

findings

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ACJ Conference 2017 Jewellery as a Means to Reflect Yanmi Liu Inspirational Trip to Senegal with the Toolbox Initiative K2 Academy Sign o' the Times: RCA Graduate Show 2017 Building a Bridge for Contemporary Jewellery Jorge Manilla: Abruptions Initiation 2017 Peter Chang Obituary Acrylic Texturing Techniques Book Reviews

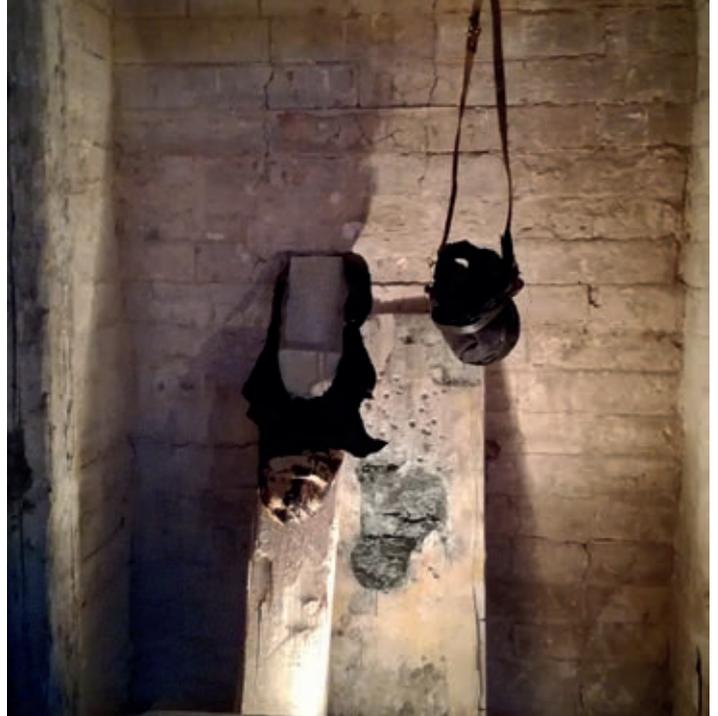
Jorge Manilla: Abruptions

Kunstgießerei, Munich Jewellery Week, 10-13 March 2017

Lieta Marziali

Those who know me will also know that I generally tend to propose a personal review only when I come across an exhibition that stirs my soul in a way that cannot be compared to pure visual or intellectual titillation. Earlier this year I finally managed to attend Munich Jewellery Week for the first time and it is there, amidst the most glorious glut of jewellery art, that I found myself profoundly moved by Jorge Manilla's show 'Abruptions' at the Kunstgießerei.

Jorge's work is deeply emotional. In its intense manipulation of materials such as leather, charcoal, wood and bone, it carries at once the conceptual baggage of an ancestral material culture and the desire to constantly bridge the gap with existence and a new life in a new continent. The tangled, carved forms and the choice of flesh and black tones, at times both baffling and tortuous, are the embodiment of a struggle to understand himself in the context of his wider past while finding a way to make his own mark on his own terms.



But it is in its venue that the power of the show is fully manifested. As in a placental abruption, the work and the environment tear us from our comfort zone of jewellery consumption. We are forced to slow down. To adjust our visual perception to a light-deprived environment. And to negotiate the denseness of another material richness: that of a working forge, of lurking half-cast figures and secretive moulds, of plaster-splattered buckets and climbing ladders, of rusty chains and twisted cables. These traces of material process are the reminders of the journey too often cleansed or altogether obliterated when producing, showing and consuming art.

Jorge has completed a small masterpiece here. If, in the past, he had feared being David overshadowed by such a powerful Goliath environment, he did not win by putting up a visual fight but by harnessing that power and participating in it with his own full emotional strength. Here, what you see, is not necessarily what you get, and hidden treasure is revealed only to those who are willing not only to explore but to question what they were looking for in the first place.

