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Michael Klug, "A Dress for the Soul: Visiting Isabella Ducrot's Studio in Rome," *Whitewall*,
May. 30, 2025.

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A Dress for the Soul: Visiting Isabella Ducrot's Studio in Rome

As part of Dior's cultural program during the Cruise 2026 showcase in Rome, Whitewall visits the home-studio of Isabella Ducrot—where fabric, paper, and philosophy converge in the work of one of Italy's most quietly influential living artists.

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MAY 30, 2025

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Rome, May 2025 – As part of **Dior** trip cultural program surrounding the **Cruise 2026 show**, *Whitewall* was invited to visit the studio of the legendary **artist** and writer **Isabella Ducrot**. At 92, Ducrot remains one of Italy’s most quietly influential creative figures. Her work—spanning textile, paper, pigment, and prose—embodies a deep, personal grammar of beauty rooted in material, memory, and restraint. Stepping into her home-studio in Rome feels like entering a sacred archive. Rolls of antique fabric from India and Tibet, books of poetry, and delicate works on Japanese gampi paper line the walls. Ducrot’s life and practice are inseparable from the textures she collects. She doesn’t just make art—she lives within it.

A Life in Textile and Paper



Photo by Michael Klug.



Isabella Ducrot's Studio in Rome; Photo by Michael Klug.

Ducrot began her artistic journey through textiles, and while her practice has evolved into works on paper, the tactile presence of fabric remains central. She often mixes mediums—combining pigment, thread, and rare papers from Japan, China, and India—to create compositions that feel as much woven as painted. “I’m not a textile artist,” she clarifies, “but I work with textile as if it were language.”

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Over the years, she has developed an archive of antique materials from her travels across Asia with her late husband, returning home each time with rose roots and fabric fragments. Her garden in Tuscany is now a living archive of roses from around the world, grown and tended over a lifetime of devotion.

Philosophy and Process



Isabella Ducrot's Studio in Rome; Photo by Michael Klug.



Isabella Ducrot's Studio in Rome; Photo by Michael Klug.

Ducrot's Ducrot's work unfolds slowly. Like a prayer or a piece of music, it asks to be heard not all at once, but rhythmically. "Paper changes with time," she says. "The sun, the air, the rain—everything leaves a mark. Like life." This idea of slowness and material time is part of what drew *Maria Grazia Chiuri* to her. The *Dior* creative director and Ducrot have developed a deep creative

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connection, sharing a belief in the symbolic power of clothing and fabric. “A dress is not something added,” Ducrot says. “It is related to the soul.”

“A dress is not something added, it is related to the soul,”

Isabella Ducrot

Their collaboration has included prints and philosophical conversations, but more importantly, a shared view that fashion can be a form of intellectual intimacy—something you wear not only on the body, but within.

Dior and the Soul of Craft



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Chiuri's admiration for Ducrot is part of a larger narrative around **craft as resistance**, and **materiality as thought**. During the Cruise 2026 events, the visit to Ducrot's home felt like a quiet counterpart to the grandeur of Dior's show at Villa Albani Torlonia. While the runway was staged under a Roman sky with lace gowns trailing through rain-soaked gardens, the encounter with Ducrot offered another kind of reverence—an artist's lifelong meditation on gesture, fragility, and presence.

A Global Moment: Naples and Kyoto

Ducrot's visibility is about to rise dramatically. In October 2026, she will be the subject of a major retrospective at **Museo Madre** in Naples, curated by **Adam Weinberg**, former director of the *Whitney Museum*. The exhibition will trace her early textile works, paper interventions, and collaborations with Dior and beyond. She is also preparing a site-specific installation in Kyoto, in partnership with London's **Cenicles Gallery**, that will blend handmade paper, fabric, and floral motifs in a temple setting—bringing together Japanese minimalism with her own poetic language of pattern and silence.

A Studio as Testament



Isabella Ducrot's Studio in Rome; Photo by Michael Klug.



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Before we leave, Ducrot hands us her latest book—a slender volume of poetic reflections on women's lives and material thought. "Everything," she says with a smile, "begins with a small gesture." In a world that races forward, Isabella Ducrot remains a force of stillness. She draws us into the fabric of time—not with noise, but with paper, pigment, and the weight of being.

"Everything, begins with a small
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