

Bloomin' Jewels

The blossoming of the Floral in Contemporary Jewellery
Special exhibition at Contemporary Applied Arts, Bankside
Thursday 27 April – Saturday 3 June 2017

Since the first human tucked a flower in their hair, blooms have been a part of human adornment. Each epoch saw new interpretations of the floral in jewellery. The Romans had their ivy circlets, the Tudors long necklaces of clusters of tiny blossoms, the Victorians their detailed panoply of symbolic blooms, Art Nouveau its sinuous floral forms and twentieth-century costume pieces sprays of foliage and flowers. Despite this, the contemporary studio jewellery movement for many years rejected the prettification of jewellery and, as a result, the flower form in contemporary jewellery withered.



All of this is set to change with *Bloomin' Jewels*, a new selling exhibition at Contemporary Applied Arts in Bankside, which sows the seeds for a regrowth of the floral motif. This special exhibition spotlights cutting-edge, imaginative and technically accomplished modern work whilst celebrating the long and esteemed tradition of depicting flowers and foliage in jewellery. Over 20 respected contemporary jewellers have been invited to offer work using the botanical as a starting point for the creation of jewellery. The results will surprise and dazzle anyone interested in contemporary jewellery, decorative arts, fashion, design and gardening.

For *Bloomin' Jewels*, the makers have employed varied materials and methods and, as a result, none of the works on show are 'traditional' in the usual sense. Although some makers have employed historical methods, working precious metals and gems, others have developed new processes using the latest technologies and non-precious materials such as resin and 3D-printed nylon. Their designs encompass the use of floral motifs and symbols, the incorporation

of real flowers, whilst others simply take the floral as a starting point for a different aesthetic. The show will provide an unparalleled floral bouquet of stunning pieces.

As guest curator Corinne Julius notes “We have selected jewellers across the gamut of contemporary making. The results are not what most people will think of as ‘pretty flower pieces’. They are unexpected and in some cases quite challenging, but then contemporary jewellery is wearable art. As far as we are aware, there has not been an exhibition on botanical motifs in contemporary jewellery in the UK.”

“Makers have had the opportunity of handling historical works,” says Corinne Julius “and I am really thrilled to see their see new versions of the Victorian *en tremblant*; jewellery that moves in response to the wearer’s body. They were a way for Victorian womanhood to express their feelings without words as they trembled and shimmered in line with the wearer’s emotions. It was and remains a very interactive form of jewellery.” The show will also include a small loan display of historical floral pieces.

Bloomin’ Jewels has been scheduled to coincide with the [Chelsea Flower Show 2017](#) and will be part of the [Chelsea Fringe](#) (20 May-4 June). The latter initiative celebrates the capital’s diverse gardens, green spaces, botanical and horticultural achievements, with a special focus on the experimental. The exhibition is CAA’s main event for [London Craft Week](#).

Participating Makers

Jewellers exhibiting include Zoe Arnold, Flora Bhattachary, Kelvin J Birk, Jonathan Boyd, Donna Brennan, Sonia Cheadle, Gill Galloway-Whitehead, Anna Gordon, Dorothy Hogg, Andrew Lamb, Kathie Murphy, Lina Peterson, Wendy Ramshaw, Kayo Saito, Hans Stofer, Rie Taniguchi, Christopher Thompson Royds, Maud Traon, Silvia Weidenbach and Rebecca Wilkes.

Talks

All events will take place in the CAA gallery

- ***In conversation with Corinne Julius***
Brunch with Bucks Fizz followed by a talk and conversation with contemporary jewellery expert, Corinne Julius. An intimate session with limited places.
Tickets: £12 each
Date: Saturday 6 May, 10.45am for 11.00am-12.00noon
- ***Geoffrey Munn – The Floral in Jewellery***
Jewellery expert and Managing Director of Wartski, jewellers by appointment to HM The Queen and expert on the *Antiques Roadshow*
Tickets: £12 each including a welcome drink
Date: Tuesday 9 May, 6.30 for 7.00pm
- ***Christine Lalumia – Flower symbolism and its use in jewellery and other decorative arts***
Executive Director of CAA; garden and design historian; formerly Deputy Director of The Geffrye Museum, where she created the period gardens in 1998.

Tickets are free but must be booked and include a welcome drink.

Date: Saturday 6 May, 3.30pm – 5pm

Notes for Editors

Corinne Julius is a journalist, critic and freelance curator. She has written and broadcast across the applied arts and gardening and this exhibition combines her love and knowledge of both. As Guest Curator on *Bloomin' Jewels*, Corinne has enriched the project with her passion for cutting-edge jewellery. She has a long-standing interest in contemporary jewellery and is knowledgeable about materials, trends and current approaches to both design and making. Her understanding of the contemporary design world enables her to place this discipline in the wider context of decorative arts and design today. She is the Chair of the Visual Arts and Architecture Section of Critics' Circle and she speaks frequently on silver and jewellery at many leading institutions. She curated *Silver Speaks: Idea to Object* at the V&A, which is on in the Silver Galleries until July 2017. She has also curated three critically acclaimed 'Future Heritage' exhibitions at Syon Park for Decorex, where she selects the best of contemporary British Craft.

Contemporary Applied Arts, or CAA, is known for its innovative and thought-provoking exhibitions and displays, combined with a strong track record in providing educational outreach. It was established in 1948 to support and encourage the making of fine crafts in Britain – and to keep them firmly in the public eye. CAA is a membership organisation which boasts some of Britain's most innovative and influential contemporary jewellers and our gallery in Bankside also shows a diverse and frequently-changing selection of one-off work, ranging from decorative to functional pieces and including ceramics, glass, furniture, metalwork, textiles, wood and paper.

Images on page 1:

Left: Swirl Jyamiti Ring by Flora Bhattachary Photo: Sylvain Deleu. Right: Collection necklace by Zoe Arnold

Visitor Information

Opening times:

Monday - Saturday 10am-6pm

Admission is free

Contemporary Applied Arts

89 Southwark Street

London SE1 0HX

T: 020 7620 0086

E: shop@caa.org.uk

W: www.caa.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ContemporaryAppliedArtsGallery

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Press Information

For further press information and images please contact Christiane Eck or Jayne Lloyd on 020 7620 0086 or email christiane@caa.org.uk or jayne@caa.org.uk