

Downtown vibe inspires Edmonton artisan's colourful jewelry

BY AMANDA ASH, EDMONTON JOURNAL APRIL 11, 2013

EDMONTON - Making jewelry is a family affair for Kristen Mackie.

Before becoming parents, the local artisan and her husband Martin Krezalek considered themselves downtown urbanites, enjoying a lifestyle of metropolitan indulgence with ease.

But maintaining their concrete adventures became a bit more complicated once Ella, 2, and Elias, eight months, were born, so Mackie decided to create a line of jewelry that married the two loves of her life: Her family and the city.

This past January, Mackie started [Elias and Ella](#), a line of gem pendants, stackable bead bracelets and antique brass charms named after her two children but inspired by bustling streets. She also snagged Krezalek to work on the business side of her line, which has now expanded from the dining room table of her West Edmonton home to Miss Boss on 124th Street (10120 124th St.), Modern Sole in Sherwood Park and possibly some shops on Yonge Street in Toronto.

"I really wanted to stay connected," Mackie says. "Martin and I are big into the local handmade scene. We like downtown and supporting local. Now that we have kids, we just incorporate them into that."

Mackie started making jewelry for family and friends while in university. Now, the hobby is a full-time job for the former ESL teacher.

Many of Mackie's items are made with semi-precious stones, such as citrine and amethyst, river stone and Jasper stone. Chunky necklaces provide cosmic decadence and mystery. Their raw, multi-faceted cuts catch the light even in the darkest downtown alleys.

Then there are her bright beaded bracelets, which incorporate a whimsical sense of freedom with charms shaped like anchors, leaves and birds.

"I like working with colour, big time. I keep track of the things going on in fashion as best as I can, and a lot of the colour really inspires me.

"I think my jewelry fits a downtown girl sort of feel."

Krezalek, who works for the department of energy for the provincial government, laughs at how opposite the jewelry line is to his day job. But he doesn't mind working with baubles and trinkets; he's always been interested in entrepreneurship, and Elias and Ella jewelry was a great way to feed his

passion.

“This, for me, is just a huge avenue to channel all that energy,” Krezalek says. “I’m right in it like a dirty shirt. It could be selling chocolate and I wouldn’t care.”

Between the two of them, Mackie and Krezalek manage to cover all the bases required of their new-found business. They’ve been watching Dragon’s Den and Shark Tank religiously, learning new ways to bring the creative and corporate sides together through graphics and marketing.

Come April 20, they’ll be focused on bringing their wares to the [Mercer Collective Maker’s Market](#) on 104th Street and 104th Avenue. They love Edmonton’s market vibe and are excited to be a part of it once again — this time on the selling end of things.

“We’re really excited to see where this all goes,” Krezalek says.

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