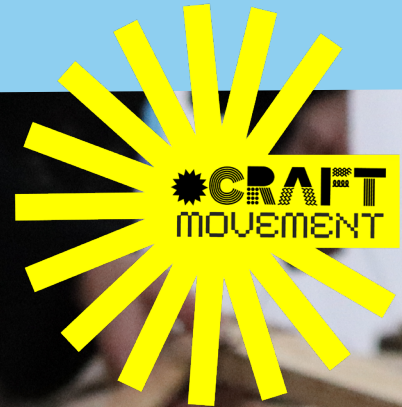
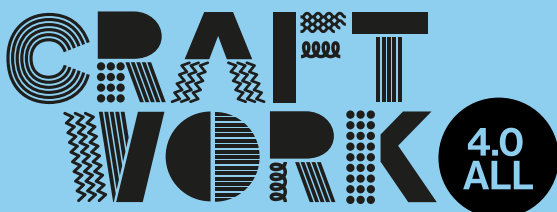




Wood, Paint & Living Forms

*Equilibrium in Practice with
Mark Redden*

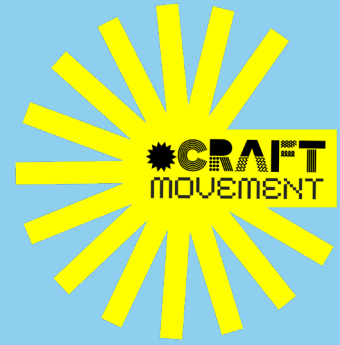


European platform
for the promotion
of emerging
craft professionals



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Workshop at ESPRONCEDA,
Institute of Art and Culture



Introduction

Overview

This workshop aims to explore concepts of balance, transformation, and material intelligence through traditional craftsmanship and sculptural experimentation.

Focused on sustainability, material optimization and recycling, the workshop is developed in collaboration with the artist Mark Redden. The idea is to extend the conceptual and material research of the HOMEOSTASIS exhibition into a collective, embodied process.

Audience, setup and adaptability

The workshop is open to professional or amateur artists and craft practitioners who want to put their creativity to the test, no prior experience is required.

Designed for up to twenty participants, it offers a collaborative and engaging experience in a temporary lab. A room with tables and chairs is required to carry out the manual work session, while the materials and tools were provided by the artist.

Workshop author

Developed with the collaboration of the artist Mark Redden, the workshop reflects his personal artistic view and is based on some essential pillars of his research, such as intuitive process, recycled materials, transformation and adaptation of the matter.

Artistic background

Mark Redden (Dublin, 1979) is an Irish visual artist, working across painting, sculptures and drawing, he's been based in Barcelona for twenty years now. His practice is influenced by traditional craft knowledge, such as the Irish currach boat building. Through wood, pigment, canvas, and reclaimed materials, Redden creates abstract forms that explore balance, memory, emotion and transformation.



Learning objectives

Participants of the workshop are introduced to the materials used by the artist, which are pieces of wood of various sizes and shapes, often considered waste or recycled material, such as branches washed up by the sea. The aim is to use these discarded objects as a starting point to create something creative and new, with a collective focus on responsibility.

By co-creating a temporary sculptural installation, which evolved continuously during the event, the guests extend the conceptual research of the HOMEOSTASIS exhibition. The aim is to help participants rediscover the importance of manual skills and traditional craftsmanship, which can coexist with contemporary artistic expression and with awareness and respect for the world around us.

Required materials

Materials for the workshop:

- Pencils
- tape
- wood scraps: pieces of pine and oak for steam-bending techniques, pieces recycled from other experiments, already colored or with unusual shapes, branches carried by the sea
- seaSpray paint
- woodworking tools: clamps, hatchet, saws, glue, chisels
- paint
- paper tablecloth

Preparation for the workshop

- Prepare the space with 5 tables, each set up as a workstation, covered with paper tablecloth to prevent damages and fixed with tape. Bring enough chairs so that everyone can sit.
- Bring the materials: pieces of wood and work tools.
- Buy some food and set up a station with coffee, tea, and snacks for a break



Implementing the workshop in 8 simple steps



Step 1 - Introduction to the workshop

For the introduction, begin by presenting your organization, the hosts, your objectives, and what will be provided during the workshop. Introduce yourself to the participants and ask them about their experience with traditional craftsmanship. Following this, the hosts will introduce themselves, share insights about their work, and briefly outline the plan and methodology for the workshop to ensure better understanding and to help participants feel more comfortable.



Step 2 - A bit of stretching to start

To activate their energy, participants begin with a quick stretching session. Awakening the body also means awakening the mind, and this is a fundamental concept for the artist, an integral part of his creative process. Now everyone is ready to start their project in the best possible way. This is followed by a presentation of each artist present, which allows participants to get to know each other and form bonds within the group.



Step 3 - Technical instructions

This moment is very important because it lays the foundations for all the work that follows. It is necessary to know the tools you are going to use and the safest way to use them consciously. Mark Redden proceeds to show some options for joining two pieces of wood: the first option is to glue them together with special glue, the second, more complex but efficient, allows for a secure fit between the parts, creating a hole in one part and the corresponding piece to be inserted into the other piece. The artist shows how to work safely and, after the general demonstration, proceeds with a personal consultation to decide on the best options for each project.



Step 4 - Ideas begin to take shape

Everyone chose their pieces and began assembling them according to their personal vision. Some opted for a more figurative result, while others sought an abstract effect. The atmosphere was dynamic, with everyone engaging in dialogue and sharing ideas. Mark was always attentive and offered advice, helping us to become familiar with the tools and the matter.



Step 5 - Learning how to work with steamed wood

An interesting part of the workshop was learning about this ancient craft tradition, which involves softening wood with steam to make it flexible and bendable. Mark talked about the types of wood that work best, like pine and oak, how long they need to be in the steam machine, and how they need to be bent quickly once they are ready. After a technical demonstration with two long sections, he helped some of the participants bend the pieces they needed for their work.

Step 6 - A well-deserved break

Craftsmanship can be hard, tiring work, so the best thing to do was to take a break halfway through. Food and, above all, hot drinks were laid out on the table to warm us up on that cold January day. It was the perfect opportunity to exchange ideas and contacts, clear our heads, and then return to the project fully prepared.



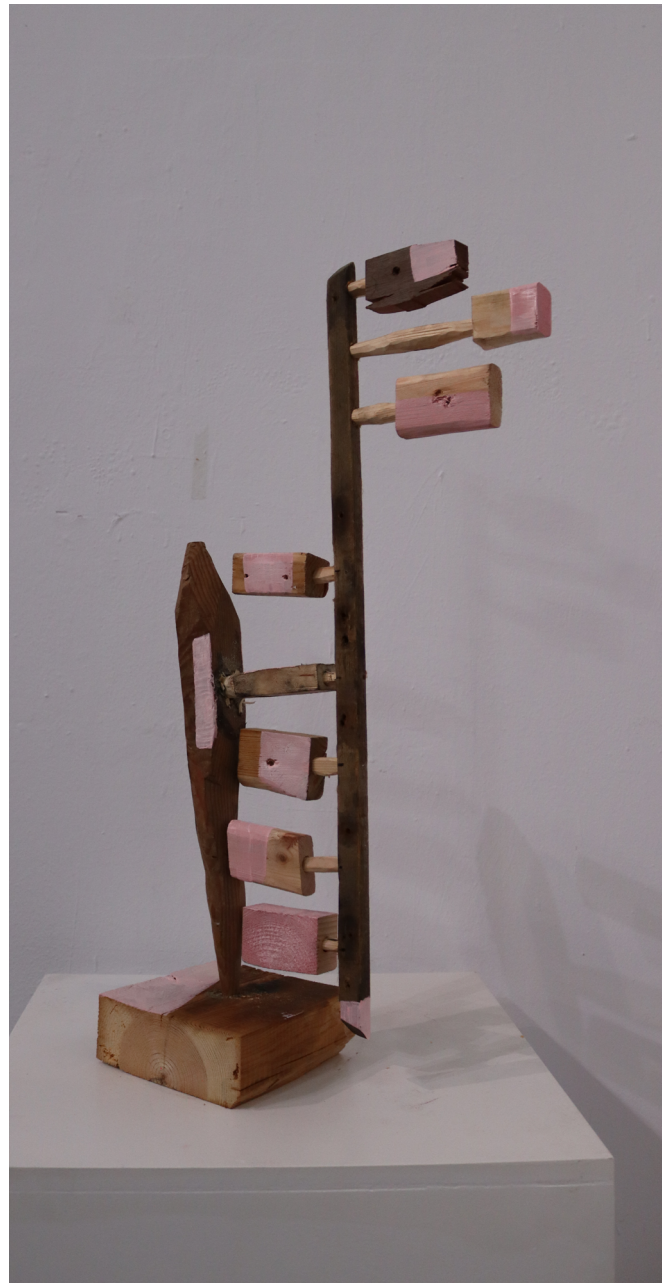
Step 7 - Finishing touches

At this point, everyone is working hard to complete the project. There is excitement in the air and a general sense of satisfaction that only comes from doing something with your own hands. Flashes of color begin to appear between the wood grain, and those who finish first help those who are still completing their projects. It becomes clear that, despite starting with the same material, each person has managed to treat it differently, creating unique pieces that are also part of a larger shared vision.



Step 8 - Everything comes together

In the end the creations follow one another along the gallery wall, hanging just below Mark Redden's canvases, like extended daughters of his vision. The eleven final works were photographed one by one against a white background, then all together they set sail on the boat at the entrance to the exhibition. By looking at them all together, it's interesting to note that, despite starting with the same material, each participant completed a distinct work, approaching the challenge in a personal and unique way.



Final considerations

This workshop was an excellent opportunity for collective experimentation and sharing. The objectives were always at the center of the debate, bringing greater awareness among the participants. The spirit of artisan tradition was fundamental, but at the same time a link was created with contemporary life and its values.

Resources & tips

For inspiration you can visit and/or contact

Mark Redden: <https://www.markredde.com/>

Impressions from participants

Overall, it was a positive experience for the participants. We have reported the testimonials of some of them to build feedback.

Nicole Chufi: with a background in digital and visual art, this Brazilian artist challenged herself to try something new and work with her hands. Despite her initial unfamiliarity with the tools of the trade and manual labor, she was very pleased with the final result and will try to bring her vision into the physical world more often.

Aby Mackie: UK artist based in Barcelona, she usually works with textile, but she became passionate about wood modeling, creating a complex sculpture rich in joints, discovering a new and exciting way to express herself.

Rhiannon Cackett: also a UK artist that has chosen Barcelona for her studio. She is used to working in two dimensions, flattening the volumes of buildings and architecture onto sheets of paper. This workshop allowed her to experiment with three-dimensionality, breaking out of the mold.

Sara Broto: A fluid and experimental Spanish artist and curator, linked to the worlds of music, literature, and visual art, she continues to extend her research into new fields. Her vision of artistic creation, which includes found, discarded, and forgotten objects, has aligned harmoniously with the poetics of Mark Redden.

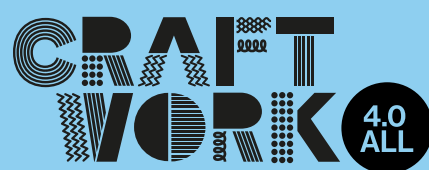
Final output:

The workshop “*Wood, Paint & Living Forms - Equilibrium in Practice*” gave rise to many points for reflection that can be developed even beyond the experience. Working collectively has led to the creation of a relaxed community that is ready to help others, creating lasting connections.

The need to keep the knowledge of artisan craftsmanship alive must go hand in hand with the presence of technology. These are not two opposing worlds, but must coexist in the realm of art.

One potential outcome will be the exhibition of the eleven sculptures as a co-created organic entity, made up of distinct pieces, during the three days **Craft Festival which will be hosted by ESPRONCEDA, in December 2026.**

Together, these final outputs create a meaningful archive of the experience, while offering inspiration and practical examples for future workshops.



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