

Craft commons and craft communities: Exploring developments and dynamics of creative enterprises

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In recent years, craft practices such as ceramics, sculptors, printmaking, textile, jewellery, glass to name a few have seen a creative revival in the post industrial West due to their potential for being localised ethical enterprises. Local makers' collectives, makerspaces, repair cafes, and digital DYIs have been hailed as performing and ushering a sustainable alternative economic future. They are said to be built on the ethics of commoning where resource use, labour rights and profit generation show commitment to collective redistributive justice. In the global south, on the other hand, traditional crafts such as weaving, embroidery, bamboo-cane work, metalwork, wood carving and painting are rebranded as creative economies utilising artistic and design interventions. Place-based family-centric craft communities which occupy much of the informal economy, are coming within the ethically conscious commercial and aesthetic fold of the transnationally connected elites. Digital platforms and influencers are also playing an important role in reviving and incentivising these craft practices. While both these scenarios offer an exploration of sustainable creative innovations and the development of the local economy for an equitable future, it is important to investigate the contradictions and political potentials offered by these enterprises.

For instance, questions remain about what kinds of gendered, racial, casteist and classist practices they unsettle or perpetuate. What are the new ways labour is being valued, cared for and governed in these spaces? Are practices of consumption here indicative of new ethical consciousness? Who is included and excluded from these spaces of production and consumption? How are digital spaces acting as intermediate spaces and used for mobilisation? In what ways past and

place specificity of crafts help in this revival? How do the revivals mark a departure from the traditional informal economy in postcolonial geographies to contemporary maker culture in post-industrialised geographies? Are there overlaps and emulations across various spatial scales? Can comparisons be drawn between international cases or within micro-geographical national or local enterprises?

We are looking for PhD students who are willing to co-design a project around this broad topic primarily using qualitative research methods. They are also encouraged to develop experimental approaches, bring new insights from across international field sites and align the topic towards their own interest, connections and locations. Potential questions can include:

- What are the ways through which craft enterprises are ushering new ethical economic futures? How are they challenging, renegotiating or perpetuating existing socio-spatial inequalities and hierarchies?
- To what extent do place heritage and local culture play significant roles in the handmade revival movement? What role do cultural and heritage organisations have in popularising them?
- In what ways can comparisons of revived craft enterprises be made between post-industrial and postcolonial spaces? What kinds of sustainable, ethical and redistributive production and consumption regimes set them apart or are there overlaps across scales?
- How are precapitalist craft practices going through design interventions for a more-than-capitalist future? What role are various intermediaries playing in this process? How are digital domains facilitating or manipulating this transition?

Funding Details

Three years of funding will come from the South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership scheme (SCDTP). In addition to covering the costs of programme fees, the SCDTP studentship also provides a basic annual maintenance grant of £18,622 (2024/25 UKRI rate). This is not classed as income so is therefore not liable for tax. Students will also have access to a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) to fund attendance at other training courses, conferences or to purchase essential equipment for your research.

Application Details

For entry in the 2024/25 Academic Year, the deadline for the receipt of applications will be 19 January 2024 (17.00 GMT).

For all studentships, students must have qualifications of the standard of a good honours degree at first- or upper second-class level, from a UK academic higher education institution. Degree qualifications gained from outside the UK, or a combination of qualifications and/or experience that is equivalent to a relevant UK degree, may be accepted.

The South Coast DTP is able to accept applications from UK and International applicants to all of our accredited disciplines/pathways, however due to UKRI funding conditions, awards to non-UK residents are capped at 30% of our overall allocation.

To be classed as a home/UK student, candidates must meet the following criteria:

Be a UK National (meeting residency requirements below), or

Have settled status, or

Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements below), or

Have indefinite leave to remain or enter

If a candidate does not meet the criteria above, they would be classed as an International student.

To apply for funding you will need to complete 2 applications forms. You will need to complete an online application form for your programme of study via your chosen institution's website. You will also need to complete an SCDTP Funding Application form. Further details can be found on the '[Apply](#)' page.

For more details please see the SCDTP website (<https://southcoastdtp.ac.uk/>). Informal enquiries may be made to the project supervisors.