

**AARON BEZZINA**



**Aaron Bezzina, *Untitled (cruci-gavel)*, (2017), wood, 10 x 10 x 2.5 and 11 x 5 x 29.5 cm**

Aaron Bezzina's artistic practice centers on what he terms *anti-interactive art*—a concept he has been developing since 2016 through a body of sculptural works that probe the tension between attraction and danger, use and misuse. His objects often appear functional—tools, instruments, or devices awaiting activation—yet this apparent utility conceals a latent threat: any attempt at physical engagement risks harm to the viewer. This paradox defines Bezzina's sculptural language: works that seduce through their crafted precision while forbidding the touch they seem to invite. The “anti” in *anti-interactive* thus becomes a conceptual stance, rejecting tactile participation in favor of intellectual reflection, transforming encounter into contemplation.

In *Untitled (cruci-gavel)* (2017), from the *cruci-dagger* series, Bezzina crystallizes the dualities at the core of his practice. The work fuses two potent symbols—the crucifix, emblem of faith, sacrifice, and redemption, and the gavel, signifier of judgment, law, and authority—into a single, unsettling hybrid form. Yet the gavel's resonance extends beyond the courtroom: it is also the auctioneer's tool, the ceremonial instrument that sanctions ownership, value, and exchange. Within this conflation of the sacred and the transactional, Bezzina's object exposes the

intertwined economies of belief, governance, and capital that underpin both religion and the art world itself.

As both relic and weapon, the *cruci-gavel* oscillates between reverence and violence, conviction and commerce. It embodies the uneasy marriage of form and function, its potential for use inseparable from its capacity for harm. By staging this conflict between material seduction and moral hesitation, Bezzina's sculptures reflect on the structures—spiritual, judicial, and economic—that regulate our bodies, our desires, and our values. In the charged space between devotion and consumption, *Untitled (cruci-gavel)* stands as a sharp meditation on faith, authority, and the commodification of belief in an age where everything, especially art, has its price.

Within the framework of *Art from Elsewhere: DEEP THROAT*, *Untitled (cruci-gavel)* becomes a meditation on the systems of power that compel confession and submission—whether to faith, to law, or to capital. The fusion of crucifix and gavel marks a collision between spiritual judgment and material transaction, exposing the violence embedded in both redemption and regulation. In the Maltese context—where religion remains deeply woven into the fabric of governance and identity—Bezzina's object resonates with particular acuity, confronting the viewer with the uneasy entanglement of morality, authority, and market value. Here, the artist's "anti-interactive" gesture mirrors a broader cultural condition: a world in which belief and obedience are sculpted not by faith alone, but by the silent pressure of systems that demand our complicity.

**ARTIST BIO:** [www.aaronbezzina.com](http://www.aaronbezzina.com)

**AARON BEZZINA (born 1991 in Malta. Lives and works in Malta.)**

Aaron Bezzina is a Maltese artist whose practice blends sculpture with installation, digital processes, and wry conceptual strategies to probe mortality, materiality, and the conditions that elicit meaning and touch. Trained in fine art (BA Hons, MCAST, the Malta College of Art, Science, and Technology) and holding an MFA in Digital Arts from the University of Malta, Bezzina builds work that stages bodily presence and absence - often with a darkly humorous logic - inviting viewers to reconsider how objects, rituals and images shape experience and value. Aaron Bezzina participated in major international Biennales, such as the Venice Biennale of Architecture (2016), the Maltese Pavilion at the Venice Biennale of Art (2017), and the inaugural Malta Biennale (2024). His recent projects trace a steady international trajectory: most recently he is participating in the prestigious at the Cité Internationale des Arts artist residency in Paris (2025-26), and he has participated in artistic exchanges and virtual presentations such as MICAS's *Between Sea and Land* (2023) and the *Rituals of Passage* exchange in Antwerp (2023). In 2021 he joined the UN/MUTE virtual residency with an exhibition at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York; in 2020 he presented the solo *PLEASE DON'T COME TO MY SHOW, IT'S SAFER TO STAY AT HOME* at Il-Kunvent tal-Patrijiet Dumnikani in Valletta; and in 2019 he mounted the solo *Corpus Adflictum* at Valletta Contemporary. His residencies include RigenerArte, Treviso (Jan–Jun 2019), AMuSE (Dusetos Cultural Centre, Lithuania, Apr–May

2019), the inaugural Blitz–Snehta Residency in Athens (Oct 2017), and the European Investment Bank Artist Development Programme in Luxembourg (May–Jul 2015). Earlier group and institutional presentations include the Malta Pavilion programmes and collateral events at the Venice Biennale (2016–17) and numerous national exhibitions from 2012 onwards.