

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Venice Biennale

What Remains ...

To create the *Remains* brooch and necklace collection, I salvaged decorative scrap wood, used to craft custom picture frames, from the floor of an Istanbul frame shop. The waste wood was no different from the wood that had gone into the actual frames and yet that arbitrary separation had condemned some pieces to worthlessness. And for some reason, I could not walk away from those charming orphans of production.

So, without knowing what I would do with them, I took the remains home. I researched my salvage. I experimented in the wood shop with giving the embellished fragments forms and then finished them as their forms seemed to suggest. Originally, the wood had been destined to shelter and display artwork—a painting, a photograph—and to serve as a window looking onto that art. As frames they would have carried on a dialogue with both the artwork and the viewers of that art; now, as brooches and necklaces, they carry on a dialogue with the human body, and even with the bodies surrounding that body.

In creating this collection, I found it gratifying that, through design, I had the opportunity to give these scraps an unanticipated usefulness and to enable the parts to recover a wholeness all their own. In return, the scraps provided me with a material that was simultaneously noble (wood) and worthless (waste) with which to play with the juxtaposition of what is precious and what is not precious, a theme that I have touched on previously in my work. Although I often use traditional materials and techniques, I find it most interesting to explore the nature of “value” by incorporating non-traditional techniques and materials—rubber, paper, packing foam and, in the case of *Remains*, discarded wood—or even using them on their own. In the process, I have found that it is possible to elevate so-called “low” materials through a series of creative choices.

Because I was working with small amounts of production leftovers, some of the finished *Remains* pieces are unique and some are made in only limited editions, their uniqueness or rarity investing what were originally castoffs with new value. In the end, however, whatever the starting point of my design—whether concept or form—it is actually the wearer who determines its value. I am filled with joy, nonetheless, at the thought that there could be a moment when the memories that a piece of mine may evoke in its beholder are similar to those that led me to design it.

In space, there are a million paths to choose; in time, a million moments to attend to or neglect. I believe that we construct our existence from these choices: What do we keep? What do we cast away? What do we make of what we have and what remains? Through design, what is left can begin again.