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Press Release

**MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM LAUNCHES INAUGURAL LECTURE SERIES WITH LEADING CRAFT SCHOLAR**

**SAN DIEGO – February 16, 2022** – Noted author, curator and scholar **Glenn Adamson** believes that craft is much more than a hobby. Rather, he believes it's a vital, timeless tool for teaching us about one another, and about humanity as a whole. San Diego art, craft and design enthusiasts will get a chance to hear from this noted speaker as **Mingei International Museum** hosts the inaugural **Joyce Axelrod Lecture** series named in honor of beloved local philanthropist, film producer and arts volunteer.

“Programming like this is a perfect match for our newly transformed space designed for and devoted to folk art, craft and design. Through the generous support of this new series, we can continue to activate our new space and bring an expert of Glenn’s stature to San Diego to share his knowledge and insight with our Mingei community,” said Jessica Hanson York, Deputy Director and Chief Advancement Officer. “We anticipate this lecture series will grow annually and become a cultural highlight for our organization and our patrons.

Adamson positions craft as a means of connecting with fundamental issues and ideas about art, history, humanity and identity. Adamson’s philosophy is neatly laid out in his recent book, *Craft: An American History* (Bloomsbury).

Two separate events are planned in conjunction with his visit.

**FRIDAY | MARCH 4 | 6 - 8:30PM**  
**Inaugural Joyce Axelrod Lecture**

Mingei Trustees, Director’s Circle members and special guests will have an enlightening evening with Glenn Adamson - American historian and curator whose work focuses on the intersection of craft, design and contemporary art. Adamson will deliver a private lecture followed by a reception in the Neeley Courtyard.

**Knowing Who, Knowing How: Mingei in the 21st Century**

In 1972 a set of translated essays by Soetsu Yanagi were published under the title *The Unknown Craftsman*. The book's influence in the decades that followed has been enormous. To this day, makers and artists worldwide are inspired by Yanagi’s ideas: the power of humility, the connections between use and beauty and the value of folk expression. In this lecture, Adamson will return to this foundational document to reflect on principles of *mingei*, which are still relevant today.

Mingei International Museum thanks Joseph Fisch for funding this event in honor of Joyce Axelrod

## **SATURDAY | MARCH 5 | 12PM**

### [Gallery Talk led by Glenn Adamson](#)

Designed with local makers, students and faculty in mind, take part in an informal Gallery Talk, exploring craft as a catalyst for further conversation on process, history and narrative, led by noted historian and author Glenn Adamson. Additionally, his books *Craft – An American History* and *Thinking Through Craft* will be available for purchase at Shop Mingei.

Open to the Public. Free with admission. RSVP required. Tickets available at <https://mingei.org/events/public-program/craft-as-a-catalyst>.

Throughout the weekend the Museum will be celebrating craft and design with [live demos](#) by local artists and [art-making activities](#) for the whole family.

### **About Glenn Adamson**

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 co-host of [Design in Dialogue](#), a weekly online interview series co-presented with Friedman Benda gallery.

Adamson's publications include *Fewer Better Things* (2019); *Art in the Making* (2016, co-authored with Julia Bryan-Wilson); *The Invention of Craft* (2013); *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion* (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.

Adamson was the co-curator of *Crafting America* at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (2021); *Objects: USA 2020* at R & Company Gallery (2021); *Voukos: The Breakthrough Years* at MAD (2016); *Beazley Designs of the Year 2017*, at the Design Museum, London; and *Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery*, at the Yale Center for British Art (2017). His biographical study of the artist Lenore Tawney is included in the John Michael Kohler Art Center's exhibition catalog *Mirror of the Universe*.

His book *Craft: An American History* was published by Bloomsbury in January 2021.

### **[ABOUT MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM](#)**

Located in San Diego's Balboa Park, Mingei International Museum collects, preserves and exhibits folk art, craft and design from all eras and cultures of the world. Within a newly reopened facility that includes an education center, theater, shop, restaurant and plenty of free, accessible public space, the Museum offers inspiring exhibitions and diverse community and educational programs to more than 100,000 visitors a year. As the presenter of [San Diego Design Week](#) and a partner to over 50 local artists and art and cultural organizations, Mingei puts celebrating creativity at the core of its mission through workshops, film festivals, lectures and more. Mingei is a nonprofit institution funded by admission, individuals, and institutional support.

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