

Edinburgh Contemporary Crafts raise money for new workshop and gallery

Edinburgh Contemporary Crafts has raised £8,000 towards the £20,000 needed to refurbish Scotland's first multi-disciplinary craft workshop, gallery and shop.

The total raised so far is a combination of public donations, business sponsorship and support in kind and the landlord James Hay Pension Trustees has also generously agreed an eight month rent-free period to give the community facility a head start.

The concept is the vision of Louise Smith who established ECC in 2011, providing workshop space on Home Street for nine resident makers who have taught more than 200 would-be crafters over the last 18 months. Having outgrown its current home, new premises have been found on Blair Street in the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town.

The crowd-funding campaign is now looking to raise a further £12,000 to enable the refit of the new premises. Individuals can pledge anything from £15, with a donation of £55 and above giving you a full day of workshops and demos, live music and a slap-up lunch in return. Businesses can sponsor up to £1000, with benefits including promotion of their brand, private staff workshop days or team building events, and invitations to private events. The crowd-funding campaign will be live until Sunday 28th April.

The new multi-disciplinary craft workshop – offering courses in screen printing, illustration, crafted textiles, book binding, dressmaking and upholstery – will open to the public on Monday 6th May with pottery and jewellery courses starting soon afterwards. The permanent gallery and shop are due to

open in July.

To date ECC has been funded by the makers themselves however to move the project forward the new premises need to be significantly refurbished. Money will be spent on knocking down walls, stripping everything back to the original stonework and features, installing gallery lighting and glass partitions, and creating specialist workshop facilities including a heat proofed kiln room, individual studio spaces and custom built storage. They already have many of the tools and equipment, and are hopeful of future funding to expand the workshop facilities.

Louise Smith said:- “This has been such an amazing process and what has surprised and delighted me more than anything is how many people have offered their help. We have received specialist knowledge and services – such as architectural planning and website development – that could otherwise cost a fortune, and so many people have offered to wield a sledgehammer or a paint brush in order to get the bulk of the building work done for free.

“This together with the crowd-funding campaign, which will pay for the building materials, has turned it into a real community project. It’s empowering to help create a thriving craft community and it means there are so many people involved from the start, taking joint ownership of the project.”

All those involved in running Edinburgh Contemporary Crafts are practicing makers who are passionate about their craft, enjoy teaching, and believe that craft can be a catalyst for social and personal change. The move to Blair Street will help to support new and established makers and encourage public appreciation and enjoyment of quality Scottish craft.

- For details on business sponsorship opportunities visit: <http://www.edinburghcontemporarycrafts.co.uk/sponsorship.html>
- For further information on the crowd-funding campaign visit:

<http://www.edinburghcontemporarycrafts.co.uk/crowdfunding.html>

Submitted by [Samantha McKay-Challen](#)

