

TOMORROW'S TOP JEWELLERY DESIGNERS TODAY!

Graduate Jewellery Exhibition at the National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny

17 July – 2 August 2009

13 July 2009: Introducing tomorrow's top jewellery designers today! The graduates of the Craft Council of Ireland's acclaimed Jewellery & Goldsmithing Skills & Design Course – considered one of the best in Europe - will showcase their work at the Graduate Jewellery Exhibition which opens at the National Craft Gallery in Kilkenny on 17th July 2009. Featuring exquisite pieces in gold, silver and precious stones, this is an opportunity to buy a unique piece from an emerging designer or simply admire incredible craftsmanship up close.

The students are emerging from an intensive two-year full time programme which draws on the expertise of some of Ireland's and Europe's most highly skilled silversmiths and goldsmiths and the students work solely in precious metals. The exhibition will be opened by Rudolf Heltzel, a world-renowned jeweller based in Kilkenny.

The in-depth training the students receive on this course gives them the ability to push boundaries in technique and innovative designs and hence, the innovative pieces on display are contemporary in design and style but use traditional materials and gemstones. The exhibition includes a stunning display of 18ct gold rings set with coloured gemstones, a hand-carved teapot with legs in the form of a lions head, a range of hair combs in silver and gold, beautiful silver brooches in flowing shapes with inlaid gold and channel-set diamonds, and contemporary salt and pepper sets in solid silver.

Speaking about the course, Úna Parsons, CEO, Crafts Council of Ireland said "This unique course provides a foundation of technical expertise in jewellery production. These graduates are the skilled workforce of the future, creating special one-off pieces of contemporary jewellery for the discerning customer. I am very proud of what the students have achieved

throughout their two years of training and wish them every success as they embark on their future careers.”

The graduating students come from a variety of backgrounds including retail and design, construction and horology and many of them intend to continue to work in the trade at home or travel abroad to gain international experience before establishing their own businesses here in Ireland.

The graduate exhibition 2009 will run until the 2nd August at the National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny.

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About the CCol’s Jewellery & Goldsmithing Skills & Design Course

The Crafts Council of Ireland’s (CCol) Jewellery and Goldsmithing course was established in 1993 and is located in the Crafts Council of Ireland’s Headquarters in Kilkenny. The students work solely in precious metals, making the course unique within Jewellery education in Ireland. The two year full time course specialises in jewellery production, stone setting, engraving, fabrication and fine jewellery techniques. The CCol promotes quality in craftsmanship and innovation in jewellery production enabling graduates entry into the jewellery industry. This course is comparable to the leading Jewellery courses in Europe and former graduates have had a 90% employment rate.

THE GRADUATES

Cathal Barber is the fourth generation of his family to pursue a career in jewellery. He also has a Diploma in Horology from the Irish Swiss Institute of Horology and a Professional Jewellers Diploma from the National Association of Goldsmiths, London. After two years of training Cathal plans to further explore new techniques and design ideas; after graduation he will work with a number of Irish based goldsmiths and then travel abroad to gain more experience before returning to Ireland to develop his own jewellery business.

Michelle Doyle completed a course in Art, Craft and Design in the Central Technical Institute, Waterford, a certificate course in Design and Display in Dublin Institute of Technology, Dublin and worked for a year on a visual design team for House Of Fraser, Dundrum. Michelle's future plans include gaining more experience in design and traditional techniques abroad with the view to returning to Ireland to set up her own jewellery and goldsmithing business.

After achieving a degree in Fine and Applied Art from the University of Ulster, Belfast, **Loretta Haughey** gained work experience with jeweller Mia Mullen. She also completed the FÁS Jewellery course, which included a six-month placement with Alan Ardiffe Jewellery. On completion of the Crafts Council of Ireland's Jewellery & Goldsmithing Skills & Design Course, Loretta hopes to gain further experience both in Ireland and abroad. Her ultimate aim is to become a self-employed goldsmith in Ireland.

Gregory Lafford completed the Jewellery Manufacturing Operative Course held by FÁS in Baldoyle in 2007. After acquiring trade knowledge and an introduction to traditional techniques and processes he progressed onto the Crafts Council of Ireland's Jewellery & Goldsmithing Skills & Design Course. Future plans include travelling to gain experience in jewellery workshops both in Ireland and abroad.

Fresh from secondary school, **Kevin McDonald** knew his vocation in life would be art related and with this guidance his attention eventually gravitated towards jewellery, being attracted by its craftsmanship and beauty of materials. Since joining the Crafts Council of Ireland's Jewellery & Goldsmithing Skills & Design Course, Kevin's designs are inspired by natural forms both abstract and figurative. He has been drawn towards model making by hand and aspires to be a master craftsman in this field.

After working in construction for a number of years **Thomas Riordan** chose to pursue a career in goldsmithing. On completion of the Crafts Council of Ireland's Jewellery & Goldsmithing Skills & Design Course, Thomas hopes to travel abroad to gain experience working in a commercial workshop. Thomas will continue training to develop and perfect his skills, particularly in gemmology and the innovative use of coloured gemstones and diamonds in his own designs.

Veronica Roden's first interest in jewellery came from attending a one year course at Alchimia, a jewellery school in Florence. Veronica returned to Ireland to perfect and develop traditional jewellery skills. After graduating from the Crafts Council of Ireland's Jewellery & Goldsmithing Skills & Design Course, Veronica hopes to acquire more technical experience in workshops abroad and in Ireland. Ultimately she will be working towards setting up her own goldsmithing business, making contemporary one-off pieces.

Marie-Thérèse Walker has always had a keen interest in craft. On attending the National College of Art & Design in 2001, she obtained a 1st BDes specialising in metals. After travelling and working throughout New Zealand Therese returned home and was accepted onto the Crafts Council of Ireland's Jewellery & Goldsmithing Skills & Design Course, which gave her the opportunity to improve her technical skills. Marie-Thérèse plans to continue her training through working in the trade, with the aim of eventually running an independent jewellery workshop.

Note to Editors:

About CCol

The Crafts Council of Ireland (CCol) is the national design and economic development organisation for the €122 million crafts industry in Ireland. The National Craft Gallery is the CCol's flagship exhibition space. CCol is responsible for fostering the growth and commercial strength of the crafts industry in Ireland, communicating its unique identity and stimulating quality design, innovation and competitiveness. Its activities are funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment via Enterprise Ireland.