

CRAFT IN AMERICA

community: show me



Preview

Craft forms known to us today would not exist if it were not for the artists. For thousands of years they have carried on traditions; some remain true to long established practice while others add their own twist. In this section of Educator Guide: Community, students will learn that artists such as Mary Jackson and instructors at craft schools like Penland School of Craft have an innate desire to share what they have learned. Artists and schools like these function with the understanding that in order for craft traditions to exist in the future, they must share what they know. They must teach others.

Featured Artists

Penland School of Craft (fiber/Community)

Mary Jackson (basket maker/Memory)

Related Artists

Mira Nakashima (wood/Landscape)

Denise Wallace (jewelry/Community)

show me

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education guide information

Craft in America, Inc.

Craft In America Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the exploration of craft in the United States and its impact on our nation's cultural heritage. The centerpiece of the company's efforts is the production of a nationally broadcast television documentary series celebrating American craft and the artists who bring it to life. The project currently includes a three-part television documentary series supported by CRAFT IN AMERICA: Expanding Traditions, a nationally touring exhibition of exceptional craft objects, as well as a companion book, and a comprehensive Web site. Carol Sauvion is the founder and director of Craft in America.

Craft in America Mission Statement

The mission of Craft in America is to document and advance original handcrafted work through programs in all media made accessible to all Americans.

Craft in America: The Series

Craft in America's nationally broadcast PBS documentary series seeks to celebrate craft by honoring the artists who create it. In three episodes entitled Memory, Landscape and Community, Craft in America television viewers will travel throughout the United States visiting America's premier craft artists in their studios to witness the creation of hand-made objects, and into the homes, businesses and public spaces where functional art is employed and celebrated. The primary objective of the series is to convey to a national audience the breadth and beauty of handmade objects in our culture.

Viewing the Series

Craft in America may be taped off the air and used for educational purposes at no cost for one year from the date of the first national broadcast—May 30, 2007. Check local PBS station listings as broadcast times may vary.



Ordering the DVD and Companion Book

For long-term viewing and in-classroom use, the Craft in America: The series enhanced format DVD may be purchased through PBS Video, 1-800-752-9727, or www.shoppbs.com/teachers

To order the companion book, CRAFT IN AMERICA Celebrating Two Centuries of Artists and Objects contact 1-800-424-7963 or www.shoppbs.com/teachers

Audience

Craft in America is produced for a public television audience. Companion Educator Guides written for teachers support each of the three episodes—Memory, Landscape and Community. These guides are intended primarily for use with middle and high school students; however, the content can be adapted for students of all ages and for use in other educational settings.

education guide information

Craft in America Educator Guides

Three Educator Guides have been designed to accompany Craft in America. Each guide—Memory, Landscape and Community—relate to and reflect the core ideas, artists, and art forms presented in the corresponding series episode. The themes presented in each guide allow additional entry points into the material found in the three episodes.

How to Use the Guides

The material presented in the three Craft in America Educator Guides is organized into thematic groupings and written to support middle and high school art education curricula. Teachers are encouraged to use the content as presented or to enhance and further their established programs of study. The guides can also be adapted for use in other subject areas. The primary purpose of the guides is to deepen students' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of craft in America.

Scope and Sequence

The three thematic Educator Guides—Memory, Landscape and Community—can be used in whatever sequence is appropriate. The guides can be used independently or sequentially. Time for each suggested activity will vary depending on the depth of inquiry.

Each theme within an Educator Guide features the following components:

Preview

A brief overview of the theme and related activities

Featured Artists

Each theme features two artists, one of whom is highlighted in the related episode

Related Artists

In addition to featured artists, each theme references at least two other artists whose work illustrates the theme

Background Information

An introduction to the theme, the featured artists, and their connection to the broader world of craft, intended for teacher use

Craft in Action

Provides questions for the teacher to use with students prior to and following viewing of the DVDs

Craft in the Classroom

Suggested activities for exploring and investigating key concepts and opportunities for art making and reflection

Worksheets

Support selected activities

The Educator Guides are designed to complement the series, but there are additional resources available on the Craft in America Web site that can be used by both teachers and students. It is recommended that teachers preview materials on the DVD and Web site prior to introducing the theme to students.

SHOW ME

“ People are interacting all the time and learning from each other. The people that are accomplished learn from the people that want to be accomplished and vice versa. ”

Anne Gould Hauberg

We are all part of a community of learners. From reciting our ABCs to throwing a baseball and learning how to drive, we are constantly being taught by someone how to do something. The things we are taught can be, and often are, simple and practical; yet as we move through life, those simple and practical lessons learned help shape and define who we are. Think back—can you calculate the number of things you have been taught from others throughout the course of your life? Sometimes we do remember who taught us how to read, throw or drive. However, there are so many things we have learned along the way that we often cannot remember who taught them to us. Yet somehow, someone did teach us, and we learned things because someone took the time to show us. to show us.

Undeniably, there are many types of teachers and diverse contexts in which we learn. Our first and often most important teachers are, of course, our parents, siblings, and families. The magnitude of what we learn from them is incalculable and has a profound, ongoing impact on our lives. The most recognizable teachers are the ones who teach within the formal education system in classrooms across the nation. Every day, they work to help expand their students' knowledge and understanding of defined areas of content to help build an educated citizenry. There are the coaches, program leaders and instructors in various settings throughout the community who teach us how to swim, tie knots, and play guitar, each one a specialist willing to share his or her knowledge and experience with others. Additionally, for better or worse, we are taught informally by our friends, the World Wide Web, television, books, magazines, incidents in the school yard, and ourselves.

In the world of craft, teaching takes on many forms and can occur in communities or be initiated by individuals. Regardless of how the craft is taught, what is important is that the craft artists pass on knowledge, skills, and traditions. They want others to learn, to carry on the tradition. And thus, the tradition continues. This is the way it has been for generations, for centuries, for thousands of years.



Shoko Teruyama at Penland School of Crafts, Jennifer Gerardi Photography



Jennifer Gerardi Photography

Penland School of Crafts

Founded in 1923, Penland, North Carolina

Located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina

Founded by Lucy Morgan as a way to teach women of the region weaving to generate additional income for their families—women became known as the Penland Weavers

Local men built looms and women wove items at home to be sold at fairs and mountain resorts

When demand for instruction grew, the Weaving Cabin, still in use on Penland's campus today, was built

Upon opening, the school began raising money to buy property and construct buildings; craft forms other than weaving were incorporated into the curriculum

Currently consists of nearly 400 acres and forty-one structures

Over 1,200 people come each year to work in ten craft art forms, including book arts, clay, metals, wood, and, of course, weaving

Penland School of Craft in western North Carolina is a community of learners where everyone is also a teacher. Started in 1923 by Miss Lucy Morgan, over the past seventy-five years Penland has matured into a thriving school of traditional craft where artists seek to further their knowledge, understanding, and practice of their art forms. The collaborative nature of the school, combined with the more than fifty craft studios in the area, makes for a fertile learning environment. With students ranging in age from nineteen to more than eighty working side by side, students teach each other through mentoring, collaboration, and "cooperative competition."

While some artists prefer to work on their own, at Penland there is a genuine interest and enthusiasm for collaboration, for teaching and learning from one another. There is also a profound understanding of both the effect the work has on the maker and the objects produced. The school is at its base a community of craftspeople teaching, supporting, and encouraging each other. Experiences there can be, in a quiet yet profound way, life-changing; most importantly, each artist learns the value of teaching others.



Amy Putansu with her class at Penland School of Crafts, Jennifer Gerardi Photography



Jennifer Gerardi Photography

Mary Jackson

Born 1945, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

First taught at the age of four to make sweetgrass baskets by her grandmother and mother, who learned from their mothers and grandmothers

Jackson returned to basketmaking in 1983. Makes baskets from sweetgrass, a plant named for the sweet smell of its reeds, indigenous to the coastal lowlands of South Carolina

Traditional techniques for weaving sweetgrass baskets come from the coast of West Africa, where the slave trade originated—Jackson's slave ancestors brought the craft form to America

Baskets and basket weavers were essential to plantations

Baskets were used to hold rice, cotton and other harvested crops

Basket business is family affair—Jackson's husband and son gather the sweetgrass from local marshes, while her daughter handles administrative tasks

Granddaughter now learning to make baskets

Her baskets owned by Prince Charles and the Empress of Japan

As children, we are taught many things by our parent and families. Sometimes we are ready and willing to learn what is being taught; other times, we resist. Why we resist some things and not others is often hard to determine. For African-American weaver Mary Jackson, basket making was a summertime family tradition. When she was a child, her whole family would gather following chores to make bulrush and sweetgrass baskets. Her parents would teach her basic traditional designs and techniques. But, despite their efforts, Jackson did not take to weaving. It was not until later in life that she returned to the basketmaking traditions of her childhood and began to fully understand the personal historical significance of the craft.

With a sick son at home, Jackson returned to making baskets and was overwhelmed by the response to her work. She soon realized that she could draw on the rich tradition that her people had preserved for over 300 years to create her own unique sculptural works. What she once resisted, Jackson was now ready to embrace. From then on, Jackson understood the importance of teaching this traditional art form; she has committed herself to making baskets and teaching the craft to her children and grandchildren to ensure that they carry on this tradition, so deeply rooted in their ancestry. From mother to daughter to granddaughter, each woven basket carries the signature of multiple generations. Jackson takes pride in teaching her family, in passing on her knowledge by showing them the ways of the past and present so they can develop their own signatures with which to stamp their examples of this ancestral work. For Jackson, her craft is firmly rooted in her cultural community, and teaching others ensures that the tradition will continue.



Mary Jackson, Cobra Basket with Handle



George Nakashima, Seltie, Philadelphia Museum of Art; Gift of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum, 2004; 2001-111-2

The Craft Connection

Craft forms known to us today would not exist if it were not for the artists. For thousands of years they have carried on traditions; some remain true to long established practice, while others add their own twist. In both instances, artists understand their materials, are masters of their techniques, and have developed unique visions in order to make beautiful objects. But all artists take things a step further when they are willing to teach others what they know. Craft artists such as those at Penland School of Craft and Mary Jackson have an innate desire to share what they have learned, understanding that sharing is necessary if craft traditions are to endure. Teaching allows them to give back what was given to them when they were starting out. This, ultimately, is what makes the world of craft truly unique.

Craft in Action

Setup

Have students come to class prepared to teach another student something they know how to do. For example, one student might teach another how to throw a football, fold an origami crane, knit, do a card trick, play hacky sack, juggle, use a camera, pound a nail, etc. The skill taught should be fairly simple; each student should be able to teach his skill in five minutes or less.

Discuss

Randomly pair students and allow ten minutes total (five minutes each) for your students to teach their skills to one another. When they are finished, have them complete the learner and teacher sections of the Show Me worksheet (Community: Show Me Worksheet #1).

Engage students in a conversation about how people learn, where learning takes place, and what things are easy to learn and hard learn. Ask: *Why are some things easier to learn than others? How did you learn and master what you just taught your classmate?*

Help students understand that there are many ways to learn and many contexts for learning. For example, school is a formal context for learning; family members showing other family members or friends would be informal.

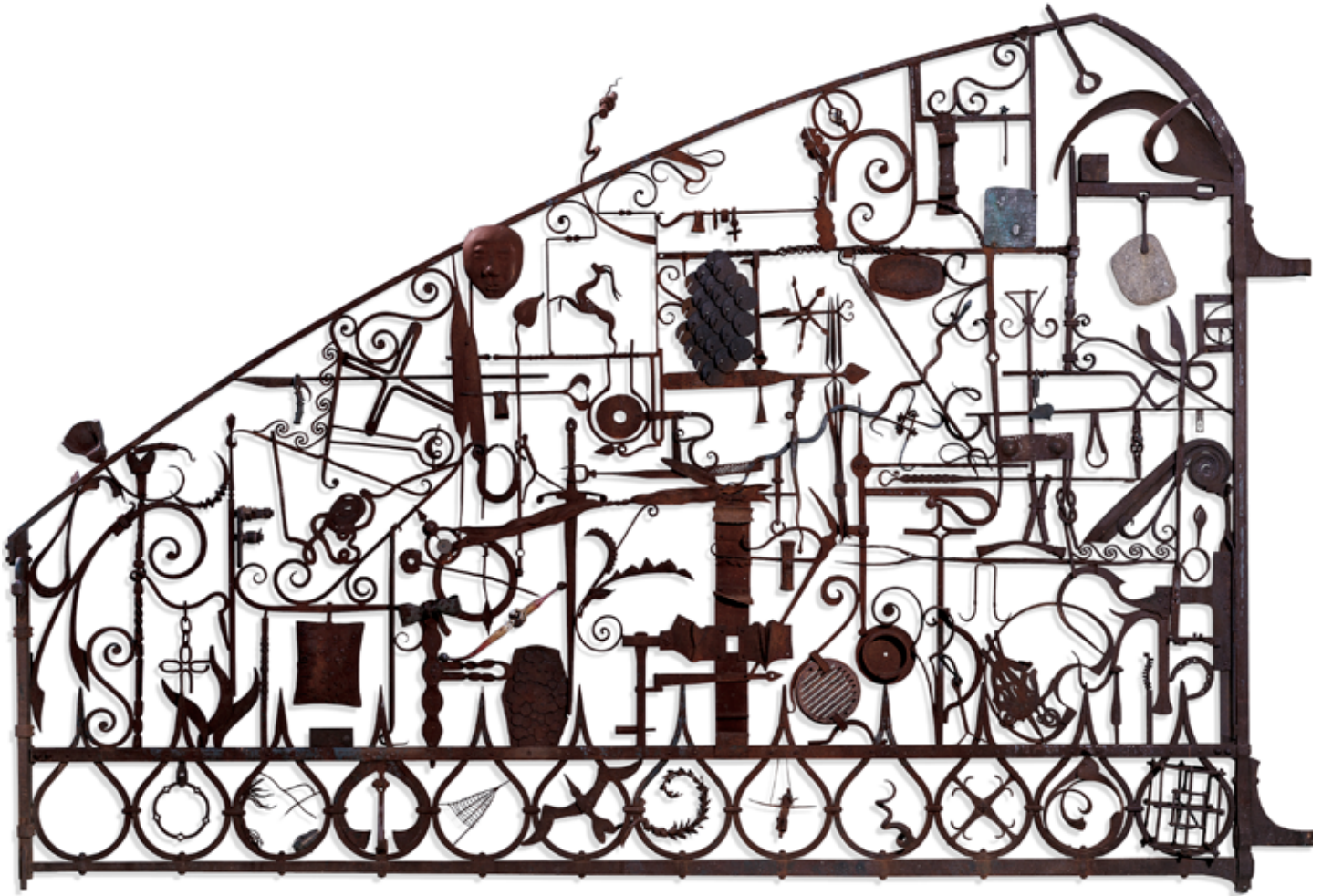
View

Craft artists learn their art forms in different ways. View the DVD segments featuring Mary Jackson and Penland School of Craft. Have students watch for different contexts in which people are learning.

After viewing, discuss the segments. *Who were the teachers? Who were the learners? Have you ever wanted to learn something and sought out a special class, school or camp? How was that experience like what you saw happening at Penland? Have you ever learned something from a family member, something that has been passed down, such as woodworking, sewing, making preserves? How did that person learn how to it?* Discuss why this makes the world of craft so unique and how teaching within families (Jackson) or a particular culture or community (Penland) has kept craft traditions going for thousands of years.



Talia Wight (left) and Sylvia McIntyre-Crook working on a "rams's horn" at Penland School of Crafts, Jennifer Gerardi Photography



Penland School of Crafts, Iron Studio Gate, 2000, David Ramsey Photography

Craft in the Classroom

Explore

View additional DVD and Web site segments on Penland School of Craft and Mary Jackson.

Explore

Examine DVD or Web site segments for other artists and art forms that explore the theme Show Me. *How do these artists teach their art forms?* Compare and contrast Mira Nakashima (wood/Landscape) and Denise Wallace (jewelry/Community) with Penland School of Craft and Mary Jackson. Who is teaching whom?

Investigate

Working individually or in pairs, have students investigate the history of Gullah baskets using the Investigating Gullah Baskets worksheet (Community: Show Me Worksheet #2). Then, as a group, have students create a visual timeline depicting changes to Gullah baskets over time. Students can include their own sketches, images they found during their research, interesting facts, samples of materials, images about the process, etc.

Investigate

In small groups, have students do a Web search to find out more about craft schools. Possible schools to investigate include Rhode Island School of Design, California College of the Arts, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Rochester Institute of Technology School for American Crafts, Black Mountain College, and Penland School of Crafts. Ask them to consider these questions as they search: *How and why did each school evolve? How are various craft forms taught—in workshops, by guest artists, through individual instruction, etc.?* Then, engage students in a class discussion about what they discovered. *What do all these schools have in common? What makes each one unique?*

Make

Origins and Traditions

Using the Craft in America Web site and other resources, have students investigate the history of selected craft forms (clay, metal, wood, fiber, and glass). Have them answer the question: How have the traditions and techniques used by craft artists within each art form been passed down? Have them look at other artists, including Sam Maloof and Tom Joyce, to see how each teaches others. When their research is complete, have students create PowerPoint® presentations on the art forms studied.

Certain cultures are known for their mastery and understanding of particular craft forms: Wasco or Gullah basketry, Persian rug making, African textiles and wood carving, and Mexican weaving are just a few examples. Have students choose a cultural craft tradition to investigate. Questions to guide their investigation might include: What are the origins of this craft? Why is it specific to this one culture or region? How has it changed over time? How has the tradition been carried on from one generation to the next? When students have completed their research, have them create a PowerPoint® presentation about the various traditions.

As students work on their presentations, display a large world map in the classroom where they can indicate with images where each art form or tradition investigated comes from and how these traditions, in some cases, have made their way to other countries. Link all of the presentations together to create a loop; make this part of a display during a public event such as the school fine arts show. Display the map with the PowerPoint® presentation. Have students show others some of the craft traditions represented, and emphasize the importance of teaching one another.

Reflect

Using pre-made paper have students make a concertina (accordion) book using as a place for reflecting on what they have learned. Have them illustrate and write about the craft form or cultural tradition each investigated in the Origins and Traditions activity. They should reflect on what they have learned, making the book into a visual record of the craft's origin or tradition. The books can be embellished with images, fragments, photos, text, and other materials to create a visual journal.

Craft in Your World

Where is craft taught in your community? Have students look at various schools, fairs, living history museums, church bazaars, and youth organizations (e.g., Scouts, 4-H, etc.).

Who teaches craft in your community? Invite local craftspeople to speak to students about how they learned their art forms and where the traditions started. Take the information gathered, and have students create a resource list that can be made available to other students and community members. Ask the local Chamber of Commerce to post the list on their Web site.

Name _____

Date _____

Community: Show Me Worksheet #1–Show Me

As learner...

I learned how to...

I felt...

I wondered...

I found it easy to....

I found it hard to ...

Something that I never knew before....

Name _____

Date _____

Community: Show Me Worksheet #1–Show Me

As a teacher...

I taught...

I felt...

I wondered...

I found it easy to....

I found it hard to ...

Something that I never knew before....

Name _____

Date _____

Community: Show Me Worksheet #2—Investigating Gullah Baskets

Investigate the history of the Gullah sweetgrass baskets. Answer the questions below in the space provided.

What does Gullah mean?

Why did the Gullah make sweetgrass baskets?

Who made these baskets in the past? Who makes them today?

What materials have been used by the Gullah to make their baskets?

How are they made? Describe the various techniques used by the Gullah to make their baskets.

How have the basket forms changed from the earliest baskets made to more recent baskets?

Why have the basket forms changed over time?

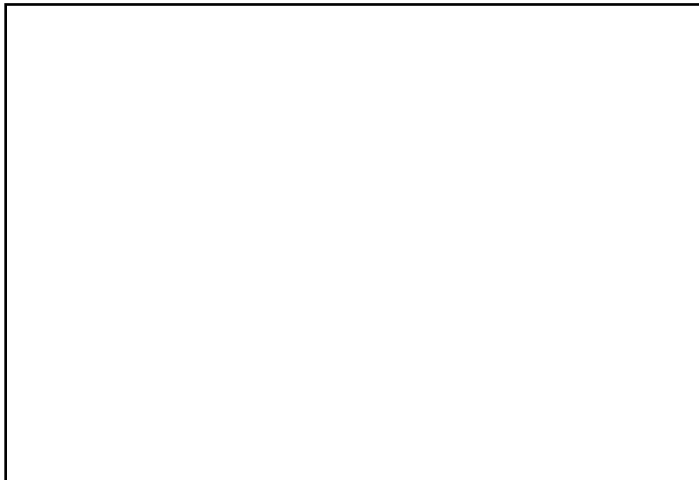
How is the tradition passed down from one generation to the next?

Name _____

Date _____

Community: Show Me Worksheet #2—Investigating Gullah Baskets

In the space below or on another sheet of paper, sketch a historical Gullah basket and a contemporary version. Include as many details as possible.



Historical



Contemporary

additional web resources

American Craft Council
<http://www.craftcouncil.org/>

Smithsonian Archives for American Art
<http://archivesofamericanart.si.edu/exhibits/pastexhibits/craft/craft.htm>

Museum of Arts and Design, NYC (formerly the American Craft Museum)
<http://www.madmuseum.org>

Museum of Craft and Folk Art, San Francisco
<http://www.mocfa.org/>

Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles
<http://www.cafam.org/current.html>

Featured and Related Artists

Einar and Jamex de la Torre
<http://www.delatorrebros.com/>
<http://artscenecal.com/ArticlesFile/Archive/Articles2005/Articles1105/EJdelaTorreA.html>

Mary Jackson
<http://www.southernaccents.com/accents/artandantiques/art/article/0,14743,344632,00.html>
<http://www.craftsreport.com/november01/mary.html>
<http://www.scafricanamericanhistory.com/currenthonoree.asp?month=1&year=1995>

Mississippi Cultural Crossroads
<http://www.ms-culturalcrossroads.org/>
<http://www.win.net/~kudzu/crossroa.html>

Richard Notkin
<http://www.ceramicstoday.com/potw/notkin.htm>
<http://www.plasm.com/cana/CBCeramics/Ceramics/Friends/Notkin/Notkin.html>
<http://www.archiebray.org/residents/notkin/index.html>

Penland School of Crafts
<http://www.penland.org/>
www.mintmuseum.org/penland/

Pilchuck School of Glass
<http://www.pilchuck.com/default.htm>
<http://www.artistcommunities.org/pilchuck.html>

additional web resources

Art Forms

Book Arts

Book Arts Web
The Center for Book Arts
Book Arts Guild
Projet Mobilivre/Bookmobile Project

<http://www.philobiblon.com/>
<http://www.centerforbookarts.org/>
<http://bookartsguild.org/>
<http://www.mobilivre.org/>

Ceramics

American Ceramic Society
Ceramics Today

<http://www.ceramics.org/>
<http://www.ceramicstoday.com/>

Fibers

All Fiber Arts
Handweavers Guild of America
National Basketry Organization
PBS's The Art of Quilting Series

<http://www.allfiberarts.com/>
<http://www.weavespindye.org/>
<http://www.nationalbasketry.org/>
<http://www.pbs.org/americaquilts/>

Glass

Glass Art Society
Contemporary Glass Society (UK)
Stained Glass Association of America

<http://www.glassart.org/>
<http://www.cgs.org.uk>
<http://www.stainedglass.org/>

Metals

Anvil Fire
Lapidary Journal
Art Metal
Metal Arts Guild of San Francisco
Society of American Silversmiths

<http://www.anvilfire.com/>
<http://www.lapidaryjournal.com/>
<http://www.artmetal.com/>
<http://www.metalartsguildsf.org/>
<http://www.silversmithing.com/>

Paper

Hand Papermaking
International Association of
Hand Papermakers and Paper Artists

<http://www.handpapermaking.org/>
<http://www.iapma.info/>

Wood

Woodworkers Website Association
Fine Woodworking
Wood Magazine

<http://www.woodworking.org/>
<http://www.taunton.com/finewoodworking/>
<http://www.woodmagazine.com/>

National Visual Art Standards

ArtsEdge, Kennedy Center

<http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm>

Credits & Copyright

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