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**THE SCULPTURAL  
JEWELS OF  
ARNALDO & GIÒ  
POMODORO**

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## INTRODUCTION

This catalogue is our first devoted solely to the works of two sculptors and brothers, whose early careers focussed on the making and designing of jewellery before they became sculptors. Indeed, the early works of Arnaldo Pomodoro and his brother Giò are so closely interwoven that it is impossible to distinguish between them. Furthermore, many were joint efforts, "... my brother and I worked together. Our exploration proceeded along parallel lines. Some of our jewellery was a collaborative effort. I would start and my brother would finish, or the other way round" (Arnaldo writing in Somaini and Cerritelli 1995, pp. 128-9).

Arnaldo Pomodoro was born in 1926 in Morciano, Emilia Romagna, Italy, before moving to Orciano di Pesaro where his brother Giò was born in 1930. Neither Arnaldo nor Giò had a formal artistic training. Arnaldo studied as a surveyor and from the late 1940s was employed as a surveyor for the restoration of public buildings in Pesaro. He also studied stage design before taking up jewellery in the early 1950s. Indeed, the Brera Academy in Milan held an exhibition of his jewellery designed for the stage in 1956. Giò received his surveyor's diploma from the Bramante Technical Institute at Pesaro before undertaking his national service in 1950-51 in Siena and then Florence. Here he spent his free time visiting museums and in a jewellers near the Ponte Vecchio where he learnt about goldsmithing.

For both brothers the production of jewellery helped finance their early experiments in sculpture. Unlike other leading artists who only made brief incursions into the realm of jewellery, Arnaldo designed jewels from the mid-1950s to the late 1970s and Giò periodically throughout his career.

Arnaldo's jewels have the same fine detailed textured surfaces found in his monumental bronze sculptures, where the smooth geometric form has been split open to reveal an inside that is jagged and twisted as though it were still in a state of fusion. He uses spaces and solid masses, contrasting shapes and volumes, negatives and positives, to create a subtle play of relief and indentations in contrast to the smooth outer surface. To achieve these intricate designs Arnaldo used the ancient technique of cuttlefish bone casting that was first developed in the Bronze Age, "in which I hollow out shapes where I then pour the molten metal; this method (used by traditional goldsmiths in order to obtain rough forms which are subsequently filed down and smoothed out) lets me exploit the linear markings typical of cuttlefish

bones, adding other markings to them as well" (*ibid.*, p. 128). These natural cuttlefish bone markings in the form of concentric ridges and shallow depressions can clearly be seen on a gold circular brooch by Arnaldo [4] and in the background of [3] and [6-7] where he has engraved into the surface of the bone. Arnaldo would carve the cuttlefish bone himself and enrich it with other gold elements that had been prepared by a goldsmith like Louis Capelli who worked in his studio for 40 years.

Giò also initially worked with cuttlefish bone castings but later came to work closely with Giuseppe Fusari, whom he would furnish with detailed life-size designs with further annotations - two are reproduced below on pp. 56 and 58. It is unclear as to how many or what parts of Giò's jewels were actually made by him. For Giò gems had a secondary role that of producing the effects of light or colour, which he sometimes used in conjunction with brightly coloured enamels (47-9).

In 1953 Arnaldo and Giò, together with their fellow artist and close friend, Giorgio Perfetti (1932-1961), formed the "3P" group and produced original jewels and small reliefs, which were first exhibited that year in Pesaro. The following year they moved to Milan and opened a small studio in a basement in Via Visconti di Modrone. Here they met artists such as Enrico Baj, Sergio Dangelo, Lucio Fontana, as well as influential collectors and critics including Peggy Guggenheim and Guido Ballo who greatly appreciated their art. Not everyone, however, was so receptive: Giò writing in 1995 commented that "for others, my brother and I were just jewellery-makers, artists working at a minor art ... The art that mattered was elsewhere" (*ibid.*, p. 141). Didier Ltd is very much with the first group and not the latter. On the website of the Arnaldo Pomodoro Foundation there is a photograph of the studio opening in which Fontana is shown looking at some jewels in a case. Indeed, it was Fontana who introduced the brothers to the Gallerie Montnapoleone in Milan where they held an exhibition of jewellery and miniature objects later that same year. The following year, 1955, they had gallery exhibitions in Rome, Florence, Venice and Milan - their reputations were in the ascendancy.

For the 1957 Milan Triennale Arnaldo and Giò were appointed curators of a new section devoted to artists' jewellery and goldsmithing, to which they invited artists such as Enrico Baj, Sergio Dangelo, Lorenzo Guerrini, and Ettore Sottsass, to make jewellery. Three years later they were involved in organising an exhibition

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of artists' jewels for a show of Italian art and crafts in the Dallas branch of the American department store Neiman Marcus. Unfortunately, there are no published records for this show. A 1964 publication distributed by the Italian Institute for Foreign Trade to promote Italian jewellery and goldsmithing abroad, includes jewels by the Pomodoros alongside those of Bruno Martinazzi, Lucio Fontana, Edgardo Mannucci, and Pietro Consagra (Kaiserlain 1964, pp. 34-5, 38, 80-2, 90-1).

In 1962 Arnaldo and Giò also held their last (until now) exhibition devoted solely to their jewellery, which took place in the Salas de Exposiciones del Aleano, Madrid. Of the 30 exhibits, five were attributed to Giò and six to Arnaldo, but the remaining 19 (seven brooches and 12 necklaces) were unassigned, indicating these were probably joint pieces.

By the early 1960s the brothers were exhibiting their jewels at the most prestigious international art events and museum exhibitions. In 1961 they exhibited 10 pieces as the Pomodoro Brothers in the *International Exhibition of Modern Jewellery 1890-1960*, organized by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Hughes 1961, vol. I, nos 649-50, vol. 2, figs 72-3). Fig. 1. on p. 5 shows one of a series of submission photographs sent by the Pomodoros to the Goldsmiths, several of which are interestingly further stamped on the reverse, Neiman Marcus, Dallas, from the 1960 exhibition.

In the preface to the XXVIII Venice Biennale catalogue of 1962 their jewels were described by Marco Valsecchi as “delicate ornaments quite probably containing the first ideas, the first indications of a revival of sculpture.” Indeed, their jewellery did serve as a way to work out ideas for later sculptures, but this also worked in reverse with sculptures providing inspiration for jewels. The Pomodoros also took part in *Antagonismes 2. L'objet* (1962): Giò with two necklaces and Arnaldo with one, which were loaned by the Galerie Internationale d'Art Contemporain, Paris, where they had previously exhibited. *Antagonismes 2* also included two gold brooches and a bracelet by Lucio Fontana that had been made in the Pomodoro's Milan studio in 1961. They helped Fontana to execute his first piece of jewellery, the artist having come to their studio with a nail in his pocket in order to pierce a sheet of pure gold prepared by their goldsmith (Somaini and Cerritelli 1995, p. 129).

By this stage in their careers, Arnaldo's and Giò's work as sculptors was also being recognized. They

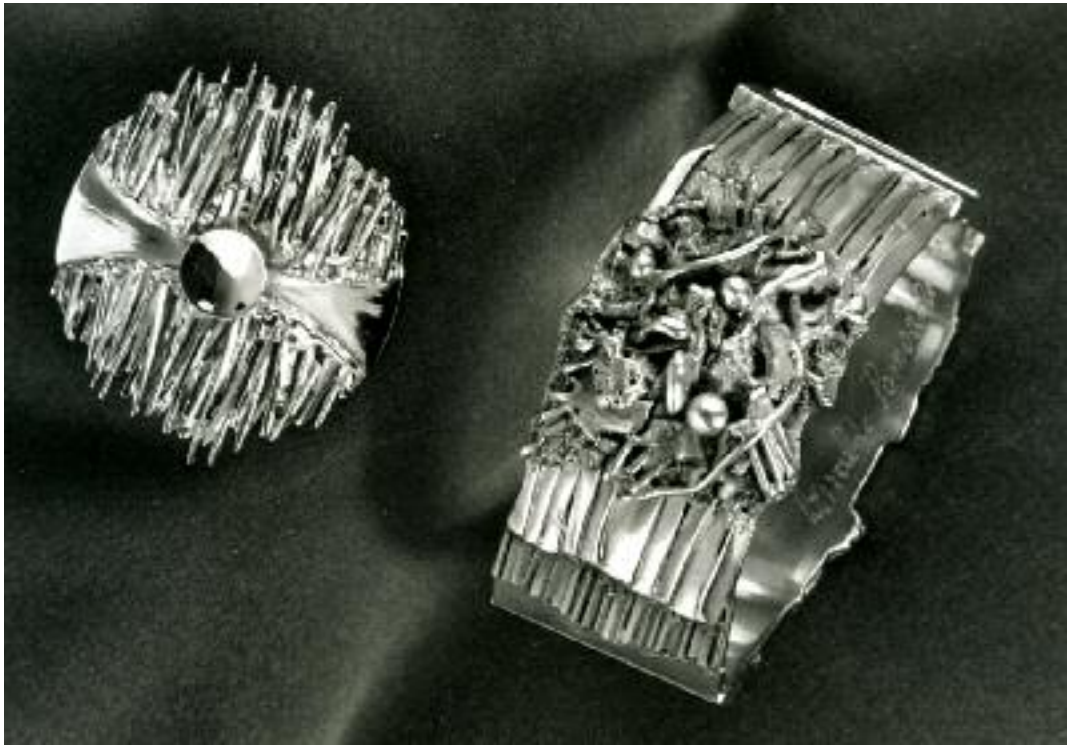
each had a long list of solo exhibitions throughout Italy and Europe. In addition, Arnaldo received the sculpture prize at the São Paulo Biennial in 1963, and the National Prize of Italy at the Venice Biennial in 1964, while Giò had been awarded the first prize for sculpture at the 1959 Paris Biennale and the David E. Bright Prize at the 1962 Venice Biennale.

In 1964 the brothers moved to their own respective studios and Arnaldo became less committed to making jewellery, although he always retained a jeweller's bench in his studio. At this point Arnaldo's work starts to examine the dialogue between positive and negative erosions in cylindrical and spherical forms. Giò's designs also move away from his earliest organic forms and signs in negative, to his study of surfaces under tension (“*superfici in tensione*”) with smoother surfaces with geometric elements: discs and spheres as well as the introduction of kinetic parts and coloured enamels.

Their work was highly respected and their jewels were included in all the major exhibitions of artists and artistic jewellery. The Darmstadt exhibition of 1964/1965 included the geode brooch [6] by Arnaldo and the sapphire bangle [21] by Giò. These jewels were loaned by Rome gallery, Marlborough Galleria dell'Arte, which was affiliated with Marlborough Fine Art Ltd in London and the Marlborough-Gerson Gallery in New York. The most influential exhibition of artists jewellery at this time was organised by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Jewelry by Contemporary Painters and Sculptors* (1967), which also travelled to the Museum Boymans-van-Beuningen, Rotterdam, and the Hessische Landesmuseum, Darmstadt.

From the early 1970s Arnaldo began working with the Marlborough Gallery designing rich and complicated pieces with an eye for the American market, where many have indeed ended up. Many of these pieces were made by his brother-in-law Giancarlo Montebello like [10] and [13]. At the same time Arnaldo designed a few pieces especially for Giancarlo as part of his GEM editions [8-9 and 15], which in contrast were more simple and designed to be mass produced. Giò also undertook designing some limited editions for Giancarlo between 1967 and 1973 that bear the same characteristics as his unique contemporary works with the assembly of geometric elements [26-9]. It is these GEM editions that were included in the 1973 Boston exhibition, *Jewelry as Sculpture as Jewelry*, which was organized by Joan Sonnebend, of Sculpture to Wear, a gallery in

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**Fig. 1.** Photograph of two gold jewels submitted to the Goldsmiths Company by Arnaldo and Giò Pomodoro for inclusion in the 1961 *International Exhibition of Modern Jewellery*. Photo: Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, London



**Fig. 2.** Square teak cigarette box, the lid with a silvered bronze relief with typical textured surface, 1960s. 5 x 11.5 x 11.5 cm.



**Fig. 3.** *3 Millenio*, sterling silver watch with a sculptural face, made by Intercoins, 2000 (Collection: Didier Haspeslagh)



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New York, that specialised in artists' jewels especially those produced by Giancarlo Montebello in Milan and François Hugo in Aix-en-Provence. Around this time too, Giò was asked by the jeweller Massimo Fumanti to provide unique jewels to sell in his Rome shop on the Via Frattina.

Arnaldo and Giò also participated in the second edition of *AUREA* in 1974, which was a trade show held in the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence for goldsmiths and jewellery houses to present their new designs to a wider audience. In this edition there was a greater emphasis on artists' jewellery. This was the only time Giò participated, but Arnaldo took part in the 1979 edition. The resulting exhibition, *Progettare con l'oro*, was organized to compare the different approaches to the creation of jewellery by designers and artists. The jewels of painters and sculptors were further divided into two sections, one dedicated solely to Arnaldo, Lorenzo Guerrini and Flora Wiechmann Savioli, and the other entitled "*Margina*", brought together those artists who only occasionally had been involved in the creation of jewellery.

Later in the 1980s Arnaldo designed a necklace and a bracelet for Artcurial, Paris, which were to be produced in editions of 150 in vermeil and 30 in 18ct gold. He also designed multiples for company gifts and promotional material like the gilded bronze triangular pendant [17] or the teak box in Fig. 2.

From the 1990s the exhibitions that Arnaldo and Giò participated in tend to become more retrospective than presenting new works of art. In 1995, *The Italian Metamorphosis 1943-1968* exhibition in the Guggenheim Museum in New York included 62 jewels by 16 artists, including six pieces by Arnaldo and eight by Giò, two of which are reproduced here (25 and 30). For a further list of more recent exhibitions for which catalogues are more readily available see below p. 7.

In 1995 Giò had a solo exhibition of his jewellery, *Giò Pomodoro. Ornamenti 1954-1995* in the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice that also travelled to Arezzo. An American showing was held in 1997 in the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. Our catalogue contains eight pieces that were included in this latter exhibition: 18-19, 23, 25, 30, 34, 41 and 45. It is also about this time that Giò reverts back to designing more streamlined sculptural jewels that do not bear any additional ornament or coloured gems (cf. Crispolti 2001, p. 61 for a silver bangle executed in 1996 now in the collection of the Museo Gori e Zucchi,

Arezzo). One of his last designs is the sculptural silver watch in Fig. 3, which was made to celebrate the new millennium. Giò died two years later aged 72.

The 55 pieces presented in this catalogue have been assembled from the secondary art market and especially from three collections that make up just over half. The first collection comes from the estate of Mrs Vera List, a renowned collector of sculpture in New York from the 1960s to the 1980s, who on running out of space changed her focus to artists' jewels. Six pieces are included here, all but one of which [28] were designed by Arnaldo [9-10, 13-15] and made by Giancarlo Montebello either as part of his GEM editions or for the Marlborough Galleria d'Arte, Rome.

The second collection comes from the skilled Italian jeweller Giuseppe Fusari, who made jewels for Giò. Indeed, Fusari had been taught goldsmithing by Giò at night school in Milan in the 1950s. Totalling 14 examples, these pieces include some of Giò's earliest creations with two brooches dating from 1959 [18-19], but most date from the later 1960s and 1970s comprising bracelets [25, 48], enamelled pendants with and without gemstones [30, 39-40, 47], a later pendant dating to 1985 [49], and four boxes in gold and semi-precious stones from the early 1980s [52-55]. It is noticeable, however, that the gemstone content of all but the earliest two is much higher than in his other works, and certainly much greater than those of Arnaldo's whose pieces always remained primarily sculptural.

The last is a collection of 13 jewels from Angioletta Miroglio that formed part of an exhibition of jewellery by Giò she arranged at the Documenta Gallery in São Paulo in December 1972 [29, 33-38, 41-6]. According to the original agreement in April 1972, Giò was contracted to provide a minimum of 40 pieces ranging from necklaces, bracelets, rings, and brooches of which Angioletta agreed to purchase a guaranteed minimum for a total of 8 million lire at a discount of 35% on the selling price. A contemporary newspaper article announcing the opening of this festival of Giò Pomodoro reported that as jewellery exhibitions normally leave husbands aloof, Angioletta and Christina Yufon (of the Galleria Documenta) had come up with a novel scheme that would certainly attract them – the jewels would dance with Emanuela Sabah, the famous Iranian belly dancer. We hope that you enjoy our catalogue without the need of such extra entertainment.

Martine Newby Haspeslagh

## SELECTED JEWELLERY EXHIBITIONS

- 1953:** *Mostra dei Tre P*, Galleria Amici dell'Arte, Casa Rossini, Pesaro (AP, GP)
- 1954:** *Arnaldo e Giò Pomodoro*, Galleria Numero, Florence (AP, GP)
- 1954:** *X Triennale dell'arte decorativi*, Milan (AP, GP)
- 1954-1955:** *3P: Giorgio Perfetti, Giò e Arnaldo Pomodoro*, Galleria Montenapoleone 6a, Milan; Galleria La Cornice, Biella; Galleria del Cavallino, Venice, Galleria L'Obelisco, Rome (AP, GP)
- 1955:** *Arnaldo e Giò Pomodoro*, Galleria del Naviglio, Milan (AP, GP)
- 1957:** *XI Triennale dell'arte decorativi*, Milan (AP, GP)
- 1960:** *Festival Italiano*, Neiman Marcus, Dallas (AP, GP)
- 1961:** *International Exhibition of Modern Jewellery (1890-1961)*, Goldsmith's Hall, London (AP, GP)
- 1961:** *Parures et bijoux dans le monde*, Musée Ethnographique, Neuchâtel (AP, GP)
- 1961:** *Pietre e gioielli*, Palazzo Massimo, Rome (AP, GP)
- 1962:** *L'Exposition Antagonismes 2. L'objet*, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris (AP, GP)
- 1962:** *Joyas de Arnaldo y Giò Pomodoro*, Salas de Exposiciones del Aleneo, Madrid (AP, GP)
- 1964/5:** *Schmuck Internationale Ausstellung*, Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt (AP, GP)
- 1967:** *Jewelry by Contemporary Painters and Sculptors*, Museum of Modern Art, New York; international travelling exhibition (AP, GP)
- 1969:** *I Rassegna del gioiello d'arte firmato*, Croce Rossa Italiana, Sala Bolaffi, Turin (GP)
- 1970:** *International Jewellery Arts*, Seibu Department Store, Tokyo (AP)
- 1970:** *Schmuck 70 – Tendenzen*, Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim (AP)
- 1971:** *Gold + Silber Schmuck + Gerät*, Norishalle, Nuremberg (AP)
- 1971:** *Giò Pomodoro - Gli ornamenti*, L'uomo e l'arte, Milan (GP)
- 1971:** *Jewelry '71: An Exhibition of Contemporary Jewelry*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (AP, GP)
- 1972:** *Ornamentos*, Documenta Gallery, São Paulo (GP)
- 1972:** *Sieraad 1890-1972*, Zonnehof Museum, Amersfoort (AP)
- 1973:** *Jewelry as Sculpture as Jewelry*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (AP, GP)
- 1973:** *Schmuck 1973 Tendenzen*, Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim (AP)
- 1974:** *Aurea '74*, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence (AP, GP)
- 1979-80:** *Progettare con l'oro*, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, (AP)
- 1980:** *Schmuck International 1900-1980*, Künstlerhaus, Vienna (AP)
- 1984:** *L'oro delle Marche*, Chiesa di San Domenico, Fano (GP, AP)
- 1985:** *L'oro della ricerca plastica*, Chiesa di San Domenico, Fano (GP)
- 1988:** *Gioiello. Biennale Svizzera del gioiello d'arte contemporaneo*, Villa Malpensata, Lugano (AP)
- 1989:** *Ornamenta I. Internationale Schmuckkunst*, Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim (AP)
- 1993:** *13 Goldschmiede*, Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste, Munich (AP)
- 1994-95:** *The Italian Metamorphosis 1943-1968*, Salomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (AP, GP)
- 1995-96:** *Giò Pomodoro. Ornamenti 1954/1995*, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, and Basilica Inferiore di San Francisco, Arezzo (GP)
- 1997:** *Giò Pomodoro. Ornamenti 1954-1996*, The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York (GP)
- 2000:** *Het versierde Ego. Het Kunstjuweel in de 20ste Eeuw*, Koningin Fabiolazaal, Antwerp (AP, GP)
- 2001:** *L'arte del gioiello ed il gioiello d'artista dal '900 ad oggi*, Museo degli Argenti, Florence (AP, GP)
- 2001:** *Imaginazione aurea. Artisti-orafi e orafi-artisti in Italia nel secondo Novecento*, Mole Vanvitelliana, Ancona (AP, GP)
- 2003:** *Être ou ne pas Être ... Peintres ou sculpteurs? Les bijoux des plus grands*, Musée de l'orfèvrerie de la Communauté française, Château de Seneffe, Belgium (AP, GP)
- 2004:** *Brillant(e)*, Casa di Risparmio, Merano (AP, GP)
- 2004:** *Ori d'artista. Il gioiello nell'arte italiana 1900-2004*, Museo del Corso, Rome (AP, GP)
- 2007:** *Gioiello contemporaneo*, Museo degli argenti, Florence (GP)
- 2008:** *Bijoux sculptures. L'art vous va si bien*, Musée d'art et d'industrie, La Piscine, Roubaix (AP, GP)
- 2008-9:** *La scultura italiana nel gioiello della seconda metà del novecento*, Museo A. e C. Gaffoglio, Rapallo (AP, GP)
- 2009-10:** *Objets d'art. Von Picasso bis Warhol*, *Künstlerschmuck der Avantgarde*, Museum für Angewandte Kunst Köln, Cologne, and Stiftung Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg (AP, GP)
- 2010:** *Bodyguard. Une collection privée de bijoux d'artistes*, Passage de Retz, Paris (AP, GP)
- 2011-13:** *From Picasso to Jeff Koons. The Artist as Jeweler*, The Museum of Art and Design, New York; international travelling exhibition (AP, GP)

### 3. GOLD CHOKER, 1961

Unique 18ct gold choker with 17 cuttlefish bone cast links executed in rose, white and brown coloured gold, some of which are further decorated with sections of thin white gold rods and small molten lumps of gold, and ten small randomly placed smooth geometric links, with a trident and loop fastening.

#### Marks

Engraved dated signature on reverse of the largest link:  
*Arnaldo Pomodoro 1961*

#### Dimensions

Length: 40 cm

Largest link: 2.8 x 1.8 cm

#### Comment

This choker clearly displays Arnaldo's interest in experimenting with the colour as well as with the texture of gold. He generally preferred to use red or rose gold, obtained by adding a little silver and a lot more copper to the crucible, because it was "closer to the colour of bronze" (writing in Somaini and Cerritelli 1995, p. 129).



### 3. GOLD CHOKER, 1961

