

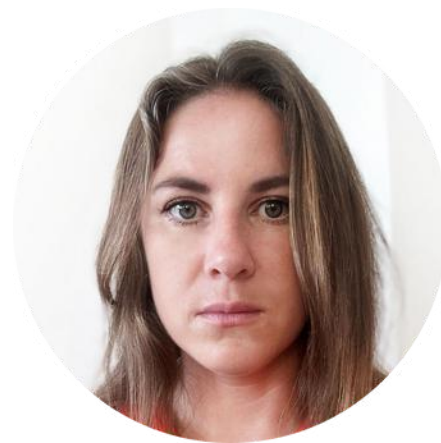


VISUAL ART JOURNAL





— Intro



Anna Gvozdeva

Curator of
Visual Art Journal

Hello dear reader,

Autumn has arrived, a time that inspires new beginnings, full of energy, emotions, and impressions after the summer.

In this issue, we have gathered impressive artists whose creativity goes beyond the ordinary, proving that human imagination and creativity have no limits. Ideas, forms, colors, and symbols—all in a whirlwind of intensity on the pages of this edition.

There's something to read even for those preparing for winter hibernation. In our interviews, you will find profound meanings and interesting stories from people who knew from childhood they would become artists, as well as from those whose path to art was more winding.

Thank you so much for being with us! Ahead are over 100 pages of enjoyment!

On the Front Cover:
**Katrin Hinterholzer -
Colourkatl**

On the Back Cover:
Felix Quinonez
Let's Get Out of This Town
(While We Still Have Time)

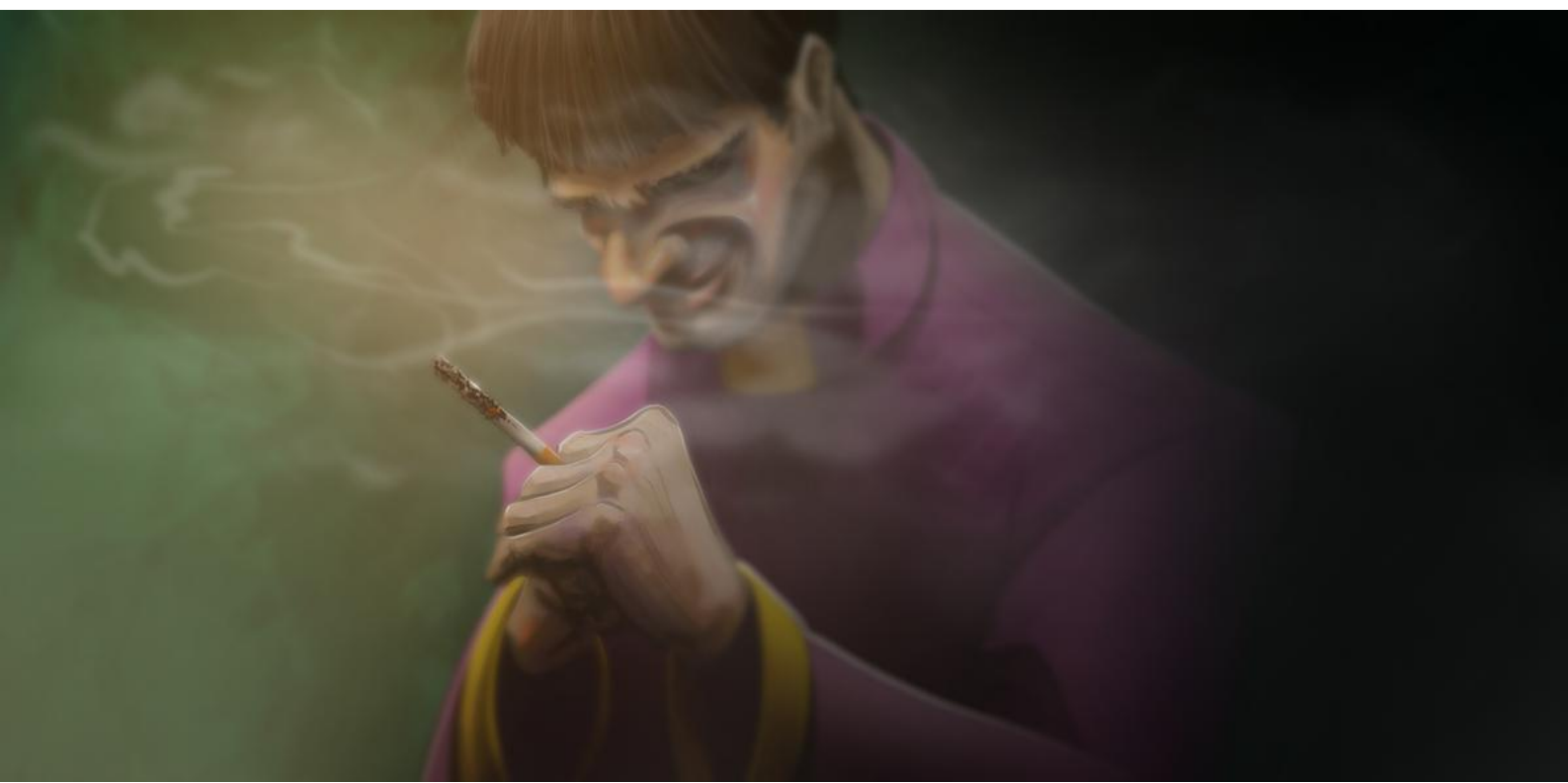
We invite artists to submit their works for publication in our magazine: <https://visualartjournal.com/call-for-artists/>

Born on August 20, 1992 in Kyiv. I have been drawing since childhood without any academic training. The first touches with academic drawing - preparatory courses for entering the university. Then 4 years of study. In parallel with which I started practicing body drawings - tattoos. After university, the vector of my activity changed - 7 years I spent in dancing and directing. Quarantine brought it back to the essence - painting is back, but in digital format. From 2020 to today, I capture my thoughts and observations in the form of illustrations and 2d animations. I practice creating sets for movies and commercials, I'm still a tattoo artist. I create and produce designer bags (handcraft). I work on comics and cartoons.

I have been interested in visualization since forever. I would even say that I am its hostage. After the incident in early childhood, which deprived me of the ability to communicate normally verbally, drawing became one of the main tools for expressing thoughts and describing my surroundings, internal, past, fantasies and ideas.

— Maxim Kovtun

Maxim Kovtun | Ritual | 2022





— Interview

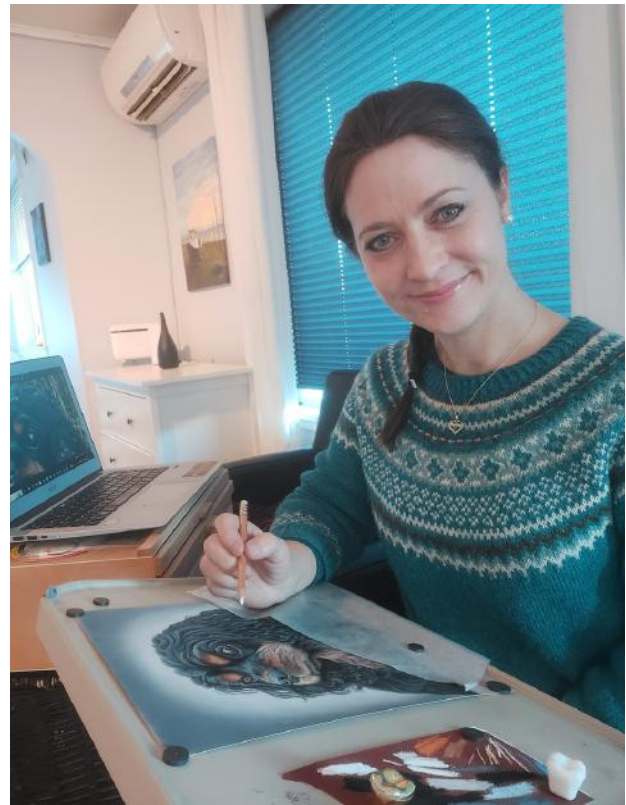
Jannicke Mjelde

What inspired you to transition from painting landscapes in oils to working with soft pastels and focusing on animals?

I never really knew what soft pastels were and had never seen them in real life until just a few years ago. I came across some videos of the great pastellist Emma Colbert, and I got very fascinated by her art and about the materials she used. I have always loved animals, but I had never dared to do that kind of detailed art, but seeing Emma Colbert`s videos made me search for more soft pastel animal art on YouTube, and I found great artists like Grace Murray-Rowley, Jason Morgan and Zara Toms. The fascination turned into an urge for wanting to feel the pastels in my hands and under my fingertips, and it didn`t take long before I purchased my first set of pastels and Pastelmat paper, and I haven`t regretted it once!

How has living with Multiple Sclerosis influenced your artistic practice and choice of medium?

I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2018. The disease is not very visible on



me, but it has an enormous effect on my life. What affects the way I do art most, is fatigue. Fatigue takes up a lot of my day, and my energy levels are very often low. When I painted in oils, I found that the long sittings I had, became more and more exhausting, and the cleaning of brushes when I was done for the day, took too much energy. I wanted to do art in a way that created less mess, and I wanted to do something where I could have shorter sittings on low energy days. With pastels, I can have my equipment nearby, and if my energy levels are low, I can just work an hour and then walk away, and there`s hardly any mess to clean up, or at least it can wait to do it until I`m back on my feet an hour or two later.

What do you enjoy most about creating animal portraits, and how do you connect with the subjects you draw?

The wonderful thing about drawing animals, is that I can almost feel their personality when I draw them. Even if I rarely meet the animal that I draw, I still feel like I know them a little after using 20-25 hours on drawing them, especially if it`s a pet that I draw. I love to draw their eyes; it truly feels like they look back at me as I work. It`s important to me that I know the name of the pet that I draw. It makes me connect to the art piece on a more personal level.

Your works exhibit a high level of detail and realism. How do you achieve this level of precision with soft pastels?

I know many artists print their reference photo, but to achieve the level of precision that I do, I need a high-resolution digital photo on my pc, so that I can zoom in on every detail. Even if the eye of the portraited animal will be less than an inch, I zoom in as much as I can, until it gets almost too blurry to see details. Then I see all the colours and reflections better, and it`s easier for me to make the eyes of the animal look alive in the portrait.



Jannicke Mjelde | Molly | 2023



Jannicke Mjelde | Kingfisher | 2024

Has your experience as a dentist influenced your approach to art in any way?

Dentistry has a lot to do with precision, down to 1/10 of a millimeter, and also with esthetics. Being used to focus on details in a smaller scale may have helped me bringing the details into my art. Two teeth are never identical, just like for example to black labradors are not identical either. Each new animal needs full focus, even if I have done the same breed many times before. Also, giving full focus to one certain object at a time even if the workload can be massive, is a skill that is important both in dentistry and in art.

Do you have any favorite animals to draw, and if so, why are they special to you?

Since I started with soft pastels a bit

more than 2 years ago, I have been drawing mostly dogs. I have just done a few other animals until recently. There are two reasons for this, first because dog owners tend to want a portrait of their pet more often than other pet owners. Second, it`s because I love dogs and have a dog of my own, so dogs are more familiar to me than most other pets. However, lately I have expanded into wildlife, and there are so many cute and cool animals in the world, so I will never be out of objects to draw!

How do you balance your time between family life and your passion for art?

Having a family and having some time on my own can be a challenge sometimes, but my kids are growing up, my youngest is now 11, so they spend less time around my feet now. Since I started with pastels, I have moved my workspace from a separate room in the basement, and into the living room, which makes me able to do art without hiding. I am still right there when the kids need me, which is nice. I must admit that sometimes, when I am very into a drawing, some of the housework gets neglected, because it`s like I am in my own, little bubble. I guess most artists know what I`m talking about when I mention this bubble!

Jannicke Mjelde | Squirrel | 2024





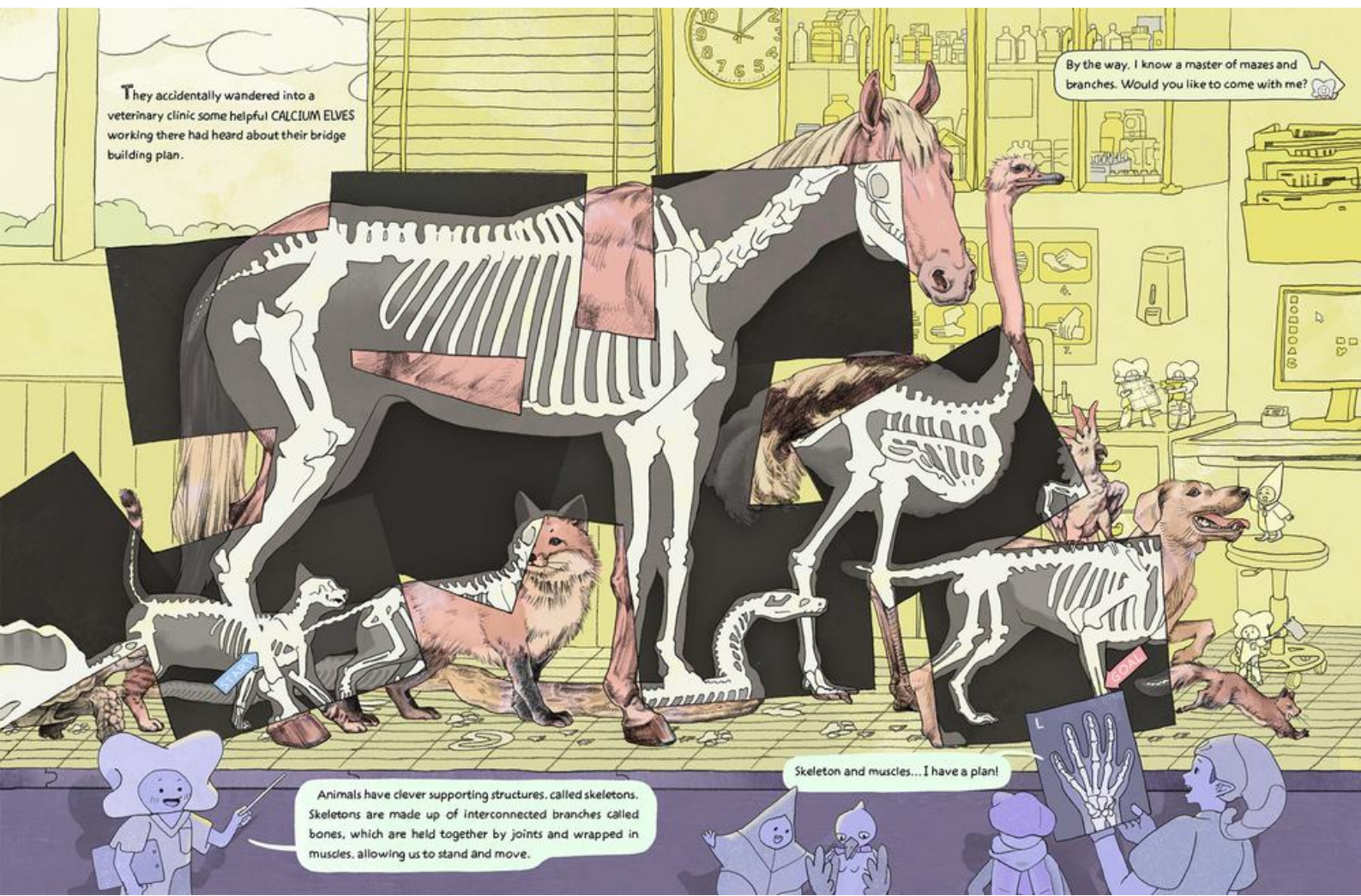
Jannicke Mjelde | Poison dart frog | 2024

Jannicke Mjelde | Halia | 2024



An illustrator who creates gaming images in natural sciences, flora and fauna, and education. 2024 marks Yuanhui's second year in illustration, and she has made the longlist in competitions including World Illustration Award and Communication Art

— Yuanhui Li



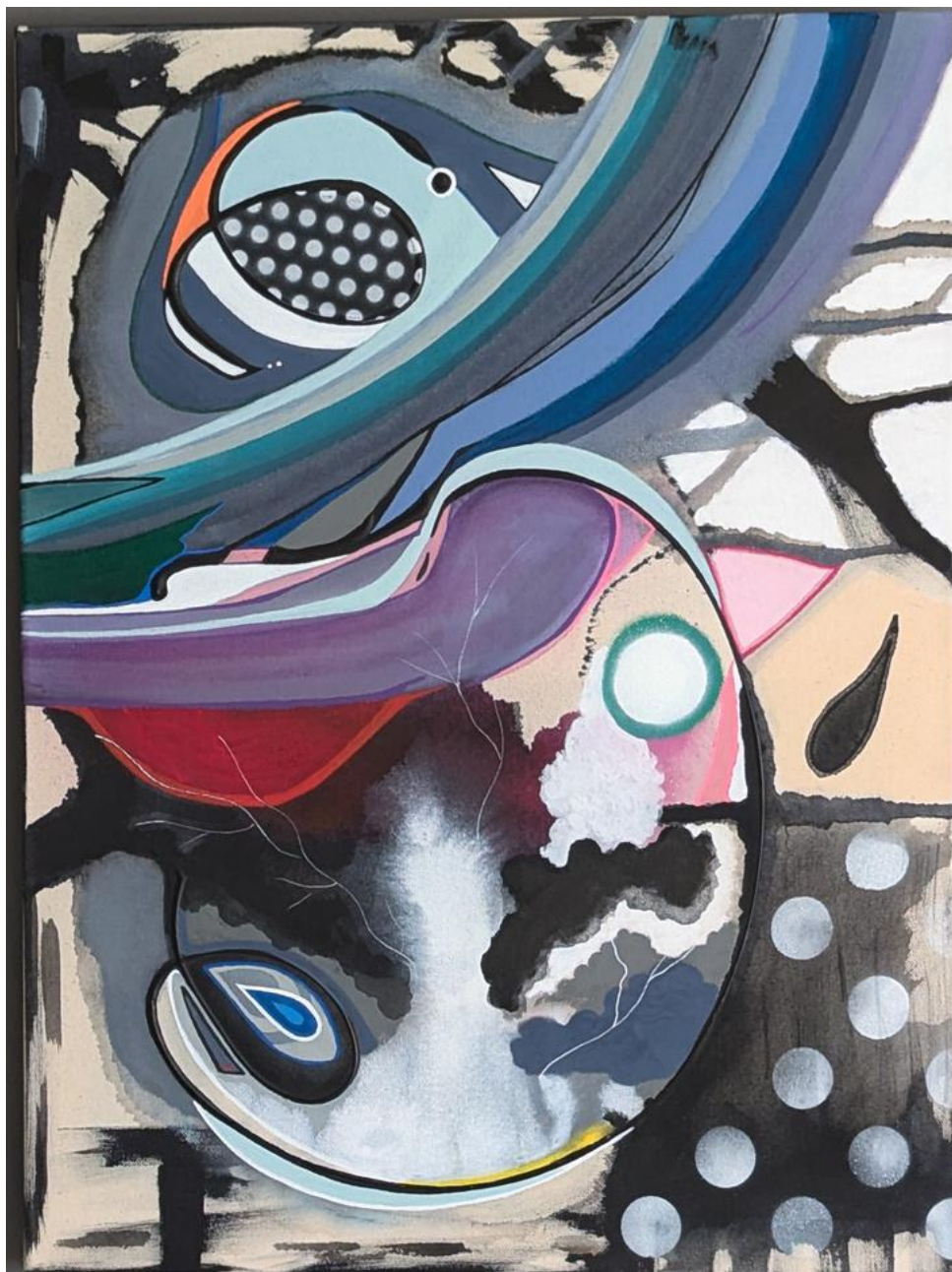


Find the lucky clover

Yün
7/2

Anemone Schultze began her career in the media industry, most recently working as an editor for a TV format. During her time as a mother, she focused on the creative expression of her talents. Starting with a writing school for children's novels, she found her way to a painting school and thus to her true passion. Since then, she has been self-taught and has been practicing as a visual artist for several years.

She creates abstract mixed media works on canvas and paper. It is important to her that the viewer does not receive a template, but goes on his own visual journey and finds his longings and dreams in her paintings.



Anemone Schultze | The Purifying Thunder Under Abstract Circumstances



Clara Rival

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina (1986).

She studied visual arts at ACNU (2009-2015), and painting with Luis Fernández and Silvana Lacarra (2014-2016).

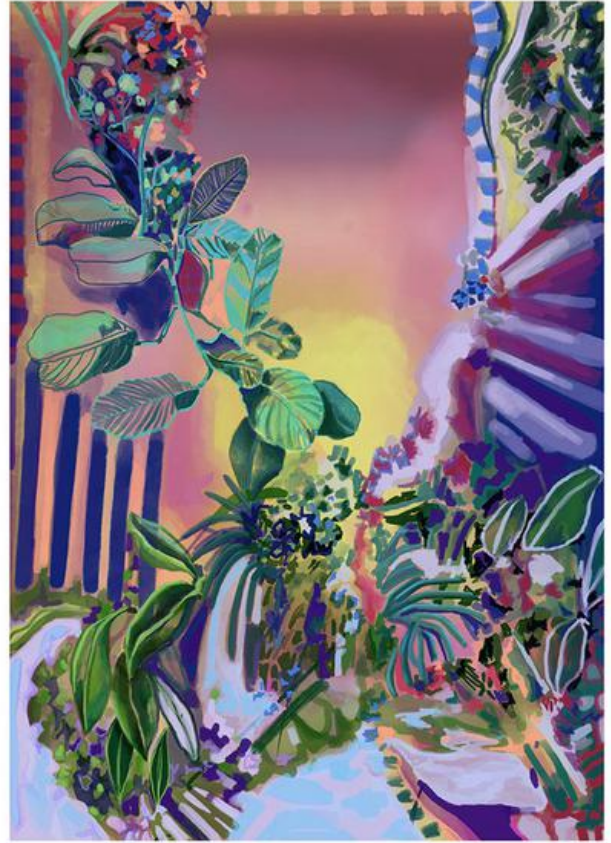
In 2017, she moved to Mexico to participate in an art residency at Casa Rosa in Oaxaca.

In 2018, she was invited to Sicily, Italy, for a residency in the village of Graniti.

She has always been interested in traveling and moving between big cities and more remote, wild places. This is why she adopted a nomadic lifestyle, which is reflected in her collages of imaginary landscapes.

In recent years, she has been living between France, Mexico, and Spain.





Artist Statement

I am looking for a place, and when I find it, I will look for another.

My universe is built from places I want to find and invented memories. The natural coexists with the fantastical.

Lush colors, unreal plants, stairs, and portals that promise to take us to the other side of the work.

I question the limits we have as spectators and explorers of the world. Do we take the time to stop and observe? How many things do we not see?

To observe, we must surrender. Seek new states. In a plain, in the jungle, in exaggeration, in fluorescence. Then, new details, frames, directions appear — invitations to explore the mystery of things. Perhaps the fantastical is in the way we see things.

— Interview

Felix Quinonez

Your works often combine autobiographical elements with fantasy and science fiction. How do you balance these different elements in your storytelling?

For me, the autobiographical element is the most important. I often use the science fiction elements either as a catalyst for the story or to add visual flair to the piece. But ultimately, they are grounded in the emotional core of the autobiographical aspects of the work.

What inspired you to create your self-published comic books and graphic novels? How has the response been from your readers?

Comic books were my introduction to the world of art. I grew up reading comics and trying to recreate my favorite panels. Because of this, I always aspired to create my own comics and graphic novels.

The great thing about comics is that it really is possible to sit in your apartment and create a whole comic book or graphic novel. However, because of that,



Felix Quinonez | Im With You

it can be hard to get your work seen. Although I've never had any mainstream success with my comics, I have enjoyed a personal connection to what little readership I have.

Over the years, I've had people discover my work through social media, and aside from getting my work to people I wouldn't have otherwise come into contact with, I also wound up making surprising connections. People have reached out to me through email to let me know how much they've enjoyed my work or to tell me they related to something and that it resonated with them.

I've also had the fortune to connect with other artists whose work I've enjoyed and has influenced my own. I also wound up collaborating with a couple of them, who then became close friends of mine.

NYC is clearly a big influence on your art. How do you think living in New York has shaped your artistic vision?

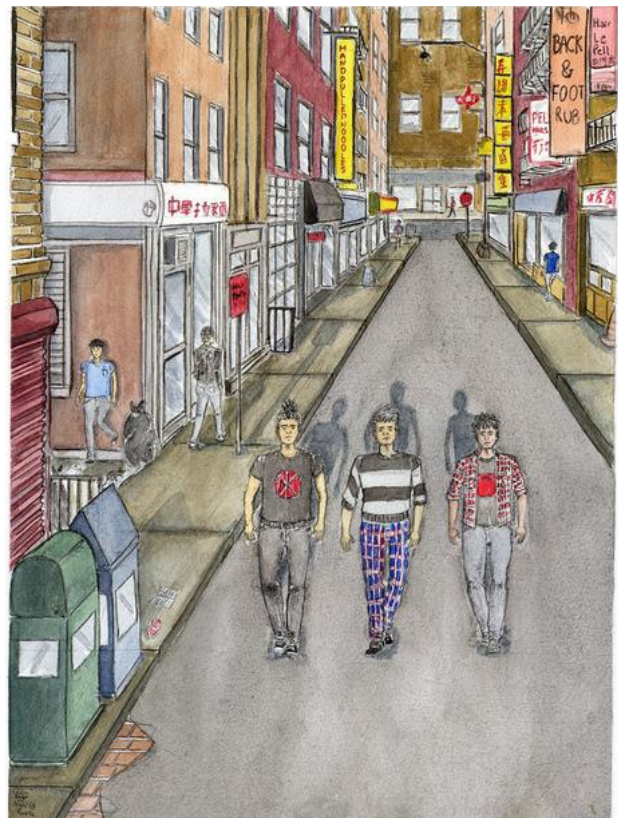
Living in New York City has played a huge role in shaping my artistic and personal identity.

Before moving to New York City, I had never considered myself an artist; I had just thought of art as a hobby I enjoyed. However, the city has a way of changing you. It's hard not to be inspired when inspiration is all around you.

You can be anyone in New York City, leaving behind small-town inhibitions. Knowing that others are on a similar journey encourages you to keep chasing your dreams. The longer you stay here, the more it becomes a part of you. A city block can become a portal to the past, a coffee shop, a window into your soul. When you see a bit of NYC in my work, it's a love letter to the city but also to moments and people in my life. In a way, it's almost like a self-portrait of me and different times in my life.

Can you tell us more about your process of creating a piece? Do you start with a story idea or a visual concept?

I'll often start with a thought or idea that pops into my head, as they tend to do. I think most of us have that. We're walking down the street; suddenly, we see, hear, or smell something that triggers a thought. However, I spend a lot of time in my head so I never dismiss these seemingly random ideas. It could be something as simple as a line in a song that'll inspire an image in my mind or



Felix Quinonez | Punks Like US

remind me of a time, person, or thing. I tend to follow these sparks of inspiration wherever they may lead me. Sometimes, that becomes a painting, a story, or a comic book, or sometimes, it becomes nothing. But I always give myself the opportunity to find out.

How did your time studying illustration at the School of Visual Arts influence your style and approach to art?

I tend to think of my art as before and after SVA. On a practical level, my technical skills improved dramatically after studying there. However, I was also fortunate to have teachers like Sal Amendola, Tom Motley, and Nelson DeCastro, who helped demystify challenging topics and, more importantly, inspired me. They changed how I think about and make art and how I see myself as an artist.

In your work, we see a lot of urban settings and subcultures. What draws you to these themes, and how do they connect to your personal experiences?

Growing up in a small town, I've always been drawn to NYC. As a kid, I practiced Tae Kwon Do, and to proceed to the next belt level, I had to come to the headquarters in Manhattan to take the test in front of the grandmaster, Duk Sung Son. I always looked forward to taking the trip with my cousin and his dad; after the test, we'd usually go to a nearby diner for food. I'd catch a small glimpse of the city on our brief walks. Even as a kid, I was enthralled by the loud, hypnotic symphony of NYC sidewalks. It felt like a different world than the small Long Island town I lived in at the time. I loved watching TV shows and movies with characters living in cool NYC apartments, leading exciting lives,

and I'd imagine myself, one day, living the same way.

Even after living in NYC for all these years, I'm still in awe of it all. Sometimes, I stop to think about how happy my younger self would be to know I'm actually doing some of the things I used to dream about.

Many of your pieces include scenes with a sense of melancholy or loneliness. Is this an intentional mood you aim to convey, or does it naturally emerge from your creative process?

I don't think that's something I consciously try to convey; I think it's just part of who I am and it organically appears in my work. I also believe that, generally speaking, sad or melancholy moments inspire me more. These are the things that I tend to think about longer and feel the need to work through with my art.



Felix Quinonez | Next Exit



Riccardo Matlakas

Melting Borders is a performance/action that symbolically melts the flags of the countries where it's performed in. Often performed in border towns where two or more flags are melted away, and the melted ice cream stains with the colors of the shirt the performer is wearing. Single flags are also melted as a melting symbol of political power from country to country. The result is the new flag, as the artist calls it: "The Sweet Flag", a flag that merges countries together, abstracting what we identify as a flag, abstracting the idea of a Nation. Going back to the source of equality.

With this action, the artist wanted to symbolically melt the borders away, leaving only the sweetness and the beauty of humanity, The first "Melting Borders" happened in Armenia and by performing it he wanted to highlight the essence and beauty of its culture. The shirt is what remains of the action. So far Melting Borders was performed in the South and North Korean Border (DMZ area), Armenia, UK, Italy, and Bulgaria melting the flags of Bulgaria, Macedonian, Greek, and European Union (Highlighting the "Macedonian Question"), Ukraine, Jordan, Poland, and more. This time was the turn of the border between the USA and Mexico.

Riccardo Matlakas | Melting Borders in Amman, Jordan | photo by Zakaria Mohammed supported by Darat Al Funun in Amman





Melting Borders in Imjack, DMZ zone in Korea, 2018
photo by Young Il Kwon during Culture Olympics area



Riccardo Matlakas
Melting Borders in DMZ zone in
Korea



Riccardo Matlakas
Melting Border in Prague

My name is **Katrin Hinterholzer**, and I am a 26 year old artist from Tyrol. After completing my degree as a primary school teacher, I decided not to pursue this profession and instead focus entirely on painting.

Artist Statement

The COVID crisis taught me to perceive and appreciate nature much more deeply. Once I've painted a mountain, I view it completely differently in reality. I become more aware of the shading and discover colors that one wouldn't typically expect to find in nature. My goal with my paintings is to capture special moments in the mountains. Whether it's the last rays of sunlight on the peaks, the changing colors of the sky at sunset, or clouds enveloping the cliffs, I spend my free time chasing these moments and love to immortalize them on my canvas. Next to painting mountains I also like to bring close-up food photos to my canvas. Especially the light effects on fruits of other object inspire me. In my most recent painting process I challenges myself by painting a moldy fruit. I find it interesting to look closer on daily life object and try to see all the colours they produce.





J.Alex is a Flint, MI Native whose passion for art started at a young age. During her time in Michigan, she received her Associates in Arts from Mott Community College and B.S. in business management from Wayne State University. J.Alex moved to Phoenix, AZ in 2023 to be closer to her family. She enjoys using mixed media such as magazine clippings, oil paint, and acrylic paint in her art. J.Alex just wants to share her art with the world and loves to challenge her artistic skills.



J.Alex | Naked Drift | 2024



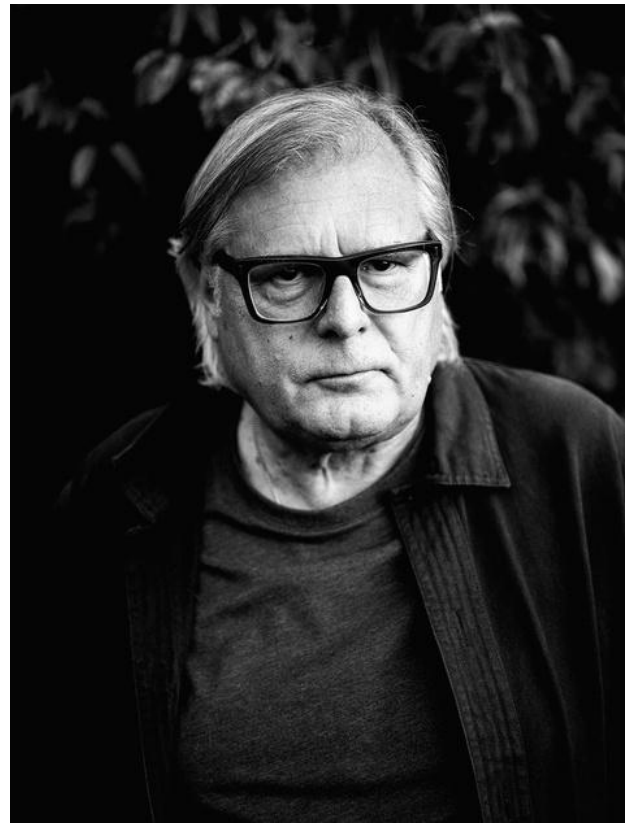
— Interview

Walter Melocco

How did your childhood experiences in Venice influence your passion for painting, especially in relation to the works of artists like Giotto and Veronese?

Venice is a marvelous, mysterious city; as a child, it felt to me like a vessel from a distant world full of extraordinary artists and characters. I had never experienced such strong and intense sensations in any other place.

At that time, in the mid-1960s, my grandmother often told me about the painters she admired. Among them was Giotto, a Florentine painter, who, according to my grandmother, was able to draw a perfect circle freehand. I was fascinated by this skill, so I spent long days practicing to do the same. Together with my grandparents, we visited the churches of Venice, the Doge's Palace... Having the opportunity to see paintings by Veronese, Titian, or Canaletto leaves a lasting impression on a 6-year-old child. Being exposed to these painters at such a young age gave me a lifelong passion for painting and art.



You've mentioned a deep admiration for Picasso and Pollock. How have these artists influenced your transition from abstract to figurative painting?

I discovered Picasso when I was quite young, around 13 years old, and it was a shock! As for Pollock, I encountered his work a little later, around 18 or 19 years old. I admired their profound freedom, their total commitment to painting, the immense energy that drove them. But very quickly, despite my great admiration for Pollock, I realized that abstraction was a dead end for me. Thus, I moved towards figuration.

Your animal portraits are incredibly expressive, almost conveying human emotions. What inspires you to imbue your subjects with such deep feelings?

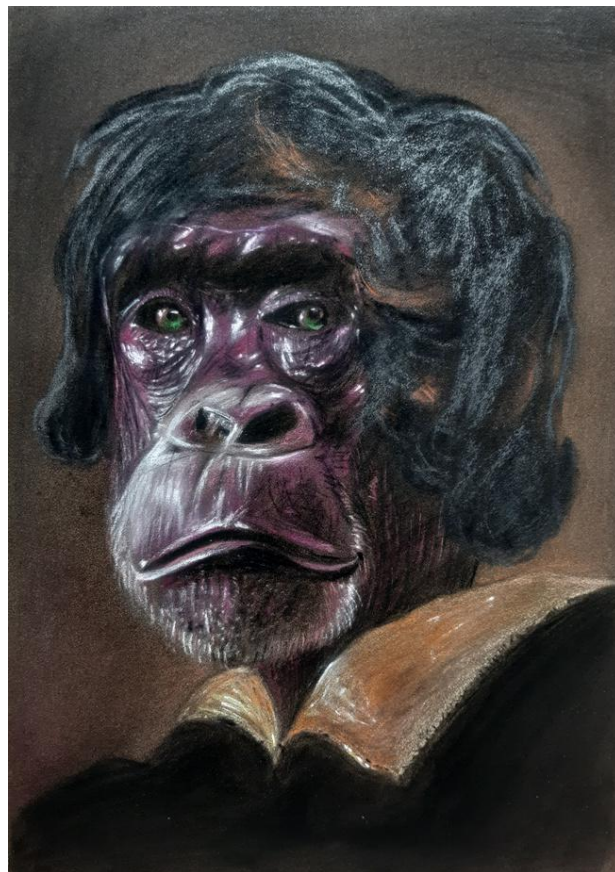
I enjoy painting portraits of animals, especially monkeys. We, too, come from the animal kingdom, and we are not the only creatures on this earth to experience feelings such as fear, sadness, or pain... All mammals share these emotions, and we should be aware of them.

How do you approach the process of creating your animal portraits? Could you share some insights into the techniques and materials you prefer?

For animal portraits, I work from photos; for example, for monkey portraits, I use photos of paintings (portraits) by artists like Velázquez, Giotto, or El Greco, then I create a new image by integrating the face of the monkey. It's a way of linking nature and culture, the Renaissance and the contemporary world. I modify the colors of the original painting and paint this new image on canvas using acrylics,



Walter Melocco | Sans titre | 2024



Walter Melocco | Sans titre | 2024

sometimes with spray paint, pastels... The creative process can be quite lengthy. The first image is often washed with a jet of water, and depending on the traces left on the canvas, I modify the image and repaint it with acrylics. The process of washing and reworking can be repeated several times to achieve the final painting. Some portraits are done in colored pencil on textured cardboard (very fine sandpaper).

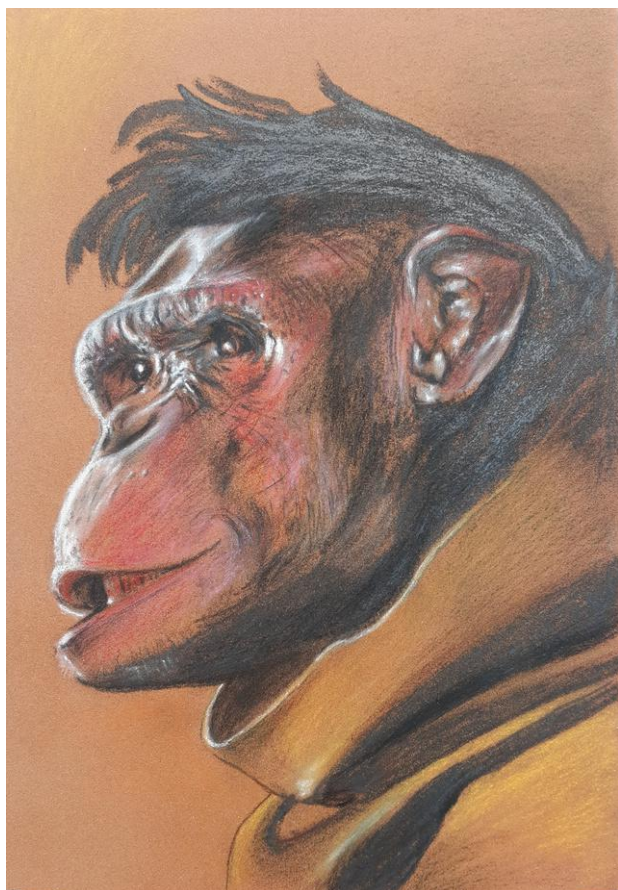
Your recent work marks a return to figurative art after years of abstract painting. What motivated this shift, and how do you feel about this change in your artistic journey?

As I mentioned earlier in the text, abstraction seemed to me to be a dead end. I went through a few years of creative block where I hardly painted.

During this period, I closely followed the work of other painters like David Hockney and Francis Bacon. Eventually, I began painting again, and figuration imposed itself on me. It was a natural evolution towards figurative images. I believe that artists cannot remain indifferent to the constant flood of images on the internet and social networks. Painting has an important role to play in this world of images; it can serve as a gateway to imagination and poetry.

As an architect by training and a painter at heart, how do you balance these two disciplines, and do they influence each other in your work?

For me, architecture and painting are interconnected; the visual arts have always influenced architecture.



Walter Melocco | Sans titre | 2024

Le Corbusier was also a painter, and the Bauhaus sought to unite all the arts: painting, sculpture, design, architecture...

Do you see your animal portraits as a reflection of human society, and if so, what aspects of humanity do they represent?

For me, an architectural project always begins with a drawing, just as a painting does. But before the drawing, before the project, there are mental images that impose themselves and form the foundation of the project and, ultimately, the structuring of space.

However, in my case, it is painting that influences architecture, and not so much the other way around. This influence can also be seen in the use of color on both the exterior and interior of the buildings I design.

My animal portraits represent, for me, a reflection of human society and the world we live in, which we have shaped. The animals I depict are those left behind in this world where we are the dominant species; they are the brothers of all human beings who are victims of wars, totalitarianism, deforestation, terrorism, famine... A small privileged part of humanity treats others the same way it treats animals, considering them insignificant. Over the ages, some of us have forgotten that we are also part of the animal kingdom.

The disappearance of living species from the Earth will precede our own extinction; by destroying other species, we are destroying ourselves.



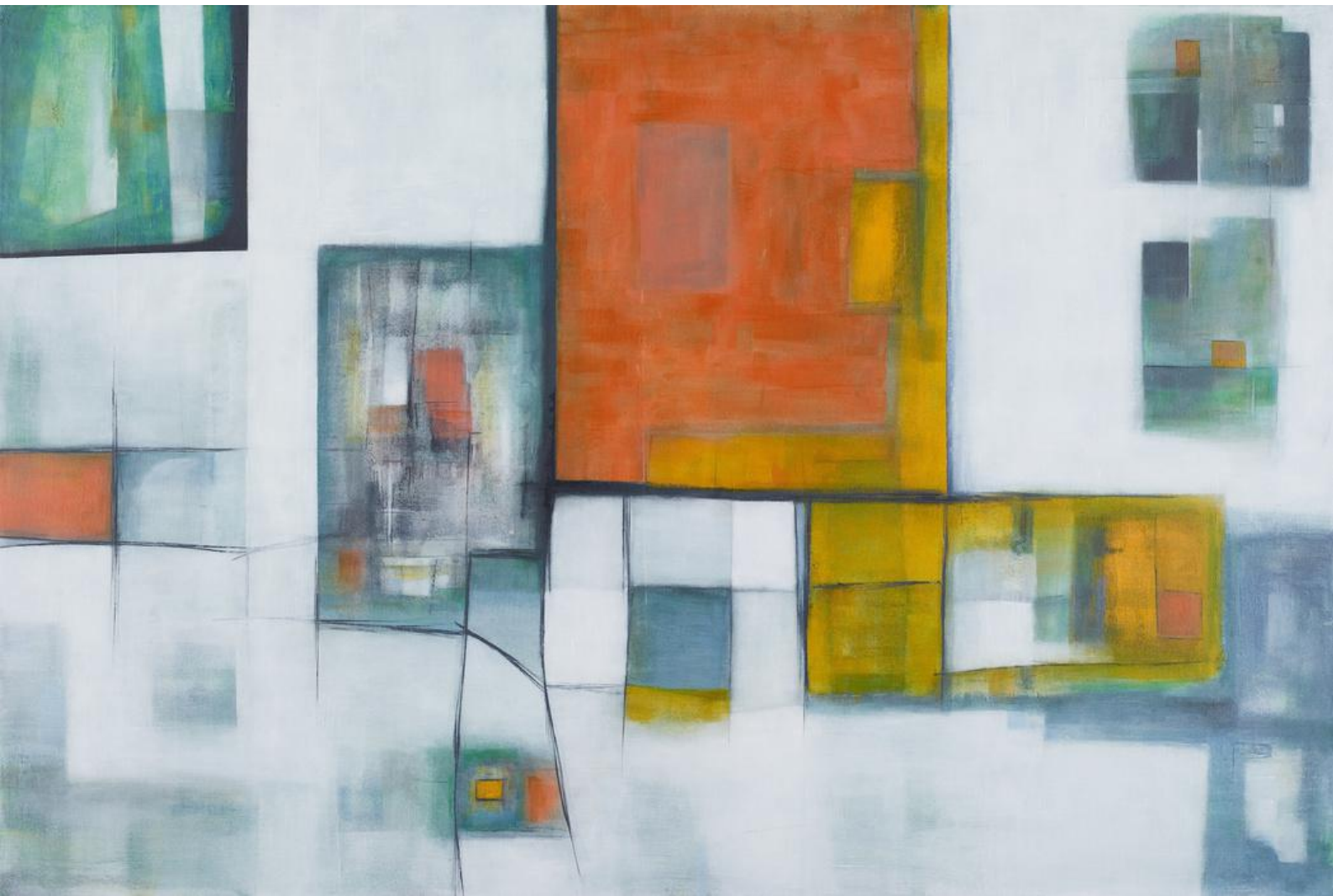
Adam Land (b. 1976) is an intuitive abstract artist based in Houston, Texas, known for his ability to navigate the delicate balance between opposing ideas within his art. His belief in painting as a fusion of direct observation and instinct, merging control with spontaneity, serves as a bridge between the literal and the symbolic, aiming to convey deeply personal messages to his viewers. Proficient across diverse mediums—painting, sculpture, and ceramics—Adam's creations grace private collections, government holdings, and various businesses.

Adam Land | Ephemera | 2024



My artistic exploration delves into the delicate interplay of the tangible and intangible, breathing new life into the aging aesthetic of abstraction. I am Adam Land, and through the use paint and canvas, I venture into the ethereal realms of digital communication. In an era defined by instantaneous global connectivity, my work transcends mere abstraction, offering tangible representations of the abstract world we collectively inhabit. Inspired by pioneers like Wassily Kandinsky, I draw from the early 20th Century's exploration of color, line, and movement. Kandinsky revolutionized abstraction by harmonizing visual art with the sensory experience of music. In my artistic evolution, I take inspiration from this legacy, presenting a vision of the gossamery world of data transfer—an unexpectedly beautiful convergence of information, sound, and visual stimuli. Every canvas transforms into a platform where the intangible whirlwind of global data finds expression. The artistic journey itself is the essence of the painting, with every brushstroke forming a symbiotic relationship between tangible strokes and the intangible currents of data transfer. As viewers engage with my work, I invite them to reflect on the profound beauty woven into the intricate dance between the tangible strokes of paint and the intangible currents of our interconnected digital existence.

Adam Land | Tacit | 2023





My name is **Kalliopi Nikopoulou**, I am 19 years old and an oil painter. My work is inspired mostly by daily life and mythology, often painted in impressionistic or realistic styles. Alongside my oil work, I create children's illustrations, a field that holds a special place in my heart. I see children's art—especially through books—as their first encounter with the creative world. With my illustrations, I aim to nurture that initial spark and encourage a lasting relationship with art. Art has always been more than a passion for me; it's a way of life. Painting is a profound form of self-expression, much like speech or writing, but with a unique power to delve into the soul and reflect its depths. It challenges not only me as an artist but also everyone who engages with it, provoking thought and emotion on both personal and societal levels. To me, art is sacred—a transformative experience that invites us to explore our inner worlds and connect with others on a deeper plane. You can explore more of my work and follow my artistic journey on Instagram [@cosy_calliope](#). I'm excited to share my creative evolution with you.

Kalliopi Nikopoulou | Sun kissed serenity | 2024



I was born 21st of September 1998 in Frankfurt am Main in Germany. I went to school and studied German Literatur. But I never stopped painting. After moving to Leipzig I started to discover who I am and what I wanted in life. Now I'm in the process of majoring in Library and Information Science and making more art than ever.

Artist Statement

I'm a dreamer and I dream of worlds beyond this one. Worlds filled with fantasy and magic. In my drawings I mostly depict figures and creatures from folklore and mythology. I love playing with symbolism. Flowers for example play an important role in my paintings. They often underline the meaning or add another level of meaning to the subject. Lately I have started to go a bit eerier.

— Lena Neuß



Lena Neuß | Tea



— Interview

Oliviero Leonardi

Can you tell us about Oliviero Leonardi's early life and how his family's background in ceramics influenced his artistic journey?

We believe that early contact with art made with/from fire must have been of great value for him as an artist. The best of his work is made similarly; his unique technique of art making, although based on enamel-metalwork, is looking at ceramic-making. He even calls his enamel paintings on steel plates 'Ceramica'; ceramic, here, is not just the material, but the process, the final look, and memories brought into the work. It is stated in multiple art critics from the archives that Oliviero Leonardi 'spent his youth' next to his father and his kiln.

What inspired Leonardi to experiment with steel plates and high-temperature firing techniques in his artwork?

Not many artists in the 20th century were working with this technique, so there are, probably, no direct influences. His family background, as his ancestors were famous ceramicists from Trento, Italy, was an early example of art-making with fire - the process of 'baking as making (art)' was not new to him. The second inspiration could be his friendship with Italian avant-garde artist and futurist, Fortunato Depero. His innovative, dynamic, historical approach to art, with an



Oliviero Leonardi | The Devil Visits The Dove Woman | Copyright Association Oliviero Leonardi

obsession for future - and futuristic techniques, were probably very important to Leonardi's artistic formation. Third, after the war, Leonardi spent many years on the island of Capri experimenting with different materials and traveled to multiple Italian cities famous for their artistic tradition. Those travels after the war may have opened to him a world of experimentation and artistic innovation.

Could you explain the process Leonardi used to create his unique artworks using high-temperature firing techniques?

The process is an innovative form of vitreous enamel, so called 'porcelain' or 'ceramic' enamel. Enamel is an ancient art technique, it is the process of fusing silica-based (glass), colored (oxides) mixtures with metal, under a fire of 700-850 degrees Celsius. Other artists have used precious metals in the past - some interesting examples of this

technique are Faberge eggs. But Leonardi used steel, which was innovative for that time (enamel on steel was typically used in industry); he also used his own mixtures of oxides and materials for enamel, such as volcanic ash; and, because he used steel and experimented with materials/mixtures, he had to use special ovens to fire his paintings at 900 degrees Celsius, for artmaking 'at great fire', as he called the process. He was innovative in many ways, one of the leaders in that field in the 70s and 80s, whose art and the process of art-making are considered an innovation even today. For more details on Leonardi's technique, you may visit this webpage: <https://oliviero-leonardi.com/technique/>

What challenges did Leonardi face when working with steel plates, and how did he overcome them?

First of all, steel plates were not the typical medium in the world of art (not even today), especially not as a painting support. It was kind of a controversial usage, it was the real avant-garde moment, but at the same time, something of a side-art, something between the painting and the applied art, and none of them. That is not an easy position for an artist. Even in the text for the catalog of Limoges Biennale for enamel art in 1986 (where he also presented his works), this



Oliviero Leonardi | Odyssey Of The Universe
Copyright Association Oliviero Leonardi



Oliviero Leonardi
Irony Of An Encounter
Copyright Association Oliviero Leonardi

dilemma is presented: is enamel ready to compete with oil painting? On the other hand, working with metal is not an easy task, timing and proper handling are everything.

How did movements like futurism, surrealism, cubism, and art Informel impact Leonardi's artistic style?

Futurism impacted him directly, not only because he was a good friend to Depero, the famous 'original' futurist, but because his roots are in Italy, and every Italian artist in the 20th century saw two options, at least at the beginning of his career: Tradition or Futurism. Leonardi fused both, but his initial phase was more futurist-oriented; imagined future and dynamic space around us is his constant preoccupation. Besides that, the influence of surrealist motifs and themes - those of dreams, of primordial, of egg-like, fetus-like forms, is obvious. Cubist art did not have that much impact on him - but he made homages to Picasso in many of his works, directly or indirectly. His drawing is, where the line is important, very similar to the line of Picasso. Art Informel was something that was happening around him. His surroundings, his living in a contemporary world. Another source for rethinking art medium, visuality, tradition. The 'light' after the war.

What were some of the highlights of Leonardi's career during the 1970s and 1980s?

At the peak of his career, back in the 70s and 80s, he was recognized as an important actor of, at that time, Italian contemporary art; his works were studied by such important art historians and critics like Carlo Giulio Argan or Elio Mercuri, and many international experts on Modern or Early Modern art, like Gustav Rene Hocke. His art was known worldwide, as his works, artistically impressive and resilient in their nature, were commissioned for public spaces from Rome to New York and Brasilia. He also exhibited in such important galleries that introduced and made modern art visible, such as Galerie Drouant, or Van Gogh House. Not to mention the opening of his school of art, Romacrea (in Rome), or special prizes for the technique he used - all the inventions he introduced to the medium. There are several institutions that preserve archives on Oliviero Leonardi including Fondazione La Quadriennale di Roma.

Could you share some memorable experiences or stories from his exhibitions in various countries?

It looks like Leonardi had special bonds with curators, critics, and historians who admired his art. It is interesting to note that he was working closely with, for example, Argan or Hocke, both giving their best to introduce him to the world of art. Hocke even wrote a monograph about him, and each catalog he needed for every exhibition he had in Germany, or generally, outside Italy. We believe that it is thanks to Hocke that Leonardi was able to have a solo museum show in Germany at the Saarland Museum in 1979, as well as be included in the Oxford Benezit. Another memorable experience worth mentioning is his connection with the



Oliviero Leonardi
War In The Desert
Copyright Association Oliviero Leonardi

Rome artistic community and the multiple studio visits he organized for them. We can count at least 4 large studio visits with more than 50 persons attending. Leonardi was very fond of this as it enabled him to better share his creative process and artistic views directly in/from his art studio, which he called "Studio Casale".

What emotions or messages did Leonardi hope viewers would take away from his art?

He wanted his art to convey the message of eternal quality, life, and primordial energy - that grows stronger as time passes by. He was not interested in the fleeting nature of things, in banality, or superficial events. His art is very deep, and very personal, but speaks to anyone. It was imagined as some kind of universal language of visual signs that represents life as a whole; those signs are easy to understand, especially following the labels, but simple does not mean banal. That is the main point of his art: showing the complex and unknown world around us with primordial signs - in a sense that it is something inherently known to us. Something that we see, and, somehow, instantly recognize.

How do you feel about Leonardi's work being almost forgotten for a period, and what efforts are being made to revive interest in his art?

It is something that just happens, sometimes without any obvious reason. In the case of Oliviero Leonardi, a chain of circumstances happened: from his decision to resign from the world of art when he was still a famous and well-known artist, to the fact that his art belongs to that liminal space between fine arts and applied arts, considering the technique he used and invented, just to give one example. For us, after the historical distance, it looks like a pity that the work and life of such an innovative and dedicated artist is currently forgotten. Because his legacy is preserved in such good condition, we believe that there is no point in delaying working on a rediscover and recontextualization process, as we believe he still can mean something to us today, that he can inspire new artists, new critics, and art historians. In that sense, we plan to keep running the website dedicated to the artist (www.oliviero-leonardi.com),

to continue collaborating with academics and curators, and be in touch art magazines and academic journals about his work. We have digitized a large number of archives, which we have made available publicly. We also plan to exhibit his work; he is currently scheduled for 2 biennials and 1 museum exhibition. We believe that the story of Leonardi is worth sharing and engaging with. We are open to interesting collaborations, particularly with art historians, art curators, artists, conservators, art experts, public and private institutions, and collections and collectors.

Looking back on Leonardi's extensive career, what do you consider his most significant contribution to the art world?

His inventions and experiments. He is an innovative creator, both in terms of technique and artistic expression. Bringing the arts and crafts closer together. The philosophical, historical, and poetical in his work. The intuition.



Oliviero Leonardi | Dynamic Abstract | Copyright Association Oliviero Leonardi

Marcella Petriglia discovered mosaics in Rome, where she lives. After having studied roman mosaics in the italian capital, she visited and got mosaic classes in Barcelona, where she felt in love with the colours and vitality of trencadís. She believes that mosaic making can heal both our souls, whose fragmentation is reflected in the irregular fragments of trencadís, and our planet. For this reason, she uses recycled ceramics, most of which come from the mediterranean beaches.

Marcella Petriglia | Portugal | 2024





Marcella Petriglia | Pechino | 2024

I am from Oxfordshire, England and I'm currently studying a BA in Fine Art. I primarily create pieces from graphite however I do occasionally experiment with other mediums such as oil paints.

I specialize in portraiture and I am interested in how people want to be portrayed through portraits and how they can be used as a way of capturing someone's mood and emotions. I usually take subjects from old family photographs. I like how personal my pieces are when family members are in them.

— Isabella Rolls

Isabella Rolls | Cousins | 2024

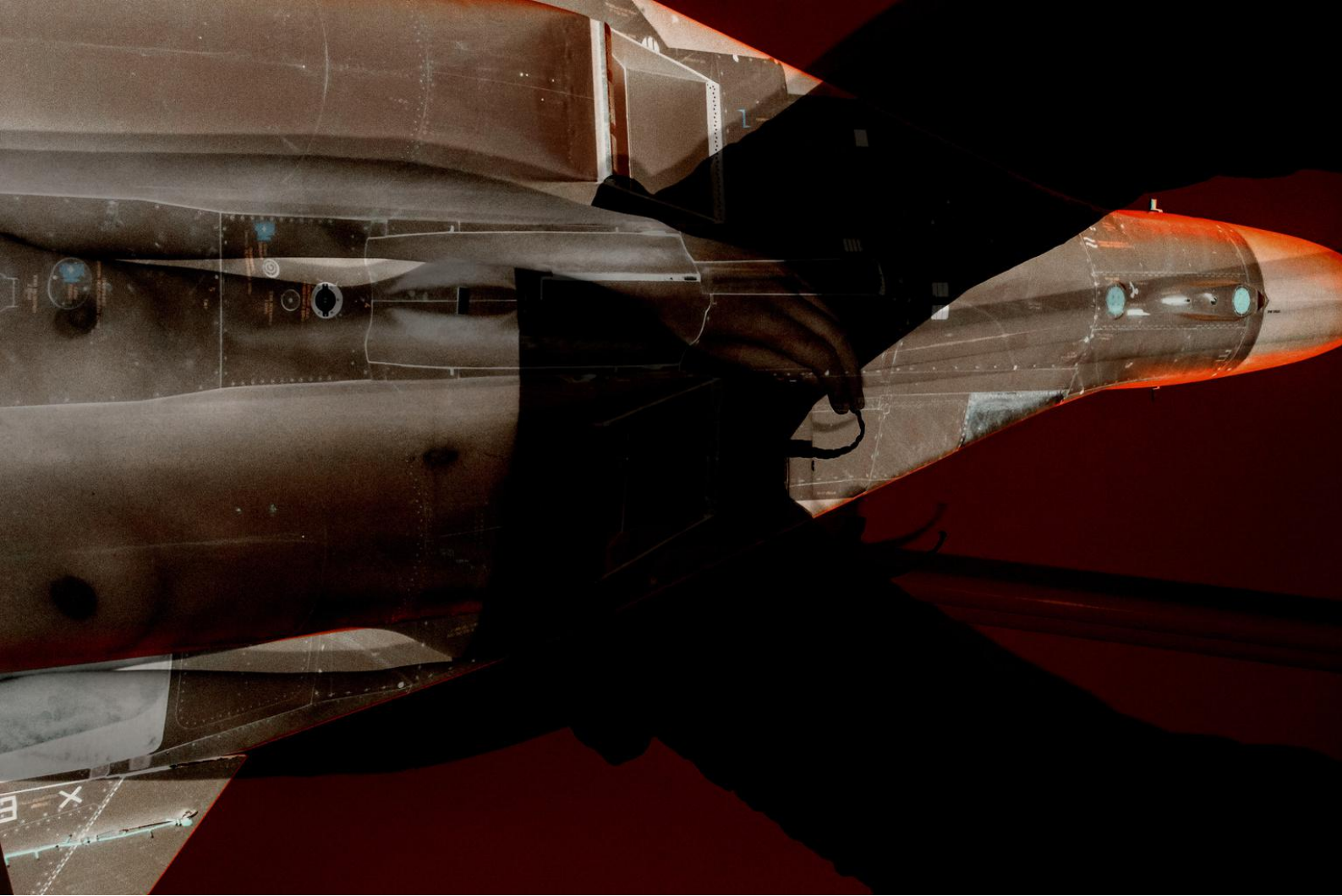




Juliette Saadeh is a film worker and visual artist based between Lebanon and France. Graduated in linguistics and geopolitics, their work revolves around forms of identity and exile on a geographical, physical and psychological scale, questioning the bias between environment, traumas and trans-generational heritage. By using several medium such as photography, collage, digital art and effects, they aim to portrait the dynamics between people and places and how they are constantly affecting and reshaping each other.

Juliette Saadeh | Gangrene Collage | 2022





Juliette Saadeh | Iron Womxn | 2022

Juliette Saadeh | Scattered Fire | 2022



— Interview

Brigitte Aflalo-Calderon

Can you tell us about your journey as an artist and how your dual identities of Morocco and the USA influence your work?

My journey as an artist started eight years ago when I turned 60. I have not stopped doing art since. In 2016, I was in Nimes, a city in the south of France where I choose to live part of the year. I saw an ad on an art gallery's window announcing the start of art classes. I walked in on an impulse. To make a long story short, the morning after I was sitting by an easel embarking on my journey as an artist. The gallery owner and teacher, who eventually became my mentor and close friend did not tell me what to paint. She asked me to look around at the art pieces on the walls, choose one that spoke to me and then sit down and start painting. My first work was an abstract painting filled with colors. I had Jean-Michel Basquiat on my mind, one of the artists I most admire. Making art has become my home. Once you leave home, the place where your history began -- Morocco in my case -- you lose forever a sense of safety. You



don't find it anywhere else. Although I have now spent most of my life in the US, I have not experienced a feeling of belonging. Through my art, I am building a world that I belong to. A blank sheet of paper or canvas is an invitation to converse intimately with colors, shapes, patterns, cut-out images or any material that captures my imagination at that moment. This is where my dual identities of Moroccan and North American cultures express themselves in one voice.

Your use of vibrant colors is quite striking. How do your Moroccan roots influence your color palette?

I feel very lucky to have grown up in Morocco, a land of colors, as it is often described. From the seashores, the desert to the mountains, red, blue, green, ochre and orange colors explode in a thousand hues. Today, they are present in my art as they were formerly in my everyday life – the garden of my home where flowers abounded, the market with stalls overflowing with fruits

and, vegetables, the streets lined with orange trees under the bluest sky. And there were the scents - the intoxicating scents of orange-flowers and mint leaves- the sounds of drums and the chants of women and men...These sensory experiences make me who I am and find a place in my art. As a matter of fact, I always begin a creative work, be it a painting on canvas or a collage, with a color in mind.

How did you move from painting to collage and digital work?

I like to experiment with different media and objects. Gradually, I added collages and various materials to my paintings – cut out images, lace, pieces of my husband’s faded shirts, pictures from old schoolbooks, newspapers, photos, etc... Eventually, collages became my main creative outlet. When you create a collage, you cut, glue, scratch, tear apart, re-cut, paste, discard, start again. To me making collages is about constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing something with fragments of different things. A bit like my dual and now triple (as I split my time between the US and France) identities.

In the recent years, I began digitalizing my work. I like to see my work go in directions that I had not suspected existed. Manipulating digitally adds an extra layer to my pieces. First, I take a photo of the painting or collage that I have chosen to work on. I digitalize this photo on my computer, which allows me to manipulate both forms and colors. So I will create a dominant image that exists in various iterations.



Brigitte Aflalo-Calderon
Lady Liberty
2024

How do you select the various objects, cut-outs, and materials that you incorporate into your mixed media pieces?

It is both a matter of instinct and having a conversation with the materials. I don't anticipate what I am going to do. Over the years I have been accumulating a library of materials organized by categories including colors, fabrics, photos, postcards, etc. I begin by picking out one or several objects that suggest a story that I want to tell. Next, I build and rebuild until a shape or shapes appear and the narrative I am looking for unfolds.

Can you discuss a particular piece that holds significant meaning to you?

The second piece I ever created eight years ago, means a lot to me. It is absolutely and inevitably about Morocco. It is called 'Hammam.' I had not planned



Brigitte Aflalo-Calderon
Behind her eyes
2024

it. I was just a beginner and had no clue as to where I was going except that I was attracted to a palette of red hues. So I began making marks on a canvas with wide brush strokes. While the paints were still wet, I carved lines. A face appeared, then another one and another one. The painting represents women sitting together in a half-circle. Which is often what happens in a Hammam in Morocco. When my brother saw it, he immediately bought it because to him too it evoked Morocco. I am glad that it remains in our family. Each time I see the painting, I stop to look at it. It brings me back home.

What are some of the most memorable reactions or feedback you've received from viewers of your art?

The most memorable comment I received was from an internationally renowned French painter who exhibits worldwide. He looked at one of my paintings, nodded in appreciation and said, this is good, this is really good. I was ecstatic. You always need encouragement. Viewers often comment on the intense and vibrant colors of my palette, as well as the somewhat unusual combination of colors.

What advice would you give to aspiring mixed media and digital artists?

I would tell them to find a mentor. I have two mentors, one in France and one in the US. It is a privilege to be guided by experienced artists. I would also tell them to join a community of artists. Being an artist can feel lonely. It is necessary to go out there, share ideas, show your art and receive criticism with an open mind.



Brigitte Aflalo-Calderon
Contemplating Eternity
2023



Stella "littlepoints" Ventura is an illustrator of Rome but that lives from many years in Genoa. For a long time, she has been dedicated to pop surrealism painting, and her work has evolved from pencil or pen drawings on notebooks to digital illustration and communication events.

- She loves: crows, number three, ice cream.

Artist Statement

The hand draws what the word cannot say.



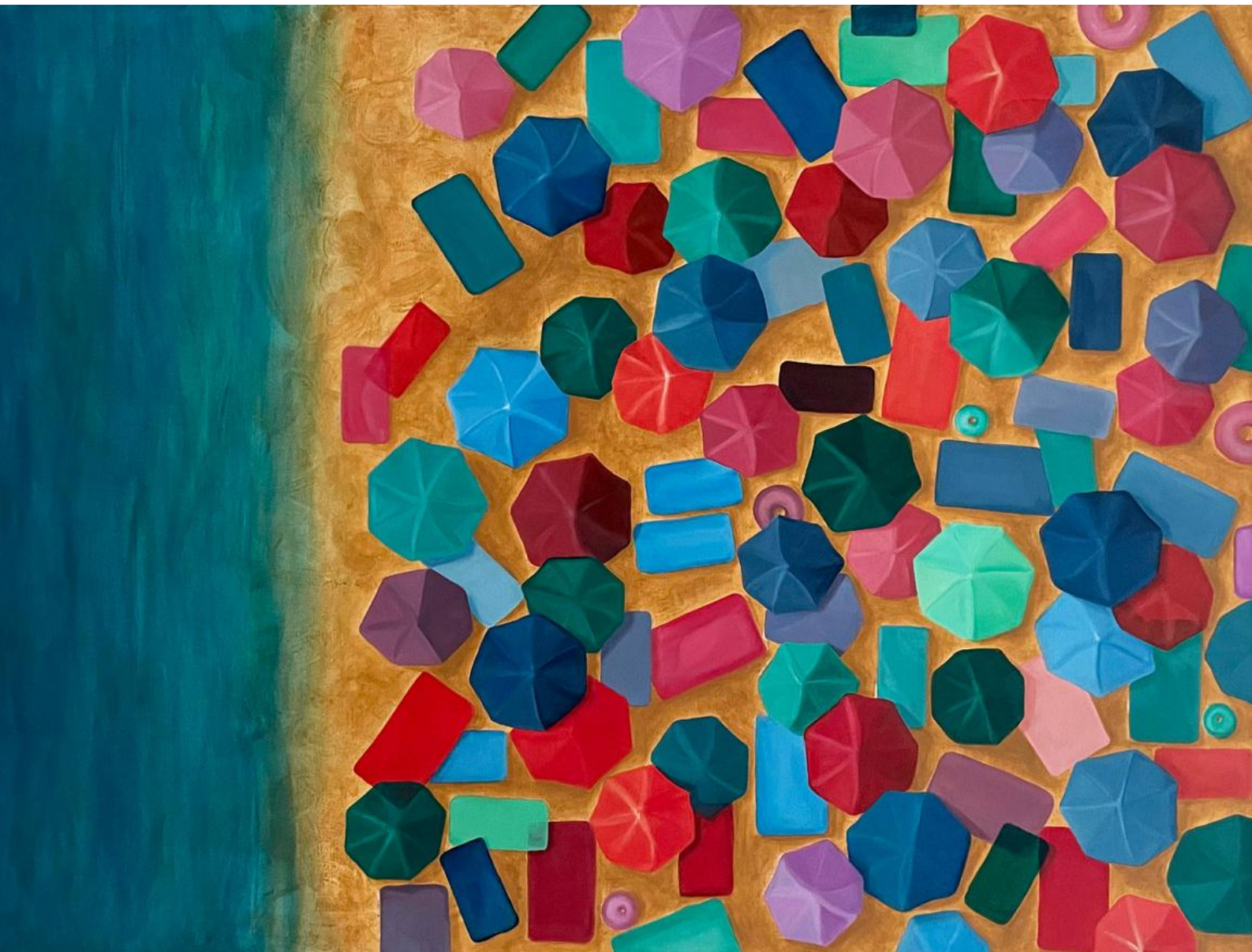
Stella Ventura | Nosotros | 2021



Magdalena Florek

Her inquiries, which are rooted in social issues, especially society and its relationship with the city, are the main subject of her paintings. Urban snapshots, seemingly insignificant moments and the apparent transience of the moment, stimulate reflection and thought. The paintings are primarily part of a conscious perception of social interaction in light of the dynamic change of the social and economic environment. They are also sometimes an expression of disagreement with the unreflective acceptance of the functioning of established social rules and axiologies.

Magdalena Florek | We will all fit | 2024





Magdalena Florek | Curiosity | 2024



Born in Delaware, U.S.A. in 1950, **Tim Young** moved to Ontario, Canada with his family at the age of fifteen where he now resides. While on duty in South Korea with the U.S. Air Force Tim purchased his first SLR camera. This began a love for photography as he travelled throughout Korea documenting the people, places, and everyday life of that culture. As a self-taught photographer, Tim has travelled throughout Europe and North America, in addition to visits to Hawaii, Morocco, Turkey, Trinidad & Tobago, Dominican Republic, and Haiti. Tim enjoys various photographic disciplines but specializes in abstract and minimalist photos.

Artist Statement

As we walk and drive through our towns and cities we often notice beautiful architecture. Some are modern, new buildings that have been recently built. Some are old and historic. However, there are many buildings, existing and recently constructed, that don't seem very beautiful, bordering on banal, that go unnoticed. My goal with the Minimal Architecture series is to show the architectural beauty, often unnoticed in our urban environment, by focusing on the colors and geometric shapes of a detailed portion of a building. By using colour, light, shadow and composition the three-dimensional is transformed into a two-dimensional piece of art.

Tim Young | Two Blue | 2023



— Interview

Verena Schlieckau

How does motherhood affect your art and creativity?

Balancing painting and creativity with motherhood is a rewarding but challenging experience. I've found that integrating art into my daily life, rather than seeing it as something separate, has been key to maintaining my creative practice while being a mother.

Motherhood itself has become a rich source of inspiration. The emotions, experiences, and even the challenges of raising children have deeply influenced my work. I often find myself painting themes related to family, growth, and the passage of time, channeling my personal journey into my art.

Motherhood requires flexibility, so I've learned to work in shorter, more focused bursts rather than relying on long, uninterrupted periods of time. I often paint during nap times, early mornings, or late at night when the house is quiet. A sidetable as creative space in my home helps me stay in touch with my art. It's a place where I can leave my work out and return to it whenever I have a moment. I enjoy creating digital art lately. It's easy to set up and I can gather ideas in a short amount of time so I can just pick



up the iPad and draw. I involve my daughter in the creative process whenever possible. We paint, draw, and craft together, turning creativity into a shared experience. Not only does this nurture their own artistic interests, but it also allows me to stay connected to my art in a way that feels natural and joyful. I've learned to be kind to myself and accept that there will be periods where my art takes a backseat to parenting. I remind myself that creativity isn't lost during these times—it's just waiting for the right moment to resurface.

How did you develop your skills as a self-taught artist? Were there any particular challenges or milestones in your learning process?

I developed my skills as a self-taught artist through a combination of experimentation, practice, and studying the work of others. Initially, I spent a lot of time simply experimenting with different materials and techniques, allowing myself the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them. Without

formal education, I lacked structured guidance on fundamental techniques, art history and critique, which made the learning process slower and more fragmented.

I compensated by studying books, online tutorials, and observing the work of established artists. I also experimented constantly, learning through trial and error.

Without the validation or feedback from teachers and peers that comes with formal education, I often struggled with self-doubt. It was easy to feel isolated. Connecting with online art communities, attending workshops, and seeking out constructive criticism helped me build confidence and realize that growth is a continuous process.

How do you decide on the themes or subjects of your artwork?

The question is very easy to answer at the moment: as a mother, my reality in life revolves around my little daughter. She brings out many facets in me that I deal with, and I see her with all my heart - so she is of course my most painted model. Otherwise, I am very interested in portraiture - I have always been very interested in figurative drawing. Faces tell stories, or stories are told about them. We recognize gestures and facial expressions. Portraits are contemporary witnesses of our society.

My transition from drawing comics to painting portraiture was a natural evolution driven by my desire to explore deeper emotional and psychological



Verena Schlieckau | E'riah Isabel | 2024

layers in my art.

When I first started with drawing comics, I was drawn to the storytelling aspect and the ability to convey a narrative through a sequence of images. Comics allowed me to play with characters, expressions, and scenarios in a way that was dynamic and engaging.

As an Atelier teacher and kindergarten educator, how do you integrate art into your teaching?

As an atelier teacher and kindergarten educator, I integrate art into my teaching by using it as a tool to enhance creativity, communication, and learning across various subjects.

I encourage children to use art to express their feelings and ideas, especially when words might be challenging. Through drawing, painting,



and crafting, we learn to communicate emotions and stories, developing both their artistic and emotional intelligence. I create an environment where imagination is valued. I give children open-ended projects with minimal restrictions, allowing them to explore materials and ideas freely. This helps them to develop problem-solving skills and the confidence to think creatively. Art projects provide a break from more structured activities and allow children to relax and have fun. By integrating art into my teaching, I aim to nurture well-rounded individuals who appreciate creativity and can apply it in various aspects of their lives. Children teach us art as self-expression and a means of communicating with ourselves and the environment. They leave traces, paint and paint over, create out of instinctive interest and thought processes. They make what is available to them their own.

This is the greatest inspiration we can take from children's creativity: Art from the joy of creating, the fulfillment of working in flow. A prepared environment

that invites you to create and play is prepared with stimulating materials and suitable tools.

In my courses and in my work in general, I attach great importance to a safe, affirming environment. The focus is on the process, not the result.

Problem-solving strategies are developed, and children explore their personalities through design. Painting promotes patience, fine motor skills, reduces stress and improves memory and self-confidence - all things that we as adult artists like to remember from time to time. Children usually know what they want to express - or they find out through the act of creating. I pave the way for them through my knowledge and a supportive attitude. I give impulses to stimulate creativity.

Are there any particular messages or emotions you aim to convey through your artwork?

I try to give the viewer a little reason to look and linger. They may not only see the portrait of a stranger but also recognize parts of themselves in it or fragments of their own stories. That's why I believe that the feelings or messages that my pictures convey are as diverse as the viewers themselves. There is always an interaction between the image and the viewer. To feel someone seen: As they are or as they could be or as something that might have been forgotten.

"Every art requires two people: one who makes it and one who needs it." - Ernst Barlach



My name is **Victoria Kudryavtseva-Vostrova**, I make art ceramics and paint on natural silk and cotton (batik). My creative work is a very exciting process! It's like magic when the white material begins to live and glow in my work and emotions. My creativity is very diverse, I paint all types of batik; Cold, hot and batik in watercolor technique. My art serves as a means of self-expression and a method of communication with the world and people around me. I graduated from an art university, but for 25 years art was a hobby for me, I devoted a lot of time to other tasks and responsibilities, but at the same time I always painted, created interior items and works of art on silk. In 2023 I rethought attitude towards her art and devoted all her time to creativity and self-presentation. I became a full-time artist, every day, seven days a week. . When I dye silk, I pay attention to small details: how the tube of reserve goes over uneven areas of the silk, how the dye flows across the fabric. I love watching white silk become multicolored. I love to immerse myself in extremely complex work so that everything around me ceases to exist, just me and my art. Ideas come from everywhere. It happens that I saw a picture and it inspired me. Or I drew a scarf and liked the intermediate stage. I memorized this step and then reproduced it as the main drawing. And then one day I took a photo of the seashore and after a few days I realized that this was a ready-made design that would look great on fabric. And it worked! You can draw anything on silk, there are no restrictions. I like to change up the standard batik painting. Thanks to my extensive artistic experience and many years of practice, I have developed an individual artistic technique for painting on silk. I like to create paintings on complex spiritual and moral themes, combining decorative art and thematic paintings that change the direction of standards in fabric painting techniques. I am very interested in thematic competitions on given topics, in which I represent an individual representative in this technique; This is a rather complex and large task that allows us to change the standard idea of drawing on silk, which makes it possible to introduce the viewer to this type of art. At the moment I am a participant and winner of more than 20 exhibitions, auctions and competitions in Europe and the USA; Most of my works are kept in private collections. This gives me great incentive to create and create new projects.



Kudryavtseva-Vostrova Victoria | Mother-keeper | 2024

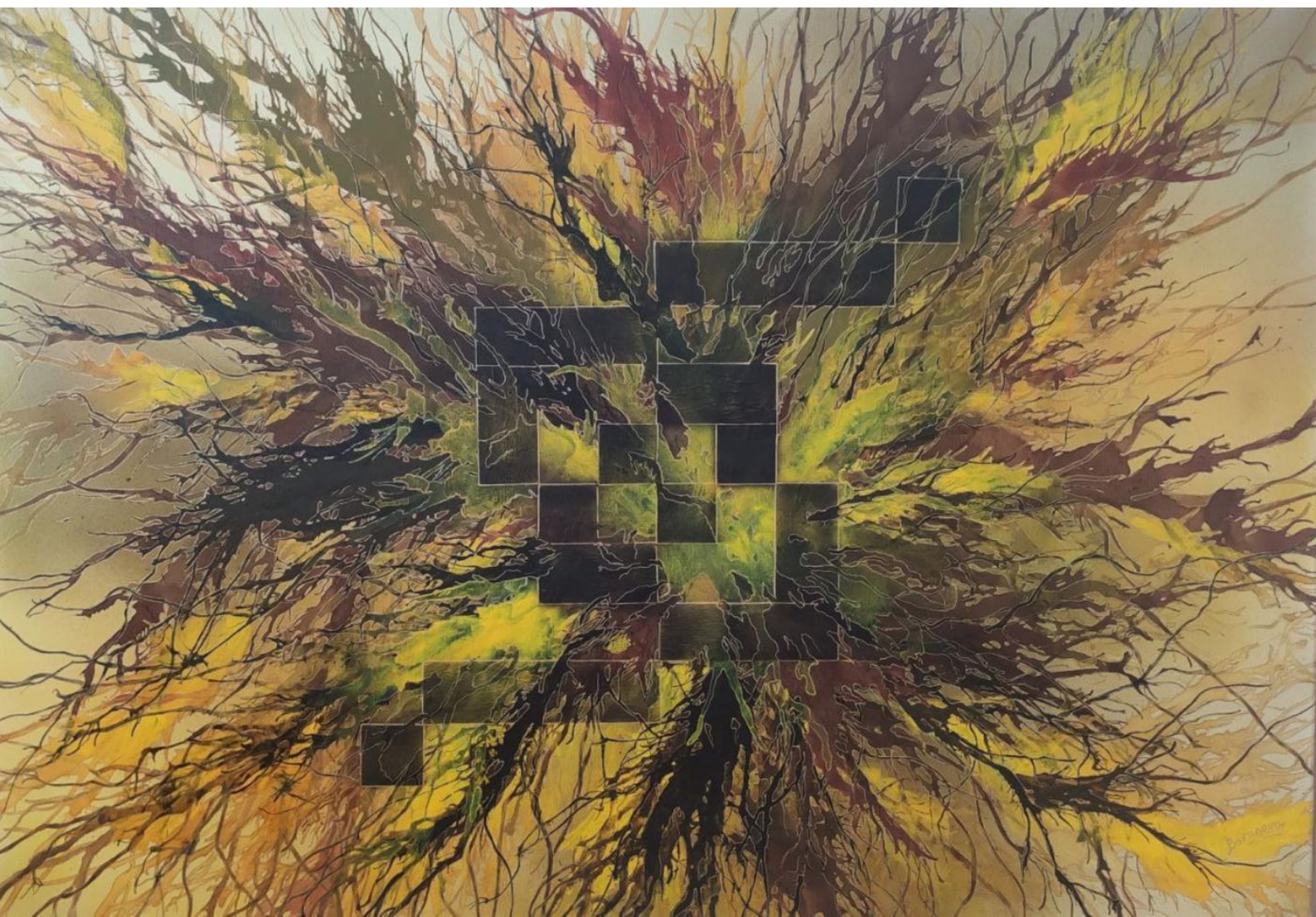


My name is **Iryna Baranova**, I am from Ukraine, I have been living in Poland for the last 5 years. I graduated from the Academy of Arts in Wroclaw. I regularly cooperate with art galleries DNA and Art and Prints Michal Kasproski in Wroclaw. I participated in the art internet competition Golden Talent, where I won prizes (1 and 2) My paintings take part in auctions on One Bid, 2020-2022 I was a member of a common group of artists in Poland, jointly made exhibitions, in 2024 I participated in a joint exhibition "ESG Art" from the gallery DNA. Lately I have been developing my unique author's style, which appeared in an experimental way, the technique of execution is invented by me and is absolutely exclusive.

Artist Statement

I paint in my unique, personalized technique with ink, acrylic and airbrush. I created the technique myself through experience. This technique is not used anywhere else. I really want my paintings to be seen by as many people as possible.

Iryna Baranova | Impuls | 2024





— Interview

Olga Gaigerova

Can you tell us about your journey in the world of art? What inspired you to start painting?

I began drawing as a child and have continued throughout my life. As a child, I would look at paintings by old masters and be amazed at how paint and brushes could create three-dimensional figures on a flat surface, bringing them to life for me, creating a unique world. I wanted to be part of that world and learn how to create something beautiful and impressive myself. Over time, painting became essential for me—it's a part of both my work and relaxation, offering a way to express myself. Creativity, of course, brings a sense of freedom; it makes you want to breathe and live. Creating a painting combines your inner world, emotions, skills, and techniques. Many things can be inspiring, but nature and animals are the primary sources. Nature, in my view, is the most important and perfect artist. Everything in nature is harmonious, and I want to convey that balance and beauty. After mountain trips, I always paint several landscapes.



You use a variety of techniques including pastel, watercolor, ink, and sumi-e. How do you decide which medium to use for a particular piece?

It all depends on the purpose of the work and what effect I want to achieve. Pastel is a versatile and tactile material that allows for creating realistic works, so I use it for hyperrealism. If I want to convey expression and movement in a landscape, I might leave visible strokes in a pastel work. For a more graphic approach or to add philosophical depth, I turn to sumi-e. I love painting winter landscapes with snowflakes in the sumi-e style because the work becomes multi-layered, with an interesting atmospheric tone. The fibers of the rice paper help with this effect, as the ink and paint spread along them. I enjoy using

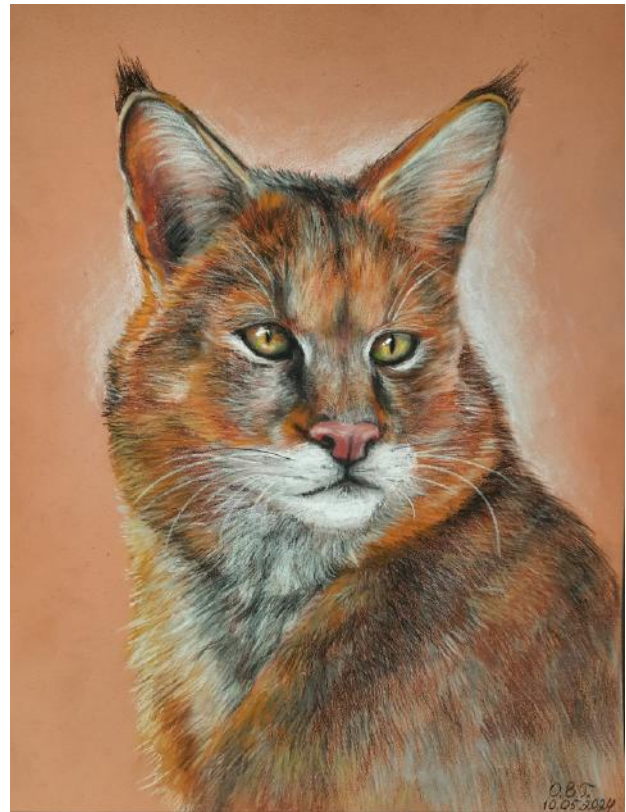
watercolor for quick sketches, often without a pencil draft, so the pieces remain lively, flowing, and breathing.

What draws you to the subjects of landscapes and animals?

Landscapes allow you to demonstrate all your skills and knowledge—there is drawing, composition (especially in buildings and structures), tone, multi-layering, and so on. A landscape captures a moment in the life of nature or a city. Animals have always amazed me with their grace, spontaneity, and diversity. When you look into the eyes of a cat with narrow pupils, it feels like there's a whole universe, another world in there. Watching a horse moving freely, you become captivated by the play of muscles and the freedom of movement! And the energy emanating from wild animals is so powerful—I want to capture all of that on flat paper and bring it to life! I believe animals should be loved and protected as part of nature and our planet. Many species are on the verge of extinction, and if they are not saved, they will only remain in photos and paintings. That's why it's important to try and capture what you see now because it might be gone tomorrow. Our world is so fragile!

How does the practice of sumi-e painting differ from other techniques you use?

The sumi-e technique is less common compared to others like oil, watercolor, or acrylic. It is often confused with watercolor, but it is not just a separate



Olga Gaigerova | Reed Cat | 2024

technique—it's an entire philosophy. Sumi-e is also known as Japanese painting and translates to 'ink and painting.' The works are created on rice paper, which is very thin, like a tissue, easily tears, and has its unique texture and fibers. The painting is done directly with ink, and mineral paints can be added. The ink spreads across the paper, and the artist must control this process. As a result, the drawing resembles a free-flowing dance, and you never know exactly what the final outcome will be. It's always a living drawing, and mistakes cannot be corrected—you have to start over. The Japanese also have their own symbolism, like the peony symbolizing wealth and being a masculine flower, while the magnolia is feminine. Bamboo represents resilience. These elements must be considered when creating traditional sumi-e compositions. Besides technique, there are philosophical aspects—there is no symmetry in nature,

so the painting should be asymmetrical, with the main subject shifted from the center. Ambiguity and emptiness are encouraged, allowing the viewer to create their own story. Sumi-e works are like films with open endings, and that's their charm.

Can you explain the therapeutic aspects of creating art for you?

Art is a way of self-expression, self-discovery, and searching for oneself. You can't paint something that doesn't resonate with you or that you don't like. In art, every stage is important—the birth of an idea, preparation, the creation process, and the final result. An additional stage is the sale of a painting when your creation finds a new home. The painting holds your emotions and experiences. You shift your focus from daily concerns to the new world you are creating. For me, art is a source of energy, a way to replenish my life force.

It's said that to receive, you must first give. The same goes for paintings—you give energy at first, but then it returns to you, doubled.

Who are some of the artists that have had a significant impact on your work?

As a child, I was strongly influenced by the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites. I was enchanted by their narrative scenes, symbols, and color palettes. Later, I was drawn to Surrealist artists, whose paintings felt like riddles to be solved. After finishing school, I learned that the famous painting 'The Chocolate Girl' by Liotard was created using pastel, and that sparked my desire to explore this medium. That's when I bought my first pack of pastel sticks. Among contemporary artists, I admire the pastel landscapes of Sergey Usik and Olga Abramova. I was introduced to Japanese painting through my teacher, the artist from Rostov, Ekaterina Zhegulova.

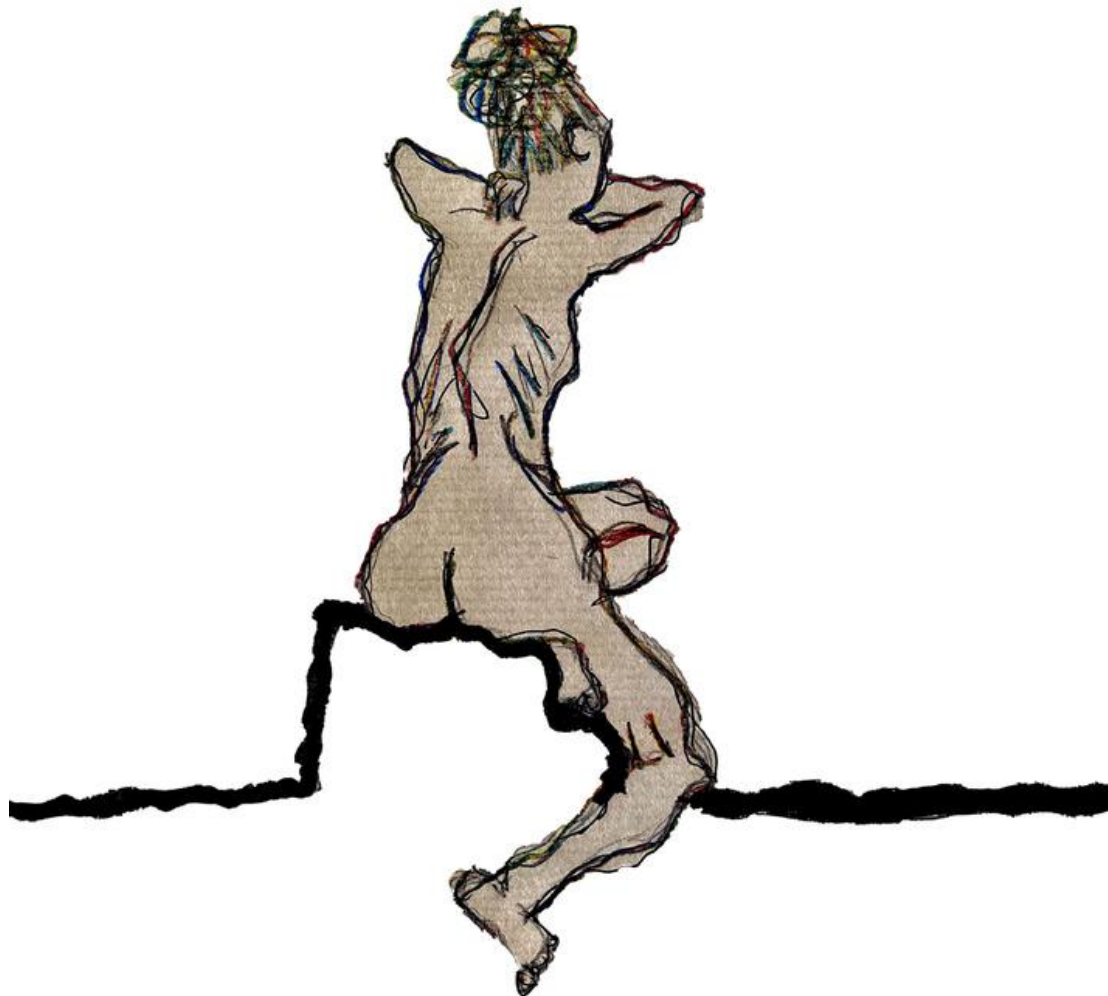


Olga Gaigerova | Element | 2024



It will now be a little over 8 years since I started drawing, notably during artistic nude session. I compose with the model who stands in front of me. I temper with the constraint of the pose, the exposure time, the angle of view. A violent balance between letting go and concentration, imagination and real proportion of the body to finally spend a moment of calm with myself through which I reconnect with what I know how to do best: imagine, observe and draw. My work mainly revolves around emotion. I look at a reality that I imbue it with my feelings. Watercolor, ink, gouache or even acrylic, it doesn't matter how technical it is as long as it gives me the consistency I need to put on paper what I feel. Based on constraints directly linked to artistic nude sessions, I oscillate between reality and imagination. Is it a body that imposes itself on me or my line, my choice of colors which imposes itself on the body? I like to tell an emotion while slaloming with the limits imposed by this work of the moment. The female body as a model in its own right.

— OD1





I majored in painting, but I work in video, photography, installation, and painting. My work focuses on how human behavior and thoughts affect individuals in society. And while the painting style of Cubism shows multiple perspectives of a three-dimensional object at once, he unfolds the object and transforms it into a two-dimensional form. I am active in the US, UK, and Europe, and have participated in three biennials in Europe and have been awarded the HONORABLE MENTION AWARD in California twice.

— Jang Guin Lim

Jang Guin Lim | Good Samaritan | 2024





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Harsimran Juneja | Lost in Conformity | 2023

Our experiences in life are full of complexities that create dichotomies - good or bad. My work investigates these dichotomies and particularly conflict in contexts that are personal, political, social or cultural. In uncovering, portraying or depicting some of these ideas, I am trying to draw attention towards 'self-in-society' to offer moments of self-reflection, opportunities to build new perceptions, and chances to reconsider simple questions. In exploring conflicts, I am curious to understand the consequences of being forced into binary systems of this or that, right or wrong etc. My works in the form of paintings, drawings, texts, combines or new media art, often turn into statements and seldom propaganda whilst representing my observations about conflicts. These can be good or bad; my practice is not restricted to either one. My visual language draws influence from art history but exists in a contemporary space and oscillates between figurative - abstraction or narrative - abstraction. I am drawn towards the use of texts and re-contextualisation of subjects; memory and its relation with objects, things, spaces and people. The texts that I write in my paintings are akin to graffiti on the streets, they tag my paintings. The figurative forms in my works challenge the notion of acceptance - norms, beliefs, traditions. The objects in my works are occasionally used as symbols or metaphors. And the use of space in my works are reminiscent of interactions and experiences across different geographies in varied contexts. A crucial aspect of being able to resolve conflict is the practice of looping - an exercise that enables better listening in a conversation to understand one's reasons better. In a larger context, I wonder if my works can be analogous to looping, enabling audiences to inch closer towards resolution of their own conflicts or perhaps a greater understanding of them.

— Harsimran Juneja

COULD YOU
FIND YOURSELF
IN A FIELD FULL
OF COURSES?



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~~HCJ24~~
HCJ24



— Interview

Michelle Iglesias

Can you tell us about the inspiration behind your project "I Belong, You Belong, We Belong"?

The inspiration behind my project "I Belong, You Belong, We Belong" stems from a deep desire to explore the concept of belonging and its vital role in fostering inclusivity and connection among individuals. In a world that often feels fragmented, I wanted to create a space where people could recognize their shared humanity and the importance of community.

Through a combination of visual art and interactive installations, the project aims to convey the powerful message that every individual has a place and significance in our society. Inviting participants to engage with the artwork encourages reflection on their personal experiences of belonging and promotes a sense of unity. Ultimately, this project serves as a reminder that we are all interconnected and that our differences only enrich our collective identity.



How did your experiences as a Hispanic woman influence this work?

As a Hispanic woman, I have navigated experiences of identity, belonging, and sometimes marginalization. These personal narratives shape my understanding of belonging and the importance of creating spaces where everyone feels valued and accepted. In the project, I aim to reflect on these experiences, highlighting the struggles and triumphs of individuals seeking connection.

My experiences inform my desire to advocate for those who may feel excluded or unheard. I recognize the power of art as a tool for social change and hope to use this project to amplify voices that often go unnoticed. I aim to create a platform for marginalized perspectives by fostering dialogue and

understanding. My experiences as a Hispanic woman serve as both a foundation and a guiding force for "I Belong, You Belong, We Belong." They inspire me to create a work that reflects my journey but also resonates with the diverse experiences of others, fostering a deeper understanding of our shared humanity. I want to give my daughter Paulina and every girl, including Ms. Harris, the message, "I Belong, You Belong, We Belong." These representations will serve as a reminder that everyone has a unique story and contribute to the rich tapestry of our society.

How does your background in graphic design shape your approach to Painting and visual art?

Graphic design often considers the viewer's experience, and I carry this mindset into my visual art. I aim to create work that resonates with the audience, encouraging interaction and contemplation. Overall, my background in graphic design enriches my practice as a painter, allowing me to blend technical skills with creative expression to produce visually compelling and meaningful artwork.

What do you hope people take away from the message of inclusivity and belonging in your work?

I aspire for my art to inspire conversations about acceptance and community, encouraging people to reflect on their relationships and connections. Ultimately, I hope to foster



a sense of belonging that transcends differences, reminding us that we are all part of a larger tapestry. By embracing inclusivity, we can create a more compassionate and supportive world where everyone feels valued and heard.

How has your journey as an artist evolved since your graduation in 2002?

Since graduating in 2002, my journey as an artist has evolved significantly. In my painting, I experience a profound sense of freedom; the endless possibilities inherent in the medium instill a sense of hope in me. I recognize that the only limitations I face are self-imposed. I feel an immense responsibility in design to execute my work with precision and integrity, ensuring it resonates as a valid form of expression. While my approaches to painting and design differ, both are vital avenues for conveying my artistic vision.

How do you see the role of art in fostering understanding and empathy among different communities?

I see the role of art as a vital instrument in fostering understanding and empathy among different communities. Art has the unique ability to transcend language and cultural barriers, allowing individuals to connect on an emotional level.

Art often tells stories that reflect diverse experiences and perspectives. By sharing these narratives, art invites



viewers to step into someone else's shoes, encouraging empathy and a deeper understanding of different backgrounds.

How do your heritage and upbringing in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, influence your artistic style and themes?

Growing up in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, deeply influenced my artistic style and themes in various ways. The city, known for its vibrant culture and complex social issues, is from the border provinces backdrop that shapes my perspectives. The juxtaposition of beauty and struggle, prevalent in everyday life there, is often reflected in my art.

The local traditions, such as folk art and music, inspire my use of color and texture, while the stories and experiences of the community inform the narratives I explore. Themes of resilience, identity, and social justice frequently emerge in my work as I aim to convey the emotions and realities of my environment.

Moreover, the challenges the people in Juarez face, including violence and economic hardship, push me to address these topics in a way that fosters dialogue and empathy. This connection to my heritage enriches my artistic expression and reinforces my commitment to using art as a means of advocacy and storytelling.

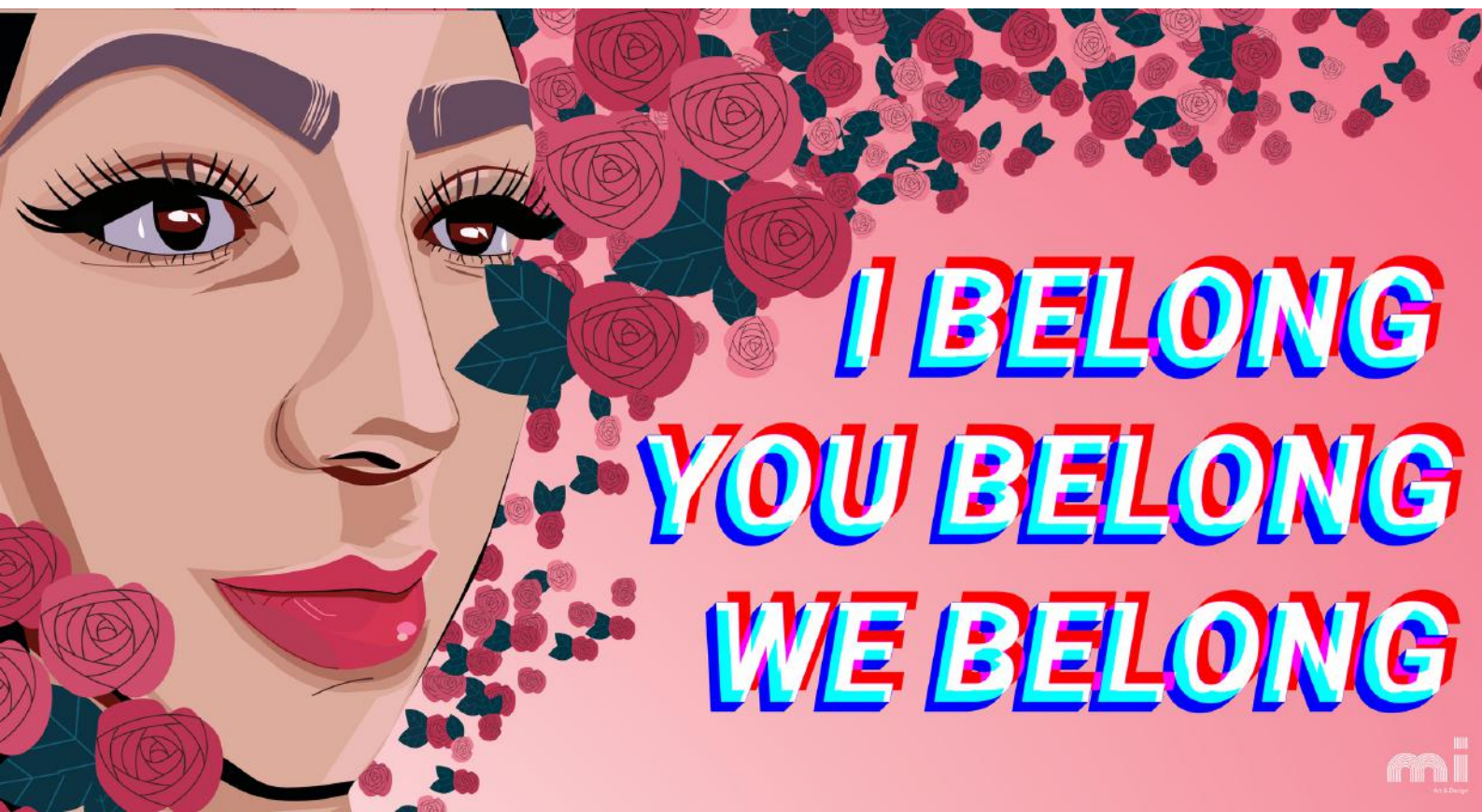
How do you balance the dual roles of being both a graphic designer and a painter? Do these roles ever intersect in your creative process?

Balancing the dual roles of a graphic designer and a painter involves navigating distinct yet complementary creative processes. Each discipline offers unique challenges and rewards, often intersecting in inspiring ways.

As a graphic designer, I work within structured guidelines, focusing on branding, layouts, and digital media. This requires a keen eye for composition and

color theory, skills that seamlessly translate into my painting. Conversely, painting allows spontaneous Painting and emotional expression, providing a refreshing contrast to the precision of graphic design.

Ultimately, the interplay between graphic design and painting enriches my creative process. Painting allows me to approach projects with a unique perspective. By embracing the strengths of both disciplines, I can create visually impactful and emotionally resonant work.



Miranda Keuter 47 years, living in The Netherlands. Born in Kampen, habiting in IJsselmuiden. Since January 2024 I am working upon Canvas. A few times selected only into finals. Good but working hard to become better one day.

Artwork *Nonna Mamacita*.

I tried to express my Spanish Mexican way of thinking into this Traditional family Papa Pablo, Picasso piece of Art.

Colour use, curves into DNA for loving and caring man.

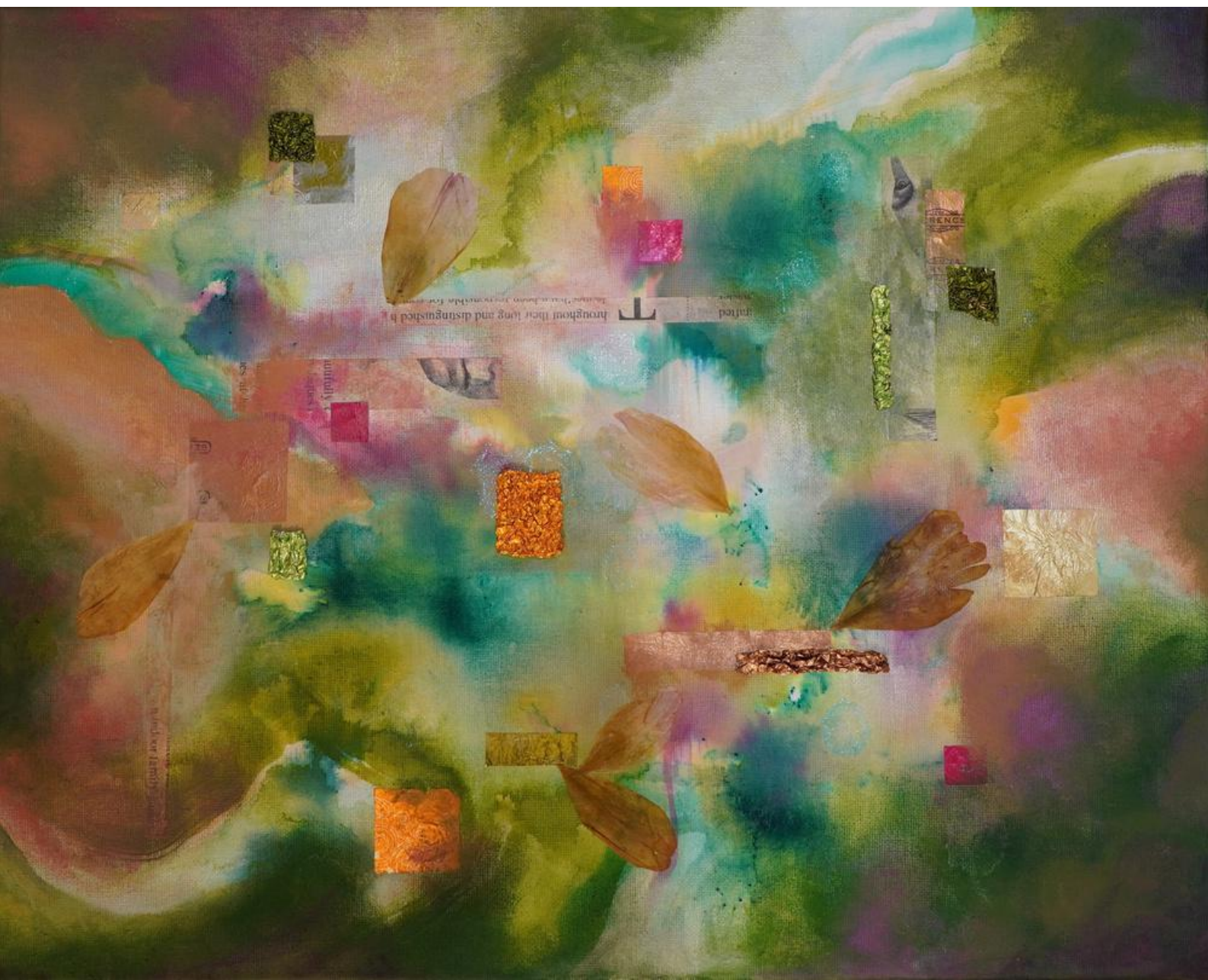
Acryl upon Canvas 60x80cm.



Enikő Marosváry-Kramcsák

I create abstract expressionist paintings with mixed media collage technique by using collected objects such as to name my favorite: pressed flowers and recycled metallic chocolate papers. The unusual combinations of elements give depth, movement and special surfaces to my artworks and indeed contrast as well. With my color choices I always try to create an ethereal and balancing atmosphere. The universal wisdom of Nature is my overall source of inspiration. Through my art I would like to show my interpretation of what I have learned from my qigong practice and eastern philosophies so far and therefore people can connect to nature in a deeper way.

Enikő Marosváry-Kramcsák | Five Elements | 2024





"At a young age, I was always caught between the two cerebral hemispheres. The decision to study as a programmer didn't extinguish my artistic vein, until the day I decided to become a full-time artist: laelleci"

Laelleci is always looking for new opportunities to translate her daily experiences into art. Her approach and her productions are constantly evolving; an evolution that reflects the constant refinement of her style, always looking for new inspirations to experiment new styles and techniques. However, she rejects labels and is committed to ensuring that each of her works is always different. Laelleci faces every project with total enthusiasm and dedication. A very sensitive soul and a marked creativity make laelleci an inexhaustible source of ideas, which she pours into arts created with her heart.

— Luana "laelleci" Cambiaghi



Luana Cambiaghi | Mimosa | 2024



Luana Cambiaghi | Rage Soul | 2024

— Interview

Yang Lu



Your work seems to blend the boundaries between structure and chaos. How do you decide when a piece is complete, given the spontaneous and unpredictable nature of your process?

Actually, I decide when a piece is complete based on my intuition. Throughout the creative process, I follow my instincts and emotions. My feelings act as a compass, guiding me through the delicate balance of adding and subtracting elements in my work. It's less about a strict formula and more about an ongoing conversation with the piece as it evolves. I aim to reach a point where the piece feels perfectly balanced. As I work, I constantly assess the piece. If a part feels overwhelming or excessive, I reduce it. If something feels lacking or insufficient, I enhance it. When I sense that adding even a little more would be too much, and taking away even a little would be too little, the piece is complete.

You incorporate elements of chance and randomness into your work. Can you share more about how you balance this unpredictability with deliberate artistic decisions?

In my creative process, there are two distinct phases that require deep thought. The first phase happens before I start creating, where I reflect on the concepts, emotions, and questions I want to explore in the work. I consider the kind of thoughts I hope to provoke through the piece. This is a serious and contemplative stage where I thoroughly think through what I want to express.

Once I've clarified my ideas, I move into the second phase, where I begin the actual creation. Here, I translate my thoughts and reflections into feelings, which I then express using my own abstract symbols. This part of the process is highly intuition-driven. I immerse myself completely and stay open to any random visual effects that might emerge. At this stage, there are no mistakes—it's a completely free and unrestricted phase. As the piece progresses, however, I start to make more deliberate artistic decisions. I continuously assess the composition, focusing on finding an aesthetic balance. This is where I begin to make conscious choices about what elements to keep and what to adjust, ensuring that the piece reaches its natural state of equilibrium. So, in essence, my creative process is a blend of embracing randomness and making thoughtful, deliberate decisions. These two aspects are intertwined and complement each other throughout the creation of my work.

The concept of Zen and abstraction appears central to your series "Beyond Form." How do you connect the principles of Zen with your approach to abstraction?

The principles of Zen deeply influence my approach to abstraction in the "Beyond Form" series. Zen teaches us to embrace the present moment and to accept the natural flow of life without resistance. These ideas are central to how I create and understand abstract art. In "Beyond Form," I explore the harmonious coexistence of form and chaos. Each piece in the series reflects the beauty and the elegance of lines, which emerge spontaneously during the

creative process. This spontaneity mirrors the Zen concept of living in the present, where each moment is unique and unrepeatable. My intuitive approach to abstraction aligns with Zen by allowing randomness to guide the creation. Instead of imposing strict rules or forms, I let the artwork develop naturally, trusting that an intrinsic order will emerge from the apparent randomness. This process reflects the Zen idea that true understanding and beauty arise when we let go of control and allow things to be as they are. "Beyond Form" celebrates the elegance of the unpredictable and the beauty of flow. It invites viewers to immerse themselves in a world where form is fluid, and meaning is found in the balance between chaos and order—much like Zen teaches us to find peace in the balance of life. Through this series, I connect Zen and abstraction by embracing the spontaneity of creation and the profound beauty that can be discovered in the present moment.

The interplay between form and formlessness is a recurring theme in your work. What does this duality mean to you personally, and how do you express it visually?

In my view, all concepts are abstract, and so are human thoughts. It is abstract ideas that shape this tangible, material world and create what we call "form." We often say that imagination is boundless and unrestricted. However, when we transform an intangible idea into a work of art in the material world, "form" inevitably emerges. This form tends to be repeated when people create art, forming a set of established habits and rules. So what I aim to do is to use the boundless imagination to break through the "boundaries of form" in the material world and create something entirely new, something that breaks past conventions or common perceptions. For example, traditional painting is often done on a stretched canvas, but in my work, I present it on soft, irregular fabrics. Whereas most painters in the past used paint, I can use materials like resin, wool, and thread, combining their textures and 3D effects to "paint" in an interdisciplinary way. This is akin to a process of creating meaning through action. All dualities are merely one aspect of a single entity; the universe itself is chaotic. A complete



Yang Lu | Zen I - Maya (Illusion) | 2024

understanding comes from exploring and recognizing both aspects together. For instance, it is only through understanding the concept of "limitations" that our understanding of "limitlessness" becomes complete. In my works, the process of transforming intangible thoughts into tangible creations, recognizing "form," and then "breaking through form" to return to the "formless" can also be seen as a process of exploring understanding.

Your use of materials is quite diverse, from silk and linen to faux leather and resin. How do you select the materials for each piece, and what role do they play in the overall concept?

Each material has its own unique qualities that evoke specific emotions and associations in viewers. For instance, wool naturally brings to mind warmth and comfort, while resin is often linked to a sense of technology and modernity. Leather, on the other hand, can evoke thoughts of hidden desires, with its texture even triggering the sensation of its scent. The incorporation of various materials not only enriches the viewer's visual experience but also conveys a sensory experience through this shared feeling. Therefore, I hope that the emotions my artwork evokes in viewers are multidimensional—not just limited to the visual aspect, but engaging multiple senses. Through the contrast and variation of materials, I aim to trigger a psychological "tactile" response and other sensory experiences. This approach helps to create a more immersive and impactful connection between the viewer and the artwork.

Your paintings and sculptures seem to challenge traditional notions of beauty. What do you hope viewers take away from engaging with your work?

I believe that when artists are free from the constraints of categorization—whether their work is labeled as painting, fiber art, or sculpture—they can create with greater freedom and authenticity. So my work intentionally challenges traditional notions of beauty by eliminating the boundaries between different art disciplines. This approach allows me to explore new forms of expression and to present art in a way that is not confined by conventional definitions. What I hope viewers take away from engaging with my work is the inspiration to follow their inner voice and to pursue their own ideas without fear of the unknown. By encountering art that doesn't fit into a single category and traditional notions, I want to encourage viewers to embrace the uncertainties and complexities of life, to explore beyond the familiar, and to find their true inner voice. Ultimately, I hope my work not only resonates with individuals on a personal level but also contributes to the broader advancement of

interdisciplinary art, pushing the boundaries of what art can be and how it can be experienced.

What advice would you give to emerging artists who are interested in exploring the relationship between philosophy and visual arts in their own practice?

My advice is to start by deeply engaging with the philosophical ideas that resonate with you personally. Philosophy offers a vast landscape of concepts that can challenge your thinking, inspire your creativity, and provide a strong foundation for your work. Take the time to study, reflect, and internalize these ideas before translating them into your visual language. Then the most important thing is to put it into practice. Don't be afraid to let your art be a space for questioning and exploration. Art and philosophy both thrive on pushing boundaries and challenging norms, so allow your practice to become a dialogue between thought and expression. This means embracing uncertainty and being open to where your ideas might lead you, even if it's beyond traditional or expected forms.





Yang Lu | Zen III - Carefree | 2024

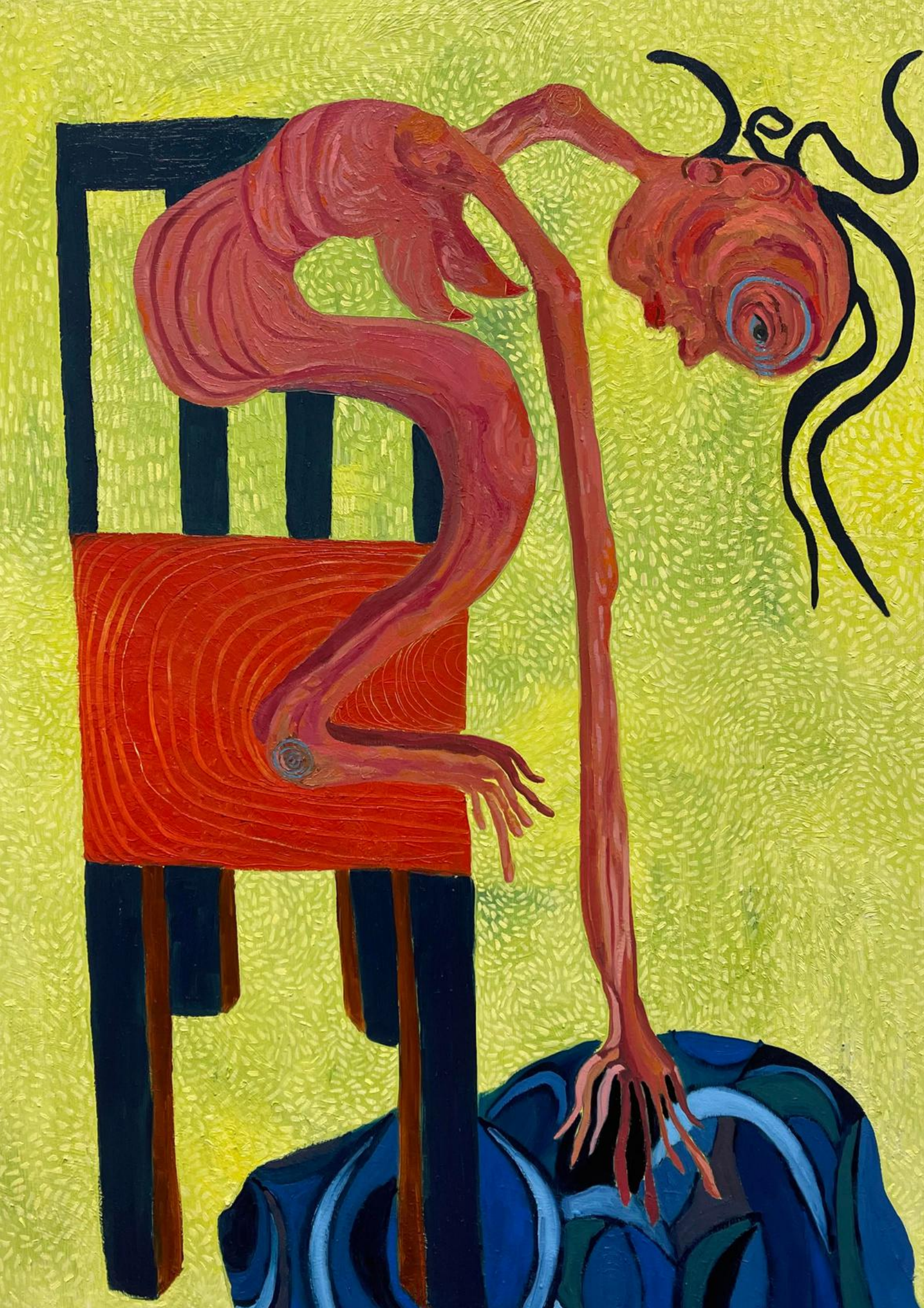
Yang Lu | Zen IV - Desire | 2024



Valentina Crolla (b. 2002, in Edinburgh, Scotland, lived and studied BA(Hons) painting at Edinburgh College of Art, UK) is currently based in London, UK. Valentina's work explores relationships and memories of her childhood, painting predominantly figurative scenes of storytelling and conversation within a subconscious landscape. Through paint and bright colour, Valentina uses aggressive mark-making and her own dictionary of symbolism to express the relentless rehashing of her memories.



Valentina Crolla | 'Don't fall Alice'



Hannah Koedel is a 2024 University of Central Florida graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Studio Art. Born and raised in Tampa, Florida, her influences stem from the world around her - working to capture the beauty and essence of environments dear to her. Her skills include photography, painting, and ceramics, to name a few, and she's constantly reaching for new mediums to try. Having had her work displayed in the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts during her time at UCF, she was able to learn from her experiences and grow as an artist. As she continues to create she demonstrates a willing passion for her craft and an excitement for what awaits next.

Hannah Koedel | Koi Falls | 2024





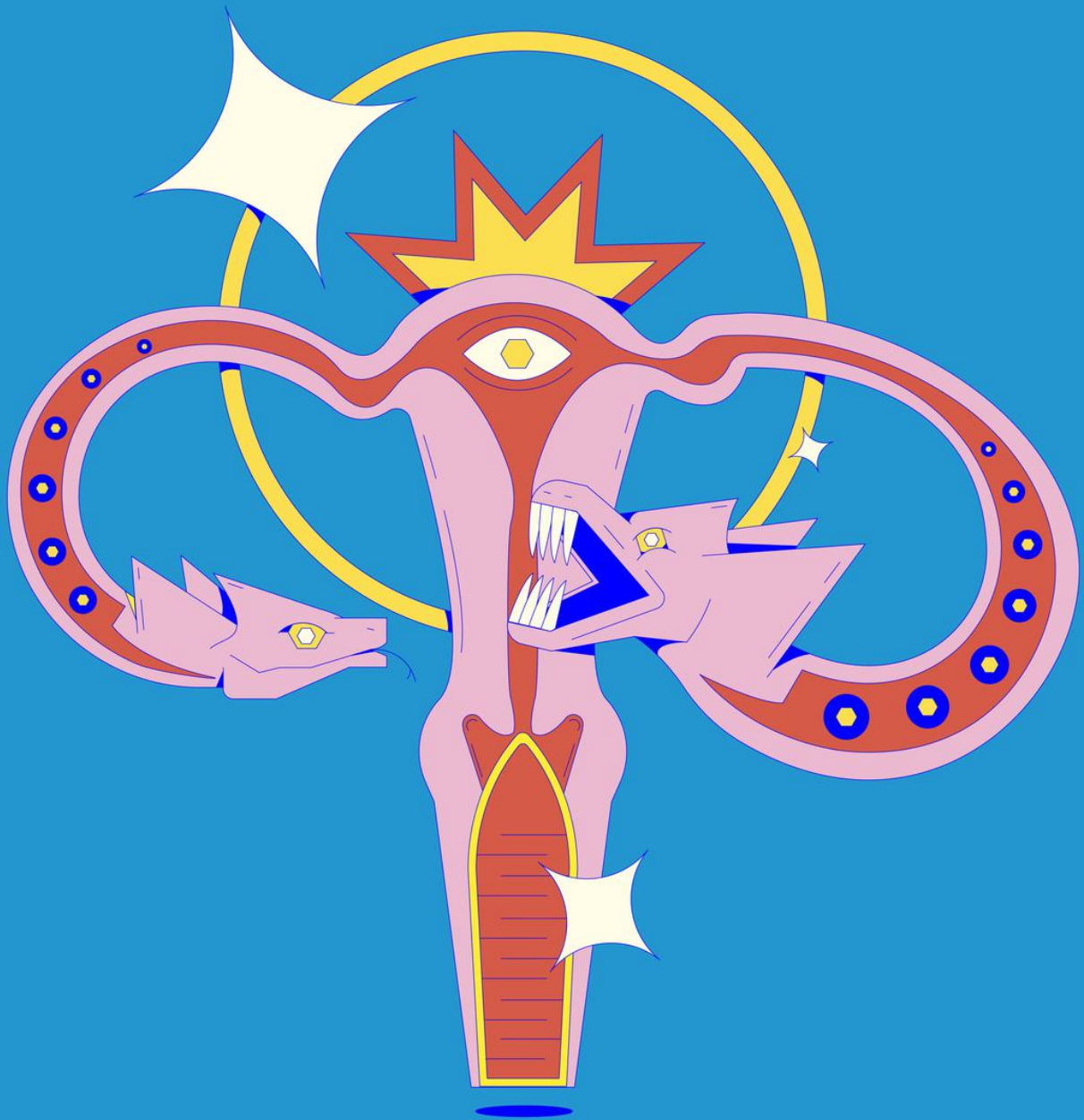
Hannah Koedel | Apollo | 2024

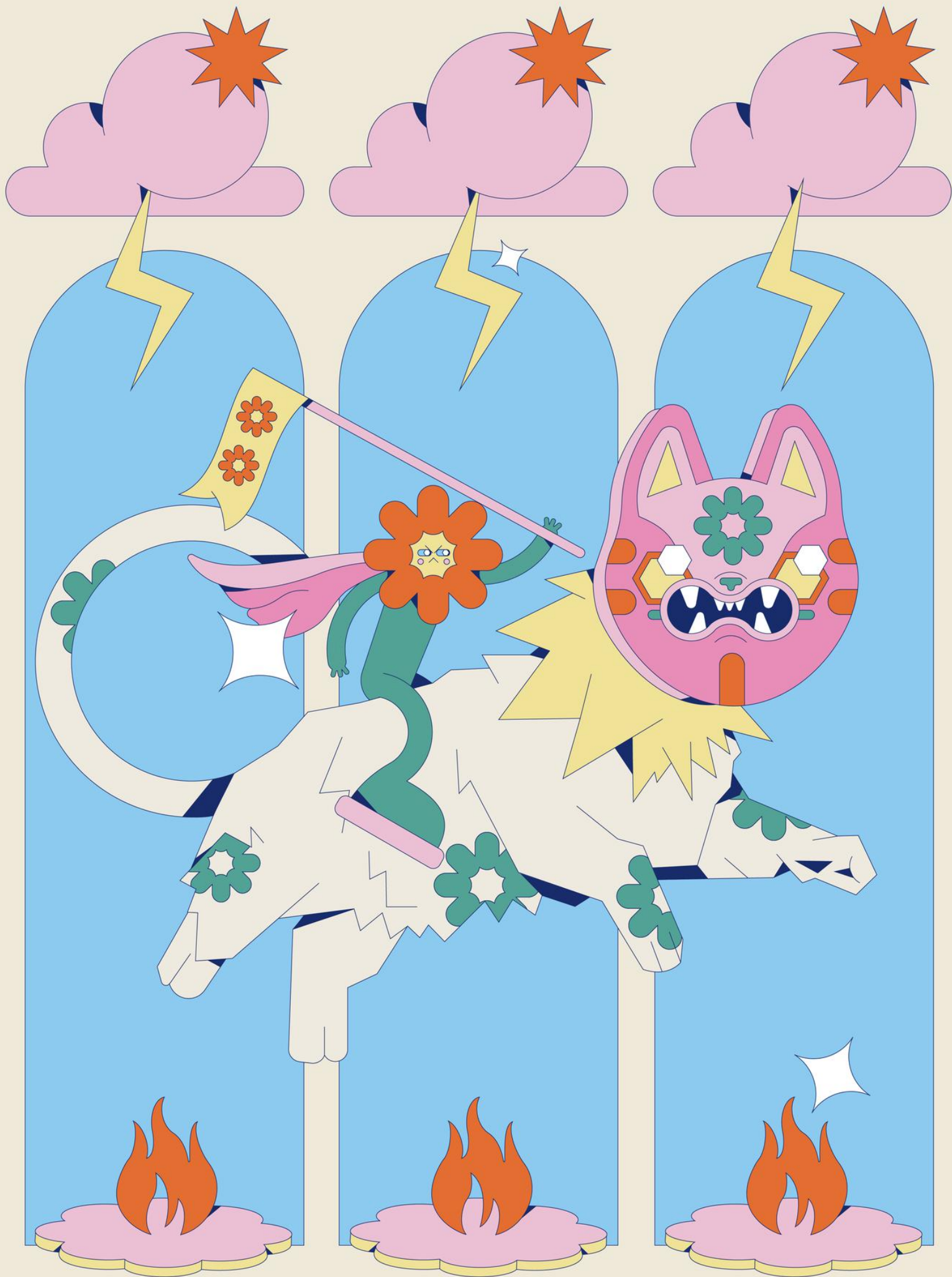
Hannah Koedel | Dock on the Bay | 2024



I was born in 1992 in Sorel-Tracy. I grew up in an anxious and unstable environment. So I started drawing to create a little cocoon of creativity. Years passed and I had to face several traumas. So I fell into drugs and alcohol. But Laurianne is a source of perseverance! I finished secondary 5 at the age of 23 and started CEGEP at 25. Afterwards, I dove into the world of academia and HELLO COVID-19! So I questioned myself. I came to the conclusion that it would be wiser to study in a field offering several opportunities. Holder of a professional studies diploma in computer graphics, obtained in 2021, I worked in a web agency for a year and a half to realize that my dream is to launch my own little cocoon of creativity.

— Laurianne Choquette





— Interview

Jordan Merlino

What initially drew you to abstract watercolor painting, and how did your style evolve over time?

I got involved with abstract watercolor painting during the Summer of 2014. I was creating a series of mindful and meditative watercolor pieces. Through that exploration, I was able to allow the



Jordan Merlino
Cosmic Storm
2024

watercolor to flow freely and relinquish control. I feel that my style has evolved over time through size, and with the addition of gouache. I tend to work larger now than ten years ago.

You mention that your work is a healing journey. Can you elaborate on how art has played a role in your personal healing process?

Creating art is a very healing act. Sometimes I have so many thoughts in my brain. When I make these paintings, things get quiet and reflective. I've struggled with mental health for a very long time.



Jordan Merlino | Silent Night | 2024

In 2021, I was diagnosed with Bipolar disorder. I started taking art seriously as a way to cope after the diagnosis. I like to think that creating these paintings is a way to stay alive.

How do you intuitively choose your color palette, and what emotions or thoughts guide your choices during the creative process?

I get real quiet and listen to my intuition. I ask, "What color(s) wants to be seen?" "What color(s) wants to be heard?" I do my best to stick to a limited palette, three colors usually because they tend to



Jordan Merlino
Subconscious Waves
2024



Jordan Merlino
Storm
2024

bleed together. Kind of like my moods. The mania and depression tend to come together for me.

Your paintings combine watercolor with gouache. What inspired you to mix these mediums, and how do they interact to convey your vision?

For a few years, I combined papercut with watercolor.

I usually used white paper so the images would pop. After a while, I grew bored of the practice (as well as getting sick of cutting myself by accident). I was inspired by the

white lines of the papercut, and wanted to try something new. So I tried white gouache for the lines in the paintings, and I really liked the result. I liked how I could still feel the calming impacts of papercut but with gouache and a brush.

How did your experience teaching at the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum influence your approach to art and teaching?

I feel that my experience with the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum was mostly positive. I instructed a lot of beginners to watercolor, mainly because it was an Intro class. I felt like I could really show students how to be free with the medium, and to really experiment with what felt good to do. My takeaway from that experience was to create art that feels good. Not to think too much, but to really feel everything and put it on paper.

What role does Santa Fe, as your current place of residence, play in your artistic inspiration?

Santa Fe is a beautiful small city. I’m from Baltimore, so I’m used to big cities and humidity. Living in New Mexico has given me so many opportunities creatively, like



Jordan Merlino | Sweet Dreams | 2024

teaching at the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum. I also want to acknowledge that it is easier to make watercolor pieces here due to the dry weather. Being from a humid state, it would take up to a full day for paintings to thoroughly dry.

What message or feeling do you hope viewers take away from your paintings?

What I want to convey with my work is to show viewers that they too can create art for their own individual healing journeys. The art doesn’t need to be perfect. If the art feels good in your spirit, that’s what matters the most.



Dora Pehazy

I graduated in MOME: MA from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Budapest, and a scholarship residency at the Academy of Fine Arts in Italy. I live in Sicily by the sea and surrounded by palm trees.

I have been working as a graphic designer for over 12 years. As a freelancer and then a leader graphic designer, I worked for many studios. Saatchi & Saatchi as an Art Director. Production manager in ODD Animation Studio.



Dora Pehazy | Iran



Dora Perehazy
Sicilia

Anastasia Epifanova

Photographer, artist. Born in St. Petersburg in 1983. She spent her childhood in Veliky Novgorod and received her higher education in economics at St. Petersburg State University. After working in the financial sector for several years, I realized that creativity reflects her to a greater extent. After completing a photography course with Mark Nazarov in 2012, he left his job in finance and began to study photography. In her work she prefers reportage photographs, as well as the creation of psychological portraits. In 2022, he is interested in abstract painting as an opportunity to express feelings on canvas. Creates a series of abstract works that take part in various group exhibitions in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Currently he takes photographs, creates digital collages and paints. Shows interest in the topic of digital art using artificial intelligence. He does not limit himself in searching for tools of expression and considers himself a multidisciplinary artist.



Anastasia Epifanova | Fashionista | 2024

Collage "Fashionista"

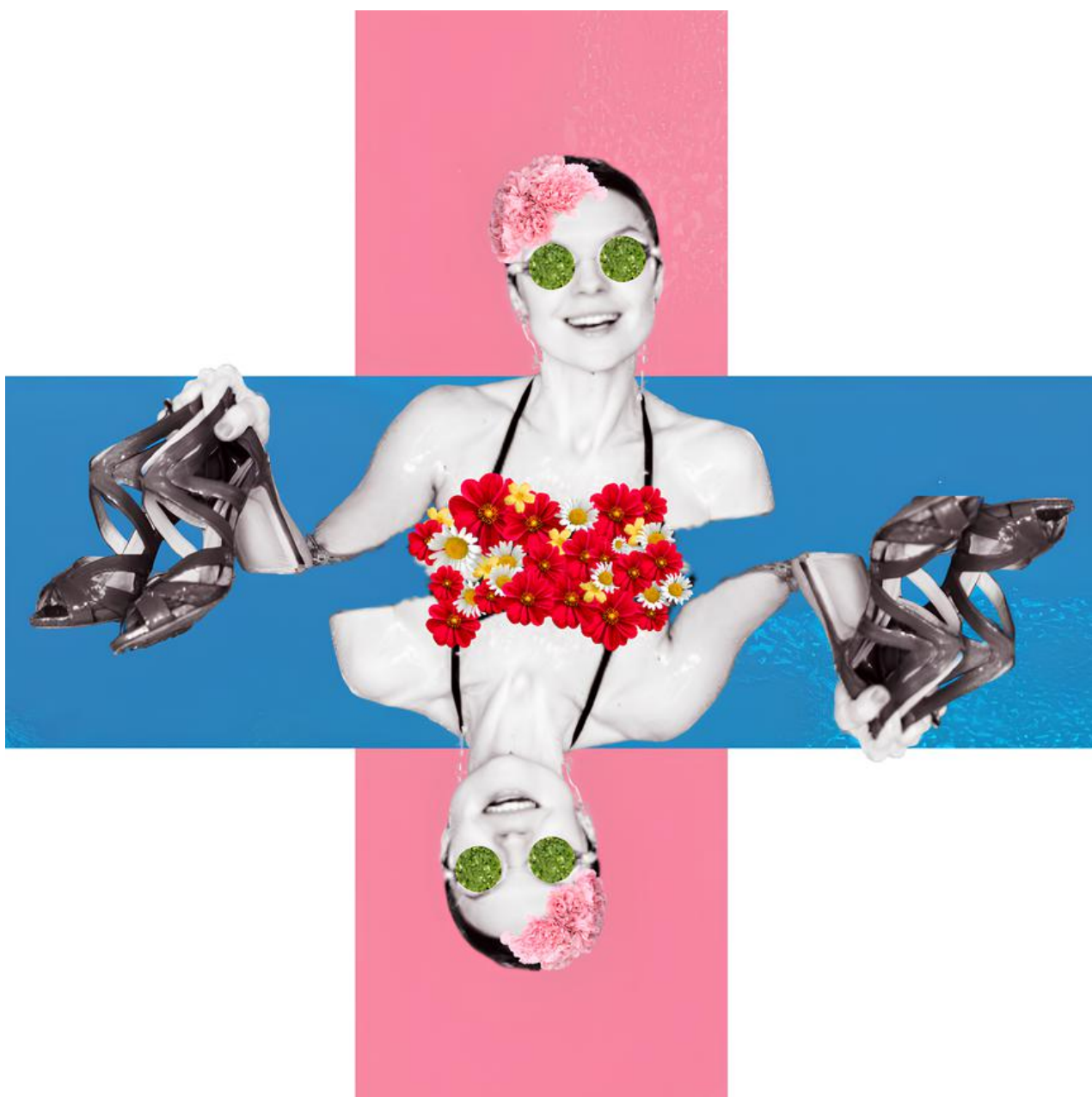
The theme of this work is a new stage in life, female identity and belonging to beauty despite the changes in life.

The collage uses photos of a blossoming tree, a city hatch in Novi Sad and, of course, photos of the heroine Olga. All photos were taken this spring.

Collage "Frühling"

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The work uses photos of the Red Sea from the height of 8000 meters, pixelated photos of spring grass and, of course, a photo of a girl as a symbol of eternal spring. She pops out and finds herself in the center of attention. She is blooming and ready for adventure - her shoes are always with her.



Anastasia Epifanova | Frühling | 2024

Maria Antonieta (Ting) Pimentel-Elger

Your artistic journey spans over three decades across two continents. How have your experiences in different cultures shaped your art?

My lived experience in different cultures opened my eyes and heart to create a more open and accepting art with awareness of the beauty and uniqueness each culture offers.

You describe your artistic expression as intuitive and abstracted. Can you elaborate on what this process looks like for you when creating new works?

As an artist, I try to start any process by grounding and centering myself through



Ting Pimentel-Elger | Trees are alive

breath, through what I hear and feel and see, and be in touch with my whole self before letting the colours and the marks show clarity on the paper or the canvas; being aware of what the creation is telling me...

In addition to visual art, you are involved in poetry, creative writing, and public readings. How do these different forms of expression influence one another in your practice?

I find that the visual art compliments my literary, as well as my performative arts. I can see, feel, hear colours and words and images that translates in many forms including poetry reading, intuitive dance and creative journaling.

You identify as a trauma-informed artist and self-love advocate. How do these aspects manifest in your artwork and creative projects?

I would like to think that my trauma informed background is a tool for healing that invites people to feel safe in interpreting and captivating the essence



Ting Pimentel-Elger
Free to be Freda

and meaning of my creations. I hope that this can be an encouragement to continue the healing journey, wherever they may be.

What role does your Filipino heritage play in your art, and how do you blend it with your experiences in Canada?

In the last five years, I have come to better understand and promote my Filipino heritage in my endeavours, especially with art- passing this rich heritage to the new generation.

You mentioned facing challenges like red tape and creative blocks in your journey. How do you overcome these obstacles and continue evolving as an artist?

I have seen the emergence of Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity in the last several years- and this paved the way for me to start to be ME - my racial identity, my gender, my age- without cowering and hiding. Now I feel that I am seen and heard through my art.

Can you share a bit about the creative process behind some of your latest works, such as "Free to be Freda," "Manila Lights," and "Trees are Alive"?

These are all products of COVID and isolation and lots of learning and experimenting. The Manila Lights is a favourite since it was blind curated and was part of an exhibit in the prestigious Art Gallery of Alberta, and I was fortunate this art was also included in the Alberta Travelling Exhibit, and was featured in my local Art Gallery in Strathcona County where I live.



Ting Pimentel-Elger
Free to be Freda

Vincenzo Cohen is an Italian multidisciplinary artist engaged in social art. He graduated in Painting from Fine Arts Academy and subsequently he achieved the degree in Archaeology from "La Sapienza" University in Rome. The artist's production ranges from visual arts to writing and consists in reworking of biographical experiences by exploring cultural, social and environmental content. His interest in history pushes him to investigate the human origins through the study of archetypes and myths accross the Mediterranean. Over the years his art has opened up to new experimental languages with different media and styles. The artist has exhibited in international contexts and published in international art books and magazines.

Artist Statement

I am a socially engaged multidisciplinary artist. I travel a lot looking for sources of inspiration for my repertoire because my artistic path is like a long jouney in search of myself and existential answers. During my artistic activity, painting, writing and photography are closely connected, since in my imagery, the creative process is a flow that sweeps towards different artistic forms merging in a poetic vision of existence. Over the years my artistic practice has passed through different stages due to personal and professional experiences. My production is mostly focused on the theme of nature and social issues such as the exploration of the sense of diversity and the fight against homophobia and racism through the representation of the body and of unconscious content that influence the human expression. I use to paint historical portraits inspired by myths and archetypes of ancient populations which represent symbols of freedom but also subjets taken from daily life.

Vincenzo Cohen | Gigantomachy





— Interview

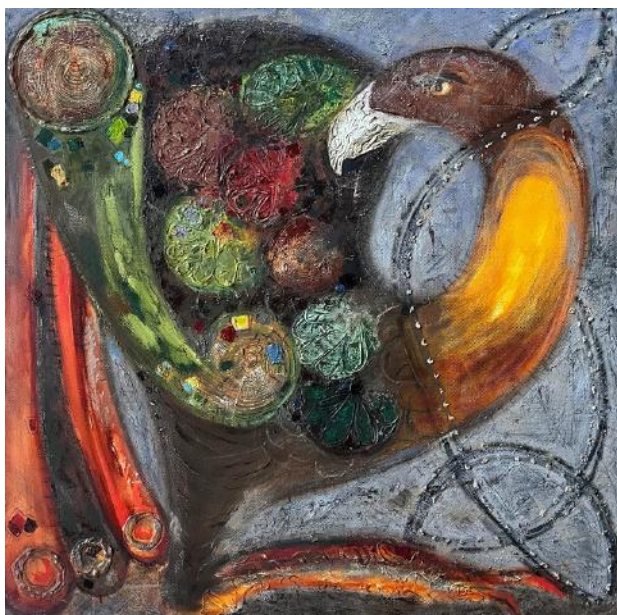
Olesya Novikova

Your works seem to blend various styles like expressionism, symbolism, and realism. How do you approach combining these distinct artistic styles in your paintings?

It happens more spontaneously and intuitively rather than deliberately. As I progress through different stages in my creative work, I analyze my pieces, which has led me to identify certain characteristics that define "my" style.

You mentioned that your artwork alternates between depth and flatness. Can you elaborate on how you achieve this balance in your compositions?

I believe every artist strives to achieve balance or harmony. But it's more of an internal feeling,



Olesya Novikova | Picture of the world | 2024



which is subjective. It's not always easy to find this harmony, as it should be present in everything: in the composition, in the combination of colors, tones, and other nuances.

What role does symbolism play in your work, and how do you choose the symbols you incorporate into your paintings?

For the past two years, I've been fascinated by the theme of mythical characters and folklore. It is in this series of works that I reveal myself as a symbolist because the characters in my works are endowed with exceptional qualities and serve as metaphorical statements. Let me give you an example. The painting "Chapa" depicts a turtle with aviator glasses and wings instead of legs.

This work is about ambition and the pursuit of dreams. Speaking of a person, the flight (desire to fly) can be spiritual as well! By associating this image with a person and interpreting the symbols, I aim to encourage the viewer to look deeper into themselves, revive forgotten dreams and ambitions, inspire new achievements, and believe in MIRACLES.

Your paintings are often created as part of a series. What draws you to explore a theme in multiple works rather than a single piece?

The very word "exploration" implies such a

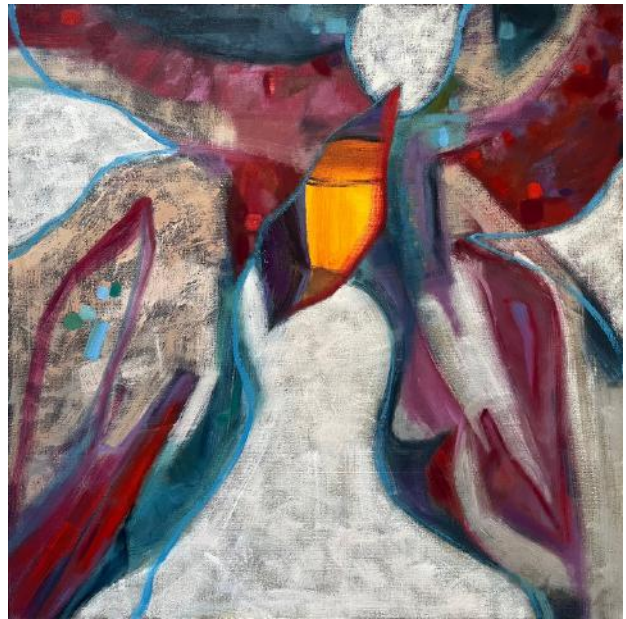
format. A series of works united by a single theme allows for deep immersion and discovering something new for yourself, including technique. Working in series is not a goal in itself; the understanding of whether you've fully expressed yourself or not often comes during the creative process.

How do you decide on the themes or subjects you wish to explore in each series of paintings?

An artist's "eye" views even the most ordinary things from a unique perspective. That's why themes and plots emerge from what surrounds me. Sometimes creative ideas are born as a result of philosophical reflections on life.

You have exhibited your work internationally. How do you think cultural differences influence the interpretation of your paintings?

I don't think so, as the decorative style of my works and the themes I address aren't specifically culture-bound. Audiences vary greatly even within a single culture or country, and as an artist, I'm always curious to learn something new about my own work.



Olesya Novikova | Butterfly | 2023

What do you want your viewers to feel or think when they encounter your work for the first time?

I am driven by the desire to see my idea realized, and only the viewer can express the emotions conveyed. I would like the viewer to reflect on the narrative. The opinion and feedback from the audience are very important for the artist, as it's an external perspective through which you also discover yourself!



Olesya Novikova | Together | 2023



Olesya Novikova | Fly | 2024

Working with AI to create art is truly exhilarating. By combining human imagination with machine intelligence, I achieve results that were once beyond reach. AI doesn't replace me; it enhances my creative vision, enabling me to bring profound ideas and innovative concepts to life. This fusion of technology and artistry allows me to craft works that reflect both cutting-edge advancements and my unique creative essence. Creating with AI is not just a joy; it's an exciting exploration of new artistic dimensions. This remarkable blend of technology and creativity gives my work extraordinary depth, allowing me to discover groundbreaking ways to convey ideas and inspire awe.

— El Elia

El Elia | The girl and the bull | 2024





EL ELIA

El Elia | Lost hopes | 2024

My name is **Olesya Volzhina**. Like most children, I loved drawing from an early age. Later, I enrolled in an art school but didn't finish it — I found it uninteresting. However, I didn't abandon my passion and continued creating art. When it was time to choose a university and a field of study, there was no doubt — I wanted to become an artist! Thanks to preparatory courses with excellent teachers and my hard work, I was accepted on a scholarship to Kursk State University. In 2019, I graduated with honors, specializing in painting. Now, at 29, I successfully pursue my artistic career and teach art to children. I work with both young children and students. I teach academic drawing and painting at my beloved Kursk State University. I actively participate in exhibitions and art competitions.

Olesya Volzhina | Family album | 2022





— Interview

Leila Zolfalipour

Your work often blends traditional craftsmanship with digital technology. How do you see the relationship between these two mediums, and what draws you to explore this intersection?

The intersection of traditional craftsmanship and digital technology in my work represents a dynamic dialogue between the past and the present. Traditional techniques, such as painting and sculpture, provide a timeless foundation rooted in cultural heritage and tactile experience. These methods carry rich histories and deep connections to human expression and craftsmanship.

On the other hand, digital technology, including virtual reality and 3D modelling, offers new possibilities for innovation and interaction. It allows for the exploration of concepts in ways that traditional mediums alone might not facilitate, such as creating immersive environments or complex, interactive elements. What draws me to this intersection is the potential to bridge these worlds and create a more nuanced and multi-dimensional experience for the viewer. By integrating digital technology with traditional practices, I aim to honour the past while pushing the boundaries of contemporary art. This fusion enables me to explore themes of femininity, heritage, and our connection to the natural world in innovative ways, inviting viewers to engage with my work on multiple levels.

Ultimately, this approach allows me to expand the possibilities of artistic expression, creating a



dialogue that celebrates the richness of traditional techniques while embracing the transformative potential of modern technology.

How does your experience as an Iranian-Canadian artist influence the themes and techniques in your work?

My experience as an Iranian-Canadian artist profoundly influences both the themes and techniques in my work. Growing up in Iran, I was deeply immersed in a rich cultural heritage filled with intricate symbols, motifs, and traditional craftsmanship. Persian carpets, historical monuments, and cultural narratives have always been integral to my artistic vision. These elements provide a meaningful foundation for exploring themes of heritage and identity. As an artist living in Canada, I've had the opportunity to engage in a diverse and multicultural environment. This exposure has broadened my perspective and allowed me to blend my Iranian roots with new experiences and ideas. The fusion of these influences enriches my work, enabling me to explore universal themes of femininity, resilience, and our connection to the natural world through a unique lens. In terms of techniques, my background informs my use of traditional craftsmanship alongside

modern digital tools. For instance, integrating Persian motifs into contemporary forms like virtual reality and 3D modelling creates a dialogue between historical and current practices. This approach allows me to bridge cultural contexts and offer viewers an immersive experience that reflects both my heritage and my experiences as a Canadian artist. Ultimately, my dual cultural experience allows me to create work that is both deeply personal and universally resonant, capturing the complexity of identity and the richness of cross-cultural dialogue.

Your multimedia installation, "Carved Kinship," includes a Virtual Reality game. What role does this gameplay in the overall narrative of the installation, and how do you hope viewers interact with it?

In Carved Kinship, the Virtual Reality (VR) game plays a crucial role in expanding the narrative and immersing viewers in the thematic exploration of femininity, heritage, and our connection to the natural world. The VR component serves as a bridge between the physical and digital realms, allowing viewers to step into and interact with the world I've created beyond the confines of traditional media. The game is designed to enhance the viewer's engagement by offering an interactive and immersive experience. It invites users to explore a virtual environment that reflects and extends the themes of the physical sculptures and paintings. By navigating this space, viewers can experience the motifs and symbols from my Iranian heritage in a new, dynamic context, fostering a deeper connection to the artwork. I hope viewers interact with the VR game by actively exploring the environment, engaging with the 3D-scanned sculptures, and experiencing the soundscape that complements the visual elements. The inclusion of elements like the Persian carpets and the house inspired by my grandmother's home is intended to evoke a sense of nostalgia and personal reflection. By interacting with these elements, viewers can gain insights into the underlying themes and connect with the narrative on a more personal level. Overall, my goal is for the VR game to enhance the storytelling of Carved Kinship, offering a



multi-sensory experience that deepens viewers' understanding of the themes and fosters a more immersive and engaging encounter with the art.

"Carved Kinship" is described as a two-year exploration. Could you describe the evolution of this project from its inception to completion? What were some key turning points?

The evolution of Carved Kinship has been a transformative journey, reflecting a deepening exploration of themes related to femininity, heritage, and our connection to the natural world. The project spans two years, during which it has evolved significantly from initial concepts to its final form.

Inception: The project began with a conceptual exploration of how traditional craftsmanship could intersect with modern digital technology. I was inspired by my Iranian heritage and a desire to integrate Persian motifs into contemporary art practices. The initial phase involved sketching out ideas and experimenting with various mediums to determine how best to merge physical and digital elements.

Development: The first major turning point was the decision to incorporate Virtual Reality. This choice allowed me to expand the scope of my work and provide viewers with an immersive experience that complements the physical sculptures and paintings. Developing the VR component involved learning new technologies and tools, such as Unity and 3D modelling software, which was both challenging and exciting.

Creation of Physical Artworks: Another key milestone was the creation of the physical sculptures and paintings. These works were informed by my research into Persian cultural symbols and abstract calligraphy. The process of



carving and assembling the wooden sculptures, as well as integrating laser-engraved plexiglass elements, required meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail.

Integration with VR: Integrating the physical art with the VR game was a significant turning point. This phase involved creating 3D models of the sculptures, designing the virtual environment, and ensuring that the VR experience aligned with the thematic elements of the installation. The inclusion of the VR game allowed viewers to interact with the artwork in new and meaningful ways, bridging the gap between the physical and digital realms.

Final Presentation: The project culminated in its installation at the FAB Gallery at the University of Alberta. This final stage involved setting up the physical artwork, preparing the VR experience, and creating supplementary materials like the zine to make the VR game accessible to all viewers.

Throughout this journey, Carved Kinship has evolved from a conceptual idea into a complex multimedia installation. Each stage has contributed to a deeper understanding of how traditional and digital art forms can intersect and enrich one another, resulting in a compelling and immersive exploration of the themes central to

the project.

Your art has been exhibited in both Iran and Canada. How has the reception of your work differed between these two cultural contexts?

Exhibiting my art in both Iran and Canada has provided valuable insights into how cultural contexts influence the reception of my work. The reception has been closely tied to my cultural heritage. Iranian audiences often connect with the traditional motifs and symbols embedded in my art, appreciating how these elements are integrated into contemporary forms. The response tends to reflect a deep resonance with familiar cultural narratives and historical references, valuing the preservation and reinterpretation of these traditions through modern practices.

Given Canada's multicultural landscape, the reception of my work has been diverse and varied. Audiences are intrigued by the fusion of traditional craftsmanship with innovative technologies like virtual reality and 3D modelling. There is a strong interest in how these elements come together to explore themes of femininity, heritage, and our connection to the natural world. The emphasis here is often on the experimental and interdisciplinary aspects of my practice, which challenge conventional boundaries and contribute to a rich dialogue within the multicultural context.

Overall, the varying responses in these two contexts highlight how art can engage with different cultural perspectives. In Iran, there is a focus on cultural continuity and tradition, while in Canada, the emphasis is on innovation and cross-disciplinary exploration within a multicultural framework. Both experiences have deepened my understanding of how art communicates across diverse cultural landscapes and have influenced my approach to blending tradition with modernity.

What are some of the most memorable responses or feedback you have received from viewers of your work?

Some of the most memorable responses I've received from viewers have been deeply

meaningful and varied. Many have shared how the Persian motifs and traditional elements in my art resonate with their personal experiences and cultural connections, evoking a sense of nostalgia and reflection. This feedback underscores the emotional impact of integrating cultural heritage into contemporary practices.

Additionally, viewers have expressed a strong desire to explore the paintings further, often marvelling at how the VR experience allows them to step into and interact with the world created in the artwork. The opportunity to engage with the paintings in a new, immersive way has been particularly appreciated, enhancing their connection to the themes of femininity and nature.

Overall, the diverse and heartfelt responses from viewers highlight the value of blending traditional and modern elements in my work. Their enthusiasm for both the paintings and the VR component enriches my understanding of how my art resonates with different audiences and inspires future projects.

What advice would you give to emerging artists who wish to blend traditional and digital art forms into their practice?

Blending traditional and digital art forms can create powerful and innovative works, but it requires thoughtful integration and experimentation. Here are some pieces of advice for emerging artists looking to explore this intersection:

- Start with a Strong Foundation: Develop a solid grounding in traditional techniques and media. Understanding the nuances of traditional art forms will provide a strong base upon which to build your digital experiments.



Leila Zolfalipour | Whispers of Resilience



Leila Zolfalipour | Carved Kinship Nurture

- Embrace Experimentation: Don't be afraid to experiment with how traditional and digital elements can complement each other. Explore different ways to integrate digital tools, such as virtual reality or 3D modelling, with your traditional practice. Allow yourself the freedom to fail and learn from the process.

- Understand the Strengths of Each Medium: Recognize what each medium brings to your work. Traditional techniques offer texture, depth, and cultural richness, while digital tools provide interactivity, flexibility, and new possibilities for visual exploration. Use these strengths to create a cohesive and dynamic artistic vision.

- Stay Open to Learning: Continuously educate yourself about new technologies and techniques. Attend workshops, take courses, and engage with communities that focus on both traditional and digital art. This will help you stay current and inspired.

- Maintain Your Artistic Voice: While integrating different mediums, ensure that your unique artistic voice remains at the forefront. The fusion of traditional and digital should enhance and express your personal vision, not overshadow it.

- Seek Feedback and Collaborate: Share your work with others and seek feedback from both traditional and digital art communities. Collaboration with artists from diverse backgrounds can also open up new perspectives and ideas.

Passionate about Art and Technology, **Valeria Galasso** graduated from Art School, experimenting with various forms of pictorial and sculptural art and subsequently specializing in Information Technology. Later on, she got in touch with the world of cinema and interior design. She collaborated on various projects of a different narrative nature, and followed an introspective path that finds its natural fit in painting. She is interested into the study and use of matter and materials, abandoning the reasoning by sifting through moods and transposing them from the ineffable to the material. Strongly attracted by the conflict between logic and instinct, she immerses herself in the search for her own expressive identity, to restore emotions, disquiet and fragility, drawing on personal experience. Her works, a meeting point between spontaneity and irrationality, are fragments of a continuous deconstruction. Always present, the red color is a symbolic opposition to violence against women.



Valeria Galasso | Squarcio di Me.



Valeria Galasso | Diagnosi

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