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London Craft Week sheds light on the secrets of jewellery-making



Backes & Strauss have constructed a diamond polishing atelier

By [Annabel Davidson](#)

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If they sold “I Love London Craft Week” bumper stickers, I’d buy one. As part of my job as a jewellery editor, I get to visit plenty of workshops and ateliers, but [LCW](#) opens up a whole other side to the industry that I’m not usually privy to. From the art of engraving to the science of diamond-cutting, there’s an amazing range of jewellery-related classes, talks, and workshops to take part in this week, taking you from Leather Lane to Bond Street.



Rebus engraving

At Backes & Strauss, a company known for its extraordinarily high-end diamond and gemstone-embellished timepieces, a charming Belgian diamond cutter has come from Antwerp to spend the week at its Grosvenor Street house. The company has constructed an actual diamond polishing atelier for the purpose, where Pieter Bombeke, a master craftsman whose impressive handlebar moustache can’t be ignored, will take you through the steps of cutting and polishing diamonds. What’s fascinating here is the use of the latest technology for viewing and inspecting the stones, and calculating the best shape to get out of the roughs, alongside the artisan’s skill with his bare hands and naked eye.

At Rebus in Hatton Garden, London’s historic jewellery district, the goldsmiths will take guests through the art of signet-ring making and engraving. You can also trawl their archives for family crests going back to Victorian times, and have your initials engraved on a little keepsake.



Rebus will be taking guests through the art of signet-ring making

Contemporary jewellery fans should grab a spot at craft business incubator Cockpit Arts on Friday night to hear journalist and critic Corinne Julius on the subject. Julius will be looking at the work of leading jewellers Petra Bishai, Maud Traon and Jo Hayes Ward, three artists whose work couldn’t be more varied if they tried to make it so. Hayes Ward is known for her pixelated pieces, Petra Bishai’s work is highly sculptural and delicate, while Maud Traon creates fantastical pieces which just happen to be wearable.



Jo Hayes Ward one of a kind 3D printed sea green tourmaline gold ring

Not surprisingly, many of the events are sold out, but it’s worth mentioning now so you’re prepared for next year. Garrard is opening its archives and its in-house museum for a look at its history of creating crowns and headdresses for royalty from all over the world, while fine jeweller Stephen Webster will be hosting a champagne reception in his new boutique to talk about his unique creative process. And for princesses at heart, Bentley & Skinner, one of London’s most respected dealers in antique and estate jewellery, will be exploring the art of tiara making.

But the real beauty of London Craft Week is that it asks the question “How do they make that?” of so many different disciplines. It’s impossible not to want to know the answer. Jewellery may be my thing, but perusing LCW’s programme, suddenly I’m desperate to know how to make a bowler hat, a horse’s saddle, or a piano.

[London Craft Week is on until May 7](#)

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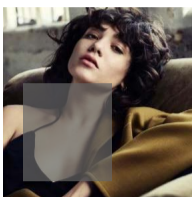
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