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Post-war design education and the jewellery industry in Yorkshire: Drawing on the experience of designer-maker Ann O'Donnell.

Samantha Broadhead, Leeds Arts University. sam.broadhead@leeds-art.ac.uk

Keywords: Jewellery, designer-maker, design education, education for industry, post-war design, Charles Horner Ltd, Ann O'Donnell

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Introduction

This chapter presents a case study based on the education and career of post-war jewellery designer-maker, Ann O'Donnell (1933-2019), to understand the impact an art school education had on her subsequent experience working in the jewellery manufacturing industry. O'Donnell's experiences also illustrate some of the tensions between the curricula designed for teaching design innovation through making and the requirements of jewellery manufacturing firms.

Ann O'Donnell was a jewellery designer-maker from the North of England who was educated at Leeds College of Art between the years 1950 to 1954 where she studied textiles and jewellery as part of her National Diploma in Design (NDD). She successfully went onto higher study at the Royal College of Art between 1954 to 1957, specialising in goldsmithing, silversmithing, metalwork and jewellery. In order to graduate O'Donnell was required to work in industry for a year. So, between 1957 and 1958 she joined the prominent Charles Horner Ltd firm in Halifax where she remembers her contribution towards the factory production line. Ultimately, this experience did not fulfil O'Donnell's design aspirations so she continued her practice whilst teaching at Leeds College of Art from 1960 until 1986 (Broadhead 2020). She was also an elected member of the Society of Designer-Craftsmen, previously known as the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, established in 1887 by members of the Art Workers Guild including Walter Crane and W.A.S. Benson. William Morris was its president in the years 1893 to 1896. The Society's certificate, beautifully written in a calligraphic style and embellished in gold, was proudly displayed in Anno Domini in Leeds which O'Donnell opened in 1970s with her business partner, Mae-Fun Chen. Anno Domini operated as a commercial gallery where exhibitions of international, contemporary jewellery were held (Norton & Broadhead 2017).

During her teaching career O'Donnell taught jewellery design to local apprentices and also ran adult education classes in jewellery making. One of many significant moments in O'Donnell's career was in 1966 when her oriental style gold necklace with square cut diamonds was chosen for the De Beers Diamonds International Awards. The judging panel included Pierre Cardin and Mary Kruming,

fashion editor of American Vogue (Norton & Broadhead 2017). One of the other winners was Andrew Grima (1921-2007), known for his innovative and modernist jewellery designs (Philips 1996).

It can be seen from O'Donnell's history, education and design practices that she was working within a context steeped in the arts and crafts heritage where hand craft was valued and seen as integral to the design process.

While O'Donnell's story provides an insight into the tensions that arose between her 'art school' education and the expectations of manufacturers, it also illustrates how hand craft skills were assimilated into the manufacturing process. Later, O'Donnell constructed curricula for those working in industry. It is proposed that due to her gender and her association with teaching for industry she was marginalised within the art school during the 1960s and 1970s. This raises questions about the unequal treatment of teachers who taught part-time on day release and evening classes and the perceived value of that kind of educational provision.

The case study draws upon research that was collected from a curatorial project that comprised an exhibition, film and a contextual essay (Norton & Broadhead 2017). It was shown as a retrospective of O'Donnell's work in 2017 where the exhibits were positioned as examples of post-war modernist design. Interviews between the researcher and O'Donnell were also recorded and transcribed along with informal conversations about jewellery making. Ann O'Donnell married Edward O'Donnell and had two daughters, Kate O'Donnell and Frances Norton. Frances was also interviewed by the researcher, and was able to give additional information about topics not previously covered in the aforementioned conversations, exhibition and film.

Context

Women designers in the 1950s had gained respect in the design and manufacturing industries. Forward thinking retailers such as Heals sold and promoted their designs in textiles, ceramics and furniture design (Briganti & Mezei 2011). Examples include Ray Eames (1912 – 1988), Lucienne Day (1917–2010), Jacqueline Groag (1903–1986), Marian Mahler (1911– 1983) and Brutalist architect Alison Smithson (1928 –1993). Reinhold (2008) described a paradigm shift in post-war design against historicism, tradition and convention and pointed out that conservatism in jewellery manufacture continued to be more apparent than in other disciplines. Phillips (1996) noted that innovation in the jewellery field came from individual designer-craftspeople trained at art schools. After 1945 there was a turn away from austere industrial design and traditional crafts towards a more expressive experimental approach (Reinhold 2008). Within the practice of jewellery making, goldsmith techniques were used but these were also experimental often being inspired by makers from other cultures like those working in Japan. Making techniques became more varied borrowing from other disciplines like textiles and sculpture.

Fine jewellery was traditionally purchased for sentimental reasons (to signify an engagement for example). Conventional materials such as gold and diamonds were chosen for their expense, rarity and preciousness. Dormer and Turner (1985) claimed that often the design of jewellery (as opposed to its symbolism and material value) was the last thing to be considered by manufacturers. As a result, much of the jewellery sold on the high street was conservative in nature.

During the twentieth century there was a growth in costume jewellery manufacture that was inspired by the fashion and film industry (Miller 2010). Made with inexpensive materials such as base metals, plastics and paste, costume Jewellery at its best was well-designed and playful. At its worst costume was a cheap and unimaginative copy of traditional fine jewellery; generally, it was mass- produced and sometimes poorly made.

O'Donnell's jewellery design did not fit into the tradition of formal jewellery made for women to celebrate key moments in their lives such as engagement or marriage. Nor could it be described as costume. It was design-led jewellery made with precious metals and stones but also incorporating other materials including pebbles, ancient glass or ceramic beads and even dinosaur bone (Norton & Broadhead 2017). Dormer and Turner (1985) claimed that the consumers of this kind of work tended to be those working in creative fields who could appreciate not only the craft, but also the visual and conceptual aspects of the work. Jewellery was celebrated for its expressive and formal qualities rather than its intrinsic value and emotional significance. Consumers of this type of jewellery valued innovation, design concept, and the craft of making rather than the rarity or cost of the materials. Women often bought their own pieces seeing them as small works of art that could be exhibited on or as part of the body (Campbell in Oliver 2015). People who wore the jewellery showed others how their taste was informed by discernment and knowledge of design.

The influence of the art schools in reinvigorating jewellery design innovation cannot be underestimated. A huge contribution was made by Gerda Flockinger an Austrian artist-maker, who established the first British course in experimental jewellery at Hornsey School of Art (Phillips 1996). Ultimately, Flockinger along with others from Germany, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and the United States expanded the possibilities for jewellery design. The work produced by these people has come to be known as The New Jewellery (Dormer and Turner 1985). The New Jewellery was a radical movement, greatly influenced by German designers with the opening of the Schmuck Museum (jewellery museum) in Pforzheim in 1961. Britain also saw in the same year the Goldsmith Hall exhibition which included 1000 objects from 28 countries, then described as new jewellery (Phillips 1996).

O'Donnell's education and training as a designer-maker of jewellery

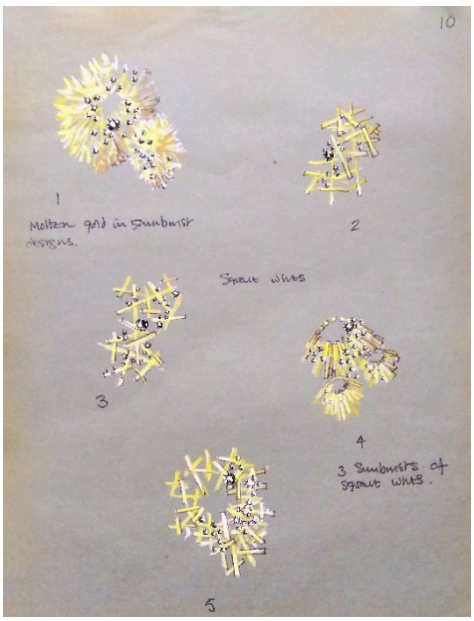
O'Donnell was educated at Leeds College of Art in the early 1950s within the context of post-war British design. Modernist ideas originating from De Stijl in the Netherlands and the Bauhaus in Germany were beginning to permeate through the art school curriculum (Yeomans 2005). This time period was pre-Coldstream, before art education became aligned with the qualifications of higher education. Much later the National Advisory Council on Art Education and the first Coldstream report (1960) considered that a two-year Intermediate Certificate followed by a two-year National Diploma in Design (NDD) was insufficient to educate professional artists and designers (Miller 2003). It was at this time Coldstream created a new Pre-Diploma course (Foundation) and a three-year Diploma in art and design (DipAD) (Miller 2003). During O'Donnell's time at Leeds as a student the NDD was a prerequisite to higher study at the prestigious Royal College of Art.

O'Donnell remembers that when she first started at Leeds she had anticipated learning fashion and textiles. However, when she realised that she could study jewellery-making she decided to specialise in that. Her teacher at the time was a Miss Noble whose own style was reminiscent of the arts and crafts movement. After achieving her NDD O'Donnell tried, briefly, to gain employment and had moved to London, taking her portfolio around prominent jewellers to try and get a job. O'Donnell's future husband, Edward, also moved to London; he was working as a musician in the 'Ken Colyer & his Jazzmen' band. It was during this time that she was invited to study at the Royal College of Art' s School of Silversmithing and Jewellery due to a lecturer seeing her end of year show at Leeds. She decided to seize the opportunity to return to education (Norton & Broadhead 2017).

The Royal College of Art was founded in 1837 as the Government School of Design. As has been discussed previously in the introduction of this book, the original aim of the Design School was to improve the quality of manufactured goods through the employment of trained designers and artisans. In 1853 the School moved to South Kensington where it evolved into the National Art Training School as part of the development of the area by the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851. The title Royal College of Art was conferred in 1896 , the name suggested both the importance of art to design practice, but also the aspiration to harness art to industry serving the economy. In the mid-20th century the College began the teaching of product design and the provision of specialised professional instruction including graphic and industrial design (Frayling 1987). Jewison (2015) noted that during the post-war period the Royal College aimed to train designers rather than craftspeople. Looking at Ann's sketchbooks (Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2) it can be seen that she had skills in drawing and designing utilising a range of design inspirations. However, she was also a craftsperson and understood the value of experimenting with materials and techniques, this can be seen from her innovative use of gold and stone setting. O'Donnell explains her approach to design based on the materials themselves.

> The nature of gold itself is smooth and flowing when molten, or sharp and crystalline when cut or fractured, and this demands a certain sculptural, abstract form, and when it is combined with stones this is made all the more obvious.

Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 are pages from O'Donnell's sketch book and show the ways in which she designed forms that were abstract and sculptural. This was design-led jewellery made in silver and gold and was in the spirit of the work produced by her contemporaries such as Andrew Grima (1921-2007).



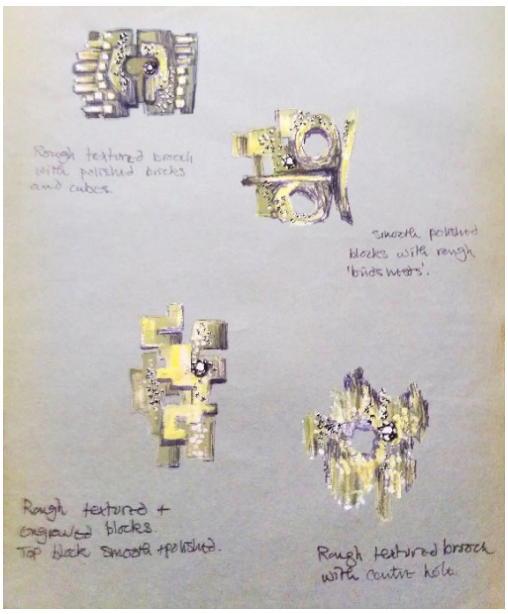


Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2: Designs from Ann O'Donnell's sketch book from 1960s and 1970s. [Permission to reproduce given from the O'Donnell family.]

Stylistically, the sketch book work is reminiscent of post-war sculpture, such as that of Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975), William Mitchell (1925-2020) and Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005). For O'Donnell the distinction between designer and craftsperson was not meaningful because the craft knowledge that she gleaned from making was central to her design process and informed her drawing.

O'Donnell's arts education for industry

During O'Donnell's time at the Royal College she was pro-active in seeking out opportunities for herself to study how the jewellery industry operated in practice. She did this through applying for awards, competitions and bursaries as noted on her curriculum vitae. Frances Norton, her daughter remembers that,

> Mum got a Royal Society of the Arts Travel Scholarship to visit jewellery manufacturers in Germany, France and Italy. It was a prize she had to apply for in order to win it. The Royal College wrote a letter of introduction, asking for her to have permission to look at all aspects of jewellery design in various factories abroad. She did this while she was a student between 1954-1958.

This experience seems to have had an impact on O'Donnell as it offered a model of how her education and training could be applied to an industrial context. Norton continued,

> She was inspired by what she saw in Germany. Designer-makers worked as part of the design team. They took inspirational designer jewellery and simplified it for manufacture. She came home with many German jewellery catalogues and subscribed to Gold und Silber magazine.

It is possible to see that, very much like the Bauhaus, under the leadership of Walter Gropius, 35 years previously, there was a clear vision of how the innovation coming from designer-makers could make work that could be transposed into an industrial context (Gropius 1965). Avant-garde designs could be conceived of as being made in multiples rather than as one-off pieces. There was a role for someone with O'Donnell's design and craft training in the German approach to jewellery manufacture.

Industrial placement – Charles Horner Ltd.

O'Donnell, during her interview with the researcher, explained that a condition of graduating from the Royal College of Art was that she was required to work in an industrial context for a year. The certificate awarded to her in 1957, states,

> This is to certify that Ann Procter [her birth name] having successfully completed the prescribed course and passed the final examination in the school of silversmithing and jewellery to the satisfaction of the board of examiners, is eligible for the award of the DIPLOMA Des. R.A.C. on the completion of a further nine months in such employment as might be approved by the college authorities. This certificate, without the Diploma, does not entitle the holder to the title and style of Designer of the Royal College of Art.

The Royal College approved that between 1957-1958 O'Donnell would enter the employ of the firm Charles Horner Ltd, based in Halifax, Yorkshire. This enabled her to achieve the Des. R.A.C. awarded on the 11 July 1958. It can be seen that O'Donnell's education was not recognised as complete until she had gained the industrial experience that the Royal College deemed was appropriate.

O'Donnell's daughter, Frances Norton, commented that:

> The College decided on Charles Horner Ltd. not Mum, but they did look for a firm local to where her family lived. They considered industry experience as part of their students' education, even if their education had been more fine art focused.

Charles Horner Ltd was an established firm begun in the 1860s as a manufacturer and wholesaler of jewellery, watches and silver goods, closing in the 1980s (Lawson 2002). During 1895 the firm opened a showroom in Birmingham, the centre of jewellery manufacturing in England. Horner developed a line of good-quality jewellery aimed at the middle market, that was manufactured with some handcrafting, but also by mass-production techniques. Innovations such as plastic jewellery and giftware kept the firm going in the latter part of its history in the 1980s (Lawson 2002). However, it was most successful during the art nouveau period (1905-1920). The firm was also known for producing thimbles and hatpins (Lawson 2002). When O'Donnell worked there, Charles Horner Ltd was not as fashionable as it had once been during the early twentieth century, and was producing more conservative 'middle-of -the -road' jewellery pieces.

O'Donnell reflected on the decision to work with this particular firm. From her words it seems that she identified with the founder of the company to some extent:

> I was given a work placement at Charles Horner, Halifax …it was very interesting how he got started because it was pretty much how I got started. Except when Charles Horner made his individual pieces he had one of those little suitcases like those people used to take their lunch in and he would go door to door. I never did do that but he probably did a lot better than I did because he did that.

O'Donnell was aware of the company's history and had an appreciation of the kind of skills necessary for producing the goods. She noted that,

> eventually his business grew and then his son took over. It was quite a good, big factory by then. During the war it was taken over for making instruments for the Royal Air Force (RAF) because there were fine workers there who could do that kind of hand-work.

However, although O'Donnell was interested in the history of the company and the enameled pieces of art nouveau silver jewellery, she did not feel she belonged in that particular setting:

> So, it was very interesting, there were one or two of the original enameled pieces there. I worked there for…it had to be a year minimum, so it was a year – I left very quickly after that…[smiling as she said this].

It was apparent from the interview that O'Donnell did not enjoy working as a designer for this firm. And it can be inferred from her decision to leave after a year that she was doing this kind of work so she could achieve her Royal College of Art diploma. She explicitly remarked that,

> My job was designing but I actually found it difficult for them to make those things [O'Donnell's designs for jewellery] as they had to be mass produced.

In a conversation with the researcher O'Donnell described how she was particularly critical of the silver hinged bangles, engraved with a traditional pattern that were being produced as being basic and unimaginative, requiring very little craftsmanship and creativity. This suggests that possibly O'Donnell's education had encouraged her to value creativity over financial concerns.

Norton remembered that,

> There was a particular bangle – Mum designed part of it then had to make it, then do a time and motion study. Each of the jewellery makers was given the individual pieces necessary to make the bangle, they had to make something like 12 in a day – it was paid at piece-rate.

The company utilised O'Donnell's jewellery-making skills in a way she had not anticipated. The production process was timed to make it more efficient in the spirit of Taylorism and scientific management (Watson 2019). O'Donnell's making of the bangle as well as other products was scrutinised and measured so they could be made efficiently on the production line. She remembered:

> And another thing I was asked to do was to go to the shop floor and do timings – time checks for people to follow. So, the whole factory had to work to my time for doing a certain job. It was very tough because they would give me, say, a gross of medallions to enamel and it would take so many minutes and they would say "not fast enough – that would not pay – do it again!" And I would do it about six times before I could get the speed up that they would except. Then the poor work force had to do what I had timed it to which was …I was not popular there [laughs].

For O'Donnell making was a crucial part of her design process. She was curious about the ways in which she could manipulate, construct and emboss metal. Figure 4.3 shows her in her work shop surrounded by her tools, some she has modified herself to meet her creative needs. Her method was intuitive and organically process-led and it did not translate well into an English industrial context.

However, the making skills she did have were not used by the Charles Horner Ltd to develop new products, but as a means of measuring the manual tasks in terms of time. This was a way of making the manufacturing process more efficient. This use of O'Donnell's expertise seems to have been dehumanising for her as a designer, but also for the work force who would not have had her training or autonomy.

Testimonies from the workers were collected from Lawson's seminal study on the Charles Horner business and give an insight into the working conditions at the factory,

> Wages were low. Training was poor. Young girls did not stay long … The girls were on piece rate [i.e. Paid on their good output only]. (MS in 2002, p. 19)

Another reminiscence from 'JT' confirms the lack of previous education and training in the work force.

> 'I started in 1957 straight from school. I have both good and bad memories from my time at Charles Horner. The firm was run in a very austere, Victorian way. We were even timed going to the lavatory and they were mean with the lighting. (JT in Lawson 2002, p.19).

The accounts from the workers on the factory floor support O'Donnell's memories about working at the company. They give added insight into the way the company was managed with a tight rein on resources and time. The experiences of the workers also call into question how students from an art school background felt when faced with a way of life that was less privileged than their own, where the workers had less control over their working lives.

Figure 4.3: Ann O'Donnell at work in her studio, she is wearing one of her signature fibula brooches. [Permission to reproduce was gained from the O'Donnell family]

Charles Horner Ltd did not seem willing to embrace O'Donnell's creativity that could possibly have led to a more exciting jewellery line, which may or may not have been commercially viable. They were comfortable producing the more mundane pieces because they felt confident their target market would buy them.

The design team who were employed during O'Donnell's work placement had not gone to the Royal College of Art, but they did have some art school training. Mary Gregory was employed between 1953 and 1959 and had studied at Halifax School of Art. Lawson (2002) described some of her popular designs that were for 'staybrite' steel and comprised a swallow, dog's head and ballerina brooches. Margaret Eccles was there between 1958 to 1966 and trained by Gregory, but she had no formal training in jewellery design, although she did have a background of textile design. Eccles' designs were based on photographs from magazines and had to stay within limits defined by production costs. The jewellery these designers originated was commercial and very pretty, but was also conservative (see Figure 4.4). The range of jewellery did not evoke the excitement and innovation that sprung from post-war design.

Figure 4.4 Examples of Charles Horner and Charles Horner style silver and staybrite steel jewellery. [Photograph taken by author]

For Charles Horner Ltd jewellery needed to be made efficiently and economically. It is significant that many of the pieces were produced in the less expensive silver and set with paste stones. O'Donnell's approach of slow crafting was a complex and intuitive activity. Her artistic objectives were very different from the outcome of the timings which was to simplify the tasks so that those who did not have O'Donnell's education and training could reproduce them quickly. This means of production seems so at odds with O'Donnell's previous education as a designer-maker that it is not surprising that she only wanted to stay at the firm for a year.

O'Donnell's approach to design led to avant-garde jewellery pieces such as Figure 4.5 and was dramatically different from the work conceived of by the Charles Horner Ltd in-house designers. Figure 4.5 is an example of O'Donnell's jewellery that led to her being selected as a prize winner at the Diamonds International Awards 1966, sponsored by De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd. The Oriental style necklace was abstract, based on random forms that looked like they were derived from a mark-making exercise or experimental drawing. It was constructed from high carat gold and square cut diamonds. The richness of the materials used and the complexity of the irregular forms would make it a challenging proposition to make in mass quantities. The piece was exhibited internationally, after which O'Donnell removed the diamonds and sold the piece to a private collector.

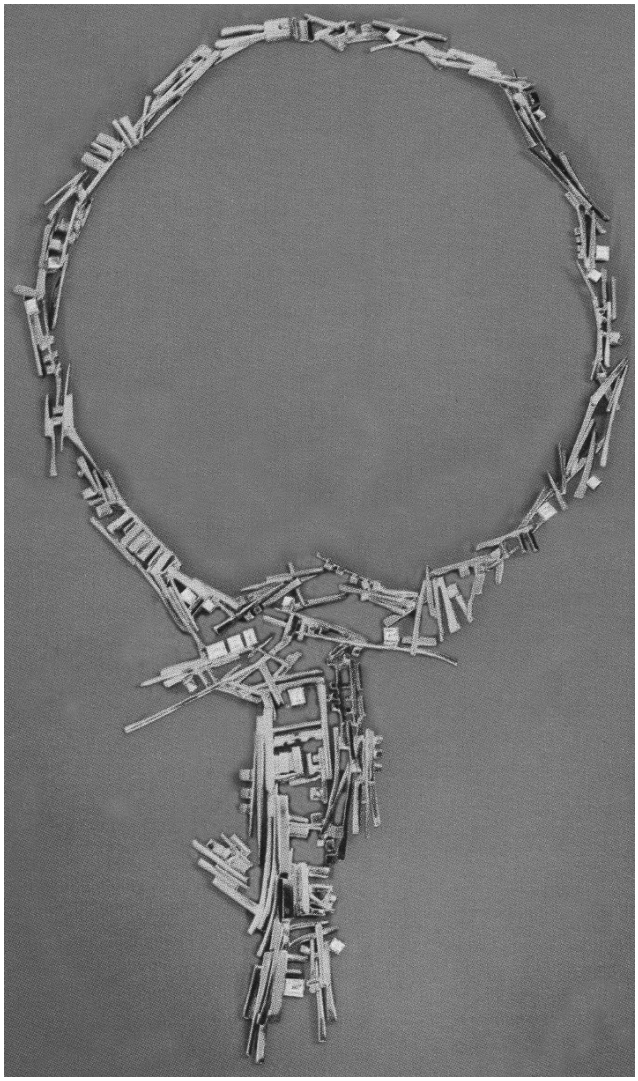


Figure 4.5: Ann O'Donnell's Oriental style necklace in gold and square cut diamonds, Diamonds International Awards 1966, sponsored by De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd. [Permission to reproduce was gained from the O'Donnell family]

Norton explained that:

> The job was not who she was as a creative maker. She had very little creative freedom. She did some design but it was with strict parameters. Mum was always commenting on the many Scottie dogs with jewel eyes that were made.
>
> They were very tight with materials – at College there was lots of solder and students could use it willy-nilly [without direction or planning; haphazardly]. Charles Horner pre-cut the solder you had to use only was given for a particular job. Borax used as a flux for soldering was restricted to very small amounts.

In spite of all the challenges O'Donnell experienced at Charles Horner, Norton believed her mother had got a lot out of the experience Even though the business model was very different from the one she would pursue as a designer-maker undertaking commissions for bespoke pieces of jewellery.

She learned how to organise a work space, how to structure a working day, how to run a business. Security – how to keep everything secure when working with precious materials that are desirable. Craft jewellers used suede cloth to catch the gold filings from the making process so they could be re-melted, but Charles Horner Ltd needed something more efficient so nothing was wasted.

It is possible to surmise that O'Donnell's experience at Charles Horner Ltd was very different from what she observed during her visit to Germany. It could be argued that her educational experience had not prepared her for the need to think about the sustainability of materials and economic implications of not using resources carefully. Even a designer-maker, who does not work in an industrial context needs to think about the practicalities, ethics and cost of their silver, gold and stones.

O'Donnell as an educator for industry

O'Donnell, being disillusioned with manufacturing jewellery on a large scale, returned to Leeds College of Art to teach in 1960, (she had previously, taught at Leeds with Harry Thurbon (1915-1985) in the late 1950s when she was also studying at the Royal College) (Broadhead 2020). O'Donnell's employment was in teaching community courses, in outreach provision around the city and in part-time Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) and City and Guilds vocational skills courses (Broadhead 2020). In particular she taught apprentices from the local Jewellery businesses.

O'Donnell was able to teach with her husband Edward O'Donnell and they referred to their students as 'the trade boys'. Her daughter explained,

> Both Mum and Dad taught jewellers from local firms and chains such as 'Ratner's'. They taught a course called 'Day-Tec' which was a day release course teaching technical skills to those in the trade. Other courses included a Diploma in Jewellery and a BTEC. Dad let Mum design the curriculum and they shared the teaching between them.

Developed in the 1970s the Design and Art Technical Education Council (DATEC) created technical qualifications which later became BTEC courses. O'Donnell took responsibility for designing curricula suitable for the local jewellery industries. However, she also believed that her students should receive a well-rounded education and be encouraged to become expressive and experimental alongside learning the technical skills associated with jewellery making.

> Mum would create a curriculum where Dad would teach the technical skills like engraving and diamond setting. She would cover design history, design illustration, and design education. Mum would teach the more creative content although she did know how to do diamond setting.

O'Donnell was not only teaching them the craft of jewellery making but also the design process.

> Mum would teach them how to work with many variations of design. How to take a single idea then create 100s of variations – first through sketching, then paint up, then through making a mock-up out of cheaper material such as copper. She taught them that you never made just one of anything but made variations – a set.

When looking back to the images in O'Donnell's sketch books (Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2) it can be seen that she was transmitting the approach to design she had developed through her own education and practice. Through the curriculum planning and teaching methods the students were being exposed to strategies that would enhance their creativity as well as their technical aptitude.

She would teach by trouble-shooting. If a student was stuck on a technical bit she would show them how to overcome it. She would show them how to create loops, fixings and pins, and how to add decoration without spoiling the whole piece. Sometimes they had to take the whole piece apart and start again. This was practice-based learning through pulling things apart to see what had gone wrong.

This explanation from O'Donnell's daughter reveals how craft teaching also develops approaches to problem-solving that would be beneficial for those working in small independent jewellery shops in the local area. Customers bringing in repairs could have them dealt with in their local shops, avoiding having to send them away to larger firms at greater cost and time. O'Donnell's courses appeared to promote a pragmatic practicality along with an aspirational creativity. The curricula was greatly inspired by the local area. Norton commented that,

> They [Ann and Edward O'Donnell] also worked with the family-owned South Asian Jewellery Shops and became great friends with staff and owners. They had a great working relationship because families appreciated the skills and knowledge that Mum and Dad had. So, they could work in connection with family knowledge and cultural ways of making jewellery.

O'Donnell's curricula were flexible to meet the needs of different small-scale businesses and those working in larger jewellery shops or chains. However, to what extent her approach to training would suit those working in manufacturing firms such as Charles Horner Ltd is open to question.

O'Donnell's accomplishments in her jewellery design have been noted elsewhere (Norton & Broadhead 2017). However, her teaching practice had a massive impact on local people who still remember her fondly (Leeds Arts University 2019). Although her expertise was recognised through her work as an external moderator for Sir John Cass Technical Institute College and BTEC, teachers such as O'Donnell and Pam Rex (1929 – 2007) a potter and fine artist, were not always valued by their institution, spending their careers teaching part-time and in the evenings (Broadhead 2020). Unfortunately, although cherished by their students these part-time teaching roles did not enable women art educators access to the networks, status and acknowledgement of their male colleagues (Kalleberg and Reskin 1995; Kropf 2001; Moen and Roehling 2005; Webber & Williams 2008). The perceived lower status of these kind of job roles also raises the question, to what extent did colleges value those courses designed for local industries?

Discussion

In the 1950s there was encouragement for British art and design students to engage with industry. The Royal College of Art made industrial experience a requirement for attaining their design diplomas. The Royal Society of Arts (RSA) provided travel scholarships for talented designers to visit manufactures in America and in Europe. The RSA also managed Industrial Art Bursaries Competitions (IABCs) and related exhibitions that were open to all design students (IABC 1958).

O'Donnell clearly had a positive outlook on learning from jewellery manufacturers, especially from what was happening in Germany.

However, there seems to be a reticence from some industrial managers to fully embrace the innovative ideas coming out of design schools such as the Royal College. During O'Donnell's work placement it was as if her creative talent needed to be stymied by the economic rationalism and austerity of the workplace. Although she did learn many things from the experience, she did not feel as though she belonged there. Was Charles Horner Ltd simply a bad choice, made because it was geographically near where O'Donnell's family was based in Yorkshire and not because it suited her approach to design?

The Royal College and Leeds College of Art had educated O'Donnell to be an accomplished designer-maker who could innovate and push the boundaries of her discipline. It seems that someone with this expertise could be useful in a manufacturing context, elevating the quality and style of the product, but the mechanism for how this could work in practice seems to have eluded some British companies. O'Donnell's experiences confirm some of the criticisms Read (1961) and Pevsner (1964) aimed at British industrialists for not embracing innovative design as part of the manufacturing process.

The industrial context did contribute some valuable work-based knowledge that had not been addressed at the Royal College. The need to manage and be mindful of the work space, the equipment, time on task and the materials were all established in O'Donnell's time at Charles Horner.

It was of note that O'Donnell's contribution to Charles Horner, was not her design ability but her skill. It was her technical proficiency and speed that was used to set a standard that other workers had to follow. The irony is that the Royal College aimed to produce designers rather than craftspeople, although O'Donnell herself saw the roles as integrated. Implicit within O'Donnell's interview was a discomfort with the time management part of her role. She empathised with the people who had to quickly make up items such as the bangle as they were only paid per piece.

Later on, in her career, after graduating, O'Donnell with her husband taught people who would be working in local small businesses as well as larger firms. They engaged with the local jewellery industry to develop pragmatic educational programmes that were fit for purpose, but also enabled people to develop their own design and creative lives if they wished.

Part-time, adult education as well as day release work-based programmes enabled O'Donnell's students to access jewellery-making materials, equipment and tuition. The importance of these modes of education for under-represented groups in the jewellery industry was illuminated by Duberley et al.'s (2017) research into the gendered and stratified employment patterns of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter.

Duberley et al. (2017) also found the division of labour in the jewellery industry was based on a segregation between those considered as artists, and those considered as skilled craftspeople (Hughes 2012; Banks 2010). This was echoed in the O'Donnells' own distribution of teaching where Edward undertook the training of students in the more technical, traditional, hands-on curriculum areas, perceived as 'male work' (Simpson et al 2014). Ann's tutorage was in the area of creativity and imagination, assumed to be primarily the domain of women (Henry 2009).

O'Donnell's career mirrored that of her of her students. She had, in effect, a portfolio career (Cawsey, Deszca & Mazerolle 1995) where she balanced her own practice with running a jewellery retail and exhibition space, Anno Domini (1972-1978) and her teaching practice. Męczyński (2019)

found that this mode of working was also common in the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter and in the jewellery centres in Leipzig and Poznań. Alongside this busy life O'Donnell also had the responsibilities of motherhood. Working long term in an industrial context such as Charles Horner Ltd would not have provided O'Donnell with the flexibility to undertake all these diverse roles.

Buckley (1986) has explained that women's relationship to industrial design was seen as problematic as it contradicted dominant discourses about femininity. Also, on a practical level women, including O'Donnell have needed to juggle their many roles. Buckley (1998) has shown how women needed to manage their small businesses such as dress-making within their homes in order to manage their creativity as well as their domestic responsibilities. O'Donnell when she closed her shop in the late 1970s moved her workshop next to her kitchen so she could continue her practice.

Conclusion

O'Donnell's story reveals the complex relationship art education had with industry during the post-war era. The curricula in arts schools in the 1950s provided Britain with a range of exciting innovative designers, many of whom were women (Reinhold 2008). Designer-makers of jewellery were well prepared to create their own stylish and desirable pieces, often based on bespoke commissions. Phillips (1996) noted that many opened up their own small businesses and commercial galleries such as Electron in London (Chadour-Sampson& Hosegood 2016).

What can be inferred from O'Donnell's story, was that in spite of public art schools intending to serve industry, there was not always full-consideration for the conditions and constraints of the manufacturing context. O'Donnell did not seem prepared for the need to manage time and resources nor did she design jewellery that could be easily mass-produced. It is also possible that she did not share the same values as the Charles Horner firm in relation to how the workers were treated.

Another aspect that underpins O'Donnell's experience is a hierarchy in the 1950s art school between artistic, experimental design and the technical, commercial, skills-based training. It can be seen that the art school valued the first activity, whereas the industrial employer valued the latter.

The ways in which designer-makers could contribute towards industry does not seem to have been fully resolved in the curriculum either. In O'Donnell's story the difference in cultures between the College and her work placement seems to have been very stark. This calls into question how students were assigned work placements; was it based on the location of the business or whether it could make use of the students' design aspirations? To what extent were firms open to taking a risk on making innovative new forms, that potentially could revitalise the business or negatively impact on it? In spite of O'Donnell not feeling that she belonged on her work placement, she did learn a lot from Charles Horner Ltd about managing a work space and the need to be prudent in relation to times and materials.

O'Donnell was a successful and recognised jewellery-maker, however her relationship to the design industry was mediated not only by her art school education but also her gender. This can be seen in her subsequent part-time teaching roles that enabled her to continue with her creative work and fulfil the responsibilities of motherhood.

Although O'Donnell ran her own jewellery-making business and did not work with a large-scale manufacturer again after her work placement, she did go onto design curricula for training jewellers

from local firms in the Leeds area. O'Donnell and her husband Edward, did seem to have a close relationship with the local jewellery trade and were able to provide a pragmatic, purposeful and responsive learning experience for new jewellers from neighbouring and diverse communities.

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