

Craft

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A **craft** is a pastime or a profession that requires particular skills and knowledge of skilled work. In a historical sense, particularly as pertinent to the Middle Ages and earlier, the term is usually applied to people occupied in small-scale production of goods, or their maintenance, for example by tinkers. The traditional terms *craftsman* and *craftswoman* are nowadays often replaced by *artisan* and rarely by *craftsperson* (craftspeople).

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Woodworking being done in a workshop



Shoes are repaired by a skilled shoemaker, here he evaluates a pair of shoes with a customer watching

Development from the past until today

Historically, craftsmen tended to concentrate in urban centers and formed guilds. The skill required by their professions is and the need to be permanently involved in the exchange of goods also demanded a generally higher level of education, and craftsmen were usually in a more privileged position than the peasantry in societal hierarchy. The households of craftsmen were not as self-sufficient as those of people engaged in agricultural work and therefore had to rely on the exchange of goods.

Once an apprentice of a craft had finished his apprenticeship, he would become a journeyman searching for a place to set up his own shop and make a living. After he set up his own shop, he could then call himself a master of his craft.

This system of a stepwise approach to mastery of a craft, which includes the obtainment of a certain amount of education and the learning of skills, has survived in some countries of the world until today. But crafts have undergone deep structural changes during and since the era of the Industrial Revolution. The mass production of goods by large-scale industry has limited crafts to market segments in which industry's modes of functioning or its mass-produced goods would not or cannot satisfy the preferences of potential buyers. Moreover, as an outcome of these changes, craftspeople today increasingly make

use of semi-finished components or materials and adapt these to their customers' requirements or demands and, if necessary, to the environments of their customers. Thus, they participate in a certain division of labour between industry and craft.

Classification

There are three aspects to human creativity - Art, Crafts, and Science. Roughly determined, art relies upon intuitive sensing, vision and expression, crafts upon sophisticated technique and science upon knowledge.



Street handicraft: here a skilled metalsmith in Agra, India sits between scooters in a commercial area making careful observations in the practice of his trade

Handicraft

Handicraft is the "traditional" main sector of the crafts, it is a type of work where useful and decorative devices are made completely by hand or by using only simple tools. Usually the term is applied to traditional means of making goods. The individual artisanship of the items is a paramount criterion, such items often have cultural and/or religious significance. Items made by mass production or machines are not handicraft goods. Handicraft goods are made with craft production processes.

The Arts and Crafts Movement

The term *crafts* is often used to describe the

family of artistic practices within the family decorative arts that traditionally are defined by their relationship to functional or utilitarian products (such as sculptural forms in the vessel tradition) or by their use of such natural media as wood, clay, ceramics, glass, textiles, and metal.



Mexican craft.

Studio crafts

Crafts practiced by independent artists working alone or in small groups are often referred to as **studio craft**. Studio craft includes studio pottery, metal work, weaving, wood turning, paper and other forms of wood working, glass blowing, and glass art.

Craft fairs

A craft fair is an organized event to display and sell crafts. There are craft shops where such goods are sold and craft communities, such as Craftster, where expertise is shared.



A product of handicraft: a relief of a simple house façade made as a decorative item

Tradesperson

A **tradesperson** is a skilled manual worker in a particular trade or craft. Economically and socially, a tradesperson's status is considered between a laborer and a professional, with a high degree of both practical and theoretical knowledge of their trade. In cultures where professional careers are highly prized there can be a shortage of skilled manual workers, leading to lucrative niche markets in the trades.

See also

- Apprentice
- Apprenticeship
- Artisan
- Arts and crafts
- Arts and Crafts movement
- Craft production
- Decorative art
- Guild
- Japanese craft
- Journeyman
- Master craftsman
- Otium
- Profession
- Semiprofession
- Vocation
- Bagh prints

Communities

- American Craft Council
- Japan Kōgei Association
- Street Artists Program of San Francisco
- Pike Place Market
- Chamber of Commerce
- Craft Northern Ireland
- Crafts Association of British Columbia
- General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the City of New York

References

External links

 Media related to Crafts at Wikimedia Commons

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