



press release

Creating business opportunities & celebrating creativity with Knysna's annual Pop-Up Shop

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Yesterday, Executive Mayor Mark Willemse and Wesgro CEO Tim Harris, officially opened the annual 'Knysna Loving Local Collective Pop-Up Shop'.

Infamous as a creative hub along the Garden Route, the Pop-Up has been running for 9 years. Boasting arts, crafts, food and beverages made from locally sourced materials, all products on display are created by disadvantaged and differently abled individuals in the district.

Launched in time to capitalise on the many holiday makers exploring the route for the festive season, Harris commented: "We are thrilled to be partnering with the 'Knysna Loving Local Craft Collective' on this innovative initiative creating opportunities in the district. The annual Pop-Up is one of many ways that the Municipality is bringing locals into the tourism sector, creating a platform for creatives to showcase and sell their wares."

To ensure the high standards of the market are upheld, the Cape Craft Institute issues an announcement calling on submissions from crafters in the greater Knysna area to take part in the Pop-Up market.

A Craft Selection Committee - consisting of a representative from Knysna Connect, African All Sorts and Knysna Visitor Information Centre - vet all submissions to ensure good quality and aesthetically pleasing products are showcased for the season. Together, the committee have more than 30 years' experience with the production, procurement and merchandising of craft.

"This year we had 17 submissions, all of which met the high standards required to be a part of the Pop-Up," says Glendyrr Fick who has served on the selection committee for the past 9 years.

Fick added, "Should we receive submissions that don't meet the requirements, we advise crafters to take part in our Craft Developmental Programme which provides mentorship on how to refine their offering."

Showcasing his wares at the 2018 Pop-Up is Paarl born Knysna raised Eugene Lewis. Lewis is the owner, artist and maker of Tribal Africa - a small local craft business specialising in the design and manufacturing of unique ceramic figurines. Joining Tribal Africa in 1997 as a young apprentice, three years later in 2010 Lewis brought the business through the assistance of Knysna Municipality's SMME incubator programme, and with it the exclusive rights to manufacture Tribal Africa's distinctively styled, design-patented figurines.

“Visit Knysna has played a strong role in helping me take my products to market historically - through displays in the information centre and facilitating participation in other events such as Design Indaba,” commented Lewis.

Relaunching Tribal Africa this year, Lewis added, “The opportunity to have my product on display and for sale in a formal, professional retail environment feels like a real privilege. Typically, most crafters have to rely on local markets and a handful of curio stores in the town to drive sales and it is very difficult to break into either of these as a new supplier. With my display and stock at Loving Local this year I am able to begin to see my dream for Tribal Africa unfold.”

Minister of Economic Opportunities, Beverly Schafer, commented: “SMMEs have the potential to help us solve the unemployment crisis in our country, and this initiative creates a supportive ecosystem in which these small businesses can display their work to visitors from around the world. I urge all visitors to Knysna this holiday season to buy local and help grow our creative economy and our small businesses.”

"I want to encourage our local community as well as all our much valued visitors to support this wonderful initiative and visit this Pop-Up store in support of our local businesses and entrepreneurs. It is a fantastic way to grow our local talent and support local economic development in Knysna," concluded Mark Willemse, Knysna's Executive Mayor.

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