

findings

Issue 61 Autumn 2015

The Magazine of the
Association for
Contemporary Jewellery

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New Designers Birmingham School of Jewellery **Junk: Rubbish into Gold** Technical Update: CAD **A Year of Development** Artists in Conversation **Mima Jewellery Symposium** Alexander McQueen at the V&A **A Sense of Jewellery** Shelanu Women's Craft Collective

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN



There is, for me, a feeling that summer and autumn are relatively relaxed periods in the year: various graduation shows and Autumn Fairs to be taken in, as well as holidays and amenable weather to be enjoyed. For many members however it has to be a productive period in preparation for the really serious Christmas offensive. There are several aspects to this but I do think it amazing (and unfortunate?) that so many makers and retailers still have to be frantic in December and under-employed in January!

Interesting stuff in November includes the last leg of our 'Sleight of Hand' exhibition showing in Plymouth. On behalf of the Association I would like to thank all exhibitors and those who have enabled it to tour to an impressive 3 venues. I'm particularly pleased that our exhibitors included two members from Australia and one from Vienna.

Corporate, as well as personal best wishes to our members and friends who are involved in the following recent developments: the new National Association of Jewellers, comprising the former B.J.A. and N.A.G., and also the Birmingham Assay Office in its move to the new site in Moreton Street, and their related collaborative tenancy and partnership with the School of Jewellery.

Terry Hunt

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to *Findings* 61 this issue is full of joy and sadness. Joy at seeing new graduates starting their learning journey in the world of contemporary jewellery and those continuing their journey through research and exploration. We never stop learning as artists and whatever your art form the questing spirit is part of what it is to be creative. This issue is very much about that learning journey. We are privileged to hear from two stunningly talented artists in conversation. Emiko Oye from San Francisco and Jenny Saker from London, as ever one artist who works primarily in non-precious materials and one who works in precious materials. You may have seen Jenny's necklace as cover star on the Goldsmiths Fair catalogue this year.

There is also sadness, I interviewed contemporary jewellery and craft collector Alan Firth for *Findings* last year and we struck up a small friendship over the phone. I was struck by his passion for contemporary jewellery and the interest and fascination he and his late wife Pat had for the creative process and the artists they met in the course of their collecting. I was saddened to hear of his death earlier this year and *Findings* commemorates him with an obituary. Igniting passion in someone else is the rare privilege of an artist. The Alan and Pat Firth Collection was sold at auction in October, I watched it's progress online and I hope the new owners of their beautiful collection are as passionate about the hands that made the pieces as the Firths were.

Poppy Porter



Cover: Maria Whetman, 'Material Landscape Cluster'. Brooch - Pure tin, copper, iron, mica, chalk, resin. Photographer: Russell Barker at Progression Imaging

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New Designers

A personal pick of the crop from New Designers 2015

Karen Dell'Armi

As ever, my few hours visit to New Designers Week 1 was over too quickly. Such a great energy which quite literally bombards the senses. I like to do a quick scout around to see what stands out and calls me to want to investigate further. I then enjoy listening to the new makers talking of their inspiration, techniques utilised and their aspirations for the future.

Starting with One Year On, a curated satellite show for graduates and new makers within the 1st year of business, I loved the depth and richness of colour created by **Flora Bhattachary** with her 18 carat gold and gold vermeil pieces incorporating opulent dark stones. Inspired by her Indian heritage, the work also has a geometrical and architectural quality to it, almost Art Deco in style.

Flora was presented with the One Year On New Designers Award for Week 1.

I featured work by **Esme Parsons** in the July E-Bulletin - Esme's Urbanisation collection features industrial miniatures of cities to be worn on the body.

Hayley Beckley is fascinated by the importance of stories and communication.

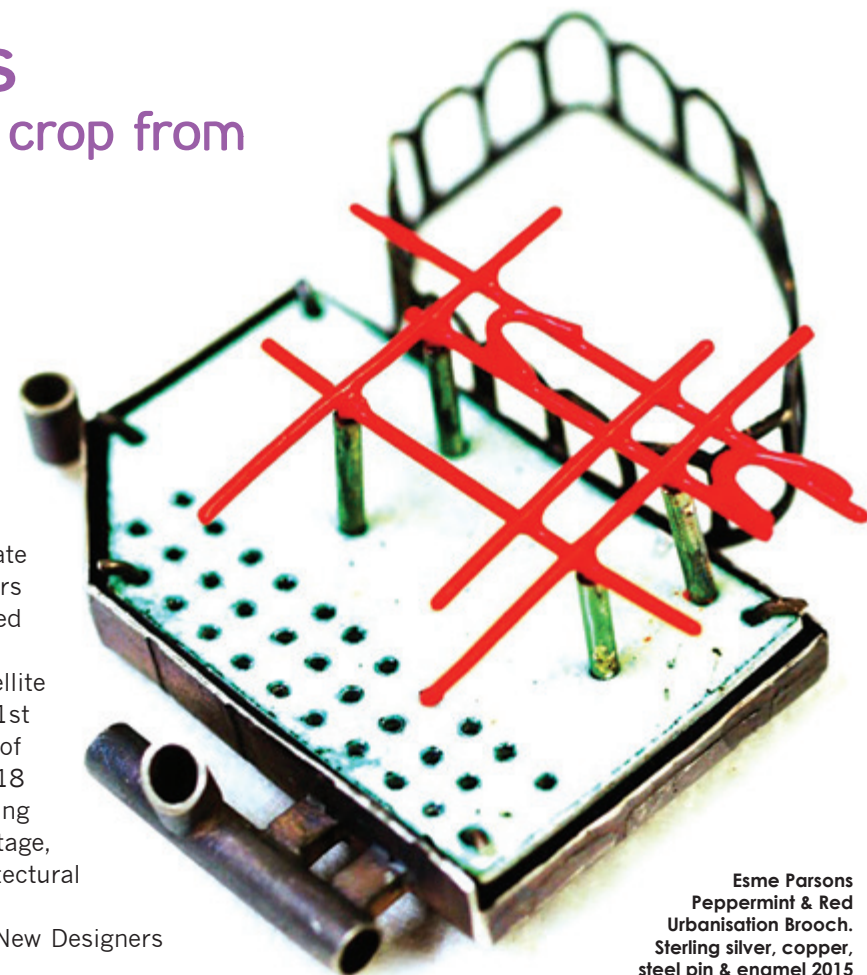
She uses textiles to narrate and positively

connect with people and the world around her. Often the focus is on the natural environment and creating a healthy and sensitive respect for it. Her Found in the Forest collection showcased at *New Designers* featured digitally printed silk with layered photographs of tree silhouettes against the sky. They are very theatrical adornments of collars and cuffs.

Morna Darling's work is inspired by fabrics and clothing. She particularly enjoys the challenge of creating repetition of pattern usually found in cloth. I was taken by the vibrant turquoise colours achieved by pagination of copper in her 'Fragment' and 'Layered' Collections as well as the organic, pod like structures in her 'Wrapped' Collection.

Edinburgh College of Art had a strong cohort again this year. I particularly liked **Maisie Welch's** work, especially the chunky and vibrant rings of concrete and oak encased in resin.

Another triumph for Scotland was **Ieva Mikitaite** from Glasgow School of Art. Inspired by something as simple as dandelions, her work is incredible. A feat of jewellery engineering without losing sight of the aesthetic.



Esme Parsons
Peppermint & Red
Urbanisation Brooch.
Sterling silver, copper,
steel pin & enamel 2015
Photo: Esme Parsons



Flora Bhattachary Taxila Ring in Trillion Cut
Smokey Quartz. Photo: Sylvian Deleu

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Her articulated collection expands and contracts effortlessly and remains delicate and intricate. She took home The Goldsmiths Company Jewellery Award this year.

Remaining north of the border, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design had obviously enjoyed experimenting with some new 3D printing technologies! I was most intrigued and impressed by the industrial style of work by **Lesley Conlan** and its incorporation of mixed materials including 3D printed plastics, resins, rubber and silver. I also enjoyed **Megan Gray**'s pieces.

Whilst on the subject of 3D printing, a high quality, intelligent use of the technology was demonstrated by **Emma Cahill** from The National College of Art, Dublin. I was drawn to the clash of soft shapes and forms with hard and sharp edges. And her bold yet sensitive use of strong colours complimented her designs beautifully. Emma won this year's ACJ Mark Fenn Award having impressed our panel of distinguished judges (Terry Hunt, ACJ Chair; Nicola Bond and Chris Cursley, ACJ Director, Cursley & Bond; and Mark Fenn, ACJ Adviser).

And crossing over another border into Wales, I was mesmerised by the vivacious and eclectic work of **Rachel Codd** from Cardiff Metropolitan University. She joyfully fuses vibrant and feminine porcelain pieces with eccentric found objects.

It wouldn't be Week 1 at New Designers without a strong field from Birmingham School of Jewellery. I always welcome the diversity in graduates' work. There doesn't seem to be a set 'theme' or 'technique' of the cohort rather that students are supported in building their skills in creating their own bespoke style of work. To find their own unique design voice. This year, I was particularly taken by the fine jewellery from **Nicole Wong** – beautiful, fluid and feminine pieces.

As a New Designers One Year On alumni, it's good to see that healthy and heady mix of experimentation and raw expression and also heartening to hear graduates becoming increasingly aware of commercial considerations at this early stage in their jewellery careers.



Mark Fenn Award winner
Emma Cahill, Twisted
Thorn Brooch 2015.
Photo: Emma Cahill



Rachel Codd, Human
Beauty Collection
Necklace, porcelain,
found artefacts, metal 2015.
Photo: Rachel Codd

Birmingham School of Jewellery is 125!

Dauvit Alexander

On 19th September 1890, the *Birmingham Daily Post* reported that “The new branch school which has just been established in Vittoria Street by the Birmingham Municipal School of Art was formally opened by the Mayor (Alderman CLAYTON). Not only will art instruction be given, but a suite of rooms has been fitted up by the Birmingham Jewellers’ and Silversmiths’ Association for the purpose of giving instruction in those trades” and it has been doing that ever since. From the school of art to Birmingham Institute of Art and Design to University of Central England and now to Birmingham City University, the school has weathered many changes while remaining fundamental to the worlds of both traditional and contemporary jewellery both in the UK and around the world.

It is hard to imagine any other school which has such a diverse portfolio of activities: technical training at the HND level; part-time specialist courses; technical, artistic and historical research at BA, MA and beyond; research and development of processes and technologies, working closely with the industry. The School of Jewellery is a unique environment which preserves that original aim of “giving instruction in those trades” of Jewellery and Silver-smithing while always looking forwards to the next stage, idea or development.

Many ACJ members have been connected with the School in different ways: our chair, Terry Hunt, taught there for many years and developed many of the courses still running in the school; Jack Cunningham, our ex-chair was Principal; Zoe Robertson and Jo Pond are course leaders; more recently, Dauvit Alexander, our vice-chair has taken up a post as Course Tutor on the HND programme.

Jeremy Hobbins, Deputy Head of school said of the anniversary,

“Birmingham City University’s School of Jewellery located in the heart of the City’s famous Jewellery Quarter, where much of the jewellery in Britain is still made today, boasts being the largest in Europe and we celebrated the 125th anniversary this year on the 18th September. The year has seen an extensive programme of events marking the significance of the institution and showcasing the way in which the School has evolved not just in size and shape, but also in the range of specialist education and training it offers.

“The dedicated team at the School unite to create an exciting centre for jewellery, horology and gemmology. As the subjects evolve globally so does the student cohort and the qualifications we offer are designed to meet the diverse career opportunities and ambitions of our graduates in the current climate. Uniquely placed in the Quarter with close industry partnerships, the students are able to absorb the traditions of the trade, right



Municipal School for Jewellers and Silversmiths - Jewellery Quarter Birmingham
Photo by and copyright Tagishsimon

through to exploring materials and accessing cutting edge technology in both the design, and manufacturing methods to meet the demands of the marketplace.

“The education and qualifications constantly evolve to stay relevant and our graduates have a proven track record, going on to have successful and varied careers. Many of the ACJ members began their careers within the walls of the School and we delight in hearing about every success story. Long may the School continue, and we look forward to another 125 years!”

Within the School, the anniversary is being celebrated in a number of exciting ways: there is the opening of the brand-new technology hub which features the most cutting-edge digital design and manufacture equipment; Jivan Astfalck is opening “JUNK: Rubbish to Gold” a week-long performance about jewellery-making and recycling being held in the atrium; the School is working with the British Art Medals Association to put on a symposium, “Art Medals – History, Philosophy and Practice” and more events are planned.

Junk: Rubbish into Gold

Laura Bradshaw-Heap

A little over two years ago we found ourselves rummaging through the remains of a pile of old, tangled, broken jewellery. Colleagues, drawn by the twinkling sparkle of paste and plastic and unable to resist the urge to rummage, soon joined us. Memories emerged and were shared as the jewels were untangled, some beads disappeared to be re-strung and re-painted, a backless brooch was made functional again.

Why did this humble pile of rejected jewellery connect with so many? Did this sharing of stories and memories shape and reshape these jewels, or were these stories and memories shaped by this jewellery? And, what would happen if this small pile grew and grew, what stories, and what jewels would then emerge?

JUNK: rubbish to gold is a co-creation and collaboration between Jivan Astfalck, Laura Bradshaw-Heap and Rachel Darbourne and is taking place at the School of Jewellery over November. We have partnered with 10 charities across the UK and Ireland who have given the project the raw material: the jewellery that they cannot sell. This jewellery, piled high in the atrium of the School of Jewellery, is to be transformed into new pieces by visiting jewellers during a live making performance. The week-long performance is also live-streamed, with screens and concurrent installations and workshops at the mac birmingham and the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter. The project culminates in an exhibition, both at the School and online through Crafthaus, and a silent auction with a percentage of the proceeds returned to the partnering charities.

So why are we doing this?

Too often we focus on the finished object, often neglecting the time, skill and craft that goes into the process of making. JUNK: rubbish to gold gives the appearance of an upcycling project – yet we aim to do more than this. By exploring the entangled social relations of a specific commodity JUNK: rubbish to gold questions how meanings and materiality transform as they shift between sites of disposal, production and consumption. We are putting on display the entire process of making; from material gathering to the de-and re-construction. By doing this we question if the process itself can be considered the art.



Exhibition Information:

School of Jewellery, Birmingham City University,
82-86 Vittoria Street, Birmingham B1 3PA

9th-13thNovember live making performance

16th-27thNovember Exhibition

16th-27thYou can bid on the objects in the exhibition
via silent auction

Technical Update: Computer Aided Design (CAD)

Frank Cooper

Computer Aided Design (CAD) software overview with particular emphasis on its use in 3D Printing

Summary

Current 3D printing and Additive Manufacturing (AM) technologies (both of which will be covered in detail in the next edition of *Findings*) have in many ways already begun to outstrip the capabilities of many of the available CAD programmes. CAD/CAM packages were originally created to design products that were to be machined or injection moulded. Jewellery and product designers are now being encouraged to design items that have complicated and geometrically complex shapes and organic structures that best exploit the design freedoms offered by 3D Printing and AM and to forgo some of the old 'design for the manufacturing process' rules. There is considerable opportunity and scope for the CAD software developers to improve and further develop their products to allow designers to better take advantage of these design freedoms. Software specifically developed for 3D Printing and AM technologies is beginning to emerge but it's very slow and it isn't coming from the traditional CAD vendors, but tends to be the development of smaller software 'plug-in' modules. The many different, competing, CAD software packages in use means that the current 3D Printing and AM process can prove to be complex and prone to disconnection. Some software vendors are showing interest in streamlining the process (e.g. Autodesk's partnership with Stratasys to print directly from AutoCAD software and the latest version of Adobe

Photoshop). Open-source software could provide another solution. There are already a small number of open-source tools available, which processes files from a more 'traditional' CAD programme, but this is currently really only being applied by the 'makers' and 'hackers' using printers like the MakerBots and similar low cost printers. Licensees of the more traditional CAD packages probably need to tell the software developers that they want these features and abilities added, as until this happens it will continue to be a slow and frustrating process. The end goal of a situation where the only limit is the designer's imagination remains some way off and getting the software right is a vital step in the process. What follows is a simplistic overview of some of the various software packages currently available to the jewellery designer and maker.

Rhino (Rhinceros)

Many jewellery designers in the UK jewellery industry actively use Rhinoceros 3D CAD software (commonly referred to as Rhino). Rhino is a commercially available NURBS-based (Non-uniform rational basis spline, which is a mathematical model commonly used in computer graphics for generating and representing curves). It was developed by Robert McNeel & Associates, and is commonly used for industrial design, architecture, marine and automotive design as well as jewellery



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design. Plug-ins developed by McNeel include Flamingo (raytrace rendering), Penguin (non-photorealistic rendering), Bongo, and Brazil (advanced rendering). Over 100 third-party plug-ins are also available including Rhino Gold which is very popular in the UK jewellery design community. The great appeal of Rhino software is felt to be its affordability/cost, coupled with relative ease of use, jewellery specific plug-ins and its undoubted multifunctionality.

Matrix

Many in the UK jewellery industry use the Matrix 3D CAD software. Its kernel is actually based on the Rhino software described above, but with the addition of a jewellery designer friendly interface and specialist jewellery specific design tools (such as pave and prong settings). Additionally, it integrates very successfully the T-splines for Rhino programming. T-splines is a patented surface modelling technology that allows designers to add local detail and control only where needed in a single surface. T-Splines surfaces typically have 50-70% less control points than the equivalent NURBS surface, allowing for faster and more controlled direct editing and shape optimisation. Matrix is thought to be less popular amongst new users due to its high purchase and training costs, and its requirement for high end hardware, graphics interfaces and processors.

ArtCam Jewelsmith

Another CAD software popular with jewellery designers is the Delcam ArtCam Jewelsmith 3D CAD software. The ArtCam Jewelsmith software combines ArtCam Jewelsmith and Delcam Designer which is Delcam's surface and solid modelling programme. ArtCam Jewelsmith offers the user multiple specific design tools and the functionality required to design and manufacture jewellery. Its fully configurable machining wizard for milling based applications enables the user to go from design to manufactured part quickly and

easily. Alternatively, it can produce STL files of the jewellery designs that are ideal for the typical prototyping, 3D Printing and AM technologies. A new gem library was recently added and the inclusion of the rendering system, KeyShot, with the software has hugely improved rendering capacity. STL, OBJ, 3DS or 3DM file formats of custom gems can be stored in the library; alternatively, new gems can be created from any 3D model and used to create bespoke jewellery designs. A new module called interactive distortion modeling which allows users to distort either vectors or reliefs within ArtCam Jewelsmith models by bending or stretching the design to see the results in real time has also been introduced. It remains to be seen how the recent acquisition of Delcam by Autodesk will impact on new developments in their jewellery design software.

JewelCAD

The current version is known as JewelCAD Pro and is more powerful and efficient than its long lived predecessor, JewelCAD which was probably the daddy of many of the jewellery specific CAD programmes developed since its introduction. Developed specifically for designing jewellery, JewelCAD's non-engineering approach for easy learning and fast operation was much appreciated by its early adopters. It now has a completely new programming core that allows faster and up-to-date extension of features. JewelCAD Pro maintains the simple user interface popular with jewellers and a similar way of working as in JewelCAD so that current users can operate it without too much difficulty. It now also has an automatic stone setting feature and much improved photo-realistic rendering, CNC and prototyping outputs.

Solidworks

A surprising number of jewellery designers have reported using the expensive, and engineering specific, Solidworks CAD software. SolidWorks runs on Microsoft Windows and was developed by Dassault Systèmes SolidWorks Corp.



SolidWorks is said to be currently used by over 2 million engineering designers at more than 165,000 companies worldwide. Its appearance in this listing may reflect the movement of traditional product and engineering designers into jewellery design. SolidWorks currently markets several versions of the SolidWorks CAD software in addition to eDrawings, a collaboration tool. SolidWorks is a Parasolid-based solid modeller, and utilises a parametric feature-based approach to create models and assemblies. (Parasolid is a geometric modelling kernel that can be licensed by companies for use in their 3D computer graphics software products. Parasolid's capabilities include model creation and editing utilities such as Boolean modelling operators, feature modelling support, advanced surfacing, thickening and hollowing, blending and filleting and sheet modelling.)

3DesignJewel

A smaller number of jewellery designers have expressed a preference for the 3DesignJewel software. The software offers an associative construction tree and a useful parametric (history) interface, an intuitive and quite aesthetic user interface, a library of jewellery specific items, and a very effective rendering and animation studio. It is compatible with both the Mac and Windows environments. A nice feature is its ability to go from 2D to 3D in just a few clicks; it is possible to change a 2D drawing (sketch, picture etc.) and convert it into a 3D object and create a usable STL file. They also offer some very comprehensive YouTube based tutorials and have an impressive Facebook presence. Developed in France, and part of the Type3 stable of products and with tenuous links to the Catia CAD software, this particular software suffers from a relatively low physical profile in the UK, but has a much more active and aggressive online presence.



Other softwares

Whilst the following are not strictly CAD for AM specific they are an eclectic collection of 'fringe' softwares and applications that could well have significant implications to some business scenarios. Autodesk's 123D Catch <http://www.123dapp.com/catch> is starting to attract a lot of attention around the 3D printing world, and has cleverly been made available on iPad and iPhone as well as more traditional PC platforms. This programme allows the creation of 3D models from captured data from a 'loop' of 20 sequential photographs and their jpeg files. Autodesk also offer a 3D print utility that connects to MakerBots and Objet/Stratasys printers. It runs through file quality checks, repairs files and generates supports where needed before sending the build file to the machine. SpaceClaim have also launched a plug-in for its direct modeller which interestingly works in both solid geometry and imported mesh data. Whilst not specifically a 3DCAD design software, HOOPS Communicator by Tech Soft 3D, is also worth reporting on here. It is a plug and play 3DCAD visualisation software for on-line visualisation purposes. Monolithic and acquisitive 3D printer supply company 3D Systems offer their own 'bespoke' software solutions: Cubify Invent, Cubify Sculpt and Cubify Design. Microsoft recently announced they were adding 3D print support to Windows 8.1 and getting onto the 3D printing bandwagon. In their 14.5 Photoshop release, Adobe introduce tools to support 3D printing, particularly when printing in colour. Their goal is to allow those who are already Photoshop users to use existing tools to design, texture and output the geometry for 3D printing. There are lots of tools for creating the model file from scratch, or import the geometry using a number of file formats including STL and OBJ, and then add texture and colour. There will be built in pre-processing tools including material efficient support generation.



Frank Cooper is a life-long jewellery industry professional and is now a Senior Lecturer in Jewellery Manufacturing Technologies, and Technical Manager of the Jewellery Industry Innovation Centre, at the Birmingham School of Jewellery. He sits on the Goldsmiths' Craft and Design Council and is a globally recognised expert in the application of various Additive Manufacturing and prototyping/3D printing technologies used in the jewellery industry. He is an active participant in a number of Jewellery Industry related research initiatives and has written and presented many technical papers and articles published and presented in the UK and Europe, as well as at the Santa Fe Symposium in America. His papers and presentations currently specialise in the areas of Additive Manufacturing, CAD and prototyping for the Jewellery and Silversmithing Industries. frank.cooper@bcu.ac.uk

Work Experience

Charlotte Verity and Raine Zhang

Charlotte Verity

Sometime last winter, Raine Zhang sent me a very polite email, enquiring about the possibility of a few days work experience. She was a second year student on the Jewellery Design course in Birmingham and I was impressed by many of the images of her jewellery that she sent me, which featured a variety of materials; silver, brass, resin, titanium, paint, copper and vitreous enamels.

I had the idea to write this report, and I asked Raine to write about the same experience from her own point of view, to give other crafts people an insight into what might be involved. I agreed to Raine's request without hesitation, but I know a few other makers have some misgivings; one reason may be that many makers have developed distinct techniques and they are worried that these might be copied. While this was a consideration, I hoped that an individual motivated enough to request work experience for 10 days in another city would be dedicated to their own practice; aspiring to engineer their own particular techniques, rather than be satisfied in copying those of another.

My own apprehension was because I was booked to exhibit at the British Craft Trade Fair the day after Raine's period of work experience with me! I had arranged these dates with her months previously and I fully intended to have all my BCTF preparation completed before she arrived, but I did not manage it; I had to prepare all my BCTF work on top of my day-to-day studio and shop jobs, while endeavouring to give Raine a fulfilling work experience!

As it turned out, Raine was a dream to work with; I had an extra pair of extremely capable hands at my disposal. After receiving instructions only once, Raine was able to carry out any tasks without further input from me. She asked intelligent, insightful questions, and the work she produced was extremely neat. I was impressed that when I posed questions to her, she answered me with a decision, rather than debate, procrastination or indifference (as I am prone to). My own productivity increased, as she was so attentive and dedicated I felt guilty when I was looking at my phone or allowing other distractions to interrupt! We finished the BCTF preparation with days to spare, and it gave us the time to experiment with some different glass techniques. I ordered some transparent tube, rubber hose and bungs to practice the skills I learned while on a Neon Glass making workshop a few years previously; a technique outside of my normal work, but one which I had been hoping to return to for a while, and I thought Raine might find it inspiring.

Overall I found the experience to be productive and I would welcome Raine back at any time! I hope she found it to be worthwhile, and I hope others would consider offering a placement to an eager student.

Raine Zhang

I am currently studying BA (Hons) Jewellery Design and Related Products at the School of Jewellery at Birmingham City University and as part of my course I was asked to find a person or place to offer me an opportunity for professional experience. I did a

vast amount of research about jewellers, designers and various art galleries and jewellery companies, and sent several emails to places who supply internships.

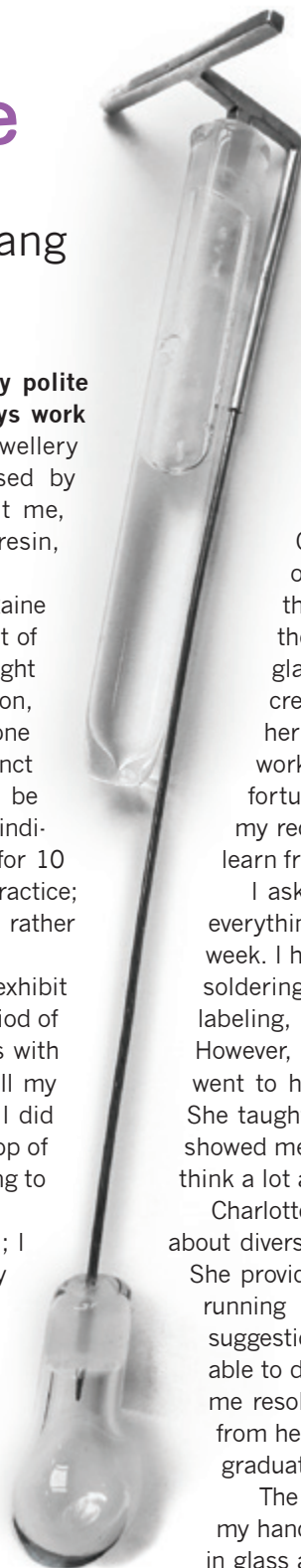
While searching for jewellers, I came across Charlotte Verity, who shares two studios with other designers in Manchester: Studio One in the Manchester Craft and Design Centre, and the Sevenoak Studio. I was attracted to her glass bubbles collection, as it showed a highly creative approach and was very colourful. I love her design style and hoped to learn some lamp-working skills from her. I sent her an email and fortunately, Charlotte answered and consented to my request, asking me to consider what I want to learn from her before I start my experience working.

I asked to shadow her, so I could get a taste of everything her self-employment involves in a regular week. I helped Charlotte with some basic silver work, soldering and polishing, and assisted in shopkeeping: labeling, display and general shop maintenance. However, the most valuable experience was when I went to her home studio to learn some glass skills. She taught me different ways to 'play' with glass and showed me how to make her own work. That makes me think a lot about my new project at University.

Charlotte was a great tutor and friend to me. We talked about diverse topics during rest time and lunch breaks. She provided me with an insight into her thoughts on running her own business and she gave me many suggestions for my future career as well. I was also able to do some research at her shop and she helped me resolve some problems. I not only learned skills from her, but also thought about my orientation after graduating.

The experience definitely helped me to develop my handmaking skills. I have always been interested in glass as a material to use in jewellery, but learning specific glass skills has truly ignited my passion! It enabled me to use this material in my recent Personal Development project at University where I used glass tube to make a minimalist bubble and branch pin. I think it would also be interesting to have some work experience in a big jewellery manufacturing company, to compare their business with working in a personal studio or workshop.

Work experience is a good way for students to learn what it really means to work as part of the industry. For the student, it is helpful to find a person who uses the skills we wish to know and study. At the same time, both of us could learn from a new experience, be creative and become friends!



SLEIGHT *of* HAND

ACJ
exhibition
2015

Clever fingers, magic, deception, smoke
& mirrors, craftiness, sheer skill....



Work by (left to right): Masako Hamaguchi, Kirsty Pearson and Dauvit Alexander

This year's exhibition from the Association for Contemporary Jewellery is all about the magic: magic of making, illusions, pulling ideas out of hats and thin air. Once again, the variety of interpretation, techniques and materials has produced a vibrant show.

Following a successful opening at the Brewhouse, Burton upon Trent, in September, the exhibition toured to the Scottish Gallery in Edinburgh for October, where several of the pieces sold to keen visitors.

The next venue is Plymouth College of Art Gallery, open from 16th November to 12th December.

Events: Wednesday 18th November 5.00 – 7.00pm, Opening Reception

Wednesday 25th November, 5.30-6.30pm, Artist Talk with Dauvit Alexander in the Studio Theatre

Wednesday 2nd December, 5.30-6.30pm, Artist Talk with Viktoria Münzker, an ACJ member from Austria

PLYMOUTH COLLEGE OF ART GALLERY, TAVISTOCK PLACE, PLYMOUTH, PL4 8AT
www.plymouthart.ac.uk/gallery

The catalogue is available now, priced £5,
full details at www.acj.org.uk



A Year of Development

Edinburgh College of Art and Todi, Italy

Karen Donovan

ABSTRACT: I have come to appreciate the importance of Scottish heather as a significant fixture in the landscape of Scotland. Heather is, like titanium, light-weight, strong, durable, and springy. Colour and pattern are integral to my work and are developed through close study of plants and created by the attributes of titanium. As my work continues to develop, I have incorporated more gold, which historically held its own role in the ever-changing Scottish landscape. I find the disparity between gold and titanium to be fascinating and continue to work on this relationship.

I have spent the last year doing a residency at Edinburgh College of Art. I did my MFA at ECA and it was good to stick around for another year developing new work and a distilled version of my degree work. Over the year I have been creating for exhibitions, developing new collections and most importantly working with students.

I decided to do the residency because I was not ready to lose the equipment and environment that were so important to me as a student there. I also wanted to get into teaching and the residency was a great way to do that. I spent my one day a week with the first or second year students sometimes teaching them hand-skills and sometimes discussing their design ideas with them. In January I started to focus on creating the outline for a workshop, particularly dealing with how to colour titanium which has been my research focus since my final year in my undergraduate degree at Skidmore College. I was able to deliver this workshop in May and was happy to see how many students really were interested in working with titanium.

In order to fully prepare for teaching about it, although I know in practice quite a bit about titanium, I thought I should put together something a bit more thorough. I made a trip to the Goldsmiths' Hall library in London to see what resources they had about the history of titanium jewellery.



Karen Elizabeth Donovan
at work at ECA



Karen Elizabeth Donovan,
Heather Brooches, 2015.
Shannon Tofts Photography -
created at ECA during residency

Todi from San Fortuna
Campanile



It was a wonderful trip – the librarians at Goldsmiths' Hall are really helpful and knowledgeable. I spent the day going through old photographs and articles, some from *Findings* itself on the history of titanium in art-jewellery and enjoyed reading about the scandal of introducing mixed metal hall-marking.

While at ECA I applied for and was awarded a grant from Creative Scotland for research and professional development. This grant allowed me to travel to Italy back in July to study alloying with Giovanni Corvaja. My period of research is not quite over though; I am looking forward in the next couple of months to a trip up to Iona in Scotland to spend some time researching and experiencing the Scottish landscape in order to build up my sketchbook resources and also spending some time with Karen Wallace in her studio in Edinburgh to learn hand engraving techniques. As my current work is mostly made of titanium which is a relatively modern material, I wanted to bring more traditional techniques into it to more fully connect with the historical jewellery forms I am so fascinated by.

This summer I travelled to Italy during the hottest week of the year in Todi, Italy. Todi is between Florence and Rome, its nearest big city is Perugia. The towns in the Umbrian region are all on the top of hills, so when you get to the city limits there are always stunning views across valleys. The weekend I spent in Perugia was the big jazz festival's final weekend and the city was crowded with jazz musicians, dancers and enthusiasts. It was very alive.

Todi is quiet in comparison to Perugia. A town full of beautiful old churches and history. Everyone in Todi seemed to know Giovanni.

There were four of us studying with Giovanni that week. We all had very different ideas of what we wanted to learn from him which made it an excellent environment. A girl from Brasilia, a German living in America, an Italian girl living in

London and me. Five days go by very quickly.

Our first day we really just talked. It was very fluid – though Giovanni was not lecturing, he was definitely imparting knowledge. On our second day we did a lot of maths and a lot of melting of our properly measured alloys. The third day was all about drawing down wire. It was really the fourth day that we split into our four directions. I definitely felt over the five days that I had learned secrets that will change the way I work with metal forever.

The reason I went to work with Giovanni was to learn how to alloy. When working with titanium I have a nearly endless choice of colours to use and can create a range or a change in colour through the piece. I wanted to use more gold in my work, but keep the colour changes. With Giovanni I was able to create a range of colours in gold with different ratios of metals. Each of these alloys have very different properties and uses. I am still working through this research, but I was able to create this chain pictured, which is based on previous designs in titanium but made entirely in 18 ct gold. I am hoping in time that my designs will develop relating the two colour ranges, using gold and titanium together. While the colours in gold are subtler than those in titanium they do seem to work well together.

While I am no longer at ECA I am hoping that the year I spent there has taught me how to balance creating for selling and personal research. I am looking forward to continuing my research into historical techniques and balancing them with the much more modern use of the material titanium. And in the meantime encouraging students to explore how they can use titanium in their work.



Karen Elizabeth Donovan Gold Ring 2015
Photography by Karen Donovan Made while
working with Giovanni Corvaja in Italy

It's never too late

Peter Sloan

As the saying goes, it's never too late to have a happy childhood, and with that sentiment in mind, as an artist in his late 50s, I sold my house in Canada, put everything I didn't purge into storage and moved to Edinburgh to start a MFA in Jewellery and Silversmithing. Spending two years out of my life in Edinburgh studying at the renowned J&S program at ECA was my goal. Who would ever regret doing that? After my first wonderful year here, not me! Edinburgh is Gothic and enchanting. I can see how J K Rowling got her inspiration and keep expecting Harry to leap out from a gnarly cobbled alley waving his wand around casting magic spells.

After the wearisome travel, which included a scolding from the cross customs official about not having my letter of admission on me (it was in my suitcase), and all the necessary steps to get settled, like the catch 22 that you can't get a bank account until you have an address, but can't get a place without a bank account, and other various challenges adjusting to this wonderful old city and its vibrant culture, I was ready to start and 'get with the programme'. I have to admit, it was very challenging to readjust my thinking and way of doing things. Focusing on practice-led research, I struggled to arrive at something new and floundered somewhat in the first term. However, with perseverance and help from my tutors, pushing through the inherent self-doubt, depression, anger, the agony of being torn down and rebuilt, and realising they weren't there to hold my hand, but to push me off a cliff, finally, with great relief and satisfaction, I felt I had emerged to rise out of the ashes.

Winning the BAM student award was a boost to my somewhat withered self-esteem. One of the good things about ECA is the variety of workshops available and I took a Photoshop tiling tutorial led by a textile department tutor late in the term.



Lobaria Pulmonaria lichen and images derived from the original photos during Photoshop experimentation.



The resulting jewellery experiments that came from using the printed lichen images.

I started working with photos of Lobaria Pulmonaria lichen I had taken on Haida Gwaii the summer before. I wanted to elaborate and transform, to utilise these beautiful ornate organic forms contained within these primitive plants in a way that represented their primal aesthetic. In a series of sequential transitions, mirroring and kaleidoscoping some of these images, I was able to modify and use them to make 3D printed forms from which silver casts were made.

This process led to enquiries surrounding semiotics and the Pareidolia effect, which is a psychological phenomenon where people see familiar things when they encounter unfamiliar patterns, similar to the way Rorschach ink blots work. Just in time for the Christmas break I finally had something to sink my teeth into, and over the holiday produced a significant multitude of images that generated evocative subjective meanings. A desire to see Velazquez's, Las Meninas at the Prado was my excuse to Easyjet down to Madrid for the break where I had the most amazing time playing harmonica with my Airbnb host and her hip hop band and circle of friends.

Rejuvenated, back in Edinburgh I focused on the research I had started and created an experimental body of work comprised of printed images on cloth and silver pieces with patterns garnered from the Lobaria images. This included objects such as ocarinas, shakers and pendants. Combining a silver piece with silk printed cloth as the neckpiece was an investigative approach to new possibilities of wearable art. Attending an inspiring seminar about botanical-based ornamentation by a visiting professor from the University of Columbia cemented my resolve to continue this line of enquiry. The talk focused on the Arts and Craft's movement and artists from that time including Christopher Dresser and his contemporaries. Other ways I will be using this imagery and forms are woodblock printing onto cloth and merging this with silver, bronze or even gold with set stones. It can be hard to see the trees for the forest when immersed in a program such as a MFA, but with the summer to reflect on the experience, I recommend a challenge like this – to be pushed out of your comfort zone and be revitalised to continue growing within the supportive embrace of the studio, the tutors and classmates, and of course, the wonderful city of Edinburgh.



The images were used on both jewellery and fabric.



ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION

Emiko Oye



Hello Emiko, who are you?

I am an artist, designer, business owner and wellness advocate living in San Francisco

What do you do?

Under my business, emiko o, I make art jewelry using LEGO®, both ready-to-wear and one-of-a-kind conceptual and statement pieces. I also teach Forrest and Hatha yoga.

Why do you do what you do, what drives you?

Creating artwork is a priority for me to feel alive – I get so swept up into my creative process that 10 hours can easily go by and I've been sitting at the bench as if it were only a few. Making is programmed into my being, and the process of taking inspiration to transformation of materials revs me up from the inside out. I can't imagine doing anything else. It's what drives me to work into the wee hours of the night. I gave up caffeine years ago because the adrenaline of making is enough.

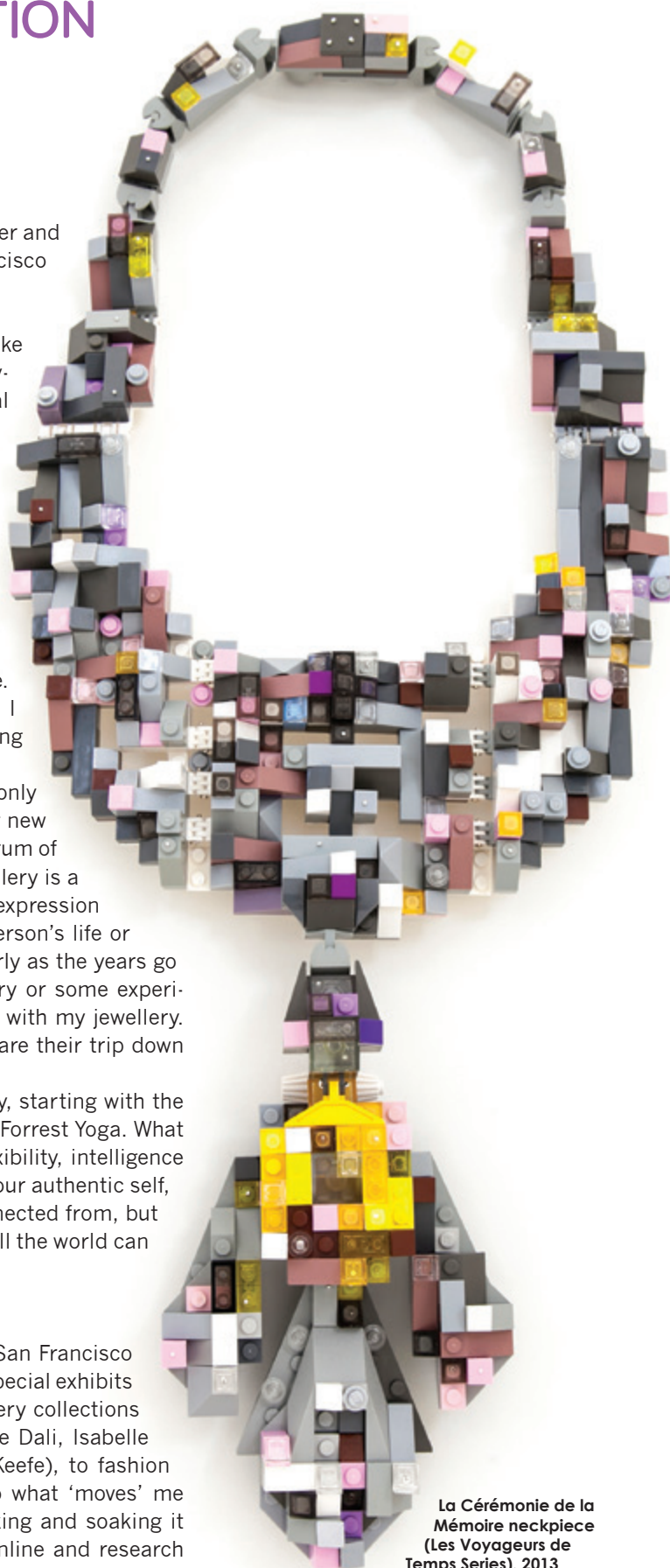
What I love about working with LEGO® is that you're only limited by your imagination, and I'm constantly discovering new parts and ways to incorporate them into my work. The spectrum of colours is incredible, and it is recognisable worldwide. Jewellery is a very personal item for most people; not only a mode of self-expression and fashion, but often a vehicle for telling the story of a person's life or family. Nostalgic value can far exceed retail value, particularly as the years go by. And this is true with LEGO® - everyone has a fond story or some experience with this material, which I see in their first encounter with my jewellery. Being privy to the surprise, smiles and the eagerness to share their trip down memory lane with me is such a reward.

I'm equally passionate about maintaining a healthy body, starting with the gut biome and then moving blockages out the body through Forrest Yoga. What I love about this healing style of Hatha is that it builds flexibility, intelligence and strength while helping to deepen the relationship with your authentic self, something that many of us in the modern world are disconnected from, but once you can connect to your gut and your inner wiser self, all the world can be yours for the taking!

What are your influences and inspirations?

It's most often when I leave the house, especially living in San Francisco where there is so much stimuli. Lately I've been inspired by special exhibits I've seen at art museums or galleries – from historic jewellery collections (Cartier, Boucheron), sculpture (Louise Nevelson, Salvadore Dali, Isabelle de Borchgrave), fine art (Richard Diebenkorn, Georgia O'Keefe), to fashion (Vivienne Westwood, Jean Paul Gaultier). I stay attuned to what 'moves' me and then spend more time with it, taking photos, just looking and soaking it in, usually end up buying the exhibition catalogue or go online and research further.

For my ready-to-wear line, runway and editorial fashion is a big influence, mostly for colour palettes, as is window shopping downtown to get a sense of what's current. I rip out images from fashion mags and post them up on my studio wall,



La Cérémonie de la
Mémoire necklace
(Les Voyageurs de
Temps Series), 2013

Emiko Oye Photo: Brian Bergeron

sometimes the images are up for months before anything materialises. Often my custom clients inspire me with their requests for particular colour combinations, and I'll run with it and end up creating a line based on that palette.

Where do you do it?

In my home studio in San Francisco

What are your most used techniques and materials?

cold connections (drilling, riveting)
LEGO® and found materials

What's your favourite tool?

my flexshaft (so much drilling!) & Scotch tape

Who are your jewellery heroes?

The strong women in our field who have put themselves out there to find innovative ways to connect community and provide inspiration, education or support for the betterment of artists and the field as a whole. And those artists who are constantly evolving in their work and in their voice, and are genuinely kind souls. To name a few: Kiff Slemmons, Brigitte Martin (crafthaus), Namita Gupta Wiggers (curator and former director of the Museum of Contemporary Craft, Oregon), Harriete Estel Berman (Professional Guidelines).

Any notable collaborations?

Artistically, not yet! However, I am proud about having organised, facilitated, and emceed a couple of professional craft symposiums ('Forging Communities' Symposium for the San Francisco Metal Arts Guild 60th Anniversary, and 'Forging Entrepreneurs' for SNAG) that brought inspiring artists, gallerists, and creatives to the stage to share their knowledge and insights with the metals community.

Have you had another jewellery experience (such as a residency) you can tell Findings about?

This year I am honoured to be the chosen artist for the Art Jewelry Forum's annual membership pin, meaning that anyone who joins AJF (and it is an international organisation) receives my interactive, exclusive emiko o LEGO pin. I had to amp up my production methods in order to create the 500 pins commissioned for this project. The honorarium I received from the commission gave me the means to have an assistant in the studio 2-3 days a week. Best decision for my business – now I can't imagine not having help.

www.artjewelryforum.org/node/5070



emiko o reware
bracelets made
from LEGO®,
sterling silver
Photo credit:
Brian Bergeron

What would you share with those just starting out in their artistic jewellery practice?

Have fun and allow yourself to play and experiment, not counting on selling your work to live on for the first 3-5 years. It can take that long to find your voice and what you feel connected to and passionate about. Less pressure allows for more authentic creativity, and it's only until you can truly stand behind what you do and wake up in the morning excited about it will the success train pick you up for the ride of your life!

Learn how to take professional and striking photos of your work. It's how curators, buyers and clients will find you and how they will form first impressions of you.

Be mindful of how you present yourself, your art, your brand online and in social media.

If you're an overachiever and workaholic, make sure to nourish yourself – sleep enough, eat healthy, connect with your community. There will always be a mountain of tasks and projects no matter how much you accomplish in a day, so build in breaks and trips to rejuvenate and inspire.

Do you have any claims to fame (it doesn't matter how tenuous!)?

People call me The LEGO® Lady!

Past President of the San Francisco Metal Arts Guild (and the first to bring a Symposium to the Guild in its 60-year history)

What would be your jewellery superpower?

What I love it that my jewellery does more often than not bring smiles to people's faces and a sense of joy when they experience my jewellery. It's the shared love of LEGO®!

What is your proudest jewellery achievement so far?

Having one of my large conceptual neckpieces in the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Where can we see your work?

- emikooreware.com
- on facebook, instagram, pinterest @emikooreware
- in person: emikooreware.com/locations-near-you/
- Through Nov 15, 2015: Body as Agent Exhibition at the Richmond Art Center in Richmond, CA
- December 2015: R/R Gallery, NYC, NY
- August – wDecember 2016: An Exuberance of Color exhibition at Tansey Fine Art, Santa Fe, NM

ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION

Jenny Saker



What do you do?

I design and make Jewellery.

Why do you do what you do, what drives you?

I had always thought I would follow my father and become an engineer but I studied sculpture at art school. As my studies progressed all the sculptures I made ended up being tiny and I was intrigued by the interaction between what I was making and the human body. In the end I applied to study Jewellery design at University. And from there I found my niche!

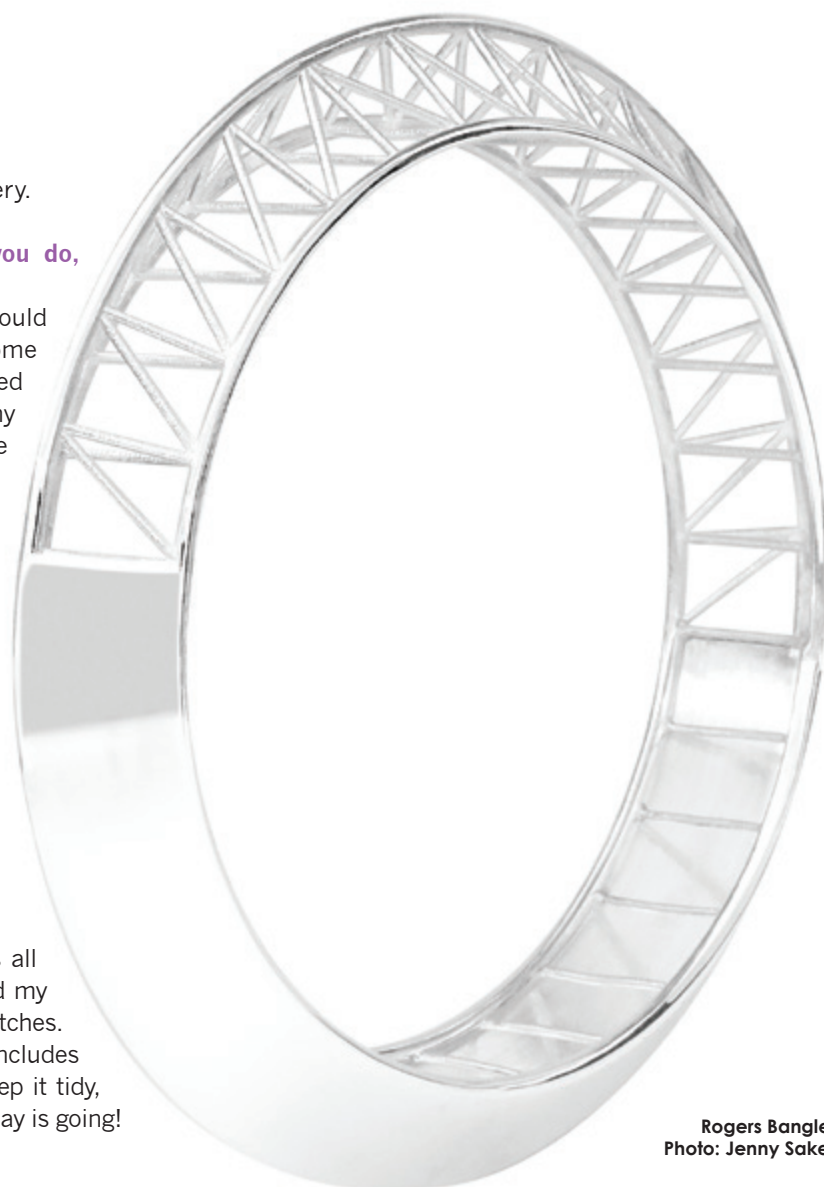
What are your influences and inspirations?

The ways in which people interact with the designed spaces they encounter day to day have always fascinated me. By scaling architectural forms to human proportions I balance striking, dominant lines with visual lightness and subtlety.

Where do you do it?

My studio in Surrey.

My studio is pretty small and compact. It has all that I need though, all my tools and materials and my inspiration wall where I keep key images and sketches. My short-term plan is also on one wall which includes everything I need to achieve this week. I try to keep it tidy, but I have to admit it very much depends how the day is going!



Rogers Bangle.
Photo: Jenny Saker

Chipperfield Ring.
Photo:
Jenny Saker



What are your most used techniques and materials?

I first saw rapid prototyping more than 10 years ago when I visited an engineering trade show with my father. The show was all very serious engineering. It focused mostly on large-scale machinery and techniques designed to work with steel and other materials on an industrial scale. I got very excited by all of the machinery and baffled a lot of the salesmen by asking them about the smallest, most delicate objects their tools could create. I wasn't at all impressed by how fast they could operate or how many axes they had.

With 3D printing I felt like I had finally started to understand how I could bring some of my most intricate designs to life. For many of my pieces it would be almost impossible to make them in any other way.

I only work with precious metals: Sterling Silver and 18ct Gold and platinum.

The weight of a piece is an important part of my designs. The piece has to be heavy enough to match its scale and visual boldness, but it's also really important that my jewellery is comfortable to wear.

Lasdun Rings.
Photo: Jenny Saker



What's your favourite tool?

My Vernier Callipers – A gift from my Father.

Who are your jewellery heroes?

I admire Suzanne Belperron's work. In the 1930s she was quite a pioneer and I love her use of clean simple forms and bold colour.

Solange Azagury-Partridge has a brilliant approach to design and is creative throughout every aspect of her brand. There is a playfulness and intrigue which makes you want to know more about the story behind the jewels.

What would you share with those just starting out in their artistic jewellery practice?

Persevere.

Be kind to everyone you work with – they will undoubtedly turn up in unexpected places in your future.

Everything that you experience and learn in life makes you who you are and will be useful.

Do you have any claims to fame (it doesn't matter how tenuous!)?

This Year's Professional Jewellers Hot 100 NexGem;
Goldsmiths Fair 'Poster Girl!' (necklace on front cover of Catalogue).

What would be your jewellery superpower?

..... eliminating SOR! If not that then making rings scale just before someone tries them on – no need to have to say 'we can make it in your size' – it would already scale up or down for that person then and there.

Where can we see your work?

www.jennifersaker.com



Foster Necklace.
Photo: Jenny Saker

Judging the Taiwan International Metal Crafts Competition of the Gold Museum, New Taipei City, Taiwan

Kelvin J Birk

I was very pleased to be invited to visit Taiwan as one of the international judges for the International Metal Competition of the Gold Museum in May earlier this year.

It was especially exciting for me as I have never been to the Far East: I even started to learn Mandarin in order to be able to say basic phrases such as “thank you”, “sorry” and “please”. I even managed to count to twenty in Mandarin!

We arrived in the late evening in Taipei and the judging of the competition started straight away the next morning without giving us a chance to get over the jet lag or to acclimatize to 35°C and 90% humidity.

Metalsmith Marian Hosking from Australia was the other international judge; there were six more judges from Taiwan, all of whom are contemporary jewellers and metalworkers.

The first part was the judging of the jewellery submitted to the competition. The large number of pieces and the wide selection of styles made it an interesting and challenging task. The style of some of the pieces was familiar to me but several pieces had a distinct “Asian” style, which made the whole judging process all the more interesting. The same applied to the metal objects, which were judged in the afternoon. Here, the variety of styles was even wider than with the objects and metal pieces, and therefore harder to judge. The judges were free to judge by whatever criteria they wanted to choose, be it innovation, creativity or making skills. Having such a wide range of judging criteria made for some interesting discussions.

With some of the pieces you could immediately see the quality with which they were made. Other pieces stood out because of the creativity and innovation behind them. Often there was little to compare them by. Because of this, I needed to be extra-careful and fair when I was judging them. Some of the pieces won me over instantly and I was impressed as soon as I saw them. There was also a good and wide use of materials and techniques in all the pieces.



Gold Prize Winner, Visual Cues, Chen Ting-Chun.
Photo: Gold Museum, Taipei"

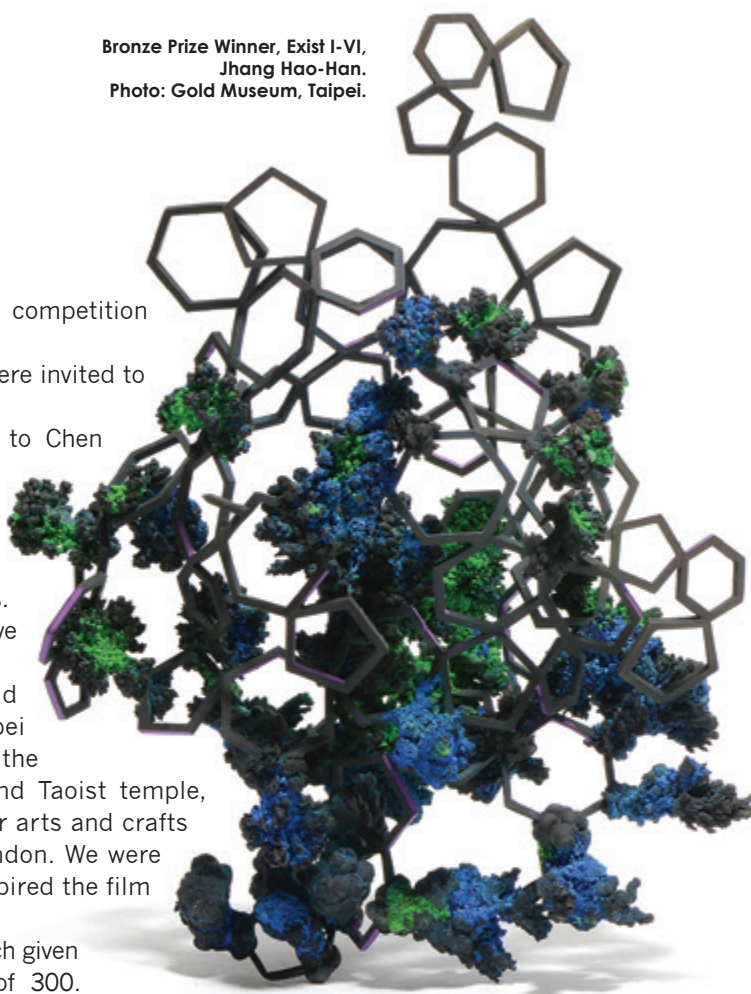


The most difficult part was the assessment of the pieces in the middle. It was easy to choose my favourites and dismiss the ones I didn't like, but choosing which items would (or would not) get a point was difficult. I would put my ratings evenly on innovation and creativity, and also on the making skills. Overall the standard of the competition was very high and a presentation of the very competitive nature of the event.

The judges did not always agree but, at the end, the finalists – all of whom show the high quality of the work that was submitted – were selected in a fair manner.

This was the first time that the Gold Museum had expanded the metal crafts art competition to an international level

Bronze Prize Winner, Exist I-VI,
Jhang Hao-Han.
Photo: Gold Museum, Taipei.



and it was the first international metal crafts art competition held in Taiwan.

The winners were informed straight away and were invited to Taiwan for the prize giving in June.

The first prize in the jewellery category went to Chen Ting-Chun from Taiwan with her fold-formed enamelled copper series 'Visual Cures'. The first prize in the object category went to Hiawatha Seiffert from Germany with his 'BC28-14-V2A', a metal bowl made from stainless-steel bicycle chains. Both truly deserved their prizes for their innovative and unusual pieces.

The day after the judging the team at the Gold Museum gave us some fantastic tours of Taipei and the surrounding area, with a proper visit to the Gold Museum, a visit to an ancient Buddhist and Taoist temple, and 435Art Studios in Taipei, a studio complex for arts and crafts people not very different from Cockpit Arts in London. We were also taken to the scenic town of Jui Fen, which inspired the film *Spirited Away*.

Another day was reserved for a seminar and speech given by Marian Hosking and I in front of an audience of 300. Marian's lecture was *Connections: 1970 to 2015: an Introduction to International Art Jewellery*. I followed her with my talk about *Value and Process of Working with Precious Materials*. The visitors were very engaged and enthusiastic, which might have had something to do with the diamond and the amethyst I gave away to two lucky winners at the beginning of my talk, though only the visitor who won the amethysts was allowed to keep them. The diamond had another fate (but that's a different story). Afterwards, there was a big queue of people who wanted to have their photo taken with us. (Well, Taiwanese people, especially young ones, take photos of nearly everything they see, so we weren't that special.)

We then spent some more days in Taiwan exploring the island and Taipei. We visited the newly rehoused MANO gallery for contemporary jewellery, which is run by Yu-Chun Chen and Mini Hsieh, as well as the 'Bomb Metal & Fry Jewelry' Gallery run by Peggy Hung and Ting-Ting Tsao. Both galleries show Taiwanese and international jewellers and makers.

The main thing that struck me most about my visit is how friendly everybody in Taiwan was. Their hospitality was just amazing and I definitely would be happy to go back there.

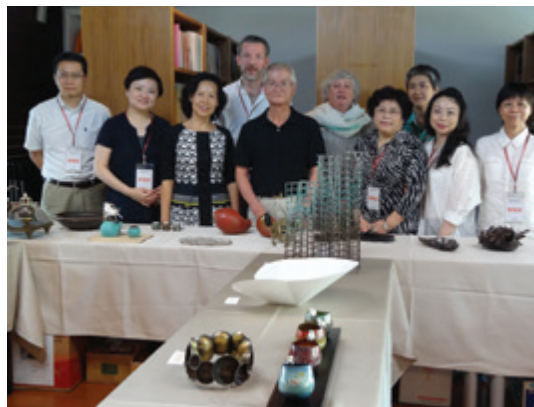
All the winning and short listed pieces as well as a piece from each judge will be exhibited at the Goldmuseum of New Taipei City, Taiwan and will then move on to Creative Tainan in Tainan, Taiwan from the 2.Oct - 15.Nov. 2015 and then to the National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, USA from the 13.Dec 2015 – 13.March 2016.

Don't forget to enter the next competition by the Goldmuseum in 2017.

Some websites:

[www.gep.ntpc.gov.tw/
National_Metal_Crafts/
2015Gold_hm/en_about.html](http://www.gep.ntpc.gov.tw/National_Metal_Crafts/2015Gold_hm/en_about.html)
www.manomanman.com
www.bmfj.com/htdocs/index.php
www.metalmuseum.org

Judging the Taiwan International
Metal Crafts Competition



Obituary: Alan Firth, 1934-2015

I feel sure that readers of Findings will be sorry to hear of the death of Alan Firth, the collector who featured in the autumn 2014 issue. Alan passed away in March of this year leaving behind the collection of over 500 items that he assembled, together with his wife Pat (1934-2012), over a 40-year period, from 1974. They began by buying pots during a particularly good era for studio ceramics and were quickly attracted to the work of Hans Coper and Lucie Rie, visiting the artists in their studios to learn about pottery and purchase work. Later they moved into collecting a range of other crafts from furniture and textiles to jewellery, silver and glass. It was a collection based on creativity coupled with skill and they had a penchant for supporting makers in the early stages of their career.

The Firths lived in a small bungalow on the outskirts of Leeds where visitors would be surprised to discover them living with this extraordinary collection, displayed all around the house. Jewellery acquisitions began in the late 1980s with a few items by makers such as Caroline Broadhead and Joel Degen. Over the following two decades they turned their attention to buying work from some of the adventurous makers of the era including seminal pieces by Wendy Ramshaw, Peter Chang and Dorothy Hogg. The silver collection contained prized pieces by Hiroshi Suzuki. They were quite bold in their support of cutting edge practice, buying major works in plastic and resin as well as precious metals. A particular favourite in later years was Adam Paxon whose dramatic work had a particular resonance with their growing passion for the experimental.

Their collection was of such high quality that they were regularly asked to loan to important exhibitions such as 'Hans Coper' at the Sainsbury Centre in 1983; the 1994/5 Crafts Council touring exhibition 'What is Jewellery?' and 'Precious statements', a Goldsmiths Hall 2006 exhibition.

The Firths kept extensive records of their collecting activities, not only detailing purchases but making comment about their activities in the field. When Pat died in 2012, Alan continued to build the collection albeit slowly. He enjoyed visiting exhibitions and events where he would usually wear some striking example of contemporary jewellery which inevitably provoked comment and allowed him to open a conversation about the joys to be had from collecting.

It seems fitting given their interest in buying and selling through auction that the collection of over 500 items is to be sold, providing other collectors with an opportunity to own the objects they so lovingly brought together.

The sale, entitled 'Studio Ceramics, Modern and Contemporary Design: The Alan and Pat Firth Collection', was held at Adam Partridge auctioneers in Macclesfield on Friday 16th October 2015. Jason Wood at Adam Partridge reported of the jewellery sold, "Despite much pre-sale interest, the jewellery collectively made slightly less than the lower estimate. Older pieces in precious metals by established makers made reasonable prices but contemporary pieces made of acrylic or resin, that the Firths purchased late in life, sold for prices that reflected a lack of acquired taste for such work."

Alex McErlain



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Donna Collinson



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Brian Eburah

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MIMA Jewellery Symposium

Frances Julie Whitelaw

This event was programmed as part of the ongoing project to promote the recently opened gallery housing Mima's international jewellery collection.

The day started with two thoughtful speakers who very coherently brought us their observations about the state of contemporary jewellery right now and how we arrived here. One was Amanda Game. Her talk, based on her wide experience of both selling and curating, had a particular point of view that is sometimes overlooked by makers and academics. She used several categories to illustrate her points about jewellery beyond the art college and studio.

From the educators background Caroline Broadhead spoke eloquently about the postwar journey from the first Schmuck show in 1959 to the present day exploring the move into the digital- and image-saturated present. She also left us with the tantalising question 'are UK jewellers under-represented internationally?'

Janet Hinchliffe McCutcheon devoted her talk to the origins of the Mima jewellery collection. As an artist in residence at Teesside University and Mima she delivered a focused and concise account of its development from 19th century philanthropy to public collections in the postwar era.

Gemma Draper from Barcelona is working with Janet on the same project but took a more conceptual approach asking questions about the viewer and maker of jewellery in a time of visual abundance, and the value of the personal experience to both.

Maria Hanson's thought-provoking talk took us through her recent research into both the meaning of the objects we make, their role in everyday life, and ritual. One of her other themes is an area of continuing study 'what is in my stuff?'. This drew together work in Africa with recycled materials and those other materials used to make the electronics of daily life.

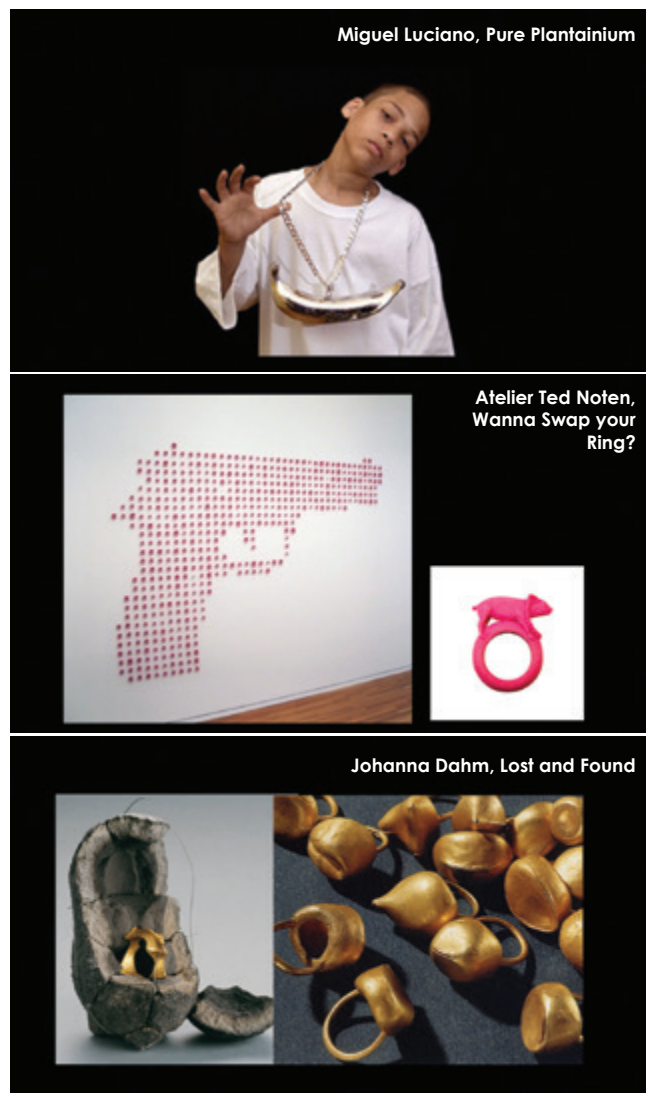
Jivan Astfalck asked if the modern age having brought us access to so many aspects of the world was now in danger of cultural homogeneity. She used literary and philosophical theory to make her point.

Over the rather rushed lunch break there was just time to go from the University to Mima for a quick lunch and quick look at the collection. I think for those who had travelled to Middlesbrough for the day this was the least well-thought through aspect of the symposium. The collection really merits plenty of time to check out all of the displays or time for a second visit.

The after lunch slot is always a difficult one to manage but Dionea Rocha Watt drew together many of the themes discussed earlier, with her the jeweller as social commentator from the 1970s onwards.

Sian Hindle teaches cultural studies at the Jewellery School in Birmingham. Her talk took us through her PhD which looks at the personal experience of wearing jewellery and the emotional attachments we form.

Images taken from Caroline Broadhead's Slides



Mah Rana took the audience in a very different direction with a talk about the necklace in *Vertigo* which appears to hold a malign spirit. For those who aren't Hitchcock fans this talk may have been a difficult topic.

After the tea break we heard from 3 collectives about their fresh approach to making their work publicly accessible. This ranged from flash mob type interventions in public places, taking the work out of the gallery and onto the street, blogging about food and jewellery, and more conventionally a shared gallery project. Although all different, these three projects felt fresh, young and exciting so it was a pity that they came at the end of a rather over full day.

My personal view is that there were too many speakers of varying quality and that the schedule did not allow enough time to catch up with colleagues from all over the country or revisit the collection.

Excerpts from the Presentations of Maria Hanson and Sian Hindle given at the MIMA Jewellery Conference 2015

A CHANGING PRACTICE: THE IMPORTANCE OF MATERIAL AND MAKING IN THIS JOURNEY
 Maria Hanson, MA RCA Reader – Jewellery & Metalwork, Art and Design Research Centre, Sheffield Hallam University



In 1988 Maria Hanson designed and made her first piece of precious metal jewellery. The Platinum and 18ct gold kinetic earrings were award winners and marked the start of a journey based on thinking through materials. This journey has evolved through three decades but continues to place making at the centre of creative activity.

Maria's presentation focused on key changes in this research and practice that have been influenced by a passion for material and making as a methodology for thinking, the intimacy of objects related to the body as a vehicle for commentary and wider social and cultural issues as a driver for conceptual positioning. The value of interdisciplinary work was disused by focusing on recent projects that engage with material sustainability, jewellery as a tool for awareness raising and participatory action research methods to enable social change and female empowerment in less economically developed communities.

One of these projects was 'What's In My Stuff'? How often do you discard something rare and precious without even realising it? It focussed on creating objects that reused components from deconstructed phones. By exploiting the intrinsic material qualities through their transformation and relocation into precious jewels it gave these 'elements' a second life and new value.

Reuse and Revalue - Exchange Brooches made from reclaimed mobile phones, exchanged for discarded mobile phones at a public event in 2012.
 Photo: Maria Hanson.



EMBODYING JEWELLERY: NEW APPROACHES FOR CAPTURING THE WEARER'S EXPERIENCE
 Sian Hindle, Lecturer and Research Co-ordinator at School of Jewellery, Faculty of Arts, Media and Design, Birmingham City University

Jewellery as an art practice that intersects with numerous other disciplines – performance art, dance, bio art, amongst others – has occupied many within the field over the last ten years. There is plenty to be learnt from the ways in which the methods and approaches of these disciplines are appropriated and incorporated into the creative practices of contemporary jewellers. However, the increasing focus on art practice tends to reify the resulting objects themselves, with the effect that they are viewed in galleries and experienced cognitively, rather than being worn.

This illustrated paper takes as its starting point my doctoral research, which seeks to explore the embodied experience of wearing jewellery and to consider how our understanding of who we are is refined with reference to the objects that are

worn next to the body. Past and present identities are explored and the dislocation between them is teased out through a reflective and iterative drawing process; and the jewellery wearer, herself, is involved throughout this process. In this way, creative research methods are being used to develop theory around the nature of embodied identity. By situating this exploration within the complexities of the wearers' everyday lives, the reification of the jewellery object is avoided and the very human business of physically interacting with objects of adornment and, through this, generating meaning is pulled into focus. Furthermore, processes that are core to the creative disciplines – drawing, thinking, trying things on – are here being put into service articulating new knowledge of significance for the broader humanities.

Savage Beauty – Alexander McQueen at the V&A

14th March - 2nd August, 2015

Dauvit Alexander

'Fashion is a big bubble, and sometimes I feel like popping it.' -
Alexander McQueen, 2009

I first became aware of Alexander McQueen's work when I found a video of his 2001 show, 'Voss' online. I'm not quite sure how I had managed to miss his work prior to this ... perhaps, like many people, I had heard of him but had been dismissive of paying attention to a 'mere' fashion designer. Yet it can't quite be that as I have followed Vivienne Westwood's work avidly since the 1980s. Perhaps it was more that outside of the fashion elite, he had not yet become famous, a household name. Whatever the reason, the important thing for me personally was the realisation that here was a great talent, a designer, a historian, a dramatist, a polymath artist of the highest calibre, the like of whom we are unlikely to see again anytime in the near future.

And therein lies the melancholy of the show at the V&A. McQueen was 40 years old when he took his own life, another in the long line of great talents who felt unable to talk about their personal demons while paradoxically airing them for all to see through their work. His death left a massive hole in not just the fashion world but in the world of art. All too few designers can make the leap to 'artist' – we have been very lucky in the UK over the recent decades to have produced more than our fair share: Heatherwick and Westwood to name two examples – and McQueen's monumental talent seemed to encompass every medium he touched.

The show at the V&A is pleasingly unfussy, arranged chronologically/thematically and is larger than the 2011 show at The Metropolitan Museum in New York. The work is allowed to speak for itself and has been given the space it deserves – unlike the Met. showing, which felt cramped. I was privileged as a member of the V&A to be able to visit at 8am in the morning, along with just a handful of other members, which allowed time to appreciate not only the work but the subtle ways in which it had been presented.

On entering the first room, an image of McQueen faces you; a fluid image which morphs between his face and a fleshless skull and which sets the tone of the exhibition as very much a 'retrospective', reminding us that there can be no more while reminding us that McQueen was interested in not only the dark 'Gothic' but also in ideas of transformation and flux. This portrait leads into the earliest of his work, the 'Highland Rape', 'The Birds' and 'The Hunger' shows. It is remarkable to realise that from his very outset, he had the power to influence global fashion:



Moon Headpiece by
Shaun Leane for Alexander
McQueen. Photo by Chris Moore

[continued >](#)

> continued from previous page

these collections feature the 'bumster' trousers which became ubiquitous about ten years later.

McQueen famously worked as a tailor on Savile Row and his talent as a tailor is what shows through in all his work, his ability to structure (and un-structure) fabric – or any other material – to suit not only the body but the message he wanted to convey and one of the sections of the exhibition is dedicated to his early tailoring. Perhaps surprisingly, the show in New York had almost none of his African-inspired works and it is good to see that in London this has been addressed by the addition of a whole room of 'Romantic Primitive' work, a thrilling space constructed of resin-cast bones and with a film projected onto the ceiling.

For most jewellers, the most interesting room in the exhibition will probably be the 'Cabinet of Curiosities', a room showing off McQueen's unique ability to collaborate with other artists, designers and makers and to bring out the very best in their work. Here are the corsets and face-pieces by Shaun Leanne, the hats by Philip Treacy, the leatherwork and embroidery, all presented alongside videos of his shows. It is possible to spend hours in this room alone and to marvel at the technical achievements of the makers involved. It is not so much curiosities which are on show here but craftsmanship.

Included in the show are the hologram of Kate Moss and an approximate reconstruction of the final scene of 'Voss' in the mirrored box and one leaves by way of his last collection, 'Plato's Atlantis', striking again by a completely different form and direction, albeit one in keeping with his general interests and themes and here we get a tantalising glimpse of McQueen embracing new technologies – digital prints, 3D modelling –

Coiled Corset by Shaun Leane
for Alexander McQueen.
Photo by Chris Moore



Egg Nest Feather Headpiece by
Shaun Leane for Alexander
McQueen.
Photo by Chris
Moore



in a way that he had only toyed with previously, leading us to wonder what could have come next.

Overall, the exhibition is overwhelming and it is very hard to keep in mind all the images that are left in the mind: this is a show to see several times; yet there are some startling omissions. As in the New York show, there is no menswear at all present – one could visit the show and believe that he had never designed menswear in his life; secondly there is only the merest hint of McQueen the craftsman, one single pattern and a couple of images. Part of the genius of McQueen was his ability to integrate his ideas with his craft and it would have been of interest to most people – not just makers – to be able to see more of this side of his work. Also missing is any of his work from his transformational time at Givenchy.

The exhibition ends with a poignant quote from McQueen, painted on the walls: 'There is no way back for me now. I'm going to take you on journeys you've never dreamed were possible.'

A Sense of Jewellery Rediscovering British Jewellery Design

15 September- 19th November

The Goldsmiths' Centre, Britton Street, London EC1M 5AD

Sian Evans

Amanda Game and Dorothy Hogg have selected the work of 40 jewellers for this exhibition 'A Sense of Jewellery', at the Goldsmiths' Centre in Clerkenwell, London. It is a very personal selection by the curators and centres on works made in Britain over the past five decades. It seeks to encapsulate the vision that Goldsmiths' hall envisioned in their mandate for the new centre in 2011; Creativity, craftsmanship and community.

Game and Hogg have previously worked together on a range of projects. Both have careers built in arts and education, in Scotland. Game as a curator and Director of the Scottish Gallery. Hogg a designer/maker and a long standing, celebrated part of Scottish higher education in Jewellery and Silversmithing, with many years as head of Jewellery and Silversmithing at Edinburgh College of Art. They have brought to the exhibition their experience and intimate knowledge of the jewellery designer/maker in Britain.

For the visiting jeweller and collector, there are many familiar names amongst the selected 40. A fine selection from the great and the good of the British school, most represented by a single work en vitrine. The works are made not manufactured, the craftsmanship exquisite. The selection traverses different areas of study for the auteur and are familiar tropes; modes of production, materiality, repetition, comment, memory.

The curation hints at relationships between works and people; Caroline Broadhead, Nuala Jamieson (C & N Designs with Caroline Broadhead) and Maisie Broadhead shown together. John Donald



Maisie Broadhead, Diamond Geezer, 2010



and Jo Hayes Ward with visually resonant pieces adjacent, representing different modes of production. Dorothy Hogg explains that "similar ideas made decades apart speak clearly of the time they were made" and goes on to say that "There are examples of pieces where the maker has focused on a very specific technique or a particular type of precious metal"

Charlotte Dew in her piece previewing the show for the Goldsmiths centre says " ...it is not a retrospective of sustained careers, but the identification of keys objects that Dorothy and Amanda believe have shaped the story of British jewellery making" In this statement she sums up well what is represented in the exhibition .The exhibitions has in its title at least, a big idea. Its tag line reads 'Rediscovering British Jewellery Design'. Their selection beautifully represents the auteur, the designer/maker, the craftsman, but misses an opportunity to be broadly encompassing or to open a debate: What is British Jewellery Design?

Goldsmiths Centre Atrium Exhibition
"A Sense of Jewellery" Photo: Ian Scaife

Shelanu: Women's Craft Collective

Emma Daker

Shelanu (a collective of migrant and refugee women supported by Craftspace) are working to create a craft social enterprise, producing high quality jewellery. Pieces are inspired by sense of place, their adopted city of Birmingham and experiences of migration.

Meaning 'belonging to us' in Hebrew, Shelanu works with professional, contemporary makers to develop commercial ranges, respond to commissions, facilitate community workshops and create exhibition pieces.

'It's a place to learn and try new skills, a place that I can feel connected and free to try new ideas It's a positive way to contribute and find your place in a new place.' Kinneret

The aim is for women to learn new skills in a safe environment, building their confidence and self-esteem whilst improving their English and learning transferrable skills. Shelanu creates a network for women who often aren't allowed to work and can be incredibly isolated due to their situation.

'We've learnt a lot of new things. We gathered lots of ideas, met each other for the first time and made new friends. It's brought people together from all over the world.' Mary

Shelanu have created three ranges of work, 'Routes to Trade' was produced with resident artist Kathryn Partington in 2011. Each woman created a collection of work inspired by Birmingham and it's industrial past.

Shelanu then worked with Birmingham jeweller Rita Patel creating a product range designed and made collectively thus enabling new members to be welcomed and trained to work on this range initially. 'Migrating Birds', the resulting work, launched at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum in 2012 and has been selling well since. The group are now developing this theme into new work following sessions with jeweller Miranda Sharpe last year.



Canal pendant by
Kinneret 2011
Photo: Becky Matthews

Large & small brooch (orange) Photo: Craftspace



Caught in the Crossfire collection (gold)
Photo: Craftspace

In 2013 Shelanu was commissioned by The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in Coventry to create a limited edition range of work for their shop to sit alongside the exhibition, 'Caught in the Crossfire'. Shelanu adopted a collective design process and worked in a visual way to make decisions. A quarter of the collection sold in the exhibition's first week:

'Interpreting the exhibition's themes through their considered use of imagery, colour and materials, Shelanu have not only created beautiful jewellery, but a powerful story; one that resonates with our visitors and inspires them to buy.' The Herbert Museum & Art Gallery

This year, in addition to facilitating city-wide workshops for other migrant and refugee women, Shelanu ventured into textiles: designing a new souvenir range for Birmingham. The design of the range was supported by textile artist Ekta Kaul and the Central Buyer for Birmingham Museums Trust acted as a critical friend to the project. The pieces are produced by Textiles by St Anne's, a social enterprise also based in Digbeth, Birmingham.

It is hoped that this range will provide a regular income for the Collective as they aim to become a sustainable craft social enterprise which can assist more migrant and refugee women to gain well-being and aspiration through their creative development.

The intention is for Shelanu to grow, increasing their contribution to the contemporary craft sector and creative economy, alongside developing the cultural capital in their local communities through workshops and membership.

www.craftspace.co.uk/shelanu

www.facebook.com/ShelanuCollective



Shelanu Black enamel
sparrow range 2012
Photo: Craftspace



Fritz Maierhofer – Jewellery and More! Retrospective Exhibition of Jewellery and Objects – Ruthin Craft Centre

18th April 2015 – 5th July 2015
Charlotte Verity

The exhibition travelled to Ruthin Craft Centre from the Museum for Applied Arts (MAK) in Vienna, filling two galleries and presenting items of jewellery, sculpture, tables and wall art from the 1970s up to the present day. The exhibition also displayed framed sketches and jewellery designs around the walls, planned on paper using ink, some coloured, which were particularly interesting to me as a maker.

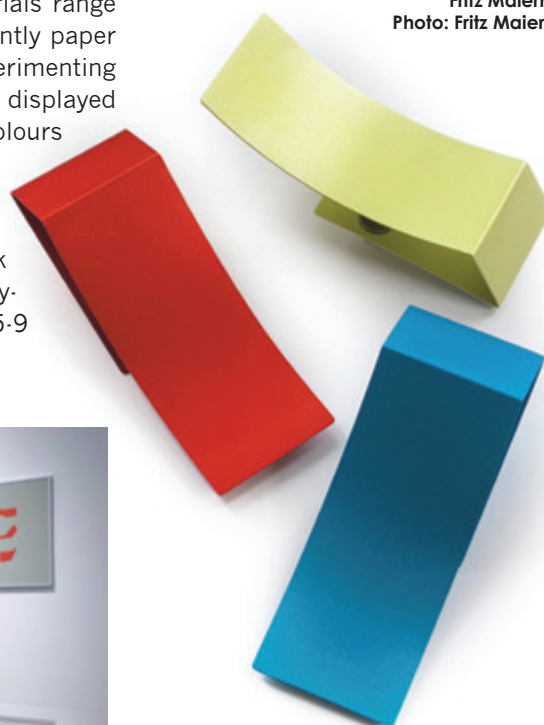
Born in Austria, Maierhofer resided in London for three years from 1967. It was towards the end of this time that his interest in contemporary jewellery began; he states that his influences included the many colours of London, which contrasted with the greyness of Vienna, his home town. My personal favourites were some of his early works from around this time which combined coloured acrylic and precious metals. These were produced as a response to his immersion in England's revolutionary pop culture of the 1960s and 1970s, and I particularly love their use of acrylic to provide vivid colours representing London.

When visiting the Bernard Schobinger exhibition in Manchester Art Gallery recently, I was struck by how many different materials had been employed throughout the collection, and I was similarly impressed here. Materials range from the more traditional through to tin, acrylic, steel and more recently paper and Corian. Though Maierhofer generally moved through periods of experimenting with certain materials consistently for a few years, the exhibits are not displayed chronologically, which emphasises non-precious materials in bright colours juxtaposed with silver, gold and stones.

There is a book available, *Jewellery and More!*, a comprehensive monograph surveying the work of Fritz Maierhofer. It's 224 pages long with colour illustrations and it documents Maierhofer's innovative work from the 1960s to the present. It was written by Gabriela Koschatzky-Elias and Carl Aigner, published by Arnoldsche. ISBN: 978-3-89790-245-9



Fritz Maierhofer, Ring,
acrylic and silver 2011.
Photo: Fritz Maierhofer



Aluminium Brooches,
Fritz Maierhofer.
Photo: Fritz Maierhofer



Fritz Maierhofer -
Jewellery and More!
Photo: Ruthin Craft Centre.

David Poston: Necklace for an Elephant and other Stories. The Working Lives of David Poston

Organised by Ruthin Craft Centre and The Harley Gallery, and touring.
Muriel Wilson

This is a timely and impressive exhibition, as David Poston has not shown work at all widely for some years, and recent pieces are here shown with representative examples of work throughout his career, demonstrating almost a lifetime of exploration and creativity.

David Poston is an artist constantly examining new methods, new materials and new ways of demonstrating his ideas about the function of jewellery and its meaning. Throughout his career he has been an inveterate boundary-pusher, right from his student days at Hornsey College of Art, where Gerda Flockinger was Head of Jewellery, and both were deeply involved in the famous 'sit-in' of May 1968, when students defied the governors and took over the administration of the college. This was a defining moment for Poston, and set his career-long path of standing apart from the mainstream, rejecting the easy path stylistically and technically, at that date experimenting with organic materials such as hemp, silk and wood, combined with beads, stainless steel or silver, as a means of challenging the concept of 'value' in jewellery. As such, he was one of a generation of designer-jewellers such as Caroline Broadhead, Susannah Heron, Cynthia Cousens and others, who did the groundwork for a new kind of jewellery, as part of a wider international scene. Emphasis was on the tactile qualities of the materials rather than their monetary value.

Poston showed in the early days of Barbara Cartlidge's Electrum Gallery, when Ralph Turner, its then manager, became a champion of his work, and later took part in Turner's Crafts Council 1975 exhibition, 'Jewellery in Europe'. In this, Poston's contribution was his 'Necklace for an Elephant', composed of large limestone pebbles strung on hemp, memorably photographed by David Cripps. In the same year Poston made a slave manacle of forged steel with an inlaid silver inscription condemning slavery.

The late 1980s saw a complete change of direction into the training of blacksmiths in several African countries in using recycled materials into agricultural tools, but in 1994 Poston was invited to curate 'What is Jewellery' at the Crafts Council Gallery, marking his return to fresh experimentation in jewellery-making, most recently using recycled drinks cans.

The present exhibition shows examples of each stage in his journey with representative groups of work, many borrowed from museum collections, and gives a rounded picture of David Poston's career to date.

A comprehensive book, with a perceptive essay by Dr Elizabeth Goring and an introduction by the curator, Louise Taylor, and superb photographs of the work, is published to accompany the exhibition, and priced at £15.

Tour dates are: The Harley Gallery, Welbeck to 28 June; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge 1 July -13 September; Art Centre, Milton Keynes 20 September – 7 November; Birmingham University School of Jewellery 11 November – 29 January 2016; Dovecot Gallery 12 February – 26 March 2016

The Real Thing" Pectoral Cross, 2004. Laser Welded Coca Cola bottle tops collected in Rwanda. Photo: Joel Degen





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