



## #MakingItHappen together with Nicola Brown Fine Art Textiles



Nicola Brown of Nicola Brown Fine Art Textiles in Carlow

**NICOLA BROWN DISCOVERED THE JOYS OF FELTING IN 2007 AND A FEW YEARS LATER BEGAN ECO PRINTING - A TECHNIQUE WHERE LEAVES, BARK, SEED PODS, ONION SKINS AND FLOWERS ARE USED TO CREATE DIRECT CONTACT PRINTS ON NATURAL FABRICS.**

Working with her handmade felt, locally woven fabric and up-cycled materials, she has been developing her skills and sharing them via workshops in Ireland and internationally since 2009.

Supported by Local Enterprise Office Carlow with a Business Priming Grant in 2013 to facilitate an upgrade to her studio and a Trading Online Voucher, she went on to establish a designated workspace in 2018 and is now revelling in the ability to create beautiful things using the environment around her.

"I added a simple wool-insulated garden studio behind my old, renovated farmhouse and in July 2019, designed and planted

a selection of herbaceous borders filled with plants chosen for their ability to provide leaves and vegetation for the dye and printing pots," she says.

**"OVER TIME, THE SUSTAINABILITY OF MY WORK AND TEACHING HAS LED TO NEW CONNECTIONS AROUND THE COUNTRY AND THE WORLD. I ALSO ENGAGE REGULARLY WITH OTHERS ONLINE, THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN EXHIBITIONS, LARGE RETAIL EVENTS AND FACILITATING WORKSHOPS IN IRELAND AND ABROAD."**

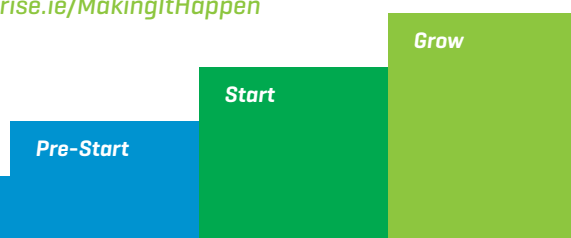
Although she works alone and with local produce, both the pandemic and Brexit have caused complications – however, the artistic entrepreneur has managed to overcome them.

"Since March 2020 all my hands-on workshops were cancelled but I had launched a suite of online workshops about four years ago and lockdown allowed me to develop this aspect of my business," she says. "There also is a new interest in sustainability and being more environmentally conscious and I have 206 participants on my current course."

Brown has received a lot of support from her Local Enterprise Office in Carlow, through various grants and advice including mentoring support which helped her to learn what steps were necessary to ensure the sustainability and growth of her business. She also received support from FORM (a collective of craftworkers in Carlow) to avail of photography which, she says, was extremely useful for marketing and PR purposes.

Grateful for this assistance, she says: "Local Enterprise Office Carlow has always been very supportive and helpful since I started this journey of developing my business."

*To find out more about Local Enterprise Office supports for your business, please visit [LocalEnterprise.ie/MakingItHappen](http://LocalEnterprise.ie/MakingItHappen)*



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