

Seeking activists working within ‘the Commons’

Being based in Birmingham the Craftspace team are witnessing the increasing privatisation of publicly owned space/assets. We are experiencing the erosion of local common resources (e.g. parks and libraries) and this is also reflected nationally at a macro level. Some of the countercultural movements that have emerged in recent decades have begun to challenge corporate forms of enclosure. These include open source ethos and social charters to reclaim the commons as well as sharing and peer to peer economies.

Craftspace is organising a national touring exhibition and festival on the theme of the commons through the lens of craft and making. The exhibition will highlight acts of ‘commoning’ that are shaping the way communities are working together for a better world. It will also explore craft as a form of commons (through knowledge, materials, practice, heritage). The Festival of Commoning will be a series of events, activities, workshops, performances, where people come together to participate and experience what they have in common. This will accompany the touring exhibition.

Historian Peter Linebaugh has popularised the term ‘commoning’ which in modern times is about activating the power of social cooperation to get things done.

Craft can join the campaign to make a powerful commentary on what society stands to gain from acting to protect and reclaim our global commons.

Mapping your activism

As part of this project we are interested in mapping the amount and nature of local and national community based activism taking place around the theme of the commons and commons-thinking. For example, community led allotment activism, social farms and gardens, community building and, but not limited to, community run shops, libraries and parks.

**If this is you, please fill in the expression of interest at the end of the document.**

This research will become part of the exhibition in a variety of ways including showcasing three socially engaged residencies where we will match activists with artists. It will also be featured in the Festival of Commoming.

“The commons means: Things we share/ Places we share/ Systems we share/ Ideas we share/ Culture we share” Peter Barnes, On the Commons co-founder

“The act of commoning draws on a network of relationships made under the expectation that we will each take care of one another and with a shared understanding that some things belong to all of us—which is the essence of the commons itself.” Julie Ristau, Commons Animateur

[You can find out more about these themes on the **Craftspace website**.](http://craftspace.co.uk/craft-and-the-commons/)

Tell us about your activism

Name:

Address:

Telephone number/s:

Skype name:

Email:

Website/web spaces:

Social media:

* How would you describe the form of ‘commoning’ that you are involved in or your commons based activism? (include any weblinks)
* Are you part of a grassroots community group? What are their activities in relation to reclaiming the commons or shaping community futures? (include any weblinks)
* Have you written about commons activism or do you actively discuss it on social media?
* Do you have any experience collaborating with artists or makers? If yes, please give details.
* Would you be interested in proposing an event, activity, workshop, performance for the Festival of Commoning? If so, please give a brief outline.

Please email this form to Emma Daker, Exhibitions & Project Development Manager at [e.daker@craftspace.co.uk](mailto:e.daker@craftspace.co.uk) by **Monday 5 August 2019**. If you have any questions please feel free to email or call on 0121 608 6668.

Please send up to three relevant images (under 1MB not large files please) in support of this expression of interest if relevant.

Thank you for your time and interest.

**About Craftspace**

Craftspace is a craft development organisation based in Birmingham. It is a curator, creative producer and researcher devising commissioning opportunities and projects which actively demonstrate the progressive role of makers and craft in civil society. Our programme is underpinned by socially engaged, participatory, collaborative and co-created approaches to engaging communities through the arts. Building cultural, social and human capital is a key driver of our work. [www.craftspace.co.uk](http://www.craftspace.co.uk)