



Six steps to commissioning an original piece of craft

1. What do you want to achieve? When approaching the commissioning process, your first thing you need to decide is what you are trying to achieve.

Draw up a list of relevant information to move you closer to identifying your goal. This is the first step in a project brief to provide the maker with the necessary information for the project.

- Maker?
- Material
- Object type
- Scale
- Who or what is it for?
- What's your deadline?

You may already know who the maker is to be, and wish to commission them because you admire their work. If not, researching your maker can be fun, a voyage of discovery on the internet, in magazines or galleries or at craft fairs. (*See [where to buy craft](#) for further information*).

2. Know your budget- it is important at this stage to identify the funds you have to spend on the commission. This will affect both the choice of maker and the nature of the finished piece. Bear in mind that changes to the work as the project progresses could affect the finished price.

3. Discuss your requirements- an informal chat with a maker or gallery staff will help your initial enquiry into the commission's feasibility. This is also a good opportunity to get to know the maker or gallery and decide if you will work well together.

4. Write a brief- writing a brief gets your ideas across in a structured way and ensures you are clear about your requirements. This should include:

- Deadline
- Budget
- A description of the work required, which should include (if appropriate) dimensions, materials, design, colours, materials, ring size, specific stones or elevation drawings
- Any special requirements, such as engravings

This is a good working document to provide potential collaborators with the budget details and required completion date, as well as any specific features you want the piece to have. Even if the design is being totally left to the maker, you should still provide a brief in order to have a written record of your requirements.

Once you have decided on what you're spending and the nature of the work, obtain a written quotation. You may wish this to include the timescale and a breakdown of material and labour costs. At this point they may suggest a design fee. This is common practice and enables the maker to present a series of drawings reflecting their interpretation of your commission. Design drawings are paid for before any work begins.

5. Agree Terms and starting the work- once you have found someone to create what you want, to the right budget and timeframe, you should ensure that you are both clear about when a commitment is made to start work. This will usually be when the first payment is made.

It is common for a maker or gallery to request a deposit, to ensure you are committed to the project, and also to pay for the materials.

If you haven't already done so, you should at this point map out appointments for viewing the work in progress and keeping up to date with instalment payments (if appropriate). Ensure that materials to be used, payment schedule and timescale for completion are confirmed in writing (if not done already in your brief to the maker).

It is always advisable to put your mutually agreed terms detailed in writing, to guide you through the process and to ensure you are both clear about time frames and requirements. A gallery will have experience of doing this, as will an experienced maker.

6. Keep in Touch- once all is agreed and you are ready to leave the work in the hands of the maker, agree to keep in touch, to stay up to date with the progress of the work. However, do this with consideration, as you are entering a process of mutual trust. You do not need to keep in constant and unnecessary contact, but by all means ask questions or check on progress when reasonable to do so.

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