



PHOTO: STUART CAIRNS

Stuart Cairns, 'The Ladle Series', 2009, found steel and wood, processed and oxidised silver, formed leaves, thorns, silk and linen threads, rubber, tallest 35 cm

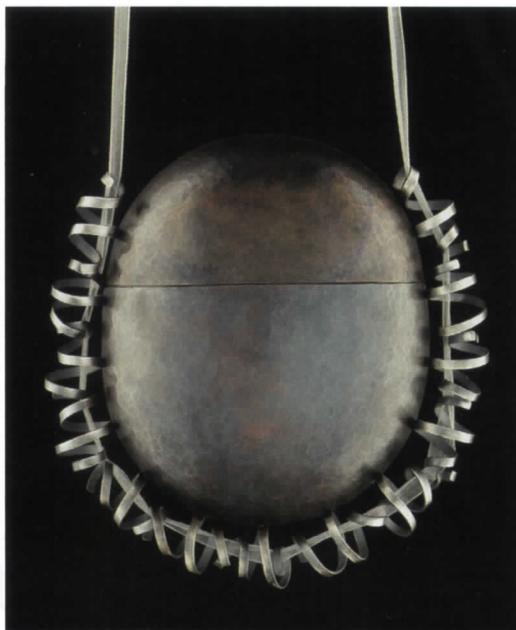


PHOTO: JERRY LEBENS

Jenifer Wall, 'Evening Bag', 2011, raised bronze with silver "ribbons" and silk ribbon strap, approximate size 17 x 13 x 6 cm, excluding the silver ribbon attachments

THE MIGHTY METALSMITH

Decorative and Domestic Metal and Silverware

Kath Libbert Jewellery Gallery, Salts Mill, Saltaire, 23 May – 7 July, 2013

HAVE nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.' These words of William Morris are as relevant today as when he wrote them in his lecture of 1880, "The Beauty of Life". He hoped for a return to craftsmanship, the maker being the designer and creator in a world of industrialisation and mechanisation. These hopes are being realised in today's thriving studio craft scene, with independent designer/makers finding there is an emerging market for their highly individual, beautifully crafted products.

"The Mighty Metalsmith" has been curated around this ideology, with 13 of the finest UK-based metal and silversmiths being featured in an exhibition which will champion both the domestic and



Marion Kane, 'Various Spoons', 2012, stg silver with 24 ct gold or stg silver embossing, sinking and fabrication, largest 13.6 x 4 x 2 cm

PHOTO: SHANNON TOFTS

decorative aspects of their craft. To emphasise this, the gallery will have a model for the contemporary silverware collector's home, the main feature being a dressed table, enabling visitors to engage with the works in a manner often unseen in a formal gallery setting. The cutlery, vessels, beakers, pots and bowls on display will not just be ornaments destined to sit on a shelf as objects of admiration. Instead they will be pieces to be used and cherished and evolve into the antiques and treasured heirlooms of the future.

The exhibition will also focus on the thoughts and processes which each metalsmith goes through before and during the making of a piece. The work of Stuart Cairns, for example, questions the ideas of domesticity and function by playing with unusual materials and forms, reflecting our ancient history as hunter gatherers and the origins of craft as we know it today. He uses gathered materials and natural fibres to produce a series of work exploring a particular part of the dining experience, ladles and vessels being two elements he has often revisited. Cairns will show his pieces alongside selected pages from his sketchbook, illustrating the daily gathering of found objects and their morphing into the sensitive sculptural forms that make up his collection.

Chien-Wei Chang also explores a theme which has long been associated with human kind, that of representing cultural history and community in domestic and decorative crafts. He is influenced by the utensils of ancient Taiwanese society and in particular the symbolism of bamboo, which inspires his exquisitely elegant containers. In employing these forms Chang engages with issues of Far Eastern culture, particularly resonant to him since moving to London from his homeland.

Marcus Steel, 'Three Vessels', 2011, fabricated from sheet brass with silver details, chemically patinated and waxed, largest 8 x 15 x 8 cm



PHOTO: MARCUS STEEL



PHOTO: JERRY LEBENS

Jenifer Wall, 'Three Spectacles Cases', 2011, steel inset with silver, etched brass and etched silver, each approximately 15 x 6 x 3 cm



PHOTO: OAKES STUDIOS

Rebecca Joselyn, 'Crushed Can Jug' from Packaging series, silver, gild, 14 x 8.5 cm

Craft as a social commentary is what interests Sheffield-based Rebecca Joselyn. Her "Packaging" series of quirky pieces explores the culture of convenience and "throwaway" in our society – for example, her gilded silver milk jug mimics a crushed tin can and her salt and pepper pots are inspired by ring pulls! Such common items become "art", something to treasure and take care of but yet still retain the exact form of the thing which was initially thrown away.

The wild beauty of her home in Snowdonia is what inspires Rauni Higson who makes rippling silver vessels and spoons. The growth patterns of plants and fungi, shells and corals all emerge from the intricate yet unpredictable nature of the folding and hammering techniques she employs, reflecting the "imperfect" symmetry of the natural world.



PHOTO: KRISTY GARLAND

Chris Philipson, 'RatsTail', 2012, ladles in Britannia silver, forged handles, raised silver bowls, length 22 cm



PHOTO: ADRIAN HOPE

Adrian Hope, 'Three Snowline Bowls', Britannia silver and embossed gild, largest diam. 9.5 x 7.5 cm



PHOTO: SUSSIE AHLBURG

Adi Toch, 'Red Sand Bowls', 2010, Britannia silver, hand-raised, soldered, red sand, largest diam. 20 x 8 cm



PHOTO: SALLY COX

Sally Cox, 'Caddy Spoon', 2011, hand-forged silver, length 10 cm



PHOTO: CHRIS HOWARD

Jacqueline Scholes, 'Silver Dish', 2012, fine silver, hand-raised and fabricated, diam. 16 cm



PHOTO: SIMON CHAPMAN

Rauni Higson, 'Aflame Bowl', 2012, stg silver, fold-forming and anticlastic forming, width 28 cm



PHOTO: JOHN K MCGREGOR

Abigail Brown, 'Large Square Fruit Bowl', 2003, silver, hammer formed, 21.5 x 19 x 13 cm. Private Collection



PHOTO: ANDRA NELKI

Chien-Wei Chang, 'Four Bamboo Water Cans', 2006, silver and gold plated silver, tallest 22 x 7.5 cm

Contrasting the natural with the built environment, Birmingham-based Marcus Steel's inspiration stems from his love of ancient and modern architecture. His pieces are complex in structure but simple and uncluttered in their form. Made from sheet metal and patinated to add intensity, richness and depth to the surfaces suggestive of age and history, these vessels hint at function, are tactile and inviting, contemplative pieces that need to be handled.

The other Mighty Metalsmiths featured in the exhibition are: Adi Toch, Jenifer Wall, Adrian Hope, Sally Cox, Marion Kane, Jacqueline Scholes, Chris Philipson and

Abigail Brown.

Based since 1996 in Salts Mill, home to the world's largest collection of art by David Hockney, the Kath Libbert Jewellery Gallery has always been a place to visit for those wishing to commission a special piece of jewellery; and now the gallery is taking this knowledge and experience into the field of contemporary silverware to encourage the commissioning of fine objects for the home. The 13 Mighty Metalsmiths in this show will all take commissions – a great opportunity to become personally involved in the creation of a treasured piece that can be passed down the generations for years to come. There will also be a special Collectors' Event where silversmith Rauni Higson and Crafts Council Patron and collector Jacqueline Gestetner will be talking about commissioning contemporary silverware from both the maker's and customer's perspective. □

For full exhibition catalogue visit: www.kathlibbertjewellery.co.uk/the_mightymetalsmith