

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

# Skills in the Making targets craft shortfall in UK schools

This summer craft education charity **The Making** launches a new educational programme to bring craft and design directly into British schools.

**Skills in the Making** is supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and is designed to improve the level of craft and design knowledge amongst school teachers. It is a three-year professional development programme which enables art, design and craft teachers to meet some of the UK's leading makers, find out about their work and explore the value of learning through making. This knowledge will in turn be passed on to their pupils and will help improve the standards of craft and design education in British schools. Artists involved in the programme include highly respected figures such as metalwork artist Junko Mori, ceramist Kate Malone and Jerwood Prize winner Caroline Broadhead.

**Skills in the Making** provides a timely and lively response to Ofsted's latest survey, *Drawing Together: Art, Craft and Design in Schools*, which found that craft and design were poorly taught or neglected in many schools: 'In more than half the schools visited, craft and design dimensions were underdeveloped, topics were unimaginative and there was a lack of response to pupils' cultural interests.' This failure has a knock-on effect, resulting in fewer young people seeking careers in these subjects, the closure of specialist craft departments in higher education and, ultimately, the decline in quality contemporary craft and design in the UK. The report noted that the underlying problem was often due to insufficiently trained teachers and called for continuing professional development for art teachers at all levels. The Making has been aware of the need for better levels of craft and design education in British schools for some time and **Skills in the Making** is designed to improve this by offering teachers an inspirational opportunity to further their knowledge through direct contact with leading artists. It will also act as a catalyst for establishing the report's aim of 'developing sustained partnerships between schools, creative industries, galleries and artists in the locality.'

The programme is being piloted in the first year with Oxford Brookes University and further developed by the University of London's Institute of Education and the University of Greenwich in order to provide an in-depth model for delivery that can be replicated by other initial teacher training courses throughout the country.

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## Note to Editors

### The Making

Based in Basingstoke, Hampshire, **The Making** is an award-winning craft education charity that promotes high quality contemporary craft and design and inspires new audiences to engage in the art of making. It takes art to where people are, delivering popular and innovative events and participatory programmes for children, families and young people, and employment and professional development opportunities for artists and educators.

Please visit [www.themaking.org.uk](http://www.themaking.org.uk) for further information.

**The Paul Hamlyn Foundation** works across three programmes in the UK – Social Justice, Education & Learning and the Arts – to maximise opportunities for individuals and communities to realise their potential and to experience and enjoy a better quality of life, now and in the future. In particular, the Foundation is concerned with children, young people and disadvantaged communities. For more information, please visit the Foundation's website: [www.phf.org.uk](http://www.phf.org.uk)

## Skills in The Making

The artists involved include

### Caroline Broadhead

Caroline Broadhead has developed a multi-disciplinary practice. She works across the fields of the fine and applied arts and regularly collaborates with choreographers producing installations for live performance. She was awarded the Jerwood Prize for Applied Arts in 1997 and was winner of the Textiles International Open in 2004. Her work is included in numerous public collections internationally. She is Course Director of Jewellery at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design.

### Lucy Brown

Lucy Brown studied Textiles at Goldsmith College, University of London and graduated in 1995. Since then she has continued to develop her practice and raising her profile through solo and group exhibitions, publications and new work related commissions in public galleries. She has delivered various education projects, talks and workshops alongside exhibitions and in schools, colleges and universities. Her work deals with narratives around beauty and representation, female identity, displacement, absence/presence of the body, clothed and unclothed and the public and private individual. These social issues are explored through reconstructing second hand clothing associated with the female body.

### Helen Carnac

Helen Carnac is a maker and academic based in London. With a background in metalwork and jewellery, she is interested in her work being centred self-consciously on the connection between material, process and maker, with an emphasis on deliberation and reflection. She was co-chair of the 2006 UK based Association for Contemporary Jewellery conference *Carry the Can* which hoped to develop understanding and debate about the different ways we value material and process today and recently co-curated the exhibition 'Process Works'. Helen is currently curating a UK national tour called 'taking time: Craft and the Slow Movement'.

### Mandeep Dhiman

RCA graduate and mixed media designer Mandeep Dhiman creates exuberant, decorative pieces out of a range of found materials, 'the plasticity the better', she says. They range from knitted body adornments to large-scale sculptures bursting with colour - a love of colour being a legacy of her Indian heritage. 'I love my work because of its decoration, intricacy and over-the-top nature,' she says.

### Dawn Dupree

Textile artist Dawn Dupree creates evocative, semi-abstract urban landscapes by building up printed layers of colour and images. They are full of unexpected surprises and juxtapositions each telling a separate narrative, often with slightly unsettling undertones. 'I like to make things that are attractive, colourful and have a visual richness so that people are forced to look a bit more closely at them and see unexpected things,' she says.

### Andy Hazell

Something of a maverick, Andy Hazell, based in Wales, constructs humorous socio-political tinplate automata and site-specific sculptures; both 'small things' and 'large things'. An acutely self-aware global anthropologist, Andy is widely travelled. His photographic observations frame a cultural awareness of film, photojournalism and the archive. His night photos demonstrate an

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interest in lighting, a material frequently used in his objects, in which the everyday is made monumental.

## Cas Holmes

Kent-based paperwork artist, Cas Holmes paints colourful stitched textiles, myriad landscapes in paper, fabric and mixed media. Concerned by 'our fragile relationship with the local and national environment', she uses 'discarded items, waste material no longer considered useful ... old and forgotten textiles'. Waste paper and fabrics are assembled and worked using textile and paper based techniques. Cas layers drawing, painting, photography, print and text, using glue transfer methods, and tearing and scraping 'to reveal layers underneath'.

## Rob Kessler

Rob Kessler's work is difficult to pin down. He is Professor of Ceramic Art and Design at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design but is very far from being a conventional potter, often working with photography and digital images rather than clay. His work bridges the art-science divide and he calls himself an artist, explaining that 'I work in the area where craft, art and design overlap'. But the one theme linking Kessler's wide-ranging body of work is his overwhelming fascination with plant material and the natural world.

## Kate Malone

Ceramist Kate Malone makes beautifully constructed, glowing pots, often in complex shapes based on natural forms such as fruit or seeds. A real hands-on potter, Malone says she is 'addicted to making' and describes herself as 'a doer not a thinker'. Although her pots have been exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the UK, USA and Europe, Malone doesn't make any grandiose claims for them; she says, 'I am happy for my pieces to be considered decorative art or craft – in fact I love the word craft as that's a huge part of what I do'.

## Junko Mori

Japanese-born metalwork artist Junko Mori was shortlisted for the prestigious Jerwood Applied Arts Prize: Metalwork in 2005 and since then has been working non-stop on a series of exhibitions and commissions. She makes striking, beautifully detailed sculptures built up out of hundreds of hand-forged individual components. Although abstract in form, the pieces are reminiscent of natural forms like sea anemones or root systems and the natural world is an important source of information for Mori. She says, 'I love plants, I collect, take pictures and get inspiration from them.'

## Darcy Turner

Darcy Turner is a London based artist who designs and builds a wide range of constructions from giant windmills to waterwheels using 'Stixx' his revolutionary 3D newspaper construction system. Darcy has produced work for exhibitions, TV and film companies and as private commissions. A furniture-maker by training, he also uses wire and a "metal bashing" (embossing) technique to create interesting and exciting constructions that are ideal for classroom projects.

## Alison Willoughby

Alison Willoughby is best known for making one-off, elaborately patterned skirts. They are as much works of art as pieces of clothing, but she is reluctant to be described as either a fashion designer or a fine artist, preferring to call herself a textile designer. 'It's annoying being put in a strict category,' she says. 'But I trained as a textile designer and my material is fabric and for me, fabric is where the excitement lies.'

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## Rationale behind the Programme

Research has shown that involvement in craft activities allows children and young people to acquire skills, learn about different materials and processes, explore different learning styles and develop visual, tactile and spatial awareness. The 'hands-on' practical nature of such activities is particularly effective in developing cognitive abilities and engaging disaffected male pupils and those pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Experiential learning and participation in craft activities also improves future employability through the development of soft skills, from creativity and problem solving, to building confidence, encouraging risk-taking and being self-reflective.

Currently, few school teachers have sufficient knowledge of contemporary crafts practice or the skills to deliver effective craft teaching. Whilst the art, craft and design curriculum is supposed to provide exposure to a range of media '...the reality for many learners is a narrow experience', Ian Middleton (HMI for Schools). This is typically 2D painting and drawing- the media which dominate most learners' portfolios.

Teachers also have limited opportunities to meet and engage with contemporary craftspeople or visit their studios and workshops (as recommended in the New Secondary Curriculum, effective from September 2008). They can find it difficult to make time to plan, select, and develop positive working relationships with appropriate designers and makers and struggle to find work related learning for their pupils or external cultural organisations to set project briefs due to the daily demands of teaching and learning within the school context.

Serious concerns over the teaching of craft and design in schools have been raised in Ofsted's latest survey *Drawing Together: Art, Craft and Design in Schools*, published in April 2009.

**Skills in The Making** is designed to help rectify the problem at its source by providing specialist professional development for trainee and established teachers. In addition to studio visits, practical training and seminars, it will provide teaching cover to free up time and enable PGCE trainees, subject mentors and other teachers to benefit fully from contact with a 'maker in residence' at their school.

Such an approach will in time, we hope, help to reverse the trend in falling numbers applying to contemporary craft, design and skills-based courses in Further and Higher Education. Creative & Cultural Skills, the Sector Skills Council for the Creative and Cultural Industries, raised this issue in their recent consultation document *CRAFT Blueprint : Developing the Craft Workforce in the UK* (2008), '...many children are unaware of the opportunities for further study in craft practice and therefore limiting demand for such courses at further and higher education levels.' At a recent seminar ('Materials & Processes: the Future of Craft Making' 23/10/08) CHEAD (Council for Higher Education in Art & Design and NALN (National Arts Learning Network) stated that raising the profile of crafts in schools was essential in reversing this downward trend.