

## Craft History Workshop Seminar Series (online, 15 Jan–14 May 24)

Online, Jan 15–May 24, 2024

Deadline: Dec 15, 2023

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Craft History Workshop invites submissions for its third season, running from January to May, 2024.

This seminar series invites new considerations of craft in an expanded historical and methodological field. Recent art-historical scholarship on craft tends to emphasize the mechanisms and markets of contemporary art, or positions craft as a phenomenon arising specifically through the dialectics of industrial modernity. But this is not the only way we can define and frame craft. Even during the rise of the mass-produced modern world, craft remained integrated in industrial capitalism, not as its “other” but (as Raphael Samuel famously showed) part of its development and operation. Nor has modernity been the only driver of change: craft’s rich pre- and early-modern transformations deserve explicit attention as well. Furthermore, craft has an ongoing present beyond the specific frame of Western affluence; in the global South and in marginalized communities within the global North, craft’s enduring importance as a cultural technology and an economic engine (rather than a rarefied form of opposition to mass culture) can remain somewhat elusive when we look primarily through the conceptual prism of art history. Researchers from a wide variety of fields have also recognized craft’s central role—both in historical research and contemporary practice—in discourses of decoloniality. Rethinking craft in terms of these long and tangled histories can elicit new questions, challenges, and connections.

The Craft History Workshop aims to enrich our historical understanding of craft as more than a byproduct of a hand-versus-machine dichotomy; rather, we consider craft as a complex mesh woven between knowledge, skill, and materiality across the many contexts of human making. We welcome papers that consider the history of craft (in any period, from prehistory to the present) from a broad range of disciplines and approaches, including but by no means limited to art and design history, material culture studies, anthropology and archaeology, histories of science and technology, economics and public policy, and conservation. We also particularly encourage submissions on topics, time periods, and geographies not represented in the previous years of Craft History Workshop seminars.

Contributions might engage notions of craft and artisan economies from the local to the global; craftwork and labor organization; decoloniality in and through craft; artisanal epistemologies; craft practices within the spheres of mass, industrial, or digital production; historiographies and categorizations of craft; processes of knowledge transfer; or histories of specific materials and their agency—among many other potential topics.

In the spirit of our title, we envision this as a less-formal space to discuss research still in development. Each session will pair two 30-minute presentations and will be online via Zoom, followed by discussion. Talks are not recorded, as we emphasize interaction and discussion of in-progress work. Emerging and early-career scholars, museum and heritage professionals, craft practitioners, and those working outside the traditional spaces and structures of academia are particularly encouraged to participate. We welcome contributions from anywhere in the world.

Send talk proposals of around 300 words to [crafthistoryworkshop@gmail.com](mailto:crafthistoryworkshop@gmail.com) along with a CV, link to a personal website, or biographical statement indicating your interests in and experiences with craft and craft history, and your availability (months, days of week). Time slots will be selected to accommodate different time zones. The submission deadline for consideration for the Winter 2024 seminar season is December 15, 2023.

Reference:

CFP: Craft History Workshop Seminar Series (online, 15 Jan-14 May 24). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 12, 2023 (accessed May 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/40595>>.