

MAKING FUTURES PHILIPPINES RETHINKING CRAFT COMMUNITIES, TAKING ON GLOBAL CHALLENGES

6-8 March 2020

Quest Hotel

Cebu City, Philippines



MAKING FUTURES

RETHINKING CRAFT COMMUNITIES, TAKING ON GLOBAL CHALLENGES

#MakingFuturesPH

Making Futures: Rethinking Craft Communities, Taking on Global Challenges is a three-day conference taking place in Cebu, the Philippines from the 6-8 March 2020 at the Quest Hotel. It is a partnership between the British Council and Plymouth College of Art and supported through British Council's **Crafting Futures** global programme.

Making Futures is a biennial international research conference developed and curated by Malcolm Ferris at Plymouth College of Art. Across six UK editions to date, it has established itself as one of the leading events in the field and is the *only* biennial global craft conference in the UK. In support of this global dialogue, editions have also been held at Beijing Design Week, China, the Cheongju International Crafts Biennale, South Korea, and (forthcoming in 2020), the Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton, Massachusetts, United States.

Making Futures explores contemporary craft and maker movements as '*change agents*' in societies across the globe by investigating key issues concerning the progressive possibilities presented by the revival, development and promotion of these sectors. These issues, many of which will be discussed in Cebu, include: the changing nature of both craft and industry, developments in digital technologies, sustainability in the context of the global climate crisis, material innovations, social and community-based regeneration, and craft leadership.

The **Making Futures** platform positions the Philippines and Southeast Asia as an exciting region for approaches and ideas that other parts of the world may not have heard of.

In summary, **Making Futures** aims to:

- Raise awareness of the global challenges and opportunities we face, and deepen understanding on how craft and maker movements can help contribute to progressive social change by addressing these key challenges.
- Share with delegates the rich cultural assets of Southeast Asia.
- Develop networks and explore collaborations between the UK and Southeast Asia to develop a strong international crafts community focused on attending to the issues at hand.

Over three days attendees will have the opportunity to take part in thematic workshops and plenary sessions that promote a sense of collective responsibility for exploration of the issues raised. This shared problem-solving dynamic is one that typically characterises **Making Futures**, and underpins much of the success of the series. **Making Futures** will also actively seek to stimulate the formation of connections and networks that can lead to future partnerships.

THEMED SESSIONS

MAKING LEADERS: CRAFTING LEADERSHIP CULTURES

This session will explore the underexploited potential of makers as leaders. High-quality leadership is vital if the crafts are to address the global challenges facing the sector, as explored in this conference. However, many (perhaps especially Western) craft practitioners might be sceptical of the very idea of leadership, associating it with an ideology of “managerialism” that emphasises the hierarchies and control systems that have characteristically governed labour in mass production industry - precisely those aspects of work many makers wish to escape in pursuing craft, (even when they might unwittingly replace these with the self-exploitative practices that are a feature of much independent work under late capitalism). This session will examine the issue of good leadership in craft, particularly the value of creative maker practices in developing qualities that contribute to good leadership, such as empathy, dialogue and collaboration through teams and communities of practice - qualities capable of championing progressive social development through the sorts of intelligent problem-solving and innovation that makers are already exhibiting through their work.

LIFECYCLES OF MATERIAL WORLDS (SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION)

This session will explore the ways in which craft practitioners are proactively exploring sustainably engaged practices and projects. These initiatives might involve digital design and production methods, new materials innovation and/or the pursuit of localised sourcing. They might also incorporate cradle-to-cradle design-and-make strategies, and associated approaches – such as re-cycling, up-cycling, sharing, make and mend, and maintenance – to confront the throw-away culture and planned obsolescence resonant of many contemporary consumer production systems. They might also embrace the longer-term systems level approaches associated with Transition Design, which, through the lens of a “cosmopolitan localism” typically seeks to analyse the interconnectedness of social, economic and natural systems as starting points for appropriate design-led strategies. As such, this session will not simply look to locate the issue in terms of individual material practices, but also at the broader level of how cultures of production and consumption need to adjust to new understandings of value and meaning-making in the context of the climate crisis and sustainability agendas.

CRAFTING IN INDUSTRY

This session will explore the current condition of craft in industry, and the idea that modern political-economy needs to embrace small-scale producers as an urgent and progressive project in its own right. In the West and other developed countries, ideas of modern craft developed in opposition to industrial mass production but are once again being publicly celebrated as a way of responding to global challenges. The context in Southeast Asia and other developing countries, is quite different, wherein craft is either seen as part of everyday living or a welcome addition to a community’s economic livelihood. Either way, technological innovations and consumer expectations appear to be driving change towards more design-led bespoke offerings, trends that are also impacting on large-scale production platforms, (as witnessed in the move from mass-production, to mass-production with options, to mass-customisation). As such this session explores the idea that forms of crafting are emerging as critical components of, and within, modern industry - an idea which calls into question many prevailing notions of industry on the one hand, and perhaps craft on the other, obliging us to recognise that we are looking at a spectrum of scales and behaviours in which regimes of small-scale neo-artisanal making and micro-manufacturing are attempting to innovate around technology, form, function, aesthetic meaning and social relevance, as part of the more nuanced regimes of production and consumption that are emerging today.

DIGITAL-ANALOGUE CRAFTING

This session will explore the use of digital platforms in maker practices, particularly the integration of digital fabrication processes into analogue working methods and systems of making. Many contemporary craft advocates understand craft to be an intelligent and directly engaged way to manipulate materials and processes, instead of a restricted range of manual techniques sanctified by tradition that dominated

craft theory in the recent past. This more inclusive perspective acknowledges the validity of integrated manual practices and digital technologies that have become commonplace across the creative industries today. Of particular interest to this session is the act of translation between digital and analogue tools and procedures, including the 'gaps' – intended or unintended, productive or otherwise – that might emerge through such translations. As well as looking at the mixing of digital techniques and materials with analogue processes, the session is also interested in how makers might be experimenting with web-based digital platforms to coordinate forms of consumer customisation, and/or to build communities around collaborative and distributed design and micro-manufacturing practices.

CRAFT AS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

This session will explore how artists-craftspeople and makers, both individuals and collectives, are developing craft as forms of social enterprise. These socially engaged initiatives represent a diverse range of activities that expand our ideas of what craft can be: from community regeneration and place-making activities, to craft-supported street activism, to process-orientated public art performances, to craft collaborations in pursuit of environmental research, to projects helping to sustain mental health in diverse communities. While such projects often address 'local' issues, they simultaneously point to a global cross-cultural awareness of the common issues we face, and the influence of global technological knowledge dissemination. They also index the ways in which disciplinary boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred, fluid and receptive to diverse influences, trends that are perhaps reflected (at least in the West) in the way's commentators will often vacillate between the term's 'artist', 'maker', 'contemporary crafts', 'design-to-make', 'neo-artisanal', etc.

BUILDING CRAFT NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

The fundamental purpose of this session is to bring together individuals and institutions interested in fostering cross-cultural networks and partnerships capable of addressing the global challenges facing craft, as explored in this edition of *Making Futures*. These initiatives might be academically research orientated, or more developmental and knowledge-transfer focussed, or combinations of both. Either way, they will be interested in taking up the **Making Futures** agenda of examining and promoting contemporary craft and maker movements as '*change agents*' through the progressive possibilities presented by the revival, development and promotion of the crafts sector globally, as discussed here in Cebu. The session will also explore the added value of working with partners and the challenges and success stories coming out of collaborations in different parts of the world; in short, the many ways in which makers are presenting, or narrating, new ideas of how we might understand and think about craft's position in society. It is intended that the session will pave the way to the establishment of future partnerships amongst appropriately interested participants.

WORKSHOPS: MATERIALS AND PROCESSES IN TRANSFORMATION

These workshops will exemplify, through practical demonstration and example, a selection of approaches to the ideas and issues, materials and making processes, explored and discussed in the sessions outlined above. Analogue and digital, handmade or part machine-made, the workshops will show a number of makers and artisans communicating, by practical example, how they are adapting to new ideas or experimenting with traditional and contemporary emerging processes and materials to create new roles, forms and applications for craft.

**PROGRAMME FOR 5 MARCH: PRESS CONFERENCE, 3-5PM
QUEST HOTEL, CEBU CITY**

PROGRAMME FOR DAY 1: 6 MARCH

09:00 - 17:30	Registration & Information		
10:00 - 10:30 10:30 - 11:00 11:00 - 11:30	PLENARY Welcome and Introduction to Making Futures Icebreaker Activity Keynote 1: MAKING LEADERS: CRAFTING LEADERSHIP CULTURES Q&A		
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch		
	MAKING LEADERS: CRAFTING LEADERSHIP CULTURES	DIGITAL-ANALOGUE CRAFTING	CRAFTING IN INDUSTRY:
13:00 – 13:30	Presenter 1	Presenter 4	Presenter 7
13:30 – 14:00	Presenter 2	Presenter 5	Presenter 8
14:00 - 14:30	Presenter 3	Presenter 6	Presenter 9
14:30 - 15:00	Workshop Discussion	Workshop Discussion	Workshop Discussion
15:00 - 15:30	Afternoon Tea / Coffee		
15:30 – 16:30 16:30-17:00	PLENARY Keynote 2: DIGITAL-ANALOGUE CRAFTING Q&A Wrap up Day 1		
17:30 – 19:00	Launch of exhibition and networking reception		

PROGRAMME FOR DAY 2: 7 MARCH

09:00 - 17:15	Registration & Information
10:00 - 10:30 10:30 - 11:20	PLENARY Welcome & opening Remarks Keynote 3: LIFECYCLES OF MATERIAL WORLDS (SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION) Q&A
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 15:00	BREAKOUTS: WORKSHOPS: MATERIALS AND PROCESSES IN TRANSFORMATION Presenter 10 Presenter 11 Presenter 12
15:00 - 15:30	Afternoon Tea / Coffee
15:30 – 16:30 16:30 - 17:00 17:00 - 17:30	PLENARY BUILDING CRAFT NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION Presenter 13 Presenter 14 Presenter 15 Roundtable Discussion Concluding Remarks

PROGRAMME FOR DAY 3: 8 MARCH

08:00 - 14:00	Registration & Information	
10:00 - 11:00	PLENARY Keynote 4: CRAFT AS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE Q&A	
11:00 – 11:15	LIFECYCLES OF MATERIAL WORLDS (SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION) Presenter 16	CRAFT AS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE Presenter 19
11:15 – 11:30	Presenter 17	Presenter 20
11:30 – 11:45	Presenter 18	Presenter 21
11:45 - 12:00	Workshop Discussion	Workshop Discussion
12:00 – 12:30	PLENARY Closing Programme and Next Steps	
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 17:30	Cultural Tours	

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It works with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year it reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. It makes a positive contribution to the countries it works with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934, it is a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

The British Council has been running the programme, **Crafting Futures**, for several years now. Crafting Futures aims to foster economic and social empowerment through the development of creative social enterprise and design-led skills for artisans and designers, with a specific focus on promoting social innovation, fair and ethical collaborations, and an appreciation of cultural heritage. Crafting Futures' projects support practices and people, through research, collaboration and education. Crafting Futures advocates the future of craft around the globe, offered in over 20 countries in Asia, Africa, Americas, and Wider Europe. In Southeast Asia, the programme is currently active in Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar. It will be launched in the Philippines and Indonesia in 2020. By building on the UK's expertise in social enterprise, cultural skills and design innovation, the programme fosters new collaborations and mutual learning among communities all over the world.

About Plymouth College of Arts

Founded in 1856, Plymouth College of Art is a specialist, independent art school offering a range of study across Art, Craft, Design and Digital – from BA (Hons) Degrees and MA to Extended Diplomas, Foundations and more. It is an art school run by artists and designers for artists and designers – a home to a dynamic, cross-disciplinary community of makers and thinkers for whom making is as important as reading and writing, and where the purpose of learning is inseparable from that of living one's life. A close-knit community where artists, designers and makers combine to explore and experiment with processes and materials, both contemporary and traditional. The College continues to invest heavily in new studios and workshops that redefine the relationship between media, fine art, digital technology and handcrafted traditions, offering the most diverse ecosystem of materials, technologies, processes, practices, and exchange of ideas of any art school in the UK, with 13,000 square meters of studios and workshops across four buildings equipped with professional workspaces and state of the art facilities. A place for making things, and making things happen.

Making Futures is a research platform that has successfully operated for over a decade, supporting a range of related art, craft and design activities, including the ***Making Futures*** international biennial conference, an on-line journal, and a number of funded research projects exploring its themes. These research initiatives include, for example, the development of prototype low cost, fuel efficient glass furnaces; the EU funded project, '*Made@EU*' exploring the interrelation of analogue and digital fabrication procedures; British Council funded research exploring women's empowerment through craft in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, as well as research with weaving communities in Myanmar, and another with craft communities in the Caucasus. The ***Making Futures*** conference serves as a dissemination vehicle for these and like-minded activities across the sector globally. Since the first edition in 2009, the Plymouth-based international conference has become internationally acknowledged as one of the leading events in its field, regularly attracting creative makers and delegate-speakers from all parts of the world. In recognition of this international profile, invited conference editions have taken place in China, South Korea, and (forthcoming in 2020), the United States.