Prestigious Churchill Fellowships awarded to the craft sector

Monday 24 April, 2017

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust has just awarded eight Travelling Fellowships to people dedicated to working in the traditional crafts, including the woodworking crafts such as joinery, cabinet and furniture making.

The Churchill Fellows will investigate new ideas and techniques in various heritage crafts specialisms, helping to ensure a healthy and sustainable framework for the future of the industry.

There is a growing demand for products and services produced using traditional hand skills, with the Heritage Craft sector anticipating a 12% growth in employment in the period leading up to 2022.[1]

This is the third year of a partnership with the Heritage Crafts Association. During this time 27 Fellowships have been awarded, an investment of over £170,000 in the UK craft sector. Past projects include research into sustainable furniture design, bronze casting and stonework techniques.

This year's Fellows include:

- **Alana Madden**, a Cabinet Maker from **Dulwich**, who will be travelling to Japan and the USA to study approaches to increasing the representation of women in the construction industry.
- **Romily Alice,** an artist and neon bender from **Leeds**, who will be travelling to Germany and the USA to study neon making with master craftsmen.
- **William Grant**, a sheet metal worker from **Spilsby, Lincolnshire**, who will be travelling to Austria, the Netherlands, Sweden and the USA to investigate prototyping techniques for creative sheet metal work.
- **David Tucker**, a designer and master blacksmith from **Derby**, who will be travelling to Norway and Sweden to explore the influence of Scandinavian craftsmanship on contemporary British blacksmithing.
- **Rajni Patel**, from **Ashburton, Devon**, and Relationship Manager at Arts Council England, who will be travelling to India and Japan to research traditional and contemporary craft practice.
- **Faye McNulty**, a textile designer from **Hackney**, who will be travelling to Australia and Japan to study traditional and sustainable textile print processes.
- **Jack Darach**, a recorder maker from **Brighton**, who will be travelling to Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland to discover strategies for rejuvenating the craft of recorder making.

Julia Weston, Chief Executive of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust said:

"Churchill Fellows in our Crafts and Makers category have used the experience of travelling overseas and meeting with others who share their specialism as inspiration to deepen their contribution to their field. Our hope is that our 2017 Fellows will also enjoy the experience of a Fellowship, and return to the UK equipped to strengthen the crafts industry so that sole practitioners and the traditional crafts can continue to thrive".

Fellow's Case Study

Bronze founder David Snoo Wilson travelled to Germany, Latvia, Poland and Austria in 2014 on his Churchill Travelling Fellowship to explore traditional bell casting.

David's Fellowship enabled him to visit the old bell foundries of central Europe and to witness the craft and performance of iron founders in Latvia.

Since returning to the UK David has been involved in the creation of a travelling theatre show incorporating folklore and myth derived from the old central European foundries he visited during his Fellowship, and has received funding to conduct research into how introducing new elements to the traditional bell alloy mix affects a bell's sound. In 2016 David co-founded a business casting bells at weddings through the use of a mobile foundry.

Related Sectors:

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1. The Heritage Crafts Association, The importance of Heritage Crafts (2016)
http://heritagecrafts.org.uk/the-importance-of-heritage-crafts/

Ends

Notes to Editors

Heritage Crafts Association (HCA)

The Heritage Crafts Association (HCA) is the advocacy body for traditional heritage crafts.

Working in partnership with Government and key agencies, it provides a focus for craftspeople, groups, societies and guilds, as well as individuals who care about the loss of traditional crafts skills, and works towards a healthy and sustainable framework for the future. Their aim is to support and promote heritage crafts as a fundamental part of our living heritage. The HCA will help promote the Churchill Fellowships to the Craft sector and provide a platform from which Fellows' findings can be disseminated.

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

In total 150 Fellowships have been awarded across the UK in 2017, an investment of over £1.4 million in UK citizens. The Fellows will be travelling to 49 countries between them, across six continents, where they will carry out a wide range of projects, designed to benefit their communities and professions in the UK. The average length of a Fellowship is six weeks.

Churchill Fellows come from all over the UK and from many different backgrounds. They must be UK citizens aged 18 or over, but no qualifications are required. What Fellows share is a passion to make a difference and a desire to share their passion to inspire others.

The categories for the 2018 Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowships will be announced on Tuesday 9th May 2017. See www.wcmt.org.uk for more details.

We have many examples of Fellows' stories of achievement from 1965 to the present day. If you would like one from a particular year or location, or would like to interview a Fellow, please contact The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Press Office on 020 7799 1660, or email press@wcmt.org.uk

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