Nation Building:Craft and Contemporary American Culture (Washington, 8-9 Nov 12)

Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum - Washington DC, Nov 8–09, 2012
Deadline: Apr 2, 2012

Debrah Dunner

Renwick Gallery Symposium: Nation Building: Craft and Contemporary American Culture
Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum - Washington DC
8-9 November 2012

Paper submissions from senior and emerging scholars are invited for this symposium, which will examine craft's increasingly urgent role within contemporary American culture. Coinciding with the 40th anniversary of the Renwick Gallery, American Art's branch museum for contemporary craft and decorative arts, this program seeks to broaden the dialogue surrounding craft's recent histories, and to articulate rapid changes to the field since the advent of the current century.

Scholarship is invited that complicates our understanding of modern craft as a response to mass culture, and that probes the evolution of the field beyond the studio movement. Investigations of post-studio practice, craft education, "craftivism," DIY (Do-It-Yourself) and Slow movements, converging practices in craft, design, and contemporary art, and shifting attitudes towards technology, skill, and materiality are welcome. How making engages gender, identity, class, politics, economics, the environment, and everyday life are also possible subjects of inquiry. The title of this symposium references modern craft's history as a regenerative (and often political) force in society, but also Hannah Arendt's assertion that what fundamentally distinguishes us as a species is our capacity for "world-building." The value of craft as evidence of diverse human agency is at the heart of this project. Ultimately, this program seeks a pluralist view of craft's impact on the contemporary American experience.

Please email a two-page, double-spaced abstract (300-500 words) and short C.V. to Nicholas R. Bell, the Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator of American Craft and Decorative Art at the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum at CraftSymposium@si.edu

Proposals must be received by April 2, 2012. Confirmed speakers will be required to submit the text of their 20-minute symposium presentations by October 8, 2012. A final text of the essay with endnotes will be due January 2, 2013, for possible publication in the symposium proceedings. The symposium will be available for viewing in a simultaneous and, later, an archived webcast.

Reference:

CFP: Nation Building:Craft and Contemporary American Culture (Washington, 8-9 Nov 12). In: ArtHist.net,

Mar 7, 2012 (accessed Oct 30, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/2857>.