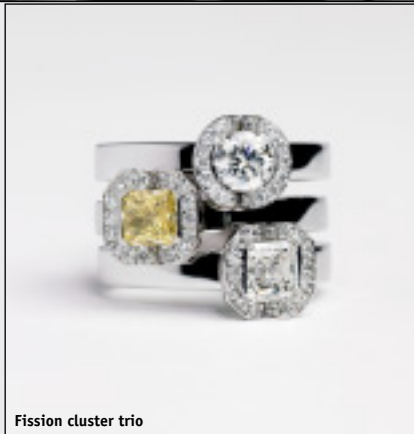


Award-winning jewellery designer Andrew Geoghegan, one of the UK's leading contemporary jewellery designers talks to Rachael Chambers about his work, his inspiration and his personal philosophy.



Fission cluster trio



Triumph

Andrew Geoghegan

When you first venture upon an Andrew Geoghegan ring you notice the simplicity and ingenuity of the design, the manner in which a piece of metal has been ingeniously transformed into a piece of jewellery of immense beauty; the stone, most often a diamond, enhanced by the clever twists of metal that reveal its unusual setting. "Since I started my career in jewellery design, I have always believed that as much of the diamond as possible should be on view, whilst taking every care not to jeopardise the security of the stone."

Andrew's love of metal manipulation can be traced back to his school days in Roundhay, Leeds, where he relished time in the metal workshops forging, melting and twisting metals. By his own admission Andrew says "I am probably a control freak in the way that the versatility of metals gives me a total control of it."

Andrew trained at the University of Central Lancashire, what was Preston Poly, in 3 dimensional design. During his time there he studied tableware design and silversmithing, but it was jewellery that captured his imagination and by his final year Andrew was working with silver, ebony and pearls to create jewellery for his final show. Andrew remembers one of his degree show designs being for a fertility ring which was 'sperm' shaped! He says, "I made a few of the rings for friends and family and I even made one for my grandma, although for her it became a tadpole ring!"

After a few incompatible apprenticeships, Andrew set up on his own in the shed at the bottom of his parents' garden 12 years ago, but the shed was burgled after 4 years and so Andrew moved to his own place that included an attic workshop. Now he has separate work premises in Chapel Allerton on the outskirts of Leeds, which he says, "is a great place to work, the area is vibrant and full of atmosphere." As the demand for Andrew's rings has increased, so too has his need to expand and source the skills needed for his elegant designs. Andrew outsources to goldsmiths and stone setters across the country in order to get the right expertise for each individual ring design.

A great admirer of German designers Henrich and Denzel, Andrew can identify with the beauty captured in their minimal designs, which are perfectly made and innovative yet wearable, something that can also be said of his own work.

Inspiration for designs comes from all sources; his Decadence ring is inspired by the Art Deco period, his Basilieus ring by Ancient Greece, his Aqueous ring by running water and the Cube ring by diamond geometry. Andrew is also inspired by the metal itself, it's physicality

and fluidity, the ability to split and twist it to unveil a new design or to hold a diamond. His Reveal ring is a perfect example of this, small diamonds are meticulously set in the panel behind the main stone. This feat of goldsmithing ingenuity is accomplished with traditional and state of the art techniques and, as with all his ring designs, is set to be an heirloom of the future. As Andrew says, "I see each jewellery creation as a sculpture where each view of the piece must be considered, balanced and beautiful."

Today Andrew designs using a CAD (Computer Aided Design) system which allows him greater control over his designs. The system offers the potential to make minute adjustments allowing him to concentrate on the smallest detail and then to render the designs before even going into metal. Such a system has been instrumental in allowing Andrew the ability to create designs for commissions that can be 'played around with' until the customer is satisfied, and only then will he move on to produce the chosen ring.

Rings aren't the only jewellery Andrew designs, in fact many of the ring designs have sparked an idea for a pendant, bangle or earrings. All these items are sold through approximately 50 outlets around the UK, from contemporary craft galleries to traditional jewellers.

When meeting Andrew, you are struck by a calmness and a clarity of thinking; he is very focused and driven. On getting to know him more you recognise that there is an underlying philosophy that is driven by meditation and yoga and that this is intertwined into his thinking and outward resolve. From his late twenties Andrew found meditation a way to calm himself, a journey of self enquiry and a manner in which to explore his consciousness, which brought him calm, concentration, inspiration and creativity. Today he uses it as a means to achieve clearer thinking and a more creative and less stressed mind.

With such a level headed mind and a strong sense of personal direction, Andrew has won the Design Innovation Platinum Award and has been highly commended for the Kayman Award, as well as being shortlisted twice for Jewellery Designer of the Year - although, having seen Andrew's work progress magnificently over the years, it does make me wonder why he hasn't actually won it yet.

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