



Craft NI

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate Release

NI craftspeople invited to meet President McAleese

Six highly-acclaimed designer-makers from Northern Ireland and the board and staff of Craft NI met with the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, at Áras an Uachtaráin on Wednesday. The meeting was initiated by the President to acknowledge the work of craftspeople throughout the island of Ireland.

President McAleese thanked those who attended, noting that they “ensure that the crafts enjoy a world wide reputation”. She commended a ‘commitment to excellence’, saying that their work has helped to ‘raise the profile of the crafts sector on the Island of Ireland in general and fine craft in particular, making it more relevant and accessible to consumers and collectors.”

The President also commended the work of organisations like Craft NI and the Crafts Council of Ireland that support the development of a vibrant craft sector throughout the island. She referred to both organisations as ‘champions’ of craft, acknowledging, “The tremendous work of both organisations in supporting and promoting craft”.

Director of Craft NI, Joe Kelly, said, “Craft NI is grateful to President McAleese for acknowledging the many businesses in the craft sector, both in Northern Ireland and the ROI, that make such a significant contribution to cultural and economic life. Craft NI will continue to support an innovative and entrepreneurial crafts sector in Northern Ireland and the designer-makers who have been invited here today are evidence of a successful future for the industry”.

Designer-makers like Michael McCrory and Rachel McKnight, from Northern Ireland, who are both critically acclaimed for the quality of their work, were just some of those invited to attend the event and meet with the President. Both Michael and Rachel have firmly established a market for their work in the Republic of Ireland and continue to build on their profile internationally.

As Rachel McKnight pointed out, “It’s very encouraging to receive this kind of acknowledgement for my work and business. This is a very positive time to be part of the craft sector in Northern Ireland.”

This significant event is one of the ways that further strengthen cross-border links providing support for the growth of the crafts sector on a regional and international level. President McAleese noted that the day symbolised “the seeding of new networks of friendship and endeavour for the future.”

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Images

1. **731** - From Left-Right: Brian McClelland, Chair of Craft NI, Sarah Daly, Acting CEO of Crafts Council of Ireland, President Mary McAleese, Dr. Martin McAleese, Joe Kelly, Director Craft NI, J.P. Donnelly, Vice Chair of Crafts Council of Ireland
2. **953** - From Left-Right: Dr. Martin McAleese, President Mary McAleese, Rachel McKnight, Jewellery Designer.

Notes to Editor

- For more information on acclaimed silversmith Michael McCrory visit www.michaelmccrory.com, for more information on jeweller Rachel McKnight, visit www.rachelmcknight.com
- In championing the craft sector in Northern Ireland **Craft NI** prioritises quality practice among designer-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.