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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CATERINA EDRICH



DRM's resident travel columnist Carole Edrich interviews a representative of this year's Venice Biennale celebration.

Every time the Venice Biennale, a celebration of architecture and art, takes place, the British Council chooses a select group of people to represent the UK at the British Pavilion. The representatives act as stewards and are given funding to develop their own creative and scholarly projects. Those selected for this year included artists, critics, public educators, mental health professionals, entrepreneurs, philosophers, a peace negotiator…. and Caterina Edrich, a jewellery student at Birmingham University. Thrilled to discover this (I'm her aunt), I set out to interview her.

Q How would you describe yourself?

A I've genuinely never been asked that before! I'd say I'm kind of interesting, kind of boring, you know? I'm creative, I'm quite sporty and I'm good at chatting with people, but sometimes I'm also terrible at it.

Q How do you view your current creative journey?

A Right now, I'm exploring different media and production processes. I mostly focus on textured or conceptual pieces for what I'd call creative projects. A lot of my work is about identity, often reflecting my own self-identity, life as a neurodivergent person, and my cultural influences. But this isn't set in stone. I've only been at this for three years, and each year it changes.



> "I'm glad I pushed myself to apply because now I feel more confident about putting myself *out there* for future opportunities."

Q What drew you to apply to represent the UK at the hugely prestigious Venice Bienalle, and what does it mean to you?

A I saw a post about the opportunity. It sounded cool, so I applied. I've always been scared to apply for things like this because I never think I'll get them. But I realised that even if I didn't get selected, the practice would be worth it. I'm half Italian, half British, and I thought representing both cultures would be a good fit, but I never expected to get chosen! Now I've done it, it still feels surreal. I'm glad I pushed myself to apply because now I feel more confident about putting myself *out there* for future opportunities.

Q Could you tell us a bit about your journey into jewellery design?

A I was really young. On my 8th birthday, my parents organised a jewellery-making party. Just beads on a necklace, nothing fancy. But they bought me some proper tools as a gift, and I got really into it for years. By the time of my GCSEs I had forgotten about it, then during lockdown when school was online, I got back into jewellery. School-work procrastination was wire-wrapping. Before COVID, I wanted to be a Spanish teacher but I didn't know what I wanted to do at uni. I even lied that I wanted to go to art school! Mum eventually signed me up for the British Academy of Jewellery in Birmingham (BAJ), and here I am.

> "Before COVID, I wanted to be a Spanish teacher but I didn't know what I wanted to do at uni. I even lied that I wanted to go to art school!"

Q How has studying at BAJ influenced your approach?

A It has completely changed everything. Before BAJ, I wanted to just make jewellery, maybe do a little bit of design, but nothing major. After doing random experimental pieces for my application process I switched from a focus on bench skills to design. Now, I'm exploring materials in ways I never imagined. The facilities here are insane! I have access to tools and machines that cost thousands. It's probably the best workshop I'll ever have in my life. With all the support and resources, I've been able to explore so many things. Every project is an opportunity to try something new.

Q How did you feel when you found out you had been chosen to represent the UK at the Venice Biennale?

A I was delighted! Just being in the interview round was fantastic. I never imagined I'd get selected. When I got the news, I was just like, "Oh my God!" It didn't feel real until I was actually in Venice.



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What did you most enjoy showcasing?

I'm excited to showcase how my work reflects contemporary British art and culture. Although to be honest, I'm still figuring out what that means.

What does it mean to you to represent young artists with ADHD on a prestigious international stage?

It's pretty cool. I didn't think much about it initially, but now it feels nice and makes me proud.

What has been the biggest challenge in your career so far, and how did you overcome it?

ADHD, hands down. It affects everything, from balancing study and work to managing time effectively. I'm still figuring it out, but I try to focus on the things I can control and seek help when I need it. ADHD makes everything harder, especially when it comes to routine and time management. The creative process is all about exploration and experimentation, which doesn't really lend itself to structure. I feel all over the place most of the time, and it's hard to stop when I should. ADHD helps with random idea generation, but it also means I end up with loads of prototypes and not enough time to finish my final pieces properly. I never quite manage to make them as well as I want.

How do you manage or balance the demands of studying, creating, and preparing for events, especially with ADHD?

It's a struggle, honestly. I'm constantly doubting myself, feeling like I don't belong in either jewellery or art, but I keep pushing through. The key for me is to take it one step at a time and remind myself of my accomplishments.

What are the most important themes or concepts you aim to explore in your jewellery designs?

Emotions and personal experiences are at the core of what I do. My work divides into two main categories: aesthetic-driven and concept-driven. Aesthetically, I'm inspired by everyday life, especially light and water and how they interact. For example, I once did a resin ring inspired by how light distorts through ice. Conceptually, I explore identity, like my family stacking rings, which represent who we are, or pieces inspired by neurodivergent experiences. I've done work exploring my own identity as someone with ADHD, and I'm always branching out from my personal experiences.

> "ADHD makes everything harder, especially when it comes to routine and time management."


Credit: Caroline Folch à Rabat

Is there a particular piece of jewellery you've created with special significance?

Yes, definitely. I never take off this silver ring. It's the first proper piece of jewellery I made in metal, my first wax carving, and I got it cast for my birthday. It has my sister's and my fingerprints inside, so it's really special to me.

Finally, what's next?

I'm currently working on my final year project, which is really exciting. I'm also planning to apply for more opportunities, both in the UK and internationally. I don't know exactly what the future holds, but I'm looking forward to whatever comes next.

AUTHOR: **Carole Edrich**, *photographer, journalist and board member for Unlimited and is also a resident travel columnist for Disability Review Magazine.*


Credit: Caroline Folch à Rabat

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