

THE COCKPIT EFFECT 2024

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CONTENTS

Foreword – Jonathan Burton, CEO	4
Executive Summary	5
Infographic.....	7
About Cockpit.....	8
About this report.....	9
Maker Spotlight: Richard McVetis	10
Cockpit Makers – who we are.....	11
Deptford uncovered.....	13
Team Spotlight: Beckie Kingman	14
Maker Spotlight: Harry Owen	15
Community engagement	16
Team Spotlight: Sarah Odong.....	17
Why Cockpit? Awards and Admissions	18
Team Spotlight: Greta Rilletti-Zaltieri	21
Maker Spotlight: Ama Adansi-Pipim	22
Empowering makers – supporting success	23
Maker Spotlight: Kendall Clarke	26
The market for craft – a Cockpit perspective.....	27
Conclusion	30
Maker Spotlight: Jason Lock	31

Appendices

Team and Trustees.....	32
Funders and Supporters	33
Awards and Bursaries.....	34
Image Credits.....	34



FOREWORD

JONATHAN BURTON, CEO



It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2024 edition of The Cockpit Effect.

As an organisation that prides itself on the tangible support it offers to makers, we see this annual review as an essential tool in understanding and sharing the impact of our work. It creates an opportunity to listen to our maker community and to reflect on the changing economic context in which they operate. Most importantly it allows us to calibrate our support and understand where Cockpit can make a real difference.

While our support is highly structured, across studio space, business advice, coaching and public events, we recognise how different and nuanced the needs are of our individual makers. Those in the first three years of business need time to develop their practice creatively and commercially and multi-year Awards and Bursaries, which bring new talent to our community, can make a critical difference. Through these we offer security at a point when makers are most vulnerable and time to explore new creative approaches and routes to market.

We look to define success with our makers, understanding their aspirations. Some wish to scale their business and must employ others to do so, while others wish to remain the principal hand, exploring their practice in extraordinary creative depth. Finding a sustainable model is a huge achievement but mid-career makers must then reflect on whether they evolve their practice and business further. Our Prizes for Cockpit studio holders offer support at this important juncture and are detailed in the Cockpit Effect.

I would also like to reflect on our sense of community. We are fortunate to have a number of makers, that have been part of Cockpit for many years. They are leaders in their field and inspire the next generation. Additionally, the redevelopment of Cockpit Deptford has created space for 20 more makers and our new and refurbished Hubs for leather, weaving and woodworking offer access to shared specialist equipment and space in which to work on large-scale projects. Importantly they also create a touchpoint with other makers, to inspire and support each other – and to forge collaborations.

We have new facilities for our community of makers and, very importantly, for the community that surrounds us. At Deptford we can now welcome our neighbours into our Craft Garden and Spring Café year round. We can further develop our event and education programme in our Learning Centre, creating opportunities for our makers to share their skills with the makers of tomorrow.

We remain ambitious and your support is essential. Our work was recognised at the UK Social Enterprise Awards in 2023 when Cockpit won the Prove It: Social Impact category. We are always looking to develop new partnerships, wider engagement with craft and opportunities for our makers.

To those of you that are already playing a vital role in our work – a warm thank you. We look forward to building on what we have achieved together. Thank you again.

Jonathan Burton
CEO, Cockpit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cockpit Effect report offers insights into the craft businesses that Cockpit hosts and supports, the challenges they face, the support Cockpit offers and the impact and value of that support. The report highlights the creativity of our makers, not only in their work, but also in the ways they respond to challenge, reach their audiences and develop sustainable models for their businesses.

Cockpit is justly celebrated as a diverse community, across: age, cultural background, craft discipline, business model, practice type, and years of experience. Encompassing 23 different craft disciplines, our 176 makers represent all career stages and all types of business models. Cockpit's maker community is also more diverse than that of craft as a whole (4%, Craft Council 2016): 25% of Cockpit makers come from a Global Majority background and 80% describe themselves as female.

Demand for the space and support that Cockpit offers has never been stronger. Our buildings are fuller than ever, with more than eight applicants for every place, and we have extended the services offered to external organisations, reaching makers throughout the United Kingdom and overseas.

Overall, the financial performance of our community has been strong and our survey findings are encouraging. Average turnover reported for the year 2022/23 was £47,393, an increase of £7,468 (19%) on the previous year. Grossed up for the whole community, this indicates a turnover in excess of £8.3m.

The average profit reported was £14,699, an increase of £2,952 (25%) on the previous year. For the community as a whole this gives a combined profit of £2.6m.

When the value of employment, whether PAYE or freelancers, is added, the Gross Value Added (GVA) for the community in total is estimated to be £3.8m, slightly higher than last year. In concrete terms, this means that every £1 invested in Cockpit generates a return of £3.80.

There are a number of themes that I'd like to highlight from this year's report:

Challenging Environment

There is a natural time-lag between the hard data captured for this report and our contemporary interactions with makers.

The financial data we received from our makers this year suggested a more positive picture than perhaps we anticipated. After such a turbulent period the expectation was that financial results might be disappointing. That they are not, is testament to the tenacity and ingenuity of our makers; finding ways to reach their audience, and to persuade them that now is the time to buy.





However, it is important to note that the financial data that supports this report is taken from the last two complete tax years and as business coaches, Madeleine Furness and I hear first hand how things are on a day to day basis.

The current craft market feels particularly soft. After a post-pandemic bounce back, attendances at selling events are now lower and data shared by our makers suggests that the online buying bubble has burst and is resolving to a baseline that is significant, but reduced from the headlines of two years' ago.

Organisers of selling events are trying to navigate a changing landscape. Equally, makers are having to evaluate which events to invest in.

The Power of Hubs

We have always talked about the benefit of having a studio at Cockpit, but perhaps neglected to highlight the benefit of our Hubs.

As we note elsewhere in this report, our Weaving, Leather and Wood Hubs offer support in terms of feeling part of a cohort, being amongst fellow makers.

Beyond that we've seen great examples over the past few years of creative and commercial collaborations, as well as straight forward outsourcing opportunities.

The Power of Story Telling

It's no secret that impactful story-telling is key to any project's success. The core ingredients behind effective marketing have always been key for the programmes and workshops at Cockpit. At base, this is makers understanding their core values, an essential part of our Make It Count programme. Taking it further means thinking about how to communicate these values. We tackle that in part through our Step It Up programme, but also by bringing in industry experts to help makers think about how to get to get their message out to their target audience.

Success

We are fiercely determined to help each maker succeed, but we understand that success has to be defined by our makers and it must be on their own terms. We ask that they define for themselves what success looks like, and how (with our support) they can move towards it. As these case studies illustrate, each maker's journey is unique.

In conclusion, whilst this year's Cockpit Effect celebrates the many successes of our community we are all conscious that the trading environment remain challenging. The prime focus for the Cockpit team is to continually test how best to support our makers both at an individual and community level.

David Crump, Head of Business Incubation.

THE COCKPIT EFFECT 2024

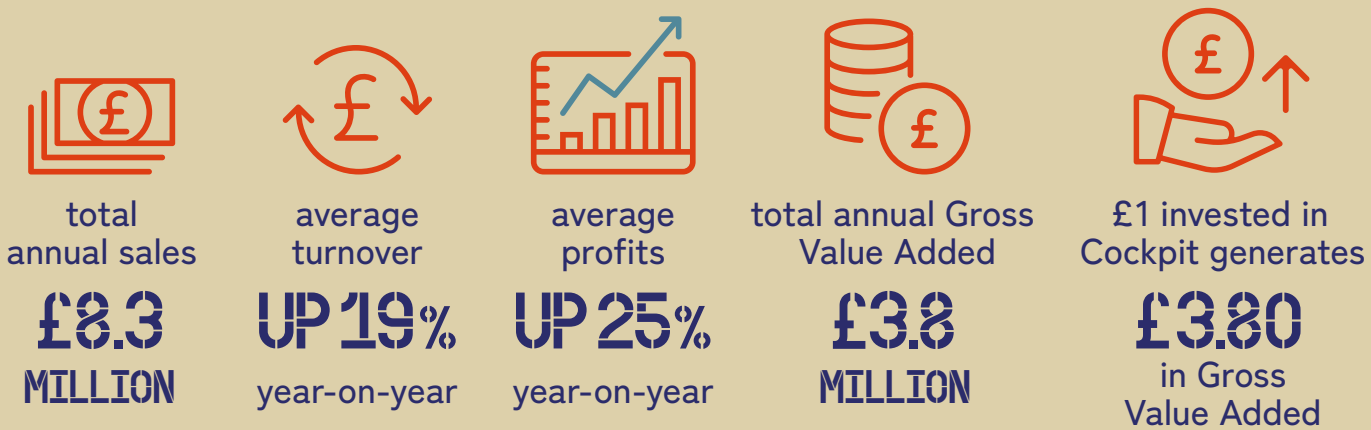
COMMUNITY



ROUTES TO MARKET



FINANCIALS



BUSINESS SUPPORT



ABOUT COCKPIT

Cockpit is a centre of excellence in contemporary craft. Spanning a wide range of craft disciplines, Cockpit makers are united by their extraordinary skill and imagination. Bridging the gap between talent and opportunity, our mission is to equip makers to succeed on their own terms, creatively and commercially.

A charity and UK top 100 social enterprise, Cockpit gives makers tools to build their businesses so they can focus on what they do best: making. We provide funded studio space, in-house business training and coaching, and exhibition opportunities for 176 makers practicing 23 different disciplines. Beyond Cockpit we work with makers throughout the United Kingdom and internationally.

Makers at Cockpit are selected for excellence in craft skill, originality of creative voice and ambition to succeed professionally. We also look for an aspiration to contribute to the wider community. Since our founding in 1986, many makers whose early careers were nurtured here have gone on to become celebrated international names in their fields.

As the only incubator for craft talent anywhere, all our places are subsidised and each year we generate more than £200,000 to support 30+ makers with funded places.

From studio space to business advice, Cockpit is where careers in craft are made.

Our Story

Cockpit's name comes from our first studio site at Cockpit Yard, Bloomsbury. Originally an eighteenth-century cockfighting arena, the yard was taken over by a cabinet maker in 1745. It has been a site for craft and making ever since.

Cockpit as we know it today began in 1986 when Camden Recycling created five starter units in Cockpit Yard for young, unemployed makers. In the early 2000s we opened our second location in Deptford and launched our pioneering business support programme. From there, Cockpit's reputation grew to become the destination for makers starting up in practice. Highly sought-after, a place at Cockpit is a mark of quality.

In 2023 we completed a major development of our Deptford building. Alongside new studios and the Learning Centre, our Café and Craft Garden allow us to welcome our neighbours into our community.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Cockpit Effect report gives an insight into the craft businesses that we work with, the challenges they face, how we work with them and the impact that our support makes.

This is the 13th edition of the Cockpit Effect. In 2023 we were honoured to be recognised by Social Enterprise UK (SEUK), winning the Prove It: Social Impact Award

This year's report looks at makers' financial data from 2021/22 and 2022/23.

This year we are also spotlighting some of the Cockpit team, sharing motivations and behind the scenes insights.

Specific sources of data for this report are:

- 98 financial surveys completed by Cockpit makers
- Maker applications for studio space, awards and workshop programmes
- 292 applications for studio places (standard or awards/bursaries)
- Maker Surveys conducted during the year
- Awardee progress reports
- Workshop programme feedback
- Exit Interviews
- One-to-one coaching sessions





MAKER SPOTLIGHT

RICHARD MCVETIS

Richard joined Cockpit in 2019 after winning the Newby Trust Award. Since then he has also been awarded the Cockpit Textile Award. He shares a studio at Cockpit Bloomsbury.

I'm Richard McVetis. I am an artist.

All my ideas for art are inspired by my fascination with the language of time, geology, and cosmology. My primary way of exploring these themes is through process and drawing, specifically hand embroidery.

The challenges I have faced and continue to face are economic conditions and financial instability, which limit creativity and risk-taking.

I am proud of my persistence in turning this into a serious art practice.

Being in the Cockpit community means being surrounded by people who understand what it means to be creative and work in this complex landscape.

Cockpit has helped me overcome challenges through business mentoring and development. The business coaches help me set goals, think strategically, and be accountable.

WHAT'S NEXT?

I'm working towards a solo show at Make Hauser & Wirth, in Autumn 2025



COCKPIT MAKERS - WHO WE ARE

Cockpit celebrates being a diverse community across age, cultural background, craft discipline, business model, craft practice and years of experience.

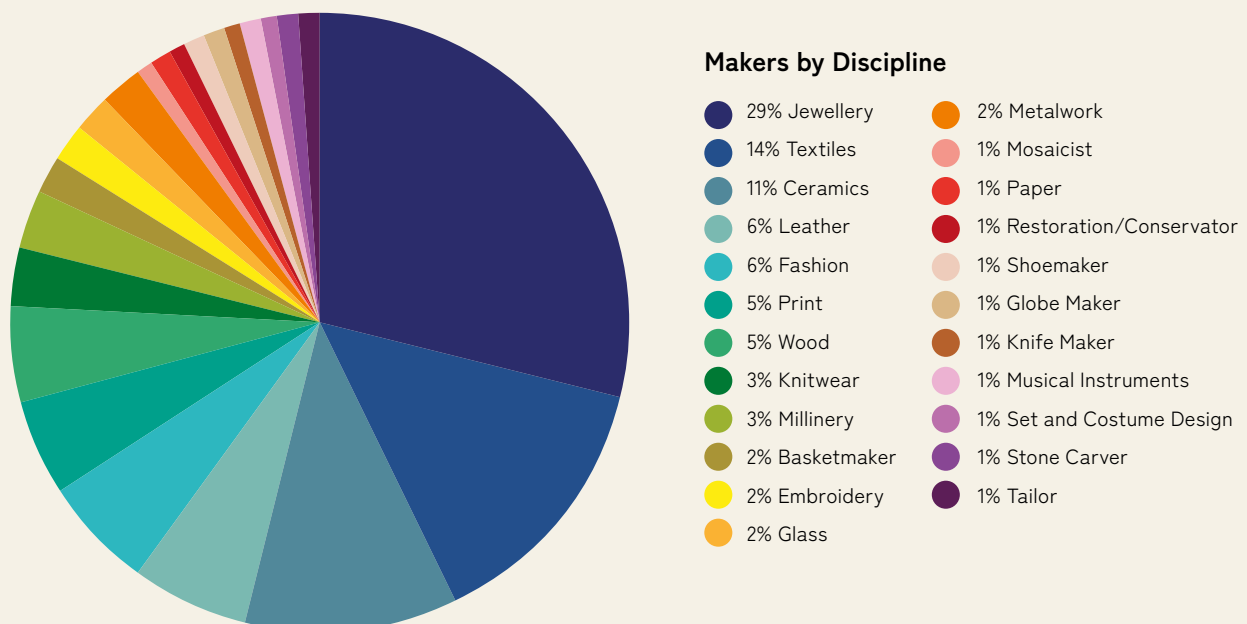
Recognising that creativity and innovation are fuelled by diversity, we foster an inclusive culture where all aspects of diversity are celebrated and seen as key to success.

Craft Disciplines

Our 176 makers at Bloomsbury and Deptford work in 23 different disciplines, with the top seven of those representing over three-quarters (76%) of the maker community. Whilst the top three disciplines continue to be jewellery (29%) textiles (14%) and ceramics (11%) we continue to see an increase in representation of other disciplines, such as wood (5%), with two new makers joining us this year.

The distribution and concentration of disciplines is driven by several factors. The proximity of our Bloomsbury studios to London's Hatton Garden jewellery quarter is a draw to jewellers.

Many of our Awards and Bursaries are discipline-specific, reflecting the focus of specific Livery Companies and the interests of other funders. Existing Cockpit makers also play an important role, acting as role models for the next generation. We use new Awards and Bursaries to diversify the mix of disciplines further, such as stone carving and pole lathe turning.





Demographics

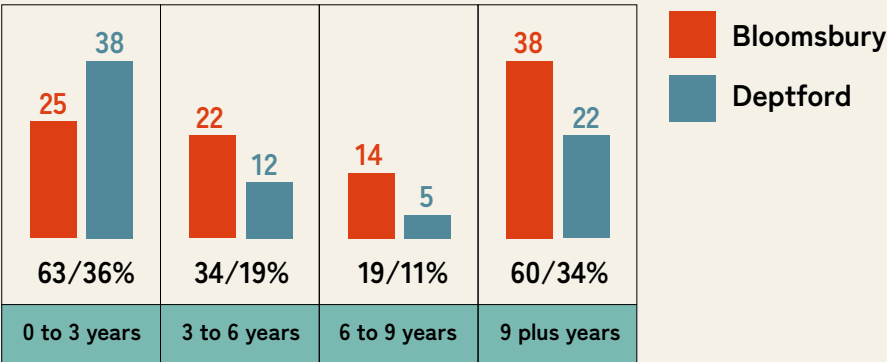
In the context of the craft world, we are a diverse community: 25% of our makers have a Global Majority background, a proportion that has grown over recent years. (In the Cockpit Effect report for 2020 the figure was 20%). This compares with a figure of just 4% in craft as a whole (Crafts Council, 2016). However, recognising that we have more to do if we want to reflect our local neighbourhoods and London as a whole, we have a live, active and evolving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion action plan in place.

Global Majority		
Yes	44	25%
No	132	75%

As with craft as a whole, the majority of our community identifies as female (80%).

Career Stages

As the chart below shows, the majority of the makers at Cockpit are either at the early part of their career and have been with us for three years or fewer, or they are relatively mature businesses and have been at Cockpit for nine years or more.



Currently 39 makers are on Awards or Bursaries, representing 22.2% of the whole population. This is an increase from last year’s proportion of 19.3%

The majority of our makers are sole traders (78%) with the balance being Limited Companies or, in the case of some Awardees, not yet registered. On average the makers completing our financial survey, had been in business for 11 years, and they had been at Cockpit for 7 of those years.

DEPTFORD UNCOVERED

In October 2023 Cockpit completed a £3.24 million redevelopment of its Deptford site. This allowed us to create improved cultural and community facilities that are open and welcoming to Londoners in our immediate local area who are facing socio-economic disadvantage. Creekside Deptford is in the 20% most deprived neighborhoods in the country, and in the highest decile of income deprivation affecting older people (LSOA Lewisham 039E, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019). The area is changing rapidly with new residential development at Kent Wharf and Sun Wharf but lacks spaces that are inclusive of people from all backgrounds.

This project has allowed us to refurbish our building to better meet local needs. It has delivered additional affordable studio spaces, a for-purpose woodworking hub, a new public entrance, London's first community Craft Garden and, importantly, a new learning centre – transforming the building into a new cultural and creative space in the heart of Deptford.

We now have three discipline-specific Hubs in Deptford, offering much needed space and equipment to makers.

The Weaving Hub was created in 2012 with funding from the Clothworkers' Company who continue to support it. It contains eight looms and provides studio space to nine weavers.

Each year 6 Weaving Awardees are offered space in the hub along with business support and the other benefits from being at Cockpit. These two-year Awards have now supported 23 weavers. In general, the weavers that are offered support are at an early stage in their practice. Spending two years in the Hub as a cohort, with dedicated support from the Business Incubation team, gives these weavers time to develop and test their work and also to work on their vision for their practice. Of the 38 weavers that have received Awards, 21 still retain a relationship with Cockpit and 14 have a studio with us.

The Leather Hub was also first established in 2012 and is supported by the Leathersellers' Foundation.

The redevelopment of the Deptford site allowed us to upgrade the Hub, adding more working space as well as access to critical equipment. These three-year Awards have now supported 28 makers of which 12 are still at Cockpit. In recent years, the Leather Hub has become the centre of an eco-system. Makers often work on projects together. Sometimes this is in the form of a creative and commercial collaboration, but at other times it is by way of outsourcing; a maker needing more “muscle” to deliver a project. This has allowed a scaling up that would not have been possible without the Hub.

The Worshipful Company of Turners has sponsored an Award since 2011, with the Awardee being given their own studio equipped with a lathe. As part of the redevelopment, with support from the Turners, we have created a dedicated space for wood. Building the Hub is the start of the project, our ambition being to provide more equipment, encouraging a wider range of wood-based disciplines.

The support of these Livery Companies is greatly appreciated; without it, these three Hubs would not exist.



BECKIE KINGMAN

STUDIO MANAGER, DEPTFORD



Beckie has been Studio Manager at Cockpit Deptford since October 2007 – a whopping 17 years! In that time she’s safeguarded both the building and the mental health of the makers within it. She is responsible for the maintenance, cleaning, administration and smooth running of the whole building, and manages studio lettings. She is often the first point of contact for our makers.

For Beckie, day-to-day life is hard to describe. While there is some structure to tasks and meetings, much of her day is reacting to emergencies, communicating with makers who pop in to see her, and other unexpected happenings.

One major new addition to her job spec was the recent redevelopment at Cockpit Deptford – a huge project and Beckie’s first large building development. Alongside her existing role, Beckie liaised with all the contractors, managed various studio and storage moves, created a new manual for the building and managed maker concerns – of which there were several (namely dust, noise and unexpected digging).

Beckie rose to this and came up with new ways of meeting needs – for example, Cockpit subsidised noise cancelling headphones and every Friday the following week’s building works were communicated to all makers. This was a huge learning curve, which culminated in a lovely new public area where makers congregate and enjoy a cuppa.

For Beckie, success looks like clear building information for all Cockpit Deptford makers; reactive and transparent responses regarding maintenance; studios that are affordable, workable, sociable and safe; and a door that’s always open. In Beckie’s words: ‘if you’re a public facing organisation that’s inviting people in, it’s important that the building health and mental health of the organisation is in a good place.’

Beckie is the woman on the ground at Cockpit Deptford, which means she can meet issues head on and amp up the good stuff. She is the much-needed conduit between makers and head office.

MAKER SPOTLIGHT

HARRY OWEN

Harry joined Cockpit in 2017 with the support of a three-year Leatherseller's Award. At the time he joined, Harry was juggling the challenge of needing regular income with carving out time to build his own business. Zooming forward to the current day, Harry is now full time in his business, a valued member of the Cockpit community, and the co-manager of our Leather and Wood Hubs.

Harry's story:

I'm a leatherworker and designer. I make leather accessories on a bespoke and made to order basis with a strong focus on hand sewing and fine detailing. I also work with other companies helping them to realise any project involving leather, in diverse design contexts such as fashion, furniture, product and interiors.

My vision and ambition is to continue to grow my business and to raise the profile of handmade leather products as a more sustainable alternative to fast fashion and mass produced consumer products for the home.

Some of the challenges I have faced include the constraints of starting a business in a challenging economic environment with no start up capital, balancing the need to develop my skills and creativity with the needs of a growing business and issues managing the clerical side of my business presented by my dyslexia.

Cockpit has helped me overcome challenges by providing me with the support I needed in the beginning of my career and by providing secure and long standing work space without the constant threat of being moved on or turfed out as is so often the case in London.

WHAT'S NEXT?

I have begun a new and exciting collaborative venture moving into the world of interior product with a long standing colleague and friend which I am very excited about.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Whilst Cockpit's main focus is the makers based at our studios, encouraging young people to encounter craft has always been a high priority, with a role to play in cultivating and encouraging the makers of tomorrow.

Our workshop programmes now extend to all generations, creating new opportunities for makers, as they expand their activities, complementing making and selling with teaching and facilitating.

The new spaces in Deptford have enabled us to further develop our services, as we accommodate and support more makers and, for the first time, open to the public all year round to offer a rich community and youth education programme for local people.

We now host a variety of new programmes, including our Craft&Making Saturday Club, the first in the country to run within active working studios.

In 2023/24, we reached 1,104 children, young people and community members through hosting careers days, school and university visits to our studios, as well as participatory workshops in partnership with Arts 4 Dementia and community groups in Lewisham.



Total
tours

16

Total tour
participants

364



University
tours

7

University
participants

364

*Includes 2 x venture
crawl visits



School
tours

6

School
participants

110



Digital
School Tours

1

Digital School
Tours participants

350



Arts for Dementia
workshops

8

Total
Arts for Dementia
participants

80



Saturday Club
sessions

16

Saturday Club
Members
unique participants

11

Saturday Club
total participants

99

Including numbers
from visiting clubs



Public Workshops
(Open Studios)

230

Participants



Creative Dimension
Trust workshops

4

CDT Participants

43

SARAH ODONG

EVENTS AND ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR

Sarah is the Events & Venue Coordinator at Cockpit, and has been thriving in her role for two years.

Like most at Cockpit, day-to-day is never the same for Sarah. Consistent tasks include engaging with those who want to hire parts of Cockpit and come on tours; planning logistics; hosting tours; supporting events and projects; and overseeing programmes like Arts For Dementia – a charity that supports those who are living with early stage dementia, and who run in-house workshops with Cockpit makers.

In fact, Sarah is currently working on the logistics for an upcoming Arts for Dementia programme, which will kick off in July 2024. Every year, Cockpit runs an 8 week programme of workshops for participants, all of whom are living with early stage dementia. During these 8 weeks, Cockpit makers run two weekly sessions each. This group has been coming back to Cockpit since 2022, and Sarah loves to see them return.

Sarah is the reason they always run smoothly. She books dates, venues, makers, applicants and dementia training for all involved – and also supports the makers as they plan their workshops. This year, she will bring the programme to Cockpit Deptford for the first time, and looks forward to doubling our outreach and paid opportunities for makers.

The positive impact on participants is tangible. It's a chance for them to reconnect with familiar faces and try their hands at new and different crafts. It's an opportunity to seize the present in a safe environment where everyone can relax and have fun. Plus, everyone can take something home that they've made, with their very own hands.

The Arts For Dementia programme is one of Sarah's Cockpit highlights. She loves working with the charity, and says 'their passion is contagious'. She sees the programme as crucial as it means continued, and meaningful, venue hire – as well as paid opportunities for our maker community.





WHY COCKPIT?

AWARDS AND ADMISSIONS

The tangible, practical elements of Cockpit's offer are clear, but makers also have other, less immediately obvious motivations for joining our community.

Financial Support

The majority of makers join Cockpit on an Award or Bursary. These are offered exclusively to makers who do not already have a studio with us. This financial support is critical to makers at an early stage in their career. It allows them to develop their work, and test the model for their practice.

Space

Some makers who join Cockpit are making the leap from 'making do' at home or in shared spaces to having their first dedicated workspace. Others want to trade their existing, unsupported space for one that provides a greater sense of community and access to the Business Incubation team.

Equipment

As mentioned earlier, some of our Awards include provision of equipment that would otherwise be out of reach for the makers that apply, either because of cost, or the space required, or both. Our Deptford development has enhanced this support with the addition of a Wood Hub alongside the existing Leather and Weaving Hubs.

Audience

For many makers, their first experience of Cockpit is at an Open Studios event. These events give unparalleled access to an audience of specialist buyers, curators and commissioners, as well as collectors and an opportunity to test product and gain valuable sales.

Community

Overcoming isolation and being among peers is an important motivator for joining. Many makers who apply to Cockpit already have connections with existing studio holders, and some will have worked for makers based here. Others have experienced our community through participation in one of our outreach programmes.

Business Support

Throughout the application process, from initial submission to interview, makers find it fairly straightforward to describe their practical needs but more difficult to pinpoint what they need from our business support offer. Applicants will often point to an existing or past studio holder as an example of what they would like their business to look like, or what they aspire to achieve, without being able to unpick what support they might need to get there. What they do know is that they associate being at Cockpit with success, and they are ambitious to achieve that success themselves.





Applying to Cockpit

Makers at Cockpit are selected for excellence in craft skill, originality of creative voice and ambition to succeed professionally. We also look for a wish to contribute to the wider craft community. Our places are advertised widely through the craft, design and art media, with some awards focused exclusively on addressing underrepresentation or on particular craft disciplines.

Applications are reviewed by an in-house panel to select a shortlist of makers who are invited to interview. Interview panels comprise a Cockpit business coach, along with two or three craft experts, in-house or external. Often Award and Bursary sponsors will join the panel.

In 2023/24 we received a total of 292 applications for a place at Cockpit, an increase of 126 (75%) on the previous year. Of these, 12% were successful. Seeing the application process as a developmental process, we offer feedback sessions to all interviewees who don't get offered a place. These are micro-coaching sessions of up to 30 minutes. We encourage makers to consider reapplying when the timing is right. Those who do, and who have absorbed feedback, are often successful on a subsequent round.

"I had a feedback session with you last year after I got through to the interview stage for a bursary spot at Cockpit. I just wanted to email to thank you for your honest feedback in our Zoom and to Cockpit for giving feedback on interviews. What you said has been immensely helpful to me in how I view and approach my business and has given me a massive kick up the bum when it comes to being more strategic with my business and finances. I feel like our conversation and the Cockpit interview has really shifted me into the next stage of running my business and helped me to approach it in a much more professional way."

	Awards	Standard	Total
 Award and studio applications	237	55	292
 Rounds of interviews	26	4	30
 Number of makers interviewed	107 45%	14 25%	121 41%
 Offers Made	28 12%	7 13%	35 12%



2 IN 5 MAKERS
applying for a studio will be interviewed



1 IN 8 MAKERS
makers applying for a studio, whether Award or a Standard Place were successful.





Cockpit Prizes

In addition to our many Awards and Bursaries, Cockpit offers a number of Prizes each year for existing studio holders. As well as the obvious financial benefit, these Prizes help makers bring a focus to the strategic vision for their business in the short and medium term.

Currently we have three on offer:

The Jill Humphrey Springboard Prize.

Inaugurated in 2011, the Cockpit Jill Humphrey Springboard Prize supports Cockpit makers to achieve a step change in the development of their business, made possible through support from Cockpit Patron and former Trustee Jill Humphrey, Cockpit Patron Sarah Burgess and Deutsche Bank. The first prize is for £1,000 with a second of £600.

“We fund the prize because we want to make a difference to a maker’s craft business. The idea behind the prize is to focus on makers in the early stages of their careers and provide resource to give them a ‘springboard’ up to the next level. The prize is at Cockpit because I appreciate the support that Cockpit provides to makers both in terms of the community but also the business support and mentoring which really enables makers to be successful. The prize is now in its 14th year, and each year it is a real delight to meet the applicants and to follow their progress.” **Jill Humphrey**

The Cockpit Accelerate Prize

The prize was launched in 2023 with the generous donation of two Cockpit Supporters Margaret Tomlin and Ian Synge. The prize rewards makers who are looking to innovate and show a passion and drive to deliver their ideas. Awarded to makers who demonstrate how funding will make a tangible, positive impact to their business or practice, the prize offers a precious opportunity for makers to accelerate their progress. Two prizes of £1,000 are awarded.

The Clear Award

Funded by Clear Insurance, this award offers £1,000 to a maker wanting to invest in the foundation of their business. Clear Insurance has supported Cockpit through Bursaries and Prizes since 2012.

External Funding

For many makers external funding is a key element of their practice. We know that the general climate for arts funding has been challenging, particularly in London, but the responses from our makers highlighted this further.

In 2021/22, 35% of our makers reported having received funding from bodies such as the Arts Council, with an average grant of £7,573 per recipient. For the following year, 2022/23, whilst the average had remained at £7,564, the total number of grants had reduced with only 12% receiving them.

For the Cockpit community as a whole this means a reduction of external funding from over £460,000 to below £160,000.

The squeeze on funding that makers have been seeing mirrors Cockpit’s experience, compounding the challenge that we collectively face.

GRETA RILLETTI-ZALTIERI

AWARDS AND ADMISSIONS COORDINATOR

Greta is Cockpit's Admissions & Awards Coordinator, and since April 2023 she has revolutionised the journey into Cockpit for UK makers.

As with all at Cockpit, this role is extremely varied. In a nutshell, Greta plans, executes and delivers all of Cockpit's Awards, Bursaries and Prizes.

While she's the go-to person for admissions enquiries and comms, from website FAQs to contracts, she also processes, screens and shortlists all internal and external applications. From here, she organises admissions events, forms interview panels, briefs panellists and chairs every single interview. Finally, she manages the outcomes for each candidate, whether they get a place (in which case she coordinates contracts, oversees their journey into Cockpit and writes progress reports for funders) or not (in which case she shares useful resources and facilitates a feedback session with our Business Incubation team). As Greta says, 'I value how we never say no; we say not this time, and we communicate what needs to happen before a candidate can re-apply and be successful'.

She continues: 'My job has a very stimulating mix of strategic thinking and critical evaluation, facilitating tasks in which I foster and revel in human connection, and day-to-day administration and communication.'

One of Greta's best achievements is the Panellist Handbook. This comprehensive guide outlines Cockpit's philosophy to interviews, and includes both practical and mindset guidelines to create a fair, robust, and informed interview environment. This has been a powerful resource for all types of panellists – be it an overwhelmed maker who has never sat on a panel, a Cockpit staff member who wants to improve, or a funder with lots of interview experience. The result is an interview process rooted in a robust framework, rather than personal preference.

All of Greta's work makes application to Cockpit clear and human at all stages. Applicants know where they stand, what to expect, receive timely communications and feel supported in what can be anxiety-inducing circumstances. A funded place at Cockpit is precious, and Greta wants to honour the commitment that candidates put into applying. She wants Cockpit to feel accessible and accountable – to 'open our doors and mean it when we say "come in"'.

Greta herself is a freelance creative, turning her hand to theatre directing, dramaturgy, and reviewing. She knows what it's like to turn an artistic practice into livelihood, and to feel unsupported along the way. This job allows her to have a tangible impact on the way Cockpit communicates, and to actively shape our approach to inclusion. She hopes the foundations she establishes lead to positive, rich and durable relationships with makers.





MAKER SPOTLIGHT

AMA ADANSI-PIPIM

Ama was awarded The Radcliffe Emerging Maker Award, joining Cockpit in 2023. Ama shares a studio in Bloomsbury with other ceramicists and a globemaker.

My name is Ama Adansi-Pipim, a designer-maker working in ceramics.

I hand carve and throw clay bodies ranging from stoneware to porcelain.

I find inspiration in my cultural identity, storytelling, and reimagining ritual practices using contemporary craft.

My ambition is to establish my own design studio where I can collaborate and co-create with creative practitioners ranging from chefs, designers to fashion houses and F&B brands.

Challenges that I currently face are time constraints and lack of resources to assist with nurturing and expanding my practice.

The highlight of my career so far must be joining Cockpit through the Radcliffe Trust Emerging Maker award.

Being a part of the Cockpit community has changed the trajectory of my practice, I can see now there are several different ways to run a sustainable creative business.

Cockpit has helped me overcome challenges by identifying alternative avenues and helping me troubleshoot any creative challenges I face.

WHAT'S NEXT?

I am keen to continue deepening my understanding of smoke firing techniques as well as expanding my range of signature glazes.

Some thoughts from Madeleine Furness, Ama's Coach

"Ama has embraced the Cockpit coaching experience wholly. She kickstarted her journey in the studios by taking part in our Make It Count programme. She demonstrably came to the 10 part series with an open mind, and I have witnessed her willingness to challenge her own thinking and preconceptions about her vision for her practice. As a coach, it is important to me to clear the conversation of any 'shoulds' – seeing typical ways of running a business or routes to market as the only way to progress – and create a thinking space where makers can be resourceful and imaginative with their options. I now see Ama bringing her whole self to her creative business. Ama has been able to encompass her transferable skills from her background in architectural marketing and business development. With this mindset, she is leaning into her personal network outside the trodden paths of craft, which is beginning to present opportunities to contextualise her offer within hospitality – including an emergent collaboration with a Michelin trained chef."



EMPOWERING MAKERS SUPPORTING SUCCESS

Supporting Makers to Succeed

In total, Cockpit provided 2893 hours of support to 254 makers, whether studio holders at Cockpit, individual makers outside Cockpit, or members of other organisations.

To give context to the level of support, the Crafts Council's 2022 survey of 639 makers nationwide revealed that half (49%) invest less than £100 per year in their professional development.

One-to-One Coaching Sessions

One-to-one coaching sessions are on offer to all makers at Cockpit, the frequency agreed between each maker and their coach. Coaching sessions are also offered to makers outside Cockpit taking part in one of our programmes.



Business Incubation Workshops

The core Cockpit workshops are delivered by the Business Incubation team, David Crump and Madeleine Furness. This core is augmented by bringing in sector specialists to speak to specific themes.

Make It Count

Makers joining through an Award or Bursary take part in a dedicated programme, Make it Count, that gives them a solid foundation on which to build their business or practice. Make it Count is offered twice yearly to maximise the benefit of the initial award year for each maker and consists of 9 sessions, timed to end before the next Open Studios. We also offer this programme to makers who are awarded Standard Studio places if they are at a relatively early stage in their career.

Step It Up

Step It Up is a programme developed for makers who are mid-career and who are ready to sharpen up their practice or transform their business. Each module consists of recorded content coupled with in-person sessions that offer the maker the opportunity to apply ideas to their unique practice, supported by their peers and the Business Incubation coach.





Monthly Workshops

To complement the programmes above we run monthly workshops on a range of topics relevant to craft makers. These offer the opportunity to bring in sector specialists to cover specific topics in more detail. In planning these workshops, we respond to makers' needs and plan content to meet these. Topics covered are wide ranging but include things like tax, exporting, SEO, digital marketing, filmmaking, sales, presentation skills and time management.

Supporting Makers Beyond Cockpit

Cockpit Professional Development Programme

In recent years we have expanded our online workshop offer, allowing us to work with increasing numbers of makers outside London. Our Professional Development Programme consists of 13 workshops coupled with one-to-one coaching sessions.

The programme offers information-led, practical workshops to help makers identify and improve the core skills needed to develop a more sustainable practice and improve their capacity for growth. The course is suitable for those still learning and refining these core skills as well as those revisiting key areas for development.

To date, the focus for these programmes has been working with makers who are members of other organisations (in other words, this is a business-to-business or B2B offer).

The prime example of this is our partnership with the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QUEST). QUEST offers two rounds of scholarships a year, with a cohort each time of 15 to 20 makers. Cockpit started partnering with QUEST in 2021 and has worked with 6 cohorts over this period, with a total of 118 scholars taking part in the programme. This year we worked with 35 scholars.

“The PDP Programme is an integral part of the Scholarship application, with applicants citing the programme as key to their development, whatever stage of their careers. Working in partnership with Cockpit is an important part of bringing maker communities together.” Deborah Pocock LVO, QUEST CVO

Elizabeth Ashdown (Libby) was with Cockpit from 2018 to 2020 and was a beneficiary of a Clothworkers' Award. As a QUEST Scholar, Libby recently took part in our QUEST PDP.

We asked Libby about her thoughts about the programme:

“David's classes provided a fantastic opportunity to re-engage with many often overlooked aspects of my business. The dedicated weekly sessions for reflecting on and evaluating past, current and future business practices and plans have proven to be extremely valuable. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing the group's varied experiences, often finding them just as valuable as the session's content.”

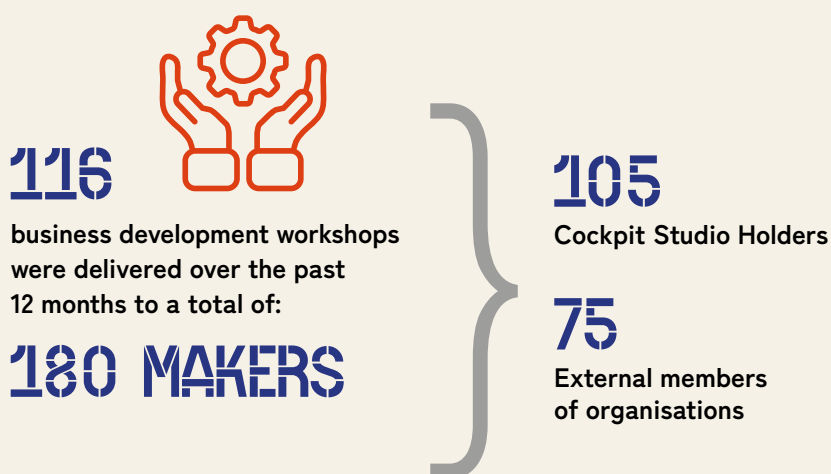
We then asked Libby how the QEST PDP differed from the support she received when she was at Cockpit on her Clothworkers' Award:

"I am now at a very different stage in my business than I was when I first joined Cockpit in 2018. Back then, I was focused on translating my creative work into a business. Although the classes I attended were extremely helpful, they felt largely theoretical from my perspective. Now that I am immersed in running a creative business everyday, the recent classes were incredibly relevant, helpful and insightful, providing practical strategies and real-world contexts that directly address the challenges I face day to day."

Other organisations accessing Cockpit's Professional Development Programme include Craft Northern Ireland, The Worshipful Company of Turners, The Sylva Foundation and the Basketmakers' Association. Alongside the business support that the programme provides, the community and collaboration framework it offers is also important, allowing makers spread throughout the UK to make lasting connections.

Bespoke Support

Beyond Cockpit's Professional Development Programme, we offer tailored support to organisations throughout the UK and internationally. This year we have worked with Yorkshire Artspace, Craft Scotland and Creative Farnham. With the support of the British Council we also developed a residency craft programme with Laajverd in Pakistan.





MAKER SPOTLIGHT

KENDALL CLARKE

Kendall is a textile artist and joined Cockpit in 2019 with the support of an Arts Society Award. Since then Kendall has successfully applied for the Springboard Prize and the Cockpit Textile Award. She is also a QEST Scholar.

I work with my own handmade paper yarn to make woven artworks and sculptures.

I am inspired by Japanese art and craft.

My vision and ambition is to reach the highest level of my craft, both technically and creatively.

I don't have an art school background so my network of art world contacts was limited, and so was my knowledge of how that world worked.

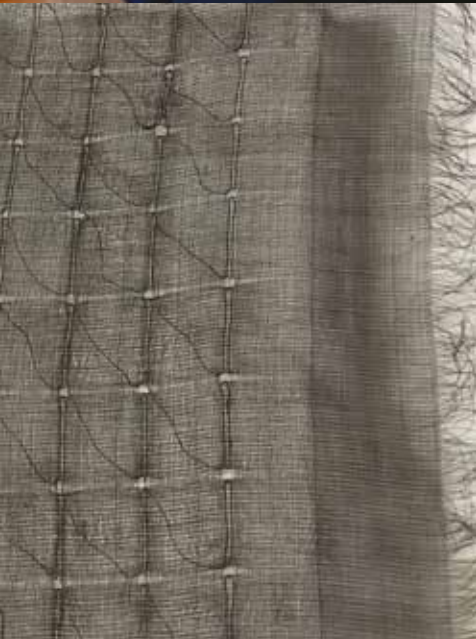
My career highpoint so far is my QEST scholarship. It enabled me to travel to Japan and learn the endangered traditional craft of paper yarn making and weaving.

Being in the Cockpit community means I feel part of a creative network, which builds confidence and resilience as well as friendships. It's important not to work in isolation.

Cockpit has helped me overcome challenges with practical advice, professional training and networking opportunities.

WHAT'S NEXT?

I'm currently building a new body of work, which I would ultimately aim to exhibit at Collect.



THE MARKET FOR CRAFT - A COCKPIT PERSPECTIVE

Gathering feedback from makers each year gives long term insight into the craft market. The information in this report is based on data shared with us by 98 makers based at Cockpit, as well as insights gained from our work with other makers over the past year.

Data in this year's Cockpit Effect covers the financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23, a period that proved to be testing from a trading perspective. The pandemic and changes and challenges as a result of Brexit continue to impact. Domestic and world events led to high inflation, increased interest rates and a continuation of the cost of living crisis. Makers saw shortages and increases in costs of their raw materials alongside disruptions in their supply chains.

Financial Results

Given the challenging backdrop, it is important to note the encouraging survey findings. Average turnover reported for the year 2022/23 was £47,393, an increase of £7,468 (19%) on the previous year. Grossed up for the whole community, this indicates a turnover in excess of £8.3m. The average profit reported was £14,699, an increase of £2,952 (25%) on the previous year. Grossed up for the community as a whole gives a combined profit of £2.6m.

Given the earlier comments about the costs of raw materials, the increase in profitability is all the more impressive. Our pricing workshops focus on the importance of intangible as well as tangible value. From a marketing perspective, this highlights the need for storytelling to convey the emotional value of our work over and above the functional. Breaking the responses down to the number of years that each maker has been in business illustrates the challenges they face in the early years and the time it can take to reach a reasonable level of financial sustainability. This reinforces the value of and need for our Awards and Bursaries to support makers in the early years of their practice.

Years in Business	Profit 21/22	Profit 22/23	% movement
0 to 3	£1,022	£ 522	(49%)
3 to 6	£5,245	£9,677	85%
6 to 9	£7,912	£9,084	15%
9+	£17,242	£20,903	21%





When asked about employment, 23% of makers reported that they either employed (PAYE) or regularly used freelancers for 4 hours or more a week. This compares with just 10% in the Crafts Council's 2022 survey of 639 makers. Extended to the whole community this suggests that 86 or more people are being employed by our makers, with an investment of £1.2m per year.

When added back to the profit figure mentioned earlier, this gives a GVA for the whole community of £3.8m, an increase from the figure in last year's Cockpit Effect, which was £3.7m

This means:

Every £1 invested in Cockpit generates a return of

£3.80



The difficult economic backdrop is perhaps reflected in makers' cautious approach to future trading levels. When asked about future intentions, nearly 25% of the makers that currently employ staff said they were unlikely to maintain current levels over the next 12 months. The survey suggests employment numbers for the next 12 months may fall by 16%.

Routes to Market

Open Studios

Our Open Studio events are important for our makers. For some they are an opportunity to test product or market services, but for others they are a key source of income. The financial survey responses reveal that, on average, Open Studios contributes 8% to each maker's turnover. Grossed up for the community as whole this indicates that our two Open Studio events generate sales in excess of £639,000.

Online sales

Across the community as a whole, online sales have seen a continued decline from the high point during Covid. 51% report online sales compared to 59% in 2023 and 71% in 2022.

For the makers that completed the financial survey, online sales averaged just over £6,000, or 13% of turnover. Grossed up for the community, online sales are £909,000 compared to £1.5m and £2m in the two previous years.

As the table below shows, online sales are particularly significant for younger businesses, accounting for 43% of their turnover. This is likely to be a reflection not just of their inclination to promote online but also of the general buying habits of their audiences.

Years in business	Online Sales as a proportion of turnover
0 to 3	43%
3 to 6	15%
6 to 9	7%
9+	13%
Overall	13%

Selling Events

The picture for selling events over the past year was broadly similar to the previous one. In the past 12 months, 50% of our makers took part in selling events, with 45% of these being direct to consumer. A small proportion of makers (7%) reported selling at trade events, whilst 20% said they did both.

When asked to look forward to the next 12 months, the respondents all indicated that they would continue to take part in these events.

Exports

Exporting continues to be a strength for Cockpit makers, with 53% saying that they had exported over the past year. This marks a slight reduction from last year (56%) but compares with only 36% of makers more widely (Crafts Council, 2021.)

Understandably, the earlier-stage businesses (0 to 3 years) are less likely to export, at 43%.

The contribution that exports make to the average turnover has fallen to 9%, compared to 15% last year. However, our community as a whole is still exporting £614,000 annually.

It is noticeable that exports to Europe have continued to decline with North America now being the most popular export region for the first time.

Export Where?	Africa	Asia	Australia	Europe	North America	South America
	1	11	7	26	27	1
2024	2%	23%	15%	55%	57%	2%
2023	5%	24%	14%	62%	51%	3%
2022	0%	16%	16%	84%	68%	5%

Retailer and Gallery Representation

The number of makers selling through retailers has fallen markedly. 33% of makers sell through retailers, compared to 58% last year. Of these 59% are selling purely through UK retailers.

By comparison, representation through galleries has increased slightly at 32%, compared to 30% last year. Whilst the majority (57%) of these are UK based, representation outside the UK continues to be significant.

Workshops and Teaching

Workshops and teaching continue to be a key part of many makers’ practice.

Of those completing our survey 22% offered their own workshops, whether to people looking for an experience or to those seeking to develop a craft skill. Of these, 16% offer an online workshop alongside in-person.

Teaching continues to be important with 33% of our makers doing this. 14% offer their own workshops as well teaching elsewhere.





CONCLUSION

The Cockpit Effect offers a moment to reflect, celebrate and look ahead.

Once again, the performance of our makers over the past two years has been impressive, especially viewed through the lens of the challenging economic conditions faced by many.

This success belongs to our makers, but this report also highlights where Cockpit makes a difference. Why do we think this?

- Positive feedback from the makers we work with, whether within Cockpit or outside.
- Growing demand to join Cockpit, whether for a studio or to take part in our programmes.
- Makers sharing increased average turnover (+19%) and profit (+25%) metrics.
- The Cockpit community generating exports worth £614,000 with 53% of makers exporting.
- Community engagement, with individual makers offering their own workshops and Cockpit partnering with a range of organisations to provide programmes of support.
- The Hubs for leather, wood and weaving at Deptford acting as a catalyst for collaborations and new commercial opportunities.

Looking Ahead

The economic challenges currently faced are not going away in the short to medium term.

Changing consumption patterns are evident, as demonstrated by the decline in online sales and attendance at physical events.

For Cockpit and our community that means being agile, curious and creative. It means developing and testing ways of reaching markets and consumers and understanding how to make what we do relevant and compelling for new audiences.

MAKER SPOTLIGHT

JASON LOCK

Jason's move into the world of wood turning happened after a roof accident forced a career switch. Jason successfully applied for the Turners' Award in 2020. His lack of mobility meant that it was not practical to move into a studio at Cockpit, but we all recognised that he fully deserved our support.

Due to Covid, we had already moved our Make it Count programme online, so it was a natural fit to have Jason join us remotely.

Since then, Jason has accessed one-to-one's and workshops online, has also taken part in our Open Studios and has become a valued member of the Cockpit Community. Here are his thoughts:

I am Jason Lock and I am a woodturner.

I turn wood on a lathe with traditional tools such as bowl gouges to make large vessels and lidded boxes using wood and resin.

I am inspired by nature, history.

My vision and ambition are to get my work into the best galleries in the UK, to gain a QEST Scholarship and hopefully go on to build success from there.

The challenges/blocks that I've faced are gaining confidence in my work and having the business tools to promote myself, using social media as a tool to show off my work. Pricing is also a challenge.

My career highpoints so far include exhibiting in some of the biggest events and winning the Turners' Award to come to Cockpit.

Being in the Cockpit community has meant the world to me. It's also about having great business support.

Cockpit has helped me overcome challenges like time keeping, pricing, setting goals and having a strict business plan.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Bigger and bolder work that will show my creator side.





APPENDIX 1

TEAM AND TRUSTEES

Team

Lateefat Babalola, Programme Coordinator
Jonathan Burton, CEO
David Crump, Head of Business Incubation
Madeleine Furness, Business Incubation Programme Manager
Ashley Gerling, Head of Marketing and Digital
Hugo Godfrey, Financial Controller
Beckie Kingman, Studio Manager, Deptford
Adrian Lee, Studio Manager, Bloomsbury
Sandie Mattioli, Head of Development
Sarah Odong, Events and Admin Coordinator
Fabienne O'Neil, Chief Operating Officer
Greta Rilletti-Zaltieri, Awards and Admissions Coordinator

Freelance team

David Beidas, Capital Project Manager, Deptford Development
Melanie Dresti, Studio Manager Cover
Shital Pattani, Open Studios Event Manager
Chris Webb, Youth and Community Consultant

Trustees

Bill Amberg
Nishita Dewan
Lee Gage
Darla-Jane Gilroy
Patricia Godfrey
Clarissa Hulse (now retired)
Pablo Lloyd OBE, Deputy Chair (now retired)
Davina Mallinckrodt, Chair
David Moore
Mehul Nathwani (now Deputy Chair)
Sarah Samuel
Ian Smart
Gavin Watters

Committee Members & Advisors

Christiane Dickens
Sam Fry
Jill Humphrey
Amanda Kay
Lorna Killin
Isabel Miao
Debika Ray

APPENDIX 2

FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

Trusts, Foundations, Liveries and Statutory Funders

The Arts Society
The Arts Society GLA
Bagri Foundation
British Council
The Clothworkers' Company
The Drapers' Charitable Fund
The Dyers' Company Charitable Trust
The Haberdashers' Company
Harriet's Trust
The Leathersellers' Foundation
Lewisham Council
Marsh Charitable Trust
The Needlemakers' Company
The Newby Trust
The Radcliffe Trust
S.H.A Charitable Trust
The Swire Charitable Trust
The Worshipful Company of Basketmakers
The Worshipful Company of Broderers
The Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers of
London
The Worshipful Company of Turners
Supported by Camden Council Culture Service
with funding
from the Cultural Education and Learning Support
Fund

Patrons

John & Marianne Adey
Sarah Burgess
Preston Fitzgerald & Cedric Smith
Patricia Godfrey
Jill Humphrey
Davina Mallinckrodt
David Robinson
Sarah Samuel
Margaret Tomlin, Ian Synge and Friends

Champions

Susan Charles
Jake Emmett & Rob Caunt
Matthew Gaved
Maurice
Erin Walls
Dr Veronica White
And those who wish to remain anonymous

Make It Support

Prue MacLeod

Corporate Support

Clear Insurance Management Ltd
Deutsche Bank

Partners

Briffa
Champagne Gosset
Decorex
Louis Latour wines

Deptford Capital and Public Art Commission Funders

City Bridge Trust
The Clothworkers' Company
Cockayne – Grants for the Arts
The Drapers' Charitable Fund
Foyle Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation
The Haberdashers' Company
The Leathersellers' Foundation
Lewisham Council
The London Community Foundation
Mayor of London
The Mila Charitable Organisation
Stride
Thames Water
The Worshipful Company of Turners
All those who contributed to our Art Happens
crowdfunding campaign

Friends+

Jane Adam
AMUZN | Nascent Ventures Ltd
Hugh Curthoys
Catherine Dyson
Sian Evans
Lynn Foster
Sam Fry
Alexandra Johnstone
Sandie & Daniel Mattioli
Scarlett Millar
Wendy Morris
Frances Ray
And those who wish to remain anonymous

APPENDIX 3

AWARDS AND BURSARIES

Awards and Bursaries whose Awardees have started in 2023/2024:

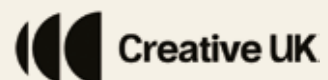
Arts Society – 1
Arts Society GLA – 1
Bagri Craft – 1
Basketmakers – 1
Broderers – 1
Clothworkers – 3
Dyers – 1
Feltmakers – 1
Glass – 1
Grant-Turnstone – 1
Haberdashers – 2
Harriet's Trust – 1
Leathersellers – 2
Make It – 3
Newby – 3
Radcliffe – 2
Turners – 1
Young Masters – 1

Credits

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Page 12: Nicole Tree
Page 13: All images, James Champion
Page 14: Becky Kingman
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Page 16: Top: Malaika Carr, centre: James Champion, bottom: Adrian Parkitny
Page 17: Sarah Odong
Page 18: Deb King
Page 19: Top: Kerry Hastings, centre: Jacky Oliver, bottom: Rentaro Nishimura
Page 20: Agata Pec
Page 21: Vittoria Butti
Page 22: Top: Yeshe Venema, centre and bottom: Ama Adansi-Pipim
Page 23: Top: Clunie Fretton, centre: Claire de Waard, bottom: Alveston Fine Art
Page 24: Craig Yamey
Page 25: Nicci James
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Page 27: Patrizia Sascor
Page 28: Paul Read
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Page 30: Top: Giulia Manzoni, centre: Cindy Lilen, bottom: Olivia Rose
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