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North Shore entrepreneurs show off skills at downtown Chicago's One of a Kind Holiday Show

By Myrna Petlicki
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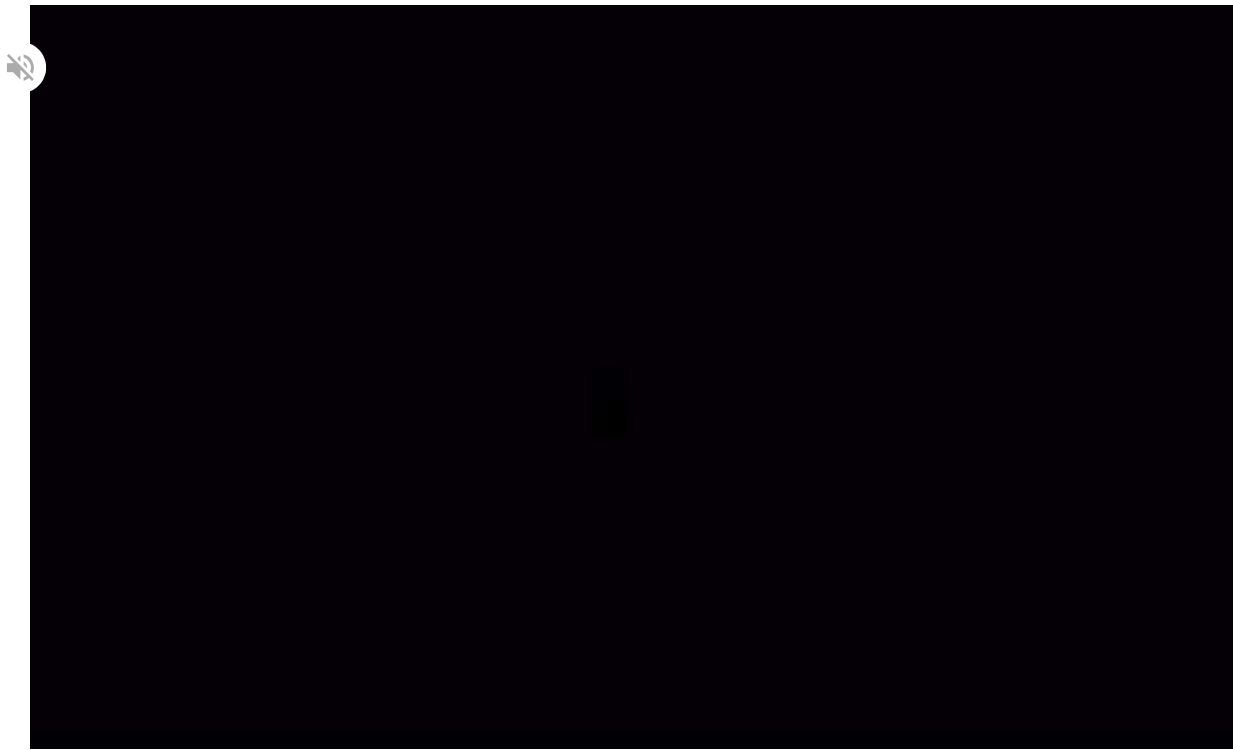
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North suburban artists and entrepreneurs are well-represented at the annual One of a Kind Holiday Show, Dec. 1 through 4 at The Mart in downtown Chicago. For 21 years, the event has offered shoppers the opportunity to purchase a wide variety of handmade items, in 20 categories, directly from the makers.

Seven of this year's vendors are Evanston residents.



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“I have a collection of sewing kits that are designed to make learning to sew easy,” said Rachel Hueffner of Butterscotch Sewing. “They come with all of the supplies you need to complete the project. They also come with access to video tutorials that are broken up into steps.”

Hueffner noted that commercial patterns that people purchase may be difficult for a novice to navigate. “I wanted to make it really easy so people didn’t have to read a bunch of directions,” she explained.



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A lot of the kits are geared toward children.



Evanston resident Rachel Hueffner of Butterscotch Sewing will be displaying her work at the One of a Kind Holiday Show at The Mart in Chicago from Dec. 1-4. - Original Credit: Handout (Rachel Hueffner / HANDOUT)

This will be Hueffner's first time at the One of a Kind Holiday Show. "I launched my business almost exactly a year ago," she said. "I thought this would be a good opportunity to share it with a larger audience and get additional feedback on the product."

Elisa Ann Lindstrom creates artwork at her self-named company. "I create landscape paintings that are calling a lot of Chicago and Evanston themes," Lindstrom said.

She will be bringing original paintings as well as limited edition prints to the show — both framed and unframed.

"I bring a lot of calm into my paintings," Lindstrom noted.

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Evanston resident Elisa Ann Lindstrom will be displaying her work at the One of a Kind Holiday Show at The Mart in Chicago from Dec. 1-4. - Original Credit: Handout (Elisa Ann Lindstrom / HANDOUT)

This will be Lindstrom's first time at the One of a Kind Holiday Show. "People have been talking about the One of a Kind Show to me for a long time," she said. "It was time to fly."

"My background is 30 years of Ayurvedic herbal medicine from India," said Luna Delgado of Luna Delgado Botanicals. "All of my products are based in the foundational principles of bringing the body into balance with nature and with the cycles of life. All of my products are completely all-natural plant-based products."

Her line includes products for seasonal skin care, wellness apothecary care, aromatherapy and body washes. Delgado has been creating these products for 25 years for clients in a clinical practice and formally launched the product line in 2020.



Evanston resident Luna Delgado of Luna Delgado Botanicals will be displaying her work at the One of a Kind Holiday Show at The Mart in Chicago from Dec. 1-4. - Original Credit: Handout (Luna Delgado / HANDOUT)

This will be Delgado's first year at the One of a Kind Holiday Show. "I'm ready to showcase my products to a wider audience," she said.

Eudell Watts is carrying on a long family tradition with Old Arthur's, a line of barbecue sauces and dry rubs.

"Arthur is my great, great, grandfather. He devised all of these recipes as a slave in Kansas City, Missouri," Watts said. "His job for the first 28 years of his life revolved around open pit barbecuing on a big production farm in Kansas City."

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Evanston resident Eudell Watts of Old Arthur's will be displaying his work at the One of a Kind Holiday Show at The Mart in Chicago from Dec. 1-4. - Original Credit: Handout (Eudell Watts / HANDOUT)

He was freed at the age of 28 when the Civil War ended. “The only thing of value he had to bring with him were his recipes,” Watts related. “He came to Illinois and put those recipes to work and leveraged them to earn a living for the next eighty years.” He lived to be 108.

The family continued to make those sauces and rubs, but primarily for special occasions. 12 years ago, Watts said that he and his father decided it was really important to begin to tell Arthur’s story. That’s when they began producing the product for sale.

“We were just named the best tomato-based barbecue sauce in America,” Watts said.

Although Constance Wastcoat doesn’t live in Evanston, that is where she started her business, GrownUp KidStuff.

“We make chocolate sauces, caramel sauces, and butterscotch sauce,” Wastcoat said. “It’s all natural, small batch, corn-free, soy-free, gluten-free, and nut-free. And we have three dairy-free options as well.”

This is the eleventh year that Wastcoat’s company has presented at the One of a Kind Holiday Show. “There’s a lot of traffic and it’s fun to see vendors that we’ve gotten to know over the years and customers as well,” she said.

In addition, Evanston artists showcasing their work include Jonathan Lee Rutledge, who creates jewelry:

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There are also three vendors from other North Shore suburbs Glencoe, Wilmette and Winnetka.

“I create one-of-a-kind pieces of art re-imagined with thousands of Austrian glass crystals,” said Glencoe resident Nancy Kaplan Koppersmith of NIK Crystal Art Studios. “I take photographs and posters and reimagine them with crystals to create depth and nuance and shading detail.”

For example, she may take a wedding photograph from one of her customers who has commissioned a piece and add crystals “to bring the photograph to life,” Koppersmith said. She also uses that treatment with nature photographs.

“I’ve never shown my work at any show,” Koppersmith said. “I’ve been going to One of a Kind Shows for over a decade. I was always so taken by all of the beautiful, innovative, unique work. I’m excited to show my work for the first time in a public forum.”

Griffin Elliott of Wilmette has been selling custom made cocktails under the label Griffin’s since December. “They are handcrafted in small batches, incorporating seasonality,” Elliott said. Some of the varieties are a Spicy Skinny Margarita, Pomegranate Martini, and Stone Fruit Old Fashioned.



Wilmette resident Griffin Elliott will be selling his custom made cocktails at the One of a Kind Holiday Show at The Mart in Chicago from Dec. 1-4. - Original Credit: h (Griffin Elliott / HANDOUT)

Elliott, who was a bartender and bar manager for 10 years, and his wife, Petroula, decided that this was a service that would be valuable for suburbanites. “We batch, bottle, and deliver fresh cocktails to homes — something that is rather unique. We also sell these at different pop-ups and farmers’ markets,” he said. “Our

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Winnetka resident Brett Bowman sells gourmet cashews under the name, B's Gourmet Nuts.

“Our product is unique based on the flavor profile,” Bowman said. “We provide a depth and texture not found in your standard nut.”



Winnetka resident Brett Bowman of B's Gourmet Nuts will be selling his gourmet cashews at the One of a Kind Holiday Show at The Mart in Chicago from Dec. 1-4. - Original Credit: Handout (Brett Bowman / HANDOUT)

Bowman noted that his product is great for cocktail hours and charcuterie boards.

“We’re not an everyday nut,” he declared, “but for a special occasion.”

Bowman presented at the Holiday Show last year and also at the One of a Kind spring show. “It’s a great community of artists and patrons,” he said. “It’s truly unique and special.”

The One of a Kind Holiday Show is on the seventh floor of The Mart, 222 W. Merchandise Mart Plaza, Chicago. Hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Dec. 1-3 and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 4.

For tickets and further information, visit oneofakindshowchicago.com.

Myrna Petlicki is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

