

For immediate release: 17th March 2023

Handpicked Productions is awarded funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for new exciting heritage project, Sekers Objects.



Handpicked Productions based in West Cumbria has received a grant of £78,452 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for Sekers Objects, an exciting two-year heritage project in partnership with Sekers Fabrics, University of Cumbria and Rosehill Theatre. Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, the project focuses on the creation of a crowd sourced digital Sekers Fabrics archive.

Sekers Fabrics was established in 1938 in Whitehaven, and quickly established itself as an innovative design house and silk mill, supplying the haute couture fashion scene. A significant local employer, nurturing skills and talent for nearly 70 years, the factory closed in 2006 and, with no plan to archive the factory's material history, employees took it upon themselves to preserve as much of the factory and its design history as possible.

Sekers Objects will work with the local community to source objects and stories and curate a digital archive, exhibition and associated workshops that will enable people of all ages to engage with their local heritage.

"We are delighted to have received funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The history of Sekers Fabrics is currently dispersed and fragmented, this project will bring it together to create a heritage asset that can be enjoyed by present and future generations." **Anne Timpson, Director Handpicked Productions**

Helen Featherstone, Director England, North at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: *"This is a wonderful project that by working with local people will capture the important and rich textile heritage of Whitehaven, and ensure this fantastic resource is preserved for years to come by establishing a digital archive and associated exhibition. We are absolutely thrilled to support this through The National Lottery Heritage Fund, which is one of the National Lottery's Good Causes."*

Anybody wanting to get involved or find out more about the project can do so by emailing contact@handpickedproductions.org or visiting www.handpickedproductions.org

Notes to editors

Sekers Objects has developed out of the successful Creative Connections project (funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund) which ran from 2018-2021. Creative Connections explored the connections between Sekers Fabrics, Rosehill Theatre and fabric and theatre design. It was through this project that the team became aware of the extensive, yet informal archive of Sekers Fabrics that exists within the local community. Further information on the Creative Connections project can be found at <https://creativeconnectionsatrosehilltheatre.wordpress.com/>

About Handpicked Productions

Handpicked Productions believes in the power of the arts and cultural heritage to change lives. We work collaboratively with communities and artists to create unique, playful encounters that connect people and place, leading to unforgettable experiences and positive social impacts. We develop opportunities for communities of all ages to engage in cultural activity relevant to and reflective of their lives and experiences, enabling them to voice their opinions and raise awareness of the issues affecting them and provide the opportunities to affect change within their community.

Formed in 2021, Handpicked Productions is a Community Interest Company based in west Cumbria, it is led by 4 directors who have extensive experience of working in the community and cultural sector.

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we Inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. www.heritagefund.org.uk.

Follow @HeritageFundUK on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund

Since The National Lottery began in 1994, National Lottery players have raised over £43 billion for projects and more than 635,000 grants have been awarded across the UK.

Further information

For further information, images and interviews please contact Debbie Graham at Handpicked Productions on contact@handpickedproductions.org or 07803008416

**For more information and regular updates please visit
www.handpickedproductions.org or 'Handpicked Productions' on Facebook and Instagram.**

