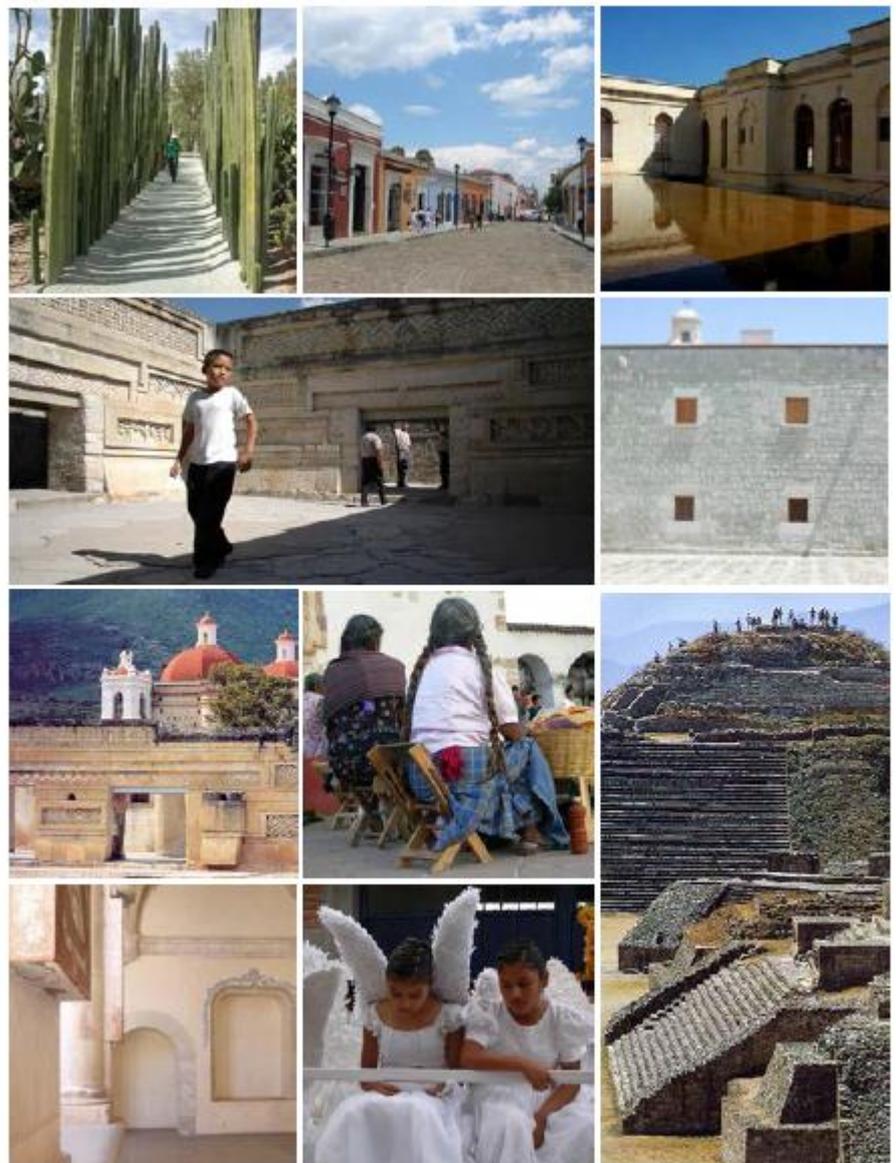


CRAFTING FUTURES MEXICO 2019 BRIEF FOR DESIGNERS/MAKERS



Oaxaca (photos by Oax-i-fornia)

1. INTRODUCTION

The British Council, Applied Arts Scotland and Oax-i-fornia are inviting proposals from Scotland and Mexico-based designers to take part in a 3-week residency in Oaxaca, a region in Mexico famous for its craft traditions. Selected designers will form teams with local design graduates and artisans to develop prototype products. The programme started in 2017 and, in 2019, was expanded to include a public programme delivered in partnership with Applied Arts Scotland at the end of the residency period.

Crafting Futures Mexico is part of a global British Council programme spanning over 10 countries in Asia, Middle East – North Africa and Latin America. For further information visit: <https://design.britishcouncil.org/projects/crafting-futures/>

2. OBJECTIVES

Crafting Futures Mexico is a three-week experimental collaboration developed by the British Council in collaboration with Oax-i-fornia, that brings together a Scotland-based designer/maker, a Mexican designer, and two Oaxacan design graduates, to work with a select group of artisans in Oaxaca, Mexico. The goal of the residency is to investigate new methodologies for the use of design and creativity as tools for social change and cultural engagement.

As a creative exchange, the programme proposes a unique strategy: rather than set up a designer/producer relationship (in which the designers design, and the artisans make the finished pieces), it seeks a shared space of interaction and creative making, in which the goals are established collaboratively. The residency's intention is not to supplant the traditional visual language of any craft but to enrich it by creating, in unison, an alternative to what already exists.

Crafting Futures begins with what already exists in the body of work of a particular artisan as a starting point for creative dialogue and collaboration with a designer. The idea is to re-think traditional form, material and technique through experiment and play, and thus develop a new body of work that can be commercialised by the artisan and to which he or she will hold the rights of production. The designers are acknowledged as collaborators for any pieces that go to market.

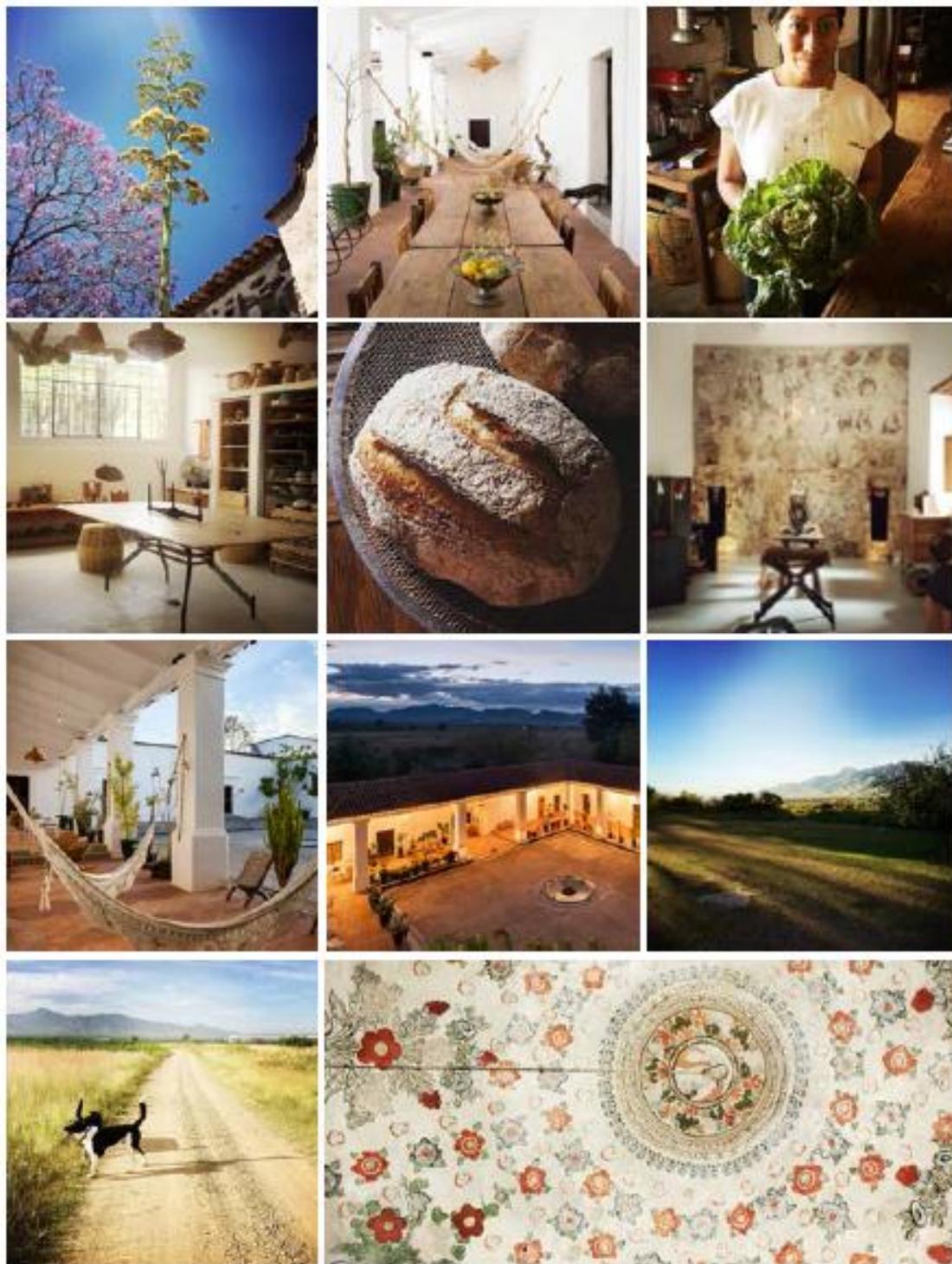
The main objectives of this programme include:

- **the development of a rich cross-cultural collaboration** in which both sides, designer and artisan, participate as equals;
- **providing a space for design exploration and creative freedom** while pushing the boundaries of the materials and craft techniques at hand;
- **the production of two collections of objects**, designed in collaboration with two artisan families in Oaxaca, Mexico;
- **possible tangible positive social and economic impact** through the creation of new design products benefiting the artisans involved.

3. CONTEXT

With a history of thousands of years of traditional craft and artistic production, Oaxaca's cultural wealth is unparalleled in almost all the world. The variety and quality of its crafts, including weaving, ceramics, wood carving, and a vast multitude of others, are internationally famous. Also remarkable is that all layers of its artistic history—ancient, colonial, and modern—remain alive and in constant relation to one another. Alongside its traditional crafts, the city of Oaxaca is home to a sophisticated contemporary arts and design community. Furthermore, Oaxaca is the most culturally diverse state of Mexico, home to 16 indigenous groups, all of whom maintain their

distinct languages, dress, gastronomy, and traditional ways of producing craft, by some of the best artisans in Mexico today.



Ex-Hacienda Guadalupe, Oax-i-fornia (photos by Oax-i-fornia)

4. THE ARTISANS

Oax-i-fornia has identified a number of artisans that are interested in taking part in the collaboration. Makers/designers are asked to respond to the materials and techniques outlined below:

Gabriel Sosa, San Martín Tilcajete - Wood carving

Gabriel Sosa Ortega's intent is to create works with human impact, hoping to generate through his work social benefit. Originally from San Martín Tilcajete, Ocotlán, Oaxaca, he began carving wood at the age of 14 in the workshop of his father Jesús Sosa Calvo. By the end of high school, he had already mastered graphic techniques, woodcutting, screen printing, and lithography. Gabriel's current work mixes popular and contemporary art, often using the theme of Oaxacan folklore. His experimentation of textures and forms aims to combine them harmoniously within a single painting, in each piece revealing part of the essence of Oaxacan culture.

Material and technique: Material: Copal (a type of wood native to Oaxaca)

Technique: Traditional copal wood carving (using machete, navajo, chisel, and sanding with different grades of sandpaper) with an incrustation of acrylic paint, maguey fiber, and dry branches and roots.



Esperanza Martinez, Sierra Juárez, Oaxaca – Silk cocoons

In the 1940s, representatives of the government arrived in towns in the Sierra Juárez with seedlings of mulberry trees; a number of years later they returned with silkworms. In this way, the craft of weaving silk was revived in the sierra.

For decades, the family of Esperanza has raised silkworms, spun silk from the cocoons, and woven silk rebozos, working for months to create a single, extraordinary piece. As a child, Esperanza collected the cast-off cocoons that could not be used for weaving and fashioned whimsical animals; now, out of these same cocoons, she creates jewellery and other objects of incredible intricacy and breadth. During Oax-i-fornia's workshop, the explorations centered around the luminescence in the material, as well as collaborations with her siblings through work that brings harmony to weaving, macramé and cocoons.

Material and technique: silk cocoons, macarame, jewellery making



Fabián Pacheco, Oaxaca - Tin

Fabián began working with tin as a young man as an apprentice in a workshop in Oaxaca, where he built candlesticks and other products in demand at the time. Other products popular at the time were toys such as trains, rattles, and soldiers—pieces that were quite complex to make. Soon Fabian became independent and established his own workshop. The type of products that began to be in demand changed—they were decorative, such as mirror frames in various sizes and shapes, or sculptural pieces with many figures of animals. Recently, he is noticing another change in the market, which is returning to a desire for utilitarian objects.

Material and technique: The tin used in this craft is a thin sheet, while the technique consists of making cuts to the sheet, then hammering to forge and decorate it. Pieces can be made in many different sizes and finishes.



César Rodríguez, Tlacolula Valley – Silver

Cesar started his career in the art of jewellery at the age of 11, helping some relatives who were jewellers. This sparked his desire to learn more and, ultimately, to create his own designs. Cesar made his own first piece, a Yalalag cross, when he was 17. He proceeded to produce replicas of jewellery found in the tombs at the ancient archaeological site of Monte Albán. Finally he began his work in “milagros” (small metal charms used for religious purposes) which is his current specialty.

Material and technique: silver jewellery, filigree, lost wax process casting



5. PROJECT STRUCTURE

ELIGIBILITY:

In order to be selected, you must meet the eligibility criteria for membership of Applied Arts Scotland. For details, see <https://www.appliedartsscotland.org.uk/members/membership-information/>.

PARTICIPANTS:

1 Scotland-based designer/maker; 1 Mexico-based designer; 2 recent design graduates from Oaxaca; 2 artisan families; assembled in 2 teams:

A- Scotland-based designer with a Oaxacan designer and a Oaxacan artisan family.

B- Mexico-based designer with a Oaxacan designer and a Oaxacan artisan family.

DURATION:

3 weeks + 1-day public programme; final dates TBC but likely to be Sun 10-Sat 30 Nov 2019 (residency), Mon 2 Dec 2019 (public programme).

PHASE I: IMMERSION

The first phase, lasting about a week, brings residents in close contact with the host culture through guided visits to sites, institutions and informal meeting with cultural stakeholders in Oaxaca. The goal of this phase is to provide targeted opportunities to acquire basic visual, cultural, and historical knowledge of Oaxaca and its surroundings. .

PHASE II: EXPERIMENTATION AND PRODUCTION

The second phase begins with studying the existing body of work in the artisan's studio, kicking off the creative process for the rest of the residency. Exhibition of the work will take place in a gallery in Oaxaca with possible venues in Mexico City and London (subject to further funding being secured).

DELIVERABLES/OBJECTIVES:

Each team will be responsible for a collection of 7-9 original pieces (2 collections total).

RIGHTS AND REPRODUCTION:

All copyright and reproduction rights for the collections will be donated to the artisans who will be free to reproduce and commercialise the pieces created during the programme, with designers fully credited. Further details will be provided in advance of the residency.

6. THE RESIDENCY

The residency support will consist of:

1. **international transportation** (flight UK-MX-UK) and local transportation;
2. **3 weeks' accommodation** at Ex Hacienda de Guadalupe;
3. **subsistence** for 3 weeks' residency (meals and local transportation);
4. **advice, contacts and support** from Oax-i-fornia;
5. **materials and production costs** covered.

Please note that you will need to arrange your own travel insurance for this trip.

The designer/maker is expected to

1. **be able to travel to Oaxaca, Mexico** for a period of 4 weeks (3 weeks' residency and 1 day public programme) between **10 November to 2 December 2019**;
2. **commit time before the project** for preparation and research, including briefing/prep sessions with British Council and Oax-i-fornia (via phone, Skype or video conference);
3. **be available for the duration of the residency** and creation of a project in Oaxaca, Mexico;

4. **participate in media interviews**, and potential student talk/workshop at the university and during public programme;
5. **participate in the documentation, wrap-up and evaluation** of the programme;
6. **document their observations and keep a travelogue**, to be published via the ADF website, BC Mexico social media and Oax-i-fornia website.
7. **prepare and deliver a presentation** for the public programme that includes observations from the residency.

7. PUBLIC PROGRAMME

The Residency will conclude with a public programme in Oaxaca, delivered with local partners. Participants will be expected to share their experience through talks and workshops. Further details TBC.

8. HOW TO APPLY

Submissions are accepted via email only and must be sent in a single .zip archive folder no larger than 5MB in total. Please format all written material as a single PDF document.

Completed applications should be sent to **pamela.zuniga@britishcouncil.org** by **4pm (GMT) on 07 August 2019**. Successful applicants will be notified by **16 August 2019**.

The following materials should be included in your application:

1. **Proposal:**
Please include a brief description and timeline for your proposed activities and project during your stay based on the artisans' profiles mentioned in this document.
2. **Statement:**
Discuss how your proposed project is situated in relation to your current practice and the broader context of your work, research, and interests.
3. **Curriculum Vitae:**
Describe your background to a maximum length of three pages. Please include all relevant contact information and a personal website, if applicable.
4. **Supporting material:**
If necessary, please submit up to fifteen pieces of additional support material, including digital images, videos, or audio clips or links to video and audio work hosted online with a corresponding numbered image list. The panel will review up to a maximum of five minutes of time-based work.

9. SELECTION

Final selection will be made by the project team:

- **María García Holley**, Head of Arts, British Council Mexico
- **Raul Cabra** (Oax-i-fornia), Residency Coordinator
- **Ana Elena Mallet**, Mexico advisor
- **Lynne Mennie** (Applied Arts Scotland), UK advisor
- **Netty Sopata** (Applied Arts Scotland), UK advisor

10. PRESS AND PUBLICITY

The selected designer is expected to agree to any reasonable requests for press or media, and to discuss media coverage with the British Council. Press information will be agreed upon and released by the British Council.

11. NOTES

Partner information:

British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We are on the ground in six continents and over 100 countries, bringing international opportunity to life, every day. The programmes we initiate to do this are wide-ranging and cover the Arts, Education & Society, and English & Exams.

The British Council's Architecture Design Fashion (ADF) department creates links between designers and cultural institutions around the world, through a diverse range of projects across the three disciplines. Recent projects include the *International Fashion Showcase*, the *Maker Library Network* and *New British Inventors: Inside Heatherwick Studio*. For more information on our work in architecture, design and fashion please visit:

<http://design.britishcouncil.org/>

The British Council Mexico's arts programme centres around fostering links between the cultural sectors in the UK and Mexico, with emphasis on entrepreneurship, innovation and social inclusion, in addition to presenting the best of UK arts and culture to Mexican audiences. For more information, visit <https://www.britishcouncil.org.mx/en/programmes/arts>.

Oax-i-fornia

Oax-i-fornia is a project founded in 2005 using play as a catalyst for collaboration and exchange between artisans, designers, and artists. Directed by designer Raul Cabra, the project is based at the Ex-Hacienda de Guadalupe in San Jerónimo Tlacoahuaya, fifteen miles from the city centre. The Ex-Hacienda is a 300-year-old stone house in close proximity to the artisan communities with whom we work, to the shifting histories of the Valley of Oaxaca, and to the dramatic natural landscape that has shaped human culture in Oaxaca for millennia. Long-standing relationships have been developed with many artisan families in the neighbouring towns help facilitate a productive and respectful opportunity for collaboration with visiting designers and residents.

A primary goal for Oax-i-fornia and all of the projects endorsed by the Ex-Hacienda Guadalupe is to create social benefit and have a positive impact in the communities with which they work. This residency in collaboration with the British Council is an important component of that goal.

<http://www.oaxifornia.org/>

Applied Arts Scotland

Applied Arts Scotland is a membership organisation run by makers for makers giving an authentic, collective and professional voice for the sector and delivering tangible benefits to the professional maker community in Scotland. We nurture the creative heart and soul of making practice, celebrate expertise, and facilitate practical opportunities for creative and professional development.

<https://www.appliedartsscotland.org.uk/>

For further information or enquiries please contact:

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