



the  
EARTH|WORLD



## METIS ATASH TRANSCENDENT BEAUTY

By Denise Gerson  
*Former Associate Director, Curator, Lowe Art Museum,  
University of Miami.*

Skull "H" FEAT. HERMES  
Fiberglass sculpture, Acrylic paint, encrusted with 7,500  
SWAROVSKI crystals  
Size: 8 inch (lifesize)  
Black Marble base: 3 inch

Opposite page: PUNKBODHA "NOW WHAT" FEAT. BASQUIAT  
Fiberglass sculpture, acrylic paint, encrusted with 24,000  
SWAROVSKI crystals, crystalized spikes.  
Size: H: 18 inch x W: 14 inch x D: 12 inch  
Inspired by: Michel Basquiat

Metis Atash's exquisite *Punk Buddha* figures radiate a presence far greater than their size within the architectural spaces where they are admired, coveted, and collected. The German sculptor, who is currently Miami-based, embarked upon a career in art only after completing a degree in political economics in her native Germany and subsequently achieving success in investor relations consultancy. Arguably, the formality of her education and the inventiveness that she brought to business helped inform the creativity and meticulousness with which she conceives and executes her acclaimed Swarovski-encrusted sculptural projects.



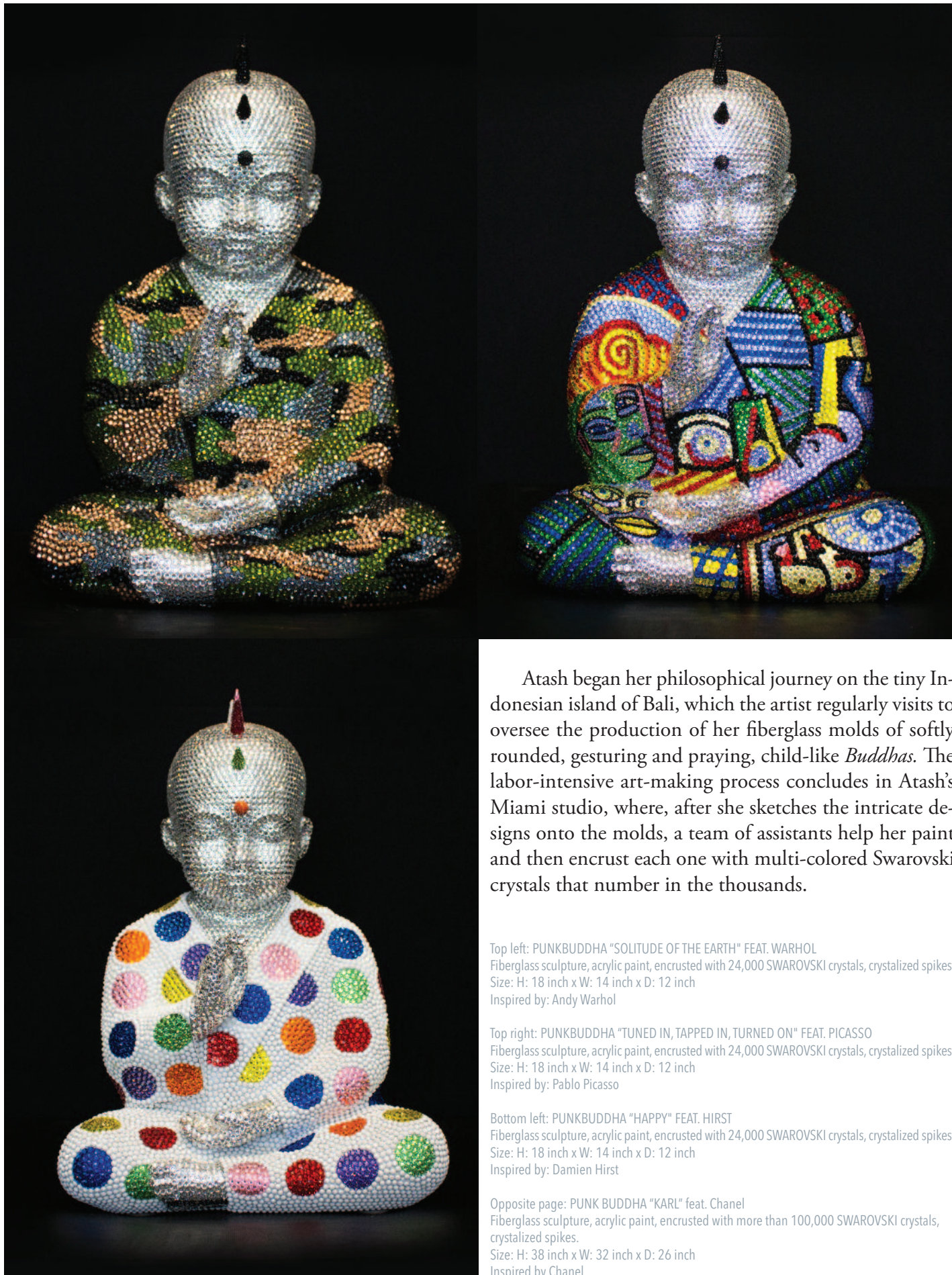


RUSSIAN DOLLS "FASHION NAMASTE"  
Fiberglass sculptures, set of 6 dolls, acrylic paint, encrusted  
with more than 250,000 SWAROVSKI crystals  
Sizes: H: 36 inch, H: 24 inch, H: 16 inch, H: 12 inch, H: 8 inch,  
Inspired by: Hermes, Alexander McQueen, Chanel, Burberry,  
Valentino and Roberto Cavalli

Even as Atash acknowledges the wide-eyed reaction of gallery and art fair-goers when they first spot the bejeweled *Buddhas* resting cross-legged on shelves or pedestals, she asks us to suspend our belief in the beauty of their sparkling materiality, long enough to embrace their totemic essence. This is no mean feat, given that, at first glance, her painted and crystal forms seem seductive objects of contemporary desire. Still, Atash rejects facile interpretation of her art, preferring to explore the philosophical core that transcends the glittering commercial aspect of her work.

Fundamental to the artist's thinking is her embrace of the universal 'Law of Attraction', a philosophy that holds we attract what we desire, and her faith in the Law's necessary 'duality in life,' or simply put, knowing what we do *not* desire brings each of us closer to knowing what we really want. These twin concepts, which inform the foundation of her life and work, are represented by her *Buddha* figures.





Atash began her philosophical journey on the tiny Indonesian island of Bali, which the artist regularly visits to oversee the production of her fiberglass molds of softly rounded, gesturing and praying, child-like *Buddhas*. The labor-intensive art-making process concludes in Atash's Miami studio, where, after she sketches the intricate designs onto the molds, a team of assistants help her paint and then encrust each one with multi-colored Swarovski crystals that number in the thousands.

Top left: PUNKBUDDHA "SOLITUDE OF THE EARTH" FEAT. WARHOL  
Fiberglass sculpture, acrylic paint, encrusted with 24,000 SWAROVSKI crystals, crystalized spikes.  
Size: H: 18 inch x W: 14 inch x D: 12 inch  
Inspired by: Andy Warhol

Top right: PUNKBUDDHA "TUNED IN, TAPPED IN, TURNED ON" FEAT. PICASSO  
Fiberglass sculpture, acrylic paint, encrusted with 24,000 SWAROVSKI crystals, crystalized spikes.  
Size: H: 18 inch x W: 14 inch x D: 12 inch  
Inspired by: Pablo Picasso

Bottom left: PUNKBUDDHA "HAPPY" FEAT. HIRST  
Fiberglass sculpture, acrylic paint, encrusted with 24,000 SWAROVSKI crystals, crystalized spikes.  
Size: H: 18 inch x W: 14 inch x D: 12 inch  
Inspired by: Damien Hirst

Opposite page: PUNK BUDDHA "KARL" feat. Chanel  
Fiberglass sculpture, acrylic paint, encrusted with more than 100,000 SWAROVSKI crystals, crystalized spikes.  
Size: H: 38 inch x W: 32 inch x D: 26 inch  
Inspired by: Chanel







Reflecting Atash's attraction to and respect for Haute Couture, as well as contemporary art history, each *Punk Buddha*, large or diminutive *Baby*, is named for an iconic figure in fashion and art, whose highly recognizable styles inspire the patterns that she incorporates onto the *Buddhas'* robes. These range from Basquiat to Balmain, Warhol to Hermes, Kusama to Chanel.

Yet these motifs, which elicit many a smile from the cognoscenti, do not alone characterize *Punk Buddhas*, for running from the top of the skull down the back of the head, is a Mo-hawk-of-sorts, a row of ornamental spikes that lend the figures an edgy, mysterious presence. While Atash considers the dramatic quasi-hairstyle -- related to the Punk Rock movement of the 70s and 80s -- as being emblematic of freedom of choice and expression, the projections expand iconographic thinking about the work, tempting interpretation. Perhaps their fierce presence is intended as subtle rebuke to those who would wantonly handle the precious objects. Look again, and the curving, spiky coronas, seen in profile or casting shadows, are transformed into benevolent halos. Ultimately, these intriguing barbs may well serve to remind those who would reduce *Punk Buddhas* to an expression of 21st century cultural consumerism, that these seated forms are also powerful totems, capable of both dazzling the eye and stirring the soul.

For more information please contact:  
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Opposite page: PUNK BUDDHA "KARL" feat. Chanel  
Fiberglass sculpture, acrylic paint, encrusted with more than  
100,000 SWAROVSKI crystals, crystalized spikes.  
Size: H: 38 inch x W: 32 inch x D: 26 inch  
Inspired by Chanel

PUNKBUDDHA "TOGETHER, FOREVER" FEAT. HARING  
Fiberglass sculpture, acrylic paint, encrusted with 24,000 SWAROVSKI crystals,  
crystalized spikes.  
Size: H: 18 inch x W: 14 inch x D: 12 inch  
Inspired by: Keith Haring

