

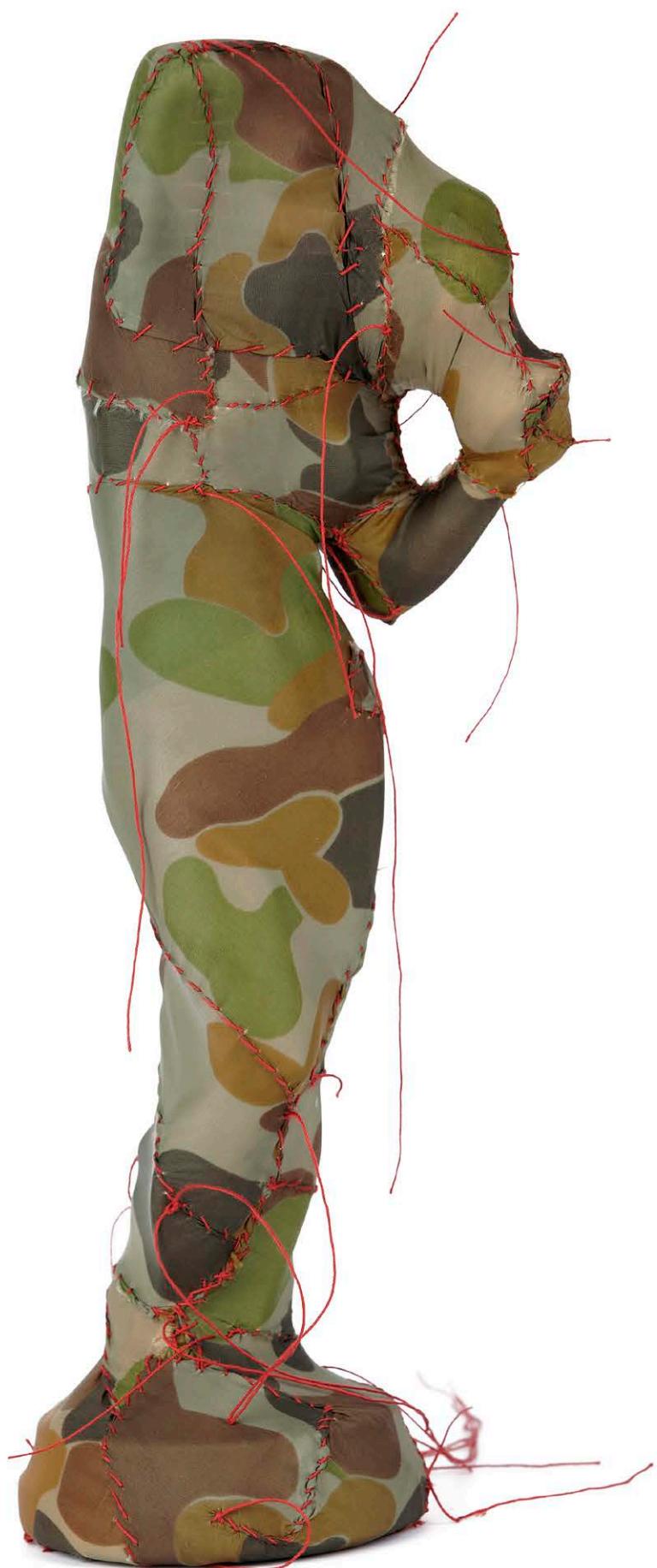
DISLOCATION

Olga Cironis

LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY

27 February – 5 June 2021







INTERVIEW WITH OLGA CIRONIS

Professor Ted Snell AM CitWA, 17 November 2020

Ted Snell

What were your first thoughts when we asked you to review your entire career and try to distil it into an exhibition at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery?

Olga Cironis

Honestly, I thought, 'Oh my God, that's huge and also exciting, a real challenge'. Reviewing my art practice enabled me to chronologically follow the development of my work and understand the links between certain works. My interest in humanity and the way we are in the world has always been present. By reviewing my career I enjoyed rediscovering forgotten works and connecting them to past experiences and certain historical events.

My art practice centres around exploring the impact that history and memory have on personal and shared identity, a reflection on shared vulnerability and the possibilities contained in social acts amidst today's ecological crisis and most recently COVID-19.

I am also hugely influenced by the experiences that we as a family went through when migrating to Australia from what was then Czechoslovakia. My parents are Greek refugees after surviving the Civil War in Greece. Experiencing and seeing the injustice of how people — migrant people, women, children, people in poverty — are treated by others in our democratic system is embedded in my work. I explore the space between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and the human desire to belong.

TS

You are incredibly ambitious, both in the scale and scope of your work, and in the impact you have. When you think back, was there always that desire to push the envelope a bit?

OC

Oh, well, I've always believed that you do the best you can. I care about the narrative that I'm trying to express through my work and the harsh and playful dichotomies that I make visible. My ambition is to make the strongest difference. It's not the response I crave, it's actually the effect it has. I've never been one to care about what I call 'divisive social rules'. I've always wanted to break them because they restrict so many of us. Growing up in the western suburbs of Sydney Australia taught me to be strong and not succumb to bullying.

TS

Your work is always about contrast and juxtaposition and these elements are fused together.

OC

They are! I knew that right from the beginning — I'm seduced by the light and the dark, the positive and negative, the conscious and unconscious. I come from a Greek background and grew up in Czechoslovakia, surrounded by communists and socialists amidst deep philosophical discussions. That experience was completely different to the realities of living in the western suburbs of Sydney so I knew that there was a different way of being in the world.

Leonard Cohen sings about 'the crack that lets the light in'. I understand that notion to be central to what life is, and I am just living and enjoying the roller-coaster. Exploring the idea of opposites — the crazy and the calm, the funny and the shocking — is a metaphor for my work. The work I make has always had a tactile component, often scaled to the human body. It is steeped in universal symbols that transcend cultural boundaries and enable us to communicate, question and connect.

images left to right:

Listening to the Silence (She Watched the Storm Come In), 2019, repurposed blanket, artist's hair and gold thread, 200 x 150 cm, The University of Western Australia Art Collection, University Senate Grant, 2019

I Just Want Her to be Safe, 2019, woollen blanket and cotton thread on Greek fabric, 106 x 187 cm, courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA. Photograph by Robert Frith, Acorn.

Alexandra, 2013, archival digital print, 120 x 80 cm, ed. 4, courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA



LIST OF WORKS

All artworks are courtesy of the artist and Art Collective WA unless otherwise stated.

Alexandra, 2013, archival digital print, ed. 2/4, 120 x 80cm

Into the Woods Alone 1, 2013, archival digital print, ed. 1/4, 72 x 104cm,
Loaned from Mary Harrison Hill

Into the Woods Alone 2, 2013, archival digital print, ed. 1/4, 72 x 104cm,
Collection of Felicity Johnston and Richard Barker

Into the Woods Alone 3, 2013, archival digital print, ed. 1/4, 104 x 72cm,
Courtesy of Mr Wayne Midson

Into the Woods Alone 4, 2013, archival digital print, ed. 1/4, 72 x 104cm

Under Cover, 2002, hollow wooden cots on castors, woollen blankets and
cotton thread, variable dimensions

Swing (from Wedding Tomb), 1995, steel, satin and lace, 45 x 35cm

I Am Sorry It's a Mess, 2020, feathers and acrylic, 39 x 30cm

Touch Her You're Dead, 2015, repurposed child's sleeping bag and cotton
thread, 136 x 53cm

Hollow Desires, 2016, child's clothing, hair and thread on military canvas,
162 x 29.5cm

Home Grown, 2013, repurposed ceramic ornaments, wooden furniture and
woollen blankets, 60 x 110 x 40cm

Water Bearer, 2013, repurposed ceramic ornament, woollen blanket and
cotton thread, 40 x 13 x 10.5cm

Echo Watching, 2016, repurposed ceramic ornament, military fabric and
cotton thread, 48 x 14 x 10cm

Uncrossable, 2017, repurposed ceramic ornament, military fabric and
cotton thread, 36 x 13 x 10cm

Dove, 2018, repurposed porcelain ornament, military fabric and cotton
thread, 14 x 18 x 10cm

Played Blue Boy, 2015, repurposed porcelain ornament, feathers and
plastic game, 33 x 20.5 x 17.2cm

Keepers of Secrets 1, 2016, repurposed porcelain ornament, 18 x 9 x 9cm

Keepers of Secrets 2, 2016, repurposed porcelain ornament, 20 x 9 x 9cm

Lost Letter, 2016, repurposed porcelain ornament, 35 x 12 x 12cm

Falling, 2018, acrylic, 189.7 x 79.5cm

Holding 2, 2018, acrylic on repurposed shelf, 40 x 35 x 20cm

Nesting, 2021, artist's hair, metal and cotton thread, 230 x 13cm

She Loves You, 1992, metal chain and velvet, 1600 x 11 x 11cm

I Just Want Her to be Safe, 2019, woollen blanket and cotton thread on
Greek fabric, 106 x 187cm

Listening to the Silence (She Watched the Storm Come In), 2019, gold thread
and hair on repurposed blanket, 200 x 150cm, The University of Western
Australia Art Collection, University Senate Grant, 2019

Mountain of Words, 2015-2020, metal loom, metal stool, woollen covered
cushion and 800cm hair ribbon with artist performance.
Loom and table: 110 x 90cm x 80cm with chair

Tertium Non Datur, 1996, woven wool and hair cloth on repurposed
furniture, 600cm cloth, 45 x 110 x 35cm

There in the Distance is Your Shadow, 2021, canvas and feathers,
230 x 294 x 175cm

Echo, 2021, single-channel digital video with sound, duration 3:55min,
ed. 1/5, This project has been made possible with the support of the
Minderoo Foundation





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Olga Cironis would like to thank her family, friends and colleagues who came together to make this exhibition possible.

All artworks are by Olga Cironis.

Olga Cironis is represented by Art Collective WA.

Published by the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery at The University of Western Australia, 2021.

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Cover image:

Echo, 2021, still from single-channel digital video with sound, duration 3:55 min, ed. 1/5. This project has been made possible with the support of the Minderoo Foundation

Inside cover images l-r:

Uncrossable, 2017, repurposed ornament, camouflage fabric and thread, 35 x 10 x 7 cm, courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA.

Hollow Desires, 2016, child's clothing, hair and thread on military canvas, courtesy the artist and Art Collective WA. Photograph by Robert Frith, Acorn.

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