

Autumn 2006

# BSOE Symposium Report

Giving readers of this newsletter an idea of what it was like to attend the BSOE symposium is not easy. Each of the four speakers had a unique picture of contemporary enamelling, and it was the juxtaposition of the four presentations that made clear what was happening in the medium and how British enamelling could progress.

Simon Fraser posed challenging questions that enamellers should address, and Marjorie Simon showed how American enamellers were contributing to the development of enamelling, particularly in the area of content. Christine Rew explained how museum curators approached the task of adding to their collections, illustrating her points by showing some of her recent purchases that included enamel pieces, and Elizabeth Turrell presented fascinating photographs of the large scale facilities at the Enamel Research Centre and of the work of visiting artists. Including Elizabeth's collaborative public commissioned work, the enamelling done at this facility was seen to be producing points of departure for contemporary enamelling.

Although it is not possible to recreate the atmosphere of the symposium, the newsletter will try to give the best account possible by featuring the contributions of the speakers, one at a time, in forthcoming issues. We will start with Simon Fraser, whose presentation opened the symposium. He did not show any images, and, correspondingly, this newsletter has no front cover picture. This emphasises that Simon was speaking to all enamellers.

## Simon Fraser's Symposium Presentation

In response to the invitation to speak at this symposium, I asked myself why is it that I don't feel that enamel is challenging me, whereas other areas and disciplines do challenge me. Why, when I am sympathetic towards enamelling, am I not engaged with it? Is it because I don't know what I am talking about? Or is it about taste? This raises all kinds of questions, which is why I was interested in accepting the invitation. I really am aware of how much work and how much authority and discipline is involved in enamelling.

Since I am here to pose questions, rather than to make statements, I realised that I had better not do this on my own, so I rang up a large number of people and had some fantastic conversations about enamelling and enamellists. I talked to retailers, to gallery owners, to enamellers, to metalsmiths, to critics, to writers, all of whom I acknowledge.

Some of the people I spoke to moved from the position of thinking as a designer to thinking as a craftsperson, and when it came to a difficult question, switched between the two depending on the point they wished to make. It wasn't

as if there was a unity of viewpoint. It seemed that enamelling, because it sits between two giant neighbours, metal and glass, is faced with the duality of working with both glass and metal, two materials which don't go together very often. Sometimes, when you are working within different kinds of disciplines and different kinds of artistic practices at the same time (and that is one of the huge strengths of enamelling), you approach things in lots of different ways. This can lead to confusion for those trying to understand the essence and meaning of enamelling. There was a sort of confusion in how people respond to what you do and what you might be setting out to do, as a group of people who have chosen to call yourself enamellers. To see yourselves as enamellers is not enough. Sorry, but it is not going to be. By naming yourselves in that way, it suggests that you have you have an agenda, but that agenda is not clear.

We all know that enamellers have to have passion, a characteristic which was widely recognised. But what questions are you asking yourselves? The purpose of this symposium to look at how enamelling today is moving forward and in what ways it is moving forward. But what questions are you asking yourselves in order to move forward? What do you want to know about yourselves?

Can you accept the answers to those questions? In other words, if you find the answer, will you respond 'I am not going to have anything to do with that'?

A question that was raised was – if you want to change, where do you show the willingness to change? How is that made manifest? It's a kind of win-win situation for you as a group of people because everybody I spoke to is enthusiastic and interested, everybody made time in their schedules to talk to me about this subject. There is huge excitement and fascination in what you do - nothing was lukewarm. This in itself is interesting.

Who do you want to be, where do you want to be, and what do you want from that place? I think this is different for each of you, but there is certainly a collective sense of where you feel you might want to be. Your discipline has a reputation as being one of order, of a controlled practice, and sometimes, to outsiders, a kind of closed world of making. People don't often understand how you do it, even when they make things themselves. Sometimes they say they had a go and it was really exciting, but you never know what is going to happen – enamelling doesn't do things right, does it? One person said 'things are either underfired or overfired'. People feel that to be really skilled in enamelling you need to be skilled in all the enamelling techniques. Or you need to have a body of techniques that you have practiced and in which you have a fluency. Actually, you enamellers might care about this, but I don't care. I think burnt black edges are attractive.

I sometimes sense that enamellers' work is viewed by other enamellers as 'passable' or 'adequate', and these are measured words about a kind of absolute standard. There are very few areas of contemporary crafts that have such a clear idea of an absolute standard that you need to hit, to make you top in your field. I wouldn't use that kind of ranking system if I was talking about jewellers – I would say 'he's influential', or 'well known for this kind of practice', or 'very strong'. The sense of an absolute standard comes out of your trade heritage, that kind of order and ranking that trade practice encouraged through the guilds in order to decide who was going to be allowed into the mysteries of the profession.

When I studied in Sheffield, I was taught by open minded and brilliant teachers, and I was also taught by talented knowledgeable men from the trade who decided who was going to be allowed access to the knowledge and be taught how to do things properly. So I did my BA in that kind of schizophrenic world, and now the language of enamelling sometimes evokes in me in that sense of 'you should know this, or you should know that'. In fact, the situation is not that way at all. You enamellers are actually very inclusive and you are looking for people to join you and enter. But who are you actually making work for? I wonder if its for other enamellers. This strong internal dialogue that you have about high standards could be seen as a closed dialogue. It is both your strength and your Achilles' heel. Top enamellers are so judged because they are technically good.

Enamelling as a craft allows you to - and indeed encourages you to - be very precious about what you do.

Therefore the question about someone being technically good is a judgement about how well they perform a task. But does being precious produce something that is precious? In contemporary studio jewellery practice we have had 30 to 40 years in which to ask 'what is precious, what is preciousness'? You can see that this is a huge, huge question. I think you can get 'precious' to mean lots of different things. To look at those options is a very good way to examine the values that your work offers to people. Because, to be truthful, its only glass. Its not really precious. You have an interesting paradox here, and it is very contradictory.

Interestingly, I always want to go to look at enamelling, and yet I am a man who is not obsessed with skill. It doesn't really matter whose enamel it is – I always go and look. That kind of draw is felt by everyone I spoke to. There is a huge magnetism about enamel. It really switches people on, and it does the same for you.

Enamel is often used to add value to a product, when people are trying to make a living in jewellery. Enamel can do this because it has a formal aspect and also an historical heritage. And it has colour. And it has skill. But not all the time. Here is another quote: 'You can see some very good pieces of enamel and you can see some gaudy and horrible enamel'. But there is also some really horrible contemporary jewellery around. Enamelling is not unique in this respect.

It is important that contemporary enamel stands up and says 'right, we are going to put ourselves on a par with other areas'. I think you believe that, but you don't actually stand up and say it very much. For that to happen, you need to be read by a contemporary audience in a contemporary way.

Historically, enamel was not a stand alone thing. It took its place in a vocabulary of workshop disciplines, some of which are not practiced very much now, and some of which are in renaissance. It was supported by engine turning and other disciplines, but enamellers now suggest that contemporary enamelling is a stand alone craft. This new idea has to be backed up with some new practices.

What will happen with laser engraving? Will we suddenly see a huge revival in possibilities for surface to enamel on? This would involve enamellers learning to design with CAD (Computer Automated Design), which is a very interesting possibility. I have never seen anybody take some engine turning, chop it up and use it as a collage. Perhaps you have. And what other kinds of fine art practices that other people have appropriated are you not using? What happens if I take a Fabergé cigarette box and cut it up to make parts of a necklace? What if I took a Fabergé egg and cut it up and stuck it together again, (a technique that some artists are doing with plastic and ceramics)? Is it brutality, is it exploration, is it inquisition? In the enamelled pieces I see, no one has made something and then sawn it up and reassembled the pieces. And that is because it has taken you all that time to make the enamelled piece, and you are not going to do it. Well, why not? What has happened to all those test samples you have in the bottom of your drawers? Why don't you saw

them all up and put them together on a resin base? The possibilities are huge.

Although enamelling, in the past was seen as part of a whole variety of techniques used to make a piece, in the 20th century, it has moved forward into a more self-conscious and internal conversation about what is enamelling - what can we do with this, what are its boundaries as a discipline? Enamelling has started to move away from functionality and become much more self-referential. This happened when enamel lost some of its attraction for its traditional commercial customers.

These customers now buy 1930s cufflinks in antique markets. I think 'I have got my enamel cufflinks', but I should be thinking - 'what haven't I got in terms of enamel cufflinks?' Why don't I want more than one pair of cufflinks? Mine are from the 1930s and speak to me of a certain time. What fashion designer do you look at when you are designing cufflinks? This evokes a stunned reaction from enamellers who respond with 'well, my work is not fashion led'. But we train our students to study fashion designers because fashion designers have grown a market. And if you understand what that market wants from that fashion designer, it is yours for the taking. And that market has been identified by someone else's hard work.

When you moved away from these commercial constituencies, you dropped off the edge of the radar. You stopped looking at what people were making and doing and your conversations became more rarified, more specialised. And you are talking to a smaller, a more closed audience. This is a strand to examine. In a way, you have become isolated. Traditionally you would have done anything for work and been continually challenged to become involved with different sorts of objects, different sorts of practice. But those objects were part of a kind of currency, a currency that was part of a dialogue about a utilitarian product. But how utilitarian are enamelled objects today?

What is your vision of the future? How do you envisage the future - architecture, medicine, transport? Is it baths, is it kitchens, is it sinks? Is that where enamelling is going next? Previously, enamelled plates and bowls became associated with poverty. Plates and trays. What do we eat off? What do we want to eat off? What food are we eating now? What are we eating it on? You need to think like that - because the best store in London, according to Time Out magazine, is Labour and Wait, in Cheshire street, which sells humble and straightforward domestic home wares, mostly central European, and 30% of their stock is enamel cutlery and kitchen equipment. All of London's media have walked through that shop, picked up it, bought it, and given it as presents. Is your work in that shop?

People now are concerned with price, and I think that is a difficult thing for you, because of the time and energy that you have to put into what you do. This makes you very conscious that you have to justify the time and energy. So instead of mucking about with enamels on the surface of plates, you are making much more classical objects that are easy to justify. People recognise them as a coded form of value objects.

So what are enamellers looking at when they design their work? Judging from contemporary enamelling, I wouldn't say that they were designed for the kind of clothes that people are wearing. Are you making jewellery? If so, why and what for? And what do people want to look like when they are wearing that jewellery?

I ask my students 'What is the clearest view of what you want to achieve? How do you define the problem for yourselves? Who do you want to be?'. 'I design for my craft. I design for enamel' are some of answers I got back from enamellers. I think that the way you use language is not doing you any favours. You are not talking in the way that everybody else is. There is a formal, arts-based language around an area of practice that can dovetail somebody who works with ceramics into architecture and fine art practice. You do not describe what you do in the same terms as other people. You are not explicit, and because you are not explicit with yourselves and to yourselves, you are making underlying assumptions about things, like 'I am not fashion led'. Actually, you are fashion led. You are making things for your customers.

How do you set design briefs for yourselves when you are in your workshops? What do you set out to do? Do people want what you offer, despite the enamel? It needs to have a way to fit into their lives so that they can't live without it, that they use it all the time. The formal mathematics of engine turning are a lovely thing, but it evolved as a way of describing a formal, austere, unchanging mathematical world in a time when everything was changing, when life was not safe in terms of hygiene, medicine and health. Now that you can have a wafer thin ipod around your neck which can deliver 2000 songs, you don't need something that talks about a powerful, clean technology. I think you can draw parallels between vocabularies and the times in which they exist. Technology nowadays is represented on people's bodies already.

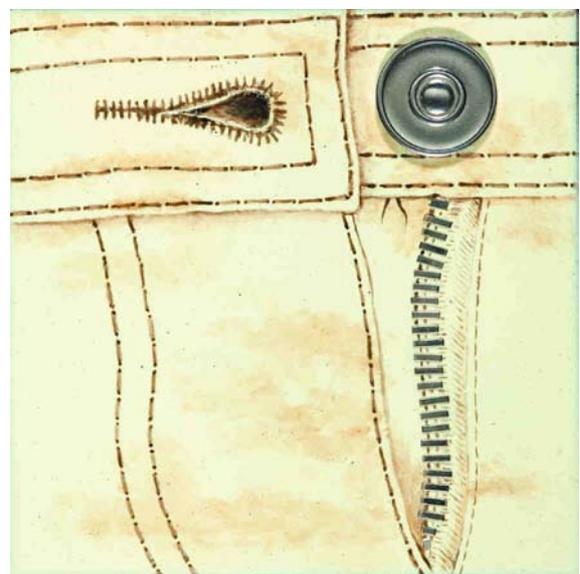
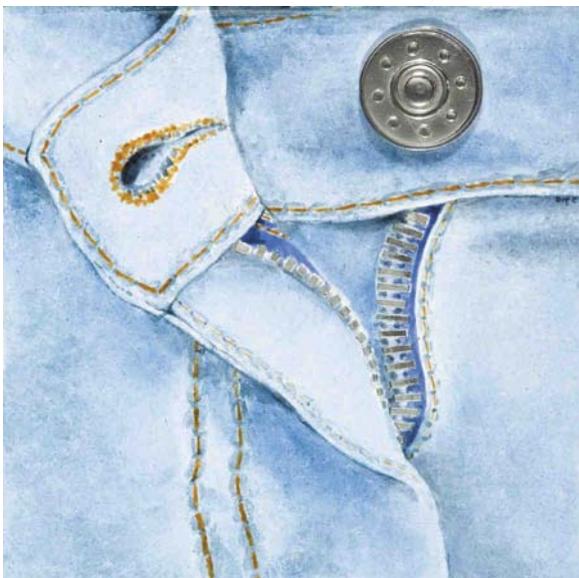
Some people said to me 'Why don't enamellers use colour?' I think you think you do use colour, but I don't think having a good eye for colour excuses you from doing your homework. I come from a tradition of teaching where the research part of what we do, in terms of design practice, is hugely important. Looking at colour in a formal, deliberate, historical research way, could make all the difference. I think there are recognised colours in enamelling that are difficult. When enamellers see those colours, they don't see the object. Its 'Oh, there's pink in that - I wonder what temperature she fired it at?' Or 'she must be using Japanese enamels'. You are not looking at the concept of the object.

As you know, these days, students are not exposed to tuition in enamelling. They don't know how to use enamel now, in the way that many of you know how to use it. And it's quicker and easier for them to use resin, or acrylic, or spray paint. In order to develop a new generation of enamellers, you have to work out how you are going to support the education of enamelling. It might be that you will take on the personal responsibility to do it, perhaps in an evening class. If every single one of you

# Deirdre McCrory - New Work For 'Silver Connections' Exhibition

'Silver Connections' is a unique exhibition in that it features the work of two generations of the McCrory family - Michael, a silversmith, Deirdre, an enameller and printmaker, and their daughter Cara Murphy, who is also a silversmith. Although Cara's parents were not her teachers, they have been role models and an inspiration to her. All three have had financial support from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, in Deirdre's case enabling her to purchase a large kiln. The exhibition was made possible by lottery funding granted by an application from the Crafts Council of Ireland to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Deirdre is exhibiting prints and enamels using various techniques. Many of the enamels incorporate a subtle use of silver to tie in with the theme of the exhibition.

The first showing of the exhibition was at Flowerfield Arts Centre, Portstewart, Co Antrim, 3-26 August, and it is now moving to The National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny, Ireland, 1 October-26 November, 2006. The excellent 'Silver Connections' catalogue may be purchased from the Crafts Council of Ireland at [www.ccoi.ie](http://www.ccoi.ie).



Pieces from the Blue Jeans and Cream Jeans series by Deirdre McCrory  
Enamel on copper, painting enamel, fine silver wire and buttons  
8 x 8cm each

Deirdre writes: The Jeans series was inspired by the theme 'Silver Connections' which, for the Jeans series, I interpreted in terms of fastenings, buttons and zips. The Blue Jeans have a base of white opaque enamel on copper. The blue colour, the shading and the stitching detail are all done with painting enamel. The Cream Jeans have a cream opaque base, and shading and stitching are in painting enamel. (It occurs to me that life would have

been simpler if I had started with a pale blue opaque for the Blue Jeans!) The zips are cloisonné wire laid flat, and the buttons are press formed and rivetted after firing. I had planned to explore clothing themes further, but was influenced by the themes of cacti and fences I was already experimenting with, and so developed these subjects into a range of enamels and prints.



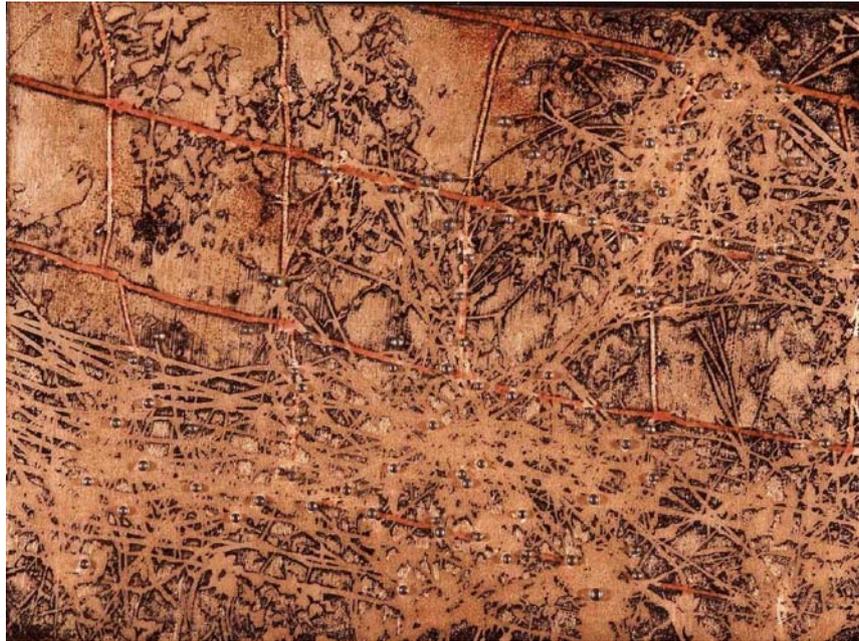
A piece from the Silver Cactus Series by Deirdre McCrory  
Etched copper, oxide, enamels, firescale and fine silver wires  
10.5 x 14cm

The cactus is white enamel, with the blue colour being achieved by a thin application of enamel. Deirdre controlled the depth of the white to get the tones. Transparent enamel was put over the firescale in the background and oxide details were painted on the cactus, a feature of the other panels in this series.



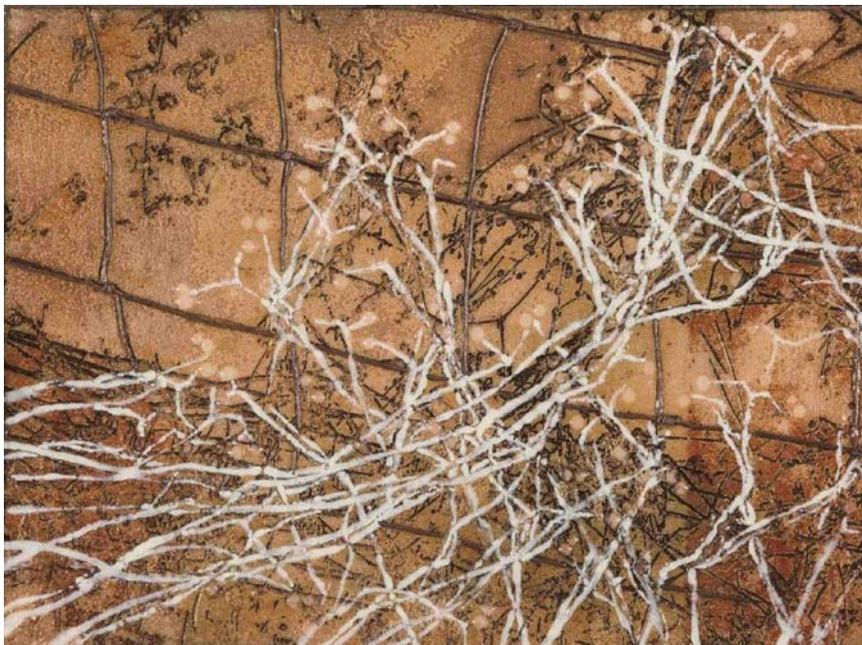
A piece from the Green Cactus Series by Deirdre McCrory  
Etched copper, oxide, transparent enamel, firescale and fine silver wires  
10.5 x 14cm

In the Silver and Green cactus series, the copper was photo etched and the holes drilled before enamelling. The fine silver wires were threaded through the holes when enamelling had been completed.



Fence I by Deirdre McCrory  
Etched copper, oxide, transparent enamels, fine oxidized silver balls  
18 x 23.5cm

Photo etched from positive and negatives images of Deirdre's original photograph, black painting enamel was rubbed into the etched plate and a flux layer fired on top. Red lines were wet laid enamel, and silver balls were fired into the surface and oxidised.



Fence II by Deirdre McCrory  
Etched copper, oxide, transparent and opaque enamels, glass beads  
18 x 23.5cm

The image was photo etched on copper using the positive and negative of Deirdre's original photograph. Black painting enamel was rubbed into etched plate before firing on a coat of flux. The fence was accentuated by copper wire fired along with some glass beads. The cream lines were applied by wet-laying.

# A Kiddush Cup: Commission for the V&A 'Sacred Silver' Gallery

by Tamar de Vries Winter

In recent years my interest in ceremonial art has led me to create a collection of ritual objects. The Judaic tradition encourages the artistic embellishing of the ritual object in order to enhance the performance of the religious ceremony. There are very few rules or constraints for making a Jewish ceremonial object, except that the item must fulfil the function of the ritual.

When I was commissioned, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, to make a Kiddush ('Sanctification') Cup for its new Sacred Silver and Stained Glass gallery, I wanted to make a vessel that was distinctively Jewish, yet with universal aesthetic appeal. After months of drawing, planning and particularly researching into lettering of old Hebrew manuscripts, I presented my design to the curators of the new gallery of the V&A.

The design is composed of Hebrew letters constructed from disconnected lines, forming a continuous pattern. These letters spell three Hebrew words, from the ancient Jewish benediction over wine, that refer to God as 'Creator of the fruit of the vine.' The words are written in diagonal rows in such a manner as to be legible both by the person holding the cup, looking down at them, and by the observer, looking up.

The repetition of these words twenty times, circling the vessel with no space between them, reflects the continuity of the prayer's recitation at the beginning of the Sabbath and holidays for more than two millennia. The Hebrew script makes it recognisable as a Kiddush Cup. For the observer who cannot read Hebrew, I tried to convey, in the rhythmic pattern of the letters, a feel of something old and precious. The white opalescent enamel evokes the traditional metaphor of the Sabbath arriving like a bride; the central gold band represents the precious point of contact between the individual human hand and the ritual cup.

The art of enamelling has been used in the creation of religious objects for many centuries. I originally fell in love with the vibrant colours and the jewel-like quality of enamel at the British Museum, when I was looking at medieval Byzantine icons of saints. It feels a privilege to apply this art in the creation of Jewish ceremonial objects.

After the Kiddush cup was spun, the pattern for the letters was cut/engraved with the aid of a computer program on a 'cad cam' system. The old method of



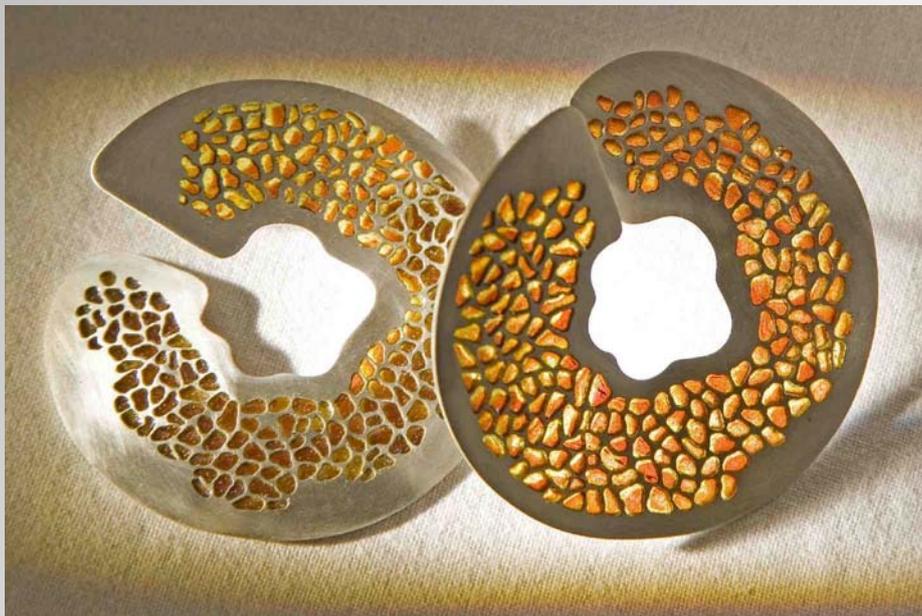
Kiddush Cup by Tamar de Vries Winter  
Silver and jewellery enamel  
9 x 7.2cm

Guilloché: Engine Turning was adapted to create recesses in the metal on more than one level, in a sophisticated new technique of machine-computerised engraving and background patterning, directly on a three-dimensional surface. This technique is extremely accurate and can be repeated. The process of designing, making and bringing together all these techniques, old and contemporary, and especially working with expert craftsmen, has been a learning and rich experience.

I have many people to thank for their help in this commission, particularly the expert craftsmen who were involved in the project: John Need & Alan Fox Kent-Silver specialists; Jack Perry - Engraving; Mary Bernard & Peter Mennim - Photography; Phil Barnes - Polishing. I am also grateful to Louise Hoffman, Tessa Murdoch, Eric Turner and Tim Schroeder of the Metal Work, Silver, and Jewellery Department at the V&A. The Kessler Foundation sponsored the Kiddush Cup.

info@tamardw.co.uk

# New Graduate: Regina Aradesian



Earrings by Regina Aradesian  
Silver and plique à jour enamel  
5 x 5cm

Plique à jour enamelling has long been of interest to Regina Aradesian, stemming from pictures of enamelling she saw in books when she was young. As a child of seven, Regina began painting and later exhibited her work, but learning to enamel was a goal. She took a foundation course at Chelsea College of Art and Design and then entered the jewellery course at Central St Martins. Here the design training was the main objective. Regina felt that intense learning and experimentation with techniques could happen later, but she was able to make difficult plique à jour pieces for her degree show. During her third year at Central St Martins, Regina also studied enamelling part time with Penny Davis at Sir John Cass College.

Having just completed her BA in Jewellery at Central St Martins, Regina Aradesian's work was represented in the New Graduates exhibition at Studio Fusion and two other galleries are also interested in showing her work. She is now looking for a workshop, which she will share with a friend. Initially she will have to support herself with a job, but she plans to start making jewellery for shops and galleries as soon as her workshop is organised and equipped.

With Armenian connections in her background, Armenian art and pattern have always been part of her life, particularly the patterns of architecture

and manuscripts. Regina, having researched Armenian art as part of her degree course, has adapted its characteristic delicacy of line and likes to combine an engraved tracery along with the areas of plique à jour in her jewellery.

regi\_y@hotmail.com  
www.reginaaradesi.blogspot.com



Bracelet by Regina Aradesian  
Engraved silver and plique à jour enamel  
12 cm diameter

Comprised of ten chapters, Ruth Ball's book on enamelling opens with a short introduction and a brief history, followed by an initial chapter covering equipment and essential health and safety information. Chapters on enamel types and designing for enamel pave the way for the subsequent chapters, which describe the step by step elements of champevé, cloisonné, painted enamel, and plique à jour. There is also a chapter on additional techniques, including short descriptions of methods such as sgraffito, stencilling, printing, using foil and leaf, working with flux over copper, etc. Each technique is illustrated by photographs of the stages of a piece being enamelled these chapters conclude with a showcase of contemporary images that illustrate the potential of each effect. The final chapters have a useful trouble shooting section and a further gallery of images that aim to inspire and reveal the diversity of the medium. Concluding pages carry the glossary, bibliography, suppliers' directory, and index.

# New Book: Enamelling Handbook by Ruth Ball



Pages from the Painting Enamel chapter in Ruth Ball's book 'Enamelling'.

in, but time became of the essence and final decisions had to be made. I elected to present only enamelling techniques because jewellery techniques were covered in other books in the series and, as the book was aimed at practicing

jewellers and students of jewellery, prior knowledge of this area could be assumed.

Research was mostly web based. I did however also take quite a while to look through past books on enamel and to hunt down books I didn't have. I wanted to ensure that what I presented was different in feel to other books, so that I wasn't re-inventing the wheel. I also wanted to illustrate the enamel techniques with contemporary works. In terms of asking for images I am very grateful for the response to my request for images from enamellers that I knew and was also very pleased to make new acquaintances of enamellers who

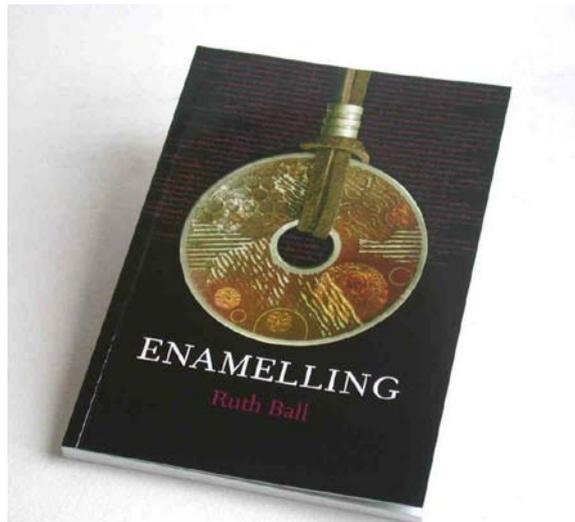
also kindly sent me images.

I find that I am pleased with the end result. The information is clear and well presented by the editorial team at A&C Black, which was headed by Susan Kelly. I feel that the layout of the book works really well and that there are plenty of images to illustrate the wide variations possible in enamelling. It is a book to get students, designer-makers, and practicing jewellers started on enamelling and, hopefully, it inspires.

The price of Handbook for Enamelling is £14.99, ISBN number is 0-7136-6882-2. It will be carried in bookshops and can be ordered online from the A&C Black website, [www.acblack.com](http://www.acblack.com), and Amazon (who seem to have an offer on!).

ruth@designnden.plus.com

Ruth Ball writes: The commission for the book came at a time when when I was thinking about how information in regards to enamel could and should be presented as an educational resource. Prior to this event I had completed a set of 'how to' samples and a demonstration video which is now on permanent display at the Walker Gallery, Liverpool, (see BSOE newsletter Winter 2003, pages 1 and 2). Subsequently I had written a 'how to' section for the ENAMEL Online Newsletter, hosted by Allan Heywood in Australia. Therefore, having the opportunity of combining my experience and knowledge in book format, and enabling it to be passed on to others, seemed a great opportunity.



'Enamelling' by Ruth Ball

The format was that the book should be roughly 20,000 words, to fit over 128 pages and include 100 images. The size of the book is just over A5 (15 x 23cm). On totalling up my original full manuscript, I was amazed to find that I had written double what was required - 40,000 instead of 20,000 words - and I also had more photos than would possibly fit. This required a huge re-organisation of information and a radical overhaul of what needed to be presented. Some of my extra length was due to an over wordy writing style, which subsequently I cut down to a much clearer writing method. Inevitably, some elements of enamelling had to be omitted or condensed, and, in hindsight, there are sections I still wish I could add back

# Melissa Rigby - New Member

Melissa Rigby's work first appeared in the Winter 03 issue of the newsletter, page 10, where she was featured as a new graduate. Now we are happy to welcome her as a new member.

Following her earning an HND at Guildhall University, where she specialized in fashion jewellery and enamelling, Melissa completed the City and Guilds Craft Level in enamelling two years ago and the Advanced Level last year, studying with Joan MacKarell. Even before finishing her HND, she was taking on commissions for friends and began to show collections of her work, including a commercial range of enamelled jewellery, in private selling exhibitions organised by an acquaintance. She was also invited to show a collection of contemporary silver jewellery at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park Christmas Show, after the curator saw her work in the 2004 exhibition of Association of Contemporary Jewellers in Bristol. The sales from this exhibition were very encouraging.

In December 2005 Melissa exhibited her jewellery at the East London Design Show



Brain Coral Brooch by Melissa Rigby  
Silver and enamel, 2005, basse taille engraving  
36 x 27mm

In this brooch Melissa uses a light blue enamel to highlight the areas that are closest to the viewer, thus enhancing the three dimensionality of the piece.

in Shoreditch, where she had her own stand. Here she showed all aspects of her work so that she could get feedback and gauge the market. Melissa found it was a good place to find out about pricing, but this was not a venue for expensive jewellery. It was the first time she had shown her enamels, which were well received and inspired several commissions.



Rock Pool Necklace, 2004, and matching earrings by Melissa Rigby  
Silver and enamel, grey pearls  
45 x 33 x 7mm (enamel box bead)

Recently Melissa visited Inorgenta, the international jewellery trade fair in Munich, which was fantastically inspiring for her and a great place to source unusual stones and findings. Here she bought a collection of stone beads which she plans to incorporate in jewellery that will also contain enamelled components (see Rockpool Necklace, lower left). Melissa was very encouraged by her recent success at the Goldsmiths Craftsmanship and Design Awards, (see Sum 06, newsletter, p. 9), and now feels that she is ready to approach galleries and spend more time on her enamelled jewellery - as soon as she finishes the current fine jewellery commissions that constitute the mainstay of her work.

[righbymelissa@hotmail.com](mailto:righbymelissa@hotmail.com)

# Janine Greenberg's Enamels To Feature at the Trackside Gallery

Janine Greenberg joined the BSOE as full member in 2003, (see Win 03 newsletter, page 5). In an excerpt from the article introducing her, Janine wrote: 'I am a psychic artist and am currently embarking on a long project which incorporates my spiritual beliefs through work with painting, crystals, and jewellery making.' She told us how she had designed a series of 31 cards, each bearing an image of an angel on one side and an explanation of the angel's message on the other. Users of the cards would draw one each morning and be motivated and guided by the message during the day. With the cards finished, Janine then planned to make enamelled pieces of jewellery based on the forms of the angels and incorporating their associated crystals.

Janine Greenberg did complete this project and will exhibit a group of the angels in her forthcoming exhibition at Trackside Gallery\*, which will open at noon on Nov 26, 2006, and run for two weeks. Prior to this, Janine exhibited some other enamelled pieces at Studio Fusion. Here her work was noticed by a representative of the Eve Appeal Charity, an organisation supporting research into ovarian cancer, who subsequently visited Janine in her studio. The Eve Appeal Charity bought one of the angels, all of which have a heart and a star, a symbol of light and hope. Another Angel received the Award For Encouragement at the 19th International Cloisonné Contest, organised by the Japan Shippo Conference. (See picture above right). In addition to the 31 angel brooches corresponding to the cards, Janine also made smaller angels, to be worn as necklaces or pendants, and others for exhibition in enamelled frames.

When the Angel project was finished, Janine began work on a Fish Collection, which is not yet complete. The one finished piece of the collection won a commended award in the Chasers Craft Section in the Goldsmiths Craftsmanship and Design Awards (see Sum 06, newsletter, p. 9). The necklace was comprised



'Creativity' Angel brooch by Janine Greenberg  
Photoetched silver, enamel, gold foils

6 x 4.5cm

The enamels are wet packed over foils, and the angel has a painted enamel face.

of many components made by repoussé, one of them being enamelled by wet packing. Janine chose fish as a theme because she loves the sea. She says she has a strong desire to go diving but is too frightened to try it, a situation which she feels inspires her to do this work. And, coincidentally, many of the forms that appear in this series are angelfish. Janine will show three Fish necklaces at the Trackside exhibition, one accompanied by a brooch and earrings, in addition to a set of rings.

---

[jsxg@hotmail.com](mailto:jsxg@hotmail.com)

\*Trackside Gallery  
1a East Churchfield Road  
London W3 7LL  
07951012051  
[www.tracksidegallery.co.uk](http://www.tracksidegallery.co.uk)

## Simon Fraser - continued from page 3

did this, and you announced it and it became known, it would change your profile and your base of enamellers.

And I think you need to take risks with what you allow those students to do. I was given a lovely quote: 'If I didn't know anything about it, I wouldn't recognise the work as enamel'. So, someone doesn't recognise a work as an enamel. And then what happens? Are there issues in this for you, that an enamelled piece can't be recognised as enamel? You can get great effects in enamel that you can't get in any other way. But your punters do not necessarily recognise the value of these effects, because your conversation about skills is very internal. They need to understand what you have really achieved. They do not know what you have managed to do. You have to find a way to talking to them about the marvel of your determination, to tell people about 'the minutiae of endless concentration' that you practice.

How do you put yourself in a contemporary situation? Is it about self-belief? Who do you have the conversation with? I have spoken to a couple of enamellers and asked 'why don't I see you in Grand Designers? Why have I not seen you in RIBA houses designed by students? Why, with all the things that enamel can do, isn't there a house entirely made of enamel - handles, light fittings? The answer was 'Well, I don't know where the platform is for getting architectural commissions'. My response was - 'well, that's a big lame, isn't it?'

You need to think about what kind of exhibitions can talk about your future. Who are they going to talk to? How will they be funded so that the work can be shown in somewhere important. What about the Silver Galleries at the Courtauld? You have to plan. Take an exhibition to Kyoto. If you say to people, we are having an exhibition in Kyoto, people are going to freak out. But these exhibitions need to show work that is made by people who are individually in pursuit of the expansion of their own ideas.

Do you want it? Do you know how to get it? Hard to ask those questions. Because a lot of what you do may not be able to go beyond a niche market. If you really are going to push out there, you are going to fight the competition, make your fight and take the stage. You have to do so in a collective way. You have to take enamel, someone said, and repetitively put it through the artistic tumble dryer. It will take you up to 10 to 15 years. Maybe you could explore, for a few years, the standard art college model that we use here in Britain. You will end up with new ideas and be in contact with a vibrant group of artists who work across disciplines. Artists are anxious to work with you, they are just not finding ways to make bridges with you and your area. You can facilitate that. They can't do it.

What happens when you use water jet cutting in enamel? There are a limited number of facilities where you can work on an industrial scale and I am conscious of that as a huge difficulty. But we live in an age of cheap flights. Get on the plane. Preserving a craft can be extremely difficult. Enamellers can be very touchy about keeping and understanding the nuances. But in order to be preserved, it needs to be used.

Don't lump everyone together just because they use a technique. There are people who use enamel but who are not enamellers. Wendy Ramshaw is a good example. She works with many materials, as well as enamel.

Enamelling needs planning, it needs constant investment of time and energy to achieve anything. This undermines your chances at spontaneity. Your capacity to develop a new understanding of your craft, and your practice, will require a slow development. Particularly if you are successful in one way, you don't have time to try out strange experiments that are not going to work. But that is what you so need to be doing. You have to say that 'every week, for two days, I will do experiments and we will see where we can go'. You all need to be doing this. You have to think of this as an investment in developing possibilities, where you take risks and just do stuff and don't know what is going to happen. And yet, this just might be the way to make something happen.

---

Everyone is welcome to submit articles, information and letters to this newsletters at any time. Due dates for the spring, summer, autumn and winter issues the middle of February, May, August and November respectively.

---

**Subscription costs:** UK - £10 (cheques should be made out to the British Society of Enamellers); Europe - e16 (please send cash), USA - \$26 (make out cheques to Pat Johnson); Canada - \$30 (please send cash), and £13.50 for all other countries outside Europe in British pounds (cheques should be made out to the British Society of Enamellers). Send all subscriptions to the editor. Contact the editor for further details.

---

**A CD containing PDF files of all the newsletters from Summer 1996 onwards, plus a complete index of the contents, is available. £10 for BSOE members, £25 for non-members. Contact the editor.**

Chairman  
Hilary Bolton  
The Mead  
70 Long Ashton Road  
Bristol BS41 9LE  
01275 540256  
hiiilarybolton@blueyonder.co.uk

Secretary  
Ruth Ball  
74 Easedale Drive  
Ainsdale  
Southport  
Merseyside PR8 3TS  
01704 577585  
bsoe@designden.plus.com

Editor  
Pat Johnson  
51 Webbs Road  
London SW11 6RX  
020 7228 0011  
pat.johnson@enamel.demon.co.uk