



# Meet... MADELEINE BLAINE

Founder of Silver Works

## Tell us your background story.

I started my career at 19 after I moved to Mexico and did an apprenticeship in jewellery making. After living between Mexico and England for 11 selling my work through craft fairs. I then met my Irish partner at a craft fair in Cork and we settled in Dublin. I decided to open a shop as I wanted kids and therefore a steady base. The Collective was born, selling my own work and that of other Irish designers.

## How did you come about setting up Silver Works?

We started teaching workshops firstly to bring more people into the shop, we used to pop a table in the shop in the evenings when it was shut, but it soon took off and Silver Works was born. A couple of years later we were offered the opportunity to expand to the whole building and we now have 3 workshops.

## What are the challenging parts of balancing being a mum and an entrepreneur?

Both roles are very demanding, sometimes you feel pulled in all directions, with very little downtime. The problem with being an entrepreneur is that it can spill over into your personal time, so you have to become very good at juggling and also setting boundaries!

## What advice do you have for parents who are balancing being a parent and work?

Setting up a business is a lot of work, but as soon as it takes off give yourself some slack and make sure to carve out more time for you and your family. I set my business up when I was 5 months pregnant, and opened the shop doors 2 weeks before giving birth! So I had no choice but to work hard the first year, juggling work between feeding and sleeping my daughter. She was often found in a sling while I was selling, or napping in the corner. My partner took her all weekend when I was in the shop. As soon as the business was doing better I stopped working weekends so we could have some much needed family time.

## What's the best and worst part about working for yourself?

Best part is the flexibility. I can choose my work hours, and of course my holidays! It also suits my personality as I love a challenge and doing different things every day. The worst bit is you take the stress home and all responsibility lies on you.

## What was your biggest learning from setting up your own business?

Get to a certain point and then employ people, you cannot scale a business without help. I see each person I add to the business as an

