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CONTRIBUTORS

David Revere McFadden is chief curator and vice president for programs and collections at the Museum of Arts and Design. He has organized exhibitions on decorative arts, design, and craft and has published and lectured extensively.

Emily Zaiden is a material culture historian and director of the Craft in America Study Center in Los Angeles. Her work was recently published in the catalogue *Golden State of Craft: California 1960–1985*.

Nurit Einik is an assistant curator at the Museum of Arts and Design and an adjunct faculty member at Parsons, The New School for Design.

Jennifer A. Zwilling is an independent curator and educator of the history of art, craft, and the decorative arts.

Darcy Tell is editor of the *Archives of American Art Journal*.

Helen W. Drutt English was executive director and a founding member of the Philadelphia Council of Professional Craftsmen (1967–1974) and the founder-director of Helen Drutt Gallery in Philadelphia (1973–2002), among the first galleries in America to champion the Modern and Contemporary Craft movement.

Jeannine Falino, co-curator and general editor of *Crafting Modernism: Midcentury American Art and Design* (2011), has lectured and written extensively on American decorative arts from the colonial period to the present, with a focus on metalsmithing, jewelry, and twentieth-century art, craft, and design.

Abbey Nova is a design historian living in New York.

Jo Lauria is an independent curator and author specializing in decorative arts, design, and craft. She has organized several national touring exhibitions and worked on multimedia presentations and documentaries.

Maria Elena Buszek is a scholar, critic, curator, and associate professor of art history at the University of Colorado–Denver, where she teaches courses on modern and contemporary art. Her recent publications include the books *Extra/ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art* (2011) and *Pin-Up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture* (2006).



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THE NEW CALIFORNIA'S

In 1950 California experienced a bold and vibrant renaissance in the craft field. Named the new crafts movement by curator of the *California Design* exhibitions series Eudorah M. Moore, it was a period of intense production, pervasive optimism, and vigorous experimentation in the crafts. California's fabled progressiveness, postwar prosperity, and expanding State College system, subsidized by the GI Bill, provided the climate for this emerging aesthetic and social movement to thrive. Working in a range of materials and disciplines, craft artists defined the ethos of the era and the West Coast way of life. Their creations made significant contributions to the American craft movement, the art world at large, and American design and taste overall. The aesthetic messages that these artists presented resounded across the country, becoming part of the national consciousness.

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The roots of the state's new crafts movement are traceable to the 1880s, when the Arts and Crafts movement made its philosophical imprint on the cultural consciousness of Californians. Widely influential and broadly adopted throughout the state, these beliefs profoundly affected fundamental patterns and philosophies of living in California: they endorsed a life style that favored rustic simplicity, emphasized environmentalism and the use of indigenous materials, advocated for the handcrafted over the machine made, and revered nature as a wellspring of inspiration. New crafts' tenets germinated, and the dynamic period of creative craftsmanship and productivity of the early twentieth century was revived in the years following World War II.

The postwar reinvigoration of the crafts in California became palpable when a new generation of college-educated artists emerged in the 1960s. Deciding to become studio craft artists, these men and women borrowed from traditions but moved away from formal and

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rigid control of materials and techniques. Driven by expressive energy and an interpretive exploration of their mediums, they opened alternative creative channels. For most, the impulse toward discovery prompted a cross-disciplinary approach, a practice they had experienced in college art programs, which presented an integrated learning approach, and for many, a closer partnership with design. These innovators had “breadth of approach, wide and imaginative range of individual expression, and zestful freedom to experiment.”¹

Aesthetic transformation was only one component of this movement. Starting in the 1960s and extending for decades, it also had a political dimension concerned with social change. The majority of craftspeople viewed their work as an outlet for liberal ideology and as a way to honor native and ethnic cultures. Moreover, as a livelihood, crafts offered a righteous path to the pursuit of self-support. Making objects by hand was personal, humane, intimate, enduring, and empowering. It offered a true connection to community, to nature, and to the environment, and reaffirmed the ingenuity and value of hand-crafting in a society increasingly reliant on industrial production. In these principles, the new crafts movement echoed the social agenda of the earlier Arts and Crafts movement. But more than an updating, the California-born new crafts movement was a reawakening and reinvention propelled by the distinctive energies and motivations of its own time.

The entries in the following timeline provide a short list of the salient events and the important individuals who brought the new crafts movement to life and defined its growth throughout the century. The selection of California artists included here is largely based on their participation in exhibitions in the *California Design* exhibition series or shows held at the Craft and Folk Art Museum (CAFAM), Los Angeles.

The core of this research was originated by the current staff of Craft in America under the direction of Carol Sauvion, executive director; Emily Zaiden, director of the Craft in America Study Center; and with research assistance from Stephanie Huerta and Jo Lauria, curator of “Golden State of Craft: California 1960-1985” (Craft and Folk Art Museum, CAFAM), Sept. 25, 2011, through Jan. 8, 2012); and former CAFAM staff Joan Benedetti, librarian and archivist, and Sharon Emanuelli, curator. The Timeline, as published here, represents the expanded and extended version as researched and written by Jo Lauria.

¹ Eudorah M. Moore, introduction to *California Craftsmen* (Los Angeles: California Arts Commission, [1963]).