

Leitrim Design House

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COUNTY LEITRIM, a land of lakes and legends, of rugged beauty and solitude, has become the home to many of Ireland's leading artists, designers and craftspeople.

The Leitrim Design House is a leading showcase for established and emerging artists and designers, a superb gallery promoting and selling original work from 150 small designer maker businesses in Leitrim and the North-West.

Located in the heart of Carrick-on-Shannon and housed in the beautiful 19th Century former Courthouse building the DOCK, The Leitrim Design House offers its visitors the best in contemporary craft, design and visual art. If you're looking for that special gift, an original piece of work, a hand crafted item or you wish to commission something especially for yourself, you can source it all at the Leitrim Design House. Ceramics, glass, wood, metal, photography, hand-made books, fine art, textiles, greeting cards and accessories are all part of the Leitrim Design House collection. Here you will discover a treasure of artistic talent, progressive design and quality workmanship.

The Leitrim Design House is a dedicated centre for the craftspeople and artists of the County, an award-winning organisation renowned as the foremost source of visual art and design in the North-West. *Co Leitrim is renowned for the range and ability of craftspeople that live and work in the County.* The Leitrim Design House aims to provide a space for those artists to express themselves and to inspire others, by encouraging,



educating and nurturing this creative talent

In 1996, in response to a combination of factors such as high unemployment, increasing outward migration, a high rate of dependency and a reliance on traditional industries, Leitrim County Enterprise Board commissioned extensive research into the arts and crafts sector in the county. This survey of artistic and craft enterprises found the

wealth of cultural entrepreneurship in the county had the potential to become a vibrant and productive sector. Now 10 years later, The Leitrim Design House is one of the most progressive and ambitious craft, art and design clusters in Ireland.

The Leitrim Design House assists small rurally based designers, makers and artists to build stronger more sustainable businesses. Working with



designers from Northern Ireland is pivotal to the progress of the Leitrim Design House, which now hosts the work of over 20 creative companies from County Down, Antrim and Armagh.

The gallery has a monthly programme of exhibitions featuring the best in contemporary crafts and art. There is also a programme of workshops where members can take part in a wide range of classes. The Leitrim Design House offers skills development opportunities through workshop-based training, exhibitions, showcase events, craft fairs, professional development mentoring and networking opportunities.

These include a series of training programmes throughout 2006-2007 including: "Developing facilitation skills" accredited through the open colleges network.

"For the love of craft" a business start up programme specifically designed for creative businesses. Through the National College of Ireland several craft workers from Leitrim have completed advanced craft and design skills programmes. This link programme together with a number of new courses will be facilitated through the Leitrim Design House in the future.

As part of our winter calendar we are presenting "The Art of Fashion" a tour de force fashion event featuring collections by Irelands leading fashion designers North and South and showcasing the work of recent graduates. This is a special fund raising event for the WAVE Trauma Centre in Belfast. In September The Leitrim Design House presented: EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY, a compilation of artworks created by 70 young people between

the ages of five and twenty, all whom have been in some way affected by the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The exhibits were not presented for their commercial value but they have become priceless in terms of a process that has allowed children and young people to share the truth about atrocities committed against them.

The Leitrim Design House is establishing links within education and will focus on a number of projects in 2007 to engage our local schools primary and secondary, recent graduates, adults education programmes and multicultural groups to experience life long learning through the medium of art, craft and design.

The Leitrim Design House is a non-profit taking company limited by guarantee established in September 2000. It is a business development and marketing organisation with a membership of 85 each of whom is striving to operate strong full time businesses in the art, crafts and design sector. 15% are based in urban locations while 85% are based rurally – An important factor of being linked to the Leitrim Design House for all craftworkers and makers in the region is the networking capacity—Niall Millar—wood turner suggested that on a daily basis the radio has become his best friend and so to be





able to network with other likeminded people artists and craft workers living locally decreases the sense of isolation previously felt by living and working solely in rural locations. Being able to meet at others workshops and talk on the phone can also give great encouragement and advise in the development of new products.

The Leitrim Design House is dedicated to promoting excellence and economic development in the field of contemporary art, craft and design in County Leitrim.

It has become synonymous with craft and design, nurturing artists and makers that honour craft's heritage as well as those that push its boundaries in new artistic directions.

The Leitrim Design House *OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SKILLS* training programme is supported by Border Action through the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2000-2006 and part financed by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan.

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