



**1/04/2015: Caroline Broadhead interviewed by Gloria Lin at Central Saint Martin's Kings Cross Campus**

**Duration:**

42:50

**Subjects**

Jewellery / Clothing

**Recording date**

1/04/2015

**Recording locations**

Central Saint Martin's Kings Cross Campus

**Interviewee**

Broadhead, Caroline, 1950- (speaker, female)

**Interviewers**

Lin, Gloria (speaker, female)

**Synopsis**

*First Decade maker /Artist Caroline Broadhead discusses her ground-breaking jewellery designs during the 70s. After graduating from college in 1972, Broadhead broke away from the rigid traditions of fine jewellery, and began experimenting with lesser-used materials such as ivory, cotton and nylon. In this candid interview with Gloria Lin, Broadhead discusses events and experiences that transformed the way she created her pieces, which were intended to emphasise malleability and changeability as opposed to rigidity and finery. She talks about the changing trends of the 70s, working with artists like Julia Manheim and Susanna Heron, as well as her time spent in Amsterdam and Africa, acquiring materials, and how her thought-process, along with her pieces, changed and developed during the decade.*

**Detailed Description**

Caroline Broadhead began her work in 1972 after training as a jeweller. Over the years, she has broken away from fine jewellery trends, redefining the discipline with textiles, and playing with how pieces can be worn through choreographed performances. She is now the Course Leader for BA Jewellery Design at Central St Martins, London.

**[02:31]** Broadhead refers to the 70s as an 'optimistic decade' that changed and shaped her work, transforming her into a versatile artist

**[02:55]** She talks of the importance of setting up a grant with the Crafts Council, which she sees as encouragement and validation of making. It was a different time then, for her, possibilities were available due to the cheapness of workshops.

**[05:30]** Discusses the use of a camera for documenting and augmenting objects and provoking imagination

**[06:15]** Prompted by Lin, she describes the first memorable piece she made out of a college – a carved ivory knot necklace which she sees as her first ‘wearable piece’.

**[07:00]** The 70s was a time when people began experimenting with different materials for jewellery; Broadhead talks about why she chose ivory and the process of making something wearable from it; refers to dentist tools used.

**[09:10]** Describes work as ‘malleable and changeable’, referring to her broken brooches (**CC collection – J79.1**).

**[10:15]** She discusses how her work progressed from ivory: began to do things ‘together’ and ‘faster’, using other materials like cotton. Speaks about love of colours; purchased her things from the Embroiderer’s Guild on Regent Street, where she could buy a huge range of embroidery threads

**[11:38]** THOUGHT PROCESS: At this time, she did not create her pieces through a self-conscious thought process, but rather suggests that it just happened that way; it was all about using her hands to make wearable things and instinctively playing with materials that could be handled easily

**[13:40]** CB discusses four ways exhibition with Julia Manheim and Susanna Heron in 1977 - The 4 women designed the showcases, cards and presentation of CVs and photographs etc. Generated a lot of interest (CB and GL look at documents and photographs related to this)

**[17:39]** GL and CB **discuss press documents (?)** Broadhead refers to it as gendered: “Jewellery is generally seen as a bit of a luxury and unnecessary by most people and I think, yeah it was probably for girls doing something silly. It was slightly patronising, the newspaper ones were slightly derogatory”

**[18:40]** Discusses experiments in Amsterdam in 1982 (3 months); Life choice in 1979 was that she realised she couldn’t make a living from jewellery design, so following a trip from Africa, she got a teaching job and tried to separate her making by not confining

**[19:50]** CB and Nuala set up C&N jewellery and buttons so that she could be more free – she began doing tufted pieces and woven pieces, and then went to Amsterdam.

**[21:50]** Describes how her thought process changed from instinctive doing to thinking in Amsterdam: ‘It was more about thinking...it was time to think...the main bit was allowing things to lodge in a different place, somehow, in my head, so when I came back I felt I’d wasted time and hadn’t done anything...but then I realised something had changed, and I started doing stuff’

**[23:45]** Mentions how people were doing large scale things and extending the boundaries of jewellery: ‘spirit of the time’

**[24:50]** Talks about how she uses her body as a template – natural for jewellers to do so

**[25:20]** Discusses doing things for dancers and performances now. Leap from harder materials to materials that change, flex and transform

**[26:20]** GL: How do you look back on your early work?

CB says it feels alien, as it was so long ago: 'I remember it more as a feeling of excitement and drive...doing things and finding things out...'

**[27:03]** Credits Vany Forrester from doing jewellery (he was a potter in her boarding school) –he urged her to do it, he was very calm and enthusiastic - 'I wanted to make earrings that nobody has ever seen before'

**[28:26]** Discusses Influences; never thought of herself as a jeweller in the way her college course presented it, she knew she wouldn't be a fine jeweller and didn't have fine skills – the norm was to do things in refined way. When she left she realised she could go beyond the boundaries

**[30:00]** GL: Has it become more rigid now or is there interdisciplinary experimentation?

CB says there are now more possibilities to be fluid and experimental, between all kinds of different jewellery, whereas in those days it was traditional. Aftermath of the 60s when things had opened up and there was more possibilities and potential in what you could do - punk influence – people were freer in the way they dressed and wore their hair

**[32:40]** Materials – always looking for different things (that's where the tufts come from) – sourcing fine nylon required lots of phone calls, and was a long process; describes bracelet (**CC Collection – J98**)

**[35:30]** Africa – influence for cottons and colours, sourcing things from markets – seeing the Masai wearing their jewellery – attitude to material was 'whatever they could get' incorporated but decorative and hidden; discusses authenticity of crafted objects in Africa

**[39:30]** CB talk about how crafts council brings together what people were doing across the disciplines

**[41:30]** GL: Shift from intuition and hand to cerebral theory –

CB: this developed in the 80s. She had to write a statement which made her think what she is doing – "how do you position yourself as an artist doing clothing?"