

YAHOO! NEWS

Edit-a-thons aim to ensure craftswomen's legacy on internet

 Lanre Bakare
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“The story of Ditchling is dominated by Eric Gill because he was such a big figure but there are a lot of hidden stories. You can trace the impact that a lot of these lesser-known artists have had across the arts and craft movement – there’s this lineage.”

The museum is holding two edit-a-thons, which have become popular ways for groups to tackle the dearth of female figures on Wikipedia pages in areas such as [science](#) and [museum curation](#), on 1 June. Butcher believes for the younger generation, the internet is a vital research tool and if artists don’t have a presence, they can quickly become obsolete.

“So much important history is in out-of-print books or in people’s heads so it’s great we have the chance to get that down,” she said. “I think there’s a risk with Generation Z that if it isn’t online, it doesn’t count.

“We’re inviting people to come to the museum and learn from the experts who are there. The idea is it’s the start of process which you could continue at home: all you need is a laptop and access to the internet. We’re hoping people are going to keep doing it.”

[Art+Feminism](#), a group that conducts edit-a-thons, claimed last year that since 2011 they have conducted more than 500 events during which 7,000 volunteers have helped edit more than 11,000 articles on Wikipedia.

Two Wild Facts events ran in New York to address the lack of female avant garde musicians on Wikipedia. Created by ambient musician Christina Vantzou they saw a group of volunteers update, create and flesh out entries for artists including British experimental electronic music icon and the former director of the [BBC Radiophonic Workshop](#), [Daphne Oram](#).

“I started with Daphne Oram. She had an entry but certain parts of it were extremely brief, which I was surprised by,” says Vantzou, who was helped by three Wikipedia volunteers who trained her and a group of others in how to create and edit a page. “The biography was there but a lot of her achievements weren’t emphasised in a way I thought they could have been.”

Vantzou had more trouble with a page dedicated to American electronic music composer, [Pauline Anna Strom](#). “I had made her a page from scratch and it was removed,” says Vantzou. “When you make a new page anyone can comment and people argue to keep or remove the page. It was argued that there wasn’t enough information in circulation about her to create the page, which was very disappointing.”

When an album of hers was reissued and Strom [received reviews](#), Vantzou remade the page and this time it was approved. “With persistence the page did go up. But it does point to the inherent problem of the whole thing. You need visibility to have a page approved but you have low visibility because of unfortunate circumstances, so how do you break through?”

For Vantzou edit-a-thons are still a vital, if imperfect, way to support female artists. “Wikipedia is our current way of fact sharing. It’s our encyclopedia. It’s all over the world. It is something to pay attention to. What you see on there gives you an important view of who that person might be.”

Craftswomen without Wikipedia pages

Catherine ‘Casty’ Cobb

Born into an Arts and Crafts household – [William Morris and John Ruskin were family friends](#) – Cobb learned the craft of jewellery and silversmithing at the Central School in London. Known for her silver pique with steel elements forged in Sheffield, Cobb went on to teach at Cambridge Technical College.

Elizabeth Peacock

Born in Staffordshire in 1880, Peacock was taught how to use vegetable dye by Ethel Mairet and became [a renowned weaver](#), eventually going to Paris in 1925 where she showed her work at the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs. Peacock was invited to display her weaving at the 1951 [Festival of Britain Exhibition](#).

Alice Hindson

Another weaver, Hindson attended the Central School of Art and Crafts in London and initially illustrated books before becoming interested in fabrics. Hindson dyed her own yarn with natural plant materials, worked with Peacock in Ditchling and was a founding member of the Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers.