

Monday 25 October 2010

HAND MADE TALES: WOMEN AND DOMESTIC CRAFTS

The Women's Library, London Metropolitan University 28 October 2010 to 20 April 2011

From dress-making to flower arranging, 'grow your own' to baking cupcakes, crafts have played a pivotal role in women's lives over the centuries. *Hand Made Tales*, a fascinating new exhibition at the Women's Library, will be showcasing crafts made by women over the last 100 years.

Part of the Archive Awareness Campaign www.archiveawareness.com, the exhibition looks at a range of diverse cultural traditions and domestic duties that have inspired women to make traditional homemade objects. It also explores the enduring popularity of domestic crafts. The display will include crafts such as quilting, knitting, flower-arranging and weaving and a number of sections dedicated to:

- Housewife
- Craft knowledge
- The art of domestic craft
- Family inheritance
- The creative spirit
- Women's skills and inventiveness, and how women have expressed themselves – and sometimes challenged - through their craft

Also on display will be objects created by women from a wide range of social, cultural and ethnic groups. There will be a design of 'Psalm 137' in Hebrew and English, a 'lament of the migrant'-an ornate doily crocheted by a Vincentian immigrant to style her front room and a traditional Punjabi handwoven duhry made to decorate the floor of a new bridal home. Plus visitors will be able to explore the complex influences that have stimulated domestic crafts in Britain.

Highlights in *Craft Knowledge* include a manuscript recipe book from the mid-nineteenth century packed with various food ideas and an instruction board on glove-making by award-winning Women's Institute member, Evelyn Mary Jones (1906-1991). In addition, visitors will get the chance to view a vast collection of books, leaflets and guides instructing women in the art of home-making. The centrepiece of the exhibition *the art of domestic craft* will comprise a large showcase filled with delicate hand sewn work, a technical colour dressing gown made from bits and pieces of silk ties and an elegant evening dress.

Carol Tulloch, exhibition curator Hand Made Tales said: **“Crafts were viewed as the specific trade of the housewife, a beleaguered individual whose domestic creativity was not recognised as being a valuable contribution to society, a position that the feminist movement fought against. This renaissance of domesticity has been criticised by some feminists as being a glamorisation of the historically subordinate housewife-but not all women who practised these crafts saw themselves and their skills as devalued”**.

Angela Owusu, Archive Awareness Campaign Officer said: **“This is a fascinating exhibition that looks into how different cultures in the past and today have been able to present their own traditions through arts and crafts. With the resurgence in ‘traditional’ home crafts and the homemade, it shows how archives can be breath-taking in their power to speak out to us across the centuries”**.

- Ends -

For further details, spokespeople or images on the Archive Awareness Campaign, please contact **Angela Owusu** on **0208 392 5237** or email

Angela.Owusu@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Notes to Editors

Hand Made Tales opens **Thursday 28 October 2010** and runs until **20 April 2011**
Press view: Thursday 28 October at 3pm

Press tours: Contact pressinfo@thewomenslibrary.ac.uk to arrange a special tour of the exhibition

Venue: The Women's Library, London Metropolitan University, Old Castle Street, London E1 7NT

Nearest Tube: Aldgate/Aldgate East

Opening times: Monday to Friday 9.30am-5.30pm (Thursday until 8pm); Saturday 10am-4pm; Closed Sunday.

- For PRESS information, quotes or images please contact Chandan Mahal at The Women's Library, London Metropolitan University on 0207 320 3502 or via moreinfo@thewomenslibrary.ac.uk (Details not for publication).
- For quotes or interviews please contact the Curator Carol Tulloch at c.tulloch@vam.ac.uk or through the library
- A programme of events will be running alongside the exhibition including workshops, lectures and literary discussions. For full details visit <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/thewomenslibrary/whats-on/events/calendar.cfm>
- Established in 1926, The Women's Library is an archive, museum and library housing one of the greatest collections of women's history in the world. It is part of London Metropolitan University, one of the foremost providers of undergraduate, postgraduate, professional and vocational education and training in Britain.
- Archive Awareness is spearheaded by the Archives & Records Association (ARA) (www.archives.org.uk) and funded by The National Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (www.mla.gov.uk).
- Archive Awareness Campaign www.archiveawareness.com is an ongoing celebration of all kinds of fascinating archive treasures. It celebrates and promotes local and national archives. Throughout the year archives across the country open their doors to showcase history, hold open days and present workshops to help the public discover a piece of their own history.

Related events

Event	Date/Time	Admission
Crafted Footnotes by Nicola Malkin. A new commission by Nicola Malkin will also be displayed throughout The Women's Library. Nicola is creating a series of ceramic and mixed media items, gigantic versions of everyday objects, inspired by personal	Opens 28 October	Free

<p>letters, literature and photographs found in The Women's Library collections. The works explore the darker side of the lives of women, a celebration of the courage and strength of women and connection to Nicola's own recently discovered personal family history in the East End of London. These pieces will be found in unexpected places around the Library, forming a trail of hidden stories for you to explore.</p>		
<p>Create and Make A day for families to take part in a range of fun and simple craft making workshops, where you make your own samples to take away with you.</p>	<p>Saturday 30 October, 11am - 3pm</p>	<p>Drop-in, Free</p>

<p>Hand Made Tales: Women and Domestic Crafts</p> <p>Explore the role that domestic crafts play in women’s lives, including the changing relationships between professional and amateur practice, the need for self expression, self agency, and private consumption. These two days will provide an opportunity to share personal making stories and experiences. Join leading academics, artists and makers to examine the debates around the values and skills of different domestic craft practises.</p>	<p>Friday 12 & Saturday 13 November 10am-5pm</p>	<p>£28 both days / £15 one day</p>
<p>Craft + activism = Craftivism</p> <p>Ladyfest Ten and Craftivist Collective invite you to unravel the relationships between craft and activism. From guerrilla mini protest banners to renegade mosaic, fence stitching to embroidered vaginas, join us to explore and reflect on how traditional techniques can be used to challenge and advocate contemporary issues in creative ways. Can craft</p>	<p>Saturday 27 November, 12 – 5pm</p>	<p>Free</p>

make the world a better place? Talks, discussions, workshops and zines plus the chance to give craftivism a go as we hit the streets together to put ideas into action.

