



# **CAN DO – flourishing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Glasgow Centre for Population Health Seminar Series  
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**Annie Warburton**

**Creative Director, Crafts Council**

Can craft save the world?





MY VOICE  
MY STORY  
MY BODY  
UNITE for HOPE

HEY  
TRUMP  
ARE



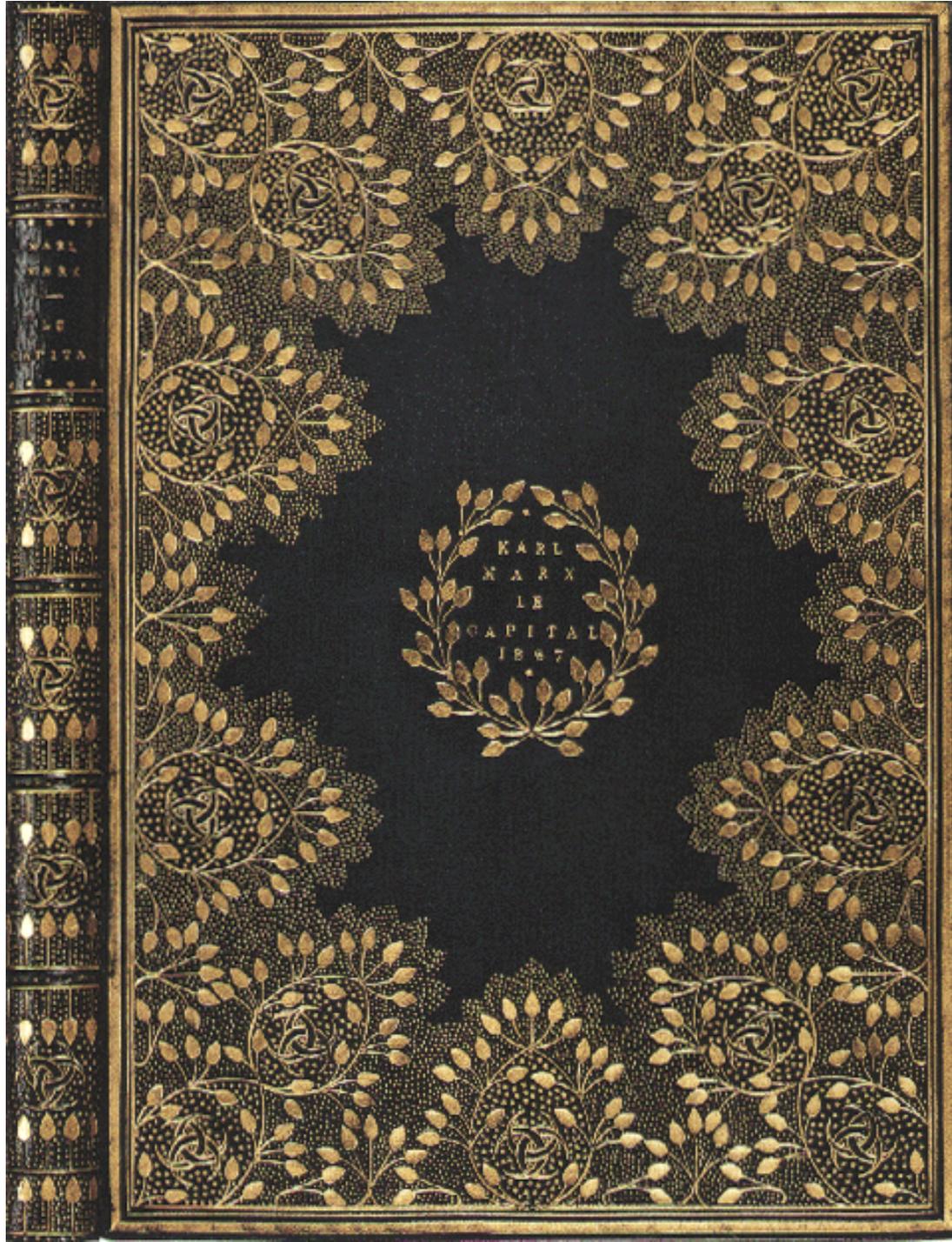




‘the greatest foe to art is luxury’

‘I spend my life ministering to the swinish  
luxury of the rich.’

- William Morris

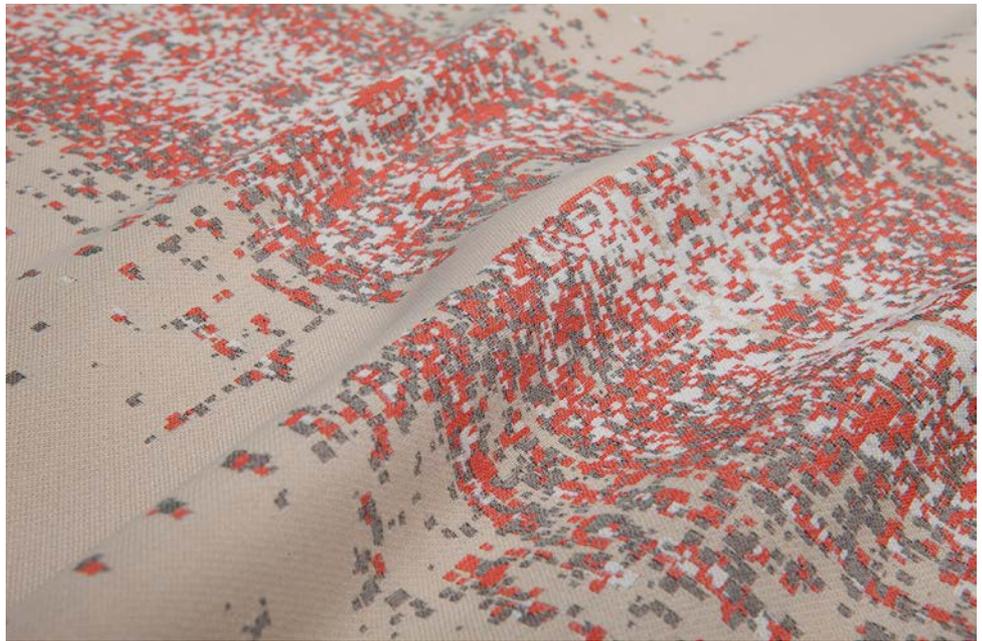


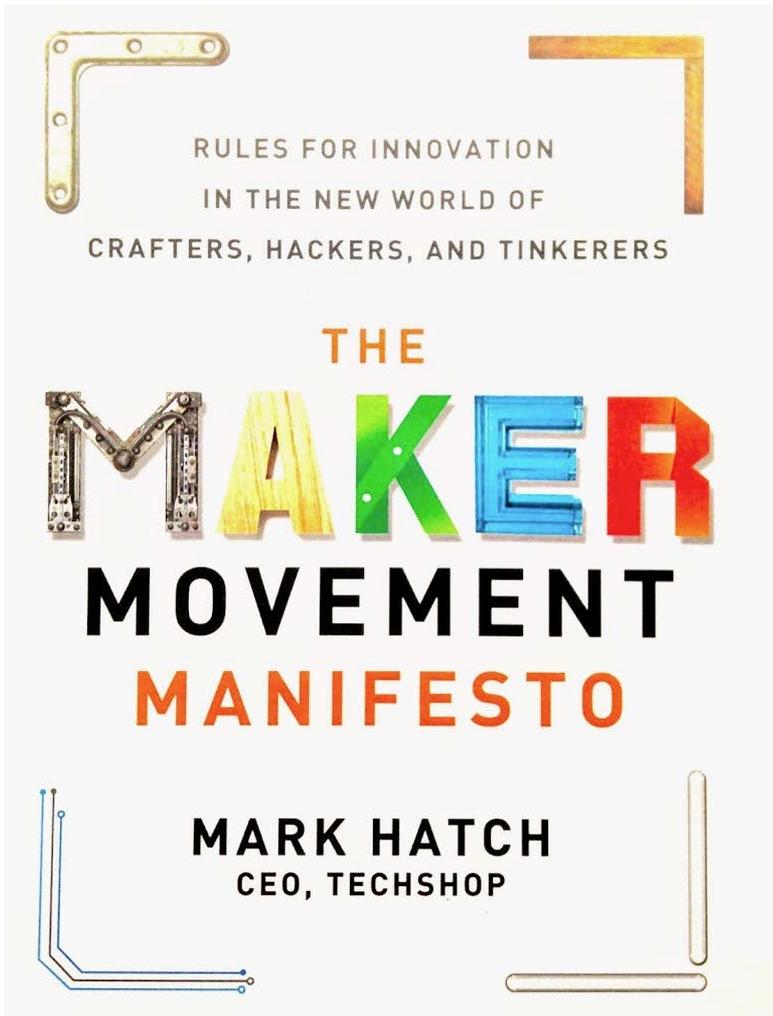
KARL  
MARX  
I.  
CAPITAL  
1867



‘we do not reject the machine, we welcome it. But we would desire to see it mastered.’

- C.R. Ashbee





# THE CASE FOR WORKING WITH YOUR HANDS

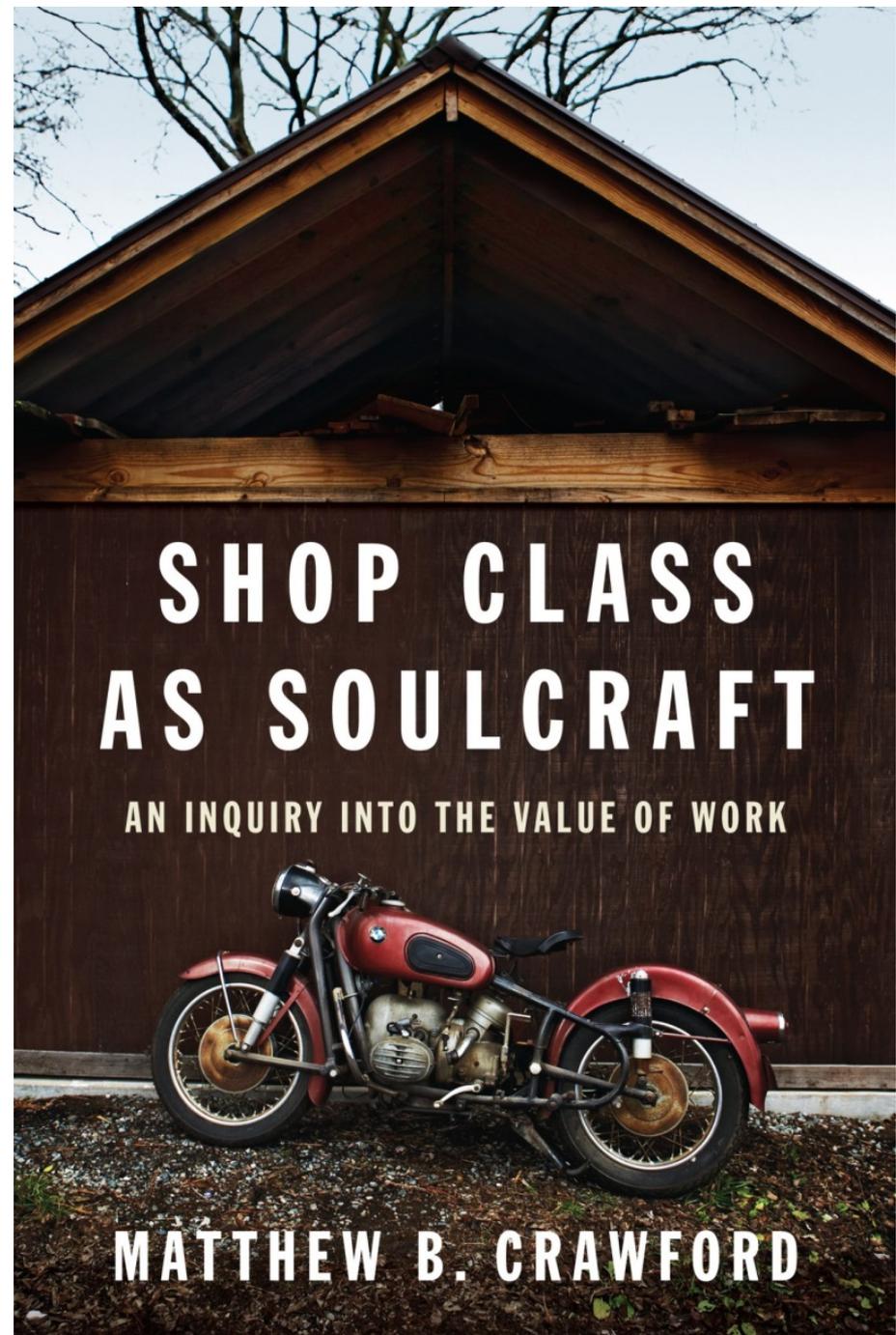
'THE BEST BOOK I HAVE READ FOR AGES'  
MATTHEW D'ANCONA, *DAILY TELEGRAPH*

'MASTERLY' *ECONOMIST*

OR WHY OFFICE  
WORK IS BAD FOR US  
AND FIXING THINGS  
FEELS GOOD



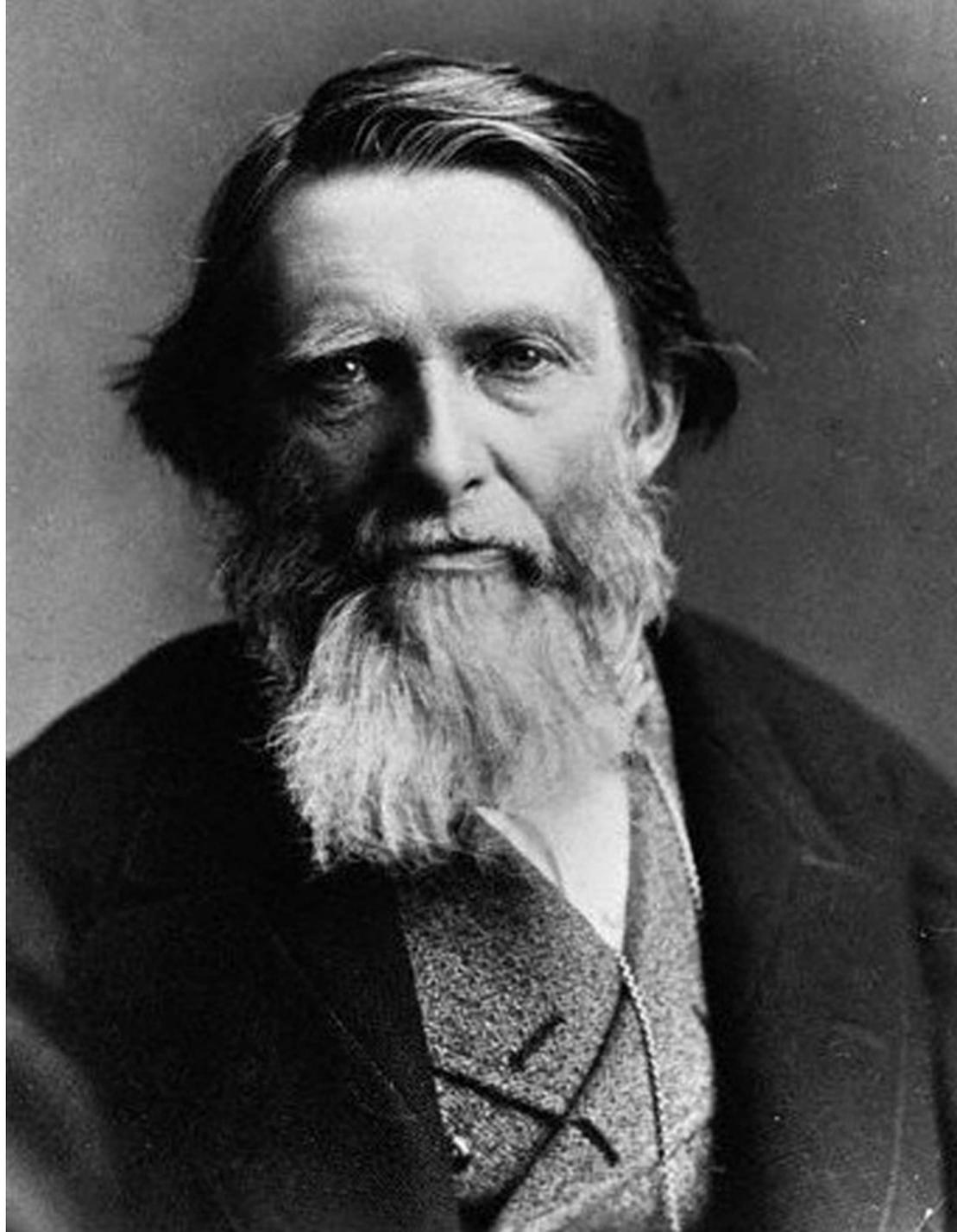
MATTHEW CRAWFORD



# SHOP CLASS AS SOULCRAFT

AN INQUIRY INTO THE VALUE OF WORK

MATTHEW B. CRAWFORD



# POWER OF MAKING



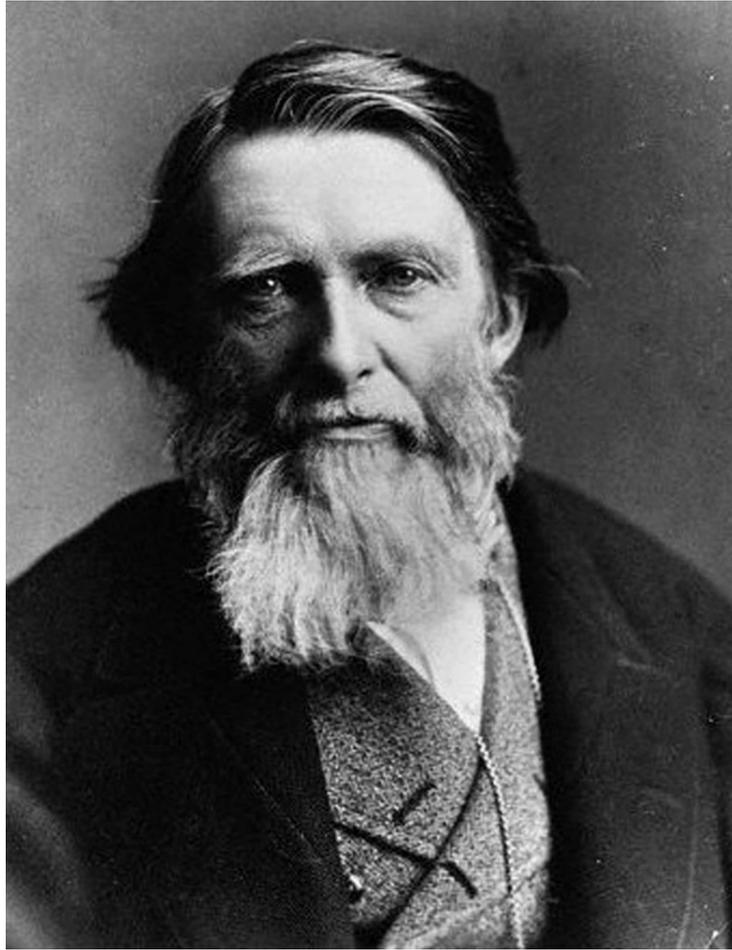
GDP 'measures everything... except  
that which is worthwhile'

- Robert Kennedy, 1968

‘to predetermine some future occupation for which education is to be a strict preparation is to injure the possibilities of present development.’

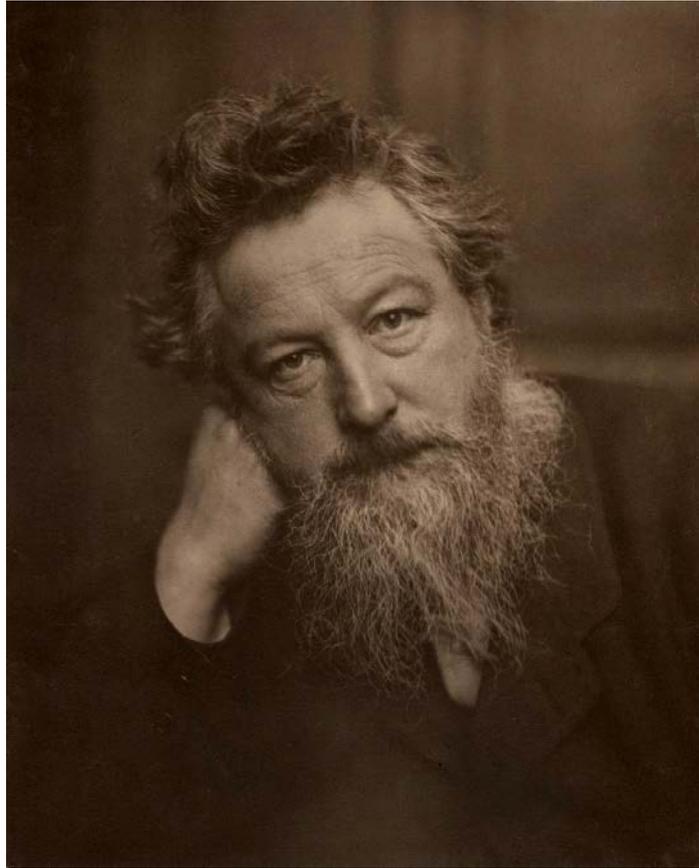
- John Dewey, 1930





‘You must either make a tool of the creature, or a man of him.’

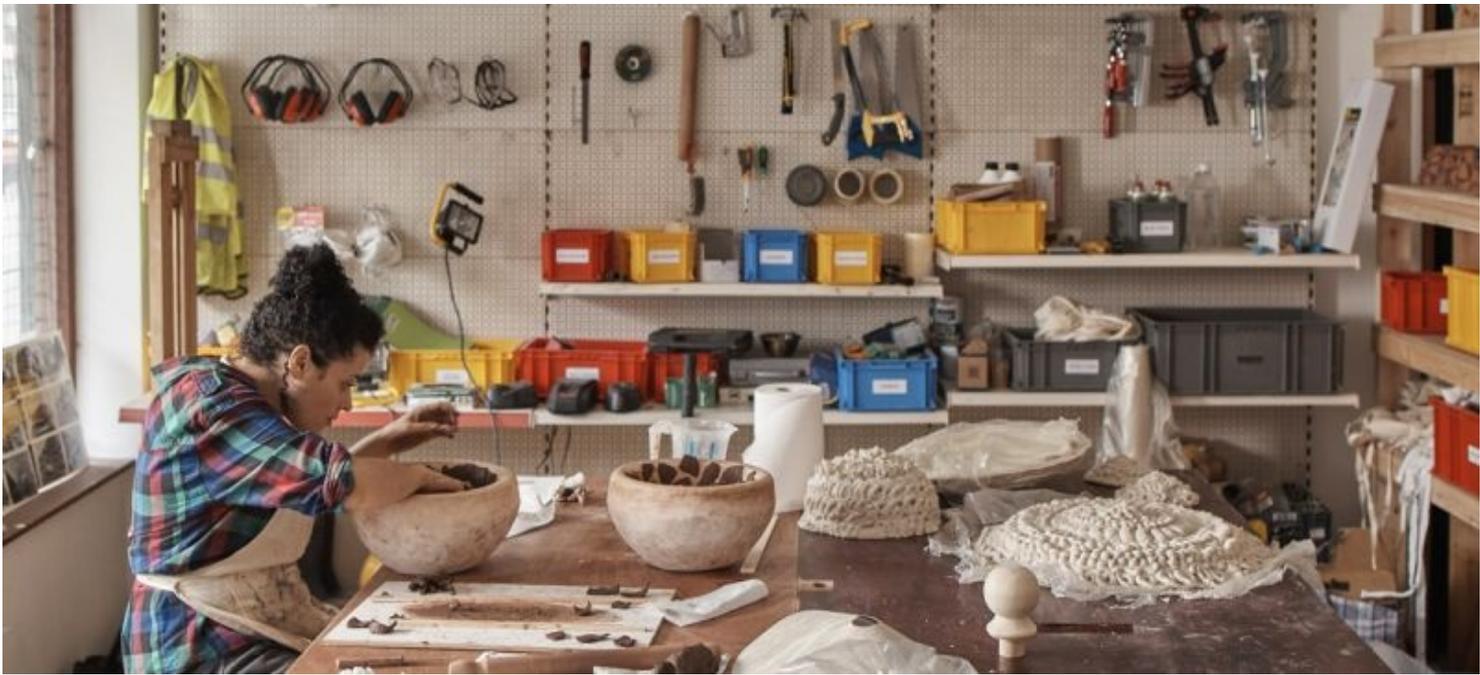
-John Ruskin



**‘without dignified, creative human occupation  
people became disconnected from life’**

**- William Morris**





# New communities of making

**MAKE**

**SHOW**

**READ**

**Maker  
Library  
Network**

=



+



+



**MAKESPACE**

**GALLERY**

**LIBRARY**









<p><b>The right conditions</b>  <i>Features of training that foster capability development</i></p>	<p><b>Capabilities developed</b>  <i>Skills and attributes that foster flourishing now and in the future</i></p>	<p><b>Flourishing now</b>  <i>Experience of purpose, meaning and fulfilment, in process and outcome.</i></p>	<p><b>Future flourishing</b>  <i>Factors that enhance potential for future experience of purpose and fulfilment.</i></p>
<p>Community  Close one-to-one relationships  Balanced challenge, competition and support  Pedagogy of trial and error  Variety (skill, experience)  Opportunity for autonomy and agency</p>	<p>Craft skills and life skills  Discipline and work ethic  Perseverance  Patience  Attention to detail  Business skills  Social and communication skills  Time management  Resilience  Autonomy  Agency</p>	<p><i>Fulfilling processes</i>  Flow  Variety  Personal progress  Transformation of materials  Agency  Autonomy</p> <p><i>Fulfilment of potential</i>  Accomplishment in a skill  Achievement: completing a challenging piece of work  Tangible results  Contributing to others</p>	<p>Aspiration  Agency  Autonomy  Opportunity</p>

## Process: Flow

‘One day it just clicked. It all fell into place really. Even that, it’s a great feeling. You’ve accomplished something that before was such a big issue in a way that caused stress whereas now it’s just what I do. [...] It’s sort of part of me really.’

- Evan

## Process: Transformation

‘You get more of a sense of pleasure coz when you see you’ve taken it from basically someone’s rubbish, you’ve put your own touch on it, you’ve changed it. [...] You know all those processes, the little things you’ve been doing, added a little more value to it. ’

- Scott

## Outcome: Accomplishment

‘From the start to the end, if you held the two pieces, you think to yourself I’ve actually done that. You’ve got something physical you can hold. It’s not like a document where you just write it. You’ve actually got something.’

- Oscar

## Outcome: Giving to others

‘You’re making something that someone’s going to wear for the rest of their life so that’s what I love about it. [...] I enjoy people being happy from what I make, getting enjoyment from it. That makes me happy.’

- John

## Capabilities: Discipline

‘If you don’t care, you’re gonna be lazy, you’re going to skip corners, you going to do a whole bunch of stuff which is not going to help and it’s only going to go against you. Yeah it’s good to care, it’s good that people care about their work.’

- Yusef

## Capabilities: Perseverance

‘It helps you to learn to better yourself all the time, rather than just bettering yourself in the painting. [...] It gives you, without you realizing it, that mental attitude [...] You start really looking and trying to find a problem so that you can solve it and make sure it’s perfect. And then you start doing that in life.’

- Ella

## The social nature of learning

‘The most thing I value is the relationship with [my master] because he’s made me who I am, the craftsman I am.’ – John

‘I didn’t want to be the guy that was letting the team down. Everyone here’s a team, we’re a family. If I’m [slow], inside that I feel bad [so] I just picked up my pace.’ - Evan

## Flexibility and resilience

‘If I have all these different ways of making something it will help me because then I can sit down and approach a job and think, “oh I can do it this way, but I know a different way to do it”. I’ve learned a massive amount by being taught by different people, not just by one person.’

- John

## Trial and Error

‘With the furniture and in life, you see mistakes are meant to be made. You do learn from them. [...] You know to do it better next time. With both of the ways you see things, it can be really helpful.’

- Ella

## Aspiration: Future Flourishing

‘They want you to be the best at what you can do which is fantastic. They really do push you to push yourself, go for it, do things well.’

- Hugh

‘They want us to expand, learn, go different places, understand different things.’

- Scott

## Flexibility and resilience: future flourishing

‘You’ve got more experience and you’re open to more things. So [...] you’ve got more opportunities to get a job in loads of different areas.’

- Yousef

## Autonomy: Future Flourishing

‘He’ll teach you how to do it properly. He’ll show you. Then he’ll leave you to do it by yourself coz that’s the best way to learn.’

- Ibrahim

‘They want us to expand, learn, go different places, understand different things.’

- Scott

A graphic design for an event. The background is white with a grid of small black dots. Scattered across the grid are various black geometric shapes, including straight lines, L-shaped corners, and curved brackets, some of which have small white dots at their ends. Three colored rectangular boxes are overlaid on the design:

- A blue box in the upper center containing the text "BUILD YOUR OWN:" in large white capital letters, and "Tools for Sharing" in smaller white capital letters below it.
- A red box in the lower center containing the text "4 June - 31 August" in white capital letters.
- A yellow box on the right side containing the text "#BuildYourOwn" in black capital letters.





'It's made me think that it's about the right tool for the job. Sometimes the machine isn't best'

KARINA THOMPSON

## Post-industrial revelations

**Karina Thompson and Matthew Howard**

Karina Thompson approached *Parallel Practices* expecting to find some good data. Data is often part of the story her textiles tell. Her installation at Cloth & Masonry, Salts Mill, Yorkshire, in 2013 included a digitally embroidered representation of her own heartbeat. She likes to work big; that piece was 100 metres long. But in the basement of King's she's working with academic Matthew Howard, not on a visual representation of data, rather a tool for capturing data and now everything is a matter of millimetres.

Thompson is working with Howard, lecturer in robotics at the Department of Informatics, and his PhD students, to embed sensors seamlessly within textiles. One project stitches flexible circuit boards into fabric, using conductive threads which pick up the electrical impulses given off when a muscle contracts. The tool could map body movement enabling the wearer to control a tele-operated robot mirroring the movements of the wearer.

Another project focuses on using sensors in clothing to chart the location and acceleration of the body, a bit like motion-capture but without all the cameras. Possible applications include monitoring the elderly who live alone - the clothing could recognise a fall and raise an alert. When I visit there is a PhD student whose arm is strapped with a few sensors and as he moves it, the robot



Opposite: Experimental electromyography hand postures and sensor test samples  
Below: Digital embroidered sample

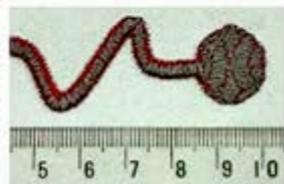
using conductive thread  
Above: Circuit board connected to embroidered electromyography sensors

arm on the table in front moves also. It's a little ingenious: the robot arm jerks copying the smooth human movement. The students muller about interference, but the potential is undeniable.

The technical nature of the collaboration makes this different to the other *Parallel Practices*. 'When I'm generating work, I experiment and then decide if it's successful. That tends to be an aesthetic decision. With this, it works or it doesn't. It's more exact, the decision making is cruder', Thompson explains. 'Yes,' Howard agrees, 'the physical world doesn't let you decide.'

The process has meant Thompson and Howard problem-solving at each stage, Howard making a bespoke printed circuit board that's flexible enough to sit comfortably on the fabric, Thompson experimenting with conductive threads, types of stitches and the level of accuracy that produces a working circuit.

Thompson brought with her, not only the technical knowledge but also a material understanding.



'Essentially, what happens with Karina, is that she comes along with a bag of tricks and says, "here's some puffy foam".' Howard explains as he shows me how poppers, hook and eye catches, puffy foam and other haberdasher's stock became part of this robotics project.

Though Thompson uses digital embroidery in much of her work (she is a beta tester for Pfaff digital sewing machines) she now finds that when she needs to be accurate to the millimetre she does it by hand. 'I work in metres, so doing four connections in 9mm was a very radical rethink about how I work,' she says.

The project has also had the textile artist considering working on an 80 year-old Singer, so as to use a thicker needle to get through the metal of the circuit board. While Thompson is involved in the most technical of collaborative projects, the experience has challenged her perception of the machine. 'I love the quality of digital embroidery, playing around with bigger and fancier machines. It's made me think that it's about the right tool for the job. Sometimes the machine isn't best. Even though we're in a room filled with machines and to some extent it's what both Matthew and I are into.'

The duo is keen to push forward, refining the sensors and continuing to explore the opportunities that textiles and robotics can bring to each other. Towards the close of our conversation I ask how the experience has influenced her artistic practice and she replies quickly and with a smile: 'This is my artistic practice.'

[www.orgtheosocial.org.uk/parallel-practices](http://www.orgtheosocial.org.uk/parallel-practices)



**OUR**  
**FUTURE**  
**IS IN THE**  
**MAKING**







**‘how we live and how we might live’**

**‘the embodiment of dreams in one form or another’**

**- William Morris**

**IT'S IN**

**OUR**

**HANDS**



**THANK YOU**

**ANNIE WARBURTON**

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