Fuller Craft Museum offers expansive opportunities to discover the world of contemporary craft. By exploring the leading edge of craft through exhibitions, collections, education, and public programs, we challenge perceptions and build appreciation of the material world. Our purpose is to inspire, stimulate, and enrich an ever-expanding community.

Visit our collection online: [http://collections.fullercraft.org/](http://collections.fullercraft.org/)

**What is Contemporary Craft?**

Objects made for use, such as a ceramic mug for drinking or a wooden chair for sitting are considered “craft.” Long before commercial manufacturing, these objects were made by hand by artisans. “Craft” can also refer to the artistic skill required in working with materials and in creating objects that can be decorative, functional, or both.

Accepted as an important art form, contemporary craft is often characterized by innovation in design and materials as well as modern interpretations of traditional technique and style. Today, studio craft artists continue to make objects by hand, pieces that can be both useful and interesting to look at.
Another name for Ceramics is Pottery. Potters use a Kiln to fire clay. Some ceramics have a glazed finish which appears to be very shiny while other pottery have a matt finish (unshiny). Clay may be modeled by hand or with the assistance of a potter’s wheel—shaping it with their hands while the clay spins—This type of pottery is referred to as being “thrown.” Kilns are special ovens that reach over 1000 ° F to fire ceramics. A Potter is an artist who makes pottery.

Glazes are made up of materials that melt during the firing process making objects like cups and vases shiny and able to hold liquids.

Blue Hill Boy, Leslie Sills

“With compassion and empathy, I seek to portray those in need.” Leslie Sills has created 3D ceramic pieces and 2D paintings and drawings since the 1970s. Sills believes that art and a love for art can be agents for change and considers herself to be an artist as well as an art educator and hopes to foster a love of art in children.

- What is the first thing you notice about this piece of art?
- This piece is titled “Blue Hill Boy”; Besides his shirt is there any thing else you see that is blue?
- Looking at Blue Hill Boy’s face, how do you think he is feeling?
- How do you think the duck Feels?

Clay is a natural product dug from the earth.

Clay Hill Boy, Leslie Sills

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Clay is a natural product dug from the earth.
A terra cotta flower pot and a coffee mug are two ceramic objects you might have at home. They both began as wet pieces of clay that are formed into a useful shape and fired in a kiln.

What other similarities do these objects share? In what ways are they different? Which one typically feels rough or unfinished? Which one is usually shiny and smooth? Would you want to drink out of a flower pot—why or why not?

**Umbrella Stand, Mark Hewitt**

- Some pieces of artwork are Functional (have a purpose or use) while other pieces of work are Nonfunctional (do not have a use).
- Do you think this piece of pottery is functional or nonfunctional?
- When might you use this?
- What other kinds of ceramic objects can you think of? You might even have some at home!
- What do you think it would be like to work with clay? Would it be sticky or dry? Hard or soft?
Fiber art may be made of natural materials (from plants or trees, or animals) or synthetic (made by people in a laboratory, like nylon). Often these fibers are spun into thread, which is then woven into fabric. This fabric can then be used to create clothing, quilts, embroideries and more.

The use of cotton and wool to create natural fabrics can be traced back to 3000 BC, and evidence of silk use from 2500 BC. The creation of man-made fibers has only been within the last 100 years. Rayon, was the first man-made fiber created in 1910, Nylon was invented in 1935.

Fibonacci Rising, Billie Ruth Sudduth

Billie Ruth Sudduth created her unique style of basket weaving using the Fibonacci sequence, a pattern and order that exists in nature, discovered by a medieval mathematician. Sudduth sees using the Fibonacci spiral in her functional artworks as an affirmation of our connection to nature.

- The Fibonacci sequence is a pattern that is found in nature—like the spirals on a snails shell or looking down on a pine cone.
- How many different kinds of lines can you find in Sudduth’s basket?
- What would you put in this basket? Why?
- What other examples of art connecting with nature in the can you think of?

There are 3 basic kinds of baskets—coiled, twined, or woven.
Look through the clothes in your closet at home and read the labels. How many of the following can you find?

Most common Natural Fibers used in clothing:
- Cotton
- Linen
- Wool
- Silk

Most common Synthetic Fibers used in clothing:
- Spandex
- Nylon
- Rayon
- Acetate
- Acrylic
- Polyester

Are your clothes made out of more natural fibers or synthetic fibers? Why do you think manufactures decide to use one over the other?

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**Drawing Series XXIV Head with Red Marks**

_Archie Brennan_

Both this piece and "Fibonacci Rising" are made from fiber; what is the difference between this piece of art and that of Billie Ruth Sudduth?

Weaving is the interlacing of two sets of threads at right angles to each other to form cloth. Weaving is usually done on a loom using two sets of threads, called the warp.
Glass is a magical material made by mixing sand, soda ash and lime into a big ceramic bowl called a crucible. Turning these raw materials into glass involves heating them up to a temperature of 2,300° F, inside of a special furnace. Glass can be cut, sculpted and blown to create beautiful craft objects.

Glass blowing, as a technique, was created around 2,000 years ago! To blow glass, a special tool called a blowpipe is used to pick up the liquid glass—the glass blower uses their breath to blow air into the blowpipe and create a bubble of glass.

**Joseph’s Coat, Carol Cohen**

“I paint on glass because I cannot paint on air.” Carol Cohen creates stacked glass sculptures that are composed of evenly spaced, layered, and painted sheets of window glass. When perceived together, the panes convey an illusion of three-dimensional objects that invite the touch.

- Think about the artist’s quote “I paint on glass because I cannot paint on air.” What do you think she means by that?
- What is the first thing you notice when looking at this piece?
- How might you describe it to someone else?
Raven Steals the Sun, Preston Singletary

- If you did not know that Raven Steels the Sun was made of glass, what might you think it was made of? Why?
- What will you remember about this piece later?
- How might you describe it to someone else?
- How does Raven steels the Sun differ from “Joseph’s Coat”? In what ways are they similar?

Try this simple experiment at home to get the feel for what it’s like working with glass.

Using the end of a spoon or honey dipper try to get a glob of honey from the jar into a cup. This is like what hot glass is like on the end of a blowpipe. If you keep the spoon turning, and hold it just at the right angle, it’s easy to move the honey as a “round” glob. Play with lowering and raising the spoon and watch gravity distort the honey’s shape or cause it to drip off. The same is true with glass at the end of blowpipe!
Metals are minerals like iron or lead that are found underground in rocks. Metals have many properties such as strength and durability. When heated, metals can be shaped into anything from a small paperclip to a large bronze statue. Shiny metals like gold and silver are used to make jewelry.

A “Jeweler” is someone who buys and sells jewelry. Goldsmiths and Silversmiths, create jewelry from metal. Gold and silver are ideal for making jewelry because they are soft and can be easily shaped into designs. Along with gold, silver was once commonly used for coins.

The earliest Goldsmiths were the ancient Egyptians.

American Scrap, John Bisbee

For nearly thirty years, John Bisbee has welded and forged 12in. spikes under the mantra, "Only nails, always different." Bisbee uses welding to make his art. Welding is a process of permanently joining two metals together with heat.

- If you could only choose one kind of art material to make art with, what would you choose?
- Why did the Artist title this piece “American Scrap”?
- How might you describe this piece to someone else?
Some materials, like metal, can be shaped into different form permanently. Metals like gold, silver, copper and aluminum can be made into thin wires, or beaten into thin sheets.

At home, tear off two sheets of aluminum foil from a roll (they should be about the same size)—notice that although it is a metal is isn’t very durable or difficult to bend, shape or tear. Squeeze one sheet of foil into a ball, compare the two pieces of foil. How is the ball different from the flat sheet? How are they similar? Do you think you can unroll the ball and flatten it out again? Try it. What does the foil look like after it had been squished and flatted?

Susie Ganch, *Brooch with Gray Molecules*  
Copper, white enamel, braided wire, anodized silver

- What shapes and lines can you identify in this piece?
- Looking at both “American Scrap” and “Brooch with Grey Molecules,” can you tell which piece is functional (has a use or purpose); and which is non-functional (does not have a use)?
- Do all metal objects weigh the same? Are some heavy and some lighter?
- Metal can be sharp, can it also be smooth?
Wood comes in many different kinds. Oak, maple (hardwood) and pine and redwood (softwood) are widely-used types of wood. Woods are usually divided into softwood (from conifers) and hardwood from flowering plants.

Woodturning is a type of woodworking used to create wooden objects on a lathe. A lathe is a power tool that rotates a piece of wood on an axis and allows you to shape it using various carving tools. Wood bowls, table legs, candle sticks, and goblets are all products of woodturning.

Cornered, Laura Petrovich-Cheney

Inspired by traditional quilt construction, Laura Petrovich-Cheney creates vibrant wall sculptures with scattered pieces of wood remains from Hurricane Sandy—wooden siding, porch railings, broken furniture, and other objects that she collected after the storm. Her work explores ideas of memory and transformation.

- What shapes do you see in this artwork?
- How many squares can you find?
- Using scraps of found wood pieces, Laura created a patchwork quilt. What other materials might you use to create a quilt?

Grain is the stripes in wood created by growth rings.
Carving is one method artist use to create craft objects from wood. You can get a feel for what it's like to carve in wood using an inexpensive bar of white soap and a popsicle sticks or a potato peelers as your carving tools.

Think about the way you would like your sculpture to look. Draw your design on paper, it should be a simple shape and be more or less the size of a bar of soap.

**The Ballad of Blossom Sweet, Tommy Simpson**

- What is the first thing you notice about this artwork?
- Both "Cornered" and "Ballad of Blossom Sweet" are made of wood; how are they different? How are they alike?
- Grain pattern in woods can be changed dramatically by making a different kind of cut in the wood. Look closely at any wood objects you may have. How many different patterns you can find?

Draw your design onto the wide side of your bar of soap with a pencil. Carefully use a popsicle stick or plastic knife to carve your design. Scrape away at the edges and twist into the surface to make holes. Keep turning your soap over and over in your hands as you work. Then your finished sculpture will be rounded rather than flat.