SMCK MAGAZINE

FOR INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

#13

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OCTOBER 2026



CULTURE IS ALWAYS ABOUT POLITICS AND DEBATE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY · CREATIVES SHOULD USE AI WITH A GRAIN OF SALT · MYTHS OF OUR TIMES: ON THE EDGE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS · TO PAINT AN ICON, YOU MUST SET ASIDE THE EGO · LEGNICA FESTIVAL SILVER: AN UNRIVALED SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY · THE ARTISAN AFFAIR: HAMBURG'S EXCLUSIVE CRAFTS FAIR · AND MUCH MORE

MYTHOLOGY

#13 MYTHOLOGY



Kallichoron – *The well of the Fair Dances, stone well in Eleusis (Elefsina), Greece. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.*

IN THIS ISSUE

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LOUISE HILL

The Weaver's Due, *Photography, Digital collage and hand fabricated ring, 2026.* www.louisehill.co.nz | @louise_hill_artist

MYTHOLOGY

EDITORIAL

By Loukia Richards

Myths still fascinate us by triggering our imagination and giving birth to multiple associations and interpretations that no mind can put into logical order nor entirely grasp.

The Greeks had neither an organized religion nor sacred books nor a strict and unmovable metaphysical narrative. Myths varied from place to place, and often offered contradictory outcomes depending on the era or local tradition. Nevertheless, myths condensed all fundamental Greek values, such as respecting nature, understanding hubris as a form of egopathy, accepting the eternal universal laws governing one's own mortal fate, and honoring the heroes who defended their families and the city's altars, in other words those who died for a life in freedom.

These are the same themes that artists participating in SMCK Magazine's spring and summer projects—Three Myths for Athens and Myths of Our Times—highlighted with their works (video, photography, jewelry, objects, and texts) included in this issue.

When people misunderstand their focal points—the sacredness of nature and the illusions blurring human vision—tmyths may become glamour providers for people sick with power.
Allegories as they are, myths also speak of tyranny, injustice, greed, borderline personalities, and their horrible crimes against the innocent. They remind us of the evils humans have to bear in dark times when freedom, justice, and equality do not exist.

Thus, in their role to address issues that were too sensitive and dangerous to talk about, myths also served as the voice of the unprivileged, and of those who yearned for truth. Myths attributed, for example, to the former slave Aesop, became the uncensored records of the oppressed in their strive to remain human, even in the most brutal periods of the *Imperium Romanum*.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear SMCK Magazine,



Mountains surrounding Leonidio, Arcadia. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.

Letter on the exhibition FRAGMENTS that took place at Augo Avgo Art Space in Leonidio, Greece, in August 2026. The show featured twenty-seven international artists examining how myths resonate with contemporary aspirations and agonies.

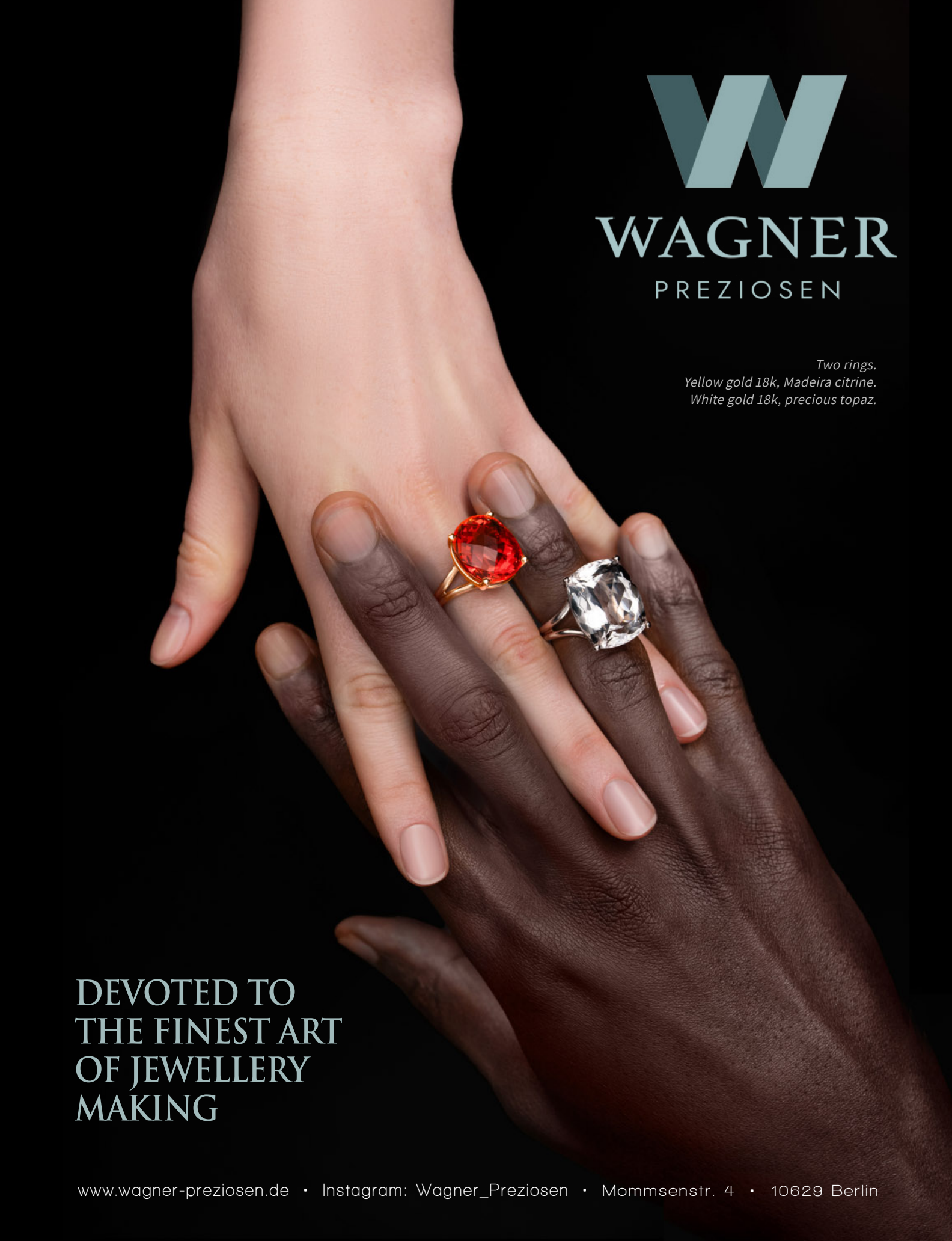
Dear SMCK Magazine,

There is a lot of fanfare, pretense and big words that say nothing out there, so *FRAGMENTS* was an even more special exhibition. I feel you enjoyed doing it. I found it special because, to me, it was honest and unpretentious, with good storytelling, beautifully crafted exhibits, all carefully curated.

It is rare to see sincerity in jewelry, stories and objects, and how they meaningfully tie together in context.

Best regards,

Adriana Radulescu, Washington D.C.


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Magdalénien, *Necklace, 2021. Rock crystal and copper. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of the artist.*

All images: © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2026 for Bernhard Schobinger; © The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Photos by Thomas R. DuBrock.

GOING UNDERGROUND: THE JEWELS OF BERNHARD SCHOBINGER. ARNOLDSCHE ART PUBLISHERS (2026). THE CATALOGUE, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY ELIZABETH ESSNER, CLAUDIA SCHMUCKLI, BERNHARD SCHOBINGER, AND CINDI STRAUSS, ACCOMPANIES THE SOLO EXHIBITION OF THE SAME NAME BY THE SWISS ARTIST AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON, TEXAS.



Grass Ring, *1977. 18K gold.*
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,
promised gift of the Rotasa Collection Trust.

By Loukia Richards

Anarchos, the Greek adjective (ἄναρχος) meaning "without a ruler," "without a starting point," "eternal," and ultimately "free," is how I can describe in just one word the jewelry of Bernhard Schobinger and its maker, both of whom are documented in the brilliant catalogue by Arnoldsche.
I discovered Schobinger's work in the library of The Textile Museum in Washington, D.C., almost twenty years ago. His interweaving of complicated ideas with formal perfection, his deeply moving humanism transpiring through the rawness of facts, and the way he chose to present his jewelry pieces left me speechless. Holiday in Cambodia, a cuff repousséed with human skulls and bones, and the Bottleneck necklace covering a woman's naked torso—printed in a rather cyanide tone—are two works I will never forget.

Schobinger's books, or rather books on Schobinger, are not about nice jewelry that is easy to wear, but about an artist working with jewelry—among other things. The meticulously designed catalogue could be seen as one of those "other things," since Schobinger does not limit his vision to jewelry. Instead, he stages how to capture the eye, curiosity, fantasy, and the senses of the reader by combining jewelry with pho-



Snake Plays with Pearl, *Bangle, 1995.*
Iron, gold, cultured pearl, black diamonds, malachite, cinnabar.
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Helen Williams Drutt Collection,
museum purchase funded by the Caroline Wiess Law Foundation.



Small Tear Drop Chain, *necklace, 2014. Steel, akoya pearls, gold, and Japanese urushi lacquer. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, promised gift of the Rotasa Collection Trust.*



See-Saw Ring, *2009. Toluca meteorite and fine gold. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of the Rotasa Collection Trust.*

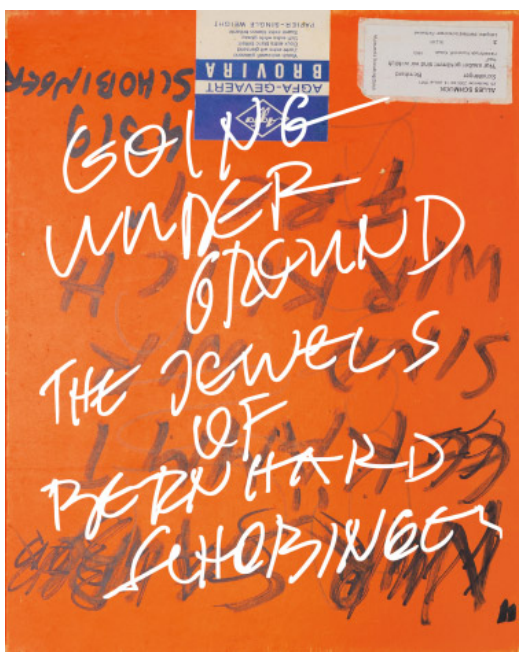
tography, graphic design, modeling, and paper. The Arnoldsche catalogue serves as a "window of opportunity" for anyone who wishes to look at Schobinger's narrative unfolding through metal, stone, asphalt, light, camera, typography, layout, the human body, or objets trouvés.
Schobinger's work leads us through deep time into the ontology of jewelry, emphasizing its connection to the cosmos and the slow, trillion-year-long process of nature. It also leads us to the preciousness of the moment of seeing neglected materials, such as the asphalt and tire leftovers from the streets of New York, capturing the essence of our fast-paced civilization that may perish within minutes in a nuclear frenzy.

A difficult ornament, a bearer of ideas, a bridge connecting us to the universe, a definer of human relationships and disruptions, a carrier of the scars of the urban landscape—this is Schobinger's jewelry. This jewelry was born through authoritarian mismatches and unspoken rebellion, through wishes and disappointments, through endeavors and failures, and through lessons learned the hard way.
These experiences led the artist to define his own "voice" through discipline and freedom—a rare and powerful, but not contradictory, combination. Life episodes that may never appear in a standard artist biography outline Schobinger's determination to do it his way, such as his initiative to address the Nazi affiliations of Germany's institutional jewelry, and his indifference towards awards that many artists would kill to get.

The catalogue is not only fascinating and highly inspiring; it also works as an antidote to influencers, self-proclaimed VIPs, and pseudo-gurus. These figures not only bore social media users to death with glamorous snapshots of their ugly jewelry events, but they also put pressure on the younger generation to follow prescribed "career moves"—fairs, galleries, the right people, the right PR—keeping them blind to the possibility of choosing discipline and freedom first.

The exhibition „Going Underground: The Jewels of Bernhard Schobinger" features pivotal pieces of experimental jewelry and select sculpture from 1968 to the present, with necklaces, bracelets, and rings drawn from prominent private collections and the holdings of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

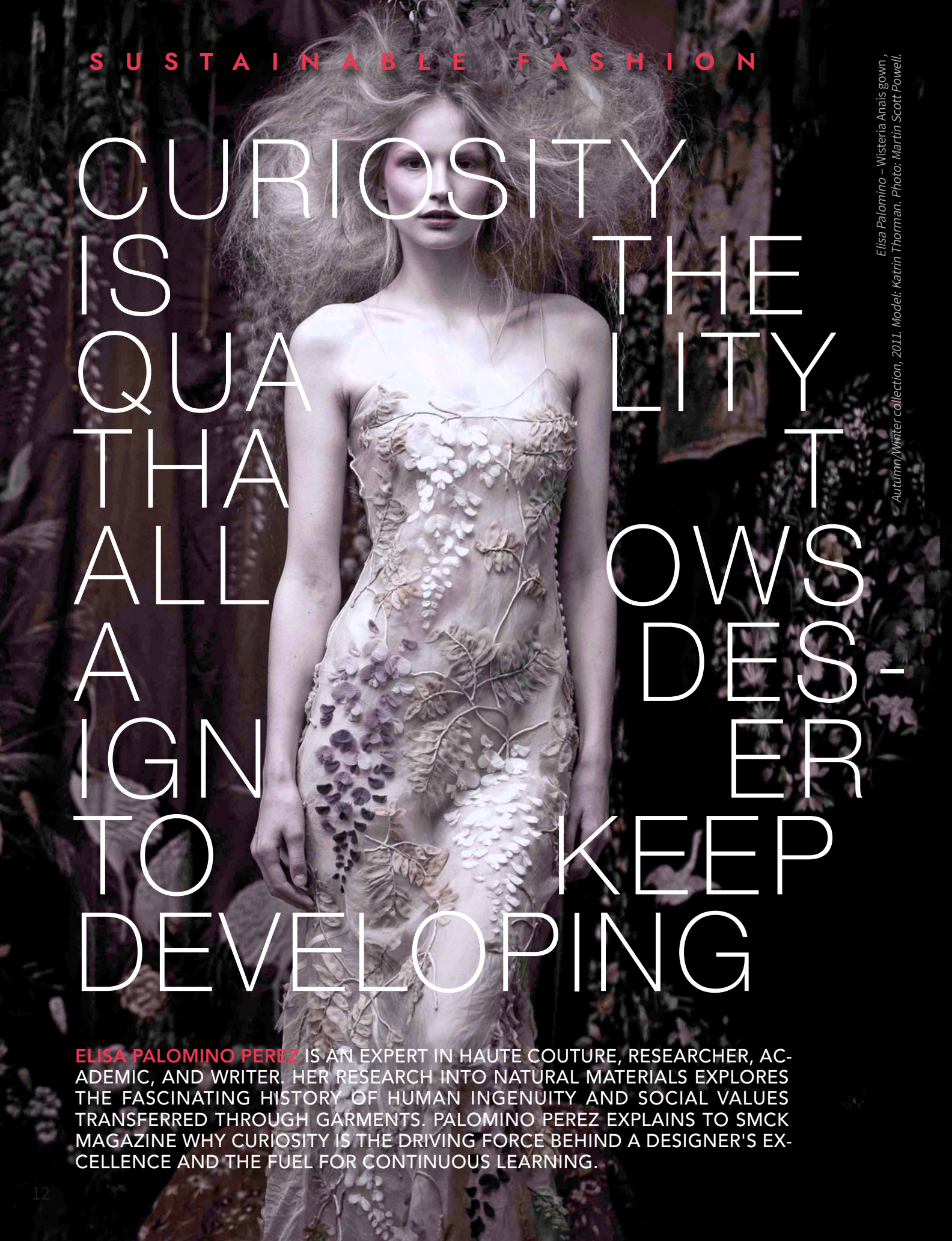
The exhibition runs through January 3, 2027.



Going Underground: The Jewels of Bernhard Schobinger, *Catalog published by arnoldsche Art Publishers, Stuttgart, in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.*

www.arnoldsche.com
www.mfah.org / www.schobinger.ch

CURIOSITY IS THE QUALITY THAT ALLOWS A DESIGNER TO KEEP DEVELOPING



Elisa Palomino – Wisteria Anais gown, Autumn/Winter collection, 2011. Model: Katrin Thorman. Photo: Martin Scott Powell.

ELISA PALOMINO PEREZ IS AN EXPERT IN HAUTE COUTURE, RESEARCHER, ACADEMIC, AND WRITER. HER RESEARCH INTO NATURAL MATERIALS EXPLORES THE FASCINATING HISTORY OF HUMAN INGENUITY AND SOCIAL VALUES TRANSFERRED THROUGH GARMENTS. PALOMINO PEREZ EXPLAINS TO SMCK MAGAZINE WHY CURIOSITY IS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND A DESIGNER'S EXCELLENCE AND THE FUEL FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING.



John Galliano – Prêt-à-Porter.
Autumn/Winter collection, 2002.
Natural salmon skin Parka.
Photo: Patrice Stable.

Interview by Christoph Ziegler

SMCK: You worked both as head of the studio of John Galliano and at Christian Dior from 2000-2007. What was your main role during this time?
Haute Couture and Luxury Fashion are often regarded as elitist and detached from normal. Is there a „democratic" aspect of high end fashion?

EP: As Studio Director at John Galliano–while simultaneously contributing to the Christian Dior collections–I coordinated the creative development of the collections from the first research stage through to the runway, showroom and sales. My role brought together designers, studio interns, embroiderers, textile specialists, and accessory teams so that every element contributed to a coherent collection.
Material research shaped the work of the studio. We explored historical textiles, prints, embroidery techniques, and unexpected material combinations. Haute couture allows ideas to be tested without the immediate constraints of industrial production. Many of those experiments later find their way into ready-to-wear and eventually into the wider fashion industry.
Haute couture is sometimes seen as distant because few people will ever own those garments. Yet its influence extends well beyond the runway. Museums preserve these collections, students study them, craftspeople preserve the techniques they acquired, and designers across the industry reinterpret their ideas. In that sense, couture remains one of the places where fashion continues to develop new ways of thinking about materials and making.

> *"WORKING WITH THESE COLLECTIONS HAS CHANGED THE WAY I THINK ABOUT FASHION. A GARMENT IS NEVER SIMPLY AN ARTIFACT. IT CONTAINS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MATERIALS, CLIMATE, CRAFTSMANSHIP, TRADE, AND HUMAN INGENUITY."*

SMCK: You are a leading advocate for fish skin fashion; you have conducted extensive research on the material knowledge and craft traditions of Indigenous peoples of the North, including communities in Iceland, Alaska, Siberia, Northeast China, and Hokkaido, Japan.
Your article "Arctic Indigenous Fashion: Honoring Women's Roles and Sustainable Practices" focuses on sustainability, cultural identity and spiritual practices, as well as gender. How can these traditions survive and remain sustainable in the face of cultural homogenization driven by consumerism and technology?

EP: Indigenous clothing traditions have survived because they continue to be practised. Knowledge is passed down through making, through observation and through experience. In the Arctic, women developed sophisticated techniques for processing fish skin, gutskin, birdskin, and plant fibres, selecting each material according to its particular properties and the environment in which it would be used. These technologies continue to evolve today as Indigenous artists combine inherited knowledge with new materials and contemporary design.
Museum collections also play an important role. Many nineteenth-century garments preserve techniques that are no longer widely practised. When communities can study these collections alongside archival photographs and oral histories, objects become working sources of

knowledge instead of static museum specimens.
Today, the fashion industry is paying greater attention to this knowledge because it faces practical questions about materials, waste, and longevity. Looking carefully at historical and Indigenous clothing reminds us that people have been solving material problems with remarkable ingenuity for centuries, and that many of these approaches remain relevant today.

SMCK: Your essay, "Spanish Ambergris-Scented Gloves: Crafting Elegance and Well-Being from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment," is a fascinating history of materials, luxury, hygienic beliefs, gender roles, and trade relations in Europe between the 11th and 18th centuries. Your article could also serve as an appeal to search for new ideas in Europe's past or even to consider relaunching updated versions of forgotten fashions.
How much research is required before a fashion firm launches a new series—and a new narrative?

EP: Every collection I worked on at John Galliano, Christian Dior, and later my own brand began with research. Before the first image appeared in a sketchbook, there were museum visits, historical references, books, travel, textiles, paintings, and collaborations with artisans. The narrative emerged through that process and informed every creative decision.

"EDUCATION AND FASHION HAVE BECOME TOO FOCUSED ON SPEED."

This approach also shaped my academic research. While I was at John Galliano, I pursued perfume studies for the development of the house's first fragrance and worked with Agnelle on the design of Galliano's first glove collection. Those experiences encouraged me to investigate the history of perfumed gloves, eventually leading to my research on Spanish amber-scented gloves. I found that glove makers combined leather dressing, perfumery, medicine, chemistry, and international trade to produce objects that were both practical and luxurious. Fashion has always developed through exchanges between different forms of knowledge.

SMCK: Students and young designers or artists feel the pressure to grow fast, to get a good position in their sector, to be successful. Nevertheless, the narrative patterns you suggest with your writings take a lot of time to mature–evolving from initial reception into associations, then into thoughts, and finally into text.
In many European countries, studies focus on the future and neglect the past. It is highly possible that for many young fashion designers and artists, keywords or concepts you mention—such as medieval Europe's dissociation from Roman hygienic habits or Moorish Spain, or colonial trade wars—do not ring a bell at all, or they may carry a negative or biased connotation.
Ignoring history not only deprives us of cultivating a balanced approach to our own times, but also prevents us from enjoying art, fashion, design when we do not understand the multiple layers behind an object of art. Educating— or re-educating—could also be an additional goal for fashion.
How important is a profound understanding and education in material culture and material history? Is the purchasing audience as sophisticated as the fashion creators?

EP: Education has never been confined to the classroom. I have learned continuously throughout my career, moving between very different fashion houses, including Moschino, John Galliano, Christian Dior, Roberto Cavalli, Diane von Furstenberg, and my own brand. Teaching in London, Denmark, Iceland, Japan, Italy and the United States has taught me just as much as working in fashion, and my museum research has constantly challenged ideas I previously took for grtanted. Education and fashion have become too focused on speed. Students are encouraged to produce immediate results, when learning requires time, curiosity, and the confidence to ask questions that may not have immediate answers. Looking carefully at historical objects, learning a craft, or understanding how a material behaves cannot be rushed.
Audiences are also changing. Many people now want to know how something was made, who made it, and why particular materials were chosen. That curiosity creates an opportunity for designers, museums, and universities to reconnect fashion with research, craftsmanship, and material knowledge.

SMCK: Given the current state of the world, which concepts or values do you believe will shape the future of fashion?

EP: The future of fashion will depend on a better understanding of materials. For many years, the industry has concentrated on producing more. The challenge now is learning how to produce better.
Historical craftsmanship and Indigenous technologies remind us that generations of makers continuously improved the materials already available to them. The fashion industry still has much to learn from that approach. We



Elisa Palomino – Chrysanthemum Chloe gown,
Autumn/Winter collection, 2011.
Model: Hanna Rundlof.
Photo: Ugo Camera.



Elisa Palomino – Chrysanthemum printed fish skin clutch. Photo: Elisa Palomino.



Laura Fernandez for Elisa Palomino – Headpiece, Autumn collection, 2012. Photo: Nathalie Malric.

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> *"LOOK AT HISTORICAL OBJECTS WITH FRESH QUESTIONS AND IMAGINE WHAT COMES NEXT!"*

should continue developing leather, fish skin, and other natural materials instead of assuming that synthetic substitutes automatically represent progress. Museums will become increasingly important for fashion. Their collections preserve techniques that are highly relevant to contemporary questions about sustainability, craftsmanship, and material innovation.
Fashion will continue to change, but its future will depend as much on careful observation and material knowledge as on technological development. Looking at historical objects with fresh questions will be one of the most productive ways of imagining what comes next.

SMCK: What are the most important skills you would recommend to a contemporary artist / designer to cultivate in order to excel in the fashion industry?

EP: For young designers, technical ability remains essential. Learn how materials behave. Spend time in museums. Handle historical objects whenever possible. Work alongside craftspeople. Read outside fashion. Curiosity is the quality that allows a designer to keep developing throughout a career because every material has something new to teach.

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THE ARTISAN AFFAIR

A REGULAR INCOME & VISIBILITY FOR CRAFTERS DEFINE A FAIR'S SUCCESS



The Artisan Affair, *exhibition view. Photo: Joseph Lange.*

QUALITY, LOCATION, CONSISTENCY, AND AWARENESS OF ECONOMIC REALITIES ARE THE SPECIAL VIRTUES OF THE ARTISAN AFFAIR. THE HAMBURG-BASED ANNUAL DESIGN AND CRAFTS FAIR OFFERS CREATIVES TANGIBLE RESULTS FOR THEIR INVESTMENT. SMCK MAGAZINE DISCUSSED WITH FRANK PRESSENTIN, THE FAIR'S FOUNDER, HOW SHIFTING THE PERSPECTIVE FROM CULTURE AND LEISURE INTO THE ECONOMY CAN ALTER THE IMAGE AND IDENTITY OF CRAFTS AND DESIGN.



Astrid Jansen – Unicorn,
handmade leather mask, 2021.
Photo: A. Jansen.

Interview by Christoph Ziegler

SMCK: Why did you found The Artisan Affair?

FP: I was visiting a Pen Show in the venue Mozartsälen when I heard that the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg (MKGH) would discontinue its annual fair, a tradition of nearly a hundred and forty years. I thought that one should not simply accept it, when another platform for contemporary crafts disappears. I became conscious of the fact that sometimes it does not take much to bring together people who share a real passion: you just need a beautiful venue, a table, handmade objects, and to make this encounter possible. Instead of complaining, I wanted to take responsibility. Still at the Mozartsälen, I started making calls; I found the exhibitors and the venue. This is how The Artisan Affair started.

SMCK: What is the difference between The Artisan Affair and other exhibition formats?

FP: Crafts need visibility, and, at the same time, they need to offer designers economic prospects. The Artisan Affair is consciously a selling fair. Only when designers sell their works can they live off their craft.
Good handicrafts should be seen, touched, and used by people. The objects are presented on a table, and not on high pedestals or behind glass cases. For me, the table is the real exhibition venue. We do not aim to become Germany's biggest crafts fair, but the most personal one. We want to create a place that equally hosts exceptional crafts and authentic encounters.

SMCK: What are the criteria you apply to select fair participants?

FP: The quality of the works, the makers' positions and personalities are very important factors. Manufactories are definitely welcome too. What is important for me is that design and execution take place within the same business, and that the creators sign their works, and support them with a statement. Another important aspect is the participants' commitment to The Artisan Affair. I am happy to host exhibitors who have an updated website, use social media in a professional manner, and keep their network informed about the event. The fair can only grow, when all participants take the responsibility and share their satisfaction with their own audience.
Loyalty is also important to me. The exhibitors who trusted in The Artisan Affair from the very beginning form the fair's foundation on which new positions are organically added.



Gundula Sommerer –
Vase, Raku ceramic.
Photo: Thorsten Held.

“WE FOCUS ON DESIGNERS FROM GERMANY AND GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES, ALTHOUGH WE ALSO HAVE PARTICIPANTS FROM MANY OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. MY WISH IS THAT THE ARTISAN AFFAIR WILL BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM FOR OUTSTANDING HANDICRAFTS.”



Alexandra Svendsen –
Cube Sun, *hand bag, leather.*
Photo: A. Svendsen.



The Artisan Affair,
exhibition view. Photo: Joseph Lange.

I believe that good crafts need time, both in the making of the objects and also in establishing the designer's relation to their audience. This continuity is more important to me than looking for new participants every year.

SMCK: Should a city support its craft and design scene?

FP: I think cities have the responsibility to strengthen this cultural ecosystem. Hamburg offers interesting programs for the creative temporary use of spaces. What I would additionally wish for is a stronger economic interest in the crafts.
Many funding programs support cultural projects as long as they do not seek economic success. However, crafts can only achieve permanent existence if crafters can live off their work. Maybe the biggest opportunity for crafts does not lie only in state funding, but in building stronger connections between crafters and public life.
Cities commission artists, design public spaces and have their own representative image. Why shouldn't they use works by regional crafters more often? At this moment, The Artisan Affair is not supported by the city of Hamburg. I wish that, in the future, such events are not only understood as cultural contributions, but also as an economically precious ingredient of a living crafts culture.

SMCK: Many artists say that participation in fairs hardly returns the fees they invested. What were the experiences exhibitors of The Artisan Affair had?



Friederike Rohse – Abbraccio Bianco, *cuff. Photo: Marc Autenrieth.*



Artisan Affair organizers Frank Pressentin & Thorsten Held at Mozartsäle, Logenhaus Hamburg. Photo: Artisan Affair.

Babette von Dohnanyi – Reaction, *brooch, 2025. Photo: Fedrico Cavicchioli.*



The Artisan Affair takes place at the historic Mozartsäle venue in the heart of Hamburg, November 21–22, 2026.

www.artisanaffair.de
Instagram: @the_artisan_affair

FP: The feedback we got from our exhibitors in our first year was extremely positive. Some of them had made very good sales, while others did less well. However, all of them agreed on the high quality of the audience. The visitors asked interesting and often very technical questions, and knew exactly what was on display. We had consciously addressed this particular audience. Visitors bought works from every price category—from post cards and smaller works to high-end unique pieces priced at a few thousand euros. Demand was stronger for the middle price range between 400 and 1,800 euros.

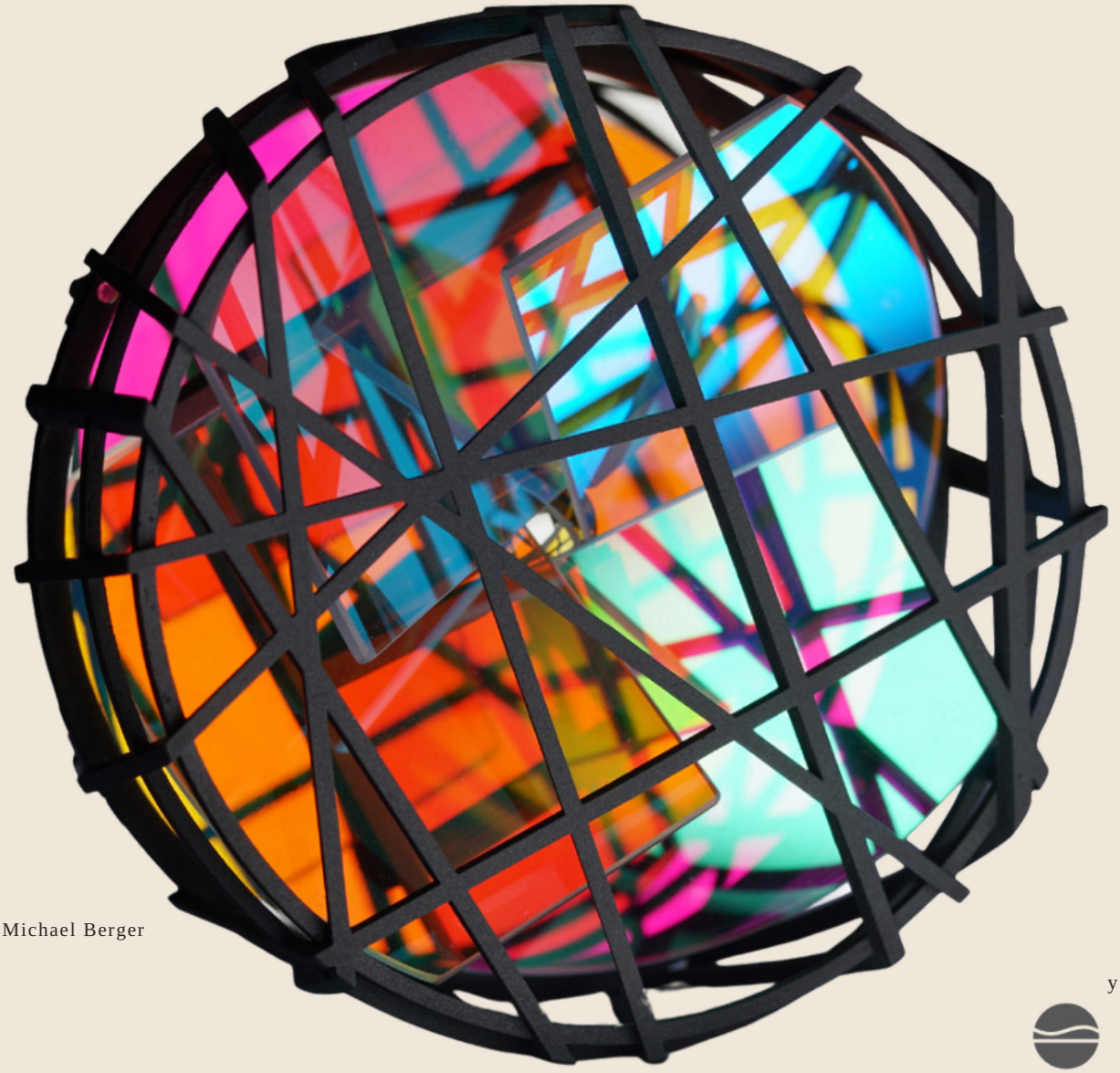
SMCK: What did you learn from your success and from your mistakes?

FP: The quality of the exhibited objects, the special atmosphere and the approximately one thousand visitors, during the two-day event far exceeded my expectations. At the same time, I learned that a project of this size cannot be managed by just one person in the long run.
We are building a professional team right now which will further develop The Artisan Affair's sustainability, and will permanently secure its high quality.
In the long run, I can certainly imagine transferring the concept to other cities as well.
If The Artisan Affair contributes to making handicrafts permanently visible, and to enable designers to live off the work they create with their hands, then we will have achieved our goal.

THE ARTISAN AFFAIR

21. Nov. 2026 | 11:00 - 19:00 Uhr

22. Nov. 2026 | 11:00 - 18:00 Uhr



Michael Berger

y

ELBWOOD
THE HANSEATIC PENMAKER

p y

haptik

Die Mozart Säle
Moorweidenstraße 36
20146 Hamburg

www.artisanaffair.de



THREE MYTHS FOR ATHENS

THE THREE MYTHS FOR ATHENS PROJECT, HELD FROM 8 TO 30 MAY 2026, INCLUDED THREE WEEKS OF JEWELRY-RELATED EVENTS IN ATHENS, GREECE: VIDEO SCREENINGS AND AWARDS, EXHIBITIONS, JEWELRY RESIDENCIES, EXPERT TALKS, AND JEWELRY PRESENTATIONS.



Three Myths For Athens, exhibition view. Photo: Christoph Ziegler.

THE GROUP EXHIBITION JEWELRY • TEXTILE • OBJECT

The group exhibition was inspired by the Athenian myths of Orestes, Theseus, and Oedipus. Each myth stands for a variety of concepts such as love, destiny, revenge, heroism, fall, justice, blindness, strength, fragility, as well as for family conflict, personal growth and independence. The locations of the three myths are still part of Athens' monumental landscape.

Participants:

KIRA FRITSCH • MARGARITA SKOKOU • POPI TSOUKATOU • ADRIANA RADULESCU • DIMITRA LAZARIDOU • NITZAN MILEGUIR • KATIE KAMEEN • EDEN HERMAN ROSENBLUM • ANNELI OPPAR • CHRISTOPH ZIEGLER • IOANA CIUCIULICĂ • ODILE YU • XINCHEN LI • OONA GALLERY BERLIN (WITH SVENJA JOHN, JIRO KAMATA, PETRA ZIMMERMANN, MARC MONZÓ) • ALESSA JOOSTEN • LOUKIA RICHARDS.

The group exhibition was housed in SMCK Art Space, an Athenian Bauhaus loft in Kolonos, Athens' oldest neighborhood. SMCK Art Space is SMCK Magazine's gallery, and is located between the ruins of Plato's Academy and Hippios Kolonos, a sacred place in ancient Greece. The THREE MYTHS FOR ATHENS project was curated by Loukia Richards and Christoph Ziegler.





Three Myths For Athens, exhibition view. Photo: Christoph Ziegler.



Kira Fritsch – Hyacinth Brooch, 2025.
Forged blackened silver.
Photo: K. Fritsch.

THE GREEK COSMOS

The Greek word cosmos means jewelry and universe. Cosmos also means to manage, order, organize, develop a strategy, and prepare for battle. The making of weapons, coins, and adornment experienced a simultaneous expansion in Iron Age Greece. This growth was triggered by the import of iron through the Aegean Sea, which is considered the cradle of Greek civilization.
Greece's jewelry traditions date back to the Neolithic era. Athens hosts the world's top collections of ancient, medieval and modern jewelry, and is home to enthusiastic jewelry wearers.

Jewelry fulfills important social functions and reflects spiritual beliefs. It mirrors a vibrant heritage that has been long forgotten in the West. Jewelry's resilient symbols and multi-layered visual language echo faith, love, cosmic unity, and the divine in Greece.



Eden Herman Rosenblum – Restoration. *rusted tin can lid, silver filigree. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.*



Xinchen Li – Encountered Faces III, earrings, 2024. 3D printing pen; polylactic acid, silver. Photo: X. Li.

CONNECTED THROUGH JEWELRY

The intricate project *THREE MYTHS FOR ATHENS* explored jewelry as a means to make contact with collective memory. Intrepid navigators, heroic myths, and the struggle for self-knowledge were reflected in the project's concept.
The artists' works, videos and jewelry, formed a conceptual mosaic that highlights the maker's vision through cultural references and interdisciplinary dialectics. By associating jewelry, topography, and mythology, the project established new perspectives into understanding the artists' works.
The myths of Orestes, Theseus, and Oedipus are connected to Athens' topography and the city's self-image; these narratives stand for love and hate, destiny and defiance, hubris and justice, heroism and defeat, loss and sacrifice, prophecy and truth.

THREE MYTHS FOR ATHENS connected jewelry, mythology and the genius loci through a step-by-step revelation of the myths' meaning via seeing, observing, narrating, discussing, walking, evaluating, voting.



Anneli Oppar – Signature, *brooch, 2024. Silver, plywood, stainless steel. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.*





Three Myths For Athens at SMCK Art Space, exhibition view. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.



Odile Yu – Postcard, Anonymous Love Letter series. Laser cut and UV printed white and frosted acrylic, adhesive tape. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.







Katie Kameen –
Neighborhood / Wink / Acetic, *brooches, 2023-25.*
Assembled plastic objects, hand stitched. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.

Three Myths For Athens at SMCK Art Space, exhibition view. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.

Anneli-Oppar – Untitled, ring, 2024.
3D-printing, stainless-steel.
Photo: A. Oppar.





Alessa Joosten –
Meraki, soft sculpture, 2026.
Rust-dyed fabric. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.





Three Myths For Athens *video screeening: Loukia Richards holding the opening speech at Goethe-Institut Athen. Photo: Mary.*

SMCK ON REEL AT GOETHE-INSTITUT ATHEN

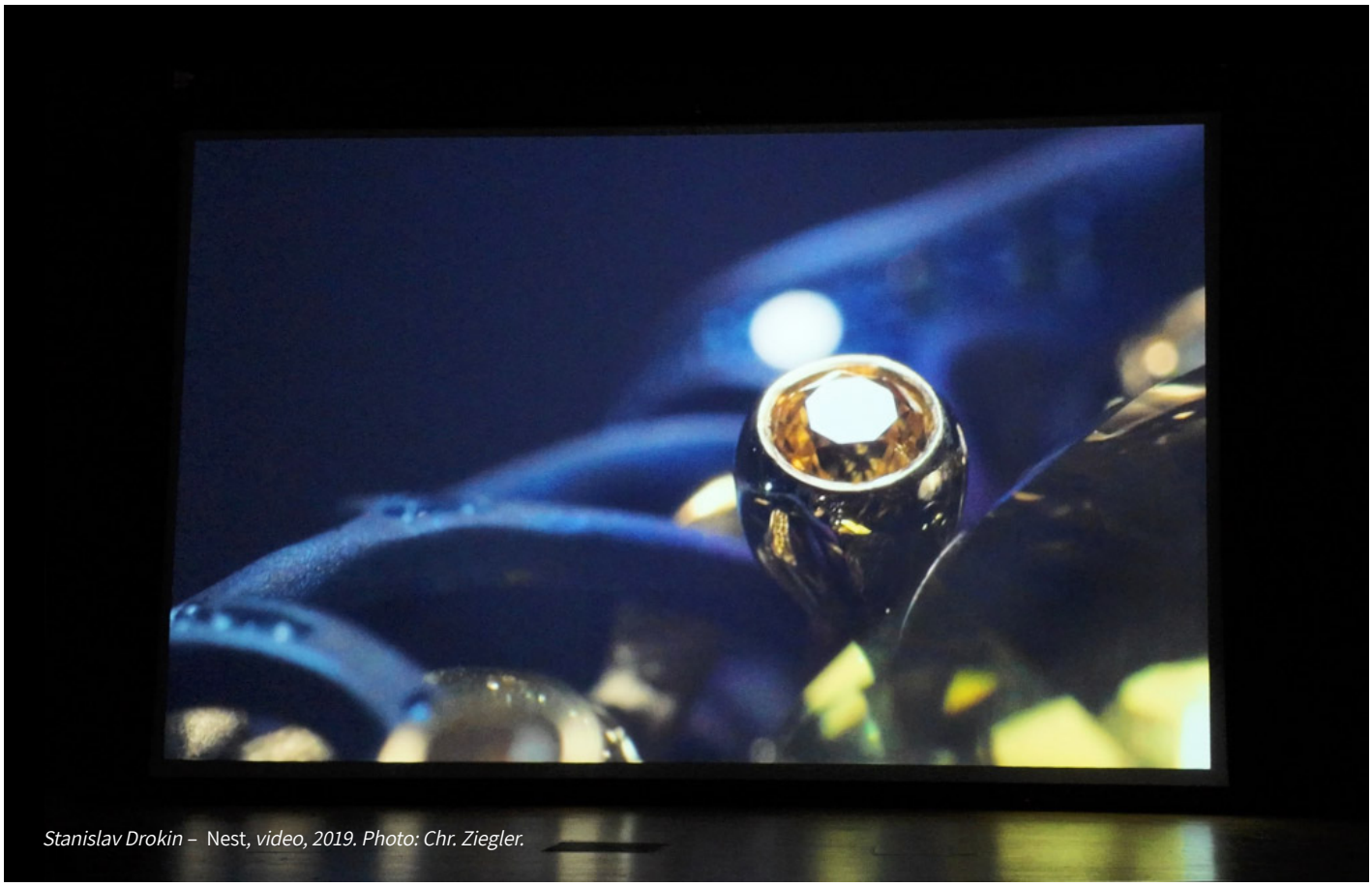
Goethe-Institut Athens, a major German cultural organization, hosted the video screenings, which served as an introduction to the events that followed.

www.smck.org/Three Myths 2026

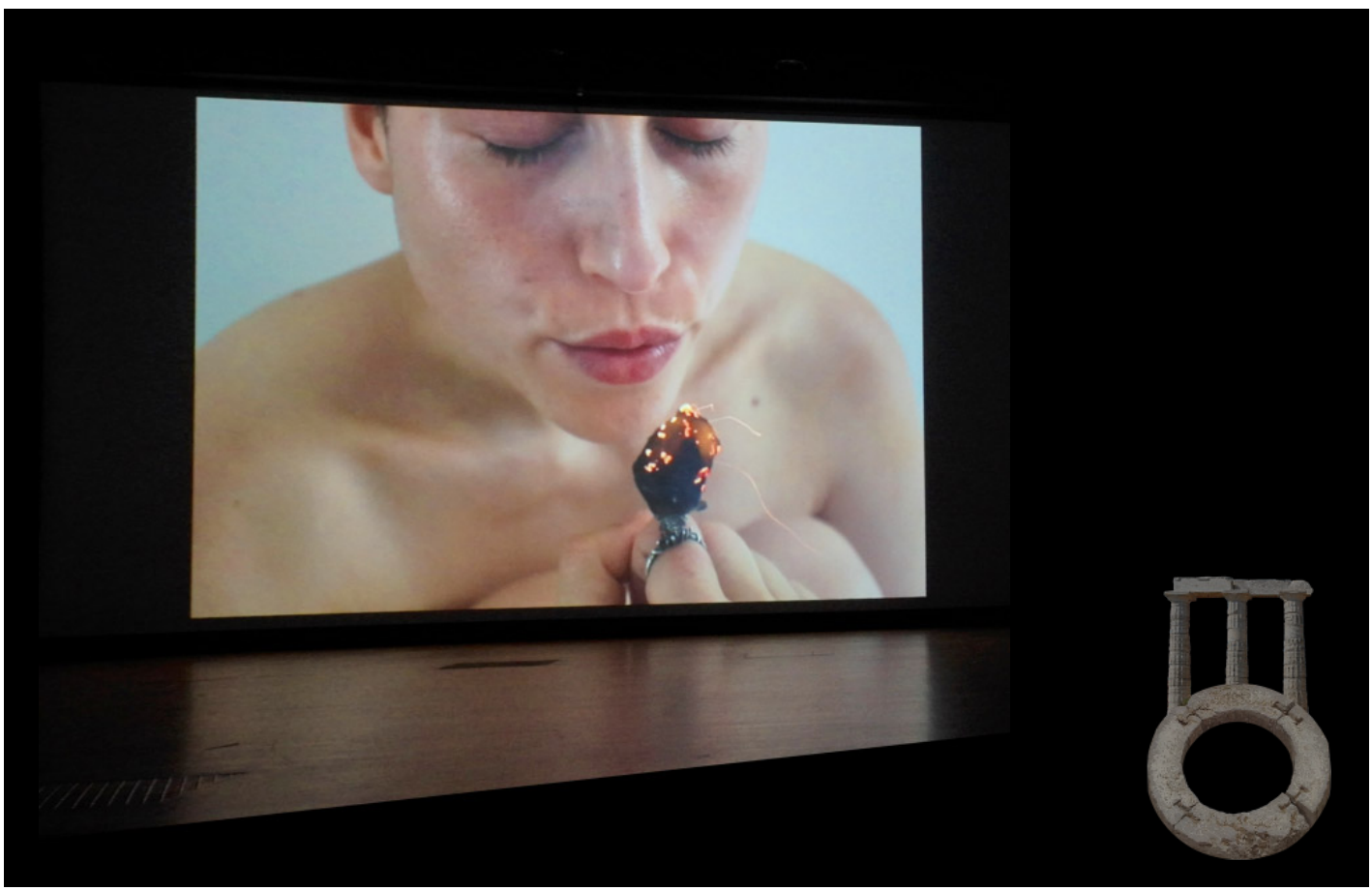
Contemporary jewelry examines patterns of social values, as well as the impact of politics and activism on collective aesthetics. Authors from Europe, USA, Asia and Oceania, as well as from war-torn Ukraine and the Middle East, used video as a medium to talk about love, intimacy, climate change, war, peace, memory, identity, and self-determination.
The featured jewelry, textile and objects created a collective narrative that echoes timeless Athens. Struggle - Justice - Harmony, fundamental ideas of the Greek polis, were represented through the myths of Orestes, Theseus, Oedipus.

Participants:

ASHGAN WAKED • ADRIANA RADULESCU • POPI TSOUKATOU • NITZAN MILEGUIR • EUROPEAN FASHION HERITAGE ASSOCIATION • EXPERTS TALK (SARAH BAILEY, IOANNIS MICHALOUDIS, SIGURD BRONGER, CLEMENS RITTER VON WAGNER) • ALESSANDRO PUGNO • Q HISASHI SHIBATA • ISABELLE AZAÏS • EDEN HERMAN ROSENBLUM • GREETINGS FROM UKRAINE (YURII PLEKHANOV, STANISLAV DROKIN) • DANIELLA SARAYA • RIMMA MATEVOSYAN • RANA KAABIYA • ORINA PARENTE • SAJEDA MOKARY • NOA YANKOVITCH • VICTORIA AROCA & MAURO CARRASCOSA • LOUKIA RICHARDS • CHRISTOPH ZIEGLER • POLITICAL JEWELRY (JASON STEIN, ELIN FLOGNMAN, BA AN LE, CHRISTOPH ZIEGLER, NARINÉE TCHILINGUIRIAN).



Stanislav Drokin – Nest*, video, 2019. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.*



Daniella Saraya – Take The Heart As An Example*, video, 2025. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.*

CULTURE IS ALWAYS ABOUT POLITICS AND DEBATE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY



Interview by
Christoph Ziegler
& Loukia Richards

GOETHE-INSTITUT ATHEN HOSTED THE JEWELRY VIDEO FESTIVAL SMCK ON REEL IN MAY 2026. SMCK MAGAZINE SPOKE WITH THE DIRECTOR OF GOETHE-INSTITUT-ATHEN CULTURAL DEPARTMENT, **MARC-ANDRÉ SCHMACHTEL**, ON HOW CULTURE OPENS NEW PERSPECTIVES TO HONEST EXCHANGE BETWEEN NATIONS, EVEN WHEN THE COMMON PAST IS FULL OF PAINFUL MEMORIES.



Goethe-Institut Athen, public library, Omirou Street 14-16. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.

SMCK: What actions does Goethe-Institut-Athen undertake to contribute to the dialogue and understanding between Germany and Greece, since there are still open scars from World War II?

MAS: This is a significant discussion indeed, one that also mirrors the primary reasons why the Goethe-Institut was founded in 1951: namely, to promote dialogue between Germany and host countries, particularly in the post-war period; to reflect on the value of dialogue; and to listen to one another in the framework of cultural diplomacy.
Early on, Goethe-Institut and cultural affairs were recognized as the „third pillar" of foreign policy. A central guiding principle has always been to establish a dialogue between Germany and the civil society of the host nation. Culture is a very important element in this process because it allows people to address sensitive or taboo subjects that cannot be discussed directly in tough political negotiations or daily business.

> *"THERE ARE TWO INSTITUTES IN GREECE, IN ATHENS AND THESSALONIKI, THAT ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN MEMORY CULTURE."*

SMCK: Among other initiatives you have launched in Cameroon, Nigeria and Germany, you have founded the Doc Film Festival in Munich. How did you discover the medium of film?

MAS: I studied French and Francophone Cultural Studies in Saarbrücken, and relatively early, I became a fan of African cinema, and have worked on this subject there. My Master's thesis was about the influence of French funding, thus European funding; examining which stories would be told, when a film is funded by France.
It was relatively illuminating that certain themes that, let's say in Germany or in Europe, are seen as representing Africa indeed received more funding, while a little bit more critical themes received a little bit less funding. This realization deeply moved me at the time. It also drew my interest to this issue; thus, I engaged intensively with the medium of film
One of the most important tasks for us in Goethe-Institut is to demonstrate what the film culture can realize. This requires understanding the culture, understanding the language with its nuances, and finally understanding history, maintaining a critical view of civilization, and staying actively engaged with civil society.

SMCK: How is film compatible with communication?

MAS: Film offers great potential to develop our work further. It goes far beyond standard cultural work; it has an impact on language acquisition.



Marc-André Schmachtel at the opening speech of the SMCK On Reel – Three Myths For Athens at Goethe-Institut Athen. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.

My first engagement was in Cameroon, where I worked as an international volunteer. At the same time, I held a position in the language department, where I was responsible for cultural programs that supported learning. Film was one of the tools we worked with.
We organized filmmaking workshops for language students where they learned how to write scripts. This forced them to practice their speaking skills when acting out the parts, as well as their listening and comprehension. It added a creative, artistic element to the educational process while also teaching them technical skills. The approach worked very well.

SMCK: What has suprised you in Athens, in a positive or a negative way, in the two years you have lived there? When you look back at your work in Athens later, what do you wish to have achieved?

MAS: I am very happy in Athens. I wish I could be a little bit more fluent in Greek, because the language skills open totally different doors.
I wish to understand better the language nuances and based on this knowledge to design better programs, because only then one understands probably better what drives the Greek public—World War II, or urbanization, or gentrification, or the rising of rental costs etc.
I always try to make sure that I develop programs that are relevant to the local people, and that I can say that the program will interest the young or not so young audience, and the audience's response will echo this effort: and that I will probably touch a sensitive nerve of this audience so that a foundation for a discussion can be build or co-shaped.
For us an important theme is, for example, antifascism, because we notice that fascism, or the definition of fascism, is again so massively redefined right now; and it is used by different sides. The definition of antifascism is, like in the past, associated with the left, or the radical left.
Actually antifascism was a profoundly democratic development. Anti-fascism was a struggle against fascism. And this is what we wish to bring into the mainstream of society; we have launched a major exhibition project that will also be shown in Eastern European countries over the coming years, because the theme is also relevant there as well.

"IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT FOR US NOT TO OPERATE IN A VACUUM, BUT TO LOOK AT WHAT ALREADY EXISTS AROUND US."

The definition of anti-fascism during the Soviet era in Eastern Europe was, of course, different from how it was understood in Western Europe. This makes re-examining the term a highly important task today. These are precisely the types of political themes we want to approach.
For me it is important to say that culture has always to do, in a way, with politics, with the debate inside the civil society, with themes that we could also address. This is a field where we carry a responsibility, I believe.

www.goethe.de/Athens
Instagram: @goetheinstitut_athen

17.05.26 –
06.01.27

Silver Lining



21. Silbertriennale International
der Gesellschaft für Goldschmiedekunst und des Deutschen Goldschmiedehauses Hanau



Kühle Brillanz
Highlights des Schmuckmuseums aus Silber und Diamanten



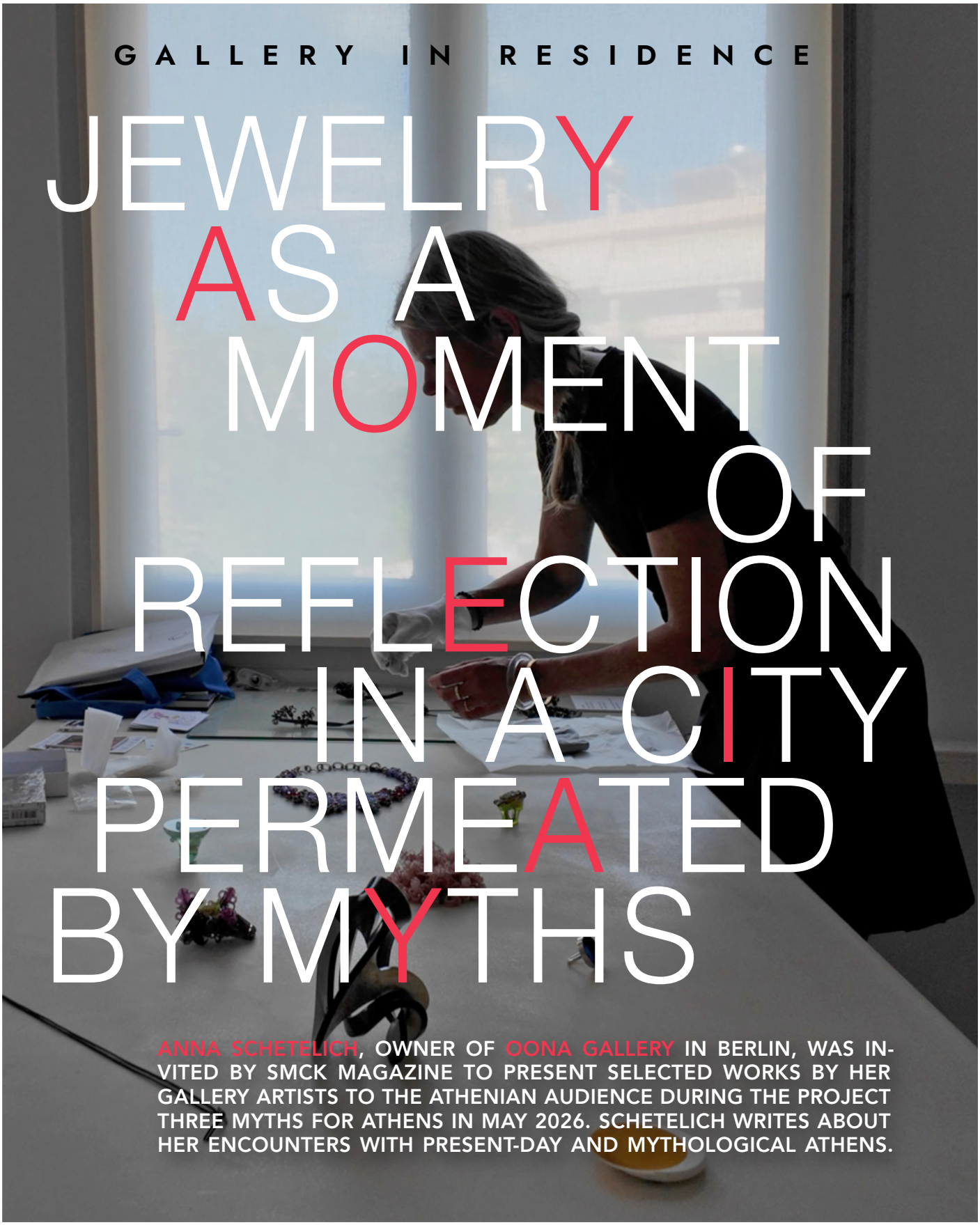
Afghanistan, Oman oder Schwarzwald?
Glanzstücke aus Silber der ethnografischen Sammlung Herion

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Fotos: Andreas Decker, Petra Jaschke, Günter Mayer | Gestaltung: L2M3.com

GALLERY IN RESIDENCE

JEWELRY AS A MOMENT OF REFLECTION IN A CITY PERMEATED BY MYTHS



ANNA SCHETELICH, OWNER OF OONA GALLERY IN BERLIN, WAS INVITED BY SMCK MAGAZINE TO PRESENT SELECTED WORKS BY HER GALLERY ARTISTS TO THE ATHENIAN AUDIENCE DURING THE PROJECT THREE MYTHS FOR ATHENS IN MAY 2026. SCHETELICH WRITES ABOUT HER ENCOUNTERS WITH PRESENT-DAY AND MYTHOLOGICAL ATHENS.

Anna Schetelich preparing her jewelry presentation at SMCK Art Space Athens. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.

By Anna Schetelich

Athens—the city of four million people built on many hills, steeped in myths—spoils you with the perfect proportions of ancient architecture and sculpture. The traces of ancient Greek culture are simply omnipresent in the midst of this vibrant metropolis. You don't even know where to begin After marveling at the unimaginably fine works of Mycenaean gold in the National Archaeological Museum—the golden mask of Agamemnon is only the beginning—you quickly reach Omonia Square, whose former elegance is mostly gone. On Athinas Street towards the city's historic meat and fish markets, household and hardware stores line up closely together. Finally, you end up at Monastiraki Square, where the Acropolis towers high above. Here, gold-colored laurel wreaths are available for 2.50 euros a piece—entire families and tour groups adorn themselves with them (while the taxis beep).

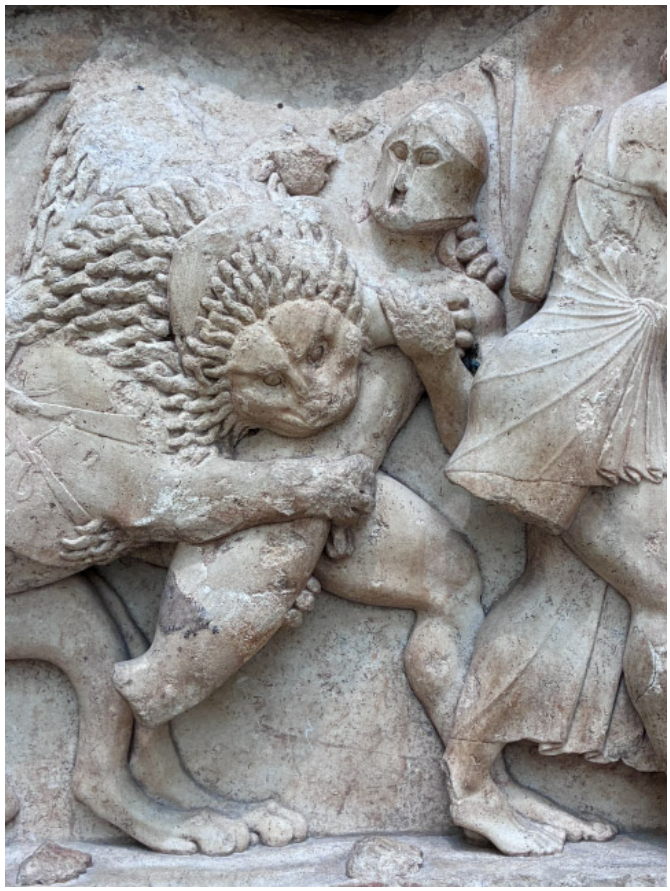
Slightly away from all the hustle and bustle, the SMCK Art Space is located in Kolonos. Invited by SMCK Magazine, I had the opportunity to present artists from the OONA Gallery there. In the bright, spacious rooms, it was easy to lay out the pieces and let them take effect. In a conversation with Loukia and Christoph, our thoughts revolved around working in the jewelry business, curating as an essential part of gallery work, and potential perspectives for authors' jewelry.

> *“ALL HUMAN CONCERNS ARE REFLECTED IN THESE STORIES TO THIS DAY.”*

Finally, Christoph took me for a walk up Kolonos Hill—the very place Oedipus reached at the end of his life; sick, weak, and begging for alms. His turbulent life, driven by a destiny ordained by the oracle, contains all the ingredients of Greek mythology: violence, love, incest, misunderstanding, and death. Forever in motion, searching to do the right thing. Failing, moving forward, erring. All human concerns are reflected in these stories to this day.

Jewelry in all its manifestations represents, in my view, a moment of pause. It is an intimate moment arising amidst the flow of life with all its turmoil and struggles—reflection, contemplation, and yes, perhaps a brief pause to gather strength and be able to move forward.

An excursion to the Oracle of Delphi at the foot of Mount Parnassus gave me a sense of the power that emanated from this place. Ultimately, the prophecies of the priestess Pythia guided the destinies of those who made the pilgrimage there.



Detail of the Gigantomachy frieze of Delphi. Photo: A. Schetelich.



Tin votives in an Athens church. Photo: A. Schetelich.

www.oona-galerie.de
Instagram: @oonagalerie_new

SMCK ON REEL AWARD WINNER

THE MINOTAUR STILL DEMANDS A SACRIFICE OF YOUTH IN TODAY'S ISRAEL



Nitzan Mileguir – Heart, Spirit Dog series, 2025. Aluminium. Photo: N. Mileguir.

JEWELRY ARTIST AND DESIGNER **NITZAN MILEGUIR** FROM TEL AVIV, ISRAEL, WAS AN ARTIST IN RESIDENCE AT FAVELAB. MILEGUIR WON THE SMCK ON REEL PRIZE DURING MUNICH JEWELRY WEEK 2026 FOR HIS VIDEO "SPIRIT DOG" FEATURING A DESIGN SHOW INSIDE A SAFE ROOM IN ISRAEL. MILEGUIR WRITES ABOUT HIS AMBIVALENT EXPERIENCES IN ATHENS AND OF HOW STRIKING CONTEMPORARY GREEK MYTHS CAN BE.



Nitzan Mileguir – Love Chain, Spirit Dog series, 2025. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.

By Nitzan Mileguir

I arrived in Athens and settled in Kolonos, where the apartment I stayed in and the SMCK gallery are located. Having my living and working spaces literally next door to each other was a wonderful experience as an artist. During my stay, I divided my time between the exhibition and wandering through Athens.

First, I visited the park built on the ruins of Plato's Academy. Like many historical sites in Athens, not much remains beyond a few stones. Still, for anyone willing to use their imagination, the spirit of the place can still be felt. That became my feeling about Athens as a whole. The ancient city is gone, yet its presence can still be felt everywhere. As the days passed, I realized that Athens is a city of contrasts - ancient and contemporary, familiar and foreign. The Archaeological Museum was a highlight, especially its collection of jewelry and metalwork. I also enjoyed the Benaki Museum. In contrast, my visit to EMST reminded me that large contemporary art institutions often make the global art world feel a little too predictable.

I felt that Athens' artistic strength lies in the space between its ruins, independent studios, galleries, and graffiti-covered walls. Which brings me to Exarchia, a vibrant neighborhood where, normally, I'm feeling at home. There I encountered one of the biggest paradoxes of my visit.

I come from Tel Aviv, a liberal and lively city inside a small country that is not particularly popular these days, Israel. Exarchia is full of political messages. When it comes to the liberation of Palestine, I agree. But many of the hostile



Nitzan Mileguir – Installation at SMCK Art Space Athens, 2026. Photo: Chr. Z.



Nitzan Mileguir – Horns of the Minotaur, 2026. Photo: Chr. Z.



Nitzan Mileguir – Installation at SMCK Art Space Athens, 2026. Photo: Chr. Z.



Nitzan Mileguir – Installation view from outside. Photo: N. Mileguir.



Nitzan Mileguir, interview at SMCK Art Space. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.

Bezalel/Nitzan Mileguir
Instagram: @nitz_mil

messages directed at Israelis lost me. The gap between the curiosity and warmth I experienced in person and the feeling of being unwelcome because of where I come from was unsettling. I couldn't stop thinking about how strange it is that a simple question like "Where are you from?" can carry so much fear and guilt.

The reason I came to Athens was to create an installation for SMCK based on the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. From this myth, I chose to focus on the idea of sacrifice. I could not help but compare the sacrifice of ancient Greece's finest youth to the Minotaur with the sacrifice Israeli families continue to make by sending their children to the army, 78 years and still counting.
The exhibition opened for the weekend. It was beautiful and moving. Yet I was left wondering how is it possible that people who share similar values of criticism, freedom, and questioning are often unwilling to engage with an artist who comes from the "wrong" place, even when he is willing to criticize it himself?

Athens was inspiring. Christoph and Loukia were wonderful hosts, introducing me to places and stories I would never have discovered alone. I left with the feeling that Athens and Tel Aviv have more in common than one might expect, and with a desire for more collaboration and cultural exchange between the two cities.


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MAKING PAUL DERREZ'S LEGEND APPROACH-ABLE AND EVERLASTING



Paul Derrez: A True Inspiration, *video, 2025. All images taken from the video by Q Hisashi Shibata.*

Interview by Loukia Richards

Q HISASHI SHIBATA WON THE SMCK ON REEL AUDIENCE AWARD FOR HIS VIDEO "PAUL DERREZ: A TRUE INSPIRATION" (NETHERLANDS, 2025) AT THE "THREE MYTHS FOR ATHENS" SCREENING PROJECT AT GOETHE-INSTITUT-ATHEN, IN MAY 2026. SHIBATA TELLS SMCK MAGAZINE ABOUT THE CHALLENGE OF SAFEGUARDING DERREZ'S LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

SMCK: How did you decide to make a movie on Paul Derrez?

QHS: I had known Paul Derrez since my student days at the Rietveld Academy. However, it was only six years ago, when we launched the Amsterdam jewelry collective "The Pool" that I came to recognize his exceptional character and his stature as a great figure in the jewelry world.
I felt a powerful urge to create an unprecedented visual work and pass them on to the next generation.

SMCK: Why did you choose video to present the life and work of Paul Derrez instead of a book or a show or any other form of presentation?

QHS: Film production represents an extension of broadening my creative scope, driven particularly by a strong desire to create biographical films about others.



Paul Derrez: A True Inspiration, *video still.*

Since 2020, Paul and I have worked as colleagues at "The Pool." I was particularly impressed by his approach to creating collaborative pieces in his studio. His passionate yet efficient approach to creation, and the pure joy evident on his face when discovering solutions during the making process, symbolized his innocent and sincere passion for jewelry—a side of the legend not widely known.

During production, it proved challenging to cover the vast scope of Paul Derrez's life and the history of jewelry. This project was made possible through the collaboration of two volunteers: Stefan Kuit (visual anthropologist) and Keiji Ito (videographer). At present, the project remains unfinished, with the final running time planned to be between 40 and 60 minutes. Securing production funding remains a challenge.

SMCK: Why do you think jewelry artists have not yet discovered the immense possibilities regarding the presentation and the documentation that video offers for their work?

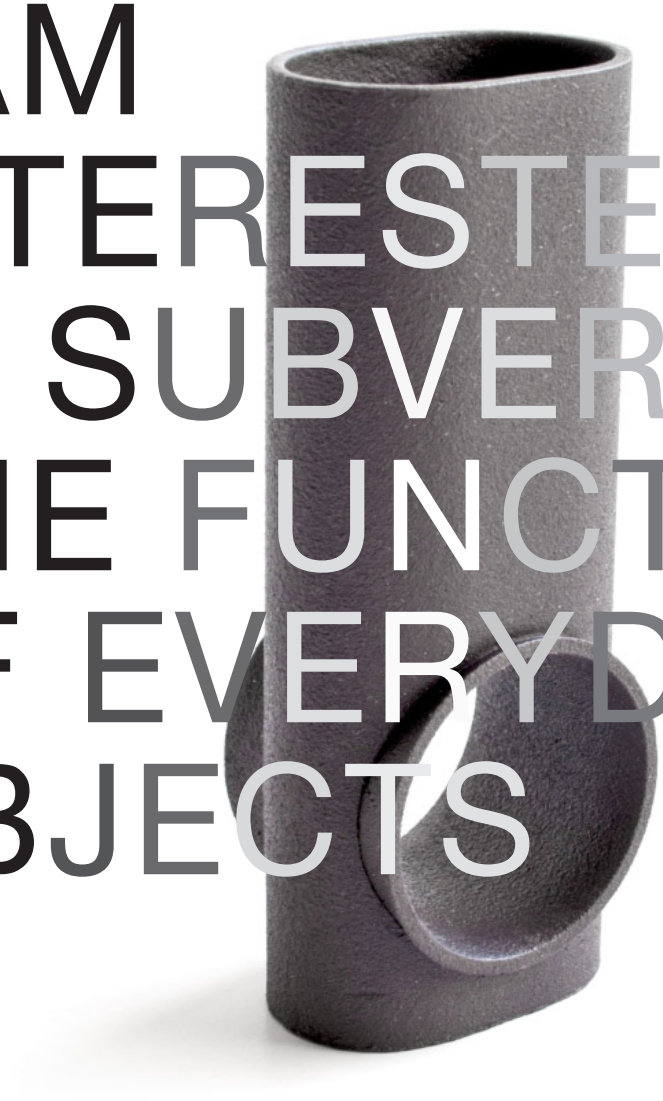
QHS: Jewelry artists really immerse themselves in their studios, dedicating significant time and focus to delving into jewelry creation and concepts. Plus, they demand such high aesthetic standards and perfection in their visuals and techniques that it might be holding them back from taking the next step.


Paul Derrez: A True Inspiration, *video still.*

Born in Osaka, Japan and based in Amsterdam since 2000, Q Hisashi Shibata is an interdisciplinary artist and designer who works with jewelry, film, costume, performance, and cuisine.

www.qhisashi.com
Instagram: @qhisashishibata

I AM INTERESTED IN SUBVERTING THE FUNCTION OF EVERYDAY OBJECTS



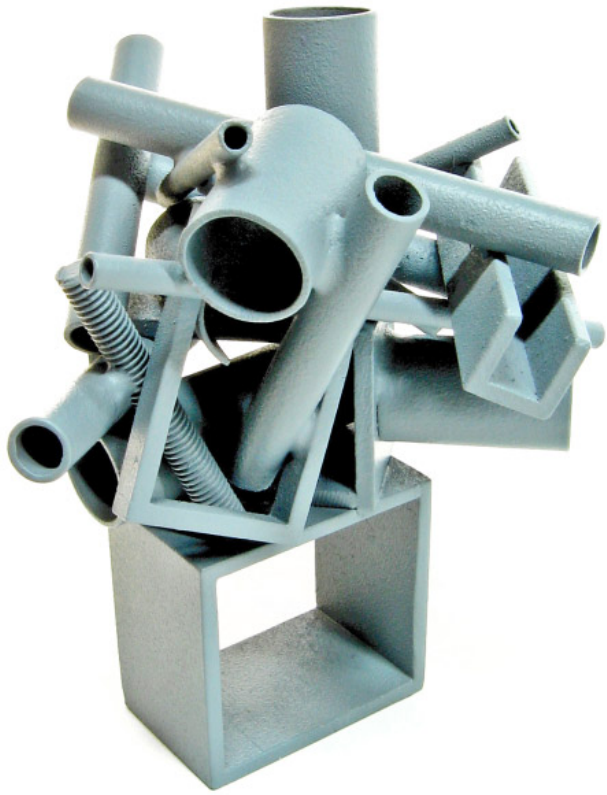
Fabrizio Tridenti – Untitled, *ring, KU series, 2018. Brass, paint; assembly. Photo: F. Tridenti.*

Interview by Loukia Richards

MINIMALISM, ARTE POVERA, UNEARTHED RELICS, LIVING HERITAGE, OPULENT SILENCE, SHAPED EMPTINESS—THESE ARE KEYWORDS TO DESCRIBE FABRIZZIO TRIDENTI'S WORK. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH SMCK MAGAZINE, TRIDENTI EXPLAINS WHY "LIQUID MODERNITY" SACRIFICES IDENTITY, AESTHETICS, AND, AFTER ALL, CREATIVE VARIETY ON THE ALTAR OF CONSUMERISM.

SMCK: Your work seems to condense time, architecture, landscape, and history, and to reflect the experience of living among the heirlooms of a great civilization illuminated by the Mediterranean sun, rusted by rain and sea, and treasured and reused by the people who have inhabited the same country for a very long time.
To me, the feeling of continuation and contact with what has been is invaluable. It also soothes the agony of eternity, as it consolidates the memory of a long historical and cultural heritage we call identity and belonging.

FT: Unfortunately, we live in an era defined by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman as "liquid modernity"—a time characterized by the dissolution of certainties, stable values, and traditional institutions. Much like liquids, social relationships, identities, and work do not retain a fixed form for long; ins-



Fabrizio Tridenti – Untitled, *ring, Grey series, 2010*
Brass, acrylic enamel; assembly
Photo: F. Tridenti

tead, they constantly shift, giving rise to precariousness, individualism, and a pervasive sense of insecurity.
Consequently, the individual becomes a citizen of a global community, fully homogenized and absorbed into the mass. Since this global society is governed by economic laws, the individual exists merely as a thoughtless consumer, completely uprooted from their own history.

SMCK: How would you describe your approach to form and technique?

FT: My work involves two aspects: the established side, where the technique and materials have already been mastered, and the experimental side, where the idea comes first, followed by the choice of material and, finally, the development of the corresponding fabrication technique. I generally use assembly methods, though some projects require me to find new techniques suited to the specific design concept.
Drawing is a fundamental part of the creative process, although I sometimes prefer to simply jot down a written note about an idea. I do not create models, except when experimenting with new materials or techniques; in those cases, I usually make test samples to check the effect, stability, durability, and so on, and I then draw on that experience when the opportunity arises to put it to use. Generally, I work directly on the piece itself.
When I used music for inspiration, it was because I needed to improvise to achieve a more spontaneous effect. During the preliminary stages, I increasingly push myself to delve deeper into the subjects that interest me, conducting research through books, films, documentaries, etc.
I have no preferred materials, I enjoy working with everything. I draw great inspiration from everyday objects. I am interested in taking them out of their ordinary context and subverting their function.

> *"MATERIAL PLAYED A FUNDAMENTAL ROLE FOR ME, AND A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF IT WAS CERTAINLY A CRITICAL FACTOR IN MY SUCCESS."*

Initially, material played a fundamental role for me, and a deep understanding of it was certainly a critical factor in my success. However, I have always viewed material as a means rather than an end. In fact, its importance has gradually diminished as I have gained an awareness of new modes of expression.

At first, I based my research on form, pushing it to the extreme, but for many years afterward, I felt the need to strip it away as much as possible, aiming for a minimalist experience bordering on emptiness. Another area of interest was highlighting the impermanence of the object by finishing it with an ephemeral industrial paint. Finally, I experimented with photography, seeking to create a purely visual experience, removing the element of portability while still remaining within the realm of jewelry.

SMCK: Contemporary jewelry remains pretty unknown to the broader art loving audience. Why is this happening?

FT: Contemporary jewelry—along with glass, ceramics, textiles, and the like—is classified as "applied art," a distinction that persists to this day and betrays its "original sin": its close association with craftsmanship. In Europe, particularly in the north, there is a limited circuit dedicated to applied art, comprising a small number of fairs, museums, galleries, magazines, and auctions; channels that certainly fail to bring contemporary jewelry to the attention of a broader audience of enthusiasts, scholars, and collectors in the way that happens with fine art.
If contemporary jewelry could gain access to the same promotional structures, it would enjoy far greater visibility and, consequently, higher value. Indeed, gallerists have



Fabrizio Tridenti – Ring, photo montage (detail), Unwearbale series, 2011. Photo on Alu Dibond.

Fabrizio Tridenti – Untitled, *ring, KU series, 2018. Brass, paint. Photo: F. Tridenti.*



made, and continue to make, attempts to introduce jewelry into major art fairs hoping to attract new collectors; however, the high cost of participation combined with the relatively modest returns generated by jewelry sales has hindered such initiatives.

SMCK: How would you describe contemporary jewelry in Italy?

FT: The jewelry landscape in Italy is highly fragmented, encompassing a variety of approaches ranging from gioiello d'autore to gioiello di design.
I could highlight Padua in particular, where local institutions have invested for years in gioiello d'autore, transforming it into a globally recognized field—thanks in part to talented artist-educators. Then there is Milan, with the Polytechnic's course on jewelry design, which builds upon the city's established tradition. Finally, there remains a sector of craftsmanship that tends to revisit the stylistic elements of traditional jewelry.
Little is happening in the realm of experimental and research-based jewelry; the high costs involved—unsupported by institutions—discourage the initiatives of the few daring individuals who venture into this field.

Instagram: @fabrizio_tridenti

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UNDER MILK WOOD

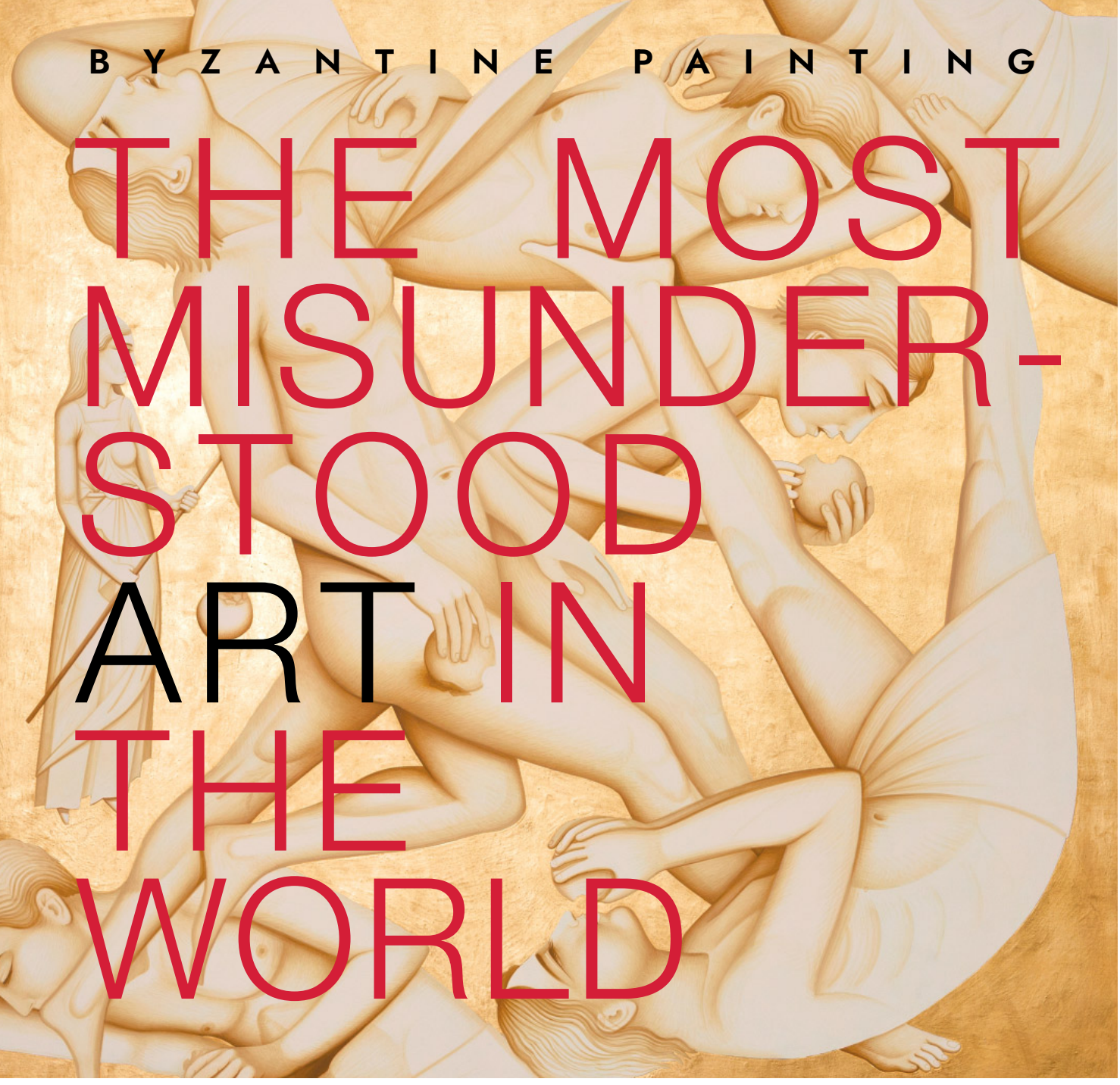
A series of new works inspired by the drama 'Under Milk Wood' by Dylan Thomas.

A fictional setting: A welsh village surrounded by the dreams, longings and secrets of its inhabitants, symbolizing a hidden poetic and magical world lying beneath everyday live.

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BYZANTINE PAINTING

THE MOST MISUNDERSTOOD ART IN THE WORLD



Oblivion (Lotus Eaters), 2022. Acrylic and gold leaf on canvas. Photo: Fikos.

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH SMCK MAGAZINE, ATHENIAN PAINTER AND MURALIST FIKOS DISCUSSES THE LARGELY UNKNOWN HISTORY, RICHNESS AND USES OF BYZANTINE ART. HE SHARES HIS ENDEAVORS TO FOSTER A CONTEMPORARY VISUAL LANGUAGE—ONE THAT SUPPORTS COLLECTIVE DREAMS RATHER THAN THE DISSONANCE OF PERSONAL AMBITIONS.

At the age of thirteen, Fikos began studying Byzantine painting at Eikonourgia (Association of Study and Research of Byzantine Painting) while also experimenting with graffiti. He later collaborated with his teacher, George Kordis, on the decoration of Greek Orthodox churches in Greece, the United States, and Lebanon.
In his artistic practice, Fikos combines a traditional Byzantine-inspired style with contemporary themes, techniques, and art movements. He is regarded as the "godfather" of the artistic movement known as Contemporary Byzantine Painting, a term that has since been adopted by artists worldwide.



Flamingos at Cyprus' Salt Lake, Larnaca City, 2023. Acrylic and gold leaf on canvas. Photo: Fikos.

Interview by Loukia Richards

SMCK: Is Byzantine painting always religious art?

FIKOS: Religious art was one part of a far broader artistic civilization—not its whole, nor necessarily its dominant part in every setting. I came to understand that Byzantine painting is not simply a "sacred" art.
Byzantine painting is, above all, art; it has its own visual system and its own rules, which serve artistic purposes rather than religious ones. Later, I realized that the idea that Byzantine art dealt only with icons is another major myth. In reality, Byzantium possessed a vigorous secular visual culture. Palaces, public buildings, private homes, manuscripts, textiles, ceramics, jewelry, and other everyday objects contained non-religious images of nature, medicine, technology, personifications of abstract ideas, decorative schemes, and humorous inscriptions. Classical statuary and mythological figures filled public space, portraits were painted in the streets, and we even have records of people decorating their homes with sexual scenes—all rendered in the very same visual language used for icons.

SMCK: In spite of its huge and majestic cultural heritage, the Hellenic world does not seem to influence contemporary art either through its messages or through its techniques. We see the dominance of contemporary works of

The rarity of preserved masterpieces made of textile, jewelry, glass, and ceramics; the extended use of the term "Ottoman" for non-religious artworks of the Byzantine tradition created after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453; and the continuous reproduction of religious icons in the Byzantine style for contemporary use are the main reasons that one usually equates Byzantine and post-Byzantine art with spirituality and worship.
However, historical records testify that secular arts continued to flourish during the iconomachy (8th to 9th centuries) that temporarily abolished icons. In addition, Charlemagne's silk shroud—manufactured in Constantinople in the 8th or 9th century—and the artworks and artifacts of the imperial workshops are mentioned in history books as luxury export goods or as diplomatic gifts to foreign leaders, allies, or mercenaries. The dress, head coverings, and jewelry worn by various church founders depicted on their churches' murals record the sophistication of the non-religious applied arts in the Byzantine Empire.

L.R.



Self-Destruction (Every man is his own chief enemy), 2021. Acrylic on canvas. Photo: Fikos.



Mural for the Jidar Festival in Rabat, Morocco, 2024. Photo: Fikos.

art that promote meaninglessness, if not nihilism, and ugliness, and making viewers feel that harmony, hope, love, and unity—all qualities and concepts to be found in Greek faith and art—are obsolete. What is your opinion?

FIKOS: I agree. Postmodernism definitely marks a turning point, though I suspect its roots lie in "Western civilization" itself, which elevated the values of individualism and self-criticism. In human rights and science, these yielded extraordinary results; without measure, however, they can turn destructive.
Postmodern thought often treats value judgments as subjective, rejecting distinctions between good and bad, beautiful and ugly. Art can then become an entirely private matter. Look at exhibition catalogs. The highest praise is that an artist has invented "a new, personal language".
Imagine a society in which each person spoke a "unique language". It would descend into chaos. This divisive trend is also evident outside the artistic sphere, in Europe and throughout the so-called Western world.
The long Hellenic visual tradition—Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine—offers another model: a kind of koine, a shared visual language through which people of different cultures and backgrounds can communicate, much as English does today. It does not erase the individual voice, but places it within a larger order of forms and meanings. Personal expression becomes a contribution to a common world rather than a refusal of one.
For me, that is tradition's relevance today: not nostalgia or ready-made answers, but a basis from which people can recognize one another again. At a time of growing isolation and fragmentation, we cannot afford to dismiss it.

SMCK: Your large-scale work addresses the community or the collective eye. Why do you choose to work with this medium especially in times when art for the many is considered an unnecessary luxury?

FIKOS: Throughout most of history, art has been a means of communication, carrying memory, knowledge, values, and ideas. The notion of "self-expression" is very recent and emerged alongside the weakening of communal life. I'm not saying it is only negative.
I myself work privately and in museums; both have their place. But what our world really needs right now is less individualism and more collectivity. We have a lot of art in public space, but not public art, namely, art specifically created for the people. That's why I often say that my artistic practice seeks not another "unique language," but a "unifying" one: the application of the Greek word "Creation", which is "Demiourgia" (Δημιουργία) and literally means "work for the people".

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TO TRULY PAINT AN ICON, YOU MUST SET ASIDE THE EGO



Alessandro Pugno, video still of Notes On Contemporary Iconography, *video, 2026.*

Interview by Loukia Richards

ALESSANDRO PUGNO'S FILM NOTES ON CONTEMPORARY ICONOGRAPHY: A LIVING BYZANTINE TRADITION WAS PART OF THE SHORT MOVIES PROJECT THREE MYTHS FOR ATHENS SCREENED AT GOETHE-INSTITUT ATHENS IN MAY 2026. PUGNO RESEARCHED, DEVELOPED AND STARTED SHOOTING HIS MOVIE DURING HIS ARTIST RESIDENCY AT FAVELAB ATHENS IN FEBRUARY 2025. PUGNO TELLS SMCK MAGAZINE OF THE DISCOVERIES HE MADE AFTER REVELING IN THE ORTHODOX TRADITION OF ICON PAINTING.



Alessandro Pugno – Notes On Contemporary Iconography, *video still of Babis Pilarinos painting an icon.*

SMCK: How did you discover the art of the Orthodox icons?

AP: I discovered Orthodox icons through Andrei Tarkovsky's film Andrei Rublev, and even more through reading his book Sculpting in Time. In that text Tarkovsky overturns what, at least in my studies, had been the dominant Western interpretation: that icons were an art form that had not yet discovered Renaissance perspective and were therefore somehow pre-modern - often with a negative connotation.

Through Tarkovsky, I instead discovered the profound humanity contained within them. This is exemplified in the life of Andrei Rublev himself: a man who understood that in order to truly paint he first had to experience human life fully. For me this was a revelation. The icon was no longer a primitive form of art, but rather the expression of a completely different understanding of the human being and of the visible world.

SMCK: Would you like to share your experience of searching for spiritual guidance that led to your recent film project?

AP: Since childhood, I felt, almost instinctively, that the dominant materialism around me was not enough. It was as if I sensed that there must be a primary reality beyond what is visible. I looked for it everywhere.

Even as a teenager I was troubled by questions about life and death and about the meaning of existence. My parents were atheists, but my grandmothers used to take me to church. I remember feeling very happy there, and those memories are still very dear to me.

> *"THERE IS AN EMERGING NEED FOR MEANING."*

Later I distanced myself from faith after developing a skin illness. At that time I could not reconcile the existence of God with the existence of suffering, especially suffering that seemed so gratuitous. After that, there was a long and sometimes painful journey of understanding. It eventually brought me to Mount Athos, but also to studying with a Buddhist teacher.
Cinema entered my life in parallel, almost as something separate. Only much later did I realize that it was actually part of the same search.

SMCK: What do you think could make your recent work



UNESCO World Heritag Monument
Monastery of Daphni, Athens.
Photo: Christoph Ziegler.

on contemporary icon painters interesting for audiences who are not Orthodox, not Christian, or even not religious at all?

AP: I feel that our world has reached—or is reaching—the extreme point of secularization, materialism, and nihilism. Recent global events are an example of this. At the same time I sense that small cracks are appearing in this dominant ideology and that a new spiritual need is emerging.
With this project I would like to offer a perspective on iconography today and to explore how certain Christian traditions—such as in Greece or Russia— still keep a connection with the experience of the holy that Western societies have largely lost.

SMCK: How was the experience of filming and interviewing icon painters?

AP: For me it was a great discovery. I found it to be a very open universe, with many different experiences and approaches. What struck me most were the painters' gazes and their deep sense of humility.
One of them told me that in order to truly paint an icon you must set aside the ego. This idea is in absolute contrast with the dominant modern conception of art as the highest expression of the individual self.

SMCK: Tarkovsky is often seen as the Orthodox filmmaker par excellence. What do you see in his films?

AP: What I perceive is a profound existential search that takes the form of a completely new aesthetic language in the history of cinema. His relationship with time is extraordinary. A film like Stalker, for example, is fundamentally a film about the question of meaning.
I cannot say what is Orthodox in his work and what is not. What I can sense is that his cinema—and perhaps Russian aesthetic traditions more broadly, and even the Greek experience—occupies a space of convergence between East and West.

SMCK: Is there still a living fire in the teachings of the Gospels?

AP: If you had asked me this question a few years ago, I probably would have said that Christian faith was becoming—or had already become—a relic of the past.
But recently I have begun to see new energies emerging. A new spiritual need seems to be appearing, perhaps still embryonic, but clearly visible in the world today.



Alessandro Pugno with icon painter F. Stamatis Skliris.Photo: Loukia Richards.

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LOUKIA RICHARDS



ST. THEODORE – *Made after a 14th century church mural. Embroidery on paper, antique pearls, vintage coral and beads, silk and cotton yarns.*


T H E M I D D



House front in Paralio Astros, Arcadia, Greece, 2025. Photo by Christoph Ziegler.

AN UNRIVALED SURVEY OF CON-TEMPORARY JEWELRY

THE LEGNICA JEWELRY FESTIVAL SILVER 2026

FOR NEARLY HALF A CENTURY, THE LEGNICA JEWELRY FESTIVAL SILVER, WITH ITS ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL JEWELRY COMPETITION AND A DOZEN EXCLUSIVE EXHIBITIONS ACROSS THE CITY, HAS BEEN ONE OF EUROPE'S MAJOR EVENTS FOR CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY. FORTY ARTISTS FROM TWELVE COUNTRIES WERE NOMINATED FOR THE FESTIVAL'S AWARDS AND PARTICIPATED IN AN EXCLUSIVE SHOW. SMCK MAGAZINE SPOKE WITH FOUR AWARDED ARTISTS OF 2026, AND REPORTS WHAT OTHER EVENT ORGANIZERS CAN LEARN FROM LEGNICA.

Sophie Bélanger – Les Non-dits (The Unspoken). Model: Miss Lotine. Photo: Agence Icône.



Justyna Aniol – Social Centimeter, *bracelet/necklace, 2026.Brass, silver, laser engraving. Photo: J. Aniol.*

By SMCK Magazine

LEGNICA SILVER

Legnica's 2026 edition theme EVERY BODY revealed a clear shift by the festival's organizers towards social and existential themes, framing corporeality as an individual, cultural, and even post-anthropocentric experience.
In the works presented in Legnica, the body was treated as a site of memory, control, exclusion, illness, violence, and experiences of otherness—an idea extended to encompass animals, nature, or even celestial bodies. The nominees' exhibition served as a reminder that jewelry exists at the intersection of contemporary art and embodied experience.

The Grand Prix of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage was awarded to Alexandra Popova from Bulgaria. The winning necklace, distinguished by its powerful and expressive formal character, opened a space for speculation. It evoked associations with violence, war, slaughterhouses, or oppression, while simultaneously becoming a metaphor for the relationship between the body and systems of control.
The 2026 SILVER programme gave visitors the opportunity to see more than a thousand objects created by nearly four hundred artists from over forty countries--from Australia, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.
The festival holds a particular significance for Legnica itself, and contributes greatly to its city branding. Situated in the heart of Poland's Copper Basin, it connects the region's industrial heritage with culture and the arts. Exhibitions showcasing artistic works created with silver provide a highly creative way of highlighting the symbolic significance of this metal and its deep connection to the region.
Each year, the festival attracts artists and guests from around the world to Legnica, creating a space for the exchange of experiences, ideas, and professional networks.

> *"JEWELRY IS ALWAYS A SOCIAL FACT SUBJECT TO OBSERVATION, INTERPRETATION, EVALUATION, AFFIRMATION, CONTROVERSY, OR REJECTION."*
>
> *Prof. Sławomir Fijałkowski*

Legnica SILVER Festival 2026 hosted once again a wide range of group and solo exhibitions; the shows featured Nikita Kavryzhkin, Ewa Effenberg-Kaja, Monica Peksa, Sophie Bélanger, and Karolina Dyczko, as well as students and lecturers from the Experimental Design Studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. It also featured solo presentations of artists who received the Gallery of Art Award at international meetings in the past.

www.silver.legnica.eu
Instagram: @legnica_silver_festival



Contemporary art jewelry in Poland is developing at an exceptionally dynamic pace, with Polish artists establishing a strong presence on both the domestic and international scenes. The main centres of contemporary jewelry in Poland are the Institute of Jewelry at the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź, and the Experimental Design Studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. Both institutions actively collaborate with the Legnica Jewelry Festival SILVER.

The total value of the prizes the winners of the International Jewelry Competition EVERY BODY received was approximately EUR 26.500. The value of the silver awarded to competition winners amounted to approximately EUR 10.100. The Festival collaborates with twenty-six partners, with the copper mining company KGHM Polska Miedź S.A. being the main sponsor. The Festival is realized with the financial support of the KGHM Polska Miedź Foundation and the Mayor of the City of Legnica.

“LET THE BODY BECOME A PRETEXT FOR MATERIAL OR INTELLECTUAL INTERPRETATION, FOR ARTISTIC ELABORATION, TRANSFORMATION, AND THE EXPANSION OF BOUNDARIES. LET THE BODY SPEAK OF JEWELRY, AND JEWELRY SPEAK OF THE BODY.”

Justyna Teodorczyk, PhD

The award ceremony of the 34th International Jewellery Competition EVERY BODY. Photo: Gallery of Art in Legnica.

PROTECTION IS ABOUT LEARNING HOW TO MOVE THROUGH THE UN-KNOWN



Aleksandra Popova –
No name, *necklace, 2026.*
Nickel silver, iron, leather.
Photo: A. Popova.

Interview by Loukia Richards

LEGNICA SILVER

ALEKSANDRA POPOVA'S NECKLACE, "NO NAME," WON THE GRAND PRIX OF THE MINISTER OF CULTURE AND NATIONAL HERITAGE AT THE 34TH LEGNICA SILVER FESTIVAL IN MAY 2026. SMCK MAGAZINE SPOKE WITH THE AWARDEE ABOUT HER THRACIAN HERITAGE, THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE OUTCAST, AND THE HUMAN NEED FOR A TALISMAN.

SMCK: You come from Bulgaria, a beautiful Balkan country with a long and rich cultvural history. I find your website statement fascinating: "Drawn to the traditions and beliefs connected to her own cultural origins, Popova explores how ancestral symbols and practices continue to exist in contemporary life." Please, tell us more about your explorations.

AP: My recent body of work, which is still developing, explores the underworld as a liminal space emerging from one of our most primal instincts: the need for protection. The Orphic and Thracian traditions have been especially present in my research because they are connected to my own roots—inherited through origin, land, and cultural memory. The Orphic mysteries speak of the soul's descent and return, of death as a passage rather than an end. Thracian culture held the earth itself as sacred, seeing the underground as a place of mystery and communion with forces older than memory. In these traditions, the threshold between worlds was not only a boundary to be feared, but a space that needed to be navigated through knowledge, symbols, and objects. Protection, in this sense, is not about keeping the unknown away. It is about learning how to move through it.



> *BEING IN OSLO HAS MADE ME MORE CURIOUS ABOUT MY OWN INHERITED SYMBOLS AND HISTORIES, WHILE ALSO OPENING ME TO OTHER CULTURES AND DIFFERENT WAYS OF CREATING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEMORY AND BELONGING.*

Five By Five – *necklace, 2024.*
Nickel, silver and granite. Photo: Alexandra Boianova.

For me, mythology was something people lived through—through rites, beliefs, fears, and hopes. I do not wish to retell these stories, but to use them as frameworks for reflecting on how these symbolic structures continue to exist in contemporary life.

SMCK: Your work concepts revolve around protection, shelter, and vulnerability. Formally, your work revolves around edgy and sharp forms that look like blades, hooks, a sort of "homeopathic talismans." What do you wish to be protected from?

> *JEWELRY IS SCULPTURE FOR THE BODY, AND SCULPTURE CAN BECOME JEWELRY WHEN IT ENTERS A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BODY.*

AP: I cannot say that I seek protection from one specific thing. What stays with me is the question of why we all need it. Today everyone searches for some form of protection—from physical danger, emotional pressure, or the challenges of everyday life.
I remember the first time I imagined a protective body adornment. It came during a moment in my personal life when I felt in need of protection. There was anger in me, and I felt vulnerable. This contradiction led me to create a thorn-like body adornment to protect my body from the dangers I felt surrounded by.

SMCK: Greek god Apollo takes revenge on Cassandra and Acantha for rejecting his favors. Cassandra is tranformed by madness, and Acantha into thorns, so people avoid them. Maybe this metamorphosis also serves their own protection: they can remain independent, even if they are lonely. We artists feel the pressure for speedy success, constant networking, obsessive promotion of our work through all channels, almost sickening dependence on "likes". This frenzy threatens to devour our most valuable asset: time. How do you deal with the need to build a career inside a highly competitive and insecure international environment, and the need to protect your art from unnecessary noise and waste of time? Have you invented your own thorns?

AP: I am searching for ways to navigate the contemporary art environment, and during different periods I create different coping mechanisms, different thorns. Sometimes these thorns are boundaries: protecting my time, my attention, and the space I need to observe, reflect, and create.
Although I try to create my own shelter, I also try to remain vulnerable. This allows me to experience the world

as it is and move through its challenges, which often leads to transformation. This is why the stories of Cassandra and Acantha are fascinating to me. Their metamorphoses bring suffering and isolation, but they can also be understood as forms of protection. Sometimes transformation itself becomes a way of preserving oneself.

SMCK: Your untitled, awarded piece at Legnica Silver Festival competition can be invested with the observer's interpretations or projections or sense of humor. I can retrieve influences of the 1970s punk movement, Claes Oldenburg's sarcastic sculptures and Bernhard Schobinger's objets trouvés on this particular work. The piece also brings to my mind the cruel wars between the Byzantine empire and the Bulgarian kingdom from 9th to 11th centuries.
Although defeated, Bulgaria became an important and integral part, and co-shaper of the Byzantine heritage—a heritage that most Western artists ignore. Coming from Greece, another co-shaper of the Byzantine heritage, your piece gives me the impression of abandonment and loss; it feels closer to sadness than aggression. Is this piece a rejection of aesthetical or educational hierarchies or an autobiographical statement or simply a nice form, and what I mention above is just nonsense?

AP: I find your interpretation fascinating and I was very pleased to read it. It brings me joy when people perceive my works through their own experiences and histories. For me, it is important that a work can exist beyond my original intention. After a piece leaves my studio, it begins its own life. It no longer needs my protection because it already carries a part of me within it.
The piece is actually called „No Name". It was created as a response to the ongoing wars of our time and explores the depersonalised body—the moment when individuality disappears and human beings become numbers. Some things are too difficult to look away from. There comes a moment when silence stops being neutral and becomes a position of its own. I could not remain silent. I do not believe one artwork can change these realities, but I needed to create it as a response to them. This piece is about sadness, shame, and rage; it is about loss—the loss of humanity. In a way, it is my cry to the world, expressed through the language that I have.



2 Inch Deep – *necklace, 2024. Wrought Silver and Engraving; silver 925. Photo: Mirena Zlateva.*

"BEING ABLE TO SHARE THIS WORK WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE LEGNICA SILVER FESTIVAL REMINDED ME HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO FEEL PART OF A COMMUNITY."

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Klára Kocúriková –
Crown of beauty, *2025.*
Human hair.

WE SHOULD MIND THE JEWELRY BUBBLE

Interview by Loukia Richards

KLÁRA KOCÚRIKOVÁ'S "CROWN OF BEAUTY", MADE WITH THE ARTIST'S OWN HAIR, WON THE ORGANIZERS' SPECIAL AWARD AT 34TH LEGNICA SILVER FESTIVAL IN MAY 2026. WORN OVER THE ARTIST'S SHAVED HEAD, IT CAN BE SEEN AS A RECYCLING OF ONE'S OWN BEAUTY, AN ALLUSION TO PLATO'S ANDROGYNE, A REMINDER OF THE MOURNING JEWELRY TRADITION OF THE VICTORIAN ERA, OR AN ECHO OF THE FLOWER GARLANDS YOUNG WOMEN USED TO WEAR DURING HARVEST FESTIVALS IN RURAL EUROPE. KOCÚRIKOVÁ TELLS SMCK MAGAZINE HOW JEWELRY ARTISTS CAN ESCAPE THE LIMITATIONS SET BY AN INTROVERTED COMMUNITY.

Youtube: Crown of beauty
Instagram: @claireischic

I had heard very positive things about the festival in Legnica, and after visiting, I understood why. The organizers put a lot of personal energy into it.
I liked the curation of the works, as well as the overall organization and presentation of the festival. They use a simple and clear visual identity, and the same consistency runs through the presentation, communication, and organization. The festival is visible throughout the city and feels supported by it.
Another important thing is that the exhibitions and activities continue for months. This gives the event a longer life and makes it feel less like a short moment of attention that immediately disappears.
I think the sudden silence after an event is a general problem in art and design. It is important to keep following awarded artists through interviews or subsequent tpresentations of their work. However, there is also much more that can be communicated: how the exhibition was prepared, how the selection was made, the people behind the organization, the jury, the curators, and the artists who participated in previous years. Highlighting this could make the communication feel more like an ongoing conversation.
Apart from a few exceptions, jewelry is missing from major contemporary art museums and exhibitions. At the same time, the practices of many jewelry artists overlap with sculpture, performance, installation, social practice, or conceptual art. They address politics, identity, gender, ecology, or social pressure. These topics are relevant to a much wider audience, but the work often remains confined to jewelry-specific spaces.
Contemporary jewelry does not need to leave its own community, but it should become a more visible part of wider cultural and artistic discussions. We all should be careful not to close ourselves inside the jewelry bubble.



Manipulated Animals II – *necklace, 2023. Sterling silver, white copper, leather. Courtesy of Gallery of Art in Legnica*

UN-KNOWN SIDES OF THE FAMILIAR

LEGNICA SILVER

Interview by Tommy Wurm

YE JEE LEE WON THE AWARD OF THE GALLERY OF ART AT LEGNICA SILVER FESTIVAL 2026 FOR HER NECKLACE 'MANIPULATED ANIMALS II'. SMCK MAGAZINE ASKED THE ARTIST HOW SHE REVERSED THE PURPOSE OF MASS PRODUCTION TO CREATE JEWELRY ART.

I create jewelry by reusing metal dies collected from Korea and other countries to reinterpret memories and symbols. The dies can be grouped into categories such as decoration, education, social status, honor, power, and wealth. The animals in this necklace were also altered and simplified for decoration, comfort, or commemoration. This idea inspired the title „Manipulated Animals".
The necklace is made of sterling silver and nickel silver. I place the two metal sheets together and press them under strong pressure so that they become almost like a single material. Finally, I use heat coloring to make the nickel silver darker while keeping the sterling silver bright, creating a clear contrast between the two metals.
My current work began when I was an exchange student in Pforzheim, Germany. At a museum there, I experimented with machinery originally used for the mass production of jewelry in the 1960s and 1970s.

"Familiar, yet unfamiliar" is perhaps the best way to describe my approach. Many of the metal dies I collect feature typical forms and patterns that were popular in the past.

As someone who mainly works with silver, I was especially attracted by the way the Legnica festival celebrates silver and even awards it as a prize. I was also impressed by the many events and follow-up programs for artists, the active communication among international winners, artists, and the organizing team, and the team's careful and prompt support. What impressed me most was that the organization of the festival continues to share news about past winners even after the event.

Compared with other art forms, contemporary jewelry has a relatively short history and sometimes challenges the public's usual ideas about jewelry and value. To introduce it to a wider audience, those who love it should make it more visible in their own fields and daily lives.

Instagram: @yejeelee_jewelry | @yejee_lee

JEWELRY MIGHT BECOME STORIES, IDENTITIES, MEMORIES, OR EXPERIENCES TO COLLECT



Marat Hryc – *Opulencia Cotidiana*, brooch, 2025. MJF 3D print in polyamide, amber, steel. Photo: Jorge Escobedo.

LEGNICA SILVER

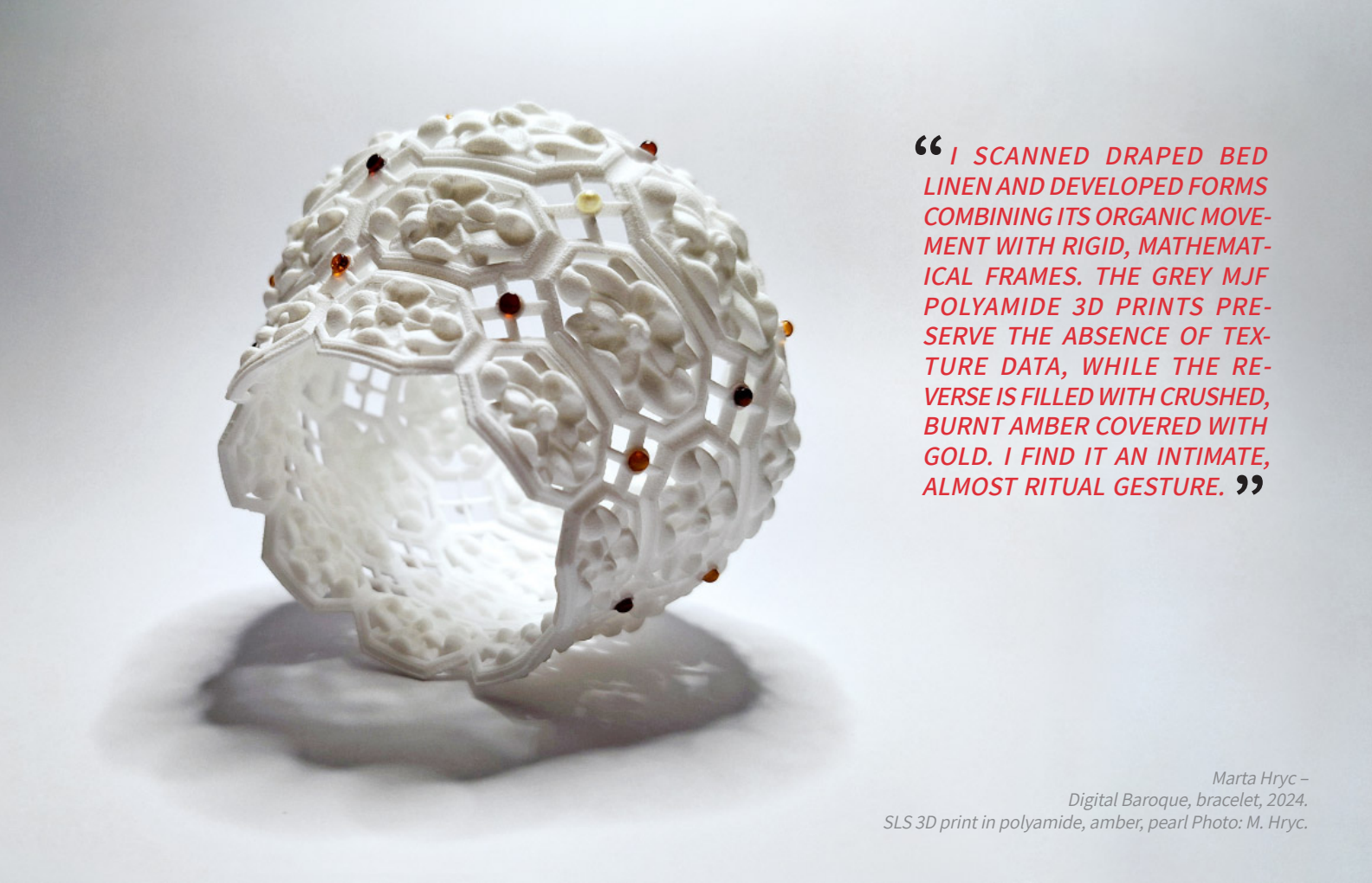
JEWELRY ARTIST AND RESEARCHER MARTA HRYC WON THE AWARD OF THE MAYOR OF LEGNICA AT THE LEGNICA SILVER FESTIVAL 2026 FOR THE ‚ABSENCE' BROOCHES. SMCK MAGAZINE HAD AN EXCITING DISCUSSION WITH HRYC ON HOW FILM CAN BOOST THE MEANING OF JEWELRY, AND THE IMMATERIAL VALUES COLLECTORS MAY SEEK TO INVEST IN FOR THE NEAR FUTURE.

Interview by Loukia Richards

SMCK: The first time I encountered 3D print jewelry was at the Ted Noten Atelier in Amsterdam in 2009. Later, I curated various exhibitions with printed jewelry, and for a time I believed it would become a major trend. I do not have the impression that digital jewelry is popular among authors. What challenges does the jewelry artist working with 3D face?

MH: I think digital jewelry became less visible precisely because these tools stopped being exotic. 3D printing dates back to the 1980s, CNC to the 1950s, and 3D scanning has roots in the 1960s. What is new is their accessibility. At art schools, young designers now use digital tools without embarrassment, often more readily than traditional goldsmithing. I value knowing both.
Since my doctoral experiments with a pearl-based printing material in 2014, I have followed this field closely. The challenge is not mastering software alone, but preventing technique from replacing intention. As Florian Cramer suggests, the post-digital begins when fascination ends and critical use starts.

SMCK: How would you describe the orientation of your work?



"I SCANNED DRAPED BED LINEN AND DEVELOPED FORMS COMBINING ITS ORGANIC MOVEMENT WITH RIGID, MATHEMATICAL FRAMES. THE GREY MJF POLYAMIDE 3D PRINTS PRESERVE THE ABSENCE OF TEXTURE DATA, WHILE THE REVERSE IS FILLED WITH CRUSHED, BURNT AMBER COVERED WITH GOLD. I FIND IT AN INTIMATE, ALMOST RITUAL GESTURE."

Marta Hryc –
Digital Baroque, bracelet, 2024.
SLS 3D print in polyamide, amber, pearl Photo: M. Hryc.

MH: I grew out of industrial design rather than a single jewellery tradition. I remain fascinated by serial production: the large-scale manufacture of objects that are intimate, symbolic and, strictly speaking, unnecessary. Living and working in Gdańsk (the centre of the Baltic amber industry) has also made me attentive to how local materials operate within global economic and cultural systems.

My research, therefore, connects amber and other situated materials with scanning, computation and hybrid fabrication. I enter the field of art jewellery when I feel I genuinely have something to say there.

SMCK: The title of your awarded series, The Absence, and the reel you posted on instagram with a woman waking up alone in an untidy bed reminds me of Antonioni movies.
You write in a statement: "In this series, digital technologies are used (...) to capture and materialise fragile emotional states. The digital process becomes a post-digital tool for speaking (...) about memory, absence, touch, loss and the traces that remain after bodies, relationships or situations disappear." Can film help us understand jewelry better?

MH: I love the Antonioni association!! I believe a film can reveal what a jewelry object alone only suggests. Film adds time, movement, atmosphere, and consequence. We see not only an object on a body, but the world around that body. Michael Brian Schiffer's idea of the "compound interactor" is useful here. The person, clothing, hairstyle, and jewelry communicate together. For a director, costume designer, and actor, jewelry helps construct identity. For the viewer, it activates memory and imagination. Today, when much contemporary jewelry is displayed rather than worn, film can restore action, intimacy, and ambiguity I believe.

SMCK: Do you know SMCK On Reel?

MH: I did not know SMCK On Reel before, but its premise feels very close to my own thinking.

SMCK: Is there something particular jewelry weeks or festivals can learn from Legnica Silver Festival?

MH: Legnica impresses me as a festival with a strong identity built over decades, yet without becoming ceremonial or closed. The concentration of exhibitions across





Marta Hryc – The Absence, *brooch (fs/bs), 2026.*
MJF 3D print in polyamide, crushed amber, gold leaf, steel.
Courtesy of Legnica Gallery.
Photo: Jorge Escobedo.

the city centre creates a genuine temporary ecosystem for jewellery, while the competition remains intellectually demanding. I especially value the coexistence of the jury selection and Holownia, where rejected works are also shown. It makes judgement visible as a process rather than presenting it as absolute truth.
Despite welcoming guests from all over the world, the festival retains an intimate scale. It does not overwhelm the visitor or generate the constant fear of missing something. What is worth learning from Legnica is its continuity, density and willingness to create dialogue between generations, methods and definitions of jewelry.

SMCK: Many jewelry festivals or weeks stop their promotional campaigns immediately after the show is over. This gives readers or social media followers a strange feeling that there is no „after-show-curation or follow up." What would you wish from the events organizers?

MH: I would prefer long-term, thematic communication. Institutions could return to works from different years and place them in changing contexts. One possible thread is what you mentioned – a 3D technology, from early digital fascination to post-digital acceptance and critical use. Another could compare industrial digital workflows with virtuoso handwork. Such editorial continuity would educate audiences, reveal historical change, and allow awarded artists to remain visible as developing practices, not as brief promotional events.

SMCK: The contemporary jewelry circle is relatively tiny. What would you suggest that events organizers, museum curators, jewelry press, academics, writers, and artists should do to extend its radius?

MH: Jewelry is already socially widespread: wedding rings, piercings, personal charms, and status objects circulate far beyond the contemporary jewelry scene. The real question is therefore not simply how to reach "more people," but whom we want to reach and why. New collectors may not wish to collect jewelry as a category, they may collect stories, identities, memories, or experiences. Institutions need to identify genuine contact points with specific groups (in fashion, film, music, technology, anthropology, or everyday public space) and develop strategies for them. Expanding the field should not mean simplifying it. It means translating it into contexts where people already recognise their own lives.

"A BED ACCOMPANIES US THROUGH BIRTH, PASSION, REST, ILLNESS, LONELINESS AND DEATH. HERE, 3D SCANNING AND PRINTING DO NOT CELEBRATE TECHNOLOGY; THEY MATERIALISE MEMORY, LOSS AND THE IMPRINT LEFT BY A BODY, RELATIONSHIP OR SITUATION AFTER IT DISAPPEARS."

zbrojowniasztuki.com/marta-hryc
Instagram: @marta.hryc.jewellery



The Gallery of Art in Legnica. Photo: Galeria Sztuki Legnica.



the award ceremony of the 34th International Jewellery Competition EVERY BODY. Photo: Galeria Sztuki Legnica.

C A T A L O G U E

MYTHS OF OUR TIMES

A JEWELRY AND APPLIED ARTS PHOTO PROJECT



OUR TIMES



C A T A L O G U E

Myths encapsulate the human experience, transmitting multi-layered messages through symbols, enigmas, and often non-linear or even contradictory narratives. Once all elements are added up, myths make sense, and their wisdom leads to a better understanding of the rules of existence. A similar structure can be found in other cultural expressions of the laws ruling human life, such as fairy tales, Tarot cards, or the Dada and Surrealist movements. It is no coincidence that myths informed the theories of the pioneering explorers of the unconscious and offered an explanation for the perpetual phenomena dominating the human psyche. Myths, fairy tales, Tarot cards, and modern art movements share a deeper bond: they are fragments of human experience, dreams, and thoughts, outlining the memory of what is lost or forgotten over time.

SMCK Magazine invited artists working with applied arts to create their own myth or interpretation of a myth by staging new scenery, and photographing it. The project goal was to shape a more holistic style of presenting applied art, and to bridge the gap between the art and craft disciplines.

The artists also reflected on the questions: What are the myths of our times reflecting our human heritage or seeking its annihilation? Should our work be understood in the context of greed, exploitation, envy, power games, destruction and inflated egos or in the context of justice, solidarity, love, peace, unity, truth?

Myths of our Times were presented during the exhibition Fragments at Aygo Avgo Art Space in Leonidio, Greece, in late August 2026.

Aygo Avgo Art Space is SMCK Magazine's summer art venue. Since 2015, Aygo Avgo has presented contemporary arts and crafts in dialogue with local traditions and history.

PARTICIPANTS:

ANN-KATHRIN PFEIFER • ANNA PAPARELLA • CHARLOTTE SAKHO • ANNETTE VON DER BEY • SHRINE JEWELRY • CHRISTOPH LUNGWITZ • JANE JU • FLOX DEN HARTOG JAGER • FILIP PALMÉN • MARINA SIMEONOVA • KATRA STUDIO • LIVIA ZAHARIA • PATRIZIA GIACHERO • MARINA SIMEONOVA • LOUISE HILL • SOROOR SHARIFI • SHIBURANA • LOUKIA RICHARDS • CHRISTOPH ZIEGLER

VISIT THE EXHIBITION WEBSITE ON **WWW.SMCK.ORG**



THE OPEN GATE – *photo portrait, 2025. Mixed-media headpiece adorned with pearls, filigree textures. Model: Mingo Emma Rose Kübert. Photo by Ann-Kathrin Pfeifer.*

The collapse of our defensive masks is the essential initiation into spiritual and emotional resilience.



JANE JU

THE INVENTION OF EVE – *Still-life photograph, 2025. Concept by Evgeniya Lisichkina . Photo by Nancy Wang.*

Do inherited narratives of gender, sexuality, and morality still define woman?

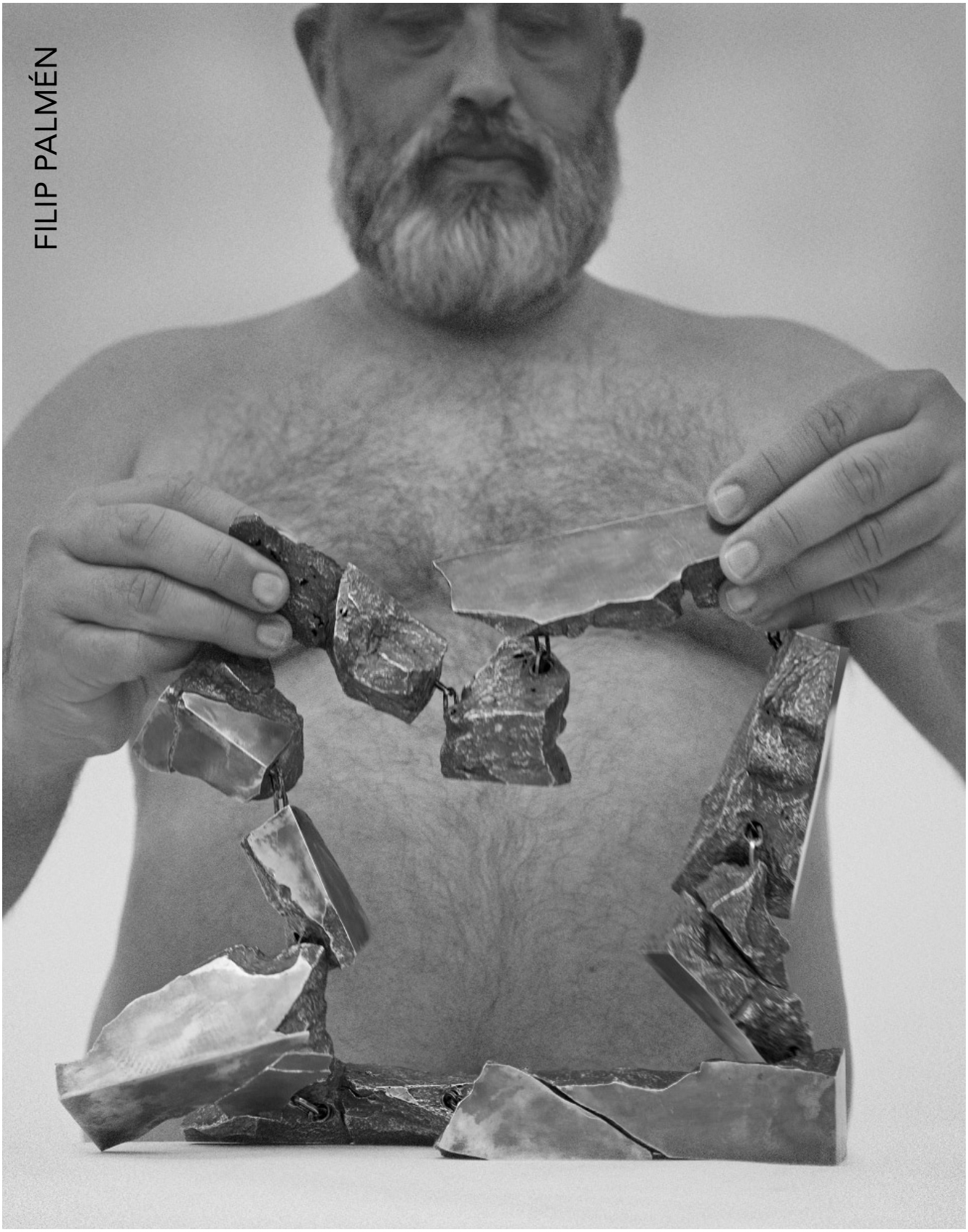


ST LUCY– *hand colored medium format gelatine silver print and digital collage, 2024. Jewelry: hand knit Sterling Silver mask. Halo necklace Hand knit Sterling Silver with 14kt double clad gold-fill discs, Ligare necklace hand knit sterling silver chain. Model: Maxine Hall–Ricciardi. Photo by Shrine Jewelry/Brienna Hall.*

Reclaiming ritual as a personal, inclusive act.

CHRISTOF LUNGWITZ

Installation view of Christof Lungwitz' work at the exhibition SEIL in Künstlerbunker, Leverkusen, 2025. Photo:



TANSGRESSION – *Photo portrait, 2016. Necklace: sterling silver; sculpted parts cast into silver, assembled with folded silver sheets and handmade chain. Model: Ben Tolkien. Photo by: Filip Palmén.*

I carry the artifacts of my myth, where the molds of conventions are cracked like broken steel.



BASKING IN THE SUNBEAMS – *Handmade beaded jewelry, natural stones: yellow chalcedony, yellow common opal, jasper, carnelian), sterling silver. Model and photo: Katia Dolzhenko/KATRA Studio.*

A duck soaking in golden light, basking at the edge of the world.

CHARLOTTE SAKHO

FALLEN ATHENAS – *Photo portrait, 2025/26. Shields made with cardboard, paper, feathers, avocado pit, wool, lychen, mousse, lemon, wood. Photo: Bilal Sakho.*

MYTHS OF



LOUISE HILL

OUR LADY OF PLASTIC – *Photography, digital collage and fabricated jewellery work, 2026. Necklace and brooches crafted from plastic reclaimed from waste streams. Resin heart. Found objects. Photo by Louise Hill.*

Our patron saint for the Anthropocene.

PATRIZIA GIACHERO



AFTER THE FLOOD – *Necklace / photographic composition, 2026. Eggshell Porcelain, charcoal pigment, textile cord. Photo by Patrizia Giachero.*

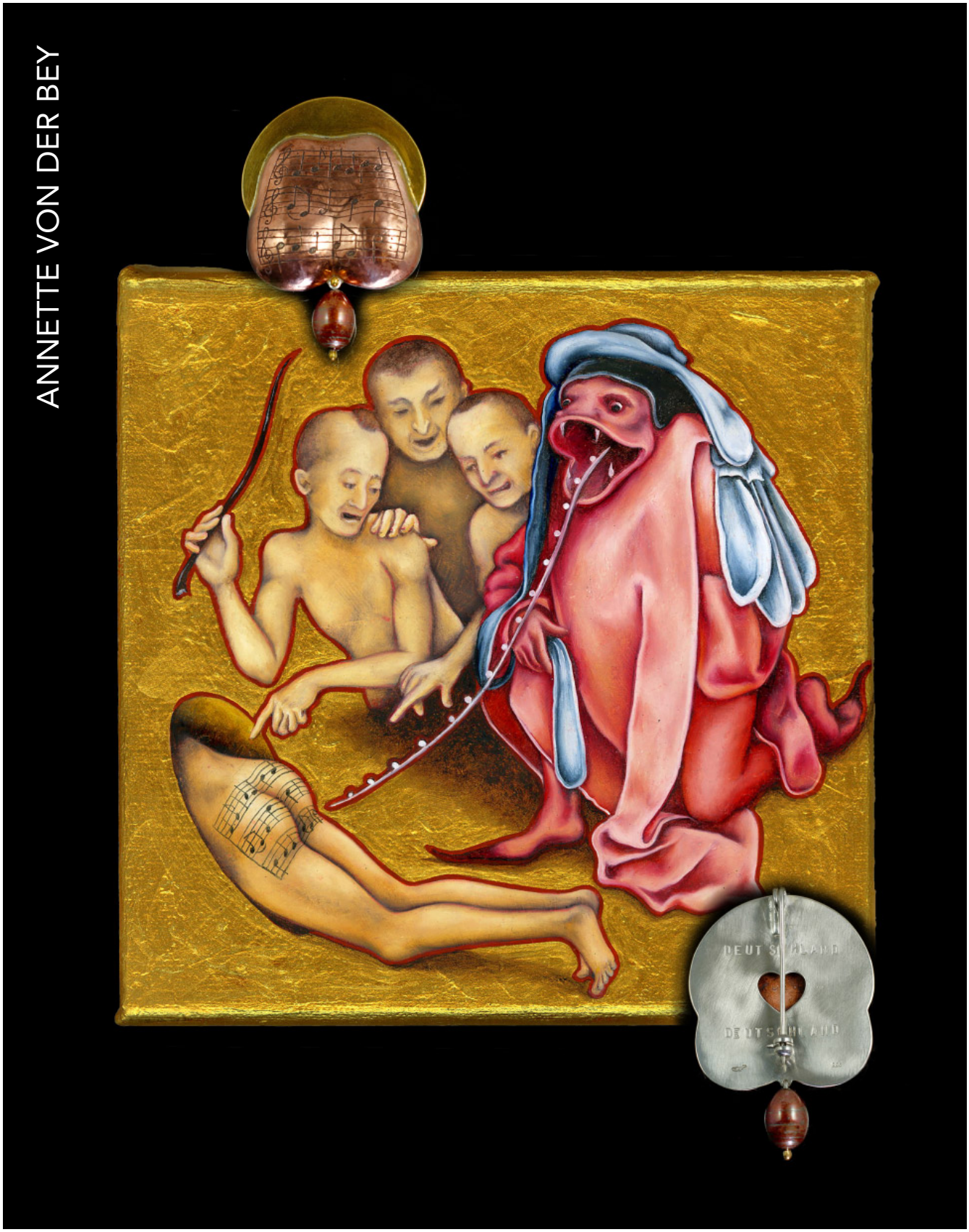
Regeneration is not a miracle but a conscious transformation of what remains.

MYTHS OF



A FRACTURED WORLD - TRYING TO HOLD THE P(I)EACES TOGETHER – *Digital photography with found objects, recycled glass jewelry, natural materials,. Photo by Marina Simeonova.*

Reclaiming our kinship with Nature.



Garden of Delights series, 2026, consisting of DEUTSCHLAND-DEUTSCHLAND, *brooch, partially gold-plated silver, copper, pearl, and* BbB-75, *painting, oil and acrylic on linen, 2026. Photo by Annette von der Bey.*

They are singing the first verse of the Lied der Deutschen:
"Deutschland, Deutschland...



FLOX DEN HARTOG JAGER

SLEEPLESS IN TIMES OF CORONA – *collage wit machine embroidery and hand embroidery, 2020. Textile, cloth, felt, polyester thread. Photo by Flox den Hartog Jager.*

Keep your distance or the Boogeyman will catch you.



ZHYVODIYNIST: THE MYTH OF THE LIVING WORLD – *Photo portrait, digital collage, 2026. Photo by Svitlana Matus / Shiburana.*

Zhyvodiynist, or The Myth of the Living World.



LOUKIA RICHARDS

CINDERELLA – *Loukia Richards wears tunic embroidered by Christina Panagiotopoulou. Photo: Christoph Ziegler.*

Cinderella did not wait for the prince's shoe to fit in order to become a queen.



BRANCHES – Slef portrait with necklace and photo of necklace. Photo by Chr. Ziegler.

Greetings from Lefkadios Hearn.



LIVIA LORE – *Digital photo montage, 2026. Original photos, digital editing and AI generated visuals based on texts prompting. Model: Livia Zaharia. Photo by Anton Kulaga.*

Go through the circles like Dante and discover what can happen there.

ANNA PAPARELLA



RELATIONS – *Necklace, 2021. Glass beads, cotton yarn, semiprecious stones, carved radiological plates. Carving, crochet, embroidery. Photo by Susanna Maria Pisciotta.*

A dialogue between movement, limitation, and transformation.



SIMURGH: A MYTHIC DIALOGUE WITH LIGHT IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS – *Self portrait with brooch, 2024. Silver. Photo by Soroor Sharifi.*

An invitation to embrace darkness as the beginning of a profound journey leading toward light, awareness, and our truest selves.

ARTIST STATE-MENTS

ANN-KATHRIN PFEIFER – PAGE 74

The Open Gate

As a conceptual artist and cultural researcher specializing in narratology, my practice decodes the tension between protective containment and raw vulnerability. For 'Myths of Our Times', my work 'The Open Gate' proposes a radical shift in how we perceive defense mechanisms in a fragmented world.

Instead of celebrating the traditional myth of the impenetrable armor as a symbol of power, this piece visualizes the pierced armor. The heavily ornamented, baroque-inspired headpiece mimics an ancient helmet, yet its porous structure does not protect, it opens up. It invites the viewer into the fragile, labyrinthine interior of the self. In this new mythology, true strength is no longer defined by stoic defense or isolation. It is the radical courage to expose one's vulnerable, inner architecture.

The optical glass lens held over the eye acts as a mythological tool of hyper-perception—reminiscent of the seer Lynceus, who could look through solid stone into the hidden depths of the earth. Here, the lens does not look outward to detect threats; it forces an inward gaze, magnifying the raw, uncensored truth of human emotion. Subverted by crimson-painted hands, the boundaries between the rigid, artificial shell and the pulsing, mortal body blur. The piece ultimately manifests a contemporary myth for our era: that the collapse of our defensive masks is not a defeat. It is the essential initiation into spiritual and emotional resilience.

www.mercury-artifacts.com
Instagram: @mercury.wearable.art

JANE JU / EVGENIYA LISICHKINA – PAGE 75

The Invention of Eve

The work examines one of the most enduring myths of Western culture still shaping contemporary perceptions of women. Drawing on the story of Eve, the work places a female form within a transparent male skull and replaces the biblical fig leaf with a cross, questioning how inherited cultural narratives of gender, sexuality, and morality continue to define woman.

www.janejujewellery.com
Instagram: @jane_juwelry

SHRINE JEWELRY / BRIENNA HALL – PAGE 76

Adornment as both Protection and Reclamation

Brienna Hall is the artist and metalsmith behind Shrine Jewelry, creating contemporary adornments and analog photographs that explore ritual, mythology, and transformation. Working in recycled precious metals, ethically sourced gemstones, and black-and-white film photography, Hall creates symbolic objects and images that draw from religious iconography while reclaiming ritual as a personal, inclusive act. Influenced by her Catholic background and its ceremonial objects, pagan folklore, and the body as a sacred site, her work invites viewers to consider adornment as both protection and reclamation.

www.shrinejewelry.com
Instagram: @shrine_jewelry

CHRISTOF LUNGWITZ – PAGE 77

www.lungwitz.info
Instagram: @christof_lungwitz

FILIP PALMÉN – PAGE 78

Transgression

In my dreams I roam freely: I see a peak on the horizon and I can reach it through pragmatic means. In this fantasy I can build and create in a vast desert of opportunity, like the adventures enacted in my mind as I played on the beach in my childhood.
But I cannot. I am not free to roam, not with what I am, my identity, how I present that identity and how the world treats me because of it.
vIn spite of this I carry the artifacts of my myth, where the molds of conventions are cracked like broken steel.

www.filippalmen.com
Instagram: @filippalmen

KATRA STUDIO / KATIA DOLZHENKO – PAGE 79

Basking in the Sunbeams

The Basking in Sunbeams necklace is inspired by symbolism spanning across cultures. The duck, a symbol of divinity, transition, nature, and creation, stands at the radiant center of this piece. From Nganu Leima, the goddess of waterfowl in Meitei mythology who rules all water birds, to the ancient Saffron Goddess of Akrotiri in Santorini, Greece (1600 BC) adorned in her own duck necklace, this sacred fowl has left its mark on human legend across the ages.

Natural stone, as a medium, carries a history of millions of years, a true witness to the lives of our ancestors. Choosing stone connects my work directly to exploring the past, while the multi-layered structure draws inspiration from traditional ethnic Ukrainian necklaces. This approach allows the piece to unfold like a painting or embroidery, but composed entirely in stone.

In Basking in Sunbeams, the carved yellow chalcedony duck rests within a landscape of sun-kissed yellow opal and warm carnelian. It invites you to imagine a scene of quiet warmth and solar tranquility—a duck soaking in golden light, basking at the edge of the world.

www.katra.studio
Instagram: @katra.studio

CHARLOTTE SAKHO – PAGE 80

Fallen Athenas

Instagram: @charlottesakho

LOUISE HILL – PAGE 81

Our Lady of Plastic

Our Lady of Plastic reimagines the Virgin as a patron saint for the Anthropocene. At her feet lie floral offerings: handmade brooches fashioned from discarded plastic recovered from waste streams. Through the transformation of refuse into objects of adornment and devotion, the work asks how contemporary myths are shaped by the materials we produce, discard and leave behind.

www.louisehill.co.nz
Instagram: @louise_hill_artist

PATRIZIA GIACHERO – PAGE 82

After the Flood

Every era creates the myths it needs. The ancient myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha tells of a world reborn after the Great Flood, where stones cast upon the earth become a new humanity.
Today, in a time marked by environmental fragility and depletion of natural resources, that story takes on a new meaning. My work begins with discarded eggshells, a fragile material that is transformed into Eggshell Porcelain, a stone-like material.
The necklace evokes the possibility that renewal may emerge from what remains. What was once considered waste becomes matter, memory and value. The transformation is both physical and symbolic: a gesture that questions our relationship with materials, resources, and the future.
This work proposes a contemporary myth of resilience, where regeneration is not a miracle but a conscious transformation of what remains.

www.patriziagiacheroartjewelry.com
Instagram: @patriziagiacheroartjewelry

OMAYA / MARINA SIMEONOVA – PAGE 83

A Fractured World - Trying to Hold the P(i)eaces Together

The oldest myths tell us that humans once belonged to the living world - not as its rulers, but as one of its voices. We have forgotten this ancient bond. Broken glass, bound together in a fragile act of repair, becomes a metaphor for the political, cultural, and spiritual fractures of contemporary society - symptoms of a deeper rupture. Rather than looking back to a specific mythology, the work proposes a contemporary myth in which we reclaim our kinship with Nature. Only by returning to this ancient bond can we begin to remember what we belong to.

Instagram: @omayajewellery
Facebook: Omayajewellery

ANNETTE VON DER BEY – PAGE 84

Garden of Delights

Who is singing there? And what are they singing? And why is the sheet music written on a human backside?
The motif is borrowed from a scene in the right panel of Hieronymus Bosch's triptych "The Garden of Earthly Delights": a naked figure lying down—its upper body vanishing from view—offers up its buttocks as a music sheet.
In my image, the upper body disappears into a hole. The three human singers, also unclothed, are reminiscent of leading German politicians from the year 2026. They emerge from the shadowed background of a hellish monster that is beating time for them. One holds a baton and points to the "Deutschlandlied"—the national anthem—that is to be sung. Which verse might they be singing? I believe they have mixed up the lyrics and are singing—whether intentionally or by mistake—the first verse of the LIED DER DEUTSCHEN: "Deutschland, Deutschland..."
This is indicated by the inscription on the back of the brooch that accompanies the artwork. The words "Deutschland, Deutschland" flank a heart-shaped cutout, the kind once commonly found in the doors of outhouses. The front of the brooch features a backside made of chased copper (RED)—etched with the musical notes of the "Deutschlandlied" (BLACK)—set against a golden halo (GOLD), in the act of defecating a brown pearl.

www.garten-der-lueste.eu
www.schmuck-von-der-bey.de
Instagram: @v.d.bey | @avdbey

FLOX DEN HARTOG JAGER – PAGE 85

Sleepless In Times of Corona

Keep your distance or the Boogeyman will catch you.

www.floxdenhartogjager.nl
Instagram: @floxdenhartogjager

SVITLANA MATUS / SHIBURANA – PAGE 86

www.shiburana.com
Instagram: @shiburana.studio | @svitlana.matus

LOUKIA RICHARDS – PAGE 87

Empowerment

www.loukiarichards.net
Instagram: @loukiarichards

CHRISTOPH ZIEGLER – PAGE 88

The Soul of the Tree

The story of Aoyagi is a Japanese myth collected by Lefkadios Hearn and published in Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things.

www.christophziegler.com
Instagram: @rossozett

LIVIA ZAHARIA – PAGE 89

Livia Lore

For every creation there is a background story. In this particular case my jewellery collection has an important tale connected to each piece and to each other.
This is the myth of creation and of the creator. It is the base of everything we do.
Therefore, we can see a very brief schematic of the pieces' interactions and their role in my work.
Go through the circles like Dante on his trip throughout the other realms and discover what can happen there.

www.livia.glucosedao.org
Instagram: @livia.zaharia.50

ANNA PAPARELLA – PAGE 90

The Measure of Flight

Inspired by the myth of Hermes, the work brings together winged sandals, a 30 km/h speed limit sign, and a necklace featuring two serpents inspired by Chinese mythology, creating a dialogue between movement, limitation, and transformation through symbols drawn from different cultures and eras.

www.sognandolosciroccojewels.it
Instagram: @sognando_loscirocco_jewels

SOROOR SHARIFI – PAGE 91

A Mythic Dialogue with Light in the Heart of Darkness

Simurgh, one of the most magnificent mythological symbols of Persian culture, has lived for centuries in the cultural memory of this land; a legendary bird embodying wisdom, knowledge, healing, and the guiding force that accompanies human beings through their most difficult moments. In the Shahnameh, Simurgh is a wise and compassionate being, a guide who reveals the path toward awareness when it is needed most.

This work is my personal interpretation of Simurgh: a Simurgh born from fire. For me, fire is not merely a symbol of destruction; it is a transformative force that burns, purifies, and makes rebirth possible. This Simurgh emerges from the flames as a symbol of strength, shaped by experience, resilience, and transformation.
In this image, I, as the artist, wear this Simurgh as a brooch upon my chest, close to my heart, as if I am carrying a fragment of this ancient myth within myself. Dressed in black, the darkness surrounding me represents silence, uncertainty, and moments of searching. By placing the Simurgh upon my heart, I enter into a silent dialogue with this ancient bird. I ask: Where is the path toward light? How does one find the way through darkness?
For me, myths are not merely stories from the past. They are the shared language of the human soul, living narratives that continue to reveal new meanings across generations. In this work, Simurgh is not a distant legend; it is a presence that illuminates the path, awakens hope, and reminds us that the power to rise, transform, and renew has always existed within us.

This work is an invitation to embrace darkness not as an ending, but as the beginning of a profound journey—one that leads us toward light, awareness, and the discovery of our truest selves.

Instagram: @soo.jewelry



Index of photographs shown in the exhibition FRAGMENTS, Leonidio, Greece, 2026.

THE OBJECT

YE JEE LEE

Humans adorn their bodies with symbols of honor, power, wealth, and belonging, found in everything from clothing buttons to official insignias and certificates. Ye-jee Lee reprints these symbols using forgotten or discarded metal dies, rearranging them into ornamental bouquets that invite new interpretations and relationships.



Shell of Desire II – *Brooch, 2024. Press technique; sterling silver, nickel silver, leather. Photo: Kwangchun Park*

Instagram: @yejeelee_jewelry | @yejee_lee

JONAS NOEL NIEDERMANN

Jonas Noel Niedermann masters the technique of kiln-formed glass and plays with the material's fluidity and solidification. Through the mirrored surface, he accentuates the vessel's three-dimensionality, revealing shifting perspectives and reflections.



Blown glass, freehand-formed, fused coloured glass, sculpted, ground and silvered. Photo: Cæciliie Philipa Vibe Pedersen.

www.jonasnoelniedermann.com
Instagram: @jonas_noel_niedermann

VIDEO ALLOWS TO CHOREOGRAPH THE ACT OF LOOKING



Wearable Poetry – *video, 2024, by Neringa Poškutė-Jukumienė & Rosana Lukauskaitė.*

NERINGA POŠKUTĖ-JUKUMIENĖ AND **ROSANA LUKAUSKAITĖ** WON AN HONORABLE MENTION FOR THEIR VIDEO 'WEARABLE POETRY' AT SMCK ON REEL DURING MUNICH JEWELRY WEEK 2025. THE TWO MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ARTISTS TELL SMCK MAGAZINE ABOUT THEIR APPROACH TO ART AND VIDEO.

NERINGA POŠKUTĖ-JUKUMIENĖ

I am the Head of the Metal Art and Jewellery programme at the Telšiai Faculty of the Vilnius Academy of Arts,

Video is a very powerful medium that allows me to simulate and construct the context in which a work unfolds. It is important to me that the object of my direct practice - the jewelry piece - is not perceived only as a static point of view. Through video I can create an environment, a situation, a story, and a bodily experience that the object alone cannot always convey. Video allows me to choreograph the act of looking and the relationship that emerges between the viewer and the work.

> *“WHAT MATTERS MOST IS THE IDEA AND THE COURAGE TO EXPERIMENT.”*

For me, video is not an addition or documentation of a jewelry object. It is a separate medium that becomes a mirror of the work itself. Within it, the gesture I want to reveal as an artist becomes visible, along with the broader perspective and potential of my artistic language.

Moreover, for today's audience, multimedia practices are often easier to approach and experience. They allow a quicker emotional and intellectual connection with the work. Perhaps this is a slightly egoistic position for an artist, but it is important to me that a work can reach the viewer through different sensory channels.

My advice for beginners would be very simple: just do it. It doesn't really matter which camera or phone you use, or which editing software, apps, etc. What matters most is the idea and the courage to experiment. Just let's do it.

My creative process always begins with an idea with thinking it through and living with it for some time. Everything starts to boil inside my head. Then come experiments with movement, narrative fragments and artefacts. At the same time I begin to think about the team, about people who can work in a similar rhythm to mine.

Flexibility and speed are important to me, because ideas can shift during the process. If possible, I try to finance the works from my own resources. Sometimes support comes from institutions such as the Lithuanian Council for Culture, but quite often it is still a personal investment.

Video is appearing more frequently in jewelry practice, but most often as a documentation or presentation tool. In my surroundings there are definitely artists who actively use this medium. Many jewellery artists still

strongly associate their practice with materials and technologies. It becomes a kind of immovable discipline, and everything outside of it is sometimes perceived as a deviation into other art fields.
I am very happy that SMCK ON REEL exists as a platform that actively and courageously supports this medium within jewellery discourse.

For me personally it would be extremely boring to remain within a single territory. I speak through jewellery, about jewellery, and sometimes against it. I am interested in provoking bodily awareness, in the contact between object and space, and in leading the viewer through a narrative, almost seducing them. In a way, it works similarly to jewellery sparkle. Except that I observe the viewer while simultaneously trying to escape the glass display case.

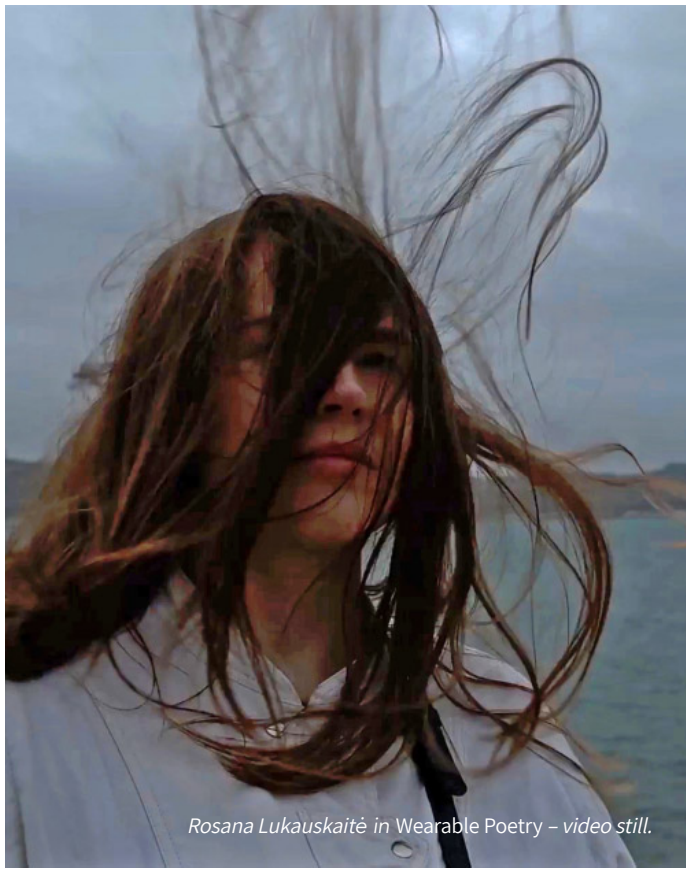
ROSANA LUKAUSKAITĖ

I am a Lithuanian writer, art critic, and interdisciplinary artist based in Klaipėda. I work where literature, contemporary art, and the moving image overlap: intimacy, identity, and the politics of attention in the digital age. I started working with video in a pragmatic way first, through my communications and editorial work in the contemporary art field: filming, helping on shoots, scripting, and producing short pieces around projects. I shifted into video as an artistic medium when my research turned toward internet anthropology and parasocial intimacy, where the primary material is already audiovisual, time-based, and platform-native (livestreams, screens, address, archives).

Video isn't just an add-on or an illustration of the essay. It extends the thinking into time, tone, and presence, and it helps construct the exhibition's narrative architecture. It turns analysis into something lived, paced, and emotionally legible.

> *"I HOPE VIDEO WOULD BE USED MORE AS A SERIOUS EXTENSION OF JEWELRY THINKING"*

Many jewelry artists, especially in my circle, have already discovered video, and for some it has become a primary medium. The real barrier isn't a lack of imagination, but the cost of commitment. Video demands time, repeated experimentation, technical literacy, and often collaboration or paid expertise. It's not something you can do half-heartedly. I hope video would be used more not as "documentation" or promotion, but as a serious extension of jewelry thinking – a way to show wear, gesture, intimacy, and the social life of objects as part of the work itself.



Rosana Lukauskaitė in Wearable Poetry – *video still.*

Outside SMCK ON REEL, my videos live primarily in the exhibition format: looped or single-channel in group shows and in my solo exhibition "Parasocial Paramour" aat the "Kaktusai" Art and Project Space of the Vilnius Academy of Arts Telšiai Faculty, as well as in institutional/gallery contexts in Klaipėda (Klaipėda Culture Communication Center) and Kaunas (Kaunas Artists' House). They also circulate through festival screenings in Germany, depending on the program.

I work with a practical, mobile kit: what I can carry, set up fast, and control alone. Most often, that means simply my phone. For now it's sufficient, and it's conceptually right for what I do: internet anthropology, livestream traces, and archival screen-life material almost demand a diary-like mode of recording rather than cinematic staging. The biggest technical challenge is editing time. Not the software, but the mental stamina: cutting ruthlessly while keeping the work tender.

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www.neringaposkute.com
Instagram: @neringaposkute

www.echogonewrong.com
instagram: @rosanalukauskaite

THE ELEUSINIAN RITUALS REMAIN UNDISCLOSED



By José Villamil

ARCHITECT JOSÉ VILLAMIL FROM BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA WAS ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE AT FAVELAB ATHENS, AND ATTENDED THE CULTURAL PROGRAM 'THE ROAD TO ELEFSINA'. VILLAMIL REPORTS ON HIS DISCOVERIES OF MYTHICAL AND PRESENT DAY ELEFSINA.

Life, death, and rebirth. Words often associated with Persephone's myth. The perceptions emerging from the residency, together with my personal artistic research in abandoned contemporary buildings, led me to question these three concepts and to situate them within physical space.
Visiting some of Athens' and Elefsina's archaeological areas—Hephaisteion and Kerameikos —offered a renewed way to approach the core of my studies. This time, the focus extended not only to recent architecture that has lost its original function—Olympic facilities, industrial areas—but also to ancient buildings and sculptures, protected through conservation systems that attempt to freeze them in a specific historical moment.

The Eleusinian Mysteries, one of the residency's central themes, added an atmosphere of secrecy and mysticism to the paths we walked. We discussed how sacred practices and rituals were gradually transformed into collective, hermetic behaviors, rooted in the place where Persephone was believed to have been abducted by Hades. This site is fundamental not only as a spiritual portal filled with meaning for those who believe in the myth, but also as a ceremonial destination for those who once sought a more fortunate afterlife. The rituals themselves remain largely undisclosed, inviting interpretation and reimagining.



Temple fragments at the ancient site of Elefsina. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.

ABANDONED SPACES PERSIST AS PHYSICAL REMNANTS ACROSS TIME

As a consequence, I wondered how aging allows the cycle of life, death, and rebirth to unfold across generations, and how it can be observed in the ways mass and material are shaped, forgotten, hidden or buried, and later reshaped over centuries. Each stage acquires new meanings and symbolisms, while the vestiges we encounter today enable the transmission of information through which past habits and beliefs may be understood.

Translating these reflections into today's architecture in a state of decay inevitably raises a series of questions. When does a building die? Can a structure that remains standing, no matter how rusted or eroded, still be considered alive? Might the temporary presence of wandering urban nomads constitute a form of rebirth?

One way or another, many abandoned spaces persist as physical remnants across time, awaiting new forms of attention and use. Perhaps this is the true nature of the cycle itself.

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ANNELI OPPAR



WWW.ANNELIOPPAR.COM | INSTAGRAM: @ANNELIOPPAR

C H R I S T O P H Z I E G L E R



M E M O R I E S

CZ CHRISTOPHZIEGLER.COM | INSTAGRAM: @ROSSOZETT

MY HOME SMILES



Sophie Molins – Mysteries of Bliss, *collage, 2025. Photo: S. Molins.*

We are the same age
(I am a nano slither older)
but here in Athens what is time?
A horizontal key hole for a double sided axe key,
fit for a goddesses to take revenge.
Thresholds. worn speckled terrazzo under foot
tiles reflect aquamarine island shallows

No 4, 44….. four has always been safe and made sense.
The number I would chose on a ticket or a seat.
The only number in English with the same number
of letters as its meaning.

High up and dizzy in Kipseli my stomach turns each day
I peg my wet clothes to the line.
I look out and over water barrels with dishes catching
unseeable signals that tell stories of light and sound.
Balconies overspill with green waterfalls
My laundry waves at your laundry -
we look across at each other
For lifetimes

Can I see in….?
Shades and shutters
The shades don't just keep out the sun.
Your foundations were laid as my cells multiplied, bloomed
and blushed spreading like watercolour
we are both 60.
The Varnish is worn on the parquet floor revealing a dull grey
next to the bright varnish that remains.
The kettle and the toaster or the boiler are too
much together.
One thing at a time.
You have your idiosyncrasies. I have mine.
I punch the side of the cistern to make the water fill.

Wire contraptions that are fabulous heath robinson fixes
and mends hold things together. Traces of Artists.

PHOTOGRAPHER, FILMMAKER, ARTIST, AND ANTHROPOLOGIST, **SOPHIE MOLINS** WAS ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE AT FAVELAB, AND ATTENDED THE CULTURAL PROGRAM 'THE ROAD TO ELEFSINA'. MOLINS WROTE A POEM ON THE UNIVERSE ORBITING THE RESIDENCY STUDIO.

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EDITOR's CHOICE

By Priscilla Katz



ARACHNE'S LEGACY: TEXTILE IN ART AND DESIGN

Group Exhibition at SMCK Art Space Athens
24 + 25 October 2026

The multidisciplinary exhibition Arachne's Legacy takes place in the context of the European Textile Network 2026 Athens Conference.
The exhibition presents international artists working across the fields of art, design, crafts, and photography. Through their practice, participants create, use or re-define textiles as a medium, while challenging dominant gender and authority narratives.

The exhibition is curated by Christoph Ziegler and Loukia Richards.

smck.org/shows/arachnes-legacy



Athens city. Photo: Chr. Ziegler.

VISIONS & TRADITIONS

European Textile Network's Conference in Athens
21–25 October 2026

Under the motto "Visions & Traditions," the next conference of the European Textile Network (ETN) takes place in Athens in October 2026.
The conference thematically bridges the gap between Greece's outstanding historical textile tradition of past centuries and modern craftsmanship, design, and textile art.
Several presentations highlight the educational needs in the field of textile crafts and art, as well as the socially unifying potential of the collaborative practice of textile art. The positions and presentations of Greek textile artists and makers are supported by representatives from European educational institutions and craft guilds, whose presentations will highlight the need for textile education within modern art academia.

Many textile-related locations in Athens will be visited during the conference (21 to 23 October), including the Benaki Museum, while an excursion to Nafplio will give participants the opportunity to indulge in the treasures of the Basil Papantoniou Foundation in Nafplio. Exhibitions, presentations, workshops and guided tours will also take place on October 24 and 25 as part of the post-conference program.

Visit: etn-net.org/timetable

GOING UNDERGROUND: THE JEWELS OF BERNHARD SCHOBINGER

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Through January 3, 2027

Going Underground: The Jewels of Bernhard Schobinger traces the radical career of Swiss avant-garde artist Bernhard Schobinger, who has created some of the most distinctive, influential, and pathbreaking jewelry of the past five decades.
Going Underground, the first U.S. exhibition to examine Schobinger's career, features pivotal pieces of experimental jewelry and selected sculptures from 1968 to the present, with necklaces, bracelets, and rings drawn from prominent private collections and the holdings of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. One of the most significant artists working in contemporary jewelry today, Bernhard Schobinger reimagines it as a subversive medium, using scavenged and alternative materials to reveal their hidden histories.
The exhibition explores the artist's work in critical dialogue with the long shadow of World War II, the anarchy of punk music, and the political and cultural forces that have shaped his life. Schobinger's aesthetic inspirations include Dadaism and Concrete Art. His Swiss cultural inheritance and an abiding interest in Japanese culture have also informed his practice.
Schobinger's pioneering work invites audiences to explore the ways in which jewelry can be made from detritus, nature, and precious metals in order to provoke new meanings. Unexpected elements are transformed by the artist's keen eye and meticulous hands: fishing lures and wedding rings foraged over decades of diving in Lake Zurich; metal and asphalt shards dug out of a decrepit New York City street in the late 1970s; glass, nails, and saw blades that were salvaged.

Going Underground: The Jewels of Bernhard Schobinger – Catalogue by arnoldsche Art Publishers:
ISBN 978-3-89790-765-2

Visit: MFAH/exhibitions/bernhard-schobinger



Bernahrd Schobinger – Lightning Rod Ring, *2016. © The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, promised gift of the Rotasa Collection Trust. Photo: Thomas R. DuBrock.*



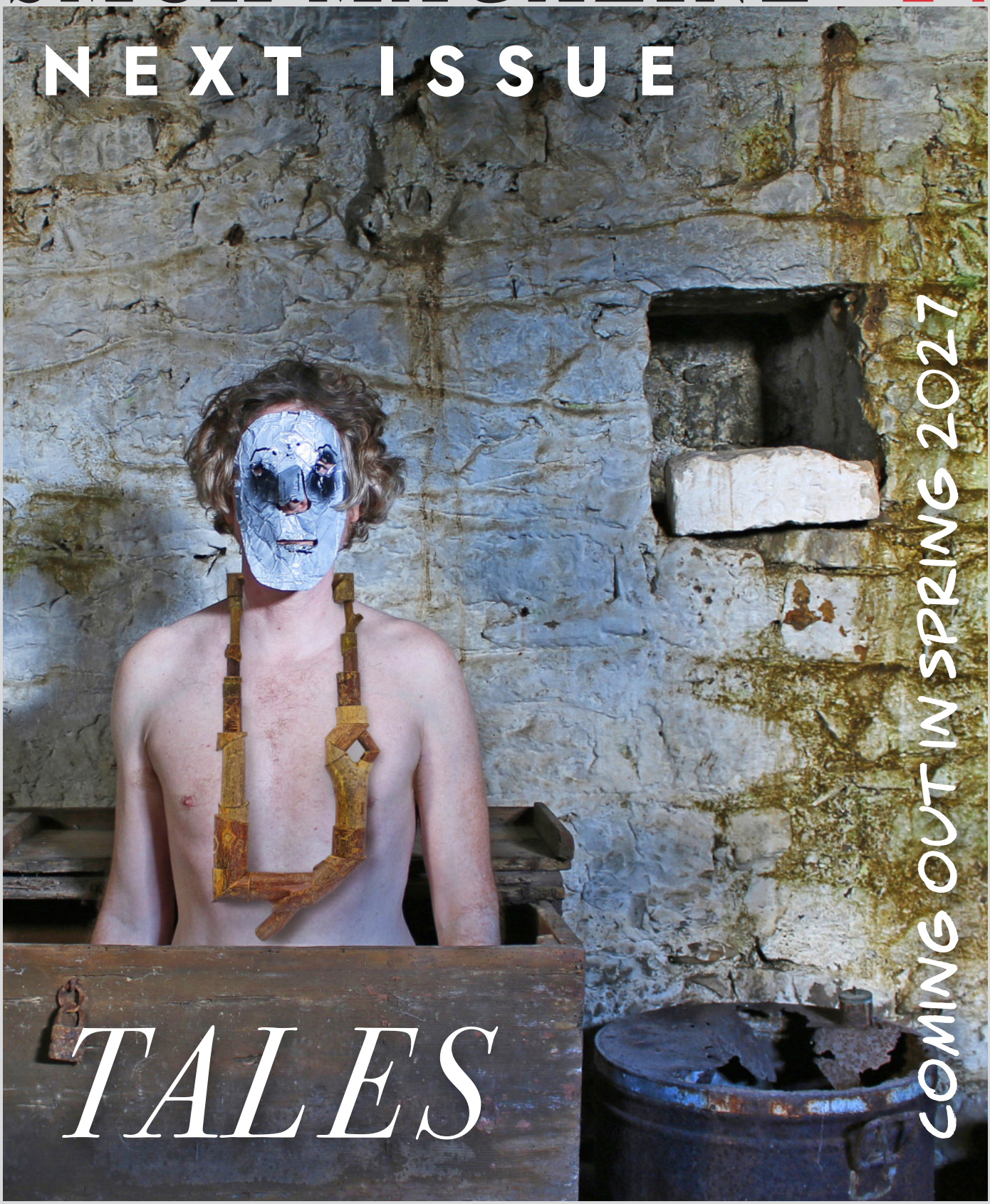
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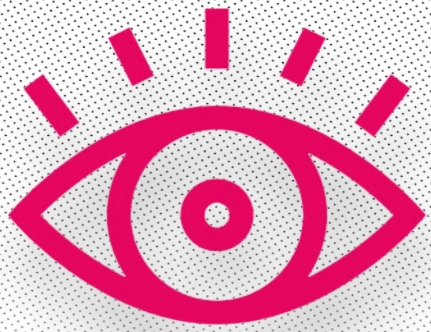


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COMING OUT IN SPRING 2027

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