

GOLDSMITHS' FAIR

PRESS RELEASE

The Nature of Silver

Exhibition of silver treasures from the Goldsmiths' Company Collection puts the spotlight on innovative historic and contemporary silver inspired by nature.

The annual Goldsmith's Fair is the premier selling exhibition for the latest in fine jewellery and contemporary silver from the best goldsmiths and silversmiths across the UK.

This year, Dora Thornton, Curator of the Goldsmiths' Company Collection, has delved into the collection to create a fascinating special exhibition of rarely seen historic and contemporary silver inspired by nature. These unique treasures (not for sale) share organic and natural

origins and challenge viewers' ideas of the creative potential of precious metal. At the same time, each piece presented a unique challenge to craftsmen to innovate and adapt techniques to realise the final designs. This extraordinary display of creativity and expert craftsmanship serves as a reminder of what is possible when inspired artisans employ traditional and modern techniques to achieve their visions.



Boyd Nautilus Cup, 1968 by David Thomas

The Nature of Silver explores the inspiration of nature on artist-makers in silver, and considers the intrinsic qualities of a metal which is found in its free elemental form in the Earth's crust. The pieces displayed show how silver offers endless potential in terms of form, texture and finish. Some examples from the exhibition include the following:

Gerald Benney's cup [1961], with its textured gilded chevrons edging half a coconut, translates a traditional drinking vessel into a modernist idiom.



Coconut Cup, 1961 by Gerald Benney

relationship to ocean tides.

David Thomas's nautilus shell cup [1968] is a jewel in which chased seaweed-like strands follow the curves of the shell and flow into the foot. (See above)

Inspired by the horns of the Arctic narwhal which washed up on beaches, were traded to Europe as talismans, and were said to be horns of the mythical unicorn, Louis Osman's fascinating balance was commissioned by the Goldsmiths' Company in 1963. It recalls the role of the Assay Office in the testing of precious metals and the unicorn supported on the Company's arms. Fitted with a rose quartz weight and jewelled counterweight, the piece combines modernist architectural rigour with medieval fantasy.

Shells and sea creatures are a constant source of fascination to silversmiths.

Nan Nan Liu's oyster shell box [2012] is built up from soldered layers of metal to suggest growth rings while the flowing engraved patterns evoke the shell's



Unicorn Horn Balance, 1966 by Louis Osman

Junko Mori's *Organism* [2005] is built up from hand-forged elements welded together to form a sea anemone as table sculpture.

Gerald Benney's witty, spiky crustaceans [1957] made from folded origami-like silver will be instantly recognisable to anyone used to prawning.

Sheila McDonald's *Shetland Bird vase* [2013] conveys the imagery and texture of a whole landscape: etched cliff faces with wheeling seabirds built up in layers of blackened and gilded enamel.

Hiroshi Suzuki's delicately hammered and chased vases translate the force of wind and wave into abstractions. The pale translucent enamelling over matte texturing on his most recent *Seni vase* [2018] suggests the shadowed troughs and burnished ridges of a moving sea.

Quieter and denser are the hammered textures built up from banks of seeds on Junko Mori's *Hedgerow Cups* [2017].

Finally, Michael Lloyd's delicately-chased cups [2006-13] express his desire to take "an inanimate material, and bring it to life in a form or image that will sing out; that desire to pay homage to my surroundings, to my creativity; that thanksgiving to that first bite into the

apple of awareness...And what of the work? It is simply my response to cherished observations."



Thorn Bowl, 1994 by Michael Lloyd



Crustacean Brooch, 1957 by Gerald Benney

It is through such exquisite works in precious metal that *The Nature of Silver* takes us inside the imagination of makers and collectors.

Further Images:



Shetland Bird Vase, 2013 by Sheila McDonald



Oyster Box, 2012 by Nan Nan Liu, photo: Clarissa Bruce



Organism, 2005 by Junko Mori, photo: Clarissa Bruce

NOTES TO EDITORS

Goldsmiths' Fair (www.goldsmithsfair.co.uk)

Opening Times

11am – 6pm (Thursdays late till 8pm) 11am – 4pm Sunday Closed Monday 1 October

Venue

Goldsmiths' Hall Foster Lane London EC2V 6BN

Tickets

- Entry (valid for one week) – £18 (Advanced online – £15)
- Entry (valid for two weeks) – £24 (Advanced online: £20)
- Breakfast Talk – £10 with valid entry ticket

For Goldsmiths' Fair 2018 news and a complete list of exhibitors go to goldsmithsfair.co.uk

- #GoldsmithsFair
 - Instagram: @GoldsmithsFair
 - Facebook: TheGoldsmithsCompany
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- Goldsmiths' Fair exhibitors are vetted and selected from across the UK by a panel of experts assembled by the Goldsmiths' Company, the UK's leading patron of jewellers and silversmiths.
 - The first Goldsmiths' Fair took place in 1982.
 - Goldsmiths' Fair 2018 will feature 138 exhibitors across the two weeks.
 - The Graduate Bursary Scheme awards 10 recent graduates a stand at the Fair, a bullion loan, £1,500 grant and mentoring sessions with experts from the Goldsmiths' Centre.
 - All items for sale at the Fair must comply with the UK Hallmarking Act 1973.
 - The Goldsmiths' Company takes no commission from sales made during or as a result of the Fair.

The Goldsmiths' Company

The Goldsmiths' Company, one of the twelve major Livery Companies of the City of London, received its first Royal Charter in 1327. Today the purpose of the Goldsmiths' Company is to contribute to British national life by supporting its related crafts, industry and trade and through wider charitable and educational activity.

The Company's Assay Office has been responsible since 1300 for testing the quality of precious metals. The Company is the principal patron of contemporary jewellers and silversmiths, continuing to play an important role in support of the craft by funding apprenticeships and assisting with the technical training of aspiring designer-makers.

2012 saw the opening of the Goldsmiths' Centre in Clerkenwell, a state-of-the-art facility comprised of workshops, exhibition space and conference facilities. The Company supports a wide range of charitable causes and pursues a number of educational projects through its official charity. The Goldsmiths' Company's private collection of silver is one of the largest of its kind in the UK, comprising 9,000 items dating from 1300 to the present day. Its contemporary collections are world renowned.

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