

Craft Scotland *Sector Report 2023*

KEY FINDINGS

During this time of important national funding discussions, Craft Scotland is committed to deepening public understanding of the value and benefits of craft through research and advocacy.

Alongside research insights, Craft Scotland consult with the sector and identify clear areas of support and investment required.

In 2022, we commissioned EKOS, an independent consultancy specialising in economic and social evidence-based research, to provide a detailed analysis of the craft landscape since 2019. For the first time, we now have the strategic, economic and policy context to support the Scottish craft sector.

The Craft Scotland Sector Report 2023 provides an evidence base for understanding the craft sector's context, working models and finances, it contextualises the sector's successes and challenges, weaving together new statistics with insights from previous Craft Scotland research to create a holistic picture of the sector.

It is heartening to see the craft sector in Scotland continue to display positivity, adaptability, and resilience. We know that Scotland's craft sector and talented makers are internationally renowned and craft is enjoyed by an estimated 3.2 million consumers as evidenced in previous joint-research ([The Market for Craft](#) by the Crafts Council and eight partners including Craft Scotland). Yet, Scottish craft's future is not guaranteed, as external factors like funding, Brexit, the pandemic, and the cost-of-living crisis have negatively affected the sector's income and confidence.

The report identifies areas of support makers need to continue developing their creative and business practice. Despite the sector's challenges, there is an undeniable potential for growth and a path forward in an evolving economic and policy landscape. Makers play a pivotal role in advocating for craft's role in society, interweaving craft with key areas of national policy including community wellbeing and placemaking, innovation and education.

This survey is not just a reflection on the present; it is a call to action for the future. We must recognise the true worth of this sector, address its challenges, and collectively work towards a brighter future for the Scottish craft sector. Craft Scotland remains dedicated to advocating for investment, providing targeted support, and celebrating the extraordinary craft community that enriches our lives.

Read the full-length report at craftscotland.org

‘[craft] enriches the environment, both domestic and public space and adds to the cultural narrative of the community.’

(Maker—p.33)



OPPORTUNITIES

Scotland's makers are well-positioned on the international stage, as global audiences want to connect with their provenance, skill and experimentation. At home, we've seen positives in audience development including the current transition towards the 'experience economy' which is marked by a burgeoning interest in craft workshops, tourism, younger enthusiasts – evidenced by the rise in popularity of open studio events.

Makers play a pivotal role in connecting craft with placemaking and community wellbeing, fostering a vibrant and resilient sector that plays a key role in Scotland's society.

The craft sector is moving towards a sustainable economy aligning with the global imperative of Net Zero. This shift resonates with consumers' growing preference for longer-lasting, sustainable, and handmade items over mass-produced products, underlining the sector's potential to thrive in a changing economic landscape.

KEY FINDINGS

1 DEFINITIONS OF 'CRAFT' FAIL TO CAPTURE THE BIGGER PICTURE

A universally accepted definition of craft is absent within policy, funding bodies, and national economic performance metrics (p.7), creating a challenge in accurately assessing the genuine economic and social influence of the craft sector - consequently, complicating the need for increased investment.

2 ECONOMIC IMPACT

Scottish Government place craft within 'Crafts and Antiques', one of the sixteen sub-sectors within the wider creative industries definition. 'Crafts and Antiques' made a substantial impact on Scotland's economy in 2020 by contributing £67.3 million to its Gross Value Added (GVA). Supporting 2,030 jobs in 2021, accounting for 2.6% of the creative industries' total employment, and encompassing 390 businesses in Scotland - though the actual figure is likely higher due to the category's limitations.

3 GAPS IN FINANCIAL DATA

Office for National Statistics (UK) only looks at data from VAT-registered companies. A large proportion of craft professionals in Scotland are sole traders and freelancers with income below the VAT threshold. Their economic contribution and needs are not being captured (p.7).

4 DOMINANT BUSINESS MODELS

57% of makers are sole traders, with over 50% stating that craft is their main source of income. Portfolio working continues to be the dominant business model (p.26-27).

5 CRAFT INCOME

77% of makers have a net income of below £19,999 from craft-related activities (p.29).



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(#4)

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(#7)



KEY FINDINGS

6 INTERNATIONAL WORKING

75% of makers felt that international opportunities were important for the future development of their practice (p.31).

7 TOP CRAFT DISCIPLINES

Most popular disciplines found in Scotland continue to be textiles (32%), ceramics (22%), jewellery (22%) and glass (14%) (p.25).

8 MAKER DEMOGRAPHICS

65% of makers have run their craft business for over five years, with many having run their business for over two decades. It is a female-dominated industry (80% since 2018) and appeals to a broad range of ages (16-65+) (p.24).

9 IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMIES

Geographic areas with a strong craft tradition, such as creative cities and rural regions, have propelled the sector's growth since 2020, with over 50% of respondents recognising the craft sector's significant contribution to Scotland's regional economy. Additionally, 39% of makers derive income within their local authority area, showcasing craft's role in fostering tourism, creating employment, supporting mental health and wellbeing, and preserving culture and community.

10 FAIR WORK IMPORTANCE

73% of makers stated that Fair Work is a priority (p.35).

‘Makers tend to be quite embedded in the communities in which they work – they might provide employment, they will be customers of other local businesses, they are keen to organise and participate in local events such as design fairs or open studios.’

(Maker—p.33)

Scotland's home for contemporary craft

Craft Scotland is the national development agency for craft. We put makers at the heart of all we do, championing diverse and high-quality contemporary craft.

We help people learn about, appreciate and buy craft, promoting the contribution of craft to Scotland's cultural, economic and social well-being. Through our exhibitions and events programmes, digital platforms and strategic partnerships, we provide leadership for the sector. We create opportunities for makers to develop their creative and business practice, and to exhibit and sell work in Scotland and beyond.

We are a registered charity supported by Creative Scotland.

Learn more about Craft Scotland's research: craftscotland.org/research



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