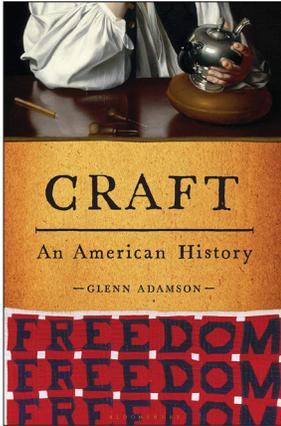


November 2021**Reading Guide:*****Craft: An American History* (2021) by Glenn Adamson**

1. *Craft: An American History* touches on the stories of many American craftspeople, most of whom are little known today. Whose story resonated most with you? Why?
2. What were you expecting from this book when you saw the title? Did the book fulfill your expectations? Why or why not?
3. How did your ideas about craft in America change after reading this book?
4. Do you have personal connections with craft? Does this book reflect your story? How so or how not?
5. What is the most important information or perspective you will take away from this book? Do you think it matches the author's intentions?
6. Would you recommend this book to others? Who do you think the ideal reader for this book would be?
7. What other resources on the subject would you recommend to someone who wanted more on the subject?

Author Biography

Glenn Adamson is a curator and writer who works at the intersection of craft, design history, and contemporary art. He has previously been director of the Museum of Arts and Design; head of research at the V&A; and curator at the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee. He is the cohost of *Design in Dialogue*, a weekly online interview series copresented with Friedman Benda gallery. Adamson's publications include *Fewer, Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects* (2018); *Art in the Making: Artists and Their Materials from the Studio to Crowdsourcing* (2016); *The Invention of Craft* (2013); *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion, 1970–1990* (2011); *The Craft Reader* (2010); and *Thinking Through Craft* (2007). He contributes regularly to *Art in America*, *Crafts*, *Disegno*, *Frieze*, *The Magazine Antiques*, and other publications.

Related Books (descriptions courtesy of Amazon.com)

► If you enjoyed Adamson's writing, you might like another book by him:

Fewer, Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects (2018) by Glenn Adamson

In this exploration of craft in its many forms, curator and scholar Adamson explores how raw materials, tools, design, and technique come together to produce objects of beauty and utility. A thoughtful meditation on the value of care and attention in an age of disappearing things, *Fewer, Better Things* invites us to reconnect with the physical world and its objects.

► To learn more about David Drake, an African American potter whose story and works are mentioned in *Craft: Carolina Clay: The Life and Legend of the Slave Potter Dave* (2008) by Leonard Todd

Fascinated by [the African American potter David (Dave) Drake who signed and inscribed many of his pots with poems and troubled by the writer's own] family history, Leonard Todd moved from Manhattan to Edgefield, South Carolina, where Todd's ancestors had established a thriving pottery industry in the early 1800s. Todd studied each of Dave's poems for biographical clues, which he pieced together with local records and family letters to create this moving and dramatic chronicle of Dave's life—a story of creative triumph in the midst of slavery.

► If you are interested in the day-to-day business of a craftsperson in early America:

The Cabinetmaker's Account: John Head's Record of Craft & Commerce in Colonial Philadelphia, 1718–1753 (2018)

by Jay Robert Stiefel

English joiner John Head (1688–1754) immigrated to Philadelphia in 1717 and became one of its most successful artisans and merchants. However, his prominence was lost to history until the author's discovery of Head's account book at the Library of the American Philosophical Society. It chronicles the commerce, crafts, and lifestyles of early Philadelphia's entire community: its shop keeping, cabinetmaking, chair making, clock making, glazing, metalworking, needleworking, plus its property development, agriculture, botany, livestock, transport, foodstuffs, drink, hardware, fabrics, furnishings, household wares, clothing, building materials, and export trade.

A Potter's Progress: Emanuel Suter and the Business of Craft (2020) by Scott Suter

Born into a traditional Mennonite culture in 1833, Emanuel Suter cultivated the art of pottery and expanded markets across the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, creating a thriving company and leaving thousands of examples of utilitarian ceramic ware that have survived to the present. Drawing on the potter's detail-rich diary and numerous primary and secondary sources, Suter's great-great-grandson Scott Hamilton Suter tells the story of how a farmer with a seasonal sideline developed into a technologically advanced entrepreneur operating a modern industrial company.

Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club

Join us for the next Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club featuring *Jefferson's Daughters: Three Sisters, White and Black, in a Young America* by Catherine Kerrison on January 12, 2022, hosted by Bayou Bend. For more information, visit mfah.org/historybookclub.

MFAH Book Club

Looking for more art-inspired literature? The MFAH Book Club presents three book selections per year for both established book clubs and for individuals interested in creating connections between literary and visual arts. Each book is accompanied by a downloadable discussion guide and is featured on the MFAH Goodreads group: mfah.org/goodreads. For more information and resources, visit mfah.org/bookclub.

Education programs at Bayou Bend receive generous funding from Sharon G. Dies; Susan Vaughan Foundation; Houston Junior Woman's Club; Mary Lynn and Steve Marks; Mrs. Denise D. Monteleone; Bobbie Nau; William A. and Madeline Smith Charitable Trust; and additional generous donors.

The education programs also receive endowment income from funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Ballard and Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Tate.

Education programs at Rienzi receive generous funding from the Sterling-Turner Foundation; Alkek and Williams Foundation; Carroll Sterling and Harris Masterson III Endowment; and the Caroline Wiess Law Endowment for Rienzi.