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Essay Title: Q5. From the series of Thinking Making research strand lectures, choose a theme, movement, or selection of artists or designers that relate to your practice or interests, and construct a 2,500-word essay. Critically assess primary themes, key writers, and relevant practitioners.

This essay is intended to investigate why we make (the psychology of making) and this will be discussed in relation to my own practice whilst assessing primary themes, key writers, and relevant practitioners from the *Research in Context* lecture series.

Themes will include reasons for making, such as necessity, tradition, craftivism, technological advances and personal; these will be discussed in relation to the key writers Richard Sennett, Tim Ingold and Raymond Williams.

In his book, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976, pp. 246-248), Raymond Williams defines the psychological as:

acquired two different senses (i) of 'inner' feelings; (ii) of character and behaviour seen from this point of view. A third sense, as in psychological moment, was common in terms of the effect of some action on the feelings and especially the morale of others, from c. 1870.

Williams goes on to say that, regardless of the general reservations of scientific and academic standpoints, the predominant references to the psychological are 'feeling' and 'character'; it is this that leads Williams to cluster this word [psychological] with other keywords. These new keywords are related to art and creativity, and include 'behaviour', 'personality', 'sociology', 'technology' and 'unconscious'. Further investigation into the new keyword of 'creativity' (Williams, p. 82) leads us to making:

"Create came into English from the stem of the past participle of *rw creare*,
L – make or produce."

When we connect 'psychology' and 'making' we are then seeking to discover our connection to the making process, to identify common themes when making and to discuss potential motivations for making.

In *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* Tim Ingold (2013, p.6) discusses what he refers to as 'the art of enquiry', stating how this process differs when viewed by either the theorist or the craftsman.

We cannot make the future, however, without also thinking it. What then is the relation between thinking and making? To this, the theorist and the craftsman would give different answers. It is not that the former only thinks and the latter only makes, but that the one makes through thinking and the other thinks through making.

Referencing Dormer (1997) and Adamson (2007) to further illustrate this point, Ingold deduces that the theorist thinks only in his head, thereby contrasting with the thinking of the craftsman who seeks knowledge from observation and engaging in practical activity.

The book *The Craftsman* (2008, p. ix) was Richard Sennett's response to a question posed by the philosopher Richard Foley:

I owe a peculiar debt to the philosopher Richard Foley. At a point when I was stuck in my work, he asked me, "What is your guiding intuition?" I replied on the spur of the moment, "Making is thinking." Foley looked unconvinced.

In *Design Crafts* an important part of the design process is 'draw, make, draw, make'; this process allows for thinking through making, resulting in creative solutions and advancement of design.

In *The Gift of Stones* (2008) Crace evokes the difficulties that arise when working with certain materials; in this case, he specifically refers to flint. Flintknapping is a notoriously difficult craft due to the unpredictability of the material itself.



Figure 1: Paleolithic. (n.d.). *Selection of tools, Mousterian, 50,000-35,000 BC (flint)*.

Crace further implies that this particular skill is not known to all, stating that the men who rode on horseback into the village seeking arrow heads and tools had “heard that those made in the village were the very best”.

They could help themselves to our village and its stone. Then what? Could they work it? Could they fashion what they wanted from the from the shattered, clumsy pieces of rough flint which were carried from our pits?
(Crace, 2008, p. 3)

Early humans who lived during the Paleolithic period were typically hunter-gatherers and it could be argued that their craftsmanship was born out of necessity: a need for tools that would help to feed and protect in an age where each day brought new challenges. Their motivation to not only make, but to make well, was survival.

The term ‘craftsman’ is somewhat outdated in this age of improved equality; indeed the OED (*Paperback Oxford English Dictionary*, p.161) now defines ‘a worker skilled in a particular craft’ as a ‘craftsman’ or ‘craftswoman’.

By the early twentieth century the Artists' Suffrage League had established themselves as a leading voice for women; their combination of making and women's suffrage was highly effective in raising awareness of the Votes for Women campaign. Their art took form in banners, posters and postcards with the majority of the banners being created by stained glass designer, Mary Lowndes. Typical examples of a propaganda postcard (fig.2) and the banners of Mary Lowndes (fig.3) are shown below:



Figure 2: Postcard,
Polling Booth Companions in Disgrace,
Artists' Suffrage League, (1907-14)
Museum of London



Figure 3: Suffrage Banner,
Home-Makers,
Mary Lowndes, (1908)
Museum of London

The Artist's Suffrage League made its mission explicit: 'to further the cause of Women's Enfranchisement by the work and professional help of artists...by bringing in an attractive manner before the public eye the long continued demand for the vote'. (Google Arts and Culture, 2021)

The Suffrage Atelier, created by a group of younger women, was formed in 1909 with a view to promoting the Woman's movement. Using crafts such as wood and lino-cuts their simple yet strong designs added an urgent edge to the campaign. Rather than a signature on their work, members of the Suffrage Atelier used their logo; this logo featured Athena, the goddess of wisdom, war and handicraft. (*Google Arts and Culture*, 2021)

Today we know these acts as craftivism, a term created in 2003 by Betsy Greer. Sarah Corbett, has published an Introduction to Gentle Craftivism course (*Alison.com*, 2021). In this course she describes how a simple act of cross stitch during a train journey reignited her passion for making. She discusses using craft for good, and as a means of gentle protest; she promotes mindful craftivism which she describes as 'a form of discovery of, and insight about, ourselves without judgment'. These two aspects combine to make powerful reasons for making and this movement continues to grow.

Tradition has long been a part of the making process; in the case of heritage crafts, they are often our last link to the past and of a way of life long forgotten. In *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* Williams (1976, p.319) describes tradition as '*surviving in English as a description of general process of handing down, but there is a very strong and often predominant sense of this entailing respect and duty.*' However, in providing this comprehensive overview of tradition Williams' closing sentence also illustrates the conflicting views held by society.

"It is sometimes observed, by those who have looked into particular traditions, that it only takes two generations to make anything traditional: naturally enough, since that is the sense of tradition as active process. But the words end to move towards age-old and towards ceremony, duty and respect. Considering only how much has been handed down to us, and how various it actually is, this, in its own way, is both a betrayal and a surrender."

(*Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Williams, 1976, p.319)

In Design Crafts and within my own practice traditional techniques are favoured; as artists, designers and makers, we have a responsibility to keep these heritage crafts alive. This, in part, is a personal motivation for making through techniques such as sand casting, lost wax casting and bronze casting.

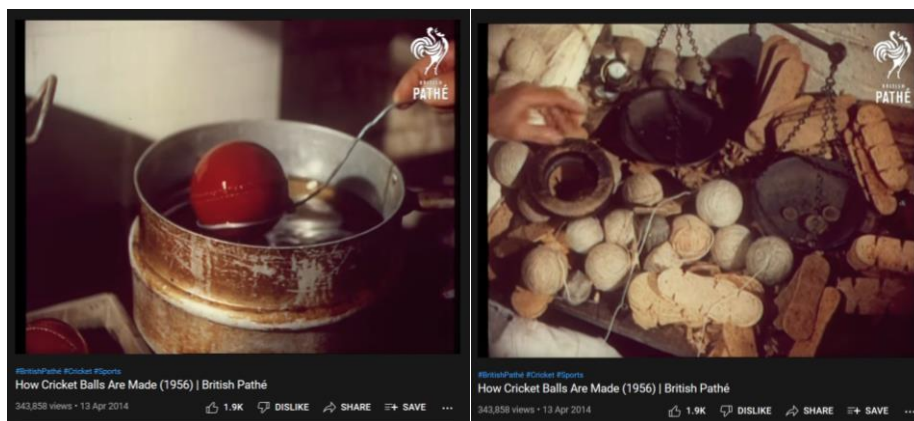


Figures 4 and 5: Anna Lewis, 2021 *'Rugby Against Racism'*

⁴Wooden master converted to wax in preparation for bronze casting

⁵Bronze cast medal as part of BAMS (British Art Medal Society) project

Some crafts are so scarce that the Heritage Crafts Association regularly produce a Red List of Endangered Crafts; the 2021 edition includes over one hundred and thirty crafts, four of which have become extinct in the United Kingdom in the past generation. These extinct crafts are Cricket ball making, Gold beating (hammering gold into gold leaf), Lacrosse stick making and Mould and deckle making (Handmade paper moulds).



Figures 6 and 7: How Cricket Balls Are Made (1956), British Pathé

In the UK, we are currently experiencing heightened interest in traditional and heritage crafts and this is apparent in the popularity of television programmes that aim to promote these skills; *The Repair Shop* (BBC1 Television, 2021) and *All That Glitters* (IMDB, 2021) to name but two. Training in these traditional skills is much more accessible than in previous times via websites such as Craft Courses (Craft Courses 2021), who have adapted to the pandemic by offering online courses in addition to live courses where possible. It is hoped that this exposure can only have a positive impact on crafts and traditional skills.

Swiss Artist Sylvie Fleury uses traditional bronze casting to create conceptual artworks inspired by luxury and superficiality, thereby blending traditional techniques with contemporary design.



Figure 8: Artsy.net Chanel Shopping Bag, Painted Bronze, 2008

Increasingly, there is a trend for makers to incorporate technology into their design and making processes. According to Craft Industries Council (2021) nearly sixty per cent of makers are now using some form of digital technology. In this digital age, the use of technology has allowed for making regardless of whether the maker is an artist, designer or creative in the traditional sense, although it must be said that this is not always the case.

Easy access to processes that facilitate the making of multiple identical products may be an incentive for those wishing to sell their crafts and therefore a reason for making that has not previously existed.

One of the most common ways of incorporating technology into making is the use of a 3D Printer, which are now affordable and relatively easy to use.

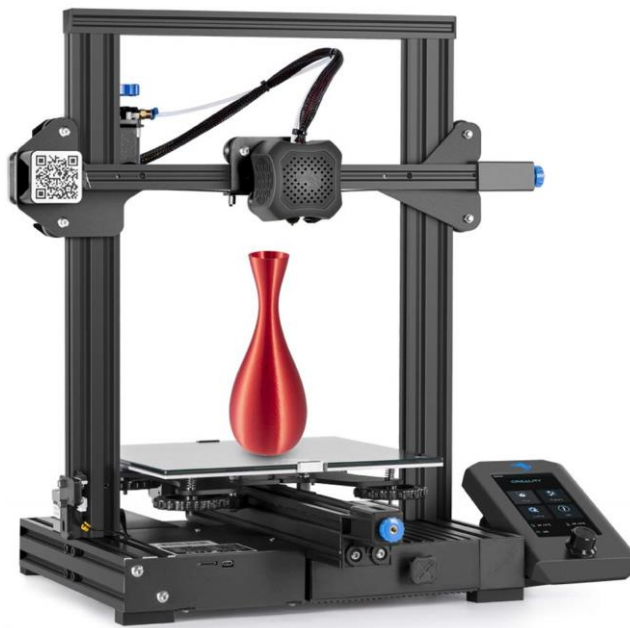


Figure 9: 3D Printer, Amazon UK

When casting pewter sea tiles in my own practice, a Creality 3D printer was used to create a pattern for mould making, followed by casting using traditional methods. Secondly, traditional mould making *and* casting methods were used to cast pewter shells. The results are identical, however transparency is important and therefore the making processes should be disclosed.

It is worth noting that pewter casting, and indeed mould and pattern making which include re-meltable PVC or wax, are sustainable processes in as much as all the materials can be constantly reused; sustainability is a vital component of the design and making process in ensuring we meet the goals of the Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (Future Generations Wales, 2021) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2021).



Figure 10: Cast pewter sea tiles, Diane Wilson (2020)

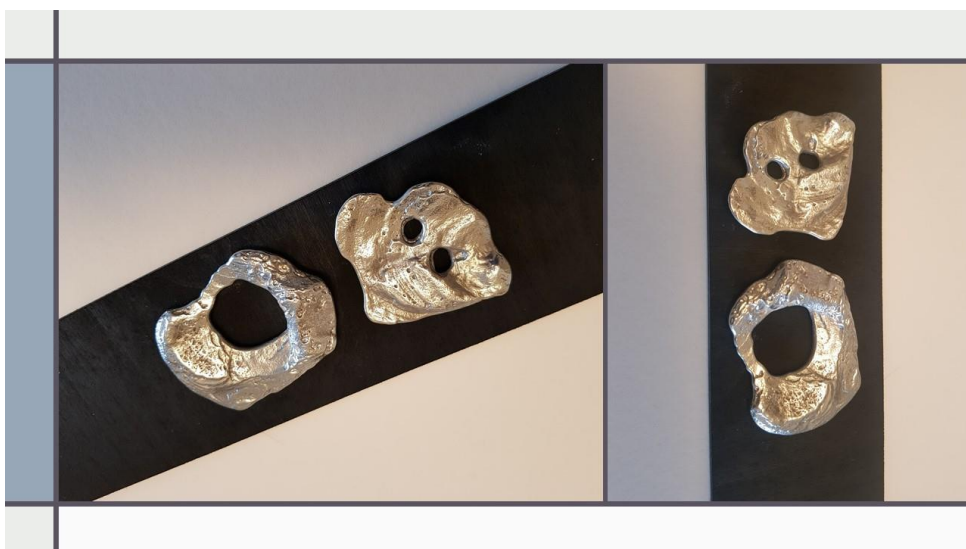


Figure 11: Cast pewter sea shells, Diane Wilson (2020)

There is continued debate as to whether this can be classed as handmade, however the global online marketplace, Etsy, now allows such objects to be treated the same as handmade products.

There's a certain degree of excellence associated with well-crafted, articulate 3D prints, and Etsy entertains all this very nicely. Imagination and creativity tend to sell a lot these days, and with 3D printing running the show, the possibilities are endless. (3D Printerly, 2021)

Access to other forms of technology include the Adobe Creative Cloud and Waterjet Cutters, both of which were used in a personal project to create glass rings. Traditional hand cutting of glass, especially in multiples, would be extremely time consuming and may have been avoided by many makers; especially so when considering the impact this would have on the selling price of their item.



Figure 12: Diane Wilson, 2021
Design: Sketchbook, Adobe Illustrator
Cut: Waterjet cutter
Finish: sanded, polished and finished by hand (a lengthy but rewarding process)

It appears that access to new technologies which speed up designing-making processes are an incentive for people to make using these techniques, resulting in unique products which remain affordable. In *Digital Handmade: Craftsmanship and the New Industrial Revolution* (2015) pp. 8-9, the author Lucy Johnston discusses this new trend:

“The terminology is changing too, as previously industrial-usage words are becoming accepted – celebrated, even – as part of the descriptive language of the digital handmade movement. The iconic phrase of this era of creative manufacturing is undoubtedly ‘3D-printing, a sweeping term used increasingly to represent a wide range of object-shaping processes. But this is only one approach of many digital-fabrication techniques and associated software programs in use by visionary creatives, who are taking the tools of big industry and, with exceptional skill and dedication, re-employing them as the tools of bespoke artisanship ”



Figure13: Dita von Teese in 3D printed dress, designed by Francis Bitonti
Image by BecomeGorgeous.com

Connection is a broad theme yet it is one which influences many designer makers. Connection can take many forms: making a connection with your chosen medium or material, connecting with the past or simply connecting with yourself.

Angela Maddock is an artist who works with textiles and thread; she has recently curated an exhibition entitled *Thread* at Elysium Gallery, Swansea. Her *In Kind* project (<http://www.angela-maddock.com/>, 2021) was based on connection to objects or items of clothing. This process often led to a connection with the owner of the item:

[In Kind] is an invitation to send me something thread made that needs fixing. Socks, jeans, a jumper, a cardigan...a teddy bear. I'll mend it for you. In return, I ask you to share its story with me, to pay the postage and to agree to me documenting the process here and on my Instagram. You can stay anonymous if you wish. Email me, or send a direct message via Instagram, with a photo and a description. I do actually enjoy the challenge of the 'beyond repair', so don't hold back.



Figure 14: A teddy bear from the In Kind project, Angela Maddock (2021)

When discussing hauntology in the article *The Metaphysics of Crackle: Afrofuturism and Hauntology* (Goldsmiths, University of London / University of East London (UK) p. 49) Mark Fisher states that “We live in a time when the past is present, and the present is saturated with the past.” It could be argued that the use of recycled materials, specifically recycled old jewellery, is connecting to the past. The sustainability of reusing and recycling materials is at the forefront of current design practices and this combines well with the sentimentality attached to inherited pieces and heirlooms.

Sensual Design allows us to spiritually connect to art and design, providing an experience, a moment, a memory. Our senses (sight, touch, smell, taste and hearing) are an important part of any connection process, allowing us to experience art and design on a deeper and more emotional level.

From the moment we enter a place that has been designed for the senses, we know it. We can feel it inside and out. Subconsciously, we recognize it, because **it just feels good** – like this moment has been curated and concocted just for us. Senses are stirred by spaces that invite, aromas that rouse, and colours that compel. We receive stimulation and rejuvenation by texture that teases, seating that embraces, lighting that flatters, and art that enamours. When all of these aspects come together fluidly, it creates a sense of place that we enjoy and remember.

(Karlene Baskind Interior Design, 2021)

This investigation suggests that there is no definitive answer as to why we make, rather a selection of individual responses to making. The primary data (fig. 15) suggests that escapism can be a motivation for making, as is a natural urge to make without need for reason. The investigation does provide some common themes; escapism, necessity, tradition, connection and craftivism (this list is intended to be indicative rather than exhaustive).

Response	Name, Role	Source	Data Type
"Making provides a singular point of focus, a chance to forget the internal and external chaos."	Daniel Butler, Technician, University of Wales Trinity Saint David	Email to author, 15/11/2021	Primary Data
"It's a release, a means of escape from everything around me where I only concentrate on one thing, the object in front of me. The solving of problems which are thrown at you from working with materials that sometimes do not want to adhere to your concept. It frustrates me, annoys me, even hurls me into a fit of anger sometimes, but boy when you get it right, what a high."	Colin Telford, Technician, University of Wales Trinity Saint David	Email to author, 15/11/2021	Primary Data
"It would feel physically unnaturally restricting for me not to make."	Lyndon Davies, Technician, University of Wales Trinity Saint David	Email to author, 15/11/2021	Primary Data

Figure 15: *Primary Data Research*, Diane Wilson, 2021

Secondary Data was sourced from Space to Make relating to Catherine Brown, Senior Lecturer, University of Wales Trinity Saint David:

Catherine's research is formed from a range of sources that are scientific, psychological and art based references that aim to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of 'making' as a learning process.
Space to Make (2021)

It is clear that this question requires further investigation in order to better understand why we make; a discussion with the Senior Lecturer for Design Crafts indicates there are options to continue this research throughout my degree, including maker groups and revisiting projects such as *Space to Make*.

“Space to Make is a pilot research project with a core team of educators and practitioners united by a passion for making.”
Space to Make (2021)

In *Why We Make Things and Why it Matters: The Education of a Craftsman* (2017, p. 66),

Peter Korn states:

My own values became clear when I eventually realized that the words I used to describe my aesthetic goals as a furniture maker – integrity, simplicity, and grace – also described the person I sought to grow into through the practice of craftsmanship.

In conclusion, and in agreement with Peter Korn, it could be suggested that often we learn things during the process of making, not just about our chosen materials, but about ourselves.

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Figures:

Figure 1: Paleolithic. (n.d.). Selection of tools, Mousterian, 50,000-35,000 BC (flint).
Image: Musee des Antiquites Nationales, St. Germain-en-Laye,
France / Bonora / Bridgeman Images [Photograph]

Figure 2: Postcard, (1907-14) *Polling Booth Companions in Disgrace*, Artists' Suffrage League,
Museum of London [Photograph]

Figure 3: Suffrage Banner (1908), *Home-Makers*, Mary Lowndes,
Museum of London [Photograph]

Figures 4 and 5: Lewis, A. (2021) '*Rugby Against Racism*' [Photograph]

⁴Wooden master converted to wax in preparation for bronze casting

⁵Bronze cast medal as part of BAMS (British Art Medal Society) project

Figures 6 and 7: British Pathé (1956) *How Cricket Balls Are Made*

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Figure 8: Artsy.net, (2021) *Chanel Shopping Bag, Painted Bronze, 2008*

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Figure 9: Amazon UK, 2021 *Crealty Ender 3 V2 3D Printer* [Photograph]

Figure 10: Wilson, P.D. (2020) *Pewter Sea Tiles* [Photograph]

Figure 11: Wilson, P.D. (2020) *Pewter Sea Shells* [Photograph]

Figure 12: Wilson, P.D. (2020) *Glass Coastline Rings* [Photograph]

Figure13: *Dita von Teese in 3D printed dress*, designed by Francis Bitonti

Available at: <https://www.becomegorgeous.com/fashion-style/fashion-news/dita-von-teese-wears-the-first-3d-printed-dress-A9988/>

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Figure 14: Maddock, A. (2021) *Teddy Bear* [Photograph]

Figure 15: Wilson, P.D. (2021) *Primary Data* [Table]

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