Craft is for everyone.

Craft encourages us to appreciate beauty and authenticity. To celebrate ideas. To value materials and notice how things are made.

It moves, amuses and provokes. It pushes us to ask questions, to be sensitive and to think carefully.

Craft gives us a link to the physical. A need to touch, shape, mould, feel and create. To roll up our sleeves, have a go and get our hands dirty. To say, what would happen if?

It encourages us to think with our hands. Feel with our heads. Listen with our eyes.

Craft changes lives.

It brings people together, starting conversations and changing communities. It connects industries. Opens up opportunities. Makes the futuristic possible.

The urge to make is human. Let’s celebrate the achievements of our makers, collectors and supporters at a time when it matters more than ever.

Let’s make a difference.
A year of striking impact

Our world is changing fast. But despite new uncertain market conditions and a further decline in craft education, craft continues to survive – and even to flourish.

For the Crafts Council, it’s been an inspirational year. We reached our biggest ever audience. Our exhibitions and loans programme made its way to 53 venues, covering all nine English regions. We explored new global markets and hugely increased our digital audience, too.

As ever, we placed artistic excellence at the highest level of importance. Our programme of exhibitions and events has been our most ambitious yet, as you’ll see over the next 20 pages in our Showcase.

Behind the scenes, we’ve campaigned, researched, advised, supported and championed craft in all sorts of ways. We’ve written policy briefings. Supported small organisations. Helped thousands of makers. Pushed the case for craft education at every level. And much more.

All this wouldn’t have been possible without the support of our partners across the UK and beyond. With only a small team – and a relatively small budget – it’s you who allow us to have such a huge impact in so many places.

So thank you. We hope you enjoy reading about everything we’ve done this year.

Rosy Greenlees, Executive Director
Geoffrey Crossick, Chair
A year where knitting met coding. Furniture took on unexpected forms. Jewellery went beyond gold and silver. The streets became a gallery. Sound turned into light. Luxury was available to everyone. Where dance and performance mingled with pottery and photography. New makers bloomed and experienced makers blossomed. And every object told a story.

Let the show commence.
Inspiring the Future

Is your career in craft? In September we joined forces with Inspiring the Future to recruit craft professionals to talk at schools and colleges about the amazing range of craft careers. We launched at Kirstie’s Handmade Fair in September, and have had over 400 sign-ups so far. If you think you could inspire the next generation, find out more on our website.

When: Launched September 2015
Where: Nationwide

Over 400 makers and do-ers signed up

The Creative Dimension Trust

We teamed up with The Creative Dimension Trust to offer Arts Awards to the 24 teenagers who took part in their parquetry and gilding courses. At the end we awarded 11 bronze awards and one silver and came away with big plans for integrating Arts Awards across our wider programmes.

When: July 2015
Where: The Prince’s School of Traditional Arts, London

Twenty-four 14–18 year olds took part

Thurrock

Future Makers

Gain experience; gain confidence. As part of Crafting the Future of Thurrock, we gave young people undertaking construction-based apprenticeships the chance to meet craft professionals and try new skills—including woodcarving, blacksmithing and glass casting. This programme marks the start of a longer partnership with Thurrock Council.

When: July 2015
Where: Thurrock, Essex
Lithuania

30%

Sonic Pattern
As with past Sonic Pattern events, the third edition showcased artists and makers who work with code, textiles, sound, pattern and performance. One of the projects—Tactus by James Bulley—was developed for blind and visually impaired people, creating experiences of Braille through sound and texture.

When: September–December 2015
Where: The Kaunas Biennial, Lithuania

Acts of Making

When: 12–26 September 2015
Where: Plymouth and Mount Edgcumbe

SEP15

Lithuania

Over 30% first-time visitors to our partner venues
Inside Out
Corrugated cardboard, recycled plastic bottles, acrylic, ash, glass fibre, oak, metal… Inside Out displayed 24 pieces of furniture of all shapes, styles and materials from the Crafts Council Collection. Visitors could also listen to oral histories from five furniture designers and watch two short films.

When: September–October 2015
Where: Launched at Platform Gallery at Habitat, London before UK tour

Build Your Own
What do street signs, prosthetic hands and a high-tech greenhouse all have in common? Build Your Own, our partnership exhibition with FACT Liverpool and Norfolk Museums Service, explored how digital technologies can come together with traditional production processes in unexpected ways. It featured new projects by Will Shannon and Turner Prize winners Assemble, Linda Brothwell, Rachel Rayns with the Raspberry Pi Foundation, and DoES Liverpool with e-NABLE.

When: October 2015–January 2015
Where: Norwich Castle Museum and Gallery
From bowls to brooches, wooden toys to tables. Our collections house a treasure trove of objects spanning the last five decades of craft.

This year, we acquired 12 new items, including four ceramic shops from Barnaby Barford’s Tower of Babel installation for the V&A, several pieces from the Granby Workshop and gifts from Clare Twomey and Gareth Neal.

Eight of these works are already out on loan to venues including mima, Gallery Oldham and Bury Art Museum.
Laser cutting. Wearable technology. 3D printing. New technologies are undoubtedly cool, but how accessible are they? Our second Make:Shift:Do festival invited people of all ages and backgrounds to experience digital innovation for themselves. In 2015, 32 creative spaces up and down the country opened their doors and over 3,300 people took part.

When: October 2015
Where: Nationwide

Great to see lots of pieces I had only seen in books. Very inspiring and thoroughly enjoyable.

Visitor, I AM HERE

Radical, experimental, wearable. Starting in the 1970s with the New Jewellery Movement, I AM HERE featured 100 works by contemporary jewellery’s biggest stars. We also ran a study day at The Goldsmiths’ Centre for over 70 craft professionals, and commissioned a limited-edition Tatty Devine necklace sold exclusively through the Crafts Council.

When: November 2015
Where: Launched at the Royal College of Art, London, before UK tour
Hey Clay! has helped bring awareness of ceramics as a contemporary product and as a potential hobby to the public.

Hey Clay! venue

Hey Clay!


Over 70 venues joined in with Hey Clay! in December 2015, giving over 4,000 people from Newcastle to Cornwall the chance to unleash their inner potter. Events were free, with many venues reporting that their pottery courses were fully booked for months as a result of Hey Clay!

When: December 2015
Where: Nationwide

The Directory

Jewellers, potters, furniture designers, glass blowers, weavers, silversmiths, bookbinders, knitters, stained glass artists, quilt makers… from all over the country. All in one place. Our directory of British craft is an inspirational showcase, promoting the work of over 400 talented makers.

The Directory is an amazing portfolio. In the short time since I uploaded my profile, I have already received an exhibition offer and Homes & Antiques magazine selected me as One to Watch in their next issue.

Lorraine Ruff
There were so many moments of revelation and inspiration, and at times it was quite emotional.

Hothouse is our programme for up-and-coming talent. Now in its sixth year, 41 makers from across the UK started in February 2016, with skills ranging from silversmithing to basket making. Injection, our 18-month business development scheme for established makers, entered its third year and covered topics including becoming a confident employer and finance.

It was also great to see our alumni picking up awards across the crafts world, with Rita Parnickzy winning the Perrier-Jouët Arts Salon Prize 2016, Rhona McCallum winning Best New Design at Goldsmiths’ Fair and Amanda Mansell winning Gold at the Goldsmiths’ Craft and Design Council Awards.

When: Throughout 2015–16
Where: Nationwide

Design Days Dubai

For the fourth year running, we took a group of makers to Design Days Dubai, the leading crafts and design fair in the Middle East and South Asia. Our eleven makers had the chance to explore a new market, meet international clients and make links with collectors, galleries and retailers. We also ran events with the University of Sharjah, the American University in Dubai.

When: 14–18 March 2016
Where: Dubai

The Crafts Council’s presence at Design Days Dubai represents the highest standard, characterised by innovative uses of material and techniques and, above all, of outstanding craftsmanship.

João Guarantani, Senior Programme Manager, British Council
Crafts Council on tour
This year nine of our exhibitions went on tour around the UK, including Bud to Bloom, Sound Matters and Acts of Making. Nearly 150 objects from our Collection made their way to 36 venues, and were seen by an audience of over 160,000.

Crafts Council on loan
This year we lent 158 objects from our Collection on a short-term basis. Those objects were seen by 1,046,401 people at 26 venues. We also made 38 long-term loans, seen by 187,907 people at 11 venues.

Crafts magazine
We published six issues of our world-renowned magazine, including a special collector’s edition to go with our What is Luxury? exhibition at the V&A. We also launched a digital edition, along with a podcast and bi-monthly book club.

Followers @Craftsmagazine has on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram
First Decade
First Decade is a Heritage Lottery funded project to digitise the objects we acquired from 1972 to 1982 – the first ten years of our Collection. Over 1,000 items are now online, including a series of new interviews with makers. This year we held 41 learning and research events around the country, allowing over 16,000 people to discover the Collection for themselves.

When: Throughout the year
Where: Nationwide

Craft Club
From knitting groups to clay clubs, weaving workshops to sewing circles. This year we relaunched our Craft Club, allowing people to search online for local groups of like-minded crafters. We’ve also built up a strong online community, giving people ideas, resources and inspiration through a newsletter and social media.

When: Throughout 2015–16
Where: Nationwide

70%
A 70% increase in visits to Collections online after launch of First Decade

To find out more about everything we’ve done this year and what’s coming up, explore craftsCouncil.org.uk

3.87 MILLION
A Total 2015–16 audience reach (That’s 35% more than our target)
Leadership
Research. Lobbying. Consultations. As well as our public events, we also work continually to make the case for craft at the highest levels of government and to lead the way on new initiatives. Our monthly policy briefings are read by some of the most influential policymakers and advisors. This year we held seven round table consultations, four Craftnet events and organised MP visits to local craft studios. We shared knowledge and data across the sector through reports, training sessions and regional ‘craft clusters’. And we partnered with the first London Craft Week to help shape a major new event in the cultural calendar.

Further afield, Rosy Greenlees chaired the general assembly of the World Crafts Council Europe and gave the keynote speech at the Cheongju Craft Biennale. We also gave a presentation at the European Crafts Summit and developed a new relationship with the Korean Foundation for Craft and Design.

Diversity
Everyone should have the opportunity to make, see, collect and learn about craft. In 2015 we published a new Equality and Diversity Action Plan and refreshed our Equality and Diversity Policy. We also set up a diversity champions group. Made up of 12 people and led by trustee Zoe Laughlin, the group meets every month to talk about current issues and related projects.

Following an audit, 13 films from our archive have now been subtitled. We added subtitles to the new Acts of Making film in-house – a great new skill for our team.

The RNIB carried out an audit of our website, and although it’s accessible overall, we’re now making some improvements. We delivered a Learning Lab for migrant women with partners Craftspace, Counterpoints Arts and Embassy of Sweden. And at our Acts of Making and First Decade workshops, 38% of participants regarded themselves as having a disability; 33% came from BAME backgrounds.

Strength in Numbers
The stronger we are as an organisation, the more of an impact we can make across the industry. This year we brought four new people into our Development Team – a decision which has already made a massive difference to our financial stability.

In 2015/16, we reached an impressive 99.4% of our income target. We also widened our sources of income, and increased investment in new activities like our Directory. Income through our website increased, too, and Crafts magazine met its income targets by branching into new markets.

The results of sub-letting our property on Pentonville Road have been staggering: we are now over £200k better off each year, and effectively pay nothing for the 4,000 square feet we’re using.

At the start of 2016/2017, we’d already secured 25% of our income target. But to make sure revenue continues to increase, our new Enterprise Working Group of trustees is exploring future projects and opportunities. Watch this space.
We want to keep reaching people from Cornwall to the Highlands. Inspiring new makers and supporting our brightest talent. Celebrating tradition and pushing innovation. Thinking locally and showcasing globally. Narrowing inequality and opening minds to the importance of craft.

We want next year to be even bigger and better. And with your support, it will be.

Thanks to our fundraisers, our major new schools programme, Make Your Future, will now deliver craft education in Leeds, Birmingham and London.

Make:Shift, our biennial conference, will be returning, bringing together experts from different industries to discuss how craft can contribute to innovation.

Our newest exhibition, A Curious Turn: Moving Mechanical Sculpture, will explore the amazing history of automata, its current popularity and where this bewitching craft could go next.

As part of our A Future Made programme, we will continue showcasing exceptional British talent at major international fairs, as well as supporting makers and inspiring the next generation at home.

We also have an exciting new partnership with Hull UK City of Culture 2017.

And finally, securing funding so that we can transform our space on Pentonville Road into a new public home for craft by 2018 will be a big focus.

Our targets for 2016/17
- Reach an audience of 2.9m
- Partner with 48 touring and loans venues
- Put on 4 UK and international showcases
- Work in 10 countries
- Have 525 makers participate in exhibitions and showcases
- And 3,000 makers take part in our CPD programme
- Include 10,000 participants in our learning programme
- Support 400 craft professionals
- Attract 824,000 people through our website and social media
- Go beyond London in 68% of activity
- Raise 46% of our income from outside the Arts Council England

Our supporters
The Crafts Council would like to thank all the individual Trusts, Foundations and organisations who have supported us during the year.

Funders
- Arts Council England International Showcasing
- Arts Council of Wales
- Creative Europe Programme of the European Union
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- The Ashley Family Foundation
- The Granada Foundation
- The Helen Hamlyn Trust
- King’s College London
- Craft Scotland
- British Council
- Arts Council
- UKTI

Individuals
- Nicholas and Judith Goodison
- Diane and Marc Grainer
- Maple-Brand
- Mark Roebuck
- Esther McLaughlin in memory of Frances McLaughlin
- Eugene Rhodes
- Adrian Sassoon
- Brian and Hana Strouba
- Arts Council Foundation
- The Ring of Tatters

Partners
Thank you to all those galleries, curators and venues we have worked with during the year, including
- Habitat
- Simmons and Simmons LLP
- Korean Craft and Design Foundation
- Saatchi Gallery
- KPMG
- The New Craftsmen

And all those who wish to remain anonymous.