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SUMMER WORKSHOP AT RAVSTEDDHUS, DENMARK

At the beginning of July I had the good fortune to enjoy a brilliantly stimulating week enamelling in the Danish countryside. Organised by Guild Chair Tom Lundsten, the collaborative workshop – with no appointed tutor and a proposed theme of Maps ahead of next year's Conference – saw ten members of the Guild, six from region 10 (Denmark) and four from around the UK, take over the Ravstedhus house and jewellery studio to explore each other's practice and share skills while progressing their own projects.

As a new member of the Guild, and a jewellery artist for whom enamelling is not the primary medium, I was both daunted and thrilled at the challenge of confronting myself with so many practitioners not as a student but as an equal contributor to the exchange. The worries, shared by others as I learnt with relief, were certainly unfounded and the challenge was the driving force of so much of the work produced during the five days we shared.

The formula for the workshop was in fact very successful. The facilities at Ravstedhus are superlative, not only in terms of the airy and light and incredibly well-stocked studio – certainly one of the best I've had the privilege to work in – but also for the welcoming atmosphere of the living quarters. The communal kitchen in particular offered great opportunities for cultural exchange, political discussion, especially in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, and debate on the future of enamel (including several late nights and the consumption of, at times, generous amounts of wine!).

In order to facilitate bonding and promote communication, on the first evening we created five mixed teams of two people, matched from the Danish and UK cohort, to share the double benches in the studio and also the various kitchen duties needed at each mealtime. I was paired up with Ulla Graversen, with whom I had had the pleasure of sharing the car journey from Copenhagen. Ulla spent most of her time refining her sifting and layering techniques on small copper vessels (both spun or found in flea markets) and other three-dimensional objects she has been developing with the aid of a metal corrugator. On my part, I continued working on a long-term experimental project combining the use of enamel flux, soldering flux and sand collected from my local heathland (therefore also loosely reflecting on the Maps theme). My particular objective

for the week was to incorporate colour into the equation, which I achieved by adding to my usual layers both WG Ball industrial colours, with which I was already familiar, and sifted colours from the Thompson range, which I had never used before.

Ritva Frederiksen devoted much time to spun copper bowls, mostly using sifting enamels, and also decided to experiment further with painting techniques, especially with pre-enamelled steel, which she was able to purchase from the supply I had brought over and which she has decided to use more in future. Sharing a bench with Ritva was Deborah Belli, whose own work specialises in painting and sgraffito techniques on pre-enamelled steel. Deborah's experimental enamelling focuses on exploiting contrasts between matt and gloss surfaces and different textures, which she achieves through wet application and also the use of porcelain mix.

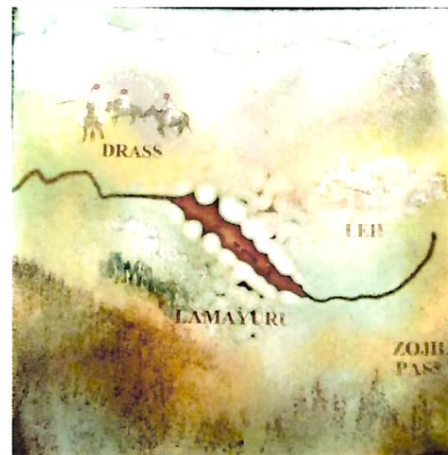
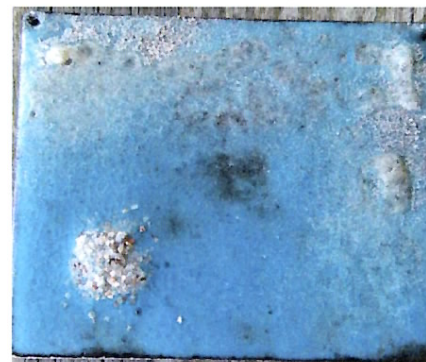
Tom, when not devoting his energies to making sure the group had the best experience, divided his time between completing a commission for a pair of earrings in a wet-packed sunburst motif, experimenting with sifting and sgraffito on a large copper bowl, and continuing work on a 3D drawing for a new engraving tool. Sharing his bench was Inger Mertz whose interest in enamel is driven by its strong painterly possibilities. Inger devoted all her time to perfecting a cloisonné silver brooch in which she combined wet packing and painting, with a view to possibly adding gold and silver foils, and started a new sample to explore a more watercolour-style approach.

Wet packing on silver was also the preferred technique of Marie Genefke. Her first piece was a pendant based on a roundabout, guided by the Maps theme, followed by another based on fish and other ocean creatures. She was also able to experiment with enamel pens for the first time. Marie shared her bench with Jill Leventon, whose main objective for the workshop was to try the large variety of Thompson enamel colours at our disposal. She produced several samples in copper, many formed with the metal corrugator, using a combination of sifting and wet application. She also touched on the Maps theme by creating a very Brexit-pertinent Europe symbol badge!

The final bench was shared by Sussie Mikkelsen and Dorothy Cockrell. Sussie, another jeweller, considers herself a beginner in enamel and this, as for me, was



Clockwise from top left: Ulla Graversen; Inger Mertz; Tom Lundsten; Deborah Belli; Dorothy Cockrell; Lieta Marziali



her first Guild group meeting. With so many wonderful colleagues with whom to share skills, she practiced sifting, wet application and painting on copper samples and stamped animal blanks, trying to gain a greater understanding of layering. She also experimented with a variety of fluxes and silver foil. Dorothy fully engaged with the Maps theme, working on sample panels based on her latest research project into the early 19th travels for the East India Company of explorer William Moorcroft. Using many decals from her own photographs from a recent trip to Ladakh and Kashmir, she worked in an experimental way, combining all techniques in that very playful way that can be acquired only from a deep awareness and understanding of all the rules that can be broken.

And it is exactly this spirit and an appreciation of the many different reasons that drive people to enamel that fuel my enthusiasm for this material and keep me wanting to experiment with it as part of my jewellery vocabulary. From the more traditional techniques steeped in centuries of craftsmanship to the most experimental contemporary applications, enamel encourages such personal approaches, allowing the development of individual playgrounds in which to engage with the material and accept the challenges it throws back at us, all on our own terms. In my view, there is no right or wrong in enamel other than what enamel itself dictates in each of our experiments: every project we tackle will be different and will require a new dialogue with the material, and it is up to us to find our own way with it.

Lieta Marziali

The Danish Experience, Part 2

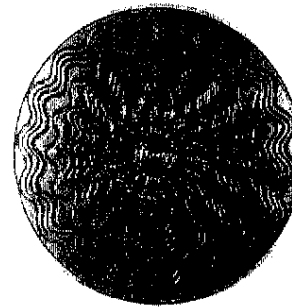
We had such a wonderful time in Denmark this year that we have decided to organise another workshop at Ravstedhus. There were several of you who wanted to come this time but for various reasons weren't able to, so here is a second opportunity. We anticipate that it will be held during one of the first weeks of July, and will probably cost in the region of £250 - £300 (this will depend on any increase in price and the exchange rate at the time). We are giving you advance notice so that you can start saving to go Conference and to Denmark! Let me know if you are interested, and I will make sure you get the details once they are sorted out.

Jill.leventon@gmail.com

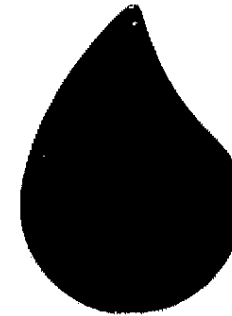
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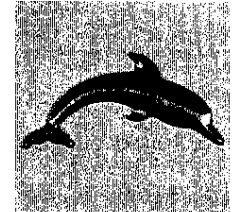
Our new website now offers secure on-line payment, new colours, new copper blanks, new stilts and new colour charts etc.



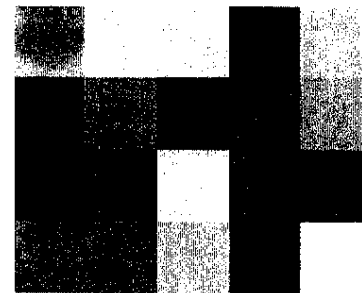
Transparent Leadfree Jewellery Enamels



Opaque Leadfree Jewellery Enamels



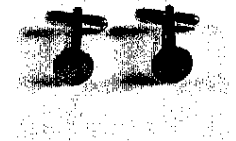
Copper Shape Ranges



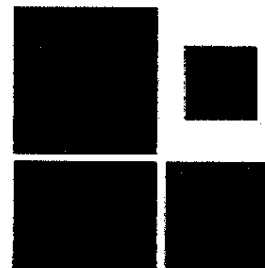
Wet Process Leadfree Enamels on Steel



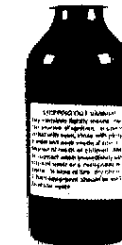
Firing Supports



Jewellery Findings



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