

EXHIBITION OPENING

Swords into Ploughshares: Knives into Jewels

A touring exhibition curated by Professor Norman Cherry & Dauvit Alexander.



Metal Morphosis "Peace Piece" - Stephen Bottomley (2023)

22 Feb - 12 March 2024

Reid Gallery

The Glasgow School of Art

164 Renfrew Street

Glasgow G3 6RQ

Swords into Ploughshares: Knives into Jewels is a multi-disciplinary exhibition which highlights and examines the urgent issue of knife crime in the UK. The exhibition will run at Reid Gallery at The Glasgow School of Art from 22nd February till the 12th March, and will be the only opportunity to see this exhibition in Scotland.

The project's core is an invitation to 30 international jewellery and metals artists to reimagine knives that have been surrendered to UK police. The artists, including Stephen Bottomley and Anna Gordon from The Glasgow School of Art, have been tasked with transforming these weapons into works of art, such as jewellery, sculptures, and small decorative objects. The exhibition was conceived by curators **Professor Norman Cherry** (formerly Head of the Birmingham School of Jewellery, and a GSA alumnus) and **Dauvit Alexander** (Birmingham City University, School of Jewellery) who were inspired by the success of "IMAGINE - Give Peace a Chance" the anti-gun crime initiative in the United States. They saw an opportunity to create a similar project in the UK, focusing on the social and personal impact of knife crime and using art as a 'non-policing solution' for change. The curators aim to engage communities and spark dialogue about the devastating effects of violence, while promoting a positive, creative response to a negative issue.

"The School of Design at The Glasgow School of Art has been determined to host this important National touring exhibition and is delighted it is now coming to Glasgow in 2025." says **Professor Stephen Bottomley, Head of School of Design at The GSA.**

"The increase of knife crime across the UK is one of the most challenging issues the UK faces. Involving and connecting our communities to work together is the key aim of this exhibition and supported by our accompanying design symposium. As our community of designer-makers and artists we are aware of our ability, indeed and responsibility, to inform and improve lives through education."



In the balance (brooch) - Jo Pond (2023)

“The students and staff in the Silversmithing & Jewellery department are thrilled that the Swords to Ploughshare, Knives to Jewels exhibition is visiting the Glasgow School of Art.” **says Anna Gordon, Head of Silversmith & Jewellery at GSA.**

“The opportunity to see work by a range of internationally acclaimed contemporary makers will be truly inspirational. This will not only provide an opportunity to engage in meaningful discourse surrounding the culture of knife crime, but also highlight how the specialism of silversmithing and jewellery can effectively facilitate this engagement.”

The participating artists, selected for their ability to address societal issues through their work, have created pieces that move beyond conventional jewellery. These are not high street products for sale, but thoughtful, personal objects designed to provoke reflection. *Knives into Jewels* challenges the public to reconsider their views on knife crime and encourages young people to channel their energy away from violence and towards creativity.

The diversity of the artists' backgrounds - some drawing on similar issues in their own countries, others finding the UK context uniquely challenging - enriches the exhibition. For each artist, the project represents an opportunity to engage with a complex, pressing issue and contribute to meaningful social change through art making.

A symposium accompanies the exhibition on Friday 21st February 3pm - 4.30pm at the Reid Lecture Theatre. The event is Free but ticketed - please Book via **[Eventbrite](#)**

For further information and images, please contact Alan Miller : abnormals@me.com

Notes For Editors

List of Exhibiting Artists:

Dauvit Alexander (UK), Boris Bally (USA), Petra Bishai (UK) Stephen Bottomley, (UK), Tim Carson (UK), Norman Cherry (UK), Jens Clausen (Germany/Estonia), Rachael Colley (UK), Eimear Conyard (Republic of Ireland), Robert Coogan (USA), Rosie Deegan (UK), Jeff Durber (UK), Daniel Freyne (UK), Cristina Filipe (Portugal), Anna Gordon (UK), Hermann Hermson (Germany), Kadri Maelk (Estonia), Arabel Lebrusan (UK/ES), Jorge Manilla (Norway/Mexico), Paul McClure (Canada), Nanna Melland (Norway), Eliana Negroni (Italy), Rohan Nicol (Australia), Ted Noten

(Netherlands), Coilin O'Dubhail (Republic of Ireland), Komelia Okim (Korea/USA), Peter Parkinson (UK), Jo Pond (UK), Annelisse Pfeifer (UK) Liz Shaw (Australia), Rebecca Skeels (UK), Risto Tali (Estonia), Taavi Teevet (Estonia), Fred Truus (Estonia).

The Curators:

Professor Norman Cherry is a practicing jeweller and curator, was formerly Head of the Birmingham School of Jewellery, and Pro Vice Chancellor for Arts and Humanities at the University of Lincoln. He is a GSA alumnus. He has an international reputation as a jewellery artist, curator of exhibitions, and writer and has a number of works in public collections such as The British Museum, Dundee Museums, Birmingham Museum and Art Galleries, the National Museums of Scotland and The Mint Museum, North Carolina, USA. Norman has previously curated touring exhibitions of new narrative jewellery such as "Transplantation" and "The Other Mountain", both of which showed the work of international jewellers from Germany, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Korea and China to international audiences. He regularly undertakes international curation, masterclasses, and other consultancies. He is a Visiting Professor at Nanjing Arts University, Tsing Hua University, Special Consultant Professor at Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, University of Shanghai, China.

Dauvit Alexander is a senior lecturer at the BCU School of Jewellery. He is also very experienced in delivering social interaction projects: www.justified-sinner.com In his jewellery he uses unconventional combinations of materials such as corroded steel and iron with precious metals and gemstones. He aims to make pieces which are aesthetically pleasing, technically interesting and, if possible, humorous and even unsettling. Dauvit has an international reputation for his jewellery, which is primarily aimed at men as he believes that jewellery for men is circumscribed by what celebrities wear. He views his practice as an ongoing process, constantly learning, improving and expanding, pushing both what is considered possible and what is considered acceptable in jewellery.

Ethical Statement

The pilot knife crime project In The Cut took place with the agreement and support of West Midlands Police Lead for Gangs and Knife Crime, Detective Superintendent Ian Parnell, Steve Middleditch, WMP Strategic Facilities Manager, both of whom were satisfied with the removal, transport and use of these knives in relation to the Police's risk assessment policy. The knives were sourced from WMP Smethwick Police Station; their selection and removal by Norman Cherry and Dauvit Alexander was supervised by Michael Hall, WMP lead for this project at Smethwick. All participants are satisfied that any knives in this particular surrender bin have been confiscated as a result of police actions on the streets or at properties visited during normal duties. Any knives which have been involved or thought to have been involved in crime are held completely separately.

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA)

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is internationally recognised as one of Europe's leading independent university-level institutions for education and research in the visual creative disciplines. Our studio-based, specialist, practice-led teaching, learning and research draw talented individuals with a shared passion for visual culture and creative production from all over the world. Originally founded in 1845 as one of the first Government Schools of Design, the School's history can be traced back to 1753 and the establishment of the Foulis Academy delivering a European-style art education. Today, the GSA is an international community of over 3500 students and staff and 22,000 alumni across architecture, design, fine art and innovation and technology in our campuses in Glasgow and Altyre (in the Scottish Highlands).