

Minister announces details for Local Enterprise Showcase Awards

New awards from Local Enterprise Office Waterford help “showcase” local craft and design talent

Local Enterprise Office Waterford is introducing a new award competition to recognise excellence and innovation amongst craft makers and designers taking part in Showcase – Ireland’s International Creative Expo, which is being held in Dublin’s RDS next month.

The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Ms. Mary Mitchell O’ Connor T.D., announced details for the inaugural “Local Enterprise Showcase Awards” and that the winners will be revealed at Showcase, which attracts more than 5,000 buyers from around the world every year. The four-day event runs from January 22nd to 25th is organised by the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland and promoted internationally by Enterprise Ireland.

The number of LEO-supported companies at Showcase has jumped from 97 in 2016 to 112 in 2017. Local companies supported by LEO Waterford include Karen & Deirdre from Wild Oats Soap in Lismore; Shona McDonald from Mireog in An Rinn; Pippa with Pippa Sweeney Designs in Dungarvan; Victoria Flanagan from Copper Coast Natural Skincare in Dunhill; Vivien with Vivien O’Malley Ceramics in Kilmacthomas and Tom Carroll of TomCases in Waterford City.

Minister Mitchell O’Connor welcomed the introduction of the awards to mark emerging craft and design talent. The awards carry a first prize of a week’s product display in the Kilkenny Shop on Nassau Street, Dublin, and an opportunity to pitch their product to Kilkenny Shop buyers.

Minister Mitchell O'Connor, said: "Ireland has a wealth of design talent and I am very encouraged that the number of emerging craft and design companies being supported by the Local Enterprise Offices at Showcase has increased this year. The LEOs have been a huge support for start-ups and small businesses in the blossoming design and craft sector. Supporting this creative sector will enable further job creation right across the country and I am delighted that these awards will recognise our incredible talent."

"There is a strong appetite internationally for the work of Irish designers and makers, and the Local Enterprise Showcase is a great opportunity for craft makers to grow and develop. Our design and craft sector is contributing to jobs, exports, and tourism and Showcase plays a crucial role in helping put Irish companies on the international design map."

Richie Walsh with Local Enterprise Office Waterford said: "The new Local Enterprise Showcase is an ideal marketplace where buyers from around the world can meet local craftspeople and designers in person, helping small businesses get their big break. Our support for companies to be at Showcase is part of year-round supports offered from LEOs in local authorities to designers and craftspeople. These supports also include financial assistance, mentoring, business advice clinics and training programmes."

The Local Enterprise Showcase is located along the Balcony Area of the RDS Main Hall at Showcase, which is open to trade buyers from Sunday, January 22nd to Wednesday, January 25th 2017.

Further information on enterprise supports available to the design and craft sector is available through www.localenterprise.ie

ENDS

For media information, please contact Bríd Kirby in Local Enterprise Office, Waterford @ 0761 10 2766 or bkirby@waterfordcouncil.ie

Notes to Editor:

Showcase – Ireland’s International Creative Expo is one of the country’s largest international trade shows, attracting more than 5,000 buyers from Ireland and around the world over the four days of the annual event. Showcase is a partnership between the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland and Showcase Ireland Events Ltd, with support from Enterprise Ireland in promoting the show internationally through their network of offices overseas. www.showcaseireland.com

The 112 companies taking part in Local Enterprise Showcase are all supported by the Local Enterprise Offices and are coming from a range of creative sectors including ceramics, knitwear, jewellery, skincare and giftware.