



LONDON CALLING

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Sometimes you have to take yourself off the beaten track in order to chance upon something new or different. Belinda Morris looked in on Pure London and Scoop and the City, for creative inspiration.

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Both of these shows in the capital take place in the height of the summer, well ahead of the main buying season, and both are primarily trade exhibitions for the wider fashion industry. However, at Scoop in particular (staged at the Thames-side Old Billingsgate venue), the number of jewellery brands and designers appeared to be even greater this year.

SCOOP

And in line with the mix of high fashion and commercial ranges of clothing showcased, the jewellery at Scoop ran the gamut from sweet/pretty/delicate and fine, to bold, geometric and different... but without stepping into the less inspiring

territories of dull/samey or downright OTT! There was also a good mix of interesting, new-to-me names amid the familiar ones, to make the visit worthwhile.

An example of the former is fashion designer-turned-jeweller Chupi Sweetman-Pell, who established her jewellery design and manufacturing business in Ireland two years ago. She began by casting found items like swan feathers, twigs and acorns and found there was a market for the pieces. Today she employs 13 people. The new Chupi collection includes necklaces incorporating a birthstone, suspended on a gold chain with a leaf taken from a rose bush cast in sterling silver and plated in a thick layer of 18ct gold.

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Chupi



Bjorg Jewellery



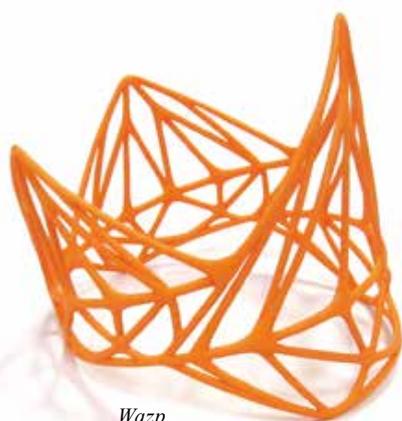
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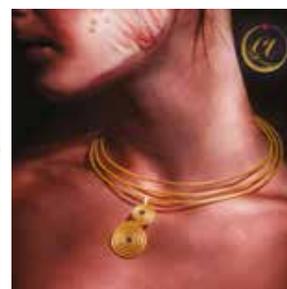
Maya Magal



Wazp

Ziio

By Nina



Cabinet

Açai Bijoux

A lifelong affinity with collecting, a childhood spent in the West Indies and family stories of exploration have informed the gold and silver, fine and costume jewellery Gemma Critchley creates for her British-made Cabinet brand. Meanwhile NAJ member Mirabelle (also made in the UK) was introducing an extended collection of re-cast vintage charms (such as scotty dogs), along with a large range of silver, gemstone and crystal-set and pearl and chain pieces.

Providing a counterbalance to the dainty, nature-inspired and/or very feminine collections, were others with a stronger, more architectural or geometric aesthetic. I liked By Boe's range of gold filled or oxidated silver, clean-lined, fashion-filled pieces; Bjorg Jewellery's dramatically different, very contemporary, fine and semi-precious pieces and GfG's gem-set 18ct gold plated vermeil on sterling silver rings, bangles, earrings and necklaces using waves and parallel bars for a geometric look.

I was also particularly pleased to spot a favourite Italian brand – Ziio – at the show. The design house, which specialises in extravagant (but very wearable) gem-encrusted jewellery, has recently appointed a UK agent and is embarking on “a bigger UK push”. Similarly, new Turkish brand Intua is opening a London HQ this autumn, to showcase its 14ct gold collection inspired by the ancient Hittite civilization.

PURE LONDON

In the main, the jewellery offering at this more commercial fashion exhibition is fashion rather than fine, but a stroll around the upper floor at Olympia resulted in a couple of gems. Brazi, for instance, is a young, contemporary jewellery business from Poland, with a passion for gemmology, unusual gems in interesting settings... and absolutely no amber! Also highlighting coloured stones was By Nina's collection of

handmade jewellery (and clothing) which supports Indian artisan communities.

Açai Bijoux's stand lured visitors with a luxuriant hand-crafted, organic and original collection of jewellery and accessories created from the golden, straw-like stem of a plant native to Brazil. The straw is woven in Jalapao using a variety of traditional techniques and made into gleaming pieces designed in France.

Arguably the most fascinating booth at Pure showcased the work of a global network of designers and 3D printers under the Wazp umbrella. The Irish company aims to make designer products “accessible to all” with a durable, lightweight collection of unique, contemporary pieces made in nylon – so strong they can go in the dishwasher apparently! Using 3D printing technology the designs for the pieces (rings, bangles, chains etc) are kept in digital format – so no need for keeping stock. Once an item is ordered it goes into production.

As far from diamonds as it's possible to get, but we're looking at the future!