



NEWS RELEASE

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Shannon Bye wins inaugural Heritage Crafts Fashion Textile Maker of the Year Award supported by the Costume Society

Hampshire silk weaver Shannon Bye has won the inaugural *Fashion Textile Maker of the Year Award*, supported by the Costume Society, including a £2,000 prize and trophy awarded at a special presentation at Eltham Palace on Tuesday 26 November 2024.

Heritage Crafts was set up 14 years ago as a national charity to support and safeguard heritage crafts skills, and has become well known for its *Red List of Endangered Crafts*, the first research of its kind to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they will survive the next generation.

The award, supported by the **Costume Society**, celebrates a heritage craftsperson who has made an outstanding contribution to fashion textiles over the past year. It recognises a contribution that is far beyond the ordinary, based on a proven dedication to a particular fashion textiles skill.



Shannon Bye is Heritage Weaving Manager at Whitchurch Silk Mill. Her progression as a silk weaver at the Mill reflects her dedication and passion for her craft. During the last year, as well as making excellent progress in her own silk weaving practice, she has developed her capacity to lead a growing team of weaver tacklers.

The *Fashion Textiles Maker of the Year* trophy was made by milliner **Vivienne Lake**, and uses a number of techniques including pleating and embroidery. The judging panel for the award included Costume Society Vice Chair Professor **Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas** and fashion entrepreneur, designer, curator, and educator **Monique Lee Hylands-White**.

The two other finalists for the award were **Clare Campbell**, whose work is represented in the prestigious permanent collections of the National Museum of Scotland, highlighting her commitment to excellence and innovation in the textile industry, and **Rachel Frost**, a self-taught, multidisciplinary artist and historian who creates both historical and contemporary headwear and bags using a wide range of techniques.



The **Costume Society** is a UK membership organisation formed in 1964 to promote the study and preservation of historic and contemporary dress. Its new partnership with Heritage Crafts has also seen three new training bursaries awarded earlier this year to early-career practitioners in millinery and historical costume design.

Professor **Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas**, Vice Chair of the Costume Society, said:

“The Costume Society is delighted to be running a new Fashion Textile Maker of the Year Award and three new training bursaries in collaboration with Heritage Crafts to mark our 60th anniversary year. The award and bursaries extend the Costume Society’s mission to support the study and promotion of historic and contemporary dress by enhancing and protecting the skills of makers that are so central to fashion textiles. These opportunities are made possible by a legacy from founder member Anne Thomas, who worked tirelessly to celebrate excellence in makers and making.”

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Photo captions:

- **Shannon Bye**, winner of the 2024 *Fashion Textile Maker of the Year Award*, and **Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas**, Vice Chair of the Costume Society. Photo by Robert Wade.
- *Fashion Textile Maker of the Year Award* trophy, made by **Vivienne Lake**.

About Heritage Crafts

Founded in 2009, the Heritage Crafts is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered as the 'Heritage Crafts Association', the advocacy body for traditional heritage crafts. Working in partnership with government and key agencies, it provides a focus for craftspeople, groups, societies and guilds, as well as individuals who care about the loss of traditional crafts skills, and works towards a healthy and sustainable framework for the future. Its aim is to support and promote heritage crafts as a fundamental part of our living heritage.

www.heritagecrafts.org.uk

About the *Red List of Endangered Crafts*

The Red List of Endangered Crafts, created by Heritage Crafts, was the first to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they would survive the next generation. The 2023 edition of the Red List, funded by the Pilgrim Trust, assessed 259 crafts to identify those which are at greatest risk of disappearing, of which 62 have been classified as critically endangered, 84 as endangered and 112 as currently viable.

The Red List shows that the craft knowledge, skills and practices that form an important part of our shared cultural heritage are – for a number of reasons – at risk of being lost. Heritage Crafts believes that these cultural assets are as important as unique heritage buildings and ancient beautiful landscapes and could provide future generations with fantastic opportunities to enrich their lives and the lives of others.

<http://redlist.heritagecrafts.org.uk>