

THE BLEND

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ART AND CULTURE ▶ PHOTOGRAPHY

# Yulia Mahr digs beneath the skin in her modern update of classic Greek statues in Paris

In 'The Church of Our Becoming', on view at the Courtyard at Dover Street Market Paris, Yulia Mahr celebrates real human bodies

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Yulia Mahr's portraits, captured with a thermal camera (Image credit: Yulia Mahr)

BY HANNAH SILVER PUBLISHED 7 HOURS AGO IN [FEATURES](#)

In the courtyard of [Dover Street Market Paris](#) there stands thirteen portraits. Each measuring three and a half metres tall, they recall classical Greek statues in their emphasis on the curves of the human form and the confidence with which they take up their space.

But these works eschew the idealism of ancient sculptures, zoning in instead on the very human attributes of the living body, whether trans, non-binary or fluid. In Yulia Mahr's works, sculpted men and passive women are sidestepped in a wider celebration of beauty. Photographed with a thermal camera, they dig beneath the skin to look at what lies beneath.



(Image credit: Yulia Mahr)

'From a young age we are taught how to read depictions of the human body, but thermal imagery can radically transform how we perceive that body, its presence and its emotional impact,' Mahr says. 'Whereas traditional photography reflects light and shadow, thermal images show heat and energy. In my black-and-white images, heat appears as gradients of grey, reversing our expectations; a warm body appears as black, a cold strand of hair as white (though I can change this in various modes). Therefore, the body becomes an ephemeral, dynamic heat signature which I can manipulate by temperature regulation to reveal the various patterns of life within it. I can push for it to pick up veins and arteries, or leave it more as broad patterns, especially in younger subjects.'



(Image credit: Yulia Mahr)

Photographing in this way distorts the normal identity cues we are used to reading, Mahr, who uses a military grade thermal camera which is usually a means of surveillance for those employed to spot people crossing borders, here endows the process with a positivity and embrace of a new way of seeing.

When displayed in homage to the Greek traditions, the photographs are elevated to a higher status. 'In Greek statuary size was never neutral but symbolised where people stood in relation to the divine,' Mahr adds. 'I'm playing with scale for the same reasons, giving more space to people and concepts that are often pushed to the periphery by mainstream culture. This is a constant in my work.'

*The Church of Our Becoming will be on view at the Courtyard at [Dover Street Market Paris](#) until 24 August 2025*★

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Paris Dover Street Market

Hannah Silver

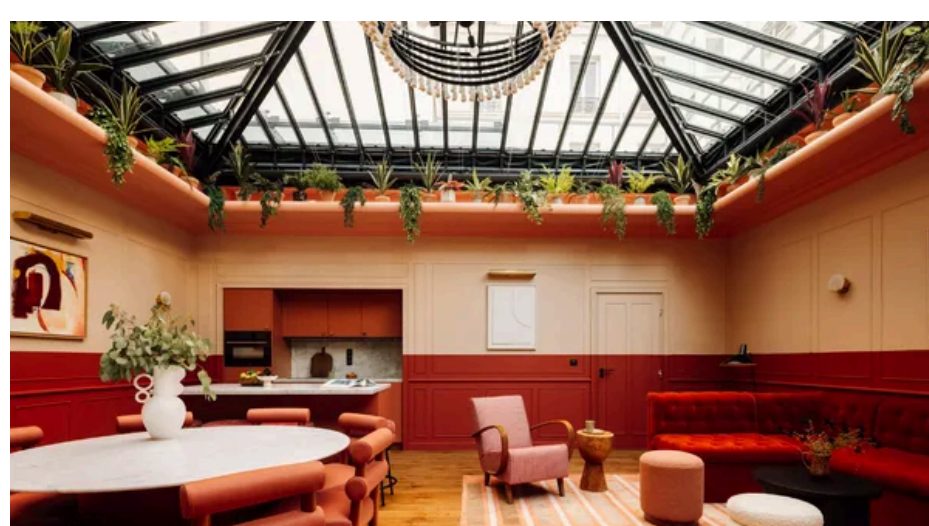


Hannah Silver is the Art, Culture, Watches & Jewellery Editor of Wallpaper\*. Since joining in 2019, she has overseen offbeat design trends and in-depth profiles, and written extensively across the worlds of culture and luxury. She enjoys meeting artists and designers, viewing exhibitions and conducting interviews on her frequent travels.

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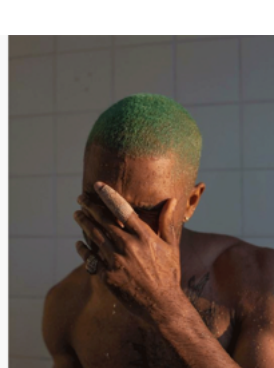


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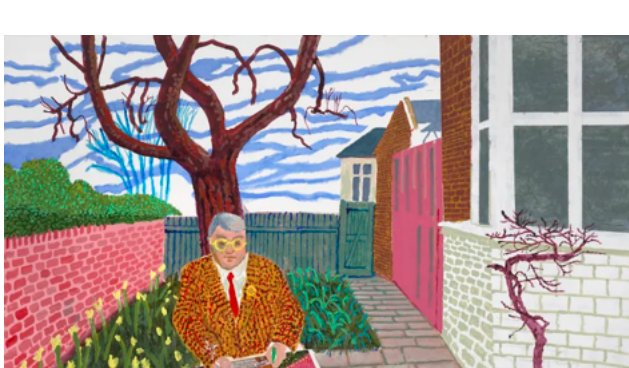
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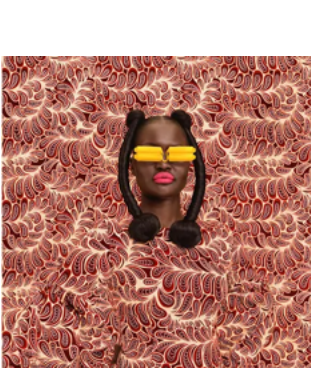
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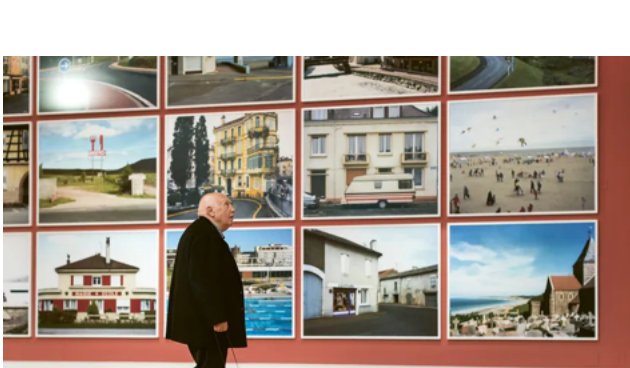
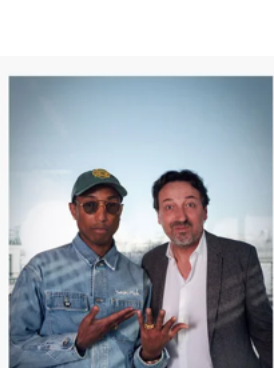
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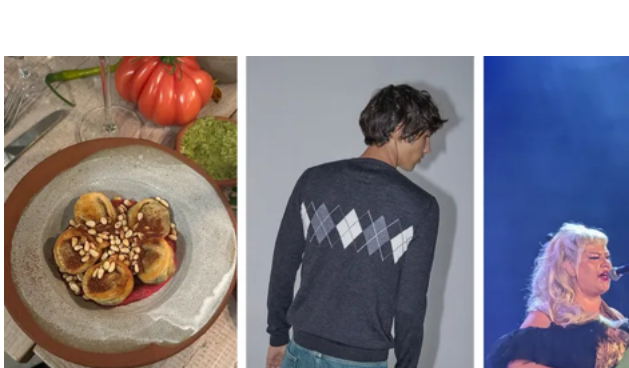
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