

TENNESSEE CRAFT

Contact: Bonnie Matthews
Director of Development
615.736.7600 | bmatthews@tennesseecraft.org

Tennessee Craft Requests Proposals for New History of Black Craft Art in Tennessee

NASHVILLE, TN (May 17, 2022)—[Tennessee Craft](#) seeks proposals from qualified contractors to initiate an ongoing exploration of history of Black craftspeople and Black craft-making in Tennessee since 1920. This project is the first step in a series of actions by Tennessee Craft and our partners to re-center the efforts of Black Tennesseans in the production of handmade craft throughout the state's history. The introductory phase of our history research will contextualize the work of Black craft artists today and increase public awareness of craft produced in the past in Tennessee.

Founded in 1965, Tennessee Craft is well-known for its biannual craft fairs in Centennial Park, biennial Best of Tennessee Craft exhibition, regional chapters across the state and development opportunities for artists like mentorships, scholarships and workshops. Participation by Tennesseans of all backgrounds in the professional craft field has been uneven. This research project seeks to address the underrepresentation and/or omission of Black artists in our history and programs, in particular the historical narrative of handmade craft's reemergence via the craft school and Studio Craft movements from the 1920s forward.

Research into the continuance and transfer of craft traditions among African Americans over the course of Tennessee's history will be used to inform future public programming. The initial project will: 1) create a catalog of Black craft in Tennessee through the past century; 2) provide historical context for the work of modern Black craft artists; and 3) suggest topics for public presentation and further inquiry.

This history project will propel Tennessee Craft's efforts to:

1. Tell the stories of Black craft artists publicly to address underrepresentation and omission;
2. Build resources of information on Black craft artists for current and future work by the organization and others;
3. Create public programs to share this artwork more broadly, elevating Black craft artists;
4. Supplement the organizational history of Tennessee Craft to include diverse craft artists and craft art.

Qualified candidates should have prior professional writing and research experience and interest in this topic. The full RFP with scope of work, timeline and selection criteria is available at: tennesseecraft.org/communityengagement. The deadline for submission of proposals is Friday, July 15, 2022. The awarded contractor will be announced and work will begin in September 2022. Email bmatthews@tennesseecraft.org with questions.

###

Supported by:



This project is being supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number SLFRP5534 awarded to the State of Tennessee by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

About Tennessee Craft: Tennessee Craft, formerly The Tennessee Association of Craft Artists (TACA), works 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 tennesseecraft.org to learn more.