

# EXERCISE; - DESIGN IDENTITY

To design jewellery - it is really helpful to first think about styles and ideas that appeal most to you.

Start collecting ideas and images - from jewellery, from art, from magazines, from the shops, and try and identify what it is about each idea or image that most appeals to you.

**TIP** - To be most successful, work with what you like most, what you enjoy making most, what is meaningful to you, or what you would like to own or wear.

Having, or being aware of your own design identity, or preferences, can help you to create new designs, and help to focus your energy in a single direction.

This is not a static process however - you don't have to decide on something and then never do anything else...

Your design identity can change over time - this is just a starting point!

This activity will take you through some ideas to help shape your own personal design identity - it is a little like a general design process for a single piece, or collection, but you are thinking more widely - about your interests and preferences in general, not just for the next design you create...

## VISUALS

Keep your eyes open as you're out and about, reading magazines, browsing online, shopping etc and start to collect images together. You could make a mood board, just keep loose cuttings, collect images in a digital folder, or save images on Pinterest. As creating is such a hands on process, working with physical images or items suits me best, but work however you prefer. Paper images mean you can easily crop and re-arrange them, or block out certain parts without needing photo editing skills or software. If you have photo software however, digital images mean that you can re-size images and print them at a size to suit you.

**Collect at least 25 images for a good start to get going from - they don't have to be jewellery - just shapes, styles, colours that fascinate you.**

## TECHNICAL

Now (if you're a maker) think about the jewellery that you enjoy making, and the skills you have so far - do these match your design style/s? If they don't, that's fine - you can outsource making skills if you choose, or you can work to build up your own skills, depending on your priorities.

Do you have a leaning towards a particular style of working, or a particular material / group of materials? The techniques and materials you use, can help to focus in your style, as of course different techniques are better suited to different types of designs. Feed

these into your brainstorm...

Do you need to learn different techniques / learn how to work with different materials? As a student, learning making, or design techniques, you will be working on projects initially for the skills they will give you, rather than the design ideas, but can you adapt some of the skills you've learnt and use them or combine in different ways for your own designs?

## **BRAINSTORM**

**Be as specific as you can** - if you're interested in nature, for example - what aspect of it - do you love the woods, the water, animals, particular groups of animals.....

- List 5 topics that you're interested in - think about what you enjoy in your everyday life; do you love music, vampire stories, architecture, astrology, fashion
- List 5 activities that you enjoy doing in your free time - do you love computer games, gardening, theatre, going to the beach?
- Look at your visuals from the previous step.... Can you list 5 things or key words that draw them together?
- Make a list of reasons WHY you love making / designing jewellery
- Make a list of 5 key words that express something about the style you like
- Make a collage of 5 colours to create a colour palette for you to work with
- Make a note of what key ideas / shapes / colours / styles etc start to stand out as important to you

## **REFINING**

From your brainstorms - start to focus in - make it more specific, highlight just a few details - what is MOST important or interesting to you, and which you would be excited to work with

Consider colour, materials, shapes, styles, motifs, scale, and anything other categories that seem useful.

The more personal you can make it, the more unique and interesting your designs can be - if it relates to what you love and what sparks your interest, then it will be easier and more fun to work on, and you are likely to end up with better results.

## **INDUSTRY RESEARCH**

Have a look at other jewellers that create work you like / admire, or that relates to some of your key words or themes - now you've got a clearer idea of the styles or themes you particularly like, you can look more specifically at how other jewellers tackle these ideas.

Use this for inspiration, to spark ideas for yourself that you can take off in different directions with, and also to make sure that you are not wasting your time by designing something that already exists, to make sure that you are adding something new to the world with your design.