

Factum Fetishes

MARIANA COOK

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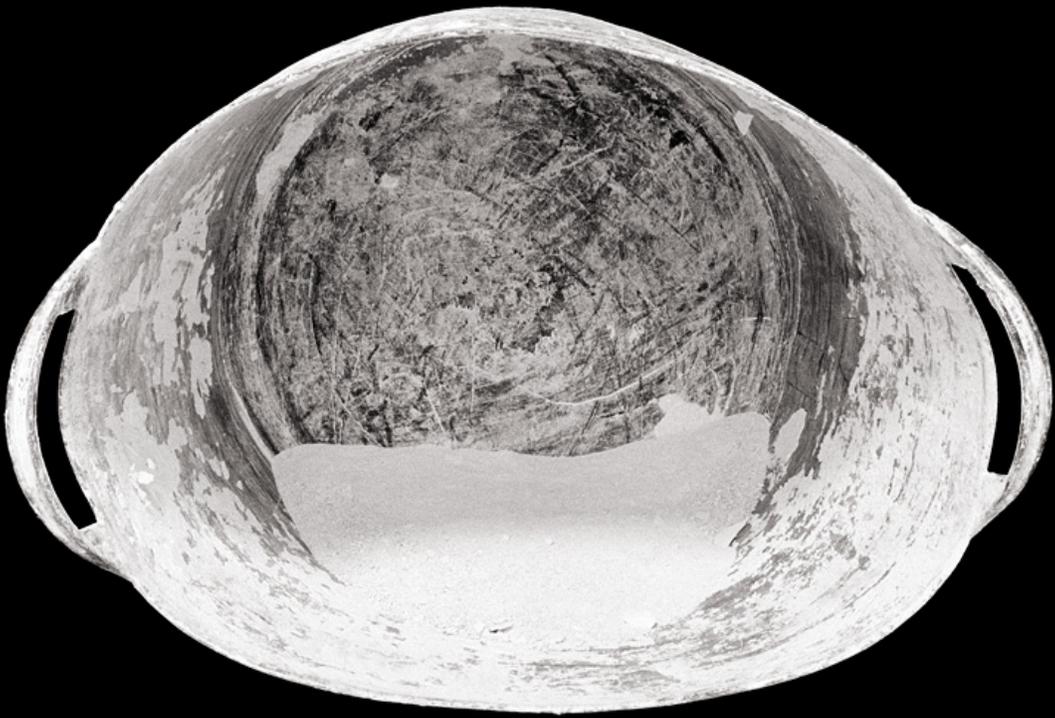
Factum Fetishes is a series of 13 images, each in an edition of 10
with 3 Artist's Proofs and 1 Printer's Proof.

Aquatinted copper plates with Charbonnel etching ink onto 300gsm Somerset
Satin paper produce the deep black in each print. The shape of the object,
untouched by the inked plate, is coated with clear gelatin by hand over which a digital
pigment print is generated, precisely registered on Factum Arte's flatbed printer. The digitally printed
elements are then coated, also by hand, with a UV resistant varnish to enhance the difference
between the black of the background and the tonal subtlety of the
fetishes, rendering three-dimensionality to the black and white image.

Each print is signed and numbered by the artist.

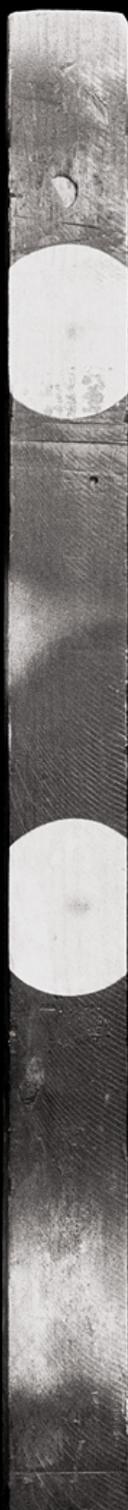




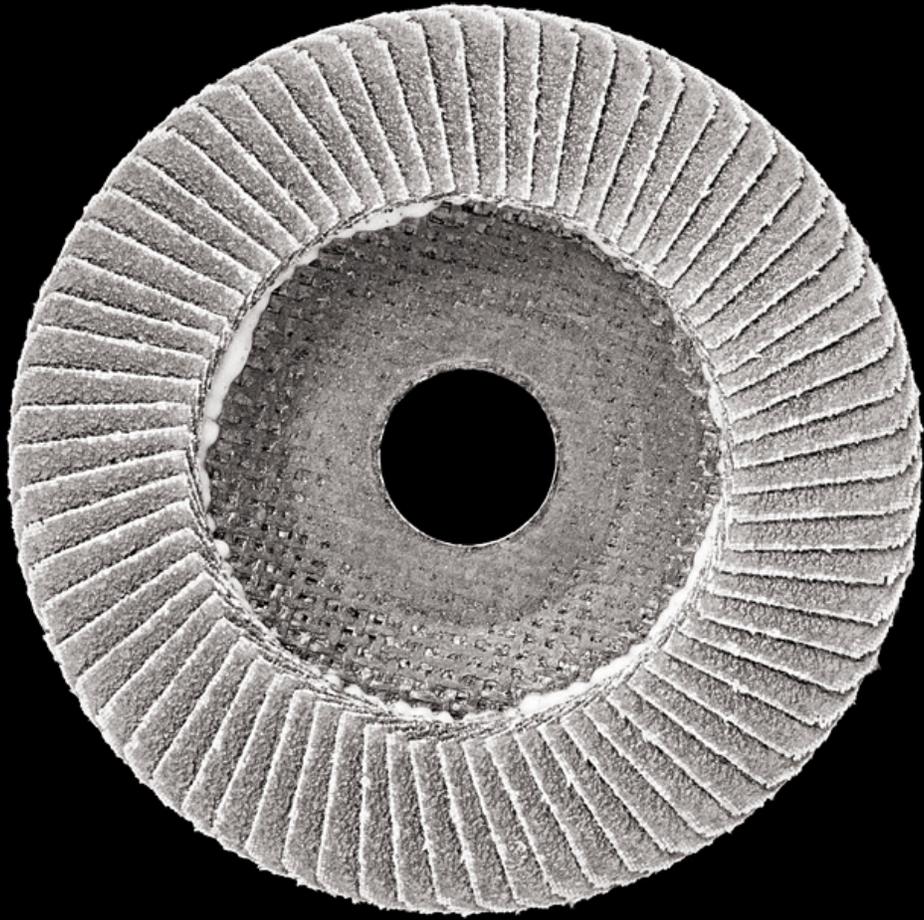








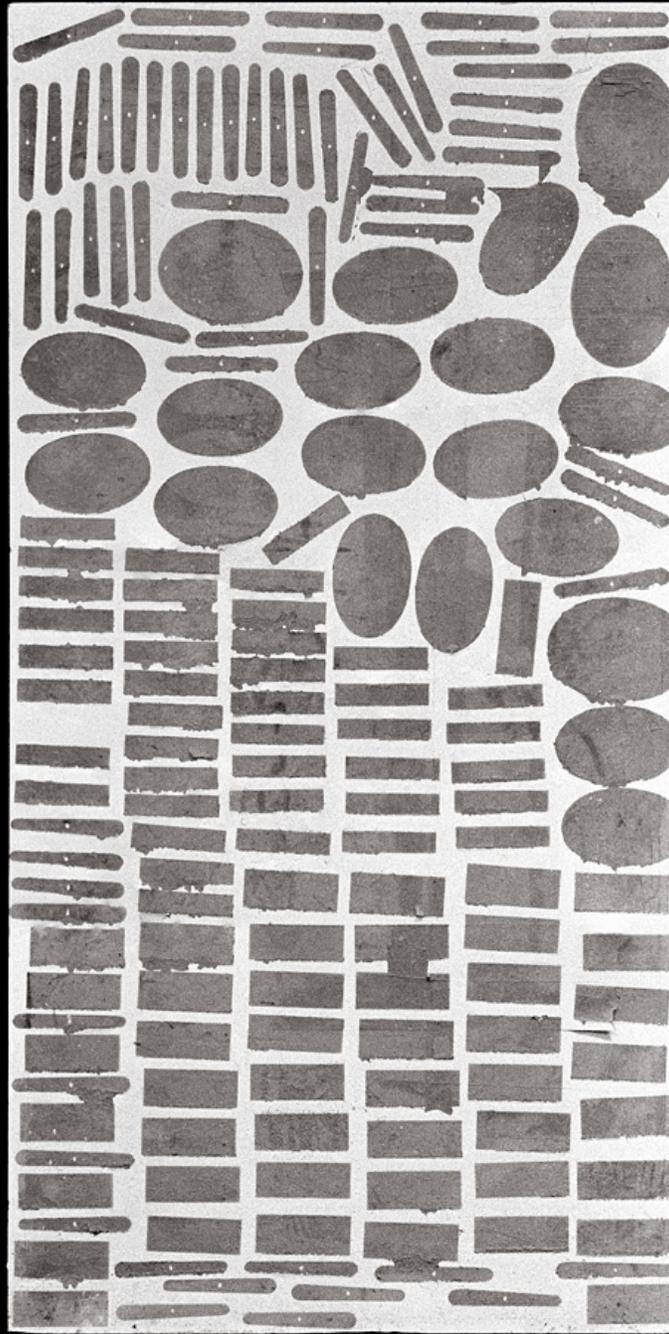














FACTUM FETISHES

PAINTER'S VEST: Jordi García Pons at Factum always wears this vest in winter when he prepare gesso to coat aluminium, canvas, and paper. Work clothes take on the character of their wearer, showing evidence of the work done and the hand doing it.

PLASTER PROFILE: A simple profile can produce beautifully complex shapes in 3D. This constructed wooden shape was used to create a form in wet plaster before it was turned into wax and then cast in bronze. Its simplicity is in direct conversation with the works of Kurt Schwitters. The only remaining Merz building, the Schwittershytte on the island of Hjertøya in Norway, was in poor condition when it was recorded by Factum Arte in 2009. The plaster-coated assemblages featured in the building feel as functional and worn as this profile.

BUCKET AND GLASS MICROSPHERES: Plastic buckets used for mixing plaster are intentionally flexible to help with cleaning. When the mixing bucket becomes a receptacle for the glass microspheres that are used to sandblast, a poetry emerges from the scraped plaster surface, pristine spheres, and slumped black plastic.

BRUSH: This brush was used to clean resin material from a wooden sand casting box. A mixture of resin and sand is compacted into the box, surrounding the object. When the mixture has hardened, the box's detachable wooden sides are removed, the mould is opened and the positive removed. Coagulated clusters of resin and sand are caught in the brush's bristles. Some tools gain a patina over time; others acquire their character when misused. Once past its functional life, this cheap brush is simply discarded.

GLOVE: In an age of health and safety considerations, the use of rubber, cloth, and protective gloves is a common feature of all workshops. James Nasmyth, the engineer, entrepreneur, and inventor of the steam hammer was not a fan of gloves. He wrote: "The eyes and the fingers, the bare fingers, are the two principal inlets to sound practical instruction. I have no faith in young engineers who are addicted to wearing gloves".

BOARD: In the paint-chamber, many different objects have been painted on this simple strip of wood. The last objects that were painted on this board were two small soldiers made for the Saudi artist Manal Al Dowayan. Their circular bases have left clearly defined traces, while the spray gun has deposited a soft-edged ghosting of paint around the protected area.

HOT PLATE: After heating gelatin and gesso for many years, a standard electric hot plate takes on a totally different character. Rabbit-skin glue, calcium carbonate (CaCO₃), dust, soap, and other materials form a new conglomerate on the enamel surface. When isolated from its working environment, the abstract shape and organically accumulated matter on the plate's surface feel like the artefacts of an electric age.

GRINDING WHEEL PAD: Electrical tools don't tend to have as much character as manual ones, but their by-products can stimulate a sense of intrigue and wonder. Used grinding pads become objects of curiosity in their own right as they are changed by the process of grinding, sanding, and polishing diverse materials.

SACRIFICIAL ANODE: Electro-forming and electro-plating require the use of a positively charged metal rod, an *anode*, placed in a liquid solution. The copper or other metal in the solution forms as a solid on the anode, accumulating in coral-like growths. At a certain point the anode ceases to function and is discarded. *Sacrificial anodes* and *witness marks* are part of the alchemical world of transformation and mediation.

PALETTE: There have been interesting photographic anthologies of different painters' palettes—Monet and Van Gogh, for example, are instantly recognizable by theirs. This plastic palette has a hole that cannot fit a thumb but is useful for brushes or a water container. The retouching acrylics used in Factum's printing department dry quickly, producing recognizable patterns of dried paint and liquid residues.

BUTCHER'S KNIFE: This knife was forged by a blacksmith in the north of Spain and is typical of those used by butchers in the region. At Factum it is used to clean and prepare moulds. The way each artisan's tools change with use is very personal.

PAINTED CHIPBOARD: A sheet of composite chipboard was used to paint various parts of the facsimile of the Table of Teschen. Silhouettes of oval and rectangular shapes are evident. The ovals were produced during the gesso coating of aluminium pieces, which were used to recreate the Meissen porcelain medallions that adorn the top of the table. The rectangles were formed by the reproduction of the semi-precious stones on the table's legs. The original table was made for the Marquis de Breteuil in 1780 and is now in the Musée du Louvre. Factum was commissioned to replicate Johann Christian Neuber's masterpiece so that a copy could remain at the Château de Breteuil.

CAST SALT: For several years Factum and the foundries it works with have been experimenting with casting salt. During the casting process the mould requires a collar to prevent spillage when molten material is poured from the crucible. This particular object is a by-product shaped by the collar of the mould that needed to be separated from the cast form. Salt is not a normal casting material, but in an age of water shortages, desalination, and rising sea levels, salt is a material that needs to be revisited. It becomes totally liquid at about 800 Celsius and does not become a gas until reaching much higher temperatures. Salt is tricky to work with because the gases it emits are toxic.