

Part 2

INSPIRATION

WHO GIVES
A SCHICHT





#1

MATERIALS:

Reclaimed steel, beach-combed brick and roof tile fragments, organic and ethically-produced hemp twine

MEASUREMENTS:

Length: approx 45cm

Width: 26cm

Depth: 3.5cm

#2

MATERIALS:

Driftwood, organic and ethically-produced hemp twine

MEASUREMENTS:

Length: approx 39cm

Width: 26cm

Depth: 1.8cm



"COUNTERPOINT"

(2017)

NECKPIECES

Part of a small series produced especially for the Tincal Lab exhibition "Jewelry and Music" (Porto, Portugal).

Do we wear jewellery or does jewellery wear us? When we wear jewellery, who has the last say?

Is it the jewels themselves, projecting the voice of the materials as well as of the artist who forged them? Or is it the body, reverberating on them through its own landscape and movement?

In these pieces, the jewels and the body are encouraged to play a participatory counterpoint in which their independent melodies can contrast or complement each other to orchestrate the harmony that is wearing jewellery.

"GIROTONDO" and "TUTTI GIÙ PER TERRA"

(2012 and 2015)

RINGS

Identity is a puzzle constructed over a lifetime from fragments of where we come from, who we are, and who we become.

"Girotondo" is the first piece I made nearly entirely with found objects, and for me it marks the true beginning of my jewellery art practice, to the extent that its imagery forms an integral part of my "branding".

The vintage tin in both pieces was donated to me by the man I consider to be my jewellery "father", Robert Ebendorf, pioneer of the American studio jewellery movement.

For many long-term immigrants like me, the shaping of our identity goes through constant evolution, often including phases of denying and reappraising our own cultural heritage while assimilating the culture, language and mannerisms of our new homes. "Girotondo" and its companion piece "Tutti giù per terra" are named after lines in the centuries-old Italian nursery rhyme Girotondo (equivalent of the British "Ring A Ring O' Roses" and with similarities to many other sung-in-a-circle songs around the world). The found and repurposed objects also come with their own personal heritage, constantly blending their own history and identity into mine as a person and jewellery artist. The silver charms, one (the coffee grinder) belonging to my mother and the other (Disney's character Goofy) a memento of my First Communion, are still the most traditional childhood gifts, passed down from generation to generation to trace our history and accompany us into our future.

Giro-giro-tondo *Round and round*

Casca il mondo *The world falls down*

Casca la terra *The Earth falls down*

Tutti giù per terra *And we all go down!*

(Italian nursery rhyme)



"GIROTONDO"

MATERIALS (all reclaimed): jar lid, vintage tin, silver charm, copper sheet and adhesive, paper, glue, fabric, steel wire

MEASUREMENTS:

Diameter: 7cm

Height: 6cm



"TUTTI GIÙ PER TERRA"

MATERIALS (all reclaimed): jar lid, old kettle whistle, silver charm, vintage tin, copper, stainless steel wire, glue, plastic bead

MEASUREMENTS:

Diameter: 7cm

Height: 9cm



"ARE WE THERE YET:

On Recurrence, Recollection and the Resilience of Material Existence"

(2018)

NECKPIECE

When I started collecting these ceramic pieces, some on the beaches and the countryside near my home, and some from as far as Malta and Italy, the artist in me had not yet been born. And I was then just an observer.

It took several years for the puzzle to come together. Becoming more aware of materials and of places around me, and of the importance of viewing, I began to investigate not just the narrative of found objects but the concept of the search itself. And I finally realised that these ceramic pieces had all been found specifically embedded into countryside dirt tracks, compacted as rubble. Earth being extracted, refined, compacted, moulded into domestic ware, fragmented, inserted and compacted again onto earth. And finally extracted again, and remoulded into body-wear.

It is only together that these two parts of me could understand the significance of these fragments, which did otherwise appear only connected in their materiality. It is only together with my artist self that we create knowledge.

MEASUREMENTS:

Length: approx 40cm

Width: approx 27cm

Depth: approx 1.5cm



MATERIALS:

Hardcore rubble from local and international dirt tracks, new and reclaimed copper, vintage bead necklace, recycled silver

"POTHOLE:

On Emptiness, and What We Leave Behind"

(2018)

BROOCH



MATERIALS:

Broken off asphalt from local country road,
reclaimed copper, stainless steel

MEASUREMENTS:

Length: 4cm

Width: 3.5cm

Depth: 2cm

"TILL DEATH DO US PART:

On the Privilege and Precariousness of Predatory Habits"

(2018)

NECKPIECE



MATERIALS:

Found fishing line, found plastic fish toy,
reclaimed plastic fish sauce holder
reclaimed plastic insulated wire

MEASUREMENTS:

Length: approx 39cm

Width: approx 25cm

Depth: approx 10cm

MATERIALS:

Found plastic fragments
and toy cowboy, copper,
recycled silver, stainless
steel

MEASUREMENTS:

Height: 8.3cm

Width: 5.3cm

Depth: 3.5cm



"PREDATOR"

(2018)

BROOCH

"Predator" confronts how history is written and perpetuated, and how knowledge is created by power structures. How do we re-write innocent games so familiar to our childhood which still manage to hide narratives of genocide and dispossession after so many generations?

I originally found the three pieces of plastic on the same beach walk and immediately I thought of creating a piece about a cowboy set against the sunset – a fun little story bringing back memories of childhood games and Lucky Luke comic books. It was only when I hit a technical problem that I had time to reconsider what exactly it was that I was so innocently trying to portray.

As my little cowboy sat lonesome for several months on the bench, I slowly started considering the cultural trap in which I had fallen. Even with a great understanding of colonial issues, the cultural imprinting acquired as a child was strongly dominant in my instinctive choice of subject matter. So this is really a great example of how my practice unearths questions for me to ask myself, and raises situations in which to confront myself. The result could really not have been anywhere else but the title. But even then, I had to find a solution so that the viewers could go through the same process of being surprised at their own initial reaction to the piece, with the word 'predator' scribed on the back and only visible if looking for it and if taking the time and the energy to find it.

"PHONEY:

On Vainglory and the Affliction of Affectation"

(2018)

NECKLACE

'As long as art is the beauty parlor of civilization,
neither art nor civilization is secure.'

"Art is a quality that permeates an experience; it is not, save a figure of speech, the experience itself. Esthetic experience is always more than esthetic. In it a body of matters and meanings, not in themselves esthetic, become esthetic as they enter into an ordered rhythmic movement toward consummation. The material itself is widely human ... The material of esthetic experience in being human – human in connection with the nature of which it is a part – is social. Esthetic experience is a manifestation, a record and celebration of the life of a civilization, a means of promoting its development and is also the ultimate judgment upon the quality of a civilization. For while it is produced and enjoyed by individuals, those individuals are what they are in the content of their experience because of the cultures in which they participate."

John Dewey, Art as Experience, New York: Penguin Group USA Inc.

(original © 1934, Perigee 2005 edition, pp. 339 and 357-8)

MATERIALS:

fake pearls, fake phone, fake shoe, fake gold beads, fake gold chain, recycled silver



MEASUREMENTS:

Length: approx 18cm

Width: approx 8cm

Depth: 2cm

MATERIALS:

Foraged sheep's wool, found
shotgun cartridge case,
found wood, found rusty
wire, recycled 18ct gold, iron
wire, stainless steel

MEASUREMENTS:

Length: 9cm

Width: 7cm

Depth: 5cm



"NORFOLK FIELDS:

On the Alchemy of Before, Between and Beyond"
(2018)

BROOCH

Sheep, shotgun cartridges and fence wire are a staple of my Norfolk countryside. And so are the famous golden treasures of the Iceni and their Iron Age Queen Boudica.

But we are often the perpetrators and victims of casual observation.

A find is not just a find, but a frozen moment in time, the snapshot of an experience, braiding together body, landscape and the acts of walking and foraging.

It is when we take the time to awaken our consciousness to this moment that we begin asking:

what is the cycle of life and death,
of disappearance and reappearance,
of extraction and refinement
and then of deposition and discovery of these objects?

And what is ours?



"STUDY IN YELLOW"

(2018)

BROOCHES

These brooches are the culmination of a series of reflections and observations on how I use found objects.

Very often, the use of discarded items and fragments falls into the more general discourses centred around the re-use of trash and/or the re-contextualisation of objects. The ecological aspect, as well as the one about re-writing of personal narratives through objects, are very present in all my work. However, I do not wish to re-position the objects into new contexts or give them a new life and, quite the opposite, I wish to bring in the existing contexts and significance of these fragments in order to help me highlight the narrative I am trying to convey.

The particular objects of this small series have been mounted with brooch attachments that are nearly invisible when worn. The objects are, and need to be shown for, what they are. Through positioning them as jewellery, or as part of jewellery, I do not wish for them to be different or better: instead it is their inherent qualities, provenance and the context/experience of their retrieval that provide for me the important materials in the stories I need to tell.

MATERIALS:

Jar lid / plastic cap / aluminium can / shotgun cartridge / plastic straw, stainless steel



And so, why the yellow? The yellow is part of a wider reflection on how colour seems to play an important part in my work in ways I have not necessarily given it credit for yet. Some of these objects were chosen instinctively out of a display resting on one of my benches. I had to concede that their colour played a part in their standing out, to the point that I had to add two (the straw and the aluminium can) from my existing materials. On the same line, then, time and place of collection instead did not play a role in this assemblage, but texture and tinge of colour did.

"I CONFESS THAT I DON'T MISS YOU"

(2018)

NECKLACE

This piece was made and selected for Gioielli In Fermento, VIII Edition, on the theme "Private time and social interaction": an exhortation to think about the place of jewellery in our daily life.

The relationships end. The hoard of gifts remains.

Hidden in drawers, these once private and public displays of affection are now nothing but their perceived material value.

And yet the memories bother us... of friends we stopped calling, of love we thought would never end.

Making steel chain is the most intensely private act in my jewellery practice. It requires acoustic isolation, strength, delicacy, repetition and meditative patience.

Zinc will protect the chain. Will it protect me from this public confession?

MATERIALS:

gold jewellery charms I received or gave as gifts as a child/young adult, reclaimed galvanised steel



MEASUREMENTS:

Length: approx 21cm

Width: approx 19cm

Depth: 1cm

"NOLI ME TANGERE"

(2019)

BROOCH

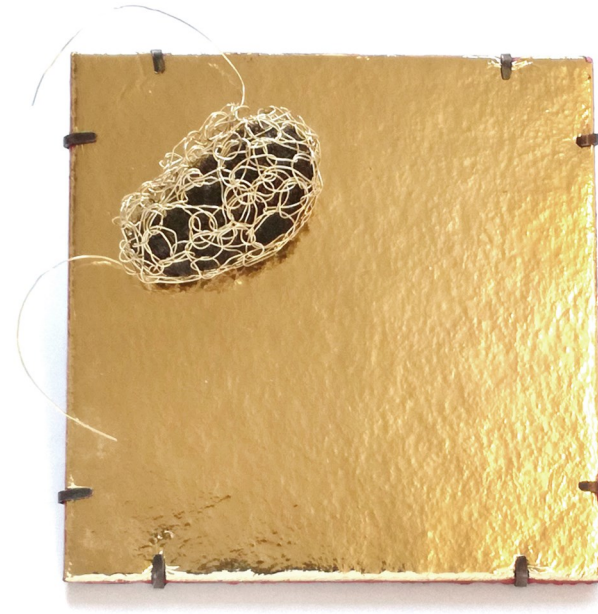
This piece was made and selected for Gioielli In Fermento, VIII Edition, on the theme "In Search of Quality". The theme implied that quality is an intrinsic value that can and will be appreciated unquestionably and objectively.

The "Noli Me Tangere" ("Do Not Touch Me" or "Do Not Let Anybody Touch Me", depending on translations) biblical episode tells of Jesus's request to Mary Magdalene that she have faith that the figure she is seeing in resurrection is indeed him. It is a request for her to maintain faith that the "quality" of his being has not changed.

My interpretation of the theme is, instead, that quality is not something unquestionable but nothing but a construct, dictated by shared norms of observation and appreciation. Mine is then a call to have faith in our own search for and attribution of quality.

"We never look deeply into the quality of a tree; we never really touch it, feel its solidity, its rough bark, and hear the sound that is part of the tree. Not the sound of wind through the leaves, not the breeze of a morning that flutters the leaves, but its own sound, the sound of the trunk and the silent sound of the roots. You must be extraordinarily sensitive to hear the sound. This sound is not the noise of the world... but sound as part of the universe."

(J. Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti to Himself*, 1984)



MATERIALS:

golden cardboard, pebble,
18k gold wire, oxidised copper,
paint, 18k gold pin wire

MEASUREMENTS:

Width: 7.8cm

Height: 7.8cm

Depth: 3cm

"LOST". "GONE BEFORE". "BEACH ROAD".

(2013)

BROOCHES

Three Norfolk mourning brooches, for all that we lose to the sea.

The coast near where I live has been for many centuries subject to very violent erosion from the North Sea. Many villages have slowly disappeared into the water. Every year more land is lost and more people have to abandon their homes. There are edges of gardens and fences hanging scarily over the cliffs and the beaches are full not only of pebbles and sand but also of bricks, tarmac, pipes, cement: fragments of streets, of houses, of lives.

MATERIALS:

copper, beach-combed
building material, vintage faux
pearls

MEASUREMENTS:

LOST: 6.1 x 3.9 x 1.1cm

GONE BEFORE: 7.2 X 3.1 X 1.1cm

BEACH ROAD: 8.9 X 4.7 X 1.8cm



"MIRROR MIRROR"

(2020)

NECKPIECE

The gesture of looking into a mirror is only simple at first sight. It is, at the same time, both the result of and the catalyst for an intense unspoken interior dialogue. The image reflected in a mirror evidences much more than our mere static physical presence. If we stop to analyse it, it reveals our agency and consciousness, and how we relate to the environment that is also reflected, but so often not recorded, in that image.

This two-faced mirror, like a Janus head, is a gate not only to our exterior and interior spaces, but also to the recesses of our present, future and past. As an artist, I wish for this piece, in all its particular components, to be a powerful talisman as much as a fragile tool for reflection: an instrument capable of both enabling and recording the complex layers of inquiry, of opening the curtains of new perspectives, and unsealing the road to the transitions necessary for us to evolve, in our interior cosmos as well as part of the larger universe we inhabit.

MATERIALS (all reclaimed):

Rear view mirror, curtain rings, seals, spacers, foam, rear view mirror fragment, craft wire, silver, 18k gold



MEASUREMENTS

Length: 58cm (plus 15cm back pendant)

Width (pendant): 12.5cm

Depth : 1.5cm

"VEDA"

(2019)

NECKPIECE

Veda (Sanskrit:विद्या) is mainly translated as learning, philosophy, scholarship and knowledge, uniting together concepts not only of intellectual knowledge per se but a process of enquiry, reasoning and understanding – as per its etymological root Vid (Sanskrit: विद्), also shared in the verb to see (Latin videre), meaning "to see, to reason upon, to find, to know, to understand".

This piece was many years in the making and it is one of the best representations of the journey of "wisdom as practice" that I wish to take with my work.

MATERIALS:

Found sheep bones, found ceramic fragment, reclaimed lapislazuli bead, reclaimed copper wire

MEASUREMENTS:

Length: approx 54cm

Width: approx 13cm

Depth: approx 6cm



ORIGIN STORY OF VEDA

One day several years ago, while at [West Dean College](#) (UK), I took yet another stroll through the arboretum in search of the tomb of its founder, the famous Surrealist patron [Edward James](#). This had so far eluded me and I could never understand how I could repeatedly miss a large funerary monument. And when I finally stumbled upon it, it was nothing like what I had expected. I nearly walked over the stone slab, well tended to, but totally level with the grass covering in between the trees. And there was the first realisation that, by following my assumptions about what a grand tomb should look like, I had always been looking for the wrong thing. And therefore I had never found it... My eureka moment was instantly rewarded by finding, embedded in the ground just a few centimetres away, two very beautiful ceramic fragments from the same plate. A gift for having gained one more grain of knowledge about myself and the world around me, I took them home and treasured them, waiting for the right moment to use them.



A couple of years after, on another visit to West Dean and another walk around the fields, I happened upon a large scatter of perfectly clean animal bones. The more I looked, the more there were. Was this

a sheep that had been killed by a predator? Or a lamb that had died of natural causes? But the bones were too pristine... The archaeologist in me continued to build scenarios, while I quickly untied a light jumper from round my waist to fashion a carrying device to collect the lot. Lamenting the loss of life but mindful of the laws of nature, I was grateful for the bounty of practically an entire body, including still articulated legs, although I duly noted that unfortunately the head was missing. These I also took home and boxed them carefully, treasuring them waiting for the right moment to use them.

Since beginning working with narrative, even before I understood the significance of why I used or needed narrative itself as either material or process, I was very aware of my inability to tell a story that was not ready in my head. What I could not see in those



early days was that, even if the story was there, it was my lack of understanding of it and of how it fitted in the grand scheme of the (or just my) cosmos that prevented me from putting the puzzle together. And this was the case with these ceramic fragments and treasure trove of bones. The only solution I could see was to take them back where they came from and acknowledge their provenance by working on them back at West Dean.

Once there, I was filled with grandiose ambitions to create a rather monumental neckpiece that would incorporate several of the larger leg bones and both the ceramic fragments. But no matter how much I strived, the piece was not coming together. The more I rearranged it, the more it felt like too much. And the more I was being intensely drawn to just one bone.

Having some understanding of skeletal anatomy, I could see this was a tail bone. Still, I took some time to research sheep anatomy. This revealed that, of course, this was in fact none other than the sacrum bone, a name by which it is also known in Italian, and one I had known since biology classes at school and by hearing old ladies complain of lower back pain.



And yet it had never occurred to me to research why it is called the the sacred bone, the holy bone. Delving deeper, I came to realise that this is in fact a name, or at least a connotation, that this particular bone shares across the world and from ancient times, mostly because of its role in aiding child bearing and birth. Its significance as a door to life was so strong that, in shamanistic cultures, it was considered a portal to another dimension.



The pieces of the puzzle were finally all there. I had learnt that I could only find when I could let go of my assumptions as to what I was looking for. And I was offered the final answer when I stopped committing hubris and instead allowed myself to feel what was calling me. As a final reward, I found in the box of objects I had brought with me one last reclaimed lapislazuli bead from a previous project, when in fact I had not remembered packing it nor in fact did I think I had any left. The lapis itself was considered, because of its deep blue appearance and golden specks, a symbol of the cosmos and the stone of truth.

WE SEE WHEN WE ARE READY TO OPEN OUR EYES.

AND WE FIND WHEN WE ARE READY TO SEEK.

And it is as a reminder of the journey of enquiry, reasoning and understanding that I went through with this piece, that it has come to be called "Veda".