



## HEART OF THE MATTER

Dutch textile artist Flox den Hartog Jager layers her works with subtle references and hidden ciphers

### 'I LOVE WORKING WITH TEXTILES.

**They enable me to make big gestures instead of concentrating on details, which I did before when painting.** Besides that, I find it fascinating how many techniques you can use when working with textiles as a medium,' says the artist Flox den Hartog Jager, who lives and works in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Flox draws upon narratives found in religion, mythology, everyday life and personal experience to create works that engage and sear. Interestingly, she wanted to be a goldsmith but, as her parents thought otherwise, she studied library sciences, philosophy and history, and went on to work as a corporate librarian and market researcher. When in 1996, she inherited some fabric from her mother-in-law, she started to make quilts. But, although she liked their abstract geometrical patterns, she found the process of

quilt making tedious and time consuming and the results unfulfilling. Even so, she found that the beauty of textiles embraced her. Their softness, tactility, texture, variety – the fact that they were easy to work without tools, and that she could work with them at home – cast a spell on her. In 2005, she enrolled on a course to learn more, studying batik, shibori, screenprinting, stamping, dyeing and working with a heat gun. Five years later she began to devour embroidery from the books of Jan Beaney and Jean Littlejohn and stitching became her favourite technique. With this knowledge, and through practice, Flox began to create works inspired by narratives taken from Christian scripture, Greek mythology, fairy tales and her own life. Her interest in stories stemmed from her mother, who had shared her study of symbols, religions, myths and legends with Flox and her siblings whilst growing up. ❖

Above: *Death, Four Riders series*, 2017. 50 x 45cm. Cotton, organza. Hand dye, discharge, monoprint, hand embroidery.