



## Overview

In the midst of a worldwide pandemic, and facing its impact on the creative sector, the Society was called to support the craft community in entirely new ways. As a result, the formerly in-person event, CraftBoston, transitioned to an exciting, highly visible, virtual marketplace which delivered on our mission and vision:

- We offered new points of engagement for artists, educators, and collectors;
- We highlighted the importance of craft and creativity, placing the maker story front and center;
- We lowered barriers to entry in our programs and connected with emerging voices in the field; and
- We provided critical financial resources for artists by facilitating retail sales.

Based on last year's success, we will continue to offer CraftBoston in 2022 in its current virtual format.

## Why CraftBoston Matters

We believe that something special happens when a handmade object passes from a maker's hands to new hands. The artist's livelihood is supported, their techniques are spread across communities, and their craft lives on to engage and inspire new audiences. Buyers and collectors receive a unique object that invites connection, contemplation, and appreciation of practices sometimes taken for granted.

### My participation

in CraftBoston: Fiber Stories exceeded my expectations beyond my belief. It's the most successful show I have participated in thus far. I sold more pieces and even tied my highest-priced single-item sale. The support and marketing that CraftBoston provided to promote the show was nothing short of amazing.

Cael Chappell  
basket maker



### **Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Craft**

Representing the diversity of makers and craft present in our community is a priority of the CraftBoston program. We seek to identify and recognize underrepresented voices and makers by including Black, Indigenous, and Person of Color artists as exhibitors and educators, offering educational programs that highlight intersections of craft and race, gender, ability, and other marginalized identities, and building partnerships with peer organizations that promote DEIA initiatives in craft.

In 2021, we:

- **Featured 50 (22%) BIPOC-identifying craft artists** as exhibitors;
- Engaged Trustees and staff in a workshop to understand Native American cultural heritage and Native craft markets; and
- Made recordings of all online events publicly available on YouTube, which provides automated closed captioning services.

In 2022, we pledge to:

- Research, draft, and publish cultural sensitivity guidelines to shift perspectives and language used in our community when discussing craft influenced by a culture different from the makers' own;
- **Extend 50 Director's Invites** to makers from underrepresented communities; and
- Pursue professional development opportunities to better equip and educate our staff on topics of inequality and accessibility in craft.

### **Supporting Craft Makers' Livelihoods**

Sales made through CraftBoston provide direct support to artists' livelihoods. We prioritized making our shows accessible and equitable by significantly reducing upfront financial commitments. More than **72% of our exhibitors sold their artwork** during at least one of our online shows, and every exhibitor benefitted from professional PR support, in-house marketing campaigns, and paid advertising.

- In 2021, we generated more than **\$83,500** in retail sales
- Highest single-artist payout in 2021 for one show: **\$2,748**
- **33 press highlights** received in local, regional, and national media outlets

## Education and Community Connections

Transitioning to fully online shows has changed the way we engage our craft community and opened new opportunities for connection and learning. We invited artists to take audiences behind the scenes through online demonstrations, hosted conversations with experts in the field to explore concepts in depth, and provided virtual gathering spaces for hands-on workshops and informal community-building.

In 2021, we saw:

- More than **900 unique registrants** across 27 online events
- Nearly **5,000 views** on our YouTube channel
- More than **450 hours** of view time combined



## National Caliber Shows Rooted in New England

While CraftBoston is and always has been a national stage for fine craft artists, we have maintained our strong ties to Massachusetts and New England-based makers. Close to **30% of our exhibitors in 2021 reside in Massachusetts**, with 40% hailing from the New England region. The next two most-represented states were New York and Pennsylvania, keeping our spotlight firmly on the US Northeast. We remain dedicated to supporting the livelihoods of New England craft artists in addition to featuring truly exemplary craft from across the country.

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## Partners

