

Dauvit Alexander, The Justified Sinner.

Rusty bolts lie by the side of the road. A coffee jar filled with corroded spring washers sits on the windowsill of a disused engineering works. Someone throws a cast-iron fencing spike into a skip. A piece of pitted steel washes up on the beach.

These are not the images normally associated with the worlds of either commercial or art jewellery but they are the sources of the material for most of my work. Combining these materials especially corroded steel and iron with precious metals and gemstones, using the skills of the traditional fine jeweller, I aim to make pieces which are aesthetically pleasing, technically interesting and, if possible, humorous: if they happen to be not just a little unsettling or disturbing, so much the better.

My jewellery is primarily aimed at men. Even in the supposedly free world in which we now live, jewellery for men is circumscribed by what footballers and actors wear, reported by magazines, filtered through a corrupting veil of media; men dare not strike out for fear of being tagged an outsider, a loser, effeminate... Using what would traditionally be seen as masculine materials iron, steel from traditionally masculine backgrounds the road, the building site, the machine-shop I look back to the last time men could freely wear jewellery: the Renaissance.

Renaissance jewellery was a glorious, allegorical, blackly humorous, alchemical mess. It was a triumph of skill and material over taste. It mixed precious with semiprecious with worthless, a riot of colour and shape. It was huge and overblown. It verged on the unwearable, comfort sacrificed, preferring to make statements about the wearer's beliefs, power and money. So it is with my own work: it takes a bold person to wear a piece by The Justified Sinner.

I did not originally train as a jeweller but as a gardener and largely taught myself the skills of metalsmithing, something which I view as an ongoing process, constantly learning, improving and expanding, pushing both what is considered possible and what is considered acceptable in jewellery.