

Jewellery, Silver and the Applied and Decorative Arts in the Culture of Modernism, 1918-1940

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to the understanding of the relationship between the applied and decorative arts and the culture of modernism in interwar Europe and America. The complete submission consists of five journal articles and one book published between 2003 and 2019 alongside a critical reflection on the contribution of the applied and decorative arts to the culture of modernism and modernity in the interwar period. There is particular emphasis on the study of jewellery, which has hitherto been marginalized in studies of the modern movement. In redressing this situation, the thesis demonstrates that an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the applied and decorative arts leads to a richer understanding of the relationship between objects and the culture of modernism and modernity by integrating the study of aesthetics, gender, identity, fashion, fiction, representation and display.

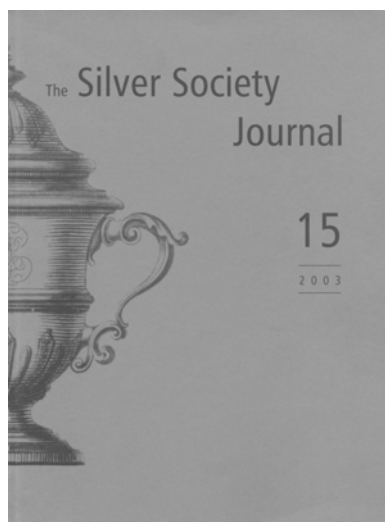
The thesis demonstrates how particular examples of silverware and jewellery can be placed at the heart of modernist studies. This constitutes a new way of identifying the contribution of objects, often those that are hiding in plain sight such as jewellery and accessories, to an understanding of the key role of ornament and personal adornment in the expression of a sense of everyday modernity. The study of personal adornment can lead us to understand modern decorative arts in a new light as having given rise to a sense of intimacy not normally associated with the modern movement in design or the practices and polemics of its major protagonists.

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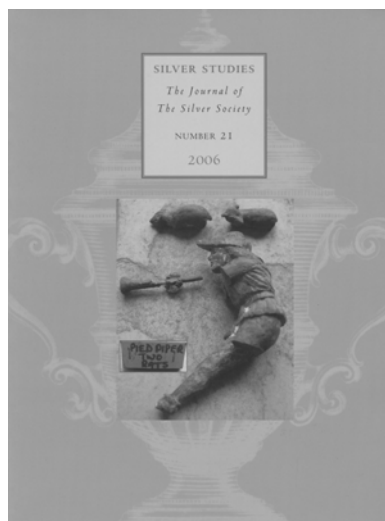
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List of Published Works (Original images in colour)

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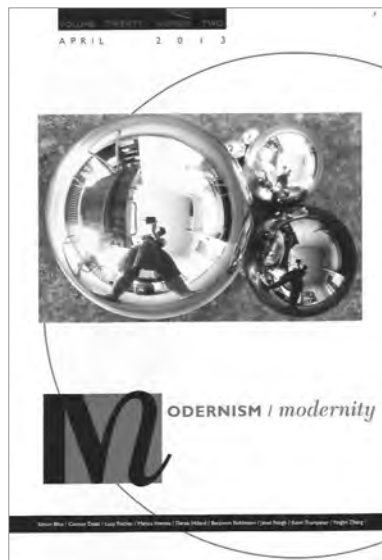
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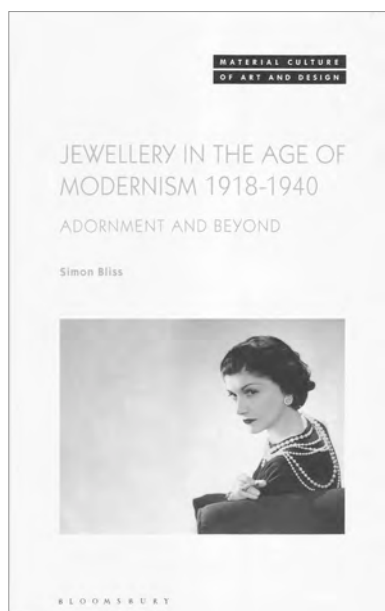


Bliss, Simon. 2015. "“L’Intelligence de la Parure” : Notes on Jewelry Wearing in the 1920s." *Fashion Theory* 20 (1):5-26.

[Translated into Russian as «L’Intelligence de la Parure»: заметки о ювелирных украшениях 1920-х годов ТЕОРИЯ МОДЫ (*Fashion Theory*) No. 41 (ОСЕНЬ 2016): 36-57. Note: this translation is not included in the submission].



Bliss, Simon. 2019. *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism: Adornment and Beyond*. Edited by Michael Yonan, *Material Culture of Art and Design*. New York: Bloomsbury Visual Arts.



Note – Copies of the journal articles and book are submitted separately.

Acknowledgements

Each of my published works acknowledges the help of particular individuals and organizations associated with libraries, archives, image banks and publishers. Without their assistance, the process of preparing works that were visually interesting as well as being acceptable to the peer reviewer and editor would have been much more difficult.

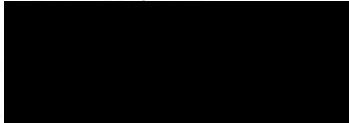
I am grateful to colleagues at the University of Brighton for their help, support and provision of time (and sometimes funding) and in helping me bring my recent research projects to fruition. This is particularly the case with my book *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism 1918-1940*, which at times required considerably more than just a few hours a week to complete.

Finally, sincere thanks to my expert mentors at the University of Brighton, Dr. Philippa Lyon and Dr. Annebella Pollen for their helpful commentaries on various versions of this Critical Appraisal.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed:

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the author's signature.

Dated: October 9, 2019

Introduction

This Critical Appraisal reflects on a series of published works investigating the connections between jewellery, the applied and decorative arts and the culture of modernism in interwar Europe and America. These works were developed between 2003 and 2019, alongside a career in Higher Education specializing in teaching art and design history to practice-based students of art, architecture, design and craft.

Through teaching courses in the history of silver and jewellery, as well as others in architectural theory, design and fine art, I developed an interdisciplinary and research-based pedagogical practice. This meant that I was able to investigate many different areas of interest, identify gaps in knowledge and undertake my own research to help address these gaps. When I came to develop a research profile in jewellery and the applied arts, this experience of researching a wide variety of visual arts subjects and making significant connections between them was invaluable. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's characterization of the rhizome and their 'principles of connection and heterogeneity' provides a useful metaphor for the way my research has developed.¹ In working on jewellery and the applied arts in the modern period it became clear that taking a wide ranging approach was essential if meaningful progress was to be made in this area of research.

The place of jewellery in the narratives of interwar culture has been overlooked, particularly in terms of its relationship with modernism and the concept of modernity. As will be reflected upon later, studies of jewellery are few and far between in collections of essays on material culture and when jewellery is addressed directly, discussion is often to be found in studies of fashion, in antique guides and general books on Art Deco, the decorative arts or particular collections of objects. Monographs

¹ According to Deleuze and Guattari 'a rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances related to the arts, sciences and social struggles' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 7).

on individual designers are exceptions to this, but many of them still adopt an uncritical and hagiographic approach. Furthermore, and crucial to the originality of my research, is the fact that jewellery is rarely addressed in cultural histories of modernism. This inspired my determination to explore and address this gap by developing a series of published works placing jewellery and the applied and decorative arts at the heart of discussions of the culture of modernism and modernity in the interwar period.

The thesis consists of this Critical Appraisal together with five journal articles and a research monograph. The first three works (Bliss 2003; Bliss 2006; Bliss 2007) are discussions of silverware in interwar modernist culture and aesthetics. Two further articles and the monograph examine jewellery in relation to wider aspects of culture and society in interwar modernism (Bliss 2013; Bliss 2015; Bliss 2019). The first group develops an important thematic focus, built on in later works, which is the impact of the culture of modernism on the decorative and applied arts of the interwar period. The second group of publications culminates in the synthesis and analysis of an extensive amount of primary and secondary research material in my research monograph *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism 1918-1940: Adornment and Beyond*, published by Bloomsbury Visual Arts in 2019.² These works represent the fruition and application of a sophisticated methodology developed over more than a decade.

The process of researching these works has required me to develop and apply an advanced and diverse set of skills and approaches. In order to access some of the material in collections, contemporary journals and books, it was necessary to combine my research with developing a good working knowledge of French in order to be able to access archive material, overcome the limitations of some key works only being available in French and to facilitate face-to-face meetings and email conversations. Locating, accessing and consulting primary texts and works on modern silver and jewellery were key moments of transformation in my research, particularly as copies of certain works could only be accessed abroad. In putting together the published

² For the convenience of the reader I refer to this work using the shorter title *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism* for the rest of this document.

works, I identified, located and examined primary and more neglected secondary source material, including objects and texts, in a variety of museums, archives and libraries, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, The National Art Library, The British Library and Goldsmiths' Hall, London; The Bibliothèque des arts Décoratifs, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, the Cinemathèque Française and the Archives Charlotte Perriand, Paris; the Bauhaus-archiv, Berlin and the Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim. It is made clear in each published work how these sources have contributed and together they demonstrate the breadth and scope of the research and its international range.

What follows is a contextualization of, and reflection on, the six published works made up of 1) a theoretical framework for investigating the applied and decorative arts of the interwar period, 2) the contribution of the applied and decorative arts to the culture of interwar modernism, and 3) a summary of the original contribution to knowledge made by the research. Discussion of the prior literature is integrated, where appropriate, into my reflections on each of the articles. However, since my research monograph on jewellery is a much more extensive work, I have included a review of the literature relevant to this publication, together with reflections on methodology, as separate sections in Part 2. This structure best resembles the way my research has developed over time. The bibliography lists works consulted in the preparation of this Critical Appraisal only. Each of my published works contains its own list of references given in the style required by the publisher.

Part 1: A Theoretical Framework for Investigating the Applied and Decorative Arts of the Interwar Period

- Understanding Modernism and Modernity in the Context of the Research

In describing the approach to my research it is necessary to define what is meant by the contested terms 'modernism' and 'modernity' in relation to the culture of the applied and decorative arts of the interwar period. Conventionally, one of the principal characteristics of modernism in design is understood as the practice of abandoning the styles of the past, replacing them with newer, sleeker, more functional items, promoted by a relentless avant-garde backed by a tenacious cultural élite. Historian of modern design George Marcus has shown how even with the advent of postmodernism, modernism and functionalism are still terms that are touchstones for an understanding of modernist culture (Marcus 1995). In my research, however, I consider modernism as a process of understanding *attitudes* to the changing circumstances of life as much as it is about the changing aesthetic appearance of objects. As Marshall Berman says in his study of the experience of modernity 'to be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and of the world' (Berman 1991, 15). This suggests that this experience is much more about sensing change, searching for freer expression in both the self and in the organized world and seeking ways of affiliating with such changes. Furthermore, these shifts are not just felt at the cutting edge of cultural practices. They also resonate at an everyday level in the changing relationships between people and objects, in becoming and appearing before the world.

If we consider the many aesthetic revolutions of the early twentieth century (the 'isms') alongside the rapid technological and material changes, their consequences for new ways of representing the world, its alienations and fragmentations increasingly characteristic of modern life, then we encounter a period of cultural change which had profound effects on the arts of Europe and America. Design historian Jan Michl characterised modernist designers of the interwar period as being propelled by 'the

obligation to be modern' (Michl 1988, 4). Similarly, Kjetil Fallan, in his study of theories and methods in design history, says that 'modernism can be seen as a constant quest for modernity, or the wish to establish an anti-traditional tradition' (Fallan 2010, 111). Whilst recognizing the difficulties in defining modernism, Fallan also points out that one of the advantages of the term is that it was used at the time of its existence to describe the tendency and not employed *post facto* (112). Many of the interwar protagonists featured in my research, such as decorative arts commentator Gaston Varenne and photographer and writer Thérèse Bonney, were able to confidently refer to the idea of being 'modern' (Bliss 2003, 145; Bliss 2019, 26). Both were acutely aware of the new tendency in the applied and decorative arts.

My use of the term modernism encompasses a number of practices in the visual arts and design, the principal focus being silverware, jewellery and accessories where the 'obligation to be modern' can be seen as being part of a cultural continuum in the interwar period. Terms like 'function' or 'functional', so commonly used to describe the appearance of modern applied arts and design, can be considered to be part of the narrative, but certainly not the whole story. Indeed, defining modernism in design purely in terms of function is problematic. In the area of silverware, Eric Turner, in his contribution to Philippa Glanville's book on silver, cites the impact of the 1925 Paris *Exposition Internationale des Art Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* as a key moment in the creation of modernist silverware. Although described in terms of 'functionalism' his idea that modern silverware always contained an element of ornamentation through the use of rich materials used in contrast to the polished silver surface is important. Turner's contention is that 'an exclusively functionalist aesthetic was never a real possibility in silverware' (Turner 1996, 74). He highlights the paradox that ornament and decoration are fundamental aspects of the applied arts – even when they are being consciously modern. I examine this in relation to the contributions of modern French jewellers to the work and aims of the *Union des Artistes Modernes* in *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism*, concluding that searching for new forms of ornament does not make modern jewellery any less modern (Bliss 2019, 93).

Simply concentrating on the form an object takes is a superficial way of identifying its qualities as a modern object. In the case of jewellery, a piece may become 'modern' in the way it is appropriated, worn or performed by the wearer. The bracelet, brooch and necklace by ex- *Bauhausler* Naum Slutzky included in the 2006 V&A exhibition *Modernism: Designing a New World 1914-1939* illustrate this problem of interpretation. The pieces are easy to classify in terms of their modernist appearance but seem to have been selected for the exhibition on the basis of this alone. The catalogue states that 'modernist jewellery such as these examples is rare, as is jewellery made without any sort of historical reference' (Wilk 2006, 223). This is a very limited perspective on the role that jewellery plays within modernism. It is also necessary, as I will explore below, to consider such objects, as well as those which are much less obviously 'modern' in appearance, within a cultural framework of modernity, if a fuller understanding of their significance is to be gained.

Fashion historian Elizabeth Wilson writes that modernity 'refers to things both intangible and undeniably material: the atmosphere and culture of a whole epoch, its smell, its sounds, its rhythm' and that it is 'not defined by Reason, but by speed, mobility and mutability' (Wilson 2005, 9). Charles Baudelaire's influential idea of modernity, in his 1863 essay *The Painter of Modern Life*, is particularly applicable to jewellery and the decorative arts. Ostensibly an essay on the French nineteenth-century painter Constantin Guys, it ranges widely across a number of themes including the *flâneur*, fashion, dandyism and the conditions of modern urban life. His famous observation that 'by "modernity" I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and immutable' conveys the way that objects of adornment can represent both enduring traditional values (materially and socially) and the passing fads of fashion at one and the same time (Baudelaire 1995, 12). I apply this characterization of modernity in my discussion of the poetic texts on jewellery by the French modernist poet Blaise Cendrars, written for the Paris jewellery firm of Templier (Bliss 2019, 96-8). Cendrars clearly captures a sense of modernity in the rapidly changing life of interwar Paris. Although he says he could easily list 700 or 800 more, here are his *Seven Wonders of the Modern World*:

1. An engine exploding into life; 2. S.K.F ball bearings; 3. The cut of a grand tailor; 4. The music of Satie that, finally, you can listen to without taking your head in your hands; 5. Money; 6. The nape of a woman's neck who has just had her hair cut; 7. Advertising. (Cendrars 1931, 212-13).

This combination of the ephemeral, the everyday and the avant-garde resonates with my studies of modernism in jewellery and silver far more powerfully than many of the more familiar rhetorical gestures of the artists and designers of the modern movement. Twentieth century architects and designers such as Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier railed against ornament and decoration as being incompatible with the idea of twentieth century progress, as psychologist John Carl Flügel did in the arena of fashion (Loos 1971 [1908]; Corbusier 1987 [1925]; Flügel 1971 [1930]). Yet ornament is a consistent feature of twentieth century design. As Jonathan Woodham puts it in his book *Twentieth-Century Ornament* 'the Modern Movement is often portrayed as being opposed to ornamentation, focusing instead on an aesthetic vocabulary that was concerned with notions of standardization, the exploration of new materials and abstract forms' (Woodham 1990, 112). James Trilling made a series of similar observations in his *The Language of Ornament* and states that the real story of twentieth century design is 'the covert triumph of ornament over dogma' (Trilling 2001, 187).

The history of interwar jewellery and decorative arts is not a simple struggle between the forces of progress and the forces of reaction. During this period modern, progressive French jewellers like Raymond Templier and Jean Després produced wearable ornaments. They did not (and could not as jewellers) reject the idea of ornamentation and were able, through their membership of the *Union des Artistes Modernes* (UAM) to operate on the same organizational and intellectual level as other notable designers and artists of interwar Paris. What they achieved was to redefine what was meant by jewellery in the modern world and to re-assess its role within it. Jean Fouquet wrote that 'jewellery is to our clothing as silverware is to our dwelling' (Fouquet 1931, n.p.). So the jewel is, eternally, an embellishment. But its role is to say something about modern life and to combine with modern ways of dressing, moving and being. In other words, it has to be a part of life, not an appendage to it.

Nancy Troy, in her *Modernism and the Decorative Arts in France*, draws attention to the association of the decorative arts with ornamentation, usefulness, commercialism, handicraft and that the idea that 'the *décorateur*...was obliged to submit to the demands of the object to be decorated' (Troy 1991, 2). This had always served to condemn them to an inferior position in relation to painting, sculpture and architecture. For Troy, the quotidian nature of the decorative arts had presented a considerable barrier for others to understand and articulate their position within modernism. Other (French) studies of the French decorative arts, focusing on the UAM and the *Société des Artistes Décorateurs* (SAD) demonstrate that a modernist sensibility was clearly present in the interwar period (Barré-Despond 1986; Brunhammer and Tise 1990). Indeed, one of the initial impetuses for my exploration of this area was to see how, through these organizations, the French silversmiths and jewellers came to occupy prominent positions in the promotion of modernist ideas in the culture of design and decorative arts practice (see Bliss 2003, 144-5; Bliss 2019, 92-6).

In her book *The Gender of Modernity*, Rita Felski writes that modernity can be considered to refer to 'experiences of temporality and historical consciousness' and that modernity does not just mean changes in the prime moving phenomena of the forces of society, such as capitalism, technology or bureaucracy (Felski 1995, 9). It is, as Judy Giles puts it, possible for 'certain discourses of modernity... [to]...offer the possibility that the mundanity and monotony of everyday life can be transformed or transcended' (Giles 2004, 31). Therefore, we need not always look for the spectacular when searching for signs of modernity. We may find them close to home in small-scale items worn on the body such as jewellery and accessories. Further, Judy Giles's contention that modernity 'is a structure of feeling that enables women and men to make sense of the social processes of modernization in light of the responses, visions and ideas generated by these processes' is a very useful one too (Giles 2004, 5-6). The notion of 'a structure of feeling' forms one of the key arguments in my published works. Rather than always seeing the modernism of some of the individuals whom I have studied in detail (Jean Puiforcat, Erik Magnussen, Charlotte Perriand, Nancy Cunard) as working objectively towards rational solutions to technical, societal or

aesthetic problems, their emotional attachments to their work and the causes they held dear come through in the objects they created, selected and chose to wear. This is particularly important in my discussion of Nancy Cunard and her controversial 'performance' of African jewellery (Bliss 2019, 57-76).

Giles's notion of the 'private sphere' in domestic modernity has resonances for the way that objects can be understood in different contexts. Although not specifically referring to objects of adornment, her idea that 'domestic modernity refers to the ways in which women negotiated and understood experience and identities in terms of the complex changes that modernization provoked in the so-called private sphere' is also important (Giles 2004, 6). It is useful to consider this idea as pertaining, also, to the processes by which fashion magazines and other media create the discourses around femininity, appearance and consumption, a theme that is explored through my discussion of jewellery and jewellery wearing in part of the first chapter of *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism* (Bliss 2015, 22-3)

Ulrich Lehmann's contention in *Tigersprung: Fashion in Modernity*, is that modernity in fashion represents a struggle between the classical, the ancient and the modern notion of 'progress'. This is a useful way of considering the special qualities of modern jewellery and the accessory. Lehmann writes that, in Baudelaire, 'the modern does not regard the past as a defeated enemy' (Lehmann 2000, 9). This is an important distinction between the idea of modernity (a perpetual but vital struggle between the past and the present) and modernism, which is seen as aesthetic production which rejects the past, concerns itself with the present and, sometimes, the future.

Lehmann's view is that 'without the connotation of antiquity, modernity loses its *raison d'être* – its adversary and point of friction, which is also its stimulant' (Lehmann 2000, 9). My work demonstrates that modern jewellery and the decorative arts possess some unchangeable qualities (formally, materially and culturally) whilst at the same time defining their own place within the object world and the world of the commodity. Furthermore, these forms are adapted to and adopted by modernism (see Bliss 2019, 98).

Throughout my research on silver, jewellery and accessories, and especially through the study of interwar magazines, periodicals and catalogues, I have been left in no doubt that the advice on offer in the arena of accessorizing and appearing is often directed firmly at those who wish to embrace a sense of mobility based on both continuity of tradition and the embracing of new modes. When allied to a specific modernist sensibility in design (new forms, materials, styles) or an attempt to re-write the rules on accessorizing or displaying oneself or the objects one possesses, we can see an alliance between the contiguous forces of modernism and modernity. This era of rapid change is encapsulated by Siegfried Kracauer's metaphor for the onward rush of early twentieth century cultural, technical, social and economic change from his 1924 essay 'Boredom'. It takes the form of a colossal ball rushing towards and then roaring over a helpless victim who lies chained, silent movie style, in its path. In the face of this colossus, Kracauer says, 'flight is impossible' (Kracauer 1995, 332).

The place of jewellery, silver and the applied and decorative arts is discussed, in my research, against a backdrop of these ideas drawn from a variety of different perspectives on the culture of modernism and modernity. I have identified the need for such a wide-ranging approach in order that the contribution of the decorative arts to the culture of modernism is no longer confined to narrow considerations of aesthetic tastes, ideas about function or the spectacular. It identifies a space for objects of intimate and personal value to exist alongside the more familiar paradigms of the modern movement. These objects are often small in scale, but they should not be underestimated in their ability to be understood as making a significant contribution to the culture of modernism. The following section makes clear how my published works on silver, jewellery and accessories examine this contribution and demonstrates how the application of an interdisciplinary methodology has revealed new insights into this under explored subject area.

Part 2: The Contribution of the Applied and Decorative Arts to the Culture of Interwar Modernism

- Modern Silver: Jean Puiforcat; Erik Magnussen; the Display of Modern Silver in Paris

In her opening remarks at the 2001 international symposium *Modern Art of Metalwork* held at the Bröhan Museum in Berlin, Judy Rudoë stated that there were a number of factors that must be considered in characterizing modern silverware in the early part of the twentieth century.³ Firstly, social and economic changes brought about the disappearance of the servant class. Secondly, the decline of the cook and the rise of 'oven to tableware' put convenience at the forefront of consumers' minds when deciding what containers to buy (Rudoë 2001). Rudoë's comments on the interwar years raised many questions about the poor state of research into modern silver, including the difficulties of researching some of the key makers and manufacturers in Germany, France and the USA either because access to archives was limited or because not enough scholars were asking questions about modern silver.

Rudoë's questions led me to consider many cultural influences on the development of the work of the celebrated French silversmith Jean Puiforcat, a key player in the adoption and promotion of modernism in interwar France. Gail S. Davidson's contribution to the symposium emphasized that his work was influenced by contemporary art trends, mathematics and science (Davidson 2001, 26). Building on this, I decided to account for Puiforcat as someone more than just a highly accomplished Art Deco silversmith. My concern was with his modernist credentials and strong commitment to new aesthetic and conceptual standards in modern

³ The event coincided with the publication of the Museum's illustrated catalogue of modern metalwork (von Kerssenbrock-Krosigk and Kanowski, 2001).

silverware through the adoption of a rigorous approach to form and a rejection of traditional ornamental features (Bliss 2003).⁴

My discussion of the work of Puiforcat assesses his contribution to modernism through the development of his aesthetic, philosophical, cultural, scientific and technical interests. Other authors' concentration on the luxurious aspects of his work, the family trade that he came from, and his biography are limited in explaining the significance of Puiforcat's contribution to modernism (Herbst, 1951; de Bonneville, 1986). Consideration of his contacts with the wider modern movement, as an exhibitor in the Paris exhibitions of 1925 and 1937 and promotion of the modernist approach to design in France (via the UAM and the SAD) casts his work in a new light. Specifically, I argue that Puiforcat's mature work was thoroughly modern in its philosophical conception, ambition and technical realization. This was achieved through his contacts with the Parisian avant-garde, seeking order in his design work through adopting the golden section and other mathematical ratios and developing an approach to the surface treatment of objects, emphasizing smoothness and the use of combinations of traditional and modern materials.

An important aspect of Puiforcat's career was his interest in philosophy and sport. The growing interest in the culture of sport is a notable aspect of interwar modernism, as has been made clearer recently in Bernard Vere's book *Sport and Modernism in the Visual Arts In Europe 1909-1939* (Vere 2018). These interests in the intellectual, the physical and the spectacle of sporting events were equally important in Puiforcat's attempts to present himself as a modern designer with an interest in the themes of contemporary life.

⁴ Published contemporaneously with my piece on Puiforcat was Gail S. Davidson's study of his design drawings in *The Magazine Antiques*. The article's principal focus is on Puiforcat's extensive use of the golden section, whereas my piece is principally concerned with his relationship with modernism (Davidson 2003).

In his work as a sculptor (reflecting his initial training) Puiforcat's two major pieces of 1937, the classically inspired *Sprinter* and *René Descartes* show these interests clearly (see Bliss 2003, 146-7 for images). In examining these connections I draw on the established literature on Puiforcat as well as articles from contemporary magazines and other primary sources such as *Art et Décoration*, *L'Art Vivant* and *L'Art Chrétien*. These sources give a fascinating insight into the interwar art, craft and design scene in Paris. For example, Gaston Varenne's 1925 profile of Puiforcat in *Art et Décoration* demonstrates an interconnectedness in the visual arts of the period which clearly shows that he was able to make a strong impact on the modern design scene as a designer, maker, promoter and, crucially, a thinker (Varenne 1925).

I used the bibliography in Françoise de Bonneville's monograph on Puiforcat to locate and examine the books and articles written about him by his friends and supporters produced both during his career and immediately after his death (de Bonneville 1986). Many of these works repeat familiar information about his life and motivations as a designer, such as the account of his career by the President of the UAM René Herbst (Herbst 1951). Tony Bouilhet's account of Puiforcat's work underplays his aesthetic radicalism in favour of the interest in mathematics and the golden section (Bouilhet 1941). This work takes care to address Puiforcat's output as continuing a long tradition of 'classical' approaches to the creation of form. These aspects, related to the influence of the Romanian mathematician Matila Ghyka, was, I argue, a key way of understanding how this silversmith played a major part in the development of modernism in the applied and decorative arts of the interwar years. His contribution in this area was well known at a time when artists and designers from Picasso to Le Corbusier were exploring 'classical' tendencies in their modernist practices as part of the post-war *rappel à l'ordre*, a cultural movement prompted by Jean Cocteau's essay of the same name (Cocteau, 1926).

Puiforcat's work appears in many of the accounts of modern silverware (Krekel-Aalberse 1989; von Kerssenbrock-Krosigk 2001) but his contribution to modern metalwork was still being underplayed in the 2003 exhibition *Art Deco 1900-39* at the

Victoria and Albert Museum as well as at the subsequent show *Modernism: Designing a New World* at the same venue in 2006 in which no examples of his work were included (Benton, Benton and Wood 2003; Wilk 2006). There are few better proponents of modernism in silver than Puiforcat so one has to conclude that, for the latter show, his work was either too redolent of 'luxury' to suit the exhibition's narrative, or that Puiforcat had already been typecast as an Art Deco designer by the curators of the 2003 show.

Puiforcat's approach to embracing the contemporary spirit of interwar Parisian modernism was not to follow those who were content to arbitrarily import modish machine age features into design. Rather, the spirit of modernism was to be found in the rigorous application of line, volume and surface treatments. This approach could be applied to something as seemingly inconsequential as a golf trophy or a series of complex platonic forms making up the elements of a tea service (See Bliss 2003, 142-3 for images). By drawing attention to these aspects of his work, I redefine Puiforcat as, fundamentally, a modernist designer aware of the contiguities of the traditional and the new in the expression of a sense of modernity.

At the aforementioned exhibition *Art Deco 1910-39*, one of the first objects visitors were confronted with was a spectacular tea and coffee service made for the Gorham Manufacturing Company of Rhode Island in 1927. It was promoted as *The Lights and Shadows of Manhattan* and designed by the Danish-born silversmith Erik Magnussen. One of the features of this set is that it was originally displayed, in isolation, in the window of the Gorham store on Fifth Avenue, New York (see Bliss 2006, 114 for image). Rudoë pointed out that 'no-one to my knowledge has looked at the history of the commercial display of silver, whether in galleries that specialize in silver alone or in department stores' (Rudoë 2001, 4). I considered this observation and from this developed a theme in my research, whether assessing the impact of the display strategies of museums, national and international exhibitions, trade bodies, individual companies or even individual shops, I produced work that addressed this gap (Bliss 2007, Bliss 2019).

Surprisingly, due to its notoriety, uniqueness of form and ubiquity as an image, Magnussen's *Lights and Shadows* had never been subjected to detailed analysis as an object. Kaplan discusses the vicissitudes of its reception, the influence of Cubism and its relationship to the 'skyscraper style' (Kaplan 2003, 343). Similar general accounts of the set can be found in a number of other works (Venable 1997, Carpenter 1997, Stern 2005). However, no attempt had been made to analyse it in terms of any possible relationship to the visual application of Cubism in three dimensions. I brought out these qualities by examining the pieces in relation to the use of reflections, the expression of movement and the modernist idea of simultaneity in the article *Cubistic Claptrap? Erik Magnussen's The Lights and Shadows of Manhattan of 1927*. Here, I explore the relationship between form and aesthetics employed by the designer to create, I argue, one of the most convincing re-locations of the cubist sensibility to three-dimensional utilitarian objects. In exploiting the reflective surfaces of modern silver, Magnussen was able to go further than many of the so-called cubist sculptors in this respect. My examination of the vicissitudes of Magnussen's service, including its failure as a commercial proposition, draws on a range of primary and secondary sources, together with archive material from the Gorham Manufacturing Company of Rhode Island.

The uncompromisingly modern design language of Magnussen's pieces was heavily criticized in the New York press in 1928 (Pilgrim 2001, 294). The clear sense that they represented an 'un-American' modernist style and that European modernist forms derived from cubist painting (never a major feature of American early modernist art) had been imported to tell an American story was a significant bone of contention. Later that year, Gorham attempted to redress this PR disaster by employing Magnussen to design the *Modern American* range of silverware which, they point out, was conceived in a much more 'American' spirit, featuring practical, utilitarian and standardized forms. The flyer for the range was an important source for me to articulate and analyse this shift in the company's positioning of its modern silverware, that is to say from the adoption of full-blown Cubist aesthetics in *The Lights and Shadows* to more restrained, practical forms. Examining the flyer, I was

able to construct a narrative of the shift in the company's design policy by analyzing the illustrations and the accompanying texts (Bliss 2006, 117-9). This revealed that the company were prepared to categorically state that in the *Modern American*, consumers were getting something that was definitely 'the silver of America...not of Europe' (Brown University, 2003). Dianne H. Pilgrim writes that 'Americans rejected a good deal of early modernism because it was not functional, straightforward, or simple – characteristics that had appealed to Americans since the seventeenth century' (Pilgrim 2001). This view resonates with much of the text in the *Modern American* flyer, leading me to the conclusion that this range, departing from the formal 'European' radicalism of *The Lights and Shadows of Manhattan* was clearly 'more River Rouge than rive gauche' (Bliss 2006, 118).

The implications of Magnussen's radical work for re-thinking modernist silver were the most significant aspects of my research. Working from two major studies of Cubist architecture and design (Margolius 1979; Bois 1997) I identified the way in which, formally, the faceting of an object (a visual trope of this style) can, through the use of a reflective surface, express much more satisfactorily the concerns of Cubism in three-dimensional form. My argument is that 'in its evocation of movement, simultaneity and the contrasting and shifting perspectives of the modern city it is hard to think of any piece of applied art from the period which surpasses it in its ambition' (Bliss 2006, 119). The theme of reflection is one that is further examined in two of my subsequent publications on jewellery (Bliss 2013; Bliss 2019). In addition, the aforementioned theme of display forms a major part of the latter publication in relation to jewellery and modernism.

The opening of the new displays of Art Nouveau and Art Deco design at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, in 2006 presented an opportunity to review the new museological *parcours* which, according to the museum itself combined 'a chronological route with a study gallery destined to deepen the approach to the works around chosen themes and new insights' (Les Arts Décoratifs, 2006). The galleries had been closed for so long (10 years) that the expectations for the new displays were high. However, of interest to me was the way that the new displays

were arranged to help tell the story of modern silver objects and other pieces of metalwork. The promised study gallery was, indeed, laid out to compare similarly functioning objects in a non-chronological way. The rest of the museum's displays were carefully laid out in a series of period rooms to convey a story of the role of the modern decorative arts in the lives of the *haute bourgeoisie*. Subsequent to the opening of the new displays, my article for *The Silver Journal* argues that, in each room, metal objects were used to facilitate this narrative, telling a conventional story of the move from nervous *fin de siècle* novelty using combinations of precious and non-precious materials by Bapst and Falize, Bonvallet and Cardheilac, to the whole hearted adoption of the modernist aesthetic by the likes of Puiforcat, Tétard and Després (Bliss 2007). As is noted in my piece, the Art Deco rooms contain objects that, ultimately, show silverware as being 'fatally challenged by a combination of social change, economic instability and the impact of modernist design theory' (81). Nevertheless, as I argue, the objects in silver and other metals, placed as they are alongside the furniture, decorative and applied arts of the period 1900-40 clearly proclaimed their modernist credentials and their connectedness to a wider set of cultural circumstances that their placement in the still all-too-common rows of display cases and vitrines could never properly achieve.

My research on modern silver places such objects at the heart of an understanding of the modernist cultural milieu revealing that, far from representing a limited and hidebound practice with nothing to say about the modern world and the experience of modernity, objects in silver were capable of eloquently articulating and containing these themes. As a result of these publications, it became clear that what was needed was a similar exploration of jewellery in relation to the culture of modernism.

- Two Essays on Interwar Jewellery: Investigating Modernism, Modernity and Jewellery Wearing

The catalyst for the work undertaken on my research monograph *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism* was the publication of two essays on interwar jewellery. The first of these, *Charlotte Perriand, Ball-Bearings, and Modernist Jewellery* I produced for the interdisciplinary journal *Modernism/modernity* (Bliss 2013). The issue containing my article includes essays on literature, film, abstraction, modernism in China and, very pertinent to my research, Marius Hentea's *Monocles on Modernity*, a study of the cultural significance of the monocle as a sign in modernist culture and counter-culture (Hentea 2013). One of the illustrations in my article, Marianne Brandt's *The Studio Reflected in Spheres* of 1928-9, was selected by the editor for the issue's cover, giving added prominence to only the second article on jewellery to appear in the journal since its foundation in 1994.⁵

The second article was published in *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture* (Bliss 2015). The journal publishes new insights into the rapidly expanding discourses around fashion, society and the body. On the recommendation of the editor of *Fashion Theory*, this piece was translated into Russian and included in an extensive collection of original essays in the book *Теория моды (Fashion Theory)* in Autumn 2016, published by Moscow's *New Literary Observer*.

Both articles focus on wearing jewellery, but from different perspectives. The article on Charlotte Perriand discusses the role of jewellery in the promotion of identity, specifically her wearing of a necklace resembling ball-bearings in the late 1920s when she was establishing herself as a designer and working at Le Corbusier's Paris atelier. Through focusing on a single object, it explains Perriand's interest in modernist culture and demonstrates that this strategic wearing of a particular piece of jewellery made it possible for her to make a statement about

⁵ The article, Enda Duffy and Maurizia Boscagli's *Selling Jewels: Modernist Commodification and Disappearance as Style* focuses on the jewel as a sign in modern literature, specifically of the desire on the part of various protagonists 'to have them disappear' (Duffy and Boscagli 2007, 189).

herself as a modern woman, dedicated to promoting the machine aesthetic. Further, through an analysis of the object itself, I demonstrate how the necklace's form and material qualities exemplify particular aspects of modernist aesthetics. The nature of the reflective surface, the iconic shape suggesting ball-bearings (the ball-bearing, as an industrial machine part, is a trope of modernist visual culture), Perriand's interest in all things metallic, her connections and friendships with avant-garde artists, designers and filmmakers and her clear intention to be taken seriously as a modern female designer are key themes drawn from a wide contextual understanding of modernism in the visual arts.

This is the only substantial analysis of this iconic modernist necklace in any language. It is also unique in its placing of a single item of jewellery at the heart of a sustained discourse on modernist aesthetics and the impact of the new visual theory. The origins of my interest in the piece stem from seeing it displayed in the exhibition *Bijoux Art Deco et Avant Garde* at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris (2009) and, two years later, *Charlotte Perriand 1903-99: From Photography to Interior Design* at the Petit Palais. Publications emerging from both exhibitions contain short discussions of the necklace, focusing on its wearing as a symbol of Perriand's interest in modernism, but both lack detailed study of the connections between the object and wider modernist culture (Mouillefarine and Possémé 2009; Barsac 2011). Perriand scholar Mary McCleod has discussed the famous image of Perriand, wearing the ball-bearings necklace and reclining on the *LC4 chaise longue*, but my inclusion of the 2007 photographic installation by artist Sadie Murdoch, in which she explicitly references the ball-bearings necklace as part of the myth-making of Perriand's association with 1920s modernist Paris, was a way of showing that the necklace still has great contemporary relevance to discussions of the use of jewellery as signifier of identity (McCleod 1987; McCleod 2003; see Bliss 2013, 186 for image).

The article also demonstrates a subsequent shift in Perriand's attitudes to the machine aesthetic by charting her changing tastes in jewellery. In the early 1930s she began to make jewellery out of organic materials and abandoned her ball-bearings

necklace in a move that mirrors what Remy Golan refers to as a general 'organic entrenchment' in French modernism (Golan 1995, IX-X). Using images of her later necklaces and of Perriand sun bathing and mountaineering, I demonstrate how this change of approach to jewellery wearing symbolized her change of direction as a designer and, consequently, her habitus (Bliss 2013, 183-6). As I state in the article's concluding remarks, Charlotte Perriand's ball-bearings necklace has a significant part to play 'in the formation of the designer's identity as a modern woman and as a portable working demonstration of modernist aesthetics' (Bliss 2013, 187). It was this combination of the idea of identity expressed through the wearing of jewellery that led to my interest in how, at the same time as Perriand, others were negotiating their strategies of personal adornment and how these accessories were worn and performed.

My article *L'Intelligence de la Parure: Notes on Jewelry Wearing in the 1920s* analyses the practices of personal adornment in the context of the changing roles of women (the New Woman in particular), the advice handed out by fashion magazines to its readers, the relationship of jewellery to the new fashions of the 1920s and, as an extension of the ideas in the previous article, the use of jewellery as expression of individual identity in Europe and America (Bliss 2015). It argues that, while modernist style jewellery did exist, the majority of jewellery remained relatively traditional. What changed in the 1920s were *attitudes* to the way jewellery was thought of, what role it could perform, how (and by whom) it could be purchased and, crucially, what wearing it could say about the wearer.

Through the examination of texts from a variety of primary and secondary sources, I establish that one of the key changes in 1920s fashion was the use of accessories to signal an increasing degree of independence on the part of the modern woman (Dayton, 1929; Bell 1976; Roberts, 1993; Bard 1998; Nochlin 2011; Bliss 2015, 7-10). I argue that no longer should jewellery buying and wearing be considered as an extension of a man's 'ownership' of a woman. The title of the article comes from a little-known piece in the magazine *La Femme de France* for February 20, 1927 entitled

L'Art de Porter les Bijoux, Ou L'Intelligence de la Parure [The Art of Wearing Jewellery, or, the Intelligence of Adornment] (Beauregard 1927). This text discusses the strategies of personal adornment from the perspective of jewellery as a central feature or starting point of an outfit, rather than something that was seen as an afterthought. It seemed to me that this idea needed to be pursued with reference to Cristina Giorcelli's contention that 'whether the accessory is an absolute sine qua non (like shoes) or a non-essential item (like a brooch), it has ended up becoming the quintessence of fashion and market forces' (Giorcelli 2011, 4).

Much of the material discussed in my article is considered for the first time in the discussion of jewellery. The argument presented is the starting point for a new discussion of jewellery studies in the context of the culture of modernism and modernity in the interwar period. Whilst recognizing that jewellery is subject to the forces of fashion, I argue that it should also be considered that it has a symbolic life of its own in helping to form and perform the identity of the wearer. Therefore, I present a case for the role of jewellery in forming multiple identities as part of the increasing ability of individuals to move between gender roles associated with androgyny, ultra-femininity and points in between. In this respect, the function of jewellery as accessory becomes an important way of moving the discussion of interwar jewellery on from its position as decoration, ornament and wearable art towards a consideration of jewellery wearing (and not wearing) as part of the practice of embracing modernity and an increasing sense of mobility - that is, a sense of liberation, self-determination and personal exploration.

- *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism 1918-1940: A Study of Jewellery in Relation to the Culture of Modernism*

The articles discussed above marked a new departure point in jewellery studies from which to explore the connections between modernism, modernity and the design, wearing, representation, performance and display of interwar jewellery. This was to find its fullest expression in my research monograph *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism* (Bliss 2019). In this work, I use an interdisciplinary approach to the study of jewellery which builds on the initial investigations into the subject carried out in the two journal articles of 2013 and 2015.

The book presents a cultural history of the relationship between jewellery and modernism in Europe and America, with a particular focus on France and Germany. The text features a close examination of the relationship between jewellery and modernist culture and places jewellery studies at the heart of an understanding of the culture of modernism in the period 1918-1940. It is the first study of any length in English to do this.

Each of the five chapters examines a different aspect of jewellery made, worn or performed in the period 1918-1940. The chapters discuss wearing (and not wearing) jewellery, jewellery and the New Woman, modernism and modernity, representation and the display of jewellery. In adopting this structure, it was possible to discuss jewellery from a variety of perspectives as it appeared in both the personal and the public realm. It is my contention that a fuller understanding of jewellery objects can only be gained when we consider the relationship between the wearer, the viewer, the cultural circumstances in which the objects are produced and consumed as well as the way these objects are displayed and mediated. As an example, my study of the jewellery store in the 1930s reveals how commercial hard-headedness was allied to modern design techniques to provide new ways of experiencing the viewing and purchasing of jewellery in increasingly open semi-

public spaces. Thus, the consuming of jewellery becomes as much a spatial as it was an individual act (Bliss 2019, 162-170).

The book emphasizes the contribution that jewellery has made to the culture of modernism, arguing that a fuller understanding of interwar modernism can be deepened by the inclusion of jewellery in its narratives. Historically, the analysis of jewellery in histories of modernism has been very marginal and, in addressing this absence, my work offers new insights into the jewellery of this period. Importantly, it demonstrates how this may be achieved using an interdisciplinary method of research and analysis. Such an examination of jewellery allows for the consideration of issues such as identity, consumption, gender politics and modernist aesthetic practices as they become an essential part of the wider culture of modernism and modernity.

Crucial to my own thinking as a jewellery scholar has been an effort to study the cultural manifestations of jewellery as a practice which deserves its own space, free of the fear of it being regarded as the poor relation of art history, fashion or design studies. In doing so I have demonstrated, for example, the contribution of jewellery to the development of some ground breaking avant-garde practices in the form of Elsa Triolet's collaboration with Man Ray (Bliss 2019, 136-40). Similarly, my study shows that new spaces for thinking about jewellery can allow objects not normally able (or granted permission) to rub shoulders with the paradigmatic examples from art history to be treated more seriously. For example, I maintain that Marianne Brandt's earring made for the Bauhaus Metal Party in 1929 is as good an example of the use of modernist montage techniques in three-dimensional form that one can find anywhere – both in a formal and/or conceptual sense. The fact that it had a brief 'life' as a wearable object does not diminish its importance as a piece of modernist art (Bliss 2019, 113-7).

Before further outlining the approach to researching and writing the book, it will be useful to discuss some precedents in the literature and how I have identified gaps and omissions in their treatment of the subject area.

(i) A Review of the Literature

Previous work in the field of interwar jewellery includes numerous books on Art Deco and Art Deco jewellery. Most continue to be aimed at audiences looking for strong visual content or for monographs on individual jewellers, collections and manufacturers. Leaving aside the general introductory texts on Art Deco produced by almost every art publisher, most texts are large format, expensive and often have their origins as catalogues (or essays for catalogues) produced to complement national or international exhibitions (Gabardi 1986; Raulet 2002; Mouillefarine and Possémé 2009). They are often excellent visual sources with useful bibliographies, but very few of them attempt a critical or wider contextual approach to the subject of jewellery in the culture of modernism. In contrast to discussions of the New Jewellery of the late 1960s onwards, those looking for a wider, contextualized account of modernism and jewellery of the interwar period have not been well served. Indeed, there is a striking lack of published material on the subject.

In characterizing the position of current research on jewellery, adornment and modernism, three groups of prior works can be identified. The first group are concerned directly with the study of jewellery as a modernist practice or have emerged from accounts of individual jewellers working in a modernist idiom (Holzach 2008, Mouillefarine and Possémé 2009, Gabardi 2009). The second are works that are concerned with outlining important cultural, historical and sociological trends of the interwar period (Roberts 1994, Otto and Rocco 2012, Bard 1998). The last group are works that have identified or promoted particular methodologies for discussing jewellery, accessories and their display which can be regarded as particularly applicable to the study of the interwar period (Giorcelli 2011, Pointon 2009, Gronberg 1998).

Cornelie Holzach's 2008 work *Art Déco: Jewellery and Accessories. A Style for a New World* discusses key examples from the interwar period (many of them from the collection of the *Schmuckmuseum*, Pforzheim, which the author curates) and relates them to the general context of contemporary culture (modernism, costume jewellery,

fashion, 'metal art'). The English and German text contains short essays but does not include a substantial critical discourse, although it serves to emphasize the neglected position of the German costume jewellers Fahrner and Bengel both of whom produced affordable ranges of jewellery in a kind of hybrid modernist idiom in the 1920s and 1930s (Holzach 2008). I refer to this in the text of my research monograph and, as it addresses itself to jewellery of a 'new world', made this a key starting point in extending my study beyond this familiar territory of jewellery studies based on particular collections (Bliss 2019, 105).

Two important works from 2009 include Mouillefarine and Possémé's book *Art Deco Jewelry: Modernist Masterworks and Their Makers* and Melissa Gabardi's *Jean Després: Jeweler, Maker and Designer of the Machine Age*. Here, the emphasis is on the objects, makers, design catalogues and markets, with contextualizing material on the avant-garde culture of interwar Paris. This is conveyed through the provision of high quality images of jewellery, archival photographs and mostly descriptive and biographical text. As in many works of this type, individual examples are not analysed in any depth. This is a deficiency I address in my research by subjecting key works by, for example, Charlotte Perriand, Jean Fouquet and Marianne Brandt to careful analysis of their key relationship to modernism and the idea of modernity (Bliss 2013; Bliss 2019, 85-7; Bliss 2019, 111-7).

Mouillefarine and Ristelhueber's 2005 book *Raymond Templier: Le Bijou Moderne* (which remains un-translated into English) is an extensive study of the work of Templier and includes contextual material relating to modernism, Templier's rivals, the Parisian jewellery trade and ways in which Templier's work was promoted. The book considers his work in relation to the culture of fashion, modernism and modernity and includes rare archive material, painting a clear picture of the workings of the Templier firm during the interwar period. However, the important poetic texts produced by Blaise Cendrars for the Templier firm in 1928 are illustrated but the *poetry* of Cendrars in which he understands jewellery in relation to the modern world is not analysed. I undertake this analysis, along with a consideration

of the possible poetic nuances of French modernist jewellery and its relationship with the concept of modernity (Bliss 2019, 96-103).

Both Mary Louise Roberts' 1994 work *Civilisation Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France 1917-1927* and Elizabeth Otto and Vanessa Rocco's 2012 collection *The New Woman International: Representations in Photography and Film from the 1870s through the 1960s* provide extensive accounts of the way in which the representation of the New Woman was achieved in both literary and visual culture. However, only fashion and clothing is discussed in detail in relation to adornment. Neither is jewellery extensively discussed in Christine Bard's *Les Garçonnes: Modes et Fantômes des Années Folles*, but the framework of her discussion is crucial in understanding the position of gender in European and American fashion in the 1920s. Chapter one of *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism* responds to and extends this by demonstrating how an integrated discussion of gender, fashion, accessories, and cultural and social history can be an effective method of characterizing an epoch by alternating the discussion between the general and the particular. Bard's use of literary examples (the work of Victor Margueritte and Colette) proved to be influential to my way of working as I adopt a strategy of deploying examples from interwar literature to draw out contemporary attitudes to jewellery and jewellery wearing. In *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism*, the subsection 'Literary types' includes discussion of the work of Colette, but also that of F. Scott Fitzgerald (Bliss 2019, 18-22).

Cristina Giorcelli's introduction to the book *Habits of Being 1: Accessorizing the Body* (2011) provides a framework for a new understanding of the idea of the accessory in modern (and modernist) dress. It draws on a number of different social, cultural and political perspectives in order to outline the formation of identity through the wearing of accessories. I developed Giorcelli's characterization of the accessorized body as a means of outlining the strategies of body adornment adopted by the New Woman and by Charlotte Perriand and Nancy Cunard (See Bliss 2019, 9-18; Bliss 2019, 41-76). Marcia Pointon's introduction to her *Brilliant Effects: A Cultural History of Gem Stones and Jewellery* contains an influential commentary on her approach to the study of jewellery by concisely outlining some of the methodological approaches

taken by key commentators such as the sociologist Thorstein Veblen, psychologist J. C. Flügel, semiotician Roland Barthes and writer on culture Bill Brown. The work does not discuss jewellery of the twentieth century but, in clearly stating her preference for adopting a cultural, rather than empirical, approach to the subject, Pointon identifies some of the issues that have also been of concern to me. For example, Pointon highlights how in an otherwise eminent art historical discussion of Rembrandt's painting *The Toilet of Bathsheba* of 1645 the model is referred to as 'naked' by the author in spite of the fact that she is wearing a lot of jewellery (Pointon 2009, 3). Why is jewellery rendered invisible to the eye of the scholar here? In *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism*, I highlight how, in the case of the painter Christian Schad and the photographer Yva, jewellery is used on the body either to heighten erotic effects or, conversely, enhance the physicality of the otherwise naked modernist female body through showcasing different forms of body adornment (Bliss 2019, 31; Bliss 2019, 124-5). The relationship between jewellery, its uses and the way it is represented is a crucial one to explore as part of a cultural approach to jewellery studies.

Tag Gronberg's work *Designs on Modernity: Exhibiting the city in 1920s Paris* remains a key text for understanding the idea of modernity in relation to the public face of interwar French design (Gronberg 1998). It discusses fashion, architecture and the city in its attempt to characterise the idea of modernity. The section on mannequins provided the impetus for my examination of their use in the display of jewellery in the commercial arena as well as by the Surrealists in the context of avant-garde exhibitions (Bliss 2019, 152-161). It is also a key text for understanding the role of design in the formation of contemporary cultural attitudes towards modern society. Gronberg's discussion of the importance of the Paris interwar exhibitions led to my research into the ways in which interwar jewellery exhibitions encouraged 'ocular' consumption alongside actual consumption practices as well as representing important milestones in the development of attitudes to modernity (Bliss 2019, 181-2).

I have contested, extended and applied ideas in the above works by constructing a focused discussion of interwar jewellery which addresses issues of gender, identity, modernism, the experience of modernity, the public and private realms of jewellery, fashion, accessories, the body, representation and display. The methods I used to achieve this are outlined below.

(ii) Reflections on Methodology

It is often taken for granted that in art and design history, perspectives are used from other disciplines quite freely. Indeed, in Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello's approach to material culture studies 'inter- and multidisciplinary are always part of the study of objects' (2015, 5). However, both methods can be considered to have some significant differences. From their position in the social sciences, Peter van den Besselaar and Gaston Heimericks offer an interesting view on the differences between multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research:

In multidisciplinary research, the subject under study is approached from different angles, using different disciplinary perspectives. However, neither the theoretical perspectives nor the findings of the various disciplines are integrated in the end [...] An interdisciplinary approach, on the other hand, creates its own theoretical, conceptual and methodological identity. Consequently, the results of an interdisciplinary study of a certain problem are more coherent, and integrated (2001, 706).

Methodologically, therefore, an interdisciplinary approach actively seeks resolution of ideas by bringing a traditionally disparate set of perspectives together. I have found it to be a particularly valuable way of writing about jewellery and characterises the approach taken in *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism*. Here I work towards an integrated conclusion, reflecting on all the themes discussed, so that the cultural and social mobility of jewellery objects can be shown to be part of the discourse of modernism.

By contrast, the authors of the recent book *Jewelry Matters* offer a 'multidisciplinary' approach to the study of jewellery (Unger and Leeuwen 2017, 521). Focusing on the jewellery collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the text considers the relationship between art history, fashion theory, anthropology and 'the matter of jewellery' as four frameworks in which to understand the history and further development of jewellery studies. The authors state:

in this age of far-reaching specialization in academia, the need to combine insights and strive for mutual connections, is greater than ever [...] Insight into a multifaceted and sometimes quite tricky subject develops through combining perceptions, through teamwork and through standing on the shoulders of the brightest predecessors (2017, 241).

This is an interesting way of articulating a method in relation to jewellery studies and, as in my own work, points to ways of bringing together insights from different subjects to shed light on the meaning of objects of adornment. *Jewellery in the Age of Modernism*, however, demonstrates a more fluid and integrated approach by developing themes within and across chapters. For example, the theme of jewellery in relation to fashion and dress is explored in all five chapters, but never treated as a separate discourse. Further, the discussion of the representation of jewellery in Chapter Four is constructed using insights from studies of the body, gender, photographic and visual theory, film studies, and the history of dress (Bliss 2019, 119-150). Others, such as David Ward and Liesbeth den Besten, have written about the inter-relationship between jewellery and photography, but their focus has been on the period from the late 1960s onwards (Ward 1983; den Besten 2012, 33-45). My work focuses specifically on jewellery, modernist photography and film to produce the first account of this relationship in the interwar period, a study which reveals that 'jewellery figures as the inspiration for a number of avant-garde experiments in visual culture and, through its signification of both the extraordinary and the everyday, makes its relevance on screen and in the printed image vital' (Bliss 2019 149).

Further, my monograph demonstrates that the subject of objects need not always be bounded by a force field of theoretical orthodoxy. Rather, it exhibits what has been described by Ian Woodward as a 'cultural approach' to material culture studies, which:

provides a much needed corrective to the modern assumption that objects enslave and empty-out via rationalization, exploitation and technological determinism [...] The cultural approach maintains that in order to understand the contours of culture even the most banal or trivial objects need attention (Woodward 2007, 108).

As an instance of this approach, I examine the jewellery objects owned by the characters Alain and Camille in Colette's 1933 story *The Cat*, to pursue the idea that the 'humble' object (in this case Alain's disparate collection of old and broken items of jewellery versus Camille's spectacular diamond engagement ring) is used by the author to make a poignant observation on the nature of the couple's crumbling relationship (Bliss 2019, 21). The connection between the object and the wearer of jewellery is a complex mixture of subject-object relations, often transcending aesthetics but always saying something about the wearer's position in society and in the culture. This is made clear, for example, in my discussion of Nancy Cunard's highly controversial use of African jewellery to perform a critique of the values of her class and its attitudes to race (Bliss 2019, 57-76).

Gerritsen and Riello, describing recent progress in the evolution of writing about material culture, consider that, as an interdisciplinary practice, a single unifying methodology of material culture studies is not possible. Giving the example of studies of consumption, they state that:

in their attempt to understand people's desires and preferences, historians have re-evaluated the significance of material artefacts. This has led to the investigation of a series of themes ranging from the everyday to luxury, politics, trade and innovation; modernization, gender, domesticity and comfort, fashion, architecture and the built environment, to name but a few (2015, 4-5).

Given the plethora of possibilities for writing about material culture, it is perhaps no surprise that they conclude that 'there is no single way of engaging with material culture' (5). This lack of a universal methodology is, I would argue, a way of liberating the study of artefacts from the straitjacket of entrenched positions that may have once offered radical readings but have become ossified or, even worse, solipsistic.

Ironically, of the twenty-five essays in Gerritsen and Riello's collection, which range from Qing dynasty ceramics to Lycra® and many points in between, not one of them is concerned with jewellery. It is a significant absence because jewellery and accessories and their virtually universal adoption as personal adornments are capable of telling us almost everything about human culture – our lives, loves, pre-occupations, histories, tragedies, hopes, joys, paranoias, affiliations and dissensions. As the celebrated Swiss anthropologist Eugène Pittard put it, adornment 'has been classified as a minor art, but historically it was the first, and one may consider that from it – or from part of it – the other arts were born'. (Brincard 1984, 10). It is in the spirit of Pittard's observation that I have developed research that allows us to re-position jewellery studies at the heart of our understanding of the culture of the modern world.

Part 3: Concluding remarks – a summary of the original contribution to knowledge made by the research

As a body of work, my publications are characterised by an urge to investigate and redress the marginalization of the applied and decorative arts in the discourses of modernism. In exploring this territory I have produced substantial, detailed and scholarly works that synthesize research material from a wide variety of sources to demonstrate that items of silver and jewellery can take their place in discussions of modernist visual and material practices of the interwar period. In this way it has been made clear that, for example, Erik Magnussen's *Lights and Shadows of Manhattan*, Charlotte Perriand's ball-bearings necklace and Marianne Brandt's earring for the Bauhaus Metal Party can be seen to contain, communicate and embody modernist culture in as profound a way as more conventionally celebrated modernist examples. I have conclusively demonstrated that interwar silver and jewellery can be understood as operating at the heart of the discourses of modernism as well as contributing to an understanding of the experience of modernity.

My research has shown that the efforts of designers, makers and manufacturers to present their work in the applied arts as, specifically, 'modern' is complemented by the integration of these works into avant-garde practices of representation in painting, photography and film. I have demonstrated that domestic objects, jewellery and accessories played a vital part in both the experimental and the commercial traditions of modern display techniques. In addition, I argue that these objects bring a sense of intimacy to the practices and experiences of modernism that can be overlooked if we continue to focus on modernism's major protagonists and exemplars. The use of objects in the process of creating a sense of self has significance in the field of material and visual culture and I have established that jewellery has a particularly important part to play in our understanding of the relationship between the object and the self in modernist culture.

Finally, my research has shed light on the way objects are conceived, deployed, represented, displayed and considered in relation to the politics of gender as well as a pervasive and increasing sense of mobility in relation to interwar culture. I have achieved this by sourcing, analyzing and connecting a wide-range of international and under explored primary and secondary research material and by examining ideas from a variety of critical perspectives in the development of an interdisciplinary methodology. Applied to the synthesis and analysis of my research material, this method has led to a fuller, more rounded understanding of the culture of modernism in relation to domestic objects and items of personal adornment. Using this integrative approach to the study of a variety of cultural circumstances, individual objects and representations, I have opened up a new field of enquiry in which such objects of material culture can permanently occupy a prominent position in the discourses of modernism.

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[My own works are listed at the beginning of this document]

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