

# PARALLEL VISIONS



## **Exhibition** **12 March–25 April 2020**

## **Symposium** **19 March 2020 6:30pm–8pm**

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Parallel Visions fosters the cross-fertilisation of ideas across the boundaries of art and design practice and design history. The exhibition showcases the work of four artists, an exhibition designer and a design historian who together have explored the relationship between their cultural heritage, creative practice and academic research.

Looking at the influence of 20th century Italian design history the exhibition embraces the cultural context and transformative role that creativity plays in the art and design of the period through a diverse range of work including paintings, photographs, sculptural objects, display systems and virtual reality experiences.

Artists Liliana Barbieri, Anna Caione, Sarina Lirosi and Wilma Tabacco, have each responded to the ideas and artefacts of selected 20th Century Italian designers – Bruno Munari, Gaetano Pesce, Alessandro Mendini and Giò Pomodoro, while Flavia Marcello presents the ‘birthplace’ of Italian design Milan Triennale, through VR reconstructions and Karen Fermo takes cues from the Giuseppe Pagano 1930s demountable travelling exhibition system for the exhibition’s display stand.

By responding to the ideas and design artefacts of selected 20th century Italian designers, architects and artists they have provided a springboard to expand current art, research and exhibition practice by experimenting with unconventional media and visual approaches that inspire new connections between art and design. This perspective of design history provides opportunities to reposition migrant cultural histories into a unique contemporary artistic context.

## Wilma Tabacco

Gold Mine (for Pomodoro)



Prior to commencing research for this ParallelVision project I did not know anything of Italian abstract artist Giò Pomodoro (Orciano di Pesaro 1930–Milan 2002)—sculptor, printmaker, designer, jewellery maker—or his work. Seeking someone with whom to ‘parallel’ my own works, in particular my gold metallic works, I was struck by his odd surname, as peculiar and unlikely as my own. Pomodoro—tomato (literally a golden apple) and tobacco – an addictive toxic plant – were both introduced to Europe from their New World origins by Spanish and Italian explorers.

Strange how, very occasionally, some inexplicable synchronicity gathers wayward tangential ideas, material processes and imagery into the type of shape that eluded one before an unexpected discovery. For over a decade I have used golden materials, sometimes the real thing, but mostly inexpensive foils or recycled metal. I have also come to admire and learn about the gold artefacts of various New World civilisations. More recently my interest has turned to their face and head ornaments—diadems, lip plugs, nose embellishments, head bands and facemasks. Despite many attempts at designing my own versions of these objects I did not want to construct any of them; until Pomodoro, or at least his work, forced my hand. The sun is a recurring symbol in Pomodoro’s sculptures and for those cultures gold was not venerated for its monetary value but for its relationship to the life-giving sun: the metal being, as it was believed, a like-shining emanation of solar potency.

I have never seen Pomodoro’s artworks except in reproduction—but I have attempted to make works that have something of the spirit of the pre-Columbian artefacts and Pomodoro’s gold jewellery—mine *povera* in material but a heartfelt reflection on their splendid artworks.

I imagine that Maestro Pomodoro would not be too impressed with what I have made but, as he habitually dedicated particular suites of his works to various historical figures (Goethe, Galileo, Kepler), I dedicate this collection of works to him and to those historical peoples whose lives and works never cease to amaze.

Wilma Tabacco’s work is shown courtesy of Gallerysmith.



*Gold Mine (for Giò Pomodoro) 2020*  
installation view



*Plaques 1 2020*  
metal, paper, glass, frame, 28x33 cm



*Nose Ornament 1 2020*  
metal, paper, glass, frame, 23.5x25.5 cm

## Designer Biography

### Giò Pomodoro

(1930–2002)

Giò Pomodoro (Orciano di Pesaro 1930 - Milan 2002) is internationally celebrated for his monumental abstract sculptures in bronze, stone and wood and his small works in precious metals. During his lifetime he received numerous honours, awards and public commissions and his works are included in public and private collection around the world including the Nelson Rockefeller Collection, New York; Galleries of Modern Art, Rome and Turin; Civic Museum of Contemporary Art, Milan; Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City; Modern Art Collection of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He participated in the Venice Biennial and Kassel Documenta, and during his lifetime he exhibited in galleries and museums in numerous European countries and North and South America: retrospective exhibitions continue to be curated worldwide.

## Artist Biography

### Wilma Tabacco

1982 Dip. Fine Art (Phillip Institute), 1995 Master of Arts, 2006 PhD (RMIT)

Wilma has presented 40 solo exhibitions since 1988, in Australia, Italy and Korea and participated in over 200 group exhibitions, including Contemporary Australian Drawing 3, New York Studio School, New York, Crossing the Line: Drawing in the Middle East, Tashkeel Gallery, Dubai, Contemporary Australian Drawing 2, Wimbledon SPACE, London, Melbourne, Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize 09, Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria, Drawing of the World/World of Drawing, Museum of Art, Seoul National University, Korea, Regards Croises: Australie – France, Espace Beaurepaire, Paris, France, Good Vibrations, Museum of Modern Art at Heide, Melbourne, Painted Spaces, Rice-Talbert Museum, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Wilma uses abstract iconography to refer to various aspects of Italian cultural history associated with archaeological artefacts found in ancient ruins and she 'maps' ground plans of architectural spaces.

Her works are included in many national and state collections including NGA, NGV, MOMA at Heide, GOMA Brisbane, Artbank, and private collections in Australia, USA and Europe.