



UOA D32

ART AND DESIGN:
HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE



RESEARCHER

Jessamy Kelly

OUTPUT TITLE

Imitate

OUTPUT TYPE

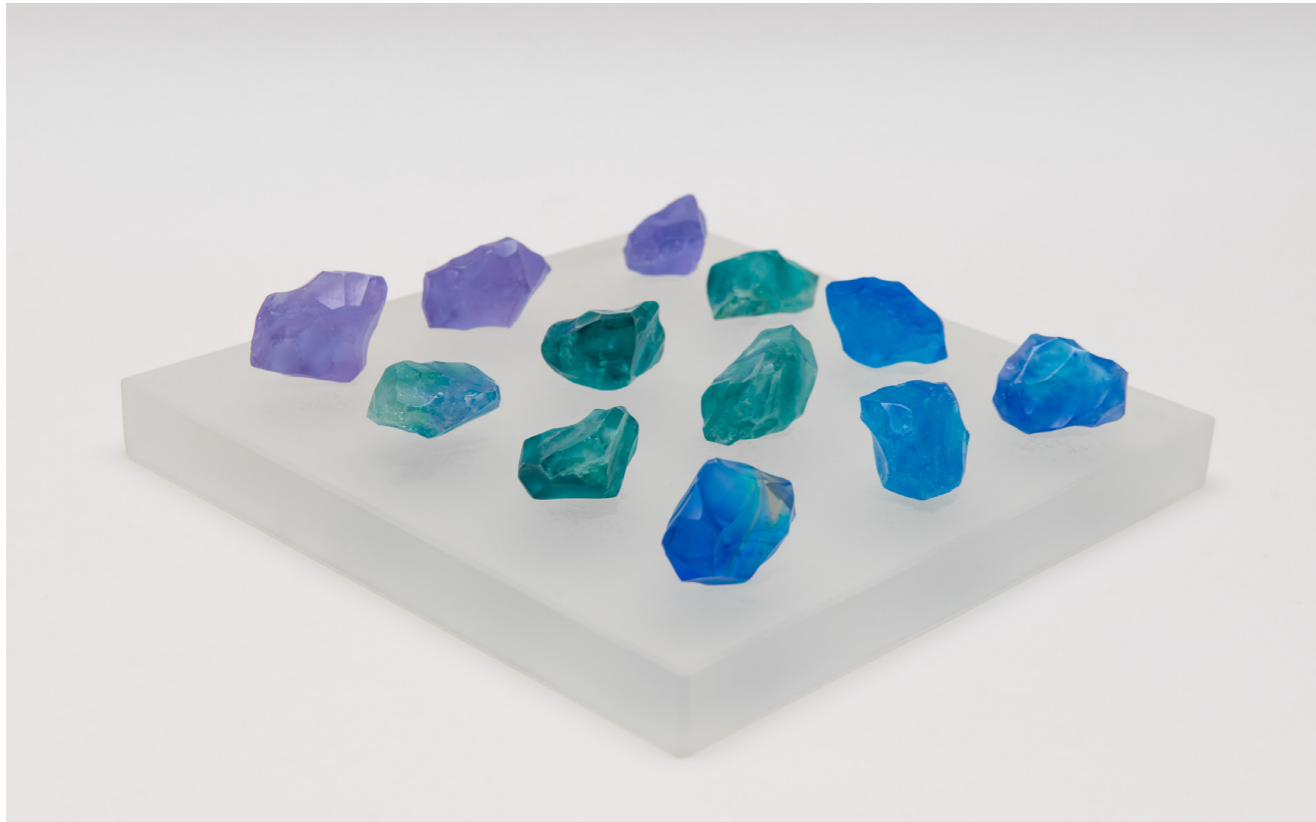
Body of Artefacts

DATE

2016 – 2020

FIG. 1

Jessamy Kelly, *Imitate*, 'Amethyst, Jade, Emerald and Lapis Lazuli'; kiln cast glass, 2017. Base 30 x 30 x 2.5cm, each piece approximately 3 x 3 x 3cm. Photo Marzena Ostromecka.



01 / STATEMENT

Imitate is a body of twelve glass works that was exhibited at the exhibition *Like a Rolling Stone* which opened at the Museum Reich der Kristalle, as part of the Schmuck International Jewellery Fair, Munich (2017). The exhibition toured to Edinburgh, Scotland (2018) and Padua, Italy (2020).

Imitate interrogates the capacity of glass to act as a medium of imitation. It experiments with the way glass can imitate materials and media including ceramic, paper, metal, wood, stone, plastic and semi-precious stones.

Kelly situates this research in a lineage dating back to the 12th century, when Venetian glassmakers used imitative techniques to imitate semi-precious stones. She extends this historical method as a living mode of inquiry and experimentation, bringing new dimensions to the contemporary practice of glass.

FIG. 2
Kelly working in the studio.
Photo Jessamy Kelly.



FIG. 3
Uncut kiln cast glass prior to finishing, showing a range of lead crystal colours. Photo Jessamy Kelly.



02 / RESEARCH DIMENSIONS

Imitate is a body of twelve unique, hand-made glass objects that experiments with the potential of glass to imitate other materials. In so doing, the work reanimates historical practices of glassmaking and gives them contemporary expression.

The works were exhibited at the international touring exhibition *Like a Rolling Stone* which opened at the Museum Reich der Kristalle, as part of the Schmuck International Jewellery Fair, Munich (2017), and toured to Edinburgh, Scotland (2018) and Padua, Italy (2020). The exhibition was accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue (2016) and published papers by Kelly (2018–2019).

Glass is renowned for its ability to imitate other the qualities of other materials, including the lustre, brilliance, translucency, and opacity of semi-precious stones. These processes of imitation date from ancient Mesopotamia and developed during the Renaissance, when the popularity for hard stones such as agate, chalcedony, jade, and lapis lazuli led to an explosion of imitations made by Venetian glassmakers. The fashion for imitation continued to spread throughout Europe, with the practice of innovatively colouring and finishing glass persisting till the 19th century.

This rich historical context inspired Kelly's research. The series presents a contemporary palette of colours and finishes that imitate precious and semi-precious stone; onyx, agate, amethyst, jade, emerald, and lapis lazuli. The works are made from kiln cast glass, which is cut and polished to a sheen. Finished to resemble raw and uncut semi-precious stones, they are exhibited on a specially crafted display mount made of clear kiln cast glass and treated with a satin finish.

'Mediums borrow – repurpose or refashion – examples from within their own history, as a form of homage or critique, or as a formal rhetorical device to reinterpret older media. What becomes clear is that all mediation is a form of remediation. Media constantly comment on, reproduce or replace other media, operating within webs of cultural meaning and social relations.'

Bolter & Grusin,
Remediation, Understanding New Media,
MIT, 1999, 55.

FIG. 4

Jessamy Kelly, *Imitate*, 'Onyx',
black kiln cast glass, 2018 large
pieces: 12 x 6 x 5cm, small pieces:
3 x 3 x 3cm. Photo Marzena
Ostromecka.



03 / ORIGINALITY

Glass has been used to remediate and imitate other materials and objects for centuries. The *Imitate* series extends this tradition, exposing imitation in a 'raw' state: glass is made to resemble uncut, rather the finished, stone.

Through this integration of material qualities from historical media, and experimentation with the visual possibilities they afford, Kelly creatively invests imitation to advance the practice of contemporary glass. Through its technical and aesthetic investigations, the research brings new knowledge to the relationship between contemporary glass practice and its historical precedents.

Imitate deliberately confuses the identity of materials, and questions the nature and composition of objects. Through play with likeness and identity, Kelly subverts the meaning of specific objects and exposes the complex relationships between material substance and appearance. Her practice contributes to a growing interest in imitation, as presented in the work of contemporary glass artists such as Choi Keeryong, Wendy Fairclough, Graeme Thyer and Edmond Bryne.

FIG. 5

Jessamy Kelly, *Imitate*, 'Onyx', black kiln cast glass, 2018 large pieces: 12 x 6 x 5cm, small pieces: 3 x 3 x 3cm. Photo Marzena Ostromecka.



04 / RIGOUR

The research for *Imitate* builds upon a body of work that Kelly produced in 2014 as part of the 'Naked Craft Network', a craft residency and series of workshops held at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop in Lumsden, Aberdeenshire.

The project was further developed in response to an invitation to participate in the workshop, 'Like a Rolling Stone', at Edinburgh College of Art in 2016. The only invited glass artist, Kelly worked alongside a group of nine jewellers during this week-long research and development workshop, undertaking site visits to locations including North Berwick and Arthur's Seat to gather research materials, develop drawings and make initial prototypes.

Following the workshop, Kelly developed *Imitate* as a new body of small-scale kiln cast glass works. They were produced over nine months of studio development in the specialist glass studios at Edinburgh College of Art. The objects were developed through a combination of traditional handmade and digital making techniques. Production methods included the creation of a range of wax and 3D printed forms, which were modelled and then lost-wax cast into kiln cast glass.

A series of colour tests were carried out which mixed a range of lead crystal colours to create bespoke, finely balanced colours that closely matched the delicate hues and subtle colouration of semi-precious stones.

The glass forms were finished using diamond cutting lathes and burnished using brush and felt polishing lathes.

The finished works were displayed on a clear kiln cast glass base which was cut to size and sandblasted to create a fine satin finish. This finish allowed a subtle shadow to outline the shards of the glass objects, heightening the effect of imitation. This innovative range of production methods, combining traditional craft skills with digital techniques, enabled Kelly to realise these glassworks at a delicate and intricate scale.

FIG. 6
The Like a Rolling Stone group workshops at ECA. Photo Jessamy Kelly.



FIG. 7
North Berwick coastline. Photo Stephen Bottomley,



FIGS. 8-18
Process images of a mix of digital and handmade techniques, from left to right, top to bottom.

The form is digitally printed in poly lactic acid (PLA) on a 3D printer.

A silicon mould is then taken of the printed form.

The form is removed from the mould and wax is poured in to replace it.

The wax form is set on the table and invested with refractory mould materials.

The wax is then steamed out.

The cavity within the mould is measured with water to calculate the weight of glass required. The moulds are then dried out and glass is cast into the cavity of the mould in a casting kiln; the firing takes up to 5 days.

Once cooled, the glass is ready to be finished using coldworking techniques.

All images 2016-2017.
Photos by Jessamy Kelly.

FIG. 19
 Jessamy Kelly presenting at the Society of Glass Technology Conference, Cambridge (2019). Photo Jianyong Guo.



FIG. 20
Like a Rolling Stone, installation view. Museum Reich der Kristalle, Munich. Photo Stephen Bottomley.



FIG. 21
Like a Rolling Stone, Tent Gallery, Edinburgh College of Art. Photo Marzena Ostromecka.

05 / SIGNIFICANCE

Imitate was publicly disseminated through the international touring exhibition *Like a Rolling Stone*, symposiums, workshops, and peer-reviewed published papers. The work has been seen by over 5,000 visitors.

Like a Rolling Stone was curated by Professor Stephen Bottomley and Dr Melanie Kaliwoda, with input from Professor Dr Wolfgang W. Schmahl, Dr Rupert Hochleitner, the Mineralogische Staatssammlung and the Museum Reich der Kristalle, Munich. The exhibition featured works in different media, providing a broad context and visibility for Kelly's research beyond her immediate field of contemporary glass.

The exhibition was presented at the Museum Reich der Kristalle during the Schmuck International Jewellery Fair, which is the annual International Trade Fair for the Skilled Trades held in Munich, Germany (7–11 March 2017).

It was subsequently presented at the Tent Gallery, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh, Scotland (21–28 June 2018), and at the Church of Santa Croce, Padua, Italy (20–28 July 2020).

The exhibition in Edinburgh was accompanied by a one-day symposium and handling session, open to the general public.

The exhibition was widely promoted through online and social media platforms. It was reviewed in several national and international craft publications, such as *Klimt02*, *Jewellery Week*, and *Craft Scotland*.

The accompanying exhibition catalogue (see Appendix, page 15) was available in printed and digital format. It is held in the British Library and National Library of Scotland repositories, and was widely distributed to HEI libraries.

Kelly presented a paper about the work at the Society of Glass Technology Annual Conference in Cambridge in September 2019. A peer-reviewed paper about the work, co-authored by Kelly, was published in the international MDPI special arts journal in March 2019 in the "Contemporary Glass Art: Materiality and Digital Technologies" edition (ISSN 2076-0752).

FIG. 22
Promotional material for *Like a Rolling Stone*.

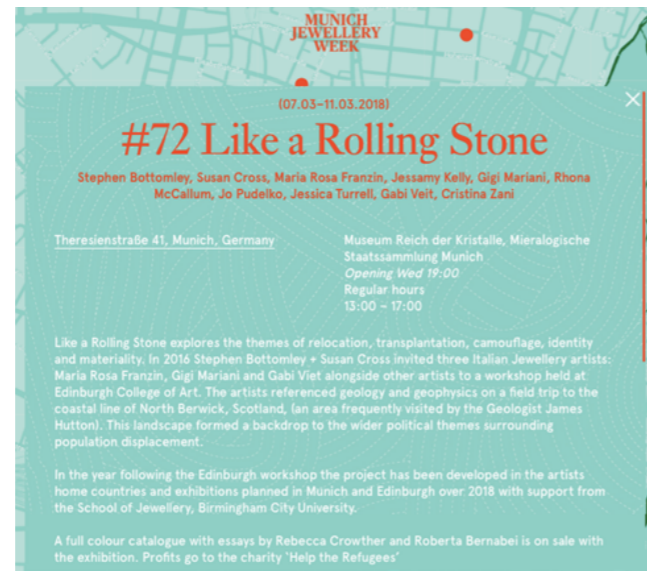
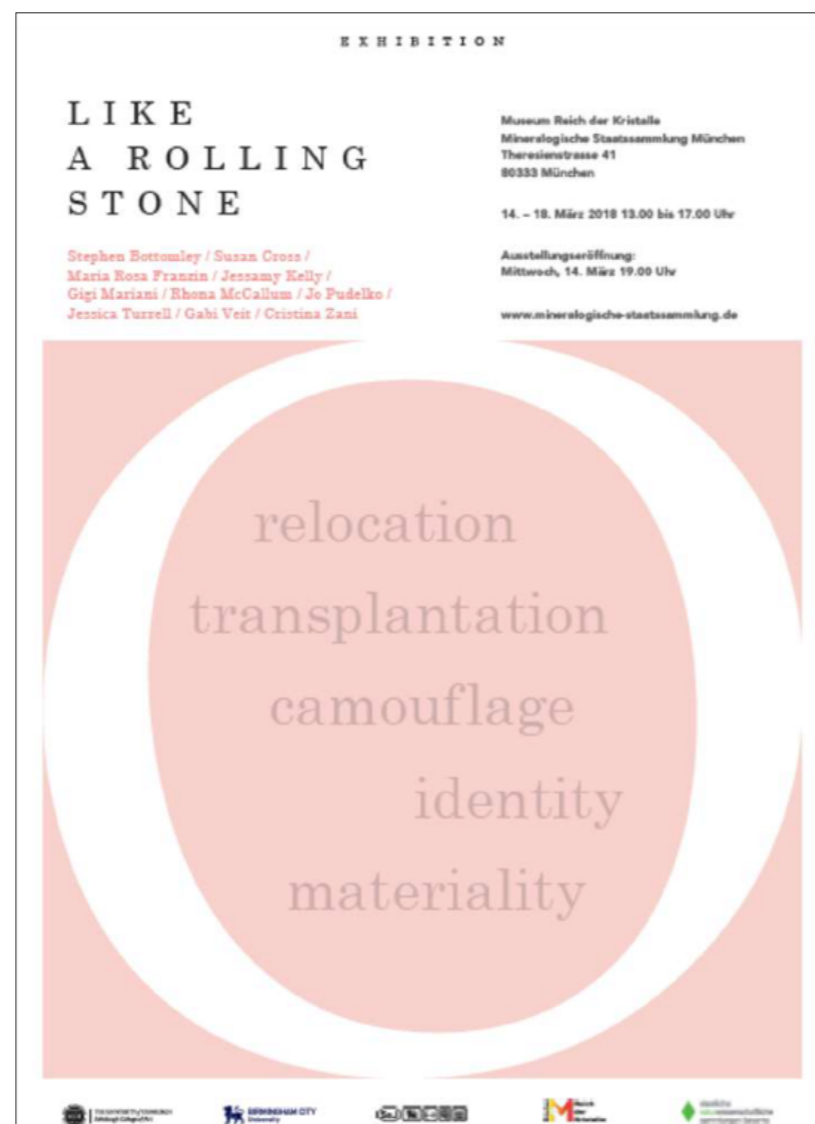


FIG. 23
Poster for the *Like a Rolling Stone* exhibition, Museum Reich der Kristalle, Munich.



06 / APPENDIX

Project website

Naked Craft Network.

<https://www.eca.ed.ac.uk/research/naked-craft-network>

Papers

Society of Glass Technology Annual Conference 2019, History and Heritage track.

<https://cambridge2019.sgt.org/ab-hh-jessamykelly>

Peer-reviewed paper, MDPI special arts journal – 2019. 'Imitate: Remediating Glass as an Artistic Medium for Material Imitation' in *Arts*, 2019, 8(1), 30.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/arts8010030>

Publications

Digital version of the *Like a Rolling Stone* Catalogue, ISBN 978-1-9999382-0-8.



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