



CRAFT IN AMERICA: DEMOCRACY

New Episode Premieres on PBS Friday, December 11, 2020



[Los Angeles] – *Craft in America*, the Peabody Award-winning documentary series discovering the beauty, significance and relevance of handmade objects and the artists who make them, announces ***DEMOCRACY*** premiering on PBS Friday, December 11, 2020 at 10:00PM (check local listings). For more than a decade, *Craft in America* has taken viewers on cultural journeys across this nation, honoring the multiplicity of craft artists and exploring the dynamic evolution of contemporary craft.

In the galleries and halls of our treasured cultural institutions; in the hands of Native American, African American and Veteran artists; from Appalachia to the Rio Grande Valley; *Craft in America: DEMOCRACY* explores how craft is intertwined with our nation's defining principles. The episode begins with **Robert L. Lynch**, President of **Americans for the Arts**, who speaks to the presence of craft in U.S. history and the role of government in the arts. He also guides us through several of the significant **Washington, D.C. monuments and memorials**, highlighting their aesthetic and emotional resonance.



Calligrapher Sammy Little / photo: Denise Kang.



Artist Harvey Pratt / photo: Denise Kang

Calligrapher **Sammy Little**, who has applied her skillful hand to projects for the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian, the U.S. Supreme Court and presidential inaugurations, discusses the importance of cursive handwriting in our nation's democratic traditions and as a record of our nation's history.



The episode features several of our capitol's treasured **Smithsonian institutions**: the **National Museum of African American History & Culture (NMAAHC)**, the **Renwick Gallery**, **Smithsonian American Art Museum** and the **National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)**. NMAAHC curator Joanne Hyppolite, Ph.D., speaks on the role of craft in the African American experience and prompts a discussion of the legacy of continued racial injustice in this country. At the Renwick, we explore the *Hearts of Our People* exhibition with co-curator Teri Greeves and artist Carla Hemlock, which features art by Native American women. We also visit renowned forensic and multi-disciplinary artist and Cheyenne Peace Chief **Harvey Pratt** in his home state of Oklahoma, who is designing the **National Native American Veterans Memorial**, to be erected on the grounds of the NMAI.



Eudora Moore / photo: Courtesy of Ren Moore Kang



Berea College student making a broom / photo: Denise

At the **Veterans History Project** through the Library of Congress, we hear from several veteran artists who express themselves and their wartime experiences through craft. Finally, we see two distinct examples of democratic approaches to creativity: first, the 1972 exhibition *Islands in the Land* celebrating handcrafted objects from Appalachia and the Rio Grande Valley, organized by visionary curator **Eudora Moore**; and second, the work-study program at **Berea College**, where traditional Appalachian craft is kept alive through historic innovative programs that foster a diverse and integrated student body.

Through these examples, *Craft in America: DEMOCRACY* explores how the interaction between government and the arts inspires our lives, fuels the creative economy, and protects our multicultural heritage.

CRAFT IN AMERICA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to advancing original handcrafted work through the Peabody Award-winning documentary series on PBS nationwide and the free-to-the-public Craft in America Center in Los Angeles. With 25 episodes produced since 2007, *CRAFT IN AMERICA* takes viewers on a journey to the artists, origins and techniques of American craft. Each episode contains stories from diverse regions and cultures, blending history with living practice and exploring issues of identity, ritual, philosophy and creative expression. Our websites craftinamerica.org and pbs.org/craftinamerica provide all episodes, hundreds of online videos and interactive learning materials, as well as object exhibitions, artist information, and the Random House book *Craft in America: Celebrating Two Centuries of Artists and Objects* and other Craft in America publications.

The Craft in America Center is an exhibition and learning space in Los Angeles. We give voice to traditional and contemporary craft through artist talks, workshops, exhibits and concerts. Our reference library contains over one thousand books and videos and is free to the public. We invite you to stop in and to join us for upcoming events and exhibitions – 8415 W. Third St., Los Angeles, CA 90048.

For more about Craft in America:

craftinamerica.org
youtube.com/craftinamerica

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View the Artist Bios: craftinamerica.org/release/democracy-artist-bios
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