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LUXURY SILK SCARF DESIGNER HAS EXPORTS WRAPPED UP

A Bath designer of unique luxury silk scarves is hoping to have trade to the US all wrapped up after joining a UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) scheme to help new exporters.

Anne Selby is a designer and maker who works with silk and velvet using traditional techniques of both arashi shibori and devoré in new and unique ways. Having already had success in the UK with her innovative products, she is starting to make waves overseas with both her silk products and a unique new pleating machine that she has patented and which is creating interest from overseas buyers.

Anne first began looking at overseas markets when she joined UKTI's Passport programme earlier this year. With the help of International Trade Advisers Norris Myers and Sue Tidsall she began to explore the potential for her scarves and wraps and a new strand of her business – the Compleat Pleating Machine, designed by Anne and manufactured locally, which improves the productivity, reliability and creative options associated with the production of Arashi Shibori accessories.

Anne attended initial workshops in exporting and then attended a UKTI inward mission by buyers from the US, where she met the UKTI representative from the US team who was able to offer further advice on markets there.

She recently used Passport funding to attend the International Shibori Symposium in Paris, where she was able to show a prototype of her specialist pleating machine. Anne was delighted with the interest shown in the machine by international buyers and she has already had a number of enquiries from potential customers. Anne has been invited to attend the Surface Design Association annual conference in Kansas next May to demonstrate the machine, which she designed after winning the 2007 Innovation Award from Bath Spa University, where Anne was studying a Masters degree in textile design.

Anne also picked up a number of orders for her scarves from the US and sees the potential there as enormous.

“Using the Passport funding to attend the Shibori Symposium proved to be exceptionally worthwhile and I am really optimistic of some positive outcomes,” said Anne.

“It was no mean feat to transport a 4-foot long prototype machine in the back of an estate car from Bath to Paris, especially unloading it along the cobbled streets of the French capital. But it attracted a huge amount of interest and I have a number of potential buyers lined up”.

“The USA is potentially a huge market for me and I think attending the event in Kansas in may well open up a lot of doors. I am also planning to follow up my contacts with the UKTI team from the US and will be meeting them when they come to the South West region next year.”

Norris Myers, UKTI’s International Trade Adviser, said:

“Companies need to visit the market to make effective relationships with clients that bring in successful sales. I’m glad we were able to support Anne Selby textiles on this occasion to visit a seminar in France that led to orders from the USA and look forward to hearing more of her success after she visits the States next year.”

Notes to News Editors

For more information on Anne Selby go to www.anneselby.com

UK Trade & Investment

UK Trade & Investment is the government organisation that provides integrated support services for UK companies engaged in overseas trade and foreign enterprises seeking to locate in the UK. It brings together the work of teams in British embassies and FCO posts overseas and government departments across Whitehall. In England, international trade support is coordinated by nine International Trade Directors working in partnership with each Regional Development Agency. UK Trade & Investment services are delivered locally through a network of International Trade Teams. The devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own arrangements for local delivery of services. For more information visit the web site www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

GWE Business West

The South West UK Trade and Investment service is delivered by GWE Business West, a leading membership and economic development organisation delivering an extensive range of services to businesses. As a powerful voice for business we play a major role in shaping and supporting economic growth and success.

Issued on behalf of UK Trade & Investment by Government News Network South West and Wales. For further information please contact Becky Graham on 0117 9003565