



# VISUAL ART JOURNAL





# — Intro

Hello, dear reader!

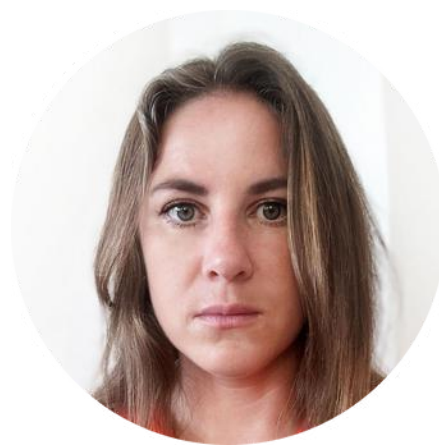
This is the 19th issue of our magazine, and I am delighted to see our audience growing. Our publication is becoming an essential part of the art world, bringing together people for whom art is not just a passion but a way of understanding the world and expressing themselves.

In this issue, we focus on forms—their transformation and interaction. How can complex works emerge from simple shapes? How does form shift, flow into another, and become enriched with equally intricate colors? Even the human body, captured in a certain position, can transcend portraiture and become an abstract symbol.

Our perception of images is remarkable: a red circle immediately evokes the sun, while a few curved lines inevitably lead us to the sea.

As you turn these pages, you will embark on a journey through the boundless possibilities of human imagination. Here, there are no rigid rules or limitations—only the freedom of experimentation and the play of creativity. Sometimes, it is essential to forget conventions and simply allow yourself to dream.

Make yourself comfortable—more than 100 pages of art await you!



**Anna Gvozdeva**

Curator of  
Visual Art Journal

*On the Front Cover:*  
**Ruoyu Gong**  
Mr. Donkey at Work  
2024

*On the Back Cover:*  
**Ordinary Art Way**

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

## — Interview

# Joseph Willoughby

**Your work often blends digital and traditional techniques. How do you decide which method to use for a particular piece, and what does each technique bring to your art?**

Each piece starts with a concept, and the choice of technique depends on how best to bring that idea to life. Traditional techniques add texture, depth, and an organic sense of imperfection that brings authenticity to my work. In contrast, digital methods offer flexibility, precision, and the ability to experiment and refine in ways that traditional media might limit. Combining both allows me to bridge nostalgia with modernity, creating a unique visual language. A great example of this is my painting *Lost Voices*. To develop the reference material, I reignited my love for collage and surrealism by photographing my local area in downtown Toronto, printing the images, and combining them with magazine cutouts. This physical process allowed me to be more spontaneous than digital tools might have restricted. The biggest challenge in blending these techniques is preserving the raw emotional impact of the piece. Moving between digital and traditional methods requires constant re-evaluation to stay true to my original vision.

**In your series *Echoes of Tomorrow*, you manipulate everyday objects to create a vision of the future. What role do consumerism and the urban landscape play in shaping this future?**



Joseph Willoughby | Surveillance



Consumerism and the urban landscape are central to how we construct our future. In *Echoes of Tomorrow*, I explore how mass production, advertising, and digital culture shape our collective consciousness. Cities, with their consistent growth and evolving infrastructure, serve as both a playground and a cautionary tale, where ambition and dystopia coexist. My background in architecture shaped my fascination with spatial interaction, while working in creative marketing deepened my understanding of how branding and advertising influences our daily lives. Since my father's passing, I've developed a strong interest in everyday objects, items that hold deep personal meaning to some but go unnoticed by others. These objects serve as vessels to explore themes of life, identity, and societal expectations. We are constantly surrounded by consumerism, from the products we buy to the social media algorithms shaping our desires. My work reflects on this evolving relationship, encouraging viewers to question their own roles in it.

**How did your personal experiences, especially the passing of your father, influence your approach to art and the themes you explore?**

Losing my father reshaped my perspective on time, memory, and legacy. My art became a way to process grief and reflect on life's impermanence. Themes of identity, societal pressure, and the passage of time are deeply rooted in this experience. One of my earliest personal works, *Lost from the I AM* series, captures these emotions. The piece features a gold foil balloon with a sad face, symbolising fleeting happiness and emotional vulnerability. Balloons, often associated



with celebration, became a metaphor for the contrast between outward appearances and inner struggles. I keep my father's memory alive by channeling emotions into my work and drawing inspiration from his inventive problem-solving nature. His ability to see the world from different perspectives pushes me to create pieces that invite deeper reflection.

**Your artwork focuses on societal challenges and personal beliefs. How do you hope your pieces will spark reflection and conversation among your viewers?**

I want my work to encourage viewers to question their relationship with technology, consumerism, and societal expectations. By presenting familiar objects in unfamiliar contexts, I aim to create moments of introspection that inspire deeper conversations. At a recent exhibition in downtown Toronto, it was rewarding to hear viewers share their personal interpretations of my work. Their responses reinforced my belief that art can serve as a mirror, reflecting personal experiences while igniting broader dialogue. Whether it's nostalgia or irony, I want my work to spark emotions that connect with viewers on multiple levels and encourage them to see their own stories within the objects I depict.

**Can you describe the process behind your Echoes of Tomorrow series? How do you select and manipulate objects, and what is the message you aim to convey through them?**

The process begins with observation, I seek out everyday objects that feel familiar but hold potential to symbolise larger societal themes. Once selected, I manipulate these objects through both digital and traditional methods to challenge their function and explore their roles in imagined futures. For example, in my piece Quick-Fix, I combined a pillbox with McDonald's branding to comment on society's obsession with instant solutions. This juxtaposition invites viewers to reflect on their own dependencies and quick-fix mentalities.

I enjoy discovering objects organically during daily



Joseph Willoughby | Quick Fix



Joseph Willoughby | Ctrl, Alt, Del

tasks and letting them influence the story I want to tell. This spontaneity keeps the creative process dynamic and reflective of real life.

**The theme of societal anxiety seems central to your work. Do you think art can provide a remedy or solution to these anxieties, or is it more about sparking critical thought?**

I believe art serves as both a remedy and a catalyst for thought. It provides solace and a sense of connection for those overwhelmed by modern life, while also challenging viewers to confront uncomfortable truths. As someone who struggles with anxiety, my studio is a space where I can process emotions and escape external pressures. I hope my work offers viewers the same opportunity, allowing them to find comfort while encouraging them to reflect on societal norms and personal challenges. Through my art, I aim to strike a balance between comfort and confrontation, offering viewers a moment to pause and reflect, while prompting them to consider the bigger picture.

**What kind of impact do you hope to achieve with your art in today's rapidly changing technological and social landscape?**

In today's fast-paced world, I want my art to remind people to slow down and reflect. With technology advancing at an unprecedented rate, it's crucial to consider its impact on our values and humanity. I strive to create work that resonates across generations, encouraging viewers to navigate change thoughtfully while staying true to themselves. Though technology influences my work, I often find myself drawn to the past, using nostalgic elements to ground my pieces in a sense of timelessness. By addressing societal challenges in visually engaging ways, I hope my art sparks meaningful conversations about the future we are shaping together.

## Angel Rengell (b.1969 Seville, Spain)

Sculptor, Painter, and Designer, Architectural Designer

Lives and works in London United Kingdom, Spain, Germany.

Surpassing mere portrayal of character, his portraits are epidermal. He has cultivated his art from childhood. Angel, of Germany descent on his father's side, begins to draw at age six. He told media that even as a student, he would portray to his schoolmates at the age of ten. He used the textbook pages to his drawings.

During age thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen, he does his first sculptures and enrolls at the age of fifteen years old into The School of Applied Arts and Artistic Professions of Seville, later at The Faculty of Fine Arts Santa Isabel de Hungría at Seville University. He is a professional sculptor at the age of eighteen, with his own studio. He starts with artworks of high-quality religious character, also simultaneously working on other sculptural creations based on the nude as well as on drawings that speak in an erotic language.

He had already combined text and volumes in his works, so when he saw this trend at international art galleries, it didn't surprise him at all; he is constantly looking for new ways of expression in the art. He is interested in all kinds of characters, formats and forms of expression, from figurative to the most refined forms and abstractions.

In 2000, he celebrates his marriage to the Painter and Sculptress Luccia Lignan.

Angel Rengell | Approach I





## "Angel Rengell, the Multidisciplinary Artist of Transgression and Emotion"

### "SPAIN I" Artwork – Angel Rengell

**Reviews: by Paola Ferrangamo, Art Dealer**

*Art Paola Ferrangamo Gallery, UK*

This work is a drawing on board entitled 'Spain', a magnificent contemporary recreation taking as an inanimate model a fridge', employs in its execution mixed technique, symbolically as technological progress, progress-approach, also towards a social contemporaneity. However, in this intriguing work by Angel we highlight numerous inert objects that necessarily intensify that 'instant-time' represented that the artist freezes meticulously', the fridge as a pretext, "between the existential vulnerability of the same", in parallel with the necessary reflection of the spectator who contemplates them.

His drawing hollows are insistences in the play of light and dark, an organic still-life-drama, ironically created by Rengell, a cultural-social placebo of that Spain chained forever to its history, reflections, 'lights and shadows' like the work we present, among other elements, a traditional 'pot', in opposing harmony, next to sculpture that lies. . without further pretensions', a graceful Baroque cherub's head, also executed by this multidisciplinary artist, Golden Century in the Spain of "Cervantes and Quevedo", always! symbols whose author uses unabashedly and unabashedly, 'cooked or raw' a la 'Shakespearean', traditions rooted in perfect harmony. rooted traditions in perfect marriage, sometimes..., assimilated as a pyramid in the controversial Spanish society, before the Europe that observes conscious of its history, beauty, talent and its art.

Does Angel suggest an arduous reflection on the Spain of today, emphatically yes', the before and the now, Velazquez or Picasso, conscious of it Rengell' resorts in this work to realism in dream mode', that black Spain of Gutiérrez Solana, to raise awareness or not crowds, mutilation & mutation of reflections.

Artistically isolate continent, and at the same time, contained symbolism, please help yourself', of duality to be tasted... In his Still-Life or Variations... Sculptures', he manipulates the viewer through his subconscious without us even being aware of it', we can hardly escape because we are visually attached to it. We have therefore, the visual digestion assured, 'Spain' invites the spectator to reflect', gathering plastically in the interior of a "historical melting pot" of traditions called Spain', where we can look freely as it does and did: Kieffer', Hirts', Bacon' Freud' or Picasso', slowly without hindrance' let's place ourselves before this masterful work', the door is always open.

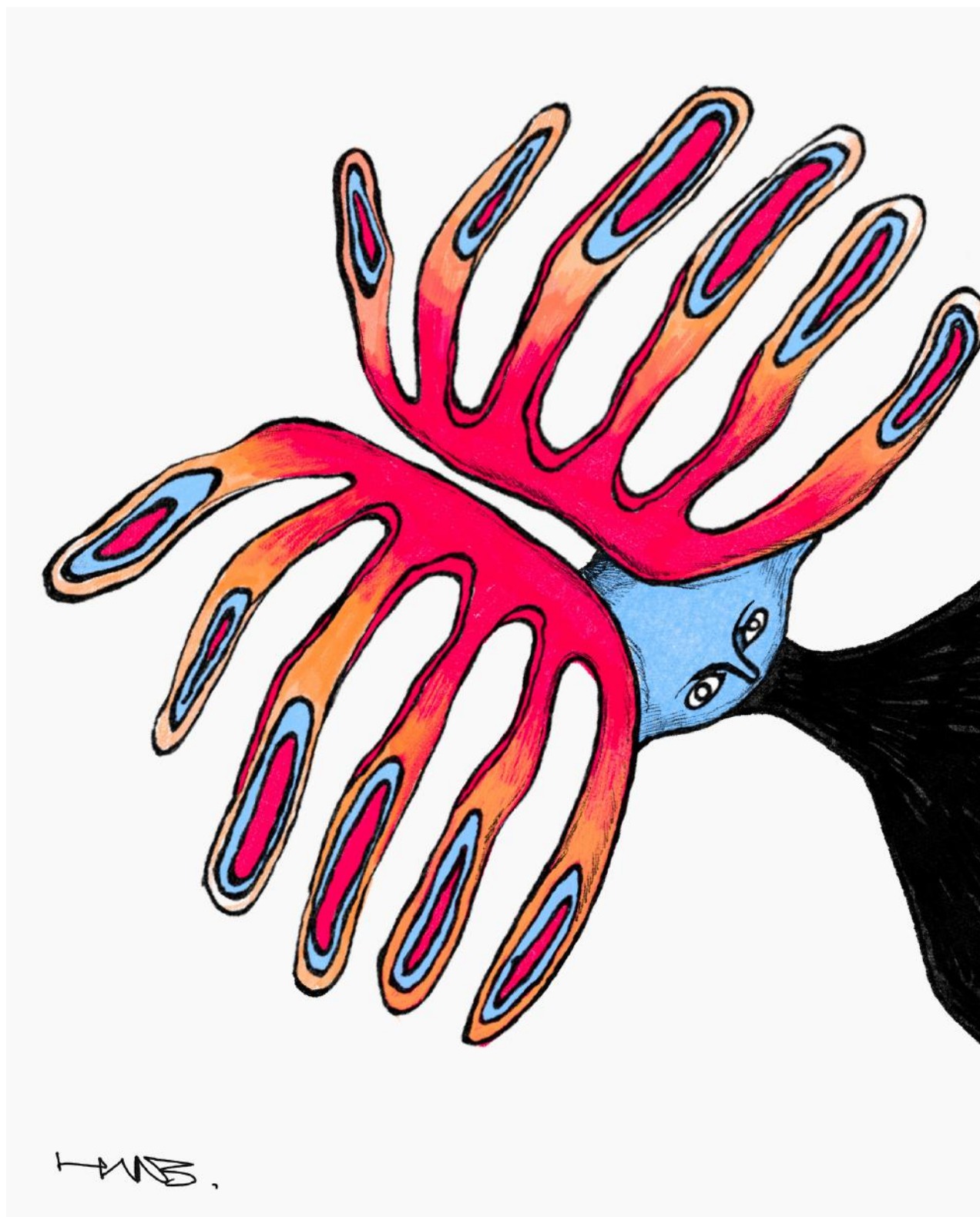


Angel Rengell | SPAIN I

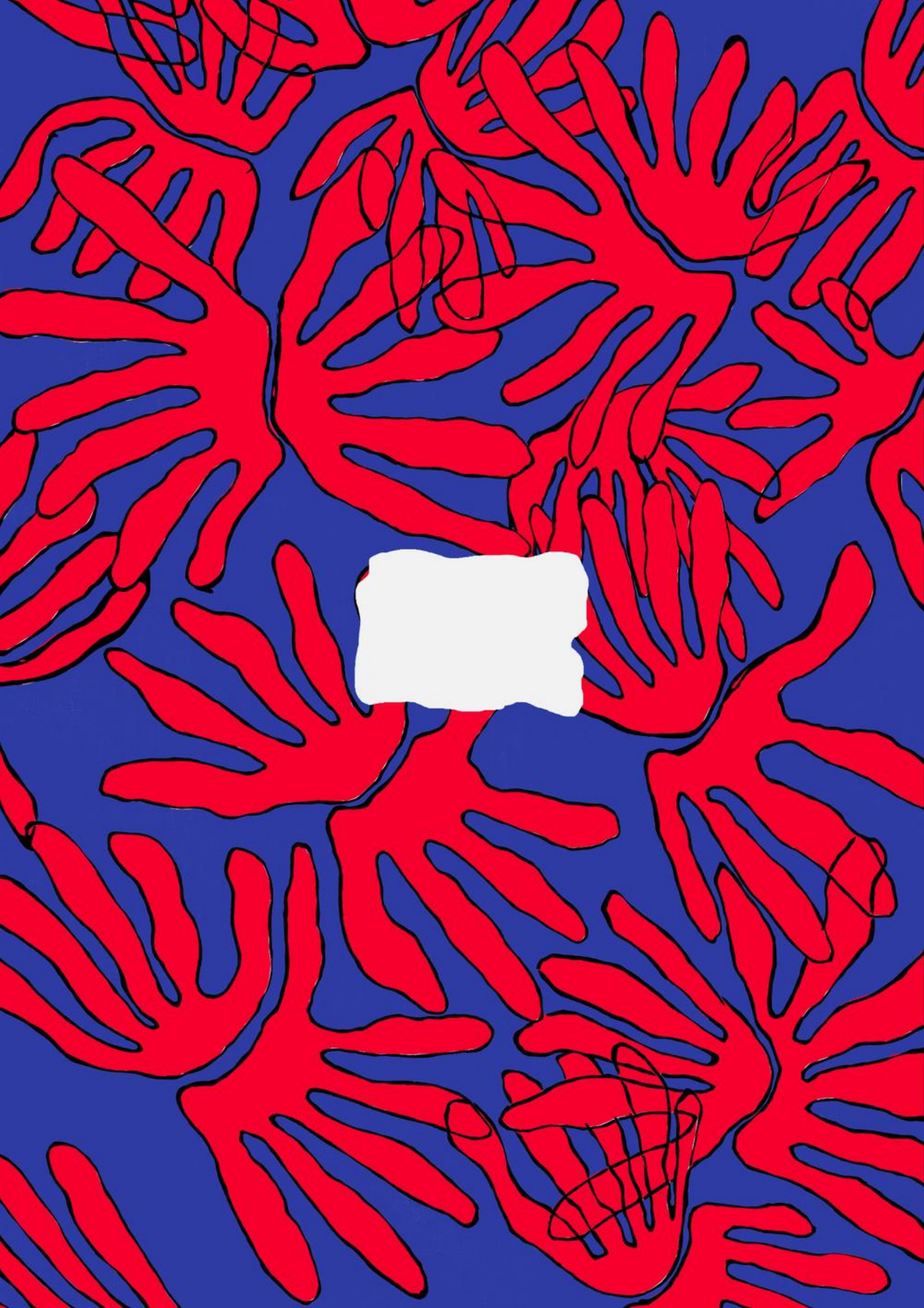


Angel Rengell | Talkative Man

I'm **Joonhan Lee** born in Seoul, South Korea, and currently working as a car designer in Japan. My journey through diverse cultures – from Korea and France to the United States and Japan – has profoundly shaped my perspective and art. Each place has its own unique style and philosophy, which I integrate into my approach to art. As an artist, I'm always seeking ways to push the boundaries of creative design, combining rich cultural heritages into modern, functional art.









## — Interview

# Katharina Stepper

### **How did your background in architecture influence your approach to fine art?**

The architectural background, having the graduation Master of Science' in this subject, taught me to analyze the world through structure, proportion, and space. Therefore, architectural knowledge and thinking has a profound and lasting impact on my art. The parameters of structure, proportion, and space are translated into two dimensions in my pictures through line and surface. Even in my photographic compositions, the principle of abstracting reality into line and surface is central.

Just as I create space as an architect, I transform human emotions and thoughts into visual compositions as a visual artist, where every form and colour develops a function and relationship with one another. The search for a balanced equilibrium,



harmony, aesthetics and beauty is central to my work, as well as in architecture, visual art and sculpture.

### **Could you describe how you explore emotional and mental states in your work?**

In my work, I explore the subtle layers of interpersonal relationships and emotional and mental experiences. For me, art is a language through which I can express what is sometimes difficult to articulate in words. My focus is on moments of emotional intensity that we experience daily, which I convey in subtle ways, reflected in my choice of colours and forms. For example, I try to represent complexity and tension by using contrasting tones or by placing different vibrating surfaces side by side. Every compositional element, whether a brushstroke or a line, reflects a human experience, relationship, thought or fleeting emotion.

### **How do you use colour and form to express complex human emotions and experiences?**

Colour and form are fundamental tools in my work for expressing the complexity of emotional states. The study of Goethe's Theory of Colours and Kandinsky's work helped me understand the meaning and effect of colour. Each colour carries its own symbolism and vibration. For example, warm tones might evoke a sense of intensity, passion, or warmth, while cooler ones may represent distance, melancholy, or introspection (drawing on Rudolf Steiner's Temperament Theory). Furthermore, I develop my compositions from a complex palette of softness and severity, intuition and rationality - principles that may also be dissolved in their appropriate context. Each work is designed to provoke an emotional reaction in



Katharina Stepper | Zusammen | 2024



the viewer and invite him to reflect according to his imagination on his own inner state.

**What role do aesthetics and beauty play in your artistic process?**

Aesthetics and beauty are elements that celebrate the power of art to touch the soul. To get there, in my work I am not making use of the anti-aesthetic theories of postmodernism, focusing instead on minimalist expression through simple, archaic forms and colours, questioning the complexity and refinement of traditional 'beautiful' art. It's not about superficial or decorative beauty, but a beauty that arises from the depth and sincerity of expression. Aesthetics, as a visual language, capable of conveying complex emotions and their essence, is a significant part of my creative process. Aesthetic in my art reveals something universal, something that goes beyond the visible surface. It's a means of creating connection and reflection - an invitation for the viewer to explore the world and our inner selves in a new and deeper way.

**Can you talk about the challenges you face in capturing the nuances of human feelings in your paintings?**

Feelings, and the human emotional experience, are by definition fleeting and transient, making them difficult to capture in a single image. Every emotional state has its own nuances. How to express these subtle tensions without resorting to literal figurative representation? and nevertheless convey their complexity through the abstract language of forms and colours. It's a process of continuously letting go of realism to reach something that touches the universal dimension of the soul.

**How do you balance the abstract and the representational elements in your art?**

In my work, abstraction is a tool that allows me to break free from the principles of figurative representation.

As Christo and Jeanne-Claude said: 'In covering, the presence of the hidden is revealed!' and 'In abstraction, the detail appears according to the viewer's imagination.' There remains the freedom to see, to feel and to interpret.

The challenge lies in using a minimalist, archaic visual language to portray rich interpersonal relationships while maintaining the expressive intent. Finding a balance between these two elements and creating a work that is both emotionally engaging and formally interesting is key. The reverse is true in my photographic work, where, starting from reality, the image is alienated into a purely aesthetically tense composition.

**Your work explores a wide spectrum of feelings; is there a specific emotion or state that you feel most drawn to express?**

While my oeuvre spans a vast emotional spectrum, I am most drawn to the exploration of positive, healthy emotional states.

When I address loneliness, for example, it is not the despairing solitude that I seek to express, but rather a more introspective, contemplative form of aloneness. This is a state of quiet strength - self-assured, yet open to the world. It is an aloneness that is not defined by isolation, but by a serene independence, an inner calm, and a deep sense of self that paradoxically allows for greater connection to others. This nuanced exploration of solitude, as a space for personal growth and reflection, remains a central theme in my work.



**Edgar R. Hernandez (Eddie)** is a prolific artist whose work in film, media projection, sculpture, painting, and digital technologies with a focus on difficult questions in regard to habitat renewal, ecosystem, social change, and human wellness. Aguacateco Mayan speaking from Guatemala, Eddie is a winsome art educator. He has seen his work exhibited in many group exhibitions, including the One World Film Festival, The People's Forest, Prescott Russell and Fresh Paint / New Construction Gallery Art Mûr, Montréal. Eddie holds degrees in art and design, including a BFA (Sculpture and Media) from the University of Ottawa with a minor in Spanish. Furthermore, he earned a college diploma in Graphic Design from La Cité, collège d'arts appliqués et de technologie.

### *Project Statement*

As a participant, to Art Festivals and to different galleries, he has produced unique and original paintings. For example, *Yi amal'l* (2021), explores, elements interconnected in nature by the flow of water making its path through the scenery of nature and living creatures. Vibrant colors, shapes, line and forms depicts a deep meaning to life. Rooted to the land and coming from a family of hard-working farmers, at a young age he understood how water is sacred and is rooted in human life. As he began a new composition in movement, he dreams of a river which carves out a path bypassing rocks, obstacles and challenges. In the light of that flowing river, where time disappears, he becomes one with the process and the creation happens. He is currently an art instructor and finds time to be an active local community volunteer. For instance, he has contributed to abroad community projects in the Dominican Republic and in Guatemala.







## — Interview

# Adelia de Padova

**Can you tell us about your artistic journey and how your father's influence shaped your path?**

I have always had a deep passion for art, a legacy I owe to my father, who was also a self-taught painter. As a child, I would watch him paint, fascinated by his ability to transform a blank canvas into something alive. This influence stayed with me, even when life took me elsewhere. After discontinuing a drawing course in 1992 due to family commitments, I only resumed painting years later, during the pandemic. It was a natural, almost necessary return that allowed me to rediscover my artistic identity.

Adelia de Padova | Caos Contemporaneo | 2024



**Your technique of combining oil colors with jute canvas is quite unique. What led you to discover and develop this method?**

Jute fascinated me with its texture and irregularity. I felt the need for a support that would give depth to my works, something that was not just a base but an integral part of the message. So, I began working on the fabric's weave, unraveling parts of it to create a dialogue between emptiness and fullness, between what is seen and what is only suggested. Oil paint, with its intensity and richness, completes this expressive research.

**What role do the texture and rawness of jute canvas play in your artistic expression?**

Jute carries a primitive strength, a kind of imperfection that I find extremely fascinating. Its rough texture allows me to work on multiple levels, creating contrasts between material and image. The idea of unraveling the canvas came from a desire to suggest a rupture, a tension between presence and absence, between the spoken and the unspoken.

**Your works often evoke a sense of fragility and revelation. How do you hope your art resonates emotionally with viewers?**



I am interested in exploring human vulnerability, that delicate balance between strength and fragility that we all carry within us. Through my works, I seek to create a silent dialogue with the viewer, inviting them to pause and look beyond appearances. I hope my art can evoke personal emotions, triggering intimate reflections that vary depending on the viewer's experience.

**How did the pandemic influence your return to oil painting, and what changes did it bring to your artistic practice?**

During the pandemic, I felt the need to express myself in a deeper and more authentic way. It was a moment of forced introspection that led me to rediscover the pleasure of oil painting. Since then, my approach has become freer, more experimental, and more focused on personal exploration.

**You have explored various courses and artistic techniques. How do you balance learning and experimentation while staying true to your artistic voice?**

Every new technique I learn is a piece that enriches my artistic language without ever altering it. I love exploring and testing different materials, but in the end, I always return to what feels most authentic to me. It is a balance between openness and identity: learning from others helps me grow, but my vision remains the common thread.

**What challenges do you face as an artist experimenting with innovative techniques, and how do you overcome them?**

One of the main challenges is making my technique understood, especially when it involves an unconventional approach like unraveling jute. Sometimes there is resistance from the audience or from those who view art through a more traditional lens. My response is perseverance: I keep working, exhibiting, and explaining my process, allowing time to give value to my research.



Adelia de Padova | Invisibili | 2024



Adelia de Padova | Oltre | 2024



Adelia de Padova | Intrecci | 2023



I am **Yana Pogosyan**, a graphic designer and visual artist with a background in graphic design and training in graphic recording. I started my career working on commercial designs, where I learned the language of advertising and how visuals shape perceptions. Over time, I felt the need to challenge these narratives, which led me to create collages that reverse the meanings found in advertisements, inviting viewers to question familiar messages. My work explores the intersection of commercial art and social commentary, using irony and juxtaposition to provoke thought. Recently, I started developing my skills in linography and began creating collages out of prints, expanding my approach to storytelling through layered textures and symbolic imagery. I've had four exhibitions so far—two focused on typography, one on caricatures, and the most recent showcasing my collage work. These experiences have shaped my artistic voice, and I continue to experiment with new ways to communicate visually.



Yana Crystal | Senza glutine | 2024







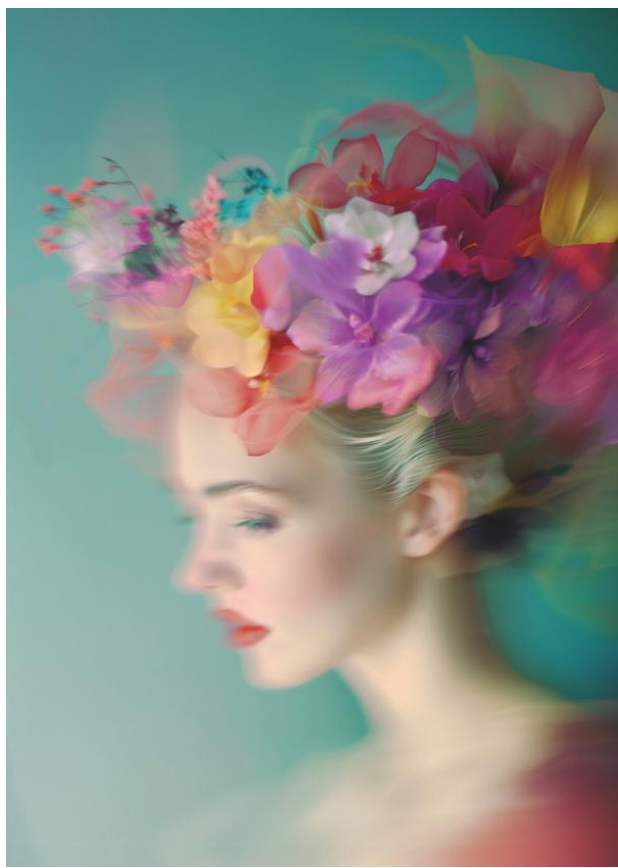
# — Interview

## Synne Kristine

**Your multicultural upbringing across different countries is fascinating. How do these diverse experiences shape your artistic style and vision?**

Due to my father's diplomatic career, I grew up abroad and lived in 10 different countries across the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and Africa. As an adult, I continued studying and working in cities like Dubai, London, and Prague before moving back to Oslo during the pandemic. These experiences have profoundly shaped my artistic vision, blending the exotic richness of Middle Eastern culture, the serene minimalism of Japanese design, and the vibrant wildlife of Africa. Themes such as nature, the desert, intricate patterns, and animals often appear in my work, reflecting the landscapes and traditions that have inspired me.

**Your academic background spans Art History, Psychology, and Social Anthropology. How do these disciplines influence your approach to art and UX design?**



Synne Kristine | Isadora | 2024



Synne Kristine | Bella | 2024

I've always had a passion for art and loved to draw as a child, which naturally led me to work in the art sector before transitioning into communication and eventually web and UX design. My studies in Psychology and Social Anthropology reflect my deep interest in understanding people and cultures, helping me create emotionally resonant and inclusive designs and artwork. Meanwhile, Art History provided a strong foundation in visual storytelling, composition, and cultural symbolism—elements I blend with creativity and empathy to craft meaningful and impactful experiences.

**Having curated exhibitions in London and Oslo and managed brands in Dubai, how do these professional experiences inform your creative practice?**

Working in galleries in Oslo and London allowed me to discover new artists and curate exhibitions that connected people with art. As a curator, I focused on storytelling—teaching others about the artworks and creating meaningful visitor experiences. This taught me how to engage audiences, a skill I continue to use in both my creative and digital work today. In Dubai, working as a brand manager in the hospitality industry introduced me to website design and digital branding. This sparked my interest in blending creativity with technology, which ultimately shaped my journey into UX design and digital art. These experiences have given me a unique ability to combine storytelling, strategy, and design in my creative practice.

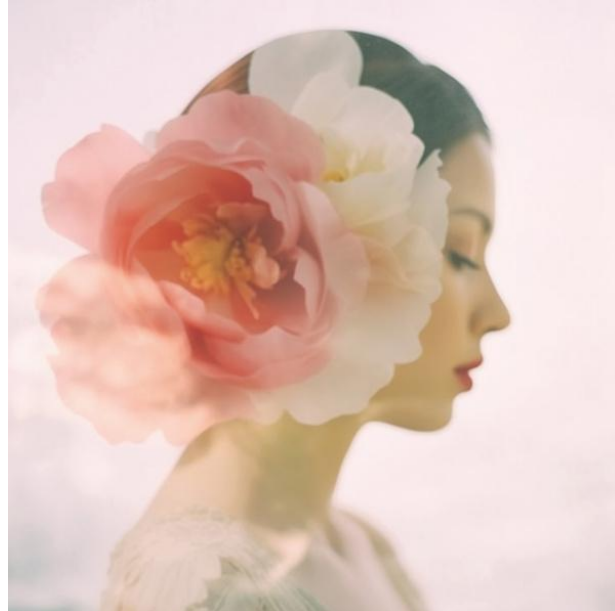
**What inspired you to explore the intersection of traditional art and artificial intelligence? How has AI changed your creative process?**



At first, I was skeptical about using AI to create art, but once I tried MidJourney, it became an exciting process. Writing prompts and seeing the results felt like true collaboration—I bring the concepts and ideas, and AI offers its interpretation, creating something unique together. While some believe AI lacks creativity, I see it as a partner that enhances and expands my artistic process. AI has also opened new creative doors for me. Exploring digital art led me to video editing and motion graphics, which allowed me to bring my work to life. Blending traditional artistry with cutting-edge technology has been an inspiring journey, pushing me to grow as both an artist and a designer.

**Your work with AI filmmaking and AI fashion design is groundbreaking. Can you share more about the challenges and opportunities you face in these areas?**

Both AI filmmaking and AI fashion design come with exciting opportunities and unique challenges. AI makes creating promotional videos faster and more cost-effective than hiring a full TV crew. However, the results can sometimes feel unnatural, and not everyone appreciates the "fake" look of AI-generated people. In AI fashion, the technology offers a more sustainable approach, allowing designers to experiment without waste. While the field is still in its early stages, its potential is immense as more people embrace it. Success in these areas comes from combining real-world skills with AI tools. Understanding camera angles, lighting, color theory, textures, and even sewing techniques makes the output more realistic and polished. As AI becomes further integrated into creative industries, the most impactful work will come from those who merge



Synne Kristine | Alicia | 2024

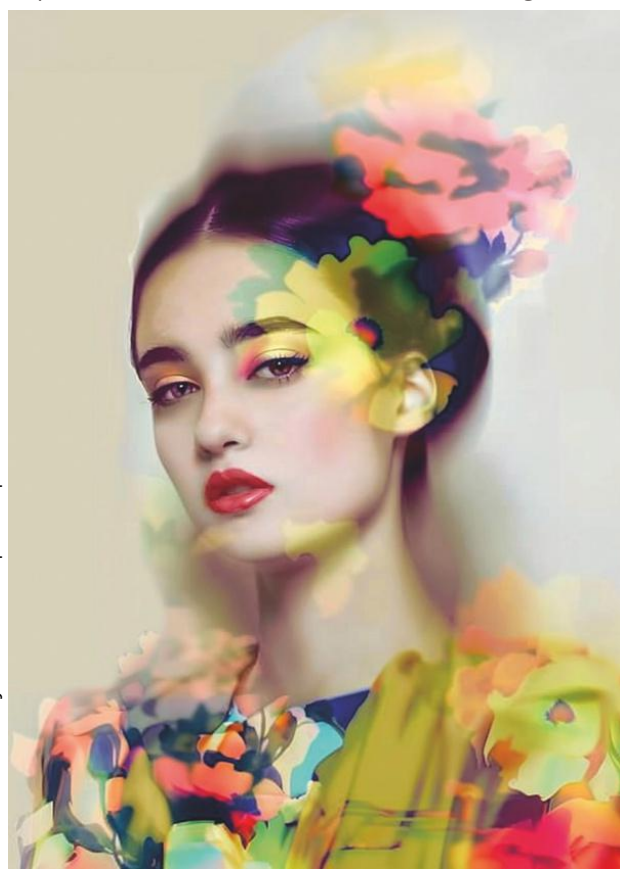
technical expertise with AI's innovative possibilities.

**As a Brand Ambassador for Refabric, you promote zero-waste pattern making. How does sustainability influence your artistic philosophy and projects?**

Sustainability is central to my artistic philosophy and projects. As a Brand Ambassador for Refabric, an AI-powered fashion design platform, I've seen how constraints can inspire creativity, leading to more thoughtful and innovative designs. Refabric's tools help designers minimize fabric waste, optimize material usage, and replace physical samples with digital prototypes. Additionally, AI-generated models of diverse sizes make it easy to test designs efficiently, reducing environmental impact. By integrating sustainable practices into my work, I strive to create with purpose and inspire awareness. Refabric's cutting-edge solutions have been instrumental in advancing both creativity and eco-friendly innovation in the fashion industry.

**What advice would you give to emerging artists who want to experiment with AI in their creative practices?**

AI is a powerful creative tool, but its true potential lies in combining it with other digital tools and artistic skills. While AI can produce stunning visuals, it often has limitations, such as anatomical errors (like too few or too many fingers) or incorrect text. To refine your work, it's helpful to know editing software and have a solid understanding of composition, color theory, and artistic fundamentals. The more specific your prompts, the more personal and meaningful your creations will be. AI-generated images are gradually replacing stock photos, but much like stock images, they work best as a foundation. Many artists refine them further to develop their unique style. Embrace AI as a collaborator, experiment freely, and blend it with traditional or digital techniques to push your creativity to new levels.



Synne Kristine | Dora | 2024

My name is **Viktoriia Sorochnik**. I am 43 years old and I am from Ukraine. My fascination with photography began not long ago; my professional field is separate from photography. Nevertheless, I use photography to communicate how I see the world around me. My main goal is to show that there can be a story behind every photo, and every series of shots to counterbalance the fake world created in social networks where the accents are shifted to meaningless images of non-existent reality

### *Project Statement*

I started working on The series My News in the winter 2021-22. I noticed the reflection in the old TV tube. It was like an allusion to all the insignificance of the news on real TV, where the simplest things were turned into dirty sensations. What was reflected in the curved glass of the old TV tube was life itself.









# — Interview

## Nick Lyre

**How would you describe the evolution of your artistic journey, and what led you to work primarily in the digital medium?**

I was simply impressed by the works I've seen in Louvre and wanted to follow the footsteps of the masters. I'm still very far away from their level, but i'll definitely try my best. Regarding digital - I simply didn't have my own space or money to go with traditional, and digital was much more affordable. I would love to try traditional, one day soon :)



**You mention blending nature, portraiture, and architecture in your work. How do these elements complement each other in your pieces?**

Here I meant that I'm working in these directions - I don't intersect them in each piece. I'm sorry, I've put it the wrong way.

**You describe your style as impressionistic. How do you balance traditional techniques with modern digital tools in your creative process?**

I just draw. I've been working for a very long time on my digital brushes - adding textures and making them as close as possible to the traditional once. Just trying to reach that traditional look and luckily the brush engine in Photoshop and some impasto brushes for Krita really allow that.

**Can you tell us more about your use of digital impasto and canvas textures? How do these traditional features influence your work?**

I simply apply them and see how it works for every single piece. I judge visually and also



Nick Lyre | Cossack on horse



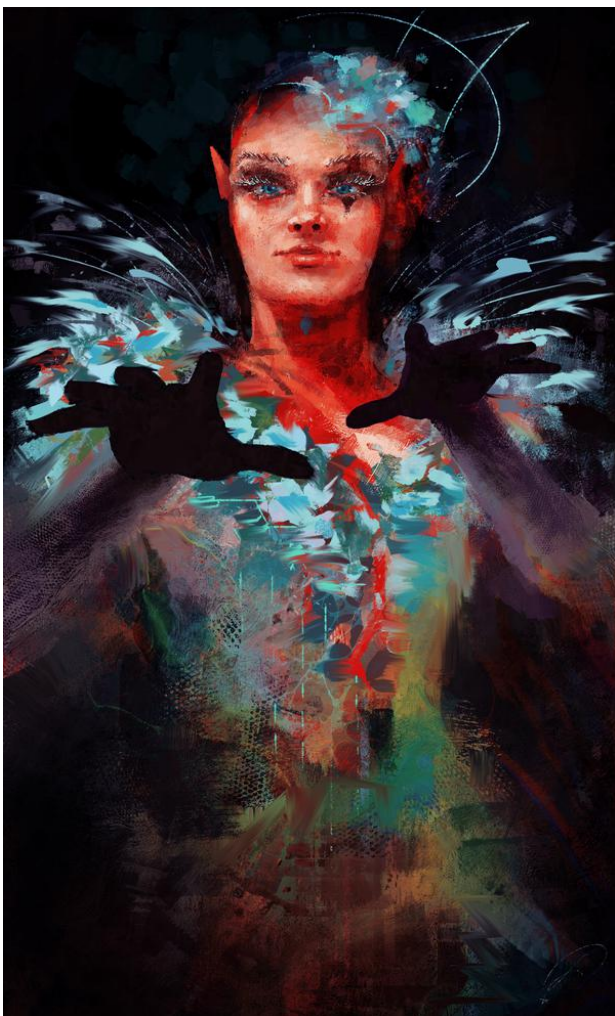
depending on what I imagine each piece should look like, and it differs from piece to piece. I just experiment - my inner feeling lets me know whether I'm on the right path. These features make my digital look closer to traditional and I love it.

**Your work seems to evoke deep emotions. How do you approach conveying emotions digitally, and what role do color and value play in this process?**

I would say that digital is the same as traditional in this regard. Yes, the difference is in how it's done, but digital artists still communicate in visual terms such as color, shapes, values, composition in the same way traditional artists do.



Nick Lyre  
Hair brushing



Nick Lyre  
Karina - Ice Queen (Arlekin)

**You draw inspiration from baroque architecture. What aspects of this style influence your digital artworks, and how do you incorporate them?**

I love the artistic features of this architecture style. I'm in process of working on pieces with this architecture style, it proves being difficult. And I understand how much love the creators had for their creations just by looking at those works.

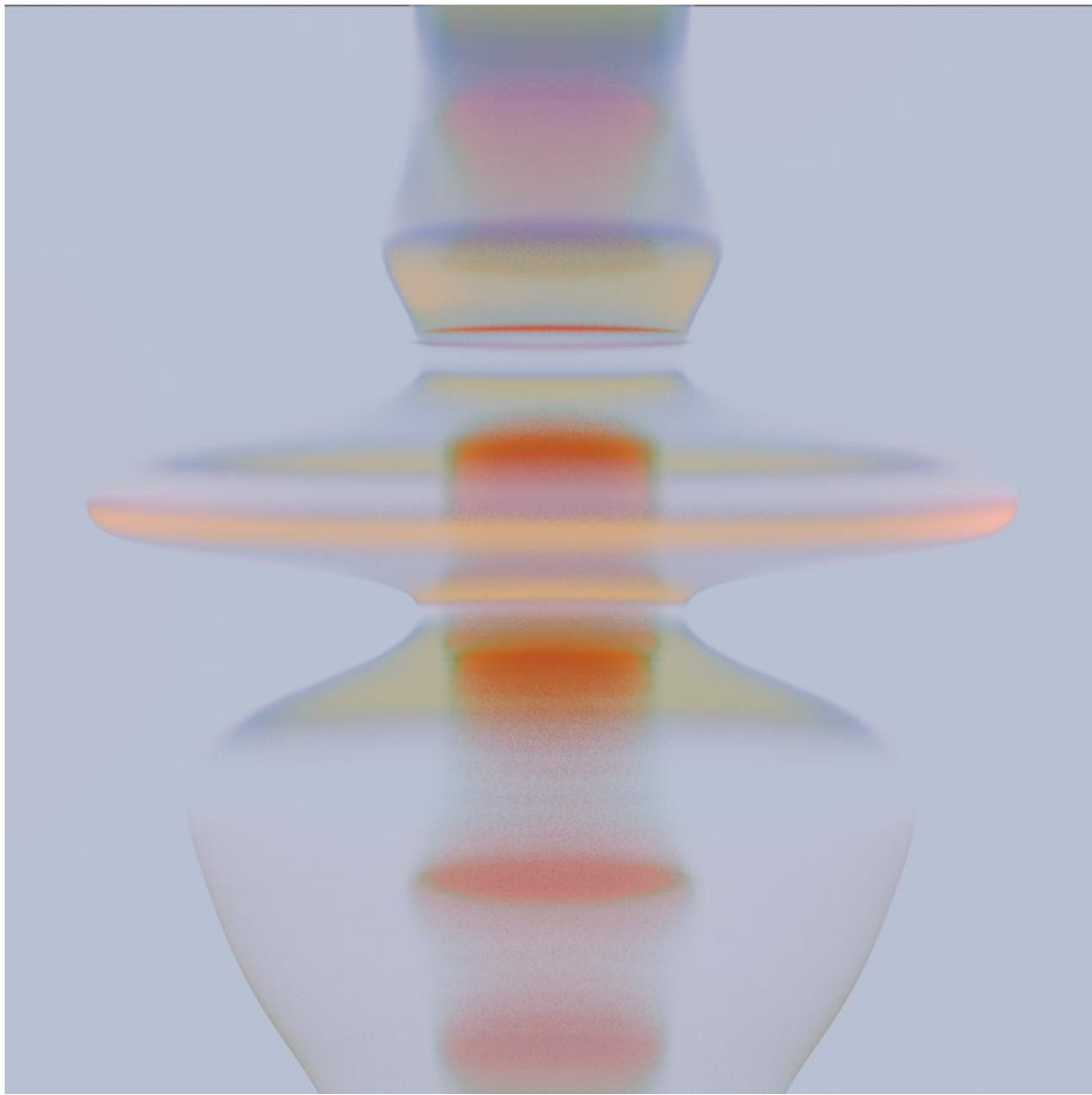
**What advice would you give to emerging artists looking to blend traditional art techniques with digital media?**

Experiment. Always.

**The Little Sunday Boy** was born in Korea and studied fashion at the Fashion Institute of Technology (F.I.T) in New York. During his time abroad, he naturally encountered New York's exhibitions and fairs, which heightened his interest in art. He was particularly captivated by contemporary artists like James Turrell and Dan Flavin. The experimental nature of contemporary art, which transcends boundaries, resonated with the struggles and survival challenges of his life as a student abroad. After returning to Korea, his passion for experimental expression continued. He began exploring 3D graphics to break free from spatiotemporal limitations and has since pursued conceptual painting that bridges digital and physical art. The artist symbolically represents the importance of technology and the complexity of microscopic worlds in modern society. By navigating between digital and analog mediums, he offers new perspectives on existing perceptions. Using 3D digital tools, he creates visual rhythms through textures and motion, inviting viewers to experience emotional shifts and introspection. Currently, he works in 3D garment simulation, researching textures and mediums while expanding his scope through digital platforms like NFTs and physical art.

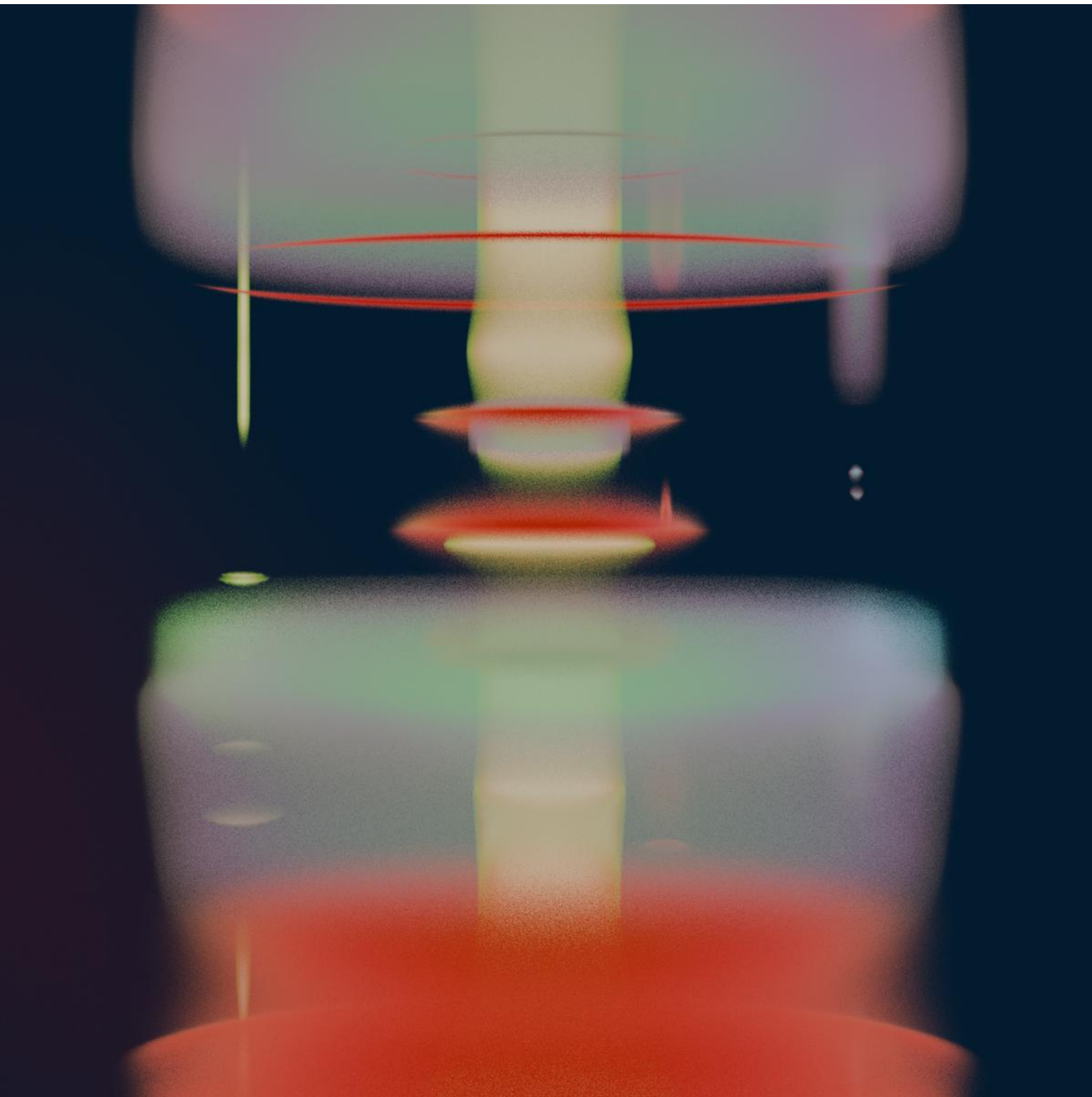
#### *Project Statement*

This work, titled "**Melted Time**," visually represents the fusion of human emotions—joy, sorrow, anger, and delight—within the past, present, and future. The reason for merging different time periods is rooted in the belief that our present self, the memories from our past, and the hopes for our future are interconnected. This concept is encapsulated through the metaphor of "melted time." The enigmatic blend of colors symbolizes the friction between anger and joy, where sorrow and euphoria harmonize. These intertwined emotions come together to create a grand, beautiful wave of resonance. We live in an era where digital content dominates. Through online platforms, we observe others, encounter news from distant countries, and experience increasingly complex emotional waves. These experiences deepen our emotional spectrum while simultaneously offering new insights. Though we navigate an age of intricate emotions, we also discover new hope through them. The pains of the past and present merge with joy and delight, allowing us to perceive them as part of a greater, beautiful existence. I hope that in the future, emotions will continue to intertwine, making life itself a celebration of both sorrow and happiness. Through this message, I wish to convey that this fusion of emotions is what defines life—and that, in itself, is joy.



The Little Sunday Boy | Melted Time





The Little Sunday Boy | Melted Time

## — Interview

# Jennifer Baron

**Your works often explore deep themes of grief, trauma, and healing. How do you navigate such personal emotions when translating them into visual art?**

My work is a direct translation of my emotions and experiences. I work intuitively, letting images emerge from memories, feelings and the unspoken. By using abstraction and symbolism, I create space for both my own story and that of the viewer. The process is sometimes confronting, but also healing. It gives form to what would otherwise remain invisible.

**In your project *Unveiled Layers*, you mention the process of uncovering the hidden aspects of ourselves. How do you decide which layers to reveal in your work?**



Jennifer Baron | Shadows of Thruth | 2024



Sometimes it unfolds gradually and sometimes I consciously guide it. I let myself be led by what needs to be felt at that moment. *Unveiled Layers* is an ongoing dialogue between my inner world and the outside world, where each layer I reveal is a step in self-discovery and connection.

**Your photographs combine both abstract and intimate elements. How do you balance these contrasting approaches within a single image?**

For me, the strength lies in the interplay between recognition and alienation. By isolating details and emphasizing structures or shadows, I create images that feel both personal and universal. Intimacy lies in small, subtle gestures: a shadow on a wall, a faded outline of a body, while abstraction allows space for interpretation and emotional depth.

**How has your background in education influenced your approach to art, particularly in terms of conveying complex emotions and narratives?**

My years in education, where I worked with young people between the ages of 11 and 18,

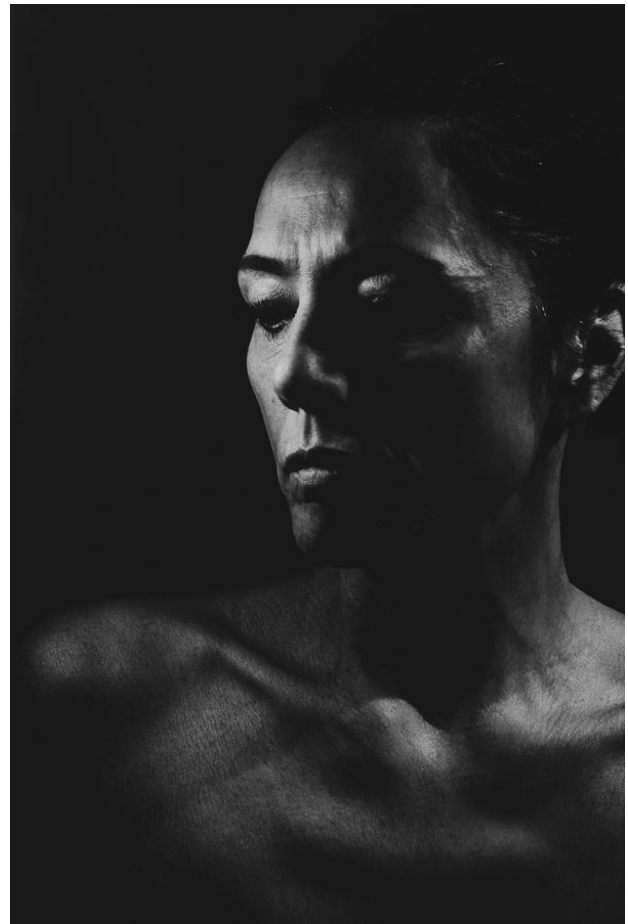


taught me how important it is to connect and create space for personal growth. Watching young people develop, learn to understand their emotions and grow in their perspective of the world, gave me insights that I carry into my work. My works provides an invitation: it offers something for reflection, but leaves room for the viewer to find their own meaning.

**Your use of black-and-white photography seems to highlight raw emotion. Can you discuss how the absence of color enhances the emotional depth in your pieces?**

Black-and-white removes distractions and brings the essence of an emotion to the forefront. Without color, only form, light and contrast remain, elements that intensify the mood and depth of the image. It invites the viewer to add their own colors and memories, creating a deeper, personal connection with the work.

**The tension between the tangible and intangible plays a significant role in your work. Could you describe a specific piece where this tension is most apparent?**



Jennifer Baron | Strained Serenity | 2024

In Unveiled Layers, the tension between the tangible and intangible plays a major role in Whispers of Authenticity. A face emerges from light and shadow, the contours are only fragmentarily visible and the subtle blurring makes the facial features elusive. This creates a sense of layering and vulnerability. A visual metaphor for the hidden and revealed aspects of ourselves, where presence and absence flow into each other.

Your art seems to foster a sense of introspection. What advice would you give to someone looking to embark on their own journey of self-discovery through art?

Be honest with yourself and dare to be vulnerable in your work. Self-discovery through art is not about perfect images but about authenticity. Follow your intuition, let the process lead the way, and don't be afraid to step into the unknown. Art is a journey, not a destination.



Jennifer Baron | Invisible threads | 2024

## Małgorzata Markiewicz

A middle-aged woman in search of herself, fascinated by all kinds of beauty - art, music. Amateur of photography and, more recently, collage.







## — Interview

# Ruoyu Gong

**Your paintings seem to explore deep psychological landscapes. How do you approach translating complex internal experiences into visual art?**

To tap into the unconscious of my psyche, I keep the urge of illustrating an idea at arm's length. Instead, I let the work develop in its own course. When facing a blank canvas, I don't premeditate what I want to paint in fear of relegating to formulaic rendering of semiotics. Rather, I play with different surfaces, collaging with different materials, or even daydreaming for ten minutes. This helps me enter a mental state that remains hidden in daily life. I visualize recurring motifs that hover on the edge of entropy. Instead of creating utter chaos, these motifs serve to elucidate a reality that lies just below the surface of my unconscious psyche.

**You've mentioned that your work is inspired by monotype printmaking. How does this influence the fluidity and spontaneity seen in your oil paintings?**

I make monotypes with acrylic paints. The fast-drying quality medium forces me to work quickly, resulting in a fluid, expressionistic aesthetic. In my oil painting, I keep a similar sensitivity in mind and boldly work with oil as if it dries fast. This method of painting allows me to lean into



surprises and accidents. In addition, I achieve highlights in my monotypes through scraping, leaving the white of the paper see-through. Utilizing this subtractive method, I disrupt the opacity of the oil paint layer with a translucent ground layer to enhance spatial complexity.

**In your project statement, you discuss the tension between control and serendipity. Could you elaborate on how you balance these forces during the creation of your pieces?**

I am captivated by gaining and relinquishing control over the medium of oil paint. I often think of the Nietzschean notion of Apollonian and Dionysian forces in artistic creation, where the former embodies reason and clarity, while the latter embodies instinct and passion. My working process is a manifestation of a wrestle between these two opposing forces. In the first stage of my painting process, formal elements such as form, value, and composition are arranged by unforeseen impulses. To me, this approach is like a visual sequence of slips of the tongue. As representational narratives begin to emerge, I continue to develop them through detailed studies and iterations, resulting in a final painting in which the inherent tension between control and serendipity is never fully resolved.

**The use of Chinese cultural references and the comedic tradition of Xiangsheng seems important in your work. How do you incorporate this into your oil painting medium?**



Ruoyu Gong | Mr. Donkey Messed Up | 2024



My paintings frequently employ the symbolic language of Xiangsheng, traditional Chinese comedy, which often features two performers engaging in humorous dialogue. I am interested in revealing a sense of irony in my work that echoes certain innuendos in Xiangsheng performances. Some Xiangsheng plots revolve around classic stories, which inspire the narratives in my paintings. However, as I paint, the initial narrative might transform into something completely independent of the original Xiangsheng plot.

**Your works convey a complex emotional narrative. Do you consider humor to be an essential tool in expressing the depth of your feelings and the paradoxes of identity?**

Humor plays an integral role in my artistic practice. To me, humor mediates opposing forces, allowing us to understand ourselves and others in a refreshed light. Since I derive much inspiration from traditional Chinese comedy, humor always reflects my cultural identity. Many would assume that humor manifests as funny imagery that induces laughter. But to me, humor can manifest in the working process by allowing myself to play without a prize or punishment. This ability to play allows me to experience the full depth of my emotion because I am able to stay completely present.

**As someone who has navigated different cultural identities, how does your experience of cultural alienation influence the themes and symbols in your work?**

I consider my study at Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing during Covid to be a pivotal point for the theme I explore. Since I was fourteen, I did not get to spend a long



Ruoyu Gong | Mr. Donkey at Work | 2024

period of time in China. So I spent that year at CAFA reexamining my role as a contemporary Chinese painter. In the past, I have been predominantly influenced by Western old masters such as Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and Rubens. My training was centered around representational figurative art, which emphasizes anatomical accuracy, color harmony, spatial clarity, etc. In more recent years, I endeavored to deviate my art from the classical Western canon. I started to imbue the Western medium of oil paint with Chinese cultural relevance formally and conceptually because I came to realize that my cultural root is the foundation for my personal and professional journey.

**You often depict your figures in absurd or improbable situations. What role does absurdity play in communicating the struggles of personal and cultural identity?**

I see absurdity as the cousin of irony. Irony is a kind of humor that reconciles oppositions of semiotics. Absurdity, on the other hand, is the juxtaposition of incongruent semiotics which appears bewildering as opposed to humorous. I think most people can agree that life is as absurd as it is. To me specifically, absurdity echoes the state in which I navigate the discordance of cultural hierarchy in a foreign land. Sometimes, opposing moral values and political systems put me in a state of confusion and paralysis. I translate this sense of powerlessness by placing the figures in improbable situations. In a way, I project my psychological distress upon the figures I create. Ultimately, when I paint them, I simultaneously become them.



Ruoyu Gong | Mr. Donkey's Daydream | 2024

## — Interview

# Stanislav Khomyakov

**Your project "Adult Child" touches on the theme of unfulfilled childhood dreams. What inspired you to explore this concept?**

Today, we live in a very fast-paced world, where we are bombarded with tasks, duties, and responsibilities, and sometimes there's not enough time to slow down and listen to our inner voice—"Am I happy? Am I living the life I always dreamed of, or am I just running without a purpose?" A year ago, I came across a small exercise where you take a sheet of paper and write down everything you dreamed about as a child, from small wishes like buying a ball to big ones like becoming an astronaut. This exercise helped me look at my life from a different perspective because the more unfulfilled desires we have, the more unhappy we may feel. The stricter we are with ourselves about not fulfilling our dreams, the more irritated and envious we become when we see someone else succeeding. I came up with quite a long list, and at that moment, I realized that there are many people like me, those who got caught up in routine and don't live, but just exist in this world. It was then that the idea came to me—to remind people, and first and foremost myself, of our childhood dreams, of what we once aspired to when we weren't surrounded by adult responsibilities. Even if we start small, we are already on the path to "self-love," and that's when the magic happens. We literally "return ourselves to ourselves," allowing ourselves to dream, and these dreams



start to become a reality because there's no longer an internal restriction.

**In your works, you depict various childhood desires that were never realized. How do you approach translating these personal experiences into art?**

With my works, I want to reach every person, so that the viewer, who is lucky enough to see my art, can say: "Wow, I also once dreamed of learning to skate!" or "Yes, I was never allowed to have a dog either, it turns out I'm not the only one!" In this way, through personal experiences, people unite and realize that they are not alone in their problems. I try to communicate with people, ask them questions, and preserve their most valuable experiences, which may later serve as the foundation for my works. Often, if you look at the paintings I create, you can notice my personal themes, things that worried me before and still do, things I didn't even think about before starting this project. I'm not afraid to open up to people through my creativity, and I want others to feel the same, to not be afraid to open up to one another, to share their experiences, and through this process find solutions.

**Could you share more about the role of nostalgia in your art, especially in relation to childhood memories?**

By resorting to nostalgia in my works, I want to bring people back to a time when they had no worries, when the constant thought of "what will happen tomorrow?" didn't occupy their minds. A time when there was no one stronger than Dad and kinder than Mom, I try to awaken forgotten feelings in people so they can experience them once again by looking at my project. Today, our world is as unstable and restless as ever, and everyone needs some support at some point, so why not let my paintings be that support, bringing us back to childhood and giving us a bit of warmth? Perhaps, speaking about all people, I am trying to return myself to that happy time and reflect through creativity, to hide at least for a while from the present—who knows!

**How do you think your art reflects the balance between childhood aspirations and adulthood realities?**

I think my art helps us understand ourselves better through our childhood aspirations. My works are not about you quitting your job today and running off to learn how to ride a bike, no. They are about how real life, as we grow older, turns



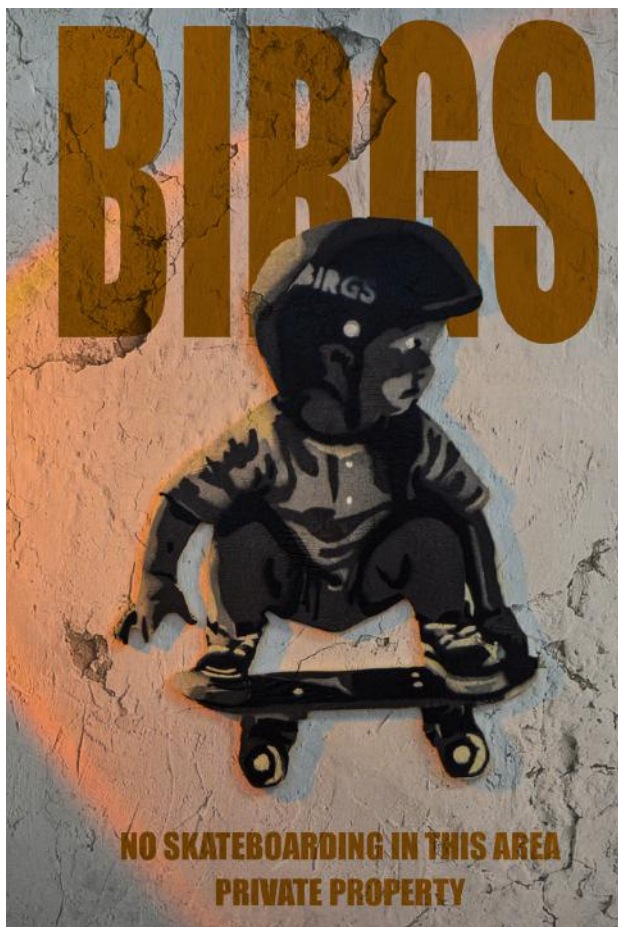
Stanislav Khomyakov | Punk



into a constant "race," where day turns into night and vice versa. In such a fast-paced environment, we lose the taste for life, and sometimes we stop enjoying our achievements because we're always in a hurry towards some goals. And only when we calm down, exhale, and spend time figuring out what truly energizes us in life, will we feel real joy. We allow something new to enter our lives, free ourselves from dissatisfaction, and learn to understand how important it is to just think about ourselves and realize what we really need. That's why I believe I'm working on an important project, showing that it is possible to strike a balance between our childhood aspirations and adult life.

**What was the process behind creating the series? Did you use specific symbols or elements to express these unmet childhood dreams?**

At the beginning of creating the series, I only listened to my inner responses because, first and foremost, this was an experiment for myself and an attempt to understand myself better. For this reason, the first works I created were based on my own childhood dreams, on what my inner child required of me—riding a skateboard, buying those very sneakers I dreamed of all my childhood but never had for various reasons, or learning to play basketball like the great stars! By analyzing myself, I started this project, and later, when I saw the positive feedback from people, I realized that I probably wasn't alone in this and that there are many people who also have a baggage of unfulfilled dreams that weigh on them. So I decided to scale the project, to make it bigger and



Stanislav Khomyakov  
Dream | 2024



Stanislav Khomyakov  
Girl

touch as many personal stories as possible so that people could, through my paintings, get a little closer to themselves, just as I did.

**How does your street art background influence the way you approach installation pieces and gallery exhibitions?**

All of my works start with the street; even this project I began by displaying my works not in galleries or exhibitions, but in the urban space, on the walls of buildings. I think it's evident from my style that I am close to street art, and I consider it paramount, so it was important for me to maintain the balance between street and exhibition art. Through the street, I can engage in dialogue with every resident of my city and share my thoughts. For me, art should not have boundaries like showcases or stands. Many galleries and curators say my works are not their format! That doesn't bother me because creativity in any form will always find a way to reach the audience; if it's not in a gallery format, it will be presented on the street, in open spaces under the starry sky. But now, more and more galleries and exhibitions are beginning to recognize street art as a serious and independent direction, and I'm proud to be a part of this because it doesn't matter whether you paint with acrylic on canvas or with spray paint on a brick wall, we're all trying to communicate our emotions to the world and find a response in thousands of hearts!

**Can you explain the significance of the title "BIRGS" and how it ties into your artistic identity?**

BIRGS is my creative pseudonym under which I create my works. I believe we should not only move forward but also not forget our past and honor it. That's the foundation of my nickname. Birg is the surname of my grandfather, whom I never met, but who undoubtedly is a huge part of my identity. Even though he didn't get to see his grandson, his grandson knows, remembers, and will do everything to keep his memory alive forever.

# — Interview

## Sillygoose

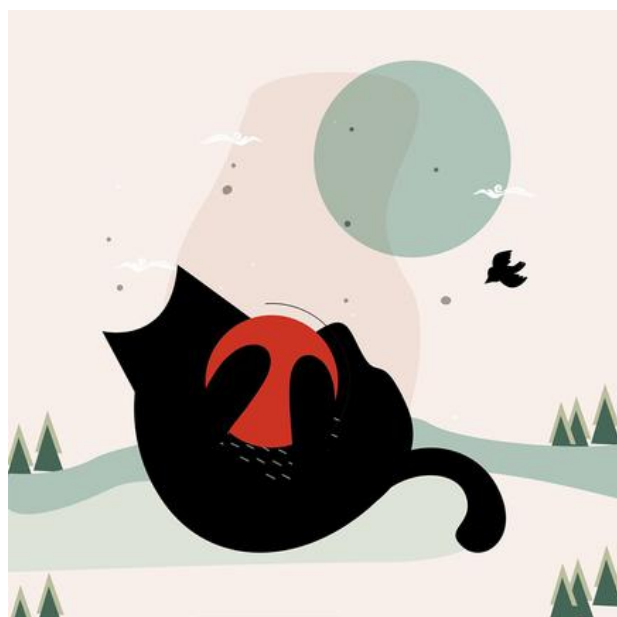
**Your work exists in a space of calculated restraint and complexity. How do you decide what remains and what disappears?**

Art is an act of intentional formulation as much as omission. Each form is an argument for its own necessity. Each absence is a silent interlocutor in the dialogue of composition. I do not believe in ornamentation for its own sake, every element that lingers must serve an unspoken purpose that is effable only through its placement. There is a rebellious nature to bridled insistence, that meaning need not announce itself in grandiloquence but rather reside between what is revealed and what is withheld.

For me transience is at the heart of my decision-making. A work must possess a fleeting equilibrium. It gives the most impression of something momentary yet immutable. I do not consider imposing clarity but rather to allow meaning to hover just beyond the grasp of certainty. A stroke removed a pause in composition or an imperfection left intact. These are not deficiencies but deliberations and a way of allowing a piece to breathe without suffocation from excess.

**In your first series, a cat is caught in perpetual pursuit—never quite reaching, never quite possessing. What does this motif signify?**

There exists an alchemy in pursuit—the manner by which it transfigures mundanity into ritual, turning motion into something near-sacred. Watch a cat hunt and see that its purpose isn't to possess but to sustain the dance of the hunt.



Sillygoose | Playtime | 2024



Sillygoose | Covertly Cute | 2024

The creature is not compelled by possession but by the primal need of the "almost". It craves that exciting space between intention and outcome where potential hums like a live wire. In a way it's like climbing a mountain and knowing that the beauty isn't in the summit but in that final ledge where the peak still breathes mystery.

**Your second series features figures that seem both exposed and withheld, immersed in a world of patterns and distortions. Who are they?**

They are effigies of perception, They are both delineated and obscured, present yet unknowable. They are present among us at every corner of life yet never truly knowable. Each face with masks and each gaze hidden behind tinted lenses resists cognizance. They are constructs of their surroundings. Their silence is deliberate. In some part they are others and in many ways they are our own reflections.

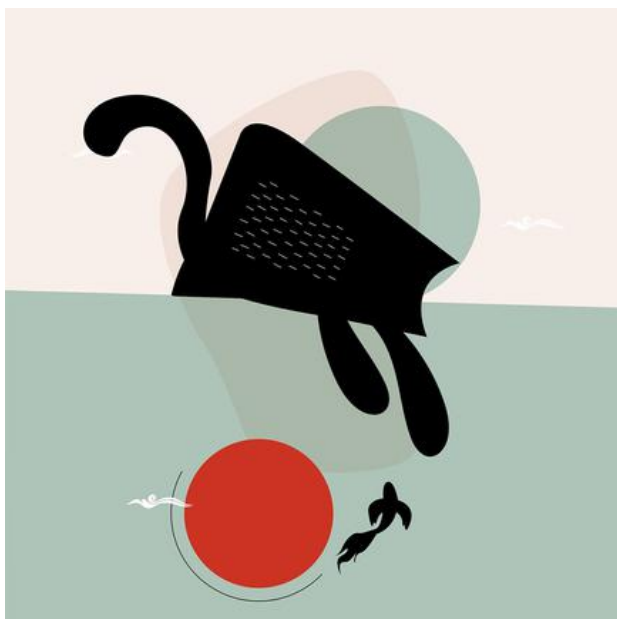
I am interested in the architecture of concealment—how identity is shaped not only by what is shown but by what is withheld. These figures do not beg for recognition nor do they fall into obscurity. They exist within a paradox like a contrived middle ground between self-possession and dissolution. They are both the observer and the observed, neither fully revealed nor entirely veiled.

**Absence is a recurring force in your work. How does it shape your compositions?**

Absence shapes meaning. To remove does not mean to diminish but it is to refine. When Art explains itself too easily, too literally, it denies the viewer the privilege of contemplation. Meaning isn't something to be handed over; it's something to be approached.

There is an intrinsic liveliness to incompleteness. It's a quiet promise that what's missing might still be found. It's found in the act of looking, not in the image itself. This isn't about negating the form, it's about calling the observer to linger within the recesses of what is apparent and implied in the artwork. The mind naturally wants to fill in the gaps, to make sense of what isn't there, turning the act of viewing into a participatory act. I don't believe in imposing meaning; I create spaces where meaning can be unfolded.





**Your approach to color is strikingly restrained, yet every hue seems deeply intentional. How do you construct your palettes?**

Color is not to be an afterthought—it is a structural imperative. It creates movement, establishes weight and dictates the overall perception. For me restraint in palette is not an aesthetic limitation but a discipline. It's a means of refining impact. When options are curtailed, each hue must possess greater integrity, each tone must be excogitated to hold its place in the visual lexicon of the piece. I firmly believe that we excel under constraints and it's part of our nature to make the most of what we can. There is a happiness to it and a joy in solving a problem in scarcity. This is especially true in today's world of excesses, overexposure and overstimulation. I hold a certain brevity to my color choices. They hover between recollection and dream, neither fully contemporary nor entirely nostalgic. I seek hues that suggest, rather than declare, that exist in a suspended state of recognition, familiar but unplaceable.

**Texture in your work operates like an undercurrent—sometimes barely perceptible, sometimes disruptive. What role does it play?**

Texture is disrupted. Texture is a bump, it's a roughness and an imperfection. A surface too pristine becomes sterile and artificial, and it denies the eye a place to Linger. I believe in irregularity with intent, creating a gesture that interrupts but does not overwhelm. These disruptions function as moments of recalibration forcing the perception to slow and adjust to register something beyond the immediate. There is a sort of perfection in imperfection. A roughness, a non-symmetry, a crooked edge, a trace of process, these introduce a sense of time into the work. These "imperfections" acknowledge the human beneath even the most precise compositions. They make it real by connecting the screen and the canvas to a moment in reality. For me texture isn't merely a surface quality but a conceptual one. Texture is the space where the work resists becoming a just an image and asserts itself as an experience.

**Your compositions manipulate scale, repetition, and abstraction in ways that subvert expectation. What compels you toward this kind of distortion?**

To distort is to liberate. Scale is not a passive thing, it is a negotiation and a means of dictating not just what is seen but how it is seen.

Just like texture and composition a form rendered in a very predictable way loses its potency. A figure positioned in too much of a comfortable position can no longer assert itself. I am interested in the tension that arises when expectation is silently subverted, when a repetition is imperfect, when elements are just slightly askew and when forms are asymmetrical.

Distortion is a form of recalibration, though many perceive it as chaos, it's not.. It requires a balance and precision between control and accident, between intention and discovery. There is something almost playfully mischievous and inviting about shifting perception and making the familiar unfamiliar. to trigger a re-exploration of the known. A work of art should not just present itself, but it should unfold, revealing itself over time and to every eye that sees it. It should expose its secrets through reconsideration and through the act of returning glances.

**Your work resists resolution. What do you want the viewer to take away?**

Resolution is just an illusion. The moment an Artwork is "Understood" it ceases to function as an experience. The most enduring works remain in a permanent state of unfolding. My purpose is not to seek to offer answers or offer them at all, All I seek is to provoke reconsideration. If a viewer walks away with an unresolved thought, a sense of something that is just beyond articulation, then the work has succeeded. My interest is not finality but in reverberation. it's in the quite persistence of an image that refuses to be neatly categorized. A work that does not linger as a conclusion but as a question that resists effacement.



Sillygoose  
Red Alert  
2024

## — Interview

# Sana Shaw

**Your work spans many disciplines such as art, fashion, philosophy, and futurology. How do you manage to blend these diverse areas into a cohesive artistic practice?**

I have always been fascinated by the humanities, which have helped me gain a deeper understanding of the world's structure, the dynamics of society, and the interconnectedness of people and culture. This knowledge has become an integral part of my artistic practice, where I explore the transformations of the contemporary world. I am particularly interested in the processes of destruction familiar world orders and security systems, the construction of new frameworks, and how these changes impact



individuals. I work within an interdisciplinary field. For me, art is a way to merge my knowledge from various disciplines, using symbolism and imagery to better comprehend these shifts and to offer new perspectives on the interaction between the past, present, and future.

**You've mentioned that your art reflects the "zeitgeist" of our time. Could you explain how your work engages with the political, social, and cultural shifts of the present day?**

My art reflects the "zeitgeist" by exploring the transformations that contemporary society is undergoing. We live in an era of profound political, social, and cultural shifts that challenge established systems and beliefs. In my work, I strive to capture these pivotal moments: the dismantling of old power structures, the renewal of global frameworks, the search for new identities, and the reevaluation of the relationship between individuals and society. I draw on materials, symbols, and a visual language that highlight the fragility and duality of our time—destruction and creation, tradition and innovation, loss and hope. For instance, the use





of industrial materials or decorative elements from past cultures in my works reflects the collision between the past and the future, reminding us that every crisis carries the potential for renewal and rebirth. What has been destroyed must be recreated in a better form, as society ascends the ladder of evolution. Through this, I aim to create a space for dialogue about how we adapt to these changes and what values we choose to build a new reality.

**Your pieces often incorporate industrial materials and broken antique elements. What is the significance of these materials in relation to the themes of destruction and creation in your work?**

I work with industrial construction materials to express ideas of destruction and the creation of a new order. Materials such as cement, stucco, or plaster are construction elements that literally illustrate my concept. They also symbolize the utilitarianism and rawness of the modern era, while the use of non-artistic materials on canvas emphasizes the transition from traditional forms of art to new conceptual approaches. The broken elements of antique styles like Baroque and Gothic serve as metaphors for the fragments of bygone eras, evoking the remnants

of cultural and social structures we witness today. They emphasize the idea that the past does not completely disappear but transforms, becoming an integral part of a new worldview. I intentionally use non-artistic materials, broken stones, and decorative elements to evoke a sense of tension and fragility that many people feel in our time. The black-and-white palette enhances this effect, creating a stark contrast between extremes—destruction and restoration, loss and hope.

I also resonate with the ideas of European Decadence, where uncertainty and disillusionment brought on by crises were expressed through aestheticism and symbolism. Much like the artists of that time, I strive to aestheticize the process of destruction and renewal, highlighting its inevitability and beauty. My approach creates a dialogue between the past and the present, chaos and order, forming a visual metaphor for the transformative potential of human experience.

**How do you see your art reflecting the ongoing transition from the old world to the new world, as mentioned in your artist statement?**

My art reflects the transition from the old world to the new through visual and conceptual elements that explore the conflict inherent in this process. I am aware that we live in an era where old systems and cultural codes are collapsing, giving way to new but still unsteady structures. This state of being in-between, oscillating between destruction and creation, is embodied in my work.

Broken forms of ancient styles symbolize the fragments of the past in my art—pieces we cannot completely discard but that, through transformation, become part of the future. These elements evoke eternity, archaeology, and memory, emphasizing that even in destruction lies the potential for new creation.

Each component—from remnants of the past to contemporary materials—becomes part of a dialogue about how old structures evolve to pave the way for a new world order.

I strive to show that the transition from one worldview to another is always accompanied by contradictions: the stability of the past clashes



Sana Shaw | Fragility of life | 2024

with the uncertainty of the future, and destruction reveals opportunities for creation. This state of transition is conveyed through the interplay of contrasts in materials, forms, and symbols. At the same time, my art not only captures these changes but also offers viewers a space to reflect on their own roles and choices amid this global shift.

**The interplay of destruction and creation seems central to your practice. Can you talk about a specific piece where you felt this tension most strongly?**

Yes, of course. However, over time I've noticed that I've been focusing more and more on the processes of restoration and creation of the new world. Perhaps we are on the cusp of major change.

One of my first works in this theme, entitled *Fragments of an Old Reality 4*, a rather large work in size and conceptualization, gave me the opportunity to feel most strongly this tension of unpredictability and unreliability that was in the air. Perhaps because it was one of the first, everything felt very acute and painful, I didn't yet have the understanding and confidence that things are moving forward, the world is changing and I hope it's changing for the better.

**Many of your works evoke a sense of timelessness and reference history. How do you approach the concept of eternity in your work, especially when juxtaposing contemporary elements with ancient references?**

The concept of eternity in my works is expressed through the juxtaposition of ancient elements with contemporary symbols and materials. I aim to show that the processes of destruction and creation, which may seem specific to the present moment, are, in fact, eternal and inevitable. By incorporating elements from antiquity, Baroque, and Gothic styles, I create a connection to the past, which, despite its destruction, continues to live in our perception and influence the present. I use these elements as a metaphor for eternity, intertwined with the ever-changing world we inhabit.

The interplay of ancient and modern elements in

my works demonstrates how different eras can coexist within a single piece of art. In this context, eternity is not perceived as a static category but as an ongoing process where the old and the new intertwine, creating something entirely different and meaningful. My art is an attempt to capture this moment of transition, where the past and the present converge, shaping a new understanding of eternity in the face of change.

**How does your background in fashion design influence your current practice, especially in terms of structure, texture, and aesthetics?**

My experience in fashion design has a significant impact on my current artistic practice. In fashion, I learned to work with materials, master new modeling techniques, and find a balance between functionality and art. I've carried this approach into my sculptural work, where structure and texture have become essential elements of composition.

I often use industrial materials and unconventional elements, such as plaster or broken stones, which echo the work with fabrics and textures in fashion design. Fashion thinking allows me to create more layered, contrasting, and engaging compositions, where each element



Sana Shaw | Fragility of life | 2024



holds symbolic meaning, and its perception depends on how it is evaluated visually and tactually. Additionally, the aesthetics I developed in fashion design help me create more precise and expressive forms, establishing a connection between modernity and the past, between the utilitarian and the artistic. In my work, I aim to convey harmony between destruction and creation, and fashion design, as a tool for transformation, serves as a powerful example of this idea within the realms of painting and sculpture.

Aesthetics in my art often serve as a way to illuminate issues and pain, making them not only visible but also accessible in a different, more beautiful and harmonious form. I tend to aestheticize difficult and painful themes, presenting them as parts of a broader process of transformation, where destruction and suffering become catalysts for change and creation. Through this, I hope to show that even in the darkest and most challenging aspects of human existence, there is space for beauty and self-expression.



Sana Shaw | Renewal of the world | 2024



## Meghan Bardwell

I am a photographer and collage artist based in Colorado. I describe myself as a dreamer, a wonder-seeker, and a tree hugger. I love being out in nature - unless it's super cold or windy - in which case I prefer to stay in and read. I think that tacos are the perfect food and there is nothing more adorable than dachshund pups.

### *Project Statement*

These works were created as part of a 365 project. I have completed this goal 3 times now and find it very fulfilling. I create a small collage every day for 365 days. I utilize one-staple collage because I enjoy the unique challenges it presents.

Meghan Bardwell | Deception | 2023







Meghan Bardwell | Cycle Breaker | 2023

## — Interview

# Dana Karyn Legg

### **What inspired you to start using color so prominently in your artwork?**

Color has always been a powerful tool for me—it allows me to convey emotion, movement, and energy. My background in color theory has helped me harness its impact, and over time, I've developed a love for using bold, metallic vibrant



hues to bring my geometric designs to life. I'm fascinated by how different hues interact and how they can completely transform a piece.

### **Could you describe how your love for nature influences the themes you explore in your art?**

Nature is my biggest inspiration, especially the landscapes, animals of the West Coast. The geometry of mountains, the organic flow of forests, and the play of light and shadow all influence my work. I aim to capture nature's essence through structured, polygonal compositions while maintaining an organic feel.

### **As a mother of four, how do you balance your family life with your creative practice?**

Finding time for art is a balancing act. My children inspire me, their curiosity and creativity fuel my own. When they were little, there were more challenges but my husband Rob has always stepped up to help and support me, giving me the time to be creative. They're now older and support my art, encourage me, while also making sure I care for myself. I've developed a structured



yet flexible routine that allows me to create while still being present for my family. Art is my passion, but also a grounding force in my busy life.

**Do you have a specific process or ritual when creating a new piece of art?**

My process often begins with an idea sparked by something I've seen in nature or something someone has mentioned. I start with sketches and photo references, experiment with color palettes, and then translate the concept onto wood using geometric forms. Wood is my canvas of choice over anything else, the grain of the wood helps translate the feel of nature.

**How do you approach the challenge of capturing the beauty of nature through your use of color and form?**

My geometric approach distills organic shapes into something structured yet fluid. Color is the bridge—it evokes the emotional depth and vibrancy of the world. The goal is not to replicate but to reinterpret nature's patterns and energy, creating something familiar yet uniquely abstract.



**What emotions or messages do you aim to evoke in your audience through your vibrant artworks?**

Growing up in the mountains and being surrounded by the beautiful west coast has made me want to evoke that feeling of calm and serenity while in nature. I want my work to feel alive and immersive, sparking joy, curiosity, and connection. By using color boldly and deliberately, I hope to inspire joy, wonder, and a deeper connection to the natural world.

**How has your understanding of color and its impact on your work evolved over time?**

Early on, I was drawn to bold colors instinctively, but over time, I've deepened my understanding of color theory. Over the years, I've become more intentional with my color choices, considering not just aesthetics but also psychological impact. I've refined my approach, experimenting with contrast, harmony, and saturation to create pieces that feel both balanced and alive.

## — Interview

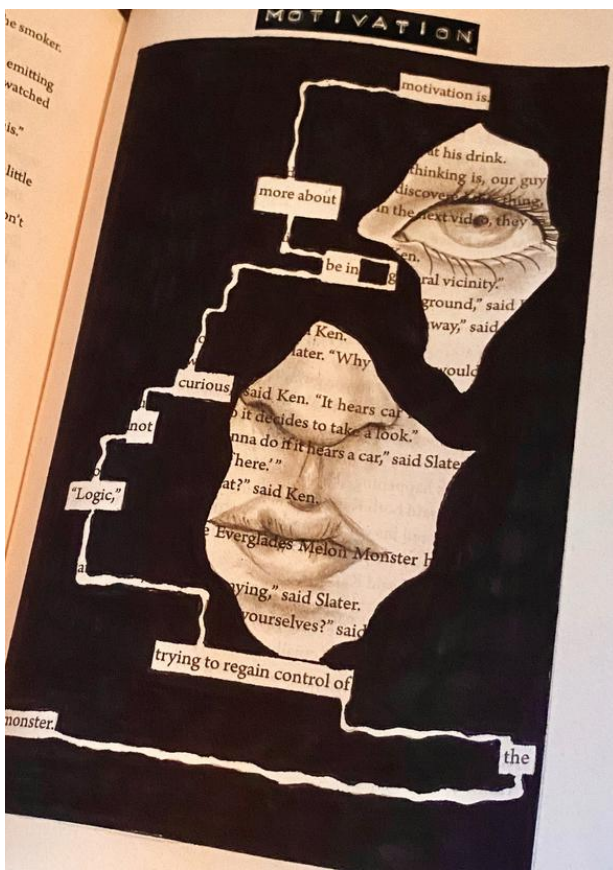
# Emily Kraemer

**Can you tell us about the journey that led you to create blackout poetry? What drew you to this particular medium?**

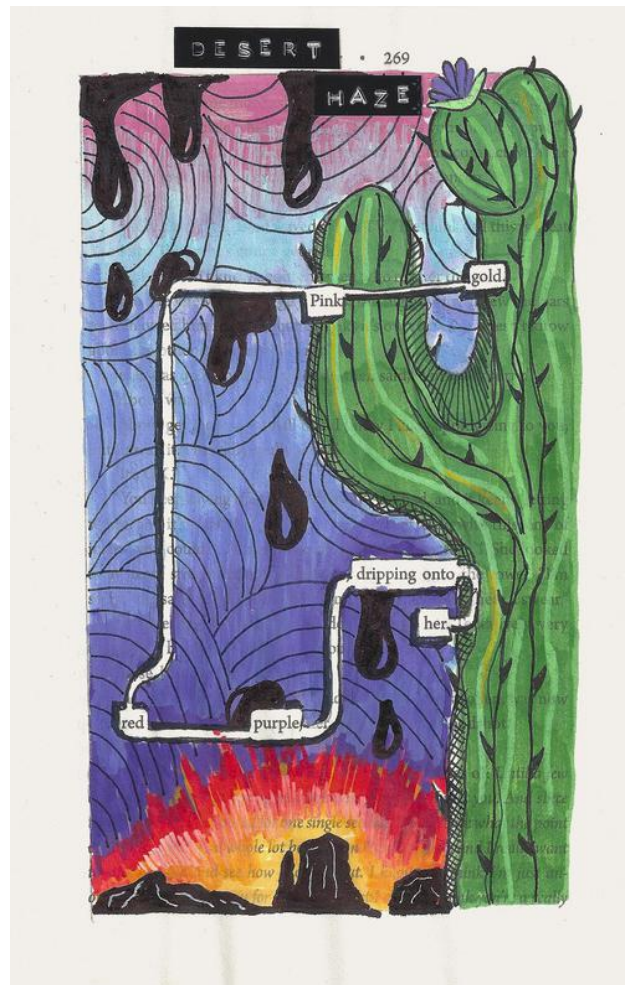
What really drew me to blackout poetry is the logical and creative nature of the medium. It feeds both sides of my brain, like combining a word search and a coloring book. I've used art as a key aspect of my mental health journey, and blackout poetry really stimulates a type of joy that you can only find through creating

**How do you approach selecting the text you work with? Are there specific themes or sources you prefer to explore?**

I use a wide range of works - mostly books - to find the text I work with, and I really let the pages speak to me. Often there are words and phrases that jump off of the page at me, and the flow state takes over. The themes almost always align to my experiences and my personal mental health journey. I aim to be an



Emily Kraemer | Motivation



Emily Kraemer | Desert Haze

advocate for mental health, and I try to reflect that in my work so people can have an open honest conversation about their own journeys.

**What is your process like when transforming a page of text into a piece of blackout poetry? Could you walk us through your creative routine?**

First and foremost in my creative routine is my headspace. My mindset at the time is what, I think, makes certain words speak to me. My brain is always searching for a way to express itself, and once I channel that headspace, the word search follows. Usually 2-3 key words or phrases really resonate with me, and I find a way to connect them to invoke true meaning in my poem. Once I have a solid and meaningful message, the creative side takes over. I often try to make the artistic aspect of the piece reflect the message - from bold and bombastic, to subtle and stirring.

**How do you balance the visual and textual elements of your work? How do you ensure both parts contribute to the overall message?**

Balancing the visual and textual elements can be challenging at times, because the visual element is



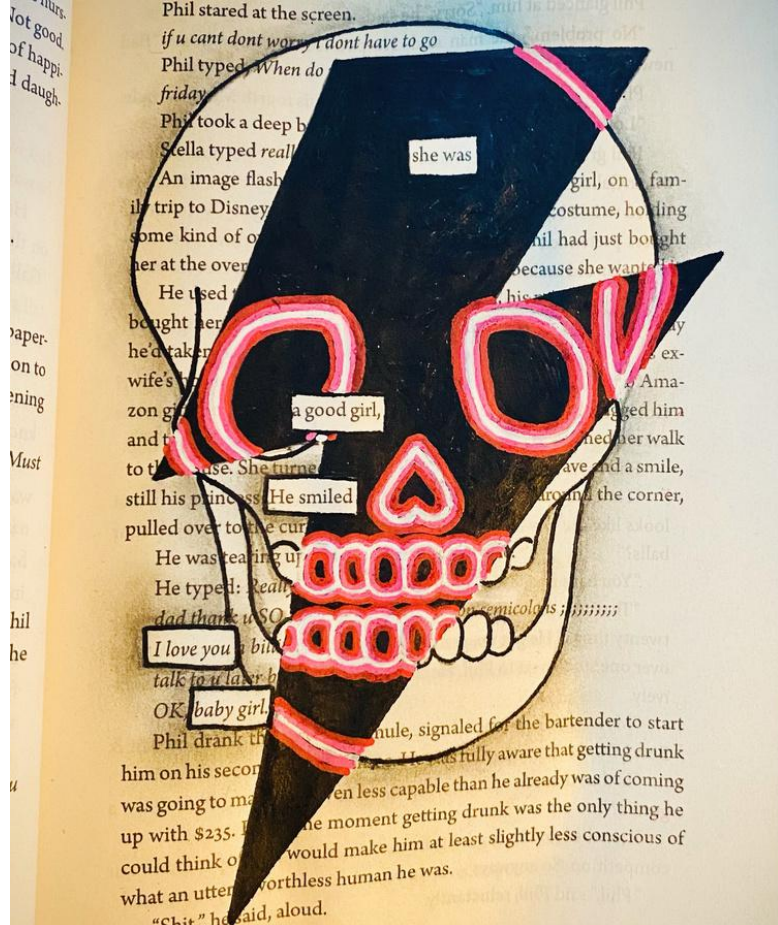
always what captures the attention first. I've found that visuals really draw people in, and it's the text that truly resonates with people. And often, people are curious about the text because of the dynamic "word mapping" on the page which I always try to showcase in every piece.

### How do you incorporate the concept of mental health and joy into your pieces? What role does this play in your artistic vision?

I always try to focus on mental health and the human experience in all of my pieces, trying to make universal - and at times controversial - issues a focal point. And in doing that I hope to inspire joy - the joy of being mutually understood, the joy of curiosity, the joy of seeing a new creation on an existing page. I want to share with people that mental health matters, and it's ok not to be ok, that you can be and are seen. And being seen can spark joy in others.

### Your business, eek.ink, promotes "mentally chill art." How do you define "mentally chill" in the context of your work?

I use the tagline "mentally chill" in my business as a way of re-framing the concept "mentally ill." I love play-on-words, and to be mentally chill in my mind is to accept who you are and your struggles, and to love all aspects of what makes you inherently "you." And

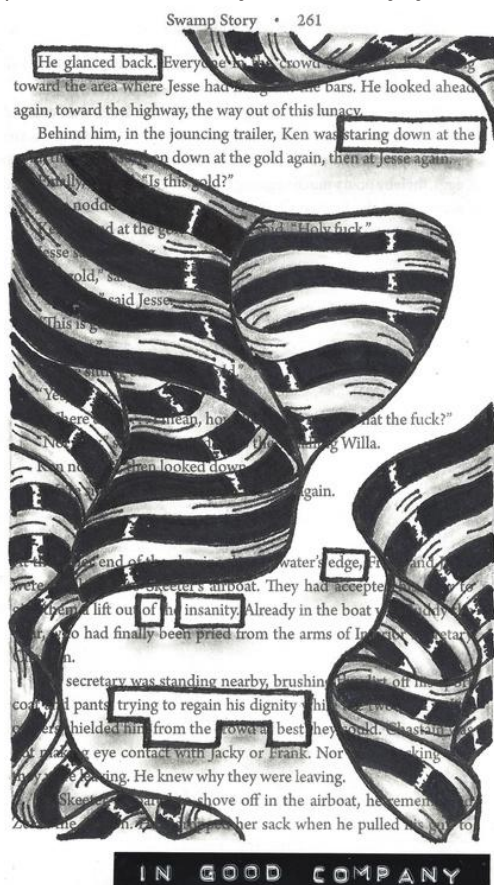


Emily Kraemer  
Good Girl

when you reach that acceptance and self-actualization you truly can become "mentally chill." That is a big reason why I try to put mental health at the forefront of all of my pieces, to tell people it's ok to be who you are - don't shy away.

### What kind of reaction do you hope to provoke in your audience when they view your blackout poetry pieces?

I really want to stir the soul in my pieces. I want to resonate with people. I want to show people that even if I don't know you, I can empathize with you. I want people to feel seen and heard when they view my pieces. I want to provide a mental safe space for deeper thoughts. I want people to know it's ok to struggle, and I want to encourage people to continue on their personal mental health journeys. Art is expression, and I want to express a loving kindness to anyone who views my work.



Emily Kraemer | In Good Company

## — Interview

# Kayci Kerkow

**Your work blends realism with abstraction in a unique way. How do you find the balance between these two styles in your paintings?**

I think that there is something so beautiful about pulling order from chaos, finding meaning in the ambiguous. For me abstraction is pure expression and is completely emotively driven. Even though it is less representational, it tells its own story. I find that truly inspiring. I love the juxtaposition of abstract and realism as I feel they are two halves to a whole in a sense, each amplifying the best parts of the other. It calls us to explore that beauty comes in all forms. The expressiveness and texture of abstraction creates a beautiful contrast against the softness of the subject's skin, and conversely the more representational aspects of a piece make the abstract that much more interesting. The balance



Kayci Kerkow | And She Was Free | 2024

between the two is very intuitive but is most successful when the subject almost feels like it is emerging, the contrast of textures and styles each highlight the beauty in the other.

**Can you share more about your creative process, especially the way you use mixed media in your works?**

My creative process, much like my personality is a blend of chaotic and deeply considered. It has been the therapy for letting go of perfectionism and embracing the beauty in all things, especially those left to chance. Every artwork begins with an expressive under layer. Mixed media is incredible for this, as it lends itself to so many different textures and effects. There is so much variety in mark making, and the process of layering unpredictable materials like acrylic ink and spray paint make impossible to get too attached to your own plans for how the piece should look. There's something truly freeing about working with your supplies and just exploring, like a child with a box of crayons. My underpainting layers often consist of collage, moulding paste, inks, spray paint, acrylic, various markers, and whatever new supplies I'm fortunate enough to play with. This part of the process is about genuine expression. From there



Kayci Kerkow | When She Smiles | 2024



I carve out my subjects in gorgeous oil paint, pulling from the abstraction. Watching this process of emergence is such a beautiful experience, and always reminds me that there is beauty in all things, and that we can always find meaning in the chaos.

**Your art seems to focus a lot on female portraiture. What is it about the female form that inspires you the most?**

That's such an excellent question. I have always found myself drawn to drawing and painting women, particularly portraiture. I think the female form has always been synonymous with beauty, but for me the most beautiful aspect of any woman is her heart, her expression. I find myself captivated by exactly how much intention the female face can carry, the storytelling in a single captured moment. We are many things. And whether caught in a moment of surrender, pure joy or determination, seeing the vast spectrum of human experience is breathtaking.

**How do you use symbolism in your work, especially with animals and flora, to convey deeper emotional messages?**

Symbolism is and has always been a global language. I find it beautiful that people from all

walks of life with differing experiences and upbringings can look upon a symbol and feel a united understanding. That's a deeply beautiful concept. Art is different things to different people, that's what makes it so incredibly unique, and I love the thought that a single image can resonate so heavily with so many. I want my artwork to resonate with people on their own journeys, and so it is important to me in the creative process that I am not painting something so specific that it alienates another person's experience. I aim to paint the emotion behind these experiences, the feelings that unify us. Using symbolism is such a beautiful avenue of exploring this. Be it colour, animal, botanical, I love to incorporate and juxtapose these symbols with my portraiture to further enhance the meaning of a piece. Whether the fierceness in a tiger's eyes, or the freedom of a bird in flight, I find that bringing these elements into an artwork help the deeper emotional message resonate more effectively.

**You describe your work as a form of celebration of imperfect things. How do you think this message resonates with the world today, where perfection is often idolized?**

This is a subject very near and dear to my heart. We live in a world that forces beauty and perfection on us like shackles at our wrists, trapping us in a tireless pursuit of the unattainable. Never feeling enough. Never feeling worthy. We have all felt that weight, felt the criticism from both the outside world and from our own internal monologue. Life is too short and far too precious to live chained to an ideal that stops us from flourishing and thriving. The most precious things we can make in life are mistakes, there is nothing to be learned in perfection. In my work, I want to explore the idea that beauty and perfection are not synonymous. I want to uplift and encourage my collectors to find and celebrate beauty for what it truly is, living simply, loving deeply, facing the sunshine, and embracing the blessing that is the joy in every day. I want them to feel seen, feel heard and know that they are enough exactly as they are. My artistic journey has taught me to celebrate the small wins and have pride in every triumph, to make a mess and unleash



Kayci Kerkow | Come What May | 2024

expression, to just be. I am not perfect, my work is not perfect, not even close, but it doesn't have to be, because that's where the beauty truly lies. To anybody who reads this, you are enough exactly as you are, and in whatever state you woke up today, you are beautiful.

**Your statement mentions the concept of “resting space” in your work. Can you elaborate on what that means to you and how you incorporate it into your pieces?**

We live in a fast-paced world that values productivity and engagement, often leaving us so overstimulated by all that is on offer to us, that it's difficult to disengage. We see, but don't appreciate, hear but don't listen, do but don't experience. I feel so strongly that Art is the remedy to this, a place where our eyes and hearts can rest, absorb, recharge. If you've ever seen a painting, or sculpture or artwork in any form that deeply resonated with you, you will understand the peace that it can bring. Resting space means different things to different people, because each of us are different and see the world through a different lens. Some artists use fields of colour, neutral tone, or many other elements to create space in a piece for the eye to rest and ensure balance. I have experimented with many of them, but as I have progressed on my journey, I find that it is the faces in my artwork that serve this purpose most effectively. The abstraction in my work contrasts with the delicacy of skin, and the expression of the faces

of my subjects call on the eye to rest and recharge. It is my hope that we can see a part of ourselves, of our journey and take a moment to connect and disengage from the world around us. A moment to rest, recharge and renew.

**How does your experience as a mother, poet, and artist influence your approach to creating art?**

I believe whole heartedly that we are all, each and everyone of us born creative, we are all artists in our own right. Artistry is achieved with more than tools and hands, and art is more than pigment and canvas. It's the relationships we have nurtured, the dreams we have birthed, the lives we have built. My husband claims to not have a creative bone in his body, but he is a problem solver, he creates solutions that others can't. Whether it's baking, painting, writing, coding, business solutions, elf on a shelf, we are always creating, bringing new things into the world. Creativity is pure expression! It's the part of us that connects with both ourselves and the world around us, uniting what's in our hearts and in our lives. I have spent my life exploring as many avenues of creation as possible. Every phase of my life has lent itself to an entire new scope of creativity. From a 17 year old girl publishing her first book, to a mother learning how to bake outlandish birthday cakes because her son was obsessed with 'Jake and the Neverland Pirates'. (If you know, you know). Becoming a mother to two little men was, as it always is, life changing. Children are the most creative of us all. From Lego, they build empires, with a crayon they create worlds, with a sharpie on my wall they create grey hairs. There is no self-imposed boundaries upon them that hinders their creative spirit, they create purely for the love of it. For me, creating art is about so much more than just applying materials to my surface, and every experience along the way has really cemented the firm belief in me that creation begins the moment an idea is sparked. As a recovering perfectionist, I am so unendingly grateful to these experiences that have given me perspective on what creativity truly means and given me the freedom to truly give myself over to that expression and the love of the process.



Kayci Kerkow | Sweet Divinity | 2024





Kayci Kerkow | Treasured Memories | 2024



# — Interview

## Armani Eloise

**You have a background in Mathematics, which is quite different from the Arts.**

**What is the relationship between Mathematics and Art for you?**

Mathematics and Art can both embody precision, creativity, and abstraction. They provide a space for the evolving exploration of forms and components, creating new perspectives and expressions. Both use tools and techniques that allow ideas to flow freely and connections to emerge, uncovering insight and beauty.

Throughout my studies, I often visualised elements of complex theories which helped me to develop abstract reasoning. Mathematical concepts inspired shapes, lines, colours, and forms to convey movement and balance.

I integrate structure with visualisation across my art work, using precision, intuition and spontaneity. By merging intention with freedom, the process weaves together connections and layers to form a whole, much like equations that reveal relationships and patterns, unfolding a story as they are solved. I see Mathematics and Art as intertwined languages of discovery, both offering a way to describe our world, expressing its simplicity, complexity and chaos in many unique, yet meaningful ways.

**As a self-taught artist, what insights or techniques did you gain from working with different mediums?**

I have worked with mediums such as polymer clay, wax, textiles, and glass. Each offers interesting challenges, insights, and opportunities to learn new techniques.

Through polymer clay, I have learned to observe and capture the intricacies of various objects. This versatile medium has allowed me to refine my attention to detail, experiment, and push the boundaries of what I can create. I enjoy studying and replicating shapes, angles, and colours—such as the masonry of a chimney or the subtle variations on an apple's surface. Sculpting has taught me techniques in gradient blending, texturing, tool usage, and precision in proportionality and symmetry.



Working with glass has deepened my understanding of some technical aspects in art, such as cutting, soldering, framing, and fusing. This has also sparked a curiosity to learn techniques like glassblowing, which I would like to pursue in the future.

**Your abstract paintings explore themes rooted in nature and cosmic phenomena. Could you elaborate on how you convey these themes in your work?**

I convey these themes by connecting observations of nature with the emotional resonance of colour. In paintings like *Tropic Storm* and *Summer Meadow*, I aimed to capture the dynamic energy and sensory experiences of nature, such as seasons and shifting atmospheres. I portray rhythm and movement through textures, gradients, fluid forms, and layered compositions.

To express the awe and ethereal mystery of the universe, I use cosmic patterns, luminous tones and varying opacities. These themes often intersect with nature and personal experiences. For example, *Celestial Vines* merges the organic with the ethereal, while *Astral Projection* represents a journey of spiritual discovery.

**The piece 'Darkness and the Light' has a poetic description. Do you often write to accompany your art? How does writing help you express the ideas behind your visual work?**

I often write short stories and poems, which sometimes accompany my artwork.

Writing allows me to explore the relationship between observation, experience, and emotion. It is a space



where abstraction connects with personal reflections and perspectives.

I use writing a tool to visualise ideas, extend meaning beyond the canvas, and open new pathways for interpretation.

**Darkness and the Light seems to reflect a journey through different emotions and states of being. How did you approach capturing these intangible experiences visually?**

Darkness and the Light explores the evolution of inner emotional landscapes in response to changing states of life.

I associated Light with positive emotions such as joy, optimism, clarity, and love.

Whilst Darkness represents negative emotions such as sadness, despair, and distress. This is expressed through the use of dark and light shades of colour, with varying intensities to capture a spectrum of emotions spanning the path between hardship to joy. Slivers of lighter shades are used to enter the darkness, symbolising hope — whether it's the feeling of looking forward to something, or the comforting presence of a friend. These moments can lift us from darkness, even if only temporarily, or transport us to a different emotional state that alters our perception and experience of the situation.

The transition between colours and shapes represents the way events in life and their emotional impacts can change, flow and evolve. Darker shapes and areas are used to symbolise difficult experiences and how they can sometimes feel like a piercing sensation, infiltrating into other areas of life.

Whether positive or negative, sudden changes are represented by bold boundaries, whereas the more subtle changes use blurred transitions between shapes and colours. The direction and position of shapes were used to reflect how states in life can sometimes flow, while at other times, they may feel fragmented and disjointed.

Darkness and the Light invites viewers to explore their own emotional landscapes—a space to reflect on the sensations and memories that forms and colours may evoke.

It offers a moment to consider how they see the balance between light and dark in their own lives, and how these contrasting forces shape their experiences and emotions.

**Colour seems to play a central role in your art. What inspires your approach to using colour, and how do you decide how to use it in your work?**

I feel colours, and use them to express myself in many areas of life.

There is a connection between the visual and

emotional sensations that colours bring, and I often rely on intuition to guide their use.

By blending colour theory with visual instinct, I create palettes that align with a theme or unfold spontaneously.

I have found Art as a way to project the experience of colour in life, transforming perception and emotion into creation.



Armani Eloise | Astral Projection



Armani Eloise | Darkness and the Light

**You've explored various mediums, from Clay to Data art. What draws you to discover and work with different mediums?**

Exploring different mediums allows me to engage with intuition and technique in new ways. Each medium offers an opportunity to discover its unique properties and experiment with how various tools and techniques can be applied and combined, opening up an expansive space for creativity.

I enjoy the process of learning, experimenting, and refining. Watching an idea, whether familiar or entirely new, take shape and evolve into a finished piece brings a deep sense of fulfillment. Along the way, unexpected results often spark new ideas, branching out into future creations.

There's a thrill in creating art through new mediums. I experienced this whilst using Tableau, a data visualisation tool designed for analytical dashboards. I found that it can also be a medium for spontaneous creation. This gave space to a new type of canvas, where calculations, charts and software features came together as a palette, transforming ordinary data into Data Art.



**Amy Kaluzhny** (b. Newton, Massachusetts) is a London-based artist currently pursuing her Master's in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Arts (UAL).

### *Artist Statement*

Kaluzhny's practice is deeply influenced by musical theater, dance, and music, which she channels into painting as a form of visual performance. She sees each canvas as a stage—both metaphorically and physically—where movement unfolds, blurring the boundaries between static imagery and live action. Her work is further shaped by cultural theory, particularly lipstick feminism, advocating for spaces where individuality, physical autonomy, and self-expression can coexist without exploitation. Kaluzhny uses dance to bring her ideas forward, emphasizing that watching dance is not merely an act of passive observation but rather a powerful and dynamic engagement that can impact our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Performance takes on a contemporary form within her work, taking place on a technological platform. Her work often blurs the lines between technology and live action, demonstrating that performance does not require a fixed moment in time. By weaving these influences into her artistic process, Kaluzhny explores the intersection of empowerment, movement, and emotional well-being.

Amy Kaluzhny | Beyond the Woods | 2024









## — Interview

# Vlad Gutarev and Ivan Voronin

**Your work emphasizes a deep connection between materials like wood and clay. Can you explain how you perceive these materials and what draws you to them in your artistic practice?**

Working with wood has fascinated me for a long time. I tried working with stone and metal, but only with wood did the process bring me true joy. It's the scent, the softness of the material, and the subsequent stages of working with wood (burning, sanding, impregnation) that I find most enjoyable. Ivan feels the same way about clay. A lot of experimentation with materials and techniques has led us to these materials, with which each of us interacts most comfortably. Clay and wood are some of the oldest and most accessible materials for creativity, construction, and daily life. These materials are nature in its purest form! When you touch them, you feel that incredible energy that ignites the fire of creativity in our souls.



**Your sculptures seem to resonate with the elements of fire and water. How do these natural forces influence your creative process and the outcome of your work?**

I am inspired by fire and its uncompromising nature. It can burn everything in its path, it is uncontrollable. Taming it has become creativity for us. Fire becomes a co-author. Water is used to control the fire, preventing it from destroying everything. Fire and water are like brushes to us. The unique patterns of wood, fire, and water create an effect that is impossible to replicate.

**The "ROD" collection reflects your approach to art. Could you tell us more about the inspiration behind this specific collection?**

We are a family-oriented people, and we deeply love and appreciate our families. They nourish us with energy for new creations, support, and inspire us. "ROD" is not just about family, but also about animals and trees. We are all part of one big organism, and we must treat the world around us as we do our family, with care and love. This collection aims to remind everyone of the basics—there is nothing foreign, everything that happens around us, in one way or another, affects us, and only by relating to the world as if it were our family can we achieve the harmony that many seek.

**As a designer and sculptor, how do you balance functionality and artistic expression in your works?**

It was 15 years of design that led me to the thought of pure creativity, because as an artist (designer), you can't create pure art—it will be a collaboration with the client,



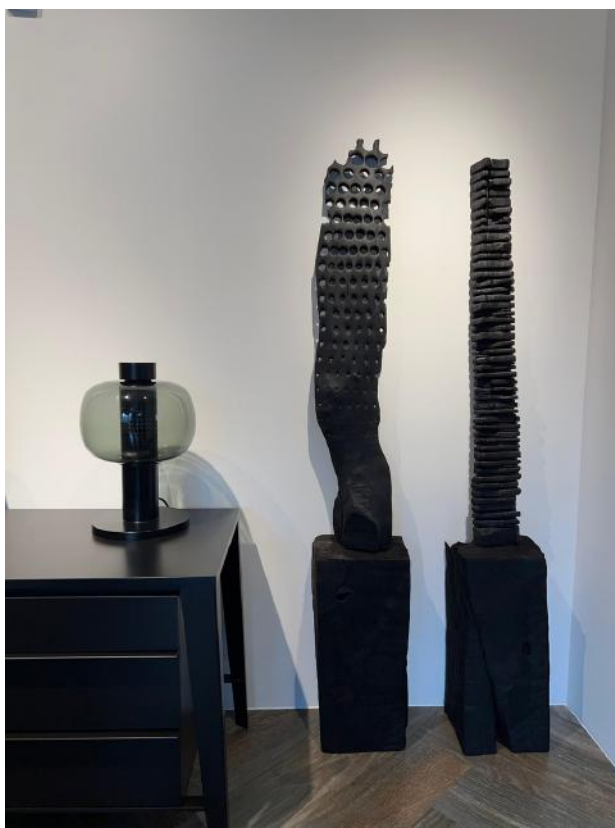


limited by budget, walls, and other factors that need to be adjusted to. Design is more about functionality and comfort than about ideas, while I, as an artist, have always wanted to express pure thoughts, without adjustments. It's also important to create an art object that is pleasing to the eye, because the world of contemporary art has become overly simplified, and I want to add a bit of complexity, especially in the visual aspect. When you look at a piece and understand how complex and labor-intensive it is, it's not just a rush job, but a piece of work where the artist has put their soul. We began working together with Ivan, combining his extensive experience in ceramics and my work with wood.

**You mentioned that your sculptures reflect a dialogue between humans and nature. How do you approach this conversation through the physical medium of clay and wood?**

It is a creative dialogue. When we start working on an object, we have no idea what the result will be. There's an image or a project in our minds, but the fire in the firing process starts to draw its own patterns, consuming the material where needed, not reaching areas we want—it lives its own life. Therefore, during the creation process, the sculpture can go through several stages! The process may last for years. The wood dries, cracks appear in unexpected places, and so on. After going through such a complex process, the sculpture acquires its own character, becoming unique. The same happens with clay in a wood-fired kiln, which always gives different results in color, texture, and may even burn or change shape. This is our dialogue. We listen to the material, and it, in co-authorship with us, gives an amazing result. Always different. It's wonderful!

**How does the element of fire, through the process of wood firing, impact the final look and feel of your pieces?**



Firing is one of the final stages of working on a piece and the most interesting. The workpiece acquires individuality, and fire leaves its unique mark. It also removes the unnecessary, smooths the wood, and gives it that special uniqueness, the natural abstractness that can't be deliberately created. Think back to the feeling of sitting around a campfire from your childhood. That incredibly warm feeling! These are the feelings we experience when creating our works. We want to capture that warmth inside our creations.

**How do you decide on the form and composition of each sculpture? Is there a specific ritual or process you follow during creation?**

Through our communication on various topics, ideas come to us, and we begin to develop them. Often, nature sets the idea. We find an interesting piece of driftwood (which we can carry out of the forest by hand), and its shape already sets the composition for the future piece. This is the foundation. Then we add our own touches, and fire adds its own. After that, we assess it, and either bring it to perfection (sanding, staining, impregnation) or leave it as a workpiece for years until the idea strikes. We only show people what we are 100% satisfied with.

Fire is always dangerous. This is what we want to convey. Often, we are powerless against the elements, but we, humans, possess intellect, and we must realize the scale of the ongoing catastrophes and participate in forest restoration.

This is what we want to convey to society. Planting a tree costs nothing for a person, but it is priceless for nature. And as a consequence, for us. Caring for nature is like caring for ourselves, for our future, and for our children. We are children of nature, and in cities, we have begun to forget about it. But today, fire itself has come to the cities, showing its uncompromising nature, perhaps to remind us who we are.



**Mahshid Gorjian** is a multidisciplinary artist and Ph.D. student in Geography, Planning, and Design at the University of Colorado Denver. With a background in Fine Arts and Creative Technologies, she explores the intersection of art, culture, and environmental studies. Her work focuses on digital painting, R programming language, GIS, and urban design, reflecting themes of tradition, identity, and resilience. Through her art, Gorjian aims to bridge past and present, using digital tools to document and celebrate cultural heritage.



Mahshid Gorjian | Through the Broken Frame







# Nephertary

**Can you tell us about your early experiences with art and how your mother's influence shaped your artistic journey?**

Art has always been a part of my life. Growing up, my mother was an art dealer, so I was surrounded by vibrant Haitian paintings, sculptures, and artists themselves. Watching her curate and share art sparked something in me. As a child, I would spend hours sketching and experimenting, but it wasn't until later, during Haiti's peyi lòk periods, that I truly reconnected with painting. Being confined at home pushed me to channel my emotions and thoughts into art, and that passion has only grown stronger.

**How has the socio-political climate in Haiti influenced your creative process and the**



Nephertary | Gran Bwa | 2024



Nephertary | Echo of Unity | 2024

**themes in your work?**

Haiti's socio-political challenges deeply shape my work. The resilience and spirit of the Haitian people inspire me daily, even amidst struggles. My paintings often reflect the collective emotions of hope, despair, and endurance that I see around me. Art becomes my way of processing these experiences and sharing our stories with the world. It's also a way to reclaim the beauty and strength of Haitian culture despite the chaos.

**Your art incorporates Haitian Vodou symbolism. What role does spirituality play in your creative expression?**

Spirituality is at the heart of my work. Haitian Vodou is not just a religion—it's a connection to our history, identity, and ancestors. When I paint lwa like Ezili Freda or Gran Bwa, I'm not just portraying spirits; I'm exploring themes of love, wisdom, and humanity's connection to nature. For me, spirituality offers a lens to reflect on universal human experiences and emotions.

**What does resilience mean to you, and how do you convey it through your art?**

Resilience is about finding strength in vulnerability and beauty in adversity. For me, it's the ability to create and express even when life feels uncertain or overwhelming. I convey



resilience in my art by blending themes of struggle with hope—whether it's through bold colors, layered textures, or symbols that speak to endurance and renewal.

**Could you share the story behind one of your favorite pieces in this series?**

One of my favorite pieces is "Dantò"—it's inspired by Ezili Dantò, a lwa symbolizing unconditional love, protection, and healing. The piece radiates warmth and safety, much like another's embrace. It was deeply personal to create because it made me reflect on the universal need for comfort and the power of love to heal. Every stroke in that painting felt like a tribute to resilience and nurturing energy.

**How do you balance traditional Haitian cultural elements with modern artistic aesthetics in your work?**

It's about honoring tradition while allowing myself to innovate. Haitian culture is rich with vibrant stories and symbols, and I use those as the foundation. At the same time, I experiment with modern techniques, abstract forms, and contemporary palettes to ensure my work feels fresh and personal. It's a dance between staying rooted in my heritage and allowing my individuality to shine.



Nephertary | Peyi Lòk | 2024

**What emotions or messages do you hope viewers experience when engaging with your art?**

I want viewers to connect on a deeply personal level. My goal isn't necessarily for them to like my work but to feel something—whether it's introspection, hope, or even discomfort. Art should provoke thought and emotion. If someone leaves my work feeling more connected to themselves or to the themes I explore, then I've done my job.



Nephertary | Ezili Dantò | 2024



Nephertary | Ezili Freda | 2024

**Ordinary Art Way** is young in work with little more age. 40+. All art is inspired from People, feelings, just from everything. Never know-how if the end the Art will be agree with first ideas. 'Cos the head work independly. OAW is unknowm Artist - but enough. So please, give any feedback about what U see in this Art.









# — Interview

## Jack Hoyer

**Can you tell us more about how your upbringing in the Hudson Valley has influenced your artistic vision and the themes in your work?**

I had the benefit of growing up between rural forests and the urban cityscape. Living in this contrast, I'm between organic landscapes all the while continuously exposed to one of the most diverse metropolitan places on earth. The soft versus the harsh. The natural juxtaposed with the synthetic. I think most of my work reflects this extreme. Most of my work attempts to honor and comment on these extremes. I meditate on how we as people coexist with both nature and technology. So I'd say that while growing up, these two opposing powers enlightened my life experience, and in turn, characterizes my artwork.

**Your art blends organic and inorganic elements. How do you approach the fusion of these two worlds in your compositions?**

Every piece demands a unique treatment. Some ideas manifest as purely photo-based while others are exclusively digital art. Most of my



Jack Hoyer | Nu Leaf II | 2023



work incorporates a blending of both, which often creates an air of surrealism and abstraction. I'll first source photographic material and then apply editing software to craft a desired result. Sometimes I'll be inspired by an experience in my day-to-day life. I'll take photos serendipitously and then readily edit them to my needs. Other times I'll sift through my archive of sourced material and be inspired. I'll pull something from my portfolio, perhaps made years ago, and attempt to reinvent it. For the most part, I take specific parts of many different photos and reassemble them within a new digital project. By doing so, I create that blend of organic and inorganic elements.

**How do you use color, hue, and light in your works to create a sense of euphoria and surrealism?**

When light and hue are purposefully distorted in my pieces, they tend to abstract very concrete sourced photo materials. In return, I'm able to visually portray phenomena that would not exist in nature. The manipulation of coloring and exposure brings something from Earth into a fabricated reality.



By taking familiar subjects and rendering them unfamiliar, I attempt to create something surrealist and evocative. The mixture of real and synthetic in conjunction with my digital editing style creates this. The resulting vision is inherently imaginative. When I'm imaginative, the feeling of euphoria comes. I hope that audiences can sense the same imagination and euphoria in my art as I sense it.

**Your background in Interactive Digital Media seems to play a significant role in your creative process. Could you elaborate on how these technical skills enhance your art?**

I've always engaged with visual media. Early on, I explored more tactile arts like drawing and painting. When entering my teens, I was afforded my first smartphone. They were just becoming popular during that time. The smartphone introduced me to digital photography skills that have come to define my image-making. Later, I was introduced to other digital art forms, namely motion capture. I was involved with the production of short films during the mid-2010s which propelled me in the direction of general

media-based work.

Regarding my work today, I had initially learned digital editing tools through happenstance coursework. While studying for my degree, I was able to attend an entry-level computer graphics class. Once I was acquainted with the appropriate technology in college, I intended to bring forth my prior knowledge of visual art and film into the realm of digital imaging. Intentional or not, my background with other art mediums has informed my current output. And my university experience became a significant catalyst for my creative process. When I was exposed to digital design tools in an academic setting, I was able to develop a niche visual style of my own. I had gained the technical power of taking something ordinary and transforming it into the enigmatic. I'm able to capture the earth around us and shape it into a different world. I suppose all the technical ins and outs have afforded world-building in ways I wouldn't have otherwise known how.

**Your work often involves abstracting traditional photography through digital design. What are the challenges you face when transforming a realistic image into something more surreal?**

Honestly, there are instances where I purposefully make my process more difficult. As counterintuitive as it may seem, I find that self-imposed boundaries steer me toward more creative approaches to image-making. I ask 'myself, how can I best achieve a certain look while adhering to pre-established intentional confines? In other words, sometimes making challenges for myself creates the best-unexpected version of my artistic visions. Otherwise, another significant challenge is ensuring the blend of traditional photography and digital design is cohesive. During the process, pieces can begin to appear fragmented with a mixture of opposing photo materials. The act of abstraction within my work promotes visual cohesion, though it can be difficult to distinguish the best means of abstraction to ensure that cohesion. The digital editing process is both challenging and freeing.

**How do you view the relationship between**



Jack Hoyer | Dusk Simulation | 2024

**nature and technology in your work, and what message do you hope to convey through that juxtaposition?**

The relationship is extreme, especially in my work. I'd like to think I'll explore all aspects of this relationship through art. Over the last few years I've distinctly developed two aesthetics that investigate this relationship through two different lenses.

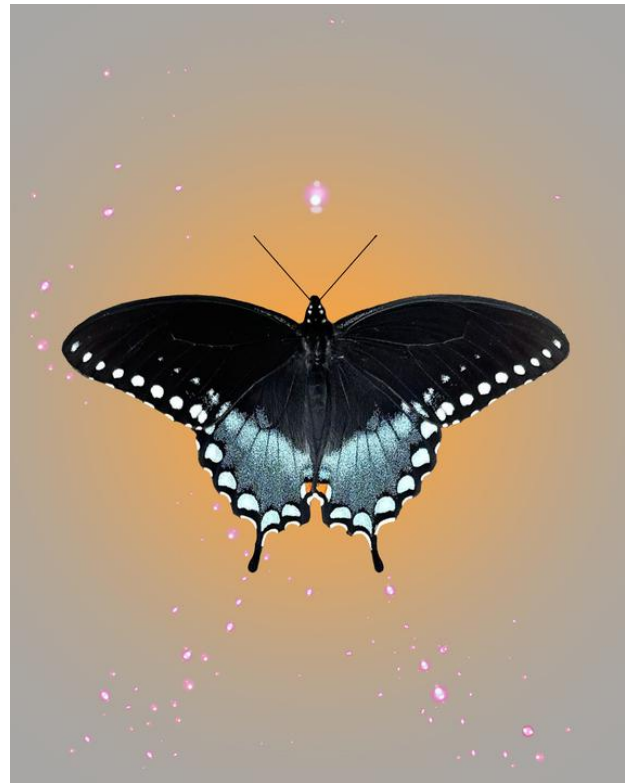
For the first, I identify the complex relationship between the earth and humankind with a darker sensibility. The pieces come from a rather nihilistic stance. They are stylistically much more brutalist than others from my portfolio, described as cyberpunk by industry professionals. There is an emphasis on negative space as well as muted coloring and color inversion. And they encompass the theme of technology before nature.

The succeeding variety investigates a much more optimistic, almost utopian view of the same relationship. These works are high-impact and tightly composed. They are reminiscent of millennium-era computer graphics, which reflected society in flux at the time, as it is today. I wanted to rebrand this aesthetic and contextualize it within the homo-techno relationship. For these works, nature is before technology. The images featured here embody this vantage point.

So it seems the message of my work is a question. Were we, are we, and will we be a society that chooses technology before nature or nature before technology?

**Having exhibited internationally in cities like Tokyo, London, and Barcelona, how does the reception of your work differ across cultures?**

It's been fascinating to see which works resonate with people of different cultures and regions. Collaborating with art groups has informed my awareness of international artistic and cultural perspectives. Gallery partnerships have also been informative of how my art and other cultures mesh. Galleries will choose art that appeals to the mission of their enterprise and



Jack Hoye | Cyber Spicebush Swallowtail | 2024

appeals to their audience as well.

For example, I'm not sure if it's because my high-impact images lend themselves to styles established in anime, manga, or general Asian modern art, though my audiences in Japan and Korea have taken to my digital-leaning work, much more so than audiences from other areas. The grand majority of my art shown here came from my brighter and more whimsical pieces. On the other end of the spectrum, many more of my European audiences have praised my more traditional photo-based works. Maybe because the discipline of photography and camera originate from Europe? I have the sense that there is a deeper appreciation for photography in areas I've exhibited like the United Kingdom. Visual styles aside, I find it intriguing when certain cultures have varying relationships with art. Based on my experience, I find that art in general is under-appreciated in my home country, the United States. And consequently, I believe that the art industry is generally much more competitive in North America. I've found much more passion towards my work, and artistic passion in general, across Europe and Asia. And the majority of the opportunities I've had manifested themselves in these areas.





**Elisabetta Fatichenti** is an Italian visual artist from Tuscany, who spent a significant amount of time abroad before returning to Italy with a renewed perspective shaped by diverse cultures. Now based in a different region of Italy, her work reflects both her love for multiculturalism and her deep empathy for human nature. Driven by a passion for human rights and an appreciation for the complexity of people, Elisabetta is fascinated by the ways in which humanity reveals itself, whether through moments of poetic beauty or ironic exaggeration. With a mix of nostalgia and melancholy, Elisabetta finds inspiration in the past and in the beauty of everyday life, while also embracing the joy of laughter and spontaneity. She enjoys capturing fleeting moments through quick sketches and portraits, or exploring exaggerated features in her caricatures to add a touch of humor. While she mostly works with watercolors, colored pencils, and ink, Elisabetta is always experimenting with new mediums, allowing her creativity to flow without boundaries. Primarily self-taught, she continuously hones her skills through online courses, workshops, and in-person training. This dedication has led to opportunities like illustrating the poster for a documentary film entitled "Ricordi di Pietra", exhibiting one of her portraits at Paris College of Art as part of a collaborative project and winning first prize in a recent local art competition. Currently, Elisabetta is exploring editorial illustration and developing other personal projects, aiming to combine her background in communication studies with her love for drawing to create compelling visual narratives. Through her work, she seeks to evoke an emotional response and create a connection, offering glimpses into alternate worlds that inspire reflection and invite a deeper exploration of the human experience.

#### Artist Statement

I am an artist who particularly enjoys capturing the essence of people through quick sketches, portraits, blind drawings and sort of caricatures. My work evolves and adapts to the unique needs of each piece, allowing me to explore different artistic expressions, creating diverse artworks that reflect the particular mood or feeling I'm aiming to convey. My sources of inspiration come from direct observation, personal memories, photographs or my imagination. In drawing people, I am fascinated by the details that define a person – their features but also their character, emotions, light and energy – and I aim to bring them into my works through essential strokes and distorted lines. My creative process is intuitive and spontaneous. I like to sketch quickly and loosely, letting lines and shapes evolve naturally and unpredictably. My main tools are watercolors, colored pencils and ink, although I like to experiment with any material that works for me, often depending on the theme, subject or desired effect on each work. My work celebrates individuality and expression, inviting the viewer to see the familiar in a new light.



Elisabetta Fatichenti | Felicità | 2022







## Nicholas Stirling

As an alumni of the Ontario College of Art and Design, Nicholas Stirling has enjoyed a career in the visual and musical arts. With study and graduate focus in Fine Arts and Advertising Design, Nicholas has harnessed this artistic experience into his past and current works. Having studied with such Canadian painting figures as Graham Coughtry, Gordon Rayner, John Labonte-Smith and Gustav Weisman, there is a deep and renewed dedication to expanding his artistic voice through concentrated image-making. Since 2007 Nicholas has painted on wood and canvas panels using oils, resins and salts to create imagery featuring expansive landscapes. In addition to over 45 painting sales and commissions, Nicholas has participation in several groups shows and was selected into: 2023 'Call Of The Wild', San Fernando California, online Juried Exhibition 2019 Painting purchased at the Art Gallery of Mississauga Art, Toronto 2018 Visual Arts Mississauga 41st Juried Art Show, 2016 Finalist in The Artist's Magazine (US) Juried All Media Competition 2017 Affordable Art Fair, New York City (5 paintings purchased) The Artist's Magazine (US) featured Artist Of The Month (March) 2013 Victor Mitic Award for painting

### *Artist Statement*

My current paintings are motivated through my arts facilitation work in the mental health sector. I am impacted by the many interactions and experiences of patients in recovery from addiction and trauma. Using human and animal icons, I aim to create an immediate recognition of form set amidst a dense landscape. I see the human and animals figures as metaphors to a complex world of mental crisis recovery, working through a journey to wellness and transition to a new mentality of healthy balance. I want to involve and excite an audience with the frequencies of colour and invitation to involve one's own story within these images. While my surfaces include canvas, linen and copper, I have a preference for wood panel due to its withstanding of surface markings and scratch distressing with knives and scorpers. Also drawing on an early apprenticeship in silversmithing, I may elaborate a painting by physical firing and heat distortion of pigments and charring of the wood surface. This gives me a heightened beauty and tension in the image theme. Man in Nature would be a fitting summary to my theme, and its this correlation that brings me to portray a struggle in survival, recovery to joy, and place in the world.



Nicholas Stirling | Prefix | 2021





# Azarakhsh Shafieikadkani

**Your work focuses on the concept of the fragmented gaze, drawing from Laura Mulvey's theories. Could you elaborate on how you interpret and utilize this idea in your photographs?**

Laura Mulvey's theory of the fragmented gaze, introduced in her groundbreaking essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, explores how visual culture, particularly cinema fragmentizes and objectifies female bodies. She argues that women are often reduced to isolated, eroticized parts (such as lips, legs, or curves), emphasizing their status as objects for male pleasure rather than whole, autonomous beings. This fragmentation not only diminishes agency but also perpetuates a patriarchal dynamic in which the male gaze dominates the visual narrative.

In my photographic work, I reinterpret and subvert Mulvey's concept of fragmentation. Rather than using fragmentation to objectify, I employ it as a means of resistance. For instance, in this project, I used matte Mylar paper to obscure my models' faces and bodies, creating an intentional sense of ambiguity and incompleteness. By cutting away parts of the Mylar, specific portions of the body are revealed, but these exposed areas are carefully curated to resist conventional notions of eroticism or objectification. This fragmented presentation forces the viewer to grapple with an incomplete, disrupted image. The blurred and unclear forms challenge the traditional expectation of coherence and clarity, shifting the dynamic of the gaze. Instead of being passively consumed, the bodies in my work demand a more



nuanced, critical engagement. This strategy invites viewers to question their own gaze and the societal constructs that shape how we perceive and objectify bodies. Through this process, fragmentation becomes a tool for empowerment and liberation, transforming the gaze from one of dominance to one of introspection and resistance.

**How do you feel your experimental photography techniques, like using LED lighting and Mylar matte paper, influence the viewer's perception of the human form?**

My experimental photography techniques, particularly the use of Mylar matte paper and LED lighting, play a central role in reshaping the viewer's perception of the human form. The Mylar matte paper obscures and fragments the body, creating a blurred, ambiguous surface that challenges the viewer's ability to fully "consume" the subject. By selectively cutting parts of the Mylar to reveal portions of the body, I introduce an intentional fragmentation that resists objectification and focuses attention on the interplay between what is concealed and what is exposed.

LED lighting complements this approach by creating dynamic contrasts, illuminating textures, and emphasizing the distortions caused by the Mylar. The interplay of light and shadow abstracts the form, drawing attention away from traditional markers of identity and toward a more fluid and interpretive



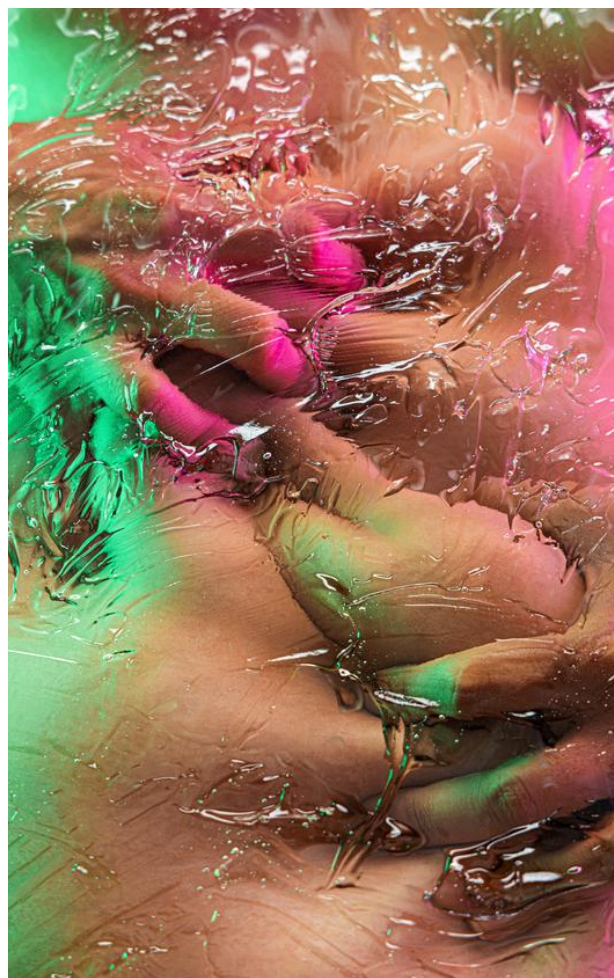
understanding of the body. Together, these techniques disrupt the viewer's expectations of clarity and coherence, inviting them to engage with the body as a site of complexity and transformation, rather than a static or consumable object.

**In your artist statement, you mention reclaiming fragmented forms as tools for liberation. How do you see this process unfolding in both the creation and reception of your work?**

Reclaiming fragmented forms as tools for liberation unfolds in my work through both the creative process and its impact on viewers. In creation, fragmentation becomes a deliberate method of challenging traditional representations and resisting objectification. In my experimental photography, I intentionally break apart the human form. This deconstruction reclaims control over how bodies are represented, emphasizing fluidity and ambiguity rather than fixed identities or societal expectations. In reception, these fragmented forms invite viewers to engage more critically with the images. The lack of clarity forces them to confront the discomfort of incomplete or distorted figures, challenging their assumptions and typical ways of seeing. This disruption shifts the focus from passive consumption to active questioning, opening space for new interpretations of the body as dynamic, multifaceted, and resistant to objectification. Ultimately, this process becomes a liberatory act—both for me as the creator and for viewers by dismantling male gaze and encouraging a more nuanced and expansive way of seeing.

**Can you describe the significance of color and light in your compositions and how they contribute to the overall concept of your work?**

Color and light play a pivotal role in my compositions, serving as both aesthetic elements and conceptual tools that enhance the themes of my work. They contribute to the emotional tone, the perception of the body, and the overall narrative I aim to convey. Light acts as a medium for transformation and fragmentation. By using techniques like LED lighting, reflective surfaces, or backlighting, I create dramatic contrasts and distortions that alter the way the body is perceived. This manipulation of light fragments the form, blending it into its environment or reshaping it into abstract, otherworldly figures. Light becomes a metaphor for revelation and concealment, emphasizing the fluidity of identity and the complexity of how we are seen or unseen. Color introduces emotional depth and symbolic resonance. I draw inspiration from Cindy Sherman's photographs, particularly her use of different color



Azarakhsh Shafieikadkani | Deconstruction | 2024

themes to evoke diverse personas and emotional states. Similarly, I use color to amplify the narrative in my work muted, earthy tones in my nature-based series emphasize a harmonious connection between the body and the natural world, while vibrant or surreal hues in my studio work enhance the sense of disconnection and ambiguity in fragmented forms. Together, color and light become vital to the storytelling in my work. They do more than illuminate or decorate they shape the viewer's experience, reinforce the fragmentation and abstraction of the human form, and invite deeper contemplation of themes like identity, gaze, and liberation. Through these elements, I aim to create compositions that are emotionally charged and visually compelling.

**What role do you believe the viewer plays in interpreting the fragmented bodies you create? How do you encourage them to engage with your work beyond its surface aesthetic?**

The viewer plays a central role in interpreting the fragmented bodies in my work. The distortion and abstraction I employ invite them to engage beyond surface-level aesthetics and consider deeper questions of identity, perception, and power dynamics. The fragmented nature of the bodies challenges the viewer's expectation for clarity. As they navigate

through the ambiguity, their own gaze becomes a key element in the work's meaning. The selective visibility of body parts creates a disorienting experience, where the familiar is made strange. This partial visibility encourages viewers to confront their own interpretation, wrestling with the tension between what is shown and what is hidden.

Rather than simply passively observing, the viewer is called to engage actively with the work, to fill in the gaps, and question what remains concealed. In doing so, they are prompted to reflect on how their gaze is shaped by societal norms, expectations, and constructs around identity. The fragmented bodies resist the viewer's desire for coherence, highlighting the discomfort and power inherent in looking, forcing them to confront their role in interpreting the body. Through this engagement, I aim to shift the gaze from a passive, objectifying act to one of self-awareness and critical reflection. The fragmented bodies become a mirror, not just of identity, but also of the viewer's relationship to the gaze itself, revealing how deeply personal and political the act of looking can be.

**How does your background in feminist and psychoanalytic theories influence your artistic practice and how you approach the representation of bodies?**

My background in feminist and psychoanalytic theories deeply influences my artistic practice, particularly in how I approach the representation of the human body. Central to my work is the idea that



Azarakhsh Shafieikadkani | Deconstruction | 2024

the body is not just a passive object, but an active site for exploring identity, power, and perception. Feminist theory, particularly the works of Laura Mulvey and bell hooks, informs my critical approach to the ways bodies, especially those of marginalized individuals have been objectified and fragmented under patriarchal and societal structures. Psychoanalytic theory, with its focus on unconscious desires and projections, deepens my exploration of how bodies are perceived, desired, and distorted.

I focus on the human body as a medium for expressing the complexities of identity, power dynamics, and personal and collective trauma. By representing bodies in abstracted and fragmented ways, I aim to challenge traditional portrayals that reduce the body to mere objecthood. This fragmentation, whether through my experimental studio techniques or abstract compositions, pushes back against how patriarchal systems have historically reduced bodies—especially women's and marginalized genders' bodies to parts for consumption or idealization. The fragmented body becomes a way to subvert and reclaim space, identity, and autonomy, offering a nuanced perspective that resists simplistic visual readings.

The materials and techniques I use are deeply tied to these theoretical concerns. For example, the use of Mylar, with its ability to blur and distort the human



Azarakhsh Shafieikadkani | The Power of Gaze | 2024

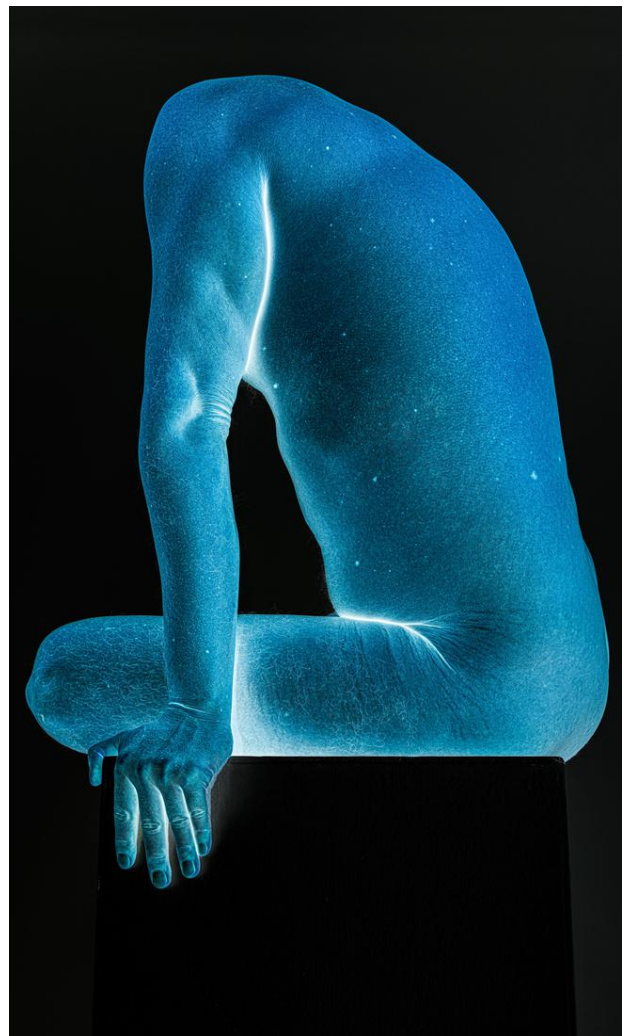


form, serves as a metaphor for how societal expectations and constructs obscure and fragment identity. The selective visibility it creates forces the viewer to confront partiality and ambiguity, challenging the desire for clear, unified forms. Similarly, I use transparent plexiglass covered in hair gel, which sits between the camera and subject, to create a veil of distortion. This technique abstractly manipulates the body, highlighting how identity can be shaped and obscured by external and internal forces. Additionally, I invert bodies to negative isolated forms, a method that mirrors the psychological tension between visibility and invisibility, drawing attention to how marginalized bodies are often hidden or misrepresented in mainstream culture. These materials and techniques, inspired by feminist and psychoanalytic thought, offer a way to deconstruct and reimagine the body outside of the limiting structures imposed by traditional representation. They encourage viewers to critically engage with the body not as a fixed entity, but as something fluid, fragmented, and multifaceted, challenging them to reconsider their own gaze and assumptions about identity. Through these methods, I aim to create a space for the human body to be seen as a site of liberation, complexity, and empowerment.

**Your project challenges traditional representations of bodies, particularly those of women, nonbinary, and transgender individuals. How do you address the intersectionality of gender and representation in your work?**

My project actively engages with the intersectionality of gender and representation by acknowledging and highlighting the diverse experiences and identities of women, nonbinary, and transgender individuals. This intersectional approach stems from an understanding that gender is not a singular or monolithic experience but rather one that is shaped by overlapping factors such as race, culture, sexuality, and societal expectations.

In my work, I strive to dismantle the rigid binaries and stereotypes that often dominate traditional representations of bodies. By using a combination of natural and experimental studio settings, I seek to create images that celebrate the fluidity and complexity of gender. For instance, in my nature-focused series, the human form is often integrated with organic landscapes, symbolizing the shared connection between the body and the natural world. This visual merging underscores the universality of bodily experience while still honoring the individuality and unique narratives of my subjects. In the studio, I use abstraction and distortion



Azarahsh Shafieikadkani | The Power of Gaze | 2024

techniques—such as photographing through textured surfaces like Mylar or manipulating body forms with glass and light—to deconstruct traditional visual cues of gender. By removing or obscuring features often used to categorize bodies, I invite viewers to move beyond preconceived notions and see the body as something dynamic and undefinable. This approach challenges the binary gaze and encourages a more inclusive perspective.

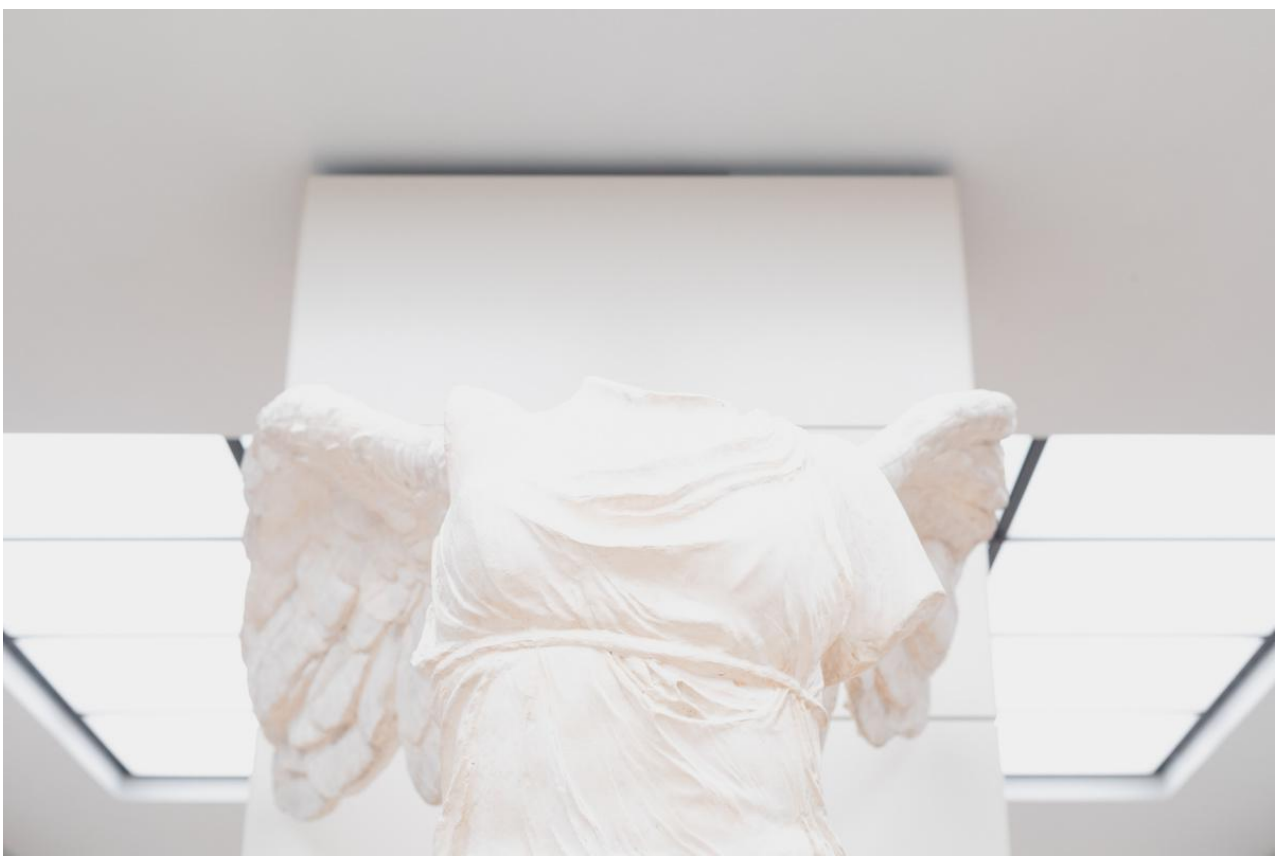
Additionally, the inclusion of nonbinary and transgender individuals in my work is an intentional effort to expand the scope of representation and provide visibility to those often marginalized in visual culture. I aim to create a space where their identities are not only acknowledged but also celebrated as integral parts of the broader conversation about gender and representation.

Ultimately, my work seeks to highlight the intersectionality of gender by offering images that resist simplification and invite viewers to consider the nuances of identity. Through these visual narratives, I hope to contribute to a broader dialogue about liberation, equity, and the importance of seeing beyond societal constructs.

**Sofia Giuntini**, young photographer of 27 based in San Gimignano, Tuscany, Italy. In 2020 I graduated in Photography at LABA - Firenze and one year later I started working as interior photographer with Interhome Group, theatre and cultural event photographer but also with Galleria Continua for artworks production. I'm a founder of IN3C (intrecci) Collective: it's an artistic and cultural project born in 2021 according with UNESCO values and the City of San Gimignano. Our aim is to coexist the past in which we're born and the contemporary we feel now, through all kind of arts: photography, writing, performance, music. At the end of 2024, I started curate a feature called "Giostre X" about emerging young photographers for Giostre Edizioni, an Italian independent photography's publishing house. I'm also part of the volunteers' team behind TEDxColledivaldelsa 2025.

### *Project Statement*

My project "No jump on clouds" is an introspective investigation of the last two years, during which I felt the need to stop and look inside myself. This series of images tells the story of losing one's center of gravity, of an equilibrium suddenly interrupted, like a flash that tore apart my awareness. I began to investigate myself through photography, seeking the "desassossego" Fernando Pessoa speaks of, which accompanies me in every corner of reality, in the places I visited, in those I knew, and in the people I met. I never felt like I belonged to a moment; it was always either yesterday or a distant tomorrow, and I couldn't recognize a present in which I felt connected to myself. I chose the title "No jump on clouds" because I was thinking of that sensation of flying and jumping from one cloud to another to reach the sky, something often seen in cartoons and films when depicting happiness or the fulfillment of a long-awaited desire. I wanted to express the opposite, using this visual metaphor to represent a nightmarish experience where, instead of flying, I fall through an immense and empty sky, with no support at all, not even the clouds, completely carried away by gravitational pull. And the quote from Fernando Pessoa guided me both in the choice of the title and in conveying the overwhelming sense of anguish throughout the project. The story I tell is a dive into my own restless and blurred well, but it is also that of my peers, filled with false incentives and unreal promises that slowly erode the armor of self-determination of my generation, leaving us empty and alone.





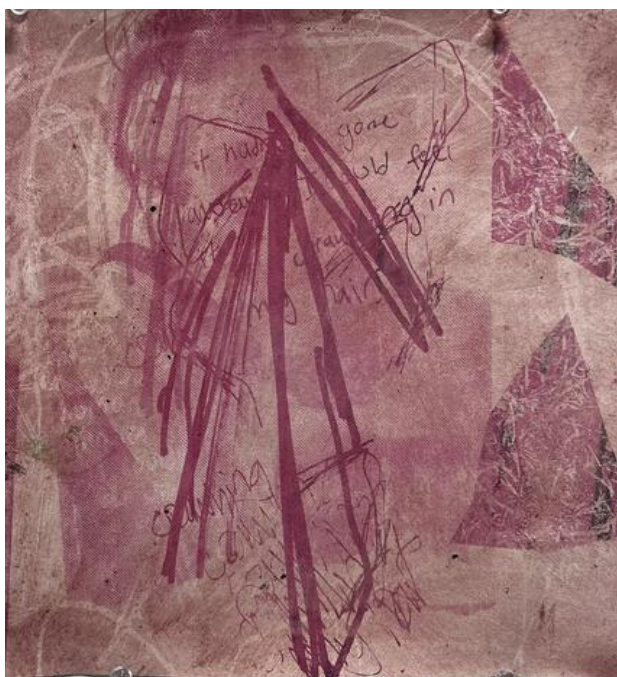


## — Interview

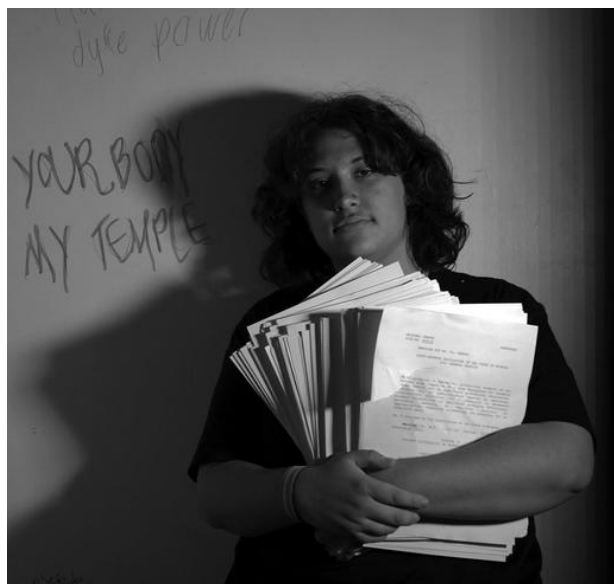
# Maggie Letvin

**Your work engages with discomfort and evokes intense reactions from the viewer. How do you decide what emotions or responses you want to provoke through your art?**

I think when I was first starting to explore discomfort, I wanted to get a reaction and freak people out by being provocative. As I've grown as an artist, I've learned that it's all about balance and embracing the unexpected. I don't necessarily have a prescriptive reaction that I want people to have, it's more about starting from a place of my own discomfort and getting it out through my work. Some of that discomfort is transferred to my viewer in my work, and it can range from shocking to subtle.



Maggie Letvin | Cross Contamination | 2022



**Can you describe a specific piece where you felt you successfully transferred a sense of discomfort to the observer? What was the process behind it?**

I created a collaborative work called "60 Seconds and Counting" that was installed in the women's restroom and confronted viewers with the average time it takes in the United States for a woman to be assaulted. My intention with placing the work in the women's restroom wasn't to make some kind of association between the bathroom and assault, but rather to probe the audience to question the gender binary and their role in the patriarchy. There were several men that treated the women's restroom like a danger zone, even when they were invited in. Those were the people that I wanted to place in an environment of discomfort- the goal being that uncomfortable feeling is something that they can take with them and something that can actually affect them and have them reflect on change.

**Your work often combines printmaking with performance. How do you integrate these mediums to create a multisensory experience for the viewer?**

Creating prints is always a performance, even if no one is watching. I will attack my prints, spit on them, step on them, scratch them, rub cigarettes on them, be kind with them, be rough with them, etc. In a similar way, my performances are often inspired by or closely connected to my print work. For example in my performance "Hard to



Swallow" I consume a pound of paper pulp- that same pulp was used to make the paper that my more print-based works in the anti-transgender project. One hundred percent anti-trans legislation in both the pages and in my performance.

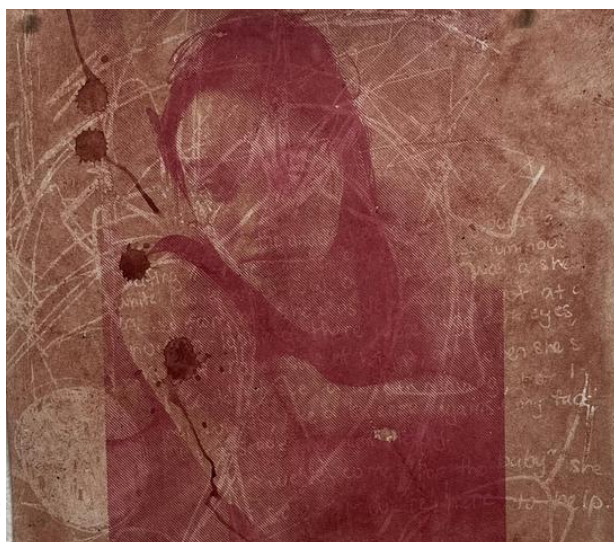
**You explore themes around gender identity in your art. How has your understanding of your own identity influenced the direction of your artistic practice?**

Like my work, it can get complicated. I had a very intimate relationship with the 3,304 page document of anti-transgender legislation. There are equally as many moments that are beautiful as those that are painful. When you feel nostalgia, growth, and loss in your body at the same time, 50 pounds of legislation that is against you produces intense reactions and interesting ideas.

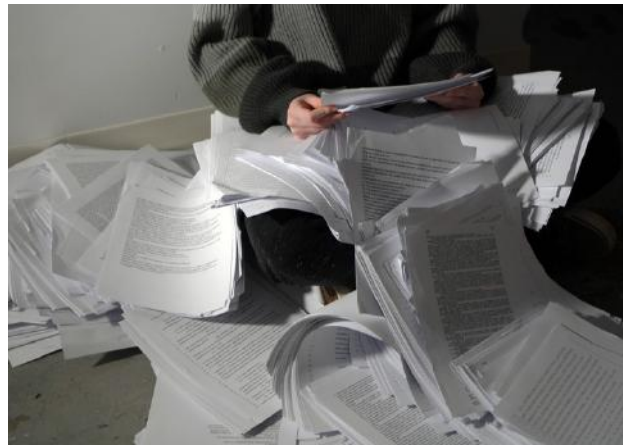
**Many of your works challenge societal systems and structures. What message do you hope your audience takes away from confronting these uncomfortable themes?**

Be yourself. You are not alone. Questioning the system is challenging, but so deeply important. For those that get it, I hope they join me. For those that don't, I hope my work makes them think.

**How do you approach experimentation in your practice, especially when it comes to**



Maggie Letvin | Cross Contamination | 2022



Maggie Letvin | Untitled | 2023

**exploring uncomfortability through different materials and media?**

I love experimentation so much. I've had a lot go off course but have learned so much for embracing the results and pivoting- rotting insects for example, produce an intense smell that is quite repulsive; that sensorial result was not something that I planned for in my prints that were exploring themes of grotesque and belonging, but it added to the whole experience. I love asking questions and trying things that might fail. What happens when I try to grow mold on paper? Can I print with pig's blood? Can I grow wildflowers from my feces? No, just maggots? Okay, what happens if I run them through the press? So much of the discomfort in my work comes from the experimentation with strange techniques and unconventional materials.

**What role does vulnerability play in your creative process? How do you balance personal discomfort with the need to challenge your audience?**

As I've grown as an artist, I've learned that not everything has to be in your face. I love taking a direct approach, but vulnerability and subtly can be tools that are equally as powerful. Intimacy is another one of those tools that challenges the audience; so combining the approach of having deeply personal poetry that has an ephemerality with this intense theme of transphobia that you have to look closer to see, I think that is still uncomfortable and challenging. My work does not have to make everyone feel the same way, it just has to make the audience feel something.

## Rimal Olga

I strongly believe that the passion and love dedicated to making art one day will bring everyone to achievements in creative sphere and will provide all opportunities to improve art skills. Everyone has its personal way to express their thoughts and senses through art and because of this art is totally different. I like to express myself by the way of intuitive art and by the way of loving the process of making art itself. The final goal is always moving onward and upward!



Rimal Olga | Feather dress collage | 2024







## — Interview

# Marion Laurent

**Your work seems to focus strongly on the theme of memory. Could you tell us more about how your childhood experiences with heirlooms and stories have shaped your artistic vision?**

Memory is an essential raw material in my work. Ever since childhood, I've been fascinated by the objects around us, especially those that bore a trace of the past: timeworn furniture, yellowed photos, everyday objects charged with an invisible presence. Everything seemed to me to contain a buried history, an imprint left by those who had touched it, loved it, forgotten it. This sensitivity to memory naturally led me to explore how objects, materials, and forms can become capsules of memories and emotions. My work seeks to bring out these resonances, to give things a voice again, and to question our own relationship with time and oblivion.

**In your creations, you give new life to forgotten objects. How do you choose these objects and what draws you to them?**

The objects I incorporate into my work choose me as much as I choose them. There's always a moment of



encounter, an intuition. I'm drawn to things that carry a silent history, things that bear witness to the passage of time: a patina, a crack, wear and tear. I like modest, sometimes abandoned objects that have lost their function but retain a latent memory.

My choice is also based on the emotional and symbolic charge of the materials. Certain objects immediately evoke a human presence or a collective memory. By hijacking them and assembling them differently, I seek to reveal what lies dormant within them and give them a new existence in a poetic dialogue with the viewer.

**Your assemblages and installations invite viewers to introspect. What do you hope people will take away from your work?**

I hope my work evokes a kind of reminiscence, an intimate echo in those who look at it. I'm not trying to impose a single reading, but rather to open up spaces of perception where everyone can project their own memories, emotions, and questioning.

If my works succeed in provoking a reconnection, a gentle disturbance, or a feeling of belonging to a collective memory, then they have achieved their goal. What interests me is this vibration between the intimate and the universal, this way in which a detail, a fragment, can awaken something buried within us.

**The concept of "symbiosis between man and the living" is at the heart of your practice. Can you explain how you integrate this idea into your art, particularly through the interaction between human and animal figures?**



Marion Laurent | Flight



I see the relationship between man and the living as a continuity, an ongoing conversation. My work explores these invisible links between beings, materials, and energies. The human and animal figures I include in my work are not there to illustrate an opposition but rather to evoke a dialogue, an interpenetration. The organic textures and raw or altered materials I use recall the porosity between the human and the natural, between the body and the environment. At times, my sculptures and installations seem to suggest metamorphoses, subtle hybridizations, as if the boundaries between man, animal, and plant were gradually disappearing. It's this notion of passage, of transformation, that fascinates me.

**How do you balance the intersection of the tangible and the intangible in your work, particularly when you're working with antique objects that carry a sense of history?**

I play with this duality by giving a physical presence to the invisible. The objects I integrate are charged with experience, but what interests me is the way they resonate beyond their materiality. The intangible translates into absences, voids, and traces. I like to work with suggestion: an imprint left on a fabric, a projected shadow, a worn surface that recounts a past contact. These elements reveal what is no longer there, what has disappeared but persists in another way. It's this tension between matter and memory, between the visible and the forgotten, that gives my work its relief.

**You speak of a world where art is a bridge between the visible and the invisible. Can you share with us your thoughts on how art can help us reconnect with deeper, almost mystical realities?**



Marion Laurent  
Self-portrait

Art has this capacity to open doors to the unknown, to make us perceive what escapes language. It acts as a threshold between the tangible world and more subtle dimensions, be they spiritual, emotional, or memorial. In my work, I try to create spaces where the viewer can feel this porosity between worlds. Aged materials, incongruous assemblages, plays on light and transparency are all ways of evoking these floating realities. I believe that art can reconnect us to buried perceptions, awakening a sensibility that moves away from the rational to touch something more instinctive, more essential.

**Your work is described as a “poetic transformation of the past.” Could you explain the role of narrative in your art and how it links the past and the present?**

The narrative in my work is fragmentary, almost like a sensitive archaeology. I collect, assemble, and superimpose elements that together form an open-ended story, to be recomposed by the viewer. The past is not static; it is constantly being reinterpreted. By giving a second life to forgotten objects, integrating them into installations or sculptures, I create bridges between different temporalities. I like the idea of each work as an enigma, a fragment of history in which the viewer becomes the reader or interpreter. Poetry is born from these unlikely assemblages, from the tension between what has been and what is becoming. My work is a dialogue between memory and the present, between absence and reappearance, between the tangible and the dreamed.



Marion Laurent | My Childhood Memories

**Richard Hall** is a watercolour artist, currently living in New Zealand. His paintings have been exhibited in both New Zealand and Turkey.

### *Artist Statement*

Throughout his life, Richard has walked in desolate, rugged places that showcase nature's beauty. Yet these landscapes are under increasing threat from human activity. His artwork is inspired by nature which acts as a cue for making expressive paintings that capture the essence of a landscape. His paintings do not try to replicate the detail but focus on areas of light and shadow, its overall shape and form as well as portraying the emotion and memories it stirs within us. Richard wants us to re-ignite our sense of awe and curiosity at the land's ever changing form. He invites the onlooker to re-engage with their memories, emotions and imagination to bring their own interpretation to his pictures. His paintings are neither purely representational nor totally abstract but lie in the space between. Painting quickly, with a minimum of drawing, he mainly uses wet-on-wet techniques with big brushes and a limited palette. The ever changing nature of landscape is summoned by allowing the colours to flow into each other and encouraging the watercolour paint to react in unpredictable and spontaneous ways.





Richard Hall | 'Life's Bright Seam' | 2024

## — Interview

# Mariya Margolina

**What inspired your deep focus on animals, particularly horses, as the central subject in your art?**

Since childhood, I have loved animals deeply and have been a vegetarian. Our family lives far from the city, and we have three cats, two dogs, a horse, a rabbit, and a guinea pig. All of our animals were rescued from the streets after suffering mistreatment from humans—even our horse. We saved her by buying her from a butcher. My connection with nature and animals



is very close, and I feel them deeply. My pets and nature are my main sources of inspiration.

**Can you tell us more about your experience working with horses and how it influences your artwork?**

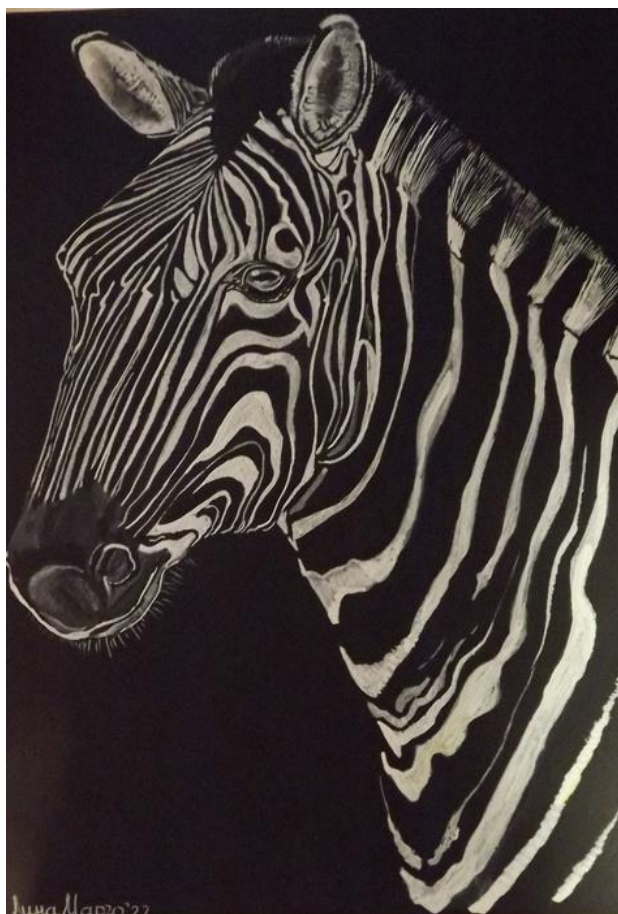
My first personal and close contact with horses happened five years ago when we bought our horse. She was just a one-year-old foal at the time, weighing 400 kg. Due to our lack of experience, she ran away into the fields and forests. We couldn't catch her for 17 hours and were very worried that she might get hurt or end up on the highway. But in the middle of the night, she came to me on her own and followed my voice through a plowed field back home. That was the moment when our special bond was formed, and I truly connected with the consciousness of horses. As Shukshin once said: "When the last horse dies, humanity will collapse, because the best beings in the world are horses."

**How do you use watercolor and pastel mediums to convey the beauty and essence of animals in your pieces?**

When creating my works, I often work intuitively, combining multiple techniques within a single piece.

**What message do you hope to communicate through your art, especially regarding the relationship between humans and animals?**

The message is very simple: we are merely guests on this planet, while animals are its true



Mariya Margolina | Black and white



inhabitants. We must respect their lives and be grateful that they have allowed humanity to exist alongside them.

**What are some challenges you face when painting animals, and how do you overcome them?**

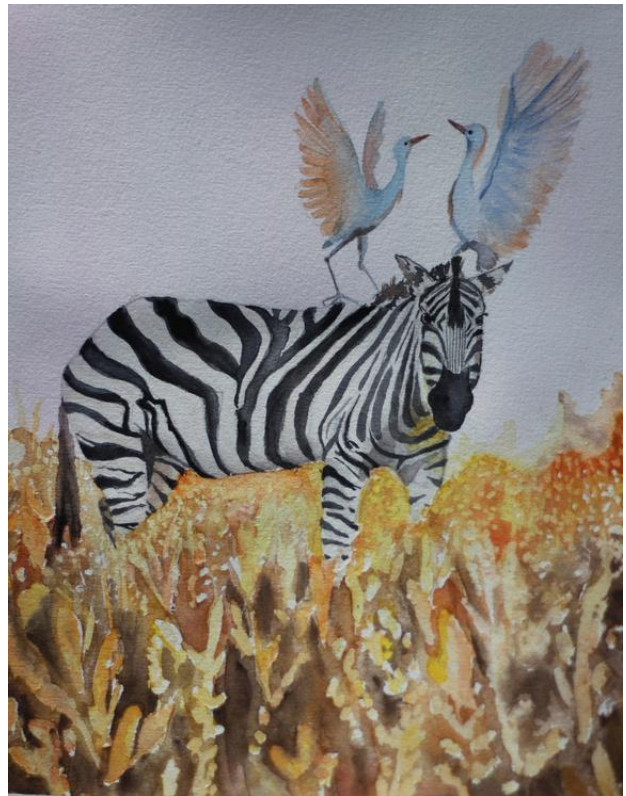
Challenges arise from a lack of experience, insufficient drawing skills, poor knowledge of anatomy, and not having enough visual references. The solution is very simple: draw, draw, and draw even more. Whatever is difficult or not turning out well—just keep practicing and drawing even more.

**What role does nature play in your art, and how do you integrate its beauty into your work?**

Nature permeates everything around us. I love it, and when I work, I am filled with this feeling. The fullness of emotion helps this integration happen naturally.

**How do you hope your artwork impacts viewers' understanding and respect for wildlife and animals?**

I simply hope that people will become kinder.



Mariya Margolina  
Into the storm



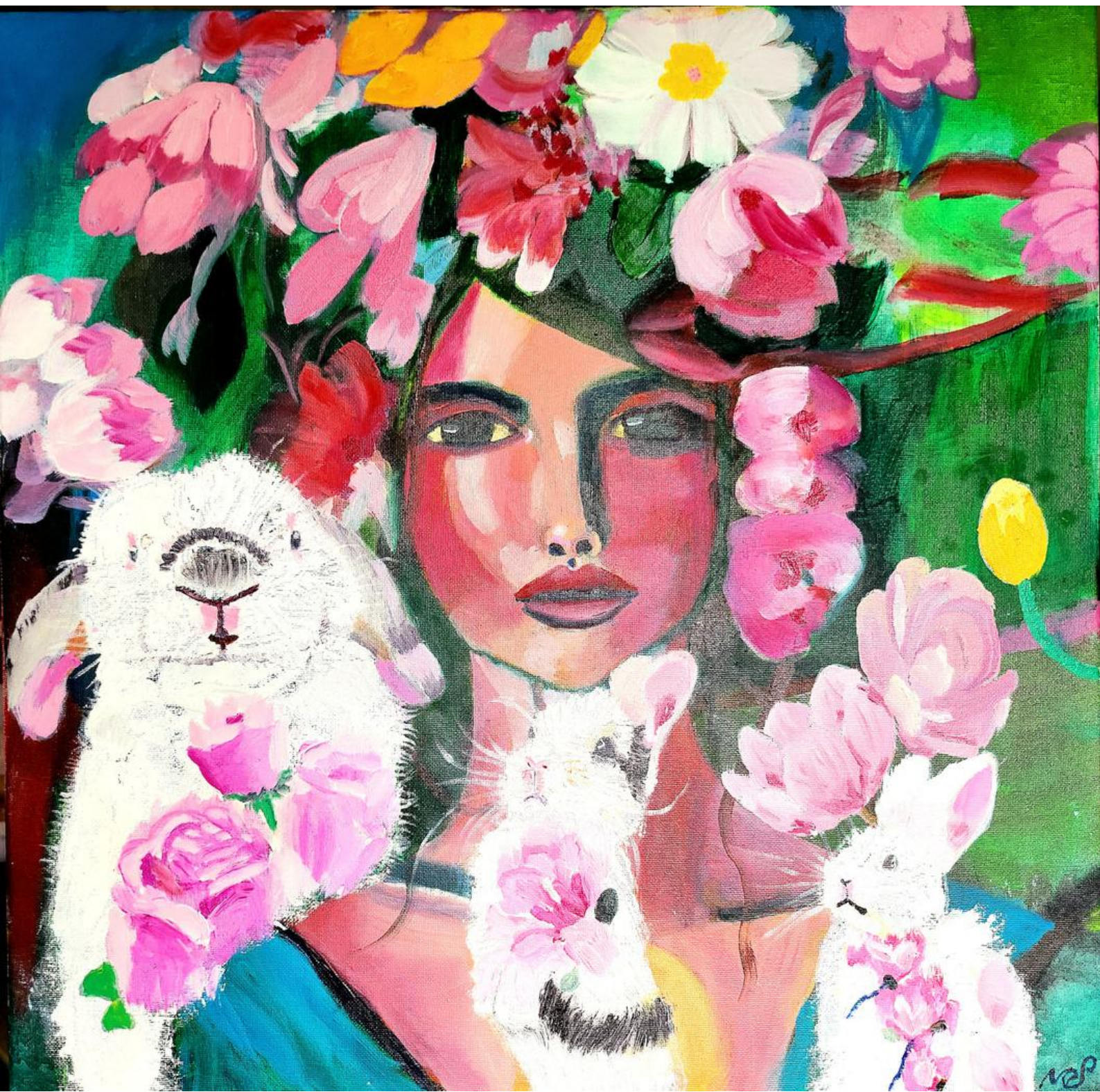
Mariya Margolina  
I'm leaving

**Monica Moon Sophia** is a painter living and working in Singapore. Her Western Semi-Abstract style is concerned with capturing natural world and the association with the feminine figure. Monica studied Advanced Western Abstract Painting course in Nanyang Academy of Fine Art and Mixed Media Painting course in LaSalle College of the Arts as well as Watercolour Painting course and other painting techniques courses with Domestika, Artify and Milan Art institute. Monica had held Solo Art Exhibitions and combined exhibitions in the past few years. The latest being under Pameran Poskad in December 2024. She had also won a few Bronze awards and 2 Silver medal awards both from Asian Art Association Singapore. She had been interviewed by Visual Art Journal for their mid October 2024 magazine publication.

### **Project Statement**

For me, a picture of a lady alone is not strong enough to express my emotions and opinions. But with natural floral and animals incorporated, they supported my statements with more powerful impact. The light and shadows on her face emits the emotions. Using vibrant oil paint, I bring out the floral as well as the pureness of the rabbits, which represents Abundance.







## — Interview

# Phillip Kesumo

**Could you tell us more about your journey as an artist? How did you transition from studying in Jakarta and Sydney to living and working in the Netherlands?**

I was born and raised in Jakarta, and studied in an IB International School, where I took up Visual Arts and Design. It was there that under the supervision of my teachers that I discovered my unique art style. They motivated me to continue my studies in Fine Arts. So I pursued my university degree in Sydney, Australia at the University of New South Wales. Afterwards, I



realized that the art scene in Europe was far more attractive. Adding to the fact that I have family members living in Amsterdam, I moved my life there where I did a pre-university course in art and design. I took a gap year before following a Bachelor degree in Fine Arts at the Willem De Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. I graduated in 2024.

**Your works often depict intense emotions and complex narratives. How do you approach the balance between figurative and abstract elements in your art?**

My work is actually my graduation project that I did for my final year at the academy. I wrote a speculative historical fiction novel set during the Second World War. In particular, a famous event in the Netherlands called "Operation Market Garden". As it is a work of fiction, the characters are my own and some elements are considered supernatural or fantasy-like. I made a series of twelve illustrations surrounding one of my main characters, a girl named Clara. I depicted her as a German girl who cares for the minority that are being oppressed by the National Socialists. I tried to create a sense of depth and perspective in my artworks by putting the main character in front and giving them attention to detail, while other objects that are further removed from the



Phillip Kesumo | Clara and uncle Himmeler



viewers appear smaller, hence the naive quality in style. Naive art was also a major style during my high school years which was widely received by people back then. But during my time in Europe, realism was more popular as the contemporary art community here views visual art as a reflection of the visual world around them. The teachers that I had here also taught me to experiment more with different styles and techniques so that challenged me to step out of my comfort zone. Now, I have combined the two styles, taking the best from both worlds.

**The recurring theme of individuals in your pieces seems to highlight strong emotional expressions. How do you choose your subjects and the emotions you wish to explore?**

In my work, I chose to portray Clara as my consistent main character in the scenes that she is in, because there is depth in her personality, character, and the journey that she takes. Her greatest strength is love and compassion, and I wanted to explore the theme of discrimination in the modern world versus kindness, by placing it in a historical time period where there is a lot of hatred towards groups of people.



Phillip Kesumo | Circe tries to kill Clara



Phillip Kesumo | Clara and Rose

**In your pieces, there's often an intricate interplay of light and shadow. How do you see light as a tool for storytelling in your artwork?**

I use light and shadow as a way to show what the character is facing physically. This can be a wall in front of them, or a tree, or it could be the forces of nature such as a lightning bolt, or light from a bulb. I also used photographs of real life models to make my characters look as real as possible, and so that my audience can get closer and feel them on a personal level.

**How does your multicultural background influence the way you approach art, both thematically and technically?**

I have grown up with a Chinese and Indonesian background. My mother grew up in a Dutch household. As somebody with a disability, I have always faced discrimination back home, and in Western society, I felt like an outsider because of my race and ethnicity. This influenced the theme I chose to tackle in my art project. Naive art is also more commonly acceptable in Indonesia than in the Netherlands as Dutch people associate this art movement with outsiders and disabled people. So I decided to embrace it.

# — Interview

## ERR-ik

### **What inspired you to explore the intersection of time and image in your “42” project?**

I have always loved movies, ever since I was a child. This art form has shaped the way I think, influenced my daily life, and even led me into photography. Now that I am 36, I still watch almost one movie or a few TV episodes every day. This shows how important film is in my life. This project started from an idea I had eleven years ago in a class at AAU. One evening, I was watching a movie in my rented apartment and thinking about a class assignment. Suddenly, I wondered what would happen if I used long-exposure techniques on movie clips. Since each second of a movie contains 24 frames, I imagined capturing them into a single still image through long exposure. At first, I did not fix the exposure time; instead, I experimented based on scenes I liked. I created a few test images and shared them in class.



ERR-ik | More human than human



Although I paused this idea for a while, it stayed in my mind for over ten years. I kept revisiting it, asking questions like: Which movies should I use? Should I also include TV shows? Should the exposure time be the same for all clips?

Then, one day, I watched *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* again. In it, the number “42” is called “the ultimate answer to life, the universe, and everything,” suggesting a universe that is random and chaotic. This concept really caught my attention.

Feeling inspired, I continued the project, centering it around “42.” I chose 42 films and TV shows that had strongly influenced me or that I truly loved. From each one, I picked a 42-second clip, used a 42-second long exposure to photograph it, and finally printed the result at 42 × 42 cm.

To me, “42” is more than just a number—it hints that even something that seems meaningless can hold meaning. This matches my artistic philosophy: art should not be about pleasing others, but about finding personal fulfillment. That is the core spirit of my work.

### **How do long-exposure techniques help you convey the sense of nostalgia and melancholy in your work?**

Actually, I didn’t intend to convey any specific emotion or story. However, if viewers can sense nostalgia or sorrow through my work, I’m genuinely happy about that. It’s similar to how a



single movie can evoke different responses in different people. Perhaps the emotional tone emerged from the subconscious choices I made while selecting the scenes to photograph. As for the nostalgic quality, it might come from using a toy plastic camera. I like the contrast between a film that costs millions of dollars to produce and a camera that only costs a few dollars, which adds an interesting tension. Also, using a plastic lens with long exposure helps avoid the obvious LED dots that digital cameras often capture, resulting in a softer look. This is why I ended up using a plastic camera for this series.

**Can you describe the creative process behind merging dynamic film and television sequences into still images?**

During my shoot, I used a simple yet creative approach. Imagine photographing a running horse by taking one photo every 0.0417 seconds. In one second, you end up with 24 images. Then, if you play these 24 stills over a single second, you get a one-second video. Afterward, I use a long-exposure shot of that “one-second” video to create a single image with a motion-blur effect. I’ve conducted many interesting experiments. At first, I wanted to use 182 seconds of exposure time because it corresponds to the shortest distance light travels from Earth to Mars, which aligns with my love for sci-fi. However, I quickly realized that 182 seconds was far too long, making the final image so abstract that it

exceeded normal recognition. In the end, I settled on 42 seconds, which turned out to be more suitable—winning this “battle of choices.” I also faced many unexpected situations. Some clips I initially thought I would love ended up looking completely different from what I had envisioned. I had to rewatch those movies, sometimes more than ten times, constantly viewing and testing. Even a slight shift of one second—forward or backward—in the 42-second exposure can lead to a drastically different outcome.

Overall, the creative process felt like a series of experiments. I switched back and forth between watching films and shooting until I could finally capture the flowing motion of each video segment in these still images, each with its own unique beauty.

**In your work, how do you see the relationship between memory, time, and imagery?**

For me, this work feels like a reconstruction of both time and imagery. During the creative process, I noticed that many of my memories take shape more like separate still photos rather than complete, moving images. It’s almost as if my brain automatically merges a series of events into a single, blurred photo that carries hidden clues.

When I revisit this series, I keep wondering: what kind of storyline or emotion might lie behind each still frame? Sometimes I realize that the scenes I piece together do not exactly match the actual movie footage—just like how memories often need our consciousness to fill in the gaps. So, even though this is fundamentally a straightforward form of secondary creation, the final result feels like a brand-new work. I’m not sure how other people’s memories or minds operate, but I’m proud to see the world in this way.

**What do you hope viewers experience when they interact with your abstract photographic works?**

In this series’ exhibition, I designed a “guessing game” by hiding the name of the original movie or TV show under a small flap. I hope viewers will first feel the mood or emotion of the image



ERR-ik | Entering

without knowing its source, and then flip open the flap to see where it comes from. I really enjoy watching their reactions when they discover the title—some people exclaim, “I knew it!” while others are surprised, or remember seeing it during their childhood. If my work inspires them to revisit certain films or find new ones to watch, I feel it’s a great result.

I’m not too concerned about whether each viewer gains a specific insight or emotion. If someone feels nothing, that’s also fine. As I often say, “If you like my work, that makes me happy; if you don’t, that’s totally okay too.” I want art to stay open for everyone, so each person can experience it in the most natural, comfortable way for them.

**Sci-fi films and rock music are recurring influences in your art. How do these themes shape your creative perspective?**

Science fiction films and rock music have had a profound influence on my creative viewpoint. I’m especially drawn to space-related claustrophobic themes, like in *Event Horizon* or *Pandorum*, which show a sense of loneliness, entrapment, and the inner struggle between different personalities under extreme conditions. In some way, this resonates with my own inner state. At the same time, I also love alien lifeforms, such as those in *Alien*, or any other imaginative and surreal settings. These highly inventive sci-fi works have deeply shaped my preferences for art design and visual style.

When it comes to music, I’m fascinated by the

“wall of sound” created by distorted guitar, layers of repeating riffs, and powerful chords—giving me the feeling of being wrapped in sound waves, as if in another dimension. This idea of a “sound wall” is also reflected in my abstract photography. I don’t want to limit myself to any single form of expression. Like the films and music I enjoy, I want my creations to remain diverse and open. You could say I’m both a “Nerd” and an “EMO kid,” embracing many different styles with passion.

**How does your fine art photography differ from your work in fashion and band photography? Are there any common threads that tie them together?**

In my view, fine art photography and commercial photography—like fashion or band shoots—have very different purposes. Fine art is mostly about personal creative desire, expressing myself through the camera, while commercial photography focuses on meeting clients’ needs. Luckily, it feels like I have a switch in my mind that lets me move easily between the two. Although the goals of art and commercial photography differ, what they share is that I fully use my professional skills to get the job done. I often joke that I’m a “merciless photo-taking machine,” because when I’m on an assignment, I throw myself into it completely. But once I finish the client’s brief, I start capturing images I personally enjoy. For example, when shooting stage performances, I like to concentrate on details—like a singer’s facial expression, a mouth at the microphone, a hand on the guitar strings, or a foot on the pedal. These close-ups might not be what the media wants, but they satisfy me because it’s my way of pleasing myself. I’ve also come up with a tongue-in-cheek nickname—“the merciless bento killer.” At many events, the organizer usually provides a boxed meal (bento) for the photographers, and sometimes I try to snag an extra one. I might even discuss with other photographers which organizer gives out the tastiest bento. These little anecdotes, while not directly related to photography, help me find some fun in the high-pressure commercial environment and show a bit of my spontaneity and sense of humor outside work.



ERR-ik | Organic life



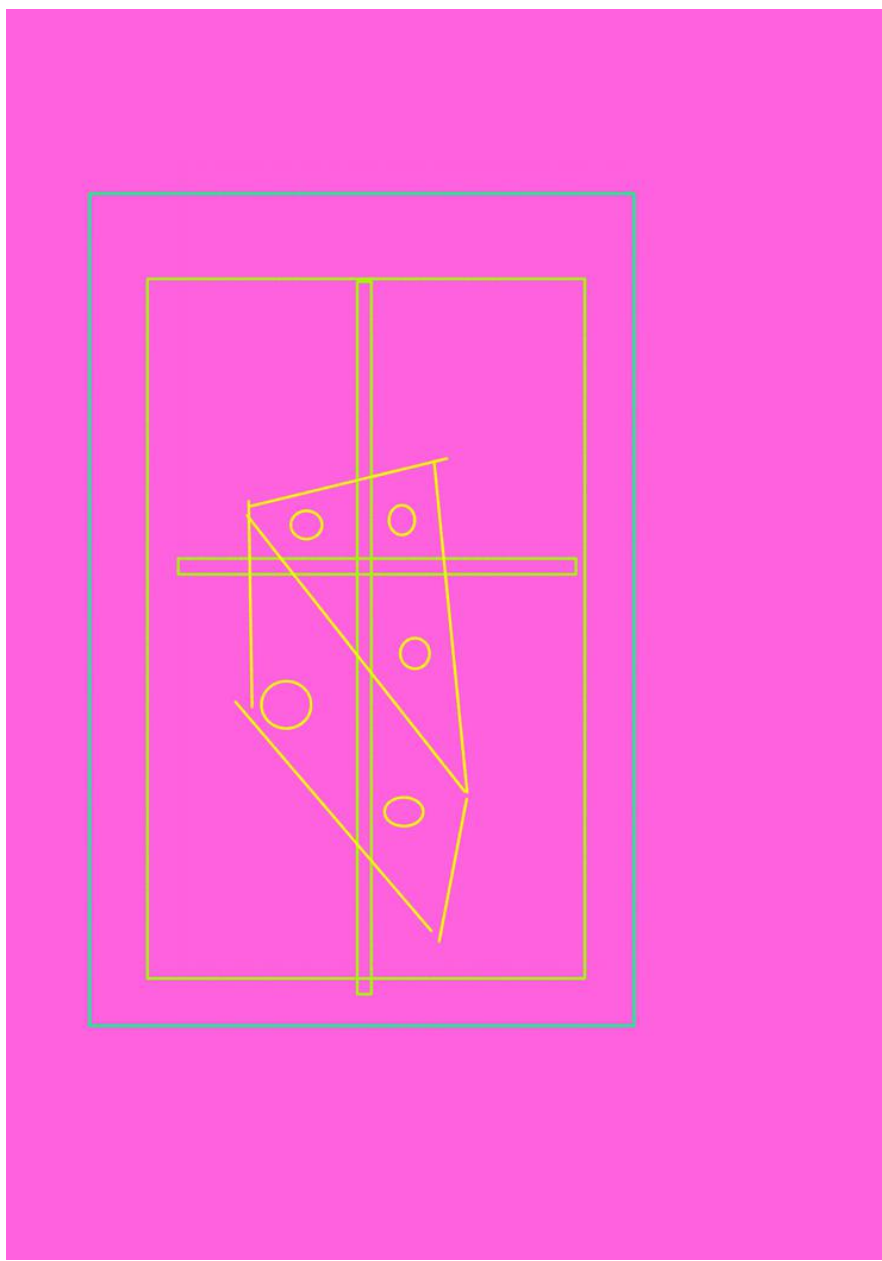


ERR-ik | The Dream

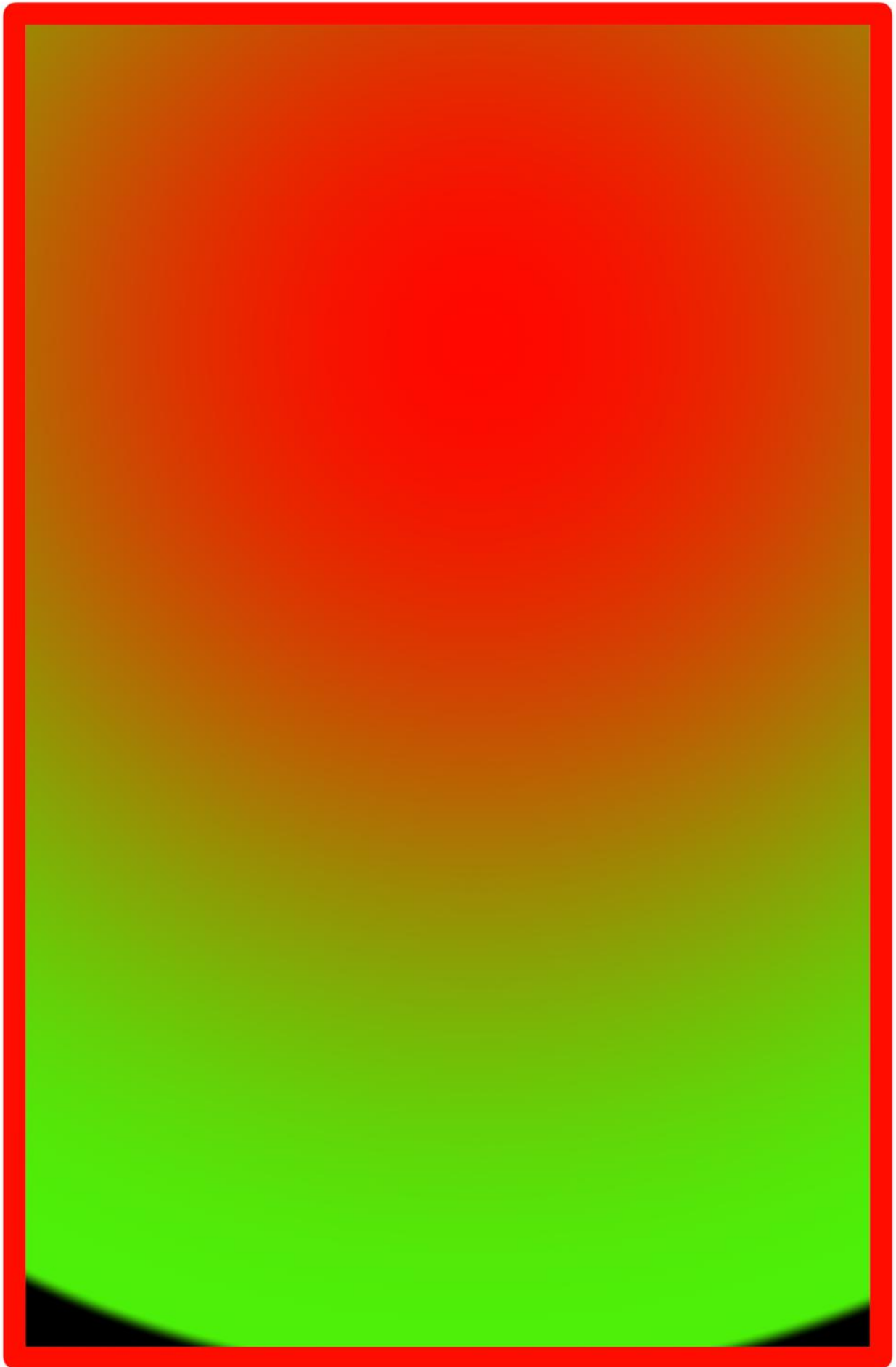
**Spandana Bandari** is a 28 year old artist residing in India. Her work spans a multitude of thematic that keep changing, however, are rooted in conflating between the whimsical and the dire. She strives to focus on little moments while forming a narrative where there's an acceptance of the aspect of "little" in these moments.

### *Project Statement*

These artworks were simply fun to make while also reflecting on the absurd in a whimsical manner. This isn't a commentary of any sorts but simply exists to make the observer hopefully say an internal "lol" as they see it.







## — Interview

# Michelle Dmitrović

**Can you tell us about your journey into photography and what inspired you to start capturing moments through the lens?**

I've never found it particularly easy to express myself verbally. I always feel like I'm grasping for the right words. That's where the visual component comes into play—it allows me to express my thoughts, views, emotions, and perspectives without the struggle in my head. That being said, my creative journey actually began with videography, which is why I believe my images have such a strong narrative quality. I kind of stumbled into photography along the way.

**How do you approach storytelling in your photography, and what elements do you focus on to convey a narrative?**

All of my images are approached conceptually. Or rather, I never really had another choice. I actually find it extremely difficult to just capture a moment as it happens in a purely documentary way. I've never had a knack for that. What I thrive in is creating moments and developing the narrative of the captured scenes myself. That's where I can unleash the full force of my creativity. But it's not just the concept and content of the image that are crucial for the narrative. To quote media theorist Marshall McLuhan: "The medium is the message." The conscious decision of which medium to use (e.g., digital, analog, which type of film, in what format) also conveys a statement.

**What role do emotions play in your work, and how do you ensure that the images you capture resonate with viewers on a deeper level?**



Michelle Dmitrović | Pitstop | 2024

Since photography is a form of expression for me, my emotional state certainly plays a big role. However, I wouldn't say that my intention is necessarily for the viewer to experience it in the same way. Images can resonate with people in very different ways, and of course, I'm happy when that happens. But for me, my own authenticity is what matters most.

**Your work showcases a unique blend of moments and emotions. Can you walk us through your creative process when preparing for a photoshoot?**

Before I pick up my camera, I spend a lot of time developing a clear vision for the shoot. I start by thinking about the mood, the story, and the emotions I want to capture. From selecting the right setting to choosing lighting and poses, every detail plays a role in creating an image that feels both intentional and natural. The biggest challenge is making sure that even though everything is carefully planned, the final photo feels like a real moment, full of genuine emotion. I focus on blending structured composition with spontaneity, so each image tells a story that feels raw and lived-in.

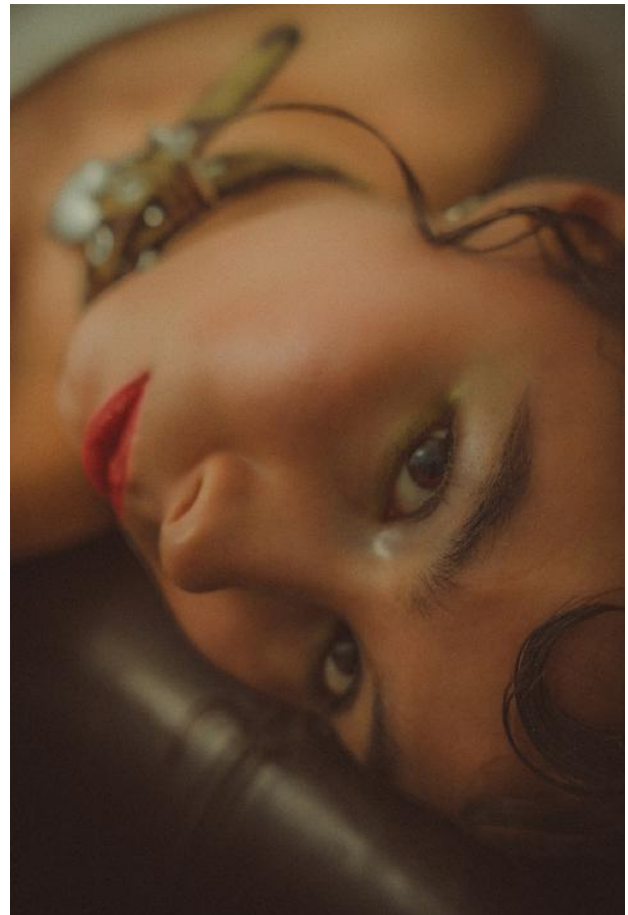


**What are some of the biggest challenges you've faced as a young photographer, and how do you overcome them?**

Being taken seriously. Especially not just as a young photographer but also as a female one. And not only by outsiders but even within the industry itself. Professional photography combines two aspects that women in our society are only reluctantly associated with: technology and business acumen. It feels like you need ten times the references before the same doors open for you as they do for your male counterparts—simply because these two traits are attributed to them from birth, while we, as women, have to prove ourselves. In this ongoing struggle, I'm grateful to have a large network of female creatives with whom I can share and discuss these challenges; yet, I wouldn't call this 'overcoming' it, but rather a form of finding solace—because it's unfortunate, and I don't believe we should resign ourselves to it.

**How does your background in Theater, Film, and Media Studies influence the way you approach photography?**

I believe that the theoretical, analytical, and historical aspects of my studies shape me a lot. This is also strongly reflected in my approach to



Michelle Dmitrovic | Editorial | 2025

photography. Creativity is one thing, but engaging with critical theories and historical contexts elevates it to another level, as it provides an extended foundation. What all these mediums have in common is that they serve as mirrors of a constantly evolving society—and they continuously reference and reflect back on each other. This interconnectedness allows me to explore different perspectives and helps me bring more depth to my projects.

**How do you balance technical aspects of photography, like lighting and composition, with the emotional storytelling you aim to achieve?**

It's important to understand the technical aspects of photography—but not necessarily to take technically perfect pictures that follow the golden ratio, are flawlessly lit, and never grainy. It's much more about knowing the aspects so that you can use them stylistically. The more familiar you are with it, the easier it becomes to execute your vision deliberately. This also allows you to intentionally break these conventional rules in a way that supports the storytelling. For me, it is essential to keep an intuitive approach and to explore what resonates with my creative vision.



Michelle Dmitrovic | Editorial | 2025



**Shalonda Jemison** is a middle age black woman from Ann Arbor, MI. Free the mind, and save the soul; equilibrium. Since receiving a diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder, Shalonda reclaims an appreciation for art. The art sessions in psychiatric hospitals helped regain a better understanding of communication with the world around her. Self-care is wealth, and she hopes to spark discussions about the connection between art, science, and soul.

Shalonda Jemison | 30mg Rx | 2024







Shalonda Jemison | Passion | 2023



# — Interview

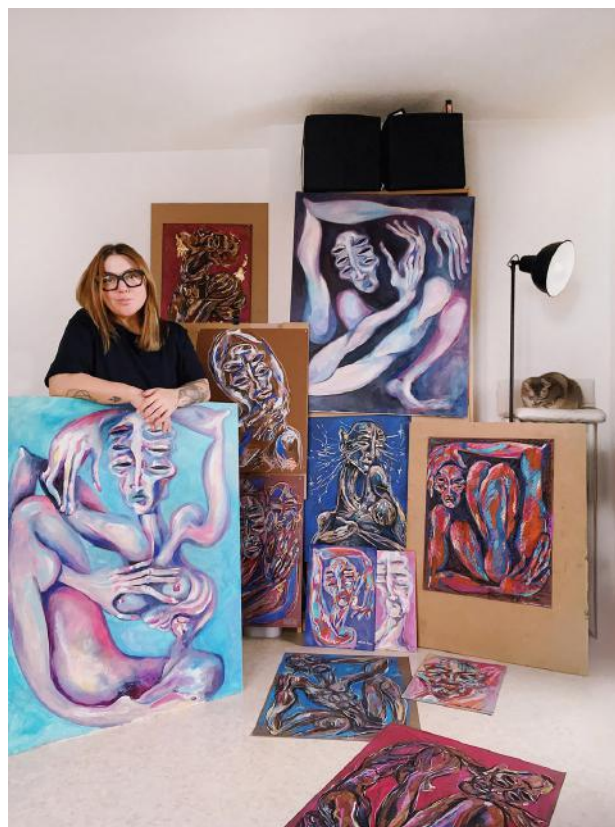
## Inna Alimova

**Your work explores complex emotional states through abstract forms. How do you decide on which emotional state to represent, and how does the process of creating this work help you understand these emotions better?**

I've been practicing yoga and exploring psychology for many years to better understand my own emotions and to feel comfortable coexisting with others. I interact with people all the time, and they inspire me because I see their experiences, their emotions, and I see the reflections of those emotions within myself. In this way, I try to capture different states that I feel or observe in others.

I've come to realize that, in a way, every person goes through certain stages—whether it's growing up or navigating various crises. People who engage in self-analysis, who try to understand their emotional states, who are deeply sensitive to emotions—all of them are sources of inspiration for me. Sometimes, it's just through conversation; other times, it's by observing these emotional states and attempting to express them through different visual techniques, metaphors, forms, and materials.

**Your art often addresses themes of self-discovery and transformation. How do you think your own journey of self-knowledge influences the way you approach your art?**



I try to observe myself and reflect on what I'm feeling in the present moment. It took me a long time to learn how to understand my emotions because I grew up in an environment where expressing feelings wasn't encouraged. For a long time, my emotional state was just a mix of different sensations—I simply felt that something was wrong: anxiety, anger, nerves, stress. It took a lot of time and focus to learn how to recognize and name my emotions. I'm still learning.

Through my work, I try to show this journey, these transformations. I aim to express different experiences because so many people go through similar confusion. My art helps me understand what's happening within me because I feel emotions, but I can't always articulate them. When I paint, then look at my work and analyze it, it also helps me understand what I'm going through.

**The idea of context—how one's background, environment, and family history shape a person—seems central to your work. Could you share a personal experience that shaped your view of this concept?**

I believe that people grow and are deeply influenced by their environment—their surroundings, family values, education, country, and political system. I grew up in a post-Soviet context where people didn't pay much attention to what they were feeling. It was an environment where human life had little inherent value, and that shaped me profoundly. People lived with a sense that they were small and insignificant, and that their desires and rights could easily be violated. The school system demanded conformity. If you stood out, you were immediately pushed back into the mold of what you were "supposed" to be. This rigid environment suppressed individuality and made it difficult to grow. I often felt like there was something wrong with me—that I wasn't good enough, smart enough, or talented enough. It took me



a long time to learn how to express myself. And even now, it's not always easy for me to show and embrace my individuality.

**Your figures are often ambiguous, not clearly defined as male or female. What role does this ambiguity play in the way your audience engages with your work?**

I often depict people as symbols, as figures, as shells filled with emotions and experiences, containing entire worlds within them. For me, this has much more value because I'm interested in how they think, what they feel, how they perceive the world, how they communicate with others, what they know, understand, and express. All of this matters to me much more than the form they're placed in.

In my work, the internal world is more significant than the external appearance. That's why I choose to portray people in an ambiguous way—because I'm focused on their inner experiences rather than on defining their physical identity. This ambiguity invites the viewer to connect with the emotions and ideas behind the figure, rather than getting distracted by surface-level characteristics.

**How do you see the relationship between personal trauma and creative expression? Do you believe your art acts as a way of processing or releasing emotions?**

Yes, in a way, my art is my therapy. When I experience intense emotions—whether I'm happy, in love, or deeply sad—I start to paint. I can't create when I'm in a depressive state, but otherwise, art helps me understand what's happening within me.

For me, it's not just about releasing emotions; it's also about exploring new ways of expressing them. I'm curious about finding different forms to convey what I'm feeling. My work becomes a way of processing these emotions, of making sense of them, and sometimes even transforming them into something meaningful.

**In your statement, you mention the impact of socio-political and cultural influences on the self. How have**



**these factors influenced your work, particularly as you transition from living in Ukraine to now working in Paris?**

Our environment greatly influences us, and that's true for me as well. I'm originally from Crimea, and although I moved away years ago, the 2014 annexation left my family there. Since then, there's been the pandemic, and then the war, which forced me to relocate again—this time to France. It was a challenging transition: a new country, a new language, and a profound sense of uncertainty and anxiety that hasn't left me for the past three years.

I haven't seen my parents in six years—first because of COVID, and now because of the war. This separation has deeply impacted me. One of the central themes in my work now is existential loneliness. Even though I have friends and a community here, there's a persistent feeling of disconnection. I feel like a person without roots, without a home—neither here nor there.

This sense of uprootedness has led me to explore themes of identity and belonging in my work. I often paint trees and roots, searching for a sense of grounding. I'm trying to understand who I am and where my roots lie, especially as I navigate this in-between state, longing for a place to truly feel at home.

**Your work encourages reflection and self-exploration. What do you hope viewers take away from your art? Is there a specific feeling or idea you wish to evoke?**

I don't aim to provoke a specific emotion. Instead, I want to spark curiosity about self-analysis, self-discovery, and personal growth. I believe that people who understand themselves—their desires, values, and place in life—can live more fulfilling lives because they're clearer about how they want to live and who they want to be around. It's not about knowing exactly what to do in life, but about the quality of relationships and communication. People who understand themselves are more accepting of others' differences and nuances. I find that interactions with such people are richer, deeper, and more meaningful.

**Lorra Ley** (b. 1991, Transnistria, Moldova) is a hybrid artist based in the Moldovan countryside. Raised in Germany, she weaves her Slavic heritage, love for mythology, and background in performance into introspective, dreamlike works. Her art, spanning painting, photography, and poetry, serves as a portal between worlds, exploring themes of the divine, transformation, and the liminal. Deeply connected to nature, she seeks to create pieces that resonate on a soul level, inviting viewers into quiet realms of wonder and reflection. She is currently working on her official business launch in spring 2025.

### *Project Statement*

In Norse mythology, the first human beings—Ask and Embla—were shaped from trees by the gods, bridging the realms of nature and spirit. This series of images delves into this primal connection, exploring the idea that humans and trees share more than just an origin ... they share a soul. The series invites the viewer to see trees not just as life-givers but as ancestors, keepers of wisdom and silent witnesses to the passage of time. By blending the mystical with the tangible, *Roots of the First* seeks to awaken a deep reverence for the natural world—reminding us that to sever our bond with trees is to forget the language of our own souls.



Lorra Ley | *Roots of the first* | 2024





# Duchna Łosiak

**Can you tell us about your journey into the world of ceramics? What initially drew you to this medium?**

At first, I actually avoided ceramics wherever I could, convinced it wasn't for me. But in the end, I found myself completely drawn into it, unable to resist. I have always been fascinated by working with materials their texture, shaping possibilities, and transformation process. What captivates me the most is that ceramics is a constant interplay of all four elements-water, fire, earth, and air. And that it's all about finding balance within them.

**How did your time at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts and your internship at BOSCH influence your approach to design and ceramics?**

At the Academy of Fine Arts, everything began for me. A bit out of defiance, I chose the ceramics design studio, which turned out to be a perfect fit. There, I learned to understand and respect the material I work with, while also thinking



outside the box. On the other hand, my internship at BOSCH opened my eyes to following and listening to technology. A good designer should always consider the possibilities and limitations of technology and optimize their projects accordingly. Combining these two worlds-the artistic and the industrial allowed me to create my own style, where aesthetics go hand in hand with technology.

**What inspired the concept of your porcelain hair jewelry collection, and how did the story of "Rapunzel" shape its narrative?**

The porcelain hair jewelry collection was my way of combining two fascinations-fairy tales and material. The story of Rapunzel symbolizes not only feminine strength but also delicacy and beauty. Porcelain perfectly reflects this duality—it is both fragile and enduring. The inspiration came from the idea of "captured beauty," which I wanted to free and make part of everyday life, giving it a new form through unique accessories.



**Can you elaborate on the experimental technique of hand-bending unfired slip? What challenges and discoveries did you encounter during this process?**

Experimenting with hand-bending unfired slip was both a challenge and a fascinating journey. At this stage, slip is extremely delicate and prone to deformation, requiring patience and precision. I discovered that the key lies in timing—knowing when the material is pliable enough but not too soft. This process also taught me to embrace imperfections, which often turned out to be the most beautiful and unique aspects of the final pieces.

**Sustainability seems to be a significant focus in your work. How do you balance functionality, aesthetics, and environmental consciousness in your designs?**

Sustainability is one of my top priorities. I strive to use materials in a thoughtful way and minimize waste throughout the production process. My designs are meant to be both beautiful and functional—objects that people will cherish for years. I believe that combining aesthetics with durability is the key to responsible design.



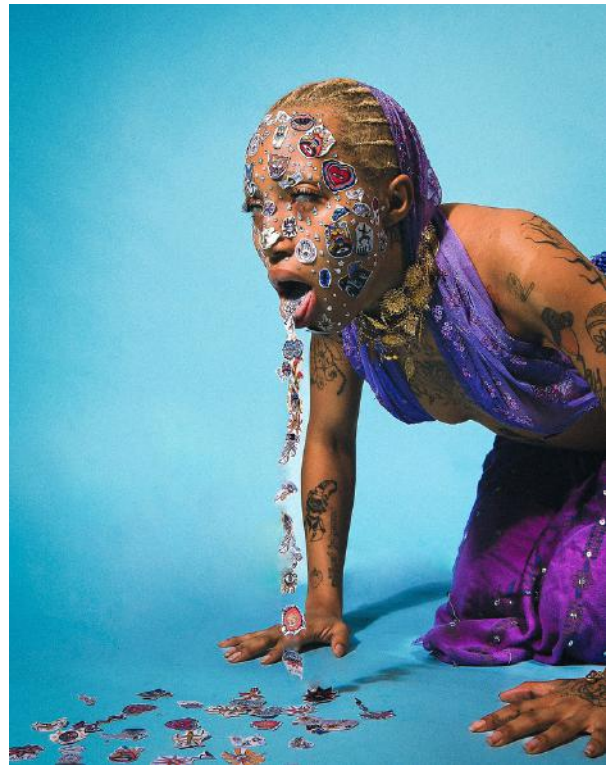
**Your work blends tradition with innovation. How do you ensure that your designs remain timeless while incorporating modern techniques?**

For me, tradition is the foundation, and modern techniques are the tools that allow it to evolve. My designs often draw inspiration from classical forms and ornaments, but I give them a contemporary feel through innovative processing methods or material experimentation. Sometimes, even a subtle change in proportions or a modern color palette can breathe new life into something traditional.

**What role does storytelling play in your creative process, particularly in your recent project?**

Storytelling is at the heart of my creative process. Every project has a narrative foundation—a story that inspires both me and my audience. In my recent collection inspired by "Rapunzel," storytelling played a crucial role. I wanted each piece to convey a sense of strength, freedom, and the beauty hidden in fragility. I believe stories give objects deeper meaning, making them more personal and emotionally resonant.

My name is **Azella Gardens**, and I am a freelance digital and film portrait photographer based in West Philadelphia. In 2018, I founded **Suny's Vision**, a photography business that brings my imagination to life, drawing inspiration from my inner child, ADHD, and my deep admiration for creativity and editorial work. My photography is a reflection of identity and creative Blackness, particularly within the underground arts scene. Through my lens, I seek to highlight the vibrancy and innovation that often goes unseen, with a focus on pushing the boundaries of visual storytelling. Since childhood, I've aspired to be an editorial photographer, working with magazines and brands that have fueled my passion since I was six years old. Suny's Vision allows me to combine those early inspirations with the rich creativity I see around me every day.



Azella Gardens | Art got your tongue | 2024

### *Project Statement*

The project I submitting is titled "**Scare The Kids**". This project was about tapping into my inner child's imagination, my relationship with ADHD, my love for Tumblr aesthetics, and my love/fearful relationship with thriller and slasher movies. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out where I fit as a photographer. In competitions, I saw so many photographers with bold, unique ways of standing out, and I kept asking myself what I could do that would be just as captivating. Eventually, I decided to take matters into my own hands, push beyond my comfort zone, and insert something I hadn't seen before—blank eyes. From that idea, I let myself explore what my inner child wanted to see and feel in my shoots, blending those emotions with the more complex feelings I experience as an adult. This project became a safe space for my creativity and ADHD to run free, allowing me to build and elevate ideas born out of both my quiet moments and the chaos of my daily life. A lot of the time and practice that went into this project came after I took a year-long break from photography after doubting myself. Returning to photography in 2024 and creating this project meant so much to me—not only because I was rebuilding my confidence but because the non-models I worked with elevated my vision. They trusted me, which gave me the tools to trust myself. They allowed me to experiment freely, helping me bring every creative idea to life. Between March 9 and October 31, 2024, I dedicated myself to this project, practicing relentlessly and turning everyday people into immortalized subjects that brought my inner world to life. Each person I photographed became a reflection of my chaos and creativity, and though the concept of blank eyes was central, every subject is strikingly different. The blank eyes evoke curiosity and unease, giving a subtle "demonic" effect without actually being sinister. But somehow it has scared some viewers throughout the process. I chose this unique feature not only to stand out but also because of my love for 2015 Tumblr aesthetics, characters like Nemesis from Resident Evil, Storm from X-Men, and The Undertaker, as well as the belief that eyes are the window to the soul. They're the first thing we look at when meeting someone, and removing that connection felt deeply impactful. This entire project was a way for me to overanalyze, reimagine, and challenge myself creatively. And in doing so, Scare the Kids was born.





# Lielie Sellier

**Your new series "Femmes bouleversées" explores the complex inner lives of women. What inspired you to focus on this theme, and how do you approach portraying these emotions visually?**

The feminine universe has always inspired me. Through my collages, I seek to explore the complexity of women's inner lives, their strength, their struggles and their aspirations. My daily observation of the women around me - friends, family, strangers I meet at random - fuels my thinking. I listen to their stories, capture snippets of conversations, immerse myself in testimonies that reveal their concerns and desires. Today, I feel an urgency to address these themes, because in some parts of the world, women's rights are regressing. Emblematic figures such as Simon Veil, Simone de Beauvoir, Gisèle Halimi and in the USA for example, Gloria Steinem fought for fundamental advances; it is essential not to lose this hard-won ground. It is therefore with this awareness that I decided to create the series "Femmes bouleversées", which highlights the challenges, tensions and emotions that run through women's lives.



In my work, I address subjects that particularly interest me: the biological clock and the pressure of time, the dictates of seduction, the mental burden that weighs on us every day, the temptations to which we sometimes give in in order to breathe and find ourselves. These moments when we lay down our arms to abandon ourselves to ourselves are also essential moments of humanity.

Visually, I translate these emotions by integrating various symbolic elements: a clock to evoke temporality and the injunction of time, a world map to situate these struggles in a global framework, a butterfly for rebirth, a bird for escape. The contrast of colors, the alternation between black and white and bright hues, as well as the use of my own photographs in the background, create a dialogue between the intimate and the universal.

With this series, I want to provoke reflection and provoke an echo in those who will stop in front of my work. Because beyond the images, it is a conversation about the feminine condition that begins, an invitation to observe, to listen and to never stop questioning the world around us.



**How does your background in Art History and spontaneous writing influence your collage work and creative process?**

My training in art history is an essential basis in my collage work. It has offered me a wide range of interpretations of the female figure throughout the centuries, thus enriching my reflection on the representations and symbols associated with women. This knowledge nourishes my vision and influences my aesthetic choices, allowing me to deconstruct and reinvent these images through collage. In addition, my spontaneous writing acts as a bridge between my emotions and my visual compositions. It allows me to capture and translate into images the feelings that listening to and observing women inspire in me. Thus, my collages become a sensitive and intuitive expression, where artistic memory and personal feelings mingle, giving birth to my series Femmes Bouleversées.

**In your compositions, you often mix personal photography with collage. How do you decide which photos to incorporate, and what do you feel they add to the overall narrative?**

When I walk, my look is drawn to everyday elements that resonate with me: a silent street, a frozen clock, a dancer's dress behind a window, the flickering light of a street lamp, or the



Lielle Sellier | Generations | 2025



Lielle Sellier | Injonctions | 2024

melancholy view of a deserted train platform. Each photograph I capture becomes a trace, a fragment of memory that can later dialogue with my collages.

When I compose a work, I select these images according to the feminine emotion I wish to express. A black and white photo, for example, can contrast with colored elements of the collage to evoke tension, duality, depth. It serves as an anchor for the composition, bringing an additional narrative dimension and an intimate resonance to the whole.

Thus, the integration of my own photographs is not limited to an aesthetic question; it enriches the overall story by infusing it with a part of experience, feeling, and intuition.

**The tension between external pressures and internal resilience is a recurring theme in your work. How do you balance these two elements in your compositions?**

In my collages, I balance the tension between external pressures and internal resilience by juxtaposing elements that dialogue with each other, creating visual and narrative contrasts. For example, in Silent solitudes, a woman in a black evening dress seems to fall from the ceiling or a window, while another woman – her double,

perhaps – sits peacefully, with a pot of paint brushes at her side. This scene illustrates a moment of change: the finery is abandoned (black dress, pumps), giving way to a simpler, freer outfit. It is a breath, a transition, a necessary step back before moving forward into a new day. The animal that passes through the composition reinforces this idea of instinct and natural movement.

**Your use of light and texture creates a rich emotional depth in your works. Can you talk more about how you play with these elements to evoke specific feelings in your audience?**

In my work, light and texture play an essential role in conveying emotions and nuances of moods. Just as light evolves throughout the day, feminine emotions go through subtle variations, between bursts and shadows, softness and intensity. I like to play with these contrasts to suggest moments of fragility, strength, or transformation.

As for textures, they enrich this emotional depth. Paper, cardboard, the addition of various elements become so many layers, symbolic layers representing the complexity of feelings. A rough surface can evoke a wound, while a translucent paper suggests a lightness or an impression of evanescence.



Lielie Sellier | Silent Solitudes | 2024

By combining light and texture, I invite the viewer's gaze to dive into my collages, to feel these sensitive variations, and to be touched by the inner stories they reveal.

**You've exhibited both in France and internationally. How do you feel the reception of your work differs in different cultural contexts?**

The reception of my work does not depend so much on the cultural context as on the personal journey of each viewer. It is the past, the present, the future, the intellectual baggage and the experience of each person that influence their view of my collages.

When faced with my work, some will see an intimate resonance, an echo of their own experiences, while others will perceive a different narrative, guided by their sensitivity and their history. Emotion, however, remains universal, even if it is expressed differently depending on the person.

Thus, beyond borders, it is these encounters between the work and the viewer that give my work a multitude of interpretations, each one as legitimate as the other.

**What role does nature play in your art? How do you connect it with the themes of femininity and emotional complexity that you explore?**

Nature occupies an essential place in my work, both by its symbolism and by its evocative power. It is a metaphor for the feminine emotions that I explore: changing, cyclical, sometimes gentle and soothing, sometimes wild and untamable.

The flowers, trees, water, and natural elements that I integrate into my collages translate this emotional complexity. A flower can represent fragility and resilience, birth, a rebirth, a wave evokes an inner upheaval, a misty landscape suggests a moment of doubt or introspection. Like nature, femininity is in perpetual transformation, marked by its own contrasts and rhythms. By mixing these organic elements into my compositions, I seek to express this inner strength that, despite the storms, always finds a path to the light.







**Andrey Khvatov**, a unique artist, was born on January 20, 1971, in Chelyabinsk. From 1991 to 1995, he painted souvenirs, which he successfully sold on Arbat Street in Moscow. Andrei's primary profession is construction. He had no formal art education and never attended art schools or any other educational institutions dedicated to the arts. In 2020, he first began experimenting with painting, using oil on canvas. In 2022, he took part in his first solo exhibition in Astrakhan, titled "The Visible and the Invisible," featuring more than thirty works. The exhibition took place at the regional state museum. The main subjects of his paintings include landscapes, animals, and still lifes. His paintings come to life, acting as a portal that transports viewers to an amazing world created by the artist. A world that is both visible and invisible, but clearly felt. A world that is elevated, full of scents and sounds—the rushing wind, the rustling of leaves, the chirping of birds, the murmur of water. A world that harmonizes and soothes. His main medium is oil painting. Currently, his works are in private collections across Russia. His works are now exhibited in two permanent exhibitions: in Moscow, at the "Contemporary Artists" Art Gallery, and in Astrakhan, at the "Together" Art Gallery.







Andrey Khvatov | Morning in the Bay

**Anne Lange** completed her Bachelor's degree in Multimedia | VR Design in 2023 and has been working as a digital designer for several years. Between her graduation and the start of her master's degree, she decided to pursue her fascination for analogue collages, which she discovered during her studies. Since the end of 2023, she has been presenting her work on the Instagram account @enna.egnal.

#### *Artist Statement*

During my studies, I discovered collage as a form of expression and quickly recognised its potential, which still captivates me today. Collage allows me to experiment with the materiality of paper, exploring its limits and transforming scraps into valuable elements of my art. The use of gold leaf as an accent in my work pays homage to traditional art and adds an extra dimension of refinement and lustre to my collages. Each piece is an intimate format that draws the viewer closer and invites personal interaction. The concentrated size of my work reflects the intensity and precision with which I arrange my cut-outs - a reflection of the patience and dedication I invest in each cut and placement. The collages combine meditative calm, aesthetic sophistication and a sustainable perspective through the use of recycled materials. My works are both decorative and profound; they invite the viewer to immerse themselves in a world where the simple reflects the complex.









## JMH Martin

As a contemporary artist, my work explores the intersection between human identity and the impact of technology on our everyday lives. Through my series Zoociety, I present a satire of ourselves, using archetypes that inhabit the collective unconscious, as proposed by Carl Jung, to reflect how we project and construct ourselves in the digital ecosystem. Each work represents a "selfie" of an archetypal character that encapsulates the emotions, behaviors, and contradictions of our hyperconnected era. These characters combine the universal and the individual, inviting the viewer to recognize themselves in them and reflect on the dynamics that govern our relationship with technology. I use materials such as wood and MDF, combined with traditional painting techniques, to transform an everyday object - the mobile phone - into a canvas that fuses the digital and the tangible. My artistic proposal seeks to question how these digital images shape our perception and behaviors, connecting the technological with the deeply human.

### *Project Statement*

**ZOOCIETY** is an artistic project that explores the nature of our identity in the digital age, where the individual becomes an amalgam of social archetypes that reflect both our obsession with technology and our collective aspirations. Each work portrays a unique character, a satire of ourselves, presented as a visual "selfie" loaded with symbolism. Inspired by Jungian archetypes and the patterns of the collective unconscious, these figures inhabit a universe where human emotions, technological anxieties and the narrative of the contemporary intertwine. ZOOCIETY's characters are not only mirrors that reflect our relationship with social media and mobile devices, but also a profound questioning of how hyperconnectivity redefines our relationships, our perception of reality and the concept of authenticity. Each piece invites the viewer to confront their own reflection through the eyes of these characters, becoming a dialogue between the human and the digital, the individual and the collective, the satirical and the philosophical. ZOOCIETY is, in essence, a visual critique of our time, a call to reflect on who we are in this modern zoo where society and technology converge.







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