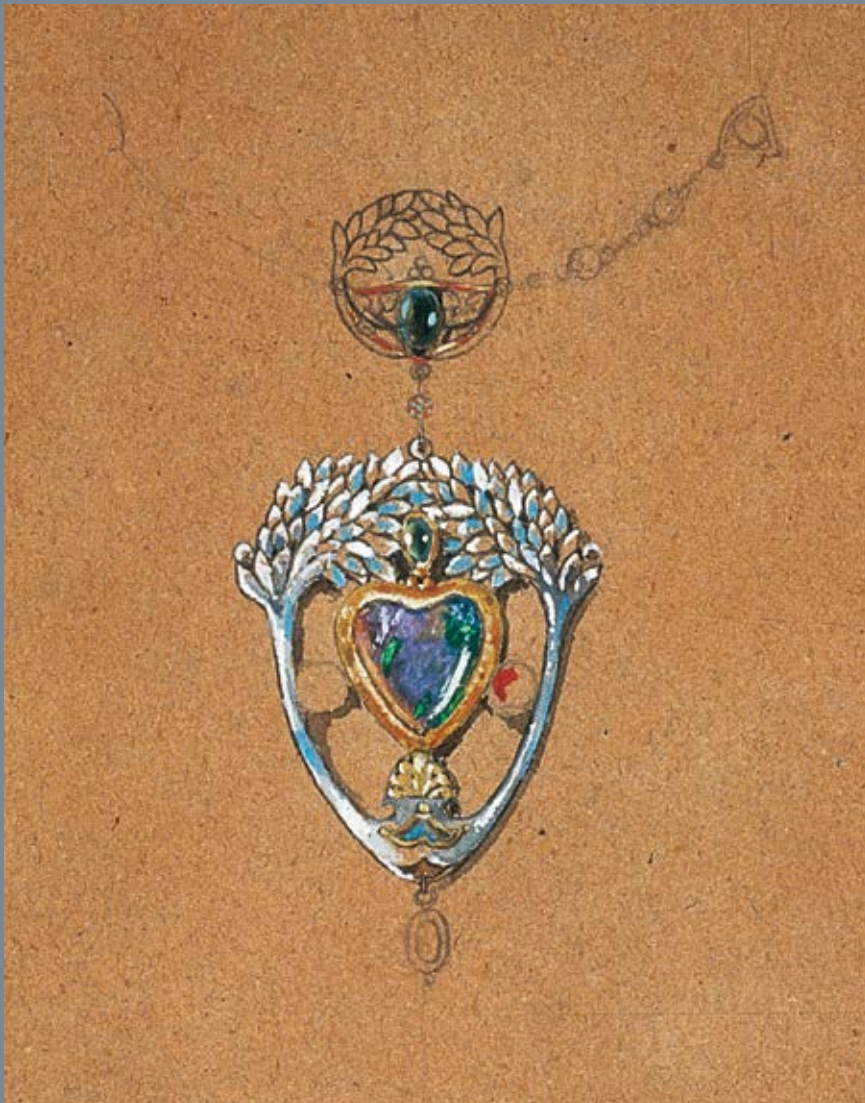


Jewellery Studies

The Journal of The Society of Jewellery Historians



2016/1
DOROTHY ERICKSON



The Society of **JEWELLERY HISTORIANS**

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The Society runs a programme of lectures from September to June, inviting speakers from different disciplines and many parts of the world. The lectures are usually held in London at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0HS. In addition, the Society arranges a variety of other occasional events including international symposia on aspects of the history and technology of jewellery, study visits to museums, and private views of special exhibitions.

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2016/1

Editors: Beatriz Chadour-Sampson and Nigel Israel

Jewellery Studies is the Journal of the Society of Jewellery Historians, and is the leading academic journal on the subject. Articles cover all aspects of jewellery from antiquity to the present day, and include related material from archives, technical data, gemmology and any new discoveries on collections and designers.

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Jewellery by James W. R. Linton

An Aesthetic Approach

DR DOROTHY ERICKSON was awarded her doctorate in 1992 from the University of Western Australia for her thesis 'Aspects of Social and Economic History on the Practice of Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia 1829-1979'. As Art History was a new discipline for this university she was the first to be awarded her doctorate in Fine Arts. Research had been undertaken in Western Australia and within the Royal College of Art/Victoria and Albert Museum course in London. She has published many articles and four books on art and design in Western Australia. The latest are 'Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia: A History' (published in 2010) and 'Inspired by Light and Land: Designers and Makers in Western Australia 1829-1969' (published 2014).



Front cover:

Rendering of a pendant by James W.R. Linton, c. 1908

Probably drawn during his time at the Sir John Cass Institute in London, or shortly afterwards
From a sketchbook of designs for jewellery, eating and drinking utensils, church ornaments and chests
Gouache and pencil, sheet 30.4 x 24.0 cm

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra NGA 1981.398: 1,2

Jewellery by James W. R. Linton

An Aesthetic Approach

DOROTHY ERICKSON

James Walter Robert Linton (1869–1947) (fig. 1), teacher, painter, sculptor, silversmith, leather worker, woodcarver and graphic designer, was probably the best-known artist-silversmith in Australia in the first decades of the 20th century. However, Linton is less known for the small amount of exquisite jewellery he made over the years. This article details some of his jewellery, and places it in the context not only of the artist's life in one of the most isolated cities in the world but also in the international scene.

Linton, who lived in Perth in Western Australia, was primarily a teacher and as such greatly revered by his former students. It is through their eyes we can get a glimpse and understanding of the man. As if obsessed by the image of what he stood for, they usually began by describing his appearance, cultivated to establish the persona of an artist — he belonged to the aesthetic elite! For Linton was indeed an aesthete, who dabbled in diverse art forms, as architect, painter, sculptor, designer and craftsman in metal, wood and leather. It is, though, as a designer for metal that he achieved his best results. It may have been because of the lack of peers that Linton assiduously fostered his image, or perhaps as a way to compensate for the lack of financial reward. The ability to do so was a legacy of his upbringing in England where he had seen his father's circle promoting themselves as artists.

Linton loomed large in the small art world of Perth. One of his students, Leslie Rees, later a writer and art critic, described him thus:

Linton, of average height and build, always looked the artist, with his short pointed beard (a beard was rare in the twenties), deep-set alertly humorous spider-eyes, the flowing black tie around a double-ear collar. He was a superb conversationalist, with a dramatic sense, a gleam in his eye at the climactic moment, a flourish in movement, which entered into his storytelling and held the attention. There was something of the actor in Linton, but he held the floor without appearing obtrusive or egotistical; in fact when he spoke of himself it was usually to mention not his merits, but his faults.¹

As the son of Sir James Dromgole Linton (1840-1916), a painter and sometime art tutor to the British royal princesses, James W.R. Linton was sent in 1896 to the colony of Western Australia to check on family investments in what turned out to be a worthless gold

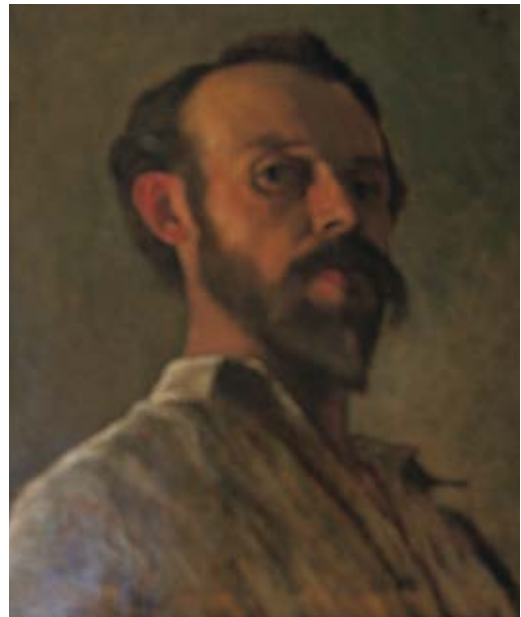


Fig. 1
Self portrait of James Walter Robert Linton, 1898
Oil on canvas, 22.0 x 26.0 cm
Private Collection

mine. Instead he found a place that had begun to bloom with new buildings and even amenities, such as electric street lights, in advance of older centres. International communication was available and open. A constant movement of people between countries occasioned by the gold rushes promised artistic growth. Recognising these possibilities James W.R. Linton decided to stay and make his home in the gold boom capital, Perth.

The influx of both men and money had coincided with a worldwide resurgence of interest in design for the applied arts. The ideals of design reformers had encouraged painters and architects to extend their activities. Many of the leaders of Perth's art world had been students in London in the final decades of the 19th century and were a powerful social force in setting taste. For instance Bernard Woodward (1846-1916), who became the director of the new Museum and Art Gallery, played a pivotal role by guiding the infant institution through its formative years. He was charged with creating a museum and art gallery that would be all things to the small community and he was admirably suited to the task. Woodward's background,

¹ Rees, Leslie, in 'An art writer of the 1920s looks back'
Art Gallery of WA, *Bulletin*, 1979, p. 34.



Fig. 2

Triptych Firescreen by Nelson and Edith Dawson, 1903
Wrought and forged iron, repoussé steel and silver,
enamel, 66.5 x 64.5 x 20.0 cm

Purchased for the Art Gallery of Western Australia in
1904

Nelson was the designer of the triptych, Edith the
enameller, and three employees fabricated the repoussé
steel and silver parts. Dawson offered the screen to the
gallery for £210.

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth WA 904/m19

education and interests were both scientific and artistic. His education was eclectic and his mentors were influential figures of the Victorian era such as Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895), biologist and comparative anatomist, William Henry Flower, comparative anatomist, surgeon and director of Natural History at the British Museum (1831-1899) and art critic John Ruskin (1819-1900). His contacts in Britain at the Art Workers' Guild, the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle, and in Florence, Tokyo and Paris, were extremely useful. He energetically pursued his chosen tasks and on his death in 1916 the committee wrote, '... the excellence of the museum will ever remain as a tribute to his knowledge and energy.'²

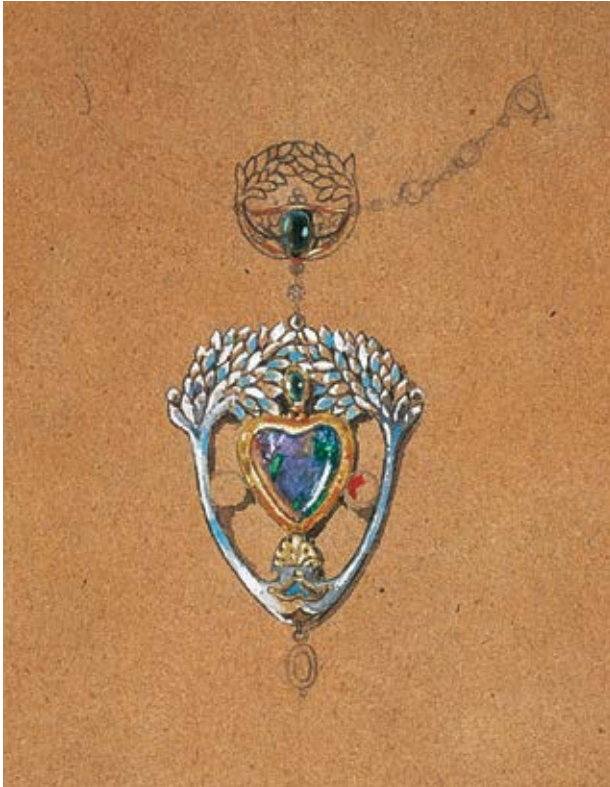
Woodward had considered it of paramount importance that the local craftsmen should have good examples for inspiration and study, in order that they might successfully compete with their fellows in the older centres of civilization. For this reason he acquired the latest work from the leaders of British art and industry. On display amongst the paintings were the fabulous triptych fire-screen with enamel from the Artificer's Guild (fig. 2), by Nelson (1859-1941) and Edith Dawson (who had married in 1893), painted enamels by Alexander Fisher (1864-1936), repoussé silver from Richard Rathbone (1864-1939), and various pieces designed by Oliver Baker (1859-1939) for Liberty. This is the environment in which Linton found himself, and to which he

contributed, and against which he judged himself.

James W.R. Linton had trained in art and architecture in London, first under John Parker at the Endall Street School of Art, and then under Alphonse Legros (1837-1911) at the Slade School of Fine Art. He assisted James Orrock (1829-1913) and then enrolled under Frederick Brown (1851-1941) at the Westminster School (today known as the Westminster School for Media, Art and Design) before becoming articled to Batterby and Huxley, architects, in London. After that Linton assisted his father in his art school in London and exhibited with the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colour and The Royal Institute of Oil Painters. His education had concentrated on memory training and the storing of visual images, thus developing a skilful sense of design. His father's presidency of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colour and membership of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society enabled the son to mix with many prominent figures in the London art and design world. This impacted on the young Linton, who absorbed the dictates of the English artist and illustrator Walter Crane (1845-1915) and put them to good use.³ In Western Australia Linton opened his own art school,

3 Crane and Sir James were members of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. J.D. Linton belonged from 1884-1891, resigning the year before William Morris became Master. (Morris joined in 1888 to show in the first exhibition and remained until his death in 1896). According to Crane, in 'The Arts and Crafts' in *Murrays Magazine*, p. 650, the members felt they were part of a newer revival than Morris's 1860s movement.

2 Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery, *Annual Report 1915-16*.



Figs. 3-5

Three renderings of a pendant, necklace and two rings by James W.R. Linton, c. 1908-10

Probably drawn during his time at the Sir John Cass Institute in London, or shortly afterwards

From a sketchbook of designs for jewellery, eating and drinking utensils, church ornaments and chests

Gouache and pencil, sheet 30.4 x 24.0 cm

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra NGA 1981.398: 1,2

and in 1902 was appointed art master at the newly opened Perth Technical School. The school trained painters, graphic artists and professional designers for the trade as well as artistic metalworkers, woodcarvers, embroiderers and workers in other media of the applied arts. The stress was on design. His own work was well designed, and he taught several generations to think in the same way. The school even became recognised internationally when the student work collectively won the Grand Prix and a Diploma of Honour at the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition in London. Linton continued to teach until the financial emergency of the Great Depression in 1931.

Linton had trained at a time when artists and architects were interested in many areas of design, and he was thus able to cover the wide spectrum of teaching required in a school with only two art instructors. He was already making domestic art for his own home and for this reason it was a simple matter for him to incorporate design for the applied arts into his teaching. With his practical experience he was able to teach several techniques and integrate these into the courses. Linton taught himself the rudiments of metalwork from books and magazines such as *The Art Workers' Quarterly*, *The Art Journal* and *The Artist*. Two experienced craftsmen working in one of the local sheet-metal factories taught Linton the basics of repoussé, and he investigated and taught himself enamelling by studying published sources, such as Alexander Fisher's articles in *The Studio* and Henry H. Cunyngame's '*On the theory and practice of art enamelling on metal*' (1899). Armed with art journals, it was not too difficult to feel part of an international art world. The following statement can be found in *The Studio*:

When an illustrated magazine deals fairly and well with the arts of the present day, it serves a more useful purpose than any exhibition of modern work, for it is open all the year, and the international contents change month by month. It is at once a book and a permanent exhibition.⁴

Linton was a product of the Aesthetic Movement. This, like the contemporary socialist Arts and Crafts Movement, had little tradition of precious metalwork, so when Linton took up this branch of the arts his models and inspiration were from more recent history, from the 1890s Craft Revival (exemplified by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society) and the European art nouveau.⁵ Linton's intention, as with other art nouveau artists,

was to be modern — a word which today no longer has quite the same connotation as it did then. With little tradition behind him he was free to experiment. Linton used his work to comment on known pieces, styles, techniques or detailing in other artworks. Moreover, when he returned to England in 1907–8 to learn metalwork, influential people, such as the architect and architectural historian William Lethaby (1857–1931) and the silversmith and designer Harold Stabler (1872–1945), were in the process of forsaking the handicraft mentality to form the Design and Industries Association. Like British artists of the period, Linton designed in order for assistants (and/or industry) to fabricate and maximise production of his craftwork. This occurred when his partners, such as Arthur Cross, William Andrews, Kitty Armstrong and his own son Jamie, were available to help with the



Fig. 6
Illustration for chapter heading in Sir Thomas Malory's
Le Morte d'Arthur
by Aubrey Beardsley (1872–1898)
in: vol II, Book X, Chapter LXXI, p.600
Pen and ink 11.9 x 8.5 cm
State Collection Art Gallery of Western Australia
(acquired 1899)



Fig. 7
Plaque with *Madonna and Child Enthroned* (after Sir James Dromgole Linton), 1903–4
This was one of the first pieces of enamelling undertaken by James W.R. Linton
Enamelled panel mounted on copper, sterling silver mount, wooden jarrah base, 39.5 x 28.7 x 2.6 cm
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth AGWA 1986/124

4 *The Studio*, vol 28, p. 248.

5 According to Stella Tillyard's thoughtful construct in: *The Impact of Modernism 1900–1920: Early Modernism and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Edwardian England*, Routledge, 1988, p. 12, the 'dictates of fashion had by this time (1890) triumphed over the movement of ideas'. The Arts and Crafts Movement had melted into the Aesthetic Movement before metamorphosing into early modernism in the 20th century. According to Robin Spenser, the early Arts and Crafts Movement was inextricably confused with the Aesthetic Movement when all the varied English work from William Morris to Aubrey Beardsley was lumped together under the title 'Queen Anne' by the chronicler of the Aesthetic Movement, Sir Robert Edis (see: *The Aesthetic Movement*, Pictureback, London: Studio Vista; New York: Dutton, 1972, p. 30). It was further confused by Oscar Wilde in his lectures which advocated ideas culled from both Whistler and Morris.

fabrication. Cutlery, caskets and ecclesiastical wares became a major part of his studio production. Examples of his designs for all of the above mentioned categories are kept in the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of Western Australia, and the Western Australian Museum, Perth. The sketches reveal a vibrant and lively designer who was very much part of the early 20th century, a time when there was no-one in Australia with whom he could be compared with the possible exception of another West Australian, Gordon Holdsworth. Linton's early work was individual, modern and eminently comparable with that of artist-craftsmen overseas.

Linton, studying the objects in the museum, knew he needed further tuition and spent 1907-8 in England at the Sir John Cass Technical Institute in London. Here he undertook art metalwork under Alfred Hughes, jewellery under J. W. Sandheim, and enamelling under Harold Stabler. He spent time in the Victoria & Albert Museum studying and sketching works of art, and attended an innovative bronze-casting course for sculptors. He attended lectures on Japanese metalworking techniques and participated in visits to the studios of Alexander Fisher and other contemporaries. The art nouveau movement was changing into the 'Modern Movement', as exemplified by the work of the Austrian Secession, which featured prominently in *The Studio* magazine.⁶ Linton's work is of this period. He had never fully embraced the sinuous curve of high art nouveau nor the intricacies of the Craft Revival. Nor were the socialist philosophies of the Arts and Crafts

guilds evident in his studio. He never really discarded his earlier aesthetic interests in exotic birds and the Orient, carrying these forward and adapting them to the mood of the period, when in the 1930s they again became fashionable.

A particularly interesting design for an art jewel is seen in the Linton sketchbook held in the National Gallery of Australia (figs. 3-5). Although it fits the description of no. 23 from the Linton and Cross 1913 exhibition catalogue described as: 'Pendant in gold and silver set with opal, tourmalines and peridots — fifteen guineas', it was possibly drawn while he was in London. There are several pencil sketches as well as the coloured renderings, featuring a stylized tree, with leaves and branches curved as an upturned arch, which shelters the heart-shaped opal within. J.W.R. Linton simplified natural forms in a manner recalling those in the drawings by the illustrator and author Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) for his book 'Morte d'Arthur', a copy of which would by then have been in the Art Gallery of Western Australia (fig. 6). Linton, as he had frequently done before, picked up a detail and completely transformed it into a new object. In this case he used the intertwined and overlapping leaves in the drawing as a design element. The opal is supported within the framework of branches by a gold shell and two small circular gemstones set in gold. Opal was enjoying unusual popularity during this period as it was considered a lucky stone. Tourmalines were set in the framing leaves, in the boss, and in a small pendant below. The pendant, as sketched, is extremely beautiful and quite individual in its design.



Fig. 8 and 8a

Necklace with peacock pendant, c.1910

Silver, gold, opal, carbuncles, pendant 6.0 x 5.5 cm

Family Collection

6 *The Studio*, special edition, "The Art Revival in Austria", 1906.



Fig. 9
Nocturne pendant, 1911-1917
Silver, moonstone and enamel, 9.0 x 4.0 cm
Private Collection

Fig. 10
Bracelet, 1913
Silver, gold, rhodolite garnets, opal, 6.5 x 6.25 x 2.5 cm
Made for his former pupil, art teacher Flora Landells
Landells Family Collection.



Another drawing (fig. 4), possibly made and exhibited as no. 13 in the 1910 exhibition catalogue, is described as a 'Necklace in Gold and Silver, set with Amethyst and Topaz'.⁷ It features a large faceted amethyst set in a wide oval frame of silver edged with twisted gold wire. Set in this frame is a series of rectangular blue enamel cartouches alternating with faceted topazes and cabochon tourmalines. Elaborate gold scrolls emphasize the four compass points fanning out from behind four round cabochon tourmalines. The central 'shield-like' part of the pendant is suspended from an enamelled circular boss set with a cabochon amethyst. Hanging from the main part of this pendant is a smaller one set with an imperial topaz. The chain was designed to be gold highlighted with enamel and is reminiscent of 16th and 17th-century interpretations of Roman jewellery. The necklace distils an essence of antiquity while being quite timeless.⁸ The sketch may date from Linton's time in London when the jeweller Carlo Giuliano and his sons were showing similarly inspired jewels in their showrooms. A simpler version was made by Linton as a pendant for his daughter Kathleen in the 1930s (fig. 21).

When Linton returned from London in September 1908 he set

up a studio at 59 William Street, Perth. He and his neighbour, Francesco Vanzetti, submitted designs for the 'Empire Rifle Match Shield'. They won this Australia-wide tender and fabricated the shield for £250, but the partnership foundered as both wanted to be the senior partner. Instead Englishman Arthur Cross (c. 1884–1917) came to join Linton in May 1910. Cross, a highly skilled gold and silversmith, was also a graduate of the 'Cass' in London. He had contracted tuberculosis and, as the dry climate of Western Australia was known to be beneficial for this condition, he decided to emigrate. Cross was technically proficient, having won a travelling scholarship and the City and Guilds Medal while a student.⁹ Much of Linton's jewellery was made during this six-year partnership with Cross.

Linton and Cross immediately set about preparing exhibitions. The first, entitled 'Exhibition of Arts and Crafts', was held at the Theosophical Society Rooms in December 1910, and included 63 items of metalwork and 14 watercolour paintings. The gem of the show, according to *The West Australian* reviewer, was the 1903-4 enamel plaque depicting the 'Madonna and Child Enthroned', an intricate cloisonné panel based on a painting by Linton's father (fig. 7). The reviewer stated:

The colouring of the panel is magnificent, and the manner in which the reds have been thrown into relief by the interposition of fine hairs of gold is a triumph of the artist.¹⁰

7 Batty Library, Ref. BL 2473A.

8 There are hints of the Lyte Jewel from the Waddesdon Bequest in the British Museum, London (WB 137), but more of the work of the Giulianos so beloved of the Pre-Raphaelites. Giuliano's shop at 115 Piccadilly was open until 1914, and if Linton had not seen the work worn by his father's friends in the 1880s and 1890s, he will most probably have taken the trouble to look at it on this trip.

9 J.W.R. Linton File, in the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth.

10 *West Australian*, 13 December, 1910, p. 6.



Figs. 11-13

Designs for two rings, an earring, and a pendant by James W.R. Linton, c. 1908-1919

The carved gemstone earring with caps shaped like golden flowers is most attractive.

Similar ones were made for the mother of one of his pupils, the painter Miguel McKinlay RA.

From a sketchbook of designs for jewellery, eating and drinking utensils, church ornaments and chests.

Gouache and pencil, sheet 30.4 x 24.0 cm

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra NGA 1981.398: 6

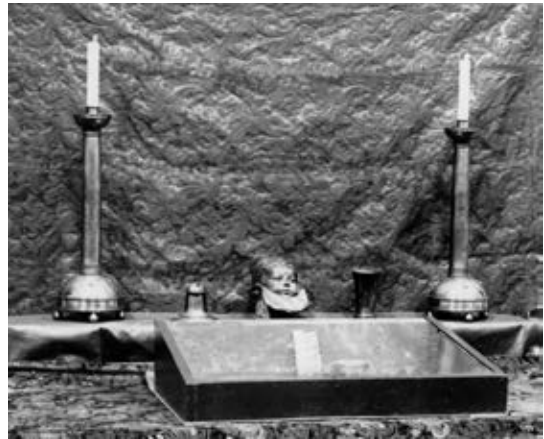


Fig. 14

Photograph of a Linton display, c. 1913

Some pieces appear to be those exhibited in 1910, others in 1913. The candlesticks had highly-polished, hemispherical bases, rimmed and set on cushion feet. Similar candlesticks are in St George's Cathedral, Perth and Christchurch, Claremont. The bronze baby's head after the French sculptor Jean-Joseph Marie Carriès (1855-1894) was in the collection of the late Betsey Linton. The beaker is in the Western Australian Museum, Perth H73.174.

Many of Linton's jewels attracted attention in this exhibition, as was further described in *The West Australian*:

Of the jewel work, a pendant in gold and silver links set with Australian opal, Mexican opal, carbuncles, and peridots and finished with a pearl drop, at the private view yesterday commanded almost unlimited attention. The work is so delicately finished, the designing so artistic as to make it without doubt the feature of that section of the display. Another chain pendant in gold and silver, set with carbuncles and opals, while not so elaborate as the other, was only a degree behind the first one in appearance.¹¹

The design of the second pendant shown in the exhibition is based on a peacock, a familiar motif from the Aesthetic through to the art nouveau period, and as such employed by many other jewellers. The pendant is fabricated from a number of lozenge-shaped elements, simulating peacock feathers (fig. 8 and 8a). It is interesting to compare this stylised design with designs by leading jewellers in France, such as Eugène Grasset (1845-1917) and Lucien Gautrait (1865-1937), as well as Charles Robert Ashbee (1863-1942) in England. Linton's pendant shows a clever variation on Ashbee's and other peacocks of the period. His design is more abstract than any of the others, and works on two levels: firstly as a functional piece of jewellery, and secondly, as a comment on the state of play within the jewellery world, it becomes an intellectual game for the cognoscenti. The pendant

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 6



Fig. 15
Necklace made for a former student Iris Boulton (née Moore) by James W.R. Linton, c. 1917
Gold, silver, black and white opals, width 8 cm, height 24.8 cm
The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney 94/191/1

has no obvious peacock body; instead the iridescent colours of the large opal allude to this motif, as do the eyes in the peacock's tail, represented by carbuncles which have moved to between the feathers instead of being on their extremities. The pearl on which the earlier peacocks stood has become a pendent opal. Despite these changes the essence of a peacock remains. This piece is a testament to the designer's vision for modern art jewellery. Although the prices were moderate, this exhibition was not a success financially for Linton and Cross. Perhaps the reason for this was the economic decline which was just beginning in Western Australia, caused for the most part by the federation of the colonies.

In the following year Linton and Cross exhibited at the West Australian Society of Arts (later known as Western Australian Society of Arts). The new Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland, was impressed 'by the metalwork which was a strong feature of the exhibition'. The reviewer was quite specific in his description:

Last but no means least must be mentioned the unique display of metal and jewel work by Messrs. Linton and A. G. Cross. The display has until lately been quite a novel one in Perth, and the work excited more than interest, so skilfully and artistically has

it been carried out. The enamel work is particularly beautiful, and an overwhelming testimony to the care and patience of the artists.¹²

Linton and Cross again exhibited with the Western Australian Society of Arts in September 1913. The reviewer for *The West Australian* was once again complimentary:

Messrs J. W. R. Linton and A. G. Cross and Perth its self may be congratulated upon the metalwork and enamels, the handiwork of these accomplished craftsmen. The design and finish of the dessert and teaspoons are delightful, and to look at them is to find it hard to understand why utility and ugliness are so frequently associated. Among the enamels remarkable for richness of tone, the charming cupid, the ship, and the impressionist scenes compel admiration of their really lovely colour and fine design. The bronze and silver buckle with enamel and artistic pendants set with enamel and jewels, in fact all of the ten exhibits are beautiful.¹³

¹² *West Australian*, 22 February, 1911, p. 9.

¹³ *West Australian*, 10 September, 1913, p. 8.



Fig. 16
Dolphin Pendant by J.W.R. Linton, before 1920
Sterling silver, gold, jade, pearl, chain length 26.5
cm, pendant 4.4 x 2.3 cm
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth AGWA 987/90.



Fig. 17
Portrait of Betsey Currie (later Linton) painted by
James W.R. Linton, c. 1930
She is wearing earrings and a necklace with the dolphin
pendant
Collection of Dr. Max Grunberg

One of the few enamelled pieces by Linton and Cross that can be located today has a scene of moonlight on water as the central feature of the jewel (fig. 9). A luscious orange harvest moon emerges between tall trees rising dark against a deep grey sky. In the middle distance, the water glistens with a golden reflection. This is partially concealed by spreading foliage in the foreground. The enamel is in the Limoges technique reintroduced by Alexander Fisher, and could well be entitled *Nocturne* as it celebrates the occasion with a palette reminiscent of the painter James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), famous for his paintings of that name. The theme of moonlight is carried forward with moonstones to complement the silver-set enamel. Linton's ability to render light and atmosphere was his major skill as a painter, a skill he has also used to good effect in this more-difficult medium. Linton has set the rectangular enamel picture of a moonlight scene in a wide silver frame ornamented with

clusters of granules at the corners and appliqué silver rhomboids at the mid-point of each side. The heaviness of this treatment, which was used to give prominence to the tiny enamel, has been lightened by surrounding it with a delicate tracery of silver wires forming a stylized floral cartouche. These conjure an essence of flowers with the outlines hinting at magnolia or perhaps some other perfumed evening bloom. The granule clusters have medieval origins, but should not be construed as such in this context, as this convention was recommended by Henry Wilson, in *Silverwork and Jewellery*, published in 1903, as a decorative strengthening device. It was used by Linton in various ways, as well as by Phoebe Stabler (1879-1955) and other jewellers, to balance designs or fill empty spaces. In this case, it has been featured as the major decorative element, intended to highlight the pictorial focus, in what is otherwise understated metalwork.

James W.R. Linton made a bracelet (fig. 10) in 1913 for Reginald



Fig. 18
The Linton Studio Stationery
Western Australian Museum, Perth H73.131d



Fig. 19
Display area in the Linton Institute of Art, Perth, 1930s
Photograph Courtesy of the Western Australian Museum, Perth
H73.129

Landells to give to his bride, artist and teacher Flora Le Cornu. It is made of 9ct gold and silver set with an opal and garnets. During this period garnets were generally foiled at the back to enhance their colour, and were known as carbuncles. The garnets are surrounded by twisted wire, and arranged in a parallelogram across the stiff circlet of gold. The four garnets form the points of the diamond shape which frames the central opal. Interspersed between the stones are four silver leaves forming a St Andrew's cross. Flattened twisted silver wires, soldered to the gold bracelet, provide further colour contrast and bind the design together.

In December 1913, Linton and Cross staged an 'Exhibition of Pictures and Craft Work' at Strelitz's Viking House in St George's Terrace, the main street of Perth. The proportion of objects to jewellery was far greater in this exhibition than the first, as they apparently foresaw greater profitability in metalwork objects. Cross, without a teaching income, was dependent on the business. Again, the exhibition reviewer was complimentary:

... The paintings are Mr Linton's and in the craft section Mr Linton and Mr Cross have worked together. They have on view a charming selection of about 50 pieces of craftwork comprising art jewellery, brass and bronze ware and enamel work. Each piece is artistic in design and well made and to see the collection is to come away disappointed with the ordinary run of manufactured goods to be found in every home. ... Stone set rings and exquisite pendants are a predominant feature but there is plenty of variety about the specimens which embraces articles from huge candlesticks and medium bronze and brass to tiny teaspoons in silver and enamel and brooches.¹⁴

In 1916 Cross became very ill, and died in 1917. Linton then took as his partner a mature ex-student, Kitty Armstrong, who was quickly followed in 1918 by returned ex-serviceman William Andrews. 'A Dolphin Pendant', now in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in Perth, is thought to have been made during this period of change (fig. 16). It was originally commissioned by Sir Walter James to give to his wife, the former Welsh suffragette Gwenyfred James. The jewel did not meet with Lady James's approval and a second, supposedly more magnificent, piece was commissioned, called 'The Neptune Pendant' by the family. Unfortunately the piece was misplaced in the last year of Lady James's life and cannot be traced. It joins a list of important pieces made by Linton which still await rediscovery. However, the surviving 'Dolphin Pendant' in the Art Gallery of Western Australia is quite delightful. It was described in 1928 by university student Coralie Clarke in *The Cygnet*, and it is this particular piece that Linton's mistress, Betsey Currie, wears in her portrait dated around 1930 (fig. 17). The intricate construction relies on numerous soldering joins to create a fish-scale or diaper pattern which conveys the impression of light on rippling waves. The pendant belongs to a period when Linton's work was becoming more ornate and beginning to incorporate details belonging to the art deco vocabulary. Linton was fascinated by the volutes or diaper patterns,

14 'Pictures and Craft Work. Exhibition in Perth', in
West Australian, 10 December, 1913, p. 8.



Fig. 20
View of Linton's Studio/Gallery
by James W.R. Linton, c. 1923
Oil on canvas
Buongiorno Collection

derived from Assyrian and Classical art, which were characteristic art deco motifs, and to which he had long been attracted. These motifs were again topical at that time as can be seen in the wrought-iron and bronze panels made in 1923 for the London department store Selfridges by the French ironworker Edgar Brandt (1880-1960). The swirls of foam — the volutes — which Linton incorporates in the piece could have come straight from the background of the Selfridges stork panels, or any number of Brandt iron grilles. Yet Linton's work pre-dates these. The coincidence lies in a common source, Oriental art and the *Zeitgeist* of the period. The symbolism of the pendant is abundant: a dolphin, the pearl in its mouth perhaps votive, glides beneath the curling overhang of a foam-capped wave to deposit its gift on the golden sand. The colour of the sea is symbolised by two green jade cabochons, and the yellow sands by golden balls on the edge of the silver waves.

Linton had married the Indian-born artist and feminist writer Charlotte Bates Barrow in 1902. They had two children, James Alexander Barrow Linton, and John. J.A.B., known as Jamie, was born in 1904 and had been given a set of tools when aged seven; he started work with his father in 1921. This ushered in a different, but most productive, phase for J.W.R. Linton. During the four-year period before the younger man left to study in Europe they produced quite a body of work, though most of it was cutlery and plate.

The 1920s was a period of complex and contradictory tendencies when designers borrowed freely from an eclectic range of exotic sources and folk art. Linton, who had grown up with catholic interests, found inspiration in the art of China, Assyria, Egypt and Mexico. His interests were similar to those

of contemporary avant-garde French painters and designers who used primitive art to stimulate their own work. He and his son Jamie shared a considerable number of similar references, and tracing the interaction between parent and child and the flow of designs and techniques is far too complex to be discussed here.¹⁵

By 1922, with the second generation of students starting at the Technical School, Linton had become a paternal figure. He accepted a position on the Art Gallery board where he was unable to arrest the decline of the institution in the face of librarian Dr J.S. Battye's relentless drive to siphon off the funds for the library. Private action seemed the solution and in 1923 he closed his Royal Arcade studio and in concert with a group of kindred friends opened a new purpose-built studio and gallery in Murray Street West (figs. 18 and 20). Here he and Jamie set up as 'Art Metal Workers, Designers, Dealers in Works of Art, etc.' This complex included a display area and studio room for drawing, painting, sculpting or exhibiting (fig. 20) as well as a smaller workshop for metalwork. The Linton School of Art operated from around 1923 to 1925. Students came for life classes one or two nights a week. Betsey Currie, a graduate of the Technical School course, acted as Linton's assistant and general factotum, while he and Jamie collaborated on the silver and copper work, in what was a productive period, as designer-craftsmen.

A description by the university student Coralie Clarke evokes the surroundings:

¹⁵ For further information refer to Erickson, Dorothy, *Gold and Silversmithing in Western Australia: A History*, Perth, UWA Publications, 2010.



Fig. 21

Kathleen Linton's pendant with chain made by her father James W.R. Linton in the 1930s

Sterling silver, gold, amethyst, peridots, 29 x 4 x 1.5 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra NGA 2009.100

He had drawn you into a large oblong room with pictures, pictures everywhere ... and amid them scattered carelessly, comfortably round the room, are low chairs with carved legs and leather seats, occasional tables, heaped with paint tubes, brass and enamels, a heavy wooden chest and a glass show case — both for special treasures. ... He lifted the lid and took out many treasures — novelties in bronze and wood, tiny metal panels inlaid with coloured enamels, and a pendant of silver. He was proud of this, proud of its fine chain and of the stately ornament in dolphin shape hanging from it. But I was prouder when he clasped it round my throat.¹⁶

By 1929 Linton must have been a tired, disillusioned and disappointed man for he described Western Australia to Rees as the 'Never Never' for art, and sued the Education Department for a salary increase, citing the extra responsibility that having university students in his classes entailed. Jamie was abroad and Linton's private life was becoming increasingly difficult. He closed the studio down in 1929. The public neglect for art and private isolation were conveyed in a few sentences by art critic and writer, former student Leslie Rees, who wrote:

There are many who will miss the studio, for it was touched with glamour of those distant days, "When workers only worked at arts they understood," and then worked for the joy of it, before the word artistic became ridiculous.¹⁷

In the 1930s J.W.R. Linton's work moved into a different phase. He was retired early by the Education Department because of the 'financial emergency' of the Depression, and by then he had begun to take more interest in his painting, leaving Jamie to make the professional silverwork. In 1932, when Jamie opened The Linton Institute of Art on the corner of King and Hay Streets in Perth, his father joined him. It housed the studios and an art school. J.A.B. Linton was the director, however much of the teaching was done by his father. Subjects taught were life painting and drawing. Extra life classes at night were carefully scrutinised by the police to check that all attendees were bona fide, and that the nude model did not move. The institute quickly became a meeting place for students, artists, family and friends. It also served as an exhibition venue with an alcove at the top of the stairs set up with a permanent display (fig. 19). Because of his retirement Linton had more time for metalwork, but as this was difficult to sell in the first years of the Depression, it is debatable whether he made much beside pieces for family members (fig. 21). The Linton Institute of Art closed in 1935 and James W.R. moved his workshop to West Perth. By this time Jamie had introduced a degree of mechanisation and could cope with the demand. Inevitably it was Jamie who made most of the work as Linton enjoyed his retirement. In 1936, Linton had resigned from the trusteeship of the Art Gallery and journeyed to China where he purchased a quantity of Chinese porcelain for sale in a shop, with the name Linton's Art Dealers, which he opened in Newspaper House. The shop was moved to the newly-completed London Court in 1938 and the enterprise closed in 1943.

In 1938, Linton's private troubles were over when his wife moved out with their daughter Kathleen to live in Sydney. James W.R. retired to the hills behind Perth at Parkerville (fig. 22) with Betsey Currie, who changed her name by deed poll. Linton was able to enjoy some years of painting before he died in August 1947. William Moore (1868-1937), the art critic and author of 'The Story of Australian Art', published in two parts in the 1930s, had ranked Linton second only to the sculptor, John Robertson Tranthim Fryer (1858 -1928), when he came to discuss the plastic arts in Australia. Linton's stature has since continued to grow, and a retrospective exhibition was held in the Art Gallery of Western Australia in 1977. Anne Gray published 'Line, Light and Shadow: James W.R. Linton: Painter, Craftsman, Teacher'¹⁸ in 1986 and institutions began to collect his work. Today most students of jewellery and silversmithing history in Australia know the name. Linton's son became a most accomplished silversmith and his son, who also trained in England in the 1970s, continued the tradition. His great-granddaughter has just embarked on a career as a jeweller in Perth. The Linton tradition continues.

¹⁷ *West Australian*, 23 February, 1929, p. 4.

¹⁸ Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1986.

¹⁶ *The Cygnet*, Perth, 1928, pp. 6-8.



Fig. 22

Landscape 'At Falls Road', Hove, near Linton's retirement home by James W.R. Linton, 1945

Oil on canvas, 91.5 x 122.3 cm

Janet Holmes á Court Collection

Jewellery Studies Notes for contributors

Jewellery Studies is the academic journal of The Society of Jewellery Historians. The Society also publishes *Jewellery History Today*, a magazine which is produced three times a year and carries articles of general interest. The readers of **Jewellery Studies** come from a wide range of disciplines with an interest in the history of jewellery and gemstones.

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Your paper should be written in English and be understandable by all. British spelling (as given in **The Oxford English Dictionary**) should be used. Papers in other languages are published at the discretion of the Editor.

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Papers should be submitted electronically as a doc text without formatting. They should include:

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- Author's name
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Captions should be listed separately in a doc text. They should include, as appropriate:

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