



Watershed Bristol to host Craft + Technology showcase

Watershed Bristol to host Craft + Technology showcase, revealing three new ideas that demonstrate future potential for The Internet of Things.

RFID enabled Music Memory Box for dementia sufferers, a flying skirt lampshade for public spaces, and a Hug & Pay alternative to currency will be introduced to the public.

This Thursday 28 March at 2pm, visitors to the Watershed independent cinema and arts centre in Bristol's Harbourside will be transported to a brave new world of the Internet of Things, courtesy of designer-makers taking part in the Watershed Craft + Technology residencies, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and supported by the Crafts Council.

As part of the showcase, 23-year-old Chloe Meineck from Surrey, 36-year-old Heidi Hinder from Bristol and 37-year-old Patrick Laing from London will demonstrate to a 100-strong audience how technology and craft can work together to create completely new experiences that can be as enriching and touching as they are practical.

Supported by Autonomic at Falmouth University's Academy for Innovation and Research, Chloe Meineck has been working with day centres and care homes to understand how people with dementia can access cherished memories, and connect with their families and communities through tactile objects and music. Chloe's prototype uses a Raspberry Pi computer that triggers the playback of a pre-selected song matched to an object embedded with a corresponding RFID tag. Together with their carer or family member, dementia sufferers can make or choose a special object they associate with a piece of music or sound recording and a memory. This object is then placed inside the box, which will identify the RFID tag to play the pre-selected recording.

Chloe has ambitious plans for future applications. She says, "It's been the most rewarding experience working with dementia sufferers who are able to laugh, share and sing about their life with others when they connect familiar objects and music together, and it's all possible thanks to very accessible computing technology using Raspberry Pi and RFID tags. I've developed prototypes for the kit version so anyone could make their own Music Memory Box, whether you are seven or seventy. The kit allows for maximum customisation to create a truly bespoke item. The next stage is to test my various prototypes across regional care homes, develop the kit further and set up my next company. It's been an amazing experience exploring all these opportunities as part of Watershed's Craft + Technology residencies, and I'm very excited about taking the idea to market."

After three intensive months working with i-DAT in Plymouth, Patrick Laing's Flying Skirt Light Shade offers a completely new take on lighting. Celebrating movement, the Flying Skirt Light Shade is fitted with malleable fabric shade, which spins when the light is switched on, creating a beautiful rounded shape that can be manipulated by fingers, objects or air flow. Beautiful to look at and irresistible to touch, Patrick hopes that flying light shades will become popular in public spaces, where they could inspire a new form of interaction with our surroundings.

He says, "The Flying Skirt Light Shade has huge potential. We are looking at motion sensors to trigger remote voluptuous contortions in the Skirts shade an passers by enacting change depending on how fast or slow they walk. Patterns of LED's responding to the change in movement and potentially feedback loops where massed Flying Skirts respond to each other. I'm hopeful that the strong early interest I have had from architects looking to specify the manual Flying Skirt will grow significantly with this new networked device."

Resident at Watershed's Pervasive Media Studio, artist Heidi Hinder has considered the role of material money in a digital age, where coins and cash could become obsolete. Heidi's project 'Money No Object', playfully questions our ideas about value. She has envisioned a system of charitable donation, in which wearable objects, such as brooches, gloves and shoes, use RFID technology to enable physical and emotional gestures between people, as a method of value exchange. Just as the Oyster card model relies on RFID tags and readers touching together to transfer funds, so Heidi's 'Hug & Pay' brooches, 'Handshake Agreement' gloves, or 'Tap & Pay' dance shoes, would rely on human-to-human interaction to seal the deal. This way, she imagines people could enjoy the process of making a donation to cultural institutions or charities while receiving something invaluable in return.

Heidi says, "I'm really excited about the chance to apply new technology in a way that brings people closer together. Money is a bond, a system of exchange and communication, a tacit agreement of trust. These alternative methods of making donations try to raise questions about value; what it is, and how it might evolve in future. I would like to approach museums and galleries to introduce this idea within their ecosystem."

Clare Reddington, Director of Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed, says "Watershed's Craft + Technology Residencies is a unique development programme that enables contemporary makers to explore the potential of the Internet of Things. We're delighted to have supported Heidi, Chloe and Patrick to create some remarkable new products and explore new business opportunities. We also hope the new modes of practice and networks they have developed during the residencies, will positively influence future works."

Beatrice Mayfield, Maker Development Manager at the Crafts Council, says "It has been really interesting to see how Chloe, Patrick and Heidi have explored new technologies through their experiences as makers each with specific material knowledge and technical skills. Their projects have huge potential and we hope that they will all build on the great work started through the Watershed Craft + Technology residencies."

The Craft + Technology Residencies Showcase will take place at 2pm on Thursday 28 March at Watershed, 1 Canon's Road, Harbourside, Bristol BS1 5TX. Admission is free and places can be booked via the Watershed Box Office: 0117 927 5100. More information is available at: <http://www.watershed.co.uk/ished>

A selection of hi res images and videos are available at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xyrhe4cevzjhtig/rMEZbLWJJe>

For more information on Craft + Technology Residencies, interviews and further images please contact:

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Editor's Notes

Supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, delivered in collaboration with the Crafts Council, and hosted by i-DAT within Plymouth University, the Autonomic research group at University College Falmouth, and Bristol's internationally renowned Pervasive Media Studio; Watershed's Craft + Technology Residencies is a new development programme that enables makers to work with technologists on cutting edge projects.

More about the Makers:

Chloe Meineck graduated from 3D Design at Brighton University in 2012, and has since exhibited at Brighton Maker Faire, New Designers and Tent London as part of London Design Week. Her work has also featured in leading magazine Wired UK. Chloe is passionate about design localism, sustainability initiatives and promoting multidisciplinary practice. She considers herself a designer grounded by the production of thought provoking objects, about current issues that intrigue her. Her work is always created for the public to enjoy.

<http://www.chloemeineck.co.uk>

Patrick Laing's recent practice has focussed on the exploration of material potential for narrative, often participative purposes. The result of this approach and acquired skills is a broad scale of work from jewellery, to furniture and lighting, patented industrial product, store and exhibition design. Customers can be individuals, or international brands such as Adidas. Patrick's BA degree at the University of Brighton's 3D Design materials course goes some way to explain his holistic attitude.

<http://www.patricklaing.com>

Heidi Hinder is an artist maker. She draws on her degree studies in Literature, and Jewellery & Silversmithing, in order to tell thought-provoking stories through beautifully crafted objects. Heidi was recently selected for a year's scholarship in the design and creation of contemporary coins and art medals. This unique opportunity included a short residency at the Royal Mint where, despite the company's 1100 year traditional history, Heidi had the first opportunity to fully incorporate new technologies into her practice. Keen to build on this experience, Heidi has since dedicated her practice to exploring the symbiosis between hand-making techniques and technology innovation.

<http://www.behance.net/HeidiHinder>

More about the Partners:

Watershed & Pervasive Media Studio

Watershed is a cross-artform venue and producer, sharing, developing and showcasing exemplary cultural ideas and talent. Through curation of people, ideas and spaces, we enable artistic visions and creative collaborations to flourish and produce work that cuts across film, music, theatre, design, visual and applied art, and the creative and technology sectors. The Pervasive Media Studio is Watershed's city-centre research lab that brings together a network of over 100 artists, technologists and academics to explore the future of mobile and wireless media. Run in partnership with the University of the West of England's Digital Cultures Research Centre and the University of Bristol, the studio has a great workspace, an open ethos and a can-do attitude.

<http://www.watershed.co.uk> | <http://www.pmstudio.co.uk>

The Crafts Council's goal is to make the UK the best place to make, see, collect and learn about contemporary craft. We aim to build a strong economy and infrastructure for contemporary craft; to increase and diversify its audience; and champion high quality contemporary craft practice nationally and internationally. These residencies form part of our Portfolio scheme, supporting and providing opportunities for makers to explore craft practice through collaboration with other sectors or industries.

<http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk>

i-DAT is a lab for creative research, experimentation and innovation across the fields of digital Art, Science and Technology, generating social, economic and cultural benefit. Located within the Faculty of Arts, Plymouth University, it has since 1998 been delivering a programme of activities pushing the boundaries of digital arts / creative media practise, instigating playful opportunities for research, production and collaboration and making technological innovations accessible to artistic talent and to audiences. <http://www.i-dat.org>

Autonomic are a research group based within University College Falmouth's Academy of Innovation and Research (AIR), who explore the use of digital manufacturing technologies, in the creative process of designing and making three-dimensional objects. They are design practitioners with skills and experience in designing in ceramics, glass, plaster, and textiles amongst other mediums. As creative researchers they have a basic urge to invent new ways of making things that reflect, exploit and develop the communication capability of digital data, exploring bespoke, and individualistic production in a variety of material and cultural forms. <http://air.falmouth.ac.uk/research-groups/autonomic>

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve the quality of life throughout the UK by funding the charitable activities of organisations that have the ideas and ability to achieve change for the better. The primary interests of the Foundation are the arts, education and learning, the environment and social change.

<http://esmeefairbairn.org.uk>