



Graduate Jewellery Exhibition Set to Open at the National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny

- 90% Employment Rate for Former Graduates -

From Saturday, 13th July 2013 the National Craft Gallery in Kilkenny will exhibit work by the twelve talented 2013 graduates of the internationally renowned Jewellery and Goldsmithing Skills and Design Course run by the Crafts Council of Ireland.

The exhibition will be officially opened on Friday 19th July by Dr. Alison Fitzgerald, a lecturer in the history department at the National University of Ireland Maynooth and an expert in jewellery and silversmithing and allied trades in Ireland. Running until Sunday, 4th August, the exhibition showcases the high level of craftsmanship and skills acquired by the graduates over the last two years and features exquisite pieces of jewellery in gold, palladium, silver and precious gem stones.

The twelve students emerging from the intensive, two-year full time programme have honed their expertise and craft with some of Ireland's and Europe's most highly skilled silversmiths and goldsmiths through master classes and work placements. Unique to the Kilkenny programme is the fact that students work solely in precious metals and have been encouraged to push boundaries in technique and innovative designs.

The course has a 90 per cent employment rate. The 2013 graduates, many of whom have made a dramatic career change to become jewellery makers, will go on to gain employment within the jewellery trade in Ireland, while others intend to set up their own businesses. They include a former project manager, fashion design graduate, plumber, software developer and architecture graduate.

Running for three weeks only, the exhibition offers visitors to the gallery an opportunity to admire the work of Ireland's emerging jewellery designers. The beautiful creations on display include:

- An exquisite collection of twelve clocks finely constructed from sheet metal, showcasing each student's technical ability and individual design aesthetics. They range from minimalist geometric hollow forms to decorative designs incorporating enamel.
- Twelve brooches produced using advanced traditional fine jewellery techniques and the modern technology of laser welding. Each piece drew its inspiration from a different decade between 1880 and 1990.
- Twelve rings in 18 carat gold or palladium set with a single coloured gemstone.

Eimear Conyard, course manager and tutor, said the course challenged the students but their steadfast commitment, passion and creativity has resulted in an exhibition of exceptional work. *“The complexity of the pieces on display demonstrates an ability to create work that pushes the boundaries of jewellery design. The final project work in the exhibition reflects each graduate's signature style and their individual technical ability. They should feel very proud of what they have achieved and I wish them the very best for the future.”*

Adding to this, Karen Hennessy, chief executive of the Crafts Council of Ireland said the course's previous record of 90% employment is testament to the relevance of the two-year programme. *“This course was established 20 years ago in response to the demands of the sector for skilled training in jewellery design and making. The programme is designed to equip students with the practical skills to develop careers in the jewellery industry. Our graduates emerge from the course not only with technical abilities but also with experience of the commercial realities of running a craft business such as working to deadlines and commissioning budgets. We look forward to continuing to work with these graduates in the future as registered craft enterprises.”*

Applications were received from all over Europe for the forthcoming 2013 – 2015 programme of this unique course. The twelve successful applicants have already been offered and confirmed acceptance of their places on the programme which commences in September.

John Tynan, Head of Education, Training and Development at the Crafts Council of Ireland said the course has established an excellent reputation both nationally and internationally. *“Our course, which is accredited by the National University of Ireland Maynooth, provides students with a comprehensive induction to the commercial world of jewellery design and making and*

has the potential to be life changing for them. We wish each graduate every success in their future career.”

The jewellery graduate exhibition runs at the National Craft Gallery, Castle Yard, Kilkenny until Sunday, 4th August, 2013.

Opening times:

Tuesday – Saturday: 10am – 5.30pm

Sunday: 11am – 5.30pm

Closed Mondays except Bank Holidays (The gallery will also be closed on Tuesday 16 July for student assessments.)

Admission is free. For further details visit www.nationalcraftgallery.ie

In addition to the jewellery and goldsmithing course, the Crafts Council of Ireland runs a two-year Ceramics Skills and Design Course in Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny. Work by the 2012 ceramics graduates is currently being exhibited at John Paul II Library at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth and runs until the end of July.

-ENDS-

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

Notes to Editor:

2013 Graduates

Catherine Conroy

Catherine Conroy graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canada in 2002 with a degree in jewellery and metalsmithing. While residing in Canada, she participated in many jewellery exhibition, including being selected to represent Canada internationally in Paris at the Concours International des Jeunes Createurs de Mode 2000 and also being short listed for the American Craft Museum Horizon Award 2002. In Ireland, her work has been selected for

exhibition by the RDS National Crafts Competition in both 2011 and 2012, as well as being short-listed for the prestigious Future Makers Awards 2012.

For a number of years after graduation, Catherine worked in Fine Art sales in Dublin before being accepted onto the Crafts Council of Ireland jewellery and goldsmithing Course. This course has given Catherine the opportunity to challenge herself as a crafts person, while strengthening and advancing her jewellery skills. During her studies, Catherine has also attained the Gemological Association of Great Britain Diamond Grading Practical Certificate. Upon graduating, Catherine plans to further develop her skills, while establishing herself as a designer goldsmith.

Alex Thiel

Alex Thiel is originally from Poland and moved to Ireland in 2008. Alex discovered her manual skills while she was working as a cake decorator. She decided that she would like to create forms in more permanent materials, like metal.

While working in the jewellery retail industry in Cork in 2009 she undertook a part-time apprenticeship with master engraver and jeweller Don O'Mahony for two years before joining the Crafts Council of Ireland's (CCOI) jewellery and goldsmithing course. As a part of CCOI course, she gained valuable experience during her work placement with Irene Leahy in IMB Design in Cork city.

Alex's inspirations for her jewellery designs are mostly organic with architectural influences. After the CCOI's jewellery and goldsmithing course, she aims to increase her jewellery and design skills by seeking further education through courses and training within the industry with a view to being a self-employed.

Angela O'Keefe

Angela O'Keefe graduated in 2003 with an MA in history of art from St. Andrews University, Scotland. She went on to study at ALCHIMIA School of Contemporary Jewellery in Florence, Italy, where she attained a Diploma in art of contemporary jewellery, completing a specialisation course in her third year with Prof. Manfred Bischoff.

In 2012, she was awarded Crafts Council of Ireland (CCOI) Future Makers networking grant and

was invited to exhibit at *LOOT: Mad about Jewellery* at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, U.S.A.

Angela has exhibited her work throughout Europe and the United States, most recently at *Bijoux! 2013* at the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, Florida and *Inhorgenta International Trade Fair*, Munich.

Eimear Cruise

Eimear Cruise graduated from University College Dublin in 2002 with a B.A. Honours Degree in English. Following this, she worked in office administration in both Dublin and London for a number of years.

Eimear choose to change career and enrolled on the FAS jewellery manufacturing operative traineeship in 2008 and undertook an 8 month work placement with David Conway Jewellers. She then went onto work for Button & Co. in Co. Waterford.

Recognising the need for further skills training, Eimear applied for the Crafts Council of Ireland's jewellery and goldsmithing course. Eimear recently completed two work placements with Sam Lafford and ESL, during which time she gained valuable practical experience.

In 2011, she successful obtained her diamond grading practical diploma from the Gemmological Association of Great Britain. Upon completion of the course, Eimear would like to further develop her fine jewellery skills and continue her gemmological studies within the jewellery industry.

Sophie Broadhead

Sophie Broadhead has a BA Hons in Hispanic Studies from the University of Stirling, Scotland, and an MA in interior architecture and design from Computense University, Madrid. She spent 10 years working in project management in Spain before returning home to Ireland in 2009.

Having participated in short jewellery courses in Thailand and NCAD, she completed the FAS jewellery manufacturing course, which included working with Alan Ardiffe in Dublin. Since starting

the Crafts Council of Ireland jewellery and goldsmithing course in 2011, she has completed a work placement in the merchandising and production department at Theo Fennell in London.

On graduation, she will further her gemstone knowledge through training with the Gemmological Association of Great Britain. Sophie's specific interests lie in the commercial side of the jewellery business and, in the future, she will continue to learn while working in the jewellery trade in Ireland.

Hanna Tommola

Hanna Tommola graduated from Kouvola Institute of Art and Design in Finland in 2001 with a B.A. Honours Degree in fashion. Due to her fascination of jewellery and metals, as part of her degree she undertook various jewellery making modules. She moved to Ireland in 2002 and her career path diverted in to archaeology.

She never abandoned her interest in jewellery and, in 2009, she enrolled on a fulltime two year jewellery, art and metal craft course in St John's College in Cork. She then applied to CCOI's jewellery and goldsmithing course.

Recently, Hanna gained additional practical experience with goldsmith and designer Tuula Harrington in Designworks Studio in Cork. Hanna's work was chosen for the RDS National Craft Competition exhibition in 2012.

Hanna is fascinated by jewellery featuring clarity and simplicity. In her designs she explores how much refinement is possible to achieve the simplest form, staying true to her Nordic design roots.

Jemma Crosbie

Jemma Crosbie first discovered her interest in jewellery making whilst completing a Bachelor of Architecture Degree at the University of South Australia in Adelaide. She undertook the elective 'Introduction to the Jewellery Workshop' with a view to improving her architectural model making skills, but was immediately fascinated with working on such a small scale with precious metals and knew this was the career path she would pursue.

She returned to Ireland in 2009 and completed a two year course in jewellery and art metalcraft in St. John's College Cork, before being accepted on to the Crafts Council of Ireland's jewellery and goldsmithing course. Jemma's designs are largely inspired by her architectural background and have been shortlisted for the Future Makers Awards in 2012 and 2013.

Jemma understands the importance of gaining trade experience to increase her skills and plans to seek further training within the industry.

Miriam Wade

Miriam Wade, from Mullingar in Co. Westmeath, graduated from the National College of Art and Design in 2011 with first class honours in craft design specializing in metals. In her fourth year in NCAD she was awarded the Future Makers Materials Grant. Miriam was also shortlisted for the RDS Craft competition in June 2011. In September 2011, she attained a place on the Crafts Council of Ireland's jewellery and goldsmithing course. In October of the same year, she received two IDI awards, the first for best graduate craft product and the IDI Grand Prix Award for best graduate design.

Miriam has been involved in a number of exhibitions, these include the NCAD degree show, June 2011; New Designers Exhibition, London, July 2011; RDS Dublin Horse Show, Dublin, July 2011; Future Makers Exhibition, Wandersfort Gallery, Cork, November 2011; Design to Shine, 100 Years of Stainless Steel in Sheffield, March 2013 and Metal Matters, Crafts Council of Ireland graduate exhibition, July 2013

Recently she has featured in Britain's Craft Magazine for the *Design to Shine* exhibition for stainless steel sculptural pieces she made for her degree in 2011.

During the CCoI course, Miriam received an honours grade in the diamond grading course through the Gemmological Association of Britain. She also gained experience in CAD (computer aided design) and laser welding techniques. On completion of the course, she hopes to further her experience in working with new technologies combining them with traditional goldsmithing skills.

Patrick Finnegan

After completing a Masters in software development for computer networks in UCC, Patrick worked for 10 years in the IT industry. Deciding to pursue his interest in jewellery and precious gemstones, he completed the FAS traineeship programme in Baldoyle in 2011, before joining the Crafts Council of Ireland's jewellery and goldsmithing course in Kilkenny. During this time he also completed the GemA diamond grading practical exam and a work placement with JMK Goldsmiths, Kilkenny.

Yvonne Sheridan

Yvonne Sheridan, from Dublin, graduated from Dublin Institute of Technology in 2008 with a first class honours BA Degree in interior and furniture design. She worked for several years in design studios on high end commercial and domestic projects in Ireland.

A love of architectural model making led to an interest in creation of small scale objects, of which jewellery became the focus. During her intensive training on the Crafts Council of Ireland's jewellery and goldsmithing course, she worked in DaCapo Goldsmiths in Dublin and Theo Fennell in London.

Yvonne received her diamond grading practical qualification from the Gemmological Association of Great Britain in 2012, and that same summer had her jewellery selected for exhibition at the RDS National Crafts competition. Over the next year, Yvonne plans to gain more practical experience in the industry, while developing her first jewellery collection.

Eoghain Thomas O'Brien

Eoghain Thomas O'Brien was born in Tanzania in 1986 and raised in Malawi, New York and eventually in Co. Laois. He discovered metalcraft in 2002 when he attended the Grennan Mills Craft School in Thomastown. After completing the two years under the guidance of Silversmith Peter Donovan, he continued on to the National College of Art and Design in Dublin to attain a first class honours degree in metal design. From there, in 2008 he opened and co-managed "Re-Craft", a shop and studio in Ballymun run in conjunction with the Rediscovery Centre.

After a year, Eoghain applied to the Crafts Council of Ireland jewellery and goldsmithing course to fine tune the skill set he built over the previous years. While in Kilkenny, he received a honours certificate in practical diamond grading, as well as a better understanding of the skills

required to create the pieces that best display his design aesthetic. Eoghain's hope is to further refine his skill set and establish his identity as a Goldsmith.

Andrew Comerford

Andrew left school at age 15 after junior cert and began an apprenticeship as pipe fitter/welder. He then began working on various bio pharma and petro chemical plants with high purity work in Intel and Wyeth bio pharma. Andrew left industry in 2008 to study architectural engineering in W.I.T. In 2009, he was introduced to jewellery making at Button & Co. by sister Elaine-Sarah Comerford and immediately fell in love with it.

He dropped architectural engineering to spend the next two years setting up production process at Button & Co., while learning bench skills and delving into the myriad areas of the designer/maker jewellery world. In 2011, he applied to CCOI College of jewellery and goldsmithing course.

Andrew hopes to build up a level of skill and knowledge to carry him into the future well equipped. He seeks to travel abroad working and perfecting his skills for three years and his ultimate goal is to become a recognized designer / maker worldwide with a high end market demographic.