form ACADEMIC AKADEMISK
FORSKNINGSTIDSSKRIFT FOR DESIGN OG DESIGNDIDAKTIKK

ISSN 1890-9515 Vol 19, No 2 (2026), Editorial, 1-12 https://doi.org/10.7577/formakademisk.6862

Editorial

Transformation – the effect and affect of craft in society

– Articles based on the Creative Europe EU project Craft Hub Special Issue

Astrid Heimer
Associate Professor (PhD), OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4849-2086
aheimer@oslomet.no

Arild Skarsfjord Berg
Professor (PhD), OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University
Professor II, Department of Arts Education, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8876-7641
arild.berg@oslomet.no

Shelley Doolan
Project Manager (PhD) – Assistive Technologies Innovation Centre (ATiC), University of Wales Trinity Saint David
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3180-8526
shelley.doolan@uwtsd.ac.uk

© Author(s). This is an Open Access article released under the terms of CC-BY 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)
www.FormAkademisk.org

Keywords

Craft Hub, artistic research, material driven processes, craft, design

Introduction

In the last decades, international craft projects have contributed greatly to the expanded attention given to the value of craft practice in society. Among the many initiatives within the EU are projects such as CraftHub EU (https://www.crafthub.eu/), *New European Bauhaus – NEB EU* (https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en), I*RON NOTES – At the Borders of Iron* (https://www.ironnotes.eu/), and *CrAFt – Creating Actionable Futures* (https://craft-cities.eu/). Another important status of craft is establishing *craft science*, a new disciplinary field (Almevik, 2017). This special issue aims to strengthen this practice-based research by bridging practice from the EU – Creative Europe project *CraftHub* (https://www.crafthub.eu/) with academic reflection and theory building in an expanding research field.

CraftHub EU (https://www.crafthub.eu/) (2020–2023) was a collaborative transnational project involving nine academic, industry, and advocacy partner organizations. The CraftHub EU project was initiated and conceptualized by Shelley Doolan at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, UK, and led by Kieran Comerford of Carlow County Council, Ireland. The project connected craft with cultural heritage and functioned as a platform for sharing skills and creative practices across Europe. The project has led to a rich online material library, and workshops, festivals, exhibitions, and conferences have been arranged all over Europe. The comprehensive programme included the creation of new craft work, experimental investigations into process and material supported by 42 transnational maker residencies, 305 days of outreach work, 1 festival, 7 exhibitions, and 2 conferences. The activities have been based on open calls, involving people of all ages, and professional exchange among partner institutions.

The final conference of CraftHub EU, *Transformation: Effect and Affect of Craft in Society*, was held at OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University and included more than 30 peer reviewed presenters and 100 participants from all over Europe. The conference allowed practitioners and researchers from art, design, and craft, as well as conservators and curators, to share their experiences, skills, and perspectives on craft for a broad audience.

The rich material presented at the conference connected well to the focus areas of the Product Design and Cultural Sustainability research group at the Department of Product Design, OsloMet. The research group had an aim to develop sustainable professional relations as a further commitment to the CraftHub EU network and thus launched an academic publication covering the varied and original topics and methodological approaches in the field of craft. This turned into the call for this Special Issue of *FormAkademisk*. The title of the conference was chosen to be similar to the title of the Special Issue to make visible

the original connection to the CraftHub EU project. Nevertheless, the articles represent an essential development from the conference presentations to contribute to new and expanded knowledge to the academic field of craft.

This Special Issue supplements previous Special Issues on craft and related topics published by *FormAkademisk*, such as two publications based on the BICCS (Biennial International Conference for the Craft Sciences) by the Craft Laboratory, affiliated at the Department of Conservation, University of Gothenburg (FormAkademisk, 2021, 2023), and another Special Issue will be published in the near future including articles based on the 2025 conference.

This collection of articles also contributes to previous research and discussions about multisensory learning (Bergstedt & Jamouch, 2026) and embodied consciousness in craft and design practice (Nimkulrat & Groth, 2024). These are also topics that are highly debated in the two Special Issues in *FormAkademisk* (2016, 2020) initiated by the Embodied making and learning (EMAL) (EMAL, n.d.) research group based at the University of South-Eastern Norway.

The articles in this Special Issue demonstrate various forms of embodied practice and tools, such as individual crafting processes and various forms of collaboration, for example through performative action, workshops, and as a pedagogical learning game. Communication of reflexive, materialized research processes permeate most of the articles, meaning that they often use an insider perspective and, thus, foreground the voices of the practitioners (Ellis et al., 2011; Hannula et al., 2013). This reflects established qualitative research within the fields of *practice-based* research (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson, 2017) and *practice-led* research (Groth, 2017; Mäkelä & Nimkulrat, 2018), and *aesthetic practice* research, defined as a combination of artistic research, practice research on a general level, and craft research (Heimer, 2020, p. 5).

Giving attention to the need for complementary approaches in qualitative research that merge materialized, visual, and verbal *articulation* to communicate craft research, the articles in this Special Issue contribute to expanding knowledge and explore the extension of more classical formats of academic articles, such as the IMRAD structure. With this approach, we point to the value of developing craft research within academic frames while simultaneously giving room to utilizing methods and tools for creative, analytical, and communicative approaches that support the discipline on its own terms. This aligns with Anne Solberg's example of artistic research as a 'new strand' contributing to an expansion of the academic landscape (Solberg, 2017, p. 226). This Special Issue, *Transformation: The effect and affect of craft in society*, thus relies on an expanded view of craft practice and craft research to demonstrate the transformative capacity of craft. The articles raise

awareness of the role of craft in society in the broadest sense. Together, they contribute to cultural sustainability through research connected to the three overarching topics from the conference in 2023: *1) Exploring Craft Heritage, 2) The Aesthetics of Materiality,* and *3) Technology and Craft*. From these themes, questions about creativity, knowledge making, educational approaches, and well-being have been further problematized into expanded knowledge about the field of craft.

In new ways and with unique examples, the various articles explore how craft as aesthetic knowledge can utilize the awareness that lies in material-based actions and the development of new expressions. The examples also involve the relational aspects of crafting, such as co-creation through workshops and interdisciplinary projects affected by nature, site, and space. Thereby, the authors demonstrate how the impact of craft in society goes far beyond *craftmaking* and the physical outcomes. Together, the articles contribute to an increase in engagement and sustainable awareness through cultural transmission and material innovation.

Articles in this special issue

Theme 1: Exploring Craft Heritage

The articles developed from the conference topic 'Exploring Craft Heritage' demonstrate values in reconnecting to traditional knowledge and how exploring materialized processes is central to contemporary craft practice. Such approaches foreground examples of craft knowledge and present it in ways that can resonate across emerging craft forms and artistic expression. Recognizing that materials have agency and that the meanings of crafted objects are contingent upon space, site, and time can reframe the idea of making to include inquiry into relational contexts. Material culture shifts with context; therefore, cultivating aesthetic awareness can deepen the comprehension of craft heritage. Embedded within these practices are sustainability concerns, addressed and explored through the ethical and practical choices that making entails.

The first article in the Special Issue is *'Crafting moments of wellbeing: Case studies from the Creative Europe project CraftHub', by* ***Arild Skarsfjord Berg, Shelley Doolan,*** and ***Amanda Roberts****.* The article promotes a new approach to analysing craft in society by using the theoretical framework of salutogenesis, including the concept of 'a sense of coherence'. The authors use three case studies to shed light on how traditional craft practices can influence well-being at an individual level and contribute to social inclusion and the development of interdisciplinary research methodologies that foster creativity and encourage a more holistic understanding of complex issues.

In the second article, *'Design and craftsmanship: A reflection on the value of local heritage and the transmission of knowledge',* ***Massimo Brignoni*** and ***Eleonora Trivellin*** highlight a new interplay between design culture, production processes, and innovation capacity. Employing students' exploration of natural plant fibres as their primary raw material, the studies address the value of transmitting *saper fare* (know-how) to younger generations. The overarching reflection on heritage is in response to new technologies and social and environmental needs.

In the third article, *'Crafting lines: Cultural transmission and embodied knowledge in Romani travellers' craftsmanship',* the authors ***Astrid Heimer*** and ***Haizea Pérez Machin*** shed light on how intangible cultural threads can be interwoven with material skills to find new meanings in contemporary design. A wire workshop for Product Design students, held by the musician and craftsman Elias Akselsen, is used as a case study. The rich atmosphere of material culture at Guttomsgaard Archive constitutes a unique frame for the workshop.

In the fourth article, *'Crafting collaboration: A sign, a room, a house, an open field',* ***Diana Butucariu*** and ***Erik Lindeborg*** describe their long-running transdisciplinary collaboration between ceramics and sound. This is an academic text from a unique insider perspective in which interdependence and both internal and external challenges to their collaborative artistic practice are explored and communicated. As a methodological approach, they explore the act of writing as the *crafting of a shared voice*. The authors' inside perspectives become a research archive based on shared experiences that is accessible for others to use in their creative work and collaborative practice.

In the fifth article, *'Craft as performed knowledge, embodied practice and the preservation of craft',* ***Robert Wiley*** and ***Rita Macedo*** use an interdisciplinary approach in which the concept of performance is explored as both the medium and the method to challenge conventional approaches to the development of craft knowledge. The authors remind us that craft is active and, as knowledge, is a living, evolving process, and that embodied action, sensory awareness, and cultural transmission are embedded in craft.

'Body, environment and object: An exploration of craft making as interconnected knowledge' is the title of ***Fiona Byrne's*** article, which is the sixth in this Special Issue. Byrne delves into the idea of knowledge as an ecosystem that encompasses humans and more-than-humans, including plants, creatures, materials, and things. The value of the established nonverbal, slow, process-based knowledge in craft is promoted, and Byrne argues for the need for new criteria for making, grounded in the values of craft's own logic.

In the seventh article, *'Reconstruction of Akershus' rose window: How Emanuel Vigeland revealed light by darkness',* ***Christa Heidrich*** and ***Kjartan Hauglid*** describe the unique process undertaken at Akershus Castle in Oslo, a site that has become a symbolic seat of the new Norwegian monarchy. In 1943, during World War II, an explosion destroyed the rose window. Two historical photographs and original drawings found in 2003 provided the basis for reconstructing the missing sections. In 2022, a meticulous, multidisciplinary project began to faithfully recreate the lost elements of the rose window.

In the eighth article, ***'****Curatorial and the mise-en-scène: The curatorial as a form of research in contemporary craft practice',* ***Loucia Manopoulou*** explores contemporary craft curatorial practice as a dynamic form of inquiry. In examining how curatorial direction transforms craft into material storytelling, the research draws inspiration from traditional film theory, specifically the concept of mise-en-scène. Ultimately, the essay contributes to a deeper understanding of how craft exhibitions can act as platforms for transformation, experimentation, and the production of new knowledge.

Theme 2: Aesthetics of Materiality

Under the conference theme 'Aesthetics of Materiality', the contributions address crafted processes, expressions, and experiences. This includes a range of materials and media, and a spectrum of distinctive crafted expressions developed through diverse techniques. The theme also considers the value of dialogue and sharing and how craft practitioners and various audiences can inform how aesthetic qualities are perceived, interpreted, and developed.

In the ninth article, *'Sustainable design in action: A case study on fused recycled glass in the Redruth Buttermarket restoration',* ***Tyra Oseng-Rees, Juan A. Ferriz-Papi,*** and ***Ahmed Wadee*** combine their expertise fields within design, construction, and engineering in a collaborative, sustainable project focusing on the innovation of using recycled glass in architecture. The beauty of the glass elements represents an excellent example of an expanded view of the aesthetics of materials from a circular economy perspective, in which the glass elements have been carefully examined to meet building requirements and address climate challenges.

In the tenth article, *'Exploring memory of textile crafts: A learning game for dialogue in textile design education' by* ***Louise Ravnløkke*** and ***Karen Marie Hasling***, the authors describe in a designerly way how access to craft knowledge can be achieved through crafted gamification. The two cases in the article demonstrate how the materials, tools, techniques, and rules of the game are explored and developed together with students. The final output

of the research is the Compass of Textile Logics, a model that visually frames textile techniques as hierarchical transformations between levels and logics.

In the eleventh article, *'Crafting individualism: Cross-cultural expressions in contemporary jewellery-related practice',* ***Liu Qiwei, Sarah Kettley, Choi Keeryong,*** and ***Collette Paterson*** present a cross-cultural study employing a heuristic research through design (RtD) methodology to investigate how different understandings of individualism, as encountered in Chinese and Western cultural contexts, inform contemporary jewellery practices. Contrary to some assumptions of binary cultural opposition, the findings demonstrate a specific hybridized creative stance emerging from the interplay of different forms of individualism.

Theme 3: Technology and Craft

Articles from the conference theme 'Technology and Craft' demonstrate how technology can expand opportunities for creative processes and efficiency. At the same time, new technologies introduce challenges, such as mass production and both physical and digital waste. The projects demonstrate how traditional techniques can be combined with innovative approaches, suggesting hybrid practices that bridge historical and contemporary methods. Examples of specific methods and tools are offered to strengthen practitioners' awareness of technological potentials and constraints and support more reflective decision-making in the studio.

The twelfth article, *'Glass craft: A new generation of designers and craftworkers rooted in re-interpretation of Portuguese traditions' by* ***Teresa Almeida***, highlights the transmission of, and ensures the continuity of, glass expertise within contemporary artistic practice. The author emphasizes the essential dialogue between the craftworker and the designer/artist in collaborative processes of crafted glassmaking. Through the rich and original use of visualization and the use of stories, her research describes how technical complexity and challenges are handled in ways that enhance dialogue in creative processes.

In the thirteenth and final article of this Special Issue, *'Craft Is All We Have: Craft as an emancipatory methodology',* ***Lydia Chatziiakovou*** and ***Bilal Yilmaz*** articulate craft as a plural, dividual process that sustains embodied knowledge, cultivates care, and generates alternative economies of making. From this alternative perspective, they discuss how social and material systems strain under capitalist extractivism and how craft can offer critical tools for imagining and enacting more attentive, grounded, and transformative forms of life and labour.

A Revitalized Position of Craft in Society

The academic scope chosen for this Special Issue is in accordance with the broad perspectives and various methodological approaches that represent the *FormAkademisk* research journal of design and design education. The journal promotes an open definition of design as set out by Herbert Simon, 'Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones' (Simon, 1969, p. 55) and defines design further as a shared concept that embraces 'the best within the field of art and the best within the field of craftsmanship' (FormAkademisk, n.d.).

Craft has repeatedly gained a revitalized position in society, as reactions effected from new technology and social structures. Glenn Adamson describes craft as an active, relational concept and points to its interdisciplinary position (Adamson, 2013). Material culture is essential to craft; knowledge transfers not only through the making but also via traditional values and critiques. Knowledge derived from material culture and making can also affect the use of crafted objects and serve to increase awareness of the value of things. This relates strongly to environmental issues and sustainable consumption by enhancing reflections on the way we care for material resources and how people can learn through environmental, creative interactions. Similar to how Adamson describes craft as active and relational, Kjetil Fallan describes culture as a bridge between history and society today (Fallan, 2019). Craft, together with art and design contribute to the broader field of cultural sustainability research, as shown in the publication series of the *Routledge Studies in Cultural Sustainability* (Routledge, n.d.). In *Design for a Sustainable Culture,* the relationship between sustainability, culture, and the shaping of human surroundings is explored through design as a tool for the creation of sustainable development (Skjerven & Reitan, 2017). Similarly, in *Form, Art and Environment*, art is described as 'an expressive force in promoting sustainable culture and conscious development' (Blanc, 2017).

In addition to the growth of research on craft in an academic sense, there are also many practical initiatives aiming to renew craft practice in an era of high digital influence. One example is the Norwegian project HandVerkSted [HandWorkShop], led by the interest organization Kunst og design i skolen [Art and design in Education]. This is an example of a craft project for children and young people, expanding access to workshops in their spare time. The project is supported by the Sparebankstiftelsen DNB [The Savings Bank Foundation DNB] (Kunst og design i skolen, n.d.) because they fund projects for the benefit of society, and that inspire engagement, involve volunteers, and make a positive contribution to children and young people.

The broad perspectives on various types of craft practice in this Special Issue build on multiple theories and methodological approaches. For further research, it is important to uncover and define the questions and common touchpoints from different fields in order to enhance the potential of interdisciplinary research projects with craft and cultural sustainability as pivot points. Although craft can sometimes be identified as a *pastoral stance*, idealizing simplicity and previous ways of making, this Special Issue demonstrates how craft also has the strong potential to bridge the past and future by activating and responding to traditions, transferring into a *spirit of revival* for future development (Adamson, 2013). This gives resonance to craft as transformative—as motion and change—whereby creative spaces and frames for explorative studies are vital. It contributes to transformation – from tradition to innovation.

Oslo & Swansea, October 2026,

Astrid Heimer, Arild Skarsfjord Berg & Shelley Doolan

References

Adamson, G. (2013). *The invention of craft*. Bloomsbury Publishing. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350036123

Almevik, G. (Ed.). (2017). *Hantverksvetenskap* [Craft Science]. Hantverkslaboratoriet, Göteborgs Universitet.

Bergstedt, B. & Jamouchi, S. (Eds.). (2026). *Multisensorisk læring: Om intensitet og kropp-materiell i en performativ kunstpedagogikk* [Multisensory learning: On intensity and body-material in a performative art pedagogy] (p. 9–18). Fagbokforlaget. https://doi.org/10.55669/oa660900

Blanc, N. (2017) Form*, art and the environment: Engaging in sustainability*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315660370

Dunin-Woyseth, H., & Nilsson, F. (2017). Four arrows of knowledge: Some notes on practice-based research. In G. Almevik (Ed.), *Hantverksvetenskap* (pp. 39–45). Hantverkslaboratoriet, Göteborgs Universitet.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Qualitative Social Research, 12*(1), Article 10. https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-12.1.1589

EMAL. (n.d.). *Research on Embodied Making and Learning research group.* University of South-Eastern Norway. https://www.usn.no/english/research/our-research-centres-and-groups/traditional-arts-and-practical-aesthetic-subjects/embodied-making-and-learning/

Fallan, K. (2019). Design culturing: Making design history matter. In G. Julier, A. V. Munch, M. N. Folkmann, H.-C. Jensen, & N. P. Skou (Eds.), *Design culture: Objects and approaches* (pp. 15–27). Bloomsbury Visual Arts. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474289856.0007

FormAkademisk. (n.d.). *About the journal.* https://journals.oslomet.no/formakademisk/about

FormAkademisk. (2016). Embodied making and design learning. Special Issue from the Learn X Design Conference DRS/CUMULUS, Chicago, 2015. *FormAkademisk, 9*(1). https://doi.org/10.7577/formakademisk.1739

FormAkademisk. (2020). Embodied making and learning II. Special issue. *FormAkademisk, 13*(3). https://journals.oslomet.no/formakademisk/issue/view/413

FormAkademisk. (2021). Proceedings of BICCS 2021 – Biennial International Conference for the Craft Sciences. Special Issue. *FormAkademisk, 14*(2). https://doi.org/10.7577/formakademisk.4361

FormAkademisk. (2023). Proceedings of BICCS 2023 – Biennial International Conference for the Craft Sciences. Special Issue. *FormAkademisk, 16*(4). *https://journals.oslomet.no/formakademisk/issue/view/501*

Groth, C. (2017). *Making sense through hands: Design and craft practice analysed as embodied cognition* [Doctoral thesis, Aalto University]. https://aaltodoc.aalto.fi/handle/123456789/24839

Hannula, M., Kaila, J., Palmer, R., & Sarje, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Artists as researchers: A new paradigm for art education in Europe*. Academy of Fine Arts, University of Helsinki.

Heimer, A. (2020). *Å gripe form for å begripe form. Konkret og abstrakt formforståelse* [Grip to get a grip of form. Concrete and abstract understanding of form] [Doctoral thesis]. University of South-Eastern Norway University.

Kunst og design i skolen. (n.d.). *HandVerkSted* [CraftWorkShop]. https://www.kunstogdesign.no/handverksted

Mäkelä, M., & Nimkulrat, N. (2018). Documentation as a practice-led research tool for reflection on experiential knowledge. *FormAkademisk, 11*(2), Article 5. https://doi.org/10.7577/formakademisk.1818

Nimkulrat, N., & Groth, C. (2024). *Craft and design practice from an embodied perspective*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003328018

Routledge. (n.d.). *Routledge studies in culture and sustainable development*. Routledge. https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Culture-and-Sustainable-Development/book-series/RSCSD

Simon, H. A. (1969). *The science of the artificial*. MIT.

Solberg, A. (2017). *Developing Doctorateness in Art, Design and Architecture* [Doctoral thesis, University of South-Eastern Norway]. https://hdl.handle.net/11250/2442970

Skjerven, A., & Reitan, J. (Eds.) (2017). *Design for a sustainable culture: Perspectives, practices and education.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315229065