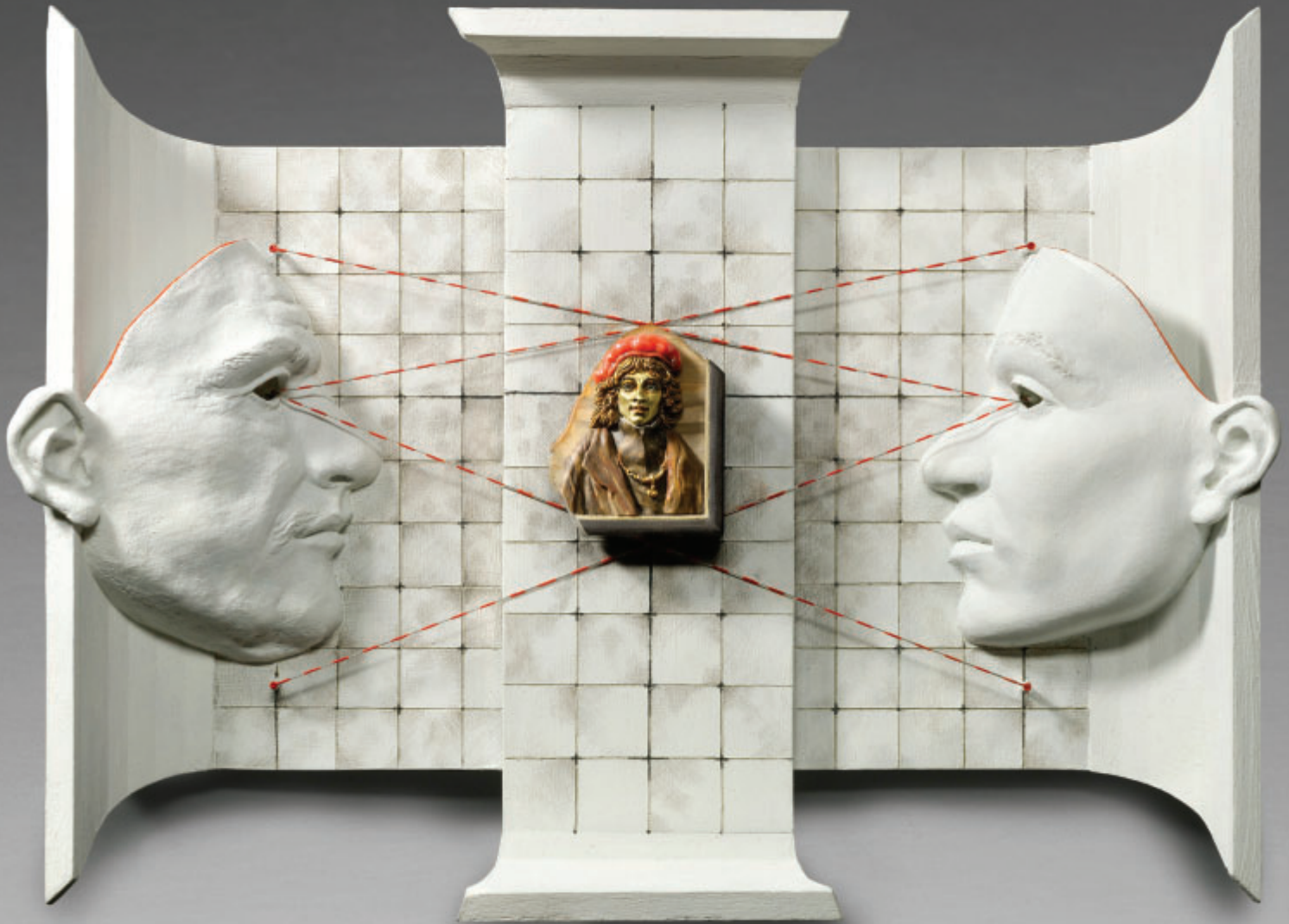


# FINDINGS

Issue 53 Autumn 2011

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The Magazine of the Association for Contemporary Jewellery

**Barbara Christie** How to Survive a Breakdown **Stacey Bentley** Cinderella's Stories **Kevin Coates** Matters of Life and Death **MAdness** in the Method at BCU  
Book Reviews and Reports

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# CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



The commitment to writing this letter every six months has reinforced not only the relentless passage of time but also its repetitive and predictable nature. At this time we have once again been inspired by London Jewellery Week and work from graduating students; we then have the autumn shows such as IJL, Origin and Goldsmiths Fair, all of which herald the build-up to all those pre-Christmas fairs!

With so many activities of interest to the jeweller it is important that full use is made of your e-bulletins. These monthly postings of news, notices and members services are such usefully topical means of communication. For those of you who need more immediate interactivity the LinkedIn and Facebook groups are proving increasingly popular. Along with our page on the new Crafthaus site, these provide unrivalled opportunities to communicate with each other and establish wider, as yet unknown, communities.

So here I can only mention significant highlights of the ACJ Board's recent work:

- In conjunction with developing communities indicated above, we have re-established links with SNAG, our equivalent organisation in the USA
- I am pleased this year's AGM is able to coincide with an ACJ Private View of the All Golds exhibition – truly a case of combining business with pleasure
- I am not so pleased to be announcing the first increase in membership subscriptions since 2003. We have resisted any increase for a number of years but, over this time, benefits to members have increased considerably and we believe the new rates (especially when discounted!) offer exceptional value.
- Next year, as well as the London Olympics, there will be much celebration for the Diamond Jubilee. This is the theme for our Members' Exhibition which opens in March and should create a most significant, high profile event within a busy year.

Please see the e-bulletins for details of all these and other events.

Thank you to those members, whether on the Board, Advisory Panel or running regional groups, who are working for the Association's development.

*Terry Hunt*

# EDITORIAL

In the early days of ACJ when we decided a regular newsletter would be A Good Idea, we began an occasional series of features called Living National Treasures, principally to tell younger members about some of the pioneer supporters of designer-jewellers in this country, of whom they might be unaware, and partly to celebrate the achievements of those early champions, and also the practitioners whose lifetime contributions had contributed so much to our jewelled heritage. Barbara Christie's popularity and prestige as a maker and as an influential teacher puts her firmly in the category of a Living National Treasure, and Zoe Arnold's long association with Barbara cast her immediately as the interviewer.

In addition Malcolm Morris shares his experience of a career-threatening breakdown, and his recovery, and imparts advice on how to deal with such a situation.

As always we offer thoughtful reviews of exhibitions and books, and don't forget that we welcome offers of research-based feature articles, and even philosophical essays, if you have ideas you would like to share with other members.

Kevin Coates. *Penumbra 8: The Red Hat. Mounted brooch. Mount: wood, charred resin, silverpoint drawing on gesso, steel cord. Details of brooch on p.9* Photo: Clarissa Bruce

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# LIVING NATIONAL TREASURES: An occasional series

## BARBARA CHRISTIE

An interview by Zoe Arnold

**I meet Barbara Christie in Hatton Garden, she walks up to me with a welcoming smile and outstretched arms.**

It's been a while since we last met and I'm happy to see her looking well, and yet as I look up to see the deftly twisted scarf covering her hair I know this is not the case, but her eyes are as ever, twinkling, and we sit down to talk.

I have known Barbara since 2001 when she taught me when a visiting tutor on the jewellery design course at Central Saint Martins. This is where I first came across her formidable teaching style and seemingly inexhaustible capacity to give to her students an imperative which has spurred many a flagging scholar, young or old, to greater things over the years. Barbara has taught as a visiting lecturer at Central Saint Martins for 17 years, at West Dean for 25 years, and was head of the extremely popular and successful jewellery department at Morley College for 33 years. With some students enjoying her teaching so much they have attended this course for the entire span, you may think that Barbara has given her all with little time left for her own work, but this is certainly not the case. In her own words her work 'takes the emphasis' and this deep love of creating is patently evident in her vibrant and inventive collections.

Each piece being a one off creation, an enticing extract from the tantalising clouds of her imagination, one cannot help but see

in her work the history of Barbara's upbringing in Amsterdam, Holland, in the 1950's, and the quirky start to her jewellery career. This has its roots in the fringe theatre, where she first discovered a love for making decorative body props and accessories. Shoe buckles, hand ornaments and any little oddities needed for the productions sparked an interest in making which has never faded over the years.

Coming to London in 1969 Barbara was largely self-taught. Two years of evening courses at Sir John Cass (now part of London Metropolitan University) and a grant from the Crafts Council saw her unusual designs rightly picked up at a time when jewellery was going through an exciting period of change, with many of the big names in jewellery emerging. 'Art' jewellery was coming to the fore. Solo shows around the world soon followed and Barbara has ever since managed to keep a fresh and ever changing approach to her work.



Necklace, Celebration, 2011. 18ct yellow gold/sterling silver, black tourmaline slices, lava cameo, central basalt stone.  
Photo: Graeme Harris

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## FEATURES

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This jeweller is however, a slight mystery to many, her mind is not naturally one for extravagant self promotion, preferring instead to while away the hours in her well appointed studio than to engage in the current world of the popular and celebrity jeweller. This has certainly been to Barbara Christie's advantage, having now gained somewhat of a cult status among her clients. Many a time I have seen their eyes light up with anticipation as a box of jewellery is unveiled at a private viewing session or intimate show, and this personal touch and intimate quality is in perfect balance with the pieces themselves. Having a rich and diverse range of skills to draw from, and an eclectic treasure trove of stones and curiosities hidden in every cupboard and drawer, it is not surprising that such technically challenging and visually stimulating riches are produced. Texture, colour, light and form are all explored and arranged in works that are as much about collage and sculpture, as they are jewellery. The box, the frame and inner spaces are ever revisited themes, drawing perhaps on her love of American artist Joseph Cornell, or Tado Ando, a Japanese architect, and on the hidden structure. "It's the box, basically," Barbara explains, "what it contains. Light seeping in through windows".

A love of quality and materials is possibly handed down from her parents, a father who owned a factory designing and making furniture, and a mother who was talented with textiles and embroidery would surely be proud of Barbara's many achievements over the years. Asking Barbara if she has any future plans for her work, she replies that she would very much like a book of her collections to be produced. I hope this wish is achieved because this would be a great treasure indeed, and a source of inspiration and pleasure for many. A suggested title perhaps?

Light Seeping Through Windows...



Brooch, Time passing, 2011. 18ct yellow gold/sterling silver. Enamelled white clouds, Picasso jasper, modelled plaster bird. Photo Graeme Harris



Ring, Coming Together, 2011. 18ct yellow gold/sterling silver, drussee, moonstone, natural topaz beads, pale coral flower. Photo: Graeme Harris

# HOW TO SURVIVE A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

Malcolm Morris gives his advice to stressed fellow jewellers

**2009 was a busy year. I did IJL at Earl's Court in September and was lucky enough to be selected for 'Origin' in October.** I ended up working flat out to get more things ready for 'Origin' and not working on any of my IJL orders and it was only after 'Origin' finished that I could start the IJL orders, which were now urgent. It was a busy time getting the work out to shops before Christmas but I managed to get every thing out on time. Unfortunately the selling time was quite short by then. Not ideal, but we had managed it.

In January 2010, I planned to do 'Top Drawer' at Earls Court. At this time the recession word was being used a lot so it was important to make sales at the show. So in spite of not having a break at Christmas, I hit the floor running with yet another show. I had not done 'Top Drawer' before although I had taken part in 'Collections', at the same time and in the same location. 'Collections' was a more designer-led fair and it had been good as a platform, but not great on sales. That year 'Collections' and 'Top Drawer' would be combined and I opted for 'Collections'

On reflection this was definitely not a show for my work, which is designer handmade in the UK and not imported, so was more expensive than other work on sale. I had a terrible show, and to top it all I was to go on holiday the following day. I will never go away so soon after a show again: I had to pack and prepare to catch our plane, which added to my stress levels. I did consider cancelling it, but it was by now very much needed. The two weeks in Morocco were fantastic and I'm glad I didn't cancel it.

About two weeks later I was to do my first international show at 'Inhorgenta' Munich. Getting things ready for an international show is enormously stressful. At 'Inhorgenta' a friend commented that I didn't seem entirely focussed. I put it down to just being tired. A week after I got back I did a show for a charity, and two weeks later I started to get dizzy.

I could cope with just being dizzy, but two weeks later it felt as if my brain had been washed and put back in. I could not remember things, I was dizzy, my handwriting was unreadable. All

Three rings, 2011: silver, cold enamel.



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## FEATURES

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I could do was sit there and feel sorry for myself. Until then I had been very healthy, but suddenly I seemed to be struck down. You don't think you're going to be ill for so long. Somehow, with a great deal of help, I managed, only just, to keep my company afloat. I couldn't even write cheques, but managed to scrawl a signature. My self confidence was at an all time low. I now realise that this was a nervous breakdown.

Over the past year, I have been prodded and scanned five times, had a PET scan, several MRIs and a lumbar puncture – all without a diagnosis. I started counselling sessions (I think that every one should have these) and taking anti-depressants. I know that it was my brain telling me to slow down. I was told that the brain is very good at regenerating itself, but this takes time. It would learn how to get to the same answer via a different route.

I had always wanted to get into meditation. I heard about a congenial group, so I started. Already after my first meeting I felt much better, so I decided to go each week and to try to do a little every day. People around me started saying that I looked much better; I bought a CD and put it on my ipod to listen to on my own. Some people think you have to empty your mind when meditating, but that is not the case. You will always have an active mind, so it's impossible to cease thinking. As we only use 20% of our brain functions, I think meditation calms one part of the brain while the other half is subconsciously working out problems.

With the enforced step back from my business, I took time out to consider how to get my company back in shape. I realised I needed to delegate more, and I now have someone to sort out my website, and a much needed book-keeper. After designing

and making jewellery for 36 years, I realised the internet is so much more important for business now. It's no longer enough just to make jewellery. You have to promote the name and make it into a brand. I'd not done this before.

I now have so much enthusiasm for my business. It's like the energy I had when I first started. I know it will take some time to get fully back on my feet, but I have learned to change my approach. I never want to be that ill again, but something good has come out of a bad situation.

This year I have started again with lots of energy. I took part at 'Inhorgenta' in February and the British Craft Fair in March. I took part in 'Treasure' for London Jewellery Week in June. We need a show at that time of the year, it's perfect timing for shops to look for interesting design to get in stock for September. This year there was even a Trade private view.

After a very difficult year I now have renewed goals for my business as well as a better organised way of reaching them. Having something to work towards is very empowering, so I would recommend all businesses to renew their goals regularly. But make sure you look after yourself in the process!



Pendant necklace, 2011. Oxidised Silver.

## STACEY BENTLEY

Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh. 8 September –14 October

Reviewed by Beth Legg

**'It is only after you have come to know the surface of things...that you can venture to seek what is underneath. But the surface of things is inexhaustible.'**<sup>1</sup>

Stacey Bentley uses a combination of industrial and low-fired vitreous enamels over silver, gold and iron structures to create work with which she aims to 'challenge the pre-conceived ideas attached to enamel by questioning technique, process and aesthetic'<sup>2</sup>. She is part of a growing movement of emerging jewellers who attempt to push enamel beyond its traditional boundaries and much of her work is characterised by a desire to investigate the relationship between the enamel and the metal surface to which it is applied. To the untrained eye this method of working may appear simple and effortless but in fact requires high levels of knowledge and control of the material in order to be successful. Alongside the work of contemporary jewellers such as German artist Bettina Dittmann, a leading proponent of this innovative

approach to enamel, Bentley has explored the possibilities open to artists when they approach the enamel surface in a painterly manner unconstrained by traditional concepts. Urban landscapes and the patterns and structures she observes within the city inform her creative practice. Her process often involves initially painting her observations onto small scale enamel panels which help her to reflect upon these industrial surfaces. These then inform her skeletal but tactile jewellery forms which explore line, shadow, granular textures and matt finishes.

Bentley has already begun to gain international recognition with her work being selected for the Galerie Marzee International Graduation Show in 2009 and by CraftScotland at Collect in 2010 and so it was encouraging to see Bentley's first solo show being held at the Scottish Gallery this year. Bentley graduated from Edinburgh College of Art with a 1st class BA honours degree and a Masters in Jewellery and Silversmithing in 2009. It was here that she first developed an

interest in enamelling and a visit to the Enamel Research Centre at the University of the West of England (sadly now closed) under the tutelage of Elizabeth Turrell introduced Bentley to the possibilities of industrial liquid enamel.

For this show the majority of her work (almost 40 pieces) was displayed in a freestanding table-top cabinet and was grouped in blocks of colour which was a simple and strong method of presenting this large group of work. I found the mottled grey felt which had been used as a base had a flattening effect on the matt surface of the enamel pieces and unfortunately eliminated the interesting shadow effects that these structures can create. Although I understand that it is not always practical, it would also have been good to see more pieces displayed on the wall and taken from behind the distancing effect of the glass cabinet - matt glass enamel surfaces behind polished clear glass felt a little incongruous to me as this form of work is so concerned with surface. Positive inclusions in this show were Bentley's sketchbooks and two panel pieces displayed in a side cabinet. It was encouraging to see a commercial gallery contextualising an emerging maker's work by having sketchbooks available to see on request.

This is an interesting point in her career development to be showcasing her work; a time when commercial pressures and financial limitations can challenge



**Navy blue brooch, 2011. Oxidised silver, iron, enamel, 18ct yellow gold, stainless steel pin.**

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Earrings. 18ct yellow gold, oxidised silver, iron, enamel

emerging makers. Here we see Bentley bringing together the industrial qualities of iron and liquid enamel with the warmth and preciousness of gold for the first time; I believe that despite the financial gamble, this is both an aesthetically pleasing and commercially astute development in her work. Her jewellery objects are accessible in scale and they invite you to handle them. You can see the progression of her work and it is evident that she has made a concerted effort to create new pieces over a range of forms and price brackets with new rings and earrings available for this show. Bentley's strongest pieces are her larger brooches and necklaces. I particularly enjoyed the bold symmetry of her new neckpieces – simple hollow linear forms which are transformed when worn on the body. In her newest pieces she has started using sheet metal as well as enamelling on textured fine silver wires, these have a more structured and controlled feel to them.

Bentley is exploring enamel in an open and experimental way, exploiting the expressive and innovative potential of the material. Her work is reflective of the celebration of democratised materials within contemporary jewellery practice and is an example of what can be produced when specialist training and dedicated facilities within arts institutions come together in innovative hands. I look forward to seeing how her work progresses.

<sup>1</sup> *Italo Calvino, Mr Palomar* (Mariner Books, 1986)

<sup>2</sup> From her website: <http://www.staceybentley.com>

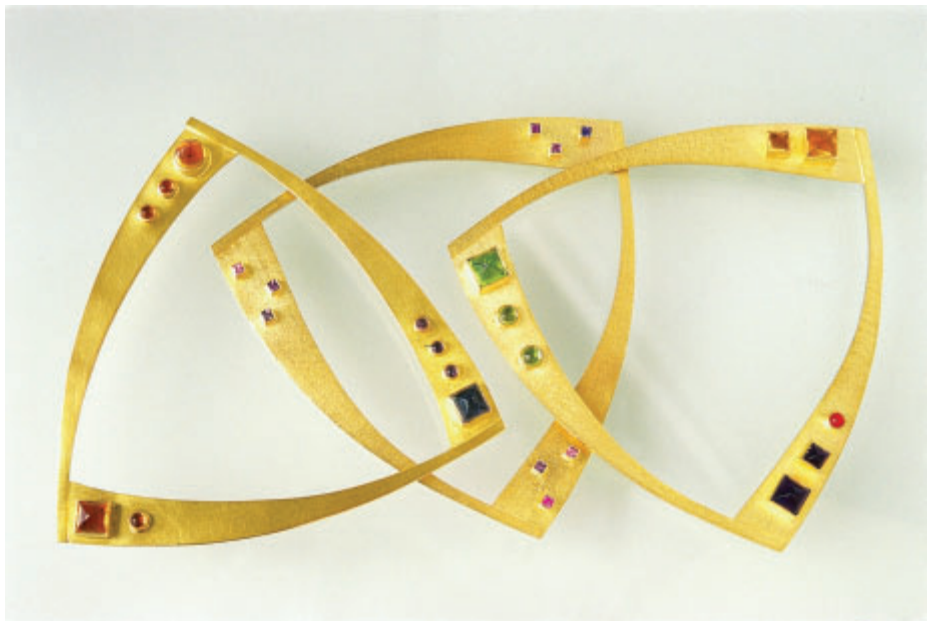
## CINDERELLA STORIES

### Lesley Craze Gallery, 8 September – 14 October

This was a rare opportunity to enjoy a selection of antipodean jewellery, brought from Western Australia. Curated by Dr Dorothy Erickson, the exhibition of work by seven prominent Australian jewellers based or linked with the jewellery scene in Perth showed an impressive range of styles and ideas. The work drew on nearly 200 years of precious metalworking in a region long associated with the mining of gold, diamonds and other minerals, and each artist demonstrated an individual response to this heritage.

Almost all the work in the exhibition was in precious metals and gems, but using also enamels, plastics and organic materials linked with the natural history and plant life of the region. The work was largely delicate in form, using geometric structures in wire, often incorporating kinetic elements.

The artists showing in the exhibition, each of whom has an international profile, were Dorothy Erickson, Cartier Makigawa, Felicity Peters, Gillian Rainer, Brenda Ridgewell, Cristel van der Laan and David Walker.



Dorothy Erickson. Three Bangles. 2010. 18ct gold, coloured gemstones



Dorothy Erickson: Ring, silver, aquamarine



## KEVIN COATES – TIME REGAINED at The Wallace Collection, London, 23 June – 25 September, 2011

Reviewed by Dauvit Alexander

**The catalogue for *Time Regained* is subtitled “Works by Artist-Goldsmith, Kevin Coates”: an elegant understatement.** Reflecting on the works presented in this exhibition, the first major public show of Coates’ work since 2007, the question of how to define both the man and his work is always unsettlingly lurking in the back of the mind. That he is an “artist-goldsmith” is not in doubt: the problem with that definition is that it is so very limiting. Coates is also a seemingly effortless painter, draughtsman, calligrapher, poet, musician, enameller, stone-carver... the list goes on and on, making a powerful case for his being one of the finest – and most underrated – artists in Europe today, his work effortlessly bridging that critically-contrived gulf between “craft” and “art”, and defying the merely fashionable (indeed, it is hard to imagine him caring one jot for the merely fashionable).

Since 2007, Coates has worked with the Wallace Collection as its Associate Artist. There are twelve new works – Penumbrae – based on his responses to specific items in the collection, presented alongside a number of his older works, some dating back to the mid-1970s. The Penumbrae are presented in one room – *Time Regained* – with a separate retrospective comprising older works, including such key pieces as the Charter Bell for Goldsmiths’ Hall, Entry of the Queen of the Night and an excellent selection from the Notebook of Pins. Looking back to this earlier work, most striking is the way in which Coates appears as an artist, Athena-like and complete in every detail, his earliest work in many ways indistinguishable from his current works, using the same motifs, materials, theories, tropes and philosophies then as now. This holistic artistry is reflected in his charming, witty and erudite catalogue notes which are bursting with nuance and reference – as are his pieces – and a wonderfully mashed-up “Enlightenment Philosophy” of his own making blends disparate

elements such as Voltaire, Alan Bennett, Proust and Tate & Lyle syrup tins into a joyfully exuberant positivity which is affirming without any of the artery-hardening platitudes usually associated with “affirming positivity” in this century<sup>1</sup>.

The works themselves are magnificent and, like any rich meat, are almost certainly not to everyone’s taste. From a technical perspective, they are peerless: these works should be seen by anyone working as – or wishing to work as – a jeweller. The exhibition is well-presented and it is possible to see around most of the pieces, including the backs of pins and the insides of rings and it is an education to be able to see how someone of Coates’ phenomenal abilities solves technical problems relating to the everyday issues of being a (prosaic) jeweller. The manner of presenting the pieces on mounts is very appealing, an elegant way of moving jewellery from the realm of occasional to permanent, enabling the works to be enjoyed when

not being worn and moving the layers of complexity to the physical. Also of technical note is his use of materials – along with the best of contemporary jewellers, no material seems too humble – and the use of patinas to create colour.

That Coates is a master of the miniature is not in doubt. His tiny worlds charm and delight us, filling us with nostalgic yearnings for the miniature of childhood or the fairy-tale hidden secret. In this exhibition, two larger works are presented which – to this viewer – sit uncomfortably in the selection: Penumbra 3: The Judgement of Voltaire and Penumbra 12: The Choice of the Unicorn, both of which are on a larger scale and both of which seemed in some way incomplete and unsatisfying. They are both beautifully made and show Coates’ usual thorough research and philosophy, yet they seemed unsatisfying, as if they were inverted maquettes for something smaller: seeming as though they were smaller works scaled-up, with the subsequent loss of detail.

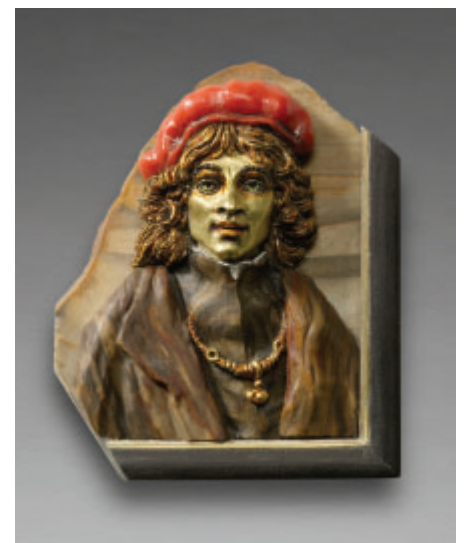
The Wallace Collection is to be praised and thanked for its endeavours in engaging and encouraging Kevin Coates to produce new and ever-more fantastical works and for presenting those works in such an exceptional exhibition.

<sup>1</sup> For a delightful example of this positivity, see the catalogue notes to “Penumbra 6: An Archer’s Ring for Cupido”

**Penumbra 11: Monsieur Boule’s Visitor. Brooch (displayed in wall mount in exhibition)**  
Carved chrysoprase, rubies, 20ct gold, various woods (marquetry), silver, 18ct white gold pins.  
Photo: Clarissa Bruce.



**Penumbra 8: The Red Hat. 2010. Mounted brooch (see cover).** 20ct gold, carved coral, petrified wood, silver, 18ct gold, white gold pins.  
Photo: Clarissa Bruce



## MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH

Kath Libbert Jewellery, Saltaire. 7 July–25 September

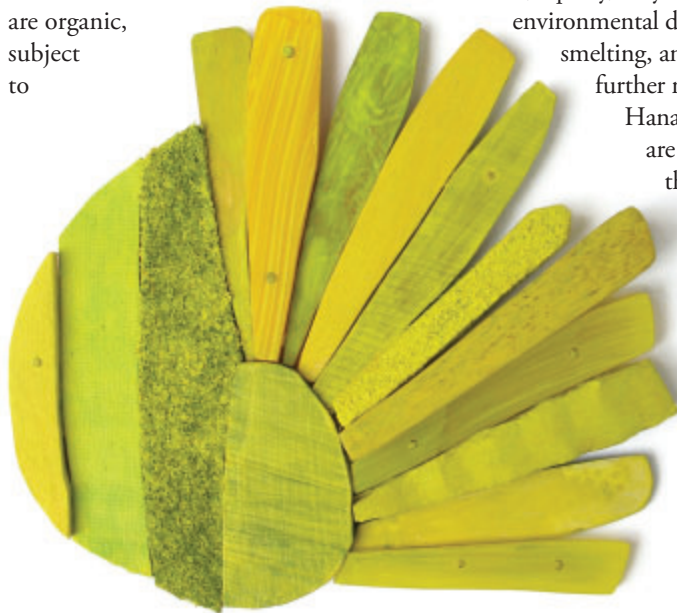
Reviewed by Elizabeth Moignard

**I came to see this exhibition late in its run, by which time it had been seen by a lot of people, many of whom left photographs of themselves wearing a chosen item from the show, and the ideas it generated, in a Chain of Thought, which formed an important part of the exhibition alongside nine makers reflecting on crucial issues, challenging, enlivening and a pause for reflection.**

Can jewellery be used effectively as a message-board by the maker? What happens when the piece is worn, if it is conventionally wearable rather than using a standard form to do something else, as Agnes Larsson's 'Carbo Neckpiece' uses carbon and horsehair to explore the permeable interface between life and death, via natural materials which have a presence in both states of being.

How does jewellery work as a statement medium for the maker, wearer and the viewer? What does each intend by their interaction with a piece? I would use Peter Vermandere's quirky Baroque Pearl Men deliberately to see what I get from the viewer - laughter, irritation, a comment on their inappropriate nature as an ornament? Pearls

are organic, subject to



Lina Peterson. Brooch, 'Yellowly' silver, 18ct gold and mixed materials' Private collection.

decay by natural or interventionist activity: we might view Gisbert Stach's installation involving the overgrowth of a pearl necklace by a tree as a commentary not only on the connections between beauty and starvation, but also on the nature of ascribed value, of the interface between people, objects and time, and like many of his pieces and installations, on ephemerality and destruction. Is a title as important to the communication of the message as the piece itself? The work of Akiko Kurihara plays with visual and verbal puns and cross-references: her 'Faces' necklace takes the pearl necklace symbolism in another direction by giving it painted facial expressions, and is probably the example to which the title actually adds least.

Bernhard Lehner's 'Belt made from a Colt revolver used in the Spanish Civil war' is a product of his desire to create art to be touched, worn, and displayed on the body. The observer may recognise its elegant components as sections of a gun magazine, and view it as a positive move to create a beautiful object for the living out of an icon of the human killer-instinct. Iron and steel remain key metals in our lives; equally, they involve enormous

environmental destruction in extraction, smelting, and onward use, often for further ruinous activity. Sophie Hanagarth's 'Trap' bracelets are an interesting fusion of that theme with several others - they have the



Bernhard Lehner. Belt made from a Colt revolver from the Spanish Civil War, sawn in pieces. 2008 Steel.

claws and teeth which are the weapons of an animal which may defend its own patch by attack on others, including humans.

The work which sits at the optimistic end of the spectrum of the show is probably the work that the wearing collector would actually be willing to display on themselves in the course of a normal day. Angela O'Keeffe's salt pieces foreground an essential element of life itself, but they are wearable as examples of their particular format - the 'Fading Light' necklace, with its labradorite collar and salt-crystal frontispiece, has a subtle colour range which could go with lots of different types of clothing, and many skin-colours. How far is the visibility and communication power of a piece linked to its form: does it have to be visually or aesthetically unconventional to get a message across? Looking at Samantha Queen's 'Kona Tree', I hope not. Her colourful plant forms are interpreted in mixes of materials which reflect on our potential power to reconstitute, conserve and repair ourselves and our damaged world through re-cycling and juxtaposition of precious and disposable, if damaging, substances. Equally, Lina Peterson's pieces are an exciting combination of surprising materials, often treated in experimental ways; the new 'Chinese Whispers' series comments wittily on organic growth and changing form.

'Life and death, light and dark, sobriety and humour' - an eloquent and moving reflection on the exhibition title by nine artists and its curator, and equally, a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate about the nature of jewellery as a communication medium.

## MADNESS IN THE METHOD - BCU MA SHOW

### Birmingham School of Jewellery, 13–23 September

Reviewed by Zoe Phillips

**The atmosphere at the private view was one of excited anticipation.** There was certainly plenty of thoughtful Method in evidence and I presume the sheer variety of form, colour and visual language constituted the MADness. It was certainly a feast for the eyes.

This course has swelled in size to encompass over 30 students from a wide variety of international backgrounds and disciplines. There were concerns that the quality of the course would suffer as a result, however I'm delighted to report that I found plenty to interest me. There were those using concepts or visual languages with which we are already familiar and some who were on the cusp of something great, but who had not pushed far enough. Overall though, some outstanding collections have been produced.

Natalie Xinzi Song's vicious looking, but soft textured silicone vessels grabbed my attention from across the room and dared me to touch them. Yu-Han Tseng's tiny magic boxes with their vividly coloured sweetshop interiors really appealed to my sense of mystery and fun. The thin steel strips forming the frame of Lei Sihan's jewellery are designed to reflect 'the endless re-occurrence of life and reincarnation,' in Buddhist philosophy, but to me they were tiny treadmills indicative of the stress and strain of daily life in a fast-paced world. The daily grind clearly influenced the concept behind Fliss Quick's 'office folk' – bored office workers in huge corporations trying to assert their individuality through the creation of escritaires.

The future for some students has already begun – Xiaohan Ren has secured an exhibition at Gallery Marzee, while Emily Bullock rejects the notion that jewellery should be displayed in a gallery environment, instead sending the viewer on a treasure hunt – a concept recently used by artist Ryan Gander with his imaginary and experiential group show Locked Room Scenario.

However the star of this show for me, and clearly a few others judging by the crowd round her stand, was Rebecca L Steventon's beautiful bowls. I enjoyed her exploration of emotional responses to the arts and the resultant enamel and gold bowls, but the pieces that I fell in love with were the incredibly delicate silicone bowls, softly rippling

around the rim under the gentle breeze of a fan and reminding me of jellyfish pulsing through the ocean. That such a gentle movement could send me into paroxysms of delight was fantastic.

Where this course excels is in the development and use of new materials and according to one student, the ability to push hard for your chosen career. Course director Jivan Astfalck states some will succeed and some won't, but '...each body of work in its own right expresses new knowledge and understanding found... and is thus adding another voice to the discipline.' Diversity is the key word here.

Rebecca Steventon, Bowl, 2011. Copper, vitreous enamel, gold plate, rubber.



## SIGURD BRONGER: LABORATORIUM MECHANUM

by Jorun Veitenberg and others. Arnoldsche, 2011. £45 hb. ISBN 978 3897903456

Reviewed by Julie Whitelaw

**ACJ members who were lucky enough to attend the ACJ conference at Birmingham School of Jewellery in 2000 may remember a presentation by Sigurd Bronger.** His talk was one of those to savour, so I was delighted that Arnoldsche has produced this well illustrated collection of his work.

The principal text is by the highly respected Norwegian critic and academic Jorunn Veiteberg. She provides the reader with the biographical basics of time and place and then provides a thoughtful and detailed analysis of the development of Bronger's work. His pieces are often described as 'jewellery devices' and throughout his career he has remained true to this interest in combining the wearable with another elusive property that hints at some function or meaning. Ornamental yet built with a love of tool making, his work is full of ideas and surprises.

In the early 1980's Bronger worked in Amsterdam where he was exposed to the design aesthetic of De Stijl and the New Jewellery, which rejected traditional materials and aspirations. He returned to Norway in 1983 and started to draw together the strands of these influences including in the mixture his attraction to scientific instruments, medical equipment, engineering and a sense of humour.

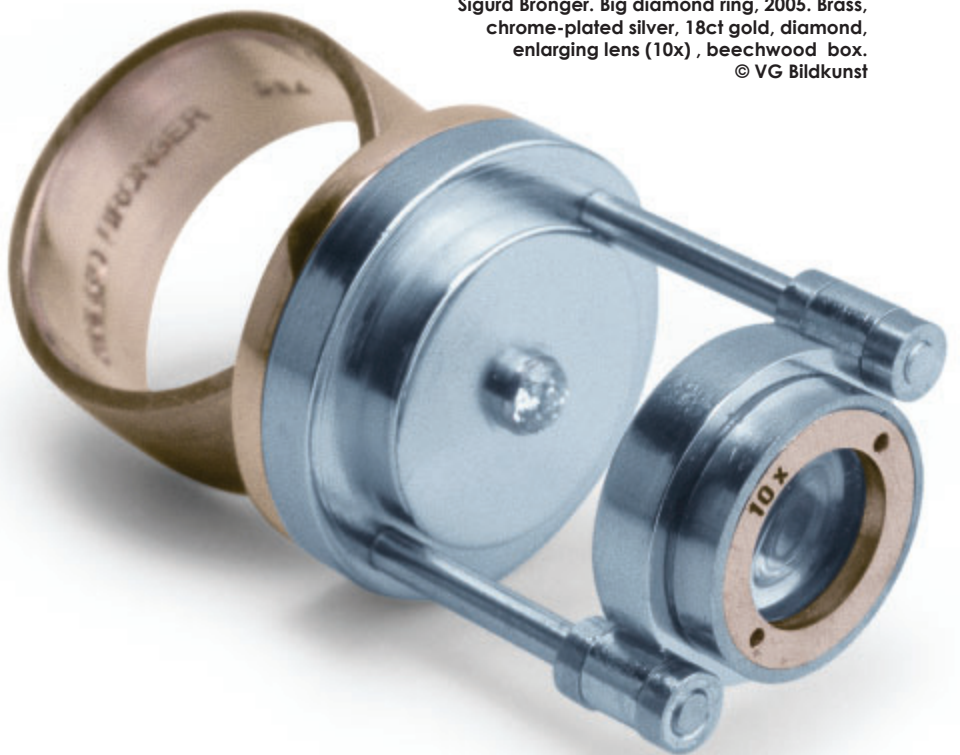
Bronger's work is meticulous in its execution and many pieces include an exquisite beech wood box to house the object when not being worn. He takes pumps, valves, pressure gauges, and engineered brass fittings and combines these elements with soft edges and rounded forms that create a contrast. As well as this visual juxtaposition of cushioned or balloon forms with real or pseudo-scientific instruments is the contrast of materials used. The natural with the man made, the hard with the soft. A goose egg

is mounted on a ring in a highly structured support tensioned with springs. A natural sea sponge becomes a brooch with a hidden joke (it is attached to a concealed water squirting system). His work incorporates many ready-made items such as bars of soap, or even a pendant made from the well-known Phillippe Starck juice maker. Some pieces are just plain witty, such as the brooch that is a miniature curtain rail with drapery to draw across an unattractive logo.

Although he doesn't 'do' precious there is a chapter devoted to his take on diamond jewellery. The aluminium brooch coated in industrial diamond dust, and the single diamond presented as a pill in a blister-pack are both subversive responses to the tradition of the fine jewel to pin to your lapel.

If the solitaire ring is more to your liking then I recommend the big diamond ring that is dominated by a tall lens, allowing the not so large gem mounted beneath to be magnified for greater glamour and visibility. This is statement jewellery that is the opposite of 'bling' but the epitome of desirable.

We don't often see much jewellery from our Scandinavian neighbours so this book is a welcome opportunity to learn more and a good addition to a library of contemporary jewellery.



Sigurd Bronger. Big diamond ring, 2005. Brass, chrome-plated silver, 18ct gold, diamond, enlarging lens (10x), beechwood box. © VG Bildkunst

## JEWELRY FROM NATURE

By Ruth Peltason. 2010. Thames and Hudson. £24.95. ISBN 978 0 500 515334

Reviewed by Zoe Phillips

**The title led me to expect a tour of the tired topic of 'organic' jewellery inspired by seed pods and flowers.** I was pleasantly surprised therefore to find that it discusses the materials themselves. Ruth Peltason says that she aims to '... make the seductive case that fine jewelry is more than traditional gemstones ...' and indeed she provides some beautiful examples. To a professional jeweller this argument seems redundant however, and set me wondering who the book was intended for. If the aim is to alter the perception of the general reader, I found the following quotation (p 123) from Chanel more pertinent: 'Jewelry isn't meant to make you look rich, it's meant to adorn you, and that's not the same thing'.

The book's format is simple: each chapter covers one material – Amber, Coral, Horn, Ivory, Pearls, Shell, Wood and 'Exotica' (it seemed odd to omit leather) – and begins with the nature of the material and its historical use. The reader is then presented with examples from the last three centuries, chosen for one of the following reasons: *essence*, defined as work where the material is essential to the impact or design; *importance*, a meaningful or historically significant piece for the canon or maker; and *freshness*, objects expressing originality or piquant design. I felt there was overkill in some areas while others were under-represented. The chapter on horn consists almost entirely of art nouveau work with only two modern pieces. Similarly, certain countries, such as Germany, are unrepresented and there is only one example of jewellery from outside the US and Europe. Surely Asia and Africa have more to offer this subject than one diamond and pearl pendant?

Throughout each chapter the author adds further bite-sized paragraphs on topics from designers and makers to famous collectors. Some of this was interesting, such as the note on American jeweller David Webb, but at times I wondered if I had slipped into a David Attenborough programme or a Harry Potter novel, as I read about the life of



NN Copley. Pencil bracelet. Wood, silver, acrylic

seahorses or a selection of mythical beasts. Style icons such as Elizabeth Taylor are mentioned (the author's previous books include editing 'Elizabeth Taylor: My Love Affair with Jewellery'), but we never see them. My imagination was fired by the mystery of the Amber Room in Catherine the Great's Palace near St Petersburg, but again there were no images. Some contextual illustrations would have been helpful.

Overall I enjoyed the choice of images in this book, although I was surprised at the largely classic nature of the jewellery shown. I found certain phrases a little trite and twee, like '...proving the point that ivory is always elegant, any hour of the day.' There was nothing on technique

beyond 'this is easy to work with' and I was left with lots of questions and few answers, What makes it 'a uniquely Tiffany clip'? Why was that piece called 'the Forbidden City necklace'? What happened to the rest of the Baroda Pearls? This book is unsatisfying for anyone seriously interested in the subject; but is however a useful design source and a good place for beginners to start. But, 'Seduced by Nature'? Not me.

## THINKING JEWELLERY – ON THE WAY TOWARDS A THEORY OF JEWELLERY

Ed. W. Lindeman & F.H. Trier Arnoldsche Art Publications, £35 hb. ISBN 978-3-89790-326-5

Reviewed by Dauvit Alexander

The opening sentences of this philosophic tome neatly sum up the aims of the editors in pulling together the series of essays which make up 'Thinking Jewellery': "What is jewellery? Why do human beings design objects that shape their appearance as individuals? What is behind this activity?" The answers to these and many other questions make for some challenging reading, not made any easier by the publisher's decision to set the text in an absolutely hideous typeface – lying somewhere between Neville Brody and Comic Sans – which will almost certainly prove off-putting to most people who might wish to read it.

Typeface notwithstanding, the book is divided into sections which relate to the symposia from which the book is derived (held in Idar-Oberstein, Germany over the last five years) though the naming of each section as 'Making Jewellery', 1-3, is not very helpful in clarifying the section theme: do not be deceived! There is not one single technical note on 'the making of jewellery' in the whole of the book and indeed the text is singularly devoid of the sort of images, ideas and information one has come to expect from books dealing with jewellery, be they practical, pictorial or historical. The images appear to have been deliberately chosen to challenge, almost to present a form of 'anti-beauty' and the essays are meditations on themes relating to the ideas about jewellery rather than jewellery itself. Most of the essays are by prominent academics, such as Jivan

Astfalck and Viola Altrichter, and in addition to the colour plates between the sections of the book, many of the essays are illustrated in black-and-white.

This book is aimed at academics involved in teaching or research but curious makers who think deeply about their own practice will almost certainly find something of interest, especially the way history, aesthetics, psychology or anthropology condition the way in which we view/wear/make jewellery in the 21st century, something most makers rarely consider.

As with many collections of academic papers, 'Thinking Jewellery' is something of a curate's egg and it is impossible to imagine anyone agreeing with the thinking behind every essay presented here. Some of the essays seem to be wilfully obscure or just plain dull; one states the obvious; one is quite misguided; however, the overall impact of the book has to be viewed in a very positive light. It is no longer enough for any challenging artform to exist without the theoretical underpinning that we have seen developing for the fine arts over the course of the 20th century. If contemporary jewellers are to be taken seriously as artists, the same theoretical (and historical) research has to be completed; the theories and philosophies have to be written. This book represents an essential step in compiling and publicising some of the thoughts of the major writers who can give gravitas to the argument for such an acceptance.

Taehee In. Ring and box, 2010. Silver, stone, wood.



## MOUNTING AND SETTING STONES

By Sonia Cheadle. A&C Black, 2011. £16.99.sb ISBN 978-1-4081-0912-0

Reviewed by Janet Richardson

**Sonia's book deals with a difficult subject clearly, making information accessible with illustrations and photographs backing up the clear step by step instructions.** It takes you logically through the simpler forms of mounts and settings to those which take many hours of practice.

I started in trepidation, wondering what I would have to deal with in class thanks to a book making it seem as though with a book in one hand and a torch or saw in the other, it would be possible to make any mount and set any stone after reading it. But Sonia does say that the book is aimed at the intermediate jeweller and that she still, after a year's placement developing her skills in this field, sends her stones to be set by a stone setter. Alongside this, she says that precision is key and that practice makes perfect. So it won't come immediately, you will have setbacks, but do persevere.

She starts with the difference between mounts and setting, the terminology used to describe the facets, shapes and cuts of stones, and describes terms used for different parts of the mounts. As she says, this is useful for refreshing, even if you are knowledgeable about these things. She then goes on to describe how to calculate the metal needed to make a mount and the tools required for mounting and setting stones.

After this the format is to show how to make the simplest form of a particular type of mount and then how to set the stone in that mount, followed by the more complicated forms of this type and setting using fancy stones. As the book progresses, more complicated mounts and settings are covered to the point where I feel the techniques described should be done in a class under experienced guidance, but then the book becomes a great back up to this.

Wonderful moments of 'Oh how useful' occur; mine was in making a marquise setting by doming a circle, cutting it in half, swivelling the top edges together and soldering them to make the mount for this shape of stone and a way of shaping a trillion stone setting, which I tried - and it worked. But if I have one criticism it would be that only one method is used to describe how to do each technique, like measuring the circumference of a stone, and if that one method does not suit you, you might struggle. Sonia is an experienced jeweller and makes many pieces with beautifully set stones so I believe she is describing the way she has found best suits her for making and teaching and the book might become less accessible if too much additional information was added.

As a straight-through read and also for reference this book is a fantastic addition to your bookshelf, one that I imagine will end up well thumbed from constant use, as mine already is. Because of the logic of the layout and the clear instructions and images it is easy to use and if you forget a term it is easy to flick back to remind yourself then carry on. I know I shall be using it a lot, running it alongside my existing knowledge.



Sonia Cheadle. Platinum ring, channel-set diamond.  
Photo: Robert Holmes

### Book Offer from A&C Black

In this issue we review several books by A&C Black, and as in the past, the firm is offering a generous discount to ACJ members.

The following books are offered:

Mounting and Setting Stones, by Sonia Cheadle  
Practical Jewellery-Making Techniques: Problem Solving, by Stephen O'Keefe  
Jewellery Solutions: how to care for, repair and restore your jewellery, by David McCoughlin  
An Essential Guide to Business for Artists and Designers, by Alison Branagan

To order the above titles, with a 20% discount and free P+P, please contact MDL on 01256 302699 quoting GLR 6BV, or visit [www.acblack.com](http://www.acblack.com) and quote GLR 6BV at the checkout.

## PRACTICAL JEWELLERY-MAKING TECHNIQUES: PROBLEM SOLVING

By Stephen O’Keeffe. A&C Black, 2011, £19.99. ISBN 978-1-4081-0581-8

Reviewed by Sarah Jane Whittaker

**Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously said “Bring me solutions, not problems”, and for once I’m in agreement.** Jewellery-making brings enough challenges of its own, so any book boldly offering me solutions to problems has me on its side from the start.

Unashamedly aimed at enthusiastic amateurs, Stephen O’Keeffe’s new book does contain some great tips: forming hook ear-wires has suddenly become just a moment’s work, following the book’s advice to wedge the balled-up end of the wire under a pen-clip when forming around a pen.

In theory, I applaud the idea of custom-making tools and jigs to simplify future jewellery-making tasks. Unfortunately, though, some of the suggested solutions just bring new problems: for example, an entire chapter focusses projects using a ‘swaging tool’ to flare tube – this appears to be similar to the tool used in car repair to flare a brake pipe, but, frustratingly, there is no mention of where to source the tool, or practical help to make one.

In order to make the tool, the author blithely mentions using an M12 bolt with a hexagonal head, with two washers and cones. He goes on to tell us that “the cones are made from a ... mild-steel bar drilled with a ... hole to be a snug fit on the bolt” and adds that wheel nuts from a car can be used, but warns they’re “not as reliable as this item which is turned on a lathe” (what item? Does he mean the picture on the previous page? What should I do if I don’t have access to a lathe?). Some fairly impenetrable information follows, advising on the desired angle and finish of the chamfer on the tool, without guidance about how to achieve all this at home. All in all, not much use to an amateur jewellery-maker.

If Mr O’Keeffe can point me in the direction of a swaging tool, or give me practical directions on how to make one with jewellery-making tools, I’d be glad to try out his instructions in chapter 8. Until then, I’ll be sticking to my trusty centre punch and doming punches whenever I need to flare tube.

Jig-designed chain process. Silver, beads





# JEWELLERY SOLUTIONS: HOW TO CARE FOR, REPAIR AND RESTORE YOUR JEWELLERY

David McLoughlin. A&C Black, 2011. £16.99. ISBN 978-1-4081-3447-4

Reviewed by Hannah Peters

**This book is beautifully presented with hundreds of detailed full-colour photographs of superb quality.** If you are interested in working with vintage, second-hand, costume or antique jewellery you will thoroughly enjoy this book.

I have read many books whose subject is antique and costume jewellery, and most of them consider only the highest quality pieces found in top auction houses or in museums. Refreshingly, this publication presents examples of fairly common and inexpensive (but no less covetable) examples of the kind of vintage jewellery you can find in any antique centre or local auction house – even perhaps a charity shop – making for a very accessible and relevant read.

It begins with a history of mostly 20th century jewellery, and is divided into broadly thematic sections thereafter; an overview of styles and common problems, restoring metal jewellery, repairing beaded jewellery, replacing and repairing findings and dealing with jewellery made from other materials such as plastic and horn. The author presents this information in an interesting series of case studies using pieces from his own collection.

This book provides practical solutions aimed at the amateur repairer. If you have a working knowledge of vintage jewellery and are already comfortable handling it, it re-affirms what you already know in an interesting and eye-opening way. If you have basic or intermediate jewellery skills and a steady hand, the final chapter of this book will give you the confidence to undertake a selection of more advanced projects; I have already used skills discovered by reading this book to fix a broken silver stick-pin I found in a junk-shop last week, and I now have

the knowledge and confidence to enable me to re-tip the claws on my grandmother's sapphire and diamond engagement ring.

This is a fascinating book, either to read cover-to-cover or just to dip into. I would welcome a follow-up volume which deals with more advanced jewellery repairs on precious and semi-precious antique jewellery.

*I have worked for Bonhams Auctioneers in their Fine Jewellery and Silver department, and I now restore and sell vintage jewellery [www.hannahpeters.co.uk/page7.htm](http://www.hannahpeters.co.uk/page7.htm) as well as designing and making contemporary bridal and wedding jewellery. Hannah Peters*



Making and fitting a replacement snap

## THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO BUSINESS FOR ARTISTS

By Alison Branagan. A&C Black, 2010. £16.99, Pocket edition £9.99. ISBN 978 14081 19037

Reviewed by Laila Smith

**My initial reaction to the hefty Essential Guide was one of slight disappointment.** It has rather dry delivery, unlike a number of American craft business books I have read recently, but my criticism was soon allayed by the in-depth knowledge offered by Alison Branagan. As I progressed through the book I realised it is full of useful information invaluable to those starting out in a creative career as well as offering help to those of us who have been working in our chosen industries for many years. As a practising jeweller of 15 years I was mostly interested in topics of self-promotion and network building but even the chapters on money management and business planning had something interesting to impart to the more established maker.

The book is bursting at the seams with vital information but some blank forms to help work out costing, along with easier-to-understand breakdowns of overheads would be well placed in the guide to help those new to running a business. Alison Branagan presents a realistic argument as to the pros and cons of working in the creative sector and her information and advice on earning potential and motivation for entering this field are admirably frank. I shall be showing these to those of my students who are romanticising about becoming an artist!

The seven artists and designers featured in the book added human faces to the topic but what a shame the book didn't cover twice as many! We all take information in more deeply when we can set it into real life situations, and even more evidence of the variety of paths taken by professionals and their attitudes to their careers would have been wonderful.

As might be expected of a book that targets all 'Artists and Designers' the guide has to be fairly general and some information seemed a little out of step with a jeweller's world, like the price quoted for studios setting rents starting at £200 a month! Some information, such as advocating frequent legal advice, can easily be seen to apply more readily to other sectors,

but it is fairly apparent which applies to your own field. Each section of the book also has a very comprehensive resources box and the books are probably worth it for these alone.

These two books constitute vital additions to the rather slim library of good books available to artists and designers setting up in business. It is many years since The Crafts Council's 'Running a Workshop' went out of print and Alison Branagan has produced two books that will certainly help creatives to negotiate the treacherous business of working in their chosen sector.

The pocket edition is an easily digestible form of the more substantial book and I found both to be useful. If you know you are not going to wade through a hefty book on business then opt for the pocket guide but I have to say that if money is not an issue then go for both. Even an established career can benefit from revisiting the basics and who wouldn't profit from re-evaluating certain aspects of their practice. It comes naturally to us to sit at the bench and make jewellery, but running a business is a whole other art in itself.

The opinions expressed in Findings are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of the editors or of the Association for Contemporary Jewellery. No part of Findings may be reproduced without permission.

## RECENT AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Comments in quotation marks are from publishers' catalogues. Offers of reviews will be considered for *Findings* 54.

**Paper Jewellery**, by Sarah Kelly. A&C Black, November 2011. £16.99. Usual format for Design and Make series: Step-by-step projects, 'masterclasses' by specialist makers, gallery.

**Art Meets Jewellery: 20 years of Galerie Slavik, Vienna.** Claudia Lehner-Jobst and others. Arnoldsche, autumn 2010. £35. ISBN 978-3-89790-332-6. Vienna's leading gallery for international auteur-jewellery.

**Now: Jewels by Norman Weber.** Ellen Maurer Zillioli. Arnoldsche, Autumn 2010 £25. ISBN 978-3-89790-331-9. 'Surreal, sarcastic, tantalising and sensual beauty in jewellery'.

**On Jewellery**, by Liesbeth van Besten Arnoldsche, November 2011. £25. ISBN 978-3-89790-349-4 'An indispensable handbook of international contemporary jewellery art, from the late 1960s to the present day'.

**Elisabeth Defner: Man – Nature – Cosmos. Jewellery and Objects.** By Karl Bollmann and Dieter Schrage. Arnoldsche, November 2011. £45. ISBN 978-3-89790-353-1. 'Jewellery in a previously unknown style'.

**Petra Zimmermann**, by Barbara Maas, Wolfram Otto, Anna Schetelich. February 2011. Arnoldsche, £25. ISBN 978-3-89790-346-3. 'A young jewellery artist who combines a variety of types to make 'hybrid' jewellery'

**Castle in the Air/Ohrloss: Jewellery from Estonia**, by Rudiger Joppien and others. Arnoldsche, £45. ISBN 978-3-89790-359-3. Work by a group of young jewellery artists.

**Suzanne Belperron**, by Sylvie Raulet and Olivier Baroin. Antique Collectors Club, October 2011. £75 hb. 'High-end' Parisian jeweller.

**Rings**, by Rachel Church. V&A Publications, 2011. £12.99 hb. ISBN 978-1-851-77650-4. Historical survey from AD1200 to the present.

# Discovering My Seoul

Cristina Zani reports on her visit to South Korea

**Had someone told me in September 2010, when I started my MFA in Jewellery at Edinburgh College of Art, that I would have spent four months in South Korea, I would not have believed them.** But it did happen!

Thanks to the support that I received from ACJ through a Professional Development Grant, and from the Incorporation of Hammermen of Edinburgh I was able to take part in an exchange programme with Kookmin University in Seoul from February to June 2011. They have been the greatest four months of my student life, but they were also very hard work.

Studying at Kookmin was challenging. Korean students are used to working very long hours, often spending nights in the workshop, something that I was not really used to. But even when we had to spend many hours working, the atmosphere was so good that I didn't really mind it.

Besides working in the studio I took two classes, Metal and

New Materials and Techniques. Both classes were taught in Korean, which made it a bit hard, but the fact that we were dealing with a visual subject was a positive help. They were both very stimulating for me, but I especially enjoyed working with unusual materials.

The experience of living and studying in such a different culture has been very rewarding, not just from the academic point of view, but also and especially on the personal point of view. Culturally it was a bit of a shock at the beginning, especially with regard to the language. English is not widely spoken, but people were always willing to help, so I never had a problem finding my way around (despite the Korean bus signs!) or carrying out daily tasks and activities.

Seoul is a vibrant and modern city full of shops, restaurants, food stalls and markets. It is possible to find virtually anything one can think of. One of my favourite areas was Jongno, Seoul's jewellery district, full of stores selling all sorts of stones, metals, tools and equipment, but also little shops specialising in casting, gold and silver plating, etching and laser cutting. Seoul is huge and there is a constant buzz in the streets which is quite exciting; most of the buildings are new, but there are also some wonderful ancient palaces, Buddhist temples and shrines where one can retreat to find a bit of quiet and a lot of inspiration.

Seoul is also a great place for exhibitions. Every week there was at least one new jewellery exhibition opening in one of the many galleries dotted around the city. It was a great opportunity to see local work and to meet and talk with the artists.

These four months have been truly enriching and I am very grateful to my sponsors for supporting me and allowing me to have such great experience.



Neckpiece, 2011. Oxidised copper, rice paper, thread.  
Photo Cristina Zani



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