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CRAFTS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES PROJECT TO TRANSFORM ITS COLLECTIONS STORE FOR PUBLIC ACCESS

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Crafts Council announces Craft for the People, a three-year project to make the national collection for craft more accessible to the public.

Through this project, Crafts Council's Collection Store, based on Pentonville Road in London, will be transformed to enable public access for the first time. Object storage, care and interpretation will be improved to enrich collection visits. A nationwide consultation involving arts organisations and community groups will contribute to the development of a sustainable strategy to widen engagement with the Collection.

By 2026, Crafts Council will deliver a collections experience for visitors that brings out previously hidden stories of makers and objects, speaking powerfully to groups that are currently under-represented by the Collection and its interpretation. The Collections Store will become an important site for the public and specialists alike to study and enjoy contemporary craft.

Craft for the People is generously supported with an award of £235,466 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), part of its [Dynamic Collections](#) initiative.

Craft for the People will create opportunities for early-career craft professionals to gain valuable paid work experience within the national collection for craft. Led by Senior Collections and Programme Manager Deborah Ridley, the project is supported by six paid work placements drawn from members of [Young Craft Citizens](#), a collective of 16 to 30-year olds interested in shaping the future of craft, design and making, convened by Crafts Council. Working within the Collection Store, these early-career professionals will directly shape the outcome of this project.

The public consultation will bring Young Craft Citizens together with members of [Craft UK](#), a national network for organisations from across the craft sector, also facilitated by Crafts Council, along with Blackburn-based [National Festival of Making](#). In addition to informing a new approach to widening participation within the Collection, this consultation will advise on new interpretation, revealing the previously hidden power and meaning that the Collection holds for different audiences.



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Comprising over 1,700 works, Crafts Council Collection celebrates the breadth of contemporary craft in Britain. It is home to works by iconic makers including Lucie Rie, Grayson Perry, Shawanda Corbett, Kaffe Fassett, Edmund de Waal and Simone Brewster. Since its inception in 1972, the Collection has been shared through exhibitions and loans to museums and galleries across the UK and internationally, as well as at Crafts Council Gallery in London

Natalie Melton, Crafts Council's executive director, says: "This significant support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund will help us better conserve, interpret and enable greater access to the Collection. Through Craft for the People, key communities will shape and inform how the Collection can be used in ways that are relevant to their own needs and interests. I am excited to see how this project will inform our ambitions for the development of the Collection."

Deborah Ridley, Collections Manager and project lead, Craft for the People, says: "Receiving this funding is seismic for Crafts Council Collection. Sharing this fantastic collection widely, and in new and innovative ways, is an important priority for us. We are thrilled The National Lottery Heritage Fund are supporting us on our mission."

Sabrina Chu, one of the first Young Craft Citizens placements who is already working with Craft for the People, says: "As something so entwined with our daily lives, craft should be experienced up close - not only through our eyes, but also through touch. I am honoured to have the chance to bring this project to life, for more people to explore both the tangible and intangible magic of craft."

Follow Craft for the People at:

<https://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/about/collections/craft-for-the-people>

- Ends -

Notes to editors

For press information please email m_stern@craftscouncil.org.uk or c_russell@craftscouncil.org.uk

Images

For high-res images please contact comms@craftscouncil.org.uk

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 by building a sustainable and inclusive craft sector.

Supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

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The Heritage Fund helps protect, transform and share the things from the past that people care about, from popular museums and historic places, our natural environment and fragile species, to the languages and cultural traditions that celebrate who we are.

The Heritage Fund is passionate about heritage and committed to driving innovation and collaboration to make a positive difference to people's lives today, while leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.

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