

Under that Cloud

There are many things in life worth railing against, but Mother Nature isn't one of them. Rough seas, floods, snowstorms, ash clouds: she has a whole host of disasters at her disposal to remind us that we are little more than mindless ants milling about on the Earth's surface.

So when jewellery designer **Jo Bloxham** was grounded by a volcanic ash-cloud, she had the good grace to accept her lot. And then she did what any self-respecting Mancunian would do: she decided to make the most of it.

In April 2010, Jo had been at a jewellery symposium in Mexico City. Suddenly stranded in a city far from home, she met up daily with fellow designers to check the news and berate the airlines for refusing to fly (they wouldn't budge until the skies were clear: according to a BA pilot who had flown through an ash cloud from Mount Galunggung in Java, flying in such conditions is "a bit like negotiating one's way up a badger's arse").

The cloud remained stubbornly in place for almost a week, and it was then that Jo had her Big Idea: why not stage a jewellery show based on this collective experience? And so *Under that Cloud* was born.

The exhibition features new work by 18 of the world's leading jewellery designers, and every bit as dazzling as their work are their accompanying stories : tales of fear, resignation and inspiration.