

John Makepeace



Throne

Enriching the language of furniture

The Devon Guild of Craftsmen

The Devon Guild of Craftsmen is the largest contemporary craft centre in the South West.

It is an educational charity which supports established and emerging makers, and provides professional development, marketing and many educational opportunities. Our mission is to educate and develop further understanding of contemporary crafts.

The Devon Guild of Craftsmen has been running a successful programme of national touring exhibitions for the last 6 years. Its aim is to promote the very best makers and crafts to as wide an audience as possible.

Touring exhibitions from the Devon Guild of Craftsmen include:

David Leach - 20th Century Ceramics

Elemental Insight (in conjunction with the Met Office)

Hitec-Lotec (Crafts For Now consortium)

Guy Martin - Whole Life Cost

**Interface - Contemporary International Digital Craft
(in conjunction with the University of Plymouth)**

**Urban Field (in conjunction with Craft Study Centre
and Contemporary Applied Crafts)**

**Playing with Fire - Contemporary UK Enamel
(in conjunction with the University of the West of
England and the British Society of Enamellers)**

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John Makepeace

OBE FCSD FIMgt FRSA

- A pre-eminent figure of British furniture design, Makepeace uses selected trees from British woodlands, leathers, textiles, glass, bronze and resins.
- He believes: **‘Changing design methods determine form’**.
Therefore drawings, models, mock-ups and computer modelling are used to generate a more responsive and expressive language for furniture that relates to the needs of individual and group activities. New technologies in construction are constantly developed in conjunction with traditional skills such as fine wood-working, sculpting, veneering and laminating to achieve high performance structures, clarity of form and economy of material.
- His approach incorporates maker education, timber production, architecture and structural engineering.
- Makepeace is extensively represented in public and private national and international collections:

Art Institute, Chicago
Banque Generale du Luxembourg

Birmingham City Art Gallery
Boots Plc

British Insurance Brokers Association, London

Cardiff Museum

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Grosvenor Estates

Leeds Museum and Art Gallery

Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt, Germany

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

Nuffield Foundation

Portals Plc (now De La Rue Plc)

Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh

Sidney and Frances Lewis Collection, Richmond, Virginia

The Post Office

The Worshipful Company of Innholders, London

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

‘In his distinctive furniture, John Makepeace offers an informed and clear balance of nature and artifice, form and function, subtlety and exuberance.’
Edward S. Cooke Jr. of the Department of the History of Art, Yale University

Biography

A maker of international standing, John Makepeace was born in 1939. In 2009, as well as celebrating his 70th birthday, he will have been making furniture for 50 years.

‘John Makepeace is second to none. From his base in rural Dorset he produces furniture which is classic and modern at the same time – and represents workmanship at its very best.’ Sir Christopher Frayling, Rector & Vice-Provost, Royal College of Art

John Makepeace’s career can be described as an ‘adventure in wood’. Aged only eleven, he became intrigued with fine furniture after watching it being made and went on to visit the great cabinet-makers in Copenhagen when a teenager. Rather than go to Oxford University, he decided to train as a cabinet-maker.

Craftsmanship came naturally. John’s thirst for design led him to work in the USA before starting his first workshop. Early commissions to furnish new buildings for both Templeton and Keble College, Oxford, projected him into the company of leading architects, inspirational teachers, academics and senior business-people.



Knot Chair



Trine Chair

Early professional recognition as a designer and maker gave Makepeace the opportunity to travel widely, working as a consultant in the field. His work as a founding member of the government's Crafts Council made him aware of what he saw as faults in the education system. In 1976, he bought Parnham House in Dorset to provide larger studios for his own work and to show furniture in an historic house, also open to the public. It was here that Makepeace also founded the Parnham Trust, a furniture-making school.

Between 1977 and 2001, the Trust educated a generation of makers who established successful businesses around the world. These included eminent graduates such as Wales and Wales, Konstantin Grcic and Sean Sutcliffe.

Awards

- 2002 Lifetime Achievement Award, The Furniture Society, USA
- 1999 Master's Award, Worshipful Company of Furniture Makers
- 1997 The Claxton Stevens Prize for most outstanding furniture, 1996-7
- 1988 OBE for services to furniture design
- 1972 Winner of the Observer Kitchen Design Competition, The Observer

Ripple



Broadening his understanding of design, John became involved in timber-growing, material science and structural engineering. The Trust initiated several international research programmes which studied the sustainable use of indigenous timber. Examples of such uses are aptly demonstrated at the Trust's award-winning buildings at Hooke Park, a 350 acre forest near Parnham, purchased by the Trust to encourage and teach a closer integration of timber-growing with design and production, without which woodland management becomes unsustainable.

'The sublime effect of exquisitely chosen materials, perfectly crafted to serve and enhance the human body and soul, makes John Makepeace's work overwhelmingly desirable.' Rosalind Savill, Director of the Wallace Collection

After 25 years as founder and director, Makepeace stepped down, the Trustees appointed a successor and Parnham House was sold. The Trust moved to a new campus at Hooke Park and amalgamated with the Architectural Association, where both ran world-renowned courses for architects and designers.



Liberty Table and Chairs

The name John Makepeace has a special place in the world of fine furniture design and craftsmanship. He combines experimental and innovative ideas with a respect for tradition. His work transcends conventional perceptions of function, structure and material with sensitivity and flair.



Space Table

Individuals and organisations come to John Makepeace to commission luxurious and distinctive pieces - mainly from indigenous wood - as a creative statement and long-term investment.

John is now designing and making furniture for exhibition and to commission for private clients and public collections in Europe and the United States of America.

Exploring, Learning ... Understanding

This exhibition offers enrichment and learning opportunities to its visitors, and a wide range of resources for use by children, students, life-long and new learners.

The exhibition will aim to provide the following learning outcomes:

BETTER UNDERSTANDING:

Viewers will explore the design process - 3D and interior - and how materials are shaped into furniture.

The exhibition will inspire thinking about furniture in its context: whether interior or exterior, domestic or public - its function and role as cultural artefact.

Visitors can gain insight into workshop building; hand-made and manufactured construction, use of material (wood, metal, plastics, textiles, ceramics, furniture, lighting).

The opportunity to reflect upon furnishing and lifestyle: sustainability, economics, consumption and how they affect use of materials, experimentation and change.

Visitors can refer to [Education Panels](#) supporting the exhibition.

View the [Documentary Film](#) and [Catalogue](#), produced in conjunction with the exhibition (large text version and transcript available).

Survey [Further Reference and Research](#): a selected range of books and other printed material relating to furniture history and tradition, design and manufacture processes, plus further study and outreach information.

Discover how Makepeace develops his work, from the [sketchbooks](#), [models](#), [tools](#) and [notebooks](#) on display.

All material created will be as accessible as possible to people with disabilities and disadvantaged audiences

ENHANCED SKILLS:

Exhibition and resources combine to provide projects and hands-on activities

See and feel how objects fit together; how wood joints work; how wood is carved/lathed/cut.

Discover how your experience affects production: identify aspects of comfort, physicality, danger and discomfort, health and safety.

Find out about function - how furniture is used by different people - and how it changes through history.

Communicate ideas through drawing, writing and moving objects.

IMPROVED VALUES AND CREATIVE THINKING:

A consideration of motivations and feelings of other people and groups, how societies interact with artefacts and make things they need.

Visualisation and creation of your own designs.

Enlightenment about how style and use of furniture changes over time and what it may be like in the future (in comparison to the past.)

Inspire more learning: wider career and industry references, jobs and skills.

Greater appreciation of making, materials, culture and behaviour.

(Ideas, suggestions and project materials for outreach and learning will be made available to venues.)

Events for audience engagement/new learners:

Outreach marketing to include adult education, societies, under-resourced groups

An opening evening event with John Makepeace in conversation.

Workshop or demo for visitors (led by different makers in each locality).

Regular guided tours of exhibition by the curator or venue staff.

Optional: Study visit to furniture maker's studio in venue locality.

Exhibition Information

Content

This exhibition will bring together up to 25 major pieces of work from some 50 years of making.

Significant examples from John's design career have been borrowed from national and private collections.

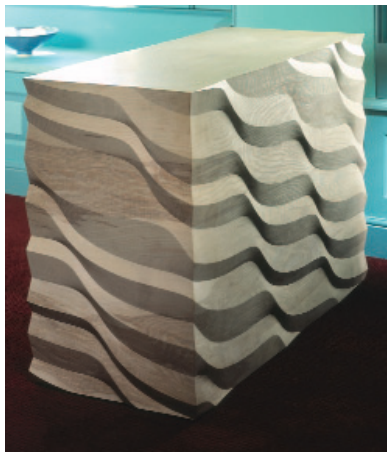
Specially commissioned works will be seen alongside key pieces from the maker's own private collection.

These works will be supported and contextualised by prototypes, drawings, models and mock-ups.

The exhibition will put into context John's influence as a designer, teacher, and ambassador for the crafts and will be supporting by a substantial education programme.

It will offer enrichment and learning opportunities for a range of visitors: children, students, life-long and new learners.

A film, exhibition catalogue, reference and research material, along with hands-on activities and further study projects, will all help to enhance skills, encourage creative thinking and gain a better understanding of furniture and making.



Sand

John's approach stems from his broad interests in the arts, architecture, material science, technology, the natural environment and patterns of group behaviour, resulting in solutions that encourage the enjoyment of furniture as an articulate expression of our time.



Obelisk

Audiences

The exhibition will provide audiences with an enjoyable, accessible and high-quality experience of contemporary craft.

The aim is to stimulate and support wider audiences and encourage them to use the gallery as a resource for learning initiatives and opportunities.

The exhibition aims to reach more diverse audiences, by making it relevant to social context, lifestyle and cultural movements.

Marketing

Opening Night cards and posters will be available for overprinting.

Advertisements will be placed by The Devon Guild of Craftsmen at the beginning of the tour, in major publications such as *Crafts Magazine*, *Craft and Design Magazine*, detailing exhibition dates.

An initial press list will be targeted by the Guild and sample press releases and images will be supplied to venues. The Guild's marketing staff will support each venue if desired.

Catalogues for the exhibition will be available on a sale or return basis.



Sylvan Chairs

John Makepeace opening 2010

John Makepeace - Enriching the Language of Furniture will open at The Devon Guild of Craftsmen's Jubilee Gallery from 18 September 2010 to 31 October 2010.

It is then available to tour until 2012.

It is hired for the Crafts Study Centre: 25 April - 16 July 2011

Information for Potential Hiring Venues:

The exhibition is designed for a 140m² space. It is also flexible enough to be accommodated in larger or smaller venues. Please contact us to discuss this further.

The hire fee is £2,500, plus insurance premium and forward transport costs.

The Devon Guild is borrowing work from national collections. Each Collection has its own criteria (in terms of environmental and security conditions), and the pieces should be displayed in accordance with these.

Prior to any venue being confirmed as part of this tour they will need to fill out a UKRG Standard Facilities Report and a UKRG Standard Facilities Report Security Supplement and have it assessed by *each* lending venue. Your venue will incur no charge for these requirements. If you are interested in taking this exhibition, please contact us immediately so we can get the process started.



Jubilee Gallery



Standing Stones

Touring Partnerships

Participation

If your gallery is interested in taking this exciting new show, or if you would like to know more, please contact:

Saffron Wynne, Exhibitions Officer

Flora Pearson, Touring Exhibitions Administrator

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Leaf