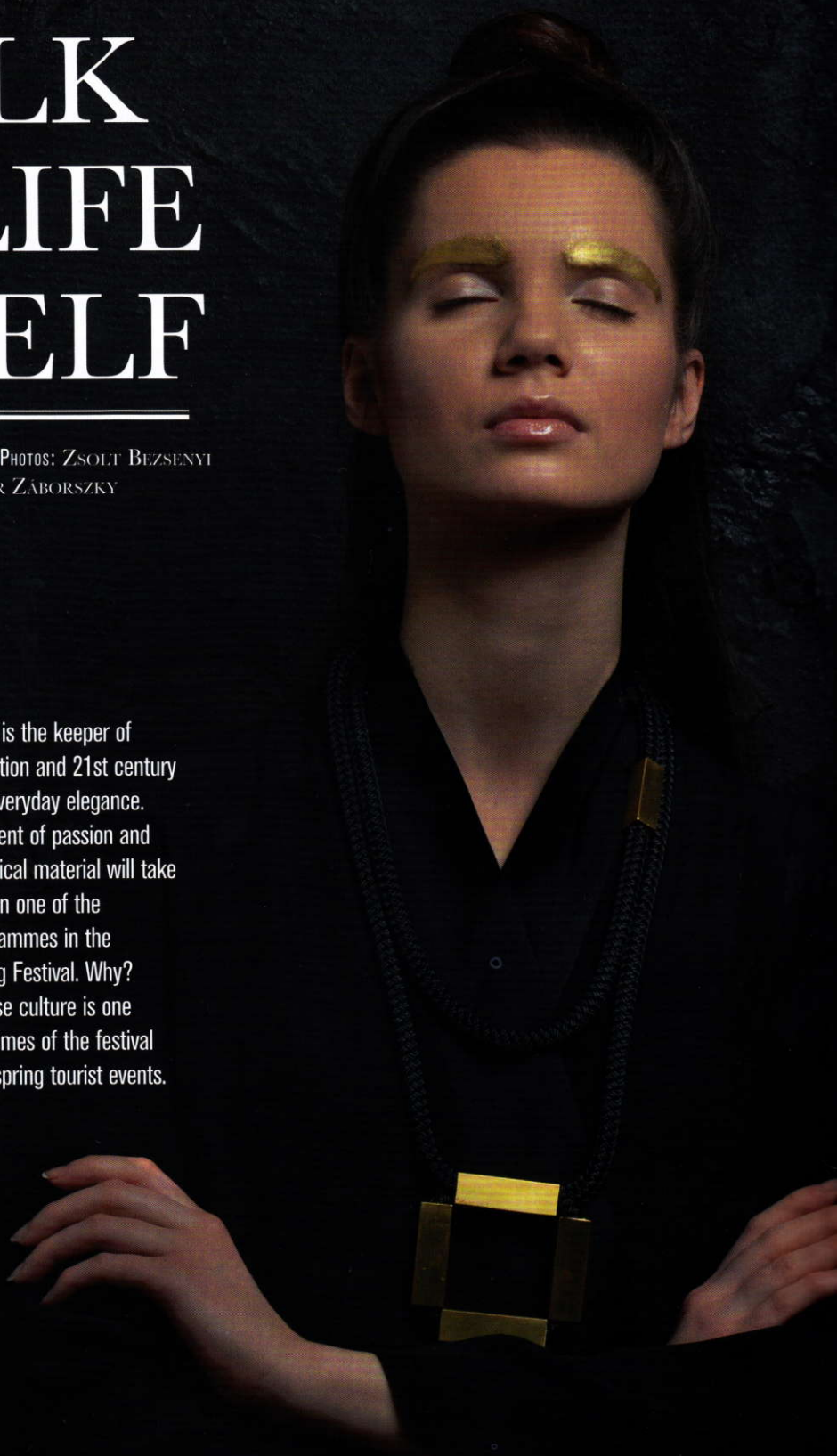


THE SILK ROAD

# SILK IS LIFE ITSELF

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As a fabric, silk is the keeper of eastern secrets, tradition and 21st century modernity, and everyday elegance. It is the embodiment of passion and tranquillity. This magical material will take a lead role in one of the unique programmes in the Budapest Spring Festival. Why? Because Chinese culture is one of the central themes of the festival and of Budapest's spring tourist events.





The Hungarian National Museum will host an exhibition within its historic walls on 23 April entitled **The Silk Road**, featuring creations by both new and internationally-renowned Chinese fashion designers, as well as the Katti Zoób Fashion House's Chinese-inspired collection.

"Silk is like life," Kati Zoób, one of the leading figures in Hungarian fashion and the soul of the Katti Zoób Fashion House asserts. "Without silk, there is no fashion industry, for this material knows every past secret and presents all the possibilities of the future," she adds, continuing "It's also used in Chinese therapy: those wishing to heal are wrapped in silk. In a relatively stimulus-free room, a calmness overcomes the unwell through this fine, soft, and somewhat slippery material, which seemingly flows off the human body. It relaxes the muscles and assists in releasing tension. This is the meditative relaxation represented by healing silk, and is in total contrast to the role it plays in fashion. There it is the tool and embodiment of excitement and emotion, glitter and wildness."

Silk is exceptionally long, fine and has flexible strands, and its weaving methods and patterns are the fruits of a culture thousands of years old. By itself it is a raw material, but it has as many variations as processing techniques exist. Winter coats can be made from it, duvets, sheets and pillows, as well as satin, organza, muslin, and everything needed to achieve the height of pomp. Unfortunately, owing to its cost, silk can never be an everyday material. But, according to Zoób, "a black georgette jacket or an elegant black georgette outfit never goes out of fashion, which is why it would be good if everyone could have at least one in their closet."

"I'm a passionate enthusiast of eastern decorative arts, especially hand-crafted textile-decorating techniques. I've been to China many times and had the opportunity to collaborate with traditional fashion industry figures who know wonders that we can barely imagine. This is a massive gift to a creator, to work with such a theme, in such a location and with such a constellation of great people. I can barely wait for the exhibition," Zoób revealed.

Within the framework of the Budapest Spring Festival, the collection being presented to the public on 23 April will be a 21st-century everyday assortment, according to Zoób. "The collection is very wearable and versatile. If someone has a feel for it, they will see how artistic it is. It's not up to the designer how the owner uses or wears the clothes. These creations can present a somewhat more Bohemian, yet elevated and more elegant world. Silk is so multi-faceted and has such a rich history, that anyone who understands it will be that much richer for it."

Prior to Katti Zoób's creations, the Chinese newcomer XiaoYun Lin, traditional designer Lulu Liu, and internationally acclaimed designer Youjia Jin will also present their work.

"What I will show is how I can insert traditional processing, such as silk jacquard or georgette into a contemporary mood or modern



lifestyle. In other words, how future-proof this material is. What interests me about the work of the Chinese designers is what a young designer today thinks of silk. Do they think of it at all, does it add something new? The material is what binds us, but considering how multi-faceted silk is, our designs will be just as diverse, and our collections too," Zoób explained.

Chinese fashion has a very strong innovative streak. Nearly every major city has a fashion university, and within that a separate department for silk. From the 1980s, the Chinese invited European textile and fashion designers to their institutions as teachers for courses and summer sessions. Later large numbers of teachers, fashion creators and consumers also received instruction during the regular term. Just as the Chinese are leaders in the development of technical materials used in sports or in manufacturing telecommunications products, China is increasingly knocking on Europe's door in the field of fashion too, Zoób believes.



What is the secret to Katti Zoób's Fashion House, which will close the fashion show? Constant learning and gaining experience appears to be the key. "I studied the various techniques for many years and learned to hear the 'sound' of a textile. If I were to start today, I would do it the same way: discovering from others as much as I can, so that I can develop my own voice. These days we work as if by instinct and don't make a big fuss. Our aim is to ensure that our clothes do not have to be disposed of and can adapt to the following 5-10 seasons. Our goal is not to attach haughty and far-fetched concepts to our clothes, but simply to create joy." ■