

Where to Find Beautiful Arts and Crafts

What are 'arts & crafts'? Generally, the term 'arts & crafts' refers to handmade products that have been designed individually with the intent of creating a piece of artwork or a decoration. People engage in arts & crafts as artisans and crafters - that is, those who make their living by producing and selling handmade objects - as well as countless hobbyists who do it just for their own enjoyment. Of course, there can also be a hidden benefit if you can make your own gifts rather than having to purchase them. Arts & crafts are deeply rooted in regional and ethnic cultures, so the specifics of what kinds of objects constitute arts & crafts varies greatly across the world. How long have arts and crafts been around? The origin of arts & crafts can be found in simple bartering transactions; expert artisans and crafters would trade their skill for sustenance. The artisans and crafters would then pass their knowledge on to the next generation through an apprentice - an assistance who grew up with the artisan for the sole purpose of learning their trade. Artisans who passed their knowledge on in this manner include ironworkers, glass blowers, weavers and blacksmiths. Of course, this all changed with the industrial revolution. Many of the lovingly handcrafted items that were formerly made by crafters and artisans could now be cheaply produced in large quantities. As a result, arts & crafts as a widespread profession quickly died out; individual artisans and crafters could just not compete with industrial efficiency. Today, those individuals who specialize in the former staples such as glass blowing or weaving are rare, and usually create high-priced items, in contrast to their utilitarian forbearers. In the end arts & crafts is mostly made up by hobbyists and small retailers. How do you find arts and crafts? Arts & crafts are generally not difficult to locate. Artisans often participate at arts & crafts fairs in order to have the opportunity to sell their wares, and allow buyers the opportunity to browse and shop from a variety of different types of arts & crafts. Festivals and fairs are good destinations to look for arts & crafts. Many vendors will rent booths at these events in order to reach a wide audience. In addition to shows and fairs, permanent arts & crafts malls are also easy to find in most metropolitan areas. Frequently, these malls include a collection of semi-permanent booths rented out by multiple artisans and crafters. Of course, if the buyer knows exactly the kind of item he or she is looking for, the Internet can be a great resource for finding the perfect arts & crafts item. More and more artisans and crafters are now posting their wares online with the ability view photos and read descriptions of their unique products. Nonetheless, while online retail sales have taken off in other industries, arts & crafts buyers typically like the experience of finding and seeing the one-of-a-kind products in person, which has slowed down its adoption in this area. 'Art' and 'Craft' Art generally refers to fine arts, such as glass creations, paintings and sculptures. The people behind the creation of these objects have usually received formal training at art schools or have studied art through other programs. These art objects are usually expensive. Crafts, on the other hand, are usually considered to be smaller in scale, or colloquially known as 'grassroots' in their creation. Those who create crafts are generally doing so based on passed down knowledge without any formal education. This of course does not mean that they are any less talented than artists. 'Arts & crafts' then is the merging of these two creative trends; grassroots objects made by highly skilled artisans and crafters. The most common arts & crafts objects As stated above, there are literally countless variations and iterations of arts & crafts objects in the world. Nonetheless, most arts & crafts can be fitted into a few basic categories: handmade jewelry, pottery, woodworking, metalworking, and sculpture are some basic categories into which most arts & crafts can be assembled. Other common types of arts & crafts include cross-stitch, weaving, crochet, knitting, embroidery, patchwork, quilting, macrame, and others. Still more common types include ceramics, wood, metal, needlepoint & textiles, and glass works. Still others are based on paper and paper products, including scrapbooking, calligraphy, collages, paper mache, and origami. How do you find other arts and crafts collectors? There are a number of national, regional, and local arts & crafts organizations that can provide both artisans and collectors a place where they can network and gain a sense of community. Some examples of popular organizations include the American Sewing Guild, the Arts & Crafts Society, the Black Crafters Guild, the Home Sewing Association, the National Art Materials Trade Association, the Canadian Craft & Hobby Association, the American Quilter's Society, the Craft & Hobby Association (United States).

About the Author

Steve Dolan is an expert on arts and crafts and has been creating exciting gifts and projects for years. Learn where to find amazing arts and crafts at <http://www.funcraftsweb.com>, and be sure to visit <http://www.funcraftsweb.com/kids> for more fun projects for kids and families!

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