

Crafts, professions of excellence

GEMSTONE AND METAL JEWELLERY

Related professional – Morgane Donval **Workshop: Martel et Enclume**

The history of jewellery in Brittany, France dates back to the prehistoric era. Archaeological excavations have revealed that even during the Neolithic period, the inhabitants of Brittany wore jewellery made of stone, bone, and shell.

During the Celtic era, jewellery became an important form of artistic expression. The Celts used gold, silver, and bronze to create intricate designs that often incorporated animals and geometric shapes. Some of the most famous Celtic jewellery from Brittany are the torques, which were large necklaces made of twisted metal wires.

In the Middle Ages, the Duchy of Brittany was a wealthy and powerful region of France, and jewellery was an important symbol of status and wealth. The nobility wore elaborate jewels and precious stones, while the common people wore simpler pieces made of silver or brass.

During the Renaissance, jewellery design became more ornate and intricate, with gemstones and pearls becoming more popular. Many pieces were also decorated with enamel and intricate metalwork.

In the 19th century, Brittany became a centre for the production of costume jewellery, which was made from less expensive materials such as glass beads and brass. The region also produced high-quality gold and silver jewellery, which was often inspired by traditional Celtic designs.

Until this day, Brittany remains an important centre for jewellery design and production, with many artisans creating unique and beautiful pieces inspired by the region's rich history and traditions – including the artist we have interviewed, Morgane Donval of Martel and Enclume.

What are the skills and expertise of professionals in this profession?

Craft jewellers need a combination of technical skills, creativity, and attention to detail. Some of the key skills include:

- **Technical skills:** Craft jewellers need to have a strong understanding of metalworking techniques such as sawing, filing, soldering, and welding. Artist such as the one we have interviewed need to have extensive knowledge of properties and characteristics of different metals, including their malleability, ductility, hardness, and melting point. This will help them choose the right metal for a specific piece of jewellery and use it effectively. They may also need to know how to work with other materials such as beads, stones or glass.
- **Design skills:** Craft jewellers need to have a strong sense of design and be able to sketch out ideas for jewellery pieces. They should be able to create unique and original designs that stand out.
- **Attention to detail:** Craft jewellers need to be detail-oriented and have a keen eye for precision. They should be able to create jewellery pieces that are well-crafted and visually appealing.
- **Creativity:** Craft jewellers need to be creative and able to think outside the box. They should be able to come up with innovative and unique designs that set them apart from other jewellers.



- **Patience and focus:**

Patience is an important quality for artists to have, as the creative process often requires a significant amount of time, effort, and dedication. It allows them to persevere through challenges and setbacks, and ultimately achieve their artistic goals. Artists also need focus in order to achieve their creative goals and produce high-quality work.

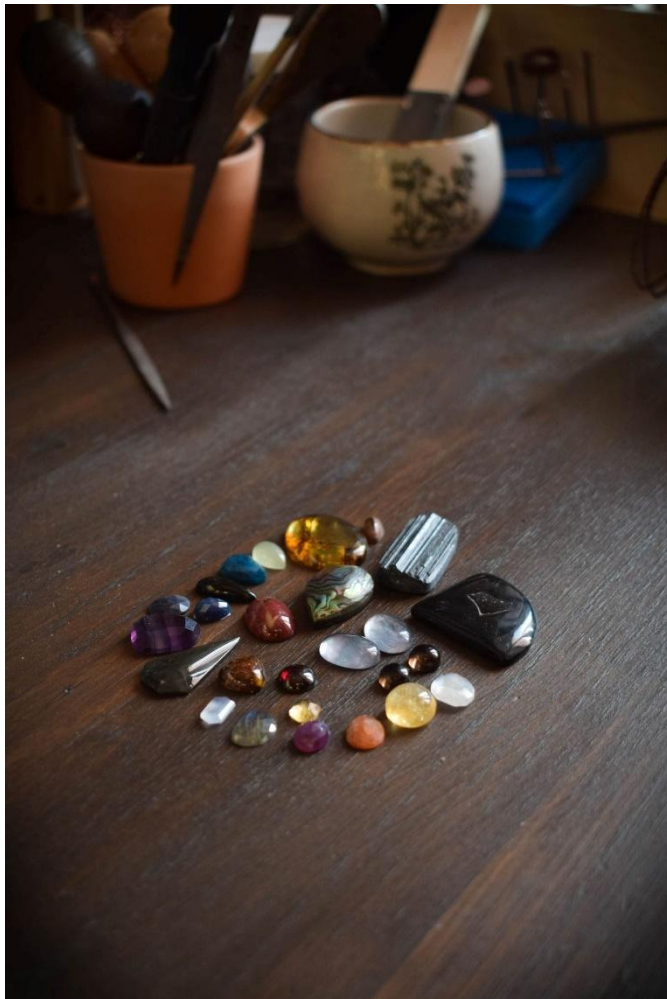
(Photo: Morgane Donval, Martel et Enclume)

Which materials are used in this craft? Are they local materials?

Traditional Celtic-style jewellery can be made using a wide variety of materials, ranging from precious metals and gemstones to beads, leather or clay. Common materials used in handmade jewellery include:

- **Metals:** Gold, silver, brass, copper, and bronze are commonly used in handmade jewellery. These metals can be hammered, twisted, and shaped to create unique designs.

Various techniques can be used to make jewellery from metal wire, one of the most common ones being wire wrapping – this technique involves wrapping wire around a bead or stone to create a setting or frame. The wire is usually bent, twisted, and shaped by hand to create a unique design.



unique textures and designs.

(Photo: Morgane Donval, Martel et Enclume)

- **Gemstones:** Precious and semi-precious gemstones like diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, amethysts, and topaz are often incorporated into handmade jewellery. These stones can be cut and polished to various shapes and sizes.

As pointed out by the artist we have interviewed, it is necessary to raise awareness of responsible sourcing of all materials including precious and semi-precious stones artists use in their production. Ethical stones refer to gemstones that have been sourced and produced in an ethical and sustainable manner, with respect for the environment, workers' rights, and local communities.

- **Beads:** Glass, plastic and wood beads are popular materials for making jewellery. They come in a variety of colours, shapes, and sizes, and can be used to create intricate patterns and designs.

- **Leather:** Leather is a versatile material that can be used to make necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. It can be dyed, stamped, or embossed to create

What are the specific tools used in this craft?

Making Celtic-style jewellery requires a vast range of tools to shape, form, cut, and finish the materials. The most important ones include:

- **Pliers:** Pliers are used to grip, bend, and shape wires, as well as to open and close rings and clasps. There are several types of pliers used in jewellery making, including round-nose pliers, chain-nose pliers, and flat-nose pliers.
- **Wire cutters:** Wire cutters are used to cut wires and other materials to the desired length.
- **Metal stamps:** Metal stamps are used to create custom designs and lettering on metal surfaces.
- **Soldering torch:** A soldering torch is used to fuse metal parts together.
- **Hammers:** Hammers are used to flatten, texture, and shape metals, such as in the creation of metal jewellery.
- **Mandrels:** Mandrels are used to shape rings and other circular jewellery pieces to the correct size.
- **Polishing tools:** Polishing tools, such as polishing cloths and rotary tools, are used to buff and shine finished jewellery pieces.



(Photo: Morgane Donval, Martel et Enclume)

What markets are related to this profession?

Fashion & accessories: Celtic jewellery is inspired by the ancient Celtic culture, which is known for its intricate and beautiful knotwork and symbols. These designs have been adapted into modern jewellery pieces that can complement various fashion styles.

Celtic jewellery has become increasingly popular in recent years, with many designers incorporating Celtic designs into their collections. It can be worn with both casual and formal outfits, making it a versatile choice for fashion-conscious individuals.

Cinematography: Celtic jewellery has been featured in many films and TV shows that have Celtic or medieval themes. The intricate and unique designs of Celtic jewellery can add authenticity to the costumes and sets used in these productions, helping to transport viewers to another time and place. Popular films and TV shows that have featured Celtic jewellery include blockbusters such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *Game of Thrones* or *Braveheart*. The popularity of these productions has helped to increase awareness and interest in Celtic jewellery among a wider audience.



(Photo: Morgane Donval, Martel et Enclume)

Where to learn this profession in France?

France has several renowned schools and institutions where one can study handmade jewellery. Some of these include:

- *École Boule in Paris*: a prestigious institution that offers courses in jewellery making, including a three-year program in jewellery design and metalwork.
- *L'École Van Cleef & Arpels*: This school, located in Paris, is dedicated to the art of jewellery making and offers a variety of courses and workshops in subjects such as gemmology, jewellery design, and metalwork.
- *École de la bijouterie et de la joaillerie de Paris*: This school offers a range of courses in jewellery making, including a two-year program in jewellery design and metalwork.
- *Institut National de Gemmologie*: This school, also located in Paris, offers courses in gemmology and jewellery making, including a diploma in jewellery design and metalwork.
- *Ateliers d'Art de France*: This organization, located in Paris, offers courses and workshops in a variety of art and craft disciplines, including jewellery making.

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