

# Handmade<sup>®</sup> at NYIGF<sup>®</sup> Highlights Summer 2008 Preview

by Traci Suppa

For more than 20 years, *Handmade*<sup>®</sup> at the New York International Gift Fair<sup>®</sup> (NYIGF<sup>®</sup>) has offered buyers an extensive, juried selection of handcrafted items in all media and across all product categories. Mark your calendars; the Summer 2008 NYIGF runs Saturday, August 16, through Thursday, August 21, in New York City.

*Handmade* is the largest wholesale craft collection within a U.S. gift market, with 575 juried artisans. *Handmade* buyers have access to an unparalleled selection of handcrafted items from 36 American states and 14 countries worldwide, in an easy-to-shop venue. And while this dynamic division stands on its own as a can't-miss wholesale craft sourcing and shopping venue, it is presented as part of NYIGF's total 2,800-plus exhibitors in 9 carefully categorized divisions.



## Why Shop Handmade?

"People are tired of the 'same old, same old,'" said Karen Hohler, owner of Whippoorwill Crafts in Boston, and president of the Craft Retailers Association for Tomorrow (CRAFT). "My customers appreciate the individual nature of handmade craft."

A walk down the aisles of *Handmade* offers retailers the full spectrum of craft resources. A jury of professionals in the craft and design fields, organized by GLM<sup>®</sup>, a dmg world media business, works together to ensure a compelling combination of domestic and international lines.

"All retailers, small and large, moderate to better, can find a gem, or many, in the *Handmade* section. This can help them differentiate their store in this very competitive marketplace," advised new store owner Sonia Sotire Malloy of SPLURGE in Greenwich, Conn.

## Meet the Maker

A return to authenticity awaits buyers at the August NYIGF, when a new designation identifying designer-maker will be introduced. "Buyers will be able to meet and speak with the designers and artists," said Carol Sedestrom Ross, GLM's consulting director of craft marketing. "Armed with a detailed background on the product, retailers can return to their stores ready to share this knowledge with their customers, undoubtedly resulting in better sales."

This August, look for more than 200 of *Handmade*'s nearly 600 exhibitors to be identified as "designer-makers" positioning their work as "one-of-a-kind," and distinguishing it from "production craft."

**Left:** This sculptural "Coral Fan" vessel was created from glass by the hands of UK designer-maker Amanda Brisbane.

## Handmade in the USA™

Demand is higher than ever for American-made craft, and there is more than ample supply throughout *Handmade*, with nearly 260 exhibitors carrying products that are made in the United States. Overall, NYIGF has approximately 400 companies that offer “made in the USA” gift and home products.

“Consumers are more aware now of the value of what’s ‘homegrown,’” added Hohler. Retailers should take this into account, and realize the business potential in carrying more American-made crafts.”



Cuff links are a brand-new product from Alchemy, Inc., one of the exhibitors in the “Handmade in the USA” showcase area.

## Find it Here: Global Resources

*Handmade* provides domestic buyers the opportunity not found at other major trade shows to source superior juried craft from around the world. “The NYIGF is a unique trade show in that it offers high-quality global resources that have to make it through the jury process,” noted Ross.

During the summer show, 14 foreign countries will be represented: Argentina, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Israel, Mexico, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.



Colorful hand-woven African textiles are available through Creative Women.

## It's in the Bag: Offhand Designs Creates Wearable Art

Why save the good china for only special occasions? That’s the question Larisa Flint Snyder wants her customers to reconsider. Luxury items should be used proudly, everyday, like the limited-edition handbags, totes and clutches she designs using sumptuous textiles such as velvets, brocades and chenilles.

“*Handmade* is where retailers will find incomparable originality, and the best of American-made artisanry. They can rest assured the craftspeople here run top-notch businesses with a commitment to great service.”



Offhand Designs is bringing back the popular “Sabrina” bag — with improved hardware — to the NYIGF this August. According to Snyder, these changes are in direct response to feedback she received from customers.

## How To Shop The Show

While it can be an overwhelming week for even the most seasoned buyers, there are ways to save time and shop smarter. GLM’s Ross advises this strategy: “First, quickly walk the whole division to become familiar with how it’s laid out, and make note of where you want to return.” *Handmade* opens on a Saturday, a day before other NYIGF divisions, and a chance to get ahead of the crowds.

It’s also worthwhile for craft buyers to visit other parts of the NYIGF to find complementary product lines. Ross suggests visiting *Accent on Design*® if your merchandise is design focused, *At Home* if your focus is home décor, and *Personal Accessories* if jewelry makes up most of your inventory.

NYIGF attendees are welcome to take advantage of educational seminars offering trend forecasts in color and design; market research on home accessory consumers and the juvenile market; and updates on sustainability and environmental issues. Details and advance registration discounts are available at [www.nyigf.com/programs](http://www.nyigf.com/programs).

The NYIGF website offers free buyer registration as well as two sophisticated advance planning tools: a new Online Catalog Gallery and a Directory Search. Travel and hotel discounts also are available online.

Can’t get enough *Handmade*? Save the date: the next edition of NYIGF takes place January 24–29, 2009, in New York City. Additional information is available at [www.nyigf.com](http://www.nyigf.com).

# Meet the Jewelers

Jewelry artisans make up over 30 percent of *Handmade* at NYIGF, offering an astounding array of design, materials, form and function. Meet some of NYIGF's 170-plus jewelers and preview the lines they will introduce in August.



One-of-a-kind sterling silver collar necklace from Deborah Armstrong, with etched "alligator" bezel and removable drop. Stones are gaspeite, sugilite, titanium druzy, and turquoise.

## Deborah Armstrong & Company

Founded in 1996 in Greenwich, Conn., Deborah Armstrong & Company creates textured sterling silver and 18-karat yellow-gold jewelry with colorful gemstone accents.

This August, Deborah Armstrong will introduce two new collections. The Mythology Collection introduces a big, bold look to pendants on multichains and large gemstones, with the added whimsy of Greek and Roman gods at play. The Bravo Collection of necklaces has a softer look, with translucent gemstones and textured 18-karat gold cascading around the neck and flowing into a sensuous "Y" shape.

"*Handmade* offers a craft that is missing in so much of today's market. This isn't 'cookie-cutter,' mass-produced merchandise. Each piece has been fashioned by hand and is often one-of-a-kind. In most cases, the buyer meets the designer and learns firsthand what motivated the creations."



## Julio Pagliani

Jewelry with heart is the ethos that started Julio Pagliani, the four-year-old jewelry company, inspired by partner Richard Speedy's first encounter with the Tarahumara Indians in Norogachi, Mexico. Today, these villagers earn their living producing an intricately crafted line of necklaces and bracelets, finely crocheted in beads, pearls and gemstones.

Several existing Julio Pagliani lines will be expanded in August, including a new snake design for the Viboras del Mundo line and new gemstone and coin pearl necklaces. Designer Jody Olcott is most excited about the debut of a new Nautical line, which features brightly colored signal flags, a departure from the more subtle tones of the line.

"At Julio Pagliani we think of our jewelry as wearable art. When a buyer comes to the *Handmade* division of the NYIGF they will find a lot of vendors with that similar point of view."

These Julio Pagliani pieces include Charra Pinto of the Charra Collection, Corn Snake of the Viboras del Mundo Collection, and La Cruz turquoise necklace with sterling heart, spur, chili pepper, cross and corn.



Ruth Mikos creates this glass pendant necklace based on the wisdom of Albert Einstein, and throws in a little whimsy with her hand-drawn portrait of the genius. 2" glass pendant suspended on 16-18" ball chain with lobster clasp.

## Ruth Mikos LLC

Ruth Mikos began making a collection of funky charms from hand-cast resin in 2003, and has evolved into other jewelry and items for the home. Most of Ruth's products feature her original photography, representing her background in fine arts.

Three new segments of the Ruth Mikos collection will debut this August. Ceramic wall tiles featuring her photographs are ready to hang. Halloween and Christmas jewelry and home décor will feature photos of holiday collectibles from the 1950s. Resin jewelry will incorporate not only photographs, but also sculptural items implanted into resin. Ruth is also expanding her current collections of canvas prints, glass wall art and jewelry with new imagery and quotations.

"I am seeing more and more Green jewelry using recycled products. I am also seeing a lot of jewelry which is very colorful and fun. There has been a distinct break from the more traditional silver and gold jewelry; I assume this is due to the current high costs of these materials."



This vintage silver-plated flower necklace from Silver Spoon Jewelry is handmade from antique silverware handles from the 1800s.

### Silver Spoon Jewelry

The Silver Spoon Collection specializes in silver-plated silverware patterns from the 1800s and early 1900s, which talented artist Jennifer Northup crafts by hand into unique ladies' watches, bracelets, crosses, necklaces and earrings. Jennifer, who works out of her Los Angeles-area studio, was years ahead of the Green movement, using only reclaimed metals from the early days of her five-year-old company.

A collection of delicate silver necklaces will be introduced at the summer market, uniquely crafted from antique demitasse spoons. The tips of the handles are joined to create intricately detailed flower blooms, which hang as small charms in the middle of the neck.

"NYIGF is the strongest show on the East Coast because it generates so much traffic for us. We see buyers from all over the world. It's just so well organized, and not as overwhelming as other East Coast shows. Ironically, I see all of my West Coast clients in New York, because they know this is the market offering the greatest variety of hand-made products."

## Beyond NYIGF, you can also find crafts at these other GLM-managed trade shows around the United States.

### Portland Gift & Accessories Show

January 10-13, 2009  
Oregon Convention Center  
Portland, OR  
[www.portlandgift.com](http://www.portlandgift.com)

### California Gift Show

July 18-21, 2008  
January 16-19, 2009  
Los Angeles Convention Center  
Los Angeles, CA  
[www.californiagiftshow.com](http://www.californiagiftshow.com)

### San Francisco International Gift Fair

July 26-29, 2008  
February 7-10, 2009  
Moscone Center  
San Francisco, CA  
[www.sfigf.com](http://www.sfigf.com)

### The Seattle Gift Show

August 16-19, 2008  
January 24-27, 2009  
Washington State Convention & Trade Center  
Seattle, WA  
[www.seattlegift.com](http://www.seattlegift.com)

### Boston Gift Show

March 28-31, 2009  
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center  
Boston, MA  
[www.bostongiftshow.com](http://www.bostongiftshow.com)



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