

findings

Issue 72 Spring 2021

The Magazine of the
Association for
Contemporary Jewellery

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Members' Gallery Lydia Niziblian: *The Shape of Words* Deborah Beck in Conversation
Jo McAllister in conversation Deganit Stern Schocken Helen Frost in Conversation
Zoe Arnold: *The Magpie Eye* Helen Noakes in Conversation Eleanor Symms: *Artful Scavenging*
All That Glitters Dauvit Alexander: *Craftivism – Materiality and Action*
Ruth Facey: *The Last Necklace* Hallmarking Agony Aunt Book Reviews 2020 ACJ
College Prize Winners Competition

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



In reflecting our current situation there is a need, as I appreciated in the last letter, to take the wider, global view. Although we in the UK are still experiencing lockdown and all that this implies, other parts of the world are emerging from the gloom and beginning to restore fractured lifestyles and broken economies.

The word 'gloom' depicts our feelings when so many events and activities have been cancelled. However, I would like to suggest some positives arising out of this: although it will never replace face-to-face retail, e-commerce has been essential; also, we have had the opportunity to access lectures, seminars and exhibitions from across the world – experiences not dreamt of a couple of years ago.

The same technology enabled more members than usual to 'attend' our enhanced AGM. Following on from our virtual exhibition *glasshouses*, there will be an Open Exhibition for members later this year – do check the e-bulletins for details.

On behalf of the Board I would like to express thanks to outgoing Director, Karen Dell'Armi and also outgoing Advisor, John Moore, for their valued involvement and contributions to the Association.

Terry Hunt

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As the UK tentatively emerges from an almost eternal lockdown, it feels that we are collectively moving from gloom to hope. We still feel grief, we must surely expect setbacks, and we can clearly see that our close neighbours and distant friends continue to struggle, but hope feels newly possible, which is a glorious improvement on the blank, black nothingness of a lockdown winter.

Yesterday I sat in the sunshine in my garden with two friends (I know, TWO!), and other friends have actual exhibitions this week. Terry is right that there are new and wonderful virtual opportunities. But the lesson of lockdown for me – a person generally happy in her own company, and inclined to stay at home reading rather than going out – is how important my friends are, and how vital the buzz of a face-to-face event.

We are looking for contributions and conversations relating to new technologies for the Autumn 2021 edition of *Findings*: this might relate to your experiences trying to teach, learn or sell jewellery online, to your use of new technologies in experimental ways to make conceptual jewellery, or to the interface between hand and machine. As ever, we are looking for diverse voices, so please get in touch.

Jo Lally



Front Cover: Deganit Stern Schocken. Back Cover: Helen Noakes - 'Get Thee to a Nunnery' necklace

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Members' Gallery

In this issue we are focusing on found objects – a broad term which covers all kinds of items, from upcycled jewellery, through beach-combed finds, repurposed tools and moulds taken of everyday objects to ordinary goods which are not typically used in jewellery. Some are sought, others bought, and yet others arrive serendipitously in the makers' lives precisely when they are needed.

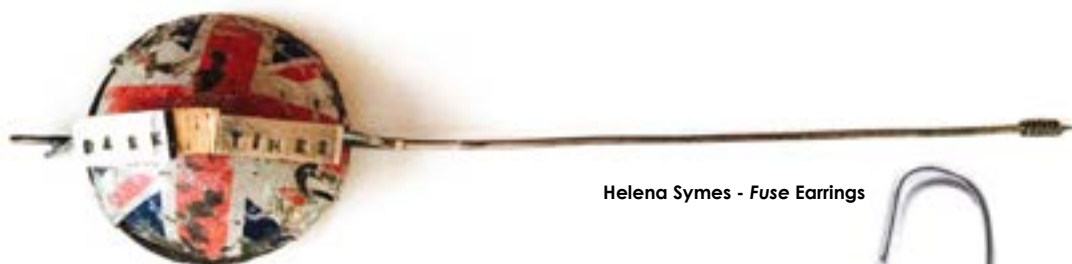
The use of found objects distinguishes Contemporary Jewellery from commercial and fine jewellery. It enables conceptual exploration, perhaps partly because an item already used has by its very history a layer of conceptual depth for the maker to play with, and partly also because the repurposing of ordinary things and the use of waste materials allow an ongoing discussion about preciousness and value.

ACJ members who use found objects were nominated by their local reps for the Members' Gallery. Imagine my surprise when my local rep nominated me! Even after thinking about found objects for *Findings* for the last six months, it hadn't occurred to me that the random collection of odd materials I used could be considered found objects. Anyway, moving swiftly on ... we have a great selection of work again. Our graphic designer, Ian Scaife, has been gathering and arranging found objects during lockdown. At the least, jewellery adjacent?

We're looking out for members' work using new technologies for Autumn 2021. ¶



Anne Earls Boylan - Pinned



Helena Symes - Fuse Earrings

Sophie Lowe



Céline Traynor
- Form, Going,
Going, Going
Brooch. Silver,
tiles from disused
building.



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THEME

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Rosie Ellwood:
Painter's Tool.
Paintbrush,
pearls.



The 'fragile' Jo
Lally wears Gill
Mallett's brooch.
Tape, feathers,
silver. (Back
when we were
allowed inside
the pub!)



Anne Morgan - *tinbrooches3*



Ian Scaife - *Red Reflector from Crushed Plastic project*

Jo Lally - *Go on, You Deserve
It* Palm ring, pendant, brooch.
Photo: Jacqui Hurst
Does the reflection count as
another found object?



Anna Lewis - *rise.*
Photo Laurenina Miksys
Model Jen Morgan



Karen Robbertze - *Seaglass rings.*



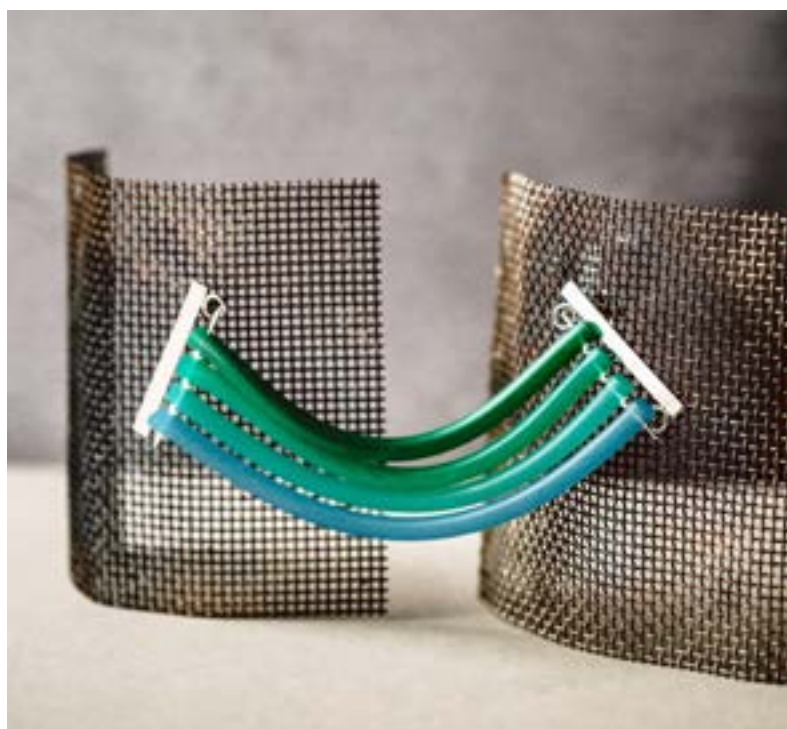
Lydia Niziblian: The Shape of Words

I wish I'd discovered jewellery-making earlier in life. I'd flirted with working with silver during a term on a City & Guilds course a few years before, but at 35 I fell completely in love with it. I'd needed some time away from our flat where I'd been a stay-at-home mum for the past four years, and (rashly) rented a tiny artist studio. In keeping with my late-in-life discoveries, at 42 I was diagnosed as autistic. Suddenly everything made sense, including my peculiar relationship with the world; as Temple Grandin perfectly phrased it, feeling like 'an anthropologist on Mars'.

Like many other autistics, I process information, including sensory input, in an unusual way. In jewellery-making, I particularly love textures, contrasts, the feel and smell of metal and stones. I use patinas and weathering and have a fondness for jewellery that changes with wear. An early obsession with museums and archaeology fed my favourite look of jewellery. I love pieces that look like they've been discovered. I used to collect things I'd found on the street, or dug up in my garden and kept an egg-box of pottery shards, old screws, plastic soldiers and coins. My studio still has boxes of salvaged objects: fabric, paper, shed reptile skins that I use for textures, interesting hag stones, old beads, shells and beach glass, crystals, pigments, anything that may inspire or be useful. Even the workspace decor comprises charity-shop treasures and flea-market finds.

When the idea for the *Shape of Words* project came about, lockdown had begun and I was extremely anxious. If ill or worried, I am more apt to experience sensory overload. I had begun a basic Welsh learning course and found I was having extremely visceral responses to some

Lydia Niziblian, *Llygaid*. Photo: Aga Hosking Branding



Lydia Niziblian, *Yn Barod main*.
Photo: Aga Hosking Branding

of these new words. I'm particularly sensitive to sound/noises, which I often 'see' as shapes. A 'good' shaped word, like 'piglet' can be enjoyed like a treat, whilst a 'bad' word, like 'sublime' makes me wince. Some of the sounds characteristic to Welsh were very textural to me and I began wondering how these new 'word-shapes' I was hearing would translate into jewellery.

'Some Welsh sounds were very textural to me and I began wondering how these new word-shapes would translate into jewellery.'

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Through serendipitous timing and excellent application support, I was awarded an Arts Council Wales stability grant which allowed me to make the project. The freedom of having time to experiment with form and materials was utter joy. The actual process of creating the pieces varied dramatically in difficulty in converting from word to finished jewellery.

At the simplest end of the scale, the word 'Hwyl' (pron. hoyle) was so clearly to me a smooth, bright, shiny curve to a point that it was a simple translation to the shooting star shape I made as a gold brooch, with a tiny diamond to accentuate to point. A longer process was the word 'Dechrau' (pron. 'dech-rye' with the 'ch' as in the Scottish 'Loch'). It means 'to start' and is the shape of a rough cat tongue. The word gives me that nails-down-a-blackboard feeling. So I sat and worked through tactile interactions that gave me that same feeling: fingernails on unglazed ceramics, biting wooden lolly sticks, certain wool/felt textures. I ended up having a tongue-shaped piece of fallen beech wood cut by a local woodworker, which I shaped and filed, before using a chisel to raise the surface in tiny splinters. I varnished the piece and added gold-leaf highlights and a 'discordant' chain created with heavy, irregular links.

I had always wanted a felted aspect to it to be next to the skin (even typing it gives me the jitters). I made a variety of shapes, none of which looked right. In the end I had made a felted mat in colours that upset me together (tan and yellow) and I got so frustrated, I ended up shredding the wool on my lap. I realised immediately it was exactly what was needed. The final neck-piece is so satisfying in its 'rightness' of how the word feels to me.

The finished collection of pieces all have unique sensory aspects to them: from a pendant that releases the scent of custard as it warms on the skin to a headpiece designed to cause the wearer to squint at mirror-painted 'falling' forms. The project has definitely given me new direction. It's certainly made me less precious about the validity of materials. The new work I'm currently making involves multiple mediums, and includes found and salvaged objects/treasures. I'm hoping the 'Shape of Words' will help encourage more exploration of neurodiversity in creativity.

The online gallery can be found at <https://www.niziblian.com/the-shape-of-words-gallery>

When Covid restrictions allow, a short film will also be added and the collection physically exhibited at Oriel Bevan Jones Gallery in Carmarthen, followed by The Autism Directory's Hub in Caerphilly. ¶



Lydia Niziblian, *Dechrau*. Photo: Aga Hosking Branding



Lydia Niziblian, *Gwybod & Popeth*. Photo: Aga Hosking Branding

Plasticity – plastic, cities and the environment

Deborah Beck in Conversation

What inspired you to start using plastics?

As a maker I was very keen to incorporate and experiment with some new materials and push my practice. I have always taken a keen interest in environmental issues, so I wanted to be sustainable. I wondered if I could collect and recycle single-use waste plastic myself at home in the studio. Could I create my own repurposed raw material from this found waste?

I was also struck by the idea that human beings have transformed the natural environment over the centuries, literally scarring the planet. This includes our agricultural methods, transportation networks, our energy production, our plastics and our cities. Those two last words, 'plastics' and 'cities', placed next to each other like that made me think of the word 'Plasticity'. Combined in this way it helped unify so many elements of my research and inspiration. I started to think about placing plastic within metal structures directly inspired by the urban lines of cities and human industry.

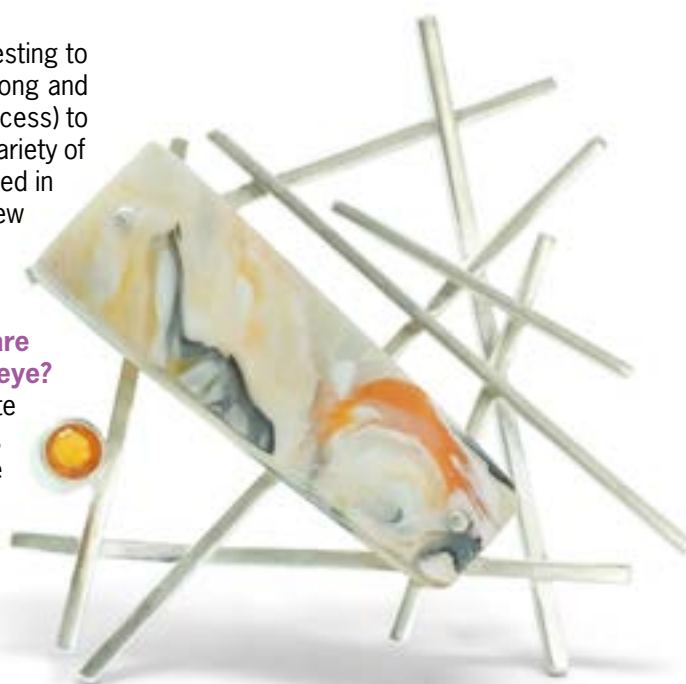
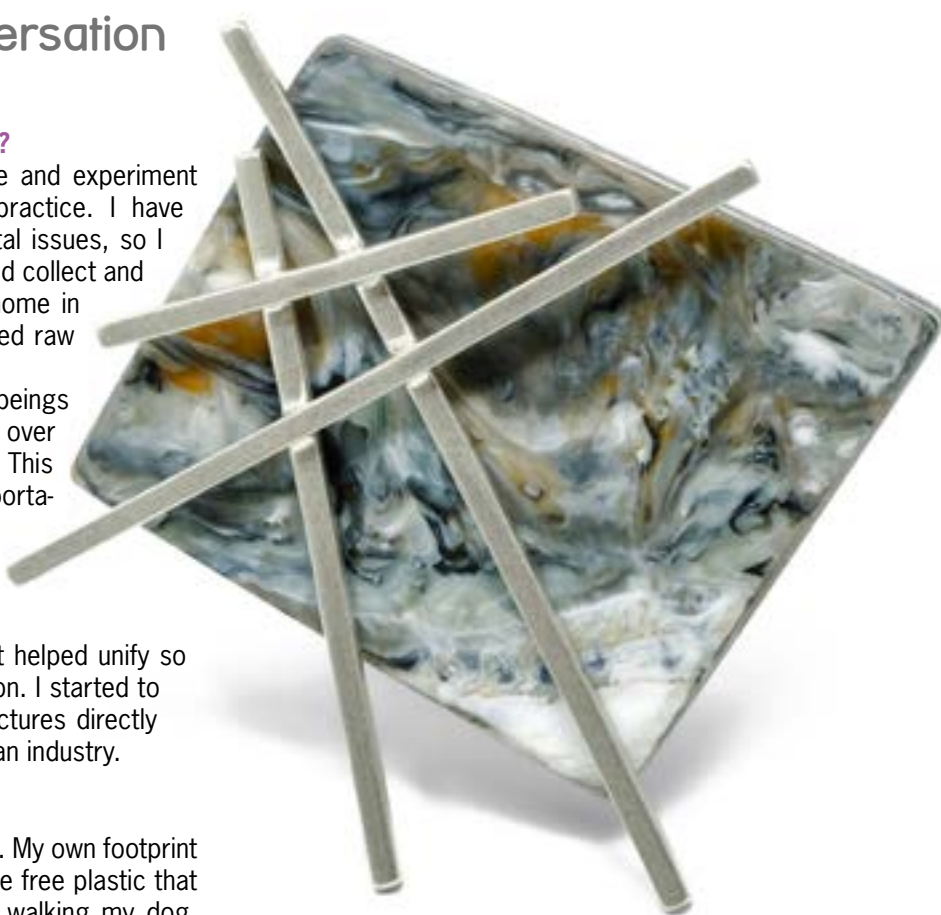
Why plastics rather than other waste?

Plastic is something readily available to us all. My own footprint as a maker is lessened slightly working in the free plastic that I find when already out and about on foot, walking my dog, rather than my having to get specific waste materials delivered from other sources.

From a maker's point of view, waste plastic is interesting to work with. Whilst being amazingly light weight, it is strong and durable and relatively easy (despite being a lengthy process) to transform through home recycling. It comes in such a variety of bright colours which can be enhanced if desired or mixed in specific ratios and sanded down to produce a whole new muted palette. It can produce some really beautiful and unique results.

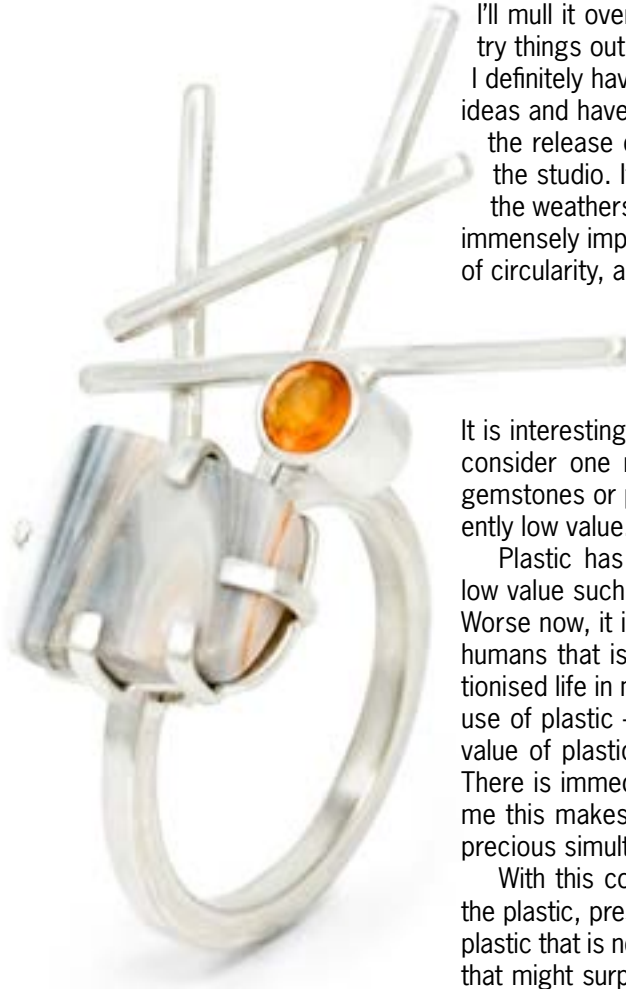
Do you look for particular materials while you are walking your dog, or anything that catches your eye?

At the moment I am working in a specific colour palette of orange, black and white – traffic cone colours. So, it is always good to find waste plastic objects in these particular colours. (Lucozade bottle tops give me a weird joy!) I decided upon these colours in order to reference another aspect of human activity on the planet, our transportation networks/car industry. But I also do love the colour orange. I have plans to change the colour scheme of my work for different releases, so I'm gradually building up a vast collection of many different colours.



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‘The process of finding materials gives a sense of circularity and mindfulness to the project.’

Is the act or process of finding materials important to your practice? Is the walking important? (I find that I have my best ideas while I am walking.)

I like to fill my head with thoughts and ideas and let everything collide for a while. I'll mull it over a lot before I feel ready to put pencil to paper to sketch ideas or try things out in base metal. So, the walking is absolutely crucial to this process. I definitely have my best ideas when walking too. It really helps to link up different ideas and have them slot into place. It's so important mentally and also physically, the release of endorphins and the break it gives me aids my creativity back in the studio. It's great to be able to spend so much time out with the dogs, in all the weathers that Yorkshire likes to offer. The act/process of finding materials is immensely important – satisfying and rewarding in equal measure. It gives a sense of circularity, and a mindfulness to the whole project.

I would like to start a bit more of a conversation about preciousness and waste. Can you say a bit more about your perspective here?

It is interesting to question what it is that makes us as human beings or a society consider one material precious, having inherent worth, such as a conventional gemstones or precious metal for instance whilst other materials are seen as inherently low value.

Plastic has a bad reputation, undoubtedly. It has associations with items of low value such as tacky gifts found in crackers and cheaply made children's toys. Worse now, it is predominantly seen as a scourge, a problem material invented by humans that is overwhelming our planet and wildlife. Yet plastic obviously revolutionised life in many ways. Every single industry has benefitted immensely from the use of plastic – medicine in particular, due to the sterility of it as a material. The value of plastic in enhancing modern living cannot be denied. But at what cost? There is immediately a dichotomy involved in using plastic within a collection. For me this makes it a more interesting material. It is in a sense both non-precious/precious simultaneously.

With this collection I wanted to see if I could enhance the desirability factor of the plastic, present it in a way that shows a certain beauty to the material, a side to plastic that is not often celebrated. I was keen to see if I could create wearable items that might surprise someone on learning the material involved was actually plastic. Hence, I have spent time experimenting with the mix of the raw plastic material, working with restricted colour palettes and combining them to create more muted tones. In my finishing and polishing I have worked slowly and methodically through the grits by hand for a subtle matte effect rather than the high polished look of the original plastic.

Some of the resulting pieces emerge with earth-like patterns, resembling mini land or seascapes like those seen in aerial photographs of earth taken from space. It's perhaps a little darkly ironic that this repurposed plastic ends up resembling images of the very earth it is responsible for polluting. Resulting pieces are certainly as interesting and beautiful in some cases as any jaspers or agates I have seen.

I employ methods that are non-toxic, use ethically sourced or recycled materials and recycled packaging. I try to eliminate waste where possible and I am always seeking ways to lessen my footprint. I think it is something that the majority of makers and a great many businesses are now seeking to do. I think it is definitely more a case now of being in a minority if you are not actively seeking ways to be as sustainable as possible. Or is that wishful thinking? There is still a long way to go, I know, but I do think the tide has turned on the idea of Fast Fashion.

The 'slow craft' element of working with plastic is satisfying to me as a maker – from the searching for the plastic to recycling it entirely by hand: cutting, cleaning, mixing, melting, shaping, forming, filing and setting. It is a lengthy but mindful process to go from raw material to finished piece. And more satisfying is that waste is minimised as all my offcuts, filings and shavings end up back in the mix pot, ready to be recycled again into usable material, or melted and used to fix and fill existing recycled sheets. ¶

Serendipity, sentiment and intent

Jo McAllister in conversation

Could you tell us a bit about your use of found objects?

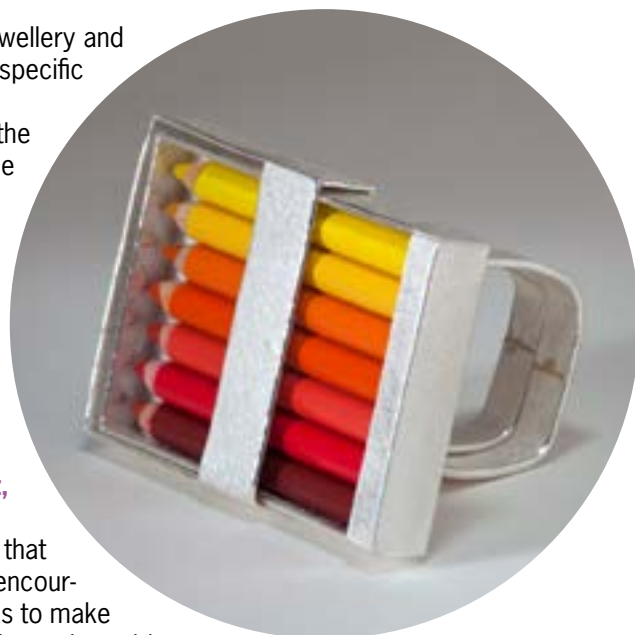
The term 'found object' is accepted within the context of art and jewellery and I have used it in artist's statements. Increasingly though, I list the specific objects and materials used.

There is a simplicity of form to my work that has made the sporadic inclusion of found objects more natural for me than the use of gemstones. I am drawn to collect gemstones but, with rare exception, have been resistant to use them without some form of conceptual framework.

I also have a large collection of gemstones that I am still wondering how to use without becoming too traditional. Perhaps for some of us, found objects are almost surrogate gemstones with inbuilt concept? Anyway ... you use quite a wide range of different types of found object. Are your objects serendipitous finds, deliberately sought, purchased to order or repurposed?

All of the above. I have phases of seeing and collecting objects that resonate with me. Serendipity plays a part and may certainly be encouraged by intent. In 2004, knowing that on my return I had three weeks to make work for a show, I took a miniature Polaroid camera on a trip to Egypt. I used it to photograph iconic tourist destinations, not something I would usually do. On the last day of the trip I found an acrylic pendant of a saint on a religious souvenir stall outside the Coptic church in Cairo. In an instant, I knew that I would frame the Polaroids in silver and hang them on string, to accompany the saint in a necklace called *Tourist Tat*.

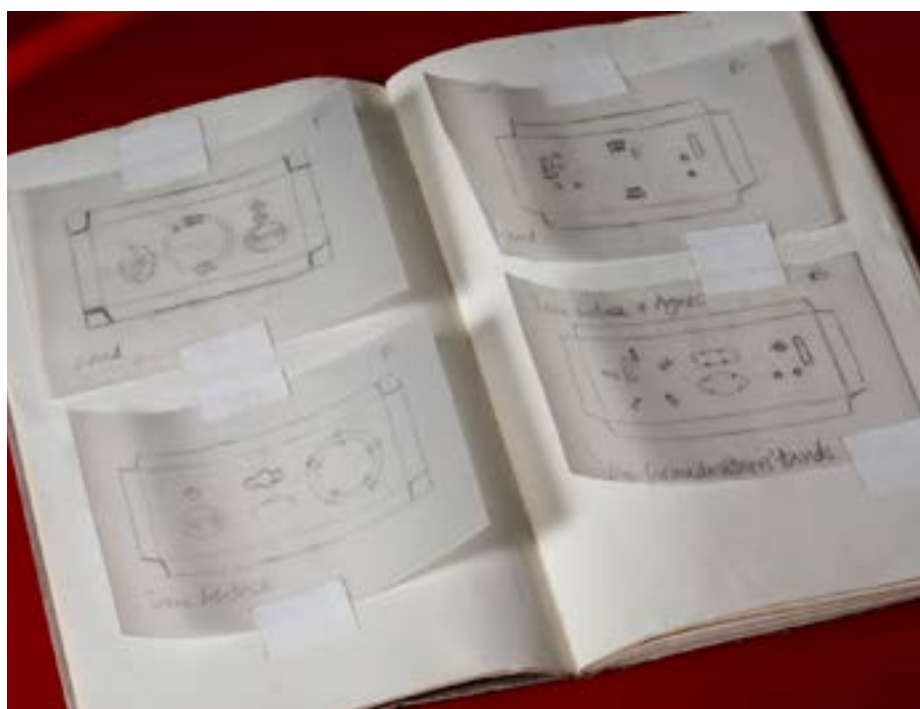
In 2011 my response to a museum room full of stuffed animals and birds was to visit local landscapes and habitats. As I observed and collected, this formed my theme. I used vintage camera lenses as lids on rings, so that seeds or insects could be placed within and observed. I saw lots of jays, but not at preening time, so



Jo McAllister, *Grandmother's Hands*
Brooches sketchbook



Jo McAllister, *Feather Box*.
Photo: Alexander Brattell



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‘Serendipity plays a part and may certainly be encouraged by intent.’

I found a sustainable source for the blue hackle feathers that I used in a pendant. It felt important to distinguish these from the gift of a single jay feather that I hid inside the pendant.

I saw a set of tiny colouring pencils complete with pencil sharpener. I had to buy them to make *Colouring* which then inspired a commission for Colour Box Brooch. The rest of the pencil set accompanies the pieces so that colours can be changed as desired.

Some objects have sentimental attachments. A pair of silver binoculars hang from the leather strap taken from those my grandfather took to the races. In this case the object was chosen and not found, or perhaps the strap found me, as there is no one else in my family who would have spied it among his belongings.

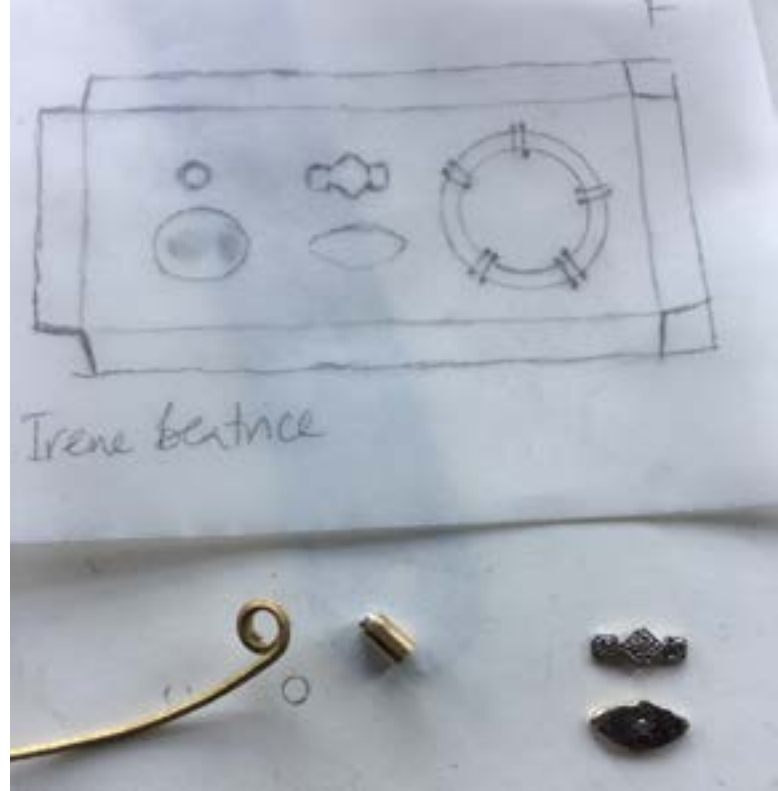
Is it fair to say that you are increasingly working with sentimental or repurposed objects?

I first used sentimental jewellery in 2009, repurposing a muddle of broken and disfavoured rings. The marks of hand-making, and distinction through re-configuration, created a brooch that I wear frequently.

Ten years later I worked with two generations of heirloom rings inherited decades earlier, presented as two brooches, *My Grandmother's Hands*.

In lockdown 2020 I decided to work only to order or to use existing materials. This led to *Gifted and Found*, a pendant using sentimental gemstones going back 30 or 40 years and desert objects found in 2004. These personal pieces are the inspiration for a whole new concept-led practice to explore in 2021.

Jewel Narratives artefacts will present the repurposed heirloom and sentimental objects of those who commission me, as well as form the basis of a concept & methodology that will finally enable me to use my collections of coloured gemstones & found objects consistently, in a way that speaks fluently to the material-led design integrity fundamental to my practice. ¶



Jo McAllister, *Grandmother's Hands Irene Beatrice Sketch*

Jo McAllister, *Binoculars*. Photo: Alexander Brattell



Jo McAllister, *Tourist Tat*.
Photo: Alexander Brattell

Window on the World: Israel

Deganit Stern Schocken: How many is one

I was delighted to see that a new book is coming out from arnoldsche Art Publishing about your work, *How Many is One*. That's an interesting title.

How Many is One is a retrospective of my work. The four words serve as titles for the book's four chapters. The phrase originated in an insight about the tension between industrial manufacturing and classical one of a kind jewelry making. This insight served at the time as a basis for a key project and an important solo exhibition I staged at Tel Aviv Museum of Art in 2003. At the same time, I realized that *how many is one* is a basic conceptual question regarding the work of art, and even philosophy and ethics. It pertains to uniqueness, to similarity and difference, to the affinities among objects and the links between individual objects and the total array. In this context, one can mention Leibniz's concept of the universe as an infinitude of monads, and the observation that no two leaves are ever identical.

You use a variety of found objects in your work. What is your approach to sourcing them?

I am primarily the one who looks, then discovers, picks up, and collects or even buys, wherever I go outdoors, walk on the street or in the market, or visit shops. In principle you could say that any object or material might find me, or vice versa — I may find it. In the beginning of the book there are photographs of shelves in my studio, on which more and more objects are densely accumulating. There is no design there, just hoarding. It is like an installation that stands on its own right.

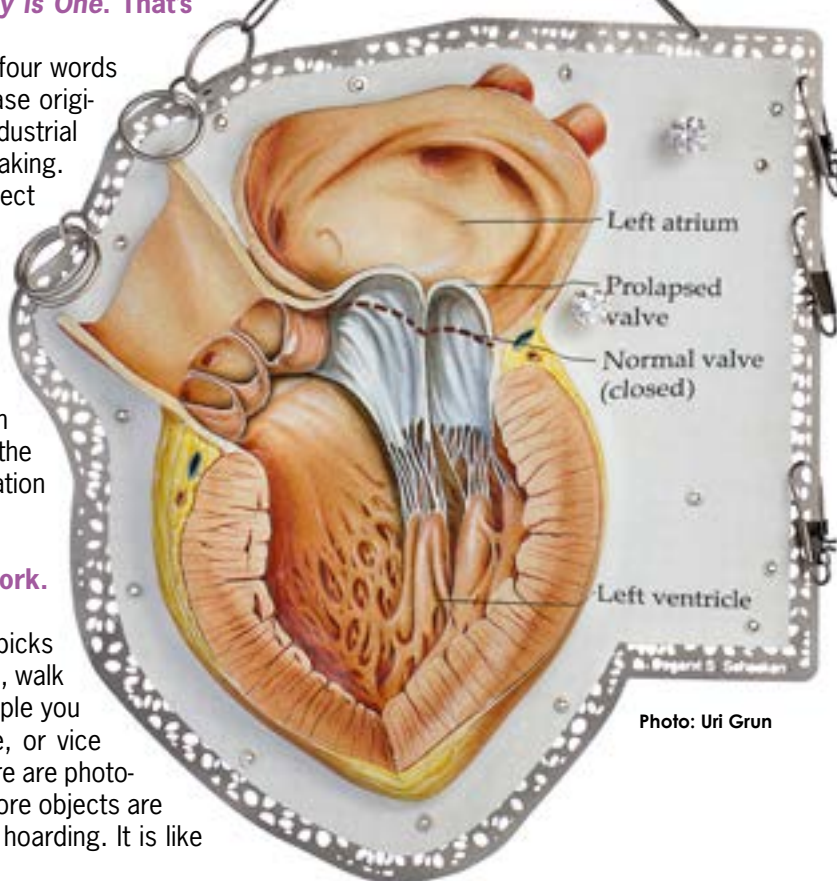


Photo: Uri Grun



Photo: Uri Grun

Have you always used found objects in your work?

At the outset of my career, I engaged in modernist architecture of jewelry. I related to the use of found objects, which has evolved since Duchamp and the flourishing of consumerism. I adopted the found object spontaneously, in response to the political and social change that occurred around me, when a supposedly liberal territory transformed into a divided territory (of conquerors and conquered), on which the heavy military boot of the occupation is imprinted. In this context, I began working on soft drink cans crushed by tanks and cars driving through the checkpoints that cross and divide Israel/Palestine and their cultures. All of a sudden, culture, art, and politics became akin to communicating vessels in reality and consciousness alike.

A pendant from your series *Qalandiya Checkpoint* changed my understanding of what jewellery is and can be. I wonder if you could talk a bit about the use of found objects to convey your concepts?

I work thematically. This is true of every cluster of found objects. As I mentioned, the works in the series *Qalandiya* are first and foremost a political response to events and changes. At the same time, they are an insight regarding the politics of value underlying objects that reflect (or disguise) what Michel Foucault calls 'power

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Photo: Uri Grun



relations.' Accordingly, these works convey a new, updated aesthetic perception of what is considered 'beautiful.' I have become more aware that the beautiful is expanding to reveal the ethical aspect. I visited the Qalandiya checkpoint area with a journalist friend, and he was surprised when he saw me collecting all the crushed, filthy cans.

Could you talk a bit about your choices and combinations of materials?

Materials such as stone, bronze, and iron have always represented phases in aesthetic and political culture. The same is true of jewelry: materials such as gemstones, gold, wood, textiles, metals, glass, paper, and plastic attest to the different use of technical modes and class affiliation in different periods. From time immemorial, these materials were used symbolically to indicate authority and status, while infusing subversive political content with regard to what was considered 'precious.' In my later works, the emphasis is on openness to the modality and values of the combined materials. The combination articulates conflict, a relationship between high and low, tension and dialogue. The book contains an essay by Liesbeth den Besten, who chose to write about the 'value' aspect of my work.

You use industrial materials and words in your work. Would you consider these to be found objects?

I use both the industrial materials and the linguistic materials as quotations of sorts, which are combined in the conceptual make up of the works (in the level of logos, meaning). As I see it, the works 'speak.' Indeed, I like the idea that the words in my works are found objects. I initially saw them as a negative on silver plates, and then they undergo abstraction to become ideas or a substitute for precious stones. As for the industrial materials, they, too, are recycled in the process of casting the item, thus acquiring a sense of found objects.

How Many is One refers to your work as informed by the socio-political realities of being an Israeli artist. Would you like to talk about this?

As for being an Israeli artist, it is important to understand that the term 'Israeli' is neither static nor homogeneous; it is conflicted, changing, demanding, and still open to definition. I was born on a kibbutz, in a Socialist society, culture, and time. Therefore, some of my experiences, which are also reflected in the works, relate to a reality that no longer exists, but may also be considered as an ideal, which may be required, in a different variant, in the future. On the other hand, I refer to the Israeli present, which has unique political characteristics, alongside elements typical of all societies in this era of Late Capitalism, with its feverish consumerism, the rule of technology, the accelerated pace of life, and the looming threat of an ecological catastrophe. ¶



Photo: Uri Grun

Trawling for Treasure

Helen Frost in Conversation

Helen Frost, *Yellow Perils*



How has your desire to make contemporary jewellery emerged from your existing practice as an artist?

I have been working with beach found objects for several years, making second and third dimensional works, in the form of assemblage, sculpture and collage. It occurred to me that another way to display the lovely objects that I found would be to assemble them in the form of jewellery. I went on a short course at West Dean College near Chichester to learn the basics of jewellery making and went from there.

How you are testing the boundaries between art and jewellery?

The vast majority of the objects that I find are unique in that each one has followed its own path between finding its way into the sea and back out again when retrieved by me. I make earrings, necklaces and pendants that may or may not be worn by the owner. I like the idea that each piece might hang inside an open frame, to be removed on special occasions and returned to its place on the wall when not being worn.

Could you talk about the importance of found objects in your practice, and how you select them?

Most of my work uses true found objects. This is a term that is over used and often means 'secondhand' rather than truly found. I spend many hours a week (pre-Covid) trawling a variety of beaches in search of objects that I can use. It is the core of my practice. I find that I have developed an eye for the unusual — somehow a shape, or a colour or a texture jumps out at me from



the shingle on which I walk — it is rare to find an object on the sand, the best things are washed onto the stony backdrop at the rear of the beach, swept in by tide and wind or sometimes revealed from below by erosion over the years. I do not usually have an end piece in mind but pick up what appeals to me aesthetically. It is then brought home, washed, photographed and filed by material for a later date.

How do you decide how to use the objects you find?

The size and shape are the first factors which determine the use to which an object can be put — there are obviously issues around size and weight if an object is to be worn, although these are less important if the object is to purely form part of a piece of art. Sometimes the scale and shape will suggest a final use. It is then a matter of 'trailing' a number of pieces together to see how they work. Again I photograph the various trials and ponder which works and shows the found objects to their best advantage.

Helen Frost,
Fork on the Beach Medmerry 3 7 19

continued >

THEME

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Which materials do you respond most strongly to and why?

I keep a fairly open mind with regard to materials although I rarely choose to use plastic. I do not wish to be seen as a 'glorifier' of the vast amount of plastic that ends up on our beaches. I also tend to avoid driftwood and certainly stones and shells as I have a morbid fear of appearing 'twee!' My material palette consists of metal, rubber, wood, wire and other manmade objects. It is the journey between entering the sea as a mass-produced and useful object to its discovery as a worn distressed and entirely useless bit of debris that interests me. How did it enter the sea, where and why? How long has it journeyed? These are the questions that fascinate me.



Helen Frost, Found Metals Necklace

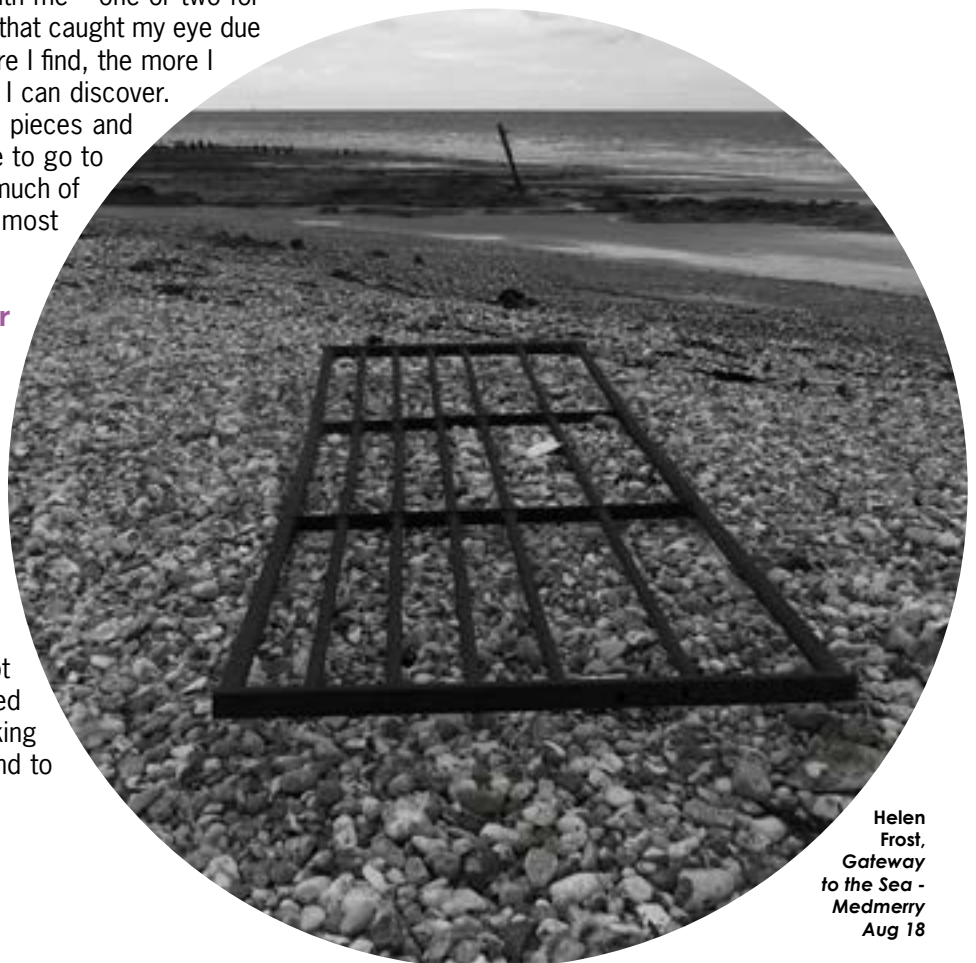
Is the walking and searching and finding an essential part of your practice or just something that you do?

The whole idea of walking along the beach started as a form of mindfulness when I was suffering from anxiety after a difficult period of multiple family and friends' illnesses and death. Our dog and I set off from a variety of beaches mostly around Chichester Harbour and it was not long before I noticed the unacceptable amount of litter. I started to carry bags with me – one or two for litter and one for 'treasure' – those things that caught my eye due to their colour texture or pattern. The more I find, the more I am drawn back to the beach to see what I can discover. Certain beaches are likely to yield certain pieces and part of the art is learning when and where to go to find appropriate materials. I am sure that much of what I collect would not attract the eye of most walkers – thank goodness!

How has the pandemic affected your practice?

Since the outbreak of Covid, I have done very little beachcombing. We have spent much time in rural Dorset so, instead, I have focussed on photography. I still return from daily walks with a bag full of treasure from time to time but there is little litter here, just natural objects. So, I have started to work with pine needles, bark, acorns and so on combined with other materials. At the moment, I do not have access to my studio, stash of combed objects or jewellery supplies so I am looking forward to getting back to all of these, and to the beaches, hopefully before too long! ¶

'Each one has followed its own path into the sea and back out again'



Helen Frost, Gateway to the Sea - Medmerry Aug 18

Zoe Arnold: The Magpie Eye

I recently took part in a conversation about the use of found objects in jewellery for the Goldsmiths' Centre with Stuart Cairns and Jo Ponds. What I discovered was: I was not alone.

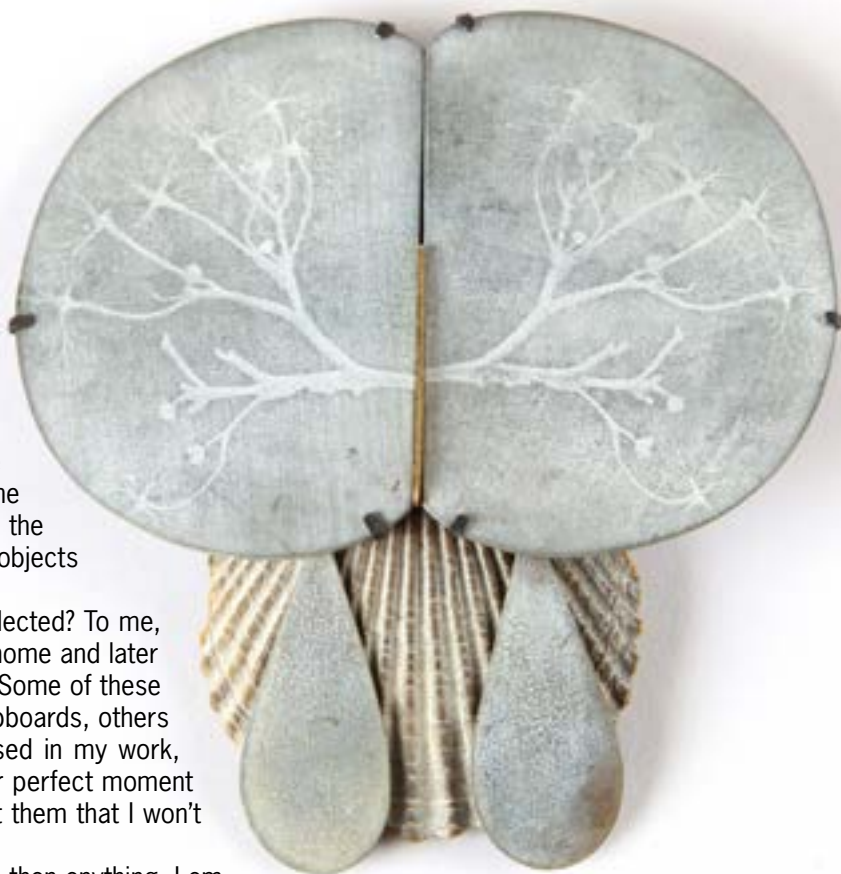
This innate desire to collect items that others would overlook or discard is a strong drive for many of us. This does not come as a surprise perhaps, but the similarities between our responses to finding these items, our physical reactions to spotting them, the quickening of the heart, the thrill of possibilities, was the very same in each of us. Even though the types of objects and the places we would search them out differed.

But what do we do with these things we have collected? To me, these finds are treasure, to be wrapped and carried home and later opened reverentially to peruse like an ancient hoard. Some of these treasures will be put carefully away, in drawers or cupboards, others placed around my workshop. Some will never be used in my work, either because I can't bear to part with them, or their perfect moment never comes, but others will have such energy about them that I won't be able to resist.

I have come to conclude over the years that more than anything, I am a curator, an arranger and a compiler. These are the things that satisfy my creative drive. For me making is curation, the very act of making is curation. I gather my objects, and I display them, by creating and rearranging endless layouts and possibilities, juxtapositions and combinations, until they feel just right. It is easy to understand how jewellery can be curated in an exhibition, or more often, a sad display case, but we are constantly curating our own collections, arranged in our jewellery boxes, on our tabletops or nestled together in drawers. An ever shifting tide of to and fro, where some may come to settle in one place, before moving on to another. For those of us who have 'the magpie eye' this flow can start at a beach, street corner or dusty box of junk, then be shuffled around with other finds, taken out, tried with this and that, put back again. The dance of the lost and found.

The human body can become the exhibition space with the jewellery being carefully arranged upon it. But focus down again, to my bench and the piece I am working on becomes the entire exhibition, the elements within it collated and curated. I gather my finds and my thoughts, and my world shrinks down to that moment. Nothing else exists nor compares to the tense exhilaration of carefully placing and shifting elements to convey my message.

Working with found objects aids this way of working and satisfies my frustrated 'curator's' instincts. Choosing a found object provides a starting point or anchor to hang the rest of the design around, a face looking out of an old photograph needs some context, or a broken fragment requires balance. Around these objects the tale is woven and their aged patina adds to the emotional feel of the entire piece in a way that new items might not. Things can be alluded to, questions left unanswered. We can often only guess at the history of an item, and whether we choose to add this meaning to our work, or to use it for the sake of its appearance, it will be added to our curated composition. Perhaps one day to form part of a larger curated landscape in some glorious dusty cabinet of curiosities or honourable museum. ¶



Zoe Arnold, *Mirror Brooch*

Zoe Arnold, *Fertility Symbol*



Humour, Memories and Models in Resin

Helen Noakes in Conversation

Helen Noakes, *Ring seaside* 2015.
Photo: Toby Bennett

Can you tell me a bit about the story behind your work?

The story behind my work is pretty non-imaginative really! It was during my course at Kensington & Chelsea College. This was way back in the late 1990s, early 2000s. My module was found objects and I'd been given a set of Preiser HO Scale models, known as railway models, and thought it would be easy to do something with them (in retrospect the 'easy' bit of that sentence was entirely wrong). As we didn't have the facilities at the college at that time, I got Kathie Murphy's resin book (which was my bible – thank you Kathie!) and experimented at home. Home at that time was a narrowboat in Little Venice. Trying to cure something flat and even when your home was constantly moving was interesting to say the least.

How do you acquire your found objects?

I buy them but they can be second or third-hand depending where they're from. The main bulk of my figures are made by a small German company called Preiser. I cannot buy directly from them as I'm not a model railway company so I rely heavily on a few model railway shops around the world and a couple here in the UK. They have become scarce and difficult to find and with Brexit and Germany in lockdown, even more difficult in the last few months. I scour eBay and the internet constantly. Prices of the figures can range from a few pounds to around £30 a figure. With international postage it does make them more expensive to use than semi-precious stones in my work (and I have to make the 'stones' – double whammy!). There have been a few times that the moulds have broken at Preiser (the swimmers are deteriorating in quality and the part lines becoming evident so I'm expecting the company will be making a new mould for them) and that means nothing for months or years. I've had mermaids on back order with 10 companies for four years and finally got a few in stock in 2020.



Helen Noakes, *Necklace Quantum leap* 2016.
Photo: Toby Bennett



Helen Noakes, *Rings Swimmer Trio* 2019. Photo: Toby Bennett



What is the concept behind your work – e.g. memory, childhood, the relationship between models and reality?

In all honesty at the start of this I had no concept in mind at all except for mastering resin and not melting the figures (one too many drops of catalyst and you'd end up with melty legs), and actually making a piece of jewellery with them. It did evolve as I realised that my customers do find meaning and affinity with my 'scenes'. That development and connection to my work was a massive surprise.

It's less about representing childhood (the figures are generally adults) and more about adult memories and an extension of who they are or want to be. During lockdown swimmers have been very popular and I think that's because that feeling of freedom and peace when you're swimming has been temporarily stopped but my jewellery is a little reminder of it. I'm lucky to have some amazing collectors and followers of my work who share their stories and memories – one of my favourite customer's first purchase was the large polar bear bangle – she purchased that because she'd been a flying doctor in Canada and from where she was stationed, she could see polar bears from her kitchen window.

Some of the connections are from childhood memories though. A recurring theme is someone who was desperate to own a penguin as a small child so yes, that representation of childhood comes through then. The stamped words seem to resonate as well – 'I wish I had a penguin' was from Yoko Ono's wish tree, 'how much can a polar bear' from my best friend in NZ, and 'come on in, the water is lovely' which is so ironic if you're immersed in England's fair waters.... Humour is very important in my work. It should make you smile as well as evoke memories.

How has your work changed?

I hope I've refined my making over the past 20 years that's for sure! I think I have – I'm very hard on myself and try and make everything to my best ability (which is why I start over quite frequently). My designs have got more detailed. I dabbled in 2019/2020 with a new range which I'm hoping to expand on which I feel has a slightly more serious edge. So more *hanging on by a thread* and *these are the ties that bind* us pieces, I hope!

Has lockdown affected your creativity?

It's been an awful year for everyone, hasn't it? It's been so very difficult to navigate through and still keep on going. My creativity has suffered immensely but I'm not beating myself up about it. Well, I'm trying not to anyway! I'm still here and I can still come into my workshop and I can still make. It will come back, I'm sure. In the meantime, I will make what I can when I can.

I think this will come as a relief to many makers – just not to be alone with that immovable object between us and our creativity! So... how are you hoping to develop in future?

I'd love to do some more collaborations – I'm open to offers on that! As for my own work I hope to smash the current creative block shortly. I'm sure it will happen..... ¶



Helen Noakes, Necklace, *Ties that bind* 2020.
Photo: Toby Bennett

'I've had mermaids on back order for ten years.'



Helen Noakes,
Bangle *solo voyager* 2017.
Photo: Toby Bennett

Eleanor Symms: Artful Scavenging

I have always been involved in making and have a lifelong fascination with materials, particularly the 'everyday' or discarded, which can be transformed into something else. I graduated from Edinburgh College of Art as a mature student in 2012. As a student, experimenting with and exploring materials was a key part of my practice and is integral to my work as a designer and maker today.

My interest in found materials is particularly focused on plastic, which has become a byword for rubbish and environmental degradation. We are all only too aware now of the impact of plastic pollution, so in some way, transforming this into something desirable and wearable is challenging and subverting traditional notions of beauty and value. Discarded plastics are abundant, hugely varied and have properties which lend themselves to being reclaimed and transformed.

The pieces that I find, whether sea-worn plastics or scraps of plastic waste, which would otherwise be discarded, are the content and the subjects of my work. I am concerned about concepts of 'preciousness' and disposability, so my starting points may be the shape, colour or texture of the found piece, but also, importantly, its origins and previous life.



Eleanor Symms, *Portal Brooch*.
Photo: Martin Alan Smith Photography



Eleanor Symms, *Oranges and Green Round Brooch*.
Photo: Martin Alan Smith Photography

The concept of histories behind the pieces I make is particularly significant. A found item may have had a very specific function, now defunct, but the lifespan of plastic is inexorably long.

As anyone who has talked to me about my work will testify, I could tell stories all day about the provenance of pieces of 'sea-distressed' plastic or salvaged plastic-coated electrical wire. Recently, I have been revisiting a very favourite find, which was formerly a moulded blue plastic chair, bearing the stamp 'Made in Scotland, 1965'. I found this fly-tipped by the sea, near my home four years ago and love the way the plastic surface has become patinated after being abandoned to the elements.

I have been working on a collection of pieces using plastic from this chair and combining this with other 'found' plastics and recycled silver.



Eleanor Symms, *Perforations*, found plastic object and multi-strand necklace.
Photo: Martin Alan Smith Photography



‘Transforming plastic pollution into something desirable subverts traditional notions of beauty and value.’

Plastic materials are frequently produced to mimic other materials, such as wood, glass or ceramics. Part of my making process embraces the ersatz nature of plastic materials, by mimicking a found item using other reclaimed materials. The *Currents Necklaces* in the recent ACJ exhibition, *glasshouses*, are made from found objects from a local scrap store, formerly used in a school science lab to illustrate positive and negative electrical charges. I made other elements in these necklaces, using reclaimed plastics, electrical wire and recycled silver, to mimic the fuses and connectors in the original pieces. The design of these necklaces, reflecting the found objects’ form and original uses.

Eleanor Symms, *Blue Oval Drop Earrings*.
Photo: Martin Alan Smith Photography



Eleanor Symms, *Currents Necklaces*.
Photo: Martin Alan Smith Photography



I tend to scavenge with an open mind, not looking for a particular item, form or colour and then develop work from the elements I have gathered. This serendipitous process is exciting and experimental, resulting mostly in unique pieces and a practice which is constantly developing.

Most of the materials I use I find when walking along the beaches in East Lothian, near my home. I am always looking down, searching for the unexpected. A keen ‘skip raider’, I often look out for industrial plastic waste and I am also a great fan of scrap stores and my local Zero Waste project.

I am very keen that viewers understand that my work is made using found and reclaimed materials and can see it as something which has value and meaning. I also enjoy opportunities to talk to people about my work and the stories behind each piece, where I found the materials I have used and, where I know this, what they used to be. Often, I find that I am talking to fellow enthusiasts, some of whom send or bring me pieces of plastic they have found. In Coburg House, the studios where I work, I regularly discover on my bench little beachcombed or scavenged gifts from colleagues, which is wonderful!

This year, I am also embarking on some small collaborative projects, making pieces for individuals with plastics they have found and selected. ¶

All That Glitters

The new jewellery talent show, *All That Glitters*, has sent a ripple of excitement – and perhaps apprehension – through the jewellery world. Looking at the forums after the first episode (at the time of writing, yesterday), the question on everyone's lips seem to be: 'How long?!?!'

We are delighted to have interviews with Kim Styles, participant and ACJ member, and Andrew Howard, from the Birmingham City University School of Jewellery (BCU SOJ) behind-the-scenes team.



Images © BBC / Twenty Twenty Productions Ltd.



The participant: Kim Styles

Kim, how wonderful to discover that an ACJ friend is on *All That Glitters*. Personally, I spent enough time crying and melting things getting my MA project together. I definitely didn't want to repeat the experience in front of cameras. You were clearly braver than me. Can you tell us a bit about why you applied, and what you hoped to get out of the experience?

When I saw the adverts calling for applications it immediately really appealed to me. I've been a jeweller for a good many years and I wanted to push myself out of my comfort zone and see what I was really capable of. It sounded like a great opportunity to work with other jewellers, having worked alone in my workshop most of the time.

Can you talk a bit about the workshop set up? Exciting toys? Scary new equipment?

The workshop was incredible, everything had been thought of and provided. I loved using the huge torches and having enough room for drawing down wire! The torches were different to my normal one, that's definitely on my shopping list now!

Can you talk a bit about the artistic and technical support?

The team were incredibly supportive, on hand for any worries and practical help and really positive about the design process.

Do you feel that you grew as a jeweller?

Yes, it certainly pushed me creatively and practically, using tools I was unfamiliar with (you know how we all have our own favourites to use). It showed me I could focus under extreme pressure, which was very personally rewarding coming out the other side!

How was it, as a contemporary jeweller with your own style, adapting to the demands of the show?

The tasks gave me scope to work in my own style while still fulfilling the requirements of the brief. The variety of design and execution, given we all had the same brief, was quite astounding.

What was your personal high point?

Getting to work in this amazing workshop with such a brilliant group of creatives, definitely.

Overall, what would you say about the experience?

It was a fantastic experience, daunting, pressured, demanding, mind-broadening. I went in with an open mind, I drank it all in and came out with one of the best times of my life.



Images © BBC / Twenty Twenty Productions Ltd.



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The jewellery consultant: Andrew Howard

How exciting for BCU to host *All that Glitters*. How did this come about?

The show has been in the planning stages for over five years now and the production team visited several sites across the UK before walking through the doors of the historic Birmingham City University School of Jewellery and falling in love with what we had to offer: the high ceilings, the glass roof flooding the hall with natural light, and the decades of historical machines and tools that they could borrow for set dressing.

What does it mean for BCU to be involved?

It's a huge honour for BCU to be selected to be the filming location and we hope to be able to keep the relationship going for many series to come. We hope that it will ignite a passion in people of all ages to pick up their saw frames and start to make jewellery, whether in university settings, by sitting next to jewellers at their benches or by signing up to some of the hundreds of part-time classes across the nation.

What was your personal role?

As lead academic, alongside other BCU staff, I worked alongside the show's challenge producer to ensure that the challenges were possible in the timescales the jewellers had, but to also ensure that the trade was fairly represented. We know there will be some jewellers who will have issues with a 3 or 5-hour timescale to make a piece – but they aren't being

filmed for a TV talent-finding show and can explain that to their customers. What is important is that the selected jewellers are able to make the items, with a little pressure, to a high standard in the time provided and that the pieces made are representative of the things made across the field. There is so much more to consider than what's made and how long they have. This isn't an apprenticeship, someone needs to leave, and we need to meet the contestants so the audience get their chance to pick a favourite or two. We also have to remember that this is the production team's first chance to see pieces made, and they need to learn along the way too.

I really enjoyed auditioning the jewellers here at the School and seeing how each of them tackled the mini challenge set to them whilst keeping up with the cameras, the producers and the other contestants' comments.

Were the BCU team involved in setting up the workshops or providing technical support?

The team here at the School of Jewellery (SoJ) at BCU all took a large role in the set layout, the tools and machines that would be required and where to source them, along with the gemstones and other materials – and yes, they are all real, not a CZ in sight.

Paul Evans (Head of technical team here at SOJ) was our lead technician on the show with Daniella Webb (Casting lead here at SOJ) by his side, both worked exceptionally hard



Image © BBC / Twenty Twenty Productions Ltd.

during the set up and filming of the series with some days lasting over 18 hours onsite. Glen Day, an academic from the School also had a large part to play in the initial stages of the show.

Working with the set designers Paul, Danni and I all took a tour around to show them what they could use and to tell them what was off limits: we did still have a school to run and students to consider so they only got 75% of what they really wanted in the end, but we think you will agree the set looks amazing. I also worked with the set designers on the benches and the studio layout to ensure we met all the health and safety requirements both of BCU and the BBC.

Paul and I worked with the producers on all risk assessments and the movement of metals from the hearth to the bench etc. and made sure that the contestants didn't just have tools that looked nice but also were useful and functional for what they had to make.

How is the TV show set up different from the normal workshops?

The transformation to the hall is amazing – there are differences, from green walls to a new floor in place to protect the original 131-year-old floor in the hall.

Having said that, the only real difference to the set up is to make sure you can get a jib camera and its huge wheel rig around the set to get those stunning aerial and flyover shots that we see and to ensure that the cameras could get in for the close ups of the bench pegs. So, nothing too tall on the benches and nothing outside of the bench space that the camera crew could fall over.

Did the rest of BCU go about their business pretending that there wasn't something really exciting going on downstairs?

The staff and students couldn't have been more professional. Having a TV crew turn up on a Friday afternoon and take over the lower levels wasn't easy but for the main part went without issue. The production company took everything into consideration whilst filming and we were very grateful for that. All filming took place over the weekend as with most shows of this type so disruption was kept to a minimum and the set was closed off so sneaky photos couldn't be published before the launch.

What recommendations would you make from a technical perspective to the filmmakers for future years?

I wouldn't change a thing! Genuinely the production team took every concern on board and listened to all I / we had to say. When the stone drops on the floor in your studio, you're by yourself to find it, nothing changed on set in that respect. The jewellers were shown the basics and necessary H&S requirements of using machines but if they hadn't used them before no formal training was given. I would be more than happy to work with any member of the production team at the drop of a hat, they wanted this show to be accepted by everyone from jewellers to viewers, hobbyists to professionals and everyone in-between. Some people may make pieces differently to the ways shown on screen but as the saying goes 'There's three ways to make jewellery, your way, their way or another way.' There's no manual for passion. ¶



Images © BBC / Twenty Twenty Productions Ltd.



The BBC are currently casting for the second series of *All That Glitters*. You can apply at:
www.twentytwenty.tv/castings.aspx
Jewellery@twentytwenty.tv

Dauvit Alexander: Craftivism – Materiality and Action

As a maker and as an educator, I am deeply concerned about the impact of lockdown on young people's mental health. In addition to this, I am both worried and furious that the teaching of craft and making is no longer possible in any real sense as students and pupils are denied access to workshops and workshops are cleared for 'social distancing'. Following the existing decline in craft subjects studied in school – a systematic devaluation of craft and making by successive governments – this means that the very materiality that makers value is being denied to a whole generation. This worry and this fury feed into my Craftivism.

What is Craftivism?

Craftivism combines 'Craft' with 'Activism'. It is about empowering people to take action, to think through issues and develop solutions, or just raise awareness of issues through making. Craftivism works by tapping into the ability of the mind to wander when the hands are engaged in making: it frees political thought from the confines of theory and democratises it.

How I came to Craftivism

My socially-engaged practice began in the early 1990s with specialist craft classes for young people with learning difficulties. It should have been obvious that at least some of the people I worked with used their making as a form of 'therapy', a means of investigating and coming to terms with the world — I am, after all, a maker who explores the world through making — but it wasn't. While I was working in prisons and Young Offender Institutions (YOI) I gradually became aware that people would make objects which connected them to their lives outside the institution or which gave meaning to their lives inside. Young people who had been victims of violence made talismans to keep them safe, while people with mental health issues used making to express thoughts for which they didn't have the words....

Reflecting on these responses, I realised that making could allow people to express thoughts which they themselves would not necessarily have known that they were having. It can also allow them to create objects which engage with or express those thoughts to others. Often, the people detained in institutions are marginalised and have no voice – worse, they are often actively denied a voice because of their backgrounds. Craftivism gives me the opportunity to help at least some young people to find their voices.



Knives Out

Knives Out is a pilot project rooted in the pandemic of young people dying or being horrifically injured in knife crime in the UK. Professor Norman Cherry and I heard Boris Bally speaking at the 2017 ACJ Conference about his *I.M.A.G.I.N.E. Peace Now* project inviting artists to respond to the US issue of gun-crime. This raised the clear parallel with knife crime in the UK. Boris suggested that Norman and I take his concept and reconfigure it for the UK.

From the outset, we wanted to tackle the issue at a grassroots level. Knife crime is not a problem which affects society equally: it mainly affects the young, the urban, the poor. We were determined to link a social engagement project to an exhibition by invited, international artists who would create work based on knives reclaimed from the street.

Working with 13 – 14-year-olds who had been identified as being at risk of becoming involved in knife crime, we decided that we would use reclaimed knives as a material for a craftivist project. In consultation with the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, we developed a programme of drama intervention, mentoring, counselling and making, in order to prepare the young people to handle knives in a safe environment.

The key to the project was giving the participants knives to handle, to allow them to experience the knife as material, a lump of metal with a wood handle and to allow them to think about how they felt when handling it. The drama element had prepared them to



Work by a participant in the Craftspace Making for Change programme. Image by author, 2017.



Work by a participant in a YOI, Pittsburgh, USA; image by author, 2013.

‘The key to the projects was giving the participants knives to handle.’

consider the issues, the counsellors could help them deal with complex emotions arising and the mentors could help them to move forward and see alternatives and the artists could give them the skills to make objects in response to all of this.

By far the most exciting part of the project was seeing the way in which the participants engaged with the thinking and making. At the end-of-project summary, attended by the school headteacher, local police, parents and community leaders, all 12 of the participants chose to speak to the group. The passion with which they expressed themselves and the pride they took in their handmade jewellery objects was remarkable.

Swords into Ploughshares

For the next, and much bigger part of the project, we have invited 40 international artists to participate in a touring show, *Swords into Ploughshares*. This will be supported by a series of craftivist interventions in each of the tour locations, engaging young people with craft, making, activist thinking and, we hope, expanding their horizons.

I would encourage any maker who feels a sense of social responsibility to investigate craftivism as a means of extending and enhancing not only their practice but the wider community as well. ¶

Swords into Ploughshares will, pandemic lockdowns allowing, launch in early 2022.

For legal and security reasons, it is not possible to show the faces of the participants or any work which might identify them.



2021 Open Exhibition

Since 2012, ACJ has produced exhibitions each year of its members' work. Some have been selling exhibitions, such as at New Ashgate Gallery and Gill Wing Jewellery, but usually there is a theme, to stimulate fresh ideas and inspire new work. You can see the catalogues in the ACJ website 'Vaults', starting with 2012's Diamond Jubilee.

The themed exhibitions are open to all members, and are selected by a panel of makers, curators and educators to show the very best pieces in terms of design and making. We have built an excellent reputation for our interesting and high quality exhibition programme. However, some members find the selection process a little daunting, so they do not apply. (It's not daunting, really!)

This year, like everything else in these strange times, things are a bit different. The aim of the 2021 Open members' exhibition is to show a picture of the huge variety of work produced by as many members as possible – a time capsule of contemporary jewellery in the 2020s, a type of directory of jewellers, with one piece each. The Board encourages every member to take part, from makers who have recently started, to those with many years' experience. The exhibition will be online, at www.acj.org.uk

Given that many makers have been locked out of their normal studios and workspaces, we are not specifying very recent work; choose a piece you think is your best from the last few years. Any materials, any techniques, any style, as long as the piece is wearable. This is not a selling exhibition, but we will include your website so that interested potential customers can find your work.

The only criteria for selection is the quality of the photo you send – these must be good enough for publication. With smartphones and digital cameras, photographing jewellery has become much simpler. Well-lit, clear images, in focus, on a plain white or very pale background with no props. We can adjust a few aspects of your photo, but do send the best you can.

The closing date for applications is 31st May, and the exhibition will go live at the end of June.

Let's celebrate all the great talent in ACJ!

Ruth Facey: The Last Necklace

The twin pincers of arthritis and Covid have effectively ended my jewellery making and teaching so, after about 50 years, I have had to face the reality of closing things down. This hasn't been easy. However, letting go of something that is no longer relevant allows for difference and new directions.

Somewhere in the middle of 2019 I was booked to give a talk to a local women's business group, in early November 2020! The talk itself had to be revised to reflect the changes I mentioned above but another element came along and needed to be accommodated. I wanted to make a significant necklace. Not to just borrow something from stock but make something that was an expression of myself.

I jotted an idea down on the Friday evening just before the talk event was due and was in my workshop on Saturday morning. I found how to meet the demands of the design and just kept going. It was an assembly of things from the tray of discards, linked with simple joining elements. Very soon I could see a theme developing, this piece was becoming a dialogue about my work. Odd pieces left over from significant designs became important again, linked together with random lengths of silver wire, beads and blobs!

I have always worked against the formality of symmetry, irregular shapes, catches on the side, small elements hanging off edges, and this necklace seemed to know what it was doing. I remember the original designs, reflecting on the passage of decades when I was constantly presenting new designs to the circuit of shows, exhibitions and galleries and a growing audience of customers.

Continuing to work through the weekend, the necklace arrived at its full stop on Sunday. Polishing was unnecessary, no soldering had been needed, and my hands wouldn't have been up to machine polishing. It received round of applause at the talk, a satisfying statement with which to sign off!

So, from discarded pieces of numerous finished items of jewellery that were never previously seen together, a new version has emerged, individual elements speaking of skills and interpretations. The necklace became a celebration of my own dialect in the language of making. Subsequent creative explorations have seen successful results in mixed media work that is beginning to sell. I celebrate the opportunity to have made the adjustment from a major part of my life and to have found fresh enthusiasm to take another path. ¶

‘The necklace became a celebration of my own dialect in the language of making.’



Hallmarking Agony Aunt: Change of use

Emma Paragreen

Emma is the Curator, Librarian and Archivist at the Sheffield Assay Office and a director of ACJ

Change of Use: altering already hallmarked articles, do you know the rules?



Upcycling isn't just the practice of transforming old materials (found objects) into usable jewellery – it is the process of breathing a new lease of life into well-used and loved items to give them a new story and personality. Many find this transformation aesthetically pleasing. For jewellery, this can mean remodelling an old silver spoon or a pair of sugar tongs into a new item such as a ring, bangle or a pendant.

Many also see the re-use of old cutlery and flatware as sustainable and environmentally friendly. This re-use and change of use of items has grown in popularity within the jewellery and silversmithing trade/ community in recent years and the UK Assay Offices have seen rise in submissions of such pieces of work.

But what are the rules regarding altering an item of precious metal which bears an existing hallmark? Are you unintentionally breaking the law?

The law as outlined in The Hallmarking Act states: '... it shall be an offence for any person to make an addition, alteration or repair to an article bearing approved hallmarks, except in accordance with the written consent of an assay office.'

For items which have been re-worked to change their use (for example a silver fork becoming a bangle, a spoon made into a pendant or a ring), you need to submit them to an Assay Office for authorisation. The Assay Office will examine the article, identify the original hallmark and issue a certificate signed by the Assay

Master. The process of granting consent for alterations is known as 'Change of Use'.

If you change an item from one form to another, without adding any metal to the product, the items will be processed as a change of use, assaying the metal, ensuring the hallmark remains valid, adding a reference number to the piece and assigning this number onto a change of use certificate which can accompany the piece when it is sold. (See image of the Change of Use Certificate.)

For other alterations, the following conditions apply in accordance with the Hallmarking Act:

- The addition must be of the same standard (precious metal) as the article to which it is being added;
- The weight of the addition must be no heavier than 0.5 grams in platinum, 1 gram in gold, 1 gram in palladium and 7.78 grams in silver;
- The addition must not be greater than 50% of the article's total weight

Any other alteration must be re-submitted to an Assay Office for testing.

REFERENCES

Taken from the Assay Offices of Great Britain, Hallmarking Guidance Notes, October 2016, p17. Hallmarking Guidance Notes (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Below: Example
Change of Use
Certificate



Did you know? Cutlery is anything that cuts or has a cutting edge. Spoons and forks are referred to as flatware, as they are generally stamped out from flat sheet, unless hand forged from a billet. Trays and salvers are also referred to as flatware.

If you have any questions or want to find out more please visit the UK Assay Offices:

Sheffield Assay Office www.assayoffice.co.uk
Birmingham Assay Office theassayoffice.com
London Assay Office assayofficelondon.co.uk
Edinburgh Assay Office www.edinburghassayoffice.co.uk

continued >

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Dear Emma,

WHY? Surely, a hallmark only says that an item is silver, not that it is a silver knife or a silver pendant. If I am changing a silver knife into a silver pendant, it's still silver, isn't it?

Yours,
Whyohwhyohwhy.

Dear Whyohwhyohwhy,

When the item was initially submitted for hallmarking it was listed in day book records and today it is on a computer database as a particular item. The Assay Office and the seller have a legal obligation under trade description to sell an item accurately, including what it is and what it is made of. If an item is changed, consumers need to be told, otherwise you are breaking trade description laws and misinforming a customer – that is, breaking the law.

The Hallmarking Act states that if it is silver and over 7.78grams it needs to be hallmarked by an Assay Office before it is sold in person or via the internet.

Yours,
Emma

Dear Emma,

I am a bit confused. I have an old spoon which I want to make into a pendant. I plan to add gold collets for stones, and some little gold balls. This will be about 2g of gold. This is a higher standard than the silver that the spoon is made from. Is this allowed? Do I have to submit this as a Change of Use AND a new assay item?

Yours,
Stoned

Dear Stoned,

Yes, this is allowed. You would need to Submit for a Change of Use certificate, and an Assay Office will apply an additional gold part-mark.

Yours,
Emma

Dear Emma,

I was planning to use two old silver forks together in a bangle with some titanium, and I really like the prominent original hallmarks, so I want to keep them. They are a part of the fork's history. I will solder the silver and use cold connections for the titanium. It looks really cool where you can see the titanium colours through the gaps. I knew I had to get a Change of Use certificate to reuse old items. But now I am wondering – does using two spoons count as an addition of more than 50% of the item's weight? And what about the titanium? Can the bangle be marked with '+METAL', as you talked about with mixed metals? Or do the specific rules for reusing old objects place stricter limits on what you can do?

Yours,
All Mixed Up

Dear All Mixed Up,

Your plan is acceptable, assuming the finished article complies with the mixed metal guidelines (clearly distinguishable by colour and visible to its extent), and the solder is up to hallmarking standard. You need to submit for a Change of Use certificate and your Assay Office will apply METAL mark/s. An Assay Office would also make a comment on the certificate to note the additions.

Yours,
Emma ¶

Silver Jewellery Making, a complete step-by-step course for beginners

by Machi de Waard and Janet Richardson
Search Press

Rebecca Skeels

Two of our longstanding ACJ members Machi and Janet have worked together to produce a great silver jewellery-making book for beginners. Packed full of details, problem-solving and tips and tricks for anyone considering on learning the basic skills of silver jewellery-making.

The book includes seven step by step projects that show evidence of Machi's and Janet's knowledge and experience from both having taught evening classes and short courses for many years. Each of the projects are set out in a logical order to help the beginner build on their skills from the previous project. The processes which are covered by this book include transferring of images, piercing, ring sizing, rub over setting, texturing, fusing and soldering to produce rings, earrings, pendants and brooches.

Many of the images are included not only to show the steps of each project, but the issues and problems that the reader may encounter as they experiment with the new processes. Photos are also provided of the tools and equipment that could be used if working from home or setting up your own space.

If you are someone that has not ventured into any jewellery making before this book is ideal. The book covers a lot of areas and topics to help ¶



Pearls: A Practical Guide

by Wendy Graham

Sadie Bell

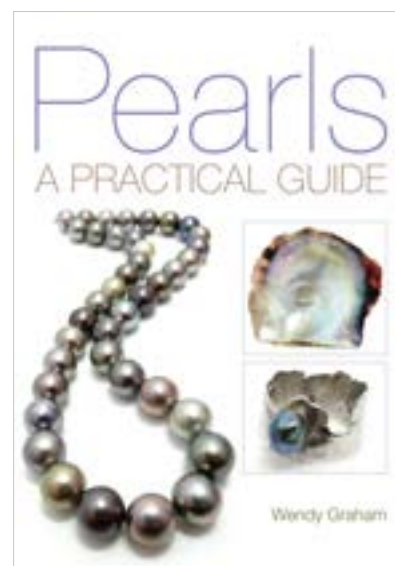
This fascinating and incredibly informative book delves into the many points of a pearl's life, from their inside out to their beginning and end.

I truly think it's impossible for anyone not to be fascinated by the utter magic of pearls. If you don't agree, this wonderful book will certainly change your mind. Wendy Graham's practical guide covers the basics of pearls: the farming, buying, selling, drilling, technical, pearl types, variations and the unusual. Each section is precisely explored and explained, making it impossible for anyone to feel under-educated or uninspired by the world of pearls.

The technical information of setting and stringing gives a great base of instruction. It is both useful to those needing to re-string pearls and to contemporary jewellers, who will gain a fantastic backbone of information – which can be used to their advantage and assist in pushing boundaries within design. We all know the importance of understanding the materials we work with to get the most out of them. As well as the technical information, the buying section of this book is a particularly great aid for jewellers too.

The imagery throughout the book is not only beautiful but gives a wonderful view behind the scenes of pearl farming and the alchemy of pearls. I particularly loved the fact that many unusual pearl colours and shapes were shown, even 'reject' pearls. There is more to pearls than a white graduated necklace strand and I was really pleased to see that all pearls were presented and celebrated.

Wendy Graham's book is utterly intriguing and would appeal to many. Whether you are a jeweller, designer, student, gemstone enthusiast or work in jewellery retail this



book has a wealth of information for all. I wish I had this book when studying pearls during my master's degree five years back! I thoroughly enjoyed reading some of the more obscure information about pearls, much of which I hadn't read before. I found reading the book truly inspiring and it has re-ignited my great love of pearls. ¶

Die Sprache der Dinge (The Language of Things)

Marlene Jochen. ISBN 978-3-89790-601-3

Hardcover 192pp. 21 x 28.5 illustrated (162 colour)

Linda Lambert

This sumptuously illustrated book showcases the 132 objects (including jewellery) that ceramicist and collector Lotte Reimers has bequeathed to the Pfalz-galerie Museum in Kaiserslautern. Reimers started collecting while very young and now coming up to her 90th birthday, she continues today. She firmly believes that in this world of mass production, handcrafted objects have a story to tell and a role to play. The objects shown are made from a wide variety of materials, from metal and plastics to leather, clay, wood, textiles and so much more. The items are to be held, in some cases worn and most certainly to be used. Shape, form, function and beauty are all intrinsically part of each item.

The collection is introduced by Marlene Jochen who discusses not only Lotte Reimers but also the makers of the various items shown in the book. Each object is shown as either a half page photo or, as most usual, a whole page image and at the end of the book there is a thumbnail biography of each artist and the materials used in each piece.

Two of my favourite jewellery pieces are Gudrun Arp's necklace made of feathers and Svenja John's bracelet made of acrylic. The first is ethereal in appearance – light and demure and yet riveting to look at. Oh for an occasion to wear such a lovely piece! John's bracelet on the other hand is made of bright pieces of acrylic – brash, colourful, modern and fun! Both pieces speak to me and I think that is true of the other items featured in the book. The high craftsmanship and the elegance of the items all grab one's attention and evoke a response. I think that all jewellers looking at this book will find inspiration whether from the materials used, the techniques involved or the maker's artistic vision. There is a lot of food for thought.

This is a coffee table book par excellence (as one would expect from arnoldsche). However, I think that the book is more than that. Not only is it a lovely book to thumb through, but I found the objects shown inspiring. I wanted to hold them, stroke them and in many cases wish that I owned them! They sparked ideas of how materials can be used and above all exemplified why handmade objects add so much to our lives. They do indeed speak to us. ¶

2020 ACJ College Prize winners

Congratulations to:

Inga Hamilton - *Ulster University*
Marianthi MacDonald - *University of Dundee*
Eloise Winter - *School of Jewellery, Birmingham City University*
Yuxing He (Star) - *School of Jewellery, Birmingham City University*
Rachel Penfold - *Manchester School of Art*
Wenwen Yang - *Sheffield Hallam University*
Lindsay Murrell - *City of Glasgow College*
Victoria Mclester - *Plymouth College of Art*
Alice Fry - *Glasgow School of Art*
Hanxia Feng - *Morley College*
Jennie Unsworth - *Morley College*



Wenwen Yang - Sheffield Hallam University



Marianthi MacDonald - University of Dundee



Alice Fry - Glasgow School of Art



Lindsay Murrell - City of Glasgow College



Inga Hamilton - Ulster University



Jennie Unsworth - Morley College



Hanxia Feng - Morley College

Rachel Penfold - Manchester School of Art



Competition: Win £50 Cooksongold voucher

First prize: a **£50 Cooksongold Voucher**

The winning piece and two runners up will be printed in the Autumn 2021 issue of *Findings*.

Theme: Finding

Submit one design or photo of a finished piece (can be a phone snap) on the theme of: Finding. This might be explored in relation to a process, opinion or result; it could mean something lost or something sought; it might reference a serendipitous discovery of an object. Any relevant interpretation will be considered.



Deadline for entries: **15 September 2021**

All entrants must be ACJ members. The judges' decision is final.

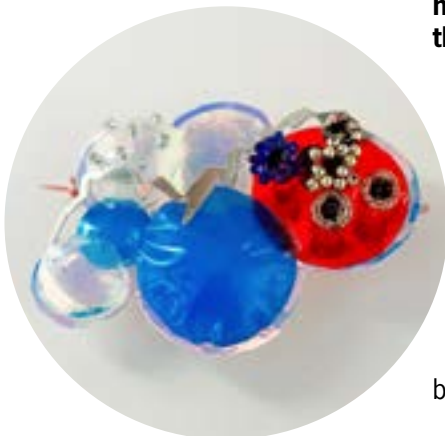
The prize for this issue is a £50 Cooksongold voucher. This includes VAT and must be used by September. Cooksongold is the UK's largest one-stop shop for the jewellery maker with over 20,000 products including bullion, tools, chain, findings, clay and much more. www.cooksongold.com 0345 100 1122 Stores in Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham and Hatton Garden, London.

Autumn 2020 winner and runners up.

Jane Moore, *I Wish I Was in This Bubble Just Now*



Jo Tallis, *Broaching the Bubble Brooch*



Once again, the response to the Autumn 2020 competition on the theme of Bubble was pleasing. Most entries had a clear link to the brief, with many referencing Covid support bubbles, and were well made. Some made our hearts sing. There were more wonderful entries than we were able to print. ¶

Winner: Jane Moore, *I wish I was in this bubble just now.*

This is a beautifully made, elegant piece, with a clear link to the brief.

Runners up

Jo Tallis, for a vibrant, exploratory piece which illustrates the ease with which infections can spread within a bubble, represented by the silver lightning flash, and Ann Shearer for beautiful surface texture on a ring which captures both the support and the claustrophobia of a bubble.



Ann Shearer, *Support Bubble*

