

A piece of GOLD

THE 1ST EXHIBITION AT WACOAL STUDYHALL KYOTO

Antique Jewellery Collection - Description

a. Stuart Crystal Ring Georgian (1760-70) High Carat Gold

The delicate gold wire work on the ring is simply eye-catching. Its distorted shape manifests that the ring was made by hand. When this ring was made, western medicine had not yet developed, and medical science was not available like it is in the modern days. Losing a loved one to illness was not a rare case then. Known as the Stuart Crystal Ring, this ring is a mourning jewellery which became incredibly popular in England during the Georgian period, from early 17th century to the end of 19th century.

The gold wire decoration on mourning jewelleries are often initials of the deceased like this ring, however, it may also be symbolic. Such symbolic goldwork is called a 'cypher', thus it could only be understood by someone close like their family or relatives. Presumably, this original owner of this ring may have had W.W or M.M as his/her initials.

Underneath the initials is the hair of the deceased, which has been meticulously woven together. It is hard to imagine in this day, but it was accepted as a significant way of remembering the loved ones by turning their hair into a jewellery. The initials are placed on top of the hair and is covered by a cut crystal.

It is also clear that the ring was originally coated in black enamel, although this only remains on the back part of the bezel and shoulder of the ring. It can be observed that black was the colour for symbolising death since the old times.

The Stuart Crystal Ring has already been extremely rare when Haruko bought this ring 20 years ago in the UK. They are one of the most significant jewelleries with cultural and historical value in these days.

[Haruko Kurihara - Private collection]

b. Horn Cameo Ring Georgian 14k Gold, Animal's Horn

A ring with a carved human face on the surface. The ecru coloured material is an animal horn, but the species is unknown. This slender construction of the ring with delicate round lines and minimal bezel describes how precious gold were when the ring was made.

[Haruko Kurihara - Private collection]

c. Chained Necklace
Georgian (1820-1830)
Pinchbeck
—
Bangle
Early Victorian (1837-1840)
Pinchbeck

Pinchbeck is an alloy invented in the early Georgian era in England by a watchmaker called Christopher Pinchbeck (1670-1732). The Pinchbeck became popular at the time because of its indistinguishable resemblance to real gold and for practical reasons as well such as ease of care.

This alloy is said to be 89% (or 93%) copper and 11% (or 7%) zinc, but the manufacturing process stayed completely a trade secret. Therefore, after the death of Pinchbeck's son Edward, no one knew how to make the alloy, thus Pinchbeck is no longer available.

Developed as an alternative to gold, which was very expensive at the time, pinchbeck filled the people's needs to look like they were wearing real gold jewellery.

Pinchbeck jewellery was mainly used as travel jewellery, especially as it was a common manner in England to distinguish the use of 'real gold jewellery' and 'low quality jewellery' at the time. Hence, it gradually became the preferred choice for travel jewellery. As word spread through the public, pinchbeck became even more popular, to the extent where counterfeit pinchbeck pieces were being made.

The pinchbeck craze lasted until the gold rush in 1848, when the price of gold drastically dropped. However, it still has a unique presence in the history of jewellery.

[Haruko Kurihara - Private collection]

d. Chained Necklace
Victorian (1882)
9K Gold

This chained necklace weighs lighter than it looks. The lightness is achieved by individual rings made of thin sheets of gold with narrow width. The rings, which are slightly bulged to reflect the light softly, are joined together by hand.

Haruko mentions that she has never seen anything lighter than this chain in her long experience of buying antique jewellery. Overall impression varies depending on the thickness, width, shape and length of the loop. This necklace gives an insight to the depth of chain jewellery.

[Haruko Kurihara - Private collection]

e.

Ring with Gemstones
Georgian
15K Gold, Garnet, Turquoise, Seed Pearl

This ring is made of 15ct gold, a style of jewellery that was produced in large numbers around this time of Georgian period. It is set with garnets, turquoises and very small pearls called the seed pearls. The uniqueness of this piece is that the gold used for the bezel and elsewhere on the ring are incredibly thin.

Despite its fragile appearance, the ring fits comfortably and it is in fact precisely tailored to be worn on the finger. It is a piece that clearly shows the ingenuity of the goldsmiths of the time creating a luxurious piece of jewellery with a limited amount of gold.

[Ami Masamitsu - Private collection]

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Product Description

*The weights of earrings are stated as singles.

01

Title : SUN

Designer : Marc Monzo

Material : 18k Gold | 2.7g

This pendant is made of 0.08mm thick gold sheet. Despite its use of extremely thin material, the design establishes both practicality and beauty in the work. The wave-like curved structure of the pendant gives rigidity to the thin sheet of gold and reflects the light delicately, enhancing the depth of beauty in the jewellery. The work transforms the characteristics of gold into stability and beauty through its design, comprehensively expressing the artist's fascination with gold as a material.

03

Title : Fishbone

Designer : Lucie Gledhill

Material :

High Ring | 18k Gold | 10.7g

Middle Ring | 18k Gold | 6.1g

Low Ring | 18k Gold | 2.1g

Triangle Earrings | 18k Gold | 5.1g

Chain making is a signature practice seen in Lucie's work. Each chain of 'Fishbone' is made by hand and are designed to show the traces of the handworks such as the hammering and soldering on the piece in an unadulterated manner, thus embodying the artist's way of exploring relationship between herself and the material.

02

Title : EQU

Designer : Dan Tomimatsu

Material : 18k Gold | 2.7g

The design of this work is expressed through the mass and shape of gold, as this pair of rings share the same value. The rings are made from the same thin sheets of gold in equal length in all sizes. Even if the size varies from small to big, every ring requires the same amount, weight and length of metal, therefore the price stays the same too. The thought-out design simply translates the concept of 'sharing the same value' by transforming gold as a medium. (The unfinished piece is a making sample.)

Title : Absence

Designer : Scarlett Zhang

Material :

Rectangle Earrings | 18k Gold | 5g

Chandelier Earrings | 18k Gold | 2.5g

Pace Two Earrings | 18k Gold | 1.05g

As titled 'Absence', there are no gemstones used in this piece. The piece misses out on the gemstones which we tend to take for granted being there, due to its strong brilliance and classic silhouette. Due to the non-presence of the gemstones, the light reflects inside the piece, making it appear as if the gemstones exist. The beauty created by the 'absence' of gemstones in the work are named 'metal stones' and are created manually by joining small folded-up pieces of gold together. The strong feeling of absence makes the piece's presence even more striking and evokes absurdity of human emotions.

04

05

Title : star

Designer : Sayumi Yokouchi

Material :

24k Gold, Silk cord | 6.6g

18k Gold, 10k Gold (chain) | 2g

Gold is a very soft metal. The higher the purity, the less practical it is as a piece of jewellery.

This piece, however, is designed to deliver the joys of softness and its deformation of pure gold. It symbolises the wearer's passage of time in a tangible form.

(The uncorded piece is a sample that has been worn and aged by the artist herself.)

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COLD

Title : Self-Portrait

Designer : Scarlett Zhang

Material :

Cameo Ring | 18k Gold | 1.5g

Round Ring | 18k Gold | 0.7g

Spiky Ring | 18k Gold | 1.2g

Inspired by the impressionist artistic approach, the three pieces were created to reflect the most significant impressions the artist had from a few of her cherished pieces of jewellery. In these pieces, she rolled a sheet of gold into 0.08 mm thin strips, cut them out with scissors, folded them and joined the resulting pieces together with a laser welder to create the final jewellery weighing more or less 1g. Her playful approach of handling gold challenges the perception on how gold is generally regarded and questions the arbitrary nature of what is considered valuable.

08

06

Title : Guldgubber

Designer : Kim Buck

Material :

24k Gold, Nylon cord | 1.8g

Transforming personal inspirations into simply beautiful figures is perhaps a quality that all skilled jewellers have in common. 'Guldgubbe' means 'little old man of gold' and refers to art objects, amulets and offerings made during the Iron Age in Scandinavia. Guldgubbe are 1-2 cm in size, often engraved with motifs such as human figures or animals and are considered the oldest metalworks in Scandinavia. Kim, the artist of the piece, has reinterpreted the guldgubber in a contemporary manner by engraving a classic jewellery motif, a heart shaped necklace, in 999 gold.

Title : FIRE

Designer : Marc Monzo

Material :

Earrings | 18k Gold | 0.75g

Brooch | 18k Gold | 5.8g

07

Similarly to the 'SUN', 'FIRE' is also made of an extremely thin sheet of gold, but designed with a completely different aspect. The shape is both soft and delicate, like a crumpled piece of paper, but it articulates a powerful glimmer of flame on the other hand. The piece lets us rediscover the value of gold as a material through design, while it impresses us with its broad expression.

Title : Fact

Designer : Marta Boan

Material : 18k Gold | 0.5g

09

The piece possesses both delicacy and strong presence at the same time. Inspired by her subtle realisations in everyday life, these earrings are created based on her own distinctive design ethos. There is a uniqueness in her work that makes it hard to imagine how the piece will look on oneself until trying them on. It is a wonder of nature how a piece is produced by transforming just a gram of gold in the simplest way possible.

10

Title : Coil
Designer : Sayumi Yokouchi
Material :
 Oval | 18k Gold | 4.0g
 Square | 18k Gold | 4.35g

This piece is made using a simple technique of coiling a single wire, yet it portrays a soft, endearing form. The folded coils are layered and soldered in order to strengthen the piece, though designed and structured in a relaxed manner. The hardness and softness of the metal is cleverly incorporated into the design.

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Title : LITTLES
Designer : Ami Masamitsu
Material : 18k Gold | 1.9g

The airy structure of these earrings offers various expressions when viewed from different angles. When realising that the small engagement rings with subtle glints of 1mm diamond criss-cross to compose its three-dimensional structure, one is drawn to its design expression. The piece discreetly emphasises the aesthetic value of the collet that precious stones are often set in.

Title : Fix and Wear
Designer : Kim Buck
Material :
 Earrings | 18k Gold, Diamond | 0.8g
 Ring | 18k Gold, Diamond | 0.8g

This ring and earrings may be the most minimalistic jewellery set with diamonds. To use a single gold wire to hold and fasten a diamond is a very simple, logical idea, however it is not made possible without the high technical skills of the artist. Without any wasted design elements, its timeless form embodies a universal beauty which makes it hard to believe that the work was first introduced in the 90's.

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11

Title : Sheet
Designer : ATAKA
Material :
 1 circle | 18k Gold | 0.25g
 5 circle | 18k Gold | 0.85g

This work attempts to reconstruct the function of earring fasteners. By integrating the earring post and clasp with a simple technique, the piece incarnates a minimal beauty to the function, without being bound by conventional constraints. Functional beauty is what results from the pure exploration of functionality and creation of undiscovered shapes.

Title : EMBROIDERY
Designer : Ami Masamitsu
Material :

A Piece of Gold Ring | 18k Gold | 3.6g
 Forget Me Not Ring | 18k Gold | 2.1g
 m Ring | 18k Gold | 2.1g
 Necklace | 18k Gold | 3.4g

'EMBROIDERY' is a flat, universal ring made from a 0.3mm thick sheet of gold. The letters and designs formed on its surface are improvised by the artist, using thin wires that have been meticulously twisted and thickened, then glued one by one with a laser welding. The ring proves that simple materials and handworks can enhance expansive expressions by the way it's designed. This work pursues the enrichment of jewellery through its ingenuity. The gold necklace displayed is the former design of the ring.

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Title : Ennui
Designer : Hongxia Wang
Material :
 Ring | 18k Gold | 3.3g
 Earrings | 18k Gold | 2.5g

According to the artist Hongxia, there is no tremendous inspiration nor concept behind this series of work, yet the inspiration is simple and purely born out of boredom. These organic forms are created for 'Ennui' as she draws on an empty sketchbook page freely. The only tools needed are wax, a burner and a fine needle. The work is a vivid pictorial representation of the artist's sensibility through her own time.

17

Title : Stamp Ring
Designer : Marta Boan
Material : 18k Gold | 3.0g

This ring is an effortless beauty, with minimum action at the core of its design - it is made by bending a gold sheet with just two cuts. The work 'Fact' alike, simple shapes with a powerful sense of formation is a common approach seen in Marta's works.

19

Title : Solder Seam Stud
Designer : Lucie Gledhill
Material : 18k Gold | 0.8g

Soldering, a joining process used to join different types of metals together, is an action taken when completing a piece of jewellery, and it is usually never a centre of attention in the jewellery making process. The artist finds beauty in the solder itself, which is the wax used during the soldering process, and creates unique jewellery pieces out of it. She first creates the ring in silver, and joins the parts together with gold wax, then melts all the silver ring parts. Because gold has a higher melting point than silver, the silver melts prior to the gold, thus the 18K gold wax remains just like an exact copy of the silver ring shape. The outcome is a fossil of wax that captures shape and time just when it melted. The idea of turning the solder itself into earrings is unique to Lucie Gledhill, who is fascinated by the process of soldering.

Title : The Naked Collection
Designer : Hongxia Wang
Material :
 18k Gold, 0.65ct Untreated
 Madagascar Sapphire | 2.5g

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This ring is truly a work of art that captures the naked look of metal. The organic form is formed by melting wax, which is then replaced by gold using the lost wax casting technique. The matt texture of the metal, naturally created by the casting process, provides a pleasant contrast to the shiny gemstones.

Title : small oval link CHAIN
Designer : Sayumi Yokouchi
Material : 18k Gold | 5.4g

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Similarly to the work 'Coil', this piece is neatly made by hand, but the subtle differences in size and details of the ovals provide a comfortable shimmer and warmth to the overall look of the work. The artist states that she feels relief when working on the repetitive pattern of her piece. Her close relationship with the metal and its reactions are mirrored in the work.

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