



## **A TWO-YEAR GRANT WILL BOOST MISSION AND OPERATIONS FOR NATION'S OLDEST CRAFT ORGANIZATION**

MARCH 9, 2022 – BOSTON – The Society of Arts + Crafts (“the Society”), an organization seminal in the early development and appreciation of fine hand-made craft and American craft artists, announced today its receipt of a two-year, \$500,000 gift from a private funder to reengineer the organization and its signature programs. Executive Director Brigitte Martin, who oversaw the Society’s transition from a physical space to an online hub for craft appreciation, sales and education over the past two years, says the gift comes as the group plans its 125th anniversary year and looks to deepen its impact and presence in the field.

According to the letter that accompanied the award: “[this funding] is designed to help the Society maintain its full footing as an important resource for the arts and crafts communities through careful strategic planning and staffing...it is an investment in the organization itself.”



“Now is the perfect time for investment in the Society of Arts + Crafts,” Martin says. “We could not be more grateful to the visionaries who saw past the setbacks of the past two years and recognized that craft artists are integral parts of our culture, and comprise a wide range of practitioners from all backgrounds. This gift gives us the chance to recover from changes forced by the pandemic and make strategic plans for the future of our industry.”

Martin says conversations with the anonymous funder began 18 months ago, as the Society worked to upgrade its infrastructure and move its popular CraftBoston Spring and Holiday live shows online. Shifting to digital programs kept the Society in the public eye during COVID shutdowns and kept hundreds of craft artists viable with financial and marketing support. “The effectiveness of our efforts during a

crisis convinced the funders to widen the aperture of their intent and accommodate a broader scope of work,” Martin says.

### **PHASE ONE WORK**

That work begins this month with an in-depth survey of the regional and national crafts field, assessing how artists are faring, and how craft experts – as well as casual and formal

collectors – see the future of everything from furniture and woodworking to textiles and ceramics. Other matters the Society will tackle include development of a program framework that meets artists' needs, further upgrades to its infrastructure to handle growth of CraftBoston and other projects, and a reinvigoration of its Membership and Arts Mentoring programs.

Martin envisions a comprehensive plan for the group will be ready on October 1, when the Society launches a year-long celebration of its 125th Anniversary with a kick-off event. "Because this is a generous two-year gift, we will spend the first year planning and the second year implementing," she says.

## **2022 PROGRAMMING**

In the meantime, the Society has a full roster of CraftBoston exhibition, retail and educational projects planned online for 2022 including:

- the wearable art show "Pins & Needles" now through April 17, 2022;
- the wildlife-inspired "Animal Attraction" May 6-June 19, 2022;
- a "best of the best" showcase called "Jubilee" from Aug. 19-Oct. 16, 2022; and
- the annual "CraftBoston Holiday" show from Nov. 11, 2022 to Jan. 8, 2023.

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

Incorporated in 1897 by a group of Boston leaders in teaching, art-making, architecture, and craft, the Society's original intent was to "develop and encourage higher artistic standards in the handcrafts." The group became a standard-bearer in the recognition and support of the arts and crafts movement, which aimed to put fine hand-made objects on par with painting, sculpture and other fine arts. Today, the Society is America's oldest arts and craft nonprofit organization. It sponsors exhibitions, Artist Awards programs including the John D. Mineck Furniture Fellowship, and educational programs that elevate the work of contemporary craft artists.

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## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

Brigitte Martin and members of the Society of Arts + Crafts board are available to talk about the impact of this gift on the organization's future. For more details, reach John Michael Kennedy at [jmk@jmkpr.com](mailto:jmk@jmkpr.com) / 781-620-1761 or Jennifer Astin at [ja@jmkpr.com](mailto:ja@jmkpr.com) / 424-333-1718.