

Position Paper for Nordic Contemporary Crafts

The Nordic Network of Crafts Associations (NNCA) proposes eight measures to strengthen the contemporary craft field across the Nordic region

1. Increase the visibility of Nordic contemporary crafts

Increased visibility for contemporary crafts and Nordic cultural heritage will diversify and empower the field, raise earnings, and strengthen the Nordic region's international position. Nordic governments should prioritise supporting the existing infrastructure for crafts on Nordic, national and regional levels, as well as stimulate new initiatives for showcasing crafts in the Nordic region.

2. Establish a Nordic Council Craft Prize

The Nordic Council's prizes increase the visibility for the close cultural co-operation in the Nordic Region and contribute to the interest for promoted art fields. A Nordic Council Craft Prize will be an important step in developing a joint marketing strategy for craft in the Nordic region and provide increased visibility for Nordic crafts internationally.

3. Research craft artists' contributions to society

Craft artists' contributions to society are under-researched. We propose that Nordic governments facilitate national and Nordic-level research that aims to measure the economic, educational, cultural, social and environmental value of contemporary crafts in society.

4. Invest in international networks and opportunities

It is crucial for the field of Nordic contemporary craft to be present in international arenas. Organisations with a mandate to promote crafts internationally play an integral role in connecting Nordic craft artists, galleries, curators and theorists to international audiences. We propose that Nordic governments ensure sufficient funding to existing organisations and aid in developing new institutions where necessary.

5. Collect contemporary craft for the future

Contemporary craft should be made accessible to future generations by being collected in the present. We propose that Nordic governments allocate and

strengthen funds earmarked for the acquisition of contemporary crafts by national and regional collections and museums.

6. Ensure fair working conditions and pay for craft artists

It is vital for the development of craft-based art that work grants, production funds, support schemes and public commissions are available to craft artists and suit their specific needs. We propose that remuneration policies be revised and developed to ensure that craft artists are paid for their work and compensated for their copyrights, especially in connection with exhibitions.

7. Stimulate craft skills and specialist knowledge in higher education

Academies and universities for art, craft and design should ensure that their craft-department workshop facilities are up to date. Craft departments should give students access to both traditional and new materials and tools, and to skilled craft professionals. University programmes in art history should ensure that the history and theory of craft is included in their curriculum.

8. Ensure that craft has a vital place in primary education

All children should have the opportunity to discover and develop their artistic talents, inventiveness, tacit knowledge and practical abilities. We propose that Nordic governments strengthen teachers' training in craft skills and develop artist-led educational programmes for children.

This position paper is inspired by the manifesto and action plan for the European craft field, which was launched by World Crafts Council Europe in Paris, May 2019.

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The Nordic Network of Crafts Associations

The Nordic Network of Crafts Associations (NNCA) was founded in 2010. The network fosters collaboration and dialogue between its members, strengthening the field of contemporary crafts across the Nordic region and beyond. The NNCA's activities are twofold: it conducts meetings to discuss political, social and economic issues relating to craft artists and the fields of contemporary craft in the Nordic region. Secondly, the NNCA produces and participates in projects to promote and mediate Nordic contemporary crafts in an international context. The NNCA consists of: Danske Kunsthåndværkere og Designere (Denmark); HANDVERK og HÖNNUN (Iceland); Konsthantverkscentrum (Sweden); Konstnärernas Riksorganisation (Sweden); Norske Kunsthåndverkere (Norway); Norwegian Crafts (Norway) and ORNAMO (Finland).