

# HOWL

Inspiration for Creatives  
from *Wolf-Gordon*

Issue 04, 2022 — Quarterly  
Curated by Paul Makovsky



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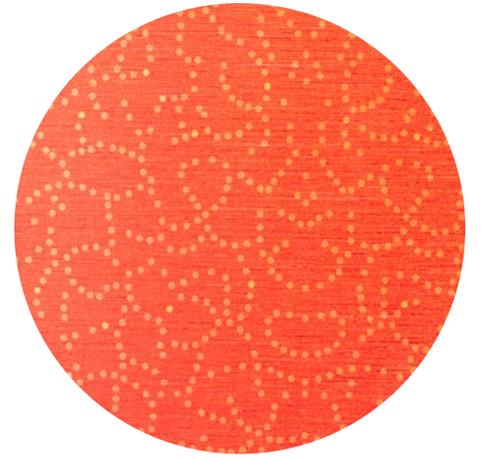
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## Places To Love

Love and romance have existed continuously throughout human history, but environments in which to express love have evolved. Here we offer a snapshot of locations from the 17th century to the present.



Jean-Honoré Fragonard  
*The Stolen Kiss* (late 1780s)

Oil on canvas

Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg

Photo: Public domain, via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

### The Affair of the Grand Trianon

Commissioned by Louis XIV in 1670 to escape the pomp and ceremony of court life and to pursue his affair with Madame de Montespan, the Grand Trianon is the most refined structure on the royal grounds of Versailles. Architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart designed the smaller palace in exquisite single-story proportions and materials—pink marble and porphyry, a reddish volcanic stone. He established a strong relationship to nature via views and easy access to the exterior. But most surprising for a building of its time is a void between the two wings that was requested by the king: an open-air peristyle for indoor-outdoor living that is between the courtyard on one side and fragrant citrus gardens on the other.



Peristyle, Grand Trianon

Versailles, France

Photo: Azurfrog, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#)



Jean-Honoré Fragonard  
*The Love Letter* (early 1770s)

Oil on canvas  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
Photo: Public domain, licensed under [CC0 1.0 Universal](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

For whom was this masterpiece conceived? A woman of outstanding beauty and wit, the Marquise de Montespan held great sway over the royal court and enjoyed the king's protection for many years. Eventually, however, de Montespan struggled to maintain the upper hand over her rivals and alienated the king. The wily Madame de Maintenon seized the opportunity to step in, and Madame de Montespan left Versailles for good in 1691. The Grand Trianon remains Louis XIV's tribute to her charms and passion for architecture.

## The Art of Seduction in Rococo Salons

In early 18th century Rococo France, characterized by the "age of allurements," romance was an elaborate game of cultivated social interactions played out against sophisticated interior design that enabled women's social and sensual power. In the words of historian Mimi Hellman, courtship was "an exchange in which individuals sought to engage and delight each other with an artfully conducted repertoire of pleasing poses, gestures, expressions, and conversation."

Fashion, furniture, and *objects d'art* were all part of a coquettish lifestyle where seduction techniques, backed by carefully cultivated charm and proper etiquette, were transformed into pleasurable experiences mediated by equally luxurious environments (think expensive textiles, gleaming mirrors, and intricately carved paneling) that became one's theatrical stage for social performance.



Speakeasy Interior, 1930s

Photo: Vintage\_Space / Alamy

## Speakeasies: Where Dating Replaced Courtship

During the 1920s Prohibition era, the idea of dating by single young men and women—without an adult chaperone or escort—exploded into the mainstream. The combination of the 18th Amendment, which prohibited the making, transporting and selling of alcohol, combined with the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, gave rise to speakeasies. These hidden underground clubs, where illegal alcohol was sold and women were allowed to take a seat at the bar, became American cultural institutions during Prohibition. Speakeasies usually had an entrance that was not obvious, leading to a door painted green with a peephole. Once inside the silk-lined walled club, patrons listened to jazz, often from a jukebox or coin-run player pianos and band instrument machines, and they danced the latest craze like the "Charleston," "Fox Trot," "Shimmy" and "Lindy Hop."

## Honeymoon Resorts

Honeymoon resorts took off as soldiers returned from World War II and promptly began to marry. Niagara Falls, for example, became “The Honeymoon Capital of the World.” As people warmed to the idea of intimate encounters, resorts dedicated to all aspects of (straight) romance boomed (think round bed, mirrors, and the obligatory “Do Not Disturb” sign). By the end of the decade, resorts flourished in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania, with Morris Wilkins, owner of Cove Haven Resort, even inventing the heart-shaped hot tub in 1963.

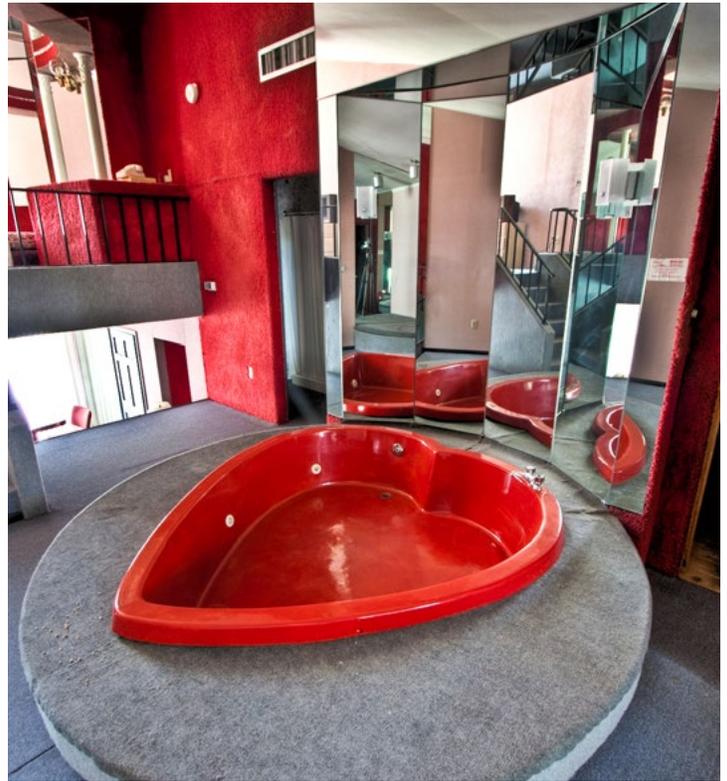
### Arcana Mirror Cabins

Ontario, Canada

The Arcana mirror cabins, by Aruliden and Leckie Studio, in Ontario, Canada, give a whole new meaning to blending in with nature.

Photo: Andrew Latreille

Courtesy of Leckie Studio, Architecture + Design



### Heart-Shaped Tub

Analomink, PA

A heart-shaped bathtub at the Penn Hills Resort, a honeymoon getaway in the Poconos Mountains that closed in 2009.

Photo: “Poconos Heart-Shaped Tub” by [Jonathan Haeber](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

## The Romantic Getaway Cabin

Situated in the Canadian wilderness two hours outside of Toronto, the Arcana hospitality brand, created by Aruliden and Leckie Studio, is a romantic getaway concept that features stunning cabins designed with wellness and the restorative power of nature in mind (think forest bathing). Clad in reflective polished stainless steel, the cabins become almost invisible as they merge with their green context, reflecting the forest and weather as it changes. The minimalist-design interiors feature a prominent picture window to allow for an immersive experience inside the cabin.



—— Q&A

## Venus Williams

Likes and Loves

We asked Venus Williams, founder of V Starr—the West Palm Beach interior design firm that created The Muse Collection for Wolf-Gordon—about some of the essential elements in her life and design practice.

The V Starr team working on The Muse Collection for Wolf-Gordon

Photo: Nicholas Mele  
Courtesy of V Starr

—— Design tools of choice:

Strangely I always use my clear plastic ruler that's usually used for pattern making in all my sketching. I travel with a mechanical pencil, eraser and vellum paper so I can sketch at any time.

—— My favorite icon of architecture and design:

I really love the work of Paul Evans (1931-1987). His furniture is so distinctive and well-constructed.

*Inspired by women, Muse by V Starr juxtaposes the softness classically associated with femininity and the fierce underlying qualities of perseverance, strength and commitment.*



Muse by V Starr for Wolf-Gordon  
Williams reviews the collection with V Starr  
Principal Sonya Haffey at the design firm's office  
in West Palm Beach, FL.  
Photo: Ryan Loco  
Courtesy of V Starr

—— A city I love traveling to:

I have so many favorite cities, but the one that always comes to mind is Paris. It was the first international city I traveled to as a 16-year-old. It's magical, beautiful and inspiring. I never want to leave when I visit.

—— A place I look forward to visiting:

I've heard amazing things about Sardinia, Italy. Being a professional tennis player, I've always had to focus on health and wellness and taking care of my body. Sardinia is one of five blue zones in the world, meaning people there live the healthiest and longest lives out of everyone in the world. I'd love to spend some time there to observe Sardinian life, and bring back some insights to Florida.

—— My favorite room in my house:

My entire house is connected and feels like one room. Each room slips into the next because of a shared muted color palette of natural wood and whites. It's peaceful, quiet and energizing. It feels like there is a hush over the world, and it's an escape from chaos when I come home. My favorite time to recharge is in the evening, with music playing through the house. I might watch a movie, work on various projects, or sketch.

—— My three favorite apps on my phone:

1. Any food delivery application: I love to have my favorite restaurants deliver to me around the world.
2. My filter app: It's the easiest way to look good without any makeup.
3. My e-reading apps: I love having my books with me, wherever I go, whenever I want.

—— While I'm designing, I love to listen to:

Blood Orange, Mac Miller, Frank Ocean or Tyler the Creator. They are some of my favorites when I'm in my creative space.

—— One of my favorite movies of all time:

I love high school films like *Pretty in Pink* or *Never Been Kissed*. I didn't go to a traditional high school or to prom and I like to fantasize that high school is just like those films!

“My parents chose tennis, for which I am eternally grateful. I was meant to be a tennis player! But I chose design, and it comes straight from the heart.”

—Venus Williams

——— A book I’m reading:

I’m currently reading *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins which has really touched my soul. It’s a story of a Mexican woman and her son who have to leave their life behind, and escape as undocumented immigrants to the US.

——— A favorite rule to break:

I am a rule breaker. Break all the rules! Restrictions create limits. If I hadn’t broken all the rules, I would not have gotten to where I am today and I would never have entered the design field, which gives me great happiness.

——— Can you talk about the process behind creating Muse, your collaboration with Wolf-Gordon?

We were so excited after having our first meeting with Wolf-Gordon. I have a deep love of textiles at a granular level, right down to the actual thread. It was important for this collection to reflect my personal aesthetic and a reverence for the materials by showcasing the threads through the design and colors.

As a women owned and operated firm, we wanted to focus on women, and it took a lot of back and forth to identify the motifs of the collection and to translate them into a woven upholstery. We do a lot of work with textiles with my team at EleVen, my athletic wear brand, and the process was completely different, so it was fun to explore textiles with a new perspective.



Art Gallery, Private Residence  
V Starr’s design for a private residence in South Florida includes unique personal touches, like an art gallery and hidden karaoke lounge.  
Photo: Ryan Loco  
Courtesy of V Starr



— Interview

## Victoria Yakusha

This Kyiv-based architect combines her connection to nature with a love for the cultural heritage of her native Ukraine.

Victoria Yakusha, founder  
of Yakusha Studio and FAINA

Photo: Babeth Albert  
Courtesy of Yakusha Studio

Victoria Yakusha is an emerging Ukrainian designer who is making waves on the international scene with the launch of a new furniture and lighting collection available through FAINA, her showroom in Antwerp, Belgium.

Yakusha's projects oscillate between architecture, interiors and products, and a philosophy she calls "Live Design"—which connects her to nature, ethnic roots and the cultural heritage of her native country. "Live Design is about connection to our roots and our land," says the architect. "I translate my design through living, sustainable materials and our ecological approach to everything we do. It's also about respect for our heritage, traditions and history."

In 2014, Yakusha founded her design brand, FAINA, right after the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine, when citizens faced the question about who their people were as a nation. "I wanted to tell the world about our culture, traditions, and let everyone feel the spirit of Ukraine—its very soul." So, she started integrating Ukrainian symbols in her work and supporting local craftspeople. Particularly interesting in the design of objects, Yakusha believes

“Live design is about connection to our roots and our land. I translate my design through the living sustainable materials and our ecological approach to everything we do. It’s also about the respect to our heritage, traditions, history.”

—Victoria Yakusha

that curiosity for animism—native to her ancestors—is relevant today: “I believe in the souls of our objects, the spiritual essence of things,” she says, and eight years after the Revolution, it’s become the focus of her brand and the new gallery in Antwerp. “It’s one of the core elements of what we call Live Design—creating something that is alive. Something with a spirit.”

Yakusha first opened the FAINA showroom in Brussels in 2019, and planned to move it to a bigger space in the city center, but was still searching for the right space six months later. One day on a visit to Antwerp with her family, Yakusha came to the realization that this northern Belgian city, with a strong fashion and design tradition, should be her location. “Our gallery should be in Antwerp,” she said. “On the way home, I found a two-story space in a 500-year-old building with high ceilings in the city center—the exact one I imagined FAINA’s home to be.”

The new gallery on the picturesque Keizerstraat reveals the essence of its Live Design philosophy, where each piece is a witness to history and emanates the strong spirit of Mother Earth. Primitive and archetypal forms, Ukrainian traditional craft and sustainable materials all shape the minimalist, yet spirited design language of the brand. “All handcrafted items have a soul—their own energy,” Yakusha says. “And it happens because someone puts their emotions and their own strength into it. There’s no such thing in mass-produced objects.” She points out that, for a long time, crafts in Ukraine were dying off, and she feels a responsibility to preserve the tradition of making and passing them on. “We work with artisans from all over Ukraine and produce all FAINA objects in Ukraine,” she says. “I love this synergy of modern design and history—when you know that something was made



#### FAINA Gallery

Antwerp, Belgium

The deep black hues of clay, wood, wool and other natural materials refer to the rich, black soil of Ukraine.

Photo: Piet-Albert Goethals  
Courtesy of FAINA

#### FAINA Collection

The newly-opened Antwerp space showcases FAINA, Yakusha’s collection of furniture, lighting and decor.

Photo: Piet-Albert Goethals  
Courtesy of FAINA





## Istetyka Eatery

Kyiv, Ukraine

The living minimalist eatery opened in 2021 and was the first Ukrainian project to win the Dezeen Awards.

Photo: Tevhenii Avramenko  
Courtesy of Yakusha Studio



## Istetyka Eatery

Yakusha Studio's interior is a study in contrast: cold meets warm, the curvy offsets the straight, and rough concrete perfectly marries delicate crochet.

Photo: Tevhenii Avramenko  
Courtesy of Yakusha Studio

with the same technique that our ancestors used long ago." For example, her tapestries are hand woven on an ancient loom with the traditional Ukrainian craft 'lizhykarstvo' (wool weaving) technique, common only to one region in Ukraine. For their glass, they use a technique of free blowing—'gutnytstvo' in Ukrainian—that is more than 1000 years old. "An artisan doesn't use molds in the process, so the shape is guided by the nature of its material," she explains.

Her philosophy applies to how she designs interiors, too. The Istetyka Eatery in Kyiv, for example, is Yakusha's vision of modern Ukrainian design—one that is laconic and pure, but harnesses a strong presence. The walls were finished with clay, as Ukrainians used to do in traditional homes, and furniture and decor are handcrafted by local artisans. "When I work with a space, I love to mix and juxtapose materials, textures and pieces from different times," she says. "This is what brings a space to life for me. The space is visually clean, but very layered and warm."



Judit Just  
*Colossal Landscape no. II*

Wool and acrylic yarn.  
Photo courtesy of the artist

——— @\_jujust\_

## *Colossal Landscape no. II*

A textile artist born and raised in Barcelona—but currently residing in Asheville, North Carolina—Judit Just makes colorful wall hangings using old weaving techniques, and gives them a twist using wood and other vibrant color combinations with silk cords, cotton, satin ribbons and fabric scraps. “Most of my tapestries are just an involuntary result of an improvisation—a dance with colors and materials,” Just said in an interview. “Once I finish and approve one design, I keep the original in my studio to reproduce it in different color variations. Then I redo them and make them evolve and metamorphose into other creations.”



Amaury Guichon  
*Chocolate Motorcycle* (2021)

Photo via @amauryguichon

—— @amauryguichon

## *Chocolate Motorcycle*

With a following of 5.5 million, chocolatier Amaury Guichon is the most popular pastry chef on Instagram. And with good reason—he is currently leading the chocolate sculpting game, creating everything from life-sized animals to robots and even a vintage rotary telephone. Much of his work draws upon his love for fantasy fiction, such as the Demogorgon from the TV series *Stranger Things* or a dragon from *Game of Thrones*. And if that's not enough, he also heads up The Pastry Academy in Las Vegas where you can learn from the master chef himself.



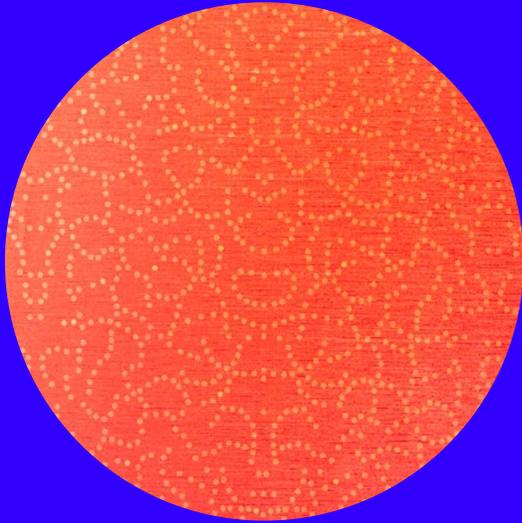
Stefano Soppani  
*Block Print 25/365 (2021)*

Photo via @365blockprints

—— @365blockprints

## *Blockprints Everyday*

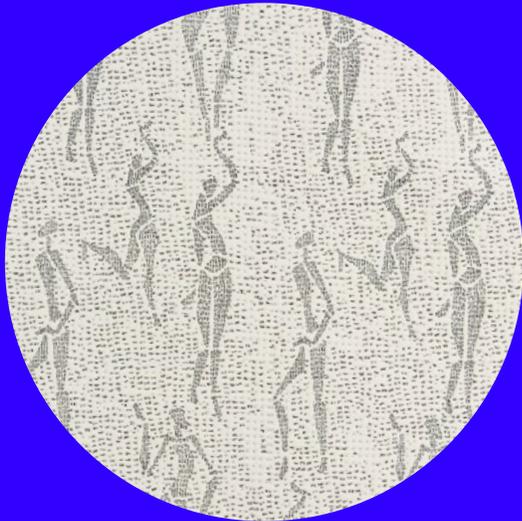
Photographer and graphic designer Stefano Soppani lives in a small northern Italian town where he cultivates his love for letterpress, linocut and block printing. He started a simple project—to create a new block print using soft rubber and a simple blade, with the same size restraints, every day for a year. The result is pure inspiration of colors, patterns, textures and emotions, which differ every day.



— Wallcovering

## Jaipur by Boym Partners

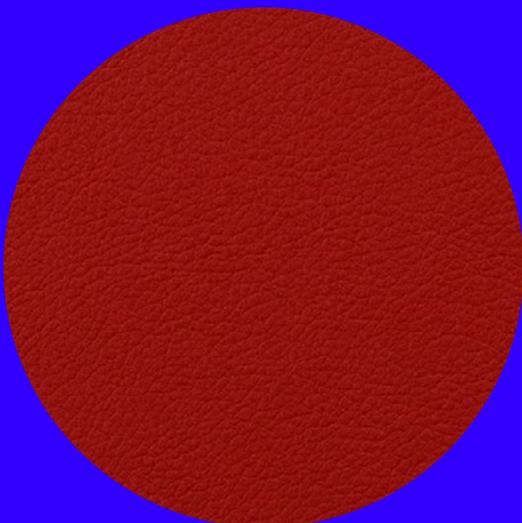
Inspired by metal rivet patterning on wood, *Jaipur* by Boym Partners invokes the crafts of India and the sensuality of Hindu imagery. Look carefully and you will spot deities, elephants and other exotic creatures in this Type II wallcovering.



— Upholstery

## Elena by V Starr

The figurative feature of The Muse Collection by V Starr, *Elena* is a matelassé textile inspired by the joy of movement. Horizontal and vertical stitches create its quilted quality as stylized female figures, representing interconnectedness and cheer, dance about the fabric.



— Upholstery

## Pelle

Thanks to its high-quality silicone formulation, *Pelle* feels just like skin! Engineered to far exceed ACT standards, *Pelle* resists stains, including oils, ink and denim dye; is hypo-allergenic; and is suited to outdoor settings. Prop 65, IMO and HHI compliant.



— Exhibition

## Sophie Taeuber-Arp: Living Abstraction

The Museum of Modern Art  
New York, NY

until March 12, 2022

This is the first major US exhibition in 40 years to survey this multifaceted abstract artist's innovative and wide-ranging body of work. The exhibition explores Taeuber-Arp's interdisciplinary approach through some 300 works including textiles, beadwork, polychrome marionettes, architectural and interior designs, stained glass windows, works on paper, paintings and relief sculptures.

Nic Aluf  
*Sophie Taeuber with her Dada Head (1920)*

Gelatin silver print on board. 4 5/8 x 3 3/4".  
Stiftung Arp e.V., Berlin.  
Photo: Wolfgang Morell



— Collection

## Susan Grant Lewin Jewelry Collection

Yale University Art Gallery  
New Haven, CT

April 01–Fall 2022

Susan Grant Lewin, one of the most influential collectors of 20th- and 21st-century art jewelry, began collecting contemporary jewelry in the 1970's, beginning with Danish silver. Over the decades she amassed approximately 450 pieces by artists who have reinvented the age-old and enduring jewelry form with a distinctly contemporary sensibility. Today, many of her pieces have been donated to the Cooper Hewitt, National Design Museum of the Smithsonian, the SCAD Museum of Art and the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich. Now, 45 pieces by living American jewelers from her collection will be on display at the Yale University Art Gallery, and reveal the pluralism of contemporary jewelry, resonating with aesthetic developments in art and design, craft and technology.

Ted Muehling  
*Bird Beak hair clip*

Gift of Susan Grant Lewin  
Yale University Art Gallery  
Photo courtesy of The Susan Grant Lewin Collection



— Collection

## Japanese Prints from the James A. Michener Collection

Honolulu Academy of Arts  
Honolulu, HI

Ongoing

<https://honolulumuseum.org/collections/>

During the 1950s, American author James A. Michener was writing *Hawaii* and living on the island of that name. He developed a love of Japanese prints and became an avid collector of Edo woodblock prints, eventually donating over 6,000 of them to the Honolulu Academy of the Arts. His collection focuses on the Ukiyo-e, or "floating island" print, and includes works by artists Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) and Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849).

Fujiya Izaemo  
*The Courtesan Yūgiri and Her Lover (mid 1780s)*

Woodblock print; ink and color on paper. 10 3/8 x 7 5/8".  
Gift of James A. Michener, 1991 HAA 24659  
Photo courtesy of Honolulu Academy of Arts



— Exhibition

## Morris and Company: The Business of Beauty

Art Institute of Chicago  
Chicago, IL  
until June 13, 2022

This exhibition showcases approximately 40 works of Morris & Co., the home furnishings company founded in 1861 by the artist, designer and writer William Morris (1838–1896). The company quickly became known for the objects it created for domestic interiors—handmade wallpapers, textiles and furniture—and its style became synonymous with the British Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century, which sought to bring art into the everyday. Underlying Arts and Crafts was a deep appreciation of flowers and plants of the natural world combined with the aim to elevate handmade objects over mass-produced goods—an aesthetic vision that remains potent to this day.

May Morris  
*Vine Leaf* (1896)

Produced by Morris & Co., London.  
Cotton or linen ground, silk floss, linen backing.  
42 5/8 x 42 5/8".  
Gift of Crab Tree Farm Foundation, 2018.844  
Art Institute of Chicago  
Photo courtesy of Art Institute of Chicago



— Catalog

## Dangerous Liaisons: Fashion and Furniture in the Eighteenth Century

By Harold Koda and Andrew Bolton

The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
New York, NY

[Download the Catalog Here](#)

During the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI, fashion and furniture were not simply meant to be beautiful but were also intended to arouse, attract and seduce. Published in response to the critically acclaimed and hugely popular exhibition held at the Metropolitan Museum in the fall of 2004, *Dangerous Liaisons* focuses on fashion and its interplay with the paintings, furniture and decorative arts of eighteenth-century France. Featuring beautiful color photographs of the exhibition's installation, details of the garments and supplementary historical material, the out-of-print catalog demonstrates how the extravagant clothing of the period reiterated the splendor of Rococo and Neoclassical interiors, and the book can be downloaded from the Met's Publications division.

*Dangerous Liaisons: Fashion and Furniture in the Eighteenth Century* (2006)

Cover Image: Detail of *The Masked Beauty*  
©The Metropolitan Museum of Art



— Exhibition

## What Is Left Unspoken, Love

High Museum of Art  
Atlanta, GA  
March 25–August 14, 2022

This exhibition features nearly 70 artworks that represent watershed moments in the history of contemporary art, such as Felix Gonzalez-Torres's "'Untitled' (Perfect Lovers)" (1987–1990), with art of the past decade. Included are six works created especially for the exhibition, such as "Our Love Was Deeply Purple" (2021) by Alanna Fields, which examines the different ways that love is understood, expressed or perhaps left unspoken. The works remind audiences of the common thread that brings us together as families, friends and community.

Rina Banerjee  
*Take me, take me, take me...to the Palace of love* (2005)

Reynolds Wrap, copper, steel, brass, semiprecious stones, Bakelite, Styrofoam, archival tape, feathers, wood, dimensions variable.

Photo courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels, © Rina Banerjee.

# HOWL

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Next Issue: Spring 2022.  
See you then!

Feedback and suggestions for  
future content should be addressed  
to [howl@wolfgordon.com](mailto:howl@wolfgordon.com).



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