

Press Release 30.03.2011

Devon Guild retains funding in competitive environment

Devon Guild of Craftsmen is delighted to announce that it has retained and increased its Arts Council England funding despite substantial cuts in the sector. The announcement was made today (30 March).

The Guild, based at Riverside Mill, Bovey Tracey is the leading contemporary crafts centre in the South West and is a pivotal organisation for contemporary crafts culture in the region and nationally. The Devon Guild is an educational charity and much of its work including its craft education outreach programme *Big Hand Little Hand*, has benefits in the wider community.

Erica Steer, the Devon Guild Director comments *"We are delighted to hear that our application to the National Portfolio Programme has been successful. This is a tremendous endorsement of the work that we do to promote contemporary craft and support makers. Ongoing support from Arts Council England will enable us to develop our exhibitions and education programme to ensure that more people have an opportunity to see high quality crafts and take part in exciting learning opportunities. We will also be able to further extend our leadership role at a regional and national level, working with strategic partners to build a strong collective voice for the crafts sector."*

1,333 organisations nationally submitted an application to be part of the Arts Council's National Portfolio funding programme which sets out goals in a 10-year strategic framework. Only around 700 were successful. The stated Arts Council England aim is to 'create a portfolio that offers the best possible artistic work to audiences across the country.'

Following their settlement from the government, the Arts Council is operating with a substantially reduced budget for the period 2012/15. Despite an overall cut to grant in aid of 29.6% their stated goal is to 'fund organisations at a level at which they can continue to produce the excellent and innovative art that audiences want and deserve.'

The Devon Guild has worked hard to maintain existing arts attenders and develop new audiences in a tough economic environment. With an exciting programme of exhibitions, events and workshops the Guild has increased visitor numbers and succeeded in increasing understanding, enjoyment and appreciation of contemporary crafts.

The announcement is also a considerable boost to the local economy of Bovey Tracey as the Riverside Mill, the Guild's gallery and Craft Shop, is the main visitor attraction which brings over 120,000 visitors annually into the centre of the town. Many local businesses, from accomodation to retail and tradespeople, will benefit from this continued support and the success of the Guild. Undoubtedly times ahead will still be challenging but this much needed boost will enable the Guild to continue with its innovative programme and its education work reaching a wide cross-section of the community.

See the Arts Council website: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/regions/south-west/> for details of funding of the Devon Guild and other organisations.

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The Devon Guild of Craftsmen is the largest contemporary craft centre in the South West and a membership organisation for craftspeople from the region. Housed in the grade II listed Riverside Mill on the edge of Dartmoor, the gallery exhibits work by designers and makers of national and international standing. The Guild is also an educational charity which aims to educate and inspire new makers and designers through its regular programme of activities in schools and the community.