

## University of Dundee

### Editorial for volume 1

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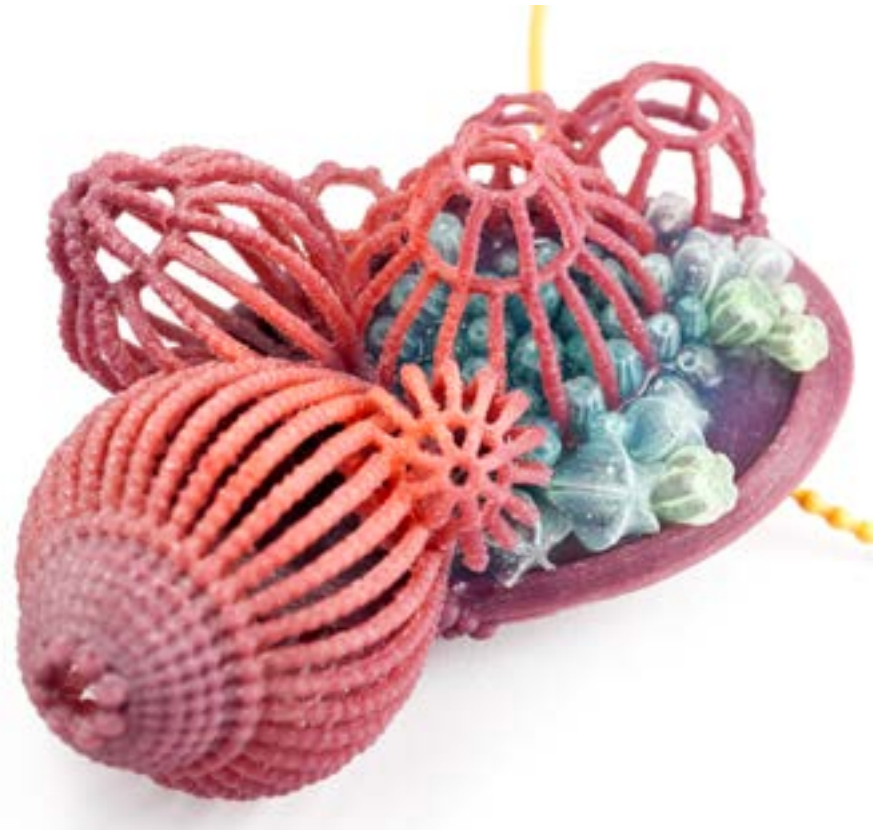
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## Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of the **Journal of Jewellery Research**. This is a peer-reviewed online and open-access publication that focuses on the design, theory and praxis of contemporary jewellery studies. It promotes research into materials, techniques, technologies, methodologies, processes, concepts and aesthetics of contemporary work. JJR provides an interdisciplinary arena for the discussion and analysis of jewellery spanning the conceptual, practical, pedagogical and cultural. It also considers contemporary jewellery within a historical timeframe to evaluate its relevance within the wealth of creative methodologies at the intersections between jewellery and other disciplines.

**JJR** is not a sudden venture. It is an idea accrued during years of studying the field, and teaching Critical Historical Studies on Jewellery. In these years the idea has evolved, and in 2015 in identifying the absence of a specialized academic journal for contemporary jewellery, Roberta Bernabei instigated the journal.

**JJR**, hosted by Loughborough University, with support from Northumbria University and Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design part of the University of Dundee hopes to establish one of the pillars necessary to further build the academic reputation of contemporary jewellery studies. The aspiration is that the journal can offer the creative scope to represent contemporary jewellery research in the creative format that it deserves and echoes the kind of work being carried out in the field.

The journal's first priority is the publication of original papers of high quality, directly relevant to the journal themes that have been identified by the full editorial and advisory team. Themes are meant

as stimuli for submissions of articles and detail areas of contemporary jewellery practice and context that we wish to support a discourse around.

We are very happy to be able to publish the 5 papers that comprise this first issue and that they come from a range of established makers as well as young researchers internationally. We received 15 papers for this initial issue and each went through a rigorous double blind peer review process supported by our advisory board of international experts in the field. Following an editorial review process and revisions by authors the final manuscripts were supported through proofreading stages and the development of the texts into the journal paper formats (both conventional and visual/textual). This has been a learning curve for us, which has opened up many ideas and opportunities for how the journal can develop and grow creatively.

Christoph Zellweger in his paper *Of Carats and Calories - An artistic exploration about bodies, rituals and norms* considers how our bodies have become matter that can be manipulated and shaped. An early version of this paper was presented verbally at *Body Alchemy. Hangzhou Contemporary International Jewellery & Metal Art Triennial*, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, in November 2015 and we are pleased to have an opportunity to share a developed version with a wider audience. The body has always played a central role in jewellery and Zellweger's work approaches this subject in an interdisciplinary and conceptual as well as an artistic manner. His approach to practice raises many issues and questions about the politics and key drivers in this arena and how much control we actually have. This shifts contemporary jewellery from adornment or the conceptual into the realm of critical design and critical making and an interdisciplinary approach. The paper documents, in part, Zellweger's experiences as an observer in the operating theatre and brings an uncommon and at times uncomfortable perspective on the body and the gaze of the medical profession as well as of the jeweller.

### In *Why Should Jewellers care about the Digital?*

Konstantia (Nantia) Koulidou presents a compelling discussion on Digital Jewellery Practice from a jeweller's perspective. She explores the 'more poetic qualities of interaction with digital technologies' and the 'self'. Koulidou's paper provides an intriguing critical overview in relation to both jewellery practice and material culture through the lens of the digital. This article fosters the discussion of digital jewellery considering how 'digital sensation' can extend the possibility of emotionally invested jewellery. Similarly to Zellweger, this paper questions what it means to be human when our bodies are extended through augmented means. Koulidou highlights an extended palette of materiality through digital technologies and is cautious to consider this from a stance of jeweller in relation to sensibilities towards the body, how we use artefacts to communicate with self and others and how we make things that are personally meaningful. Continuing the thread of new materiality Katharina Vones in *Materials Libraries: A Jeweller's Perspective* unpacks her engagement with a number of materials libraries in order to raise awareness for contemporary jewellers of their existence, scope and accessibility. Whilst full of potential for practitioners Vones details the rise of materials libraries but also the limitations of certain funding models that ultimately act as barriers to entry and use. The paper highlights contemporary discourse around perceptions of preciousness in both historical and emerging material culture and the rich potential for jewellers of new materials. Vones offers a clear polemic for greater access to the resource of materials libraries and greater awareness of their existence in the jewellery field.

Stephen Bottomley in his visual textual paper: *The Adorned Afterlife Research Network* details a multi and inter-disciplinary research network, comprising the fields of Design, Archaeology, Forensic Anthropology, History, Philosophy and Museology. This fascinating grouping of

disciplinary backgrounds and sensibilities was created in order to enable its members to share practices and methods of artefact interrogation and gain insights through adopting each other's techniques and ways of seeing. Based in the knowledge that museums around the world contain a wealth of artefacts that relate to adornment, but that may be out of reach or hidden out of sight within an artefact; the group's aim was to consider new approaches to re-examining objects of adornment held in UK national collections. The paper details existing methods and new technologies for the non-invasive examining of artefacts and paintings in museums by computerised tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanning. Bottomley's paper takes us through a pilot project focused on the Rhind Mummy housed in the National Museum of Scotland. The paper details how the group worked together and what their different disciplinary perspectives meant in relation to identifying artefacts as jewellery or not. Bottomley proceeds by discussing the advantages of the inter-disciplinary group, future potential of working together from these specific disparate disciplinary groupings and nuanced differences in how jewellery was described and perceived that were highlighted by the pilot study.

The final paper in the volume is by Gitte Nygaard and Josephine Winther: *Makers Move - Jewellery as a medium of exchange*. Echoing the sentiment at the heart of Zellweger's, Koulidou's and Bottomley's papers of seeking to view the context of jewellery from an uncommon perspective Nygaard and Winther uprooted their workshop situated view, by taking their workbench out into the public street. This paper digs down into the Makers Move project beyond previously published work to discuss the project as a dialogue between two jewellers and people met randomly in the street around objects that hold meaning to them. More than this, however, the paper poses making as a dialogue between not only person and themselves, but also person and the world. The

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paper situates making as a form of unending, unfinished dialogue and both authors consider implications of the 'intelligent hand'. One perspective presented is that we have the opportunity to re-tune into this form of intelligence through making with our hands and that this fundamental human ability is worth championing in a capitalist culture. By engaging with people in the street through making the authors detail a simple method of casting objects that people carry and wear as a means to engage in dialogue around personal meaning and, like in Bottomley's paper, a means to unearth stories of significance. Nygaard and Winther draw this first issue to a close and it is a pleasure to end with a grounding in well established jewellery making techniques to compliment other papers' focus on the digital, the augmented body and new material cultures.

Four of the five papers are critically reflective explorations of practice and it is this focus that we wish to encourage and continue to support in future issues of the journal. Two of the papers consider the relationship between emerging digital technologies and contemporary jewellery that perhaps hints at another potential shift in practice specifically a blurring of flesh and the digital and a move towards a biological approach to wearable technologies. Two of the papers are also from PhD researchers and it is perhaps no coincidence that they are also separately supervised by the journal's two co-editors Prof Jayne Wallace and Dr Sandra Wilson who were part of the vanguard of PhD graduates at the turn of the 21st Century. All of the three co-editors are actively involved in supervising PhD candidates. This growth in PhD students within academia is also fostering an exciting robust research culture and we welcome future submissions from both current PhD students and early career researchers.

Whatever future direction contemporary jewellery takes it is clearly an exciting time to be a maker and a practitioner. The field is divergent and its value is being recognised and welcomed by a broad range of disciplines. We firmly

believe that contemporary jewellers have a distinct take on the world and offer particular, uncommon, perspectives on understanding our relationship to other objects, people, disciplines and larger social and societal issues. Whether part of multidisciplinary teams or working alone there are particularities to being a jeweller that bring unique ways of seeing, doing and finding insight. The papers in this issue offer the first contribution from **JJR** to this dialogue that is already alive in the wider field and we look forward to supporting and championing the voices of jewellers as this journal matures.

Editors: Roberta Bernabei, Jayne Wallace & Sandra Wilson.

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