

# Week 5 – Digital Crafting & Laser Cutting & Glass Casting & Harvest Exhibition

written by s2757663

This week, we explored “Digital Crafting” and attended workshops on “Laser Cutting” and “Glass Casting”. As I expected, digital technologies have indeed brought great convenience, efficiency, and new possibilities to craft practices, significantly expanding their boundaries.

## ▪ Laser Cutting

I was particularly surprised by the wide range of materials and the high precision achievable with laser cutting – patterns can be engraved on almost any surface, from wood, fabric, plastic, and glass to even very hard materials like iron, metal, and stone. Moreover, the instructors continuously encouraged us to experiment with new materials, showing no hesitation or conservatism about taking risks or facing challenges, which I found truly inspiring and admirable.

## ▪ Glass Casting

As for “Glass Casting”, since I had never worked with glass models or plaster molds before – which are quite different from silicone mold-making – initially found it difficult to keep up and understand the principles. Fortunately, Choi patiently explained the process, and I finally grasped the concept. It made me realize that understanding the underlying principles is essential to truly mastering any craft technique.

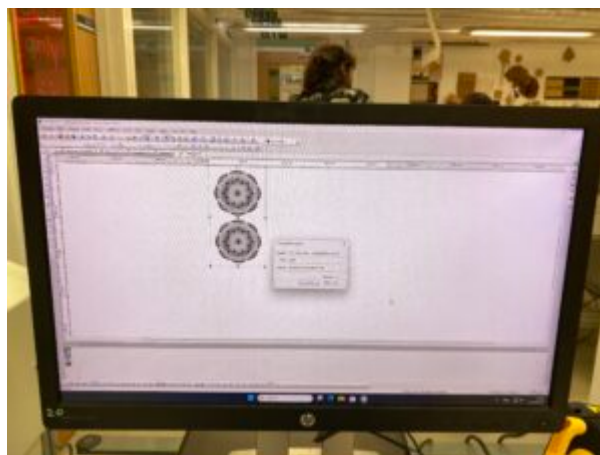
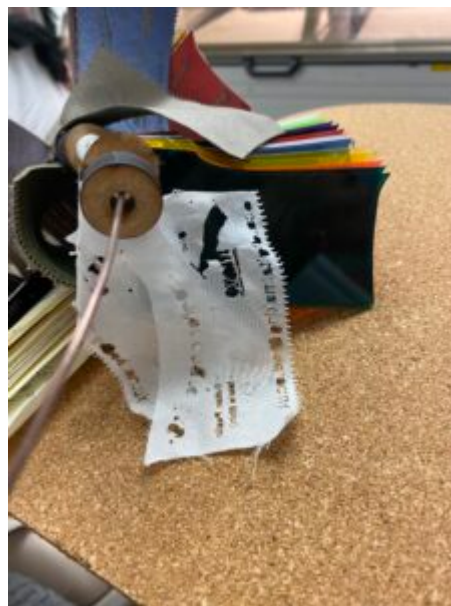
## ▪ Harvest Exhibition

As part of our study trip, we visited the “Harvest Exhibition”. I was deeply impressed – and honestly shocked –

by the prices of the handmade products there. A single handcrafted scarf or blanket was often more than ten times the regular market price, which made me truly appreciate the value and uniqueness of handmade work.

One PhD senior's candlestick particularly caught my attention – it was crafted from leftover animal bones combined with enamel techniques, symbolizing a ritualistic meaning behind its creation. I was deeply moved by the conceptual depth of this work. I later learned that he successfully sold a small brooch made with the same technique for over £100, which made me wonder what kind of emotional connection the buyer must have felt when purchasing such a piece – once again reminding me of how profound and personal people's pursuit and understanding of art can be.







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# Week 4 – Craft & the Expanded Field & Research Methods

written by s2757663

Review of the Book *Post-Craft*

- Brief review of Chapter 4, “MADE IN CHINA/ CREATED IN CHINA CATHARINE ROSSI”

The chapter examines the complexities and contradictions of Chinese manufacturing, emphasizing the human and ethical dimensions often overshadowed by industrial scale and economic progress. Pieces like Ai Weiwei's Sunflower Seeds and Cohen & Van Balen's 75 Watt highlight the human labor behind mass production, portraying individual **craftsmen not merely as anonymous producers but as agents of cultural symbolism and societal shifts**. For instance, Sunflower Seeds underscores the craftsmanship involved in creating each porcelain seed, subtly critiquing the disparity between the artist's symbolic intent and the factory workers' potentially hazardous labor conditions. Similarly, 75 Watt employs a staged assembly line involving real workers, blurring boundaries between their physical engagement and the industrial spectacle, thereby amplifying their agency and vulnerability within global supply chains. Yet, these works also expose a paradox: the individual worker's role appears both pivotal—embodying the craftsmanship, agency, and cultural identity—and marginalized, subject to exploitative labor practices. The artworks challenge viewers to reconsider the often romanticized notion of the artisan by revealing the socio-economic inequalities, environmental harms, and cultural implications embedded in production processes. Ultimately, these projects insist that **individual laborers are central to understanding China's manufacturing ethos—not as mere cogs but as active, consequential participants in a global narrative of craft, critique, and economic transformation**.

▪ **Brief review of Post-Craft Chapter 2, "Craft Rather Than Crafted" :**

This chapter focuses on the distinction between "craft" and "crafted." The author argues that while **traditional craft emphasizes skill, knowledge transfer, and mastery, in contemporary contexts, craft has increasingly become a tool for social and political expression**. The chapter highlights how many practitioners today prefer "craft" as a spirit of

experimentation and exploration, rather than perfection. For example, Artschwager's use of Formica to challenge traditional woodworking reflects a critical and disruptive attitude. This form of "craft," though seemingly chaotic and accidental, emphasizes the process of exploration and reflection, rather than adhering to classical standards of perfection. This shift underscores the flexibility and openness of craft, transforming it from mere technique into a cultural, social, and political act. Overall, the chapter offers a fresh perspective on "craft," emphasizing its multifaceted roles in modern society.

## **A short case study and Reflection:**

### **▪ Case Study – Ryo Yoshida and the Expanded Field of BJD Craft**

Ryo Yoshida, co-founder of the Japanese company Volks and creator of the Super Dollfie BJD line, is a key figure showing how craft has evolved into an expanded field. Yoshida combines traditional sculpting and hand-finishing skills with digital tools such as 3D modelling, CNC milling, and resin casting. While each doll retains a strong sense of handcraft through hand-painted faces, customized outfits, and narrative character design, the use of modern technologies enables greater precision, modularity, and accessibility. This hybrid approach allows BJD dolls to exist not just as handmade art objects but as part of a global creative culture that bridges craft, fashion, storytelling, and technology.

### **▪ Reflection:**

This week's lecture deepened my understanding of the relationship between technology, industrial processes, and craft. I used to question whether industrialization might conflict with the handmade essence of craft, but the discussion strengthened my perspective and confidence in my own research direction. I believe that technology should be actively embraced and harnessed to serve human creativity

,enabling craft to reach wider audiences while preserving its handmade spirit. Emerging industrial techniques, such as 3D printing, demonstrate this potential well.

But I believe that the current crafting techniques of BJD or figurine dolls still have room for innovation, improvement, and greater sustainability, and I already have some ideas that I have been developing and experimenting with in my own practice.

As I mentioned in previous homework tasks, I'm trying to integrate IML techniques from the fields of plastics and automotive manufacturing, 3D design, fine arts, and 3D printing – a combination of all these – into doll crafting. This is a completely new and non-traditional approach, but I am still experimenting with it. If it works , it will significantly enhance crafting efficiency while preserving the handcrafted quality and aesthetics.

But even for now, our contemporary BJD crafting has already blurred disciplinary boundaries across jewellery, textiles, 3D design, fine arts, and even human anatomy.

Personally I particularly want to explore 3D digital design, IML (in-mold labeling) techniques in plastics, costume making, and some related knowledge in engineering.

Regarding social and cultural issues, I am particularly interested in exploring feminism, social evolution, and gender equality through doll making and practice using narrative approaches.

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# Week 3 – Thinking through Making&Skills Audit&Develop 3D Design Skills

written by s2757663

- **Define Yourself**

This week, we explored “Thinking through Making,” which emphasizes critical thinking and reflection within the making process. I was particularly impressed

by Glenn Adamson’s idea of “Craft as a reflection of ourselves.” In the seminar task, I responded and defined myself by answering these questions in this way:

WHO ARE YOU? A female, an asexuality, a creator , an entrepreneur, a to-be philanthropist, a driver of social change, an innovator, and an artist.

WHY ARE YOU CREATIVE? To evoke emotional resonance, provide people with emotional value, and convey positive, uplifting values.

WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES? I believe in gender and social equality, fighting discrimination, and helping people feel happier and more emotionally fulfilled.

WHAT ARE YOUR SKILLS? Hand Painting , Photoshop Skill□3d scanning, 3d crafting , 3d printing, Business Knowledge, ect.

- **Skills Audit:**

**I already possess skills** such as BJD design, painting, making, sketching, physical prototyping, and business skills.



**Evidence:** After graduating from university, I started my own business and founded a craft company and brand focused on BJD doll design, production, and global online sales. I have continued to develop and operate it to this day, even securing licensed collaborations to produce character merchandise for theatrical films, while also attracting the interest of venture capital investors.

**I need to develop my skills further in:** 3D digital design, and some cross-disciplinary techniques like IML( In-Mold Labeling techniques) in the fields of plastics, car manufacturing , and material and process innovation in engineering, etc.

**I would like to connect with:**Besides experts within the Craft discipline, such as miniature costume makers, 3D designers, and jewellery/mini-prop makers, I would also like to connect with cross-disciplinary technical experts from different industries, such as experts in plastics who are proficient in IML, experts in automotive manufacturing, and experts in engineering who might know how to improve the efficiency of figurine production while preserving the current quality of handcrafted mini-costumes/wigs/props.

As well as people in television, film, and gaming, including actors, producers, distributors, and curators.

Additionally, I aim to engage with other professionals outside the industry, such as lawyers and financial advisors, and finally, venture capitalists and investors in the creative and cultural sectors.

• **Practice: Develop my skills further in 3D digital design**

At the same time, I also managed to make full use of campus resources. I found 3D digital-related courses on “**Path**”. And this Week I successfully applied to audit the “3D Digital

Design" course and got access to the course on Learn. While auditing the classes, I also began learning the basic skills of "Blender" after class to strengthen my 3D skills required for my research.

Request to Audit 3D Design (Online Distance Learning) Course

Dear Ms Eleni Geragidi,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Saisai Wang (s2757663), and I am a current postgraduate student on the MA Craft programme at the Edinburgh College of Art. I am writing to ask whether it would be possible for me to audit your course 3D Design (Online Distance Learning).

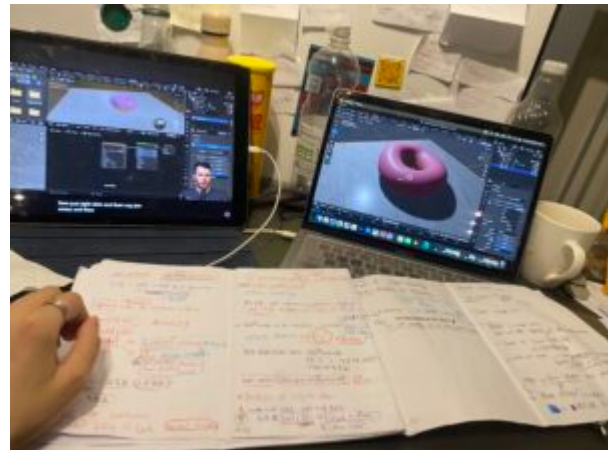
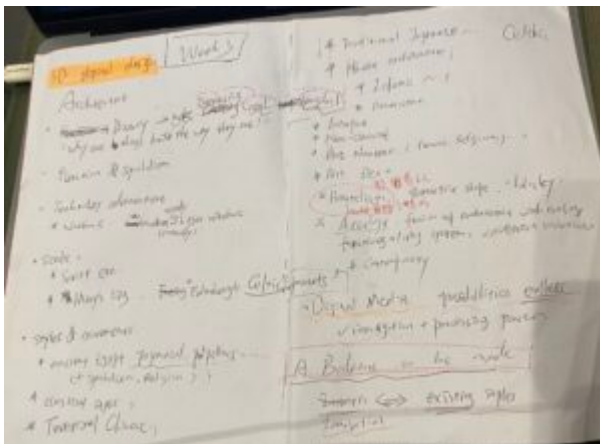
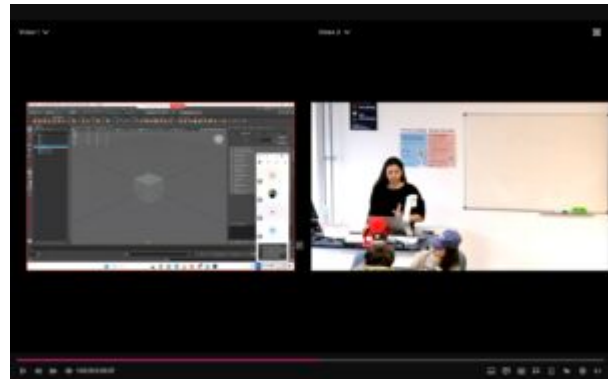
The course aligns very closely with my current research focus and I believe it would provide valuable insights for my work. My research focuses on integrating traditional craft practices with 3D digital design—particularly 3D modelling, sculpting, and texturing—and is supported by my previous professional experience in this area.

I believe attending the lectures would not only benefit my own studies but also provide me with the valuable opportunity to engage with and learn from the perspectives shared in your class. I would also be very interested in attending any offline workshops, should they be available and convenient.

I would be very grateful if you might consider allowing me to join as an auditor. I have CC'd the course secretary, Miss Barbara Bianchi, for formal record-keeping.

I look forward to your reply. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Best regards,  
Saisai Wang



# Week 2 – Narrative Craft & Labubu & BJD Design & Resin

written by s2757663

The topic discussed this week was the concept of “Narrative Craft.” In the seminar, I chose “Labubu” as my case study for exploring “Narrative Craft”, and conducted an in-depth analysis of my preferred material – “resin”.

## ▪ Case Study: Kasing Lung – “Storytelling Through Enchanting Monsters”

As the designer of the currently universally popular art toy – Labubu, The Hong Kong artist Kasing Lung masterfully blends narrative and art through his beloved Labubu universe. He is a former children’s book illustrator and winner of the prestigious Bratislava Illustration Biennale, Lung imbues each character—like the mischievous Labubu or timid Tycoco—with a unique personality and backstory.

His sculptures and toys are not mere objects; they are tangible portals into a fantastical world of friendly monsters. Their expressive gestures and detailed settings suggest untold adventures, inviting collectors to imagine their own stories. This deep narrative layer, drawn from Lung’s illustrative roots, transforms his work into collectible tales, fostering a passionate global community that connects with the characters’ emotions and whimsical lore.



- **Resin BJD Design: “The Memory Keeper”**

For this project, I designed a resin BJD doll that embodies my ongoing dialogue with memory and identity. Resin, with its translucent yet fragile quality, symbolizes the way memories shape but also scar us over time. The doll's removable layers of clothing and interchangeable facial plates represent shifting identities and emotional states, while visible seams and joint lines reveal the vulnerability beneath the surface. Inspired by experiences and cultural expectations from both childhood and adulthood, this piece becomes more than a figure to me – it's a storytelling vessel exploring how personal history, resilience, and transformation coexist. Sketches show the evolution from inner memory fragments to a tangible, expressive form. It is not merely a toy but a posable narrative sculpture that allows complex stories to unfold through form and movement.



This resin BJD sketch explores my experience as an asexual person, wearing masks in society and performing the “normal” heterosexual female role expected by both social and family norms. After engaging with Buddhist teachings, my mindset shifted significantly. The act of tonsure symbolizes Buddhism and, to some extent, asexuality. The mask is deliberately inspired by the makeup of Qin Xianglian, a “perfect woman” character from Chinese Peking opera, reflecting a performative role under a patriarchal society – the virtuous wife and obedient mother. The doll’s movable joints represent the fluidity of identity, allowing it to sit in meditation, work, or lie down.

▪ **Narrative Matrix of Resin :**

delicate/Vulnerable	Soft Touch/Skin-feel	Flawless/Beautiful
Solid/Durable/Stable	Resistance to Crashes/Hardships	Variable/Unfixed
Colorful/Various/Versatile	Formless/Fluid	Blank/Collaborative

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# Week 1 – Introduction & Self-reflection

written by s2757663

In the first class, Jennifer and Choi gave a general introduction to the course content and structure. After the

course briefing, we each introduced ourselves.

- **About Me**

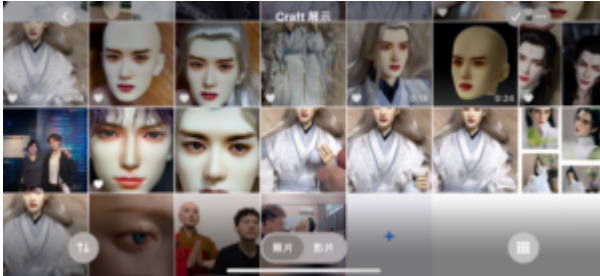
I did not go to art college before, but I'm self taught and have experience in producing BJDs, art dolls, articulated realistic figures, and film and television merchandise, as well as experience in the film and television industry. I started my business of doll crafting many years ago and have a craft studio , My main interest lies in integrating cross-industry, cross-disciplinary, and cross-field technologies to achieve hybrid practices, technological innovation, and critical reflection on current production methods. While ensuring the quality of craftsmanship and maintaining a high level of aesthetic value, I aim to significantly increase the efficiency of art doll production, industrialize much of the manufacturing process (i.e., combining handcraft and machine-making, with handcraft still remaining the core), and reduce production costs. In this way, high-end art dolls such as BJDs would no longer remain luxury items but become art toys that people are easier to own—similar to what PopMart (a Chinese company specializing in art toys, best known for “Labubu” ) has achieved: transforming once niche art toys into something popular and widely owned. In doing so, such creations could also meet the growing spiritual needs of a broad audience—particularly women—by offering forms of emotional companionship.

Even in the future, I hope this craftsmanship could be applied to the AI industry, for example in the form of desktop companion-type humanoid robots. I have observed that in China, young start-up teams are already developing such projects and attracting considerable attention; however, I personally believe there is still room for improvement in terms of craftsmanship and design.

Through this course, I hope to develop both theoretical and practice-based insights into craft especial the making of

various life-like human figures, and I am looking forward to experimenting with new forms and methods of design and critical practice.

Presentation of some previous works:



### ▪ Some thoughts and reflections

During the **Icebreaker exercise**, each of us introduced our backgrounds and areas of interest. My classmates came from various disciplines such as glass, textiles, jewellery, ceramics, and product design – most of which are strongly rooted in handcrafted practices.

Since I joined the programme with a clear entrepreneurial project, specific goals, and problems I want to solve, I focused particularly on the challenges I had encountered in BJD production – especially the issues of handcrafted mass production and collectors' pain points.

I raised a question in class about whether there is a fundamental conflict between **mass production** and **craft**. Jennifer said that it was a profound topic, while Choi mentioned that if mass production aims to reproduce and promote such beautiful handmade craftsmanship, then the two are not in conflict. Their responses reassured and encouraged me a lot. However, I still felt uncertain and doubtful about whether my research direction truly fits within the Craft MA programme. At the same time, I started to understand the **commercialisation of crafts** from a fine art perspective.

Later, during the **Workshop/Maker Space Campus Tour**, we visited ECA Main Building's Wood, Metal, Glass, Ceramics studios, as

well as the Hunter Building, Bookit Central, Maltings, and U-Create. I realised that many of these studios are directly or potentially connected to my project, especially **U-Create**, where I found the technologies and machines I had been looking for. At that moment, I felt once again that I had chosen the right programme.





