



By the age of 10, Lin Cheung had made cushions, curtains and bed linen for her own bedroom, using sewing skills inherited from her mother, but didn't see craft as something you might make a living from. 'My mum was very talented, but in our family craft skills were for fulfilling practical needs.' The third daughter of Chinese parents from Hong Kong, Cheung was born in the UK and grew up in Wiltshire, where her father ran a Chinese take-away. It would take a BTEC National Diploma at the University of Southampton for her to realise that craft could be a career. 'Visiting my metalwork teacher's studio opened my eyes to a completely different way of life,' she says. 'I knew from that moment that I wanted to make things for a living.'

A book called *The New Jewelry: Trends and Traditions* by Peter Dormer and Ralph Turner, discovered during her BA in Wood, Metal, Ceramics and Plastics at the University of Brighton, focused that ambition into a desire to make

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jewellery. 'Opening that book for the first time was profound,' she explains. 'The images were powerful and the work was technically incredible, but crucially, it was unlike any jewellery I had ever even imagined. It blew my mind.'

Brighton was also where Cheung developed her ideas-led approach. 'When you talk to people about jewellery, they launch into memories and emotion before they talk about form or materials,' she says. 'It is deep in human nature to imbue objects with meaning.' An MA in Goldsmithing, Silversmithing, Metalwork and Jewellery at the Royal College followed, and visiting lecturer Onno Boekhoudt opened her eyes to the potential scope of a jewellery artist. 'It was like finding a spiritual home for my thinking and making,' she says.

Today, Cheung's making process is very direct and despite the advice she gives her students (she is a senior lecturer on the Jewellery and Textiles Programme at Central Saint Martins), she rarely sketches. 'I just

feel around, often working on a few ideas at a time, until a finished piece pops out,' she says. It's clearly a process that works – she has won an Arts Foundation Award (2001) and a Jerwood Contemporary Makers Award (2008) among many others, exhibited all over the world, and designed the London 2012 Paralympic Games medal.

She's been shortlisted for the prize with *Delayed Reactions*, a series of politically motivated brooches exploring gemstone carving. The first piece is *Confused*, a pin badge made from blue lapis lazuli inlaid with gold stars depicting a bemused face. 'I am not overtly political,' Cheung says, 'but following the EU referendum, I wanted to put all of my thoughts and feelings into a piece, just for me.' Other brooches explore what pin badges say about the people who wear them.

She says being shortlisted for the prize is the highlight of her career, but as for winning: 'I couldn't even imagine that.' *Katie Treggiden*
lincheung.co.uk



Clockwise from left:
Two Brooches Inside a Jewellery Box, 2016;
Delayed Reactions - Confused, 2017, brooch, carved lapis lazuli, gold;
Pearl Necklace Graduated, 2017, carved freshwater pearls, reconditioned vintage case, gold;
Rope of Pearls, carved freshwater pearls, heat shrink tubing, 2016

