

2022 President's report

In each year's Annual Report, we reflect on the achievements and activities of Craft ACT and in this, my third and final President's Report, I find myself overwhelmed at how much a small team and membership organisation can achieve in twelve months!

Starting early in the year our annual *Emerging Contemporaries* exhibition highlights the best work from recent graduates, once again demonstrating the depth and range of new artists and makers. The extensive exhibition program also included creative responses from Valerie Kirk AM and Harriet Schwarzrock, our selected Namadgi National Park Artists-in-Residence for 2022. Their reflections on the collections of Geoscience Australia and their time spent in the recovering Namadgi bush resonated strongly with our visitors. We were also pleased to present the inaugural *Robert Foster FINK National Metal Prize* supported by the Tall Foundation, FINK + Co-Director Gretel Harrison, and Craft ACT, highlighting the talent in metalworking in the region and reinforcing the value of ensuring high quality training and mentorship in the crafts.

Craft ACT also punched above its weight with international collaborations. Our successful partnership with the Embassy of Italy brought the *Home Life* exhibition from Rome showcasing Italian design. Later in the year our first small, but significant collaboration, with the Embassy of Uruguay produced an exhibition of Uruguayan fibre arts spread across the Craft ACT Gallery and the Canberra Airport. With such a vibrant and engaged diplomatic community in Canberra we are making connections between

members and makers across the world.

In 2022, the Craft ACT team delivered the ninth, and largest to date, DESIGN Canberra Festival. Although every year brings it's challenges and new programs the 2022 festival was the culmination of two years of planning, program development, and partnerships (after the necessary reductions in 2021 due to pandemic restrictions). Transformation was a triumph of coordination and sheer determination from the small Craft ACT team to bring the Festival to the public. A count of the connections and collaborations that form the Festival indicated well over 1200 stakeholders, with many artists and organisations being repeat contributors over several years. It is this strength of community connection which make the DESIGN Canberra Festival such a fabulous and essential part of Canberra's art and design ecosystem each year.

I would like to acknowledge the leadership of our CEO and Artistic Director, Jodie Cunningham, whose personal commitment to a creative, positive and efficient Craft ACT has been exemplary. My thanks also to the Craft ACT staff whose capacity to deliver high quality programs and services with enthusiasm and grit has been a highlight of 2022.

Craft ACT Members are of course the backbone of the organisation. Our membership numbers attest to the success of the many programs and benefits offered by Craft ACT and confirm our relevance to the community we serve.

I thank our Board of Management members for remaining engaged

and collaborative throughout another busy year. Everyone on the Craft ACT Board has been focused on ensuring high quality governance and practical problem solving, with our aim being to support the team to effectively and efficiently deliver the strategic plan.

Funding support from government and sponsors is essential to our operations. I thank the ACT Government, the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy (an initiative of the Australian, state and territory governments), and the Australia Council for the Arts (the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body) for their on-going support of Craft ACT.

This will be my final President's Report as I step down from my four years on the Board of Management. It has been an exciting, and sometimes extraordinary, time to have been on the Board and I have been lucky to have worked with many creative and talented Craft ACT staff and members in this time. I know the organisation will continue to deliver great programs and exhibitions into the future. I look forward to finding some time to reactivate my own creative pursuits and will continue to look to our Canberra region makers, craftspeople, and artists for inspiration.

Rebecca Coronel
President
Craft ACT Board of Management