

## **Sustainable Innovation 2023**

*Accelerating Sustainability in the Creative Economy and Creative Industries*

24th International Conference

Online Conference: 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Business School for the Creative Industries

University for the Creative Arts

Epsom, Surrey, UK

### **Materials Sustainability Across the Crafts and Applied Arts: a Review and Reflections.**

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In late 2020, as part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council's 'Where Next?' Initiative, the Council funded a scoping project: 'Sustainable Materials in the Creative Industries' (SMICI) (AH/V005510/1). Over the course of the following year the SMICI project team of ten staff explored current and immanent sustainable practice around the sourcing, use, disposal, reuse, recycling, and upcycling of materials. This work was undertaken to understand the creative sector's ongoing responses to demands for more sustainable working practices, as well as its current and potential contribution to the development of a more circular economy. The SMICI Final Report, written for the Council, provided a snapshot of practice and perceptions around material sustainability across the creative industries, identifying existing trends and showcasing cutting-edge developments. It also flagged sector-wide and discipline specific barriers that would have to be negotiated or addressed to achieve widespread sustainably orientated practice. SMICI's Principal Investigator will draw on material from the research that they and the rest of the research team undertook over the course of 2021, and follow-on research activities undertaken during 2022. This will be used to explain how the different branches of the creative industries identified in the SMICI proposal and Final Report as Crafts and Applied Arts have envisaged, engaged with, adopted, or promoted more sustainable practices around their engagements with materials. Specific aspects and issues will be illustrated through the presentation of a series of short case studies drawn from the project's data. Referencing the project's wider findings, the presentation will compare the current position of the Crafts and Applied Arts sector with developments in other creative industry disciplines and across the creative industries as a whole, considering the role of conventions of practice, education, transport, regulatory change, communities of practice, the procurement and disposal of electrical and electronic equipment, and the intersection of material sourcing, usage, and disposal and carbon calculating. This will lead to a discussion of the implications of the project's findings for creative practitioners, academics teaching across these disciplines, and policymakers focusing on aspects of crafts and applied arts practice.