



Craft NI

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Gifts less Ordinary

Exhibition Series Showcases Innovative Craft and Design Ideas

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[STORY BEGINS] ‘Eco-brooches’ and a jewellery-box for recession-hit consumers are among the unusual and affordable gifts designed by local craftspeople on display this month at Craft NI, The Merchant Hotel and the University of Ulster.

In a bid to showcase distinctive gifts that can be bought locally at craft shops and galleries in Northern Ireland, Craft NI has brought together over 50 innovative designs for the exhibition with prices starting from £15.

As, Director of Craft NI Joe Kelly explains, “*Craft shops and galleries in Northern Ireland stock hand-made work by local designer-makers that provide the perfect solution to what is an annual, Christmas dilemma – where to find distinctive, personal gifts for friends and family.*”

We hope the exhibitions will provide visitors with some new ideas for local hand-made gifts that they can be added to their Christmas shopping list”, says Joe.

One of the most promising young designers, who will be exhibiting her ‘eco-brooches’ is Belfast-based Lesley Frew.

Lesley specialises in funky, innovative jewellery which is created using plastic bags.

Her jewellery designs transform discarded waste into desirable, hand-crafted accessories.

As Lesley explains, “*Consumers are becoming more conscious about purchasing designs that are made locally from recycled materials.*”

In transforming discarded waste into hand-crafted accessories, I have created a range of contemporary, ethical jewellery which has proved sufficiently distinctive to appeal to the higher end of the market.” says Lesley.

Lesley's eco-brooches are available to buy at Space CRAFT shop and gallery in upstairs in the Fountain Centre, Belfast and start from £20.

Another product on display is '200-square', a multi-functional and affordable jewellery box by Newtownards-based furniture maker, Mark Hanvey.

Mark has adapted his designs to meet the needs of recession-hit consumers who are seeking value and practicality, without compromising on craftsmanship.

The jewellery box, which measures 200 centimetres by 200 centimetres, is hand-crafted in hardwood oak and lined with suede-leather.

As Mark explains, "*Consumers are looking for value and affordability in their purchases but also want products that will hold up for a longer period of time.*"

"This is a hand-crafted quality product that is designed to respond to these needs"

'200-square' is available to buy at Ards Crafts in Newtownards from £109.

Other products on display include funky teapots in vibrant copper-glaze, a 'bubble-print' clutch bag, 'origami' jewellery, tapestries and linen prints, hand-woven scarves, contemporary hand-dyed jewellery and ceramic tableware.

The exhibition opens this week and continues until 23 December.

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Images:

001 – 007

- **001**_Eco-brooch by Lesley Frew made from recycled plastic bags
- **002**_'200-Square' Jewellery Box by Mark Hanvey are made from solid oak and lined in suede leather
- **003**_Eco-brooch selection by Belfast Jeweller Lesley Frew are made from recycled plastic bags
- **004**_Copper-glazed teapots from Tyrone-based potter Diane McCormick
- **005**_Black and Gold brooch by Fiona Kerr
- **006**_Teaset by Belfast potter Derek Wilson
- **007**_Turning Whippet by David Withers

Editor's notes:

- The exhibitions are part of Buy Craft This Winter Campaign. [You can download listings flier here](#) or by visiting Craft NI's website, www.craftnidirectory.org.

- Woodturner Mark Hanvey, Jeweller Lesley Frew and Joe Kelly, Director of Craft Northern Ireland are available for interviews in person or by telephone at any time.
- More information on Mark Hanvey www.markhanvey.co.uk, Lesley Frew www.laf-designs.com/page9.htm
- More information on Craft Outlets in Northern Ireland is available here: www.craftnidirectory.org/seOutlets.aspx
- Please contact Emma Duggan if you would like to arrange an interview. t: +44 (0) 28 9032 3059, m: +44 (0)7708 178667, emma@craftni.org
- There are more than 300 craft businesses and 500 people working in the crafts sector in Northern Ireland with a combined turnover of some £8m. These are some of the findings of Craft NI's survey of the craft sector, commissioned in 2006. The executive summary is available to [download here](#).
- 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.
- More information about Northern Ireland's craft sector is contained in Craft NI's advocacy document for the craft sector, 'Why the crafts matter', available to [download here](#).
- Craft NI is supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland.
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