

Glass blowing on a weeknight? Wecandoo it, Wecandoo it

The popularity of in-person crafting workshops is on the rise. We spoke to the cofounder of Wecandoo, a platform that works as a search engine for local craft workshops, about the joy of crafting and supporting local artisans.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Arts and crafts is considered by some as a pastime exclusively for young people, but that couldn't be further from the truth. In 2020, the global online art market was valued at US\$5.9B - and that's not even taking into consideration in-person events.

The arts and crafts industry is expected to grow another 3.3% by 2028, and that may be, in part, thanks to the pandemic - in August 2020, Hobbycraft reported a 200% increase in online sales from the start of Covid.

When freedoms to move around as we liked were taken away, many turned to old crafting hobbies or looked for new ones to keep them busy - and now life has returned to normal, more people than ever are looking to continue their creative outlets.

Finding local artisans

Enter Wecandoo - a platform that plays host to local artisans who curate and deliver unique craft workshops in person. The company was created by Edouard Eyglunent and his fellow cofounders seven years ago in Paris, and it has now launched in the UK.

The website works as a search engine for in-person crafting workshops. Users can search the site for specific types of workshops or ones happening in their area, and then book onto a session directly.

“The aim of Wecandoo is to support makers in their daily job and to enable the general public to give it a go with professionals who have the proper equipment, a proper studio and proper skills,” says Eyglunent. “We want to connect these two groups together in a fun moment, which is the workshop.”

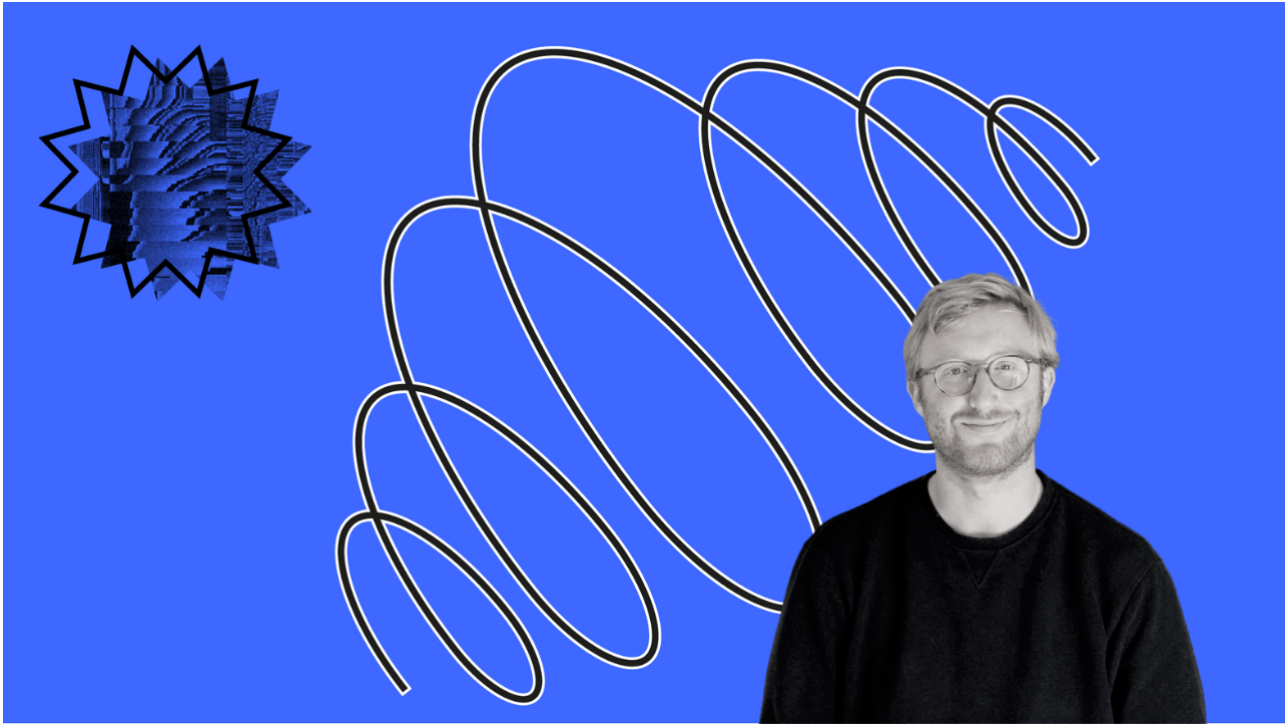
To be featured on the site, Wecandoo has ten rules – with the key one being for artisans to have a studio and not doing it from their living room, for example. They should have two years of experience or a degree in the craft that is applied during the workshop, and it has to be a registered company.

The crux of a workshop must be to transform a raw material – meaning it can’t simply involve assembling beads on a string to make jewellery, for instance. Crafters would need to be actually making the beads in question.

“I’ve always been in love with crafts,” says Eyglunent. “Since I was 11 years old, I would go to a maker’s studio every month and spend one or two days just watching and learning. I learnt how to fix an engine in a car and make a cabinet, for example.

“I always loved it for two main reasons. The first one is the people – I just love passionate people. I feel like I’m getting fed by their energy and the way they look at life and creative problems.

“The second part would be the craft itself. I’ve always been passionate to see how you can transform a block of clay into a pot, for example. It’s just amazing – it’s pure human magic at work.”



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Embracing change

Eyglunent agrees that technology has a significant role to play in the resurgence of crafting, allowing artisans to share their skills with a significantly wider audience. He says we tend to look at artisans as artists, but they're actually entrepreneurs too as they have to oversee everything in their company.

“The production side, how to manage the business, how to control costs, how to define price, how to communicate, how to sell – if you want to communicate and sell today, you need to use technology and *host a proper website*,” he says.

“Tech is fundamental for artisans who want to try to grow their business right now. They need to be tech friendly – or, at least, open to it.”

As well as booking for workshops directly, a big part of Wecandoo’s

offering is the opportunity to buy physical or digital gift vouchers for loved ones – a particularly timely offering with Christmas around the corner.

So, if Edouard was to give a new workshop a go, which would it be?

"Glass blowing! We have recently partnered with Molten1090 where you can learn about this captivating art, transforming old or broken (molten) glassware into something new! I would love to try this out and learn all about about the sustainable elements of the practice."

Edouard Eyglunent is cofounder at Wecandoo.



Join a craft workshop!

Article by Kirstie Pickering