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UNDER THAT CLOUD

<https://artjewelryforum.org/sites/default/files/images2012/under-cloud/content/lignel-600px.jpg>) **Klimt02** (<http://www.klimt02.net>) is most famous in the jewelry community as a website where the full breath of the field is displayed. It is a fabulous resource, but it is also a gallery in Barcelona, Spain, started by Leo Caballero and Amador Bertomeu. With a hard working crew of only four people they have managed to give us a huge amount of information. For the 1% of you who haven't looked at this site yet – get with it! In the meantime, the rest of you can read about the physical space started by Leo and Amador and their recent show called *Under That Cloud*, curated by Jo Bloxham. A [catalog for the show](http://www.klimt02.net/publications/index.php?item_id=27932) (http://www.klimt02.net/publications/index.php?item_id=27932) can be ordered from the Klimt02 site.



Susan Cummins: You are famous for your informative website, [Klimt02.net](http://www.klimt02.net). (<http://www.klimt02.net>) Please tell me the story of how and why you started it.

Leo Caballero: I learned about this kind of jewelry in the 1990s by visiting a very good gallery in Barcelona called Positvra, which closed many years ago. They showed work from German artists and people like Annelies Planteijdt. Ever since then I have been attracted by the creative level of the artists and have always felt that this kind of jewelry represented my time and represented me as a late twentieth century citizen. It was in 2002 that I decided to show contemporary jewelry online. Together with my colleague Amador Bertomeu, we started Klimt02. We thought we should to put together as much quality information as we could find and share it. It is hard to believe but in 2002 it was difficult to find information. In ten years the situation has changed radically.

What is your background?

Leo Caballero: My background is in industrial design and ancient painting restoration. I also did some sculpture. It was during my studies in industrial design that I connected with jewelry. I have always related to the fine arts and many of my friends are designers, painters, and photographers . .



<https://artjewelryforum.org/sites/default/files/images2012/under-cloud/content/leo-caballero-and-amador-bertomeu-600px.jpg>) **I understand that you now have a **physical space** (<http://www.klimt02.net/gallery/exhibitions/index.php?Id=27931>) in Barcelona where you have monthly exhibitions. Why did you decide to develop the gallery in addition to the website?**

Leo Caballero: Yes, we have had a physical gallery since 2007. The website shows what is happening around the world in a virtual way so we thought, why not to do it also for real? Barcelona had a lack of galleries and we wanted to give the people here the opportunity to enjoy the best work in their own city.

How many people work on the site and in the gallery?

Leo Caballero: Amador and I run the gallery. We are the founders of both projects. For the website, we have two assistants working from Sweden, so in total there are four people working on it full time.

Wow, that is a lot of work for a small staff. With all this activity do you have any time to read or see a movie or show? If so do you want to tell me about some recent favorites?

Leo Caballero: During the day I'm reading and checking information about exhibitions, workshops, schools, artists statements, press releases . . . So it is late at night when I have time to read and watch movies. I only sleep a few hours. I usually read two or three books at the same time. Recently, I enjoyed *A Winter Journal* by Paul Auster. Plus, I like all the novels by John Fante, which were just published here in Spanish. And now I'm reading one from Patty Smith called *Just Kids* and *The Naked and The Dead* by Norman Mailer. The last movie I saw at the cinema was *Drive* by Nicolas Winding Refn and one I liked a lot was *Le Havre* by Aki Kaurismäk (on DVD).



<https://artjewelryforum.org/sites/default/files/images2012/under-cloud/content/sarneel-400px.jpg> **If I were to visit Barcelona where would you take me to dinner?**

Leo Caballero: If you like seafood cooked in the old style of our grandmothers then I would take you to La Cova Fumada. It is a small restaurant in La Barceloneta, a seaside neighborhood. You can't miss it!

And now the final question: Why did you choose the name Klimt for your site?

It is because of Gustav Klimt, the painter. His father and brother were goldsmiths and I think he was as well. For us jewelry is art and we think G. Klimt is a very representative figure. It was also a subtle way to say jewelry is art and is a short and easy name to remember.

Thank you Leo. Now I am going to address my questions to Jo Bloxham, the curator of *Under That Cloud*, which was recently at your gallery. Jo, can you tell me the story of how you became a curator in the contemporary jewelry world?

Jo Bloxham: I was a maker for a number of years before I moved fully into curating. It was while studying for an MA in 2005 that the change finally happened. I decided to curate an international exhibition of jewelry for my MA submission. This had never been done at Birmingham School of Jewelry, where I was studying under Professor Jivan Astfalck, so it was new territory for myself and for the school. The exhibition was a great success and I quickly realized that not only did I enjoy curating more than the making process, I was also better at it. I had always been more interested in what others were making than in my own work.



(<https://artjewelryforum.org/sites/default/files/images2012/under-cloud/content/knap-600px.jpg>)

How many other exhibitions have you curated, apart from *Under That Cloud*?

Jo Bloxham: While I was making jewelry I was also curating small exhibitions in my locality in the United Kingdom. But the first major show I curated was called *Romancing the Stone* (<http://www.jobloxham.com/romancing-the-stone>). It was an exhibition made in response to and displayed on the white marble sculptures in Manchester Town Hall. Initially the sculpture hall was booked to host the opening reception of a jewelry symposium, which I was co-organizing, called *Ars Ornata*. I looked around the hall, imagining it filled with jewelers and had the idea to hold an exhibition in the space. The hall was a gothic space filled with nameless marble sculptures. I felt the sculptures looked sad and neglected, so I decided to breathe new life into them by adorning them with jewelry. There was very little information available about the sculptures and who they were, so I spent some months researching their origin and building the history and personality of each one. I then selected 22 of my favorite jewelers and invited them to take part. Each artist was given a sculpture with its biography, and asked to make a new piece for their sculpture.

After this I went on to curate an exhibition called *The Sting of Passion* (<http://www.jobloxham.com/sting-of-passion-exhibition>), which was made especially for Manchester Art Gallery. The gallery is a fine art gallery and until then had never exhibited jewelry. It soon became my mission to get them to agree to show jewelry for the first time. I based this exhibition on the gallery's world-renowned collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings, which made the proposal difficult for them to turn down!

I presented each of the twelve selected jewelers with a painting as their inspiration to work from and the resulting pieces were truly wonderful.

In fact, one of the pieces made for this exhibition was bought by mima (middlesbrough institute of modern art) for their [permanent jewelry collection](http://www.visitmima.com/collection/collection.php?type=jewellery) (<http://www.visitmima.com/collection/collection.php?type=jewellery>).



(<https://artjewelryforum.org/sites/default/files/images2012/under-cloud/content/melland-500px.jpg>). **Well, you certainly have been busy creating opportunities for jewelers to make work with interesting themes. Do you want to explain what the idea of this show is and why you did it?**

Jo Bloxham: *Under That Cloud* was born purely from a serendipitous situation. I was in Mexico City attending a symposium called [Walking the Gray Area](http://www.grayareasymposium.org/blog/) (<http://www.grayareasymposium.org/blog/>), when the Icelandic volcano (whose name I can't pronounce) erupted and brought European air travel to a halt. It left huge numbers of us stranded and unable to travel back to our friends and families. At the beginning of the conference I was approached by Mike Holmes and Elizabeth Shypertt, from Velvet da Vinci Gallery, in San Francisco. They had heard about me curating jewelry exhibitions and asked me if I would curate a show for them. I was very flattered, so of course I said yes, though at that point I had no idea what I would make the show about. It was during my extended stay in Mexico, under the volcanic ash cloud, that I realized the theme for the exhibition was all around me, as were the jewelers who would take part.

I rushed about asking various people who were all stranded like me, if they would like to take part in an exhibition about our experiences being trapped by a world phenomenon. People were scared, worried and helpless – this invitation gave them something else to focus on while we waited to be told we could travel home. Nine months later, [22 jewelry artists](http://www.jobloxham.com/under-that-cloud) (<http://www.jobloxham.com/under-that-cloud>) submitted new work based on their very varied experiences of Mexico. Some depicted their fears and anxieties, while others portrayed the vivid colors and warmth of the people of Mexico City.



(<https://artjewelryforum.org/sites/default/files/images2012/under-cloud/content/svensson-500px.jpg>) **This show has traveled from Germany to the United States and United Kingdom and is ending up here in Barcelona. So many people have heard about it or seen it by now. What kind of response has it got from visitors?**

Jo Bloxham: This is an interesting question as each venue has an established reputation, which attracts jewelry enthusiasts, students and collectors. *Under That Cloud* is a diverse and colorful exhibition including pieces which are making serious political, religious and historical comments, while other pieces are made using wit and humor. Therefore the range of work in the show appeals to all tastes. The likes of Manchester Art Gallery is quite different. It is a public gallery which usually attracts visitors who are expecting to see more traditional forms of fine art, so it is the element of surprise and intrigue which I find fascinating – and also this ‘new’ audience which I am keen to see develop and see grow.

Did you attend all the openings and if so what is your reaction to the different ways the work in the show was displayed?

I went to all the openings and each venue displayed the work in their own way, with the exception of Manchester where I set the display up myself. I think it is important to give each venue the freedom to exhibit the work in a way which I hope would flatter the pieces as well as the gallery space. So far I have not been disappointed. But, a funny thing happened at Galerie Spektrum in Munich. It took two days to hang the exhibition, which was in the window area. When finished I went to change in readiness for the excitement of the opening. When I returned a few hours later in the middle of a huge downpour of rain, there were over 100 people queuing to get in. It wasn’t until I looked at the window that I realized the show had completely disappeared. The window had steamed up with the rain and the heat of all the people – you couldn’t see a thing! I decided to explain that the exhibition was so authentic that we had even transported the ash cloud to Munich.

I understand that you produced a catalog to go with the show. How can we get hold of copies?

Jo Bloxham: The catalogues for all the exhibitions I have talked about are available from Klimt02, Charon Kransen Arts, or my own [website \(http://www.jobloxham.com\)](http://www.jobloxham.com).



(<https://artjewelryforum.org/sites/default/files/images2012/under-cloud/content/manilla-500px.jpg>) **Do you want to describe the show you are currently working on called *Mirror, Mirror*?**

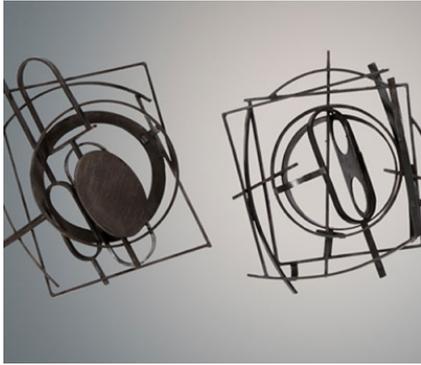
Jo Bloxham: This is an exhibition made specifically for Espace Solidor, in the South of France. As far as I am aware, Espace Solidor is the only publicly funded gallery in France dedicated to art jewelry. *Schmuck* traveled to this gallery in 2011 after it was shown in Munich. The gallery is named after a woman called Suzy Solidor, who was an openly lesbian singer, model and actress in the 1930s. She lived in what is now the gallery space. She was a fascinating character who commissioned a huge number of famous artists to paint her portrait, many of which hang in a chateau next to the gallery, which is in the most beautiful village of Cagnes-sur-Mer. Suzy had a nightclub in Paris, where she often courted controversy by entertaining, among others, the German troops during WWII.

The work produced for this exhibition is varied, diverse and often very provocative. Ultimately, the show is a homage to her life. For those of you who can't get to Europe this summer, *Mirror Mirror* will travel to Velvet da Vinci, in San Francisco in October 2012. The renowned French artist, Benjamin Lignel and myself have curated this exhibition together. This is the first time I have worked alongside another curator on a project and I must say it has been fascinating to work so closely with someone else. There is always so much to learn from other people and their working process. This is a big show with 29 artists participating from fourteen countries. I have to confess that almost all of the credit for this exhibition has to go to Ben. He has worked tirelessly on this project and done such a fantastic job!

Where do you go from here?

I have lots of ideas for future exhibitions and collaborations and I am always open to new ideas and proposals. There are a few offers and projects in the pipeline, which I am very excited about. But sometimes the most exciting projects will happen spontaneously and unexpectedly, often involving a twist of fate. So, watch this space . . .

Thank you.



(<https://artjewelryforum.org/sites/default/files/images2012/under-cloud/content/cuyas-500px.jpg>).



(<https://artjewelryforum.org/sites/default/files/images2012/under-cloud/content/kamata-500px.jpg>).



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