



**Swords into Ploughshares:
Knives into Jewels**

In memory of Kadri Mälk, 1959 - 2023

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Introduction

If you have read my book, *Stuff Matters* (Penguin Books, London, 2013), you will know that my deep interest in materials, indeed my whole career, was sparked off by my experience of being stabbed on the London Underground in 1985. You could say that was a classic example of something positive resulting from an initially negative situation - which is very much what *Swords into Ploughshares: Knives into Jewels* is all about. I fully support what Norman, Dauvit and the many artists participating in the exhibition and related social interventions are doing and wish them nothing but success.

Materially,
Professor Mark Miodownik,
UCL, London, 2023.

In total, one in five (19%) Britons from an ethnic minority background say they know someone personally who has been a victim of knife crime, including 5% who say they themselves were the victim. This figure remains higher than amongst white Britons, of whom 12% say they know someone personally and just 2% say they have been a victim themselves.

Beth Mann, YouGov Researcher

About the exhibition - Dauvit

This exhibition has been five years in the making, having been born at the 2017 Association for Contemporary Jewellery conference. I had invited Boris Bally to present his response to gun-crime in the US, “*I.M.A.G.I.N.E: Peace NOW*” as a paper at the conference. I had created a piece for his show and on the back of that work had travelled to the US to work in a young offenders’ institute, a deeply disturbing experience for many reasons (some of which are picked up by Martin Glynn’s essay in this catalogue). In conversation with Boris and Norman Cherry over the conference weekend, we decided that it would be appropriate to develop a UK-based exhibition in which the theme became knife violence and the material would be knife blades sequestered from the streets.

It has not been an easy five years: our first application for funding to Arts Council England was thwarted by the global pandemic from which we emerged into a radically-altered arts landscape. Two further bids for funding from the Arts Council were praised by them but ultimately rejected. Everyone we spoke to – community leaders, researchers, activists, artists and young people – loved the project and this convinced us that we needed to keep on with it in whatever version we could and through our own time, hard work and the generosity of the artists.

It is a tribute to the power of creative people that these artists have dedicated themselves to this for free and have produced a wealth of amazing, thought-provoking work which will become the basis for the social interventions that each venue has agreed to run for us in their location. The social interventions have always been the key aim of this project: there is no point in putting on an exhibition of this sort if it is not going to engage the communities affected by the theme and we are delighted that all the venues we have been working with have taken this on board very strongly, working with prisons, youth justice organisations, youth collectives and schools to show young people the power of creativity.

As the UK moves further and further down the road to philistine fascism, projects which prove conclusively that creative communities can combat the nihilist capitalist agenda are ever-more essential. This project represents a massive “fuck you” to the puppets of the post-Thatcher world and we want our participants to realise that killing each other with knives fits in with the establishment class-war divide-and-rule agenda: by engaging with each other creatively, thoughtfully, respectfully, by thinking, doing and making, they can make a difference to their own lives and to the communities in which they live, no matter how circumscribed those communities are.

In the year ending March 2022, there were around 45,000 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in England and Wales. This was 9% higher than in 2020/21 and 34% higher than in 2010/11.

(Commons Library Research Briefing, 20 September 2022, Knife Crime in England and Wales: Statistics)

The figures speak for themselves. Carrying a knife has become endemic amongst certain groups of young people and Norman and I hope that our carefully-designed programme of social interventions will go some small way to making people think about what they stand to lose if they carry a knife or associate with people who do.

This is not a “nice” exhibition to go and see casually but an exhibition of brutal, dangerous, challenging work which demands engagement. We want people to leave and talk about it, tell others to go and see it, take up the call to create and to start projects of their own which challenge the status quo. Art makes a difference. This is the reason that the current government hates art and artists and is using its propaganda machine to devalue them in the popular consciousness, underfunding arts organisations, artists and arts education at every turn. It is a constant battle, class warfare written large, it is costing lives and we need to turn the tables, channelling the aggression and anger back at those who are responsible.

Dauvit has explained the genesis of this exhibition and some of the difficulties encountered in bringing what was undoubtedly a great idea to ultimate fruition. These should not be underestimated; the road we travelled to reach a conclusion was tortuous and painful at times, but never without hope and commitment to the initial idea. What we offer you in *Swords into Ploughshares: Knives into Jewels* is ultimately the result of a partnership of curators, venue directors, and participating artists. When we realised that formal funding was not going to materialise we seriously considered abandoning the idea but it was the venues and the artists who all encouraged us to keep going, to find a way of still making the project happen. To them we owe a debt of gratitude for their encouragement, their good will and, especially in the case of the venues, their leap of faith in agreeing to host an exhibition which did not actually exist in any material sense, since all the works were still to be created, at the point of commitment.

Jewellery and Object as a subject is an ideal vehicle to engage with the many issues around knife crime in the UK. This is not conventional “Jewellery as product” as seen on the High Street, but “jewellery as art object”. Jewellery of this sort can take many forms but, in principle, may be described as small, portable, personal works of art or objects which have the capacity to be worn and/or displayed in small spaces, and which often tell a story or make a political or social point. Political and social significance is clearly a major indicator in this project.

We always intended that the show would include creators who are established nationally and internationally, some mid-career practitioners and others whom we might describe as emerging. It was important to us that we have a mix of experiences, nationalities and approaches in this exhibition and it gave us a deal of satisfaction to offer opportunities to younger artists to participate in something as potentially significant. Knife crime is a curse on modern society, not only in Britain, and has caused untold misery to so many. Several of our artists have experienced similar phenomena in their own societies, others view the British experience as very different. Some of the artists expressed interest in participating because they already work with steel and/or other non precious materials, some because they relished the opportunity to do so for the first time. All of them committed to the project because they believe in the power of their art to change lives.

Dauvit and I put that theory to the test during 2018/19 when we worked with a secondary school in an area of multiple deprivation in Birmingham. We developed a social intervention which involved building a team of artists, theatre-in-education practitioners, and social mentors working with a group of year ten pupils to introduce serious discussion and problem solving through the medium of drama and jewellery. As always when putting a theory to the test for the first time, we did so with confidence but a degree of trepidation. At the end of a seven week programme this group of monosyllabic, recalcitrant young people appeared to be transformed into engaged and talkative individuals who stood up and gave lively presentations in a semi-public situation where they talked positively about the experience. They proudly exhibited the items of personal jewellery they had made with components which included parts of

knives which had been surrendered to West Midlands Police. Early in 2023, the school reported that not only had every single one of them demonstrated a changed attitude to school, their studies, and to their peer group but that this modified behaviour had continued right through until leaving school.

We have asked each venue to engage with their local community in a manner which they think is appropriate depending on social makeup, funding, and local skills. Dauvit and I look forward to seeing the results over the next two to three years as “Knives” travels around the UK and, as we expect, makes a strong impact everywhere it goes.

Restorying violence

The image is grainy at first. White noise and static. Then, suddenly, CCTV footage of a Glasgow street flickers into focus. Bathed in pale light, the black and white figures move quickly in and out of shot, at diagonals, throwing stretched punches. The focus is unsteady but six or seven people, all young men, are visible. Another, clad in tracksuit and white cap, appears from the margin cutting a zigzag path through the bodies. He appears to throw one punch, then another, before turning to raise his hands in celebration. The knife that had been secreted in his hand is now visible, reflecting the glare of the streetlight. The second punch inflicted a stab-wound to the heart, claiming the life of a passing stranger.

Writing this now, I recall the sickening lurch in my stomach the first time I saw the footage. I was a young, naïve police analyst trying to get to grips with crime in the city and had been invited across the road to visit a new police unit. It was 2005, and the World Health Organisation had listed the city as having the highest homicide rate in 21 European countries. Territorial gangs from housing estates competed for local prestige with knives and fists, as newspaper front pages vied for the most lurid image of bloodied knives and scarred young men. The Violence Reduction Unit, as they became known, had been set up to try and tackle Glasgow's epidemic levels of knife crime. They had their work cut out.

Like Inuits with snow, there are many words for knives in Glasgow. A chib, a shiv, a malky – the latter being short for a Malcolm Fraser, or razor. There is an everyday intimacy to these terms, and they run deep in the city's history. For the knife is an intimate weapon. A bullet is impersonal - it works from a distance, forcing its way down the barrel and tearing its way mercilessly through flesh and bone. A knife demands closeness, intimacy. A lockback knife fits in the palm of your hand. The dirk, a dagger carried covertly, was part of the standard attire of the Scottish clansman. The modern kilt still includes a knife secreted in the right sock - a sgian dubh, or black dagger.

Later I saw the CCTV footage again. This time, though, it was screened in front of a room full of people, and was accompanied with a forensic life-history of 'David', the fourteen-year-old assailant. He had been rehoused three times in his first five years due to repeated incidents of domestic violence then, between the ages of nine and twelve, he was rehoused a further three times due to poor living conditions, often living with family members actively involved in crime. At age twelve he began to truant and began to run with a local street gang, and received police attention for breaches of the peace, solvent abuse, assault, shoplifting and theft. The story was tragic, and spoke to the audience of missed opportunities by schools, police, social work, and many others.

David's story, as it became known, itself became a weapon. The Violence Reduction Unit had been tasked with changing the narrative about violence in Glasgow, and they found stories like this had an incredible power. A former Director of the VRU, John Carnochan,

estimates that the story has been heard by more than ten thousand people. And in my own research it has come back time and again as an inspirational moment that prompted change. Though violence involving young people has not gone away, it has dropped by more than half, and I think restorying was an important part of that.

The restorying of knives, as imagined in this exhibition, is similarly powerful. Knives are so everyday they are enveloped into our movements without thinking, an inorganic extension that somehow becomes part of us: the tactile connection between flesh and steel, fingers flowing into metal. Knives into Ploughshares takes this tactile quality and recasts it. In some the violence of the knife remains visible – a sharpened edge foreboding threat – while in others their violence is blunted and recast. Some bring to mind the ancient qualities of blades, calling to mind the Stone Age, or the Wild West, while others are archly contemporary or dystopically futuristic. But most powerful of all is what has gone on beneath – dedicated, creative work with young people affected by violence, learning to craft metal, and perhaps, recraft their story.

David's story ends as he is released from prison. Perhaps, for him, as for knives in this exhibition, a restored second life is possible.

On 12 June 2019 Maya Oppenheim, Women's Correspondent at The Independent, reported that police were handing out blunt knives to victims of domestic violence to try to stop their abuser stabbing them.

Rachael Colley.

The Artists

Berserking: Empty Vessel



Biography

Dauvit Alexander, also known as The Justified Sinner, started making jewellery at the age of 14 in Glasgow. Mistakenly diverted into Landscape Architecture, he quickly realised that his future lay in jewellery and spent many years honing his skills at the bench and in the classroom. Over the last twenty years, he has built an international reputation for his jewellery which combines found, corroded iron elements with traditional jewellery materials and fine-jewellery skills.

His practice has taken a more publicly-engaged turn over the last ten years and he has been looking at the way in which jewellery can be used to give meaning to social issues, including violence, gender and identity: this exhibition is the largest of these projects he has undertaken to date.

His work can be seen in many recent publications on contemporary jewellery and is in the permanent collection of the British Museum as well as many private collections.

Statement

I was struggling to make a piece for this exhibition. Having been so completely immersed in the theories of violence and the marginalisation of young people as well as the planning and organising, I had hit a creative block. Listening to James MacMillan's "The Berserking" piano concerto (1990) on CD, I read the following by MacMillan,

"In fact the initial burst of inspiration for The Berserking came in 1989 after watching a soccer game in which Glasgow Celtic turned in a characteristically passionate, frenzied but ultimately futile display against Partizan Belgrade!"

This idea of misplaced energy dissipating in futile actions stuck with me and I considered what I'd been reading about misplaced anger and the fact that governments don't do anything about knife crime because they are happy to accept that young, disenfranchised people are killing each other rather than risk them turning their anger on the oppressors... These outbursts of this anger are futile as they are so misdirected.

Having seen videos of young people working themselves up into a frenzy, I decided to see what would happen if I did this myself – could I even do this myself? – and to then use the knife as a weapon 'against' a piece of metal, a guaranteed futile action, the metal recording the marks of the frenzied attack without being significantly changed by it. The video element of the presentation records this. After the attack, I felt drained, empty.

The final piece is an echo of the knife, an "empty vessel" from which the knife has been removed but which still bears the scars of the attack.

Burst: Dressed to the Knives



Biography

Boris Bally is a Swiss-trained goldsmith working as a contemporary metalsmith and designer in Providence, Rhode Island, where he maintains his studio business, Bally Humanufactured. Bally's work is a disciplined body of objects which vary from eccentric through formal to humorous, provoking thought and reflecting on some of the distortions of our ordered world. Over four decades, his practice has become an amalgam of the skills of an able industrial designer, a gifted craftsman, a discriminating sculptor and a cultural critic. For years, he has been organizing major art exhibitions facilitating political activism to end gun violence.

Recently, Bally was interviewed for the Smithsonian Institution's, "Archives of American Art: Oral History Project." His work has been featured in numerous international and national exhibitions and prominent publications. Public collections include London's Victoria & Albert Museum, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Museum of Art & Design New York, Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, Brooklyn Museum, The Smithsonian American Art Museum's collections housed in the Luce Foundation Center for American Art, Renwick Gallery and the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum. His artwork has earned him numerous state fellowship grants in design and crafts including an International Design Resource Award, the Felissimo Design Award from the New York Foundation for the Arts, a Green Dot Award, Second Prize in the Fortunoff Silver: New Forms and Expressions II, the Visual Arts Achievement Award from the Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island, and a Society of North American Goldsmiths Volunteer Recognition Award.

Statement

The artwork produced in my studio blossoms from four decades of producing art with integrity, skill and professionalism. I draw upon my Swiss goldsmith training and formal art school education in crafts and design. Since the early 1990s, I have pioneered the use of recycled aluminum traffic signs for creating art, furniture, furnishings and colossal murals. In my studio, I try to incorporate ways to engage the community, providing opportunities for people to learn about art, gain new skills and participate in our community. Past projects include interior and exterior installations in parks, offices, hospitals, community centers and even on building façades. My goal is to explore beyond the realm of the precious metals -- the foundation of my expertise -- and to transform common materials by creating a sense of value and awe through ingenuity. These pieces are intended to welcome any audience to be invited in on multiple sensory levels by incorporating familiarity, beauty and even sound.

Your Tongue is Like a Knife - Tongue Depressor 1



Biography

Petra Bishai, a jewellery maker and designer studied at Epsom School of Art. She set up her own studio on leaving college and combines her own practice with teaching part time. Her jewellery is defined by a linear style and pared down forms and is exhibited both nationally and internationally.

Her designs draw from a diverse range of cultural influences, from the Middle East to London, born of Egyptian and Syrian parents in Bahrain, Petra's family came to London in the 1960s. Growing up in South East London, Petra has always drawn upon her cultural heritage and London upbringing. Her work reflects her fascination with living in a large city exploring the paradox of belonging versus alienation and how we adapt and interact with our surroundings. Petra considers London life and the transitions that occur in her cultural environment.

Statement

Your Tongue is Like a Knife.

نبيك سلا لثم كناسل

In the 1990's I attended classes to learn to play bass guitar. One week I turned up and there was a boy ahead of me. The man on the desk asked him to hand over his knife before going to his music class. The young teenager duly did so, there appeared to be a tacit agreement that he would then pick his knife up when he left at the end of the evening. I didn't know how they knew he carried a knife or why he did so. This was before the first London knife amnesty and that was how the situation was dealt with.

Fast forward to the present day and I have my own knife to deal with: do I destroy it completely or leave it in its recognisable form? I toyed with both ideas before thinking about my own youth and my weapon of choice. 'The tongue is like a sharp knife. Kills without drawing blood' Buddha.

Growing up, my mother would often rebuke me, in Arabic: 'Your tongue is like a knife'. My adult response is to create two tongue depressors, designed to gag the wearer and stop them from making any cutting remarks.



Metal-morphosis 'Peace Piece'

Biography

Stephen Bottomley has had his family home and studio in Scotland since 2008. His academic career has taken him from the South Coast of England where he established his first studio with a Prince's Youth Business Trust and Enterprise Allowance Scheme awards in 1990. Over thirty years he has worked or lived in all four cities that are home to the countries Assay Offices in London, Sheffield, Edinburgh, and Birmingham.

Studies include the Royal College of Art (MPhil RCA, 1999-2001), the University of Brighton (MA Design, 1996-98), with an important exchange to Rhode Island School of Design, Providence Graduate Metals programme (USA 1998). Previous studies include his degree at West Surrey College of Art and Design in Surrey (BA Hons 3D-Design Metals, 1986-89) and a Foundation at Hasting College of Art (1985-86).

Bottomley's jewellery work is internationally exhibited and held in permanent collections including, the National Museums of Scotland, the Cominelli Foundation and British Museum. Solo exhibitions include shows at the Vitt St Gallery, Birmingham (2018), Hidden Gallery, Seoul, South Korea (2010), Fortuny Museum, Venice, Italy and Hove Museum and Art Gallery (2008) and include a retrospective at the Scottish Gallery Edinburgh, 2012 as well as many group exhibitions.

Statement

My jewellery is created by traditional goldsmith skills applied to precious and non-precious metals, influenced by our urban and rural landscapes. Characteristically my jewellery features surfaces with vibrant layers of colour applied by the art of enamelling. Recycled, or found materials have long held a fascination, especially when they obtain a second life through a workbench led alchemy, while retaining traces of their past lives.

This work for 'Swords into Ploughshares: Knives into Jewels' takes a mundane household knife and transforms it into a flowering pendant. Inspired by the iconic 1967 photograph 'Flower power' by Bernie Boston, depicting a Vietnam War protestor placing a carnation into the barrel of a rifle held by a soldier during a protest march to end the War in Vietnam. The title of my piece 'Metal-morphosis- Peace Piece' alludes also to the Greek poet Ovid's Metamorphoses featuring gods and men transformed into animals, plants and rocks.

The piece was made by encasing the knife with protective layers of vitreous enamel. Steel flowers, c 1960 from a Providence Rhode Island Fashion industry warehouse, were also fired and then riveted through the perforated blade. This refers the knife to the pioneering "IMAGINE - Give Peace a Chance" anti-gun project (Bally, 2016, USA) and to Providence RI where Bottomley lived and worked in the 1990s.

Engagement Rings - R.I.P.



Biography

Drawing influence from Punk Rock, Dadaism, Situationism, the Goons and the dilapidated barns and discarded rusting farm machinery that surrounded him in his childhood, Timothy Information Limited has run an active and continuous making practice since 1991. Working in a range of materials, predominately in 3D on and off the body, he has exhibited internationally with often kinetic work exploring the displacement of narratives, the badge as a political medium, the redundant machine and the role of the author in the making process. Information Limited has a strong involvement in collaborative practice, currently working with two active jewellery-based collectives, the London based 'Dialogue Collective' and the International 'Extranalities' group.

When not lecturing or making things Information Limited aka Jehovis is the vocalist in the Cabaret Punk band Scrotum Clamp.

Statement

In the 'Engagement Rings' project the sole focus isn't on the jewellery outcomes, but very much on the processes used to produce them. Deploying options opened up by industrial technologies becoming more available, in this instance water jet cutting, the aim is to develop digital templates/files that are transferable and have the flexibility to be used to cut new jewellery from any old knife, and perhaps other redundant tools/objects as well. In this iteration, although they are surprisingly comfortable to wear, the stainless steel 'Engagement Rings' (available in ring sizes 'R', 'I' and 'P' only) utilise the thin nature of a knife blade, generally unfamiliar in traditional rings, to instil an associated subconscious jeopardy for the wearer of the ring. Building a direct connection to the original form of the material as well as a reminder of its previous context.



Strillo

Biography

Norman Cherry is an independent jewellery and metals artist, curator, and consultant. He spent many years in UK higher education, most recently as Pro Vice Chancellor for Arts and Humanities at the University of Lincoln. Prior to his appointment at Lincoln in 2008, he was Head of the Birmingham School of Jewellery. His work has been exhibited extensively internationally and many of his pieces are held in private and public collections throughout the world. He is a Visiting Professor at Nanjing Arts University and Tsing Hua University in China, and was Special Consulting Professor in the School of Fine Arts at Shanghai University until 2020.

His curation projects have included numerous international exhibitions over a period of some twenty years. Most notable among these have been “Transplantation: a Sense of Place and Culture” and “The Other Mountain: Contemporary Jewellery from China”, in conjunction with the National Centre for Craft and Design. “New Jewellery from China” was shown at Gallery Funaki in Melbourne, Australia, as part of the 2017 biennial Radiant Pavilion Festival of Jewellery and co-curated with Associate Professor Wang Kezhen of Nanjing Arts University.

His book “Jewellery Design and Development: From Concept to Object”, examines the creative processes of a number of jewellers as they record specific projects from generation through to completed objects. This was described by a South African academic as “the book that says everything I have been trying to say for years”.

Statement

Having worked on the development of this exhibition for several years, my thoughts on what I might create for it have gone through as many iterations as there have been proposals for the show. I experimented with a number of ideas, always exploring the material qualities of blade steel, with its complex characteristics: hardness, brittleness, intractability while still being capable of surprising malleability under the right conditions. An early experiment to clarify exactly how malleable was the blade of a very sharp old carving knife which I think dates from the 1920s yielded surprising results. I found that I could roll the blade into a coil relatively easily as long as I exercised patience and careful heat control.

As the blade gradually took on a visually softer, organic look it reminded me of a children’s party horn - something rather playful and, I thought, perhaps too flippant for an exhibition with such a potentially sinister starting point. However, one aspect of Swords into Ploughshares is that of risk related to personal security and safety. As I reflected on that, this series of personal alarms began to evolve. One of these has as its “horn” a repurposed police whistle which emits the sort of shrill noise you would expect while the other three have horns of a simpler conical structure which produce equally loud and piercing but more musical sounds. Each of them, should they need to be used, makes a hell of a racket which I hope might scare off any potential assailant.



Biography

I am a jewellery artist and craftsman. It wasn't until many years after my studies that I started making my own jewellery again. It became very natural for me to continue where I left off - with a very geometric, minimalist and partly architectural design.

Only recently has it become important for me to take a more conceptual approach in terms of design and meaning. I do not want any restrictions when it comes to either material, technique, design or, for that matter, functionality. The objects must still be wearable, comfortable or not.

Statement

For this project I choose the traditional Japanese knife, 'Tantō'.

Already by removing the handle, hold in place by a wooden pin and blunting the blade it basically gets useless as a weapon.

My aim was not to deform or reshape the knife completely, making it unrecognisable but to create a pattern or ornament leaving some of the characteristics intact.

Re-made in Sheffield, Melon-Colley (Poor trait) series



Biography

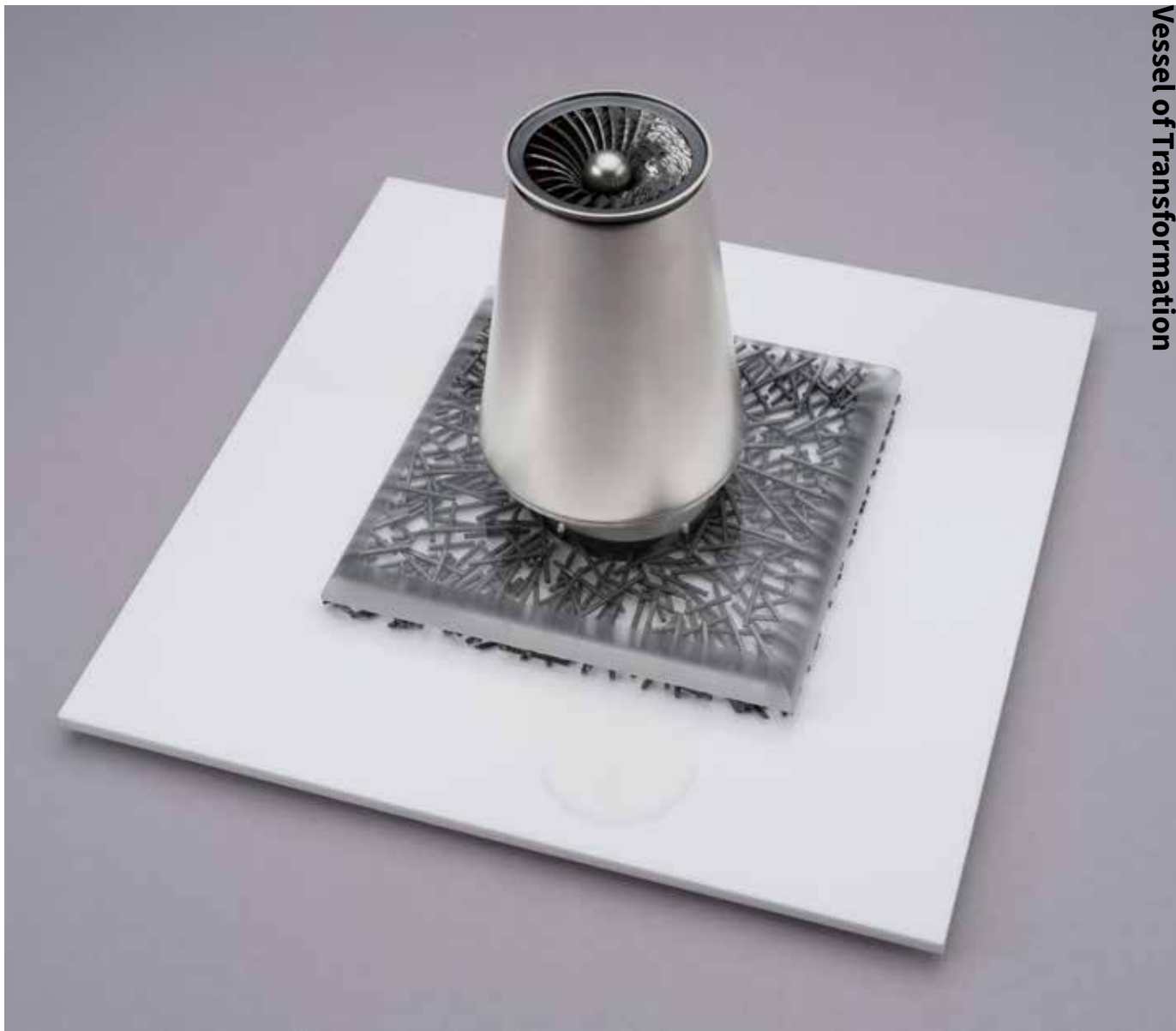
My kitchen is a safe haven, a relaxing and inspiring space that forms part of my studio, supporting my art practice. Food preparation and cooking lead to playful material experimentation, often using odd kitchen tools and paraphernalia, such as a grape cutter usually used to prepare the fruit for safe consumption by children. Knives are an important tool in the crafting of my work, which also, in the most basic sense, enable us all to participate in the everyday act of eating.

Based in Sheffield, the UK's 'Steel City' famed for its cutlery industry, I create ambiguous eating implements that challenge our collective connections with food and communicate aspects of my lived experience with the autoimmune disease systemic sclerosis. I think through materials and making, producing jewellery, tableware and sculpture which are explored in experimental dining events, exhibitions, installations and visual art projects.

Statement

The narrative around knife crime in the UK media tends to focus on knife possession crimes relating to young men, rather than highlighting women and the role of knives in domestic abuse cases. Published on 30 Sept 2021, data from UK Parliament shows that, in relation to knife crime in England and Wales, the most common method of homicide of both male and female victims was using a sharp instrument.

On 12 June 2019 Maya Oppenheim, Women's Correspondent at The Independent, reported that police were handing out blunt knives to victims of domestic violence to try to stop their abuser stabbing them. The article astounded me but helped outline the creative process I applied to the blunted knife blade I received at the start of this project. I aimed to re-craft and highlight the damaged blade, returning it to the kitchen as an ambiguous tool, more appropriate for use in my playful material experiments than in effective food preparation. I applied the tools original 'cutting' function to the blade, slicing it into six sections with a silicon carbide disc to reveal its different thicknesses of stainless steel. I welded the sections in an even 360 array, reminiscent of segmented citrus fruits, a food group I find challenging to eat. Systemic sclerosis, which affects my GI tract, has led to disordered eating and depression, hence the title of this work Re-made in Sheffield, as part of my Melon-Colley (Poor-trait) series. The sintered nylon handle's design was inspired by the forms and patterns of melons and other fruits, indicating the fleshy softness of their bodies, and connecting back to the female form.



Biography

The idea that jewellery is not merely adornment but also an object independent from the body has been the driving force in my work as a Jewellery and Timepiece designer over the past 15 years. My timepieces are an exploration of material and form. Design is driven by the challenges of the functionality of the object, yet I strive to not allow these constraints to restrict the form or use of materials.

My sculptural jewellery uses contrasting precious and non-precious materials to build resting places for jewellery; large hollow forms created to house and build this other context, a second place of being exclusive of the human physique. My most recent body of work incorporates materials and techniques used to produce my timepieces without the constraints of the functionality and mechanics of the object. The use of perspex influences the design and balance of precious materials like gold, silver and pearls.

I combine my practice with working in education and I am currently Manager of the Crafts Council of Ireland's Jewellery and Goldsmithing Skills and Design Course. Other lecturing posts include School of Jewellery, Birmingham City University in the UK and at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Canada.

I have exhibited my work in Ireland, England, Canada, USA, and Europe.

Statement

The design and creation of this piece Vessel of Transformation became an exploration of the traditional techniques of knife making. While working with knife maker Patrick Joseph in his workshop in Kilkenny, Ireland to elevate the steel from the existing blade into something unrecognisable I was introduced to a new area of metalwork. The steel from the original blade was combined with more metal and turned into Damascus steel. This exposed me to several new processes particular to working with steel and making Damascus steel

Patrick Joseph is trained in the traditional art of knife making using traditional Japanese techniques and this complex process and mastery of skill is steeped in heritage.

For me the design of this vessel came first when I was oblivious to the complexities of working in Damascus steel. This material is like no other I have ever worked with. It requires scientific precision and a huge amount of equipment and knowledge.

Contemporary bladesmiths are continuing to use ancient techniques like slowly controlling the reduction of temperature to anneal the metal in an ash bath of fifty bales of hay! Like all materials this metal is continually moving and requires processes to ensure it doesn't crack or distort when refining the grain structures. This process involved hundreds of hours of work, carefully controlling the pattern while forging to reveal the Damascus pattern, grinding, finishing, annealing, heat treating, hand polishing and acid etching.

I am excited to have found a new material to work with but I will approach with caution in the future! I have a new found appreciation for bladesmiths and their mastery of skill and in particular Patrick Joseph who without his unbelievable generosity in time, knowledge, support and use of his workshop this piece would not have been possible. I think we both learned something new and hopefully this piece will be the start of a new body of work for both of us. It has been an absolute pleasure. Homage to the Damascus steel and the bladesmith who allowed my design to become reality.



Biography

Robert Coogan has created art, working in metals since the mid-1970s. He holds a BA degree from Humbolt State University and an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art. He taught for thirty-six years for the Appalachian Centre For Craft at Tennessee Tech University and has taught workshops across the USA and internationally. He taught for a year in Torquay, England, as part of Fullbright teaching exchange.

His work has been shown both nationally and internationally. He is represented in numerous museum and private collections and continues to teach and exhibit his work from his home in central Oregon, USA.

Statement

I have been a knife-maker as well as a jeweller for close to 50 years. My greatest fear as a knife-maker has always been that one of my creations would be used to harm a human being. I believe a well-made knife can be a thing of beauty as well as one of our most useful tools. They have been around since we evolved to stand upright.

I have used the knife's elegant form and mystique in the making of jewellery, sculpture, forms, or simply to create a statement. In making the work for the exhibition, I hope to show a movement past the history of knife violence, to show that the violence is archaic and that we can move beyond it.

I chose the Gorget because it is an ancient piece of armour which has carried over to modern times as a symbol of rank and simply a decorative embellishment. The addition of the ammonite – being a fossil – was added to promote the idea of it also being a relic. The blade was kept intact but cleaned up a little to fit with the look of the piece. The blade points to the heart as a suggestion of it's potential for danger.

In the bracelet, the knife blade has, again, been kept fully intact. It has been overlaid with a forged silver flower as a symbol of growth: they interrupt the shape of the blade, the tip of which is held in a pocket behind one of the flowers. The blade still forms the foundation for the new growth.



Exquisitely handcrafted, but practically pointless

Biography

Rosie Deegan is a contemporary artist and jeweller, with a fascination for tools and their inherent links to narratives of creation, craft and use. She graduated with a first class honours in Decorative Arts (BA) from Nottingham Trent University in 2014, and has been exploring aspects of luxury, purpose, function and craftsmanship heritage since.

Since graduating, Rosie has exhibited her work in multiple venues across the UK; including Mint, Kensington, Kath Libbert Jewellery Gallery, Saltaire, National Glass Centre, Sunderland – and more recently at the New Art Exchange, Nottingham in 2022. Her work can also be seen in ‘Crafts’ magazine (issue no. 252) and in ‘Narrative Jewellery: Tales from the Toolbox’ by award winning jeweller and silversmith, Mark Fenn.

In 2021, Rosie was awarded the DYCP grant from Arts Council England, which is currently supporting the progression and development of new work exploring endangered craft skills; with a particular focus on her father’s work as a harpsichord maker.

In addition to working on her art practice, Rosie works as a Visual Arts Technician at West Nottinghamshire College and also runs an ethical jewellery business under the name ‘Elouise Makes’, where she creates earth-friendly, animal inspired jewellery out of recycled silver and gold. Rosie lives and works in Nottingham, UK, and is available for commission.

Statement

I have always been fascinated by the relationship between beauty and utility; a relationship that has also pervaded the work of English textile designer and socialist activist William Morris. In 1880, the father of the Arts & Crafts movement famously declared “Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.” This statement is still widely known by many today.

For this project Swords into Ploughshares: Knives into Jewels – a creative response to knife crime in the UK, I was given one of the many knives that had been surrendered to West Midlands Police to repurpose. I chose to introduce elements from William Morris’s celebrated ‘Dove and Rose’ design to create a new blade for the knife. The pattern has been intricately perforated by hand using a jeweller’s saw in a laborious and meticulous manner – similar to the way Morris created much of his own work. Morris was particularly damning of mass-produced objects, believing them to be ‘soulless’, due to absence of the human connection that can only be found in a handmade object.

In many cultures, doves have long been seen as symbols of peace and roses have long been seen as symbols of love and beauty. Exquisitely handcrafted, but practically pointless is a piece that explores craft, beauty and utility, but also plays on repurposing the knife into a ‘soulful’ object that endorses peace, rather than conflict and violence.



Biography

Jeff has been a lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University since 2004, working in the department of Art & Design for BA Jewellery, Materials and Design. Since 2014 he has been SHU's Collaborative Course Leader for the BA JMD taught in partnership with the Hong Kong Design Institute. He especially enjoys working with creative people when they are beginning to realise their potential and to develop their creative identity. Jeff cherishes the value of craft skills in transforming lives, allowing makers to achieve growth and thrive by building their own professional networks.

He describes himself as a designer-maker, having a creative approach based on playful first-hand knowledge of materials and technologies. Born in Stoke-on-Trent in 1968, he grew up surrounded by interesting materials with their own back stories (His father was a project engineer with Michelin.)

From 1994 – 2001, he specialised in the design and production of high quality pocket knives under the brand Featherstone & Durber. These were marketed and sold to collectors. Resourcefulness is at the heart of his practice, he embraces opportunities to make his own tools, seeing this as a vital route to expanding his hands-on knowledge. He built his current workshop largely from discarded materials, and is currently developing a range of slip-joint pocket knives made using a grinding machine fabricated from a discarded folding table, a desk lamp and skateboard wheels.

Alongside this 'Shed-made' approach, He is inspired by colleagues who truly value sustainable practice, in particular the uncompromising work of Rachael Colley.

Statement

How to make a meaningful response to the emotive challenge of this exhibition? I felt a sense of duty with this brief, for a long time I earned my living by making knives that myself and my partner Sarah Featherstone believed to be above and beyond the issue of knife crime.

I gave myself some simple design constraints to work within: use as much of the supplied knife as possible and to hint at a positive way forward with the theme. At first the materials of this cheap kitchen knife were not inspiring, a basic heat treated stainless steel and simply moulded plastic handle. By de-constructing the handle I gave myself time to treat the materials with care, sanding the slices until a smooth surface was revealed. The air pockets in some of the slices are random events that might not have been understood or controlled by the original manufacturer, similar to our own reactions to 'controlling' crime.

I wanted the central pendant to hint at the idea of 'The Pen is Mightier than the sword'. The blade steel was softened and cut with a jeweller's saw into a pattern I remember doodling in my own school workbooks. I guess this is my quiet comment that providing people with education and opportunity is the best way to counter knife crime.



Biography

Ndidi Ekubia, a contemporary British silversmith with a strong international reputation for her sensual and rich hammered forms. Originally based in London since 1998, Ndidi has explored her fine silversmithing skills to create beautiful and practical objects, from small bowls, drinking vessels and vases, to larger scale wine coolers, salvers and centrepieces. Her designs are inspired by organic shapes or naturally formed patterns of everyday life. In turn her artistic landscape has been determined by the bold African shapes, textiles, food and passionate family conversation of her childhood. Ndidi has recently moved up north to Manchester.

Ndidi's pieces are made using traditional silversmithing techniques that require the beating of sheet metal over steel and wooden forms. This process allows her to explore the resistance and strength of silver sheet with specialist hammers. The process of creating these rich sensual forms is a rhythmical, mesmerising scene of tools pushing the metal to its limit, emphasising the fluid vitality of each form. Each piece exposes an emotional response to the material, each one a unique blend of order and chaos.

Statement

At first, I had a creative block when I received the knife because of the size of the steel and deciding what to make it into. To get past this I had to work the steel like I would silver. I tried a combination of stretching, moving bending with my hammers against hard wood and my steel stakes.

After working the metal, I started to texture the surface, the annealing of the steel seemed to give the metal an appearance of age and character. I could visualise the piece as one of many and wanted to present it as a group which lead to the framed artwork. Each figure affecting the one next to it, connected like a wave.



With the lights out, it's less dangerous

Don't drink and drive. It's the only way to stay safe. Don't drink and drive. It's the only way to stay safe. Don't drink and drive. It's the only way to stay safe.

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With The Lights Out, It's Less Dangerous

Biography

Born on 22 April 1965 in Lisbon. She began her artistic training at Escola Artística António Arroio in 1983, and later at Ar.Co – Centro de Arte e Comunicação Visual. In 1987, she studies at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam with a scholarship from the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and, in 2001, completed her master's degree in Arts & Design at the Surrey Institute of Art & Design in Farnham.

In 2017, she was awarded a Susan Beech Mid-Career Artist Grant from the Art Jewelry Forum for the production of the book *Contemporary Jewellery in Portugal*.

The following year (2018), she completed her PhD in Heritage Studies at Universidade Católica Portuguesa, School of Arts (UCP, SoA) with a grant from the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia. She has worked as a curator, exhibitor, teacher and speaker around the world.

She founded Associação Portuguesa de Joalharia Contemporânea in 2004 and still chairs this today. She instigated and curated the 1st Lisbon Contemporary Jewellery Biennial – Cold Sweat, she was editor of the respective book/catalogue (2021/2022). and has written widely about contemporary jewellery. Her work is in many private and public collections.

She lives and works in Lisbon.

Statement

With the lights out, it's less dangerous.

It is fair to say that the proposition of this project is that any knife is capable of being used for violent crime. I have had this set of 6 knives in my possession for over 40 years, since I saw them at my grandparents' house. I couldn't resist the handles, defined by their immense use. Deep, almost violent marks bore witness to the various hands that had eaten with them over many years.

They are not knives made for crime. But any knife has that potential. The domestic side of these knives, through the challenge of this project, led me instinctively to relate each one to an author who committed suicide and pays tribute to five writers and a songwriter: Sylvia Plath, Mário de Sá-Carneiro, Paul Celan, Florbela Espanca, Virginia Wolf and Kurt Cobain. Their names are engraved on the handles and their sentences on the blades of the knives.

The case that keeps the knives presents a lid divided in two parts by a cut that allows our gaze to separate the handle from the blade and to focus only on one of the parts one at a time.

I dedicate this work to all those who put an end to their own lives by committing a crime against themselves. Victims of their own crime.



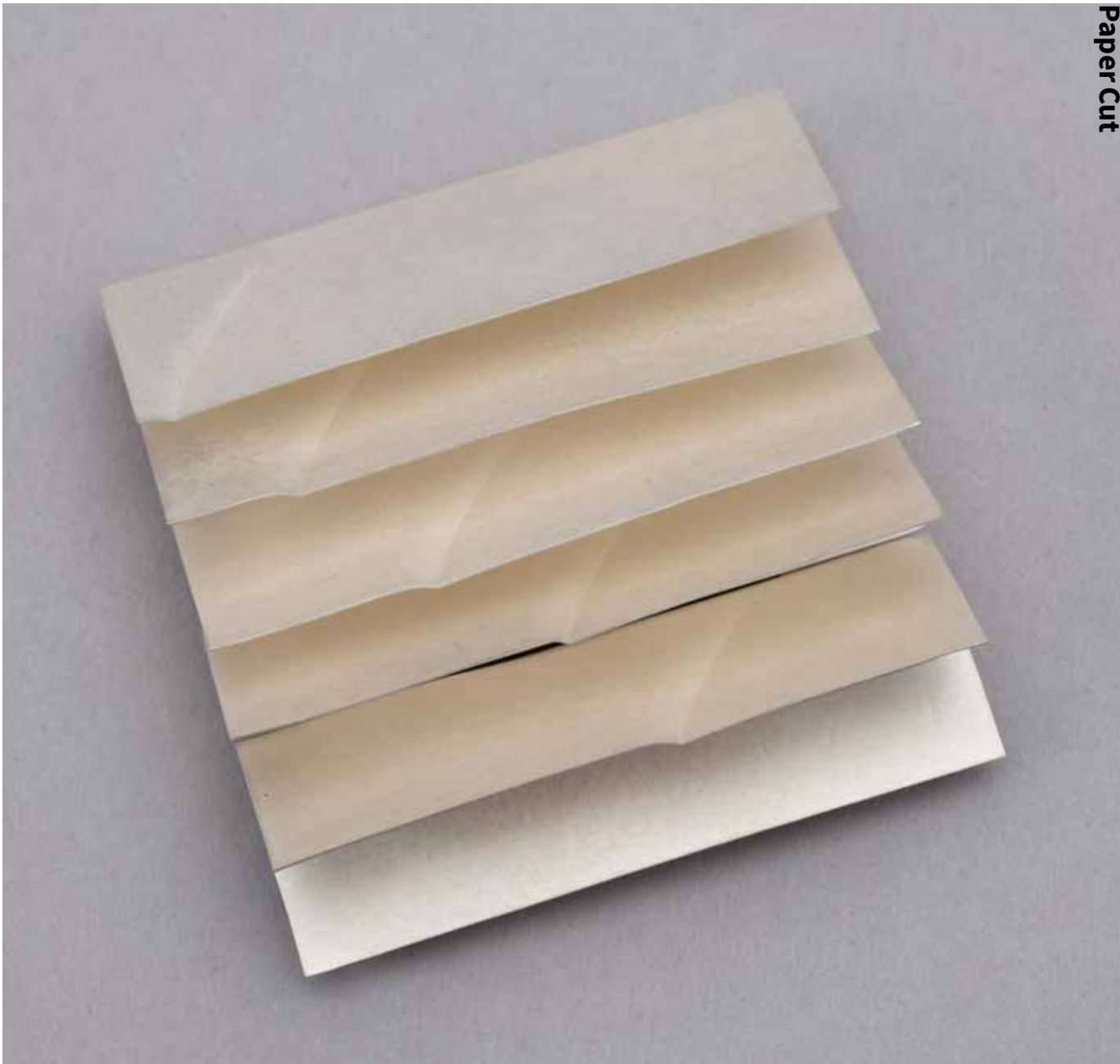
Biography

Daniel is a blacksmith and metalworker with over a ten years' experience, who describes his work as a modern representation of a timeless craft. After a five-year blacksmithing apprenticeship at Ratho Byres Forge, Edinburgh, he set out on his journeyman, visiting six European countries. Upon qualifying, he enrolled in a Bachelor's degree at Gothenburg University, to study Fine Art, specialising in Metal Art. During Daniel's BFA he had some notable exhibitions, including being represented by Craft Scotland at Collect 2020, 'Realizing Form' at Make Hauser & Wirth, Somerset, and Future Heritage at Decorex 2021, curated by Corinne Julius.

Statement

Schism is an artistic observation regarding the social impact of knife crime: from the destruction of families and communities to youths making irrational decisions that will have consequences for the rest of their lives. Freyne's intentions are expressed by presenting a broken and fractured bowl. An everyday object, representative of something that was once whole.

Made up primarily of confiscated knives, reforged and reshaped. Freyne incorrectly forge welds the pieces allowing the knives to retain traces of their original shape - a foggy memory of what once was.



Biography

Anna Gordon graduated in 1994 from Edinburgh College of Art in Jewellery and Silversmithing under Professor Dorothy Hogg MBE. She has her own contemporary jewellery practice as well working in design education, currently the head of programme in Silversmithing and Jewellery at the Glasgow School of Art.

Her work is in national collections including the National Museums of Scotland, The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, and the V&A. She is also a trustee of the Scottish Goldsmiths Trust and a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers.

Gordon uses traditional metalworking techniques in her practice exploring structural design and geometric form and composition. Kinetic elements create movement on the body and disrupt geometric forms creating order and disorder. This movement creates subtle surface changes that reflect light and emulate qualities of the drawn line. Drawing is a key part of the design process and the finished works retain the quality of these drawings, keeping an element of imperfections in a structured controlled form.

Statement

While researching knife crime and the carrying of knives, I became interested in the idea of knives as tools rather than weapons and whether these tools would be carried on a person. I came across an article on paper knives.

In early book printing, the pages were printed on long strips of paper and then accordion folded before being bound together. The reader then had to cut the pages open with a knife to read the printed pages. This is referenced in Tolstoy's novel Anna Karenina,

“out of her handbag took a paper knife and an English novel. She ran the paper knife across the glass, then pressed its smooth cold surface to her cheek.”

Broken Anger



Biography

Having completed his studies at Akademie voor Beeldende Kunsten in Arnhem, The Netherlands in the late 1970s, Hermesen has become well-known as a product designer, especially of jewellery. From the outset of his career, he has sought new concepts and new technical solutions within a contemporary interpretation of traditional values and crafts in combination with expressive and innovative design.

His jewellery is conceived as unique pieces, as multiples or for serial manufacturing and in all cases, concept is always an important starting point and can go into different realms: new interpretations of the meaning of the jewellery; a technical or constructive approach; critical about materialistic values, or concepts from an associative, anecdotic or humorous point of view.

He has taught widely in The Netherlands and Germany, as well as around the world and his work is held in several international collections.

Statement

The content is related to the criminal act of the attack with a knife in direction to another person.

“Broken anger” The blade of the knife has broken into a large number of small pieces. When you hold the grip in your hand you see no knife left and it is completely broken away, so not dangerous anymore. The aggression and anger is broken away and can reflect on the earlier intension and mood of the acting person.

“Reflected fury” The blade of the knife is pointed back to the aggressor and by acting it is dangerous for him-/herself. The mineral amethyst of the bead chain has the spirit effect to reflect within yourself, so it helps to think over the impulse of action and behaviour.

“Now look at you” The blade is split in two halves and bend in a circle to hold a mirror in which the aggressor sees him-/herself and can reflect and think over the impulse directly.



A Sharp Knife Cuts The Quickest and Hurts The Least

Biography

After obtaining his master's degree in 2006 at St Lucas University College of Art and Design in Antwerp, Belgium, Manilla continued to work as a freelance artist and as an art educator at different institutions in Europe, Central and South America.

During 2014-2018, Manilla carried out a doctoral research at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, under the name "other bodies: fragments are not just small parts". In 2017, Manilla obtained the position of Senior Lecturer in the subject area of metals and artistic jewelry at the Oslo National Academy of Arts in Oslo, Norway, a position he continues to hold full time to this day.

Manilla is constantly active as a visiting professor in different official institutions as well as in private and independent organizations, as a critic and tutor of art programs, giving workshops on creative, technical and conceptual processes.

Manilla's work has been acquired by various museums, collections and private foundations around the world.

Statement

Knives have a rich and vast history, from their humble origins as caveman tools to more modern versions, knives have always symbolized power, strength and control.

In literature and other media, knives are considered a masculine symbol due to their phallic nature.

With this work he seeks the political, aesthetic and conceptual qualities of the knife as a tool and weapon.

The aesthetic impact of the materials used question this.

I use knives with a symbolic meaning loaded with concepts such as separation, death, sacrifice, division or liberation.

The results are an invitation to recognize and identify a personal but poetic relationship with each of the pieces.

Frame of Reference



Biography

Patrick McMillan is a jeweler/metalsmith based in Rhode Island. He completed his Bachelors in Fine Arts at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University in Halifax, Nova Scotia and his Master of Art at the Birmingham School of Jewellery in Birmingham, England.

After completing his education, he spent many of his early years working with small companies as a bench jeweler, designing and fabricating jewelry lines, repairing and restoring metalwork, and working in large scale with blacksmithing and ironwork. In 2011, he launched his own jewelry and metalsmithing business, McMillan Metals, where he created his own production line and custom jewelry pieces for customers in the region.

Alongside his studio practice, he also began working with the Rhode Island community through local nonprofit organizations that focused on the arts and services. He served in many roles, including volunteer, instructor, coordinator and board member. He later went on to develop jewelry programming in local highschools before finally opening up his own education space in 2017. Patrick now owns and operates The Bench Jewelry and Metalsmithing Studio in Pawtucket, RI, a creative and educational studio space for jewelers and metalsmiths that provides access to workshops, tools, equipment, and affordable workspaces.

Statement

The experience and trauma of violence at the hands of another is lasting. One living with these memories is continuously retelling it, processing it, and surviving it. To understand the perspective of the victim, you must have a lens into their experience and grapple with the intense emotion that comes with it.

How can you understand its impact from an outside perspective?

This piece is a reflection, a moment in time, that places you in the center of a dangerous situation. Looking into the lens, you begin to see yourself with increasing awareness of your surroundings. Starting from afar, you pause, noticing something glimmering in the surface. It is enough to grab your attention. You come closer. Your reflection appears. Familiar shapes temporarily ease your fears and bring you further in. As you draw near, the threat becomes clear and surrounds you completely.

What can you do now? How do you respond? Is it possible to make it out safely?

To share and understand this experience, we must also bear its weight and step into the perspective of the victim. Violence using knives and sharp objects claims the lives of nearly 100,000 people a year, and it has been steadily rising for nearly a decade*. In order to take action, we must first be willing to see the problem and feel it on a deep and personal level. By building empathy and awareness, we create an avenue for action, engagement, and change.

**United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime's 2019 Global Study on Homicide.*



Biography

Nanna Melland (born. 1969, Oslo, Norway) is a diploma and Meister student from the Academy of the Fine arts in Munich. She received a Candidata Magister degree from the University of Oslo in Social Anthropology and History of Religion and is a journeyman in goldsmithing. In 2017 Melland was a guest professor at Burg Gibichenstein in Halle, Germany and is now situated in Oslo, Norway. In 2008 Melland received the Norwegian Craft main prize. Melland works in different materials, and a wide variety of subjects. Intra-Uterine Devices, nail in gold, cast pigs hearts, orchids in lead, aluminum airplanes and atom bomb rings in tin, hence achieves – albeit paradoxically – a coherent whole. Her work is represented in Nordenfjeldske Arts and Craft Museum in Trondheim, Norway.

Melland has taken part in many groups and solo exhibitions in museum and galleries around the world, like The Pinakotek Moderne in Munich, The Schmuck fair, the Museum of Modern Art in Arnheim, The Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Jewellery Museum in Pforzheim, New York Museum of Arts and Design and The Dowse Art Museum in New Zealand.

Statement

Dark energy emanating from the steel blade. Whether you are a butcher and cut the beef or you are a killer and cut a human being, the steel blade cuts the flesh. The killer who has cut a hole in the body feels it. Pulling the knife out, the inside pours out until there is no more life. So many times. So many crimes. So much killing. So much energy gone wrong. Play turned dark. All that energy needs to transform. All those emotions need to transform. To play. To colours.

Thou shall not kill.

Thou shall not kill.

Thou shall not kill.



Biography

Eliana Negroni is an industrial designer and maker based in Italy, born in Milan (Italy), working in the field of metalworking and tool-making for goldsmiths and silversmiths. Active in the international network of art jewellery and deeply involved with AGC (Italian association for contemporary jewellery), today Eliana Negroni relaunches her family's workshop - the Archivio Negroni - as a dynamic reservoir of information and practical references in a cultural project which enlightens the archive and the inherited know-how.

She graduated in 1990 from Milan State University and worked in organization and decision support systems for seven years. In 1998 she quit a well-paid job in finance to go back into the family master engravers' workshop specializing in various metal-engraving techniques. She experimented on her own aluminium jewellery design for more than 10 years.

Meanwhile her interest for contemporary jewellery grew matching it with a deep wish to focus on Mediterranean region, heritage and sceneries and founded Gioielli in Fermento exhibiting project, curating it since 2011.

Statement

I have been working with metal for many years having learned from my father who was a master engraver, without welding or casting and this allows for more direct contact with metals. For some time I have been working with aluminium, chasing light effects through engraving and the use of precision machinery, always creating pieces based on my original designs, reworking each piece by hand. In my opinion, this simple and ordinary metal then becomes so precious revealing all its purity and lightness that makes it a unique adornment, though the thickness of solid and still light shapes, nice wearing and pleasing to the touch.

The pendant designed for the project is part of a free manifesto on the kind of jewellery I've been making for a few years. Every message and symbol expressed through a piece of my limited* jewellery collection is a way to use my free side in professional skill to become part of a community of shared values and be part of a conversation, be part of the debate.

I titled the piece "Flower power" to draw attention to domestic violence and recall the pacifist pop phrase "put flowers in your guns" addressing it to a contemporary and familiar context where aggressive behaviour can be hidden indoors, between walls seemingly silent of the family kitchen. Everyone has to live with their own nightmare... Because using bladed weapons is a hated war, both on a global scale and in ordinary daily life, all seasoned with a triumph of chiselled flowers from the family workshop punch archive and played on the contrast between the "beauty" and the object/subject imprisoned by the material.

**limited in terms of produced pieces number; absolutely not a limited edition in terms of preciousness and affordability/availability*



Shape Shifter

Biography

Rohan is a gold and silversmith with a practice spanning art, craft, design, and curatorship. His research focusses on the links between domestic living models (the home) and the impact of globalisation and change (consumption, materials use, distribution models). He has published in leading global journals on design ethics and led global teams in collaborative research projects that focus on changing harmful domestic consumption habits. These projects present new living, manufacturing and production models that are scalable and offer the prospects for the repair of our planet.

Other projects focus on various forms of arts-led innovation (regional and local manufacturing), through collaborative projects that have realised and documented positive impacts on culture, community, and economies. Rohan is currently Associate Professor and Associate Head of The School of Creative Arts and Media at the university of Tasmania.

Statement

Shape shifter pendant continues my ongoing interest in taking familiar domestic objects and shifting how they function on a range of levels.

The utility of this domestic stainless steel cooking knife is altered from function to adornment. This enables me to orchestrate a curious tension between the object, the wearer and the viewer that elicit attention. What I hope to present through this work, is a notion of 'Jewel-ness' that steers away from the tradition of presenting value, wealth, and power of jewellery through precious metals and gemstones. Instead, its power emanates directly from the blade, its altered state, and the tangible knowledge we all have of what it symbolises and can do.

It is quite extraordinary feeling to put this work on and feel what it is like wear a knife as pendant. It is literally charged with power. Is it dangerous? Will it cut the rope? What does it mean?



Biography

Ted Noten is one of Europe's most interesting and often challenging jewellery artists. He describes himself as looking for fixed meanings in the banal and the cultivated. He says that he "debunks their essence, then reinvents them back into reality" that "in affecting and infecting symbolic values I actually reveal their unmistakable intangibility".

He has worked as a bricklayer and for some years was a psychiatric nurse. After three years travelling the world he studied first in Maastricht and then in Amsterdam at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy. His reputation as something of an "enfant terrible" was quickly established and he has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally. He has held a number of posts in higher education, mainly in the Netherlands, eg at the Sandberg Institute, the Design Academy, Eindhoven, and in developing the MA at PXL- MAD, Hasselt in Belgium. He was Senior Research Fellow at the Birmingham City University School of Jewellery from 2005 – 2008.

His work is in the collection of many national and international museums as well as being collected by many discerning private patrons.

He has curated a number of exhibitions, most notably Framed by Ted Noten, at the Museum of Art, 's-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands.

Ted Noten's designs act as a critique on contemporary life and on the history of jewellery, as well as on the wider context of product design. The underlying, recurring, theme of his work is to challenge convention and processes of habituation, the familiar and the unusual.

His oeuvre gains in depth from his idiosyncratic response to the apparent familiarity of our daily surroundings, whether this be a market street in Amsterdam, the explosion of building construction in Shanghai, or a gang of road sweepers at work in a provincial town in Russia. By lifting symbols from their everyday surroundings and placing them in a new context, he doesn't so much query the symbol itself as our perception of it: as with the Mercedes project for which he cut out brooch-fragments from the bodywork of this status symbol par excellence and then offered them for sale; or the first weapon he cast in an acrylate handbag; or the boxing glove to fit the hand of a baby; or the pearl necklace for the bird sculptures of artist Tom Klaassen.

Statement

The bag gives the stiletto another position – it almost becomes as silent as the gems above.

The bag is still functioning – to open carefully press the hinges and then there is a small textile container into which one can put the most necessary items...

It's up to the viewer to imagine what that could be.



Biography

Cóilín is a silversmith living in Dublin, Ireland. Cóilín trained at Grennan Mill craft school and Edinburgh College of Art, graduating in 1996. He subsequently worked as a designer for industry in India, the Philippines, and the UK, and set up a workshop in Kilkenny, Ireland.

In 1998, he moved to Tokyo, to study in the metalwork department at the National University of Fine Arts and Music (Tokyo Geidai), receiving a doctorate in 2005. From 2007-2019, Cóilín worked as a Senior Research Fellow at Sheffield Hallam University. He currently lectures in the School of Design at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin.

He exhibits his work internationally and has pieces in collections including the National Museum of Ireland, the Goldsmiths' Collection, London, and the Marzee collection, Netherlands. In 2015 he was awarded the Bavarian State Prize for outstanding contributions in applied art and design.

Cóilín's research interests focus on the intersection between traditional craft processes and new technologies, exploring the appropriation of industrial technologies for craft production and the development of new ways of using traditional craft processes and materials in the production of studio work.

Statement

In this piece I wanted to focus on the material qualities of the knife steel. There is a subtle beauty in the knife materials that we do not often have time to notice in our busy daily lives. When the knife materials have an association with crime or violence, they are even more difficult to regard with an appreciation for material aesthetics.

I cut the hard blade material carefully into smaller pieces, aiming to preserve some of the original knife grinding and geometry. I heat treated the small sections at different temperatures, growing an oxide layer on the surface to produce a range of colours.

This work builds on my ongoing series of pieces called "Lann", meaning scale in Irish. In this series I am exploring the construction of modular forms combining 3d printing with metal components. The knife scales are mounted on small joints allowing movement. I'm intrigued by the variations of colour and form in the laminar surface, and the contrast of flowing outer surfaces and complex inner structures. I imagine this expanded to architectural size, covering a building jewel-like in faceted scales.

**Creatively Housing Swords Into Ploughshares /
Negotiating Heart to Knife Peacefully**



Biography

Komelia is a Korean-American artist who has studied in both countries and has taught in America over 40 years, she holds Professor Emeritus, at Montgomery College, Rockville, Maryland, USA and retired in 2014. She has exhibited and conducted workshops/lectures/seminars in many parts of the world. As a recipient of the Fulbright International Scholar Exchange Grant (twice) for teaching and research in Korea, her life has been enhanced by a deeper understanding of both her inherited and her new homelands' cultures, traditions, and aesthetics. Through three Fulbright Research & Lectureship grants on Traditional Korean Metal Surface techniques, she published a book, 'Korean Metal Art: Techniques, Inspirations, and Traditions' by Schiffer Publishing Ltd, Atglen, Pennsylvania in 2019.

She has lectured and conducted workshops at many parts of Asia, Europe and North America - over 130. Her own work integrates the dynamic interactions among different cultures, ethnic orientations, and philosophical views. Most of her inspiration comes from various images of people, landscapes, and cultures in both contemporary and historical settings, in the abstract designs and aesthetical forms. Her work often highlights these images of people, landscapes, and cultures, reflecting upon contemporary and historical motifs. The expressive images, forms and aesthetics reveal the characteristics of human gestures and moods in their environment, tranquility, timelessness, longevity, and spirituality. Her life and work embrace on the YING YANG (EUM YANG) Principle of Dualism.

Komelia has had 30 solo, invitational shows in Korea, North America, and France. Her works are in many museum collections including The Victoria & Albert Museum, UK; Metal Museum; Museum of Arts & Design, NY; Honolulu Museum of Fine Art; Smithsonian American Renwick Museum; The Korean National Modern & Contemporary Museum; The Seoul Craft Art Museum and many others.

Statement

My two works of 'Creatively Housing Ploughshares' and 'Negotiating Heart to Knife Peacefully' were created with the intention of bringing the public awareness to our peaceful living environments being disturbed and threatened by menacing swords.

I created the works based on how swords would destroy human lives just as our peaceful environments are disturbed by the abstractly expressed knife-forms with the speculum bullet shaped images of the saw blades marks. Basically, my two different house-landscape settings would be threatened with the bullet-shaped knives spearing through the middle of the tranquil landscapes as destroying the peaceful living environments.

Cook, Knife, Squid



Biography

I studied Industrial Design at the Royal College of Art and worked as a designer in the Architects' Department of London Transport, during the early stages of the Victoria line. Later I worked in the Design Office of Allied Ironfounders before taking on a teaching role at the University for the Creative Arts.

I was invited to take part in two Crafts Council Forging Iron Workshops and Conferences at Hereford Technical College, in 1979 and 1980, where I met Richard Quinnell and was able to spend time in his large blacksmithing workshop and built a small blacksmithing workshop at my home. An enthusiastic new Head of Department was appointed at Farnham, and I was able to set up a Blacksmithing course, alongside Silversmithing and Jewellery as part of a combined BA(Hons) Metals course. BABA, the British Artist Blacksmiths Association held three Conferences at the College.

On leaving education, I could develop a workshop and studio to run my own artist blacksmithing business, initially making small pieces of work for gallery sale, then gaining commissions for large pieces of public art. Small pieces of work offer a good way of exploring ideas quickly, selling small work through the Ashgate Gallery in Farnham and the Fire and Iron Gallery in Leatherhead and gaining commissions mainly for public art work, in Basingstoke, Blackburn, Bournemouth, Bradford, Crawley, Derby, Dorking, Guildford, Leicester, London, Middlesbrough, Portsmouth, and Southampton.

I have written three books on Blacksmithing and metal sculpture and have lectured, taught and judged at events in America, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Sweden. I still write regularly for Artist Blacksmith, the journal of BABA.

Statement

As an Artist Blacksmith I am familiar with designing and making site specific work – seeking some visual, cultural or historic aspect of a site as the basis for design ideas. It works for me. So turning a knife into something of interest lacks a context, except the knife itself. I would like to say that I conceived the Squid as symbolising the grasping nature of humanity, swimming just beneath the surface; I would like to say that I have deep knowledge of Cephalopods. But neither of these are true.

The fact is that having been invited to take part in a wonderful opportunity to turn a weapon into something interesting, I spent a little time considering – perhaps groups of knife blades assembled, plaited or woven into structures, only later to find that there were not enough confiscated knives. I had to make do with one fortunately large knife.

I am used to designing a piece of work then choosing the material to carry it out. The challenge here is the reverse. The start is the material, which is a kitchen knife officially blunted, the blade already severed from the moulded handle. Examining this starting point, I think it was the subtly curved handle that made me think of the body of a squid, and it followed that the blade could be split into tentacles. The two bulging eyes hold it all together. I see it as a tiny exhibit in a small museum.



Biography

Annelisse Pfeifer's fascination with objects, gems, minerals, and personal embellishments started in her early years when her attention would naturally veer towards quirky compositions with colours, textures, and forms. The exploration of materials and techniques is at the forefront of her work. Annelisse enjoys working with a consistent selection of colours, inquisitive texture composition, and surreal elements in her creations. She is endlessly inspired by the multifaceted geography of the many countries she lived in, as well as her multicultural background.

Through jewellery, Annelisse researches and questions how individuals perceive the world: what do they consider essential in their day-to-day existence, and what value do they attribute to the objects around them? Rather than explain the concepts behind her art, she prefers to let viewers connect with the pieces - explore them, perceive their secret beauty, and draw their own conclusions about the meanings behind them. Her diverse background has taught her that personal interpretations are mutable according to individual cultural constructs.

Annelisse studied at the School of Jewellery in Birmingham and the FH in Düsseldorf. She holds an MA in Jewellery, Silversmithing, and Related Products, as well as Certificates in Gemmology from the Gemmological Association of Great Britain. She is currently based in London and splits her time between working in the Gem industry, making work with Dialogue Collective, and volunteering as a Tour Guide at Tate Modern.

Statement

Responding to an object infused with negative connotations that's main function is to cut through skin and flesh has been a challenge of the mind and heart.

There is a notable appeal of the aesthetic look of the raw object: a shape that is somehow sensual, a perfect blade, a heavy minimal handle, no unnecessary decoration or details, abstract in its form and cold to the feel.

The process of transformation was intuitive and free, with the aim to soften the harsh qualities of the knife and what it represents, while preserving its history and the intentions behind its use. It is coated end to end in purple tape to seal any dark harmful thoughts, with dripping and melting components to vanquish the heavy feeling. It lies on a silky, puffy bed to put all that remains to rest.



Biography

Discovering jewellery during her formative years at South Hill Park Arts Centre, Jo Pond progressed through Berkshire and Loughborough Colleges of Art & Design, establishing her design process some years later, during her Masters at the School of Jewellery in Birmingham. She was awarded for her Narrative Jewellery Collection, winning the 2005 BDI Industry & Genius Awards in the category of Products and Genius. Her work has been exhibited internationally.

Born in Chiswick, London, Jo is now based on the edge of rural Derbyshire. After lecturing at the School of Jewellery in Birmingham for fourteen years and becoming a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Jo now concentrates on her own projects, working full-time as a studio jeweller.

“I come from a family of ‘Ponds’ who appear to have a genetic necessity for hoarding; digging up metal detector finds was the foundation of a passion for objects. This fashioned the beginnings of a lifetime of habitual collecting. Utilising this drive to accumulate the unconventional and unwanted, coupled with an aesthetic appreciation of the details of decomposition and change, I choose to incorporate items potentially paradoxical within jewellery. Employing symbolic references of form, material and technique, I dabble in the potential for wearable items to become vehicles for communication; whether through sense, nostalgia, or knowledge.”

Statement

Utilising an object associated with knife crime, it felt important to include the elements to communicate its origins. The knife provided was worn and used, the mechanism was effective and the decorative scales loosely resembled tortoiseshell. Once dissected, I was very drawn to the hardened steel spring, which suggested a balance. The blades themselves were quite beautiful industrial elements, although unsafe. I reluctantly sacrificed the nail indentations within them (which enabled the user to release them from their casing), as although there was temptation to incorporate them, I felt it was more important to render the blades safe and prevent further use; as was the intention of the knife amnesty.

Creating a composition to reframe the elements took time and thought. The ‘element of balance’, the sprung steel which once propelled the blades into action, suggested the fine line between the choices, actions and outcomes of using such a weapon. The blades assumed a comfortable pairing, becoming nestled together like spoons; the raw edge of one became protected by the back of the other and their manufacturers’ stamps were placed on display. A single scale was used once again to embellish, and all rivet holes were decorated with set stones, as a nod to the previous incarnation of the piece. The reverse displays the text ‘not suitable for children’; referencing the rise in knife crime impacting child victims and perpetrators.

Although the subject matter was stark, I hope to have softened the arrangement, suggesting the positive outcome of weapon surrender.

Knife Plate



Biography

Having travelled for many years working as a journeyman blacksmith Alex returned to the UK in 2006 and set up Alex Pole Ironwork - creating high quality functional products for the home and garden. The business has evolved over the years and now specialises in forged cookware, knives and garden tools.

Only traditional techniques are used at The Forge. All products are hand forged to the highest quality using the best materials available by a small team of skilled craftsmen. Quality of design, function and material are the cornerstones of Alex's work. One primary objective is to promote British blacksmithing and to demonstrate the relevance it has to society and culture in the 21st century.

"I have always had a fascination with metals for as long as I can remember. From sitting with my mum watching her make jewellery as a 4-year old to casting lead soldiers in my pre-teens, it feels like I've always been drawn to this material. Blacksmithing is not just a craft but a way of life, and one that gives great satisfaction not only to me but I hope to others as well. My main role today is to design and prototype new products, often assisted by my team, and continuing to develop the brand."

Statement

The idea of taking one object and re working it into another has always held a fascination for me since my days at Art College where I studied jewellery design before moving to ironwork. Much of my work was focused on found object pieces reworked into wearable jewellery.

'Knife Plate' explores the idea of taking a much-used integral kitchen knife and re-forging it in a piece of tableware – a simple shallow plate - but keeping its original and recognisable form. Integral knives are single pieces of steel forged out to include both the handle and the blade – no wooden or plastic pieces added to form a handle.

The blade was cut into four roughly equal sections and returned to the fire for re shaping. Each of these sections was forged out to similar thickness and prepped up for forged welding. This involves heating the steel to near melting point and carefully hammering the pieces so they weld together and are fully bonded. The sections are arranged in order of the original knife dimensions. Next the plate was heated again and formed under a 25 ton press using top and bottom tools to give a shallow dished form. Finally the steel was burnished and waxed to seal the surface.

Part of the blacksmiths ancient tradition has always been to re-use and re-cycle different steels , whether to make something new or to repair broken items . To take something sharp and potentially dangerous (knife) and to rework it into something that represents sustenance and sustainability (plate) is a concept I have much enjoyed exploring.



Diego, Don Tom and Ann

Biography

Dr Elizabeth Shaw is Head of Jewellery and Small Objects at Queensland College of Art Griffith University, her studio practice is informed by traditions of silversmithing and sculpture. Shaw contributes to academic research with a focus on ethical practice and the social and cultural values and meanings associated with objects and is an international member of the advisory board for Ethical Metalsmiths. She exhibits regularly and is interested in rethinking the role of the maker within society, reconsidering working methodologies and materials to address societal and environmental needs.

Statement

Street Knives and Cigars share several attributes, they are performative, viewed as status symbols they suggest power and are involved in posturing. They are also dangerous and about the individual. In 1669 King Louis XIV of France ordered that all knives on the street or at dinner have their pointed blades ground down to reduce violence. Diego, Don Tom and Ann are soft edged knives for spreading dips or soft cheese. They are for communal eating, sharing food and creating connections.



Look from another angle

Biography

Rebecca Skeels started her business in 1994 after graduating from the University of Wales. Since 1994, Rebecca's thirst for knowledge and her passion for sharing has led her to graduate from Central Saint Martin's (MA Project by Design) and achieving a PGC in Higher Education from the University for the Creative Arts. Rebecca is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

As a designer maker, Rebecca's work has exhibited across Europe, in the US and in China. She continues to explore ideas and work collaboratively with like-minded designer makers of different disciplines utilising different materials. In parallel, Rebecca's enthusiasm to encourage others to learn and to be creative led to her position as Course Leader for Postgraduate courses in Craft at the University for the Creative Arts from 2013 to 2019. Rebecca is now Senior Lecturer at the School of Jewellery at Birmingham City University and External Examiner on the BA (hons) Designer Maker course at Brighton University.

Materials are her obsession; bridging her work as a designer maker and her role as an educator. Materials and their related processes determine not only the form and function of an object, but also the object's interaction with the surrounding environment, connecting with personal memories and associations. The use of materials within Rebecca's own work can be fun, contradictory, functional and thought provoking. The knowledge of other craft sectors has led to the exploration of traditional techniques and processes, along with new technologies and digital processes, developing current and future craft practices.

Statement

I initially embraced the brief and really support the idea and message that Dauvit and Norman are doing with all aspects of the Swords into Ploughshares project. However, I discussed it, I drew pictures, I ignored it, I searched for the right, wrong and interesting and challenging knife to use, I stopped, I ignored it, and I began again and again. I was challenged at every stage, eventually I had something to experiment with and explore a little further.

This activity and the rules I made for myself eventually meant I created a piece that focussed ideas stemming from the way we need to challenge ourselves, to look from different angles and sides, to help us support, understand and have empathy for others, to encourage us to consider ideas and thoughts that are not always obvious. This can be as huge a challenge as it seemed for me to decide what to do with a knife and to make this piece.

The bracelet itself has clear angles, shades, colours and details that means it needs to be worn and played with to explore them all, looking carefully at different angles and in different light.

A Rose Thorn



Biography

Risto Tali is an accomplished artist and master of the workshops at the Estonian Academy of Arts, specializing in jewellery and blacksmithing. With a Bachelor's and Master's degree from the Estonian Academy of Arts, Risto has established himself as an expert in his field. He has won numerous awards and competitions for his work, including the Estonian Architects' Association Medal of Merit and the Tartu Marathon memorial competition.

Risto has also worked on various public space projects, such as the commemorative medal for Endel Lippmaa at the Estonian Academy of Sciences and the forged gates at Narva College.

With a focus on forging and metalwork, Risto's unique designs have been recognized and appreciated both locally and internationally.

Statement

As an artist, I find inspiration in the world around me, particularly in the sounds of metalwork. Although I am not a musician, I can feel the rhythm and appreciate its beauty. I am honoured to think that my work may serve as inspiration for musicians who seek to replicate the sounds of metalwork in their music.

Through my art, I aim to create something that will resonate for eternity, much like the objects that inspire me. I recently crafted a rose from iron, a material often associated with strength and durability. This piece is a tribute to my lost teachers who taught me the art of metalwork and served as a source of inspiration for me.

I am also interested in exploring the concept of danger and safety in my work. While knives are conventionally viewed as dangerous, I find it intriguing that a smashed champagne bottle can be an even worse weapon. Despite this, champagne bottles are associated with joyous celebrations, highlighting the complex and nuanced relationship between danger and safety.

Overall, my work is a reflection of my fascination with the world around me and my desire to create art that is both beautiful and thought-provoking.



Biography

Taavi Teevet (b. 1996) is an Estonian metal artist, currently living and working in Tallinn. He has participated in exhibitions in Germany, Austria, Portugal, Belgium, Hungary, Estonia and beyond.

He graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts Jewellery and Blacksmithing BA in 2020 and is currently pursuing a Masters degree in Design & Crafts curriculum in the jewellery and blacksmithing department in Estonian Academy of Arts.

Teevet works as a head of Workshop in Estonian Academy of Arts Jewellery & Blacksmithing department Metal workshop and is teaching practical courses such as metal-casting, metal-spinning and metal workshop related introductory courses. He also freelances as an artist, participating in jewellery and metal art related projects and exhibitions e.g. concept & production of the Bocuse d`Or Finale 2023 team Estonia serving tray.

In his works, Teevet often fantasizes about existential questions, depths of one's inner world and thoughts, questioning the main ideas of the philosophy of consciousness. Teevet is often testing out new technologies, techniques and materials. He is drawn to seek connections between different fields of art, trying to break out from the contemporary metal art & jewellery scene by presenting his works together with contemporary theatre productions.

Statement

The blade chosen for the project was used to slaughter, slaughter pigs, not humans, but what's the difference?

What defines us? Is it who we are or what we say we are? Does a blade, which was once used for slaughter remain it's ego after it has been cut open with a single continuous line?

The piece *Alter ego* is a remembrance of a great force that used to be, it is a farewell and a testament; a goodbye and forever lasting memory. It is an etude on the topic of the law of permanence, in which combines the story of a knife becoming a necklace.

The blade in its functional state does not exist anymore, it cannot be used for slaughter yet the material, shape and the body remains.

The knife turned into a jewel is a representation of its alter ego whose aesthetics can be admired and explored with interest but in its liminal state, becoming a piece of jewellery doesn't take away its true past.

Pleased To Meet You, Hope You Guess My Name



Biography

Fred Truus (30.07.1985) is an Estonian artist of many disciplines, starting with traditional vocational blacksmithing training.

He was granted a Fulbright scholarship and gained his MFA degree from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Truus has reached his dreams of creating large public space sculptures, both in forged and polished stainless steel.

Currently focusing on timberframing and log house building, he seeks to expose true nature of wood and to combine it with metal.

Statement

*Pleased to meet you,
Hope you guess my name.*

A narcissistic story about the power of the knife that never gets old and gets told in all forms of metal.

A blade made in Solingen, has been torched to dust, faded away, transforms into new life as art.

The thought must cross every barbershop client's mind at some point, as they glance into the mirror: a knife on a throat can change so much.

A mix of techniques. inviting the viewer into a dialogue with the piece, looking into themselves and of a feeling of not wanting to get trapped.

21st Century humans are so exposed to stories of this nature that we have become inured to them, the violence normalised: they cease to shock us.

*Dauvit Alexander
“Join The Car-Crash Set”
Journal of Jewellery Research, 2018*

Afterword

IT MUST BE LOVE

At the time of writing this piece the level of bladed weapons being paraded as a symbol of street identity is growing. I'm similarly reminded how the main discussion that predicates bladed weapons, tends to centre on young people. Not ceremonial daggers, bayonets, the guillotine, the axe used in state executions, whilst we consume hundreds of hours of movie violence when the ending of someone's life is swift. In essence, much of the actual use of knives is carried out by adults: that somehow brings out a normative response based on it being an act of war, patriotism, adult revenge, or some of enforcement based on collecting a debt. As both a criminologist and an artist I live with the contradiction of on the one hand pouring scorn on the use of bladed weapons and on the other marvelling at the craftwork and decorative presentation of intersection of metal and other materials. And then I reflect, knives don't kill, humans do. The knife is a dormant object: anger, the need for revenge, and the desire for retribution, carry the blame. The knife does not receive a custodial sentence, human beings do.

Watching Chris Rock's recent show on Netflix, 'Selective Outrage', I am reminded about the context in which we view the issue of knife crime. As a social grouping, young people are demonised for the use of weapons on the street and are duly punished. Yet, the first scene in Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet', opens with a gang fight with blades between the Montagues and the Capulets and yet is seen as a great piece of art. The portrayal of the Samurai and its culture is also steeped in a tradition that revolves around a bladed weapon.

My point is to ask a question 'Who is seen within the culture as having a legitimate right to carry and use a blade?'

It is for this reason I wanted to share a case study of a young man I worked with who carried a knife and used it for enforcement purposes. To pass judgement on any issue, it first requires thinking individuals to locate their view, less as anecdote, and more of one with understanding. For confidentiality purposes the identified young person will be known as 'J'.

J's story

I sit nervously in a small grey room anticipating the arrival of 'J', a young black man in the care of a Youth Offending team. My previous encounter with 'J' reveals a young man on the cusp of serious offending, who is reacting and responding to the trauma of both personal and social neglect. My lasting image of 'J' was an insular, angry, and potentially volatile young man who was crying out for support, but emotionally struggling to ask for it. A car pulls up and out steps Rob, 'J's key worker, who informs me that 'J' hasn't been seen for the last couple of days. Rob asks if I want to go and find 'J'.

A small negotiation with the YOT manager, and we're out of there. Although it was going to be a risky pursuit, the idea of not having a dialogue with 'J' was just not feasible: 'J' like a legion of young men before him holds the key to many of the answers researchers,

policy makers and analysts, make up without engaging in any real conversation. I knew that the probability of finding him was slim, but it felt a worthwhile challenge that may bring in a significant result.

As Rob and I set off we swap stories and make a real connection. Work like this is about a team effort and not reliant on status, profile, or academic ability. Rob was a guy who knew the streets, had a strong awareness of young people like 'J', but more importantly he wanted to make a difference in the lives of young guys like 'J'. After a few random stops in the community, we eventually find 'J' at a house where he'd found refuge to 'chill out'. With things at home piling up, stress of dealing with his mum, and generally in need of a space to reflect, forces 'J' to be elsewhere. I discover an ironic twist in 'J's' disappearing act, namely he wants his independence, but the thought of being on his own is a scary prospect. 'J' climbs into Rob's car, scowls, glares, and then touches my fist. In a way I'd got his approval, but the look of cynicism is very evident. To 'J' it appears I was yet another vested interest wanting to pick his brain and make some recommendations in a report that no one was going to read or act on. Hard as it is I can't argue with his logic. In saying that I continue to press 'J' about his wellbeing, which he acknowledges with a few nods of the head and the occasional answer. I become very aware of the difficulty 'J' finds in talking to me in front of his key worker.

It was at that point I decide to pull back and give 'J' the space to engage on his own terms. Pushing 'J' into a corner could result in conflict that I want to avoid. Rob soon picks up the vibe and suggests we go for something to eat at a fast-food restaurant. 'J' smiles and agrees. Not only did I feel good that we'd touched base, but I was also anxious about how our meeting would be. Sitting with 'J' gave Rob his exit point. We all touched fist and 'J's' loyal worker left. Too many professionals use guys like 'J' for CV information, without doing the job or establishing the credibility with their key workers. I had my work cut out. For the next few minutes 'J' eats his food and drank, like a condemned man having a last meal. He is clearly hungry. Another aspect of our encounter is 'J's' nervousness. Every person coming in is surveyed with piercing looks. At one point I ask 'J' if he had an on-going beef with anyone as I sensed that this space is unsafe. I ask 'J' if he wants to leave. There was no answer.

'J' gets to his feet, heads out the door, and continues to look from side to side, front to back. I was becoming nervous, as 'J' doesn't indicate why he was so edgy. So, there we were sitting in my car, outside a house in silence. I was playing the internal DVD of this meeting and begin to wonder if I would get a break though. I was still reminded that 'J' is a young man who is struggling to find time and space to communicate anything to anyone, and my intrusion into his life may leave him a little irritated as I had pulled him away from 'Street runnins'. A few minutes pass and 'J' sits in silence as if he wanted to tell me stuff but was still fearful of talking to a stranger who claimed he was here to help. And then it happens. 'J' opens up. For over an hour we engage in deep discussion about the things that are troubling him. 'J' reveals his distress about his absent father, the pain of not experiencing love in his life, the on-going battle with his mum, all underpinned by a deep sense of loss and despair in relation to losing friends to gun crime. 'J's' tough

exterior drops off him like snow on a melting glacier. I was now talking to someone who was less of a 'bad boy' or 'young offender', but a young man in need of understanding and love. Amazingly 'J' smiles in a shy type of way and asks me a profound question; 'what is love?' 'J' takes me completely by surprise and off guard. I go blank for the first time and ask him to give me a few moments to think of a response. For the first time in our conversation the tables have been turned. The good thing was 'J' is in control and is growing in confidence. As I bumble my way through an answer that was anything but right, it provides 'J' with an opportunity to see me as someone who was not there to punish or hurt him, but just another individual who was wrestling with similar issues as him. Not that I want to put myself in the same situation as 'J', but the need for love, connection, support, and understanding, is common to both of us. 'J' is now smiling, laughing, letting his vulnerability show in a way that was natural and unpretentious. In 'J' I see myself. Here is a young man with so much to give, but someone who has had so much taken away. The clarity about his life is very apparent at that moment in time. Suffering from Father hunger syndrome, living the fear of acceptance or rejection by society.

As quick as the conversation had started it ends and 'J' links his cousin on the mobile. Within moments 'J's' cousin arrives and they're off. Like two prowling hyenas poised to strike at any moment. 'J' touches my fist, makes a last glance back, put his mask on, and vanishes into the chaotic world of 'Street Runnin's'. To 'J' the streets are a place he can exercise control through menace and fear, as well as finding solace in a world of lost souls. Hopefully 'J' will discover a better way to negotiate the social maze before it's too late. Sadly, though, if love passes 'J' by and he vents his anger on an innocent bystander or turns it in on himself, then he will become a mere number, an output target, a statistic, languishing in the abyss and banished to the margins of a society that has little or no interest in him as a person.

'Mirror mirror on the wall, will 'J's' talents, gifts, and abilities be seen or heard?' The reflection is hazy. I wish it were clearer for guys like 'J'.

Twenty minutes after 'J' left, I start the engine and head home.

Epilogue

For those of you reading this, I want to encourage you to take the idea of turning something like a knife, which can be dangerous yet can also be something beautiful, and to apply that modus operandi to young people like J.

Therefore, not only am I wholly in agreement with dangerous objects being reimagined, but to take it further to see how these objects can create transformative pathways towards change.

Why is this important?

Quite simple: the victims of bladed weapon crimes such as knife crime need respite from pain, hurt, and loss. Maybe the police, prisons, and the probation service, have a

lot to learn from artists about transformative practices where we ascribe 'from pain to purpose' as a maxim.

Biography

As a writer Dr Martin Glynn has written for theatre, television, radio and children. He has recently been exploring 'data storytelling' and is the founder of Algorhythm data storytelling lab.

Dr Martin Glynn is also a criminologist with over 35 years' experience of working in criminal justice, public health, and educational settings. Dr Glynn received a lifetime achievement award from the Multicultural Business and Community Champions (MBCC) awards in Nov 2022.

Venues

MAKESouthwest

1st April 2023 - 13th May 2023



Birmingham City University - School of Jewellery

21st July - 6th October 2023



BIRMINGHAM CITY
School of Jewellery

20-21 Visual Arts Centre

4th November 2023 - 20th January 2024



visual arts centre

North Lincolnshire Council
www.northlincs.gov.uk

Tees Valley Arts

4th February 2024 - April 2024



tees valley arts



Glasgow School of Art

22nd February - 15th March 2025

**THE GLASGOW
SCHOOL OF ART**



The Atkinson

Spring 2026

More venues will be added as they are confirmed.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

This exhibition couldn't have happened without many contributions from many people. Thanks are especially due to the artists from around the world who have engaged so positively with Swords into Ploughshares: Knives into Jewels. The idea for the exhibition has been a long time in the development, as both curators have noted in their introductions. First off, we must thank Boris Bally for giving us the idea to start the project and without the guidance of whom, this would be a weaker exhibition. We must thank all the artists who have stuck with the project from the outset, despite the uncertainty and changes in direction that we have been forced to deal with.



Thanks go to each of the venues for supporting the exhibition but we want to give especial thanks to Flora and Laura at MAKE Southwest, who have stuck with the project and who showed faith at a time when we were only able to offer the idea of the exhibition with no actual work to show them.

Thanks particularly to Birmingham City University, School of Jewellery for supporting the project from the outset with generous allocations of space, time and resources.

This catalogue benefits from some excellent inputs from our contributors and would be very much poorer without them. We must thank Professor Mark Miodownik, University College London; Professor Martin Glynn, Birmingham City University; Dr. Alistair Fraser, University of Glasgow.

Thanks to Paul Whyman for his help in setting up our website.

Finally, this exhibition would not be what it is without the intervention of the marvellous Kadri Mälk who died while we were putting the show together. She was working on a piece for us, one based on an axe, which we would love to have included in the show. In her wonderful way, she kept inviting other people into the show on our behalf: most of our Estonian artists (Risto, Taavi, Fred) are included because of her intervention and it is a stronger show because of it. It is with love, respect and appreciation that we dedicate the show to her memory.

All photographs by Luke Unsworth, 2023; © Swords into Ploughshares CIC, 2023.

