More than meets the eye
“What lies behind us, and what lies before us, are tiny matters compared to what lies within us”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson.
I always found myself inspired by the human body, the structure and appearance of it but this time I was intrigued into looking deeper than the surface, the unconscious, the subconscious and our dreams. Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung are two of the most important figures that shed light into this matter, and their studies are truly remarkable. I was particularly interested in the way memories, stories, events and habits are so unnoticeable, being deeply stored in our unconscious mind crafting our reality and the way we experience and understand life. Through this journey my aim was to find a way to reunite those two states of mind, -the conscious and unconscious- in a playful and interactive way.
This journey began by exploring and researching the eyes. I conceptualised eyes as a two-way window that allow us to observe the world, but also gaze into the inside world of the beholder. We acknowledge them, yet most of the times we fail to fully understand the greatness they provide. They capture all those images, colours and movements that we think went noticed and store them into our mind’s underground library and those images creep into our dreams, thoughts and guide our daily actions without our even realising it.
Eye miniature or Lover’s eyes were costume made jewelry pieces with paintings of people’s eyes and were quite famous in Georgian era. These were sentimental jewelry: by wearing one of the most intimate part of one’s beloved on their bodies, people expressed their love/forbidden love or mourning.

“Often called the “window into the soul”, looking into someone’s eyes can reveal deep and hidden feelings and a gaze held between two lovers can be one of the most intimate of acts.”

Jones, Joy. “A Lovers Eye – Romance In Miniature”
Medusa was once a pretty woman who became too full of herself. Athena, a wise goddess appeared before her to advice her that there were more important things in life than self-worship. Medusa refused to admit her wrongs, and Athena punished her with snakes for hair, and those who gazed into her eyes would turn into stone.

The Graeae were three sisters who shared one eye and one tooth between them. This eye gave them great knowledge and wisdom.

Odin travelled to a mystical well that contained wisdom-enhancing water. Mimir, the guard of that well, asked Odin to sacrifice his eye in order to allow him to drink the water. Odin removed his eye without hesitation. He traded his sight for insight and internal wisdom.

Fun Fact about Cyclops: According to myths, Cyclops had only one eye, because they traded one eye in order to see the future. The only future they were able to learn after that, was the day of their death.
The Hamsa is an ancient Middle Eastern amulet that depicts a hand with an eye in the middle and it symbolized the Hand of God. This symbol is very commonly found in jewellery and it is believed that whoever wears it bring them happiness, luck, health and protection against the Evil Eye.

The evil eye exists in many religions and it is one of the strongest symbolic images in the world. It is a look given with jealousy or malice and intents to inflict harm. It is some sort of curse believed to bring misfortune or injury.
Textures: Looking deeper into the eyes and experimenting with clay.

It is incredible that the deeper you look, more shapes appear. It’s like a whole new world is hidden inside them. Looking into Suren Manvelyan’s’ close up photographs, I was challenged to look deeper into my own eyes. That is why I purchased a small microscope, which I used to take my own photos. Then, I traced over the lines I captured and used them to sand-blast similar texture onto a porcelain vessel I made.
Looking into textured surfaces made me think about mosaics and wall art so I started sketching, implementing some of the ideas I had about ceramic pieces that could go on a wall and be interactive so people can explore them not only with their eyes but with their hands as well.
Ceramic ‘touch’ surface with raised sculpted eyes and Braille message that says: “The less we see with our eyes the more we see with our hearts”
Being inspired by the idea of tactility, I thought to create a vessel where something will be sculpted on the inside and only a hand can have access to that part, therefore training the sense of touch and arousing curiosity.
'A touch that gives sight'
Can you feel the eyeless man?
Where did his eyes go?
Surrealism

The Eye of Silence, 1943 - by Max Ernst

The False Mirror, 1928 - Rene Magritte
“Dictionary: Surrealism, n. Pure psychic automatism, by which one proposes to express, either verbally, in writing, or by any other manner, the real functioning of thought. Dictation of thought in the absence of all control exercised by reason, outside of all aesthetic and moral preoccupation.”

Surrealism is a movement where artists twist the ideas of what should be accepted and considered normal. It’s a means of merging the conscious and unconscious worlds, bringing elements of fantasy and dream to everyday rational images and creating “an absolute reality, a surreality.” I found myself being drawn to this creating process because behind the illogical and absurd imagery lies a deeper meaning and every object has its own symbolism that be can decoded, forcing us in a mindful tricky game.

“Surrealism”. En.Wikipedia.Org
Being inspired by Dali’s melting clocks in the “The Persistence of Memory”, 1931 to create a three-dimensional object.
Translating drawings into three-dimension ceramic objects
These three-dimensional objects that I have created had some very interesting shapes, yet because of their very thin and fragile forms they cracked very easily and they were very difficult to transport.
Reflection So Far

Looking into Surrealism and surrealistic artists helped me broaden my ideas and the possibilities of what I can create and how playful I can be with clay. Creating those objects from the drawing made me realise that I like the way those thin yet fragile forms look, but making them solely like that would be very risky especially when I will want to move them and transport them. This made me think of creating an extra layer around them that could protect and also keep them visible. So, I decided to create a vessel-like form, with objects on the inside still inspired by drawings.
Subversion 2017
Subversion was one of my previous projects that consisted of ceramic vessels with eyes and ears sculpted on the inside, that people could see through the peep-holes. The project was based around the idea of privacy. Nothing is private anymore: You can always be watched and listened to, or can’t you? Due to their mystical appearance and their ability to arouse people’s curiosity these objects were open to many interpretations. After finishing that project, I felt that I could have expanded and developed those shapes even more. That idea of looking though peep-holes only to find a new world hiding on the inside is very intriguing. The act of exploring and interacting with the piece and not just presenting something in plain sight gave me lots of ideas for my current project, so I decided to use those shapes, expand them and manipulate them according to the stories I want to tell.
I found Yuko’s work very captivating and inspiring. I am fascinated with the organic shapes of her vessels and the way she talks and describes her work. The way she finds inspiration from her surroundings is very impressive. She has a very poetic and fluid way of writing and that is clearly and visibly transferred into her three-dimensional objects.

In her artist’s statement she says: “Instead of analyzing and explaining in literal language I want to explore thoughts and emotions through building tangible objects using my hands. Things like frustrations toward time, the memory of a seaside town, a desire to be somewhere else...”
Turning my sketches into three-dimensional forms and placing objects inside them.
The mindset of this artist has been a major influence to me. She is creating worlds beyond reality. She is exploring the unconscious minds, myths, daydreaming, imagination and fairytales. Her sculptures might look childish and toy-like with all their colours and playful looks, but as you begin to analyse them deeper, a darker side is being revealed. As she explains on her artist statement, “The dialogue between components and the way one’s unconscious can direct the composition interests me. My creatures invite you into an absurd and surreal world where things are not what they seem… and my aim is to create a visual poetry based on my own personal story”.
Working Intuitively

We are connected to more than what we see. Our intuition is always there, hidden behind all the thinking and passive movements of our daily lives, and it is one of the greatest gifts given to us. So I decided to set one rule before I started making my final pieces.

Rule: No restrictions, no precise guidelines therefore no expectations.

I decided to let that part of my mind work and take actions while I listen to the clay, follow it where it wants to go, and try to push it to its limits.

Each piece will be inspired by a specific event, a poem, a dream, a thought, a feeling, and I will let those guide me.
On our everyday life we are surrounded by signs and symbols that we visibly see in front of us. Though, what I am interested in, is to explore the ones that are not conveniently placed on plain sight. Every animal, figure or object is infused with varied symbolisms - that is, symbolisms which can change depending on when we stumble across them. We could explore these forms through different kind of practices, for instance, spiritual, historical, religious and many others. According to Freud, dreams are coded messages from the subconscious. It is very fascinating how real and normal they feel even though they could be the most illogical, bizarre and intense scenarios. Through my project I am planning on finding objects and figures, then research their dream and spiritual meanings and weave them together into a three-dimensional object that can be then decoded through those symbolisms.

Even though all symbols were chosen according to the individual piece's story, a symbol that remained the same and kept showing up in my work was the eye. The eye to me has multiple interpretations, yet most on the times I chose it for its knowledge, protection, sight and insight. Sometimes, it just acts as an observing tool, in the background, just passively accepting the situation were it is placed.
A few random pages from my dream-journal. I tried to keep a diary so I could remember more dreams. Unfortunately that did not work very well, because I was too stressed to wake up and remember to write the dreams. By the time I would wake up I couldn't remember anything else than the anxious feeling of the need and failure to remember.
It was one of those days where everything felt against me. I could feel how strong people's opinions and behaviours could effect my mood and my thoughts, and I felt as if I couldn’t say or do anything, only listen and watch. That night I found a spider on the wall next to my desk. I am not a big fan of them but I just sat there looking at how it moves, its legs so thin and tiny yet quite scary because I couldn’t predict its fast and sudden movements. Curiously, I started researching about spiders, not only their meaning in dreams but also as creatures in general. Spiders can represent creativity, connection, patience, a sign to weave your wishes into reality, or a very powerful feminine working energy. Yet, as they say, a coin has two sides and the shadow side of it portrays the spider as a negative captivating energy. Maybe someone is manipulating and weaving a hidden trap on you or it could represent the estrangement of one’s own feelings. In this case the spider felt like a very good symbol to use, and being inspired by this situation, I created a painting which then led to one of my final ceramic vessels.
Acrylic on paper.
You said: “I’ll go to another country, go to another shore, find another city better than this one. Whatever I try to do is fated to turn out wrong and my heart lies buried like something dead. How long can I let my mind moulder in this place? Wherever I turn, wherever I look, I see the black ruins of my life, here, where I’ve spent so many years, wasted them, destroyed them totally.”

You won’t find a new country, won’t find another shore. This city will always pursue you. You’ll walk the same streets, grow old in the same neighbourhoods, turn gray in these same houses. You’ll always end up in this city. Don’t hope for things elsewhere: there’s no ship for you, there’s no road. Now that you’ve wasted your life here, in this small corner, you’ve destroyed it everywhere in the world.

This is one of my favourite poems by the Greek poet Constantine Peter Cavafy. The way I understand this poem is that it talks about a person who is in despair and tries to run away from the city he lives in order to find something better and build his life again. Yet, another voice shatters those man’s plans. There are no new places, he will always stumble along the same mistakes he made and no new place can erase those memories. If he cannot change himself and fix the quality of his life in the place where he is now, then there is no hope in any new place. He will always carry his home within him and if he cannot find peace within himself, mind and body then there is no hope for him.

Leaving these words echoing in my head, I tried to translate this feeling into a three-dimensional object, a man, not only with a house within him, but him being a small representation of a city.
This year felt a bit challenging, both academically and personally. All my thoughts were tangled up in a knot and I started to unravel them bit by bit. I had to confront some feelings that I hid deep inside for far too long, and the only way to overcome them was to face them. It hurt and it wasn’t pretty, but it was necessary. I felt like creating an object that all these feelings could be poured in and, thus, I started researching all sorts of symbolisms of different animals and objects and mixing up different sources.

A heart signified truth, and can represent how you are currently dealing with strong feelings and expressing your emotions. An octopus means that you are entangled in some difficult and emotional matter or subconscious feelings and needs that are holding you back. Yet, they can also embody change and that something is going to shift in your life. Therefore, I decided to link those two into a single three-dimensional presence. I chose the jellyfishes to surround the ‘heartopus’ because they have an energetic flow. They symbolize the surfacing and healing of painful memories; a reminder that now you are ready to deal with these aspects of your life, acknowledge them, forgive them and let them float away.
This is one of a series of three wall pieces, all inspired by the idea of change and transformation. The butterfly takes us through a journey of metamorphosis. A journey of rebirth, of unveiling one's true self. Initially, the creature awakes as a caterpillar that creates a cocoon in order to transform. In that deep, secure and dark state of isolation it is one's opportunity to self-reflect. In that sacred space we can figure out our internal complexities and everything that keeps us from becoming our true self. Realise that nothing stays the same, and all places are temporary places. After that mediation state, the previously crawling creature beats its wings against the shell of its cocoon to break free. Now it accepts its new self and begins to rediscover nature from a 'higher' point of view.
Snails are creatures of patience and they are confident that wherever they travel they have everything they need within them.
The shedding snake on this piece symbolizes the transformation, and leaving behind what no longer serves us. We cannot hold on to everything, we evolve and we need to remove the worn layers and allow a new vivid self to rise.

**A THOUSAND VERSIONS OF YOU**  
Poem by Nikita Gill

You have shed a thousand skins  
to become the person you are today.  
And if you ever feel overwhelmed  
by the many people you once were,  
remember,  
your bones have grown,  
but what makes them  
has never changed.
A dragon is a fearless creature that is not afraid of change. In this piece I decided to focus on how the colours of the dragon change and what each of those could mean. An egg is hatched, a dragon is set free. A symbol of passion and desire. My dragon is physically being born black - an omen of danger. As the dragon takes its first steps into this world, its body starts blending into a grey colour that represents blank emotions and indecision about all the options that surround it. As his wings are spreading it becomes white, finally arriving to the state of the spiritual rebirth. Now it is finally becoming into a positive protective omen, for good things are meant to happen. We cannot jump from certain states of minds to others without undergoing a change and facing obstacles, it's all part of the process.
A totem inspired by Cypriot Statuettes. This goddess offered a very kind energy towards my work and everything that went in the kiln with her survived in one piece.

A successful kiln offering inspired by Medusa. The idea was her facing towards the ceramic pieces in the kiln, and petrifying them as they are, with no cracks.

A totem inspired by the historic ‘Eye Idols’ with the Norse symbol of protection carved into its body.

A two faced goddess and the depiction of evil. This was the cruellest goddess I’ve made, since everything that went in the kiln with it cracked. I should have thought that the division of one face into two was not a good symbol of protection against cracks. Strangely enough this goddess vanished for a long time after that unfortunate event.
Surprisingly enough all of the small wall pieces had cracks in them, but most of them were easily fixed with glaze and Araldite Epoxy Adhesive. Yet, the dragon artifact was the only piece that constantly felt the need to break free! It cracked before it was bisque fired and I used a ready made paste to fill the crack. Following the bisque firing the crack was quite visible. I applied the same paste and bisque fired it again, but I could still see the crack. I then decided to glaze over it and see how the glaze would treat the crack. After glazing, it was still a bit visible but it looked very organic and suited the aesthetic of the piece. However, as I rotated the piece I noticed a massive crack running all the way down to the bottom. We can blame it on the evil two-headed kiln goddess or just the fact that ceramics are ceramics and sometimes they crack.

Thinking things through, it is the same with humans, we all have our own “cracks” to deal with. One could say that it is part of the human condition to be imperfect and vulnerable- that does not mean we should ‘throw ourselves to the bin’ as one might tempted do with a failed object! It is for that reason that I refused to discard and give up on my dragon artifact despite what initially I saw as its imperfections. For practical reasons and for maintaining the stability of the piece I chose to cover the crack using white coloured paste. I did not want to paint over it and I left those repairing marks visible. My whole project is based around symbolisms, meanings, subconscious and intuition so camouflaging the cracks for the purpose of erasing them would have felt ironic. It’s broken, it’s fixed, but always remains true to itself. I am not hiding it nor am I trying to draw attention to it. Rather, I have simply accepted the fact the crack has itself becomes part of the process.

Having to choose between a couple of possible paste colours, I chose white because it is a subtle colour and it is not restrictive. As Edmund de Waal said “White is a place to begin and a place to end” and it indicates both parts of life, accompanying us from the beginning until the end and offering completion.
From Ceramics to Metal
After concentrating mainly in ceramics, I decided to experiment in metal and loosely translate the same concept into contemporary, interactive jewellery. My initial research influences both bodies of work. I am still getting inspired by the subconscious, the symbolisms and the way of seeing things both metaphorically and literally.

For my metalwork, I aimed to produce a series of interactive wearable objects. Although they look like rings and can easily be worn on the fingers, these objects act more like statements and they tell stories, than just being ornamental objects.
Initially, I started looking into automata, and kinetic mechanisms as I always found their movements very interesting. Their forms and tiny crank handles invites us to touch and explore them. Therefore, I created a series of contemporary rings that perform different movements. Even though I am really happy with how playful they look, the making of these objects was very tricky. I had to solder them multiple times for all the compartments to be in place and that made the thin parts very fragile and difficult to clean.
After experimenting with automata, I decided to look into other simpler mechanisms with minimal moving parts. I realised that this way I could design these rings with wider surfaces, where I could etch, write and solder more objects.
The eyes are closed, and they dream. When the eyes open, a dragon appears flying. A kinetic ring with a handle on its back. The message on the front says “Everything you can imagine is real”
These two rings were inspired by the Titaness of Enlightenment & Sight, Theia, the ‘all-seeing’ goodness.
For these two rings I decided to use simple mechanisms that provide the slide movement and reveal hidden parts/words.
Bronwen Tyler Jones

http://bronwentylerjones.co.uk/metalwork-inventions-
“It is a very sacred game we are playing here on earth. Each of my pieces can function as a touchstone, a cairn, a talisman, for soul retrieval, for awakening, for the journey back to remembering. I think of each as a miniature navigational atlas to the world behind this world, the unseen, the unheard, the unknown.”

-Kim Nogueira
“I found a fairy in the woods
running away from rules and shoulds
Trying to find that something new
Packed her fears and chattels on her back
and started walking off the beaten track.
the journey was long and her legs started to shake
she stopped and sat and her head began to ache.
“I am confused and tired, and
I am pretty sure I’ve been in this place before,
I guess this was a wrong and foolish thing to do
if only I could carry this one journey through.
I can’t even trust my own two feet,
is there even hope for me?”
oh little silly you
overwhelmed from your own point of view
you are doing this whole wrong
just listen to your nature’s song
let the rhythm guide the way
and trail the worried sounds away
Put your fears and chattels on the floor
and let them distract you not
Realise that
you’re a prisoner of your own thoughts war
so no matter how far you go
you will always stumble along this road,
So straightened your back and
dust off the wings you hide
Although you never learnt how to fly
Take the first step and in a blink of an eye
I promise you one day
you and yourself
will see eye to eye…”

This is a poem I wrote a year ago when I
was surrounded by doubt and insecurity,
yet a silent positive voice inside me kept
me going. I decided to decode my own
poem, and recreate it into an interactive
contemporary jewelry.

Symbolisms:
The bird is representing the nature’s
song, and the brain represents the prison
of thoughts. The key is the realization
of that and the action of setting yourself
free to follow your heart’s wishes. The
wings are the freedom and acceptance of
one’s true self.
“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Using Emerson’s words, I was inspired to create this playful ring. The eye shape represents the gateway to the soul, thus revealing what lies on the inside. The Iris can be removed and you find yourself with a puzzle, that connects into an image of the same concept.
The ring says it itself!
If only life came with an instruction manual.
I guess we all need a few wise words to remind us what life is truly all about.
Thinking about the creative ways of seeing and understanding things, I did a little bit of research into lenses and objects that alter the vision. I purchased a couple of lenses and tried to experiment with the different ways images can change and how those lenses could be attached into wearable/jewelry pieces.
I made a trip to Hove Museum as they have a very interesting ‘film and moving images’ section. Their display of early optical toys including zoetropes and thaumatropes was very inspiring. It is amazing how these devices create illusions that deceive the mind and distort our perception of reality. Thaumatropes inspired me to create different ideas for kinetic rings. (The way they work is that when you spin a disk that has two different images on each side, the images seem to combine due to persistence of vision.)

“Thaumatrope”. En.Wikipedia.Org
“The idea behind a kaleidoscope is that it’s a structure that’s filled with broken bits and pieces, and somehow if you can look through them, you still see something beautiful. And I feel like we are all that way a little bit.”
-Sara Bareilles
Spin me!


http://bronwentlerjones.co.uk/metalwork-inventions-.