

# FINDINGS

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The Magazine of the Association for Contemporary Jewellery

Exploring the Interference Colours of Titanium Wearing the Inner Life The Goldsmiths' Centre: Update Crossings, ACJ Conference 2010 Enamel Symposium Gray Area Conference Gold Fever in Scotland Signs of Change Conference A Course at Alchimia Chance of a Lifetime Exhibition and Book Reviews

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# CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



I am pleased and honoured to write this as the Association's new chair.

For those who don't know me, may I provide some background. I am a maker of jewellery and objects though I have just retired as lecturer and Deputy Head of Birmingham's School of Jewellery, which has been a significant focus for almost forty years.

This meant, of course, that I was involved with the Association at its inception, being Norman Cherry's deputy at the time. Since then I have contributed to various conferences; articles in Findings; as well as seeing many friends and colleagues become chairs or board members. To be Chair now is a satisfying continuation of my involvement.

On behalf of all members I would like to thank our last chair, Frances Julie Whitelaw, for her dedication and hard work over a really long and arduous period. We have all witnessed tremendous issues over the last few years relating to finance and the Association has experienced its own share. The Board and its chair have successfully piloted the ACJ through some particularly rough seas and it is a tribute to them that we can now move forward with confidence in our stability and buoyancy.

One of the most recent events of course, has been last July's Crossings conference, which is reported in this issue. The success of large scale events like this can only be ensured through the efforts of a relatively small but enthusiastic team of volunteers. Thank you again those who were involved in this.

There are a number of new additions to the Board, and also to its Advisory Panel, and they will, I'm sure, wish to take advantage of our more confident situation. From views already expressed to me I foresee projects intended to involve Association members and enhance their membership. This can range from more specifically negotiated trade discounts to a makers' exhibition. The website is due for a periodic update; I would personally like to see a visually vibrant site providing a broader overview of what the ACJ actually represents. Images of members' work or interests that are accessible to all site visitors would be a more effective way in 'supporting and developing the voice, audience and understanding of contemporary jewellery'.

I look forward to my year in office with excitement and anticipation of creative dialogue with a great team.

*Terry Hunt*

# EDITORIAL

Our magazine this time is particularly plump, as autumn brings its usual harvest of Development Grant reports. We foreground the report of ACJ's conference, 'Crossings', the big event in July, and there is news of other symposia and conferences around the world. Our new Hon. Treasurer, Dr Lynne Bartlett, shares something of her research into the colouring of titanium, and Mark Lewis contributes an appeal for response to his ongoing study of the spiritual dimension of jewellery. We have an update on the progress of the Goldsmiths' Centre, and the usual reviews of exhibitions and books.

Cover: Rachel Colley: Dodgy Dodger, brooch, May 2010. Goldplated silver, biscuit, jelly, dried blood, stainless steel. Photo Rachel Colley

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# EXPLORING THE INTERFERENCE COLOURS OF TITANIUM

By Dr Lynne Bartlett

Titanium emerged in the late 1960s as an exciting new material for jewellery. New design possibilities were created by coloured surfaces that could be obtained without the use of paints or dyes. Titanium colours appear as if by magic when the metal is oxidised.

**The virtual exhibition of historic titanium jewellery at [www.reflectionandrefraction.co.uk](http://www.reflectionandrefraction.co.uk) shows work by studio jewellers who used thermal or electrochemical methods of oxidising titanium to create a variety of decorative effects.**

However control of titanium oxidation in the jewellery workshop can be problematic. This paper presents results from my doctoral thesis in which the methods of analytical science were employed to explore colour on titanium.

## Thin Film Interference

The optical phenomenon responsible for colour on titanium, thin film interference, is an example of Geometric Optics<sup>1</sup> where the structure of the system creates the appearance of colour. A common manifestation of thin film interference is the range of colours observed in a petrol slick on a wet road.

Interference colour depends on the thickness of the film. Oxidised titanium exhibits interference colour when the oxide layer produced on the surface of the metal is within the range 20 - 300 nm thick.

In addition to the film thickness, the composition and homogeneity of the oxide layer and the surfaces of both the underlying titanium metal and the oxide layer contribute to the colour appear-

ance and therefore may be responsible for variability of colouration. The following summary outlines investigations made to determine the relative contribution of these factors to colour on titanium.

## Colour Measuring

The colour chart produced by James Brent Ward<sup>2</sup> showing typical interference colour sequences gives only approximate guidance. Therefore a measuring system was needed within the project to provide unambiguous notation for the description of the colour and the applicability of the chosen CIELAB<sup>3</sup> system for the measurement of the colour appearance of an oxidised titanium surface was confirmed by experiment.

The purpose of the CIELAB Uniform Colour Space is to provide a three-dimensional colour space with axes which correlate with perceptual attributes of colour in a way that is approximately perceptually uniform. Measured spectral reflectances are used to derive  $L^*$ ,  $a^*$  and  $b^*$  coordinates for each measured surface.  $L^*$  represents the lightness on a scale from black to white,  $a^*$  and  $b^*$  are red-green and yellow-blue axes respectively. These values may be transmitted via a computer graphics interface to permit communication of colour appearance data for titanium between jewellers, Figure 1.

Figure 1: Comparison between actual samples and graphics images.



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### Surface Comparison

The reported differential oxidation behaviour between matt and polished surfaces<sup>4</sup> was confirmed by comparing titanium sheet with different surface finishes, typically used in jewellery.

Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) showed that the morphology of the coloured titanium surfaces, whether anodised or heated, was essentially that of the underlying metal, Figure 2.

Exceptions were observed for the thicker oxide layers and for the phenomena, which I have called ‘Flower’ oxides in honour of the late Prof Harvey Flower<sup>5</sup>, Figure 3.

### Oxide Crystal Form

Although it is generally accepted that the composition of the oxide layer is mainly titanium dioxide, its crystalline form may vary from anatase to rutile<sup>6</sup>, which have different refractive indices. However the maximum theoretical difference in layer thickness, attributable to the presence of all anatase or all rutile, is within the error of the metric and therefore not of major significance in colour variability.

### Oxide Layer Thickness and Homogeneity

Having eliminated the metal and oxide surfaces and the crystal forms of the oxide as major causes of variation in colour, the remaining areas likely to be responsible for colour variability are the homogeneity and thickness of the oxide layer.

A yellow/gold colour was selected for this part of the experimental programme as both heating and anodising can easily and reliably produce it in a jewellery workshop, Figure 4.

Figure 4: Titanium brooches with gold colouration.

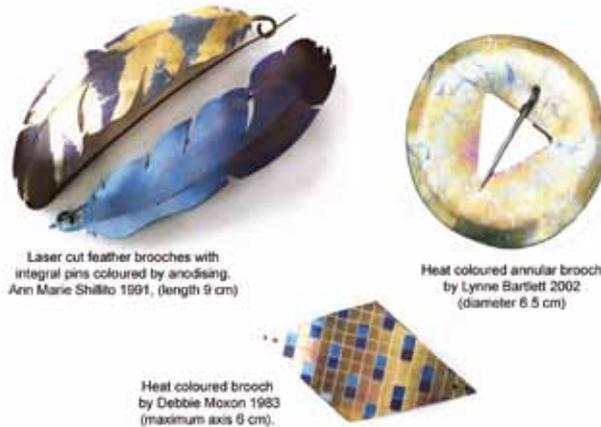


Figure 5: Anodised titanium.

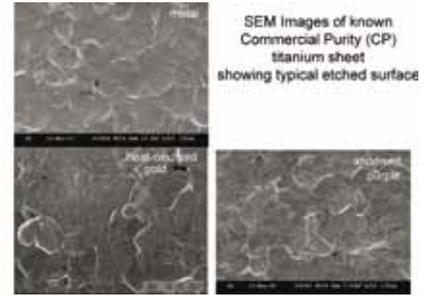
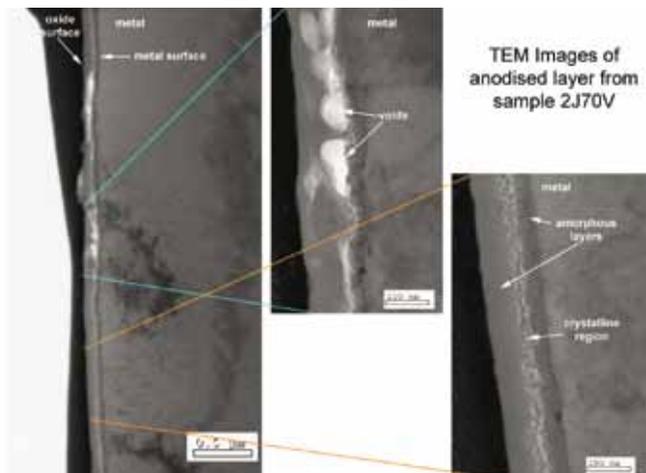


Figure 2: SEM images of titanium metal and heated and anodised surfaces.

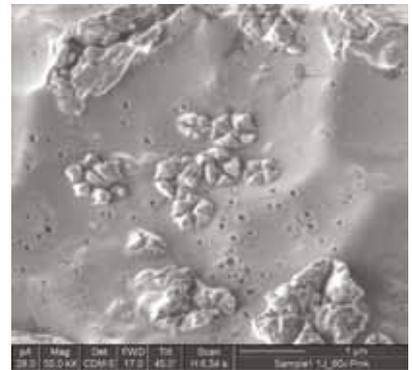


Figure 3: SEM image of ‘Flower’ oxides on anodised titanium.

Two samples were prepared: 2J70V anodised at 70V and 2QE heated in a kiln to obtain a similar gold colour appearance. Cross-sectional samples of these two oxide layers were prepared in the FEI FIB 200 TEM Workstation by the ‘lift out’ technique<sup>7</sup>. These sections were examined by Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM) with a JEOL 2000FXII TEM at different levels of magnification.

Although some difference in structure between the two layers had been expected the actual results were astonishing.

The anodised layer shows a sandwich structure of relatively uniform thickness (139 nm +/-4 nm) along its length. The amorphous regions adjacent to the metal surface and at the outer surface of the oxide enclose a middle crystalline region containing randomly distributed voids of varying size, Figure 5.

In complete contrast the oxide layer created by heat is entirely crystalline. The variable thickness increasing along the length of the sample from 135 nm to 255

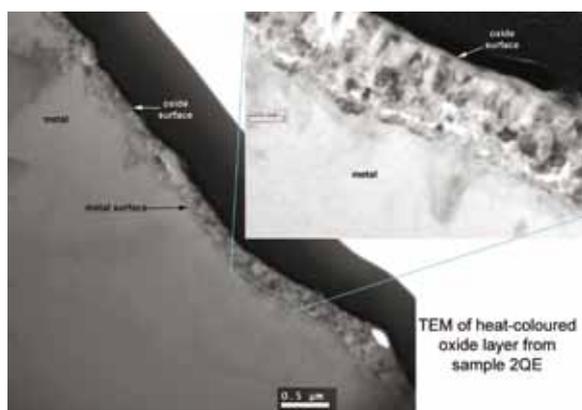


Figure 6: Thermally oxidised titanium.

nm could be the effect of unevenness in heating. From the image, Figure 6, it is clear that both the surface of the metal and the outer edge of the oxide layer are much rougher than similar parts of the anodised layer.

## Conclusions

These images show for the first time, on workshop-generated samples of oxidised commercially produced titanium sheet, the very different oxide layer structures that are created by anodising and by heating the metal. The significant conclusion from the project is that the presence of apparently random voids within the anodised oxide layer is likely to be the major cause of the observed colour variation.

The marked difference in structure is a possible explanation why, for jewellery usage, a heat-generated oxide layer is more robust in wear than an anodised one.

<sup>1</sup> Nassau, K, *Scientific American*, 243, 4, 124, 1980

<sup>2</sup> Ward, James Brent, *The Colouring and Working of Refractory Metals*, Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths' Project Report No. 34/1, London September 1978.

<sup>3</sup> Fairchild, Mark D, *Color Appearance Models*, Addison Wesley Longman, Inc. Reading, Mass 1998, p219

<sup>4</sup> Hass, G, *Vacuum*, 2, 331, 1952

<sup>5</sup> Bartlett, L: *Optics and Laser Technology*, 38 (2006) pp440-444.

<sup>6</sup> Aladjem, A, *Journal of Materials Science*, 8, 1973, p688.

<sup>7</sup> Gueneau de Mussy, J-P. et al, *TEM and X-ray diffraction investigation of the structural characteristics of the micro-porous oxide film formed on polycrystalline Ti*, *Scripta Materialia*, 48, 23, 2003.

# WEARING THE INNER LIFE - Contemporary Jewellery as Spiritual Enquiry

By Mark Lewis

If one puts the words 'spiritual' and 'jewellery' together in an Internet search, the results will be somewhat predictable: occult symbols, healing crystals, amulets and 'worry stones' to name but a few. The word 'spiritual' is used with alarming confidence although in the practice and critical debate within the craft disciplines, it is used very sparingly and with caution. However, it has become evident in recent years that the spiritual is manifest in much of the contemporary jeweller's art and this has little to do with superstition and self-serving occult practices, but more to do with the probing the human condition. Many contemporary artists recognise a hidden spirituality in what they are doing. This may be a search for the transcendent or a deeper, personal investigation into their own life journeys. We have, of course, to be wary of trying to pin down these experiences too prescriptively because they are often very subjective and work at different levels of experience. But now it would seem to be the turn of the contemporary jeweller to enter this mode of spiritual enquiry and this is something that goes beyond what would otherwise be glibly categorised as social, moral and political comment.

'Spiritual' is of course a slippery and loaded word which is open to a wide range of interpretation. Some clarification is therefore needed in this context. Spirituality is central, but not exclusive to the religious enterprise and in a more expansive world view it refers to the ultimate meanings and values by which we live. It may also be discussed in terms of personal transformation, ethics and morality, but may also point to

Felicity Peters. 'Ethical' Pendant necklace, 2009. Sterling silver, 24ct gold. 50x27x18cm. Photo: Victor France



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anything that uplifts us, heightens our awareness, or takes us out of ourselves, if only briefly. Organised religion might be presently having a hard time, but spirituality per se, does appear to be in the ascendant. A word that has recently entered the arena of debate is “post-secular”, which refers to the contemporary relaxation of secular suspicion towards spiritual questions, particularly those that have traditionally been in the domain of mainstream religion and are now being reframed for our own time. The art and craft communities will undoubtedly play a key role in the spiritual quest emerging in this new post-secular world.

The most passionate expressions of the spiritual in contemporary jewellery seem to focus on a preoccupation with the deeper life issues and what might be called “the pain of existence”. A visit to New Designers, or the graduate summer shows reveals a whole spectrum of mood and poetic feeling around themes such as belonging; identity; personhood; difference, diversity and alienation; gender and sexuality; memory and loss, love and relationships; social, ethical and political

protest; ecology and environmental issues, and so on. Ideas and assumptions about these things are continually being challenged or explored. None of the categories are necessarily in themselves part of a self-conscious spiritual enquiry, but this new mood suggests that there is a quest for a lucid spiritual language arising within the world of the contemporary jeweller. We all need images that offer us some new truth or a new angle on a previously assumed truth. We also crave ways of leading ourselves into deeper self-knowledge. Jewellery is therefore, well-placed to be a vehicle for spiritual exploration because of its association with the body.

Among some of the high profile practitioners, Felicity Peters in Australia is producing work which demonstrates a warm humanity that is spiritual. In a quite different key, Alan Craxford produces pieces inspired by sacred imagery such as the mandala, which seem to point to something beyond themselves. In a very subversive way, Jivan Astfalck has produced pieces such as “Hide”, which raises questions about whether we are more than our bodies. Many Polish and East

European contemporary practitioners are also addressing existentialist questions and probing the human depth dimension.

I am aware that there will not be an easy consensus on what constitutes ‘the spiritual’ in jewellery or any other art form. Inevitably, there are some burning questions to be addressed: Given our concerns with values, what kind of spiritual or religious language are we talking about? How do we understand it and articulate it? Why is the word ‘spiritual’ apparently so problematic for many? Where is the spiritual actually located – in the artist, in the viewer, the finished piece, or in the creative process itself?

I would like to open up debate about these issues within the ACJ and I am planning a book to explore these issues in contemporary jewellery. I would be pleased to hear from any member who feels their work is a vehicle for spiritual or ‘post-secular’ exploration or enquiry, and would like to be considered as a case study in any forthcoming publication.

*Mark Lewis can be contacted by email: [pharos@sketchbook.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:pharos@sketchbook.wanadoo.co.uk)*

Jivan Astfalck. ‘Hide’ Installation, 2004. Latex rubber. Photo: Angel Row Gallery



# 'CREATIVITY, CRAFTSMANSHIP AND COMMUNITY'

Peter Taylor, Director-designate of the Goldsmiths' Centre, updates us on its progress.

**I was delighted to be asked to speak about the Goldsmiths' Centre project at the 2010 ACJ Conference and how we hope that going forward it will support 'Crossings', the theme of the conference.**

The Goldsmiths' Centre, currently being constructed on a site in Clerkenwell in London, is a newly formed independent charity established by the Goldsmiths' Company. The Centre will comprise a multi-faceted amenity, and will be home to a new training and education facility, to be known as the Goldsmiths' Institute, that will offer skills and post-graduate training. Other aspects incorporated into the site will include workshops, studios, conference, seminar and exhibition space and last but not least, a café. The project represents the largest single investment by the Goldsmiths' Company in support of the craft and industry, with a total investment of c. £17.5M spent on construction and specialist fit-out.

The re-development of the site and building works are now going well after a 'difficult' start, with our initial contractor going into administration. However, Balfour Beatty Ltd is proving to be a very effective replacement and is making excellent progress. For those of you with any interest in buildings, we are still, as the photograph shows, 'in the ground' but I'm pleased to report that the weather over the summer months has ensured good progress. We are therefore currently on programme to finish the building on or around the 7 October 2011, when we will be handed its keys.

Whilst this is of course good news, and very exciting for us, in the final analysis the building will simply provide a vehicle for future activity for the Goldsmiths' Centre. The question is then: 'How does the Centre support the idea of 'Crossings' and how does it become a



The Goldsmiths' Company's Prime Warden Michael Galsworthy making an on-site inspection in July 2010. Photo: Martin Stewart

meeting point for inter-disciplinary activity between the traditional craft, contemporary design, material science and process engineering?

From the outset, we were intent on designing and creating a state of the art facility that could trigger new and interesting opportunities for interaction at all levels. At a basic level, managed workspace and an education and training facility will share the same location. It is hoped that knowledge transfer will occur naturally. However, the principles of mutual support, access and respect for those who use the Centre will be sacrosanct, and for occupants and learners, these principles will be enshrined within occupancy agreements. In short, those who don't wish to contribute and further the charitable purpose of the Centre will not be able to justify an allocation of space within the Centre's internal community.

What does this mean in practice? Occupants of workspaces within the Goldsmiths' Centre can expect competitive rents (to include service charges) that will be complemented by access to meeting rooms and administrative and technical facilities, which we hope will provide a wonderful working environment. In return, a commitment to 'putting something back' into the Centre's community will be asked. Occupants might interact with students or contribute positively to the courses offered by the Institute. In some cases this might be through running masterclasses and teaching specialist skills to Centre pre-apprentices or 'improvers', in others it might be providing work experience or a placement for a young person beginning their career. As the graduates enrolled on

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our post-graduate programme begin to develop their work, we hope that they too will be able to gain technical advice and support from those around them, and once up and running perhaps make use of the craftsmen on site.

There are however a number of other exciting ways in which the Centre and Institute can encourage inter-disciplinary activity going forward. For instance, our aspiration is to recruit graduates onto our programmes from disciplines other than silversmithing and jewellery. The Goldsmiths' Company enjoys excellent relationships with some of the top HE institutions in the UK and not just those which deliver silversmithing and jewellery courses. There are obvious links to courses such as fashion and textiles, but also to disciplines such as industrial and engineering design and material sciences. We currently see a blending of technology, fashion and adornment and we'd like the work of the Goldsmiths' Institute post-graduate programme to reflect the cutting edge creativity that this enables. We will also be using our own networks to engage with new technology and processes making these available to the widest possible audience through innovative teaching and learning materials, as well as live events at the site.

These are a few of the ways in which we see the Goldsmiths' Centre supporting the concept of 'Crossings', but I am sure that there is much we will learn once we formally open the building in late 2011/early 2012. Hopefully, many of you will feel that you want to contribute, engage and make use of the facilities on offer and by doing so you too will contribute to the Centre's future development. The great advantage that we have as a Charity is that we can bend our support to achieve the maximum public benefit and hopefully by doing so make ourselves relevant and worthwhile in the short, medium and longer term.

*More information about the building can be found at our website:*

*www.goldsmiths-centre.org where you can also register interest in workspace, courses and teaching at the facility*

## CROSSINGS

### ACJ's 5th conference, 19-21 July 2010, at West Dean College.

#### A report by Belinda Hager

**The Association for Contemporary Jewellery is, in its own words 'devoted to the promotion, representation, understanding and development of contemporary jewellery in the United Kingdom and abroad'.** The association was founded in 1997, and this was the fifth ACJ conference. Titled and themed 'Crossings', the conference took place at beautiful West Dean College in West Sussex. Four years had passed since the last conference and attendance was down, but by the end of the 3 days it felt as though we'd all been lucky to be part of this small group.

Registration took place with a quirky 'make your own name tag' stand, and somewhere to display the 'swap pins'. It must be said that the pins were, on the whole, fairly uninspiring (as were the delegate and student exhibitions), and this caused an edge of anxiety to creep in. The first afternoon's programme, and the delight of receiving what may well have been the pick of the pins that evening, soon dispelled my concerns though! After an introduction to West Dean College and its illustrious former owner, Edward James, by Dr. Sharon-Michi Kusunoki, the opening speaker was Sofia Björkman, from Galerie Platina in Stockholm. Björkman's was a beautifully measured presentation; it felt like being read to from a book of poetry, with each stanza illustrated by a perfectly framed photograph.

An example of the text for her talk reads:

'I believe in jewellery – gossiping jewellery that tells truths and untruths, gorgeous jewellery that fascinates, annoys and tickles, without falseness.

I make jewellery that is questioning the values and status.

I show jewellery that attracts others to think.

I am wearing jewellery that loads my batteries, and illustrates my thoughts.

I discuss jewellery that may seem strange to the viewer

and I sell jewellery to stun or strengthen people's feelings.

I think of jewellery as miniatures of life's content

and dream of jewellery that makes a hole in my wallet.'

Björkman initially spoke about her gallery, and the aesthetic and conceptual values that created and sustain it. Her photographs were texted with scribbles that members of the public had made in response to the works they see on show. This was followed by a guided tour through Björkman's own creative process. This captivating and poignant talk showed an aesthetic that was gratifyingly contemporary, setting the tone for an interesting and diverse conference.

As a non-UK jeweller, this was my first ACJ conference, and many of the names and faces were unfamiliar to me. Others, however, have been a part of my contemporary jewellery consciousness since I began making jewellery 20-25 years ago. I did wonder



Delegates viewing the student exhibition in the Old Library, West Dean College  
Photograph: Davit Alexander



L to R: Wendy Ramshaw, David Watkins and Stephen Boffomley (Conference Chair), during question time. Photograph: Dauvit Alexander

beforehand about the contrast between Björkman and keynote speakers David Watkins and Wendy Ramshaw. My impression of the latter, taken from their precise and sharp-edged jewellery, was such that I imagined a fairly structured lecture. I also anticipated a 'new wave vs. old wave' scenario, but the pair more than confirmed their place as the High Priest and Priestess of English contemporary jewellery, having lost none of their relevance in the wider contemporary jewellery scene. With an engaging informal conversation between the two, providing a fascinating chronology of their working lives, we were given a glimpse into a partnership that appears to be as rewarding for its companionship as for its artistic sparking. Each described the various defining points (for example, Watkins worked on Kubrick's '2001 A Space Odyssey', Ramshaw was initially a fashion designer) in their working lives that changed their direction or opened new doors. They talked of people, opportunities offered and jumped at, timing and spontaneity, technologies, and more than anything, an excitement and enthusiasm for the new that has never, apparently, dwindled. These are lives well lived, and far from creatively stilted.

What followed were presentations about an interesting array of practice-related research, creative explorations, and collaborative projects. Some of these relate to and inform industrial processes; three of the speakers, Jessica Turrell, Trish Woods and Cóilin O'Dubhghaill, spoke of their industrial/academic research into, respectively, enamels, patination of pewter, and alloying for patination. Other presentations related specifically to the conception of a body of work, as was Maria Militi's talk of her research into a Greek house and its owner, and Michael Brennand-Wood's, describing his beautifully subversive

politically-themed works. Susan Cross and Bridie Lander spoke of cross-media and cross-cultural exhibitions.

Phil Renato and Courtenay Starrett presented a slick and exciting talk introducing their own and others' collaborative works utilising digital technologies. They provided the most interesting crossover – that between old-school making and virtual designing, making, selling and owning! Images were shown of the company Nervous System's work, using the drawings of radiolaria by Ernst Haeckel, the 18th century biologist. These intricate images have foiled many a maker, myself included, who have attempted to adapt and use the designs. Nervous System create their jewellery using rapid prototyping and 3-D modelling and printing technologies, and encourage their customers to customise their own jewellery using generative design processes. Theirs was just one example of the ways in which people have adopted and utilised computer technology in the creative process. Renato and Starrett also discussed the collaborative projects they have worked on with colleagues around the US. It may have been a challenge to some of the more conservative delegates, who can't let go of the idea that jewellery must be made by hand, but it was an amazing look at the future happening now.

Each day was punctuated at some point by a 2-hour workshop. The first day's was spent in a relaxing and liberating interlude of play, under the guidance of Robert Ebendorf. He had amassed a

wonderful pile of recyclables, from bra straps to coloured paper swatches, and encouraged participants to make 3-D collages, joining seemingly disparate parts with hot glue guns, as maquettes for later jewellery pieces.

Day Two's workshop revealed how to electrolytically etch, in amazing detail, with homemade technology. This method, using photographic printer paper, an iron, salt-water, and costing as little as £5-10 of battery charger, was devised and wonderfully well taught by Dauvit Alexander (who just happened to be the maker of my pin!).

The final workshop I attended was with an almost evangelical Cynthia Eid describing the benefits of working with Argentium™ silver – well worth a shot, by the looks of things!

Other workshops were given by Michael Brennand-Wood, Anne-Marie Shillito, Joan McKarell and Lynne Bartlett. What worked particularly well was that the workshops did not overlap with any speakers' talks, as sometimes happens at conferences. The only downside was that there were too many interesting choices, and not enough opportunities.

There was the usual assortment of trade stands. Especially interesting was Yellow Chrome books, with a stunning display of diverse and quite specialised jewellery and related books. Otherwise there were tool and materials suppliers, The Assay Office, an insurance broker and a photographer. They were all graciously helpful and informative in the face of long days with few customers.

The theme 'Crossings' was general enough to attach significance to any of the presentations. There was the crossover between art and science/technology, and of practice and academia, the journey of creative exploration, the exchanges of ideas, mixed media and collaborative works, cross-cultural exhibitions, the influences of other creative media, and the significance of times and places. There was the odd moment when it didn't flow – often simply due to the mechanics of getting from A to B, or a speaker or event being slightly out of whack with the general theme – but there's no doubt that each participant will have experienced something new and fresh during a busy but fun three days. Congratulations to the organisers of the conference – you should do it more often.

Dauvit Alexander during his workshop



# INNOVATION IN ENAMEL: SYMPOSIUM

## Bower Ashton Campus, University of the West of England, Bristol, 15 July 2010

Compiled by Kathleen Reeves (Chair ACJ-Bristol) .

**The Symposium, hosted by Jessica Turrell, provided an excellent platform to disseminate and share the research outcomes of her AHRC fellowship and to discuss the practice of vitreous enamel as a visual art.** It was supported by the Enamel Research Unit led by Elizabeth Turrell (Senior Research Fellow in Enamel), the Centre for Fine Print Research and the University of the West of England. These institutions have a commitment to 'promote and raise the profile of vitreous enamel and to make enamel a more established area of the visual arts by exploring its creative potential on metal.' This ethos extends to encompass the International Contemporary Vitreous Enamel Archive (ICVEA), dialogue with educational establishments here and abroad and technical support for practising artists and industry. It had seemed a pertinent moment to discuss the uncertainties and dilemmas around excellence in education and funding.

The day consisted of presentations by Jessica Turrell (UK) AHRC Research Fellow, Christine Graf (Germany) Enamel Artist, Elizabeth Turrell (UK) Senior Research Fellow, Professor Robert Ebendorf (USA) Jeweller and Visiting Professor UWE, who kindly led the thanks and opened the final discussion.

**Jessica Turrell** discussed her AHRC funded research project, *Innovation in Vitreous Enamel Surfaces for Jewellery*.

Her first step had been to examine and categorise the range of enamel practice in the UK, Europe and the USA. She had noticed within the contemporary jewellery community a reluctance to engage with enamel, almost an antipathy. Why had it come to be perceived as a time-consuming and difficult skill? She suggested that in the UK, the lack of investment in the future of enamel has led to isolated pockets of specialist teaching that were straining against the rejection of skills in fine art visual culture. Combined with a lack of dedicated, well-resourced studio facilities available to students, this has led to an impoverished enamel culture in this country, unlike

the vibrant work in Europe and USA. Her conclusion expressed the need for shared resources, archives and forums to encourage work of excellence and rigorous integrity.

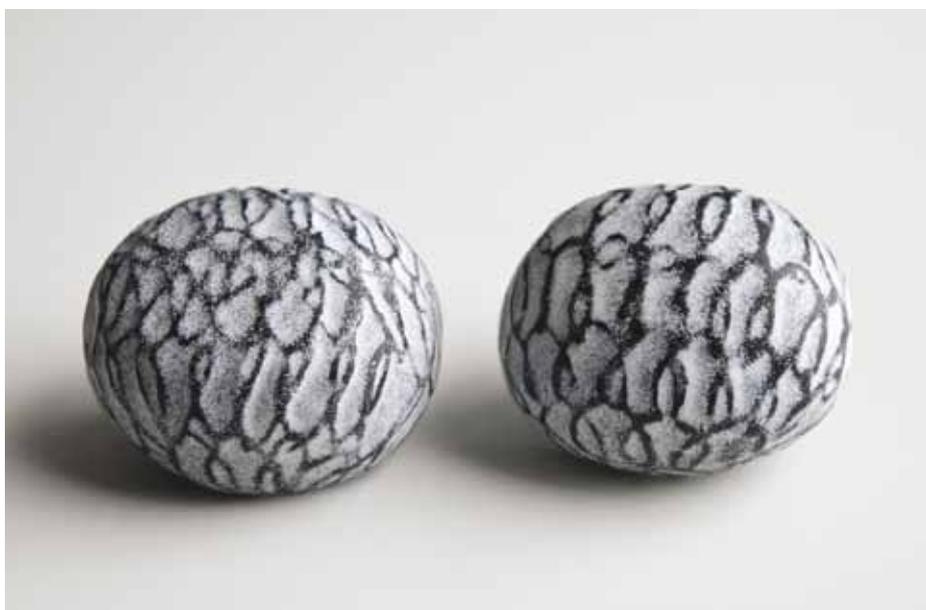
Part of her practical research outcome was to look at ways of working that avoid the technical constraints of enamel application on traditionally constructed hollow metal forms. The worry of risking in the kiln a form that might have taken weeks to make will often inhibit a maker's readiness to experiment. Jessica felt that risk-taking was fundamental to full engagement with the material. She searched deliberately for a simple, uncomplicated solution within the scope of the individual maker. Seamfree forms created through electroforming provided the creative opportunity to tweak, explore and play, building a rich, expressive surface vocabulary in enamel. The result is the tactile, engaging body of her new work, exhibited recently at Contemporary Applied Arts (CAA), London.

*Kathleen Reeves*



Symposium guests admiring Jessica and Christine's work in the Enamel Research Room

Jessica Turrell. Brooches: sifted vitreous enamel on etched, electroformed copper. Oxidised silver fittings. 4x3cm



**Christine Graf:** When they hear the word enamel, most people think of tiny areas of jewel-like colours, gleaming like polished gems in precious metal. Christine Graf, from Munich, took us through her own journey to something different and beautiful.

Trained as a goldsmith, Graf has been inspired by both nature and art. An exhibition of all-white paintings by Robert Ryman on varied surfaces (metal, wood etc), which qualitatively altered the effect of the white, led her to question the variety of impressions of depth produced. She felt that the smooth shiny surface of traditional enamel prevented the experience of depth that she wanted to convey in her work.

Another important influence was the writing of a Czech philosopher on working directly with one's hands, moving freely like birds. Graf then set out to work in metal foils, to avoid having to use tools. As thin as chocolate wrappings, the metal was effectively stabilised by the application of very thin layers of enamel, but there were problems: the brooches needed findings. Soldering was impossible, so she used rivets. Temperatures were established by lengthy trial and error.

Taking a year out to study in Birmingham, she created paper and wax vessel-forms, without breaks, then made them in copper mesh, patterns occurring only incidentally where layers overlapped, light and shadow and a moiré effect. These were entirely hand-shaped and laser-welded. Many very thin layers of enamel were applied, sometimes causing problems in the tension between the enamel and the body. When a piece collapsed, she reacted to the breaks in the enamel layer and in re-making it kept the cracks to record the history of the making. At the end of her year in Birmingham, she exhibited twelve conceptual vessels.

Returning to Munich, Graf began to work on jewellery-sized vessel brooches, using copper mesh, and gold wire for stitching, to join the vessel's sides and to create a decorative surface beneath the enamel; these were now closed forms. The layering techniques acquired in Birmingham continued to be used: a thicker layer would have broken and peeled off. A square (flat) brooch, enamelled red over a cross-stitched pattern, the thickness of the enamel varying over the surface to create a texture, sometimes there and sometimes invisible, had its gold back enamelled with a transparent peridot green, a stunning and surprising contrast.

*Sarah Braun (vice-chair ACJ-Bristol)*

#### **Elizabeth Turrell** *Reinterpreting Glass on Metal*

Elizabeth came to enamel from a background in ceramics. She described fusing glass to metal to create vitreous enamel as a 'fire art', with similar chemical affinities to glass and ceramic glazes. Fundamental understanding of the elemental components of her chosen material has led to a practice concerned with the aesthetic qualities of subtle, expressive, matte, eggshell surfaces.

She gave us the 'back story', detailing the history of enamel from the Alfred Jewel and Iron Age bronzes to examples of early transfer prints for enamel from the 1750's, pre-dating the industrial processes that would later transform the ceramics industry. The historical methods used in artisan and industrial production, kilns and firing were also illustrated. She highlighted enamel's breadth of possibilities. To work well in enamel needs an understanding of the chemistry and how the surface will alter with firing. It is a seductive medium and needs to be handled with restraint, lending its great aesthetic qualities to innovation and the growth of a personal voice.



**Christine Graf. Brooch:** sifted under-fired vitreous enamel on metal mesh. Oxidised sterling silver frame.

#### **Professor Robert Ebendorf** *'Stepping backwards; simplifying life and work with elegance, and honouring the craft.'*

Robert spoke passionately about education and of being a teacher, missionary and facilitator enabling other people to channel their abilities. He praised the archive (ICVEA) for containing work that crosses over from the UK and USA embracing new ideas as well as the history of enamel. He described the joys being an 'outlaw', giving himself the freedom to play, make dumb things, have a cup of tea, lay them out and think about them and to share any outcome with those of equal passion. He suggested that misreading a formula could give an imaginary alchemist a new point of investigation. Makers could allow themselves to be cast into that role. He felt that the profile of enamel in education was vulnerable, lacking 'an ear upstairs, who decides where the money goes, particularly in the arts...someone willing to swoop in there, street-fighting for us.'

An open discussion on education followed with members of the audience, which included Jane Short MA RSA (Central Saint Martins), Beate Gegenwart (University of Swansea), Melissa Rigby (The British Society of Enamellers), practising enamellers and artists, educators and graduate students. Students were felt to be 'poets without enough words' lacking mentoring and the basic underpinning of technique and skill, which would allow them to develop a sophisticated vocabulary. The consensus felt that teaching and creative emphasis must not be entirely about process. Materials need to be considered carefully to ensure that the most appropriate medium is used. Enamel is a wonderful art form but makers need knowledge, language, and discipline to realise a sophisticated idea in a simple, elegant way.

#### **Links:**

Enamel Research [amd.uwe.ac.uk/cfpr](http://amd.uwe.ac.uk/cfpr)

The International Contemporary Vitreous Enamel Archive

(ICVEA) <http://archives.uwe.ac.uk>

CAA Gallery <http://www.caa.org.uk/exhibitions/archive/2010/remarkable-glass/jessica-turrell.html>

## AN ORGANISED YET IMMORTAL FRAGILITY IN THE AIR

### Gray Area International Jewellery Conference, Mexico, by Sam Grainger

**‘This library has stood for over 200 years, through two revolutions and the Mexican Civil War’- a man with orange tinted aviator sunglasses announces to a packed auditorium.** Thus I imagine we are in safe hands for the moment. The opening ceremony of the Area Gris International Jewellers Conference was blessed with a buzzing sense of anticipation and fervour, as if there was revolution of another kind brewing within Aztec style masonry. Waking up to Mexico City’s petroleum-laced air is seldom a refreshing experience, but at 10am the Biblioteca Mexico played host to a carnival of enthusiastic introductions, greetings and a few ecstatic reconciliations. The organisers, who were among friends and colleagues, appeared to have devoted themselves religiously to the smooth running of this symposium. Valeria Vallarta Siemelink and Caroline Rojo of the Otro Diseño Foundation opened the symposium with an attitude of positive international diplomacy that seems to have been the genesis of this event. Towards the end of the conference they would be seen on national press at the culminating exhibition and go on to describe the success of the Gray Area blog - over 12,000 visitors from almost every country on earth (<http://www.grayareasymposium.org/blog/>).

The 4-day event covered a huge range of topics, from the symbolic relevance of alchemy to the future of jewellery galleries. A prolific body of European artists and academics included Caroline Broadhead (Central St. Martins College), Manon Van Kousvijk (Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam), Ramón Puig Cuyas (Massana Institute, Barcelona) and Dr. Sarah O’Hana (University of Manchester), all of whom acted as ambassadors for their institutions, presenting the results of intertwining research and practice.

Added to this were artists whose approaches stood out on an international level. Ruudt Peters, Nanna Melland and Jiro Kamata showed the Latin American audience the extent to which ideas towards wearable objects can be taken. As leaders in their field, their work stood up as potently avant-garde. Notable works included respectively, silver and gold casts of water-cooled wax, a necklace made from casts of 687 discarded IUD’s, and pendants of coloured camera lenses. Each drew tumultuous appreciation from the audience, the significance and quality of work translating universally across barriers of language and cultural aesthetics.

In showing the Latin American delegates such fine examples of progress in jewellery, it was interesting to note the joy with which the work was received. Most reassuring was the enthusiasm with which the Latin American delegates responded to the stimulus of international offerings. We were invited into worlds of international exploration, spiritual and cultural pilgrimage, post-colonial perspectives and a peek into rich archives of history. Ximena Briceno (Peru) showed insight into the timeline of the filigree technique, drawing on anthropological evidence



Caroline Broadhead discussing pieces in the exhibition with a conference delegate.

that the technique existed independently in ancient regions of China, India, Italy and Mesoamerica. Dr. Clemencia Plazas (Colombia) discussed spiritual aspects of the Aztec passion for gold. The nature of opposites and cycles contributes to their sense of universal balance, in equal use of gold and silver. Plazas’ research supplied us with an important grounding in the history of Latin American jewellery and an insight into its stylistic relevance in contemporary jewellery.

Mexican-born Jorge Manilla shared a journey from seeing as a child the poverty-ridden streets of ‘Distrito Federal’ to his current life in Belgium. His experience stands as a template for further transatlantic migrations, manifested in his work. Other pioneers of international repute included Cristina Felipe (Portugal) and Damien Skinner (New Zealand), both of whom extolled the quality and contemporaneity of their nations’ work in jewellery.

Curator Jurgen Eickhoff of Galerie Spektrum in Munich deserves mention. His experience over 30 years is an example to European and Latin American audiences alike of the migratory nature of contemporary jewellery, where his honest attempts to sell jewellers’ work places him among the chieftains, elders and mystics of this 21st century tribe.

Ultimately, the Gray Area symposium allowed for understanding, and for seeds of relationships to germinate between Latin American jewellers and those from the rest of the world. It was a hugely enjoyable and beneficial event, characterised by the passion and interest shown in presentations and discussions.

## GOLD FEVER?

### A Scottish expedition, reported by Michael Kay

#### Was it just the idea of an unusual weekend away, or could it have been – gold fever?

Whatever, it drew an international group of ACJ members from Glasgow, Dundee and Angus, Edinburgh and Newcastle, descending on the sleepy village of Helmsdale, Sutherland, just 50 miles south of John O’Groats on the first weekend in September.

Dauvit Alexander, Tessa Holland, Michael Kay, Jaimie MacDonald, Adrian Murray, Islay Spalding and Holly Wilcox, foregathered on the Friday evening outside the Bannockburn Inn – the goldpanners’ pub, to enjoy the last rays of sunshine. It was like an extended version of a typical Dundee ACJ meeting – a free exchange of ideas and business punctuated by hilarious diversions into such subjects as the correct length of plus-fours and the notion of tweed hot pants!

Gerry and Alison, hosts of the Bannockburn, joined us at dinnertime, regaling us with gold panning info and stories and offering a free drink to the person producing the most gold; nothing like a bit of pressure.

Saturday dawned fine, fortunately with a light breeze, essential for warding off the midges. About ten miles along a single track road, the A897, up the Strath of Kildonan we came to the car park at Baile An Or, beside which the serried ranks of the camper vans of the ‘serious’ panners were drawn up. Over the hill and down to the Suisgill Burn, site of the 1868 gold rush, and we were there. With only an A4 panning guide and our pans, riddles, scoops and pipettes, rented for £3.50 per set from the local tourist office, plus some pointers courtesy of YouTube we got started, shovelling sand and gravel into our pans, swirling and shaking until there were only garnets, fine sand and magnetite – black magnetic sand associated with gold, left.

“Where was the gold?” you might ask, as we did. It was said that there was “gold in every pan.” Whoever said it hadn’t heard about the ACJ!

In the afternoon we were visited by a ‘serious’ panner, who was most informative, giving us the demo and advice from which we could have benefited much earlier in the day. Of the seven, three members struck gold, but in each case, to say pin-head sized ‘flakes’ would be quite generous.



On our way off the hill after six hours with our eyes peeled, we were met by a group of the serious panners. They were intrigued by the idea of group of jewellers having a go, and were keen to show us the results of their efforts. These included nuggets of gold up to the size of a fingernail, down to the flakes similar to ours, mostly kept in glass phials, although they did show us a ring they had made. They showed us Welsh gold with its greenish tinge and dirty-looking gold from Tyndrum. This last was of particular interest as the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Planning Authority have recently and controversially just turned down a planning application for the establishment of a gold mine at Tyndrum which would have provided much needed work in the area.

At the car park where the camper vans were assembled there is a posted set of instructions from the estate owners that give clear rules. These state that panning is for recreational purposes only and that the gold must not be sold; that panners may work the site for no more than two weeks at a time and that fixed methods of panning such as the use of sluices were expressly forbidden. How then does this square with ‘panners’ in dry suits and snorkels lying on the bottom of the burn, sucking up every speck that shows up white in the peaty water? Perhaps it’s the acquisition of larger quantities of gold that funds these serious hobbyists. I couldn’t possibly comment, but it hardly seems in the spirit of the recreational activity.

Although our perhaps unrealistic expectations were unfulfilled, the weekend as a whole was superb. It was a chance to make new friends; learn a new skill; exchange ideas; enjoy good food and drink; it couldn’t have been bettered, and as well there’s always next year.

To those ACJ members who have yet to become involved with their local group, I would say, “Don’t delay. Get involved. It can only do you good.” Here’s to the next ACJ Dundee event. All of you are welcome!

**Eyes down: (from front) Islay, Holly, Dauvit, Jaimie and Tessa prospecting for elusive gold in Scotland. Photo: Michael Kay**

## SIGNS OF CHANGE: JEWELLERY DESIGNED TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD

### FORM Gallery, Perth, Western Australia, 9 April – 30 May 2010

Vicki Mason took part

**Conferences are always enlightening in some way and the exhibitions accompanying them as part of the official programmes are often the icing on the cake.** Along with local and international speakers, workshops, exhibitions, meeting old and potentially new friends, these interesting events keep us inspired, challenged and, certainly for me, feeling part of something bigger. I always leave conferences with a sense of being part of a community of like-minded souls sharing a passion for jewellery in all its forms.

'Re-source – prospects for contemporary jewellery and object making', the 14th Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group of Australia (JMGA) Biennial Conference was Australia's most recent jewellery conference. It was hosted by the JMGA Perth branch in April 2010 at the Central Institute of Technology. Makers, theorists, educators, writers and collectors were convened together for three days of discussion and debate. Apart from attending the conference I was invited to attend the opening of a group exhibition that formed part of the official programme of the conference. A key exhibition hosted by the state's public institution for contemporary craft, 'Signs of Change: Jewellery designed to make a better world' was an international exhibition featuring 18 projects by over 20 jewellers from Australia, Japan, Germany, Sweden, England and New Zealand. It was curated collaboratively by FORM's Elisha Buttler and the eminent Australian curator Kevin Murray.

'Signs of Change' sought to ask 'Can jewellery function as an instrument of change?', tapping into rising trends in jewellery and object making. When thinking about this change in relation to jewellery, Kevin Murray states on his blog <http://www.craftunbound.net> that it supports 'the opportunity to re-think jewellery as something for the

many, rather than the few' as well as 'to challenge many customary ideas of jewellery, and instead, position it as an object which is not only functional but can exert degrees of change on the wearer – or viewer'. Through their pieces selected exhibitors explored ideas relating to the positive benefits to individuals, society and the community more generally than attempts to instigate change could possibly affect. Health, sustainability, the environment and jewellery as functional device as well as potential agent for social change as a way of bringing people together, were just some of the aspects investigated in this thought-provoking exhibition.

The opening was attended by a large, enthusiastic audience that sought to engage with the variety of works. As an exhibitor, discussing the key themes underpinning my work and the exhibition themes with those interested raised new and exciting possibilities and ideas about jewellery's many roles today. One of the opening speakers talked a little about my project – introducing the interactive element that had attracted the audience's interest. My project involved (and involves) giving away my jewellery for free, with certain covenants applying. I hope that various themes associated with 'change', politically, socially and at a community level are raised by ideas embedded in the works. The participatory nature of my project began at the opening and if you'd like to learn more about the work have a look at the blog designed to accompany the project: <http://broachingchangeproject.wordpress.com/>. You never know, you might end up being part of this movement towards jewellery as an agent for change and one of my brooches may even end up with you!

If you'd like more information on the exhibition more generally have a look at FORM's website and Kevin Murray's blog (addresses above). A beautiful catalogue accompanied the exhibition.



Vicki Mason. Brooch, 'Wattle' 2010.  
Hand-dyed PVC, PVC, polyester,  
rayon, viscose thread, powder-coated  
brass, steel.  
Photo: Bill Shaylor

## MASTER CLASS: AUTHENTICITY IN THE AGE OF STYLE SURFING.

Laura Bradshaw-Heap used an ACJ Development Grant to fund attendance at Alchimia.



Laura's rings. Alchimia 2010. Mixed materials  
Photo: Laura Bradshaw-Heap

**Florence on a hot summer's day. A perfect backdrop to 'Alchimia' the private school for contemporary jewellery.** It has attracted a number of prominent makers to teach over the last twelve years, including Robert Smit, Lucy Sarneel, Manfred Bischoff and Sofie Lachaert.

Our course leaders Helen Britton and David Bielander believe that lack of rigor in investigating materials and themes can cause some contemporary jewellery to lack an authentic style of a designer's own. 'The way to make a piece of contemporary jewellery: throw a few bits of colourful junk together and glue it to a pin with as little skill as possible. To guarantee success make it organic: a lack of clear form, and a lack of reference to any kind of tradition, history, context or geography'.<sup>1</sup>

Art Historian Damian Skinner comments that on talking to a group of Swedish jewellers he found that, like most European jewellers, none of these saw themselves as making Swedish Jewellery, despite the fact that they made their work in Sweden.<sup>2</sup>

It seems that some makers of contemporary jewellery may have forgotten their roots, in an attempt to make work to show at exhibitions such as Schmuck in Munich. Yet it is our national identity, culture and upbringing that make us unique. According to Helen and David it is these that shape how we view and analyse the world and should be harnessed when creating,

So taking this as a starting point, how did this Irish jeweller, based in England, draw inspiration from Florence and interpret it into a meaningful working methodology?

Our first day began with nine students and the two tutors, from eleven different countries, all full of enthusiasm. We began by taking photos. A theme of brutal beauty, bodge-it construction, layering of colour, along with a sense of history and inherent memory within the objects photographed soon became clear. Helen and David reminded us of the need to investigate each

material thoroughly before deciding on its use. I chose a piece of cedar wood, a material completely new to me. I began to burn, bash, scratch, colour, nail-file and sand it, all the while under strict instructions NOT to think about jewellery.

In between the (sometimes) frantic making, there were trips to La Speccola, Galleria Uffizi, Pitti Palace and Bargello and intensive talks over dinner and prosecco.

An invigorating chat and my many 'samples' of wood revealed themselves as rings. Next began the process of finding appropriate constructions to grow the 'samples' into functional rings, while maintaining that 'bodge-it' Florentine attitude and my own fast and instinctive design technique.

The Workshop ended on a high with an exhibition, a chance to step back and really see what we had made.

So what has come out of doing this course, other than very good friends? A better understanding of how I work, of my interests and aims as a jeweller, and as an artist. A reminder to treat all the materials I use with a sense of possibility. A reminder to treat all my explorations in jewellery with respect, especially the less successful ones, as it is these we learn the most from. And most importantly, that though it takes patience and time to develop and make good work, it is well worth every moment.

<sup>1</sup> 'Thoughts on Jewellery Now', notes from Helen Britton and David Bielander, read out during the Workshop.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Damian Skinner is a freelance art historian and curator who lives in Gisborne. His research interests include traditional Māori carving in the twentieth century, New Zealand modernist art, and contemporary jewellery. [www.pauadreams.co.nz](http://www.pauadreams.co.nz) 'Identity Issues, December 22, 2009.

## CHANCE OF A LIFETIME: AN EDUCATION DOWN UNDER

Rachel Jones received an ACJ Development Grant to study at the Jewellery School in Perth.

**The BA Jewellery Design Course at Middlesex University is unlike many others as it offers a placement year between the second and final year to allow students to gain industry experience and personal development.** In February 2010 I took the plunge and travelled half way around the world to take part in a five-month exchange at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia.

The Australian course system differs from that in the UK, and I had to select four different units that could be anything from Jewellery to Australian Studies. The units run alongside each other through the semester with one class per unit, per week. I selected two jewellery units, one of which required students to choose an alternative material to create ten identical pieces ready for sale by the end of the semester and the other a free design

project. The third unit was the 'Client Project' and encourages students to find a client within Perth to work with in order to create a new original product. I worked with the John Curtin Art Gallery to produce a small collection of silver pieces for their shop. The jewellery department also provides an Art Minor unit, which is tutored by Australian working jewellers Sarah Elson and Claire Townsend, both of whom had shows in Perth galleries at the time. As everyone can select units I found myself in classes with graphic and product design students, and students from all over the world, including the US and Europe.

Student living in Perth is friendly, exciting and unpredictable but I took opportunities to explore the city's beauty and culture by visiting galleries including the must-see PICA Gallery (Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts) where Sarah Elson's 'Phloem

One end of the jewellery studio at Curtin University





Client Project: final pieces made for the John Curtin Art Gallery, silver.  
Photo: Rachel Jones

Potica' was on show. FORM Contemporary Jewellery Gallery in the heart of the city exhibited some of Claire Townsend's work in its 'Signs of Change' show. During my stay in Perth the Jewellers & Metalsmiths Group of Australia held its National Biennial conference with talks and workshops by Karl Fritsch, Lisa Walker, Helen Britton and others. During the conference several galleries put on shows exhibiting work by the visiting jewellers, allowing contemporary jewellery to become easily accessible to the public.

I have found the exchange experience to be extraordinary and beyond what I could have imagined. Studying at another institution has given me opportunities that I may not have experienced in a UK institution, such as working with a client. This not only benefited my professional development as a jeweller but it also gave me the chance to grow as an individual by becoming more confident, which will ultimately aid me in the future as an independent designer. I've been able to meet international stars, discovered what fellow students are investigating and how they work. I've also been able to build contacts with galleries for the future as well as getting my own work into a gallery. I would urge anyone who has the opportunity to undertake a student exchange or is given the chance to work abroad to do so. You won't regret it!

*Useful information and weblinks:*

[www.mdx.ac.uk](http://www.mdx.ac.uk) ; [www.curtin.edu.au](http://www.curtin.edu.au); [www.form.net.au](http://www.form.net.au);  
[www.pica.org.au](http://www.pica.org.au) ; [www.jmgawa.com.au](http://www.jmgawa.com.au);  
[www.kitandcaboodle.ning.com/profile/ClaireTownsend](http://www.kitandcaboodle.ning.com/profile/ClaireTownsend);  
[www.johncurtingallery.curtin.edu.au](http://www.johncurtingallery.curtin.edu.au);  
[www.racheljonesjewellery.wordpress.com](http://www.racheljonesjewellery.wordpress.com);  
[www.galleryeast.com.au](http://www.galleryeast.com.au)

## MATTER 2 – CHARLOTTE DE SYLLAS

**Innovative Craft at Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh. 14-23 May, curated by Adam Paxon**

Reviewed by  
Elizabeth Moignard

**This gentle retrospective was the second of what eventually turned out to be five perceptive exhibitions curated by Adam Paxon for Innovative Craft – the last was a fascinating reflection on his own work as well as the other four exhibits, at the end of the run.** The guiding principle started as an insider's snapshot of the working practice of four other makers, Drummond Masterton, Charlotte de Syllas, Lina Peterson, and David Poston; despite an overarching aesthetic which placed their work in the same large front gallery at Dovecot with video projections, relatively few objects, often on open tables, and a sense of reflective space, all five shows outstandingly achieved their intention of focussing on the creative process as much as the outcomes; the Peterson show imported the maker and a temporary workshop as well. IC and Paxon are to be congratulated on the idea and the effectiveness of its implementation.

I feel very lucky to have experienced the de Syllas show in the way I fortuitously did, as a lone visitor at a quiet time of day; the time for sitting and looking, and quiet reflection provided an ideal opportunity for the kind of attention this work demands and embodies. The set displayed much of the work, largely as single items, in grouped tower cases which allowed a view from all angles. Along one side of the gallery was a hanging transparent screen of large pebbles suspended on steel cable, leading the eye to the end wall with its continuous projection, and diagonally to the outcome of a collaboration with Jasper Vaughan - Jali Screen, a quasi-textile glass and metal construction in wonderful warm pinks and reds, and obviously on a bigger scale than the wearables. The projection reflected an apparently real-time view of a piece of sky, inhabited by birds, clouds, light, rain and slow, quiet natural sound. The second projection, by Shadi Vossough, on the opposite end wall, behind the entering viewer's back, gently reflected the maker's work, home, hands, and workbench scattered with tools and images.

From this, you can see that this exhibition, I believe the first real retrospective of Charlotte de Syllas' work, was designed, like its fellows, with a profound understanding of the maker's aesthetic and working timelines. This show, in particular, reflected the intensive and perfectionist quality de Syllas brings to her individual pieces. What we saw in the show, including the Jellyfish neckpiece, the truly astonishing white jade 'Migration' necklace, that much-illustrated black-and white interlocked cuff, the early 'Head' ring, with its imposing box, and the much

> continued from previous page



more recent ‘Twist’ and ‘Tulip’ pieces, was an absorbing mix of the familiar (if only from photographs) and the new. It was enormously important to see them together, and displayed like this, rather than in a conventional spotlight clutter. The choice of pieces confirmed the basis of my enormous respect for the work, but also demonstrated an ongoing iterative process of aesthetic renewal and technical refinement. It is to the credit of both the maker, the curator and the lenders that it was possible, even for a short time, to look and see. And to think about the experience. Let’s hope that it proves to have been a trendsetter.

**Charlotte de Syllas: necklace, Migration. White jade.**  
**Photo: Shannon Tofts**

## MATTER IN EDINBURGH

Adam Paxon, an internationally recognised contemporary jewellery artist, first visited the Dovecot building in August 2008 at the invitation of IC:Innovative Craft. Inspired by the beauty and invitation of the new Dovecot gallery spaces, Paxon was also struck by the ‘unfamiliar announcement of purpose’ that offered space for new thinking. In 2009, with the assistance of funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, IC and Dovecot were able to invite Adam and the furniture designers, Jim Partridge and Liz Walmsley, back into the building to curate events and exhibitions which responded to the spaces using their knowledge and experience as artists and makers.

Each exhibition focussed on the work of one maker, with Paxon orchestrating a balance of finished works, photography, sound, live studio activity and film to give a resonant viewing space for his subjects.

The four makers, Drummond Masterton, Charlotte De Syllas, Lina Peterson and David Poston participated fully in the exhibition process leading one to say ‘it was the best display of her jewellery in 45 years’ and another to comment that it made her feel ‘full of enthusiasm for new work’.

*Amanda Game, Lead Director, IC:Innovative Craft*

## NEW WORK BY ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART JEWELLERY GRADUATES

Electrum Gallery, London 16 July – 14 August 2010

**The recent refurbishment of Electrum has transformed the experience of visiting this prestigious gallery.** The 'on street' presence of the gallery is at once more welcoming than formerly, as the window provides an enticing view of the interior through to the back without compromising the impact of the actual jewellery pieces shown in the window display.

The 1970s wall panels have been stripped away and the grooved boards beneath have been painted an utterly gorgeous shade of indigo/charcoal/ocean/plum/soot which provides a perfect background against which to display wall-hung pieces. Wide floorboards echo the vertical proportions. Two pale painted cast iron fireplaces are a natural focal point for the space above. This transformation of the interior space has made it so much more welcoming and accessible. I always used to feel like a bull in a china shop on my visits there as being tall and usually carrying a bag or two I was always aware that the floor shook beneath me and exhibits rattled in their cases. I used to be relieved to leave without causing some kind of disaster, or being in the way. No longer – and gallery staff Beth and Hannah are very welcoming and knowledgeable. There is now no fear of embarrassment for the visitor as the new display cases have been carefully balanced on the floor so that they no longer bounce, and the displays are wonderfully accessible to a visitor of almost any height and volume. It feels now that there is space to breathe, and for the exhibits to establish their presence in their surroundings.

Eleanor Bolton, Donna Brennan, Rachael Colley, Caroline Holt, Nan Nan Liu, Marta Mattson, Therese Morch-Jorgensen, Christopher Thompson-Royds, Katharina Bianca Vones are the makers selected for the exhibition, and this is the second year in which Electrum has showcased Royal College of Art Graduates. The exhibits were selected by Sarah Edwards and Flora Bhattachary, working closely with Hans Stofer and the RCA. This year's selection is distinguished by the exuberant diversity of materials: cotton, balsa wood, lead, biscuits, metal, jet dust, paint, concrete, horsehair and more – all employed with both investigative endeavour and a welcome lack of inhibition by this year's chosen graduates.

Nostalgia for the iconic Jammie Dodgers biscuits drew me to Rachel Colley's intriguing work. The structural integrity of the forms which encase the sturdy biscuits is belied by the fragility of the laser cut balsa wood from which they are made. Where does this narrative lead? The viewer must decide...and yes, they are real biscuits.

Eleanor Bolton has developed her own craft technique for coiling and stitching cotton rope into large scale jewellery pieces. Wall hung above the staircase in the gallery, they have true decorative presence together with an honesty that beguiles the viewer and celebrates the tactile qualities of the material.

Favourite for me is the work of Christopher Thompson-Royds. Working with a seductive combination of lead and gold he has created a collection of seal rings which seem to bear the weight of history. An emphatic circular neck piece shows the marks of process: the casting sprues, the slight seam spill and various marks of the maker's hand. Beside this fascinating use of a comparatively humble, though heavy material the gold looks almost sullen. The extruded, unearthed and even slightly squishy look of this piece stood out for me as a special highlight. Searching the web for more information about this process has convinced me that these makers are right to keep their methods to themselves, and to continue to delight us with covetable conclusions.

**Christopher Thompson-Royds. Necklace, 2010. Fine silver, lead and candlewick. Photo: the maker.**



## CERAMIC JEWELLERY

By Joy Bosworth. A&C Black, London, 2010. £15.99.

Reviewed by Margot Coatts

**The A&C Black list of ceramic and glass handbooks now stands at an impressive 92 titles, not including books for schools and the hobbyist.**

The latest, 'Ceramic Jewellery', is by a potter and teacher who is more than able to write with authority on ceramic methods. She combines this knowledge with a jeweller's sensitivity to scale and wearability, conveying many design ideas as well as practical instruction.

In her introduction, Joy Bosworth sets out the validity of non-precious materials as part of jewellery or adornment and cites René Lalique, working in Nancy in the early 1900s, for elevating horn and glass to a position in jewellery where it could fetch high prices. At a similar time the Ruskin Pottery, based in Smethwick, became the British pioneer famed for its ceramics featuring high-temperature coloured glazes used for components in jewellery and metalwork by manufacturers including Tiffany. In the last thirty years, leading ceramic jewellery exponents include Wendy Ramshaw, who produced a collection in gold and jasperware clay with Wedgwood, and Kathryn Partington whose association with the same company as a pattern designer also fed into her ceramic jewellery. Ruth Tomlinson's articulated porcelain flowers have recently won many admirers and appear on the cover of this book. Ceramic materials have, with other non-precious substances, become firmly a part of the expanding territory of jewellery.

The two most important things ceramics can lend to jewellery are colour and decorative surface textures. Bosworth devotes a chapter to creating such textures with sprig moulds, by stamping, using slips, impressing or rolling found materials (such as rope) into clay; and carving and modelling the surface directly. Next, she describes forming in the round, to make such things as beads, bangles and pendants. The production of these could be by throwing, hand-building and modelling, slip casting, press-moulding or extruding the clay – in fact any technique in miniature. This section of the book also

covers the threading or attachment of ceramic components, which obviously needs to be resolved at the wet clay stage.

One of the most obvious advantages of ceramic jewellery is its ability to carry colour permanently, with none of the long-term uncertainties associated with synthetic materials. Oxides and enamels, or transfer prints, can be combined with glossy or matt surfaces. Stains and glazes offer a vast palette at relatively low cost and, as this book confirms, colouring and firing clay is a fascinating science. Of course, the resulting ceramic items must be linked, assembled or manipulated in some way for wearing and the author devotes an essential chapter to settings and findings such as clasps, wires, chains, yarns and other fibres for threading. Joy Bosworth's own clasp of a handmade silver bar and raku-fired ceramic ring (to fasten a piece incorporating a neck-scarf) is one of the most original shown.

The book concludes with a gallery section endorsing the point that ceramic jewellery is part of the mainstream of contemporary work. Illustrations of pieces by Daisy Choi, Tanvi Kant, Ruudt Peters and Claire Ireland (among others) show some recent ideas that make one aware of the versatility of ceramic elements in jewellery.

Kathryn Partington. Silence brooch, 2007.  
Glazed bone china and silver with raised pigment.  
7.5 x 8cm. Photo: Gareth Partington



## COLOURED ALUMINIUM JEWELLERY

By Lindsey Mann. A&C Black 2010. £16.99. Design and Make series.

Reviewed by Sophie Honeybelle

**I loved this book. It is a particularly relevant text for me to read as I am currently working with printed anodized aluminium for the first time.** This book offers me a wide range of ideas and techniques to further my understanding of the various ways to work with aluminium in jewellery design.

The images in the book are excellent with plenty of examples of the author's work as well as a variety from other makers. I have long been a fan of Mann's jewellery and to read her book has given me invaluable insight into how she works. I am very grateful to Mann and to the other contributors for sharing their knowledge and information. Ever reliant on the internet for information to inform my own studio practice, reading a detailed and comprehensive book about this subject has been like unearthing a diamond.

The book covers a broad view of the subject and includes chapters on the anodizing process from scratch, all the colouring processes a jeweller may need as well as chapters on problem-solving, fabrication and assembly and a gallery section to show what can be achieved with this fascinating material. Mann includes a section about health and safety; gives references for other sources of information and includes an appendix of suppliers, which is always very useful.

The opening chapter gives a brief history of aluminium and the science behind anodising. I found it especially interesting to know that at one time aluminium was considered to be worth



Lindsey Mann. Pendant N10, 2009. Anodised, sublimated print. Photo: Lindsey Mann

more than gold. Chapter 2 guides the maker wanting to do their own sulphuric acid anodising and includes a precise chemicals and equipment list.

In Chapter 3 Mann goes into plenty of detail about the various colouring and patterning techniques including information about colour appreciation; how to use water-based and solvent-based dyes; how to best employ dip-dyeing techniques and includes a large section covering the many different methods of printmaking. The section about sublimation printing was fascinating as was the page covering the topic of colour removal. The problem-solving chapter will surely help any maker new to this material or an experienced practitioner who may need to find answers to recurrent issues.

The chapter about non-wearable objects might not seem all that relevant at first glance, but may spark some ideas for jewellers or for those keen to expand their use of coloured aluminium into other craft areas.

The final chapter contains three design briefs to help the maker apply their new-found knowledge to create a finished piece of jewellery.

Something I also appreciated in this book is the understanding the author has of the need for each maker to discover their own path and to find what is right for them and their style. She can offer guidance to contribute to a maker's practice, but ultimately it is up to the individual to create new ways of working, which helps to enrich the jewellery sector all the more.

Daniel Jocz. Ribbon. Armpiece 2005. Aluminium coloured by solvent-based and water-based colourants. Photo: Dean Powell



# CHASING AND REPOUSSÉ – METHODS ANCIENT AND MODERN

By Nancy Megan Corwin. A&C Black (Originally published by Brynmorgen Press), £30

Reviewed by Tessa Holland

**Should first impressions count? This is a nice quality hardback book with plentiful colour photos and a glossy smell.** Flicking through it reveals generous principles of demystification and a well thought out structure. The illustrations are placed in a logical relationship to the relevant text: finished work is described by maker's name, dimensions and material; 'process' shots are captioned to direct your eye to the relevant detail. Lay the book open, and it stays open on that page - invaluable for a workshop manual.

The main focus here is on working metal and inspiring possibilities – there is only a very brief introduction to the history of repoussé, and then the book moves on to its central chapters about practice – finishing with a broad gallery of images and statements from contemporary practitioners.

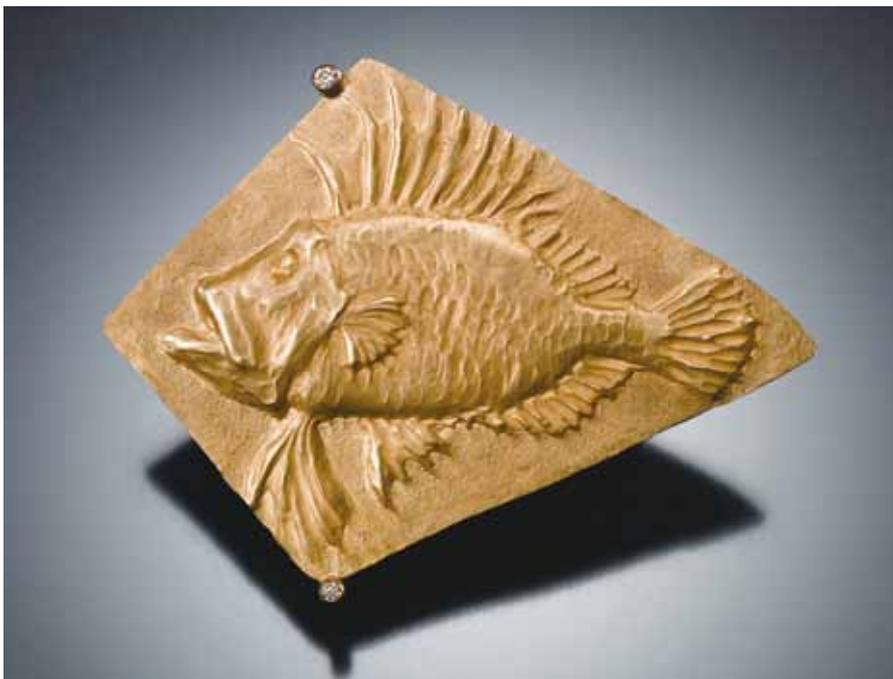
Nancy Megan Corwin addresses herself to the realities of workshop life. Excellent explanations of different metals and their properties are complemented by enough scientific detail to develop a practical understanding of what takes place during processes like work-hardening, annealing or tempering. There is a whole chapter just on pitch. I really appreciated the breadth of comment such as how to make and maintain one's own tools, and also how to judge the quality of a shop-bought tool and how to modify it. It is refreshingly useful to see pictures of poor technique to compare alongside the good, and to have an explanation of why it is unhelpful to do it that way, rather than just a bald instruction that it's correct to do it this way. Her advice is situated in the real world, where you don't always have the exact tool, mistakes need correcting, and sometimes your body aches, and small adjustments matter in unforeseen ways.

Later chapters deal with more advanced skills, including working without pitch, complementary metalwork techniques, stone-setting, and variations of scale and complexity. As a beginner, I feel unqualified to comment on these other than to say they look to have the same rigorous approach.

There were a few proof reading bloopers here and there, and it was slightly inconvenient that suppliers, terms and measurements are designed for a US readership... though Google can nowadays connect us with most products; and there are conversion charts in the appendices.

NMC is a lovely communicator on the particular experience of moving metal in this way, and she has an intuitive understanding of the delicate confidence of a learner. Using an ancient, dirty second-hand pitch pot and some variously improvised punches and hammers, I made a first stab at chasing and repoussé. The small scrap of Britannia silver felt surprisingly responsive against the pitch and I was amazed at the height and detail it's possible to raise with just one cycle of working/annealing. In my (albeit simple) experiments with makeshift tools I didn't come across a single practical difficulty that the author hadn't anticipated! The result was that I felt emboldened to carry on in a spirit of experimentation and ended up with a simple abstract doodle, with which I am pleased beyond reasonable proportion.

As the introduction says: 'I hope that the work shown here will stimulate imagination and encourage a new generation of artists to master these timeless techniques.' There is a real sense that she has given generously and freely of her knowledge and I really did find the book inspiring and enabling.



Linda Kindler Priest. Brooch 'Fish with Attitude'.  
Copper. Photo: Gordon Bernstein

## RECENT AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS

**Mounting and Setting Stones.** Sonia Cheadle. A&C Black, April 2011. £16.99. ISBN 978 1408109120 If an advance copy is available in time for review in *Findings 52*, we should welcome interest from expert reviewers.

**Junk-Box Jewellery: 25 Inspirational Projects.** Sarah Drew. A&C Black. October 2010. £14.99. ISBN 978 1408122273

**Enamelling on Precious Metals.** Jeanne Werge-Hartley. The Crowood Press, July 2010 (New paperback edition) £16.99. ISBN 978 1847972057

**Art Deco Jewelry: Modernist Masterworks and their Makers.** Eveyne Possémé et al. Thames & Hudson, 2009. £36. ISBN 9780500514771

**Art Meets Jewellery: 20 years of Galerie Slavik, Vienna.** Cornelia Holzach et al. Arnoldsche Art Publishers. September 2010. £35. ISBN 9783897903326

**Now! Jewels of Norman Weber.** Ellen Maurer Zitioli (ed.). Arnoldsche Art Publishers. September 2010. £25. ISBN 978389703319

**Indian Jewellery: Dance of the Peacock.** Usha R. Bala Krishnan and Meena Sushil Kumar. Antique Collectors' Club, June 2010. £50. ISBN 9781851496334

**Inspired Jewelry: From the Museum of Arts and Design.** The Museum of Arts and Design, New York. Ursula Ilse-Neuman. Antique Collectors' Club, 2010. £29.95.

**The Worldwide History of Beads** (New edition). Lois Sher Dubin. Thames and Hudson, 2010. £39.95. ISBN 978 0 500 515006.

**Twentieth Century Jewelry: from Art Nouveau to the Present.** Alba Capillieri. Skira, £45. ISBN 978 88 6130 532 8

**Jewelry from Nature.** Ruth Peltason. Thames and Hudson, £24.95. ISBN 978 0 500 515334. 200 years of fine jewellery made from materials derived from plant or animal sources.

**Paul Flato: Jeweler to the Stars.** Elizabeth Irvine Bray. Antique Collectors Club, £45 hb. ISBN 978 1851496242. A tribute to the life and work of the original Hollywood jeweller.

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## Jewellery Quarter Jewellery Commissions: An exhibition of contemporary jewellery

### Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

18 September 2010 to 5 February 2011



This stunning exhibition showcases newly commissioned pieces of jewellery by Birmingham designer makers. In celebration of the historic Jewellery Quarter, the jewellery is inspired by the area and draws on its buildings and architecture, its history and heritage.

All three participating designer makers; Heidi Hinder, Anna Lorenz and Kathryn Partington reveal in their work the extraordinary skill and creativity that thrives in the Jewellery Quarter today.

The exhibition also gives insight into the processes involved in making the jewellery including preparatory works and photographs of the makers in their workshops.

Heidi Hinder. 'What a relief! The Jewellery Quarter is glowing.' 2010. Mixed materials. Photo: maker

### Museum of the Jewellery Quarter

75-80 Vyse Street, Hockley, Birmingham B18  
Tel: (0121) 554 3598 [www.bmag.org.uk](http://www.bmag.org.uk)

Open 10.30am – 4.00pm Tuesday to Saturday

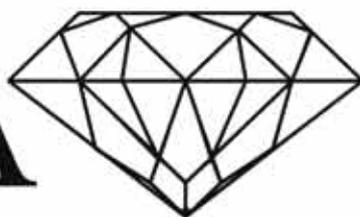
Closed Sunday and Monday, except  
Bank Holiday Mondays

### Graham Hughes

ACJ members will be saddened to learn of the death of Graham Hughes, at the age of 84. He was widely acknowledged as one of the most influential figures in the promotion, from the 1960s, of designer jewellery, through the exhibitions he organised at Goldsmiths' Hall, and the many books on jewellery that he authored.

Unfortunately the news has come too late for us to arrange an obituary, but we shall hope to publish an appropriate tribute in the Spring 2011 issue of *Findings*.

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