

# Craft 2026

Craft 2026 is an exhibition of contemporary craft with ceramics, glass textiles and metal work from established professionals and emerging creatives from the UK, Europe, North America, Africa and East Asia as well as our annual exhibition of DMU Design Craft second year student work

Exhibitions and events run from **29<sup>th</sup> May – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Find out more [@lcbdepot](https://www.instagram.com/lcbdepot) or at [lcbdepot.co.uk/event/craft2026/](https://lcbdepot.co.uk/event/craft2026/)



## ***Thisiswhatido***

Sam Gleeson

The development of tools is a defining aspect of Homo sapiens, setting us apart from other primates. Arguably, the knife was one of our first tools. Today, it remains an indispensable part of daily life, connecting people across food traditions, generations and geographical locations through materials, techniques and shared skills.

Gleeson's work encapsulates this culture, these ideas, stories and heritage in a form we all recognise.

High carbon steels are forge-welded with historical salvage. Handles are hewn from timbers of long-forgotten orchards, limbs of storm damaged trees from Estate Houses, or relics of buried forests found in the boglands.

His work has become synonymous with his passion of exceptional forging and a belief in sustainable and found materials. His understanding of materials, process, geometries, chemistry cements all these elements and defines a high-quality everyday tool that will become an heirloom.

A lot of his work is done through feel, not sight – this is where the repetition and understanding of the craft is really put into practice. When you hold one of his knives and close your eyes, you will feel its exact balance and comfort, run your fingers (carefully) along the blade and you will understand why it cuts so well, you will feel the forged in tapers and the smoothness of the cold forging and refinements.

## **Artist Bio**

I am an artist and maker based on the west coast of Ireland. Having lived and worked across the globe, my practice is shaped by a deep respect for traditional craftsmanship, natural materials, and sustainable processes.

My primary medium is the knife—an object that represents the intersection of utility, tradition, and beauty. Drawing inspiration from figures like David Nash, William Morris, and furniture maker Peter Korn, my work explores humanity's relationship with natural resources, food culture, and the creative reuse of waste.

Using advanced forging techniques of the traditional bladesmith, woodcraft of a contemporary furniture maker and the scientific understandings of an environmental chemist, I craft knives that are both highly functional and sculpturally expressive. Each piece tells a story—of transformation, of heritage, and of connection to the material world.

I look to deepen my own practice through opportunities to learn & preserve this culture, these ideas, stories & heritage. The connections between community and social history have also allowed me to bridge my craft practice into an arts narrative whilst sharing my skills through education and exhibitions.

High carbon steels are forge-welded with historical salvage; wrought iron cartwheel rims, whiskey barrel straps, antique ships anchor chains. Ergonomic handles are hewn from timbers of long-forgotten orchards, limbs of storm damaged native trees from Irish Estate Houses, or relics of buried forests found in the boglands. I have recently become interested in the smelting of iron rich bog soils to create bloom iron (and ultimately steel) in a manner that deeply connects us to ferrous metal history across the globe. And in the creative re-imaging of beach found marine plastics in order to mould handle material.

My work has received multiple awards, including the Arts Council Agility Award, the RDS Crafts Award and a shortlist prize for the Golden Fleece Award. I have also received recognition through the DCCI Future Makers Awards twice, Creative Ireland funding and Clare County Council Arts funding.

I have exhibited both nationally and internationally, most recently at the Collect Art Fair and have work heading to Iceland in June for a collaboration piece in a show at the National Parks Centre. Internationally I have shown at the Homo Faber biennale in Venice, Munich Jewellery Week, The American Artist Blacksmiths Association Tools as Art exhibition and Rings in Water in Slovakia. Nationally in the last year, I was part of the Fort Gallery exhibition A Different Kettle of Fish Altogether, I was profiled in the Form and Fable craft series and had a joint show at the Súil Gallery in Ennis amongst others.

My work has sold to restaurants, chefs, numerous home cooks and private clients around the world and is held in the Arts and Metals permanent collection of the National Museum of Ireland. I was previously commissioned by the National Gallery of Ireland to create a large feature dining table for their café area and have had work commissioned in Ireland, the UK, Europe, Australia, Africa and the Americas.

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<https://www.thisiswhatido.ie/>