

For Immediate Release

Blue Patch's 'travelling' Sustainable Department Store pops up at the Whitworth, The University of Manchester's acclaimed art gallery on the 12th to the 31st March 2019. The first regional museum to host the store - marking the launching Blue Patch's grand tour of the British Isles.

The Whitworth
The University of Manchester
Oxford Rd
Manchester
M15 6ER

Whitworth Opening Times

Monday to Wednesday: 10am-5pm

Thursday: 10am-9pm

Friday to Sunday: 10am-5pm

Visitors to one of Manchester's finest galleries are in for a treat as national social enterprise Blue Patch, who represent over 400 of the country's sustainable designers, crafters and manufacturers, are installing a radically refreshing retail experience: a 'travelling' Sustainable Department Store.

30 members of the Blue Patch Collective will showcase high-quality products, including EcoStardust's plant based, biodegradable face glitter, the 'must have' for festival season, Circular Economy startup Bundlee, a baby clothing hire service launched by The University of Manchester trained entrepreneur Eve Kekeh. There will be 'word search' organic tee-shirts by Identity Papers and Manchester's celebrated quilter and textile designer Lisa Watson will also be exhibiting. For a little pampering, there'll be palm oil free, organic beauty and handmade perfume in refillable bottles. The store will provide all you could wish for in terms of unique designer-makers, so come and browse the best in UK design.

Blue Patch's travelling store has a mission to help tackle two issues, climate change and the economy. Firstly, carbon-saving ideas shared within a desirable setting could encourage even more people towards behaviour change, helping to amplify the good things already happening. Secondly, the social disconnect caused by online shopping, rising business costs and brexit is cascading through high streets and local businesses are under extreme pressure. Tackling these issues head on, Blue Patch's aim is to create high profile opportunities for their collective of SMEs and get them directly to local shoppers, increasing their chance of a stable customer base and finding other retailers to work with.

More and more shoppers are demanding stores and manufacturers that are conscious of how and where they make their products.

Shopping ethically in the UK has surged with a market value of £81.3bn (Ethical Consumer Markets report 2017). According to Ethical Consumer this is a growth of £40bn since 2008

and it's the younger generation who are leading the trend. A YouGov survey demonstrated that almost a quarter 24% of respondents said they had bought products in 2017 specifically because of their ethical reputation. See the full report [here](#).

Blue Patch and John Ruskin at the Whitworth

The Whitworth will be holding its Ruskin inspired exhibition 'Joy for Ever: How to use art to change the world and its price in the market' during this time.

Blue Patch has a lot in common with the English Arts & Crafts movement and the focus on supporting local artisans, heritage manufacturers and ethical services.

Notes to Editors:

[Dropbox for images](#)

What people are saying about Blue Patch's travelling Sustainable Department Store.

Oliver Heath, architect and interior designer

"If you thought that high street shopping had lost its edge, then you need to visit Blue Patch's pop up store at the Whitworth in March. It's filled with gorgeous designer/ maker products that have the provenance, care and attention to detail that is missing from so many retail experiences today. At Blue Patch you can buy pieces that have been beautifully designed and crafted, meet the makers and hear their stories of how making products in the UK is alive and kicking."

Oliver Heath is an industry recognised expert in the field of sustainable architectural and interior design. Oliver has presented television programmes since 1998 working for numerous channels including the **BBC, ITV and Channel 4**.

Bill Grimsey, expert of the High St.

"I visited the Blue Patch Collective's first 'High St' Sustainable Department Store in Shoreditch and discovered a blueprint for a new retail experience. Blue Patch is a shining example of how a collective of UK SMEs are working together to rebuild retail, filling the gaps left by conventional models. Socially engaging with free talks and creative workshops, the store highlighted the exceptional quality of products hot from the UK's workshops, artisans and heritage manufacturers. I wish them luck on their journey to bring life back to the high streets across the country."

Bill Grimsey is a former chief executive of Wickes and Iceland, author of [The Grimsey Review](#) and 'Sold Out'. An astute [commentator](#) Bill is one of the UK's leading experts on the High Street.

About Blue Patch

[Blue Patch](#) is a selective ethical marketplace for sustainable, local and heritage products from the British Isles and beyond including furniture, clothing, gifts, beauty and services such as ethical banks and sustainable printers. Launched in 2014 by Jane Langley, Blue Patch also provides a collaborative business network for SMEs and sole traders. As a social enterprise, every penny Blue Patch makes supports its business members, renewable energy, conservation and community programmes.

Blue Patch's 'travelling' Sustainable Department Store launched in 2016 in Dulwich Village, south London. Open for a day, the event attracted 1000 visitors. In December 2018 Blue Patch popped up in Shoreditch, East London.

Blue Patch's sustainable store will tour regionally, starting in Manchester. Telling stories of the people behind the brands, supporting the local low-carbon economy and inspiring everyone to shrink the carbon footprint of their consumption.

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About the Whitworth

The Whitworth is part of The University of Manchester. It is home to internationally renowned collections of modern art, wallpaper, textiles, watercolours, prints, drawings and sculpture. Created in 1889 as the first English gallery in a park, the Whitworth has developed a new vision for the role of a university gallery. A creative laboratory within an ambitious university, the Whitworth is a place where good, unusual things happen. The Whitworth re-opened to the public on 14 February 2015 after a major £17 million redevelopment by architects MUMA. The Whitworth has welcomed over one million visitors since re-opening, and more than doubled its previous annual records. The redevelopment has doubled public space and created state-of-the-art new facilities including expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and a collections centre. The gallery was crowned Art Fund Museum of Year 2015, nominated for the prestigious Stirling Prize and named Best Emerging Cultural Destination in Europe.

www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth

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