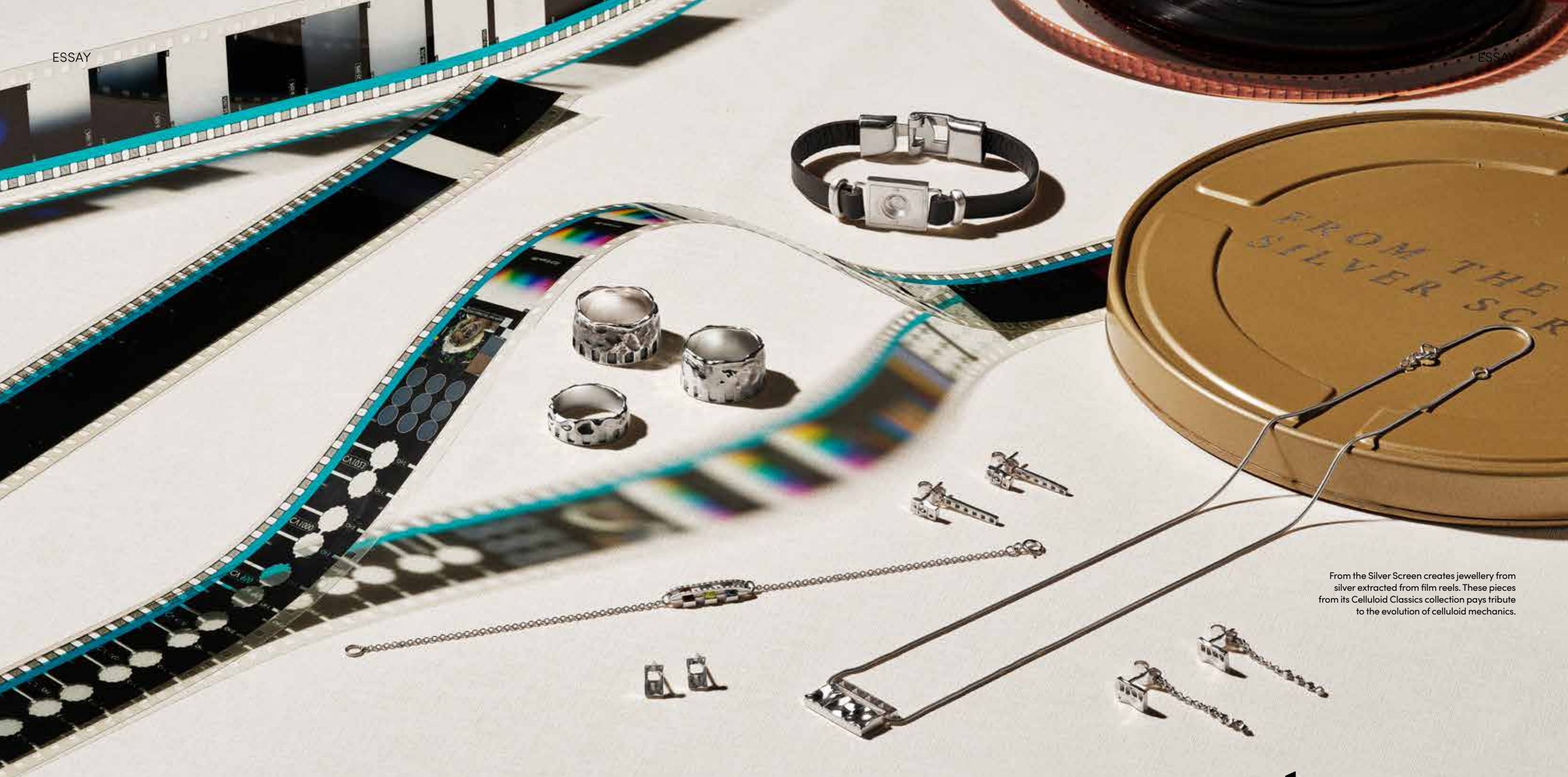




From the Silver Screen creates jewellery from silver extracted from film reels. These pieces from its Celluloid Classics collection pays tribute to the evolution of celluloid mechanics.

Waste to wonder

Traceable recycled silver is fuelling the next generation of responsible

jewellery design, says Amy Wakeham

The sky-rocketing price of gold – up 47% in the year leading to this March – has prompted many jewellery designers to look for alternative materials for their designs. One of these is silver, which until recently had spent several years languishing in the shade, overlooked for flashier yellow gold or more luxurious options like platinum.

But silver is officially back in the spotlight. Fashion designers like Chanel, Courrèges, Louis Vuitton and Bottega Veneta sent it shimmering down their SS26 runways, and jewellery makers like Annoushka, Otiumberg, Marei New York and Alighieri have all recently pivoted towards the metal in their collections.

While silver accessories might be more popular than ever, the metal itself still comes with ethical and environmental concerns. Much of the world’s silver supply is a by-product from mining operations of other heavy metals like copper, lead, and zinc, which have been linked to water pollution, deforestation and health issues for miners.

The solution for an increasing number of jewellers and their customers is to choose recycled silver which has a carbon footprint one-third the size of its mined counterpart, according to Pandora, the world’s largest jeweller. In 2024, the Danish brand switched to using exclusively recycled silver (and gold) for all its designs, sourcing its metal from industrial waste, manufacturing scraps, old jewellery or tableware (though as of this year, the maker claimed it was considering switching to platinum-plating its jewellery, to reduce its exposure to the ever-increasing price of silver, which has more than doubled over the past twelve months).

Also using recycled silver from post-industrial sources is Heavenly London, a sustainability-focused demi-fine jewellery brand that is an accredited B-Corp. “For us, it’s about reducing unnecessary extraction,” says Madeleine Sangster, the brand’s Creative Director. “There’s already a significant amount of silver in



Next Generation
Left: Natalie Daniels and Claire Richardson, founders of ‘From the Silver Screen’. Above: Madeleine Sangster, Creative Director of Heavenly London

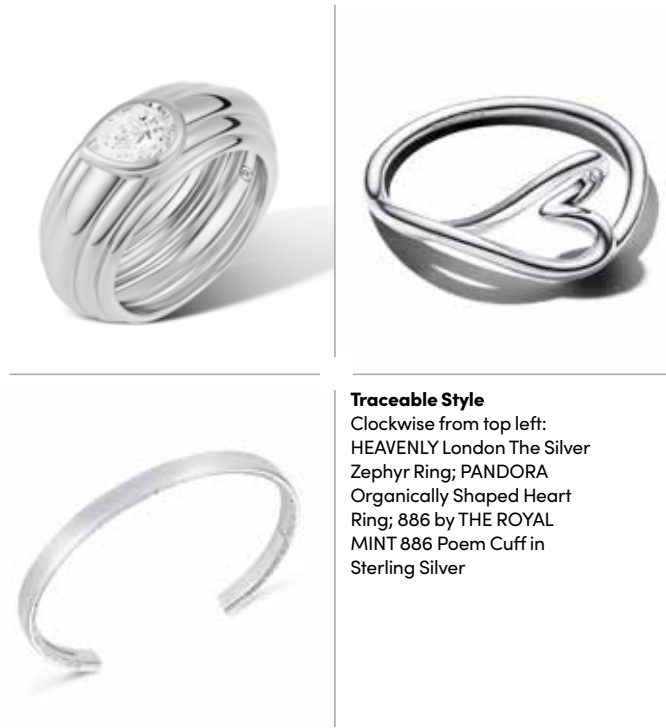
circulation, so choosing recycled material allows us to create pieces without contributing to the environmental impact of mining.”

Silver recycling isn’t a novel concept. Precious metals have always been reused, whether after industrial use or in the jewellery trade, with production scraps repeatedly swept up and melted down. What is new is the demand for properly traceable recycled metals – where jewellers and their clients can be confident that the silver they’re buying isn’t simply traditionally mined materials melted down and resold as a more ‘sustainable’ option.

“Sourcing is everything”, agrees Sangster, adding that once a metal reduced to its raw state, it becomes very difficult to ascertain its provenance. “Not all ‘recycled’ silver is equal, and the term itself can be used quite loosely. The key is working with suppliers who can demonstrate proper certification and transparency around their processes.” For Heavenly London, this means working with a refiner that is accredited by the London Bullion Market Association (LBMA), while Pandora’s is certified according to the Responsible Jewellery Council’s Chain of Custody standard.

The growing demand for traceable metals prompted refiner The Betts Group to launch AgAIN Silver in 2022, which recycles silver from old hospital X-rays. While the Group was already working with the NHS to extract the metal from its scans, “AgAIN was about taking that a step further: creating a completely segregated, known-provenance silver from material that would otherwise have gone to incineration or landfill,” explains managing director Charlie Betts,

Like Sangster, Betts notes that ‘recycled’ is an unregulated term. This means that the end product could be made up of only a fraction of recycled material, with the rest being newly mined. “A lot of recycled claims in the market are fairly broad or pooled in nature,” he says. “AgAIN is much more defined: it comes from a known waste stream, is processed in full segregation, and is supported by a robust, auditable chain of custody.”



Traceable Style
Clockwise from top left: HEAVENLY London The Silver Zephyr Ring; PANDORA Organically Shaped Heart Ring; 886 by THE ROYAL MINT 886 Poem Cuff in Sterling Silver

“Pandora has been using exclusively recycled metals in its collections since 2024.”



A circular solution
886 by The Royal Mint 886
Bangle in Sterling Silver

886 by The Royal Mint
sources its recycled silver
from medical X-ray film

AgAIN Silver’s first customer was The Royal Mint, which debuted its jewellery line, 886 by The Royal Mint, in 2023 under creative director Dominic Jones. “We launched with an ambition to be the most sustainable jewellery brand,” reveals the designer. “Reclaiming material that otherwise would be landfill, unlike the high CO2 footprint of mined silver and even recycled silver, which has questionable provenance, is the pinnacle of re-usability.”

Using AgAIN Silver is just one pillar of 886’s infrastructure. “Our framework is part environmental, part social,” Jones states. “It’s about creating a foundation that we can build a beautiful, design-led business on top of, in that sense it’s the opposite of the design-led greenwashing that can be quite cynical.”

This happens when a brand crafts its identity, packaging, or user experience to signal sustainability without any meaningful environmental impact behind it. Jones’ approach of putting traceable, recycled raw materials at the heart of 886’s ethos is one shared by Heavenly London. “It’s less about forcing sustainability into the design, and more about embedding it into the way we operate,” explains Madeleine Sangster. “We’ve become more considered, focusing on pieces that have longevity, that can be worn in multiple ways, and that don’t feel tied to a moment or trend.”

Another brand that has set traceable silver at the heart of its business is From the Silver Screen, which sources the metal from used film reels and creates jewellery inspired by the movies shot on them.

The idea came to founders Natalie Daniels and Claire Richardson while they were working at Pinewood Studios for an indie production and distribution company. They were touring the location’s Kodak laboratory when they discovered that film reels, like X-rays, contain silver that was being extracted and filtered back into the metal trade. “Nobody knew the provenance of it,” says

A dramatic silver
cuff at Courreges’
Spring/Summer 2026
presentation.

CREDIT: ANGELA WEISS / GETTY IMAGES

CREDIT: ALAIN JOCARD / GETTY IMAGES

Daniels of this potential source for jewellery. “We really wanted to connect it back to the films.”

Then Covid hit. While Daniels and Richardson were furloughed, they launched From the Silver Screen and began working with both Kodak and Cinelab, the UK’s biggest film and digital service company, to reclaim silver from film reels. Their first full collaboration was with Wes Anderson’s *The Phoenician Scheme*, which debuted last year. “When they heard about what we were doing, they absolutely wanted to get on board,” recalls Daniels. From the Silver Screen produced a limited-edition run of individually numbered grenade necklaces (one of the movie’s key props), with Anderson himself owning ‘Number One’.

Since then, the brand has collaborated with London’s Design Museum on merchandise for its *Wes Anderson: The Archives* exhibition, and with the 2026 Oscar-nominated film *Bugonia* – its lead actor, Jesse Plemons, wore a From the Silver Screen brooch crafted from silver recovered from the film’s own reels to the Academy Awards in March.

It’s unusual for a jeweller to have such direct oversight on its raw material sourcing – Daniels claims she has not heard of any other brand doing anything similar and maintains that From the Silver Screen’s product is “never contaminated” with metal sourced elsewhere. “We collect out of the tank at the labs, it goes to the refiner, then it comes back to us. We have full traceability,” she says. For this reason, and to differentiate itself from other second-life metals on the market of unknown provenance, the jeweller prefers to say its silver is “upcycled” rather than “recycled”.

While silver jewels might be surging in popularity, there remains a “degree of inertia” in the industry when it comes to sourcing metals more responsibly, says Betts. “People are open to change, but they need it to be straightforward, commercially viable, and they need to understand why this is different,” he says. The second point is key: Pandora pays an additional \$10 million a year - a prohibitive figure for smaller jewellers - to ensure its recycled silver comes from a source segregated from mined metal, according to its spokesperson. So, while fully traceable recycled silver remains the ideal, it remains a less shiny prospect for many in the industry.



Above: AgAin Silver,
which is recycled from
medical X-rays.



Left: Silver jewels at
Ralph Lauren’s Spring/
Summer 2026 runway
show.

