

## The National Craft Gallery fashions the future with a new exhibition.



**Image credits (from left to right)**

*Girl on Flying Machine*, Mannequin, Yinka Shonibare, 2008

*Hunter Jacket*, *Embodying Ethics*, Rohan Chhabra, 2010

## BLOCK PARTY: Contemporary craft inspired by the art of the tailor

**Exhibition Dates: Saturday March 31 – Wednesday May 16, 2012**

Block Party at the National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny.

**Exhibition Opening: 3pm, Saturday March 31, 2012**

A fashion show featuring contemporary Irish tailoring by designers from the Project 51 Collective will be held in the National Craft Gallery to launch the exhibition.

*See below for further details.*

**"The wonderful thing about a show like Block Party is that it challenges our assumptions, and that is potentially a very creative state to be in. It will be interesting to see what it inspires."** – Ann Mulrooney, Manager and Curator, National Craft Gallery

*Block Party: Contemporary craft inspired by the art of the tailor* explores new uses of the centuries-old skill of tailoring, by presenting work by 15 international artists who push pattern-cutting well beyond the fashion garment. Artists include Yinka Shonibare MBE, Shelley Fox, Charlotte Hodes, Dai Rees and Hormazd Narilewalla.

*Block Party* has been curated by Lucy Orta, Professor of Art, Fashion and the Environment at London College of Fashion, and a renowned visual artist whose own practice fuses fashion, art and architecture. "Driven by a deep admiration of the tradition and craftsmanship of pattern drafting, curating Block Party has been the perfect opportunity to

reflect on its many contemporary visual interpretations," she said of the exhibition. The artists Orta has selected take pattern-cutting as a starting point to produce sculpture, ceramics, textile, moving image and collage.

### **Opening Event – Fashion Show**

Combining the concept of the exhibition with the wealth of fashion creativity that is flourishing in Ireland right now, four very talented Irish designers will be showing their creative designs at the Saturday afternoon fashion show on March 31 to launch the exhibition.

- **Claire O'Connor** [www.claireoconnor.ie](http://www.claireoconnor.ie)
- **Sinéad Doyle** [www.sineaddoyle.com](http://www.sineaddoyle.com)
- **Jennifer Rothwell** [www.jrothwell.net](http://www.jrothwell.net)
- **Caoimhe Keane** (label: Que-Va) [www.que-va.com](http://www.que-va.com)

The National Craft Gallery will host this exclusive first look at the Autumn/Winter 2012/13 collections by the designers who are all part of the Irish design collective Project 51 - [www.project51.ie](http://www.project51.ie).

### **Exhibition Themes**

The exhibition comes at a time of renewed interest in the bespoke and focuses on three themes: Storytelling, Embracing the Future, and Motif and Manipulation.

In **Storytelling** artists use pattern-cutting as a means of expression. Turner Prize-nominated Yinka Shonibare MBE presents a child mannequin, dressed in a historically accurate Victorian outfit crafted from African fabric to reference culture, race and history. Claudia Losi's 24m whale made of woollen suit fabric was transported around the world like an old fashioned fairground attraction to stimulate discussion and storytelling before being deconstructed and transformed into jackets in collaboration with fashion designer Antonio Marras.

In **Embracing the Future** existing pattern-cutting methods are manipulated and challenged through the use of innovative processes and technologies. Simon Thorogood's patterns are created using digital programmes whilst Philip Delamore of the Fashion Digital Studio at London College of Fashion seeks to apply the latest developments in 3D digital design to the garment making process.

In **Motif and Manipulation** the beauty of the paper pattern block is the visual inspiration. Ceramist Charlotte Hodes directly incorporates these familiar shapes into her strikingly vivid ceramics. Raw Edges re-appropriate the use of a pattern block when a technique similar to that used in the clothing industry is used to create furniture, as a flat paper pattern of a chair is then filled with expandable foam to create the 3D '*Tailored Wood*'.

*Block Party* was originally commissioned by the Crafts Council UK, and the exhibition was first seen at Smiths Row in Bury St Edmunds in January 2012.

More information can be found at [www.blockparty.org.uk](http://www.blockparty.org.uk)

### **Ends**

For more media information about *Block Party*, please contact Christine Monk on 087 675 5329 or [christinemonk@eircom.net](mailto:christinemonk@eircom.net)

For more media information about the National Craft Gallery and the Crafts Council of Ireland, please contact Susan Brindley on 056 779 6152 or [susan@cco.i.e](mailto:susan@cco.i.e)

### **Notes to editors**

#### ***Block Party* exhibitors are:**

Tia-Calli Borlase, Rohan Chhabra, Philip Delamore, Shelley Fox, Charlotte Hodes, Suzanne Lee, Claudia Losi, Hormazd Narielwalla, Lucy Orta, Raw Edges, Dai Rees, Rubedo, Yinka Shonibare MBE, Rhian Solomon, Richard Sweeney and Simon Thorogood.

#### **About the National Craft Gallery:**

[www.nationalcraftgallery.ie](http://www.nationalcraftgallery.ie)

- We are Ireland's leading centre for contemporary craft and design.
- We play a critical role in building understanding of craft and material culture.
- We exhibit Irish and international designers, artists and makers who push boundaries in their engagement with the making process.
- We inspire appreciation, creativity and innovation through our exhibition and education programme, and along with our touring programme we reach an audience of over 100,000 people annually.