Rethinking Craft in Postindustrial Society
Dec 13, 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM
IAB 918, Columbia University

Event description:
Craft has long been understood in terms of its adversarial relationship with mechanization and industrialization. In industrial society, where people live surrounded by machine-made, mass-produced commodities, craft has been relegated to the realm of “tradition,” which belongs to the disconnected past. However, what does craft mean in a postindustrial society like today’s United States? When manufacturing, the long-time opponent to craft, no longer constitutes a major economic sector, what is the role of craft and what can we gain from it? These questions become even more critical now when on the one hand, artificial intelligence threatens to encroach on human territory, and on the other hand, the senses of localism, ethical consumption, and environmental consequences are higher than ever. This one-day conference proposes to take advantage of this crucial moment as an opportunity to rethink craft both as a mode of production and as a way of living. By bringing together practitioners and scholars from Asia and the United States, it provides a venue for an interdisciplinary conversation about craft, technology, and the economy.

The conference is open to the public. No registration is required.

Program details:
9:30 – 9:45 Introduction
Yuan Yi, Columbia University

9:45 – 10:45 “Heavy Metal Weaving”: Between Craft and Mechanization
Chair: Yuan Yi, Columbia University
Speaker: Rabbit Goody, Thistle Hill Weavers

10:45 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 Made in USA, Made in Laos: Handwoven Textiles
Chair: Pamela Smith, Columbia University
Speakers: Justin Squizzero, The Burroughs Garret
Carol Cassidy, Lao Textiles

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch Break

1:30 – 3:00 State, Craft, and Intangible Cultural Heritage
Chair: Jacob Eyferth, The University of Chicago
Speakers: Timothy Oakes, University of Colorado Boulder
Karuna Miryam Dietrich Wielenga, Azim Premji University

3:00 – 3:15 Coffee Break

3:15 – 4:30 Roundtable
Moderator: Eugenia Lean, Columbia University

Participants:
Rabbit Goody, Thistle Hill Weavers
Yuan Yi, Columbia University
Justin Squizzero, The Burroughs Garret
Carol Cassidy, Lao Textiles
Pamela Smith, Columbia University
Timothy Oakes, University of Colorado Boulder
Karuna Miryam Dietrich Wielenga, Azim Premji University
Jacob Eyferth, The University of Chicago
Eugenia Lean, Columbia University