

**For immediate release: Tuesday 25 August 2020**

**Kassandra Lauren Gordon Fund awards £21k in grants to 21 Black jewellers, to support business growth and reduce financial hardship**

**- Survey of Black British jewellers launched today -**

- **KLG Fund raises over £25,000 to support Black jewellers**
- **Grants of £1,000 were awarded to 21 Black jewellers by an independent panel of judges, made up of industry experts: Melanie Eddy, Satta Matturi, Victoria McKay, Alex Monroe and Roxanne Rajcoomar-Hadden**
- **The judges said that Black jewellers in Britain ‘face a unique set of challenges’ and that barriers needed to be addressed**
- **The KLG Fund is launching a research project and survey today, to better understand the experiences of Black British jewellers**

London, 25 September 2020: The Kassandra Lauren Gordon Fund (KLG Fund) has awarded a total of £21,000 in grants to Black people working in the jewellery industry who need support for their businesses and have faced financial hardship because of the current crisis, following a review by a panel of five independent industry judges, who said they were “overwhelmed by the talent, creativity and enthusiasm of the applicants”.

In June, Black jeweller and activist Kassandra Lauren Gordon successfully raised £19,483 on a Go Fund Me page, exceeding the original £14,000 target. 328 people, businesses and trade organisations made donations ranging from £5 to £5,000. Kassandra also started a collaboration with the Goldsmiths’ Company, with its charity donating £6,000 to the Fund, taking the total value of the KLG Fund to £25,483. The Goldsmiths’ Company Charity team has provided pro bono support for the application process and administered the grants on behalf of the Fund.

The KLG Fund was set up in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement to provide immediate financial relief to emerging and established Black jewellers. The Fund was created in response to feedback from the Black jewellery community about the challenges, discrimination and racism they faced in the jewellery industry, following Kassandra’s open letter to the jewellery sector (first published by the Jewellery Cut on 6 June).

Kassandra said, "I was getting a lot of Black jewellers messaging me on social media in response to my open letter. They shared their own experiences of racism and discrimination, as well as the financial difficulties they were facing due to Covid-19. Many wanted advice and support for their businesses and their practice, but there just wasn't anything available from the industry specifically for black jewellers. So, I decided to launch a Go Fund Me page to raise money to do just that, inspired by all the people who had contacted me. Initially I planned to support 10 Black jewellers with £1,000 grants, no strings attached, and to fund some social research. But the campaign was so successful, that with the support of donors large and small, we have been able to support 21 Black jewellers. I am so grateful to all of the donors; we simply couldn't have done this without them."

### **Alex Monroe says Black jewellers in Britain 'face a unique set of challenges'**

An independent panel of judges made up of industry experts – Melanie Eddy, Satta Matturi, Victoria McKay, Alex Monroe and Roxanne Rajcoomar-Hadden – reviewed a total of 44 applications in August and reached a unanimous decision.

Speaking on behalf of the judging panel Alex Monroe, one of the UK's leading jewellery designers, said, "It was strikingly clear to all of us [the judges] from the applications, that Black jewellers in Britain face a unique set of challenges and that the Coronavirus crisis has caused exceptional hardship. We were impressed by the talent and passion of all our applicants and are pleased to be able to award 21 grants to those we felt would benefit from it most at this time.

"The successful applicants demonstrated real talent, both in craft and design, and had well considered business and marketing plans. We acknowledge that many of the applicants have had difficulty accessing other support: the KLG Fund grants will help businesses through an exceptionally difficult time and contribute towards their success."

Alex said that the judges had learned a lot through the process. "We learned so much about the discrimination and racism faced by Black jewellers in the UK. There is a problem of visibility for many Black jewellers in our industry. Access to the press, buyers and social media and marketing support can also be challenging. Many black jewellers come into the jewellery industry through less conventional routes, which can throw up barriers of access to what we understand, and have experienced to be, a small and often closed industry. The specific hardships faced by Black jewellers are real. They exist and they won't go away unless we all get involved. A fairer, more inclusive industry will benefit everyone."

The KLG Fund was originally set up to offer support to Black jewellers who are self-employed, sole traders, or running micro-businesses. However, the judges saw a demand for grants from graduates and hobbyists who were just setting out. “We felt it was really important to support the next generation of Black jewellers who need help to get started in business. There were some strong and compelling business cases among the applicants, and we are pleased to be in a position to support them, with the help of our donors,” Alex said.

### **Black Jewellers Survey launches today**

The KLG Fund is also conducting one of the UK’s first research projects into the experience of established and emerging Black British jewellers, supported by the Goldsmiths’ Company and the Goldsmiths’ Centre as well as Fund donors. As part of the research, a survey of Black jewellers is launching today, and Cassandra is encouraging as many people as possible from the Black jewellery community to participate in the survey.

Kassandra said: “This is a very important moment in history – an opportunity to really understand the experience of Black British jewellers in our industry. The need to improve equality for Black people in the jewellery industry and address systemic racism does not begin and end with awarding 21 grants. We need data, knowledge and information about the UK Black jewellery community to create long term change that will support the next generation. Your contributions can help shape the actions that the jewellery industry should take to improve access, training, and support for all Black jewellers. So please have your say and complete the survey.”

The survey is available here: [https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Black\\_Jewellers\\_Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Black_Jewellers_Survey)

And the deadline for submissions is 6pm on Tuesday 8 September. All survey respondents will be entered into a prize draw to win one of five sets of Cookson Gold gift vouchers worth £100 each. The survey findings will be released at the end of October 2020.

ENDS

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## Notes to Editors

A list of all donors to the KLG Fund Go Fund Me page can be found here:

<https://uk.gofundme.com/ff/support-uk-black-jewellers-hardship-fund>

### A breakdown of donations raised:

Total raised toward the KLG Fund on Go Fund Me (at 28 July 2020)	£19,483
Additional donation to the KLG fund from Goldsmiths' Company Charity	£6,000
Total raised:	£25,483

### A breakdown of the Fund costs:

<b>Grants</b> (£1k each for 21 Black jewellers)	£21,000
<b>Go Fund Me administration fees</b>	£679.16
<b>Black jewellers survey focus group</b> (10 Black jewellers paid £100 each for participating)	£1,000
<b>Black jewellers social research case studies</b> (10 Black jewellers paid £100 each to be case studies for social research project)	£1,000
<b>Social research project:</b> (Other costs e.g. gift vouchers, transcribing, proof reading and graphic design)	£1,803.84
Total to be distributed:	£25,483

**Note:** since 28 July an additional five people have donated a total of £277 to the Fund. These donations will be used to support the social research project.

## About Cassandra Lauren Gordon and the Fund

*Kassandra Lauren Gordon is an ethical jeweller/Goldsmith and jewellery content creator based in East London. She has studied jewellery manufacture and design in Hatton Garden. Kassandra was a former social researcher, youth worker, community worker and domestic violence professional. She has always wanted to empower people to find their voice, especially when life is not easy. Kassandra designs ethical jewellery with the dress codes of a range of professional industries in mind; from minimalist styles for the more formal work environments to loud pieces for creatives. Her jewellery style is minimalistic with organic, textured elements contrasting with geometric shapes, always infused with storytelling.*

*In June 2020, Kassandra wrote [an open letter to the jewellery industry](#) highlighting how current practices and systems limit accessibility and entry into the trade for Black people; and a five-point plan to help increase the visibility of Black jewellers in the industry and amplify their voices. She also launched a Go Fund Me page to raise money to support Black jewellers facing hardship.*

*Kassandra is the host of the 'Created For You' podcast, where she interviews business owners and creatives providing excellent experiences to their clients. <https://anchor.fm/kassandra-gordon>*

*Kassandra runs the Black Jewellers Network which produces mentoring opportunities and support for Black Jewellers, a monthly newsletter and free event [www.facebook.com/blackjewellersnetwork](http://www.facebook.com/blackjewellersnetwork)*

**Website** <http://www.kassandraaugord.com/> **IG:** @klgjewellery

## About the judges

### **Melanie Eddy, Academic and fine jeweller**

*Melanie Eddy is a key academic on the MA Design: Ceramics Furniture and Jewellery programme at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design. She is a Director of The Association for Contemporary Jewellery and is consistently involved in projects relating to her field; sector development, research, writing, exhibition installation and curation are examples. Melanie has a London studio based in The Goldsmiths' Centre, Clerkenwell; she specialises in a bespoke service, mostly working within customer focused private commission.*

**Website:** <http://www.melanieeddy.co.uk/> **IG:** @mne\_eddy

### **Satta Matturi, Founder and Creative Director, Satta Matturi Fine Jewellery**

*Satta Matturi is the founder and creative lead of the award-winning brand, Satta Matturi Fine Jewellery, which she founded after a 17-year diamond career as a sales and rough diamond expert with one of the world's largest diamond mining groups. Her skills and experience within the mid-stream of the industry, coupled with her passion for diamonds and jewellery led her to start up her niche brand. Being British and West-African, Satta combines deep felt traditions and heritage from the African continent, mixed with a global view of trends, attitudes and inspiration, to create distinct designs that resonate with women across the globe. Satta has travelled extensively and has an innate passion for the new emerging Africa, which she brings into all her designs.*

**Website:** [sattamatturi.com](http://sattamatturi.com) **IG:** @sattamatturijewellery

### **Victoria McKay, Co-Founder, Women's Jewellery Network**

*Victoria McKay is Co-Founder of the Women's Jewellery Network and is a respected jewellery and diamond industry commentator, with her opinion regularly sought by international journals. For many years she has been an active campaigner for empowerment for women and inclusivity for all within the jewellery industry. She has written for trade media journals Retail Jeweller, Professional Jeweller and was a panel judge for the UK Jewellery Awards for four consecutive years. Victoria sat on the Camden Business Board and was an Executive board member for the Hatton Garden BID board. She was acknowledged twice in the Professional Jeweller Hot 100 as a Business Big Shot. In early 2020, Victoria was awarded the title of Top 100 Female Entrepreneur in the UK by F:Entrepreneur.*

### **Alex Monroe, Founder, Alex Monroe**

*Alex grew up in the Suffolk countryside surrounded by nature, and his childhood was full of adventure and wonder of the natural world. After training at The School of Art, Architecture and Design in London, Alex created his first collection in 1987 to critical acclaim. When establishing the Alex Monroe brand over 30 years ago, his intention was to produce high quality, handmade jewellery that is consistently wearable. These values remain unchanged to this day.*

**Website:** [www.alexmonroe.com](http://www.alexmonroe.com) **IG:** @alexmonroejewellery

### **Roxanne Rajcoomar-Hadden, Founder, Goldie Rox**

*Roxanne started her career as a diamond sorter for DeBeers. In the 15 years since, she has worked with numerous fine jewellers across various sectors of the industry, ranging from retail to looking after the high value jewels in the Bvlgari vault. In 2012, Roxanne set up her own culinary inspired brand Goldie Rox which has, over the years, evolved into a fine jewellery brand specialising in remodelling family heirlooms.*

**Website:** <https://www.rrhjewellery.com> **IG:** @rrhjewellery

## About the Goldsmiths' Company Charity

*The Goldsmiths' Company Charity is a grant funder, that was founded in the late nineteenth century with investment income on assets given by the Goldsmiths' Company over the centuries. Its Board of Trustees is made up of members of the Goldsmiths' Company's Court of Assistants (equivalent to a board of non-executive directors).*

*The Charity builds partnerships with other charitable organisations that work with young people, prisoner reintegration, an ageing population, education and culture*

*The mission of the Goldsmiths' Company Charity is to make a positive and lasting impact on society, giving people better access to opportunities that improve their life chances, including access to education.*

## **About the Goldsmiths' Company**

*The Goldsmiths' Company is a membership organisation that has contributed to national life for 700 years. We train and support jewellers and silversmiths, protect consumers by testing and hallmarking precious metals and work with charitable, educational and cultural partners to help people in need.*

*In a pre-welfare state society, trade guilds like the Goldsmiths' Company provided a safety net protecting craftspeople, their communities and people who had fallen through the cracks in society. The giving of alms, or financial relief, is mentioned in the first pages of the Company's earliest minute book in 1334.*

- **The Goldsmiths' Centre:** *Trains and supports jewellers and silversmiths and those in the allied trades.*
- **The Assay Office:** *Protects consumers and the trade by hallmarking precious metals.*
- **The Goldsmiths' Company Charity:** *Works with charities to help improve people's lives.*

**Website:** [thegoldsmiths.co.uk](http://thegoldsmiths.co.uk)

**IG:** [@TheGoldsmithsCompany](https://www.instagram.com/TheGoldsmithsCompany)

**Website:** [goldsmiths-centre.org](http://goldsmiths-centre.org)

**IG:** [@GsmithsCentre](https://www.instagram.com/GsmithsCentre)