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Woman's Hour,
BBC Radio 4,
Broadcasting House,
London, W1A 1AA,

The Woman's Hour Craft Prize 2017

Dear Alice Feinstein,
Artists' Union England is an affiliated trade union to the TUC & GfTU. Our aims and objectives include improving the pay and conditions of artists and regulating the arts industry.

A number of our members have contacted the trade union to highlight some of the information given in the FAQ's of the Women's Hour Craft Prize 2017.

*Within the images section there is also opportunity to submit up to two images of work you would show if selected as one of the 12 shortlisted makers to feature in the Woman's Hour Craft Prize exhibition. This can be existing work but **we would encourage entrants to create new work for the exhibition** and so submit illustrative images such as sketches. There is **however no fee available for creating new work** if selected. As we cannot supply information on the dimensions of exhibiting space available to individuals we are encouraging ambition in proposed new work but cannot commit to them being accommodated.

As I understand it there is no fee for making new work if selected as one of the 12 shortlisted artists for the exhibition. If this is the case it appears the entry conditions are encouraging artists (mainly women) to work for free. I am sure you are aware that many women are already at a disadvantage as the equal pay gap diminishes slowly. This criterion further accentuates the disadvantage and discrimination women will experience. The need for diversity in the arts is imperative. Educational aspirations dwindle for many working class women due to University fees and the industry relies frequently on unpaid work, excluding many who cannot afford to work for free. Arts organisations such as the V&A and the Crafts Council should be advocating for better pay for artists, instead they benefit from the cultural value the unpaid artists bring to their organisation.

The governments squeeze on arts budgets is felt most by those at the bottom of the ladder, the artist. As an individual they are less likely to complain, but as a member of a trade union, it is our responsibility to speak out and draw your attention to the following:

Artists Union England Rates of Pay Guidance (enc) devised and endorsed by AUE members these guidelines are used by artists, commissioners and employers.

The a-n/AIR "Paying Artists Campaign" – further details here: www.a-n.co.uk/paying-artists

Organisations such as the Craft Council and V&A need to acknowledge the very real exploitation that exists in the creative industries and have the opportunity to present a real change in direction. Artists need to be paid for their labour. Our members are looking for your support to help make this happen.

The prize money could have been used to fund new work by women artists, give value to their work and acknowledge their contribution to the arts.

We look forward to hearing how you can help raise the bar for all artists.

Kind Regards

Theresa Easton Secretary AUE

Martin Sundram Co-Chair AUE

Angela Kennedy Co-Chair AUE

CC Bill Sherman Director of Collections & Research V&A

CC Rosy Greenlees Executive Director Craft Council