

## Turning Handmade Crafts Into Hot Careers

Source: iCraft.ca

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*A new generation of artisans and crafters leverage the power of the internet to establish profitable, online businesses.*

Toronto, ON - - There was a time not so long ago when artisans were limited to showing their unique, one-of-a-kind products at local craft shows and exhibitions. The internet has now become one of the easiest and fastest growing channels in which to market and sell handmade goods from all over the world. Crafters enjoy the flexibility of being able to generate sales from an online "virtual" storefront, while buyers can shop from the comfort of their own home, and have the satisfaction of knowing the merchandise is quality-made and not mass-produced.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of the "buy handmade" movement, which supports entrepreneurs and small businesses owners over typical "big box" retailers. Because of increasing consumer demand, more and more crafters and turning their hobby into a profitable, full-time business.

Toronto-based jewelry designer and iCarft.ca member Josie Tecson is a creative talent responsible for adoring Hollywood celebrities including Beyoncé, Tara Reid, Elisha Cuthbert and Canada's own Nelly Furtado. As a self-made entrepreneur, Tecson's first taste of business started when she left her Vancouver home at the age of 25 and accepted a position with La Senza, Canada's leading lingerie company, as a Marketing Coordinator.

Shortly after, she moved to Toronto to work at a publishing company. With the restrictions of creative freedom at her full time job, she took a leap of faith and quit. Josie's confidence in her artistic skills combined with a strong sense of intuition and foresight in business matters gave her the determination to start her own jewelry business. Tecson knew that starting her own business from scratch, and building her brand would not be an easy task. "I'm okay with hard work, but I like to be in charge of my own life." she says. "It builds character and only makes you stronger."

The quality and diversity of Josie's work was soon attracting attention from stylists responsible for adorning celebrities such as Nelly Furtado and Beyoncé. Josie Tecson accessories were used for Nelly Furtado's European Get Loose Tour, with dancers wearing signature gem pieces and band members sporting funky and cool leather bands with semi-precious stone settings.

Josie's most thrilling moment to date occurred in August 2007 when the House of Dereon's brand manager in Montreal contacted her about accessorizing the Canadian launch of House of Dereon, the clothing line designed by Beyoncé, her mother, Tina Knowles and sister, Solange. The quality of Josie's handcrafted and Canadian made pieces had garnered such respect that her collection proved a perfect fit for such an A-list celeb as Beyoncé. Tecson hopes her hard work will lead to seeing all her dreams realized. She'd love a Josie Tecson store in Toronto and eventually in the U.S. and worldwide, when she would continue with the role of lead designer heading a creative team.

Tecson's story is one of many who are hoping and striving to make it big in the world of professional arts & crafts. iCraft.ca found a huge demand for its services when the site first launched in late November 2007. To date, the site has over 400 registered Creators from numerous countries including Australia, the United States, Canada, Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Thailand, Venezuela, the UK and many more. Over 1400 unique items are currently listed on the site with many more being added each day.

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#### About iCraft.ca

Based in Toronto, ON, iCraft.ca exists to connect artists, designers and craftspeople to those who appreciate their work. All creators of unique, one-of-a-kind items can take advantage of the powerful marketing services offered. Visitors to the site can browse collections, and have the ability to contact creators directly with questions or requests. iCraft.ca is a division of ArtMyriad Inc. Officially incorporated on November 6, 2007 under the Business Corporation Act (Ontario).

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