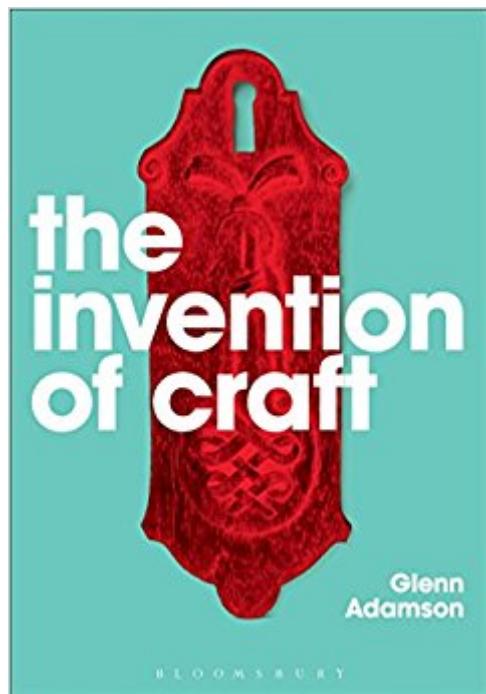


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# The Invention Of Craft



## Synopsis

Glenn Adamson's last book, *Thinking Through Craft*, offered an influential account of craft's position within modern and contemporary art. Now, in his engaging sequel, *The Invention of Craft*, his theoretical discussion of skilled work is extended back in time and across numerous disciplines. Adamson searches out the origins of modern craft, locating its emergence in the period of the industrial revolution. He demonstrates how craft was invented as industry's "other", a necessary counterpart to ideas of progress and upheaval. In the process, the magical and secretive culture of artisans was gradually dominated through division and explication. This left craft with an oppositional stance, a traditional or anti-modern position. *The Invention of Craft* ranges widely across media, from lock-making, wood-carving and iron-casting to fashion, architecture and design. It also moves back and forth between periods, from the 18th century to the present day, demonstrating how contemporary practice can be informed through the study of modern craft in its moment of invention.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Glenn Adamson is a friend of craft, but in *The Invention of Craft* he has come to deconstruct the narrative and many of the beliefs of both the practice and the discussion of craft as it operates in the 21st century...His arguments are clever and natural but complex...But, that being said, he has made this book for arguing. Reading the last seven lines of the book, the reader sees not only that Glenn Adamson is a friend of craft but that he is doing everything possible to take us

and the whole field further. Leopold J. Kowolik, Studio Magazine  
Adamson presents an array of contextual arguments grounded in rigorous research, which allow the reader to draw their own comparisons as one delves further into the book...By shifting between different centuries and fast-tracking to the present day, Adamson carefully illustrates how craft is not only rooted in modernity but also how it has constantly manipulated itself to remain relevant to contemporary technology. Zara Arshad, DesignersandBooks.com  
"The work is written well and provides a thought-provoking take on the subject. Students and other scholars of art history and the philosophy of art will find many uses for this work...VERDICT Recommended for only the largest libraries and only where there is very strong interest in the academic study of art history. Jennifer Naimzadeh, Richland Lib., Columbia, Library Journal  
Adamson here offers an impressive, authoritative revisionist historical analysis of the origins of craft...Adamson understands the concept of craft as a modern invention...A wide-ranging, deeply informed, and occasionally brilliant book, this important contribution to clear thinking about things made and their makers will appeal to sophisticated readers. Summing up: Highly recommended. Graduate Students, researchers/faculty, and professionals/practitioners. K.L. Ames, Bard Graduate Center

Glenn Adamson is Head of Graduate Studies and Deputy Head of Research at the Victoria & Albert Museum. He is also author of *The Craft Reader* (Berg, 2009) and *Thinking Through Craft* (Berg, 2007).

If you are into art you should read this.

Excellent condition and an excellent book. I am really enjoying it. Thank you!

I've given the book three stars and flagged it as a "difficult read." That's from my view as a layman. The main point of the book is that although the popular story is that the craftsman preceded and was supplanted by the industrial revolution, in fact the idea of craft was born during the industrial revolution, with each, craft and industry, "defined against the other through constant juxtaposition." However, if we think of this reasonable and interesting thesis as the book's forest, I got thoroughly lost in the trees, branches, twigs, leaves, insects, birds, squirrels and so on. Make no mistake, this is a scholarly, academic work written for insiders, of which I am not one. If you're an art scholar, pay no attention to my review. Look for ones from members of your own subculture. Edit: Sept. 6. 2013. I

just read that the author, Glenn Adamson, will become the director of the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) in New York City, effective Oct. 1, 2013. I'm looking forward to seeing how this hire works out. (If one wonders why I, not an art scholar, am interested in craft, here's the answer. I'm a layman, retired from business, who is interested in art and the "craft" part of it, which exists in the minds of scholars and the rest of us, and am trying to get up to speed on art and craft in order to give museum tours at an art museum with a significant craft and design emphasis. I've visited the current MAD location, as well as its predecessor locations, any number of times. A couple of things from the NYT article reporting Glenn's appointment. He's process oriented and interested in the process of making. Commentators wonder if he'll be able to pull off the fund raising in a tough New York environment.)

really fun to read--and I am slightly out of field. This is a terrific history of "craft" as an invention of the Industrial Revolution era. If you are literature and science buff, this argument will sound familiar, but with a slightly different cast.

## Very interesting

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in a thorough and philosophical discussion on craft. Historically comprehensive, and extremely relevant to contemporary debates concerning technology in modern society. What I liked best was the capacity this book has to challenge deeply embedded assumptions about craftwork and encourage us to critically engage with the question of what the value of craft may actually be. A pleasure to read from start to finish.

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