



NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday 27 November 2024

Preethi Kosanam wins inaugural Heritage Crafts Young Leatherworker of the Year Award supported by the Leathersellers' Foundation

London leatherworker Preethi Kosanam has won the inaugural *Young Leatherworker of the Year Award*, supported by the Leathersellers' Foundation, including a £1,000 prize awarded at a special presentation at Eltham Palace on Tuesday 26 November 2024.

Heritage Crafts was set up 14 years ago as a national charity to support and safeguard heritage crafts skills, and has become well known for its *Red List of Endangered Crafts*, the first research of its kind to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they will survive the next generation.

The award, supported by **Leathersellers' Foundation**, celebrates a young leatherworker who has made an outstanding start to their craft career. The winner is highly skilled amongst their peers, whilst raising the perceived value of their craft through sharing and awareness raising. They have given themselves a fantastic chance of achieving long-term success, perhaps overcoming disadvantage or setbacks along the way.

Preethi Kosanam is a graduate of the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Chennai, where she specialised in leather garments and accessories, and now studies at the London College of Fashion. Most recently, she won the prestigious Dents Prize for the most commercial and innovative glove design. She is deeply committed to creating products that are not only functional but also profoundly expressive. She uses



craftsmanship as a medium to address today's pressing issues in fashion, such as sustainability, ethics and consumer responsibility.

The judging panel for the award was made up of **Yusuf Osman** (leatherworker), **Anu Bankole** (accessories and product designer) and **Kerry Senior** (Director at Leather UK).

The two other finalists for the award were **Ana Del Rio**, a fashion designer specialising in leathercraft and the founder of her own brand ANA DEL RIO, and **Shuyen Chen**, a bookbinder on the Graduate Program at West Dean College who won the Best Craftsperson Award in the inaugural Edward James Bookbinding Competition.



The **Leathersellers' Foundation** is a grant funder that enables individuals and communities by working with charities, fosters opportunity through education, and supports the UK leather trade. Its partnership with Heritage Crafts also sees four new training bursaries for early-career leatherworkers to be launched in January.

Heritage Crafts also ran a new **Leatherworker of the Year Award** for practitioners of any age, supported by the **British Leather Industry Development Trust**, which was won by **Natalie Thakur**. Natalie initially started out working in bespoke leather interiors, before starting up her own brand *Natthakur* and pioneering techniques such as hand-painted leather marquetry, specialist leather moulding, and hand-crafted sculptural relief.

ENDS

Contacts:

- For press information and photographs, contact **Tess Osman**, Grants and Awards Officer – tess@heritagecrafts.org.uk.

Photo captions:

- **Preethi Kosanam**, winner of the 2024 *Young Leatherworker of the Year Award*, and **Yusuf Osman**, leatherworker and award judge. Photo by Robert Wade.

- **Preethi Kosanam**, winner of the 2024 *Young Leatherworker of the Year Award*.

About Heritage Crafts

Founded in 2009, the Heritage Crafts is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered as the 'Heritage Crafts Association', the advocacy body for traditional heritage crafts. Working in partnership with government and key agencies, it provides a focus for craftspeople, groups, societies and guilds, as well as individuals who care about the loss of traditional crafts skills, and works towards a healthy and sustainable framework for the future. Its aim is to support and promote heritage crafts as a fundamental part of our living heritage.

www.heritagecrafts.org.uk

About the *Red List of Endangered Crafts*

The Red List of Endangered Crafts, created by Heritage Crafts, was the first to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they would survive the next generation. The 2023 edition of the Red List, funded by the Pilgrim Trust, assessed 259 crafts to identify those which are at greatest risk of disappearing, of which 62 have been classified as critically endangered, 84 as endangered and 112 as currently viable.

The Red List shows that the craft knowledge, skills and practices that form an important part of our shared cultural heritage are – for a number of reasons – at risk of being lost. Heritage Crafts believes that these cultural assets are as important as unique heritage buildings and ancient beautiful landscapes and could provide future generations with fantastic opportunities to enrich their lives and the lives of others.

<http://redlist.heritagecrafts.org.uk>