

# NEEDLE DANCE

7TH FEBRUARY – 2ND MARCH

PRIVATE VIEW | 21ST FEBRUARY | 6PM-10PM

AT THE ART'OTEL LONDON HOXTON, MAKIKO HARRIS IN COLLABORATION WITH KRISTIN HJELLEGJERDE GALLERY PRESENTS A BOLD UNDERWATER FILM AND MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITION EXPLORING FATE, FEMINISM, AND THE POWER OF CONNECTION

Towering needle sculptures, dancers entwined in brilliant red rope, and a captivating underwater setting converge in *Needle Dance*, the latest work by American-Japanese artist **Makiko Harris**. This five-minute conceptual art film premieres from 17 February to 2 March at art'otel London Hoxton, co-presented with **Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery**. Created with **Director Peter Gray** (renowned for work with *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*), **Costume Designer Deborah Milner** (Couture Designer and previously consultant on couture at Alexander McQueen), and **Composer/Executive Producer Carlos Basilisco**, the film also features an original violin score co-composed and performed by Harris.

## Artist and Musician – Makiko Harris

Harris, an interdisciplinary artist exploring feminism, identity, and desire, earned her MA in Contemporary Art Practice from the Royal College of Art, London (2023). Her first film premiered at Tate Modern as part of *Tate Lates* (March 2023), and she's received accolades like The HIGH Prize (2023), residencies in Portugal (PADA, Buinho), and is a 2024 Ingram Prize finalist. Her work is in global private collections and The Bunker Museum (Florida). Solo shows include *Lacquered Rebellion* (2024) at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, with group shows in the UK, US, Japan, Singapore, and Germany. In addition to her career in visual art, Harris showcases her sophisticated musical background in *Needle Dance*. Trained at a pre-professional level in violin performance, Harris attended conservatory preparatory San Domenico School in California, performed with the San Francisco Youth Symphony, and appeared on NPR's From the Top. At 18, she stepped away from a career in classical music to pursue a broader artistic practice, yet her meticulous training remains evident in this project.

Central to *Needle Dance* is the Japanese legend of the red thread of fate, an unbreakable string connecting destined individuals. Harris contrasts this with feminist ideas of self-determination, questioning if destiny limits or complements personal freedom. Filmed entirely underwater, the dancers' movements reflect the red thread's tension—weightless yet bound. Water evokes amniotic fluid, symbolizing how fate shapes us from birth, while highlighting the tension between connection and independence. Inspired by her grandmother's sewing kit, Harris enlarged needles to subvert domestic "women's work," transforming them into towering symbols of feminist defiance. Initially seen as militant tools, they evolved into emblems of care, mending, and personal healing. Through movement and myth, *Needle Dance* explores feminism, desire, and belonging and how notions of destiny rub against the contemporary feminist imperative for self-determination.

## Director – Peter Gray

An internationally acclaimed hair stylist and accomplished film director, Peter Gray brings a refined, avant-garde perspective to *Needle Dance*. Renowned for his exceptional cutting skills and lightness of touch, Gray's creative flair has elevated editorial shoots for *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *T Magazine*, and more, while fashion houses like Hermès, Ungaro, and Dsquared have sought out his visionary runway looks. Gray's clientele spans top-tier celebrities—Sigourney Weaver, Kate Hudson, Beatrice Grannò, and Kat Graham, among others—drawn by his rigorous technical grounding and conceptual approach to beauty. In addition to his achievements in editorial and advertising, Gray is an accomplished motion-image director. His directorial debut, *Shoot Doris Day*, was the first music video created specifically for DVD, marking an early expansion of his creative repertoire. Now, with *Needle Dance*, Gray contributes his distinct blend of high-fashion sensibility and cinematic vision to Makiko Harris's underwater exploration of fate, feminism, and artistic transformation.

## Costume Designer – Deborah Milner

Deborah Milner is an acclaimed couture designer renowned for merging artistic vision with technical mastery. Her fascination with drawing and painting the human form naturally led her to the forefront of fashion and art, culminating in a tenure

consulting and then heading up the Alexander McQueen Couture Studio (1997–2015), where she realized some of McQueen's most iconic and intricate showpieces. Collaborations with creative luminaries like Isabella Blow, Philip Treacy, and Nick Knight underscore her innovative credibility and broad media appeal.

Currently, she is developing a prêt-à-porter initiative set to launch in 2025, promising to integrate sophisticated modern design with a commitment to sustainability. Milner's enduring impact is further highlighted by her portrait's inclusion in the National Portrait Gallery's Legends exhibition by Zoe Law, and by high praise from American Elle, which dubbed her "London's best-kept secret for extraordinarily beautiful designs and unconventional sculptural shapes." For Needle Dance, Milner draws on her flair for dramatic silhouettes to enhance Makiko Harris's underwater choreography, weaving each rope-based design with a nuanced blend of fragility and strength. By uniting artistry, craftsmanship, and a flair for theatrical impact, Milner's costumes become a powerful element in Needle Dance's exploration of fate, feminism, and the transformative potential of "women's work."

### **Composer and Musician – Carlos Basilisco**

Carlos Basilisco brings a diverse perspective to music composition. Raised in a family of artists—his father a flamenco guitarist—he grew up immersed in flamenco, classical guitar, rock, jazz, and electronic styles. In recent years, Basilisco has led a musical ensemble while also performing as an electronic DJ for over 20 years. For Needle Dance, he joins forces with Makiko Harris to craft an innovative, genre-blending score that reflects the project's fusion of tradition and modernity. The film score, influenced by Hans Zimmer, blends Harris' classical training in violin with modern electronic elements, and is co-composed with Basilisco. The layered soundscape and relentless percussion performed by Basilisco intensifies the film's emotional depth, culminating in a raw, violin-only section.

### PRESS + SALES

For images, press inquiries, or interview requests, please contact Personal PR for **Makiko Harris Studio**:  
Madelaine Bennett | madelaine@gingerbreadagency.com | 07977 290416

For enquiries relating to **Artwork Sales** of works by Makiko Harris, please contact:  
**Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery** | info@kristinhjellegjerde.com

For enquiries relating to **Deborah Milner Studio** including sales of costumes, please contact:  
Deborah Milner | studio@deborahmilner.com

For enquiries relating to the **art'otel London Hoxton**, please contact:  
Alisa Lisovskaia | alisa@artotel.com

### MANY THANKS TO

16 Oz Studio	Duane Nasis	Melissa Tanti
Alain Philippe Cross	Felix Cohen	Michael Lindsay
Alex Cousens	Greg Fleming	Oleg Boryk
Alisa Lisovskaia	Joe Hirst	Ping Usagi Studios
Allison-lily	Karina Rigby	Proportion London
Andre de Kock	Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery	Raahi Khinvasara
Anne Kaerst	Lan Ha Vu Minh	Sabrina Wong
Art'Otel Hoxton London	Linda Duffield	Sophie Cohen
Big Ferro	Madelaine Bennett	Under The Water Media
Colin Pullen	Maria Sone	Worowsky Papa