

# STARDUST

STEFANO CURTO

HALCYON GALLERY

Contents:

<b>Prologue:</b> Renovatio Splendor by Stefano Cecchetto	0 4
<b>A Thousand Possibilities and A Thousand Worlds:</b> By Felix Petty	0 6
<b>In Conversation:</b> Stefano Curto with Olivier Varenne	7 3
<b>In Conversazione:</b> Stefano Curto con Olivier Varenne	8 2
<b>Materiality and Magic:</b> The Powerful Pull of Stefano Curto	8 6
<b>Biography:</b> Stefano Curto, Italian b. 1966	1 2 2
<b>Stardust:</b> List of works	1 2 4



## Prologue: Renovatio Splendor by Stefano Cecchetto

Extract from the catalogue published for the *Renovatio Splendor* exhibition, held at the Venissa Fondamenta Santa Caterina, 3 Bugno Art Gallery in 2013 curated by Stefano Cecchetto.

The byzantine itinerary that Stefano Curto undertakes to show his new works begins in Venice. Venice, the city where everything began in 2010 with a wonderful show at the appropriate premises of 'Batioro and Tiraoro'<sup>01</sup> was where Stefano introduced himself officially to the art world and has become the stage of his personal expressive language. From there, he worked to establish international recognition: from London to Australia; from the Venice Biennale to Caffè Florian; from Paris to Turin. He has always been present at the most prestigious shows, which confirms his complete originality and the undeniable fascination his works command.

He now returns to Venice. This time the stage is grander with the widespread presence of his works – which investigate the times of a sensitive reality. It is the enduring testimony of an inventory of knowledge, affirmed in the documentation of his epic transitions that he is still working on today. His works narrate – like stories of an ancient fresco – the human and artistic journey like windows; they open onto the world of his vast and poetic iconographic research. The impenetrable crystals that the artist uses in his works are precious stones that reflect flashes of the infinite; with the gems set in the space of his inner universe. In Stefano Curto's works, time is not only daily experience but is also the indelible cipher of a memory of places and things; a travel diary full of autobiographical references and an informed testimony of his own times.

Stefano Curto's artistic venture is destined to go great distances. His various journeys characterised by an eternal search for awareness or for 'different light', in order

to give these works, not just diversifying expressive tones, but the concrete reality of a specific point of view. Each space in which the gems lie is a space of the soul.

Let us try to follow this itinerary starting with the concept, which is more or less a storyline that unfolds. Collectively his Venetian exhibitions are like chapters of a human story that Stefano Curto unravels in order to investigate the symbiosis of opposites, and to create a composed and harmonic balance of revelation and accusation. Looking at Stefano Curto's work, *EVOLUTION INVOLUTION*, I am reminded of a quote from Goethe: '*It is not always needful for truth to take a definite shape; it is enough if it hovers about us like a spirit.*'

Those aspects of transformation and alchemy that occur in life and the universe that most interest me are those which I feel in harmony with. Like those of *Ora del Tramonto*<sup>02</sup> and *Aurora*<sup>03</sup>, where imaginary light emerges from the twilight and then re-emerges into the world. This birth or better yet, the philosophy of re-birth seems to me the main concept which informs all of Stefano Curto's works. They start from the man-made object whose natural development is like an extension of the spirit: the image flows out of the material like an apparition that is not always understandable immediately, but that slowly becomes identifiable due to a process of artistic identification.

The cosmic basis for his new spiral that develops in tones of white to become purple is a chromatic convergence that shakes up the shapes of an apparent reality. Although alchemy is a very ancient practice, it still fascinates many contemporary artists who find a perfect fusion between the spirit, the mind and the divine within this process. As such all the elements of the world are intimately related to each other and find their perfect position in the universe. Stefano Curto is an 'experimental' artist

in the genuine sense of the word. He starts from a thought, which he elaborates on through experimentation, in order to find perfection that recalls the ideogram of the circle that represents the Cosmos.

The concentric circles and spirals draw on the past in order to project the dimension of a 'sustainable' future, because to create is also to create one self, so as to be able to find oneself in the work and its transformation. The artist is a medium that tries to capture a message; the principle analogy that commands it and prompts it to reveal this message is the same one that resists the reveal. The secret of perception is hidden or concealed within the work itself, like the Tibetan symbol of the cosmic union, the yantra, which remains camouflaged in a background of colours, it is discovered only by those who are able to recognise it.

In all of Stefano's works, the past and the future are intimately connected at the mysterious point where they meet. The precious stones are not a symbol of wealth in this case, or of vain luxury and appearances; instead they are the apparent forms of precise and constant research that the artist carries out on 'the road of wonders.' We look for 'awareness' every day in the things that surround us, in a spiritual process – sometimes unconsciously – which allows us to follow a path that is aimed at the 'Evolution-Involution' of our consciousness. In each of his new works and also in his numerous trips to the Far East, Stefano Curto carries on his exploration of his labyrinth trying not to lose the delicate thread of Ariadne that guides him in his untiring search of the 'beyond'. That subtle force, that fundamental vibration, is a trace that leads him back from the multiplicity of things unknown to the most profound meaning of existence. The baggage that he brings home every time is always a little lighter.

**Stefano Cecchetto is an Italian Curator and Art Critic based in Venice.**

<sup>01</sup> Known as the Scoleta dei Batioro e Tiraoro in Venice, this was the venue of Stefano Curto's show *Trama Lucente*, Venice, 2010.

<sup>02</sup> *Ora del Tramonto* is translated from Italian to mean sunset.

<sup>03</sup> *Aurora* is translated from Italian to mean sunrise.



# A Thousand Possibilities and A Thousand Worlds:

By Felix Petty

6 Venice for hundreds of years acted as a bridge between worlds. A city whose trade and finance echoed across the globe, and brought riches back to *the floating city*.

S  
T  
A  
R  
D  
U  
S  
T  
In Italo Calvino’s fantastical work of geographical magical fiction, *Invisible Cities*, the explorer Marco Polo sits down to describe the thousands of different metropolises he has encountered on his travels to the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan.<sup>01</sup> Each city more beautiful and extraordinary and imaginary than the last; a city of pipes, a city of water, a city of the dead, a city that floats in the sky, a city of merchants. There are cities of memories and cities of the forgotten, cities that stretch on forever and cities that are small and self enclosed and surrounded by walls. Each city is one city though, a description of Marco Polo’s hometown, Venice.

Venice here is not a reality, not a living, breathing, dreaming and perspiring city, but a place where art and imagination and reality can overlap, a magical place that contains a whole world. Venice of course is an irresistible paradox; that floating city sinking into the Adriatic. I researched the hometown of Stefano Curto, a place called Segusino, a small town just north of Venice. It contained a fact that seemed too perfect. There is a town called Chipilo in Mexico, a town founded by the descendants of immigrants of Segusino, who still speak the local Veneto dialect. How fantastically Calvino-esque, for there to be a small town in the Mexican hillside speaking Venetian.

And how perfect, too, as a way to start talking about the works of Stefano Curto. An artist whose work ranges far and wide like Marco Polo; is fantastical and full of imagination like Calvino; and full of surprising and charming beauty like the idea of a town in Mexico speaking Venetian.

Thankfully Stefano’s work proposes no easy answers to such existential musings, but

at least offers up an array of spectacular, crystalline questions for us to lose ourselves in.

You could simplify Stefano’s work to this base element, perhaps: that the thousands of crystals that make up each piece form a constellation. A constellation in the literal sense, as the works often resemble a glimmering night sky full of stars, but a specific one, a night sky seen in the wilderness, free from the orange glow of light pollution from the city. A sky full of peacefulness. But also, less literal, in the works’ suspension of crystals, there’s something meditative, a constellation of ideas that come to you as you lose yourself in their abstractions, forms, beauty, and geometry. Not that these are works that simply and only nod towards the new age existential possibilities that Stefano has glimpsed at in his travels. His body of work always finds its way back to home, to Italy; to Italy’s rich art history and contribution to civilisation. There’s as much Italian gothic in Stefano’s works as there is Indian mysticism.

To put another reductive statement out there: you should definitely, when starting to think about Stefano’s work, start by thinking about the crystal. Each work is hand crafted from thousands of them. There’s splendour in the gems, sure, but not a surface of vanity or decadence or luxury – although the works are certainly luxurious. The splendour is in their properties, the way they play with light, the way they enrapture you, you lose yourself in them. Light, the basest, but boldest, of elements. Most paradoxical too in that dichotomy between splendour and serenity. Stefano’s crystalline constellations encapsulate all that. Take, for example, the *EVOLUTION INVOLUTION* series, cosmic, concentric circles of various shades of colours. The transformation, from pure whiteness to deep blue, reveals a cutaway not unlike the drawings of the planets we got at school. Like those diagrams, Stefano’s works reveal an interior mystery to us. Their abstractions reach towards a spirituality without ever proscribing



The Bodleian Library, *Marco Polo Travels*, fol. 218r, Johannes and his school, c.1400. Depicting Marco, his father and his uncle departing Venice in 1271, bound for Kublai Khan's Xanadu.

“HIS BODY OF WORK ALWAYS  
FINDS ITS WAY BACK TO HOME,  
TO ITALY; TO ITALY’S RICH ART  
HISTORY AND CONTRIBUTION  
TO CIVILISATION.”



Stefano Curto's hometown, Segusino, Italy.







0  
1

S  
T  
A  
R  
D  
U  
S  
T

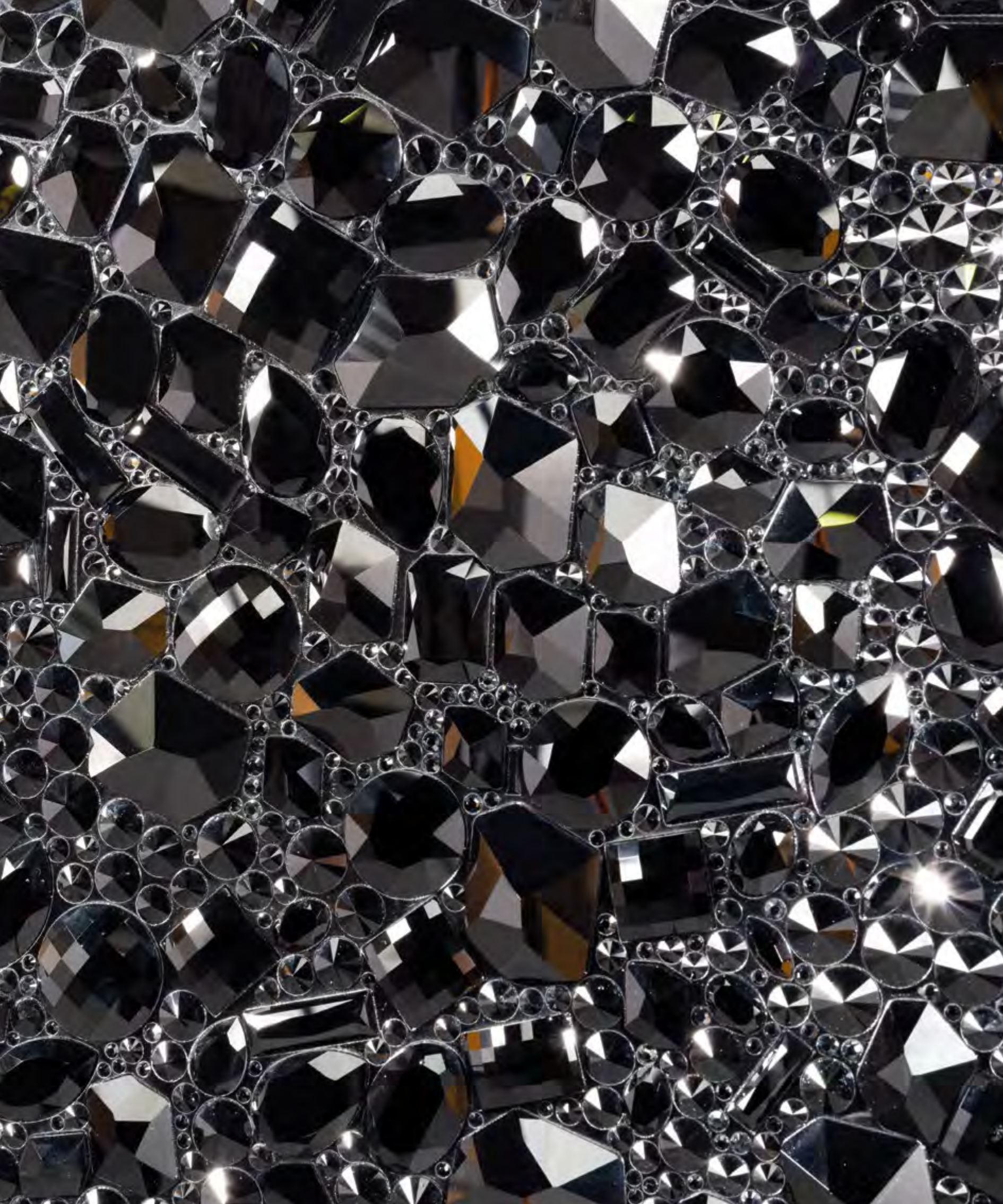


***THE INFINITE BLACK EXPANDED***  
2010-2011  
Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
199 x 198 x 3 cm  
110,175 Swarovski crystals









**“THE SPLENDOUR IS  
IN THEIR PROPERTIES,  
THE WAY THEY PLAY WITH LIGHT,  
THE WAY THEY ENRAPTURE YOU,  
YOU LOSE YOURSELF IN THEM.”**

**FELIX PETTY**  
Assistant Editor at i-D magazine

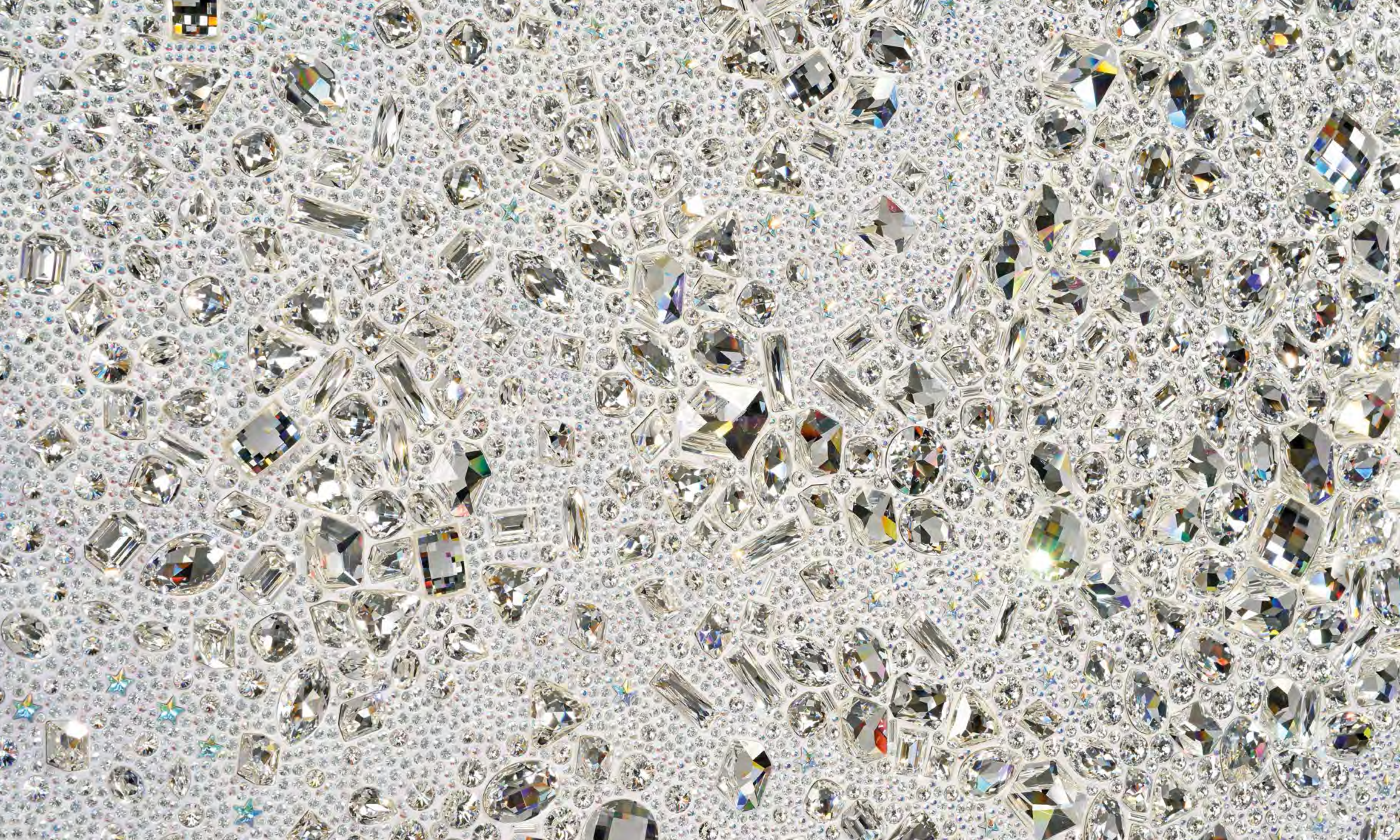


*HOME00000200900000*  
2008-2009

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
199.2 × 159 × 4 cm  
73,180 Swarovski crystals









***L'ORO MALATO***  
2010

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
199.5 x 149 x 3.5 cm  
53,148 Swarovski crystals











***EVOLUTION INVOLUTION***  
[Purple], 2016

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
121 x 121 x 3 cm  
104,741 Swarovski crystals





**“HIS WORKS FUNCTION AS  
A PRISM, GUIDING THE VIEWER  
THROUGH A MOMENT OF PAUSE  
AND PLAY, A MOMENT OF FOCUS,  
WHERE THE OUTSIDE WORLD  
TAKES A BACK SEAT.”**

**CHARLOTTE JOHNSON**

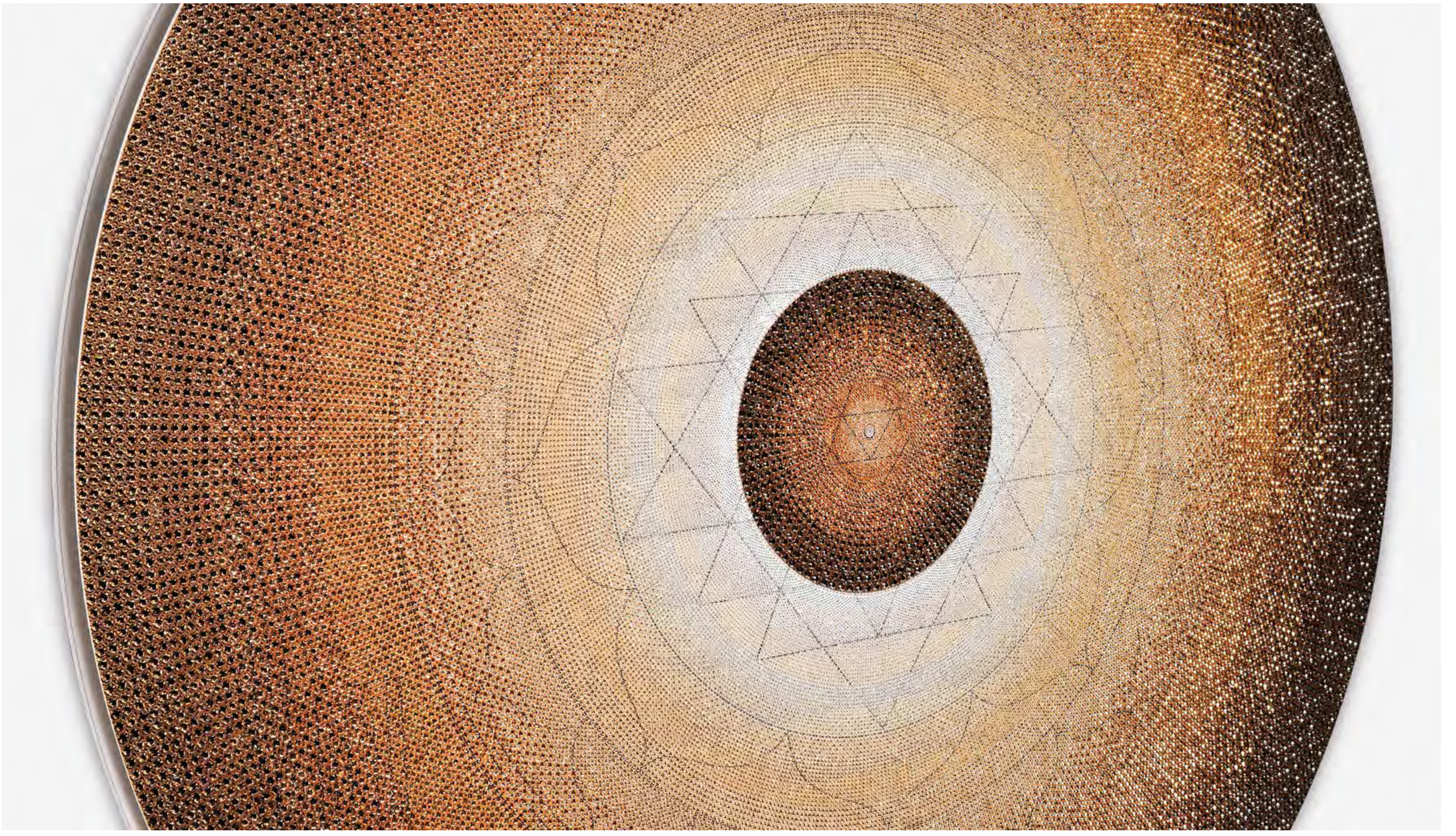
Assistant Curator of the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection in the Department of  
Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.





***EVOLUTION INVOLUTION***  
(Brown Iridescent), 2016–2017  
Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
148.5 × 148.5 × 2.5 cm  
104,741 Swarovski crystals





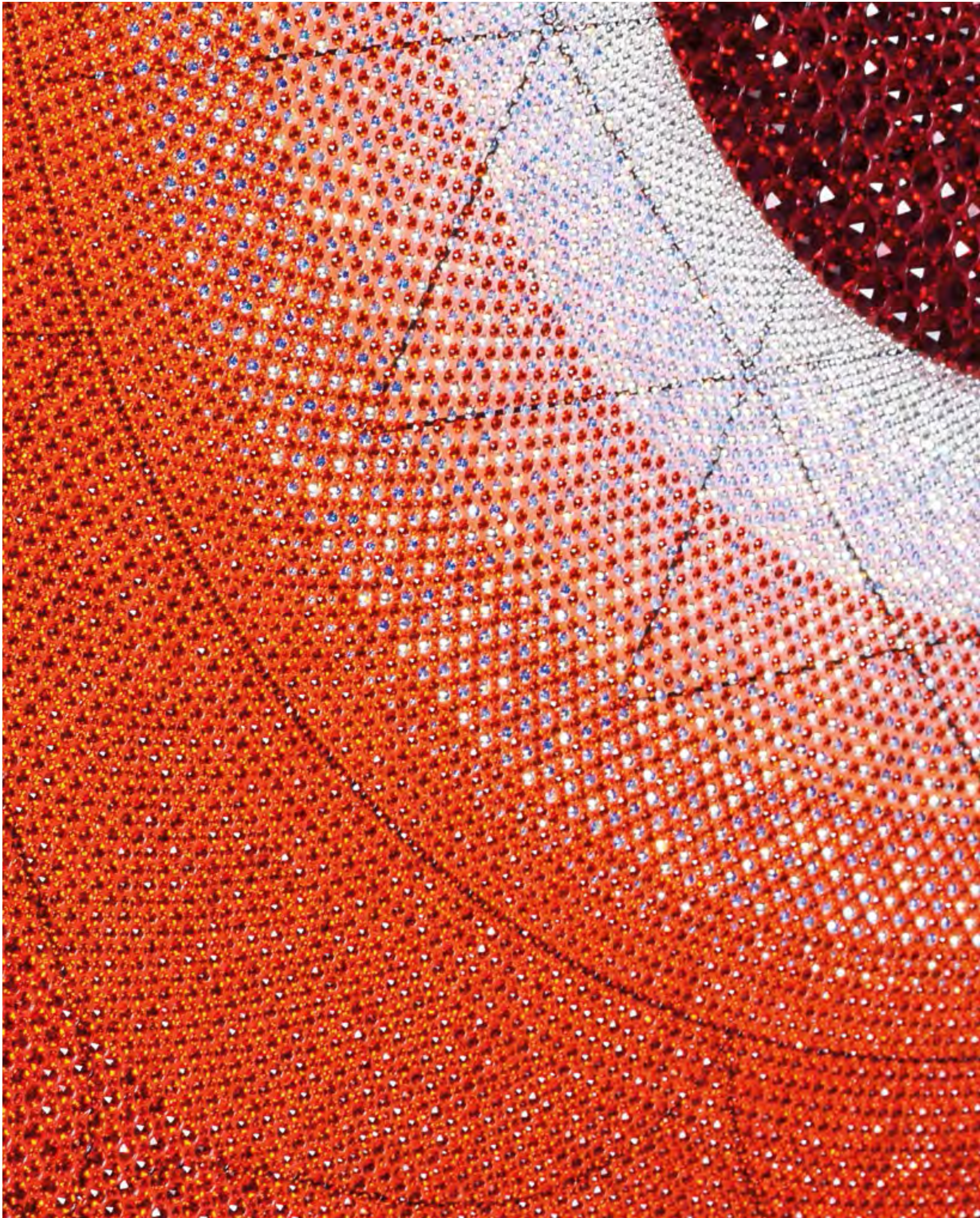




***EVOLUTION INVOLUTION***  
[Red], 2015

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
149.5 × 149.5 × 2.5 cm  
104,741 Swarovski crystals

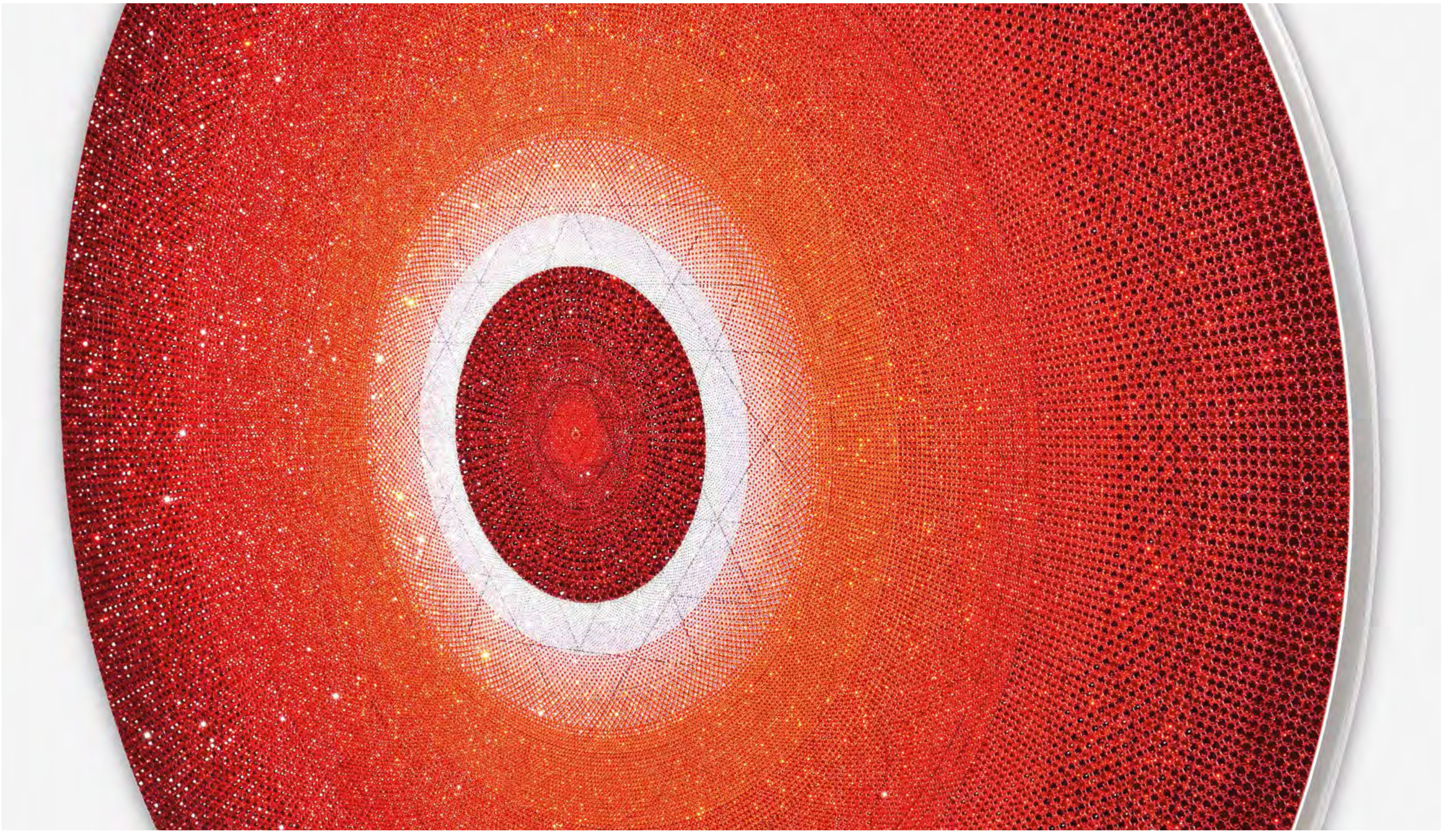




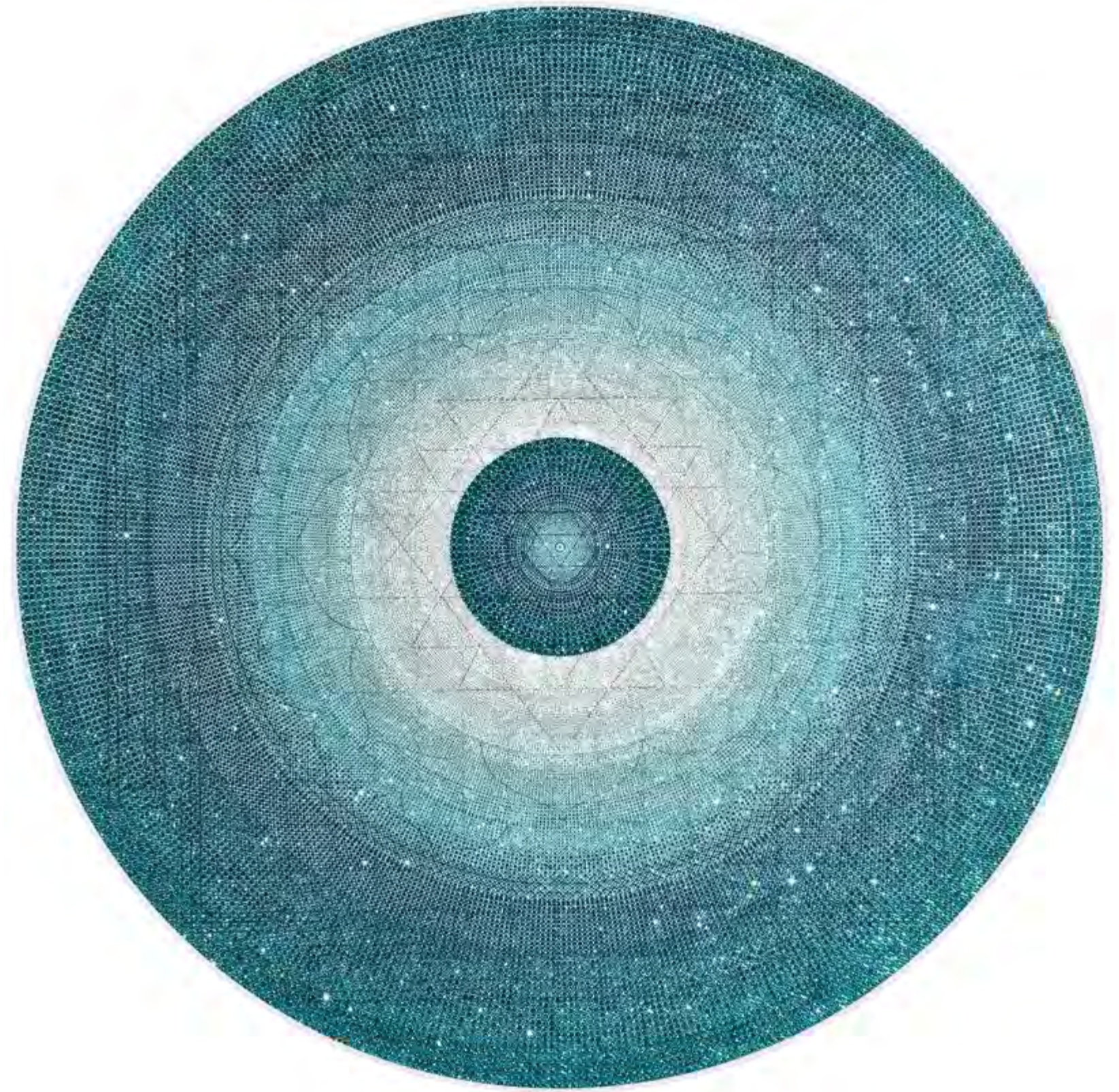
**“THE COLOURS ARE LIKE THE  
SCENT AND THE MUSIC ACTS  
UPON MY EMOTIONAL ALCHEMY.  
IT IS THE PREVAILING COLOURS  
IN EVOLUTION INVOLUTION AND  
THE ELOQUENT ALCHEMY THAT  
ATTRACTS VIEWERS.”**

STEFANO CURTO







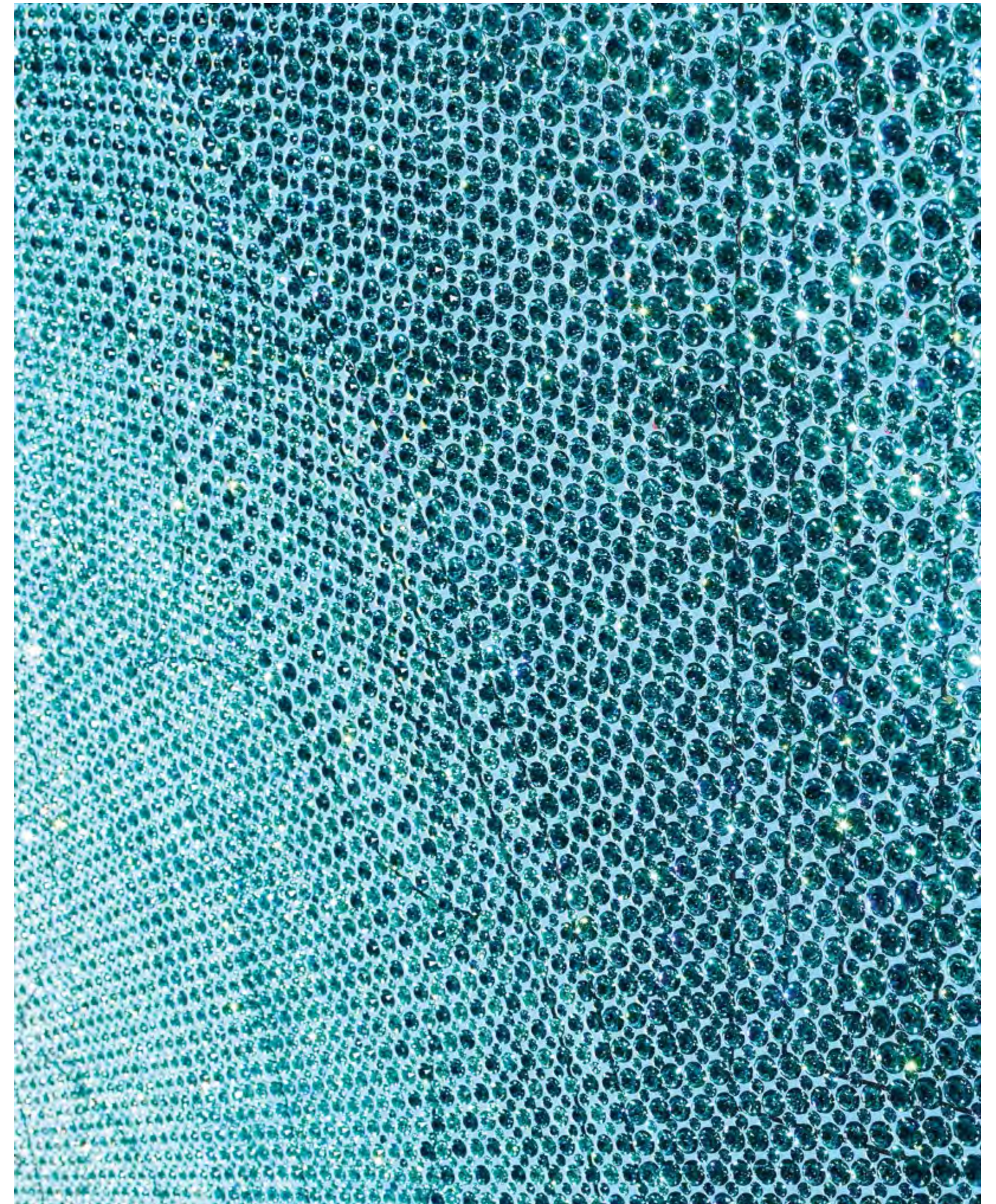


***EVOLUTION INVOLUTION***  
[Turquoise], 2016  
Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
149 × 149 × 2.5 cm  
104,741 Swarovski crystals



**“EACH PATTERN AND EACH COMBINATION OF THE DIVERSE FORMS OF GEMS CREATE A DIFFERENT REFRACTION OF LIGHT. MATH AND CHAOS ALTERNATE INTO MY WORKS, LIVING TOGETHER AS THEY DO IN THE UNIVERSE.”**

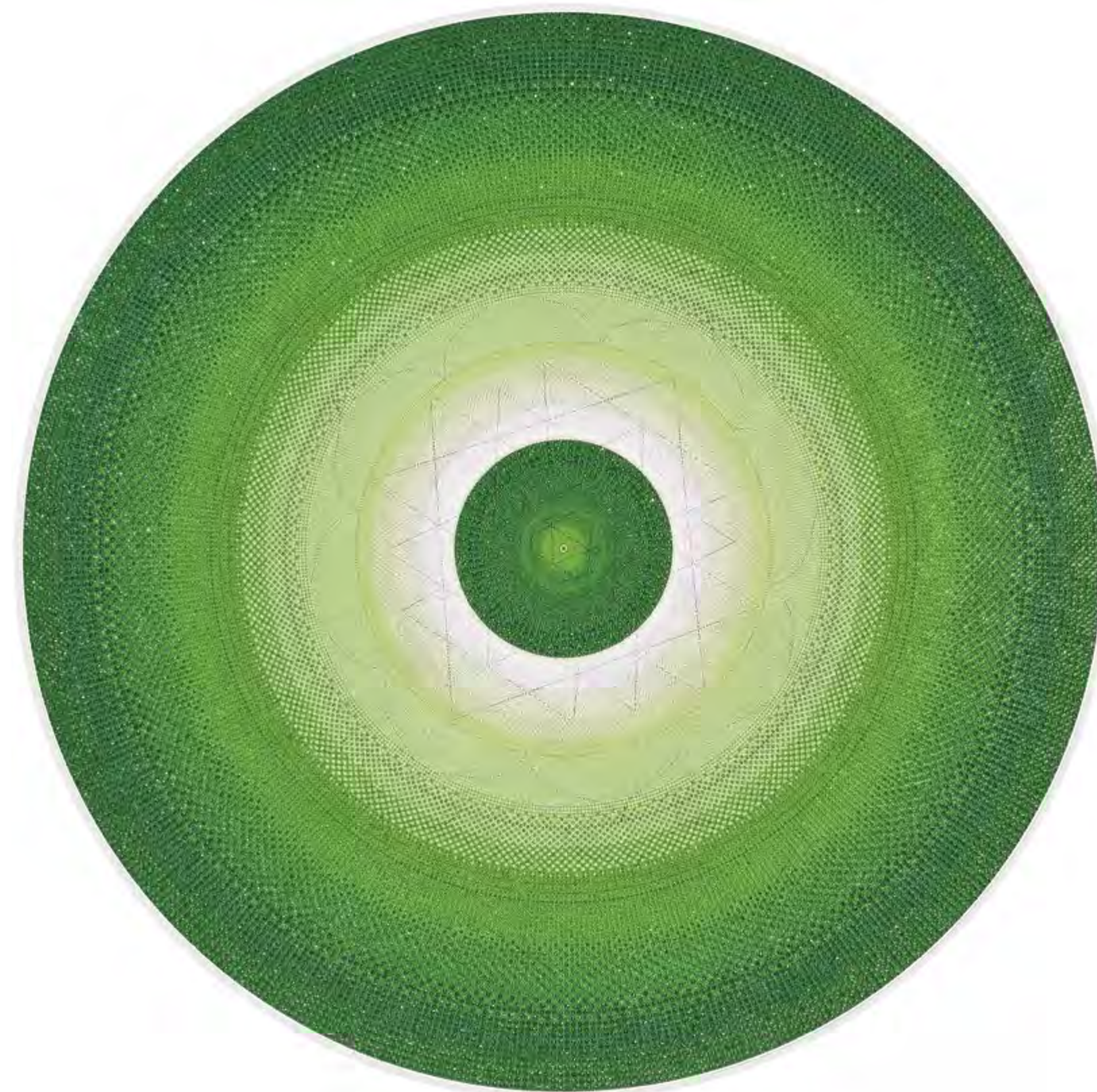
STEFANO CURTO











***EVOLUTION INVOLUTION***  
[Green], 2015

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
149.3 × 149.3 × 3 cm  
104,741 Swarovski crystals







***THETARTZERO***

[Red], 2016

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass

149 × 149 × 2.5 cm

75,175 Swarovski crystals





**“STEFANO’S THETART SERIES...  
ARE COSMIC, IN THE FAR OUT  
SENSE, BUT MICROCOSMIC,  
IN THAT WITHIN THEIR GENTLY  
REPEATING PATTERNS THEY  
PUSH AND PULL BETWEEN  
THE CHAOS AND UNPREDICTABLE  
POSSIBILITY OF THE MOVEMENT  
OF LIGHT, AND THE FINELY  
TUNED GEOMETRIC ORDERS  
THAT STEFANO MUST ORGANISE  
TO CREATE THEM.”**

**FELIX PETTY**  
Assistant Editor at i-D magazine









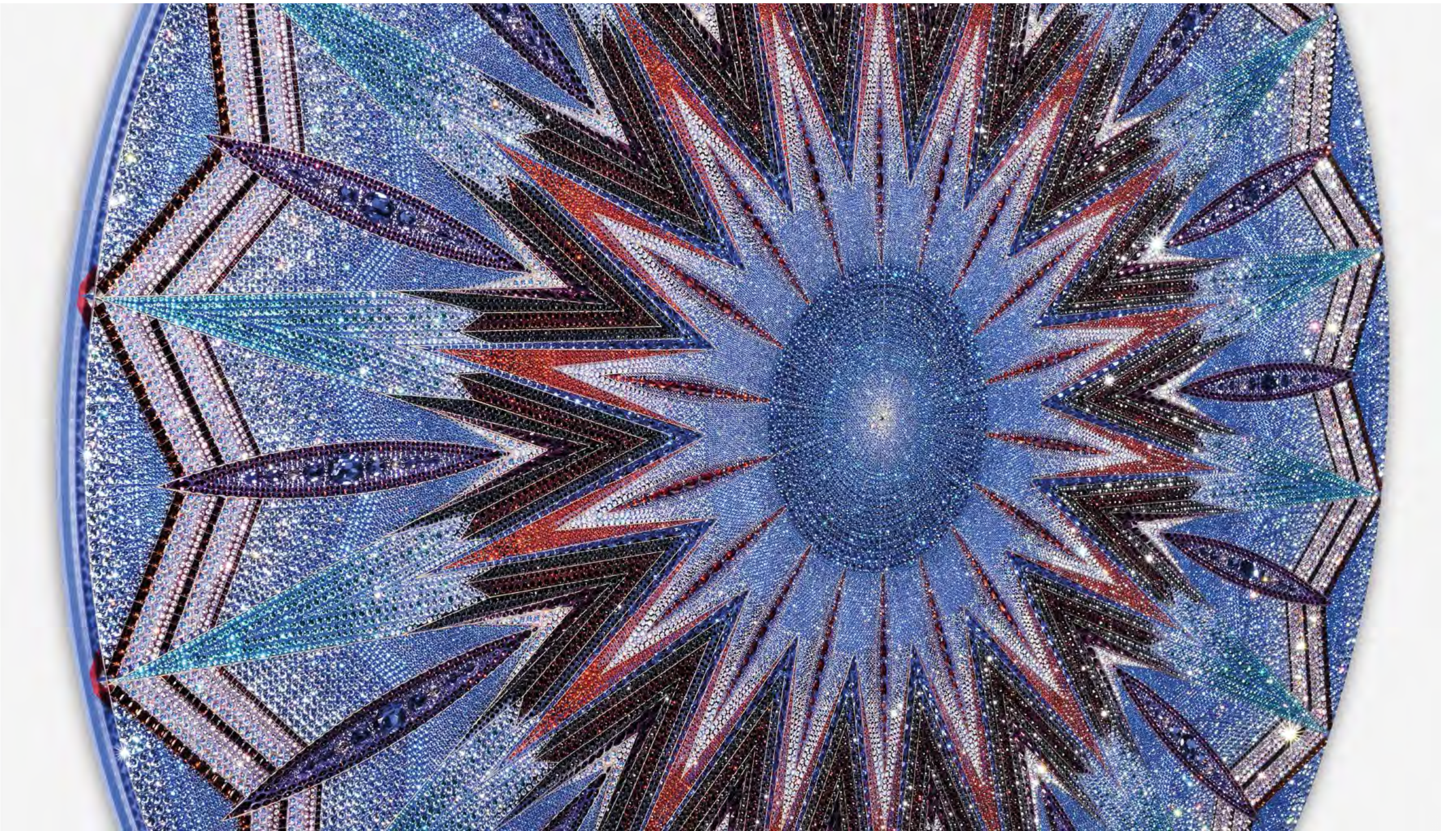
***THETARTZERO***  
[Blue], 2016

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
149 × 149 × 2.5 cm  
75,715 Swarovski crystals

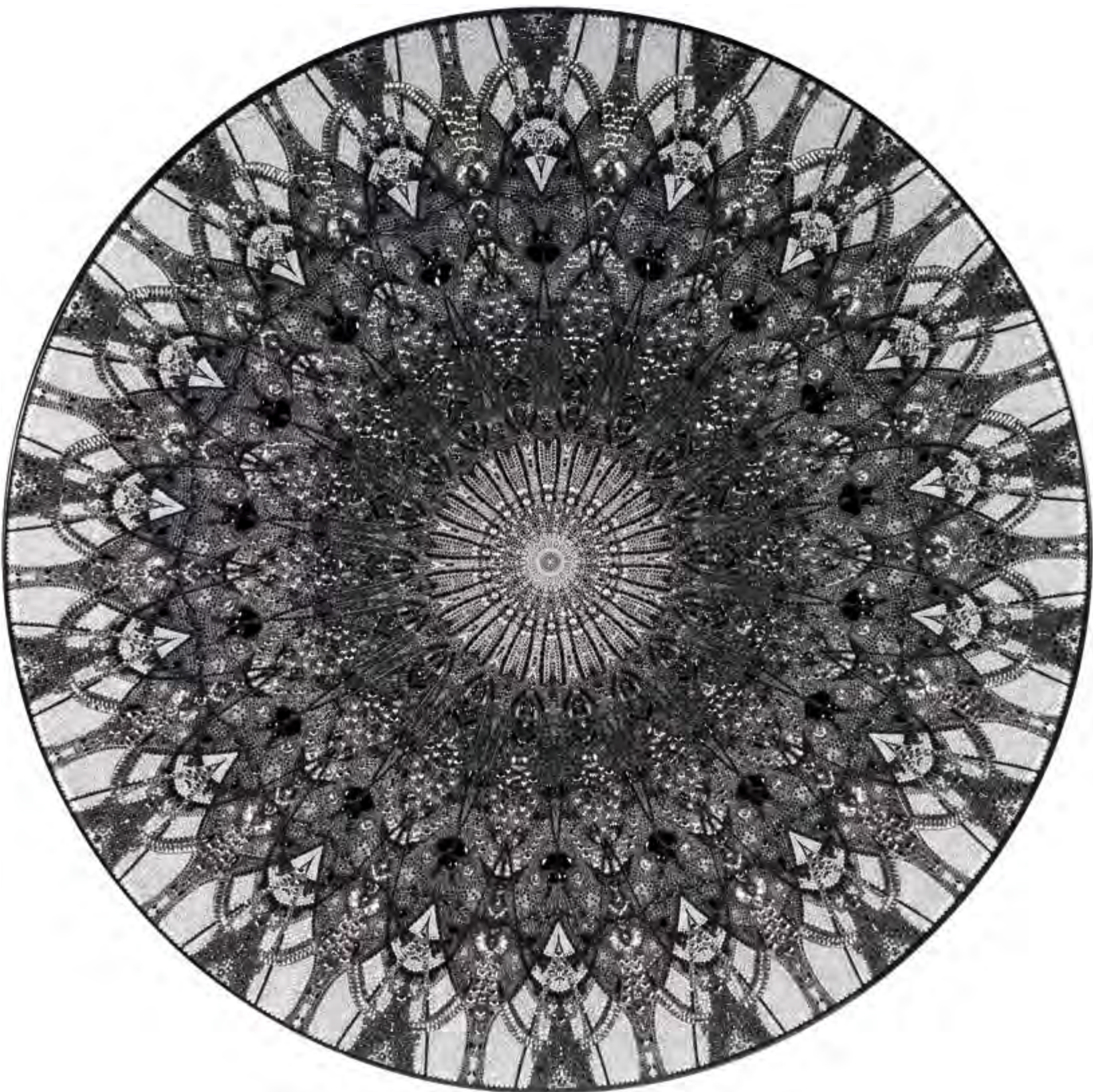












***THETART TWO***  
 2016  
 Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
 149 x 149 x 3 cm  
 75,715 Swarovski crystals





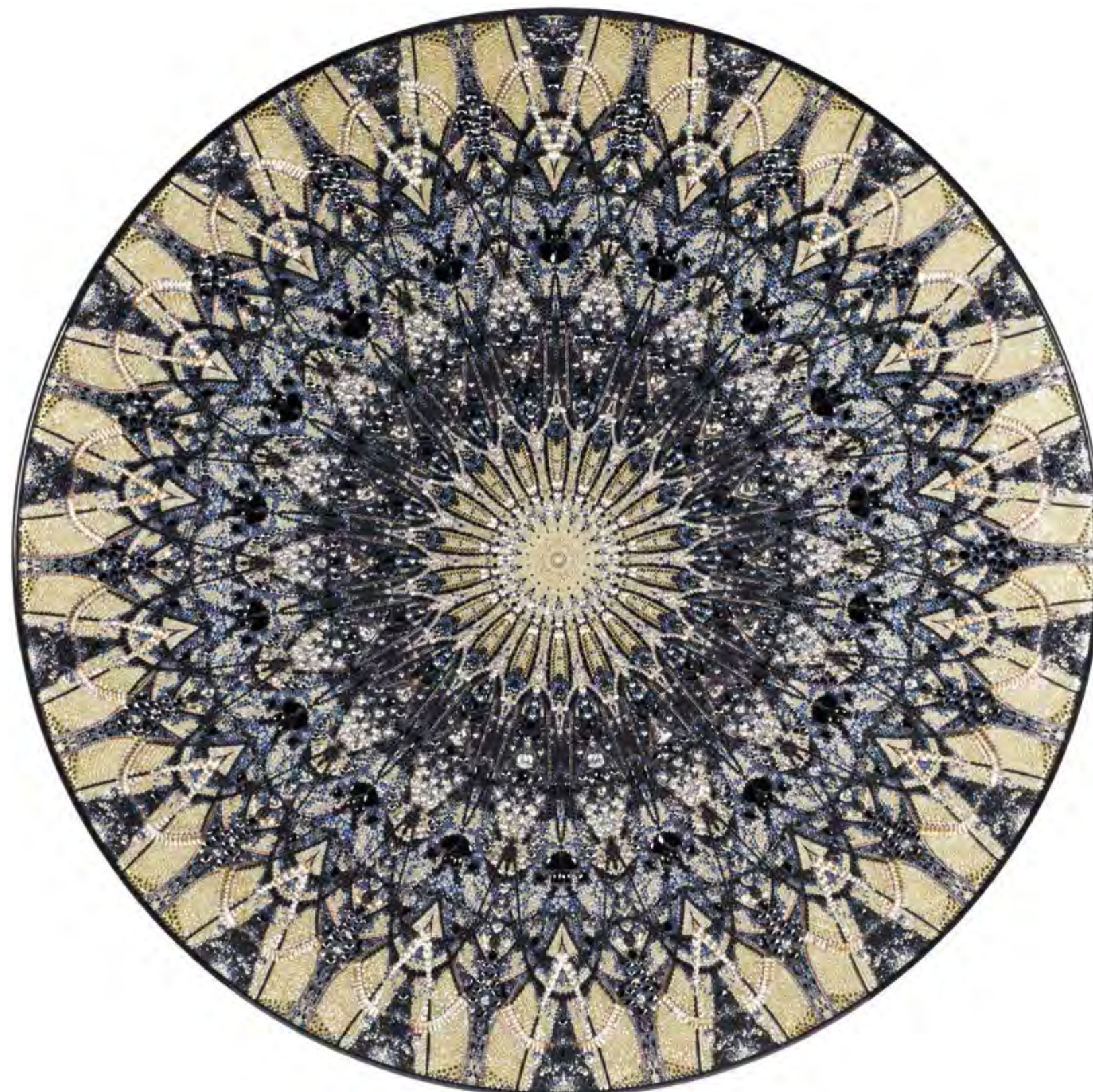
**“I HAVE FOUND A VISUAL  
LANGUAGE WITH THETART.  
A LANGUAGE THAT COMES  
FROM THE DEEPEST MEANING  
OF LIFE AND REVEALS ITSELF  
TO MY EYES WITH GREAT  
HARMONY AND PRECISION.”**

**STEFANO CURTO**







***THETART TWO***

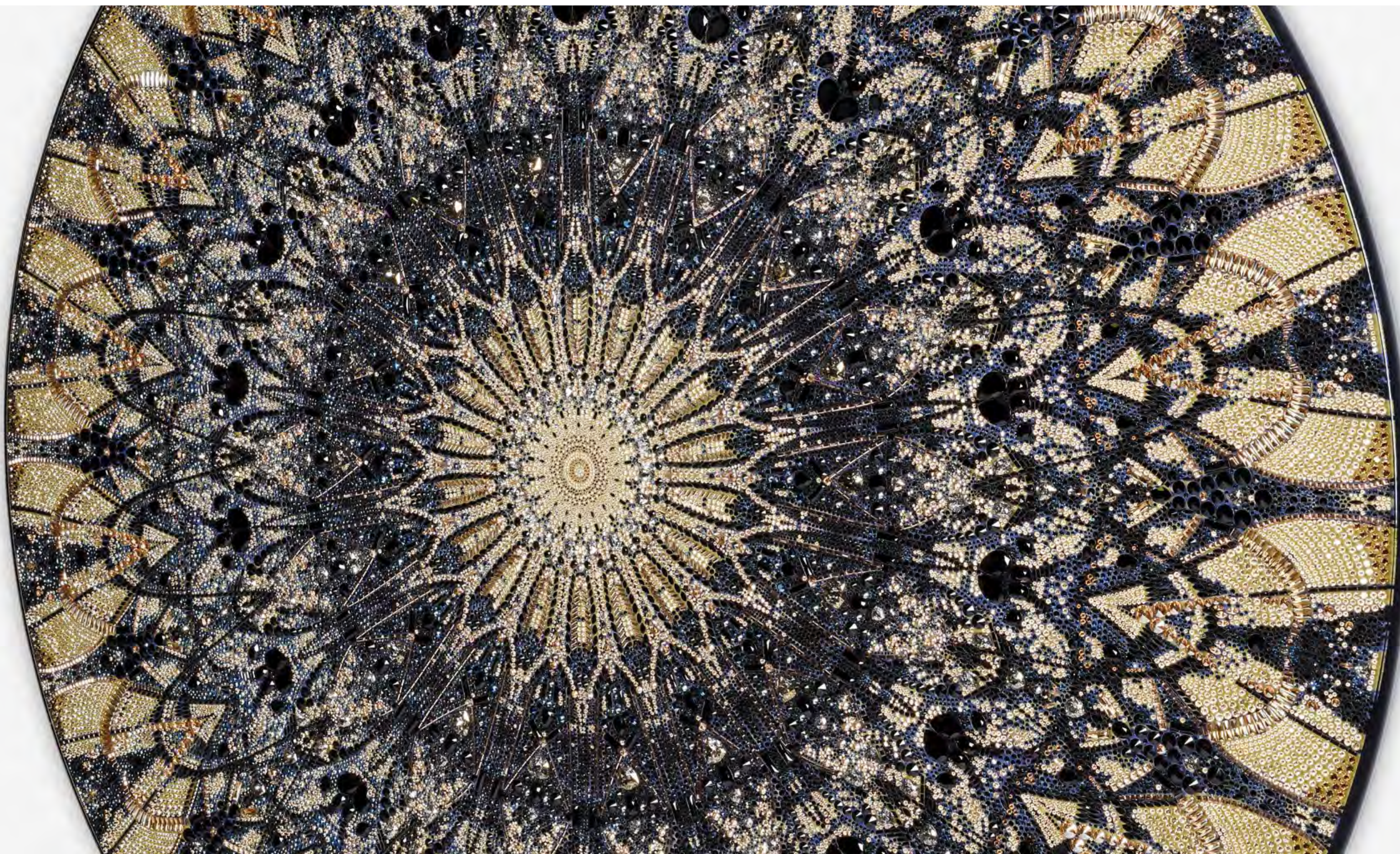
[Gold], 2016

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass

149 x 149 x 2.5 cm

75,715 Swarovski crystals











# In Conversation: Stefano Curto with Olivier Varenne

Stefano Curto in conversation with Olivier Varenne, the Co-Director of Exhibitions & Collections and International Curator at the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Tasmania, Australia. The interview took place in March, 2017.

**OV** : Stefano, your work forms part of the MONA Museum collection. Part of MONA’s philosophy is that we believe in the ability of art to transcend language and other forms of cognition, and tap straight into the ‘broader bandwidth’ of consciousness. Started by David Walsh in 2011, the collection represents Walsh’s desire to ‘democratise art’. How do you see yourself within the contemporary discourse of art?

**SC** : During the great opening at MONA, I realized that David Walsh was actually contributing to the discourse of democratizing art through your curatorial work. Walking down the stunning staircase and losing yourself in the MONA sounding board and moving through the anterooms of a cave that David carved from the ocean, is a sensorial experience. The artworks exhibited at MONA are intense, visceral and powerful. My life partner and dancing messenger, Pantxo Larreguy Elduayen and I have met all kinds of people from different social and intellectual backgrounds going down those stairs. The inner circle of the Art World came to investigate whether your artistic space could accommodate the rules of the contemporary art scene. As far as I am concerned they often forget that art should be accessible to everyone. When artists confuse us intentionally and make their work almost impossible to interpret, I believe that to be wrong.

I have always loved to attract viewers to my art, with the light which gives meaning to my work, and lead them on a journey that explores the human soul, even in its most terrifying essence (as in my work – *L’ORO MALATO*<sup>01</sup>).

I don’t like to limit my work to a specific context and I don’t commit time and energy to that. I do not usually investigate contemporary art and its debates. And it’s the same with music: I don’t look for influence; this is something that happens naturally without paying any attention to it. When you travel round the world, finding crucial artists from different periods, it is a recurring experience that leaves its mark on you. I have crossed the borders of many countries, experiencing the land, which can be as sacred as life itself. I have visited almost all the archaeological sites in the East and West sides of Persepolis, arguably the most significant areas of our time. I have seen street art in many capital cities and continue to find and visit museums where the art of all periods is preserved. I stop the most in the silence of nature, where I find time to create.

**OV** : You have worked with top Italian fashion houses in the past. Can you talk about your journey into becoming a visual artist? In addition you use gems in your practice — your work holds thousands of meticulously placed crystals, on average 60,000 per work. When did you start using gems and what is it about your chosen medium that is so special to your creative process?

**SC** : When I held gems given to me by my mother in my hands, I realized that I would be connected to them forever. I felt an immediate attraction. I couldn’t stop turning them to see the fragments glimmering under the lights and shining their own light. They were reflecting the moods, colours and shadows of the room. They seemed like stars responding to my actions, and I could compose constellations. I had a one-way ticket to Canada, ready to run away from that valley [in Segusino, my hometown] and ship wood on the trains towards Alaska, but the light won. I immediately began to experiment with different materials to understand their complex fixing technique. I used to have a lot of them



Stefano Curto and Olivier Varenne at MONA Museum of Old and New Art in Tasmania, Australia in front of *IL NERO INFINITO* in 2013.





MONA Museum of Old and New Art, viewed from Little Frying Pan Island, 2013.

“LIFE AROUND US IS TRANSMITTING  
CONSCIOUSNESS ALL THE TIME.  
EACH WORK IS CONCEIVED BY  
AN INTROSPECTIVE THOUGHT.”

STEFANO CURTO

at home. My father's company had just shut down, which for decades had made acetate eyewear. He designed the models manually, polishing the acetate with basic little tools. He was extremely talented and I inherited his dexterity and craftsmanship along with his passion for music. Now he is 91 years old and he started painting ten years ago. My mother was the first from our small town of Segusino to move to Milan, where she learnt how to dye and curl hair. Segusino is a very small town found at the foot of the Alps, and has a unique character; you either love it or hate it. My mother then changed her job to venture into the world of eyewear as an innovative and independent entrepreneur.

Each gem has a depth and a section that differentiates it from the next. The crystal housing must be perfect; their positioning requires great experience, very delicate handwork and a lot of time and patience. After a year of practice, I showed up in

one of the most prestigious companies at that time and I started working immediately, mounting gems based on the drawings provided. I quickly began to propose my ideas. I was patenting new combinations, colours and inventions. In just a few years, the most valuable brands started to visit my lab, interested in what I had to offer or to give me suggestions related to the brand that I was developing with my amazing team, driven by my sister Antonella Curto, who has always been by my side. The evolution of technology has allowed me to create never-before-seen works and my studio was coveted in that field and visited by all the most important brands. That significant development – along with the extraordinary evolution of technological tools and photography – pushed me towards the world of art, where I was welcomed with open arms. I have worked behind closed doors for six years, gathering everything that I needed to draw and to embed those gems into large



Curto Family portrait, 1970. Stefano Curto with Coppe Orsola (his mother), Giuseppe Curto (his father), his sisters, Antonella Curto and Maurizia Curto.



Stefano Curto's first show in Venice entitled *Trama Lucente*, 2010.

scale images. Images that have perhaps always been destined to leave the intangible world and become art. Stefano Cecchetto discovered my work and encouraged me, curating various exhibitions including *Trama Lucente*,<sup>02</sup> my first solo exhibition in Venice in 2010, where I experienced the shining eyes and words of 8,000 people and where you chose *IL NERO INFINITO*<sup>03</sup> for MONA's collection. I often picture artists like Leonardo acting in our time with our means; he would have taken us all dancing on Orion's belt on the back of shining horses.

**OV:** Coming from the Venice area and with one of your works in the Pontifical Collection in the Vatican, Italy, your identity is steeped in Italian history and culture. Venice has been heralded as one of the most important cities in the history of art, rearing the likes of Giorgione, Canaletto, Bellini or Tintoretto. Do you look back to the

Old Masters in your work, to the history of your native city and its legacy?

**SC:** The identity of all beings will be etched in the evolution of our species through their actions. Venice is a city you have to love and study. Standing in front of a Canaletto and observing in detail the vestiges of the past of that spectacular city or looking at the paradise of Tintoretto and his wonderful, mystical visionary inspirations, has motivated my artistic vocation. Over time, art has captured the most intimate mood of the society in which these artists have lived. If we really want to investigate a specific time with an artistic eye, we should consider all artists, not just the known artists - and this is not happening. I grew up as an artist surrounded by an essence of religion that is failed and overshadowed by human weakness, like many others. After two years my *SINDONE NERA*<sup>04</sup> entered that temple, the sacred place, of elects [The



“WHEN I HELD GEMS GIVEN TO ME  
BY MY MOTHER IN MY HANDS,  
I REALIZED THAT I WOULD BE  
CONNECTED TO THEM FOREVER.  
I FELT AN IMMEDIATE ATTRACTION.”

STEFANO CURTO

Pontifical Collection of the Vatican]. I do not believe in that religion, but I do now respect it a lot. I respect them all and I have never embraced one religion, but I have found many answers in Buddhism. In that work, I wanted to impress the face, white on black and break with the figurative identity using large crystals, which perhaps becomes an expression of the concern about faith nowadays. I use light though and that has always been a projection of hope. I believe that every contemporary artist's aim is to leave their mark on future generations.

**OV:** Italian art is often embedded in tradition and religion. Your art is very spiritual but in a completely different way, can you elaborate on the role of spirituality in your work? For example, your work titled *THETART* is rooted in meditation. Does the craftsmanship and dexterity required to make your work create a balance between

the freedom of meditation and the precise nature of your art?

**SC:** Through meditation you can seek yourself, and find that fulcrum where our essence is burning, the big bang of yin and yang, dark and bright spirits. There is nothing more precise, pure and harmonic than the balance that lies in the origin of our being in all its immense richness. As far as I'm concerned this is what we call spirituality. Everybody investigates it in their own way and belonging to a diverse culture has provided us with the keys to personal readings. I feel I have found the one that suits me through meditation and yoga practice, which is one of the many important gifts I have received and am thankful for. Knowing yourself is the way to freedom. I have found a visual language with *THETART*,<sup>05</sup> a language that comes from the deepest meaning of life and reveals itself to my eyes with great harmony and precision.



Stefano Curto working in his studio, 2015.



Stefano Curto amongst his drawings in Pai, Thailand, 2015.



Stefano Curto presenting *SINDONE NERA* to Pope Francesco, St. Peter's Square, Rome, 2013.

Three years ago I felt the call to learn the ancient and supreme technique of meditation. I had been to India twenty-three times. I was captivated by the Hindu monks that have an expression of an infinite deep, calm mystery. That was the time to explore. I went alone to the bottom of the Himalayas and tried many schools but did not find what I wanted. One day I casually knocked on a metal door with a small sign reading 'yoga' on it, facing the Ganga River, and an old man with a long grey beard opened the door and asked me if I was in need of any help. He was called Swami Virenadra. With an open heart I explained what I was feeling and said I was ready to explore my mind and ready to receive whatever was in there and out there. I said I was deeply feeling 'the call'. I spent two months with him, just him and me. He taught me the essence of yoga. Every day for hours, he would sit in a chair and observe every single breath of my chest. The silence of the mind opened a universe of awareness

in me and changed my perception of life maybe forever.

With the *EVOLUTION INVOLUTION* series,<sup>06</sup> I had already started the exploration of the mandala's power but, I don't call a *THETART* work a mandala. I have many visions during meditations and they become artworks, but *THETART* is different. I experimented with how these hypnotic figures are made and the way I do them. It is believed that everything that is inscribed inside a circle is a kind of spiritual protection zone for those watching it. What could I inscribe in my circles? Two years ago, during a month of solitude that I would take every year, I started making abstract drawings right after meditation and I saw that they were harmonious. In our culture the state of an empty but conscious mind before sleep is called '*theta*'. I prepare the drawing paper in front of me with charcoal colours. Then I sit and I do long *pranayama*<sup>07</sup> breathing and enter in to meditation for a long time. As soon as I

open my eyes, I just let my hand go and draw with no premeditation at all. After that I take a section of the drawing and create my circle. Sometimes I would see Gothic rose windows! I have always admired these windows, having seen them all over the western world. I reached this image through another route, one that has roots in the 'Eastern world' philosophies. How fascinating this was to me. Then the moment came, to give light to that Gothic window shape, so I 'drew' on top with my crystals, placing thousands and thousands of fragments of light. I chose each one spontaneously, easily, as if they were just waiting for my hand to catch them. The result is a *THETART* work. Each one represents an intense emotion. It is me somewhere, somehow in that circle.

**OV:** You have mentioned in the past that travelling is extremely important in creating. What is inspiring about your





Stefano Curto motorcycling with Francois Larreguy in Hampi, India, 2015.

travels? Are you setting off to explore the world or are you always looking for something specific?

**SC:** Travelling means moving around and migrating from a well-known situation to a multiple universe of infinite possibilities. It is clashing with elements that fate disseminates on our journey, speeding along in the chaos and attracting those elements that diversify and shape who we will become. All trips are different and explorative in their own way. Every place has its own energy. I spend a lot of time alone around the world, devoting time to yoga practices and meditation and also creating music and art. Mind and place can create the right synergy for our purpose. However the idea almost always develops in motion; it's on the road, with the wind blowing on your face and flowing images of the landscapes which fill your eyes, with its colours and immeasurable beauty. Your mind quivers and opens to bloom like a flower. I have travelled a lot, and I used to do long trips, often in remote areas or with my motorcycle throughout my beloved mountains and villages.

**OV:** Music also plays a large part in your life and practice. Do you also look at other mediums for inspiration, like paintings,

sculptures and photography, film? Would you say your work uses outside influences and experiences, or is your artwork rather conceived from a place of introspection?

**SC:** Life around us is transmitting consciousness all the time. Each work is conceived by an introspective thought. I use that profundity to create the alchemy that transmutes life into art.

Throughout the years I have been trying to describe my intimate relationship with music. To be honest, I know why and it's a strong reason even if it changes over time. The sound does not have anything to show, neither forms nor colour, but still its alchemy breaks in and demolishes pains and uncertainties. I have to find that language in the music itself and my visual artworks are the key. Perhaps, I am looking for the key through the composition of my fragments of light. I love all forms of art that create an emotional bridge and when this happens, the influence on my 'creative bandwidth' is a natural consequence. I have always considered the transformational processes in my life the main source of inspiration for my work.

I am currently recording an album. I have played for thirty five years with several



Stefano Curto, *THETART* preparatory drawing in colour, 2016.



Stefano Curto, freehand drawing in colour, 2016.

“I HAVE CROSSED THE BORDERS OF MANY COUNTRIES, EXPERIENCING THE LAND, WHICH CAN BE AS SACRED AS LIFE ITSELF.”

STEFANO CURTO

bands. I started as a punk singer, then I moved to performing as a new wave-Goth-post punk drummer, then I got back to singing and playing rhythm guitar and keyboards. My style has evolved into one that I would not be able to depict and I do not actually like to define it. I have composed music and lyrics since I was fifteen years old. I was born and raised with a piano that my father is still playing passionately. After fifteen years, I left my last band, *Lacrima Christi*, in 2016. We released three albums that we have never promoted. I'm currently recording with an outstanding Italian musician, Roberto Zancaner. I have learned to use professional recording programs. I have created a home-studio (called *Perineville*). Connecting with millions of sounds is an amazing experience. Now everything has changed: I create music slowly following my mood, recording when I feel inspired and stepping back from schedules to recall those magical and unforgettable synergies experienced with my band in the past. The album will be entitled *Technicolor Voyage* and it will be mixed and partly produced by Sebastian Mayer in Vienna – there is a lot still to be done.

**OV:** You often use vivid and contrasting colours in your work, can you tell me a little bit

more about the role of colour in your artwork? How about combinations of colours and patterns? How do they manifest themselves in your creative process?

**SC:** My latest artworks spring from visions I had during meditations in India last summer. I guess it is even harder meditating as an artist! We should never explore our visions during meditation; we should let them go like thoughts. I do lose many of them indeed, but I can occasionally find some visions when I re-awaken or when I am going to sleep. I always see vivid shapes and colours. In these visions, blue permeates everything. The effects of light that are transposed in my work rely on geometric precision in the placement of the crystals. Each pattern and each combination of the diverse forms of gems create a different refraction of light. Math and chaos alternate into my works, living together as they do in the universe. I definitely find my greatest source of inspiration is Mother Nature. The colours are like the scent and the music acts upon my emotional alchemy. It is the prevailing colours in *EVOLUTION INVOLUTION* and the eloquent alchemy that attracts viewers. Reading comments from people that have visited the *U-Topos* exhibition,<sup>08</sup> where the red and



Stefano Curto on a scooter in Segusino, Italy, 1968. The photograph was taken by his father Giuseppe Curto.



green works were displayed; most of them at first were attracted by the red than they were engaged with the colour which was in dialogue with their soul. Night and light, light in the night. Night in the light. The black and white have always been in my work too. Tao teaches.<sup>09</sup>

**OV**: Do you have a favourite way of viewing your art? When creating, do you envision a particular context for each work?

**SC**: The subject matters are crucial: I clearly picture a large dark space for the cosmic works like *THROUGH THE COSMIC NIGHT*<sup>10</sup> or *THE INFINITE BLACK EXPANDED* in 2011<sup>11</sup>, or *AMNIOTIC STARDUST*.<sup>12</sup> When I showed you *THETARTONE* that day, I had previously set the room. Totally black, there was a light shining weakly through, an eye projector radiating from the middle of the work intensively towards the outside. I imagined the work like this. You said: “It is amazing, but pulls you away...! I see it in another way: natural light from above, as if it came from the window of a gothic vault.” I liked it much more in the following days. Stefano Cecchetto taught me a lot about the presentation of my works. My paintings vividly reflect every space and every eye before it. Once I have created the work, I have learned to leave it to the different sensibilities of the viewers that approach it. Acting as a music producer, the curator may extend and direct the meaning of an artwork on multiple frequencies, intrinsic and unknown to the artist himself.

**OV**: *Stardust* is your first major exhibition in London at Halcyon Gallery. Can you tell us more about this project? What about the significance of *Stardust*, the exhibition’s title, and can you give us a glimpse into your plans for the future?

**SC**: I have always loved *Stardust* as a title and it came alive with Halcyon. When I

was twenty years old I had those crystals in my hands for the first time and I thought they were stardust, nothing else. Finally I can do more, supported by Halcyon, and this is all I have ever wanted. The production cost is very high and in all these years I have had to stretch out the creation, setting aside many projects that will now be real. Big dimensions, three-dimensionality, more colours. Who knows? *Pachamama*.<sup>13</sup> My art will also support the lives of some people I have met during my travels in India. Amazing people, with high values and behaviours – they have nothing but have taught me everything. That will be a part of any artwork that I create in the future. I want to create art that can spread a universal message which will make us aware of the causes and effects of our every action.

01 *L'ORO MALATO* (translated from Italian as 'Sick Gold'), is a work by Stefano Curto which appeared in his first show *Trama Lucente* in Venice in 2010. It consists of thousands of gold Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass.

02 *Trama Lucente* was Curto's debut show in Venice held at the Scoletta dei Batioro in Venice, in 2010 curated by Stefano Cecchetto.

03 *IL NERO INFINITO* (translated from Italian as 'Infinite Black') is a work by Curto which appeared in his first show *Trama Lucente* in Venice in 2010. It consists of thousands of black Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass.

04 *SINDONE NERA* (translated from Italian as 'Black Shroud') is a work by Curto that was inspired by a trip to South India. The work depicts Christ's face through a shroud. It entered The Pontifical Collection of The Vatican Museums, Rome in 2013.

05 Curto's *THETART* series are united by their circular form. The artist began these works in 2015. Inspired by his freehand drawings achieved after meditation, Curto adds thousands of Swarovski glass crystals to the forms, to create optical illusions.

06 Curto began his *EVOLUTION INVOLUTION* series in 2012. Defined by their concentric circles and vibrant colours, these works are made of thousands of Swarovski crystals.

07 'Pranayama' is the formal practice of controlling breath in yoga.

08 *U-Topos* was a solo exhibition of Stefano Curto's works held in Vittorio Veneto, curated by Stefano Cecchetto in 2015.

09 *Tao* is a Chinese word signifying 'way' or 'path'.

10 *THROUGH THE COSMIC NIGHT* was completed in 2014.

11 *THE INFINITE BLACK EXPANDED* was completed in 2010–2011.

12 *AMNIOTIC STARDUST* is a work by Curto that was completed in 2012-13. It is made of thousands of red glass Swarovski crystals.

13 '*Pachamama*' is a goddess revered by the indigenous people of the Andes. She is also known as the earth/time mother. In Inca mythology, Pachamama is a fertility goddess who presides over planting and harvesting, embodies mountains, and causes earthquakes. Stefano uses the term to mean 'to give back to mother earth the elements that she gave to us.'



# In Conversazione: Stefano Curto con Olivier Varenne

**OV** : Stefano, le tue opere fanno parte della collezione del museo MONA e come parte della nostra filosofia crediamo nell’abilità propria dell’arte di trascendere il linguaggio e altre indugianti   forme cognitive, puntando direttamente alla più “ampia banda” della consapevolezza. La collezione, iniziata da David Walsh nel 2011, è frutto del suo desiderio di attuare un processo di democratizzazione dell’arte. Come vedi te stesso nell’arte contemporanea?

**SC** : Quel giorno, al grande opening del MONA ho pensato che David con il vostro lavoro di curatela   lo stesse facendo. Scendere la grande scala e inabissarsi nella cassa di risonanza del MONA, attraversare le anticamere di quella tana che David ha scavato sotto il mare, è di per sé un’esperienza sensoriale. Le opere in mostra sono intense e graffianti, profonde, dissacranti, toccanti. Io e Pantxoa Larreguy Elduayen, mio compagno di vita e danzante ambasciatore, abbiamo visto gente di tutti i tipi e di tutte le estrazioni sociali e intellettuali scendere quei gradini, insieme all’élite delle caste venute a indagare se quel contenitore rispondesse ai dettami della scena artistica odierna. Elite che, a mio avviso, molto spesso si dimentica che la chiave di lettura della propria arte dovrebbe essere accessibile ai più. Quando un artista ci fa sentire piccoli e inadeguati, incapaci, molto spesso volutamente, di interpretare il suo operato, credo abbia sbagliato tutto. Amo tendere la mano, abbracciare gli occhi di luce e condurli a un viaggio che spazia e sonda l’animo umano anche nella sua più temibile essenza. Come nella mia opera *L’ORO MALATO*<sup>01</sup>. Non mi piace cercare un contesto in cui debba   inserirsi il mio operato. Non vi dedico tempo ed energia. Non cerco quasi mai di indagare sull’arte contemporanea e nemmeno il confronto. Questo anche nella musica: non cerco la contaminazione, essa avviene strada facendo senza   porvi alcuna intenzione. Viaggiando ovunque, gli incontri fatali con gli artisti di tutti i tempi sono frequenti ed ogni volta lasciano

il segno. Ho varcato i confini di buona parte delle terre di questa sfera per me sacra quanto la vita stessa. Ho visitato quasi tutti i più grandi lasciti archeologi dei nostri antenati a est e ovest di Persepoli, tutte le più grandi metropoli del nostro tempo. Ho percorso con lo sguardo chilometri di street art e di sale dove è custodita l’arte di tutti i tempi. Eppure, dove i miei piedi si fermano più a lungo, è nel silenzio della natura quando è ora di creare.

**OV** : In passato hai lavorato con grandi case di moda italiane. Puoi raccontarmi quale sia stato il tuo processo nel divenire un artista visivo? Nella tua pratica creativa utilizzi gemme di cristallo: le tue opere sono costituite da migliaia di cristalli incastonati meticolosamente, circa 60,000 per ogni tuo lavoro. Quando è iniziato il tuo lavoro con questo tipo di materiali? E cosa mi puoi   dire del *medium* che hai scelto e che rende così unico il tuo processo creativo?

**SC** : Nel momento stesso in cui ho avuto tra le mie mani quei cristalli che mia madre mi ha posto, ho saputo che vi sarei rimasto legato per sempre. L’attrazione che ho provato è stata fulminante. Non riuscivo a smettere di muovere le mani sotto ogni luce ed osservare come quei frammenti sembrassero vivere di luce propria. Riflettevano ogni umore dello spazio circostante, ogni colore, ogni ombra. Sembravano delle stelle che rispondevano al mio richiamo, potevo comporre notti a mio piacimento. In una mano avevo anche un biglietto, pronto per andare in Canada a trasportare legnami sui treni per l’Alaska e scappare finalmente da quella valle. Ha vinto la luce. Ho iniziato immediatamente la sperimentazione per capire l’intricata tecnica di fissaggio sui vari materiali. In casa ne avevo parecchio. Mio padre aveva chiuso un’attività in cui da decenni creava occhiali in acetato. Creava i modelli a mano, limando l’acetato con l’ausilio di piccoli macchinari molto basilari. Era bravissimo nella sua manualità e nella creatività che mi ha tramandato insieme alla musica. Ora ha 91 anni e da soli dieci ha iniziato

una produzione pittorica incredibile. Mia madre è stata la prima di un paesello di duemila abitanti ad andare a Milano per imparare a tingere e arricciarei capelli in quel di Segusino, un paesetto incastrato ai piedi delle Alpi che sfoggia un carattere unico. Si odia e si ama parecchio. Mestiere che mia madre ha poi cambiato per avventurarsi nel mondo dell’occhialeria come imprenditrice innovativa ed emancipata. Ogni gemma ha una profondità e una sezione diversa dall’altra. La sede di alloggiamento del cristallo deve essere perfetta. La loro posa è un lavoro manuale delicatissimo; richiede grande esperienza, molto tempo e pazienza. Dopo un anno di prove mi sono presentato a una delle aziende più prestigiose   del tempo e ho iniziato subito a lavorare. Inizialmente incastonavo le gemme seguendo i disegni che mi venivano dati: di lì a poco iniziai a proporre le mie idee. Nuovi accostamenti, colori e invenzioni che brevettavo. Dopo pochi anni i marchi più importanti iniziarono a venire nel mio laboratorio per vedere cosa potevo proporre o per darmi degli spunti legati al marchio che sviluppavo insieme al mio meraviglioso team guidato anche da mia sorella Antonella Curto, che è al mio fianco da sempre. L’evoluzione della tecnologia mi ha permesso di creare lavori mai visti prima e il mio atelier in quel campo era ambito e frequentato da tutte le più grandi griffe. È stato questo ampliamento epocale, questa incredibile evoluzione tecnologica negli utensili e nella fotografia a spingermi verso quella porta dietro la quale le mani tese dell’arte mi hanno accolto. Ho lavorato per sei anni a porte chiuse mettendo assieme passo dopo passo tutto ciò che serviva per poter disegnare e incastonare quelle gemme su grandi dimensioni e realizzare quelle immagini che, forse da sempre, aspettavano di lasciare l’immateria per diventare arte. Stefano Cecchetto ha scoperto la mia opera e mi ha accompagnato curando varie mostre tra cui *Trama lucente*<sup>02</sup>, la mia prima mostra personale a Venezia nel 2010, dove ho visto brillare gli occhi e le parole di ottomila persone e dove tu hai scelto *NERO INFINITO*<sup>03</sup> per il MONA. Immagino spesso

artisti come Leonardo agire nel nostro tempo con i nostri mezzi: ci avrebbe portati tutti a ballare sulla cintura di Orione in groppa a dei cavalli di luce.

**OV** : Considerando la tua origine nell’area veneziana e il fatto che una delle tue opere sia parte della Collezione Pontificia in Vaticano, la tua identità’ (di artista) è immersa interamente nella storia e nella cultura italiane. Venezia è stata proclamata una delle città più significative nella storia dell’arte, formando artisti come Giorgione, Canaletto, Bellini e Tintoretto. Fai riferimento ai Grandi Maestri della storia dell’arte nel tuo lavoro? E alla storia della tua città natale e al suo retaggio?

**SC** : L’identità di ogni essere rimarrà impressa nel divenire della nostra specie sotto forma delle azioni che avrà compiuto. Stare di fronte a un Canaletto a osservare nei minimi particolari le vestigia del passato di quella spettacolare città (che non si può non amare e non studiare) o stare di fronte al paradiso di Tintoretto e le sue meravigliose e visionarie ispirazioni mistiche, stare di fronte a tutti loro, motiva sempre di più la mia vocazione artistica. L’arte imprime nel tempo l’umore più intimo della società in cui gli artisti vivono. Se vogliamo veramente leggere con chiave artistica un’epoca dovremmo sondare tutti gli artisti però, non solo gli eletti. Questo non è esattamente ciò che sta succedendo. La mia *SINDONE NERA*<sup>04</sup> è entrata in quel tempio dopo due anni di una vicenda che mi ha fatto crescere molto, mostrandomi l’essenza di una religione che, come molte, è sporcata e offuscata dalla debolezza umana. Una religione in cui non credo ma che ora rispetto molto. Le rispetto tutte e non ne ho mai abbracciata nessuna, ma nel Buddismo trovo molte risposte.

Quel volto che ho voluto imprimere bianco su nero spezzandone ulteriormente l’identità figurativa con grandi cristalli, forse esprime l’inquietudine della   fede in questo tempo. Ma... lo lavoro con la luce che è da sempre proiezione di speranza. Credo che

nella scena artistica contemporanea sia insito nello scopo creativo di ogni artista lasciare ai posteri   la propria forma.

**OV** : L’arte italiana è caratterizzata da continui riferimenti alla tradizione e alla religione. Il tuo lavoro è estremamente spirituale ma con un approccio completamente diverso. Sapresti indicarmi il ruolo della spiritualità all’interno della tua opera? Per esempio, *THETART* è fortemente legata alla meditazione. Credi che l’abilità manuale e destrezza siano indispensabili per raggiungere l’equilibrio tra meditazione e precisione nelle tue opere?

**SC** : Attraverso la meditazione si cerca il centro del proprio essere. Si cerca quel fulcro in cui arde la nostra essenza, il big bang dello yin e dello yang, spirito oscuro e spirito lucente.   Non vi è nulla di più preciso, puro e armonico di quell’equilibrio in cui risiede l’origine del nostro essere in tutta la sua immensa ricchezza. Lì, a mio avviso risiede quello che definiamo spiritualità. Ognuno la ricerca a proprio modo e le chiavi a questa personale lettura ci sono state date da diverse culture. Nella meditazione e nella pratica dello yoga sento di averne ricevuta una a me affine. Uno dei molti doni importanti che ho ricevuto e di cui ringrazio la vita. Conoscere se stessi è la via per la libertà. Con la *THETART*<sup>05</sup> ho trovato un linguaggio visivo che nasce da quelle profondità e si esprime ai miei occhi con grande armonia e ... precisione.

Tre anni fa ho sentito il richiamo all’apprendimento della suprema e antica tecnica della meditazione. Ero stato in India ventritre volte prima di quell’anno. Mi ha sempre catturato la calma, la profondità infinita e il mistero insito nello sguardo di quei monaci Sadu. Sono andato da solo ai piedi del Himalaya e provato nei giorni a seguire molte scuole di yoga, ma sentivo di non essere sulla giusta strada. Un giorno, casualmente, ho bussato a una piccola porta metallica che si affacciava sul Gange con

un una scritta *yoga* incisa modestamente e un vecchio uomo con una lunga barba bianca e lunghi capelli mi ha chiesto se avessi bisogno di aiuto. A cuore aperto ho spiegato ciò che sentivo, ho detto che mi sentivo pronto per esplorare la mia mente e ricevere ciò che avrei trovato. Dentro e fuori di essa. Sentivo profondamente quel richiamo. Ho passato due mesi con lui, quasi sempre solo noi due. Swami Viernandanedra. Lui mi ha insegnato lo yoga nella sua essenza, seduto su una sedia di fronte a me. Per lunghe ore quotidianamente ha osservato il mio petto in ogni suo singolo respiro. Il silenzio della mente ha aperto in me un universo di consapevolezza e cambiato, forse per sempre, la mia percezione della vita. Avevo già sperimentato il potere mandalico con *EVOLUTION INVOLUTION*<sup>06</sup>, ma non chiamerei *THETART* un mandala. Ho molte visioni durante la meditazione che diventano spesso opere d’arte, ma la *THETART* è diversa. Ho indagato sulla costruzione di quelle figure ipnotiche e trovato con esse la mia via. Si crede che le figure e le geometrie iscritte all’interno di un cerchio siano una sorta di protezione spirituale dell’individuo che le osserva. Cosa potevo iscrivere all’interno del mio cerchio? Due anni fa durante un mese di solitudine che amo prendermi ogni anno, ho iniziato a fare dei disegni astratti immediatamente dopo la meditazione e ho constatato che vi era molta armonia. Nella nostra cultura, lo stato mentale di piena coscienza che precede il sonno, è chiamato Theta. Preparo gessetti e fogli di fronte a me, faccio profonde respirazioni pranayama<sup>07</sup> ed entro in profonda meditazione. Al mio *risveglio* (   se così si può definire) inizio a disegnare lasciando la mia mano scorrere sul foglio senza premeditazione.

Dopo di che, prendo una porzione del disegno e creo il “mio cerchio”. La prima volta sono rimasto stupefatto nel vedere che ciò che avevo di fronte era un rosone neogotico. Li ammiro da sempre: ho trascorso ore a osservarli nelle chiese del nostro Occidente. Vi sono arrivato attraverso un



percorso che ha origini nelle filosofie orientali. Per me questo è estremamente affascinante. Poi, viene il momento di dare luce a quel “rosone”. Disegno su di esso ponendovi migliaia di miei frammenti di luce. La scelta di ogni gemma è spontanea e magica come se fosse predestinata, come se quei cristalli aspettassero solo la mia mano per essere colti. Il risultato è un lavoro *THETART*. Io sono lì, dentro quel cerchio, da qualche parte, in qualche modo.

**OV** : Hai dichiarato in passato che viaggiare è estremamente importante nel processo creativo. Cosa ti ispira durante i tuoi viaggi? Parti per esplorare o cerchi sempre qualcosa di specifico?

**SC** : Viaggiare vuol dire muoversi, migrare da una situazione conosciuta a un universo cellulare di infinite possibilità di aggregazione. Cozzare con gli elementi che il destino dissemina nel nostro cammino, sfrecciare in quel caos e attrarli come proteine che differenziano e plasmano l’essere che diverrà. Tutti i viaggi sono esplorativi e in ogni caso diversi. Ogni luogo ha una propria energia. Passo molto tempo da solo in punti diversi del pianeta per dedicare tempo alle pratiche come lo yoga e la meditazione o per comporre musica e arte. Mente e luogo creano la giusta sinergia al nostro scopo. L’idea, invece, quasi sempre si sviluppa nel movimento. È sulla strada, con il vento in faccia, ed è quando nei miei occhi entrano le immagini del continuo mutare del paesaggio, dei suoi colori e delle sue incommensurabili bellezze, che la mente freme e si apre per sbocciare come un fiore che emana essenza. Viaggio molto su qualsiasi cosa a due ruote. Faccio viaggi lunghissimi, spesso in zone remote, ma anche nelle mie montagne e tra i miei paeselli in bici.

**OV** : La musica ha sempre avuto un ruolo fondamentale nella tua vita e nel tuo processo creativo. Fai riferimento anche ad altre forme artistiche come fonte di ispirazione, come

pittura, scultura, fotografia, cinema? Potresti affermare che il tuo lavoro si basa su esperienze e influenze esterne? O che piuttosto nasce da un processo di introspezione?

**SC** : Ogni secondo di questa vita veicola in noi cognizione. Ogni mio lavoro è concepito da un pensiero introspettivo. Attingo a quella profondità dove vivono le alchimie che trasmutano in arte il vissuto.

Sono anni che cerco di carpire un linguaggio che possa definire il mio rapporto così intimo e dirompente con la musica e, mentre scrivo questo, forse, trovo una ragione, una delle tante che trovano forza e cambiano nel tempo. Come tutto cambia... Il suono non possiede nulla da mostrare, né forme né colore. Eppure la sua alchimia entra e scardina dolori e sicurezze... Forse è nella musica stessa che devo cercare quel linguaggio e le mie opere visuali sono la chiave. Forse, attraverso la composizione, con i miei frammenti di luce, cerco quella chiave. Amo ogni forma d’arte che crei un ponte emotivo in cui mi possa sintonizzare: quando questo accade, l’influenza sulla mia “banda creativa” è naturale conseguenza. Non vi è un *medium* specifico dal quale io attinga maggiormente, se non dalle alchimie del mio vissuto. Tornando alla musica, attualmente sto incidendo un album. Ho suonato per trentacinque anni con varie band. Da prima come cantante punk, poi come batterista new wave, dark, post punk. Nel tempo sono poi tornato al canto, -alla chitarra ritmica e alle tastiere per poter comporre, evolvendo nel genere che ora non saprei e non mi piace definire. Compongo musica e testi da quando avevo quindici anni. Sono nato e cresciuto con un pianoforte in casa che mio padre suona tuttora con vigore. Ho lasciato la mia ultima band “Lacrima Christi” nel 2016 dopo quindici anni, con tre album all’attivo che non abbiamo mai promosso. Ora sto incidendo insieme a Roberto Zancaner, un musicista eccezionale del mio paese. Ho imparato a usare dei programmi di registrazione professionali. Ho creato uno studio (Perineville) a casa mia. Avere di fronte la

connessione con milioni di suoni è un’esperienza straordinaria. Ora è tutto diverso rispetto a prima: sviluppo la musica passo dopo passo seguendo il mio umore, registrando quando sento il momento di ispirazione, senza orari e senza quelle sinergie che, seppur magiche e indimenticabili, ho vissuto con i miei compagni musicisti di un tempo e che ora veicolo da me.

L’album si intitolerà “Technicolor Voyage”, sarà mixato e in parte prodotto da Sebastian Mayer a Vienna. È a buon punto

**OV** : Molto spesso fai uso di colori intensi e contrastanti, potresti dirmi qualcosa in più sul ruolo del colore nelle tue opere? Relativamente, ad esempio, alla combinazione dei colori e dei motivi, come si manifestano nel tuo processo creativo?

**SC** : In questo momento sto lavorando a delle opere che nascono da visioni che ho avuto durante delle meditazioni l’estate scorsa in India. È ancor più difficile meditare da artista! -Non dovremmo mai esplorare le nostre visioni durante la meditazione; dovremmo lasciarle andare come i pensieri. Ne smarrisco moltissime infatti, ma qualcuna ogni tanto si fa trovare al mio “risveglio” o... al mio addormentarmi? Vedo forme e colori che sono sempre vividi.

In quelle visioni il blu permea ogni cosa. Negli effetti di luce che creo in molte opere, la precisione geometrica nella disposizione dei cristalli è fondamentale. Ogni pattern, ogni accostamento di forme diverse di gemme crea una rifrazione diversa della luce. Nei mie lavori convivono matematica e caos, sono nell' universo così come nel mio operato. Nel divino di Madre Natura trovo sicuramente la più grande fonte di ispirazione. I colori sono come il profumo e le note, agiscono sull’alchimia emozionale. Nel colore imperante delle *EVOLUTION INVOLUTION*, l’alchimia che ogni spettatore attrae a sé è eloquente. Ho visto di persona e letto i commenti della gente entrata nelle sale di *u-topos*<sup>08</sup> dove erano

esposti il rosso e il verde: il rosso è dove si sofferma per primo lo sguardo dei più. La scelta successiva divide e indirizza le persone ad andare incontro al colore che interloquisce in quel momento con l’umore del proprio inconscio. Notte e luce, luce nella notte, notte nella luce.

Il bianco e nero sono sempre presenti nei mie lavori. Il *tao* insegna<sup>09</sup>.

**OV** : In quale modo preferisci osservare le tue opere? Immagini un particolare contesto per ogni tuo lavoro durante la sua creazione?

**SC** : Dipende dal soggetto: per le opere “cosmiche” come *THROUGH THE COSMIC NIGHT*<sup>10</sup>, *THE INFINITE BLACK EXPANDED in 2011*<sup>11</sup> o *AMNIOTIC STARDUST*<sup>12</sup>, chiaramente vedo un contesto con un grande spazio oscuro. Quando ti ho mostrato *THETARTONE* quel giorno, avevo prima preparato la sala. Tutta nera, una luce che la illuminava debolmente e un proiettore a occhio che doveva partire dal centro e svilupparsi intensamente verso l’esterno. Così vedevo quell’opera.

Tu mi ha detto: “E’ stupenda, ma tira via quel faro. Io la vedo in altro modo: luce naturale, dall’alto, come se venisse dalla vetrata di una volta gotica”, Mi piaceea molto di più giorni a seguire. Anche Stefano Cecchetto in questo mi ha insegnato molto. Le mie opere riflettono vividamente ogni spazio e ogni occhio che vi sia di fronte. Una volta creata l’opera, ho imparato a “lasciarla” alle diverse sensibilità che la osservano. Come il produttore in musica, il curatore può ampliare e direzionare il messaggio di un’opera su più frequenze, insite ma sconosciute all’artista stesso.

**OV** : *Stardust* sarà la tua prima mostra a Londra presso la Halcyon Gallery. Potresti rivelarci qualcosa in più su questo progetto? Cosa significa il titolo della mostra “Stardust”? Potresti darci qualche anticipazione sui tuoi piani futuri?

**SC** : *Stardust* è un titolo che mi è sempre piaciuto e con Halcyon prende vita. Quando ho avuto per la prima volta quei cristalli tra le mani a vent’anni, ho pensato fossero esattamente questo: polvere di stelle.

Finalmente con Halcyon alle spalle posso creare di più ed è ciò che ho sempre desiderato. Le mie opere hanno un costo molto elevato di realizzazione e in tutti questi anni ho dovuto centellinarne la creazione mettendo da parte moltissimi progetti che ora prenderanno luce. Grandi dimensioni, tridimensionalità, più colore e chissà... *Pachamama*<sup>13</sup>. La mia arte sosterrà anche la vita di alcune persone che ho incontrato nei miei viaggi in India. Esseri speciali, superiori che, senza avere nulla, mi hanno insegnato tutto. Ogni opera che creerò avrà intessuta tra le sue trame anche quell’intenzione. Arte come veicolo di un messaggio universale, che renda consapevoli delle ragioni di causa ed effetto di ogni nostra azione.

<sup>01</sup> *L’ORO MALATO* (tradotta in inglese ‘Sick Gold’), è un’opera di Stefano Curto apparsa per la prima volta in mostra durante la sua prima personale *Trama Lucente* a Venezia nel 2010. Si compone di migliaia di cristalli oro Swarovksi su plexiglass.

<sup>02</sup> *Trama Lucente* è stata la mosta-debutto di Curto a Venezia, realizzata presso la Scoletta dei Batiore nel 2011 e curata da Stefano Cecchetto.

<sup>03</sup> *IL NERO INFINITO* (tradotta in inglese ‘Infinite Black’) è un’opera di Stefano Curto apparsa per la prima volta in mostra durante la sua prima personale *Trama Lucente* a Venezia nel 2010. Si compone di migliaia di cristalli neri Swarovksi su plexiglass.

<sup>04</sup> *SINDONE NERA* (tradotta in inglese ‘Black Shroud’) è un’opera di Curto che prende ispirazione dal suo viaggio nell’India meridionale. L’opera ritrae il volto di Cristo sulla sindone. Dal 2013 fa parte della Collezione Pontificia del Vaticano.

<sup>05</sup> Le opere della serie *THETART* di Curto sono accomunate dalla loro forma circolare. La produzione di tali opere è iniziata nel 2015. Ispirato dai disegni a mano libera realizzati dopo la meditazione, Curto aggiunge alle forme ottenute migliaia di cristalli Swarovski, creando illusioni ottiche.

<sup>06</sup> Curto ha iniziato la sua serie *EVOLUTION INVOLUTION* nel 2012. Caratterizzate da cerchi concentrici e colori sgargianti, tali opere sono realizzate con migliaia di cristalli Swarovski.

<sup>07</sup> ‘*Pranayama*’ descrive la pratica di controllare il respiro nello yoga.

<sup>08</sup> *U-Topos* tra spazio e luce è stata una mostra personale di Stefano Curto curata da Stefano Cecchetto e che ha avuto luogo a Vittorio Veneto nel 2015.

<sup>09</sup> ‘*Tao*’ è la parola cinese che si traduce con “via” o “corso”.

<sup>10</sup> *THROUGH THE COSMIC NIGHT* è stata completata nel 2014 e sarà esposta durante la mostra ‘*Stardust*’ presso la Halcyon Gallery nel 2017.

<sup>11</sup> *THE INFINITE BLACK EXPANDED* è stato completato nel 2010-2011.

<sup>12</sup> *AMNIOTIC STARDUST* è un’opera di Curto che è stata completata nel 2012–13. Si compone di migliaia di cristalli rossi Swarovski.

<sup>13</sup> ‘*Pachamama*’ è una divinità venerata dai popoli abitanti l’altopiano andino. Significa in lingua quechua *Madre Terra*. Nella mitologia incaica Pachamama è la dea della fertilità, protettrice della semina e del raccolto, personificazione delle montagne-e causa di terremoti.





St Mark Relics Mosaic above the doorway on the far right of San Marco Basilica, depicting the legend of the smuggling of St Mark's body from Alexandria.

# Materiality and Magic: The Powerful Pull of Stefano Curto

When one first encounters a piece by Stefano Curto, it is the glamour and sparkle of his works, made of thousands of gems that first captures your attention. This is perhaps what we would expect of the work made by a man who spent the first twenty years of his career setting precious stones for the most prestigious fashion houses of Italy. However, on closer inspection, caught in the tractor beam of the beauty of these intricately crafted works, it becomes clear that something far more profound is at play.

Curto began his career with precious stones when his mother, in an attempt to stop her son travelling half way across the world to chase adventure and freedom driving logging trucks in Canada, intervened. Her intervention took the form of the physical exchange of precious stones: as she poured them into his hands, they glinted in the light, and he was hooked. This transformative moment in Curto's life was cued by a momentary encounter, by a flash of light caught and reflected in the depths of the stone. Curto has said that in this moment the gems "seemed like stars responding to my actions, and I could compose constellations."

The years Curto spent working with this magical material, years in which he spent honing his skills and developing his understanding, and innovative approaches to their possibilities have resulted in an ability to assess the properties of each stone in one glance. Curto selects and positions each stone based on its own individual properties. His sensitivity to their individual qualities means he can use them in artistic alchemy, as it is not the properties of the stones themselves as static objects in isolation that are his priority. Instead, it is, as is appropriate for an alchemist, the potential that they have to create an other-worldly effect when combined with other ingredients. For Curto, the catalytic ingredient in his work is light. The physiological impact on the viewer of this heady combination of

light and a mass of carefully amassed precious stones, is the central tenant of his work.

When one first approaches a work by Curto, it may appear seductive with the associations of luxury that such sparkling precious materials evoke. As you move across the room, however, the work begins to exert its magical force, changing as the viewer moves. A ripple of sparkling light racing across its shimmering surface. You pause, and move your head backwards and forwards playing with the encounter the work offers, experimenting with the reflection refracted in the stones.

Curto harnesses the power of light. As the thousands of crystals come together to reflect swathes of light, the viewer is caught in a moment that transcends, by definition, the transitory nature of the fashion world. The seductive shimmer of a luxury good becomes a coordinated flash that pulls the viewer into a moment. As the precious stones Curto uses form a prism through which light is diverted and orchestrated, so his works function as a prism, guiding the viewer through a moment of pause and play, a moment of focus, where the outside world takes a back seat.

This moment, as the viewer is caught in the light glinting from the stones, is foregrounded in the contemplative nature of Curto's creative practice. The thousands of stones that come together to form each piece, are meticulously hand set in a process which can take years of focused intent. This highly skilled technique no doubt requires the patience of a saint. The repetition, concentration, and deep focus on the work, provide Curto with a space in which he feels connected to something beyond himself. The creation of a work is something he experiences as definitively spiritual.

Curto spends a large portion of his time travelling around the world, but particularly



forms that share this communal strength. Made from thousands of pieces of stone or glass set together to form a figural or ornamental surface, their materiality has a solidity which seems to defy a fixed temporality.

Mosaics are rooted in Italian culture. The rediscovery of the mosaics at Hadrian's villa in Tivoli<sup>01</sup> in 1737 brought about a resurgence of interest in mosaic as a decidedly Italian art form. Inspired by this discovery throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries artisans heated and shaped rods of coloured glass, bringing them together to form the most intricate and delicate micro mosaics.<sup>02</sup> The impossibility of these works inspires wonder in the viewer as the illusion that they are made up of painted brushstrokes shatters. Curto arguably draws on all these evocations: eternity, solidity, and wonder.

When Curto travels, he searches not only for the spiritual space in which inspiration can occur, but also for experiences that throw up figurative sources. This is reflected in his work, where he incorporates motifs that speak to a range of different cultures. Rendering this imagery in his unique style serves to underline the unity he feels we have as a human race. Each culture is made up of a vast number of individuals, the human race is made of a vast number of cultures, Curto seeks to unite all through his practice. No small aim, but one that is no doubt admirable in these divided and difficult times.

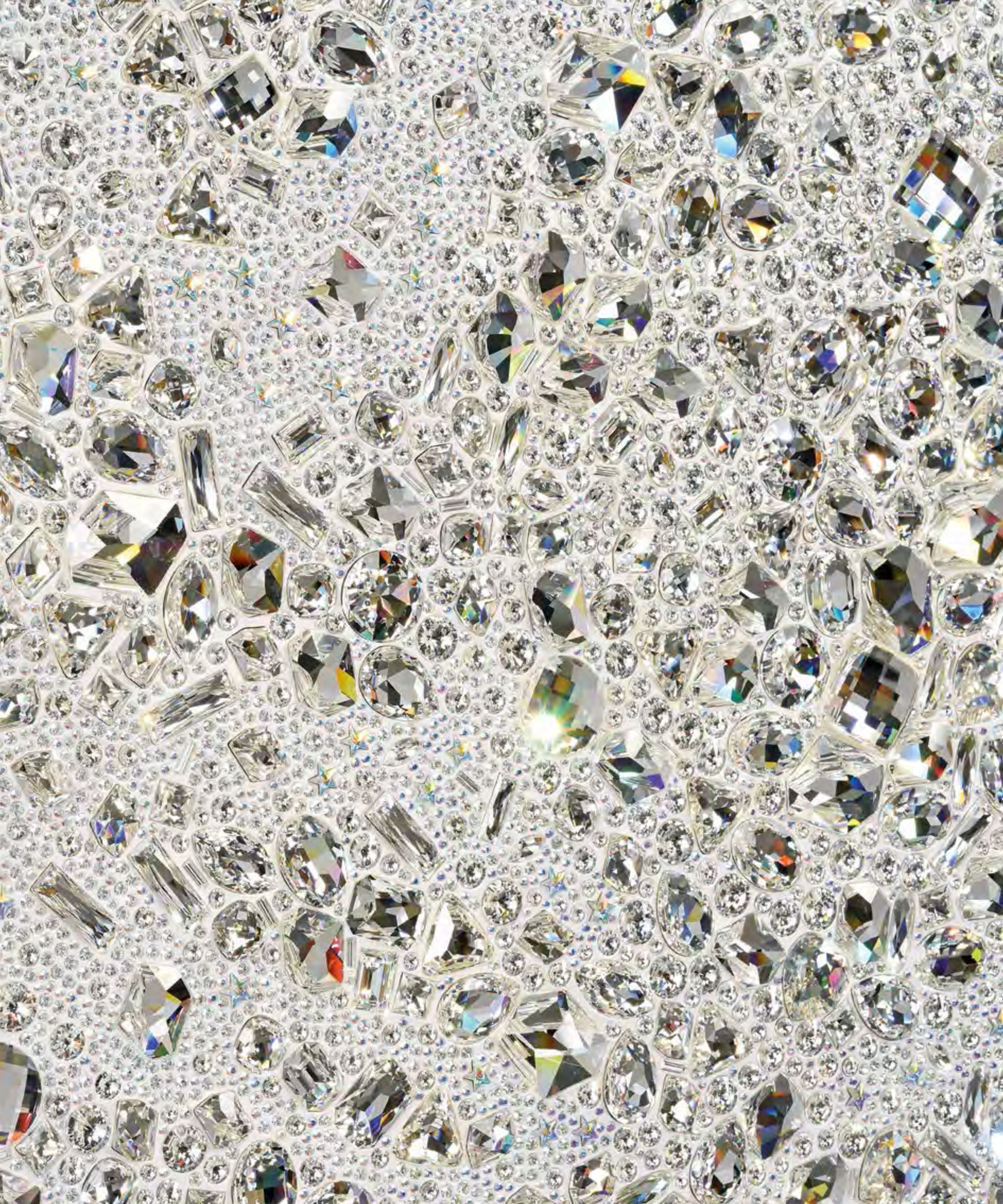
Curto has said that 'knowing yourself is a way to freedom.' He has found himself in his travels, in his practice of yoga and meditation and in his interactions with people he has spent time with the world over. Perhaps we can understand Curto as an artist through the way he creates his works. He approaches and selects each stone, paying careful attention to both its needs and his, and delicately sets it before moving on to the next. This deliberate,

considered approach requires above all patience and determination. As each viewer encounters Curto's work, they are provided with a carefully selected moment of pause, play and peace. As a consequence, Curto hopes, they will feel the shared nature of their humanity. Then they move on as the next viewer approaches. Through his alchemy Curto works on one viewer after another, setting us all within a more peaceful and united world. Perhaps he will get to all of us; he certainly has the patience for it.

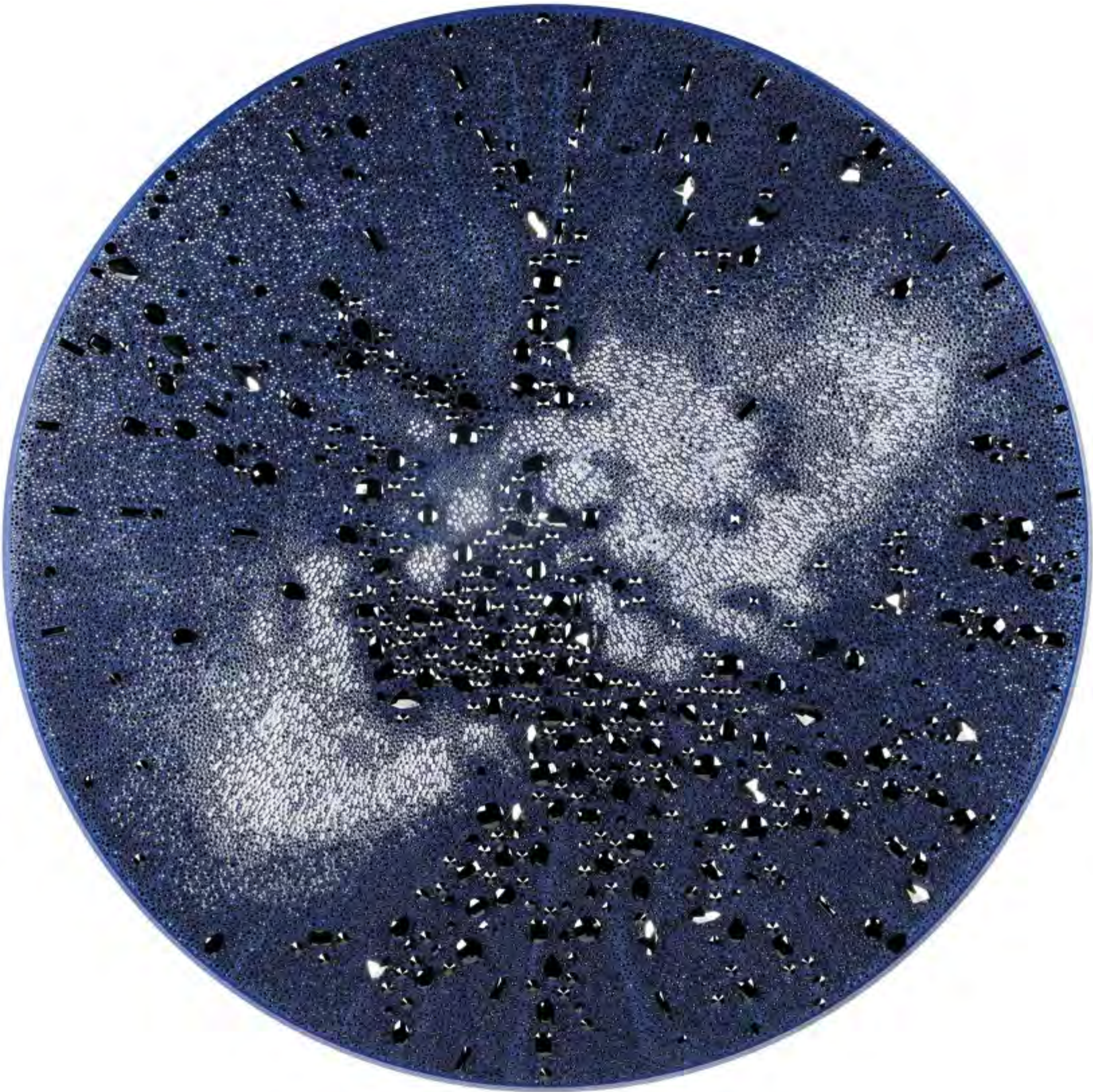
**Charlotte Johnson is the Assistant Curator of the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection in the Department of Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.**

01 Hadrian's Villa is a large Roman archaeological complex at Tivoli, Italy.

02 Micro mosaics are a special form of mosaic that uses unusually small mosaic pieces.



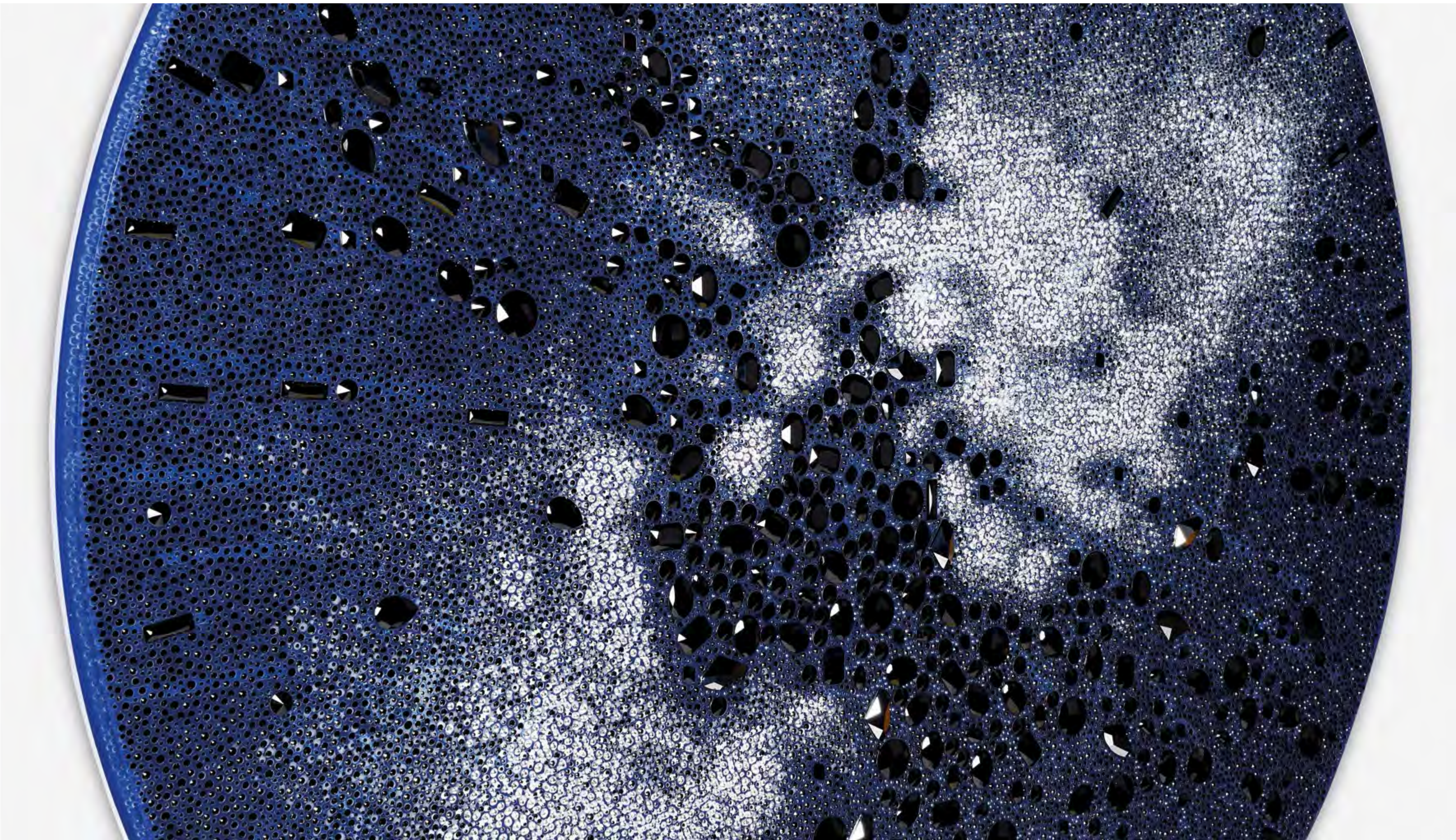




*THROUGH THE COSMIC NIGHT*  
[Blue], 2014

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
122 × 122 × 3 cm  
38,000 Swarovski crystals













*THROUGH THE COSMIC NIGHT*  
[Black], 2014

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
148 x 148 x 3 cm  
38,000 Swarovski crystals







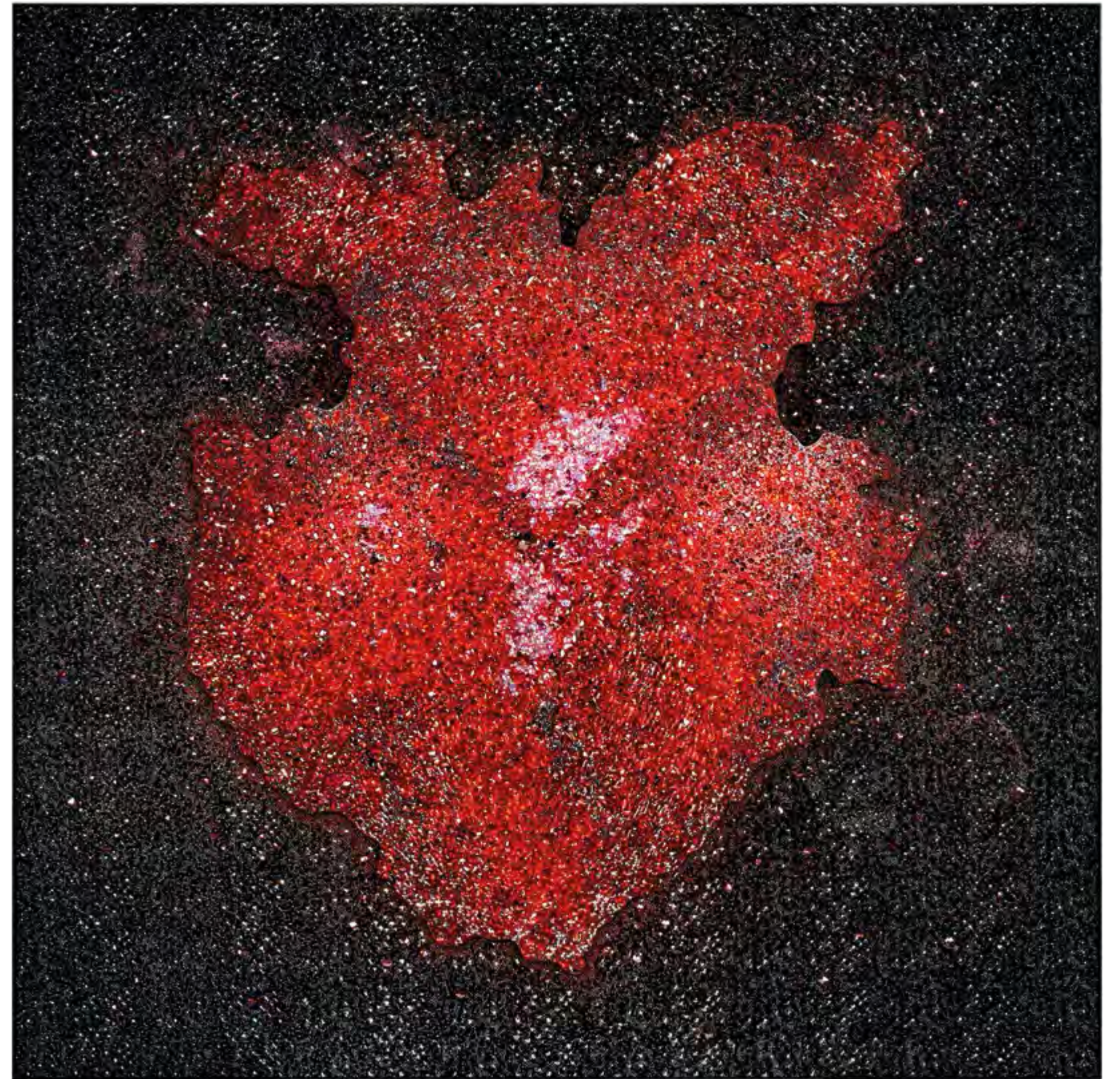


**“THEY SEEMED LIKE STARS  
RESPONDING TO MY ACTIONS,  
AND I COULD COMPOSE  
CONSTELLATIONS.”**

**STEFANO CURTO**



***AMNIOTIC STARDUST***  
2012-2013  
Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
199.1 × 199.1 × 20 cm  
164,842 Swarovski crystals



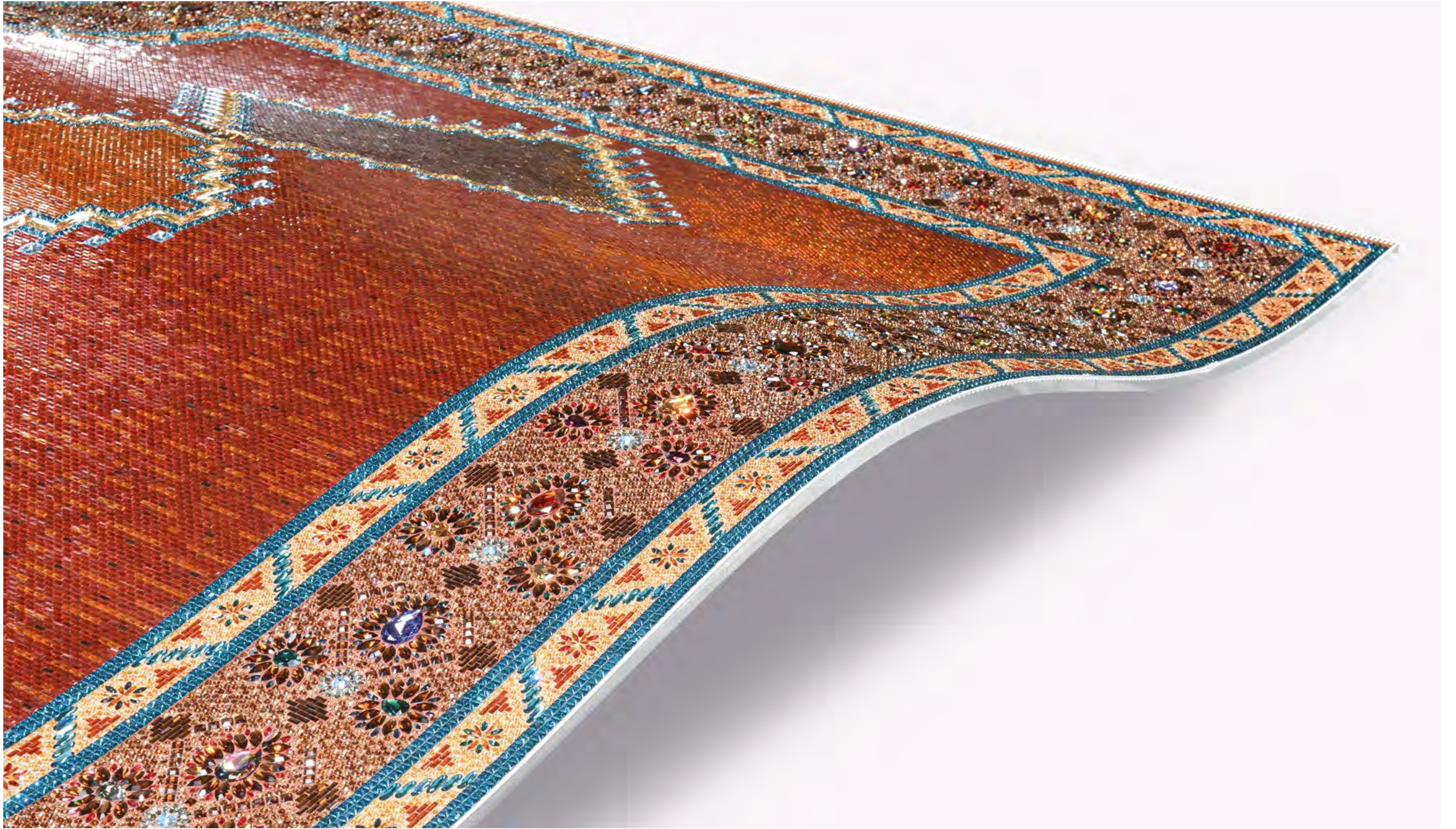














***THE MARVELLOUS FLIGHT OF COEXISTENCE***  
2009-2011

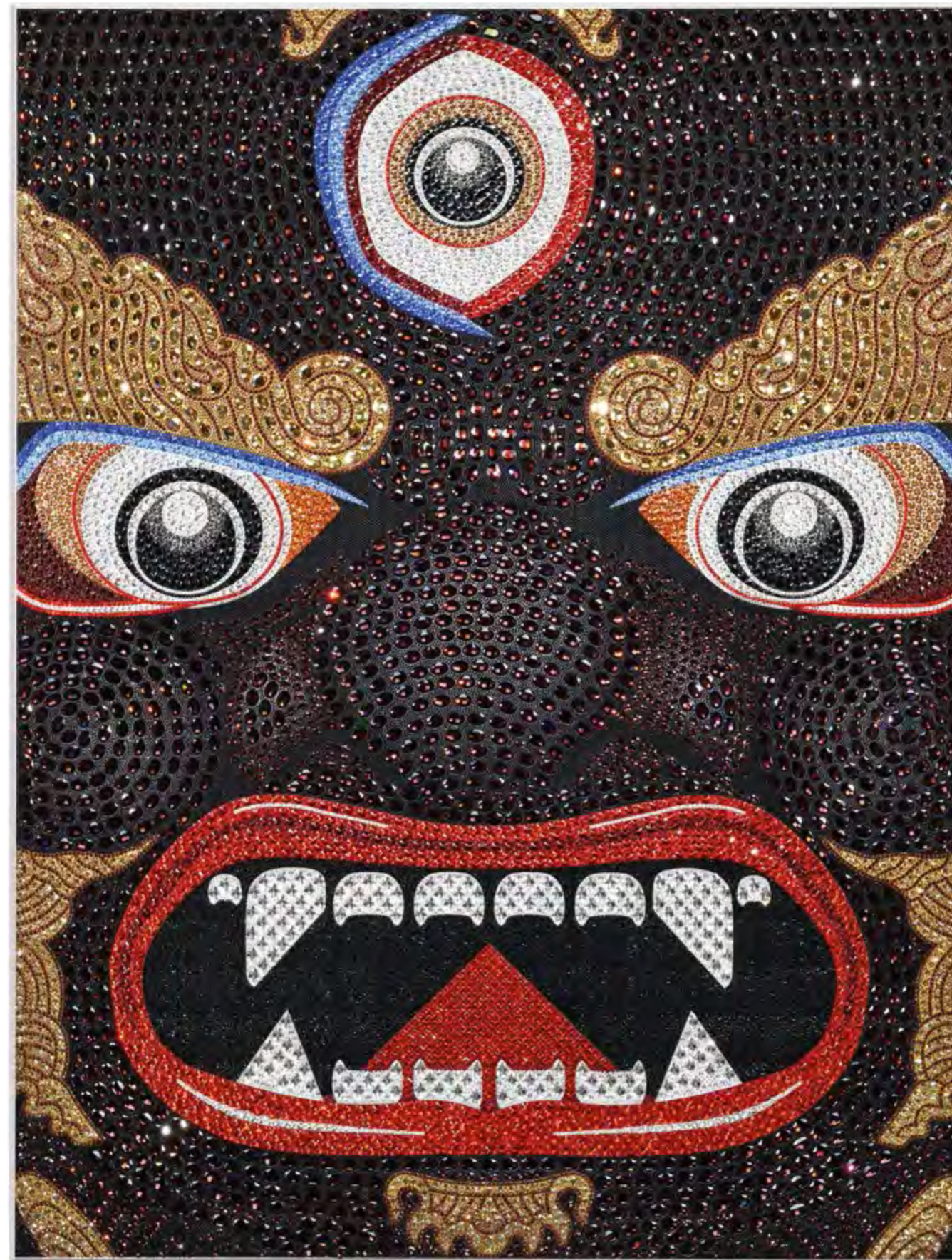
Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
147 x 193 x 15.5 cm  
119,378.00 Swarovski crystals





*IL DISTRUTTORE DEL FALSO*  
2009-2010

Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
199.1 × 149.1 × 3.5 cm  
64,171 Swarovski crystals









**JAPAN 2006**  
2010

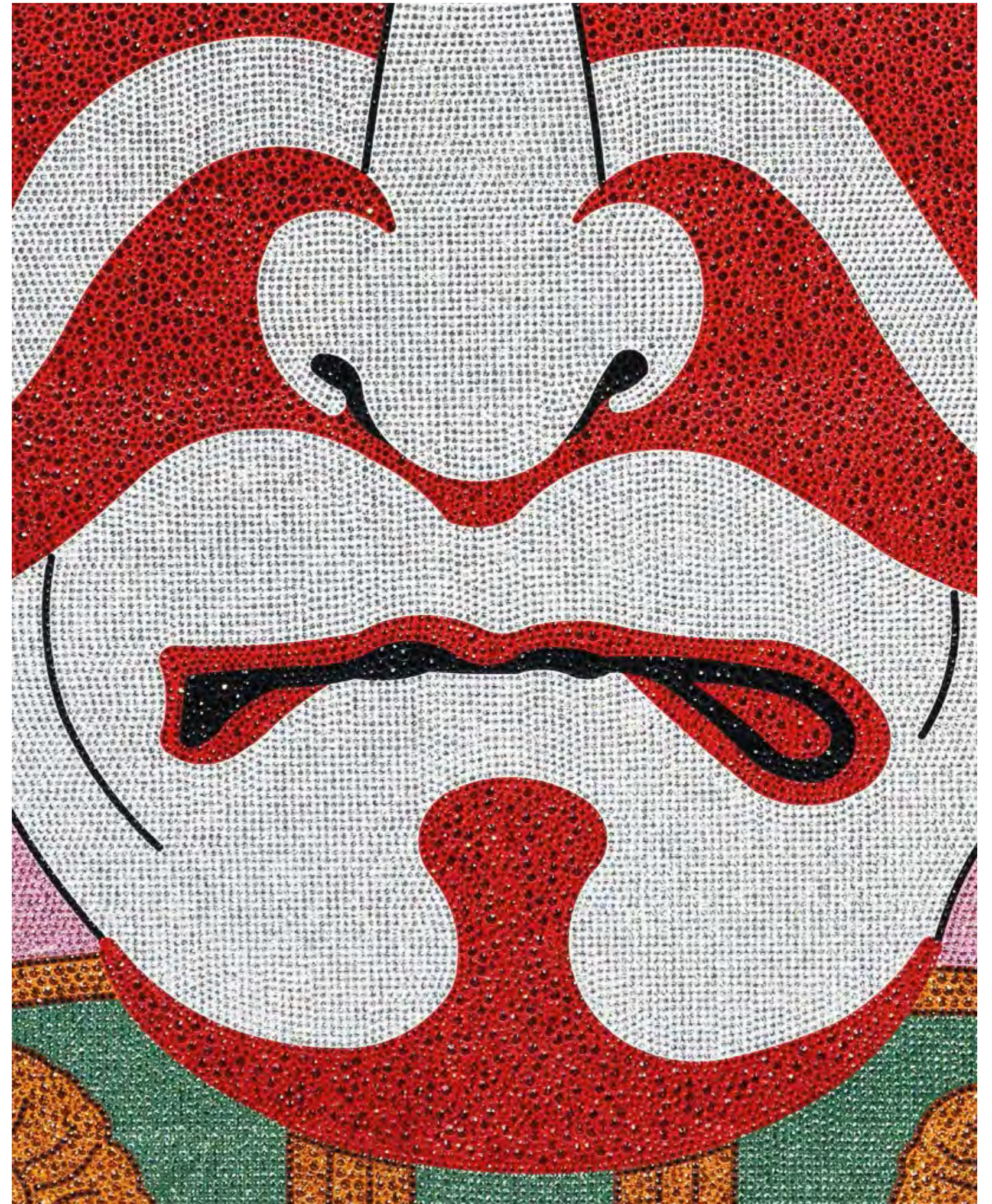
Swarovski crystal gems on plexiglass  
199 x 149 x 3.5 cm  
136,623 Swarovski crystals



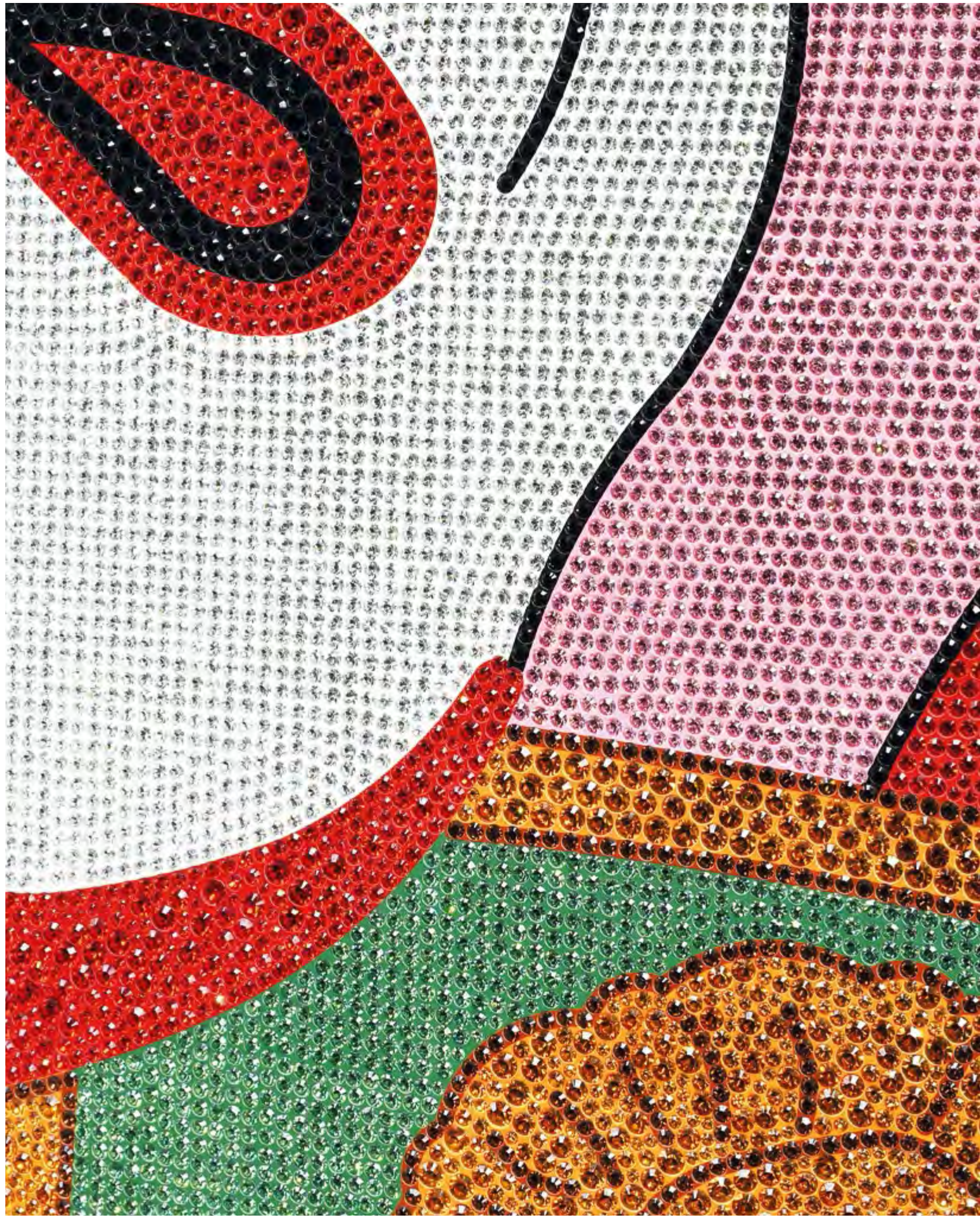


**“I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED TO ATTRACT VIEWERS TO MY ART, WITH THE LIGHT WHICH GIVES MEANING TO MY WORK, AND LEAD THEM ON A JOURNEY THAT EXPLORES THE HUMAN SOUL, EVEN IN ITS MOST TERRIFYING ESSENCE.”**

**STEFANO CURTO**









# Biography:

## Stefano Curto,

### Italian b.1966

Contemporary Italian artist Stefano Curto works with hand-crafted Swarovski crystals and minerals to create sensuous light canvases of a magnificent universality. Referencing Op Art<sup>01</sup> in the geometry of his mandala designs and interweaving the cosmic with the symbolic, he meticulously embeds thousands of gems into plexiglass canvases, bringing into being something comparable to the glowing stained-glass windows of Italian Gothic churches. His collections link to Venice's historic dominance in glass fabrication and set forth searching questions about human philosophies and mystical perceptions.

Curto was born on 4 February 1966 in the small town of Segusino, around 80 kilometres from Venice. His father, whose company made eyewear out of acetate, was a talented craftsman who designed, tooled and polished products by hand, and Curto inherited his dexterity. By his teens he had a passion for music, singing and playing with punk and new-wave bands from the age of 14 and beginning to compose at 15. On leaving school he studied mechanical engineering; the elements of mechanics and technical drawing would later stand him in good stead as an artist planning and constructing pieces some 2 metres broad and tall.

Travel was another of his loves, but when at age 20 Curto told his mother Ursola that he wanted to drive logging trains in the forested Canadian wilderness, she gave him a handful of crystals. 'The sparkle of the gems fascinated me instantly', he recalls. 'It was like having stars in my hands.'<sup>02</sup> She believed that the rapidly growing local fashion economy would be a place he could exercise his talents. A year later he had opened his own atelier working as a setter of crystals, and exclusive fashion houses Prada and Gucci approached him requesting bespoke accessories. As his studio flourished, Curto found time to travel, often biking around Asia.

By 2004, his journeying, meditation and engagement with the richness of other cultures was drawing Curto towards artistic creation: 'I needed to give a new soul to the stardust and the minerals that I love so much ... [I] had a palette of which I knew the most intimate and little secrets.'<sup>03</sup> For six years he worked away in private, and by September 2010 he was ready for his first solo exhibition, curated by Stefano Cecchetto at the Scoletta dell'Arte dei Tiraoro e Battioro, on the Grand Canal in Venice.

Entitled *Trama Lucente*, the show explored Curto's fascination with light as a projection of hope and a metaphor for the infinite qualities of the universe. The works were inspired by his travels in Mongolia, South India and Thailand. Attracted to 'anything that reflects light', he notes: 'I have always found it difficult to draw my eyes away from these minerals which almost appear to sparkle with their own light, cleverly capturing the most feeble ray: breaking it down, giving it colour, concentrating it, multiplying it and then casting it back to harmoniously connect with the surrounding space, often reaching distances which seem infinite'.<sup>04</sup>

Following this exhibition, the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Tasmania, Australia, purchased *IL NERO INFINITO* (Infinite Black), a work that responds to the vortex of the night-time skies in Mongolia and the magical sense of bewilderment they evoke. Curto was also invited to show his work at the elite arts organisation the House of the Nobleman in London during Frieze Art Fair, exhibiting alongside contemporary artists such as Damien Hirst, Banksy and Gerhard Richter.

2011 was a busy year, including a solo show in Venice and group exhibitions in London, Paris and Padua, crowned by the distinction of being selected for the Venice Biennale to exhibit *THE MARVELLOUS FLIGHT OF CO-EXISTENCE*. This piece advanced Curto's technique of setting tens of thousands of

individually shaped gems from a kaleidoscope of symbolic colours, as he shaped the plexiglass resin board into a poetic three-dimensional form to seemingly suspend the sparkling 'flying carpet'. Looking like an Indian prayer rug, it is interwoven with half-hidden religious symbols and evokes the bonds between peoples that elevate and enlighten, as described by Gandhi.

2012 saw a prestigious solo exhibition at Venice's Caffè Florian, a favourite haunt of artists for some 300 years, and group shows in many regions of Italy. The Florian presented Curto's *THE MARVELLOUS FLIGHT OF COEXISTENCE* and *JAPAN 2006* against the backdrop of the Seasons Room at Caffè Florian.

Curto's solo exhibitions of 2013 included Renovatio Splendor with the powerful piece *AMNIOTIC STARDUST*, encrusted with 164,842 Swarovski crystals and confronting the theme of the end of all things. This modern take on the long tradition of memento mori art was inspired by a blood-red picture from the Hubble telescope showing a star that was about to explode. From it Curto has created a form that looks like a heart pulsing with red magma, and wound into it is the Lenten sentence 'You are dust and unto dust you shall return'; yet the mood is not resignation, but a final awareness of existence. Also, presented in this exhibition, were a body known as the 'Evolution Involution' series: spirals and concentric circles that develop from rich, deep purples, blues and many other single colours into tones of white, projecting transformation and self-recreation derived from Curto's practice of meditation and yoga. The Tibetan symbol of cosmic union, the yantra, is camouflaged in the sea of colour, visible to those who recognise it.

In December 2013 Curto stood with Pope Francis and his work *SINDONE NERA* (Black Shroud) before a crowd of 50,000, as the work was acquired by the Pontifical Collection of the Vatican Museums in Rome.

First displayed in his solo London exhibition *Renewal of the Sacred* that year, *SINDONE NERA* salvages the only image of Jesus referenced in Christianity: his face impressed on a shroud – 'the first of a long series of divine images that have unsettled me since I was a child', says Curto. 17,843 rectangular-cut crystals enhance the mystery and fear of God conveyed by this imposing work, conceived to seem like a face that appears out of gloomy, black rain. Its genesis was, perhaps surprisingly, in India, when Curto saw a tiny image of Jesus among the many vibrant representations of the Hindu gods.

After a group exhibition in Monaco in 2014, the following year saw an important new solo show entitled *U-topos* (Greek, 'no place'): *tra spazio e luce* (Italian, 'between space and light'). Here Curto returned to the beginnings of the cosmos, a place with time and space for generation. Inside each work lies a hidden message. 300.000 km/s to GOD is an archetypal piece, in the form of a light mandala (Sanskrit, 'circle', signifying a ritual symbol representing the universe and a spiritual protection zone for those who look at it). It establishes a sacred space through its use of cardinal points, circular globes surrounding the dynamic centre, flashes of light output from the crystals and the suggestion of symbolic arrival at the core in the search for the Absolute. In the exhibition catalogue, art historian Danilo Riponti observes, 'Boundless spaces, human silences, deep soul rest – here are the keys of the noble reading of the artist's vision'.

Curto lives and works in Valdobbiadene, in the hills of Prosecco near his birthplace.



Stefano Curto, 2013.

01 Op Art was an artistic development in the 1960s that used a framework of purely geometric forms to create optical effects and drew on colour theory and the physiology and psychology of perception; Hungarian-French artist Victor Vasarely (1906–1997) is credited with its invention and other leading figures were Israel's Yaacov Agam (b.1928) and the English painter Bridget Riley (b.1931).

02 Quoted in *Bond Art* magazine, 2013.

03 Quoted in *Bond Art* magazine, 2013.

04 *Trama Lucente* exhibition catalogue, inner sleeve of the cover, 2010.



***Stardust:***  
List of works



***THE INFINITE  
BLACK EXPANDED***  
2010–2011  
199 × 198 × 3 cm  
110,175 Swarovski crystals  
p. 10



***HOME00000  
200900000***  
2008–2009  
199.2 × 159 × 4 cm  
73,180 Swarovski crystals  
p. 16



***L'ORO MALATO***  
2010  
199.5 × 149 × 3.5 cm  
53,148 Swarovski crystals  
p. 20



***THROUGH THE  
COSMIC NIGHT***  
(Blue), 2014  
122 × 122 × 3 cm  
38,000 Swarovski crystals  
p. 90



***THROUGH THE  
COSMIC NIGHT***  
(Black), 2014  
148 × 148 × 3 cm  
38,000 Swarovski crystals  
p. 96



***AMNIOTIC  
STARDUST***  
2012–2013  
199.1 × 199.1 × 20 cm  
164,842 Swarovski crystals  
p. 102



***EVOLUTION  
INVOLUTION***  
(Purple), 2016  
121 × 121 × 3 cm  
104,741 Swarovski crystals  
p. 24



***EVOLUTION  
INVOLUTION***  
(Brown Iridescent),  
2016–2017  
148.5 × 148.5 × 2.5 cm  
104,741 Swarovski crystals  
p. 28



***EVOLUTION  
INVOLUTION***  
(Red), 2015  
149.5 × 149.5 × 2.5 cm  
104,741 Swarovski crystals  
p. 32



***EVOLUTION  
INVOLUTION***  
(Turquoise),  
2016  
149 × 149 × 2.5 cm  
104,741 Swarovski crystals  
p. 38



***EVOLUTION  
INVOLUTION***  
(Green), 2015  
149.3 × 149.3 × 3 cm  
104,741 Swarovski crystals  
p. 44



***THETARTZERO***  
(Red), 2016  
149 × 149 × 2.5 cm  
75,175 Swarovski crystals  
p. 48



***THETARTZERO***  
(Blue), 2016  
149 × 149 × 2.5 cm  
75,715 Swarovski crystals  
p. 54



***THETART TWO***  
2016  
149 × 149 × 3 cm  
75,715 Swarovski crystals  
p. 60



***THETART TWO***  
(Gold), 2016  
149 × 149 × 2.5 cm  
75,715 Swarovski crystals  
p. 66



***THE MARVELLOUS  
FLIGHT OF  
COEXISTENCE***  
2009–2011  
147 × 193 × 15.5 cm  
119,378.00 Swarovski crystals  
p. 108



***IL DISTRUTTORE  
DEL FALSO***  
2009–2010  
199.1 × 149.1 × 3.5 cm  
64,171 Swarovski crystals  
p. 112



***JAPAN 2006***  
2010  
199 × 149 × 3.5 cm  
136,623 Swarovski crystals  
p. 116



# Acknowledgements:

## Stefano Curto

No journey in life is made alone.

I would like to thank the people that have been crucial in my journey so far and without their vision commitment and hard work this project would not have been realised.

Francois Larreguy, Antonella Curto, Marica Furlan, Coppe Orsola, Curto Giuseppe, Angelo Bessegato, Maurizia Curto, Stefano Cecchetto, Danilo Riponti, Phillipa Adams, Olivier Varenne, Scoppel Tarcisia, Udi Sheleg,Paul Green, Simon Quintero, Kate Brown, Lydia Larreguy, Marica Furlan and everyone at Halcyon Gallery in London.

126

S  
T  
A  
R  
D  
U  
S  
T



First published in Great Britain in 2017 by

Halcyon Gallery  
144–146 New Bond Street  
Mayfair, London W1S 2PF  
T +44 (0)20 7100 7144  
info@halcyongallery.com  
www.halcyongallery.com

Copyright © 2017 Halcyon Gallery

Text:

‘Prologue: Renovatio Splendor’ by Stefano Cecchetto  
‘A Thousand Possibilities and A Thousand Worlds’ by Felix Petty  
‘In Conversation’ Stefano Curto with Olivier Varenne  
‘In Conversazione’ Stefano Curto with Olivier Varenne  
‘Materiality and Magic: The Powerful Pull of Stefano Curto’  
by Charlotte Johnson

Exhibition curator: Simon Quintero  
Exhibition assistants: Jessica Draper, Katie Gruder  
Design: Greg Bartlett

Photographic credits:

All images © Halcyon Gallery except pages 73, 74, 75, 76, 77,  
78, 79 © Courtesy of Stefano Curto; 6 © The Bodleian Library,  
The University of Oxford, 264 fol. 218r, Marco Polo Travels,  
Johannes and his school, c. 1400; 74 top image © MONA,  
Museum of Old and New Art / Rémi Chauvin; 123 © Bond Art  
Magazine / Gaetano de Rosa

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted  
or reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any  
form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying,  
recording or otherwise, without prior permission in writing from  
the publisher.

Printed in Great Britain by xxx x x xx x

ISBN: 978-1-907849-41-1