Tips For New Exhibitors

Craft In Focus

Exhibiting at craft fairs is all about representing yourself and your work. It's an opportunity to share the story you tell and why your work exists.

What to do/not do at the event

- Make sure you're ready and on your stand for when the show opens to the public.
- Collect email addresses so that you can keep in contact with people – have a sign up form asking customers if they'd like to know when you'll be at another event, running special offers or adding new work.
- Smile and maintain a positive and friendly disposition.
- Don't sit reading a paper or on your phone.
- Engage with visitors but don't do a hard sell – sometimes a tricky balance!
- Look at which of your ranges are selling best (this may differ at different events).
- Talk about commissions if relevant.

Tell People About It!

Don't rely on the organiser to do all the marketing. They will promote the event but no one will know you're at the event if you don't tell people!

Your website is your first introduction – it needs to tell a full story – why your work exists, how long it takes to make a piece. Make people understand what the medium is. Explain why the work is connected to you. Use well-taken photographs. Make sure your website is up to date. Update your website to include details of events where you'll be exhibiting.

On social media use lifestyle shots of your products – show work in context in a home/ garden setting. This makes it easier for people to understand the uses and size.

Email your customers to let them know you're going to be at an event.

Send out leaflets to your customers and give out at other events you are doing. Sending something in the post is more personal. Tell people you'd love to see them at the show! Give them your stand number. If you need more leaflets, ask!

Update your email signature – at the bottom of each e-mail where you have your name, trading name, website, etc you can edit this to include: *"I will be showing at XXXX event from xxxx. Come and visit!"*

Social media – please follow and tag us as follows:

Instagram - @craftinfocus

Facebook - @CraftInFocus

Threads - @craftinfocus

Use any hashtags being used for the event if relevant. Like, comment and share any posts by the organiser.

In the run up to the event you can post about creating work for the event with some images of your work being prepared. Videos also work well on social media. Post about your life as a maker, your life in the studio, etc. Add photos of you making – people buy from people and like to see the person behind the work. You can also promote other exhibitors who you know are exhibiting whose work you admire – just imagine if all exhibitors promoted other makers at the event! You can also share other makers' Facebook posts.

Don't forget to continue with your social media posts during the show and continue using any hashtags and tagging Craft In Focus – some photos of your stand, your display, images of the show, people attending, the venue…

If you blog – write about the event.

Stand Display

You need to ensure your stand has a wow factor! It needs to reflect your brand and do justice to your products as well as being eye-catching.

Lighting really highlights your work. Don't save money by not having lighting – a few well-placed LED spotlights can make all the difference.

Make sure you have some height to your display – use props, boxes and shelving.

Clearly label prices or have a price list or a 'prices from….' sign. Most newcomers under-price their work so customers don't always value it.

Ensure you have a backdrop to your stand (unless you are taking the shell scheme).

Set up your stand at home or in your studio before you arrive to see how it looks.

Ensure you have a cover/table cloth if you have a table.

Ensure you have an area for paperwork, bags, wrapping, etc.

Look at what other exhibitors are doing with their displays for ideas (or what not to do!).

Make sure your display fits in the stand space that you have been allocated.

Have a broad range of products – affordable, achievable and aspirational.

Display your company name – it helps people remember you.

Display graphics (especially if your work is small).

Maybe include a graphic of you in your workshop to highlight that it's handmade.

Ensure your display is stable.

Before The Event

- Read all emails and show notes that are sent to you by the organiser and respond by set dates if required.
- Ensure you know where you are going when you arrive on site (and at what time).
- Know your stand number.
- Remember to bring with you your vehicle label/exhibitor pass if relevant.
- Make sure you know the stand size you have.
- Make a packing list and tick off as you pack your vehicle.
- Allow enough time to travel and to set up.
- Check your card payment facility works.

Craft In Focus Shell Scheme

The shell scheme available at Craft In Focus events consists of grey, fabric covered panels which provide a backdrop to your work and divides you from neighbouring stands. The fabric is nylon loop Velcro compatible. Graphics and light work can be attached using Velcro. Exhibitors are not permitted to use any kind of nails or screws in the shell scheme. Heavy work should be hung from the top using wide style picture hooks (sold for use with dado rails), or "S" hooks with at least 35 mm bend. Panels are 2.1 m high x 35 mm thick.

Shell scheme at Desire Fair where a fascia is also included

Examples of Exhibitors Using Their Own Backdrops/Stands

Examples of Exhibitors With Open Stands (these are for sculpture, garden art, etc)