



VISUAL FEAST

SILVIA
WEIDENBACH

VISUAL HEAST





SILVIA
WIEDENBACH
GILBERT
COLLECTION
V&A ARTIST IN
RESIDENCE

2017-2018



THE ROSALINDE AND ARTHUR GILBERT COLLECTION: A VISUAL FEAST

By Charlotte Johnson and Heike Zech

Melding digital design, 3D printing, and traditional silversmithing techniques, Silvia Weidenbach creates exuberant jewellery that demands attention. Weidenbach is the first V&A Gilbert Collection Artist in Residence, and this publication, alongside a commission, and a display, is the culmination of her residency.

Housed in a suite of galleries in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection includes masterpieces from four areas of European and British decorative arts: silver and gold, enamel portrait miniatures, micromosaics and gold boxes. The collection was formed by two Londoners, Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert who moved to Los Angeles in 1949. It was there that they also moved from designing bespoke ball gowns, to property development, and started collecting decorative arts. Their motto was 'not for us, but for everyone.' In this spirit, since the collection arrived at the V&A in 2008, the curatorial brief has been to show the collection in new ways in the museum and online, ensuring it remains relevant and exciting for the broadest possible audience. It was with this in mind that internationally renowned

jeweller Silvia Weidenbach was appointed the first Artist in Residence for the Gilbert Collection from April 2017 to April 2018.

Weidenbach sees the Gilbert Collection as a feast for the eyes. The intricacy and opulence of the historic objects exhibited in the Gilbert Galleries feeds her creativity. Weidenbach's innovative work combines traditional goldsmithing and silversmithing techniques with digital technologies. Her jewellery is sculpted digitally, 3D printed and then hand-finished and set with precious materials.

Using these processes Weidenbach created a bedazzled Visual Feast box, commissioned in response to the Gilbert Collection. In its materiality, this twenty-first century gold box embodies the push and pull between the historic and the contemporary that defines the Gilbert Collection. The collection's eighteenth-century porcelain boxes, for example, are objects that were at the cutting edge of European technology when they were made. Porcelain, or 'white gold', had remained an Eastern secret for centuries, the subject of industrial espionage, as competing Western countries sought to discover its composition. Weidenbach's

works, made of her secret material Moon Dust, embodies narratives of wondrous making and the wow-factor of miraculously crafted objects.

Weidenbach's Visual Feast box is ultimately inspired by arguably the most dazzling objects in the Gilbert Collection: five diamond-set boxes designed and made for Frederick II, King of Prussia, also known as Frederick the Great, made between 1765 and 1780. These boxes attested to the skill of the craftsmen working in Prussia during Frederick the Great's reign. They were extravagant and strategic commissions, allowing makers to explore innovative design in the latest techniques and most precious materials. They also proved that Berlin could rival Paris in the production of luxury goods. At a time when chic Parisian designers saw rococo as last season and had moved towards neo-classicism, defined by rational straight lines and references to antiquity, these boxes were asymmetrical, floral fantasies.

Created for the royal courts of the eighteenth century, the boxes were used in exquisitely designed and built palaces, during meticulously choreographed ceremonies and events, by an elite whose appearance

was as carefully constructed and opulent as the boxes they used. Weidenbach's work pays tribute to this world and its understanding of the power of objects, whilst also interrogating its aesthetics and deployment of luxury. Weidenbach consciously engages with the extravagance of these objects: her box is encrusted with the same abundance of diamonds and mother-of-pearl as their historic counterparts, posing questions of how this aesthetic functions today.

In the display, Visual Feast (July 2018—January 2019), Weidenbach stages an intervention throughout the Gilbert Galleries, inserting her pieces into the display cases that hold the Gilbert Collection's historic decorative arts. The juxtaposition of her futuristic jewellery and the historic objects forms a link from the past to the present. This contrast asks the viewer to consider how objects communicate with us, how they express ideas from power to identity, and how they can enchant us with the mystery of how they came to be. Looking at Weidenbach's work inspires the viewer to engage with historic objects in a visceral, personal way, indulging in their visual power and letting their eyes take their fill.

Weidenbach engaged collaborators to realise her vision for the display. Sculptor Katrin Hanusch, translated Weidenbach's concepts to create 'mounts' for the jewellery. Intricate yet unobtrusive museum-made metal stands are used throughout the galleries to support the historic pieces without distracting from the objects on display. Weidenbach's sculptural mounts subvert this purpose by creating fantasy landscapes for her pieces and the neighbouring Gilbert objects, designating the gallery space as a playful one to be visually enjoyed.

Digital artist Jon Emmony produced a video piece, Visual Feast: Moving Image. The film visualises Weidenbach's creative process. It explores the collisions of contemporary and historic, physical and digital that define Weidenbach's work. 3D scans and images of objects, are merged with data that when printed and hand-finished becomes one of Weidenbach's pieces. Through these ruptured and shifting forms, Emmony creates a portrait of the maker and her process. These collaborations provide another avenue of engagement for the viewer to enjoy, and further demonstrates the power of the Gilbert Collection to inspire contemporary artists.

Emmony's film, and a host of other digital content are also hosted on the V&A's website www.vam.ac.uk. This digital body of work will ensure that Weidenbach's intervention has a legacy beyond its temporal and spatial limits. The commissioned bejewelled box will provide a physical legacy and will remain in the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection.

All the work carried out throughout Silvia Weidenbach's residency, including this publication and the commission, is generously supported by the Gilbert Trust for the Arts

GILBERT COLLECTION

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BOX NOW



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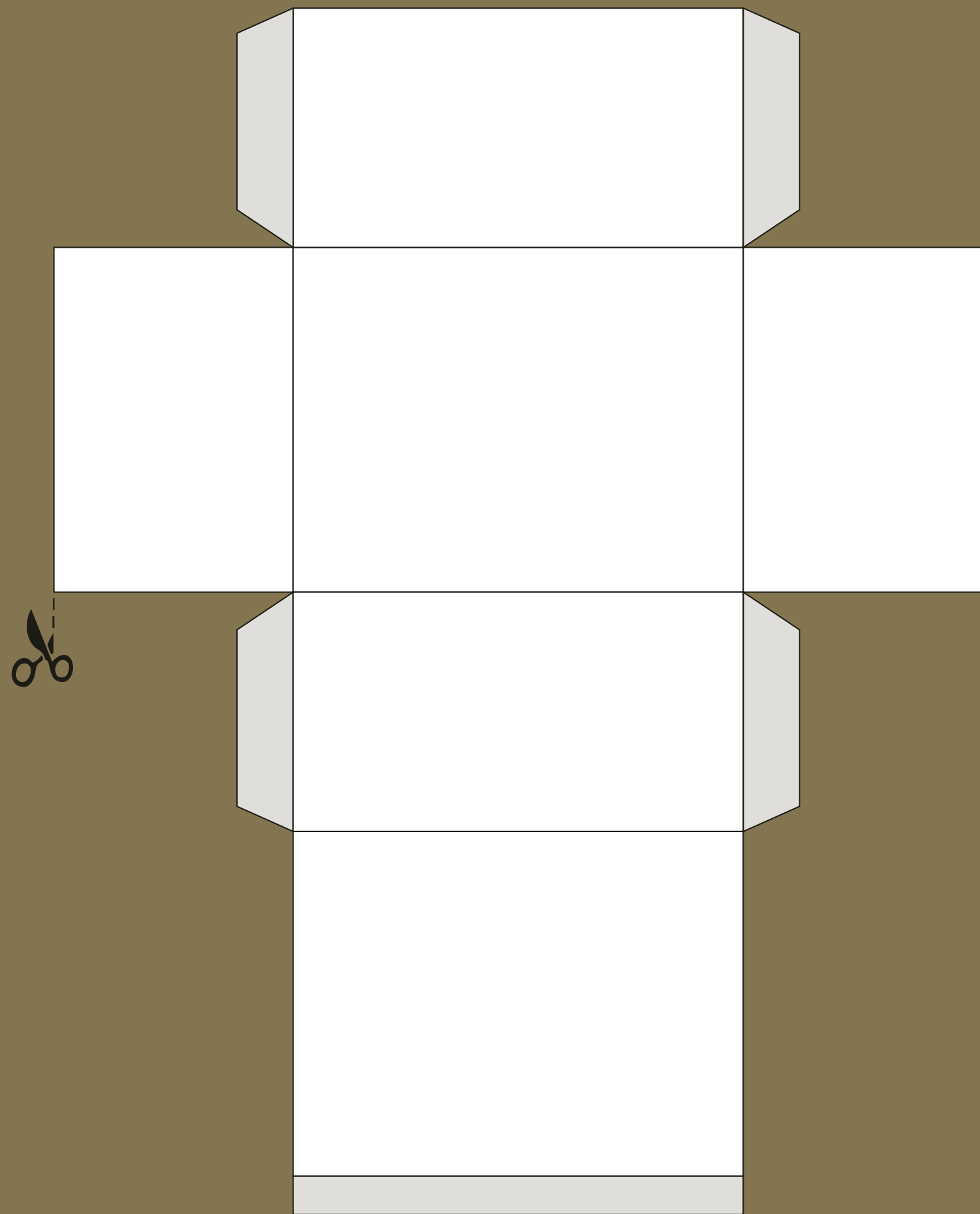
Box **Rendered Mockup London/Glasgow 2018**
3D printed Moondust, gold, diamonds, mother of pearl

GILBERT COLLECTION



FREDERICK BOX

Table snuffbox with Flowers Berlin, about 1765
Museum no. Loan: Gilbert.413-2008.
© The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection on loan
to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London



MAKE
YOUR
OWN
BOX

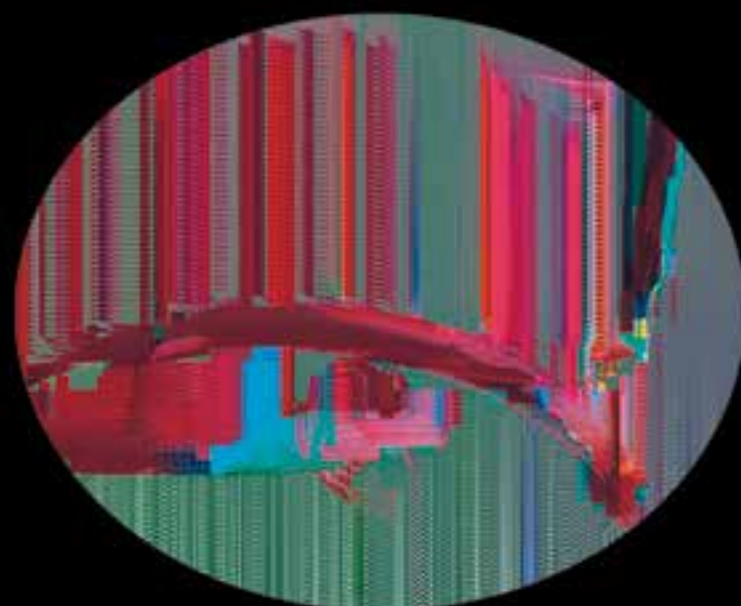
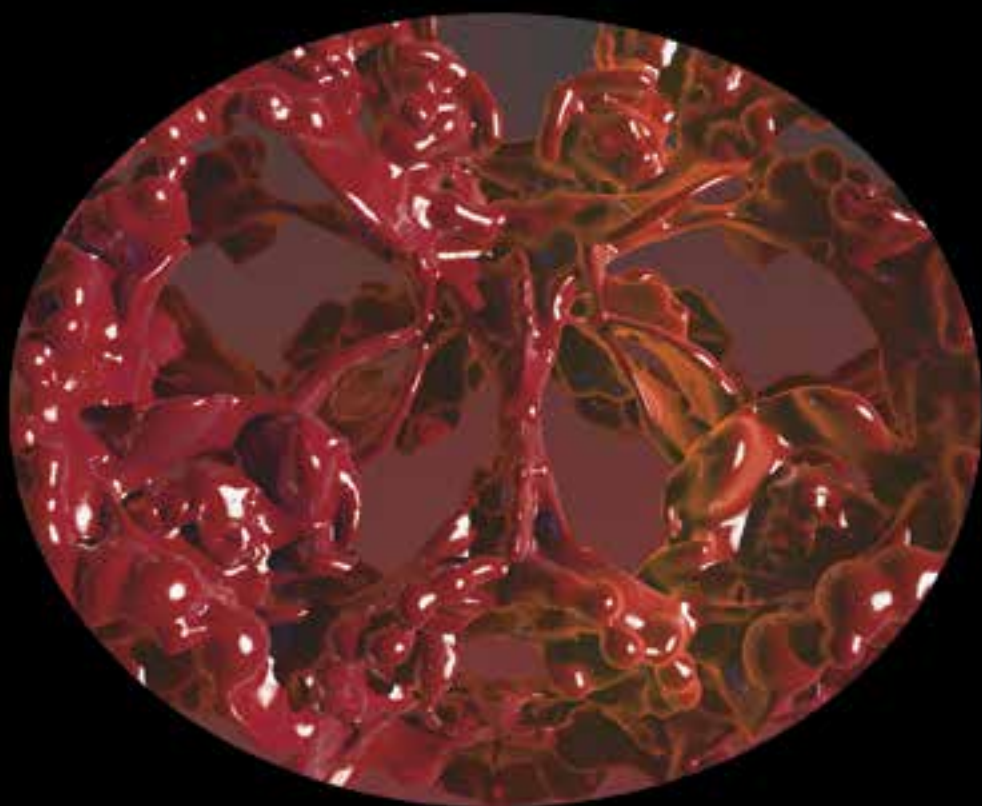
VISUAL FEAST

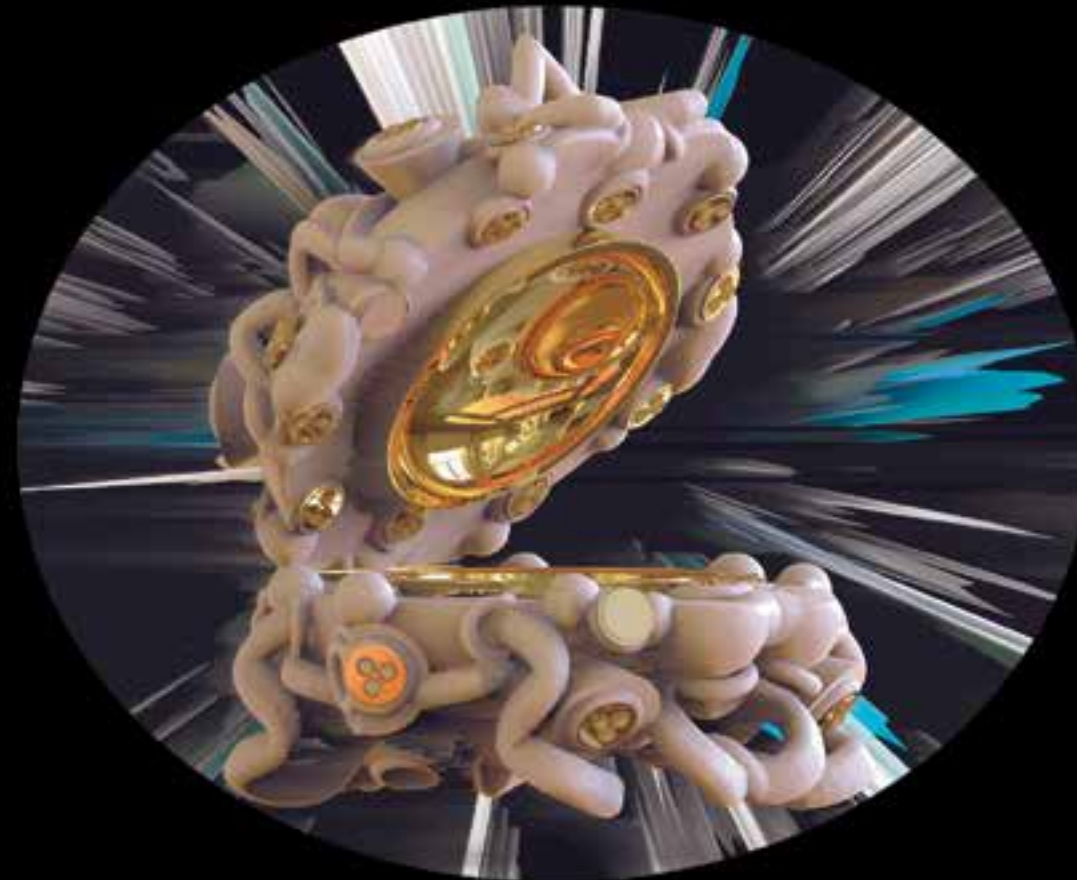
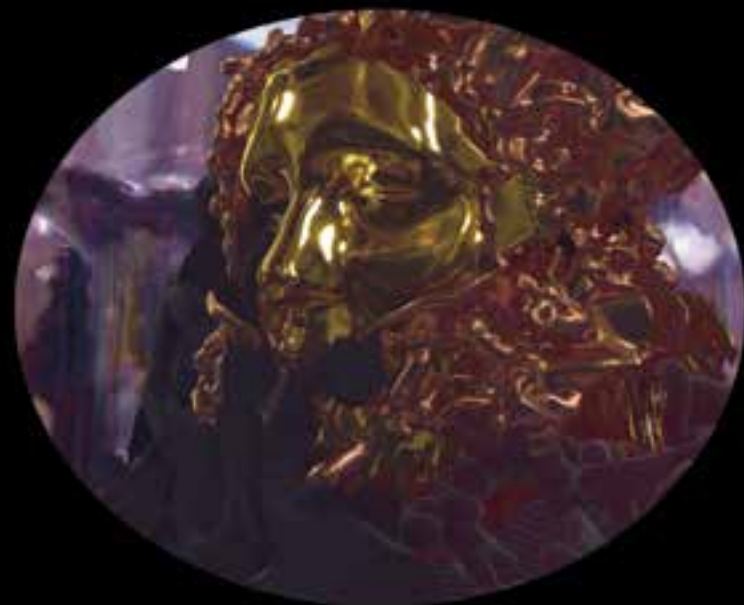
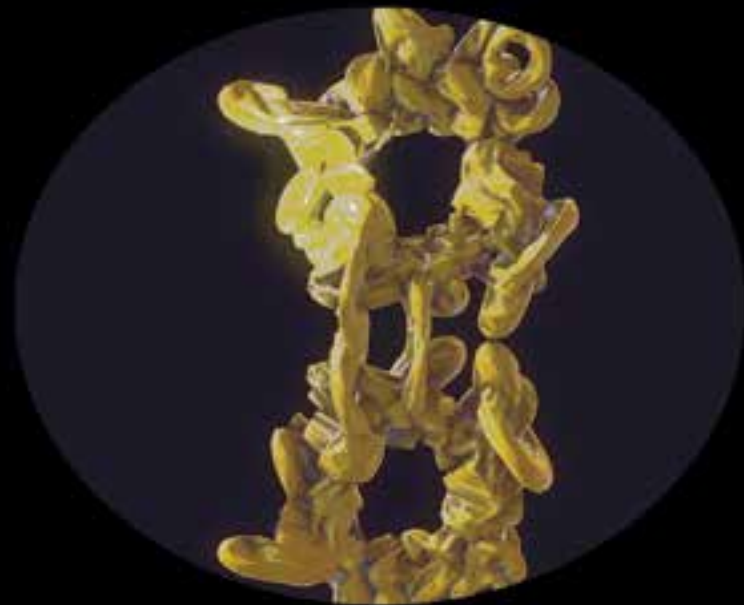
MOVING IMAGE

with Jon
Emmony

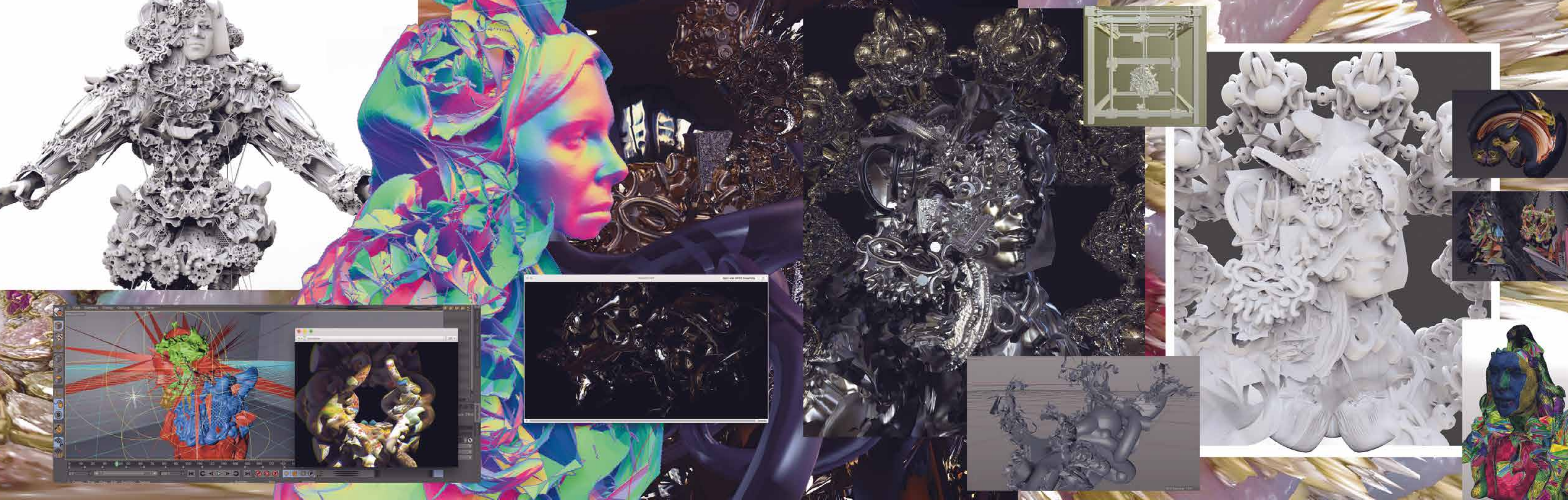








Exploring the ideas of lateral thinking, modern production techniques of both jewellery and digital art and the digital landscape as object, the film unpicks the form and mood established within both classic and contemporary work. Utilising 3D scanning technology, pieces from the Gilbert Collection, such as the snuffbox made for Frederick II were recorded into the computer, allowing them to be manipulated and viewed in entirely new ways, free from their physical form. Warping, extending and blending these classic pieces with Silvia's contemporary 3D printed jewellery allows for a continuation of thought – showing how old influences new and how similarities and contrasts can be established. Viewing both sets of work within the digital realm allows for a dialogue to be opened. **Jon Emmony**



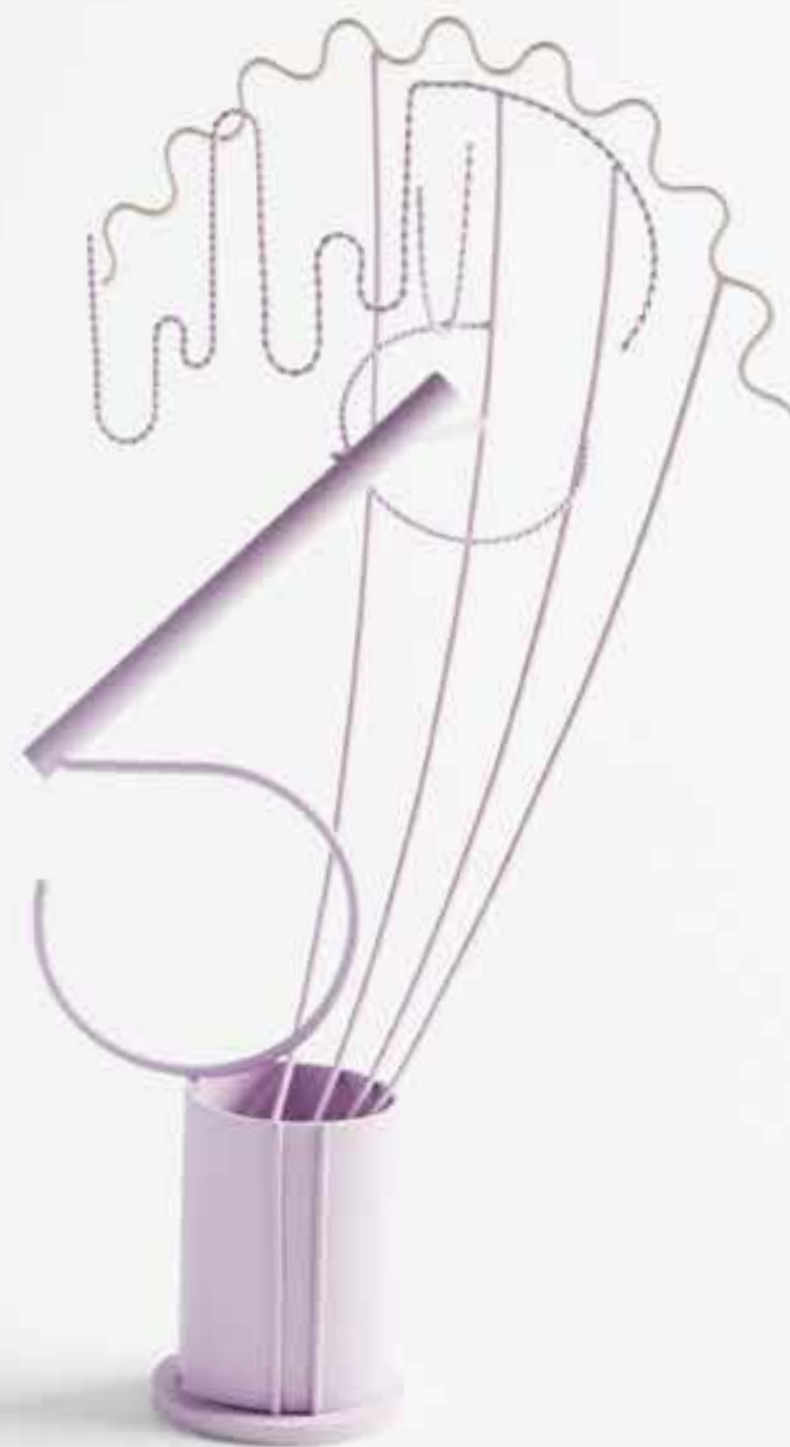


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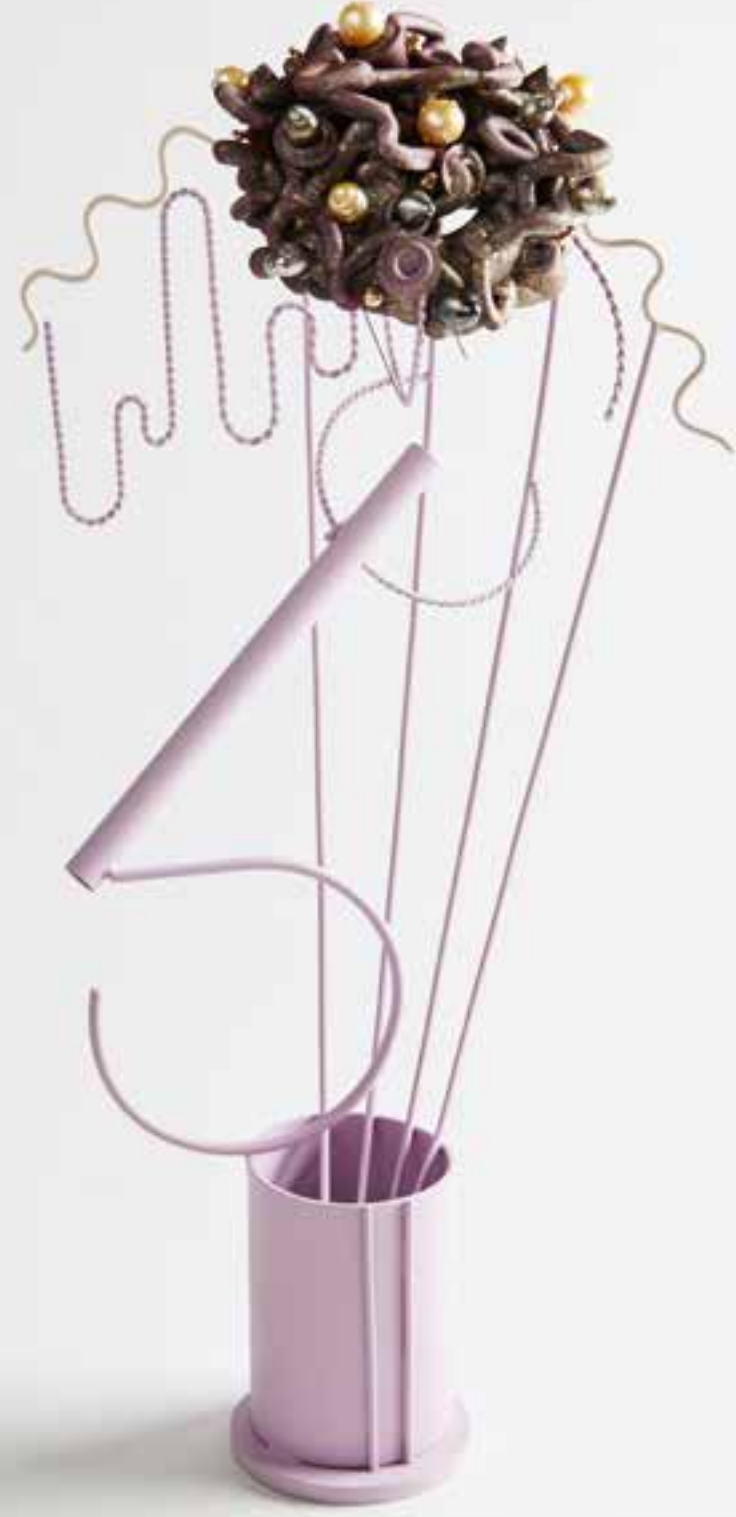
Fractal Invention
Don't Go For The Rollercoaster London, 2012
necklace 3D printed Moondust, silver, gold, enamel





Fractal Invention
 Another White Night **London, 2012**
 necklace 3D printed Moondust, silver, topaz





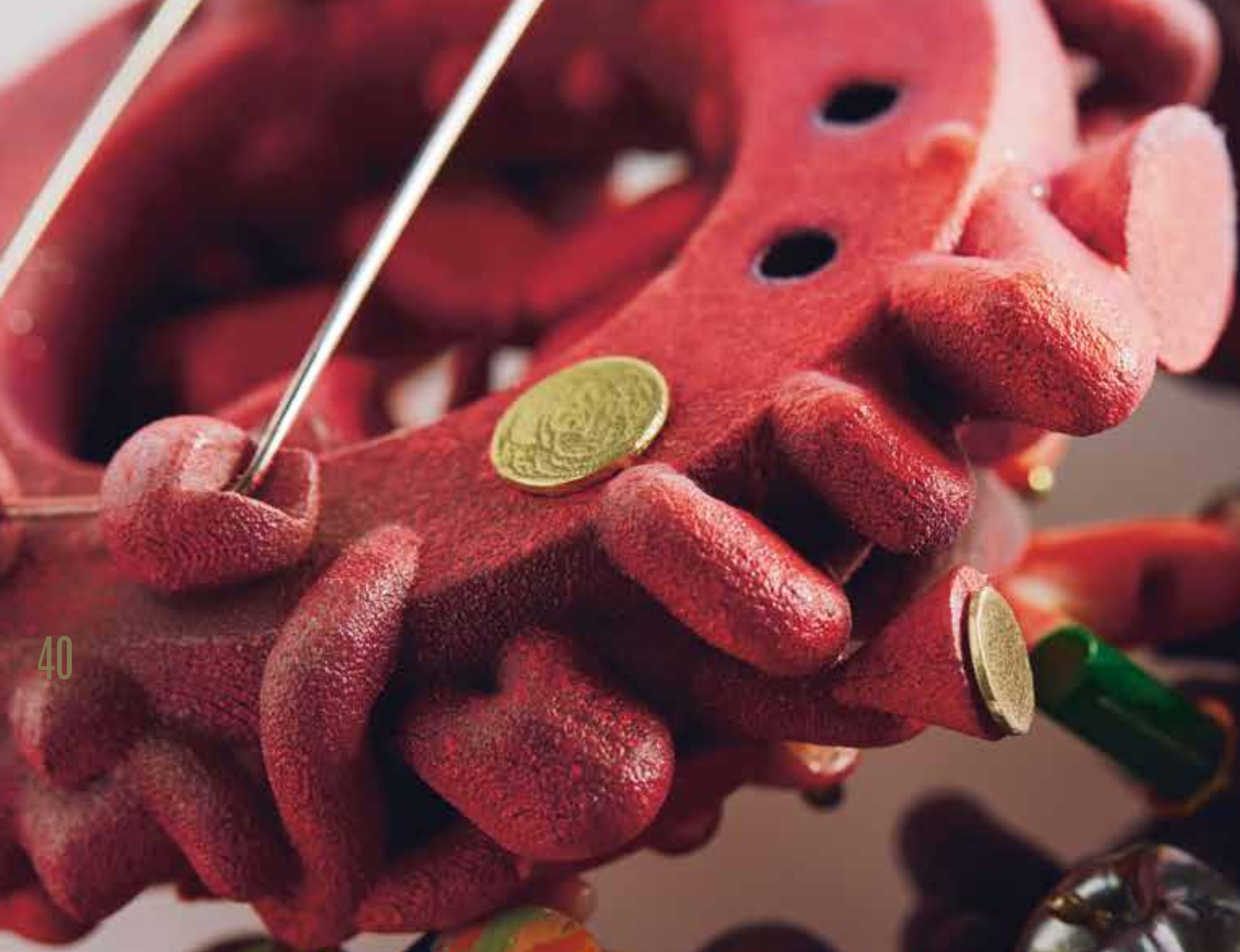
ctrl visionTWO London, 2017
brooch 3D printed Moondust, gold, pearls





confession
ctrl vision TWO London, 2017
brooch 3D printed Moondust, gold, silver, lacquer, pearls

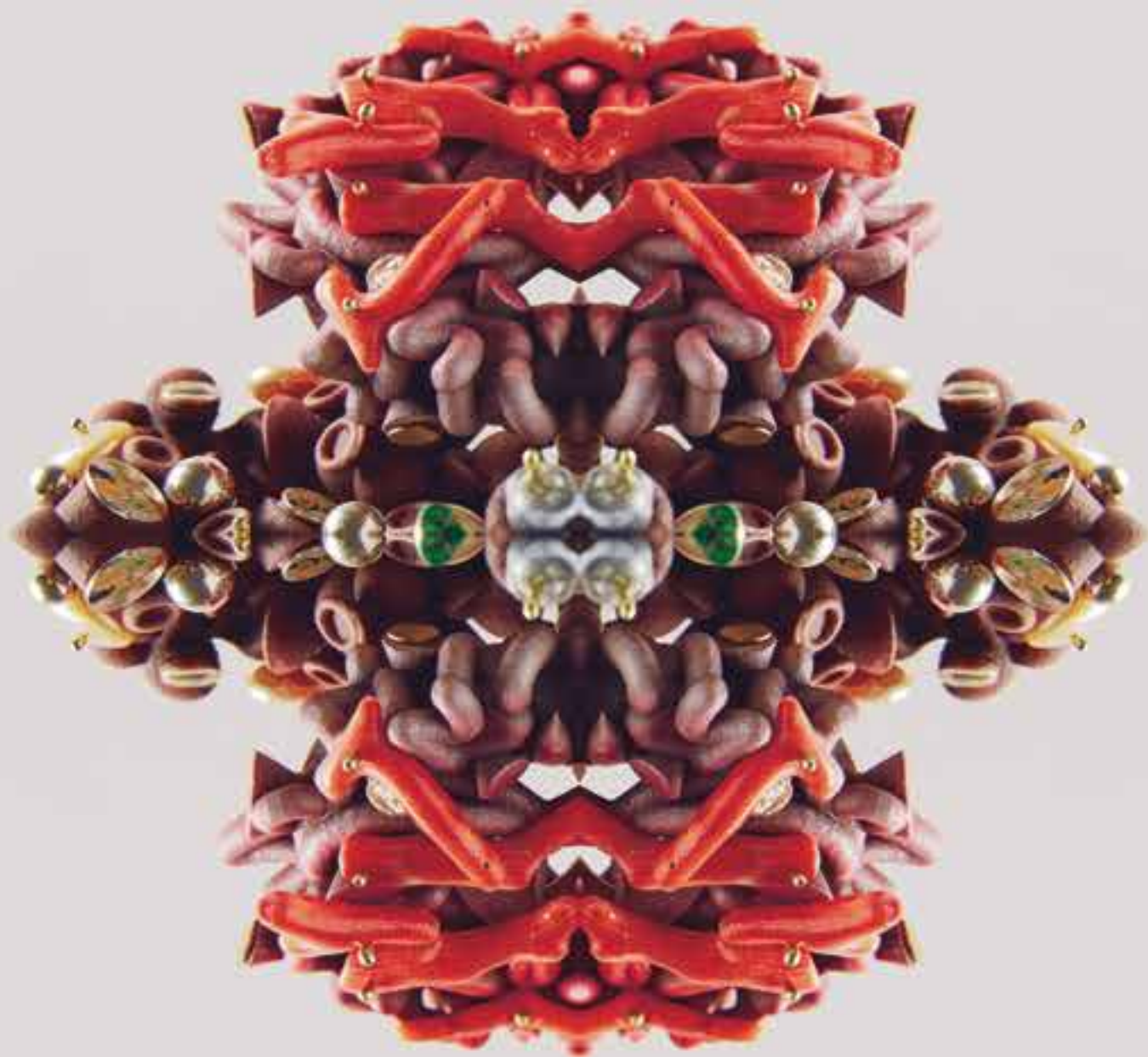




40



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conPassion
ctrl vision**THREE** London 2017
brooch 3D printed Moondust, coral, gold



conPassion
ctrl vision**SIX** London 2017
brooch 3D printed Moondust, pearls, gold



conPassion
ctrl visionFOUR London 2017
brooch 3D printed Moondust, gold, mawsitsit, pearls



Floral Bust London 2017
brooch 3D printed Moondust, coral, pyrite, silver, gold



COLLABORATIONS

Silvia Weidenbach was the first Gilbert Collection Resident at the V&A between April 2017—April 2018. During her residency, Weidenbach collaborated with numerous artists, performers and musicians to reinterpret the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection and her own jewellery. Weidenbach's collaborations pushed the boundaries of how visitors interacted with historic and contemporary objects

within the museum space. By exploring the human senses and different artistic mediums, V&A visitors delighted in the sensory feast offered up to them by Weidenbach.

The following collaborations **Unboxing Metis**, **TAT TOO MUCH**, and **Perfume/Desire** were achieved during Weidenbach's residency.

UNBOXING METIS

I wanted to get outside of the workshop where I sit and make jewellery, and explore the jewel's power to create a direct dialogue with the body. **SW**

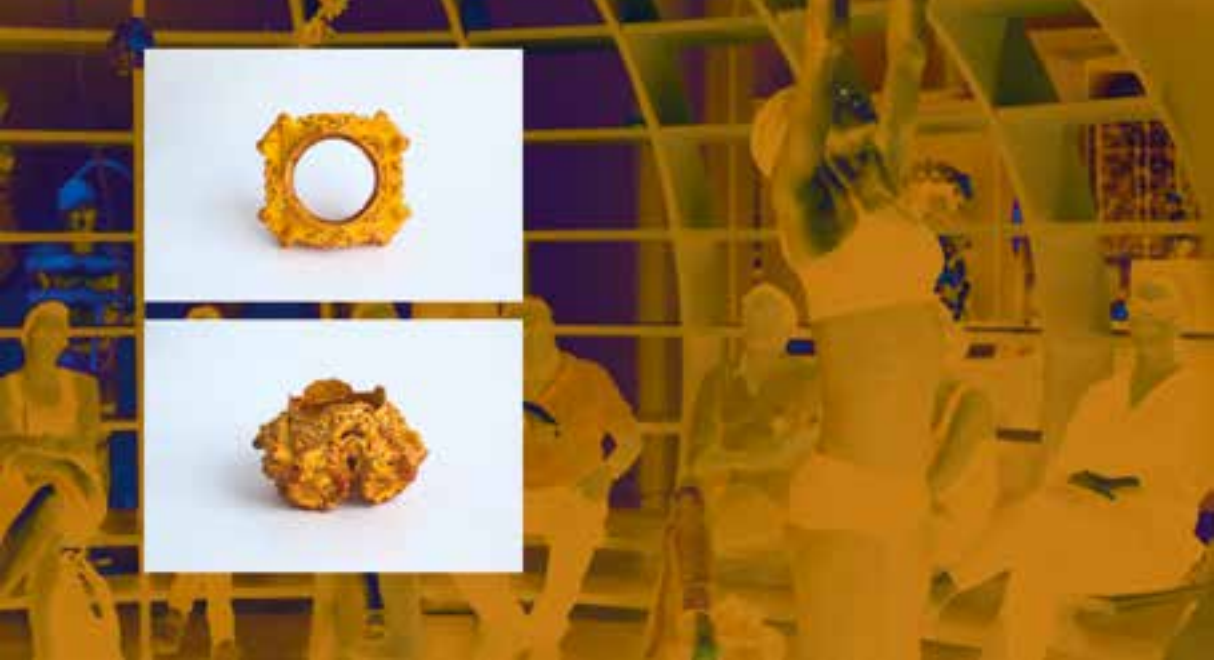
Objects can be used as social and political tools to impress the power of their patron upon the beholder. Carried and deployed by their elite owners, gold boxes in the Gilbert Collection were used to assert status. Weidenbach designs her pieces with bodies, movement and power in mind. To explore how bodies activate objects, Weidenbach produced a dance-theatre piece entitled Unboxing Metis, performed in the Globe, the structure built by Los Carpinteros in the V&A's Europe 1600–1800 Galleries. The Globe is a contemporary interpretation of the 'Salon', an eighteenth-century space where ideas could be discussed, and therefore provided the ideal space to host Unboxing Metis.

The piece, directed by Pedro Caxade and performed by dancer Teneisha Bonner, was an experiment between a designer, an actor, a dancer, a composer, a sound artist and a film maker. The choreography was structured around the wearing of Weidenbach's pieces: a brooch, a bracelet and a necklace. It was filmed and edited into a short video by Andrew Jonathan Smith with sound design by Miguel Ramires and original music by Sigi Schwab.

Bonner embodied Metis, the goddess of wisdom and craft. By moving unpredictably within the Globe, she made physical the dialogue between Weidenbach's pieces and the historic boxes of Gilbert Collection.

With special thanks to **Teneisha Bonner**
Pedro Caxade
Moea Creugnet
Andrea Foffa
Miguel Ramires
Sigi Schwab
Andrew Jonathan Smith

Supported by the Gilbert Trust for the Arts



TATTOO

I was interested in exploring the conceptual and visual intersection of these distinct forms; both jewellery and tattoos share in their purpose of adornment. **SW**

Since time immemorial mankind has had the desire for body adornment, transcending cultural borders around the world.

Beatriz Chadour-Sampson.

MUCH

Jewellery and tattoos can both be personal to the wearer and convey a message to the viewer. This workshop brought together a range of different creative disciplines for a discussion on the adornment of tattoos and jewellery, with experts including: Beatriz Chadour-Sampson, Independent Curator and Jewellery Historian, Torsten Illner, Tattoo Artist and Rita Lass, Book Artist. Weidenbach's workshop brought a lively debate to an audience of creative practitioners.

This workshop also discussed the main differences between a tattoo or jewel – permanence. Jewels are attachments and can be easily remodelled or even discarded, and have tangible values. Whereas the tattoo requires a tool and a material of relatively low monetary value, however the actual artistry can be expensive. A tattoo is almost irreversible and the tattoo artist is arguably therefore left with a greater responsibility while crafting.

The audience were given an “artistically” constructed tattoo machine (created and made in collaboration by Illner and Weidenbach) in order to explore the physicality of the needle, but not on skin – instead on a beautifully crafted leather-bound box made by Rita Lass in keeping with the tradition of the gold boxes in the Gilbert Collection.

With special thanks to

Zoe Allen
Nigel Bamforth
Anne Bancroft
Beatriz Chadour-Sampson
Georgina Goodman
Torsten Illner
Rita Lass

- 1 CUT THE SHAPE
 - 2 PEEL OFF CLEAR TOP SHEET
 - 3 APPLY FACE DOWN
 - 4 DAMPEN TATTOO
 - 5 HOLD FAST FOR 30 SEC
 - 6 ADMIRE
- 57



Both jewellery and perfume take part in dressing the body. They are concerned with individuality, self-expression and desire. I am interested in the play of senses inherent in experiencing these forms. **SW**

PERFUME SILVA WEIDENBACH AND NICOLA POZZANI / DESIRE

Weidenbach's response to a Pomander in the Gilbert Collection inspired a special event in which she collaborated with Artisanal Perfumer and Fragrance Educator Nicola Pozzani.

Pomanders were personal items of jewellery with hinged compartments which contained different scents. The raised, engraved and pierced silver-gilt ornament of the Pomander, combined with the intimacy of the scents, inspired Weidenbach to open her private studio with Pozzani and introduce members of the public to a heady sensory experience.

Pozzani, a Bespoke Perfumer at Floris London, British Family Perfumers since 1730, uses scent to tell stories and construct creative landscapes.

Visitors experienced various scents, learning how they are made and where they come from, choosing elements that Pozzani felt best described Weidenbach's jewellery pieces. Visitors were encouraged to consider the strong dialogue between the tangible and the more abstract senses, particularly those of smell, sight, and touch.

With special
thanks to **Nicola Pozzani**
Floris London



Pomander England, 1600–1610

Museum no. Loan: Gilbert.578-2008.

© The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

GRANNY'S CHIPS: RELOADED JEWELLERY FROM 2011—2016

Visual Feast is not the first time a historic collection has inspired Weidenbach's designs. Here, Beatriz Chadour-Sampson further explores Weidenbach's past work:

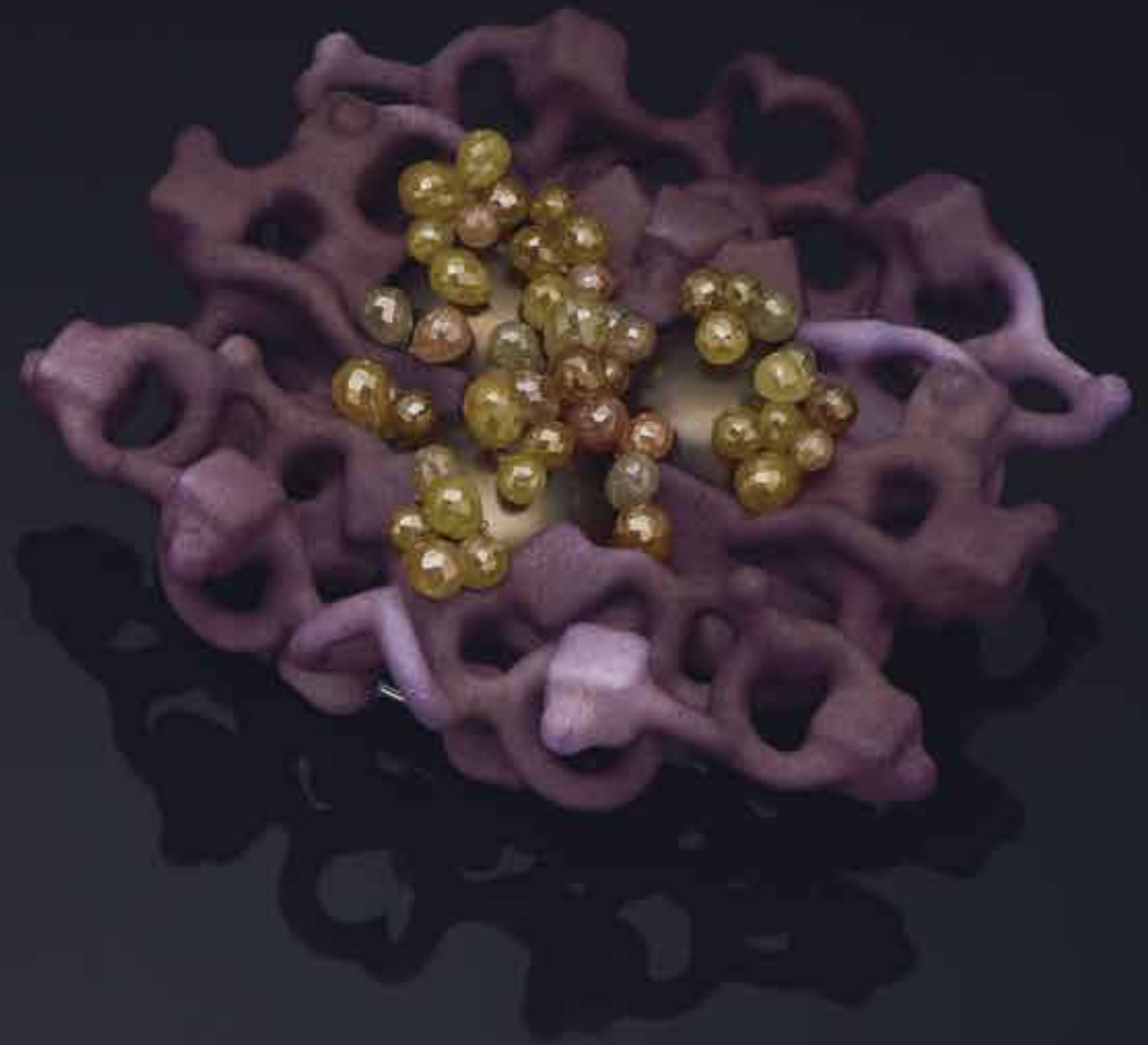
Fantastical and bizarre describes the jewellery Silvia Weidenbach creates, which is fun to wear. She has always been experimental in finding new materials and discovering innovative ways of working with them, combining traditional goldsmithing techniques with current technology. Silvia's jewellery is splendid, sensuous and sensual. Her time in London, a city steeped in history and tradition, sparked her imagination which led to a new dimension in her work and unlimited ideas. Coming from Germany where royalty is history, rather than authentic, she became fascinated by the splendour and glamour surrounding the British Royal family and their jewels. Silvia admits to being a fan of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, who frequently wears the famous Cullinan diamonds III and IV weighing together 158 carats as a brooch and humorously refers to them as "Granny's Chips". Silvia inspired by historical jewels and gold boxes from the Gilbert Collection has developed a unique aesthetic with futuristic brooch and necklace designs made of moondust in a splash of colours and array of gemstones creating a visual feast for the eyes. These exuberant jewels are playful and celebratory. Her inventiveness has no boundaries and her enthusiasm is boundless.

Beatriz Chadour-Sampson

Granny's chips reloaded_01
London 2015
brooch 3D printed Moondust,
rose gold plated silver, diamonds



66



67

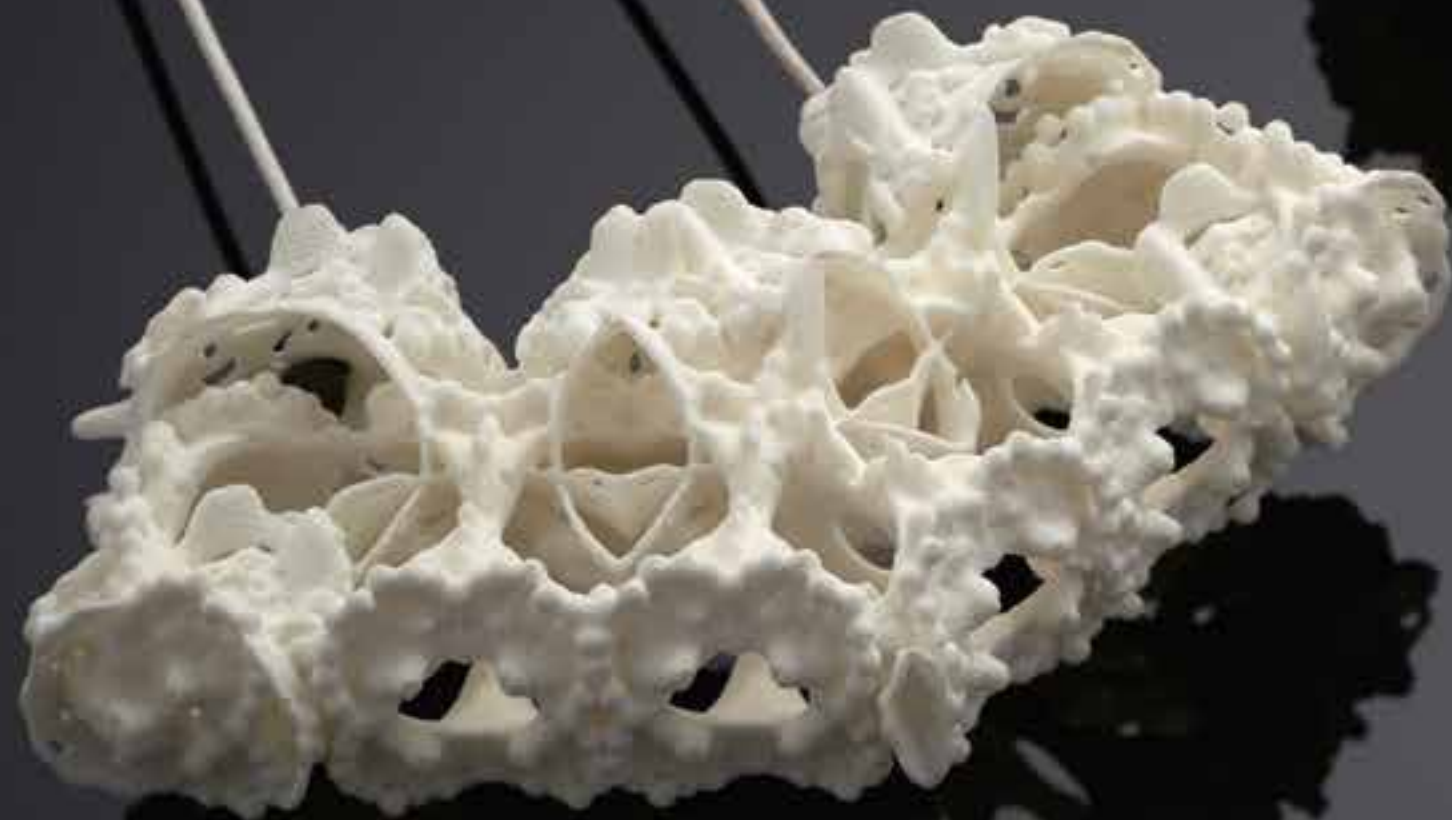
Granny's chips reloaded_02
London 2015
brooch 3D printed Moondust,
ruthenium plated silver, diamonds

Granny's chips reloaded_03 London 2015
brooch 3D printed Moondust, silver, smoky quartz

Granny's chips reloaded_04 London 2015
brooch 3D printed Moondust, silver, synthetic spinel

Granny's chips reloaded_05 London 2015
brooch 3D printed Moondust, silver, synthetic sapphire





Moonlife_1 London 2012
pendant 3D printed Moondust, silver

Moonlife_3 London 2012
pendant 3D printed Moondust, silver



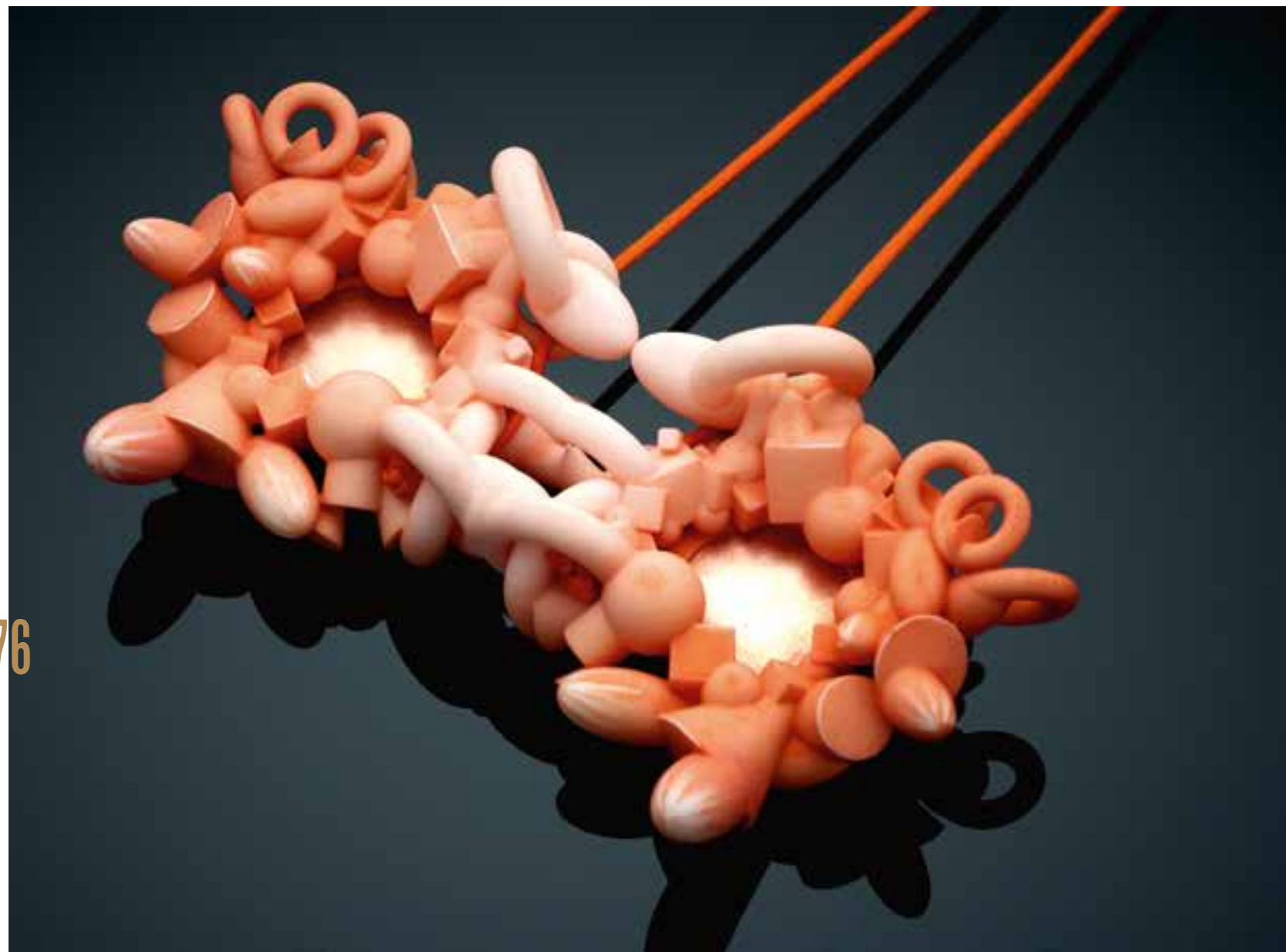


POSTOPAL_4 London 2013
brooch 3D printed Moondust, silver, enamel, lacquer

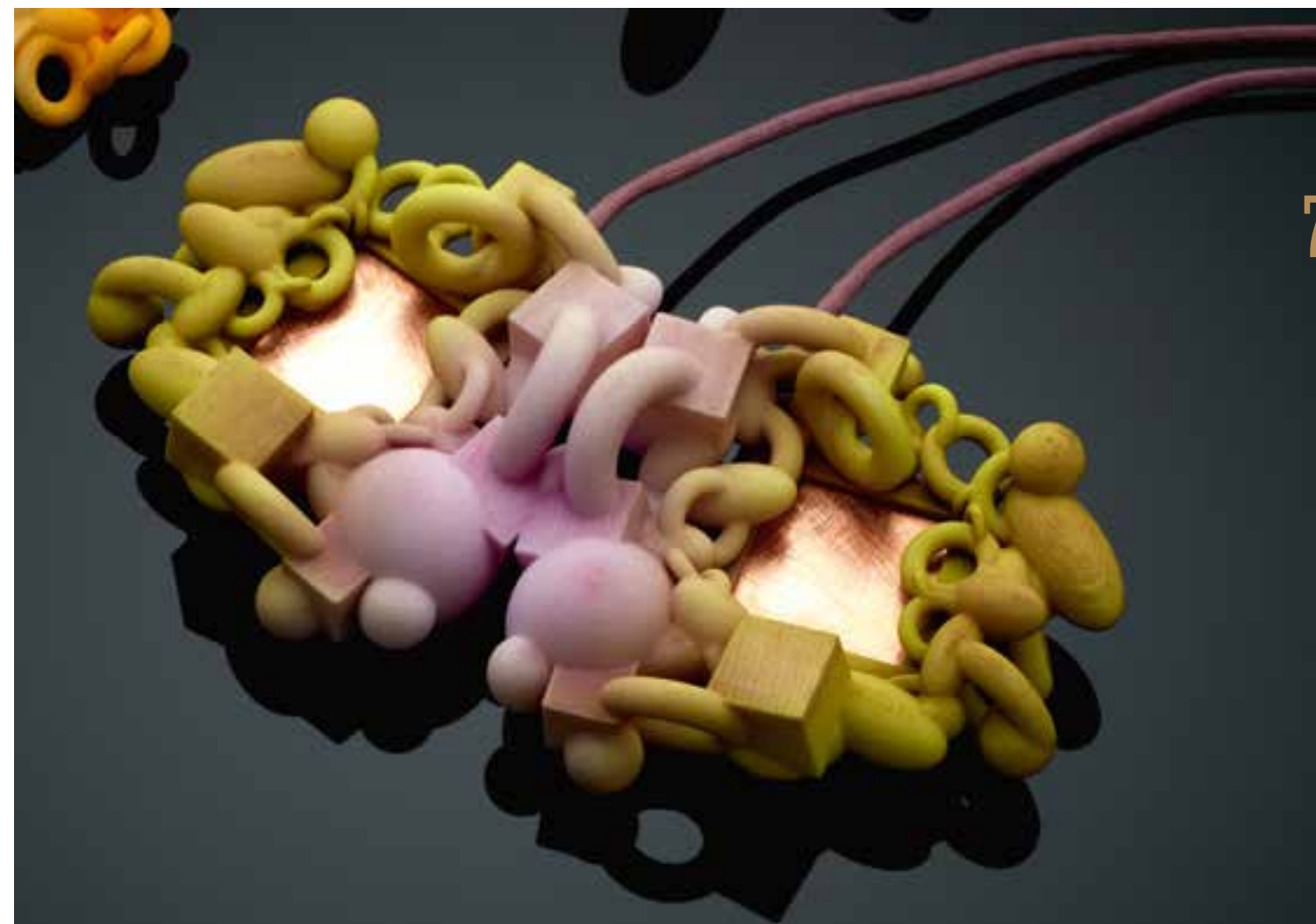




HAPTICNOSIS exuberant_01 London 2012
pendant 3D printed Moondust, silver



76



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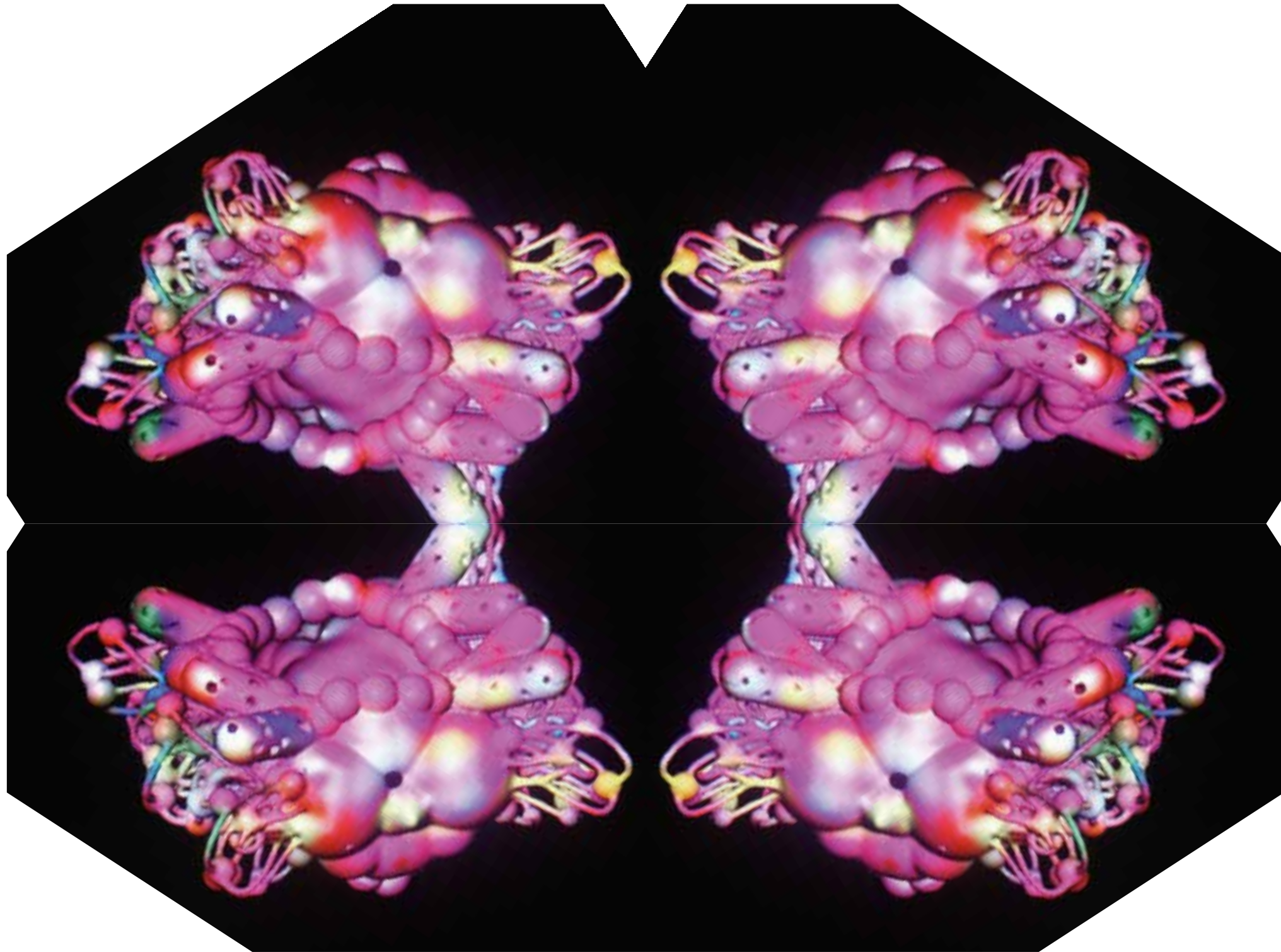


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RORSCHACHBURST London 2014
pendant 3D printed Moondust, copper



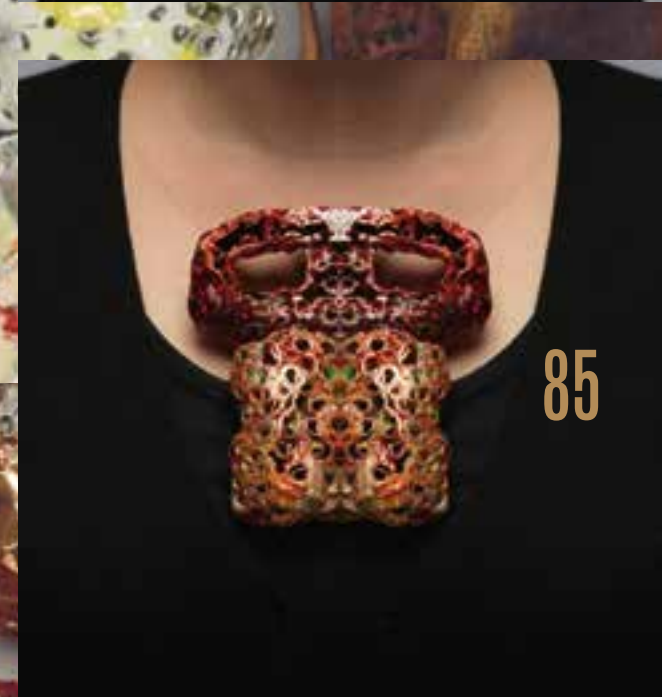
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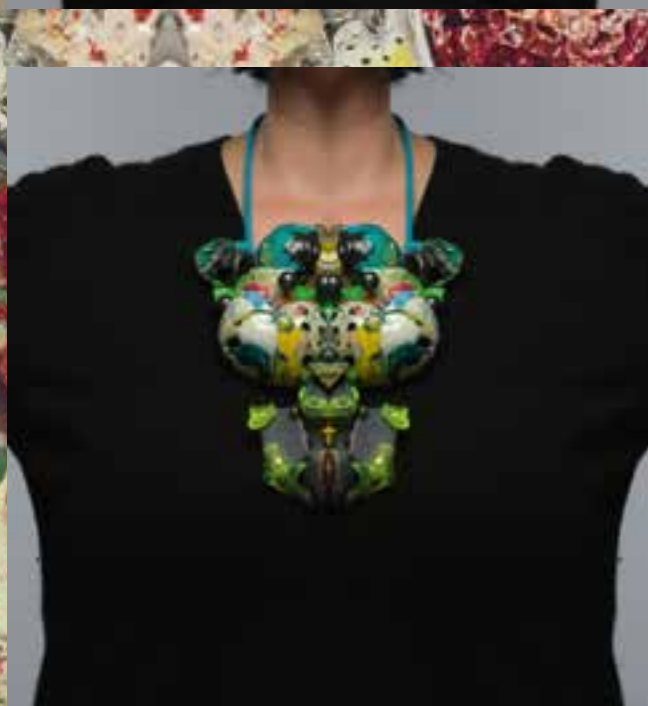




84



85





Silvia Weidenbach
www.silviaweidenbach.com
*1980 in Annweiler am Trifels, Germany
Lives and works in Germany and the UK

Silvia was the first Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection Artist in Residence at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, from April 2017 to April 2018. Her work was displayed in the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Galleries in the display, Visual Feast, from July 2018 to January 2019. The Gilbert Trust for the Arts commissioned Weidenbach to produce a work as the culmination of her residency.

Silvia teaches as a lecturer at the Glasgow School of Art and Royal Collage of Art, London

Artist in Residence
2017–2018
V&A Gilbert Collection Residence, London

2015
Microsoft Research, Cambridge UK

2011
Villa Bengel, Jakob Bengel Stiftung, Idar Oberstein

Education
Royal College of Art, London
MA GSM&J, 2011
University of Art and Design Burg Giebichenstein, Halle
Diploma Jewellery, 2009
College for Glass and Jewellery, Neugablonz
silversmith apprenticeship, 2003

Awards
2016
Technological Innovation Award,
The Goldsmiths' Craft & Design Council, London
Conceptual Jewellery Bronze Award,
The Goldsmiths' Craft & Design Council, London
2015
Walpole Crafted, London
Best New Design Award Goldsmiths' Fair, Crafts Council, London
Goldsmiths' Fair Bursary —The Goldsmith Company, London
Nomination Perrier-Jouet Arts Salon Prize, London
2012
Jerwood Makers Open Award, London
2011
Theo Fennell Jewellery Award, highly recommended, London
2010
Postgraduate scholarship, Saxony-Anhalt Arts Foundation, Halle
2007
C. Hafner RRH Award Pforzheim, highly recommended, Pforzheim



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