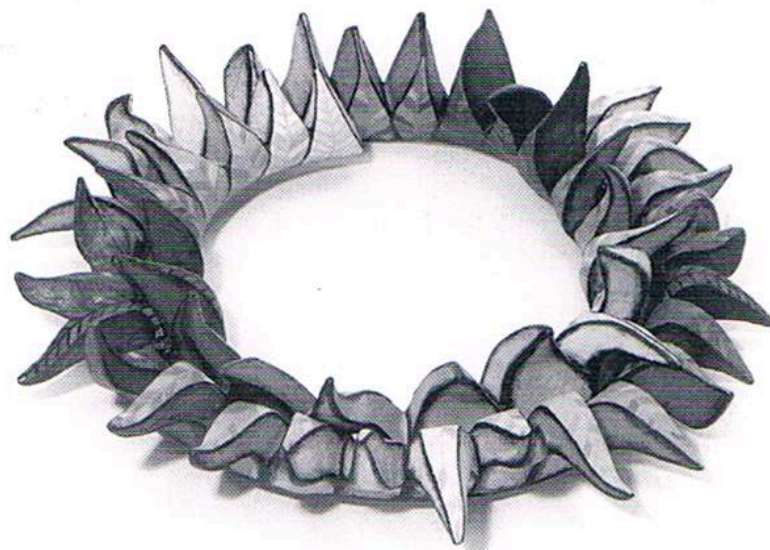


Welcome to the Association for Contemporary Jewellery

One of the major outcomes of last year's Jewellers' Exchange Conference was the desire of delegates to form a grouping or association which would be inclusive rather than exclusive. It should seek to encourage as wide a constituency as possible to join together to promote contemporary jewellery. A steering group was appointed to plan such an organisation and the Association was formally constituted on the 10th May this year when over 40 people from all over the UK took part in our first general meeting.

The Association's objects are to advance public education by promoting understanding of contemporary jewellery and to foster communication between practitioners and interested others.

This therefore is an organisation not just for jewellers, educators and students but also for collectors, retailers, curators, anyone who buys or just likes contemporary jewellery – in effect anyone with a genuine interest in the field. As well as producing a regular newsletter



(see the editorial) we intend to organise conferences, workshops, and seminars, all of which should offer a means of communication, discussion, and dissemination of relevant and useful information.

We have already begun to establish links with similar organisations in Europe and North America and hope to see those develop in a variety of positive ways. We expect to be able to offer valuable opportunities to our membership from time to time. The first of these is the concessionary rate for the new Oppi Untracht book featured elsewhere in these pages, I am certain that if you attended his lecture at Jewellers Exchange you will not want to miss this one.

This association will be very much a reflection of the interest, concerns, and needs of its members. The Committee wants to have your ideas and thoughts on future plans and directions, both long and short term. **So do join us, we look forward to hearing from you!**

Norman Cherry Chairman

I have mooted just such an organisation for a very long time and am excited that it has indeed come about. I do hope that makers see the potential for themselves.

Tony Gordon, Dazzle.

I am delighted at the setting up of the Association and hope it will go from strength to strength. I hope to take an active part in it.

Jaqueline Dillely, Facets

Officers and committee members

Norman Cherry (Chairman), Jane Adam (Vice-Chair), Maria Hanson (Hon Treasurer), Muriel Wilson (Hon Secretary), Ann Marie Shillito (Membership Secretary), Nick Aikman, Sally Andrews, Holly Belsher, Jane Dickinson, Jan Hinchcliffe McCutcheon, Jacqueline Mina, Michael Pinder, Alison Richards.

Editorial

We hope you enjoy reading our first Newsletter. Our aim is to produce it quarterly, and that it will grow into a really interesting and useful publication. This issue contains a number of features and notes written by members, and we would like to encourage any member to consider writing something to go in future issues. We hope to be commissioning longer features from makers, critics, gallery owners and others. Many of these will be thought-provoking in order to stimulate discussion amongst the membership.

The dissemination of news and information about such things as members' activities, new products, competitions, conferences, business and educational opportunities will be an integral part of each issue – we rely on you to keep us informed, so if you know about something good, please don't assume that we do – drop us a line with the information. Any other ideas you have would be of great interest to the editorial team, so let us know what you think of this issue, and how you think it could be improved. We would naturally prefer constructive criticism! *The Editorial Team*

Contributions please – features, letters, short notes and news items to Mike Pinder, c/o Department of Architecture, Landscape and 3-D Design, Manchester Metropolitan University, Chatham Building, All Saints, Manchester M15 6BR, or to Muriel Wilson, 215 Addison House, Grove End Road, London NW8 9EJ. Deadline for next issue is 15 November 1997.

New acquisition at the V&A

The V&A is delighted to have added a piece by the American jeweller Marjorie Schick to its international collection of contemporary jewellery.

The necklace titled 'Ring of Fire' is made of brightly coloured papier mâché, measures 48.5cmx50.5cmx10cm, and was made in 1995. Schick's work from the late 1960s was in Ralph Turner's *Jewellery in Europe and America: New times, New Thinking* at the Crafts Council and in Cardiff. This piece featured in the *USA Today* exhibition at Lesley Craze Gallery in March.

A professor at Pittsburg State University since 1967 Marjorie Schick has long been known for challenging conventional notions of adornment – by the large scale of her work and her preference for non-precious materials. These large papier mâché necklaces, which she refers to as 'paintings to wear' are a particularly distinctive part of her output. She describes her work as: 'the construction of patterns, and the scale of the objects in relationship to the human figure'. The 'Ring of Fire' necklace addresses these aspects, and is a stunning piece which will delight and provoke.

A great benefit of acquiring recent pieces by living artists is that the Museum can record accurately the processes and materials by which the piece was made. Schick does not follow sketches but works directly in the material. In this case the piece started as a flat spiral of corrugated cardboard, strengthened with a metal rod. The flame-like units were made separately, curling 'as if they had naturally grown that way and were blowing in the breeze', and then the whole was covered in layers of papier mâché and painted.

The necklace is currently on display in the Recent Acquisitions Case outside the entrance to the Jewellery Gallery. *Clare Phillips*

ACJ Edinburgh Conference September 1998

The first conference to be organised by this Association will coincide with the major exhibition 'Jewellery Today' at the Royal Museum of Scotland.

Masterclasses are being planned by Edinburgh College of Art.

The theme for the conference will be the relationship of the wearer to jewellery, with key speakers exploring this aspect from different perspectives such as cultural motives, historical antecedents, individualism and identity.

The dates, still to be confirmed, are provisionally 10-13 September 1998. There will be further details of programme and speakers in the next newsletter. *Ann Marie Shillito*

I am thrilled that there will be a specialist newsletter for contemporary jewellery – it is a fascinating area of art, and, for many, a wonderful way of experiencing a whole range of objects. Marina Vaizey, writer

The brilliance and vitality of contemporary jewellery are outstanding – there is a place for a society which can bring the makers and the addicts together and champion the cause. Richard Edgcumbe and Clare Phillips, Metalwork, Silver and Jewellery Department, V&A

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

Traditional Jewelry of India

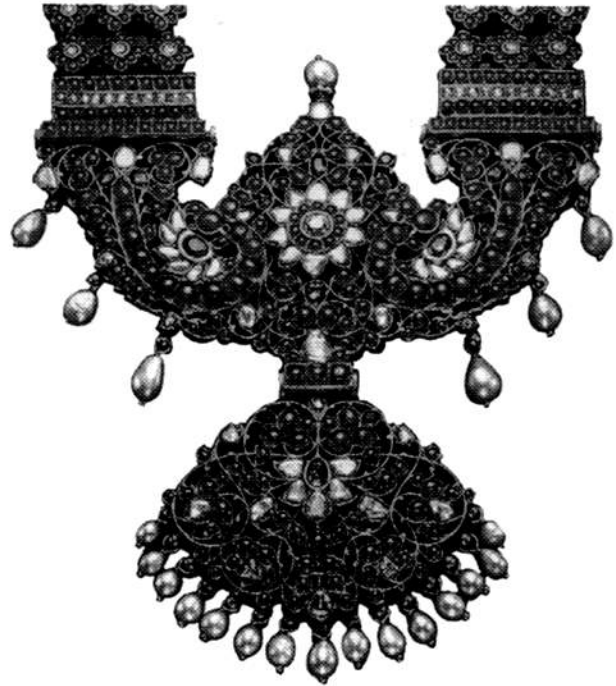
by **Oppi Untracht** Thames & Hudson £55.00

With over 400 pages of fairly fine print, and with 863 illustrations, this is not a book to treat lightly! Those who were lucky enough to see Oppi's presentation at Jewellers' Exchange '96 are unlikely to forget it, and if your appetite was whetted then, you will not be disappointed. This is Oppi's magnum opus, even longer in gestation than the practical volumes on metal techniques that we already know him for, and it is a labour of love from its specially dyed end papers through to the comprehensive bibliography.

In order to deal with this truly daunting amount of information, the book is divided up into seven major sections: the early origins of Indian Jewellery; the formulation of the tradition; the typology of the jewellery; gold and silver; gemstones; the Moghul tradition; cross cultural exchanges between India and Europe. Each of these sections is further subdivided under a number of headings.

Within this structure, the reader will be able to find a store of information on such diverse subjects as (at random) flowers as erotic stimulants, materials used in Naga ornaments, the Buddhist rosary, heat treatments of agates, coins as amuletic jewellery, lac bangles, the archer's thumb-ring, post-mauryan granulation, the Emperor's Weighing festival, Turra tassels – you get the idea. If you want to know anything about traditional Indian body decoration from henna to diamonds, the answer, or a way of finding it, is almost certainly here. Not only are the many forms of jewellery dealt with, but their symbolism and place in the culture are elucidated. There are large sections dealing with how particular techniques evolved and are practised, and the contribution of the Moghul Empire to the tradition. The final section, exploring the cross-fertilisation between India and Europe is full of culture-shocking news to this reader, including such mind stoppers as jewellery designed by Cartier, in the 'Indian' style, for Maharajas and their wives!

It really isn't possible, in a short review, to do justice to the depth and breadth of research presented in this book, but one particular section held my attention throughout its 70-odd pages – Indian Jewellery Typology: from Head to Toe. Working through from crowns to toe-rings, this section treats us to a comprehensive view of what can be achieved by a multifaceted traditional culture. This is more or less the subject of Oppi's lecture at Jewellers' Exchange, but what a pleasure it is to take it slowly, and study each image at leisure.



Madras, Tamil Nadu 19th century © Oppi Untracht

All you'll want to do when you get the book is to look through all the pictures. And then do it again. They are, whether colour or black-and-white, of an excellent standard throughout the book, are well integrated with the text, and have been drawn from an impressive range of sources.

Oppi Untracht is a tireless collector of facts, with a strong sense of accuracy. He is also a very good photographer, as is evident in many of the plates in the book. His great strength lies in his ability to accumulate, organise and present large amounts of information. He is not a critic, but a perceptive and respectful observer – thirty-five years of research could only be sustained by a deep and abiding love of his subject. Perhaps partly because of this, the book is not a dry and dusty read; the text is clear and precise, without being heavy.

If you are looking for a socio-aesthetic analysis of the subject, you will not find it here. You will, however, find an object lesson in the richness of invention achievable by a traditional culture based on what, to the modern jeweller, seems a severely limited technological base. Proof, if it were needed, that limitations are an aid to creativity, rather than a hindrance. Look, for example, at the anklets from Kerala on page 271: simple, stunningly extrovert forms, unlike anything that a modern western jeweller would design, and yet utterly acceptable within their own tradition. Buy the book (see the special offer on the enclosed flyer), luxuriate in its riches, and let it influence your thinking about what your jewellery is, or could be. *Michael Pinder*

Ars Ornata Europeana Conference

Strasbourg, France, 27-29 June '97

The conference was held in the Palais des Fêtes, within walking distance of the historic city centre, its predecessors having been held in Cologne and Bratislava. About fifty delegates were present, several of whom had attended Jewellers' Exchange '96 in Newcastle.

The event was hosted by Corpus, an association based in Strasbourg, and five other European associations were represented by invitation - Forum Für Schmuck und Design (Germany), S.T.F.Z. (Poland), Orfebres F.A.D. (Spain), A.U.R.A. (Slovakia) and Cinabre (France). There were also delegates from the USA, Belgium, Sweden and Holland, plus a handful from the UK.

To coincide with the conference, three exhibitions were on view at the Palais des Fêtes - one was a display of work by members of all the associations represented, another was a body of work by contemporary Polish jewellers, and the third a major retrospective of work by the internationally renowned jeweller Anton Cepka.

Unfortunately, much of the formal content of the conference was presented in either French or German, only one paper having an English text available. There was thus no official conference language, and the situation was further confused by the lack of any visual accompaniment or methodical leadership throughout the programme. These factors often made comprehension, meaningful participation, and dialogue impossible!

Much discussion towards the end of the conference made it apparent how difficult it can be to survive as a contemporary jeweller in several other European countries. In Poland for example, individual creativity and access to foreign information, materials and stimuli have all been subject to political repression until recently. French jewellers are excluded from a system which allows other craft-makers to promote their work as Fine Art, thus gaining recognition and sponsorship from various government bodies. In Germany, the strict hierarchical apprenticeship system can be a barrier to those wishing to set up workshops and live from making. In this context, a brief outline was given of the various opportunities available in Britain, as well as the factors affecting them. For example:-

- High quality Higher Education in the Arts & Crafts
- A healthy network of galleries, shops and other exhibition spaces

- Official recognition, promotion, and sponsorship through the Crafts Council, Goldsmiths' Company, Regional Arts Boards etc
- A relatively simple system of taxation

These and other factors are taken for granted by those of us working in the UK, but delegates from several other countries were both surprised and, I suspect, envious of such seemingly enlightened circumstances.

As the only official delegate from Great Britain's own newly formed Association for Contemporary Jewellery, I was able to announce our existence to the conference participants, and I was offered much encouragement, support and the possibility of future collaborations.

To summarise, because of the language and organisational problems, this conference was not the success that it could have been. The informal atmosphere between presentations, however, and the friendliness of the delegates made up for these shortcomings. The next conference will take place in the summer of 1998 in Stockholm, and I am sure that members of the Swedish organising committee learned several important lessons for the future. *Nick Aikman*

Forthcoming events

Cartier: 1900-1939

1 October '97 - 1 February '98 British Museum,
The jewellery, timepieces and objets d'art produced by Cartier are renowned world-wide for their elegance and superb workmanship. This spectacular exhibition covers the period 1900-1939 which witnessed some of Cartier's most original design, and takes a new look at the work of this legendary jeweller. The 227 objects included, together with over 70 presentation designs, come mainly from Cartier's own historic collection, with additional pieces from public and private collections in Europe and America, many of which are on view for the first time.

The firm of Cartier was founded in Paris in 1847, coming to prominence in the late 1890s, when it set up its own design and manufacturing operation. A new shop was opened in the rue de la Paix, the heart of the haute couture district, and by 1909 the firm had branches in Paris, London and New York, each run by one of three brothers, grandsons of the founder.

The exhibition is organised jointly by the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. It is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue by Judy Rudoie, available from the British Museum bookshops, price £50 (hardback) and £25 (softback).

Review

Artisan 21-25 August '97 The Edinburgh Festival of Contemporary Crafts

Artisan was created by Tony (Dazzle) Gordon and Richard Green, with the encouragement of Dr Helen Bennett, Crafts Director of the Scottish Arts Council, and the support of the Scottish Arts Council itself. They wanted an event to compare in terms of quality of work and prestige with the Chelsea Crafts Fair and Art in Action.

Well they did it. I personally found Artisan a much pleasanter experience than Chelsea, and I wasn't the only one. Scotland is starved of such a venue – for both makers and punters – and what a superb ambience a group of top class makers can create.

There were a lot of jewellers. 47 out of the 128 stands and another 9 people working in metal which included more jewellery. But the climate at the moment seems weighted towards jewellers and many more apply for stands than other makers. Then of course there was Dazzle at the Traverse which was all of 5 minutes walk away, perhaps something to be re-considered for the future.

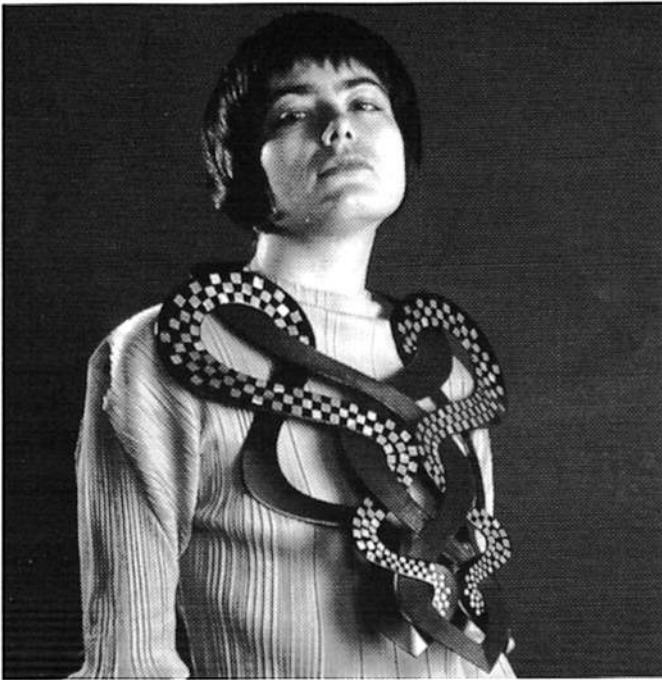
Some Scottish makers had doubts that Festival visitors were prepared to spend money on objects as well as tickets, which are getting increasingly expensive. In the first two days these doubts were borne out, with many visitors treating it as an exhibition to be viewed rather than a buying trip, but if foreign galleries, shops and other buyers could be targeted with the double attraction of business and pleasure, Artisan will be a winning formula.

There is no doubt we do not have the volume of money seen in the South of England, and this is bound to be reflected in sales, especially in the first year of Artisan. We are well used to seeing high class jewellery and ceramics, so I think the experience of seeing textiles, furniture, book binding etc will do a lot for the public's enjoyment and many makers had very good sales. The encouraging thing was that without exception everyone I spoke to had total praise for the event and were prepared to take a leaner year this time in anticipation that future years will develop public awareness.

'Meet your Maker' was an accompanying Education programme which although impressive in content, unfortunately took place in a different venue, making attendance impossible for stand holders. This should be rectified next year.

To sum up, Artisan is an event well worth doing, and the public were beginning to respond, which bodes well for the future. *Molly Bullick*

Sakurako Matsushima – at the Lesley Craze Gallery



Japanese Contemporaries at Lesley Craze Gallery

19 Sept-22 Oct '97

This fascinating exhibition shows both young innovators and established craftsmen using a broad range of media from mokume to shakudo, paper to gold, Mikukiko cedar wood to lacquer and terracotta to textiles.

It is a stimulating opportunity to experience great workmanship, the visual and tactile results of Japanese culture and its reaction to Western ideas. Japanese jewellery has had a short but full history. It began after the second world war, when jewellery was accepted as a Western accessory. Since then there has been an outpouring of creativity resulting in jewellery being established as a formative art. The breakthrough came in the 1970s when jewellers not only borrowed themes from the fine art world but immersed themselves in the rebellious ethos of the time. What started as a Western trend forged its own identity, benefiting from ancient Japanese techniques and materials.

The exhibition was chosen with the assistance of the Japanese Jewellery Association. Amongst the selection of 21 jewellers is Professor Yasuki Hiramatsu, a pioneer and leader in the field of contemporary jewellery in Japan. As a representative of the third generation of a traditional metalsmith family, he has had an illustrious career as an educator and creator, and his work has been exhibited throughout Japan, Europe and America.

Gillian Packard As this issue went to press we learned the sad news of Gil's sudden and untimely death. A full obituary will appear in the next issue of *Findings*.

This annual showcase for the British Art and Design colleges to show their new graduates' work gives a good opportunity to examine the state of younger contemporary jewellery practice. The diversity of media and wide areas of practice reflect the fertility of our design and craft education – make no mistake, this is an important event. It is hard to judge a new crop of graduates as they emerge blinking into the spotlight, metamorphosing into good-looking, well-dressed individuals.

Some exhibitors will only now, after college, create work that is successful. Others might seem fabulous – supported in every decision and creative process – but will founder in the next eighteen months and retreat into television or catering. Yet others fail to present or explain their ideas successfully. There is also of course that tiny handful for whom this is their public arrival as fully fledged makers, and who will dive into practice with all its purgatory and pleasure.

New Designers

Business Design Centre 17-20 July '97

So what is there amongst this waterfall of jewellery? Students can offer us a direct expression of the zeitgeist. Unencumbered by expectations about what they have made, they will pursue and combine happily what older practitioners see at best as separate areas, at worst as sacred, eg Ed de Large meets Indian wedding jewellery at Laura Ashley. It is spotting these colliding influences, historical and contemporary, fashionable or deeply personal (sometimes in undigested chunks) that can suggest the future. Watching these models change or return is always great fun. During the mid-eighties Applied artists and designers adopted underwater imagery: the ubiquitous starfish, shells, fish. Larger stores and design houses noted this very quickly, so I didn't expect to see this continuous 12 year old genre extensively represented as an innovatory commercial area.

Others have noted this ubiquity and have gone for a more 'modern' feel – a 'faux naïf' cheesy modernity, part Barbarella, part Scandinavian, part 1970s Woman's Realm. It is surprisingly hard to achieve a 90s elegance with 70s influences, and very often objects can look clumsy. Proportional arrangements to the human body can be difficult or uneasy in student work with lack of experience normally the problem. This 70s influence made it much more difficult this year.

Regular visitors will remember that strange synchronicity, where students all over Britain make the same object at the same time. Very distressing it can be, if you are the

students showing! This year one could see the 'column ring'. Simple dart shapes and bullet forms, often lathe turned and bezel mounted in rings. We're not talking Wendy Ramshaw nor Campbell/Kulagowski here. With this item reflecting mainstream fashion's preoccupation with colour, the choice was offered of refractory metals, perspex (particularly fluorescent or UV sensitive), nylon or anodised aluminium, occasionally stones. There was also a strong showing for the 'pod form', influenced originally by Maria Wong, and this has been very much in vogue during the 90s. A small, often hollow volume with a lid or hinged door for use as a container for 'special secrets'. Perhaps I am naive in wanting a more honest "It's for smuggling drugs into clubs" answer, but that side of student life seems rarely reflected in the work. Ubiquitous was the 'blob ring', which might be a one-season wonder. In essence this is a heavy shank in metal, plastic or refractory metal with a stainless steel wire or filament onto which has been skewered a blob of an entirely different material. The oversized claw-setting returned on chunky silver items, with hammered and etched texture, suggesting rather than understanding Tom McEwan. The extensive use of etching allied to these was a concern, highlighting the poor standard of drawing.

There was work here that stretched from the 'Scandinavian' silver link bracelet to Fiona Anderson's volume forms in fine steel wire which suggested enclosure rather than the possibilities of wearability. Porcelain and goose eggs were explored by Susanna Shaw, as volume forms in collision with silver geometries. Plastics had a strong showing with the very wearable work of Peiling Lee (ball knots woven from blue plastic strips), Yolanda McGill's bold, simple forms and, in particular, Joanne Lewis's cast translucent plastic necklaces, which seemed to be sexual yet genteelly reminiscent of cacti and jellyfish all at once. Material exploration is and should be a strength. Jennifer Kerr showed this in her understated gold and patinated mokume.

The influence of computer graphics both from the music business and from IT in general was obvious but failed to follow through into objects that carried conviction. It was a pity that those students interested in this took refuge in a product-orientated styling, reminiscent of Japanese electronic consumer goods, with bold graphics and neon colours that originally relied for their quality on mass manufacturing techniques. Disappointingly, craftsmanship failures undermined this.

Perhaps that is the message from this show. As new ideas slip into the vocabulary from our increasingly visually-literate society, jewellers need to examine them carefully, to make them really valuable in our dialogues.

Simon Fraser

Noticeboard

Events

Goldsmith's Fair

29 Sept.-5 Oct.

Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat/Sun 11-5.

Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Lane, London EC2. Admission (including catalogue) £3. Now in its 15th year as a successful selling event for selected jewellers and silversmiths.

Chelsea Crafts Fair

14-19, and 21-26 Oct.

Mon-Fri 10-8, Sat/Sun 10-6.

Chelsea Town Hall, Kings Road, London SW3.

Craft Movement Fairs

16-19 Oct. Manchester

31 Oct-2 Nov. Blackheath, London

21-23 Oct. Cambridge

21-23 Oct. Cheltenham

4-7 Dec. Richmond-upon-Thames

11-14 Dec. Bath

Information and application forms from The Craft Movement, PO Box 1641, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1YY.

Tel: 01373 813333

Dazzle

3 Nov. '97-3 Jan. '98

Town Hall, Manchester

17 Nov '97 -10 Jan.'98

Royal National Theatre, London,

Passing Out

1-18 Dec. Mon-Sun, 10-6

Manchester Metropolitan University, Righton Building, All Saints, Manchester M15.

Work by graduating students, sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.

British Contemporary Jewellery Study Day

24 Jan.'98 10.30-4.30

Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7.

This study day will explore and debate examples of the rich variety of contemporary jewellery. The day will interest makers, both amateur and professional, students, collectors, and anyone who wishes to learn more about the state of jewellery making in Britain

today. Speakers include Clare Phillips, Caroline Broadhead, Jane Adam, Norman Cherry, Amanda Game, Simon Fraser. Information from V&A Education Department, 0171 938 8407.

Exhibitions

Barbican Centre

RAE: Janna Syvänoja

Part of Barbican programme celebrating Finnish culture.

16 Nov.'97 -1 Jan.'98

Mon-Sat 10-7.30, Sun 12-7.30

Jewellery Case, Ground Floor, Level 0 Silk Street, London EC2.

British Museum

Cartier

1 Oct.'97-1 Feb.'98

Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 2.30-6

Great Russell Street, London WC1.

Contemporary Applied Arts

Cynthia Cousens

26 Sept.-1 Nov. Mon-Sat 10.30-5.30

Elizabeth Bone, James Griffin, Joanne Thompson.

7 Nov.-24 Dec. Mon-Sat 10.30-5.30

Lower Gallery Showcase, 2 Percy Street, London W1.

Craft Centre and Design Gallery

Jewellery Showcase: Catherine Hills, and 'Cuffs and Collars'.

2 Sept.-31 Oct. Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-4

15 Jewellers from past and present

1 Nov '97.-10 Jan '98.

Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-4

City Art Gallery, The Headrow, Leeds.

Craft Council Gallery

A Sparkling Christmas, includes jewellery by Kate Wilkinson, Susan May, Tina Engel.

3-24 Dec. Tues-Sat 11-6, Sun 2-6

44a Pentonville Road, London N1.

Craft Council at the V&A

Showcases include jewellery by

Catherine Hills 16 Sept.-19 Oct.

Mon 12-5.30, Tues-Sun 10-5.30

A Heavenly Christmas includes jewellery by Debra Allman,

Alison Evans.

19 Nov.-23 Dec.

Mon 12-5.30, Tues-Sun 10-5.30

South Kensington, London SW7.

Association for Contemporary Jewellery



Electrum

Axel Russmeyer, Joyce Scott.

3-25 Oct. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1

21 South Molton Street, London W1.

Facets

Facets Christmas Show, work by a broad range of selected jewellers.

1 Nov.-3 Jan '98 Mon-Sat 10-5.

14 Broadstone, Dartmouth, Devon

John McKellar Designer jewellery

Amanda Doughty Oct.

Robert Pfrogner Nov.

Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30

23 Church Street, Hereford.

Lesley Craze Gallery

Japanese Contemporaries.

19 Sept.-22 Oct. Mon-Sat 10-5.30

34 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1.

Oxford Gallery

Jewellery Showcase: Debra Allman

24 Nov.'97-7 Jan '98 Mon-Sat 10-5

23 High Street, Oxford.

NOTICEBOARD will be an important feature of the Newsletter, keeping members informed of events and opportunities. For optimum coverage we shall be depending on you to supply details, clearly presented and in good time. Information for next issue by 15 Nov.'97, to: Muriel Wilson, 215 Addison House, Grove End Road, London NW8 9EJ Tel/Fax 0171 289 6105

The Society of Jewellery Historians hopes that the new organisation will have great success in promoting both new and old skills and materials in the creation of fine modern jewellery. Today's contemporary jewellery will be the historical jewellery of the future.

Nigel Israel, Chairman, Society of Jewellery Historians

Symposium 97

4-5 July School of Jewellery, UCE

The Symposium covered the application of laser technology, CAD prototyping, new precious metal materials as well as innovative approaches to more historical techniques, anti-clastic raising, stone-cutting and stone-facetting, and engine-turning. The two-day event was rounded off by an analysis of marketing as applied to the jewellery industry in Germany.

The programme was well-balanced and the event well-attended by a cross section of people from the jewellery and silversmithing industry.

Norman Stockham, technology manager at the Welding Institute, presented the ever-developing possibilities of fibreoptic lasers which can cut, drill, engrave, weld and solder, bond granulation and distort hollow forms. He showed a spun silver cup which had been extensively and delicately pierced by a laser programmed to run overnight. Anne Marie Carey, a recent MPhil graduate from the RCA, exhibited a series of spun niobium bowls which were patterned in various colours using laser technology.

The Modelmaker II Rapid Prototyping system was explained by Laser Integrated Prototypes (LIP) and was of great interest to the representatives of production companies in the audience.

Mitsubishi Materials Corporation illustrated three new products:

Diagold – diffusion bonded multicolour gold sheet.

High Strength Pure Gold (HPG) – this product is 99% pure gold to which a secret chemical has been added to make the metal hard enough to be practical.

Precious Metal Clay – This combines precious metal powder with an organic binder to produce a material which can be worked like clay but when fired, becomes entirely metal. This is not yet available through a UK supplier.

David Pledge of Pledge and Aldworth ran through an excellent and detailed slide presentation on the application of engine turning. This company's innovative and lateral thinking approach to problem solving was fascinating and seems to have breathed new life into a 300 year old technique.

The more traditional methods of thinning and stretching metal sheet – anti-clastic raising developed by Hekki Seppa and Michael Good – were idiosyncratically presented by Michael Good who provided 22ct gold samples for handling. These beautifully fluid forms have been developed by Michael for production in the USA.

Bernd Munsteiner communicated his fascination by and total sympathy with precious stonecutting techniques. His illustrations of sculptural pieces demonstrated the use of long facets to bring life to unpromising material. He handed round for inspection a box of gems he had cut and faceted in a variety of exquisite ways.

The innovative integration of design, metallurgy and engineering practised by the German company Niessing has long fascinated me. Mr Jochen Exner, President of the Company, talked through his analytical approach to marketing and the development of the family business, originally a production company for wedding rings.

In 1974 the company looked at Germany's declining birthrate and projected forward to 1995-2005. The anticipation that marriages would decrease by 40% led the company to develop designs other than wedding rings. One of their famous innovations is the 'tension ring' (Spannring), where a diamond is held firmly in place by tension.

This Symposium was well organised in an unobtrusive and efficient way. It provided a springboard for the germination of new ideas and for the sharing of information.

Dorothy Hogg

Become a member of the Association for Contemporary Jewellery and encourage others to join

For details, send an A4 s.a.e. to:

Association for Contemporary Jewellery
c/o School of Jewellery
Birmingham Institute of Art and Design,
Vittoria Street
Birmingham B1 3PA

Membership is open to makers and to anyone with an interest in contemporary jewellery. The annual subscription is £30, and £10 for students and those in their first year out of jewellery courses. If you are already a member, please give these details to anyone who might be interested in joining.