



Craft NI

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Craft FEST offers Shopping Experience with a Difference

A showcase of craft by leading makers at Castle Ward in Strangford

Date: Monday, 3 August 2009

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[STORY BEGINS] VISITORS to Castle Ward in Strangford can expect to find some of the best local craft and a very ‘un-high street’ experience at Craft Fest 2009 this weekend.

Organised by the Craft & Design Collective, the festival which kicks off this Friday will feature many of Northern Ireland’s leading local artists and craftspeople.

Throughout the weekend there will be demonstrations of blacksmithing, bear-making, clay sculpture, embroidery, felt-making, woodturning and woodworking and jewellery-making using recycled materials.

Visitors can get involved with craft making by booking onto a workshops to create jewellery from old and found objects including bracelets, badges and necklaces.

A selection of striking jewellery, bespoke handbags, fashion and interior accessories in ceramic, metal, mixed media, textiles and wood will be available to buy directly from the makers who have designed and produced them.

The festival’s Craft Tent also hopes to generate a surge in creativity among children at the event and makers overseeing the craft activities are expecting to be kept very busy throughout the weekend.

Jan Irwin of Craft and Design Collective explains what the festival has to offer:

“Craft Fest is a 3-day festival that celebrates the unique craft in Northern Ireland.

“The festival is being hosted again this year at Castle Ward which is situated on the shores of Strangford Lough.

This idyllic setting is perfect location to showcase the quality and individuality of our local craftspeople” says Jan.

“Over the weekend visitors can expect to be sorely tempted by the work on display”.

Craft FEST 09 is part of the August Craft Month 09, a programme of over 40 craft events and activities that celebrates craft in Northern Ireland and invites people to get involved in the heritage, tradition and innovation that the craft of Northern Ireland has to offer.

For more information on the activities taking place and how to get involved is available by contacting the Craft and Design Collective on 028 9032 9342 or by emailing jan.irwin@virgin.net

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Images [see attached]

Editor's notes:

- Craft FEST 2009 takes place on Friday 7th (1pm to 5.30pm), Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th (10.30am to 5.30pm) August 2009 at Castle Ward, Strangford, County Down.
- Normal National Trust admission charges apply.
- To reach Castle Ward from Downpatrick take the A25 to Strangford. Castle Ward is signposted from Downpatrick and Strangford.
- There are limited workshop places available. Participants must book in advance. For further information, or to book a place on one of the workshops, please contact Jan Irwin T: +44 (0)28 9032 9342 M: 0779 327 9161 E: jan.irwin@virgin.net
- jan.irwin@virgin.net
- Participating Artist/Designer/Makers will be available for interview and photo opportunities during CRAFT FEST 2009. To arrange an interview please contact Jan Irwin T: +44 (0)28 9032 9342 M: 0779 327 9161 E: jan.irwin@virgin.net
- Craft FEST is listed as part of **August Craft Month 09** - Northern Ireland's annual celebration of craft. [A copy of the listings guide to August Craft Month 09 is available to download here](#) or by visiting Craft NI's website, www.craftnidirectory.org.
- This year, the 3rd year of August Craft Month, the focus is on ceramics and there are 5 major ceramics exhibitions and a full programme of over 40 events across Northern Ireland.
- **About the Craft & Design Collective** - The Craft & Design Collective is an independent membership organisation formed in 1997 by Artist/Designer/Makers for Artist/Designer/Makers, to help raise the profile, manage and facilitate the development of Craft, Applied Art and Design.
- With over 130 members the Craft & Design Collective is the biggest Craft Network in Northern Ireland. We are dedicated to the promotion, representation, understanding and development of Craft, Applied Art and Design in Northern Ireland and beyond. www.craftanddesigncollective.com