

PRESS KIT
2026

KAIA
X
PAULINE LEPRINCE

BENEATH THE SURFACE

With “Beneath the Surface”, KAIA presents its first collaboration with French architect and designer Pauline Leprince. The collection unfolds as a series of sculptural metal and glass objects that explore the emotional and psychological depths that lie beyond appearances.

Developed through a close dialogue between KAIA’s Creative Director Manuela Szewald and Pauline Leprince, the collaboration results in three minimalist pieces – a console, a mirror, and a lamp. Conceived as points of tension between the individual and society, the works question what exists beneath the visible surface: the hidden fractures, vulnerabilities, and silent forces shaping contemporary life.

At the center of the collection is a deliberate transformation of material. Burnt metal, subjected to fire, undergoes an irreversible metamorphosis. The act of burning is not an aesthetic gesture but a decisive intervention: fire inscribes itself into the surface, leaving the material marked, scarred, and permanently altered. The metal becomes a vessel for memory and trace – an embodiment of the invisible tensions and inner fractures that run through modern society.

In contrast, glass introduces fragility and transparency. It allows light to pass through while carrying the constant potential of rupture, evoking the delicate threshold between exposure and vulnerability. Within the pieces, glass does not seek purity but revelation – a material that both reveals and threatens to break.

The mirror, in particular, transcends its functional role. Rather than merely reflecting, it confronts the viewer directly, creating a moment of self-awareness shaped by the presence of the collective gaze. Identity, here, appears not as fixed, but as something negotiated between self-perception and social expectation.

“Beneath the Surface” consciously rejects the conventions of the decorative. The console, mirror, and lamp do not seek to soften or embellish space. Instead, they assert themselves as objects of presence and confrontation. The burnt metal surfaces carry the marks of transformation – traces that cannot be erased. Glass, meanwhile, remains poised at the edge of fracture, embodying the fragile balance between what is revealed and what remains concealed.

Through this collaboration, KAIA and Pauline Leprince present a collection that engages deeply with materiality and meaning. Matter accepts its scars; trace becomes language. Light persists – not in spite of tension, but through it.



“Working with Pauline felt like a deeply profound connection – a shared understanding of sculptural, minimalist forms and impeccable craftsmanship. The use of raw and fired metal returns the work to the soil, to origin and material truth, and ultimately to our inner selves. At the same time, it reveals vulnerability and fragility – qualities we rarely allow ourselves to show, particularly in the performative world of social media.

These themes are deeply intertwined with the female experience and the ongoing struggle for women’s rights. In times like these, design and art can make subtle yet resolute statements. They create space for dialogue and give voice where it is often hardest to be heard.”

MANUELA SZEWARD

MANAGING AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR KAIA

BENEATH THE SURFACE
CONSOLE





BENEATH THE SURFACE
TABLE LAMP



BENEATH THE SURFACE
MIRROR





BENEATH THE SURFACE
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UNDER THE SURFACE
CONSOLE

H 600 X W 1250 X D 850 MM

BURNT METAL / TEXTURED GLASS

PRICE ON REQUEST

AXIS
TABLE LAMP

H 340 X W 400 X D 70 MM

BURNT METAL / TEXTURED GLASS

PRICE ON REQUEST

DISARMED
MIRROR

H 1750 X W 500 X D 40 MM

BURNT METAL / TEXTURED GLASS

PRICE ON REQUEST