



MARIA BRITO

## THE METAMORPHOSIS OF STEPHANIE HIRSCH

June 10, 2015



In Ancient Greek, the word "psyche" meant both "soul" and "butterfly". In certain western religions butterflies have iconographically been associated with the process rebirth. And throughout history, in literature, poetry and art, butterflies have been used to illustrate either freedom or change. When [Franz Kafka](#) wrote *The Metamorphosis* in 1912, he wanted to epitomize the absurdity of life. Back then, there weren't mantras or affirmations to cope with challenging circumstances, at least not like those offered nowadays in new age books, learning centers, yoga studios or meditation



groups. Thus, bugs and butterflies were used by Kafka to illustrate dramatic changes in the body and the mind of his main character,

who never turns human again. Dali added butterflies to his paintings all along the 1950s to signify transformation and lightness, and most recently [Damien Hirst](#) has reflected idealistic beauty and resurrection through the use of butterflies.



And then there's butterflies in "Awakening"; [Stephanie Hirsch's](#) latest body of work, whose solo show opened last week at [Lyons Wier Gallery](#). Fresh from her artist residency at the Cosmopolitan in Las Vegas in partnership with [Art Production Fund](#), the interactive installation, titled "#Lightseeker" somehow served as a preamble to "Awakening".





Stephanie's work is aesthetically rich and compelling. Thousands of rhinestones and crystals are hand-embroidered into shaped canvases cut, in this case, as butterflies. The smaller pieces have poignant

Winston Wächter Fine Art, Inc.

530 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10001 TEL [212] 255 2718 FAX [212] 255 2719 EMAIL [nygallery@winstonwachter.com](mailto:nygallery@winstonwachter.com) [www.winstonwachter.com](http://www.winstonwachter.com)





words embedded in them, text that brings to the outer world what Stephanie has been listening to in her mind. "Life Takes Time" and "Let Go" catch my attention, and so do the colors in them, which Stephanie has chosen through a dual-pronged process: on one extreme, inspired by [Ed Ruscha's](#) gradients and on the other, by the colors she believes that these words have when they cross her mind.





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Even more dramatic and intense is a large butterfly in black and white with no text in it. The piece called "Duality" alludes to the constant flux and spaces in our mind and the subsequent emotions caused by our thoughts. "Without the darkness we would not be able to understand the light, to appreciate the good things", Stephanie tells me, using her fingers to trace the intricacy of the embroideries. And with no more words needed, we both acknowledge the process, the means being as important as the end accomplished with her sumptuous work.

Stephanie Hirsch

*Awakening*

Lyons Wier Gallery

542 West 24th Street

New York, NY 10011