

VISUAL ART JOURNAL

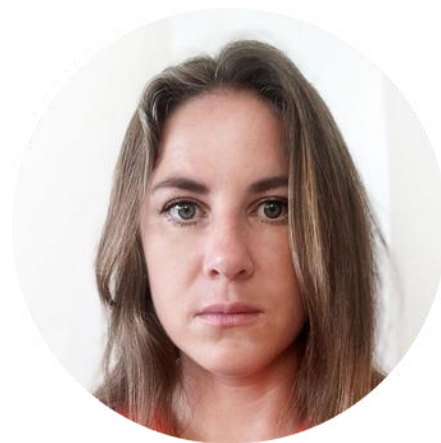


NO. 35

AUGUST 2025



— Intro



Anna Gvozdeva

Curator of
Visual Art Journal

Hello dear reader,

In your hands is Issue #35 of our magazine, and with almost all of summer behind us, I sincerely hope you've spent it just as you wished (whether it was filled with incredible adventures or moments of peace and solitude).

What is color, really? Radiation from a light wave, yet why does it affect us so differently? For some, one color may mean one thing, while for another, it may be something entirely different. This is about how we perceive objects as beautiful or not, how we feel about those colors, and how they relate to our sense of comfort and safety. In this issue, you'll find a rich array of colors, forms, combinations, and variations.

I am sure this magazine will spark new thoughts for reflection and provide inspiration for creating something new. Ahead, as always, you will find over 100 pages of creativity.

Happy reading!

On the Front Cover:
Nastya Artsplash
Untitled
2025

On the Back Cover:
Tito Victoriano
Man on top
2025



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

Tito Victoriano is a self-taught visual artist whose work bridges traditional painting and digital media. Beginning with brushes and canvas, his practice has evolved into a digital exploration of contemporary life, where layered narratives and cultural critique take center stage. His compositions draw inspiration from the bold visual language of Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Motherwell, and Andy Warhol, blending expressive forms with a sharp eye for the present moment.

Victoriano has exhibited both online and in physical spaces, including early career shows and recent exhibitions at the Carnegie Museums and the August Wilson Cultural Center in Pittsburgh. As a former Master Teaching Artist with the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, he also brings a deep commitment to creative learning and community engagement.

Today, Victoriano's work continues to push boundaries, merging analog sensibilities with digital tools to tell stories that resonate across time and place.





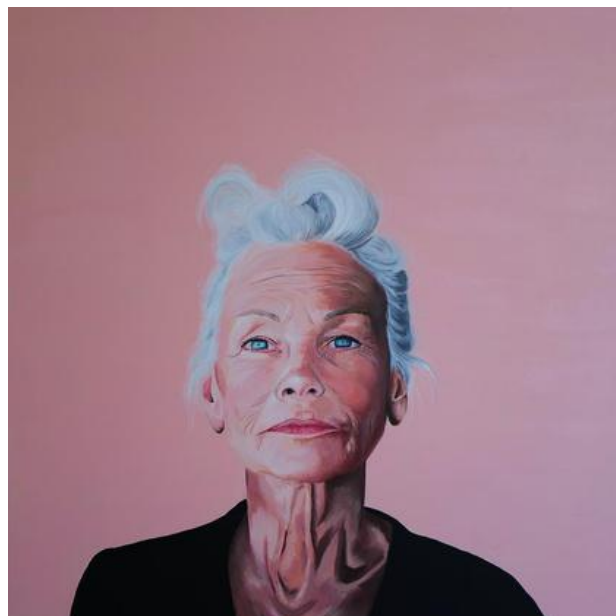
Franshesca (Franshesca Oliveras)

Your portraits radiate strength and vulnerability at once. How do you choose your subjects, and what draws you to them?

I choose people who move me — sometimes in ways I can't explain. There's an instant connection that goes beyond appearances. I'm drawn not just to their faces, but to their movements, their smiles, the way they carry the weight of their lives. It's as if I can see past the surface and step into their stories. These are people with lessons to teach me. At this



Franshesca Oliveras | Lola | 2025



Franshesca Oliveras | Bridget | 2025

stage of my life, I look up to them. I observe, I listen, I learn. Sometimes we don't exchange a single word, yet a silent conversation takes place in my mind. I study them, and I absorb their strength until it becomes part of my work.

You describe painting as your “practice of stillness and belief.” Could you elaborate on what this means to you on a daily level?

As a busy mother of two energetic kids, my days are always full of movement, and stillness is rare. Painting offers me that precious moment of calm—a chance to quiet my mind and connect deeply with my soul. In those moments, I imagine sharing a peaceful coffee with my subject at a small café by the beach, sitting together in silence as I listen and learn from them. It's also a practice of belief, because I never know exactly what will appear on the canvas. I imagine the power they make me feel and trust that I can translate that feeling into color, texture, and expression.

How has your background in architecture and graphic design influenced the way you approach portraiture?

The most valuable lesson I took from both architecture and graphic design is the importance of connection — to feel what I'm creating. Architecture taught me about the flow of space; graphic design taught me about the power of color. Together, they gave me a deep understanding of proportion, rhythm, and negative space, both in 2D and 3D.



Years of working in these disciplines trained my eye to create structure while still embracing instinct. Now, I use those tools to create portraits that are not just likenesses, but meaningful connections between the viewer and the subject. AND THE SPACE.

What does the concept of “The Fire Keeper” mean to you personally?

For me, “The Fire Keeper” is the one who protects the inner flame — courage, wisdom, and identity — even when the world tries to diminish it. It’s inspired by women in my family and community who have kept traditions, stories, and dignity alive, often quietly but with tremendous strength. They are the women I look up to, and they are a reflection of my past, my present, and my future.

Do you see your work as a form of activism in a society that often devalues aging and invisibilizes older women?

Yes. My portraits are acts of visibility. By placing older women at the center — celebrating their beauty, complexity, and presence — I challenge narrow cultural ideas of value and beauty. It’s a quiet activism, but it speaks clearly: You are seen. You matter. Your story must be told. You are the revolution.

Many of your portraits have a dark background that contrasts with radiant facial expressions—what is the symbolic intention behind this aesthetic?

The dark background removes distractions, focusing all attention on the subject. Symbolically, it represents life’s challenges, the uncertainty, and the shadows we all carry. Against that darkness, the illuminated face becomes a beacon of resilience, hope, and inner light. It’s a visual declaration: I am light. I am power. I am here.

What conversations or emotions do you hope your viewers experience when they stand in front of one of your portraits?

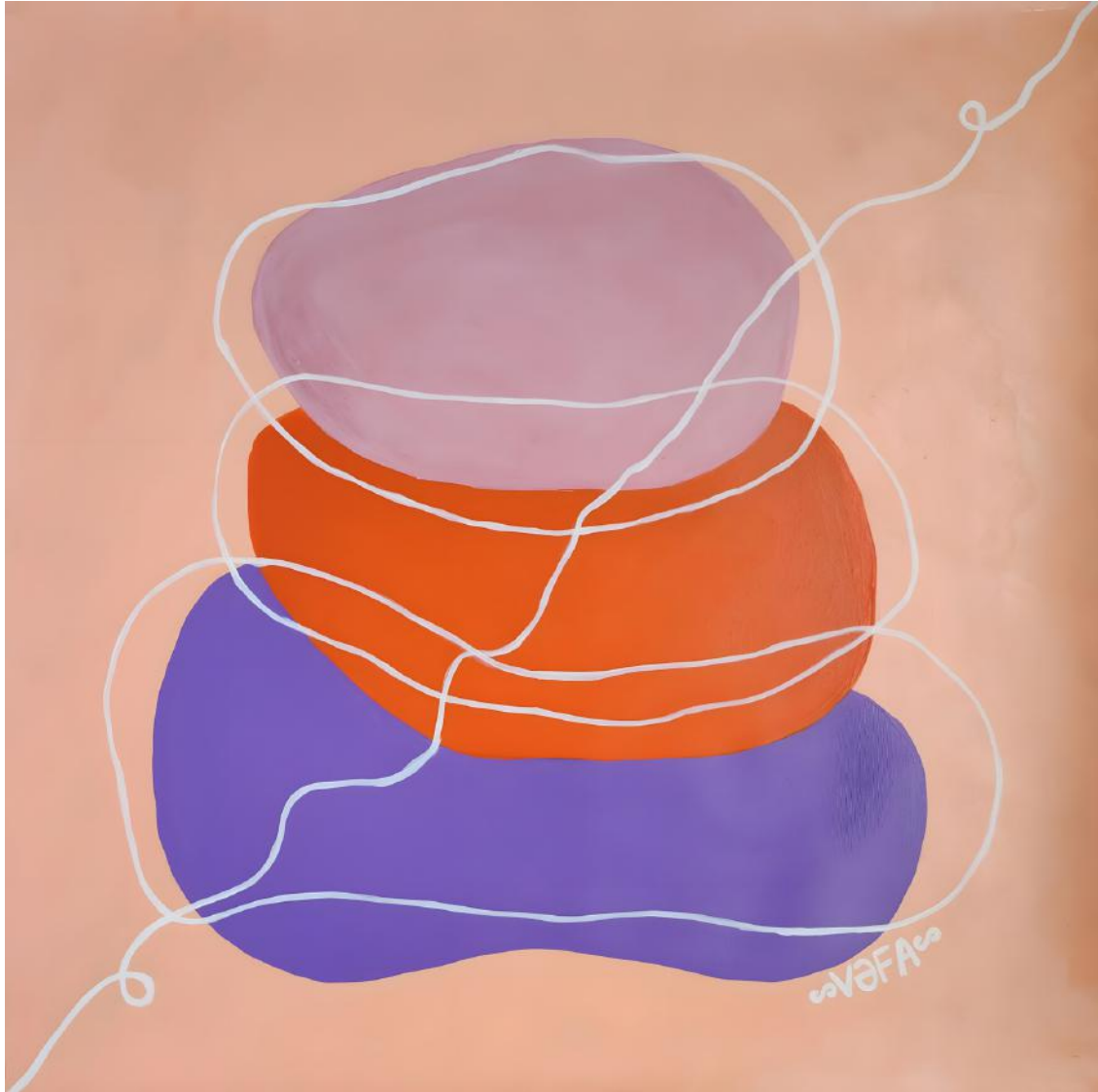
I hope they see beyond the surface and recognize the immense power women hold within—the strength forged through life’s challenges, the resilience that refuses to be diminished, and the fierce spirit that continues to burn brightly. My portraits are a celebration of that inner fire, a reminder that true power often lives in quiet confidence and lived experience. I want the audience to feel that energy, to see what I see: women who carry wisdom, courage, and an unstoppable force that inspires and teaches us all. It’s about honoring their power and inviting others to recognize and embrace their own.



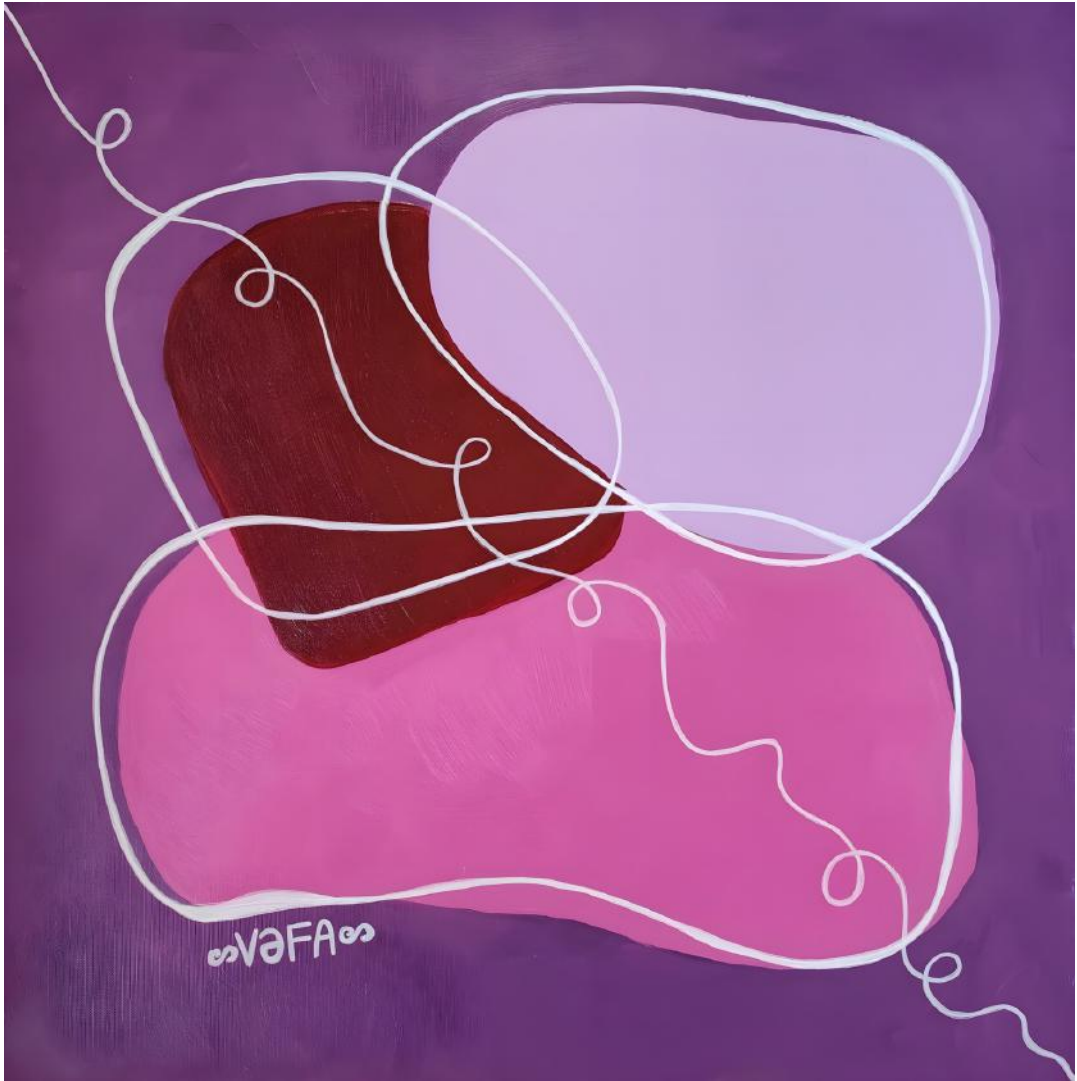
Vafa Majidli is a highly acclaimed Visual Artist based in Baku, Azerbaijan, whose captivating artworks have garnered global recognition and are prized possessions in prestigious private collections across the world. Having received the distinguished "Artist of the Future Award" from the CAC platform, she continues to collaborate with renowned international galleries and piques the interest of art connoisseurs and collectors worldwide: Canada, the USA, Germany, France, Switzerland, Japan, Taiwan, Russia, Turkey, China, Azerbaijan, Poland, Italy, etc. By delving into the complexities of the human psyche and intricacies of inner transformation, Vafa's profound and meaningful creations serve as a mirror to the human experience, reflecting deep emotions and universal truths. With a focus on exploring the depths of the human psyche and inner world, Vafa's dedication to her art is evident in the profound meanings and beauty she conveys through her creations, reflecting her deep passion and commitment to her craft.

Project Statement

I am an observer who wants to understand the universe. In particular, the development of the human soul. There are suggestions that we once had the experience of the soul in the form of a stone. Then our souls were only at the initial stages of development. We were motionless, but our souls needed this experience to develop from time to time to a higher state - human experience. My paintings act as a contemplative dialogue, inviting viewers to reflect on the existential concept that at one point in the vast tapestry of existence, we were akin to stones—bare and unassuming, yet holding within us the boundless potential for consciousness, growth, and profound awareness. This metamorphosis from lifeless matter to sentient beings imbued with depth is a central theme in my work, serving as an evocative reminder of our collective journey through the infinite cycles of life. Each piece resonates with the intricate, interconnected nature of our spiritual narratives, encouraging individuals to explore their unique paths while also recognizing the shared history that unites us all. In this artistic exploration, I employ surrealistic humanoid stones portrayed within minimalist compositions, utilizing these forms to evoke a sense of harmony akin to the principles found in Eastern philosophies, especially the teachings of Dao. This philosophy resonates deeply with me, particularly in illustrating the serene balance that stones exemplify as they rest upon one another in perfect zen-like conditions. Similarly, this state of equilibrium mirrors the conscious journey of the soul as it navigates through its myriad experiences. As I paint, I skillfully depict the subtle, ethereal bodies of these stones with delicate, thin white lines, each serving as an intricate representation of our essence beyond mere physicality. These lines meander through the composition, symbolizing the dynamic, pulsating relationship between Cosmic Energy and Mother Earth, offering a visual reminder of the profound interconnectedness that binds all living forms. Ultimately, my artistic journey conveys a grand celebration of the vibrant journey of the soul, urging viewers to immerse themselves in the mystery and beauty that lie within and around them. Each work is not merely an artistic endeavor but an invitation to recognize and honor the transformative power of existence, reflecting the endless potential that resides within every being as we collectively navigate this extraordinary cosmic experience. Through my art, I aim to cultivate a deeper appreciation for the intricate web of life and the spiritual transformations that shape our souls throughout the ages.



Vafa Majidli | Zen Minimalism. Peachy Calming Happiness



Vafa Majidli | Zen Minimalism. Stones of Purple Nature



Vafa Majidli | Zen Minimalism. Meditation. Stones

— Interview

Shelly Craig

Your art is a vibrant tribute to marine life. What draws you to the underwater world as your primary inspiration?

I grew up landlocked in the Midwest and spent years in healthcare before everything changed on a scuba vacation to Bonaire in the early '90s. This tiny island paradise captured our hearts, and we've called it home ever since. As a scuba diver, I've spent countless hours beneath the surface, surrounded by mesmerizing colors, textures, and the quiet magic of marine life—a world full of wonder and movement that I love capturing through watercolor and ink.

How did your experience as a scuba instructor influence your transition into surface pattern design?

I wanted stylish rashguards that reflected the ocean I loved—and couldn't find any. So I began designing



my own. That spark grew into surface pattern design, a way to merge my underwater experiences with creative expression and bring the sea's colors, moods, and characters to life.

You skillfully combine traditional watercolor with digital techniques. Can you walk us through your creative process from sketch to final design?

I start with loose pencil sketches inspired by sea creatures, corals, or island flora. I paint them in watercolor and often add fine ink details for texture and personality. After scanning at high resolution, I refine and arrange the elements digitally in Photoshop and Illustrator, adjusting color, layout, and repeat. It's a blend of analog spontaneity and digital precision, allowing my designs to come alive on fabric, paper, and more.

The lionfish and seahorse artworks are both full of personality and color. Do you often imagine your sea creatures as characters with their own stories?

Absolutely! The lionfish, with its dramatic fins, is the flamboyant show-off of the reef, while the seahorse feels curious, shy, and gentle. I like to imagine them as part of an underwater cast of characters—each with a unique rhythm and role in the reef's ecosystem.



Shelly Craig | Lionfish



Shelly Craig

Living on the island of Bonaire must offer constant inspiration. How does island life shape your daily creative rhythm?

Bonaire's natural rhythm—gentle breezes, turquoise seas, and still mornings—guides my work. Daily walks by the sea or paddleboarding over the reef keep me connected to the landscape and refill my creative well. The island gives me both the inspiration and the space to create with clarity and intention.

What is your favorite subject to illustrate — fish, corals, plants, or something else entirely?

It's hard to choose, but I'm especially drawn to fish, shells, flamingos, and palm trees. Each fish has its

own shape, palette, and energy; shells hold the story of time in their spirals—nature's jewelry. Flamingos bring playful elegance, and palm trees embody island serenity. Together, they capture the vibrant spirit of the tropics I love to paint.

As a surface designer, what types of products excite you most when you see your patterns applied?

Fabric, athleisure wear, and home décor excite me most. There's something magical about transforming a painting into something wearable or functional—a pillow, rashguard, wall print, or greeting card—that brings art into daily life. Seeing my work add color and joy to someone's space is incredibly fulfilling.

Jessica Lin is a ceramic sculptor originally from O'Fallon, Illinois, now based in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where she is pursuing a BFA in Art Education at Western Michigan University. Her work defies conventional aesthetics through the use of geometric and primitive shapes in a raw, "ugly" way. Lin prioritizes the artistic process, letting the clay lead her and accepting its natural flaws. A painstaking perfectionist by nature, she finds freedom in the unpredictable nature of clay, producing abstract pieces that invite the viewers to question their shape and meaning.

Project Statement

My work as a process-based artist embraces expression and focuses less on traditional function and conceptual meaning. What draws me most to clay is the intimacy of it—the physical back-and-forth with the material. I like to think of it as a dialogue between artist and medium. Regardless of whether the final piece is messy and unrecognizable in the end, the act of creating is liberating and keeps these pieces meaningful to me.

Jessica Lin | Friend | 2025





Zhoulanggu

How did your journey into traditional Chinese hairpin making begin?

From my early childhood, I have been deeply captivated by traditional Chinese culture and its unique aesthetics. This fascination solidified my determination to pursue art throughout my studies and growth. What draws me most to hairpins is twofold: First, despite their compact size, they served as the most dazzling and significant adornment in the hair of Chinese women throughout history. Second, they embrace boundless creative themes—whether depicting flora, fauna, aquatic motifs, or symbolic patterns from tradition. Having gained foundational knowledge of hairpin craftsmanship, I embarked on creating my own pieces. Each design is infused with my personal aesthetic sensibilities, and I aspire to elevate this ancient art form to even greater heights of beauty.

Zhoulanggu | Chinese Peony Hairpin | 2025



Zhoulanggu | Wildflowers Hairpin | 2025

What drew you to techniques like 'Chan Hua' and 'Rong Hua'?

Silk thread serves as the common foundation for both techniques. I'm particularly drawn to its natural, delicate luster. Hairpins crafted using 'chanhua' (wrapped silk flower) and 'ronghua' (velvet flower) techniques possess an embroidery-like beauty, yet exist as three-dimensional artworks to adorn the hair. They elegantly translate the graceful softness of embroidery into wearable sculptural form.

Your hairpins often feature botanical motifs – what do flowers symbolize in your work?

Flowers in hairpins carry rich, multifaceted symbolic meanings, embodying both the beauty of nature and profound layers of human emotion and cultural metaphor.

Blossoms represent the cycle of nature and life force. Wearing floral hairpins expresses an aspiration for perpetual vitality. In ancient China, women often changed hairpin motifs with the seasons—a practice reflecting harmony between humanity and the natural world.

Moreover, different flowers hold distinct cultural connotations:



- Pomegranate blossoms signify “abundant offspring and blessings”
 - Orchids epitomize “the noble integrity of a virtuous scholar”
- These poetic associations infuse hairpin artistry with deeper meaning, transforming each piece into a vessel of cultural wisdom.

How do you balance tradition and innovation in your designs?

I cherish infusing contemporary elements while honoring traditional craftsmanship. Combining diverse techniques within a single hairpin creates a dynamic interplay—a collision and fusion of materials. I frequently integrate botanical elements from different species, deliberately disregarding their natural seasons or growth patterns. When two or more plants converge in a design, they generate unexpected visual poetry—an alchemy of forms that transcends nature’s boundaries.

Can you tell us more about the creative process behind one of your recent hairpins?

When creating any narcissus-themed hairpin, I consciously evoke its Chinese symbolism: elegance and solitary refinement. Thus, I typically refrain from pairing narcissus with other blossoms—though might

introduce a lone butterfly—believing this flower’s beauty needs no floral companions. Such restraint honors the narcissus’ intrinsic spirit.

What emotions or stories do you hope to convey through your pieces?

As an adornment with millennia of history, hairpins served as tokens of pledged affection in ancient China. Within their graceful forms reside timeless narratives of human emotion.

In my creations, I capture the most exquisite blooming moments of diverse flowers to express the unique beauty inherent in every sentiment. All plants deserve admiration—just as every emotion, however fleeting, holds intrinsic worth to be cherished, never suppressed.

You’ve published two books - what was the motivation behind documenting your craft in this way?

While introducing the artistry of hairpin craftsmanship, these works primarily guide readers in practicing traditional Chinese techniques. Through diverse multimedia platforms, I aspire to unveil the beauty of China’s hairpin heritage to broader audiences—making it accessible for appreciation and study. This endeavor holds profound meaning for me.



Bette Ridgeway has exhibited with 107+ museums, universities and galleries, and London Biennale, Embassy of Madagascar, Barcelona International Art Fair and Swiss Art Expo. She is represented by 11 galleries.

Prestigious awards include Michelangelo International Prize, Leonardo DaVinci Prize and Botticelli International Prize. Mayo Clinic and Federal Reserve Bank are among Ridgeway's permanent public placements, in addition to private collections and commissions. Many books and publications have featured her work, among them: Magazine 43, Berlin, Hong Kong, Manila; LandEscape Art Review, London, New York; Contemporary Art Curator Magazine, Dubai. Ridgeway has penned several books about her art and process.

Project Statement

Bette Ridgeway is best known for her large-scale, luminous poured canvases that push the boundaries of light, color and design. Her youth spent in the beautiful Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York and her extensive global travel have informed her colorful palette. For the past two decades, the high desert light of Santa Fe, NM has fueled Ridgeway's art practice.

Her three decades of mentorship by the acclaimed Abstract Expressionist Paul Jenkins set her on her lifetime journey of non-objective painting on large canvas. She explores the interrelation and change of color in various conditions and on a variety of surfaces. Her artistic foundations in line drawing, watercolor, graphic design, and oils gave way to acrylics, which she found to be more versatile for her layering technique. Ridgeway has spent the last 30 years developing her signature technique, called "layering light," in which she uses many layers of thin, transparent acrylics on linen and canvas to produce a fluidity and viscosity similar to traditional watercolor. Delving further, Ridgeway expanded her work into 3D, joining paint and resin to aluminum and steel with sculptures of minimal towers.

Ridgeway depicts movement in her work, sometimes kinetic and full of emotion, sometimes bold and masterful, sometimes languid and tentative. She sees herself as the channel, the work comes through her but it is not hers. It goes out into the world – it has a life of its own.

Bette Ridgeway | Ascendance | 2025





Paolo Lazzarotti

Paolo, born in 1973 near the stunning Cinque Terre, began his photography journey at 19 with a compact film camera given by his father. Self-taught, he focused on landscapes, sunsets, and the power of nature. His passion for sea storms led him to photograph towering waves and rain, feeling awe-struck by nature's strength and beauty. Later, Paolo expanded into female portraiture, capturing sensuality and passion through dynamic, conversational interactions with his models. He avoids static poses, allowing the model's energy to infuse the images. His work reflects both the raw beauty of nature and the deep connection he feels with the human spirit.

Paolo Lazzarotti | Emerging Aphrodite

Angel Rengel | Approach I





— Interview

Esther Wiederhold

Your artworks are striking for their expressive eyes and vibrant colors. What inspires your choice of subjects and color palette?

I am inspired by photos of interesting people, especially women. I search the internet and magazines for strong expressions. I search for stories in the faces of people when I walk through the city. I look into children's eyes and try to feel what they feel. I particularly emphasize the eyes to be large and intense, because they reflect the soul. The colors reflect the expression of the emotions of the depicted person. I work with bright colors because the soul is colorful.

Many of your portraits depict children with powerful emotional presence. What draws you to portray childhood?

I portray children to represent innocence and sensitivity. It is their carefree nature with which they approach life. The children's images are meant to express human dignity, the inherent dignity of every



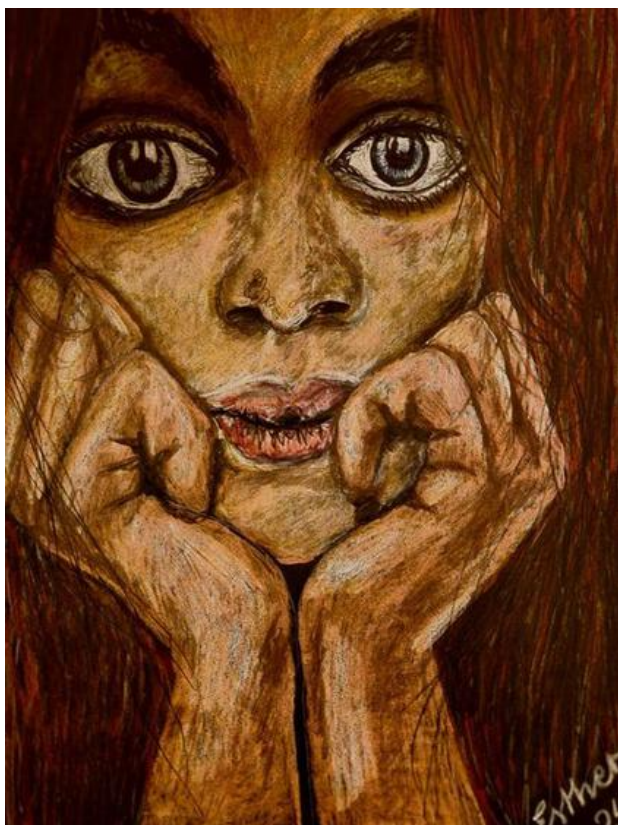
person. A child approaches the world joyfully and innocently at first. Furthermore, I have been working with children for 35 years.

How does your background in education and your teaching experience influence your artistic process?

I studied at the University of Fine Arts in Kassel and have been working as an art teacher for 35 years alongside other subjects that I teach. Art has always been a very big theme in my life, and I have always spent my free time with creativity. I am interested in colors and people. I have been inspired by interesting and strong women and read biographies of female artists. However, personal life circumstances have repeatedly challenged me to immerse myself deeply in my art, which has helped me a lot.

You describe yourself as an outdoor artist. Could you tell us more about your "art trails" and the idea behind presenting your works in outdoor environments?

I have been living in a very small village right by the edge of the forest for over 25 years. I have always been very close to nature through my dogs. I spend about 10 hours a week in the forest. We have set up a small art trail in our village, and I was very inspired to create my paintings for nature. Trees mean a lot to me. When you exhale, your breath passes through the tree and emerges again as oxygen, which you then inhale again. In this way, I am connected to my trees. So I had the idea to pave my world and my forest with



colorful pictures. The tree benefits from my pictures and the pictures benefit from the tree, as the foliage changes throughout the seasons and changes color. The pictures thus always receive new backgrounds. In spring, they appear more cheerful and brighter, in autumn warmer and earthier.

What are the technical steps you take to transform your original artworks into large outdoor pieces on aluminum?

For the outdoor images, I need to photograph my Polychromo drawings and enlarge them. I then have them brushed on aluminum or cast in acrylic. This way, they can hang weatherproof outdoors in selected locations. Even at friends' gardens or carports, my outdoor pictures hang and make the world around me colorful.

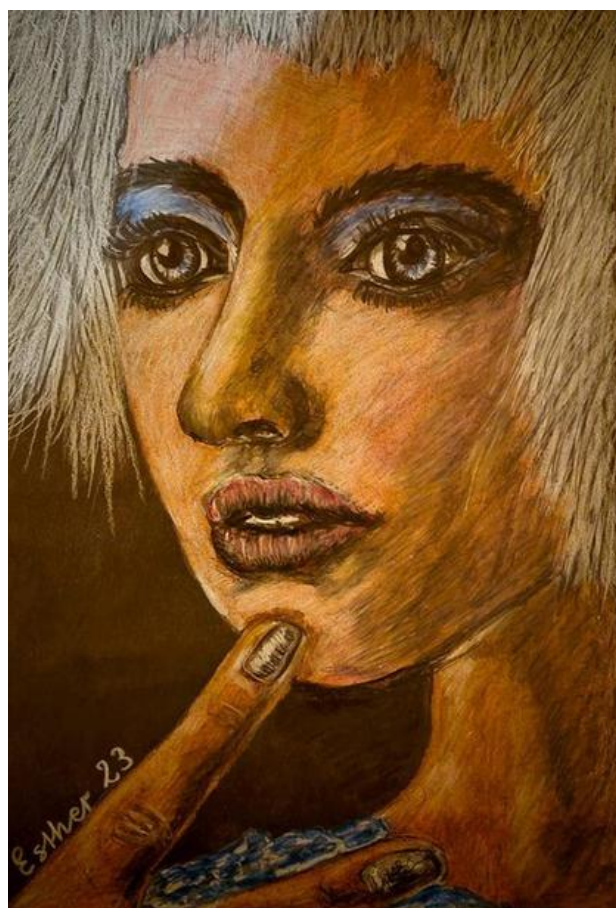
How do people usually respond to seeing art in public spaces compared to galleries or museums?

For my art, I can say that people are pleased. In particular, children react very emotionally with loud calls when they discover one of my colorful pictures among the trees, between bushes and branches. It has something mystical about it. I enchant the world a little bit. I try to create a deeper connection to nature by providing food for thought. All my pictures mean something. I give them names and add quotes or my own words. They are truths about life or suggestions on how to deal with the world, with others, and with

oneself. So, I can say of my art that it evokes emotions. They are different feelings than what a picture on a white wall in a museum can evoke. My paintings are seen by families with children on a walk, by lonely hikers, or even by sad, happy, in-love people. I certainly evoke something completely different each time. But I especially love the children. One cannot equate an artistic experience in the forest with an artistic experience in the museum. The greatest artistic experience remains nature itself.

Do you see a connection between art and nature in your practice?

Nature itself is a work of art that I initially only decorate. When I decide to gift a tree a picture of myself because it is special or has a special place, the picture begins to interact with the tree and they benefit from each other. Throughout the day, there are various reflections of light. The tree and the picture experience the sunrise, the colors of autumn, the dreary November days, and the snow of winter. The picture always appears different. It tells new stories. Over the years that my pictures have been hanging in nature, they have connected themselves with it. I often walk by them during my walks, and now I feel that they have truly become a part of nature. My pictures have also given me something. My world has become colorful and cheerful.



My name is **Alexandrina Sorokovykh (Sanko)**. I am an artist and architect originally from Russia, currently living and working in Buenos Aires. With a background in architecture, I combine spatial design with the creation of visual imagery on canvas. However, painting has always been my primary form of self-expression. It has accompanied me since childhood and gradually took on a deeper meaning. I began participating in group exhibitions and searching for themes I truly wanted to explore.

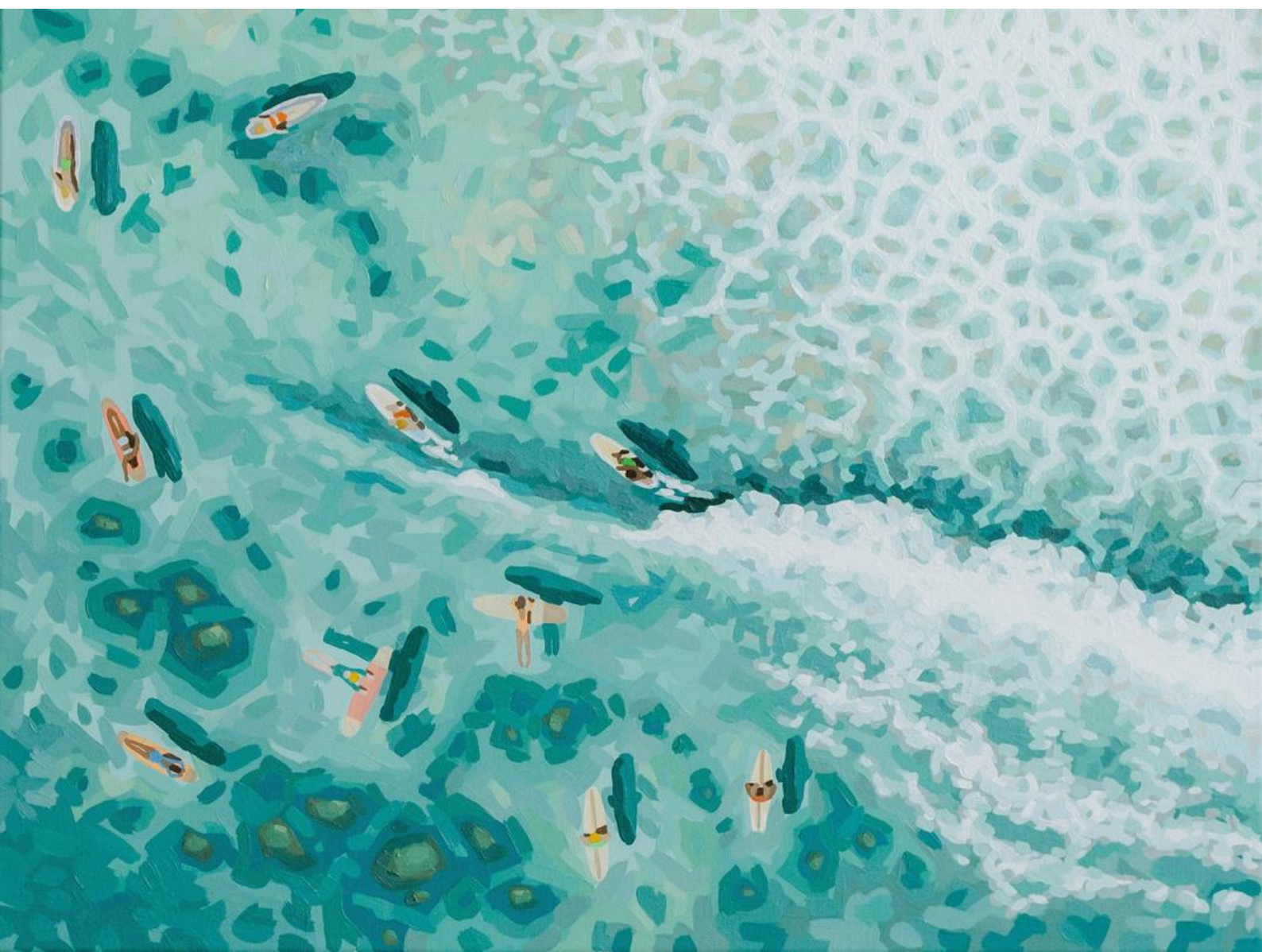
Project Statement

Themes and Ideas In my work, I explore the relationship between humans and nature, focusing especially on the power and beauty of elemental forces such as mountains and the ocean. For me, both mountains and the ocean are symbols of the freedom of the human spirit. They nourish our inner world, help us reconnect with ourselves, and awaken inspiration. Emotionally, my paintings are meant to feel like a breath of fresh air — a reminder of the love for life. They serve as a visual counterbalance to the urban environment, to the concrete jungles where the sense of one's true self is often lost.

Methods and Materials I work with acrylic on canvas, using expressive brushstrokes and pure colors to convey the energy and atmosphere of natural landscapes. Acrylic allows me freedom in color combinations and helps me quickly capture emotion. Recently, I've become interested in aerial perspectives — the view of landscapes from above — and have started integrating this viewpoint into my practice. It reflects the idea that sometimes we need to step back and see things from a distance, offering an even greater sense of freedom and openness.

Context and Influences My vision has been shaped by travel and a deep personal longing for open spaces where a person can feel part of nature and listen to their inner voice.

Goals and Intentions My goal is to transmit the immense energy of natural forces through my paintings. I aim to encapsulate that energy in color and form, and allow the viewer to feel it. I want to create paintings that help people reconnect with themselves and reignite their thirst for life. Through my work, I try to offer space for breath, for dreaming, and for personal interpretation. It is important to me that my paintings go beyond representing a specific landscape — they should evoke an emotional response.



Alexandrina Sorokovykh | On Wave | 2024

— Interview

Ariane Fischer

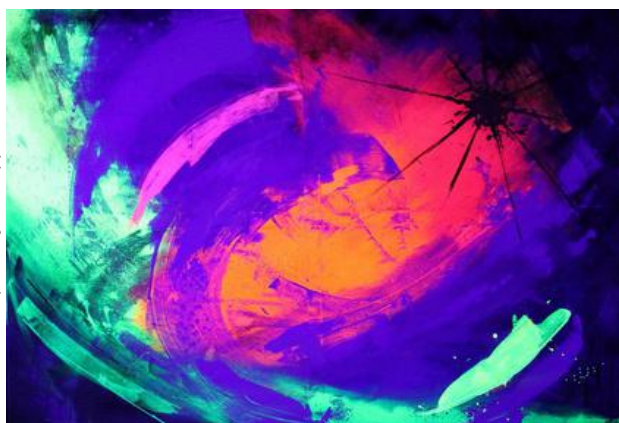
Your works are vibrant and full of energy. What role do color and light play in your creative expression?

The colors I choose fill me with joy and spread good cheer. There are no limits, only bold combinations and a harmonious blend of different materials. The light gives the images additional vibrancy and makes them shine powerfully, emphasizing their strength. Even in dark surroundings, when a black light lamp is shining, the images unfold their full luminosity through the fluorescent colors. They shine like every living thing that should glow, expressing a special energy and vitality.

You describe painting as something that brings joy. How do your emotions and music influence your painting process?

Music is a significant motivator for me and a source of deep emotion in my painting. New places, their sounds, and melodies inspire me in a special way. Often, it is powerful, rhythmic sounds from France, South America, or Africa that fuel my creativity. I love painting in unfamiliar places - the unknown and the beauty of nature fascinate me and give me a sense of well-being. In such moments, inspiration flows naturally, and the painting almost creates itself.

You've been trained in many disciplines—yoga, psychology, NLP, art therapy. How do these areas intersect with your art?



Ariane Fischer | Galaxy Of Happiness



Everything I have learned has deeply interested me and enriched my personality in many ways. These are topics that have developed and shaped me mentally, physically, and creatively. I consciously apply these insights in my work with people, because body, mind, and creativity are inextricably linked. People often try to separate them, but that should not be the case—they belong together. A holistic life is the goal. In Kum Nye, it is often said, “Everything is allowed” – and the same applies to art. Everything complements each other and contributes to a more fulfilling, harmonious life.

What inspired your transition from a business economist to a full-time artist and coach?

I grew up believing that a job in administration offered a certain amount of security in life. That's why I first trained in a commercial profession and studied business administration alongside my work as a controller. I worked for a large airline group in Germany for 23 years. But the work was not very rewarding. It was all about results and deadlines, while people and their feelings hardly played a role and were rather seen as a disruptive factor.

As a sensitive, empathetic, and creative person, this place was not right for me. Over time, illnesses set in, making it clear to me that I had to change something in my life. It was a long journey to admit to myself that something had to be different and to ask the question: If what I've been doing so far no longer fits, what does? What truly fulfills me?

So I began to embark on a journey to find myself. I started with Kum Nye Yoga, which gave me physical strength and energy. I also completed coaching training for personal development and art therapy training. These three paths—physical, mental, and creative—led me to my inner self. My desire was to do something meaningful in life, to help others and show them that it is never too late to make changes. I wanted to convey how important it is to be aware of oneself and others, and that anything is possible. In painting, I found a form of self-therapy and healing. My works reflect that change is possible both internally and externally. I



used to paint small pictures in pink and turquoise, but today I paint large pictures in bright, colorful hues. That's how I changed, too. Anything is possible. This, too, is a process. Today, I have found the confidence within myself that anything is possible.

Many of your paintings use fluorescent paint. What draws you to this medium, and how do you want viewers to experience your art?

The colors in my paintings glow in the dark thanks to their fluorescent tones. Everyone should be allowed to shine. Everyone should have the freedom to live as they truly are. But we often limit ourselves—through the expectations of our parents, family, neighbors, society, our jobs, and much more.

My paintings are an expression of liberation from these conventions, from the shackles we impose on ourselves – the beliefs that keep us from our inner selves. If we allow it, anything is possible. My works show the way to free ourselves and live a free, authentic life.

The vibrant colors radiate vitality, joy, courage, and beauty. Anything is possible. So are my paintings—without restrictions. Viewers can take away from them that anything is possible—if you just have the courage to believe in it.

Can you tell us about a particularly meaningful workshop or community project you've led?

In 2022, I started my own business. At that time, the war in

Ukraine also began, and I didn't want to just stand by and watch, feeling helpless and stunned. That's why I launched the "healing heart" project, which I financed myself. My goal was to give refugee women and their children from Ukraine an opportunity to express themselves creatively. I invited them to join me for painting and crafting sessions at my studio. From my training in art therapy, I know how healing painting can be. The time the women spent with their children at my place was magical. They painted, did crafts, drank juice, and ate cookies. The children laughed again, and the mothers also found joy and lightness. It was a very touching time that warmed my heart deeply.

Feedback from a participant:

Svitlana M. is with Ariane Fischer in Darmstadt

June 19, 2022

Thank you very much, Ariane Fischer, for a wonderful vacation for me and my son. My son painted all evening after this meeting.

Images from the past, captured by Svitlana, a prominent photographer in Ukraine. She was able to take her camera with her when she fled, which enabled her to take these impressive photos.

I am very proud that the project has been revived after several years and is now receiving financial support. It is called "Painting to Arrive." For six months, I worked in a refugee shelter, painting with children from a wide variety of refugee nations.

For me, painting is an active form of meditation. It is important to process experiences, and this does not always have to be done with words. Painting enables quiet healing of body and mind. That is exactly what I appreciate so much about it.

You've exhibited in places like Miami, Venice, Basel, and Barcelona. What has been your most memorable exhibition experience so far?

For me, expometro in Barcelona was the most beautiful idea and the most wonderful feeling. Artists from all over the world came together and became a unique work of art. Each individual received the attention they deserved, and all the works of art were viewed with appreciation. The result was a colorful, harmonious whole, even though not everyone was able to be there in person. It was true unity—everything was allowed to be, everything stood side by side in lively diversity.



Zayd Mian Mushtaq

Kentucky based artist, Zayd Mushtaq, has been creating artwork regarding his cultural identity since his time at Loyola University Chicago. Now as an artist living in the rural south, he continues to create heritage pieces while incorporating elements from his personal life. Many of his compositions are reminiscent of something one might see when looking at illuminated Persian manuscripts, or perhaps Mughal miniature portraits. However, the familiar content of his works is transformed through added visual elements that speak to the present. This juxtaposition between familiar and historic imagery provides a new layer of symbolism throughout Zayd Mushtaq's pieces.

Zayd Mushtaq | The Fisherman's Mirage | 2025





Zayd Mushtaq | Shabakhair | 2024

Zayd Mushtaq | The Pomegranate Grove | 2024



— Interview

Sistermoon Svetlana Didenko

Your work highlights emotional honesty and intuition. What role does spontaneity play in your creative process?

Thank you for your sensitivity..



My works are an expression of an inner impulse that words alone cannot express... as if something greater than words wants to manifest in form, to be discovered and seen by others... and of course this impulse appears spontaneously... when something wants to speak through me...

You mentioned that you don't plan your paintings in advance. What usually prompts you to start a new piece?

All my works begin with an internal emotional charge that demands to be released... it's my dialogue with the world, when there's a strong need to speak... when you simply can't not create...

How did the pseudonym "Sistermoon" come about, and what does it mean to you?

About 20 years ago, a friend called me that... back then I didn't really understand its meaning, but I liked how it sounded and I remembered it... Now I associate it with depth, intuition, and femininity.

Many of your paintings convey deep internal



states. Do you consider art a form of self-healing or emotional release?

Of course, both are powerful impulses for creation... by releasing emotions, the body is freed from the excess accumulated energy, harmonizing our nervous system... that's why I consider any form of self-expression a basic self-regulation mechanism, given to us by nature... but there's a huge field for reflection here, since you used the word art, not creativity... we can endlessly debate what is art and what is not, but for me personally, art is something that serves... it serves the viewer first and foremost, expanding their perception of recognizable forms... so unconscious splashing of madness onto a canvas can hardly be called art unless it's brought to a point of recognizable association... but the fact that such a form of self-expression can be a worthy creative work — that's 100% true.

How do you use color and texture to convey invisible or subtle emotions?

Color is an absolute reflection of what is happening on a subtle level... we may not always be aware of the stages we're going through, but we will always choose the palette that symbolizes them without error... perhaps this is one of the main goals of art — to show the artist a movie about themselves... to bring the inner outward,

which can also be recognized by others, creating a sense of unity and connection...

What materials and techniques do you most often work with and why?

Since I don't plan the work in advance, I have to give the paint the opportunity to reveal itself, give it freedom, the necessary time, and leave space for experimentation... That's why I mostly paint with acrylic, as it doesn't limit the artist, easily takes on different forms, and doesn't require an academic approach or a preliminary sketch like when working with oil... Acrylic helps the painting to emerge naturally...

How do you know when a work is finished — that there's nothing more to express?

There's always something to express) but I finish the work when a hint of objective reality begins to appear in the abstract forms, when a tangible shape of the real world is born by chance... I'm not very fond of techniques where there's nothing but chaotic color mixing... I believe a work should resonate with its viewer, and resonance occurs when the brain recognizes some familiar forms, colors, images...



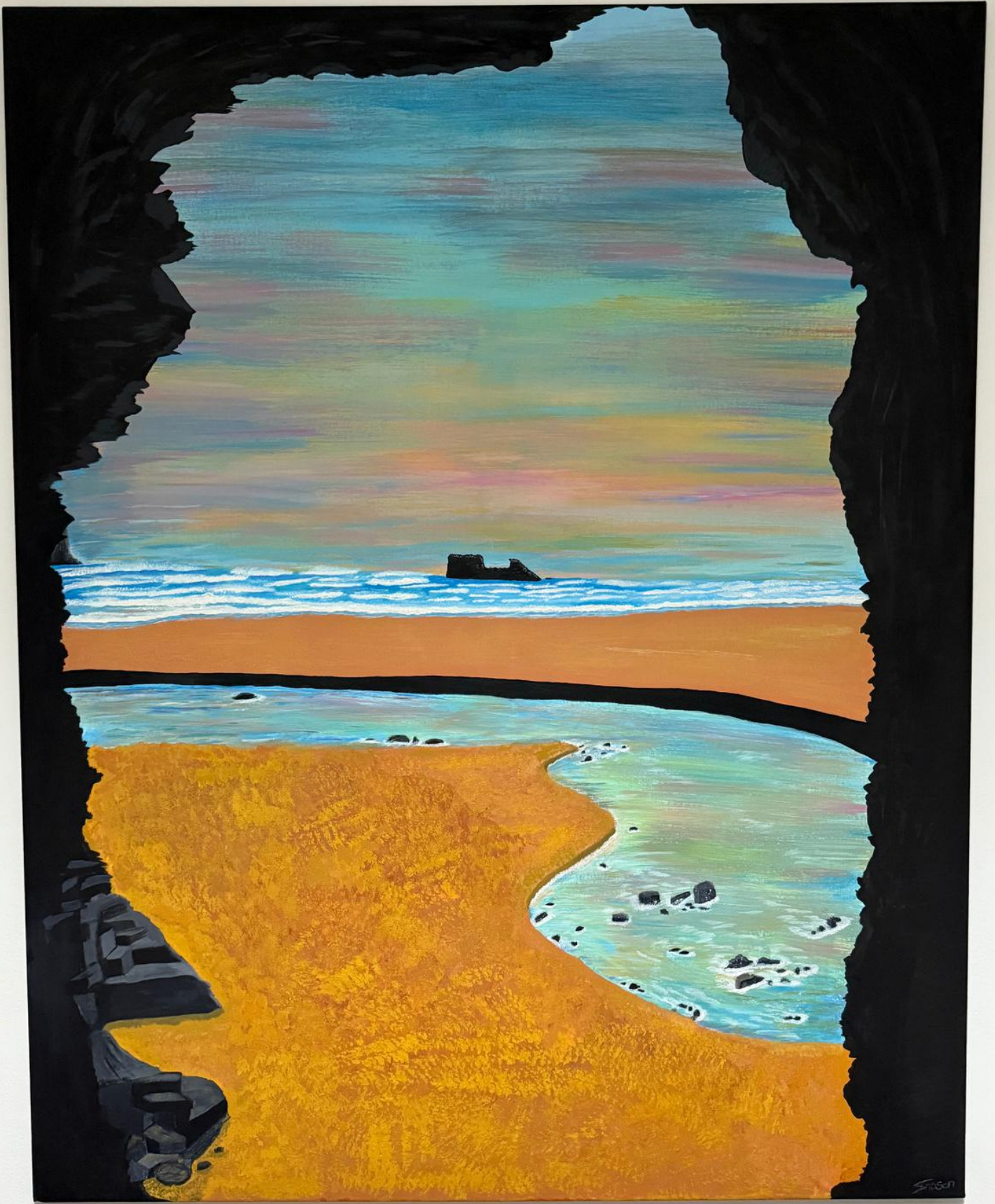
My name is **Shaun Mason**, I'm 30 and iv been painting for over 15 years and I'm am driven by emotion, storytelling, and a deep connection to the creative process. Painting has always been more than just a passion for me it's how I explore my thoughts, experiences, and the world around me. I'm constantly evolving as an artist, always open to experimenting with new ideas and styles. For me, art is about connection—between the work and the viewer, between emotion and form. My goal is to create pieces that not only express who I am, but also resonate with others in a meaningful way.

Project Statement

My painting was from inside a cave in Cornwall, perranporth looking out at Chapel Rock in the uk, it's an amazing beach 4 miles long with gold sand and big waves, iv been going here for 30 years me and my family have never missed a year it's a relaxing part of the uk with plenty of memories I had to paint it the sunset is beautiful and iv tried to capture it in the painting, I finnished it this year 2025 to me it's like a portal to Cornwall a moment in time and a peace I truly love.



Shaun Mason | Portal to Chapel Rock

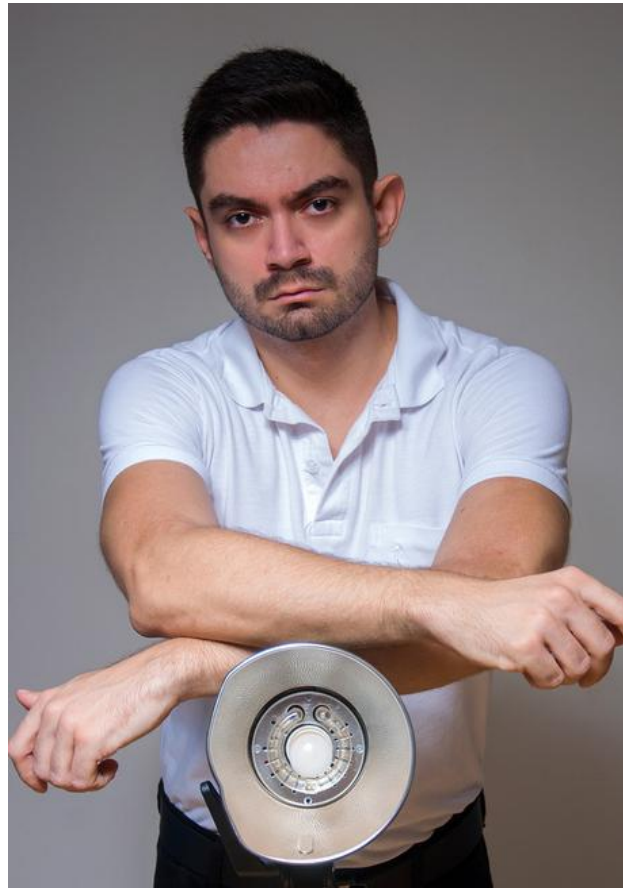


Thiago Carvalho

You've built a career in corporate, fashion, and beauty photography. What felt insufficient there, and what specifically pushed you toward contemporary art this year?

I still love working in these fields. I enjoy making things beautiful, even if in a more standard and commercial way, but at the same time, I felt an artistic impulse within me that was becoming increasingly silenced in order to meet the demands of a very conventional audience. This year, I decided to give voice to this artistic impulse and began to think about freer and more transgressive ways of experimenting with photography, including allowing for autobiographical elements, as I did now. I'm not questioning or saying I'll give up the perfection I've always sought in most of my previous work, but it's liberating to find in art a field where even imperfection can be purposeful, understood, and, more than that, even capable of carrying a message. A possibility I hadn't had before! While I'm excited about the possibility of others identifying with this new approach, my focus with art is to explore what resonates primarily with me, without placing other people's approval as something decisive.

How did your father's experience with kidney stones shape the emotional stakes of this project before your own diagnosis?



The experience with my father, Bartolomeu, made me see kidney stones in a very dramatic way. I even feel like this is reflected in the image I've created. After all, it was one of the reasons for his death and what devastated his quality of life in his final years. I followed much of this journey and was often with my father during appointments, hospitalizations, exams and even the ICU. This also made me familiar with many terms, like creatinine and double J catheter, even before I had to deal with them. So, when I had my first pain crisis and learned the diagnosis, it was frightening, because my history with this problem was worrying. Today, I have a more normalized outlook and have created my own journey in a more rational and optimistic way. Now I understand that kidney stones are common, that there are many ways to prevent them and manage them, and that my father's case became very serious because, unfortunately, he neglected the symptoms for years. If he somehow knows what's going on, he should be happy to see that I anticipated the precautions and even turned it into art.

When did the idea to “re-signify” the stones emerge—before surgery, as you saw the images, or only when the surgeon handed you the fragments?

When I received the stones, shortly afterward, I began to associate them with my idea of pursuing more experimental approaches to photography. Before that, I was only concerned with taking care of my health. After the surgery, I felt my mind was at ease, so I began to think that mastering a creative tool as powerful as photography could give me the chance to not just let that experience end as something painful and stressful, but that I could transform it into something much better.

Why did you choose to combine medical imaging (ultrasound) with your own photograph of the stones rather than present them separately?

The ultrasound images were all I had to visualize the stones, even though I couldn't understand much about them. The image I created, however, is very close to what was going through my mind. This image also reflects a lot of my psychological state at the time. I wanted to superimpose the image I created to create a contrast between what I had concretely and what was going through my head, allowing my mind's perspective to prevail, since it is the raw material of this image and also the source of the feelings that guided this entire experience.

The central image is saturated red—part wound, part cosmos. How did you arrive at this color and what does it signal for you?

The choice of intense red arose along with the idea. Red is dramatic, menacing, reminiscent of blood. When I shine a light on my skin, it seems like everything inside is red. When I talked about the stones, I seemed to automatically imagine them swimming in a red universe inside me. I didn't experience any visible bleeding before the surgery, only a small amount detected in tests. However, the possibility of more intense bleeding was imminent. After the surgery, my urine was very red, and some fragments of the stones only came out after the procedure, so at some point, I had fragments of the stones swimming in blood inside me. So, red definitely connects with this experience in several ways. To achieve this color, I froze the stones in a portion of strawberry juice and later, during editing, I made adjustments to make the color even more intense and dark.

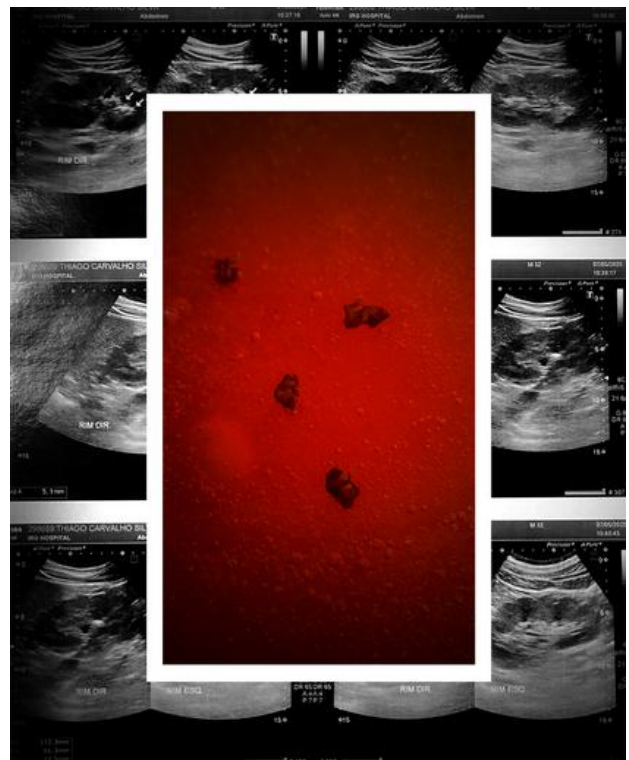
Can you walk us through the technical process: capturing the stones (lighting, scale/macro), digitizing the exams, compositing, and post-production decisions?

I was working with extremely small elements. The stones were no more than half a centimeter. I decided to use two smartphones to photograph, one for lighting and the other for capturing. I felt this would give me more mobility when dealing with something tiny. I tried using the camera's macro mode, but the image generated in this format on my phone is smaller, and I wanted a larger image for more editing possibilities. So, I started using the camera's zoom in PRO mode to get closer to the stones and try to capture their shapes. I opted for a slightly underexposed image, both to be able to use a low ISO and maintain a satisfactory level of definition, and also to maintain the intensity of the strawberry juice's red color. I took the shots very improvisely, on my kitchen table. As I mentioned before, I was looking for freer ways to practice photography and wanted to prove to myself that I don't need a large, organized structure to create something interesting. The idea of placing the ultrasound images in the background only came to me in post-production. I felt they would better contextualize my image and add more narrative depth to it. I made adjustments to the white color so that the white edge of my photo blended with the white edges of the ultrasound images, forming this sort of grid that leads to the center of

everything, where the red explodes and the stones are. Perhaps it's only in the way the images are arranged and how they appear aligned, guided by proportional white lines, that my more commercial side still shines through. It's as if, in some way, I still want to see things well-organized.

What role did chance play—unexpected textures, artifacts from the scans, or imperfections you chose to keep?

I come from segments of photography where having control over everything is very important and I believe that I will still make use of this control in many other artistic projects to come, but, in this work specifically, I was portraying a moment in which I lost a bit of control over things, so it didn't make sense for me to portray this in a very controlled way. Early on, I accepted that I couldn't define the positioning of the stones, as it was impossible to put the juice in the freezer without them moving. I ended up liking the fact that one of them was more in the background, blurry; I think it gave the image a more three-dimensional feel. After finishing the photo, I felt a bit strange about its definition; because I come from a background where excellent definition is almost always the norm. I almost decided to retake the image with my work camera to try to achieve even higher resolution, but I remembered that this new approach isn't about perfection, but rather making sense. That photo was meant to represent my thoughts, and I don't think in high definition. Furthermore, since I decided to superimpose it on the ultrasound images, which are quite abstract, something that wasn't so sharp would have been more harmonious. The small bubbles came out exactly as I wanted; they create a feeling of fluidity, as if the liquid were moving, guiding the stones through my body toward the exit. Interestingly, a few days after I took this image, I naturally expelled a stone. I have a very mystical view of life, and I felt that expressing this situation through art may have sent a message to my body to also expel another stone!



Thiago Carvalho | The Stones | Carried | 2025

Egor Ovchinnikov

Since childhood I've been drawn to history, mythology, and dreams—interests that soon began shaping my worldview. I was always adrift in fantasies, creating my own worlds and spending a lot of time in them. At some point I wanted to see all of this in the physical world, which led me first to drawing and later to painting. I began swinging from one extreme to another, focusing solely on one sphere of interest at a time. It gave me no peace, leaving me with the feeling that I couldn't find myself. Many people live with this sense of being lost. Philosophy helped me overcome it. In searching for myself, I moved closer to harmony and gathered all my interests together. But I couldn't find a suitable place for myself within the existing art field—it felt too constricting. So I created my own direction in art, which became Invisionism. In everyday life I strive for quiet and contemplation, to be myself and reflect that in my paintings. I bring together personal experience and timeless themes. Today I continue to explore myself and to help others do the same, developing my own artistic language.

Artist Statement

Have you ever wondered who you are? Not your name, not your job, not what others say about you—but who you are. Perhaps you are the voice that speaks within, or a set of unique childhood traumas? My art is a path to self-knowledge and a way to help others find themselves. I don't believe in Truth as something absolute. Truth is the ultimate point of agreement within a system of interpretations. Truth is what has temporarily settled but can always be rethought. Truth is a fiction we believe in long enough for it to begin to operate as reality. If there's no hope for objective knowledge, if there's no trust in authorities, dogmas, and Truth, what remains to think about? The particular, the unrepeatable uniqueness. The person.

Who am I? Since childhood I've been both tormented and preoccupied by nightmares. They frightened and attracted me at the same time. Like any child, rummaging through my dreams, I started to embellish things. But at some point the boundary between dream, fantasy, and personal memory began to blur. I stopped being sure whether certain events had actually happened to me or whether I invented them, absorbed them from elsewhere. It's like rewriting a hard drive—your consciousness is formatted and records something new. I don't understand how anyone can be entirely certain about some events from their past. I always dreamed of traveling consciously through my dreams, but I never managed to. In my art I want to fulfill that dream. I strive to immerse the viewer in the sensation of a dream-state and into my consciousness. For me, the dream is not random fragments drawn from life or the archetypes of the unconscious, but an analytic approach with its own rules. Following this path, I created a new direction—Invisionism—in which I play with the boundaries of form: sometimes emphasizing them, sometimes dissolving them to penetrate into the depths of form. My paintings are symbolically dense; I use semiotic signs and work with myths. And all of this is in order to understand myself and to help people embark on the same path.

Egor Ovchinnikov | Ark





— Interview

Kelly Lu

What inspired the title “The Quiet Gaze”? What does “quiet” mean in your artistic vocabulary?



Kelly Lu | Under Arches



Kelly Lu | Stop

For me, “quiet” is not about silence in the literal sense, but about a kind of attentive stillness — a space where observation happens without urgency, where the viewer lingers and absorbs what might otherwise be overlooked. The “gaze” is active, from both my perspective and the audience’s, yet it moves gently, without imposing. The title reflects the way I like to approach both life and art: patiently, and with an openness to subtlety.

In the photo “Under Arches”, the lone figure seems to blend into the architecture. Was this intentional? What message were you aiming to convey?

Yes, it was intentional. I wanted the view of the figure’s back to feel fully integrated into the frame, creating a layered experience where the audience is observing while the figure also observes. The photo was taken in Oxford University’s cathedral. The idea is about the quiet dialogue between humans and the environments they are in, and how we leave traces of ourselves in the places we pass through — even when we feel invisible. And when I say “under arches,” it’s not only about a single kind of arch; it’s also a metaphor for the different thresholds, passages, and frames we move through in life.

Your work often captures fleeting, unnoticed moments. How do you choose which moments are worth capturing?

I follow a kind of instinct that’s hard to put into words. It’s less about seeking “big” moments and more about sensing a shift — something in the air, a movement, a shadow, a pause in someone’s step. I try to stay open to moments that could vanish if I looked away for even a second, because those brief, fragile instants often construct the uniqueness of our lives.

Light and shadow seem to play a key role in your



compositions. How do you use them to express emotion or narrative?

I enjoy the idea that nothing is only about black and white. The contrast brings a sense of emphasis, but that doesn't mean what isn't in the light is any less important. Often, I'm searching for a moment where light and shadow collapse into each other — where the boundary blurs. That inbetween space feels emotionally rich, because it mirrors the way most truths live in shades, not absolutes.

How does your background in screenwriting and film influence the way you frame your photographs?

Screenwriting taught me to hint at the before and after of a story. Film trained my eye to frame the world with intention, even when I'm working with a single still image. When I photograph, I'm always looking to tell the story behind the image, and to discover what kinds of narratives and emotions can be held — and received — by a single frame.

Do you approach photography more like a writer

or like a director? Or something entirely different?

I approach photography more from a writer's perspective, but with a director's habits. As I've shared in other answers, I tend to tell stories through my lens that invite empathy. The visual elements I choose are an unspoken way of leaving blanks — hints that guide viewers while allowing them to fill in their own understanding. It's like offering the key words in a narrative and letting the audience write the rest. In that sense, the act of selecting those elements is the writer in me, while shaping them into intentional visual cues is the director's touch.

You describe yourself as working across disciplines. How do photography, writing, and film feed into each other in your practice?

They're different languages, but they speak to the same obsession: storytelling. Writing helps me clarify what I'm feeling; film helps me choreograph space and time; photography freezes a moment in its purest form. Moving between them keeps me from getting too comfortable in any one medium and reminds me that every story can be told in more than one way.

Teti (b. 1986, Minsk, Belarus) is an international interdisciplinary artist. Rethinking contemporary painting in the context of today, artist forms his language which based on a dialogue of aesthetic balance, multidimensionality of meaning and the fragile issues of our time. Since 2015 she is Ambassador International / laureate of l'Institut Européen des Arts Contemporains (IEDAC, France) and member of l'Académie Européenne des Arts - France (AEAF, France). Her artworks have been publishing in Aesthetica Magazine (UK), The Holy Art Magazine (UK), Contemporary Art Magazine (France, 2019), Artqol Magazine (issue 9, May), Artist Portfolio Magazine (online, 2015, US) and international artbooks "101 Top Fines Artists of Our Day" (Germany, vol. 2017-2018), reference book "Himmelblau" (Germany, 2016) and "International Contemporary Artists vol. XI" (2016, US, NY). Teti is winner of international project such as: Institut Européen des Arts Contemporains, Prix du Merite Artistique pour avoir contribue au rayonnement de l'Art a l'échelle Européenne (2015, médaille, France), Luxembourg Art Prize (certificate of artistic achievement, 2023), Prix "Revelation" du Salon d'Art Plastique "Arbustes" (2015, France), "Artweek in the World" (2014-2016, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Venice and London).

Teti | Out of nowhere | 2020



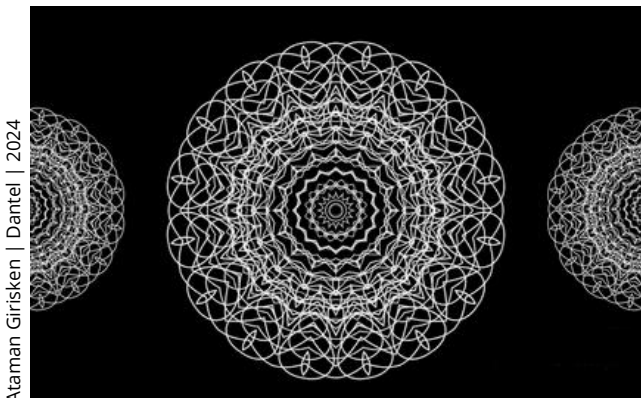


Teti | Falling out of the void | 2020

Ataman Girisken

Your academic background is in computer science and engineering. How did this technical foundation influence your transition into the world of generative and interactive art?

My background in computer science gave me the tools to see code not just as logic, but as a medium. Algorithms, once abstract problem-solving mechanisms, became a language for creating organic systems, visuals, and experiences. This technical lens allows me to approach generative art structurally—thinking in terms of systems, feedback loops, and emergence—while also leaving space for unpredictability and emotion to surface through the code. This foundation also gives me the confidence to experiment deeply, knowing I can navigate both the technical challenges and artistic possibilities.



Ataman Girisken | Dantel | 2024



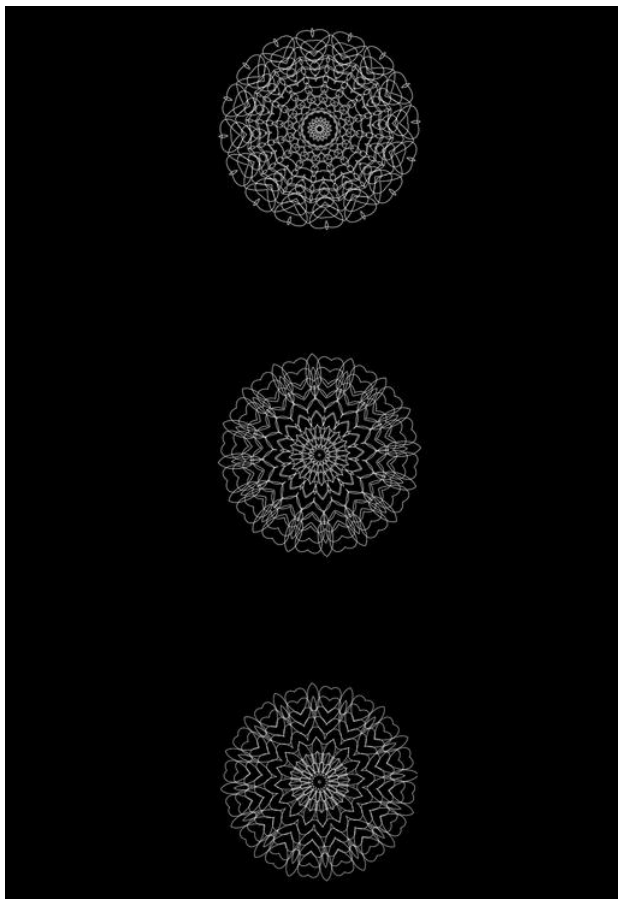
What inspired you to create Dantel, and how did the metaphor of lace emerge as a central theme in your work?

Dantel was born out of a desire to connect ancestral memory with digital aesthetics. Lace, or “dantel” in Turkish, is something I associate with my grandmother’s home—delicate, handmade, and filled with time. I became fascinated by its algorithmic nature: the repetitive patterns, the symmetry, the negative space. Its structure reminded me almost of the binary code—like the 0’s and 1’s that form the foundation of how computers work. This made lace a perfect metaphor for bridging tradition with contemporary generative systems.

You describe Dantel as a dialogue between memory and mathematics. Could you elaborate on how personal or collective memories are encoded into your generative systems?

I think of memory as pattern—sometimes repetitive, sometimes fragmented. In Dantel, I use techniques that mirror these traits. The rules behind the visuals are based on rhythms I associate with cultural rituals, weaving structures, and the repetitive precision found in traditional craft.

By drawing inspiration from inherited cultural forms and natural structures, I bring together the digital and the ancestral. These encoded references act as subtle triggers—viewers often project their own associations and memories onto the work. That creates a deeply personal experience, yet one that also speaks to a shared, collective memory. Each viewer brings their own associations to the work, making the experience personal, while the underlying cultural elements allow for a connection to shared memory.



The visuals in Dantel are minimal yet deeply intricate. How do you balance mathematical precision with emotional depth in your work?

I aim for restraint in form but richness in motion. The mathematical systems give me control over structure, but I'm constantly looking for ways to break symmetry or introduce organic variation. Emotional depth emerges when the visuals feel alive—not just technically precise but breathing, trembling, evolving. That tension between order and chaos is where the work feels most human.

What role does performance (dance, theater) play in your creative process, especially when integrating your generative visuals into live settings?

Performance transforms the digital work from an object into an event. I'm drawn to the immediacy and vulnerability of the body in space. Collaborating with dancers and performers allows both the visuals and the performers to respond to each other in real time, creating a feedback loop between human movement and generative behavior.

I often try to ground the visuals through a specific, embodied moment—where the code doesn't just react, but resonates with the performer. This moment of integration elevates the work: it's no longer just about what's seen or moved, but about how deeply

the two forms—digital and physical—can listen to each other. The success of such collaborations depends on a shared sensitivity, a rhythm of mutual adaptation. When that harmony is achieved, the work gains its own rhythm and presence.

Your installations have been exhibited internationally—from London to Istanbul, Vienna to Athens. How do different audiences respond to your digital work? Have any reactions surprised you?

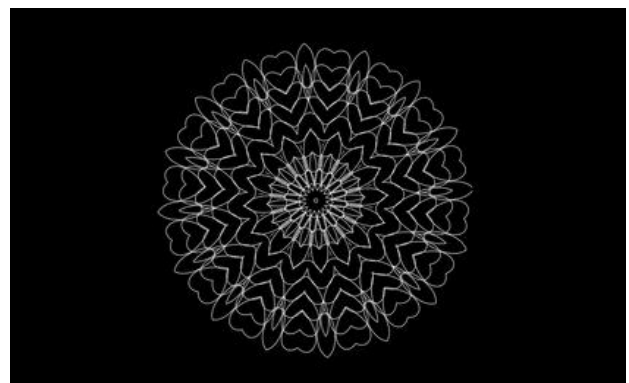
Audience responses often reflect cultural nuances—some viewers approach the work with analytical curiosity, trying to understand the system behind it, while others are drawn to its emotional or meditative qualities. What consistently surprises me is how digital visuals, even when abstract or minimal, can evoke such visceral emotions.

One person once said, "I didn't know what those moving lines were, but they made me want to cry." That kind of reaction stays with me. It reminded me that abstraction doesn't limit emotional depth; in fact, it can open up space for deeply personal interpretations. When viewers project their own memories or emotions onto the work, it becomes a shared, silent conversation—one that transcends language, culture, or even understanding.

Do you approach your coding process as a form of artistic expression in itself, or is it purely a tool?

For me, coding is both medium and method. It's where the conceptual framework and aesthetic intuition meet. I write and rewrite systems not just to make things "work," but to make them "feel right." There's a poetics to the way the code unfolds—the tension between control and unpredictability.

I often work through trial and error, allowing the process itself to guide the outcome. Sometimes, it's not until I break something or take a wrong turn that an unexpected visual or behavior emerges—something I couldn't have planned. In that sense, coding becomes a collaborator. It's not just a tool; it's a partner in the creative process.



Jane K Williams

From a young age, I was captivated by the magic which exists beyond the mundane, creating fantastical worlds through drawing, painting, and making. This natural inclination led me to pursue a career in art, culminating in an honours degree in Fine Art and Textiles from Goldsmiths' College, London. Here, I honed my skills in translating otherworldly visions into richly textured figurative works using experimental machine embroidery techniques. Life took a profound turn when I lost my mother, prompting a deep exploration of existence and belonging. This quest led me to wander through southern Europe, living in seaside towns and mountain villages. I sold my drawings and handcrafted jewellery in local markets, along with roasted chestnuts and foraged mushrooms. My journey revealed my innate affinity for wandering and living in harmony with nature, camping in farm huts, washing in rivers, creating shelters on the beach, and bathing in the sea. Eventually, my love for wild places brought me to the West coast of Ireland. Here, nestled between mountains and sea, I found a place to call home where I raised my two daughters. I continue to immerse myself in the landscape, swimming year-round in the ocean and painting every day in my garden studio. My artistic journey is driven by a desire to make a difference in the world. My work has the power to bring to offer a quiet place of reflection to inspire a deep appreciation for the miracles that are constantly present in our lives. In this place of silence transformation can take place.

Project Statement

Treasure - Jane K Williams 2025

How can I know when a seed is about to come to life in spring time? My mind cannot. But my heart hears it's song from under the dark earth as it prepares to awaken.

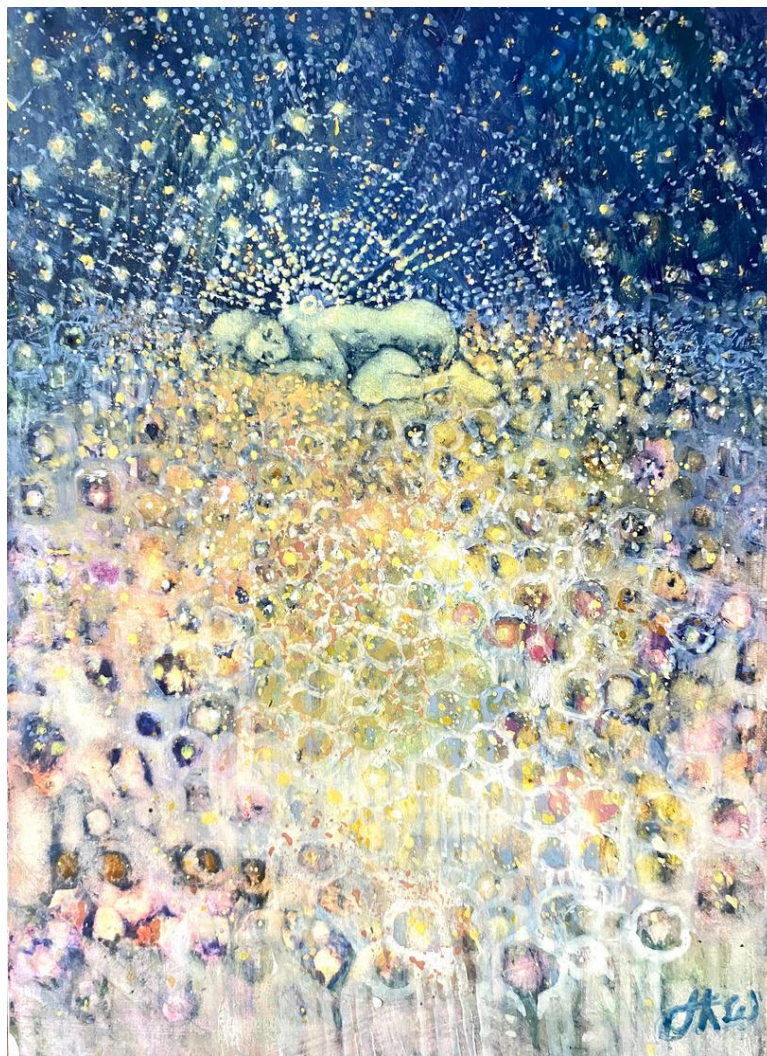
In this latest collection of paintings I explore my experience of resting my head down to my heart and into the deepest home-place within myself. I find a place where I can disconnect the mind for a while and enter the space of my truest nature. It is a place of quiet where I can breathe and 'be'. I find there are no limitations, borders, or judgement, no separation. All are interrelated. There is no beginning and no end. The heart does not recognise the difference between human and non-human. All are honoured equally.

My work delves into the possibility of connecting to the natural world on this deeper level using the 'knowing' of the heart: I can know the route of a river and sense the freshness of her water on my skin but my heart can revel in the mysterious stories each drop gathers on her travels through time.

As I walk through a hillside of meadow flowers I inhale the scent, I breathe it deep into my heart until my feet lift off the ground and I am transported back in time to a sacred paradise.

Viewed from the perspective of the heart, we return to the place of wonder that we know so well in childhood. Is this perhaps the treasure we are seeking in our lives?

Some of these paintings which were created in my studio are in response to the sensation of awe and wonder that I feel when I connect with the heart dimension during my meditation practice. Some were a more direct response to the natural environment, expressing the joining and communication with the earth through the heart. Whatever the subject, I work in an intuitive way which, as I add and subtract layers of colour, I am intrigued as to the nature of the image that reveals itself. The painting grows and changes with each layer until finally revealing itself in its final form. The intimate scale of my work demands the viewer to move in close. It is an invitation to take a moment of introspection away from the busyness of the mind and see from the perspective of the spacious heart.



Jane K Williams | My song joins the song of a million beings | 2025



Whispers in Aria: A Review of Poetic Resistance at the Margins

by Anna Gvozdeva



Curated by HanYue, *Whispers in Aria* is a delicate, resonant group exhibition that brings together emerging voices in contemporary Chinese art, set against the conceptual backdrop of the 2026 Venice Biennale theme "In Minor Keys." Held from August 1–3, 2025, at 17 Rue Chapon, 75003 Paris, France, the exhibition is presented as a curatorial response rather than a mere collection. It stages a quiet rebellion—a theatre of muted gestures and unresolved emotions, where the whisper carries the weight of resistance.

The participating artists are Yifan Li, Xiaoze Zhang, Mu Tan, Lin Ye, Jialin Wu, Cheng Xie, Xiang Li, Aini (Ellie) Zhang, and Qinglai Chunqi.

Yifan Li's immersive installations explore memory and spatial narratives by reusing architectural materials to evoke lingering emotions within contemporary and historical contexts. Xiaoze Zhang's mixed-media work blurs boundaries between painting, animation, and sculpture, creating fragmented dreamscapes that explore perception and unresolved emotional states.

Mu Tan's practice centers on psychological and emotional experiences of youth, using digital art to foster healing and reflection across generations.

Lin Ye investigates museography and transmedia storytelling, creating immersive environments that probe death, memory, and identity through sensory and conceptual layers.

Jialin Wu constructs speculative digital installations that challenge institutional narratives and explore ecological and ontological transformation.



Xiaoze Zhang | Desiccant vs. Rian

Cheng Xie's video and mixed-media work meditate on emotional exhaustion and the limits of empathy within contemporary digital and cultural structures.

Xiang Li composes multisensory works from natural materials, invoking a deep reconnection between body, earth, and instinct through tactile, scent, and visual elements.

Aini (Ellie) Zhang's paintings dwell in existential introspection, translating fleeting emotional moments into intimate, tension-filled visual narratives.

Qinglai Chunqi contributes a poetic voice of subtle resistance, weaving soft yet resolute gestures into the collective dialogue of the exhibition.

At the heart of the show are works by London-based artists Xiaoze Zhang and Aini Zhang, whose contrasting yet complementary practices invite viewers into spaces where silence resonates louder than words.

Together, these works embody the exhibition's curatorial ethos: to reclaim the minor, the quiet, the peripheral. HanYue's thoughtful staging avoids spectacle, favoring nuance and emotional texture. Her background in cross-cultural curating is evident in the exhibition's fluency across geographies and sensibilities, while the spatial arrangement invites reflection rather than consumption.



Whispers in Aria does not shout—it listens. It creates a space where absence is presence, and where fragility is rendered not as weakness but as depth. In doing so, it not only echoes the Biennale's theme but extends it—offering a resonant platform for those who speak in subtler tones.

Curator: HanYue

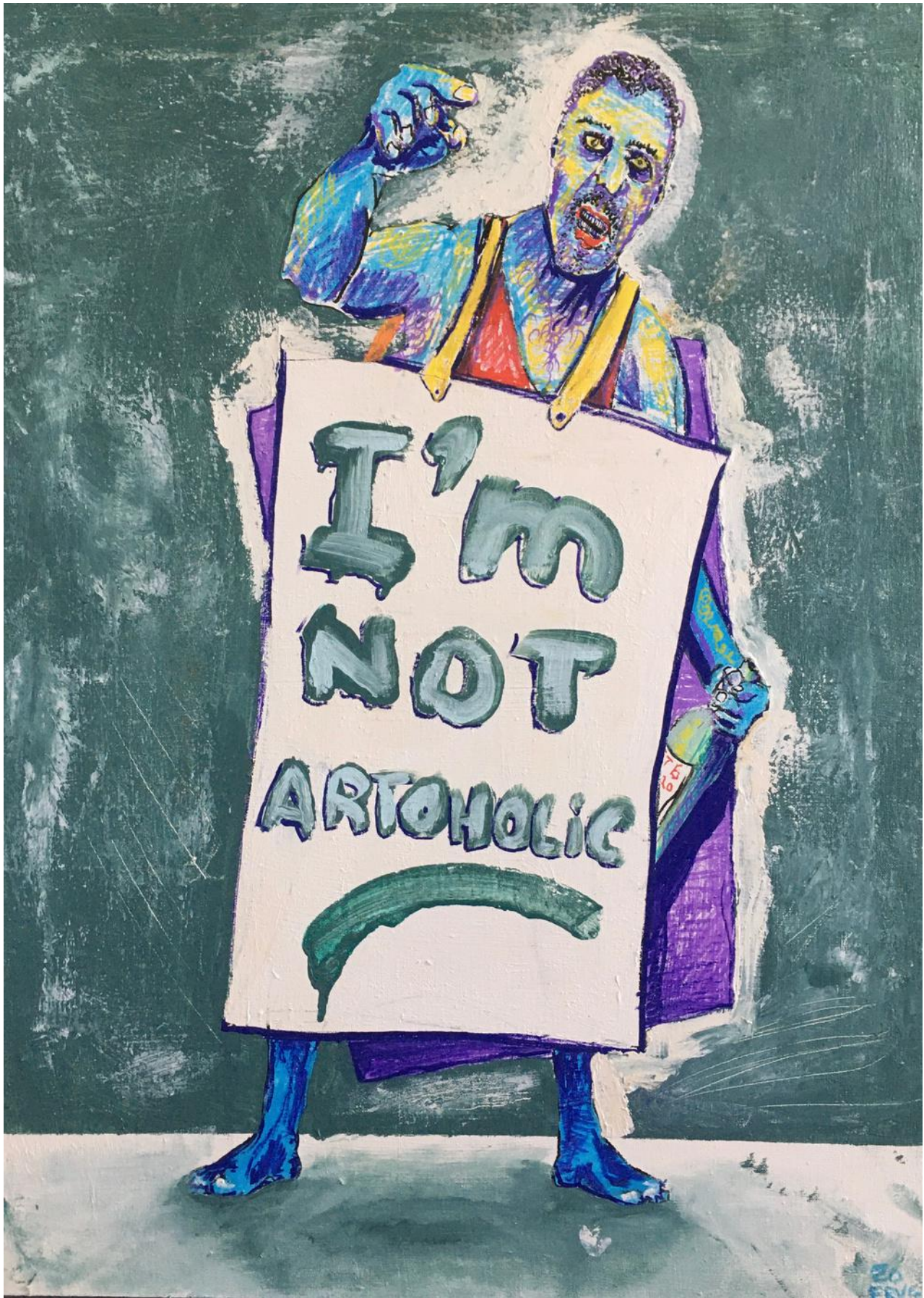
Artists: Yifan Li, Xiaoze Zhang, Mu Tan, Lin Ye, Jialin Wu, Cheng Xie, Xiang Li, Aini (Ellie) Zhang, Qinglai Chunqi



Aini Zhang | Blue Hesitation

Vladimir Fedorov-Romanov

Born in Moscow in 1984. Self-taught artist. Graduate of the International Institute of Advertising (2006). Began with graffiti and street art in Russia, Ukraine, and Latvia (late 1990s–early 2000s). Member of MKhF (International Art Fund) and PSKhr (Professional Union of Artists of Russia), rating 5A. Works across various media: painting (canvas), sculpture, art objects, street art. Taught at Mark Margulis's "Color" studio (Moscow Zoo). Has participated in group exhibitions.





Vladimir Fedorov-Romanov | Composer | 2018

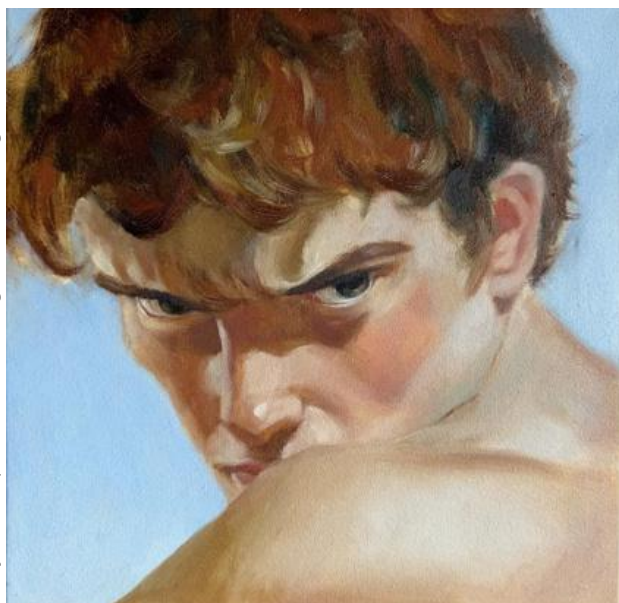
— Interview

Nastya Prairie

Your works are filled with emotion and inner light. How do you transfer internal states onto the canvas?

It usually starts with a feeling. And then the images come — on their own. I feel them speaking to me, as if asking to manifest in this world. Something inside begins to vibrate subtly, asking to be heard — and I just try not to get in the way of it coming out. Sometimes it's a state of silence, sometimes — of inner rebellion. But always — it's real. I don't invent what the painting will be like, I feel it. That's why there is so much light in my works — they are honest, lived-through states of being, translated into color, gesture, image.

You mentioned that the human being is the



Nastya Prairie | The Choice (Turning Point) The Feeling Series



Nastya Prairie | Children Of The One God. Friends (The Neo Paraphrae Series)

central theme of your work. How do you choose your subjects?

I care not just about the image, but the essence. I look for people who know how to be themselves. In their gaze — a story, in their posture — vulnerability and strength. Sometimes they are real people I know. Sometimes — an inner image, born from a dream, a memory, a feeling. In any case, I search for that spark of life that can't be faked.

Those who commissioned portraits from me often said I didn't just capture the likeness, but caught something deeper — the energy, the state, the essence. It's hard to explain in words, but for me, that's the main thing: to reveal the best, the living, the authentic.

How does your background in ethnography influence your creative process?

Ethnography taught me to feel deeper, to see the layers beneath the surface. I often turn to the symbols, aesthetics, and rituals of different cultures — not for the sake of exoticism, but to remind myself and the viewer how rich and polyphonic human experience is.

My view of a person always comes with respect for their roots, for that inner silence they were raised in. The history faculty is my alma mater, and I hold it with gratitude. It taught me to be attentive,



careful, and not to oversimplify the complex.

How do you combine classical influences, like the Pre-Raphaelites, with contemporary themes?

I grew up on the classics, studied with masters of the past — anatomy, sketching, composition. But I live — here and now. The Pre-Raphaelites are close to me: their spirituality, beauty, depth. But my subjects are our contemporaries. In their gaze — Spotify, anxiety, self-searching, traces of social media, tired eyes. I simply connect the eternal with the current. Because one without the other is incomplete.

Your paintings often convey both strength and vulnerability. How do you work with this emotional duality?

Because I live it myself. We are all strong — and at the same time fragile. My characters are not afraid to show it: that's their strength. I'm drawn to moments of silence, pauses, doubt — those transitional states where a person is most real. I love to paint both at the peak of emotion and in the moment of deep contemplation — when everything stills and only the truth remains. In this aliveness and fragility, I see true beauty.

Travel and cultural diversity inspire you — can you recall a journey that especially influenced your art?

India. It didn't just inspire — it changed my sensitivity. The contrast, brightness, the

combination of life and death, noise and silence — all this taught me to listen.

It was there that I first started to paint the way I feel. Without looking back at rules, without fear. In India, my first canvases were born that were filled with freedom.

I've been there seven times already. And I think the eighth is not far off.

In the age of digital noise, your paintings feel especially timeless and deep. What do you want the viewer to feel when looking at your art?

Calm. Connection. Silence.

I want the person, tired of speed and overload, to suddenly pause. To feel themselves — not with the mind, but with the body. Through breath, through gaze, through emotion.

My art is not about decor. It's about a space where you can be real.

Without a role. Without haste. Just be.

Why did you choose the classical technique of oil painting and not modern media?

From 2012 to 2021, I tried everything — from digital Corel Painter to markers, watercolor, acrylic. But only oil gives me that depth, that physicality and flow I was looking for. It's important to me that the work lives, ages beautifully, breathes. Oil is not about the moment. It is about time. Just like my paintings.



Takeshi Yamanaka

After retiring from work, he resumed the production of copper engravings that he had studied in college. I am a freelancer who does not belong to any faction because I have been suspended from production due to work. I have resumed my activities and uploaded my work to Instagram. Nowadays, I produce not only copper engravings but also unique pen paintings using metallic pens. I am working on my own composition art with various things at the core, such as the works of my favorite painters and the scenery of my travel destinations. "I don't want to be an artist, I want to be a printmaker who enjoys printmaking." Equal to. I used to upload my work on Instagram "tatikun2", but I met him in March, and now I'm uploading my work on "tatikun3".



AP. T. Yamanaka.



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CAT'SPRESSO

— Interview

Eve Van Scott

Your work feels like a blend of myth, fashion, and dream. Where do your stories usually begin—in the costume, the character, or the landscape?

They always start with a muse. There's a spark of inspiration when I see a unique expression flicker across someone's face or a distinct mannerism of theirs. I let myself float in their current for a moment until I'm led to a color, creature, or environment that further defines the feeling. After that, they become more like compositional puzzles, designed to create balance and cohesion throughout the entire collection.

Many of your characters seem caught "between worlds." What draws you to this in-between space, and what does it represent to you?



Eve Van Scott | Eve | 2024



At their inception, fantasy seemed much more comforting and attractive than reality. Visualization had become a major part of my daily life, and the worlds that revealed themselves to me were beautiful — and probably even addictive to visit. These places were new and foreign but blended with my subconscious, which allowed me to explore exciting settings while also discovering unseen parts of myself.

You studied fashion design—how has that background shaped the way you approach painting and composition?

Studying fashion included a lot of collection design. Mine seemed to always go a more fantastical route and faceted characters started to peek through their looks. When viewing the paintings and observing the different personas together, you begin to notice a common style or recurring trends in that world, as well as where certain personalities emerge through their own unique expressions. I love how fashion expands the realm in that way. Early illustrated Vogue covers along with *La Vie Parisienne* and Harper's Bazaar also played a huge role in the forming of the compositions themselves.



How do costume design and painting inform each other in your practice? Do you work on them simultaneously or in separate creative phases?

They're all a little different. For some, I had the entire character dressed and posed before I even knew what was going on around them. It just depended on what idea would flow to me first. I really resonate with what David Lynch said about catching ideas as if they're fish. Focused intention, and then you wait.

What role do dreams or altered states of consciousness play in your creative process?

Huge. Most of these paintings, either before or during the process, I was visited by that person in a dream. Some were even dressed as they are in the paintings which is still astounding to me. It's unclear what version of them I interacted with and whether or not they existed before or after the paintings themselves; I'm not quite sure. But, just the idea of it makes me smile.

There's a theatrical quality to your art. Do you see your paintings as scenes from a larger narrative?

Yes. They all have their own storylines and they all weave together quite beautifully. It's something I hope to move forward with telling in a different medium someday. But, for now, I find it fascinating to see what stories people come up with for them on their own. It's extra fun to see what overlaps.

Symbolism appears to play a large role in your work. Do you use recurring symbols intentionally, or do they emerge intuitively?

Intuitively definitely. The deeper meanings seem to connect afterwards. In the beginning, I'm usually focused on the painting's visual attraction and that's more intuitive. It's intriguing when the emotions or energy of the character start to align with the other imagery in the scene. It's rarely intentional.



Anastasia Torobceva

I am an artist from the village of Zheltye Peski.
All my life I have been searching for my own style,
and I think I have now found it.
It is bright, colorful, and sometimes messy
brushstrokes that convey both vivid and gloomy
moments of life — all of which are reflected on the
face.





— Interview

Iris T. Korsnes



Your work explores social communities and family structures. What inspired you to focus on these particular aspects of human relationships?

I grew up in a large, female-led family. My grandmother was the matriarch, and I was surrounded by women; my mother, sisters, aunts, and cousins. Even my father, raised among sisters, shared a deep bond with his own mother. This strong female presence shaped the rhythm of daily life, though I didn't think twice about it at the time, it simply felt natural. Everything changed when my grandmother and mother passed away within months of each other. Their absence left

a void, but also opened a space for reflection. Inheriting my mother's quilting textiles; a quiet archive of her creativity and care, prompted me to think more deeply about the role family plays in shaping identity. I began to consider how these intimate systems of support, tradition, and memory influence not only who we are, but how we navigate the world. What does it mean to come from a lineage of women? How do inherited roles and unspoken knowledge shape one's sense of belonging?

As a teenager, I found a sense of belonging in punk and other subcultures. What caught my attention was not just the aesthetics or rebellion—it was the community. The DIY ethos, the shared values, the sense of solidarity all echoed something familiar: the cohesion and quiet strength of my family. At the time, I couldn't articulate the connection, but in hindsight, the parallels are striking. Both offered spaces of acceptance, collective identity, and resistance to mainstream expectations.

These threads; family, loss, creativity, subculture continue to inform how I see the world and my place in it.

How do you approach the concept of the “human façade” in your textile-based work?

For me the human façade, is referring to the layers people construct to present themselves; what we choose to show, and what remains hidden. I've always been curious about what lies beneath the surface: the inherited behaviors, unspoken rules, and identity patterns passed down through generations. In many ways, our façades are stitched together from family structures, cultural expectations, and personal experiences.

In my textile-based work, I use material metaphors; layering, stitching, cutting, and mending. Textiles carry memory and meaning. They reflect both vulnerability and resilience, much like the human façade. By working with inherited fabrics and domestic techniques, I also question what identity we carry forward, and what we choose to unravel.

Could you tell us more about the role of feminism and craftivism in your practice?



Iris T. Korsnes | The Midnight Sun | 2024



Feminism is a core inspiration in my work, particularly in exploring and honoring women's stories and roles. By working with heirloom textiles and passing down textile knowledge from mother to daughter, I highlight a legacy of female craft—an often overlooked form of creativity, resistance, and self-expression. In my family, women have been the carriers of culture, history, and strength. Using inherited materials allows me to honor their lives and labor. For me, feminism is not only about equality, but also about giving voice to generational wisdom and lived experience. It's a tribute to the resilience, love, and skill passed through women's hands—and a way to foreground how gender and power shape both art and cultural memory.

How do these values translate into your visual language?

I like to see myself as a storyteller, working between figurative and abstract forms. Much of my practice involves hand quilting, often incorporating materials with personal history like crocheted tablecloths and curtains from my grandmother, along with pre-cut and unfinished quilt pieces left by my mother. I began quilting after my mother passed away, partly to carry on the craft tradition, partly as a way to hold onto memories, and more importantly to pass that heritage on to my daughter.

Over time, this exploration of family history has become a posthumous dialogue, a generational thread connecting my grandmother Helga and my mother Harriet on one side, and my daughter Neeva and me on the other.

How do inherited textiles and quilting techniques help you convey intergenerational memory and identity?

Quilting has its roots in reuse, traditionally made from worn-out garments or surplus fabric. For me, working with inherited textiles adds deeper layers of meaning. These materials carry personal histories - visible in their folds, lines, cut-outs, and wear. They act as silent witnesses, holding memories, traditions, and emotional imprints, communicating through a material language that speaks without words.

This non-verbal materiality is central to my practice. It reflects the intimacy, social context, and lived history embedded in the textiles. When I received my mother's fabrics, they still carried the scent of her study—a fleeting presence that, like

memory, fades over time. That smell, along with the texture and visual motifs, contributes to a sensory experience where memory and the material become inseparable.

Many of your works feature layered, three-dimensional textures. How do you select materials and techniques for each piece?

I approach drawing from a textile perspective and usually begin with a concept I want to explore. I rarely sketch, I'm too impatient. Quilting is my main form of expression, often combined with reactive digital textile printing or heat transfer vinyl. Once I've printed a design using the digital textile printer, I study how the imagery interacts with the fabric. From there, I choose techniques and additional materials based on a mix of intent and intuition.

With heat transfer vinyl, it's always interesting to see how the software interprets the design—those small technical shifts can lead to unexpected outcomes. Again, what happens next is guided by both deliberate decisions and instinct.

I often work within the traditional quilt structure; a three-layered sandwich, but frequently combine it with trapunto to add depth and dimension. Layering, both materially and conceptually, is at the core of my process.

What role does improvisation or spontaneity play in your quilting and textile processes?

A lot. I love working and spending time in my studio. I usually end each day with a plan for the next, though more often than not, I end up doing something entirely different. It's essential to listen to the process rather than force it. The process has its own logic—its own voice—and I've learned that it's often wiser than I am, if that makes sense.

Tacit knowledge, is also a key part of my material-based practice. In the meeting between body, material, and technique, I often experience a state of flow, an intuitive presence where the process becomes both slow and deliberate, and the aesthetic senses take over.

This kind of tacit knowledge highlights the importance of unspoken, experience-based understanding that develops through creating. It reminds us that deep expertise often exists beyond words, expressed instead through bodily awareness and aesthetic sensitivity.

Your current project examines female lineage through a biographical lens. What discoveries have you made about your own family in the process?

The strength of the female unity I grew up with and always taken for granted, and the discovering of my own artistic drive inherited from my foremothers. Neither my mother nor grandmother were artists in a formal sense, but had they grown up today, surely both would have pursued artistic paths.

My grandmother was a farmer who made clothes on commission and knitted and crocheted to earn extra income. My mother made clothes for us children when we were young, and as our financial situation improved, she became deeply involved in quilting. My grandmother, after becoming a widow at an early age, crocheted daily for years. I now see that practice as a form of survival mode, something that gave structure and purpose after her daughters moved out and she was left alone.

Mari Dagaz

Date and place of birth: 12 March 1991, Kharkiv. City of residence: Moscow.

Professional association: Member of the Creative Union of Artists of Russia, Painting section.

Education:

Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture, Master's degree in Culture and Sports — 2013.

Kharkiv Children's Art School No. 1 named after Ilya Repin — 2002.





— Interview

Isabelle Langlois

Your work is deeply influenced by your role as a domestic violence counselor. How do the stories you witness shape your artistic process?



Isabelle Langlois | Introspection | 2025



In my work as a counselor, I witness the destruction caused by domestic violence, on women, on their lives, their self-esteem, and their souls, but I also witness their reconstruction. The women I welcome, with tears in their eyes, their heads down and shame in their gaze, leave the shelter after a few months, with their heads held high, sparkling eyes, and filled with hope. I try to represent in my paintings the beauty, strength, and resilience of these women, who despite their ongoing psychological destruction, continue to care for their children, to work, and to move forward in life while keeping hope for a better future. It is impressive. In my art, I represent their physical and inner beauty using aesthetic elements and bright colors. I attempt to honor them by creating magnificent paintings that reflect their reconstruction process. The reconstruction process, for its part, is represented by the different sections present in my paintings that give the impression of an object that has been broken and reassembled. The patterns are a testament to my own resilience as I use painting and patterns as a means of active meditation that keeps me in the present moment and reduces my anxiety.

What does “resilience” mean to you, and how do you express it visually in your collages?

For me, resilience is about rebuilding oneself when completely destroyed, becoming even more fulfilled, grounded, and beautiful than before. Just like the caterpillar that turns into a kind of black mush to rebuild itself and become a freer and more magnificent butterfly. It's about using difficulties and traumas as a springboard to reconstruct oneself, stronger than ever. Visually, I represent it using a collage juxtaposed in different sections that, when assembled, resembles a bit like a patchwork representing reconstruction. I also try to create images of great beauty not for superficial purposes but to represent the beauty of rebirth and resilience. The patterns express the impact of consistency and repetition in a process of reconstruction.

Many of your works blend photo portraiture with illustrative, surreal elements. What draws you to this hybrid approach?



I really like the visual effect of the photographic portrait integrated into the painting; I find that it gives a dynamic and modern effect to the work. Moreover, the hours I do not spend painting the portrait give me a sort of freedom and increased creativity to paint the elements around the portrait. The addition of the photographic portrait associated with the painted elements represents well, I think, the process of reconstruction, that is to say starting with existing facets of ourselves, our qualities, our strengths, and our soul, associated with new elements that help us grow and elevate us.

Your use of patterns, color, and symbolism is very distinctive. Can you walk us through your creative process when starting a new piece?

Usually, I start with a visual idea of several elements that I want to combine together, however, the image develops gradually. Especially regarding the colors and integrated patterns. What I find interesting is that I feel there is a moment during the creative process when the work takes on a life of its own and strays from the original concept, which sometimes strangely results in something very close to my subconscious. I sometimes realize that I am reflecting not only the resilience of women but also my own resilience through my works.

You mention influences from urban art and Art Nouveau. How do you integrate such different styles into a cohesive personal voice?

My inspiration from these two currents is mainly at a visual level. In Art Nouveau, I draw inspiration primarily from the beauty of women, among other things through the movement of hair and the addition of flowers in my

paintings. As for the visuals of urban art, I really appreciate that they use collage, the use of paint markers, and the application of flat paint with the help of stencils. It gives a graphic result that I find very interesting. For me, creativity is, among other things, the ability to transform all the inspirations that surround us into a unique and personal image. I look at a lot of artists' images and the influences mix in my unconscious to create images in my own color.

Can you tell us about the symbolism behind the floral motifs that appear so often in your work?

Regarding the floral patterns, I mainly use them for their aesthetic appeal, as I mentioned above, for me the process of reconstruction and resilience is of great beauty. Women who rise from difficult moments and traumas eventually blossom after a lot of work, just like a flower.

How do you see the relationship between art and healing, especially in the context of trauma and recovery?

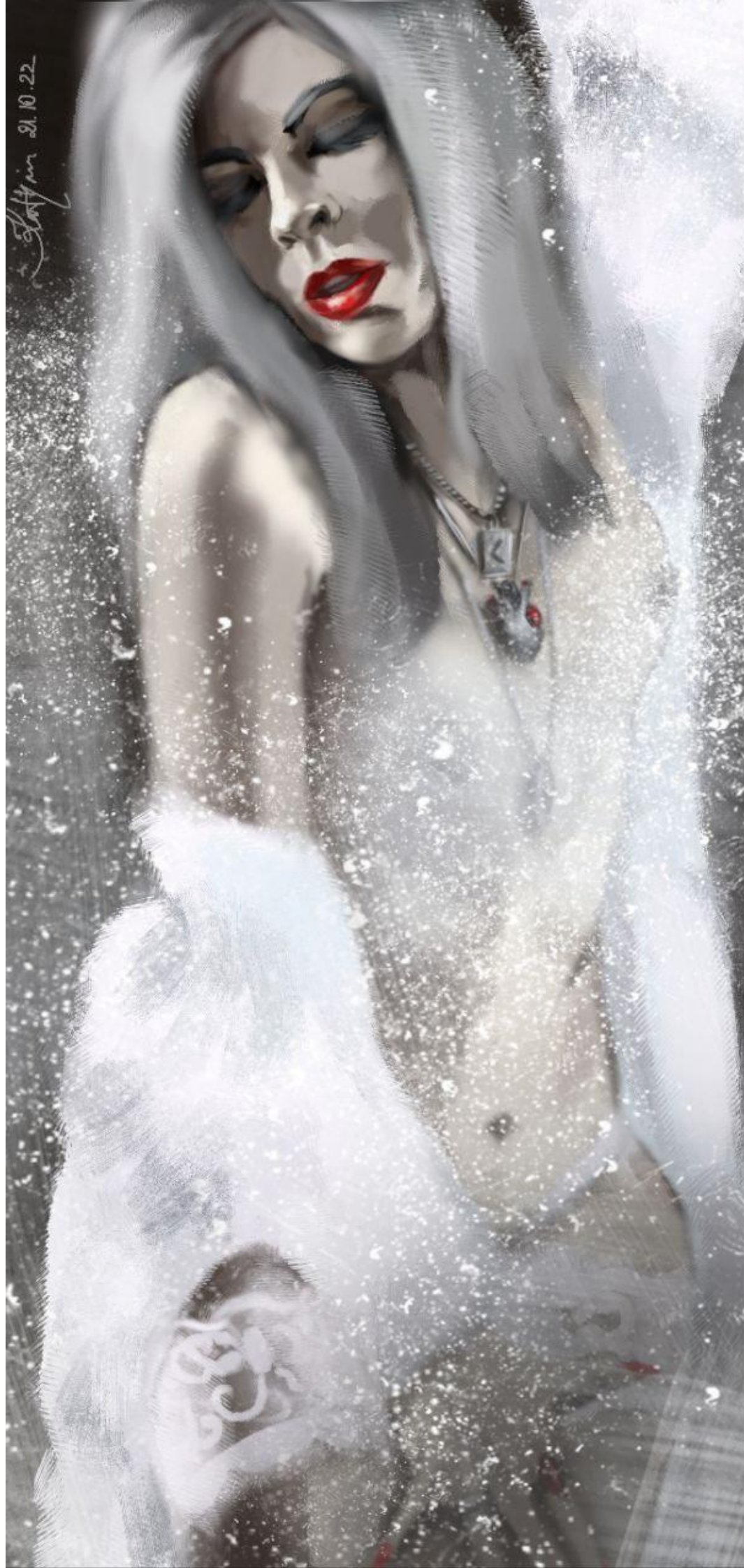
Personally, art saved my life; I deeply believe in the benefits of art in a healing process, especially with mental health issues. I went through severe depression, and art helped me to get the morbid thoughts out of my head by transforming them into creative, beautiful, and colorful images. Art has, among other things, the ability, just like meditation, to bring us back to the present moment and thus take us out of our catastrophic scenarios and reduce anxiety. Art also has the power to create a bridge with our unconscious where all our wounds and traumas accumulate. My art reflects the resilience of women but also my own resilience as I am a woman myself.



Kathrin Urvanova

The most important thing in our lives is emotion. It is the expression of everything that surrounds us. Everything we see, hear, and feel evokes emotions. And it is precisely these emotions, I believe, that should be conveyed in any form of creativity, including painting. This is what I depict in my works. Passion, love, joy, sorrow, fear, desire—everything most vivid and stirring to our soul—is the very aim of my brush.





Hyena Nam

What inspired you to create the "Motherhood" and "The Melody of Healing" posters?

For the Motherhood poster series, the visual direction was inspired by the paintings of Mary Cassatt, renowned for her tender and intimate portrayals of mothers and children. As a mother to a 16-year-old son, the theme holds deep emotional significance for me and invites personal reflection. I first encountered Cassatt's work during a museum visit, where I was deeply moved by the serene, nurturing, and elegant atmosphere of her pieces. I purchased postcards of her artwork, which later became part of my personal collection and served as both artistic and emotional references throughout the creative process.

For The Melody of Healing poster, I wanted to express the importance of love and forgiveness as daily reminders in our lives. I spent time reflecting on these concepts and how they could be visually represented in a way that resonates with others. One quote that particularly inspires me is, "When you forgive, you get healed." I believe that forgiveness is rooted in love, and that love, in turn, leads to healing. To communicate this message, I created a visual metaphor: a man playing the cello, from which the words "Love" and "Forgiveness" flow like music. I see music as a powerful form of healing, and the cello player serves as a symbolic figure of emotional and spiritual restoration.

The typography is designed to move fluidly, echoing the rhythm of musical notes, and reinforcing the idea that love and forgiveness are like healing energies.



How do personal experiences as a mother influence your design work?

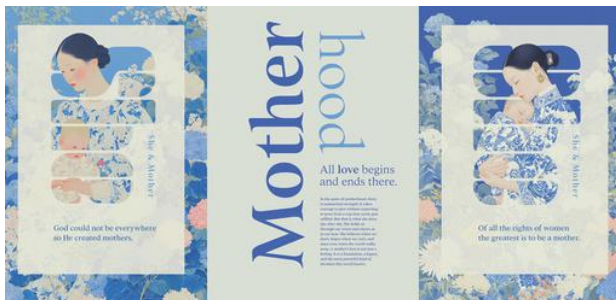
As a mother, my son is always a priority in my life. I try to put myself in his shoes so I can relate to him, understand him, and stay emotionally aware. This allows me to fully sense his needs and emotions. These experiences have shaped the way I approach both design and the creative process, especially when working with clients.

When I collaborate with clients, my first step is always to understand their challenges and goals as clearly as possible, and then to create thoughtful visual solutions that address those needs. Motherhood has taught me to be more empathetic, attentive, and understanding, qualities that are essential to how I work as a designer with clients and other professionals.

I see design as an ongoing, iterative process that requires time, care, and reflection. It often involves multiple versions and thoughtful decision-making to reach the best outcome. In that sense, my experience as a mother has helped me become more patient and dedicated in my design practice.

Your work beautifully integrates visual storytelling with emotional depth. How do you approach translating abstract concepts like love, healing, and protection into visual form?

I firmly believe that visual communication has the power to influence how people perceive and respond to the world around them. This belief drives both my creative practice and scholarly work, which focus on developing visual communication strategies that make abstract or complex ideas more accessible and emotionally resonant. When translating abstract concepts into visual storytelling, I begin with in-depth research to explore visual expressions that are universally recognizable and relatable. I then reinterpret these ideas through my own artistic lens to create work that feels both personal and innovative. For example, when I set out to express the themes of love





and healing through the metaphor of music, I conducted extensive research on visual elements that represent music and how they could be integrated with typography. I explored various types of waveforms, pattern designs, musical notes, and graphics, and then selectively chose the final design elements that effectively conveyed the visual concept. For me, starting with thorough research is essential. It allows me to gather and refine diverse ideas into a unified design solution that bridges the gap between abstract concepts and meaningful visual storytelling.

How does your cultural background influence your design style and thematic choices?

I was born in South Korea and currently live in the United States. South Korea is a country rich with over 5,000 years of history, while the U.S. is a culturally diverse nation that brings together people from all over the world. I feel incredibly grateful to have lived in both countries, as these international experiences have deeply enriched not only my personal life but also my creative practice as a designer.

For the Motherhood poster series, I reinterpreted the Western paintings of Mary Cassatt through the lens of traditional Asian art to capture the timeless and universal nature of maternal love. The visual concept and artistic style were inspired by my background in South Korea, where I developed a deep understanding of Asian aesthetics, culture, and history.

Additionally, having worked and studied in both Korea and the U.S. has allowed me to explore and absorb a wide range of design trends and visual languages. These experiences have provided me with a rich foundation of ideas and inspiration, giving me the freedom to experiment with

various styles and themes in my creative work.

What is the most important lesson you aim to teach your design students?

There are many valuable lessons in design education, but one of the most important things I strive to teach my students is that a designer is not just a maker. A designer is a strategist who crafts effective visual communication with the potential to make a lasting impact on viewers.

While a solid understanding of design principles and proficiency in software tools is essential, I believe it is even more important to build the ability to generate innovative ideas that create value and have the potential to make a meaningful impact. I teach students a range of design research methodologies and strategies, and I encourage them to apply these insights thoughtfully throughout their creative process. My students are expected to conduct thorough research for each design problem in order to make informed visual decisions, rather than relying solely on intuition or instinct. They are constantly challenged to ask: Who am I designing for? What am I trying to achieve? Why am I making this particular design choice? This approach helps them grow as strategic, critical, and creative thinkers. I also highlight that design is an iterative problem-solving process, not merely the creation of visually attractive artifacts. As technology and trends continue to evolve—especially with the rise of AI—the creative process has become more accessible. Today, almost anyone can produce design-like outputs. However, what distinguishes a competitive designer is the ability to generate innovative ideas and use technology as a tool, rather than relying on it. Ultimately, I aim to teach my students how to orchestrate both ideas and technology to create meaningful and impactful design.

How has international recognition shaped your career and confidence as a designer?

Receiving international recognition has been both validating and empowering. The peer-reviewed nature of these awards and features has not only boosted my confidence in the quality of my work, but has also enhanced my credibility with clients and collaborators. Being acknowledged by respected global organizations has opened doors to new opportunities, from professional connections to client inquiries. These experiences have reaffirmed my commitment to design excellence and have motivated me to keep pushing creative boundaries on an international scale.

What advice would you give to emerging artists and designers who hope to combine commercial success with personal expression?

Stay true to your voice while remaining open to collaboration and adaptation. The most compelling creative work often comes from a place of authenticity, so don't be afraid to infuse your personal values, stories, and aesthetic into what you create. At the same time, understand the needs of your audience or clients and find where your vision intersects with theirs. That balance is where impactful and marketable work thrives. Lastly, be patient—building both artistic identity and commercial viability takes time, experimentation, and resilience.

Marta Beatrice Anghel was born in 1996 in a small town in Romania, but moved to Italy with her family at the age of six. She completed her studies in Communication Sciences and, driven by a passion for visual anthropology, began to travel in search of colors and gestures, individual and collective memory, through the lens of her camera.

After journeying through ecovillages and festivals, she started leading group nude photography workshops for women in natural settings, which inspired her upcoming first photography book. Following her latest trip to Mexico in June 2025, she released her first short film, *Orale!*

Project Statement

She works through various artistic mediums, weaving together visual and narrative elements to explore the connections between identity, transformation, and anthropology. Her creative process is deeply rooted in the relationship between the human body and the natural world, often embracing rawness, sensuality, and vulnerability as tools for self-discovery. She is currently organizing experiential nude photography workshops in nature and is developing her first photography book “Hips of the Land”.





— Interview

Ruslan Borisenko

Your work is deeply influenced by engraving techniques and pointillism. What initially drew you to this intricate style?

The pointillism style initially attracted me with its versatility. From a mass of dots, one can create virtually any form, giving volume and depth to the image. Furthermore, by working



with dots, it is always possible to add tone and enhance contrasts. Although working in this style takes an enormous amount of time, with dozens or even hundreds of hours spent on a single piece, I really enjoy the process of gradually revealing meaningful images on the flat surface of the paper. I was introduced to engraving techniques in my childhood, and I have always been drawn more to graphic art as a tool for creative expression. Therefore, in addition to classical pencil drawing, I was always interested in experimenting with other graphic art tools. One of my favorite artists is Albrecht Dürer, whose stunning works have always inspired me. At some point, I decided to incorporate engraving techniques into my art, which helped expand the possibilities of conveying my ideas. The academic foundation in art has greatly contributed to the further development of my skills in the chosen direction.

Many of your artworks contain symbolic references and historical motifs. How do you select the symbols you include?

I have been studying the signs and symbols of past eras and their influence on humanity's cultural and historical heritage for quite some time. Since contemporary culture distorts the meaning of many symbols, my task, both as an artist and a scholar, is to find the original meaning of a symbol in the era in which it was created. This allows me to infuse my works with meaning and expand their overall concept by incorporating symbolic significance. Different historical periods inspire me, especially antiquity and the Renaissance, from which I draw not only ideas for some of my works but also a specific aesthetic. By combining all of this, I create works in which the embedded meaning is transmitted, but I



Ruslan Borisenko | Transformation Of The Mind



always leave room for reflection, allowing the viewer to find something personal and sacred in the painting.

You often combine traditional ink techniques with digital graphics. What role does each medium play in your artistic process?

Since my journey in art began with traditional visual arts, it has always been primary for me. I believe it is the most sincere and honest form of art in relation to both the artist and the viewer. Digital graphic forms serve as an assistant for me, as I work on various projects, the realization of which is often tied to the need for digital representation of images. I have a higher education in digital graphics and design, which allows me to create projects from scratch or complement existing hand-drawn works. The use of digital graphic tools aids in the versatile development of an artist and simplifies certain technical aspects of the work.

Your art seems to navigate between the visible and the invisible — what themes or questions are you most interested in exploring?

I am interested in philosophical topics, questions about the universe, and defining the place of humans in it. Additionally, various religious imagery is very close to me, which I occasionally incorporate into my art. This allows me to add depth and emotionality to my works. Through studying signs and symbols, I am also drawn to the theme of different cultural codes, which help people, among other things, identify themselves in the modern world. However, my art is not detached from reality and reflects, alongside me, the events happening in our time. Sometimes, through images from past eras, I depict the present with all its problems and challenges. The key is to know how to read between the lines.

You mentioned a fascination with religious imagery. What draws you to these themes, and how do you reinterpret them in a contemporary context?

For me, religious imagery is more than just a specific religion and its symbols. It represents a certain life energy and an invisible force that fills everything around us. As I mentioned earlier, religious images allow me to infuse the painting with emotional depth and show faith not only in higher powers but also in the individual. Taking these aspects into account, I create works that can provide not only emotions and food for thought but also encourage the viewer to believe, above all, in themselves and show that they are not alone.

Do you see your works more as visual narratives or philosophical reflections — or both?

Both. Depending on the initial concept, my painting can be a visual story that engages in a dialogue with the viewer, visualizing a specific story, or a philosophical reflection where the painting poses a question, and the viewer must find the answer themselves. In this case, there are no wrong answers, as all of them are subjective and based on personal feelings and experiences. But there is also another option – when I simply want to capture a particular moment or image. For example, I create paintings with architectural themes, where I want to capture a specific mood, light, and color. By the way, I often use a limited number of colors in architectural subjects, while the rest of my works are usually black and white.

What is the reason behind your use of only black and white in your paintings?

In my understanding, graphic art is about meaning and details. This is the focus of my work, and technically, I find two colors sufficient. The style I use, pointillism, and engraving techniques look most effective in black and white, and even with high detail, the painting is perceived as a cohesive whole.

In some cases, I add a few more colors. Most often, these are golden hues or shades of gray, which help create a certain mood or emotion, or highlight significant elements within the overall composition.

How has your background in graphic design and academic research influenced your approach to fine art?

A graphic design education has primarily helped broaden my perception of the world around me and find inspiration not only in works of art. Additionally, higher education has contributed to applying a structured approach to implementing ideas and combining various meanings into a unified concept. I believe this is a crucial aspect for graphic art, as it helps translate not only the initial ideas and emotions onto paper but also brings them together into a single composition with various details and features. Moreover, as a design lecturer at a university, I continually update my knowledge in the professional field and share it with my students. This communication fosters new ideas and a fresh perspective on creativity. My academic research into the sign-symbolic space of different cultures makes the selection of elements for imbuing meaning into my works more professional.

Nastya Artsplash

As a classically trained artist, I prefer to work with traditional media and techniques: painting on canvas, graphic art, and sculpture. In my practice, I explore the phenomenon of liminality—the transition from one state to another—as well as the interplay between the real and the unreal. I create unpeopled landscapes with elements of architecture and industrial structures, imbued with a contemplative state—a subtle, elusive sense of contact and unity with the transcendent. These deserted landscapes are a form of social and visual escapism within a contemporary environment so saturated with images, sounds, and meanings. Pared-down forms, minimalist composition, and a restrained palette construct a space where the longing for unfathomable ideal worlds coexists with silent yearning and serene calm—a space free of noise and haste, where one can encounter one's inner self.

Nastya Artsplash | The House at the Edge of the Earth | 2025





Justin Bland (Nu)

Your work explores the intersection of nature and infrastructure. How do you decide which elements to emphasize in a new piece?

Whenever observing the communication between the two, there's a story I must read into. There is always a beginning, middle and inevitable end. I prefer to focus somewhere in



Justin Bland (Nu) | Irse



the middle. Somewhere I would see an old metal warehouse door, or an exposed copper pipe. Commonly we can see it in the state it's in and sort of disregard it, but something in me became interested in this variation of appearance and physical shape it undergoes when exposed to the conditions. Immediately I find it fascinating to imagine the evolution of its deterioration and its relation to the environment. When observing, I must note the colors, textures and/or evidence of missing pieces due to wear and tear. These phenomena usually decorate the environment for my pieces. It's even more intriguing if the infrastructure includes man made impressions like graffiti, scrapes and marks from frequent contact on a concentrated area, or simply destruction of the object altogether. It's all just more information for me to enjoy and interpret in my work.

You mention being influenced by decay—mold, rust, and bird droppings. What draws you to these organic processes of deterioration?

I think one day I decided these are designs rather than damages. We always use the expression “if these walls can talk” but to me, they do. Not with words of course but with time. When seeing old buildings or bird-plastered beach piers, we see the results of time by their markings and our imaginations do the rest. We think about how long the structure has been there, how many



people and events happened there. The markings tell me everything I want to know. I want to lean into these features and create a world where the natural impact carries its own integrity besides from the structures themselves. I enjoy the aggression yet majesty I experience when witnessing these features, even creating my own criteria of how much or little impact they have on me at the time. We can imagine how many colors mold or rust can be especially when blocked against an object of another color; there's harmony in that. It becomes a social discussion. These markings have intense, complicated processes that allow them to grow and become their own identity. Eventually these sources became the DNA of my work. They serve more as phenotypes of my pieces with the same process of creation or growth regardless of the structure itself, yet all under the common denominator of age.

Can you describe the emotional impact of growing up between Mojave, South Central, and the Central Coast on your artistic voice?

Since Kindergarten, I was able to witness constant contrast between Mojave, the Antelope Valley, Los Angeles, Pismo and San Luis Obispo. I've been able to live and explore at these places for pretty much all my life while undergoing the growing pains of an unorthodox, yet statistically not so unorthodox split family dynamic. The events within these places informed me, but the

surroundings consoled me. Despite my personal challenges, the changes of environment were drastic but exciting. The most inspirational aspect between each of these settings were the landscapes and architecture. Once I arrived at these places, I knew what to look forward to and I was able to find comfort in that current space, seeking to absorb the ambience of the streets, corners and buildings. I'm not a very social person. Usually while people speak, I observe, so it has given me more time to appreciate the complexities of each scenery, people and spaces alike. Over the years, the colors of the San Luis countryside, the rundown underpasses off the 110 freeway in LA, and the warm-palleted desert backdrop of the Antelope Valley became some of the driving force of my color choices as well as textural references. As I grew more informed of social and civic dynamics, it became a priority to decorate my interpretation of intrapersonal relations with the colors, shapes and other imagery pertaining to each of these geographic spaces... and music, lots of references to music that sustained me over the years.

How do your materials and textures reflect the tension between community and commodity?

This one is loaded, let's see how brief I can keep this: There seemed to be a coldness that came with the endless cycle of dreaming, obtaining and discarding. It appears that sometimes, especially here in Western culture, the only connection people have with objects ends at the shared experience of ownership rather than transcending to stewardship. It is critical for me



Justin Bland (Nu) | Enclave

to create work that reminds us that in a culture where we are taught that flashy, new and conventionally attractive generally means better, there is a risk of losing substance and meaningful experience in our lives. The internal and external consequences of failure and unfamiliarity should serve as an invitation to grow. This lifeline conversation with myself over the years has driven me to observe the confluence between knowledge, substance, excess and lack. Visually, it has become a staple to portray an extreme sense of textural urgency, forcing the work to be about the imperfections and what to appreciate in those alone. Using materials found at home like tile mortar, house paint, random nearby debris; anything that can convey the bumps and bruises of life while also repurposing discarded or overlooked objects. I enjoy when people appreciate things not because of what it is but how it is and why. I love that effectiveness is completely independent from popularity, familiarity, digestibility or vanity. I also enjoy delving into what creates longevity in a relationship or in a life's work and how understanding value with a prideless perspective can impact our utilization of resources and our growth as people.

Your color palette is described as earthy, pungent, and moody. Do you associate specific emotions or memories with certain colors?

Most of the color choices that are made reflect my childhood. I grew up watching lots of animation such as Hanna Barbera, and Cartoon



Justin Bland (Nu) | Awop

Network (Adult Swim). I may not have realized at the time, but watching color being professionally curated onto characters or settings helped develop my own taste of color arrangement. Besides animation, variations of certain colors remind me of old articles of clothing I had as a kid, the color of an interior's floor or carpet or what color a loved one was wearing the day we went somewhere. Skateboarding graphics, clothing and other related designs also played a significant part in my love for color. Nature is probably the most referential regarding my work because of the range of reactions I experience such as intensity or visceral response I get when seeing the deep reddish sienna of rust. On the contrary there's a deep sense of peace, nostalgia and reverence when seeing an originally white object being yellowed by the sun. Particularly, I tend to gravitate towards colors that feel lived in or intimate. There is one color however that followed me around growing up and once I took art seriously and identified its official name, it became like my homeroom of colors and that's cobalt blue.

In your practice, what role does spirituality or personal memory play in shaping your visual language?

When it comes to consolidating concepts and ideas, I love keeping a prompt that assigns me to a punchline or parable. It is imperative to encapsulate as much introspection with as little overplay as possible. For example, I have been working on a concept called 'how many bastards does it take to screw in a lightbulb?' which expounds on repeated generational failure or



Justin Bland (Nu) | May



traumas and the intensity of evolution through changes in ideas and perspectives. It has been a concept so sentimental to my life that it inspired the name of my alias, nu. My faith in Jesus has played a large part in my inspiration as an artist, challenging me to visually articulate lessons I have learned about being in the world. Almost all of my pieces relate to the Bible in some way. It has given me a space to interpret the rawness of biblical times, referring to hygiene, architecture and intrapersonal communication but hybridizing the stories and concepts into a more personal and palatable experience without sacrificing integrity or inclusivity.

Is there a particular object or space—urban or natural—that you keep returning to in your mind or your work? Why?

Growing up, one of my chores was to take out the trash. In my apartment complex, there was a designated area with a couple Waste

Management bins, loosely enclosed by these brick walls. I always remember there being the most random items on the ground or weird mixtures splattered on the walls and bins. The smells were interesting. I love parking garages, especially if there's a lot of efflorescent, naturally stained concrete. I often think of this MF DOOM music video for a track called 'Guv'nor' where the surroundings were far more intriguing than the subject. The ambience of a parking garage is like a personal mental hub. I once took a trip to Hearst Castle and felt as if the plains and landscape were exceedingly more beautiful than the castle itself. I am always mentally between a nitty-gritty urban space like an alley or a wide open field like those plains and shores in San Simeon. It is also fun to synthesize music with these spaces and create a visual representation of what I hear and see. Thinking of these spaces puts me into a zone that holds the perfect balance of comfort to work with and discomfort to work through.

— Interview

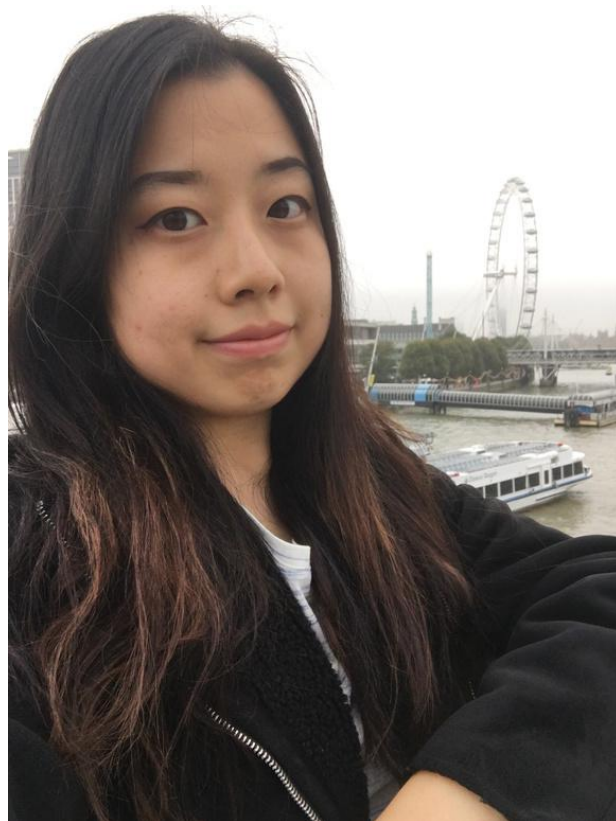
Yuchen Ge 葛钰晨

Your work is deeply rooted in art history and classical techniques. How do you balance academic research with imaginative visual storytelling?

They nourish each other in ways that are often unpredictable and spontaneous. When I write about art history or read for research, part of my mind tends to connect ideas to visual memories – or sometimes it might simply be a feeling. These nuances have largely guided my sketches. At the same time, my practice on canvas inspires my art-historical thinking through forms of expression that cannot be captured in words. The moment being fully absorbed in the process of painting feels like a grand symphony, it would feel wrong to try and summarise it immediately. After years of embracing both modes and trying to better understand their unique dynamics, I have learnt not to see the two – academic research and imaginative visual storytelling – as a duality, in fact, they complement each other so well because of their difference in methodology and through process.

You often mention “imaginary history” as a key concept. Can you elaborate on what this means to you and how it manifests in your work?

The dynamics between the very immediate experience of painting practice and the predominant sentiment of history in this process very much fascinates me – visual forms



informed by both historical imagery and ongoing intellectual inquiry – which I call an imaginary history. Old masters’ art and literature are good starting point to elaborate. My fine art educational background has been centred on traditional studio training, especially in oil painting and printmaking (primarily etching and woodcut). I enjoy exploring visual references from historical painting and literature, such as Magdalene from George de La Tour’s work and figurines of Alice from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland that I featured in my work. The way these classic imageries talk to you – with the literal familiarity and your own conception on them – always changes each time you see them, every different context makes them different, yet still very visually familiar. It is similar to what Sigmund Freud called ‘the uncanny’, but I’d say it is not enough to conclude a state like this knowing there is a term to rely on, rather, it is a nuanced creative space in the mind, situated between taught knowledge (what you already know about Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll) and your immediate perception (what this exact Alice-looking figure makes you think right now). It is about history, but not based on history; it moves beyond what you have been taught about history. This is an imaginary history – what my works are currently exploring.

Many of your paintings feel like theatrical scenes frozen in time. What role does narrative play in your creative process?

I like the description ‘theatrical scenes frozen in time’. I really enjoy observing how specific scenes or details are staged in oil painting, stage show, and opera. These silent moments present a pure and concentrated form of art at that very single minute – emotional temporality – a moment suspended in time that captures an entire narrative, without relying on validating through formalist concerns such as colour, shape, and contrast. This emotional temporality is what I currently pursue in the sense of narrative in my work.

Yuchen Ge 葛钰晨 | Lotus Eater The Erased Stories





How has your academic journey across institutions in China and the UK shaped your visual language?

I studied at Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in China, China's first national-level institution of higher education dedicated to the arts. CAFA has been influenced by European art traditions – initially French, and later Russian, along with their respective systems of education. My time there provided me with rigorous academic training: art anatomy, traditional glazing techniques and chiaroscuro in oil painting, realistic sculpture, and my major – printmaking, with a focus on etching. These foundations have deeply shaped my artistic language.

I've always been attracted to those rich emotion, aesthetics, and poetic movement of brushworks found in the paintings of artists such as Caravaggio, Rubens, and Watteau. At the same time, I developed a passion for exploring a calligraphical, sketch-like language, combined with expressions through colour and subject matter – a pursuit strongly informed by traditional Chinese motifs, and the Chinoiserie. For example, in *Delft Blue* (2022), an ancient Chinese zodiac sign – the Rabbit – is standing in a room with an English ceramic figurine of a lady. Instead of a violin, she holds a helicopter. The space, filled with miniature, resonates the room in *The Arnolfini Portrait* by Jan van Eyck, while on the wall there hangs taxidermy birds that was once adored in history.

Can you talk about your technical process—especially your experiments with rabbit skin glue, oils, and soft-

ground etching?

I prepare my canvas with pure rabbit skin glue solely. The process is quite straightforward: the glue, which comes in hard granules, needs to be soaked in water overnight. It is then gently heated in a container that allows for both warming and storage, ensuring it doesn't burn. Once it becomes a smooth liquid, it's ready to be applied evenly onto the canvas. I prefer to paint directly onto the rabbit skin glue ground, as it creates a velvety texture, in my opinion, better complements the flow of pattern and floral flourish in my work. But for the traditional process, once the glue layer dries, one or more coats of lead white would be applied to prevent the oil colours from sinking into the canvas. Today, titanium white is used as a safer alternative. Soft-ground etching is a technique that is very welcoming, you can combine it with a lot other materials – both conventional and unconventional, such as sand or sponge, and the outcomes are often unpredictable. I enjoy drawing with oil crayon and brush on a soft-ground plate, which creates rich, sketch-like lines. When the soft-ground layers are combined with other techniques, such as aquatint which brings ultra dark shades, the result brings a manuscript-styled visual language offering a lot to explore.

Your imagery often features a blend of historical references and dreamlike figures. Do you begin with a clear plan or let intuition guide the composition?

My process involves much more contemplation than actual execution. The painting develops all in my head, I don't record it in any manner but I do give it enough time to form, as no physical form can resemble such ideas accurately enough. It is like a seed, growing and growing, whenever I'm ready I start painting. I use sketch as a reminder – like a note pad – to record visual ideas when it comes to more specific decisions on canvas. Intuition? Yes, but I am very aware of its agency and limitation in my work: where and how it will dominate, exist, and stop. Dreams inspire my works to a great extent as always, and historical reference sometimes perfectly complements the conversation in my work, they inspire me as different forms of reality rather than in a duality of real and imaginary.

Do you see your work as a form of visual philosophy—an inquiry into how we remember and reinterpret the past?

Yes, I think so. I often see my work as a personal manifestation between past and the present – more precisely, between the inevitable influence and presence of the past as a form of romanticised knowledge, and the present personal experience and reading of the past which is subject to now. It is my intellectual inquiry, in the form of visually.

This can be seen in the way I use art-historical references in my paintings: capturing from a form of past that we all share – the history of art – and offering my thoughts through them, contextualised within the conversation in my work. Dreams and imagination play a central role in my work: they are the main storytellers in my practice who choose to synthesise these more recognisable references or to re-narrate them completely. In this sense, I do see my work as a form of visual philosophy – an inquiry into how we remember, reinterpret, and imaginatively inhabit the past and its form of knowledge.

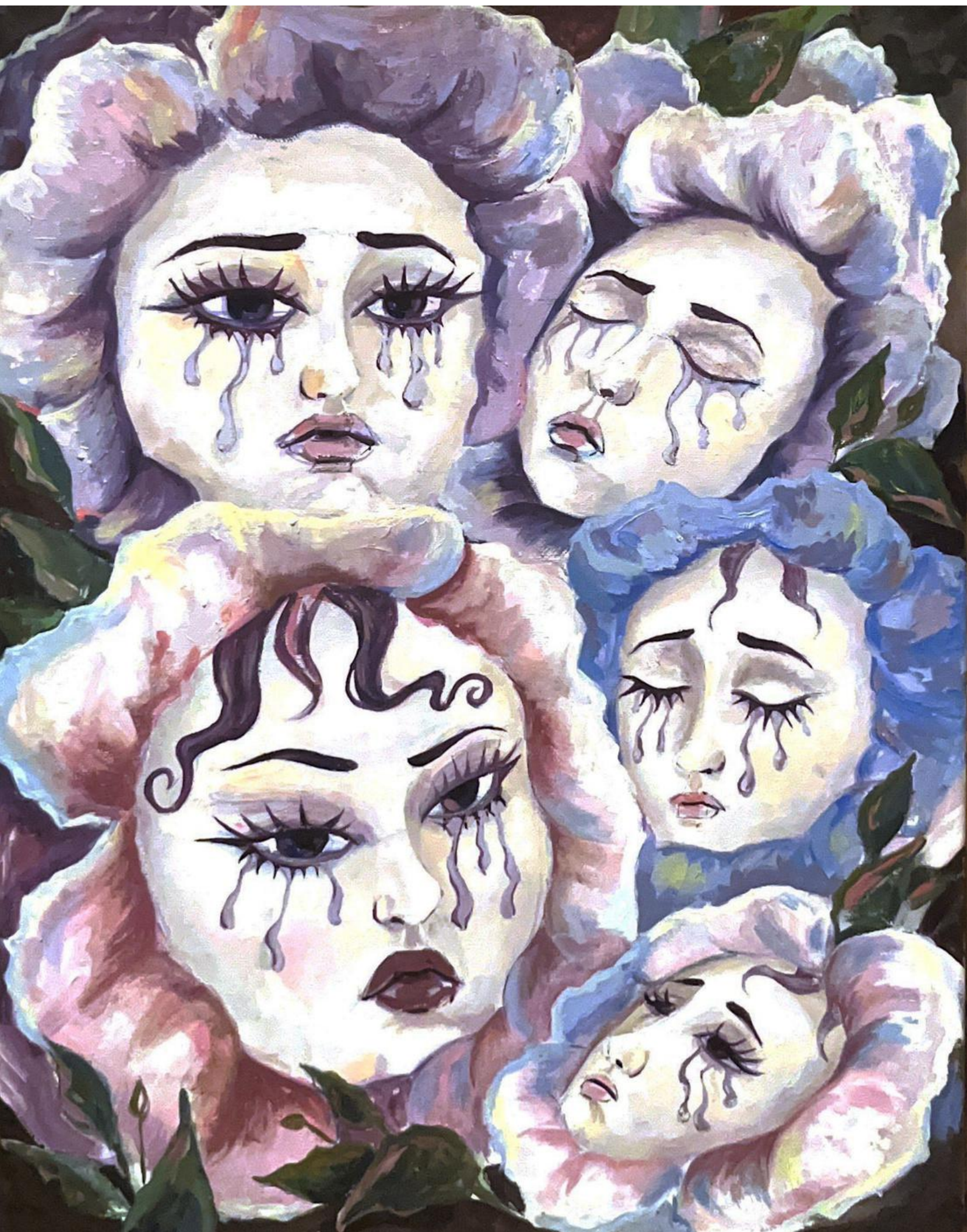
Nadezhda Drozdyk is an artist whose creative practice is closely connected to the world of color and imagery. She received formal art training and later earned a degree in architecture, which gives her a deep understanding of form, space, and composition. My entire life has been a continual pursuit of self-expression through art. I paint in oil on canvas and pay homage to Impressionism. In my works, I strive to reveal society's flaws and convey meanings that run deeper than they may seem at first glance. My paintings are often imbued with symbolism and an inner philosophy, prompting the viewer to reflect and feel an emotional response. I believe that art should evoke emotion and leave room for contemplation. From time to time, my works are exhibited in my hometown, which allows me to share my vision with a wide audience and continue growing as an artist. My practice is a constant search for harmony between outward beauty and inner depth, and an effort to make each canvas a reflection of my inner world and my relationship to the surrounding reality.

Project Statement

The work "Paradise Temptation" is intended to draw the viewer's attention to the duality inherent in all existence—to how the very nature of being is simultaneously beautiful and flawed. The painting illustrates the internal and external choices we face every day and emphasizes that the development and outcome of events depend on our decisions. At the core of this piece is the idea that every choice is not merely an action but a reflection of our inner struggle between good and evil, beauty and vice.

The painting depicts flowers that embody beauty and vulnerability. They appear both alluring and dangerous: their delicate petals can symbolize temptation, while their fragility suggests human vulnerability to inner conflict. This image underlines the notion that true beauty is born through overcoming inner contradictions. Only by passing through inner trials and learning to find balance between the outer world and our inner state can we attain genuine harmony.

Thus, "Paradise Temptation" reminds us of the need for mindful choice and the pursuit of inner equilibrium. It shows that beauty and perfection are possible only as a result of grappling with one's own weaknesses and contradictions, and through the ability to combine external appeal with inner harmony.



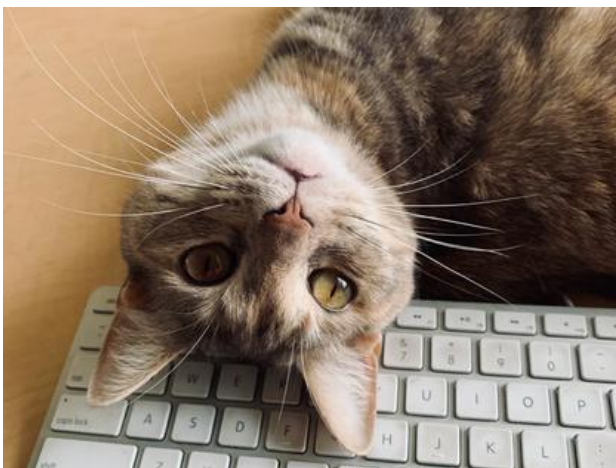
— Interview

Karen Parry



Can you tell us about the story behind the name “Kaz and Kika”?

Kaz is my childhood nickname — it’s short for Karen — and Kika is my cat and studio sidekick. I made up her name and it’s short for “kitty kat”. She was rescued as a kitten in Brooklyn and has been by my



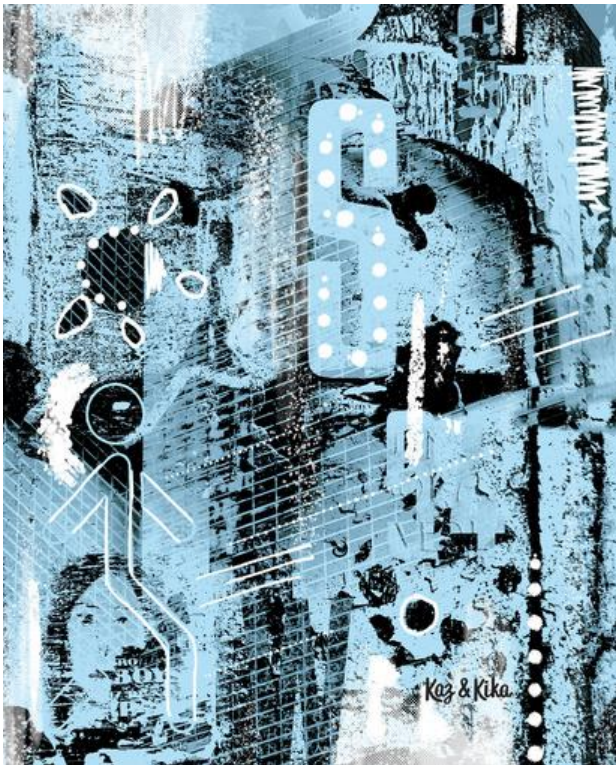
side for 8 years now. The name Kaz and Kika just felt right!

How did your upbringing in Australia and your current life in New York influence your artistic style?

Growing up in Australia, you have big skies, bold color, and that intense, strong light — it trained my eye early on to really see color and contrast. The landscape there is so dramatic and full of texture, and that definitely shows up in my work. I’ve always loved living in large cities – I’ve lived in Sydney, London, Berlin among others – and now that I’m based in New York, there’s this whole other layer. The pace, energy, and graphic shapes of the place. I think my work blends those two worlds: the bright, sun-drenched vibe of Australia with the structure and rhythm of city life.

Your work is full of vibrant colors and energy—what draws you to this bold palette?

In Australia, everything is turned up a notch — the sun, the sky, the sea — nature is very bold there and so I always loved strong bright colors. I’m drawn to color that makes you feel something — joyful and happy mostly. I use it to create rhythm and movement, like a visual beat that runs through my patterns and illustrations.



What is your process for turning everyday objects into captivating art?

Often I decide on a theme to make a collection of art and patterns around and it's all planned out from the start. But sometimes it starts with noticing something small — a shape, a shadow, a bit of texture or crumpled leaf on the sidewalk. I'm constantly collecting visual scraps on my phone's camera. Once I have the idea or theme, I'll sketch, doodle, or play around in my sketchbook or Procreate until something clicks. I often add a bit of fun too — taking the ordinary and letting it surprise.

Which of your recent works feels most personal to you, and why?

One of my most personal recent projects was creating artwork from a typeface that I had designed called Saison. I made Saison during the type design program at Cooper Union here in NYC a few years ago. It's a revival and you can read more at <https://www.karenparry.com/saison.html>. I really loved the "S" in the original specimen and I always wanted to do something graphical using the font. So I created a collection called Letter Set and it felt like a full-circle moment — combining my love of type — I've been a graphic designer for over 35 years — with my visual storytelling in a way that felt really true to me. The artwork Sunny Day Blue, chosen for the Times Square showcase, is from this collection.

How do you approach designing for surface licensing versus creating purely for artistic expression?

When I'm creating just for myself, it's all about exploration — following an idea or visual thread and seeing where it goes. I'm not thinking about where it'll end up. It's more instinctual, more about the joy of making. It's usually just filling in pages of a sketchbook.

But when I'm designing for licensing, I shift into a more strategic mode. I'm still drawing from the same inspirations, but I'm thinking about how the artwork might live on products — how it repeats, how the colors translate across surfaces, what season or market it fits. It's a mix of creativity and intention. I love both approaches — one fuels the other. When I have space to play, the licensed work ends up stronger, and when I have clear parameters, I get more inventive.

Are there particular themes or motifs you find yourself returning to in your illustrations?

I always come back to bold shapes, rhythm, color and a sense of movement — whether I'm drawing fruit characters, sun motifs, animals or flowers. There's usually a playful energy running through my work. Nature shows up a lot — but not in a hyper-realistic way. I'm drawn to organic forms, symmetry in chaos, and that tension between structure and spontaneity.



Jodi Lorenzo

Jodiyosa is an artist, aerialist, and animator, fascinated by flow, flight, and the female form. Hailing from the islands of the Philippines, she is currently based in Japan.

Project Statement

Every Day Durga is a piece made as a tribute to International Women's Day in March 2023. It is an ode to all the roles we play and that are sometimes expected of us as women. We are complex queens multitasking these different aspects of lives everyday, and we celebrate it.



— Interview

Thanh Thanh Nguyen

You started your career as an electrical engineer. What led you to begin exploring sculptural painting?

I started my career as an electrical engineer, which gave me a strong foundation in problem-solving and technical analysis. Over time, as I transitioned into data analysis and strategic roles, I realized I wanted a creative outlet that balanced my analytical side.

My first hands-on creative experience was making floral cupcakes with buttercream, but I wanted to create something more lasting. That curiosity led me to explore sculptural painting with acrylics. The process of carefully shaping each petal and designing modular pieces lets me apply the same precision and thoughtful design I use in my professional work, but in a more tactile and expressive way.

This blend of technical skill and creativity drew me deeply into sculptural floral art, and it's become a meaningful way to connect with both sides of myself. Over time, this evolved into my Magnetique Petals concept: merging artistic expression with innovation and modular design. It's still problem-solving, just with flowers instead of circuits.



Thanh Thanh Nguyen | Quiet crimson | 2025

What does the creative process look like when you're building one of your Magnetique Petals pieces?

When I create a Magnetique Petals piece, the process begins with inspiration: often drawn from nature, emotions, or a particular memory I want to express. I start by sketching a rough composition, focusing on how the petals and blooms will interact on the magnetic canvas. This initial layout helps me plan which elements will be fixed and which will be interchangeable.

Next, I hand-sculpt each petal using acrylic, carefully building layers to mimic the natural texture, curves, and veins of real flowers. Once the petals cure, I apply carefully chosen colors and finishes that enhance their natural texture and form, adding depth and dimension to bring out their lifelike qualities. Embedded magnets make each petal detachable, allowing for endless rearrangement and interaction. The final step is assembling the piece on the magnetic canvas, where I balance form, color harmony, and tactile experience. I offer a variety of premade backgrounds and sets of flowers that collectors can mix and match to create a personalized arrangement. The goal is to make the art visually captivating while inviting ongoing interaction, turning it into a collaborative and evolving experience.

How did the idea of embedding magnets into your floral sculptures come about?

The idea really came from wanting art to be more interactive and adaptable. I loved creating sculptural flowers, but once a piece was finished, it felt very static; you could admire it, but you couldn't change it.

One day, I was rearranging flowers in a vase and thought, Why can't wall art work the same way? That's when the idea clicked: if I embedded small magnets into each petal or bloom, they could attach to a magnetic canvas and be rearranged endlessly.



Thanh Thanh Nguyen | The secret she keeps | 2025



It combined my engineering mindset: problem-solving and modular design with my artistic vision for something beautiful yet functional. Now each piece isn't just art you look at, but art you can play with and make your own.

What role does interaction play in your artwork? Do you view the viewer as a co-creator?

Interaction is at the heart of my work. With *Magnetique Petals*, the artwork isn't meant to be a fixed composition. It's designed to change hands, moods, and seasons. By allowing petals and blooms to be rearranged, the viewer steps into the role of co-creator.

I see it as a collaboration: I provide the structure, textures, and colors, and the person interacting with the piece brings their own creativity and story to it. The result is something deeply personal, because no two arrangements are ever exactly the same.

In that way, my art becomes less of a one-time statement and more of an ongoing dialogue between the creator and the collector.

How do you choose your color palettes? Are they inspired by emotions, memories, or nature?

I'd say my color palettes are a mix of all three: emotions, memories, and nature, but nature is often the starting point. I pay close attention to how certain flowers naturally pair colors, from the soft blush-to-cream gradients of a peony to the bold contrasts in a zinnia.

From there, I layer in personal meaning. Some palettes are tied to memories like the dusty pinks and golds that remind me of sunsets in my hometown while others are guided by the mood I want the piece to evoke, whether that's calm, joy, or nostalgia.

It's a bit like composing music in color; I'm always aiming for harmony, but I'm not afraid of adding one unexpected "note" to make the whole composition feel alive.

Do you approach flowers more as symbols or as aesthetic forms? What do they represent to you?

For me, flowers are both aesthetic forms and symbols. I'm drawn to their shapes, textures, and the challenge of sculpting something so delicate in a lasting medium.

But they also carry deep meaning — and each flower has its own story. A zinnia speaks to lasting friendship, a peony to prosperity, a daisy to innocence. And then there's the blue rose — a bloom that doesn't exist in nature — symbolizing the unattainable, the mysterious, and the dream you're still chasing.

More than just shapes and colors, flowers are vessels for emotions and memories. By sculpting them in acrylic, I'm capturing not just their beauty but the heartbeat of the moments and feelings they represent, allowing them to live on, be touched, reimagined, and cherished anew over time.

Can you share a story behind one specific artwork that feels particularly meaningful to you?

These two pieces began as separate explorations, each reflecting a distinct chapter of my life, and I hadn't planned for them to be viewed together. But when I finally placed them side by side, I discovered a powerful conversation unfolding between them.

The Secrets She Keeps is a celebration of childhood summers: those endless days filled with vibrant energy and raw emotion. The flowers burst with bright, lively colors, and their petals carry a rough texture that speaks to the unfiltered, untamed spirit of youth. This piece captures the joy, curiosity, and sometimes the secrets we hold close during those formative years.

In contrast, *Quiet Crimson* embodies the weight and complexity of adulthood. The deep crimson backdrop reflects the burdens, challenges, and responsibilities that come with growing up. The flowers in this piece are softer and more uniform in color, with petals that flow gracefully, symbolizing the way we learn to adapt, blend in, and navigate the world with more subtlety. Yet, amid this maturity, flashes of my youthful self persist: the bright yellow flowers and wild leaves serve as reminders that even as adults, fragments of our inner child remain vibrant and wild beneath the surface. Together, these pieces create a visual narrative of growth, resilience, and the bittersweet dance between holding on and letting go. They invite viewers to reflect on their own journeys: the memories that shape us, the changes we endure, and the enduring spirit that connects our past and present.



— Interview

Ying-Syuan Zeng

Your background spans scenography, film, and object-making. How did this multidisciplinary experience shape the creation of Sylver Lining?

My practice has always moved between storytelling and material exploration, whether through the visual sweep of a stage, the intimacy of a handcrafted object, or the framing of an image. I worked as magazine editor and graphic designer after I finished college majoring in commercial design. In those years I learned to see things in an “editor’s/director’s eye” that later on greatly help me transitioning into doing design and production for theater and film.

In theater and film, I majored in costume design as well as wigs and prosthetic makeup design, and I took scenic art courses on the side, which gave me a sensitivity to scale, surface, and how objects relate to the body. That training taught me to think of wearable pieces not only as adornment, but as extensions of character and narrative. My time in film reinforced the importance of visual composition and emotional atmosphere—how every detail contributes to a story.

In Sylver Lining, these perspectives converge. Each piece is conceived not just as an isolated artwork, but as part of a larger visual narrative—portable fragments of beauty that can accompany their wearer, carrying with them layers of story, meaning, and presence.

Can you tell us more about the Cloisonné Resin technique you developed? What inspired you to reinterpret traditional cloisonné enamel in a contemporary way?



I’ve always been fascinated by the luminosity and depth of traditional cloisonné enamel—the way light seems to live inside the color. The process, however, is rooted in metal and glass, involves flame torching, and requires a kiln—something my small New York apartment could never accommodate. At the same time, I wanted to bring that visual richness into a form that allowed for more sculptural freedom, lighter weight, and durability for daily wear.

My background in scenic art, particularly in faux finishing, plants the seed for this. I often work to replicate the appearance of one material using entirely different substances—wood to look like marble, resin to look like metal. That mindset made me wonder: why not try to develop my own technique to mimic the luminous, jewel-like quality of traditional cloisonné enamel without relying on its exact materials or processes?

Over time, I developed what I call the Cloisonné Resin technique: building intricate compartments much like traditional cloisonné, but filling them with layers of hand-tinted resin rather than enamel. This opened up a new vocabulary for me—colors that could shift in translucency, gradients that feel almost painterly, and surfaces that could hold embedded textures or subtle inclusions. The technique lets me honor the precision and meditative rhythm of traditional cloisonné, while also pushing it into a more contemporary, wearable, and narrative-driven space. In many ways, it’s a conversation between heritage and innovation, past and present—just like the stories I hope each piece will carry.

Your works blur the line between jewelry, art, and personal objects. How do you envision people interacting with them in daily life?



I see my pieces as intimate companions that invite personal interaction beyond mere adornment. They are designed to be worn, touched, and contemplated—objects that carry stories and emotions close to the body. In daily life, I hope they serve not just as decorative accents but as anchors for memory, reflection, and self-expression. Whether someone wears a piece to feel connected to a moment, a person, or an idea, I want these works to become part of their everyday rituals—quiet reminders of the invisible threads that weave our inner and outer worlds together.

The title *Sylver Lining* suggests a play on resilience and quiet comfort. Do you see your pieces as emotional companions?

Absolutely. Each piece is both a refuge and a companion in its own right. The process of making them brings me a deep sense of comfort and peace amid a fast-paced, high-pressure professional life. Balancing countless responsibilities and the demand for high-quality work under tight deadlines has often left my mind overly active and chaotic. Creating this series has become a grounding ritual—helping to quiet the noise within and offer moments of stillness. In this way, the pieces are not only expressions of resilience but also vessels of quiet comfort, both for myself and, I hope, for those who wear them.

Color and texture play such a strong role in your designs—how do you select and compose the palettes for each piece?

My background as a scenic artist taught me to see color and texture as inseparable. Years of faux finishing trained my eye to notice how the slightest shift in hue, the layering of translucent glazes, or the introduction of a subtle texture could completely change the mood of a surface. I approach my jewelry the same way—building color in layers, allowing light to pass through or catch on a texture so the piece feels

alive from every angle. Sometimes I start with a specific mood or memory, translating it into a palette; other times, the palette emerges through the process, guided by how different pigments and textures react within the resin. For me, color isn't just a visual choice—it's a tactile and emotion, meant to be felt as much as seen.

There is a distinct tactile quality to your works. How important is touch in your creative process and in the viewer's experience?

Touch is essential both in how I create and how I imagine others experiencing my work. The smoothness of materials like resin plays a vital role, offering a tactile softness that invites close, gentle interaction. Equally important is the intricate wiring process inspired by cloisonné technique, where fine metal wires delicately separate each color and texture, adding a subtle raised texture that contrasts with the smooth resin surfaces—surfaces that are later polished into one unified whole. As I work, this interplay of smoothness and intricate detail guides an intuitive dialogue between my hands and the materials. For those who wear or encounter the pieces, I hope this tactile richness encourages a sensory connection that goes beyond the visual—transforming the work into a living experience that feels personal, intimate, and full of meaning.

What role do memory and personal narrative play in your work? Do any specific stories inform this series?

Memory and personal narrative are deeply integral to my work. For instance, *Lavender Ice Cream* is a tribute to a meaningful moment in Los Angeles, where I finally met two good friends in person after years of connecting solely online. We shared a long brunch, wandered the neighborhood chatting for hours, and ended the day savoring a memorable honey lavender ice cream — my first ever. That experience of connection and discovery is captured in the piece. *The Raven* draws inspiration from the mysterious iridescence of raven feathers. While these birds are often seen as ominous, I perceive them as symbols of divine protection and wisdom. Carrying *The Raven* with me feels like wearing a talisman — a constant source of guidance and reassurance. *Forget Me Not* is a heartfelt remembrance of my late mentor, who felt like a grandfather figure despite no blood relation. In homage to the Victorian tradition of crafting hair wreaths jewelry from the locks of loved ones, I translate this intimate art form into my work as a way to honor his memory.

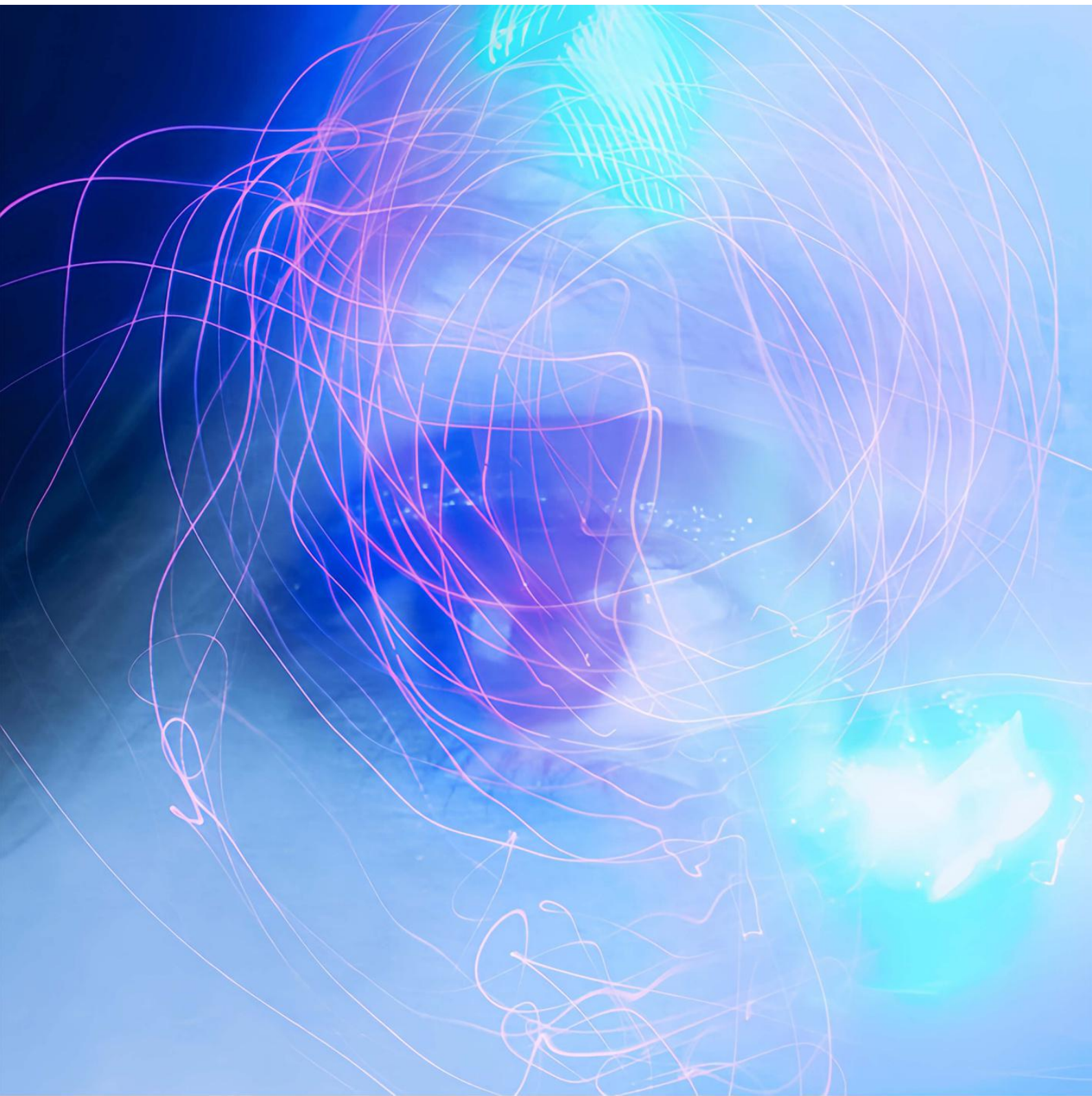


Irina Korshunova

I was born in Perm, Russia, and currently live and work in Tbilisi, Georgia. My background spans both biology and visual arts, reflecting my passion for combining analytical expertise with creative expression. I hold a PhD in Microbiology from the Institute of Ecology and Genetics of Microorganisms in Perm, along with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Genetics from Perm State University. My scientific career includes roles as a senior microbiology professional IN PHARMACEUTICAL FACILITY and as a research engineer at Perm State University. Since 2024, I've been working as a Life Science Consultant, where I integrate my biological knowledge with IT technologies. Alongside my scientific work, I've been actively involved in photography since 2010. My artistic style draws on retro aesthetics inspired by the 80s and 90s, using vibrant hues of blue, purple, and yellow, as well as techniques like blur and grain, to evoke nostalgia and emotion. Balancing scientific precision with artistic vision is central to my work, and this dual focus continues to shape my identity as both a scientist and an artist.

Project Statement

'Chaos' project is a visual exploration of chaos as an integral part of both the internal and external world. Through self-portraits and abstract light reflections, I seek to convey a sense of unpredictability, where the boundaries between the personal and the surrounding reality dissolve. Inspired by Edward Lorenz's "butterfly effect" theory, the project captures moments when barely perceptible changes in light, movement, and perspective radically transform the perception of space. The magic of chance comes alive in shimmering glares, reflections, and flares. These ephemeral fragments of reality become a metaphor for the fragility of human existence — the feeling of vulnerability in the face of the world and the awareness that even the smallest moment can carry immense significance.



Irina Korshunova | Chaos

— Interview

Beulah Bujan

Your paintings radiate imagination and emotion. What role does fantasy play in your creative process?

Fantasy is I-Magic nation that magnetizes and guides my physical energy to flow into form.

How did studying with Gonzalo Balboa influence your approach to painting and color?

Gonzalo Balboa taught me to use the receptive soil in God's garden which lies within.

You use a mix of materials – oil, charcoal, pastels.



Beulah Bujan | Peace Promotes Love Bur War Causes Hatred



How do you decide which medium to use for a particular piece?

It depends on my playful mood.

Your works seem to blend innocence with profound symbolism. How does your inner child inspire your art?

I explore with wonder, curiosity n' adventure.

How do your experiences across different cultures and continents reflect in your artwork?

I open my heart to the guidance of love and adapt to the new and never stop learning - a life-long process... never return from a trip without a book.

Has being a teacher influenced how you see and create art?

Creativity n' teaching are inseparable to suit ages 4-65 using a combination of love and respect.

Do you see connections between your visual art and your writing? How do they feed into each other?

Definitely my visual art and writing are inseparable. I mix and match.



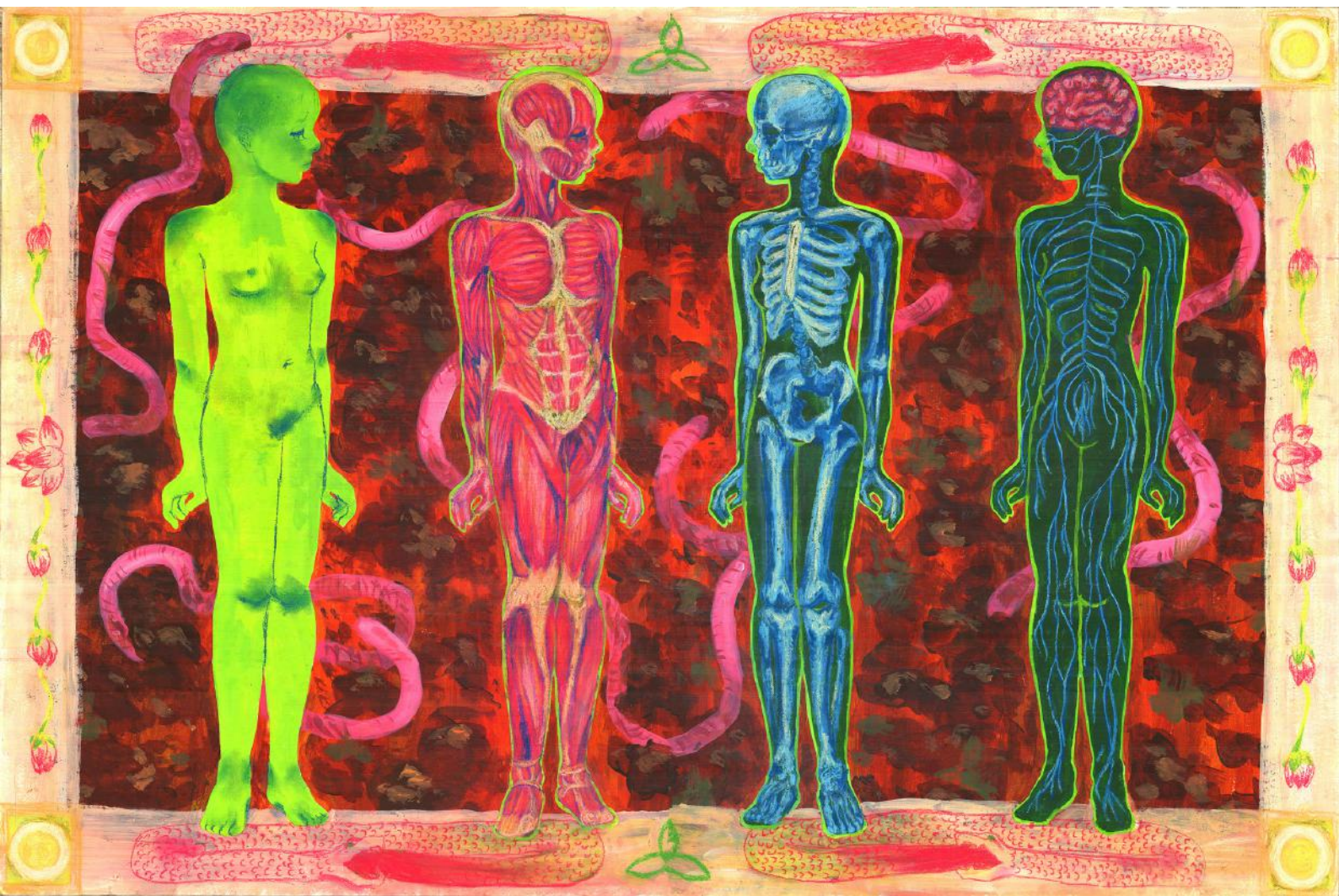
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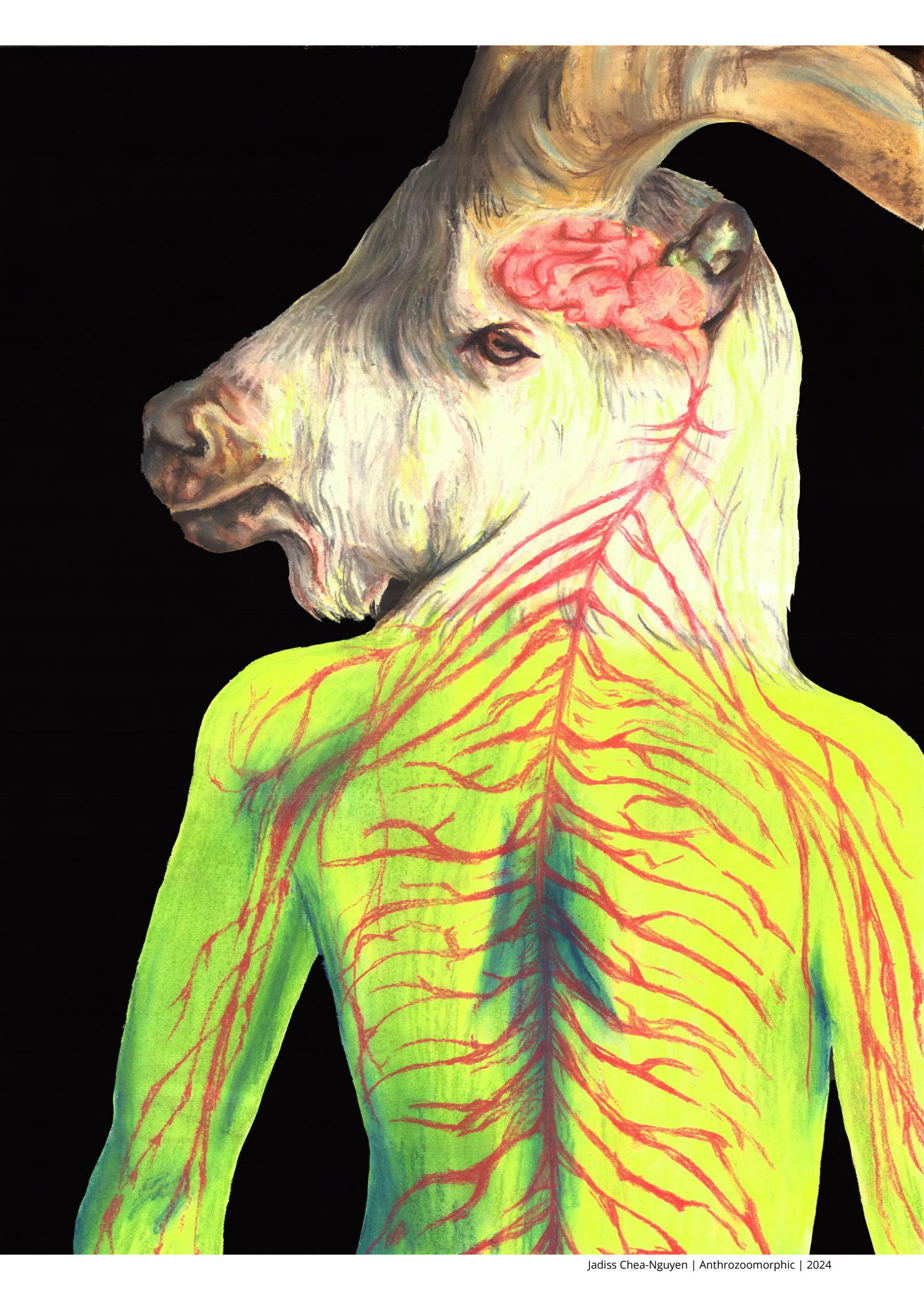
Born and raised in South Philly, **Jadiss Chea-Nguyen** is a Cambodian-American artist currently studying for a BFA at Tyler's School of Art. With experience in painting, drawing, ceramics, and stone carving, her interdisciplinary body of work often explores themes of self-reflection, family, cultural identity, and the human relationship with the forces of nature through self portraits. Jadiss draws inspiration from her experiences as an Asian American woman and the constant evolution of culture, and often takes a multicultural approach to her artmaking by looking at both historical and contemporary means of exchange.

Project Statement

In creating "Transference", I've been thinking a lot about death and ways we cope with it, and how views on death vary culturally. As a born and raised Theravada Buddhist, I'm meant to view death as a beautiful part of the cycle of samsara. an opportunity for the soul to become enlightened and most likely return to earth. As a westerner, I've learned in science class that when you die your energy is recycled back to the earth through decomposition. In both worlds the physical body dies, but your energy continues to serve a larger purpose. Death appears objectively as a transitional period and that helps me not be afraid of it. The imagery of this piece leans heavily towards western science, but my heart believes both can be true.

Jadiss Chea-Nguyen | Transference | 2025





— Interview

Aleksandra Pakhanian

You have a background in playback theatre and psychology. How do these two worlds influence your visual art?



Theater and psychology go hand in hand, as both involve emotions, feelings, and the stories of different people. I am learning to listen and hear, to extract subtext from the words spoken. Through a person's facial expressions, I see more. I encounter hundreds of human stories and destinies, collecting images, words, and feelings. All of this is reflected in my works.

What inspired you to transition from theatre to photography and mixed media?

I have always been involved in photography, but one day I decided that I could take it to a professional level. This happened during my maternity leave when I was able to take a break from the theater and reconsider my desires. However, theater and psychology are still a part of my life. I can't imagine life without them now.

Your statement describes your works as a "scream" — could you elaborate on what you're screaming about in this series?

I shout about the feelings of women that they keep silent about. This is my experience, that of my friends, the stories of people I hear in the theater and carry through myself. Feelings that cannot be kept quiet. About loneliness, fatigue, burnout, dissatisfaction with



one's figure, appearance, and the constant search for oneself.

My works address not only female experiences. They are also based on the feelings of the opposite gender. My next series of works will definitely be dedicated to male experiences. "Man. Alone." – this may be the title of my new project.

The series "Woman. Alone." touches on the inner states of modern women. What personal emotions or experiences fueled this project?

As a sensitive person, which greatly helps my creativity, I experience a wide range of emotions, such as fatigue from daily life. I often compare myself to others, both in terms of appearance and achievements. The feeling of loneliness is also something I experience.

I often feel the pressure of social norms. It took me time to accept and understand myself in order to create such works. For a long time, I held back my creative impulses, fearing not being accepted. But that is in the past now. Through my work, I communicate with people.

Your pieces challenge structure and embrace chaos. How do you decide when a composition is "complete"?

It's more of an intuitive feeling. Minimalism is hard for me because for 40 years I didn't fully express myself, and now I'm finally able to. I have things to say, and I don't limit my expression in each piece. I allow myself to release a lot. I don't want there to be any unsaid thoughts. When I feel a "stop" inside, that's when I stop.

You use vibrant colors and bold contrasts. What role does color play in expressing the invisible?

Color is my theme. I love bright, bold, daring combinations. Color helps me in some works to transition into a scream. But the scream is sometimes louder, sometimes quieter. Colors help balance the statement. And what was hidden, thanks to color and form, comes to life.

Can you tell us more about the bio materials you incorporate — fabrics, beads, embroidery — and how they connect to the body or emotion?

The bio materials I use primarily allow me to feel the work, focus on it, and experience it. After the mixed-media processes, I move with inspiration to digital art. Combining these two styles is like seeing a multidimensional picture of the world, the inner world of my characters, and my response to the pain of others.



Josephine Tomaszewska (b. in Warsaw, 1991). She's a graduate of cultural studies and The Academy of Photography. Her work focuses on the issues of ageism and the perspective of women and their place in society. She was published in "2023 in the Lenses of Polish Photographers". Completed the 13th edition of The Sputnik Photos Mentoring Program. Josephine lives and works in Warsaw.

Project Statement

Saska Kępa, Warsaw, 2019. From the bathroom window, I see a small photography studio every day. Intrigued by the place, I often wonder who runs it.

In the summer of 2022, I meet her on the street. She invites me to the studio and we talk.

50 years make us apart, passion for photography makes us alike.

What is the status of a woman photographer in the 1970s in Poland? What is it like today? At what pace are changes taking place? Is this pace sufficient?

Working with Mrs. Celina Osiecka's archives, I compare the situation of women then and today, in 2024.

The eponymous 46 Steps is not just the distance between my apartment and the photography studio. How many steps must be taken for our hopes to become fulfilled?

The project was created during the Mentoring Program of Sputnik Photos 2023/2024

ROZSĄDNA DZIELNA DZIEWCZYNA

WIEK CZŁOWIEKA jest odwrotnie proporcjonalny do jego doświadczenia. Im kto starszy, to mądrzejszy, a im młodszy... Dlatego stale tyle rozwodów, pochopnych związków, niechcianych dzieci, dramatów rodzinnych, spraw alimentacyjnych! I rozpaczliwych listów do redakcji: „Ratuj!”.

Toteż rodzice, w pocie czoła, wypracowują i mają już gotowy, wygodny, praktyczny model rozsądnej dziewczyny. Wszystko wiadomo, co robić, kiedy i jak. Przestrzeganie tych zaleceń zabezpiecza przed: rozczarowaniami, niedostatkami, porzuceniem z dzieckiem na ręku, mieszkaniem u teściów, zależnością materialną od męża, brakiem kwalifikacji zawodowych, i tak dalej.

Kiedy rozsądna, zdolna i ambitna dziewczyna powinna wyjść za mąż?

Nie przed 24 rokiem życia. Biorąc pod uwagę, że dziecko idzie do szkoły, mając lat 7, zanim zdobędzie średnie wykształcenie – minie lat 12, a wyższe studia trwają przeciętnie 5 lat – rozsądna dziewczyna uzyska dyplom magistra dopiero w 24 roku życia.

A przecież nikt rozsądny nie wchodzi w związki małżeńskie, zanim nie zdobędzie zawodu! Wszystkie pisma kobiece głoszą pochwałę tych wstrzemięźliwych a samodzielnych, które najpierw mają fach w ręku, zanim przystąpią do owijania mężczyzny wokół palca. Toteż dzielna dziewczyna kończy studia jako panna.

Jednak mądra dziewczyna nie wychodzi za mąż zanim nie ma gdzie mieszkać ze swoim wybranym. Toteż, z myślą o przyszłości, z aprobatą mamy i taty, już podczas stażu zapisuje się do spółdzielni mieszkaniowej i wpłaca comiesięcznie określoną kwotę na poczet swego wkładu.

Po dwóch latach od chwili wypełnienia odpowiedniej deklaracji, rozsądna dziewczyna mianowana zostaje członkiem, a po czterech latach od tej chwili wchodzi w posiadanie własnego domu. Wtedy wychodzi za mąż. Ma lat 30. Piękny wiek!

Otrzymawszy mieszkanie, posłuszna córka, dzielna kobieta i zapobiegliwa żona energicznie przystępuje do meblowania. Przy dużej przedsiębiorczości i dyscyplinie finansowej zajmuje jej to dwa lata. Na Targach Poznańskich zademonstrowano nam wyposażenie M-3 w meble za cenę od 24 tys. złotych.

32-letnia rozsądna kobieta ma więc wyższe studia, pracę, męża, mieszkanie, meble i teraz przystępuje do uzupełnień: lodówka, bez której nie może żyć cywilizowany człowiek XX wieku, pralka, odkurzacz, radio i telewizor. Po roku wyrzuci 33-letnia myśląca kobieta ma już warunki, żeby urodzić dziecko.

Jeszcze tylko rok oszczędności, że – przygotować się na pokrycie zwiększonych wydatków. Jeszcze tylko rok zaczekać z myślą o bezpłatnym urlopie macierzyńskim.

35 lat! Przeworna kobieta może zostać matką! ...Wtedy okazuje się, że jej mąż został ojcem, bo jakaś szalona młoda dziewczyna bez wykształcenia, bez stażu, bez mieszkania, bez krzesła, bez odkurzacza, a nawet bez zastanowienia – właśnie urodziła mu córeczkę.

Nie martwcie się jednak.

Los bywa mściwy.

Chyba z tej córeczki wyrośnie rozsądna, dzielna dziewczyna.

MARIA MANKIEWICZ

CORAZ WIĘCEJ CORAZ LEPIEJ

UCZEŃ SIĘGA PO KIELISZEK

Kilka godzin uczą się w szkole. Kilka go-

JUŻ DZIŚ nie trzeba nikogo przekonywać o...

Można też zwiększyć...

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Mrożone warzywa i owoce 4500 t 3600 t 15 000 t

Mrożone wyroby kulinarne 6000 t 2800 t 24 000 t

Lody 1800 t 2400 t 12 800 t

ktem ze sklepem konfekcyjnym i stąd gapią się na ulicę Warszawską. — W sobotę i w niedzielę nie innego nie przychodzi do głowy jak tylko zalać się w pestkę i to będzie rozrywka... informował 17-letni wówczas chłopak.

Zgodnie z miejscowym zwyczajem umówiliśmy się „pod koszulą”. Deszcz wprawdzie nie zaczął, bo blok ma coś w rodzaju okapu, ale zimny wiatr nie pozwalał stać w jednym miejscu. Chodziliśmy zatem po ulicy Warszawskiej w tę i z powrotem... Chcieliśmy się ogrzać w świetlicy Cechu Rzemiosł Różnych, ale drzwi zamknięto nam przed nosem, otwierano je tylko dla posiadaczy kart wstępu. Nie wpuszczono nas także do świetlicy

46 KROKÓW

KOBIETA
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16 lipca 1972 r. Cena 2 zł

W numerze m.in:

Praca
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Męski głos
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Pobaw się
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Milionerki



Rozsądna
dzielna
dziewczyna



Czy kobieta
wypoczywa
inaczej?

— Interview

Robi Munta

Your artistic journey began in the early 1990s. Can you tell us about the context and inspiration behind “A Devil in Me”?

Let’s just say that my passion for drawing has always been there since I was young and it later developed into a technical direction through professional studies as a surveyor. In the 1990s, these illustrations were created, which I titled “A Devil in Me!” Symbolically, the contrast between angels and demons can represent the internal conflict between the positive and negative



Robi Munta | Grunge Devil



forces present in the human soul, the struggle between virtue and vice, between rationality and instinct. In fact, along with the paintings depicting devils, there are others depicting angelic figures. There Must Be an Angel (Playing with My Heart).

How did your background as a surveyor influence your approach to illustration and visual storytelling?

I believe my training has been able to combine technical precision with the visual sensitivity of someone who seeks details that often escape the distracted eye, while maintaining a curious gaze.

You mention that observation and wonder are central to your creative vision. How do these values guide your artistic process today?

Over the years, photography has become a compass for me, a natural extension of my love of travel, art, and all forms of expression that convey beauty. Through it, I have cultivated a personal vision based on exploration, observation, and wonder. Images tell stories of places, atmospheres, faces, and emotions; each shot can become an opportunity to see and re-see the world with new eyes, or with those of a child.

The figure in “A Devil in Me” appears powerful yet introspective. What emotions or inner conflicts



were you aiming to express through this character?

I was going through a period of internal conflict, which I wanted to represent symbolically with angels and demons. In addition to the drawings of devils, there are others depicting angels. The figures are contrasting yet complementary forces, positive and negative forces present in each of us that confront yet complement each other, repelling and attracting.

What led you to revisit and digitize this early work decades later? Did your perception of the artwork change during this process?

I admit that sometimes my actions aren't guided by anything rational; in certain moments, instinct and creativity take precedence over technicality. We often hear that we must learn to listen to ourselves; in those moments, an inner inspiration pushes me to act and make choices. Over time, I've learned not to ignore it, but to listen to it and, above all, to follow its advice, even if I don't understand why at the time; the result will reveal itself. In conclusion, one day, I opened a drawer, dusted off an old folder containing these

drawings, and, when I saw this opportunity, I seized it.

Marcel Proust's quote seems to play a guiding role in your philosophy. How do you "see with new eyes" when approaching your subjects?

I believe this is an attitude inherent in me, part of my nature: a technical mind, yet a dreamer at heart. The theorized poetics of "childhood"—in every human being, even adults, resides a childlike part capable of awe and wonder at things, similar to the pure and naive gaze of a child. This inner "childhood" is a source of poetic inspiration, as it allows us to grasp the beauty and hidden meanings in small things, often overlooked by adult rationality.

You work across photography, illustration, and art. How do these mediums interact in your practice?

They alternate and complement each other. Initially, drawing was the primary means of expression, but over time it evolved from manual techniques to digital graphics, and only later did photography become the dominant art form.



Sayan Bhattacharyya is a final year BFA student from Kala Bhavan, Visva-Bharati University, India. Apart from participating in several national seminars and workshops, he has showcased his skills on many other platforms. His special area is tempera painting. His artwork titled "Unrequited Love" has lately been shortlisted for Summer Edition of the USA-based Otherwise Engaged Literature and Arts Journal and his article on Abanindranath Tagore in the upcoming international conference on "Indigenous Knowledge System and Decolonial Turn: Global South in Focus" to be hosted by Bodoland University, Assam, during 16-17 October 2025.

Project Statement

After strolling through the vibrant sunflowers garden near my home, I poured my emotions onto the canvas, capturing a poignant phase of my life. In this piece "The forest's Ferny floor", I depicted myself reclining amidst nature's splendor, surrounded by the resilient beauty of wilting sunflowers - a testament to finding solace in impermanence and embracing new beginnings. The busy dung beetles, going about their routine, serve as a poignant reminder that life marches on. The monochrome palette lends an air of mystery and serenity, while the delicate brushstrokes echo the ebbs and flows of my mind. This artwork is a reflection of my inner world, where beauty, impermanence, and resilience converge.



Jingyi Zhang

Your practice blends photography, moving images, and interactive design. How do you decide which medium best conveys a particular concept?

I believe it depends on what I want to express: photography helps me convey fragmented emotions; moving images allow me to tell a more complete story and offer a kind of freedom and fluid format compared to traditional films or shorts. Interactive design makes me consider the user experience and the technical expression of the work. I don't limit myself to any single medium—I like to use them flexibly and bring out the greatest potential of each. I also really enjoy the process of multimedia storytelling.

Many of your works use natural objects as metaphors. What draws you to nature as a visual and symbolic language?

To me, nature represents an innate human attribute. Humans are born from nature and transform it into various forms for different purposes. Exploring natural objects goes beyond their materiality; it is also about uncovering the human psychology and subconscious behind them. Humans unconsciously project emotions onto these objects, creating beautiful and sensible connections.

Having exhibited in the USA, China, Japan, and Brazil, have you noticed differences in how audiences from different cultures respond to your art?

Originally, I thought my Asian background and artistic style might resonate more strongly with Asian audiences, and that responses would vary across different countries and regions. But from all the feedback I've received, I've found that the feelings evoked by my work are quite consistent—a sense of calm, peace, and healing. For example, in my recently closed exhibition in New York, "Echoes of Culture," my photography showcased Buddhist art from Dunhuang and traditional Chinese qipao clothing. Many people from diverse cultural backgrounds felt the same serene Eastern aesthetic and poetic atmosphere in my photos, which I feel very delighting. I hope my art creates a unique cultural context that transcends boundaries and touches all audiences.

You have participated in both physical and online exhibitions. How do you see the relationship between digital presentation and in-person experience in contemporary art?

I personally prefer attending opening events in person and engaging with all the audience—that's how I get the most genuine feedback. However, online exhibitions have become a trend in today's digital era—everything physical is transformed into virtual platforms or even NFTs. This helps break down barriers of time and space, allowing more people to access art. Still, it can limit the full expression of artworks. I firmly believe that the best way to experience contemporary art is in physical exhibitions—contextual spaces are crucial to shaping the artworks' expression itself.



Jingyi Zhang | Yugua Island | 2024

You have a background in Film and Media Studies from Columbia University. How has academic research influenced your artistic choices?

Academic research has trained my way of thinking—I tend to dive deeply into even small research topics and analyze them comprehensively. I try to apply this approach to my art creation, so that I don't want to just make beautiful pieces but explore the underlying logic and background of the themes. I believe artworks created this way are more powerful and moving.

Can you share a challenge you faced while creating an installation, and how you overcame it?

I'm currently working on a new photography installation using resin. The biggest challenge comes from materials. I live in New York, but some crucial materials I plan to use in the work are only available in China, and it's complicated to get them here. So, I'm considering either replacing them with materials easily sourced locally or paying for expensive shipping, weighing the time and cost involved. I think artists

always need to balance their creative ideas with material and technical constraints. I prefer to start from reality—sometimes limits or restrictions can become a source of creativity. Maybe adapting to local conditions is a better choice for me.

What themes or questions are you currently exploring in your upcoming projects?

I want to continue my project that combines the “I Ching” (Book of Changes) with programming visualization—trying to create more complete interactive experiences and design motion graphics for more hexagrams. I hope to merge traditional Chinese cultural classics with cutting-edge technology, making it an open cultural space that presents different languages of expression across time, exploring its infinite potential. This project excites me a lot. I hope to complete the whole work in a residency and present it on a great platform. I'm even considering collaborating with commercial projects or tech companies to realize my entire design.

Nyll Axis is the pseudonym of an artist who prefers to remain incognito. His paintings emerge as a nameless presence moving along the spiral of perception. There are no stories, no time - only appearances and disappearances. What remains are abstract glyphs with the illusion of meaning, thresholds, lines, and dissolving architecture. These are not narratives, but signals - pointing beyond knowledge toward the vanishing wall of the self.

Project Statement

My work unfolds within the architecture of inner space. I construct symbolic systems that reflect zones of refinement within reality. Each image combines elements that delineate the boundary between the perceived and the unmanifest. The human figure becomes a condensed node of awareness, locked within recursive corridors, encountering illusory exits and sacred interference. Architecture and line serve to shape and sharpen the absence of density in the surrounding field. I am drawn to the spiral of return - the collapse of constructed perception, the black window that never opens, the dissolving edge between the seeker and the silence. These are not artworks. They are fragments of a myth that erases itself. "Dissolving Wall" series The "Dissolving Wall" series explores the structures through which perception is formed, and the quiet unraveling that follows any attempt to look beyond them. Each composition presents a layered architecture of mind—a fabricated solidity shaped by attention, belief, and habit. Within these arrangements, the figure is not a subject but a condensation of awareness, placed against the illusion of passage or exit. The black obelisks and suspended forms promise depth, yet deny entry. The invented symbols offer the appearance of meaning, while withholding language. These paintings do not describe a journey. They enact the moment when inquiry deconstructs itself—when looking too closely causes the surface to dissolve, and what was once structure is revealed as a pattern of disappearance.



Nyll Axis | Dissolving Wall | 2025



Roxanne Chew

Your work beautifully integrates art therapy and personal artistic expression. How do these two practices influence each other in your creative process?

My personal art-making and art therapy practice are in constant dialogue. Art therapy has taught me to approach creation with deep listening—to be attuned not only to imagery but also to the emotions, memories, and stories it carries. This mindset naturally shapes my own work, where I allow meaning to unfold through the process rather than force a fixed outcome. In turn, my personal art practice keeps me creatively nourished and grounded, enabling me to show up authentically for my clients. This mutual exchange ensures that both practices are enriched—



Roxanne Chew | Rooted In Love | 2025



Roxanne Chew | Rooted In Love | 2025

my art becomes more mindful and intentional, and my therapeutic work benefits from my active engagement with art as a lived experience.

In *Rooted in Love*, the leaves and flowers carry strong symbolic meaning. Could you share how you chose these particular forms and colors to represent resilience and renewal?

Leaves have always represented grounding and continuity for me, while flowers embody growth, fragility, and beauty. The central pink blossom symbolizes vitality and the strength that emerges through life's transitions, while the two smaller blossoms suggest the ongoing process of becoming. The blue background evokes calm and depth, providing a steady backdrop for these symbols of renewal.

The central flower in your composition stands out as a symbol of growth and strength. Was it inspired by a personal experience or a universal message you wished to convey?

It's both personal and universal. Personally, it reflects my own journey of navigating change and finding balance. Universally, it speaks to the quiet triumphs we all experience when we adapt, heal, and grow despite life's uncertainties.

You used leaf printmaking in this piece. Could



you walk us through your creative process for making these imprints and the emotions you associate with them?

I begin by selecting leaves for their unique shapes, textures, and the way their veins tell their own quiet story. I apply paint to one side of each leaf and press it onto the canvas, transferring the intricate details. Each complete set of prints is then layered with another coat of paint to create depth and richness, with the printing process repeated over and over in layers. This slow, deliberate approach is both meditative and grounding, allowing me to be fully present with each mark while watching the image emerge organically over time.

As an art therapist, how do you see nature-based imagery—like leaves and flowers—helping people process emotions or navigate transitions?

Nature-based imagery provides an accessible and non-threatening way to explore emotions while also offering a sense of calm. Leaves and flowers carry universal symbolism—change, growth, resilience—that can help people reflect on their own life transitions. At the same time, engaging with nature-inspired forms can have a relaxing effect, slowing breathing, softening tension, and creating space for emotional release. The dual impact—emotional processing alongside physical relaxation—makes nature-based imagery a powerful tool for healing.

This work was created during a period of profound transition. How did the act of making it support your own emotional journey at that time?

During that period of transition, the process became my anchor. The repetitive act of pressing leaves, applying paint, and layering prints one over another mirrored the way I was slowly building stability in my own life. Each layer added depth not only to the canvas but also to my emotional resilience. The meditative rhythm of the process allowed me to slow down, breathe, and hold space for both uncertainty and hope. In many ways, the artwork became a visual record of my own grounding and renewal during that time.

You also create digital art portraits. How does working in a digital medium compare to working with traditional materials in terms of emotional expression?

Traditional materials connect me physically to the work through texture, scent, and touch—elements that deepen the sensory experience of creation. Digital art, on the other hand, offers fluidity and experimentation without the limitations of physical media. Emotionally, digital portraits allow me to capture likeness and narrative in a way that feels immediate and contemporary, while traditional work holds a tactile intimacy. Both speak different emotional languages, and I value each for what they bring to my practice.



Elena Nabatova

Style: Abstraction, mixed media art

I strive to convey inner experiences and sensations, eliciting associations in the viewer. I use free gestures and expressive brushstrokes, and I add textural elements to enrich the visual experience. Each layer is part of the process, creating depth and multi-layered structure. I work with acrylic and oil paints, as well as texture paste.

My abstractions explore themes such as:

- The perception of space and time
- Emotions and the human inner world
- Natural phenomena and their impact on the soul

My works are intended for people open to new ideas and emotions. They are created for collectors, artists, and art lovers seeking inspiration. I believe that art is a form of nonverbal communication capable of bringing people together and awakening feeling.



Elena Nabatova | Birth



Elena Nabatova | Moon and Mountains



Elena Nabatova | Dragon's Eye

Critical Review of Eva Oleandr's Work

by Anna Gvozdeva

Eva Oleandr's art emerges as a meticulous interplay between surrealism, symbolism, and philosophical reflection, presenting a body of work that is as technically accomplished as it is conceptually layered. Across the four presented pieces, her focus on coloured pencils, watercolours, and mixed media reveals a consistent commitment to fine detail, nuanced shading, and controlled palettes dominated by muted tones with deliberate bursts of red—symbolically charged and emotionally potent.



In *Attachment*, two swans—black and white—are entwined in a knot, their necks bound by a fragile red thread. The symmetry is disrupted by mirrored tears, suggesting emotional interdependence tinged with pain. The red crystalline forms floating around them read as both wounds and precious stones, oscillating between beauty and trauma. Here, Oleandr demonstrates her ability to use compositional mirroring and chromatic restraint to convey themes of duality, love, and conflict without over-explaining the narrative.

Eva Oleandr
Attachment
2025

Comedy and Tragedy sharpens her symbolic voice. A realistic heart is pierced by a sword, flanked by the theatrical masks of joy and sorrow embedded in rocky forms. The imagery is direct yet multi-layered: the sword as a unifying axis, the masks bound by red cords, and the clouds framing the scene all speak to the inevitability of emotional extremes in human life. Oleandr's rendering of anatomical and fabric textures displays technical precision, while the central composition creates an almost ritualistic visual impact.

Eva Oleandr
Comedy and Tragedy
2025





Eternal Present shifts towards a temporal meditation. The hourglass filled not with sand but with faces and skulls captures the passage from life to death, while fish suspended in each chamber evoke cyclical continuity. Roman numerals and spear-like arrows situate the piece within a symbolic clock, expanding the concept of time beyond linearity. The balance of blue-toned clouds against red accents maintains her visual signature while reinforcing the cold inevitability of time's flow.

Eva Oleandr
Eternal Present
2025

In *The Mask*, the focus narrows to a single serene face surrounded by rhythmic, organic lines in shades of rose and black. The absence of overt narrative allows for a more introspective encounter. The stylised mask—smiling faintly with closed eyes—can be read as a metaphor for inner peace, concealment, or even surrender. This work demonstrates Oleandr's capacity for restraint, where compositional simplicity amplifies meditative stillness.



Eva Oleandr
The Mask
2018

Conceptually, Oleandr's art aligns with her statement: each work feels like a fragment of a broader ontological investigation. Her recurring visual lexicon—knots, threads, masks, anatomical hearts, crystalline forms, and cyclical structures—functions as an evolving symbolic language, inviting viewers to decipher their own interpretations. Thematically, she addresses polarities—life and death, joy and sorrow, connection and separation—not as binaries, but as interwoven states.

If there is an area for further exploration, it might lie in expanding her chromatic range or varying compositional dynamics to introduce moments of unpredictability. While her visual coherence is a strength, occasional disruption of symmetry and motif repetition could further deepen the sense of discovery in her series.

Overall, Eva Oleandr's work demonstrates a mature synthesis of technique and concept, positioning her within a lineage of contemporary surrealist-symbolists who merge mythic imagery with philosophical inquiry. Her art does not offer definitive answers but rather serves as a contemplative space—an invitation to engage with the invisible threads between imagination, emotion, and reality.

— Interview

Aby Golden Lady B

Your work spans photography, poetry, and theater. How do you decide which medium to use when telling a story?

Honestly, the medium chooses me, since I encountered New York. I chose poetry and theater at age 12 after winning my first poetry contest and discovering the “Théâtre du Soleil”, led by Ariane Mnouchkine. I spent all my free time there until I was 20, when I wrote and directed my first play in Paris.

Photography, however, was a gift from New Yorkers themselves, who started calling me “Golden Lady B.” It was the first city I arrived in without friends or family. Photography was just a hobby, something I allowed myself. But somehow, this city has magic. In just three years, I became a listed photographer, alongside idols like Basquiat or William Klein. That doesn’t mean it’s easy. On my last trip, I arrived in New York with just 10 dollars in my pocket, beat that, Madonna! So yes, between struggles and red carpets, the medium finds me. I simply welcome each one as a gift... with a fair share of challenges! My projects are self-funded through crowdfunding campaigns and supported by my amazing network.



Aby Golden Lady B | New York - Broadway | 2022



You’ve described your work as a “living archive.” What does that mean to you artistically and politically?

We’re older than our elders. Amadou Hampâté Bâ once said, “When an old man dies, a library burns,” but when a child dies, it’s humanity itself that is dying.

We have to remember, but also a duty to reimagine. I see my work as an archive of resilience and transformation, made of real lives, daily beauty, and the things we forget to honour.

How did your multicultural background—Franco-Senegalese identity and New York experience—shape your artistic vision?

Honestly? In all three places, it’s a struggle for artists! But in all three places, passion wins.

Being an artist means bringing magic into your life. Yes, it takes energy, but it’s worth it.

Art and theatre are powerful alternatives to war and darkness. Today, we often confuse artists with influencers. But they don’t serve the same purpose. Influencers often reproduce a toxic model, based on appearances, easy dopamine, and a culture of consumption. True artists are seekers. They reflect, disturb, heal, and transform. In France, Senegal, and even New York, more than 80% of artists cannot make a living from their art. Yet we continue to create. Because we don’t do it to profit from the world, but to bring another sound to life. The day we invest more in art than in weapons will be the day we can truly say we live in peace. My artistic vision is to inspire others to tap into their creative side. Creativity leads to empathy, resilience, and social harmony.

In your photographs, the everyday becomes poetic. What draws you to these quiet, often unnoticed moments of city life?

Because those moments tell stories. stories that are just



beginning or about to end, depending on the viewer's imagination.

That's where inspiration is born. Being inspired means wanting to go further.

When someone asks to take a photo of my book, "New York Poets", I say yes with joy.

That's why I made it: To inspire others. We all have an artist inside waiting to be awakened. Mixing universal poetry with my New York snapshots makes that awakening possible.

Your return to the theatre after 28 years is powerful. What inspired your upcoming play at the Brooklyn Short Play Festival?

It's an unexpected encounter between my past and my future. A gift from heaven, history repeating itself, but in a positive way for once. Being part of New York theatre history is a great honour. At university, the Living Theatre was one of my research topics. The play I am currently writing is called "Burn, baby, burn" and will focus on suffering at work and New Yorkers, of course. I owe them that much!

The Brooklyn Short Play Festival is a project founded by Kate Huston and Casey Speer. We are four playwrights and directors, with Molly Stern and me, embarking on a wonderful creative marathon. We each started writing our plays in early June and met regularly to exchange ideas and inspire each other around the theme's festival "Take this to your grave". On August 20th, we will open auditions to begin rehearsals in September. You can join us on October 18th and 19th at RATS NYC, a theatre located in the heart of Dumbo, where the audience will participate in their marathon as they watch our four plays in one evening. Twenty-eight years ago, I was alone; now

there are four of us. It's like finding your first love again, except that it seems to have multiplied, ahah.

You often collaborate with collectives. What does shared creation mean in your process?

I love working in teams. I don't like loneliness, and I make friends in under five minutes! Being part of a collective boosts your confidence and creativity. It helps you grow without needing fame.

I became a listed artist in 3 years thanks to my participation in global collectives like Expo Metro and Artboxy. I've exhibited worldwide with minimal investment thanks to this spirit of mutual support. As a writer, I've contributed to over 7 anthologies published across the globe, from New York with Poetry Soup or Rencontre des auteurs francophones, to Bombay with Poet's Choice. Collectives create momentum and networks, provide funding, training, and solidarity. And let's not forget: they help us celebrate the wins together. But working with collectives isn't just a creative choice, it's a political act too. It's a way to propose another kind of society, one that doesn't revolve around influence and domination, but mutual care and shared strength.

From the UN talk to Art Basel, 2025 has been a landmark year. How do you see your voice evolving in the global art scene?

A voice for peace, above all. One of my collectives, Les Guérrières de la Paix, is nominated for the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize. That's how my 2025 year began ahah.

The recognition of my writing and photography on an international scale motivates me to amplify the voices of those we don't hear enough, those who struggle every day, yet still find ways to care for others.

With the support of Art Basel New York, this will allow me to exhibit my photography and poetry at other Art Basel events in the US and around the world. I have also just signed a partnership with Singulart, which also supports emerging artists.

If the stars keep nudging us forward, I like to think we'll still be here in a century. Art, and especially theater, is a form of resistance. We might be the last of a generation of engaged artists... or the first in a long, necessary revival.



Aby Golden Lady B | Unfinished legacy | 2023

LOVECASHIONISTA is a one of a kind brand that specializes in art, fashion design and photography. LoveCashionista's vividly expressive work has been recognized at various exhibitions and featured in major publications worldwide. The brand continuously works to develop, evolve and expand through its mission of turning pain into power through a blend of different art forms.

Project Statement

To develop, evolve and expand through its mission of turning pain into power through a blend of different art forms.





— Interview

Lev Shevchenko

You are known for your work in traditional wood carving. What inspired you to move into contemporary art?

Yes, I am a member of the Union of Artists of Russia and have been engaged in traditional wood carving since 1999. My first works were in the miniature technique—icons, crosses, Easter eggs. This delicate work required great patience and precision. Later came larger commissions: iconostases, kiots, and



church utensils. This direction was not chosen by chance. Even while studying at college, I came to faith and began attending church. Even then, I realized and deeply felt the urgent need for God's presence in my life... And all of this—my many years of experience, faith, and reflections on the fate of our world and the role of Man in it—pushed me to seek new forms of artistic expression.

Tell us about the process of creating "Object World 2025." What materials and symbols did you use?

The story of creating Object World 2025 is also closely connected with my work in decorating churches. My assistants and I were making an iconostasis. During the process, several beautiful elements remained. I picked them up, put them together, and they formed something resembling a church dome. I liked its shape... Well, if it's a dome, then there must be a cross! That's how the overall structure came to be. Then I looked at it for a long time. For several months it stood in my workshop. But the final decision came suddenly.

The image of the Earth hanging on a thin thread is very expressive. What emotions or thoughts do you want to evoke in the viewer?

One day, while discussing the global situation and another round of alarming news, I heard the phrase: "Right now, the whole world is hanging by a thread!" I vividly imagined this image... And indeed! But what is it still hanging on? And looking at my dome with the



cross, I understood—it's hanging on a thin thread of Hope, on a frame of Faith, Kindness, and Common Sense, which still remain in people. A small, fragile Earth is hanging by a thin red thread of Hope, which is held by a golden dome of Faith. But this is only the top of the composition. Below, where the frame of Faith is subject to the corrosion of human passions and the gold has almost worn off, lie scissors. Scissors of division, discord, destruction—with which everyone wants to cut off a piece for themselves. And with them, it's so easy to cut that thin thread...

What role, in your opinion, should an artist play in a time of global instability?

Artists and poets have always been the voice, the figurative reflection of their generation. And now, in our troubled times, this is more relevant than ever. The task of the artist is always to bring the light of art to people, to illuminate the difficult life of a person with a sense of beauty. And today, more than ever, the words of A.S. Pushkin about the role of the artist in the modern world are relevant: And I shall long be dear to the people, For awakening kind feelings with my lyre, For glorifying Freedom in my cruel age, And calling for mercy for the fallen...

Does your experience in traditional craft influence your approach to contemporary conceptual work?

Yes, absolutely. My experience working with wood, gilding, and enamels greatly helped me in creating this piece.

What difficulties did you face in creating a work that combines spiritual and geopolitical meanings?

The difficulties were mainly related to the figurative component. How to express my idea? How to convey it more effectively to the viewer? Of course, there were doubts and searches for solutions, but the work came together organically—from the successfully formed shape to the figurative expression of my thoughts about the modern world through object-visual symbolism of contemporary art.

Do you perceive "World 2025" as a warning, a prayer, or a reflection?

You are absolutely right—it is my reflection and a warning, and a reason for the viewer to ponder. I believe everyone will see their own meaning in this image. But I want all people on our Earth to help this small, fragile world survive. Each person, by contributing their share of Goodness—whether large or small—can help strengthen that thin thread of Hope and the frame of Faith and Light, in order to preserve this World for future generations.



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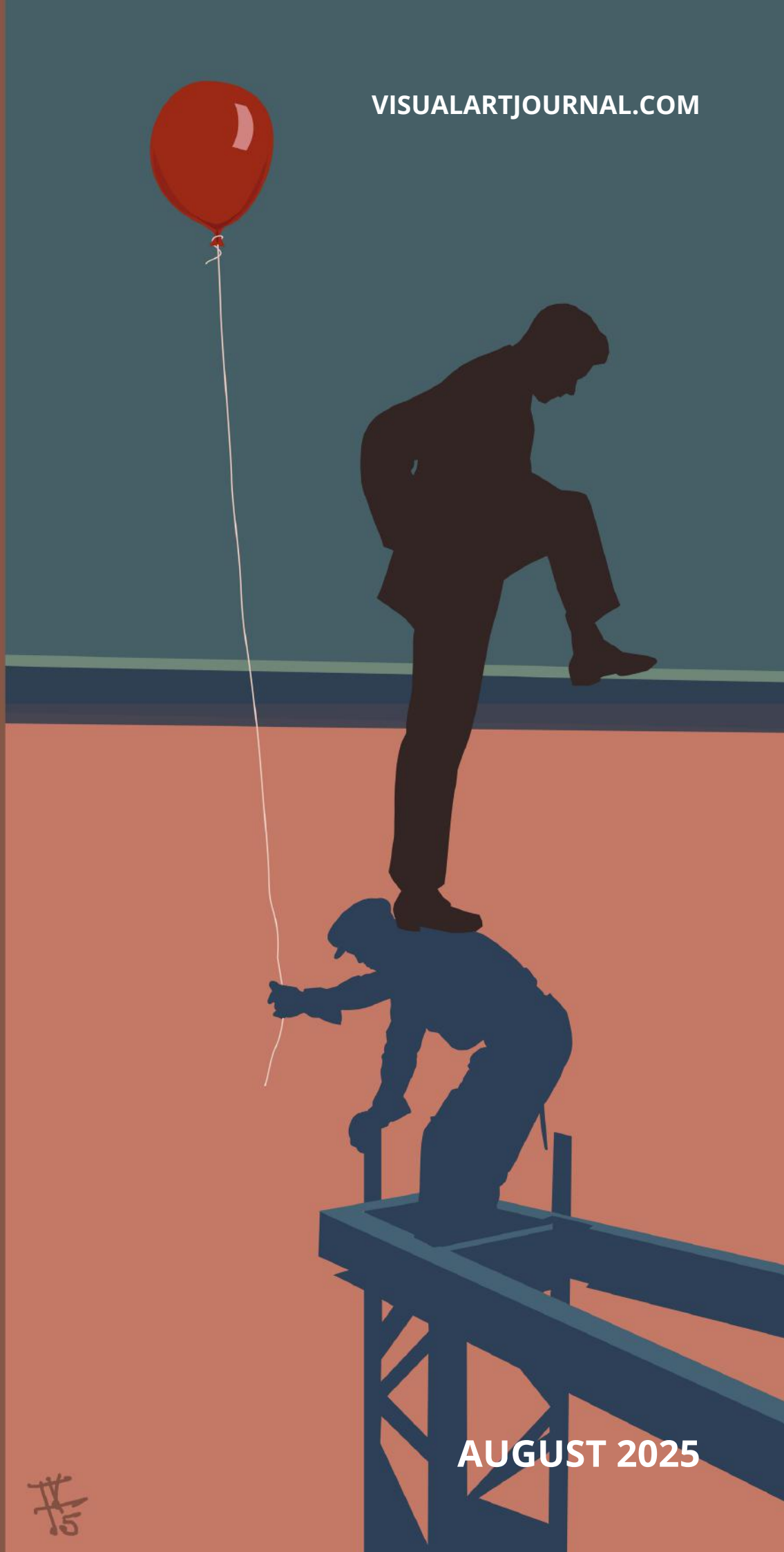
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