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Craft Industry Alliance

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Golden Scissors Awards Recognizes Outstanding Achievement in the Crafts Industry



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Craft Industry Alliance is proud to announce the winners of the first-ever Golden Scissors Awards recognizing excellence in the crafts industry. The awards ceremony took place live on stage at h+h Americas at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Illinois today. Five outstanding craft professionals were recognized in front of an audience of several hundred of their peers for their contributions to the industry.

The craft industry is made up of both world-class corporations and thousands of visionary small business owners, whose never-ending creativity continually lifts the entire sector to new heights. The Golden Scissors Awards are an opportunity for the industry to acknowledge those who have offered outstanding leadership and innovation and made important contributions to the industry as a whole.

Nominations for the awards opened in January of this year and were open for a month. In March each nominee was considered individually and confidentially by a panel of five judges nominated by the Craft Industry Alliance Board of Advisors. Judges for this year's awards were Brittany Gray, president of [EE Schenck](#), Ed Roth, artist and founder of [Stencil1](#), Kate Butler, Chief Content Officer of [Golden Peak Media](#), Kathy Cano-Marillo, artist and founder of [The Crafty Chica](#), and Dana Williams-Johnson, assistant professor at Howard University and knitter at [Yards of Happiness](#).

“It was an honor to serve as a judge for the 2024 Golden Scissors Awards,” said Gray. “After reviewing all the submissions, I feel even more confident about the short- and long-term success of our industry and am inspired by the creative achievements from the winners and nominees.”

“I was happy to be a part of recognizing such great leaders in the craft industry who are striving to make positive impacts on the craft industry as a whole,” said Williams-Johnson.

Craft Industry Alliance would like to thank the sponsors of this year’s Golden Scissors Awards program. Their support in this first year was a demonstration of their support of our industry and the importance of recognizing talent. Thank you to [Spoonflower](#), [Universal Yarn](#), [Jimmy Beans Wool](#), and [Famore](#). Each award winner received a beautifully engraved, personalized pair of golden scissors made for them by Famore to honor their achievement.

There were five categories of awards given this year: Emerging Leader, Innovation, Sustainability, Social Impact, and Lifetime Achievement.

For Emerging Leader, the award winner is Elizabeth Okeyele-Olatunji who is making a difference in the lives of countless young people in her home country of Nigeria. Through her organization, [Tunnize Creation](#), she has set a goal to reach 20,000 African children with the skills of knitting and crochet. We are so pleased to welcome her all the way from Lagos.

For Sustainability, the award winner is Ali Pate, an indie yarn dyer of [Road Trip Sock Yarn](#) who has worked to make every single step of her process better for the environment. From reusable materials, to printing on post-consumer recycled paper, to sourcing energy from renewable and solar and creating a home water collection system, she has collaborated with the Colorado Tree Coalition to facilitate planting trees in her home state.

For Innovation, the award winners are Masey Kaplan and Jen Simonic, two co-founders who have come up with an organization that eases grief, creates community, and inspires generosity. [The Loose Ends Project](#) matches volunteer handwork finishers with projects people have left unfinished due to death or disability and now has more than 20,000 volunteers globally who have completed 2,000 projects.

For Social Impact, the award is [Allyson Allen](#), the organizer of the Piece-ful Protest Quilt Exhibit which features 36 quilted textiles of protest art. Recognized by the State of California as an award winning Master African American textile artist and culture bearer, she organized this exhibit to be shown in Laguna Beach California where it had a significant impact in furthering the understanding of open-minded diversity and inclusivity..

The Lifetime Achievement award winner is Warren Wheelock who, beginning in 1987, worked with spinning mills all over the world to develop yarn collections that would inspire makers and promote handknitting. Now retired, he was a hands-on leader who knew every aspect of every person’s job at his company, [Berroco](#). He generously shared his industry knowledge and was a mentor to every member of his team. A pillar in the industry for 40 years, he ran the company with a sharp business acumen, family pride, and great respect for his team.

Congratulations to all of this year’s winners. Craft Industry Alliance co-founder and president, Abby Glassenberg, says of this year’s awards program, “It’s so important that we have a way to honor and acknowledge those leaders in our industry who demonstrate excellence. This awards program gives all

of us something to strive for and something to celebrate. These business leaders are incredibly impressive and we are thrilled to be able to present them with these esteemed awards.”

Masey Kaplan of the Loose Ends Project explains the importance of receiving this award. "This award means so much to us," Kaplan said. "Being recognized by this organization validates all of our hard work for the volunteer crafters, and grieving families we serve."

Elizabeth Okeyele traveled to Chicago from Lagos, Nigeria for the awards ceremony. "Receiving the Golden Scissors Award is validation of dedication, perseverance, and excellence," says. "It's a great motivation for me, to continue striving for greatness. This Award is dedicated to all my young learners that will emerge from Africa as great craft leaders in the future!"

The Golden Scissors Awards will be given annually each spring at h+h americas. Nominations for next year's awards will open in January 2025.

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About Craft Industry Alliance: Established in 2015, Craft Industry Alliance is the premier trade association for the crafts industry. With over 2,000 members, the organization serves craft businesses of all sizes including solo-entrepreneurs, brick-and-mortar shops, manufacturers, content creators, designers, teachers and more, in all craft sectors. Craft Industry Alliance provides its members with coverage of breaking industry news, networking opportunities, and ongoing professional education. The organization is the strategic partner of h+h americas.

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