

Creative industries re-awaken Belfast's skills-based heritage

Northern Ireland's burgeoning film industry based in Belfast's Titanic Quarter is being kept afloat by the skills and ingenuity of people working in the creative industries.

Northern Ireland's burgeoning film industry based in Belfast's Titanic Quarter is being kept afloat by the skills and ingenuity of people working in the creative industries.

A host of local designer-makers and artisans have been signed up by major film companies to make everything from costumes, jewellery, film sets to weird and wonderful props.

This explosion of creativity and skill has been made possible by public funding of the arts including schemes such as the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Creative Industries Innovation Fund.

Ring-maker Garvan Traynor, who has benefited from public funding, said that his success in working in film would not have been possible without this vital support.

Late last year, Garvan and other representatives of the creative industries were invited by the Arts Council to meet Finance Minister Sammy Wilson to discuss how public funding of the arts makes a real difference to the local economy.

Garvan said the Minister was very receptive to their arguments and was particularly impressed by the amount of local talent that was being used in big budget productions such as City of Ember and the soon-to-be-released Your Highness.



"Without the contribution of a vibrant arts scene and the creative industries, major film producers would not be able to work in Northern Ireland."

Roisin McDonough, Chief Executive, Arts Council of Northern Ireland

of our heritage," he added.

Joe Kelly, Director of Craft Northern Ireland, which champions the needs of the craft industry, argues that retaining the level of funding is essential to providing business support for up and coming designer makers.

"If the crafts industry in Northern Ireland is to continue to thrive we must develop the skills and talents of our emerging designer makers. They make a real contribution the Northern Ireland economy through cultural tourism, creating new businesses and supporting the local film industry.



'Public funding is necessary if we want to continue to support the development of these industries.'

The Department of Culture Arts and Leisure faces a cut of £25.9 million in

its budget this year, which is expected to lead to substantial reductions in the level of support given to the creative industries sector. The Arts sector alone is facing a cut of £4.2m, which

equates to 23% of its annual budget and is expected to impact directly on artists and art organisations.

In its Fair Deal for the Arts Campaign, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland has been strongly arguing the case for a vibrant creative industries and arts scene that supports the film industry, creates jobs and promotes the growing cultural tourism sector.

It is urging the public to support the campaign by going to its Facebook page and sending the Fair Deal for the Arts Campaign letter to the Northern Ireland Executive.



"Public funding is necessary if we want to continue to support the development of these industries."

Joe Kelly, Director of Craft Northern Ireland

Roisin McDonough, Chief Executive, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, commented: "Without the contribution of a vibrant arts scene and the creative industries, major film producers would not be able to work in Northern Ireland. Public funding of the arts is not a hand-out it is a real investment in our economy."



Jeweller Garvan Traynor meeting Finance Minister Sammy Wilson

Cutting-edge Northern Irish jewellery designer Garvan Traynor has struck gold working for some of Hollywood's hottest talents.

From his Belfast-based Dual Workshop, which he shares with his sister Céline, the ring-making maestro has attracted the attention of some of the biggest names in the movie industry.

In his most recent commission he made a number of eye-catching items, most notably a ring and chastity belt for Golden Globe winner Natalie Portman and a crown for James Franco for the forthcoming medieval comedy/epic 'Your Highness'.

Portman has been nominated for the best actress Oscar for her performance in the Black Swan, while Franco has been nominated in the best actor category for 127 hours.

The soft-spoken Newry man is one of the most talented jewellery designers in Ireland, making distinctive, highly personalised engagement rings, wedding bands and contemporary brooches.

He is something of a romantic and designed a brooch for his girlfriend which is a painstakingly miniature replica of her first apartment so she could always remember it.

It is this uncanny ability to transform ideas into pieces of exquisitely crafted jewellery that has attracted the attention of Tinseltown elite.

In the recent past, Garvan has designed and made props for big budget movies filmed in Northern Ireland including gold rings for Shirley MaLaine in Richard Attenborough's 'Closing the Ring' and the futuristic mayoral chain worn by Bill Murray in 'City of Ember'.

He has also designed wax seals for the multi-million pound HBO Fantasy TV series Game of Thrones and was commissioned by the Mayor of Derry to design and make St



Contemporary jeweller shines with Tinseltown elite

Patrick's Day gifts for President Obama - 50 stylised brooches and tie pins - based on the design of the Foyle Bridge.

His years of training and the skills he has developed have enabled him to take on high pressure projects at very short notice.

"For 'Your Highness' I had to do a lot of research on medieval imagery in a very short space of time. The props aren't precision-made pieces of jewellery. I'm using exactly the same skills but on a much larger scale. I don't have to measure everything to a tenth of a millimetre," he added.

Garvan graduated from the University of Ulster in 1995 and afterwards completed a two year jewellery skills programme in Kilkenny. He then spent a year's apprenticeship with Dutch goldsmith Trudi Van Schriek in Maastricht.

His sister Céline specialises in gallery-orientated work and this is something that he is looking at for the future. He recently had one of his pieces featured in the Ulster Museum's permanent collection.

He said: "I am influenced

by architecture and music. My apprenticeship in Holland gave me an appreciation of the outlook of people in Northern Europe. They tend to wear personalised, handmade jewellery.

"People here tend to be more interested in big name brands but that is definitely changing and I think that is down to Craft NI's role informing the public that they can get hand-made individual pieces of jewellery which aren't much more expensive than the items you can buy in the High Street."

More and more people are approaching designer makers to commission one-off pieces that reflect their own personalities. He enjoys the creative process of engaging and collaborating with customers, involving them closely in the design process to ensure that every end product exceeds expectations.

"Every person is different and every piece I produce reflects that. I find that engaging with clients is one of the best ways of finding inspiration because they come with their own ideas," he added.

For more details about Craft, visit www.craftni.org