

Ethically-sourced silver used to craft Scottish Goldsmith's Trust award winner's creation

Among the beautiful pieces in an exhibition celebrating Scottish jewellery and silversmithing will be a handcrafted silver goblet inspired by the weights on railway signals.

The highly contemporary minimalist design is by trainee silversmith Ruth Page who was commissioned to create the piece as part of her prize when she was awarded the Scottish Goldsmiths Trust (SGT) Outstanding Student Award in 2019.

It's the first time that the award-winning design has been made from Fairmined silver – reflecting SGT's ambition to see Scotland become a world-leader in the use of ethically-sourced materials and sustainable practices.

COVID-19 meant the Edinburgh College of Art graduate, who now works at Hamilton & Inches on George Street, was only able to make the goblet this year.

Ruth has a fascination with the small details of Scotland's railway infrastructure and architecture that mostly go unnoticed. The exterior of the goblet echoes the weights used on signals.





Scottish Goldsmiths Trust (SGT) Outstanding Student Award Winner Ruth Page – Image credit (and top image) Colin Hattersley Photography

Rectangular cut outs near the base give a glimpse of a cone with a tiny gold sphere which is based on the anti-trespass panels. The inside is plated with black rhodium, giving a rich, dark lustre to the wine inside.

Ruth said: “I found out about the award the same day I learned I’d graduated with a first – it was the best day of my life.

“The use of Fairmined silver was also important to me – it’s an issue that needs to be talked about.

“And now to have the piece selected for an exhibition that includes some superb pieces of gold and silversmithing going back to the 1880s is absolutely amazing.”

The annual Outstanding Student Award invites entrants from Scottish art schools to come up with a truly exceptional design and the finished item is given a place in the

Incorporation of Goldsmiths of the City of Edinburgh's permanent collection.

Ebba Goring, Scottish Goldsmiths Trust Chief Executive, said: "This is a wonderful piece of work by Ruth. It embodies exactly the kind of beauty and quality that we are trying to nurture among young Scottish silversmiths.

"The goblet is also notable because it is the first time the Outstanding Student Award design has been made from Fairmined silver.

"By commissioning this goblet in Fairmined silver we know exactly where this material came from, in this case the Macdesa mine in Peru. We also know that the mine meets the Fairmined standard relating to social, economic and environmental standards.

"The SGT is committed to supporting and promoting the adoption of responsible and sustainable practices in jewellery and silversmithing.

"For it to be chosen to be exhibited alongside so many rare and unusual pieces created over more than 155 years underlines how exceptional it is."





Ruth's Fairmined silver goblet – Image credit Shannon Tofts Photography

The Celebrating our Craft exhibition is being staged by

Hamilton & Inches and will feature some 70 pieces created by its craftspeople throughout its 155-year history and takes place within their Edinburgh showroom from 26 August to 5 September. Among the star exhibits will be a selection of sporting trophies, awards and more.

There will also be the fabulous bowl and candlesticks, by Nicola Williams, from the SGT Millennium Collection, which was created to celebrate the return of a parliament to Scotland and is on permanent loan to the First Minister for use at Bute House.

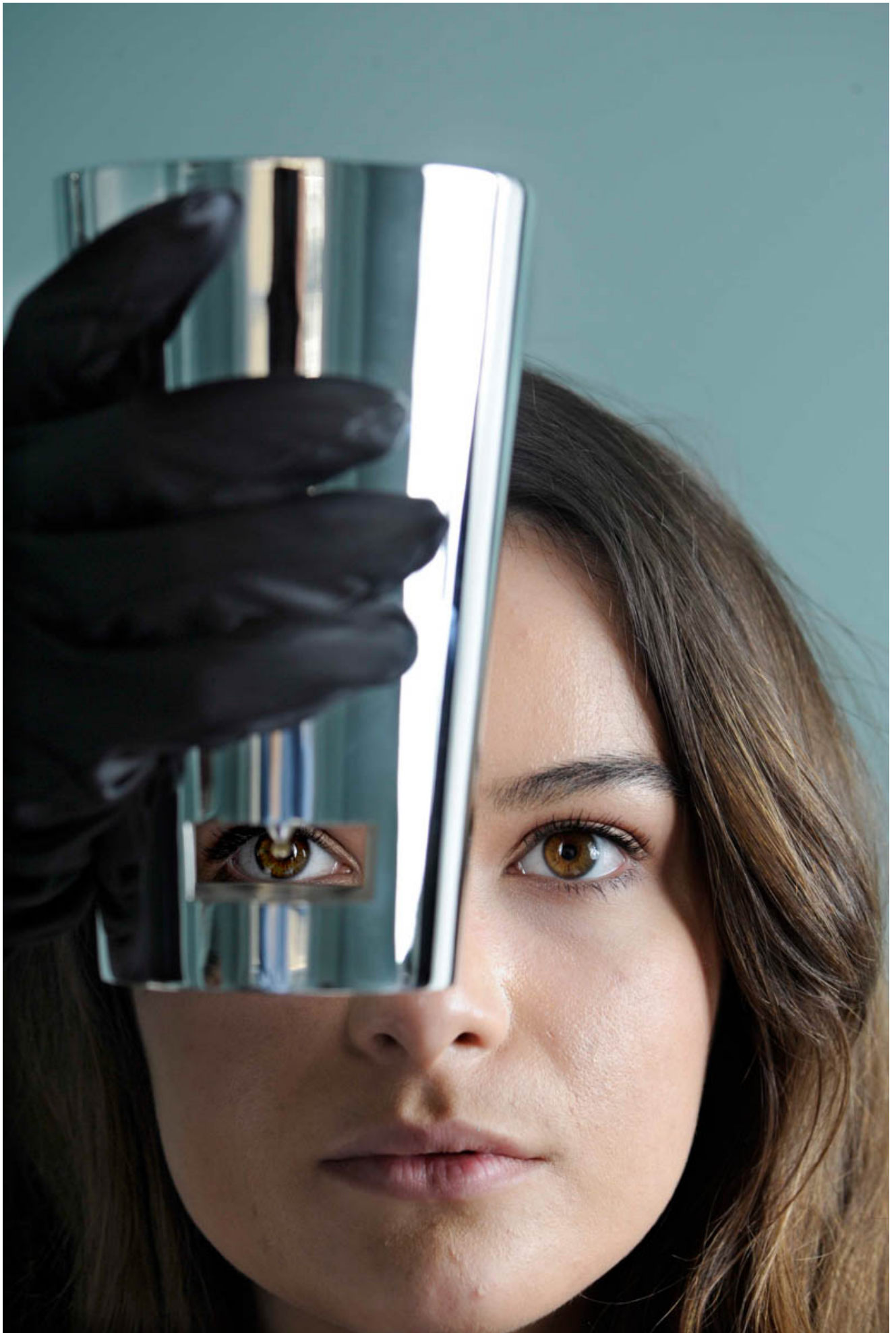
While many people are familiar with the Hamilton & Inches Edinburgh showroom, Celebrating our Craft will shine a light on the skills of the generations of hand engravers, jewellers, polishers, silversmiths and watchmakers based upstairs in their workshops.

Victoria Houghton, CEO of Hamilton & Inches, added: "The future of craft is incredibly important to us, which is why we are so proud to work with key establishments within Scotland and beyond to offer opportunities to young makers.

"Ruth's exceptional goblet is the result of the skills and support from the established craftspeople of Hamilton & Inches. Passing on expertise from one generation to the next helps secure the longevity and preservation of craft in Scotland. In turn, we look forward to Ruth sharing her knowledge and expertise for years to come."

Ruth initially planned to become a jewellery maker, but the award and the chance to work with some of the finest silversmiths in Scotland, has shifted her focus to larger pieces and the chance to take them from initial design to completion.





Photography

She said: “Originally, I didn’t want to be a silversmith, I was more drawn towards jewellery. But I’ve completely changed my mind. I enjoy working on larger scale objects and I’d love to be a silversmith for the rest of my life.

“And I so love working with silver. You can do so much with it because it’s so soft.”

Another part of the Outstanding Student Award was the opportunity for mentorship. This was provided by Hamilton & Inches master polisher Colin Golder (who has been with the company for 30 years) and r silversmith David James Ramsay.

David’s own career began with an apprenticeship in 2007 that was sponsored by The Incorporation of Goldsmiths of Edinburgh (which set up the Scottish Goldsmiths Trust charity in 2000).