

Growing research excellence in craft



How can we work together to achieve greater excellence and impact in research on craft, making and materials?

The Crafts Council:

- builds craft audiences
- champions craft education
- supports craft businesses, and
- has a reputation for producing high quality research with impact.



3D Weaver Oluwaseyi Sosanya © Zuzanna Weiss

We're keen to work more closely with higher education institutions in the UK and abroad. We're actively interested in engaging with current work and in developing co-produced research outputs through new collaborations across a range of disciplines, either directly through craft or about craft, including:

- research into, and through, contemporary and innovative craft practices, materials and trends, in craft and through its impact on other disciplines
- how craft practice and thinking influences innovation in other sectors of the economy and society, nationally and internationally
- craft in relation to migration and diasporic communities
- geographical and historical studies of craft
- anthropological and sociological studies of craft
- capturing and understanding the value of craft including professional and amateur craft in, for example, economics, health, cultural policy.

As a national development agency, we work, for example:

- with economists, ethnographers, chemists and geographers as well as with academics and practitioners in art and design
- with galleries, museums and archivists
- in sectors such as health care, high-value manufacturing and technology
- demonstrating impact on audiences or growth of microbusinesses.

We would welcome conversations with those interested by our ambitions.

What can the Crafts Council offer?

- A track record of well-regarded and used research projects (see overleaf), well-received by research councils
- Experience and extensive national and international contacts across the craft world
- Evidence and analysis of trends in the craft economy, education and practice (such as the 50% decline in HE craft courses since 2007/08), seeking to address contemporary craft narratives
- Pathways to impact, working with crafts practitioners (including makers, businesses, educators, gallerists and curators); development organisations; communities of practice; artistic commissioners; extensive national and international research, higher education, policy and practitioner networks (including through the World Crafts Council – Crafts Council Executive Director Rosy Greenlees holds the presidency until 2020)
- Access to national collections and archival material
- Opportunities for researchers to demonstrate and capture research impact, including through residencies
- Occasional financial contributions to leverage wider funding
- Collaboration on drafting research questions and proposals, in the context of our research strategy (<http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-strategy/>)



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2015/16



Black Paradiso, Peter Layton, 2016.
Photo: Ester Segarra

What could co-produced research look like?

Examples of our published collaborative research include the following models:

- [*Innovation through Craft: Opportunities for growth*¹](#) examines how collaboration drives innovation, investigating its economic potential through a series of case studies. Working with partners the University of Brighton and the Knowledge Transfer Network, we commissioned KPMG to investigate the processes and impact of innovation through craft. The findings have shaped our advocacy work and development plans.
- [*Measuring the Craft Economy*²](#) a Crafts Council commission from Trends Business Research, identifies the industry and occupational classifications that measure craft's contribution to the economy. As a result of the findings, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport included data for craft for the first time in its economic estimates.
- [*Crafting professional practice through Higher Education*](#) is a collaborative PhD between King's College London and the Crafts Council. Securing funding from a scholarship fund, this co-designed research project assesses the development of professional skills in the UK's contemporary craft sector. The project investigates how knowledge acquisition and the development of such practices takes place within higher education, in order to consider how the sector could be more resilient for the benefit of makers and audiences.
- *Collaboration, mutuality and community: producing and consuming contemporary craft* brings together insights from four AHRC funded research projects that explored dimensions of the place and practice of craft within the creative economy. Led by the [University of Exeter](#) and funded through the AHRC's Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement, the activities were co-designed by the Crafts Council, the Devon Guild of Craftsmen and the Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen. The Researcher in Residence role is shaping the Crafts Council's strategic objectives by contributing evidence-based research to support our mission to chart and anticipate economic, social, cultural and political trends in craft.

¹ Innovation through Craft: Opportunities for growth (2016), KPMG: Crafts Council

² Measuring the Craft Economy (2014), Trends Business Research: Crafts Council

As co-producers of research with us, you would -

- Generate high-quality research outcomes that demonstrate and capture research impact on making and the wider craft economy
- Shape national policy debates and Crafts Council programming.



Green ash benches produced by Gareth Neal and Paul & Jo Morton for the In Pursuit of Carbon Neutral research project at Moreton Wood, Herefordshire, England.

Join the conversation?

If you would like to explore opportunities (either formally or informally) for us to contribute to new or existing research projects, speak to:

Julia Bennett, Head of Research and Policy j_bennett@craftscouncil.org.uk
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Develop the conversation with staff or one of our [board](#) members with research experience:

Professor Geoffrey Crossick is Chair of the Crafts Council; a former vice-chancellor, he produced the report from the major project on cultural value that he directed for the AHRC.

Professor Bruce Brown was Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research at the University of Brighton and Chair of a Main Panel for the UK Research Excellence Framework. He is editor of Design Issues Research Journal

Dr Zoe Laughlin is the co-founder and Creative Director of the Institute of Making, University College London and co-founder and Curator of the Materials Library project. She lectures and publishes on making and materials

Clare Twomey is an artist, curator and Reader of Research at the University of Westminster. She uses performance, serial production and site-specific installations in her exploration of clay.