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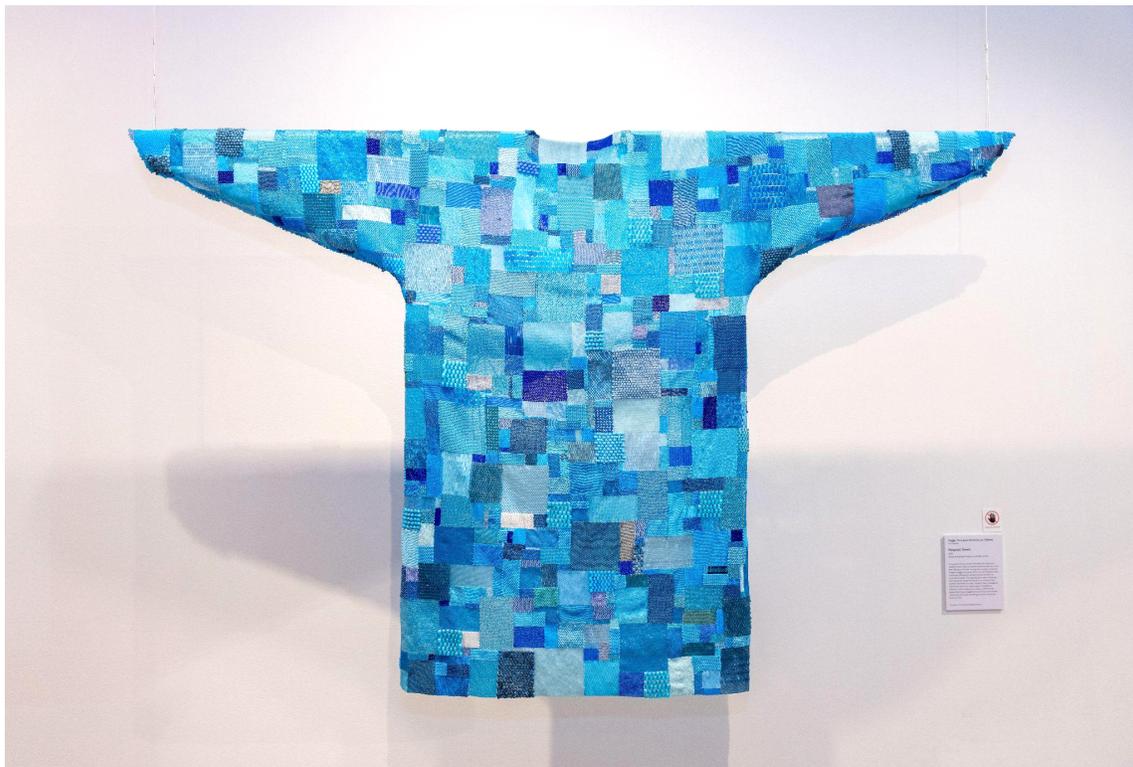
CONTACT: Daniel Nevers

(828) 785-1357 x114

press@centerforcraft.org

New Exhibition on ‘Craft-itarianism’ Explores Community Action Through Craft

Show celebrates nonprofits and artists using craft to heal, stabilize communities



Maggie Thompson (Fond du Lac Ojibwe), *Hospital Gown*, 2025, glass and plastic beads, synthetic sinew, 45 x 73 x 2 in. Courtesy of the artist and Bockley Gallery. Photo credit: Emmanuel Figaro/Center for Craft.

ASHEVILLE, NC (March 24, 2026) – What if craft could do more than preserve tradition or express identity? What if it could create jobs, restore dignity, and rebuild community infrastructure from the ground up?

Craft-itarianism: Community Action Through Craft addresses these questions with action. Coined by 2026 Center for Craft Curatorial Fellow Alyssa Velazquez, the term *craft-itarianism* describes artistic projects that generate employment, raise awareness, and provide therapeutic support through craft.

The exhibition brings together nonprofit organizations and artists from across the United States who are using craft as a pragmatic tool for change. Their initiatives support individuals affected by addiction, incarceration, and violence—creating spaces for skill-building, solidarity, and economic opportunity. In these instances, craft is not a luxury but a kind of infrastructure.

At its heart, craft-itarianism is the use of craft to add joy, distribute resources, and foster community in the everyday lives of specific at-risk or marginalized people. It reframes making as both visionary and practical—a means to meet urgent needs while imagining more equitable futures.

“As a curator, I’m interested in what art can do, not just what it represents,” says Velazquez. “When we invest in craft, we’re investing in people—their skills, their healing, and their ability to create stability for themselves and their communities. Craft-itarianism names the work that so many artists and nonprofits are already doing—using making as a practical tool for care, connection, and economic opportunity.”

Exhibiting organizations and artists include AMBOS Project with students at Jardin de las Mariposas, Casa Arcoíris, and Casa Unión Trans in Tijuana, Mexico; the Black Craftspeople Digital Archive; the Center for Creative Works with Kelly Brown, Cindy Gosselin, and Ania Lattie; Firebird Community Arts with Laura Donefer and Firebird youth artists; People’s Pottery Project; and Maggie Thompson (Fond du Lac Ojibwe).

Launched in 2017, the Center for Craft Curatorial Fellowship supports emerging curators exploring new ideas about craft with mentorship, professional development, and a \$5,000 honorarium to realize an exhibition. Velazquez’s project was selected from proposals submitted nationwide. Support for the Curatorial Fellowship is provided, in part, by the Stoney Lamar Craft Endowment Fund.

Exhibition support is provided, in part, by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Center for Craft receives funding from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources. Support also comes from the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts.

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ABOUT CENTER FOR CRAFT

The Center for Craft catalyzes the people and practices shaping the future of making. Founded in 1996, it has awarded more than \$8 million in grants and fellowships to craft artists, researchers, and organizations across the United States. Proudly based in Asheville, North Carolina, the Center’s free public galleries explore craft’s evolving impact on culture.

In 2028, the Center will open the Center for Craft Community Library and Archives—combining holdings transferred from the American Craft Council with existing collections to form the nation’s leading resource on American craft. The library will house the Center’s Materials Collection, a growing repository of more than 100 material samples ranging from those commonly associated

with craft to emerging bio-based alternatives designed to spark new approaches to making.

For more information and images, contact Daniel Nevers at (828) 785-1357 x114 or press@centerforcraft.org.

Center for Craft is located at 67 Broadway St., Asheville, NC 28801. Gallery hours are Monday–Saturday, 10 am to 6 pm.

Website: www.centerforcraft.org

Instagram: [@centerforcraft](https://www.instagram.com/centerforcraft)