

Master's Degree Thesis

HOLD YOUR HEAD UP
AND
SEE YOUR HEROIC-SELF

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ABSTRACT

this project is about a sculptural adornment...

a sculptural adornment worth to be placed on the neck of Woman that shades her Goddess-hood...a wearable sculpture with its vigorous forms, reflecting all that life force of hers as a reminder of her powerful female body...a mirror to the mind, a medium for self-realisation through a nonverbal cue, the posture of power...

this project is about a trope of shield...

a shield that embraces the inner power of the female body, once detected by men and then sunk into the darkness...the darkness of silence, the darkness of violence, the darkness of being a prisoner of her own body, own rage and being projected as monstrous...a shield that cuts the silence of darkness and comes back to life on the Woman's neck...

this project is about revising the old myth...

revising the old myth of the snake-headed Medusa that has been repeated itself over centuries as a threat to the male gaze...revising the old myth and tell the true story in order to embrace the beautiful laughing Medusa again in each of us, as Women...

KEY WORDS : Medusa, Goddess-hood, the female body, the posture of power, nonverbal cues, self-realisation, self-empowerment, conceptual jewellery, sculptural adornment, wearable sculpture

CHAPTER I

BEYOND TIME, FAR BEYOND TIME

ME, THE CUTS AND THE OLD MYTH

April 2010, moving to Sweden from Turkey as a wife and a mother to become a designer. 2015, the divorce, the end, the cut...the beginning of a new episode, an inner journey as a Woman. Realising the actual trauma of my life in fact was not the reason of divorce itself, but the old me I was told I ought to be...the old me was not me, the self image to the mirror was blurry and the voice of her was below my breath...all was the silence.

She became a single mother in the new episode, but she prefers "self-standing mother" as it's called in Swedish. In the new episode she is aware of her body, her strengths. She follows her own voice now in order to move forward in her own path...She also became a designer and now in her way to extend her art more over, centring upon metals and reflective materials in order to create different experiences. And she now loves mirrors. Her inner journey as a Woman is not always easy though, the strength is an enigma to explore, nevertheless she is learning, she is still healing.

~

18 August 2019, Turkey, at a cafe. A video footage in social media. A woman at the age of 38 is stabbed to death by her ex-husband in front of her ten years old daughter. She is holding her slit throat and screaming "*I don't want to die*" as her daughter begging her to live...Shhhh, a deep cut...the silence.

What remained from the Woman's savagely taken life, was her daughter. She was 10 when her new episode started. She was 10, the same age as my own daughter.

~

In a time the one long before that one, the ancient times of Gods and some Goddess with the patronage of the Gods, Greece. A beautiful young Woman with lovely head of hair. You might know her as the petrifier, the snakes-headed monstrous, for we were made to believe so, I once believed so too, till a while ago. But in fact "she was raped, decapitated, turned into a monster by men, a monster to the male gaze."¹ Yes, she was beautiful and her punishment was her decapitation...shhhh...the cut!

~

Tearing into a Life, our lives...All I see in this moment is the darkness, all I hear is the sirens of silence, endless victims of silenced women. A body, bodies, our female bodies, our female bodies in pieces of violence, our female bodies with no end, taken from our memories, sunk into a darkness of silence. How many times we, women, have been left as prisoners of our own bodies, how many times we have been projected as monstrous, how many times we have been dead...

Silencing of women, over and over, still, in this time, in this very time...A strong ignition inside me to contribute to this issue, as a designer, as an artist, as a mother and as a Woman.

¹ Leeming, 2013; 72

RECOGNISING THE SEVERED HEAD THROUGH HER POWER

That beautiful Woman who was raped, cursed and then banished to the earth's end, was Medusa, the Gorgon. But her punishment wasn't enough though, to make matters worse, she had to be destroyed. Thus and so, Perseus "the hero", performs the act of beheading. Not wishing to be turned to stone, he avoids looking at her directly. Hence he only sees her reflection in the mirrored shield given to him by Athene. He then escapes and uses the severed the head as a weapon, since it still has the power to turn onlookers to stone. He eventually presents the head of Medusa to Athena, who places it on to her shield to warding off or turning away the enemies from herself.

A side from the myth itself, with his book "Medusa: In the Mirror of Time" David Leeming also brings forward various attempts to explain the significance of decapitation archetype. He points the detachment of the severed head with her everlasting power: "Freed from the body of the Gorgon, the Medusa head could become the primary weapon of the hero Perseus and eventually the apotropaic talisman that supposedly protected people in Greek society from other kinds of evil. In short, the dominance of the head in the overall myth is reinforced by decapitation, and decapitation 'explains' the existence of the Gorgoneion."²

Hereby, to underline, a tropological dimension of the Medusa's apotropaic capacity is identified in the essay of Thomas Albrecht as twofold; a trope of horror and an apotropaic trope as putting the protective power of the Medusa's Head in a place of a defensive trope.³

In this manner, the motif of the severed head of Medusa will contribute this project within the aspect of "an apotropaic trope". In other words, the interpretation of the figure will be recognised through her protective power as a defensive trope which I believe, would help to avert all kinds "horror" embodies us.

² Leeming, 2013; 95

³ Albrecht, 1999; 10-11

ON SELF-REALISATION AND SELF-EMPOWERMENT

Was it always like that? Have women always lived in darkness of silence, felt frustrated, insecure, broken and scared? No!

A bygone time, much much time ago, in light ages, beyond the burning witch, beyond the all patriarchal inventions, women have lived a good, good life, the time of the Goddess. She is the Woman, She is the Goddess, "the entire Cosmos, the whole world, ever-presented in land and sea, in the elements, in all living creatures, in every human being, being all the creative life force itself." ⁴ She is the Woman, She is the Goddess. But she no more will remember this. The light is getting misted, for a dark episode will soon begin. The episode of the Gods in which "the Goddess will be turned into a shrew..." ⁵

In Freud's, "Medusas Head", the head is the horror, a fear of castration to men. "To decapitate = To castrate" ⁶ signifies the man, who likes playing God. "Castration anxiety", he says, "Medusa's head in the form of snakes, female genitals surrounded by hair, the sight, the stiffness, the erection, the penis, the absence of penis, the horror, 'the fear of a lack'..." but in fact his subconscious sounds more like, the fear of a lost authority over the female body. The fear that finds its relief only in punishing or objectifying the woman. An act keeps itself out over centuries. "Castration anxiety", he continues to say, "the fear of a lack..." but then Hélène Cixous, the dazzling voice of the Goddesses, cuts his words sharply with her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa":

"Men say that there are two unrepresentable things: death and the feminine sex. That's because they need femininity to be associated with death; it's the jitters that give them a hard-on! for themselves" and then she underlines that the greatest crime men have committed against women was violently leading woman to hate themselves, to be their own enemies and to mobilise their immense strength against themselves so that they could construct the infamous logic of antilove, an antinarcissism. She also calls us to stop listening to the Sirens for the history to change its meaning, to liberate the New Woman from the Old by coming to know her, by loving her for getting by: "You only have to look at the Medusa straight on to her. And she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she is laughing." ⁷

We have to give ear to that dazzling voice and enlighten our consciousness. We have to look back to the light ages so that we can remember our native strengths. Remember our power of creation, the worship abilities of our bodies, our vitality. We have to look inside and see. It is there, ready to expanse, ready to sparkle.

Holding my head up and seeing you Medusa, oh my powerful, beautiful Medusa! Be my mirror in the sirens of silence so I can tell your true story, in each of us, as Women. Be my mirror in this journey so I can embrace your beautiful laugh again.

⁴ Göttner-Abendroth, 1995: foreword, XV

⁵ Leeming, Page, 1994:100

⁶ Freud, 1922; 84, 85

⁷ Cixous, 1976; 885, 878

ON POSTURE OF POWER

If the power is inside of you, how to see it then?

Through a mindful presence, awareness of self and a hand-in-hand unity of mind-body, says Naz Behesthi in her article "The Power Of Mindful Nonverbal Communication." ⁸ She expounds that nonverbal cues, such as body language and postures are governs that we delegate unconsciously and adds that our unconscious minds delegate a great deal of information-processing compare to our conscious minds (almost more than 10 millions bits of information per second). The entire array of nonverbal signals at our disposal announces to the world, and to ourselves, who we are, she says. Therefore, once we learn to be more conscious of our nonverbal cues, we can also control their effect on to other and ourselves.

"Hold your head up and search your heroic-self!" says Medusa.

In her TED talk where social psychologist Amy Cuddy puts this across by her study conducted at Harvard, about "the power posing". ⁹ She argues that standing in a posture of power within two minutes - even when we don't feel powerful - can boost feelings of power. Moreover physiologically, the testosterone (dominance hormone) level significantly goes up, whilst the cortisol level (stress hormone) drops.

Cuddy also emphasises on two facts: that people avert their gaze from individuals engaging in nonverbal dominance displays and that women feel chronically less powerful than men in their presence. So in this manner, manifesting the presence of an expansive posture, might have an impact on our chances in long terms to deal with frustration, insecurity, fear and other emotional outburst under social thread situations especially when our identities taken from us. When the body leads, the mind follows and the presence of confident and power appears.

Concisely, an expansive posture actually make us feel more confident and powerful but also as an additive supplement, an effective defence tool to avert all kind of harmful gazes from us.

Be the mirror inside Medusa, so we can recast our self-empowerment and reverse victimisation into strength, our strength. Be the mirror inside Medusa, so we can remember...Remember, the strength of the female body..

⁸ Behesthi, 2018

⁹ Cuddy, 2012

ON NECK AND HEAD

A body, the female body, the female body as a whole. What is it that makes the body a whole?

Eyes shot down, trying to hear. The silence... "shhh...the cut", whispers Medusa wisely. The cuts! The necks, the cut of the necks, a cut of the neck and the body draw apart in two pieces; the head and the rest. Without the neck, there is death. The body is a body owing to the neck.

The neck. The part of the body on many vertebrates that connects the head to the rest of the body and provides the mobility and movements of the head. The structures of the human neck are anatomically grouped into four compartments; vertebral, visceral and two vascular compartments. Within these compartments, the neck houses seven cervical vertebrae and enclosed spinal cord, jugular veins and carotid arteries. The neck also supports the weight of the head and protects the nerves that carry sensory and motor information from the brain down to the rest of the body.¹⁰

The neck, just like a woman, such vulnerable and tender but vigorous enough to hold you together, as a whole. The neck, holds your head upright too, that posture of power, such a powerful posture.

Heaps of time, the neck might need support for an upright posture. In history for example, the ruffs worn in Elizabethan times as a symbol of wealth and status, forced the body to upright posture with their stiffness of the garment.

Yes, the neck, the neck will cut off the death and bring out the life again.

¹⁰ Drake, Vogl, Mitchell, 2014; 657

ON ADORNMENTS

Shoring up the neck with supplements also serves to aesthetic values or beliefs as it is on the occasions of adornments. Furnishing the body with adornments not only intends to enhance, embellish and distinguish the body, but also to connect the wearer esoterically to Gods/Goddess. The neck rings worn by the women of the Kayan Lahwi tribe of northeastern Burma can exemplify this.

In his article, "Gallery of Moments", the photographer Mehta Akanksha narrates this practice of neck elongation as a tradition has been around for centuries among the "long-necked women" of the Kayan tribe. The rings are composed of long coils made from brass, silver, or gold and with every passing year more coils are added around the neck beginning from the day when the girls reach the age of five.

Nevertheless, the origin of this practice is disputed, he says since some anthropologists claim it began as a means of marking the tribe's women as distinctly unique from other tribal women, some claims to enhance the woman's beauty and femininity or protect them from tiger attacks. But in fact, he declares that many Kayan women believe the rings connect them to the Dragon Mother and thereby regard the practice as deeply sacred and pious.¹¹ Isn't that exoteric?

Holding my head up and seeing a sculptural adornment! A sculptural adornment worth to be placed on the neck of Woman that shades her Goddess-hood...

¹¹ Mehta, 2012; 48

CHAPTER II

EMBODYING

APPROACHING CRAFT WITHIN A DESIGN METHODOLOGY

The day I applied the bachelor's programme in design at HDK, my intention was to be a product or furniture designer. Nevertheless, during the three years of education based on an artistic expression and representation, I had the opportunity to work in a number of design projects within an overall perspective - *publications, furniture design, lightening, spatial design, curating* - and expand my knowledge of using different workshops and tools. Although the projects were in different thematic directions, the core in all these design activities were always common: a process of creative problem solving by focusing on the result within a specific methodology.

But something has changed after the exploratory project we had later in the second year. For the first time, the result-oriented process of mine shifted its intention to a creative making process focused on the senses, a creative making process of flow, a deeper dialogue between form and material, a relation of mind-object-space. I enjoyed exploring the question of what we can hear from the objects, thusly that became an inevitable part of my design practice where I work with installations and interactive sculptures in order to create different experiences through reflective materials and metals.

A sculptural adornment for a story that needs to reverse victimisation into strength, our strength, the strength of the female body, remember, the protective power of Medusa's head, it is there, always with us, inside us.

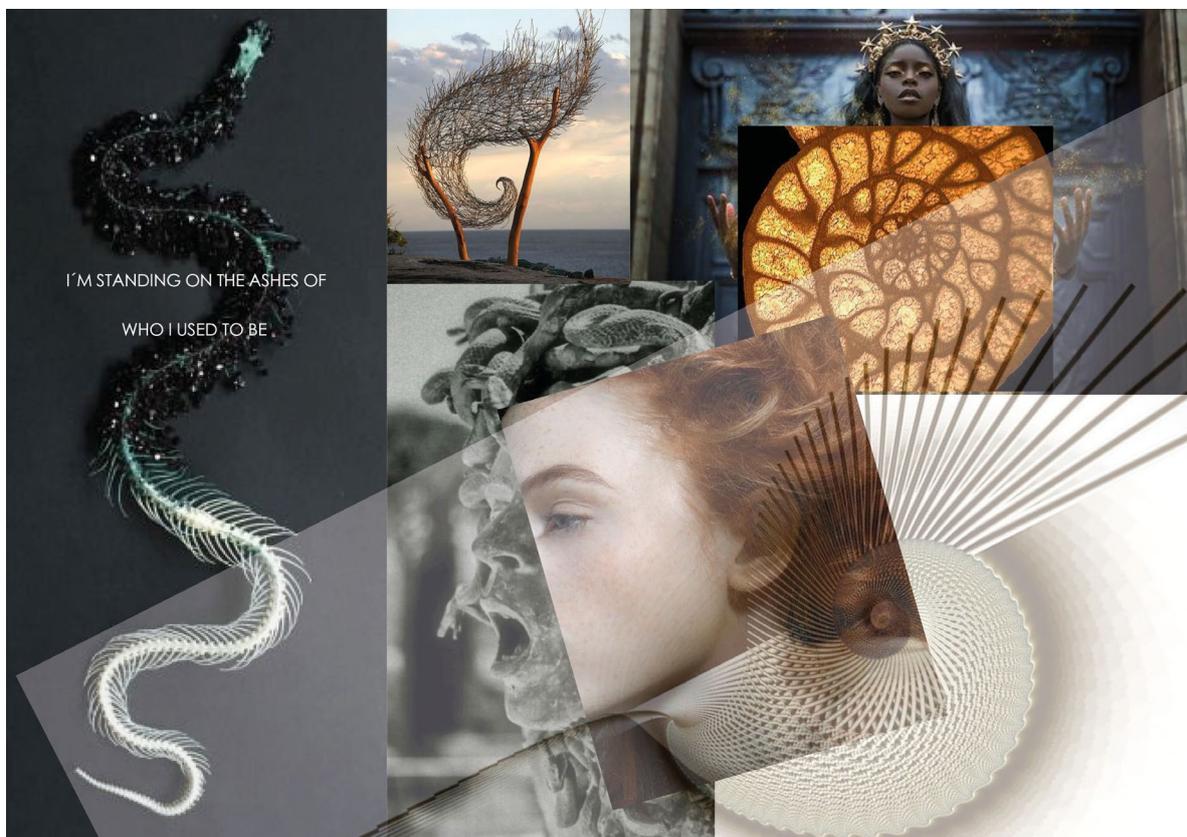


IMAGE 1 : Launching out the process with moodboards. An indispensable tool for me to stimulate the ideas. Visualising the concept, an overall feeling of the idea, a clear tool to communicate.

In time, the intention to deepen my knowledge of working with reflective materials and metals increased. I started to the master programme in jewellery art where I could zoom in these materials and explore new techniques and methods centred on the surfaces.

By phrasing the embodiment of my practice within this brief summery, I subtly indicate that this degree project appeared to be an attempt of a new approach to my practice, since I, for the first time explored the body as space and worked with a technique that I've never tried before. On the other hand, the design methodology I usually work with to conduct my process, such as mind mapping, sketching, making moodboards, scale modelling and so on, was remained. In this manner, I can also call this project as an attempt to approaching jewellery art within the boundaries of a design process.

A sculptural adornment for the neck that comes to life through mythology and its symbolic images, with a story which shelters emotions in stead of words, for a story that repeats itself over and over, for a story which needs to reverse itself.



SERPENT

*connected to the life
sustaining the life
wisdom*

GLORIA / NIMBUS

*glance of the life
life force
light, energi, vitality*

OUROBOROS

*sustaining life
instiling the life
self-sufficiency*

IMAGE 2 : 2D sketches relevant to some symbols and the meanings they stand for.

Beside moodboards, scale modeling is also a functional tool to me. On a scale model, you can demonstrate various manipulations promptly. This method to me, is much more useful compare to 2D sketching as it constructs the form or the space to my mind more clearly. Therefore I sculptured this form as a representation of the body part and the posture that I'm working with. It provides convenience for an examination from different angles and also makes possible to reflect on the form's interaction with the body and with the viewer.



IMAGE 3 : Quick 3D sketches with metal wire, brass sheet. Sculpture, pink oven-bake clay. Height 15 cm.

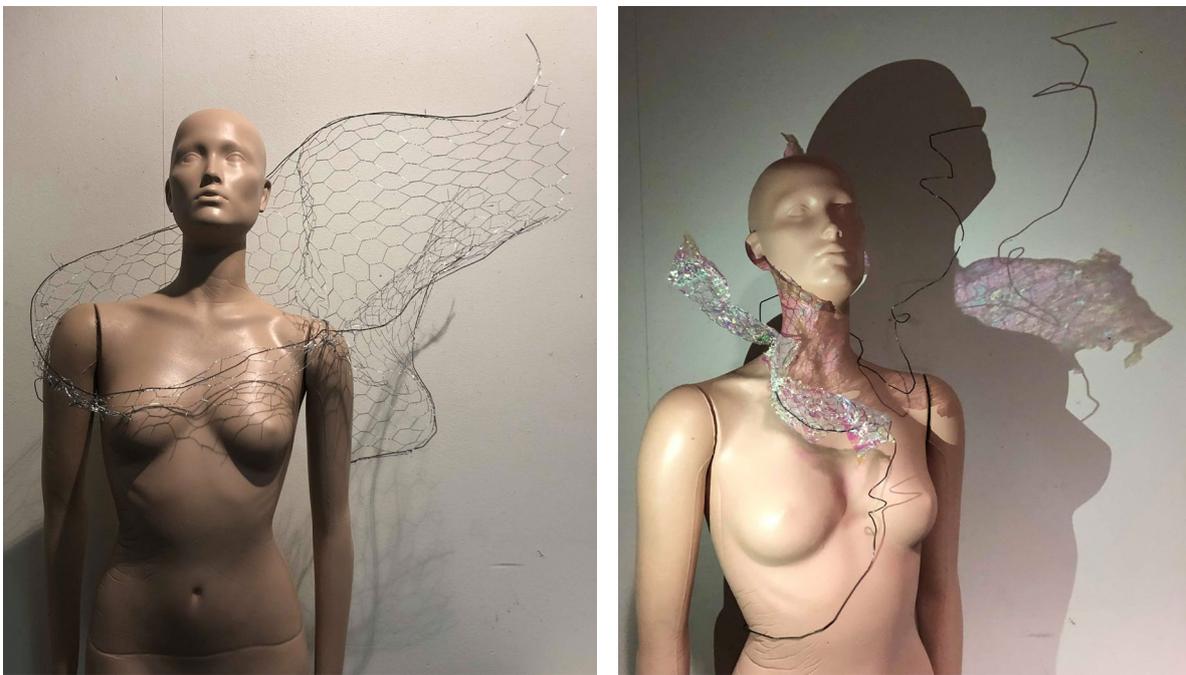
Thinking of the form, searching for the right form. A form that holds your head upright and shows you the heroic-self. Yes, the light should be on the neck. But no, not this stuffy form, it should let the neck free, your body should be free. Thinking of a form that lets you free. Cut!



IMAGE 4 : Playing with the light through material to create different reflections around the neck area. Copper wire, dichroic film on plexi glass.



IMAGE 5 : Quick 3D sketches on scale 1:1. Materials chicken wire, iridescent cellophane (to represent dichroic film)



Yes, scale models are perfect tools to simulate a space when you attempt to enhance it. If the dimensions are precisely registered, then all your plannings you work on it will represent its scaled-up actuality.

But in this case, the space I'm working with is the body, an organic form, its measurements differ from person to person. There is no precise measurement either of the space nor the form which will fill the space. Therefore, parallel to working with the smaller scale, I also made some sketches on the mannequin. But the mannequin only helps for an ideal representation, not for a precise one.



IMAGE 6 : Searching for a dialog between form, material and different ways of expression.
 Materials : stoned verdigris, plaster, dichroic film on plexi glass, brass sheet

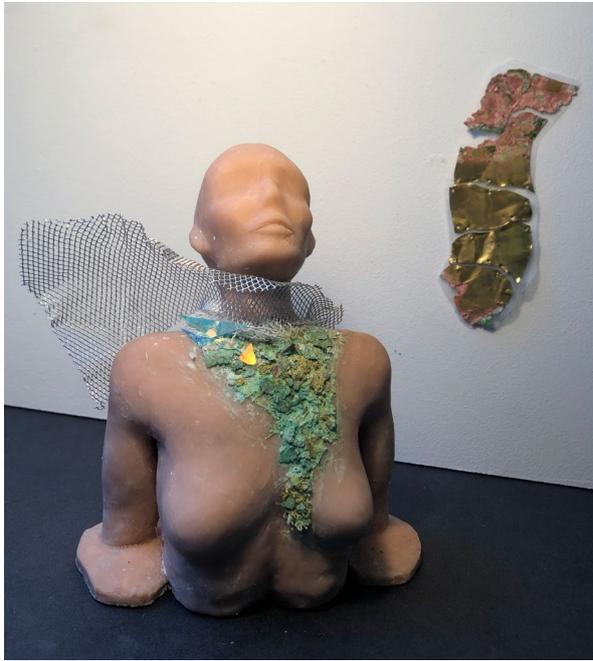


IMAGE 7 : Materials on the scale model, stoned verdigris, wire mesh dichroic film on plexi glass, brass sheet. Materials on the wall, green-pink patina on brass sheets sewed on fabric.

The skin, the snake skin. Like the shed skin of a snake after molting, peel your old skin off and breathe again, peel your old skin off and come to life again. You recreate, Your female body is vital.



IMAGE 8 : A developed moodboard with an overall view to the project.

Yet another moodboard, but an expanded one including the background story, the theories that built the project, notes, key words, the concept, the material samples, experiments and try outs, selected sketches and so on. A map to look at when you need to gather different ideas, a map to look at when you need to move forward and to decide how to move forward.

Enjoying this growth of the process. But no, not sure if this embodies the dialog I'm searching in order to enlighten the power of female body. Something more vigorous more powerful I need to find. Hold your head up and search your heroic-self. Cut!

THE FORM AND THE MATERIAL

Time for a decision, time for creation. The previous ideas, the snake skin, the snake like form, the material combinations of stoned verdigris, textile, the thinnest sheet of brass, silicone, the iridescent folio...that way of expression does not feel right.

But how to embody the power itself, this immense source, this moving ensemble? Thinking of a material that could shelter our inner power. A material that transforms itself to a new life, just like you Medusa, both transforms and is transformed over and over again.

*"Hold your head up and see your heroic-self" whispering Medusa wisely,
"from the mirrored shield I've been shown, the decapitation of my own"
Yes, that mirrored shield, once reflected the violence on to you Medusa,
might now reflect the power itself, your protective power itself, on to us.
A shield that embraces the inner power of our female body.*

Choosing brass and choosing hammer...A material to give a shape to, a tool to give shape with...Thinking of a form in brass to give a shape. A material and a tool that I've never combined to work with before, hammering, I've never hammered before. Taking a risk?... The silence.



IMAGE 9 : Brass sheet of 0,5 mm thickness

*Medusa, the Woman, the power to fascinate, she is you, she is me...
Medusa, the "Gorgoneion", the power to protect, "the most ancient
apotropaic amulet", the weapon to protect, our defensive trope...*

*A trope of shield for the neck, with its dynamic, organic, vigorous curves,
reflecting all that life force of yours as reminder of your goddess-hood.*

STUDIO WORK

The room is growing into a space, a space to bear witness of making, a making without knowing, a making through senses, seeing, listening and feeling. My hands are growing into the pain. The pain, focus on it. That pain is your shaper, your understandings, your learnings, your growth for a creation. Growing into a creation.



IMAGE 10 : Unification. The studio space, the tools, the material and my body...They all are growing into a creation.

Making through senses, seeing, listening and feeling. The heart beats, the hammer beats. Hearing the material, the material comes to life and telling me all about her life...all her tears and laughters...She is stiff and rough I'm thinking at first, but then feeling of her all scratches from countless mistakes she's made and witnessing how she still manages to keep her self soft and warm, still can shape herself over and over again, despite everything. And this vigorousness of her just livens me up.



IMAGE 10 : The process of shaping



But then, a resistance...
The material is resisting against the form.
The form supposed to shape itself from one shoulder to another along the back side of the neck is resisting. I am resisting. The damage.

What went wrong? How to deal with the resistance?

"Hold your head up and see your heroic-self" whispering Medusa wisely. And I am looking at straight on to you Medusa, as the dazzling voice of the Goddesses calls out. And you're not deadly. You are beautiful and you are laughing.

I am looking at the form again. Changing the angle. Another perspective. The form I look at changes like "a moving, limitlessly changing ensemble" ¹². Moving the angle up towards and seeing a form floating up from shoulder. A form, a shield, a reminder, an adornment to embrace the inner power of the female body.



IMAGE 11 : The decision moment of the form will be rested on one shoulder, instead of both. Model: Carolina Claesson

¹² Cixous, 1976; 889

Searching for the right angle. Otherwise no shelter for the right magic. The convex needs to be concave. Re-form. The heart beats, the hammer beats.



IMAGE 12 : Working on an illusionary effect to create whilst trying to repose the form in balance. Dichroic film on brass.

Searching the ways of reposing the form in balance. Shoulder is the centre of mass. But the form does not stand still. How to shore up the spot on shoulder? Forming over and over, she is "a limitlessly changing ensemble." The heart beats, the hammer beats.

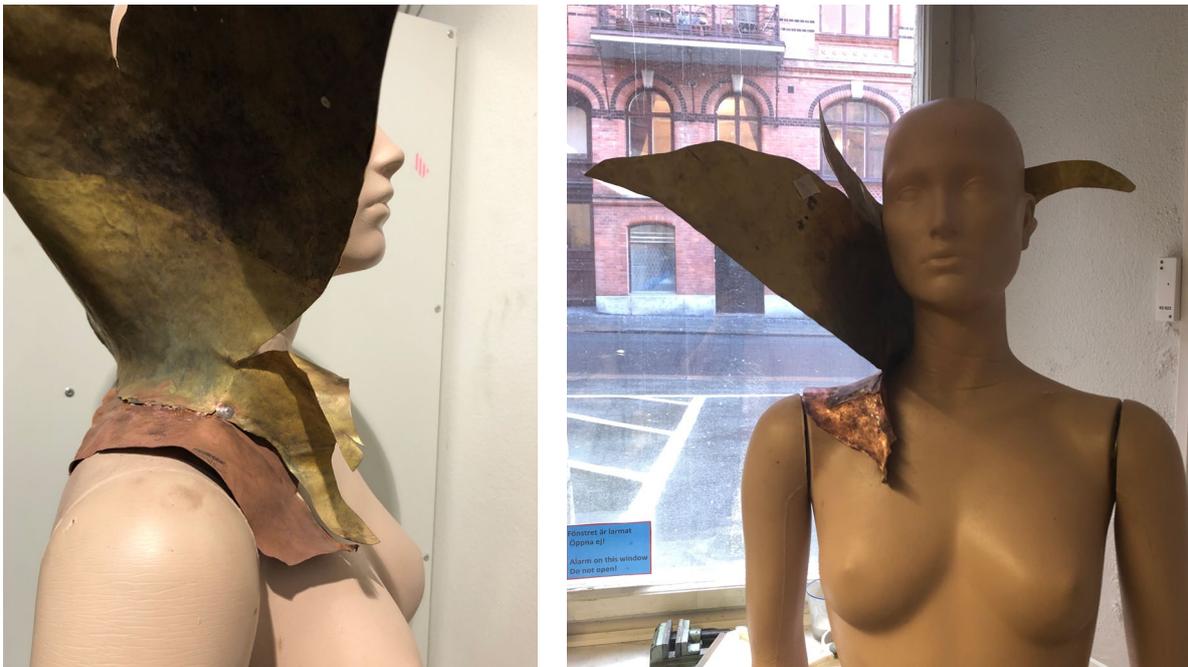


IMAGE 13 : After soldering brass to copper, the form finally reposes on the shoulder in balance.

THE FINAL PIECE

Initiating the final. Making the final form through senses after I've been seen, listened and felt. Now throwing caution to the wind, for my hands've even if just a bit learned, understood and grown for the creation. The pain, has gone. I am no longer afraid, no longer a slave to fear and it is no more the silence. The heart beats, the hammer beats, thus my strength awakes.



IMAGE 14 : As seen above, comparing to the first one on the left, the size of the final form has been extended

Holding my head up and seeing the heroic you Medusa. Medusa, my Gorgoneion, the power to protect. Your severed head is on to the shield, your severed head is our "defensive trope" averts all evils from us, your severed head is a reminder of your endless power.

Awakening through making, seeing, listening and feeling. Brass is no longer a slave to fear, on the contrary, eager to come to a new life so as to shelter the inner power, my inner power, our inner power. The dignified power that protect us.



IMAGE 14 : Soldering copper and brass for the shoulder part.



IMAGE 15 : Final touches



IMAGE 16 : The final form
(front view)



IMAGE 17 : The final form
(side view)



IMAGE 18 : The final form
(back view)



IMAGE 19 : The final form
(side view)

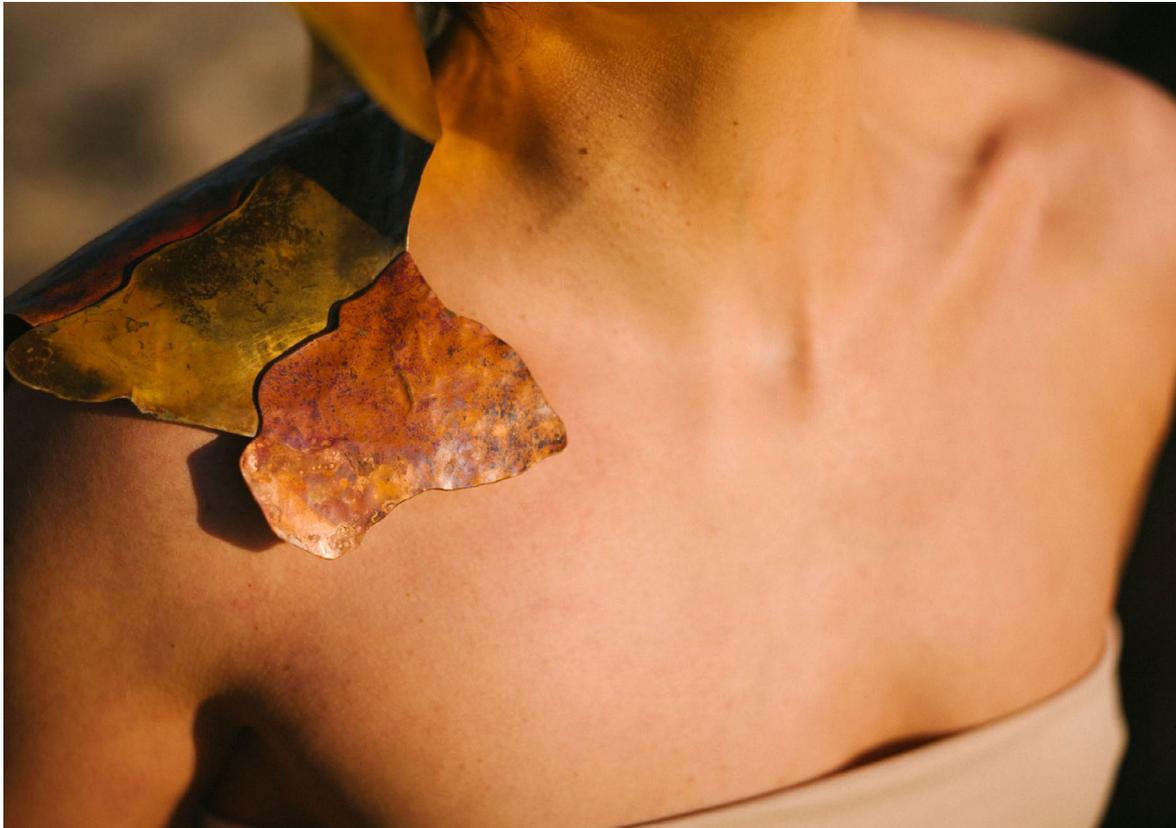
THE ACTUAL STORY



*The heart beats,
the hammer beats,
thus a shield appears*

Holding my head up and seeing the shield

*A trope of shield for the head, to be placed on the neck
that will embrace your power back.*



*“Hold your head up and see your
heroic-self” whispering Medusa
wisely*

*Holding my head
and seeing a neck up*

*A neck that is not feasible to cut,
for it bears a shield that embellishes
all that life forces on to the female
body*



*Yes, that mirrored shield, once
reflected
the violence on to you Medusa,
reflects now the power itself,*

*your protective power itself,
on to us!*

*Holding my head and
seeing a neck up*

*It is alive, it is moving, it is free
And this vigor of her,
liven's up me*



*Holding my head up
and telling a story*

*A story that we feel inside
to heal us*

*A story needs to be heard to
reverse the old one,*

*for the old one has been
told us before, was not the
actual one*



*The heart beats,
the hammer beats,
thus the darkness flees*

*Holding up a shield that tells the actual story,
my story,
your story,
our story*

*We are no longer a slave to fear,
we hear no longer the sirens of silence,
for the shield we bear shelters our inner power*



HOLD YOUR HEAD UP AND SEE YOUR HEROIC-SELF

CHAPTER III

REFLECTIONS

IN THE LANDSCAPE OF DESIGN AND JEWELLERY ART

This project have grown into diverse explorations although the intention in the beginning was to exploration of the female body as a space to enhance and to enlighten its inner power.

An earlier finding of the project was the possibility of highlighting the female body as a whole moving ensemble, just by focusing on its one simple partial area. This finding and the decision to implement it was quite surprising to me because, I was so determined not to focus on one and only specific body part, since it might bring the consequences of misunderstandings of my intention was to demonstrate the female body as an object. Nevertheless, in the terms of anatomical and metaphorical aspects since the neck is a "lifeblood" where the body unifies itself as a whole, I decided upon using the neck area as representation of the life force of the whole body.

The exploration then continued by zooming in the neck-head-shoulder area, examining its contours and investigate it as a space to enhance. A moving space, an organic form with no standard measurements. This was new and a big challenge to me. This was the moment I decided to apply my own methodology that I use on my spatial design projects, so that I wouldn't get totally lost during the process. To investigate the function of this space and its connection to the body, its changeable form in different postures based on this design approach, helped me to find the ways of constructing a neck piece that only stands on balance within a specific body posture.

Yet another big challenge was shaping the form itself since the technique I've been using was totally new to my practice. Therefore this duration of creating was not only to explore metalsmithing as a technique but also to explore my boundaries as a creator. Nevertheless, the demonstration of this process was not about to be able to achieve to the perfect level of a craftsmanship, but to use it as a way of expression to tell a story. Of course, there have been some inevitable moments where I questioned my own "craftsmanship" by comparing it to their perfectly archived ones, but each time I tried to remind my self the actual intention of the project.

Yes, my role in this project was much rather to be a messenger. A messenger for all Women who have forgotten or forced to forget their inner power, felt frustrated, incurable and been projected as monstrous in our society for centuries. Those Women have to remember the native power inside their bodies so that they can heal.

In this manner, this project can be related to Shari Pierce's ongoing art project "SheLL" ¹³ which evokes healing for the women who has been sexually assaulted. By asking them to donate their dresses they associate with their trauma and then she exhibits them as sculptural forms in the void attached with a personal statement submits how the abuse has affected them. In this way, she forces the viewer to reflect on a real person through a real story, not a "stereotypical" image of an abused woman. The dresses are also powerful

¹³ Shari Pierce, SheLL project, installation, 2007-ongoing, <http://www.sharipierce.com/sharipierceart#/shell-project-she-will-shell>

symbolic "shells" to encourage Women to appear and to tell about their own stories just like the trope meaning of my piece as "shield" which evokes Women for an awareness of self-empowerment.

With regard to evoking awareness, many of my previous projects focuses on the mind-object relation through reflective materials and their illusionary venues. For instance, in 2017, in my bachelor's degree work [apperception] ¹⁴, I addressed the issue of Women feeling disconnected from their own image and tried to invent new meanings of ageing and transform these self-image experiences to surfaces. However, in this project, the awareness is linked to a mind - body - object relation. The object within its placement to the body, stimulates the mind for a body posture, and within its form and material, an esoteric connection to the old time of the Goddesses which evokes an awareness of an inner power.

Of course, playing with this mind - body - object relation might occur in different ways. David Bielander is doing this by playing with the scale, in his 2,5 meter long "Python Necklace" ¹⁵ that he made in 2011. Here, the link is the realistic scale of the piece which give the delusion of a snake and so evokes the mind open for various kinds of experiences since each wearer would have different kind of association to a snake. ¹⁶ The piece has also its uniqueness in the field of jewellery art since it is "neither a chain, nor a necklace, nor a scarf, but it forms a class of jewellery in its own right" as Jeroen Redel says in the article about Bielander's snake. In a similar aspect, I believe, how to classify my piece in the landscape of jewellery art, will open some discussions.

To my eye, it is a sculpture, an adornment, a neck piece, a semi-prosthetic neck piece, a metaphoric shield, an esoteric connection to Medusa, a mirror to the mind, a reminder of the immense power of the female body, an object that calls its own story, your story, my story.

Concisely, there are different arenas for this piece to point its spot. And I believe, the field of performing arts and collaborative projects within photography, sound, film can be counted as an example. The Turner Prize awarded feminist artist, Tai Shani successfully manages to achieve all these fields at once within her inspiring projects. In 2018, with her epic "DC: Semiramis" ¹⁷ project for instance, she created a large-scale sculptural installation combined with video, sound and her experimental texts, also functioned as a site for twelve episode of performance series which presented over four days. This project lay grounds to built a post-patriarchal "city" for twelve fictional female characters in timeline of a space void which is both mythical, historical. She presents the monologues of those fragmentary fictions in her book, *Our Fatal Magic* (2019) ¹⁸ which appeared to be my biggest influence to my creative writing.

Hopefully, this project, sometime in the future, can lead itself towards that direction too.

¹⁴ [apperception], sculptural installation, Bachelor's Degree Work 2017. <http://cargocollective.com/nihanaycan/apperception>

¹⁵ Redel, 2014. <https://artjewelryforum.org/node/5068>

¹⁶ David Bielander, Snake, neck piece 2014. <https://artjewelryforum.org/node/5068>

¹⁷ Tai Shani, DC: Semiramis, sculptural installation / performance, 2018.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/turner-contemporary/exhibition/turner-prize-2019/tai-shani>

¹⁸ Shani, 2019

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