

# Craftspace

We are Commoners: Creative acts of commoning  
Exhibition for Hire

“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

*Reknit spectrum samples*  
Amy Twigger Holroyd

Amy explores Commons themes in her work;  
Reknit Revolution represents a proposition to use  
making as a means of overcoming the enclosure  
of the fashion commons.

[reknitrevolution.org](http://reknitrevolution.org)



*Lament For The Seas On A Great Auk*  
Pinki Maclure

## Outline

### Why commoning?

We are currently witnessing the increasing privatisation of publicly owned assets in the UK. Many areas are experiencing the erosion of local common spaces and resources (e.g. parks and libraries).

Some countercultural movements that have emerged in recent decades have begun to challenge corporate forms of enclosure. They champion the sharing economy, peer to peer economy and open source.

In 'Mapping the New Commons' Charlotte Hess suggests that divergent disciplines, political interests, and geographical regions are increasingly finding the term 'commons' crucial in addressing issues of social dilemmas,

degradation, and sustainability of a wide variety of shared resources.

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

Commons researcher Julie Ristau describes how "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. The practice of commoning demonstrates a shift in thinking from the prevailing ethic of "you're on your own" to "we're in this together."



Launching: 2020/21

Tour: 18 months

A national touring exhibition

Co-curated and organised by Craftspace

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

## Exhibition Development

The exhibition will be informed by a range of cross disciplinary perspectives (including culture, geography, social sciences, history of ideas, philosophy). To this end, we are working in partnership with Nottingham Trent University. A network of curators, craft practitioners and researchers/academics will participate in a series of workshops and discussions, which will feed into the project blog: [commoners.craftspace.co.uk](http://commoners.craftspace.co.uk). The content will interrogate current issues and ideas relating to the commons including the creative, neighbourhood and knowledge commons.

## Exhibition

This national touring exhibition will highlight 'acts of commoning'. These actions are shaping the way communities work together to share and steward commonly owned assets and resources.

Through loans and new commissions makers will call attention to the issues, contribute their thought leadership and participate in a call to action.

We Are Commoners will launch at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) in September 2020 and tour throughout the UK.

The exhibition will feature work by 20 artists, including 2 based internationally, which will be a mix of new commissions and loaned pieces. Also, three artworks made in response to or co-created with communities in three site specific and socially engaged residencies.

The exhibition will investigate craft as a form of commons (through knowledge, materials, practice, heritage).

## Exhibiting Artists

### Loaned work:

Ele Carpenter  
Claudia Rodríguez  
Pinkie Maclure  
Fourthland  
Alice McLean & Justine Boussard

### Commissioned work:

Amy Twigger Holroyd  
Deirdre Nelson  
Linda Brothwell

Heidi Hinder  
Blackwater Polytechnic: Ben Coode-Adams and Freddie Robins  
Jacky Oliver  
Shane Waltener  
Lise Bjerne Linnert and Gelawesh Waledkhani  
Rachael Colley  
Alinah Azadeh  
Kate Hodgson

## About Craftspace

Craftspace is a charity creating opportunities to see, make and be curious about exceptional contemporary craft. We are based in Birmingham and work collaboratively regionally, nationally and internationally. We build relationships between artists, people and organisations and encourage the sharing of ideas, skills and knowledge.

We have 30 years' experience and continue to learn, push boundaries and challenge ideas.

Craftspace initiates artistic programmes which stimulate creative excellence, critical thinking and understanding of contemporary crafts in the widest social and cultural contexts.

### Craftspace

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[t tweetcraftspace](https://twitter.com/tweetcraftspace)  
[i craftspace\\_](https://www.instagram.com/craftspace_)

## Target Audience

Younger people 25-40  
Students/Academics/Scholars (craft/design/environmental/politics)  
Artists  
Commons activists (local, national, international)  
Environmentalists  
Socially engaged public  
Online audiences (through the exhibition blog and social media)

## Tour

Midlands Arts Centre will be a key partner in the development of the exhibition and will launch the tour in September 2020.

The exhibition will tour for 18 months. The following tour slots are available:

10 July – 2 September 2021  
27 November 2021 – 22 January 2022  
16 April - 11 June 2022

These dates can be negotiated.

## Venue Requirements

Space: approximately 200 square metres.

Security: full time invigilation or CCTV

## Cost

£2500 based on 8 weeks – the number of weeks can be negotiated.

Hire fee includes all display cases/stands and interpretation, education, family and marketing/PR resources.

Venues must insure the exhibition shelf-to-shelf and undertake one-way (onward) transport as well as fulfilling Craftspace's Conditions of Hire.w

## Contact

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**mac**  
Midlands Arts Centre

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