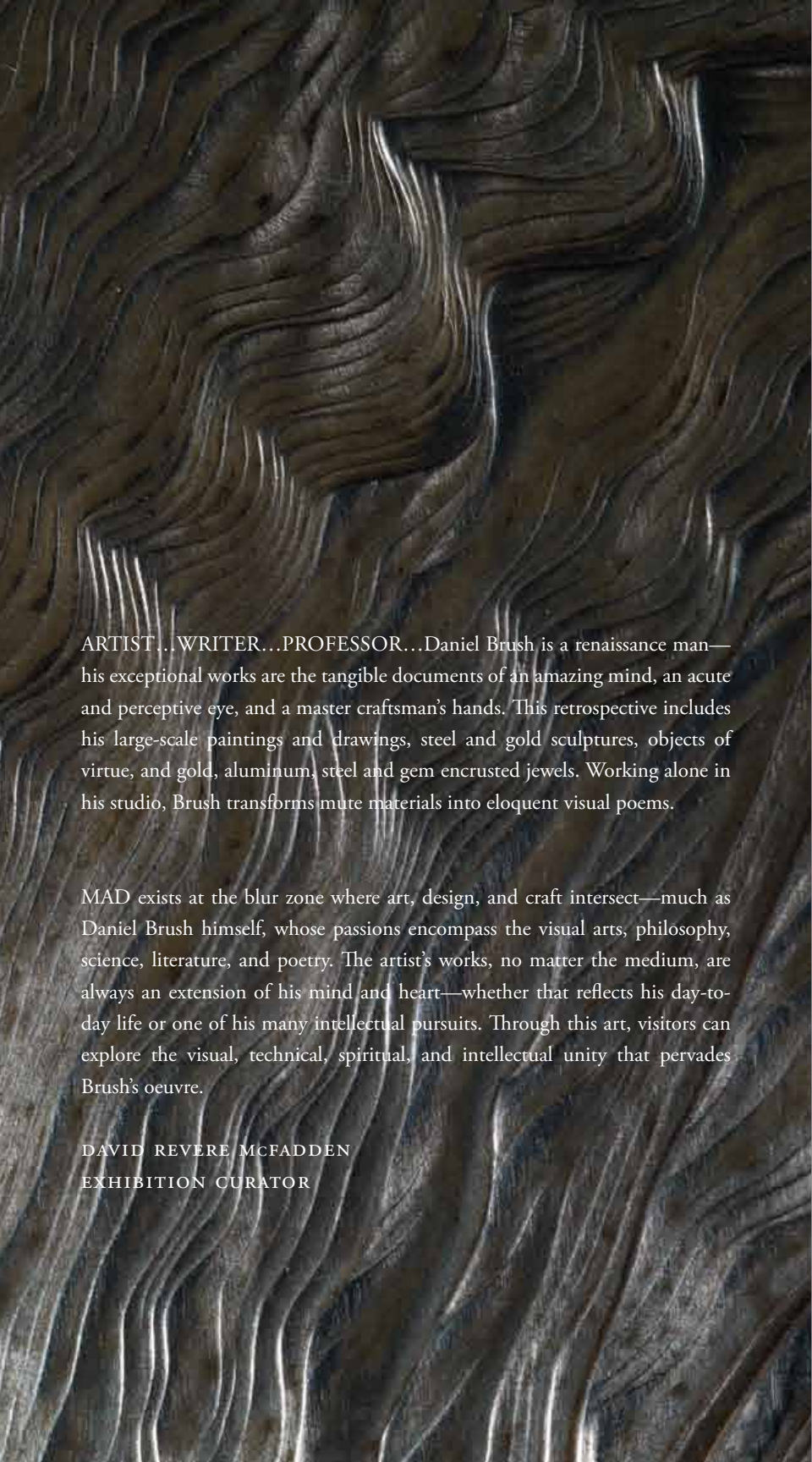


DANIEL BRUSH



BLUE STEEL
GOLD LIGHT

OCTOBER 16 2012
FEBRUARY 17 2013



ARTIST...WRITER...PROFESSOR...Daniel Brush is a renaissance man—his exceptional works are the tangible documents of an amazing mind, an acute and perceptive eye, and a master craftsman's hands. This retrospective includes his large-scale paintings and drawings, steel and gold sculptures, objects of virtue, and gold, aluminum, steel and gem encrusted jewels. Working alone in his studio, Brush transforms mute materials into eloquent visual poems.

MAD exists at the blur zone where art, design, and craft intersect—much as Daniel Brush himself, whose passions encompass the visual arts, philosophy, science, literature, and poetry. The artist's works, no matter the medium, are always an extension of his mind and heart—whether that reflects his day-to-day life or one of his many intellectual pursuits. Through this art, visitors can explore the visual, technical, spiritual, and intellectual unity that pervades Brush's oeuvre.

DAVID REVERE MCFADDEN
EXHIBITION CURATOR

To a Painter, To Daniel Brush

In looking

*one aims to retell
the seas
mountains
clouds.*

But to see

is to forget the names of things.

—Aleksis Rannit, Yaddo, 1976

I WRITE ON STEEL. I write on canvas and paper. I write about what has been roosting in my mind all these years: the nine levels of understanding for the Noh theater actor, the ineffable beauty I've seen, and the reclusive years. These works are a record of my breathing, a record of time, and a declaration of being on and in the work. When the pressure and the confusions overtake me, I make objects.

I carve steel like wood with hammers and chisels of my own making. Clear goggles and old headphones wrap my eyes and ears. The work uniform is a leather shirt, leather apron, leather gauntlets, gloves, motorcycle chaps, spats, and welders' boots. Even with all the protection, I get steel splinters.

I have absolutely no interest in the monetary value of gems and materials. Pink diamonds have a blossoming beauty and stainless steel reflects Payne's grey in February light. When pure gold is heated to the melting point it glows a majestic blue.

To bear Christmas in 1987, I made Tinker Bell's wand. I filled it with all the gold dust from the workshop floor and dusted tourists at Rockefeller Plaza.

I have been busy everyday for forty-five years following the direction of my work. I feel comfortable in New York City around the UPS drivers, the fish-mongers, the buttons and needles in the loft floor, and the congestion of 47th street. I eat the same thing everyday for breakfast and lunch so I don't have to think about it. I read poetry, mechanical and chemical engineering reports, philosophical papers, financial headlines (because my son covers derivative regulations), and dream about the heroism of post war American artists. Until about six years ago I never thought about the years, but the studio became stacked with unseen work.

DANIEL BRUSH

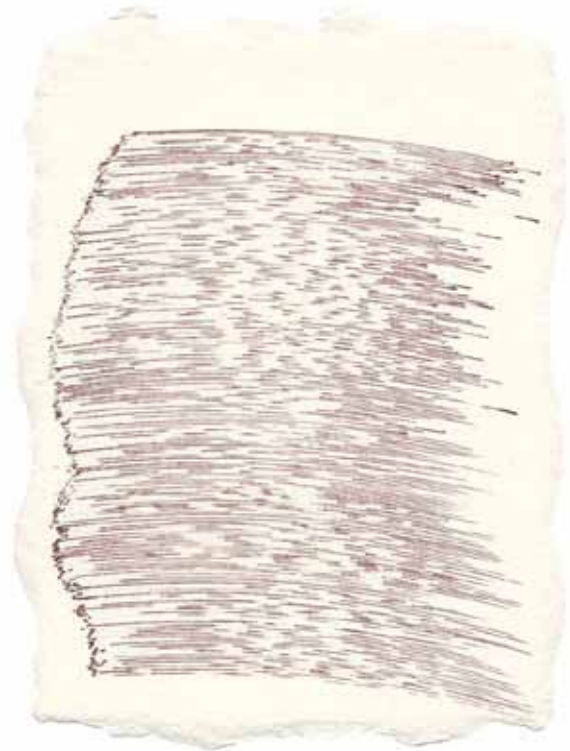
SECOND DOME



When I was thirteen years old, my mother took me to Europe to see the world in “thirteen days.” We got on the bus and off the bus and went up the leaning tower of Pisa. What I remember most is standing in front of a gold bowl in the jewel vault at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. It was encrusted with tiny balls of gold organized in intricate patterns. At that exact moment I knew that I wanted to make something like this, but I was terrible at model cars and airplanes. Seven years later I bought one ounce of gold and a torch and set out to crudely make Olivia’s wedding ring by myself. I remembered that Etruscan bowl and decided to learn about gold. It was my perfect diversion from being a painter.

SECOND DOME, 1983-1989
PURE GOLD, 22K GOLD, STEEL
3 X 3 X 3 IN. (7.6 X 7.6 X 7.6 CM)
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO: JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR

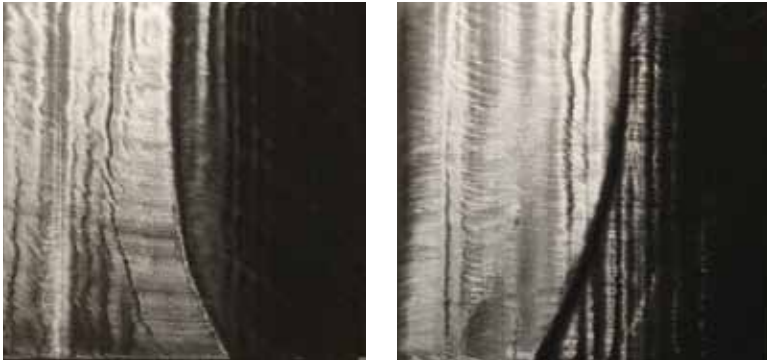
COMPILATION OF AN EDIFYING JOURNEY



In 1773, the Chinese emperor Qianlong commissioned the “Siku Quanshu”—a compendium of all Chinese cultural knowledge including poetry, history and philosophy. After ten years, he traveled to the Shenyang imperial palace to see what had been accomplished. His impressions of the 79,000 chapters were recorded on ten jade tablets. I read about this commission in 2002 and for the next ten years, I studied areas of poetry, history, and philosophy that previously had not been my study. In 2012, I recorded my impressions of my edifying journey.

COMPILATION OF AN EDIFYING JOURNEY, 2011. INK ON PAPER
TEN PARTS, OVERALL DIMENSIONS VARIABLE;
EACH: 8 5/16 X 6 1/4 IN. (21.8 X 15.9 CM)
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO: TAKAAKI MATSUMOTO

AH OH



I imagined Samuel Beckett in a totally blackened theater, thrusting his hands into the air and belching out “Ah” in complete emotional terror and then immediately lowering his hands with total desperation and resignation uttering “Oh” when actor Billie Whitelaw misspoke a phrase in the author’s twenty minute monologue, *Not I*, in 1972. Each panel of the diptych is bifurcated, with the left side engraved line by line with my right hand, and the right side engraved line by line with my left hand-top to bottom. I had to commit and execute each line without nerves because once the metal is removed it cannot be altered. Error Terror.

AH OH (ONE WORK OF TWO PARTS), 2007. ALUMINUM
6 X 6 X 1¼ IN. (15.2 X 15.2 X 3.2 CM)
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO: ED WATKINS

DREAM FOR CERRO PELON



One afternoon over coffee, my friend and great collector told me how when she was a twelve-year old girl, she traveled from Mexico City to a “magical” place (Los Macheros) where she was covered with hundreds of monarch butterflies. On three successive visits to the studio, she brought books and articles about the butterfly migration that traces a journey north to San Antonio and further upward to the Hill Country of Texas. I worked exclusively on this piece for four years keeping it private from my friend until the 100th butterfly was finished. I wanted to see her face with the smile of a twelve-year old girl.

DREAM FOR CERRO PELON, 1999–2003
STEEL, PURE GOLD, DIAMONDS, RARE EARTH MAGNETS
18 X 4 X 2 IN. (45.7 X 10.2 X 5.1 CM)
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO: DAVID BEHL

LOOSE THREADS



My companion, Olivia, and I have shared the same studio for more than forty-five years. She helps me. I help her. Her area is packed with bolts of fabric, leather, buttons, needles, sewing machines, skivers, burnishers, rippers, irons, chalk, oak tag, patterns, dressmaker forms, and cedar blocks. The floor is covered with thousands of thread ends of every color. She, too, is generally covered with “loose threads” because of static electricity. Without telling her, I made a thread of stainless steel and .7mm Moghul diamonds and attached it to her blouse sleeve one morning with a small rare earth magnet. She laughed and laughed which led into two years and 175 more threads.

LOOSE THREADS, 2007–9. STAINLESS STEEL, DIAMONDS
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-SIX PARTS, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO: TAKAAKI MATSUMOTO

BUNNY BANGLE



My mother and father owned a children’s clothing store for over forty years. In the 1950’s, I traveled with them to New York City, to the Seventh Avenue garment district, where they placed wholesale orders for dresses, underwear, shoes, “stuffed” animal toys, and “little” girl dresser sets. The sets had a mirror, comb and brush, and often times a bangle with rhinestones. I remember the sets that drew the most attention were the ones made with pink plastic. Pink diamonds from the Australian Argyle mine started coming to New York in the late 1980’s. The pink color was charming, blossoming, and youthful. It let me make a “big” girl dresser set.

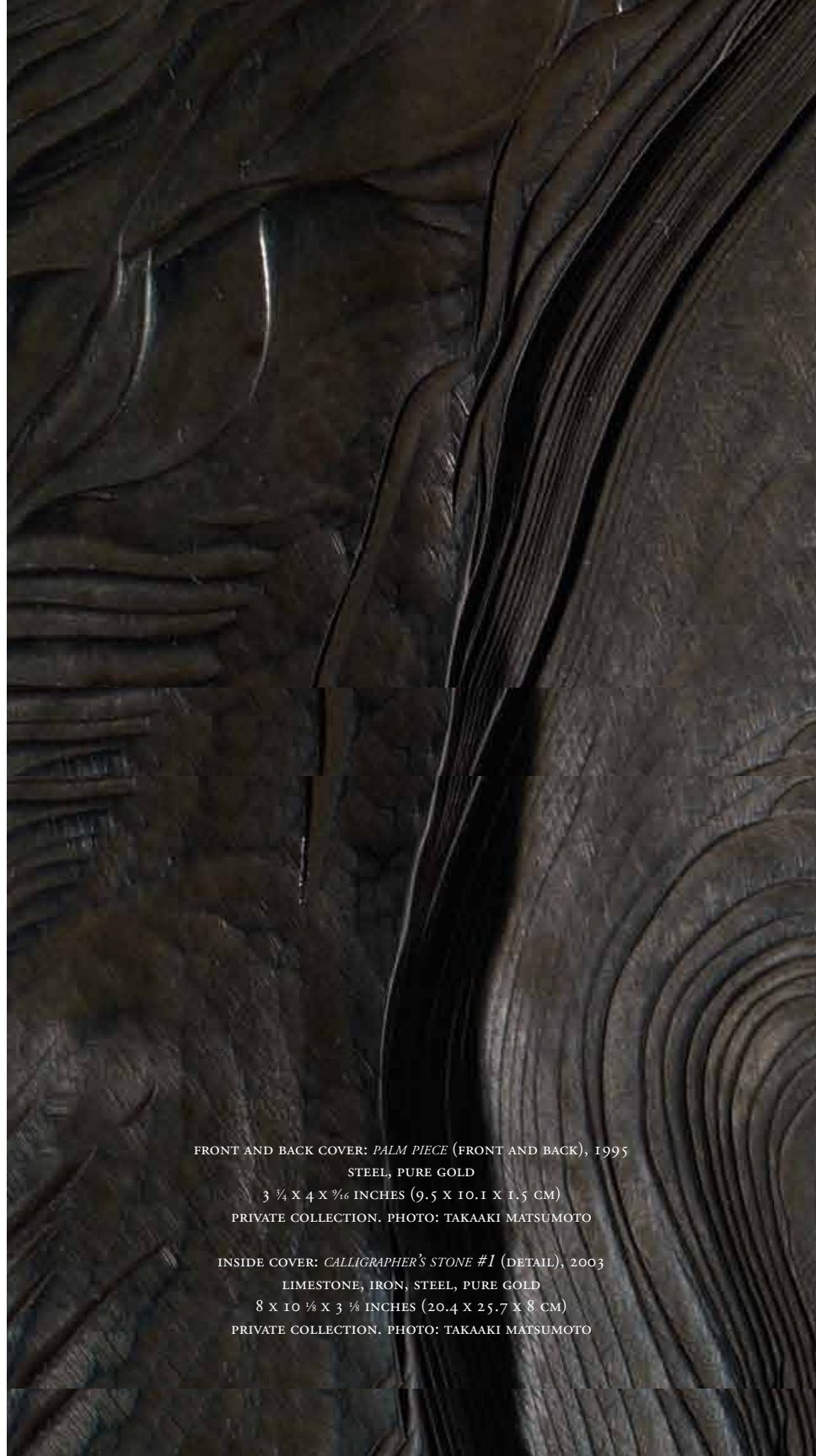
BUNNY BANGLE, 1988–1992
BAKELITE, PURE GOLD, PINK DIAMONDS, RUBIES
3 X 4 X 1 IN. (7.6 X 10.2 X 2.5 CM)
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO: JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR

GOLD HEART



Gold is mysterious and mercurial. I've tried to stretch it into a wire one mile long, but I wasn't successful. I've been mesmerized by the color changing from yellow to orange to red to an other—worldly blue when it melts. Years ago, after reading about astronaut helmets that had a lamina of pure gold as a heat shield, I tried to make the same ultra thin transparent sheet. I spent years treating gold as a material that could be pushed and pulled, stretched, and inlaid. Late one afternoon, around 5:00 pm in Florence, Italy, standing near Giotto's Campanile (my favorite building), Olivia said to me that the city was glowing. Of course it was! Gold on "Il Duomo" and on all the cathedrals was reflecting the ambient light. My years of carving, breathing, and writing line by line on steel met Olivia's "Gold Light".

GOLD HEART, 2003. STEEL, PURE GOLD
3¹/₁₆ X 3³/₈ X 1/4 IN. (10 X 7.9 X 3.2 CM)
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO: TAKAAKI MATSUMOTO



FRONT AND BACK COVER: *PALM PIECE* (FRONT AND BACK), 1995
STEEL, PURE GOLD
3 1/4 X 4 X 1/16 INCHES (9.5 X 10.1 X 1.5 CM)
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO: TAKAAKI MATSUMOTO

INSIDE COVER: *CALLIGRAPHER'S STONE #1* (DETAIL), 2003
LIMESTONE, IRON, STEEL, PURE GOLD
8 X 10 1/8 X 3 1/8 INCHES (20.4 X 25.7 X 8 CM)
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO: TAKAAKI MATSUMOTO



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