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JACQUELINE • CULLEN

WHITBY JET

Whitby jet is a prehistoric black fossil most commonly associated with Victorian mourning jewellery, the trend for wearing jet jewellery was started by Queen Victoria in response to the death of her consort Prince Albert. Mined during its heyday, Whitby jet is now rare. Jacqueline's supplier abseils down the cliffs on a rope collecting raw samples from disused caves and mines.

Jacqueline Cullen has developed innovative processes and formats that celebrate rather than disguise the inherent flaws and inclusions of Whitby jet allowing the natural beauty of the material to speak for itself, removed from connotations of death, grief and morbidity. Jacqueline is inspired by dramatic acts of nature, a placid sky ripped open by a slash of lightening, a volcano erupting, a cliff edge left jagged from erosion. Even in the act of immense destruction, nature can create something intensely beautiful. Hiatuses inform her aesthetics and the interruption or breaking up of a bold, fluid form is central to her work where fractures, fissures and crevices release a luxurious cascade of textured gold or glittering diamonds.

Jacqueline Cullen is the only person working with Whitby jet in a non-traditional way and she remains committed to introducing this ancient and sensual material to a contemporary audience.

Jacqueline has received an Arts Council grant and the Balvenie Master of Craft award (stone category). Her work has been featured in Vogue UK, Spain and Italy, Financial Times, the FT How To Spend It, The Times, The Independent, Harpar's Bazaar, Tatler, Wallpaper* and on BBC TV and radio and her contemporary Whitby jet has been commissioned by the Harry Potter franchise. She is a featured designer in 'Drawing Jewels for Fashion', the new book by Carol Woolton jewellery editor of Vogue. Jacqueline has been selected as one of 10 fine jewellers to showcase at Rock Vault at London Fashion Week, Somerset House in September.