

**GOLDSMITHS' FAIR SPECIAL EXHIBITION:
COURT CUPS AND MEDALS**

24 Sept – 7 Oct (closed 1st Oct) at Goldsmiths' Hall



Court Cup for Michael Prideaux designed by Angela Cork (2016)

The annual Goldsmiths' Fair is the destination for the best and most innovative fine jewellery and contemporary silver made by UK designer craftsmen. In addition to showcasing the work of 138 supremely talented artisans over two-weeks, there will be several special exhibitions highlighting historic and contemporary gold- and silversmithing.

Court Cups and Medals will highlight a fascinating and rarely seen aspect of the Goldsmiths' Company Collection by using silver treasures (21 silver cups and 12 art medals) to tell a human story; that of the Company through its people, both makers and patrons.

The concept of a personal Cup, both for use and as a status symbol, goes back thousands of years in human history. The story of the Company's Court Cups is much more recent, going back only 60 years, but it offers a key to the development of the craft during that period. Court Cups seem to have originated in 1957 as champagne glasses in silver, commissioned by members of the Court of

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Assistants but paid for by the Company (hence their odd name). The idea clearly appealed to the Court, as these cups came to be used more widely when members dined at Goldsmiths' Hall. Today when a new member joins the Court (the Company's governing body), the Company commissions an official Court Cup for them to use at Company dinners.

The Cups themselves document shifts in taste, design and specialist skills over time, as well as charting collaborations between craftsmen. Famous makers, such as Gerald Benney and Stuart Devlin, have made their own exquisite Cups; Richard Fox recently commissioned his apprentice, Oscar Saurin (the son of a distiller), to make his Cup to his own design. Others have chosen a silversmith, often as a result of looking through the Company's collection of contemporary British silver, and have worked with the maker to decide on the form their Cup will take. The results are highly personal and often include elements of biography, while also documenting an individual's taste and their relationship to the Company and to the trade.

Dame Lynn Brindley's Cup, made by Clive Burr and enamelled by Jane Short, evokes her love of Cornwall. She asked Burr to incorporate a nugget of Cornish gold in its making, while Short's swirling enamels evoke the brilliant colours of Atlantic waves. Michael Prideaux, the current Prime Warden, asked silversmith Angela Cork to chase the famous face from Edvard Munch's *The Scream* inside the base of his Cup, as a tribute to his wife, Susan Prideaux, Munch's primary biographer—though he also says it provides an excuse for a refill so as to keep the agonised face hidden.

In addition to the highest standards of craftsmanship, there is plenty of wit on display here. The purpose behind the tradition of Court Cups is serious however. The aim is to involve members of the Court in commissioning a contemporary piece of silver designed for their own use and to give them the experience of working with studio-craftsmen, so that when dining with guests they become natural ambassadors for the craft.

The Cups are displayed here alongside portrait medals, also commissioned by the Company, of individual owners who served as Prime Wardens. The display introduces us to patrons and makers of contemporary silver and how they collaborated in these most personal of commissions made by the Company over sixty years.

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

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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
 - Twitter: @GoldsmithsCo
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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.

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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.

- **thegoldsmiths.co.uk**
- **@GoldsmithsCo**
- **/TheGoldsmithsCompany #GoldsmithsFair**

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