

TENNESSEE CRAFT

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Tennessee Craft Launches Research Project that Explores Statewide History of Black Craft

NASHVILLE, TN (September 15, 2022)—[Tennessee Craft](#) announces the start this month of a new historical research project focused on the contributions of Black craft artists in Tennessee. The initial project will build a database of Black craft artists working in the state over the past century, placing their artwork in the broader context of living and making art in Tennessee since 1920.

Tennessee Craft has named Karlota Contreras-Koterbay as the primary researcher for this initiative. Potential candidates were invited to submit proposals to Tennessee Craft through an open RFP process. An independent selection panel including Dr. Earnestine Jenkins (University of Memphis) and Dr. Tiffany Momon (University of the South in Sewanee) selected Contreras-Koterbay's proposal for funding. Dr. Jenkins said, "Karlota Contreras-Koterbay's proposal is comprehensive and well-planned. It also highlights the importance of fundamental research in this area. I think [she] will produce something of significant historical value."

Karlota I. Contreras-Koterbay is an Appalachian-based Filipinx curator, artist and arts administrator. She is the Director of the Tipton and Slocumb Galleries under the Department of Art & Design at East Tennessee State University (ETSU), where she develops diverse, innovative and collaborative exhibitions and educational programs that serve the Appalachian Highland region. She curates and organizes multidisciplinary exhibitions by regional, emerging and nationally-renowned women, BIPOC, LGBTQ and Appalachian artists. She received her Master of Art (MA) in Art History and Bachelor of Art (BA) in Anthropology with honors from the University of the Philippines—Diliman.

The general public is invited to participate in the vital work to elevate the creative accomplishments and lives of Tennessee's Black craft artists, who may have previously been overlooked or excluded from participation in prominent craft venues. The initiative covers artists working in traditional craft mediums throughout the state from 1920-2020. Recommendations of Black craft artists to include in the database can be submitted online at tennesseecraft.org/blackcraftartists.

Contreras-Koterbay anticipates a public presentation of her research in Fall 2023. Updates on the progress of the Black craft history project and important findings will be shared on Tennessee Craft's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts and via the organization's website, tennesseecraft.org. For questions or to share information, contact bmatthews@tennesseecraft.org.

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Supported by:



This project is being supported, 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.