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Local Craft and Produce in Rural
Areas of Northern Ireland



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Meaning / Definition



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Meaning / Definition

This becomes a problem so how should we as a partnership define it. Lets look at some of my definitions!

1. Meaning / Definition



The term ‘craft’ is defined and interpreted in a variety of different ways, included below:

‘Contemporary craft is about making things. It is an intellectual and physical activity where the maker explores the infinite possibilities of materials and processes to produce unique objects. To see craft is to enter a world of wonderful things which can be challenging, beautiful, sometimes useful, tactile, extraordinary, and to understand and enjoy and care which has gone into their making.’

Rosy Greenlees, Director, Crafts Council

Contemporary craft work that is cutting-edge and ensures the highest standard of workmanship. Work that must not seek to reproduce or restore, but rather must be innovative in its use of materials and aesthetic vision. Work that not only reflects the signature of the individual maker, but also demonstrates investigation of the processes and critical enquiry.

Arts Council England definition of contemporary fine craft

2. Meaning / Definition



The term 'craft' is defined and interpreted in a variety of different ways, included below:

‘Craft is remembering that art is seen, felt and heard as well as understood, knowing that not all ideas start with words, thinking with hands as well as head.’

Mark Jones, Director, Victoria and Albert Museum

‘Craft is taken to mean an object which must have a high degree of hand-made input, but not necessarily having been produced or designed using traditional materials, produced as a one-off or as part of a small batch, the design of which may or may not be culturally embedded in the country of production, and which is sold for profit.’

From *Careers and Lifestyles of Craft Makers in the 21st Century*

– **Andrew McAuley & Ian Fillis, in Cultural Trends - Vol 14 (2) June 2005, Routledge**

3. Meaning / Definition



The term 'craft' is defined and interpreted in a variety of different ways, included below:

(Craft is) the development of practical, aesthetic and thinking skills and of creativity through the conception and production of individual works and an in-depth engagement with materials

Dr Nicholas Houghton, Benefits to the Learner of 21st century Craft, 2005

Craft can be considered as the designing and making of individual artefacts, encouraging the development of intellectual, creative and practical skills, visual sensitivity and a working knowledge of tools and materials

Making it Work, 2001



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Legal Framework for Artisananship

The Legal Framework for Artisanship



Craft Northern Ireland was legally established in June 2004 as a response to research initiated by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. We recognise the strength and diversity of craft practice in Northern Ireland and aim to positively impact on the sector by taking a regional lead and co-ordinating role.



The current Board of Craft Northern Ireland is made up of representatives from the University of Ulster (School of Art and Design), the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Ulster Museum, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and five sectoral representatives.

The Legal Framework for Artisanship



In 2000, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), in conjunction with the Departments of Education (DE), Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) and Employment and Learning (DEL), published 'Unlocking Creativity: A Strategy for Development'.

This consultation paper outlined the Executive's strategy for developing the creative and cultural resources of the people of Northern Ireland in both cultural and commercial contexts:

This strategy would bring considerable benefits to the Northern Ireland economy in areas such as:

- a flexible and adaptable workforce
- increased levels of innovation and entrepreneurship
- establishment as a major centre of excellence for the creative industries

The Legal Framework for Artisanship



The consultation paper meshed together the objectives of the four contributing departments from their various perspectives:

- DCAL - emphasis on the creative industries
- DETI - strengthening of the knowledge-based economy through applying creativity
- DE - creating an educational environment to allow new opportunities to be exploited
- DEL - investment in people through training and lifelong learning

The Unlocking Creativity agenda aims to recognise and maximise the effect of creativity, while addressing the needs of diverse stakeholders, specifically in the cultural and commercial arenas.

The Legal Framework for Artisanship



Responsibility for coordinating efforts and providing strategic direction was given to the CreativityAction Group, an interdepartmental body with representatives from DCAL, DETI, DE and DEL, together with ACNI, the Northern Ireland Film Commission and a variety of practitioners.

In drawing up its strategic framework, DCAL recognises the need for investment in the arts, for robust structures and sustainability and for the promotion of excellence.

The paper identifies ACNI as a key player in delivering on many of the key objectives identified, as part of the wider Unlocking Creativity agenda cutting across DCAL, DETI, DE and DEL.

The Craft Development Unit will be created to deliver upon these common objectives.

The Legal Framework for Artisanship



Through its discussions, the Working Party clearly identified seven core functions for the proposed CDU:

1. Coordination of sectoral development and sub-regional activity

The crafts sector lacks a generally accepted definition and encompasses a wide range of activities and a number of separate agencies are currently involved in the sector but without cohesion.

The proposed new CDU will provide a focal point for stakeholders in the sector and act as a catalyst for coordinated strategic development.

2. Advice and advocacy

The CDU will play a key role in providing proactive advice to crafts artists and producers and in advocating the cause of the crafts sector to government departments and other stakeholder agencies.

The Legal Framework for Artisanship



3. Information exchange

A central function of the CDU will be the exchange, collation and distribution of information. The information exchange function will be carried out through mechanisms such as the following:

production of a regular newssheet, developing a database of craft producers, coordinating and listing craft exhibitions, events and shows and provision of information on training and business development

The CDU would see a two-way flow of information between the sub-regional crafts activities and programmes stakeholders and itself as essential for the new unit to function effectively.

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4. Signposting

CDU will have the capacity to 'signpost' links to external information sources where stakeholders demand this.

5. Raising quality and standards

A key aim of the new CDU will be the improvement of quality and standards in close partnership with the Invest Northern Ireland Design Directorate. The CDU's role will be to foster quality and standards but not to certify this by means of any quality mark.

6. Benchmarking and highlighting best practice

The role of the unit will be to identify and disseminate quality and best practice in the sector. This will have the twin benefits of promoting innovation and talent and raising the profile of Northern Ireland crafts by highlighting excellence within the sector.

The Legal Framework for Artisanship



Liaison with sub-regional activities, programmes and initiatives forming closer relationships with local producers and networks will be a critical element of the new unit. CDU will work alongside the existing framework of sub-regional activists.

This close involvement with sub-regional players will ensure that the CDU's functions and delivery mechanisms are needs-driven.

The Working Party has identified a number of areas that will not be prioritised.

- Quality certification
- Training provision
- Retail operations and
- Funding administration

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The creation of the Craft Development Unit is a direct response to the identified need of the craft sector in Northern Ireland. A number of government department and agencies have also prioritised enhancing creativity as a means of achieving a range of objectives including increasing employment, rural regeneration and diversification, enhancing education and training and tourism development.

This Unit will work with existing producers and stakeholders to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to the sector. Key objectives will be to enhance and develop local networks, provide quality information, co-ordinate activities which will foster best practice.

The craft sector has been identified as an area of potential growth in the future. This investment will provide an opportunity for a specific body, which has been advocated by sectoral participants, to focus on the needs of the stakeholders and to deliver upon a number of key governmental objectives.

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This new unit will be called :

Craft Northern Ireland

Craft Northern Ireland, is the sector-lead body for the promotion and development of the design-led contemporary craft industry in Northern Ireland.

Craft NI supports and promotes the craft industry as an integral, entrepreneurial and vibrant part of the region's economic and cultural infrastructure. Its key partners include; regional government and agencies, local government, cultural organisations, universities and colleges of further and higher education, private business and industry.



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Craft Northern Ireland's Partners

1. Arts Council of Northern Ireland, The lead development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland.
2. Invest Northern Ireland, Invest NI is working to overcome Northern Ireland's key structural challenges and create an economy where prosperity is driven by a vibrant private sector.
3. Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Craft NI works in close cooperation with The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) to promote and support Craft Tourism Development.





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Existing Craft & Produce Sectors

Categories:

Local craft:



Glass
Ceramics
Pottery
Wood Work
Jewellery
Metal Work
Paper
Stone
Synthetics



Local Produce:



Cheese
Ice Cream
Chutney
Whiskey
Ready Meals



EU4US Craft Map





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The Legal Status

Start Up Business



Invest Northern Ireland

Enterprise Northern Ireland

Network of Agencies across Northern Ireland

1. Business Start up (Enterprise Development Program)
2. Client Manager (Initial Assessment)
3. Business Training (Free Three day training)
4. Client Facing (Implementation Plan with an advisor, two hours with specialist advice regarding business start up, the business plan and finance for starting a business.



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Statistics

Statistics



Craft and tourism are building a relationship and it's a growing one. Both industries are developing rapidly in Northern Ireland and increasing synergies between them are providing new and attractive opportunities for visitors, designer-makers and service providers.

The craft industry provides a base for creative and cultural tourism development which has been recognised by tourism agencies, local authorities and cultural sector lead bodies.

Around 400 Northern Ireland-based craft businesses already generate significant export sales and cater to international and domestic tourists. The network of craft and arts centres, high quality sales outlets and regionally spread small businesses offer increasing visibility for craft designer-makers with the potential for both direct and online sales.

Statistics



UK market research shows that the craft industry has the potential to grow by 60% with a projected customer base of 4.4 million in addition to the 6.9 million who already buy craft. In Northern Ireland, the sector contributed £39.2M GVA in 2008-09 to the local economy with key impacts in the cultural economy, tourism and sustainable rural communities.

Partnership with tourism

The Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 highlights the need to attract more visitors and encourage repeat visits. As selling on price alone becomes increasingly challenging, the need to create products and services which deliver value for money through their distinctiveness and quality is a priority.

As the focus of tourism shifts towards emphasising the everyday, intangible culture of Northern Ireland - its sense of people and place - as part of its unique identity, the potential to link craft and tourism strengthens further. Tourists can provide new markets for craft producers, and in turn a vibrant craft scene can add attraction, activity and animation to tourist destinations.

Statistics



The craft sector can assist in the delivery of NITB's 'Signature Projects' by creating craft experiences and products at sales points, within short break formats, activity holidays and cultural and heritage tourism.

Craft can help to 'sell' Northern Ireland

NITB is supporting the development of quality products, services and experiences within a competitive marketplace.

The 400 craft producers in Northern Ireland represent a dynamic, highly skilled sector of the economy with the potential to contribute to this development and to the wider economy as well as boosting the export earnings of their businesses. Craft producers can expand their markets while adding value to the tourism product.

Statistics



Developing the commercial opportunity

Making craft more accessible

The predominantly rural location of craft businesses provides an opportunity for developing new tourist products across Northern Ireland as a whole. The main challenge lies in making craft producers and activities visible and accessible to visitors. In addressing the needs of the visitor, Craft NI will encourage and support makers to:

- reduce the distance to markets by further development of workshop visits, studio trails and retail opportunities.
- make craft more available through improved marketing, display and purchase opportunities at tourist attractions, craft shops and other outlets.
- get closer to the tourist 'market place' with craft demonstrations and displays at tourist attractions, inclusion of workshop and studio visits on tour itineraries.

Statistics



- maintain and increase quality and desirability of craft product based on better understanding of customer needs, to produce authentic gifts and objects - contemporary souvenirs – that are original to the locale and the region.
- reinforce Northern Ireland branding by strengthening the indigenous / local authenticity of the product - continuously reminding the buyer of where it was purchased.
- encourage creative and cultural engagement through workshops and master-classes to meet tourist demand for hands-on experiences and encourage higher tourism expenditure.