

Try the Tron for Christmas shopping

There may be only 13 sleeps until Christmas Day, but there are still plenty of days for shopping.

If you're looking for something different and original then head to the Tron Kirk makers market on Edinburgh's historic Royal Mile, where more than 20 local makers and artists are displaying and selling their unique work – including paintings, photography and pottery, art and jewellery.

Previously home to the city's only indoor market until its closure in 2018, the historic Tron Kirk building was then occupied by [Edinburgh World Heritage](#) (EWH) which staged displays about the history and architecture of the capital's historic site, along with a gift and book shop. However the pandemic forced its closure in 2020, leaving it again empty and unused.



Dating back to 1633, the Kirk is listed on the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Buildings at Risk register. Uncertainty has surrounded the future of the building, which

was once Edinburgh's main parish church. It remained empty for 50 years after it closed as a church in 1952 and it has been on the HES Buildings at Risk Register (BARR) since 2003.

Since 1 July this year, the historic building re-opened its doors and been given a new lease of life as an artists' market, showcasing and selling the work of local makers and artists.

The [Scottish Design Exchange](#) (SDX), a community interest company which provides a high street presence to hundreds of small, independent producers, took up occupancy of the historic Tron Kirk, on the Royal Mile in the summer.

Opening a second outlet in Edinburgh as part of its long term expansion plans, it has signed a three-year lease with the Scottish Heritage Buildings Trust, which manages the 17th Century building. It now provides a retail space for more than 20 artists, designers, and craftspeople, seven-days-a-week, as well as hosting occasional events and exhibitions.

The SDX is bucking the trend of retail market contraction elsewhere with its social enterprise model of bringing original, high quality products made by small, independent local producers to the high street. It has generated more than £4 million of income for hundreds of tenants at its stores in George Street, Edinburgh, and Buchanan Galleries, in Glasgow since it was launched in 2015.

Chief executive of SDX, Lynzi Leroy, said: "The Tron Kirk is on one of the UK's busiest thoroughfares and we are delighted at having the opportunity to use this prize location to showcase local artists, designers and makers. It has always been an ambition to bring SDX to the Royal Mile, to show tourists and locals an authentic Scotland, selling local handmade products on our City's most iconic street.

"The feedback from customers and local businesses has been fantastic! We have sold products to people from every corner

of the world. But, even more importantly, we are not a tourist driven business and we have found that local customers love what we do too. The Tron Kirk Market offers that unique opportunity for customers to meet the makers on site, which both locals and tourists love.”

“Our first six months of trading has more than exceeded the expectations of the traders, some of whom are now working on their businesses full time, for the first time and with many of them now employing staff.

“SDX was created to allow fashion designers, artists, textile and jewellery designers, publishers, photographers, and other makers to display their work on the high street and make the lion’s share of the profit, without having to pay high commission rates demanded by galleries. Tenants pay a fixed fee to rent space, so they’re not penalised for the popularity of their products.

“We have a good mix of different artists and producers – including painters, printers, designers, jewellery makers and ceramicists – to ensure they are not competing with one another.

“The relationship we have built with Scottish Heritage Buildings Trust (SHBT) has been very rewarding. As a landlord they have been very hands on and been very quick to start repairs on the building, looking after it’s long term future as local landmark. It’s a really nice story that we, as a social enterprise, are partnering with a heritage body to showcase the work of some of Scotland’s best and most creative talent.”



Scottish artist Liana Moran's work comprises large architectural drawings, responding to the environment within cities around Scotland. Liana said: "I studied Fine Art,

drawing and painting, at Edinburgh College of Art and have been in a range of exhibition venues and festivals since graduating. I've been working with SDX for over 5 years. Being asked to take an individual stand at their Tron Kirk Market, has been a big commitment, but it has allowed me to grow my business to where I can work on my art full time and I now employ one member of staff. The Tron has been fantastic for sales and I've met customers from all over the world."

Local artist Maria Brien is the creator behind 'The Interior Flower Art'. She uses digital media to create fun, colourful and positive illustrations alongside a range of fun products including mugs and tote bags.

She said: "I have always been very creative, and after being diagnosed with Post Natal Depression, I wanted to spread some positivity around through my love of colour. I love illustrating places, flowers, and people using fun colours and patterns. My two daughters, Lily and Phoebe, who love anything pink and positive are a big inspiration.

"I joined SDX in June 2021 and now have a full time stand at the Tron Market, which has been life changing. I'm working harder than I ever have before, whilst juggling being a wife and mother, but I wouldn't want to be doing anything else, and in such a fantastic location! I'm getting to know my customers and meeting people, from all over the world."

With Edinburgh the second most visited city in the UK after London, having the opportunity to purchase authentic local handmade products made in Edinburgh, and also meet the makers and artists, in the heart of the cities capital, offers a unique and memorable shopping experience for both tourists and locals alike.

The Tron Kirk 122 High Street Edinburgh EH1 1HN.

