

**BETWEEN MICROCOSMOS AND MACROCOSMOS –
THE ARTIST'S CHOICE FROM THE PERSONAL TO THE COLLECTIVE**

— AMBER TRIP —

XIX INTERNATIONAL BALTIC JEWELLERY SHOW

**BETWEEN MICROCOSMOS AND MACROCOSMOS
—
THE ARTIST'S CHOICE FROM THE PERSONAL TO
THE COLLECTIVE**

Lieta Marziali

16 March 2023

[INTRODUCE MYSELF]



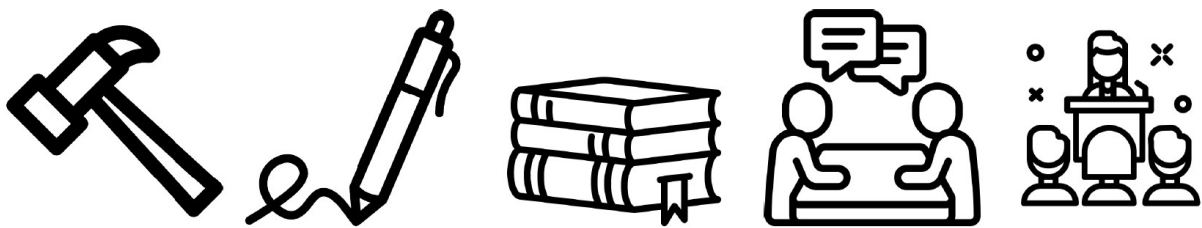
Hi, so, first of all I'm going to start by telling you a little bit about myself. My name is Lieta Marziali. I was born in Italy and then I moved to Britain when I was 20. And that was now many years ago. Also, in Italy, my mum is from the island of Sardinia, and my father was from the mainland. So I consider myself a complete European hybrid, and my identity has been shaped – in fact, it is constantly still shaped, especially after Brexit – by where I have been, where I am, where I travel to and, above all, the people that every day I connect with. I am myself, and what I shaped myself to be, but this shape could not exist in a vacuum, and I only exist as and develop as I am because of the environment I find myself in – but also choose to find myself in.

I was not always an artist. In fact, it took me a long time not only to find art but also to find the courage to call myself an artist. I started my university studies in Italy, but Italy didn't work for me, or I didn't work for Italy. Anyway, I moved to England and I started university again in London, and I got a degree in English literature. Then I worked in the publishing industry for a few years, then was a restaurant manager for a few more years, and then I even worked in archaeology for two years. And then I found jewellery, or perhaps jewellery found me.

So, there have been a lot of choices happening in this journey. Choices I made, choices I could make and choices I could not make, choices I could choose to make and choices where I did not have a choice. Along the way, there were choices that were made for me, but also choices that came to me. There have been situations and people that I chose, but also situations and people that chose me.

And so this history is not static and it continues to change every day. It changes because I change, but I change because I am in the world: a world, yes, that I create for myself, but also a world that creates me and shapes me every day.

Ans so now I'm going to tell you a bit more about MY PRACTICE



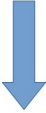
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Once jewellery and I found each other, I took some practical training in jewellery and then studied for a three-dimensional art degree, and then I took a Research Master. While I was still studying, my practice was mostly as a maker. But then I started writing and, today, there are many things that are part of my practice: I make jewellery, I am a writer and a researcher, and I am also a mentor and a curator. All these things are equal in my practice: nothing is more or less important. Sometimes I don't make for months, but I write, or I research for a project, or for an essay, or just for myself. Or I collaborate with others on their project, or I mentor someone. Or maybe I do several of these things at the same time. But it never happens that I do none of these things. There is always something happening because everything for me is a manifestation of my practice. And this is very connected with what I am trying to discuss with you here today: the idea of choice.

But we'll get back to this a little later.

[WORD "CHOICE"]

CHOICE



RESPONSIBILITY

So, what about this word – choice. “Choice” is a very problematic word. So very often, we take it for granted. On a basic personal level, for example, how many of us take for granted the choice they have of what to eat for breakfast, and what to wear for the day? But, again on this basic needs level, is this choice extended to everyone in our immediate society? And what about in our extended global society?

Most recently, the pandemic and the war in Ukraine (one of many wars, which we notice more because it is on our doorstep!) have once again try to make us notice a lesson about choice:

- that we sometimes don't have choice and that there are others out there who never have a choice
- that we often do not have control and that there are others out there who never have any control of their choices.

But there is also another lesson in all of this, and that is that where we do have control of our choices, these choices do not only affect us but everyone else too.

So, with choice come responsibility. But, again, we'll get back to this later.

[MY PIECES IN THE EXHIBITION]

For the moment, I want to talk about the more personal aspect of choice and tell you a bit more about the pieces that are here in the exhibition and their stories.

[DE-LIBERATE]

Lieta
Marziali

“ONCE
UPON THIS
TIME”

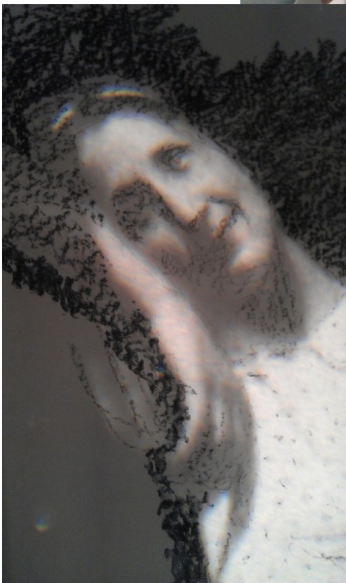
(2014)



“Once Upon A Time. Once Upon This Time”
Image: Andy Sapey



“De-Touch”
Image: Andy Sapey



The first piece is called “De-Liberate” and it is part of a group that I made in 2014 called “Once Upon This Time”. The title of this group is really important, and it is of course about exercising choice. The choice in this case is about personal history. Now, there is a part of that history, the part that was very traumatic, that I did not have a choice in shaping. But there is a choice that I could exercise in how I dealt with that story, how I made it mine so that I could deal with the trauma. So this group is about the choice we can claim in shaping our history in a way that it can shape us in a different way.

The story is about the trauma that I suffered with my mother when both of us were younger. Our relationship was really hard (so hard that I moved to a different country!). But she herself was suffering the trauma of her own young years with her own mother, my grandmother, who was herself suffering at the hand of the violent man she had married (my grandfather). As a grown woman I still did not know how to deal with all this trauma. I did not have the tools. The tools only came when I found art.

When I mentor young (and not so young) art students and artists, one of the first things I tell them is that art is the only subject where you get to study yourself as a subject. Art is very much about learning about yourself as much as learning about, let’s say, history of art, or learning to paint, or make jewellery, or technique etc.

And so, as I was invited by another art student to share a residency space in the art school we were in, I decided to reflect on this trauma. I brought in the big collection of old photos that I have of that side of the family. I studied them, I confronted them and, as they were all on the wall (something you can do in a studio but not really at home!), I zoomed in on this photo of my grandmother as a young girl. In this photo she was happy and carefree. And I made the choice that this would be the character of a new story: that I would re-write the history of my grandmother based on this photograph in the hope that, freeing her from her own trauma, that trauma would not go down to my mother and then me.

You can read all the various details on my website, so I won't bother you with all of them. First, I used the photo as the basis of a locket, to treasure this new incarnation of my grandmother. Then I used personal items that I inherited from her house to make choices about how to process that story. The second piece was about reflecting on the strength of our personal histories, and the power they can have on us. So the little ivory necklace becomes enclosed in a vitrine, like in a museum. It symbolises the history that is part of me, but also my choice to detach myself, to create some distance, in order to be able to appreciate it. The piece name is of course a play on word, where I can "de-tach" myself and the necklace is not able to "touch" me anymore, both physically and metaphorically, but it is still an important part of my heritage and my identity that needs to be ob-served and pre-served.



The third piece, the one in the exhibition, is the final reflection. And this reflection is exactly about the amount of choice, and the kind of choice, we have in shaping and being shaped by our personal histories and identities. And so there is a simple pebble, and this pebble is enclosed in a golden basket. The metaphor here is obviously quite simple. Now, this basket is where I choose to be as a simple pebble. It is the house I choose for myself. It is who I choose to be. But this golden

basket holds me in a sort of embrace, a hug, but it also imprisons me, as you are not able to take the pebble out of the basket. And then there is the chatelaine this beautiful jewel belonging to another of the women in that side of the family more than 100 years ago. And there is a chain, forged in strong steel, and every day there is a choice that can be made about how to use it, or whether to use it. I can choose to live totally attached to that heritage, or I can choose to live detached from it, but still keeping the chain as a reminder. Or - I can just be the pebble in my own golden basket, which of course, as I said, is precious but also a limit on where I can go.

When I first made the piece, I thought so much about this choice: the importance of this choice and of the implications. But now, thinking about it again as I am nearly 10 years older, I can appreciate how the choice is so fluid all the time, and really there is no right or wrong. The only choice we really need to make is to learn to know ourselves and to listen to the need and the presence of the moment.

[I CONFESS THAT I DON'T MISS YOU]



Lieta Marziali
"I CONFESS THAT I DON'T MISS YOU"
(2018)

And on that note, let's quickly look at the other piece I have in the exhibition: "I Confess That I Don't Miss You". A much shorter story, but still very much related to our personal histories. Now, I have always been a great "cleanser". For example, I go through clothes I don't wear, I pay attention not to get surrounded by too much "stuff". If I don't use it, then somebody else can use it and love it. I do get new things and practically never throw anything away as rubbish, but I mostly tend to get second-hand things, and I do regularly pass them on too. You know, circular – shared economy ...

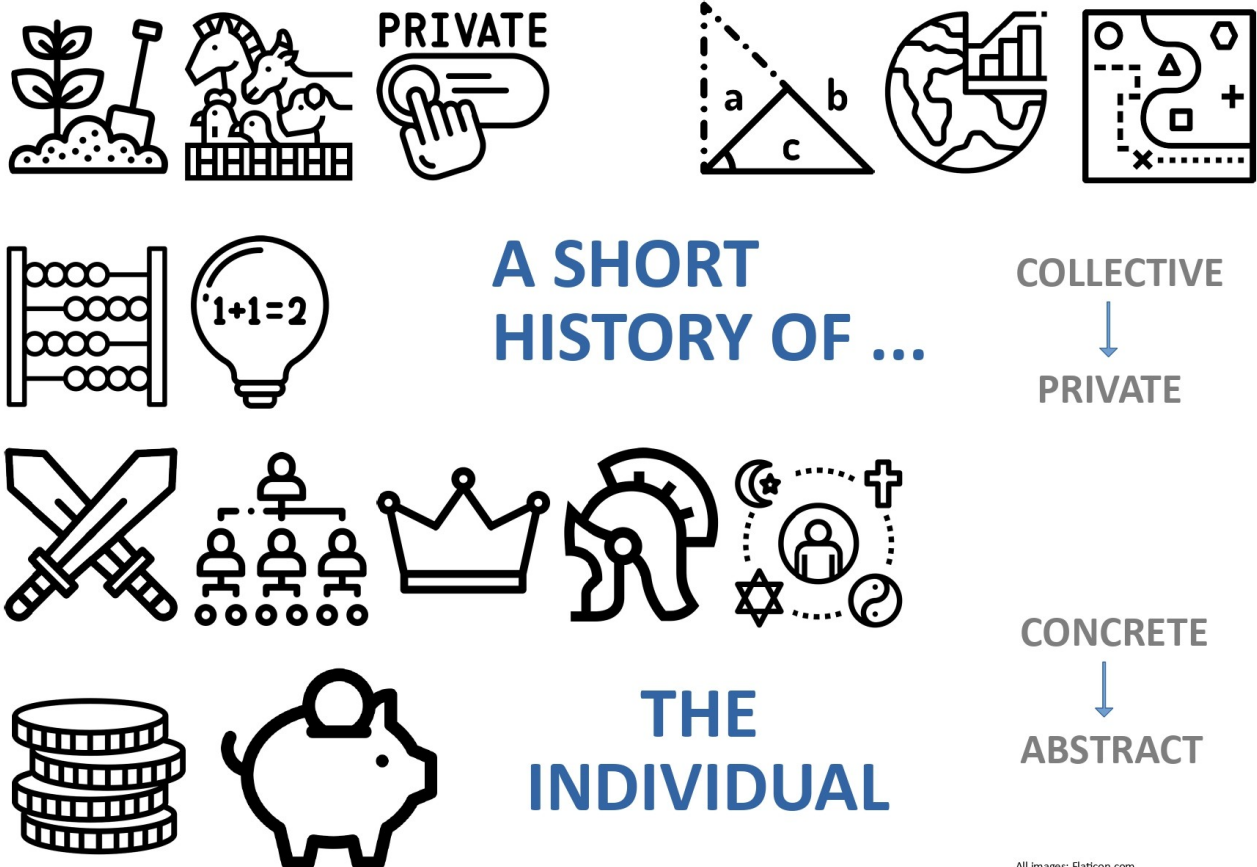
Looking through my jewellery, I had actually sold some gold before. For example, I had even sold a solid gold ring that my dad had commissioned for me when I was a young teenager. And I sold it so

that I could put some money towards my first studio. My dad died many years ago and I never wore the ring any longer, so I thought he would actually be more proud of me using it for something real in my life than just for the memory of him. But there were all these little bits that were more difficult, because I would have to separate the stones etc, and I just left them there. And they kept haunting me. These were all gifts from people that had been really close to me when I was much younger: best friends from school, best friends not from school, my ex-boyfriend and then husband... People totally out of my life and people I did not really want back in my life. It was a harsh realisation to understand that I did not miss these people. And so this piece was a way for me to confront myself with this choice, with this confession. The chain, once again, is made of strong steel. It is covered in zinc, a material that of course protects the steel from corrosion. But my question was: would it protect me from this choice I had made? A few years later, I can say that, yes, it did. I stand with my choice not because I don't love these people anymore. In fact, they were all very very important for me at the time. But I stand with my choice because I have learnt to know myself and to listen to the presence of the moment.

This is the responsibility we have to ourselves.

[MICROCOSMOS / MACROCOSMOS]

So, as an individual in my microcosmos, I could say that I felt entitled to be able to make the choices that I described in my pieces.

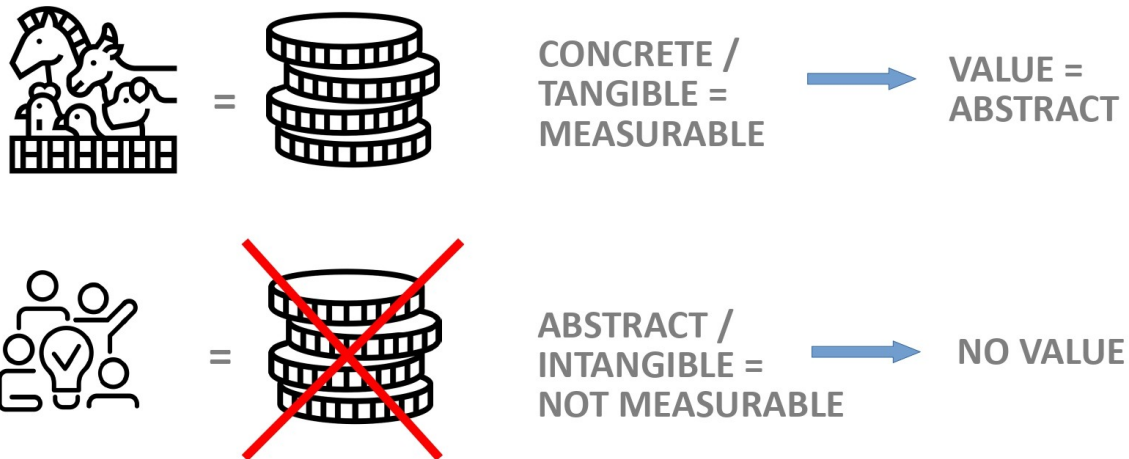


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But – the idea of the “individual” is a product of long-term philosophical training in the Western, capitalist, patriarchal, industrial world. I won't take you through all the particular details (maybe you can read some of my other lectures) but, we can shortly summarise it like this:

- First we started with wanting to domesticate the world around us: we started by not accepting our place as humans as part of the world. Instead, we classified this world, this “Nature” as something else, an external object to which we became higher, better, so that we could justify dominating and using it. First, of course, we did this through clearing forests for agriculture, and then with animal domestication. Once we had made “Nature” something “Other”, we could then describe it, classify it and give a value to everything (measured against our higher value as thinking humans) so that all that knowledge could be used for our own benefit. Let’s also not forget that with organised agriculture and animal domestication came also the idea of storage and of private property.
- Then, once we had started dominating the land and property, we invented measuring and borders as a form of control of that property. With measuring we also invented numbers: words that gave us the possibility to give an abstract value to this nature we had dominated.
- At the same time, we invented war to be able to defend that property, which was once common to everybody, but which then becomes not only dominated by humans, but dominated by only certain humans, those with the power to do so. So somebody is starting to make more individual choices, but who are they affecting?
- And so, we invented hierarchies to decide who was better, stronger, and who should be in charge and who should obey. We invented kings and empires and we moved from a shared spiritual world that included us as part of nature to the hierarchical world of organised religions.
- Then, quite a bit later, we invented money (at first, coins specifically, but then banknotes, credit cards, cryptocurrencies) which made this abstraction of value even stronger. With coins, we start completing the transition from an economy of sharing resources that are common and visible to everybody (I mean, of course you could accumulate gold, but still it would be more visible), to an economy of accumulating resources in a very private and invisible way. Slowly, this develops into a paradox.

PARADOX OF ABSTRACTION



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Let's think about the paradox of this abstraction:

- on the one hand, you have concrete, tangible things that are given an abstract value (a price);
- on the other hand, we have a lot of intangible things, like community knowledge and cooperation, which, because you cannot give a numerical value to them, become considered without value.

- Then came the age of discovery. Of course, all populations had already been moving from place to place for many tens of millennia. In fact, this is how we developed our various species of hominins and started moving out of Africa and into all other continents. But this modern age of discovery was pushed by dominant powers, and so "exploitation" was justified under the name "exploration". It was only "discovery" for those who, even as dominant powers, were in fact ignorant of what was out there.

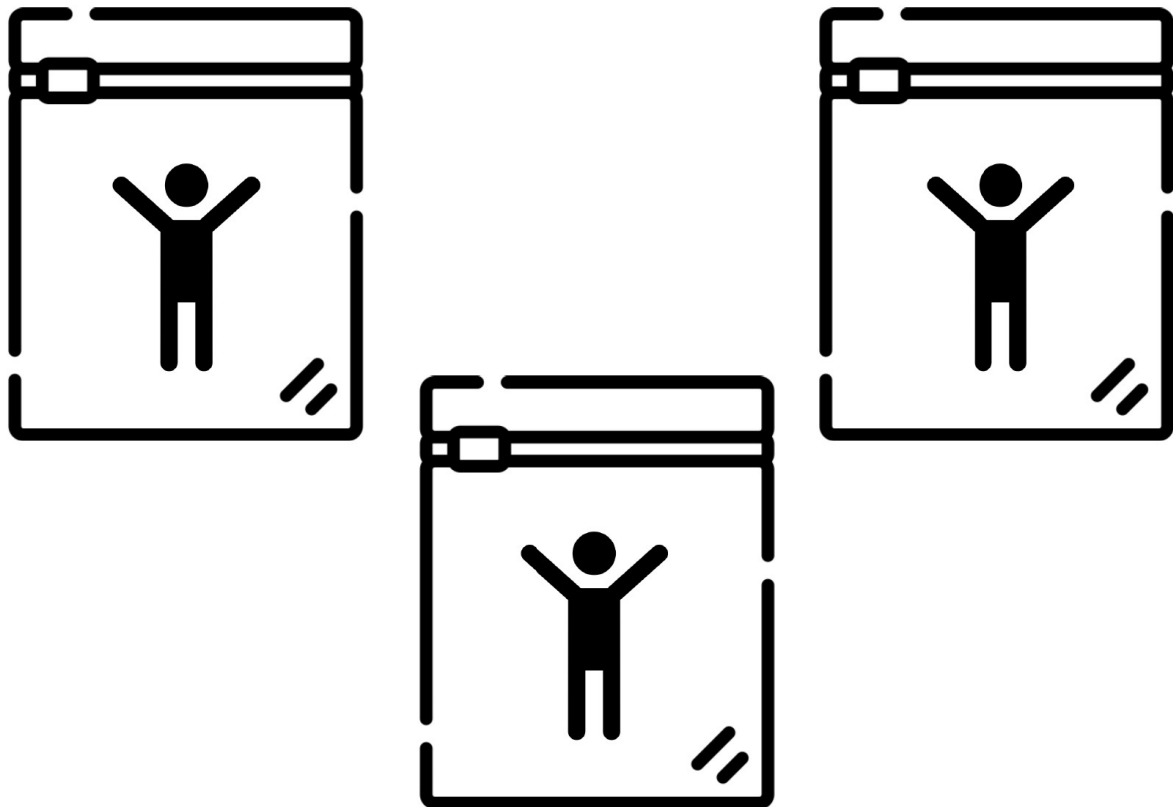
- With the age of "discovery" comes the age of "science". All populations have of course always had their science. But this was, again, a certain type of science: a science based on abstract numbers and values, developed by dominant powers. And it is here that the Individual completes its journey to become the only measure for the world. And this individual is, 99.9% of the time, Man (NOT Woman!)

- And so, armed with new ways of giving value to everything according to their particular standards, dominant human beings use borders, war, measuring and numbers not only against "Nature" but also against other human beings that they start to consider "Other".

REVOLUTIONS??

So... That's a lot of choices we made there... We call a lot of them revolutions, but who have they benefited? And where are we now, with war, exploitation, climate change? And where are we going?

[WE DON'T LIVE IN A VACUUM]



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So, here is the revelation. We don't live in a vacuum. Our choices – our individual choices, from those as basic as what we choose to eat to what we choose to wear – matter.

And if we don't live in vacuum as people, we don't live in a vacuum as artists.

Again, on a very basic level, one of the big questions, especially in the jewellery field, is what resources are we choosing to use? How much are we basing our choices on what makes us look better instead of what makes the world better?

On a slightly deeper level, for example, what language do we use to describe our work? One word that comes out all the time is “object”.

(PERSONAL) OBJECT ???

In fact, jewellery is so often described as a “personal object”. I recently gave a lecture in Bratislava about this. But what do these words mean? What philosophy, what way of thinking, do they have hidden inside them? The word “personal” refers, again, directly to the idea of the individual – and we looked at that history just a moment ago. And the word “object” is also related to that history, and to human beings starting to consider themselves “subjects” that could dominate everything around them as “objects”. Philosophically, it is a dualism that goes hand in hand also with the division between the mind and the body.

SO – JEWELLERY AS PERSONAL OBJECT – WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH THIS?

As we are among jewellers, let’s just for a moment think about this idea of jewellery as a personal object...

When we talk about personal objects, so jewellery, amulets, keepsakes, but also books, clothes, what are we actually saying? Is there really such a thing as a personal object?



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For a start, objects are never completely “personal” because of their provenance: somebody extracted the materials from somewhere or something, somebody manufactured them, somebody marketed them, somebody sold them, somebody processed the payment for them, somebody delivered them to the shop or to the house. The list is quite vast. On top of that, most of the times there is a further *TRANS-ACTION* that surrounds so-called personal objects: at some point, they have been bought, exchanged, gifted, stolen.



Even when they are found, somebody could have lost them or deposited them. Or, in case of objects we class as “natural”, we are normally totally ignoring, in our own very special anthropocentric way, what Bruno Latour calls the ‘*actant*’ aspect of the world around us: these that we call “natural objects” have not magicked themselves there for our own use, but they are in fact the product of earth processes which, in the case of a simple pebble like the one in my piece, have taken millions of years of hidden labour to exist.

OBJECTS...

NEVER TRULY PERSONAL

...

“INEXTRICABLE COMPLEXITY”

...

“NEVER DIRECTLY EXPERIENCED”

JEAN BAUDRILLARD, *The System of Objects*

Objects are never truly personal because they also don't exist in a vacuum: they are part of a network, an infrastructure. So, objects possess, are part of, and function within, an inextricable complexity (structural – so technological, social, economic, for example – and also functional and cultural) that is, for the most, never directly experienced.



(ph. THOR, Wikimedia Commons) - cropped



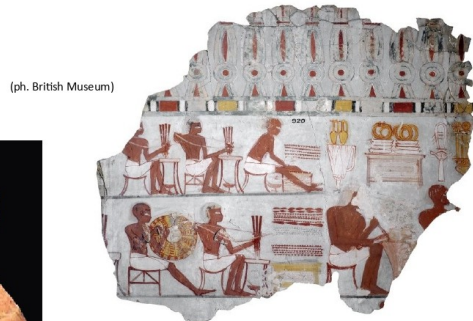
(ph. Virginia State Parks, Wikimedia Commons)



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(ph. British Museum)



(ph. C. Henshilwood and F. d'Errico (Research Gate))



(Image - Etienne Delaune, goldsmith's workshop, XVI c)



(ph. Professional Jeweller)

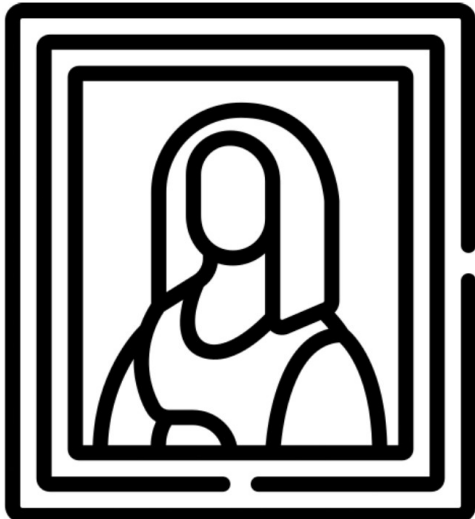
Let's get back to jewellery. When we research, talk, write about jewellery, we are always confronted with a shared (whether it is shared by us or by other groups) history:

- shared social, economic, religious, ideological, material, cultural norms;
- and also shared social, economic, religious, ideological, material, cultural purposes.

When we learn to make jewellery, we rely on shared knowledge, some of which extremely ancient and some of which much more contemporary. A knowledge that is both material and technical, but also intrinsically linked to the shared histories I have just mentioned.

Also, jewellery is never personal as such as it is always liminally positioned – so it is always on the limits, the borders – for the maker, the wearer and the viewer. And it is positioned there also on the most liminal of our organs as so-called subjects: our skin – our border between the inside and the outside, between the microcosmos and the macrocosmos. Jewellery is therefore capable of a particular agency: and this agency – so this power jewellery has to act – is at the same time intrinsic (so jewellery has it because it is jewellery, at the limit between the microcosmos and the macrocosmos), but it is also activated by shared histories, norms, purposes etc. The bodies that make it, the bodies that wear it, and the bodies who view it are never individual, but always part of a body politic.

(ART) OBJECT



(ARTIST) OBJECT



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And yet, despite all that we have talked about, art is so very often regarded as an object. Think of the expression – the “art object”, the “*objet d’art*”... If we think about visual art, it is something that it is viewed, touched, worn, purchased, sold, stored. If we think about books and music, they are suffering an even worse destiny in the digital age, when they lose their value even as objects!

So, art is seen often only as a product, a final result. This is what we are judged by. Again, we are only judged by what can be seen, touched, smelled, heard. And of course, marketed and sold and stored. Jewellery, from this point of view, is probably one of the most objectified forms of art.

But then, when we think about it, even as humans we have been objectifying ourselves for a very long time. We started with objectifying “other” human beings, as we have seen, first with kingdoms and empires, and then with colonialism, slavery etc. Then, with the advent of more industrial capitalism (because, remember, the roots of capitalism really start with organised agriculture many thousands of years ago), this gets worse and worse. And in the digital age, we all become an abstract objectification. Also, we don’t just do it to whom we consider “other”, but we willingly do it to ourselves.

We abstract the physical presence of our bodies into a digital presence. And we continuously measure, and are measured, by values that are even more abstract than money. And let’s not forget that the digital space in which we do this is not a shared common space anymore. Like the land before, this has been divided up and privatised. And we are pushed by market forces to abstract and objectify our bodily presence into an abstract space that does not even belong to us any more. Let’s just reflect on this for a second!

As we have seen before, there is a big paradox that comes with abstraction: tangible things become an abstract value (they get a price), and intangible things, the ones that cannot be measured, are said to have no value, because that value can not be calculated.

PROCESS ??

(UNPRODUCTIVE) THINKING ??

NOT objects ??

And so, what about the process of making art? What about all the aspects of art that we cannot see, touch, market and sell? What about our reflections? What happens to our thinking? And especially, what about our un-productive thinking? Or thinking that does not produce anything but maybe ideas, and certainly not objects?

[OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY]

In the art market – the art industry – as we like to call it, there is no room for that. No value for that. And still, we, as artists, fight to be part of this industry.

First of all, like our ancestors when they started dominating the land, we create more and more abstractions in the form of arbitrary hierarchies and divisions so that we can control our territory better. For example, over the centuries, we invented the concept of the fine arts as opposed to the applied / functional / artisanal arts. And then, within those, we create more and more divisions and specialisations and hierarchies – we create more borders so that we can defend our territory – like fine jewellery, production jewellery, art jewellery, design jewellery.

So, instead of projecting our microcosmos onto the macrocosmos – instead of reflecting on how our individual choices affect everything and everybody around us – we reduce the macrocosmos to the benefit of our microcosmos: we control the macrocosmos to benefit us as individuals.

VALUE??

And in these now micro-territories that we have created, we then do all sorts of things to be seen – and to be seen to be better than others. We voluntarily agree to all sorts of forms of objectification, not only of our work but also of ourselves by continually asking to be valued and judged, whether it's on social media or through competitions. But what is seen, valued and judged is never our process, only the result.

And we do this to ourselves. We do this from within the art field to the art field. In fact, we choose to do this from within the art field to the art field.

SO – WHAT CAN WE DO?

The thing is inseparable from a person
perceiving it,
and can never be actually *in itself*
because its articulations are those of
our very existence,
and ... which invest[s] it with humanity.

MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY, *Phenomenology of Perception*



Image: Flaticon.com

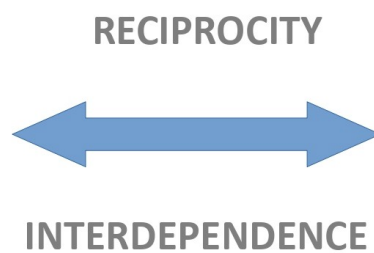
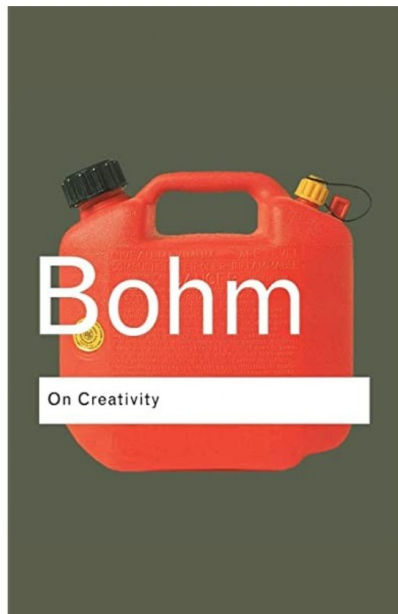


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If we individually do not exist in a vacuum, and also everything that surrounds us in the world also does not exist in a vacuum, what can we do to make sure that we are connected between ourselves and with the cosmos we inhabit? As artists, how can we make sure that we connect our microcosmos to the macrocosmos?

We have seen how in our microcosmos we can feel entitled to make certain choices. But we have also seen that our choices come with responsibility, and so it is our responsibility to learn about ourselves and our choices, and above all to be critical.

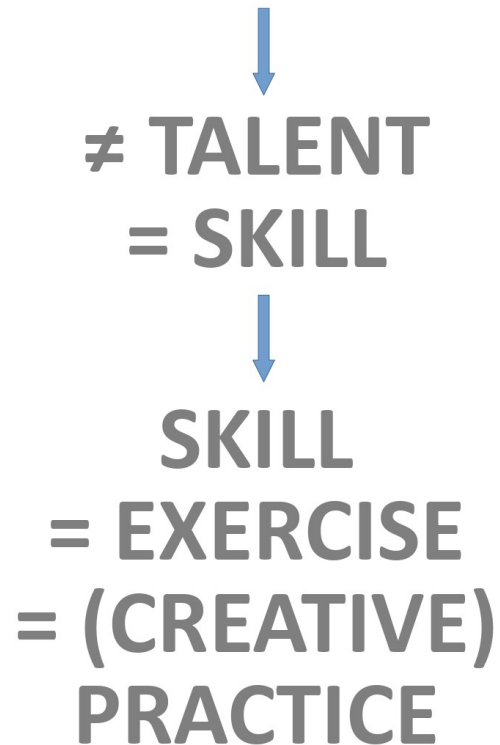
REFLECTION



CRITICALITY

Image: Routledge Classics

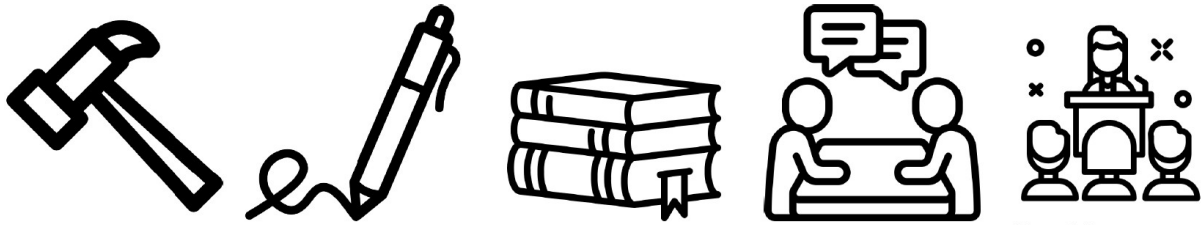
CREATIVITY



There is a wonderful book about creativity by a physicist philosopher called David Bohm, which for me became really important. It helped me a lot in setting the foundations for my practice. He says that creativity is not some genius inspiration which then allows us to make a representation of something, or to design something, and so on. He says that creativity is not a talent we are born with but a skill that we have to acquire and then practice. We can acquire it through reflection and learning to be critical, which then allows us to make new connections that we hadn't made before, to "create" new connections, new ideas. And once we have this skill, then we have to exercise it, to practice it. A bit like soldering!

But, also a bit like soldering, this is a skill that we learn and then work with on our own terms. If you ask ten people to show you how they solder, they will all do it in a slightly different way. And it is the same for this kind of creativity. This kind of creativity is not linked to any particular discipline (like painting, sculpture, pottery, jewellery), or to any medium or classification of "art". In fact, it is in itself "art". However, it is not art as a creative product, as an object, but it is art as a creative *process*, a creative *practice*.

CREATIVE PRACTICE



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RECIPROCITY



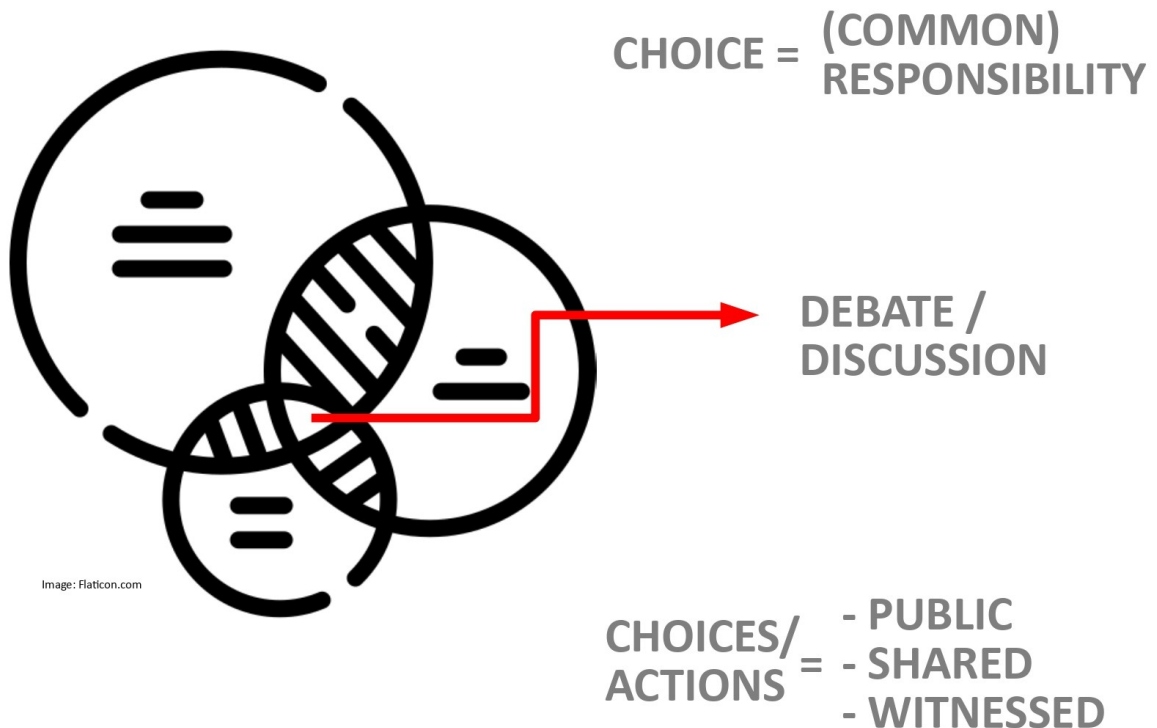
INTERDEPENDENCE



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So, in my case, for example, if we go back to what I was telling you earlier about my practice, all the things that I do are equal. There are no divisions and hierarchies in my work, nothing that is more important or less important: making, writing, mentoring, curating, researching. Even lecturing here today is part of that creative process, that creative practice, because all spaces and all situations are for me a studio space. A studio space for me is not my bench, or my desk, or my computer: it is any place where I choose to put myself or find myself where I can ask questions and test myself, reflect and try to understand who I am, how I think and why I think that way, and to make sense of myself in the context of my surrounding world. It is a place where I can explore my microcosmos and understand how it is part of the macrocosmos.

SO WHAT ABOUT THIS SURROUNDING WORLD? THE MICROCOSMOS IS ALWAYS PART OF A MACROCOSMOS



If the choices we make as individuals affect, in some way or another, everything that surrounds each of us, then all choices are in some way interconnected and interdependent. It means that at any one time our choices – even the choices we feel entitled to make – are in fact shared choices.

Jean Paul Sartre, the famous existentialist philosopher, realised how important it is that we understand that. Our freedom of choice comes with immense responsibility, towards ourselves and towards others. Another great thinker that can help us here is Hannah Arendt. Not only she talks about this shared responsibility in our choices, but also she brings our bodies, our presence into the shared space in which we make these choices. She says that our actions only become actions – our choices only become choices – when we practise them, when we perform them, publicly in a space where we can witness others and others can witness us. So there needs to be an arena where we meet: a space that is physical, public and shared (not like the digital space, which is private and controlled). And in this space we can share debate and discussion that can bring us to better choices, because these choices are shared.

SO, HOW DOES THAT APPLY TO US ARTISTS?

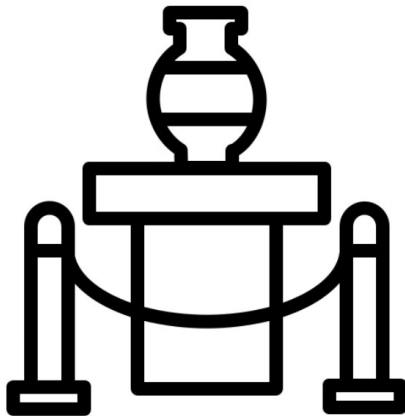
As jewellers, we think so much about the body. But what happened to our body, our presence?

Well, being here all together is already a really good start, don't you think? And we are here not just with our pieces, our products. And we are not just in a digital space, where we either agree with each other without even thinking because it is polite to do so, or we put a Like because maybe it is useful to do so. But without anybody being able to see our face. We are here in person,

and hopefully sharing our process and our thinking – sharing our practice – being a witness for each other so that our collective choices can be better than just our individual ones, and building unity and strength as creative people of the world and in the world.

And so, maybe, another thing we should ask ourselves is how healthy is it for this process of shared reflection and discussion, to put ourselves always in competition with each other. If we all develop and practise our creativity on our own terms, then we are at the same time all equal in the process but all different in the way the process manifests itself. Then how can we judge these differences? And how can we judge them often according to the same criteria, with one system to fit all? And how important is actually it?

(ART) OBJECT



(ARTIST) OBJECT



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We consider the solo exhibition as the top of our achievements. And a solo exhibition is indeed sometimes very important as a moment of reflection, a moment to be critical in the way we talked about. But if we look at it simply as an achievement, a goal, just to validate ourselves, are we ever solo as an artist? Are we ever solo during the thinking and the making? Were we ever sealed in a vacuum bag? Did nothing or nobody interest us, or inspire us, or push us, or stopped us? Were we in contact with nobody for the entire life it took to put together all the work? And, going back to the idea that all we see is the pieces, are the pieces in such a solo show the only way we can – or should – judge the creative process?

This is the individualistic capitalist world that dictates that all artists should arrive at the solo exhibition not as a reflection moment but as a career goal. Because it makes both the artist and the results a better product that can be better sold. But this does not unite us collectively. It divides us. It makes us believe that our microcosmos is somehow separate – and more important.

So, instead, what about working collectively? What about collaborations? What about dialogue and debate?

This is certainly the road I have chosen for myself. So, not only I do not have divisions and hierarchies in my individual work, now I also try as much as I can to work collectively with other people. I choose to not really take part in competitions, and, I also choose not to judge competitions. When I curate exhibitions, my voice and my choices are witnessed by others who help my journey as I help theirs. When I mentor, I don't impose my voice or my choice. I advise and I listen. In my own microcosmos, I have learnt over the years to be the "Other" in my head and to have that discussion and debate inside my head. And to make it loud and clear so that I can confront it. When I mentor, this process is really visible because mentoring, like teaching, is really about morphing yourself into the other. So it is certainly not a one-way process.



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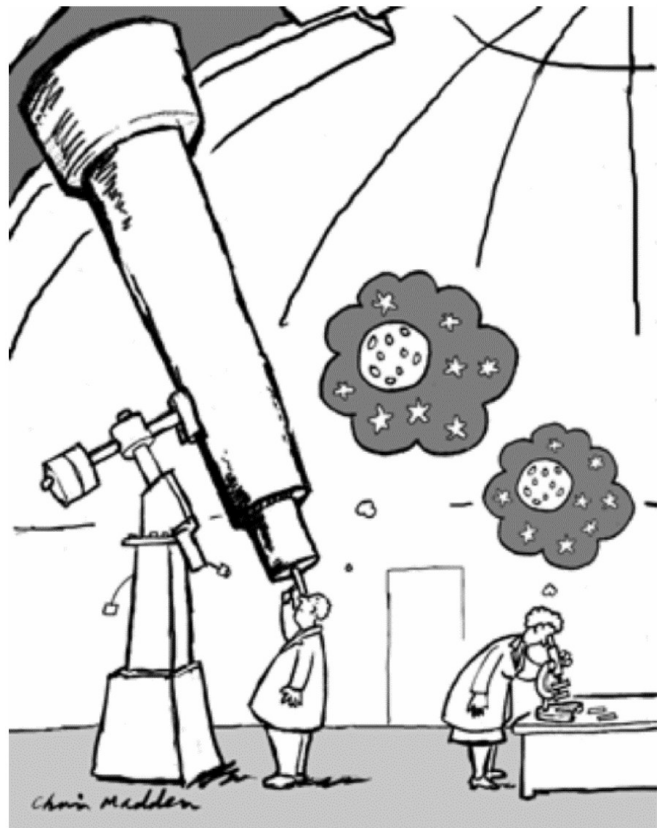


Image courtesy of Chris Madden

And a lecture is also not a one-way process. So today I would like to conclude not with some genius wisdom, which I do not profess to have, but with some questions for ourselves and each other.

- What can we do to move from thinking about art as a product, a result to be sold, to art as a process – a process of thinking, of reflecting, of being critical?

- And what can we do to start understanding the importance of making that process a shared collective one? And to think what we could achieve if we realised that the choices in our microcosmos could have so much more impact if we shared them and thought about our shared responsibility towards our shared macrocosmos?

- How can we go back to the thinking of our very old ancestors, before the invention of domination, of measuring, of wars and empires, and co-operate in our choices in the understanding that our microcosmos is never separate, and instead our microcosmos *IS* the macrocosmos?