



Press Release

8<sup>th</sup> January 2017

## ANNOUNCING SHOWCASE 2017

### Ireland's International Creative Expo Returns for its 41<sup>st</sup> Year

**One of Ireland's largest trade shows expected to attract buyers from over 20 countries**

Showcase – Ireland's International Creative Expo returns to the RDS from Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> to Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017. The annual show has established itself as a must-see trade event, attracting buyers from Ireland and more than 20 other countries, including UK, USA, Mainland Europe and the Far East, all keen to see the latest designs from Ireland's top brands and craft producers.

Showcase, which was founded by the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) 41 years ago, enjoyed strong growth in 2016, with the number of buyers attending up 7% to 5,300, and sales orders placed at the fair increasing by 17% to €21.7M, equating to a full-year sales value of €121.2M.

Showcase is an international launch pad for the 450 Irish designers, manufacturers and craftspeople who will be unveiling their new season collections across fashion, jewellery, home and giftware over the four-day event. A particular emphasis is placed on new products to market, providing retailers with opportunities to discover and stock up on the latest designed products, many of which are unique to the show.

New for 2017 is **TextISLE**, an initiative focusing on the creative potential of Irish textiles in fashion and homeware. TextISLE is a collaborative project that brings together designers and producers to develop exciting new products which will be unveiled at Showcase 2017. An advisory panel of six experts has worked with Showcase in selecting the work: Deirdre McQuillan, fashion editor of *The Irish Times*; John Redmond, Creative Director at Brown Thomas; Karen Fleming, Director of the Research Institute for Art and Design at Ulster University; Angela O'Kelly, Head of Design for Body and Environment at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin; Alanna Gallagher, interiors journalist; and Catherine Condell, one of Ireland's most acclaimed fashion stylists.



Participating in TextISLE are factories such as: Avoca; Emblem Weavers; Cushendale; Mourne Textiles; Magee; and Wild Cocoon, and designers such as: Peter O'Brien; Mariad Whisker; Emma Manley; and Helen Steele, among others. The results of the creative collaborations will be introduced at a vibrant and innovative presentation during the show, designed to excite and inspire the visiting buyers.

Elsewhere at the fair, Showcase specialist curators Alanna Gallagher (Home & Gift) and Natasha Sherling (Jewellery) will help make viewing the best products easier for the discerning visitor by presenting an edited selection of the most interesting products, including nominees for the **Best Product Awards** at the show.

At the heart of the show, **Design Ireland**, the exciting new initiative from DCCol, will feature 90 Irish brands chosen by an independent jury for their creativity, innovation and craftsmanship. All the products in this dedicated area of the Main Hall are designed and made in Ireland.

Karen Hennessy, Chief Executive of the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland, commented: *"The considerable growth in both attendees and sales at last year's show demonstrates that Showcase is drawing increasing interest from trade buyers all over the world. It is also a testament to the unique offerings of the Irish design and craft sector and to Showcase itself which we are continually developing as a professional, world-class tradeshow focused on Irish creativity. Showcase provides a unique opportunity to connect hundreds of Irish designers and makers with potential domestic and international buyers over an intensive four-day period and, having brought a preview of the trade show to Brussels, London and New York in late 2016, we anticipate even stronger interest in this year's event."*

Showcase is promoted internationally by Enterprise Ireland through their network of over 30 international offices. According to Julie Sinnamon, CEO, Enterprise Ireland: *"Every year Enterprise Ireland helps promote Showcase to relevant international buyers and in 2017 we expect to bring even more buyers to this unique Irish event. We look forward to welcoming back buyers who are returning to Ireland to build on the success of previous buying trips to Showcase. We also look forward to welcoming new buyers from the traditional targeted retailers, and increasing numbers from high street retailers – reflecting the wide appeal of the unique, world-class Irish products available at Showcase. Our ambition is to help Irish consumer retail companies to win export orders from visiting buyers, sustaining and creating jobs in every region in Ireland."*



The **Local Enterprise Showcase**, which will fully occupy the balcony of the Main Hall at the RDS, will feature unique products from emerging Irish businesses supported by their Local Enterprise Offices. Kieran Comerford, Chair of the Network of Local Enterprise Offices said: *"The Local Enterprise Showcase is the new destination for discovering design and craft talent for 2017. In this hub of creativity, buyers will meet 112 designers and craftspeople from around the country, all supported by Local Enterprise Offices in local authorities. We're also introducing the Local Enterprise Showcase Awards this year, to highlight Irish design innovation to buyers from all over the world."*

For attendees wishing to expand their knowledge, an extensive **retail seminar programme** over the four days of the show will feature top international industry speakers delivering thought-provoking presentations that provide retailers with expertise, research and advice.

Showcase is a partnership between the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland and Showcase Ireland Events Ltd., with support from Enterprise Ireland in promoting the trade show internationally through their network of offices overseas.

Showcase 2017 runs from Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January and is for trade attendance only. For further details on the event or to register to attend, please visit [www.showcaseireland.com](http://www.showcaseireland.com).

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### **About Showcase**

Showcase – Ireland's International Creative Expo is one of the country's largest international trade shows. The annual event is attended by over 5,000 buyers from Ireland and more than 20 countries around the world, generating sales orders of up to €20 million over the four days of the show. 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. More than 450 Irish designers, manufacturers and craftspeople exhibit at the fair, including over 100 emerging



Irish businesses supported by their Local Enterprise Offices. Showcase is for trade attendance only. [www.showcaseireland.com](http://www.showcaseireland.com)

### **About the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland**

The Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) is the main champion of the design and craft industry in Ireland, fostering its growth and commercial strength, communicating its unique identity and stimulating quality design, innovation and competitiveness. DCCoI's activities are funded by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation via Enterprise Ireland. DCCoI currently has over 60 member organisations more than 3,200 registered clients. [www.dccoi.ie](http://www.dccoi.ie)