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THE CRAFTS COUNCIL LAUNCHES MAKE! CRAFT! LIVE! TO CELEBRATE ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2021

Make! Craft! Live! is a season of nationwide exhibitions, learning events, fairs, and digital activities that celebrates the value of craft, from October 2021 to October 2022.

The events over the last few years, defined by the pandemic, and the impact of climate change and racial injustice, have highlighted the social, economic, and environmental inequalities that exist in our world. The Crafts Council passionately believes that craft can inspire change, help us navigate this shifting landscape and build our road to recovery.

Make! Craft! Live! is a season of nationwide exhibitions, learning events, fairs, and digital activities that celebrates the value of craft to empower, enrich and connect our society. Running from October 2021 to October 2022, this marks 50 years of the Crafts Council and will be principally delivered through 50 craft activities that will take place at venues across the UK, including: craft studios, museums, galleries, cultural venues, schools, community centres and online.

Make! Craft! Live! marks a shift in the Crafts Council's programme to accelerate our collaborative working, prioritise the social and environmental value of making, and platform new voices and narratives that have been historically overlooked. Championing ideas of diversity, sustainability, and resilience, the Make! Craft! Live! programme is a call to action to rethink the role of making as a vehicle for social change.

Through this activity, audiences are encouraged to discover the wealth of craft that surrounds them - at home, on the streets, in our communities, towns and cities - and to think about its impact on our daily lives. It invites those who have discovered (or rediscovered) making at home and during lockdown, to get out and connect with others through a range of activities, and to discover new work, ideas, processes, and people.

Activities developed by the Crafts Council to support the programme include:

- *We Gather* a new exhibition at the Crafts Council gallery from 17 November to 5 February 2022. Curated by Rosie Ross & Griffi and commissioned by Dr Karen Patel of Birmingham City University, the exhibition features five female artists of Black and Asian heritage whose work shares a commitment to craft and its cultural value, and social justice. The makers are Francisca Onumah, Lorna Hamilton-Brown, Shaheen Ahmed, Omeima Mudawi-Rowlings and Onome Otite.

- A series of inclusive hands-on workshops for all ages at newly re-opened cultural and community venues across England at the end of half-term on Saturday 30 October, championing the positive impact of everyday creativity and cultural engagement (see below)
- A series of talks and discussions exploring crafts transformational power to connect and support.
- A social media campaign profiling the nation's makers.
- A new digital directory of craft shops and venues across the UK to help connect the public with making in real life.
- The anniversary of the Crafts Council will also be marked by Crafts magazine in print and online, reflecting on 50 years of craft with contributions from Magdalene Odundo, Grayson Perry, Carol McNicoll, Jonathan Anderson, and Jay Blades.

Key aims and the focus for events and activities hosted by external partners looking to participate include:

- Spotighting, supporting, or showcasing makers from Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ makers and makers who identify as having a visible or non-visible disability.
- Engaging a variety of audiences across age, gender, ethnicity, ability, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Activities that seek to target groups who are currently underrepresented and underserved in the crafts sector.
- Highlighting new cutting-edge practice that seeks to push or challenges the boundaries of craft.
- Prioritising collaboration and collective ways of working
- Presenting work that explores crafts' positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Half-term workshops:

 [The Halloween Crafternoon Tea Party at Blackpool Central Library](#)

 [A Bug's Life Workshop at mima, Middlesborough](#)

 [Feeling Form Workshop at Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth](#)

 [Green Willow Weaving Workshop at Devon Guild of Craftsmen](#)

 [Digging Deep: Stories in Clay with Zeba Imam at British Ceramics Biennial in Stoke-on-Trent](#)

 [Dream Weave Workshop at The Bureau Centre for the Arts, Blackburn](#)

 [Empowering Crafts Workshop at Fargo Village, Coventry](#)

 [Knit and Weave with Black Girl Knit Club and LA Basketry in the Crafts Council Gallery, London](#)

Quotes

“This year-long programme of 50 events, hosted by the Crafts Council and partners, will explore the big societal issues that craft can help address, such as equity and social justice, mental health and wellbeing, and the climate crisis. Over the last five decades, our core purpose – to encourage innovation and inspire a passion for craft – has not changed. We have also seen how craft can have economic and social impact. This broadening of the craft world is now our focus. An anniversary is a chance to look back, celebrate successes and take stock – and gaze into the future.

With initiatives such as our Make! Craft! Live! campaign, we are looking forward to exploring what a future for craft could be and will throw all our energy into ensuring it is bright.” Rosy Greenlees, executive director, Crafts Council

- Ends -

#craftscouncilat50 #makecraftlive @craftscouncil

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About the Crafts Council

The Crafts Council is the national charity for craft. We believe craft skills and knowledge enrich and uplift us as individuals and can change our world for the better. Through our activities we inspire making, empower learning and nurture craft businesses. We do this by championing craft and its positive impact on society, increasing levels of craft education and participation, growing the market for craft, and by building a sustainable and inclusive craft sector.

www.craftscouncil.org.uk

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