

# Handmade City

Not your grandmother's craft fair



HMC  
Last December's Handmade City took place at the Bucktown Center for the Arts. More than 300 people flocked to see what was offered by talented local artisans.

BY LESLIE KLIPSCH

**M**y interest this holiday season is in the handmade. I don't mean ultra-traditional items like red and green crocheted potholders or snowmen coffee mugs filled with hot coca mix. Rather, I crave edgy accessories, stylish knits, great design, and gifts that have a little bit of personality and a little bit of grit.

I'm willing to scour the Internet for such unique fare, but I'd rather be able to shop in person and support local businesses, and thanks to a collective of independent Quad-Cities artists who get together biannually to sell their wares, a simple trip downtown Davenport to Handmade City on Dec. 7 just might fulfill my fastidious wish.

Rose Noble, the woman who makes this unique shopping experience possible, says that back in 2010 she and a friend looked for a place to sell their handmade items and were surprised at the lack of an indie craft show presence in the Quad-Cities. Discouraged by the high prices of entry fees charged by out-of-town indie craft fairs, they began to envision a local event that skewed from a traditional craft fair where they could sell their own handmade goods and offer the opportunity to their creative, innovative friends, all the while keeping vendor fees affordable.

With that vision, Handmade City (HMC) was born and has been supporting and promoting current, local handmade artisans every since. HMC now takes place twice a year in locations throughout the Quad-Cities and has a following of hundreds of appreciative fans.

The vibe at HMC events is different than what you'd discover at a conventional craft fair. The atmosphere is laid back and attracts a youthful, artistic crowd. (Expect beards, knit caps and retro black glasses.) There is a certain indie-craft and DIY aesthetic that participants share that reflects autonomy and style you won't necessarily find at the mall. Items for purchase are typically one-of-a-kind and carefully constructed by local artists and craftspeople.

Today, Ms. Noble runs the HMC events with the help of her two sisters. An artist herself, she creates HMC's beautiful promotional material and teaches youth art classes, paints, and, in her words, "plays with photography and obsesses with typography." She also works full time for a jewelry company where she designs jewelry and assists with product design as well as online and print design.

"I also blog with friends over on ObsessSesh.com and run HMC," she says. "It keeps me busy, but I wouldn't have it any other way."

Since its inaugural event in the spring of 2010, Handmade City, as well as the whole Quad-Cities indie arts scene, has seen tremendous growth. The vendor list has expanded significantly, as well as the variety of

products handmade here in the Quad-Cities. This season's sale, the seventh of its kind, will feature more than 35 vendors selling everything from handmade, upcycled and vintage clothing and accessories to visual art and screen prints to handcrafted soaps and scents.

As Ms. Noble says, "We have such a great group of people dedicated to not only making handmade items, but also supporting the artists who make them. I love seeing all of these creative people under one roof, celebrating handmade."

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### **Ms. Noble's favorites**

For December's Handmade City event, Ms. Noble is most looking forward to taking over the Skybridge and seeing it filled with handmade goods. She is working to secure an interactive photo booth for the event and is excited about welcoming a great batch of new vendors. "I love seeing the crowd 'ooh'



Leslie Klipsch  
Hartley Studio, who was featured in the April edition of Gold Book, will be at Davenport's Sky Bridge selling more beautiful jewelry during this year's HMC.

and 'ahh' over all of the vendors' booths," she enthuses. "I wish I could buy everything at HMC, but since that would be crazy, I live vicariously through the shoppers and get pretty excited for them when they purchase that special something."

### My favorite

Let's just say that I'll be one of those people oohing and ahing. I always look forward to a cup of drip coffee poured by Rozz-Tox, a local coffee house which, as Ms. Noble says, "oozes the indie vibe." I'm also anxious to see what printmakers Anna Pate and Joseph Lappie have created for their

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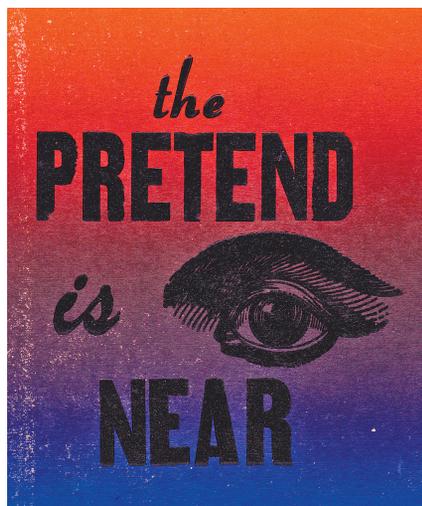
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Phono Orange and Olive booth. I'm always happy to see the fabulousness that Anne Brown from The Adventure Orange has to offer. Also on my list is a festive handmade dress for my daughter to wear to this season's various holiday events and a pair of upcycled wool mittens to keep me warm this winter.

### Why you should check out Handmade City

If you're like me, you will grab your girlfriends and make a morning of it. We'll linger over coffee and French toast at a

*Continued on page 19*



Phono Orange and Olive  
The Pretend: Joseph Lappe and Anna Pate  
will sell their letterpress posters, cards, and  
more at this season's HMC.

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# GOLDBOOK

# Q-C FACES

These Q-C Faces were seen at the October meeting of **King's Daughters**.



Phyllis Hallene, Jo Jamieson,  
Bernadette Murphy and Lois McAdams



Judy Boten, Anne Johnson,  
Meredith Kurtz and Katie Aimsforth



Elizabeth Meegan, Virginia Nelson  
and Caroline Fleming



Sharon Dougherty and Jolene Skoglund



Arlene Frieden, Bex Kautz, Joan Doyle and Ginny Roberts

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Continued from page 17

local downtown establishment (Fresh Deli? Brewed Awakenings? Café d’Marie?) and then head to HMC, where we’ll likely swoon over what we see. Handmade City has the potential to make a significant dent in your holiday shopping, all the while keeping your dollars local.

### Where you should go

This season’s Handmade City sale will take place in downtown Davenport at the Skybridge (121 W. 2nd St.) on Saturday, Dec. 7. Vendors will sell their goods from

10 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, updates, and featured artists, check out the Handmade City Facebook page ([facebook.com/handmade.city.art](https://facebook.com/handmade.city.art)) and website ([handmade-city.com](http://handmade-city.com)).

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Each month in The Gold Standard, Leslie Klipsch, a freelance writer and editor based in Davenport, shines a spotlight on the gems of the Quad-Cities area — for Gold Book readers. She enjoys reading, cooking, spending time with her husband and three young children and exploring all that the Quad-Cities has to offer.



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