



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Five National Leaders in Craft to Headline JRACraft's 2026 Symposium

Washington, D.C. – Five influential voices in craft will take the stage at the James Renwick Alliance for Craft's (JRACraft) Spring Craft Weekend Symposium on **Saturday, April 25** at the **Smithsonian American Art Museum**. As part of this weekend of celebration, JRACraft will honor three of these leaders with the **Master of the Medium Award**, which recognizes master craftsmanship, profound influence in their medium, and contributions to the advancement of the craft field. JRACraft will also present two **Distinguished Educator Awards**, which recognize the recipient's reputation for excellence and innovation in education, influence on the future of craft, and significant contributions to American education in the craft field. Each honoree will present, then join a lively roundtable with audience Q&A.

The 2026 Master of the Medium Honorees are:

- **Piper Shepard:** After a long teaching career at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Shepard creates studio works and architecturally sited projects that transform cloth into lace-like filigree patterns.
- **Winnie Owens-Hart:** A Howard University alumna and longtime faculty member, Owens-Hart connects ceramic traditions across the globe, particularly between Africa and the United States, through scholarship, research, and documentary filmmaking.
- **KeKe Cribbs:** Renowned for imaginative subject matter and luminous color, Cribbs is celebrated for innovative glass techniques that bring her imagery vividly to life.

The 2026 Distinguished Educator Honorees are:

- **Tom Loeser:** Loeser is recognized for his many years as an influential professor in the woodworking/furniture area at UW Madison, as well as his carved and painted one-of-a-kind functional + “dysfunctional” objects.
- **Bruce W. Pepich:** Pepich is honored for his transformative work over the past 50 years in establishing the Racine Art Museum as a leading craft institution and collection in the country.

JRACraft’s Symposium is held annually as part of its Spring Craft Weekend celebration and fundraiser, which coincides with the Smithsonian Craft Show. The Symposium is free and open to the public, reflecting JRACraft’s mission to advance public appreciation and understanding of American craft.

Spring Craft Weekend Symposium

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Saturday, April 25, 2026 | 10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Free and open to the public

Details: <https://www.jracraft.org/2026-spring-craft-weekend.html>

About The James Renwick Alliance for Craft

Through exhibitions, educational programs, and events like Spring Craft Weekend, JRACraft fosters a vibrant community of artists, scholars, and enthusiasts. Learn more at

<https://www.jracraft.org>