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THE STATE OF CRAFT

2025

**EXHIBITING
ARTIST
STATEMENTS**

Jake Arnett

Jake Arnett found his passion for glass while attending Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska, where he received a B.A. in Studio Art in 2019. He currently serves as an Instructor and Studio Technician at the Tulsa Glassblowing School in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

In his artistic practice, Jake uses glass to explore the fundamental laws of the universe and absurdity in the mundane. He particularly enjoys playing with form, color, and transparency.

Marilyn Artus

I am an equality activist, fiber artist and a suffrage era nerd. I have created shows that explore the suffragist era in the US, paid tribute to an assortment of women in U.S. history and continue to explore the many different stereotypes that women navigate through on a daily basis.

Jonathan Bolivar

The focus of my work is centered within the different perceptions of balance. I attempt to represent balance using shape and structure; pattern and color. Using these variables I hope to make a subconscious connection with others.

We can find these connections in our lives every day when interacting with the surrounding world. We are drawn to different colors, attracted to patterns, and affected by the flow of changing shapes. We experience a continuous evolution of taste, one that we explore by designing our own worlds. Commonly using tangible objects, we express ourselves using a personal equation for aesthetic pleasure. The connections to shape, color, and pattern exist in all of nature. They can be seen in both plants and animals, used mostly as tools for communication and survival. These connections have long defined how we humans live and evolve. Using the physical properties of glass, I hope to construct forms that represent properties of balance. I am fascinated by pushing the structural limits of glass. I attempt to understand these limits, using the delicacy of glass as a common denominator to balance. The placement of lines and color allows me to play with shapes, emphasizing their individual properties. My artistic challenge is to explore the variables that equate to a representation of balance. Combining shapes and patterns with nature's asymmetrical designs, I hope to find a correlation between personal perceptions and connections to the natural world.

Caryn Brown

Caryn Brown has been producing various forms of mosaics since the late 90s. She has been living in Tulsa since 2006 after bouncing around with life stages in California, Canada, Australia and Kansas City.

She specializes in small mosaic sculptures but has been commissioned for large scale mosaic designs for wall installations, fountains and pools.

Currently her work is exploring the blending of clay sculpture with a variety of mosaic applications.

Patrick Collins

Patrick has been a woodturner since 2010. He specializes in turning old tree cuttings into beautiful works of art that take the form of vases, bowls, and pens. His work has been on display in art galleries in Kansas City and Tulsa. Currently, Lovett's Gallery in Tulsa is displaying some of his unique and beautiful vases. He was named wood turner of the year in 2017 by the Northeast Oklahoma Woodturners. When Patrick's not busy in his workshop, he's participating in art shows from South Carolina to Iowa.

"I use a variety of wood – cherry, maple, walnut, to name a few – that is mostly given to me by tree cutting businesses. I re-purpose the wood into vases, bowls and pens that would otherwise be turned into chips or taken to Tulsa's green waste yard. Once people know what you do, they'll call and ask if you want wood. They like seeing it turned into something. It's a unique way to recycle."

Claire Ferguson

Claire Ferguson is an artist and glassblower based in Tulsa, OK. Her practice explores the relationship between form and function, using glass as a material language. Drawn to the mindfulness that glassblowing demands and the inherent poetry of the medium, Ferguson approaches her work as a dialogue between opposites: gentleness and pressure, control and surrender, liquid and solid, inhale and exhale.

She is fascinated by the psychology of objects—how balance, tactility, opacity, and form shape our emotional responses and attract us to what we hold, use, or display. In her work, glass becomes a vessel for exploring these subtleties of perception.

Her ongoing lamp series, *Free Play*, takes inspiration from Stephen Nachmanovich's book *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*, which emphasizes the role of improvisation in deepening creative practice and technique. The lamps embody this spirit, combining technical precision in glassblowing and cold working with improvisations of heat, pressure, and breath. The resulting sculptural lighting pieces evoke images of wind-carved geological formations, with indentations and curves shaped solely through an interplay of heat and breath. A sandblasted finish softens the surface of the glass, emphasizing its tactile presence and diffusing the light within.

Penni Gage

The quest to find beauty and balance in an unsettled world motivated me to create *Fusion*. The vivid color and the earth-like quality of the turquoise immediately draw the eye. Underpinning the stone with two different sizes of metal discs, one undulating and one flat, gradually widens the focus until individual components are seen as one composition.

My work focuses on the relationship between raw metals and precious/semi-precious stones. Each design element is hand fabricated by me. Techniques such as layers, textures, and patinas are often prevalent in my finished pieces while individual expression and quality craftsmanship provide the foundation for my studio practice.

While my reason for creating *Fusion* was beauty and balance, its real value will only come into focus through the lens of the viewer.

Suzy Gammill

I have a passion for both needle and wet felting and all things fiber. The amazing flexibility of wool fiber as a medium never ceases to amaze me. When I create a 2D needle felted painting I use and blend the wool as a painter uses their paint and my needle as the brush. Wool can be coaxed into a solid 3D needle felted sculpture. By using soap, water, and agitation I can mold a sturdy bowl, or create a soft, flowing garment.

I was raised surrounded by art in many forms. My family is full of exceptionally talented artists and our household growing up was a riot of color and texture. My father, an advertising executive and accomplished sculptor and painter, shared his passion for art with his children as did my mother, a docent at several museums. I was educated at a time when art was still a mandatory part of the curriculum in schools. However, you might say my “art education” is more by osmosis and trial and error than formal education. Over the years I have tried my hand at a variety of different mediums but never found real joy until I was introduced to wool fiber as a medium for my artistic endeavors.

Much of my work reflects the deep love I have for nature. I am inspired daily by our beautiful state and the amazing flora and fauna that, like me, call Oklahoma home. Living in rural Oklahoma I have a front row seat to the unbelievably vibrant colors of nature whether it be the pinks and purples of a sunrise or the flicker of red and yellow on the wing of a blackbird. I strive to capture that feeling of “the beauty of home” in my art.

Sally Garner

I will forever be inspired by the weird and beautiful complexities that are found in nature. A few years ago, during an artist residency in Ireland, I experimented with weaving living seaweed at low tide, documenting the impromptu pieces knowing that over time the rising waves would unravel everything I had done. Since then, my work has been focused on considering the environmental impacts of our actions, especially the manipulative human nature of speeding up processes, skipping vital steps, and using up resources faster than they can be replaced, all for economic gain without regard for future consequences. My sculptural textile work reflects on both advanced and low-tech ways of interacting with the world. Highly technical, loom-woven sculptures that are hand manipulated sculpturally are contrasted against open, organic forms produced by the slow-paced action of hand weaving threads randomly across biomorphic structures made of industrially processed basketry reed.

Claire Harkness

I work in clay and sculpt decorative and functional pieces reflecting the flora and fauna of Oklahoma. I use mid-fire and high-fire clays, and decorate with oxides, slips, and underglazes.

Pamela Husky

My five decades of work in fiberart evolved from functional weavings (garments, rugs, linens) to tapestries. With experience as a spinner and dyer, I began to experiment with feltmaking. The ancient techniques allowed me to achieve a more direct, painterly design than tapestry weaving. I use resist fabric pieces between layers, pulling up the separated layers after felting. This increases the three-dimensional depth.

I choose landscape as subject, working to convey the impression of a place I've lived or traveled. The beauty of the sky, water, grasses, trees, rock formations and mountains is my subject. It is the challenge of "painting" with wool and silk: dyeing, spinning and carding these materials, and sharing a sense of place and time that compels the work.

Rusty Johnson

Woodworker and whittler are words I hear a lot from the some people in relation to woodcarving. Woodworkers make furniture, whittlers make small sticks out of big sticks. Woodcarving has also been considered folk art or craft by many. My feeling as a carver is to try to elevate the form to fine craft or even an art form. I like to think my work asks questions but lets the viewer provide their own answers.

Years ago a woodcarver friend paid me a high compliment saying, "we are just woodcarvers, you are an artist." That is what I like to hear.

Clayton Keyes

My sculptural practice examines environmental legacy and institutional oppression through figurative forms that center human and animal subjects. I focus on marginalized and oppressed figures, using gesture, posture, and emotional tension to create narratives that are at once unsettling and alluring. These figures often embody complex emotional states—grief, resilience, tenderness—that invite the viewer into a space of confrontation and reflection. To extend the narrative impact of my work, I frequently photograph my sculptures in found or constructed environments. This process, akin to composing a two-dimensional image, removes the work from the traditional gallery setting and situates it within a world that better supports its emotional and thematic weight. These constructed contexts deepen the viewer's engagement, encouraging them to follow the narrative threads more intuitively and intimately. I aim to create experiences that are emotionally charged, visually compelling, and socially urgent—offering viewers space to feel, question, and respond.

Joe Kissinger

I've been an artist for most of my life, working in many disciplines along the way. I bring elements from painting, sculpture, metalsmithing, ceramics and woodworking to the art I now create. The skills learned from those disciplines allow me to explore new possibilities in my constructed and wood turned objects. By pursuing my goal for each new object to be different from the last, my work is a commitment to constant reinvention. This relentless pursuit of novelty feeds my brain and fuels my artistic drive. I want to always surprise and amaze the viewer.

Cynthia Marcoux

This is part of a series of pieces I'm working on to preserve my cherished memories from my childhood. Every time I look at one of these pieces I'm beading, I have flashbacks – back to making pancakes for my Barbie out of bottle cap liners, or having a Coke at the Woolworth's soda fountain, or using a real potato for Mr. Potato Head, or in the case of this piece, falling in love with every mystery date that came out the door.

Jarrett Maxwell

I strive to create innovative designs that blur the lines between art and furniture while maintaining a firm grasp on both form and function.

My design inspiration, often drawn from nature or architecture, always seems to be informed by deceptively simple geometry. I love the interplay between masculine angles and feminine curves and find great beauty in forms where the details are subjugated to the overall architecture of the piece. For me, the architecture is always the number one concern.

I am continually looking for inventive ways to use and structure my materials, which pushes me to the boundaries of my technical abilities. The greatest joy in my creative endeavor is to envision something in the mind just outside the realm of what seems possible and then labor to flesh it out into a tangible, 3-dimensional reality. Recognizing an increasing desire to incorporate additional materials beyond wood into my future work, my curiosity grows with each new piece.

Michael McDaniel

I begin by salvaging native Oklahoma hardwoods—such as walnut, maple, and hackberry—each piece selected for its unique character. After harvesting, the wood is processed and carefully dried over a period of up to two years. During this time, I study the developing color variations and grain patterns, which guide the creation of each piece.

While every vase starts with a form or shape in mind, the wood often reveals its own story, influencing the final outcome. As I turn each piece on the lathe, I respond to the natural flow of the grain, allowing the material to lead. I use no stains or dyes—only the natural color and texture of the wood—to highlight its inherent beauty. Each finished vase is a collaboration between the raw material and the maker, shaped by time, patience, and respect for the wood's unique voice.

Jan Meng

My glass mosaic on steel is groutless. I hand cut each piece of glass to fit cheek by jowl to the next. I'm besotted by the laws of physics of light on and through glass. The process is tedious but the resulting geometric patchwork of sparkle, reflections and color is so worth it. My sun catchers are two-sided and turn on stainless steel ball-bearing swivels. They are extraordinarily stout.

I also create graceful sun chains. They are long, approximately 45" comprised of individual mini glass and mirror mosaics separated by tumbled glass, often vintage, glass beads, and repurposed glass in all colors of the rainbow. They are connected with stainless steel duo lock snaps. There's always at least one vintage rainbow-throwing prism in the chain. They are joyfully therapeutic and can hang inside or outside.

An artisan-crafted squiggly stainless steel hanging hook is included with my sun catchers and sun chains.

Sheryl Miller

As Zach Miller's original music "Number Seven" was composed in layers of sound, "Reprise" was also created layer upon layer. Pieced quilted fabric anchors the work as deep bass notes as boxes appear and reappear in the composition. Circles in patterns of five mimic higher musical tones as the visual composition also becomes more complex. Over these foundations shimmering metallics add yet more layers and create the visual accompaniment just as instrumentals added color and shine to the music composition.

Molly Murphy Adams

My work serves as a cultural narrative, an expression of personal experience, and an exploration of form and function. I use specific materials and designs to connect with my tribal art forms from history while material and content choices embrace the reality of my modern mixed heritage. My designs originate from traditional sources and combine with beadwork and embroidery techniques create a specific textural and tactile experience necessary for me to explore relationships between our understanding of data and knowledge. I use the visual language of color and shape to articulate new observations on politics, history, and identity. Art is the means with which I engage with the weight of both my past and my potential, one stitch at a time.

The installation Specimen is an ongoing and growing ensemble of animal toys painted in lucre gold and set into glass cloches on beaded bases. The bead bases radiate color trapped in a static moment conveying the instant of collection and possession. This work relates to the destructive action of discovery, a version of knowledge production that requires damaging intervention.

Cristiana Prado

As an artist born and grown up in Brazil, my sense of identity has been formed fundamentally by my relationship to my native culture. Living in this country for 26 years has embodied my creative process to come to terms with my origins and to create an artistic archive of my cultural heritage. I am from the city of Salvador, full of mysticism and syncretism of religions due to the interrelations between Africa, Europe, and the local native culture. My inspiration to create my art comes from my fascination with the Afro-Brazilian art and culture. Also, I get inspiration from my strong connection with nature. I used to spend a great amount of time in our beach house right in front of the ocean in Brazil. Recently, I have been observing flowers, leaves, and other natural elements closely.

My ceramic pieces are mostly symbolic objects in various scales, vessels, totems, sculptures, mandalas and tiles. While creating, I look for aesthetic relationships between my sources of inspiration. Clay has been the best medium for me to express this dynamic union. I employ labor-intensive surface treatments by using textures, organic shapes, distorted masses, and blended colors. I am constantly experimenting with layers of glazes fired many times to create a unique palette.

Elizabeth Richards

Zigzag is an art quilt that transforms bright striped cotton fabrics into a bold geometric design. The black hand stitching echoes and disrupts the printed stripes, adding texture and rhythm that balances precision with playful energy. Viewers are encouraged to notice how the lively play of pattern, movement, and texture emerges from simple elements.

Sarah Robl

As a child, I watched my mother toil away at her sewing machine for hours. It seemed obvious that sewing was a chore, just one more thing she had to get done. As I grew up, I witnessed a fascinating transformation in my mother: she began sewing for the act of creating. Sewing offered her an escape from illness. Sewing brought comfort and relaxation, not duty and obligation. This inspired me to experiment with thread and needle in my work. I immediately fell in love with the soothing, repetitive act of stitching. I feel a connection to the artisans who have fought to bring textile art into the world of fine art. I hope to challenge historical preconceptions of embroidery and the way “high” and “low” art are thought of in the modern world. Crafting these hand-stitched works provides endless opportunities to explore the possibilities within needlework.

I combine color, geometric shapes, and symmetry to create compositions that feel harmonious and invite the viewer to take a closer look. My use of precision reflects my personal love for order and structure. Papers are cut and layered, creating windows of depth within the work. I choose shapes based on historical and cultural meanings and pair them with personal interpretation. Creating artwork that explores themes of everyday thoughts, feelings, and experiences is my passion. It is through these works on commonality that I hope to achieve a sense of personal connection that is comforting, empathetic, and familiar to those who view it.

I deeply consider how my work will be experienced. Upon close inspection, I want to surprise the viewer with lines made of thread rather than lead. I want to entice the viewer to come closer and reward them with the details. I invite you to come closer.

Autumn Savage

Autumn Savage repurposes discarded materials into sophisticated works of art. Her striking mosaics capture both the challenges endured and the elegance of renewal. Through her assemblage and ready-mades, she highlights the transformation of objects, mirroring her perspective of viewing life from a refreshed vantage point. Autumn's journey is stitched with both darkness and defiant joy, just like her work. She layers found objects, vintage jewelry, and broken tiles to build bold, textured pieces that shine with resilience. Each fragment carries history; each arrangement, a declaration: beauty survives. Her art is a metaphor about taking what life gives and daring to make something beautiful anyway. With gratitude and dedication, Autumn's work becomes both a mirror and a message: You're not broken. You're becoming.

Steven Schmidt

Working with mixed media, I construct sculptural reliefs that explore order, structure and precision not as constraints but as guiding principles that shape composition and invite deeper reflection.

The visual themes in my work draw inspiration from science fiction, architecture and vintage electronics, blending conceptual ideas with familiar forms. These concepts revolve around forgotten and obsolete technologies, theoretical extraterrestrial life and the untapped or misunderstood potential of the human mind, among others.

Rather than confining creativity, I utilize structure as a framework for exploration, resulting in meticulously crafted multidimensional pieces that engage both intellect and intuition. This diverse foundation shapes my practice, allowing me to create work that reflects technical skill and a deep engagement with systems, signals and meaning.

Byron Shen

Currently, my ceramic pieces are a dialogue between haiku poetry and the inner self. Using the tradition of Raku and Zen, I like the notion of stripping away the unnecessary until one is left with only the essential. By paring down, there is a distillation until we reach the necessary.

Gayle Singer

I am inspired by structural elements, the growth process and abstraction of forms found in nature. Energy, tension, and motion are compelling forces that I continually strive to emulate in my work, and are best translated by the way I choose to manipulate and exaggerate the plasticity of the clay. My approach to the material is direct, yet responsive to its innate properties. The hand and material connection that clay provides, in relation to the use of the potters wheel, engage me physically and allow me to respond spontaneously. My current sculptural explorations involve vertical forms that are assembled on a metal rod. The installation process provides flexibility with the orientation of multiple parts, contributes to the illusion of movement, and aids in the distribution of weight within a given sculpture. The incorporation of functional elements contribute to the structural foundation and establish a format for interpretation and interplay. The introduction of a black and white palette with extreme textural surfaces help to highlight the play of light and shadow, adding drama and intensity. The addition of saturated color evokes an element of surprise that helps to enhance the juxtaposition of parts within the composition, and invites a visual and tactile response.

Agnes Stadler

I feel that even though you stop physically growing as you reach the end of puberty, your inner growth continues. It is no longer obvious for the outer world, nor is it measured in inches or centimeters. Everything you learn, in school and in life, your emotional experiences and spiritual progress, all contribute to the invisible growth you undergo for the rest of your life. This chart represents my growth, my path—with bumps, potholes and all, but an interesting journey nevertheless.

Colleen Stiles

Colleen Stiles is a graphic designer and illustrator from Tulsa, OK. Colleen is the current president of the Tulsa Artists' Coalition. She received her BFA from Oklahoma State University in 1997. Stiles' work explores the intersection of the natural world and the subconscious. Through drawing, sculpture, and ceramics, she creates visual narratives that evoke emotion and intrigue. Her pen and ink drawings delve into rich landscapes populated by creatures both real and imagined, where intricate details and a sense of wonder intertwine. In sculpture, she utilizes a variety of materials, including plaster, found objects, and clay, to construct figurative forms that embody a raw, organic quality. Stiles strives to create a sense of tension, movement or intrigue. Her artistic process is intuitive, allowing the work to evolve organically as she engages with the materials. Ultimately, she seeks to create pieces that resonate with viewers on a visceral level, inviting contemplation and sparking the imagination.

Sean Tyler

My purpose in life is to make things unnecessarily difficult, so rather than buy pre-colored materials, I started dyeing all of the fibers I use in my art with plants and insects. The dyes come from wood shavings, flowers, stems, and roots (with the occasional insect-based color). It took five years' worth of dyeing, foraging, growing, and researching to accumulate the fibers and fabrics used in my latest body of hand-embroidered work.

When choosing subjects, I'm drawn to places where nature and the human world interact. Figures come and go in my work, with an increasing focus on integrating them with landscapes. Natural dyes, native species, wild plants, and rural landscapes are intricately connected. I have a special love for Oklahoma's oddest plant species, like the hemi-parasitic *Castilleja* family, also vividly known as 'prairie fire.'

In The Field is inspired by Ana Mendieta's work, specifically her Silueta Series, which has haunted my dreams for the better part of a decade. The figure in this piece is a deliberate reference to her work, as well as a self-portrait. Mendieta's work was about the land, but it was also made FROM the land. This relationship between the material and subject is reflected in my ability to represent the prairie, partially, with things that grew here through natural dyes. Osage orange wood, goldenrod, sumac, black walnuts, coreopsis,

Mary Whitney

This piece takes a look at the beauty and sanctuary of slower, quieter things. For me, creating with clay quiets the mind and brings moments of peace. In these turbulent times. I find comfort in slowing the pace to a 'clay pace'. The necessary attention and consideration to materials, processes, and surface treatments is a journey of ongoing learning and self-discovery. I've found sanctuary in the community of clay artists; we encourage and inspire one another and celebrate each other's successes.

Nicki Wood

My work is a celebration of ritual and community, particularly as seen through the lens of food and domestic life. Food is a universal connector, and for me, it's a way to explore feelings of beauty and desire that are often found in the everyday. The joyful appearance of cakes in my art, for instance, is meant to appeal to the eye, with colors and flavors that evoke a sense of deliciousness. I want the viewer to feel that excitement—to want to devour the piece with their eyes. My art is rooted in a fascination with Mexican Folk Art, Pop Art, and nostalgic objects like vintage cameras. I use my creative practice to preserve everyday moments, like those captured in old family photos where I can “almost hear the laughter and feel joy”. My ceramic pieces, in particular, often feature a female perspective. A theme I use to address the assumptions and biases that can lead to an unbalanced view of marginalized people. Using clay slabs and tiles, I build narratives that, beneath their “shiny glaze veneer,” tell a more complex story of identity and personal history. I hope my art invites viewers to reflect on their own experiences and how they see themselves in society.