



Select Page



7 LGBTQ+ Makers to Celebrate

by Clark Tate | Jun 29, 2021

We're celebrating Pride Month by highlighting seven incredible LGBTQ+ makers and their work. From growing their own skills to building crafting communities that make new faces and fresh perspectives feel welcome, we can't wait to see what these makers do next.



Save



Louis Boria is a knitwear designer and instructor and the owner of Brooklyn Boy Knits.

Louis Boria of Brooklyn Boy Knits

For Louis Boria knitting started as a dream, an actual one. He was busy knitting a scarf one night in 2008, then he woke up. “I went to Michaels that day,” he says, “and then just didn’t stop,” Nine years later, singer Frenchie Davis posted a photo of Bora knitting on the subway. It went viral. “For me, people like me,” he says, “when the door opens, you never say no.”

“It’s opened up a whole other world that I never knew existed, a beautiful world,” Bora says. Now he’s a knitwear designer, has a knitting show at a children’s hospital (Fiber Arts with Brooklyn Boy Knits), and teaches knitting to kids for fun and as therapy. He’s also [on the Vogue Knitting Diversity Advisory Council](#) and on the board [at Knit the Rainbow](#). Boria volunteers a lot of that time, while working full time as a hospital administrator and running his Brooklyn Boy Knits business. He’s often up till 2.

Boria lives in Brooklyn, not that far from Red Hook, and is inspired by everything from graffiti to street fashion. “I’m always trying to find a really cool way to take knitting to the next level,” he says. “I want people to be inspired by my work because it crosses boundaries.” Boundaries like gender, identity, or body type, he says, “I want something that screams, ‘Hey, I can wear that too.’”

According to Boria, “knitting is for everyone,” and he’s excited to see that the industry is growing and becoming more inclusive. “Knowing my voice makes a difference,” he says, “that’s what I’m most proud of,” he says. “You don’t ever think that what you love most could actually change the world.”

Support Boria’s work at [Brooklyn Boy Knits on Ravelry](#), [Brooklynboyknits.com](#), and watch his TED talk, [Making the most of your moment](#) and the [2020 Kaleidoscope Fashion Show](#) he helped organize on YouTube.





Working primarily in wood, Danielle Rose Byrd blends traditional and modern methods with ample experimentation and a wide range of tools to make gradients of sculptural and functional objects.

Danielle Rose Byrd

Danielle Rose Bryd came to woodworking in a roundabout way. She studied music history, which led to building a wooden “fiddle-ish” sculpture, which led to carving spoons and then bowls. She explored outlandish bowl concepts (seriously, check out her instagram) for around six years before shifting to pure sculpture.

She loves the life she’s built. “It’s harrowing, but it’s awesome,” she says. “It’s not to the point where it’s not a roller coaster ride.” The work doesn’t pay incredibly well, but neither did other odd jobs, like waitressing, that required much more labor. Work and life are very blended for Bryd, who deals with chronic illness and lets her energy shape her schedule.

“I have a lot of things in the queue, and by in the queue, I mean in my head,” says Bryd. She’s also looking forward to spending time with the woodworking community again. “I’m really excited,” she says, “to let people know that space is being created for everyone and the old views are being put to rest.”

“And I do mean that in terms of equity and how that applies to race, because woodworking is a wildly white, homogenous landscape, but also, like, the ideas within woodworking itself and the ideas in terms of tradition,” Byrd says. “In the last ten years in this community, I feel like it’s a breath of fresh air.”

Find Byrd’s creations at [DanielleRoseburg.com](https://danielroseburg.com) and [@danielle_rose_byrd](https://www.instagram.com/danielle_rose_byrd) on Instagram.





Mathew Boudreaux is a quilter, sewist and weaver behind online community Mister Domestic.

Mathew Boudreaux of Mister Domestic

“I quilt, and I sew, and I make bags, and I weave,” says Mathew Boudreaux, creator of the online community known as Mister Domestic. “I’m bold and daring and adventurous when it comes to color,” he says. “I like high saturation.”

Boudreaux was discouraged from nurturing his creative gifts as a child growing up in Texas. He’s offering his daughter a different experience. “She’s very visually creative,” he says, giving advice on fabrics, designs, and colors. “She’s my muse for everything.” One of his biggest challenges is “not getting distracted by the next pretty thing I want to play with.” The other is to figure out how to transfer his work to Instagram or Ticktock, which drives a lot of his business.

Most of Boudreaux’s work is about building a community that is “truly inclusive.” That’s what drives him, he says, “that I’m providing a safe space and a happy place for so many people that have been othered.” His revenue streams include fabric design, brand alliances and virtual classes. He only works with companies that champion inclusivity and diversity.

“Everyone knows that if I am there and my name is attached to it that it is a safe space,” he says. “It’s humbling, it’s weird,” Boudreaux says of his work. “It’s not a situation that I ever envisioned for myself, but it’s an honor.”

Boudreaux gives most of his creations away. To attend one of his classes or support his community, follow @Mrdomestic on Instagram and @misterdomestic on TikTok.





Don Mayfield is a woodworker creating beautiful, functional items for Element Wood Creations.

Don Mayfield of Element Wood Creations

Don Mayfield owns and runs Element Wood Creations, and his family is all for it. From gifting them charcuterie boards, bottle stoppers, bottle openers and candles, to fixing up his own home, “they absolutely adore it,” he says. “It’s an awesome feeling to know that your family and friends are supporting something you are passionate about.”

He got into woodworking by watching YouTube videos out of curiosity. That led to a chance conversation with an acquaintance who had a woodturning lathe laying around. A year later, Mayfield has a workshop in his garage and his craft consumes his weekends.

“The whole concept of having a thought in your head and then creating it out of materials is what intrigues me the most,” he says. He likes his shop time. “I’m a very introverted person at heart. I like my solitary time a lot,” he says. “It’s my artistic release.”

For the most part, Mayfield puts his phone down while he works, though he does share progress on his social networks. “For me, it’s the most helpful community I’ve ever been a part of,” he says, one where woodworkers answer questions and provide feedback and support.

“I know there are not many LGBTQ woodworkers,” Mayfield says. “I kinda felt like I was this island on my own.” Then he [connected with Trent Preszler](#) online. “Him being so receptive, and welcoming me to his online group and them giving me feedback and pushing me along was so reassuring,” Mayfield says. “It’s the better side of social media.”

Find Mayfield’s creation at [Element Wood Creations on Etsy](#) and [@elementwoodcreations](#) on Instagram.





Isa Berger creates pottery that includes elements of nature like bugs and fungus that inspire them.

Isa Berger

Isa Berger took their first pottery class right before the pandemic. “The major appeal to me is that it was a creative practice that was making something functional,” they say. “I can, like, work on this piece and then get to drink my coffee out of it the next day.”

They also love the social aspect of the studio, where Berger trades work for access to recycled clay and firings. “It’s not in any way hard to be myself or feel accepted there” they say, finding that the ceramics world feels younger and more diverse than expected, especially online. “For finding queer clay community, I’ve looked on the internet and easily found it there,” they say.

Berger works on a farm full time and sells pots at the local market. The pursuits complement one another. “There’s a funny thing, where I feel like I have the least time and energy this time of the year, but I also feel the most creatively inspired,” Berger says. “I’m just seeing all these really interesting bugs and, like, patterns and weird fungus,” they say. “And those things make me want to make art.”

Spending time in nature is important to Berger. “So much of my connection to pottery is my connection to nature,” they say. “And nature doesn’t have the same binaries that we humans have imposed on ourselves.”





Alexa Villanueva is a ceramicist and illustrator, creating whimsical and calming work for Lexa Luna Studio.

Alexa Villanueva of Lexa Luna Studio

Alexa Villanueva went to school for interior architecture, where her love of illustration blossomed. She was seeking a path away from computers when she first tried ceramics. “I just, like, started one day,” she says. “I made a huge mess.”

She always thinks about how people will interact with her pieces. “I’d say that they’re rooted in honoring the earth and inspired by gratitude and the home,” says Villanueva. “The clay that we use is from the earth,” she says. “How are we giving back to the earth? How is this going to last and make spaces feel more beautiful and comfortable?”

“I always try to make work that flows,” she explains. “It feels a little whimsical and calming, and that ties in with my identity as well, in that it’s fluid. Perhaps.” Villanueva enjoys the communal aspects of pottery, creating in a studio and connecting to other ceramicists. “Even if everyone is doing their own thing and not even talking, there is a beautiful magical energy”, she says.

But it’s more than that. “It’s, like, the most ancient artform,” she says, “and so I feel this deep connection every time I spend time with clay, with my ancestors, with the earth, with myself even. “It’s not just a job at all to me,” says Villanueva who is very proud of her Filipino American and Asian American Island heritage. “It’s like a teacher.”

Villanueva is enjoying a year-long art residency in Uruguay. Her illustrated tarot decks are available [through her website](#). Her ceramics will be back in 2022. Follow her [@lexalunastudio](#).





Laura Mays is an architect, woodworker, and instructor at The Krenov School and you can find her work at YaffeMays.com.

Laura Mays of The Krenov School

Laura Mays is a trained architect, woodworker, and woodworking professor at [The Krenov School](#). She has many reasons for teaching, saying, “I really enjoy it, and it’s a good steady income and a good way to interact with other people.”

The consistent pay gives her more freedom in her own woodwork, mostly furniture making, though less time to do it. She fits it in “just around the edges,” stealing 10 or 30 minutes to work on weekends or lunch breaks. Then there’s the summer. She

stays motivated because she knows that “work makes work,” a quote she credits to Wendy Maruyama. “Each thing you do, you think of three more things,” Mays explains.

She describes her pieces as “fairly modern, contemporary, paid-down” and thinks a lot about how the furniture will be used. “It’s really important to me how people really interact with the objects,” she says. It’s also important to her how people interact with the craft of woodworking.

“One of the things I’m really concerned about is bringing people who aren’t generally welcome into woodworking,” Mays says. “First, it’s a question of fairness really. Secondly I think that more people will bring different approaches to the work, not necessarily because of their identity,” she continues. “A field that stays so homogeneous is just going to fold in on itself, it’s less vibrant.”

Find Mays’s creations at YaffeMays.com and [The Krenov School](https://TheKrenovSchool.com).



Clark Tate

contribution

Clark Tate is a freelance writer and lifelong knitter. After graduating from never-ending scarves to more complex projects, Clark also graduated with a Master’s in Environmental Science. She then worked as a restoration ecologist for six years, before moving on to an obsession with braided hats and writing articles about people and the environments they live in. She’s written for Hakai Magazine, Summit Daily News, Salt Lake City Weekly, and GearLab.com. You can find further examples of her work at lclarktate.com.

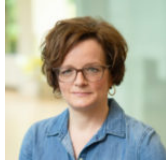
2 Comments



Heather Capezio on June 30, 2021 at 10:34 am

The website and social link for Laura Mays is incorrectly listed as the same ones shown for Danielle Roseburg.

Reply



Abby Glassenberg on June 30, 2021 at 11:30 am

Thank you so much for alerting us to this, Heather. We've updated those now.

Reply

Who We Are

- [About](#)
- [Board of Advisors](#)
- [Corporate Members](#)
- [Member Testimonials](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Information

- [Contact Us](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Newsletter](#)
- [Become an Affiliate](#)
- [Press](#)
- [Terms of Service + Privacy Policy](#)

Contact Us

hello@craftindustryalliance.org

617-216-5296

P.O. Box 812397

Wellesley, MA 02482



This website and its content are the copyright of Craft Industry Alliance LLC™ - © Craft Industry Alliance™ 2015-2022. All rights reserved.