Manchester Craft & Design Centre (MCAD)

Director

Lead one of Manchester's most distinctive creative destinations. Champion independent makers. Shape the future of contemporary craft and design.

Salary: £36,000 (based on £45,000 full time)
Hours: 28 hours p/w (based on 35 hours full time), ideally spread across five days
Location: Manchester Craft and Design Centre, Northern Quarter
Reports to: Chair of the Board of Trustees

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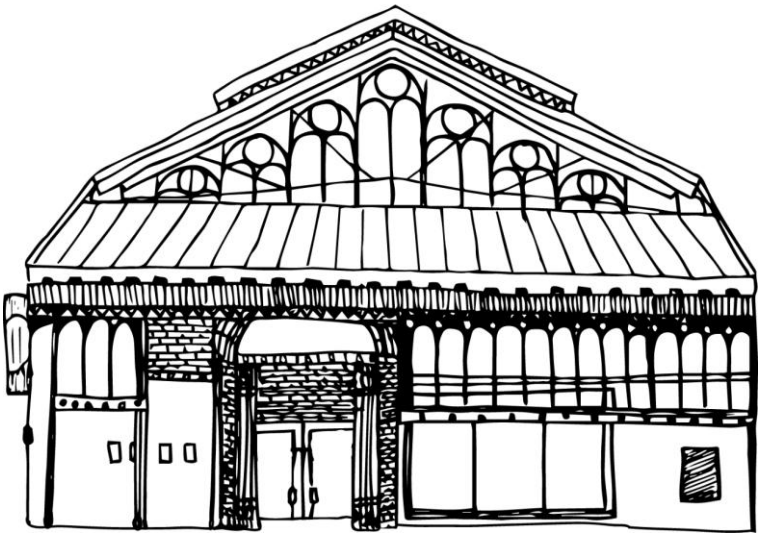

Thank you for your interest in joining Manchester Craft and Design Charity Board as Director. This is an exciting opportunity to shape the future of an established creative organisation, champion our community of independent makers and strengthen our place within Manchester's cultural landscape.

This role needs to be visible in the centre as well as developing a powerful strategic focus, so our preference is for the 0.8 hours to be spread across five days. We are open to hearing good ideas about working flexibly and how this could work for the right candidate

How to Apply

Come and meet us – Open Day on 8th December, 12 noon – 5.30pm
We warmly invite prospective candidates to visit MCAD, to meet the Chair, staff team and Makers, and discover more about the organisation and the opportunity.

Deadline for Applications

Please send your up-to-date CV plus a covering letter (no more than 2 sides of A4 / 750 words) that sets out how your skills and experience meet the requirements of the Role Profile and Job Description to contactus@craftanddesign.com by **7th January 2027.**

Interview Process:

13th January 2027 - First round interviews.
Week beginning 18th January 2027 - second round interviews for selected candidates.

We welcome applications from people with a range of backgrounds and experiences who share our passion for craft, creativity and supporting independent Makers.

Our Vision
To create a sustainable future for craft and design.

Our Purpose
We believe craft and design matter to people, places, and communities and should remain inclusive, innovative, and accessible, supporting wellbeing, enjoyment, and sustainable creative careers.

Our Mission
We collaborate to connect people with craft and design, growing opportunity, expertise, participation, and access within a thriving and inclusive community of makers.



Our Organisation
Manchester Craft and Design Centre is one of Manchester's most distinctive creative destinations, housed in a beautiful historic Victorian fish market building in the heart of the Northern Quarter.

Home to a vibrant community of independent makers and designers, we champion contemporary craft, support creative businesses, inspire audiences, and connect the public with making through exhibitions, workshops, and events, enriching our city.

Supported by Arts Council England, we are a small, ambitious charity with a big heart, and a clear vision – to create a sustainable future for craft and design.

We believe craft and design matter to people, places, and communities and should remain inclusive, innovative, and accessible, supporting wellbeing, enjoyment, and sustainable creative careers.

Our Definition of Craft & Design

Craft and design are an expression of the environment and the culture in which we live today, and the personal story and creative vision of the maker.

Craft and design have a functional purpose and is delivered through human creativity, skills, materials, beauty, technology and personal expression.

Craft and design are driven by people, working now, to combine traditional skills, innovative techniques and modern technology in a process of ‘making’.

Our Strategic Objectives:

● We support and collaborate with independent makers to ensure that we can sustain a thriving creative ecosystem for craft and design.

● We welcome visitors and create unique and unforgettable experiences, centring craft and design expertise in order to create joyful, accessible and meaningful interactions with people.

● Through the charity, we will demonstrate an enterprising spirit in raising income, empowering our staff, working to Manchester Net Zero targets and caring for our heritage building as a place for craft and design in the heart of Manchester. Ensuring a thriving organisation that will be there to support craft and design for generations to come.

● We will take the lead in showcasing the power of craft and design as a way of delivering skills & talent development, education, creative careers, economic impact, wellbeing, a sense of pride in place, social inclusion and creative excellence.

● We will lead and innovate in the sector; convening and collaborating with the greatest minds in contemporary craft and design to ensure that craft and design can continue to thrive and evolve in the future.



Our Values

All of our work is developed through the lens of equality and environmental sustainability. These are intrinsic values placed at the heart of our decision-making.

- We're brave, innovative and wonderfully northern.
- We're collaborative, inclusive and we care for each other.
- We share our knowledge and expertise and empower others to find joy in craft and design.
- A talent incubator where everyone is welcome.
- We strive for excellence in what we create and the experiences we curate.
- We're curious and ambitious and like to do things differently.
- We look out into the world to ensure we're relevant for the future.

What We Do

MAKER SUPPORT

- Offer affordable city centre making/retail space.
- Enable people to run and participate in workshops and professional development.

- Promote craft and design to create a thriving ecosystem for craft and design.
- Provide opportunities for makers to show and sell their work in the centre and across the North West.

ACCESS TO CRAFT

- Welcome visitors/shoppers to access craft.
- Run talent development & education programmes supporting diverse makers (and skills) to enjoy craft and design and pursue creative careers.
- Deliver a public programme with a focus on craft and makers.

A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

- Create unique shopping & cultural experiences.
- Raise revenue through donations, enterprise and other fundraising activities.
- Support staff effectiveness.
- Care for a heritage, landmark building as a destination for making, in the heart of Manchester’s Northern Quarter

SOCIAL IMPACT

- Provide a space for meeting and collaboration (wellbeing/creative).
- Contribute to city's environmental sustainability.
- Enable access to heritage.
- Develop skills/talent, education, aspiration, and volunteering.
- Fundraise for craft/community.

INNOVATION & LEADERSHIP

- Collaborate with universities and educators.
- Lead the NW craft network and collaborate locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Create networks for all career stages.
- Participate in thought leadership and sector dialogue.



Director: Manchester Craft and Design Centre (MCAD)

About the role

We are looking for an inspiring and experienced Director to lead MCAD into its next chapter.

This is an exciting opportunity to shape the future of an established creative organisation, champion our community of independent makers and strengthen our place within Manchester's cultural landscape.

This is our most senior role in the team. Working closely with the Board of Trustees, staff team, resident makers, and cultural partners, you will provide strategic leadership and operational oversight, drive fundraising and income generation, and ensure the Centre is financially sustainable and creatively ambitious.

It is a varied role. In a typical week you might be finding new ways to secure income for MCAD, building relationships with funders and partners, making sure we spend it wisely, and shaping

the future of our centre, so it thrives as a wonderful place for Makers, visitors, staff and volunteers. We are a small team, so you will think big and roll your sleeves up too.

What you will do

- Lead MCAD's strategy and keep everyone pulling in the same direction.
- Raise MCAD's profile, developing programmes, audiences and opportunities.
- Champion resident makers and support the growth and visibility of their creative businesses.
- Drive fundraising, income generation and partnership development.
- Provide operational and financial oversight, overseeing financial planning - looking after the budget with care.
- Make sure we have the right people in the right roles, doing the right thing, always leading with fairness and care.
- Lead, inspire and support the team, creating a positive, supportive working environment
- Be the steward of our culture, making MCAD a vibrant, inclusive, and rewarding place to work, make and visit.
- Build positive, lasting relationships with funders, partners, cultural and educational institutions, and the wider craft sector.
- Oversee the care and long-term future of our historic building.
- Work with our Board, maintain a strong and constructive relationship with the Chair and Trustees, supporting good governance and providing clear reporting on organisational performance.

About you

You will be an enthusiastic, skilled, and confident leader with:

- Significant senior leadership experience, ideally in a cultural or creative organisation.
- A passion for contemporary craft and a commitment to supporting independent makers.
- A real understanding of how creative charities work and the funding pressures they face, and experience of making limited resources go a long way.
- Experience of fundraising, income generation and developing successful partnerships.
- Strong financial management and a track record in fundraising and income generation.
- Experience working with a Board of Trustees and a sound understanding of charity governance.
- A passionate advocate for craft and makers. An existing network in the sector would be helpful but is not essential; we are more interested in your experience, ideas, and enthusiasm for what MCAD can achieve.

Above all, you will understand the importance of creative communities and be excited by the potential of this unique organisation.

Role Profile
Director: Manchester Craft and Design Centre (MCAD)

Function: Director
Level: Director
Reports to: Chair of the Board of Trustees

Summary of Role

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Hours: This role needs to be visible in the centre as well as developing a powerful strategic focus, so our preference is for the 0.8 hours to be spread across five days. We are open to hearing good ideas about working flexibly and how this could work for the right candidate
Location: Based at Manchester Craft and Design Centre

About this level

Leads the organisation. This is the most senior operational role at MCAD, reporting to the Board of Trustees. The Director (D) holds overall responsibility for the whole charity and where it is heading, working within the direction set by the Board.

The D keeps the team and their direct reports focused and pulling the same way. They are the steward of our building and our culture, setting the tone by leading by example and living our values every day.

About this role

The Director leads Manchester Craft and Design Centre (MCAD), a much-loved home for independent makers in Manchester's Northern Quarter.

They make sure the centre has a clear direction, is well run and well-funded, and that our team, makers and partners feel looked after.

It is a varied role. A typical week might include finding new ways to bring money into MCAD, making sure we spend it wisely, and shaping the centre into a wonderful place for makers, our team and the visitors who come through our doors.

As we are a small team, this role thinks strategically and rolls up its sleeves when needed. **Focus:** self, others, whole organisation	

Contribution to the business: Turns the Board's strategic direction into a thriving, financially sustainable MCAD.

Responsible for

- **Strategy:** Shape and deliver MCAD's 2026-2031 business plan within the direction set by the Board, making sure everything we do moves us towards our strategic goals.
- **Right people, right roles:** Make sure MCAD has the right people in the right roles, doing the right things to help us thrive, and taking difficult decisions with fairness and care when needed.
- **Governance:** Make sure MCAD is run with care and integrity, to high standards of governance, ethics, and creative excellence, and that the Board always feels well informed.
- **Income:** Lead our fundraising and income generation, finding fresh and creative ways to bring money in, with specialist support when needed.
- **Budget:** Look after the budget, planning income and spending carefully so every pound works hard for MCAD.
- **Risk and resilience:** Think ahead, spotting risks and opportunities early, and help MCAD adapt with confidence when things don't go to plan.
- **Relationships:** Build warm, lasting relationships with our funders, partners, and stakeholders, and open up new partnerships that create opportunities for MCAD, its independent Makers and the wider craft sector.
- **Sector leadership:** Be a proud and passionate voice for craft, championing innovation and real impact for independent Makers and our community.
- **People and culture:** Be the steward of our culture. It matters enormously, and MCAD must be a vibrant, thriving, exciting, inclusive, and rewarding place to work, make and visit. Line manage and support the management team to do their best work.
- **The Centre:** Care for our historic building and its future, so it stays a welcoming, inspiring home for independent Makers, our team, and visitors.
- **Creative projects:** Bring imagination and ambition to guide the development of significant projects and programmes that help MCAD thrive.

Typical goals and measurements

- Income and spending budgets are met or beaten, including fundraising and income generation.
- Strong partnerships are in place that help MCAD deliver its mission.

- Our team feel supported and empowered, and meet their personal goals.
- MCAD is a place people love to work, with a culture that feels vibrant, inclusive, and rewarding.
- Makers and visitors feel welcomed and well looked after and speak highly of the centre.
- The Board feels well informed and confident about MCAD's future.
- MCAD is recognised for its leadership in the craft and cultural sectors through a raised profile and relationships across organisations, partners, and stakeholders.

Competencies & Behaviours

About the postholder

The Director is a warm, skilled, and experienced leader from the creative or cultural world. They can see the big picture and set a clear path to get there, bringing the team together so everyone is pulling in the same direction. They combine a powerful strategic vision with a practical, sleeves-rolled-up approach, and they care deeply about craft, makers and the people who make MCAD what it is.

Technical skills

- Strong leadership and people skills, with a track record of uniting teams and leading them to perform at their best.
- Experience working at board level, with a sound understanding of charity governance.
- Strong financial planning and budget management, with the confidence to take difficult decisions to keep MCAD resilient.
- A track record in fundraising and income generation, including measuring impact and telling its story well.
- A commercial and entrepreneurial outlook, with experience of growing earned income from spaces, events, or retail.
- Experience building partnerships and influencing on behalf of an organisation, including with funders, local authorities, and civic partners.
- Experience of looking after an historic building or venue, including planning for its upkeep and future investment.
- Knowledge of the craft, arts, or cultural sector. An existing network of creative partners or makers would be helpful but is not essential.

Other skills

- A passionate and articulate advocate for craft, making and the creative industries, and the good they bring to our community.
- A positive, ambitious enterprising approach to creating opportunities for MCAD.
- A collaborator, who builds productive relationships with our team, independent makers, and partners.
- Curious and always learning, bringing fresh ideas that keep MCAD a sector leader.

- Lives our values and sets the tone for how we work, as described in the MCAD expectations framework.

Education and experience

- Significant experience in a senior management or leadership role, ideally in a cultural organisation.
- A real understanding of how the charity sector works, especially for creative and cultural charities, and the funding pressures they face. Experience of making limited resources go a long way.
- Strong knowledge of the craft or cultural sector. An existing network to draw on would be helpful but is not essential.
- A proven, proactive approach to partnership working, influencing, and networking.
- Sound knowledge of charity governance, financial management and fundraising.
- Experience of using evaluation and impact to shape strategy.