



classes in cornwall

In an idyllic rural setting with expert tutors, the Cornwall School of Art, Craft and Jewellery is the perfect place to learn something new, brush up on a technique or take your hobby further, as Chloe Menage discovers.

The Cornwall School of Art Craft and Jewellery, or CSACJ, is based in Bodmin, central Cornwall.

Founded and run by two UK craft and jewellery artists Julia Rai and Marion Wilson, the school aims to provide the very best training and classes in all aspects of art, craft and jewellery. Their vision is for this centre to bring together the top teachers in the different craft fields, for students to learn in an inspiring creative environment.

Both artists are well known in their fields, Marion for her pottery and mixed media work and Julia for her silver clay. As teachers themselves they run many of the classes at the centre, but often invite outside tutors, who travel from all areas of the UK and beyond to share their knowledge.



Bronze clay flower made in the workshop.

The centre is still relatively new, only opening its doors in February 2013. Based in a beautiful converted barn on a working farm, which dates from the 1800s, the courtyard outside CSACJ has a number of granite standing stones reclaimed from a Dutch barn which used to stand on the site. The location is rural and quiet, completely conducive to a relaxed and creative break from everyday life.

Mixed media and more

The school offers courses on everything from porcelain, fused glass, metal clay and silversmithing, to beading, polymer clay, bobbin lace and felt making. As well as basic taster sessions, CSACJ also run longer more intensive courses. Masterclasses with international tutors will be running throughout 2014 and the latest addition to the timetable is an exciting professional jewellery qualification course. Julia explained: "We have just entered into a partnership with Cornwall Adult Education to deliver the first ever accredited qualification to include metal clay in the syllabus. The NCFE Level 1 Creative Craft (Jewellery) qualification also runs as an evening class at our School taught by Marion and myself."

Both Julia and Marion are keen promoters of accredited jewellery training, believing thorough courses like this to be an important and useful tool

for anyone looking to start their own jewellery business or take their hobby further. "We are so proud to have been selected to run this and it's a testament to our professional set up and teaching standards. We were keen to open this qualification up to a wider audience so offered it as three, long weekend blocks as well as the evening class format."

This was so popular that the first one scheduled sold out in 48 hours with students from all over the country and Europe! Adult Education then had a waiting list of people wanting to do it in this format, so CSACJ put another set of dates in and this booked also. Julia said: "To our knowledge, this type of qualification has never been run in this format and it's proved so popular, we'll be running a Level 1 again this year. We've also been asked to run a Level 2 NCFE Certificate in Art and Design for students who want to continue so writing that is our next big job."

Wealth of experience

Other qualifications which the school provide are the Art Clay Level 1 and 2, which Julia herself teaches. Julia has extensive experience in the industry, internationally well known as Director of the Metal Clay Academy, her work has appeared in multiple publications, magazines and competitions. She won First place in the Beyond Beads



The workshop is located in a gorgeous rural location.



There's plenty of guidance given in the classes.

Category in the 2013 British Bead Awards, and First place in the Metal Clay category in 2011. As an award winning metal clay artist students really are learning from the best!

Mixed media artist Marion is a potter who has incorporated beading, wirework, glass fusing, silver work, wax carving and metal clay into her repertoire. She has run her own successful jewellery business for several years, teaching classes, taking commissions and selling her work in a number of galleries in the south of England. Marion teaches many of the mixed media classes like the Porcelain Jewellery and Introduction to Fused Glass.

Idyllic and creative atmosphere

The school offers a friendly atmosphere for students, with small class sizes, allowing for all the help and guidance needed. On top of the huge range of courses Marion and Julia also have a craft club which runs most Wednesdays. This allows people to come and carry out their craft, using the studio space and resources for a small fee. They also offer a handy kiln firing service.

Although focused on teaching, the pair felt it important to be able to retail some of the tools and materials needed most frequently on courses, or those harder to obtain, in order to help their students. Julia said: "We sell some small

tools to students on courses and we also supply kilns, polishing machines and Dockyard Carving Tools through the website. We intend to sell metal clay soon."

Finding a space suitable for the school and big enough to accommodate the pair's extensive collection of tools, materials and crafting paraphernalia was a challenge! Julia said: "We originally thought we'd like a high street location but many of them were too small for our needs. As soon as we saw the Coldrenick Farm premises, we loved the location and the size was just right for us. When we first put all our joint tools and equipment into the space, we were a bit worried that it wouldn't all fit but once we'd sorted it out and found a home for everything, we were happy with the size."

Time flies

They have done so much in a year and feel that getting the school moved in, set up and website up and running within a month was one of their biggest hurdles and proudest achievements. Julia said: "We have to keep reminding ourselves that we are quite young as a school and we've achieved so much in a short time. Just getting everything into the school within a few weeks of the website going live was a major achievement." **B**

contact them

CSACJ is based at:
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Classes run weekdays and weekends.
To see the full schedule and availability
visit the website
www.csacj.co.uk

Email Cornwall School of Art, Craft
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