



African American

Craft Initiative

Think Tank

May 25-27, 2021

SMITHSONIAN  
CENTER FOR  
**FOLKLIFE**  
& CULTURAL  
HERITAGE

Think Tank Report • Summer 2021

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Cover image: A young man works a printing press during a workshop hosted by Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts. Photo courtesy of Nick DeFord



Bib & Tucker Sew-Op students show off their hand-sewn pillows and bags. Photo courtesy of Viola Ratcliffe

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The African American Think Tank, taking place virtually between May 25–27, 2021, was the second in the series of three convenings organized as part of the African American Craft Initiative (AACI). The Think Tank considered ways in which African American organizations can best support makers, their communities, and each other. Given the unique ability African American organizations have to bridge the gap between African American makers and communities, and the broader craft community, participants were able to discuss the successes and challenges they face in accomplishing their missions as well as how they gather and disseminate information about the history and ongoing presence of African American craft.

Thirty-five leaders of African American organizations attended the three Think Tank group sessions. Those in attendance hailed from craft and activist collectives, galleries, small businesses, cultural centers, and museums. They were thought leaders, podcasters, educators, scholars, arts administrators, entrepreneurs, and artists. Curators Dr. Aaron Bryant and Dr. JoAnne Hyppolite from the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and Haili Frances, major gift officer at the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, moderated the sessions.

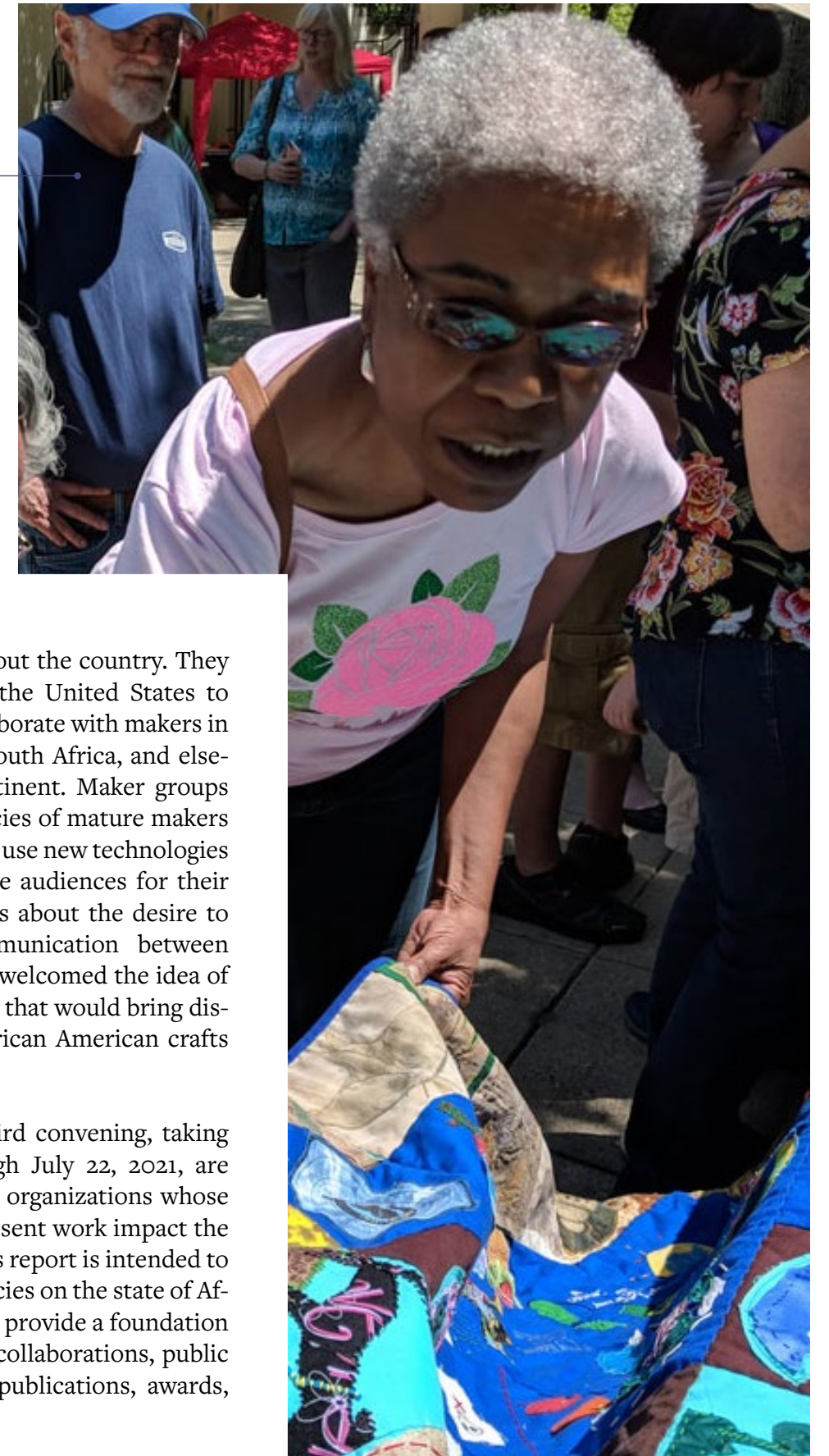
Our AACI team emailed a survey to representatives from several African American organizations to gauge interest and to assess needs of potential attendees. Equipped with this information and with the results from the African American Maker Summit in October 2020, we were able to propose themes and moderator questions for the three meetings that constituted the Think Tank.

African American craft organizations attending the Think Tank tended to be gendered, skewed toward female-identifying groups. The collectives

tended to be siloed by generation as well. At the same time, as in the summit, Think Tank attendees emphasized that youth engagement in craft is essential to guaranteeing cultural sustainability for African American crafts. Major takeaways included calls to involve more youth uncovering their heritage. Several participants wanted to see more training, intergenerational mentoring, apprenticeship opportunities that would encourage young people to learn craft. Maker groups called for greater access to funding and for residencies run by and for African Americans.

Additionally, the Think Tank discussions highlighted the sheer numbers of African Americans interested and involved in craft organizations as makers, scholars, entrepreneurs, educators, and social activists. Especially in the wake of COVID-19, many groups have increased their online presence and their reach, finding creative ways to support interest and involvement in craft and their organizations. African American-led humanities projects are uncovering the rich history of the artisans of African descent during captivity. Maker groups are gathering in conferences and creating podcasts and collectively ex-

A woman admires a quilt sewn at a Bib & Tucker Sew-Op workshop. Photo courtesy of Viola RatCliffe



hibiting at venues throughout the country. They are also reaching beyond the United States to learn from, teach, and collaborate with makers in Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, and elsewhere on the African continent. Maker groups seek to document the legacies of mature makers and to teach makers how to use new technologies and platforms to widen the audiences for their work. There was consensus about the desire to expand avenues of communication between groups. Many in the group welcomed the idea of an event or series of events that would bring disparate segments of the African American crafts community together.

The participants in the third convening, taking place from July 20 through July 22, 2021, are representatives of national organizations whose histories, missions, and present work impact the field of American craft. This report is intended to inform all three constituencies on the state of African American craft and to provide a foundation for future work, including collaborations, public programming, exchanges, publications, awards, and other work.

## BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the work of African American makers in the American craft community has been minimized, dismissed, or ignored by art historians, folklorists, and cultural heritage institutions. Over the past five years, however, African American makers, historians, and craft organizations have been pushing for greater recognition and documentation of their work and impact on American craft.

We began the African American Craft Initiative in October 2020 during the first year of the COVID pandemic and just five months after the on-screen murder of George Floyd shocked so much of the United States—and the world—into recognizing the deeply entrenched nature of systemic racism in the nation. Dr. Diana Baird N’Diaye, AACI founder and curator, noted the disproportionate ways in which African American makers were affected by these “dual pandemics” following discussions within her own network of African American artists and makers. The persistent misconception among craft organizations, galleries, and museums that there are very few African American makers leads these spaces to only showcase a select few individuals repeatedly, perpetuating the sidelining and downplaying of African American makers and their contribution to the American craft community.

In the wake of COVID, the word “pivot” became part of all our everyday vocabularies as we struggled to cope with the changes foisted upon us individually and collectively. The initiative was born out of a pivot from another project, the Crafts of African Fashion, that was set to launch in Senegal during the 2020 art biennale, *DakArt*, before all in-person events went into involuntary hibernation. Between pivoting and reflecting on community, craft, and engagement, the AACI team recognized it was time to engage with the African American craft community more deeply,

to highlight the work and voices of makers and organizations, and to address the deep inequity that runs through American craft.

### African American Craft Initiative

While historians, art critics, and folklorists began to study African American crafts in the late twentieth century, notably in the 1960s and 1970s during the civil rights movement, their focus was largely confined to textile arts, basketry, blacksmithing, and other heritage arts, restricting access to opportunities for funding and exhibitions for contemporary makers working in other genres and contexts. The resulting limited understanding of the range, diversity, and culture-based aesthetics leads to fewer opportunities and access to resources for African American makers.

One year after historian Tiffany Momon created the Black Craftspeople Digital Archive in 2019 at Duke University, the Smithsonian launched the African American Craft Initiative, a project that aims to identify and support the educational, programmatic, and financial needs of the Black craft community. Building on the legacy of the National African American Crafts Conference and Jubilee in Memphis, Tennessee, in May 1979, the initiative articulates three main goals:

- Improve and increase research and documenta-



A young woman works on a project as part of *We Wield the Hammer*, a metalsmith training program led by Karen Smith. Photo courtesy of Karen Smith

tion of African American makers and their craft

- Create new and renew networks linking African American makers to support organizations
- Increase public awareness of African American craft

Through collaborative research, documentation, and programming, the initiative is identifying, creating, and nurturing new models for a cultural ecology of craft production and learning. The initiative also aims to increase opportunities for connection and exchange between makers in the United States, Africa, and the diaspora.

As a first step, the initiative created a database of makers and organizations in order to better understand the breadth and depth of the African American craft community across the United States. Researching the demographics and craft practices of makers as well as the variety of craft-based organizations, the initiative developed a continuously growing database of over 500 community members.

The first two AACI convenings were conversations with African Americans individual makers (the Makers Summit) and craft organizations (the Think Tank). Our intent in those meetings was to assess the craft landscape through the lens of African American makers, to develop networks, and assess needs from a perspective of African American agency. We also wanted to document the scope of the African American presence in contemporary craft.

### African American Makers Summit

The AACI team hosted the African American Craft Summit in October 2020 to discuss the past, present, and future of African American craft with makers from across the country and to include a variety of craft traditions outside of heritage arts. AACI’s research and the contacts have revealed a much larger African American craft presence than we even expected. The AACI database is poised to develop meaningful collaborations and connections among makers and organizations.

## THINK TANK METHODOLOGY

Informed by the groundwork of this first convening, we organized a series of meetings for the AACI Think Tank, held from May 25–27, 2021, to facilitate conversations about the ways in which organizations can best support makers and their communities while also addressing the unique challenges they face. Organization leaders helped develop a list of issues that the African American craft community faces as well as next steps that can be taken by museums, galleries, national craft organizations, and funding institutions to better support the financial and programmatic needs of the African American craft community.

In preparation for the Think Tank and the broader work of the Initiative, AACI identified African American makers and craft organization leaders and collected initial research related to African American craft organizations, art schools, makers, activists, and others. This work drew heavily from the database of African American makers, curators, scholars, and educators collected during the Makers Summit. A few of the summit participants were also able to participate in the Think Tank as organizational leaders.

The participating organizations spanned the country geographically and represented a variety of African American craft-related constituencies. They represented museums, galleries, schools, and design studios that focus on African American craft and art, allowing the AACI team to better understand the role they hold in the more “traditional” art institution space. Representatives were also selected from African American community organizations, collectives, and cultural centers in order to capture the perspectives of more community-based, grassroots organizations. Adding a third dimension to the conversations, the Think Tank provided space for representatives from craft-specific guilds and organizations to speak to the successes, road-

blocks, and interests of their stakeholders in their respective craft fields.

To gauge the interests of the African American craft organization community, the team developed an online interest survey. It collected data related to interest in discussing the needs of the African American craft community and identified key topics that they hoped would be discussed in the Think Tank, including financial needs for opportunities such as residencies. Based on feedback from craft organizations and makers, the AACI team isolated central discussion topics.

The resulting agenda and conversations focused on the foundations of craft, the legacy of African American craft organizations, and the major challenges they have had to overcome. They also focused on mapping the present, notably the general landscape for makers and organizations that are responding to current social issues. The sessions ended with discussions of the future, including goals for programming and partnerships and necessary changes within African American craft in the next five years. The discussions pointed to positive indicators of growth, accompanying roadblocks, and the desired outcomes and lasting effects for African American craft

Weaving workshop  
hosted by AKOMA Detroit.  
Photo courtesy of  
Mandisa Smith



organizations and makers along with resource requirements.

The Think Tank took place over the course of three days, broken into three two-hour Zoom sessions, with a total of thirty-five representatives from organizations across the country. By dividing the participants into smaller groups, the team ensured more intimate discussions about the craft community and allowed moderators to home in on key points participants brought up in their sessions.

Through robust conversations, participants focused on involving younger generations in crafting, documenting elder makers and their impact on the American craft community, and using history to guide craft traditions, programming, and more. Participants were able to draw upon their organizations’ experiences to express the needs of the African American craft community and what must be done to better support makers and the vitality of African American craft.

## DISCUSSION THEMES

The agenda for each Think Tank discussion session was divided into three themes: Foundations, Mapping the Present, and Envisioning Change/Future. The themes followed the same framework used during the Maker Summit, and as many of the representatives from the organizations are makers themselves, their perspectives often vacillated between maker and organization representative. Additionally, while each group followed the same agenda, they all developed their dialogues in different directions, producing a variety of ideas for the greater AACI.

### THEME ONE

Foundations: What is African American craft in the twenty-first century?

Throughout the sessions, many makers had varying perspectives of what African American craft is in the twenty-first century; however, there was consensus regarding the importance of understanding craft as a versatile art form. This was made blatantly clear as the makers introduced themselves, and no two makers specialized in the same craft. Even if the crafts were kindred, makers used it differently to help their community.

Crafting is an art form deeply rooted within the African American community. Many makers who founded crafting organizations were introduced to craft in childhood or through apprenticeships or residencies, yet there is a constant concern for the future of crafting within the African American community. The organizations are questioning how crafting traditions carry on if the younger generation is not interested in crafting. This is a main reason why many of the crafting organizations were founded: to uphold the African American heritage and teach these meaningful skills.

As artist and founder of Women of Color Quilters Network Carolyn Mazloomi stated, “How do you get someone to love their heritage? They only look forward to the money and not back at their history.” There is now a greater need to show African American youth financially stable avenues into crafting because this is a main factor that discourages them from continuing a career in craft. This forced organizations to look at their work and see how they can confront the issue.



Step Afrika! performs at the National Black Arts Festival. Photo courtesy of Stephanie Owens

### THEME TWO

Mapping the Present: How are organizations responding to current social issues?

Social justice issues such as systemic racism, sexism, and environmental injustice were recurring themes throughout the sessions. Another recurring theme was the need to increase access to resources (e.g., funding, residencies, and educational opportunities). Makers such as Corey Pemberton felt as though current events were causing “many [white-led and majority white] organizations and institutions to do social justice-oriented work for the optics of it.” Pemberton expressed his optimism that “a lot of the organizations in this room will continue to put in the work long after the headlines are faded from the newspapers.” Others noted the skepticism among the makers because many have been fighting to better sustain the African American crafting community. They questioned whether national organizations would sustain their social justice work or if their “allyship activism” is only performative.

Participants spoke about how African American makers within white-majority organizations felt isolated and overlooked due to the lack of proper representation for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) crafters in museums/

galleries, publications, and other professional environments. To combat these feelings, BIPOC crafters and organization leaders are left with the only choice of adapting to the limiting systems at great personal expense. Many makers, therefore, founded collectives and other groups to counter the isolation.

COVID-19 has also shaped many of the ways organizations look to expand their businesses and reach, turning to multiple platforms to attract a wider audience. Using social media platforms, apps, websites, and other online communities, organizations are working to create safe spaces for African American crafters. These spaces have not only allowed them to chat about current events affecting their community but also helped many to network and collaborate with one another. These online groups introduce makers to bigger communities, including African American organizations that participated in the Think Tank. These new networks have and will hopefully continue to lead to more funding, education, and opportunities that would not have otherwise been accessible.





An intergenerational group attends Art in the Park-Eco-Printing. Photo courtesy of Mandisa Smith

### THEME THREE

#### Envisioning Change: How can we reimagine a more equitable craft society?

One goal of the Think Tank was to draw out ideas for broader institutional support. Participants discussed the potential role of craft organizations and museums in expanding visibility and access. They noted that partnering with museums is not the only way to gain visibility and representation, but it does help tremendously with exposure and can lead to funding, residencies, and educational opportunities. Participants also emphasized putting the responsibility of increasing visibility not solely on museums, but also on African American craft organizations themselves, ideally creating more residencies and funding opportunities by and for African American makers. Some brought the conversations back to youth and the responsibility of promoting education of craft traditions and opportunities to build enthusiasm within that demographic.

Organization leaders noted the need for documentation, apprenticeship, and access to information, which would help their own stakeholders and, hopefully, the practices of young makers to come. All the participants acknowledged that their skills or success must be shared with youth, emphasizing that crafting has such a huge community that is forever evolving and cannot continue without the next generation of Black makers to push it forward.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the Think Tank, the initiative team compiled a list of recommendations based on suggestions put forth during the meetings. The needs of the African American craft community are diverse, but many participants had overlapping concerns and solutions, providing a solid basis for discussions, planning, and programming. Unsurprisingly, the often-dual lens of maker and organization leader created significant overlap in the recommendations of the Think Tank participants and the recommendations that came out of the Maker Summit. The continuity of visions for a more equitable craft community across the makers and the organizations is a positive sign.

Below, we highlight some direct suggestions that organizations would like the Initiative to address, organized by theme. The initiative will work with partner organizations to develop action plans and accountability frameworks to address and build upon the key takeaways and recommendations.

### Institutional and Organizational Recognition and Support

Many organizations agreed that African American makers and organizations need to be included in funding discussions, review committees, and boards for larger crafting organizations. A system needs to be put in place to allow African American makers and organizations access to funding opportunities given by various institutions. More support networks should be accessible to future African American makers through mentorship opportunities between young and elder makers. African American crafting organizations should host residencies for African American makers.

### Markets, Resources, and Entrepreneurship

Participants emphasized the importance of creating workshops on how to better assert the worth of their work as artists and how to use that to

price their products. There is still a need for the Smithsonian and other established institutions to provide welcoming spaces for workshops, exhibitions, and sales. Additionally, they must create more opportunities to document elder makers and their crafting traditions, notably through oral history, work, and museum exhibitions.

### Community Building, Networking, and Social Media Platforms

Organizations discussed ways to help makers through establishing workshops for documenting craft and promoting each other through social media. They can connect with each other to create programs and expose more African American youth to the history and works of crafting. These actions will give young people the encouragement to pursue a career in crafting while also learning what different avenues of craft exist through education in schools.

## CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

The Think Tank, like the Makers Summit, was an opportunity to hear from African American organizations about their resources and concerns and to learn more about the rich creativity, skills, and knowledge that exist within the African American craft community writ large.

This community of practice is diverse, multi-generational, international, and multi-gendered. African Americans are deeply engaged across the range of craft media, processes, techniques, and styles—working in both heritage-based arts such as quilting and pottery and in experimental combinations that include performance, installation, and digital media. African American organizations represented at the Think Tank ran the gamut from collectives, support groups, and podcasters to museums that acquire, document, and exhibit the craft work of African American makers, HBCUs, and digital humanities projects. Notably missing were artist residencies and schools specializing in African American craft.

In the next steps for the initiative, we will continue to expand the database of African American makers, organizations, and resources and to make the information we collect available to our constituencies. The AACI team will combine all the feedback and information from the Summit

and the Think Tank to develop a resource packet and body of documentation regarding the landscape of African American craft in the United States. Using this information, AACI hosts the Craft Institution Consortium in July 2021 with national craft institutions to discuss ways in which they can address equity and improve engagement with African American makers and organizations.

Following the consortium, the initiative seeks to facilitate collaborations, partnerships, and further communication between African American makers, groups, and national organizations. We hope this will lead to more equitable representation of African American in the craft community and greater recognition of a wider range of African American makers. We also plan to create and strengthen our own capacity to support and present African American crafts through our own partnerships and public programs.



Viola Ratcliffe presents at a Bib & Tucker Sew-Op workshop.  
Photo courtesy of Viola Ratcliffe

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Think Tank Planning Survey Results

In April 2020, we sent out the African American Craft Organization Think Tank Interest Assessment Survey to those who had previously expressed interest in the upcoming meetings and others recommended by African American makers. Twenty-eight people representing African American craft organizations responded. Below are some of their responses.

**Give us examples of how you have built platforms, networks, and support for African American craft and its makers.**

*Many respondents commented on the need to document African American makers, both young and old. The documentation of elder makers was also a central piece of the Think Tank meetings, explored above.*

“We host a website that features in-depth interviews with BIPOC creatives where we focus on their craft, their process and their challenges as creators of color within predominantly white academic and art communities.”  
—**Representative**, Shades Collective

“Our museum is dedicated to preserving and showcasing the craft of the Black Doll. Along with ongoing hands-on crafting workshops we have exhibits specifically on Black dollmakers large and small, past, present and future.”  
—**Debra Britt**, National Black Doll Museum

*Respondents also commented on the need to promote collaboration with other makers and craft organizations. Social media as well as websites and sharing platforms have increased the potential for collaboration, but the AACI, they presumed, will accelerate this process.*

“Our primary demographic are artists and emerging curators of color. We host meetups every other month to host conversations and connect other young people in the field.” —**Ashleigh Smith**, The Curator’s Pick

*Along with this focus on collaboration, respondents highlighted the need for training and exhibitions. Many organizations have held professional training workshops focused on social media to show makers how to share their work. Others have highlighted the work of affiliated makers through social media spotlights.*

“Spelman College supports African American craft and its makers tangentially through the Atlanta University Center (AUC) Art Collective, which houses art history and curatorial studies but also organizes and hosts college-wide panels, talks, events etc.” —**Kelly Mitchell**, Spelman College

“I host a weekly InstaLive where I engage with AA makers, I have a blog where I highlight and educate about AA women creatives/crafters/makers, I have given artist’s talks and been on panels making visible the work of my organization We Wield the Hammer as well as collaborating with others like the Black in Jewelry Coalition. I also use social media to network and showcase other makers of African descent.” —**Karen Smith**, We Wield the Hammer

**Are you interested in collaborating toward the AACI's goals? If so, what are your suggestions for what our collaboration can look like?**

*Many respondents expressed interest in collaborating and were eager for AACI to use its platform to publicize the work of artists; host stakeholder meetings between African American makers, craft organizations, and white-led museums and gal-*

*leries; and spearhead inclusive program design. Other respondents mentioned using their own platforms to draw attention to African American makers and organizations.*

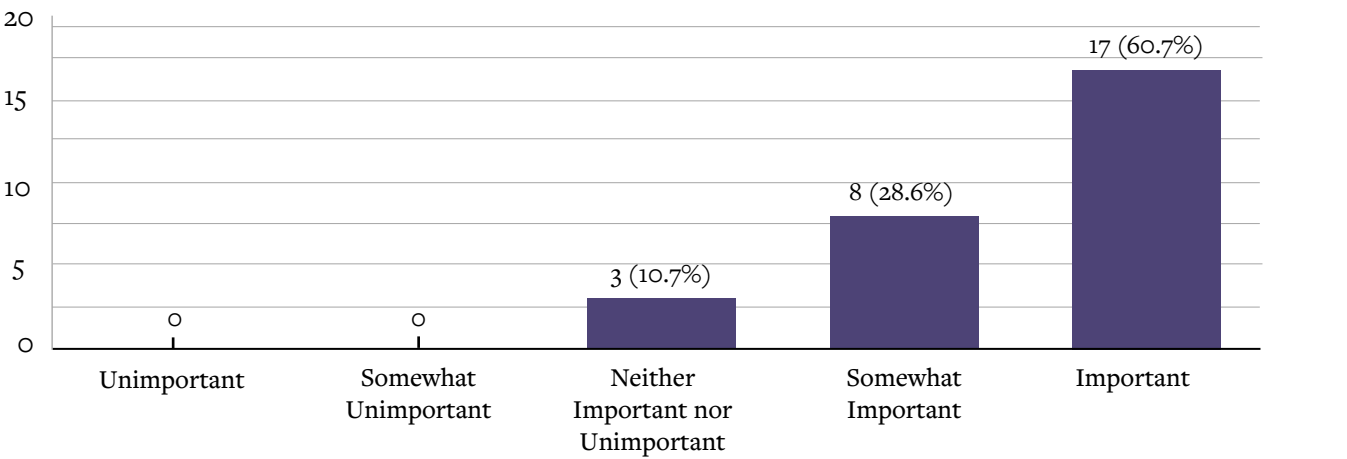
“Cross collaboration, cross promotion along my platform to draw attention to Smithsonian programming”  
—**Lisa Woolfork**, Black Women Stitch

*Several others remarked that their craft organizations do not have a specific relationship with the African American craft community and would like to collaborate with makers directly to learn how they can best support their work and community. Another goal is development standards for partnerships with African American makers and organizations.*

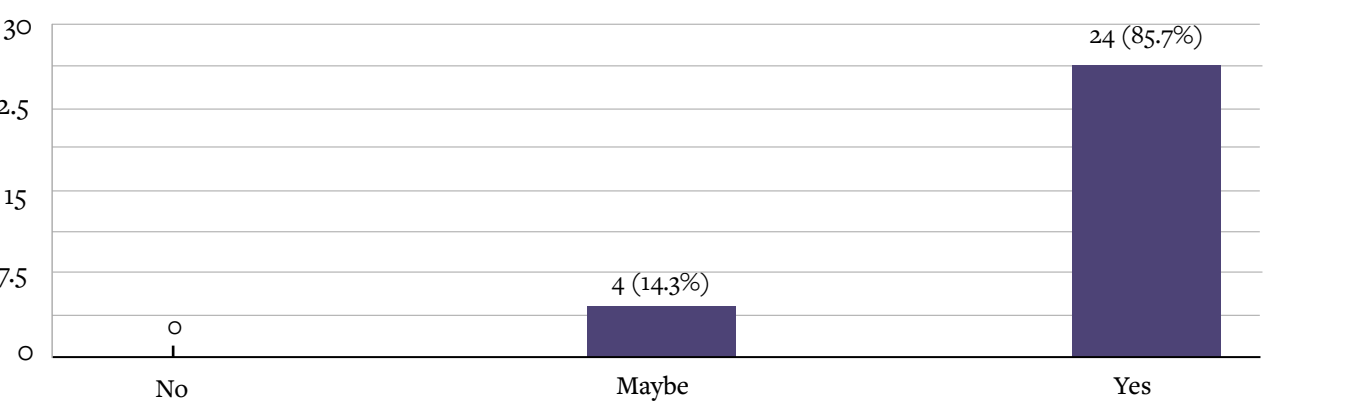
“Given that we don’t have a specific relationship with craftspeople we’d love to learn more about this community and how curators and curatorial perspective could help your initiative reach its goals. We’d also love to give input on platform building and learn from other partners about this as well.”  
—**Ashleigh Smith**, The Curator’s Pick

“Establishing standards for partnerships and connections to like-minded organizations. Working to establish database of likeminded organizations as well as establishing or exploring how to strengthen and promote African American crafts and makers nationally.” —**Regina Abernathy**, African American Quilt and Doll Guild

**To what degree is it a priority for your organization to help build platforms, networks, and support for African American Craft and its makers?**



**Are you interested in collaborating towards the AACI's goals?**



Appendix B: Think Tank Moderators, Participants, and Staff

Moderators

- Aaron Bryant**, Curator of photography, visual culture, social justice, and contemporary history, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture
- Haili Francis**, Major Gift Officer, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
- Joanne Hyppolite**, Curator of African Diaspora, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

Participants

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Regina Abernathy</b> , African American Quilt and Doll Guild  | <b>Ella Isaac</b> , Black Artist Marketplace  |
| <b>Malene Barnett</b> , Black Artists + Designers Guild  | <b>Napoleon Jones-Henderson</b> , AfriCOBRA   |
| <b>Lauren Black</b> , Social Justice Sewing Academy  | <b>Leslie King-Hammond</b> , Center for Race and Culture, Maryland Institute College of Art |
| <b>Destiny Brewton</b> , A House Called Hue  | <b>Lavalais</b> , Black Artist Marketplace  |
| <b>Debra Britt</b> , National Black Doll Museum  | <b>Carolyn Mazloomi</b> , Women of Color Quilters Network                                   |
| <b>Aleia Brown</b> , African American Digital Humanities Initiative, Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities | <b>Sandra McMillan</b> , Waller Gallery   |
| <b>Emily Carris</b> , The Art Dept.  | <b>Kelly Mitchell</b> , Department of Art & Visual Culture, Spelman College                 |
| <b>Vedet Coleman-Robinson</b> , Association of African American Museums  | <b>Tiffany Momon</b> , Black Craftspeople Digital Archive                                   |
| <b>Willis “Bing” Davis</b> , SHANGO: Center for the Study of African American Art and Culture                            | <b>Ngozi Okaro</b> , Custom Collaborative   |
| <b>Michelle Bishop</b> , Harlem Needle Arts  | <b>Corey Pemberton</b> , Crafting the Future  |
| <b>Mary DeBoise</b> , Black Girls Craft, LLC   | <b>Deloris Pringle</b> , Penn Center  |
| <b>Nehemiah Dixon III</b> , Phillips Collection  | <b>Viola Ratcliffe</b> , Bib & Tucker Sew-Op  |
| <b>Shannon Downey</b> , Badass Cross Stitch  | <b>Lowery Stokes Sims</b> , Maryland Institute College of Art                               |
| <b>Jacqueline Francis</b> , Association for Critical Race Art History  | <b>Marvin Sin</b> , GABA Conference / Art of Leather  |
| <b>Deborah Grayson</b> , Grayson Studios   | <b>Ashleigh Smith</b> , The Curator’s Pick  |
| <b>Alicia Harrison</b> , Crafts of a Different Shade   | <b>Cassandra Smith</b> , Sewists of Color   |
|  | <b>Karen Smith</b> , We Wield the Hammer  |

Participants

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Mandisa Smith</b> , AKOMA Detroit            | <b>TJ Walker</b> , Black Design Collective                                    |
| <b>Charlene Spearen</b> , Penn Center           | <b>Tracey Williams</b> , Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History |
| <b>Kamisha Thomas</b> , Returning Artists Guild | <b>Lisa Woolfork</b> , Black Women Stitch                                     |

Staff

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Dr. Diana Baird N'Diaye</b> , Lead curator, project director | <b>Kamryn Bess</b> , Curatorial intern  |
| <b>Sloane Keller</b> , Project coordinator                      | <b>Emma Cieslik</b> , Curatorial intern |
| <b>Cecelia Halle</b> , Strategic communications assistant       | <b>Julia Hirsch</b> , Curatorial intern |



A student solders a project at We Wield the Hammer. Photo courtesy of Karen Smith

## Appendix C: Think Tank Agenda

Introductions: Meet the Organizations (15 minutes)

Foundations: African American Craft in the Twenty-First Century (30 minutes)

- One major upcoming event or project?
- What do you consider to be some of the unique assets of African American support organizations that fill needs that are not being filled elsewhere?
- What is the legacy that African America craft organizations can draw on?
- What are the major challenges that you have had to overcome?
- Who is your constituency? What are your past interactions with makers?
- What are your organization’s past interactions with larger, non-African American craft organizations?

Mapping the Present: How Are Organizations Responding to Current Social Issues? (30 minutes)

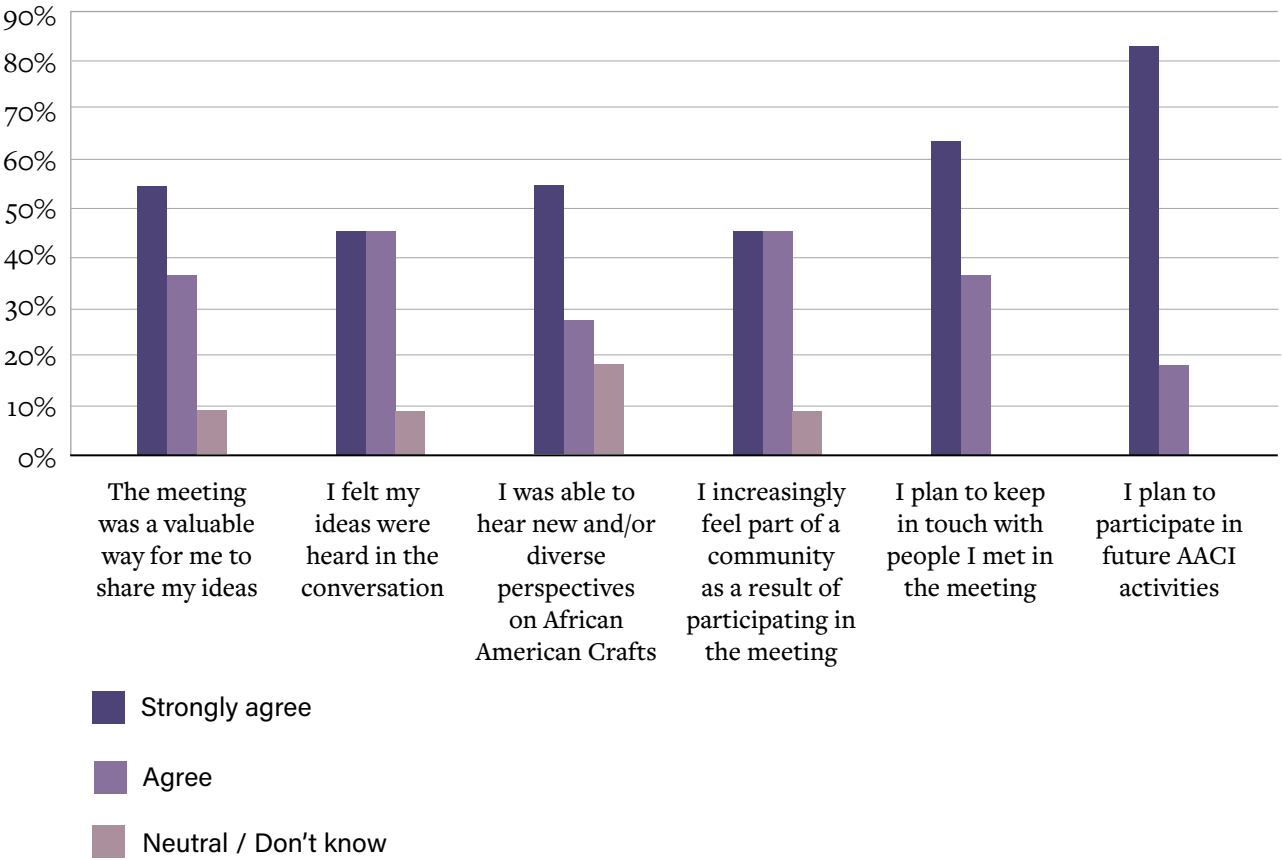
- What is the current landscape for African American makers?
- How are you as organizations responding to current social issues?
- What challenges are African American organizations currently facing?
- In working toward achieving this future programming, which kinds of organizations would you find it helpful to partner with?
- How would you define a successful program? Examples?

Envisioning Change: How Can We Reimagine a More Equitable Craft Society? (35 minutes)

- Where do you envision African American craft in the next five years? What are the positive indicators? What are the roadblocks?
- If your desired outcomes for your target audience are achieved, then certain long-term change might occur. What does this change look like?
- Where would you like to see AACI go from here to support the needs of African American craft communities? What are the needed resources? What steps for recognition, visibility, and sustainability?
- How are you interested in continuing networks and/or collaborative programming? How do you want to connect with each other? With national and regional (not African American-specific) organizations?

Wrap-up & Next Steps (15 minutes)

## Appendix D: Participant Survey Results



## Appendix E: Cultural Sustainability Program Information

**The African American Craft Initiative** is part of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage’s Cultural Sustainability Program, which aims to support communities’ efforts to preserve and sustain their living cultural heritage. The program is funded by the generous support of Ferring Pharmaceuticals. Learn more about Cultural Sustainability and our other Smithsonian Artisan Initiative efforts [here](#).



Regina Abernathy



Napoleon Jones-Henderson



KarenSmith



Deloris pringle



Tiffany Momon, Professor, Se...



Deborah G (she/her/ella) DC,...



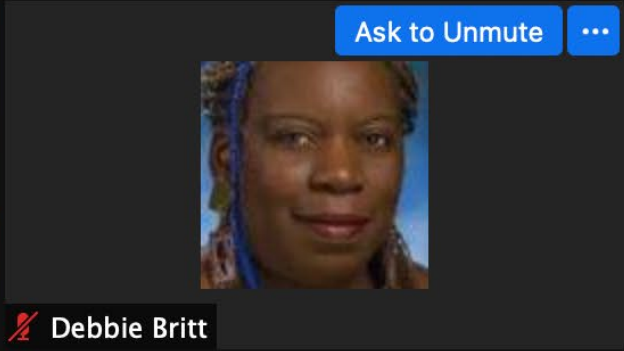
Emily Carris (She/They) Textil...



Michelle Bishop, Harlem Needl...



Leslie King Hammond



Debbie Britt



Diana Baird N'Diaye



Regina Abernathy



Napoleon Jones-Henderson



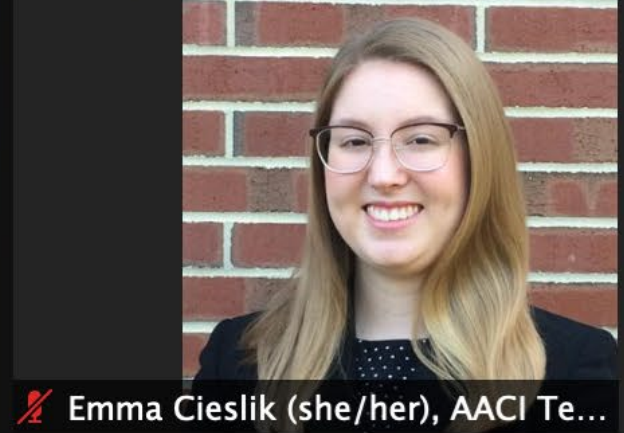
KarenSmith



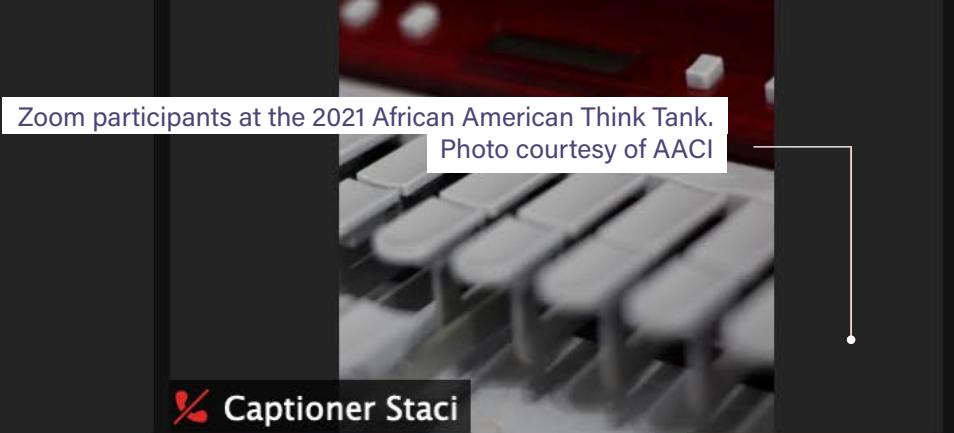
Deloris pringle



Tiffany Momon, Professor, Sewa...



Emma Cieslik (she/her), AACI Te...



Captioner Staci



Deborah G



Emily Carris (She/They) Textil...



Ashleigh Smith



MBishop

SO GOOD TO SEE YOU ALL.  
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING.  
AND VERY,

SMITHSONIAN  
CENTER FOR  
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