



'Sponge 77', 2007, ring, stellite



'Digital 65', 2008, ring, stellite and diamond

WEARABLE ARCHITECTURE

Coming from a long goldsmith family tradition, after mastering traditional production techniques and processes, Stefania Lucchetta chose to focus on new technologies in the creation of her jewellery. Text by Anna Cecilia Russo.

AFTER finishing a degree in the history of art at the University of Venice, Stefania Lucchetta decided to join the family company as a designer while pursuing studies in goldsmithing. Having mastered the traditional techniques, she decided to concentrate on various CAD-CAM systems, and experimental materials and techniques, producing limited series of jewels in non-allergic materials such as polyamide, stellite, titanium and bio-resins. These have been widely exhibited internationally. Lucchetta's works feature regularly in the most respected design and lifestyle publications.

The password to access Stefania Lucchetta's world is certainly research, understood integrally and concretely as an all-engaging commitment to the design of jewellery.

'The purpose of my experimentation with techniques and materials has always been, since the outset, to create "specific" objects for our age, creating new, original and really contemporary shapes patently of the present day.



'Silk 24', 2011, ring, stellite

The use of new technologies and materials, therefore, was a precious instrument to create a language for jewellery; a language only made possible by contemporary tools.

In Stefania Lucchetta's world the jewel speaks a fluid and current language, in which technology and experimentation with shapes and materials become the syntax governing the architectural parameters directed by the strength of a lucid indomitable passion.

Having been born into a long goldsmith family tradition, after mastering traditional production techniques and processes, Lucchetta choose the less travelled road of exploration – to go further, swim against the stream, and fully espouse contemporaneity.

'In 1999 I concluded my studies and I decided that design would be my job. I was enthralled at once by the power of technology to quickly carry out in an infallible way what I designed by a computer.

By the end of the nineties, lots of people considered computers and numeric control machines a restraint for the creativity of the "artist-designer's", and for their imagination and freedom. That was not what I thought, better still I realized that these could be instruments for new modes of expression for designers, and which would spur their creativity and provide new possibilities to carry out experiments with shapes and materials.'

For Lucchetta a new world appears, different and absolutely in line with the age and its technology. It gradually unveils itself with shapes that are very precise and characterised along the trajectory of the curved lines and the geometrical planes of wearable architecture,¹ which after the 3D renderings materialise as stellite, titanium and bio-compatible resin.

Wearable architecture, therefore, is the best definition for Lucchetta's jewels, the fruit of long research into experimentation, means and systems that are contemporary and not linked to any commercial understanding of series of



'Silk 12b', 2008, ring, stellite

“collections” form trends and homologation standards. With metal sintering and the use of unusual materials – precisely stellite, bio-compatible resins or titanium – she has developed both an industrial line of production such as *Drago*, *Gabo* and *Continuum*, and numbered editions of research jewels as *Crateri*, *Sponges*, *Crystal* and *Digital*. All the “machine produced” jewels, as she herself calls her first experimental series of rings, *Crateri*, made of resin, in a deliberately provocative spirit, and her “hand-made” trademark, show the inalienable quality and guarantee extolled in the goldsmith field. Jewels that when they are produced, or when they are finished, unveil interesting structural homonymies and similitudes with natural forms. Nature is seen as an example of impeccable geometric perfection, balance, proportions, variety and unperceivable details – attributes which, of course, cannot be manually manipulated to create new effects. Lucchetta’s creative path, therefore, wanders between shape and technology, through a formal research which cannot be realised solely by hand, but by using the most innovative technology,



'Digital 13', 2010, ring, titanium

in a mixture of avant-garde break-up and lab curiosity, in the world of the jewel. 'If I try to summarise my history, I can say that it's been a continuous attempt to overcome what yesterday was possible, trying to use all the means that are available today.' The strong impulse towards innovation and the will to interpret in the best possible way the contemporary spirit, for Stefania Lucchetta become, not only the reason for a direct fight against the hand-made tradition, but provocation and need to travel along a different path, towards industrial and culturally conscious design, which in 2005 ends up in her ADI membership and in niche experiments precariously balanced between art and design. This is what today is more and more often called Design Art. Her productions are limited editions, apparently in contrast with the seriousness of the big stars of design, but which again fully agree with reflections according to whom *The archetype in the future is going to be more valuable than the large series of products*, and perfectly in line with the assertion by critic Enzo Mari that Stefania Lucchetta in the last years took to herself: *The quality of a project depends on the degree of cultural change it triggers*.

To open wide the doors of one of the most traditional domains of the applied arts to the “machine made” and replace the modeler and the manual wax modeling with a three-dimensional modeling software, certainly triggered a cultural change to the point of opening a debate both on the side of conservatism of the goldsmith's field, and of the interest and recognition by international critics.

In 2010 *Wallpaper* put Stefania Lucchetta's name as one of the 20 best reasons to visit Italy. Exhibitions, shows and publications followed one another and her work went on exhaling the same cultural message of sensibility and ideas which her research at the beginning triggered.

'I certainly can say that it wasn't an easy or banal task. The slowness that characterises the manual work also characterises my creative process – in spite of the means I use – and the continuous learning and experimentation process of techniques that are constantly evolving, of new metal alloys and of new synthetic compounds. This is the path that I chose to interpret the spirit of our age and I don't definitely pretend to be the only one or the best.'

Stefania Lucchetta's pieces express the contemporary spirit through the mix of “luxury” and low cost materials. Resins and diamonds can co-exist in the same machine-made ring, whereby it is the project itself which determines its



'Digital 13', 2010, ring, titanium



'Cage 07', 2013, brooch, stellite and white gold



'Crystal Earrings', 2005, varnished, polyamide and gold



'Cage 04', 2013, earring, stellite and gold



'Silk 51', 2009, bangle, anodized titanium

value – the uniqueness of a jewel born of Computer Aided Design. Nevertheless, far from the schemes of fashion and trend, such an item has the capacity to determine its own specific space-time circumscription.

The result of the best interpretation of today, the precise meaning of here and now, even modulating her own creativity on shapes without time, as they are near the lines which can be located in the shapes found in nature: fingerprints, sea sponges, or “concrete” geometries of space can be found in the complex wearable architectures of the jewels by Stefania Lucchetta, which, further to emerging with a precise identity from the chaos of the creativity of the 21st century, harmoniously integrate with the person who wears them in a perfect somatic synesthesia.

In the case of a jewel, wearability is an important factor, but there are many other considerations which affect its specific value. The communicative capability of the “right” jewel, its cultural strength and the depth of the thought it contains are back again. We are not wrong if we affirm that every work of art – taking into account the vagueness of this word – and, particularly, every beautiful wearable object possesses both a functional and intrinsic value.

Functional and intrinsic value which every right jewel will never cease to have, not even if it is enveloped by the transition fogs of long cultural winters, revealing, no matter how, the uniqueness of its aesthetic aura far from the fragility of worlds which do not belong to it.

Anna Cecilia Russo

Stefania Lucchetta's works are exclusively available in Australia from Bini Gallery Contemporary Jewellery, 62 Smith Street, Collingwood, Melbourne, VIC. Website: binigallery.com.au



'Diamond 04', 2009, earrings, white gold



'Diamond 21', 2010, ring, titanium



'Vacuum 12', 2013, ring, stellite