



II
INSPIRATION



Photo: Salva Lopez

Cloth statues.

— *Sergio Roger* — who recently came to the attention of gallerist Rossana Orlandi — invited us to his studio in Barcelona’s Gothic Quarter to discover “Textile Ruins”, a series of sculptures that plays with appearances and revisits the art of antiquity from a modern viewpoint. —



Why make fabric sculptures?

I taught myself how to sew when I was young and I have always felt drawn to contemporary artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Joseph Beuys, Cosima von Bonin, Ernesto Neto and Mike Kelley who use textiles as their medium. I started experimenting quite early on in my own practice with the relationship between sculpture and textiles and soon developed my own method and technique.

Can you talk about your passion for antiquity?

Although I am interested in ancient art in general, I am particularly fond of classical Greek and Roman art. This subject provides the ideal viewpoint from which to address the notions of beauty and idealism from a western perspective.

Are you trying to copy the original?

It's true that the starting point is a sort of technical challenge: I want to see

how close I can get to imitating classical sculpture. However, by replacing stone or bronze with a soft medium, my aim is to break down preconceptions about traditional sculpture and shed new light on how archaeology helps us to understand history. I remember wanting to work on one of those glorious Roman busts of emperors complete with armour and cape etc. I found a picture of a marble portrait of Antoninus Pius on the Internet that immediately caught my eye and looked in vain for other images from different angles. After some months working on my version of the bust, I found out that the original was at El Prado Museum in Madrid. I immediately decided to set off on a day trip to Madrid just to study the original Roman marble and especially to see what the back looked like. I was really excited to see it in real life and spent a long time taking pictures and observing it from close up. I must have seemed suspicious because I even drew the attention of a museum guard.

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Roger's collection "Textiles Ruins" revisits the styles of antiquity by recreating the period's columns and busts out of vintage linen.



Photos: Salva Lopez



Photo: Sílvia Lopes



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My work is a combination of traditional techniques, experimentation and improvisation.

The last stage in the production of these linen sculptures is to hand sew the drapery details.

The artist finds inspiration in actual antique sculptures, either in museums or in images he finds online.

Can you describe your creative process?

My first textile busts were an attempt to recreate classical beauty from a generic perspective. After that, I started to base my work on actual sculptures and artifacts in museums or images I found in books or on the Internet. I start by choosing a sculpture that I want to recreate or use for inspiration and get as many pictures as possible. I also do lots of sketches. I then use a pattern making technique that I have developed to recreate three dimensional figures. I make several prototypes from regular cotton fabric and stuff them, continuing until I get the desired effect. I then select a piece of antique linen and sew the actual piece, which I stuff before finishing with the details, such as the hair and drapery.

What type of fabric do you use?

I buy antique linen that is between 100 and 150 years old from specialised antique shops or markets in Spain and the south of France and colour it with a

plant-based dye. So far, I have only used earth tones such as terracotta, which give my works the right patina i.e. the look of weathered stone. I would definitely love to experiment more, for example using greens to evoke antique bronze.

What about the technical aspects?

I mainly employ techniques used in tailoring, such as pattern making and hand stitching, but I also embroider and quilt and use natural dyeing processes. My work is a combination of traditional techniques, experimentation and improvisation.

What are your plans for the future?

I have lots of ideas going round and round in my head, but in the near future I would like to explore more deeply notions of scale. I have other ideas too, but you'll have to wait and see!

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