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BACKGROUND

Practitioners using craft techniques to make one off and limited edition pieces are typically operating in one of two scenarios: either as designer makers producing small ranges of products for sale via boutiques, online stores, galleries, and craft fairs. Or alternatively as fine artists, who incorporate craft techniques in their work while exhibiting, producing work for commission and perhaps even operating as an artist in residence (clearly, some craftspeople may make work which straddles the design/applied art, fine art divide). Similarly, practitioners may have a traditional training in craft (in cabinet making, studio ceramics, silversmithing, or hand-weaving for example), they may have studied in a fine-art context and become interested in appropriating craft techniques, or they may have come from a more industrially oriented background, in product or textile design for instance. What unites these apparently disparate practices

is a concern for lovingly made artefacts and products which contain, significant elements of hand make or hand finish. Many practitioners are excited by traditional craft techniques in their own right, while others combine these techniques with contemporary technologies or with unusual approaches and materials to produce innovative results. For example, jewellery designer Sarah Kelly uses intricately pleated, folded and laser-cut paper to create her distinctive pieces which she markets under the label *Saloukee*.

Sarah Kelly, Jewellery Designer/Maker

‘Whilst making maquettes in paper to create jewellery, I realised I loved working with the sensitivity the material, much more than I liked the very expensive metals and stones I had been traditionally trained with. Today, my work is still directly influenced by historical and contemporary couture fashions and in particular material manipulation techniques. I find problem solving, advancements in technology and the engineering and combination of contradictory materials all very exciting and influential.’

PRESENTATION

Sarah Kelly has gone to great lengths to create a strong and visually effective identity for her brand *Saloukee*, including by commissioning a brand-designer to tailor a website, logo, and various promotional materials to meet her needs and specifications. The result is an extremely coherent and professional brand identity which, nevertheless, doesn’t threaten to overwhelm or distract from images of her work. Sarah Kelly says of branding her work:

‘I worked long and hard with a brand designer to get the appropriate visual aesthetic to represent my company ‘*Saloukee*’. Everything I now send out to clients, present online, or in promotional material, I try to brand in the same way, with a clear, coherent and beautiful visual aesthetic (using same colour,



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font, imagery and logos etc). My aim in doing this is that as my brand grows it will be visually recognisable and represent the correct connotation of sophistication, linking directly with what I aim for in my jewellery.'

As Sarah suggests, one important consideration when developing a website, or other promotional materials, is to ensure that you use presentation to frame your work appropriately. In Sarah's case the brand identity serves to reinforce the complex, refined, qualities of her paper jewellery. More generally, designers and craftspeople may need to be sensitive to presentational tropes in a variety of situations. Ceramicist John Butler uses wood firing to create pottery informed by tradition which retains a modern sensibility. In his case, presentation is important both in framing his practice and in connecting with his consumer.

Illustrations 34, 35, 36, 37

Sarah Kelly's Saloukee brand, online and printed promotional materials work together to create a coherent visual identity. Jewellery design Sarah Kelly, photography gemmadewson.com

John Butler, ceramicist making wood-fired pieces

'One of the chief means of promoting my work is through ceramics shows, in this context presentation is extremely important as it affects not just whether people notice your work, but also their perception of it. When I started doing shows I used to display everything on slabs of wood – the problem with this was the work didn't stand out from the wood, and the look was too "country cottage". Now I use simple black lacquered cube shelving to display my work. Against this background the qualities of the material are much easier to appreciate and the subtle colours stand out. It's also about presenting the work in a modern context while still implying a domestic space. Alongside the work, I also present photographs of the firing process at shows and events. I started off by presenting these as printouts in plastic sheets, but using an online book creator it is so easy to produce a professional looking, captioned, hardback bound book of photographs – and this is what I use now.'

As John points out, presentation can be used to influence the way that consumers understand and respond to work. By presenting his beautiful, traditionally crafted pottery in a context which suggests a clean modern