



Invitation from
HDK— Academy of
Design and Crafts,
Konsthandverkscentrum
(The Crafts Centre)
and The Röhsska Museum

Welcome to the conference
“Crafts and Ethics”

24—25 November 2017

WELCOME TO THE CONFERENCE “CRAFTS AND ETHICS”

DATE: 24—25 November 2017

PLACE: HDK — Academy of Design and Crafts,
Kristinelundsgatan 6—8, Gothenburg

TIME: Friday 24 November, 17:00 —22:00
Saturday 25 November, 10:00 —17:00

PRICE: 600 SEK. Konsthantverkscentrum members 500 SEK,
students 250 SEK. Light meal on Friday, lunch and
coffee on Saturday included.

What are the ethical responsibilities of crafts today?

This event will explore the complex issues about labour conditions, material sourcing and perceptions of value that are central to the future identity of crafts. The proximity of craft practices to making arguably makes the craft disciplines better positioned to safeguard their ethical standards.

But what standards should we aspire to the crafts of the future upholding? How can the crafts justify the investment of makers’ time weighed against scale of audience or financial remuneration? In a world overfilled with goods, how do we defend bringing more into the world?

Keynote speakers are Christien Meindertsma and Rod Bamford. The conference includes a number of shorter seminars, group discussions between participants and a panel discussion moderated by Professor Jessica Hemmings.

Book your ticket by 12 November

Booking and more information: <https://simplesignup.se/event/100812>

For further information: info@konsthantverkscentrum.se

The conference will be held in English with group discussions in both Swedish and English.

This conference is a collaboration between HDK — Academy of Design and Crafts, University of Gothenburg, The Crafts Centre and The Röhsska Museum. It is aimed at practitioners, students and others active within the field of crafts both in Sweden and internationally. The organisers have realized several conferences together in the past, for example two international events: *Mapping Crafts Theories* in 2013 and *About Time* in 2015.

Speakers

CHRISTIEN MEINDERTSMA is an artist and designer who explore the life of products and raw materials. For example, her second book *PIG 05049* reveals lines that link raw materials with producers, products and consumers that have become so invisible in an increasingly globalized world. With her designs Christien Meindertsma aims to regain understanding of processes that have become so distant in industrialization.

ROD BAMFORD, former Head of Ceramics and Glass at the Royal College of Art, is a practitioner and researcher working at the intersections of art, craft and design. His work draws on experience in the field of ceramics, digital media technologies, print and related media to explore transformative personal and social experiences associated with emerging technologies and ecologies of production.

His recent *Digital Bamboo Research Collaboration* investigated how social media applications and the ‘internet of things’ could apply to craft practices in Indonesia and Australia.

Moderator

JESSICA HEMMINGS is an internationally recognized researcher, writer and lecturer in the field of crafts. Since January 2017 she is Professor in Crafts at HDK.

TALKING ABOUT — short presentations

CHRISTIEN MEINDERTSMA (*Friday evening keynote*)

KNOWING AND NOT KNOWING WHERE THINGS COME FROM

Does it change your behaviour if you know where things come from, how they were made and who made them? These are the questions that I asked myself when I was graduating from the Design Academy in Eindhoven in 2003. I did not imagine then that these are still the questions that interest me most. My talk will discuss making one sheep sweaters, a book about a single pig and trying to make something out of the complete harvest (10.000 kg) of flax from a farmer in the Dutch Flevopolder. I will talk about my attempts to try avoid craft and embrace industrial production because for me personally producing locally, environmentally friendly for a fair price is the most important factor, and about wondering where is the border between industrial production and craft?

ROD BAMFORD (*Saturday morning keynote*)

MAKING ETHICS

What are the ethical implications of craft if, as Glenn Adamson says in *The Invention of Craft*, craft is ‘an indispensable means of working’? Does this mean that craft ethics exist in all kinds of work? If so, then I would argue that those who are experts in making, thinking about and working with craft have a significant role to play in helping us make an ethics of working, or living, beyond the current ‘craft’ paradigm. My talk uses this argument as a premise to uncover aspects of the essence of craft practice that might contribute ethical perspectives of value in the 21st century. My ideas will be discussed loosely under 3 key headings: craft and the ethics of authorship, interaction, and interference. I will try to develop the idea of craft operating in ‘ecologies of production and exchange’ where it performs different roles at different points in time and space. I will argue that in this context, some common ethical positions taken by craft and the guidance they might offer is currently insufficient, and how some perspectives are misdirected in achieving their aims because of aspirations to a symbolic order of stasis ill equipped to engage with critical contemporary global issues. I’ll conclude with some ideas of how craft might re-engage with its core characteristics of virtuosity, agility and care, and rethink their application towards ‘making ethics’ as well as things.

KATJA PETTERSSON (20 min panel presentation)

THE FIFTY FIFTY PROJECTS

What are the ethics of making yet another product, even if it is produced and bought in a sustainable way? Are we really producing products or are we producing self-authorisation as designers and producers? Is it possible for a company to have an ethical standpoint in all parts of the process? What choices would we have done if I were the producer?

Critiquing my own initiative, The Fifty Fifty Projects, I now ask how can design and craft contribute to a better world instead of pitying designers for getting a low salary. Looking at Maslow's pyramid of need, I see that the field where The Fifty Fifty Projects could have made a change was in the upper part covering the need of the social, esteem and self-authorisation. The physiological and safety parts were not covered. With you now knowing of my dilemma, I will talk about the structure of how we were thinking around Fifty Fifty Projects. Finding an alternative to the royalty system (implemented around 1950), the system then was based on collaboration with few designers and many products produced. Today the system is reversed: many designers and producing companies and few objects produced. To survive as a designer approximately 25 products need to be in production for an ok salary. I wanted to know how the manufacturers were thinking and how to make an alternative. I question why producers pay double for logistics than for the actual design and if we need to produce and transport all over the world? Is it possible to educate the end consumer how to consume, by consuming?

NICOLAS CHENG (20 min panel presentation)

STICKY MATTER

The notion of conflict materiality may be found in surroundings we interact with on a daily basis, but carry along histories and narratives that are very complex and seldom transparent. How can the craft or jewellery medium—their processes and ways of thinking—be used to problematise materials and the way they are sourced, produced, consumed and eventually discarded? How can we as makers raise awareness of, shed light on or propose possible, more sustainable scenarios for important issues that pertain to material resources, their appropriation and distribution? How does this affect producers as well as consumers in the global arena?

KARIN AURAN FRANKENSTEIN AND TOMAS AURAN

(20 min panel presentation)

TRANSFORMING/UPGRADING TIME AND MATERIAL

We will briefly discuss two ongoing projects and their inherent relations to ethics. First, our common work, The MarbleWool where material itself is a mediator of values between the crafter and the viewer. This project is based on finding different ways of upgrading/transforming discarded wool. The urge to find ways to use the material is one main driving force. We will discuss the issue of time and freedom or lack of freedom to choose what to do with it and how art and craft can function as a tool to liberate us from the capitalist logic of productivity. These issues lead us into the second project that we are involved in, the work of the Malmö based collective group Cartier, using craft as a binding glue in public gatherings connected to political and social issues.

MÄRTA MATTSSON *(20 min panel presentation)*

BLOODY BEAUTIFUL: A PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH
THE UNCANNY USE OF TAXIDERMISTRY IN ART

Is it ok to use a deceased body as ornamentation? What is the acceptable use of materials that were once alive? How can I, as a vegetarian and animal-lover, use dead creatures in my pieces? What are my intentions and what am I trying to say with my pieces? I will address different psychological and emotional responses to both my work as well as other artists' work concerning taxidermy. I will also speak a little bit about hierarchies between animals and humans and our relationship to different species as well as human irrational behaviours and ideas concerning what is considered offensive, attractive or repulsive.

BIRGITTA NORDSTRÖM *(20 min panel presentation)*

IN INFANCY 2017

Certain questions, and things that happen to us, leave a deep imprint in our lives. And this is what happened to me when I was asked to weave small wrapping cloths for children who die during pregnancy or delivery. These wrapping cloths had an important task to perform in a difficult situation where words maybe fail those involved. Could the weave talk and act as words — by touching it and looking at it? In an attempt to examine this question, a booklet was produced and the wrapping cloths were also shown in a number of exhibitions. Sharing them with others led to me having contact with parents who had experienced

the loss of a child, as well as the staff in hospitals, and I was so glad to receive their support and share in their experience. Preparations for a clinical study to be launched also took place, and this study is now underway at different pregnancy and childbirth clinics. The work and research that was once carried out alone has now come to be a process that I share with students, colleagues and friends in a Weaving Research Group at the HDK — Academy of Design and Crafts, University of Gothenburg. To embrace, to hold and to wrap are the words that lead us — as we weave on the same loom, and encourage each other on by saying: let's weave — and let us weave the loveliest we can.

HILDA HELLSTRÖM *(20 min panel presentation)*

THE ESSENCE OF AN OBJECT

My 2012 graduation project *The Materiality of a Natural Disaster* was set inside the Fukushima exclusion-zone. I made a short documentary about the rice farmer Naoto Matsumura, who had decided to remain inside the evacuated area. From the radioactive soil of his wasted agricultural land, we created food-serving trays, objects that would materialise the events in Fukushima, like iconised souvenirs. The starting point for the project was to explore the idea that objects are imbued with meaning that goes beyond its physicality. I was exploring ways of creating artefacts relating to narratives, sites or people. Even though my work doesn't talk about production and its ethics I do think that a key to this topic is to talk about ways of relating; both to other beings and objects, as opposed to creating an environment of inanity. I will touch upon subjects such as the fetishized object, Donald Winnicott's Transitional object, Volker Pawlowski's workshop that manufactures 'real' pieces of the Berlin wall, Cornelia Parker's 'Exhaled Blanket' and Teresa Margolles' 'What Else Could We Speak About?.'

**.K.H.
.V.C.**
KONSTANTVERKSCENTRUM

HDK



The conference is part of OPEN WEEK — Gothenburg Design Festival: Powered by HDK. www.hdk.gu.se
Arranged with the support of Göteborgs slöjdförening and Estrid Ericsons Stiftelse.