



The HS craft-writers' programme

Following the success of its jewellery-mentoring platform, [HANDSHAKE Project](#) is launching a pilot craft writers' programme, running from January 2020 to December 2021. The online programme will nurture the writing skills of craft and art professionals with a view to channelling their knowledge of craft practices and history into critical and historical writing.

The programme is coordinated by mentor **Benjamin Lignel** with guest reviewers **Namita Gupta Wiggers** (Director and Co-Founder Critical Craft Forum; Director, Master of Arts in Craft Studies, Warren Wilson College) and **Felicity Milburn** (curator at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū).

At the end of the programme, participants will have built an awareness of historical and contemporary curatorial craft practices; developed their research, observation and critical writing skills; and honed their ability to write in multiple formats. The programme will combine collective reading sessions, writing briefs and debriefs with online classes and one-on-one tutorials.

This project means to address the need for more reviewers in a growing and vibrant contemporary craft field that welcomes, annually, fresh talents graduating from New Zealand's visual art-and-design programmes. Today, it seems necessary to nurture the skills of commentators in order to unpack craft practices for the public and express its cultural currency.

[Application](#) opens 27 September 2019

[Application](#) deadline **Friday 22 November 2019**

Results 16 December 2019

Selection panel: Ben Lignel, Namita Gupta Wiggers, Felicity Milburn, Peter Deckers.

Capacity: 2 participants

This writers' programme is only available for New Zealand citizens and New Zealand permanent residents.

Objectives

This programme will nurture the writing skills of craft professional (craft curators, art historians with an interest in craft, circulation and exhibition managers) with a view to channeling their knowledge of craft practices and history into critical and historical writing, and turning them into expert craft reviewers.

Quality Measures

Each of the submitted papers will receive extensive written feedback. The first two reviews will require re-submission in revised form, which will also receive feedback. To ensure that participants are exposed to a variety of editorial styles, two of their papers will be reviewed by two guest editors, Namita Gupta Wiggers and Felicity Milburn, towards a rewrite. Reviews will be submitted to online publication, local and international, for consideration: these outlets will include – but are not limited to – The Handshake blog, Contemporary HUM, the Pantograph Punch (NZ), Art jewelry Forum, Metalsmith magazine (US) The Journal of Modern Craft (UK) Garland (AU) Klimt02 (SP) & Art Aurea (DE).

Outcomes

At the end of the program, participants will have built an awareness of historical and contemporary curatorial craft practices; developed their research, observation and critical writing skills; and honed their ability to competently write three types of text: a report on a historical exhibition (through research), a critical review (through direct engagement with exhibitions) and an extended artist bio (through research and interview).

We are interested in documenting this program – required readings, writing briefs and debriefs, draft and stage versions of texts – with a view to publishing an online or in-print pedagogical document on critical writing.

Requirements

Participants must hold a BA in visual art, art/craft history, curatorial practice, or cultural administration and be familiar with contemporary craft disciplines (international and Oceania/New Zealand). Participants should have good communication skills, some work experience in the arts, and some writing skills. Participants should be NZ citizens, or have NZ permanent residency status. Participants will be expected to review exhibitions in New Zealand.

Your application will contain:

- a CV, stating the applicant's experiences in writing, curation, visual arts;
- a 400-words statement of intent, describing your motivation for applying; A choice of two from the following three writing samples:
- a 800-word craft object analysis,
- a 500-words critical review of an exhibition,
- 3x 150-words Instagram posts on an exhibition / object encounter / people encounter.

Application deadline **Friday 22 November 2019**

Programme and Timeline

The programme will run from February 2020 – to Dec 2021

Participation fee is NZ\$ 500.00 pp for the two-year course

Successful applicants will receive a list of required readings about the history of craft exhibition-making, alongside essays on critical writing.

The participant will be assigned over the course of the 2-year program a minimum of:

- Five 500/800-words reviews
 - Five extended bio
 - One 1200-words historical report
 - One in-depth, 3000 words review
- Mentorship will consist of the following:
- four individual 1-hr Skype session per year,
 - two group 2-hrs sessions per year.
- You must expect a workload of 2-hours minimum per week.

Bio / CV

Benjamin Lignel is an educator, writer, curator and artist. Alongside his artistic and curatorial practices, he started contributing essays and op-eds to magazines and publications in 2006, and became a member of *Think Tank. A European Initiative for the Applied Arts*, in 2009. He was the editor of Art Jewelry Forum between January 2013 and December 2016. During his tenure, Benjamin oversaw the publication of more than 350 essays, reviews and interviews, and edited three books, including the first book-length study of jewelry exhibition-making. He is guest teacher at the Akademie der Bildende Künste (Nürnberg), Alchimia (Florence), Warren Wilson College (Swannanoa) and has conducted numerous workshops on creative and critical writing (in Italy, the United states, and New Zealand). Ben is currently working with co-editor Namita Wiggers towards a publication on jewelry and gender. He is on the editorial advisory board of Norwegians Crafts (Oslo) and of the *Journal of Jewellery Research* (Loughborough). He lives in Montreuil (France).

Namita Gupta Wiggers is a writer, curator, and educator based in Portland, OR. Wiggers is the Director of the Master of Arts in Critical and Historical Craft Studies at Warren Wilson College, North Carolina. This low residency program, the first of its kind, focuses on critical and historical craft studies. She is the Director and Co-Founder of Critical Craft Forum, an online platform for dialogue and exchange, CCF has organized annual sessions on craft at College Art Association since 2010. From 2004-14, Wiggers served as Curator (2004-2012) and then Director and Chief Curator (2012-14), Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, OR. She contributes to online and in-print journals and books, and serves on the Editorial Boards of *Garland* and *Norwegian Crafts*. From 2014-18, Wiggers served as the Exhibition Reviews Editor, *The Journal of Modern Craft*. She is a former Trustee of the American Craft Council and Center for Craft, and currently serves on the Board of Directors of Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. She is the editor of the forthcoming *Companion in Contemporary Craft* with Wiley Blackwell Publishers (2020).

Felicity Milburn is a Curator at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, where she works collaboratively with artists on a wide range of projects, from temporary installations through to large-scale survey exhibitions. She writes regularly for the Gallery's exhibition catalogues, website and quarterly magazine and also contributes to local and international publications, including *Art New Zealand*, *Takahē*, *Landfall* and *World Sculpture News*. Her essays have featured in books on several leading New Zealand artists, including Joanna Braithwaite, Séraphine Pick, Lisa Walker and, most recently, *Jacqueline Fahey: Say Something!*, which sold out its first print-run. Between 2015 and 2017 she was Art Editor for *Takahē* magazine, a long-running, not-for-profit New Zealand literary magazine. In that role, she commissioned and edited essays by established and emerging writers. She is currently working with ceramic artist Cheryl Lucas on an exhibition and book project.