

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a glass artist based in Canberra. My practice is grounded in kiln-formed and cast glass, with a strong interest in material experimentation, form, light, memory and embodied experience. I am connected to the craft and design sector as a practising artist, educator, workshop facilitator and arts administrator, and through my relationship with Canberra Glassworks.

Craft and design matter because they hold knowledge that cannot be reduced to words, data or digital output. In glass, knowledge is carried through the hand, the body, the kiln, the material and the mistakes. A maker learns through tacit knowledge: repetition, judgement, observation, failure, repair and close attention. These specialist skills are also human skills. They are built slowly, through practice, mentorship and access to proper facilities.

In my own practice, making is not only a way to produce an object. It is a way of thinking, feeling and understanding the world. Often the hand knows something before the mind can explain it. Working with glass allows me to process emotions and experiences that are too complex to resolve intellectually. Glass can hold grief, fragility, resilience and transformation in ways that language cannot always manage.

For example, in my kiln-forming practice, repeated firings and slumping processes allow flat glass to become sculptural through gravity, risk and material response. This knowledge cannot be learned from a screen alone. It requires equipment, technical expertise, time, experimentation and a community of makers.

Craft also creates moments of wonder. A handmade object can ask a person to slow down, look closely and pay attention. In a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, this matters. AI can imitate patterns, but it does not know what it means to grieve, to remember through the body, to handle a fragile material, or to make something for another human being with care. As digital systems become more dominant, the original, handmade and materially intelligent object becomes more important, not less.

Without proper investment, Australia risks losing specialist skills, material knowledge and intergenerational learning that cannot be quickly rebuilt once gone. Glass, ceramics, textiles, metal, wood and design practices require infrastructure, equipment, mentors, technical staff, training pathways and time. These are not luxuries. They are the conditions that allow artists and designers to keep making locally, teach others, build sustainable careers, and contribute to Australian culture and communities.

Craft and design also have strong potential for collaboration with science, material research, industry, architecture, health, education, tourism and manufacturing. Artists working with materials often ask different questions from scientists or engineers. We test through making, observation, failure and adaptation. When these ways of thinking meet, new possibilities emerge.

I support the call for a 10-year workforce plan for craft and design, dedicated craft and design capacity within Creative Australia, and an export and tourism development strategy. These measures would help ensure that Australian makers, designers, educators, studios and specialist institutions are recognised as vital cultural infrastructure.

Craft is one of the ways humans design for humans. It deserves serious, long-term support.