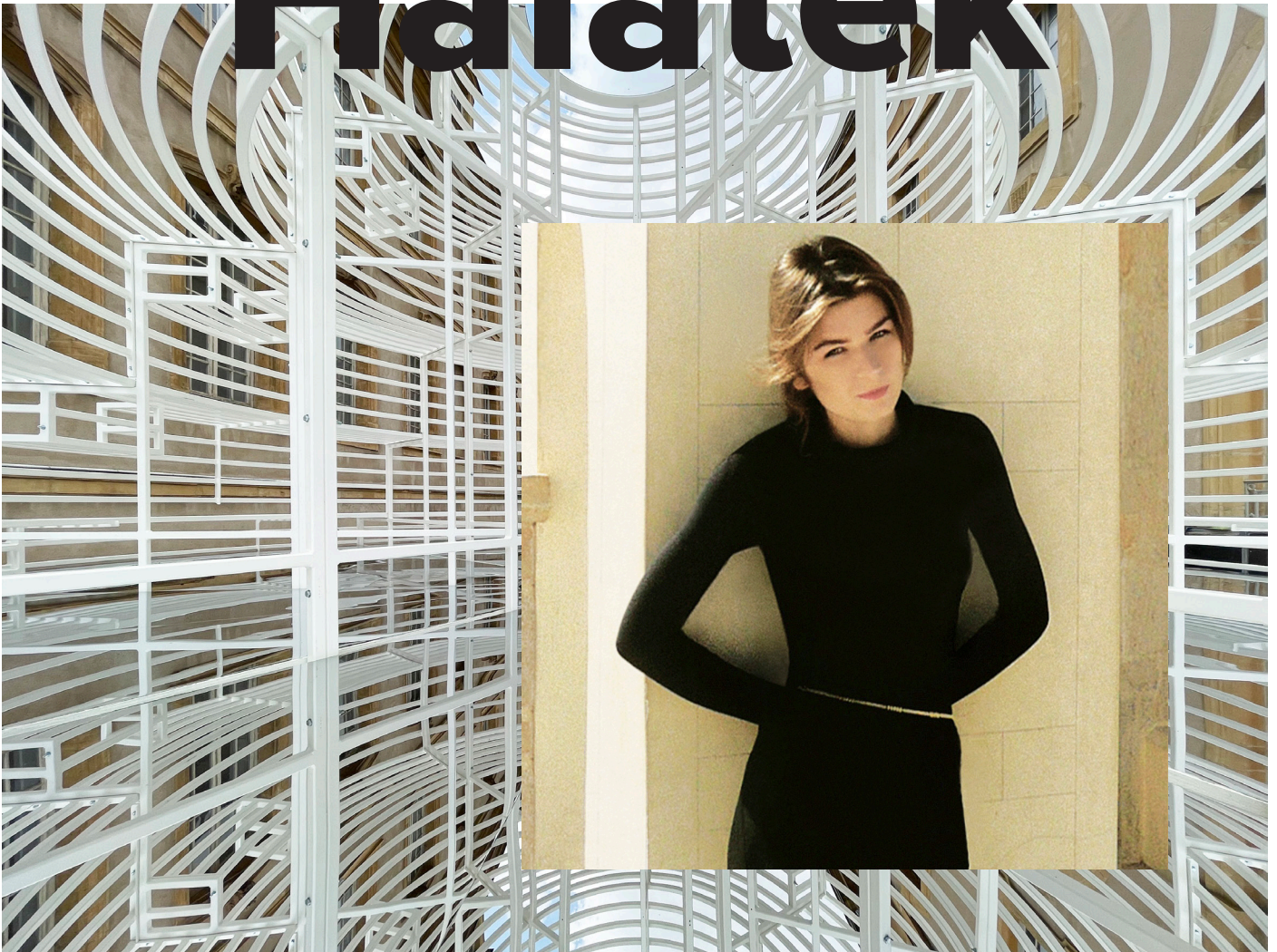


Karolina Halatek



Karolina Halatek uses light as the central medium in her work. She creates site-specific experiential spaces that incorporate visual, architectural, and sculptural elements.

Where does your inspiration come from?

From my own experiences, from nature, from spiritual insights from the Christian tradition.

What is your creative process like?

Most of the time I work for museums, contemporary galleries, or festivals.

Can you tell us about your collaborations with quantum physicists? What do they bring to your work?

Some years ago I did a project dedicated to M-Theory, the theory of everything in physics. It was a collaborative project with physicists. The focus was on the link between hand drawing and the most innovative ideas about the structure of the universe. Together with my artist friend, we interviewed a number of scientists and collated their hand drawings that visually represent traces of their theories. Roger Penrose, Carlo Rovelli, Leonard Susskind got involved. They enriched me through their curiosity and courage, they took a path through numbers and space to make sense and understand the world we live in. They showed how not to be afraid of ideas and how to think independently, which is crucial for every artist.

What fascinates you about light?

Light is sublime and yet most powerful. Life depends on light and no visual art would exist without light, so I choose light because it reveals the essence. In this regard, I'm a minimalist who wants to embrace what is the most fundamental.

What have you learned about light since it became your preferred medium?

Each project gives me new insights on what effect particular light can create, so from one project to another I'm perfecting the outcome and more closely I can predict the final effect. However, as each project is unique and different, it's impossible to know exactly how the light will behave or to simulate the effect in a scale model.

What is the main challenge of working with light?

Electricity and handling the energy flow. Light is ephemeral but at the same time it needs a source, and because I don't have a background in engineering, sometimes it's challenging to design an object without specialist knowledge. In each time project, I'm learning a new technical skill that helps me to develop the next one.

What perception of the world do you have through your works?

My works give me an uncanny sense of presence. They open up a new dimension that provides epiphany and feels unreal. I intend to create a perception that is rather positive, that values the individual, and can build up a community around it.

What are you trying to demonstrate through them?

Purity, serenity, self-discovery, self-awareness thought through immersion in the unexpected, iconographic experience. My installations are more or less catalysts of the experience.

« Immersion is now more important than ever, as a society we are too disembodied and disconnected from ourselves. »

You place particular importance on the discovery of a work through immersion and experimentation. Why?

I believe that immersion is now more important than ever, as a society we are too disembodied and disconnected from ourselves. Firstly it gives us a chance to relax to bring back the focus on our own sensations, it helps us feel our body and emotions, secondly, it helps us to learn how to be open - not to have a predicted set of ideas, thirdly perception is being challenged, so it gives a chance to behave spontaneously, decode old patterns and gain new knowledge.

What did you feel the first time you climbed to the top of RELIC?

I felt a sense of detachment from the familiar environment and dazzling elevation that extends to the sky, I felt kind of a special, luminous thrill.



Your project for 2024 ?

I'm working on two permanent artworks in a public space. One is planned for Tirana, I got a prize in a competition for art in public space organized by the Ministry of Albania. The date is not yet set, so it can happen this year or the next. Second, I need to keep a secret.

What advice would you give to a young light artist?

Be honest, be consistent, and search for meaning.

If you were to do an artistic collaboration, who would you do it with?

I would love to collaborate with spacecraft scientists.

Is there a particular art movement that resonates with you?

I feel strongly connected to minimalism and modernism.