

**Crafts Council**

**International Toolkit**

Case studies

2022



---

## Contents

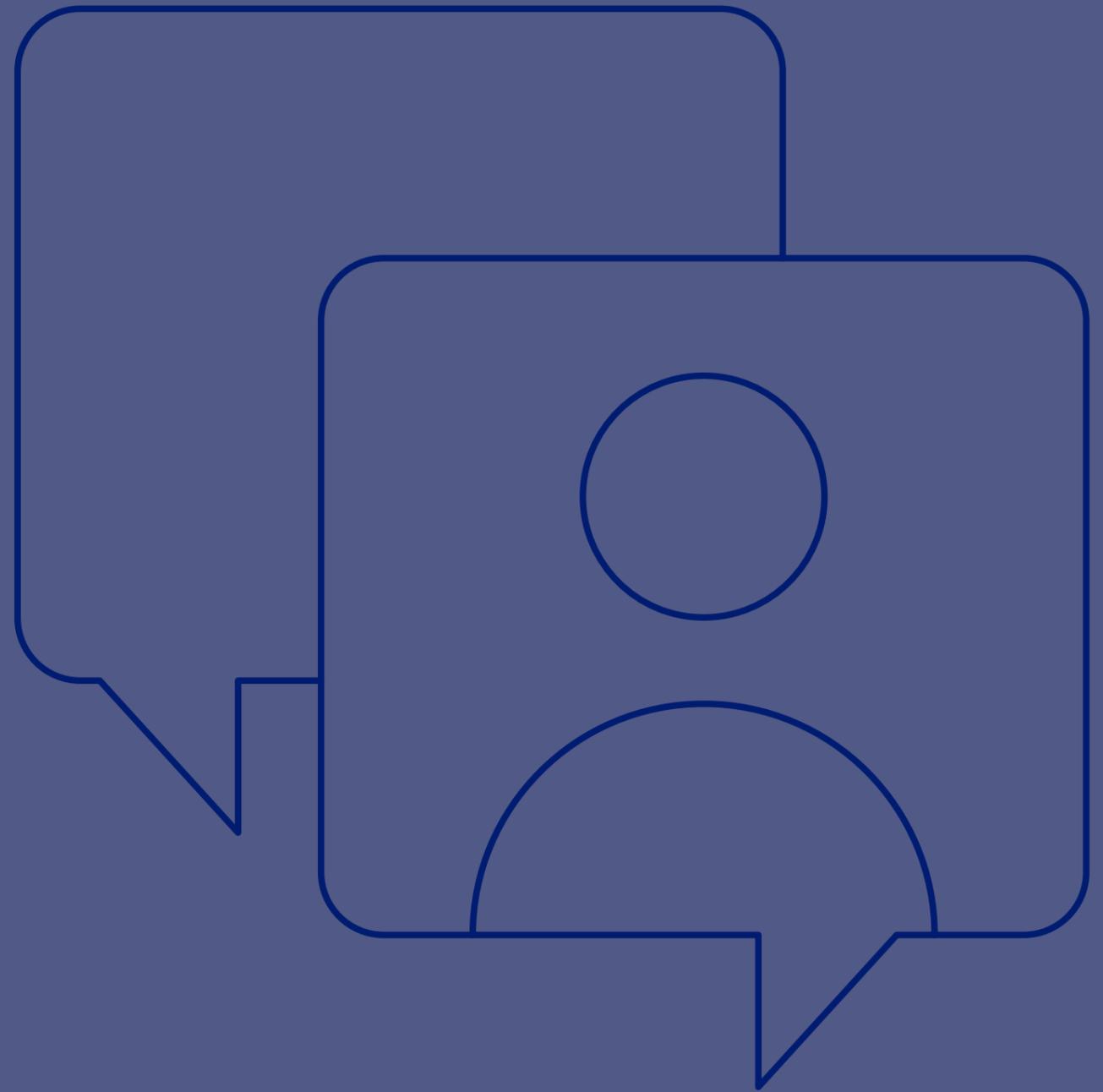
---

<b>Temporary import with an ATA Carnet</b>	<b>6-9</b>
<b>Showcasing in an EU member state with intent to export</b>	<b>12-15</b>
<b>Exhibiting at an overseas trade fair</b>	<b>18-23</b>
<b>Teaching and exhibiting in China</b>	<b>26-30</b>
<b>Importing to a retail fair in the UK:</b>	<b>34-51</b>
Case-study interview with ESH Gallery, Milan	

---

# Case study: Temporary import with an ATA Carnet

# 1





# 1

## Case study: Temporary import with an ATA Carnet

A UK textile maker working as a sole trader transporting samples to a trade fair (in an EU member state) with the intention to gain orders. Their textile samples are to help secure sales; the trade fair does not permit sales from the stand. The trader will return to the UK with all their samples.

Dalia James, woven textile designer-maker.  
Photo: Joan Fernandez Blasco

---

What procedures does the maker need to follow? Do all EU member states offer an ATA Carnet?

An ATA Carnet simplifies the customs formalities by allowing a single document to be used for clearing goods through customs in the countries that are signed up to the Istanbul Convention on Temporary Admission.

ATA Carnets may now be used when moving goods from the UK to the EU. This is already an option for the transportation of goods from the UK to many other non-EU countries, and it reflects the established international approach.

The management of EU import and export procedures is the responsibility of the customs authorities of the EU member states. It is important that businesses and individuals confirm these procedures in advance of their journey.

Does the maker need an ATA Carnet to enable them to take samples to the trade fair, or client?

The use of a carnet is optional for the temporary export of professional work equipment to the EU, or vice versa. It is a commercial decision that depends on an individual or business's specific circumstances. For example, another option for moving goods between the UK and EU is the Temporary Admission customs procedure, which is also subject to conditions being met.

---

If the maker is using an ATA Carnet, must the document be stamped on departure from the UK and on entry to the EU, and the same on the return?

Yes. During travel, the carnet is presented to customs for endorsement (wet-stamped) each time the goods enter, or leave a customs territory. At present, this is a manual, paper-based process undertaken by Border Force in the UK.

Is there a set fee for an ATA Carnet? Or does it differ depending on the work you do?

You can acquire a carnet from the [London Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) for £185 plus VAT for members, and £310 plus VAT for non-members. You will also need to pay a security deposit depending on the value of the goods.

How long is an ATA Carnet valid for?

An ATA Carnet is valid for up to 12 months from the date of issue and can be used multiple times, and in multiple countries, during the period of validity.

Can an organisation such as Design Nation apply for an ATA Carnet on behalf of its members?

Private travellers or businesses can use a carnet – this will either be in the name of the holder, or a representative. If the latter, their name will be in Box B of the carnet, or in the authorisation letter.

Which freight lanes does the seller use when entering the EU?

We advise that you check the import processes with the customs authorities of the particular EU member state you are travelling to.

---

# Case study: Showcasing in an EU member state with intent to export

# 2





# 2

## Case study: Showcasing in an EU member state with intent to export

A UK ceramicist working as a sole trader transporting goods to Germany with intent to sell at a trade fair, as well as through a gallery. Their products are priced between £300 and £2,000 (between €340 and €2,250).

---

Does the sole trader need to complete a customs declaration form for exporting goods, declaring all items and the value of these items?

Yes. Goods exported from the UK to the EU from 1 January 2021 require UK export declarations and follow the same processes that exist for trade with the Rest of the World. You can find more information via GOV.UK [here](#).

The import of commercial goods, described as Merchandise in Baggage (MIB) for customs purposes, enables small-scale and infrequent traders to trade.

It allows them to carry commercial goods in their baggage, or small motor vehicle (defined as carrying no more than nine people and weighing less than 3.5 tonnes) to sell or use in their own business. These are not goods for personal use, or that a commercial transport operator has carried for you.

For goods moving between the UK and the Rest of the World, any MIB declared below £1,500, and weighing less than 1000kg, or not classed as controlled goods, requires that you either:

- Make an oral declaration to a Border Force officer where a red channel exists, or by using a red phone.
- Use the merchandise online declaration service (MODS) before, or on, entering the country. You can find further guidance on this [here](#).

Should this paperwork be done by a licensed company, or can the sole trader complete the forms themselves?

This can be done by the trader themselves, or they could get someone to handle customs procurement for them. Ultimately, this is a commercial decision. If you would prefer to hire someone, there is guidance on how to do this [here](#).

---

Are there any specific transit documents applicable to goods that travel by road between the UK and the EU?

The government's guidance for hauliers and commercial drivers when transporting goods in this way can be found [here](#).

Does the value of these items need to be declared at retail, or trade price?

The value to be declared is the cost of the goods to the purchaser abroad – or, if there is no sale, the price the goods would fetch if they were sold to a purchaser abroad. The value should include packing costs, inland and coastal transport in the UK, dock dues, loading charges, and all other costs, profits, charges, and expenses.

What paperwork is required for returning unsold items to the UK?

There is guidance available that provides information on how to bring goods back into the UK after they've been imported into another country. You can find out more [here](#).

Does the sole trader need to be VAT registered to sell in an EU member state – in this case, Germany?

You may need to register for VAT in the EU country you're selling to. You can find out more about EU country-specific information on VAT through the European Commission's website.

Does the sole trader need an ATA Carnet in this instance?

The use of a carnet is optional and is a commercial decision, depending on an individual or business's specific circumstances.

Is there a requirement for shipped goods to go through a haulage company, or can the sole trader carry their own items?

This is a decision for the trader, but they should consider the guidance on Merchandise in Baggage above.

---

# Case study: Exhibiting at an overseas trade fair

3



---

# 3

---

**Case study:**  
**Exhibiting at an overseas trade fair**

A woodturner shares her experience of participating in an overseas trade show for the first time in April 2018.



Sally Burnett, woodturner.  
Photo: Simon Bruntnell

---

I am now in my third year of making luxury vessels in wood. I tried direct selling at shows with mixed results, and as my work got larger in size, I realised that architects and interior designers were my target audience.

I am passionate when talking about my work, but I am not confident in 'cold-calling' situations. Approaching individual designers also takes time. The solution seemed to be a trade show, but which one?

Where do others selling to your target audience exhibit? Talk to fellow makers and get their feedback. Our colleagues are a huge and generous resource of experience and knowledge. Once you have narrowed it down, go and visit the show. Talk to the makers exhibiting there. Walk the halls – which one best matches your product? Contact the organisers and do your research on their website.

Organisers are usually keen to provide statistics on the footfall, buyer type, and countries attending. Talk to your target audience, if you can – where do they look for new and innovative products?

Now that you have narrowed down your preferred shows, do your sums. This can be an expensive undertaking with no guarantee of success. Check if there are any grants available for your choice of show. A good source of information and support is your local chamber of commerce, and your local [Department for International Trade](#). They can also provide help with export documentation and shipping.

Read the small print carefully. Some grants require that funding is secured before any show costs have been paid, so you need to plan well in advance, and other grants may offer match funding with upper and lower limits.

---

When I visited Maison&Objet in Paris in September 2017, I walked into the CRAFT Hall and knew that this was where I wanted my work to be. There were no other UK makers exhibiting, so the chances were that I would be there alone with my very basic French. But I couldn't give up now. Look around to see if any other UK organisations have a group stand that you could be part of. Location can be very important so be brave!

As you walk around the show, start thinking about stand design. What is the 'look' of the show and how could your work fit with this? Are you shipping your work and stand furniture, or packing it all in your car or van? For me, Maison&Objet was only going to be financially possible if everything fitted into the car, including my plinths, so they all needed to be flat-packed and light. Look at the available light in the Hall. How many spots do you think you'll need?

Most shows have an application process, but for Maison&Objet CRAFT there is a particularly rigorous pre-application process.

If you are successful with this pre-application, then you will be invited to apply for a stand at the exhibition. Maison&Objet is biannual, so which of its two events is best for you? Ask other exhibitors: do they attend both? Is the visitor profile the same for both?

Now that you have been accepted, what do you need to consider? What literature will you need? Have you got a pricing structure in place that can cope with retail, gallery, trade, and public prices? Should you price in GBP, Euros, or both? Are your terms and conditions robust enough for dealing with non-UK companies? Do you have good quality, high-res images?

The Maison&Objet exhibition catalogue is written in both English and French, so take the time to complete your free listing as soon as possible. I received requests

---

for information from potential buyers, via this online resource, four weeks before the start of the exhibition, and they were still coming in two months afterwards.

If you speak French, then attending an exhibition in France will not be so daunting. If, like me, you are a little nervous because your French is not great, write down some key phrases about your work, translate them into French, and learn them by heart.

Most visitors speak English, but making that initial contact in French is much appreciated.

Most visitors are happy to receive price lists and other information by email, so take down their details and keep notes. This greatly reduces your print costs and enables you to supply information in the most relevant currency, as well as securing important contact details.

Exhibition hours are long and exhausting, but make time every evening to send emails out to the buyers that you've met that day. Many will be there for several days, so may well return to your stand.

Be realistic about your expectations. Know the limits of your production and agree to feasible deadlines. If you don't receive any orders at the show, you mustn't consider this a failure. Buyers want reliable, professional makers and seeing you there more than once gives them confidence. So be prepared to invest in the same show for three years before seeing any positive returns.

Finally, a couple of dos and don'ts:

- Do make your stand as eye-catching as possible and remember that less is more.
- Do as much planning and preparation as you can.
- Do build up your stock before the exhibition.

- 
- Don't struggle alone; if you need help at the show just ask. Everyone wants your stand to be the best that it can be.
  - Don't arrive at the show exhausted – plan your time well.

Above all, enjoy the experience. At the very least you will come away with many new friends and some great contacts.

---

# Case study: Teaching and exhibiting in China

# 4



---

# 4

## Case study: Teaching and exhibiting in China

---

A ceramicist shares her experience of teaching and exhibiting in China in 2019.



Jo Davies, ceramicist

---

Around two years ago, I was contacted by an academic at Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, who was writing a book about Western ceramics. She requested several photographs of my work to include in the book, as well as answers to some questions related to her research. We exchanged a few emails, and then she asked if I might like to do some teaching at the Institute, all expenses paid. How could I say no?

Jingdezhen was already well known to me; as a ceramicist specialising in porcelain, I was well aware of its significance and history. Porcelain originated in this area of China; the clay was taken directly from the ground and Jingdezhen developed as a city adjacent to an abundant seam of naturally occurring porcelain.

However, it is a very different material to the porcelain I use here in the UK.

So, of course, I felt it was important that I go and see Jingdezhen, which I had only read and heard about.

Eighteen months after my initial contact with the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, I flew out to China, but I had very little idea of what to expect. When I arrived I felt unprepared for the teaching, as I had no information about my students, their previous experiences, how much time I would be spending with them, or the Institute's expectations. I now understand that this is a common cultural difference; one side is thirsty for preparatory information, the other wants complete flexibility up until the last moment. In this aspect of our cultural exchange, I learned an important lesson about the value of being flexible in my approach to teaching, and I hope my colleague learned that giving just a little more information to visiting lecturers prior to arrival would maximise the learning experience for their students.

---

During the five weeks I was in Jingdezhen, I decided I would take the opportunity to undertake my own research into its working practices and history. This research took me into studios, factories, galleries, and the homes of fellow craftspeople wanting to show me both their work, as well as their rich ceramics history. For instance, I returned many times to the very beautiful Tao Xi Chuan, a centre that could be seen as the public face of ceramics in Jingdezhen. It has been beautifully restored, creating galleries, studios, ceramic shops, contemporary ceramic markets, and a museum that showcases the best of the industrial remnants from the site. It is a centre that actively encourages a permanent international community, so it was a good opportunity for me to reconnect with my old tutors Takeshi Yasuda and Felicity Aylieff, who have permanent studios in the complex.

Very early on in my visit, I understood that there was a huge amount I didn't know about the culture I found myself in and I was curious to ask questions, find out about the history, and gain insights into the very different ceramic working practices in the region.

China really showed me what volume looks like, what it sounds like, and what it feels like. This is one important cultural difference – what's considered large and what's considered small. This difference in sense of scale also translated into a presumed need for mass-production among my students. My insistence that there was no real place for mass-production in my own was a difficult thing for many of my students, who were being primed for industry, to fully understand: how, as a creative professional, I could do without it was a curiosity and a point we returned to several times.

While I was in Jingdezhen, I found that my position at the Institute was an enabling force for me. My

---

colleagues recommended me to their friends (everyone works in ceramics in Jingdezhen) and so doors opened for me in a way that just showing my work at a fair, or an exhibition, would not have done. This is something I hadn't understood prior to my visit: that the Chinese system of 'face' is very important for doing anything professional. In the UK, it's easy to believe that if you simply show your work it will bring opportunities. However, having a common connection through other people is of particular importance in China.

This was how I was able to meet one of my most important contacts at The Pottery Workshop in Jingdezhen, an important organisation for ceramics, with galleries, studios, and learning spaces in Jingdezhen, Dali, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

Having met with them in Jingdezhen, including their director Caroline Cheng, whose work can be seen at the British Museum, it was agreed that I would meet their gallery curator in Shanghai on my way home. As a result, I'm now looking forward to showing my work in a solo exhibition at Pottery Workshop Shanghai in September 2019.

---

# Case study: Importing to a retail fair in the UK

# 5





# 5

## Case study: Importing to a retail fair in the UK

Daniella Wells, market consultant for Collect sat down with Riccardo Sorani, founder and director of ESH Gallery in Milan, to reflect on trading with the UK after Brexit.

ESH Gallery at Collect.  
Photo: Iona Wolff

---

Firstly, thanks for your time when you have only just returned from London. Let's start with some basics: can you give an overview of your gallery and business model?

ESH Gallery was established in November 2014 with the idea of working with Japanese artists.

My background is actually in Chinese antique porcelain. I started the gallery from scratch, with no contact base, just a real love of contemporary Japanese craftsmanship – inspired by a trip to The European Fine Art Foundation (TEFAF) in Maastricht, The Netherlands. Luckily, one of the Japanese contacts I wrote to after that trip is a representative of many artists I was interested in showing and the business grew from her advice.

We have more or less four exhibitions per year: two of them about contemporary Japanese craft; one is jewellery (usually around Christmas time); and one, it depends, it might be a presentation of new Italian artists or might be a comparison between East and West. Often we work with museums, supporting them from a commercial point of view, in organising a special exhibition to run alongside their programme.

We deal in contemporary craft and sculpture and limited design editions often on the subject of nature, space, and time. I try to avoid work that touches on social or political issues.

---

And what about art fairs?

We've shown at a range of art fairs locally in Italy, France, Switzerland, and, of course, London for Collect. I'm planning a fair in Japan soon.

I really try to consider what I show and where. Some fairs are very much focused on 'fine art' and categorise themselves depending on the collecting at the fair and its reputation. We've tried to avoid purely functional objects, or objects that give an indication of the functional. The word 'craft' can be really problematic at some countries and in certain fairs.

The last couple of years have been extremely unusual, but in terms of the market and your business in general how are things changing for you?

I've thought a lot about how we relate to different kinds of publics and what area of the market we occupy. We present ourselves as a contemporary art gallery, as a general rule, and I talk about 'sculpture'. There's a big difference in price depending on what area of the market you operate in, and during the pandemic we were closed. This gave me the opportunity to look around online and research pricing.

As a gallery, you have to think about the effort involved in trying to sell a piece – is it the same for a piece worth £1,000 compared to 10,000? Paradoxically, it's easier to relate to a potential client about a piece priced around £20,000–30,000 with the statement 'this is an important artist, who is already very established in Japan...'

So, I'm slowly shifting the business model and considering having two sections of the gallery, one for fine art and the other for craft to consider different price points.

---

We are also planning on having an auction – they are fun and it’s easy for people to consider a piece for €300–600 (with a few pieces costing up to €1000 as a starting price), instead of coming into the gallery and considering more significant works. But the regulations on auctions in Italy are quite complicated, so we are still in the process of setting this up.

I’ve found that, over the last couple of years, people have become lazy; fewer people come to the gallery now. And it’s not just us (I’ve visited several galleries recently and found the same) or that Covid-19 is impacting on viewing times. The field is changing. You have to be very careful about how you engage with the public. I recently went to a design event – it was a pop-up followed by an auction – and several works were very ‘cutting edge’ with quite a high price. It clearly had huge investment in terms of marketing and with the history of design in Milan you’d think it would have been a success, but it wasn’t. Within the marketplace, you need to consider the investment in the audience, how engaged they are, and their appetite to buy.

So, to summarise in terms of business: yes, we’re shifting to a higher level with more established artists. Selling major artworks means we are more able to cover the expenses of running the gallery.

Okay, so the is very much focused on sculptural fine art, whether the material is lacquer, porcelain, or glass. What about wearables? How does contemporary jewellery fit in your offer?

In truth, jewellery was a sort of plan B. Around considering that around Christmas clients are less likely to spend €3000–7000, so we looked at a lower price point. It’s more marketing than making money for the gallery. It’s a lot of work for 10–15 artists with maybe 20–30 pieces each. However, it’s a great way to engage people, particularly women. It’s great for variety, but it’s not the focus.

---

And with the jewellery exhibitions, there's not a focus on Japanese artists now? These exhibitions include more international artists, is that correct?

That’s correct. We started with international artists, not just Japanese artists, but as it turns out we now have 80% Italian artists and maybe 20% from outside Italy. Those from outside Italy come from the European community only, otherwise I have to pay a lot of money in customs regulations. I have to think about balance. I also have to think about returns, or adapting a piece, particularly for rings where size is important. This brings a lot of complications, which means it just isn’t commercially viable. So here the practicalities have impacted on what we show, but I’m comfortable with that.

Okay, let’s talk more about the practicalities of how you trade internationally – do you have a set way of dealing with your artists? Your main experience is with importing Japanese artists into the EU?

Most of the time, I follow the same format. We come to an agreement about showing the work and the artist pays for the shipment to the gallery. Normally I keep the pieces for six months to a year and then we decide how best to deal with any unsold works.

I pay 10% VAT on the value of the work every time I import from outside the EU. There is no duty to pay as I declare the work as ‘contemporary art’, which is zero-rated. I have to pay the 10% upfront, which I recover in my tax return. The 10% is calculated on the price set by the artist. Once the work is fully imported to the EU, I am able to move the works around Europe to show at different fairs. I need the flexibility – if I used temporary import it would restrict us to showing the pieces at my gallery, or only in Milan. Temporary import needs a specific address (which would mean the gallery address), so if I tried to move them outside this space,

---

there would be legal implications. It's important to have the works imported fully, so that I can swiftly send them to a client. If a client is based in the US, for example, they then pay the import VAT and duty relevant to their state. The client is usually aware of the fees they incur when importing locally. My pricing strategy only covers the cost of importing to the EU. I always inform the client that they may encounter import fees.

With the description of work, it can be tricky with craft objects if they appear to be functional. For example, functional pottery of no artistic value will attract 22% VAT on import to Italy.

I don't use duty deferred. The import/export adviser that I liaise with at my local chamber of commerce instead suggested that I use a combination of different options such as temporary import for high-value artworks, and only if the work can stay in Italy for at least six months – or use my VAT plafond (ceiling) for lower value items. As a general rule, I have four different options for importing from outside the EU:

- 1) Full import – pay 10% VAT upfront. Pro: Ability to move the piece anywhere. Con: Making a payment upfront.
- 2) Temporary import – this works for higher value works where there is no need for them to move outside the gallery for at least six months. Pro: No need to pay VAT immediately if you present a guarantee (only paying VAT if sold). Con: It requires a custom agent and payment of €200–300 per item (and the work is confined to the bonded area).
- 3) VAT plafond (VAT ceiling) – As I'm a regular importer, I can build a VAT reserve that is calculated on the VAT paid in the previous tax year. I can use that instead of paying VAT upfront when VAT is due.
- 4) ATA Carnet – I used an ATA Carnet once to show in Japan. An ATA Carnet can be requested at your local chamber of commerce for temporary exports and re-importation. By presenting an ATA Carnet to foreign

customs, your goods travel duty-free and import tax-free into a carnet country for up to one year. The pros are that it's not expensive and you don't need to advance any VAT, because the procedure is insured. You pay a small percentage of the declared value and the goods can travel to different countries. The cons are that the ATA Carnet is valid for 12 months and some countries don't accept it for art fairs (e.g. Switzerland), so you'd need to check beforehand.

When returning unsold works, I pay the shipping. Returning works to Japan means having to officially import them again. It's essential to include detailed descriptions to ensure that the work doesn't incur duty. I rely on the advice of my Japanese consultant about how they (the artists) would prefer to have the work returned.

When selling, the components of pricing are important. You need to make sure that everything is covered in the final price to the client. To use the example of an artwork from outside the EU (or not VAT-registered in the EU) with a price of €1,000, here are the precise components according to a margin scheme:

- €1000 artist price
- €100 VAT import (10% in Italy)
- €1000 gallery commission
- €440 Italian VAT 22% (on €2000)
- €2540 total (so rounded up €2500)

As for me, I pay 22% VAT on margin only, which means €220 on €1000. Therefore, I gain on behalf of the client status and receive €220 for free. But because I paid €100 before, the potential discount is €120 (approx. 5%). The rise in price is only slight, which means that I don't lose money.

If the artist is VAT-registered:

- €1000 artist price
- €220 VAT (22% in Italy)
- €1000 gallery commission

---

–€440 Italian VAT 22% (on €2000)  
–€2440 total (round €2500)  
(a maximum discount here €220/same as above)

To many these customs procedures are an additional element to consider when trading between Europe and the UK. As a lot of your experience has been in importing Japanese works to the EU, this is not new for you. Have you seen any changes in attitude from clients as to where an artist's work is from?

I haven't seen a change in attitude or increased interest in the provenance of the work. It's almost seven years since we established the gallery and I only have only three clients that would define themselves as 'Japanese collectors'. Most people buy because they like the piece; they don't do their homework before they come to you. Although saying that, presenting work online leads to several enquiries about artists (and not so many sales). It's a lot easier to do research online.

It's interesting to consider the fixed idea of a Japanese aesthetic. Why do people think Japan comprises a sort of quiet, minimal, consistent group? They say: 'I know it's Japanese'. But there is such a wide variety of creative output from Japan including manga and anime. Maybe it's a profound form of connoisseurship? I'm happy to let that flourish.

Certainly, the history of a country's traditions is important. At Collect, for example, the fair is staged in a country with long ceramic traditions, a history of collecting, and a knowledge of contemporary craft. That's why I go. There are many potential clients in London.

---

So in terms of British makers, however you wish to define them, who have you shown at your gallery from the UK and why have you chosen them?

I have shown Matthew Chambers (I bought a commissioned piece for a client). He's a big name and really good. Also Angela Mellor and Philip Melling. Philip's work is sculpture made by bending metal bars (with very nice patination) and I had a solo show of his work, which was quite a success. I first read about Angela's work in a magazine article. I really love her use of fine bone china and that she uses natural elements from the seashore in her mark-making.

And how have you found working with British makers?

In terms of business, very straightforward. Matthew was very helpful with providing the right piece according to the client wishes. The main difference is how the work is packaged – it is very different to the Japanese. The Japanese really consider how their work is viewed. There is huge attention to detail in the packaging, which makes for a lovely buying experience.

In terms of the artist/gallery relationship, what do you consider to be the key responsibilities of artists?

There are two main things. First, is the personal relationship and the second, the practicalities.

The first is really the most important. We need to feel that the artist is interested in the bigger picture and their fit within the gallery. Artists that are immediately focused on when they will get paid for sales can be off-putting. I'm interested in having a discussion about the work and in making sure that I'm getting the best pieces, and the exhibition and exposure opportunities are right. I don't do solo shows anymore, but sometimes with three artists, and we print catalogues for these shows. I've heard some galleries ask artists

---

for payment for being included in a catalogue – I don't do that. That starts to feel like I'm hiring out my gallery space. It's an entirely different business model.

But you do need to talk specifics when it comes to payment. I once incurred double bank fees when trying to pay Yen into a bank account given to me by an artist, where the account wouldn't accept that currency. This was frustrating as the artist had quoted the price in Yen and given this specific account for payment.

In the UK, Brexit has been really frustrating in terms of change, and it feels like there is still a lot to be decided. Has Brexit affected your interest in showing British artists, or showing at UK-based art fairs?

No, definitely not, as I'm so used to importing work from Japan.

However, I have to consider pricing and decide what the right price is for the client with additional costs on my side. This means that it's only worthwhile taking part in a British fair with high-value works. At least those over £3,000.

The main issue is the price of shipping. This is a really big issue. Coming to the UK this year, the price for shipment between Italy and the UK is now over double what I paid pre-Brexit. It might be something to do with your many different entries to the UK and that drivers are less likely to find a shipment for the return journey, so they return with an empty van. I was expecting an increase in costs, maybe €700, but this was a shock. I've heard that new rules will come in force in May, so from June it could be worse.

I know things will change. In Switzerland, where they are set up to trade with those in the EU, I have worked with bonded areas at the art fair. The customs

---

paperwork can be done at the fair, and there is no delay in getting sold works collected by the client. This is a great system.

If I do Collect again, I'll probably drive. It will take a while and I'll need to book a slot at customs, but this may well reduce larger shipping expenses.

In terms of schedules, when coming to the UK this year, were there any delays due to customs?

No delays. I just had to be ready about two weeks prior to normal to submit my paperwork. So for Collect (held at the end of February) I was ready by 31 January. The lack of delays was probably due to our decision to work with a professional shipper (in this case, EBISS), as they looked after the whole process.

It's important to listen to the information needed at different stages. For example, first off when looking at scheduling your shipment, they will just need basic details for volume. When preparing the customs paperwork, you need to be extremely precise and it takes time to provide accurate information such as sizes and weights of boxes within the crate, both individually and collectively.

You have to consider that different countries require different regulations and information. For example, in Switzerland they are adamant that the declared price is the maximum price that the work will be sold for.

Due to Brexit, I decided to arrange temporary import for the artworks I needed to take to Collect. EBISS organised all of the custom operations. The first step was to obtain an EORI GB number which allowed me to trade in the UK, then a proforma invoice was prepared where values were declared and the works were consigned to me at my booth at Somerset House. At Collect, I only took higher priced works in order to mitigate the impact of the fees occurred to transform

---

the Temporary Import status into the Full Import, if sold. For certain pieces in order to avoid those fees, I advise clients that might be convenient to wait that the pieces would be returned to Italy then shipped again to the UK Fully Imported. This might be applied for those smaller artworks or not fragile.

Thinking about international trade more broadly, can you tell us about the paperwork for rules of origin? Do you have any tips or lessons learned about these details?

For me, it's quite straightforward. Of course, I do not import anything that relies on ivory. It's important to be cautious with things like shells and coral. Also remember that something like coral could be used as a small decorative element. I once had to import a piece of furniture to the US and within the knobs there was a coral detail. Any sort of material like this can add complications, finding the scientific name and provenance.

Most of the time, the country of origin is simply Japan – but it's important to check that all components of a work originate from Japan also. Declaring that the origin is Japan is helpful in case you need to return the work.

One thing that I have been discussing recently about rules of origin relates to an artist doing a making demonstration at a fair or in the gallery. So, in some instances, the piece could be made by a Japanese artist, with Japanese materials, but made in Italy.

---

We've talked a lot about shipment using art shippers, but do you use big companies each time for just one piece?

It depends on the value of the work and there are a lot of websites that aggregate different shippers, which are worth exploring. I use FedEx or UPS if the value is up to £5,000.

I also use DHL. You still need to prepare the paperwork, the proforma with the value declared and the code, usually 9700 (international trading code for artwork category) and 9703 (that defines the work as sculptures).

Some of those courier companies include insurance in the cost. How do you usually deal with insurance?

I usually pay insurance at 0.1% on non-fragile works and 0.3% on fragile works, of the declared value for fairs and exhibitions (in my case, this is the price I will pay excluding VAT to the artist).

As I have insurance with the gallery, the shipping insurance is usually just an extra for every fair I participate in. It's not easy to find an insurer for a fair if you are not a client of the company.

For shipping to clients I use Fedex, UPS, or DHL. I use their insurance, or the insurance provided by the aggregator. In those cases, it is around 1% of the declared value. My art insurer does not cover shipping by those couriers.

---

These last couple of years a lot of the market has gone online. What's your experience of online selling?

I've got two years' experience with online platforms and it hasn't been successful for me. There is a lot of administration required for platforms such as Artsy and 1stDibs – the former favours high-profile artists and the latter requires a substantial inventory. These platforms don't currently suit my business set up. They both require a constant change of inventory, which just isn't possible. For now, I've decided to use my budget for digital marketing on my own website. We've started to sell as part of an e-shop and have recently integrated some online advertising. We hope to see the results soon.

I know some people have revised their Terms through experience of selling works that haven't been seen in real life. Do you have a returns policy?

No, I don't have a stated policy on my website and, luckily, I have limited experience of returns. I judge each case individually and each client. In Italy, you can return something within 14 days with no reason for the return. (This rule applies to e-commerce only).

Of course, the client would need to pay to return a work to me and in the same condition.

It's important for the reputation of the gallery that any issues are resolved well. I once had the situation that a client had paid the first instalment for a work and then couldn't settle the remaining instalments. We settled on a less expensive work as a compromise.

---

Have you had any challenges with managing data or artist IP?

When there is a change in the law, like the update in the law on GDPR, it means there are fees to pay (e.g. website updates to make them compliant in Italy). Officially, a couple of years ago, you had to write to every contact for their agreement to remain on your records. But this makes no sense when everyone has the option to 'unsubscribe' from a mailing. It's also entirely linked with e-data and spam. If you write a hard-copy letter, it's treated entirely differently.

Sometimes I ask people whether they'd like to share their details so they can be updated about our gallery programme – I don't send lots of emails. I know a lot of my clients personally.

I've found a change all over Europe with clients and their reticence to give contact details at a fair. When I hand out numerous business cards, I don't get details in return. Where previously I would have taken 30–40 contacts at a fair, recently it's been only eight. This is a major issue, because if you don't always make lots of sales at a fair, you need contacts to build your client list. It's a culture of caution. At a fair like Collect where you encourage prices to be displayed on the works, it's a good idea but it removes the possibility of getting contact details in the exchange for price queries. It's frustrating as my details are frequently taken; for example, I received 20 emails from restorers/photographers/online websites after Collect.

In terms of IP and the gallery, I have switched from being a sole trader to a limited company. I have registered the name.

---

Thanks Riccardo. What does the rest of the year look like for you?

We will present our first ceramic auction in June, and we have a new exhibition in September. We'll develop our plans to present more established artists within the programme, and will continue with the Christmas jewellery focus. If you'd like to receive updates, visit [ESH Gallery here](#).



ESH Gallery in Milan

Crafts Council Registered  
Charity Number 280956



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



Department for  
Digital, Culture,  
Media & Sport



Department for  
International Trade