

## Q1. Can you give us an insight into your artistic process? Is your work pre-planned or created intuitively? How long does each work take to complete?

My art celebrates connection to land, natural elements, cycles, and memory through a diverse range of artistic practices such as weaving, embroidery, stitching, netting, and tools making. But also, videomaking, photography installations, performance, and live art.

I also collaborate with Karl, we moved specifically to the Island of Sant'Antioco to learn from one of the last master weavers. A central part of our practice is transmitting what we do for future generations through workshops, spinning and weaving in public, festivals, and exhibitions. We also have taken part in several art residency projects. These feeds our wider research that connects different lands such as Sardinia, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, and Australia, often through projects in rural or remote zones that involve local communities.

## Q2. How long does each artwork take to complete?

The work we do, if you consider time, you do not even sit down and start it. Stitch after stitch you forget time. We gather what we need for dyeing fibres - roots, leaves, flowers, bark. We produce our dyes with a palaeolithic technique. It can take from one night to 5-6 years. We have been passed on this knowledge by our Maestro, Chiara Vigo. We don't use chemicals and we fix the colour by oxidation. In this way the leftovers of our dyes can go back to the land without harming it, making our garden more fertile. To not hurry is one of the many important things she has been teaching us.

We mainly use raw natural fibres. The wool for example must be washed, dried, combed, then we spin it with a small 'fuso'. Wool is a marvellous material but when it doesn't get sold, shepherds are supposed to get rid of it and pay for the disposal which is a shame because for them it has always been sacred. Many kinds of wool are not made for the textile industry and are classified as 'special waste'. Instead, we love to use the Sardinian rough and fibre wool.

The actual weaving process then is a separate, intimate thing. The 'tessitura' always arrives when she wants.

## Q3. Can you explain your technique; how you manipulate the medium?

I use various kinds of looms that Karl or I create such as nail looms, table looms, backstrap looms, or no loom, just threads and your body. I like to weave at home, often at night when everything is quiet. Going deep in the 'disegno', while it emerges, to catch it. This is not planned but created directly in the 'tela'. It takes concentration, inner silence, strong connection with yourself and open eyes on something deep that can go over yourself. I also like to weave outdoors without loom and attached to a tree. With Karl, we use a double back-strap loom so we can weave also in nature. We started this process last October in Lithuania during an art residency while we had to shepherd forty sheep. In this way we could follow the flock and weave wherever they stopped for grazing.

## Q4. Do you keep some kind of ongoing drawing book or diary? Or a collection of images or photographs for inspiration?

I have my notebooks, but I use them quite randomly to record intuitions, memories, dreams, stories, things important for me and my art. I also use paper to trace my 'disegni' and transform them in something that can be adapted to weave. But patterns and shapes can also be drawn in the sand, we live on an island so it's something that comes spontaneous, even water draws beautiful lines on the shore.

I love to scroll the crazy mix of photos I take with my phone while we walk through the territory for exploring and gathering. I also collect images from the internet, often old pictures of artworks that involve weaving, gestures, specific tools, or the work of contemporary artists where research is deeply rooted and tells us something interesting about their land, the cosmos, and the relationship with nature. Sometimes I can see amazing resonances with what we do, even from a distance. I like when art makes visible the good energies that connect us all.

## Q5. Who are your favourite artists? From whom do you draw inspiration?

Working side by side with Karl is for me a big privilege and luck. There is a part of his art that is personal, and I like to see how his paintings can appear suddenly or instead layer by layer slowly emerge when the right colour comes out from a jar. It is like seeing nature at work! And I also like his playful but serious approach to the less fancy aspects of our practice that take a lot of dedication such as warping the frame or applying for projects. It's nice to be in two.

I studied art from when I was fourteen. In Italy art is everywhere, you open the door of a church, enter, sit in silence, have a look around and probably see something special. I like circular churches like the 'Duomo Vecchio' in my natal city, Brescia. Especially the semi-abstract frescos on the ceiling, the natural pigments and the decorative motifs linked to the cult of water.

But I think I have chosen this path after my parents brought with them on their trip around Tuscany to see Firenze, the cradle of the Renaissance, but also the small workshops where the artisans were working. Still now I prefer well-done craftsmanship to purely aesthetic art. But I think that good art should combine both.

Also, in my region I love the 'Valley of the Signs', Valle Camonica, an immense archaeological area, where only 10% of the rock art has been uncovered. 'Naquane', but also other older sites. The engravings depict cosmic, symbolic stories, Neolithic daily life, or rituals, still now mysterious because they are misinterpreted.

Contemporary man thinks he is ahead, but I love the work of the archaeologist Marja Gjmbutas who has brought to light many prehistoric finds, cataloguing abstract and recurring motifs, such as the grid or chessboard which is also 'su scaccu' in Sardinian weaving, one of the first we learned. Sardinia is an amazing open-air museum, you cross the land, and you find nuraghes, sacred wells and domus de janas.

I also love Indigenous art of different origins. Ancient arts are all beautiful. Ainu embroideries in Japan, Sami weaving in Lapland. In Australia you have so much... First Nations Australians are a living heritage. Like our Maestro, Chiara Vigo, my dream is to organize an exhibition of hers here in Australia, she has never been here. I love her art because a part of being original and meticulously crafted, it presupposes knowledge. It conserves knowledge, remembers, connects, tells stories and passes knowledge.

I love art that talks about living on this planet in balance, love, and peace. The sacrality of water, we completely forgot it in our modern societies. I have a big interest in rivers where it started from my grandfather's story, making willow fish traps, and living in symbiosis with the river in a sustainable way. How could we allow the water to be polluted?

This is why I decided to live close to a true master as there are now there are just few. We should listen to them more and learn from them, even if it takes effort. I feel a sense of responsibility to my nephews (I have seven of which six in Australia and one in Italy) and to the children of the world, what legacy are we leaving them?



*Top:* Marta weaving on a tandem belt-loom whilst shepherding at the Verpejos AiR, Lithuania

*Bottom:* Fish traps made in Carss Park at the Georges River AiR







*Top: L&C - Karl Logge and Marta Romani exploring the Val Camonica and the engraving sites during their residency at the Borgo degli Artisti in Bienno, Italy, R – The collective weaving 'Radical Visions' produced at the end of that residency*

*Bottom: L – 'Su Scaccu,' cold dyed wool and antique linen. R – Marta working on 'She, The River.' Silk and goldthread on old cotton cloth.*





*Top: 'Head Net' Silk, antique hemp, and linen net. NaHR A.I.R. Taleggio Valley, Italy.*