

Ceramics in dialogue

The Mediterranean has long been a vessel for cultural exchanges, vehicle for contamination and innovation through human history. Clay and ceramics have been at the core of this journey, shaping human life for centuries, and still are, even though materials like plastic have tried to take their place.

I come from Sardinia, one of the islands at the heart of this vibrant region, and I've been directly and indirectly exposed to the numerous of substrata sedimented by all the different civilisations that partially or integrally have interacted with the land. During thousands of years, Sardinia has been a natural harbor for travelers, a target for conquerors seeking raw materials, and even a place of exile for those out of favor.

This history of coexistence and solidarity has shaped a society that cherishes diversity, blending influences into a unique cultural amalgam.

It is evident that an individual's perception of their position is inherently shaped by the cultural context they inhabit. The way we interpret reality is fundamentally influenced by our lived experiences. Our worldview is filtered through the lens of our education, which serves as the framework for communication and preconditions our perception. Language, as a codified system, inherently carries with it embedded beliefs and assumptions, perpetuating a shared understanding each time we communicate. Semiotics play a crucial role in shaping our perception of reality

This legacy profoundly influences my work. Being born on an island with its own language, brings a unique set of experiences. The search for otherness, coupled with the effort it takes to cross the sea, creates a powerful pull—an ebb and flow that mirrors my own identity.

Finding my artistic language took time. Initially, I wasn't allowed to study art, so I turned to architecture and eventually earned a degree in humanities. This academic journey shaped my analytical approach and perspective.

My introduction to clay was unexpected, but it was love at first touch. The plasticity of the material, the ability to shape objects with my hands, and the mystical transformation of firing captivated me. After a year in a Genoa workshop, I earned a place at the Post Diploma Ceramic School in Faenza, where I immersed myself in the world of clay. Studying at the International Museum of Ceramics, surrounded by sculptures from all eras, I was particularly moved by the works of Zauli, Fontana, Picasso, and Melotti. I was fascinated by the density of high temperature clay.

During my studies, I interned at Päivi Rintaniemi's studio in Seinäjoki, Finland. This experience profoundly influenced my vision and methodology. One of the pieces I created there, *Prodigy of Existence*, reflects the effort of a gem breaking free from its shell. It explores themes of cause and effect, vulnerability, and the interconnectedness of all life.

My research process, rooted in the scientific approach I developed during my earlier studies, involves a philological method. I explore themes from their historical roots and relate them to contemporary contexts, translating these ideas into visual forms. Scandinavian design,

with its emphasis on shape and minimal surface treatment, deeply influenced me, helping me find my own voice in my work.

Prodigy of Existence, made of raku clay slabs with a white engobe surface, was shortlisted for the 59th Faenza Prize and now resides in San Francisco.

After completing my diploma, I interned at Todomuta, a design studio in Seville. There, I was responsible for producing a piece designed by the studio, allowing me to engage with a different approach to the creative process. Starting from a maquette they would add, subtract, combine other objects or series of objects, creating a sort of collection *in fieri* to find what they were aesthetically looking for.

This experience resonated with the philological method I had learned, further shaping my practice.

Moving to London in 2016 immersed me in the Brexit debate.

To understand its origins, I explored the concept of Englishness and the perception of the Other. I delved into the construction of exoticism and the creation of semantic hierarchies throughout history. Simultaneously, I re-examined my own roots and archetypes.

In *Time-Space-Traces*, I explore the concept of time from a subjective perspective: the infinite potential, the actual moment, and the possibility of dialogue between these two aspects.

I've experienced decay and transition processes by combining layers of different materials either in the body, as a series of strata and on the surface. Emulating sedimentation and erosion I've added different clays and slips to create a shapeless mass which I've later defined looking at totemic forms, inspired by neolithic Sardinian Giants of Mont'e Prama. I've been experimenting with engobes and glazes to create my own material language, developed from a selected palette that has informed my visual research from Pompeii frescos to Francis Bacon painting.

Curating this collection in a circular arrangement would highlight the significance of equal exchange in the dialogue between the pieces. Exposed to sunlight, the collection would become a sundial, emphasizing the passage of time.

Wanting to personally discover my own bias and assumptions I started questioning my methodology. Trained to sketch before shaping in clay, I sought to break this habit by making decisions step by step, altering the piece whenever it began to resemble something figurative. This process shifted my focus and reshaped my aesthetic expectations.

A wondrous creature has been shortlisted for the British Ceramic Biennale, and what's truly fascinating is how the diverse interpretations from the public have sparked deep conversations about the fluid nature of perception, evoking a sense of displacement and the uncanny.

Building on this exploration, I deconstructed my drawing technique by making blind portraits of friends. This liberating experience changed my stroke, which I then translated into 3D forms, exploring another dimension of the line.

The making has been quite challenging particularly because of the size of the portraits.

In Control is perhaps the most instinctive—and ironic—response to Brexit, borrowing its title from the very slogan used to justify Britain's departure from the EU.

This piece is a deliberate assemblage of objects, each with its own material and historical narrative:

- A solid, clear glass cast rests precariously atop a commercial yellow sponge.
- A ceramic form, crafted from an eclectic mix of clays—porcelain, terracotta, white stoneware, and Raku—each from a different origin and at a different condition.
- An antique wooden milking stool anchors the composition.

These disparate elements are held together by a synthetic strap, suggesting a tenuous unity.

The piece portrays a precarious condition due to feelings of rejection conflicting with the constant ask for proof of belonging. It reveals a sense of compelled vulnerability that wasn't allowed to be disclosed.

It has been a discover of new grounds both in the material experimentation and in the subject matter.

In control has been shortlisted for the 62nd Faenza Prize and it is now part of the MIC collection.

In my quest to find a meaningful answer to the questions raised by Brexit, I explored the concept of symbiosis.

Symbiosis is a material led process which investigates the interrelation between ceramics and glass in various forms. Blowing, slumping and casting are techniques that I have been combining and adapting to create complementary objects both in glass and ceramics.

I had the opportunity to do a weekly residency at the Glass Foundry in Stroud, UK, where I experimented in depth these processes to create shapes which visually express the idea of interdependence. The outcomes are not exactly predictable considering that the two materials behave in quite different ways, which is a challenge I have embraced. Part of the shaping is related to the heat in the kiln which conceptually, takes a good part of the agency and creates the space for a new aesthetic.

The pandemic clearly answered my starting question about superimposed ontological hierarchies reinforcing the urgency of dismantling arbitrary boundaries. It made it extremely clear that we live in an interdependent ecosystem where no one can avoid the Other.

The urgent question for me is how to contribute for a better coexistence on the planet we inhabit, which we must preserve for the next generations to come.

As I navigate my journey, I see displacement as a tool for critical inquiry. I look forward to exchanging ideas and perspectives, deepening my understanding of the contemporary world. The only way forward, I believe, is to start with myself.

Thank you