



## Somerville artists featured in new online exhibition

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In its newest online exhibition, “CraftBoston: Cups of Good,” the Society of Arts + Crafts highlights the art of handmade vessels and explores the personal connections, favorite recipes, and memories behind treasured cups, bowls, mugs, pots, and boxes. “Cups of Good” showcases more than 50 New England and national fine craft artists who apply a wide range of techniques, mediums, and interpretations to what a vessel can be.

**“Cups of Good” debuts Sep. 10, 2021 on the Society’s CraftBoston page and runs through Oct. 31, 2021.**



Collection of carved Collins and Old-Fashioned glasses. — Photo by SaraBeth Post.

The latest in the Society’s popular “CraftBoston Online” multi-discipline programming, “Cups of Good” features interactive online educational and entertainment events that include artists sharing in-depth looks at their work through studio visits, do-it-yourself workshops and social activities.

The exhibition is the first partnership between the Society and Syd Carpenter, a Professor of Art and the Peggy Chan Professor of Black Studies at Swarthmore College. An active ceramicist and mixed media artist, Carpenter served as Guest Juror for the “Cups of Good” exhibition, bringing her decades-long and celebrated background to help select the artists whose works would be featured. She surveyed the group of more than 70 artists who applied for the exhibition and says she was delighted not only by the number of artists with whom she was not familiar — indicating a fresh group of applicants — but also the range of work and ideas represented in the pool.

“I looked for artists who are using the cup form respectfully as a functional object, but also with awe,” Carpenter says, “and with extraordinary interpretations of the cup. I think these artists truly sensed the opportunity this exhibition gave to transform one of the most mundane objects into art. This cohort of applicants represents a cross-section of what is being done with this particular form right now.”

Visitors can shop for pieces from all the artists — in a wide range of price points, style, and materials. Three artists are Somerville residents participating in “Cups of Good”:

- **Arthur Halvorsen**, a Mudflat studio artist, whose work uses bright colors, textures, and patterns on earthenware, gathering inspiration from pop art, coloring books, and tattoos;
- **Coby Unger**, a designer and educator who is a Hobby Shop Associate Instructor at MIT, brings his background in industrial design and technology development to bear on a stunning wooden zoetrope;
- **Peter Schilling**, an American jade master, who has brought serious international attention to jade carving in America. His carving techniques combine both ancient and modern approaches.

Other artists chose a wide range of vessels made from clay, fabric, metal, wool and glass; the works could be interpreted and used as jewelry, wall art, and other decorative items. Carpenter says viewers will find expected items and distinctive pieces that turn the expectation of a vessel on its head.

“The diversity in this show is satisfying to me,” Carpenter says. “There’s not a sense here that these items are exclusive, or for an audience ‘in the know.’ There is folk pottery, wood-fired cups, tea bowls that are beautiful and designed to appeal to buyers, as well as wearable vessels, boxes, and spectacular, ritual-based objects. This exhibition will attract a range of folks curious about the process of making.”

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Society of Arts + Crafts Executive Director Brigitte Martin says “Cups of Good” was designed as a celebration of handmade vessels and the treasures they could carry. The containers in the show can hold anything from beverages to houseplants to family treasures, she says, and many will be paired with recipes selected by the makers.

“Many of our artists submitted original family or personal recipes to accompany their work,” Martin says. “There are favorite drinks, desserts, savory dishes with unusual ingredients, and even a potting soil mix. Throughout the exhibition, members of the public will be encouraged to upload favorite food memories [here](#), to be considered for inclusion in a commemorative recipe book that will be sold to support the Society’s ongoing educational endeavors.”

More details about “CraftBoston: Cups of Good,” and its education, retail and entertainment events are available at [societyofcrafts.org](http://societyofcrafts.org).

## **ABOUT THE SOCIETY OF ARTS + CRAFTS**

Incorporated in 1897, the Society of Arts + Crafts has been at the forefront of the American craft movement, fostering the development, sales, recognition, and education of crafts for more than 100 years. Its mission is to support and celebrate craft makers and their creativity; its vision is to build and sustain a vibrant and diverse community and to shape the future of craft. See the full mission [here](#).

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