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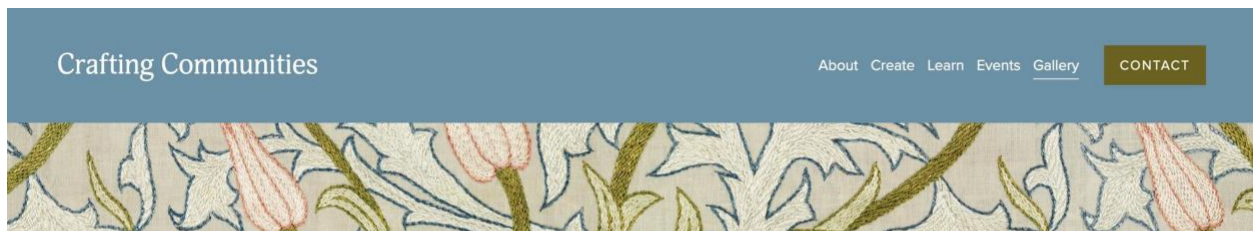
Crafting Communities

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Creations from the Community

Thank you to our workshop and tutorial participants for sending in photos of their Crafting Communities projects!

Please send us your works in progress and/or finished creations:

Email us at craftyvictorians@gmail.com or message us on Instagram [@crafty_victorians](https://www.instagram.com/crafty_victorians) or tweet us [@craftyvictorian](https://twitter.com/craftyvictorian)



Crafting Communities' Gallery page

In the spring of 2020, when many felt untethered by the COVID-19 pandemic, Crafting Communities emerged to address this alienation by “enabling hands-on learning in a hands-off context” within the field of Victorian material culture, as the site notes. From a pilot program of two

online events, the project has expanded to comprise further roundtables and online discussions, craft workshops and tutorials, an online exhibition, a podcast, and additional written resources. More than two years on, the site continues to provide a vibrant home for resources and discussions about Victorian material culture.

The litany of components which make up Crafting Communities comprise a combination of digital resources, online events, and documentation to support offline crafting. The online events might be thought of as Crafting Communities' catalyst and core. Unfortunately, recordings of these are not included; the Events page simply provides a list of past and future offerings. However, indirect documentation exists in many of the site's other components. Several of the tutorials on the Create page, including hair art and broderie anglaise (a needlework technique featuring cut-out eyelets), were originally presented in real-time workshops. All of the objects in the *Victorian Things* online exhibition (found via the Learn page), were discussed first in either a roundtable discussion or an episode of the *Victorian Samplings* podcast (also located on the Learn page). Someone interested in hair art might, therefore, lament having missed the real-time workshops held in 2020, but still find images of contemporary projects, detailed instructions on how to create their own works, and a thoroughly described historical object on various pages across the site.

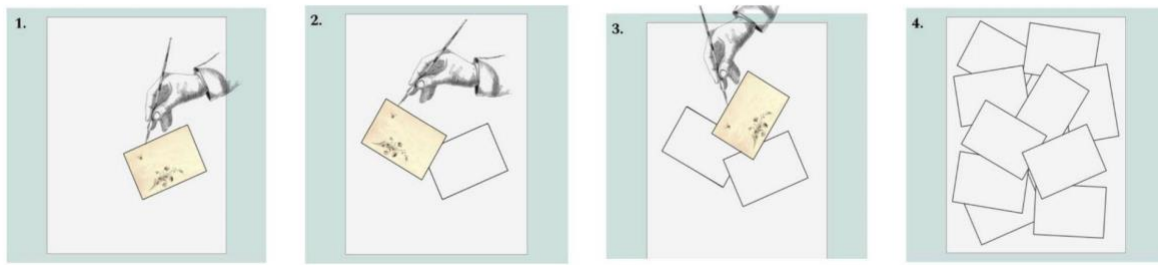
This complex interweaving and productive redundancy of content makes Crafting Communities a richly multisensory, multimodal project. Varied forms of engagement are persistently integrated within the individual site components. For instance, citations within the object records in Victorian Things (an online exhibition) reference not only "Suggested Reading" but also "Selected Viewing" and "Selected Listening." Within the craft tutorials, images, written descriptions, and videos overlap to create clear and accessible instructions for makers with a wide range of experience and confidence levels. Slightly frustratingly, the videos, while hosted on YouTube, must be accessed through the individual tutorials rather than listed together on the Crafting Communities YouTube page.

Activity #3: Calling card page

Victorians often left calling cards for their hosts as mementos of social visits (people would display trays full of calling cards as a measure of their social circle). Calling cards were also pasted into scrapbooks. Alternatively, scrapbookers would trace shapes onto a page and have friends and family sign their names in the shapes to make them look like calling cards.

Materials: blank book, pencil and black pen, scissors, cut out calling card from handout (or business card/credit card)

1. Place your card anywhere on the blank page and trace around it in pencil.
2. Pick up your card and place it again in a way that overlaps with the existing trace.
3. Repeat until your page is full of overlapping calling card shapes.
4. Outline with pen.
5. Ask your friends and family to sign a "calling card"!



A section of the "Victorian Scrapbooking" online tutorial created by Ruth Ormiston

For all the thoughtful ways in which information is duplicated and connected, the largest drawback of Crafting Communities is that the site has limited navigation capabilities. Adding features such as filtering the list of events by type, and linking directly from an object record to the relevant podcast episode would considerably reduce the scrolling currently required. Furthermore, there is a gallery of work submitted by participants in the workshops and tutorials, with no identifying information accompanying the images. In short, the current site navigation is intuitive, but not efficient.

With its emphasis on richness of connectivity over technological innovation, Crafting Communities is perhaps better understood as a community to join than a resource to draw upon, aimed at a broad range of interests. Much of the content (especially the *Victorian Samplings* podcast) emphasizes research methodologies and pedagogy, making it valuable for researchers and educators within and beyond Victorian studies. With its concise presentation of information and extensive links to further resources, the *Victorian Things* online exhibition could provide a helpful starting point for student projects. Finally, the workshops and craft tutorials are appealing to anyone who enjoys making, whether within an academic context or not.



William Moon's "Reading for the Blind" Primer



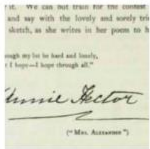
Miniature Portrait of Elizabeth Siddall



Charlotte Brontë's "Little Book"



J. M. Whistler's "The Fleet: Monitors"



Mrs. Alexander's Mark



The "Ladies Carpet"



Hannah Claus's "interlacings"



The Brontë Family's Broken Hair Bracelet



Kate Greenaway's Design for Nursery Wallpaper



Clemence Housman's "The Were-Wolf"



Amelia Wood's Conversation Tube & Pouch



William Macready & Charles Dickens's Scrap Screen

Objects in the *Victorian Things* online exhibition

Crafting Communities is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Reflecting the diverse community supported by the project, organizers from three Canadian universities have recruited a wide range of contributors, including contemporary artists, librarians, and undergraduate students as well as established academics. As the project continues to grow (the second podcast season began in late July), it seems likely that the network woven by Crafting Communities will become still more varied and vibrant.