



NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR ORGANIZATION OF
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Newfoundland artisan to represent the Government of Canada at the G7 Summit—
The Craftswomen Summit in Japan.**

ST. JOHN'S, May 5, 2016 – Representing your country abroad is an enormous honour and one that Natalie Austin, a self-taught metal smith from Carbonear will have later this month. As the sole representative from Canada, Natalie will attend the Craftswomen Summit in Tokyo, Japan as part of the G7 Summit May 18-19, 2016.

Natalie is dedicated to the preservation of the Newfoundland cultural landscape. As owner of Natalie Jewellery (www.nataliejewellery.com), she creates fine handcrafted jewellery from reclaimed copper water pipes. Her products have Crafts of Character designation.

"No one really expects to get a call saying they have been nominated to go to Japan for the G7 as a representative for Canadian Craftswomen, I know I certainly didn't, and I especially didn't expect to be the one chosen. Yet, somehow that is exactly what did happen," says Natalie.

NLOWE (Newfoundland & Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs) had the opportunity to put forth names of local artisans and crafters to the Canadian Business Women in International Trade Program (businesswomenintrade.gc.ca) at Global Affairs Canada for consideration for this opportunity and are delighted that Natalie was chosen.

"We are thrilled that Natalie is not only representing Canada in Japan, but also the women-business owners in Newfoundland & Labrador. The crafters and artisans in this province are some of the best in the world; and Natalie, who is extremely talented and incredibly passionate about our provincial culture will be an outstanding representative," says Paula Sheppard, CEO of NLOWE.

"I think it speaks volumes about my body of work and my community involvement, something that as an artist you often downplay. This will be the opportunity of a lifetime and a career changer, and I am ready for the challenge!" says Natalie.

The G7 Craftswomen Summit is a unique event being organized in conjunction with the upcoming G7 Summit. Selected craftswomen from the G7 countries will come together to exchange information, share experiences, success stories and challenges they may be encountering.

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The Commerce and Information Bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) is the lead on the initiative, and is supported by other quasi-government organizations, craft industry associations and Google Japan. Participating countries include: Japan, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, United States of America, and the European Union.

With a degree in Folklore and Vernacular Culture from Memorial University, Natalie's interest in fine craft and material culture has led her to a career as an artisan. "I come from a family of artisans and artists; from potters and painters to cooks and actors there was even a silver smith, it only makes sense that I became one myself. I love to learn new techniques and work with my hands."

"Every piece of material I can upcycle is one less thing that ends up in a landfill. We are on an island; a beautiful island, and the less of that space we take with unnecessary waste, the better. I want to keep using the natural landscape as inspiration - every rugged shore and flowing wave is reflected in my designs. Through jewellery design, I am making my own small daily cultural and environmental contribution."

Natalie is also a Founder and Director of DozenOdd Galleries, a social enterprise In Carbonear representing the work of over 30 artists and artisans. She is looking forward to lending her voice the global conversation on women in craft.

"I can only imagine what I will gain from meeting the Craftswomen from the other G7 nations, what it will mean to bring my work to the world stage, or what it will mean to be part of the global conversation on women in craft; but I welcome it all. I am incredibly honored and humbled to have been chosen be the representative for Canada at such a prestigious event."

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