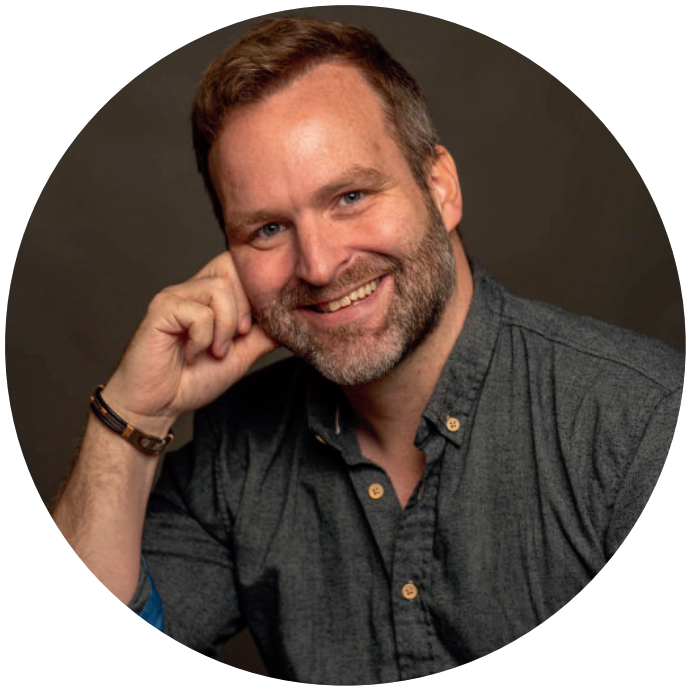
A man of many facets

Colin Weldon ist Edelstein-Wissenschaftler – und kämpft immer häufiger mit Diamanten aus dem Labor.

Interview: MELITA CAMERON-WOOD

MEDIUM AUDIO ÜBUNGSHEFT



Having trained as a gemologist, I'm able to identify gemstones and see the difference between natural stones and synthetic ones without lots of equipment. As a jeweller, I see fakes constantly, some of which are very good. Stones that are often used as fake diamonds are cubic zirconia, moissanite and white sapphire. Diamonds that don't have certification documents are usually suspicious.

The edges of gemstones are either facetted, polished or "bruted" — meaning they've been left in their natural state, which usually suggests a natural stone. My diamond tester isn't 100 per cent accurate, but it's a good place to start. It reads the heat conductivity of the stone and identifies if it's a diamond or a moissanite. I also look for the fracture-filling of inclusions. Fracture-filling is controversial and can make diamonds worthless.

Today, lab-grown diamonds have nearly the same quality as mined diamonds. This is both an opportunity and a problem. Lab-grown diamonds are more affordable, which is attractive to customers with less money to spend, and they're better for the environment. For my business, being unable to clearly see the difference between mined diamonds and lower-value lab-grown diamonds is challenging. Diamonds are graded from D to Z — from white to yellow, depending on the lack or presence of nitrogen. For a D-colour two-carat flawless diamond with no certification, the difference in value could be €80,000, depending on whether it's mined or lab-grown. NASA is helping to develop better diamond detectors, as high-quality diamonds are used in space-based instruments, and this research could have a big impact on the jewellery sector.

Before Brexit, I worked with lots of dealers in Hatton Garden, London, but customs duty has made this too expensive. I now work with dealers from all over the world, based in a range of places, from Miami to Antwerp. At jewellery trade fairs, such as INHORGENTA Munich, I can see pieces that I otherwise wouldn't see and stay informed of international trends, which is essential to success in this industry.

"I see fakes constantly"

COLIN WELDON is a Dublin-based gemologist, a graduate of the Gemological Institute of America and a private jeweller

Lab-grown diamonds have nearly the same quality as mined diamonds. Testers read heat conductivity

gemologist [dʒe'mɒlədʒɪst] ► Gemmologe/Gemmologin

gemstone ['dʒemstəʊn] ► Edelstein

jeweller ['dʒuːələ] ► Juwelier(in)

cubic zirconia [ˌkjuːbɪk zɜː'kəʊniə] ► Diamantimitation mit kubisch kristalliner Form

moissanite ['mɔɪsənaɪt] ► Moissanit

sapphire ['sæfaɪə] ► Saphir

suspicious [sə'spɪʃəs] ► verdächtig

facetted ['fæsɪtɪd] ► facettiert

bruted ['bruːtɪd] ► naturbelassen

heat conductivity [ˌkɒndʌk'tɪvətɪ] ► Wärmeleitfähigkeit

fracture-filling ► Verfüllen von Rissen

inclusion [ɪn'kluːʒən] ► Einschluss

lab-grown (*ifml.*) ► aus dem Labor

mined ► geschürft

grade sth. ► etw. klassifizieren

nitrogen ['naɪtrədʒən] ► Stickstoff

colour ► *hier:* Farbgrad

flawless ► makellos

research [rɪ'sɜːtʃ] ► Forschung

impact ► Auswirkung(en)

customs duty ► Zollgebühr(en)

trade fair ► Messe

graduate ['grædʒuət] ► Absolvent(in)

Fotos: privat