

# Press release

*An exhibition by SEPTIEME Gallery*



## THE MATERIAL IS LEATHER **LOUKA ANARGYROS**

### Info

**Dates:** September 26th to November 16th 2024

**Opening:** September 26th 2024, 6–9 pm

**Location:** SEPTIEME Gallery, 31 rue de l'Université, 75006 Paris, France

# THE MATERIAL IS LEATHER

The Material Is Leather, Louka Anargyros' second solo exhibition at SEPTIEME, invokes the political heritage of leather culture. A space shrouded in signifying black leather, material and sculpted, reveals a powerful social mechanism at work in a subjugated community that, by reappropriating the symbols of its oppressor for the benefit of its own condition, deactivates its violence.

At the center, two bikers in black leather suits embrace. These Leatherboys embody the continuation of Louka Anargyros' discourse questioning masculinity and the ambivalence of its symbols, where virility, when performed to the extreme, blurs its own gendered reference points. The motorcycle, in all the power it invokes, alludes to the possibility of an unimpeded existence. It is the historical source of the queer community's leather movement which, in the 40s in Los Angeles and the 50s in New York, reappropriated the visual codes of biker culture to become a global alternative culture. Leather bars, to which Louka Anargyros makes explicit reference, gradually emerged as historic spaces of community formation, combining the exploration of sexual freedom with a desire for political gathering and protection. The constitution of this scene thus precedes that of the AIDS years' militancy for sexual freedom, and subsequently of the LGBTQIA+ cause on a global scale, which today holds, among other things, leather identity as a rallying object. Here, Louka Anargyros explores the camp - i.e., exaggerated and ironic - reinterpretation of codes of hegemonic masculinity in reaction to the accusation of femininity. This process of reappropriation and sexualization of the biker figure, documented by Tom of Finland's drawings, propels masculinity out of a heterosexual monopoly and deepens its ambivalence.

The installation of around a hundred leather garments placed to circumscribe the space offers a further reading of the origins of leather culture, inspired by Susan Sontag's text "Fascinating Fascism" (1974), from which the title is a direct quotation. Noting the birth of BDSM and queer leather culture immediately after the end of the Second World War, she presents the postulate that the gay community had effected a reversal of fascist visual language through desire. In the same way that the Pink Triangle was turned on its head in the 90s, the Nazi aesthetic was stripped of its appeal and replayed on the leather scene through desire. This radical subversion of black leather as a sexualized material, suggested by Sontag in the 70s, continues to make its way into the prevailing culture, to the point where today it has become a mainstream synonym for sex appeal. With this installation, Louka Anargyros passes from the convocation of homophobic insults inscribed on his suits to that of a global aesthetic, underlining the deactivation of its oppressive substance.

Léa Perier Loko

# Biography

## **LOUKA ANARGYROS**

Louka Anargyros (born in 1992 in Paris) lives and works between Copenhagen and Paris. His practice as an artist is primarily sculptural. While his work can often be seen as conceptual and contextual, his main driving force remains the physical relationship with materials and forms. In recent years, he has focused on pushing the boundaries of his ceramic technique, often spending months working on a single sculpture. His work frequently depicts human vulnerability and examines identity and intimacy, often using, indirectly or not, personal elements of his life as material. Queer politics, exile, and intergenerational trauma are ongoing research topics that Louka addresses through the lens of bodily experience.

## Selection



### **LOUKA ANAGYROS**

Leatherboys IV  
164x106x39 cm  
ceramic and acrylic  
2024



### **LOUKA ANAGYROS**

"Now there is a master scenario available to everyone. The color is black, the material is leather, the seduction is beauty, the justification is honesty, the aim is ecstasy, the fantasy is death."

21 meters  
leather and paint  
2024

## Contact

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