

# THE NEW CRAFTSMEN



Press Release

## A PORTRAIT OF PLACE: THE NEW CRAFTSMEN AT HOLKHAM HALL

Earlier this year, **The New Craftsmen** invited five of its makers on a residency to the historic **Holkham Hall** on the north Norfolk coast to explore and creatively respond to the rich narratives of history, culture and aesthetic style embedded in the estate. Over five days, the makers were inspired by Holkham's cast of characters and experts, both past and present; its decorative upstairs; pared-back downstairs; the outhouses; surrounding 25,000 acres; its values and progressive outlook, and were commissioned by The New Craftsmen to interpret it through the medium of craft. The result will be an idiosyncratic collection of hand-crafted pieces - entitled '*A Portrait of Place*' - that will be exhibited at Holkham Hall from 9th - 13th September before travelling down to London to The New Craftsmen showroom in Mayfair for London Design Festival and available to purchase online.

This year's residency at Holkham Hall is the second '*A Portrait of Place*' by The New Craftsmen after the first iteration took place in Orkney in 2019. Speaking about the project's origins, Catherine Lock, Creative Director at The New Craftsmen, explains: *"Over the years, we have built close relationships with our makers; we are continually having invaluable discussions with them about their practice, business and creative ambitions, which is a central part of our role at The New Craftsmen. From these conversations and understanding their ambitions, we initiated the 'Portrait of Place' biennial project. The idea is to invite a small group of makers to take time away from their studios to immerse themselves creatively and intellectually in worlds that unlock a flurry of ideas and help fuel their imagination. During the residency, we encourage them to explore new - or push existing - techniques and design concepts."*



In addition, the purpose behind the biennial residency is to examine how craft can tell a story of a place: in this instance, how The New Craftsmen makers can evoke the distinct spirit of Holkham - its craft traditions, material palette, influential decorative history and the personal and cultural narratives contained within it - through their skills and imaginations. The notion that craft can depict a portrait of a place has long been a fascination of Catherine Lock and a driving force behind founding the company in 2012 after travelling the British Isles and meeting regional makers.

Holkham is a thriving rural estate set on one of the most beautiful stretches of the north Norfolk coastline with a clear vision: to be the most pioneering and sustainable estate in the UK. Built in the mid-18th century by Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester, Holkham Hall is rich in stories of craft; from being a masterpiece of Palladian architecture with its impressive Staffordshire alabaster hall to the no less impressive yet utilitarian ice-house, blacksmithery and brickworks found in the grounds. Catherine says: *"Built in the 1750s when the role and status of the Arts were under examination in Britain, Holkham - the hall and its expansive estate - is a man-made masterpiece created from one man's vision in the Age of Enlightenment. It was a time when philosophy and science were being energetically debated in salons and coffeehouses, and the concept of taste was explored. From the gilded pier glasses in the main house to the wading spoonbills on the nature reserve, this Palladian stately-family home and farm has opened up an abundance of narratives, which our makers have channelled through their unique new works. It's truly captivating to see."*

The five craftspeople selected for this year's 'A Portrait of Place' are **Alfred Newall, Arjan Van Dal, James Rigler, Laura Carlin** and **Mac Collins**. Working closely with Catherine Lock and with the guidance and expertise of the team at The New Craftsmen, each is now working in their respective studios developing a piece or a collection - from lighting and furniture, to mirrors and decorative statements - inspired by their week at Holkham Hall. The Countess of Leicester says: *"Craft plays a central role at Holkham and we are fortunate enough to be surrounded by the work of talented craftspeople from the 18th century onwards, living and interacting with it every day. It was energising to see today's fine British makers following in the footsteps of their predecessors - 'the old craftsmen' - and interacting with Holkham's heritage, history and landscape. This is the very first collaboration of its kind at Holkham and we are intrigued to see how The New Craftsmen makers have interpreted our family home for today's consumer. We share with The New Craftsmen a respect for the past and those who came before us in order to move forward and have a place in the modern world."*

The north Norfolk coast has been a place of escape since Catherine's childhood and her sights were set on Holkham Hall for this year's residency, recognising the synergies with The New Craftsmen. Both are values-driven organisations with a shared respect for heritage and craft, matched with their boundless imaginations and ambitious visions of their roles and the impact they can have now and in the future.

The New Craftsmen 'A Portrait of Place' exhibition at Holkham Hall will take place from 9th - 13th September 2021, before travelling to The New Craftsmen showroom in Mayfair for London Design Festival. The New Craftsmen will host a programme of events during LDF which will allow visitors to interact and engage with the collection and themes.



### **About The New Craftsmen**

The New Craftsmen was established in 2012 as a platform for genuine and meaningful craft, playfully imagined and properly made by artisans of the British Isles. Founded on a belief in the joyful, enduring value of finely crafted wares, our pioneering initiative has grown to become a substantial community of makers with a rich variety of expertise, including textiles, furniture and pottery, lighting and artwork. With our makers we develop collections that reinvent traditional techniques and create contemporary work imbued with the specific cultures and places in which they take shape. Hammered, thrown, woven, gleaned, spun, spliced, bound, knotted, whittled, blown and dyed – every work is alive with the spirit of its making. Working across a generous range of scales – from a humble ceramic bowl to complete interiors – we also enable bespoke commissions and produce wholly unique projects. We make visible the life of things: useful, beautiful objects to enjoy every day.



## About Holkham

Holkham is a thriving rural estate set on one of the most beautiful stretches of the north Norfolk coastline. Built in the mid-18th century by Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester, the Palladian hall is a masterpiece. The estate comprises the hall, deer park, the world famous Holkham National Nature Reserve and beach as well as a thriving collection of businesses centred on property, farming, hospitality and leisure employing more than 250 people. Holkham's vision is to be the UK's most pioneering and sustainable rural estate. Custodians of wonderful natural capital, landscape and wildlife, Holkham endeavours to attract, inform and inspire those who visit whilst also being a great place to work where talent is developed, and the human touch is never lost. Holkham is also earnest and passionate about its role within the local community, in which it strives to be a force for good in helping local communities to thrive by providing employment, homes, and support for local businesses and charities.

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