



# Craft Economies: Inequalities, Opportunities, Interventions

STEAMhouse, Birmingham 4 December 2019, 9am-5pm

Part of the Craft Expertise project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, in collaboration with Crafts Council UK







**Welcome** to the first Craft Economies conference, which includes speakers from the UK and around the world discussing various aspects of craft, from practice, to careers, to questions of diversity and inclusivity. This conference is part of a funded research project led by Dr Karen Patel of Birmingham City University in collaboration with Crafts Council UK and led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. More information about the project is at the back of this booklet.

Please see the full programme below. The conference is being held in the Lab space of STEAMhouse (to the left of the reception desk).

If you have booked a one-to-one session with the Crafts Council these are being held in the Games Room, which is on the far left-hand side of the reception area.

### **Programme**

9am-9.30	Registration, tea and coffee
9.30-9.45	Welcome - Rajinder Dudrah, Karen Patel (Birmingham City University)
9.50-10.35	<b>Keynote with Q&amp;A: Craft past, present and future</b> - Deirdre Figueiredo (Craftspace) chaired by Karen Patel
10.35-10.45	Comfort break
10.45-12pm	Panel I - Craft and the Community (chaired by Annette Naudin)
	Craft - the new entrepreneurship? - Julia Bennett (Crafts Council UK) Maker-centricity and 'edge-places of creativity': making as a method for self-organizing and achieving craft impact in local communities and economies - Fiona Hackney (University of Wolverhampton) and Deidre Figureido
	Models of engagement between makers and markets: a study of craft intermediaries in Cape Town - Roberta Comunian and Lauren England (King's College London)
12-12.45	Lunch
12.45-2	Panel 2 - Global Craft (chaired by Karen Patel)
	Folk Art in India: The example of Patachitra in West Bengal - Charlotte Waelde (Coventry University)
	The charity of craft: Empathic Activism - Rose Sinclair (Goldsmiths College)
	When crafts people become the storyteller-the interrelationship between tourism
	and the craft industry - Ya-Chiao Tu (King's College London)
2-3.15	Panel 3 - Craft and Sustainability (chaired by Craig Hamilton)
	Crafting professionals: graduates' entrepreneurial strategies for balancing passion and sustainability - Lauren England (King's College London)
	Plant motifs in craft practices: future interdisciplinary possibilites - Geetanjali Sachdev (Srishti School of Art, Design & Technology, Bangalore, India)
	The importance of good looks? Craft publishing and attracting new audiences for academic research - Craig Hamilton, Sarah Raine, Iain Taylor (BCU)
3.15-3.30	Tea and coffee break
3.30-4.45	<b>Panel discussion - diversity in craft and the creative industries -</b> Karen Patel, Lorna Hamilton-Brown and Jeanette Sloan (BIPOC in Fiber), Majeda Clarke. Chaired by Rajinder Dudrah.
4.45-5pm	Closing Remarks - Karen Patel
5pm-6pm	Drinks Reception at Digbeth Works (I min walk from STEAMhouse)

### **Abstracts**

### **Craft - The New Entrepreneurship?**

Julia Bennett, Crafts Council UK

Building on a draft chapter for a forthcoming book, Craft Entrepreneurship (Eds. Dr Annette Naudin and Dr Karen Patel, Birmingham City University), I explore how entrepreneurship expresses itself in craft business and ask if there are distinguishing characteristics that offer a new vision for a different type of entrepreneurship. Drawing on the Crafts Council's evidence (KPMG, Spilsbury, TBR) and experience of responding to makers' professional needs, I describe the challenges facing makers in setting up business. In the changing context of increasing self-employment in the wider economy (CIF, RSA, Demos), I examine makers' perceptions of success (Reijonen; Schreiber and Treggiden) and their attitudes to sustainability as a legitimate business goal. Analysing the wider literature on entrepreneurship, I raise questions about reliance on traditional notions of scalability and growth for a healthy economy and argue how the experience of craft businesses may suggest a need to define a new entrepreneurship.

# Maker-centricity and 'edge-places of creativity': making as method for self-organizing and achieving craft impact in local communities and economies

Fiona Hackney, Manchester Metropolitan University

Deirdre Figueiredo, Craftspace Birmingham

Susan Luckman (2012: 9–10), citing Katherine Gibson's call for a return to 'the grass-roots work of engaging the community and being open to developing new economies', advocates a vision of creative industries that builds the affordances of 'edge-places of creativity'. While Luckman's focus is non-urban localities, her proposal could equally apply to the amateur craft groups, community organisations, and independent businesspeople that the AHRC-funded project 'Maker-Centric: building place-based, co-making communities' worked with in deprived inner-city areas in Birmingham and the Black Country (Hackney et al in Bell et al: 2019). This paper examines project processes and outcomes as we worked with partners Craftspace, Creative Black Country, Fab Lab West Bromwich and Terre Vera, Slovenia, to prototype a 'Maker-centric method' which combines hand-crafts, digital fabrication and placed-based heritage to provoke community perspectives, build assets and agencies, including craft as a means to re-imaging work in a future society funded by universal basic income.

# Models of engagement between makers and markets: A study of craft intermediaries in Cape Town

Roberta Comunian and Lauren England, King's College London

Creative intermediaries are increasingly recognised for their role in facilitating the growth and development of creative entrepreneurs, and creative and cultural industries (CCls). There is also a growing interest in the role played by CCls in developing economies, particularly in relation to economic development but also cultural engagement and social change. In this paper we bring a Global South perspective to the study of creative intermediaries in the craft sector by exploring how they engage with makers and markets for craft products in Cape Town, South Africa. Using qualitative interviews with key players from four intermediary organisations working at the community level through to luxury export, we present their different business models and approaches to supporting the development of the craft sector and makers locally and nationally. We also consider some of the key challenges faced by these intermediaries in relation to policy, infrastructure, finance and global competition.

### Folk Art in India: the example of Patachitra in West Bengal

Charlotte Waelde, Coventry University

How do indigenous communities in rural India make a living from their craft? How do they negotiate retaining the central attributes of their intangible heritage with the demands of the market? This talk will explain the work of the British Academy funded interdisciplinary project, 'Celebrating local stewardship in a global market: community heritage, intellectual property protection and sustainable development in India' using the example of the Patachitra community in Naya Village, West Bengal. The researchers, whose expertise spans intangible cultural heritage, marketing and intellectual property, have been working with

the NGO Banglanatak.com in West Bengal and the Patachitra community. The aim has been to investigate how marketing and intellectual property can be used to help to broaden the market appeal of the patuas art form of scroll painting and singing, while recognising the core importance of intangible heritage.

### The Charity of Craft: Empathic Activism

Rose Sinclair, Goldsmiths, University of Londor

Whilst the craft economy has been dominated of late by the online community (Gauntlett, 2011) and the rise of social media and the cult of craft fandom (Cherry 2016). A historical review of craft spaces allows a more nuanced approach of the place of the informal textile's networks, such as Dorcas Societies (Richmond 2013) and Dorcas Clubs (Sinclair 2015) that are more specifically gender based and focused on marginalised, poor or needy communities and operated as through an informal economy model. Groups such as Dorcas Societies, were based on an initial philanthropic discourse, and an approach of 'gifting knowledge' thus cloth emerged as commodity and exchange mechanism (Kopytoff & Appadurai 1986) alongside becoming object and gift. The movement of Dorcas Societies and Dorcas Clubs across boundaries and geographies of space and place, sees textiles as craft through a post-colonial discourse, and enables a review of craft as a way of operating to support not only creativity in marginalised communities, but as a vehicle for what I would term 'empathic activism' of making, leading to inclusive approaches to co-collaborative and participatory textiles practices.

# When crafts people become the storyteller- the interrelationship between tourism and craft industry

Ya-Chiao Tu, King's College Londor

Craft has recently received a growing attention and it has become something that is 'cool' for all the ages. This paper looks into the socio-economic aspect of craft when it encounters with tourism. What does tourism activities bring into the field of craft making? Can craft contribute to tourism in smaller cities and villages? Is tourism working as a catalyst in regenerating post-industrial pottery/ ceramics industry? What is the attractiveness of craft for tourists in choosing destination? Interviews with tourists, local craft-makers, and managerial people in craft industry as well as tourism industry in Stoke-on-Trent, UK and Yingge, Taiwan help to understand the phenomena in placing handicraft experience (eg. Pottery) as a key element in reshaping image of a destination as well as restructuring the local creative economies. By looking into pottery and ceramics industry in specific, questions will be asked regarding the benefits as well as challenges of developing the craft industry for tourism development and destination making.

# Crafting professionals: graduates' entrepreneurial strategies for balancing passion and sustainability

Lauren England, King's College London in partnership with Crafts Council UK

There is growing interest in craft entrepreneurship and in the trajectories of creative graduates in relation to the creative economy and cultural work. This paper addresses both areas of study by exploring the experience of early-career crafts graduates (0-4 years after graduation) in developing a craft enterprise. Drawing on interviews with 25 graduates from four universities in England, the paper focuses on how they balance their passion for creative practice with the need for economic stability. First, five strategies are identified during the early career period resulting in different models of income generation and creative production. The paper then addresses links between graduate strategies and their higher education experience and wider trends in contemporary craft practice. Finally, the paper highlights challenges faced by graduates in adopting certain strategies and how an imbalance between passion and sustainability can hinder both creative and entrepreneurial development.

### Plant Motifs in Craft Practices: Future Interdisciplinary Possibilities

Geetanjali Sachdev, Srishti School of Art, Design & Technology, Bangalore, India

The field of botanical art is concerned with studying plants through art practices. Established in the needs of botany during colonial expansion where illustrations were intended to assist with plant identification, the characteristic feature of botanical art practice has been representational accuracy. This representational convention has dominated visual expressions of plants through botanical books. Botanical art therefore,

does not take into account aesthetic and indigenous uses of plants.

In India however, plants are extensively used within craft practices through aesthetic engagements often originating in myth and ritual. This paper draws upon such botanical expressions and proposes a trajectory for studying botanical art that intersects with Indian craft practices. It argues that while plant representations in crafts vastly differ from conventional botanical illustrations, these representations, and practices producing them, should be pedagogically considered due to opportunities this offers for interdisciplinary educational interventions, and for developing new specializations for the craft economy.

# The Importance of Good Looks?: Craft publishing and attracting new audiences for academic research

Emerging from a four-year project within BCMCR at Birmingham City University (UK) on experimental approaches to writing about popular music, Riffs: Experimental writing on popular music is conceived as a research method through which we can think about what it means to communicate research about popular music. In this paper, we will critically reflect on the design, publication and dissemination activities associated with Riffs - which at present are rooted in small-scale, craft practices - in order to ask what can be achieved if we move beyond traditional academic forms, conventions and contributors, particularly in regards to audience. We then consider issues of sustainability, exploring if and how Riffs - as both a publication and a method - can exist within and/or without of the academic systems that have supported its development, and whether such systems could ever fully account for the labour of the academics and creatives involved

## **About the presenters**

**Karen Patel** is a Research Fellow in the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research (BCMCR) at Birmingham City University. She leads the Craft Expertise project, which is an AHRC Funded UKRI/RCUK Innovation Fellowship in collaboration with Crafts Council UK. Her research interests centre on the politics of expertise in cultural work, inequalities in craft and cultural work, and creative workers' use of social media. She is author of *The Politics of Expertise in Cultural Labour: Arts, Work and Inequalities* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2020) and co-editor with Annette Naudin of *Craft Entrepreneurship* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2021).

**Rajinder Dudrah** is a Professor of Cultural Studies and Creative Industries at Birmingham City University. Rajinder's academic interests are in the areas of film, media, cultural studies, and creative industries including: Bollywood cinema, Black British representation, popular music, diasporic and transnational media, television studies, and in cultural theory and qualitative research methods as applied to popular culture and creative industries research.

**Julia Bennett** is the Crafts Council's Head of Research and Policy. She develops policy and advocacy strategy, writes about craft and manages research projects, strengthening evidence to improve the conditions for craft. Julia has worked independently with small arts organisations, as well as for the Local Government Association, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service and the Minority Rights Group.

**Fiona Hackney**, Professor Fashion Manchester Metropolitan University is currently researching sustainable fashion, interwar print media, crafting, co-creation and social design. Recent publications include *The Power of Quiet: Re-Making Amateur and Professional Textiles Agencies* (2017) and the co-edited collection: *Edinburgh Companion to British Women's Print Culture between the Wars* (2018) for Edinburgh University Press. She has led several Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research projects with Deirdre Figueiredo, including Maker-Centric.

**Deirdre Figueiredo MBE** is Director Craftspace Birmingham, a leading craft development organisation and creative producer. Craftspace commissions exceptional, world-class contemporary craft and champions makers to take an active role in civil society. It connects creative practice with diverse communities of interest and place through a range of activities and partnerships. These include touring exhibitions, cross-artform productions and participatory projects. www.craftspace.co.uk.

Roberta Comunian is Reader in Creative Economy at the Department for Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College London. Her research interests include the creative industries and cultural policy at the urban level; creative graduates and creative higher education and networks and work in the creative economy. Dr Comunian is currently working on a research network grant "UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING CREATIVE ECONOMIES IN AFRICA: EDUCATION, NETWORKS AND POLICY" supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC). From 2019, Dr Roberta Comunian is involved in the new H2020 consortium DISCE (Developing Inclusive & Sustainable Creative Economies).

Lauren England is a Lecturer in Culture, Media & Creative Industries at King's College London. Her PhD, conducted in partnership with Crafts Council UK, investigates higher education and sustainable business development in the UK's contemporary craft sector. Lauren has published research on the resilience and evolution of craft knowledge and skills in post-industrial regions, and reports on craft entrepreneurship and higher education policy via the Crafts Council. She is currently working on projects exploring creative industries development in Africa.

Charlotte Waelde's research interests centre on the role of intellectual property law and in particular copyright within the cultural (heritage) sector and the digital environment. She has written widely at the intersections of intellectual property law, digitisation and culture and has sole and co-authored a number of articles with cross-disciplinary intersections which have been published in a range of national and international journals. Charlotte is currently the PI of the BA Sustainable Development funded project, Celebrating local stewardship in a global market: community heritage, intellectual property protection and sustainable development where the team are working in India with the NGO, Banglanatak.com, and of a British Council funded project in Kyrgyzstan working with young cultural entrepreneurs seeking to use their intangible heritage skills for economic empowerment.

Rose Sinclair is a Design Lecturer (Textiles) in the Design Department at Goldsmiths, University of London, where she teaches Textiles and Design related practice at Postgraduate level. Her doctoral research focuses on Black British women and their crafting practices, and textiles as used for migration, identity and settlement, she is also interested in their use of textiles networks as participatory craft practice. Rose has authored several textile books, her most recent being Textiles and Fashion, Materials, Design and Technology (2015). She is a member of the editorial board for Textile: Journal of Cloth and Culture.

**Ya-Chiao Tu** is a PhD candidate in Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College London. Her thesis investigates the interrelationships between tourism and pottery industry through economic, cultural and social aspects in Stoke-on-Trent, UK and Yingge, Taiwan. Her research interest includes tourism and creative industry, creative tourism, craft tourism, destination making and placemaking. She also is a Managing Director of a holiday accommodation management company in London.

**Geetanjali Sachdev** is an art and design pedagogue based in Bangalore, India. She has been involved in framing teaching and learning frameworks at the undergraduate and postgraduate level at the Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Bangalore, where she is currently the Academic Dean for Post Graduate Programs. She is doing her PhD in Art & Design from Manipal University, Karnataka, through which she is exploring pedagogical approaches for the study of plants through art and design.

**Craig Hamilton** is a Research Fellow at Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research (BCMCR) at Birmingham City University. His research explores contemporary popular music reception practices and the role of digital, data and Internet technologies on the business and cultural environments of music consumption. This research is built around the development of The Harkive Project (www.harkive. org), an online, crowd-sourced method of generating data from music consumers about their everyday relationships with music and technology. Craig is also the co-Managing Editor of *Riffs: Experimental Writing on Popular Music* (www.riffsjournal.org).

**Sarah Raine** is a Research Fellow at Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research (BCMCR) at Birmingham City University. Sarah is currently an AHRC Creative Economy Engagement Fellow working in partnership with Cheltenham Jazz Festival on their Keychange (PRS Foundation) pledge and to explore the barriers experienced by women musicians active on the UK jazz scene. She is also co-Managing Editor of Riffs: Experimental writing on popular music, a book series editor for Equinox Publishing (Icons of Pop Music and Music Industry Studies) and the Review Editor for Popular Music History.

**lain Taylor** is a lecturer in Music Industries in the Birmingham School of Media, Birmingham City University, and an editor and designer of *Riffs* – a journal for experimental writing on popular music. His research is concerned with the changing material meanings of popular-cultural artefacts in the face of digitalisation. He currently leads on the Materialities research theme in the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research.

Lorna Hamilton-Brown is a black British knitwear designer and artist. She has a Master's degree in Knitted Textiles from the Royal College of Art, London, and is a qualified University lecturer. Lorna learned to knit and crochet from her Jamaican mother and started out designing and selling items at school. Her knitwear has appeared on BBC TV and been sold in Harrods of Knightsbridge, London. As an artist, Lorna creates artworks that challenges racial stereotypes. She's currently building on research from her Master's dissertation, which debunked the myth that "Black People Don't Knit," as well as revealing the bias shown in the way knitting histories have been presented.

**Jeanette Sloan** is a knitter and textile designer and co-founder of BIPOC in Fiber. She has worked as a freelance textile designer and tutor teaching both machine and hand knitting. She has written four books on hand knitting. Jeanette has worked with some of the best hand knitting brands in the UK and her designs have featured in several UK knitting magazines including *Knitting Magazine*, where she is a regular contributor responsible for the 'Ask Jeanette' letters page, Yarn Reviews and A-Z of Techniques.

Majeda Clarke is an award winning artist, recently receiving the 2018 British Muslim Award for Creativity and 1st prize in the New Designers 2018 One Year In Award. Published in Wall St. Journal, World of Interiors, Living Etc, The Sunday Times, The Evening Standard, Selvedge magazine and Crafts magazine. She has exhibited widely in galleries such as Aram, Mint, CAA, New Ashgate, Fortnum and Mason and The National Centre for Craft and Design. Her work has been selected as a Liberty's 'Future Collectible'; 100% Design curated by Barbara Chandler and The Crafts Council Hothouse Talent Programme. She is a Crafts Council Talent Ambassador and a Clothworker's Foundation Awardee.

Karen and Rajinder would like to thank everyone involved with this conference - the presenters, staff at STEAMHouse and at BCU, caterers at Digbeth Works and colleagues in the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research.

### About the project

Craft Expertise, or 'Supporting diversity and expertise development in the contemporary craft economy' is an AHRC funded UKRI/RCUK Innovation Fellowship led by Dr Karen Patel of Birmingham City University, in collaboration with Crafts Council UK.

This is a 2-year project which began in March 2019, and involves interviews, ethnography, podcasts, workshops, academic publications and a conference. For more information visit craftexpertise.com.



# Listen to the Maker Stories Podcast

In the Maker Stories podcast we talk to inspirational crafts women from black and ethnic minority backgrounds who are based in the UK. The first two episodes are now live at maker-stories-podcast.simplecast.com. You can also subscribe via iTunes and Spotify.



### **About STEAMhouse**

STEAMhouse is a new centre for innovation and creation based in central Birmingham. Uniting talented people from different backgrounds in the arts, science, technology, engineering and maths — the STEAM sectors — to bring amazing new ideas to life.

For more information visit www.steamhouse.org.uk.



Thank you for attending. This conference was supported by:







