

HARIS EPAMINONDA'S WORK TRANSFORMS ORDINARY OBJECTS INTO ABSTRACT ART

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Haris Epaminonda wants her work to be timeless, but not in the sense of it enduring forever. In fact, she'd rather escape time entirely. The 37-year-old native of Cyprus collects found objects and frees them from their history by placing them in site-specific, deceptively simple installations. But first, she lives with them.

A vase, for instance, might sit on her desk at home for months before it enters one of her eerily sparse settings. "I turn these items I find back into some sort of abstract material, so that I can no longer define what it was that originally attracted me," she says.

For nearly a decade, the Berlin-based artist has exhibited her uncanny installations around the world in a series of numbered shows that she refers to as "volumes." She reached "Vol. XXII" in 2017; among the objects placed throughout the Aspen Art Museum were a small Japanese woodcarving of a goldfish, facing its reflection in a mirror; a dried palm leaf delicately hanging from a thin metal grid, casting a shadow on a sheet of gold foil; and a black porcelain vase, tucked in a corner on top of marble floor tiles and beneath a framed book page.

Epaminonda's choreography of space draws viewers into a visual dance, allowing them to slow down enough to consider her jarring, unexpected pairings. It's a quality her work shares with that of one of her inspirations, the surrealist painter Giorgio de Chirico. "This place he has created gives you a tranquil feeling," she says, "a feeling of mystery that you cannot resolve, like you're diving into the unknown and into the unconscious."

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