



Clothes recycled as art

LIVING in Raglan is like being on holiday every day says fabric artist Lin van Craenenbroeck.

From Belgium, Lin and bicycle mechanic husband Dirk holidayed in New Zealand in 2001 and, although they didn't visit Raglan at that time, they decided to settle in the seaside town when they moved to live permanently in the country four years ago.

A mosaic artist and window dresser with a background in tailoring learned from her mother and grandfather, Lin has set about creating her own style of reconfigured clothing using recycled fabrics and established the Moz-Art label.

The thing that really appealed to the couple was the relaxed atmosphere.

"Belgium is nine times smaller than New Zealand and has 11 million people. It felt so good in New Zealand. The people are so different. In the markets in Europe people tend to be impulse buyers probably because they know the piece might not be there if they come back.

"Because there are fewer people in New Zealand people tend to look at something and leave and come back later. It is so much more relaxed."

Lin makes a range of bags, skirts, jackets and children's clothing. Everything is one-off. Early on she used her own clothes as raw material but has become an adept reuser of discarded clothing and material including quantities inherited from her grandfather who worked as a tailor near Antwerp.

"In the beginning I started cutting up my own clothes to make into bags. I use old trousers, skirts and duvet covers. They are like a mosaic – every little piece tells a story."

As the enterprise grew she made enough money to establish her own label.

Lin retails her clothing creations through the markets. She has used Tamahere, the Auckland markets at Titirangi, Coatsville and Ponsonby Rd. In January she does the rounds of the Coromandel catering to the holiday crowd.

She has learned which markets work and which don't.

"I need to be at markets where there are a lot of hand-crafted local work rather than markets where there are people selling a lot of cheap imported goods."

Lin also supplies the Raglan markets and a constant stream of tourists and visitors call at her Stewart St home during summer.

Lin's work can be seen as part of the Raglan ArtoWear Awards 2010 which will be in the town hall on Saturday June 5. Shows 2pm and 7pm.

Relaxed lifestyle appeals to Belgians.

Photo: SHANE MORTON

City centre design: renewal approved

THE heart of Hamilton's central business district, Garden Place, is to get a makeover.

Hamilton City councillors last Wednesday endorsed a design brief for Garden Place.

The brief was prepared with assistance from Project for Public Places, engaged by the council late last year. It includes improvements to the existing square and an option to reconnect Worley Place with Alexandra St in the future.

The urban designers who have worked on the CityHeart Revitalisation project, Reset Urban Design, are to start more detailed design work.

They will refer to artists' sketches produced by the project which show new features including installing a kiosk as a welcoming point at the Victoria St entrance to the square, removing bollards and installing glass awnings over shops.

CityHeart project manager Jason Harrison said his team was building on what was already in Garden Place. Ideas include an area for interactive art, a giant chess board and more tables and chairs.

The reconfiguration is part of Hamilton City Council's \$26 million long-term commitment to the central city.

Aspects of the plan already undertaken

include the \$5.3 million revamp of Hood St and the redevelopment of the south end of Victoria St.

The revitalisation project includes central city connections with the \$68 million Claudelands conference and events centre which is under construction and due for completion in September 2011.

Physical works on the Garden Place redevelopment are scheduled to begin in September with completion in June 2011 including a pause for the Summer in Garden Place programme. The overall budget for the project is \$3.7m.

Garden Place was last overhauled in the late 1990s.

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