



MEDIA RELEASE:

Scottish Craft celebrated on global stage as Craft Scotland welcomes international delegation ahead of World Craft City award

Outer Hebrides awarded World Craft City status for Harris Tweed

Craft Scotland is delighted to announce a coup for Scottish craft as the global spotlight falls on Scotland's makers this week. For the first time in 15 years, an international delegation of leaders from the world of craft will arrive in Scotland for the World Craft Council (Europe) General Assembly. Held on Wednesday 6 June the delegation will be welcomed at a special reception at Edinburgh Castle celebrating the breadth and depth of what Scottish craft has to offer.

The reception hosted by the Scottish Government, on behalf of Craft Scotland will also be an opportunity to celebrate the award of World Crafts Council Craft City region of Outer Hebrides for Harris Tweed. The World Crafts Council welcomed the region to the network of world craft cities - a complementary contribution to the UNESCO Creative Cities programme. As one of only two recipients in Europe the award recognises the importance of Harris Tweed and its relationship with the region.

Harris Tweed is unique – the only commercially produced hand woven fabric in the world. Renowned globally, the famous Harris Tweed Orb mark guarantees that the cloth is: “made from pure virgin wool dyed, spun and hand woven by islanders at their homes in the Outer Hebrides”. The production of Harris Tweed is central to the islands’ economic wellbeing, with the sector providing over 50% of manufacturing jobs, providing a mainstay of employment in EU designated fragile economic areas. It supports an active artisan sector in the Outer Hebrides, with designers creating products for international markets, generating revenue for local retailers, and supporting the wider tourism industry.

Supporting Makers, Promoting Craft

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Craft Scotland is a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland no. SC 270245

A registered Scottish Charity no. SC 039491



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The award cements Scotland's reputation as a destination for world class design-led contemporary craft. To further support the sector, the Craft Scotland Annual Conference takes place in Edinburgh a few days later on Thursday 7 and Friday 8 June where craft professionals and international delegates will gather for a series of talks and workshop events to share knowledge and learn best practice. Speakers include Commonwealth 2014 textile designer Jill Blackwood, jewellery artist Felieke van der Leest and curator Lars Sture from Norwegian Crafts.

Speaking ahead of the award Craft Scotland Director Fiona Logue said:

“Craft Scotland is delighted to have the opportunity to share the creativity and skill of the craft sector in Scotland with our European colleagues. Hosting the General Assembly of the World Craft Council (Europe) signifies our standing in an international context. It is particularly apt that we have been able to celebrate the Outer Hebrides being awarded World Craft City Region status for Harris Tweed.”

Lorna Macaulay, Chief Executive, Harris Tweed Authority said:

'The Harris Tweed Authority, on behalf of the wider Harris Tweed sector here in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland are delighted to accept this prestigious international designation as a 'World Craft City'. Whilst the Outer Hebrides is of course not a city, our island community punches well above its weight in terms of the reputation of Harris Tweed globally and its importance to the history, culture and economy of our island home. The Harris Tweed Authority's application to and adjudication by the World Craft Council was thorough and required that we met the highest standards of craftsmanship and skill. This award recognises that the skill and craft of the current generation of weavers, mill workers, designers and makers for whom Harris Tweed cloth and Harris tweed products are not just made by their hands, but also courses through their blood "

International Development Minister Dr Alasdair Allan said:

“Scotland has long and proud tradition as being the home of skilled and innovative crafts men and women – and today our creative industries continue to be economically and

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culturally important. Therefore, I welcome that the meeting of the World Crafts Council Europe is being held in Edinburgh, hosted by Craft Scotland.

“It is both significant and well deserved that the Outer Hebrides has been awarded World Craft City status for Harris Tweed. This is a tribute to the international reputation of this iconic and high-quality product, further reinforcing the position of Harris Tweed on the world craft stage.”

Rosy Greenlees, Executive Director, Crafts Council said:

“I am delighted that the region of the Outer Hebrides has been recognised for its Harris Tweed as part of the World Crafts Council Craft Cities programme. Across the globe there are clusters of the most incredible artisans and makers producing stunning craft. From the horsehair work in Rari in Chile to the natural indigo dying of Sakon Nakhon in Thailand and from the crafts of Hebron in Palestine to those of the island of Bornholm in Denmark their commitment to sustaining their heritage and craft is to be applauded. The WCC’s programme aims to profile and celebrate this excellence in a growing network of over 20 designated Craft Cities.”

The official title ‘World Crafts Council Craft City region of Outer Hebrides for Harris Tweed’ is the first ever UK entry into this celebrated cities network. Following an application by the Harris Tweed Authority supported by Craft Scotland the bid was rigorously assessed by an independent panel of craft specialists and the World Crafts Council Board. The Outer Hebrides is now the 24th and newest member of the network.

For further information on the WCC Craft Cities network and to see the list of other awardees visit: <http://wcc-europe.org/craft-cities>

For images, interviews and other media requests contact Owen O’Leary from Oh Really Creative on 07815 992658 or email owen@ohreally.co.uk

View and download hi res images here:

<https://app.box.com/s/fv11hpns694k7yyzb71hw3yvfvronsg> ENDS>

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Notes to Editors:

Craft Scotland

Craft Scotland is the national development agency for craft. They put makers at the heart of all they do, championing diverse and high-quality contemporary craft. They help people learn about, appreciate and buy craft, promoting the contribution of craft to Scotland's cultural, economic and social well-being. Through their exhibitions and events programmes, digital platforms and strategic partnerships, they provide leadership for the sector. They create opportunities for makers to develop their creative and business practice, and to exhibit and sell work in Scotland and beyond. Craft Scotland is a registered charity supported by Creative Scotland.

www.craftscotland.org

WCC CRAFT CITIES

A network of creative craft cities worldwide has been launched by the World Crafts Council (WCC) in the framework of the creative economy and in response to the growing awareness of the contribution of local authorities, craftspeople and communities to cultural, economic and social development.

World Crafts Council Europe

World Crafts Council Europe promotes the design-led crafts and applied arts in Europe

- They encourage the membership to promote WCC-Europe at key exhibitions, conferences and trade related events
- They utilise the WCC-Europe website as a resource for promotion and for critical writing about craft across Europe
- They work with members to develop the 'Craft Cities' and 'European Artistic Craft Days' initiative
- They analyse and highlight critical challenges facing craft in Europe
- World Crafts Council Europe also plays an active role in the WCC International, profiling European craft in WCC International activities

The Harris Tweed Authority

The Harris Tweed Authority is an independent body, established to safeguard the standard and promote the reputation of Harris Tweed. The Authority assures authenticity of Harris Tweed by

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the application of the 'Orb' stamp on finished cloth, and the protection of the 'Orb' by international trademarks.

Harris Tweed Authority Mills Weavers “made from pure virgin wool dyed, spun and hand woven by islanders at their homes in the Outer Hebrides”. The story of Harris Tweed is one which blends tradition and change, but one where the craft tradition in the Outer Hebrides remains central to the timeless appeal of the cloth. The Harris Tweed Authority holds in trust the 'Orb' trademark on behalf of the resident population of the Outer Hebrides. It grants a licence to produce Harris Tweed to the independent mills and artisans, and holds a register of the self-employed weavers. <https://www.harristweed.org/>

The Outer Hebrides

The Outer Hebrides is an island group located off the west coast of Scotland. The islands are sparsely populated with an overall population of 26,900. Employment opportunities are limited, and while traditional crofting and fishing continues, this provides often marginal and seasonal income. Harris Tweed has been woven in the islands for centuries, augmenting subsistence incomes. The production of Harris Tweed is central to the islands' economic well being, with the sector providing over 50% of manufacturing jobs, providing a mainstay of employment in EU designated fragile economic areas. It supports an active artisan sector in the Outer Hebrides, with designers creating products for international markets, generating revenue for local retailers, and supporting the wider tourism industry. Approximately 23% of the population live in the main town of Stornoway, with the rest scattered throughout over 280 townships. Harris Tweed is a major source of employment in many of these.

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