

# **Isomorphs**

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## Isomorphs

My first solo exhibition at Hipotesi in 2000 – *Beyond the Wire* – was a collection of work through which I had investigated the application of textiles techniques to jewellery in precious metals.

My second solo show at Hipotesi in 2005 – *The Space Within* – was the major vehicle for my then current research into the shellform. My specific interest had been that which is unknowable, the space inside an object which we can never properly know without destroying the object itself – perhaps in itself a metaphor for the human condition.

This collection appeared to be totally unconnected to more than twenty years spent investigating textiles techniques. The final objects, the materials, technology, and practical techniques were all very different. The only apparently common factor was my individual approach to creating the work: a combination of visual and other research, drawing, making, periods of reflection, followed by quite explosive bursts of creative energy over very intensive but relatively short periods of time at the bench: what Schön might have been describing when he talked about reflection-in-action.<sup>1</sup> It was only in 2007 when I assembled a body of work utilising textile techniques for a retrospective exhibition at the Birmingham School of Jewellery that I realised how much the later works in this opus had somehow metamorphosed into the first of the shellforms. My final experiments with fusing and pressing thousands of very fine silver wires to create what I called illusion weaving were actually proto-shellforms.

*Deconstructed – Reconstructed*, shown at Shibuichi, Porto, in 2007, was a natural progression from *The Space Within*, whereby I set about deconstructing some of the original shellforms and constructing new, very different forms from these and other components. This collection was a clear development of the previous work.

And now, as I review the new jewellery which comprises this latest collection, I better understand the visual and intellectual threads which join all of these exhibitions together. Parts which had previously been bisected, deformed, and reformed sometimes become components for the new pieces. Sections from hydraulic pressings which previously had been thought of as part of the supporting cast and normally consigned to the melting pot as offcuts have become components and, in some cases, the major framework for some of the new brooches. Negative spaces are now positive and concrete. Some themes have continued, albeit in revised form. What at first glance might seem to be several very separate threads of visual thought turn out to have aspects of commonality.

Hence the title *Isomorphs* – objects which display similarities of form or characteristic.<sup>2</sup> Although normally a term associated with the biological sciences, the word seems particularly apt for a collection of very different pieces in which the common visual themes can nevertheless be identified, in some cases more obviously than others.

As is often the case, I see this very clearly in retrospect through what I describe as post-rationalisation. At the point of actual creation it was probably much less clear, although I was certainly aware of developing several parallel themes. Each object is a project in itself, a local instalment in a global series of actions. Each one is treated as an individual, but each enjoys the same application of reflection and action informed by a bank of experience-tacit knowledge, sometimes referred to as knowingness – built up over a long period of professional activity.<sup>3</sup> This is creative endeavour which continues to be as challenging, exciting, and satisfying as ever it was.

Professor Norman Cherry  
Lincoln, 2008

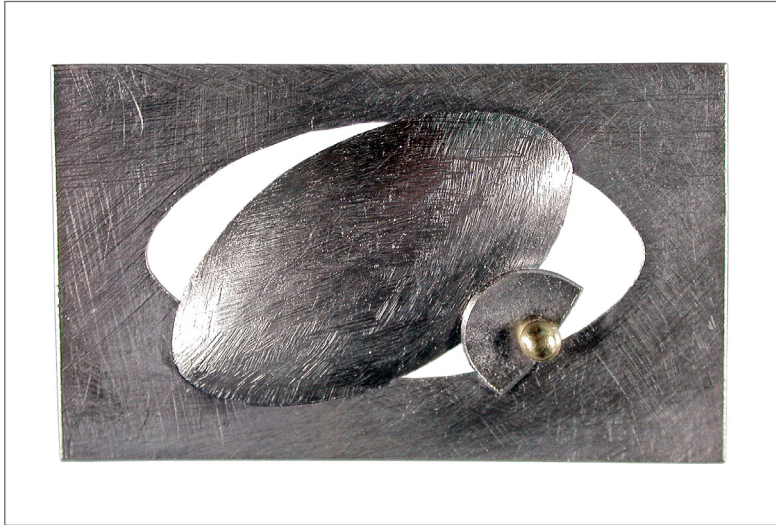
<sup>1</sup> Schön, D. (1991) "The reflective practitioner, how professionals think in action". Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing. P.54.

<sup>2</sup> Pearsall, J. ed. (1998) "The new oxford dictionary of english". Oxford: Clarendon Press. P.968.

<sup>3</sup> Barratt, C. (1989) "Logic in design". New York: Design Press. P.302.



Brooch: pressed form, cone, & grain. Standard silver.



Brooch: pressed forms & grain. Standard silver & 18ct gold.



Brooch: pressed forms. Standard silver, shibuichi, & pearl.



Brooch: disc & shellform. Standard silver.



Brooch: reticulated disc. Standard silver & 18ct gold.





Brooch: pressed & constructed forms, & grains. Standard silver & 18ct gold.



Brooch: pressed forms, discs, & grains. Standard silver & 18ct gold.



Brooch: discs, pressed forms, line & grains. Standard silver & 18ct gold.



Brooch: disc, pressed form, & grains. Standard silver & 18ct gold.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

- 1966-70 Glasgow School of Art
- 1970-71 Assistant to Louis Osman, goldsmith, Canons Ashby, Northants
- 1971- Designer / goldsmith / jeweller, Kelso
- 1974-86 Proprietor, Woodmarket Gallery, Kelso
- 1978-84 Part-time Lecturer, Scottish College of Textiles, Galashiels
- 1983 Temporary Part-time Lecturer, Edinburgh College of Art
- 1984-85 Associate Lecturer, University of Northumbria, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
- 1985-96 Principal Lecturer, Head of Division of Three Dimensional and Environmental Design, University of Northumbria, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
- 1996-2008 Professor and Head of School of Jewellery, Birmingham City University
- 2008 - Dean of Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design, University of Lincoln

## **AWARDS**

- 1971 Crafts Consultative Committee setting up grant
- 1972 Saltire Society John Noble Craft Award
- 1983 Sir Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship
- 1983 Grand Prize, Society of North American Goldsmiths Platinum Design Competition
- 1984 1st Prize, Jewellery, Incorporation of Goldsmiths of the City of Edinburgh Design Competition
- 1993 Betty Davies Award for Jewellery, Scottish Artists and Artist Craftsmen
- 2003 Applied Arts Award, Visual Arts Scotland

## COLLECTIONS

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1971 | King's Own Scottish Borderers                                   |
| 1984 | Dundee Museum and Art Gallery                                   |
| 1987 | Borders Regional Council  |
| 1984 | Dundee Museum and Art Gallery                                   |
| 1992 | Scottish Crafts Collection, National Museums of Scotland        |
| 2000 | Contemporary Jewellery Collection, National Museums of Scotland |
| 1992 | Tennessee Technological University                              |
| 2002 | Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery                               |
| 2008 | British Museum  |

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1990 | Courtyard Gallery, Cheltenham                     |
| 1992 | Open Eye Gallery, Edinburgh                       |
| 1994 | Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh                       |
| 1998 | Roger Billcliffe Fine Art, Glasgow                |
| 2000 | "Beyond the Wire", Hipotesi, Barcelona            |
| 2005 | "The Space Within", Hipotesi, Barcelona           |
| 2007 | "Deconstructed - Reconstructed", Shibuichi, Porto |
| 2008 | "Isomorphs", Hipotesi, Barcelona                  |

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1971 "Scottish Crafts", Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh Festival
- 1973 "Eight Scottish Jewellers", Scottish Crafts Centre, Edinburgh
- 1977 "Important Scottish Silver 1953-1977", Huntly House Museum, Edinburgh
- 1976/80 "Loot", Goldsmiths' Hall, London
- 1983-84 Goldsmiths' Fair, Goldsmiths' Hall, London
- 1984 Society of North American Goldsmiths' Conference, New York
- 1985-88 "Dazzle", Manchester, Edinburgh, Bath, London
- 1987 "Jewellery in Precious Metals", Design Council, London
- 1989 "Los Britanicos", Espai Positura, Barcelona
- 1991 "Timepieces", Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
- 1993-97 Scottish Artists and Artist Craftsmen Annual Exhibition,  
Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh
- 1998 Best of the British, Facère Gallery, Seattle, USA, in conjunction with  
Lesley Craze Gallery, London
- 1999 "Making Connections", Sammas Galerii, Tallinn, Estonia
- 1999 "Making Connections", Shanghai Library, Shanghai, China
- 1999 "From the Centre to the Edge", Institute of Contemporary Art,  
Portland, Maine, USA
- 2000 "Diverse Routes", Electrum Gallery, London
- 2001 "Beyond Materials", Silkaporn University, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2002 "B1 3PA", Metallum Galleri, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2004 "exempli gratia", Facère Gallery, Seattle
- 2005 "Praxis", Appalachian Craft Center, Smithville, Tennessee

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13th November – 10th December

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