

Honoring **Accomplishments**

The American Craft Council
celebrates the winners
of our **2020 ACC Awards**.

WHILE SO MUCH IS ON PAUSE IN 2020, PEOPLE across the country continue to practice their crafts. Indeed, craft offers much to culture and to our lives at this time, reminding us of the importance of slowing down, reconnecting to the creative spirit, transforming raw materials into objects with beauty and meaning, and experiencing the satisfaction that comes with making things with your own hands.

So, this year it is especially meaningful to us here at the American Craft Council – the non-profit publisher of *American Craft* – to honor individuals and organizations for exceptional artistic, scholarly, and philanthropic contributions to the craft field. We are delighted to introduce you to the winners of the 2020 American Craft Council Awards in the following pages.

With this award, five accomplished makers enter the ACC's College of Fellows, which honors those who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in the field of craft for more than 25 years. These new members have been elected by their peers and other leaders in craft.

We also celebrate the Gold Medalist for Consummate Craftsmanship, a career-crowning honor reserved for a previously elected Fellow; an Honorary Fellow for scholarship; the winner of the Aileen Osborn Webb Award for Philanthropy; and the Award of Distinction, which goes to a craft museum this year.

We invite you to cozy up, make some tea, and fill your cup with inspiration as you meet this year's awardees. ~*The Editors*

Patricia Malarcher

Honorary Fellow



LEFT: A sampling of *Surface Design Journal* issues edited by Patricia Malarcher (right).



WHEN WRITER AND ARTIST Patricia Malarcher went to graduate school for art, she asked her design teacher, the painter Kenneth Noland, for some recommended reading. “I said, ‘Would you recommend a book?’ And he said, ‘There is no book.’” It was a big shock to someone who had always learned from books and words. “I just felt like I had fallen off a cliff,” she says.

Malarcher started her career in the early 1950s as an assistant editor for a magazine, so words were a big part of how she understood the world. She’d always wanted to study art, however, and she didn’t want to wait until she retired to do so. So, in 1954 she entered

graduate school, receiving an MFA from the Catholic University of America, where she studied painting.

In 1957, when her ceramics professor encouraged a visit to an exhibition of wall hangings at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, Malarcher found her true artistic passion: textiles. “When I saw them, I felt I was in love with them and that I could probably take everything I had learned about color and composition and transfer it into fabric,” she says.

In the 1960s, she completed several stitched and appliquéd liturgical commissions, and in the following decade had her work featured in solo and group exhibitions. But after reading

the book *Centering: In Pottery, Poetry, and the Person* by M.C. Richards, Malarcher felt a calling to connect her passions for words and handwork. In 1976, she started writing reviews for *Craft Horizons* and, a few years later, for *Fiber Arts*. She covered regional craft news for the *New York Times* in the 1980s and ’90s and also did about six years of doctoral work at New York University. As a 1989 Renwick Fellow, Malarcher studied why craft has been historically misunderstood, disrespected, and ignored by fine art circles – something that in recent years has changed as

galleries and museums increasingly recognize “craft” as “art.” Then, from 1993 to 2012, she served as editor of *Surface Design Journal*.

Malarcher insists that she never had a master plan for her career. Instead, she set one goal at a time, following both her inner “knowing” and serendipitous opportunities. “In the beginning, I was really moving along quite well in my journalistic career, but then I felt I really wanted to – I just felt driven to – make art part of my life. And I’ve insistently kept with that ever since, no matter what else I did in addition.”

Fuller Craft Museum

Award of Distinction

FULLER CRAFT MUSEUM in Brockton, Massachusetts, works to challenge common perceptions of craft, which it is doing, more and more, by presenting exhibitions with powerful social content.

“I feel the days of beautiful things just kept at bay are waning,” says the museum’s director, Denise Lebica, who believes objects can be conduits for understanding and dialogue.



Fuller Craft Museum staff, including director Denise Lebica (front row, in blue) and chief curator of exhibitions and collections Beth McLaughlin (front row, in plaid).