



Beyond Silver: 25 Years of the ACJ

Friday, Saturday and Sunday 1, 2, 3 July 2022 Exeter University

The ACJ invites speakers to take part in its conference, **Beyond Silver: 25 Years of the ACJ**, which coincides with our touring exhibition, **Meanings and Messages**.

Together both conference and exhibition celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Association for Contemporary Jewellery. In 2017 the ACJ celebrated its 20th Anniversary by marking the past and the present through the exhibition *20:20 Visions* and exploring the future through the conference of the same name. Now, five years on, the focus has shifted to the position of contemporary jewellery in a changed society.

To focus our reflections on where contemporary jewellery has brought us over the last 25 years, we sought inspiration from the translation of Marjan Unger's doctoral dissertation, *Jewellery in Context: A Multi-disciplinary frame-work for the study of jewellery*. After her passing, Theo Smeets and a number of jewellery institutions, scholars and interested individuals came together to publish Unger's work in her spirit, making it available in English over a decade after it was defended in 2010. When we wear jewellery, we are communicating something about who we are and what is important to us. Contemporary jewellery doesn't just engage with the history of jewellery and the body but also expands upon an array of associations and *Jewellery in Context* seemed like an excellent place to begin our reflection and help frame the conference topics.

Over the course of three days the conference will offer an opportunity for discussion, debate and engagement across a range of concerns that affect the discipline of jewellery. It hopes to provide a framework for discussion on and around British Contemporary Jewellery by posing a number of questions pertinent to the current global situation and exploring the discipline through some specific contextual lenses.

Creative education is changing and there is a skills gap on the horizon, but there is everything to play for: we live in a digital culture that supports the creative entrepreneur, what does the future of the British Jewellery look like in this post-Brexit and global pandemic landscape? While contemporary jewellery in Britain has evolved much over the last 25 years, how will jewellery evolve over the next 25?

We invite proposals, in the form of an abstract, from scholars, artists and research students and welcome a range of modes and formats, from academic papers, artist talks, performative interventions, workshops, technical demonstrations etc.

Proposal submissions might include (but are not limited to) the following themes:

Jewellery as a social connector

Jewellery has always served to emphasise identity and status, but it also plays a role in relationships between people. How do we connect with other people through jewellery? Have there been positive outcomes to this global pandemic? How do people view jewellery worn by others and what conversations are had?

Jewellery: meanings and messages

Jewellery contains within it a vast diversity of meanings. What does the jewellery we wear reveal about who we are? What are the meanings and messages contained within a piece: are they subtle or explicit?

Democratising the field

Once the preserve of the initiated few, contemporary jewellery is now reaching a broader audience through the opening of online platforms. How are customers accessing contemporary jewellery today? Has the independent jeweller benefitted from the global reach of social media in the form of an increase of interest and sales from new clients? How has this affected the galleries?

Jewellery as art

Jewellery historically, is made to be worn: what is it without the body, is it still jewellery? As such a universal phenomenon and art form, definitions of jewellery would seem superfluous to requirement but how it is viewed is constantly changing. With more and more contemporary jewellery now acquired by museums and collectors beyond ethnological imperatives and with traditional art categories no longer applicable we explore artistic practices rooted at the intersections of craft, applied and visual arts, design and fashion.

New voices

Are you new to research or studying on an MA or PhD in jewellery and looking for a platform to discuss your ideas and work so far? Then we would like to hear from you too. Please submit your proposal indicating where you are currently studying or from where you have just graduated.

Deadline for an abstract of your paper or your submission proposal is October 4th 2021. Successful applications will be notified by November 8th 2021.

Please email your submissions to the ACJ at conference@acj.org.uk

Any enquiries also to conference@acj.org.uk