

STUDIO HACIENDA

PHOEBE PORTER AND BLANCHE TILDEN SHARE MORE THAN A STUDIO SPACE. SINCE PORTER DID A MENTORSHIP WITH TILDEN A STRONG SIMPATICO HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE TWO JEWELLERS. THEY BOTH SPEAK ABOUT AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION, AND A SIMILAR PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO THEIR WORK. NEITHER ARE INTERESTED IN MAKING JEWELLERY JUST FOR THE SAKE OF IT. BOTH WANT WHAT THEY MAKE TO MEAN SOMETHING TO THE WEARER, AND ARE CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT ATTRACTS PEOPLE TO THEIR WORK.

TILDEN TRAINED IN BOTH GLASS AND GOLD AND SILVERSMITHING AT THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ART, CANBERRA. SHE QUICKLY ESTABLISHED A REPUTATION FOR MAKING JEWELLERY BASED ON REPEATED ELEMENTS, OFTEN IN THE FORM OF CHAINS. TILDEN MAINTAINS THAT, THEN AS NOW, HER 'INSPIRATION COMES FROM THE INDUSTRIAL AGE AND IT'S ASSOCIATED MASS PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES ... THE INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE AND APPARATUS THAT CHARACTERIZED THIS ERA.' HOWEVER, THE ELEMENTS HAVE BECOME LESS OVERTLY MECHANICAL, MORE ABSTRACTED FROM THE ORIGINAL FUNCTION OF PULLEY, COG OR LINK.

PORTER IS A GRADUATE OF THE SAME ART SCHOOL WHERE BOTH TRAINED UNDER JOHANNES KUHNEN. THERE IS AN UNSPOKEN COMMON APPROACH TO HOW THEY WORK AND SOLVE PROBLEMS THAT THEY FEEL COMES FROM THIS INITIAL TRAINING WITH ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S LEADING GOLD AND SILVERSMITHING PRACTITIONERS AND TEACHERS. AFTER GRADUATION, AS WELL AS DEVELOPING HER PRACTICE IN JEWELLERY, PORTER SPENT SOME TIME WORKING FOR THYLACINE, A MUSEUM DISPLAY COMPANY THAT REQUIRED SKILL AND RESOURCEFULNESS IN MAKING SPECIALIST FITTINGS. THE EXPERIENCE FED INTO HER APTITUDE FOR TOOLS AND PROCESSES, SUCH AS THOSE SHE HAS DEVELOPED FOR HER SERIES OF FOLDING BROOCHES, RINGS AND NECKPIECES. A GROWING INTEREST IN CLASSIFICATION AND WORKING WITH MULTIPLES SUITS THE WAY SHE 'COMBINES INDUSTRIAL METHODS WITH TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES', SHE SAYS.

TILDEN'S EARLIER MENTORSHIP WITH SUSAN COHN TAUGHT HER, SHE ACKNOWLEDGES, 'HOW TO MAKE JEWELLERY MEAN SOMETHING TO ME: HOW TO SEE WHAT WAS OUT THERE AND TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN.' TILDEN PASSED THIS ON TO PORTER, MORE BY EXAMPLE THAN IN ANY FORMAL SENSE: IN CONVERSATION, OBSERVATIONS AND ASIDES, AND IN THE SMALL DETAILS THAT ARE SHARED WHEN YOU ARE IN DAILY CONTACT WITH SOMEONE.

THE STUDIO CAME HOT ON THE HEELS OF THE MENTORSHIP AND WAS A NATURAL PROGRESSION FOR BOTH MAKERS. HOW IT CAME ABOUT IS REVEALING OF MORE THAN CIRCUMSTANCE ALONE. THE STUDIO WAS FOUNDED IN A SEQUENCE OF SERENDIPITOUS EVENTS. ON THE BUILDING THERE WAS A LEFTOVER SIGN 'HACIENDA'. THIS MEANT SOMETHING TO BOTH PORTER AND TILDEN: IT WAS THE NAME OF THE MANCHESTER NIGHTCLUB THAT GAVE BIRTH TO BANDS SUCH AS JOY DIVISION, DESIGNED BY PETER SAVILLE, WHO DEFINED INDUSTRIAL CHIC FOR A GENERATION AND HAD THE KNACK OF MARRYING LIFE AND ART. THEY ADOPTED THE NAME AS THEIR OWN, AND ADDED SAVILLE'S 'HAZARD' STRIPE TO THEIR STUDIO. THE SIGNATURE PIECE FOR STUDIO HACIENDA CONTINUED THE THEME.

PO BOX 1261 CARLTON VICTORIA 3053 AUSTRALIA
MOBILE 0419 129 128
BLANCHE@BLANCHETILDEN.COM.AU

BLANCHE
TILDEN

PORTER RECALLS 'BLANCHE NOTICED SOMEONE WEARING A 'WORK SAFETY' BLACK AND YELLOW WRISTBAND, TYPICAL OF THE CURRENT STREET FASHION OF WEARING A BAND TO SHOW AN AFFILIATION WITH A CAUSE'. TILDEN FOLLOWED IT UP AND SECURED THE LEFTOVER STOCK. THEY ADDED A SIMPLE STAMPED ALUMINIUM TAG TO THE SOUVENIR BRACELET. IT WAS TO BE A CELEBRATION OF THEIR NEW VENTURE AND A GIFT TO FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES. QUITE INCIDENTALLY IT BECAME A POWERFUL PIECE OF GUERRILLA MARKETING.

IN THE STUDIO EACH CONTINUES THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE. HOWEVER, CONSTANT DIALOGUE HELPS CLARIFY DIRECTIONS AND SOLUTIONS FOR BOTH IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF TRUST AND RESPECT. AS TILDEN STRUGGLED WITH THE 'BIKE CHAIN' LABEL ASSOCIATED WITH HER EARLIER WORK, PORTER REFLECTED TILDEN'S OWN ADVICE BACK TO HER. TILDEN FOUND A WAY FORWARD BY FINDING THAT THE APPEAL OF THE CHAIN CAME FROM A DEEPER PROCLIVITY TO GRADE, AN INCLINATION TO COLLECT THAT SHE ENJOYED EVEN AS A CHILD. REPETITION IS 'IN MY BRAIN', SHE SAYS. PORTER'S APTITUDE FOR SORTING AND CLASSIFYING FINDS RESONANCE IN TILDEN'S WAY OF MAKING SENSE OF THE WORLD.

THERE WILL NATURALLY BE A CROSS-FERTILISATION OF SKILLS AND A SHARING OF EXPERTISE IN PARTICULAR MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES. FOR EXAMPLE, TILDEN'S EXPERIENCE HAS BROADENED PORTER'S UNDERSTANDING OF SERIAL PRODUCTION, WHILE PORTER'S COMPUTER AIDED DRAWING SKILLS HAVE INTRODUCED TILDEN TO THE BENEFITS OF ELECTRON WIRE CUTTING.

AND A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT, GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IS UNDERWAY. THE CONCEPT EXEMPLIFIES THEIR COMMON GROUND: WORKING IN MULTIPLES, EXPLORING THE INDIVIDUAL IMPULSE TO SELECT, COMBINE AND ADORN, ALERTNESS TO THE UBIQUITOUS STREET STYLES THAT PULSE THROUGH A CITY. IT WILL BE A PROJECT THAT INVOLVES PEOPLE IN A LIVELY, INTELLIGENT CONVERSATION THROUGH THE OBJECT.

THAT'S STUDIO HAÇIENDA.

MERRY N GATES