

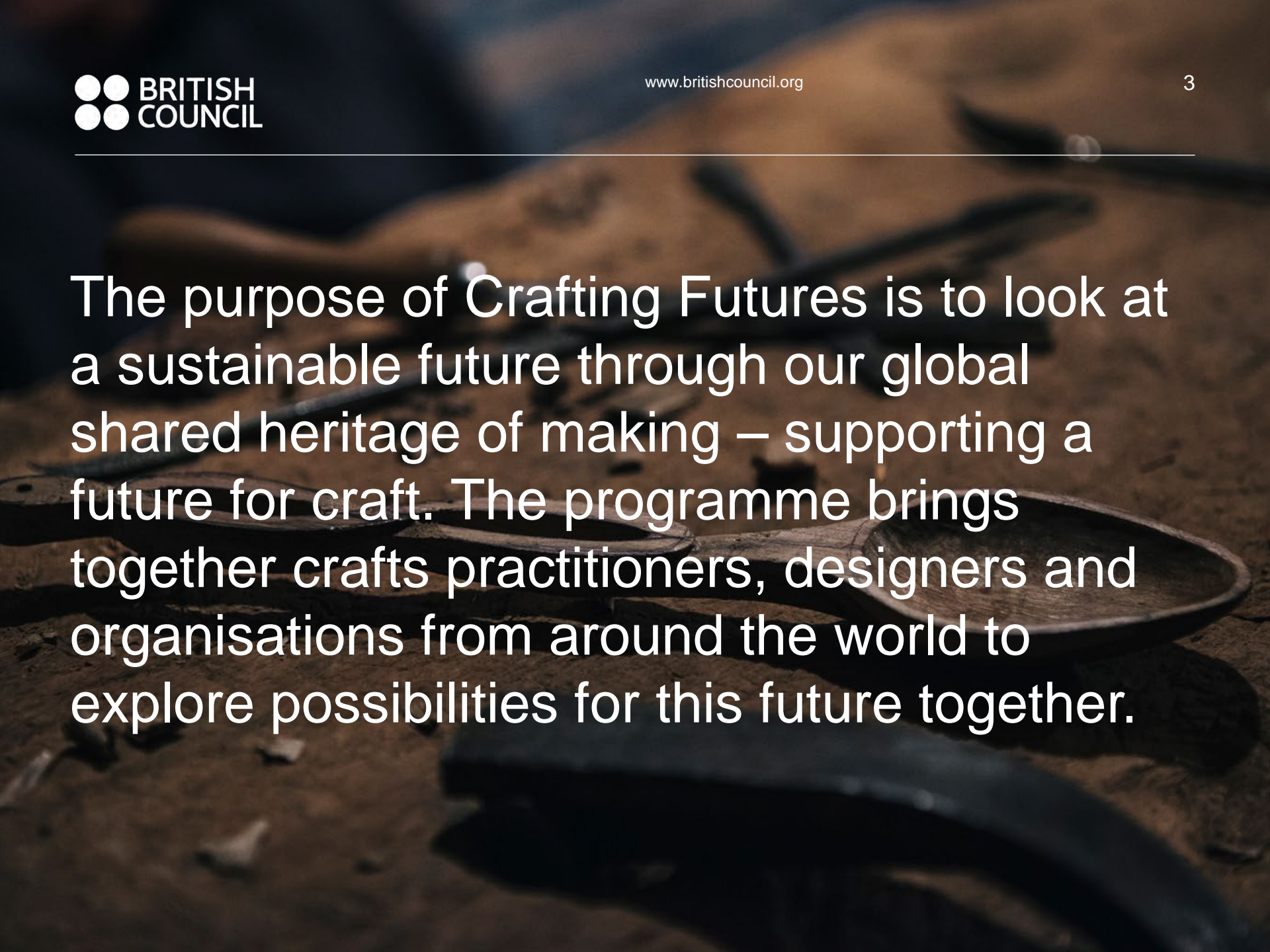
CRAFTING FUTURES



About British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 65 million people directly and 731 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.



The purpose of Crafting Futures is to look at a sustainable future through our global shared heritage of making – supporting a future for craft. The programme brings together crafts practitioners, designers and organisations from around the world to explore possibilities for this future together.

All projects within Crafting Futures look to either:

- Create opportunities for craftspeople to train, learn or enter crafts practice;
- Enhance the perceived value of craft, including developing new audiences; or
- Enhance the creative practice of craft through collaboration.



Crafting Futures projects in themselves explore how craft can create a sustainable future by testing methods and approaches and the projects should be seen as living research.

Each project is developed against the local need, stakeholders and context.

UK partners are brought on board in the British Council's spirit of mutuality, matching with contexts they feel connect with their own conditions.

All outcomes of the projects are made as publicly accessible as possible, in order to grow a global community of practice within our global network.

Participating countries



In development:

China
Peru
Argentina
Nepal
Sri Lanka
Uzbekistan
Kyrgyzstan
Kazakhstan
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Georgia
The Philippines
Indonesia
Romania
Bangladesh (from 2020)
Sri Lanka (from 2020)

Ongoing:

Thailand (year 2)
Myanmar (year 2)
Malaysia (year 2)
Vietnam (exit)
Morocco (exit)
Afghanistan (year 1)
India (year 1)
Mexico (year 2)
Chile (year 1)

HOW WE'RE DOING IT

A woman is shown from the chest up, focused on her work at a traditional wooden loom. She is wearing a light-colored, patterned shirt. The loom is made of dark wood and has many threads running through it. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the workshop. On the right side of the image, there is a large, white, stylized geometric graphic consisting of several parallel lines that form a series of nested, angular shapes, resembling a modern architectural element or a stylized letter 'K'.

Project Themes

- Inclusivity (marginalised, indigenous & female communities)
- Culture-based design
- Intergenerational connections
- Environmental sustainability
- Craft online
- Craft in the expanded practice, such as architecture



Research and Learning Tools



- Working to ensure projects are producing globally accessible learnings and approaches, capturing methodologies through learning kits and toolkits
- Commissioning research and mappings, capturing key issues within communities, key organisations and opportunities for collaboration

Residencies

- Building networks for craftspeople and designers to exchange skills and practice around a shared challenge (design innovation, technical skills, sustainability)
- Focuses on enhancing relationships rather than the creation of new products



Education Collaborations



- Research collaborations between educational institutions
- Trialling new curriculum and creative education models
- Educator exchange programmes

Digital Learning and Exchange

- Building relationships with hard to access communities (i.e. within conflict zones) through digital learning and exchange platforms
- Storytelling around craft practices through the commission of new content such as film or maps/databases
- Online campaigns



Storytelling

- Installations, commissions, workshops and public engagement projects to tell the story of craft to the widest audiences
- Exhibitions at festivals, museums and showcasing platforms
- Media partnerships



International Exchange

- Inbound study tours to the UK, connecting with major craft events
- Regional and international conferences and events for knowledge sharing



WHY CRAFT?



“The artisan sector is the second largest employer in the developing world after agriculture, worth over \$32 billion each year. Globally the artisan sector is growing - international trade in artisan goods more than doubled between 2002 & 2012. Over 65% of artisan activity takes place in developing economies.”

The Alliance for Artisan Enterprise

“From master goldsmiths to makers who build film sets and props, from the small-batch production of designer-makers to one-off ceramic masterpieces, and from the centuries-old traditions of everyday craft to cutting-edge digital making, craft skills promote wellbeing and community, open the doors to an incredible range of careers and inspire the innovations that shape the future.”

Crafts Council, ‘A Case for Craft’

Why Craft?

- **Mutuality:** Making is a practice shared across the world, which crosses boundaries and histories
- **Economic development:** according to the UNCTAD 2018 Creative Economy report, craft is the most important creative industry in developing countries, while design is the largest creative sector with a clear overlap on craft
- **Cultural Development:** craft is included in UNESCO's Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage, being defined as more than just a cultural object, but representative of community knowledge, skills and experience
- **Environmental Sustainability:** opportunities to promote ecological sustainability through the handmade, including the introduction of sustainable materials, innovative processes and materials and changes in consumption and production habits. Craft is associated with slow movements, promoting different economic models (or even pre-industrial models)

Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Challenges in UK Craft

Education

- no requirement to include making in primary and secondary education, creating significant decline in students studying craft at GCSE level
- more than 50% decline in the Higher Education craft courses on offer in the last 10 years;
- UK visa restrictions mean international students often leave upon graduation
- Fewer young people entering craft professionally

Market

- Small domestic market for sales
- Many makers must export but lack the knowledge and network to do so
- Loss of major heritage industries and resulting unemployment

Challenges in UK Craft

Enterprise

- Poor business skills amongst makers; many individuals need to take on additional work and earn below the minimum wage
- Across the UK, there are **11,620** businesses involved in craft industries; Over **50%** of these businesses are unregistered micro businesses, suggesting a strong reliance on small independent makers.

Diversity

- Lack of diversity, including fewer women in full-time businesses and non-white minorities

Government

- Little or no acknowledgement from government on the value of craft economically or socially

Opportunities in UK Craft

Education

- How will craft respond to the changes in Higher Education?
- There is a welcome growth in apprenticeships, albeit small in number, since 2007/08 with most of this growth occurring in 2013/14. This reflects a shift in funding policy, with a greater focus on apprenticeships and a move away from other work-based learning.

Enterprise

- Craft is the most entrepreneurial of all the creative industries sectors
- Craft seems to offer significant routes into enterprise for people who have not traditionally been well represented in the business community. In particular, craft offers strong opportunities for women to work as creative entrepreneurs: research shows that whilst, in general men are almost twice as likely as women to start a business, in craft the percentage of female entrepreneurs is close to 70%
- How will craft leverage digital, technology and innovation to change business?
- How can making thinking be applied to other industries?

Opportunities in UK Craft

Market

- It is estimated that craft practitioners contribute **£500m** to the UK rural economy, which has developed without cultural strategy.
- Market demand is greatest for contemporary and 'cutting edge' craft.
- How can craft respond to the economic effects of the 'age of austerity'? How can it prevail despite the budget cuts in the arts and culture sectors?

Diversity

- More likely to be older than those in all occupations (40 per cent are over 50);
- More likely to suffer from a work-limiting health problem or disability (17 per cent compared to 13 per cent);
- How can craft build on this and create a space for more diverse makers?

Government

- How will craft respond to Brexit?

Opportunities in UK Craft

The Future

- Can craft respond to the growing concerns over environmental and ethical issues?
- How can craft address issues of well-being, ageing populations and inclusion?
- How can craft present different economic models in a changing global world?

Trends in UK Craft: Sustainability and Localism



Fernando Laposse, Totomoxtle

Trends in UK Craft: Craft and Well-being



Craftivism Collective in collaboration with MIND mental health charity

Trends in UK Craft: Materials

Matt·er

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Con	Ex	Se	Ca	De	Hi	Na	Po	Pro	Im	Inn	Et	So	Mec	Ch	Pre	Sub	Pra	
Li	Unx	Med	Mil	Col	Eco	Th	Yo	En	Gl	Vo	Am	Mas	Liq	Be	Fo	Dis	Lo	

Trends in UK Craft: Craft and the Expanded Field



Neil Brownsword, FACTORY

Trends in UK Craft: Regenerating Heritage



Mark Tallowin, TALLOWIN

Trends in UK Craft: Innovation and Technology



Natsai Audre Chieza, Faber Futures

Creative Clusters



Cockpit Arts