

HARVEST MOON is a design research project led by Charles Holland and Cat Rossi, Professors of Architecture at UCA Canterbury School of Art, Architecture and Design, conducted in collaboration with Local Works and UCA colleagues Steffi Klenz, Reader in Photography and Stephen Knott, Director, Crafts Study Centre. Materials and assistance provided by Perry Court Farm and Torry Hill Chestnut Fencing. Visual communication by Ben Moore.

The project is supported by a UCA Pro-Vice Chancellor's Design Research Award 2025 – 2026.

HARVEST MOON

HARVEST MOON is a table made from agricultural and industrial waste harvested in Kent, including grubbed up apple trees, chestnut peelings, and pallet straps. Together these materials tell stories of local resources, economies and industries, of changing customs and seasons, of generosity, of the climate emergency, and the possibilities of regenerative design. The table has been designed to host HARVEST GATHERINGS to explore what we gather, collect and give thanks for today. Assembling the table is the first step and key to the gathering. Like a barn raising, it takes working together.

The background features a grid of green and white squares. Overlaid on this grid are several green circles of varying sizes and green triangles pointing in different directions, creating a complex geometric pattern.

**WHAT DO
WE GATHER,
COLLECT
AND GIVE
THANKS FOR
TODAY?**



Come together to explore what we gather, collect, and give thanks for today. How to do so is up to you. Here are some suggestions:

1 Introduce Yourself

2 Appoint a Steward

To steer the event and take care of those gathered (including the table)

3 Assemble the Table

Use the instructions, taking time and care to do so. Like raising a barn, you'll want a few people for this.

4 Topping Out

Once assembled, you can gather around the table. This is a moment to discuss the materials that have been gathered, harvested and assembled in its making, give thanks, and explore the ideas the table holds.

Feel free to decorate the table, bring food or drink, perform, sing, recite, sit in silence or conduct any other activity that feels right.

5 Record the Gathering

Please add a drawing, reflection, or other record of the gathering to the assembled papers. You can use the blank gathering document to do so.

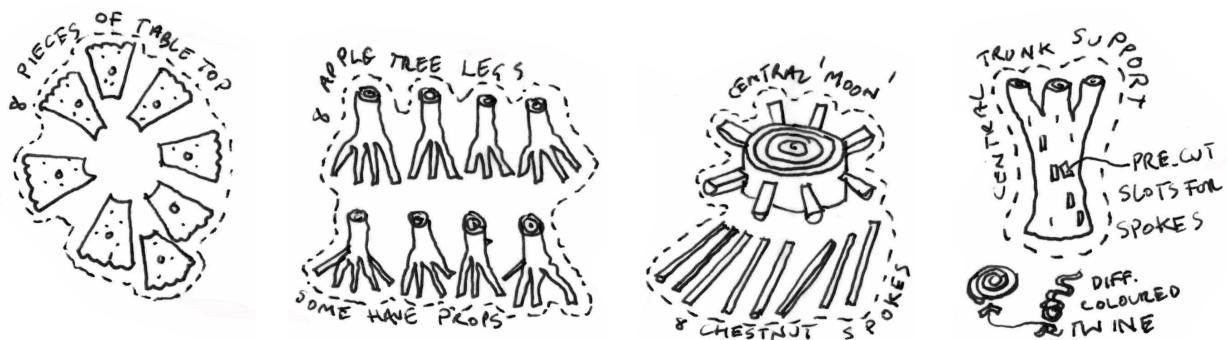
HOW TO HOST A HARVEST GATHERING

HOW TO MAKE A HARVEST MOON

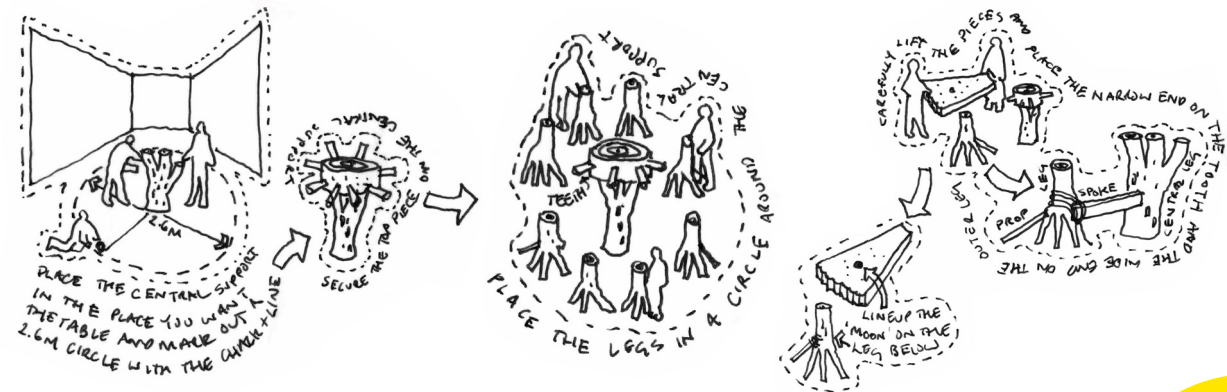
1. Gather materials



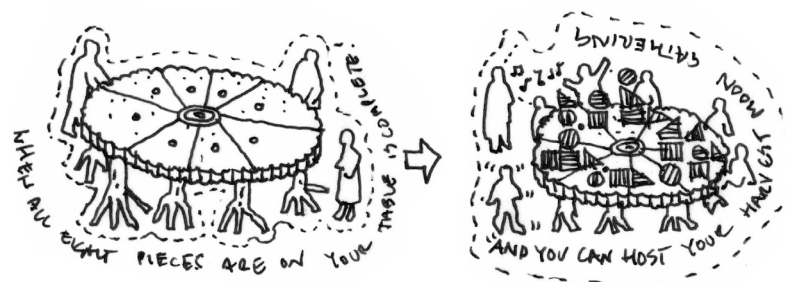
2. Lay out all the pieces



3. Assemble the table



4. Host your harvest gathering

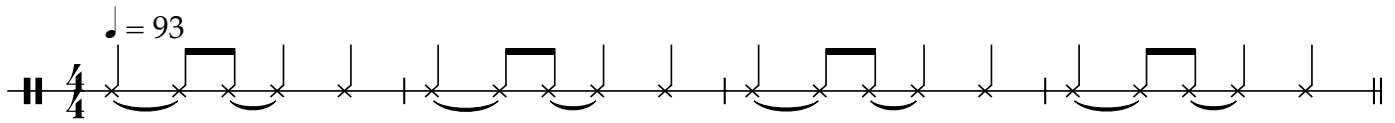




HARVEST MOON

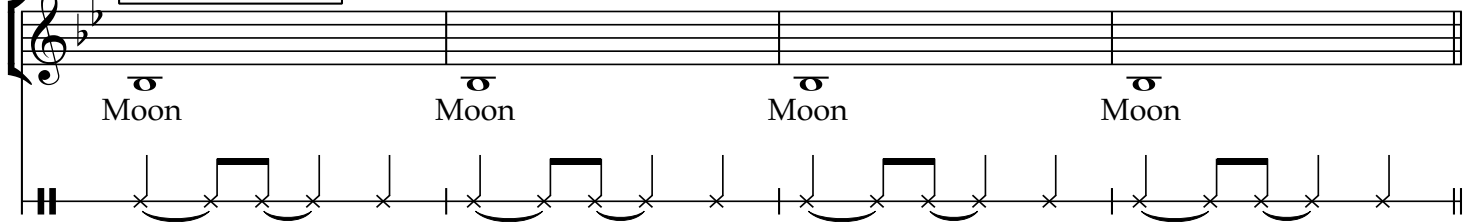
Words and music by Anna Braithwaite
www.annabraithwaite.co.uk

LOOP 1-Drum



5

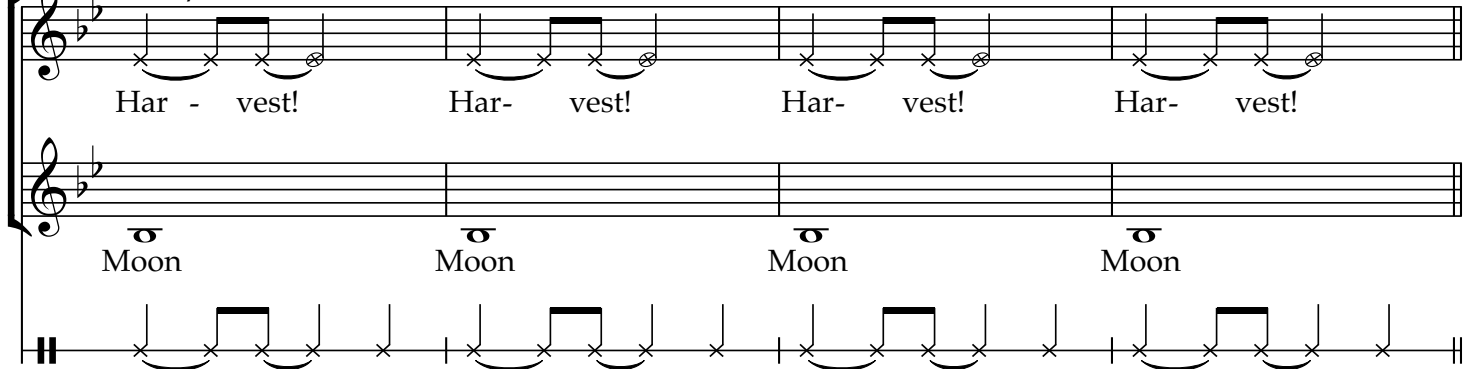
LOOP 2-add vox



LOOP 3-add vox 2

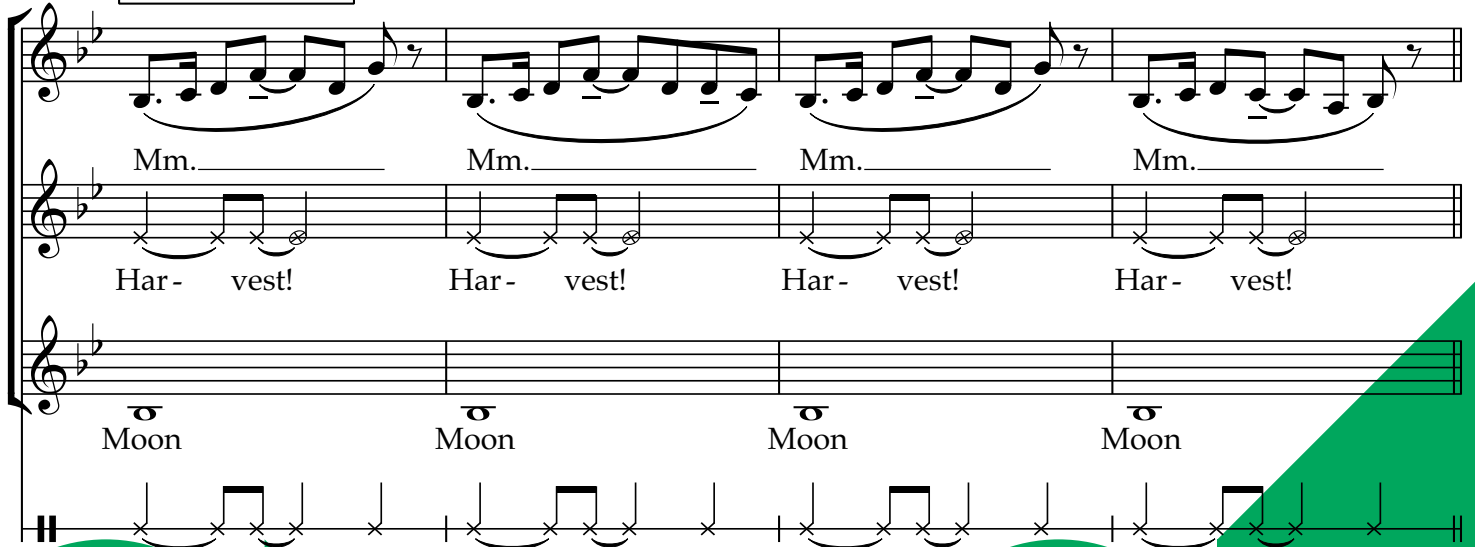
9

whispered



13

LOOP 4-add vox 3



17



What will you har - vest and ga - ther_ this_ year? What will you bring to the

20



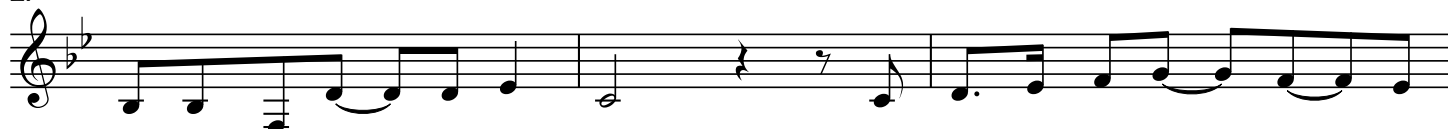
ta-ble?_ (1.)Black - ber - ries caught_ in the old man's_ beard,_
 (2.) *Improvise your own 'offerings' list here from things that guests have brought._*
 (3.)Mo - no - cul - ture has left a_ rup - ture, and

23



Salt - ed fish, tea from net-tles?_ Bring the waste the bark and the clunch,
 eat-en our ru - ral fa ble._ The sun now warms the fields_ more fiercely,
 Not simply for pleasure we ga - ther to - gether,

27



We have much more than we need. By hold - ing and bind - ing_ we're
 Ac - res now owned by the French, Bram-leys now grubbed up, re -
 We can build new_ i-deas here, Lash - ing and string - ing_ is

30



al - ways re - min - ded, Earth gives us life, gives us
 placed_ by pea - ches, Hops for our beer, up -
 just the be - gin - ning, Turn thoughts in - to ac - tions_ for

32



wa - ter and feed._ grad-ed to vines. Still the moon ri - ses and ri - pened fruits they fall,
 now and next year.

35



Sun lights our days_ on this earth but it's ne - ver e - nough.

The Weight of the World

Charles Holland

Charles Holland is an architect, writer and teacher. He is Professor of Architecture at UCA Canterbury School of Art, Architecture and Design and the Principal of Charles Holland Architects.

It's cold and raining persistently at Torry Hill, a forest on the outskirts of Sittingbourne in Kent. This is a coppiced wood and there are neat piles of recently sawn Chestnut trunks laid out in a large, cleared area. Through the drizzle, the surrounding trees form a misty, grey boundary. The cut timber will be transported back down the hill to the sawmill and after a process involving drying, splitting, stripping and bailing with metal wires it will become the kind of ubiquitous paling used to demarcate gardens, parking areas and patios the country over.

We are here because we would like some palings. We aren't sure what we will do with them yet and since we arrived a few other things including pallet straps, bailing twine, metal wire and a vast pile of bark chippings have caught our eye. This level of creative uncertainty typifies HARVEST MOON, the research project that has brought us slightly improbably to this corner of Kent.

The ambition of the project is to design and make a table using agricultural waste materials from the immediate area drawing directly from the geology and ecology of the North Downs, an area of chalk downland that stretches from the southern edge of London across Surrey and Kent before it meets the English Channel. Torry Hill is also a former chalk pit, once providing blocks of 'clunch' for use in traditional construction and we will gather and use this material too. Later the same day we will visit Perry Court, a fruit farm on the edge of Ashford, where we will walk through orchards of grubbed up apple trees, sawing off gnarled branches chosen for the fascinating complexity of their shapes and the fungi and lichen that cling to them.

The process of making this table has been experimental and open-ended, marked by on-the-spot decisions, intuitive responses and collaborative discussions. It has involved leaps of faith and a willingness to suspend disbelief and resulted in some happy accidents alongside more considered judgements. But it has not happened without clear parameters and an ethical framework in which decisions are made. The process has revealed important things about materials and what they can and can't do alongside judgements about how to join, prop, support, dye and attach them.

It has also revealed something about the economies of agriculture and farming in the region. A combination of climate change, the increased export costs of Brexit and shifting tastes in shopping and diets has led to Perry Court pulling up its cooking apple trees. These are being replaced by other more popular varieties as well as fruit such as apricots and peaches that can now be grown commercially in the UK due to increasingly warm winters. Viticulture is now proliferating across the region too with French Champagne producers buying up large tracts of land.

The English countryside is not static or stable, and it is not always a thing of beauty. Despite a prevailing sense that the UK is made up of pretty, rolling countryside, much of it is shaped by large-scale agricultural production. Kent is known as the Garden of England, not because of what it looks like but because of its historical productivity. It is a county shaped by the large-scale industrialised farming of the twentieth century as much as by the centuries before it. Industrialised farming has resulted in the destruction of acres of woodland, hedgerows and meadowland (with the consequent loss of insect and bird life) and the pollution and extraction of



rivers. The reliance on fertilisers and chemicals leads to ever more intense use as the natural fertility of the soil is lost.

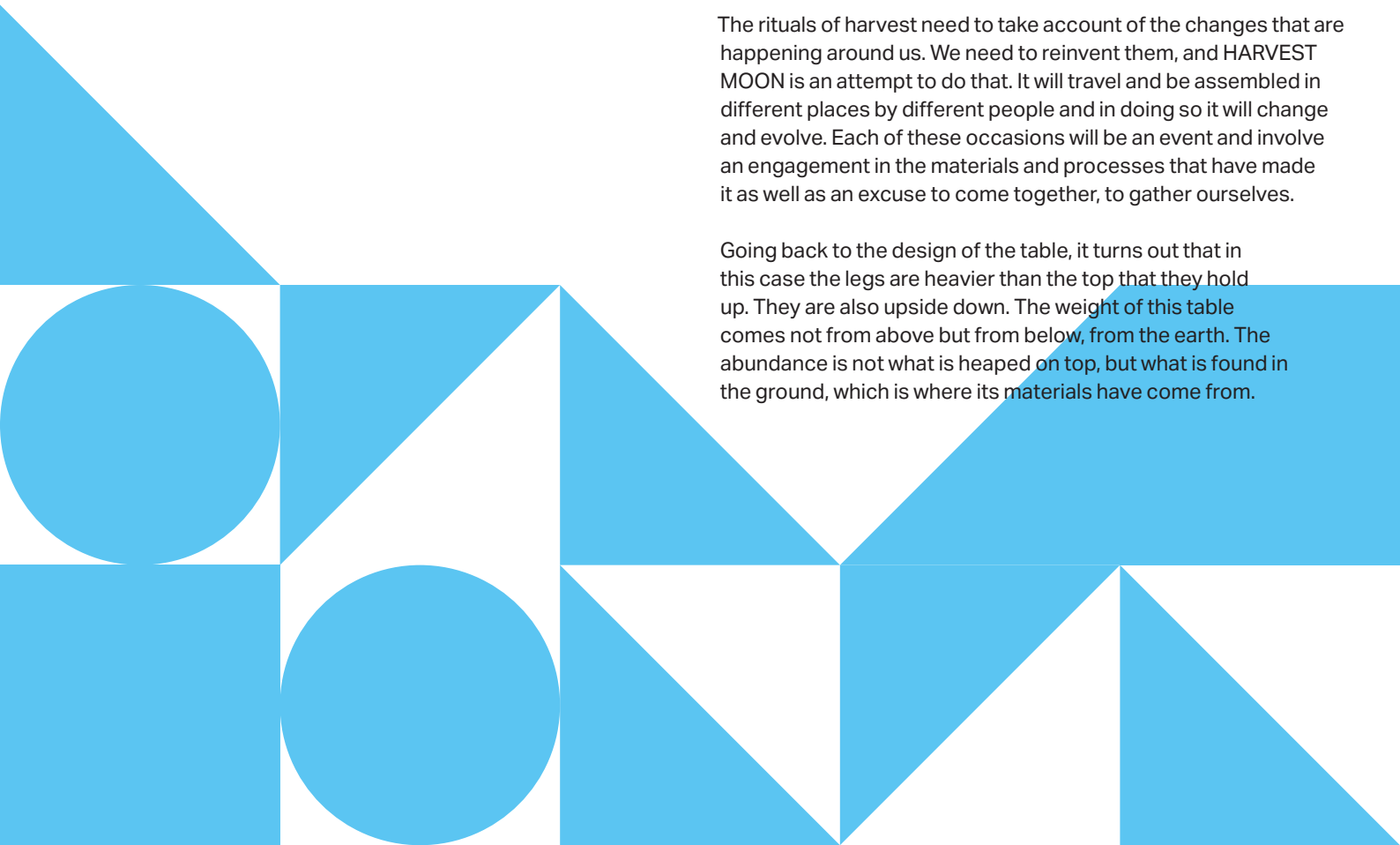
HARVEST MOON locates design within the processes of farming, using regenerative biomaterials and agricultural waste. It also explores the role of seasonality, with fabrication following the rhythms of growing and harvesting. In doing so it exposes the challenges of such an endeavour and the a-seasonal and always-available mentality of global supply chains and industrialised food and material production. Sentimentality or a sort of bougie backwater of fashionable organicism has been a constant worry. Can one really escape the realities of the dense matrix of production and consumption that surrounds us? And does one even want to? Surely, agri-business saves us from the vagaries of climate, the possibilities of bad harvests, food shortages and famine?

The traditional harvest festival is a celebration in the face of genuine threats to survival. It is about giving thanks for something that is not always certain. The images of abundance, of piles of fruit, vegetables and loaves of bread common in representations of harvest festivals are meaningful because the opposite is genuinely terrifying. But what does it mean to celebrate abundance now, when we know that our desire for comfort, plentiful food and full bellies has led to a natural world on the brink of extinction? Is abundance really a cause for celebration or a vision of decadent excess?

How does all this relate to HARVEST MOON? It might seem like a lot to pile on one table, especially one made of slices of cast chalk held up rather perilously on apple tree legs lashed together with baling twine. It could be seen to have the weight of the world on it, this table. We have invested a lot in it. Not only mornings spent in muddy fields but a hope that design can respond positively and productively to the problems that face us. And, more than that, that it can give meaningful expression to our attempts to overcome them.

The rituals of harvest need to take account of the changes that are happening around us. We need to reinvent them, and HARVEST MOON is an attempt to do that. It will travel and be assembled in different places by different people and in doing so it will change and evolve. Each of these occasions will be an event and involve an engagement in the materials and processes that have made it as well as an excuse to come together, to gather ourselves.

Going back to the design of the table, it turns out that in this case the legs are heavier than the top that they hold up. They are also upside down. The weight of this table comes not from above but from below, from the earth. The abundance is not what is heaped on top, but what is found in the ground, which is where its materials have come from.



Rough Winds do Shake the Darling Buds of May

Loretta Bosence

Local Works Studio is a hands-on research practice specialising in design for a circular economy and regenerative landscapes. As is our way, we're scouring the county to find land uses that might have interesting arisings, as byproducts of a main harvest.

On a track that leads through an orchard towards Perry Court Farm, near Ashford, we pass possibly the most dangerous looking piece of machinery in horticulture. Six giant spinning circular saw blades, mounted on either side of a small tractor, round the turn at the end of a row of old apple trees and begin their annual prune, cutting the terminal buds and branches with breathtaking ferocity and efficiency. Not hobby farmers, the Fermor family grow 200 varieties of apples and pears, as well as other fruit, veg and livestock, on 800 acres, for sale in their constantly bustling farm shop. They have kindly agreed to let us come and pick our own. Not apples, but apple wood.

As we bump further along the farm track, we begin to see the strange sight of line after line of apple trees upended, or lying on their sides, roots exposed to the wind. An open-air hospital dormitory of sleeping soldiers with feet hanging over the end of their bunks. We have come to the fruit farm not with picking baskets, but with chain saws, to salvage what we can from the 'grubbed-up' remains of hundreds and hundreds of venerable Bramley's apple trees.

The mother of all Bramley's Seedling trees was reared from a pip by a teenage girl in Victorian Nottingham and became one of the most widely grown apples in England. Favoured for commercial production, it was subsidised by the Ministry of Agriculture in the mid-twentieth century. These days, the orchard population of Bramley's is aging and unfashionable and a homemade apple crumble, or pie, is a rare and precious thing. Despite this, the farmer tells us that until recently they could still sell the apples for a profit as the next best thing, in Mr.Kipling's cakes. However, as Brexit began to unfold, the price per crate fell steeply. When export taxes were imposed, as we finally cut ourselves adrift from the EU, the cost of shipping a single crate to the farm's main buyers in Ireland rose to four times the price of the apples it contained. Bramley's became worthless overnight.

Apple wood, however, is a rare treat. Even when mature, the highest branches scarcely reach beyond the ridgeline of a two-storey house and the trunk is nearly always short and crooked. It is not a timber tree by any stretch of the imagination. An unlikely hero, it is brittle and awkward to dry, but much sought after by wood turners and sculptors for its fine texture and workability. The blush-pink wood can be finished to a fine sheen. It excels in the production of small and intricate objects – saw handles, pipes, bookbinder's screws, mallet heads, spoons and bowls. We will use branches of it, unconventionally, in their original form - to make many-footed legs for our harvest table.

By the end of our day in the orchard, we have made a tiny dent in the huge volume of wood and can hardly bring ourselves to leave. The rest will be burnt and the orchard replanted, with a more modern and considerably less characterful variety. Even in the best of times, it is standard, if brutal practice for commercial orchards to grub up their orchards once the trees begin to lose productivity, at the tender age of just 12 to 15 years old. Fields are left fallow, to recover for a year or so, then replanted with new stock. Consumer attitudes to fruit varieties are changeable, manipulated by supermarkets and fleeting trends, but fruit growing is a long-term game. Orchards are not being replaced at the rate they are being removed. In the last 50 years, Kent alone has lost 85% of its orchards.¹ At the current lacklustre rate of planting, in just 11 years (by 2037), the number of orchards we have in the UK today will have halved again.²

When an orchard is grubbed out, it is a loss. At its most derivative, it is the loss of a valuable material resource. Of years of investment, stewardship and a reliable income for the farmer. Of carbon to the atmosphere and a fully functioning mechanism for sequestration. We must not forget that it is also a loss to the personhood of the trees themselves, and of home to those more-than-human beings who come to depend on them. It also represents a loss to the distinctive culture and identity of communities around the UK – and anywhere else that apples are cultivated. It would be a mistake, however, to equate the grubbing up of orchards to the loss of a bucolic England that never really existed, or to grieve, instead of acting. The loss, especially when an underperforming commercial orchard must be replaced, is actually a rare moment of possibility – a chance seedling from a discarded pip.

It is a moment for re-evaluation, or remembering, of what orchards can do. A 'seemingly harmonious marriage of forestry and agriculture', orchards represent the potential of our human made landscapes to balance the needs of people and those of other living things.³ Well-managed orchards can be complex habitats and cultural sites that exemplify hybridity and our capacity to provide for our own needs, whilst creating a mosaic of opportunities for others to benefit too. The value of orchards is not in romantic fictions of mellow fruitfulness, but in the skill, precision, care and promise embodied in those trees, as they march orderly over the undulating landscape.

¹ <https://www.orchardnetwork.org.uk/south-east-england> Accessed: 24.03.26

² Orchard and Storage Census Report 2025. Data collected by British Apples & Pears Limited (BAPL) from UK top fruit growers. 'Largest ever UK apple and pear tree census and storage survey indicates 'pivotal moment' for the sector' <https://www.britishapplesandpears.co.uk/largest-ever-uk-apple-and-pear-orchard-census/>

³ John Jackson, 'Traditional Orchards: Do They Have a Future in the UK?' *Forestry Journal*, 14th April 2023.

Would you Like to Make a Table Together?

Catharine Rossi

Catharine Rossi is a design historian, curator, writer and educator. She is Professor of Architecture and Research Lead at UCA Canterbury School of Art, Architecture and Design.

Taking part in a Harvest Gathering involves unexpected interactions with people and materials alike. Drawing a circle with chalk and pink string, setting out upturned apple trees around a lunar cycle, matching chestnut pegs and spokes marked with coloured twine and pallet straps, wielding a handmade hammer, lifting tabletop segments cast from poured chalk and chestnut aggregate; this is not the usual choreography of either assembling a table or attending a harvest festival. Yet these actions are the centre of our gathering, a deliberately hands-on and communal experience wherein putting a table together is akin to raising a barn.

HARVEST MOON is as much about designing regenerative behaviours and ways of being as designing regenerative objects, materials and making approaches; where wielding an Allen key to speedily assemble highly processed materials is discarded in favour of slowly and collaboratively bringing together distinctive materials that speak loudly about their earthly origins.

The idea of gathering is core to the table. It is also an idea that has gained purchased of late, perhaps unsurprising at a time when we are looking for ideas and concepts that tell less violent and more interdependent stories of who we are and how we might live with each other and the planet. Key voices include the science fiction writer Ursula Le Guin and her "carrier bag theory of fiction" (1987), a riff on the work of 1970s feminist geographer Elizabeth Fisher, who argued that gathering, rather than hunting, was the originary pre-historic human activity. Fisher argues that the first "cultural device" was actually a "container to hold gathered goods" rather than a spear or sword.¹ If gathering is the foundational human act, and the carrier bag its representative object, then the round table is its archetypal furniture typology – a shared surface around which bodies can equitably congregate.

The format for our gathering is inspired by feminist, ecological and convivial (after Ivan Illich) approaches in contemporary design, art and curating, many of which are table-centred. These include the Long Table, a format devised by feminist artist and activist Lois Weaver based on a set of open instructions for non-hierarchical participatory discussions; and the Curated Dinner, created by design curator Jana Scholze to host meals where discussion topics rather than food is served at each course. Material-based precedents include Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* (1979), the gargantuan triangular table laid with heavily symbolic plates and embroidered place settings for an imagined feast of women from history and mythology, and Hans Hollein's display of breads from around the world in the Cooper Hewitt exhibition *Man Transforms* (1972), which signalled design's growing interest in anthropology and food in the late 20th century. This interest persists today, with a number of designers creating dining tables for performances and installations centred on ideas of communality and feasting for multiple communities and species.

We held our first gathering in June 2026, unveiling the table on a sticky summer's day that contrasted starkly to the wintry forests and fields where we collected the materials earlier this year. We followed a set of instructions we had ourselves devised: introduce yourselves; appoint a steward; assemble the table; topping out; and record the gathering. Like Le Guin's novels and Weaver's instructions, the gatherings are intended to be neither linear nor predictable: guests can choose whether or not to take part, whether to follow our steps or not, or even add their own.



We see the steward as key; a figure borrowed from ecological land management and used here to describe someone appointed by those present to take care of both guests and the table. At the gathering, it becomes clear that stewardship is something to be shared by all those present, not just one individual. Most steps involve two people (some who have not met before), and the pairs check on each other, ensuring they feel comfortable carrying ungainly tree trunks and unwieldy tabletop segments. Shouts are made for what is spontaneously called a "spotter", someone willing to stick their head under the table and check that pegs and joints align. We quickly learn that pegs are to be tapped lightly in place, rather than hammered roughly in - the table looks solid but is in fact rather fragile. Once all the parts are in place we realise that the table needs "tuning", and so collectively gather around it, delicately pushing the segments closely together.

The gathering format borrows ideas and actions from other rites and rituals. A topping out ceremony marks the placement of the final beam on a structure; historically this would have been affixing an actual tree to the highest point. We too wanted to celebrate the labour involved, both that of assembling the table but also the growing and gathering of the materials it is made from. We turned to the harvest festival, wherein songs have been used across centuries, cultures and traditions to give thanks for that year's yield. The song we commissioned, HARVEST MOON by local composer and performer Anna Braithwaite, however also reflects contemporary harvest politics and economics: what do we celebrate in a world of excessive abundance and manufactured scarcity, when climate change is destabilising annual crop yields and seasonal rhythms.

While the table is made from Kentish apple trees, it's the wrong time of year for local apples. Instead, we celebrate the gathering with other local food and drink, a feast that is as much an offering to the table as a way of replenishing energies and solidifying relations. At first, we are tentative in sitting at the table, overly concerned at causing any damage. But once you do sit, you can't stop touching it - the tabletop's polished surface is absurdly tactile, its cast bark peelings, pallet straps and straw adding texture as well as colour and decoration.

Our gathering was much an encounter with a table as with people, an intertwined dance of the material and immaterial. It was a reminder of the interconnectivity between our grown and cultural worlds, and the potential of designers and curators to create artefacts and conditions that can rethink the relations between them. Of course that was just the first gathering; the table is now out of our hands, and into those of others willing to explore what they collect, gather and give thanks for today.

¹ Elizabeth Fisher in Ursula Le Guin, "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction", 1986.

Biotechnics, the Rural, and Craft

Stephen Knott

Stephen Knott is the Director of the Crafts Study Centre, an accredited museum of modern craft and research centre of the University for the Creative Arts. He is a writer, lecturer and curator specialising in theories and histories of craft.

A design harnessing locally accessible biomaterials and the residue of agricultural production, with a deep connection to the topography and community where it was conceived and made. This is a brief description of the HARVEST MOON table and wider project, but it is equally applicable to many of the works within the Crafts Study Centre's (CSC) collections. Use of biomaterials is a recurrent motif in the Centre's capacious collections of twentieth and twenty-first century British studio craft and documented extensively in its archives. It accounts for the earthy hue prevalent in many CSC exhibitions and across the Centre's storage shelves.

For example, from 1928-1936 in a cottage-turned-pottery on the edge of her family's estate, Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie and her partner Norah Braden assiduously tested and developed ash glazes for their pots using wood from the surrounding area. The resulting humble pots belie the hard graft that went into their production. The duo also used local clay deposits for their work, grounding their queer, interwar, creative partnership in local materials.¹ Use of local Cornish clays was also integral to the early days of the Leach Pottery in St Ives when it was set up by Bernard Leach and collaborator Shōji Hamada in 1920. In the furniture and wood collections locally sourced timber features prominently, from Edward and Sidney Barnsley's use of English walnut, ash, and sycamore to make refined furniture to Eleanor Lakelin's reclamation of felled horse chestnut burr in her 2024 work *Jar #4* with its silhouette of a mini moon jar. Yet it is the textile artists in the Centre's collection – from Rita and Percy Beales delicate linen made from East Anglian flax to Ethel Mairet's research into vegetable dyes (resulting in 1917's *A Book of Vegetable Dyes*) – where the connections to the HARVEST MOON project seem particularly resonant.

Recent research on the Mairet archive at the Crafts Study Centre by craft historian Antonia Behan highlights the attentiveness of the weaver towards the raw materials from which her work was made. Employing the term 'biotechnics' from Mairet's contemporary the theorist Patrick Bell Geddes, Behan describes how Mairet assiduously researched various types of husbandry, collecting samples to understand how the way in which sheep were reared, and the land on which they grazed, determined the quality of the fleece and ultimately the final piece of woven work.² Mairet's point was that design does not start with a ready stock of stable raw material to be shaped and fashioned. Design needs to consider the longer prehistory of extraction, the material's connections to the land and to the communities that have grown, nurtured and harvested it.

This 'land,' in the context of the UK at least, has mostly already been farmed. Despite preconceptions, makers in the CSC's collections – and most definitely Mairet – had a modern understanding of British landscape that was sceptical of the bucolic ideal pedalled by the advancing leisure industry. HARVEST MOON shares this realism through its use of agricultural byproducts: chestnut peelings, discarded baling twine, pallet straps. Materials, matter, growing stuff and agriculture ain't always pretty.

In the CSC exhibition *Affinities* (2025-2026), furniture maker David Gates and enamellist Helen Carnac explored this complex relationship to the rural through the lens of the relocation of their home-studio from London to west Somerset. On their walks in their new environment, they noticed curious agricultural structures jutting out of the landscape and various examples



of surface patination, such as rusted and bent corrugated steel sheets on haybarns and indeterminate scrappy sheds. They became more attuned to seasonal change, and in their time with the CSC archive saw affinities with twentieth century craftspeople who also live-worked within rural settings, from Edward Barnsley foraging for wild wood to Mairet's recipes for apple pulp.³

In February 2026, the team of academics and designers that led HARVEST MOON came to the CSC to discuss the project's themes and explore artefacts from the collection that related to local materials, vegetable dyes, and the notion of harvest. They encountered artefacts including samples of actual seaweed and lichen sent to intrepid weavers in the 1950s by archivists at Kew Gardens' botanical library, and depictions of harvest scenes in the etchings of Robin Tanner. Looking back on it, the day repeated in microcosm what the HARVEST MOON table sets out to achieve: to gather around a table to share space, ideas and reflections of what we gather together. The only difference is that HARVEST MOON is a table that practices what it preaches, unlike the bog-standard office tables that populate the CSC Research Room, like so many work environments.

¹ Helen Ritche, 'Disrupting the Estate: Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie at Coleshill' *Women's History Review* 33 (August 2024): 909-926.

² Antonia Behan, 'Ethel Mairet's Textile Biotechnics and the Aesthetics of Materials' *Journal of Modern Craft* 14, no. 3 (2021): 211-228. a

³ *Affinities: David Gates and Helen Carnac* (exhibition publication) (Farnham: Crafts Study Centre, 2025).