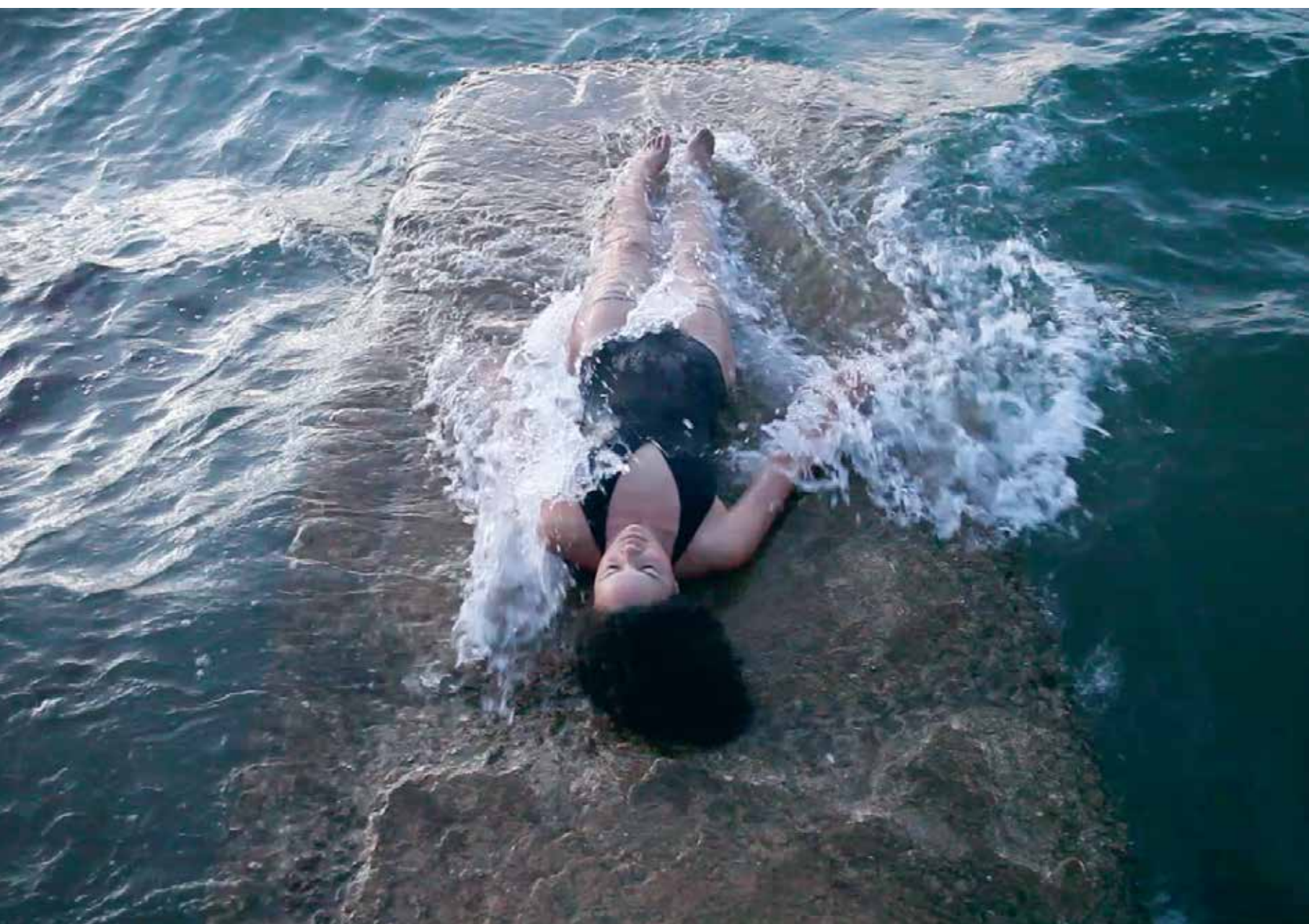




HIGH

TIDE

KAREN VAN GODTSENHOVEN
MICHEL DEWILDE

PREFACE

From 30 October 2026, BRUSK is hosting *High Tide: Of Humanity and the Sea, Through Fashion and Art*, a fascinating exhibition about the power, beauty and many layers of water and the sea.

For centuries, water has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artists and designers. Rivers, seas and oceans feed the imagination, connect different worlds and shape civilisations. They are creative forces, sources of life and change. It is this diversity that inspires *High Tide*, which explores the many relations between humankind, water and the sea, with surprising and atypical connections between fashion, art and heritage.

This theme is especially meaningful for Bruges, as the city's history is inextricably linked with water. Thanks to its waterways and access to the North Sea, it became one of Europe's most important trade hubs and cultural hotspots. Goods, ideas, stories and people found their way to the city by water. International trade routes brought us costly fabrics, broadcloth and luxury goods, while artists, craftsmen and merchants encountered new influences and exchanged ideas. Water was the city's lifeline, transforming Bruges into a crossroads of cultures, creativity and entrepreneurship. Today, the relationship between our city and the sea remains of great significance. Through the port of Zeebrugge, one of Europe's most important gateways, we maintain our historical relationship with the North Sea and international networks of trade, exchange and connection. Water, in all its manifestations, thus continues to be a defining factor in the development and identity of Bruges.

Guest curator Karen Van Godtsenhoven draws on this rich, historical context to combine fashion, contemporary art and objects from the collections of Musea Brugge in unexpected and enthralling dialogues.

This is the first time ever that fashion and the visual arts have collided on this scale in Bruges. *High Tide* explores how water continues to inspire and challenge artists and designers. Fashion, the visual arts, video and sound bring the ocean to life, inviting visitors to reflect on their own relationship with water. The exhibition explores how deeply embedded water is in our emotions, memories, dreams and vision of the future.

International fashion and art icons like Chanel, Alexander McQueen, Versace, Iris van Herpen, Bill Viola, Wangechi Mutu, Dries Van Noten, Otobong Nkanga, Rinus Van de Velde and Dominique White give shape to these ocean imaginaries in riveting ways. Together with a new generation of artists and designers, they have created an exhibition with captivating installations, surprising perspectives and sensorial experiences.

High Tide is a journey for the young and the young at heart, an invitation to experience the poetry, power and urgency of water and the sea. This exhibition will move and astonish visitors, encouraging reflection. With *High Tide*, Bruges aims to welcome a broad, diverse audience. BRUSK's exhibitions and dynamic programme offer an open meeting place for the locals and visitors alike, for experts and the curious, for people of all ages and for an international audience that can discover a new dimension of our city here.

We are especially grateful to all the fashion houses, artists and guest curator Karen Van Godtsenhoven for their exceptional collaboration.

LOW TIDE

- 16 THE BEACH
- 32 RINUS VAN DE VELDE
in conversation with
MICHEL DEWILDE
- 52 THE MYTHOLOGY
OF THE OCEAN
- 58 DIMITRA PETSA
in conversation with
KAREN VAN GODTSENHOVEN
& MADELON DENDOOVEN
- 66 HARMONIA ROSALES
in conversation with
MICHEL DEWILDE
& MADELON DENDOOVEN
- 70 WATER WOMEN
AND WATER CREATURES

THE DEEPEST WATER

- 88 EAU PROFONDE
- 96 SHAYLI HARRISON
in conversation with
KAREN VAN GODTSENHOVEN

HIGH TIDE

- 112 NORTH SEA
- 128 EXCERPT FROM
KAROLINE HJORTH
& RIITTA IKONEN'S DIARY
- 132 SHIPWRECK
- 140 ELENA VELEZ
in conversation with
KAREN VAN GODTSENHOVEN
- 150 DOMINIQUE WHITE
in conversation with
MICHEL DEWILDE
& MADELON DENDOOVEN
- 158 BLACK TIDE
- 168 RUSHEMY BOTTER
& LISI HERREBRUGH
in conversation with
KAREN VAN GODTSENHOVEN
& MADELON DENDOOVEN
- 180 MIGRATION:
THE TRANSFORMATION
OF THE TIDES
- 188 ABDUL RAHMAN KATANANI
in conversation with
MICHEL DEWILDE
& MADELON DENDOOVEN
- 194 HIGH TIDE
- 212 MARINE SERRE
in conversation with
KAREN VAN GODTSENHOVEN

‘There is no drop of water in the ocean, not even in the deepest parts of the abyss, that does not know and respond to the mysterious forces that create the tide. No other force that affects the sea is so strong.’

Rachel Carson in *The Sea Around Us*, 1951

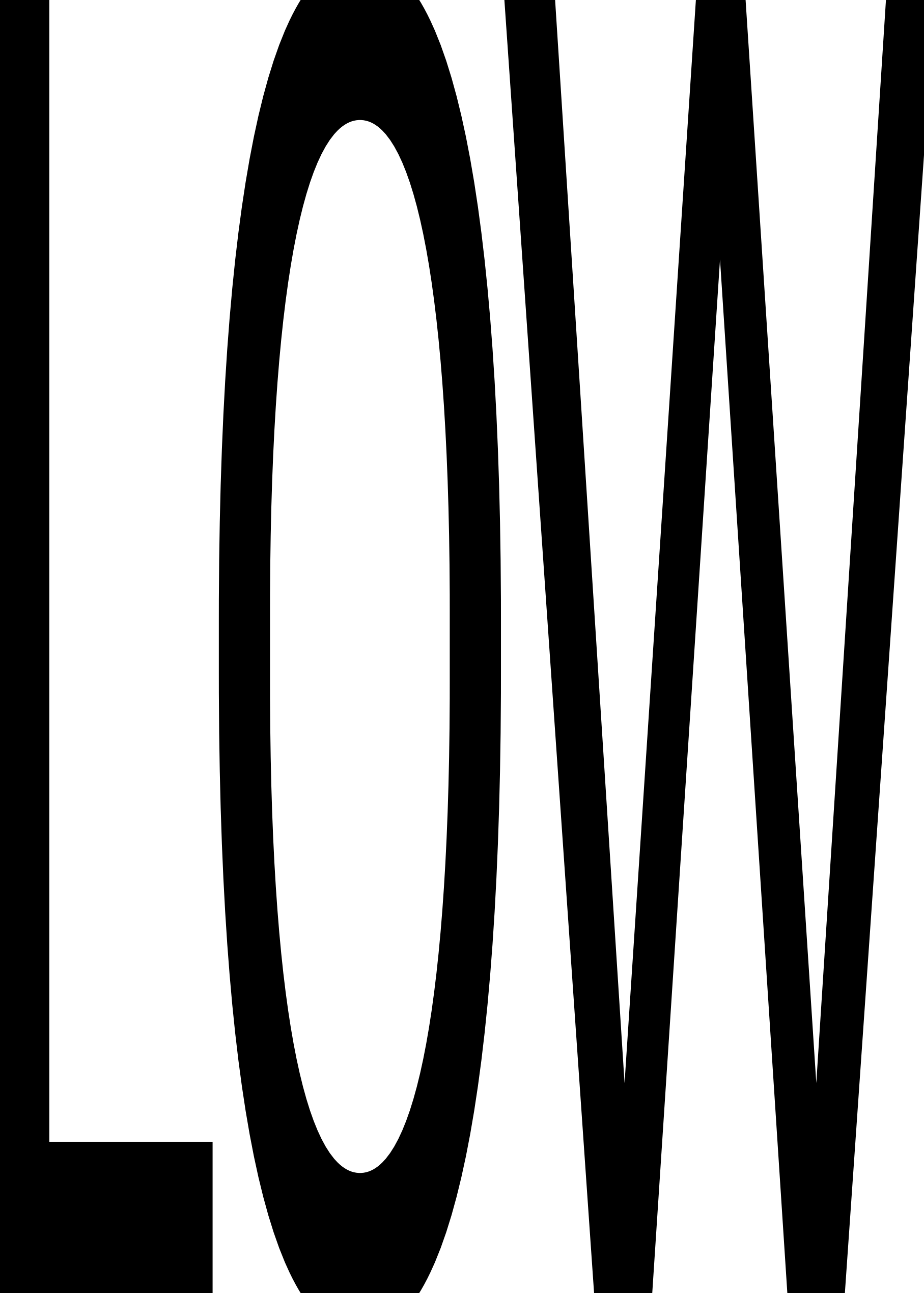
“Ocean” is a far more appropriate name for our world than “Earth”. Today, just over 70 per cent of our planet’s surface is covered in salt water connected into a single planetary ocean.’

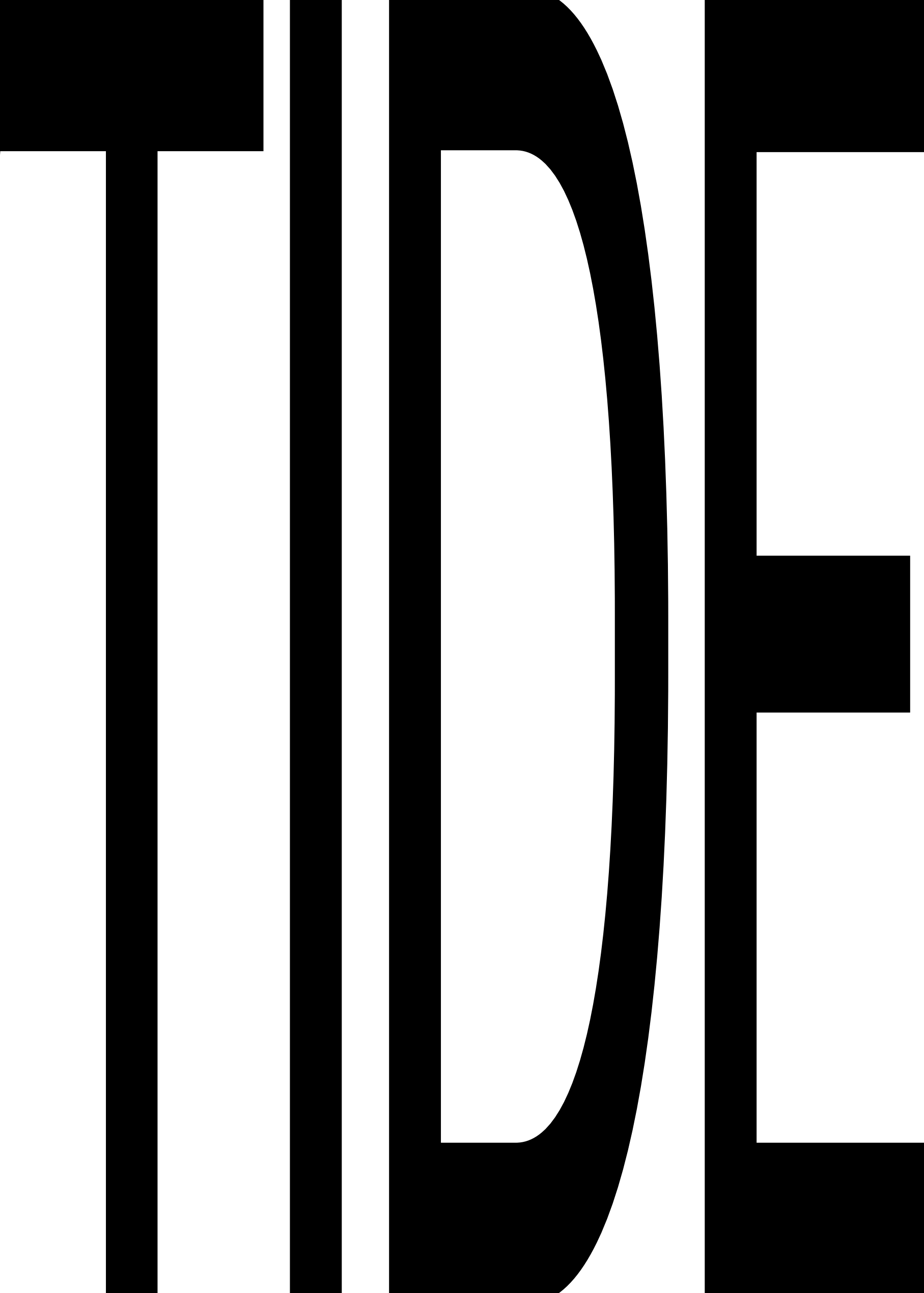
Sir David Attenborough and Colin Butfield in *Ocean*, 2025



Henri-Victor Wolvens, *Beach at Koksijde*, 1952. Musea Brugge, inv. 1982.GRO0017.I. Photo: Hugo Maertens. © Sabam 2026.









Versace, *Versacepolis*. Spring-Summer 2021. Model: Irina Shayk. Courtesy of Versace.





DI PETA, *The Moon Tastes of Wine*, Spring-Summer 2023. Photo: Louiza Vradi.



DI PETA, *Reflections of Venus*, Spring-Summer 2024. Photo: Etienne Tordoir / Catwalkpictures.

THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE OCEAN



DI PETSA, *My Body is a Labyrinth*, Spring-Summer 2025. Photo: Etienne Tordoir / Catwalkpictures.

Where did the ocean originate? In many maritime mythologies, the answer lies in creation myths: the ocean is a primal current, the beginning of everything and the womb of life. In Greek mythology, Okeanos is the source and the all-encompassing force, the cradle of the gods and of all living things. Many mythologies see the sea as an animate, divine force: a fluid matrix in which life unfolds.

In *High Tide*, contemporary tales of the sea are explored in which this ancient imagery resonates and evolves. In the Mythos section, Greek fashion designer Dimitra Petsa starts from the watery and female perspective on Western mythology. Her installation *Bodies of Water* features video close-ups of body shapes that ripple, vibrate and flow like water between clothes that cling to the body in her signature wet look. 'Low Tide' is also populated by a host of mythical creatures, but none is more spellbinding than the siren-like *Water Woman* (2017) of Kenyan artist Wangechi Mutu. This life-size bronze sculpture depicts a *nguva*, Swahili for 'mermaid', a hybrid figure, half-woman, half-sea creature, imbued with magical power, which has its roots in East African folk traditions. The *nguva* moves through Mutu's transformative universe, where boundaries dissolve like shifting tides. Her fabulous landscapes are home to a rich iconography of seductive, powerful female aquatic figures. In this fluid world order, Mutu rewrites dominant Western narratives and undermines patriarchal and colonial narratives. The *Water Woman* manifests herself as a rebellious entity, a body without fixed contours, open to endless transformations. She embodies the possibility of a new, matriarchal imagination: a world in which African heroines emerge, driven by the power of water as a source of creation.

The Birth of Oshun (2017), a mythological painting by the Afro-Cuban-American artist Harmonia Rosales, depicts the magical birth of Oshun, the West African Yoruba goddess of fresh water, love and fertility. Oshun emerges from an open seashell, unfurling like a wave, surrounded by other Yoruba deities. Rosales was inspired by Sandro Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (1483) for this reinterpretation of a canonical image: here, space is created for Black female power and alternative beauty ideals. In Rosales's work, water becomes a primal channel: a current in which mythology, identity and memory are sustained and converge. Instead of a backdrop, the sea has become a creative force: a spring from which new stories, bodies and meanings continue to well up.

‘Ocean origins are birth stories.’

Steve Mentz in *Ocean*, 2020



Harmonia Rosales, *The Birth of Oshun*, 2017. Courtesy of The CCH Pounder-Koné Collection. Photo: Harmonia Rosales Studio.









ELENA VELEZ (EV) IN CONVERSATION WITH KAREN VAN GODTSENHOVEN (KVG)

KVG: Why is the collection shown in *High Tide* called *Leech*?

EV: *Leech* is my anti-Disney fairy tale about the subversive intrigue of mythological sirens. *Leech* is the incarnation of the oozing and amniotic succubine shadow self, both amorphous and amoral. The season's collection drew on a spectrum of feminine archetypes from the original mythology: the demure and virginal Captain's Daughter, called to her cause through the purity of her intentions; the Landwalker or the Seductress, shrewder and more calloused by life's harsh truths; and finally the Leech, the slippery and disembodied final amalgam that discredits our lowly matrix of good and evil altogether, and brings back grayscale to morality. The issue *Leech* forces is one of feminine multiplicity and nuance, a portrait I find largely missing from modern depiction.

KVG: Your mother was a ship captain...

EV: I had access to a very non-traditional archetype of womanhood growing up. As a young girl in post-industrial Middle America (the 'Rust Belt') with an unusually early interest in fashion, I was driven to recreate a remote image of cosmopolitan glamour but with a very different toolkit of references and resources. My mother is a very multisensory person; she is loud and warm. Her clothing is worn and distressed – it sounds like keys and smells like engine exhaust. Everything she wears is sized for men and made for utility. In the winters, we broke ice together on the tugboats along the Kinnickinnic River, and in the summer, I was dragged to sailing courses on Lake Michigan (under mom's carefully binocularized eye, observing from the cliffs).

My first play spaces were engine rooms and repair garages, and my earliest creative collaborators were welders, machinists, blacksmiths and other blue-collar tradespeople. I found it to be an interesting exercise in creating work that provoked gender assumptions and the discourse around what we consider art versus craft. Steel is an iconic export of my hometown and not such a foreign element in fashion as we think (i.e. steel boning, corsetry architecture). With the ingenuity that is forced upon an artist who is trying to make art on a working-class budget, I discovered a newfound respect for 'site-specific' materiality – textiles that bridge the wearer with the source of inspiration for the season, such as ship sails, salvaged hardware, repurposed industrial scraps...

KVG: How does the materiality of the silhouettes reflect the nautical theme?

EV: The treatments for the looks chosen in the exhibition contain silicone, sand, fisherman nets and ship sails. The metals are from decommissioned vessels on Lake Michigan and are fabricated in Milwaukee by long-time collaborators at Gallas Metalworks. The silhouettes worn by the more coherent characters are familiar, like captain's coats and linen breeches, while the more conceptual personas are driven less by plot and more by a sensation of materiality under duress.

KVG: The set for the presentation of the collection reminded me of Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa* (1819). Does the motif of the shipwreck inspire you?

EV: Most of the mythology I draw from in my work contains some grand or apocalyptic tone. As a bicultural American and a deracinated internet-bred millennial, I feel a yearning for a different era of adventure and honour. The shipwreck motif is such a loaded and perfect symbol: the loss of promise, the danger and the irresistible lure of the unknown... In an age of misinformation and social divisiveness, this sort of imagery is almost divine in its continuity – true in every time, across every culture.

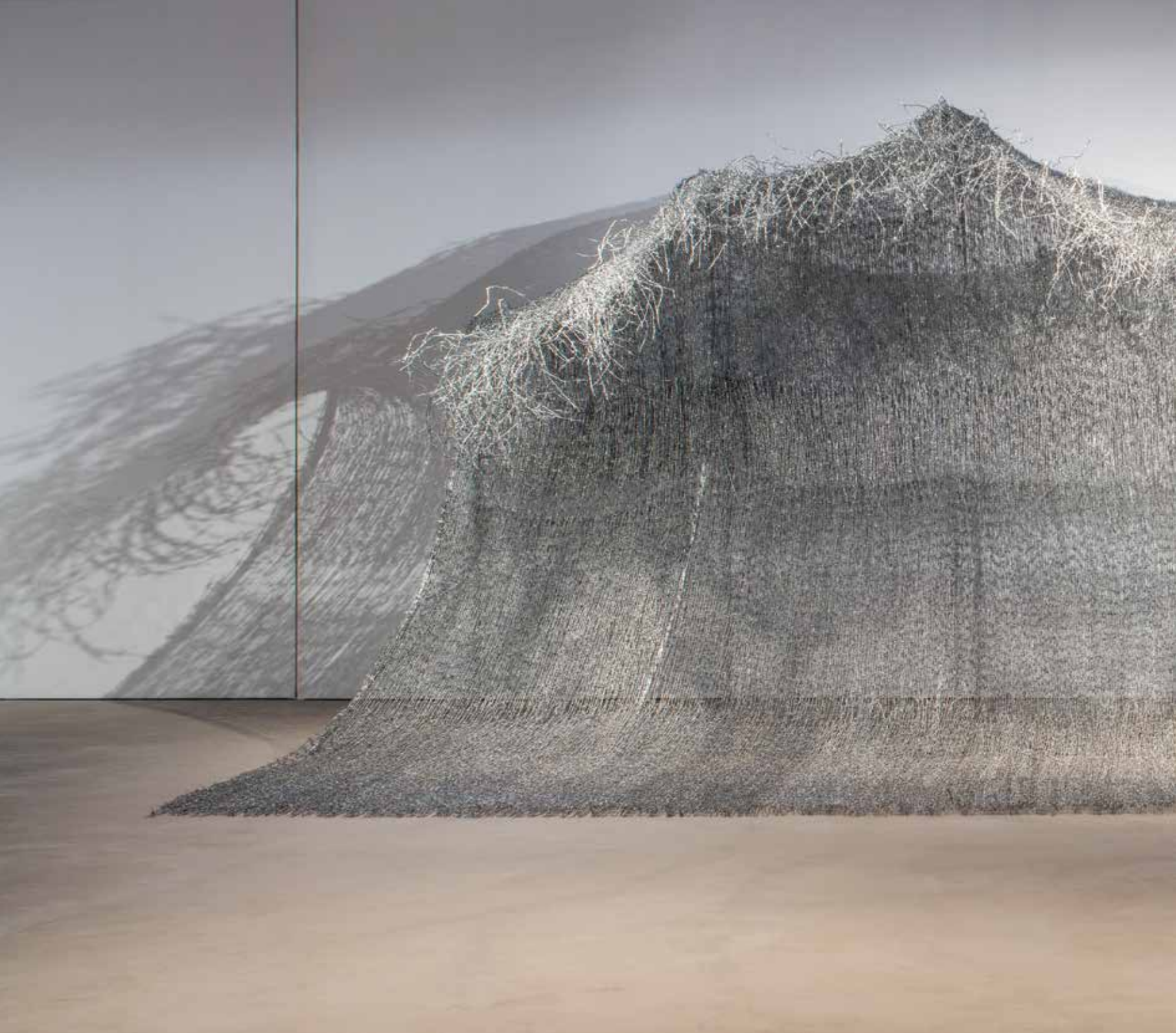
KVG: The presentation of the collection is like a performance, with real-life characters. What are some stories, legends or mythologies that inspire your work?

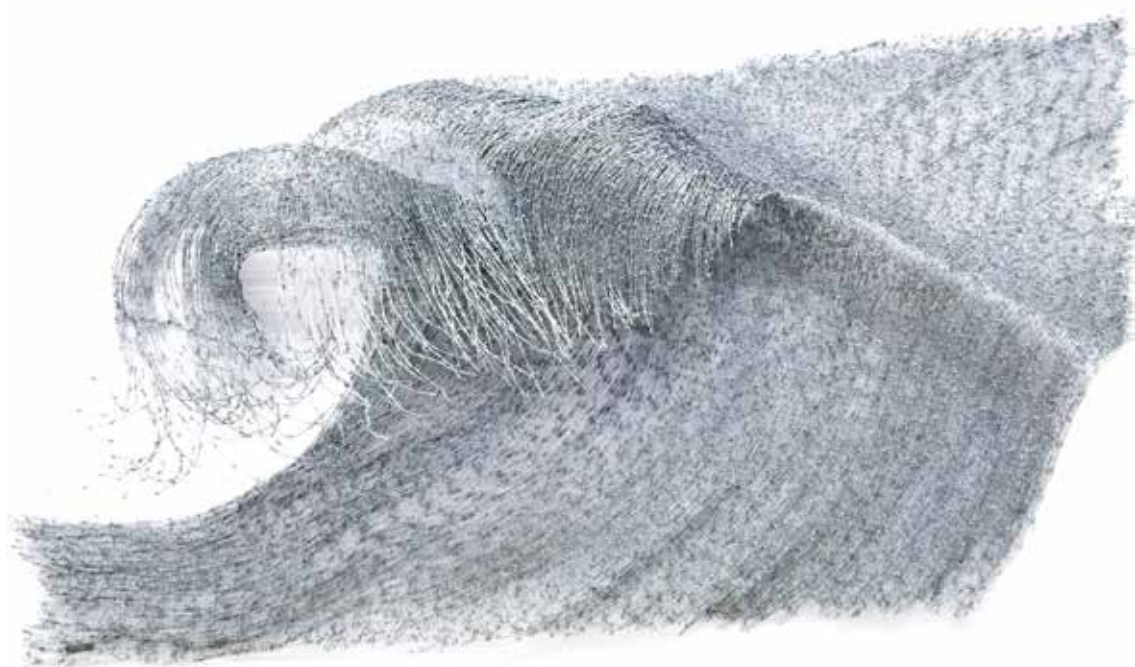
EV: I have a creative compulsion towards making work with as many direct references as possible: working with natural substances as surface treatments, using textiles from a conceptually relevant time or place, and casting characters who are living extensions of my story for a particular season. My unwillingness to sanitise these findings can pose a real challenge for a commercial fashion brand that insists on such a degree of artistic purity. It feels increasingly important to make room for women who have been relegated to the fringes of polite society and to collaborate with them to draw contemporary parallels to the themes I explore in my work. In a tale of shadowy feminine conquest, Anna Delvey's ankle monitor¹ becomes the shell that holds Ariel's voice worn around Ursula's neck.

¹ Anna Delvey, for Anna Sorokin, is a Russian-German scam artist who served two years in a New York jail.















BOTTER, *Vodun*, Spring-Summer 2024. Photo: Etienne Tordoir / Catwalkpictures.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sara Ahmed, ‘Affective Economies’, *Social Text*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2004, pp. 117–139.

Julia Armfield, *Our Wives Under The Sea*, Hampshire, Picador, 2022, p. 48.

David Attenborough and Colin Butfield, *Ocean*, London, John Murray, 2025, pp. 10–11.

Gaston Bachelard, *L’eau et les rêves*, Paris, Librairie José Corti, 1942, pp. 57–84 and 132–171.

Susan Ballard, *Art and Nature in the Anthropocene*, New York, Routledge, 2021, pp. 1–12 and 43–59.

Eva Barois de Caebel and Koyo Kouoh, ‘Streamlines – Oceans, Global Trade and Migration’, in Dirk Luckow and Koyo Kouoh (eds.), *Streamlines – Oceans, Global Trade and Migration*, Cologne, Snoeck, 2015, pp. 21–27.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Theory of Water, Nishnaabe Maps to the Times Ahead*, Chicago, Haymarket Books, 2025.

Laird Borrelli-Persson, ‘Iris van Herpen. Fall 2021 Couture’, *Vogue*, 5 July 2021, <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2021-couture/iris-van-herpen>.

Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*, London, New Beacon Books, 1984.

Kamau Brathwaite, *Barabajan Poems 1492–1992*, Kingston and New York, Savacou Publications, 1994.

Kamau Brathwaite, *ConVERSations with Nathaniel Mackey*, Staten Island, NY, We Press, 1999.

Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris, *The Hydrocene*, Oxford, Routledge, 2024, pp. 1–47.

Vivienne Bozalek, Tamara Shefer and Nike Romano, *Hydrofeminist Thinking with Oceans*, Oxford, Routledge, 2024, pp. xxiii–14.

Jacques Brel, ‘Le Plat Pays’, 1962.

Rachel Carson, *The Edge of the Sea*, Houghton, Mifflin & Co, 1955, pp. 141–147.

Rachel Carson, *The Sea Around Us*, Oxford University Press, 1951, pp. 169–179.

Clara Darrason, Jennifer Houdrouge, Marianne Lien, Alex Rawlings, Meghann Ripenhoff, Roy Scranton and Arthur Zhe, *Eyes as Big as Plates 2*, Stuttgart, Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2021, p. 115.

Joseph Delmelle, *Les écrivains belges et la mer*, Ostend, 4th International Sea Conference, 1951, p. 857.

Marc Donnadieu, Annie Madet-Vache and Agnès Mirambet-Paris, *Pierre et Gilles : Mondes marins*, Rouen, Editions des Falaises, 2025, pp. 11–19.

Epeli Hau’ofa, ‘Our Sea of Islands’, *The Contemporary Pacific*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1994, pp. 148–161, *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23701593>. Accessed on 12 March 2026.

Stefanie Hessler, ‘Tidalectic Curating’, *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, vol. 9, October 2020, pp. 248–270, https://doi.org/10.1386/jcs_00023_1. Accessed on 15 May 2026.

Victor Hugo, *Les Travailleurs de la mer*, Paris, Gallimard, 2002, original version: Brussels, Librairie internationale, 1866, p. 377.

Steve Mentz, *Ocean*, New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2020, pp. 1–8.

Astrida Neimanis, *Bodies of Water*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019, pp. 1–26.

Silvia Pireddu, ‘Ad Limine: Martin Parr’s Humans on the Beach. Re-empowering the English Seaside Resorts as Pop Culture’, *Imaginaires*, no. 24, 2022, pp. 110–130, <https://doi.org/10.34929/imaginaires.vi24.39>. Accessed on 15 May 2026.

Anna Reckin, ‘Tidalectic Lectures: Kamau Brathwaite’s Prose/Poetry as Sound-Space’, *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003, pp. 1–12, <https://anthurium.miami.edu/articles/10.33596/anth.4>. Accessed on 15 May 2026.

Rainer Maria Rilke, ‘Elegy’, translation by Stephen Mitchell, *The Paris Review*, vol. 82, 1981. Available via https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_twe007199801_01/_twe007199801_01_0079.php?q=op. Accessed on 19 June 2026.

Warsan Shire, ‘Home’, in *Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in Her Head*, New York, Penguin Random House, 2022, pp. 24–25.

Shelby Van Pelt, *Remarkably Bright Creatures*, London, Bloomsbury, 2022, p. 1.

Peace Talks, ‘Wearing a Flag for Humanity | Helen Storey’, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0Ca3XIitFPU>, 11 July 2025.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, ‘Alexander McQueen, Savage Beauty’, referring to McQueen’s program notes for *Plato’s Atlantis* (S/S 2010). Accessible via <https://blog.metmuseum.org/alexandermcqueen/jellyfish-ensemble-platos-atlantis/>. Accessed on 22 June 2026.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art (@metmuseum), Instagram, 8 June 2024.

Jean-Pierre Villebramar, ‘Marées Noires’, available via <https://www.poetica.fr/poeme-8477/villebramar-marees-noires/>. Accessed on 19 June 2026.

Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*, The Hogarth Press, Penguin Books, 1992, original version: 1931, pp. 111–112 and 220–221.

WWD Staff. ‘Alexander McQueen: A True Master’, *Women’s Wear Daily*, 12 February 2010, pp. 1–8.

Steff Yotka, “‘After the Apocalypse... Maybe You Try to Make a Wedding Dress’: Marine Serre Discusses Her Spring 2020 Collection”, *Vogue*, 16 October 2019, <https://www.vogue.com/article/marine-serre-spring-2020-collection-video>. Accessed on 15 May 2026.

COLOPHON

This book is published on the occasion of the exhibition *High Tide: Of Humanity and the Sea, Through Fashion and Art* at BRUSK (Bruges, Belgium) from 30 October 2026 to 14 March 2027.

Compilation & Editing
Karen Van Godtsenhoven
Michel Dewilde

Interviews
Madelon Dendooven
Michel Dewilde
Karen Van Godtsenhoven

Project Management Musea Brugge
Michel Dewilde

Image Research
Madelon Dendooven
Karen Van Godtsenhoven

Translation
Sandy Logan

Copy-editing
Xavier De Jonge

Project Management
Stephanie Van den bosch

Design
Tim Bisschop

Printing & Binding
Graphius, Ghent

Publisher
Gautier Platteau

Team Hannibal Books
Laura Bijmens, Sara Colson, Pieter De Meyere, Sarah Eycken, Natacha Hofman, Séverine Lacante, Sofie Meert, Gautier Platteau, Hedwig Scheltjens, Marie Schoups, Stephanie Van den bosch, Hadewych Van den Bossche, Jarrik Van Der Biest, Bert Vanlathem

Exhibition Team
Director
Filip Strobbe
Guest curator
Karen Van Godtsenhoven
Curator of contemporary art, culture and history, Musea Brugge
Michel Dewilde
Exhibition Design
Studio OTW
Scenography
Chloroform BVBA
Mannequins
BONAVERI

Team Musea Brugge

With the support of

Main partner

=
**Belfius
PR/IVATE**

Media partners

Vrù De Standaard

Acknowledgements

Yves Beaumont, Gilles Blanchard & Pierre Commoy, BOTTER (Rushemy Botter & Lisi Herrebrugh), Trashy Clothing (Omar Braika & Shukri Lawrence), Chanel (Danielle Cillien Sabatier, Emmanuelle Guitton, Christelle Demoussis, Marie Hamelin-Dufieff, Julie Deydier), Chromat (Bex McCharen), Gabriella Ciacimino, Anne-Claudie Coric, Dani, Jadrana Demoen, Madelon Dendooven, Maria Dolfini, Christoph Draeger, Shayli Harrison, Richard Hoffman, Pierre et Gilles, Karoline Hjorth & Riitta Ikonen, Rose Issa, Jerome Jacobs, Abdul Rahman Katanani, Lama Koubrously, Jean-Paul Lespagnard, Thebe Magugu (Thebe Magugu, Lindokuhle Nkonyane, Melissa Nxumalo), Michèle Matyn, Alexander McQueen (Katherine Beckwith, Plum Ayloff, Arianne Scott), Musée Mode & Dentelle (Caroline Esgain, Nicolas Lor, Sophie Couret Donders), Wangechi Mutu, Maryam Najd, NAVIGO-team, Yaroslava Olinska, Yuima Nakazato (Yuima Nakazato, Rachel Minori Sasaki), Otobong Nkanga, Kira Perov, Martin Parr, Dimitra Petsa, Laure Prouvost, Harmonia Rosales, Marine Serre (Marine Serre, Mathieu Baboulène, Roisin Breen, Elodie Collin), Subin Son, Helen Storey (Helen Storey, Susanna Cordner for LCF), Mara Tatevosian, Olivier Theyskens (Olivier Theyskens, Sandro Ghighione), Angela Tiatia, Günther Vanbleu, Maarten Vanden Eynde, Rinus Van de Velde, Iris van Herpen (Dominika Kasova), Dries Van Noten (Jan Vanhoof, Bas Verwaetermeulen), Elena Velez, Versace (Antonio Masciarrello, Eugenia Ioppolo, Cristina Bergonzi), Bill Viola Studio, Dominique White, Cindy Wright, Robert Wun (Tia Collection)

Cover

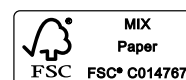
BOTTER, *Global Warning*, Spring-Summer 2022. Models: Ka'amed J and Monykuoch Deng. Styling: Imruh Asha. Styling assistant: Aroua Ammari. Set design: Ibbi Njoya. Movement director: Yagamoto. Hair and makeup: Zenia Jaeger. Production and casting: Rachel Evans. Courtesy of BOTTER and Viviane Sassen. Photo: Viviane Sassen.

ISBN 978 94 9341 664 2
D/2026/11922/16
NUR 640/655

© Hannibal Books and BRUSK, 2026
www.hannibalbooks.be
www.bruskbrugge.be

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders for all texts, photographs and reproductions. If, however, you feel that you have inadvertently been overlooked, please contact the publisher.



‘Waves,
Marina,
we are ocean!
Depths,
Marina,
we are sky.’



