Written by By Damon Scott for Finance New Mexico
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The "pop-up retail" trend has helped many artists and entrepreneurs sell products and launch businesses in cities throughout the country. Pop-up shops allow artists and retailers to use temporarily donated commercial space to sell wares and land new customers.

Albuquerque's WESST Enterprise Center hosted a holiday pop-up shop last year to showcase its artisan and "maker" clients as part of Manufacturing Day activities. The event was so successful that the nonprofit business development and training organization has scheduled the second incarnation for Friday, October 20.

"We use the pop-up shop as a way to cap off our Creative P.I.E. program," said Julianna Silva, managing director of the Enterprise Center. Creative P.I.E., which stands for practice, innovation and enterprise, offers packaged-up training and consulting to local business owners and entrepreneurs to give them a way to promote their products and get their name out in the public.

"The pop-up shop is the highlight of the Creative P.I.E. program and a way to have our artists get in front of people for the holidays," said Silva.

Twenty artists participated last year, and Silva expects 23 to join this year.

Kymberlie Martin, owner of Reuseful Candles, is one. Martin repurposes bottles and jars into receptacles for high-quality handcrafted candles.

"These types of events are very important for my business," said Martin. "Since I make scented candles, selling online can be quite difficult. Selling in person, where people can see and smell the product, really goes a long way."

Erin Kleymann is another entrepreneur who will be selling at the event. The owner of willajunejewelry crafts bronze, copper and silver into necklaces, brooches, earrings, money clips and more. Kleymann also leads WESST's Etsy Craft Entrepreneurship program, teaching clients how to set up and optimize shops on the popular e-commerce website where many handcrafted products are sold.

"I've been in business for seven years, and [have worked] with WESST since 2014. I started my business online through Etsy, but it has since evolved to also include my own website, in-person sales events, and wholesale accounts," she said.

Kleymann is looking forward to her second year at WESST's pop-up shop.

"I love in-person events like these," she said. "They are a great opportunity to market your business, but also to engage with your customers and see what they are responding to. I love that locals can come out and see what there is in the community and support the local economy."

Many other unique products are expected at the event, including handmade Moroccan items, locally-made magnetic domino sets, traditional hand-punched tin art, and contemporary Day of the Dead fine art.

Vendor contracts are finalized and entries are closed, at least for this year. But according to Silva, client learning opportunities haven't stopped there. "As they are getting ready to participate, we offer them training and consulting around things like insurance, working with the fire marshal and getting prepped," she said.

The WESST holiday pop-up shop runs from 11am. to 6 pm. Oct. 20 at the WESST Enterprise Center, 609 Broadway Blvd. NE in Albuquerque. For more information, visit wesst.org.

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