

CERAMICS GRADUATE EXHIBITION OPENS AT THE NATIONAL CRAFT GALLERY, KILKENNY

***UP FROM EARTH* SHOWCASES CERAMICS WORK BY EMERGING DESIGNER MAKERS**

An exhibition of works by the graduates of the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland's (DCCoI) Ceramics Skills & Design Course will be officially opened by internationally renowned ceramicist Jack Doherty at 6.30pm on Friday, 18th July, 2014, at the National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny. The exhibition entitled *Up From Earth* gives visitors the opportunity to admire and acquire the creative and individual work by these emerging craftspeople.

The display of work at the exhibition, in each graduate's signature style, reflects their individual technical ability and design aesthetic. The exhibition features contemporary craft in a variety of ceramic materials, from delicate ceramic porcelain to robust stoneware, including Steve Meek's contemporary reworking of folk pottery and 2014 Future Makers Awards & Supports recipient Chloë Dowds' innovative take on functional vases, which inspired by music, sees her ceramic designs suspended from the air.

The 11 students have recently emerged from an intensive, two-year full time programme at the picturesque Island Mill in Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, where they honed their expertise and craft. This intensive skills-based programme, which is now accredited through National Univeristy of Maynooth, is designed to equip students passionate about working with clay, with the practical skills and technical knowledge that are needed to develop careers in the ceramics industry – 94% of past graduates have progressed into the ceramics industry.

Karen Hennessy, Chief Executive of the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland, said *“Over the past two years the students have developed the skill set and business acumen to meet the needs of the ceramics industry. The Up From Earth exhibition is the culmination of two years intensive work but also the start of a new chapter for these emerging designer makers. Following that experience and the combination of access to expertise in training and facilities, this transition will allow the graduates to pursue successful careers in our creative economy. We look forward to continuing to support them through the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland programmes in their creative enterprises.*

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John Tynan, Head of Education, Training and Development at the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland, said *“What makes for high-quality, employer-related skills training in DCCol’s Ceramics Skills & Design Course is the combination of excellent facilities matched to industry needs and a well established curriculum programme which is formally accredited by the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM). The collective result of this is that a group of highly skilled ceramicists are able to exhibit their beautifully designed and crafted work to the high standards seen at the National Craft Gallery today”.*

Gus Mabelson, DCCol’s Ceramics Skills & Design Course Manager, added *“The skills the students have acquired through many hours of hard work and the creative use of those skills form the foundation of all the work in the exhibition. The day to day engagement with the material, in this case clay, is essential to the acquisition of those skills. Learning through ‘doing’ and then doing it again is at the core of the course curriculum. They have gained self-confidence, professional pride and a sense of identity through the objects they design and make”.*

Up from Earth will run at the National Craft Gallery, Castle Yard, Kilkenny, until Sunday, 3rd August. A ‘Meet the Makers’ late date event will take place in the National Craft Gallery on Thursday 24th July at 6.30pm where the graduates will present their work and explain their process and inspiration for their selected pieces.

For further details visit www.nationalcraftgallery.ie

Ends

For further press information please contact: Aoife Smith or Sorcha Furlong at Elevate PR on 01-6625652 or email aoife@elevate.ie / sorcha@elevate.ie

Notes to Editor

The 11 graduates of the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland’s Ceramics Skills & Design Course, as well as progressing from arts schools, also come from diverse backgrounds including a former captain of a charter ship, chef and surf instructor. Each took up the course at different stages of their career and have since found their own style within the expressive world of ceramics. The graduates include:

- Bernadette Tuite
- Chloë Dowds
- Edward Brennan

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- Florian Gadsby
- Joanna Doyle
- Karen Cody
- Magda Bethani
- Peter Montgomery
- Polona Simonič
- Sam White
- Steven Meek

*Please see full bio / work details attached separately

About the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland:

The Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) is the main champion of the craft and design industry in Ireland, fostering its growth and commercial strength, communicating its unique identity and stimulating quality design, innovation and competitiveness. Headquartered in Kilkenny, DCCoI has almost 3,000 clients on its register of craft and design enterprises and has over 70 member organisations. DCCoI's activities are funded by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation via Enterprise Ireland. For further information, please visit www.dccoi.ie.