

FLAIR – art in the car park

Edinburgh will host a major exhibition of work by Scottish artists and designers whose livelihoods were negatively impacted by the Covid pandemic at the beginning of June. And it will be held on Level B3 in the car park.

The work of around 50 independent producers will be on display and for sale at FLAIR, an event jointly organised by the Scottish Design Exchange (SDX) and event stagers 3D2D.

Taking place in St James Quarter's car park on level B3, FLAIR hopes to provide an opportunity for a high street audience to see the work of creative people whose businesses have suffered during months of lockdown.

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on Scotland's creative industries, with more than half of self-employed business owners reporting that their mental health suffered.

A survey of more than 200 artists, fashion, textile and jewellery designers, publishers, photographers at the height of the pandemic found that 53% reported feelings of anxiety, stress, or depression.

Fewer than one in ten continued to earn their full, pre-pandemic salary with half earning less than 50% of their normal income. One in four was earning less than a fifth of

their pre-lockdown wage, with many struggling to keep up rent and mortgage payments and to pay gas and electricity bills.



Lynzi Leroy

Lynzi Leroy, the entrepreneur behind SDX, which provides a high-street presence to artists and craftspeople, said it was hoped the exhibition, which will run over the Queen's Jubilee week-end at the start of next month, would help the artists to recover some of their lost earnings.

She said: "The nature of the industry is that most of its members work alone, often in remote areas, and the lockdown only added to their sense of isolation.

"Lacking the financial resilience of larger organisations, for many people the disruption to trade had a devastating impact on their income and many, because of the way they are paid, did not qualify for Government assistance."

Philippa Wilson-Buys, Director of 3D2D, said: "All the exhibitors have been selected for the richness and quality of their design and craftsmanship, commitment and flair."



Carole Conchie, whose art is made from items she finds on the shore including driftwood and pebbles, said: "The pandemic was

disappointing for many artists, many of whom struggled to sell anything at all.

“Most of us tried migrating to online but it’s different from selling in person. It’s so important to be able to talk to customers and to tell them about your work, how it’s done and where the ideas come from.

“I’m really looking forward to the show at the St James Quarter. It’s such a landmark in an unusually designed building and it is a magnet for local shoppers and tourists alike.

“All of the exhibitors are really excited about the fair and we’re hoping it will be a fantastic opportunity for us to get our work out there and to show people the range of skills and talent in Scotland.”

Nick Peel, Managing Director at St James Quarter, said: “St James Quarter is a welcoming cultural and lifestyle hub for art, culture and fashion – a key pillar of the business we seek to embrace and develop, so we’re honoured to be supporting this event and hosting it in our car park.

“Supporting the local community is at the heart of what we do and it means a lot for us to be able to help talented artists after a tough couple of years. Our car park is an ideal space for exhibitions and events, so we’re excited to see it all come together and welcome guests for what is set to be an incredible weekend.”

The Art Fair will take place from June 3-5. Stalls will be available to visit from 8am to 6pm.

