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Publications policy

Background

When the Crafts Study Centre was founded as a charity in 1970, the founder Trustees included alongside their original mission to advance 'the education of the public in the arts and in particular artistic crafts' a specific objective 'to collect and publish books magazine periodicals and other publications in connection [with the works of artist craftsmen]'.

The Centre delivered on this objective in two ways: by establishing a library to support individual study of objects and archives, and growing this library through occasional purchase and gifts; and by publishing occasional monographs and catalogues, often in partnership with other related organisations, linked to temporary exhibitions promoted by the Centre, or having a more personal focus, for example as a tribute or memorial.

Work is in hand, as a result of the commissioning of this paper by Trustees, to identify a complete list of Crafts Study Centre publications (and to ensure that at the very least a single reference copy of each publication is held in the Centre's library). The following books from the Centre's 'back catalogue' are currently on sale:

Justin Howes, Edward Johnston: a catalogue of the Crafts Study Centre collection & archive (Bath, 1987)

Denise and Henry Wren, The Oxshott Pottery (Bath, 1984) ISBN 86197 044 6

Patricia Baines, a Linen Legacy: Rita Beales 1889-1987 (Bath, 1989)
ISBN 0 86197 104 3

A Fine Line: Henry Hammond 1914-89 potter and educationist (Bath, 1992)
ISBN 1 85790 001 4

Robin Tanner etcher and teacher 1904-1988: what I believe: lectures and other writings (Bath 1989) ISBN 0 86197 090 X

Tributes to Robin Tanner 1904-1988 (Bath, 1990) ISBN 0 86197 107 8

In addition the Crafts Study Centre published a short-lived series of newsletters in the 1980s (The Crafts Study Centre News) which contained information such as the Centre's Acquisitions Policy and short essays on makers and collections as well as a list of current publications (an example from issue 6 is shown as an annex to this paper).

In short, the Centre's publications at Bath focused on disseminating information and understanding about significant craft practitioners with a close association to the activity and ethos of the Crafts Study Centre. The books, all soft back, and generally modest in scale and length, sometimes accompanied exhibitions, and were occasionally delivered in association with other organisations, notably the Crafts Council. One of the most significant of these collaborations led to the publication of a series of essays by eminent writers (including Richard La Trobe Bateman and Peter Dormer) in the book David Pye: Wood Carver and Turner (London and Bath, 1986).

The move to Farnham

The Centre's relocation to Farnham and its new association with The Surrey Institute of Art & Design, now the University for the Creative Arts, led to a reappraisal and indeed a reinvigoration of the Centre's work as a publisher, working still within the parameters of modest budgets and limited staff resources. However, the developing use of digital resources and the availability of significant Higher Education funding streams to support digital content led to the most extensive publication of information materials ever undertaken by the Crafts Study Centre, during the period of transfer from Bath to Farnham and the opening of the new museum for the Crafts Study Centre's collections and archives. The resources on the collections and archives (over 4000 images and a series of illustrated essays on the collections by a range of eminent authors) now published on the website of the Arts and Humanities Data Service (www.ahds.ac.uk) establish a major and well used body of content for researchers and students.

The Centre has built on this achievement by publishing additional illustrated essays on the AHDS website and on its own website (www.csc.ucreative.ac.uk). For example, using funding from the Headley Trust, a series of three scholarly essays by the young craft writer Sophie Heath, supported by David Westwood's acclaimed digital images, were commissioned, on the potter Marianne de Trey, the calligrapher Ann Hechle, and an extended essay based on a thorough analysis of the relatively untouched Lucie Rie archive. In all three of these cases, new objects to support the collections at the Centre were added. With the support of a modest but essential grant from the Henry Hammond Trust, an essay by Sophie Heath on Henry Hammond was published on the Centre's website. Finally, the Centre has acted swiftly to enable academic staff at the University to publish research over the Centre's website, for example, Linda Brassington's paper on 'The collection as a narrative in the crafts' based on her analysis of Barron and Larcher textiles. This latter example was a case of a low cost publication where the commitment of time by the author, Centre staff and the digital photographer were required to bring the essay to fruition.

The Centre has also responded to the challenge of producing and publishing monographs and collections of essays in line with the Centre's charitable objective, and in sympathy with its back catalogue. It has also done so mindful of the rapid advances in book production and design methods, taking into account the relatively high costs of publishing in very small print runs, and the difficulties of having a venue with small visitor traffic as the main point of distribution of the product. The Centre has also published in such a way as no financial risk is incurred. That is to say, the costs of a publication are determined in advance, a budget secured (often with external funding) and the books sold at a reasonable price to attract sales, rather than a price that takes account of the true costs of production (as this would make the books prohibitively expensive).

The Centre has published seven books since opening to the public in 2004, (as at September 2007):

Ed., Simon Olding and Pat Carter, Essays for the opening of the Crafts Study Centre (Canterton Books, 2004)
ISBN 0 9541627 4 9

Adrian Bland, Tass Mavrogordato, Jean Vacher, 20th century crafts: a review of the first Crafts Study Centre exhibition 1972 (Canterton Books, 2005)
ISBN 0 9541627 9 X

David Whiting, Deirdre Wood: straight and narrow (Crafts Study Centre, 2005)
ISBN 0 9551166 0 0

Simon Olding, John Hinchcliffe (Canterton Books, 2006)
ISBN 0 9541627 7 3

Ed., Jean Vacher, Muriel Rose: a modern crafts legacy (Crafts Study Centre, 2006)
ISBN 0 9554374 0 7

Ed., Simon Olding Urban Field (Crafts Study Centre, 2007)
ISBN 978 0 9554374 1 0

Simon Olding, Rezia Wahid: woven air (Crafts Study Centre, 2007)
ISBN 978 0 9554374 2 7

The first of these books was collaboratively funded by Trustees of the Crafts Study Centre and The Surrey Institute (using funds from the digitisation project); Deirdre Wood was produced by the Crafts Study Centre using a grant for the arts grant raised by the artist; Muriel Rose was funded from the exhibition budget for the show (and used 75% of that budget); 20th century crafts was sponsored in kind (the designer waived his fee and secured a reduce paper price enabling a very high specification on paper); John Hinchcliffe and Urban Field were entirely dependant on grants from Arts Council England, South East. In most cases, a very small print run has been produced (from 250 to 500 copies) and around 50-100 copies of each book have been given to the artist or for advocacy purposes. The books are sold through the Centre's shop, via the Centre's website, through special offers in Crafts, at the New Ashgate Gallery in Farnham, and in a recent development, through the new venture Chrome Yellow Books. Essays has also been distributed in conference pack for the Centre's conference programme.

The Centre also actively deals with enquiries from researchers wishing to use the Centre's images and other information within external publications. The Centre supports these enquiries wherever possible, and within sometimes stretched resources of time and convenience, but sees the value of external advocacy for the Centre's activities in doing so.

Most recently, the Centre has been involved in supporting the production of DVDs based on interviews with artists (notably with urban FIELD) and plans are in hand to extend this approach to future exhibitions by sole makers (for example Rezia Wahid and Makeba Lewis).

Towards a publication policy

The Crafts Study Centre's approach to publication has been opportunistic, financially risk free, and partnership-based. Early publications were promoted by Canterton Books (a small West Country specialist art publisher) principally through the personal contact of the Director. This enabled an external ISBN (useful for Research Assessment Exercise purposes) and an alternative means of publicising and distributing the books. As the Centre has found its feet, ISBN numbers specific to the Crafts Study Centre have, and will continue to be used. In this way, the University benefits from an association with an 'external' publisher and gains exposure on its own account. Funding from Arts Council England has been the primary means of investing in the production costs of each book, from a grant of £5000 for John Hinchcliffe to a grant of £10,000 for Urban Field. Future publications (including a series of books on furniture designer makers in association with the Ruthin Craft Centre) are also dependent on raising external funds. The focus on short soft cover books that either look at the work of contemporary craft makers with an association to the Crafts Study Centre, or reflect on the history of the Centre and its leading protagonists and its collections, is set to continue.

A publications policy for the Crafts Study Centre

The Crafts Study Centre will continue to publish in book form and in digital form essays and monographs that concern the history and development of the Crafts Study Centre, its participants and makers, its archives and collections, in order to reach deeper understanding and enjoyment of the crafts and craft history. The Centre will also proactively seek opportunities to publish electronically and in print form essays and monographs concerning contemporary craft practice and practitioners, to secure a wider understanding and appreciation of those makers, and to develop a body of work that reflects on craft theory and wider concerns. The Crafts Study Centre will actively seek partners to support its publication activity. It will find financial partners to help underwrite the costs of publication. The Centre will seek the support of organisational partners to help deliver and disseminate publications to the widest possible audience.

In addition the Centre will continue to support external researchers and to gain exposure for the Centre in externally published books and journals with the appropriate credit, payment where appropriate, or donation of the volume to the library.

Recommendations

Trustees are invited to discuss and approve the publications policy noted above; it will be debated in addition by the Management Group of the Crafts Study Centre to ensure the continued support and understanding of the University.

A new authoritative list of CSC publications from 1970 to the present day will be produced, and where possible a single library copy of all of the Centre's publications will be held in the Centre's library in a dedicated section, and two duplicate copies will be held in store.

This paper was agreed by the Trustees of the Crafts Study Centre on 10 October 2007

Professor Simon Olding

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