A subject that has reoccurred in my work for some time now has been the preserved remains of the creatures in Natural History Museums. In his moral philosophy works Samuel Scheffler speculates on how we bestow value on things by preserving and sustaining them, to extend them into the future.

Viewed in this way, the collections within institutions such as natural history museums can be seen as repositories of that which we collectively value and consider worthy of preserving. The collections also give view to the shifting tastes and attitudes that have taken place over time; a thing considered acceptable one moment becomes with time, outdated and at times even inappropriate. The collections are also valuable in reminding us that a thing existing in abundance in one moment doesn’t guarantee its existence in the future; history gives us many examples of things that existed in profusion one moment and ceased to exist in the next.

In this way I approached my avian subjects as something to be revered. In handling their remains, some of which were very old specimens, I was willing to make visible the empathy I felt for them as creatures, at one time alive. In the series ***Ancestors***, ***Corpus*** and ***Ocular,*** it is the vestiges of the birds’ lifeless bodies that serve as compelling symbols, of the ephemeral nature of life.