VISUAL ART JOURNAL

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— *Intro*

Anna Gvozdeva

Curator of
Visual Art Journal

Dear reader,

In your hands is the 47th issue of our journal. We created it with great care, filling its pages with beauty and conversations with inspiring people.

This issue brings together works in a wide range of genres, created by artists from all corners of the world. As you turn the pages, you may sense how deeply interconnected the contemporary world has become. Despite the events that can pull people apart, creativity acts as a binding force - gently reconnecting us beyond boundaries and differences.

This is hardly surprising, as the themes artists explore in their work resonate with almost everyone, touching something deeply human and universal.

We wish you an enjoyable reading experience, and thank you for being with us.

On the Front Cover:
Flavien Couche
Femme au bijoux
2022

On the Back Cover:
Charlie Ramos

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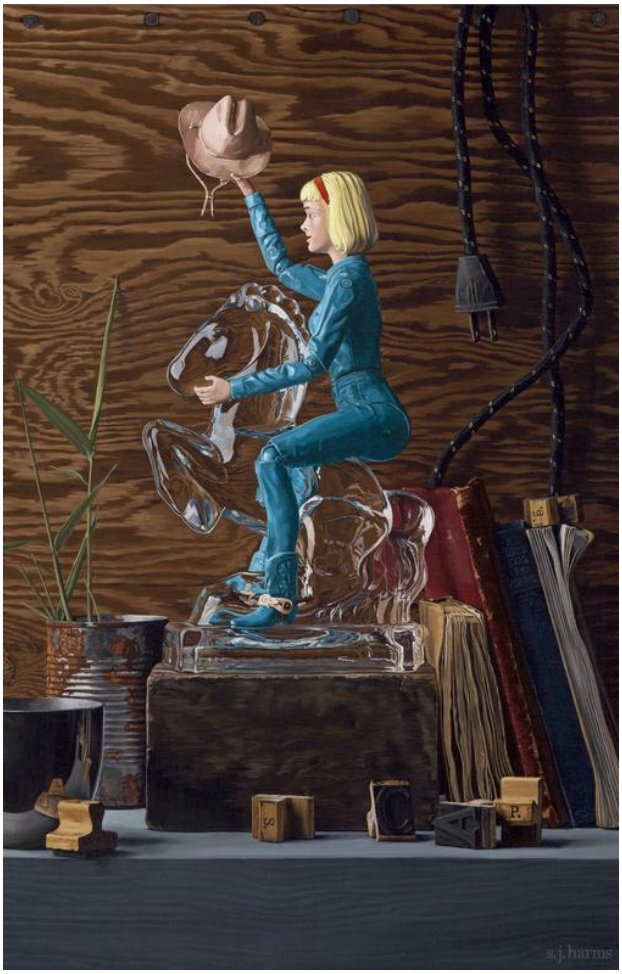
We invite artists to submit their works for publication in our magazine: **https://visualartjournal.com/call-for-artists/**

Sharon Harms

You spent decades working as an advertising art director before turning fully to painting. How did that background shape the way you think about visual storytelling today?

Advertising showed me just how powerful visuals can be. Everything that goes into the design of an ad matters when it comes to articulating a brand's story and shaping how it's perceived. It's a deliberate process, one that involves the careful crafting of every detail.
I learned that stories aren't shaped only by what is shown, but by how it's presented. Hierarchy, scale, pattern, and color all influence what a viewer takes away. After so many years honing those art-direction skills, creating compositions for my still lifes has become very instinctive. In a way, using objects as visual language in my paintings feels like a natural extension of that experience.



Sharon Harms | Escape | 2020

You've said that each painting often begins with a single object that captures your curiosity. Can you describe a recent object that sparked an unexpected narrative for you?

I became fixated on the small ceramic unicorn figurine featured in my latest painting, The quest. The unicorn carries a lot of mystery and symbolism, and once I began placing other objects alongside it, I sensed that the story could unfold in many directions.
Rather than forcing a narrative, I let the objects guide me and looked for connections that resonated beneath the surface. I initially saw the unicorn as whimsical, but over time it revealed deeper spiritual connotations. In relation to the other objects in the painting, it became a symbol of the elusiveness of spiritual enlightenment. And the very human desire to pursue it.

Many of your works combine hyper-realism with surreal or symbolic juxtapositions. What draws you to still life as a vehicle for psychological or philosophical ideas?

My work is about searching, sifting, and examining the things people collect as a way to uncover insights about the world we create. Objects carry personal histories, cultural echoes, and subtle associations that reveal themselves over time as I develop a still life and paint it. The narratives that emerge can be fleeting, but once a still life is set, it doesn't change. The solidity of hyperrealism

Sharon Harms | Everyone Thought Frank Was A Company Man | 2022

has a grounding effect. It creates a space for reflection, a place where clarity can emerge through sustained attention.

Coming to painting full-time later in life, did your sense of artistic freedom change compared to your earlier creative work in advertising?

Yes, there's a freedom I didn't have in the commercial world, but paradoxically, the process can be more difficult when there are endless possibilities. As an art director, my work was shaped by my clients' marketing needs, which were always defined at the outset of a project. I was always telling a story with a specific goal in mind. I knew the endpoint before I began.
As an artist, I'm looking for meaning that isn't tied to a predetermined outcome. I've realized I often created more easily when parameters narrowed the field of possibility. Now it takes a leap of faith every time I start a painting.

Your paintings often invite the viewer to "read" them slowly, noticing subtle details and connections. How important is viewer interpretation in completing the work?

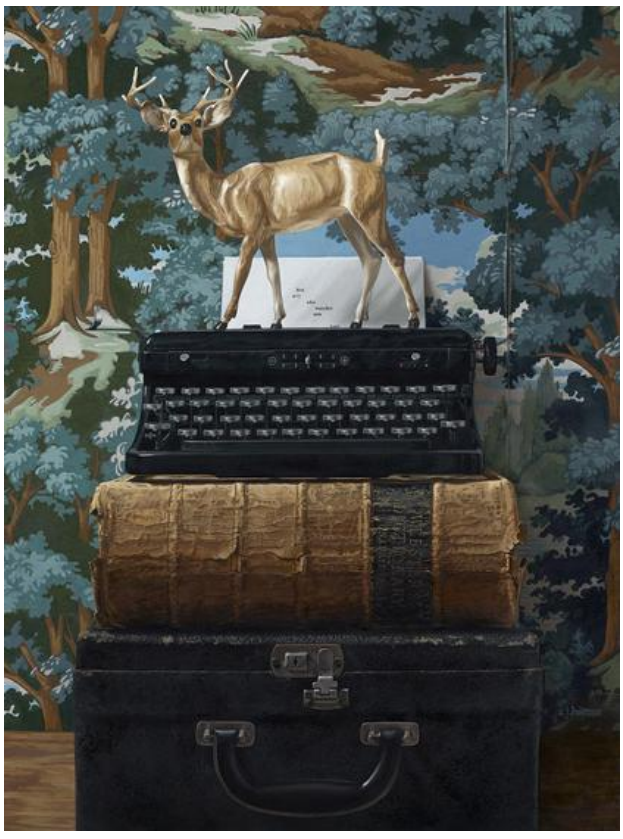
My painting style is precise, but the visual language I use is intentionally open. The individual histories and experiences viewers bring to the work expand it and reinforce the idea that our physical world isn't fixed or singular.
I didn't anticipate how interactive this aspect of the work would become when I first began painting these still lifes. Each piece is an invitation for the viewer to look, to notice, to think, and ultimately to complete the story for themselves.

Hyperrealism is frequently associated with technical mastery. What role does discipline play in your studio practice, and where do you allow space for uncertainty?

From an early age, I was drawn to details. I had a natural ability to draw and paint realistically, and that inclination stayed with me. Over the years, I experimented with many techniques, materials, and styles, but nothing has felt as satisfying as completing a successful hyperrealistic painting.
Creating a sense of presence on a two-dimensional surface is challenging, but deeply rewarding when I get it right. The vulnerability lies in not knowing whether what I'm committing to the canvas will hold up to the intense scrutiny that the genre demands.

Living and working in Nashville now, does your current environment influence your choice of objects, mood, or color palette?

At this stage of my life, I value Nashville's slower pace and ease of living. It gives me the space to examine details, something I've never lost interest in. I'm able to observe what people keep in their homes, what they care about, and what they hold onto.
Nashville is also quirky and a bit kitschy, and I'm continually inspired by the oddities I discover in junk stores and flea markets. I let those found objects guide the work.



Sharon Harms | In Search Of The Muse | 2023

Interview

Charlie Ramos

You have lived and worked in many different places across North America and Europe. How has constant movement shaped your sense of identity and your visual language as a painter?

Constant movement has always been a part of my life. I think it's led me to always feel like an outside observer. This feeling has been a big part of the reason I always gravitated towards art. I consider it a kind of refuge in a way.
Some of my most vivid memories are of exploring a new city, taking in its history and culture. This fills me with inspiration. Each new place has its own distinct sounds, color, music, history, etc. When I paint, these are the sources of my imagery. I am especially inspired by the personal stories of the people I meet. The details of their experiences are much more interesting to me than anything you can learn from a history book.

You've worked extensively in the animation industry as a previs artist and cinematographer. How has that experience influenced your approach to composition, narrative, and movement in painting?

I grew up surrounded by animation and film in general being a latch-key child so I can only assume that it's a part of my visual language. I attach images to music in almost every painting I create. It adds another level of meaning and depth for me. More directly, my experience working in film has created a focus on the importance of the shot. In filmmaking , every shot needs to have its reason for being in the sequence or else it's just dead weight. The phrase "Use every part of the buffalo" was a kind of mantra at Pixar and I have tried to carry it with me in my paintings in trying to use every element: color, composition, subject matter, etc. to push the idea forward.

Nostalgia and isolation are recurring themes in your work. Are these emotions connected more to specific places, personal memories, or broader social experiences?

My paintings are almost entirely based on personal experiences. How I see myself in the world. I'm a hopelessly nostalgic person in the sense that I see the world almost always in retrospect. There is a song by the Catalan singer/songwriter Joan Manel Serrat which has the lines "there is nothing more cherished than that which i have lost" I see this in my work. My paintings are visual poems about what I've cherished in my experiences.

You cite Diego Rivera and Marc Chagall as influences - two artists with very different visual languages. What aspects of their work resonate most strongly with you?

Diego Rivera had a big impact on me in art school. I was an Illustration major and his bold structural compositions and ways of stylising his subject matter appealed to me in this way. His work is that of an objective observer that suited the kind of illustration I was doing. Later, as I moved from Illustration into fine arts and wanting to explore more personal stories, I became interested in Marc Chagall. His paintings to me feel like poetry or music. They have a sincerity and vulnerability that I gravitate towards. I try to imbue this quality in my work as well. I still see some of the Diego Rivera influence in my work but I feel that, like most sources of inspiration, it has melded into the big mix of influences that have come along since.

Your statement mentions not fully understanding your work as you create it. How do you balance intuition with intention during the painting process?

My paintings almost always are based on stream of consciousness writing. I find It's the best way to get around the overly intentional and contrived conscious part of my brain. I do this as often as possible when I wake up after a strong coffee. What I write is mostly a big jumble of nonsensical strings of words but imagery starts to appear and after around 15 to 20 minutes there is inevitably something that resonates. A phrase, a place, an object, or a character..This is my starting point. I begin to draw after this and try not to over think..Just let it form itself. Little by little a story starts to form. As if the painting is guiding me. All of this is intuition. Sometimes it takes to the very end for the story to reveal itself to me.

Many of your paintings feel cinematic, almost like fragments of a larger story. Do you see your works as standalone images or as parts of an ongoing narrative?

The work is standalone although the overall theme is part of a subconscious journal of my life experiences. I could almost categorize my paintings through a timeline as they correlate to particular moments and experiences in my life but there's quite a bit of crossover. The painting "Birthday Party" is about my feelings on aging and isolation but incorporates memories of me watching my mother ironing in the foreground.

How does living in Montreal now influence your current work compared to your time in places like California, Mexico, or Spain?

Montreal has been my home now for almost a decade. There's something very inspiring and at the same time very accessible about this area even though the language is still a struggle for me. I've always been torn between my love of European culture and art and my roots and appreciation of my American upbringing and cultural references. I love this area in that it offers both at the same time. One can go to a county fair that feels like you're in a small town in Texas and then drive to certain parts of the city and be transported to somewhere in Europe. Best of all is the sense of ease in how this diversity coexists.

How do you know when a painting is finished, especially when meaning reveals itself gradually?

My paintings always start as intuitive imagery based on my writing. As I start to put paint to canvas I eventually enter into the "valley of despair" I hear many artists go through this. I get this feeling that the work makes no sense and I never had any talent and should give up..I think identifying this phase has helped me deal with it and accept it as part of the search. After a bit of time and work there's this sort of Eureka moment when the painting resolves itself and guides me through. It's still rough at this stage but the artistic journey feels over and then it's mostly a technical process. Every painting is a journey in this sense.

Priya Shyju

I am Priya. I am an Indian residing in the United Arab Emirates.I am a Visual Artist. I am an Art graduate and have been into Art since last 25 years and that makes me mention my age that is 41. My working mediums mostly are in acrylics but I also enjoy working with dry pastels, color pencils and oil paint.

Artist Statement
The more I am or can be with any form of Art the happier I am.

Natalie Dunham

Natalie Dunham | No.1.1656.2

You give your works numerical titles that form a narrative of your artistic development. When did this method first emerge, and how has it influenced the way you create?

I first started using numerical titles in 2010. As a process-based artist, I struggled with titling my works early in my career, repeatedly using 'Untitled' on my labels. During exhibitions, I was frequently asked how many individual pieces of material were in each work. This prompted me to start documenting my materials, which quickly led to me assigning numerical titles to my pieces.
The numerical titles not only allow me to track the individual elements used but also document the materials, finish, and quantities required to replicate a piece of that size. This practice is invaluable when creating commissions that use the same or similar materials.

Natalie Dunham | No. 16.8512.11

What draws you most to sculpture and installation as your primary forms of expression?

I'm drawn to the tactile and spatial interaction they enable. Sculpture and installation invite viewers to engage with the artwork in three dimensions, allowing them to move around and experience the piece from various angles. This physical engagement fosters a more immersive connection, allowing viewers to explore the relationships among form, material, and space in a dynamic, alive way.

How do you choose the materials for each project? Do they guide the work, or do you guide them?

My selection of materials for each project is an intuitive process that balances the materials' characteristics with my initial vision for each piece. I consider the inherent qualities of each material—its texture, weight, flexibility, and how it interacts with light. Once I have a material in mind, it often guides the direction of the work. I pay close attention to how the material responds to my manipulation and to the ideas that emerge during this process. The material can sometimes lead me to unexpected discoveries or shifts in direction.
In other cases, I may have a clear vision of what I want to create and choose materials that best convey that idea. This interplay between guiding the materials and being guided by them creates a rich dialogue during the creation process, allowing for a balance between intention and spontaneity.

Your art encourages viewers to slow down and be mindful. What role does slowness play in your own life and creative process?

Natalie Dunham | No. 1.719.5

Slowness plays a significant role in both my life and creative process. In a world that often prioritizes speed and instant gratification, I find value in taking the time to observe and reflect. This intentional pacing allows me to connect more deeply with my surroundings, my materials, and my own thoughts and emotions.
In my creative process, slowness enables me to experiment without the pressure of rushing to completion. It gives me the freedom to explore ideas organically, allowing for moments of discovery that might go unnoticed in a hurried approach. By integrating this mindful practice, I can engage more authentically with the materials, fostering a dialogue between what I envision and how the materials respond.

You maintain workspaces in both the United States and Europe. How do these different environments influence your artistic thinking?

While I am fortunate to have workspaces in both the United States and Europe, I have not yet fully leveraged the space in Europe. However, I am actively working to integrate my practice across both locations. Currently, most of my work is produced in the US; I transport it deconstructed by plane and assemble it upon arrival in Europe for exhibitions.
I look forward to further expanding my practice in both environments by building new connections and growing my client base.

Your works have been acquired by a wide range of public spaces—from hospitals to embassies. How does the context of display shape the meaning or reception of your work?

The environment in which artwork is exhibited or collected can significantly influence its perception and interpretation. As a minimalist artist, I find that the diverse display contexts allow my work to resonate in varied ways, prompting different interpretations and emotional responses. It is fascinating to see how each environment shapes not only the viewer's experience but also the narrative the artwork contributes to within that space.

Are there specific artists, movements, or philosophical ideas that inform your practice?

As an artist working with minimal sculptures and installations, I found Eva Hesse's approach to material investigation and her willingness to embrace ambiguity and process to be inspiring early in my career. Her focus on the tactile and experiential aspects of art aligns with my practice, which seeks to evoke emotional or contemplative responses through minimal forms. Additionally, I have been influenced by various minimal artists from the 1960s, such as Donald Judd and Carl Andre. This movement emphasized the importance of basic geometric forms, monochrome color palettes, and the elimination of unnecessary details to highlight the work's essential qualities. The aim was to achieve a sense of purity and objectivity, encouraging viewers to engage more deeply with the art's fundamental aspects. My work closely relates to these principles. In our culture, I believe there is a vital need for simplicity—paring down to the bare essentials and fostering moments of patience, pause, and reflection.

Natalie Dunham | No. 4.216.1

GUILLORY

Artist Statement
I create immortal works with my mortal hands.
I create these works by drawing on post-impressionism, pointillism and fauvism. Artists such as VAN GOGH, SIGNAC and MATISSE have been a great inspiration to me. After painting a background in one of the colours of the colour wheel, I paint my subject in oil in the same colour, mixing in its complementary and neighbouring colours from the wheel. Quick strokes and dots give shape to my always figurative subject. I repeat this process with the other colours of the wheel on different subjects.
My philosophy as a painter is to persevere in my work. Because perseverance is what makes the impossible possible, the possible probable and the probable reality. Just like the artists who inspired me.
I wish myself dreams of creation, endless exhibitions and a fierce desire to realise some of them.

Eric Guillory | New York Blue | 2024

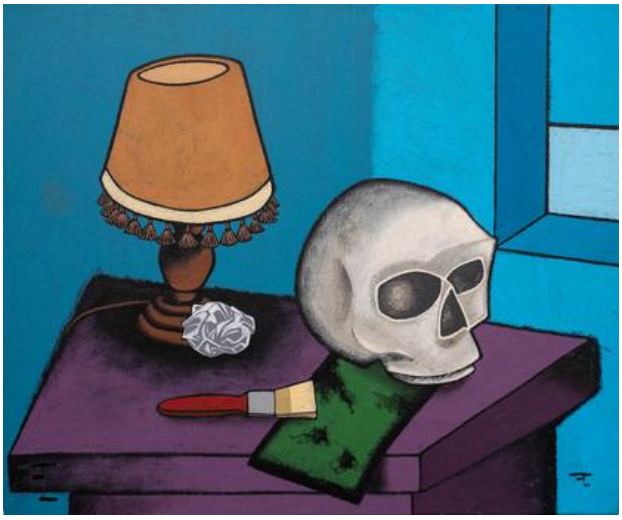
Eric Guillory | By the Green Water | 2025

Flavien Couche

You discovered drawing and comics at a very young age. How did visual storytelling shape the way you compose your paintings today?

I began by telling stories even before I tried to create 'finished' images. Drawing and comic strips taught me very early on to think of images as sequences, spaces where something is happening, even in silence.
Even today, my paintings are constructed like fragments of a narrative: there are tensions, ellipses, areas of mystery. Even when there is no explicit narrative, I seek to create a flow of the gaze, an inner path for the viewer. The canvas becomes a place of projection, almost a mental stage.

You describe the Fauvist exhibition at the Grand Palais as a revelation. What did color suddenly allow you to express that line or form alone could not?



Flavien Couche | L Inspiration | 2025

This exhibition was a shock and a revelation. I understood that colour could be a language in itself, autonomous, almost instinctive. Where lines structure and reassure, colour displaces, overflows, and sometimes even contradicts form. Also, the fact that I use only a narrow palette of colours allows for narrative linearity, which in a way imposes the appropriation of the work on the viewer.
It has also allowed me to express more complex, more ambiguous states: contradictory emotions, impulses, ruptures. Colour does not illustrate, it reveals. It acts directly on the body and memory, without passing through the filter of reasoning.

Your work constantly moves between figuration and abstraction. What determines this balance in a painting — intuition, concept, or emotional state?

It is above all a question of intuition, of feeling, nourished by experience and the emotional state of the moment. I do not decide in advance how far figuration or abstraction will go. I also like to immerse myself in my daily life, to represent it in a raw way, without subtext. Most of the time, these elements provide both an anchor point and a loss of reference for the viewer. The painting guides me. Sometimes the figure imposes itself, sometimes it dissolves. This

Flavien Couche | La planche et l | 2025

unstable balance reflects my way of perceiving the world: never completely legible, never completely abstract. I like this tipping point where the gaze hesitates, where nothing is fixed.

The time you spent on Réunion Island marked a decisive shift in your palette. How did the landscape and atmosphere of the island transform your relationship with color and materials?

Reunion Island profoundly transformed my relationship with colour. There, the light is intense, almost physical, fragrant, and the colours are never neutral. They vibrate, they contrast, they clash.
I began to work with bolder, more saturated colours and with a freer medium. The climate, the volcanic landscapes and the lush vegetation encouraged me to let go of a certain restraint. I understood that painting could be organic, alive, in constant flux.

You often describe color and form as "revealers of the soul." What kind of inner states are you most interested in revealing through your paintings?

I am interested in states of transition: doubt, fragility, momentum, the tension between calm and agitation. What matters to me are not spectacular emotions, but the often silent intermediate zones where something is transforming. This silence is fundamental to my work and its representation. My colours are deliberately chosen for their vividness, in order to energise this whispering world and create a paradox that I find interesting.
In short, painting allows me to make these inner, sometimes unconscious movements visible. It acts as a distorting but sincere mirror.

You cite German Expressionism, Fauvism, and Surrealism as major influences. How do these movements continue to resonate in your contemporary practice without becoming references or quotations?

For me, these movements are not models to be replicated, but sources of energy. Expressionism taught me the necessity of subjectivity and the immediate impact of representation; Fauvism, the freedom of form and colour; Surrealism, openness to the unconscious. They nourish my practice in a subterranean way. I do not seek to cite them, but to prolong their spirit: painting that is committed, instinctive, deeply human. I feel that the further I advance on my pictorial path, the more these influences become 'watermarks', well anchored but also less alienating.

Ultimately, what do you hope the viewer carries with them after encountering one of your works: an emotion, a question, or a state of mind?

Ideally, an inner state. Something difficult to put into words, but which persists.
If an emotion arises or a question pops into mind, so much the better, but above all I want the viewer to leave with a feeling, an intimate resonance. I want the work to continue to have an effect, even after it has left the viewer's gaze. It is important to me that my creation becomes the viewer's new playground.

Flavien Couche | Interlude | 2025

Katerina Kirik

Your professional background is in finance, hospitality, and interior design. What moment or inner shift led you to fully commit to clay and sculptural ceramics?

Yes, at the time when I was applying for higher education, finance and law were the most popular fields. I did not work in my specialty for long, as I quickly realized that a dress code was not for me. From then on, my path was entirely creative: working with jewelry from India, running an event agency and creating celebrations, doing interior renovations in apartments and chalets, and even opening a restaurant in Krasnaya Polyana. Later came a reset and a pause due to the joyful experience of maternity leave.

Katerina Kirik | Reka | 2025

I happened to come across a video in my feed showing a pottery wheel—how hands give birth to form—and it captivated me visually, so I decided to try it. In the end, however, I focused on hand-building. I feel the clay better this way and can move at my own rhythm, rather than the rhythm of the wheel. I never plan or sketch my vases in advance; I find that boring. What truly interests me is the flow of the process and where it leads—so-called intuitive sculpting, when it is not the mind or the eyes that shape the work, but some deeper essence of yourself that wants to manifest through the clay. In the end, there is a childlike sense of joy, because it is always a surprise.

Water is a recurring presence in your work - rivers, sea ripples, flowing energy. What does water symbolize for you personally and artistically?

By a twist of fate :) I moved ten years ago from the bustling and cold Moscow to Sochi to warm up. Looking at water is always calming; waves are the rhythms of life, the restoration of our energy — that is what water means to me. Sochi is full of mountain rivers and waterfalls. The water there is so different, always a living energy. I suppose I looked at it so intensely that I began to recreate it myself :)
I really love leaving my fingerprints on the clay, as if they were the ripples of the sea. It creates the feeling that the vase is breathing and moving, yet remains still.

Katerina Kirik | Perelivi | 2025

Many of your vases resemble human bodies, often imperfect and asymmetrical. Why is bodily imperfection important to you as a visual language?

There is a current trend focused on working on oneself, improving, and changing. I have always done this too—examining my body, noticing where its parts are not the same, and trying to bring them into symmetry. I was truly surprised when I started sculpting and realized that my vases are also asymmetrical, and that this is exactly what is so pleasing to look at. It creates a kind of wave—again, movement, energy. Our bodies are not static; they are energy, a dynamic structure that can be shaped and transformed. And it's important to enjoy the fact that we are all different, to observe and appreciate these unique features rather than hide them or try to conform to standards. I can see this trend gaining momentum now.

You work primarily with large-scale hand-built vases. What physical or emotional challenges does working at this scale bring?

Yes, I realized almost immediately that I wanted to work with large forms. The only problem I'm facing right now is that I can't fit my vases into the kiln, so I have to reduce their size :)

Movement and lightness are central sensations in your forms. How do you translate something as intangible as flow or energy into clay?

Clay is a medium that carries human energy. I simply pass on my own — it's that simple. In this sense, I like to see people through their creative work.

Your works balance strength and fragility. How do you perceive this duality, and is it connected to your understanding of the human condition?

An interesting observation. I would say lightness and strength — and these are no longer contradictions :) My vases are people, living beings. Each one is different and beautiful, and you can talk to them. That's why glazing them is so difficult for me. It feels as if I'm hiding them, wrapping them in dresses and cloaks :) Some of them remain in raw clay — I feel they will find their buyer, someone who doesn't need them to wear clothes :)

You also teach adults in your studio. How does teaching affect your own practice and perception of clay?

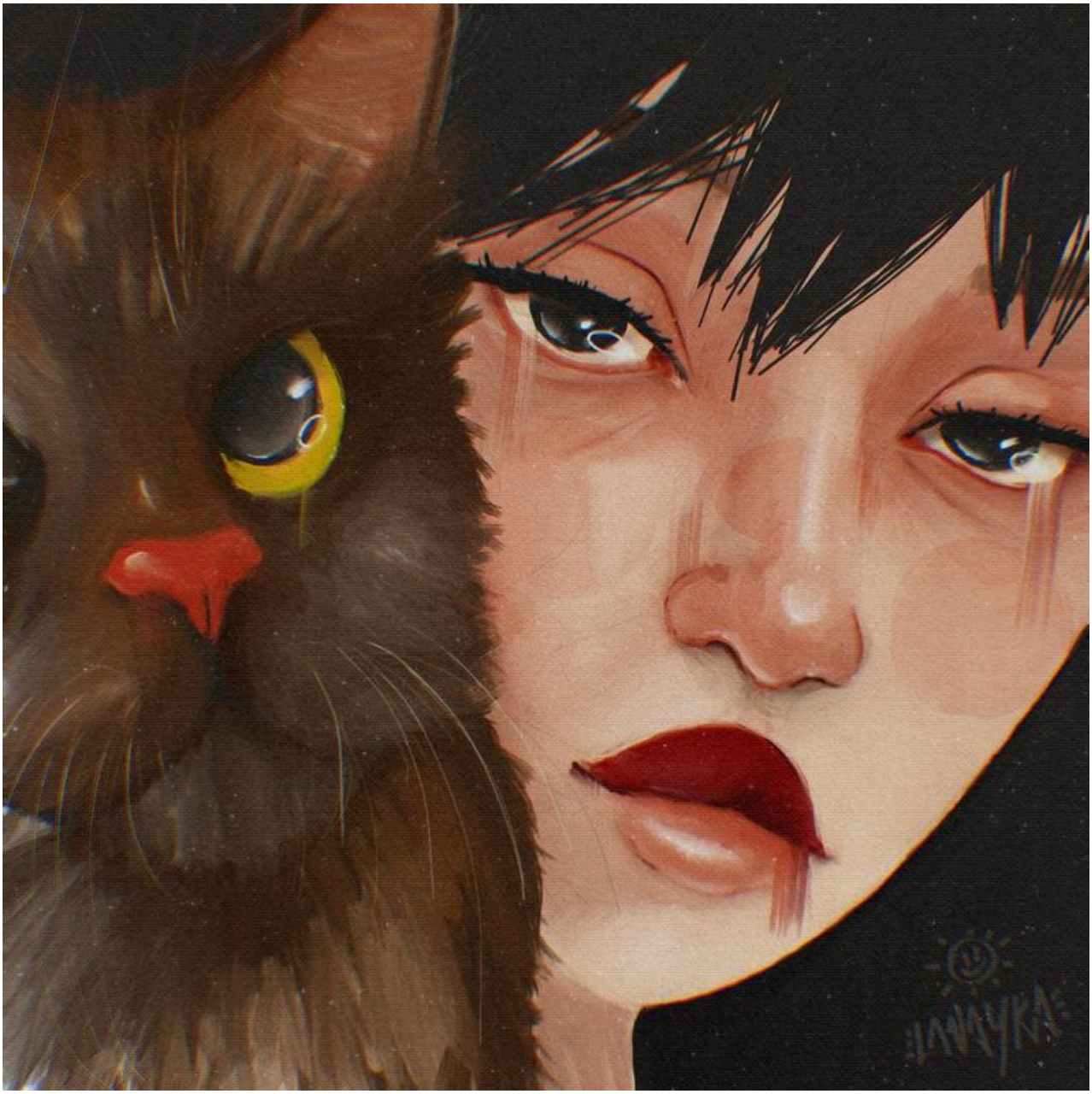
When you watch how people interact with clay, you realize how different everyone is. The calmer and more relaxed a person is, the faster they connect with it.
I usually begin talking about clay with these words: "Don't rush — it needs your love and gentleness :) Make friends with it, and it will do everything the way you want."
For some, it works from the very first try.

Katerina Kirik | Morskaya | 2025

Lanayka

My artistic path started with self-education through masterclasses and online tutorials. What began with creating simple gift illustrations evolved into a professional practice in the field.
My work has been featured in a digital art exhibition in New York during the international NFT.NYC event.
My practice now includes a focus on 3D graphics, as I constantly seek new visual languages and methods for narrative storytelling.
Guided by the belief that art has the power to create positive change, I donate 100% of the proceeds from my art sales to support animal shelters.

Lanayka | The Guardian of the Hearth | 2026



Lanayka | Indifference | 2026

Interview

Heidi H. Waintrub

Your work moves fluidly between figurative storytelling, symbolic portraiture, and abstraction. How do you decide which visual language a particular idea or emotional state requires?

My decisions are guided by a combination of concept, emotional intensity, and the practical conditions of the making such as time and space. When an idea feels urgent and I have an almost physical need to express it, I choose a faster, more direct language and smaller formats so I can capture its energy before it fades. In those moments I often work with watercolor, gouache, or digital illustration, because they allow immediacy and quick shifts.
Material also supports that decision. Watercolor allows me to achieve softness, transparency, and ambiguity, so I tend to use it for smaller works. I also use gouache and acrylic for smaller projects, but with those materials I can expand into both figurative and abstract approaches. Gouache offers opacity and graphic clarity, while acrylic lets me push contrast and make bolder, more decisive statements. For ideas that need time to unfold, I work with larger supports and more slowly in oil, allowing for layering, revision, and deeper development.

Heidi H. Waintrub | The Kiss

You describe your figures as emblematic rather than individual portraits. What makes a figure symbolic for you, and how does this symbolism connect to collective memory?

A figure becomes symbolic for me when it functions as an archetype rather than an individual. When it carries an interesting idea, a tension, or a psychological state that extends beyond a specific biography. I often extract the figure into a symbol through simplified features, strong gestures, and charged attributes, so the image is reshaped with meaning rather than a portrait. What interests me is not representation for its own sake, but the way a figure can hold contradictions: innocence and power, vulnerability and violence, devotion and rebellion. This is why I return frequently to what I describe as “mythic femininity”: female archetypes that appear across mythology, religion, and history. Greek myth and biblical narratives, in particular, offer complex women who have been interpreted as heroic or dangerous, sacred

Heidi H. Waintrub | Eve

or transgressive. I am currently working on a series of biblical women because these stories remain culturally active; they are repeatedly retold, judged, and reimagined, and they continue to shape how femininity is understood.
The connection to collective memory comes from the fact that these figures already live in a shared cultural imagination as codes that viewers recognize even unconsciously. By reinterpreting them through my visual language and in contemporary language, I am not illustrating the past; I am using these archetypes as a framework to speak about the present and to reactivate their meanings in a way that feels immediate today.

Ornament, patern, and repetition play a key role in your compositions. Do these decorative systems emerge intuitively, or are they conceptually planned from the beginning?

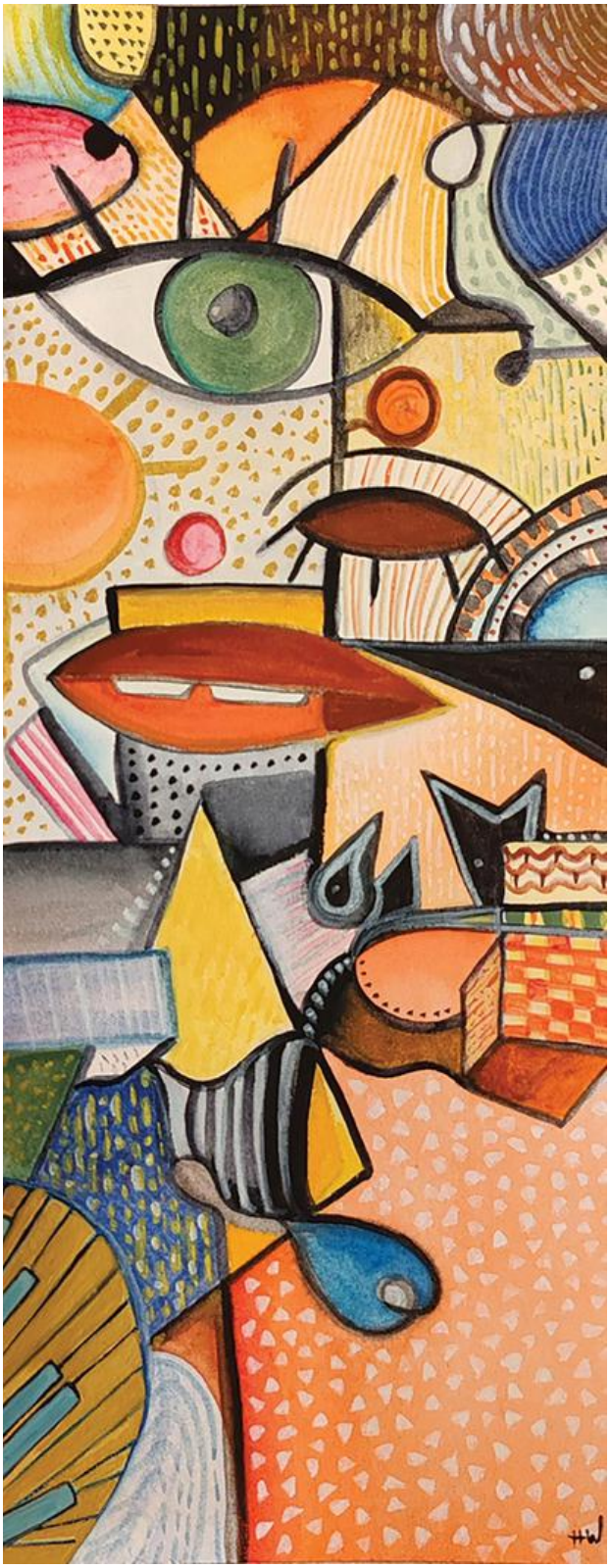
Patern, ornament, and repetition are integral to my process, and they usually begin intuitively. I approach them as a form of visual thinking: I give my hand freedom to move before I impose a fixed structure. In that sense, I feel close to the Surrealist idea of automatism: the atempt to bypass conscious control and allow unconscious material to surface. That said, once the initial impulse begins to take form and direction, the process is no longer left entirely to chance. The first stage may be spontaneous, but I then continue by composing: strengthening certain rhythms, editing others, and using repetition to build tension, balance, and emotional tone. This is especially central in my more abstract works, where paterns often emerge as an unplanned impulse. So, the answer is both: paterns, ornament and repetition are born from intuition, but they are shaped through conscious decisions as the work develops.

Many of your works reference mythic femininity and historical archetypes. How do mythology and art history influence the way you speak about contemporary identity and womanhood?

History shapes the visual and psychological vocabulary we still use to understand womanhood today. I see the past as an active force in the present: cultural narratives don't disappear - they evolve, repeat, and continue to influence how identity is constructed. Because of that, I often return to historical and mythological figures as a way to speak about my contemporary experience.
The idea of "mythic femininity" is important in my work because it uses archetypes. In a Jungian sense, these figures function as symbolic structures within the collective unconscious: they shape perception, desire, fear, moral judgment, and social roles across time. They are often framed in extremes: pure or dangerous, sacred or transgressive - which mirrors how femininity can still be negotiated today.
In my paintings, I use these archetypes as a framework to address contemporary identity. I'm interested in the tension between projection and reality: how women

Heidi H. Waintrub | Judith And Holofernes

have been idealized, blamed, celebrated, or controlled through inherited images, and how those images still shape modern life. This is why I repeatedly paint women in different states and roles - motherhood, strength, vulnerability, and power, and why I'm drawn to complex historical and biblical heroines. By reinterpreting them through my own visual language, I aim to shift the narrative toward greater human and psychological depth.



Heidi H. Waintrub | Judth

Your academic background is in archaeology and art history. How does this training shape your relationship with symbolism, fragmentation, and layered narratives in your art?

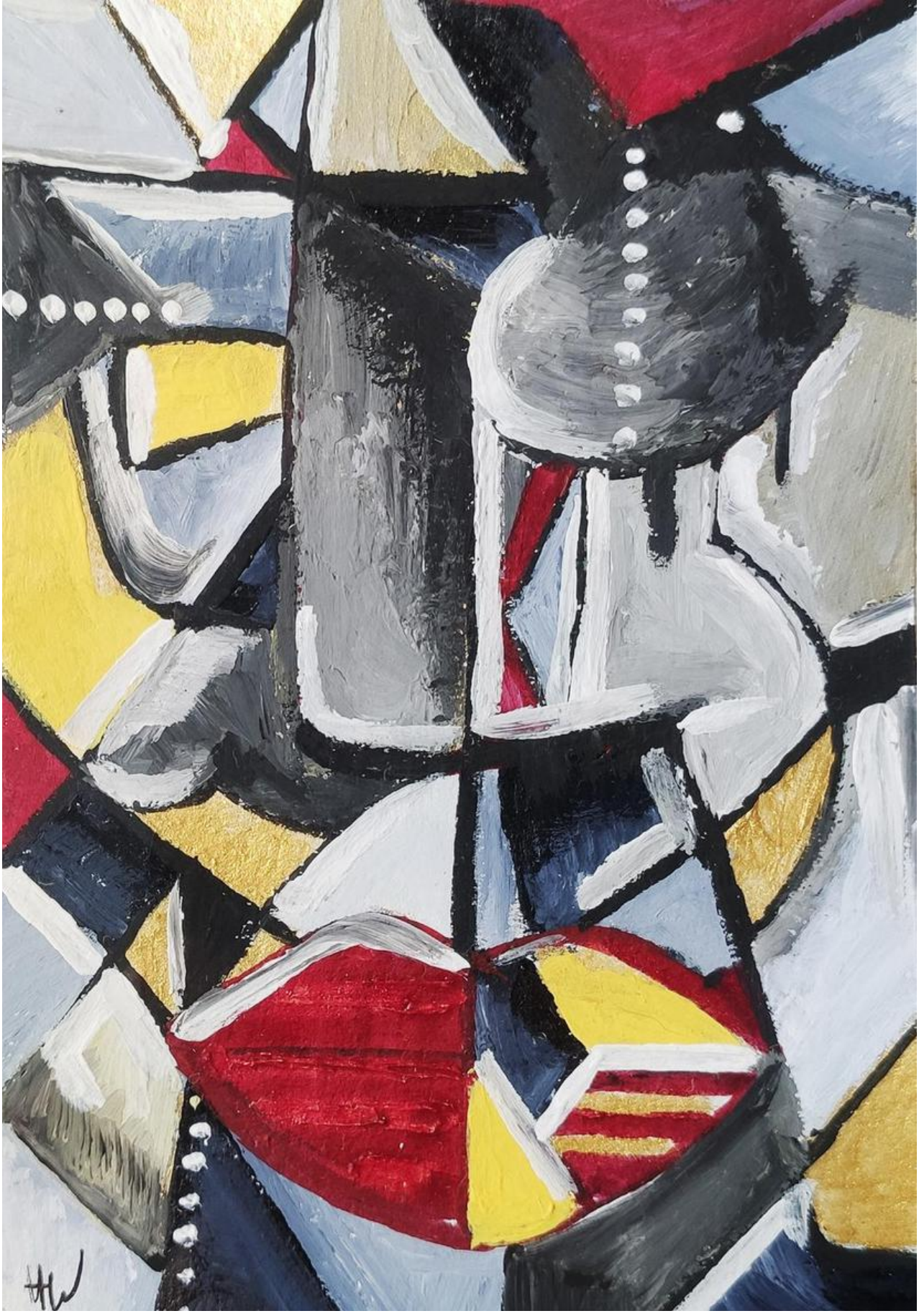
Archaeology and art history gave me a broader understanding of art as a cultural language. Archaeology is deeply connected to art because it reveals how societies lived, what they valued, and how they expressed themselves visually through objects, images, and symbols. This training made me more attentive to symbolism: how meaning can be carried through signs, archetypes, and visual codes across time. My use of fragmentation, especially in my abstract work, does not come directly from my academic studies. It comes from my artistic process and emotional approach to form. What my studies did give me is a stronger awareness of how images communicate. How symbols operate historically and how they continue to shape the way we read and understand contemporary art.

As both an artist and curator, how has your curatorial experience influenced the way you create and present your own work?

My curatorial experience added an important dimension to my practice and gave me an inner understanding of the contemporary art world. Early on, while working in an artist's botega in Florence alongside my painting training, I also had organizational and management responsibilities. Over time that evolved into curating, directing exhibitions, and producing art events.
That experience shaped the way I approach my own work in practical terms. It made me more atentive to context - how a piece functions within a space, how a series communicates as a whole, and how pacing, selection, and placement affect the viewer's reading. It also strengthened my ability to edit my work and present it professionally, from documentation and writing to installation and project planning.
I didn't initially plan to work behind the scenes, but it became a valuable part of my development. It gave me the skills to handle the administrative and organizational realities of being an artist, and it ultimately supports my studio practice by allowing me to present the work with clarity and intention.

Many of your images feel like open-ended narratives rather than resolved stories. What role do you believe the viewer plays in completing the meaning of your work?

For me, painting is a form of storytelling, but not a closed story. Each work is the beginning of an imagined conversation between my experience and



Heidi H. Waintrub | First Lady

the viewer's. I build the image as a starting point with an emotional and symbolic framework, rather than a fully resolved narrative.
The viewer plays an active role in completing the meaning. I want each person to find a point of entry: a gesture, a symbol, a color, a mood that resonates with their own memory or inner life. From there, interpretation becomes personal. The work shifts from my perspective to theirs, and the image is "finished" through the associations they bring to it.
In that sense, the paintings are intentionally open-ended. They invite viewers to participate and to transform the work into a reflection of their own story and experience.

Leah McMillan (b.1999) is a visual artist and horticulturist based in Chicago, IL. They are pursuing a Painting and Drawing MFA from SAIC after receiving a Marine Science BA from UC Berkeley in 2020. Leah has worked professionally as a soil scientist, land steward, farmer, and gardener. They primarily work with drawing on paper with colored pencil, pastel, and ink, but also use gouache and acrylic. Their work examines more-than-human kinships, feelings of estrangement, sickness, and friendship; it is precise yet nonsensical, narrative, and disorienting.

Artist Statement
One hand in the bucket of buoyant health, one hand holding cramped pain and damned illness. One foot pressing the organic world, one foot fastened to manmade objects. One ear listening to unquestioning loves, one ear hearing restless greed. Knowing that life is inextinguishable, fathoming that life is timed. Capture all these opposing tails, put them on a paper. Rooted in ecological healing and relating to the non human natural world, I make a container for what I fear, delude, cherish, need, hope, and dread. All these contradictions are screeching and jarring; superimposing the inconsistencies in a picture makes life more digestible for me, maybe for you.

Leah McMillan | Red Sails | 2024

Leah McMillan | Big Glove | 2024

Emma Coyle

Emma Coyle | The Slice | 2025

Your work is often associated with Pop Art, yet you frequently reference Picasso and Matisse rather than Warhol. How do you personally define the lineage of your visual language?

I think knowledge of art through reading books and visiting galleries and museums defines the progress and development of my work. When I started making art in the 1990's before galleries used the internet, books were the only way to learn about art history and magazine were how you learnt about international contemporary art.
I have always had a strong appetite for learning about art and in the 1990's it was American Pop Art of the 1960's which had a lasting effect on me. The impact from large works and bold colours really interested me. The following few years I found interest in the line-work of Modern artists from Picasso and Matisse to Mucha. I think knowledge of art history is important to learn from and a continuing interest in the development of contemporary is important. As an artist you never want to duplicate pass or current art but be inspired by the endless ideas within art.

You work extensively with contemporary magazine imagery and advertising. What draws you to a specific image, and how do you know when it has enough formal strength to become a painting?

I have used current print magazines and in particular fashion and style magazines as the starting point for my figurative work over the past fifteen years. At the start of my career, I had used images from 1920's Japanese advertisements, Silver Screen movie images etc but I slowly became drawn to current advertising images. I constantly collect magazines and every few years I make a collection of the images which interest me the most. I choose images which are solely strong in form, there is no other influence. From there I can start work on one hundred or more drawings and tracings, adding and subtracting line work for months on end. From these one hundred plus drawings I use a process of elimination before moving on to painting. I keep grouping images together and narrowing down the numbers of drawings in each group. To explain when I know when to stop working on a drawing is impossible, each drawing is dealt with individually, you just have a sense when you know a drawing has enough information to proceed.

Emma Coyle | Collective Selection | 2023

Line plays a crucial role in your work, especially the balance between primary and secondary lines. How does line function for you emotionally and structurally within a composition?

Emotion is not something I try to embed into drawings or paintings. For me that relates to the narrative of a piece and is something I leave to the viewer. The line work in my paintings build the structure of each piece and it is used to create form and balance. Primary lines build the form of an individual and secondary lines as I refer to them are used to add movement or depth.

You are known for working in large scale, with paintings reaching several meters in height and length. How does scale affect your physical and conceptual relationship with the image?

The scale of my work has continuously grown over the past twenty plus years. I use it to push the work further; with larger scale the impact of the work is greater. And with a greater amount of canvas to work with this allows you to develop your ideas. I don't think any artist ever wants to stop developing their work, each year you want to push your ideas to another level. I can plan studio work up to five years

Emma Coyle | 25.02 | 2025

ahead, but these plans change from to new ideas found while painting.

Your process of mixing paint - never using it directly from the tube and carrying pigments from one work to another - feels almost archival. What does this continuity of material mean to you?

An artist naturally wants to experiment and produce their own pigments and be know for their own pallet of colour. It is a very important part of our studio practice and the foundation for the work we produce. I have pots which have not been cleaned for over twenty years. Even what can look like white on my canvas is paint which contain small pigments of reds, browns or yellows. Painting demands respect and painters are dedicated to the production of work which this is based on. My paintings have always been based on development, to work hard and continually push forward ideas and to never reproduce what I have made in the past. My pallet has always been pushed within each series of paintings over the years. Bringing pigments as a starting point from one series to the following to develop has always been an interest of mine and coincides with the development of all aspects of my work.

Your recent figurative works feel simultaneously minimal and emotionally charged. How do you strip away detail without losing psychological intensity?

As I have mentioned the emotion in my paintings for me relate to the narrative of each piece, which I leave to the viewer. In my paintings produced over the past five years I have not touched on the emotion of a figure. Form is the main interest I have in each piece and I am able to keep intensity in each form from years of experience of working with drawings. Continuously working on drawings for each series is the experience I needed to produce the work I am now creating.

Traveling between and working in Dublin, New York, and London has clearly shaped your career. How have these cities influenced your visual language and professional trajectory?

Meeting people with different ideas, working with different artists, curator, galleries and agents in different cities is the best work for any artist to develop their own ideas. There is a constant energy and excitement which comes from cities, the art world is never stagnant and is always changing because of the people who work within it. Continually visiting galleries and museums is so important to any artist's career. Not only does it help you articulate your own work but adds to the depth of work you produce. An artist's appetite to stand out from the crowd is never full.

Emma Coyle | Big Mouth | 2025

House of Iris (Grace Farren-Price)

Your art feels like a vivid dream - full of surreal colors and feminine energy. How do you begin a new piece? Is it born from a vision, a feeling, or a story?

My art starts as a vision in my mind's eye, although the way this is inspired and developed changes for each piece. There is no singular route or process that I follow, so everything I make tells a different story. Sometimes the concepts or images seem to appear in my mind out of nowhere, other times they are built around a particular element I'm envisioning or contemplating. If there is a particular feeling I want to draw with, I just sit with that feeling in my imagination until I find a place to start. These thoughts often begin with, 'Wouldn't it be cool if...?'. Wouldn't it be cool if you could step inside a forest of human-sized mushrooms? If you could see spectacular planets on the horizon? If mountain ranges were magenta and violet? If a field of grass was so tall it could envelop you? If sun-lit sky was also full of stars? I think it would be sublime. Another common starting point for my work is music, usually a song that I've had stuck on repeat that feels like the backdrop to an imaginative realm. It's never about directly

House of Iris (Grace Farren-Price) | Day Dreamers | 2024

House of Iris (Grace Farren-Price) | Babe | 2024

basing the artwork on a song, but a specific song might create the atmosphere I need to become fully inspired by an idea. I also play around a lot with the world as I'm creating it. So perhaps the piece started as one idea in my head and transforms into another as I'm drawing. The digital medium allows for more freedom with that, which I love. As the artist, you're still only discovering the image as it evolves. I'm not one to have a set plan or sketch before I begin. Instead, I have a rough idea and I'm mostly piecing it together along the way. One aspect that does remain consistent across my work is an expression of fantasy, wonder and escapism. I feel like my drawings are portals into the worlds I dream of stepping into and exploring.

Colour plays a major role in your work. How do you choose your palette, and what emotions do you hope to evoke through these intense tones?

Bright, saturated colours are an essential feature in my art, which is certainly obvious from looking at my work. My use of colour is perhaps somewhat untraditional. I choose my palettes intuitively as I go, and I'm still learning how to do this effectively. This can also become a process of trial and error, figuring out what colours are right for the piece while I'm creating it. That's another reason why digital art resonates with the way my mind works – mistakes can be learned from yet still 'fixed'. When people comment on the vivid colours in my work, I simply explain that being surrounded by them brings me joy. Living in a space filled with colour feels just like looking out at a blue sky on a summer day – the world itself feels like a brighter place to be. That's what I'm hoping my art can bring to other people's lives, too.

The female figure appears often in your art - powerful yet serene. What does femininity mean to you in the context of your creative world?

I do love centring my art around female figures, and not only because they are beautiful. The empowerment of women that has continued to evolve over my lifetime is so important to me as

House of Iris (Grace Farren-Price) | Eye Of The Tide | 2024

a woman myself. Particularly the movements I've seen around confidence, body positivity, and self-love. My art focuses on the female form as that's where I resonate with my own experiences and struggles. The places I draw are the reflections of the female figure(s) who resides within them. Drawing an idyllic, trippy or dreamy landscape is one part of the enjoyment, but having a subject inside that world adds another layer of depth. It turns a landscape into a story, each woman with her own unique personality and vibe that draws you into her realm. It gives context to the world she is in and really brings life into it.

Many of your compositions feature mushrooms, celestial skies, and giant flowers. Are these recurring motifs symbolic for you, or do they emerge intuitively?

The world of my art is always full of celestial, magical elements and it can be hard to put the 'why' behind this into words. It's about the feeling of it all for me – the excitement and imagination. The realms I draw are the places I wish I could step into, and drawing them is the closest I can come to that. I suppose the way they emerge in each piece feels both intuitive and symbolic. Intuitive in the sense that these elements seem to be revealing themselves to me as I draw, and symbolic in that they represent imagination, dreams, spirituality, and a connection to nature's inherent beauty.

Your worlds feel like portals - half fantasy, half meditation. How does mindfulness influence your creative process?

It's really the creative process that influences my mindfulness. I was a very anxious child and I'm still quite an anxious adult. Although I'm learning to push through fear more as I get older, this growth is not linear. A lot of my personal anxiety involves ruminating and fixating on intrusive thoughts of all the things that could go wrong in life. So, in a sense anxiety is the very opposite of mindfulness. Making art is one of the rare times where I get a break from these thoughts, particularly in sessions where I enter a 'flow' state. When I'm so focused on the piece and its details, it takes me outside of myself for a while and my mind doesn't have the opportunity to throw negative thoughts at me. Plus, the process of seeing something come to life is so rewarding and generally gives me all the good feelings. Sometimes there is frustration when things aren't quite working in a piece, but I generally find these moments to be engaging challenges to problem solve. So, I'd say that my creativity allows me to be more mindful, and in doing so, the mindfulness allows me to be focused on my creativity. They feed each other in that way.

What do you find most rewarding about working digitally, and what do you miss from traditional painting techniques like acrylics or watercolour?

Working digitally was an incredibly discovery for me, something that really resonated from when I first started around 2020. It's an interesting medium because it involves mixing traditional art techniques with an entirely different digital skillset. I've used computer software since childhood to create images and videos, so it feels relatively intuitive for me but I'm still always discovering new digital techniques. I work in Photoshop which is a bitmap/raster software, as opposed to vector software which I find many artists tend to use instead. The advantage of vector graphics is that the piece can be scaled up and down without any quality loss, but I'm happy to sacrifice this flexibility as I love being able to draw the same way I would on a piece of paper. There are so many other reasons that I love the digital medium too. First, being able to mix incredible vibrant colours and experiment with such ease. Another huge advantage of this medium is, in all honesty, the magical 'undo' button that gives me room to make mistakes and changes without stress. It takes away the pressure for everything to be perfect in the first go. Another fantastic part of the digital medium is the unlimited copies I can print without worrying about protecting the precious original – because there really isn't one. Sometimes I do like to spend time making art through more traditional methods. Mainly drawing, watercolour or acrylic paint. It's a different thing for me – less about creating the final piece and more about the process. What I love and occasionally miss about these more traditional mediums is the break from staring at a screen, the ease of set-up in any location, and most of all the connection with real materials. For sure there is something very grounding about a piece of paper or canvas that can't be replaced. I have space for both in my practice but ultimately the digital medium is where I'm most excited and focused.

You mentioned that creating art puts you into a flow state where everything else fades away. Can you describe what that experience feels like?

The flow state is something exceptional that I have been lucky to experience many times in my practice. Explaining this properly goes back to psychology – I'm currently completing my bachelor's degree. I can recall a lecturer explaining 'flow' as a state where you are so engaged in an activity that you lose your sense of time, exhaustion, hunger, and are just totally immersed in the task at hand. It was this moment where I realised that flow is exactly what I (often) experience when creating art. The flow state has also been shown to correlate with mindfulness, so it's really an extension of the concept of being in the present moment. For me, the experience feels like falling asleep or getting to the end of a long drive – it's a different state of consciousness that you suddenly 'wake up' from, wondering where all the time has gone. I don't enter the flow state every time I sit down to draw, but when it does happen it's very special and rewarding. For anyone who worries like me, finding something creative to immerse yourself in could be well worth a try to give your mind a break and connect with the present.

Bruno Lebon

Born in 1967, he belongs to a generation that experienced the end of the Cold War, grew up with the explosion of mass media, and witnessed the advent of the internet. His universe naturally draws from television, comic books, cartoons, and other TV series, movies, advertising, etc.
After studying Painting at the Beaux-Arts, he chose to cease all pictorial practices to devote himself to computer graphics, his "demon," and worked for about fifteen years in the fields of print and WEB.
Following an inner "necessity," Bruno Lebon later returned to painting, fueled by the operational modes of digital imagery which he re-injects into the process of creating his paintings.
One hemisphere of the brain "digital" and the other "pictorial," jokes the artist... He exhibits his work, creates murals, dabbles in NFTs digital prints, and also runs art workshops...

Artist Statement
I have a great fascination for the Image: fixed, animated, printed, mental, advertising... Moreover, we live under a continuous bombardment of images. Intrusive digital networks make us enter an "augmented," "cluttered" reality as our imaginations are constantly solicited, even affecting our perception of the real.
Painting, then, becomes a struggle to assert the profoundly human dimension of this practice. The use of ancient pictorial techniques helps me: they impose a slowness, a process conducive to short-circuiting this frenetic pace... Freeze frame...
Each of my paintings represents a bet to be won. Nothing is really established in advance, except for a succession of mental collages, superimpositions executed spontaneously in an iterative manner, somewhat like a computer algorithm. It is, among other things, about accounting for this mental "gorging," surpassing it, and proposing a pictorial image aiming for "resilient" beauty.
My iconographic repertoire consists of heterogeneous elements. Memories, characters, recurring motifs, worn objects, fragments of elements emerge from very complex compositions without concern for homogeneity: the viewer must be jostled, brought out of a form of apathy.
To illustrate my work, I readily quote the American painter Philip Guston (1913-1980): "Often, when one is ready to give up, one plays their last cards. One adds a few touches, accesses a new type of consciousness, and works from that click".

Bruno Lebon | The Fish Tank in Front of the Window

Bruno Lebon | Teenage Memories

Liyu Yuan

Your work consistently centers on the human body as a site of emotional and social tension. When you begin a new piece, do you start from a bodily gesture, a concept, or a lived experience?

I usually begin from a lived experience rather than a fixed concept or a predefined bodily gesture. What stays with me is often a moment that has not fully settled—something quiet, repetitive, or emotionally unresolved. These experiences are carried by the body before they are articulated intellectually. I pay attention to how the body occupies space, pauses, repeats actions, or responds subtly to its surroundings. Concepts arrive later, as a way of organizing what has already been experienced. I want the work to provide a sense of presence and duration, allowing viewers to encounter the body as something that holds time rather than illustrates an idea.

Overlapping figures and colors appear frequently in your work. How do these visual entanglements reflect your understanding of responsibility and complicity within social systems?

Liyu Yuan | Nature Is A Temple | 2025

The overlapping figures and colors in my work do not function as direct representations of social systems, but as visual conditions that mirror how individuals exist within them. Layering allows forms to coexist without hierarchy. Figures are neither isolated nor fully merged; they remain partially legible while influencing one another. This visual entanglement reflects my understanding of responsibility as something distributed rather than singular. It is often unclear where one presence ends and another begins, much like our positions within social structures. The viewer is asked to navigate these layers slowly, becoming aware of their own position in relation to what is seen. Responsibility, in this sense, is not declared but felt through proximity and duration.

Bullying is a difficult and emotionally charged subject. What led you to approach it through painting rather than text, research, or activism alone?

I was interested in how certain experiences linger in the body long after the event itself has passed: hesitation, silence, internalized pressure. These sensations are difficult to articulate through text alone. Through painting, I could work with accumulation, erasure, and repetition—processes that reflect how such experiences are remembered rather than narrated.

Liyu Yuan | The Moutains Are Calling | 2024

Animals such as the snow leopard, mountain goat, parrot, and hunting dog appear symbolically in your paintings. How do you decide which animals enter a work, and what role do they play in your visual narratives?

Animals in my paintings represent a more instinctive and truthful layer of human relationships. I am interested in aspects of connection that exist before language or social roles—states such as alertness, dependence, intimacy, or vulnerability. Animals allow me to approach these conditions without the cultural expectations attached to human figures. By introducing animals into the image, I create a space where viewers can sense relationships in a more subtle and purified way. These figures do not carry fixed symbols; instead, they operate through posture, proximity, and gaze. This openness helps both the viewer and myself access emotional states that are often difficult to articulate directly.

Texture plays a crucial role in your practice, from mortar and crack paste to layered watercolor. How does material choice shape the emotional register of each series?

Material choice is never neutral in my work. I select materials based on how they respond to time, pressure, and touch. Mortar and crack paste introduce resistance and weight, while watercolor allows for diffusion and loss of control. These physical behaviors directly shape the emotional register of each series. I am interested in how materials hold traces of process —cracks, stains, accumulations. These marks are not decorative; they register duration and friction. Rather than illustrating emotion, materials embody it. They slow down the making process and invite a similar pace of viewing.

As a BFA student at RISD, how has your academic environment influenced your conceptual thinking and material experimentation?

The academic environment at RISD has been open, rigorous, and deeply collaborative. What has influenced me most is learning from my peers. Through daily studio exchanges, critiques, and informal conversations, I have been exposed to different ways of thinking, making, and questioning. RISD has provided a space where curiosity is taken seriously. The collective energy of the studio has sharpened my awareness of process and has reinforced the importance of dialogue in artistic development.

When viewers encounter your work, what kind of awareness or responsibility do you hope they carry with them after leaving the space?

I do not expect viewers to leave with a clear message or moral conclusion. Instead, I hope they carry an awareness of their own presence—how they move, pause, and attend to what is in front of them. My work asks for slowed perception. In spending time with it, viewers may become more sensitive to subtle tensions, overlaps, or absences. If there is a form of responsibility, it lies in acknowledging complexity without rushing to resolution. I hope viewers leave with a lingering sense of duration, carrying with them the experience of staying with something that does not immediately resolve itself.

Liyu Yuan | Tang Sancai Glazed Ceramics | 2024

Mario F. Bocanegra Martinez

Your Tipográficos series transforms typographic forms into luminous abstractions. How did this project begin, and what first inspired you to merge typography with projection and photography?

Tipográficos started as an open-ended experiment. I wanted to see what would happen if I took typography off the page and put it into a space filled with light, distortion, and hands-on improvisation. When I began arranging typographic fragments, wood blocks, perforated discs, and transparency sheets on what I call "the translucent stage" of an overhead projector, I quickly saw how letters could lose their meaning as language and become sculptural forms.
The idea started when I noticed how a single projected composition could change with a slight movement of a material, a different camera angle, or a change in aperture and shutter speed. A letterform might turn into a pattern or silhouette, then come back together as something new. This process reminded me of László Moholy-Nagy's work with light, transparency, and photogram-based abstraction. His belief that light could be a main creative medium has had a lasting influence on this project.

Mario F. Bocanegra Martinez | Tipográfico Tres | 2025

You describe your process as one of purposeful play and inexactness. How do you balance experimentation and control in your creative workflow?

In my home studio, I have the freedom to spread out and set up for experimentation. The camera and lights are always ready, with materials close by for whenever inspiration strikes. Typography gives me a formal foundation—shapes, proportions, rhythms. But once these elements are placed in the overhead projector and mixed with other materials, the rules become more flexible. I can then enjoy the beauty that comes from inexactness as a design tool, and welcome surprises that help me move forward.
My process is hands-on: I stack, tilt, and raise objects. I keep moving pieces around, watching how shadows overlap, how perforated objects create texture, how light bends across a curved object, and how a soft focus creates unexpected contrast with darker shapes. I understand the system I'm building, but I never really know what the image will look like

Mario F. Bocanegra Martinez | Tipográfico Seis | 2025

until it appears on the wall. The tension between control and the unpredictable behavior of materials, along with unusual camera setups, is central to my work. With practice, you learn to adjust your approach and find potential in almost anything you see.

The use of an overhead projector feels both nostalgic and innovative. What draws you to this analog device in a digital age?

The overhead projector has a presence of its own. It hums, glows, and even warms the room. Its imperfections, like dust, scratches, and uneven light, become textures in the final image.
Moholy-Nagy worked extensively with light, transparency, and shadow to create what he called "new vision photography." That spirit is embedded in the overhead projector and in the ways I use the camera to investigate. It offers a kind of optical poetry that digital tools rarely replicate. The overhead projector brings friction, unpredictability, and intimacy. I find these qualities essential to this series.

Many of your compositions feel kinetic, almost like motion frozen in light. How does your background in motion design influence these still images?

Motion design has changed how I see form. I don't see it as something fixed, but as something that can move, shift, collide, and shift. Even when I make still images, I think about motion and design principles like contrast, repetition, overlap, rhythm, and direction.
As I manipulate materials on the overhead projector bed, I work almost as if I'm animating in real time. The final photographs often capture a moment of transition: a transparency lifted, shadows and focus responding as an object tilts, distortions and color gradients seamlessly come together. It's like a kind of choreography, and the still image becomes evidence of the movement that produced it.

The interaction of light, transparency, and shadow seems crucial in your work. Could you share more about how you select and arrange your materials?

A big part of my process actually starts outside the studio, often in thrift stores and flea markets. I look for objects that catch light in interesting ways, like odd plastic containers, textured glass, perforated metal, small hardware pieces, or anything with transparency, unusual edges, or unique silhouettes. I try to imagine how they'll perform, but I'm almost always surprised—and that's the fun of it. When I get to the studio and put these objects on the projector bed, they produce results I could never have predicted. The surprise teaches me. I learn by testing and seeing what happens. Each setup is temporary, a brief mix of light, shadow, and overlapping forms, captured in a photo before I take it apart and start again.

Typography here loses its linguistic function and becomes pure form. What does this abstraction reveal to you about the nature of language and communication?

When a letter is freed from legibility, it reveals the underlying expressiveness we often overlook. It becomes a shape with its own internal logic rather than a symbol tied to language. This process shows me how meaning is constructed—and how easily it can dissolve. By fragmenting and abstracting typographic forms, I'm not erasing communication but transforming it. The work asks viewers to engage with typography not through reading, but through sensing.

Your work bridges design, art, and education. How does teaching inform your creative practice—and vice versa?

Teaching always brings new energy to my work. Students ask questions, share doubts, and offer unexpected ideas. Their curiosity helps me explain my thinking more clearly, stay open to new ways of working, and rethink old habits.
I create classroom workshops that let students explore materials, projection, typography, and both analog and digital processes. I see these workshops as chances for students to start shaping their own creative paths, rather than simply following a prescribed set of rules. When students see the messiness behind work driven by intuition, they realize that experimentation isn't chaos—it's at the heart of all creative work. This reminds me that creativity is always a process, not a fixed result.

Mario F. Bocanegra Martinez | Tipográfico Dos | 2025

Marijana Filipović

The cycle "Prayer" continues your earlier project "Record of the Soul". What inner necessity led you to this transition, and what shifted for you conceptually between the two cycles?

Marijana Filipović | Prayer

The cycle “Prayer” (2025) builds on the previous cycle “Record of the Soul,” exploring themes of inner reflection, the peeling away of layers, and personal transformation. It consists of seven circular wall objects – relief plaster discs with recesses in which mirrors are located. The surface of the mirror is covered with a layer of pieces of coal and ash, over which melted white wax with a wick is poured, creating a relief surface that can burn. Compared to previous works, in which a colored wire served as a supporting structure, in “Prayer” this function is taken over by the wick – an element that no longer holds the structure, but gradually destroys it. Burning becomes an act of liberation, and the mirror is revealed only through this process – a kind of inner “cleansing”.
The transition from the cycle “Record of the Soul” to “Prayer” was a logical sequence because recording internal states was no longer enough. I was further inspired by the late professor Ante Kajinić's quote that art is prayer – I have always felt it, but lately I have been experiencing it more intensely than ever. Conceptually, the key change between the cycles is the shift from writing to process.

Fire plays a central role in "Prayer" - not only as a visual effect, but as a real, destructive force. What does burning represent for you personally, beyond symbolism?

For me, fire in the cycle "Prayer" is not just a metaphor, but a real, unpredictable force with which I enter into a relationship. Burning marks a moment of irreversible loss

Marijana Filipović | Prayer

of control – a process that cannot be reversed, but can only be followed and accepted. The size and shape of the "space" for smoldering varies; sometimes it is restrained, emphasizing the solid surface of the plaster, and sometimes openly, allowing for a slow and unpredictable process that leaves uneven traces. The flame gradually decomposes the form, which represents an act of liberation and giving up on the need to preserve everything in order to reveal what was previously hidden.

In this series, the mirror is hidden and only revealed through burning. How do you understand the act of self-recognition in your work - is it something violent, gentle, or inevitable?

I experience self-recognition in my work as inevitable. It does not happen gently or violently, but through the process of removing the layers that protect and deceive us. The mirror is revealed only through burning, when superficiality disappears. A paraphrase of St. Augustine's thought sums up the essence of this experience: what we seek has always been present within us, but obscured by layers that have yet to be burned. What remains is not an ideal image, but a real, stripped-down reflection.

Your objects exist between sculpture, painting, and ritual. At what point does the artwork stop being an object and become an experience or act?

A work of art ceases to be just an object when it enters process and time – like a candle that smolders and burns out. Form is no longer permanent; it becomes an event, an act, and an experience. The verticality of the work invokes an inner axis, while combustion becomes a silent moment of introspection. The flame removes the superficial and reveals that the search for light begins within.

The traces of smoke, cracks, and melted wax feel almost like drawings made by fire itself. Do you see fire as a collaborator in these works?

Yes, I see fire as a direct collaborator in the work. During burning, the flame and smoke spontaneously write traces on the surface of the plaster – dark lines, cracks, and deformations emerge with their own rhythm and force. The melted wax and traces of smoke act like reliefs and drawings created by the fire itself, shaping and disintegrating the object at the same time. Fire thus becomes a co-author, whose behavior completes the work.

One work remains active during the exhibition, slowly burning in front of the audience. How does the presence of time and impermanence change the viewer's relationship with the work?

Six works will be displayed in a post-burnt state, while the seventh will smolder in front of the audience. The visitor will be able to follow the process of the emergence and disappearance of the seventh work, becoming aware of the transience of matter. The slow burning of the seventh work and the gradual uncovering of the mirror introduce a ritualistic, introspective dimension in which the viewer becomes a participant.

If "Prayer" is a silent inner act, what do you hope remains with the viewer after leaving the exhibition space?

I hope that the viewer will remain with a sense of inner silence and introspective space even after the opening of the exhibition. The subdued lighting will emphasize the drama of the burning, while the tones of the duduk lead the visitor towards a meditative experience. Seeing their reflection in the uncovered mirror, each visitor can encounter their own outline and their own sense of truth.

Marijana Filipović | Prayer

Fatemeh Zare

I started my artistic journey as an illustrator, constantly sketching the wild ideas that filled my mind. But I soon realized that some stories couldn't be confined to a single frame, they needed motion, energy, and life. That realization led me to animation, where my imagination could finally break free and take shape in ways I never thought possible.

Magdalena Brzezinska

You returned to art after many years, at a different stage of life. How did this return change your understanding of yourself as an artist and as a person?

I returned to artistic creation after decades, when my three children were no longer small and dependent. The return was a demanding and lengthy process. At first, I felt disheartened by my lack of practice and technical imperfections. Years without art had left me acutely aware of my shortcomings, which were difficult to bear because of my perfectionism. Comparing myself to others wasn't helpful, either. Yet, certain poignant events in my private life sensitized me to life's fragility and its one-time nature, so I decided to persist, and my children supported me in this journey. Gradually, I became more accepting of my deficiencies and of the fact that the conditions for creating are less than ideal. Often, my studio is my bed, with all the materials scattered around. I am still in the process of discovering my artistic voice. I cannot say I am very lenient toward myself, but I am becoming bolder and more forgiving of the unsuccessful attempts.

Magdalena Brzezinska | Louis Armstrong | 2025

You have said that a portrait is a journey into the model's soul. How do you sense or approach this "unspoken" inner layer when you work?

This is a very difficult question, as I am not fully aware of how this happens. What I know is that for me, a portrait is a lot more than capturing a likeness, even though it feels nice when viewers recognize the model. I mostly sense and intuit the model's energy, emotional state, and the silent stories that may want to be revealed. I like discreetly observing people in public places, on trams, in cafes, or in waiting rooms. I try to imagine what may be going on in their minds. Connections come naturally to me, so sometimes observation is followed by a conversation. Working on a portrait also feels like a meaningful dialogue, or perhaps even more so, like listening: to faces, particularly to eyes and whatever they reflect. Still, I accept that sometimes I may read emotions into people that are just my projections. Ultimately, art is about interpretation, so I give myself and the audience the right to speculate.

Male faces appear frequently in your work. What do you find emotionally or visually compelling in masculinity, aging, and the marks of time?

I am drawn to rawness, to faces allowed to be imperfect and age. What is shaped and warped by time interests me far more than what is smooth, generic, or perfected by expectation. Men have always had a freedom that I long felt

Magdalena Brzezinska | Passenger | 2025

society denied women: the freedom to be flawed, weathered, and elderly. And wrinkles, fatigue, and roughness carry stories: narratives that can take your breath away or humble you. I also like discovering vulnerability in strength and tenderness in apparent coarseness, which, I feel, is easier to see in male faces. Finally, while I mainly manifest my femininity, I also recognize a strong presence of cross-gender characteristics in myself, and I am on a constant quest to unravel the masculine element in me.

In this portrait, reflections in sunglasses play a crucial role. What made reflection an essential narrative element rather than a secondary detail?

The reflection was definitely the trigger for taking the photo that later served as a reference for the pastel painting. Although I was never quite as brave as Julia Margaret Cameron, Dorothea Lange, or Diane Arbus, these seminal artists inspired me to look at people closely and try to capture transient and occasionally intimate family moments. The photo, and then the painting, was never only about my son's face, but also about what appeared briefly within its frame. Transience played an important role. My daughter and I are only temporarily present, visible for as long as Albert's attention lingers. Thus, our presence is already becoming a disappearance; the here-and-now is already turning into the past.

The image captures not only your son, but also you and your daughter reflected in him. How conscious were you of memory, loss, and distance while creating this work?

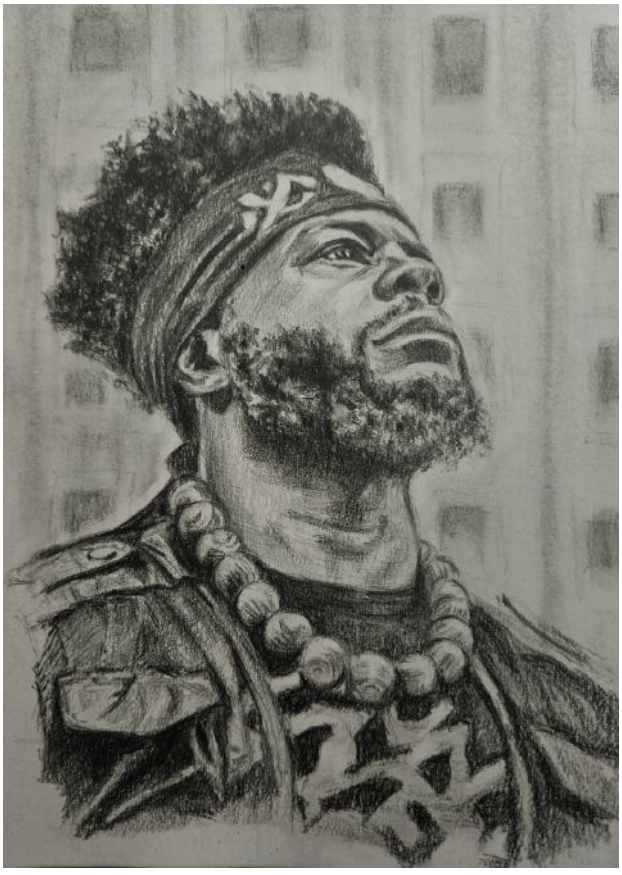
I was conscious of distance and loss both in the moment of capture and later, during the act of drawing. I liked the mirrored glasses and the fact that even though my daughter and I were reflected in them, I could not be really sure what my son was looking at. Albert was a teenager who suddenly outgrew me physically, and I was not quite ready for that. He was towering over the petite us, and I was aware that even though all three of us were close then, this was already a prelude to him becoming his own, independent person living a separate life: a difficult truth for many mothers. Last December, as I was rendering the image in pastel, I was reliving the moment. The portrait became a record of our three lives briefly aligned, all the more precious now that my son has started his own family and my daughter lives far away.

You work primarily with pencils and dry pastels, sometimes using iridescent pigments. What does this combination allow you to express that other media might not?

Graphite and dry pastel used against rough paper suit my temperament and my way of seeing reality. Life is rough, so coarseness should be felt when it is being expressed. That is why painting as a way of expression has no allure for me. I admire the old masters of chiaroscuro: Rembrandt, Caravaggio, or de La Tour, and they inspire me beyond my humble abilities, but a brush does not feel right in my hand. Also, pencils and dry pastels allow for hesitation, correction, and uncertainty, which soothe my perfectionism and are essential to how I work. As for the iridescent pigments, they lend a face a glow, a subtle light that illumines everyone coming into this world. I want to discover it even in the toughest faces.

Your background includes art therapy. Does this experience influence how you relate to your subjects or to the emotional depth of your portraits?

I have never given it much thought, but I feel that my training in art therapy, as well as my natural empathy, may deepen my sensitivity to the layers beneath our appearance. We are fragile, here today and gone tomorrow. Our faces endure, survive, and remember. I want my portraits to be attentive rather than judgmental. I want to honor fatigue, imperfection, and vulnerability. I do not avoid portraying people who are young, strong, and beautiful, or so they seem, but I am aware of ephemerality. It may sound like a cliché, but I want to actually see people, not just look at them, and allow their inner life to emerge on paper.



Magdalena Brzezinska | Blackwatr | 2025

Kyriaki Fotiadou was born in Heraklion, Crete. She studied Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, Italy and Engraving, at the Fine and Applied Arts Department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece as well as, at the University of Fine Arts in Barcelona, Spain. She obtained Master's degrees in Museology as also in the Protection, Maintenance and Restoration of Cultural Monuments, at the Department of Architectural Engineering of the Technical University of AUTH. Since 2024 she is a PhD candidate at the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture of the Faculty of Theology of AUTH. She has taught as an auxiliary staff, painting and engraving in the Visual and Applied Arts departments of the Universities of Western Macedonia and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In the past he has taught art at the departments of Social Theology and Christian Culture, Preschool Education and Education of AUTH, in the secondary Art School of Thessaloniki, while he has collaborated with the State Museum of Padua and the Archaeological Museums of Veria and Thessaloniki. Her artist works have taken part in exhibitions in Greece and abroad.

Artist Statement
The redefinition of the elements of decomposition as well as the reunification of the body with the soul, the division, the reconstitution, that is to say, the recall, and the restoration of our self to the whole, reassembling the spirit and body together, are the starting point in the series of engraving works entitled Absence.

Kyriaki Fotiadou | Absence

Kyriaki Fotiadou | Absence

Ju Xie

Your work often bridges emotional storytelling and structured design systems. How do you balance intuition and system-thinking in your creative process?

In my design practice, emotion functions as a visual connection between a brand and its audience. However, that emotional layer must be grounded in research and a clear understanding of user needs. In fine art, emotional interpretation can remain ambiguous and subjective, but in design, emotion needs to be intentional and communicative. Before any visual exploration begins, I conduct in-depth market and user research to understand audience pain points and evaluate the brand from a marketing and business perspective. This ensures that emotional expression is not only expressive, but also relevant and viable. Once this foundation is established, I translate the brand story into visual language through imagery, composition, and tone. Grid systems and structural frameworks are introduced later to organize the visuals, providing clarity, consistency, and alignment with contemporary market expectations.

You began your artistic journey with traditional painting. How has this early training influenced the way you approach graphic design today?

Traditional painting shaped my aesthetic sensibility and the way I perceive visual relationships. It trained my eye to be sensitive to light, shadow, color harmony, and composition — fundamentals that continue to guide my design decisions. This sensibility extends naturally into my motion and 3D work, particularly in how I approach spatial depth, lighting, and atmosphere. Even in digital environments, I work with a painter's mindset, considering how light defines form and how color carries emotion. Traditional painting was also my introduction to visual storytelling. It allowed me to approach graphic design not only as a problem-solving tool, but as a medium for narrative and emotional communication. Even when working within strict systems, I still think like a painter first: where the eye rests, what carries emotional weight, and what can be left unsaid.

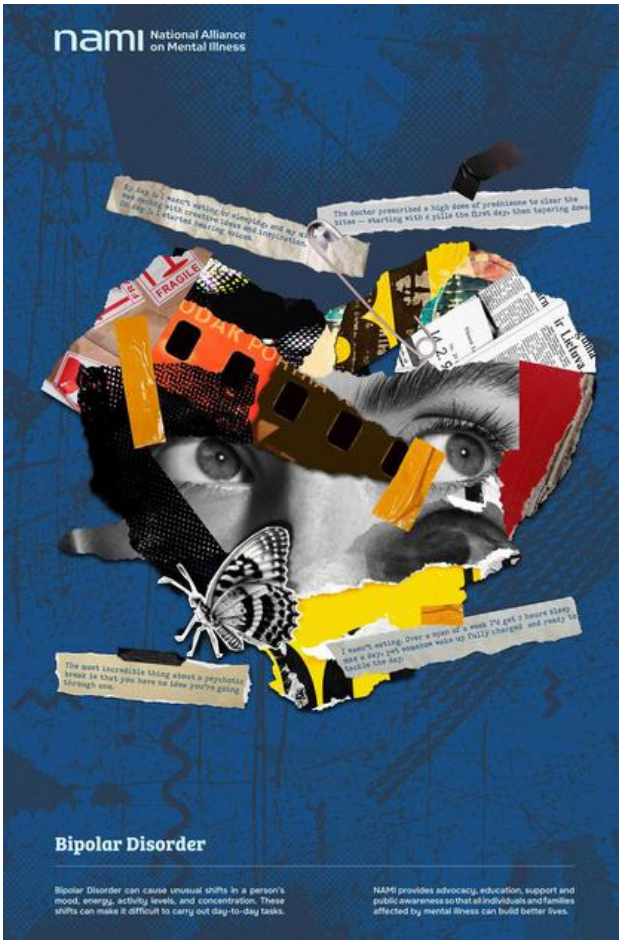
Ju Xie | Nami Anti Stigma

Many of your recent projects explore mental health and emotional fragmentation. What initially drew you to this subject matter?

As mental health challenges become increasingly common, they have emerged as a critical social issue that demands attention. These struggles often lead to secondary issues such as substance abuse or alcohol dependency, which can affect not only individuals but entire families.
People living with mental illness are also among the most marginalized groups in society. They are frequently labeled as emotionally unstable, a simplification that fails to reflect their lived realities. Through research on professional mental health platforms and social media, I found that many share a common desire — to be heard, understood, and taken seriously. Their perspectives on the world can differ profoundly from those without mental health struggles. This realization motivated me to use design as a bridge, creating visual connections that encourage communication, empathy, and understanding, and challenge existing biases.

In your NAMI rebrand project, collage becomes a central visual language. Why did collage feel like the most honest way to represent mental health experiences?

During my research on social media platforms, I noticed that many people living with mental illness describe themselves as feeling "broken into pieces," often comparing recovery to slowly putting themselves back together, like repairing a shattered vase. That metaphor deeply resonated with me and led naturally to collage as a visual language.



Ju Xie | Nami Bipolar Disorder

I began to see collage not as a decorative technique, but as a metaphorical structure. Each fragment represents a lived experience, a memory, or an emotional state. By assembling these fragments, collage reflects mental health not as a linear journey, but as an ongoing process of disassembly and reconstruction. In that sense, collage felt like the most honest way to visualize inner experiences that are complex, fragile, and non-linear.

You mentioned reading personal diary-style reflections during your research. How did these real voices shape specific visual decisions in the project?

The diary-style reflections influenced how I approached composition, pacing, and visual restraint. Many of the writings shifted between clarity and confusion, hope and exhaustion, which led me to avoid overly balanced or symmetrical layouts.
This translated into uneven layering, disrupted grids, irregular spacing, and moments of visual quiet. Typography was treated as fragments rather than declarations, allowing space for pause rather than constant explanation. Instead of designing about these voices, I designed around them, allowing their rhythms and emotional shifts to guide how elements appeared, overlapped, or faded. The goal was not to interpret their experiences, but to create a visual environment capable of holding them respectfully and authentically.

The posters feel both raw and carefully constructed. How do you decide when to embrace imperfection and when to impose structure?

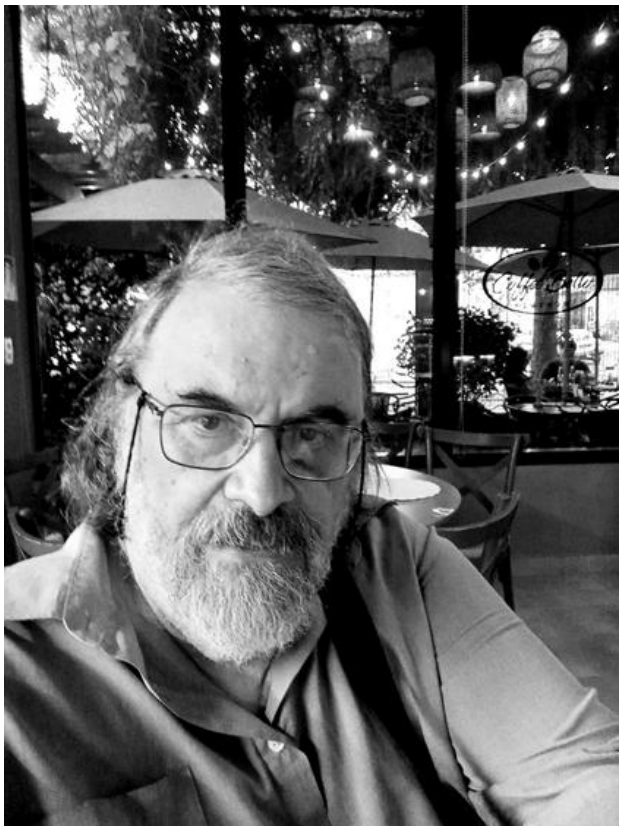
I see graphic design as a practice of balance — knowing when to hold and when to release. I don't strictly follow grid systems, but I respect their role in establishing hierarchy and clarity. I often choose to break the grid, but never without understanding it first.
The imperfections within the collages reflect my interpretation of mental health and emotional movement. There are no perfect people, and emotions are never static. Imperfection becomes a deliberate form of negative space — a quiet acknowledgment of vulnerability and lived experience. Leaving room for imperfection is not a lack of control, but an act of empathy and an understanding of humanity and life.

Your work suggests a strong sense of empathy toward the viewer. How do you define empathy in design, and how can designers cultivate it?

Empathy in design begins with resisting assumptions. It means not designing solely from personal taste, and not allowing visual appeal to dictate an entire system. Graphic design requires a balance between rational thinking and emotional sensitivity.
Before designing, it is essential to listen — to users, to real conversations, and to lived experiences. Designers must step outside their own perspective and consider how work will be received, understood, and used. Design that exists only for self-admiration rarely resonates. Empathetic design, on the other hand, is grounded in understanding. It asks not "what do I want to say," but "what needs to be communicated, and for whom."

Ju Xie | Nami Anxiety Disorder

Marcelo Guimarães Lima



The Bestiary Series refers to one of the oldest artistic traditions — animal representation. What motivated you to return to this ancient subject today, and why does it feel urgent now?

Marcelo Guimarães Lima | Bisonsoflascaux Bestiary Series

Marcelo Guimarães Lima - My fascination with Prehistoric art and the representation of animals has two aspects: first, is the intentional act of significant mark making with its communicative and representational dimensions, that from its ancient beginnings is repeated today in drawing. I empathize, let me put this way, with the Prehistoric “artist”. There is a lineage going back to these early manifestations of cave art that synthesize in gripping visual representations mindful developments of early cultures, refined perceptive capacities, manual ability, rational and expressive behaviors. Besides, there is the sheer beauty of these works, of these animals depicted in caves with an expressive, vital power.

Your animals are not depicted realistically but through expressive, almost primal marks. How do you balance observation, memory, and imagination in this process?

Marcelo Guimarães Lima - I am after a certain vitality in the artwork, the one I see in the subject, for instance, and therefore, this goal becomes associated to the “method” or procedure I employ. In this way, there is a kind of “urgency” of the forms, mediated by the search

Marcelo Guimarães Lima | Dove Bestiary Series

for “aesthetic” realization, the formal effectiveness of the work. Whether we want it or not, it is something imposed by the demands and the limits of art. Within these “limits” or constraints, there is an infinity of possibilities and the artist must choose, that is eliminate redundant, distracting, superfluous elements and concentrate on the essentials. Of course, the “essentials” are the product of a process of discovery. Now, of course, all this requires effort, judgment, energy, trial and error, ambition and humility going together, it does not fall from the sky into the studio work...
Imagination is reinforced by knowledge. And memory for the artist, and not only for the artist, is a creative capacity, not a passive “repository” of past experiences, but the capacity to understand the meaningful dimensions of time in experience.
The education of the senses, the education of perception, has been and it is a central role of the arts. Drawing from observation was part of my artistic education and it is part of my daily practice. As I understand it, observation, description, representation of forms, already imply an active, discriminatory approach to visual experience and it requires the use of imagination to amplify that experience.

Many of your works seem to oscillate between tenderness and raw intensity. What emotional or ethical relationship do you seek to establish between the viewer and the animal?

Marcelo Guimarães Lima - The animal is the quintessential “other”, both close and distant. In the animal we may recognize dimensions of our own being as living creatures, therefore as mortal subjects, as active beings, as natural beings living in different ways by the “gifts” of nature, and at the same time as passive receivers, confronting the imbalances and perils of the natural world, natural disasters, cataclysm and catastrophes, large and small. In our time of incipient ecological consciousness, that is, the emerging consciousness of the solidarity of all forms of life, it is important to point out, again and again, that our survival as creatures of one and the same natural world does require that we address the imbalances that certain destructive forms of activity we perform create for life in general in the planet. What I think is essential for us to realize is that our relation to nature is always mediated by our relations among ourselves, that is, we can not address the imbalances between humanity and the natural world without addressing the imbalances within present day society.
I am glad that you see both tenderness and intensity, as you write, as elements in my works. I believe they are related to my search for vitality of expression. And are related also, in the case of the representation of animals, to the idea of the animal as “other”, perhaps as the very model of “otherness” in reflection and in experience.

You reference prehistoric cave art in your statement. Do you see your drawings as a form of contemporary cave painting, and if so, what is today’s “cave”?

Marcelo Guimarães Lima – That is an interesting way of putting it. As I said, I see the affinities, in a phenomenological sense, between the Prehistoric image maker and the artist of today.

Marcelo Guimarães Lima | Jaguar Bestiary Series

In my case, in the importance of mark making and the tactile and gestural aspects of drawing. On the other hand, the cave may be an interesting metaphor of our present day situation, of this more and more troubled historical period. There are archaeological and anthropological studies that point out some important characteristics of the so called Prehistoric cave art: the activity of painting was done in a context of ritualistic practices, the location of the paintings in the deep recesses of caves, with difficulty of access and lack of natural light, indicate that these works were not made for conspicuous display. Rather they were actions that aimed at disclosing the structures of reality, to locate, to map the place of human society in the cosmos and to facilitate communications between levels of reality, the underworld or infrastructural level, the daily world and the supernatural domain. Animal representation replicated life itself by the power of "personification" proper to the image, as a guarantee, for a society of hunters, of the natural fertility of species and survival in the real world. The artist as mediator, as a type of shaman, had indeed great responsibility in Prehistoric society. If we think "cave" as a place of obscurity in need of light, we can see our time as such a place. We can also think of Plato´s cave as a domain of shadows that obstruct our knowledge of the light of reality. Indeed, our time of wars, of material and spiritual poverty for the many, of a genocide transmitted over the internet, is in need of the light that artists may be able to bring to the context. Artists as mediators, "returning", so to speak, to "ancient" roles, may be able once more to gather the powers of knowledge and

Marcelo Guimarães Lima | Jaguatirica Bestiary Series

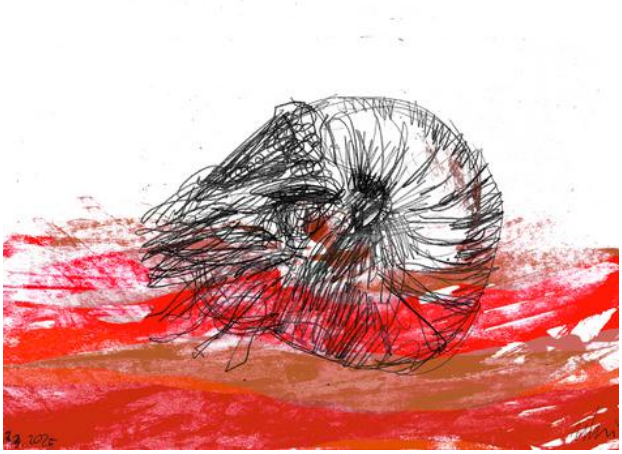
imagination to surpass the obscurity of the times. In this sense, the paradox of art can be said to be able to disclose reality by means of "appearances": the artwork appeals to our sensory and sentient imagination in order to produce knowledge about the world and about ourselves in it.

As an artist and art historian, how does your academic knowledge influence your intuitive, gestural drawing practice — or do you try to keep them separate?

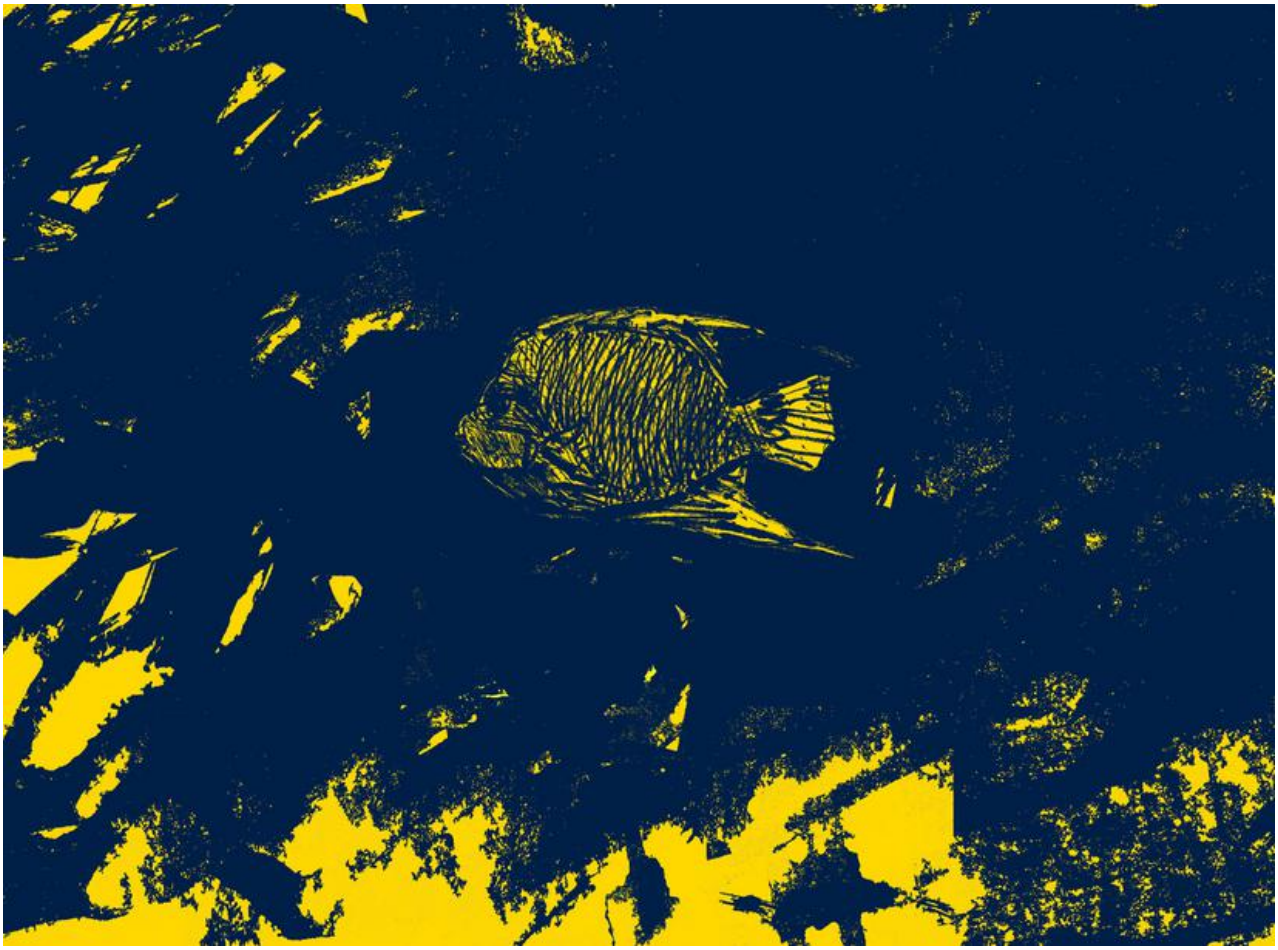
Marcelo Guimarães Lima - Both separate and together. There are different requirements. Academic work requires objectivity, rigor and mastery of given subjects. There is no compromise here. There are no shortcuts. On the other hand, knowledge is a requirement for art making. Knowledge enlarges experience, and therefore it feeds imagination. Poor knowledge, lack of experience, poverty of imagination go hand in hand. And that is a fatal combination for the artist. The knowledge of works of imagination is also what feeds imagination. Hence the importance of the history of art, and of appreciation of different arts such as literature, music, drama, etc.

The limited color palette, especially the use of red, black, and earth tones, is striking. What role does color play in conveying life, vulnerability, or violence in your work?

Marcelo Guimarães Lima – In making a drawing or a painting, for instance, the artist will chose what to include and, as important, what to exclude. In this sense, art making is also a



Marcelo Guimarães Lima | Nautilus Bestiary Series



Marcelo Guimarães Lima | Oceanlife Bestiary Series

reductive process. So goes with color. As in other aspects of a work of visual art, here effectiveness requires the capacity to synthesize, to say more with less. Your characterization is indeed to the point in my view, and I have to thank you for this: life, vulnerability, violence expressed with the help of color choices.

Having worked extensively as a teacher and community art project director, how has education shaped your understanding of art as a social practice?

Understanding the vital roles that art can play at different times in the life of individuals, from early to late ages. Understanding the contributions of art to cultural and intellectual development. In short, understanding that art indeed is for everybody. That it can contribute to enhance life, and that everybody can bring its own contributions to clarify the impact of art in society, to the appreciation of art and that everyone of us can contribute to art production itself, challenging and bypassing the social division of work, the permanent functional divisions in society that imprison the individual and distorts personal development, the division between mind and matter, sensibility and intellect, between actors and spectators, and other reified divisions within our life worlds that separate human collectivities and splits the human subject.

Aliaksandra Göğer

My name is Aliaksandra. I am a self-taught artist from Türkiye. I was born and I grew up in Belarus. I first joined the drawing classes in 2017 mostly as a way to relax after stressful work. Since then drawing became not only my best form of relaxation but also my huge passion. I kept on drawing by myself out of hobby classes and I was constantly experimenting with mediums and techniques until I tried soft pastels. I can tell that soft pastels became my drawing crush. I love everything about this medium: its texture, its fragility and endurance at the same time, its amazing color palette, and its unpredictable character. I moved to Türkiye in 2020 and I continue my growth as a soft pastel artist here in İzmir. The love of my life, my husband Yunus, as well as my two children, Mehmet Aslan and Aybigem Nur, are my endless sources of inspiration for my art.

Artist Statement
The world is changing every second. The sun we saw a week ago will never be the same. The rain that is dropping at this very moment will never be the same rain tomorrow or any other day. Every single thing around us changes with our every breath. The only way to capture the unique beauty of each particular moment is through the art.

Aliaksandra Goger | Aurora Borealis | 2025

Aliaksandra Goger | A Peach Tree | 2024

Daria Un

Your work is deeply rooted in Chuvash folklore and feminine archetypes. How did your personal connection to this cultural heritage begin, and how has it shaped your artistic voice?

My connection with Chuvash culture began not as research, but as recognition. Chuvash is spoken in my home. From childhood, I was surrounded by its fragments: in ornaments, gestures, images of women, in the very intonation of memory, even when it was not spoken aloud. Later, when I began to consciously study mythology and symbolism, I realized that I was not so much discovering it as remembering it. Chuvash folklore taught me to think in symbols rather than narratives, which is why my works became quieter, more ritualistic, and timeless.

Daria Un | Last Sun

You describe folklore as a "living language." How do you translate ancient myths and symbols into a contemporary visual form without losing their spiritual depth?

For me, folklore is not the past, but an ongoing dialogue. I do not aim to literally illustrate myths; instead, I work with their inner resonance and with how I feel and perceive them. I translate ancient symbols through atmosphere, color, rhythm, and posture rather than through direct depiction.

Many of your figures appear calm, ritual-like, and timeless. What role does stillness and silence play in your visual storytelling?

In many ancient traditions, silence was considered a sacred moment before revelation. My characters exist precisely in this state—between thought and

Daria Un | Land Of Ancestors

awareness. The concentrated stillness in my works allows the viewer not just to look, but to enter the image, to listen to it, and to search for subtle details.

The landscape in your illustrations often feels inseparable from the female figures. How do you perceive the relationship between women, nature, and ancestral memory in your work?

In my visual world, woman and landscape are inseparable because both the body and the land carry memory. They remember through cycles, through wounds, and through healing. The female figures in my works are not placed within nature—they are nature itself. This reflects how I perceive feminine identity: as a continuation of lineage, landscape, and time.

One of the key images in your series is inspired by the Chuvash legend of the Three Suns. Why was this myth particularly important for you to reinterpret today?

The legend of the Three Suns is, for me, above all a story about ingratitude and the loss of connection to a gift. In this myth, people could not withstand the power of what they were given and responded not with gratitude, but with fear and destruction.

Today, this story feels especially sharp: we live in a world where many things are taken for granted—life, resources, attention, the Earth itself. The myth of the Three Suns reminds us that every gift requires respect and inner maturity.

Your characters are not portraits of specific individuals, but symbolic embodiments. How do you construct these archetypal female figures, and what emotions or qualities are most important for you to convey?

I begin not with appearance, but with an inner state. Each figure is born from a feeling—for example, calm, longing, strength, or protection. My characters are not meant for identification, but for sensation. For me, it is most important to convey quiet strength, vulnerability, and inner autonomy—a state in which a woman belongs to herself.

As a contemporary digital illustrator working with traditional mythology, how do you balance modern tools with ancestral themes?

Digital tools are only a form. Meaning is born from intention. Mythology survives precisely because it changes its outer shell without losing its essence. My works exist at the intersection where ancestral memory speaks through a contemporary visual language.

Daria Un | Homeland

Eleni Mavrovouniotis is a Melbourne-based illustrator.
With an innate quirky love of illustration in both Fashion and Art, together with a Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design, Eleni's hand illustration skills have always spontaneously led the way to her inspiration.
With more than two decades working in the fashion industry and having a child, my love for illustration and my inner child's dream needed chase and major focus once more.
Illustrating high fashion has always been an enjoyable exercise for me, I also have some clients overseas and take pleasure in illustrating my take on their brands when requested.
Paul Klee's famous quote, “A line is a dot that went for a walk” has always resonated with me.
The idea that my own line goes for a walk, free and spontaneous, allowing the line to explore and create its own path in any medium, represents freedom to me.
One of my fascinations has always been a woman’s authenticity.
Her choice of what is worn over time, that becomes her. Somehow, just right for her. It’s not about something as temporary as her looks.
For me, the allure is deeper and needs to remain in the composition. Almost revealing- irrespective of time, a glimpse of the mystery life has woven into an individual. Who could actually be, something of a unicorn.

Artist Statement
Currently, I’m working on returning to a more loose, innate hand illustrated style, always exploring the possibilities as my line begins, trying to push my own boundaries within various mediums and techniques, to unlearn the conditioning that can be left out.
I find exploring my own art work through Giclee printing quiet striking and enjoy the idea of creating a black and white version with’ some’ of my art work, framing stark contrast and emotion through the piece for the viewer.

Artwork Title :
New Woman Series 2025
A portrait representing a time when women ventured out to enjoy their newfound freedom in the roaring 20s. Trying to redefine what it meant to be a woman.
Colourful, exciting, different, and confusing.

Eleni Mavrovouniotis | 1920s New Woman

Eleni Mavrovouniotis | 1920s New Woman

Marc Foloni

Your work often exists between abstraction and figuration. How do you personally navigate this threshold, and what does it allow you to express that a more defined image would not?

Marc Foloni | Black White Wing

My process begins intuitively, guided by impulse rather than preparation. I work without sketches, allowing the image to emerge as a quiet transmission of inner experience. What remains unresolved—between what is shown and what is suggested—invites the viewer into their own reading. The titles stay minimal, because the work is meant to be felt before it is understood.

The recurring figure in your practice functions almost like an alter ego. When did this persona first emerge, and how has it evolved over time?

In 2015, I was in Medellín, Colombia, and had already held my first exhibition in Brazil, still working in a style different from my current one. The month I spent there with my partner at the time was so intense and transformative that it resulted in a series of 40 watercolors. It was there that I found my style—the forms, the gestures, my artistic self. Time passed, but the pattern remained and continues to manifest autonomously, always in variation, yet anchored by a constant.

Many of your figures appear androgynous or zoomorphic. What role does ambiguity of identity play in your exploration of the subconscious?

I am deeply influenced by psychoanalysis and

Marc Foloni | Black White Wing

psychology. Everything carries meaning, whether I understand it rationally or not—I can be part animal, part man, part woman, part everything, and so can every human being. My method of painting as an act of speech creates moments I prefer to leave open, allowing the viewer to discover, reinterpret, or identify with them.

In White, Black, Wing, you restrict yourself to a black-and-white palette. What does this radical reduction make possible conceptually and emotionally?

Every absence carries meaning. I like to say a lot with very little, and I believe this series expresses exactly that. Joy, intensity, pain, love, freedom, and doubt—universal feelings. Here, the intensity lies precisely in the absence of color, control versus risk, containment versus flight, which still creates harmony and balance.

The eye is a persistent motif in this series. Do you see it more as a symbol of perception, vulnerability, or surveillance—or something else entirely?

The eye can be everything; it serves as a powerful metaphor for our generation. At times it relates to surveillance, but more often to vulnerability and openness—still strong, yet exposed. In dialogue with the wing, it suggests awareness and introspection rather than control, existing quietly, fragile, and unresolved.

Your lines often feel both decisive and fragile. How important is the physical gesture of drawing or painting in conveying psychological tension?

I paint on the floor, feeling my body in contact with the surface, immersed in a silence that can last minutes, hours, or even days. Afterwards, I contemplate, compare, and try to understand what I've created. I believe each work is a fragment of my life that I don't wish to express in words. Strength and fragility are always in harmony, in one way or another.

You describe the works as resisting fixed meaning. What kind of role do you hope the viewer takes on when encountering these images?

For me, the most magical aspect of my artistic style is listening to the meanings others bring to the work. This not only makes me happy, but also leads me to reconsider what I hadn't seen myself. When someone tries to decipher a piece and shares their interpretation, it means they felt something—and that deeply satisfies me. I prefer to ask people, "What do you see here?" After ten years as a visual artist, I still hear completely new interpretations of works from 2016 or 2018 and think, wow, you've opened something no one had ever seen before.

Marc Foloni | Black White Wing

Márta Nyilas

Your artistic journey moves from informal non-figurative and gestural painting toward a delicate balance between figuration and abstraction. What inner or conceptual shifts prompted this transition over time?

Indeed, looking at the totality of my works, there is a shift from the non-figurative direction, toward a delicate painterly style between figuration and non-figurativeness. I did indeed do non-figurative painting for a decade or so. In recent years I have been interested in how I could present classical scenes such as those inspired by the Bible in a contemporary way.
At the same time, it is well known that there is no difference between the criteria for creating a figurative and a non-figurative image. Unless the non-figurative picture is focus less, i.e. it does not have a main plot, it should be constructed in the same way as one that contains recognizable depicted forms. Composition, rhythm, colors and their tonal scale, different textures, opaque and translucent painted surfaces. Of course, in the case of a figurative painting, you have to figure out what should be on it, so to speak, i.e. with what elements and their arrangement you can convey the desired message. Meanwhile, in non-figurative painting, the painter works with elements that are universally used: homogeneous or color-to-tone gradient surfaces, spots, lines, bands, etc., concrete (geometric) or painterly treated.
Recently in addition to my paintings balancing between figuration and abstraction, I have just revived a series of non-figurative pictures that I started more than thirty years ago and which I considered closed at the time - where I interpreted the letter as an element of image construction, a band, - and to which type of paintings I turn back with great excitement and expectation while the works are still in the experimental stage.

Márta Nyilas | The Good Shepherd | 2024

You describe your recent works as lyrical, intuitive, and emotionally charged. How do you recognize the moment when intuition should lead, rather than conscious composition?

This is a very apt question. I think that in general consciousness and lack of it alternate in the making of a painting. I think that those paintings of mine are successful which, after a long period of contemplation, make you say I have lost my mind. Sometimes I try to consciously induce the lack of control, sometimes I fail.

Márta Nyilas | Sunday Afternoon | 2025

But when I manage to lose my mind on purpose an uncontrollable force bursts out and radiates from my body. In such cases, the brush does not make mistakes: it brings the necessary line exactly there and in such a way, or places a spot as it should, even in a new and apt way that I could not have imagined. In these cases, I fully accept the risk and usually make the right decision. However, sometimes the loss of control seems to happen randomly, but of course this is preceded by a longer period of time when I am filled with my own experiments. The beginning of this process can be triggered by a color found in a part of the picture, or a well-placed brushstroke. At such times, I usually feel that I can do anything with the painting that has been completed up to that point; I am bursting with a good sense of self-confidence, and I live in the present with my whole being. Surely, then, thought and action become one.

Many of your paintings seem to exist on the threshold of narrative and abstraction. How important is storytelling to you, and how much do you leave open for the viewer's interpretation?

I am incredibly careful not to let the narrative dominate the picture. I try to formulate a story according to a contemporary feeling and perspective. Fragmentation is one of the characteristics of our time. Therefore, I only want to provide the viewer with clues so that they can build the story of the picture according to their own vision. Of course, my pictures in question have a message, but I leave it to the viewer's imagination to decide what kind of interpretive branches can arise from this backbone.

Rhythm and the physical trace of the brush play a central role in your work. Can you speak about the relationship between bodily gesture, movement, and meaning in your painting process?

According to experts, a mode of cognition closely related to visual cognition is kinesthetic or neuro-muscular cognition. This means that the artist tries with his whole being to follow, or more precisely, to almost imitate, what is happening to the form and all its parts. "I paint a window the way I look out of it. We must behave in painting exactly as we behave in life," says Picasso. Like this observation, I am trying to display figurative motifs, in my own traceable rhythm. The main carrier and reflection of the painter's state of mind is, as is known, is the brushstroke, with which I strive to keep all the details of the picture together, so that the viewer also perceives it as a unit. My brushstrokes are brisk and dynamic; one of my painting colleagues says they are fluttering.

You often simplify forms until they approach abstraction. What determines how far a figure can dissolve before it loses its emotional or symbolic core?

We can only abstract what we know well. I try to simplify the form I want to display to its essential characteristics as judged by me, while constantly paying attention to its adaptation to the two-dimensional character of the canvas. In this way, I simultaneously keep in mind the spatiality of the motif and its compression into two dimensions.

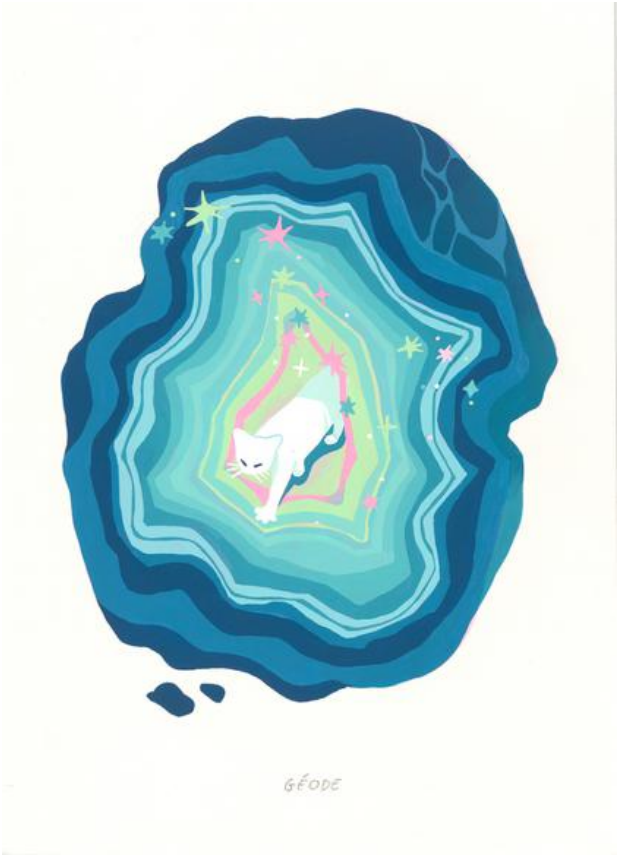
In recent years, you have been drawn to themes that resemble biblical scenes, not for their religious meaning, but for their archetypal familiarity. What attracts you to these well-known visual structures?

I do not want to offend Christian believers, but I believe that scenes depicting Biblical scriptures are, even without the holy book, the most faithful types of relationships between humans, or between human and in general with the animals tamed by the man. I prefer scenes with few characters since I have always been interested in depicting intimate relationships.

Having studied under influential figures such as Ilona Keserü and Markus Lüpertz, what lasting impact did these experiences have on your approach to painting?

I received a classical painting training in Cluj-Napoca, for which I am very grateful, but upon arriving in Pécs, Ilona Keserü in addition to her openness to the love of colors introduced me to an avant-garde experimental painting mindset, which opened new doors for me in the field of painting.
The painting workshop I spent with Markus Lüpertz had a great influence on my creative attitude: his words gave me self-confidence, which I still recall today when I am in a negative creative wave: "You have a very good sense for painting!" he told me in the summer of 1996.
However, when it comes to mastering the secrets of painting, I must also mention Matteo Massagrande, from whom in the late few summer art camps I learned about the importance of color tones in a painting or the importance of the type of applied paint.

Romain Demongivert



Romain Demongivert | Géode | 2025

Your work often feels like a quiet moment suspended between reality and a dream. How do you usually begin a new piece - with a memory, a feeling, or an image?

Romain Demongivert | Attrape RêVe | 2025

Since I live with aphantasia, my process differs from many artists who visualize a clear image before they begin. Because I cannot 'see' internally, I rely on my other senses—and above all, my emotions. My starting point is often a fleeting feeling or a simple word that resonates within me. This is actually why most of my pieces have one-word titles: a single word is enough to encapsulate the emotional essence I seek to translate onto paper.

Studio Ghibli is often mentioned as an influence in your practice. What aspects of its storytelling or visual language resonate with you most deeply?

I grew up immersed in the Ghibli universe thanks to my parents. What deeply moves me is their contemplative approach: the ability to suspend time through music, composition, and magnified scenes of daily life. Films like Arrietty, Kiki's Delivery Service, and Castle in the Sky left a lasting mark on me with their blend of reality and fantasy. They use the magical as a metaphor for life's milestones. My ambition is to create images that are just as beautiful, profound, and meaningful in my own way.

You work primarily with gouache on paper. What does this medium allow you to express that digital or other traditional media cannot?

After exploring Posca markers and digital illustration, I

Romain Demongivert | Baignade | 2024

turned to gouache for its relationship with the unpredictable. I love navigating that tension between technical control and the 'letting go' that traditional media demands. Gouache allows me to achieve highly saturated, vibrant flat tones that are essential to my creative process. This organic texture and depth of color give my work a dreamlike yet tangible quality that I cannot find anywhere else.

Many of your characters appear introspective, resting, or absorbed in their inner worlds. What draws you to these intimate, quiet moments?

I see my illustrations as frozen moments, parentheses outside of time. I want the viewer to feel as though they are holding this fragile scene in the palm of their hands. By depicting characters absorbed in their inner worlds, I invite the observer to sit beside them and experience a quiet moment, often tinged with a gentle melancholy. It is an invitation to empathy and a pause in a world that moves too fast.

Your universes often blend everyday objects with fantastical elements. How important is daily life as a starting point for your imagination?

Reimagining a common object outside of its primary function is my way of re-enchanting reality. In an era saturated with anxiety-inducing information, I believe it is vital to allow ourselves to dream. Finding magic in everyday objects isn't an escape from reality, but a way to make it gentler. This need for poetry and breathing space is what I aim to share through my blending of the ordinary and the imaginary.

You describe your practice as a bridge between the tangible world and the subconscious. How do you know when a piece has reached that balance?

There is no set rule; it's purely intuitive. It's a feeling that emerges while I'm painting. I sometimes set sketches aside for months because I feel a 'key' or an emotion is missing, without being able to explain why. I have to wait until my own state of mind is in sync with the piece to be able to finish it and find that exact balance between the tangible world and the subconscious.

What do you hope viewers feel or carry with them after encountering your work?

I first hope to captivate them with the brilliance of the colors, like a call to step closer. Once that connection is established, I want them to make the image their own through the lens of their own life stories. For me, drawing is about freezing a personal emotion on paper, but the work only truly comes alive when it resonates with someone else. What moves me most is discovering how my own silences and dreams manage to speak to the intimate histories of others.

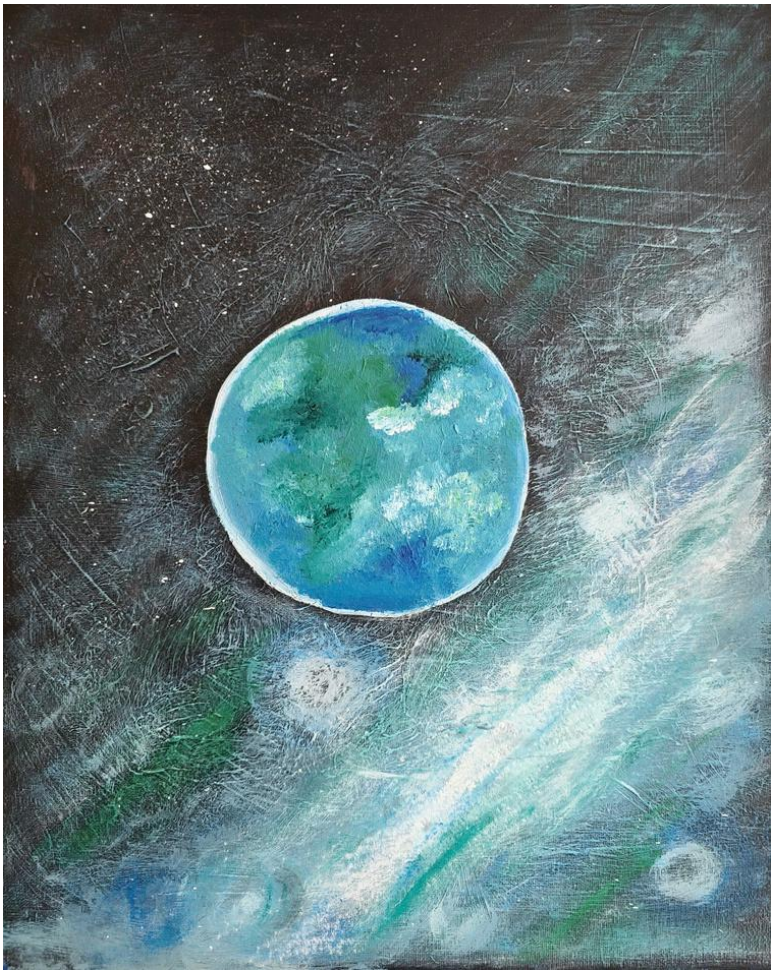
Romain Demongivert | Bouquet | 2024

Inga Vilkaitytė

I have been drawing since childhood. At age 12 I finished art school and, wanting to go further, decided to pursue a career in architecture. Architecture, for me, was the perfect combination of art and mathematics, which I loved both of. Somehow, along the way, my path shifted to architectural heritage conservation, which also has both aspects and none of them at the same time. All that time I was drawing in my free time until I stopped almost completely for a few years. Just recently my life has changed a lot, and I have been eagerly considering the question of what my true passion is. That's how I picked up my paintbrushes again and started looking for those answers through art.

Artist Statement
These six submitted paintings are my newest works, reflecting my journey as an artist through fundamental life changes.
The first painting captures the loneliness of a single planet in space. Nevertheless, it's never truly alone, despite how it feels right now.
The second painting tells a personal story about a family pets, linking what has been with what is now.
The third painting emerged from expressive, mindlessly drawn brushstrokes that suggested ships and a harbor.
The fourth painting depicts a lush, green Lithuanian countryside in summer.
The fifth painting is an attempt to portray mountains without actually painting them—my little experiment.
The sixth painting contains a hidden diamond. You may not notice it at first, but it's there.

Inga Vilkaitytė | Little Universe



Inga Vilkaitytė | Rememberance

Inga Vilkaitytė | Harbour

Inga Vilkaitytė | Summer

Inga Vilkaitytė | Mountains

Inga Vilkaitytė | Hidden Treasure

PEPI / JUN YASUDA

You began your professional path in medicine and later made a radical shift toward art. What inner realization or moment made you certain that art was your true calling?

Many people continue to love what they loved in childhood, even as they grow older.This is something I came to understand through my studies and experiences in psychiatry.Somewhat unexpectedly, it was medicine that helped me realize how essential art is to me.For me, art is one way of returning to a state of pure, childlike innocence —a space constantly filled with stimulation, curiosity, and wonder.At the same time, it serves as a form of detox and healing for myself.The moments when adults are able to return to their inner child are profoundly beautiful.

How did your experience of traveling the world influence your way of seeing, sensing, and translating emotions into visual form?

We Japanese tend to be reserved, expressing our emotions less openly and often preferring to be the same as everyone else.For me, this felt confining.The people I have met around the world express themselves freely — boldly and colorfully and they value connection.What I feel especially strongly is their deep respect for religion, nature, and human relationships.These values give powerful inspiration to my art.They are also less concerned with how others see them.Many people know who they are and are unafraid to show it.This continually reminds my art — and myself — to be true, to be freer, and to keep spreading my wings.

PEPI / JUN YASUDA | Expression

PEPI / JUN YASUDA | Expression

Your works often depict sleeping or closed-eyed faces. What does the state of sleep represent for you emotionally and symbolically?

When we sleep, we are all vulnerable, and it becomes a time of healing. As the phrase “sleeping like a child” suggests, when we sleep, we all return to being children. It also carries the desire to keep dreaming, to remain comfortably asleep a quiet escape from the fatigue and stress of modern society.

Flowers appear repeatedly in your work as a central motif. Why did flowers become such an important symbol of love, connection, and emotional flow in your visual language?

Images of my grandmother and mother tending the garden and admiring flowers have stayed with me since childhood.I received so much love from both my mother and grandmother.Perhaps because of that, flowers gradually came to mean love to me.People are always drawn to flowers.From a single beauty, countless connections are born.Yet flowers themselves are finite they bloom, they fall, and they never show the same form again.By painting them, they are no longer bound by finitude.This is the kind of flower I continue to imagine and create.

You describe your expressions as “gentle” and “childlike.” Do you see this softness as a form of resistance in today’s fast-paced, often harsh world?

It is an act of resistance, and it is infinite love. In the face of the harsh realities of this world, I believe love is the only thing that can truly resist. Not only on a global scale, but also in our everyday lives, love is always present.I believe love exists in our care for others, and in each small action we take.

Your work often conveys a sense of care, love, and emotional safety. Is this something you consciously aim to offer the viewer, or does it emerge naturally?

Feelings such as compassion, love, and inner calm arise unconsciously. Some people may experience entirely different sensations when viewing my work — and that is completely valid. There is no single correct interpretation. If, for some, these feelings gently and naturally emerge, that is what brings me joy.

Living in Bristol after being born in Hokkaido, how do different cultures and environments shape your artistic identity today?

Hokkaido is a region surrounded by vast natural landscapes.While there are many opportunities to connect with nature, there are fewer opportunities to encounter art.There are also fewer artists.Bristol, on the other hand, is a city overflowing with art, where it is easy to meet artists every day.Because of this, my days are constantly filled with stimulation and inspiration.Meeting so many artists has also changed the way I think about art.In the past to put it bluntly I may have simply been making art.Now, I recognize art and creative practice as an integral part of who I am.This is because every artist I meet in Bristol carries art as a part of themselves.

PEPI / JUN YASUDA | Expression

Veva van der Wolf is a Dutch-born contemporary textile artist based in Sardinia, Italy. She studied fashion design at ArtEZ University of the Arts and graduated with a specialisation in knitwear. Her practice in lace-making and passementerie centres on textile-based sculptural forms that bridge historic techniques and contemporary expression.
Trained in historic textile techniques, she worked professionally as an embroiderer in London, contributing to ateliers and fashion houses including Peter Pilotto, Erdem, and Ralph & Russo.
She later worked as Head of Passementerie at the TextielMuseum. In this role, she worked with and helped revive an antique passementerie machine, supporting the development of contemporary textile applications rooted in traditional craftsmanship. Within this context, she contributed to and developed works on the passementerie machine for artists such as Otobong Nkanga, Sandra Planken, and Tanja Smeets, and collaborated with educational institutions including the Design Academy Eindhoven.
Her work has been presented internationally, including a solo exhibition Underneath The Surface at DOOR Dordrecht and participation in Museum de Kantfabriek's exhibition "HOEZO" geen vrouwen in de kunst?, highlighting fifty pioneering female textile artists.
She learned Filet di Bosa in La Foce, Sardinia, and now reinterprets the technique in contemporary textile and portrait-based work.

Artist Statement
Veva van der Wolf's practice explores the emotional, symbolic, and structural potential of traditional textile techniques, particularly passementerie and lace-making. Rooted in crafts historically associated with decoration and utility, her work reclaims these techniques as a contemporary, expressive language.
Her current research, supported by the Embroiderers' Guild Scholarship (UK) , focuses on Filet di Bosa lace, a traditional Sardinian needle-lace technique learned directly from women in La Foce. Through careful study and reinterpretation, she translates this historic grid-based lace into contemporary textile and portrait-based works, allowing ancestral knowledge to evolve through a personal and intuitive artistic process.
Inspired by the rhythms of the sea and the natural environment surrounding her Sardinian studio, Van der Wolf's work reflects themes of impermanence, memory, and transformation. Structure and fluidity coexist within her pieces, mirroring emotional cycles of holding, release, and renewal. By preserving endangered techniques while allowing space for experimentation, her work creates a dialogue between past and present, positioning textile as a living, evolving form of storytelling.

Veva van der Wolf | Carefully Crafted Mandala Cord Machine

Veva van der Wolf | Earcuffs

Ke Qin: When We Were Birds

From 5 to 9 January 2026, visual artist Ke Qin's latest moving image series The Unbalanced Everyday, debuted at 67 York Street Gallery, London, as the centrepiece of her solo exhibition — When We Were Birds.

Installation view of When We Were Birds, 67 York Street Gallery, 2026. Courtesy of the artist.

When We Were Birds uses the bird as a metaphor to explore the psychological changes and identity displacement experienced by individuals in rapidly changing societies and environments. Her main artwork series, The Unbalanced Everyday, reveals the underlying precariousness within the lived experiences of climate migrants. By bringing these marginalised groups back into the public eye, Ke Qin compels viewers to reflect on the obscured reality behind the conventional narrative.

Installation view of When We Were Birds, 67 York Street Gallery, 2026. Courtesy of the artist.

Ke Qin's practice explores the intricate interplay between perception, consciousness, and reality, employing fragmented and non-linear narrative structures through digital media. Her works delve into the profound internal shifts of individuals across diverse social backgrounds, heightening these shifts through spatial displacement, time delay, and perceptual imbalance to reflect the hidden tensions and alienation inherent in today's society.

Installation view of When We Were Birds, 67 York Street Gallery, 2026. Courtesy of the artist.

In The Unbalanced Everyday, Qin envisions a post-dwelling age defined by a complete loss of control. These four moving images chronicle the evolution of the living environment from latent vulnerability to acute instability, and ultimately to gradual decline. As the narrative progresses, the audience experiences the continuous erosion of daily order, as well as the accumulated unease and imbalance of the protagonist — or us — amidst environmental changes. As their external structures continue to be reshaped and their sense of belonging gets lost, the character's spiritual world continues to transition, and life becomes a reflection and magnifying glass of the psychological state.

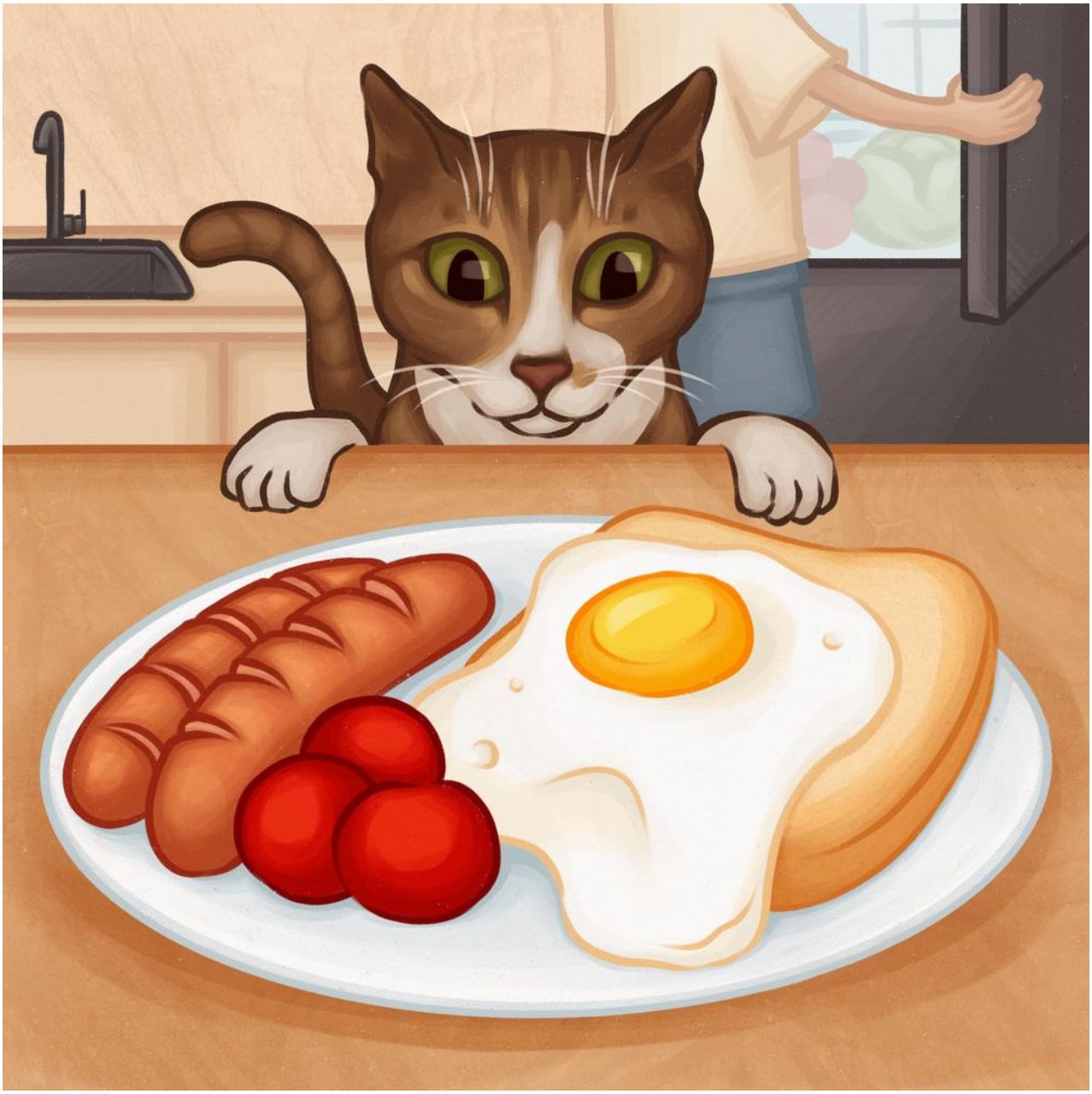
The exhibition depicts a state of displacement accelerated by changes in climate, policy, and social structures. Through these four moving images, viewers witness the protagonist survive and find their footing — a journey that is deeply human, primal, and personal, but also collective in its resonance.

Installation view of When We Were Birds, 67 York Street Gallery, 2026. Courtesy of the artist.

Maltysel

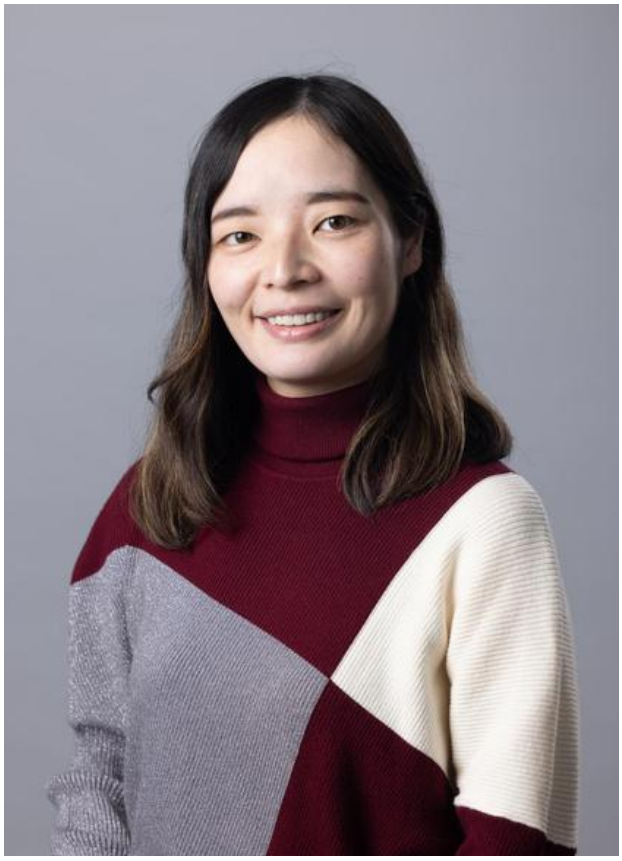
It all started for me at a Russian art school in a small town. At first, things didn't go well. I didn't get along with composition, drawing, painting, or even my teacher. After school, I thought I would never connect my life with art. But everything changed quickly—I met illustrator Narisofka and went to study digital painting with her in 2020. She taught me about NFTs, which I worked with in 2023-2024. After that, I found myself teaching digital painting to children. I am still doing this and developing my skills in Narisofka's community of artists.

Olesya Maltseva | Cat's Breakfast



Olesya Maltseva | Cat's Waffles

Emiko Kawakubo



Growing up between Japan and the United States, how did navigating two cultures shape your visual sensitivity and approach to design?

Growing up between Japan and the United States shaped the way I perceive and communicate visually in a very natural way. I've always been sensitive to non-verbal forms of communication—expressions, gestures, atmosphere—and being exposed to both cultures made that sensitivity more flexible and expansive. From Japanese culture, I've inherited an awareness of "sensing" rather than simply being told, which deeply influences how I approach design: I instinctively think about not only what people physically see, but also what they might imagine or feel beyond the visible. At the same time, the American emphasis on direct communication helps ground that intuition, guiding me to clarify priorities and make conscious decisions about what truly needs to be communicated. Together, these two perspectives allow me to balance subtlety with clarity in my work.

Emiko Kawakubo | Iroha

You studied International Relations and architectural design before graphic design. How do these disciplines continue to influence the way you think visually?

Studying international relations gave me a strong foundation in understanding hierarchy, balance, and the subtle negotiations that shape relationships between different systems. It taught me that structure is not only about simple rankings, but about navigating complex layers of meaning, priorities, and influence—an approach that strongly informs how I organize information visually today. Architectural design further refined that mindset through its emphasis on discipline and precision. Being trained in an environment where grids, alignment, and structural logic are essential helped me develop a deep respect for order, while also giving me the confidence to intentionally challenge it when needed. Together, these backgrounds continue to shape the way I build visual systems that feel both thoughtful and grounded.

Many of your works balance softness, playfulness, and structure. How do you consciously work with contrast in your compositions?

When I design, my primary intention—often even subconsciously—is to create something that feels positive and uplifting to the viewer. Even in situations where simplicity

Emiko Kawakubo | Iroha

is required or emphasized, I'm mindful of maintaining a sense of warmth and beauty within that restraint. This naturally leads me to incorporate gentle curves and approachable visual elements, even within highly structured compositions. For me, contrast is not about relying on obvious "soft" palettes or familiar combinations, but about exploring subtler relationships—playing with color density, scale, and sequence to shape how a composition is experienced. I'm always interested in challenging myself to find where structure and softness can coexist in a way that feels both thoughtful and inviting.

Japanese aesthetics often emphasize restraint, while American design can be bold and expressive. How do you negotiate these sensibilities in your work?

Growing up spending part of my childhood in the United States, and continuing to travel there periodically, has been a real support in maintaining my expressive side. In Japan, there is often a strong emphasis on restraint, which I experience not just in aesthetics but in daily life. At the same time, this sense of subtlety has deepened my sensitivity. During my life in Japan, I would sometimes express myself in ways influenced by my experiences in America. The "surprise" or sense of wonder that others felt when encountering these expressions—not as criticism but as genuine amazement at something new—made me aware of how experiences across different cultures can resonate with people. This, in turn, encouraged me early on to explore how my sensibilities shaped by both countries could blend, and to embrace the challenge of experimentation. As a result, I feel that today I am able to naturally merge these influences in the mood, color, and atmosphere of my illustrations.

Your patterns and illustrations feel both decorative and conceptual. What usually comes first for you: an idea, an emotion, or a visual form?

For me, ideas usually come first. I spend time thinking about what I want to communicate and what concept I want to explore, whether by looking at designs, going for walks, or listening to music, allowing my thoughts to wander. At a certain point, a clear idea will suddenly emerge, and I start by making quick sketches. The colors are then determined while looking at these sketches, reflecting the vision I had in my mind. On the rare occasions when ideas don't come easily—even after trying different approaches and letting a night pass—I begin by choosing colors or fonts first. Establishing these constraints can sometimes help the design expand naturally. Emotional impulses rarely guide my work directly, and even when they do, I tend to check myself by reflecting on the concept I am working around. That concept can be broad, like a season, or more specific, depending on the project.

How do you approach storytelling in graphic design, especially when working on posters or campaigns for music and cultural events?

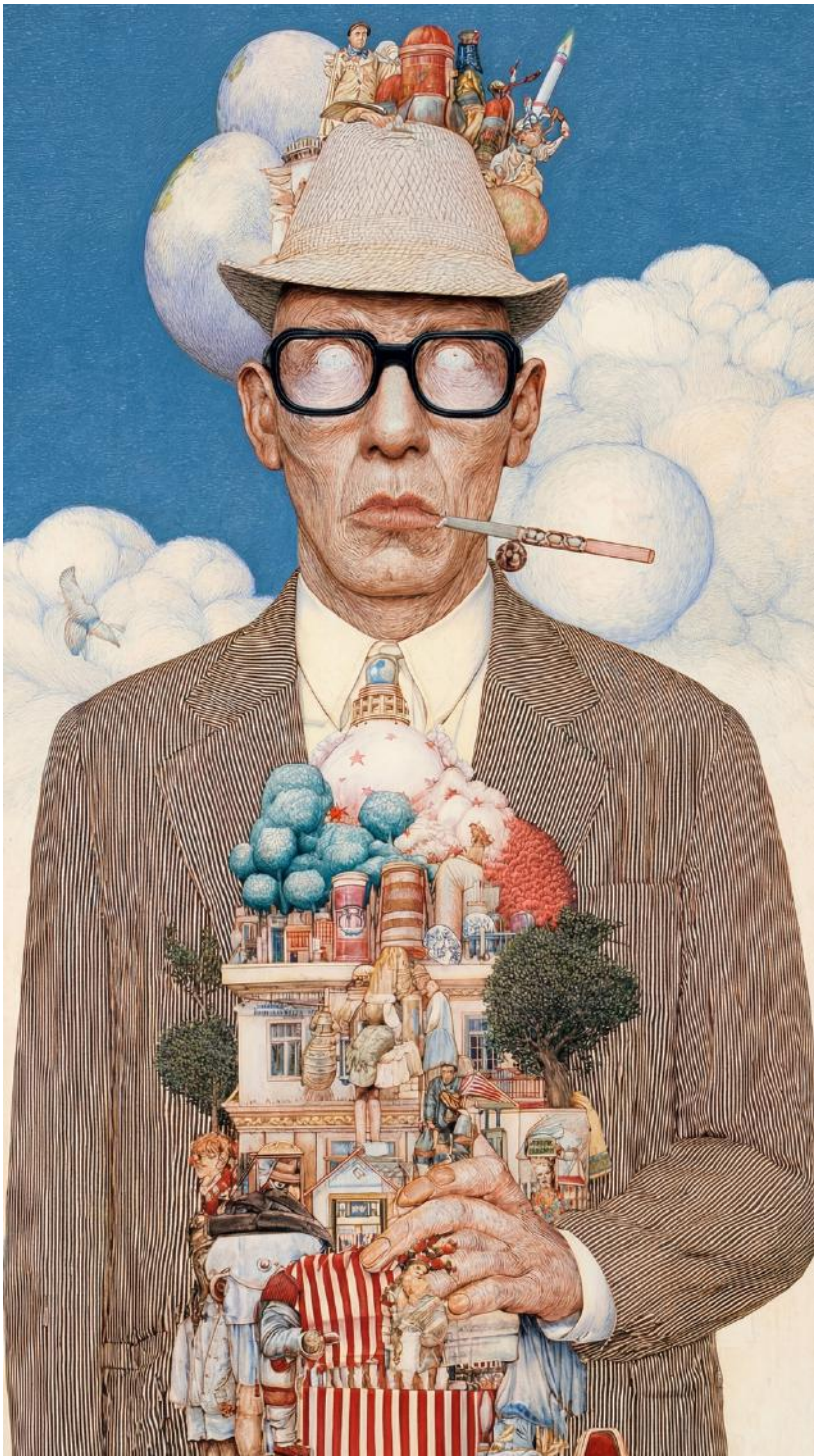
When working on posters and campaigns for music and cultural events with UMA (The Unprecedented Music Association), I always start by understanding the clear concept behind each project. In this 2025–2026 season, I learned that each concert is themed around one of the five senses, so my goal is to explore designs that reflect those themes. We've already completed two concerts: "Visions," which combined piano with visual experiences, involved collaborating with a visual artist. I listened to both the artist and UMA members to understand their vision, and then considered how I could translate the concept into design. For "Licks!" which focused on taste and the fusion of jazz with light food and drinks, I carefully listened to the member who created the menu to understand her intentions. Based on her input and the atmosphere UMA was imagining, I created a visual that evoked a retro bar where instruments from the jazz band seemed to float in the cocktails. While the concept is provided by UMA, the design itself is my own, and I approach it by immersing myself in their music and ideas to imagine how I would bring it to life visually.

Looking ahead, how do you envision your design practice evolving as you collaborate with global brands like Netflix or Disney?

If I were given the opportunity to collaborate with global brands such as Netflix or Disney, I believe the experience would offer far more than I have gained from my past challenges and learning so far. Being surrounded by highly skilled professionals would naturally lead me to reflect deeply on what my own design truly represents, and would encourage me to further refine my practice. I have often been described, by myself and by others, as someone driven by a strong desire to grow, and this motivation becomes especially strong when I am working alongside people whose skills inspire me. While the process would certainly involve new difficulties and longer, deeper paths of exploration, I believe those experiences would further cultivate my sensitivity, flexibility, and personal voice, ultimately shaping me into a more refined designer.

Sun Jihoon (Loh3n) is a visual artist working across image and moving-image formats, using generative AI as both a tool and a visual language. His practice investigates how memory and emotion accumulate, how time becomes layered, and how urban structures collide and merge with the forces of nature. Grounded in cinematic composition and camera grammar, he builds scenes that oscillate between realism and the uncanny—rendered with controlled light, precise texture, and high-detail world-building.
Loh3n develops works through an integrated pipeline spanning prompt architecture, image generation, retouching, upscaling, and motion/editing. He continues to expand AI-driven visual workflows within a virtual production context while pursuing a distinctive body of work defined by symbolism, clarity, and emotional resonance.

Artist Statement
My work uses generative AI to construct cinematic images that feel like fragments of a larger story. I am interested in how memory is built—layer by layer—and how time can be perceived as a physical space rather than a linear flow. Within this space, urban structures and natural forces meet, clash, and occasionally reconcile. I treat these thresholds as emotional landscapes: places where the familiar becomes strange, and the strange becomes intimate.
Technically, I work through an integrated pipeline in which prompt design, image generation, and post-production are inseparable. I shape lighting, texture, and composition with the same intention as a film director—using camera grammar, controlled contrast, and tactile detail to anchor the scene in realism, while allowing subtle distortions to signal a different reality beneath the surface.
I aim for work that carries symbolism without becoming illustrative: images that remain visually striking at a distance, but reveal quieter emotional structures up close. Ultimately, I am building a visual language that can operate globally—rooted in cinematic clarity, yet open to ambiguity, reflection, and personal interpretation.



Jihoon Sun | Boldness | 2025

Jihoon Sun | Look at Me | 2025

Kazumi Sakurai

Your relationship with photography began almost at birth, through your father's camera. How do you feel this origin story continues to shape the emotional core of your work today?

Kazumi Sakurai | Sunflower | 2018

I don't consciously remember it, but what I felt from my father through the viewfinder — like many children — was love.
Receiving love, feeling connected, being held. That feeling became something very simple: joy, safety, and a quiet permission to exist. I believe that still connects directly to my work today.
In certain moments, something in my heart trembles very gently, and that becomes the feeling of "I want to photograph." Perhaps it is also a desire to connect.

You describe photography as "an exchange of love." What does love mean in your images, and how do you recognize it when it appears in a photograph?

It's simply what I feel drawn to—what feels beautiful, or quietly moving. Sometimes it's something tender, sometimes something a little sad, sometimes something I find sweet or endearing.
Love, for me, is whatever makes the heart move.

Memory and nostalgia play a central role in your practice. Do you photograph in order to remember, or to reinterpret memory through the present moment?

I don't think too much when I photograph. In that sense, it may be both — or neither.
Sometimes it feels like memory, and sometimes it feels less like memory and more like an atmosphere. Often, what remains in the photograph is not the past itself, but a present moment that carries a certain mood or feeling.
I like returning to my images over time. Each time I look at them again, the relationship shifts slightly, and I often receive new realizations. These quiet changes are an important part of my practice.

Many of your images feel quiet, restrained, and deeply contemplative. How important is silence or stillness in your creative process?

I've come to realize how essential it is. Without a sense

Kazumi Sakurai | Phantom

of quiet presence—of simply being there—the heart doesn't open.

You work across commercial, fine art, and documentary photography. How do these different practices influence one another, and where do you feel most at home?

I feel most at home somewhere between fine art and documentary.
Fine art is where I feel free to express myself, but I believe that freedom is rooted in documentary ways of seeing.

The series Dream carries a softness and an airy, almost subconscious atmosphere. What draws you to this dreamlike visual language?

My eyesight actually isn't very good — it's been the same since I was in high school. But I don't wear glasses or contact lenses. In the back of my head, I sometimes think I might be trying to avoid seeing reality clearly.
Even so, I can clearly see the moment when my heartmoves and I press the shutter.

Softness — sometimes something slightly blurred — feels comforting to me. It may simply be the kind of beauty I naturally see and live with.

What do you hope viewers feel or discover within themselves when they spend time with your images?

This is a difficult question for me.
Part of me feels it would be presumptuous to expect something from the viewer. And yet, I share my work because I hope something is felt.
I was afraid of connecting with people, yet I longed for connection. I wanted to be understood, but I couldn't express my true self... When the stage of sharing photos, all those past feelings come along with them. in a sense, my naked self is just thrown out there.
It's frightening, but also the most honest way I know to connect safely with the outside world, and somehow, it feels safe.
If people who see my photographs feel their hearts move a little, and like me, they connect with something—an emotion, an atmosphere, a memory... if they end up connecting with something within themselves- then I feel very lucky.

Mari Momozaki

Born in Miyagi Prefecture in 1991.
On March 11, 2011, he lost his family and home in the Great East Japan Earthquake and suffered from panic disorder. However, after moving to Kanagawa, he began creating texture art and resin art while working as an office worker, and his mental state began to stabilize.

Career
September 2025
Solo exhibition in Nishisugikubo, Tokyo
Solo exhibition title: "So I Screamed"

January 2026
Exhibited at the Mini Art Exhibition

January 2026
Exhibited at the Color Play Cup Abstract Painting Competition

September 2026
Solo exhibition in Nishisugikubo, Tokyo
Solo exhibition title: "Heart"

Mari Momozaki | Lights Out | 2025

Mari Momozaki | Door to Pegasus | 2025

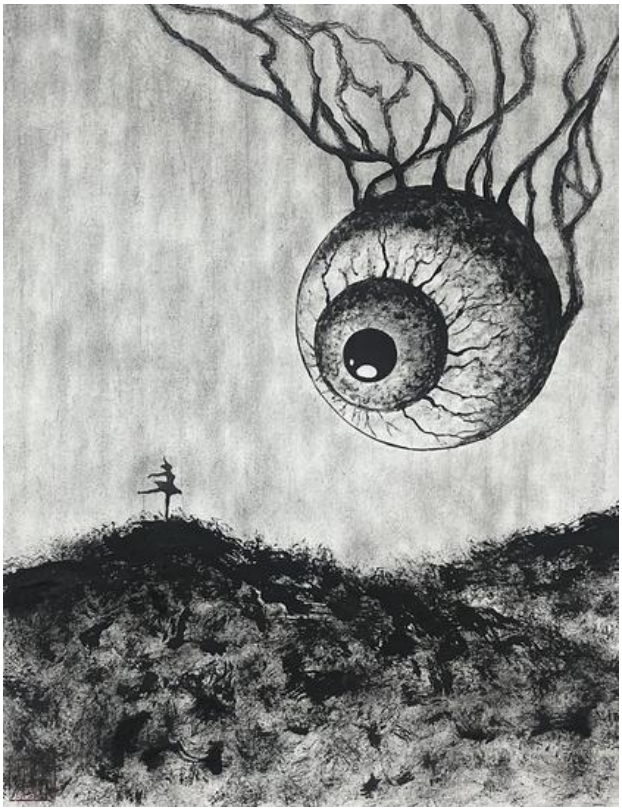
Mari Momozaki | Arteries and Veins | 2026

Long Phi Tran

The title "A Definition of Art Criticism" is very direct and provocative. How did this idea emerge, and what personal experiences influenced it?

The title is a personal reflection on my creative journey rather than a universal definition. While I respect art criticism as a catalyst for growth, it often manifests as a 'predatory gaze'—an overwhelming pressure that can stifle nascent ideas. I personally felt this weight while utilizing traditional Asian mediums to explore modern surrealism, caught between the expectations of authenticity and my desire for experimentation. The enormous eye embodies this duality: it is simultaneously an acknowledgment and a judgment. It forces the artist—the small figure—to constantly strive for identity under such a colossal, inescapable gaze.

In the artwork, we see a striking contrast between a fragile human figure and an enormous observing eye. What does this imbalance symbolize for you?



Long Phi Tran | A Definition Of Art Criticism

In my view, this scale imbalance manifests the individual's position beneath massive observation. The fragile figure represents the vulnerable artistic ego, while the enormous eye symbolizes powerful entities. To me, this contrast depicts the solitude of creation: a modest 'self' asserting its identity despite being overwhelmingly scrutinized.

You describe observation as "overwhelming and predatory". Do you see criticism primarily as a threat, a necessity, or something in between?

I view criticism not as a threat, but as a harsh, essential 'ecosystem.' While it may 'prey' on fragile ideas, this pressure forces core values to emerge resiliently. To me, criticism is a survival challenge—a necessary tension that polishes a raw stone into a multifaceted piece of art.

Ink is a demanding and unforgiving medium. Why did you choose ink on paper to express this concept?

Choosing ink was a philosophical decision. Its 'unforgiving' nature mirrors criticism: once committed, every stroke is permanent. By blending East Asian tradition with modern surrealism, I harness the medium's inherent stillness to explore contemporary pressures, staying rooted in my heritage while opening a new space for dialogue.

The eye in your work feels almost organic, alive, and invasive. Is it meant to represent a specific entity - critics, institutions, society, or something more abstract?

I envisioned the eye as a living entity, weaving itself into the creative process. Beyond institutions, it represents a synthesis of pressures—from societal standards to the 'internal eye' of self-doubt. By giving this gaze an organic form, I hope to evoke an intimate yet daunting reality: criticism is an inherent, evolving part of life that takes root

Long Phi Tran | A Definition Of Freedom Of Visions | 2025

within us all.

How does your cultural and artistic context in Vietnam shape your approach to drawing and conceptual storytelling?

The Vietnamese cultural context, for me, is a confluence of deep heritage and the relentless pace of a modernizing society.
Technically, traditional Vietnamese art—particularly ink wash and graphic arts—taught me the power of minimalism and the significance of 'voids' (negative space). This discipline ensures that every ink stroke carries emotional weight.
In terms of storytelling, the humility and metaphorical nature of Vietnamese culture shape how I convey messages: subtle yet haunting. I use Asian mediums as a foundation to tell universal stories, creating a dialogue where past and present, East and West, can find a common language.

What do you hope viewers feel or question when they encounter "A Definition of Art Criticism" for the first time?

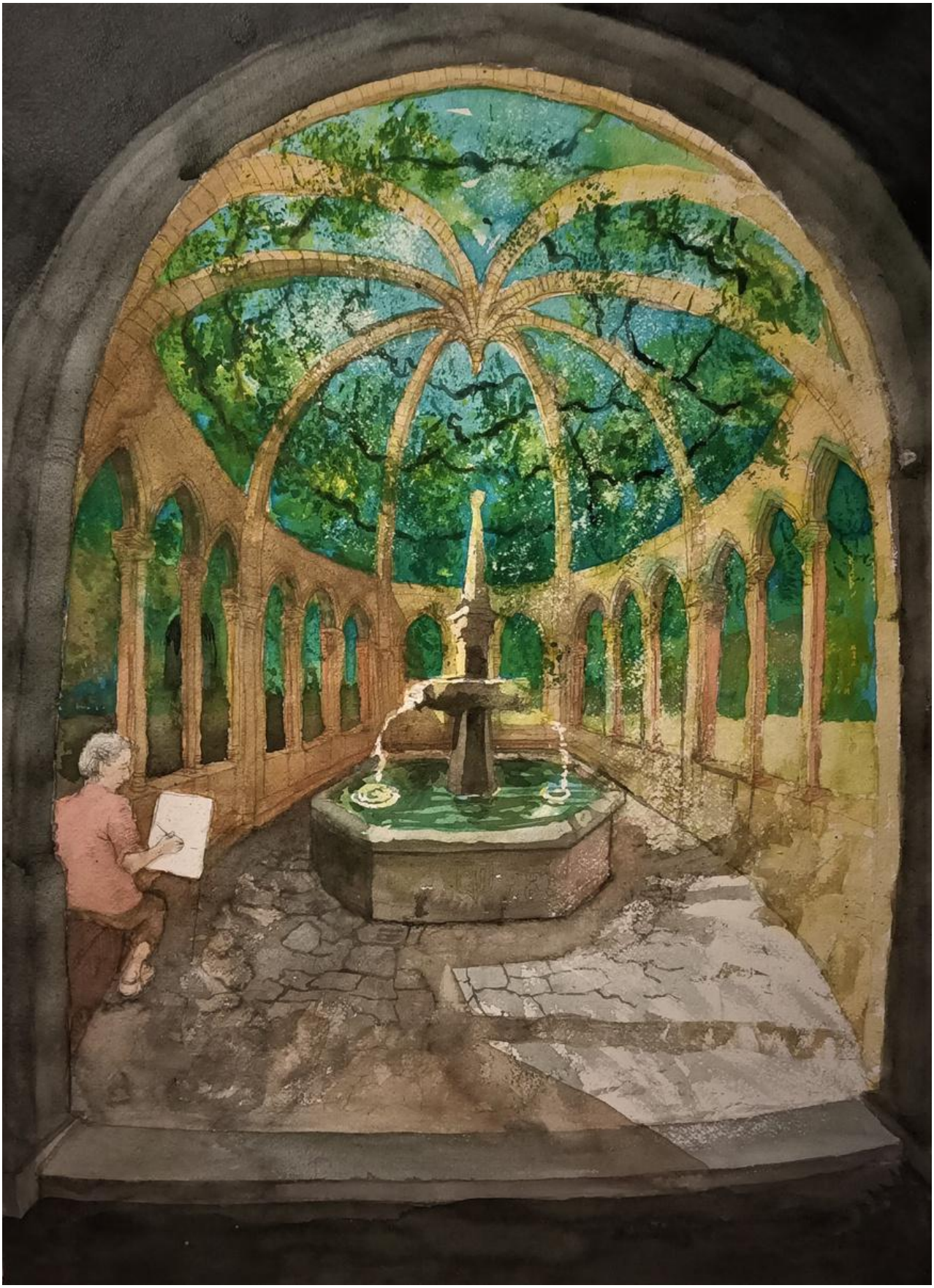
I hope that when viewers encounter the work, they see not just fear, but resilience.
I want them to ask themselves: 'What is the eye observing my own life?' and 'Am I letting that gaze define my worth?'.
Rather than feeling overwhelmed, I hope they find solidarity with the small figure—realizing that no matter how demanding the world may be, staying true to one's identity and continuing the journey is the most quiet yet powerful form of strength.

Karel Vereycken

Born in 1957 in Antwerp, Belgium, Karel graduated from the Institut Saint-Luc in Brussels and trained in engraving at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts, where he obtained a certificate of passage « with distinction. ».
Today, in France, he concentrates on writing about art history, producing audio guides and of course watercolors and engravings.
As a member of the Fédération nationale de l'estampe, he confirmed his technical mastery at Atelier63 and continued to perfect his skills in the Montreuil workshop of Danish engraver Bo Halbirk.

Artist Statement
What always attracted Karel in painting and imagining is the way art "makes visible" things and ideas that are "not visible" as such in the simple visible world but which "appear" in the minds of the viewer.
It took him over twenty years to sort out the difference between "symbols" (a "convention" accepted among a group or a code system designed to communicate a secret meaning), and "metaphor" which by assembling things unusual, by irony and paradox, allows the individual mind to "discover" the meaning the painter intended to transmit.
Such an approach offers the joy of discovery and surprise, a deep human quality. Modern art started as a non-figurative form of symbolism till "contemporary" art brought many artists to put an axe into the very idea of poetical meaning.
In 1957, the CIA sponsored, under various covers and often without the artists even knowing about it, many "abstract" artists to promote a form of art that it considered coherent with its ideology of "free enterprise."
So what inspires Karel is true human culture, be it Chinese painting of the Song dynasty, the Buddhist sculptures of Gandhara, the early Flemish masters or the magnificent bronze heads of Ifé in current Nigeria. Bridging the distances in space and time, religion and philosophy, stands the celebration of unique human capacities, that of compassion, empathy and love.

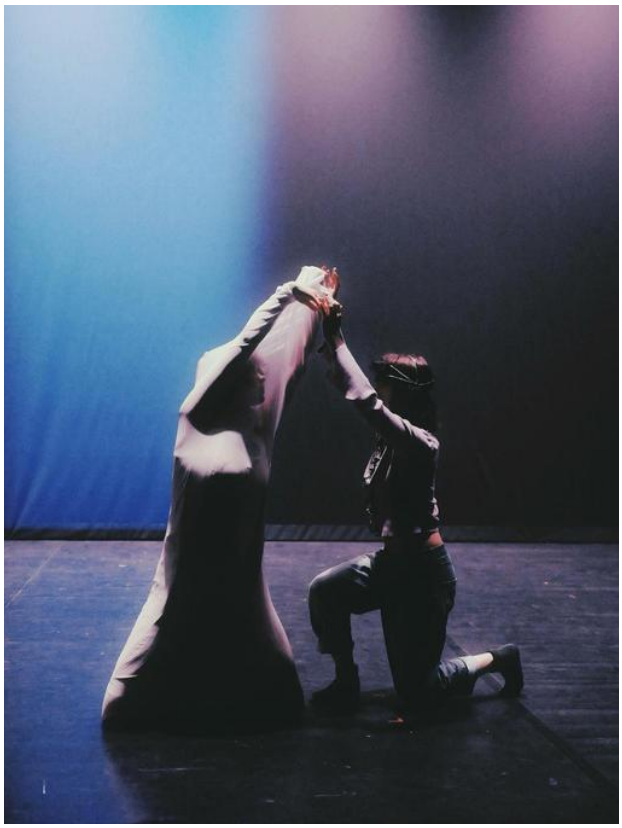
Karel Vereycken | Fun in the Snow | 2025



Karel Vereycken | Abbey of Valmagne | 2024

— *Interview*

Xinling Zhang



Your work moves fluidly between film, movement, and performance. What usually appears first for you - a visual image, a physical impulse, or an emotional memory?

My work usually begins with lived experience and inner reflection. Personal growth is the core source of my practice — the root from which everything else emerges. Because of this, emotional memory is often the first thing to appear: a felt experience that exists before it becomes form, image, or language.

You describe your practice as exploring how the unseen becomes felt. Can you share an example of a moment when something intangible suddenly took form during a project?

A clear example comes from my use of live camera in performance. Traditionally, the camera operator remains invisible, positioned behind the scenes. When I chose to step onto the stage and become a visible photographer, that convention was disrupted.
At that moment, what had previously been intangible became palpable: the dynamics of looking and being looked at, self-awareness, and distance were clearly felt through the interaction of body, image, and live presence. I realised that live imaging does not simply make emotions visible; it allows me to become an observer of my own life.

Intuition plays a central role in your creative process. How do you distinguish between intuition and artistic intention when shaping a piece?

For me, artistic intention is the 'core' that must be held onto once a theme is defined. It functions as an anchor throughout the process, guiding decisions and ensuring that every choice develops from the same underlying direction.
Intuition, on the other hand, allows me to maintain balance while making those decisions. It keeps both

the rational and sensorial sides of the process in dialogue, encouraging me to listen to the body and to my most instinctive impulses. I believe that the purest artistic material comes from these impulses, and intuition prevents the work from becoming overly conceptual or rigid.

Your method of devising treats collaborators as "living archive". What have you learned from working in this co-creative, non-hierarchical way?

What I have learned most is an attitude of equality, respect, and mutual appreciation. What you offer within a collaboration eventually returns, often in unexpected forms. I believe that only when a person feels genuinely trusted and respected are they willing to give one hundred percent of themselves, bringing life into the work with a sense of ease and creative openness. It was through this foundation of equal dialogue that I realised devising is the method most aligned with my directing style — allowing me to build healthy, fluid energetic relationships with collaborators, while also giving myself permission to work in a state of flow and inner stillness.

How does your background in both Beijing and London influence the way you perceive the body, presence, and performance?

Living and studying between Beijing and London has deeply shaped how I perceive the body, presence, and performance. In the Chinese context, I've learned to sense and express emotion through metaphor, spatial relationships, and subtle interactions—my body often carries meaning that isn't directly spoken. In London, I was encouraged to let the body itself become a language, entering the present moment in a more direct and open way.

These experiences have taught me that the body is both a vessel for personal emotion and memory, and always exists in relation to others.

Memory and emotional resonance appear frequently in your work. What role does personal vulnerability play in your creative process?

Vulnerability is both the starting point and the compass. I create from the parts of myself that are still tender — unresolved relationships, distance, longing, and the desire to be seen without fear. Allowing these emotions to surface in the studio helps cultivate trust among collaborators and unlocks deeper movement qualities.
I believe that vulnerability is not weakness but a form of energetic truth. When I open myself in the creative process, performers follow, and the audience eventually enters that shared space of honesty. Vulnerability becomes the bridge connecting all three.

Your performances often blur the boundaries between performer and observer. What kind of emotional or spatial environment do you hope to create for audiences?

I tried to blur or dissolve the traditional concept of the stage, exploring the space between conventional and immersive theatre. In my work, I combine image, movement, performance, and space, creating a multi-media dialogue that allows the audience to experience interaction across bodies, projections, and sound.
When the audience is not simply watching as spectators or treating the work as a show, this multi-layered experience can open new philosophical reflections, even offering a sense of life beyond the fleeting beauty of a single performance.

Born on January 20th 1976, **Jason Bryant** grew up in rural North Carolina. Art was always around Jason, encouraged by his mother, who would often draw comic book figures for him as a kid. At around age six, Jason would observe with anticipation the joy his uncle derived from creating drawings for him and from watching Jason create images. These memories serve as seminal moments for Jason's development as an artist at an early age.

As Jason grew older, movies and drawing became a way for him to escape the realities of a broken home. Jason's fascination with drawing was replaced by a love for painting, which was encouraged in him by his mentor Paul Hartley during his years at East Carolina University, where Jason received his BFA in 1999. While painting, Jason would listen to the soundtrack of different films, letting himself be completely absorbed in the emotions and images the music evoked and translating the energy into images on his canvas.

The flux of the world is based upon dialogue, how we interact, and the change from these interactions. The one thing that has remained a constant tool in bringing about, as well as informing people of, change is art. Art is the vehicle that we use to educate ourselves. It is the consummate mirror of our world, reflected back at us. Jason believes in trying to build that mirror, to illuminate people's understanding of the world.

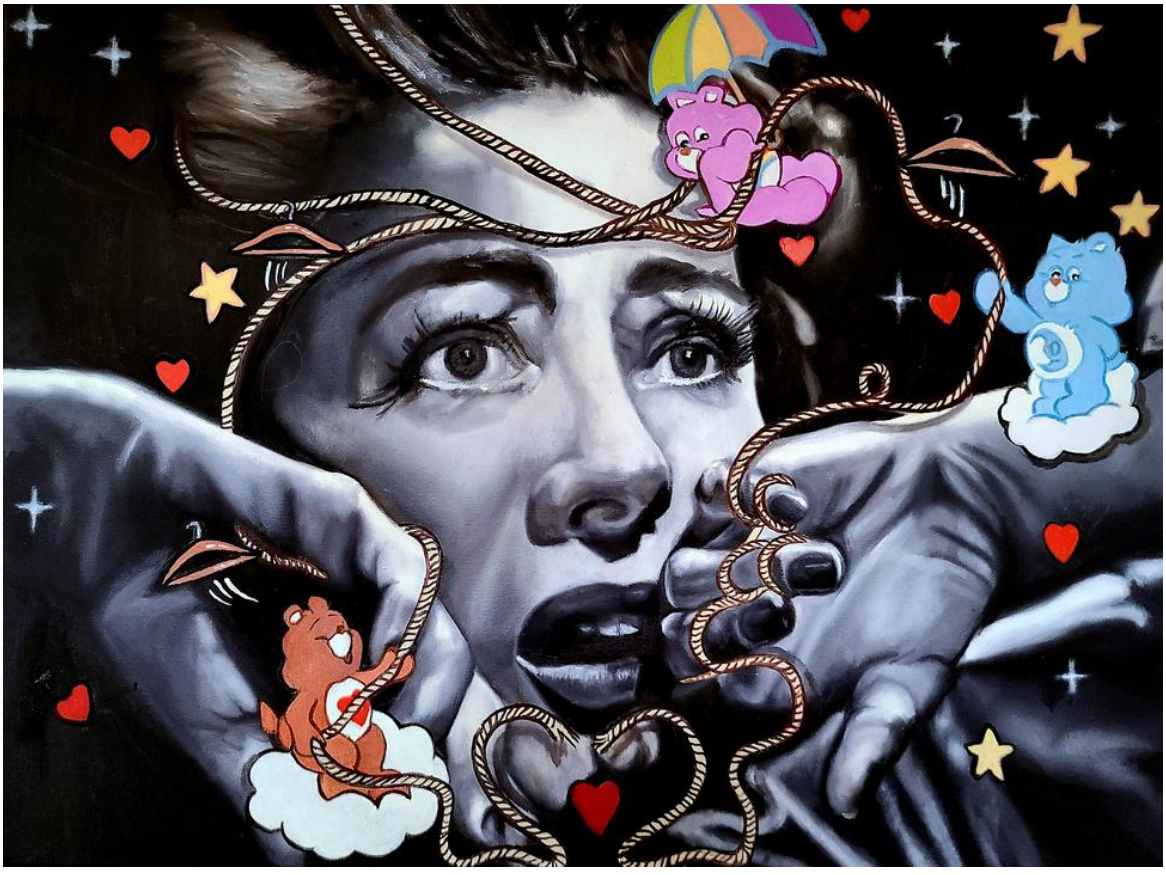
After receiving his BFA, Jason moved to Baltimore, where he lived for five years before moving to Brooklyn, New York. In the beginning of his career in Baltimore, Jason did an internship for the Mayors Advisory Committee on Art and Culture, where he was introduced to many of the contemporaries he works with today. His relationship with the community of artists was furthered when he was accepted to the Maryland Institute College of Art, where he received his MFA in May 2004 from the Mount Royal School of Art graduate program. After receiving his MFA, Jason moved to Brooklyn NY were he has worked as an artist assistant to Kehinde Wiley since 2005.

While living in Baltimore and Brooklyn Bryant has exhibited at such institutions as The Greenville Museum of Art in Greenville, North Carolina; The Period Gallery in Omaha, Nebraska; Transport Gallery in Los Angeles, California, Maryland Art Place in Baltimore, Maryland; The James E. Lewis Fine Arts Museum in Baltimore, The Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, Tribes Gallery in New York, Porter Contemporary in New York, Like the Spice Gallery in New York, Vertical Gallery in Chicago, Gauntlet Gallery in San Fransico and Gallery 32 in London, England.

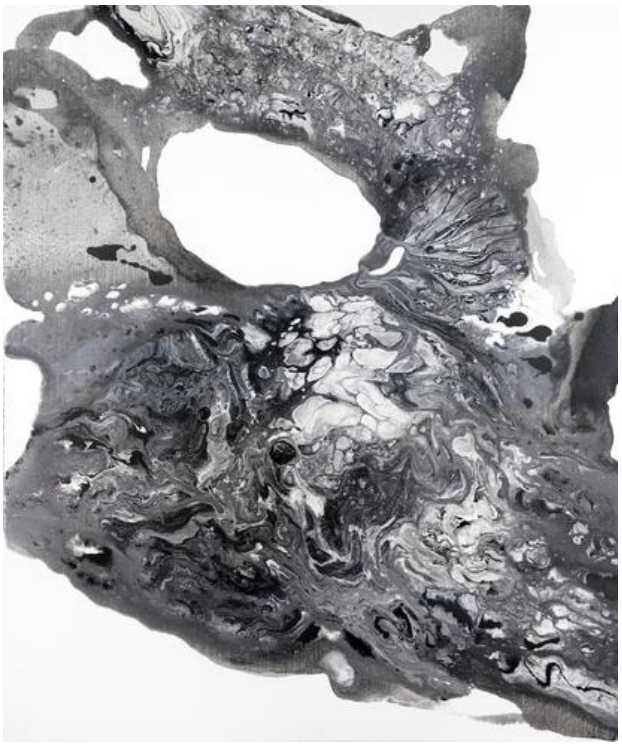
In the past four years, Bryant's paintings have been published in such publications as Thrasher Magazine Juxtapoz, The Baltimore City Paper, The Philadelphia Inquirer Link Magazine, Direct Art Magazine volumes 5 and 7, New Art International, NY Arts magazine. Studio visit Magazine., Flavorpill, and American Artist Since 2004 Bryant has been represented by Glance Gallery in North Carolina, the Showroom Gallery in Tennessee,Like the Spice Gallery in Brooklyn NY, !9 Karen Contemporary Artspace in Austrailia Porter Contemporary in New York.

Artist Statement

My recent series of paintings, I have incorporated my love of skateboarding to explore themes of portraiture. With vibrant visceral iconic skateboard graphics coming from behind or bursting through the elegant black and white images of various actors and actresses, I've merged two of the most important partsof my life, skateboarding and art. I use the traditional format of the portrait, to simultaneously, comment onidentity and create portraits that mean so much more than just the individual being painted. With most of my paintings, the figure is the focal point, but when all of the elements of the painting come into play, the work really explores the identity of others, not the subject being painted. There is so much to be learned from a person's portrait, information that goes well beyond the face.



Wallace Woo



profoundly shaped who I am today. Yet, I have always held a clear wish in my heart: I hope people will eventually call me an Artist, not merely a Makeup Artist.

This shift in identity stems from a deeper level of self-reflection. My rich experiences in the fashion industry broadened my horizons but also amplified my desires, ultimately leading me back to the most fundamental level: to perceive my true self and explore the more essential values of life. Painting became the medium for this journey.

I discovered an innate affinity within myself for the ethereal, formless quality of Eastern ink wash painting. It embodies a philosophy of "gaining through letting go"—much like sculpting jade, where removing the excess reveals the radiant Buddha within. However, I equally cannot abandon the training in form, structure, and active expression I received from Western art education since childhood. My unique cultural identity compels me to ask: How can I find my own balance between Western "creation" and Eastern "relinquishment"?

Thus, my technique, "Acrylic with the Spirit of Ink," became a bold experiment. I thin fast-drying, dense acrylic to an ink-like transparency, pour it onto the canvas, and within the brief window of its free flow and manifestation, I engage in precise intervention and choice. This process itself is my core creative philosophy: learning to let go within creation, embracing chance within control.

This experiment has no final "perfect" answer; it is an ongoing process. For me, the value of art lies precisely in this: continually perceiving, creating, and letting go. Within this cycle, I approach that state of "eternal becoming." And what remains on the canvas is the most honest evidence of this journey.

Your works often feel like they are forming and dissolving simultaneously. How do you decide when a piece is complete, especially in such fluid, evolving processes?

Your technique, "Acrylic with Ink Spirit," balances fluid spontaneity with precise control. How did this approach emerge from your background in fashion makeup artistry?

I am deeply grateful that in the first half of my life, I had the opportunity to work as a makeup artist in the dazzling world of fashion. Everything this profession bestowed upon me—from a heightened sensitivity to color, light, and form, to the ability to shape texture and capture transient moments—has

I am deeply immersed in a state of heightened concentration throughout the painting process, constantly attuned to the shifting reality before me—every fleeting state of the pattern as it moves across the canvas. The most fascinating aspect of fluid painting is that even the subtlest flow carries an indescribable sense of motion in the moment, both tangible and elusive, present yet intangible. My creative process is one of using slowness to master speed, while simultaneously racing against the drying time of the paint to make rapid, precise judgments about each emerging form. It is a contradiction, but then—isn't life itself just like that?
Through Zen practice, I have learned to accept all the changes life brings. Pain passes, sorrow passes—there is no need to cling to what is unnecessary. I sense whether the emerging patterns and my inner awareness connect, and naturally, a strong impulse arises within me to extend the uniqueness of those forms. As for deciding when a work is complete—as an artist looking back on past creations, I always feel something could have been done a little better. So, in truth, there is no absolute "completion." Instead, I would say a work feels comfortable more than it feels "finished."
It is like the feeling of love at first sight. When you encounter a stranger, do you step forward to greet them, or let them pass, preserving a space for imagination? That tension between reaching out and holding back—that precious, trembling in-between—is where the essence lies. My painting finds its pause not when everything is resolved, but when that moment of poised uncertainty feels alive, breathing on the canvas… and quietly settles into my soul.

Vipassana emphasizes awareness of impermanence. How does this spiritual practice shape your relationship with each artwork as it emerges and transforms?

The awareness of "impermanence" emphasized in Vipassana meditation is not merely a philosophical concept to me, but the most fundamental mind-body state I enter when creating each painting. It has completely reshaped my relationship with the work: I am no longer a "creator" building from nothing, but more like a practitioner learning to "witness" and "respond" within the flow of change.
The flowing, blending, diffusing, and settling of colors on the canvas are themselves the purest visual manifestations of impermanence. Every second, forms are born while simultaneously fading away. What Vipassana first taught me is "simply knowing"—knowing the paint is flowing, knowing a surprising texture is forming, and also knowing a beautiful shape I had anticipated is dissolving. In the past, that "dissolution" would instantly trigger inner anxiety and grasping. I would rush to intervene, trying to "save" or "fix" the moment I favored. Yet, often, such intervention born of fear is like trying to hold running water with bare hands—not only futile, but also disturbing the poetic path the flow might have taken, one I had never imagined.
Vipassana gives me a space to breathe. When the thought of "wanting to pull it back" arises, I can recognize it and choose to return to an open awareness, trusting the material's own wisdom. This trust is not passive abandonment, but a subtle, timely participation within intensely focused contemplation. Like a surfer moving with the wave, I do not control the paint. Only after fully accepting "impermanence"—accepting coverage, accepting unexpected color mixtures—am I released from the tension of "fearing loss." My mind becomes calm and clear, enabling me to "hear" what the canvas truly needs: perhaps a stroke to contain, perhaps an area of blank space.
My relationship with the work is an ongoing, silent dialogue. The work changes, and my awareness flows along with it. I do not ask, "What do I want to make it into?" but rather, "What is

it becoming? How can I participate in the least destructive way?" Completion is no longer a static endpoint, but a fulfilling pause naturally reached in the dialogue. When I feel all the energy, all the movement, all that has "happened" and "not yet happened" on the canvas reach a dynamic, breath-like balance, I know it is time to let go.
Those works "completed in one sitting" are precisely the traces of this practice. They honestly record the quality of my awareness, my courage, and my limits in that moment. They remind me that the power of art lies not in eternal solidity, but in its candid revelation of the entire process of becoming, abiding, and dissolving—just like life itself. Each painting is a collaboration with impermanence, and the peace and freedom the heart finds after letting go of attachment.

Black, white, and muted tones dominate your palette, with occasional subtle colors. How do you approach color as a symbolic or emotional element rather than a purely aesthetic choice?

In my exploration of color, I have undergone a journey from outward expression to inward reflection. Initially, I did experiment with a riot of colors in my work, as if pouring all the brilliance I witnessed in the fashion world onto the canvas. However, those works were eventually destroyed by my own hand—they held no "feeling" for me, merely a lively veil that could not touch the soul. I gradually realized that this might be a profound misdirection brought by my career as a makeup artist: I once thought I lived in a world full of color, only to later awaken to the fact that many of those colors were "costumes" applied for others—external, temporary, and serving the visual. They were not the true reflection of my inner landscape.
Thus, I conducted a resolute experiment: I removed all colors from my palette, leaving only black and white. This was not a negation, but a purification. When the world shed all its colorful garments, an indescribable "sense of substance" rose from within. Black and white became the purest light and shadow, the most essential contrast. They constructed the depth of space and the weight of time, allowing me to focus on the growth of forms, the flow of energy, and the internal structure. This is the visual truth I have always sought—not the appearance of the world, but the skeleton and breath behind it.
Yet, this does not mean I reject color. When cool tones like deep blue or lavender occasionally emerge, I do feel a distinct "resonance." This is not a random aesthetic choice but rather as if these hues themselves carry a certain emotional frequency or spiritual temperature. This allows me to perceive an intuition connected to the chakra system—deep blue seems to link to the throat chakra's calm expression and the intuitive eye, while lavender touches the awareness of the crown chakra and the inner vision of the third eye. To me, they are manifestations of specific internal states, the natural emergence of a "texture of light" when energy reaches a certain level. Therefore, in my paintings, color is never decoration but the direct topography of emotion and spirit; the occasional infusion of a cool hue is a subtle glow of spirit within the silent space-time constructed by black and white.

Your process seems deeply physical despite its meditative foundation. What role does the body play—movement, gesture, breath—in shaping each composition?

In the creative process, my body is not merely a tool executing commands from the mind; it is a "guiding entity" unified with spirit and breath. While many perceive meditation as static seated practice, for me, when I am fully immersed in a state of flow, the entire act of creation becomes a dynamic Zen training ground. Within this dedicated space, every movement of the body, every breath, is no longer just a physical act but an internal force that directly participates in shaping the painting.
When I pour paint or tilt the canvas, my movements are not arbitrary but a form of conscious "bodily writing." The arc of my arm's sweep, the subtle turn of my wrist, even the shift of my body's center of gravity—all leave irreplicable traces in the flowing medium. These traces are the most honest dialogue between body and material. Breath, meanwhile, acts as the metronome of this conversation. In moments of held breath and focused stillness, I intervene and guide; in long, deliberate exhalations, I observe and wait. The rhythm of my breath naturally modulates the force and timing of my actions, preventing the process from becoming rushed and chaotic or hesitant and stagnant.
Thus, before the canvas, my body is like a dancer moving with water. It does not fight the fluid but perceives its gravity, tension, and speed, responding and collaborating with corresponding gestures. In the end, what solidifies on the surface is not only the trace of color but also the "testimony of presence" forged in that moment by the synergy of bodily momentum, respiratory rhythm, and fully concentrated energy. Creation, for me, is precisely this dynamic meditation —a resonant state where body, mind, and material become one.

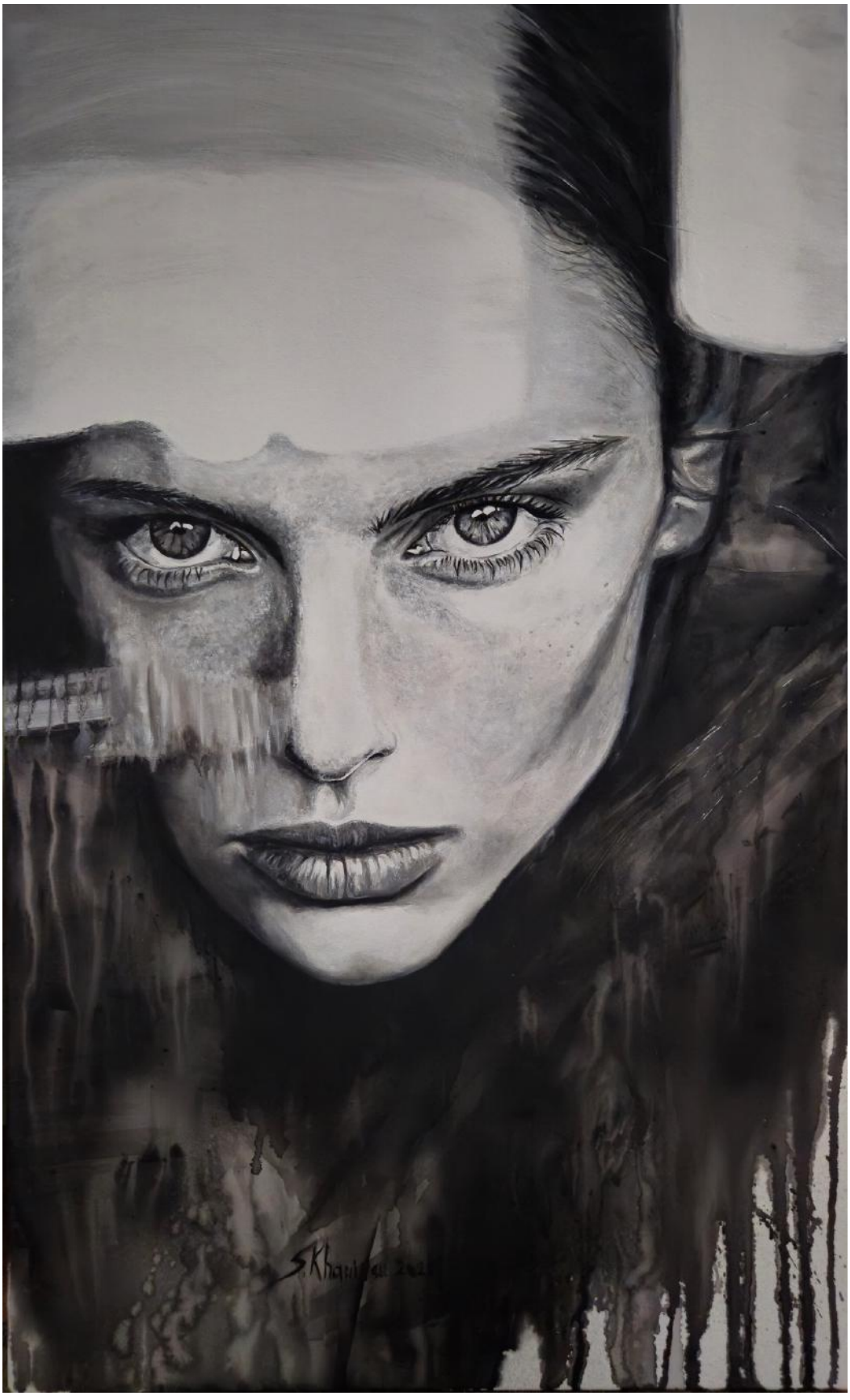
Many viewers describe your works as meditative portals. What emotional or contemplative state do you hope they enter when encountering one of your paintings?

When I create these works, the anticipation I hold in my heart is not for viewers to "take away" any specific message or story. Quite the opposite—I hope they can let go.
Let go of the daily clutter, let go of the mind that rushes to interpret meaning, and even let go of the unconscious tension that comes with "viewing art." When you stand before the painting, I hope the silence woven from layers and flow can serve as a buffer, gently separating you from the noise of the outside world. It is like entering a cave—the initial darkness and silence may feel unsettling, but as your eyes and mind gradually adjust, you begin to perceive the texture of the stone walls, the sound of dripping water, and the vast, gentle flow of time itself.
What I wish to guide viewers into is a state of "aimless focus." The gaze can wander along the edges of color layers, sensing the weight and delicacy of pigment sedimentation; thoughts may settle in a corner where ink softly blooms, much like the mind finding a blank space to rest. Within this focus, we might touch upon a more fundamental experience: a simple awareness of our own existence, of our breath, of the present moment.
These paintings depict geological time, the slow pace of growth. Thus, I hope they can create a psychological space of deceleration for the viewer, allowing one, in a moment of pause, to untangle from the chase of the social clock and experience another expansive quality of "time"—it is not meant to be filled, but to be inhabited.
Ultimately, what I hope for is that the canvas becomes a mirror reflecting the inner self, not a window defining a view. The traces I depict are merely an invitation. What the viewer truly encounters depends entirely on themselves—it is the stillness within them, the depths, or the light they are prepared to see at that moment. Thus, before the same painting, one person may encounter a pond of serene stillness, another may see their own unspoken thoughts reflected, while yet another might, within those shades of grey, recognize for the first time a faint yet certain light that belongs to them. This is the meaning of art as a "mirror": it does not provide answers. Instead, with its silent depth, it invites every person who pauses before it to engage in an honest, gentle, and open dialogue with themselves.

Creating a series of 99 works is an immense artistic journey. What inner transformations or realizations accompanied you through the creation of "Stalactite"?

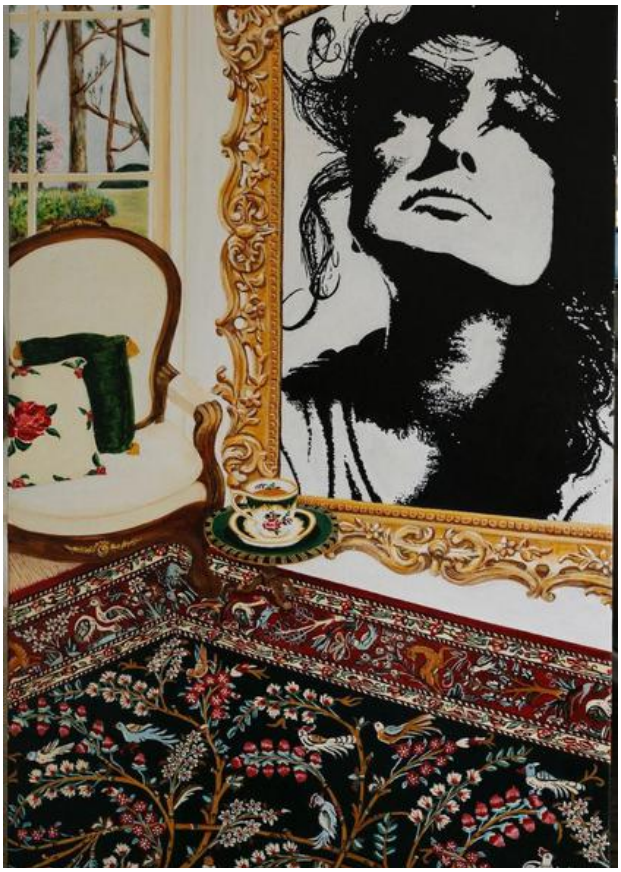
Through a long and uninterrupted creative process, to claim that thoughts of giving up never surfaced would indeed be untrue. I am honest that on certain days, I would grow weary of the sight before me, even deeply doubting my own worth —having created so much, the works stacked quietly at home were like silent words only I could hear; there was no audience, no echo. When would those destined to resonate with them ever appear? This silent inquiry would occasionally lead me to the edge of abandonment.
For me, painting might have begun merely as a way to pass time and channel emotions. But gradually, a longing also arose within my heart—a longing to be seen by the world. Only by being seen could these quiet cultivations of mindful awareness possibly flow outward and touch another heart. Yes, I am so conflicted: I am both immersed in the purity of solitary creation and yearn for resonance; I find myself in loneliness, yet feel unsettled by it.
Yet, as if drawn into a ritual of obsession, within those repetitive motions—painful yet quiet—whether in the daily act of painting or the subsequent documentation of the works, a truth gradually became clear to me: creation itself is the most fundamental way I engage with the world. When I asked myself, "If I don't create, what else can I do?" the answer was often a void of silence. Since there seemed no other choice, I might as well move forward, transforming this time into a meaningful accumulation, even if the world had yet to notice. I began to understand that the seemingly lonely process had long been rewarding me: it was an irreplaceable focus, a depth of being with myself, and an internal order formed within silence.
The creation of the Stalactite series was precisely a prolonged process of "inward rooting." The accumulation of 99 works allowed me to personally experience what "the sedimentation of time" means—occurring not only on the canvas but within my very life. This process also completely redefined my understanding of "completion." I no longer saw each painting as an object to be "perfectly finished," but rather as a node within the entire growth process. The 99 works are like 99 slices of time, collectively documenting a history of conscious sedimentation. What matters is no longer the impact of a single image, but the intangible, complete trajectory of growth formed by all the works, together with the silences, hesitations, and perseverance in between.
I came to realize that an artist's value is not defined solely by external attention. Just as a stalactite in a dark cave silently forms its own shape and luster through the accumulation of each drop of water, an artist's creation is also a form of self-completion that requires no external permission.
This series is a metaphor and a tribute to all creators who work diligently in silence: we need not rush to be seen, because true light comes from the act of sustained growth itself. In the end, what I completed was not merely a series of works, but an inner conviction—the meaning of art lies first in whether we are willing, through long and quiet stretches of time, to remain faithful to that drop of water within the heart, letting it fall, sediment, and ultimately crystallize.

Svetlana Khanina was born in the Ivanovo region. She graduated from the Shuya Medical College. A vivid example from childhood was her father, an artist, who set her on a creative path. Since 2019, she has begun her artistic journey and the study of art history.
She studied painting and graphic art with contemporary artists both online and in person. Since 2025, she has participated in exhibitions in Moscow and in international competitions.
Svetlana lives and works in Moscow.




S. Khalnina 2025

Fatima M Khan



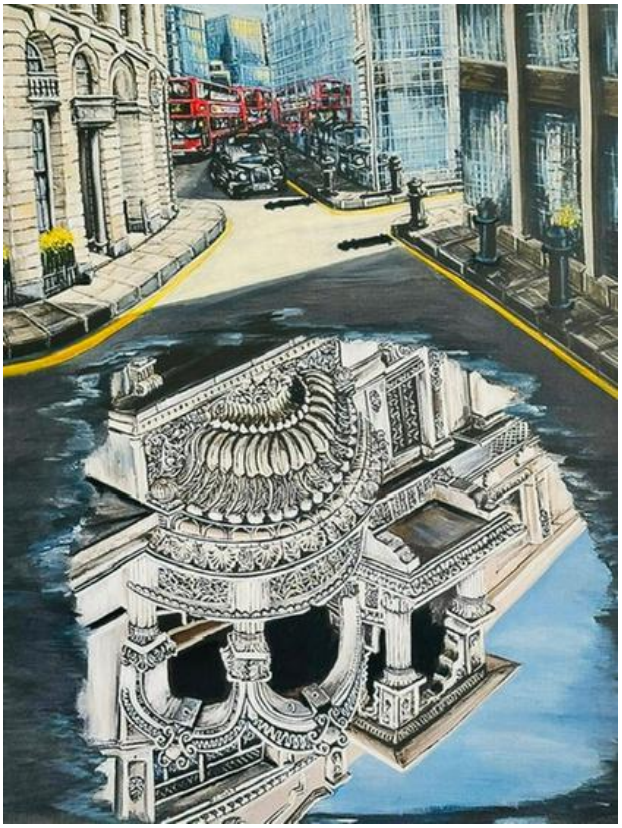
While living in London, I became acutely aware of how rain transformed the city. Puddles on pavements and reflections in glass façades appeared daily, quietly mirroring historic and contemporary architecture. These temporary surfaces began to feel more truthful to me than solid structures themselves. Their fleeting nature became a metaphor for architectural memory forms that exist briefly before disappearing, much like buildings that slowly vanish over time due to neglect and the lack of conservation in their countries of origin.

Your Reflection / Puddle Series centers on fleeting reflections of architecture. What first drew you to puddles and glass as carriers of memory rather than solid architectural forms themselves?

Hyper-realism often emphasizes permanence and precision. How do you reconcile this meticulous technique with themes of impermanence, erosion, and disappearance?

Hyper-realism allows me to slow down what is inherently fleeting. By rendering reflections with precision and care, I give permanence to moments that would otherwise disappear instantly. The tension between meticulous technique and fragile subject matter mirrors the contradiction at the heart of my work, using permanence to preserve what is already vanishing.

Many of your reflected buildings carry historical



weight. How do you select architectural subjects, and do they relate to places of personal significance for you?

I am from Pakistan, and many of the reflected buildings in my work belong to Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. Having encountered countless such structures while living in Pakistan, I later selected specific buildings through my research—those in which architectural beauty still emerges beneath eroded façades. These buildings carry both historical weight and personal familiarity, functioning as quiet witnesses to a shared cultural memory.

In your work, reflections appear fragile and easily disturbed. Do you see the viewer as an active participant who metaphorically "disturbs" the image by observing it?

Yes. I intentionally exclude human figures from the series so the viewer can inhabit the image themselves. The fragility of the reflections invites the act of looking to become a form of disturbance, positioning the viewer as an active presence within the work rather than a detached observer.

Your paintings often blur boundaries between past and present. Do you consider your work more as documentation, preservation, or quiet critique of contemporary urban life?

I consider the work an act of preservation rather than critique. It is driven by admiration for cities such as London, where historic architecture has been carefully retained and woven into contemporary urban life. By holding these moments in reflection, the paintings acknowledge the past as a living presence—one that can coexist with modernity when conservation is valued.

Your work has moved from intimate studio practice to large-scale public display in cities like London and New York. How does public space change the way your work is read?

When the work enters public space, it shifts from a private act of looking to a shared experience. Displayed in cities such as London and New York, the images gain a heightened sense of reality, placing the past visibly within the present. In these contexts, where historic architecture has been preserved, the work creates a quiet contrast between past and present, allowing reflection to function as a bridge between the two.

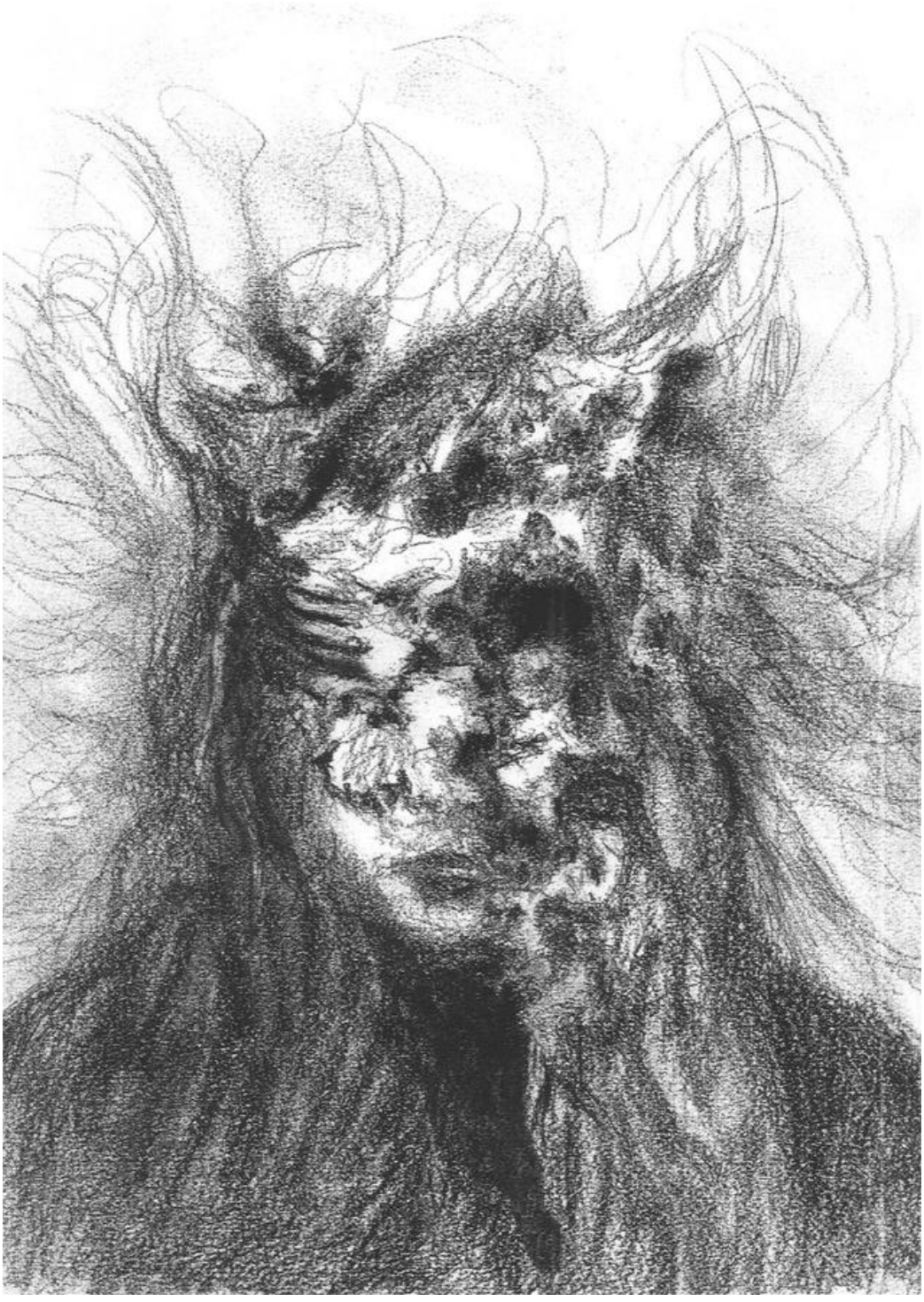
Many viewers describe a sense of stillness and pause in your paintings. Is creating that moment of contemplation an intentional part of your practice?

Yes, it is intentional. While the paintings invite stillness and slow the viewer down, they also acknowledge the passage of time. Puddles dry, reflections in glass shift throughout the day; buses, people, clouds move, and by night the image transforms again. The work holds this tension between pause and movement, reminding the viewer that even in moments of quiet contemplation, time continues to pass.

Maria Winther (b. 1997, Norway) is an illustrator working at the intersection of psychology, symbolism, and the inner landscape. She has exhibited at Galleri 49 and is preparing for her first solo exhibition. Winther's work explores vulnerability, shadow, and consciousness through a blend of figurative and abstract forms.

Artist Statement
My work navigates the unseen realms of the mind and the subtle energies of human experience. Through painting and illustration, I explore vulnerability, shadow, and the anima, creating visual spaces that invite quiet reflection and intimate encounters with the self. I am drawn to tension - between presence and absence, light and shadow, known and unknown - and aim to give form to what often goes unspoken. Each piece becomes a mirror and a portal, inviting viewers to feel, question, and recognize themselves within the work.

Maria Winther | Soul



Maria Winther | Old One

Clothilde Fricot Mugnerot

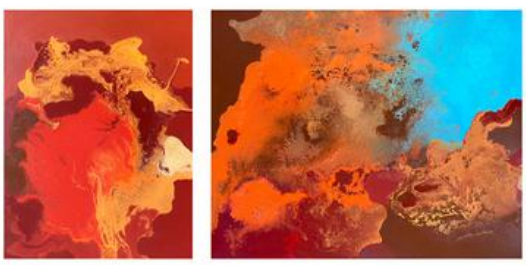
Your artistic journey started very early. Can you recall a specific moment or experience that made you realize art would become central to your life?

Yes, indeed, my relationship with art began very early. From childhood, I have been particularly attentive to details, materials, colors, lines, and shapes that surround us. I have always felt the need to experiment, to manipulate and transform matter, and manual and creative practices very quickly became an essential part of my daily life.
From a very young age, I observed my parents engaging in hands-on practices. My mother created clothes, embroidered, and painted; my father made things and was constantly building and repairing. Simply witnessing these gestures, skills, and processes of making nurtured my curiosity and shaped my relationship with creation from an early age.
As I grew up, I quickly understood that art—and visual art in particular—was the most accurate means of expression for me, the one that allowed me to externalize a sensitivity that was sometimes difficult to put into words.
I have always drawn. As a teenager, I spent hours drawing exclusively in black and white, using a Rotring pen, in a very introspective and almost obsessive practice. Painting came a little later, as a new opening.

You lived in Canada for four years. How did this experience transform your artistic vision and your relationship with nature?

I began with drawing, working exclusively in black and white for many years. My arrival in Canada marked a true turning point. I was deeply moved by the vastness of the landscapes, by the omnipresent nature—raw and spectacular.
It was at that moment that color entered my painting practice.
Painting in color asserted itself almost instinctively, as something self-evident. In hindsight, it is striking to see how naturally this transformation took place.
I traveled across Canada and the United States, which allowed me to discover grand landscapes and national parks shaped by impressive natural phenomena. This direct encounter with powerful, living territories profoundly transformed my artistic vision and my relationship to the world.

The Yellowstone series was inspired by your road trips. What emotions or sensations were you trying to translate onto the canvas?



Clothilde Fricot Mugnerot | Yellowstone

Clothilde Fricot Mugnerot | Yellowstone

The Yellowstone project is part of the continuation of these travel experiences. Inspired by volcanic zones, telluric movements, and the natural colors of the earth, this series evokes unstable landscapes traversed by invisible forces. Colors become a language in themselves—the language of transformation. They flow, collide, and settle, like the layers of a ground in constant recomposition.
Through these canvases, I seek to convey the emotion that arises at the moment of a shift, during a change of state. There is also the idea of the ephemeral: those fleeting moments when something transforms before our eyes, never to be fixed or frozen.

You often describe movement in your work as a metaphor for nature. What does movement symbolize for you on a deeper level?

My practice is rooted in an exploration of transformation, transitional states, and moments when matter escapes all control. Through experiments combining pigments, alcohol-based paint, acrylic, ferrofluid, and chemical reactions, I establish initial conditions and then allow the fluids to interact, disrupt one another, and short-circuit.
Form emerges from imbalance: it appears, transforms, and almost simultaneously disappears. This first phase of the process relies on a deliberate loss of control. Matter sometimes acts faster than intention, generating unique compositions that are impossible to reproduce.
These images may evoke aerial landscapes, geological formations, volcanic zones, or even microscopic movements. They oscillate between the infinitesimal and the monumental, between slowness and sudden eruption. Each work becomes the trace of a tipping point—an instant when the flow briefly breaks before reconfiguring itself.

Your works remain open to interpretation. How important is it for you that viewers bring their own narratives to your art?

It is precisely for this reason that abstraction occupies such an important place in my work. It allows for an open space, without imposing a single interpretation or narrative. What I seek above all is to evoke an emotional response in the viewer.
I place great importance on allowing each person to project their own story, sensations, and memories. Being attentive to what we feel when facing an artwork, and questioning why a particular form or color resonates with us, seems fundamental to me. The work then becomes a place of intimate dialogue between the image and the one who looks at it.

How do you balance control and spontaneity during your creative process, especially when working with fluid materials?

I often speak of “guided chance” or “controlled randomness.” It is a balance that is particularly important to me. I usually begin with an intention, a direction, but I leave a great deal of space for chance, for the unpredictable reactions of the material.
Part of the process is accepting what I have not entirely decided, and then continuing to create from there. There is something very important to me in this capacity for adaptation.
It is also a way of echoing nature: it cannot be controlled; it takes shape over time, through movement and successive transformations. Nature is in a constant state of evolution, and my work seeks to situate itself within this dynamic.

You have a background in communication and design. How does this influence your approach to fine art today?

My training in communication and design made me aware of the importance of discourse around art. Knowing how to present one’s work, place it in context, and speak about it with clarity and accuracy is now an integral part of artistic practice.
Design also brought me a certain rigor: attention to composition, balance, and formal and technical choices. This more structured foundation now informs my fine art practice, even though it leaves ample room for intuition and experimentation.

Clothilde Fricot Mugnerot | Sans Titre

Yuqing Wu is a sophomore college student majoring in Fine Arts with a concentration in Painting and Drawing and a minor in Art History. Having lived across continents, their work is shaped by constant movement and an evolving sense of place, memory, and belonging. Working primarily in surrealism, Yuqing creates layered, dreamlike compositions that blur the boundary between the real and the imagined. Through mixed media including graphite, watercolor, oil paint, and soft pastels, their work explores themes of displacement, cultural identity, and psychological transformation. Grounded in both personal experience and broader social concerns, their practice uses surrealism as a tool to navigate transition and give form to what resists language.

Artist Statement

Having lived across continents - from China to California, Florida, and now Minnesota, I have learned to see the world through different lenses. Constant movement has shaped not only my sense of identity but also the way I understand place, memory, and belonging. My art often emerges from this fluidity, an exploration of how displacement and adaptation can coexist within the same body and mind.

Working primarily within surrealism, I create visual spaces that blur the boundary between the real and the imagined. I am drawn to surrealism because it allows me to express inner contradictions, the tension between the familiar and the foreign, the personal and the political. Through mixed media, including graphite, watercolor, oil paint, and soft pastels, I build layered compositions that reflect the shifting textures of thought and emotion. Each medium holds a distinct voice: watercolor for fluidity, oil for depth, graphite for control, and pastel for vulnerability.

My work serves as both self-exploration and commentary. While much of it is deeply introspective, mapping psychological landscapes and personal transformation, it also reflects my engagement with broader issues such as politics, ecology, and cultural identity. The environments I depict are often dreamlike but grounded in real concerns, echoing how the subconscious processes the instability of the modern world.

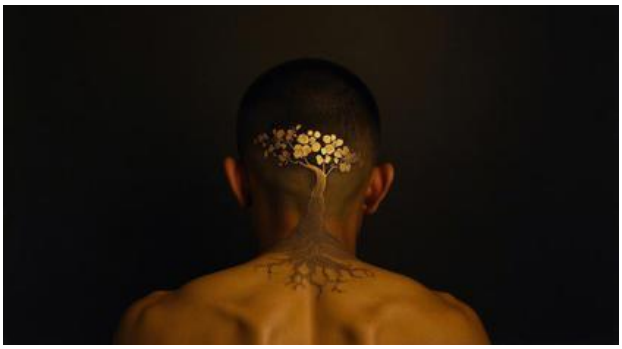
Ultimately, my art is a search for coherence in transition. I use surrealism to navigate what cannot be neatly expressed in words, to reveal the invisible threads that tie personal experience to collective history. Each piece becomes a visual diary of migration, emotion, and reflection; a world where borders dissolve and meaning continually reshapes itself.

Yuqing Wu | Wear Your Heart on Your Sleeve | 2025

Yuqing Wu | New World, Old Habits | 2024

Pear Dropy

You've said that each work begins with a dare—crossing a line or breaking a rule. Can you remember a moment when taking that risk changed a piece in an unexpected way?



Pear Dropy | What Year Does Gold Still Mourn | 2025

Every creative act feels like a dare. You might think you know where you're headed, but following an idea often takes you down paths that don't resemble what you first imagined. Sometimes the risk isn't pushing forward, but turning back—or staying with an idea even when you don't yet understand where it's going.

In your statement, page and canvas seem to speak to one another. How do words and images live together in your process?

They move back and forth. Writing becomes images; images turn into writing. Neither feels complete on its own. Some images hold a moment that wants to become a story; some stories collapse into a single, fixed image. These are the strays I let in.
How To Let The Wrong Thing In began as two separate works made weeks apart: an image of a dolphin rising high enough to see both the sun and the moon at once—an impossibility—and a poem written elsewhere, at another time. The title arrived last. When it did, I realised the image had been describing the poem all along. They were circling the same idea, looking for each other.

Your titles often feel like fragments of poems or unfinished questions. When do they appear?

Sometimes before, sometimes during, sometimes after. Some titles are poems. Others are questions or small stories. The image alone is never enough; the title works alongside it, opening a space for meaning rather than closing one. Naming the work is part of listening to it.

You've compared stories to cats—especially

Pear Dropy | How To Let The Wrong Thing In | 2025

strays. How does that shape the way you let meaning remain open in your work?

Ideas don't stay where you put them. They wander. They return when they want to. A stray might pass through once and never come back. If you're lucky, you learn how to sit still long enough for it to trust you.

Your practice moves across digital painting, photography, and hybrid digital forms. What has working digitally given you?

I learned to draw, sculpt, and photograph very young—those skills came early, and easily. Digital work didn't. It took years before it felt natural. But once it did, it opened a way to bring everything I already knew into one place. I don't think in terms of mediums anymore. They're just ways of getting closer to the idea.

Loss, longing, and transformation appear often in your work—not as endings, but as states of motion. Do you think of your images as emotional landscapes rather than stories?

I think of them as pauses. A moment held open. Nothing is resolved, but everything is present—the past, the future, all pressing gently at the edges.

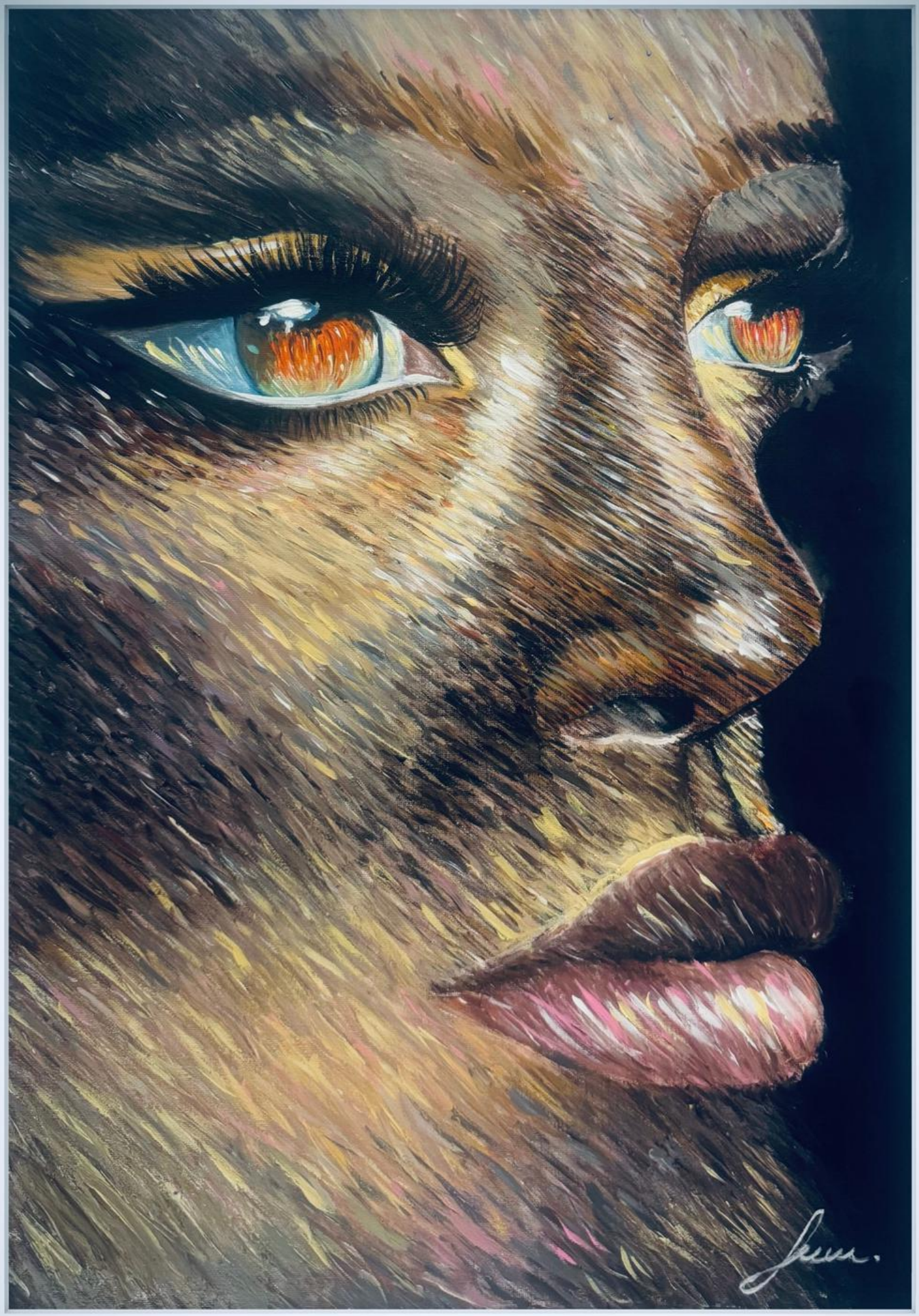
Animals—particularly cats—appear throughout your work, sometimes literally, sometimes symbolically. What do they hold for you?

Animals feel like reflections of ourselves—our temperaments, our instincts, our ways of loving. I've tried to let both cats and dogs appear in my work. That Cat People Know Their Love resonated enough to be shown in the UK probably says more about how people feel about cats than about any intention of mine. It was one of two self-portraits I submitted; the other, more overtly political, belongs to a different body of work.

Ekaterina Starodymova

Born on February 14, 1986, in Blagoveshchensk, Amur Region, where she graduated with honors from a children's art school. She currently lives and works in Moscow. She has been engaged in creative practice throughout her life, with oil painting being her preferred medium. She works in various techniques: the classical brush method, palette knife painting, and has also experimented with painting using her fingers, without brushes.
These two works (My Baby and the still life Delicious Mood) were created using this finger-painting technique. Working in this way offers completely different sensations: the painting is truly created, as if the image is being sculpted, like a sculptor modeling a form. In this process, no solvents or oils are used—only oil paints. As a result, the paintings have a pronounced texture, and the colors appear rich, vibrant, and intense.

My name is **Boanca Lorena Adriana** and I am a visual artist based in Romania. My artistic practice focuses on portraiture, textile intervention and poetic text, exploring themes such as identity, memory and the emotional interiority of human figures.



Ekaterina Terentyeva, an artist from Saint Petersburg, primarily focuses on landscape as the central theme of her artistic practice. She is drawn to vivid colors and bold, contrasting color combinations.

Project Statement
Plein air works created in 2025. Bright, high-contrast pieces from various cities across Russia and Belarus.

Ekaterina Terentyeva | Pechory | 2025

Ekaterina Terentyeva | Vitebsk | 2025

Daniel Chek-Shu Housley

Your portraits often sit between observation and performance. How do you decide where reality ends and construction begins in a particular image?

I don't usually think about it in fixed terms while shooting. I tend to start with observation, spending time with someone and noticing how they hold themselves, how they move, what feels natural to them. From there, small decisions are made instinctively, often around light, framing, or stillness. The construction comes in quietly. It's less about inventing something and more about creating the conditions for something honest to surface. If an image feels too performative, I usually pull back. If it feels too casual, I might introduce a small amount of structure.

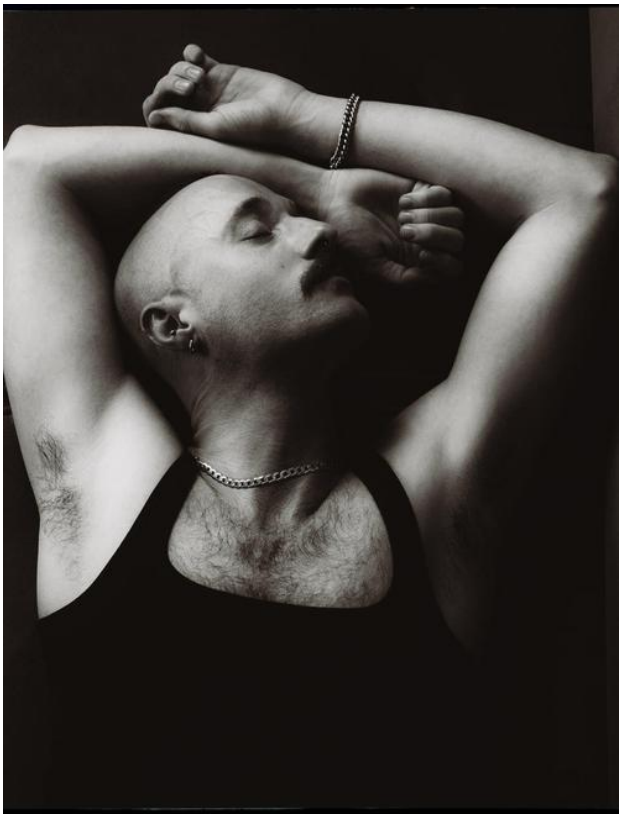
Daniel Chek-Shu Housley | In Causeway Light | 2024

Many of your works feel quiet yet highly charged emotionally. What role does stillness play in how you approach portraiture?

Stillness gives space for attention. When things slow down, small gestures and expressions become more visible, both to me and to the person being photographed. I'm not very interested in capturing peak moments or overt drama.
Emotion, for me, often sits in what isn't happening. I find that a held breath, a pause, or the absence of movement can feel more truthful than something expressive or loud.

You work between the UK and Hong Kong. How does moving between these cultural contexts shape the way you think about identity and belonging?

Moving between the UK and Hong Kong has made me more aware of how fluid identity is. I often feel slightly out of place in both contexts, which has shaped how I look at others and how I photograph them.



Daniel Chek-Shu Housley | Settling In | 2025

That in-between feeling has become part of my work. I'm drawn to people who occupy multiple worlds at once, culturally or emotionally, and portraiture feels like a way to sit with that complexity rather than resolve it.

Light and colour function in your images as emotional tools rather than decorative elements. How do you develop a visual language for emotions that are difficult to name?

Light and colour are decisions I make in response to the person and the space rather than something I pre-plan in a rigid way. I'm attentive to how a particular quality of light or a certain colour shifts the emotional weight of an image, and I work with that in the moment.
I'm less interested in colour as theory and more interested in atmosphere. Light and colour allow me to suggest emotional states quietly, without needing to define them or reduce them to language.

Several of your portraits suggest intimacy and trust between you and the subject. How do you build collaboration with the people you photograph?

Time and honesty are important. I try to be clear about why I want to photograph someone and how the image might be used. I also leave space for conversation and silence rather than filling every moment.

I don't see portraiture as something done to someone. It works best when it feels collaborative, when the person being photographed feels seen and respected rather than directed.

Your work often resists clear storytelling and explanation. What do you hope viewers bring into the image themselves?

I hope viewers bring their own experiences and emotional references. I'm not trying to guide them toward a specific narrative or conclusion.
If an image leaves space for uncertainty or reflection, I see that as a strength. I'm more interested in images that linger rather than explain themselves immediately.

How do your long-term personal projects differ from commissioned work, both creatively and emotionally?

Personal projects tend to move more slowly and are driven by curiosity rather than outcomes. They allow me to sit with uncertainty and return to the same questions over time.
Commissioned work has its own energy and clarity, which I enjoy, but personal projects are where I process ideas more quietly and intuitively. The two inform each other, but they feel emotionally different.

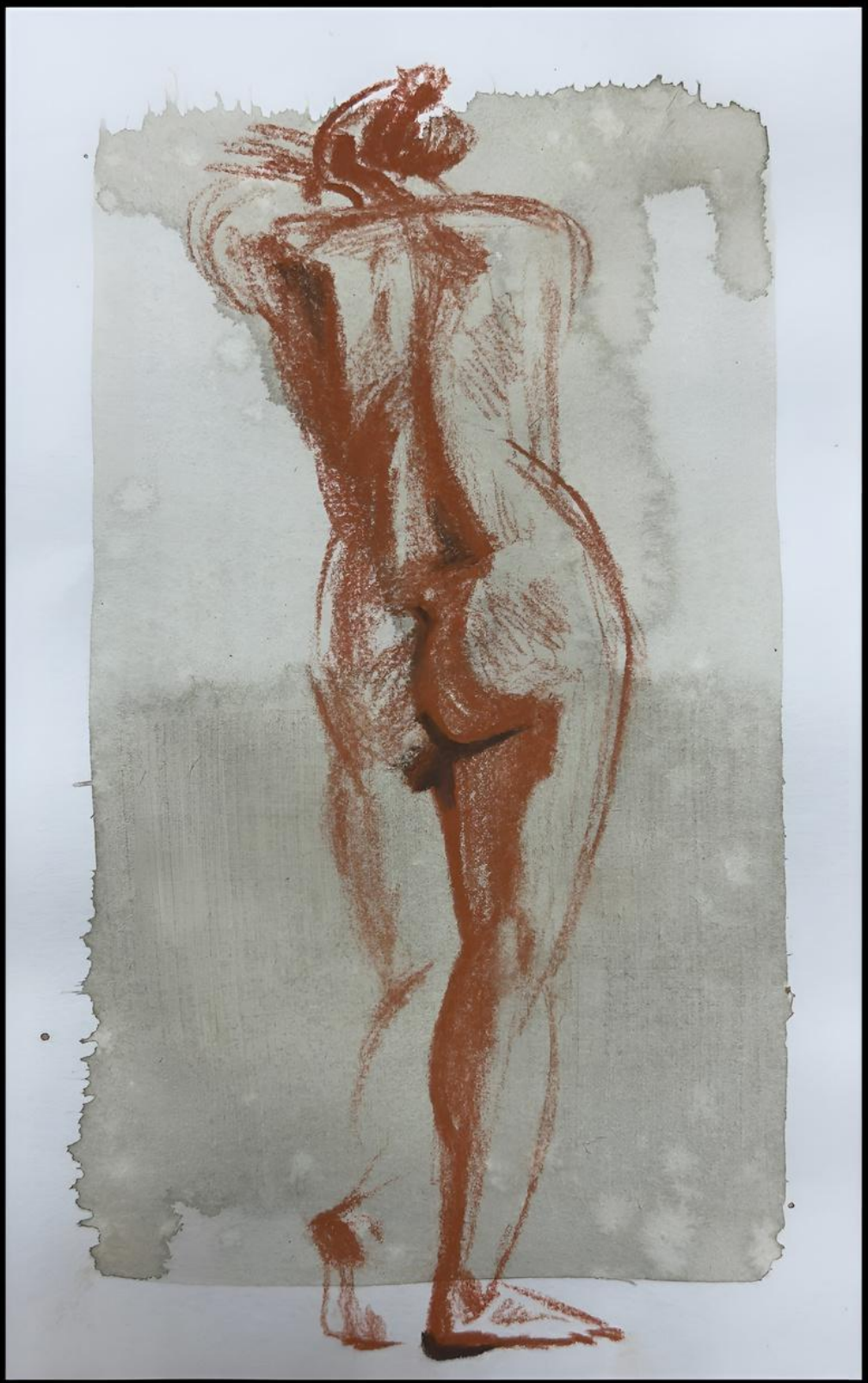
Daniel Chek-Shu Housley | Le Fil | 2023

Taisiia Ananeva
Artist | Sculptor

Professional Profile:
A sculptor working in the fields of fine art, ceramics, and graphic arts. Possesses professional experience in creating sculptures from a variety of materials, including stone, plaster, and bronze.
Education:
* Moscow Central Art School of the Russian Academy of Arts (2017-2024) — A seven-year academic training program specializing in academic sculpture.
* Moscow State Academic Art Institute named after V. I. Surikov of Russian Akademy of Arts (Is currently pursuing education) — A six-year academic training program specializing in academic sculpture.
Professional experience:
• Collaborates with Moscow-based galleries and participates in exhibitions featuring sculpture and graphic works.
• Works at a foundry specializing in the production of monumental sculpture. • Employed as a prop artist in the Russian film industry.
Awards:
Gold Medal of the Russian Academy of Arts “For Academic Excellence” (2024)

Artist Statement
Participation in this particular project will enable me to present my work to a global audience, thereby supporting the further development of my career as an artist.

Taisiia Ananeva | The Reapers | 2022



Taisiia Ananeva | Sketch | 2025

Interview

Dakii

Your works feel like visual diaries filled with symbols, gestures, and repeated marks. Do you see your paintings as a form of recording inner states or experiences over time?

Yes very much so. I see it like visual diaries, but not in chronological sense. Its more about being present at different moments, rather than illustrations of those moments themselves.

You mention that the deeper your work goes, the less it can be explained. At what point do you feel a painting has gone beyond language and becomes complete for you?

For me, the work is always beyond language. I don't try to explain or evaluate it so completion is entirely intuitive.

Many of your compositions appear dense and overflowing, almost resisting empty space. What does this accumulation mean to you emotionally or conceptually?

The density comes from remaining inside an experience until it exhausts itself so empty space would feel like an escape.

Having started with drawing in notebooks as a child, do you feel that your current practice is a continuation of that instinctive scribbling, or has it transformed into something else?

The process feels familiar. But now it carries weight and meaning that weren't present before.

You studied basic painting techniques at a young age but later moved into electronic music. How has your experience with sound and rhythm influenced your visual language?

I didn't consciously think about how music production might influence my painting, but I'm sure it did. It shifted how I understand repetition and trained me to think in terms of rhythm.

There are recurring organic and symbolic forms across your works. Do these symbols carry fixed meanings for you, or do they change from painting to painting?

The forms return because they feel necessary and they're consistent in form, not in meaning.

What do you hope a viewer feels or experiences when standing in front of your work without trying to "understand" it?

I want them to feel that my work is complete, like this is exactly how it's meant to look.

Daniil Poliakov

The series The Last Wall is dedicated to the history of a 66-year-old building in which more than one generation lived and changed over time. Today, only reinforced concrete blocks and bricks remain - and soon they too will be gone, just like many of the people who once lived there. At a certain moment, its fate became inevitable. First, all the surrounding buildings were demolished, and when the turn came for this one, I decided to document it in a before-and-after format. An ordinary story of a panel building and its surroundings is reflected through photography.

Daniil Poliakov | The Last Wall | 2025

Daniil Poliakov | The Last Wall | 2025

Daniil Poliakov | The Last Wall | 2025

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