



Ruth Ball Enamel & Design <http://ruthball.weebly.com/>



Enamel Portrait Miniatures by Gillie Hoyte Byrom <http://www.enamelportraitminiatures.co.uk/>



Jane Short Enameller <http://www.janeshort.com/>

**Jane Short** is a master enameller who specialises in hand engraving. She has been granted prestigious commissions and has produced large commemorative works. Basse-taille and champlévé are her techniques of choice. Her surface design, exceptional craftsmanship and use of vibrant translucent colours combine to create superlative pieces.

**Ruth Ball** uses "the alchemy of colour with her individual style, highlighting enamel as a medium of contemporary design". She has collaborated with other artists in producing works that combine different textures and materials. She is the author of Enamelling (A&C Black), an excellent reference book for beginners and advanced enamellers alike. For her most recent exhibition in March this year, Ball produced beakers that were chased

in Britannia silver and hand-engraved. These formed part of an exhibition called Cut in Clerkenwell.

Another enameller I admire greatly, **Carolyn Del Zoppo**, hails from Australia. She has exhibited her works extensively and won many awards. Her speciality is the cloisonné technique, which she's expanded by using fine wire not only to isolate colours, but to serve as a pencil line, giving her work vibrant motion and expression. In her earlier works, Del Zoppo made use of subtle colours (often monotonous), but today she uses vivid shades to create miniature "paintings" which comment on man's relationship with nature.

**Jacqueline Ryan** has developed a technique which allows enamel to be applied to three-dimensional surfaces. Her works, done in yellow gold, are inspired by nature and take the technique of bosse-ronde to a new level.

**Wendy McAllister** has developed her own style incorporating 3D surfaces. She uses an air-pressured spray, which allows the enamel to adhere to intricate sculptural surfaces.

I wrote this article because of my abiding passion for enamelling. I want to share that passion not only with my students, fellow goldsmiths and jewellery-makers in South Africa. I want my colleagues to incorporate



Wendy McAllister Jewellery <http://wendymcallister.com/home.html>

enamelling in their work, their creations and their manufacture. Above all, I want to show that enamelling is alive and well in the modern genre and is by no means limited to traditional, conservative expressions.

Enamelling continues to evolve, transforming an ancient craft into a contemporary medium; each generation contributes to its richness and diversity in its own way.

There are no limits to the enamelling technique; it can be applied to any creative design and truly enhances the piece.

The versatility, beauty and use of colour make it a unique medium. ■



Phil Barnes Enameller <http://www.philbarnesenameller.co.uk/>

# Enamelling: a truly evolving art form

We know and admire the enamelling masterpieces created by Peter Carl Fabergé. But what of contemporary vitreous enamelling? Are there examples of jewellery-makers, modern artists and enamellists using the ancient techniques and what are they creating? Sasha Leon shares her passion and knowledge of modern enamelling.

BRIEF EXPOSURE TO CURRENT VITREOUS enamelling demonstrates that it has not stopped evolving and has transformed into a vibrant, contemporary art form challenging the boundaries of technique, material and process. It is a demanding, yet generously rewarding craft. As Phil Barnes describes it:

"Enamelling is challenging, fascinating, evolving – an exacting combination of art, chemistry and risk."

Modern vitreous enamelling expresses a new freedom, a refusal to be constrained by conventional limits and techniques. The use of enamel in larger silver objects has elevated these works to a new level, where colour and innovative processes have become the dominant element, allowing the enameller to express their own individual style both as jewellery-maker and artist, using a number of techniques.

In its broadest terms enamelling is simply the fusing of crushed glass onto a metal surface by firing it in a kiln. However, this simplicity – in conjunction with creativity and experimental design – allows the enameller to explore colours that are translucent, just as a painter would work with oil paints, opaque shades and water colours.

It helps to view the work of some of the leading enamellers in the world. All of them are highly accomplished in their field, with many awards to their credit and extensive creative résumés. Although most of them are British, many countries have a very rich enamelling tradition and are today part of this evolving art form.



Phil Barnes Enameller <http://www.philbarnesenameller.co.uk/>

The British Society of Enamellers aims to promote new members to join and participate in joint exhibitions. This is subject to a selection in which originality of design and a high quality of craftsmanship are the primary criteria. The society organises exhibitions locally and in different countries. It has a website (<http://enamellers.org>)

that offers information about upcoming events and exhibitors. The organisation inspires its members to create works of a very high standard and draw inspiration from each other, rather than working in isolation.

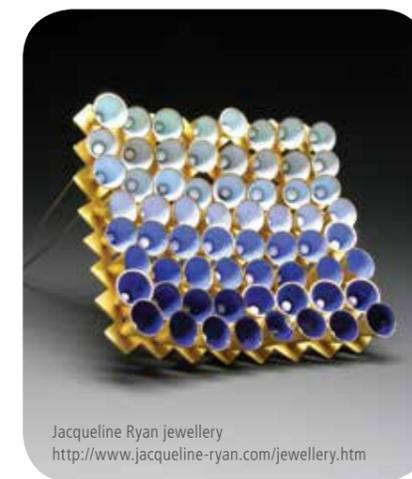
The following enamellers (though there are many more) provide a brief, but tantalising taste of the nature and quality of modern enamelling:

**Phil Barnes** has combined various enamelling techniques that give his works a unique

style. The use of cloisonné (where colours are divided using fine wires) and Basse-taille, where varying depths are engraved into the metal surface and then enamelled, allows the enamel to lighten or deepen in colour, depending on its proximity to the surface of the metal.

**Gillie Hoyte Byrom** specialises in miniature portraits. Very finely ground enamel mixed with oils is painted onto a base colour and repeatedly fired until the desired effect has been achieved. Her precision, fine observation and mastery of this technique produces exquisite,

Wendy McAllister Jewellery <http://wendymcallister.com/home.html>



Jacqueline Ryan Jewellery <http://www.jacqueline-ryan.com/jewellery.htm>

life-like portraits. Included in her Historical Gallery (visit: [www.enamelportraitminiatures.co.uk](http://www.enamelportraitminiatures.co.uk)) is a breathtaking portrait of Edward, Prince of Wales after Holbein.

**Alexandra Raphael** is a great exponent of the plique-à-jour technique. The enamel is used in three-dimensional objects which have no metal backing, in order to allow the light through, a little like a stained-glass window. Raphael produces three-dimensional bowls for exhibition purposes only, as this medium is understandably extremely fragile.

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