

Jewellery History Today



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Cover: Ute Decker, brass maquette for Curling Crest of a Wave, hand sculpture and pendant, to be realised in 18 ct Fairtrade gold. © Photo Alun Callender. See p. 16.

Chairman's Letter

What a triumph it is to be celebrating the 50th issue of our highly-esteemed magazine, *Jewellery History Today*. I can still recall the lengthy discussions around the title we might give this brand new SJH publication when the first edition was launched in January 2008, bearing a stunning image of jewels from the Cheapside Hoard on its cover. Its consistent arrival in our letter boxes is much anticipated and it is easy to take its very existence for granted. This really is the perfect opportunity to thank the stalwart and talented team who share the task of its production. To the core trio of Copy Editor Jane Perry, Features Editor Juliet Claxton, and our indefatigable Editor Kirstin Kennedy, we offer grateful thanks for voluntarily giving up their precious time in order to bring so many varied and instructive articles, news items, books and exhibitions to our attention. Nor should we omit designer Doug Barned, who plays an invaluable role in the visuals, as well as the countless contributors over the years who have shared fascinating new facts and information. As befits a Golden anniversary issue, we feature on our cover the work of Ute Decker, a long-term advocate for the use of Fairtrade gold. Members will recall her 2021 lecture to the Society on the subject; in this issue she tells us about her latest project: building a freely-accessible online resource to illuminate the complexities of the origins of gold. This is accompanied by another rich array of articles, as well as a write-up of the recent SJH visit to the highly seductive *Colour Revolution* exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum in the company of its curator Matthew Winterbottom. Join me in raising a toast to this 50th-anniversary publication, and let us look forward to the celebration of its centenary!

Katherine Purcell

Editorial

A scroll down the contents of past magazines posted on the SJH website is a journey down a glittering path of knowledge and enthusiasm (and we only inadvertently duplicated a cover image once – JHT 3 and 33 – but who doesn't love a massive stomacher encrusted with Brazilian diamonds?). The range of subjects reflects the very broad church that is the world of jewellery and its history – found aboard Spanish shipwrecks, hidden in a chest behind a wall ... or hiding in plain sight, like the work of jeweller Oscar Massin. Then there are the materials and construction of jewellery: Slovak opals, Victorian registered designs, Devon marbles, Georgian paste, and coral ex-votos. In this issue, Jo Vandeppeer's account of malachite brooches from Australia continues to mine that seam, while Paula Weideger considers the exquisite workmanship and lapidary beauty of two ring-stone cabinets on view at the 2024 TEFAF art fair at Maastricht.

The many studies on amulets, mourning jewellery and rings reflect the intensely personal nature of jewellery, and its commemorative significance is demonstrated once again in this issue by Rachel Church, writing on Corinne Julius's January exhibition at the Sarah Myerscough Gallery, London. Fittingly, the cover for our 50th issue is not without memorial significance either. JHT has inspired great loyalty among its production team, from publishers and designers to editors, reviewers and proof readers. Naming individuals is invidious, but, in addition to the current team applauded above by our Chairman, thank you Paul Clifton, Matt Greaves and Matthew Lewis, and Eleni Bide, Jo Whalley, Natasha Awais-Dean, Mo Cerrone, Melanie Eddie and Caroline Pegum. JHT has also enjoyed the support of stalwart advertisers (Wartski, Woolley and Wallis, and most recently, Noonans, whose back cover ad for this issue features a delightfully spring-like brooch). But a look down the list of names and contents also reminds us that Muriel Wilson, the founding force behind JHT, died in 2018, barely a year after she stepped down following a decade as Editor. Muriel, a great supporter of contemporary jewellers, recalled once visiting an unprepossessing craft fair in a basement somewhere in London where she met ... Ute Decker. Their admiration was mutual, and Ute later created a ring for Muriel. 'Muriel's ring' was a bold, geometric design drawn in silver. Featuring Ute's latest work on our cover celebrates the vision of an important contemporary jeweller – and the love of jewellery and jewellers that Muriel inspired through JHT.

South Australian Malachite Brooches

By Jo Vandeppeer

South Australian malachite brooches ornamented the throats of colonial women in the second half of the 19th century. At the time, they were evidence of aspiration and enterprise. Today, we can read their history as an expression of South Australia's mineral wealth – for it was copper that made the colony's fortune and malachite is oxidised copper.

Malachite's distinctive green colour is sometimes banded with light and dark shades, or it can be formed in a botryoidal manner like a cluster of grapes, so that, when cut and polished, the banding appears as concentric circles. Whether striped or botryoidal, each cabochon of malachite is unique. The British Crown Colony of South Australia was also unique. Prior to 1901, Australia consisted of six British colonies, but South Australia differed in that it was the first British colony based on land sales. No convicts were ever transported to its shores. Rather, the South Australian Company sold, in Britain, small tracts of land to free settlers, which in turn funded the immigration of a labour force. Immigration was equally divided by gender, and those willing to sail across the ocean to the other side of the world expected a promised utopia of religious freedom, economic stability, and respectability. The opportunity to own land was particularly appealing to would be emigrants formerly crowded into European cities.

Whereas the neighbouring colony of Victoria was famous for its goldfields, South Australia was known as the 'copper kingdom'. In 1840, the German geologist, Johann Menge, first observed copper in the Adelaide Hills. Not long afterwards, Captain Bagot noticed an outcrop of copper ore whilst picking wildflowers, and the pastoralist, Frederick Dutton, spotted it whilst searching for lost sheep on horseback. Both men were involved in the establishment of sensationally successful mines that made enormous fortunes. Three of the biggest mines were located at Kapunda, Moonta and the delightfully dubbed Burra Burra after the creek of the same name, the source of many of

the earliest malachite cabochons. By the 1850s, when the first malachite brooches were created, the South Australian copper industry was worth more than grazing and agriculture combined.

The very first piece of malachite jewellery known to have been produced in South Australia was made by John Henry Pace (1814-1859) in 1845. One brooch was described as 'a polished malachite cabochon set in a silver bezel with a matching set of earrings'. As with every achievement that advanced the aspirational colony, and at a time when many still lived with a dirt floor, the press celebrated the jewellery setting as well as the stone, because both the malachite and silver were derived from

South Australian mines. The following year, a Mr. Lewis was selling polished malachite ready for mounting, and another jeweller, George Griffin, was offering

'native malachite set in brooches, pins, and rings, with engraved borders, to any pattern'. However, both advertisements were completely overshadowed when Pace was commissioned to make a gift for the Governor's wife of 'a rich piece of malachite from the Burra Burra mines, set in virgin gold produced from the truly valuable property of the Victoria Mining Company,' in the Adelaide Hills.

Rather than a silver surround, Pace used the first Australian-mined gold, which predated gold from the neighbouring (and more famous) Victorian goldfields.

South Australia's copper boom attracted a huge influx of skilled migrants, and thousands of Cornish miners and Welsh smelters swelled the mining towns, as well as labourers and goldsmiths from northern Europe. Amongst a significant number of German immigrants, three German silversmiths and a Dane took colonial jewellery to new heights. Charles



Fig. 1. C.E. Firnhaber, brooch locket, 1859, Adelaide, gold, malachite, glass, 7.9 x 7.0 cm. Gift of Mrs Krogman 1944, 863A71A, Art Gallery of South Australia. Image © Art Gallery of South Australia.



Fig. 2. C.E. Firnhaber, malachite brooch, unknown date, Adelaide. Donated by McCabe Jewellers, 2015, South Australian Museum. Image © SA Museum.

Eduard Firnhaber (1805-1880) arrived in South Australia from Bremen in 1847. He definitely worked with Pace, and it is likely that he also worked with Griffin. However, within two years of arriving, Pace was declared insolvent, making space for Firnhaber to establish his own business. A short time afterwards, Firnhaber designed and executed 'a massive and beautiful brooch,' set in an ounce and a half of South Australian gold worked into 'elaborately chased roses, shamrocks, and thistles'. These gold flowers were set

onto Burra Burra malachite and worth 'about £13'. The brooch was donated to the Art Gallery of South Australia nearly 100 years later (fig. 1). Firnhaber explored South Australian themes in a larger malachite brooch with a border that represented the burgeoning viticultural industry of South Australia. Now sadly lost, the brooch purportedly featured an emu and a kangaroo, and the malachite itself opened with a hinge to reveal a locket for hair and an inscription 'to his beloved wife.'

It is difficult to determine the makers of extant malachite brooches from this period because the four European goldsmith-jewellers were closely linked and worked in each other's establishments. For example, after lurking for decades in the safe of a local jeweller, the brooch in figure 2 was donated to the South Australian Museum with a provenance linking it to Firnhaber. Its gold wreath, however, is almost identical to the silver one which frames the malachite cabochons set into the base of the John Ridley testimonial candelabrum (1860, now in the University of Adelaide Visual Art Collection), made by a second German silversmith, Julius Schomburgk (1819-1893). Schomburgk's arrival no doubt compromised Firnhaber's market share, so around this time the two men worked together. Schomburgk's creative talents outshone his business acumen, however, and in turn he undertook work for Henry Steiner (1835-1914), a third German silversmith, who established himself as a jeweller in Adelaide. Further muddying the waters, Schomburgk also worked with the Danish silversmith, Joachim Matthias Wendt (1830-1917), and, around 1862, he joined Wendt's workshop where he worked for upwards of 30 years. Therefore, with all four men active in Adelaide at the height of the fashion for malachite brooches, it is difficult to attribute provenance without markings or handy descriptive newspaper references.

The jewellers' interactions and collaborations can be seen in several malachite brooches now in private collections (figs 3 and 4). Figure 3 reveals an arresting botryoidal cabochon. Its bezel and surround are like those of figure 2, which would suggest it could be by the hand of Firnhaber or Schomburgk. Two brooches in figure 4 have a scalloped bezel, and more than one features the grapevine motif suggestive of the South Australian wine industry. None is marked or signed, and provenance remains the underlying problem for South Australian malachite brooches from this period, not least because the early colonial jewellers' fortunes were fused together.

Today, the malachite brooches prefigure the future green and gold colours of a Federated Australia. More significantly, these are the ornaments that graced

the necklines of the South Australians who became the first generation of women in the world to gain the right to vote and stand for parliament, 24 years before their British sisters. This must surely have been a dual source of pride for the enfranchised South-Australian woman lucky enough to embellish her outfit with a beautiful South-Australian malachite brooch.

Dr Jo Vandeppeer is an art historian and teacher in South Australia. Her research focuses on South Australian history, applied arts and colonial female artists.



Fig 3. Malachite brooch, gold, Burra Burra malachite, 4.5 x 6.0 cm, unknown date, private collection. Image © Jo Vandeppeer.



Fig 4. A selection of malachite brooches: gold, Burra Burra malachite, unknown dates. Left brooch from the Mineral Collection, SA Museum; middle and right brooches from a private collection. Image © Jo Vandeppeer.

What Are Memories Made Of?

By Rachel Church

'Memories are made of this' was the title of an innovative contemporary jewellery show held at London's Sarah Myerscough Gallery (6 December 2023 - 17 January 2024). The exhibition, curated by journalist Corinne Julius, asked 15 UK jewellers to consider the nature of memory in the context of jewellery.

Memory is deeply embedded in the creation of jewellery. So much jewellery is made as a means of fixing a moment in time — the emotion of a love affair or marriage, the memory of a deceased person, the ideals of a political movement or a public event. Memories, private and public, are often the driving force behind the making and wearing of jewellery.

This exhibition drew on deep, historical roots in often unexpected ways.

Memorial and mourning jewellery offers the clearest link with the concept of memory. It was made as a record of the life of a person, often incorporating their name and life dates, and was treasured by the family and friends who received it. Memorial jewellery developed from the earlier use of *memento mori* ('remember you must die') jewels, decorated with skeletons, skulls, hourglasses, and crossbones. It was designed to encourage the wearer to reflect on their mortality and the fate of their immortal soul. The 17th century saw the gradual move from jewels designed to remember death in general to those made for specific individuals. The imagery of these jewels also transitioned from the frank depiction of death in skeletons and skulls to more general images of funerary urns and grieving figures in classical draperies.

Jewels were made even more personal by adding some of the deceased's hair, described in a 19th century manual as 'the most delicate and lasting of our materials and survives us, like love'. When Mary Verney wrote to her husband Ralph after the death of their daughter Peg in 1638, she advised him that '...if you have enough of my deare girles haire to make bracelets I know you could nott send a more acceptable thing than every one of your sisters a bracelet'. Wearing a jewel set with the hair of the loved one was a comfort and a way to feel closer to them despite their absence. When jewels were made to memorialise young children, it was often the only physical reminder of their brief span on earth [and see also Rachel's article 'What's in a name?', JHT 40, pp. 3-5 – Ed.].

Bequests of commemorative jewels were clearly intended to preserve the deceased in the memory of their friends and families.

When the young Princess Amelia died in 1810, rings bearing the simple yet poignant motto 'Remember Me' were made and distributed to her family and friends (fig. 1).

In the exhibition *Memories are made of this*, the participating jewellers looked at the concept of memory itself as well as memories of childhood and intimate experiences of love and grief. Jewellery became a way to explore family memories, loss, and love. The work of Anna Gordon and Lin Cheung studied the nature of memory. Lin Cheung's perfectly smooth cacholong bangles and rings were set on marble blocks with a carved recess for the piece, leaving the memory of the jewel once it is removed. Despite their polished surfaces, each piece holds the memory of the hand which made it. In 'Shared Memory I', 'II' and 'III', Anna Gordon created pairs of brooches, using the same language of colours and materials but varying in effect to express the mutable nature of memory. As a twin, she found that her recollection of events differed from that of her brother, despite their shared childhood.

Kathie Murphy's 'Anthropocene?' and 'Millisecond Reflection' consider the destruction of the natural world and our contemporary preoccupation with social media and image. She showed a jewel which enclosed charcoal in a layer of resin and a necklace made up of beads of

palladium leaf set under resin, creating a mirror-like surface. The work of Elaheh Naghi Ganji was based on recent incidents in her native Iran. In 'Kian', she suspended a series of rainbow-coloured rings in different sizes from a hoop, shown with a ring sizer engraved with Farsi letters. Placing the rings in turn on the ring sizer spells out a hidden message. Joyful memories were encoded into Silvia Weidenbach's citrine bangle 'A Touch of Razzmatazz', conceived as a reflection of the happiness possible in life.

Some of the participating jewellers drew on their own lives and experiences to make moving and deeply personal objects. Maria Hanson's pieces were a response to the stillbirth of her first son, Thomas. 'Loss, Life and Love' is a chain made up of three rows of handcrafted silver rings, relieved only by three small dots of gold,



Fig. 1. Enamelled gold mourning ring for Princess Amelia, the oval bezel with a crowned 'A' on black bordered by the motto 'REMEMBER ME' on a white border, 1810, Victoria and Albert Museum, M.151-1962. Given by Dame Joan Evans. © Victoria & Albert Museum.

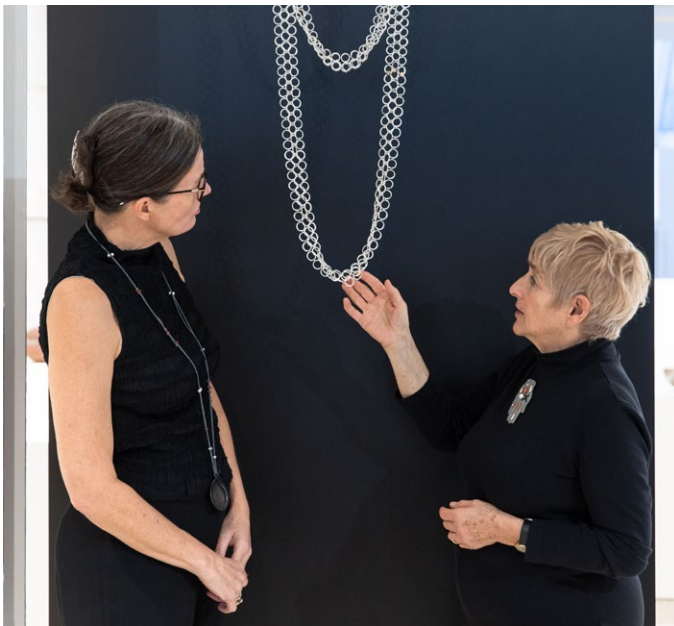


Fig. 2. Sarah Myerscough and Corinne Julius with Maria Hanson's 'Loss, Life and Love'. Image © Anwyn Howarth, Sarah Myerscough Gallery.

representing each of Hanson's children. The necklace elements add up to the number of weeks from the death of Thomas to the date on which she agreed to take part in the exhibition. The necklace became a way to hold Thomas and his memory as part of her family (fig. 2). Jessica Turrell's work was also a memorial to her adult son through subtle plaster and enamel jewels which include messages written on sheets of paper hidden within the pendants.

Memories of childhood inspired Alice Biolo's brooches; plain at the front, and the back set with red and green cubic zirconia, drawing on a funny memory of her colour-blind grandfather's tomato plants. Jonathan Boyd recreated his own childhood memories with a recovered Scottish bus seat and the strap of his grandfather's railway watch, unravelling like time itself in a tangle of gold wire. Mark Nuell also used his unusual childhood in the small sapphire mines of Australia to create beautiful gold jewels set with a rainbow of gemstones (fig. 3).

Reclaimed materials form the basis of both Zoe Arnold and Romilly Saumarez Smith's work. 'Hello' by Arnold includes a little lead, toy dog, in memory of her childhood longing for a pet (fig. 4), while Saumarez Smith's 'Green Grass of Home' is inspired by the classic Tom Jones song. Miles Robinson, taking his idea from earlier posy rings, made brooches spelling out romantic messages from the letters cut out of the bottom of brown beer bottles.

Maria Militsi and Caroline Broadhead looked at the experience of women in the 20th century. Broadhead's reimagining of the pearl necklace made that almost-clichéd jewel fresh and new, deconstructing it and setting it in a cage of beads or against a lightbox. Militsi's mother and aunt were both talented artists working against the expectations laid on women in mid-20th-century Greece. Her pieces use broken and repaired pottery and a sculptor's tools set with tiny splashes of gold to make brooches that can be taken away and worn.

The works made for the exhibition were startling, moving and beautiful in turn. Just like the memorial jewellery of former



Fig. 3. 'Bright Lights, Big City' by Mark Nuell. Image © Mark Nuell.

centuries, jewellery remains uniquely suited to expressing the most personal aspects of human life. Metalworker Adi Toch's presentation of 'Earth to Earth' was shown alongside 'Memories'. It featured a range of beautifully textured vessels which she had buried in earth, creating subtle patination, and embodying the memory of the time she spent creating them as well as the memory of the earth which enclosed them. Both shows exemplified the creative vibrancy of the contemporary craft world.

A pdf copy of the catalogue can be downloaded at: https://www.sarahmyerscough.com/usr/library/documents/main/sarahmyerscoughgallery_memoriesaremadeofthis_catalogue.pdf

A former V&A curator, Rachel Church is now an independent scholar, author, and lecturer, specialising in the social history of jewellery.



Fig. 4. 'Hello', by Zoe Arnold. Image © Anwyn Howarth, Sarah Myerscough Gallery.

Jewellery from South America in the V&A: From Tombs to Tupus

By Kirstin Kennedy

From 1870 to 1877, Juan Facundo Riaño was the South Kensington Museum's 'man in Madrid'. Employed by the Museum as its Art Referee, diplomat and scholar Riaño had the task of seeking out examples of Spanish decorative arts. His name is familiar to jewellery historians in particular, because it was he (together with Bond Street dealer William Chaffers, also in the Museum's employ) who purchased a number of important examples of jewellery from the great sale of pieces from the treasury of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar at Zaragoza in 1870 [there will be an SJH lecture on these jewels, by Carolina Beatriz Naya, on 25 June – Ed.]. Riaño's acquisitions for the Museum included an important silver casket which, despite its Toledo assay mark, he identified as Mexican but which in fact is from the Spanish colonial province of Alto Peru (modern Bolivia). However, there was no South American equivalent to Riaño, no South Kensington 'man in Havana' – or even in Lima, Bogotá or Buenos Aires. As a result, the Museum's holdings of jewellery from South America are modest.

Most of the collection comprises pre-Columbian, archaeological pieces. The largest group of these is a 'collection of gold ornaments and copies of dress' from 'Señor Rostrofo' [sic, for 'Restrepo', the collector Vicente Restrepo, who placed his considerable collection of similar ornaments on display at the Columbian Pavillion during the 1892 *Exposición Histórico-Americana* in Madrid]. The earrings, nose-pieces and pendants of a gold alloy called *tumbaga* were excavated from pre-Columbian graves in the Quimbaya area of Colombia (fig. 1). The decision to purchase them (for £65) was approved on 14 December 1871 by the board of the Science and Art Department. Other vendors were archaeological opportunists. In 1875, a former British Consul in Peru, Thomas Hutchinson (c. 1802–1885) sold to the Museum (for £30) a group of pottery and silver items found in a *huaca* (an indigenous burial site) at the city of Chan Chan, northern Peru, the centre of the Chimú kingdom. Among them was a silver ear ornament (991-1875). All were described in the register as 'Ancient Peruvian'. More silver ear ornaments arrived at the Victoria and Albert Museum (as it had now become) in 1924, given by South Kensington resident Alfred Naylor. According to Museum records, they had been 'dug up between 1859 and 1861 at Gran Chimu, Trujillo district' (M.368 to 374-1924).



Fig. 2. Shawl pin or *katawe*, silver, Mapuche culture (Chile), 1850-1900. Length: 22 cm. Given by Mr Charles H. L. Alden. V&A M.204-1938. © Victoria and Albert Museum.



Fig. 1. Three nose ornaments, gold and copper alloy (*tumbaga*). Quimbaya area, Colombia, 9th – 15th centuries. Clockwise from top: V&A 766-1872 (W.: 7.8 cm); V&A 762-1872 (W.: 2.3 cm); V&A 762-1872 (W.: 2.1 cm). © Victoria and Albert Museum.

Acquisitions of jewellery from this area of the world after the 1920s have been few – and coincidentally all are types of fastener. Three are shawl pins, all donated, and all of which arrived with provenance information of varying accuracy. A long, vicious-looking, silver pin with a finial in the shape of an orb with a pendant cross (fig. 2) was given to the Museum by a Mr Charles H.L. Alden. He told the curators that this was 'for use on an infant's shawl', and he probably acquired it in Spain, as the Museum register identifies it as 'Spanish, 19th century'. Although a date of 1800-1900 is plausible, the pin is actually a *katawe* – a shawl pin of a type used by the Mapuche people of the Patagonia region of Chile, and unlikely to have been for an infant. The other two pins are *tupus* or *topos* – Quechua for a dress pin used to attach a woman's shawl (*Illiclla*) around her *acsu* (tunic), and typically made of silver. The word appears in Spanish texts as early as 1600, when the Franciscan missionary Fray Diego de Ocaña described his visit to Chile where he observed Mapuche women wearing 'a square blanket over their shoulders, gathered at the breast with a gold or silver *topo*'. The pins are sometimes documented in the wills of indigenous women, noted as items of value which could be sold. In her will of 1598, for example, Ana Copana left 'two pairs of large *topos*, I order they be sold [...] I leave some small pieces of silver and some old broken, silver *tupus*' (cited in Nora E. Jaffaray and Jane E. Mangan, *Women in Colonial Latin America, 1526 to 1806* (Indianapolis, 2018, p. 37). The two V&A *tupus* are much later. One, probably 19th or even 20th century (M.16-1974), was presented together with a *mate* pot (M.15-1974) by a Mr and Mrs A.L. Simpson in fulfilment of the instructions of Mrs Simpson's late mother. Another was given by Queen Mary (fig. 3). Correspondence in the Museum archives reveals it had been part of the collection of South American artefacts assembled by Dame Clarissa Guthrie Reid and her husband, and that it had been lent to an exhibition of South American arts organised in London during the summer of 1916. The Guthrie Reids had lived in Peru and, on their return to London,

Clarissa became Honorary Secretary of the Anglo-South American Central Depot (based in Queen's Gate, London). In a letter concerning the exhibition, dated 10 August 1916 and addressed to Mary, Lady Minto, a member of the Queen's household, Guthrie Reid explains that 'the silver pin is the kind used by the Indian women of Southern Chile for fastening their shawls', although she does not give it its Quechua name of 'tupo'. Shortly afterwards the pin, together with a vase (V&A C.217-1916) and a tunic (V&A T.267-1916), were presented to Queen Mary. She, in turn, resolved to pass them on to a museum. A series of notes exchanged between Edward Wallington, the Queen's Private Secretary, and Cecil Harcourt Smith, the V&A's Director, show that Smith was happy to confirm the pieces were suitable for the V&A (the Queen had also considered sending them to the British Museum), but was careful to establish that they were, indeed, gifts and not loans.

In 1997, the Museum received a collection of coins bequeathed by Professor Gordon Marshall Petersen. This included a Chilean peso, enamelled and mounted as a brooch in Birmingham in 1891, and representative of the English fashion in the 1880s for jewellery made from enamelled coins of the world. It was not until 2022,

however, that the Museum once again purchased jewellery from South America. This acquisition highlighted the work of a contemporary maker, Tatiana Apráez, who works with a type of lacquer made from the natural resin of a tree which grows in the area around the city of San Juan de Pasto, Colombia (figs 4 and 5) [An interview with Tatiana, discussing her work, is planned for a future issue of JHT – Ed.]. The resin, known locally as *mopa mopa*, is worked to produce a resilient varnish that can be dyed: 'Pasto varnish' (*barniz de pasto*). In Colonial America, this lacquer was used to decorate large-scale objects such as cabinets and trays, but also smaller pieces such as snuff bottles. Before the arrival of the Spanish, however, the indigenous population made beads and nose rings from the *mopa mopa* resin – a reminiscence of the silver and gold alloy ornaments purchased from Sr Restrepo and Consul Hutchinson all those decades ago, and a link which resonates with Tatiana's own work today.

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www.vam.ac.uk/shop/jewellery

Kirstin Kennedy is Editor of Jewellery History Today.



Fig. 3. Shawl pin or tupo, silver set with a red paste gem, Patagonia region (Southern Chile), 1800-1899. Length: 22.5 cm. Gift of HM Queen Mary. V&A M.133-1916. © Victoria and Albert Museum.



Fig. 4. Tatiana Apráez, Urcunina Series: 2 (front), wood and barniz de pasto, Colombia, 2022. Diameter: 9.2 cm. Acquired with the support of Tatiana Apráez. V&A W.5-2023. © Victoria and Albert Museum.

Fig. 5. Tatiana Apráez, Urcunina Series: 2 (back), wood and barniz de pasto, Colombia, 2022. Diameter: 9.2 cm. Acquired with the support of Tatiana Apráez. V&A W.5-2023. © Victoria and Albert Museum.

Amber. From Antiquity to Eternity

Reviewed by **Elisabetta Gagetti**

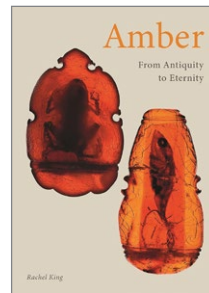
In *Amber. From Antiquity to Eternity*, author Rachel King has achieved an extremely challenging goal: a book which can be enjoyed on multiple levels. The text, beautifully written, tells the many fascinating stories of amber, thematically arranged in eight chapters. But the interested general reader, and also the specialist — and not everyone can be a specialist in every period and culture — can take their interest even further thanks to the synthesis of current scholarship detailed in the endnotes, and a useful select bibliography. A key feature of *Amber* is King's decision to trace 'a history of human engagement with amber across three millennia', all over the world, and she pays special attention to thorny ethical issues connected to the mine-to-market chain, such as the exploitation of the workforce, the cultural impact of the amber business on non-Western societies, and its place in our environmental consciousness. This approach aligns her book perfectly with current research trends in every field.

The eight chapters each focus on a specific, broad, topic. Each offers a skilful synthesis while at the same time all are threaded through with the same questions: how did the identification and perception of amber change over time? how was it collected (or mined) and worked? what agency did those involved in working, selling, trading and buying amber have? And, what was the value and the meaning of amber in different periods and places?

Chapter one deals with the nature and age of amber, or, to be precise, ambers: King focusses not only on Baltic amber, but also on amber from several deposits across the world, in particular Myanmar and the Dominican Republic. Chapter two addresses Greek and Roman myths on the origin of amber, and their survival and revival in art and science, from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. Chapter three is about the common history of amber and man from 40,000 years BCE to the early middle ages. King considers the significance of amber for different times and cultures, from the Stone Ages, Bronze Age, and the Ancient world of Greece and Rome, to Europe in the first millennium CE, Western Asia and China (fig. 1). Some key points are singled out: the meaning of amber in the religious sphere, the relationship between amber and the human (especially female) body, the knowledge of amber sources and trading routes, the hoarding of amber. Chapter four is devoted to the different techniques of amber recovery: mainly foraging (i.e. picking up amber pebbles washed up on the beach),



Fig. 1. Snuff bottle carved with women and children in a garden. H. 7.9 cm. Amber, ivory and coral. China, Qing Dynasty, Qianlong period (1736–1795). © New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bequest of Mary Clark Thompson, 1923.



Amber: From Antiquity to Eternity.

Rachel King.

Reaktion Books, 2022, \$40.

272 pages, hardback,
6.5 x 9.25 inches.

ISBN: 978-1789145915

fishing and mining. Particular attention is paid to the best-recorded deposits along the Baltic coast, and she considers the correlation between amber deposits and the development of trade networks. Chapter five is on imitation and counterfeiting of amber. The rare and precious 'gold stone' was already the subject of imitations in the second millennium BCE. Only a few written recipes to 'make' or to 'improve' amber survive, dating as far back as 250–200 BCE in China, but only to 1400 CE in Europe. These imitations sought to reproduce not only the colours, clarity and weight of amber, but also one of its most mesmerising features: the inclusions of organisms, ranging from insects to small vertebrates. Chapters six and seven, on amber artefacts, can be read as a diptych: on the one hand, designed to be worn on the body (as jewellery and also in the immaterial form of scent), on the other, as works of art to be displayed in houses, courts and places of worship. Here the author marshals the range of her profound knowledge of worked amber from the middle ages to the contemporary art market, and refers to the importance of

amber in cultures other than European: China, Tibet, India, Africa and the Muslim world. She also focuses on the journey of amber objects from private collections to public museums. Finally, chapter eight deals with the idea of amber and loss. Most obviously, this relates to looted artworks, such as the legendary Amber Room, presented to Peter the Great of Russia by the king of Prussia, Frederick William I in 1716, and removed by Nazi forces from the Catherine Palace at Pushkin in 1941, but King also considers the loss of the mystique which had surrounded amber in the past, a loss which has affected the market value for amber, with the exception of a few spectacular pieces that have found their way into private collections.

The book — which draws extensively on documentary and archival sources, both familiar and less well-known — is helpfully structured with sub-headings that clearly map the reader's wonderful journey around the mysterious world of amber.

Elisabetta Gagetti is co-director of Gemmae. An International Journal on Glyptics Studies. She is a specialist in glyptics, Hellenistic to Early Mediaeval, and devoted several studies to Roman ambers, especially finger-rings.

Precious

Reviewed by Tricia Topping

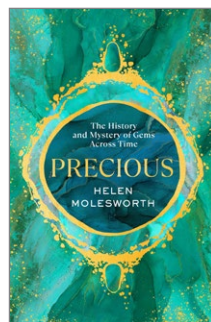
Helen Molesworth, the Senior Jewellery Curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, has written this book to celebrate humanity's love affair with jewels. Several members of the Society of Jewellery Historians are thanked for the help they gave Helen (fig. 1) in her journey as an author. The book draws you in from the very first page. It could be a novel, a study of gemmology, or a jewellery book; it is undoubtedly an adventure story, a history book, and a demonstration of the increasing value of jewellery as an asset class. It documents Helen's 25 years of immersion in the world of jewellery, her passion for antiquity and her magpie's eye for spotting the beauty and glow of a gemstone from a very early age.

As Helen explains, her work is an almost perfect synthesis of every subject. It is all in the book, whatever interests you, from history, politics, geography and geology, chemistry, romance, fine art, and high finance. Her skilful use of anecdotes pulls all these sections together, showing clearly via a helpful world map where the best gems are discovered. The journey of gemstones from the depths of the earth plays a role in the crowning of kings and queens. These precious pieces of adornment have been at the heart of wars, buried with their deceased owners, lost under the floorboards of a London street, yet continued to glow with the secrets hidden in their facets. These stones command eye-watering prices if they make it to the world's auction houses, proving that although an object of adornment signifying prestige and power, they are also an investment small enough to be hidden in the hem of a dress but large enough in value to buy yourself out of trouble.

Helen has selected ten of nature's most dazzling jewels, including the big five: diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds and pearls. The chapters highlighting the gems that have fallen out of favour or are considered unworthy of consideration are the best. The garnet was loved by Victorian housekeepers and revered in the seventh century by Raedwald, King of East Anglia, who was buried at Sutton Hoo with extraordinarily detailed geometric dark red garnets symbolising his power. How did the garnet fall to the bottom of the gem list? Why did its fortune wax and wane through history? Will it be revived, and will its value increase? You must read the chapter to find out.

The misunderstood and undervalued spinel has a whole chapter to itself, with the story of the Black Prince's Ruby, whose complex history was examined by Jack Ogden in an SJH online lecture in 2021, taking a central role. Although described as a ruby, it is not a ruby but contains a ruby filling a drill hole in the mother gem. The sad old spinel, loved and esteemed by Mughal and Persian emperors, has lost its lustre and identity. Which begs the question: is the spinel an imposter pretending to be a ruby, or a gem looking for a marketing campaign to bring back the sparkle?

Helen's extensive historical knowledge and her skills as



Precious. The History and Mystery of Gems Across Time.

Helen Molesworth.

Doubleday, 2024, £30.

336 pages, hardback,

15.6 x 24 cm.

ISBN: 978-0857529091



Fig. 1. Author Helen Molesworth bathed in gold after the publication of her new book. Image © Helen Molesworth.

a gemmologist combine well with her love of language and classical education. The book gives a fully rounded picture of the opportunities within the gem and jewellery industry. The writing style mesmerises you with stories of long-gone people and their obsession with certain gems. Reading the book will encourage further interest in delving into the all-consuming world of gemstones. We should be grateful to Helen for opening the jewellery box and highlighting heritage jewellery, a frequently misunderstood fine and decorative arts area. It is a perfect book for a gift.

Tricia Topping is a member of the SJH Council, MD at Carlyle Consultants, and author of the blog Luxury Topping, about jewellery, art, fashion, interior design and property.

www.luxurytopping.com

Recent and Forthcoming Publications

Further recent titles are available on the SJH website at www.societyofjewelleryhistorians.ac.uk/jewellery_books_recent



Carved Gems: Inspiration & Expertise.

Helen Serras-Herman.
Gem Art Center, Arvada, CO,
2023, \$29.95.
160 pages, 9 x 6 inches.



Peter Bauhuis: Simultanea: 18 Vessels.

Markus Rigert, Martin Schmidt,
Niels Skat Tiedje.
ACC Art Books, 2024, £49.
62 pages, hardback,
22.5 x 30 cm, English, German.
ISBN: 978-3897907126



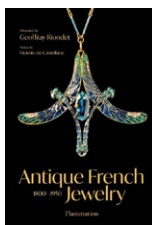
Symbolism in Global Jewelry.

Sindi Schloss.
International Gemological
Services, 2022, \$34.95.
248 pages, paperback.
ISBN: 978-0578392684



Tiffany & Co. The Landmark.

Alba Cappellieri, Christopher Young.
Assouline, 2024, \$175.
272 pages, hardback in slipcase,
9.5 x 13 inches.



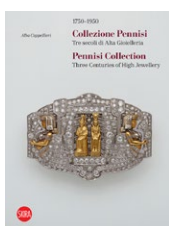
Antique French Jewelry: 1800-1950.

Geoffroy Riondet, Victoire
de Castellane.
Flammarion, 2024, £20.
128 pages, hardback,
16.05 x 23.09 cm.
ISBN: 978-2080433312



La résistance des bijoux: Contre les géographies coloniales.

Ariella Aïsha Azoulay.
Rôt-Bò-Krik, 2023, €15.
240 pages, paperback,
11 x 16 cm, French.
ISBN: 978-2958062057



1750-1950. Collezione Pennisi. Tre secoli di Alta Gioielleria – Pennisi Collection. Three Centuries of High Jewellery.

Alba Capellieri.
Skira, 2023, €39.90. 280 pages,
hardback, 21.7 x 28.7 cm, English, Italian.
ISBN: 978-8857251189



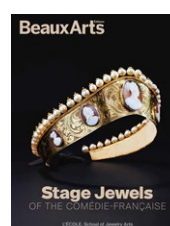
Decoding the Jewels: Renaissance Jewellery in Scotland.

Anna Groundwater.
Sidestone Press, 2024, £39.
200 pages, paperback, 8.2 x 25.7 cm.
ISBN: 978-9464262575
Hardback version, £93.60.
ISBN: 978-9464262582



Les poinçons français des métaux précieux.

Michael Fieggan.
Osprey Paris, 2024, €59.
192 pages, hardback (sewn not glued),
15.5 x 22 cm, French.
A full PDF file with an English translation of
each page is supplied to all overseas buyers.
ISBN: 978-2957637621



Stage Jewels of the Comédie-Française.

L'École School of Jewellery Arts.
Beaux-Arts Editions, 2023, €10.
52 pages, paperback, 22 x 29 cm.
ISBN: 979-1020408655

See JHT 49 for the fuller French version.

An extremely comprehensive and carefully checked work that includes for the first time all the 204 assay offices ever opened, including in Algeria, and the 58 offices opened in European towns occupied under Napoleon which struck French hallmarks. All the drawings are new, in colour, and most of the hallmarks have a photo as well. All the dates of introduction and suppression have been carefully checked, with some errors from as far back as the early 19th century corrected.



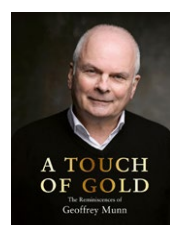
Lydia Courteille: A Jeweller's Odyssey.

Juliet Weir-de La Rochefoucauld.
ACC Art Books, 2023, £45.
224 pages, hardback,
24.38 x 26.29 cm.
ISBN: 978-1788842006



Daniel Kruger Jewellery. The unexpected meaning of curious things.

Barbara Schmidt, Olga Zobel Biró.
Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2024, £42.
184 pages, paperback, 21 x 27 cm,
English, German.
ISBN: 978-3897907102



A Touch of Gold: The Reminiscences of Geoffrey Munn.

Geoffrey Munn.
ACC Art Books, 2023, £25.
208 pages, hardback,
18.29 x 24.89 cm.
ISBN: 978-1788841979

Wonders Never Cease

Reviewed by Paula Weideger

Each year in March, a vast, nondescript convention centre on the edge of Maastricht in the Netherlands becomes the flower-filled home of TEFAF (The European Fine Art Fair). This year 270 international dealers exhibited paintings, *objets d'art*, design, drawings, antiquities and – top of my ‘must see’ list – jewellery and jewelled objects. At the two-day, invitation-only preview which I attended there were some 300 museum directors, 650 curators and 40 museum patrons’ groups. There were also visiting dealers, art advisors and gallery staff along with private collectors. Gossip flowed along with wine and the people-watching was fun, too, although this year, apart from the odd ropes of pearls à la Chanel, modest jewels were the mode. I darted from S.J. Phillips to Hemmerle; Van Cleef and Arpels to Didier and their artist creations. At Veronique Bamps, I fell for a Castellani necklace of natural pearls and rubies – opulent yet restrained. I did not skip antiquities dealers either. Kallos, for example, offers ancient engraved gems set as earrings, rings and pendants. Then it was off to the dealers in *objets d'art*. In 23 years of visiting TEFAF I have always had one thrilling surprise; something I simply did not expect but loved at first sight. This time lightning struck twice.

A single ring-stone cabinet would have been extraordinary. Fewer than two dozen are documented; intact survivors in good condition are even more scarce, while rarer still are those in private hands. And yet: Kunstammer Georg Laue (Munich and London) had one.

And so did Galerie Kugel (Paris)!

In the late 18th century, ring-stone cabinets were the brilliant marriage of the new ‘serious’ science of mineralogy and the longstanding ‘frivolous’ delight in wearing decorative jewels. A cabinet would include a collection of carved, specimen semi-precious stones, a catalogue identifying them and a ring into which the specimens could be popped. The wearer would dazzle while also appearing to be erudite. Heinrich Gottlob Lang, born in Dresden with a workshop in Augsburg, was the pre-eminent stone-carver of specimen minerals for these cabinets.

The Kugel cabinet (c. 1790; fig. 1), is attributed to the workshop of Dresden’s Johann Christian Neuber. It is in the form of a leather-bound book complete with marbled endpapers. Its ‘text’ is a slide-out box holding 41 faceted semi-precious stones, all rectangles of the same size. Its handwritten catalogue is titled



Fig. 2. Carved insects and flowers are set on sample hardstones like specimens in Heinrich Gottlob Lang’s 1770s ring-stone cabinet. © Kunstammer Georg Laue, Munich / London.



Fig. 1. A book to treasure: stone samples (including agates, lapis lazuli and petrified wood) in Johann Christian Neuber’s witty 1790s ‘book’ on the study of rocks. Image courtesy of Galerie Kugel / Guillaume Benoît.

Amusement Lithologique. White sapphires frame the bezel of the ring (a replacement) waiting for its stone to display.

At Laue, the ring-stone cabinet (c. 1770; fig. 2) is a leather-covered box from Lang’s own workshop in Augsburg. Here 50 semi-precious hardstones are cut as either a rectangle or an oval. The cabinet top opens to reveal two fire-gilt rings – one bezel oval, the other rectangular (both original). Below are five slide-out drawers holding 48 other specimens, an ivory tool to lift each from its hollow and Lang’s handwritten catalogue identifying each specimen. Lang was interested in insects, too: Four of the stones are inlaid with bugs and butterflies. One, of lava, is topped by pretty, turquoise forget-me-nots.

Not to worry. Forget you I shall not.

Paula Weideger, author, journalist, art and jewellery lover, is a New Yorker who has lived in London for many years. Her writing about art, objets d’art, antiques and jewels has appeared in many international newspapers and magazines. She is currently working on a book about collecting.

Revolution in the Air

The Second Contemporary Jewellery Biennale, Lisbon, April – September 2024

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Portugal's Carnation Revolution. As day dawned on the 25th April 1974, army rebels overthrew half a century of dictatorship in an (almost) bloodless coup. The second Contemporary Jewellery Biennale, organised by Marta Costa Reis and her team from the Portuguese Association of Contemporary Jewellery (PIN), takes its cue from this historic event to explore how jewellery can act as an expression of politics and of power. 'Daybreak' ('Madrugada'), the word chosen as the leitmotif of the Biennale, deliberately echoes the poem '25 Abril' by Portuguese poet Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen. It is one of many events that will be held this year in Portugal to commemorate the Revolution, and it does so in a spirit of celebration, invoking the hope that the dawn brings. Just like the first Biennale [see JHT 43 – Ed.], the organisers aim to raise awareness at home and abroad of the work of established artists and Portuguese art students through collaborative workshops (with Central St Martins - University of the Arts London, and the Florence-based Alchimia Contemporary Art School, among others), and a series of exhibitions. There will also be a conference.

Jewellery has always been closely linked to power, be it monetary, spiritual, or political. Contemporary jewellery can also carry political content, as artists express political positions, reflections and comments on a range of issues – whether challenging the financial system, addressing racial issues, asserting feminist stances, denouncing massacres, or mocking our obsession with conventional ideas of beauty. The limitless creative possibilities that political engagement offers artist-jewellers will be on display in a major exhibition organised by PIN in partnership with MUDE (Museum of Design and Fashion; 27 June to 22 September 2024). At the same time, the Ricardo Espírito Santo Foundation will offer a space for galleries from Portugal and abroad to showcase and promote their artists, while cultural spaces and commercial galleries across Lisbon will also play host to exhibitions of jewellery on the theme of politics and power (see www.jewellerybiennial.pt for details), including a retrospective devoted to the work of Teresa Milheiro at Zé dos Bois Gallery. The recently-opened Royal Treasury Museum will also contribute to this dazzling range of exhibitions with two shows: 'Contemporary Tiaras' and 'Jewels for Democracy' – the latter featuring pieces specially created by PIN Members for women who played a significant role in the 1974 transition to democracy (fig. 2). Both shows will be open from 18 April to 30 June.

The Royal Treasury Museum is also the venue for the Biennale colloquium (fig. 1), which will explore the relationship between jewellery, politics and power. Speakers on subjects ranging from the exploitation of natural resources and mining, to political jewellery in the USA, include Rotterdam-based artist and writer Clementine Edwards, and Cindi Strauss, Curator of Decorative Arts, Crafts and Design at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas.

www.pin.pt
 @pin_contemporary_jewellery
 www.jewellerybiennial.pt
 @lisbon_jewellery_biennial



Fig. 1. *The Biennale Conference poster, featuring an image of a pendant by José Aurélio, '25 de Abril, 1974'. Poster designed by Studio on Pluto.*

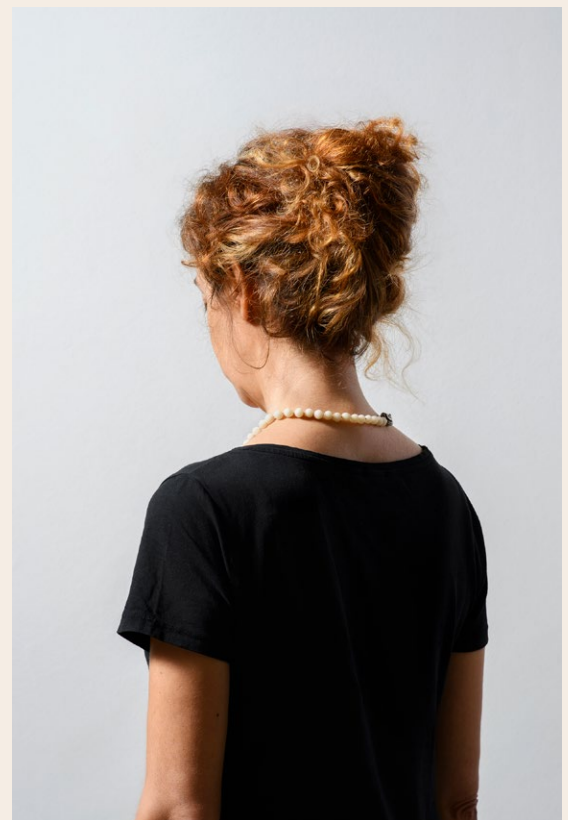


Fig. 2. 'Her name was Catarina': necklace (17 cm) by Tereza Seabra of beads made of wheat flour, silver, gold marcasites and zircon, made to remember 24-year-old harvester and pregnant mother Catarina Eufémia, shot in the back at point-blank range by police in 1954 while demonstrating for better pay and working conditions. Photo: Eduardo Sousa Ribeiro.

SJH SYMPOSIUM 2025 ANNOUNCEMENT

BEADS

Saturday 28 June 2025 at the Society of Antiquaries, London

Further to recent calls for assistance with our next symposium, the Society of Jewellery Historians is delighted to confirm that this will be taking place on **Saturday 28 June 2025** at the **Society of Antiquaries, London**.

We invite submissions that explore current scholarship on beads whether through practical work or recent research, in honour of the generous donation to SJH from the Bead Study Trust in 2021. We welcome papers in a variety of formats to encourage speakers from a range of disciplines and career stages:

- Presentations of 15 minutes followed by 5 minutes of questions.
- Series of shorter presentations of 10 minutes sharing common themes, with a longer time for discussion at the end of the series. You may like to submit an idea for a group panel.

Please specify which format you would like your presentation to be considered for.



Detail of glass and plastic beadwork from Hungarian bridal crown, 1970s-80s, London. © British Museum.



Detail from a woman's sleeveless coat, Bosnia, early 20th century, with blue glass beads to ward off the evil eye. London, © British Museum.

Topics can range from any geographical area and any chronological period and may include, but are not limited to:

- Materials and techniques/technologies from the past to contemporary
- History of beads
- Sources and origins, trade and exchange
- Significance, symbol and meaning
- Personal adornment, jewellery and clothing accessories
- Beads in art
- Beads in literature

Please submit abstracts of up to 200 words to beads@societyofjewelleryhistorians.ac.uk by **30 September 2024**. If your abstract is accepted, you will be notified before the end of the calendar year.

For any queries, or if you are interested in supporting the organisation of this event, please contact Aude Mongiatti and Natasha Awais-Dean via:

beads@societyofjewelleryhistorians.ac.uk

CORRECTION: Readers will remember our tribute to the late Erik Schoonhoven in JHT 49. Somehow we mixed up jewels and royal heirs. Apologies. Queen Beatrix, who wore the historic jewels of the House of Nassau, had three sons. It was her mother, Queen Juliana, who had four daughters. Please forgive us, Erik!

Gold – a Blessing or a Curse?

In November 2021, jeweller Ute Decker spoke to the Society about her creative philosophy and her role as a leading voice in the international ethical jewellery movement. Here she introduces a new online resource, under the working title 'Decolonizing Gold', that will illuminate and inform anyone interested in tracking the true histories of gold and invites volunteers to assist in her endeavours. Intrigued? Read on...

Gold is not simply a metal. No other element contains such a rich mixture of history and myth, uselessness and value, beauty and horror. I love working with gold, sculpting its luminescence and quietly weaving stories of meaning and origin into each piece. Yet the troubling question always haunted me: where do my materials come from? Beneath its gleaming surface, gold holds dark tales of conquest, colonialism, environmental degradation, and the misery of indigenous peoples. These dark answers to my question made me an early pioneer in the use of fully traceable Fairtrade gold. It was a step endorsed internationally when the V&A acquired (thanks to the generosity of Jacqueline and Jonathan Gestetner) my 2015 work, 'The Curling Crest of a Wave' as the first example of a Fairtrade piece of gold jewellery in the Museum's permanent collection. [Ute is currently turning brass into Fairtrade gold with commissions for the Dallas Museum of Art: see cover image and fig. 1 – Ed.].

But despite its troubling history, gold transcends mere materiality, symbolising transformation across realms of alchemy, religion, and art. Gold will always be with us and so, following my initial question and after years of research, I have now embarked on a journey to create 'Decolonizing Gold' (working title), a freely-accessible online resource dedicated to illuminating the complexities of gold that, thanks to its shimmering, timeless allure, has been a central thread in the fabric of civilizations.

The project is currently drawing together a diverse team already comprising a curator, a lawyer, a poet, and several journalists, who will work together to shape this vast amount of information into a form that is both meaningful and accessible. However, we



Fig. 1. Ute wears her 'Infinity' neckpiece in 18 ct Fairtrade gold, and a brass maquette of a Fairtrade gold hand sculpture she has been commissioned to make by the Dallas Museum of Art. The actual ring will be revealed in a major exhibition of the Rose-Asenbaum Collection of studio art jewellery, opening in May 2025 and curated by Sarah Schleuning (author of the accompanying book: <https://artjewelryforum.org/interviews/deedie-rose/>). Photo © Alun Callender.

would welcome additional expertise in fundraising, technology, establishing a digital subject cataloguing system ... as well as writers and researchers to delve into the subject, curate the most pertinent information, and provide engaging subject chapter introductions. I would particularly value content suggestions by SJH members: could you volunteer your expert knowledge for one afternoon, provide feedback and insights to guide project development, or even become part of the team?

To participate or to learn more about this endeavour, do contact Ute Decker at gold@utedecker.com

www.utedecker.com

Accommodation in Paris: An Offer from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs

Researchers working on the important jewellery collections in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs can now apply to stay in a flat in central Paris which the Museum has generously made available for study periods from one to several months.

From 1 September 2024, two single rooms in a spacious

flat, with a shared kitchen, living room and bathroom, are available free of charge for the use of up to two researchers.

Written submissions detailing the specific research project – which must relate to the museum's collections, and explain why the work would benefit from a stay in a Paris location – should be directed to the Curators' Committee for consideration.

A written report of the research undertaken must be submitted to the museum at the end of the stay.

Submissions can be made by e-mail at any time to MAD curator DrMathieuRousset-Perrier:mathieu.rousset-perrier@madparis.fr

A Dazzling Spectacle: the SJH Visit to the exhibition 'Colour Revolution. Victorian Art, Fashion & Design' at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

By Juliet Claxton



Fig. 1. SJH members in the Headley lecture theatre, being shown a necklace made of seven decapitated emerald-green and ruby-topaz-coloured hummingbirds. Image © Juliet Claxton.

Like many people, my notions of colour in the Victorian period were limited to a muted palette influenced by old sepia photographs and Dickensian images of London as a polluted smoke-filled city. The SJH visit to the Ashmolean Museum's autumn exhibition, *Colour Revolution. Victorian Art, Fashion & Design* very quickly dispelled my preconceptions with a mesmerising journey through the history and significance of colour in art and design from 1830 to 1905. Curated with precision and care, the exhibition showcased a diverse array of artworks that showed Victorians embracing the products of the Industrial Revolution, and revelling in the kaleidoscope of colours that were produced using new aniline dyes.

Our visit began at Headley Lecture Theatre (fig. 1), where SJH members were treated to a fascinating lecture by the exhibition's lead curator, Matthew Winterbottom. Our thanks to Matthew for generously sharing his time to explain the concepts and challenges behind the exhibition, giving us a deeper insight into the objects that were on display.

As if to confirm my dark preconceptions the exhibition opened with Queen Victoria's mourning dress. But Victoria's long period of wearing black following the death of Prince Albert in 1861 has distorted modern perceptions of Victorian Britain. It was the discovery of synthetic pigments, spearheaded by William Henry Perkin (1838-1907) who created mauvine in 1856 and later succeeded in manufacturing alizarin for red, pink, and brown, which introduced Victorians to a rainbow of colours, surpassing natural dyes in their ability to retain their shocking brilliance. Synthetic anilines were celebrated at the

International Exhibition of 1862 and even named after significant events of the 19th century. Two of the most fashionable aniline colours on display, vivid pinks – Magenta and Solferino – had been named after recent French victories over Austria in the 1859 Second Italian War of Independence.

The exhibition's carefully-designed layout led us through an exploration of colour's evolution over the 19th century, seamlessly weaving together paintings, illuminated manuscripts, ceramics, furniture and items of fashion and jewellery. One cabinet showcased a dazzling purple day dress, crinoline and lace-up boots all dyed with the first aniline mauvine. But for some, especially the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the colour revolution fuelled a tension between nature and artifice as 'unnatural' colours became associated with decadence. The array of purple fashions was disparagingly termed 'mauve measles' and there was real human cost as the toxicity of some synthetic dyes became apparent: in the 1860s, toxic arsenic green notoriously caused the death of a young woman poisoned by the artificial flowers she created, and harmful anilines used in red striped socks left rashes on the legs of the women who wore them.

To the delight of SJH members, the show's 'Medieval Court' section held an exhibit of the Devonshire parure (fig. 2). A colourful seven-piece gem set including a bracelet, bandeau, comb, coronet, stomacher, necklace, and diadem, the parure was commissioned by the 6th Duke of Devonshire for the Countess Granville (the wife of his nephew) to wear in Moscow at the coronation of Tsar Alexander II in 1856. Also on display were examples of cloisonné enamel jewels by the Parisian

jeweller Alexis Falize, which integrated vibrant flower and bird designs inspired by Japanese prints. The quest for colour in nature, however, fuelled a gruesome Victorian appetite for animals, beetles, and hummingbirds. One exhibit was of a hummingbird necklace made of seven decapitated emerald-green and ruby-topaz-coloured birds, created by the jeweller Harry Emmanuel in 1865. A second parure consisted of the bodies of 46 South American iridescent green weevils. The weevils were presented by the Portuguese ambassador to Foreign Secretary Lord Granville in 1884, who had them mounted on a tiara and necklace for his wife.

The exhibition was a surprising tour through a century I had previously envisaged as muted or gloomy, so it was a privilege to see the 19th-century's colourful and technological impact on Victorian fashions and society.

Dr Juliet Claxton is Features Editor for JHT.



Fig. 2. SJH member Lucinda Orr, and the Devonshire Parure. Image © Juliet Claxton.

The Society of Jewellery Historians – 2024 Lecture Dates

<p>28 May</p>	<p>Beatriz Chadour-Sampson — Jewellery by Johann Karl and Karl Thomas Bossard, Lucerne, from Historicism to Art Deco 1868-1934 Johann Karl Bossard (1846-1914) came from a family of goldsmiths in central Switzerland going back to 1775 in Zug and since 1830 in Lucerne. After taking over his father’s workshop in 1868, he led the company to great success; in 1901 his son Karl Thomas (1876-1934) continued the business. With the rise of tourism on Lake Lucerne, Bossard attracted an international clientele, ranging from the high society, European aristocracy, renowned collectors to museum curators. In 2013 the Swiss National Museum, Zurich, acquired the Bossard estate which includes several thousand drawings, models, casts, templates and a fascinating list of clients. The focus of the talk will be on the jewellery designs with an emphasis on historical styles.</p>
<p>25 June</p>	<p>Carolina Beatriz Naya — The jewels of the Treasury of the Pillar at the Victoria & Albert Museum In 1967, Charles Oman, Keeper of the Department of Metalwork at the Victoria and Albert Museum, published an article in <i>Apollo</i> detailing the public auction in Zaragoza, in June 1870, of jewellery from the Treasury of the Virgin of the Pillar. Oman vividly recounted the pivotal moments surrounding the acquisition of pieces by representatives of the V&A (then the South Kensington Museum). Following this ground-breaking article, little additional information of note was published, until the speaker’s doctoral thesis (2015) brought to light much new evidence about the auction and the jewellery. In this lecture, Carolina will present a comprehensive review of the acquisitions made (including four pieces which came to the Museum from the London trade), and share some intriguing anecdotes.</p>
<p>Further 2024 dates: 24 September, 22 October, 26 November. 2025: 28 January, 25 February, 25 March, 27 May, 24 June, 23 September, 28 October, 25 November. A full list of lectures is also available on the Society’s website: www.societyofjewelleryhistorians.ac.uk/current_lectures</p>	
<p>Lectures are held at the Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, at 6.00 pm, and simultaneously online. Members and guests only.</p>	
<p>For last minute changes or cancellations, check on the website at www.societyofjewelleryhistorians.ac.uk/news</p>	

SJH MEMBER HONoured BY FRENCH GOVERNMENT

We are delighted to congratulate long-standing SJH member Dr Sandra Hindman, who in January was named *Chevalière de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* for her contribution to arts and culture in France.

Sandra, who founded her Paris gallery 'Les Enluminures' in 1991 (and subsequently 'Les Enluminures' Ltd, in Chicago, Illinois), has been active in the field of the history of medieval art and artefacts for nearly 50 years. Her involvement is high-level and wide-ranging: as a professor (at the Johns Hopkins University and at Northwestern University, where she became Chair of the Department of Art History and now Professor Emerita), author, publisher and art dealer. Her name will be familiar to many readers, not only for the important books she has published (in collaboration with other SJH members such as Diana Scarisbrick, Beatriz Chadour-Sampson and Jack Ogden) and for the exquisite jewellery and manuscripts that she sells, but also for her generosity in hosting private views of her jewellery exhibitions for SJH members.

The *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* is one of four ministerial Orders created by the French government in May 1957; among its first recipients were artists Georges Braque and Marc Chagall. Awarded for contributions to the arts and culture of France, its precedent lies in the medieval *Ordre de Saint-Michel*. Established 1469, and initially restricted to members of the aristocracy, it came to be awarded mainly to artists and scholars until it was phased out in 1830. Sandra joins an illustrious pantheon: recent recipients include jewellery designer Cindy Chao – and George Clooney.

www.lesenluminures.com



A (bejewelled) scholar in her study: Dr Sandra Hindman, named Chevalière de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in January. Photo © Les Enluminures.

Listings

Readers wishing to attend any of the events listed are strongly advised to contact the organisers to confirm the details, in case of any alteration or cancellations which may occur after this issue goes to print. Details published in previous issues of JHT are not repeated.

UK SHOWS, FAIRS AND EVENTS

The Royal Horticultural Hall Antiques Fair
19 May, 9 June, 7 July, 8 September 2024
The Lindley Hall, The Royal Horticultural Halls,
off Vincent Square, London SW1P 2QW
Tel: (+44) 020 7254 4054
Web: adamsantiquesfairs.com
Email: adamsantiquesfairs@gmail.com

The Treasure House Fair
26 June – 2 July 2024
Royal Hospital Chelsea, South Grounds, London, SW3 4SR
Tel: (+44) 020 4505 7760
Web: treasurehousefair.com/visitors
Email: info@treasurehousefair.com

UK EXHIBITIONS

Rediscovering gems
Classical gems have been highly prized by collectors from the Renaissance onwards, but never more so than in 18th-century Europe. Collected by royalty, aristocrats, artists and antiquarians, their designs reflect, and serve as a record of, personal tastes and aesthetic preferences. With a typical 18th-century gem cabinet, housing gems and impressions, as well as a collector's magnifying glass and drawings, this display captures the fascination that gems have inspired over the centuries. In August 2023 the British Museum announced that a number of engraved gems had been stolen, were missing or damaged. Hundreds have already been recovered, and ten of these can be seen as part of this display.
Tel: (+44) 020 7323 8000
Web: britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/rediscovering-gems
Ends 2 June 2024
British Museum,
Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG

Victorian Radicals: From the Pre-Raphaelites to the Arts and Crafts Movement
Three generations of British artists, designers and makers revolutionised the visual arts in the second half of the 19th century. The Pre-Raphaelites, William Morris and his circle, and the men and women of the Arts and Crafts movement transformed art and design. Selected from the city of Birmingham's outstanding collection, this exhibition presents paintings and drawings alongside jewellery, glass, textiles and metalwork to explore their radical vision for art and society.
Tel: (+44) 0121 348 8000
Web: birminghammuseums.org.uk/exhibitions
Ends 31 October 2024
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
Edmund Street, off Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3DH.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

Jewellery – Form – Content
The exhibition presents historical and contemporary jewellery from the collections of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, together with pieces lent by private collectors or the artists themselves that are still worn today or have been preserved as keepsakes.
Tel: (+420) 778 543 900
Web: upm.cz/jewellery-form-content
Ends 19 May 2024
The Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague
17. listopadu Street No.2, 110 00 Prague 1, Czechia

Ramses & the Gold of the Pharaohs
Tel: (+61) 2 9320 6000
Web: australianmuseum/exhibition/ramses
Ends 19 May 2024
Australian Museum,
1 William Street, Sydney NSW 2010, Australia

Gabi Dziuba & Friends
Matches or tablet cartons, coins, beans or letters of the alphabet, cast in gold or silver and slightly modified —

Gabi Dziuba uses anything as a source of inspiration for her jewellery. The results of her experiments with shapes and materials are rigorously inventive, refreshingly unconventional, austere minimalist, glamorously sparkling, and progressively modern. This exhibition will be giving an impression of the entire spectrum of her oeuvre for the first time.
Tel: (+49) 723 139 2126
Web: schmuckmuseum.de/en/exhibitions/upcoming-exhibitions
Ends 26 May 2024
Schmuckmuseum Pforzheim
Jahnstraße 42, 75173 Pforzheim, Germany

The Sceptre and the Distaff. Being a woman between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance
From a cultural and social history perspective, this exhibition will highlight the place of women in society in the 15th and 16th centuries, in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. The discussion will be based on more than 100 works of all kinds (paintings, sculptures, archaeological objects, manuscripts, prints, archival documents, etc.), including a magnificent ensemble of Renaissance jewellery, discovered in Amiens in the 19th century. One can also admire jewellery depicted in paintings loaned by institutions such as the Louvre.
Tel: (+33) 02 42 88 05 90
Web: mba.tours.fr/agenda/1249/62-visite-en-l.s.f-de-l-exposition-le-sceptre-et-la-queuille
Ends 17 June 2024
Musée des Beaux-Arts
18 Place François Sicard, 37000 Tours, France

Buccellati, the Prince of Goldsmiths: Rediscovering the Classics
This major retrospective exhibition rediscovers the heritage, history and craftsmanship of Buccellati. Hosted in Venice, in association with the Biennale di Venezia 2024, it retraces the distinctive themes of Buccellati's creations, highlighting the mastery and preciousness of the 'classic'.
Tel: (+39) 091-2741420
Web: zoemagazine.net/201821-buccellati-the-prince-of-goldsmiths
Ends 18 June 2024
Officine 800
Fondamenta San Biagio 800, Giudecca, 30133 Venice, Italy

The Joy of Giving – silver donations
Tel: (+46) 8 519 543 00
Web: nationalmuseum.se/en/exhibitions/the-joy-of-giving-silver-donations
Ends 23 June 2024
Nationalmuseum,
Södra Blasieholmshamnen 2, Stockholm, Sweden

A Taste for the Renaissance: a dialogue between collections
The second in a series of three exhibitions held in collaboration with the V&A, this exhibition celebrates the extraordinary innovation, skill and craftsmanship of Renaissance art and explores its enduring appeal to collectors through the ages. It highlights the complex interconnections of the Renaissance world, a golden age of exploration and discovery which witnessed an exchange of materials and ideas across both Europe and distant lands. More than 130 works of art, comprising sculpture, metalwork, jewellery, glass, textiles, books, manuscripts, paintings, works on paper and exotica, will be on display.
Web: hotel-de-la-marine.paris/en/agenda/a-taste-for-the-renaissance
Ends 30 June 2024
Hôtel de la Marine
2 Pl. de la Concorde, 75008 Paris, France

The Mystery of Golden Jewels: Unique finds of royal jewels from the migration period of peoples from Central Bohemia
Ends June 2024
Tel: (+420) 313 512 768
Web: muzeumtgm.cz/kulturni-program/vystavy/zahada-zlatych-sperku
Muzeum T. G. M. Rakovník
Žižkovo nám. 1, 269 01 Rakovník, Czechia

Joyce J. Scott: Walk a Mile in My Dreams
Tel: (+1) 443 573 1700
Web: artbma.org/exhibition/
Ends 14 July 2024
Baltimore Museum of Art
10 Art Museum Drive, Baltimore, MD 21218, USA

Modern Alchemy, Adam McNeely
Adam Neeley is an award-winning artist-jeweller who transforms precious metals into wearable art by traditional goldsmithing techniques and modern technologies. Through many years of trial and error, he developed a never-before-seen technique that he calls 'Spectra Gold', which seamlessly changes one colour of gold into another. This exhibition will explore both the creative working processes of this innovative jeweller, and some of the raw and faceted gems and minerals used by him to create his art. Artist-jeweller Adam Neeley is a true 21st-century alchemist.
Tel: (+1) 949 494 8971
Web: lagunaartmuseum.org/exhibitions/
Ends 29 July 2024
Laguna Art Museum
307 Cliff Drive, Laguna Beach, CA 92651, USA

Chicago Collects: Jewelry in Perspective
This exhibition will include approximately 200 pieces of jewellery and objects collected by Chicagoans, many never displayed before in public. Exhibition highlights include a 19th-century jewelled monstrose, three magnificent tiaras, jewellery renderings by René Lalique and by Anne Howe Geyer for Mauboussin, a large collection of medals of the French kings, and much more. Lenders include the Richard H. Driehaus Collection, Chicago, the Chicago History Museum, the Lizzadro Museum, select private collectors, and contemporary Chicago jewellery artisans.
Tel: (+1) 312 482 8933
Web: driehausmuseum.org/exhibitions
Ends 22 September 2024
The Richard H. Driehaus Museum
40 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611, USA

Pocket luxuries
This exhibition presents an exceptional collection of small, precious and sophisticated objects, such as containers for snuff, sweetmeats, patches or makeup, vinaigrettes, writing sets, cane handles and lognettes, in gold enriched with hard stones, porcelain or enamels, and sometimes decorated with miniatures. It aims to renew the way we look at these objects, by amalgamating the histories of art and fashion, techniques, cultural history and anthropology, to make these objects resonate with other works: fashion accessories, but also the clothes they complete, the furniture where they are stored and finally paintings, drawings and engravings where these objects are depicted.
Tel: (+33) 01 40 27 07 21
Web: museecognacjay.paris.fr/expositions/luxe-de-poche
Ends 29 September 2024
Musée Cognac-Jay
8 rue Elzévir, 75003 Paris, France

All Cleared Out – the Jewellery Museum Extends an Invitation
Concurrent with Ornamenta 2024 in Pforzheim and the Northern Black Forest, the Jewellery Museum will be staging three parallel exhibitions under the motto of 'All Cleared-out' one put together by visitors, another featuring individual artistic positions, and a third presenting haute joaillerie creations. In addition, a huge black ball made of felted merino wool will be on the road in Pforzheim and the Enzkreis. Between July and September, local people can decide how and where to move the ball. Some roll it through the streets, amid great laughter. Others lie down under the ball and let themselves be rolled over, oddly enough mainly men in suits.
Tel: (+49) 723 139 2126
Web: schmuckmuseum.de/en
5 July to late September 2024
Schmuckmuseum Pforzheim
Jahnstraße 42, 75173 Pforzheim, Germany

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