



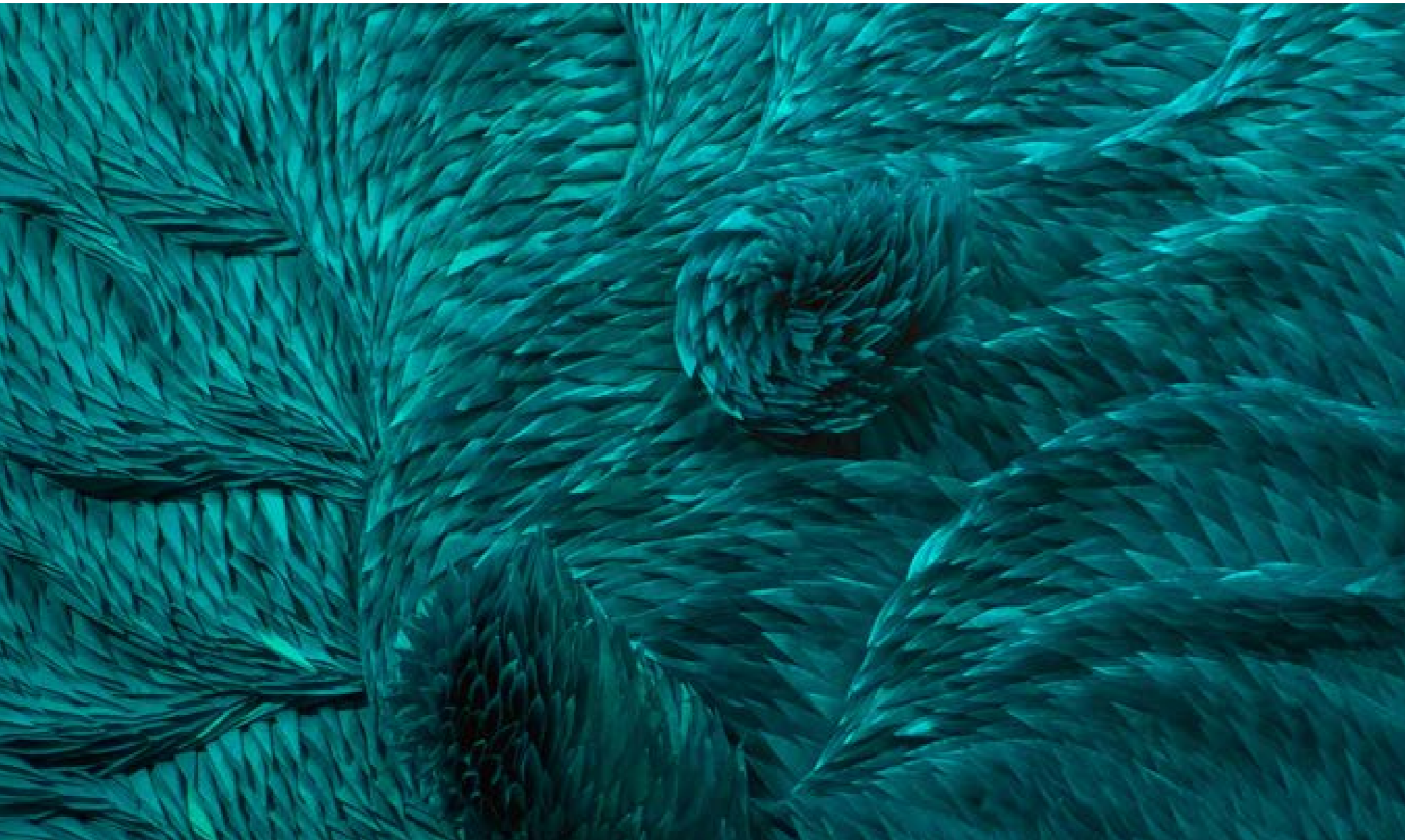
# ART AND SOUL

*We speak to Simonida Pavicevic, co-founder of House of Fine Art*

London is inarguably one of the most important hubs of the art world, with only New York City to rival it. Simonida Pavicevic is an art advisor and co-founder of leading contemporary gallery House of Fine Art in St James's: "The younger generation of art collectors are coming through and we are seeing funky, contemporary, decorative art as an area of interest. Over the last few years we have seen a surge of interest in Asian artists Zhuang Hong Yi and Ilhwa Kim. These are not just fabulous creations to behold, but have also proven excellent investments."

Social media is vitally important in art today, says Simonida, Instagram in particular: "Finding art through Instagram is massively significant to advisors and clients alike, in a way unimaginable even three years ago. Art fairs in London have a major part to play too of course, not just in the sense of sales, but people finding where their taste lies. This can also convert people: "Without even necessarily knowing it at the time, non-art lovers can become art lovers, and that's a beautiful thing to behold."

House of Fine Art is different to other galleries in a crucial way; Simonida debuted the gallery with one eye on interior designers' needs, as this was her previous profession, and will forever remain a passion: "I trained in art, and went on to fitting out the interiors of private jets, which has given me an insight into how I can cater to both worlds, if you like. We are proud to have loyal interior design clients who we curate for, the likes of Lawson Robb, Katharine Pooley, Taylor Howes and Staffan Tollgard."



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Simonida is patent about where House of Fine Art's advantage lies: "Most art inhabits the home, and if you're trained to have an eye for what works, you're a step closer to realising clients' dreams. Our customers travel the world and see beauty all over it; my job is to homogenise the two, and I have a love for it that transcends the business side of what we do. I'd be as bold to say that it's our integrity in melding art and design within a designated space. It makes my heart sing when it works, and I'd like to think that's apparent, furthermore reflected, in clients' reactions to our work."

One artist that summarises this melting pot is Camille Hannah: "Her genius melds old masters' broad and bold shoulder strokes with a simplicity that is quintessentially modern and contemporary. We had a visitor to the gallery, whom I cannot name, but is a major player in interior design, and is picky beyond belief, in a way I admire. He fell head over heels for her work. Javier León Pérez is another young wonder that interior designers are bowled over by: "His work initially seems simple and modern, but it has aspects of geology, fossils, the gravitational layering of history. It talks to the old soul in us, despite appearing a simple concept at first."

Ilhwa Kim's intricacy is stunning to behold, I was fascinated by her work the second I clapped eyes on it. The concept of seeds in the universe, not to mention her use of hearts within that universe, has a romance that escapes the vast majority of contemporary artists. Her use of colour varies a lot, making her adaptable to different interior colour schemes. It's a humbling honour to work with such eminent talent, and I'm so proud to place their work in spaces that merit it."

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As an art advisor, Simonida is asked about the fiscal side almost as much as the aesthetic: "I always tell people to buy what they love. If you don't like it, you're just hanging money, and money can be lost as well as won. In general the shrewdest collectors have not been speculators, but rather art lovers, romantics if you like." And there are many that have benefitted from Simonida's trained eye, not least Zhuang Hong Yi, a Chinese artist living in Rotterdam: "Zhuang is fantastically popular, and has a delicate touch that floored me when I first came across his work. He's immensely talented and I know that his star will continue to rise."

The rise of Asian fine art internationally remains exponential, with no signs of slowing down.

As little as ten years ago, the mere mention of contemporary art from Asia drew blank stares from all but a handful of cognoscenti.

While corporate giants, economists and politicians were proclaiming the Pacific Century, few took notice of the cultural currency quietly being minted by a new generation of artists throughout the region.

What a difference a decade makes. Now, there's hardly a museum on the planet that hasn't showcased some facet of contemporary Asian art. Galleries scour the East, searching for the next big name. Collectors from all corners are in pursuit.

Asia is no longer a stalking ground for the world traveller sort, but a true complement to the global art community.

Simonida doesn't see the tastes of her clientele changing, rather evolving: "The demographic of my clientele hasn't changed dramatically, although they are getting younger, and their tastes are getting broader, whereas the previous generation were more traditional. This is a good thing for the contemporary art world, as diversification leads to conversation, and debate, and taking on opinions that you hadn't considered previously. It's about people, not just the art itself."

House of Fine Art are opening a gallery for the summer in Nammos Village, on the Greek island Mykonos. They will indeed be showing Yi and Kim, along with the likes of Bran Symondson, P  p   Gregoire, BAIN and Javier Martin: "While Asian artists are of interest to me, we show living artists in their prime, no matter where they may hail from. I like what I like, and fortunately my tastes are shared by others. I've been going to Mykonos for five years, I absolutely adore it. Nammos have this fabulous new cost-no-object development and it's the right time and place to open."

Plants and trees have been brought from as far as Africa for the botanical gardens the gallery will be set within, next to a waterfall.



The infamous, geometrically surfaced, animal figurative works of Richard Orlinski will be dotted around the landscape, including a spectacular 2m tall Kong: "I've been dying to show Richard's pieces in the great outdoors, as he likes to do, most notably by the bear in Corchevel. We're going to turn Nammos Village into an art lover's paradise."

