

September 11, 2019

An Interview with Carolina Mazzolari in her Studio in Clapton, London



Courtesy of Carolina Mazzolari.

Carolina Mazzolari is a Milanese artist known for her multidisciplinary practice involving textile manipulation, painting, photography, video and performance. I visited the studio she shares with her husband Conrad Shawcross in Clapton, London and left feeling both uplifted and inspired by her practice. While her range of mediums is extensive, Mazzolari is formally trained as a textile artist, graduating from the *Chelsea College of Art* in 2003; with a focus on dyeing techniques and screen printing. As her primary medium, Mazzolari's textiles are identifiable by their extraordinary level of craftsmanship and detail - often addressing the emotionally charged concepts of grief, love and struggle.

Her upcoming exhibition, *Emotional Fields*, opening at *Tristan Hoare* gallery, takes its name from her critically acclaimed book *Carolina Mazzolari: Emotional Fields*. The book represents the final phase of Mazzolari's research on psychoanalysis and reflects her intense interest in cognition, intuition and human behaviour. As such, her upcoming exhibition promises to take the viewer to the same introspective, emotionally raw and inspiring places as her book. *Emotional Fields* runs from 20th September until 25th October 2019.

For more information see: [Caroline Mazzolari: Emotional Fields at Tristan Hoare](#)



Carolina Mazzolari *Ostberg* 2019, courtesy of the artist.

Describe the space within which you live and work?

I live in Clapton, London. In an old barn which we restored btw 2013/2015. It's divided between my husband and I studios and a family home. It's used to be a barn for horses in the 19th century, where they lived after the trams stopped at night, then a taxidermy and after that a textile maker factory. We have lots of people coming and going. Mainly artists.

How would you define beauty in 280 characters or less?

Non è bello ciò che è bello ma è bello ciò che piace. An old Italian saying which means that beauty is subjective to what you personally like, which is different from general aesthetic.

What attracted you to *Tristan Hoare* as a gallery?

I think Tristan himself, I met him at my studio first, before I met the beautiful Georgian place his gallery is into. He's a kind and sophisticated person, with a deep knowledge in the arts, crafts, aesthetic and artists.



Carolina Mazzolari *Untitled 2019*, courtesy of the artist.

Is there an artist or artwork, which inspires you?

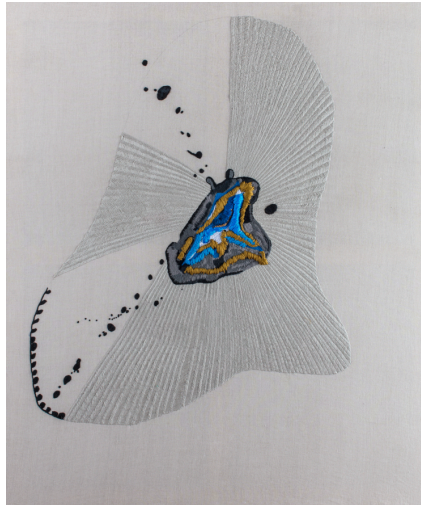
I'm lucky enough to be surrounded by wonderful artists friends whom inspire me everyday. Painters, sculptors, singers, musicians, performers, makers of all sorts... I am very saturated with art and craft since I was a child. I have only always found real peace looking at art and knowing about it from the past, now inspiration comes from within, all this being piled up

Discuss your choice of exhibition title *Emotional Fields*?

Emotional Fields takes its name from the book I made last year, the emotional maps series, which is the last phase of my research on psychoanalysis mixed with *the desire to create a visual realisation of an invisible spiritual state*. A desire to make bits of the unconscious visually tangible on my terms

Do you follow rituals or a routine as you work?

I work 9 to 6 everyday or at least I try to with kids around after school. I always research from books I'm reading, to understand where I'm going. it's always a mix of ancient scripts, literature, non fiction, motifs, sometimes religious or spiritual readings. I always prepare my linens personally and dye the fabric first. I can work anywhere but I work best in my quiet studio upstairs at least at the start of the project. I like to start the work alone, the drawing phase is personal. I like to share the process of making with my team, I'm very close to 'my girls', one or two whom are always around me, with indeed the help of the boys from Conrad's studio downstairs when needed.



Carolina Mazzolari *Hesitation* 2019, courtesy of the artist.

How has your education informed your current practice?

I was educated as a fashion designer then as a textile designer specialised in screen printing, then went to belle arti, then again to textiles. I have acquired a lot of discipline and long work hours from fashion school, construction skills and strict rules on aesthetic finishings in Milan as it was very competitive. I learned about experimenting in dye labs and print studio after that in London gave me so much freedom and opened a world of possibilities. I definitely use this duality in everything I make. Or at least I try.

Do you collect the work of other artists? If so, who?

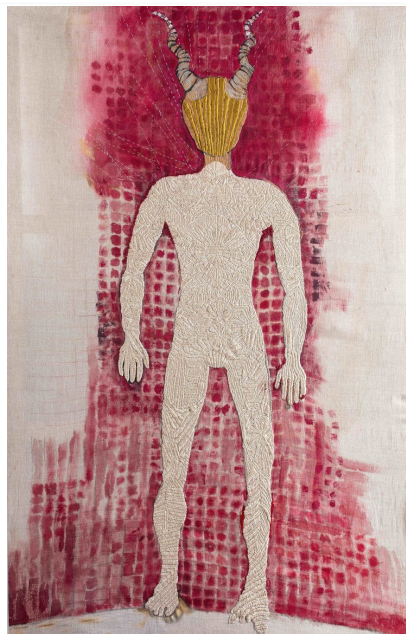
I collect antique tribal artefacts and old industrial objects, little works of friends artists and photographers.

What is your greatest indulgence in life?

Running my studio is my greatest indulgence as it's smoking cigarettes under an Italian red wine spell. One far away and long trip per year. Long nights out forgetting about all my responsibilities back home, probably in this order.

Does your interest in psychology inform your practice?

Yes psychology and therapy informs my practice and nurtures some of the ideas of what I'd like to make. Knowledge creates interesting complexities, always.



Carolina Mazzolari *Figure II (Pun)* 2019, courtesy of the artist.

Discuss your commitment to textiles as a medium?

I'm a textile person, it's been my medium and in my training for so long... I have explored and exploited lots of the aspects of textiles as a maker. Printing, painting, dyeing, weaving, stitching, embroidery, knitting, jacquard making for years, constructing garments or new shapes, I am committed yes. I have practiced a lot as a photographer too since I was very young so I like to use all my skills and sometimes overlap them to create interesting unusual solutions.

Has social media had a positive impact on your work?

Social media is a beast, but it's the only way to communicate your identity to a wider public rather than the people that know you personally. So it is vital nowadays to reach out. I am quite discrete in my practice I don't go out and tell everyone what I do, so for me it's helpful cause it allows me to share in a personal way whom I am, without letting weird interpretations come in. It's a statement, your Page, it's the only way you want others far away to perceive you

Why do you choose to work across different mediums?

I guess it comes from being a Milanese obsessed with design and art, raised by an antiques and tribal collector and a perfumer, spent most of my youth with my eldest sister whom is a very precise architect, another sister who filled room with clay heads, both my parents loved markets and shared this passion to travel to these curiosity places. so I have a broad attachment to what I find interesting I used to work much more with wood plaster and copper, electric fittings, leather, textiles photography... before, now I chose a much slower process. I also like to work with clay and make etchings, but also computer programs. I have an aesthetic that thrives when I can fuse and get the perfect alchemy through a few of these I guess.



Carolina Mazzolari *Love II (detail)* 2019, courtesy of the artist.

What do you wish every child were taught?

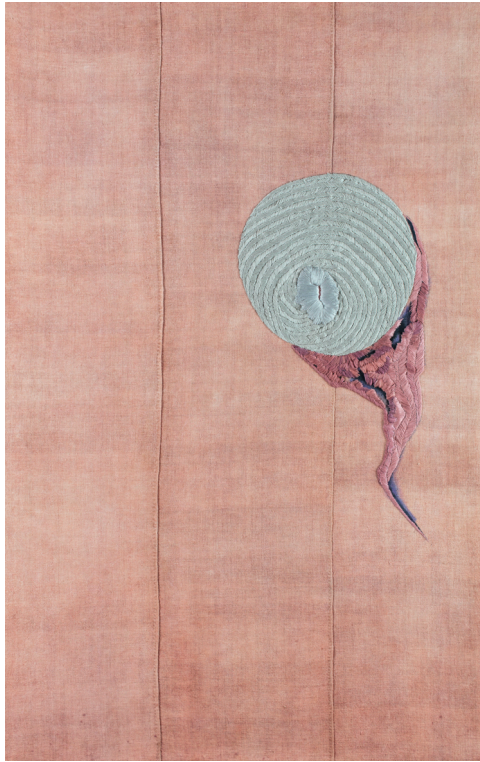
Every child should be thought to be kind and to be curious. We should raise our children as if we were guides, to raise them into independent beings, not dependent on us or others.

Can you elaborate on your involvement with Fine Cell Work?

Fine cell work has allowed me to speed up a very slow process and taught me how important small things such as these can radically also support very different social situations giving them home and profound satisfaction.

Does your Italian heritage impact your work?

I am very Italian and feel my origins very strong, it's profound and definitely the making of my work sometimes is like a prayer to these memories. I'm a Mediterranean who lived by the Alps. Luckily I was able to live in other places too and broaden my vision and understanding (specifically Switzerland Madrid and London).



Carolina Mazzolari *Moon* 2019, courtesy of the artist.

Is there a subject or medium you're yet to explore?

I would like to make sculptures with glass and stones and metal to give life to some of my characters

Do you love what you do? If so, why?

I really love doing it all, perhaps I love it less when it's done. Still, it's the journey that counts not the destination - if not I would have already arrived.

For more information see www.carolinamazzolari.com

Written by Flora Alexandra Ogilvy, Founder of *Arteviste*