



CRAFTS COUNCIL WELCOMES FOUR NEW TRUSTEES

21 DECEMBER 2023

PRESS RELEASE

Crafts Council is pleased to announce the appointment of four new Trustees, providing essential strategic direction and advice to our leadership team at a pivotal time for the organisation.

Richard Hill, John Knell, Rose Sinclair and Jake Solomon have joined the Board of Trustees to serve four-year terms, effective November 2023.

Natalie Melton, Crafts Council executive director, says: "I am delighted to welcome these four Trustees to the Board, who each bring distinct perspectives and skillsets.

"Rose is a founding member and formerly Chair of our Equity Advisory Council (EAC), helping shape our work in representing the voices of makers from marginalised and under-represented communities. This appointment formalises the EAC's work within our governance structure, making the most of Rose's skill in communicating under-represented craft histories. Jake's appointment extends the Board's craft business expertise, Richard brings a wealth of corporate governance experience, and John's work as an evaluation leader in the culture sector is equally vital.

"A transformation is underway at Crafts Council, following significant changes in our organisation and funding streams. The commitment Richard, John, Rose and Jake have made as we embark on this journey gives me great confidence in Crafts Council's future."

Richard Hill

Richard is chief executive of bpha, a housing association managing 20,000 homes across Bedford, Cambridge and Oxford. Richard has held leadership roles in the housing sector for nearly 20 years, including as deputy chief executive of the Homes and Communities Agency. Richard is also non-executive chair Phoenix Futures, a drugs and alcohol rehabilitation charity working in residential, community and prison settings across the UK.

Richard says: "I'm delighted to be joining the Board of Crafts Council. I've seen throughout my career how participation in crafts can have such a

positive effect on people's lives. I'm excited to see how I can help Crafts Council grow and develop."

John Knell

John Knell is an independent strategy consultant working across the private, public and third sectors. Over the last 15 years he has built an international reputation as a cultural policy analyst, working with governments, funders, cities and major cultural institutions around the world. Since 2013, John has run Counting What Counts, providing impact evaluation and measurement tools to the cultural sector. This includes Culture Counts and the Impact & Insight Toolkit, used by Arts Council England across its funded portfolio.

John was Director of Research and Policy at the Work Foundation between 1998 and 2003, retaining strong links with leading research centres. John is a fellow of The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

John says: "I am so excited to be a new Crafts Council Trustee. This is such an inspiring moment to join the Board as we work with Crafts Council's talented team to showcase inspirational makers and make everything about craft more inclusive, enriching and economically vibrant. I love the power of making as both a highly personal form of creative expression, and as a vitally important collective act of sharing and connecting."

Rose Sinclair

Rose is a Lecturer (Textiles) in Design Education at Goldsmiths, University of London. Rose's PhD doctoral research focuses on Black British women, their crafting practices and textiles networks, such as Dorcas Clubs and Societies.

In 2022-23, Rose co-curated the exhibition *Dorcas Stories from the Front Room, Textile Narratives, Now and Then* with Craftspace in Birmingham, and the first retrospective of the work of Caribbean textile designer Althea McNish, *Althea McNish: Colour is Mine*, at William Morris Gallery in London and The Whitworth in Manchester. Rose's first monograph, about Althea McNish, will be published in Autumn 2024.

Rose is a Heritage Crafts Ambassador for Heritage Crafts UK and a Trustee of the Textile Society UK.

Rose says: "I have loved art, design and craft since I was a child. I grew up with crafting skills of all kinds around me. I'm excited about joining Crafts Council as a Trustee at this time of change. It is important for me to be part of that voice change and champion those key issues that are important."

Jake Solomon

Jake Solomon is a small business owner in the craft space, employing more than 40 people across two businesses in Birmingham. Foresso manufactures

a wooden terrazzo made from industrial waste streams, focusing on waste wood from the joinery industry and end-of-life refractory investment. Lunts Castings is a 90-year-old bronze foundry. Jake's focus is on creating working environments built around the people doing the work, creating business processes that allow craft skills to remain in the UK.

Jake says: "The desire to create viable craft-based businesses based on modern manufacturing standards, pricing and social impact, no matter how small, is my central philosophy."

About our Board of Trustees

Crafts Council has 13 Trustees led by two Co-Chairs. Our Board of Trustees meets four times a year, holding responsibility for overseeing Crafts Council's strategic direction and performance. Drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, personally and professionally, the Board includes a minimum of four makers.

The Trustee appointments were made by Crafts Council's nominations committee, comprised of incumbent Trustees Majeda Clarke and Melanie Eddy, with Board of Trustees Co-Chair, Helen Hyde.

We are committed to ensuring that our Trustees bring a range of skills and experiences to the organisation. We work to ensure the group is geographically and culturally diverse, so they can best support the needs of the organisation and our audiences.

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Notes to Editors

Read about our Board of Trustees and find our annual reports at www.craftscouncil.org.uk/about/governance

Please email m_stern@craftscouncil.org.uk copying comms@craftscouncil.org.uk for more information, interviews or photographs.

About Crafts Council

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 building a sustainable and inclusive craft sector.

Supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

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