

'Tis the season for crafts

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It's begun. The season of crowded malls, dreadfully long lineups and not knowing what to get mom has slowly but surely crept upon us.

Christmas shopping can bring more stress to your life than holiday joy, but local artists say they've got an alternative to the traditional mall: Arts and craft shows.

One of the largest such events in Calgary is the 20th Annual Art Market Art and Craft sale.

It returns to the Telus Convention Centre Nov. 16-19, showcasing more than 200 professional artists' handcrafted work.

"This is the place for avoiding those woes because the salespeople know everything about their own work," says Marlene Loney, the producer of the event.

"They really care about what they sell and who they sell it to. It's all about service and quality."

The pieces of fine art on display at the market will sell from \$5 to \$5000 and will range from ornaments to fine fashion to jewellery to sculptures.

"What's neat about hand-crafted art is that the artists put their own time and integrity into their work. You don't see that when what you're buying comes off an assembly line."

Loney says the best part about purchasing art as a Christmas gift is the meaning behind the piece.

"It's the gifts that we have received that are hand-made that we treasure the most. A mug is a mug, but one purchased at a craft sale is unique, hand-painted, comes with the story of an artisan, or perhaps the memory of a day spent with friends."



Shi Studio of Victoria, which created this stained glass piece, is one of the exhibitors featured at the upcoming Calgary Art Market.

— Courtesy of Calgary Art Market