

Sculptural forms, performance and the body define Marco Chianchetti's practice. Architecture is significant for his work, with wooden and metal structures a recurring motif. He is a 'post-medium' artist, but since 2010 his art has been increasingly bound up with clay and casting processes, providing a coherent framework and bringing him critical attention.

His sculptural work embraces both abstraction and figuration: *Untitled Aluminium Sculptures* (2012) comprises abstract cast aluminium forms that reveal the imprints, indents and impressions of the artist's hands—fingers, palms, knuckles and wrists leaving their traces through myriad gestures of kneading, pressing, pulling, rolling and folding. Sidestepping this work's monumentality, the ceramic series of *'Pink Sculptures'* (2013) are seemingly floppy, glistening, intestine-like vessels bunched up, squeezed and folded over. Photographs documenting the finished works feature hands restaging key moments in their making—a fist clenched around one, a finger poking through another.

The series *'Black Sculptures'* (2013) is pared down further still, the forms becoming more literal manifestations of the physical gestures involved in their creation. Given Chianchetti's performative bent, it was a natural step to employ other body parts. In *'Untitled (Bricks and Tiles)'* (2014), he pressed his forearms into a block of clay, which was subsequently fired, leaving their indent and the attendant fissures as the work's poetic and almost minimalist *raison d'être*.

Chianchetti approached the corporeal from a more oblique angle in *Bullet Holes – A Measure of Kinetic Energy (AK47)* (2014), hiring an ex-policeman to fire rounds from an AK47 semi-automatic rifle into large blocks of clay, before casting the aftermath of deformed cavities in bronze. The results are both beautiful and horrific. A calmer approach followed in his 2015 series *'Sculptures for Birds'*; ceramic stands on which birds of prey and exotic birds can perch. Showcasing various casting and glazing techniques from underglaze washes to high-gloss finishes, the forms are ambiguously organic abstractions, though the birds that modelled the finished pieces seemed happy to use them as intended.

These were followed, in the spring of 2016, by a commission for the 20th Biennale of Sydney. A mixed-media installation uniting performance, architecture, the human body and sculptural casting processes, *The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins?*, comprised three aviary structures. Inside, the artist placed cast body parts made of birdseed on which mynah birds would feast. Unpopular in Australia due to being a non-native and invasive species, Chianchetti chose the mynahs as a means of provoking discussion about displacement, migration and immigration. As a site-specific work for Sydney's Mortuary Station—a former railway used for transporting the dead—the project drew a poignant connection to the notion of birds as carriers of human spirits into the afterlife, or as signifiers of death. When the birds pecked at the sculptures, the seeds would drop onto the floor, as if ready to grow again—the cycle of life played out through imagery of the dead and decaying human body.

• Matthew Price



Marco Chianchetti Born 1973, London. Lives and works in London. Selected Group Exhibitions: 2016 – 'The Future is Already Here....it's just not evenly distributed'; 20th Biennale of Sydney; 2015 – 'Drawing Biennale', Goodman Gallery, Cape Town; 'Puerto Paraiso', Red Departamental de Artes Plásticas, Medellín, Colombia; 'The Campos de Gutiérrez Archive Travels to Norte de Santander', La Boga-tela Museum, Colombia; 2012 – 'Rudolph Polansky and Marco Chianchetti', Ancient and Modern, London; 'Figure and Ground', Utopian Stumps, Melbourne, Australia; 2011 – 'Rock the Casbah', Swiss Institute of Rome.

Marco Chianchetti

- Perch (with Eclactus Parrot), 2015  
Gilded ceramic, Eclactus parrot  
23 x 12 x 9 cm  
(9 x 4 x 3 1/2 in)
- Untitled (with brick), 2014  
Unglazed ceramic, concrete  
28 x 18 x 22  
(11 x 7 x 9 in)
- Untitled handheld sculpture I (pink), 2014  
Ceramic, enamel  
24 x 18 x 14 cm  
(9 1/2 x 7 x 5 1/2 in)
- Untitled handheld sculpture II (pink), 2014  
Ceramic, enamel  
19 x 8 x 7 cm  
(7 1/2 x 3 x 2 3/4 in)
- Brick (Medellín), 2014  
Unglazed ceramic  
20 x 40 x 12 cm  
(7 1/2 x 15 3/4 x 4 3/4 in)

