

Introduction to Jewellery Design

Why do we need to design Jewellery?

Designing jewellery on paper is a wonderful and inexpensive way to create and judge your designs. If a line in the design does not seem right you can erase and re-draw that line. You can place stones on the drawing, imply dimension and even control the style and "look" of the piece. These initial steps towards the creation of an actual piece of jewellery can give the designer an enjoyable amount of freedom.

Practising one of the oldest crafts, Jewellery designers create personal adornments using a variety of materials, including gold, platinum and gems. They create pieces that can have great sentimental significance or symbolic meaning which last for centuries.

They must be able to relate well to their clients in order to understand design specifications, as well as to the manufacturer who will require the creative and practical skills needed to make the product.

The designer needs to provide both the customer and the manufacturer with a clear communication in the form of a draft visual of the desired design.

The precision level in their work is critical as their creations tend to be small and valuable and, when working with precious metals and gems - any mistake can be very costly so ***any design must be precise, practical and manufacturable.***

What does it take to be a Jewellery Designer?

At its core, designing jewellery deals with developing aesthetic values and technical skills which require precision work and great attention to detail. In brief:

Accuracy, Precision and Detail – the features and details of any design must be accurately shown and drawn with precision.

Anyone who cannot master these three basic requirements will be unlikely to succeed.

The best designers are like good financial advisors – they are acutely aware of the historical trends, current events which affect their field and have many years of experience. This is what makes the difference between an ordinary and extra-ordinary design.

Jewellery Designers can be inspired from anywhere and everywhere – Nature has always been a successful source of inspiration for jewellery. History, Art and Architecture also lead to some fascinating jewellery pieces.

Beyond specific themes, all jewellery is influenced by traditional and popular culture, the global economy – affecting which gems and metals are used, where the pieces are worn and impacting their symbolic significance.

Some jewellery designers link their designs to up-to-the-minute catwalk trends, while others create classic, timeless designs. Unlike high fashion however, most fine jewellery designs are intended for longer term use and are often appreciated over generations!

Three important criteria that any designer must always keep in mind are:

Beauty, Durability and Comfort.

Beauty is subjective however, as a rule of thumb, any jewellery designer must feel the design has merit and love the item they are creating otherwise not present it. A design which is not so beautiful has little chance of being sold today.

Durability is of utmost importance as, when buying a valuable heirloom, gift of sentimental significance or just a piece of jewellery to enjoy, the wearer expects it to last. Not just for one week or one month but with jewellery the period expected is an eternity, and a beloved jewel can pass from generation to generation as has been proven the world over. It is up to the designer to make sure that no part of the design is too thin or too weak to withstand normal wear and tear.



Comfort is also a key feature. A piece of jewellery which pinches the skin, which might be so heavy on the earlobe so as to cause a headache or is just plainly uncomfortable will not be worn often if ever at all. If this item is never worn the wearer will not return to purchase more from that designer nor will the piece promote the designer from sitting inside the jewellery box!

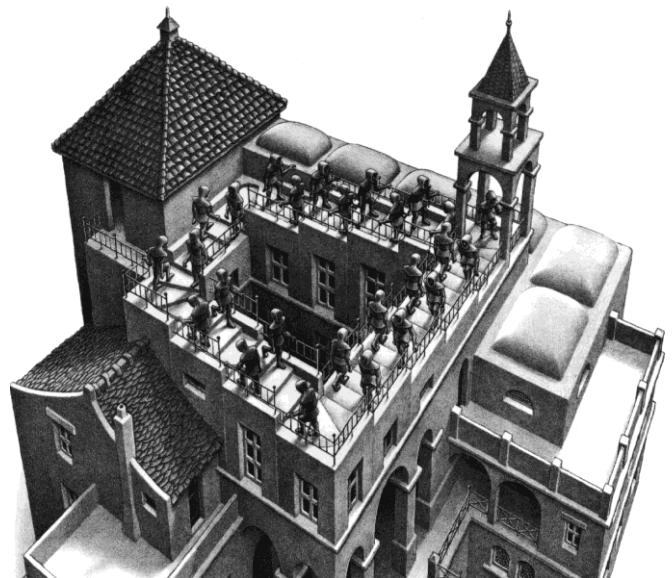
Any jewellery design must be Beautiful, Durable and Comfortable.

Customer requirements

Having the idea for a theme or design, the end-to-end process is complex and involves a series of stages, each requiring many different abilities on the part of the designer:

When working with a client, after discussing a client's range of options and formulating original ideas, designers sketch many variations to help the client visualise the finished design.

The Customer Requirements are most important and must be met which requires the designer to listen carefully while offering suggestions and swaying the customer to understand what can and cannot be achieved.



Sometimes the desires of a customer can be quite challenging as the client is not always aware of the manufacturing process and can request the impossible. It is up to the designer to know what can and cannot be done and never to produce a pretty picture which is unachievable like the famous painting 'Ascending and Descending' produced by Dutch artist M.C. Escher in the 1920's.



Manufacturable and Practical Limitations



This is a skill which comes with time and overall understanding of every possible technique invented old or new as the designer needs not just to please the customer but has to ensure ***the manufacturer's requirements are also met.***

Throughout this program the many various manufacturing techniques will be viewed by

video, and reviewed in practical exercises so as to give each learner the maximum knowledge in this area. The best scenario is for the designer to learn for themselves by actual execution to understand exactly what it takes and to appreciate more the amount of work involved however, time constraint for most designers will limit them to the

viewing of these processes which is readily available today in many other forms. It is key for any designer to be able ***to communicate the requirements of a desired design accurately and effectively.***

At the beginning if a designer is not sure in this area they must depend on a senior designer, their floor manager or bench jeweller to ***determine practicality and manufacturability of the design*** and to make sure the customer is not mislead and will not be disappointed to find their ideas will never materialise.