Roberta Bernabei, Father and Son

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Narrative Jewelry
TALES FROM THE TOOLBOX
MARK FENN
Foreword by Jack Cunningham, PhD
To Jane,
my soul partner, for always being there.
I love you with all my heart and soul.

To Jerri and Sam,
you both have made me a proud father,
and Libby-Jane, you’re the jewel in my eye.

To Grey and Murphy,
my studio companions.
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Roberta Bernabei is a jewelry maker and historian whose work has been exhibited at various national and international venues, including Victoria & Albert Museum, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo and the Museums of Decorative Arts in Berlin and Turin. She has been an academic at Loughborough University in the School of the arts since 2004. Her theoretical research into the history of “contemporary” jewelry has enabled the recent publication of her first book: Contemporary Jewellers: Interviews with European Artists.

My latest work has dealt with an interactive exhibition to imbue memory with jewelry. Participants are asked to talk about their memories and therefore the narrative and visual images provided by them become the main source of inspiration. The final brooches attempt to imbue their personal memories and my experience of working on a participatory project. The short narrative next to the piece of jewelry complements the work as it enables the viewer to be involved in the act of sharing the project.

This brooch represents a memory of father and son of a memorable day dedicated to the Remembrance Day in the UK. The sky was peppered with bright red poppies. This fragile but strong flower has been a source of inspiration to depict the relationship between “father and son” described by the person who took part at the participatory project.