

Light Metal

Aron-Irving Li makes small-scale sculptures predominantly with metal: usually copper along with silver and bronze. Whether tennis ball or basketball-size, his sculptures share some formal qualities of such game pieces – circular, mobile, patterned, tactile, light – as well as their peculiar combination of flexibility and strength. It's hard not to pick them up and roll them in your hands. Of course, metal cannot bounce, yet Li's sculptures seem to embody the twisting arc of a fast curve ball, slowed down for the human eye to perceive its intricate spin. His pieces tend to be punctured, with pinholes, circles, ellipses or tiny wavy lines; some are covered with droplet-like appendages; others offer two sculptures in one, with a perforated surface surrounding a vessel, like a pod holding a seed. Whatever their size, shape or perforations, the sculptures have a mesmerising effect, due to the repetitions of patterns that shape them and their use of negative space. By putting distinct patterns on one piece – circle, arc, perforations – Li has created a contrapuntual sculpture. Just as the musical phrases of a fugue are interwoven together while depending upon silences, Li's patterns are tightly fused while depending upon negative space. It's as if the artist were attempting to realise the greatest number of patterns on the smallest possible surface to create a striking combination of fragility and strength. How many shapes and holes can a piece of metal sustain while still remaining intact? In this way, Li's sculptures recall ornate details in Baroque Wunderkammer sculptures, from a Biblical scene carved on a cherry pit to a ship shaped from an ivory horn. Yet the resemblance to counterpoint seems closer since music remains a non-figurative artistic expression. Unlike painting, musical compositions cannot represent a landscape or a face, although Wunderkammer masters such as Egidius Lobenigk carved polyhedrons, embedded in each other, in ivory. Li's works are such abstract wonders, liberated from royal and religious representations to realise the potential of materials. *Jennifer Allen*

Aron-Irving Li (1989, Hudicksvall, Sweden) is an Oslo-based artist working mainly with small sculptures and objects, predominantly in metal and wood. Li completed his MFA studies at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts in 2015 after studying silversmithing at Leksands Folkhögskola in Sweden 2008–2010. He has participated in group exhibitions at many institutions, including Arvika Konsthall in Arvika, Sweden and the Oslo galleries Brudd Kunsthåndverk and Galleri Kirkeristen. Li has also done commissions for Galleri Format in Oslo and Akershus Kunstsenter in Lillestrøm. Having worked extensively with jewelry, the artist expanded his practice to include objects and sculptures, which focus on form and tactility and which often fit into the hand. Li invites his audiences to pick up his works and view them closely, creating an interaction between object and spectator.

I have always been fascinated by the ability to create objects, and it is in my art that this fascination comes into play. I explore the three-dimensional form while emphasising physical and visual aspects such as surface, texture, volume, shape, material and colour, with the desire to arouse curiosity. Inspired by the beauty of nature and the precision of geometry, I work with the specific encounter between man and nature while addressing broader themes such as humanity's impact on the environment.

I am also interested in the relation between the object and the spectator. Focusing on shape and tactility, I invite spectators to pick up my works and to view them closely in order to create a stronger physical understanding of the work through the senses. While relying on a strong design, I hope to create a meeting between the body and the mind whereby the intellectual content is linked to the physical and bodily experience of my works.

Process is important, especially the relation of my works to the body, both mine and the viewers'. By allowing the materials and the techniques to affect each piece, I can sense its final form emerging in my hands. Traces of process are preferably left untouched as a memory of the creative process. In this moment, I find the motivation and inspiration that drives my art forward. I use mainly metal due to its plasticity as well as strength and flexibility. My works are often hand-size and shaped to evoke the desire to lift them up and touch them. Through the use of repetitive patterns, I hope to obtain a design that appeals to the viewers' senses while drawing them in closer. The design varies with the intention, but the work may turn out to be an object of sculpture, jewelry or both. *Aron-Irving Li*



Filiciane 2014, copper, 45 x 30 x 30 cm.

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Objects 2014, mixed media, dimensions variable.
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Andi Paulsdotter.

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Untitled 2014, copper, 25 × 12 × 12 cm.



Untitled 2014, copper, 25 × 8 × 8 cm.



Spore 2014, copper, 8 × 6 × 6 cm.

