

CHEN ZEYUN

PREVIOUSLY UNDERGROUND

Chen Zeyun is currently finishing her Master degree in Jewellery Design, Gold and Silversmithing at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp

What is value? This is a question that Zeyun is fascinated by and which forms the core of her Masters project. At first glance, you might not recognise the material she has used to create her objects. Could it be wood? Bone? Or is it a precious material such as coral, shell or ivory - materials that are worth treasuring? Her objects are, in fact, made of potato.

The potato is a very common, hardy vegetable with a very colourful history. Originally from Peru, the potato was first introduced to Europeans by the Spanish, and was not thought highly of until food shortages and famines forced the meat-loving citizens of England and France to turn to the food they had reserved for animals. With this, the potato saved lives and it is hard for us now to imagine how valuable the potato was to those suffering from famine. Most people today think potatoes are very ordinary; a common starch, only to be used to soak up the gravy from a delicious meal.

When these vegetables are hand carved and dehydrated, they become sturdy and tough. The sweet potato and taro vegetables come in bright shades of purple and orange, while the common baking potato gives a wonderfully delicate ivory. Zeyun became obsessed with potatoes and has created a collection celebrating its features and complex relationship to value.



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