Craft School
Jasleen's Challenge:
Constructing with Collections

Amy Leung



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1 Welcome

Welcome to Crafts Council Learning!

The Crafts Council is the national charity for craft. We inspire making, empower learning and nurture craft businesses. We believe craft skills and knowledge enrich and uplift us as individuals, and, in so doing will change our world for the better.

We work to ensure craft is a key part of everyone's education and work closely with our network of schools, teachers and maker educators to secure the future of craft in the classroom. Our education work is underpinned by Make First, our craft education pedagogy.



Current page: Camden Art Centre Dreamscape
Photo credit: Amy Leung

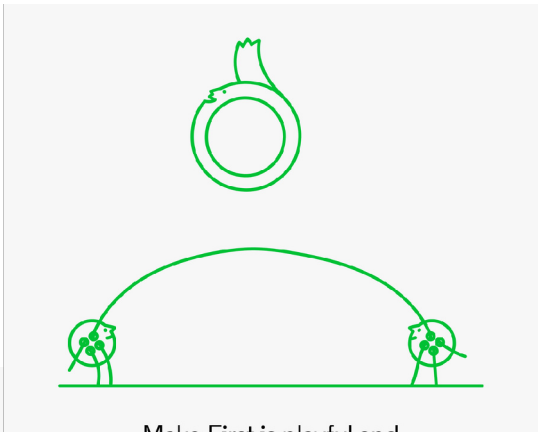
Cover: Charleston Lewes Summer workshop
Photo credit: Phoebe Wingrove

2 Craft First

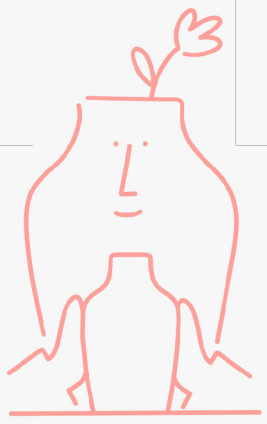
Make First is the Crafts Council's approach to making. It is an open ended, non linear, playful way of teaching and leanring about craft and craft objects.
At the heart of Make First is joy: the joy of making, of starting with your hands, of finding out what a material will do before you know the answer. Knowledge emerges through direct engagement — through resistance, accident and iteration — not through abstraction alone. As AI absorbs more work, what stays distinctly human is our creativity, our material understanding, our thinking through the hands.



Dive straight into making!
Pick your materials and have a go



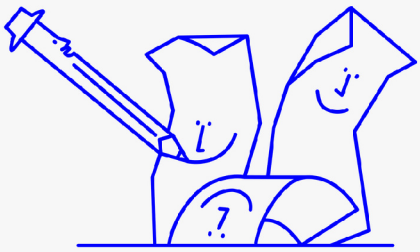
Make First is playful and
open-ended; enjoy the making and
don't focus on the final outcome



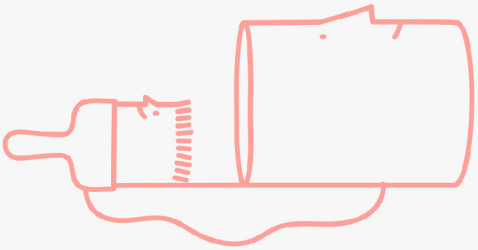
Explore your interests and
develop your voice as a maker



Learn together as a community



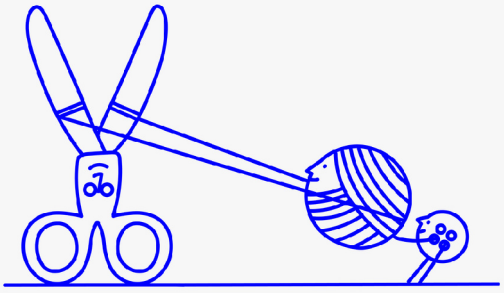
Make First is about the joyfulness and pleasure that comes from making



Fail and try again to become a braver maker



Build skills and knowledge from your interactions with materials and the physical world



Tweak and tinker with materials to develop your ideas

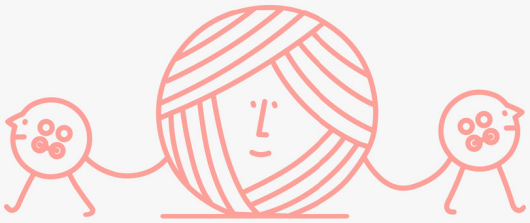


Start again, work on several things at once or repeat the same thing with different materials

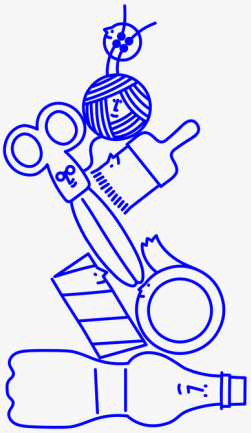
Make First can be flexibly applied to different learning outcomes.

It's not a rigid framework and can be adapted to suit the needs of learners and learning outcomes.

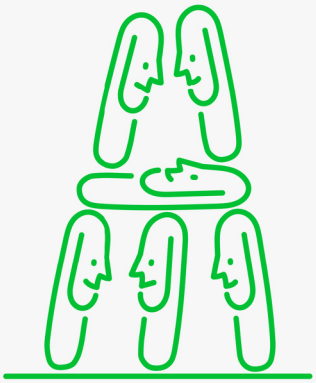
Its foundation in exploration, creativity and collaboration allows for Make First to be used in a variety of different contexts and support cross curricular making aims.



Make First is supported through a classroom environment that encourages collaboration and supports learners to make their own choices



Make First can support a range of learning outcomes across the curriculum



Make First can be scaffolded by discovery resources, challenges or technical drawings



Camden Art Centre Dreamscape
Photo credit: Amy Leung

3 Craft School

Craft School is a free nationwide challenge designed to get EYFS, primary and secondary school learners engaged in hands-on making.

Launching September 2026, Craft School: Jasleen's Challange returns for its second iteration, inviting educators and learners to explore the theme of community through craft and making in collaboration with our Maker Champion, Turner Prize-winning artist Jasleen Kaur.

The programme is free and supports education providers and learners from EYFS to KS4 with digital resources, online CPD sessions, and Educator Forums. Craft School can be integrated into your curriculum, used as a crosscurricular project, after-school club, or home-school programme, helping young people get making across all learning settings and stages.



Charleston Lewes Summer workshop
Photo credit: Phoebe Wingrove

4 Amy Leung

4.1 Amy Leung Bio

Amy Leung is a London-based artist who works with children and young people in museums, galleries and schools. She works in social care, healthcare, with early years, in schools and with SEND groups. Together they make sculptures, drawings, installations and interventions.

Material exploration and playing collaboratively are key to her practice, with ideas emerging through making together.

Previous projects have focussed on themes of: co-designing and co-creating play spaces, transitions, craft and objects and an experimental studio with Early Years. Amy has previously worked with Camden Art Centre, Firstsite, the Royal Academy and South London Gallery. She has an MA in Art and Design in Education from the IOE, UCL.

4.2 The Compulsion to Collect

Inherent to Early Years children and perhaps within all of us, is the compulsion to collect. These collections might be of natural materials, things that can live comfortably in our pockets or themed to express something about our personalities or identity. They might be an object of attachment with deep emotional ties or simply something we can't throw away for unknown reasons.

In these make-along activities, we will start with the objects that the children we work with, are drawn to. Whether this collection of objects is curated by us or are collected independently or with the support of parents and caregivers at home, it's important that the children have choice and agency with the particular objects they work with. You might already have a tuff tray of loose part objects that are familiar to your educational setting or you might wish to bring in curiously unfamiliar ones, anything goes!

Some inspiration...

Shiny objects
A sweet wrapper, a loose button, a conker
A stick, a spatula
A doll's outfit, a loose sock
Building blocks
A receipt, a glove
A straw, an old cotton reel, a paperclip
Tangerine peels and the stems of grapes
A pen, a rock, a shell, a tupperware lid
A dandelion, some gravel
The remote control
A bug
Some ribbon
An object that makes a sound
Something smooth and cold
Something from another era
.....
What do we have in front of us?

Arrange the objects, with careful consideration, like precious artefacts in a museum.

Observe if there are any reactions or rearrangements to this set up.

4.3 Responding to Collections

Here are some options for responding to these collections in simple, immediate ways.

Mark making:

Offer simple drawing materials to trace around objects with. If possible, hide objects under a piece of paper and use wax crayons, creamy oil pastels or cold graphite sticks to make a rubbing to discover the objects again.

Light and dark:
Dim the lights and add torches to explore the objects. Play with scale, making the object super big (close up light) or super small (increase the distance to the light source). Explore what shadow creations might come about when objects stack and sit together.

Squashy impressions:
Roll out a piece of clay, saltdough or playdough. Sink your objects into it. What repeat patterns, marks and textures emerge?

Photograph:
If possible, try documenting the objects through the perspective of your children. An iPad, screenless camping camera or instant thermal heat camera all produce different effects. These snapshots might reveal the child's relationship and perspective of their objects: are they make believe objects, something from another realm that need to live in a specific place?

Re-collecting, posting, transporting:
Responding to certain schemas, you could set up the space with boxes, baskets and trolleys to see what might happen to these objects when movement is introduced.

4.4 Constructing with Collections

How might we take a more sculptural, making approach to using objects directly in our work? The objects that the children have chosen have a curiosity or attractiveness that makes them potentially precious sites for working with.

For this longer activity, we'll need space (a table / trays/ a tuff tray) to present a menu of materials that include:

• Dry fixings, materials that allow connection: string, fruit netting, wool, wire, pipecleaners, pegs, tin foil, clips, scrapstore curiosities.

• Sticky fixings: tape, stickers, plasticine.

We'll also need a designated space for framing and photographing your sculptural collection.If possible, look for good natural lighting and a colourful or plain piece of paper or fabric for a backdrop.

1. Invite your children to peruse the menu of materials and choose 3 fixings that they like to start off with. For example, some wool, tin foil and stickers might be chosen.

2. Encourage them to find a space to work with these 3 fixing materials with their object. How might the objects relate and connect to each other? Could the tin foil and wool wrap and bind, might the stickers cover or transform their object into something new? Perhaps the pieces hang in fruit netting or disappear in tape. Knot, tie, weave, crumple, bind, stick things together.

3. If they would like more fixings, encourage the children to help themselves – sometimes these connecting materials become more curious than the original objects itself and a new collection begins.

5. Rearrange the objects altogether in a new exhibition or showcase. Provide options to hang, place and elevate pieces so the children can decide on how their objects are experienced.

Step back and admire your new, possibily very different looking collections.

Notice the conversations and reactions to the objects now, what has changed and what stays the same?

Are there any stories that come out of the new pieces?

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