

Object lesson in creativity: the maker movement

“Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine, and at last, you create what you will.”

– George Bernard Shaw

We are, by nature, creators. Some of the most accomplished people in history are self-taught. They tapped into their own innate creativity, often outside conventional models of education, because they had a passion to invent, change, improve or transform something. In his book *Makers: The New Industrial Revolution*, Chris Anderson argues that at the threshold of the digital age, we are standing on the cusp of realizing our greatest creative potential in the history of humankind. This happens through using digital tools that save and, therefore, create time.

I have always loved handmade objects. My first professional writing job was writing for the League of New Hampshire, the oldest

professional crafts organization in the country, and one of the first American “cottage industries” spawned from the Great Depression in the 1930s. I interviewed glassblowers, woodcarvers, blacksmiths, basketmakers, metal-smiths, printmakers and potters. What I love most about craft is the merging of art and science. The craftsman must learn scientific parameters of specific media and the physics of movement and function in order to design something successful and beautiful within those boundaries.

My second book, *American Luthier* (ForeEdge, 2016), came about because of my fascination with the hand-hewn object, the violin, and the pioneering woman who carved nearly 500 stringed instruments by hand. I



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also learned about the dishonest violin market still ruled by the elite—a few dealers and makers who determine supply and demand and craft not only wood but perception about violin value to benefit the elite who have cornered the violin market.

No more. To my shock, a few months ago, I stumbled upon a product by Hova Labs, a 3D acoustic violin that is computer-printed for a cost of about \$70. As I tried to get my head around this paradox, I began to see the entire world of objects, including something as high-end as a violin, is being turned upside down by digital tools. I soon discovered that I had to rethink nearly everything I thought I knew about production in the digital age.