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Put Your Thing Down, Flip It, and Reverse It: Re-imagining
Craft Identities Using Tactics of Queer Theory

The phrase “identity crisis” has been frequently used to describe the current state of contemporary craft.¹ This identity crisis came to a head when several prominent educational and cultural institutions dropped the word *craft* from their formal names, choosing to exist under the banner of *art*, and in some cases *design*. Within the span of five years from 1998 to 2003, the American Craft Museum changed its name to Museum of Art Design, California College of Arts and Crafts became California College of the Arts, Kentucky Foundation of Arts and Crafts amended its name to Kentucky Museum of Art + Design, and the Southwest Center for Craft added the word *art* to its title citing the word *craft* as “too ambiguous.”² These institutions’ actions demonstrated that the public image of craft is in shambles—the word itself evokes stigmas and stereotypes that museums and schools are hesitant to be affiliated with. In her essay “Home-spun Ideas: Reinterpreting Craft in Contemporary Culture,” Lydia Matthews writes:

While the categories of art and design are currently stereotyped and packaged as urban, hip, sexy, potentially transgressive, technologically savvy, intellectually astute, and politically progressive, craft is cast as fundamentally down to earth, time-honored, conventional, non-threatening, and conservative by comparison. Craft is comfort food spooned into a brown-glazed earthenware bowl, while art and design are upscale gourmet fare, plated vertically on Italian porcelain and served with all the economic

and class connotations and Eurocentric assumptions suggested by that analogy.³

Other stereotypes of craft include objects that result from pursuits considered amateur or hobbyist. When first considering a name change, the institution now named the Museum of Art and Design hired a “corporate-identity consulting firm” to conduct a survey that asked a focus group its opinion of the word *craft*. One participant stated, “Craft can never shed its macramé pot-holder image no matter what it’s done.”⁴ Items such as crocheted teapot cozies, bulky knitted wearables, whittled wooden tchotskies, and whimsical blown-glass figurines all have a decidedly gendered and amateur ring to them. It was possibly with these stereotypes in mind that David Revere McFadden, head curator at the Museum of Art and Design, articulated the stereotype of craft as “the bimbo of the art world.”⁵

However, it is not just foremost and influential institutions that find craft identity unsettling: the topic of identity is also a contentious issue within craft’s own infrastructure, and heated debate exists over the word *craft* itself, as well as great concern regarding its current and future relevance to contemporary culture. Institutions, practitioners, curators, and critics have often claimed the word *craft* cannot be defined, and this ambiguity is largely viewed as a negative quality. While craft represents a large scope of labor practices, methods, skills, mediums, and makers, it typically is embedded with a tinge of nonnormativity and otherness. Studio Craft Practitioners use the word to represent the extensive education and long hours of practice and labor that goes into making



fine-tuned artisan objects. For many of these makers, the seemingly infinite definitions of craft—particularly those that refer to amateur or hobbyist activities or practices—degrade the highly specialized skills required to fashion their objects. Furthermore there is fear that the appropriation of *craft* by a younger generation of makers who maintain studio practices, but deviate from Studio Craft processes and methods, endangers their treasured and long-standing traditions.

Part of the blame for the word *craft*'s perceived identity crisis is often attributed to lack of critical theory within the field. Matthews states: "(U)nlike the rest of the art world, which favors critical cultural discourse, the craft world's cultural forums have been largely celebratory."⁶ Janet Koplos extends this statement in her essay, "Considering Craft Criticism," pointing out that "craft tends to be defined as a community rather than an aesthetic position."⁷ This stance has culminated in attitudes that promote coherence through affirmation rather than challenging criticism present in other annals of material culture—specifically the constructed conventional categories of "art" and "design" to which craft is often compared.

As of late, many venues, including magazines, journals, and domestic and international conferences, have touted the generation of new-and-progressive critical craft theory as essential for craft to assert itself as a vital and rich part of visual and material culture, and to simultaneously challenge the stereotypes that seemingly position craft at the bottom of the aesthetic and conceptual food chain. Writing critical craft theory is a formidable task; it must address craft's relationship to the larger arena

of visual and material culture, as well as the state of crisis that currently characterizes insular circles specifically dedicated to craft practice. In a recent essay published in the newly revamped "American Craft," the official publication of the American Craft Council, Bruce Metcalf writes: "... (C)ogent theory (or theories) of craft must emerge from the ideas and attitudes that are peculiar to craft. The theory must make virtues of what are often considered limitations."⁸

If we recognize that we need to invent a body of critical theory that harnesses both the peculiarity and so-called limitations of craft, what kinds of theoretical models might we turn to? Are there other existing theoretical frameworks that might prove instructive in terms of thinking through craft histories and its manifold current practices? In fact, I argue that there is a theoretical terrain that we could learn from to shape our own progressive discourse.

In the past fifteen years another discipline has predicated itself on virtues considered nonnormative, "other," and peculiar. In the 1990s, queer theory emerged from activist movements, feminist theory, and women's studies. Often thought of as focusing on issues of gender and sexuality, queer theory has intellectually evolved to include discourses regarding race, socio-economics, disability, and a host of other areas that factor into the makeup of what we call "identity." These almost-always marginalized groups are often expected to possess certain characteristics and, subsequently, are saddled with stereotypes that group people together under a common identificatory label despite their differences, resulting in muted individuality. What

facing page: Video Still from
*Fight Back, Fight AIDS: 15
 Years of Act Up*, dir. James
 Wentzy, 2003.

makes queer theory so useful to those marginalized communities that must confront pigeonholing stereotypes that over-determine and essentialize identities? The tactics of reclamation, reappropriation, and dis-identification used in queer theory and praxis give nonnormative identities agency, as well as question the seemingly stable systems that render them as *other*. These tactics acknowledge stereotypes, transpose them, and then subvert them to form new models of identity.

The reclamation of the word *queer* itself was a primary tactic to displace stereotypes often saddled upon nonnormative populations. The impetus for the contemporary reclamation of the word queer came from within the academy as well as outside of it. AIDS activists played a pivotal role in reclaiming queer from a term of denigration into one of agency.⁹

Beginning in the 1980s queer as a word was deployed as an agent to depathologize those who were HIV-positive. Using the word *gay* as a label to describe those in the population who were considered then to be most at risk for HIV (or who, in fact, already had AIDS) was deemed essentialist and over-determined. Queer, as a word, recognized the endless configurations of identity made even more complex by their constant fluidity and simultaneously served as a banner that could represent a host of people under the common cause of confronting an epidemic—one that was fleetingly killing thousands, while the government refused, devastatingly, to acknowledge its existence.¹⁰

Within the bounds of the academy queer theory anchored on, a larger platform of post-structur-

alism also played a part in the reclamation of the word queer from one of degradation to one that asserts nonnormativity, peculiarity, and so-called otherness as a position of empowerment. The tactic of nonspecificity embodied by queer resists stereotypes and enables identities to encompass, according to theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances” that renders labels and classification simplistic. Queer expresses a noncomplicity toward systems that create and proliferate those stereotypes that establish and regulate power structures. The word is made further potent because it still carries with it what Sedgwick describes as an “always derogatory underbelly.” If the word were to lose all of its stigmatization and simply become a wholly affirmative term, it would lose the potency that provides what she views as “a near inexhaustible source of transformational energy.”¹¹

The tactic of reclamation, along with the strategy of reappropriation, can also work in tandem as a tool for communities to rethink their own marginality. By first acknowledging the stereotypes that ossify individual and group identities, stereotypes can then be displaced through reappropriation and performance. In his text, *The Other Question*, Homi Bhabha states:

... the basis of a prior political normativity is to dismiss it, not displace it, which is only possible by engaging with its effectivity; with the repertoire of positions of power and resistance, domination and dependence that constructs the... identification subject.¹²

When confronted with stereotypes that calify identity and possibly, in the case of craft, practices, and objects, Bhabha contends that to simply dismiss the over-generalization is ineffective. If the stereotype is simply written off as a nontruth, the systems that constructed them as a means of establishing and maintaining hierarchies and power structures are not brought to light. Instead, if these systems are illuminated the stereotype is revealed not only to be a gross generalization, but also as tools used to influence and control dynamics within the marginalized group they claim to represent. To recognize and reclaim the stereotype, Bhabha argues, is the first step to displacing it.

Reappropriation and performance can take on a variety of different forms. One technique of reappropriation and performance is over-performance. Through over-performance stereotypes are illuminated and exaggerated and their constructedness is revealed. Another avenue for reappropriation is the queering and *requeering* of traditional identities, fusing them with elements that challenge and skew the essentialist notions they project. Through this tactic the stereotype is continuously broken down and challenged, which allows the hybrid identity to endlessly add new elements and change itself. Simultaneously, this incessant transformation is a strategy that works to deflect mainstream culture's tendencies to co-opt otherness skewed into trends marketed as hip or seemingly transgressive that result in reinforcing the suppression of groups and individuals who have struggled with factors once seen as nonnormative before this absorption.¹³

With these reformulated identities at hand, tactics of disidentification then enable individu-

als to adopt or reject certain qualities these new configurations and re-imagine them. José Esteban Muñoz writes in his book, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*:

Disidentification, as a mode of understanding the movements and circulations of identificatory force, would always foreground that lost object of identification; it would establish new possibilities while at the same time echoing the materially prescriptive cultural locust of any identification... Disidentification is about recycling and rethinking encoded meaning. The process of disidentification scrambles and reconstructs the encoded meaning of a cultural text in a fashion that both exposes the encoded message's universalizing and exclusionary machinations to account for, include, and empower minority identities and identifications. Thus, disidentification is a step further than cracking open the code of the majority; it proceeds to use this code as raw material for representing a disempowered politics or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by the dominant culture."¹⁴

The sequence of reclamation, reappropriation, performance, and disidentification succeeds in the remodeling rigid and stagnant stereotyped identities that enable the possibility of reformulated identities endowed with opportunities to imagine, morph, and expand. Once the stereotype is located

as the “cultural locus,” it can then be transformed from an inhibiting identity immobilizer into the “raw material” that stereotypes exploit to repress the so-called unthinkable—the many minority identities that threaten and disrupt the identities of those in power. With so many configurations of identity to deal with, methods of repression would have to vary, and this would require more effort for those of the majority. Stereotypes work to singularize, requiring less exertion for those seeking to control and repress marginalized populations. Disidentification works to make visible these infinite varieties of identity—or nonidentity—that present such a threat to dominant forces. The act plays on the stereotype and moves away from it. It endlessly confuses expectations and future efforts of those in power to reapply revised stereotypes to the minority once the former stereotype has been cracked. Using these tactics of reclamation, reappropriation, and disidentification, the individual, fueled by displaced and reconfigured stereotypes, is given the option to claim an identity, move fluidly between identities, or choose not to identify at all.

Craft can gain from the methods and tools that queer theory has deployed to reclaim and reconfigure its own marginal positions into a place of empowerment. By flipping and displacing denigrating and confining stereotypes through tactics of performance and appropriation, craft can reimagine itself in multiple ways, molded and reconfigured by the desires of the maker. Through the dismantling and reconfiguration of its own stereotypes, craft is positioned as a potent agent to challenge the very systems that create and proliferate

stereotypes to maintain hierarchies of visual and material culture. I maintain that by using the tactics and strategies of queer theory, craft could gain agency by deliberately asserting an identity that defies fixed or historically prescribed boundaries in relation to its use of materials, processes, or formal vocabularies. This radical critical position would relocate craft as an aesthetic category that embraces an enormous range of multiple and seemingly contradictory practices, as well as an agent to challenge existing systems that define materiality and makers.¹⁵

For those invested in craft, to acknowledge stereotypes can be a painful endeavor. It means tracing a history in which specific ways of making—tagged with the word craft—have been deemed as somehow lower than other forms of labor, thought, materially, and context. To be able to deconstruct stereotypes most effectively, the history of those characterizations and ideas must be examined and pulled apart. This history is one shaped not only by the ideas that circulate about craft in a contemporary moment, but also by reaching farther back, perhaps to the origins of fine craftwork or, put another way, to capitalism and the production of goods, something rarely invoked in such clear terms—even in the hyper-capitalist art world.

Additionally craft must realize that in comparison to other circles of visual and material culture, it is a largely conservative and homogenous body. Its insularity has contributed to incredibly homogenous demographics and lacks the more diverse configurations of identity present in other areas of material and visual culture.¹⁶ Those who participate

in craft in any role—makers, critics, curators, collectors, and viewers—must consider the fact that craft is being applied not only to new practices that are rooted in materiality, but also in newer trends of social practice that detach themselves from it. While a divorce from materiality seems antithetical to craft in many ways, it must nonetheless be considered. Practices considered *craft* that place materiality on the so-called back burner present a terrain difficult to negotiate and could be viewed as an angle that will present craft with more undefinability, which in the past has been explicitly denounced as its undoing. The conservative approach to this conundrum would be to vehemently oppose this trajectory and take sides pitting practices rooted in materiality against those that deviate from it. However, it would be more beneficial to understand how these viewpoints work *in relation to each other*. This could itself open up new discourse for craft to include those who work more traditionally, those who work more radically, and those who find ground somewhere in between.

While the aforementioned are issues that critical craft theory must address, integrating analysis of makers who are presently flipping craft stereotypes and reconfiguring identities will ground progressive discourse. So many types of practices and makers exist who are claiming *craft*—the terrain so deeply rich and endlessly shifting—that critical craft discourse is positioned to redefine material and visual culture. This in turn can foster the multifaceted practices that have surfaced and continue to sprout and expand and enable makers to further conceptualize and contextualize their practices and their identities as makers.

Lia Cook, a faculty member in the Textiles Department at California College of the Arts, serves as a dynamic example of a maker who asserts craft and dislodges its stereotypes through her processes of making, the contexts in which she exhibits, and her own identity. Cook's roots are in the Studio Craft Movement, a group virtually exiled—partly through its own doing—from larger arenas of visual and material culture. Cook began weaving on hand-loom and painting textiles to create complex and intricate illusionary images. In the past few years Cook began to weave on a digital jacquard loom—which also requires the use of the hand—to merge intimate family photos with woven structures.

Cook abstracts these images through pixelation on her computer before uploading them to a CAD program that relays her image to the loom. When taken off the jacquard and installed, they present large, overwhelming phantom memories of former childhoods gone by.

Through her work, Cook displaces stereotypes of craft while she simultaneously reclaims it. Although the jacquard pulses with digital savvy, Cook must integrate the warp and the weft by hand. Weaving requires the constant, repetitive physical motion of the maker, and while the Jacquard is a high-tech, air-compressed beast, it is no exception. The conflation of cutting-edge technology with the tedious handwork that is required of Cook is simultaneously typical and atypical of craft. The conflation of cutting edge technology and the tedious hand-work that is required of Cook is typical and atypical of craft all at once—technology standards in architecture and design curricula is



Lia Cook's Digital Jacquard Loom in her Berkeley, California studio.



Lia Cook, *Big Boy with Bear*,
Woven Cotton, 2004.



Liz Collins and Knitting Nation, *Knitting During Wartime*, Performance for *The Muster* on Governor's Island, 2005.

fused with traditional and centuries-old methods to create singular pieces that are rendered difficult, if not impossible, to classify.

Cook further complicates the contradictions embedded in her practice and weavings vis-à-vis her identity as a maker. While still remaining a Studio Craft mainstay, Cook exhibits within a fine arts context with Nancy Margolis Gallery in New York City's Chelsea district, and her work is currently on view at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in the prestigious 2007 National Design Triennial. Cook is listed as an *artist* on the Nancy Margolis Gallery website; a *designer* in the National Design Triennial catalog; she was featured at the Shaping the Future of Craft Conference; and was a College Art Association Conference panelist for the program entitled "When is Technique Central to Making," which was dedicated to those who are considered to maintain craft practices, and was, coincidentally, moderated by Janet Koplos and Bruce Metcalf.¹⁷

Craft, reclaimed and re-imagined, is the agent Cook deploys to break through the prescribed boundaries of material and visual culture. In doing this she complicates her identity, and by virtue of it, the identity of craft. What is particularly exciting about Cook and her work is that she manages to bridge the acknowledged gap between Studio Craft Practitioners and a younger generation of makers who identify as hybrid makers or choose not to identify at all. Cook remains a part of the Studio Craft Movement and is championed by it. Yet she also merges with makers who are increasingly interdisciplinary, technology-savvy and unafraid to invade and borrow from other areas of

material and visual culture not considered craft. Through her entrance into these other areas they then become inherently implicated with craft.

Liz Collins is a prime example of a younger generation of makers who claims craft and employs it as an agent to traverse the constructed perimeters of visual and material culture. After earning a bachelor of fine arts and a master of fine arts from Rhode Island School of Design in Textiles, Collins immersed herself in garment construction and quickly garnered a reputation as a cutting-edge designer whose apparel was inventive yet simultaneously ready to wear. After a five-year tenure running her highly acclaimed independent fashion label, Collins began to stage her *Knitting Nation* performances. *Knitting Nation* consists of Collins and a team of assembled workers who continuously labor at knitting machines, as well as by hand, to produce large-scale installations. Collins' first *Knitting Nation* performance took place during "The Muster," a one-day event that occurred on Governor's Island, located near Manhattan.¹⁸ Those taking part in the event were asked to consider the question, What are we fighting for? as they imagined and prepared their projects. Collins titled hers *Knitting During Wartime*, and she along with her *Knitting Nation* troops constructed a huge American flag.

Clad in coveralls bearing the *Knitting Nation* logo, Collins and her crew operate like honeybees at the hive—little by little their collective repetitive motions build a large-patterned entity realized only through cooperation and diligence. Audiences swarm Collins and her worker bees—the back-and-forth-motion of the knitting machines emanating

a befitting buzz. Collins and her team produce a spectacle of craft using materiality and performance that can only be accomplished through technical skill and expertise.

Knitting During Wartime evokes the spirit of Betsy Ross and casts the age-old figure of patriotism as the pioneer of do-it-yourself (DIY). However, keeping in check with the original intents of DIY before its entrance into the mass-market, Collins and her army harness the methodical sloth of craft to locate themselves outside the mainstream, choosing a mode of production that until recently was largely viewed as gendered, old-fashioned, and roundabout. The spectacle of their slowness offers a time-out to the audience to observe acts of making usually sequestered from the public gaze. Additionally this spectacle serves to parody and crucially question nationhood. The workers clad in coveralls with foreboding unifying logos paired with the compulsive stitching and the absurdity of knitting a monolithic flag clearly calls into question the blind patriotic fervor of a post-9/11 nation that is no longer considering the question: What are we fighting for? However, this over-performed nation-building also warns the craft community, despite its desires, that asserting a common and collective identity, a nationhood of sorts, is not the solution to its identity crisis either—that this trajectory of forming an identity would only re-stereotype craft and once again stifle the identities of the individuals who with their incredibly varied practices claim craft.

Collins describes her practice as “firmly rooted in knit construction as a craft.” Through this

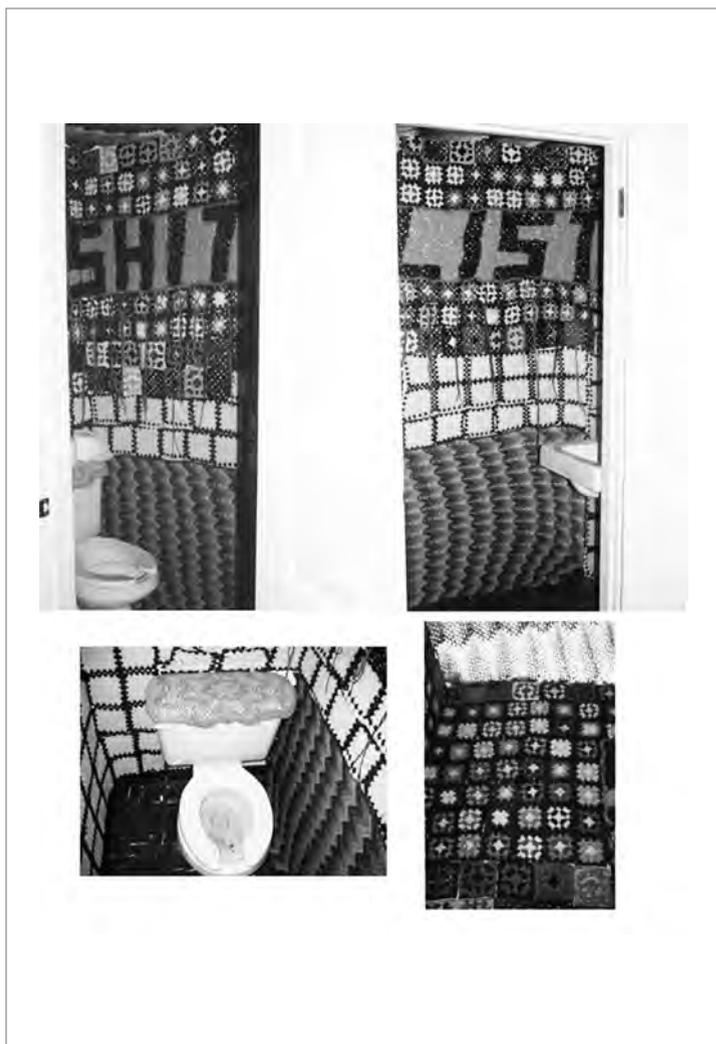
statement Collins asserts craft in a similar way to how queer is deployed. Craft becomes an agent to resist stereotypes and to challenge the constructed systems of visual and material culture. Deliberate acts of making are at the heart and center of what Collins produces, and through the medium of knitting she, in her own words, “transcend(s) boundaries of art, performance, industrial production, and fashion, always maintaining the involvement of my hands in all these endeavors.”¹⁹ Her purposeful gestures of skilled construction perform the nonnormativity and peculiarity that is rife within craft and serves as her vehicle to infiltrate a variety of arenas. In turn, through her making and fluid movement between perceived boundaries she continuously shifts and morphs her identity. By doing so she denies any classification of her work and herself.

Strategies such as camp and over-performance are tactics endorsed by queer theory to critique stereotypes that over-determine identities. Similar to how drag performance functions, the work of Josh Faught magnifies and dismantles prevalent craft stereotypes. Entering Faught’s installation, *Shitlist*, one encounters granny squares gone rotten.

Far from the comfortable and tender intentions typically thought of as infused into a crocheted quilt, the craft in *Shitlist* looks to have been stitched by a serial killer, each square a materialization of the vengeance that creeps into his mind during banal hours sitting in the john—a notch on his shit list. Through parody and extreme over-performance Faught’s work slits open the derogatory underbelly of craft and spills its guts. A condensation of granny squares performs



Knitting Nation workers labor at knitting machines.



Josh Faught,
Shitlist, Crocheted
Acrylic Yarn, 2004.

the stereotypes of craft (capital “C”) to such an extreme that we cannot shy away from the fact we recognize it due to its unsophisticated, amateur, feminine, and chintzy aesthetics. Faught has crafted craft’s stereotypes, and at once this reclaims it, flips its stereotypes through camp, and allows him to literally hew his own identity through tactics of disidentification.

A word that has popped up often when people discuss the future of craft is *hybridity*. When people use hybridity in the context of craft and the trajectory that they believe will catapult it into territory that they consider fashionable and cutting-edge within material and visual culture, they promote craft’s fusion with art and design (and occasionally with fashion and architecture.) Cook, Collins, and Faught are certainly examples of this often-discussed hybridity. In fact, all three had their work shown at the “Shaping the Future of Craft: 2006 National Leadership Conference,” sponsored by the American Craft Council that took place in Houston, Texas, to illustrate the concept.²⁰ However, in talking about hybridity one runs the risk of unwittingly reinforcing constructed and stereotypical categories within material and visual culture. For example, if the elements of certain processes or finished work are identified with any of the conventional classifications—art, craft, design, fashion, architecture, etc.—these essentialized categories are inadvertently strengthened and reified. Hybridity can be a tremendous asset and breakthrough, however, if elements in a piece are so thoroughly fused that the elements can no longer be defined as one category or another.

The tactic of disidentification can come into play to reinforce hybridity as a concept that breaks down stereotypes rather than reinforces them.

The thing about having a lack or loss of identity is that it creates the opportunity for identity to be invented anew. Much of craft is about making. By not declaring a fixed identity for craft, it could always be in the making. If craft was constantly in formation it could resist being stereotyped and include many different types of makers. Its undefinability could be transformed into an asset—and an agent of power to challenge systems that use definition to limit. Instead of ignoring or denying stereotypes they could be made into raw material and transformed—much like the physical materials that Lia Cook, Liz Collins, and Josh Faught use to breakdown preconceptions about their work and themselves. A lack of critical craft theory has opened up infinite possibilities to create new theoretical avenues to conceptualize and contextualize craft—a wide-open playing field. Queer theory can teach craft through its tactics of reclamation, reappropriation, performance, and disidentification. These methods present a potent and provocative template for craft upon which to model new and progressive critical theory. If positioned in this way, craft criticism could be unleashed from its current quagmire to become a theoretically provocative part of academia and provide a dynamic framework for makers to conceptualize their own practices.

NOTES

1. Lydia Matthews uses this phrase in her *Homespun Ideas: Reinterpreting Craft in Contemporary Culture*, which first appear in the catalog for Practice Makes Perfect: Bay Area Conceptual Craft, an exhibition featuring “conceptual craft” at the Southern Exposure Galley in San Francisco, CA, as does Debbie Hagan in her article “*Identity crisis? Naming craft museums proves difficult; some embrace the word ‘crafts,’ while others have dropped it from their names,*” which appeared in the January 2005 issue of *Art Business News*. Additionally, Dennis Stevens uses the phrase in his blog “Redefining Craft” and John Perrault in his blog “Artopia.”
2. “Is ‘Craft’ a Dirty Word?” *Fiberarts* 30. 2003: 16. and “More on the Word Craft,” *Fiberarts*. Jan/Feb. 2004, 4.
3. Lydia Matthews, “Homespun Ideas: Reinterpreting Craft in Contemporary Culture,” *Practice Makes Perfect: Bay Area Conceptual Craft*. (San Francisco: Southern Exposure, 2005) 8–9. This essay will also appear in the forthcoming *The Furniture Society: Furniture Studio 5: Craft in Our Time*, vol. 5, Fall 2007.
4. Carol Kino, *The Art Form That Dares Not Speak Its Name*, *New York Times*, (New York: Mar 30, 2005), G.8.
5. Suzanne Ramljak, *Interview: David Revere McFadden*, *Metalsmith* Fall. 2004: 20.
6. *Ibid*, 7.
7. Janet Koplos, *Considering Crafts Criticism*. Haystack Institute Publication. Deer Isle, Maine: Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, June 12–14, 1992.
8. Bruce Metcalf, *Looking Back, Looking Forward*. American Craft. December 2006/January 2007, 22.
9. Annemarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 93–96; and Douglas Crimp, “Right On Girlfriend,” in *Fear of A Queer Planet*, ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993), 314; and Lee Edelman, *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 96113.
10. Crimp, 314, and Edelman, 111.
11. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 105–106.
12. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 67. A reading of Critical Race and Post-Colonialist Theory greatly enhances Queer Theory and vice versa. Read together, these two areas of study offer a wide variety of angles in which to consider matters of identity, struggle, and resistance.
13. The co-optation of *craft*, in the realms of both master craftsmanship and amateur practices and aesthetics is particularly relevant considering its frequent appearance in the mainstream contemporary art market. Of note are Turner Prize finalists and winners Tracey Emin and Grayson Perry who each employs “crafty” methods and aesthetics to fabricate their work. Much has been said in craft circles about the work of Josiah McElheny in terms of the high levels of skill and traditional techniques present in his work and the mainstream acclaim he’s received, including a MacArthur Fellowship Award.
14. José Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 30–31.
15. Additionally, it is important to consider that this theory could be applied to a variety of makers who claim the use of *craft*. How could traditional makers use this theoretical framework to think through

or recontextualize their practices in different ways? How would the concept of an ever-shifting identity affect the maker and his or her practice alike? Would this theoretical template attract radical makers looking for new ways to conceptualize themselves and their work?

16. The *Shaping the Future of Craft Conference* brought together 270 people considered to be leaders in the field of craft. The lack of diversity of the participants was an issue that was repeatedly addressed. Mostly the absence of young people and students was noted, though it was also evident that the audience was overwhelmingly white, middle-aged, and did not identify as queer, among other factors.
17. Koplos and Metcalf are currently coauthoring a forthcoming textbook on craft history that has been sponsored by the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design in Hendersonville, North Carolina.
18. <http://www.themuster.com>.
19. Liz Collins, "New Artists/New Work, Session 2," *Shaping the Future of Craft: 2006 National Leadership Conference*, Oct. 20, 2006.
20. It should be noted that each of these makers were educated and received their MFA degrees at prestigious schools: Liz Collins at Rhode Island School of Design; Lia Cook at California College of the Arts (then California College of Arts and Crafts); and Josh Faught at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. This is certainly a topic that craft circles should take note of when considering what is being touted as the current and future trajectories of *craft*. The author also bows to her own interest and studio practice in fibers, which accounts for her interest in makers who use textiles as a key component in their practices and perhaps displays its own "lack of diversity" in the context of this essay.