

- Daily & weekly newsletters
- Buy & download The Bulletin
- Comment our articles

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Home > [Guides](#) > Creative thinking: Meet the artisans reviving arts and crafts in Brussels and Wallonia

## Creative thinking: Meet the artisans reviving arts and crafts in Brussels and Wallonia

Feb 1, 2016

[discoverwallonia](#) [Belgium](#) [Business](#) 0

Sarah Crew and Karen McHugh



They are the unsung heroes of the local economy. Inspired by their creativity, drive and passion, these artists benefit everyone in the community. Wallonia has long had a history of traditional skills, and in recent years there has been a remarkable renaissance of hand-crafted and locally made products. This awakening interest in provenance and authenticity challenges consumers to think more about what they buy. Another motivation for acquiring high-quality crafts is the stories behind individual pieces. All these artisans love their craft and the privileged reputation they have with their clients, who are increasingly coming from abroad.

### BRUSSELS

**Tamawa** The Bakelite ball's shape was what attracted Hubert Verstraeten to it as a source material for jewellery and design. "It's a universal form, it belongs to every kind of culture," he says. Made from the hard plastic used for snooker balls, each sphere is manufactured in Belgium and then incorporated into designs for his jewellery - rings and necklaces, but also watches, coat-stands and peppermills.

**Lilù** operates from their atelier, from which they sell their handbags on Rue du Bailli. "We offer tailor-made options to clients - they can pick a design for a bag and we make it in the leather they choose." They're not after world domination; rather, their ideal evolution is "to keep creation in our workshops: one or two more points of sales and to keep the direct contact with our clientele."

**Niyona** Based in the centre of Brussels in Rue Dansaert, Niyona styles itself as a concept store as well as creator of leather goods. "We had a desire to return to the source, towards local expertise and production," says owner Jonathan Wieme. They also offer workshops, courses and repairs at the premises. And the meaning behind Hello James, their flagship store? Named simply for their son.

### WALLOON BRABANT

[RELATED ARTICLES](#) [POPULAR](#) [RELATED Q&A](#)

- » [Health matters: the Belgian health...](#) 0 1
- » [Condroz country: the great outdoo...](#) 0 0
- » [Top 5 most eagerly awaited cars i...](#) 0 1
- » [Winter warmers: donating clothes...](#) 0 0
- » [Road rage: are Belgian drivers re...](#) 0 30



[Refresh Location](#)

[Show Local Offers](#)

[BRUPARCK](#)



Bruparck - Always fun!

### Recent articles

Apr 26, 2016

#### Pajama-clad customers get half off at Brussels hotels

In a bid to attract more customers to the struggling Brussels hotels, the Brussels Hotel Associat...

Apr 25, 2016

#### 1,500 people protest in Brussels against purchase of new fighter jets

An estimated 1,500 anti-war activists on Sunday marched through Brussels to protest against the g...

Apr 25, 2016

#### Drones used to monitor Belgium's busiest port

Belgium relies on drone technology to help monitor the Port of Antwerp, Europe's second-largest s...

Apr 25, 2016

#### Louis Theroux coming to Belgium to present new documentary

**Malakine** Catherine Malvaux aims to create a jewellery line that stands out from the tradition of everyday wearable jewels. "My sources of inspiration are nature, animals. Each piece tells a joyful and colourful story." Currently with a presence in Belgium and St Tropez, Malakine intends to expand to Paris and London in the near future, and tends toward individual styling. "We privilege a private clientele, with the idea of creating tailor-made jewels."

Three documentaries from the Belgian film festival DOCVILLE were chosen by cinema chain Kinepolis...

**Atelier Van Tesch** Magali Tesch set up her atelier in 2007, making high-end jewellery that can be worn every day. Inspired by the architecture of Bruges, she remains faithful to traditional techniques; everything is handmade. "I dream of seeing my jewellery in the windows of big jewellery shops; of working in Paris and London," she says. Tesch takes on the UK market at the Spring Fair in Birmingham next February.

**Maison Bernard Depoorter** For Bernard Depoorter, fashion is a vocation. He was inspired in childhood by a collection of designer dresses discovered in his attic, and by his stylish mother: "a lady who liked wearing beautiful clothes." He specialises in haute couture, with a dramatic yet timeless style, and has been worn by Princess Mathilde on an official trip abroad. He is now also developing his ready-to-wear line.

## HAINAUT

**Eric Parmentier** With Angelina Jolie among his celebrity clients and an order book full for the next two years, pocket knife craftsman Eric Parmentier has no need to advertise. As one of the finest artisans in his field, he uses only quality materials – mother of pearl, steel, mammoth ivory – to create exclusive and elegant objects that feature his own patented opening and closing mechanism. "They are not at all aggressive," he says. "They appeal to those with an adventurous spirit."

**Emilienne et Paula** Each of Caroline Crunelle's colourful handmade bags is an exclusive creation. After years of doing patchwork as a hobby, the mother-of-four from Mons launched her business after encouragement from family and friends. "I'm passionate about fabric and I love working with such a diversity of materials. Each bag is unique." Crunelle sells her "chic, yet practical bags" via fairs, private sales and online.

**Pascal Jeanjean** The bibliophile and master paper-maker designs and makes personalised paper for companies and institutions such the Louvre in Paris. "Orders are so diverse that I like to meet the client first," he says. "The reflection, vision and conception required is similar to that of a chef inventing a dish. It requires personality," says the craftsman, considered one the best handmade paper-makers in the world.

## NAMUR

**A fleur d'Ame** As a florist, Isabelle Marloye was inspired by seeing how clients expressed their emotions in selecting flowers. After studying as a herbalist in Canada, she discovered floral elixirs and has since developed a therapeutic business in Namur that explores the link between flowers and well-being. As well as personal coaching and workshops, she shows corporate clients how "creating a natural perfume is a fun way of boosting self-confidence."

**Mosaic Studio** From his Dinant workshop, Marq Rawls crafts original handmade mosaics for interiors and exteriors (pictured). Combining Roman and Byzantine tradition with contemporary designs, he creates unique panels, walls and floors in crystal glass for clients in France, Russia, Poland, the Baltic states and South Korea. "We are not in the business of quantity but quality and durability," he says, "as well as the beauty and exceptional nature of our projects."

**Lady Moon** Monthie Mulquin, aka Moon, swapped life as a teacher for that of a stylist. As well as her own range of 100% Made in Belgium clothing for women, men and children, she runs creative workshops and collaborates with other artists in the region. "It's important for me to have a label that is also a lifestyle concept; made-to-measure clothes in limited series and bright and subdued colours."

## LIEGE

**Philippe Ongena** The stone sculptor's creations range from the decorative to the practical, comprising barbecues and garden tables as well as sculptures and fountains. "The inspiration for me is the movement of the water on the stone," he says. His works appear in gardens and parks across the country. Now approaching retirement, Ongena will continue his trade but plans to spend more time on creative pieces.

**Louise Kopij** For Louise Kopij, starting her own jewellery atelier was a creative path towards freedom and knowledge: "I love working with my hands, translating the images that come into my head," she says. Among her signature styles is the use of feathers in her designs. With two points of sale already in New York, Louise will also be presenting her work at the national popup store this winter in Hong Kong.

**Pauquet** The son of a jeweller, Olivier Pauquet showed an early interest in his father's trade and studied as a gemologist, culminating in a coveted Lauréat du Travail. "I am heir to careful craftsmanship, but I'm also constantly seeking new ideas," he says. Pearls are Pauquet's forte, and his collection includes necklaces, rings and pendants, with a preference for opals. All are on display at his

shop in Liège.

## LUXEMBOURG

**Françoise Lesage** The Ardennes-based ceramic artist draws on her background as an engraver to mix techniques, whether it be for designing lamps and working with porcelain, or making original floor tiles for architect-designed homes. The latter dominates her schedule. "I don't have time to go looking for business," she says, "so professional fairs such as Maison & Objets in Paris are really important."

**La Boîte à Papa** When Stéphanie Mathu was inspired to give her husband a surprise present after the birth of their daughter, the seed of a business idea was planted. The couple launched an online business compiling original gift boxes for births and any celebratory event. A shop now adjoins their village home from where her mother, sister and two other dressmakers make all the textile elements. "We're a real family business," she says.

### Albert Hardiquet

Uniting antique lovers with a specific piece of furniture, painting or object is the motivation for Albert Hardiquet, based in Vielsalm and Brussels. Depending on the object's age and condition, his team of specialists renovate from start to finish. "I would like to develop a professional network to share different techniques with other businesses," he says. He is inspired "by imagining the previous life of an object".

This article was first published in the [Wab](#) magazine, winter 2015-2016

Like 4 Tweet

## Log in to comment

Before you can comment you first need to [register](#) or [login](#)

### FEATURES

*Insider tips on expat life*

## Brussels hosts short film festival with a warm heart



## The Bulletin radio show on Bruzz: 24 April

## Opportunities for Investing in Uncertain Times: free seminar in Brussels

## Digital minds think alike at Brussels tech conference

## Independent Brussels: a new way to do art fairs

## What's on this week: 22-29 April

## One year on: How Politico has fitted into the Brussels media landscape

## EVENTS & SOCIAL

UPCOMING POPULAR

50 years, Happy...

### Primary School Teacher (Part-time)

**D Y Patil International School**

Responsibilities include: · Classroom teaching · Planning and ...

### Biology Teacher

**Ecole Internationale Montgomery**

We are currently seeking a qualified Secondary Biology teacher able to teach IB Diploma. The professor must also be able to give the chemistry course if ...

### Teacher of History and Government & Politics

**The British School of Brussels vzw**

We are looking for an inspirational, highly motivated teacher committed to challenging and enthusing our students to join a successful History and Government ...

[MORE JOBS](#)

## Splendid unfurnished groundfloor appartement with sunny garden

For rent: (min 3 years contract)...

[MORE](#)

- » [For rent furnished](#) 24
- » [Services offered](#) 18
- » [Lessons & courses](#) 17

[POST YOUR SMALL ADS >](#)

[MORE SMALL ADS >](#)

## LOCAL OFFERS

Great deals & discounts

[Refresh Location](#)

[Show Local Offers](#)

## TWITTER

**26** 26.04.2016  
APR Bruxelles  
by Brussels International...

**27** **The Best of Aldo...**  
27.04.2016  
APR Bruxelles  
by BEIT + TIJ Events

**28** **David Pirotte -...**  
28.04.2016 to 30.06.2016  
APR Bruxelles  
by Jos Joos Gallery

MORE EVENTS

## REGISTER

» Login » Register » Newsletters

E-mail

OK



Bruparck - Always fun!

BRUSSELS

Tweets by @flanderstoday



**Flanders Today**  
@flanderstoday

First public hydrogen fuel station opens in Flanders buff.ly/1NOvGz5



Embed

View on Twitter



**The Bulletin**  
@\_TheBulletin

Cinephiles, @BrusselsShort Film Festival is fast approaching xpaths.com/brussels-hosts... #ILoveCinema



16h