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American Craft Week Star Award Winners in Tennessee

Tennessee Craft Week Continues its Success with Six National Awards

NASHVILLE, TN (November 7, 2017) [American Craft Week](#) announces the 2017 Star Award Winners and Tennessee Craft is pleased to announce that [Tennessee Craft Week](#) (TCW) garnered six **STAR AWARDS** during its third year. Nationally acclaimed country icon Tanya Tucker presided as the Honorary Chairman of the 2017 Tennessee Craft Week.

The six top TCW events honored with the American Craft Week national Star Award include:

Most Innovative Event Concept Influx “Connecting Through Clay”

An ingenious event where the public was invited to explore how craft can help people reconnect in turbulent times. People purchased contemporary ceramic vessels at the Julia Martin Gallery, enjoyed it for one month and then delivered to someone else. The second recipient was asked to pass it along again, with the intent of building new relationships with others. Twelve potters created and displayed their signature works for this extended gift-giving campaign.

The Ultimate Group Celebration The Great Smoky Arts and Crafts Community

The Great Smoky Mountain Arts and Crafts Community is the largest group of independent artisans in North America. 2017 was the organization’s first year to participate. The individual members all jumped into TCW with enthusiasm. The artisan’s high percentage of vendor involvement by hanging posters in each store, inviting the public to “Do the Loop,” offering demonstrations, and shining the light on handmade crafts was extremely effective to promote Tennessee Craft Week.

Outstanding Family Event Shimai Gallery of Contemporary Craft

Shimai Gallery of Contemporary Craft: This Is My Story, This is My Song; presented twelve artisans who demonstrated their creative process, encouraged visitors to join the hands-on activities and hosted additional interactive speaker/artists programs, partnering with the Bellevue Branch of the Nashville Public Library.

Most Energizing Advocate Mary Grissim

Local Arts Consultant Mary Grissim, founder of Grissim Group, is a talented and indefatigable advocate for the arts. With passion and determination Grissim has a successful track record of growing and sustaining arts engagement. She is actively promoting numerous creative non-profit organizations in Nashville.

Most Resilient Participant Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts

Wildfires in Gatlinburg in November 2016 scorched and destroyed three buildings on the Arrowmont campus. As the news spread, thousands of people from across the country called the school, shared their creative experiences, and vowed to help rebuild this iconic and prestigious school. Arrowmont reached back out into the community; providing Christmas Day dinner for 140 Sevierville residents, proving strength can overcome adversity.

Exceptional Public Sector Support Nashville International Airport

The Nashville International Airport is known for one the finest arts programs across the nation: Arts At The Airport. As millions of visitors fly in and out of Music City, they walk by and enjoy numerous display cases filled with handmade craft and walls of art. Giant installations hang from the ceiling and local artists are encouraged to display their handmade work throughout the year. The airport provides an impressive number of hands-on demonstrations during Tennessee Craft Week, with a personal greeting from the TCW Honorary Chairman welcoming visitors to Nashville.

Tennessee Craft Week is a collection of craft events and happenings designed to connect and celebrate Craft Artists, the work they create and the businesses that support them. In 2017, hundreds of artists showcased their handmade crafts at 73 events across the state, including all 15 Tennessee Welcome Centers. Artists demonstrated their skills and encouraged guests to take a moment from their travels – to experience the rich tradition of crafts “[Made in Tennessee](#).”

Funding for TCW generously provided by **Metro Nashville Arts Commission, Tennessee Arts Commission, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, and Arts at the Airport.**

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Celebrating fifty years, **Tennessee Craft**, formerly The Tennessee Association of Craft Artists (TACA), is a nonprofit organization working to continue and create Tennessee’s fine craft tradition. With more than 500 members throughout the state, Tennessee Craft serves as the premier connecting point for local, independent makers and their audiences through Craft Fairs, exhibitions, professional development, networking, mentorship and other educational programs. Visit www.tennesseecraft.org to learn more.