

NEWS UPDATE

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innovative CRAFT



WELCOME

IC Lead Director Amanda Game writes:

Many thanks for your continued interest in IC: Innovative Craft. This is the third of our occasional newsletters in which we aim to keep you up to date with our activities. The last few months have been incredibly busy and inspiring for all of us at IC. We are delighted to have this opportunity to catch our breath and look back over what we have already achieved – and look forward to the many good things rapidly appearing on our horizon. It has been particularly pleasing to see so many of you at our events, both old friends and new. Word is clearly spreading fast that the Dovecot building is the place to come to explore challenging, innovative craft, take part in uplifting conversations with the ever-widening community of people interested in our work, and enjoy the social aspects offered by this magnificent space.

Looking back

We have just reached the end of an intensive six-month period of activity in the Dovecot building, which has included bringing together an extraordinary range and quality of contemporary objects – from Australian designer Robert Foster's Aluminium Teapots in our *Raising the Bar* exhibition (August/September 2008) to Gary Breeze's magnificent lettered slate panels in the *Jerwood Contemporary Makers* exhibition (November 2008/January 2009).

We are continuing to develop a close working relationship with Dovecot Studios. Our new IC office is immediately adjacent to the Studios' fantastic new weaving floor – at the water level of the swimming pool that once occupied this space during the building's former incarnation as the Infirmary Street Baths! We were delighted that Douglas Grierson, Head Weaver, and his team agreed

to open the Weaving Floor for our Textile Study Day on 24 January (see photo below), which gave a wonderful focus for the 75 visitors who joined us for that event.

The Studios also lent their time and skills to the extraordinary FilmCraft weekend, curated by film maker Matt Hulse (30 January – 1 February). The opening promenade performance and installation, *A Stitch in Time*, on the Friday night, brought the weavers together with musicians of the quality of Daniel Padden's One Ensemble and Sarah Kenchington, kinetic sculptor Guy Bishop (who is currently designing a money box for the National Library of Scotland) and embroiderer Deirdre Nelson – an event which stimulated one audience member to comment, 'This is where the Scottish Renaissance is!'

Both the Textile Study Day and the FilmCraft weekend formed part of 'Thinking Through Craft', the programme of IC activities supported by The National Lottery through the Scottish Arts Council. The same programme enabled us to offer a series of other events by remarkable makers. These included:

- a participatory workshop on *Pattern* by Edinburgh ceramic artist Frances Priest;
- a talk about the work of the innovative Edward Marshall Trust by architectural ceramic designer Will Levi Marshall;
- a conversation between tapestry artist Sara Brennan and painter Moyna Flannigan;
- and a talk by Gary Breeze about the art of lettercutting.

All these stimulated lively debate among the participants, who came from an exhilarating range of backgrounds and interests. ▶

Above: When 'Raising the Bar' was shown in Wales, Amanda Game was interviewed at Ruthin Craft Centre for Channel Four Television – in Welsh!

Below Enjoying the experience at the Textile Study Day.



JERWOOD
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Supported by
The National Lottery
through the Scottish Arts Council

Scottish Arts Council

People

The IC team remains small and flexible. *Jenny Findlay*, a textile designer based in Edinburgh, has been working with us over the past couple of months, acting as front-of-house for the exhibitions and offering much-needed administrative support to the IC Directors. She has also been much involved in recording some of our events, which are being shaped into podcasts for our website with the assistance of *Dougal Perman* at Inner Ear in Glasgow. Two Edinburgh College of Art jewellery students, *Soizig Carey* and *Jennifer Laidlaw*, have helped invigilate our exhibitions, and we are looking forward to seeing their graduation shows this June. *Jenny Carter* and *Justin Reynolds* have been actively involved in keeping our website up to date.

Meanwhile, IC Directors *Elizabeth Goring*, *Roanne Dods* and I continue to give as much time as we can to ensuring that IC:Innovative Craft continues to pursue its aim of encouraging and celebrating extraordinary achievement in the field of making through a whole variety of different events, exhibitions and collaborations. Our advisory board keep us focused and up-to-date and they, together with all the makers, artists, historians, curators, gallerists and visitors who have come through the Dovecot doors in the past six months, keep reminding us we have an exceptional project here which requires hard work to deliver – but which is already beginning to bear wonderful (and often unexpected) fruit.

Amanda Game
Lead Director
IC:Innovative Craft



Looking forward

The second phase of the 'Thinking Through Craft' programme will begin in late April, to coincide with the showing of our next exhibition at the Dovecot building, *The Age of Experience*, which opens on 7 April 2009. IC is bringing this show to Edinburgh in partnership with Ruthin Craft Centre. It includes some absolutely stunning pieces of contemporary work by makers of the calibre of Elizabeth Fritsch (ceramics), as well as a rare chance to see textiles by the late Peter Collingwood OBE. All the makers, as the title suggests, are individuals with long and productive careers – all have made fabulous contributions to the art of making, and some are showing for the first time in Scotland.

In August, we will be bringing the second *Jerwood Contemporary Makers* exhibition to the Dovecot building. More 'Thinking Through Craft' events will be programmed around this.

The partnership with Ruthin Craft Centre is proving very productive in numerous ways. Philip Hughes, Ruthin's Director,

opened his own new gallery spaces in North Wales, last summer, and these beautiful purpose-built craft galleries have already housed IC's *Raising the Bar* exhibition, which showed there in October/November 2008. This resulted in coverage by Channel Four – in Welsh. IC is currently curating another exhibition, *Thinking through Tapestry*, for Ruthin Craft Centre, which will show there in September/October this year. We are delighted to be bringing together a group of six artists, all with specific connections to tapestry either through the Dovecot or Edinburgh College of Art, but whose works offer very different artistic interpretations of this medium. We hope to bring the show back to Scotland later in the year.

We now have a new partner gallery in the form of Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (mima), who are showing *Raising the Bar* from the end of this month (27 February) until 10 May. It's wonderful that this exhibition will now have been seen in three very special new exhibition spaces around the UK. Many thanks to all the artists, including Scottish maker Malcolm Appleby, who have generously agreed to lend their work to this exhibition for several months.

We are currently working with the National Museums Scotland to research and develop an exciting exhibition exploring craft and photography. We also welcome ideas from contemporary makers about other projects that we should be considering or working with you on. Dovecot offers us all the opportunity to meet and discuss live ideas in amazing spaces.

Other news includes the donation of 20 boxes of books on craft and design from The Scottish Gallery – a fantastic treasure chest of magazines, monographs and exhibition catalogues of Scottish, UK and international interest. Together with Dovecot, IC is investigating the possibility of piloting a Reading Room to make this material widely accessible. We hope to launch this project in April/May: watch our website for updates.

AWARDS

We are delighted that the IC website has been shortlisted for a Communicators in Business Scotland Award – winners to be announced later this month.

Why not go to our Support page and sign up to receive news and Updates regularly? www.innovativecraft.co.uk

Below: IC will be showing the work of ceramist Elizabeth Fritsch in The Age of Experience at Dovecot in April.

