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Beaded gauntlets, c. 1950, attributed to Mary Gibson (Yakama or Umatilla, active mid-20th century). Courtesy of the Maryhill Museum of Art, Goldendale, WA.

Handwork Handcrafted Objects that Made America

Edited by Emily Zaiden, with a foreword by Carol Sauvion

An engaging and essential portrait of America through surprising, overlooked, everyday, and iconic handmade objects crafted over more than 250 years.

Handwork: Handcrafted Objects that Made America is a visually stunning, deeply inspiring celebration of America's spirit through ordinary, surprising, and overlooked handcrafted objects spanning more than 250 years. The official book of *Handwork: Celebrating American Craft 2026*—Craft in America's yearlong, nationwide initiative marking 250 years since the Declaration of Independence featuring hundreds of museum exhibitions and events, a four-part PBS docuseries, and specially designed educational components—***Handwork*** is essential reading for anyone curious about American history, design, material culture, or craft.

Edited by Emily Zaiden, director and lead curator of the Craft in America Center, with a foreword by Carol Sauvion, the visionary behind the Peabody Award-winning PBS series *Craft in America*, ***Handwork*** takes readers on a journey through time and across the multiplicity of cultures that have made America, uncovering the powerful stories behind objects that shaped American life. The book groups handmade objects into four curated sections—DWELL, FEED, FURNISH, ADORN—and highlights objects that reflect innovation, resistance, artistry, and community, from a nineteenth-century Kiowa cradleboard to an antique Hawaiian *papa he'enalu* (surfboard) and a prototype for an iconic sneaker.

Handwork includes illuminating texts from nearly 30 experts nationwide that accompany each object, emphasizing overlooked narratives and the underrepresented artists who helped define American life through their craft. Contemporary makers featured throughout show how craft traditions live on, a testament to the human ingenuity that continues to shape American culture. An introduction by Zaiden also speaks to her editorial approach, “placing on equal footing the everyday and ordinary, the overlooked and disregarded, and the exceptional and acclaimed.”

With vibrant full-color photography, an engaging layout, and a thorough, inclusive approach, ***Handwork*** is as captivating and eye-opening as the objects and artists it celebrates.

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Handwork: Handcrafted Objects that Made America



About the Authors

Emily Zaiden is director and curator of the Craft in America Center in Los Angeles where she has organized over eighty multidisciplinary contemporary art, craft, and design exhibitions for the center and partner museum venues. Zaiden oversees public programs, a K-12 education initiative, and digital projects, including the creation of the online Craft Video Dictionary. Her research focuses on craft processes, materiality, functional design, and cultural art, particularly from a historical lens. Zaiden has an M.A. from the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture.

Carol Sauvion is an American crafts scholar and creator of the Peabody Award-winning PBS series *Craft in America*. Sauvion was the founding director of Craft in America and for over forty-five years was the director of Freehand, her Los Angeles gallery specializing in functional craft.

About Monacelli

As a leading publisher of illustrated books for more than twenty-five years, Monacelli has challenged the conventions of publishing to produce provocative, inspiring, and essential titles. Founded in 1994 by Gianfranco Monacelli, the organization has released nearly 600 books on architecture, art, interior design, landscape and gardens, photography, and the applied arts. Monacelli's books have been made in collaboration with prominent practitioners and scholars ever since its inaugural title, the groundbreaking *S,M,L,XL* by Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau. In 2015, the applied arts imprint Monacelli Studio was launched, adding elevated books on art instruction, photography technique, and crafts to the publisher's roster. In 2020, Monacelli joined the Phaidon family of companies.

About Craft in America

Craft in America is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit arts organization founded in 2004 with the mission to promote and advance original handcrafted work through programs in all media. The Peabody Award-winning, Emmy-nominated Craft in America documentary series first aired nationally on PBS in 2007 and has produced over 35 hour-long episodes to date. These programs are filled with artists, techniques, and stories from diverse cultures, blending history with living practice. In addition to the series, Craft in America's organizational efforts include its extensive website, a YouTube channel, multi-disciplinary educator guides that adhere to national standards, and the Craft in America Center in Los Angeles, which presents exhibitions, talks by artists and scholars, workshops, and K-12 school tours. All of Craft in America's multimedia educational content is provided to the public at no charge.

About Handwork 2026

Craft in America is pleased to present *Handwork: Celebrating American Craft 2026 (Handwork 2026)*, a nationwide Semiquincentennial initiative to showcase the importance of the handmade both throughout our history and in contemporary life. *Handwork 2026* is a year-long collaboration among organizations, educators, and makers to celebrate the diversity of the crafts that define America, bringing compelling stories and underrepresented art and artists into the spotlight through exhibitions and events presented by more than 300 cultural organizations, the Craft in America series on PBS, robust educational programming, digital content, and this publication.

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