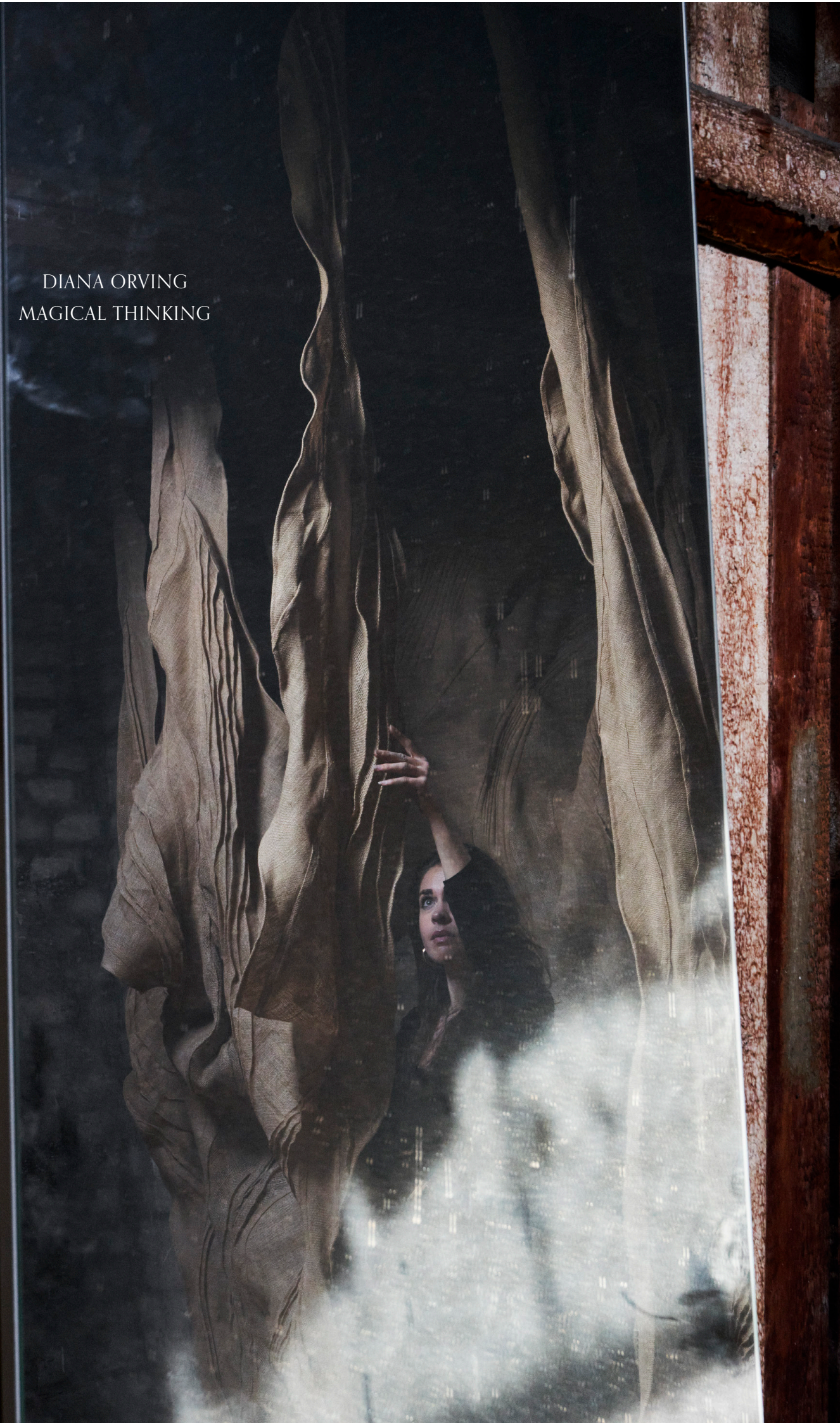


DIANA ORVING  
MAGICAL THINKING





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Part of the work *Fragments of a tree*





## A DIALOGUE BETWEEN ARTIST DIANA ORVING

*Your exhibition is called Magical Thinking. What is your own relationship to magical thinking?*

That's how my thinking system works, for better or for worse. It is a little dysfunctional to think that you can influence events through actions. Children engage in that, it's something you are supposed to put aside as an adult to become a more enlightened being. But the magical thinking lies as a filter for my entire reality. I have always engaged in the act of encapsulating moments. In my head, I have a large index of frozen moments that, already when they happened, I decided to save. I pondered a lot about existential things even as a small child. There has always been a fear of impermanence in me. Encapsulating moments is, I suppose, a way of nailing down time. Like pinning a butterfly to a piece of cardboard to save that brief moment of life. In this exhibition, the theme is visible in my silk cocoons, into which I have sewn notes with secret wishes. That "cocoon-concept" is something I've been doing for a long time, in different forms: Vows and spells written on rolls of paper, sealed with my hair. The cocoons offer a projection surface – what is my sealed desire?

*What does your process look like in concrete terms? How do you start the work?*

My process is organic and intuitive. The piece is shaped in my hands. I often think that the sculptures should grow into their own organisms, with their own will and temperament. Something that I need to submit to. I have an initial thought where I give the piece a starting point. It can be the material, the beginning of a shape or a color. It becomes like a first chord in a piece that I then get to follow and see what intention it has, in order to then help the creation come into being what it wants to be. My feeling is that I almost become an instrument for the work. A doubt perhaps? I don't have a rule for how the work should proceed between point A and point B. I don't know beforehand how it is going to take shape. I don't draw anything, I shape everything with my hands while working. The seams that flow through the pieces are elastic, never straight. More like blood veins or the lines of a tree, living lines. The form that I have in my head and the form that arises and that I cannot always predict, also work in interaction. Textile is exciting if I compare it to bronze or plaster, they represent a finished form. But my textile sculptures are transformative. They can become something new depending on how you hang them.

AND AUTHOR SARA PABORN

One can find different movements in them. They have a large amount of inherent capabilities.

*What materials are you working with in this exhibition?*

Partly silk, which I have worked with for a long time. I color it myself, mixing pigments to achieve the exact shades I'm after. Some of the works are sculptural paintings. I paint with oil paint on the silk. I think of painting as a kind of lighting where thin layers of white make the form emerge from the blackness. I also work in burlap, because there is an earthy materiality in it. How we are anchored in the earth and time. I have been inspired by the olive tree on Plaça Carrer, it is six hundred years old. It is fascinating to get lost in its labyrinths. What caused the twist on the trunk to grow to these proportions? I have tried to find a way to translate the tree into my language and created my own tree inside the gallery in burlap. The work is in three parts and is entitled *Fragments of a tree*. That also allowed me to work with the shadows on the walls. What exists but cannot be touched. Then I found this black plastic material that made me think of fishing nets, sun protection for plants, packaging.

*There are certain shapes that recur in your art. Like the spiral shape, the trilobite, the uterus, the tomb ... what do you think about it?*

In many ways, my works are about origins, about motherhood. The cocoons I made may bring to mind a womb. The original, archaic. My own placenta from when I gave birth to my children really grabbed me, it really does look like an absolutely amazing tree! Imagine that the body can produce an extra organ. One can understand why the placenta is called *the tree of life*. The nerve fibers look just like the roots down into the soil. It is like a reminder that everything belongs together, everything is plant power. But the motherhood I refer to is not only the private but the universal. We humans as a creation of the whole. To be one us in one body. The interlinking of generations, the umbilical cord ... We pilot life on. There is a loss of control in it that is both terrifying and comforting. The cupped shape of a trilobite, is something that feels both ancient and futuristic. It signals both vulnerability and protection. How I feel about it is connected to how I feel about my children, there are all possibilities there, something that is strong and fragile and private. The shield which is an armor that covers its inside, just like the pupa. And the spiral form also reappears in my works. It could be a shell. The winding road. The narrow passages. The inexorability of everything going on, with or without us.

*Your mother was a textile artist, how has that influenced your artistry?*

I am very influenced by my mother. To grow up between looms, with sewing machines and fabrics close at hand all the time. I can still remember every scrap of fabric that was kept in my mothers baskets; the structures, the colors, the materials, the feeling, the smells. The sensations they gave me are imprinted in me. She had three children, we all climbed the warp of the loom. To me it was playful, to create alongside of her, and it is an approach that I have been able to maintain, even though I have refined my technique over the years. I have always connected handcraft with care. The fact that you choose to spend so much time on something. The time you weave in, sew into every little stitch. The act of love in that. What I do is really let childhood spread out before me, with my own language. My thoughts find outlet when my hands are busy. I think with my hands.

*I think of something I read, like "If you don't know where you are going, close your eyes and listen very carefully. Follow the invisible thread laid out before your feet".*

Yes, to create is to seek the unknown, and I understand the unknown a little more by giving it a form or an expression. I intuitively search for my sources with my hands and listen. When I spend time doing this, it also becomes a deepening, a meditation in approaching, understanding and marveling at, for example, the lines of a being or a tree.



Baum red. I, II, III



Moonberg







*Baign, red*



Circuit



Promise



*Magical thinking*



*Capsule*



Unfold



Remembrance



Schlunde



*Finale*



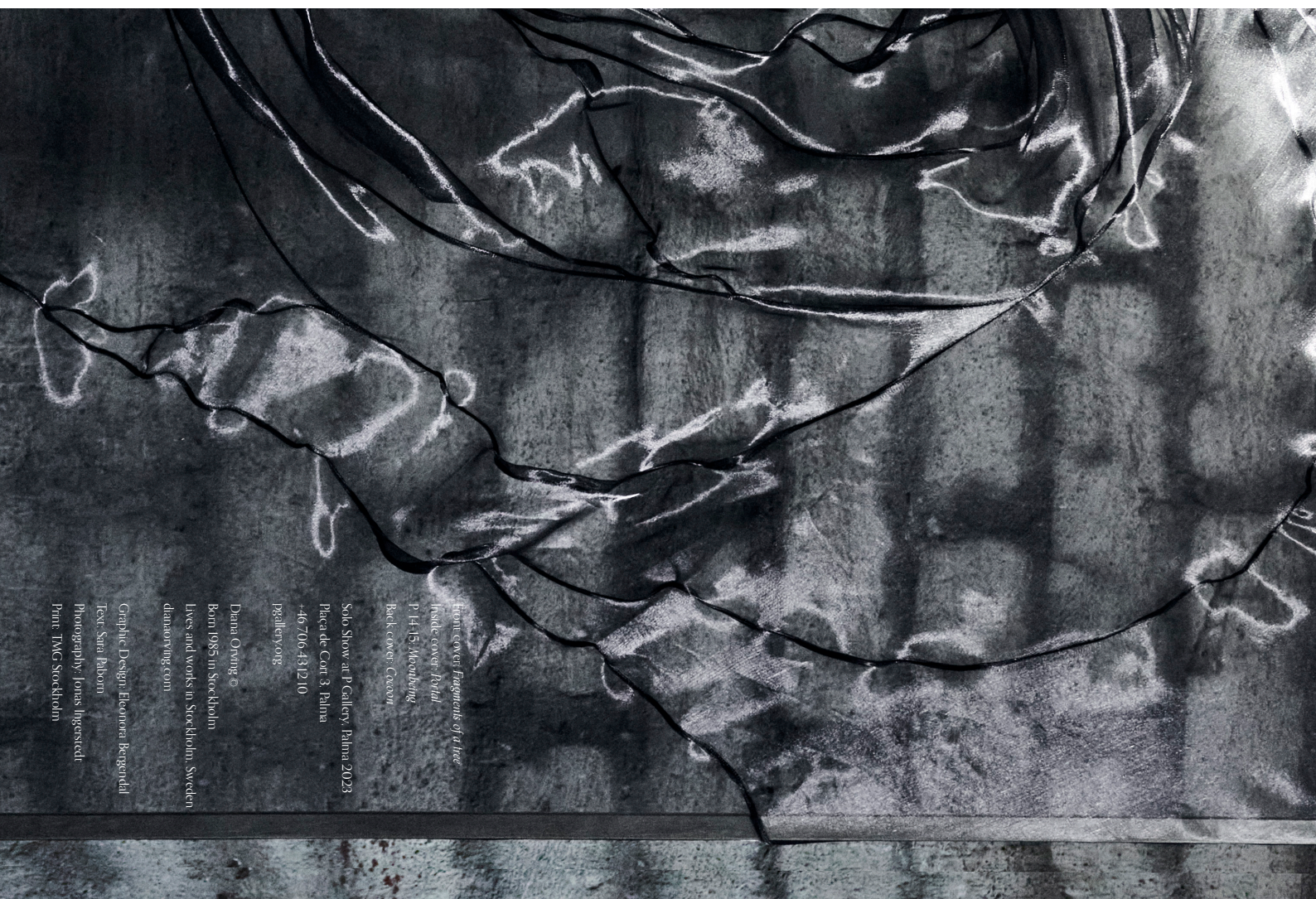
*Cocoon, stretched*

## BIOGRAPHY DIANA ORVING

Diana Orving is a Swedish artist born in 1985. She works predominantly with textile sculptures and paintings, combining sculptural drapes and reliefs with oils. Her style is associatively and innimically fluid, investigating themes such as motherhood, origin, protection and dissolution of the self. With a background in fashion design, she has been acknowledged for her costume work with the Royal Opera, and has exhibited in collaboration with choreographer Alexander Ekman at Stockholm's Moderna Museum.

In 2017 she was awarded Designer of the Year by Elle Magazine. In 2023 her artistic work was awarded a two-year artist grant by the Swedish Arts Grants Committee.

Diana Orving lives and works in Stockholm. She has exhibited at, amongst others, the Tempesta Gallery in Milan, the Institut Suedois in Paris and Varbergs Konsthall, Gallery Arnstedt, Sven Harrys Konsthall and the Gothenburg Art Museum, all in Sweden.



Front cover: *Fragments of a face*

Inside cover: *Palma*

P. 14-15: *Aboubouling*

Back cover: *Cocoon*

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Placa de Cort 3, Palma

+46 706 43 12 10

psgallery.org

Diana Orving ©

Born 1985 in Stockholm

Lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden

dianaorving.com

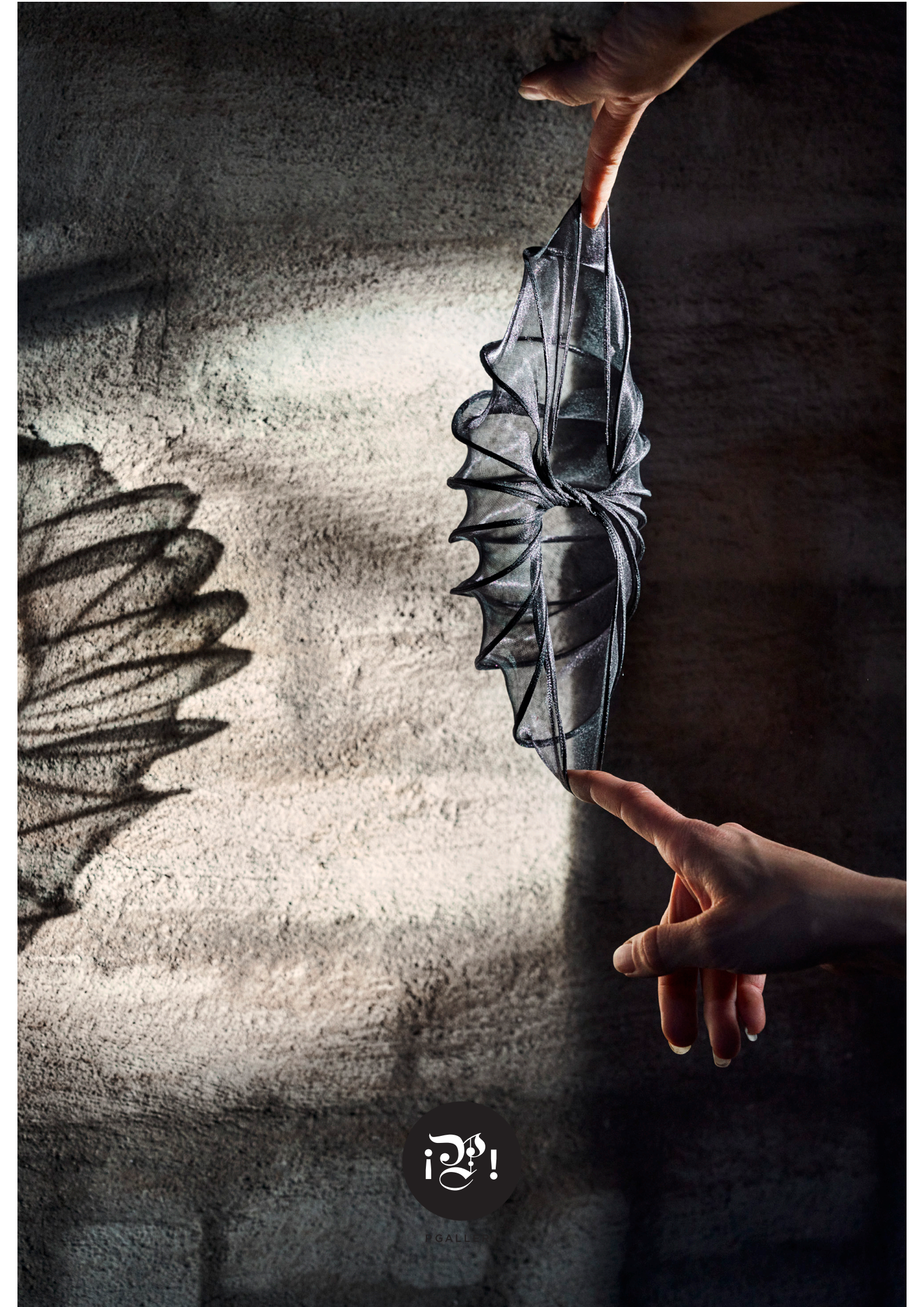
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