

COME TOGETHER

It is that special moment again, when the Pullens Yards fling open their iron gates, and invite the world in - the Winter Open Studios. What is special about it?

Pullens Yards were purpose-built for designer-makers in the late 1880s. The studios have housed craftspeople, working with their hands, for a hundred and twenty years. Unsurprisingly, over this length of time, what most of the craftspeople produce has evolved: at one time the Yards boasted lace makers, fan makers and cabinet makers: who have been replaced by today's filmmakers, jewellers and artist potters. A few crafts have stayed, furniture designers and letterpress printers are here now, just as in the days of Queen Victoria.

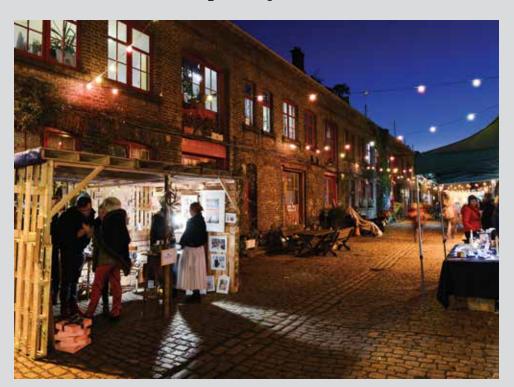
Hannah Arendt wrote of "homo faber". humans fully engaged in shaping the world around them, by actually producing that world with their hands. Making

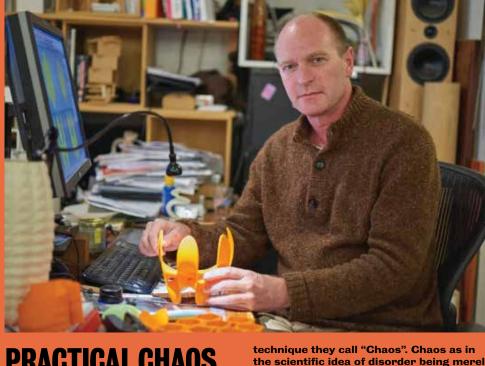
involves thinking about what you make, which amounts to careful thinking about everything that surrounds you. Thinking carefully about making, naturally results in made things that exhibit sensitivity, practicality and beauty.

Richard Sennett in his recent book "The Craftsman" puts it even more succinctly: "making is thinking". Making anything necessarily involves "an intimate connection between hand and head". By making repeatedly you learn from materials and effects, and strive to find better ways of working. This striving unifies everyone in the Yards, no matter whether they make photographs, paintings, silver dogs, wooden chairs or musical instruments.

Sennett again: "craftsmanship names an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake". This is a rare thing in our increasingly robot-made, genericised, that-will-do, cold-calling world. The Yards are a special place, a home to thoughtful making, and on this special weekend we welcome you to participate.

Quentin Newark





PRACTICAL CHAOS

Most people do one thing. They are a teacher, an insurance broker or a flight attendant. Cairn can't put his finger on what he does. And roaming the workshop he shares with Ian Spencer - under the banner Yard Sale Project - and the studio upstairs, you simply can't tell, the spaces are Aladdin's Caves of tools, machines, wood, drawings, maquettes, half-finished wooden or steel carcasses, ceramic forms, and a cupboard, called Cubrik, that swirls open doubling its size with physical ingenuity impossible to understand.

Clements Yard, the home of Cairn's lair. was derelict when he came across it as an industrial design student twenty years ago. He saw its potential immediately. He squatted at first, but then went on to pretty much rebuild it and its studios with a handful of compadres. Is this architecture or community building?

In making their distinctive multi-layered furniture, Cairn and Ian use a design

the scientific idea of disorder being merely a more complicated form of order. Borrowing from the way nothing in Nature is pure, or perfectly symmetrical, they fashion furniture which seems far closer to Henry Moore's sculptures or neolithic tombs than what mass-production methods have made us used to. A myriad blocks of wood bonded like crystals, and carved into sinuous body-like shapes. The chairs are other worldly. Alien thrones.

And then there is Cairn's cutlery for Auerhahn, showing that he can be novel within the tightest parameters. My favourite are the spoons, that twist as though they are reaching for that last drop of honey. Or his bowls for Rosenthal, with food cupped safely in the centre, they bloom outwards like flowers.

Although Nature is clearly at the heart of what he does. Cairn doesn't baulk at unnatural finishes, chrome or polycarbonate. What he is doing though, is bending these industrial substances into forms that humanise them, eccentric, unexpected, rhythmic forms.

Ouentin Newark



























































































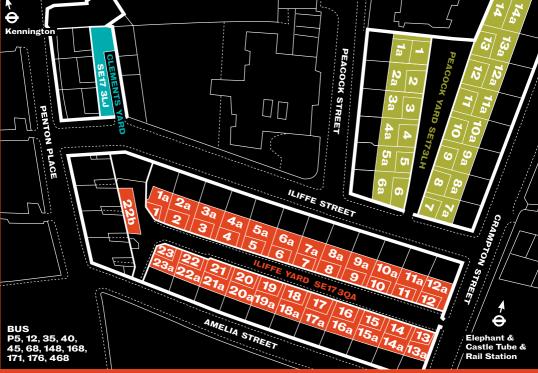














SAVE THE DATE FOR THE NEXT SUMMER OPEN STUDIOS 10/11/12 JUNE 2016