ISSUE #85

ACID MAGAZINE

YOUR VOICE AGAINST DESIGN THEFT

Tincredible Creations

ACID Member Silver Crane share their story

p16-17

Raise Your Voice to Reform Design Law

Page 6-7

Hat's Amazing!
Imogen's Imagination's Journey To IPEC

Pages 10-13

Going Green with IP:
YPIE winner and ACID Sustainability Ambassador Carl Henrik-Andersson

Pages 14-15

Hello ACID Community!

Can you believe it is almost the end of 2025! As we approach the festive season, it is both a time for reflection on the year's progress and looking ahead to a new year of opportunities.

Of course, there will have been – and will be – many challenges too, both faced and yet to be faced, and it's important we are always doing as much as we can to mitigate and manage these challenges, as well as supporting our design community and business colleagues in navigating them.

That's why it is vitally important we maximise the opportunity of this year's Design Consultation, which is open until 27th November 2025, so there will still be plenty of time to get involved by the time this magazine hits your doormats and inboxes! It feels extremely fitting, therefore, following almost 15 years of relentless campaigning, that our very own and wonderful Dids Macdonald OBE takes the prime spot of Guest Editor for this issue. Head to **pages 6-7** to find out why the Design Consultation matters, how you can get involved, what ACID's key objectives are and what we're doing to push for design law reform.

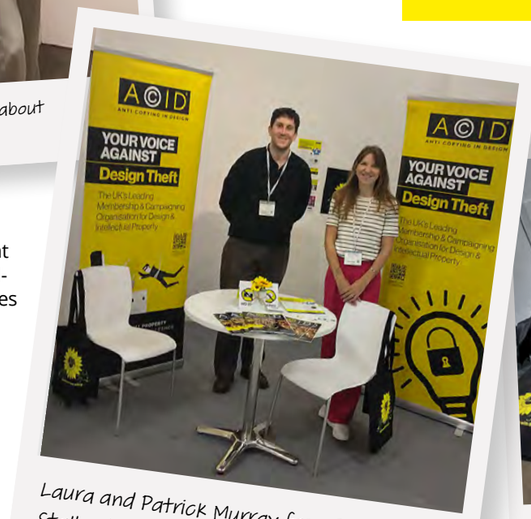
When it comes to reflection, 2025 has been a very exciting year for ACID; both in terms of membership and campaigning. As I'm sure you'll all have seen, we have been at the forefront of campaigning for creators' rights in the face of AI's exponential usage, with Dids spearheading ACID's involvement with the media-wide Make It Fair campaigning and ACID having an active role in the Creative Rights in AI Coalition. This is yet another reason to get involved in the Design Consultation too; we need design law to be understandable, affordable and enforceable to equip our incredible UK designers and manufacturers with the tools they need to keep fighting the endless and wide-ranging copycat threats.

One such threat is the online marketplace. In 2025, ACID met TEMU for the very first time when, as I'm sure you all remember (vividly!) they appeared at Spring Fair. TEMU have long been a cause of concern and copying for ACID members and the wider creative community, posing a threat to sales and livelihoods through the prolific and seemingly unwavering copying on their platform. However, since the surprise encounter, ACID and TEMU have built an open and proactive dialogue, voicing our concerns and putting members directly in front of them to give their real-life, first-hand experiences of IP infringement from TEMU sellers. Again, this goes to show just how effective case studies are, and why we need them for the Design Consultation, since TEMU are proactively engaging in dialogue and we continue to work with them to make improvements.
You can read a summary of our progress on **p8**.

"When it comes to reflection, 2025 has been a very exciting year for ACID; both in terms of membership and campaigning"

Laura and Marion out and about

"TEMU are proactively engaging in dialogue and we continue to work with them to make improvements.
You can read a summary on p8"



Laura and Patrick Murray from DMH Stallard at Decorex

Laura and Marion at Design London Shoreditch

When it comes to our eclectic community, 2025 has been another fantastic year for our partnerships; both in welcoming new partners and engaging with our existing partners to continue IP education and support. ACID are delighted to have so many fantastic partnership organisations working alongside us, and you can read our latest updates on **p20**. Our exhibition partners are also a fantastic part of our ACID community. We were delighted to attend Design London Shoreditch for the first time this year, held in September by the organisers of Clerkenwell Design Week. We were also back at Decorex in October, meeting a vast array of interior design, lighting and furniture businesses alongside ACID member exhibitors.

As ever, our wonderful members are also actively implementing their IP strategies and enforcing their rights wherever and whenever possible. Sophie Cooke, of Imogen's Imagination, has recently had a successful outcome to her claim, issued in the Intellectual Property Enterprise Court (IPEC), following extensive copies of her wonderful range of hats. Sophie breaks down her journey on **pages 10-13** with hints and tips on navigating the IPEC system. Another member ensuring her IP strategy is bang up to date is Vicky Yorke of Vicky Yorke Designs. Vicky recently had a concerning AI encounter, which spurred her into contacting ACID and working together to produce not only a case study of her experience to share with our members, but suggested inclusions for website terms and conditions to help keep AI predators at bay. Turn to **p18** to read more.

Finally, if you're starting to get into the festive spirit, ACID Member Silver Crane are this issue's member focus on **p16.** With a fantastic range of twinkly tins and Christmas creations, you'll be sure to be reaching for a mulled wine as you leaf through your ACID magazine.

All that remains is for me to wish you a fantastic rest of the year and a wonderful festive season on behalf of all of us here at ACID. As ever, if you have any IP questions or concerns, the ACID team are here to help. We look forward to working with you all in 2026!

Laura Newbold Breen,
ACID CEO

A GOVERNMENT'S DUTY

Nick Kounoupias, ACID Chief Counsel and IP Director

As any student of politic thought will confirm, the first duty of any Government is to protect the life, liberty and property of its citizens.

This is not a novel concept; John Locke first enunciated this theory in the late 17th century. So, it should be expected that the current major design consultation announced in September 2025 will be an opportunity for the UK Government to make good its commitment to protect the livelihoods and property of the UK's design sector, and over 81,000 design businesses which today contribute over £100billion to the UK's economy.

Unfortunately, the current direction of travel is not generating much optimism that the Government will fulfil its duties. Whist we do support the general tenet of the Design Consultation that the legal regime for protecting designs should be simplified, we fail to understand how Government will achieve this by favouring reducing the term of protection for unregistered designs from 15 years to 5 years and by dismissing the legitimate concerns of designers faced with the deliberate copying of their designs but unable to afford the mountain of legal costs that they would face in suing as "anecdotes" alone. Whilst this is insulting at best, it also represents a massive abandonment of Government responsibilities towards its own citizens and favouring overseas corporations at the expense of UK designers and design businesses.

> "ACID will be shining a spotlight on this theft in its response to the Design Consultation"

The criminalisation of unregistered design right infringement really is a no brainer. Why should the deliberate copying of a song, magazine article or computer software (all breaches of an unregistered legal right: copyright) be punishable by up to ten years in prison, whilst the deliberate copying representation of a design is not even a criminal offence. Either they should all be criminal offences or none of them should be.

The main opponents of criminalising unregistered design infringement are organisations based outside the UK whose business model frequently depends upon the deliberate copying of designs. ACID will be shining a spotlight on this theft in its response to the Design Consultation. Our Government will then have to decide whether to fulfil its duties towards its own citizens or whether it will pander to overseas interest instead.

From a furnace of ideas to Westminster: TURNING ANGER INTO ACTION

In the late 1990s, in Adam Aaronson's Fulham glassmaking studio, a small group of us would gather after work, venting our frustration over an injustice that was becoming all too common: the theft of our creative work.

I had just launched an innovative range of decorative accessories, only to see them shamelessly copied by a major UK high-street retailer and others. I even bought a share in one £450 million copycat company and threatened to shame them at their AGM. It worked and they settled.

"What started as a handful of frustrated designers asking, "What can we do?" has grown into the UK's leading organisation and voice for design protection and IP reform"

With the support of a young, talented intellectual property (IP) lawyer and ACID's co-founder, Simon Clark, I decided to channel that anger into action. From that spark, ACID was born, a movement rooted in frustration but driven by a determination to try to help protect the rights of UK designers.

What started as a handful of frustrated designers asking, "What can we do?" has grown into the UK's leading organisation and voice for design protection and IP reform. Over the past two decades, ACID has evolved from grassroots activism into a respected lobbying force, pressing both Government, policy makers and industry to confront the vulnerabilities of the UK's £100 billion design sector, of nearly two million people with design or design skills, mostly lone, micro and SME.

The journey often felt like swimming through glue, but persistence has paid off. The UK Government's recent consultation on strengthening design protection marks a historic turning point, a long-overdue acknowledgment that our design laws are outdated, not fit for purpose and urgently need reform.

ACID's progress has relied heavily on collaboration and expert guidance. The design sector owes a huge debt to our Chief Counsel, Nick Kounoupias, whose insight, and unwavering commitment has been instrumental in our success. Alongside the unfailing loyalty of our supporters, his counsel has helped push design protection to the forefront of political attention. Nick has been a sage mentor to me through what was an accidental and unplanned journey in my professional life.

But real change depends on collective action. Some may dismiss the consultation process as too technical or procedural, but this is our moment to shape reform. ACID has created a simple case study template for designers to share their experiences of theft: how it happened, where it was discovered, the cost of taking legal action and the consequences.

These personal stories and real evidence will be far more powerful than statistics in influencing policymakers.

At the heart of ACID's campaign is a call to fix a glaring imbalance in UK IP law. Most designers rely on unregistered design rights, which expire after 15 years and carry no criminal penalties for deliberate infringement. Meanwhile, copyright lasts a creator's lifetime plus 70 years and criminalises intentional copying.

Why should a photographer snapping a single image of a product enjoy stronger rights than the designer who conceived it? Creativity across all disciplines deserves equal protection. We are calling for deliberate infringement of unregistered designs to carry criminal consequences, aligning them with copyright and registered design rights. This is a crucial step in creating robust deterrence with capability to safeguard Britain's innovation and creative economy.

From the furnace of that Fulham studio to the halls of Westminster, ACID's journey proves that even a small, determined group can make a difference.

Now, as the Government finally listens, to diminish design protection would be nothing short of a tragedy; to fortify it is not merely a choice, but an obligation. I urge every designer to act; share your story, raise your voice, and help ensure design theft is recognised and punished for what it is.

"I urge every designer to act; share your story, raise your voice"

Design has always been one of Britain's greatest strengths. From post-war reconstruction to modern industry, it has fuelled growth and shaped cultural identity. As the Design Council notes, "Unless it has been designed by nature, everything around us has been designed." But creativity can only flourish in a culture that respects originality. Copying is not flattery. It is theft. It robs livelihoods, drains innovation, and undermines our creative economy.

Copying isn't flattery or competition. It's theft and it's time the law recognised it.

Dids Macdonald
OBE
Chair and Co-Founder of ACID Director of Public Affairs/IP Policy & Campaigning

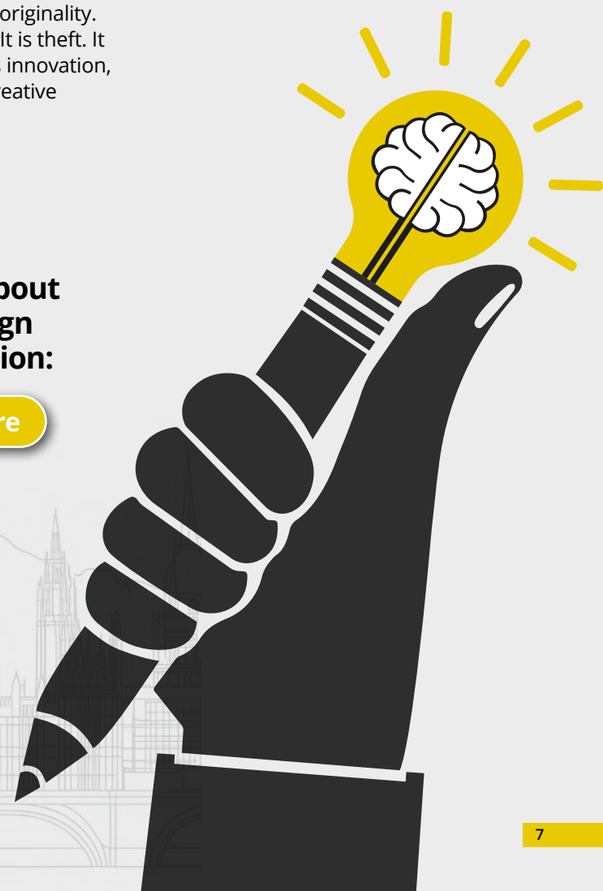
Complete ACID's case study template:

Click here

Read all about the Design Consultation:

Click here

ACID LOBBY
ANTI COPYING IN DESIGN



TEMU, Take Downs and The Super Six

Whilst 2025 began unexpectedly and disconcertingly with TEMU's somewhat bombastic and controversial attendance at Spring Fair, as the year has progressed ACID and TEMU have formed important and proactive lines of communication; something of a rarity in the digital age of virtual assistants and customer service bots.

The first meeting took place on 26th February 2025, whereupon Dids, Laura and Marion met representatives from TEMU online to continue applying pressure on behalf of our members, and the wider design community, regarding the prolific, marketplace-wide copyright and design infringement, namely:

- Prolific copyright infringement, as demonstrated (for example) by the greetings card industry
- Seller vetting apparently not being fit for purpose, due to the number of infringements
- Though take down was usually quick and responsive, sellers were quickly relisting under a new name to continue infringing rights holders' IP
- TEMU need to be more proactive in monitoring infringing sellers and listings, not leave this to rights holders' who are often SMEs without resource to tackle mountainous infringement at this level
- TEMU need to improve their vetting process and ensure repeat offenders are not allowed back

TEMU's IP Protection Team were keen to share TEMU's IP Protection Programme, built on pillars of policies and procedures, notice and takedown, proactive monitoring and stakeholder engagement. Though ACID complimented TEMU on the principles of their IP programme, this simply wasn't reflected in practice. Moreover, the seemingly strong trade mark focus really wasn't fit for purpose when the infringement is, more often than not, design and copyright.

With the door now open for discussion, TEMU were keen to hear from our members directly about their experiences. ACID strongly believe in the power of real-life stories and immediately set about getting a team of members together with first hand experiences of TEMU's challenges:

Victoria Wardingly, Hand Painted Stuff

John Parker, Berni Parker Designs

Laura Mysek, Wee Wishes

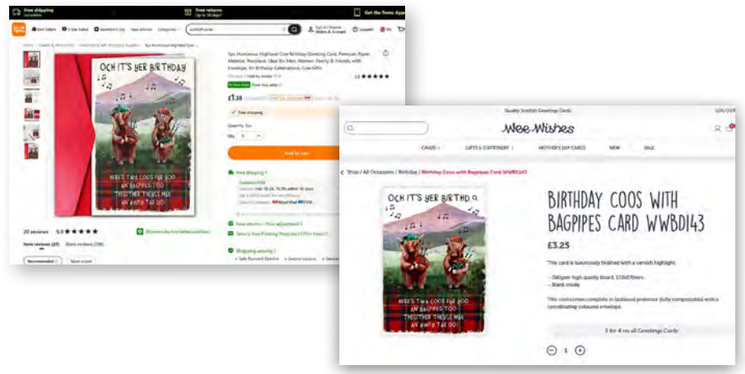
Sarah Hurley, Sarah Hurley Brands

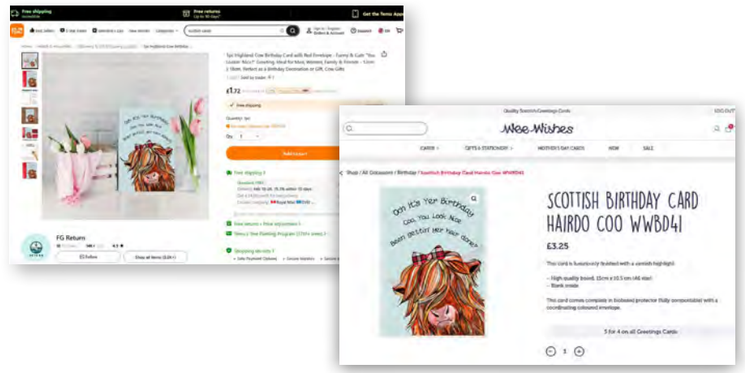
Amanda Mountain, Lola Design

Sophie Cooke, Imogen's Imagination

On 16th July, each of these ACID 'Super Six' presented their stories to TEMU, with issues chiefly focussing on:

1. **Repeat infringement**
2. **Seller onboarding**
3. **Financial losses**





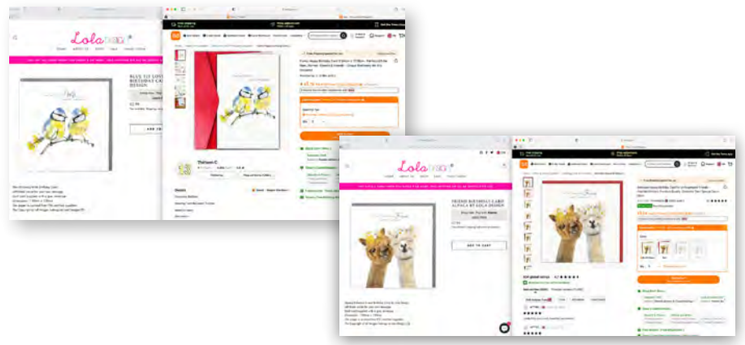
Though they agreed the response was quick, reporting the infringements had taken hours, even days, out of their schedules only to find these infringing listings would reappear days, weeks and months later. They were having to police TEMU's platform because new sellers were joining the platform advertising previously reported infringing images and designs. Many also reported their designs and images were being altered slightly or applied to products, such as cushions, they have never sold.

Both image and design infringement, and the apparent lack of punishment for repeat infringers were key frustrations. TEMU have been receptive to these criticisms and comments and intend to work together to rectify each situation proactively as well as reactively through their takedown tools, including a keen interest in ACID's IP Databank as a verification of copyright and unregistered design ownership.

In terms of financial losses to our members, estimates in both product sales and time were of the order of tens of thousands of pounds, yet TEMU doesn't appear to have a non-litigious mechanism in place to tackle compensation for the rights' holder.

Overall, TEMU have significant work to do to build trust with the design community and taking more decisive and punitive action against infringement earlier and more impactfully would go some way towards building this trust. Encouragingly, TEMU have since updated their "how-to guide" for reporting infringement and asked ACID to share this with our members. The Super Six and TEMU have remained in close contact, actively working together to improve take down and reporting with, it seems, increasing success, and are looking forward to meeting agan to review progress.

ACID would like to extend heartfelt thanks to each of our members who have joined us on this journey for sharing their candid, honest and challenging stories. Your voices have definitely resonated. ACID would also like to thank TEMU for engaging with us and we look forward to continuing to build on these positive foundations.



ACID CASE STUDY:

IMOGEN'S IMAGINATION INFRINGEMENT ON ETSY & IPEC JOURNEY

In Summer 2024 I noticed that sales of one of my best-selling headband designs had slowed dramatically on Etsy. I did some initial research and discovered that several other Etsy shops were offering almost identical designs for sale... only for half the price of my design!

Over the coming months I collated evidence of this infringement through screenshots and links to their products. This evidence included the first dates of reviews for the items, public sales history (where available), plus product listing images and titles.

I also researched their social media accounts to identify whether these designs predated my own documented design and marketing timeline. They did not.

The materials, shape and form of my headband are quite unique. Knotted headbands have been a trend for a long time. However, before marketing my final design in March 2022, I did my due diligence research.

I was unable to find any existing designs online that matched both the shape/form and materials used to make my new headband design. I used keyword searches that covered all possible phrases that might be used to describe my product and the materials that they are made from.

Identifying the Etsy sellers was easy, however not all the sellers had shared their contact information publicly. This is a legal requirement for UK commerce businesses and a breach of Etsy's policies - these state that sellers must follow local laws.

COPY

ORIGINAL

Emotional Impact

My first reaction to discovering this infringement was annoyance and resignation. Although over time this has grown into anger and frustration. It now manifests as defiance and a determined conviction that nobody, other than myself, should be able to exert this scale of impact on my business.

My design was not registered and I was very doubtful as to whether I had grounds for legally claiming the design as my own. Basically, I wrote it off, thinking that there was nothing that I could do anything about it.

I was resigned to just accepting this infringement as an inevitable consequence of having designed a fantastic product. "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery that mediocrity can pay to greatness" (Oscar Wilde).

I knew that the techniques used to make the headband were simple and the materials easily available. This was a conscious design decision on my part as I wanted a product that was quick and simple to make.

The design had gone through rigorous testing and I spent significant time and effort sourcing and sampling my chosen materials and packaging. These headbands had been designed to meet the specific circumstances of post-pandemic shopping and the plans that I had laid in place during the lockdowns – when I had all the time in the world for business development!

Summer 2022 was set to be THE summer of events. I needed to capitalise on it fully after the pandemic ravaged weddings, races and all large-scale events/parties in the two years prior.

Most importantly, my headband was designed to allow preparation of the various elements to be outsourced to my freelance helpers. I was solely responsible for the final assembly of the components, which allowed me to maximise sales by being able to offer "rush order" upgrades – an absolute must for the inevitable last-minute shoppers!

By removing these £12/hr tasks from my workload, it also allowed me to focus on the £20/hr tasks in my business – like strategy and planning for the year ahead.

Between March 2022 and July 2024, these headbands flew out of the studio, destined for customers around the globe. Selling at a rate of one a day, this was by far my fastest selling design ever and completely unprecedented.

In the latter half of 2024, after discovering the initial infringement, the scale of the problem increased further. I discovered more cheap copies of my headband on Etsy and sales of my original design disappeared completely.

As all Etsy sellers know, the algorithm loves sellers who sell so a drop in my best sellers had a knock-on effect across all my products. Combined with the introduction of GPSR for EU sales, and starting legal action against one Etsy seller, this was a perfect storm.

The drop in sales last summer, my peak selling period due to weddings and events, meant that I was unable to keep my freelance staff on. It also meant that I had stop paying for additional freelance social media support.

Throughout Autumn 2024, I struggled to speak positively about my business. Without someone to pick up the slack with my marketing, it ground to a halt. With no social media or email marketing, which previously only promoted my own website, this meant a further decrease in my overall revenue.

Most crucially, I also had to half my own salary contributions from the business. This had a significant impact on my personal finances.

The emotional impact of having a business that was thriving, to one that was on the verge of collapse was intense and devastating.

By Christmas 2024 I was diagnosed with severe depression and in January I started job hunting for full time roles.

I knew that without my rented studio space I would need to sell up and close. This has never been an option.

I have sacrificed too much and worked too hard over the last 19 years to give up. I built my business from a hobby alongside full time work, so if this is the solution to save it – I will do it again.

My anger at this infringement is now being channelled into protecting my now legally declared design rights. Returning to full time work will bring the much needed financially security to make this possible.

It's not where I thought my business would be 12 months ago.

It's not where I want my business to be in 12 months' time.

It's not where my business will be in 24 months though!

Financial and Business Impact

For the purposes of my court claim, I calculated that I had lost £13,000 in revenue via Etsy between July 2024 and January 2025 on this design. I am steeling myself to update this figure for further legal action, although I estimate it to now be in the region of £15,000.

Sadly though, the true figure is unknown. I cannot evidence sales made by Etsy sellers via their own websites or other outlets. Unfortunately, nor can I evidence the direct impact these lost sales have had on Etsy's algorithm and my sales of other products, especially during key periods e.g. Christmas 2024 and Summer 2025.

My Etsy sales have been weak throughout 2025 with July sales hitting their worst low since 2021 – this is only beaten by the Lockdown Summer of 2020.

The greatest damage to my brand reputation has been my own lack of confidence. My own inability to feel enthusiasm or confidence in sharing my work or thoughts on social media. This is partly because I'm still not in a truly healthy headspace. It's hard not to allow negativity to infuse, something I've battled with whilst writing this!

I have certainly lost momentum and relationships with customers, both on social media and through my email list. This will be a priority once I have started employment, had my first payday and found some mental balance.

Dealing with this infringement has become somewhat paralysing and incredibly time consuming. Understanding the legal processes, collating and creating the necessary evidence for court, monitoring Etsy to identify new infringing products and the, sometimes overwhelming, fear of what will happen next.

However, this has been time well spent. Having successfully taken legal action against one Etsy seller, I have learnt so much. This knowledge and familiarity with the process will now make taking future action simpler – I've done a lot of the heavy lifting already.

The damages and legal costs that I was awarded by IPEC will be used to fund future action. I had to fund this action using my personal finances, so my salary from full time employment will be used to repay both my personal savings and debts.

I know that I will never recoup the revenue from the lost sales, or even potential missed sales. I accept this and recognise that I will probably never "make" any money out of this situation.

It has now become a matter of principle that I challenge this underhand activity. I have ignored infringement in the past but now I am armed with a much greater understanding of my rights, I feel much more empowered to challenge it.

Steps Taken and Future Plans

I have posted on social media about the infringement I have suffered. I have aimed to keep it educational, such as highlighting the impact of copying in general and sharing my test purchases of infringing products. However, I did publicly name the defendant in my IPEC claim after the case was made public record.

I need to crack on and add the ACID logo to my website as well as a blog about my membership and the amazing support ACID has provided. I have been somewhat distracted since I became a member in January 2025, so this is long overdue!

My total legal/court costs from October 2024 to date are now in the region of £4600. This will increase due to ongoing action.

These costs can be split into 3 distinct categories:

- Initial Letter Before Action – although this cost has reduced over time as it has been possible to use the original letter as a template for different recipients
- IPEC Court Fees
- Legal Advice– Assessment of products to ascertain ground for infringement and court/legal process etc

The cost of the Letters Before Action in October/November for sellers 1 and 2 was approximately £1500.

My total court fees were £674, however £123 was wasted on default judgement fee. The defendant's defence statement was not uploaded to the filing system until after the deadline had passed, despite being received 3 weeks prior. Sadly, this fee was non-refundable.

Whilst the cost of legal advice has been significant, I now have a repository of questions and answers that I can refer to, both pre-empting and reducing potential future queries. I have also gained the confidence and knowledge to submit my own report via Etsy's IP reporting portal – albeit with mixed success.

Claim filed in April 2025 at IPEC against Etsy Seller 2

Hearing date June 2025 - No defence evidence received by the court or me and the defendant did not attend the online hearing.

Court Order and Judgment awarded in June 2025 declaring my unregistered design rights and damages/costs awarded (£5000 damages and £1024 in costs).

The Etsy IP reporting portal is painful, confusing, non-sensical and that's before speaking to their support team! Etsy's support emails are infuriating, dismissive, lack transparency and are utterly unhelpful

In the IPEC judgment, the Judge criticised Etsy's IP reporting processes, their determination of UK design rights and how these rights are upheld.

Etsy Seller 1 - Multiple reports made via the IP reporting portal by my solicitors – final report upheld

The shop closed in Oct/Nov 2024 after a Letter Before Action letter was sent to the Etsy Legal team direct.

No seller contact details were displayed publicly so it could not be emailed or posted direct to the seller.

Etsy Seller 2
Multiple reports made via the IP reporting portal by my solicitors – all rejected

Etsy removed 60 items after I shared the IPEC claim form in April 2025.

Additional items were reported and rejected by Etsy in April – although removed by the seller after the court order was issued.

Further items were reported and removed by Etsy in July 2025 - I reported these when the deadline to comply with the Judge's order had passed.

At time of writing, Etsy is refusing to accept the IPEC court order in relation to the removal of advertising materials for the infringing items - those reported in April and removed by the seller in July.

Etsy is the only party that can remove the images linked to reviews of the infringing items, therefore the defendant has not and cannot comply with the court order.

Sellers 3-6 - No seller contact details displayed as required under UK law, but crucially, no sales of the infringing items.

Letters Before Action are not cost effective in these circumstances, so I have reported these items via the Etsy IP Reporting portal myself.

All my reports have been rejected and at time of writing, Etsy is refusing to accept the IPEC court order as evidence of my unregistered design rights to these infringing items.

In addition, my requests to investigate further legal and Etsy policy breaches by these sellers have been ignored/rejected by Etsy.

Sellers 7-9 - Significant sales of infringing items through both Etsy and their own websites.

At time of writing, I am awaiting advice/ action from solicitors regarding Letters Before Action for these sellers.

Sales by these sellers are ongoing and at high volume so my losses further escalate due to this infringement.

ACID has truly been a lifeline in this battle to protect my rights. I can hand on heart say that without their support, knowledge, expertise and cheerleading, I would never have had the confidence to stand up for myself. Thank you so much!!!

I am so very grateful for this support, as I know so many makers/creatives never tackle their copycats... and I completely appreciate why!

The fear/threat of losing, the cost, the time and the sheer mental load is terrifying. But that is what the copycats rely on and it's why, time and time again, they get away with this lazy approach to making money – at our expense!

I have lodged some of my designs in the ACID IP Databank and it is my intention to add more. Sadly, all my best-selling designs were created too long ago to register with the IPO, so this is an incredibly helpful resource.

I am also resolute in supporting ACID in their work to support creatives like me. If my experiences have taught me anything, sharing knowledge and demystifying the processes of IP protection is key.

There is strength in numbers, and ACID provides a vital umbrella network to support a vast range of businesses, of all sizes. I welcome this collective power and find strength in it – a lone voice can easily be ignored but the roar of a crowd is difficult to silence.

This might have been one of the biggest challenges that I have ever faced in my life, however the alternative was to give up, sell up and forever regret the way in which the demise of my 19-year-old business had come to pass.

I refuse to give anybody the power to dictate the future of my business in this way. These people have not earned the right to influence these decisions, let alone to copy my work.

I do acknowledge that I have found myself in a privileged position, especially in having the means to fund legal action. I also have professional skills, from my past career, which have made this process less scary. Most crucially though, I have had the ability to seek alternative employment and pivot my entire life to fit around this drastic action.

I am hopeful that after a year or so of stability; to reset my finances and my overheated brain, I will be able to return to full time millinery. I'm confident that with breathing space I can fall back in love with my passion and thrive once again. This will just be a pause, not a goodbye.

Final Words

I'd like Etsy to seriously review the way in which they handle IP reporting in general. I'm not convinced their "staff emails" aren't just bots!

Should there ever be the opportunity to get them in a room in the same way that there has been with TEMU, I will be there!

Sophie Cooke, Imogen's Imagination

Launched in 2006, Imogen's Imagination started off as a hobby to "scratch an itch".

In 2013, milliner Sophie left full time employment to realise her ambition of being a full time creative.

The Imogen's Imagination style can be summed up as "vintage inspired with a contemporary twist" with all designs being handmade, by Sophie, in her Sheffield city-centre studio.

Using traditional millinery techniques and equipment, Sophie creates customisable hats, fascinators and hair accessories, one of a kind ready to wear designs, as well as offering bespoke and retrimming services.

Sophie's signature bow berets have been seen on TV and are a firm favourite with customers across the globe... and copycat sellers on TEMU!

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TRIUMPH AT YPIE!

Each year the Furniture Makers' Company runs a three-week intensive Young Professional Industry Experience (YPIE) programme, aimed at educating young people in all aspects of the furniture business, supported by leading UK furniture manufacturers and industry organisations.

The Furniture Makers' Company
the furnishing industry's charity

ACID was once again delighted to be part of the Furniture Makers' Company (FMC) Young Professional Industry Experience (YPIE) programme, with Dids and Laura kicking off the first week with a talk and workshop on intellectual property (IP). Each year, we also run a competition setting an essay question: "Why IP Matters to my Brand/Business'.

The importance of IP for future, sustainable innovation and full lifecycle design cannot be echoed enough. That's why our winning piece had to go to Carl-Henrik Andersson, founder of Category Furniture – his own endeavour that ensures no piece of furniture ever goes to waste.

FIRST PRIZE
Carl-Henrik Andersson
Founder of Category Furniture, with his piece:

IP refers to any copyright, patents, trade marks, design rights or trade secrets owned by a company. IP is a key resource within a company's business model. Throughout this text I will evaluate how IP matters to my own furniture brand, Category Furniture.

After registering my company name on Companies House, I took upon the challenge of personally designing my own brand. This included coming up with a logo, its own typography, a website and a domain. The design and development of each element involved researching and iterations to finally achieve an original, fresh and appealing brand identity, all of which required a significant amount of IP; by doing so I will further strengthen the brand identity to which consumers will be able to trust.

In continuation, IP does not only improve brand reputability, but it can also provide economic development. In the future, for example, if I design my own furniture or invent a new technology, registering these designs and ideas would potentially allow me to secure funding from investors once I am ready to further develop the business as a fully-fledged furniture brand.

Unfortunately, in the design world, it is common practice for other designers and manufacturers to copy popular designs. In the event of IP infringement, having my work registered with different forms of IP would ensure eligibility to defend myself in court to prevent my work from being exploited. This is only possible so long as I have documented and registered my design process, allowing me peace of mind, knowing I have a strong legal standing, giving me a clear basis for legal action.

In conclusion, IP matters to my brand as it ensures I am rewarded for my hard work of creating a brand identity and new innovative solutions; regarding the prevention of furniture going to landfill, whilst also providing security in the event of infringement. However, with artificial intelligence (AI) now on the rise, this is having an impact on IP. Moving forward I will refrain from using AI for design or solution development, since there are many ongoing debates to figure out who owns the rights to the information inputted into these AI systems.

ACID is also delighted to welcome Carl as our first ever Sustainability Ambassador, supporting and advocating for IP respect throughout sustainable design and green skills.

Daniel Edmunds from Dreams, was our worthy Runner Up, citing the importance of IP in both innovation and brand differentiation. Daniel's words resonated with the ACID team.

RUNNER UP
Daniel Edmunds
From Dreams, with his piece:

IP is a critical asset for any business focused on innovation, brand strength and long-term growth. For Dreams Bed Company, the UK's leading bed retailer, IP is not just a legal formality—it's a strategic tool that underpins the company's success. From exclusive mattress designs to digital innovations and powerful branding, Dreams relies on IP to protect its unique identity, products, and customer trust.

First and foremost, Dreams places significant emphasis on product design and innovation. The company offers a wide range of sleep products that are not only functional but also uniquely engineered. For example, the Dreams Sleepmatch technology, which helps customers find the perfect mattress based on body profile data, showcases the company's commitment to combining science and comfort. Protecting such innovations through patents, design rights and trade secrets ensures that competitors cannot simply copy or replicate these advancements. This protection secures Dreams' investment in research and development and helps maintain its market-leading position.

Equally important is the Dreams brand, which has become synonymous with comfort, quality, and expert sleep solutions. Over the years, Dreams has built a strong emotional connection with its customers. The brand name, logo, and marketing slogans—such as "Sleep matters"—are powerful differentiators in a crowded marketplace. By registering and enforcing trade marks, Dreams protects these brand elements from imitation or misuse, ensuring that customers always know they are purchasing authentic products from a trusted source.

Dreams also benefits from IP through its exclusive product ranges, including in-house brands and collaborations with top manufacturers. Many of these products feature unique aesthetics, materials, or construction methods that provide added value to consumers. Registering these features under design rights helps Dreams secure its competitive edge and prevents imitation by lower-cost or lower-quality competitors.

In recent years, the company has increasingly embraced digital innovation. From an intuitive e-commerce platform to in-store digital experiences and sleep improvement tools, technology is playing a larger role in how Dreams interacts with customers. The development of bespoke software, interactive tools, and data-driven services involves valuable IP in the form of source code, algorithms, and user interface design. Protecting this IP ensures that Dreams can continue to lead in digital retail experiences and enhances customer engagement both online and in-store.

Beyond protection, a robust IP strategy adds real commercial value. Whether in partnerships, investor discussions, or future expansion plans, a well-maintained IP portfolio demonstrates that Dreams is safeguarding its assets and thinking long-term. It increases the company's appeal to stakeholders and confirms its position as an innovative and forward-thinking brand.

In conclusion, IP matters to Dreams because it underpins innovation, protects brand integrity, supports exclusive offerings, and enhances overall business value. By actively managing its IP, Dreams secures its reputation as a trusted industry leader while continuing to deliver high-quality, differentiated sleep solutions to customers across the UK.

ACID would like to congratulate everyone who took part in YPIE 2025 and wish them an extremely successful future; we're sure you all have fantastic careers ahead of you!

Member Focus
Silver Crane

Faith Capstick, ACID's Social Media & Communications Executive, meets the Silver Crane team

Silver Crane has evolved from Camden Lock Market ceramics in the 1970s to a world-leading name in decorative tin packaging today. Looking back, what role has design and originality played in building such a strong global brand identity?
Design and originality have always been at the heart of Silver Crane. From our early days selling ceramics in Camden Lock Market to creating decorative tins for the world's leading retailers, our success has always come from doing things differently. We've never been one to follow trends — our role has always been to create them. That design-first mindset has built our reputation globally and continues to be the reason why customers return to us year after year.

Your tins are instantly recognisable and have a reputation for the "WOW" factor. How do you use intellectual property (IP) to protect that creativity and ensure your unique designs remain exclusive to Silver Crane?
When you pour so much time, creativity, and investment into original design, protecting it is essential. We register our designs and trade marks in key markets, keep detailed records of the creative process, and work under confidentiality agreements with partners. But IP isn't only about safeguarding Silver Crane — it also gives our customers peace of mind. They know that when they work with us, their products are truly exclusive and can't be replicated elsewhere.

Many ACID members experience copying and lookalike products. Have you ever faced situations where your designs were infringed, and if so, how did you respond to protect your IP?
Yes — copying is unfortunately a reality in our industry. It's incredibly frustrating to see your work imitated, but we've always responded firmly and quickly, whether through legal channels, direct action or industry networks.

Winning awards like "Innovative Pack of the Year" and "Reusable Pack of the Year" highlights Silver Crane's focus on originality and sustainability. How do these accolades help strengthen your position when it comes to preventing or challenging copycats?
Awards provide independent validation. When a design is recognised by the industry as best-in-class, it underlines that it's new, innovative, and unique. That makes it much harder for a copycat to pass off something similar. For us, awards also energise the team — they remind us why it's worth pushing boundaries, and they reinforce our message to customers that when they work with Silver Crane, they're getting market-leading creativity.

The packaging industry is fiercely competitive. What do you see as the biggest IP challenges for creative businesses like yours, and how do you stay ahead in protecting your ideas?
Speed and cost. Trends move quickly, and copycats can react faster than ever, so protecting designs needs to be just as quick. International protection is also expensive and complicated, but it's essential for businesses like ours with a global reach. The way we stay ahead is by constantly innovating, registering our designs, and being proactive in telling our story — why originality matters, and why it's worth investing in.

As ACID members, what benefits or resources have you found most valuable in supporting Silver Crane's journey, particularly in defending your rights and safeguarding innovation?
ACID has been hugely valuable for us. On a practical level, the advice, guidance, and resources are excellent, but the bigger picture is just as important: ACID is a strong voice campaigning for design law reform and championing originality. Being part of that network gives us confidence that we're not alone in this fight, and it helps raise awareness across the industry that design has to be respected.

With your new Bournemouth warehouse and global expansion, Silver Crane is clearly scaling at pace. How does IP protection support your international growth strategy?
As we expand into new markets, IP protection gives us and our partners confidence. Retailers want to know that the designs and products they launch with Silver Crane are truly theirs and won't suddenly appear elsewhere in copied form. By protecting our creativity globally, we safeguard not only our own investment but also theirs. It builds trust, strengthens long-term relationships, and ultimately gives us the foundation to scale internationally with originality at the core.

Can you give us a glimpse of what's next? Do you have any exciting new designs, innovations, or collaborations coming to market that you can share with us?
Innovation is what excites us most, and we have plenty in the pipeline. We're developing new seasonal gifting ranges that bring together creativity, sustainability, and collectability — packaging that people want to keep and treasure long after the food is gone. For us, the joy is in raising the bar a little higher each year.

ACID values the support of its members to enable it to campaign for design law reform. Do you have any messages for Government/ Policy Makers on IP issues? Do you think that copying of designs is deliberate and blatant?
My message to Government would be that design theft should be treated as seriously as any other kind of theft. UK creative businesses invest millions in ideas, and those ideas are one of our greatest strengths internationally. If we want the UK to remain a global leader in creativity, we must protect the people and businesses that make it happen.

Finally, have you signed the ACID IP Charter?
Yes

Faith Capstick,
AUTHOR
ACID's Social Media & Communications Executive

DON'T TRAIN ON ME!

HOW YOU CAN TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR WEBSITE FROM AI

An ACID member for many years, Vicky Yorke of Vicky Yorke Designs is a surface pattern designer and illustrator with oodles of experience and artistic ability. Not only that but Vicky always has a keen eye on all things IP, displaying terms and conditions and the ACID logo on her website to deter any would-be copycats.

However, like many of our ACID community, Vicky has become increasingly concerned about the impact AI could have on her business, designs and future. Despite diligently taking steps to opt out of social media AI use, Vicky was shocked to then receive an email from www.dondo.com advising that their AI tools had analysed her site and made recommendations.

When she clicked 'view analysis', Vicky was shocked at the level of detail the report went into, including extensive detail of her brand voice.

Visit: **vickyyorkedesigns.com** to find out more about her and her work

Though the analysis had only used information freely available and outwardly facing on Vicky's website, this nonetheless felt invasive. No permission had been given and no request made for this kind of intrusion, which highlights the concerns we all have about AI – where does the control lie and how do we restrict its ever-growing infiltration into our lives? Particularly for our design community, how can we be confident our designs aren't being slowly stolen under the radar?

Vicky says *"Although I know this is now routinely happening, I felt physically sick reading this. I have been actively turning off AI permissions across my social media, but don't believe there is a way to do this on my Shopify store website. My work is also widely available online through licensing partners, so I feel I am fighting a losing battle unless an AI 'opt-in' system is quickly put in place..."*

ACID legal affiliate Robert Lands, Partner and Head of IP & Commercial at Howard Kennedy LLP believes it is of utmost importance that the Ts&Cs on ACID members' websites expressly forbid AI training and data scraping of website content. Robert suggests adding clauses not only to warn against the copying of your designs in the traditional sense, but also to prohibit the use of bots and spiders and prevent automated techniques which analyse text and data to generate information (or to develop or improve AI systems or models).

Robert points out that it's also useful to state in the terms that such AI clause is to be treated as *"an express reservation of rights, including for the purposes of Article 4(3) of the Digital Copyright Directive ((EU) 2019/790)"*. The Digital Copyright Directive introduced an opt-out system in the EU for text and data mining. In other words, under EU law it is not illegal to scrape data from a website to train an AI, unless you have opted out. This is not part of UK law, but your website may have visitors from the EU- including AI visitors!

Dids Macdonald, ACID's Chair, Co-Founder and Director of Campaigning is at the forefront of ACID's work on ethical AI use. Dids states *"Vicky's experience is a shrill warning shot that without guardrails, AI can indiscriminately use data without permission. The more individuals that create their own policy about authorisation of data the better, to avoid this chilling direction of uncharted territory regarding use of your data for "training purposes" which is a sanitised word for theft. An excellent start would be to upload the following legally approved statement as a warning shot. An "opt in" system is urgently required in UK law but under the current government this is looking unlikely"*

This is an agreed statement that ACID recommends on users' websites and on social media:
"I am [or We are] a member of Anti Copying in Design (ACID). The use of [my/our] work and the data on [my/our] website and social media by generative AI models is expressly forbidden."

So, though it may seem like closing the door after the AI horse has bolted, ACID is of the opinion that there are still a number of things you can do to keep yourself and your designs protected.

ACID CEO, Laura Newbold Breen, says *"we were very pleased Vicky came to us to raise this issue and share her story with the ACID community. There is nothing worse than that stomach-dropping moment of thinking your information has been stolen or compromised but putting some simple steps in place like deterrent messaging, using the ACID logo, maintaining a strict audit trail and keeping yourself up to date by attending ACID webinars will ensure you are forewarned and forearmed".*

Vicky Yorke is a British Surface Pattern Designer and Illustrator who works from her home studio on the Isle Of Portland, Dorset. Obsessed with colour, pattern and texture, she has been creating beautiful products for almost 20 years.

Vicky's designs are inspired by the stunning nature and coastal scenes that surround her home and appear on many different types of products - including stationery, kitchen products, home decor, craft products, home textiles, luggage and bags, plus much more - and her products are sold in retailers worldwide.

Living with several chronic illnesses has helped Vicky to understand how positive design can promote wellbeing. Whether creating playful and bold typography or a delicate floral pattern, Vicky hopes to spark joy through her artwork to bring fun and warmth to everyday living.

Vicky Yorke,
Vicky Yorke Designs
@vickyyorkedesigns
www.vickyyorkedesigns.com

Partnering in IP Perfection

2025 has been another fantastic year for ACID Partnerships; both in continuing our existing partnership engagement and forming new partner relationships to continue our united goal of IP education, deterrence, support and, of course, respect, compliance and ethics! *(Have **you** signed our IP Charter yet?!)*

All our partnerships are vital for continuing to support current businesses and the designers and creatives of tomorrow with all aspects of IP, ensuring that every organisation's members feels empowered and confident to continue innovating, creating, designing and selling no matter the industry or area they are in. To ensure they have access to all the tools they need for a proactive IP strategy and help when they need it most, all members of our partner organisations receive 20% off ACID membership.

Joining the ACID Partnership community this year are:

Holly&Co

www.holly.co

British Home Enhancement Trade Association (BHETA)

www.bheta.co.uk

The Society of British Jewellers (TSOBJ)

www.thesocietyofbritishjewellers.com

A huge, warm and excited welcome to you all!

Not only have we welcomed these wonderful three organisations to our community, we have also had a great year of events with our partners. On many occasions these events are also attended in collaboration with our wonderful legal affiliates, to ensure we provide the best advice and information possible.

We kicked off this year's partnership programme on 19th March with Laura attending DCA South West; a regional members' day hosted by the Direct Commerce Association (DCA). Laura gave an overview of IP with a particular focus on retail, especially online marketplaces. The following day, ACID attended the Furniture Component Exhibition in Telford for the first time, hosted by ACID Partner the British Furniture Association (BFA). ACID legal affiliate Kelly Hudson from McDaniels Law joined Laura to give a talk on IP in furniture and furniture components. In the same month, Laura was joined by legal affiliates Tony Catterall and Rebecca Horne from Taylors Solicitors in Warwick for the Garden Industry Manufacturers Association (GIMA) Members' Day. AI was the hot topic of the day, so providing a talk on IP was a timely reminder of the importance of attribution and ownership when using AI tools.

Fast forward to 4th June and time for the BPMA Conference in Marlow. Laura was delighted to attend and give a talk on IP to an audience from the promotional merchandise sector, where trade marks and design IP were the order of the day. In January 2026, Laura will be attending the BPMA Awards to present a year's ACID membership to the winner of the Grand Prix category.

At the end of June, on Thursday 26th, we were thrilled to be invited back to the LIA Annual Lunch to present an award of a year's free membership to this year's NextGen winner, which deservingly went to Harry Ford from Loughborough University. Congratulations Harry!

Following a summer break, October came around and with it Laura was back where the year started with ACID partner the DCA for the DCA Annual Summit & Direct Commerce Awards. With the Design Consultation in full swing, this was the perfect opportunity to get as many attendees around a table as possible to explain ACID's consultation wish list and how anyone and everyone can (and should!) get involved.

As ever, a heartfelt thanks to our partners for hosting us at these events. We love to be involved and it's a pleasure to support you and your members.

Alongside these in person events, ACID has hosted a number of introductory webinars to new partners, explaining all about ACID, IP and how we are here to help.

2026 is looking like an exciting year for new partnerships, so watch this space! As well as plenty more events with our partners to look forward to.

If you are interested in becoming an ACID partner, feel free to get in touch by emailing laura.newboldbreen@acid.uk.com for an informal chat any time.

Member

SHOUT OUT

A warm welcome to some of our new members. We have been delighted to share their work through our social media channels. Keep up with our latest news on Facebook, X and Instagram.

Isobel Olivia Textiles

A recent Textiles Print & Embroidery graduate from Bath Spa University, Isobel's designs are bursting with country garden charm, floral motifs, and a sprinkle of cottagecore magic. Think dreamy botanicals, whimsical animals and a soft, nostalgic aesthetic you'll want in every room!

@isobeloliviatextiles

Silver Crane Company

With over 47 years of design and supply expertise, Silver Crane is a global leader in seasonal food gifting and decorative tin packaging — working with top-tier retailers across 30 countries.

From humble beginnings selling ceramic teapots in Camden Market to creating award-winning, collectible packaging seen in some of the world's most prestigious shops.

@thesilvercranecompany

www.silvercrane.com

Belly Button Designs

The design-led giftware brand putting heart into art and passion into planet-friendly products! Known for their luxurious greeting cards, stationery and gift collections, everything they create is stylish, sustainable and proudly made in the UK. With beautiful designs and a strong ethical ethos, they prove you don't have to choose between creativity and responsibility.

@bellybuttondesigns

www.bellybutton.cards

Tara Collette

Tara creates beautiful, one-of-a-kind handmade banners that ooze charm and character — each one stitched with care and creativity. With 8 years of experience and a client list that includes The National Trust, Camden Town Brewery and Wool and The Gang, her love for traditional crafts shines through in every piece.

@taracollette

www.taracollette.co.uk

Bella Christie Jewellery

A passion project turned brand, Bella Christie creates bold, beautiful jewellery for stacking, styling, and expressing your personal vibe. Think chunky golds, silvers, charm necklaces and statement stacks you'll want to wear on repeat. Designed to be mixed, layered and truly feel like you – every piece is effortlessly cool, empowering and made to last.

@bellachristiejewellery

www.bellachristiejewellery.com

Jelka Group

Experts in equestrian infrastructure, Jelka design smart solutions with horse welfare, performance, and efficiency at the heart. Whether you're a professional or a passionate amateur, their tech-savvy approach to stables is built to make life better for both horses and humans.

@jelkagroup

www.jelka.co.uk

Tala Fustok Studio

Led by designer Tala Fustok, this West London-based studio blends luxury with imagination. Known for their layered textures and bold material choices, their interiors aren't just beautiful — they're immersive, surprising, and completely one-of-a-kind. Think secret nooks, unexpected details, and spaces that feel like stories waiting to unfold.

@talafustokstudio

www.talafustok.studio

CommonRoom

Merging the worlds of art and interiors, CommonRoom creates bold, thought-provoking wallpaper and homewares by contemporary artists – making high-quality art something everyone can enjoy. Their work is rooted in storytelling, design history, and a belief that wallpaper deserves to stand in the spotlight.

@commonroom.co

www.commonroom.co

Minka Jewels

Founded by gemmologist Lucy Crowther, Minka creates modern heirlooms with vibrant gemstones, clean lines & timeless style — all expertly crafted in the UK.

@minkajewels

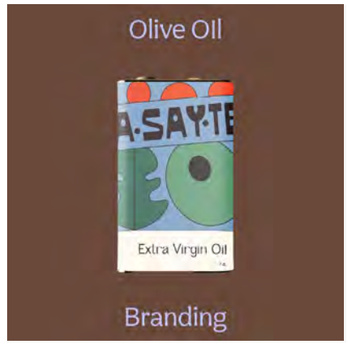
www.minkajewels.com/

Deni Deni

Experts in British-made luxury accessories & furnishings, combining traditional craft with innovation. Proudly bespoke, proudly original. Welcome to the team!

@denideniengland

www.deni-deni.com/



Emma Illustrates

Emma blends colour, storytelling and creativity through a mix of analogue and digital processes. Her work is often inspired by nature, African landscapes and her Mozambican heritage – and she's already caught the eye of big names like Oatly, Penguin, Anthropologie and more.

@emma.make

www.emmamake.com

New Members

ACID welcomes the following new members to the ACID Community

Company	Industry
Abigail Ghent	Ceramics
Eddie & Joan	Fabrics & Textiles
Elizabeth Rachael	Fabrics & Textiles
Karis Devon Textiles	Fabrics & Textiles
Redenim Crafts	Fabrics & Textiles
Stoff Studios	Fabrics & Textiles
Màiri M MacLeod	Fashion
Yoostudio	Fashion
Art by Nature Ltd	Furniture
Category Furniture	Furniture
Elements Creative Workshop	Furniture
Verb Furniture	Furniture
All Frills	Giftware
Boho Zo Designs	Giftware
Freya Gigi Hansen	Greetings Cards
Johan Brand t/a Brand Creation Company	Interior Accessories
Sarah Goodwin	Interior Accessories
LAURAWILDISH	Jewellery
Rebekah Ann Jewellery	Jewellery

Company	Industry
Scott Anthony	Jewellery
SAKHANTRADER LIMITED	Lighting
LapCaddy	Other
Missy Studio	Other
Wild Changer	Other
Emily Peasgood Studio Limited	Product Design
Instant Nit Comb Cleaner Ltd	Product Design
Flat Bistro	The Arts
Tara Winona	The Arts
Nick Dobson	Toys
Alice Georges	
Chrissie Pearcey	
Conker Furniture Ltd	
Harry Ford	
Holly Parr - Beaded Blooms	
LOCO DESIGN PVT LTD	
Rosslynstone	
SeaWaves Jewellery	
Soane Limited	

Events

25th November **ACID Lunchtime Learning:** How Designers Can Protect Their Work on Amazon with ACID Partner, SnapDragon Monitoring	26th November **Intellectual Property Rights in Crochet & Knitting:** Weaving IP into Your Work	3rd December **ACID Lunchtime Learning:** Trade Marks Explained	13th December **The Lettering Arts Trust Symposium**
→ Register	→ Register	→ Register	

Anti Copying In Design Ltd
All Mail to:
Anti Copying In Design Ltd
Fetcham Park, Lower Road,
Fetcham, Leatherhead,
KT22 9HD

Membership Office:

+44 0800 080 3230

Email: info@acid.uk.com

Online: www.acid.uk.com

Social Media:

@ACID_tweets

Anti.Copying.In.Design

anti.copying.In.design

ACID Registered Office:
5 Singleton, Chichester, PO18 0HA
Company Reg. No 3402512.
VAT Reg. No 707 5923 23

Nothing in this newsletter is intended to be a complete statement of the current law and you should always take specialist advice in respect of your own particular circumstances

© ACID 2025

CARBON BALANCED PRINT
www.carbonbalancedprint.com
Stanbury Chameleon - CBP2222

ACID's Joining Criteria for New Members

In accordance with our policy, all new members are provisional members for the first 6 months of their subscription period and will be published by industry sector in the next ACID magazine. In the event that there is any complaint against a new member, please write to the Chief Executive Officer together with any substantiated facts. Hearsay, rumour or unsubstantiated facts will not be considered under any circumstances. Any complaint that should arise will be put before a panel comprising ACID's legal advisor, Chief Executive Officer and two members of the ACID Advisory Council from a different industry sector. If the panel decides that a complaint should be upheld their decision will be final and no further correspondence will be entered into.

A MEMBER OF ACID ANTI COPYING IN DESIGN

The Furniture Makers' Company
the furnishing industry's charity