



ROLLS-ROYCE ARTS PROGRAMME

SPIRIT OF
ECSTASY
CHALLENGE

ROLLS-ROYCE
MOTOR CARS

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A NEW
CHAPTER
FOR
MUSE

ROLLS-ROYCE ARTS PROGRAMME

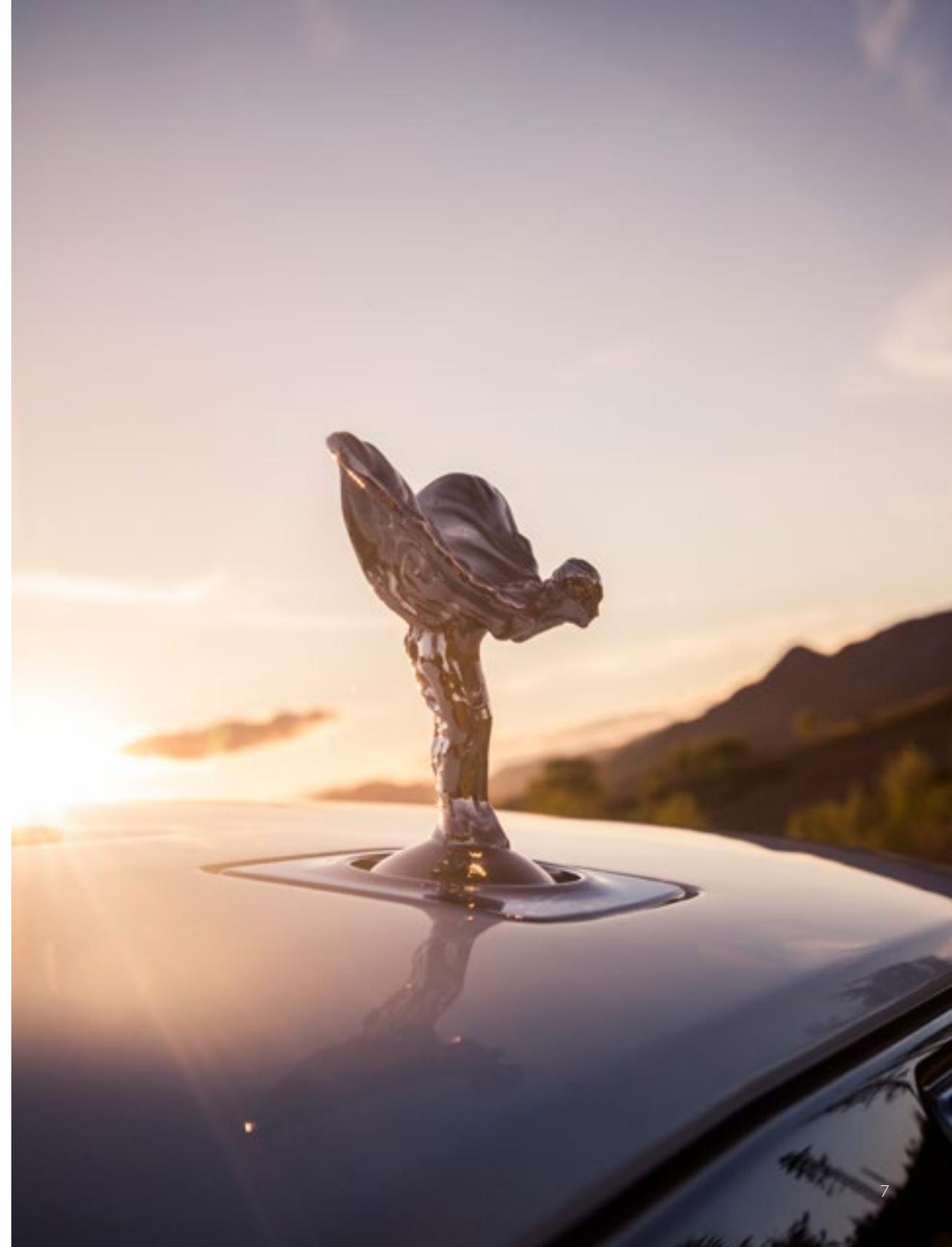
STEEPED IN CREATIVITY

Ever since the first encounter between Charles Rolls and Henry Royce, in 1904, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars has been synonymous with limitless imagination. The choice of conveyance for renowned artists, musicians, writers, actors and filmmakers, Rolls-Royce has long drawn vitality from the creative energies of its time.

Our creations have appeared in paintings and sculptures, songs and films, poems and novels. Our driving ambition – to inspire greatness – finds a natural affinity with the restless imagination that spurs artistic minds to venture relentlessly into new terrain.

In 2019, we launched Muse, the Rolls-Royce Arts Programme, which fosters and inspires creativity through collaboration with artists and creative individuals who share our passion for pushing technical and conceptual boundaries. We provide time and resource to produce art conceived, and to be experienced, without compromise.

Our aim is simple: to leave a legacy of exceptional creative achievements.



INSPIRING GREATNESS

Muse builds on past Rolls-Royce engagements with seminal figures in contemporary art, among them Angela Bulloch, Yang Fudong, Isaac Julien, Mohammed Kazeem, Tomás Saraceno and Refik Anadol. The projects have produced enriching moments of shared experience – a foundation for Muse.

In 2019, Muse announced two new programmes that engage different facets of contemporary creativity. Our Dream Commission, launched in 2019 as Muse's flagship initiative, supports emerging and mid-career artists to create landmark works of moving-image art. In 2022, the commission was awarded to New Jersey-based artist Sondra Perry. Moving-image works represent a vital frontier of innovation in contemporary art. The ambition of the Dream Commission is to advance this ground-breaking field. Presented in partnership with the Fondation Beyeler in Basel and Serpentine in London, the Dream Commission invites artists to conjure alternative sensory universes, dreamworlds, sublime and fantastical. Transcending the everyday, these audacious, immersive works transport viewers to a realm of pure imagination.

In early 2022, Muse unveiled its second marquee project, the Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge.

Celebrating both tradition and innovation, the Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge invites three emerging artists from a range of disciplines to create unique objects inspired by the Spirit of Ecstasy, the sculptural figurine that adorns the bonnet of every Rolls-Royce motor car and the enduring symbol of the ethos of Rolls-Royce.

Together, the Dream Commission and the Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge embrace a wide spectrum of contemporary visual expression, from artists who exhibit in esteemed museums to pioneering artistic practitioners committed to the heritage of their craft while making use of the latest technological advances. For Rolls-Royce, Muse's programmes help foster a new generation of creative leaders and form a gateway to fresh ideas and unbounded innovation.



THE SPIRIT

OF

ECSTASY

CHALLENGE

REIMAGINING AN ICON

Rolls-Royce is the only motor car that arrives complete with a work of art. Soon after the company's inception, each motor car was graced with the Spirit of Ecstasy, a sculpture created by Charles Sykes in 1911. This figurine has become an icon of British luxury and one of the world's most recognised symbols – a mark of beauty, style, perfection and sophistication.

For Rolls-Royce, the Spirit of Ecstasy represents excellence and limitless creativity. It embodies the essence of who we are: our enduring commitment to heritage, innovation, craftsmanship, rarity – a constant striving for perfection. The figurine's lithe, soaring movement exudes a fearless passion for the new. Arms outstretched; she radiates the joy of taking a leap into the unknown.

With the Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge, this timeless symbol becomes a point of departure for new adventures in creativity. We are seeking to discover emerging talents in the design world and take them on an exciting journey. There are few limits to what the outcome can be, just a desire to expand technical and conceptual boundaries. The objects thus created may not look like the Spirit of Ecstasy at all, but they will be infused with her effervescent vitality. They will challenge the participants to explore and test the possibilities of materials.



CELEBRATING MATERIALS

The Home of Rolls-Royce in Goodwood, England, is a Global Centre of Luxury Manufacturing Excellence. Here, materials experts perfect their art, demonstrating creativity, skill and precision that is developed and enhanced from generation to generation.

‘Design excellence and the innovative mastery of craft and materials have been integral to our marque since its inception,’ says Anders Warming, Director of Design for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. ‘The big challenge for designers today is to embrace modernity and technology while respecting, and protecting, heritage. I am proud to witness this skill daily in our own design studio.’ With this initiative, he adds, ‘This Challenge allows artists and innovators of our time to merge their vision with the philosophy of our marque, as represented by the Spirit of Ecstasy.’

Drawn from a new generation of talented artists from around the world, the participants in the Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge will be invited to experiment with materials in ground-breaking ways that are key to Rolls-Royce craft, including leather and textiles, wood, glass, paint and technical fibre. As such, the initiative brings design, materials and craft into a dynamic dialogue. The artistic objects resulting from it will be exhibited around the world.

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF TEXTILES

The Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge invites artists from a range of disciplines to explore the enormous creative potential of textiles. From the handmade to the digital, from the most traditional methods to the very newest products of material innovations, textiles inform our lives at every level.

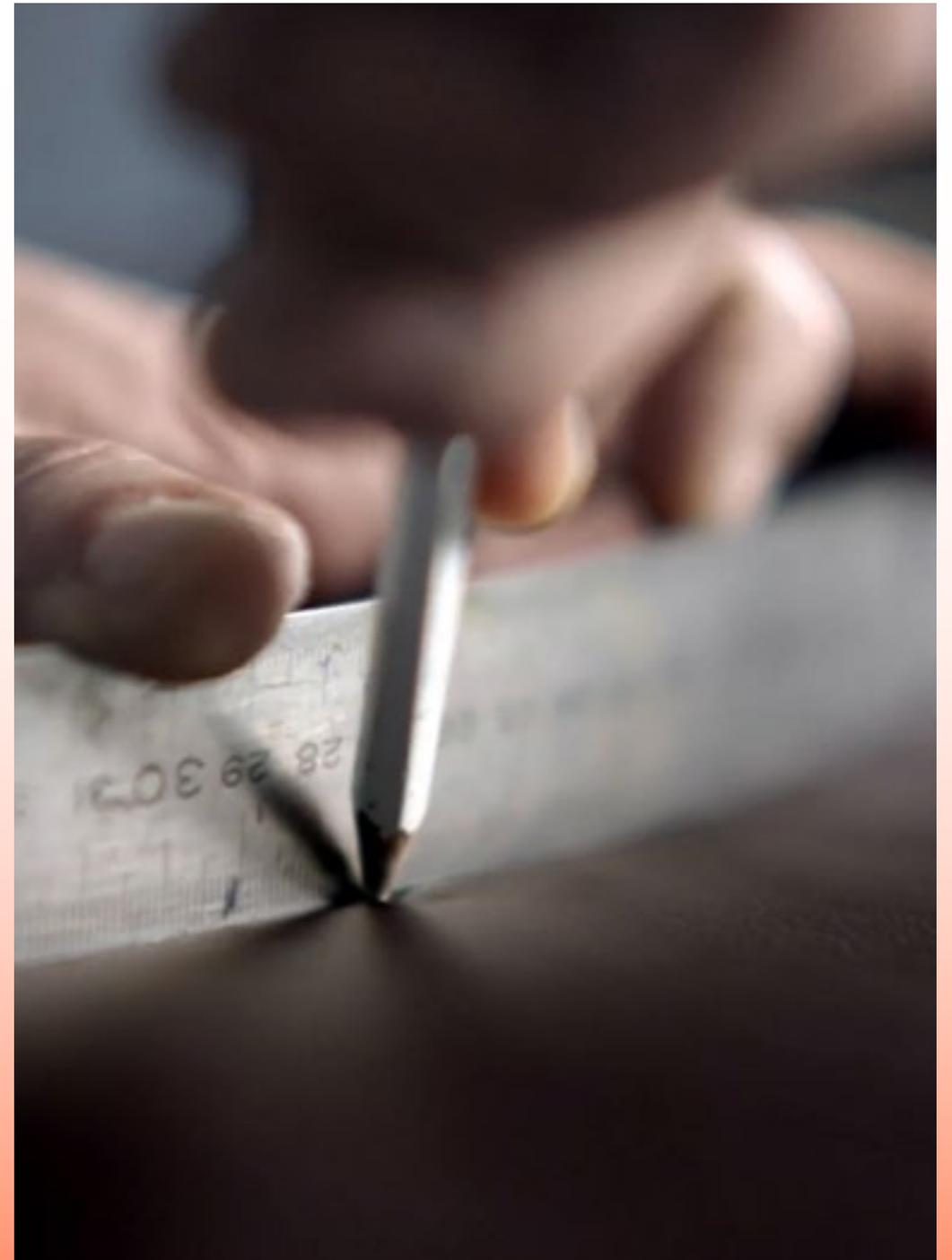
The craft techniques involving textiles are among the oldest available to car designers. In the early years of Rolls-Royce, leather was used mainly in the front of the interior, a hard-wearing material well suited to a space usually occupied by a driver. The rear compartment, by contrast, was a warm and quiet cocoon, fully enveloped in soft textiles, seen as the most luxurious material for the discerning occupant. Over the years, leather took predominance throughout the cabins of luxury vehicles. Today, however, aided in part by rapid developments in technology, car design is once again poised to rediscover the potential of textiles.

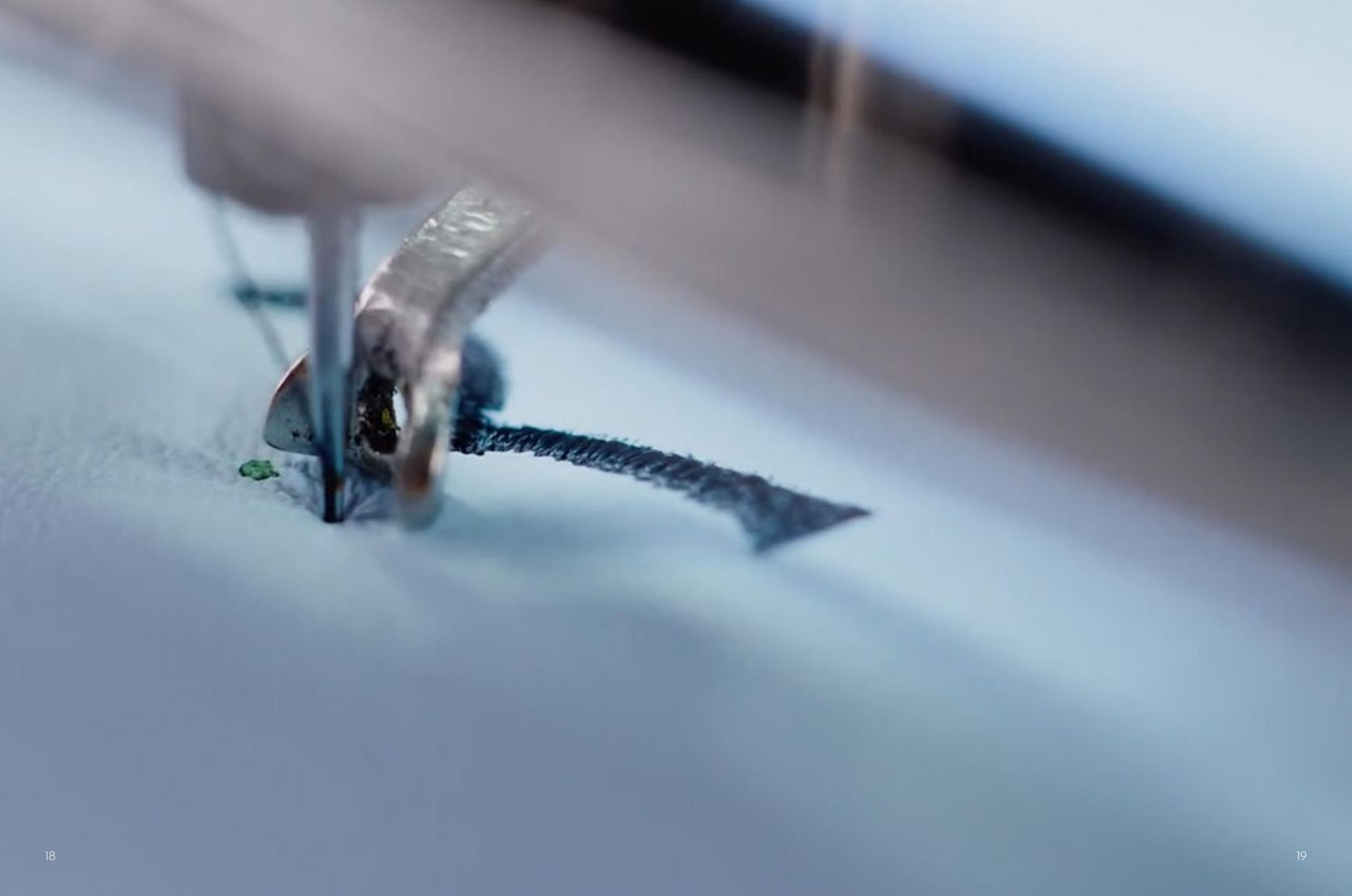
The opportunities to imagine something radically innovative in textile have never been more far-reaching or fanciful. Versatile, delicate, organic, taking inspiration from a global heritage stretching back over millennia, textiles offer up a wide-open terrain of creative possibility.



'It is absolutely amazing to see how many different approaches to textiles there are, and how different people are experimenting with the topic,' says Rolls-Royce Head of Colour, Materials & Trim Design Christine Franck, who trained as a weaver.

'Today's material designers are infusing textiles with a new energy. They are making use of high-tech advances in material science, such as electrically illuminated filaments. They are also infusing a generational concern for diversity and ecological sustainability. Speaking to both the past and the future of creativity in design, textile is a perfect medium to bind heritage and innovation.'





THE 2022

WINNERS



GHIZLANE SAHLI



BI RONGRONG



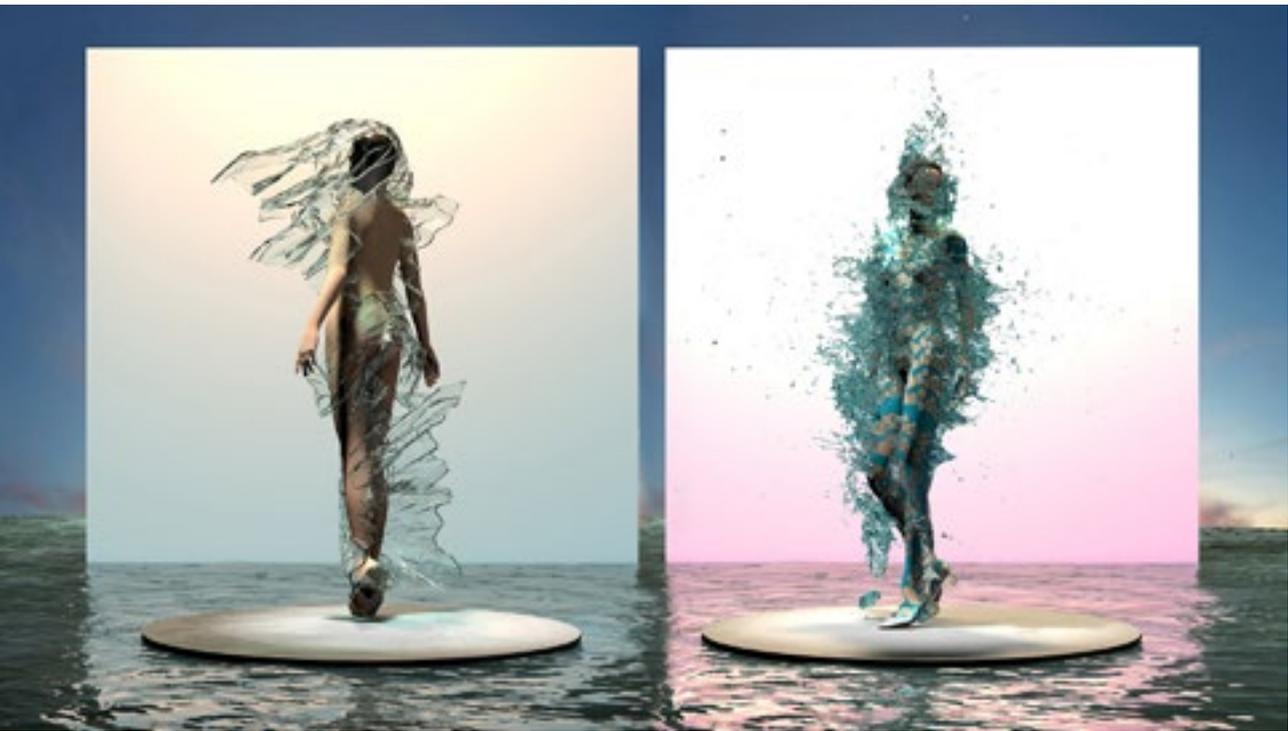
SCARLETT YANG

A dramatic black and white photograph featuring a person's face, partially obscured by a large, jagged piece of shattered glass. The glass is fragmented into many sharp, irregular shards, creating a complex, crystalline pattern. The person's eyes and part of their nose are visible through the cracks and gaps in the glass. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the sharp, reflective surfaces of the broken glass.

SCARLETT YANG

At 25, the London-based artisan Scarlett Yang is already leading the way with her avant-garde design practice. Working in the intersection of science, technology and art, Yang creates futuristic fabrics from biomaterials, which she digitally reimagine as ethereal garments, offering a mesmerising vision of the future of fashion combined with organic matter.

Having grown up immersed in the world of gaming, anime and internet forums, Yang naturally gravitated towards virtual fashion whilst studying womenswear at Central Saint Martins. Confronted with the wastefulness of garment production during her degree, she began to seek sustainable solutions not only by designing digitally, but also by finding alternative materials that would limit the environmental impact of her clothing.



Yang's research led her beyond the couture atelier and into digital fabrication and biology laboratories, culminating in a headline-grabbing degree show in 2020. The artist went against convention by presenting *Decomposition of Materiality*, a virtual dreamscape where avatars modelled dresses spun from algae and silk-cocoon protein. While Yang created a physical sample of this fabric, it was through digital renderings that she was able to demonstrate how these sculptural gowns would respond to humidity and eventually dissolve in water.

Since graduating and winning the prestigious LVMH Maison/O Green Trial prize with her project, Yang has continued to develop her research in virtual technologies and biomaterials, achieving a double master's in design engineering from Imperial and Royal College of Art and exhibiting at major art institutions including London's Victoria and Albert Museum and Somerset House.

Yang's designs are ground-breaking in the way they challenge our perceptions of materiality across multiple levels. She often discusses the importance of 'fluidity' in her work, the acceptance 'that things are transient, and nothing is really permanent.'

In choosing organic materials such as algae and seaweed, the artist proposes a reality where we create in collaboration with nature, finding ways to embrace impermanence within fashion. This idea finds eloquent expression in her biodegradable pieces, which reimagine the lifecycle of textiles and put powerful emphasis on examining a design system as a whole.

'Fluidity' is a word which can also be used to describe the way Yang moves between virtual and physical design worlds, and between different disciplines. The STEM industry in particular has been a major source of inspiration, with the artist seeing huge potential for material science to be applied to fashion and textile production.



First-hand research in laboratories and factories is therefore vital to Yang's process, as it allows her, in her words, to be 'exposed to all these scientific possibilities of what future materials and future products could look like and what they could be made of.'

Yang harnesses the power of modern technology across her hybrid practice. On the physical side, laser-cutting technology and 3D printing are used to create the custom-made moulds with which she casts her fabrics; on the virtual side, generative design tools and software allow her to freely imagine how these garments might be worn without creating expensive and wasteful prototypes. These digital simulations offer an answer to fashion's sustainability issues, but they also point to a larger trend which sees culture migrating online. Having presented collections on the metaverse, Yang sees her work as heralding 'the beginning of a future where we consume fashion, textile, culture, lifestyle, in a virtual way.'



Left & above Scarlett Yang, photos by Mark Cocksedge



Bringing these avant-garde ideas to life is of course no small feat. It requires space for creative experimentation, expert knowledge of materials and the best digital fabrication technology the world has to offer. Yang has had access to all three during the Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge. Paired with an algae expert, Yang has created a new hybrid project. The work consists of two elements; one is a physical piece, the other a digital visual identity of the physical work and processes.

Collecting seaweed specimens directly from the coast, Yang was, for the first time, able to work with the substance as a raw material, as opposed to using pre-processed algae. This allowed her to further her technique by developing her textiles from scratch. Back in the laboratory, she examined the properties of different types of seaweed, recording everything from colour to texture and smell: 'We were able to experiment and combine the algae pigments to create a diverse palette. It is truly exciting for me to be able to create 'living colours' that do not contain petroleum-based ingredients.'



Above Scarlett Yang, *Decomposition of Materiality*, 2020.
Courtesy the artist (3D simulation)

Left Scarlett Yang, *Skins*, 2021. Courtesy the artist

As well as expanding her research in this nascent field, this experience has also fuelled her desire to use nature as inspiration: 'Seaweed, algae application in textile products is at a very early stage, which is hugely exciting. I find it beautiful to go to the seaside and observe, research and collect this drifted seaweed, to see visually how they're moving in the water, how they're growing.' Detailed footage of the material's surface was documented using a macro videography lens and will be shown on-screen next to the physical piece.

By strengthening the collaboration between design and science, the artist has been able to further bridge the gap 'between extreme imagination and real-world problem solving' which defines her practice. The final artwork allows all those who encounter it to peer into the surreal world of Yang's mind and witness the 'idea of humanity within technology' in close quarters.

'The Challenge is a lot of the things I want to do and am passionate about: combining this notion of craftsmanship, hands-on making of actual tactile things with really precise digital fabrication.'

— Scarlett Yang



Scarlett Yang, *[garment]*, 2020.
Courtesy the artist (photographed by Scarlett Yang)



GHIZLANE

SAHLI

For the past decade, Ghizlane Sahli has explored the poetics of materials and texture through her striking abstract art. Living and working in Marrakech, Sahli with the help of local artisans combines ancestral techniques with her mastery of space and form to create intricate bas-reliefs and sculptures, bringing craft and contemporary art into dynamic dialogue.

Sahli displayed a natural artistic ability as a child, which would eventually lead her to pursue a degree in architecture in Paris. Her work with textiles began after she returned to her native country and settled in Marrakech, Morocco, where she started a children's-clothing brand and ran it successfully for several years. It was not until 2012, when Sahli was asked to create a dress made from salvaged material for a local arts magazine, that she decided to commit fully to artistic creation.

That same year Sahli co-founded the Zbel Manifesto, an artistic collective that focused on using waste materials. With them, she brought an installation called *Pimp My Garbage* to the Marrakech Biennale and was later invited to participate in the inaugural exhibition of the Mohammed VI Museum, in Rabat. It was around this time that she also received her first solo presentation, at Marrakech's Dar Bellarj Foundation. Asked to conceive a work in collaboration with a local artisan, the artist devised a technique for creating three-dimensional structures by cutting up recycled-plastic bottles and wrapping them in silk thread.

Having since exhibited in galleries, fairs and biennales across Africa and Europe, Sahli is now renowned for creating voluminous, jewel-like works which synthesise her passions: embroidery and recycling. Today she continues to work with female artisans as a way of both encouraging female empowerment – for example, carrying out textile projects with women living in rural areas of Morocco – and drawing on the rich tradition of textiles of her country, which she explains is important 'for everyone across society, from the poor to the very rich.'

In Sahli's workshop, the artisan's practical know-how is redirected through experiments with scale, materials and form. The result is a bold, highly contemporary style which alluringly reimagines traditional craft. The Alveoles (translating as 'cells' in English), her signature works, are particularly captivating in the way they blur the distinction between plastic and organic material. Made to resemble bodily or natural forms, they have a honeycomb-like surface which pulls the viewer in with a deep sense of perspective, recalling the artist's architectural training.



Previous page Ghizlane Sahli, *Fils De Soie Sur, Plastique Et Metal*, 2018.
Courtesy the artist

Above Ghizlane Sahli, *Embroideries On Paper*, 2021.
Courtesy the artist

Right Ghizlane Sahli, *Sans Titre*, *Encres Et Fils De Soie Sur Papier*, 2018.
Courtesy the artist



These natural forms point to a concern for the environment, which is also reflected in Sahli's use of waste materials. Rather than making direct statements about sustainability, however, Sahli uses recycling to explore metaphors of renewal. By repurposing discarded items into exquisite artworks, the artist draws attention to the beauty of the everyday. She also sees the repetitive acts of collecting and cutting during the creation stage as a meditative exercise, fostering a similarly organic and intuition-led process: 'The Alveoles are like cells. They grow, they grow, they grow, until it's done. I don't have a real idea where I'm going. I have the feeling that it's like a dialogue, and the artwork knows better than I do when it's finished.'

With its wings and feminine body, Sahli's artwork for the Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge adopts the shape of the graceful Rolls-Royce figurine. Using the form of an Alveole, the artist knotted each individual 'cell' onto a 'skeleton' of wire and metal mesh. For her materials she once again turned to discarded plastic items such as bottles, caps, tubes and wires. With the help of Najat, the artisan who assists the artist, these components were then embroidered in white silk and gold thread, completing the transition from waste to dazzling artwork: 'To use waste, the junk of every society, and cover it with noble materials brings universality and hope to the project.'

As in her previous works, Sahli approached the making of this piece as a 'gestation' involving various steps: collecting waste, washing, cutting and finally embroidering. She explains how the process induces an almost trance-like state: 'All these steps are very spiritual and totally devoid of any intellectuality. The gesture of creation is repetitive and becomes like a mantra.'

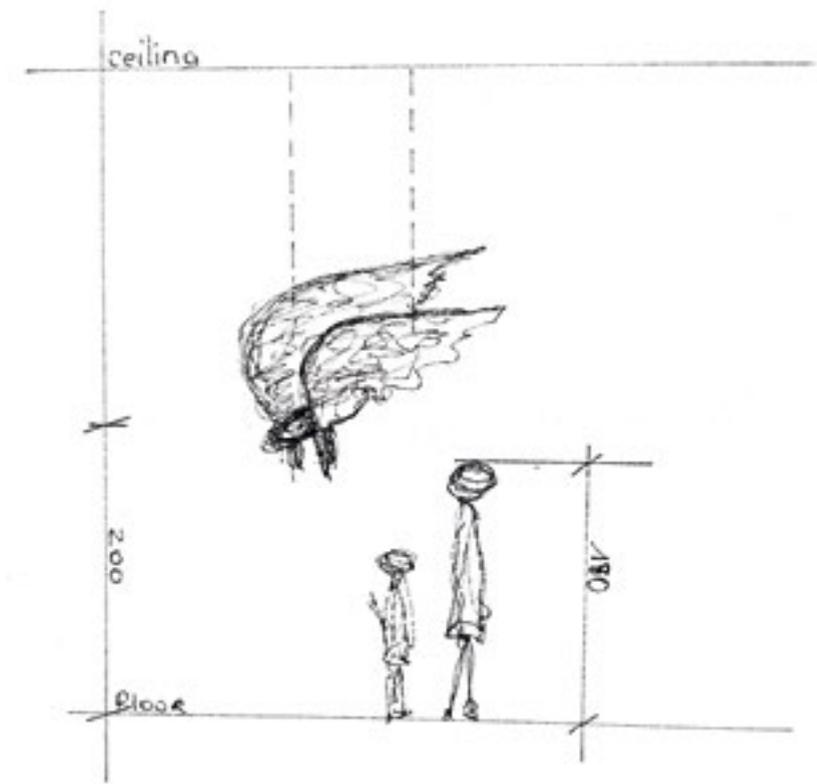


‘The woman, the body, the wings,
the perfection, the attitudes, it's all
exactly what I'm looking for.’

– Ghizlane Sahli

Sahli’s aim was to capture the essence of the Rolls-Royce symbol, which she regards as reflecting many of the key themes within her art: its expression of freedom, femininity and embrace of a heightened state of emotion. Her piece also draws parallels between the craftsmanship of the Goodwood plant and her own workshop, where each artisan also has a specific skill set and task to produce each component to the highest standards.

As well as achieving the perfect alignment between Sahli’s own artistic ethos and the goals of Muse’s initiative, the artwork is invigorated by her deeply personal connection to the project: ‘The Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge is the perfect answer to express the aim of my path right now in my life. I feel connected to the figurine, her open arms, elegance, lightness and strength to take flight.’



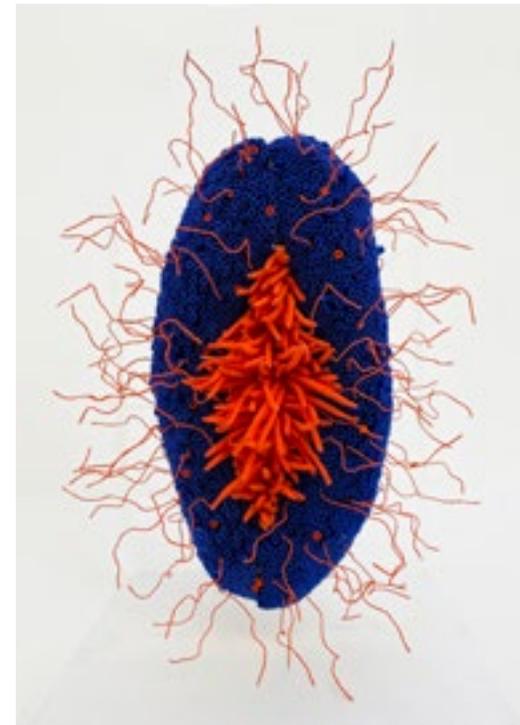


Top left Ghizlane Sahli, photo by Adnane Zemmama

Far left Ghizlane Sahli, *Fils De Soie Sur Plastique Et Metal*, 2020. Courtesy the artist

Left Ghizlane Sahli, *Exceptions d'Afrique* © Nohan Ferreira. Courtesy the artist

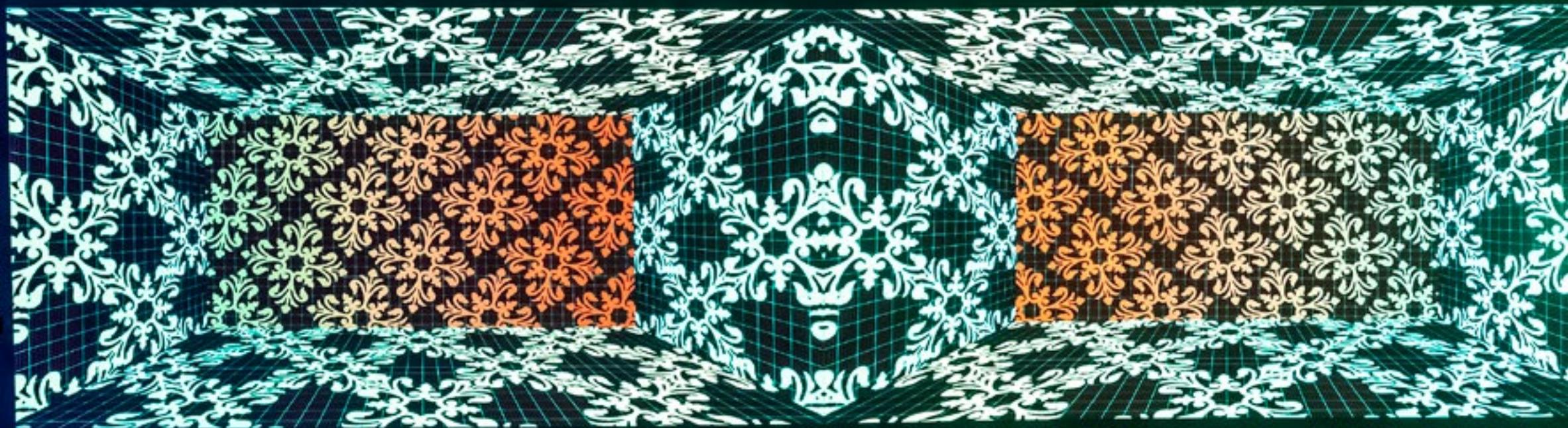
Above Ghizlane Sahli, photo by Adnane Zemmama.



Left page Ghizlane Sahli, *Fils De Soie Sur Plastique Et Metal*, 2020, sideview.
Courtesy the artist

Above left Ghizlane Sahli, *Fils De Soie Et Laine Sur Plastique Et Metal*, 2020.
Courtesy the artist

Above right Ghizlane Sahli, *Fils De Soie Et Laine Sur Plastique Et Metal*, 2020.
Courtesy the artist



BI RONGRONG

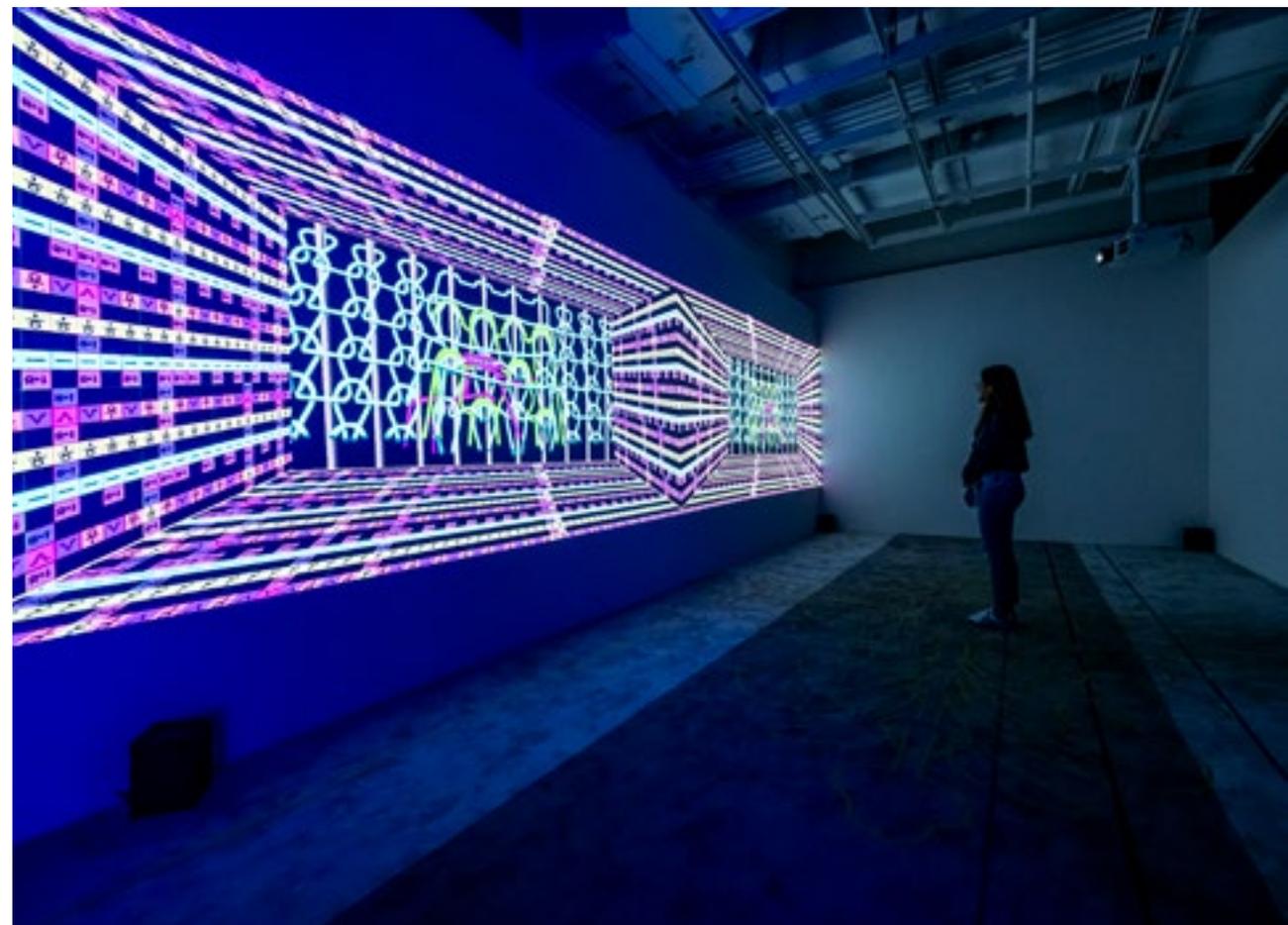
Looking at Bi Rongrong's sprawling canvases, collages or installations, one might see a visual record of one of the artist's city trips. She began collecting street imagery during her travels, 'reading' the architecture in a personal way and applying it to her art. Busy, colourful and richly textured, her vibrant multimedia works refract the dynamism of urban life and invite viewers to closely inspect their complex surfaces.

Now based in Shanghai, the artist studied Chinese traditional landscape painting at Sichuan University before completing a master's in painting at the Frank Mohr Institute, in the Netherlands. Both these experiences contribute to the balance between the traditional and contemporary, the figurative and abstract, which animate her work. While today her works encompass a wide range of materials and media, Bi Rongrong's practice is still heavily informed by her studies: 'I never put Chinese traditional painting aside. That whole way of thinking is still in my process. I will say both of [my degrees] give me a different way of observing or looking at the world, and a totally different way of expressing art, of the things I want to reveal.'

Since graduating, Bi Rongrong has gained a reputation for creating spectacular large-scale works – for instance, her massive, patterned mural at Shanghai's Bund18 Temporary Art Space, and her immersive public installation at the Shanghai Urban Space Art Season. In 2016 the artist added crocheting and knitting into her diverse mix of techniques when she began collaborating with the fashion department of the city's Institute of Visual Art, and her recent installations, such as at Hong Kong's Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile in 2020, have seen her contrast textiles with video and LEDs.

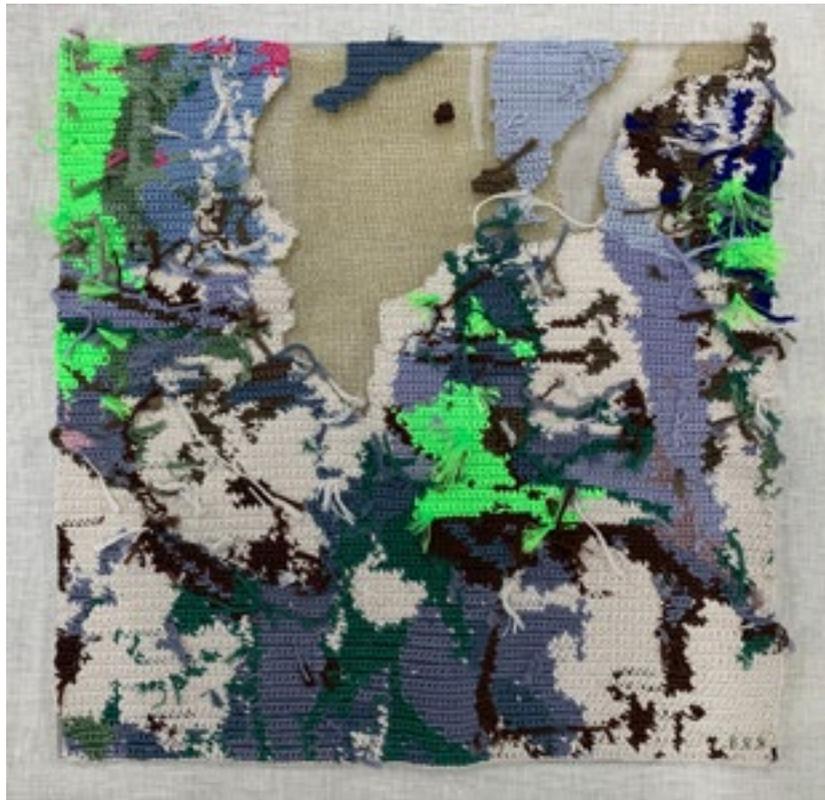
Collecting is an essential part of Bi Rongrong's creative process. Whether in her native Shanghai or a new city, the artist searches for inspiration across the surface of the street, in everything

from billboards to logos and graffiti – what the artist calls the 'urban skin'. These visual references eventually evolve into a picture which might be transposed onto a three-dimensional space, creating an environment at once strange and familiar. She traces this process of observation and collection back to traditional Chinese painting, comparing the way she studies a street to how a painter might observe 'the veins on leaves or the rings on plants'. Questions begin to arise from observing such details closely: 'Where are these patterns from? What's the resource? How is it connected with the local people, or why is it so tightly connected with the city?'



Previous page and above

Re-encode—Pattern XI-∞, video, textile, LED and mural, 2019–2020. Photo courtesy of CHAT (Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile), Hong Kong



Above *Untitled Textile 202108*, Cotton thread, polyester thread, metal thread, sewed on acrylic panel, 43x41.5cm, 2021. Photo courtesy of Bi Rongrong



Right *Untitled Textile 202110*, Linen thread, wool yarn, polyester thread, 70x50x6cm, 2021. Photo courtesy of Bi Rongrong

Right page Bi Rongrong, photo by Zhang Jin



Such inquiries allow the artist to draw parallels between nature and the built environment, a relationship expressed in her works through their dramatic sense of pattern and texture. Finding interesting ways to contrast materials is key for Bi Rongrong, because it allows her to ‘activate’ these patterns. The artist likens this to preparatory sketches of nature which need to be ‘transformed’ into a fully-fledged landscape painting. While in traditional Chinese painting this transformation is usually achieved through colour, Bi Rongrong transforms her drawings by bringing them to life through different mediums.

Bi Rongrong was drawn to using textiles because of the way they relate to the structure of her artworks: ‘It is about layers. The whole idea of weaving is just like how I organise things together in my works.’ Through textiles, the artist also finds new ways to interpret her surroundings and the different textures of architecture. She describes how, upon visiting museums of historic art, she was

inspired to bring woven materials into her work after seeing how carpets featured heavily in nomadic homes: 'Architecture is not only stones; it also can be textiles.'

These experiments find their way into her artwork for the Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge. Titled *Stitched Urban Skin*, the piece expresses her unique way of deciphering the city by combining materials as wide-ranging as metal, acrylic, LED lighting and crochet textile, overlaid across three layers.

Studio Portraits, photos by Zhang Jin

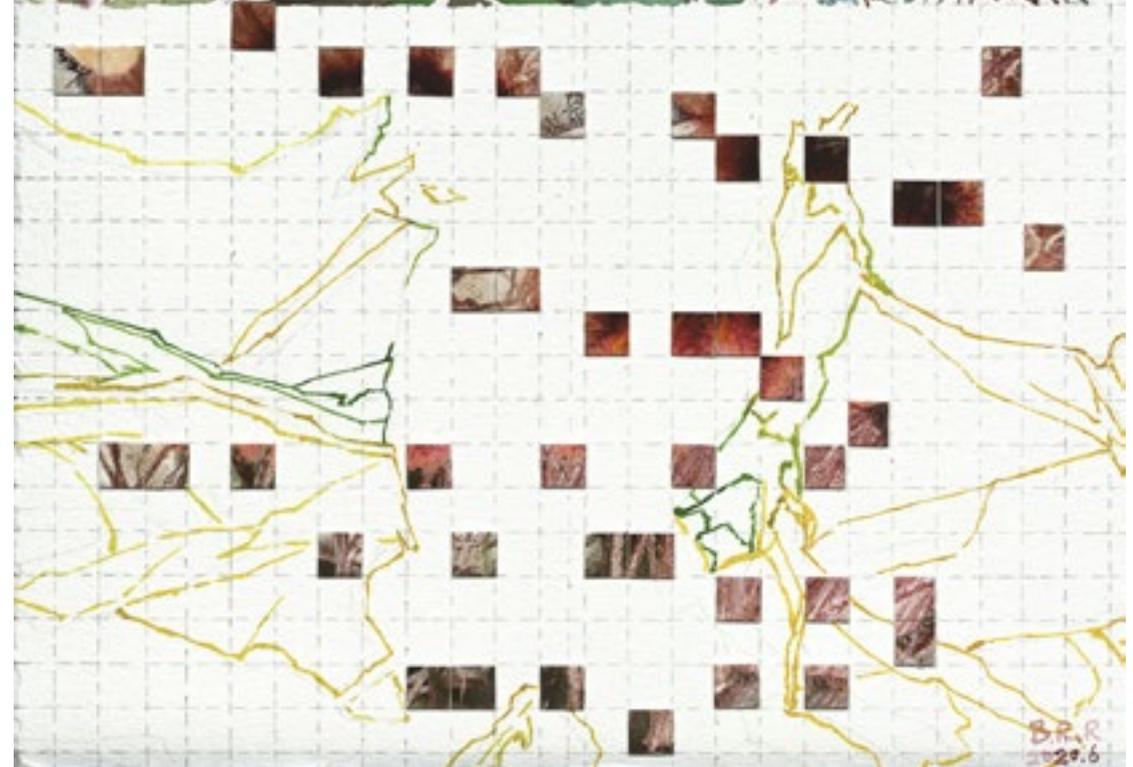


'The patterns I collect from buildings or textiles, for me they have life, and this life needs to be activated.'

– Bi Rongrong

The greatest technical challenge for the artist has been finding ways to 'stitch' all these elements together. With each material possessing its own independent craftsmanship and language, Bi Rongrong took advantage of the opportunity to understand their specific properties by working with Rolls-Royce associates from various fields. She made multiple samples to see how these could finally come together in the finished artwork, and trialled different ways of integrating the materials – for instance, using a Xiaoshan lace-making technique to stitch on metal and wire elements, or wrapping thread around LEDs.

In the final artwork, materials, textures and visual references are excitingly remixed as modern media and traditional techniques are woven together. For the artist, whose use of metal was inspired by the Rolls-Royce car surface, it was a way of drawing from and paying homage to the first-class craftsmanship at the Goodwood manufactory: 'To build up a line of thought is a lifetime thing. This process is part of everyday life for me, so I am a craftsman as well. We are the same from that perspective.'



This page *A Growing Landscape (III) – A view at the site (Detail)*
 The work is combined by 14 pieces of manuscript, carpet and wallpaper,
 dimension variable, 2020. Photo courtesy of Shanghai Pearl Art Museum
 and Bi Rongrong

Right page *A Growing Landscape (III) – Manuscript 10*
 Pencil, watercolor, Ultra Giclee print, acrylic glue, acid-free watercolor paper,
 25.5x35cm, 2020. Photo courtesy Bi Rongrong



Moving Greyscale – Drawing, watercolor, pencil, acid-free watercolor paper, 137x76.3cm, 2014. Photo courtesy of Bi Rongrong

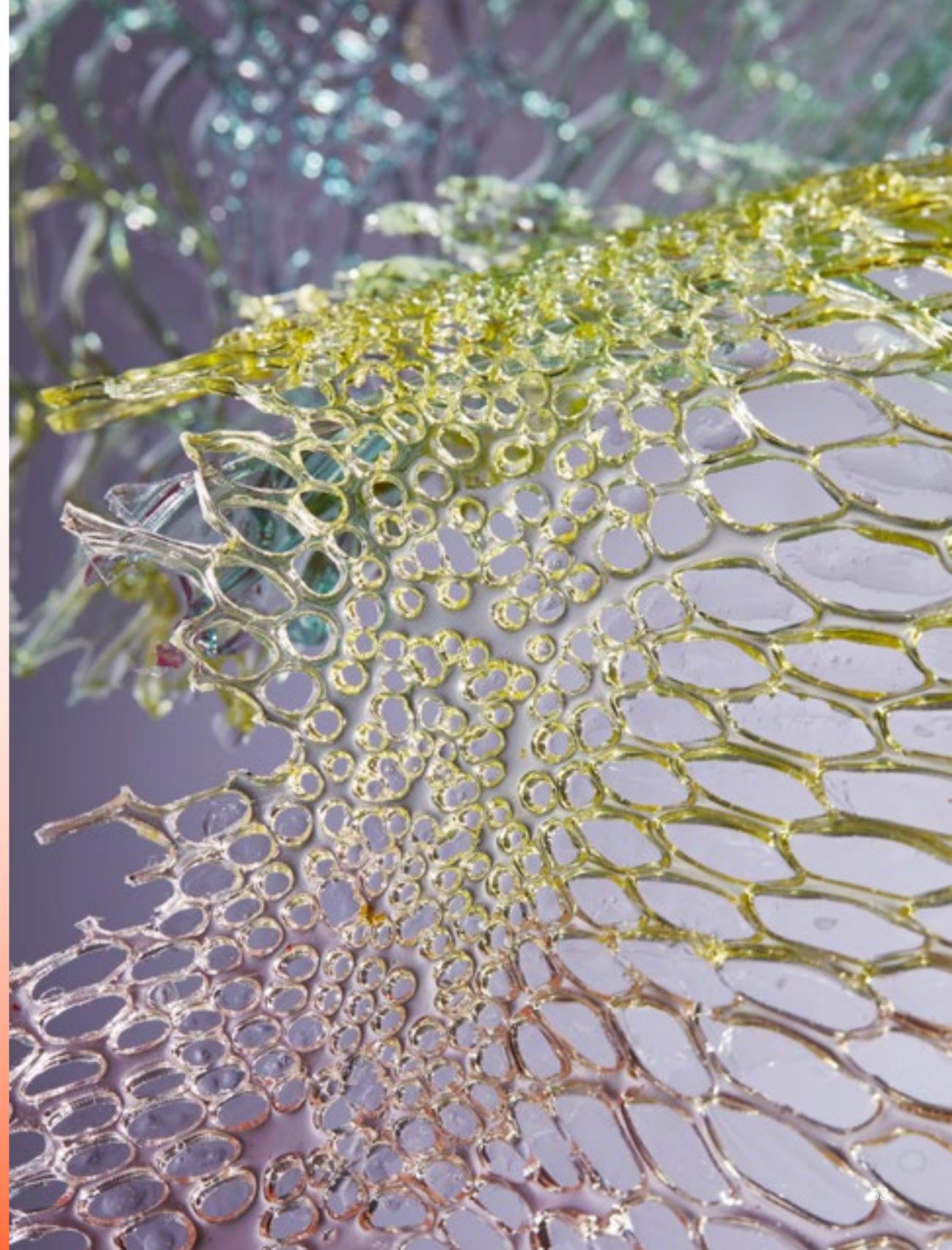
The background features a complex, abstract design. It consists of several overlapping, wavy, funnel-like shapes in shades of orange and white. A prominent feature is a dense grid of thin, light-orange lines that curves and follows the contours of the shapes, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is a modern, geometric, and organic aesthetic.

THE EXHIBITION

SCARLETT YANG, TRANSIENT MATERIALITY

In keeping with the hybrid nature of her practice, Scarlett Yang's artwork is composed of two elements. The first is a physical object, an ethereal metre-high sculpture made of intertwining ribbons of synthetic biopolymer produced from algae, collected directly from the ocean and dried. The sculpture's form, surface and colour all reflect the natural world: its delicate texture was inspired by dragonfly wings and made by pouring the liquid bio-polymer into a custom-made mould, while the ribbons' green and purplish hues were created through experiments with spirulina and other bio products. Suspended in the air and illuminated with a spotlight, visitors are able to marvel at the piece's shimmering, diaphanous qualities.

Alongside the sculpture is a film which forms the second part of Yang's project. Here viewers can see footage documenting the artist's process as well as digital renderings of the sculpture set to a futuristic soundscape.







GHIZLANE SAHLI,
NISSA'S RINA (WOMAN'S SONG)

Resembling two triumphant wings about to take flight, Ghizlane Sahli's artwork is a joyous celebration of femininity and freedom. The sculpture is composed almost entirely of recycled materials: plastic bottles, metal armatures, aluminium and copper embellished with gold leaf and gold thread purchased from the artisans in Marrakech's Medina. Aided by her own studio of artisans, Sahli has employed her usual technique of cutting up bottles and wrapping them in thread, building up each element into wing-like structures that reference Rolls-Royce's Spirit of Ecstasy figurine.

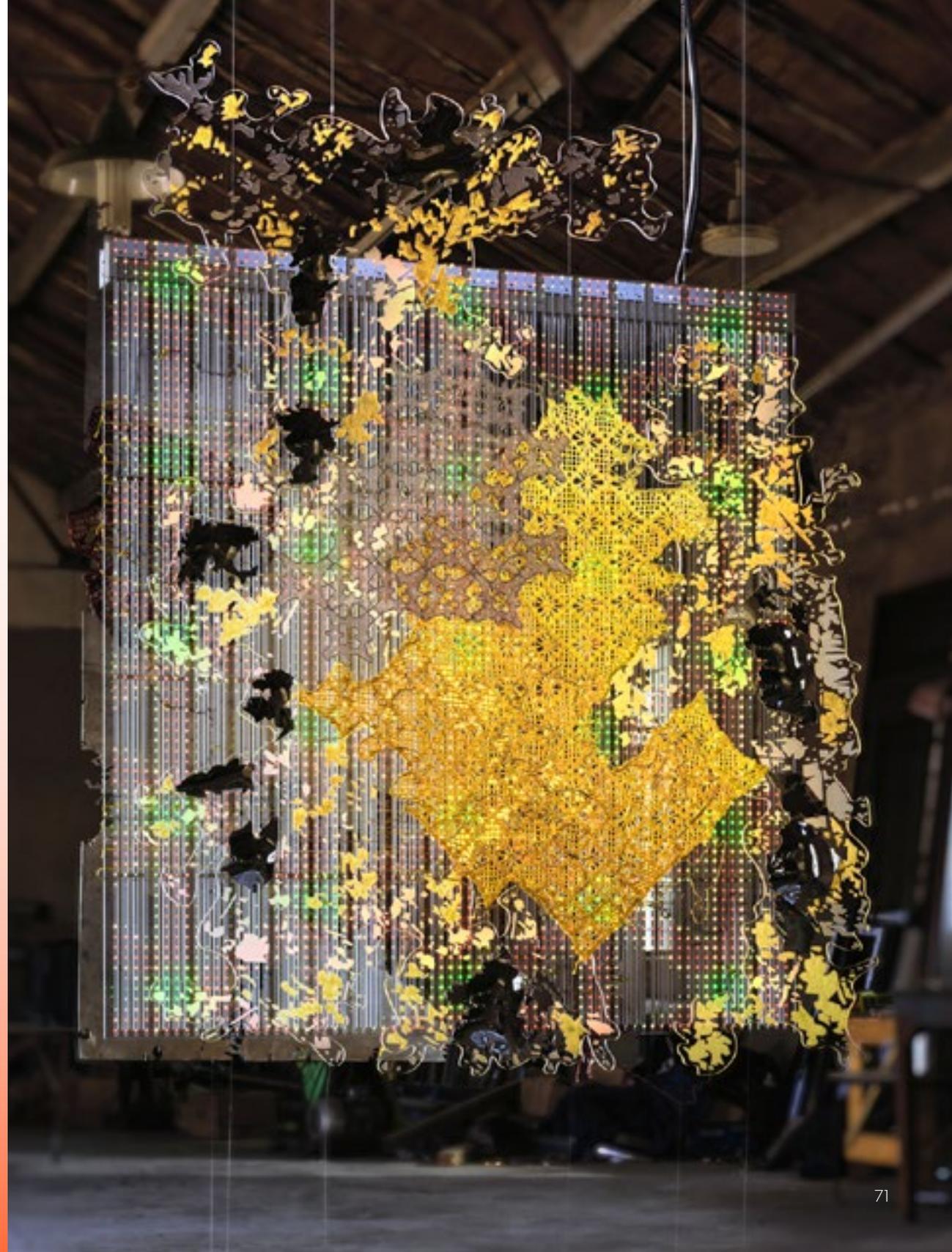
The piece has been designed to be suspended at eye-level so that viewers can fully appreciate its intricate craftsmanship of not just the wings but also the body of the structure. Displayed in a spotlight, the gold elements of the piece shine, offering an iridescent symbol of rebirth and regeneration.



BI RONGRONG, STITCHED URBAN SKIN

Titled “Urban Skin”, Bi Rongrong’s work consists of three layers of two-dimensional sheets made from different materials: specially treated metal, an animated LED light sheet, and a Perspex sheet embedded with crochet. Old and new are woven together as the artist revives a traditional Chinese crochet technique practised by a small female collective working just outside of Shanghai. These women have used the same materials for the past 40 years, and by incorporating their knowledge into her work, Bi Rongrong helps keep their craft alive. In her work, the artist has used both their crochet pieces and embroidery created in her own studio, bringing her own spin to this ancient practice.

As the title of her work suggests, the artist also draws inspiration from the multi-layered landscape of cities. The sheets are hung together with a space between them, creating a three-dimensional effect which invites viewers to peer into the artwork. The animated lights in the LED sheet have been designed to mirror historical and contemporary architectural shapes which the artist has “collected” over the years, and are accompanied by a sound piece. The overall effect is a dynamic sculpture which combines craftsmanship and innovation.





THE PROCESS

Three emerging artists from a range of disciplines were invited from different parts of the world to experiment with a material key to Rolls-Royce craftsmanship. With the Spirit of Ecstasy serving as a point of inspiration and orientation, the participants will be encouraged to push the limits of the selected material and create objects that surprise, delight and inspire.

The first step of the inaugural Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge was to identify and invite participants who are considered virtuosos of manipulating textile. To achieve this, an international committee of nominators was assembled. Each expert was asked to propose up to five emerging artists in the field of textile who demonstrate ingenuity, individuality and creativity in their work. The nominators included curator Glenn Adamson; Anne Marr, Programme Director of Jewellery, Textiles and Materials at Central Saint Martins; cultural advisor Nana Ocran; and Mizuki Takahashi, Executive Director of the Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textiles, in Hong Kong.

The list of nominees was then shared with an international jury, which includes Yoon Ahn, Creative Director of Ambush and Jewellery Director at Dior Men; Tim Marlow, Director and Chief Executive of the Design Museum in London; Sumayya Vally, Principal of South African architectural practice Counterspace; and Anders Warming, Director of Design of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. Together, they selected three winners to participate in the first Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge.

Each participant has been invited to visit the Home of Rolls-Royce, in Goodwood, England, to meet and interact with master craftspeople, before finalising their creations. Once completed, editions resulting from the process will go on tour worldwide, including to Rolls-Royce showrooms and exclusive social events, where they will be seen by art, design and car enthusiasts.

THE NOMINATORS



GLENN ADAMSON

Based in the United States, Adamson is a curator, writer and former museum director at the intersection of craft, design and contemporary art.

'I wanted to find people who could materialise the idea of joy and release which the adventurous days of early automobiles captured so well.'

ANNE MARR

The Programme Director of Jewellery, Textiles and Materials at Central Saint Martins, in London, Marr has extensive industry experience as a consultant internationally.

'Developing clever materials will make all the difference in how we share and repair our planet, so I have selected projects accordingly.'





NANA OCRAN

A London-based writer, editor and cultural advisor, Ocran in 2017 created People's Stories Project, a network of Africa-based and diaspora writers, artists and cultural producers of all genres.

'Young creatives are steeped in the issues that affect the world and contribute important solutions across equality.'

MIZUKI TAKAHASHI

The executive director of CHAT (Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile), in Hong Kong, Takahashi engages in transdisciplinary curation which questions conventional artistic taxonomies.

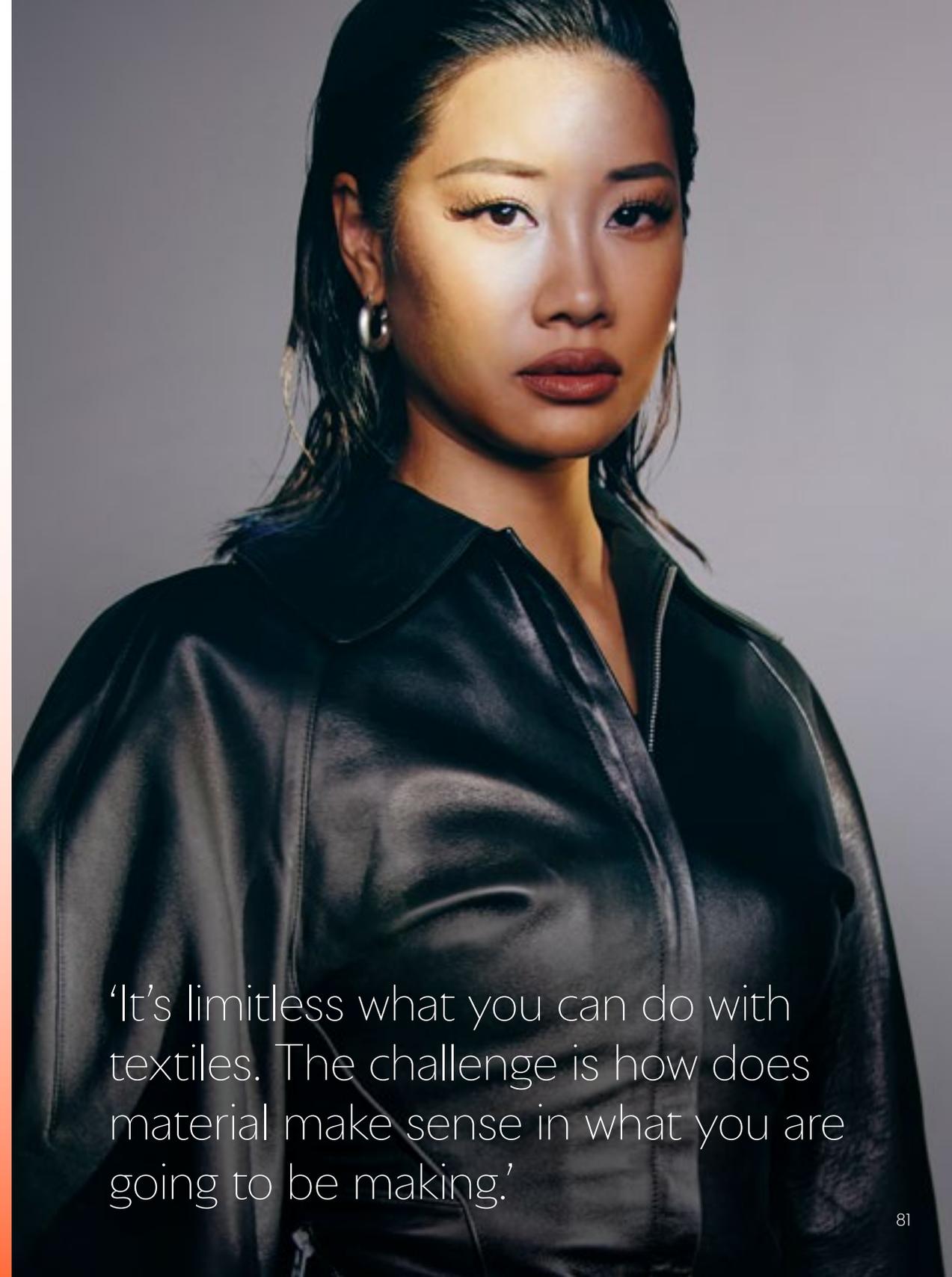
'I nominated those who have attempted to liberate textile materiality, through production and adaptation from conventional methodology.'



THE JURY

YOON AHN

Creative Director of her own fashion company, Ambush, and Jewellery Director at Dior Men, the South Korea-born, Tokyo-based Ahn has collaborated with partners from Bulgari to Nike.

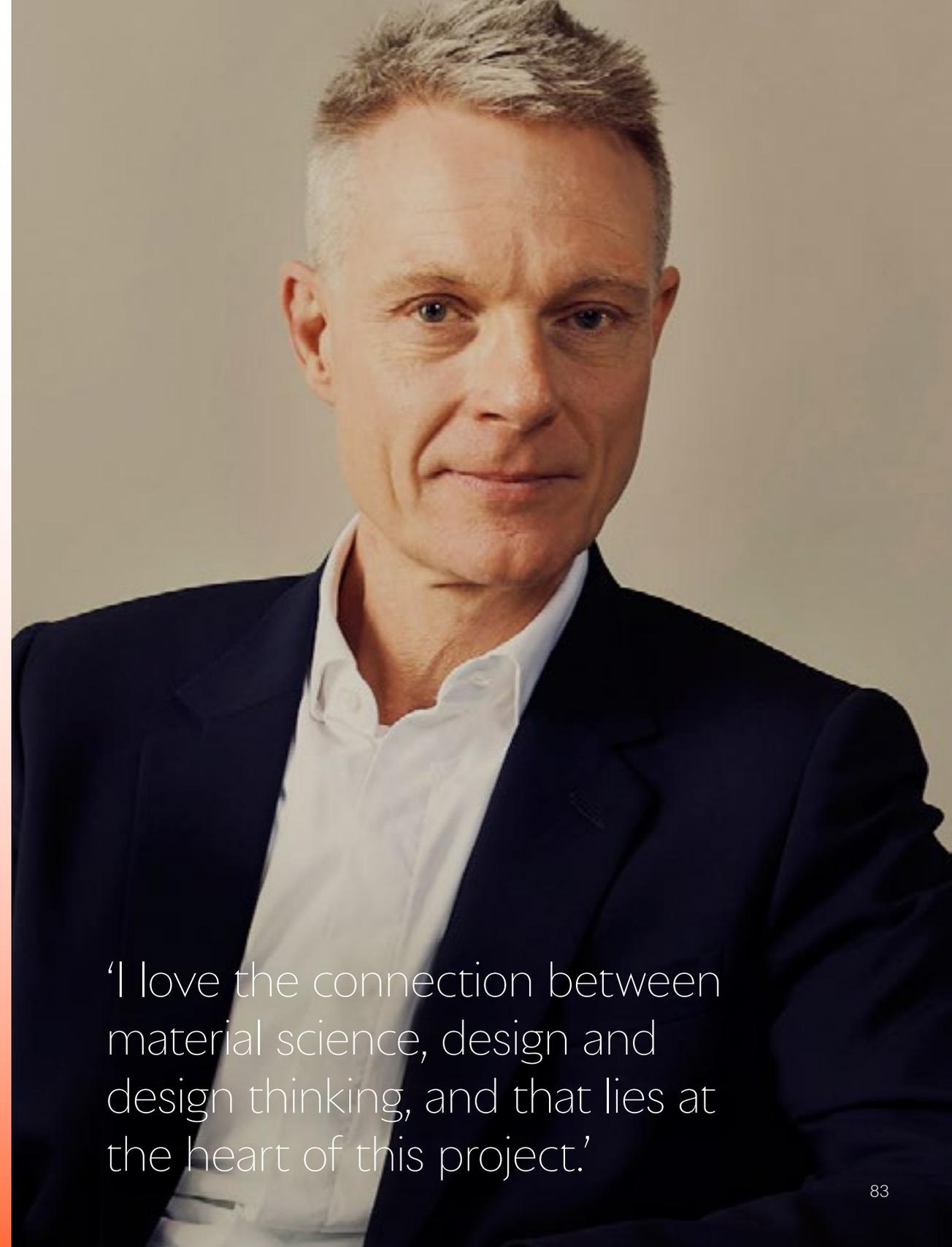


'It's limitless what you can do with textiles. The challenge is how does material make sense in what you are going to be making.'



TIM MARLOW

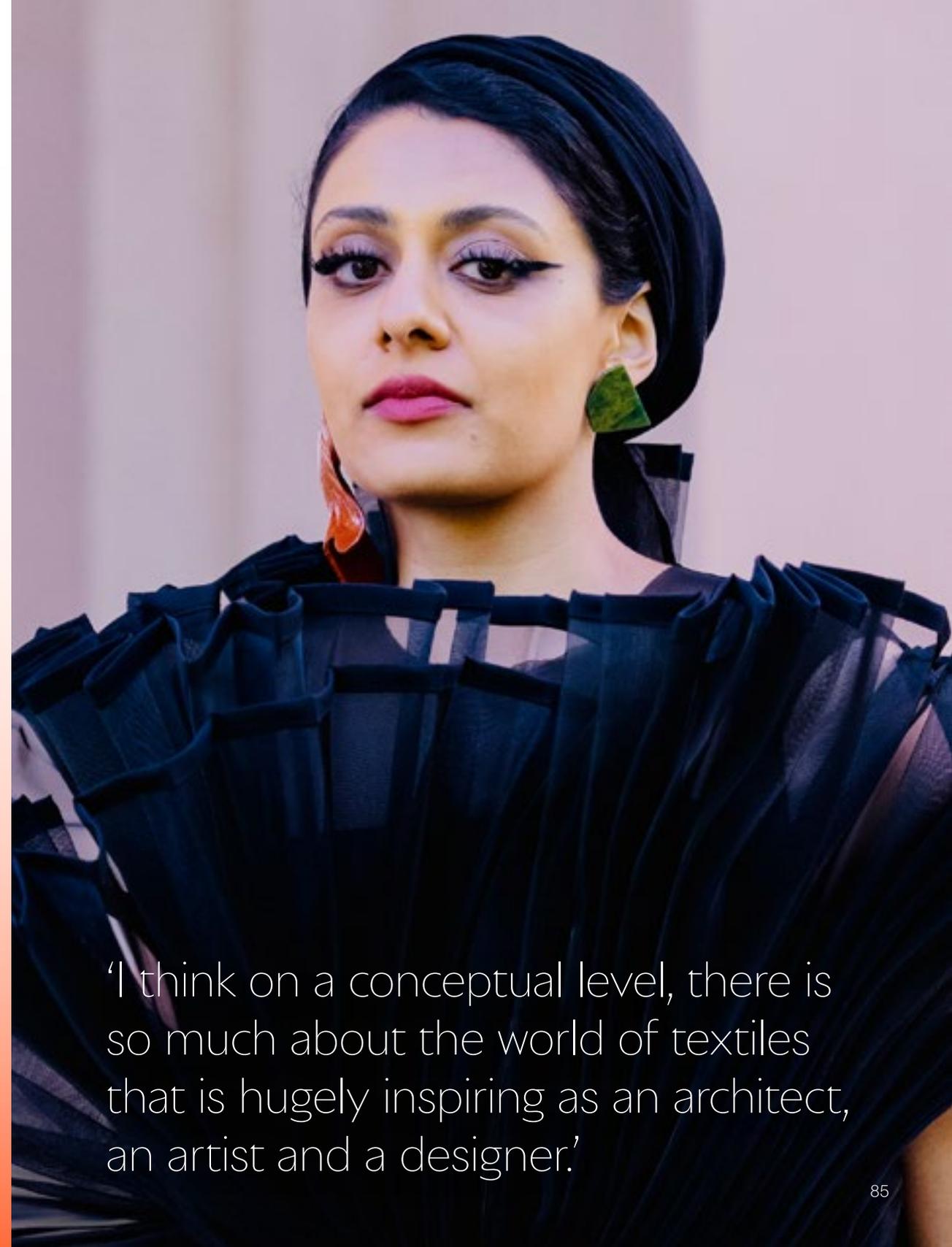
The former Artistic Director of the Royal Academy of Arts and Director of Exhibitions at White Cube, Marlow is Chief Executive and Director of the Design Museum in London.



'I love the connection between material science, design and design thinking, and that lies at the heart of this project.'

SUMAYYA VALLY

As Principal of the Johannesburg architectural practice Counterspace, Vally is searching in her design, research and pedagogy for expressions of hybrid identities and contested territories.

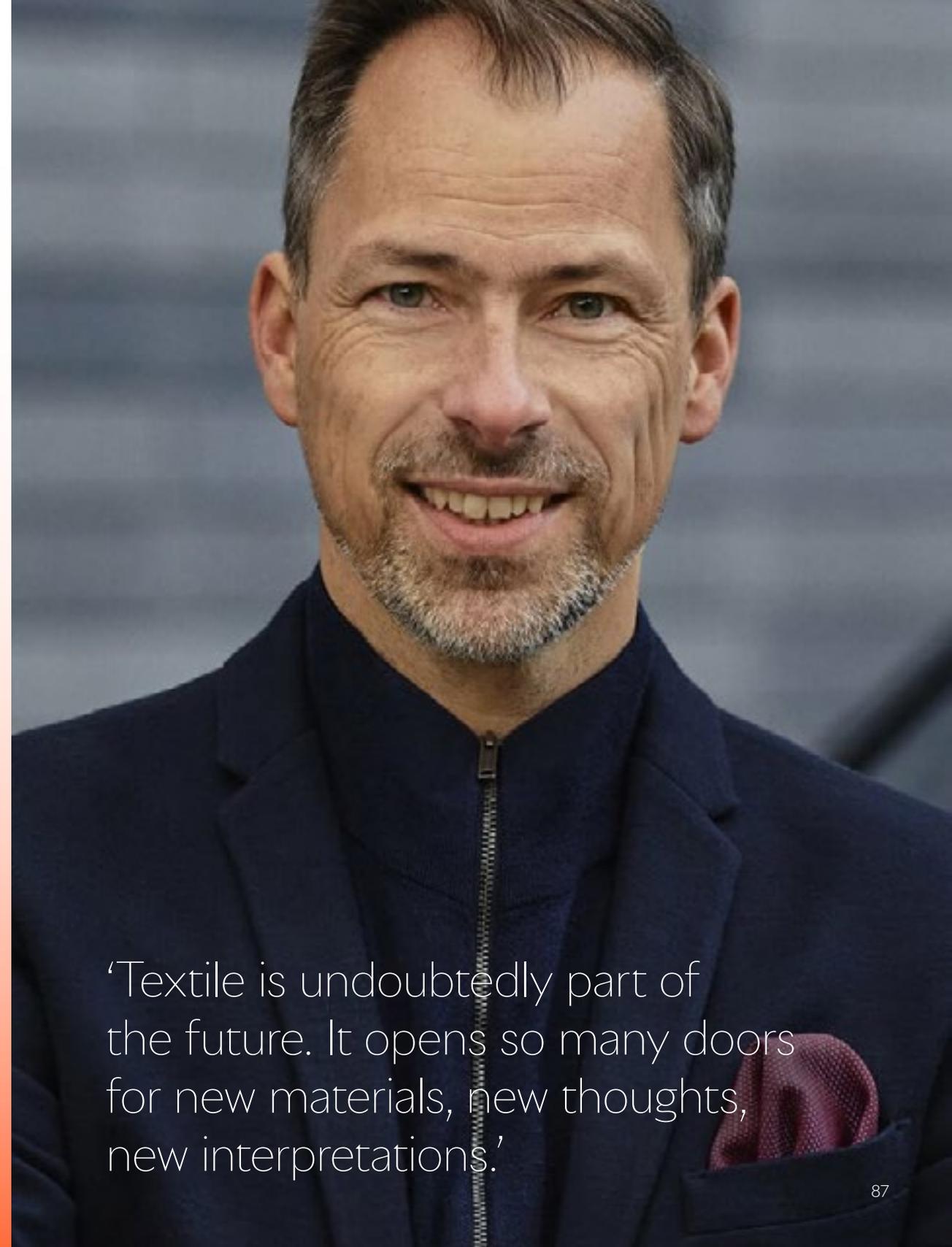


'I think on a conceptual level, there is so much about the world of textiles that is hugely inspiring as an architect, an artist and a designer.'



ANDERS WARMING

As Director of Design of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, Warming is passionate about new materials and innovation in automotive design.



‘Textile is undoubtedly part of the future. It opens so many doors for new materials, new thoughts, new interpretations.’

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Spirit of Ecstasy Challenge, an initiative by Muse, the Rolls-Royce Arts Programme, invites three visionary artists to create unique objects inspired by the Spirit of Ecstasy, the sculptural figurine that adorns every Rolls-Royce motor car.

With thanks to

NOMINATORS

Glenn Adamson
Anne Marr
Nana Ocran
Mizuki Takahashi

JURORS

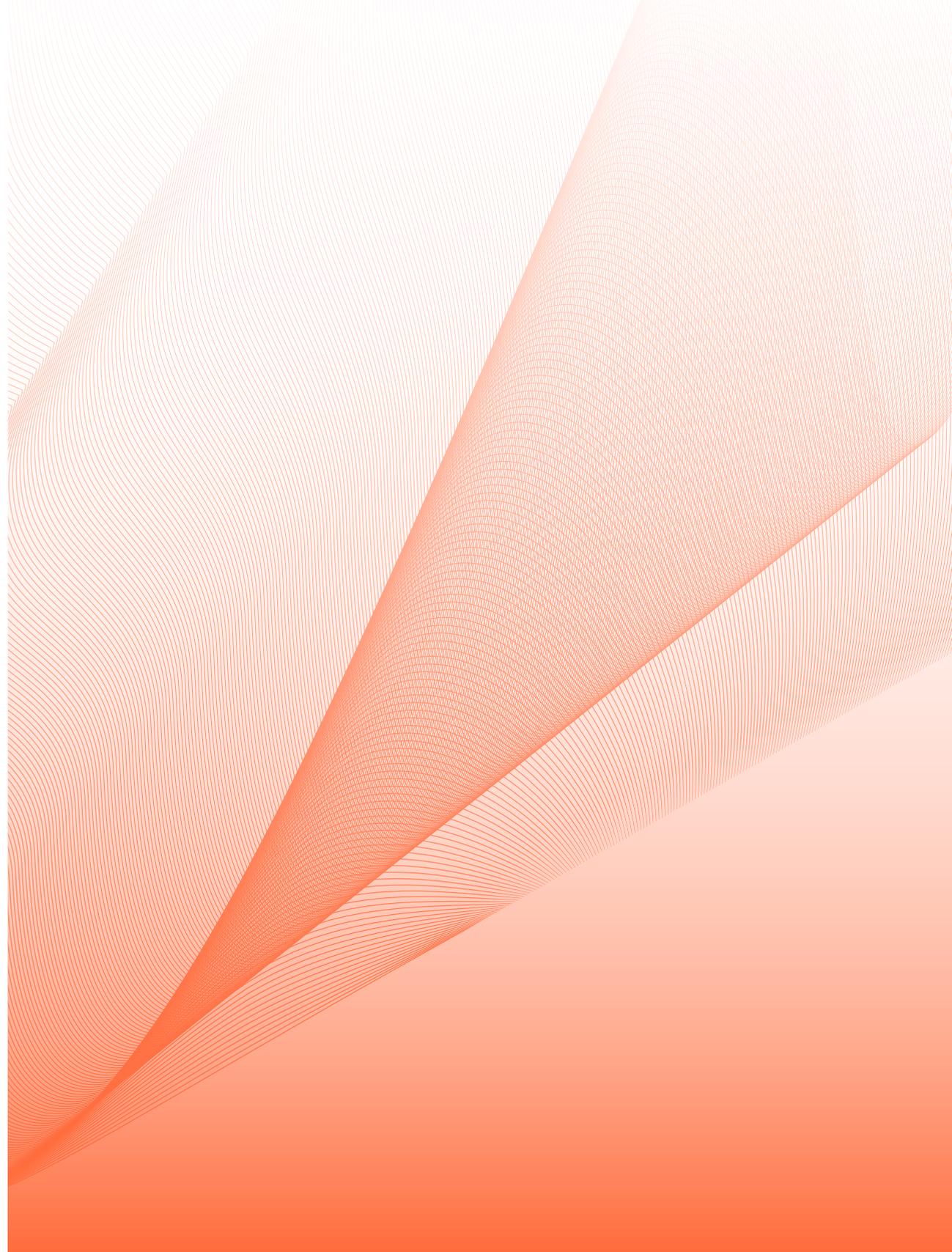
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M U S E

ROLLS-ROYCE ARTS PROGRAMME