

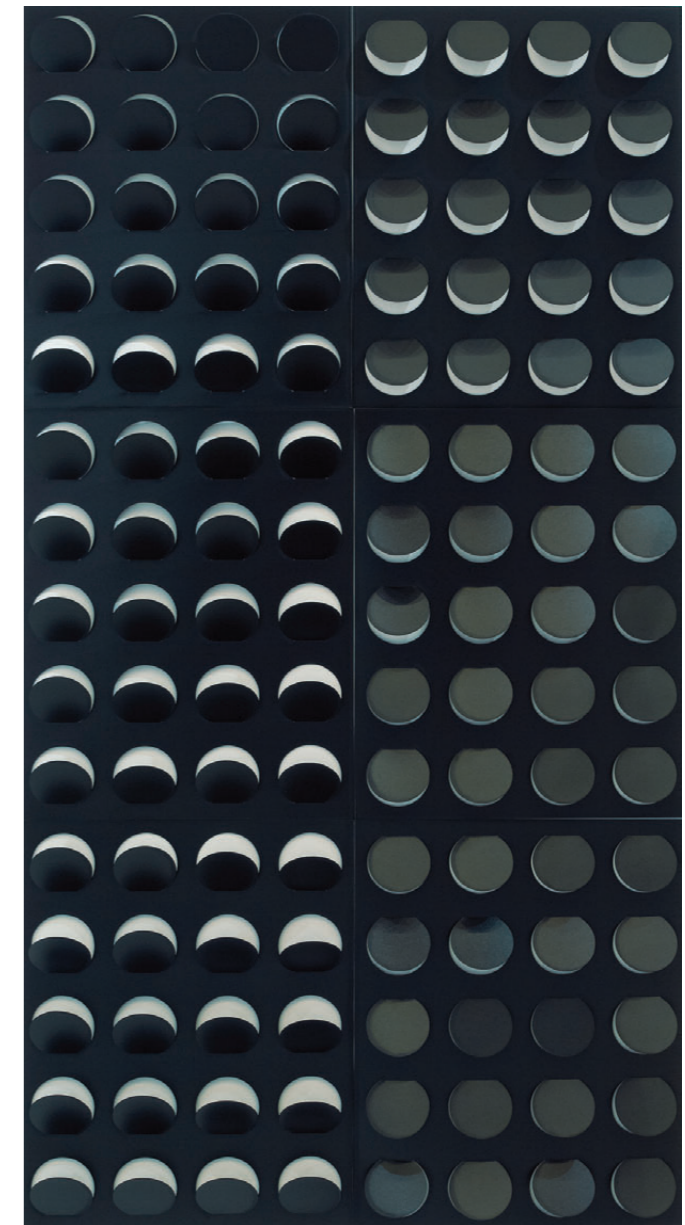
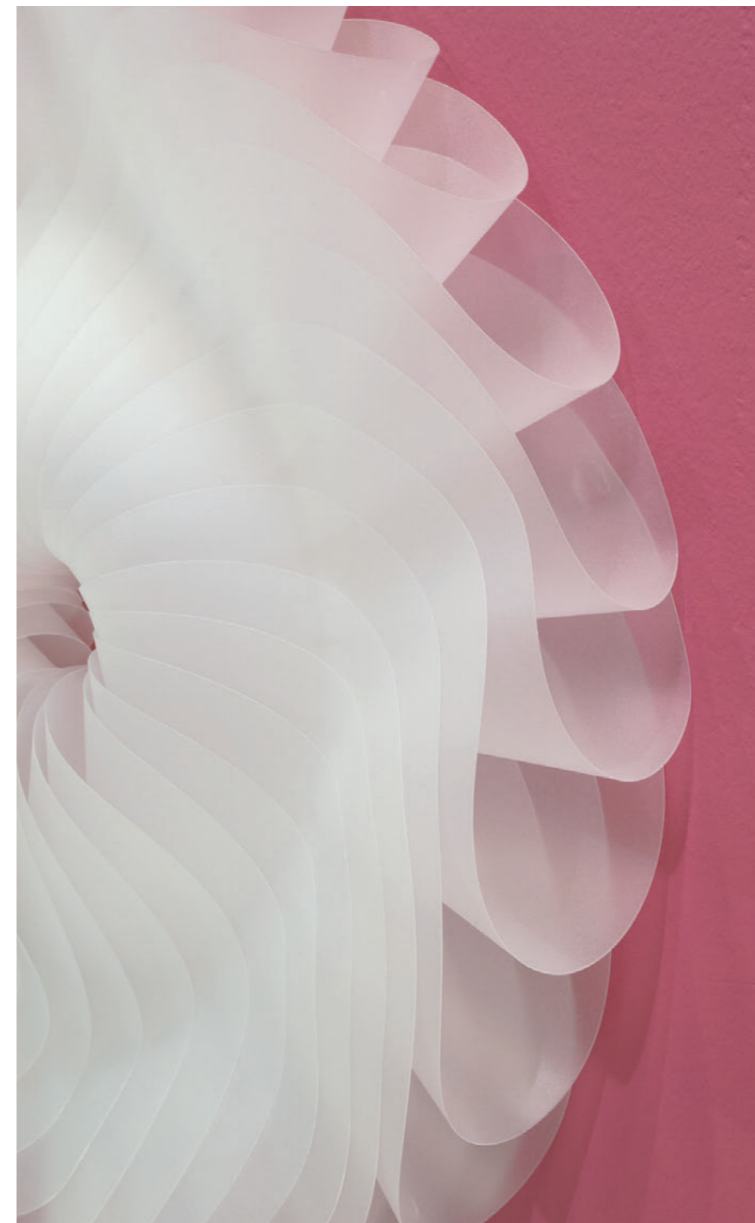
# Rachael McKnight

# NEW YORK YORK YORK

Rachel a big hit from Manchester to Manhattan



**Y**oung Belfast designer-maker Rachael McKnight is one to watch. Her jewellery has been a huge hit and is currently showing in exhibitions in New York and Philadelphia and she's now branched out into creating beautiful pieces for the home. She has just returned from the prestigious 100% Design show in London where she met top architects and interior designers and is soon to head off to the Great Northern Show in Manchester with four other makers from Northern Ireland, supported by Craft NI. Speaking from her workshop in her home off the Lisburn Road, she is hurrying to pack for New York where her work is part of an exhibition in the American Irish Historical Society on Fifth Avenue. "It's been an amazing couple of years - I've loved every minute of it," she said. Rachel - who turns 30 in November





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– was always creative but she also is a born entrepreneur.

“When I was little I did these puppet shows and I’d charge my friends to come in and watch – I even paid my brothers to do the lighting! I couldn’t wait to have my own business but after finishing my degree at the University of Ulster in 2003 I wasn’t sure if I’d be able to start a business making jewellery.

“I took a job at an office but was so

bored; I just wanted to be creative. I made a few pieces and went around shops to see if they’d stock them. I was lucky in that Copper Moon took the pieces straight away and placed an order,” she said. From there the only way was up – she got involved with the Craft and Design Collective which runs Space Craft in Belfast and then went on the Making It Programme run by Craft Northern Ireland. In recent years her work has taken her to many places and she

says trade shows like 100% Design and Great Northern are hugely important to designer-makers.

“It’s your chance to make contact with people in the industry and to get your work sold around the world. It takes a lot of time and planning and when you return you have to follow up by emailing all the people you met and sending on images of work that might be suitable for them,”

Her new work went down well at 100% Design in London. She has produced placemats and coasters and her polypropylene wall panels created a huge amount of interest. “I liked the idea of creating a decorative wall piece that wasn’t two dimensional,” she said.

**Find out more about Rachel’s work at [www.craftni.org/directory](http://www.craftni.org/directory)**