

CUT IN  
THE  
*Hand Engravers Association*  
of GREAT BRITAIN  
CLERKENWELL

**Anastasia Young**

Jeweller, Hand Engraver and Writer



Interviewed by Lucy Moseley  
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## **Early life and learning:**

Anastasia was born in 1976, in Stirling, Scotland. She had no early awareness of hand engraving but was privy to arts and crafts in general enjoying art at school as well as crafts like quilting, knitting, and lacemaking. She took up hand engraving so that she could create certain designs on jewellery she was making. She had been etching numbers on a piece and thought it would be better to engrave them and so she set about learning how to do so. Anastasia learnt to engrave by taking a three day short course at Holts Academy of Jewellery which was run by Emmet Smith, who himself was taught by Ray Wilkins at R H Wilkins.

## **Career:**

Anastasia started her career with a degree in Jewellery Design at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design graduating in 2001. Between 2002 and 2004 she completed an MA in Goldsmithing, Silversmithing, Metalwork and Jewellery at the Royal College of Art. She then moved into teaching in London at places including Central Saint Martins and Morley College. Alongside teaching she has written books for Quarto Publishing and set up her own business making and selling jewellery. Several of her jewellery pieces are engraved.

She tends to engrave on silver and sometimes on gold. She engraves her own work often with numbers and sometimes with initials. Anastasia feels that engraving adds a traditional element to her modern contemporary style of jewellery design. She works alone in a fully equipped home studio. She tends to engrave on metal flat and then form it afterwards. Most of her work is done over two days a week and the other days are spent teaching.

One of the main difficulties Anastasia faces is a lack of time. She finds it difficult to find the time to make the pieces that she would like to and she does not have as much time to practice engraving as she would like. She stays motivated because she enjoys what she does; she feels a compulsion to make things and likes the instant feedback from making something with her hands. Anastasia feels that making is technical problem solving for which the design process poses the questions.

She has completed many memorable projects. She made a pair of 18 carat gold rings with the design derived from watch and music box movements. She also really enjoyed engraving the paperweight for the Cut In Clerkenwell project as it was the first time she had done something so pictorial.

She received recognition for her engraving when she had completed her course at Holts Academy of Jewellery: she entered and won their Jewellery and Design annual award in 2005. She has also won a Silver award for a brooch at the Goldsmiths' Craft and Design Awards in 2013. Anastasia says that, given her time again, she would definitely join the profession again.

Anastasia passes her knowledge onto others a lot and has been employed to teach by Central Saint Martins, Morley College, City Lit and UCA Farnham. She has also written books which instruct people on how to make jewellery: *The Guide to Gemstone Settings; Styles and Techniques* (A & C Black, 2012); *The Workbench Guide to Jewellery Techniques* (Thames & Hudson, 2010); *The Jewellery Materials Sourcebook* (A & C Black, 2008). Two of these books contain instructions on hand engraving and have been translated into seven languages. She has not taught others how to engrave though.

### **Anecdotes, interesting characters and stories:**

Anastasia has been tutored by Emmet Smith and has met other engravers through the Hand Engravers Association at a day event put on at London Metropolitan University.

Anastasia has had links with Clerkenwell. She had a bench in Clerkenwell Workshops between 2000 and 2002; she trained at Holts Academy of Jewellery which is in Hatton Garden; she has exhibited in Clerkenwell; and she trained at Central Saint Martins which is close by.

She believes that hand engraving will continue in the future but notes there are too few engravers in the country at present. She thinks that short courses and adult education will help maintain its future as mainstream education appears not to be keen to teach these techniques anymore. Events like Cut in Clerkenwell really help.

Anastasia notes that recent technological developments in the profession include the Gravermax (pneumatic graver) but points out that engraving is a historical technique which does not need many tools nor much space.



Trophy Wife Trophy, 2012



Music Box Ring, 2006