



International Workshop:

The International Workshop planned within Methodology

Date: Wednesday 01st June 2011
Time: 11.00am
Location: Venue: "Space Craft, Craft & Design Collective"
Country: Belfast, Northern Ireland
Title: How to make Craft More Attractive to Youth

During the course of the Belfast visit in May/June, The partners visited "Space Craft" in Belfast City Centre. Space Craft opened in June 2007 and was designed to be a focal point for commissioning, exhibition promotion and the sale of Craft applied and fine art. The design Collective offers promotional space for emerging artisans from across Northern Ireland. The EU4US partners were greeted by Jan Irwin the manager of the craft collection.

Please note: The EU4US Partnership is made up of 4 Partners representing 4 Partner countries. These include:

Bistrita-Nasaud Chamber of Commerce and Industry:	Bistrita, Romania
Castlereagh Enterprises Ltd:	Belfast, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland
Lawton School S.L:	Spain
Tarsus Chamber of Commerce and Industry:	Tarsus, Turkey

Space Craft NI Participation

Jan Irwin talked to the EU4US party about the difficulties experienced by artisans in attempting to establish a name for themselves within this sector. Namely difficulties arise due to the high expectations on developing educational background and the attractiveness of this sector as a viable business option. Jan highlighted the fact that the pressures from you people in the rural community tend to look elsewhere for employment rather than stay in the environment and produce. It was also highlighted that traditional crafts within Northern Ireland have diminished. Artisans who still maintain a living from the particular skill set have had to innovate and adopt to make the product or service more attractive to the modern/ contemporary market.

Space Craft offers artisans within Northern Ireland:

- Specialist Help and advice to anyone wishing to purchase, sell, commission or collect applied art and design.
- A place to indulge in retail produced locally in Northern Ireland made by local people from across the province. It is a place to purchase in support of our local craft makers.
- Staff within Spacecraft artists/designers/makers themselves: They have a good knowledge about the backgrounds of the various artisans that have products on display. They give insight into the people behind the products.

- Space Craft offers: wedding lists services, Corporate Gift services and the opportunity to commission specialist pieces.
- Space craft offers a gallery to display pieces to the general public and offers a shop to sell local artisans work.

Jan told the party that “the idea behind the Space Craft, Craft and design collective was to raise the profile of Craft, Applied Art & Design”.

Jan spoke openly about the decline in traditional crafts and products, “We have very few traditional crafts, however by the very nature of craft and design tastes have changed and designers picked up and pass these on. While the traditional craft products are not a popular, these are being filled with contemporary products that very often use the traditional skill set.

The Craft and Design Collective (formerly County Down Crafts) has over 125 members. It is the largest craft network within Northern Ireland.

“We are dedicated to the promotion, representation, understanding and development of Craft, Applied Art & Design in Northern Ireland and beyond”.

The Importance of Craft, Applied Art & Design

Craft, Applied Art & Design makes an enduring contribution to the cultural, economic and social regeneration and tourism infrastructure of any country.

“In this post-industrial world it is surprising that Crafts still exist. Machines can usually produce the objects we need for daily living much faster, less expensively and quite often more practically than Artist/Designer/Makers can hope to do. Today Crafts have to be special, well designed and well made certainly, but also expressive of the maker’s unique personality and ideas. Here and there makers still survive who have a more direct line to the tradition of the pre-industrial age, but the contemporary maker feeds off a global view of the Crafts and of the Fine Arts, to produce work that can delight, amuse, startle and sometimes even change our own outlook on life...”

www.craftanddesigncollective.com

Craft NI Participation

The second guest speaker invited to our international workshop was Emma Duggan a representative from 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.

Emma discussed the role of Craft NI within the context of Northern Ireland and provided insights into the growing craft-based tourism within Northern Ireland.

Background to Craft NI:

Craft Northern Ireland was established in June 2005 and is now at the end of its pilot phase. Appraisal of this phase confirms that the aims and objectives set out in the original business plan have been a useful and relevant strategic framework for planning, delivery and review.

Craft NI recognises that the contemporary craft sector is broad and diverse. It encompasses practitioners who can be identified as designer-makers, applied artists, artists and designers who design and prototype for commercial manufacture, for the built environment and those working to a client brief or commission in the public and private sectors.

Emma provided key insights into the future of craft NI's Future in relation to making Craft more attractive to youth.

Craft NI wants to build and develop a sustainable Opportunity Environment for makers in Northern Ireland. This will focus on creating a supportive landscape across the region and beyond that will enable makers and businesses to pursue and develop their own individual creative and business ambitions. To do this we will prioritise our resources around three broad areas of development:

- professional: supporting the sector in the parallel development of its creative and business practice
- infrastructural; developing the infrastructure, partnerships and resource investment, both regionally and locally, in support of the craft sector
- public awareness and engagement; working with audiences in a process of education, raising awareness, appreciation, and in stimulating and securing markets.

Local Craft Producers Visited:

In addition to the planned workshop over the course of the project meeting in Belfast we met with a number of local crafts people who gave us insight into the products they each made and how they typically generated an income from these:

These included:

1. Causeway Cheese (Local producer of various types of cheese in Northern Ireland)

The Rural Community within Northern Ireland has suffered recently and increasing risks on the farming community have led many to think of new ways to support an income. EU4US Partners met up with the owners of Causeway Cheese and sampled for themselves the local produce.

2. Scullion Hurls (Family owned business local producer of Sport Hurls, Traditional Irish field based game played in the Island of Ireland) Using locally sourced materials this family business has passed down the traditional skills and has seen an increase in demand as the popularity of the sport increases. This is in part due to two key factors. Firstly the increased coverage within the Media of these Sporting events and secondly the introduction to the curriculum for some schools in Northern Ireland. EU4US Partners visited the family owned business and were able to see first hand the products being produced.
3. Anhorish Preserves (Local producer of chutney, a fruit based preserve). Based in the Rural area of Castledawson, Malachy Gribbin is the business owner of this artisan food business which specializes in Chutney, Relishes & Oils. EU4US Partners met up with Malachy Gribbin for some lunch within the ECOS centre. Malachy described the products he sells and the background to the business.
4. Marion Woodburn (Small Jewellery designer /maker workshop based unit based in Rural area of Northern Ireland. Marian has a small workshop from which she designs, creates and sells jewellery. Some of the designs are inspired by local places and Celtic imagery. EU4US Partners spent some time with Marion in her workshop and witnessed first hand some of the precious metals being prepared for the jewellery making process.
5. Red Earth Designs: (Small pottery designers/makers, Initially were Rural Based however relocated workshop into Belfast City. Many of the works produced are based on Rural landscapes and are inspired by Traditional Irish Landscapes) The EU4US Partners visited Red Earth Design and took a small tour of the workshop.

All of these crafts /produce have been included for reference within the Inventory of Crafts people.

Acknowledgement and Thank you

Castlereagh Enterprises Ltd would like to thank SPACE Craft NI , The craft and Design Collective for inviting and hosting the EU4US Partners and invited guests. In particular we would like to thank Jan Erwin for her contribution, insights and enthusiasm for the EU4US Project.

Castlereagh Enterprises Ltd would like to thank Emma Duggan for representing Craft NI, taking time out of her schedule and for attending our international Workshop and contributing to the various issues addressed over the course of the discussions that took place.

Finally Castlereagh Enterprises would like to thank all of the crafts people and local producers who have taken time out of their busy schedule to spend some time Engaging with the Partners involved within the context of the EU4US Project.

For more information regarding the Craft and Design Collective “Space Craft” or developments taking place in CRAT NI please visit:

1. www.craftni.org
2. www.craftanddesigncollective.com

