

PRESS RELEASE
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ROSA MAGAZINE LAUNCHES SUSSEX CRAFT WEEK

A new regional celebration of craft to take place

14-22 June 2025

in partnership with West Dean College



Image: Artist Alison Crowther, photo credit: Danil Ripnar, Gallery57

Review of Sussex Arts (ROSA) is pleased to announce the launch of Sussex Craft Week 14-22 June 2025, a new region-wide event to celebrate craft makers and making.

“Creativity on an industrial scale” is how Sussex Craft Week Partner, Gyr King, CEO, King & McGaw, describes the art and craft industry in Sussex today. Sussex Craft Week sets out to showcase this to the world with a series of high profile exhibitions, courses, demonstrations and open studios.

Sussex Craft Week will offer a coordinated exhibition and event programme across East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove, revealing the history of craft in Sussex and its place as the hub of today’s craft revival.

Sussex – the home of craft

Sussex’s geographical location, with its chalky coastline, rolling Downs and fertile lands, has for centuries provided both the natural resources and inspiration for a thriving craft scene. In the medieval period, pottery flourished with a brickyard and kiln in every parish, particularly in Lewes and Hastings, where local clay was used to produce decorative ceramics as well as practical items such as bricks and pipes. The region was also home to skilled spinners and weavers from the 16th century onwards, with Hailsham earning the name ‘Stringtown’ for its rope production. The first glassmakers in British historical records were based in Dyers Cross Sussex, where skilled Huguenot artisans made windows for Westminster Abbey, Westminster Palace and Salisbury Cathedral.

The 18th and 19th centuries saw the rise of more industrialised craft production, including clockmaking. Then Sussex played a role in the reaction against growing industrialisation: The Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th century, saw makers, inspired by the ideals of William Morris, producing hand-crafted furniture (including Morris’s famous ‘Sussex Chair’), textiles and metalwork in line with the movement’s defining principles of quality and truth to materials.

Making in Sussex flourished in the 20th century, becoming home to influential collectives such as the Ditchling Artists, Graffham Weavers and the Bloomsbury Group, as well as being an important place for the Modernist and Surrealist movements.

This rich legacy inspires innovation today. Sussex is the location of national craft centres West Dean College and Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft, and is a hotbed of contemporary craft.

A surge in interest in handcrafts

There has been a well documented surge in interest in handcrafts over the past decade. The Crafts Council, the country’s foremost authority on contemporary craft, issued a report ‘The Market for Craft’ in 2020 which showed that our passion for craft has never been greater: 73% of UK adults bought craft in 2019 – snapping up almost 25 million handmade items. In a significant shift, almost a third (32%) of today’s buyers are aged

under 35 – making this demographic the biggest buyer of craft today. Since this report, and post-pandemic, interest in craft continues to soar: impressive sales figures are matched by a wealth of popular television programmes, such as the BBC's The Great British Sewing Bee, Mastercrafts, and The Great Pottery Throwdown.

Like the Arts and Crafts Movement of over a century ago, the current craft revival can be interpreted as a reaction against advances in technology. In a world of proliferating AI-generated work and mass-made disposable products, there is an increasing appetite for work which is unique and has a story to tell. Ironically, interest in the handmade is accelerated by viral craft videos which disseminate across social media channels.

The aim of Sussex Craft Week is to harness this groundswell of enthusiasm; to ensure the survival of traditional crafts by providing an environment where regional makers can thrive.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

ROSA Magazine

ROSA launched in 2022 and publishes a quarterly arts and culture magazine, in print and online. It also curates an events programme. Sussex Craft Week was founded and organised by Jessica Wood, publisher of ROSA Magazine. She has extensive experience working with art fairs such as British Art Fair, Mayfair Art Weekend, Masterpiece Fair, Women in Art Fair and Artwave. See more at rosamagazine.co.uk

Headline Sponsor: West Dean College

ROSA is pleased to announce that West Dean College is the Headline Sponsor for Sussex Craft Week.

West Dean has been at the vanguard of championing arts and crafts since its inception in 1971. The college was founded by the passionate and eccentric patron of the arts, Edward James, who had a singular vision: A vision to preserve traditional techniques of craftsmanship which he feared would be lost in the wake of World War II, and a vision to foster creativity and invest in burgeoning artists and makers. Fifty years later, this beautiful estate nestled in the South Downs remains a world-leading centre for arts, crafts and conservation. West Dean now provides a variety of cutting-edge degree and diploma programmes designed to equip students to excel in a variety of industries. Alongside these qualifications, the college runs over 800 creative short courses spanning a plethora of disciplines from printmaking to blacksmithing and everything in between. These

renowned short courses not only provide excellent introductions for novice makers, but provide career enhancing professional development courses led by passionate, expert tutors.

“Sussex Craft Week embodies West Dean College’s founding mission to protect and promote the practice of craft. Sussex has an extensive history within the craft movement and remains a vibrant centre for contemporary makers to this day. We are excited to work in partnership with ROSA on this important project.”

Partners

Sussex Craft Week’s partners to date include: Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft, Towner Eastbourne, King & McGaw, Hastings Contemporary, Hastings Craft Weekend, The Makers Directory, Atelier Beside the Sea, Emma Mason Gallery, Eastbourne Studio Pottery, Chintz and Wood, MADE Brighton, Sussex Contemporary and Arundel’s Gallery57.

How to Take Part Sussex in Craft Week

Professional makers, galleries, studios, collectives and craft businesses from Sussex are invited to take part in Sussex Craft Week (14-22 June). They are invited to curate and take part in exhibitions, to offer courses and studio demonstrations. All application details are available at sussexcraftweek.com The deadline for submissions is 30 March.

Preview Text:

Sussex Craft Week

A celebration of making and makers

14-22 June 2025

sussexcraftweek.com

office@sussexcraftweek.com

[Instagram: @SussexCraftWeek](https://www.instagram.com/SussexCraftWeek)

ROSA (Review of Sussex Arts) is pleased to announce the launch of Sussex Craft Week, a new event to present the region as the UK’s craft hub. Sussex Craft Week will be a celebration of craft at venues across Sussex presenting an inspiring showcase of the region’s vibrant and thriving contemporary craft scene, with a series of high profile exhibitions, craft courses, tours, demonstrations and open studios.

Sussex Craft Week will provide a chance for visitors to discover and support talented professional makers and to learn about their distinct craft practices through engaging events.

A full programme of events will be published on the Sussex Craft Week website in March 2025, along with an interactive map.

Tickets

Tickets for Sussex Craft Week go on sale in early March 2025. Sign up to the newsletter for regular updates here: [Sussex Craft Week Newsletter](#)

Press Images

Find a selection of images to use in this folder [Sussex Craft Week Press Images](#)

Press contacts

Jessica Wood, Director, Sussex Craft Week,
jessica.wood@rosamagazine.co.uk Tel: 07939 226988

Holly Finch, Manager, Arts Media Contacts
holly@artsmediacontacts.co.uk