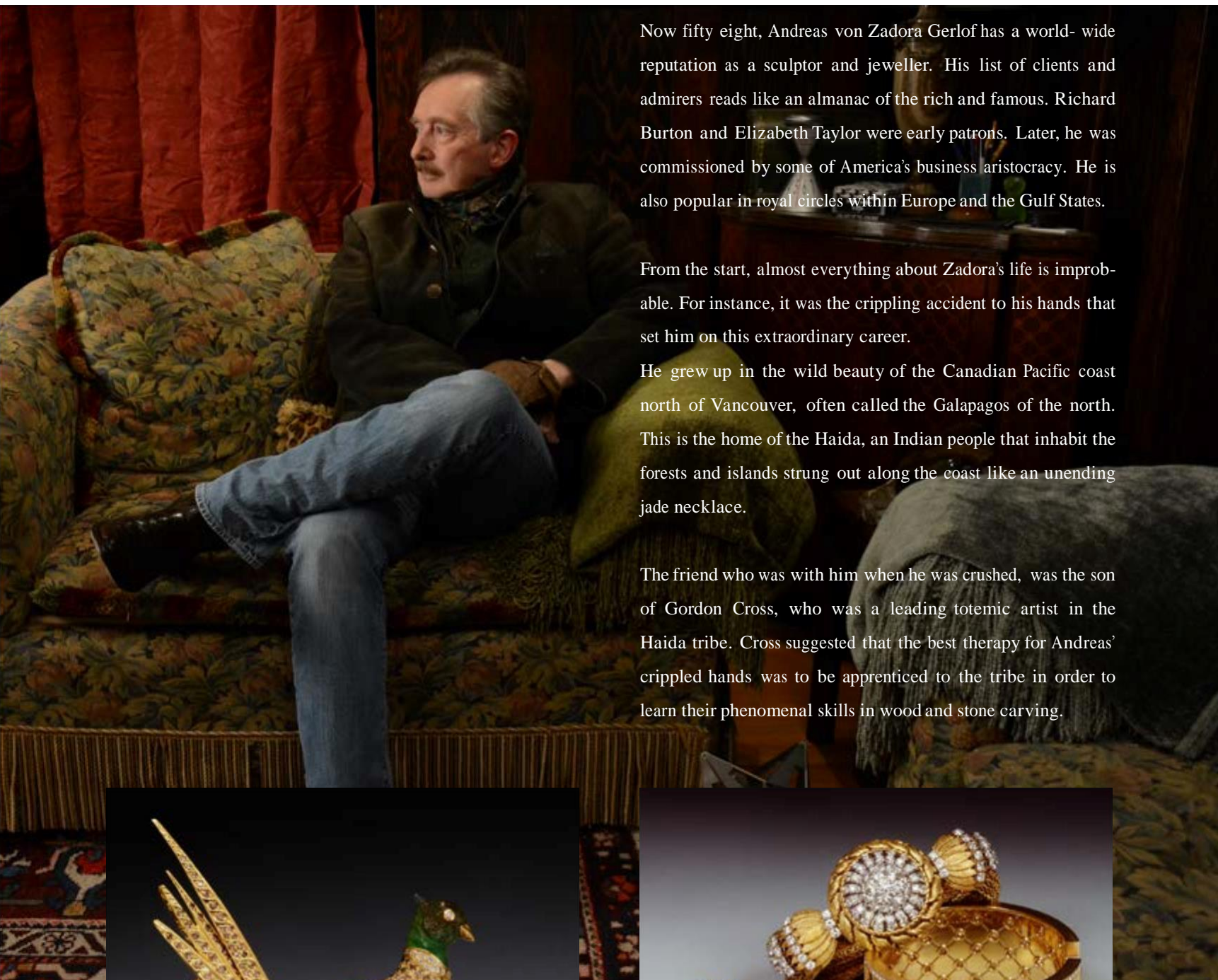


ZADORA

The noise of the giant log thundering towards him was terrifying. The fourteen year old boy was trapped, unconscious, his hand crushed underneath it. He had escaped death, but it seemed his life might never be the same...

By Margharita Wailes-Fairbairn



Now fifty eight, Andreas von Zadora Gerlof has a world- wide reputation as a sculptor and jeweller. His list of clients and admirers reads like an almanac of the rich and famous. Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor were early patrons. Later, he was commissioned by some of America's business aristocracy. He is also popular in royal circles within Europe and the Gulf States.

From the start, almost everything about Zadora's life is improbable. For instance, it was the crippling accident to his hands that set him on this extraordinary career.

He grew up in the wild beauty of the Canadian Pacific coast north of Vancouver, often called the Galapagos of the north. This is the home of the Haida, an Indian people that inhabit the forests and islands strung out along the coast like an unending jade necklace.

The friend who was with him when he was crushed, was the son of Gordon Cross, who was a leading totemic artist in the Haida tribe. Cross suggested that the best therapy for Andreas' crippled hands was to be apprenticed to the tribe in order to learn their phenomenal skills in wood and stone carving.



Zadora has taken his training and recast it in gems and precious metals. Today his work shows an intricacy of detail that would delight the most demanding zoologist. Perhaps not surprisingly many hail him as the modern Faberge.



It seems the eggs hatched a new idea – one that has become characteristic of his work. Not only did he perfect the Russian's system applying five or six layers of coloured enamel to a metallic base of silver or gold. He learnt to be a jeweller-magician hiding mechanisms and surprises in small unexpected places:



A MAGICIAN's TOUCH

Surprise has become to his trademark. By design and by request his work has matured to embrace miniature mechanic systems that are completely unique. And it is this that makes him a sensation in places such as Gstaad, St Barths, Monaco, and Marino di Portofino.

THIS IS THE MAN WHO was accepted a commission from a successful tech entrepreneur to create an elaborate gem-studded clock in the form of an aquarium. The catch however was that the diamond studded fish were to look as though they were swimming in the aquarium.

Set with details in 18 carat gold. The 56 fish are sculpted from gem stones of red thermocline, amethyst and aquamarine. All 56 are wearable pieces of jewellery.

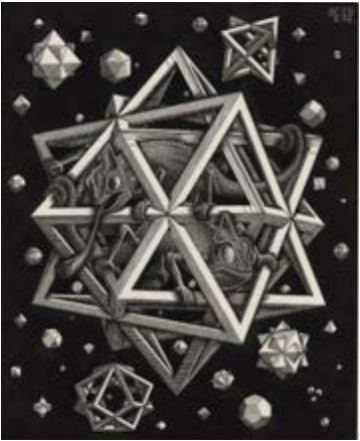
He succeeded, using magnets combined with his knowledge of spectrometry. "...Using science I was able to become a magician.. It meant testing dozens of oils and silicon before finding the perfect match. But ultimately I was able to make all the mechanics disappear from view."

AND THIS IS THE MAN who created a monkey time piece, where, when the hour strikes, one monkey climbs up the tree to greet his simian friend, who then waves to the world.

FINALLY, THIS IS THE MAN who agreed to sculpt a life size hawk that could fly. One year and seven thousand titanium feathers later, Zadora's hawk swooped and hovered like the real thing, controlled by radio concealed in a golden glove.

Fast forward to today. ZADORA, is engaged on his most ambitious project yet. After years of negotiation he has won the exclusive right to translate the artist M.C.Escher's famous mathematical lithographs and prints into 3D.

The result is an extraordinary collection of articulated steel-work that has been twisted into seemingly impossible geometric



shapes. As statement pieces they combine the immediacy of performance art with the longevity of sculpture. It includes many of Escher's most iconic lithographs – Mobius II Gravity, Angels and Devils, the Bond of Union and Hands.

Dubai March 2015.

The annual art show – the biggest in the Middle East – is getting underway. An enormous structure, apparently in the shape of a figure of eight, is being hauled into position.

It would be difficult to imagine a more radical departure from the intricate miniaturism of Zadora's jewellery to a structure fourteen feet high, weighing four tons which has taken Zadora and his team more than 30,000 man hours to build.

Escher's lithographs and wood cuts suggest a surreal world of irregular perspectives impossible in nature. It has usually been assumed that rendering them in three dimensions would be impossible. But Zadora does not merely accept challenges – he seeks them out.

The lithograph Zadora loves to talk most about is Escher's Mobius II. Manoeuvring ants (each one a metre long) around the complex, multi-linear curves of the structure presented Andreas and his team with dauntingly complex mathematical calculations.



Magnets were the initial solution. But the animation, mobilized by an electric drive in the base was only ultimately achieved through the interplay between magnets fixed to the ants that in turn reacted to magnets fixed to the strip around which the ants had to walk.

“We realized that the secret lay in the actual weight of the ants. If they were too light, then because of the slipstream of air, they were quite likely to overshoot and knock one of us out. On the other hand, if they were too heavy, they stayed rooted to the spot or rather the magnet.

In the end, not even computers could solve the problem. It was down to patient experiment and human intuition. “It was one of those moments when I understood what it’s like to be overcome with perfect happiness...”

THE FUTURE

Towards the end of the show, I receive a call from Zadora. He is in a state of euphoria. He has become the star attraction.

A favourite is the famous Bond of Union, a self portrait of Escher and his wife. Two people have come together but also remain separate: a separation represented by the fragmented visualization of each head.

His order book is also bristling. He is in discussion with several heads of state about possible commissions.

When asked why he thinks his meditation on Escher has hit a nerve, he does not skip a beat. “ I just love his modernity. He seems to have captured what our world is becoming. His work, and my interpretation of it, prompts questions about how we interact with machines and computers.

Then abruptly he has to end the call. A sheikh is waiting at the stand to discuss a new sculpture.



"da Vinci envisaged flying machines... But someone in the end had to build them. I'm embracing Escher's vision, but I'm also taking it forward to the next stage... I have to be true to him, but also have to unleash myself."