

Wallpaper\*

Jansen, Charlotte: *Katharina Grosse's shimmering, iridescent installation envelops Espace Louis Vuitton in Venice*  
26 October 2022

# Wallpaper\*

## Katharina Grosse's shimmering, iridescent installation envelops Espace Louis Vuitton in Venice

German artist Katharina Grosse's theatrical new installation at Espace Louis Vuitton Venezia evokes a fluid, prismatic fabric that shrouds objects and prompts contemplation



Installation view of Katharina Grosse *Apollo Apollo* at Espace Louis Vuitton Venezia.  
(Image credit: Jens Ziehe)

BY CHARLOTTE JANSEN  
LAST UPDATED OCTOBER 26, 2022

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM  
JENS ZIEHE - PHOTOGRAPHY

‘Venice’s urban texture is so dense and multi-layered that I decided to turn the Espace Louis Vuitton Venezia into a black box, to establish a feel of both remoteness and intimacy,’ says Katharina Grosse. The German artist is well known for her prismatic paroxysms of paint that often take a monumental scale, even dousing entire buildings with an industrial paint sprayer, as she did at Fort Tilden in the Rockaways, New York in 2016. Her appearance as part of the official collateral event programme at the 59th Venice Biennale is a scintillating, oneiric new installation, *Apollo, Apollo*, that captures the quintessence of the Venetian setting as a sensory experience.

Iridescent and shimmering, Grosse’s meticulous installation flows like a single, fluid fabric (made of metal mesh) from wall to floor. The impact of its gleaming, theatrical colours is heightened by the contrast with the black interior and special lighting in the space. The work conveys the aesthetic feeling of Venice by mirroring its reflective optical qualities, found in the local materials associated with the city and its architecture: water, Murano glass, Fortuny silk and terrazzo mosaic tiles.





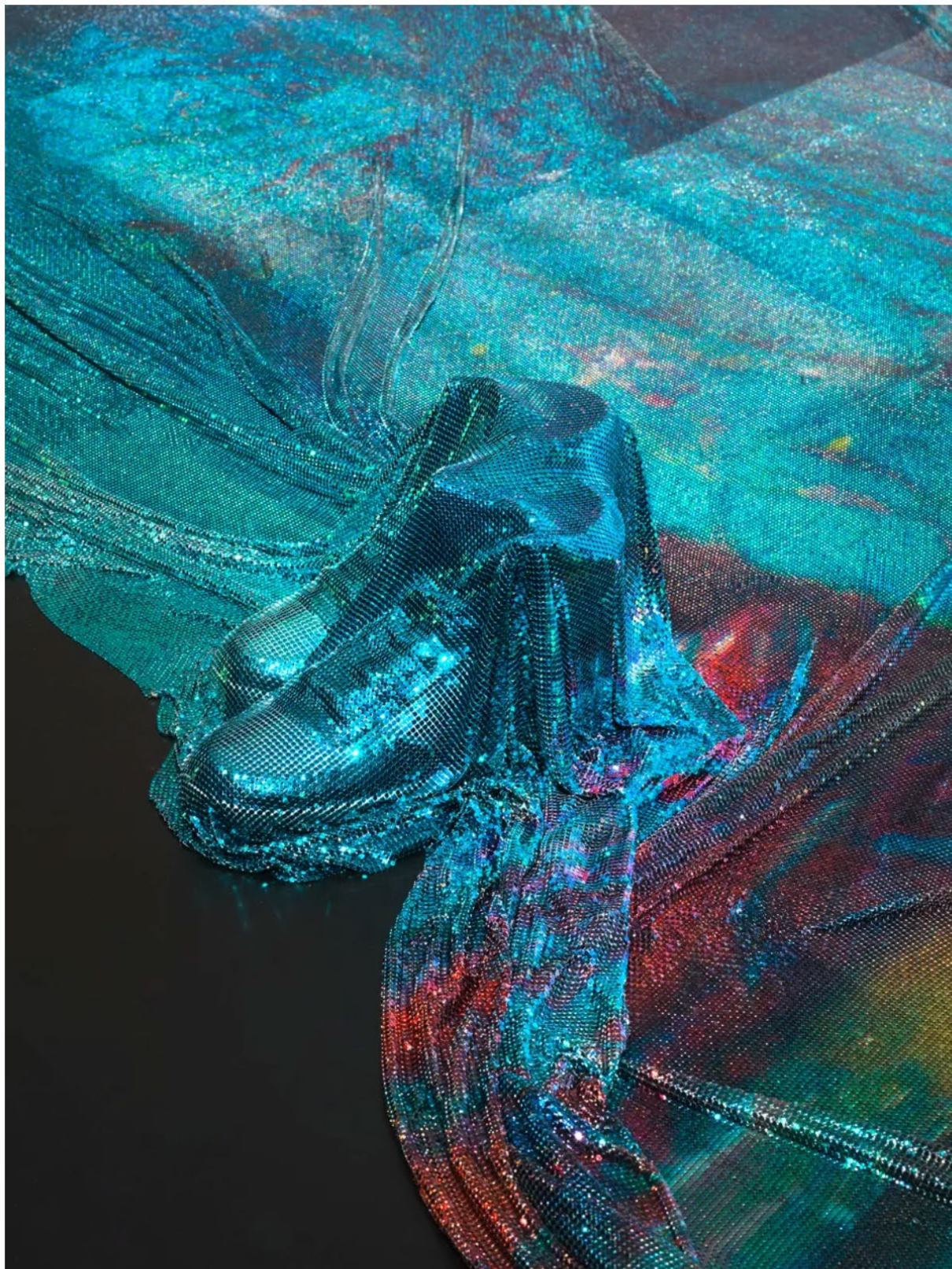
(Image credit: Jens Ziehe)

The exhibit at Espace Louis Vuitton represents the first time Grosse has printed photography onto metal mesh material, which resembles knitted sequins and enshrouds the entire room like an armour. 'There is an almost painful beauty to the temporality of my site-related paintings, given that they usually disappear,' Grosse says. 'So I began to collect and study the visual residue of work processes, both on site and in my studios.' Grosse began to print photographic images onto fabrics as part of her practice in 2013: 'By transforming these images into large-scale prints on silk,

polyester or metal mesh, I was able to obtain a ghostlike photographic presence, which underscores the fleeting quality of the original works.'

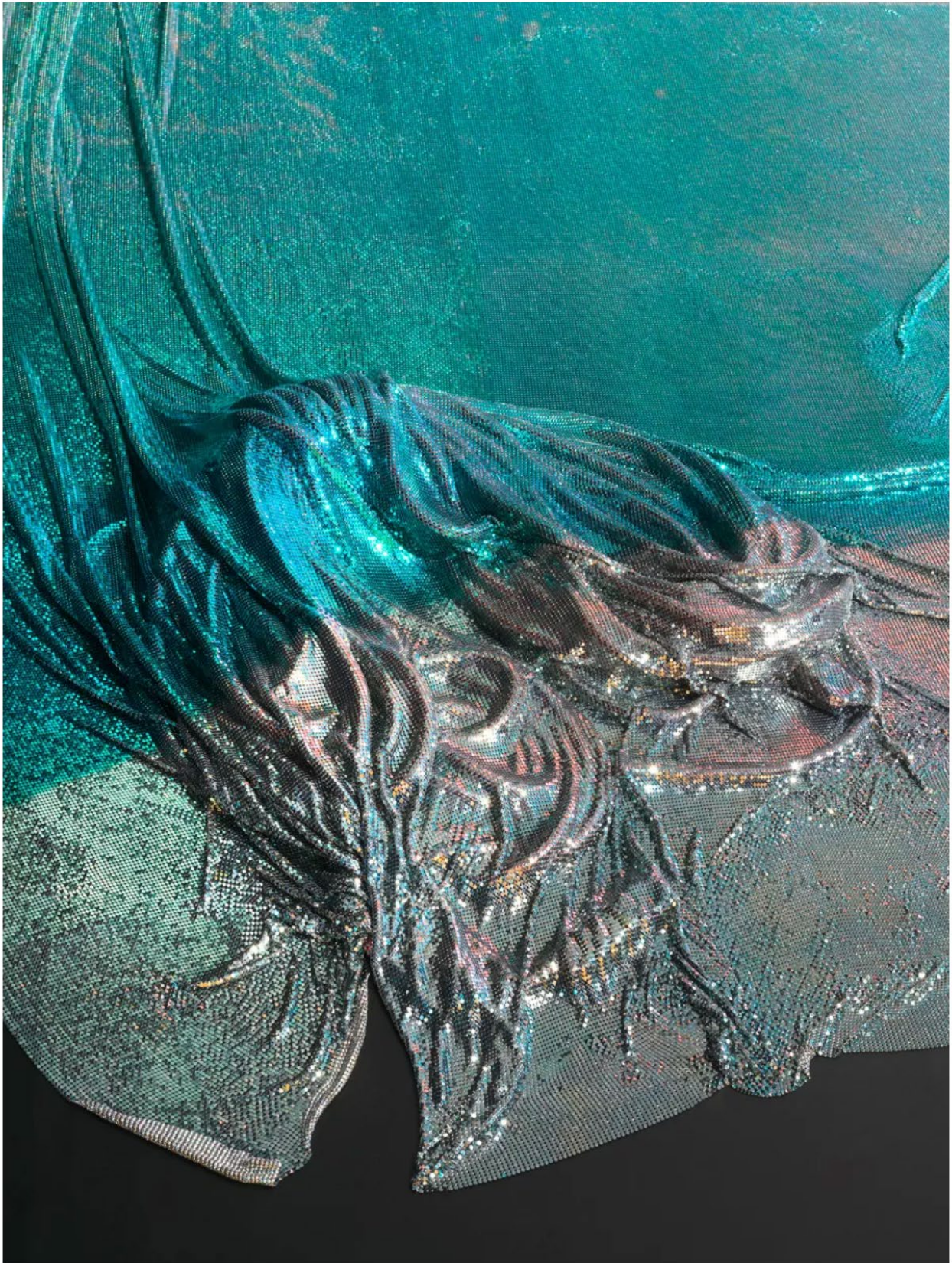
Various objects have been placed under the mesh, prompting us to imagine what lies beneath, or why – a fold-up chair, a pair of boots – suggesting narratives and the presence of the artist. Barely perceptible on the surface of the metallic fabric is a composite printed image of the artist's hands. These moments explore the link between the mediums of painting and photography, and the ever-present tensions in Grosse's work between image and body, physicality and illusion. It all evokes an ethereal, fantastical sensation. 'This experiment has allowed me to disconnect the photographic from the paradigm of the representational and to link it with the paradigm of presence instead,' Grosse notes.





(Image credit: Jens Ziehe)





(Image credit: Jens Ziehe)



*Apollo, Apollo* is one of three projects Grosse will produce at Louis Vuitton over the year – at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris in May she will reveal *The Splinter*, an installation of 20 painted plywood triangles as part of a group show inspired by Frank Gehry's architecture. *The Splinter* will have 'a very strong physical presence in, and contrapuntal dialogue with, Gehry's dynamic architectural space, which I started to think of as an interface between daylight and painting'. In the autumn, she will unveil *Canyon* at the Fondation – a further installation in response to Gehry in which 'painted, cut-up canvases lead to entangled, rolled aluminium forms suspended from the ceiling of the building. It's a massive undertaking and very much a work in progress,' Grosse explains.

For someone who has worked large and loud in locations all over the world, this work has a more intimate, contemplative feel, encouraging a deeper look within, rather than expanding the feeling of space as Grosse has often done. In contrast with the epic, heavy works of Anselm Kiefer and Anish Kapoor, who have concurrent solo exhibitions in Venice, Grosse's work also provides a place of quietude and solace. In fact, the magnitude of the divine is implied, tongue-in-cheek, in the exhibition title, a reference to the omnipotent deity whose power was to empower mortals with self-awareness and consciousness.

Grosse herself sees the work, amid a world of chaos, as a poetic 'appeal to the possibility of human coexistence as a gliding, flowing, constantly renegotiable iridescence, where form and image are constantly changing and oscillating in relation to the viewer's perception of it.'



(Image credit: Jens Ziehe)





(Image credit: Jens Ziehe)





(Image credit: Jens Ziehe)