

SILVER OF THE STARS



PRESS RELEASE

SILVER of the Stars, the sparkling collection of contemporary silverware created by some of the best craftsmen and women in the country, will be exhibited at the Goldsmiths' Centre in London this spring, following more than 10 years touring the world to the delight of over three-quarters of a million visitors.

The collection, which was designed in collaboration with world-famous Scottish actors, writers and musicians, including Sean Connery and Ewan McGregor, has just returned from a hugely popular tour of Europe that has confirmed Scotland's international reputation for contemporary silver and design.

Tom Murray, Deacon of the Incorporation of Goldsmiths of the City of Edinburgh, which commissioned Silver of the Stars to mark the Incorporation's 550th anniversary, says: "Scotland is home to a unique community of artists working in silver. Their work is held by some of the world's leading collectors and the demand from galleries to show this unique collection has been overwhelming.

"There is a huge interest in Scotland and its heritage and this collection combines ancient techniques and craftsmanship with superb artistry and new engineering solutions. In many ways it stands as a metaphor for Scottish talent and innovation."

The ten drinking vessels that make up Silver of the Stars include a vintage car-inspired whisky set for actor Robbie Coltrane; a diamond bejewelled teapot for singer Sharleen Spiteri and a rolling teapot for Billy Connolly.

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Vicky Vincent at Facets PR victoria.vincent@facetspr.com

020 7553 3253

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

* The Incorporation of Goldsmiths of the City of Edinburgh is the oldest consumer protection group in Scotland and is also believed to be the oldest continually existing business of any kind in the country. It still carries out its original function of promoting the interests of goldsmiths, silversmiths and jewellers and through the Edinburgh Assay Office it tests and hallmarks precious metals, applying the internationally-renowned Scottish hallmark.

The silversmiths who have created pieces for Silver of the Stars are:

Professor Roger Millar, Glasgow

(Nicola Benedetti – hot chocolate jug and mugs)

Notable public collections: Millennium Collection for Bute House, HM the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, National Museum of Scotland

In his design for Nicola's hot chocolate pot, Roger was asked to include a subtle reference to music. He got so immersed in the design process that he produced five different designs for her to select. The final result was a beautiful pot and a pair of mugs, made by seaming the metal and spinning it. The insulating bars between the body and handle of the pot and mugs make this piece as practical as it is stunning, thanks to the flair of the design, and Nicola's exuberant signature.

Grant McCaig, Edinburgh

(Robbie Coltrane – Cadillac-inspired whisky service)

Notable public collections: Millennium Collection for Bute House, Birmingham Museums & Art Galleries

Grant created mood boards featuring references to Cadillacs and jazz to inspire him for his design for Robbie's whisky set. He has encapsulated a 1950's feel in the forms and details. The gusto with which Grant approached the design was carried through to the making of the piece, which includes a silver tray that is highly polished and creates wonderful reflections.

Michael Lloyd, Castle Douglas

(Sir Sean Connery – silver whisky quaich)

Notable public collections: Millennium Collection for Bute House, Victoria & Albert Museum, Museum of Scotland, 10 Downing Street, Mace for the Scottish Parliament

Sir Sean asked to be paired with Michael Lloyd having seen the silver water jugs he created for The Millennium Collection for Bute House. Michael's work pays homage to the landscape and to weapons of peace. In order to reflect this and the choice of Sir Sean's charity, The Scottish International Education Trust, he has chosen to decorate this beautifully chased quaich with an apple motif, representing at once the natural world and the fruit of knowledge, itself a weapon of peace.

Cóilín Ó Dubhghaill, Glasgow

(Billy Connolly – teapot inspired by Harley Davidson three-wheeler)

Awards include: 1998-2005 Monbukagusho Fellowship, Japan; 1997 Ronald J. Pearson Scholarship, Haystack School of Crafts; 1996 Designer Silversmith Awards, Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths (Highly Commended)

Cóilín closely based his design on Billy's own drawing of a teapot in the shape of the Harley motorcycle on which he travelled for his World Tour. Cóilín then added his own design for a matching sugar bowl with a banjo shaped spoon tucked neatly onto the back. The pot was formed by hammering the metal to produce a lively organic shape, which is perfect for serving up a cup of Tickety Boo Tea from Billy's Fair Trade charity.

Linda Robertson, London (originally from the Isle of Bute)

(Lulu – handle-less teapot)

Notable public collections: Millennium Collection for Bute House, Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, Worshipful Company of Weavers

Linda created an inventive handle-less teapot for Lulu. The pot is cupped in both hands to be poured, a ceremonial gesture reminiscent of Japanese tea rituals and also a sign of friendship when proffering the tea to a companion. To keep the tea hot and the hands cool, Linda worked hard with an engineer to perfect the thermal insulation, a difficult technique that has rendered wonderful results.

Sarah Cave, Edinburgh, employed in the Hamilton & Inches workshop

(Sir Cameron Mackintosh – claret jug and beakers)

Notable public collections: Millennium Collection for Bute House

Sarah designed the lid of this cheerful looking claret jug to be removable and create a second drinking beaker so that Sir Cameron can then enjoy his drink with a close friend. Sarah raised and spun the jug from a single sheet of silver, before hammering the surface to create this fascinating multi-reflective effect.

Marion Kane, West Kilbride

(Ewan McGregor – coffee pot and mug)

Notable public collections: Millennium Collection for Bute House, the Burrell Collection

Marion departed from her usual feminine style of silversmithing, with its natural, flowing lines, to create this chunky and quintessentially masculine coffee set for Ewan McGregor. She raised the main body and lid of each piece, used fabrication and riveting for the handles, and she turned the acrylic stoppers. Marion sourced reclaimed motorbike handles for the handles of the jug and mug. On the jug she laser engraved the names of the countries that Ewan and Charley Boorman visited on their “Long Way Round” motorbike trip. The registration plates of their bikes are inscribed on the mug.

Graham Stewart, Dunblane

(Alexander McQueen – Absinthe goblet)

Notable public collections: Millennium Collection for Bute House, “Contemporary Honours of Scotland” sculpture in Scottish Parliament, British Embassy in Washington DC, Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC, Aberdeen Art Gallery

Graham moved away from the more natural forms of his usual work to make this fabulous absinthe goblet and spoon, which Alexander designed entirely himself. There is much ritual in the drinking of absinthe. The rare glasses that are made solely for this drink characteristically have a reservoir blown into the base as an accurate measure for the absinthe, as can be seen on the stem of the goblet. A pierced spoon is placed over the goblet, topped with a sugar cube, through which the absinthe is carefully poured.

John Creed, Glasgow

(Ian Rankin – Irn Bru flask and beakers)

Notable public collections: Millennium Collection for Bute House, Birmingham City Art Gallery, Aberdeen City Art Gallery, Royal Museum in Edinburgh, the Vatican

John has always had an interest in metal that relates to architecture. He has made many large spectacular sculptures in various metals while also working in silver on a smaller scale. Above all, he loves to combine the different metals in one piece. He was therefore the obvious choice to be paired with Ian, who wanted a piece that spoke about Scotland’s industrial past. The famous Forth Bridge was the inspiration for the tray. As the bridge physically connects Edinburgh and Fife, so the tray symbolically connects the two for Ian. The airtight stopper on the jug ensures the Irn Bru stays bubbly.

Sarah Hutchison, Edinburgh

(Sharleen Spiteri – diamond-fringed teapot)

Sarah's individual "fringing" technique was developed initially in her jewellery and also in small bowl forms. Being invited to make a teapot for Sharleen gave her the opportunity to make a larger piece. Sarah researched the construction of a non-drip spout – famously one of the great silversmithing challenges. She also developed new techniques to create this innovative diamond studded showstopper of a teapot.