



Alanna Gallagher

Best in class

# Block party



**1** Gloucestershire-based Artichoke was commissioned by its engineer owner to design an antiqued oak kitchen inspired by Victorian wrought-iron engineering, in particular the work of Brunel, known for its robustness. It includes a maple wood end-grained chopping block because it is a functional item, built to outlive its owners, says the firm's Andrew Petherick. It also features Carrara marble and stainless steel worktops and burnished nickel cabinet ironmongery to match the La Cornue range oven's detailing. [Artichoke-ltd.com](http://Artichoke-ltd.com)

**2** These rolling butcher carts were built by Versatile Wood Products based on a design by Anne and Richard De Wolf of Portland-based design and build firm Archiform and manufactured using wood harvested from their coastal property in Washington. The his-and-hers design is one that having tested out at home, they have incorporated into many of their builds. They make for a very moveable feast. [archiform.com](http://archiform.com); [versatilewp.com](http://versatilewp.com)

**3** This Seattle kitchen remodel, in calming and on-trend teal blue, shows an L-shape design with a wood-grain end block presenting a workstation that looks out towards the rest of the open plan room. You can chop here and talk to the family. Recipe books are also to hand thanks to the installation of end-of-counter shelving, just one of many clever ideas Kenna Stout of Brio Interior Design incorporated into this design. [Briointeriordesign.com](http://Briointeriordesign.com)

**4** This aged wood kitchen by Minneapolis-based Murphy & Co Design is given contemporary stainless steel countertops to break up the rustic atmosphere. In pride of place is an antique butcher block. You can see the years of wear and tear on the undulations of the surface. For the best DIY option, check out the Canadian maple butcher block in The Village Butcher in Ranelagh. It came from McDonnell's of Queen Street, and costs €880. A matching alloy stand costs €316. These prices are ex VAT. Blocks can be made to order. [Murphycodesign.com](http://Murphycodesign.com) [thevillagebutcher.ie](http://thevillagebutcher.ie)

**5** This new kitchen was built inside a 100-year old one-room stone cottage for a California-based landscape designer. The cottage has old polished concrete floors and original stone walls that Maraya Droney of Maraya Interior Design retained. She added stainless steel cabinets, thick concrete counter tops and an incorporated sink. An antique butcher block was incorporated into the new cabinetry. Droney also added a pot rack made from old snow chains. The glass and metal door leads out to a beautiful hedged kitchen garden filled with greens and vegetables. [Maraya.com](http://Maraya.com)

**6** This is the block idea reduced to a small and moveable board that sits atop a large scale Edwardian-style workbench. Designed by Aughrim-based Rhatigan and Hick and made of oak, it has been coated in a white oil that sits into the grain of the wood and gives a bleaching effect. The firm doesn't recommend chopping on the counter-top as it will mark and scratch it. Instead you should make use of the slip-on board which is made of iroko. The main counter should be oiled regularly to keep the wood looking good. [Rhatiganandhick.ie](http://Rhatiganandhick.ie) [mcdonnells.ie](http://mcdonnells.ie)

**7** This is a classic painted in-frame kitchen by Gorey-based Andrew Ryan. It features a Corian-topped island with a walnut and ash end grain block added to the main archipelago. It is set lower than the counter, as was traditional for butcher blocks. While extremely heavy to lift, it is designed to be taken out and scrubbed using a wire brush to clean it. [Andrewryan.ie](http://Andrewryan.ie)

## Collaboration with education keeps Irish design at the cutting edge

### Aideen McCole

NCAD is building a bridge between student life and industry with a number of innovative projects

Salone del Mobile, Milan's world-famous furniture fair, has for decades been the launch pad for new products and studios, and a place to find the latest ideas in furniture and product design.

Its most recent edition saw the launch of a new series of products from Waterford crystal company J HILL's Standard, a collaboration with Norwegian designer Daniel Rybakken.

A mobile and lighting series, Secant marries Rybakken's minimal aesthetic and lighting expertise with J HILL's Standard's mission to revitalize crystal production in Waterford.

A series composed of a floor, wall and table lamp and a sculptural mobile employing a pulley and glass counterweights also affords the opportunity to experiment with form and play with our perceptions of a traditional material.

#### Poses a challenge

Not just an opportunity for J HILL's Standard to collaborate with a new designer, Secant also poses a challenge in terms of production, which means research is about to begin with glass students at the National College of Art and Design in order to develop a means of producing the discs in crystal.

"One of the traditional characteristics of lead crystal is for the completed work to be free of bubbles and this will be the biggest challenge: currently we can only fire the glass discs in a kiln, and bubbles are inevitable in kiln-formed glass," explains Dr Caroline Madden, lecturer at NCAD.

Dr Madden and Anike Tyrrell, founder of J HILL's Standard, are applying for funding to further the project, which could be the first step towards an ongoing collaboration between the company and the college. Tyrrell is enthusiastic about the prospect of creating a stronger relationship with the college and its students.

"While we are at early stages now, I would be delighted to provide more opportunities for students to apply their ideas. There's great talent in the glass department at the moment," she says.

#### Real-world situations

Increasingly, a large part of NCAD's teaching activities is to connect to industry and the wider community so students can apply those talents in real-world situations. Head of engagement and innovation Derek McGarry coordinates projects that enable NCAD students and graduates to develop skills and experiences beyond the college walls.

"Over the last three years we have had an average of 50 client projects a year, which is a lot for any institution," he says. "We're always looking for projects which will enhance teaching and provide learning value so that students develop skills and experience to become real assets to the industry, the community and to culture in Ireland."

Many of the projects that current students engage in tie in with longstanding relationships with Irish companies such as



■ Clockwise from above: M-Power, a multi-functional device aimed at aiding wheelchair users; Obeo, a food waste recycling product; and a Seacant walllight and floorlight.

Newbridge Silverware, TileStyle and others. Another industry link initiative is Origin8, the college's incubator for campus start-ups. Through support and mentoring, as well as office and workshop space in NCAD Annex on Dublin's James's Street, Origin8 helps student projects become

start-ups, and start-ups become viable businesses.

Obeo, a food-waste recycling product you may have seen on the shelves of your local supermarket, or advertised on the side of a Dublin Bus, is the first major success story from Origin8.

Obeo is a company started by NCAD graduate Kate Cronin and her business partner Elizabeth Fingleton and is now employing four others in order to support its expansion to UK and Canadian markets.



at aiding wheelchair users with a myriad of activities, developed by graduate John Horrigan and his company HEIDL.

While studying, Horrigan found a real lack of products on the market to aid wheelchair users with a range of very necessary tasks, and M-Power – an armature that can be fitted to any manually propelled wheelchair to hold devices, laptop tables and more – aims to rectify this.

**Great ideas**  
From industry-sponsored projects for current students, ongoing research or the incubation of budding enterprises, NCAD is providing the time and space to develop great ideas along with exposure to real-world challenges and constraints. These activities build a vital bridge between student life and the working world.

**“We're always looking for projects which will enhance teaching and provide learning value”**