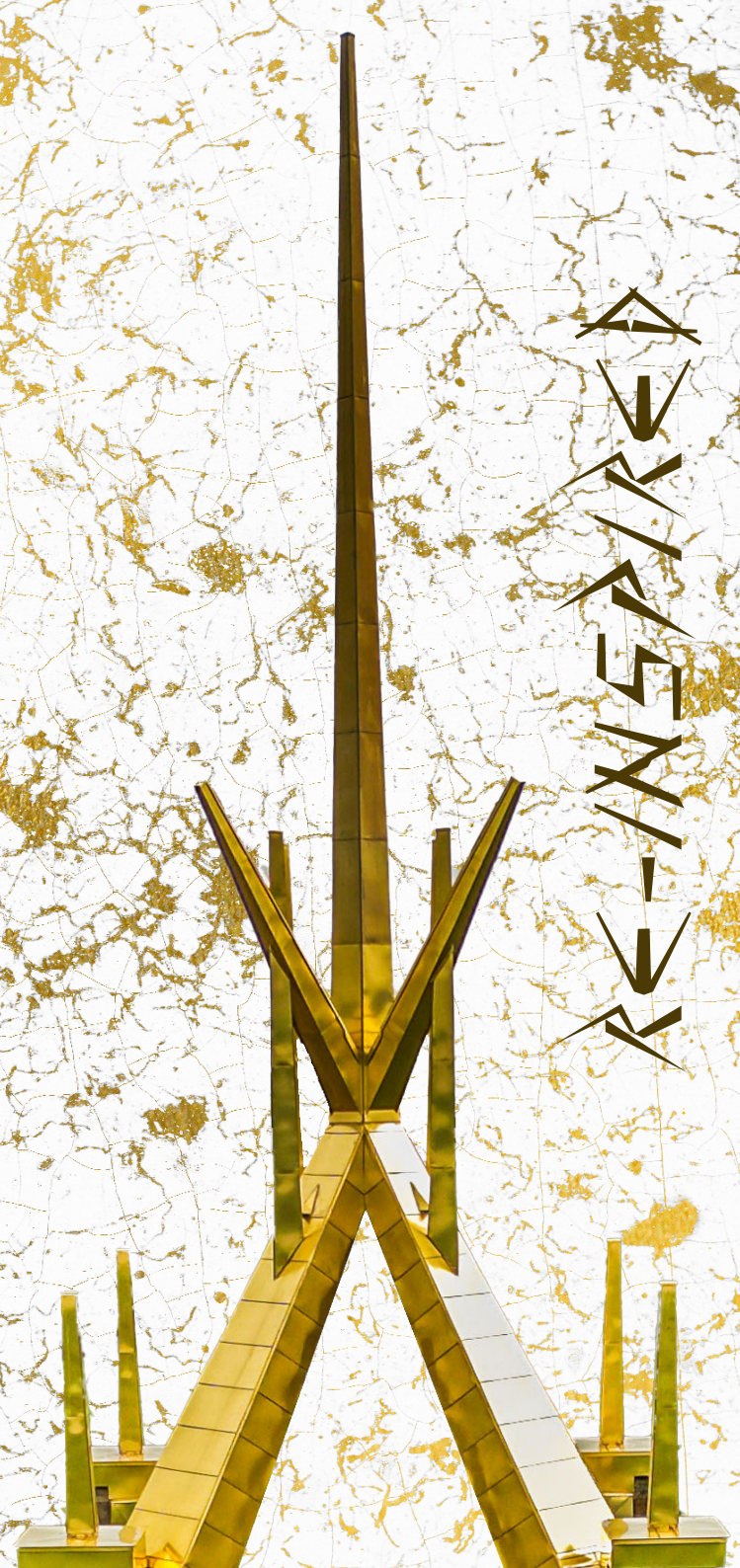


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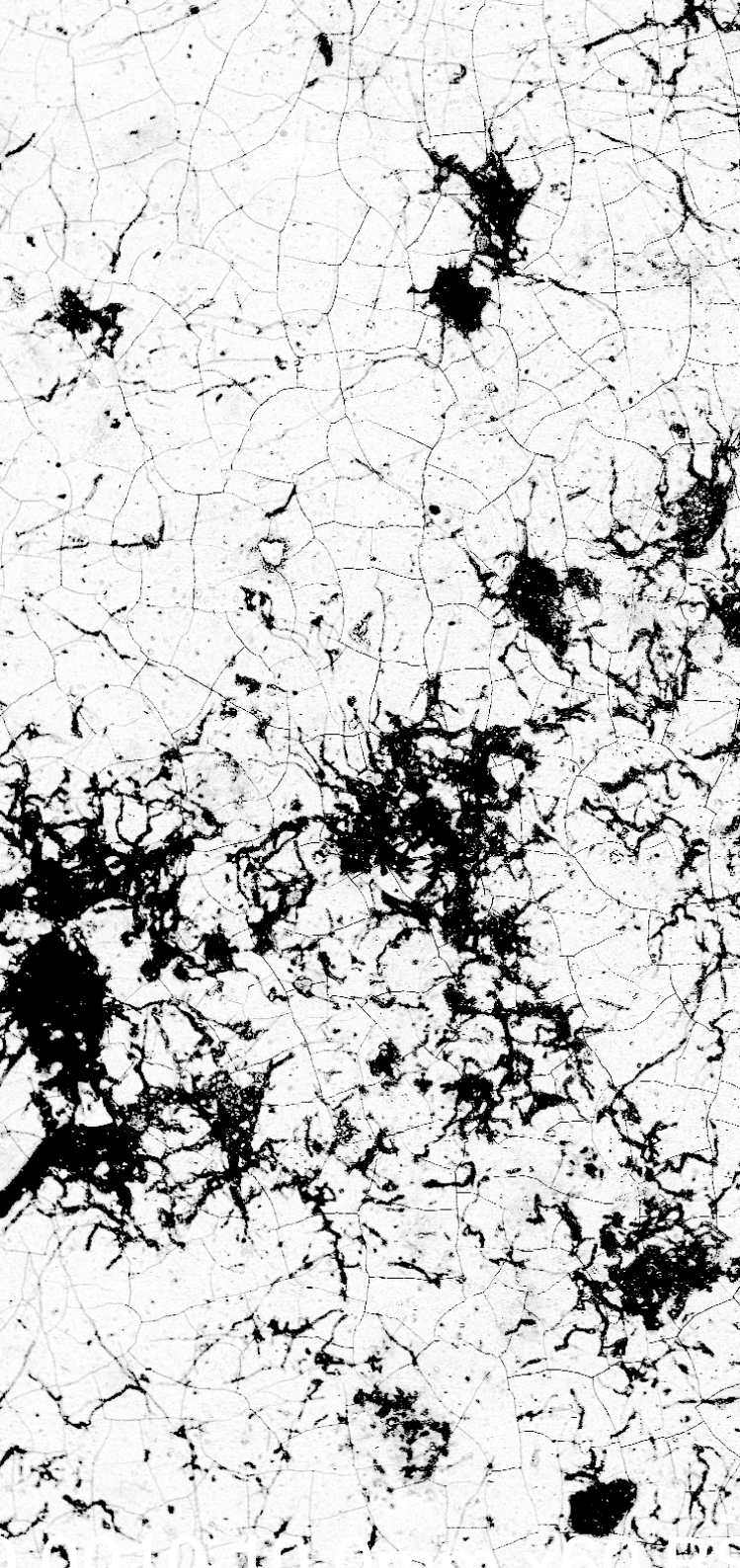


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INTRODUCTION

Drawing Threads is one of a group of newly established research clusters at The Glasgow School of Art's School of Design. A vibrant grassroots 2022 initiative, the clusters bring colleagues together, from a range of specialist design departments to share inter-disciplinary approaches and lead enquiry across design history, theory and practice.

Pulling on shared threads of interest across silversmithing, jewellery and textile design, our aim through is to develop collaborative approaches to studio research, through the rich experiential technological enquiry of craft. To achieve this aim, our group explores the boundaries of existing studio-based practices and asks how overlapping yet distinct disciplines can bring a new understanding of a subject's shared material craft heritage. In response we have organised workshops, visiting professor talks, symposia and conference activities, including hosting the 2023 European Academy of Design conference held in Glasgow in partnership with Edinburgh College of Art/University of Edinburgh.

Re-inSpired is the *Drawing Threads* cluster's first group exhibition that features eleven of our staff and researchers' work. The exhibition presents metalwork and textile designs made from donated sheets of the 1960s recycled aluminium metal cladding from the sculptural spire, known as the *Crown of Thorns*, designed by Geoffrey Clarke in 1964 for the St Michael's Church, Linlithgow, Scotland.

We were incredibly grateful to Kirsten Davies and Brian Lightbody, who first approached us on behalf of St Michael's Church to see if there was an interest to have pieces of the original salvaged sheet metal gold-anodised aluminium cladding to work with on a potential project.

Urban mining is a term credited to Professor Hideo Nanjyo of Tokyo University Research Institute of Mineral Dressing and Metallurgy in the 1980s. Urban mining refers to the recovery and reuse of valuable materials from waste, such as electronics, concrete, bricks, steel, roofing materials, copper pipes, and aluminium. The original aluminium cladding recovered from the *Crown of Thorns* had spent

over 60-years exposed to Scotland's elements. The original aluminium had been anodised with a bright golden yellow colour and over time had changed patina from golden yellow to its more grey and silvery finish. The golden yellow of maturing whiskey, a significant Scottish export to the world, is seen in casks left to mature for years. The spirits from the casks lost to evaporation (estimated at 2% per year) are referred to as the 'angel's share' – a very different spiritual link. Exposure becomes an intended process of aging and maturing that adds both character and ultimately value as well as worth. As makers, we support a process that values all materials in alternative ways through themes like time, space and narrative. This is increasingly important as precious metal prices reach unaffordable levels for many and the added environmental costs of mining and extraction.

The provenance of the site's material, history, and heritage has offered a fertile ground to explore a rich range of ideas around values, sustainability and sense of place. The approaches and design thinking of the artists are presented in detail in this catalogue and expertly contextualised by the excellent essays by University of Glasgow visiting Professor Jane Milosch and architect Brian Lightbody, who led the spire's restoration and funding project. We are very grateful for the time and energy they have given to support this publication, which accompanies the exhibition.

The exhibition will preview in Munich during International Jewellery Week in March 2025 at the Museum Mineralogia München. The work will be on display within its permanent geology collection exhibition space, generously offered by Dr Melanie Kaliwoda, Deputy Director and Senior Conservator. The exhibition returns to Scotland to be shown in Linlithgow at St Michael's Church from the end of March into April 2025. April 22nd 2025 is 'Earth Day', with a global focus to consider sustainability. We hope you enjoy the exhibition and the narratives that accompany our work.

*Professor Stephen Bottomley MPhil RCA, MA, BA Hons
Head of the School of Design at the Glasgow School of Art
Lead for the Drawing Threads Research Cluster*

ST MICHAEL'S PARISH CHURCH



Deteriorated spire before 2024 restoration by Images Above Ltd.

We are delighted to be able to collaborate with Glasgow School of Art and to host the exhibition ***Re-Inspired***, displaying jewellery made from the old metal cladding removed from our iconic modern church spire known as the *Crown of Thorns*. It's a great story of recycling, re-imagining and sustainability. Material that appeared to be of no value, and was heading for the rubbish dump after the completion of the refurbishment of the spire in 2024, has been given a new lease of life – pieces of one artwork now re-created as another.

The modern spire, designed by Geoffrey Clarke RA, replaced the original stone crown spire, completed in 1489, but removed in 1821 when it had become unstable and threatened the stability of the entire bell tower of the church. In 1964 the minister, Rev Dr David Steel, concluded that the bell tower had looked unfinished for too long and decided that a new stone spire should be designed. The noted architect Sir Basil Spence was consulted but he swiftly concluded that

only a lightweight solution was structurally possible and he suggested that a sculptor should be employed rather than an architect, and that Geoffrey Clarke, with whom he had worked successfully at the recently completed Coventry Cathedral, should be approached.

Geoffrey Clarke's uncompromisingly modern gold design was accepted, despite opposition from some quarters, and the finished structure, although hugely controversial at the time, has over the years become the cherished, admired, and most recognisable feature of the skyline of the town.

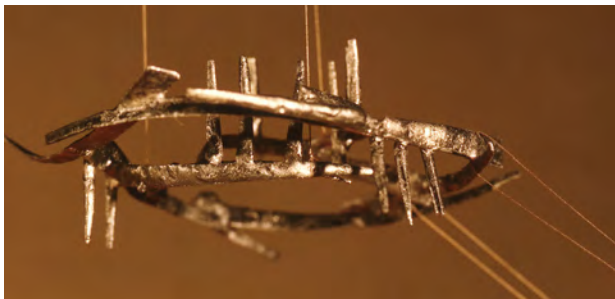
Sadly the years of Scottish weather took their toll. The gold anodised aluminium cladding faded to a dull grey, the fixings corroded, and the resulting water penetration started to rot the timber substructure. However it was concluded that the crown could be repaired by cutting out the rotten timber, splicing in new sections, and re-cladding with a colour fast bronze alloy, gold coloured to match the original, and fixed with a modern secret-fix system. The funds were raised from multiple sources, most coming from the church and community, a testimony to the affection that Linlithgow has for its once controversial spire.

St Michael's Parish Church is regarded as one of the finest late medieval works of gothic architecture in Scotland. Designed by royal master mason John French, the first phase of nave, bell tower and transepts was completed in 1490 and the second phase of chancel and apse completed by his son and grandson in 1540. For many years, because of its proximity to Linlithgow Palace, it was the church of the Stuart kings from James I to James VI and where Mary Queen of Scots was baptised in 1542. The 'luminous' vaulted interior is much praised and the window in the south transept, St Katherine's Aisle, with its elaborate tracery, is regarded as the finest gothic window in the country enhanced by the glowing stained glass designed in 1992 by Crear McCartney.

The dominant stained glass central window in the apse of the church was installed in 1884 in memory of Sir Charles Wyville Thomson, an elder in the church and widely recognised as the world's first oceanographer. His three year round-world voyage on HMS Challenger discovered what is till the deepest point in the world's oceans – The Challenger Deep, and gave its name to the space shuttle Challenger.

*Brian Lightbody BArch RIBA FRIAS
Architect*

BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW



Geoffrey Clarke, *Crown of Thorns* (maquette for Coventry Cathedral), 1961
Brazen steel, painted, 55 x 130 mm, Private Collection

In the Beginning. I am delighted to collaborate with the Research Cluster on their first exhibition project, *Re-inspired*, 2025, which will be on view in Munich, then Linlithgow, and hopefully travel to other venues. This exhibition does not have a permanent checklist of objects as the show will expand as the artists continue to experiment with the recycled, 1960s aluminium salvaged from Geoffrey Clarke's spire design for St. Michael's Church, Linlithgow, known as *Crown of Thorns* (1964). Geoffrey Clarke (1924-2014), renowned for his ecclesiastical projects and cast aluminium sculptures, trained and worked in a variety of media. His innovative approach—to whatever materials and techniques he used—resulted in original designs in stained glass, mosaics, jewellery, medals, textiles, ceramics, and enamels. His experimental-craftsmanship approach makes him an ideal match for The Glasgow School of Art's (GSA) interdisciplinary exhibition project. St. Michael's—with its exquisite masonry, ribbed vaulting, stone tracery, stained glass, textiles, liturgical and sacramental objects—is an endless inspirational and visual resource for artists.

The Church. In January 2025, I visited St. Michael's Church, Linlithgow, and was treated to a fascinating tour of the church—its long history and artwork—by parishioner and architect Brian Lightbody, who championed the restoration of Geoffrey Clarke's spire. My visit was a revelation in many ways. St. Michael's dates to the 12th century but was largely rebuilt in the 15th century to the designs of the Royal stone

mason John French and richly decorated with sacred art. Due to the Reformation these artworks were destroyed, save a sculpture of St. Michael on the Church's outside wall. Since the 19th century, St. Michael's has commissioned architects, artists, designers, and craftsmen to restore and create new artworks—stained glass windows, metalwork, and textiles, all of which can be seen today. St. Michael's is an active parish and its sacred space, services, and charitable work bring the human in contact with the divine.

The Spire. Clarke's sculptural design is a brilliant, stellar solution to what was both a liturgical commission and a structural challenge. This led me to consider: what were his inspirational sources; and how does this commission fit within his overall oeuvre? I knew that Clarke's design reimaged what had been a stone "crown" steeple, but his sculpture with its abstract forms did not resemble a crown of thorns and made me wonder about the title. Two maquettes for this commission are illustrated in *Geoffrey Clarke Sculptor. Catalogue Raisonné* (Pangolin, 2017): one dated 1962 with a small cross atop the spire, and the other dated 1963 without a cross, but no suggestion of a crown and thorns. After consulting with two Geoffrey Clarke experts—Peter Black and Judith LeGrove—about his inspirational sources, they indicated that Clarke had always referred to this commission simply as "The Crown". Archival research has yet to shed light as to its now accepted title.

An inspirational source that might have helped shape Clarke's ideas for the Linlithgow commission is his *Crown of Thorns* (1962) designed for Coventry Cathedral. However, the former involved different design challenges—as an exterior versus an interior sculpture and needing to relate it to a pre-existing tower structure that could not sustain much weight. One of his maquettes for Coventry, *Crown of Thorns* (1961) is visibly what the title purports it to be, with its circular form and spiky projections. Thirty years later, Clarke recycled the silver electrodes he used to gold plate the high altar cross for Coventry to create *Pendant* (1992)—a wonderful example of how he often revisited and reimaged his designs, materials, and techniques to create something new, and a fitting archetype for the artists' work presented in the *Re-inSpired* exhibition.

Repurposed, Reconsidered, & Re-Inspired. The works made by the eleven GSA artists breathe new life into a damaged material that would otherwise have been discarded. Their 2025 *Re-inSpired* works take inspiration from a variety of sources found in and associated with St. Michael's as a sacred architectural and functional space.



Geoffrey Clarke, *Pendant*, 1992
 Recycled electrodes, silver, Cumbrian slate, 52 x 55 x 10mm
 Collection of Jantien and Peter Black

Their works raise questions about time, place, and memory, as well as what is tangible and intangible, ornamental and functional, personal and universal.

Jewellery. Marianne Anderson's *Columnar Ring* features the anodised aluminium of the spire's gold cladding that was not exposed to the weathering of the elements; its shape recalls the church's architectural columns, and the pearls suggest the ornamentation of ecclesiastical vestments. The result is a wearable ornament that is precious and sacred. Andrew Lamb's *Untitled Ring* unites the recycled aluminium with the spire's new metal, which complements and contrasts. Like Clarke, Lamb's work involves casting and experimentation with different metals and processes, and his work is a conversation between expressive and symbolic elements, through bold and subtle forms and surfaces.

Stephen Bottomley's brooch, *In my End is my Beginning*, commemorates Mary, Queen of Scots' baptism and regal association with St. Michael's. His materials and techniques meld the old with the new, and vice versa, referencing the temporal and eternal through his gold, pierced spiral design on the original anodised gold aluminium set within a contemporary solid sintered aluminium frame. The title punched into a silver backing plate is evocative of faith, "the evidence of things not seen". Anna Gordon's brooch, *Time*, garners inspiration from many things, especially the passage and weathering of time, both on materials and our perception of things. Through her use and manipulation of the anodised gold aluminium, she restages its history and transforms it into an iconic weaving of looped metal forms that move, recalling the impermanence of things and the glory of beauty. Michael

Pell's *Decladation Neckpiece*, with its circular, weathered, and pierced disk was made from the recycled aluminium and its smooth chain links from silver and gold, bringing the deteriorated in contact with the precious. Layers of religious symbolism and teaching can be culled from this combination: the damaged and discarded redeemed into something beautiful and useful, a supernatural take on the meaning of suffering and redemption.

Textiles and Metal. A collaboration between weaver Elaine Bremmer and embroiderer Susan Talford resulted in *Untitled Braid 1* and *Untitled Braid 2*. These works recall liturgical textiles through their use of materials, techniques, and design elements. They have unified the spire's recycled aluminium with luxurious, fluid threads, and together these reflect the church's layered history and space. Another collaboration between metalsmith Yitong Zhang and textile designer Anita Sarkezi resulted in *Cloth Holder No. 1*, a symbolic union of a textile cloth, metal candleholder, and wax—and hint at the visible and invisible, as we cannot see the holder in which the candle sits. We must take it on faith that it is there. The cloth's luxurious gold threads make reference to the geometric forms of the spire and the church's vaulted interior patterns.

Graphic Design. Leigh Bagley's poster design for *Re-inSpired* features a colour palette derived from the metal properties revealed by electron microscope scans of the aluminium, translating this data into colour attributes. The resulting blues and greens recall the sky and landscape that surround the spire. Graphic designer Kim McNeil created an entirely new font featured in this catalogue, inspired by the shapes and lines of the spire and the architectural drawings created for the restoration project. Her pointy and gestural font is an homage to the spire's iconic status: a monumental, symbolic form that marks a sacred and historic place.

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new”. (Revelation 21:5a). All the works by the GSA artists resonate with Clarke's innovative and iconic design for Linlithgow, echoing and embodying his use of materials, penchant for experimentation, devotion to the handmade, and desire to create something new, reaching for the unknown with open eyes. I think he would have been pleased with this project and joined in too.

Jane Milosch
Visiting Professorial Fellow in Provenance and Curatorial Studies
School of Culture and Creative Arts
University of Glasgow

MARIANNE ANDERSON



Columnar Ring, 2025
Oxidised silver, recycled aluminium and freshwater pearls
50 x 50 x 30mm

Reflecting and investigating the architecture of St Michael's, my research has focused on the columns.

Sacred structures hold personal significance for me. They were the catalysts that shaped my initial perspectives on architecture and ornament, influences that continue to resonate in my work today.

This work draws inspiration from various archives of ecclesiastical ornaments and motifs characteristic of the architecture and reliquaries. The columnal forms inspired an exploration into the geometry of their cross-sections while reflecting on their meaning beyond the structural support and in what they represent in a religious context.

The ring I have made serves as a tangible example of the decorative aspects of the column, translating silhouettes and architectural proportions of this aspect of divine architecture.

*Marianne Anderson, Lecturer
Silversmithing & Jewellery Design*

LEIGH BAGLEY



Poster Design , 2025
Digital & Print Media

The colour palette used for the *Re-inSpired* poster was derived from Aluminium scan data, which translated the metal properties of the sample into colour attributes.

This process employed both CMYK and RGB profiles, referencing CIELAB values, a color model based on human vision, to create a precise and defined colour palette consisting of three key colours.

The first step involved analysing the scan data, particularly focusing on the highest metallic values present in the sample. These values were then converted into CMYK percentages. For instance, the following values were identified:

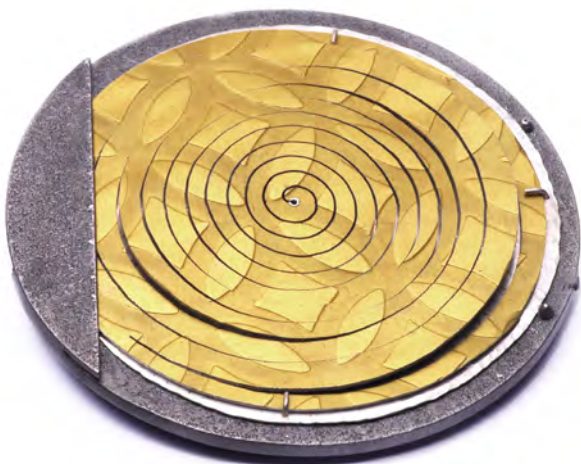
O = 50.1% (Cyan)	Pantone - 7458C
Al = 25.8% (Magenta)	RAL - 240 70 25
C = 13.5% (Yellow)	
Fe = 5.6% (Black)	
HEX - 7ea3c1	

By translating the aluminium sample data into these percentages, the colour profile of the material was established. This step was repeated across all scanned data, taking into account not only the primary metallic content but also the subtle nuances of tone, saturation, and reflection inherent in the aluminium surface. These nuanced variations were key in achieving an accurate and harmonious colour match.

Next, the closest average colour match was identified by referencing various colour database. The derived colour palette was cross-checked for accuracy to ensure it aligned with the intended visual representation. After validation, the appropriate colour was selected, and the corresponding colour code was documented.

This comprehensive process ensured that the final colour, derived from the Aluminium Scan data, was both visually accurate and consistent. It also guaranteed that the colour could be reliably reproduced in various design and manufacturing processes requiring precise colour matching.

STEPHEN BOTTOMLEY



*In my End is my Beginning (brooch), 2025
Recycled & sintered aluminium, silver and steel
83mm Diameter x 8 mm*

The origins of the great church of Linlithgow date back to the Royal charter of King David I in 1138. Over 400 years later, Mary, Queen of Scots, was born in Linlithgow Palace on December 8th 1542 and baptised in St Michael's Church. Mary was a political prisoner of her cousin Elizabeth I for over eighteen and a half years, before her final execution in 1587. During her imprisonment, Mary crafted a number of embroideries; the rectangular hangings were often surrounded by smaller geometric badges or patch-like "decorated with letters or symbols" (V&A archives).

One lost embroidery, recorded as on a 'Cloth of State', was stitched with the words "*En ma Fin gût mon Commencement*" – "*In my End is my Beginning*". These words capture a theme that ran throughout her life with the eternal cycle of life and death.

The badge reflects these themes and narratives in its layered construction. The brooch features a central panel of the original 1960's anodised aluminium cladding of the *Crown of Thorns* (1964 Clarke) removed during the renovation. Themes of eternity are reinforced by the cutting of spiral motif in the brooches central panel and the traces of Mary's words on the reverse silver disc. The historic aluminium is juxtaposed when mounted on a frame of modern 21st Century sintered aluminium.

*Professor Stephen Bottomley MPhil RCA, MA, BA Hons
Head of the School of Design at the Glasgow School of Art
Lead for the Drawing Threads Research Cluster*

ELAINE BREMNER & SUSAN TELFORD



Left: *Untitled Braid 1*, 2025
Recycled aluminium, textile and mixed media threads
370 x 2 x 170mm

Right: *Untitled Braid 2*, 2025
Recycled aluminium, textile and mixed media threads
170 x 2 x 130mm

Elaine Bremner and Susan Telford's collaboration of woven and embroidered textiles offers a fusion of craftsmanship, where traditional techniques meet experimental material approaches. This union draws inspiration from the architecture of St Michael's Church, Linlithgow, resulting in a dynamic exploration of form and texture through the tactile intricacies of embellishment and the structural elegance of weave.

Taking inspiration from the corrosion of the spire's metal, carved marks and details within the stonework and patterns and textures embedded within the church walls left by centuries of weathering, to the textile materials and surfaces that inhabit the interior and have provided comfort and warmth within the church; we seek to capture and translate the tactile and visual layers found in this historical structure.

By utilising the waste aluminium from the spire of the church as a primary material, the project embodies a sustainable ethos, repurposing discarded elements to create new, purposeful material and technical responses. The aluminium serves as a decorative and integrated feature, while the delicate interplay of woven threads transforms it into something visually rich and texturally complex. This process highlights the potential of upcycling and repurposing architectural byproducts in the realm of textile design.

The explorations emerging from this collaboration reflect the intricate beauty found in the architectural structures of the church. The shapes mirror the sharp lines and dynamic geometry of the spire, and the textures within the walls and interiors have informed the design of these experimental textiles, which explore a layering of techniques and materials. The outcome is a harmonious blend of materiality, technique, and inspiration, bridging the realms of textiles, architecture, and sustainability and resulting in a collaborative collection of decorative braid concepts.

Elaine Bremner, Subject Leader Weave
Susan Telford, Subject Leader Embroidery
Textile Design

ANNA GORDON



Time (brooch), 2025
Recycled aluminium, silver and stainless steel
80 x 80 x 10mm

Using the discarded aluminium from the original *Crown of Thorns* by Geoffrey Clarke, I was interested in trying to create a piece that visualised the passage of time.

When the aluminium structure was first erected in 1964, it was not popular and many considered it out of place or inappropriate. Over the next 60 years, the spire has become an iconic emblem for the town, much loved and even featured on school uniforms.

The aluminium cladding on the original spire was anodised gold. This however weathered over the years to a pale grey. The pieces retrieved from the spire still have the original gold colour on the inside surfaces that were protected from the elements, creating an interesting bimetallic sheet.

I used the properties of the hard anodised gold surface, rolling it through metal rolling mills, fracturing the anodised coating to make each piece progressively paler in colour. Using 60 folds to represent the passing of 60 years, moving progressively from rich gold to pale silvery grey. This echoes the timeline illustrated on the street leading up to the church. The folded repeated forms took inspiration from the interior columns of the church as well as the pipes from the church organ, following the rhythmic patterns of these interior surfaces and details.

Anna Gordon, Programme Leader
Silversmithing & Jewellery Design

ANDREW LAMB



Untitled Ring, 2025
Recycled aluminium and TECU® gold copper alloy
25 x 12mm

The *Crown of Thorns* is a familiar sight I have often glimpsed through rain-splattered train windows while commuting between Glasgow and Edinburgh. This project has transformed it from a passing landmark into a source of inspiration for an interrogative exploration of materials. Visiting St Michael's for the first time and researching its history have sparked new methodologies of material transformation within my work.

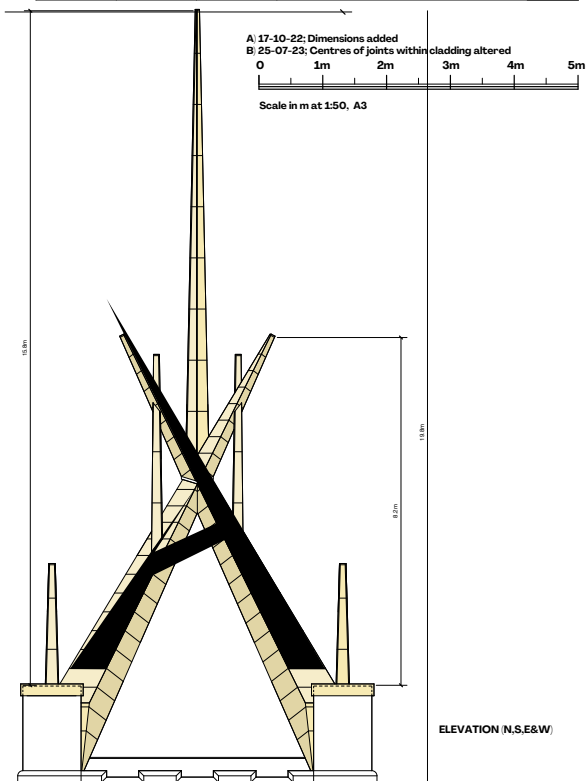
Working with mixed metal processes is central to my jewellery practice, and for this exhibition, I became particularly interested in the relationship between the spire's materials—its original redundant aluminium cladding and the newly introduced bronze alloy. I was drawn to their metallurgical properties and the contrast between the cool, industrial grey of aluminium and the warm, golden tones of bronze. Using processes such as lost wax casting, wire drawing, and sheet fabrication, I have experimented with embedding one material within another, layering them, and allowing elements to emerge through careful surface removal.

The artworks I have created for this exhibition include jewellery and a selection of experimental works, shaped in part by archival imagery—particularly postcards that document the church's presence over time. Often inscribed with personal messages, these postcards serve as tangible records of place and memory. Their small, tactile nature has influenced my approach, mirroring the way objects can hold both historical and emotional significance.

Learning more about Geoffrey Clarke's radical, experimental design has encouraged me to embrace process-driven making, allowing materials to guide and techniques to shape both surface and form.

Andrew Lamb, Lecturer
Silversmithing & Jewellery Design

St. Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow Crown of Thorns Repairs and re-cladding Proposed Elevation (N,S,E&W)			POLLOCK HAMMOND LTD ARCHITECTS AND CONSERVATION CONSULTANTS HERKIMER HOUSE, MILL ROAD ENTERPRISE PARK LINLITHGOW, EH49 7SF tel. 01506 847829 email - mail@pollockhammondarchitects.co.uk	S112 P06 rev B
1:50 at A3	August 2022	glj/jg		



Re-Inspired Font (Work in Progress), 2025

Digital Media

*Image with permission from Pollock Hammond Architects and
 Conservations Consultants*

St. Michael's Church, which is located very close to Linlithgow Palace, has a distinctive spire known as the *Crown of Thorns*. This modern aluminium spire was erected in 1964 and caused initial controversy due to its unconventional contemporary design contrasting with the ancient church building.

It was the vision of the then minister, Rev Dr David Steel, to create something bold and iconic. The spire was designed by Geoffrey Clarke and has become an iconic symbol of Linlithgow over time, including being used in logos for local businesses.

We visited the site in July 2024, and alongside the breathtaking beauty of the stained glass by Crear McCartney, the sheer variety of fonts within the building was astonishing. A lot of these were hand carved and the technical skill involved was impressive. Early on, the idea of a font to commemorate the spire was an attractive path for this project. With a strong passion for architecture, the building plans for the spire were also of special interest. After studying these, letterforms began to emerge from the drawings. These shapes were used as a foundation for the *Re-Inspired* font. The spire's spikiness and narrowing lines are replicated in the stems of the letters. The font itself doesn't conform to the rules of traditional type design, mirroring Clarke's own non-conformist approach to the design of the spire itself. It is my hope the distinctive letterforms pays tribute to the landmark's unique identity and iconic visual impact.

Kim McNeil, Graphic Designer & Technical Manager
Technical Support Department

MICHAEL SB PELL



Decladation Neckpiece, 2025
Recycled aluminium, silver, gold
35mm diameter x 765mm

My creative process is considering and responding to the impact of destruction, removal, stripping back and exposing the inner physical degeneration of material and structure, and how we can respond to this through reinvention and creating a new material future.

This piece seeks to celebrate the potential and opportunity for a new future offered by the act of destruction – a scenario current in my life with the destruction of my own home, a converted church, by fire and the process of re-imagining, re-considering and re-instating it.

In decommissioning the material the forced removal by ripping the cladding from the tower has torn through its skin where it was nailed onto the timber structure, creating a ruptured scare revealing the original golden colour on the reverse of the material installed in 1964, the same year I was born.

Incorporating two 35mm discs cut from the redundant cladding material, each centred on a torn section of material where the fixing nail once was, sitting back-to-back creating a medallion like pendant. The handmade chain of twenty-four links is crafted in the colours of the cladding, silver and gold. The three 18ct gold links reference the ecclesiastical context of the holy trinity, and the circular shape of the pendant was informed by the round consecration marks carved into the interior walls of the cathedral indicating where holy water hit the walls.

Another piece in development includes a long neckpiece with 24 discs joined with silver links intended to be worn over ceremonial ecclesiastic vestments. Each disc references an hour of a day, communicating time and reminding us of our limited earthly existence.

*Michael SB Pell, Lecturer
Silversmithing & Jewellery Design*

YITONG ZHANG & ANITA SARKIZI



The Cloth-holder No.1, 2025
TECU® gold copper alloy, deadstock silk, cashmere, polyester filament
220 x 300 x 250 mm & 70 x 300x 250mm

By integrating three types of materials — metal, fibre and wax — our work explores how materials converse and communicate their symbolic meaning through their material characteristics.

We merge the concepts of a candleholder and a textile cloth — two objects integral to universal ritualistic practices—and re-invent their symbolic significance.

The candleholder is crafted from TECU® Gold copper alloy salvaged from the *Crown of Thorns* sculpture on the spire of St. Michael's Parish Church in Linlithgow. It has been transformed into a round concave form designed to hold and support.

It is a structure hidden under the woven cloth, whose symmetrical pattern mimics the structural (as opposed to decorative) characteristics of the Gothic church's ceiling.

The candle holder has a singular purpose that is purely functional yet is embedded to support and serve as a resting place for the wax candle.

While our project was to join the materials and methods by which we approach craft-making into one object, we have (perhaps subconsciously) engaged in mimicry of the church's structure itself. As the wax candle towers above the candle holder, its position in relation to the cloth resembles the supportive structure inside the church architecture.

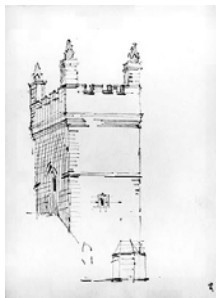
Overall, the work represents the intersection of static space and the continuity of time. It asks a question: Is a heritage landmark bound to retain its original status and function over time, or can it undergo an evolution that redefines its identity?

Yitong Zhang, PhD Researcher
Anita Sarkezi, Textile Designer & Artist in Residence
The Glasgow School of Art

PROVENANCING THE CROWN



Left: Artist Unknown. n.d. View of the Tower with Imperial Crown
Lithograph in *Ecclesia antiqua* (1905)



Right: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, West Tower, St. Michael's, Linlithgow,
Scotland, c. 1880-91, pencil on paper, 174 x 126 mm
National Library of Ireland

In researching the history of St Michael's Church ahead of the *Re-inSpired* exhibition, 2025, much of our focus was directed upon the unique nature of Geoffrey Clarke's *Crown of Thorns* (1964) and his wider body of work. Clarke's crown has become a defining feature of St Michael's, but is by no means the sole source of inspiration for the eleven artists at The Glasgow School of Art as their works in this exhibition illustrate. Many were also influenced by the church's centuries-old history and Gothic architecture.

The original stone imperial crown of St Michael's was one of the three ancient crown spires of Scotland, alongside most famously St Giles, Edinburgh (1495). The removal of the Linlithgow crown was contentious, although by Summer 1821, it was deemed essential to preserve the structural integrity of the church tower. Records indicate, this removal was never intended to be permanent however, with hopes of later reconstruction or redesign.

In 1894, St Michael's went through extensive renovations to restore the church to its original late Medieval form. After a community-led campaign, the parish was able to raise £7,300 (approx. £800,000 today) to finance the renovations. The Glaswegian architectural firm, Honeyman & Keppie, oversaw the work in which Reformation-era modifications to the church's interior were removed and contemporary, liturgical artworks commissioned. It is presumed, that it is also during this time, that Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) was introduced to St. Michael's, and his studies of the church were produced. His drawing of the church's tower ca. 1880-91, depicts a crenelated stone parapet topped by taller pillared forms. Could Mackintosh's sketch possibly have inspired Clarke's design over a century-and-a-half later?

Re-inSpired reflects upon the intersections of art and architecture, and the interactions that occur within this space, and how artists often revisit earlier designs and materials to create something new. The GSA artworks featured in the exhibition respond to these layered histories, drawing inspiration from the church's Gothic architecture, its periods of transformation, and its enduring role as a site of contemplation and artistic inspiration.

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TRIUMPH RISING LIKE A SPEAR



*Geoffrey Clarke, Crown for St. Michael's Church, Linlithgow (maquette), 1962
Balsa wood and gold paint, location unknown*

Before researching news items about the commission and 1964 construction of St. Michael's *Crown of Thorns* by Geoffrey Clarke (1924-2014), I expected to find disparaging articles due to how often it is said that the crown was 'controversial' at the time. While I don't doubt the crown had its detractors, contemporary reporting was largely positive and welcoming. One ardent supporter was Rev

Dr. David Steel who served as minister at St. Michael's Church from 1957 until his retirement in 1976. In an early article appearing in *The Scotsman* on April 21, 1962, he wrote of the ongoing discussion concerning the crown to be a contentious one, but ultimately makes his opinion known that the restoration efforts should embrace the "spirit of the medieval age, to mix our periods and make a contemporary crown". He is reported again in *The Scotsman* on January 30, 1964, saying the design "symbolises triumph rising like a spear from the *Crown of Thorns*."

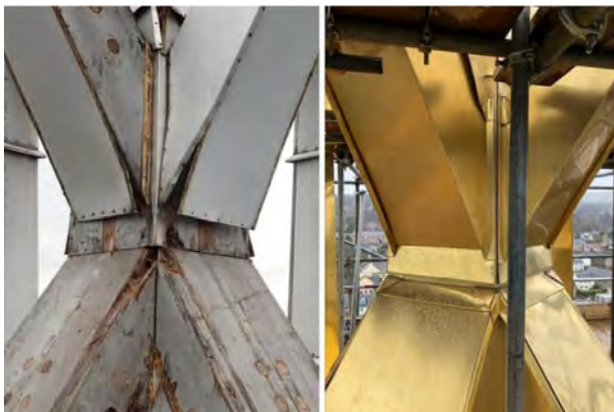
"Magnificent" declares another contributor under the "Palace Broadcastings" column of the *West Lothian Courier* on October 2, 1964, the crown has "given St. Michael's a new lease of life." Dr. David Steel appears again one week later under the same column to assure readers that the main critics were not locals but from out with the town.

An early model of Clarke's design shows a more crown-like appearance as well as the inclusion of a cross atop the "spear." A sketch of this version appears in the *West Lothian Courier* on November 16, 1962, along with the pronouncement that "a new Linlithgow is about to take shape." This is not the design that exists today, and the model changed over time – losing features that made it recognisably Christian. One columnist wrote in 1962 that the crown symbolises "a sign of the Church's willingness to participate". The progressive nature of an abstract work atop a historic church was perhaps seen as appropriate for this "new Linlithgow." This is a throughline when it comes to support for the modern crown, a BBC article from May 15, 2024, refers to the spire as "masterful marriage of modern design to historic architecture."

More positive reporting following construction in 1964 spoke of how the new crown would define Linlithgow's skyline and differentiate Linlithgow Palace from other palaces in the region. The crown makes it clearly distinct to visitors who might have no knowledge of the intricacies of medieval Scottish architecture. St. Michael's crown has become a symbol of Linlithgow, a point of pride for its residents. The current outpouring of support online through words and donations speaks to how beloved the crown has become (and perhaps always was). Though sixty-one years old, Clarke's crown remains symbolic of renewal and eternity as evidenced by the GSA artists' statements and artworks in the *Re-inSpired* exhibition.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



*Left: Damaged Crown of Thorns close up
Right: Repaired Crown of Thorns close up*

Re-inSpired Exhibition

Munich International Jewellery week
Mineralogy Museum Munich
Germany
13 – 16th March 2025

St Michael's Parish Church
Linlithgow, Scotland
29th March – April 13th 2025

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pp. 6, 8, 30: Photographs by Geoffrey Clarke. Courtesy of Judith LeGrove and Pangolin Gallery, London.

p. 28 Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

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p. 7: Peter Black, Geoffrey Clarke, *Symbols of Man: Sculpture and Graphic Work, 1949-94* (Ipswich Borough Council Museums and Galleries and Lund Humphries, 1995), pp. 54-55; Judith LeGrove, *Geoffrey Clarke Sculptor. Catalogue Raisonné* (Pangolin and Lund Humphries, 2017), pp. 80-81, 92, 281, and *Geoffrey Clarke: A Sculptor's Materials* (Sansom, 2017), p. 154. See "St. Michael's Church Now Restored. Service of Dedication", *Linlithgowshire Journal & Gazette*, 9 October, 1964. I extend my thanks to Peter Black, Judith LeGrove, Polly Bielecka, Pangolin, London, as well as Brian Lightbody for their research assistance for the three University of Glasgow essays.

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