

Cover sheet

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Craftsmanship in the modern era

My aim for this exhibition is to show the development of Craftsmanship in the luxury furniture industry, I also want to show the general public how much work goes into making and designing furniture. It is easier to demonstrate it in the luxury furniture industry as people want to see something different so the craftsmen and designers have to go the extra mile. I will hold my exhibition in the Dutch Church main Hall in Austin Friars London. Which is opposite the furniture maker gild's head office. The Dutch church Austin Friars London was first opened in July 1550 (*Prockter, A. (2020)*) however, it has been rebuilt a couple of times, and the church we see today is an amalgamation of those rebuilds. Which has created a space with a rich history. This amalgamation of craftsmanship will be reflected in the pieces in my exhibition.

The high ceilings create an open and freeing atmosphere. (*Prof Meyers-Levy, J & Zhu, R. (2007)*) "proposed that spatially (i.e., owing to the volume of the space they occupy) edifices can communicate different semantic associations. He notes that chapels, which are small and contained, are likely to convey the notion of confinement or restrictedness, whereas awe-inspiring cathedrals are reminiscent of the freedom and openness of the cosmos." (*Prof Meyers-Levy, J & Zhu, R. (2007)*) Thus having a high ceiling will reflect the pieces I have chosen to go in this space. As the Master craftsmen who constructed the pieces of work have had creative freedom, as the financial viability of the product is not a concern.

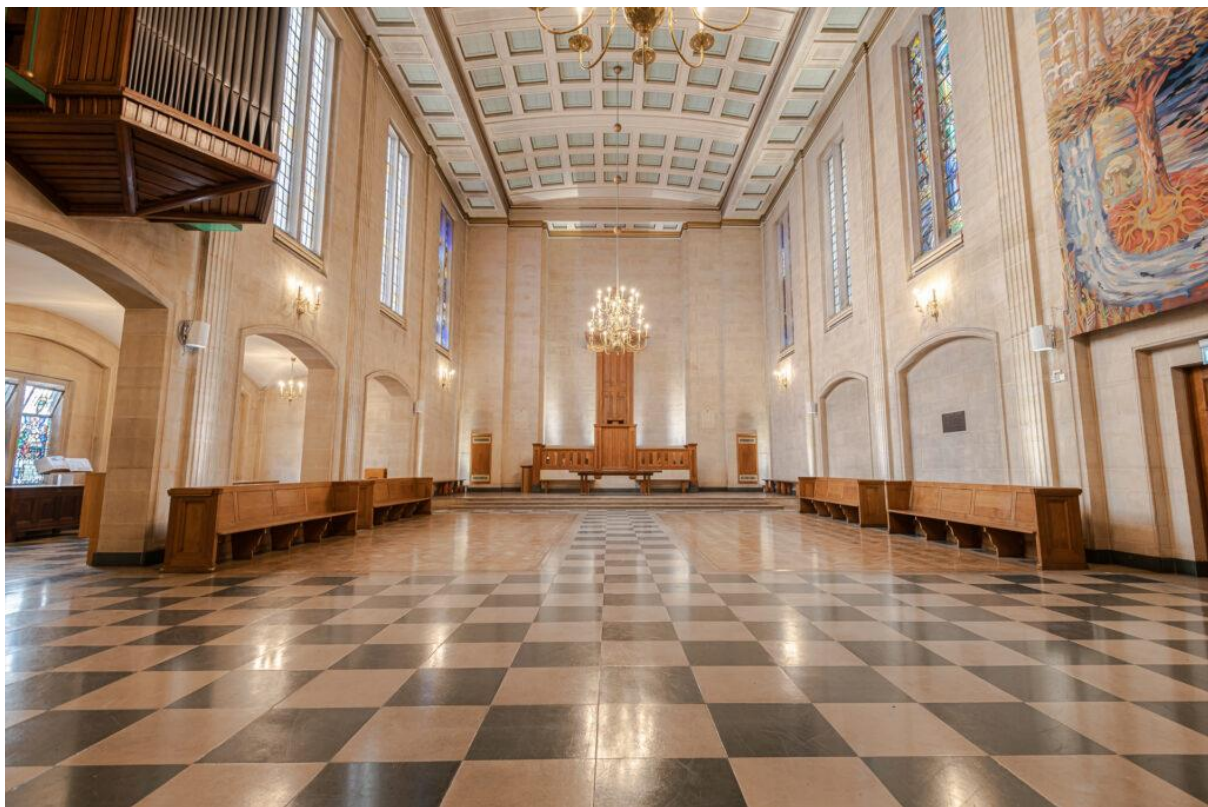


Fig 1 – inside hall of the Dutch Church

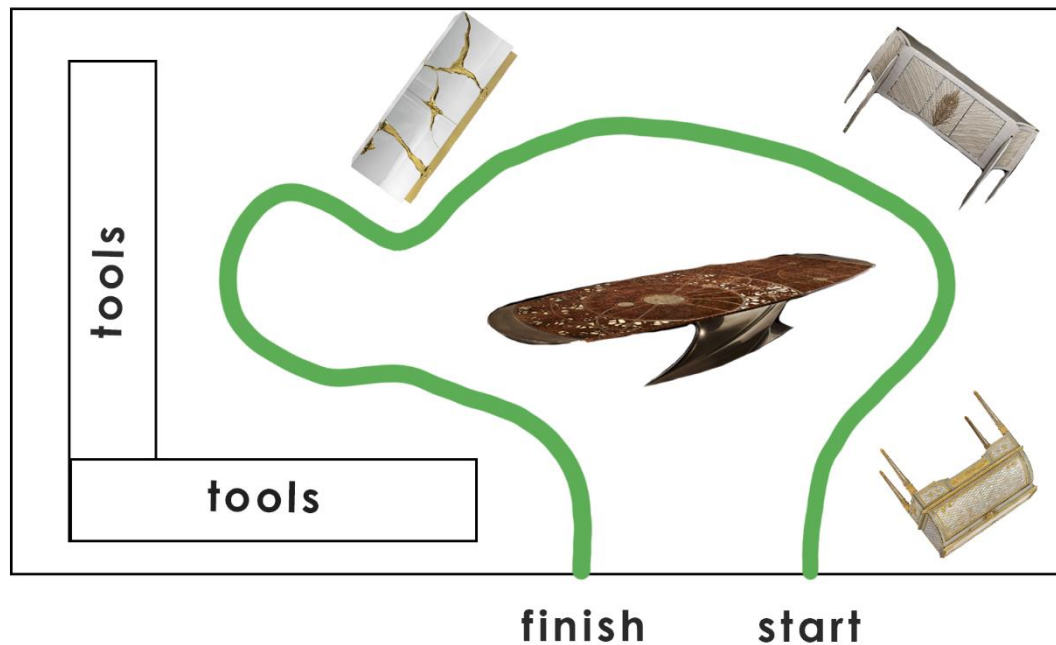


Fig 2 – Inside hall of the Dutch Church exhibition layout

This overhead layout shows how people are to walk around the exhibition space. Going around the pieces of furniture and admiring the craftsmanship. They will then arrive at the tables which will show every tool that was used and every design bit of paperwork and every technical drawing. This will demonstrate to people, that the piece of furniture in front of them is the pinnacle of a master craftsman's work. They will start to appreciate/understand the time, effort, and love that goes into a piece of furniture.

The idea is to demonstrate that there is a massive amount of tools and people that go into making these 4 pieces of furniture. From pencil to paper, research, development, making, finishing, and delivery to the customer. This includes things like planes, vans, machinery, tickets, coffee, etc to show all the resources that are needed to make a luxury piece of furniture

Marie Antoinette Rolltop desk



Fig 3 - Marie Antoinette Roll top desk

Marie Antoinette Roll top desk is one of my favourite pieces of furniture by Jean-Henri Riesener. He is described by the Royal Collections Trust "as one of the greatest cabinet-makers of the eighteenth century." (*Jean-Henri Riesener Furniture by one of the greatest cabinet-makers of the eighteenth century* (1993).

Marie Antoinette's roll-top desk would have been made completely by hand. No CAD (computer-aided design) no machinery. Just basic hand tools. It is admirable the level of dedication to the craft and what was possible. However, the only way Riesener could make such fine furniture. Was of who his client was, Louis the 16th and Marie Antoinette the last king and queen of France. According to *Nicholas E. Bomba (1788)* Louis, the 16th had a yearly income of "168,130,500 livres (the form of currency at the time)" In today's money £1 = 13 livres meaning that King Louis the 16th yearly take-home salary was £2,185,696,500. This shows that price was no object which gave Riesinger the freedom to be as eccentric and creative as possible whilst paying enormous detail to the pieces. That's why it is in this exhibition.

Peacock cabinet

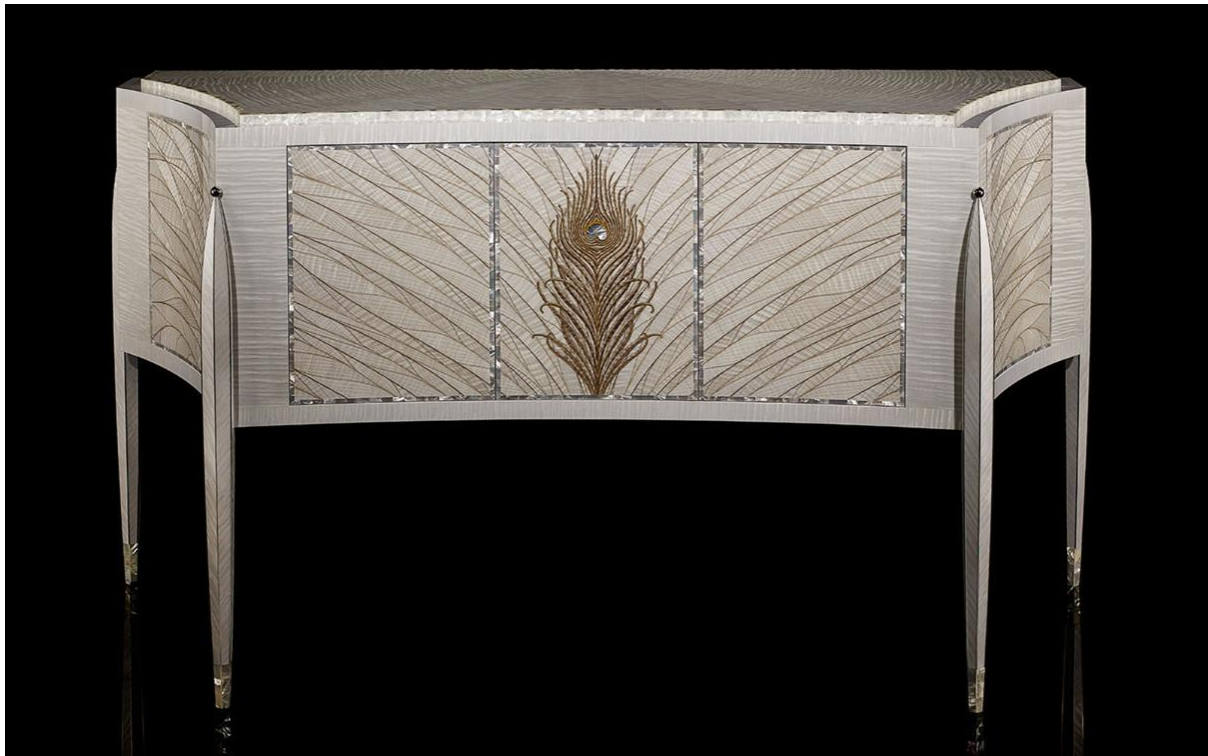


Fig 4 - Peacock cabinet

Silverlining Furniture Ltd made the peacock cabinet. it is crafted with "oxidized ripple sycamore, ebonized walnut, and 24-carat gold leaf marquetry. mother of pearl shell and polished nickel details"(Silverling furniture ltd (2023). This piece of furniture belongs in this exhibition because of the time-consuming and delicate nature of its decoration and aesthetic. The method of inlaying marquetry is done using a scalpel and templates. This process takes hours, days and weeks to complete. Then each separate piece must be glued onto the furniture carcass making sure that there are no bubbles in the glue it's a commendable amount of work to undertake

We have become desensitized to the process of making things from start to finish. Oxford Dictionary describes the word desensitized as "having been made less sensitive/aware" (Oxford University Press (2023). People used to be a part of the furniture-making process because they would have it for a long time and it was expensive. However, "during the industrial revolution, the demand sky rocked for mass-produced furniture in the major metropolitan area's." Jackson, A. (2021). We have followed this trend to modern-day companies like Ikea. This has left modern-day people with no understanding of the amount of work that goes into even Ikea's furniture. That's why the peacock cabinet is important it shows an unbelievable level of care and attention to detail/planning, that you just don't see in other pieces of furniture today. It is a testimony of greatness to the artisans who made it.

Cosmic Dining Table



Fig 5 – Cosmic Dining Table

The Cosmic Dining Table is inspired by the astronomy of the universe. This piece of furniture in this exhibition reflects the skill of mastering different materials that can elevate the artisan's work. The combination of both metal and wood reflects the elements that created it. Metals are made from elements and minerals. "As the cloud of cosmic dust and gases from the Big Bang cooled, stars formed, and these then grouped together to form galaxies" (*How Elements are Formed (2009)*) thus making us "14 billion years later" (*How Elements are Formed (2009)*). For the world to form, trees to grow dinosaurs to live and die. Then the man arose from the ashes, learned to master the tools, and conquer the waves. Then all this history lines up to make this table.

The table celebrates the human reasoning of the chaos of the cosmos. It resembles a maritime star map. This shows our ability to understand what we see in the world, whether it be with our hands by making or crafting. Using our minds to challenge and change the way we create and perceive the world this table celebrates our very existence and shows the level of thought that has gone into its creation. On the tool bench, I would have star maps and charts as well as a star finder showing the inspiration, showing what was inspired by the artisans that made and designed it. That is why it is on display at this exhibition.

Lapaiz Sideboard



Fig 6: Lapaiz sideboard

The Lapaiz Sideboard is inspired by Lapaiz in Switzerland. Which is a mountain range that has a very distinctive rock structure. Lapaiz's distinctive features are formed by "rainwater dissolves the limestone and sculpts deep channels by infiltrating the cracks." (*lapiaz (2011)* shown by the brass elements. A process of millions of years summed up by a designer's tools, their eye, a pencil and paper.

The designer's ability to communicate the idea to their team of skilled artisans, such as cabinet makers, metal craftsmen, and finishers. This piece of furniture is in this exhibition as it demonstrates the story of the work that goes into a piece of furniture, and how many hands it goes through before it lands in your home. The use of the word "tool" has many different meanings. What would be on display for this piece are the men and women involved in the whole process of its creation. The effect would be a surprise shock at the number of people who stood before you, who have all had a hand in creating this wonderful piece, that's why the Lapaiz sideboard is in this exhibition.

Conclusion

This exhibition demonstrates some of the world's best craftsmen's skills in the luxury furniture industry. I feel people look at furniture at luxury furniture and wonder why it cost so much. The exhibition is designed to show people, how many skilled and talented people are involved in creating furniture. From the designers, pencils, and pads to the research. Then handing over to a technical engineer who works out how to make it. Who will pass it over to the master artisans, depending on the product it could be hundreds of talented and skilled people. Who have come together to make a work of art!

I wanted to display my love for the craft and skills that these people possess. I want people to start thinking about the things they interact with day to day. There could be hundreds of man-hours and skilled people behind the simplest of things. By showing the level of work that it takes to design and make luxury furniture. You can appreciate what work, that goes into IKEA's work.

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Fig 1 - <https://www.dutchchurch.org.uk/>

Fig 2 – inside hall of the Dutch Church exhibition layout

Fig 3 - Secrétaire à cylindre (1786) in mother of pearl, gilt bronze and silver, made by Jean-Henri Riesener for Marie-Antoinette's boudoir at Fontainebleau. (Marie Antoinette Rolltop desk) Available at: <https://www.thelondonlist.com/culture/nouveau-riche> (Accessed:05/04/2023).

Fig 4 – peacock cabinet by silverling furniture ltd: Available at: <https://silverliningfurniture.com/portfolio/peacock-cabinet> (Accessed:05/04/2023)

Fig 5 – cosmic dining table by silverling furniture ltd: Available at: [Bespoke Furniture | Cosmic Dining Table | Silverlining - Silverlining \(silverliningfurniture.com\)](https://silverliningfurniture.com/bespoke-furniture/cosmic-dining-table) (Accessed:05/04/2023)

Fig 6: Lapiaz sideboard: Available at: [Lapiaz Sideboard | Boca do Lobo Exclusive Design](https://silverliningfurniture.com/boca-do-lobo-exclusive-design)