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Pedestal (Sic semper evello mortem tyrannis/Thus always I bring death to tyrants), 2017/2018

In my previous body of work, I explored the ways in which women's perceptions about themselves have changed over the last five hundred years. I particularly focused on how certain dichotomous female figures from the colonial narrative became the epicentre for this change.

This piece, *Pedestal (Sic semper evello mortem tyrannis/Thus always I bring death to tyrants)*, takes on a more contemporary stance: the female subject becomes more universal, more anonymous. It speaks to an aggressively masculine outlook that eradicates any sense of autonomy attributed to the female body. The woman becomes "a common household object" – a material possession. However, the furniture element suggests that she still forms an integral part of the familial/societal structure: if a living room had to be devoid of chairs, for example, then several of the functions it normally facilitates would be rendered null and void.

The head takes the form of a golden wild boar skull. Boar symbolism is often associated with the dichotomous relationship between the patience/gentleness of motherhood and the aggressive defence of one's legacy. Traditionally, the boar has been viewed as a symbol of war, warriors and courage. The golden colour speaks to a sense of commodification and objectification – the woman becomes the hunting trophy, a precious and inanimate memento of a previously fierce force of nature.

However, even though 'she' appears to be trapped in the gender role assigned to 'her' by the patriarchy, the taught position of her arms (reminiscent of the arm rests of a chair) suggest that 'she' is aware of 'her' inherent power and is waiting for the tyrants – that have been using 'her' to elevate themselves for centuries – to finally fall. The Latin phrase in the subtitle, *Sic semper evello mortem tyrannis*, was originally attributed to Marcus Junius Brutus during the murder of Julius Caesar. Brutus has come to symbolise the ultimate traitor and thus this association with his words proposes that, since ancient times, influential women have often been discredited as turncoats, deserters and villains.

The phrase translates as "Thus always I bring death to tyrants" and is also said to have been shouted aloud by John Wilkes Booth, another dichotomous figure in history, the moment before he pulled the trigger to assassinate US President Abraham Lincoln. In this context, in the terms of Luigi Ciuti*, it advocates that *this is what you get when you attempt to rule over people. This is what anyone gets when they try to rule over people. Tyrants get overthrown. That's the way it has always been and that's the way it'll always be*. It introduces a sense of hope to the age-old cycle of female oppression by suggesting that this kind of death will inevitably come to despotic rulers... and patriarchal tyrants.

*Cuiti, Luigi. 2016. *What exactly did John Wilkes Booth mean by "sic semper tyrannis"?* Viewed 16/07/2017, <<https://www.quora.com/What-exactly-did-John-Wilkes-Booth-mean-by-sic-semper-tyrannis>>