

# Manchester Craft & Design Centre

## Artistic Policy 2020-21



### Manchester Craft & Design Centre

17 Oak Street  
Manchester  
M4 5JD

t: 0161 832 4274

e: [contactus@craftanddesign.com](mailto:contactus@craftanddesign.com)

w: [www.craftanddesign.com](http://www.craftanddesign.com)

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## Who We Are

Manchester Craft & Design Centre (MCDC) is run by Manchester Craft & Design (MCAD), a charity. We provide combined studio and retail studios for craftspeople and designers working at different stages of their careers and in a range of different materials and techniques (our 'resident makers'). We also organise a high-quality temporary exhibitions and events programme, showcasing the work of local, national and international artists and makers. MCDC opens its doors free of charge to the public.

## The MCAD Artistic Policy

MCAD's Artistic Policy acts as a set of guidelines when selecting new makers and designers to join MCDC; whether this is when programming new exhibitions, events and workshops, or selecting future MCDC resident makers. The Artistic Policy will be used as a reference in creative planning, setting our cultural vision of what we strive to achieve as the organisation progresses in the future. The Artistic Policy will also be used as part of the studio recruitment process – both by people who are applying to become resident makers, and by the studio recruitment selection panel.

MCAD will remove barriers to creative participation, learning and involvement by offering opportunities to individuals and groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act in order to truly reflect the diversity of contemporary Manchester and the UK.

## Our Mission

To be an unforgettable place to make, see and buy craft and design.

We will do this by:

- Identifying and nurturing diverse talent by offering sales and exhibition opportunities and providing professional development services for MCAD resident makers and regional artists.
- Inspiring the next generation of creative talent by welcoming visits from education groups, supporting student research projects, and mentoring individuals.
- Making craft and design accessible to the public by creating opportunities for diverse audiences to engage with and purchase craft and design.
- Contributing to Manchester's cultural map, building the strength of the creative economies and cultural infrastructure of Greater Manchester and the North West.
- Bridging-together traditional artisan skills and contemporary techniques and ideas.

## How our Values Inspire our Artistic Policy

Everything that we do is guided by our values. We are:

- **Passionate** - about sharing our knowledge and space.
- **Collaborative** – we work together and with partners to achieve our goals.
- **Supportive** – we support each other, and nurture new talent and ideas.
- **Professional** – we aim for excellence and high standards in all we do.
- **Brave** – we believe in testing out new ideas and approaches.

## **Our Exhibitions & Events Programme**

Our rolling programme of temporary exhibitions and events supports the Arts Council England (ACE)'s Let's Create 10-year strategy and the outcomes it sets out:

- Creative People. Everyone can develop and express their creativity throughout their life.
- Cultural Communities. Villages towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture.
- A Creative and Cultural Country. England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.

We will refer to these outcomes as guidance in decision making when programming and will commit to the investment principles set out in Let's Create so we can offer high quality, accessible and relevant exhibitions and events.

In order to fulfil our mission, we will programme accessible, ambitious and innovative exhibitions and events showcasing diverse craft and design talent. Our exhibitions and events attract new visitors to MCDC, as well as broaden our existing audiences.

This inclusive programme promotes the Centre's profile both regionally and nationally. The programme aims to show work from local, national and international makers at varying points in their careers, and advocate for community participation. MCAD's Exhibitions & Events Officer will research, co-ordinate and deliver a critically engaging programme of temporary exhibitions each year. Each exhibition and event will be fully evaluated on completion in order to further enhance our future programmes.

In order to achieve the above ambitions, our exhibiting and resident artists, makers and designers will align with the following:

- MCAD aims to appeal to a wide audience through its exhibitions and events programme, developing an appetite and enthusiasm for craft and design both regionally and nationally.
- MCAD will seek to diversify its audience (both in number and range) by providing the opportunity to engage with craft and design through an active and challenging events programme, including talks, tours, creative public workshops and innovative after-hours events.
- Our exhibitions will be physically and intellectually accessible and inclusive; interpretative materials will complement each exhibition (in accordance with MCAD's Equality Action Plan).
- MCAD will embrace digital technologies and platforms in order to increase the depth and quality of its audiences' experiences, thereby extending our audience's visit beyond the physical building.

- MCAD aims to build our audience further by collaborating with an ever-evolving selection of cross-disciplinary partners.
- MCAD's artistic decisions and programme will be further enhanced by our participation in professional sector-related bodies including the North West Craft Network, Craft UK and Contemporary Visual Arts Manchester.
- Through our creative partnerships with higher and further education institutions as well as cultural education organisations, MCAD strives to unlock and further develop resources for children and young people in order to engage them fully in our programmes.
- MCAD will celebrate cultural diversity, equality and inclusivity in our creative outlook, encouraging an energetic, relevant, fearless and challenging approach to artistic programming. MCAD recognises that by increasing the diversity of the artists we work with we increase the quality of our programme and visitor offer, and better reflect the diversity of our communities.

### **Exhibiting Artists and Resident Makers**

- MCAD's exhibitions and resident makers will embrace variety, appealing to regional, national and international visitors. Chiefly our exhibition programme will promote work under four strands:
  - NW / Northern Artists
  - Emerging / mid-career artists including recent graduates
  - Culturally diverse artists
  - National / international work
- MCAD will champion original work designed and made by living craftspeople and designers who produce unique or limited-batch work which demonstrates genuine skill and ambition. Unique and limited production applies also to makers printing onto fabrics/ceramics/paper/glass.
- MCAD's resident makers will continually strive for excellence in their work, reflecting their individual signatures as makers and demonstrating a challenge to an investigation of processes.
- Exhibiting artists and resident makers will work in a range of materials and techniques. MCAD actively encourages and supports makers working in materials including (but not limited by): jewellery, silver and other metalwork, ceramics, textiles, wood (including furniture), glass, millinery, and paper.<sup>3</sup>
- In order to continue to champion craft and design, MCAD will not as a priority support or exhibit fine art, painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, or work that seeks to restore or reproduce. We champion work that is made 'from scratch', i.e. not assembling 'bought-in' materials.
- MCAD is committed to the creative development of the small businesses run by our resident makers, as well as new graduates and emerging designers in the region by

offering affordable studio workspaces and providing access to our knowledge, expertise, and creative networks.

- MCAD is committed to the fair payment of artists, makers and designers. All artists will be paid according to their level of experience, stage of career, and overheads. The a-n Artists Fees Toolkit and the a-n 'Paying Artists Draft Exhibition Fee Framework and Guidelines'<sup>4</sup> will be consulted when paying exhibiting artists.<sup>5</sup>

### **Studio Applications to Become a Resident Maker at MCAD**

Prospective Resident Makers who are applying to have a studio at MCAD should take note of the recommended materials and techniques listed above. As a craft and design organisation MCAD does not as a priority, support artists working in-fine art or photography, or those working with mass production methods.

### **Space2: Our Hireable workspace**

Space2 is our hireable project space used to further audience participation through workshops, education sessions and events.

External applications for pop-up exhibitions in space2 are welcomed. All applicants will be aware of our Artistic Policy, although applications for pop-up exhibitions (not organised by MCAD) will be determined on an individual basis, and not governed by the Artistic Policy.

### **Where to go next**

You can find out more about Manchester Craft & Design Centre's creative vision by visiting our website, [www.craftanddesign.com/exhibitions-events/](http://www.craftanddesign.com/exhibitions-events/)

If you have any queries about Manchester Craft & Design Centre, please contact our Exhibitions & Events Officer on 0161 832 4274 or [exhibitions@craftanddesign.com](mailto:exhibitions@craftanddesign.com).