



Craft NI

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Graduate grabs the Craft NI & Invest NI Craft in Business Award

Craft NI and Invest NI launched their new award at University of Ulster's annual prize-giving ceremony on Monday evening. The Craft in Business Award went to Designer-maker Suzanne Harbinson, an undergraduate from Metalsmithing and Jewellery.

Suzanne is the first recipient of the award which recognizes the value of craft businesses in developing innovative and entrepreneurial approaches to craft within the Creative & Cultural Industry sector. Suzanne makes conceptual jewellery which fuses contemporary and traditional craft. She has already developed commercial collections which retail at Goldigger79 jewellery gallery in Holywood.

Oonagh Hinds, Senior Client Executive with Invest NI's Entrepreneurship Development Team commented, "This is a really valuable way to stimulate creative entrepreneurship amongst young people in Northern Ireland. The award encourages budding entrepreneurs to develop craft businesses which have real commercial potential."

Suzanne was delighted to receive the award and has already begun to think about how to put it to good use, "I have started to build my own workspace at my home, where I plan to expand with more equipment, I would also like use the money to take professional advice on how to develop my work for specific markets and to take the next steps to making my business plans a success."

Brian McClelland, Chairman of Craft NI who awarded the prize, said, "Building an integrated, entrepreneurial and vibrant contemporary crafts sector involves recognizing and nurturing creative talent like Suzanne's and that of other young graduates."

Research conducted by Craft NI highlights that setting up a craft business in Northern Ireland is becoming increasingly attractive to young graduates. Craft NI's business incubation programme, *making it*, both actively retains graduates and attracts returning craftspeople to establish craft businesses in Northern Ireland.

Craft NI director, Joe Kelly, said, "As champion for the Craft sector in Northern Ireland we are delighted to formally recognize the potential of young designer-makers who are the future entrepreneurs of the craft sector."

The Craft in Business award is just one of the ways in which Craft NI is recognizing the entrepreneurial spirit of the craft sector. Through economic development initiatives, business incubation and continued professional development, Craft NI seeks to support and develop the opportunities for business innovation.

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Image

1. **Suzanne Harbinson receives the first Craft NI & Invest NI, Craft in Business Award**

From Left-Right: Brian McClelland, Chairperson Craft NI, Jeweller Suzanne Harbinson, Winner of Craft in Business Award, Joe Kelly, Director Craft NI, Oonagh Hinds, Invest NI Senior Client Executive.

Notes to Editor

- **Craft in Business Award** is a jointly funded award by Craft NI and Invest NI. The purpose of the award is to highlight the opportunities for application of creative practice to business innovation and entrepreneurship within the creative and cultural industries sector.
- **Craft in Business Award** is presented to a final year student in applied arts at the University of Ulster whose work demonstrates the most potential in terms of application to innovative, entrepreneurial business
- In championing the craft sector in Northern Ireland **Craft NI** prioritises quality practice among makers whose work is linked to lifestyle, fashion and critiques of contemporary arts practice, along with those working within a traditional and vernacular style associated with heritage.
- **Craft NI** supports and champions the business needs of the craft sector through economic development initiatives including business incubation through its *making it* programme and CPD seminars.
- For more information on **Craft NI**, please visit www.craftni.org. Craft Northern Ireland is based at Cotton Court, Waring Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland.