

ACID[®]

MAGAZINE

YOUR VOICE AGAINST DESIGN THEFT

**Ringing in the
New Year with a
New Partner!**

Introducing The Society
of British Jewellers
p18-19



Photography: Andy Schofield
@ Kelandy Designs Memorial Jewellery

Consciousness in Creation:
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Happy New Year!

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas, a restorative break and a chance to reflect and recharge.

Here we are again. Another year; another realm of opportunities but... of course...another catalogue of challenges.

Businesses of all shapes, sizes, disciplines and demographics are facing rising costs, complex HR landscapes and general admin headaches to name just a few issues. It's enough to leave you questioning your life choices at the best of times; throwing in the towel at the worst.

As a very small team ourselves, ACID completely understands the frustration and worry that comes with running your own business.

But you are designers. Designers persevere, reimagine, create and overcome obstacles. That's what makes you so unique.

“Designers persevere, reimagine, create and overcome obstacles. That's what makes you so unique”

To quote our very own Nick Kounoupas, ACID'S Chief Counsel, **“Designers are different”**.

And different is good. Different is what creates change; different makes progress; different defies the odds.

In 2025, 149 creative businesses and individuals joined the ACID community for IP support, deterrence and advice. We are proud to have you all with us as we continue to campaign for designers' rights and give you the best guidance and access to IP resources we can. One of our key benefits of membership is our team of legal affiliates, and we are grateful to them for their unwavering support to both us and our members.

As you know, ACID submitted its response to the Design Consultation (the Consultation) in November 2025, a



ACID's 2025 in numbers



Delivered 24 webinars



Attended 18 events & in-person talks



United with 4 new partners



Welcomed 149 new members



summary of which you can read on **p10**. Our thanks to you all – members and followers, legal affiliates and partners – for your contribution and input. Our asks are big and bold, but essential to enable UK designers and creatives to innovate in confidence and, just because the Consultation has passed, we won't stop fighting for what we believe in.

As well as new joiners of ACID, in 2025 100 members of the design and creative communities signed the ACID IP Charter pledging our commitment to IP respect, compliance and ethics in design, including copyright and AI. Your comments and commitment have been an essential part of our submission to the Consultation and campaigning work overall. If you haven't already, please do sign the charter and let's keep the momentum.

Education remains at the top of ACID's agenda. In this issue, our Guest Editor Kate Farley (**p6**), Lecturer at Norwich University, explains her journey through design, the challenges of IP and now AI, and why it is imperative our future designers have the IP awareness and skills they need. Kate is one of ACID's Tutor Focus Group, assisting us with the design of IP resources for schools and universities. In November 2025, it was a joy to give another webinar to Gray's University, Aberdeen, in conjunction with Iain Morrison – another member of our Tutor Focus Group – and Marek, one of ACID's Student Ambassadors. The engagement of these wonderful academics and individuals spreads our word far and wide. In addition, it is our great pleasure that CHEAD

actively advocate for ACID's work and Consultation aims, who you can read about on **p12**. We welcome this opportunity to engage directly with creative education institutions and keep pushing IP in the curriculum.

One new partner also keen to support students, apprentices and the jewellery industry as a whole is The

Society Of British Jewellers (TSOBJ), who joined as an ACID Partner in late 2025. You can read all about how TSOBJ came into being, and their excellent work, on **p18**.



Photography: StudioRed49



Photography: MOCARPO

As ever, ACID is always focussed on support and deterrence. Our longstanding brand protection partner, SnapDragon Monitoring, explains what to look out for in online brand protection in 2026 on **p20** whilst, of course, we continue our discussions with TEMU. To be forewarned is to be forearmed and that's why we're also taking you through the IPO fee increases on **p14** due to come into force in April 2026. Moreover, AI is of course continually on the rise in ever new forms. ACID legal affiliate and resident AI oracle, Robert Lands, explores the latest and upcoming AI issues to keep you up to speed with this fast-paced challenge to designers on **p8**.

So, whilst we begin to navigate 2026 and all it may throw our way, ACID's

“Our thanks to you all – members and followers, legal affiliates and partners – for your contribution and input”

message for the New Year is clear:

As we step into 2026, creativity remains our greatest strength. Keep creating. Keep campaigning. Together, we can build a stronger, more resilient future underpinned by IP.

In times of uncertainty, protecting what you create is more important than ever. Investing in IP isn't just about safeguarding designs, it's about securing your business, reducing risk, and unlocking long-term growth. IP is the foundation that cements your plans and gives confidence to move forward.

When the future feels unstable, your IP is the business asset that endures. Protect your designs, protect your business, and protect your future.

Our ACID Community grows by the day - here's to a year of innovation, collaboration, and creativity, backed by strong IP.

Wishing you a prosperous and healthy 2026.
Laura.



Laura Newbold Breen,
ACID CEO

WHOSE VOICE COUNTS? REBALANCING DESIGN PROTECTION FOR BRITAIN'S CREATORS



The Design Consultation (Consultation) concluded in November, and we are now awaiting the Government's recommendations.

Most industry bodies support our position, as does the Design Council, the Government's strategic advisor on design. Opposition to equal legal protection, effective deterrence and proper recognition of every UK creator, particularly designers who depend on unregistered design rights, has come primarily from representatives of large global corporations; some with a record of poor business practice and from the legal firms that represent them. Many of these interests are headquartered outside the UK, which presents a significant challenge.

Alongside patent and trade mark bodies, whose memberships are dominated by IP lawyers acting for medium and large enterprises, these groups disproportionately

shape opposition to introducing criminal provisions for the intentional infringement of unregistered designs.

By contrast, British independent designers, microbusinesses and SMEs, the creative backbone of the UK design economy, are largely excluded from the debate. Many cannot afford membership fees or specialist legal representation. Yet these are precisely the designers who depend most on a fair and effective design protection framework and whom the recent Consultation should be listening to, as well as supporting.

The Consultation's stated aim is unambiguous: to modernise the UK designs system so that it is clearer, fairer and more accessible. However, the current civil-only enforcement model creates a profound imbalance. Well-resourced corporations can deploy teams of lawyers to delay proceedings, exploit procedural

infringement of unregistered designs should be a criminal offence? The answer is clearly "no". Their professional loyalties lie with some of their clients who may benefit from weak deterrence.

A minority of powerful "bad actors" exploit the current system to copy and profit from others' creativity with negligible risk. As openly acknowledged by senior counsel at an industry forum, deliberate replication of competitors' designs can form part of a corporate strategy. Criminal sanctions would introduce personal accountability for such conduct, hence the resistance.

Opponents have expressed concerns about unjust prosecution but the high bar set by the Attorney General gives unequivocal assurance by the 'two-limb test.' Criminalising intentional infringement would not be chilling to innovation; it would target only

The Consultation's stated aim is unambiguous: to modernise the UK designs system so that it is clearer, fairer and more accessible.

loopholes and overwhelm smaller opponents with cost and complexity. For most SMEs, enforcement is simply unaffordable. The law therefore ceases to be protection and becomes a barrier.

This raises a fundamental question: are IP lawyers acting for medium and large corporations the right voices to determine whether intentional

deliberate theft, meeting the high threshold of intent, proof beyond reasonable doubt and in the public interest.

For this Consultation to have integrity, British designers and small creators must be placed at its centre, not overshadowed by the voices of global business interests.



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



Meeting The Test

The Ministry of Justice has introduced proportionality tests to assess the need for any new criminal offences. ACID has been campaigning for many years for a new criminal offence for the deliberate infringement of an

3. Are there any other actions that could be taken to meet the policy objective? *No*

4. Are there existing offences which already cover the targeted behaviour? *Deliberate infringement*

7. Does introducing a new criminal offence mean that existing offences need to be repealed or consolidated? *No.*

In our view the case is strong. Indeed, we consider that the case for criminalising the deliberate infringement of an unregistered design to be stronger than the EXISTING criminal sanctions for some copyright offences, where existing civil sanctions and international obligations already protect rightsowners.

Design rights are often, unfairly, called "the unloved child". It's time to protect that child through proper deterrents and not illusionary and ineffective rights.

Design rights are often, unfairly, called "the unloved child". It's time to protect that child

unregistered design. We consider a criminal offence to be an essential deterrent to rampant infringement. But such a new offence needs to be evaluated against these tests. So how do the arguments fare? The tests are set out below with our responses in blue italics.

of a 2D artistic work (e.g.: a design drawing) can be prosecuted as a criminal offence under Section 107 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, but once that drawing is converted into a 3D product or design there is no criminal offence created at all. This is absurd.

1. Is the consequence for the offender appropriate? Does their behaviour warrant a criminal sanction and a criminal record?

Yes, for repeat and deliberate theft a criminal offence is a massive deterrent as the copyright experience has shown since 2002. Innocent or accidental infringement will never be prosecuted.

2. Would civil sanction be more appropriate or adequately achieve the policy objective. Is it possible to introduce a hybrid measure?

Civil sanctions already exist. But they are very expensive for SMEs to fight as well as being a massive distraction to them being able to run their business. In addition, well-funded defendants will use every trick available to them to frustrate and stifle any claims.

5. Is the proposed new offence simply for deterrent effect and if so, is there any evidence to support this approach?

It is primarily for deterrent effect but in appropriate cases there should be prosecutions also so long as they meet the prosecution tests set out in the Attorney General's guidelines.

6. Are there associated international obligations which make the creation of the criminal offence necessary? *We are not aware of any that impose specific criminal sanctions in respect of designs. This is because designs are protected in different ways. For example, the US protects designs through design patents, whereas copyright protection is uniform around the world.*



Nick Kounoupas,
ACID Chief Counsel
and IP Director

Original is best; how we must continue teaching respect in creativity

I'm sure many of us can remember the classroom scenario of one child copying another and the teacher calming the tension by saying copying was a form of flattery. The thing is, it doesn't feel like flattery when it happens to you, it feels like theft.

Many years ago, I received an excited message from a friend congratulating me on getting my work on the set of a very big television series. Really, how

did I not know this ...? Then the reality kicked in. It wasn't my work, there were similarities, easily confused with, but crucially not mine. Anger, fury, sleepless nights, and powerlessness, as I scrolled the internet finding listings of this poor imitation, available to buy in the UK, EU and as far away as New Zealand, on a product my version of that pattern was not on. Was I to blame? I exhibited the design at trade shows, shared it on social media, and

received press coverage – had I made it too easy?

As a designer I ensure my work is original. I don't follow trends and want to be proud of the work I create, knowing my creative process is rigorous. I've made a life-long commitment to my practice, living and working by those values for the last thirty years. Sadly, I have been contacted by companies a few times,

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“As a designer I ensure my work is original. I don't follow trends and want to be proud of the work I create”



“I teach students to protect themselves from being copied, and at the same time, not to copy others”



asking me to create designs like the examples they've shared with me. I've always politely declined, suggesting they go to the designer of those pieces, as I don't copy or imitate other's work.

I remember a designer came to talk to us during my degree in textile design in the mid-1990s, and my main take away was fear of showing anyone my work. The narrative was one of mistrust and I didn't feel prepared in protecting my work. I am sure I wasn't alone in feeling this way then, and I know from experience, design students and graduates feel the same today, with added pressure of social media platforms to navigate too.

I've held academic roles for the last twenty-five years alongside my design practice. Having launched textile design collections, licensed patterns, collaborated with brands to create bespoke patterns, worked with manufacturers, and written a book on pattern, I have broad experience to draw upon. Each new situation feeds my knowledge and understanding of industry practice, for good and bad, and this can shape my work in higher education. Rather than spreading fear, we need to work together to



understand and empower, which is why I've been so happy to join a focus group with ACID, to share and learn from others.

Copying has two positions, the copier and the copied. I teach students to protect themselves from being copied, and at the same time, not to copy others, ensuring they have an ethical practice. Image-gathering social media platforms make visual research too easy, as students fill their digital feeds and boards with inspiration aligned to their design aspirations. I educate them to ensure they understand the perils of that practice, even if they've seen that happening in design studios they have visited. I often suggest students create a ring of difference around their own visual research, ensuring anything that looks too similar in their secondary research is rejected, and pushed away like repelling magnets. Our creative originality needs respect from ourselves as well as each other.



Generative Artificial Intelligence has proven to be a more complicated spanner in the works of ethical practice in the creative sector. We need to identify not only the potential opportunities, but the impact on creativity and ownership, students, educators and industry are grappling with. What do we own, and therefore what can we sell? This is the next conversation to have.



Kate Farley
 Designer and academic
 (Course Leader, BA Textile Design, Norwich University of the Arts)

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AI, Copyright and Design: The Changing Legal Landscape

Technological change often drives changes to the law, particularly copyright law. Copyright dates back to the rise of the printing press (where publishers were given exclusive printing rights), and the law has continued to evolve with technology ever since. As the software industry took off in the 1980s the law was changed to expressly grant copyright protection to software as a literary work. More recently, the rise of the Internet saw concepts such as “broadcast” replaced with the more technologically neutral “communication to the public”.

Broadly speaking, changes to intellectual property laws in response to technology have historically served to increase

inputs to any eventual reform of the copyright framework for AI. In December 2025 the Government published an interim progress report on this, which revealed that more than 11,500 responses were submitted to the copyright consultation, 88% of which supported the idea that copyright licences should be required to use works to train AI. There were also widespread calls for a law to require transparency over training data. The Government says it has established working groups to find “practical solutions that support AI innovation while protecting creators.”

Alongside copyright, design law reform took centre stage in 2025. In September, the UKIPO launched its most significant



the protection given to rightsholders. However, that is no longer a certainty in the age of AI.

Government Consultations

ACID Members will recall that 2025 was the year of the Creative Rights in AI Coalition’s “Make It Fair” campaign, which protested against the UK Government’s consultation on their proposal to **weaken** copyright laws by allowing AI companies easier access to creative content without payment, using an opt-out permission system.

That change hasn’t happened, yet. But the Government’s formal response to the consultation is a key thing to look out for in 2026.

The Government has committed to producing by March 2026: a report on the use of copyright works in AI development, and an economic impact assessment- key

review of design protection in over a decade. This included a proposal to abolish the current law which allows protection for computer-generated designs by deeming the arranger as the author.

ACID participated in the design consultation, which also considers numerous other changes to the protection of designs. The consultation closed in November 2025, and a response, including draft legislation, is expected this year.

In a separate development, the Law Commission (the independent public body responsible for making recommendations for legal changes) published a Discussion Paper on AI in 2025, which floated the somewhat radical idea of granting AI models legal personality as an idea to resolve some liability issues.

The Government says it has established working groups to find “*practical solutions that support AI innovation while protecting creators.*”



The First Big Case on AI and Copyright

2025 was also the year of the greatly anticipated High Court case of Getty v Stability AI. Stability AI are the makers of an image-generating AI model called “Stable Diffusion”. Getty Images (a photo library), accused Stability AI of copyright infringement and trade mark infringement.

Originally, it was hoped that this case would answer a number of really big questions- Is it an infringement to scrape photos from a website and use them to train an AI model? Is the AI model an “infringing article” under UK law? Are the AI generated outputs copyright infringements?

Unfortunately, the judgment, which was handed down on 4th November 2025 did not deal with many of these issues. This is because Getty had already withdrawn its primary copyright claims. They dropped their claim of infringement by copying (the use of their images to train the AI) because they could not show that this activity occurred in the UK. Faced with a difficult challenge, Getty also dropped their claim that the output images produced by the AI infringed copyright.

The remaining copyright issue, which was dealt with by the judgment, was a secondary infringement claim. Secondary infringement is knowingly dealing with an infringing copy of a copyright work- for instance importing a copy into the UK.

Was the Stable Diffusion AI an “infringing article” which had been unlawfully imported into the UK?

The court confirmed (for the first time) that an infringing “article” can be intangible (EG electronic files as opposed to “traditional” infringing articles such as books and recordings), but the judgment did not go so far as to say that Stable Diffusion itself was an infringing article.

The Court held that Stable Diffusion’s *model weights* (the numerical values that determine the strength and direction of connections between neurons in artificial neural networks) were **not** “infringing copies” for the purposes of secondary copyright infringement, and therefore downloading the model in the UK did not amount to importing an infringing article.

In December 2025 Getty Images were given permission to appeal this point to the Court of Appeal, so 2026 may see a second round of this litigation. But the appeal would not be to challenge the Court’s finding that Stable Diffusion did not contain copies of Getty’s works, because Getty didn’t actually claim that it does. Instead, the appeal would be centred on the interpretation of the law on secondary infringement- and, in particular, whether an “infringing copy” must be a “copy” in the literal sense of the word. Quite a technical argument, but nonetheless still important to the question of whether AI models are infringing.

In summary, 2026 is shaping up to be an important year, with potential changes to copyright and design law on the horizon and further litigation which will help to clarify how IP law deals with AI. ACID will be watching closely.



Robert Lands,

Partner, Head of IP & Commercial
Howard Kennedy LLP

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DESIGN UNDER SIEGE: THE CASE FOR REAL DETERRENCE IN UK DESIGN LAW

The UK Design Consultation (Consultation) closed on 27 November 2025 – what's next?

ACID's submission to the Consultation is both a culmination of a decade-long campaign and a compelling call to action. After ten years of sustained advocacy to secure this Consultation, the ACID submission stands as a mature, authoritative and urgently relevant intervention in the debate about how the UK protects one of its greatest economic and cultural assets: design.

Many thanks to all of you who submitted case studies to support our arguments for urgent design law reform. It is your action and input that influences change for the better.

At its core, the submission makes an unambiguous case for what is absolutely necessary to support the UK's extraordinary design economy, an economy that underpins 1.97 million jobs for every designer and ripples across manufacturing, retail, technology and the creative industries.

ACID argues persuasively that without effective, enforceable protection for unregistered design rights (UDRs), this ecosystem is left dangerously exposed. For the majority of UK designers, particularly SMEs and independent studios, UDRs are not a theoretical fallback but the primary form of protection. Weak deterrence, without criminal sanctions therefore, translates directly into lost income, lost jobs and lost innovation. Any erosion in the term for UDRs protection is unthinkable.

One of the submission's greatest strengths is its clear confrontation of the escalating "David and Goliath" copycat culture. It documents how powerful corporations can appropriate designs with minimal risk, relying on deep pockets, legal intimidation and procedural complexity to overwhelm smaller rights holders. The result is a systemic imbalance in which copying becomes a rational business strategy for bad actors. ACID does not frame this as an abstract moral issue, but as a structural market failure that rewards infringement and penalises originality.

Crucially, the submission is not rhetorical; it is evidential. With the support of our legal affiliates, ACID has addressed the legal, technical and procedural dimensions of reform with precision and credibility. Complex questions around proportionality, certainty and enforcement are handled with clarity, demonstrating insight and understanding of how design law operates in practice, not just in theory.

More importantly, the submission is underpinned by a robust body of both qualitative and quantitative evidence. Case studies from our ACID members and designers generally illustrate the real-world harm caused by copying, stress, business failure, and withdrawal from innovation, while data-driven analysis exposes patterns of infringement



See ACID's summary submission here



Click here



and enforcement gaps. This evidential foundation decisively strengthens the argument for introducing a genuinely strong deterrent, one that would shift incentives away from copying and back towards fair competition.

In contrast, the opposition's arguments are revealed as strikingly thin. Claims by some large businesses and their lawyers that stronger protections would "chill innovation" are shown to rely almost entirely on anecdote, unsupported by empirical evidence. ACID has effectively dismantled this narrative, pointing out that it is copying, not protection, that suppresses innovation by discouraging investment in new ideas.

Overall, the submission is a landmark piece of advocacy. It is measured but firm, technical yet accessible, and grounded in evidence rather than ideology. After ten years of campaigning, ACID has delivered not just a call for reform, but a blueprint for a fairer, more innovative design economy, one where creativity is protected, not exploited.

What can YOU do in the next three months – a Call to Action!

As the Government moves toward recommendations following the Consultation, designer voices are critical. Evidence has been submitted but political will depends on visible, sustained support from the design community.

Here's how designers can help right now:

→ Write to your MP and the Minister for Intellectual Property

A short, personal letter explaining how copying affects your work, business, or willingness to innovate is incredibly powerful. MPs pay attention to constituent experience, especially ahead of policy decisions.

→ Support ACID publicly

ACID members and the wider design community are urged to show visible backing through social media. Policymakers monitor sentiment, and a unified message demonstrates that this issue affects real livelihoods, not abstract legal theory.

→ Share your experience

Whether you've been copied, deterred from enforcing your rights, or lost opportunities as a result, your story matters. Personal testimony reinforces the evidence already submitted.

Visit our webpage to download resources:
<https://www.acid.uk.com/campaigning/design-consultation-2024-2025/>



Design Rights and Students

CHEAD

Safeguarding creative rights as a student is an important topic for creative education across all arts, media and design subject areas.

"our partnership with ACID will act as catalyst to advocate, raise awareness and prepare students to continue" to innovate in creative landscapes.

This is why Council for Higher Education Arts and Design - CHEAD has partnered with ACID to upskill creative educators and students with vital knowledge on IP protection and practical advice on how to protect their creative outputs from the earliest stage.

Many students generate creative content that has potential for commercial exploitation, so up to date understanding and application of their design rights must be embedded as part of their creative education.



Students share their ideas, concepts and designs in assessments, on social media and online trading platforms as well as at showcases, exhibitions and end of year degree shows and are often open to misuse and a lack of protection. To counter this and to prepare students for real world employment in the

creative industries, our partnership with ACID will act as catalyst to advocate, raise awareness and prepare students to continue to innovate in creative landscapes.

Through our collaboration, students can become members of ACID at extremely competitive and affordable rates in order to benefit from the resources and advice covering legal protection, how to register their designs, drafting contracts and negotiating licensing agreements and handling any disputes. Furthermore, creative educators, teachers and technicians can gain confidence in delivering IP awareness programmes and will be given the capacity to signpost students to expert advice and guidance from ACID.

In the last year ACID has contributed to online seminars designed to prepare graduates for employment in the design industry as well as on how to navigate self-employment and freelancing frameworks. Together we will continue to advocate for design systems to work for our small-design led businesses and individual designer-makers. ACID is a game changer in its field, and we aim for our partnership to create a step change in course design and curriculum development that future proofs the creative economy as one of the success stories of the UK, contributing nearly £125 billion to the UK's GVA based on the protection of its intellectual capital as a critical success factor.

AI, generative design tools and machine learning have totally changed the landscape of design for this generation of creatives. ACID and CHEAD will work together to effectively influence enterprise education and the policy landscape for creators' rights and to lobby for reforms that protect the originators of unique ideas.

Jointly we believe in the power of 'Educate to Protect' and will encourage young designers to be empowered to exercise their unregistered and registered design rights through access to ACID resources such as the IP Databank as a first level of support.

Personally, I am very excited to collaborate with ACID and to combine our voices as IP activists and enforcers

against design theft, particularly to support students and graduate designers to ensure their brilliant, original and personal work cannot be copied.

Sandra Booth is Director of Policy and External Relations for CHEAD

CHEAD is the association of educational institutions with degree or postgraduate provision in art, design, creative media and related disciplines. CHEAD provides a voice for and on behalf of higher education art and design in the UK four nations advancing knowledge and understanding in the sector and promoting the sector's interests to others.

www.thead.ac.uk

"we believe in the power of 'Educate to Protect' and will encourage young designers to be empowered to exercise their unregistered and registered design rights"



Sandra Booth
Director of Policy and External Relations

www.thead.ac.uk



RAISING THE DRAWBRIDGE: WHY HIGHER DESIGN REGISTRATION FEES ARE SO BADLY TIMED



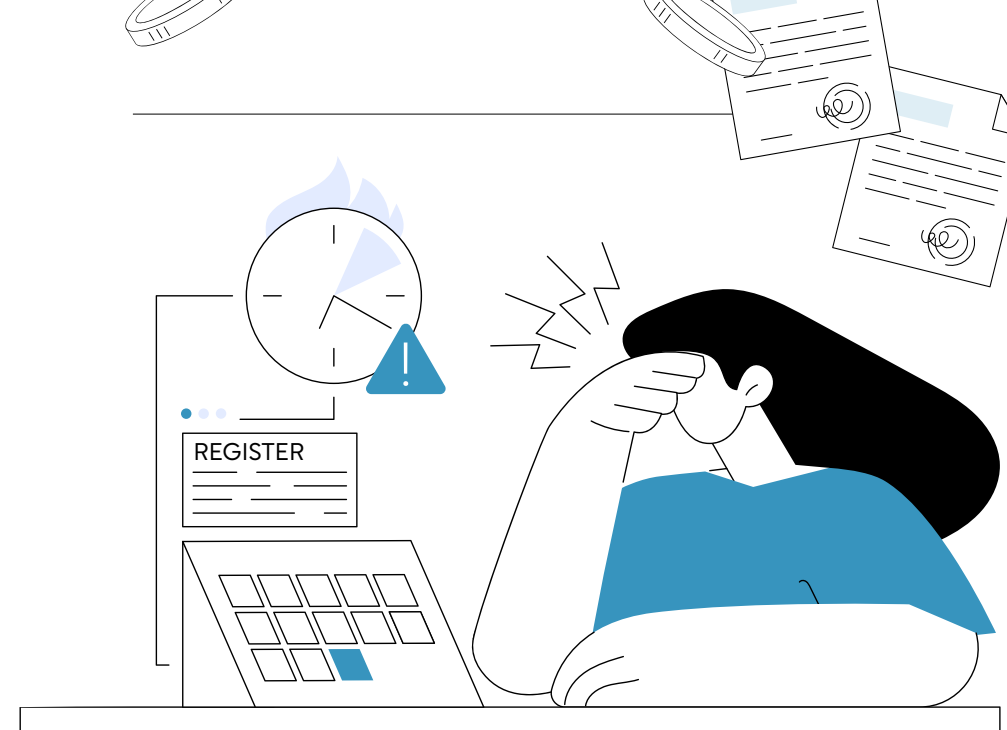
See new Registration rates which come into effect [here](#)

As you'll have already read, ACID's ten-year campaign for the long-awaited UK Design Consultation (the Consultation) has recently concluded. It seems, therefore, that the recent announcement the UK Intellectual Property Office (UKIPO) is raising its registration fees for designs, patents and trade marks by an average of 25% from April 2026 could hardly come at a worse moment.

Dids MacDonald OBE, ACID's Chair, Co-Founder and Director of Public Affairs/Campaigning & IP Policy states, "As we know all too well, the UK design economy overwhelmingly relies on unregistered design rights. Of the estimated 1.97 million designers working in the UK, only around 30,000 designs are officially registered. This is not because designers do not value protection, but because the current system is ill-suited to how most designers actually work".

Just as designers' hopes may have been raised for reform, clarity and greater accessibility through the Consultation, the juxtaposition of designers being asked to pay more into a system many do not understand and already struggle to use feels somewhat counter-productive, especially in the current financial landscape. The rise in National Living Wage (NLW) and Employers' National Insurance along with the changes to employment law bringing in potential hidden costs from day one, workers' rights are already putting businesses under insurmountable pressure. Coupled with day-to-day business operations from exports, manufacturing and general admin suffering under the cost of living crisis, it feels unfair and untimely that protecting your brand and IP business assets should also now come at an increased cost.

Dids explains, "While design registration is often described as 'relatively cheap', this oversimplifies the real cost. Registering incorrectly can jeopardise protection entirely, as what you submit is what you rely on. Any errors as a result means pushing designers, particularly SMEs and sole traders, towards lawyers or specialist



and enforcement, higher fees risk widening the gap between the system and the creative community it is meant to serve. In solidarity with our creative communities, and to ensure all designers big and small can access IP protection, ACID's membership fees remain the same. Don't forget you can have free and unlimited use of the ACID IP Databank for lodging unregistered designs and copyright work as an ACID Member to obtain 3rd party verification of your unregistered design rights, should you ever need to enforce these in instances of alleged copying.

So, if you only make one New Year's resolution this year, make sure it's reviewing your IP and file what you need to before the fees rise. ACID and our amazing legal affiliates are here if you need any support or have any questions. Get in touch info@acid.uk.com

agents. That additional professional layer often costs significantly more than the official fee itself, making registration a risk as much as an investment".

Typically to register one design will now cost £60 instead of £50 but legal fees for completing the registration correctly may cost between £375 and £800 depending on the complexity of the design. (See new rates which come into effect here <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/intellectual-property-office-fees-to-increase-from-april-2026>).

Claims Track (SCT) of the Intellectual Property Enterprise Court (IPEC) which is a nonsense.

Without accessible enforcement, registration offers theoretical rights rather than practical protection. ACID has addressed all these points in its submission to the Consultation and is also calling for the intentional infringement of an unregistered design to be made a crime in line with registered designs to give all designers the deterrence and protection they deserve. If you haven't

“While design registration is often described as “relatively cheap”, this oversimplifies the real cost.”

The proposed sliding scale for fees does little to address this. It may benefit large companies filing dozens of designs at once but it is of limited help to independent designers who create only a handful of designs a year. For them, each registration decision is a calculated gamble.

Enforcement is another major deterrent and strength of a registered design, but many SME designers ask a simple question: what is the point of owning a registered design if enforcing it is unaffordable? Design law is complex, litigation costs are high, and registered design disputes still cannot be heard in the Small

already, turn back to **p10** now to read Dids' summary of ACID's response to the consultation.

Laura Newbold Breen, ACID CEO, says "If designers are being asked to invest more in design registration, let's hope they get the ROI they deserve through deterrence, enforcement, accountability for Goliath copycats and accessible, affordable support".

At a time when policymakers claim to want more designers to register their work, increasing fees sends precisely the wrong signal. Without meaningful reform to cost, complexity



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



Laura Newbold Breen,
ACID CEO

Member Focus

Stratum Marquetry

Faith Capstick, ACID's Social Media & Communications Executive, meets Stratum Marquetry

MEMBER FOCUS



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

ACID is proud to feature Stratum Marquetry, an ACID member redefining contemporary design through sustainability, craftsmanship and strong intellectual property (IP) awareness. Founded with the aim of reducing waste in the design industry, Stratum Marquetry re-interprets traditional marquetry using reclaimed and recycled materials sourced from local waste streams, transforming them into distinctive, high-quality surfaces.

Stratum Marquetry also demonstrates a positive and proactive approach to IP, recognising the importance of protecting original designs developed through extensive research and experimentation. By clearly defining ownership and usage, they safeguard their creativity while continuing to innovate. Their ACID membership reflects a shared commitment to

protecting originality and championing responsible design.

Tell us a little about how your marquetry design business started, what inspires you, and how you stay ahead of the design industry?

Stratum Marquetry began with a simple but challenging question: why is so much beautiful material being thrown away? The business was founded to re-interpret traditional marquetry through a contemporary lens, using reclaimed and recycled materials sourced from local waste streams. What started as an experimental process quickly evolved into a design language rooted in material honesty, craft and sustainability.

Inspiration comes primarily from the materials themselves – their qualities, tone, colouration, histories, and journey often dictate the final design. We also draw influence from architecture, modern art and natural patterns, particularly landscapes and geology. Staying ahead of the industry is less about following trends and more about developing a distinctive process, continually refining our techniques and investing time in research,

experimentation and collaboration with designers and architects who share similar values.

Your designs are very unique and you clearly have sustainability at the heart of your ethos. How do you use IP to protect that creativity and ensure your unique designs remain exclusive to Stratum Marquetry?

IP is fundamental to our business. Our designs are the result of extensive material research, prototyping, and process development, so protecting that work is essential. We retain IP rights on all original designs and are clear about ownership, licensing and usage from the outset of any project or collaboration. Beyond formal protections, we also document our design process thoroughly, maintain clear records of design development and work with trusted partners who respect IP. Membership of ACID provides both guidance and

reassurance that we are taking the right steps to safeguard our creativity while continuing to innovate responsibly.

What do you see as the biggest IP challenges for creative businesses like yours, and how do you stay ahead in protecting your ideas?

One of the biggest challenges is the imbalance between small creative businesses and larger organisations that may have more resources to replicate, commercialise or defend designs. The speed at which images circulate online also makes copying easier and more immediate.

We stay ahead by being proactive rather than reactive: understanding our rights, embedding IP considerations into our

contracts and being selective about how and when work is shared publicly. Education is key – both for ourselves and for our clients – so that the value of original design and craft is properly understood and respected.

As ACID members, what benefits or resources have you found most valuable in supporting your creative journey, particularly in defending your rights and safeguarding innovation?

ACID's guidance, legal insights and advocacy work have been extremely valuable. Having access to clear, practical advice on IP protection helps us make informed decisions without needing to be legal experts. Just as important is the sense of community – knowing that

other designers face similar challenges, and that there is an organisation actively campaigning on behalf of the creative industries, provides reassurance and support.

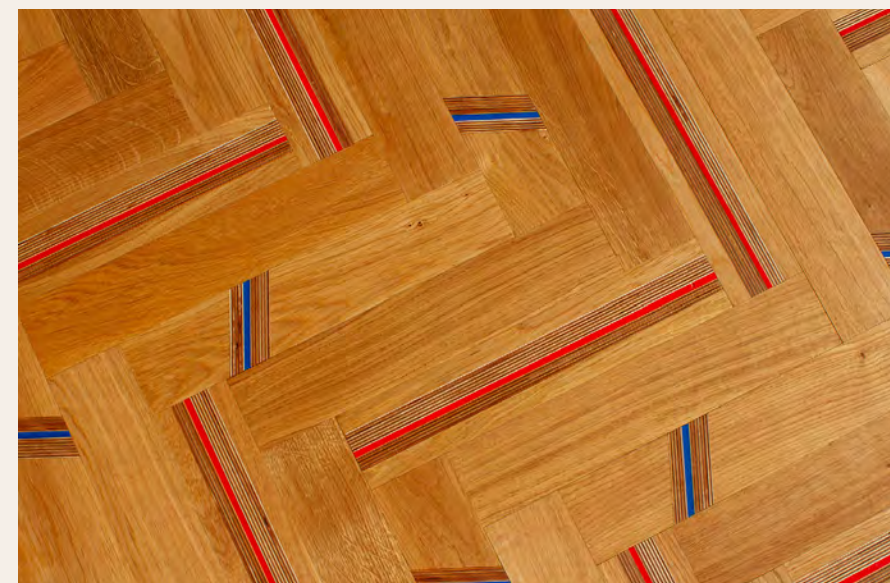
Can you give us a glimpse of what's next? Do you have any exciting new designs, innovations or collaborations coming to market that you can share with us?

We are currently developing new Modern Marquetry products like our flooring and decorative panels as well as working on our signature patterns – patterns that are fully customisable, infinitely scalable and crafted exclusively from locally sourced off-cuts and recycled materials. Concepts that push our reclaimed-material approach further, both technically and aesthetically. Alongside this, we are working on a number of collaborations with interior designers and makers to translate our designs into new contexts, including furniture and architectural applications.

We are also laying the groundwork for an educational and community-focused arm of the business, which will share skills, rescue more materials from waste streams and support creativity and wellbeing through making. This feels like a natural next step in aligning our design practice with wider social impact.



Dan, Co-Founder & Maker and Ravi, Co-Founder & Designer Maker



A Gem of a Partnership: Introducing The Society of British Jewellers

Many jewellers find themselves working independently and often isolated in their workshops, away from the much-needed professional and mindful support of others.



Ben Poulsom
Founder of The Society of
British Jewellers

With this in mind, in 2015, when Ben Poulsom was a relative newcomer in his career, he recognised the need to be able to interact with others in the trade; to discuss ideas, support fellow jewellers and feel a sense of belonging within a community of like-minded, talented individuals.

Initially starting on social media, 'The Society of British Jewellers' (TSOBJ) private Facebook group now attracts an organically grown following of almost 6000 members who use this as a platform to ask questions, share their work ideas and openly discuss matters relating to the jewellery business.

Further information can
be found at
www.thesocietyofbritishjewellers.com

Photography: Jacqueline Brewer Jewellery

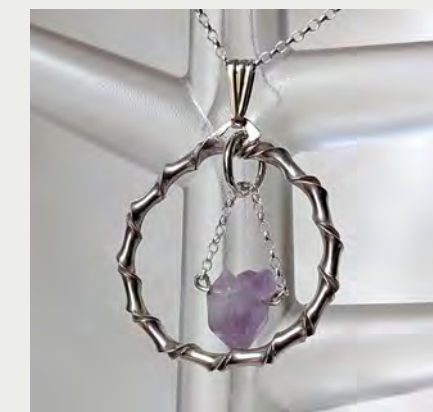
Photography: Jacqueline Brewer Jewellery



Photography: MOCARO



Photography: Studior49



Understanding the need of fellow jewellers and to help others in his trade further, Ben then set up an official membership at TSOBJ, which, along with his team, he actively runs today.

With its roots firmly set in supporting others, TSOBJ is a professional organisation that links together the talent and expertise of jewellery makers and designers from across the UK, with clients looking for hand-crafted jewellery, as well as repair and alteration services and bespoke commissions.

Continually assessing the needs of its members, TSOBJ works hard behind the scenes, engaging with official trade suppliers who generously afford great discounts and deals to members to benefit their businesses.

With a friendly, easy and approachable team, members often make contact to let us know how their membership helps and what supplier discounts and deals mean to them. Ben mentions recent communication from members stating, "A big thank you, with the ever rising cost of metals and materials etc, the discounts available through my membership are making the difference between me being able to carry on creating or not", and "I hope you don't mind, but I have posted about you on my social

media pages to let other jewellers who are desperately trying to keep going, know about you and why membership at TSOBJ matters. Thanks again, you're making a very real difference".

Of course, this drives everyone at TSOBJ forward in their aim to help fellow jewellers as much as possible to utilise their talents to the full and, in more recent years, have been able to introduce half price membership to students and apprentices in the trade to help them at the start of their careers, recognising the necessary need for continued new talent within the jewellery trade. In more recent times, TSOBJ has also been able to support members who face financial difficulties, with vastly reduced membership fees ensuring talent in this country is not lost because of financial hardship.

Ben also works alongside other charities and organisations to bring benefit to his membership and more recently announced he is "delighted to be working with Laura Newbold Breen from ACID who has generously come on board as an official partner". By forming a partnership between ACID and TSOBJ, members have the opportunity to gain additional protection for their jewellery designs from an organisation that is dedicated to fighting design theft and lobbying Parliament

for even greater protection for our industry and many others. "This is a genuine concern forefront in the mind of many jewellers and we look forward to a long lasting partnership with Laura and her team", says Ben.



Photography: Pure Imagination Jewellers

A Three-Pronged Approach to Protect Your Designs in 2026

Originality is the hard-won and the soul of a designer's work. Hours of sketching, sampling and refining shapes into a pattern, a design or a product.

In an era of generative AI and global e-commerce where technology is being leveraged to create, sell and distribute lookalikes, protecting your creations has never been more challenging, or more critical.



Jet Doran,
Brand Protection
Director

www.snapdragon-ip.com

Here are three practical ways to stay ahead.

1. Understanding the threat

Print-on-demand (POD)

Using AI-driven image generation and automated listing tools, fraudsters can offer prints and patterns across thousands of products, from fashion and accessories to homeware, at unprecedented speed.

While these platforms ask users to respect intellectual property (IP) and provide guidance on avoiding infringement, the number of takedown requests they handle underscores just how persistent the problem of unauthorised use remains.

Clone sites and typosquatting

Unfortunately, impersonation is on the rise. Fraudulent websites often closely resemble, or even completely mimic, genuine sites. Many use typosquatted domains that differ from the real URL by just one character, diverting revenue and damaging brand reputation. Frequently, no products are actually for sale; these sites exist solely to harvest financial and personal information or to carry out phishing attacks.

Industrialised networks

Listing analysis has identified patterns indicative of coordinated activity. Organised networks use shared supply chains, distribution routes, fulfilment services, and AI-driven logistics to flood markets with imitations and adapt quickly to enforcement actions.

2. Monitor the high-risk platforms

Global marketplaces and social e-commerce remain a battleground for originality again this year.

Designers should keep a close eye on:

TEMU

With high listing velocity and aggressive promotion, TEMU can push low-cost lookalikes to the top of search results, sometimes outranking genuine products. Many independent artists and small businesses have discovered their work being used by third party sellers on this platform.

Shein

Currently fighting numerous legal battles, Shein has repeatedly been accused of selling copies of both independent creators' designs and those of major fashion brands such as Uniqlo and Levi Strauss.

TikTok Shop

Billions of users and viral trends on TikTok Shop enable imitations to reach customers in minutes, often outpacing the visibility of genuine products.

Top tip: Run regular keyword and image searches across these platforms to identify threats early. If a suspected infringement is detected, gather key evidence including screenshots and seller information and seek professional advice on the most effective enforcement strategy.

3. Have a clear enforcement strategy

- ➔ Know your IP rights and how to use them: trade marks, copyright, designs and patents.
- ➔ Understand takedown processes on key platforms: policies and required documentation and evidence.
- ➔ Register with all available brand protection programs to access the most efficient enforcement tools and benefit from the preventative measures.
- ➔ Report confirmed infringing content to the relevant platforms or hosts.
- ➔ Escalate when needed: rejections, counternotices, repeat offenders.

Top Tip: Retain dated records of your artwork's creation to establish ownership and strengthen reliance on unregistered rights.



SnapDragon

How SnapDragon protects your work

When IP rights are being infringed at scale, protection needs to be proactive, intelligent and relentless.

That's where SnapDragon can help.

We combine AI-driven software with industry expertise to detect the full ecosystem behind imitations – from marketplace listings and social content to copycat sites. And we don't just identify and flag threats; we report them with the aim of taking down the network in its entirety, safeguarding your reputation, revenue and customers.

Get in touch today:
jet.doran@snapdragon-ip.com

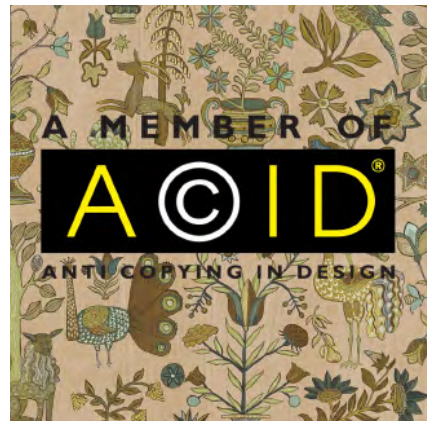
Jet Doran, Brand Protection Director

With over ten years' experience in brand protection, Jet specialises in developing technology-led strategies to safeguard brands in the digital marketplace. She has an established track record of quickly identifying and addressing brand misuse, alongside extensive expertise in notice-and-takedown procedures across major platforms, including Amazon, Meta and the Alibaba Group.

Passionate about IP, Jet is committed to helping businesses make the most of their rights while tackling the sale of counterfeit goods - items that are often environmentally damaging, produced under exploitative conditions, harmful to the economy and, in some cases, linked to organised crime.

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.



Josephine Munsey Wallpaper

A talented textile designer creating beautifully crafted fabric and wallpaper from her Stroud studio. Her designs grow from years of personal sketchbooks; inspired by travel, exhibitions, family collections, and the woodland around her. Every pattern begins with a hand-drawn repeat, trialled in paint, and lovingly built up before finally being scanned to explore colourways.

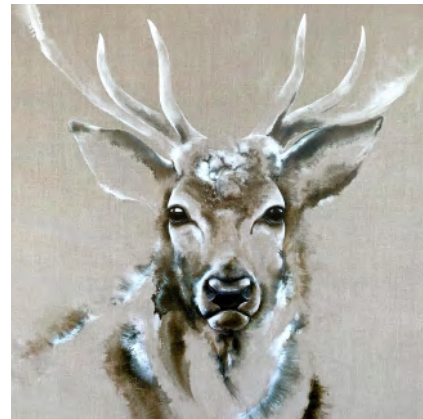
📷 @josephinemunseywallpaper
🌐 www.josephinemunsey.co.uk/



Laura Wildish

A luxury limited-edition fashion and jewellery label celebrated for bold creativity and striking craftsmanship and proudly showcased at London Fashion Week. Her pieces merge artistic expression with high-end design, offering wearable statements that are as distinctive as they are meticulously made.

📷 @laurawildish
🌐 www.laurawildish.com



Tara Winona

An artist and writer whose work is a heartfelt celebration of nature and the stories it holds. Tara's paintings blur the lines between wildlife and self-portrait, weaving personal experiences into flowing, emotive portraits where creature and creator become one.

📷 @tarawinona
🌐 www.tarawinona.com



By Kate Elford

A Somerset-based illustrator, potter and self-confessed pin addict, bringing all things penguin, happy and positive into the world! From starting out as a potter in 1999 to now creating uplifting illustrations and joyful pins (including the beloved Pea of Positivity), Kate's work radiates charm and originality, creativity we're proud to help protect.

📷 @bykateelford
🌐 www.bykateelford.co.uk/



Elizabeth Rachael

A Greater Manchester-based freelance print designer and illustrator with over a decade of shaping standout prints for womenswear and homeware. Elizabeth's work blends creative flair with deep trend knowledge and technical skill, allowing her to craft beautiful, best-selling print collections that stay ahead of the curve while remaining unmistakably her own.

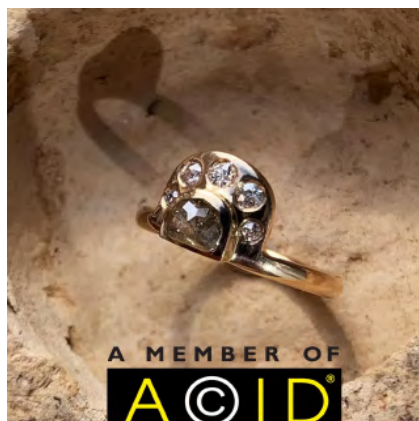
📷 @elizabethrachael
🌐 www.elizabethrachael.com/



Stine Keinicke Studio

Based in South London, Stine creates sustainable, functional objects that invite touch and rethink how materials and processes are used. Her work is all about innovative design with purpose. Alongside her design practice, Stine has also spent years empowering the next generation of creatives.

📷 @stinekeinicke_studio
🌐 www.stinekeinicke.com/



Rebekah Ann Jewellery

Trained at The CASS and Central Saint Martins, Rebekah brings decades of experience from across the trade to her bespoke pieces. She works exclusively with recycled gold and responsibly sourced stones, favouring rose-cut diamonds, vibrant sapphires and heirloom gems ready for new life. Every design embraces organic texture, character and true individuality.

📷 @rebekahannjewellery
🌐 www.rebekahannjewellery.co.uk



Sarah Goodwin Design

A vibrant print and textile designer whose work blends playful nostalgia with bold, romantic flair. Since launching her signature Ric Rac Giclée prints in 2020, Sarah has become known for rich colour palettes and a graphic yet soft aesthetic. Working mainly in inks, she creates expressive designs for digital and screen printing, rotary, embroidery, knitwear and jacquards.

📷 @sarahgoodwindesign
🌐 www.sarahgoodwindesign.com



Caro B Fin Studio

Run by Caro, this creative studio is all about crafting soulful pieces with a strong sense of story and sustainability. From repurposing old boat sails into handmade pennants to giving vintage flags a new lease of life as cushions and blankets, everything is made with care, character, and a love for the past.

📷 @caro_b_fin_studio
🌐 www.carobfinstudio.com



Eleanor Monica Textiles

A first-class graduate in textile design for fashion and interiors, Eleanor brings a bold and expressive style to both knit and print. Her work is full of personality, colourful, creative and always with purpose.

With a passion for individuality and a strong focus on sustainability, she crafts her pieces using reclaimed materials and fabric off cuts, making every design one-of-a-kind.

📷 @eleanormonicatextiles
🌐 www.eleanormonicatextiles.com



Stratum Marquetry

This innovative studio is reimagining the tradition of marquetry with a modern twist, creating bold, patterned surfaces from reclaimed and recycled materials. Their distinctive designs feature across furniture, lighting, wall cladding, flooring and more, bringing a unique depth and detail to interiors. Every piece is carefully crafted with sustainability and striking visual impact in mind.

📷 @stratummarquetry
🌐 www.stratummarquetry.co.uk

New Members

ACID welcomes the following new members to the ACID Community

Company	Industry	Company	Industry
Yoostudio	Fashion	LAURAWILDISH	Jewellery
Gin Durham Ceramics	Ceramics	Rebekah Ann Jewellery	Jewellery
The Gluggle Jug Factory Ltd	Ceramics	Sky Moon Diamonds	Jewellery
Gym Queen Clothing Ltd	Childrenswear	Apocalypse Games Ltd.	Other
Daryl & James Limited	Fabrics & Textiles	Green Roof Shelters Ltd	Other
Josephine Munsey Limited	Fabrics & Textiles	Jack Badger Ltd	Other
Madeaux Ltd	Fabrics & Textiles	Olorun Limited	Other
Redenim Crafts	Fabrics & Textiles	Siminetti	Other
Màiri M MacLeod	Fashion	Magic Mushroom Cabin	Photography
Seated Group Limited	Fashion	Amuse La Bouche Limited	Product Design
The Faraway Gang	Fashion	BanterBros	Product Design
Sah Rugs	Floor Coverings	Inner Stewardship	Product Design
Sophie Cooney Runners	Floor Coverings	Instant Nit Comb Cleaner Ltd	Product Design
Art by Nature Ltd	Furniture	Richard Greene	Product Design
Category Furniture	Furniture	Shereen Friedlander	Product Design
Charlotte Holland	Furniture	C K Art Design	The Arts
Dogan London Limited	Furniture	Clare Maria Wood Artist	The Arts
Gabbertas Studio	Furniture	I make small things	The Arts
Matahari Ltd	Furniture	Tara Winona	The Arts
Loxden Limited	Garden Products	Alice Georges	
Boho Zo Designs	Giftware	by Kate Elford	
cheshire card company	Greetings Cards	H Wald & Co Ltd	
Bishops Court Editions Ltd	Interior Accessories	LOCO DESIGN PVT LTD	
Marrikur	Interior Accessories	Soane Limited	
Sarah Goodwin	Interior Accessories	Stitchdoodles	
echo sierra charlie	Interior Design	victoria catten	
Kelly Marie Jewellery	Jewellery	Zephlinear Ltd	

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.copyping.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

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Events

January 21st BPMA Annual Awards Dinner	January 27th 12.30-1.30pm The Gift that Keeps On Giving: How Intellectual Property (IP) Can Protect Your Giftware Business, Designs and Creations ACID introductory webinar for the Giftware Association.	5th February 12.30-1.30pm ACID Lunchtime Learning: Intellectual Property Rights in Crochet & Knitting: Weaving IP into Your Work → Register
26th February 12.30-1.30pm ACID Lunchtime Learning: All About AI - Recent Case Stories and What's Next for Designers in 2026 → Register	19th March 12.30-1.30pm ACID Lunchtime Learning: IP Essentials for Start-Ups → Register	

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

