

VISUALARTJOURNAL.COM

VISUAL ART JOURNAL

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— Intro

Hello, dear reader,

This is already the 18th issue of our magazine, and I am incredibly happy to see our project growing and evolving.

This time, I would like to talk to you about fairy tales. From the moment we are born, the first things we are introduced to are fairy tales and the world of imagination. We are told stories about invented worlds, and later, we begin to create them in our own minds.

As we grow up, many of us forget about this and hesitate to bring a little imagination and fantasy into the real world, which is often filled with real problems. But what do artists do? On the contrary, they refuse to let go of this world of fairy tales—a world where anything is possible, as long as you wish for it. They transfer it onto canvas, into clay, or any material capable of making the unspoken tangible.

"Let's imagine..." *"What if...?"*—I believe these are the very phrases that help adults step beyond the boundaries of routine and monotony, making our everyday lives brighter, richer, and more exciting.

So, sit back, allow yourself to dream, and immerse yourself in over 100 pages of imagination, creativity, and something that perhaps could never happen in reality—but that's precisely what makes it so wonderful.

Thank you for continuing to read with us!



Anna Gvozdeva

Curator of
Visual Art Journal

On the Front Cover:
**Juan Carlos Nava
Contreras**
Self Portrait
2024

On the Back Cover:
Matt Gabler
Blue Snowcone

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

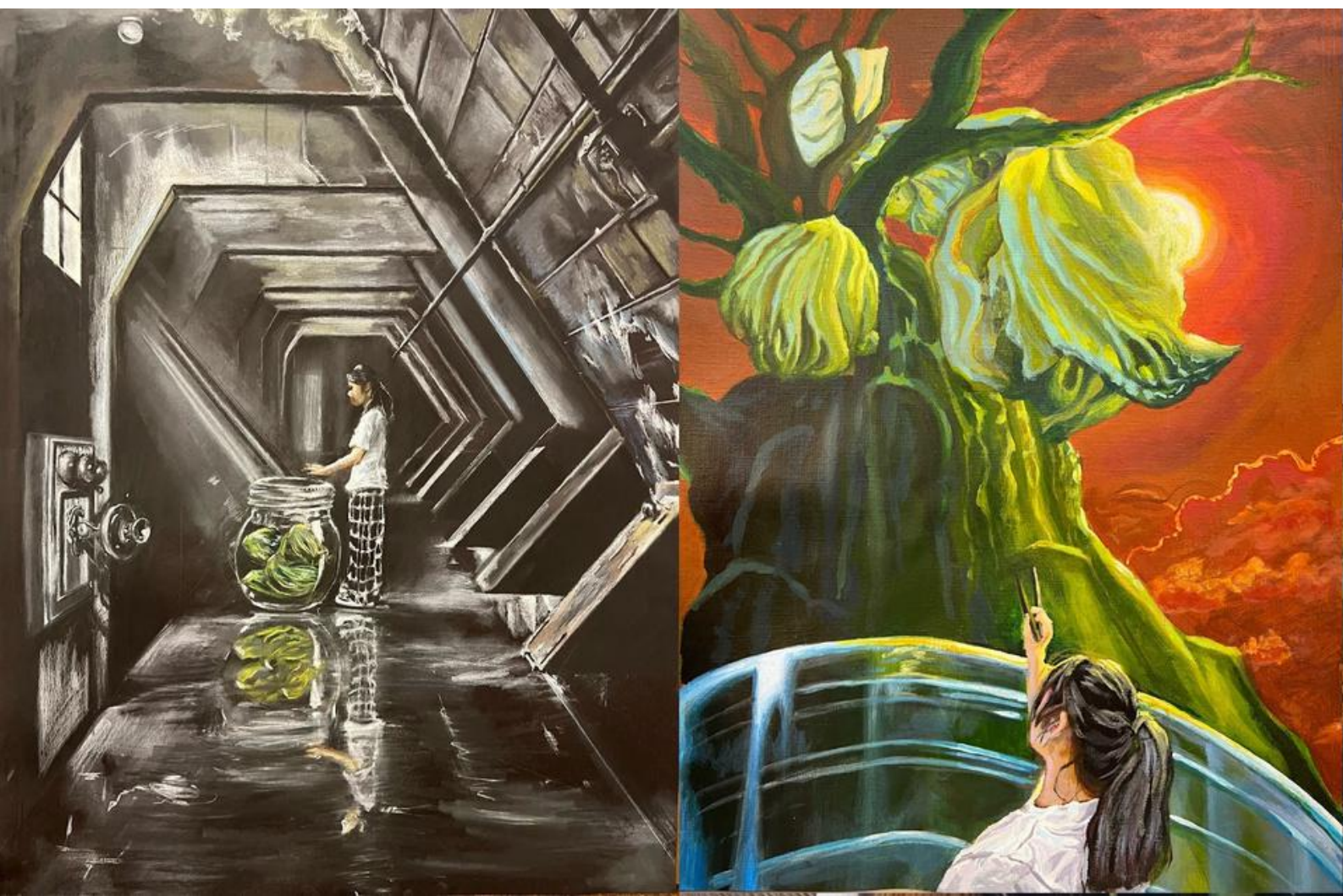
Hello everyone! My name is **Lana Pokhoday**, I work under the pseudonym "**Li Lu Ay**". I am a Spanish painter with roots in Ukraine. I have participated in several exhibitions and competitions in Spain and Ukraine. My works can be found in different galleries in Ukraine and Spain, also in private collections in Switzerland, Portugal, Germany, Spain, Italy, Netherlands and England. And I am glad to share my artistic creations with you. Painting is my passion, my way of living and communicating. Currently, I am focused on creating abstract and colorful paintings. In each of them I aim to achieve a harmonious and lively composition. Each one is unique and created in my studio.

Lana Pokhoday | Winter Lviv





Candy Qu is an Asian artist born in China and based in Los Angeles, California. She is currently pursuing a BFA in painting at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in Providence, RI. Candy is interested in using impressionistic, abstract expressionism, and cubism painting to illustrate life experiences to create fictional and mysterious scenes. Her art explores the interplay between seemingly ordinary materials to create a narrative of transformation and connections that mirrors the human experience. She creates bridges between the sensible world and the realm of the abstract, aiming to evoke feelings, thoughts and emotions that transcend the limitations of the physical world, shaping the unseen forces of our existence. Her artwork has been exhibited in New York A Space Gallery, Risd Memorial Hall painting department gallery, Risd Waterman gallery, Chaffey Community Museum of Art, California Institute of Art's main gallery, Garcia Center for the Arts, the Washington DC district office and Art-Collide Online Gallery. In the past, she received Spring 2024 honors designation at Risd, Rancho Cucamonga community art scholarship, exhibition proposal finalist of Contemporary Art Museum St.Louis, California Young Artist scholar, silver key in Scholastic painting and art portfolio, and second place in congressional art competition.





— Interview

Peter V. Bellanza

Can you tell us more about your journey as an artist? How did your early experiences, like winning the St. Helen gold medal, shape your artistic career?

My journey began with my love for the arts ever since I was a young boy I was always very good at drawing in grammar school. And after winning the medal for excellence achievement in art at my graduation in 2002 made it my passion to continue on from their. Eventually taking up art classes in high school for three years. And then eventually turning it into a business in the spring of 2018 and have been successful ever since.

Your medium of choice, alcohol marker brush and sharpie, gives your work a distinct aesthetic. What drew you to this medium, and how do you use it to express your ideas?

After creating my work with black and white pencils I decided to move on to color, while shopping in Michael's Arts and Crafts store I was drawn to the marker section. I always liked using markers but I realized their was something distinct about the alcoholic marker. By chance I



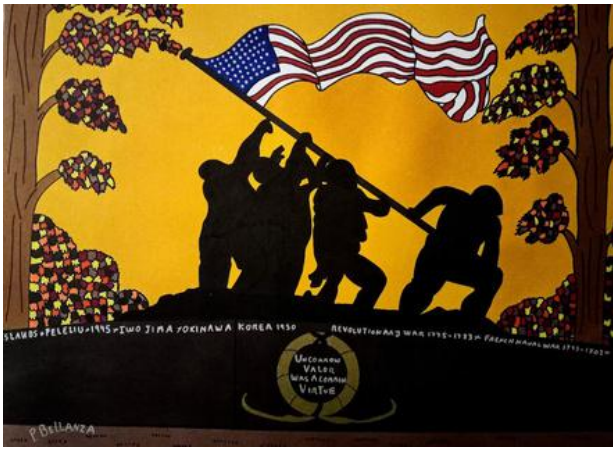
took a few of them home and decided to give it a try. The ideas I express with them depends on the subject I'm working on when I create the topic on canvas. For example I've done many paintings of the seven dwarfs but in I describe them as the seven little men in all of them. And as I describe them to the viewer/customer they are like the seven deadly sins the human being possess. And it is up for the viewer to decide which one represents which sin as they appear in the painting. I use many different topics when I create a caricature of a person, place, or thing in most of my art.

Many of your artworks are inspired by New York City and its people. How do you decide which moments or scenes to capture?

It depends upon where I' am in either one of the five boroughs during the time of the day. I could be in a particular place in any one of them. I see something interesting something I have not seen before I would snap a photo of it. And would use it as a reference to create my next/new topic that I want to share and market. During covid this was one of my benefactors where I would be walking around masked up and see how my everyday New Yorkers would react to a world they are having a hard time to adjust to. One of my paintings depicts that and the people whom I meet have interesting stories to share. And I feel they are sharing it with me when I create them on my canvases.

Peter V. Bellanza | Brownstones in Autumn





Your work has been described as a blend of Andy Warhol and Edward Hopper. Do you feel influenced by these artists, or is there another artist who inspires your style?

Yes I was always a strong admirer of both Warhol and Hopper and another artist who is a big influence is the late great Bob Ross. I would watch his show the Joy of Painting and would watch him for hours as he would create what he would call "his world" on his canvas. Some of my landscape ideas come from his inspiration as well.

Can you walk us through your creative process, from initial idea to the finished piece?

When I have my subject all thought out whether it be landscape, portrait, or cartoon I begin the process with the outline with the sharpie. The sharpie is the first tool to hit the canvas and once the outline is completed with the sharpie I paint it all in with the alcohol marker. And once the painting is completed the sharpie puts the finishing touches on it. So all in all the sharpie is the first and the last tool I use to begin and complete my work.

Working in the entertainment industry seems to have played a role in your decision to pursue art professionally. How has your past career influenced your artistic style?

My past career had nothing to do with my artistic style little did I know that my artistic style was in my future I didn't see it until I started it and I'm glad it has all worked out really well for me.

What has been the most rewarding part of exhibiting your art in galleries across New York City and Long Island?

Its an opportunity to get my work out to the general public more and more and an opportunity for me to meet and greet the viewers, sell them the paintings if they like what they are seeing in front of them, and exchange my information with them if they would like to purchase off of me at a later occasion. Especially for when the next gallery that I partake in whenever that takes place.



Peter V. Bellanza | Night Life



Peter V. Bellanza | Lighthouse in Maine

Michael Davydov

International artist, born in Russia in 1996. From early childhood he was fond of drawing, and in his student years he participated in several joint exhibitions of fine arts. He actively began his creative activity as an artist in 2019, after moving to Ukraine, exploring and being inspired by the genre of miniature and sculpture, and later combining them. The author's style is basically a mixture of elements of miniature architecture and natural motifs, placed in various glass vessels. He has a successful experience of joint exhibitions of his sculptures in Europe. Several hundred works are in private collections around the world. Currently lives and works in Denmark.

Artist Statement

My work explores the concepts of home, memories and nature. Home for me is not only a building, but also a set of emotions associated with warmth, safety and the people who make it so special. In my projects, I strive to reveal the multifaceted nature of this theme, looking at it from different angles. Using natural materials such as wood, combined with artificial ones, I create textures and colors reminiscent of nature. My goal is to create miniature worlds under glass that symbolize the fragility and uniqueness of our existence. These works reflect my personal experiences of migration and finding my place in the world. My style combines elements of modernity and realism, while maintaining a minimalist approach to the subjects. I strive to evoke in the viewers bright memories of childhood, fairy tales and travels, awakening their imagination and giving a feeling of warmth and comfort. I am convinced that the spread of good and bright ideas through art plays an important role in our society. In the future, I plan to implement large projects that will allow me to explore and explore topics that are important to me even more deeply.



Michael Davydov | Birch Grove



— Interview

Leia Davliakos

Your work embodies a dialogue between color and Hellenic memoir. How do your Greek roots influence your choice of subjects and color palette?

My Greek heritage is the foundation of my artistic vision, deeply influencing my choice of subjects and their complementing color palettes. I often reflect on moments spent on the cliffs at sunset in the land of my ancestors, where I would breathe in inspiration through the crashing of the waves and the stillness of the rocks. In those moments, I envisioned how a brush might move parallel with the rhythm of the sea, trying to translate the natural world's motions into a painting. To me, the natural world is evidence of profound artistry. These experiences, rooted in my ancestors' stories, shape my work. Their lives, choices, and beliefs molded the artistic soul I have inherited, and I honor their legacy by exploring themes reminiscent of their journeys. My palette draws from the deep blues and earthy tones of the Aegean and the golden warmth of Mediterranean light.

Byzantine Encaustic Wax Painting is an ancient and challenging technique. What drew you to this medium, and how has it shaped your artistic expression?

I was drawn to this medium because of its ability to



express both texture and depth in a way that no other technique can. Melting beeswax and pigment to create layers of rich, malleable, and textured surfaces allows me to bind color and texture. As I work, I envision the movement of my brush alongside the rhythms of nature, the crashing waves, and the stillness of the rocks along the shoreline. This technique shapes my artistic expression by encouraging me to slow down and become deeply immersed in the process—creating works that are not just seen but felt, like the surfaces of ancient icons. It is through this ancient medium that I am able to create a dialogue between history, memory, and personal reflection.

Your mentor, Gerontissa Theophano, plays a significant role in your creative journey. Can you tell us more about how her guidance has influenced your work?

Under her guidance, I was able to learn the Encaustic Wax process and its Byzantine origins. Her guidance in working with this medium has been invaluable. She taught me how to approach my work with patience and humility, emphasizing the importance of the creative process. Under her mentorship, I learned how to express the essence of my heritage while maintaining a deep sense of reverence for the traditions that have shaped me. Her teachings inspire me to create works that reflect my personal journey and the legacy of those who have come before me.

You travel to Paros, Greece, for inspiration and painting. How does the environment and culture of Paros shape your creative process?

Jane Morris Pack, my artistic mentor on the island, has been instrumental in both challenging and revitalizing my work. Through her guidance, I have learned to see my entire life and my art through a new lens. She encouraged me to step beyond the familiar into a

space where I am a stranger to my own comfort zone. It is in this unfamiliar territory that I've found the purest way to discover myself. Her approach to earth-toned palettes, observing the world with intent, and classical oil painting technique has allowed me to shape my identity, guiding my creative journey and giving breath and life to tradition.

Joaquin Sorolla is known for his masterful use of light and color. How do you incorporate his influence into your work while still retaining your own unique style?

I incorporate his influence by studying how he used light to evoke emotion and bring life to his compositions. In my work, I try to create a similar sense of luminosity and vibrancy but anchored in my heritage. I love the organic warmth created as light dances on surfaces and water, and I aim to channel this depth and dimension in the dialogue of my own work.

How do you balance the classical elements in your art with more contemporary approaches?

I see this balance as a dialogue, one that honors the legacy of the classical while embracing the freedom and experimentation of the contemporary. Classical elements ground my art in the heritage and spiritual ideas that inspire me. The way I layer materials and



interpret stories allows me to bridge two worlds, creating pieces that feel both rooted in tradition yet relevant.

What are some of the key themes or emotions you hope viewers experience when interacting with your art?

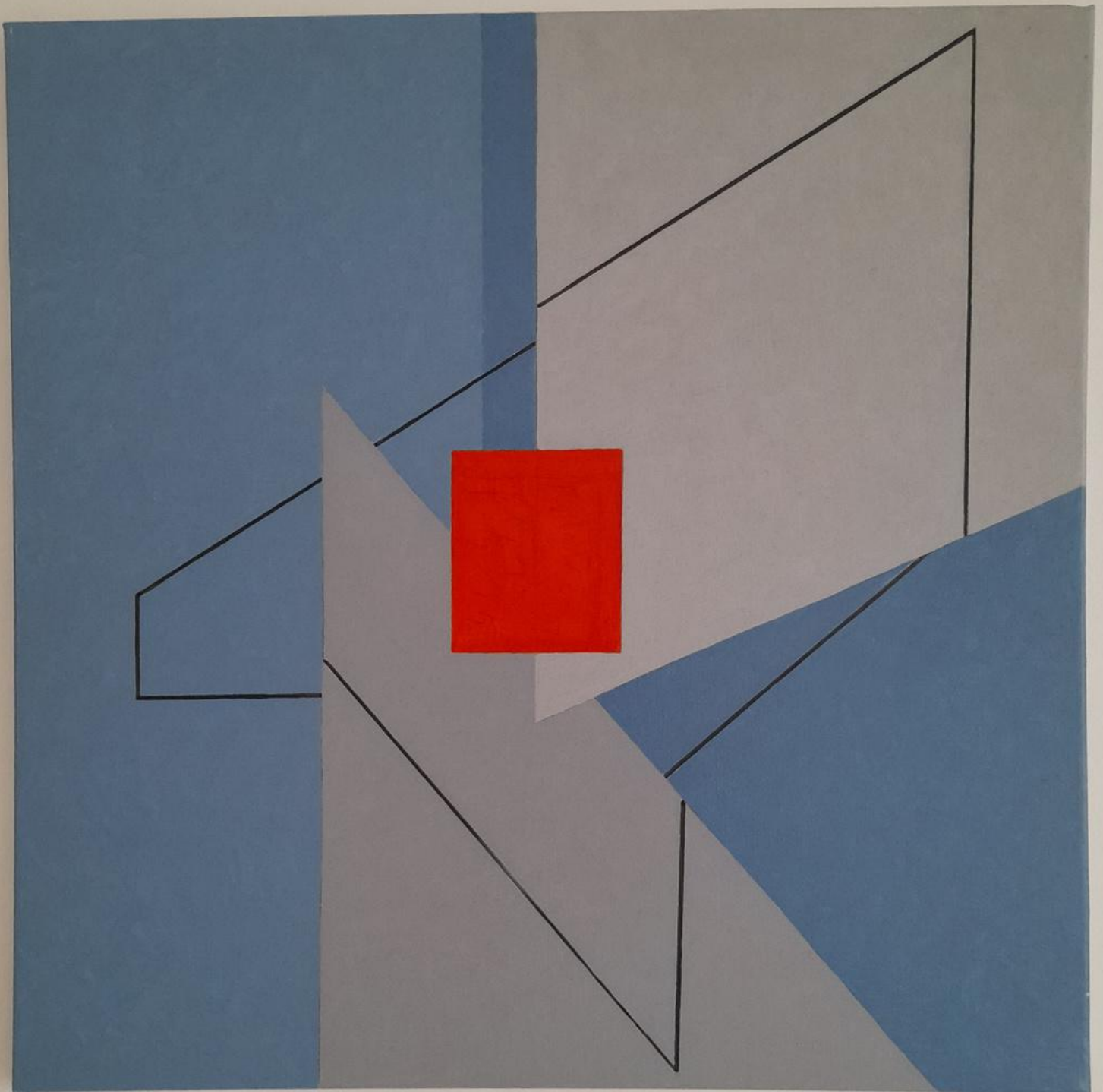
My art is a Hellenic memoir, a journey through color and texture that bridges the echoes of my ancestors with classical mediums. When viewers engage with my art, I hope they experience a sense of connection to the past, to memory, and to the natural world. In addition to this, I hope they find an appreciation for the beauty in both the seen and the unseen.



John van Brakel is a Dutch Artist/Painter creating Abstract/Geometric work. Born and living in the city of The Hague on the West Coast of the Netherlands.

Artist Statement

The composition is created by a combinations of lines. A certain pattern is created from which the painting presents itself.





Kazuhisa Oishi

Nature photographer/digital artist

Born in Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan in 1982. He was born and raised in Shizuoka Prefecture, surrounded by rich nature, he developed his sensitivity as a nature photographer. At first, he took photos of flowers such as cherry blossoms, camellias, and hydrangeas as a hobby, but in 2020, he encountered Japanese wildflowers and became fascinated by their charm. Since then, he has continued to share the charms of Japan's nature, with a focus on Japan's wildflowers, to people all over the world, including Japan, mainly on Instagram.

The artist's works have already been published in the Visual Art Journal.

Kazuhisa Oishi | Komagane Pond and the autumn leaves of the Central Alps | 2021





Kazuhisa Oishi | In full bloom in Ogawa Village Banjo cherry blossoms and the Northern Alps | 2023

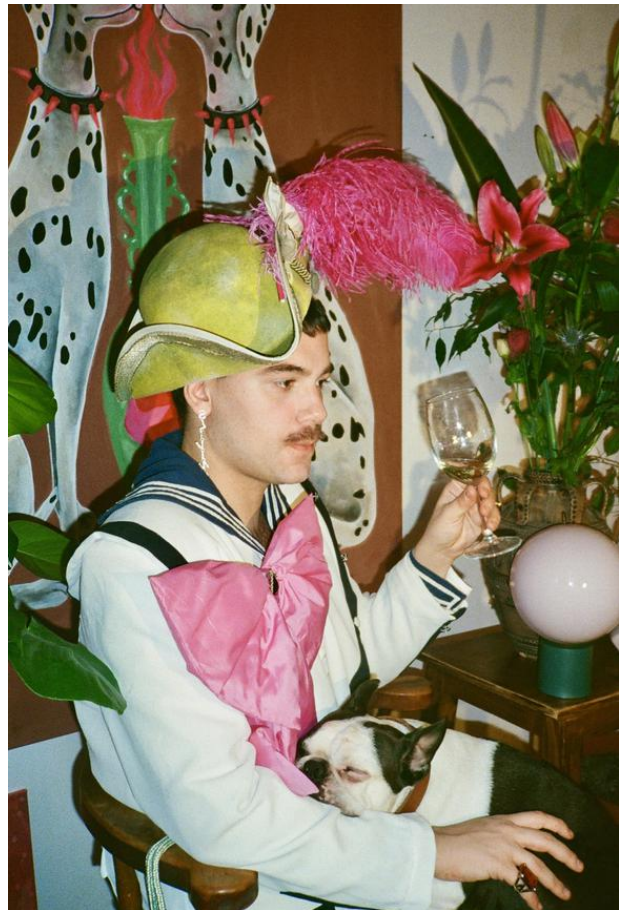
Japan has four distinct beautiful seasons, and the Japanese people have admired and cherished the beauty of the four seasons since ancient times. Cherry blossoms in the spring, hydrangeas in the summer, red leaves in the fall, camellias and plum blossoms in the winter, and many other wildflowers bloom everywhere from the lowlands to the high mountains. I was born and raised in Shizuoka Prefecture. Shizuoka Prefecture is located between Tokyo and Osaka in the Japanese archipelago, and is home to Mt. Fuji, one of the world heritage sites, the Southern Alps, and the volcanic group of the Izu Peninsula. It has a rich natural environment ranging from lowlands to alpine zones. This environment, where abundant nature is a given, has given me the foundation as a nature photographer. I discovered cameras around 2017. At first, I carried a digital camera with me and enjoyed going to the botanical garden every week to take pictures of hydrangea, hibiscus, and camellia flowers. At first, I was satisfied just having fun photographing such flowers, but one day I learned that there was a kumagaisou on the grounds of a shrine in the town where I lived, so I went looking for it myself. When I took photos with my mirrorless camera, I was really drawn to the beauty and vitality of the kumagaisou flowers blooming in the wild. In the fall of that year, I learned that there was a wild wildflower called Shirahigesou in Aichi Prefecture, and I really wanted to see it with my own eyes. In the natural habitat of Shirahigesou, it is surrounded by a fence. Although I was only able to take pictures with my camera through the peephole, I was able to see a beautiful scene of the sun shining and reflecting on the flowing water. I became even more fascinated by Japan's wildflowers and became obsessed with them. Wildflowers do not bloom to exist for someone, nor do they bloom to wait for someone. They exist solemnly to leave behind descendants for the next generation. When I point my lens at the wildflowers in full bloom, they never speak. I feel like the message is being sent to me in a mysterious telepathic way. Through the lens of my camera, I can capture the momentary beauty of Japan's natural wildflowers and all kinds of flowers. I would like to take cut-out photographs and deliver them to the viewers.

— Interview

Jovan Glusica

Your work merges fine art, scenography, and fashion. How do these disciplines influence one another in your practice?

The connection between my practices allows me to explore storytelling and world-building on another level. In scenography, I learned to think about space and atmosphere, how an environment can emote drama. This translates into my art, because compositions often feel like a stage. Fashion, on the other hand, brings a tactile, wearable dimension to my work. It challenges me to consider how art envelops the body, creating a dialogue between personal identity and the public gaze.



Could you tell us more about your transition from studying Stage Design in Serbia to pursuing Contextual Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna?

The shift from stage design to contextual painting was both natural and transformative. In Serbia, stage design taught me to focus on constructing narratives and visualizing abstract ideas in three dimensions. When I moved to Vienna, the Academy of Fine Arts offered me the freedom to expand on those ideas. Contextual painting encouraged me to consider how art interacts with its surroundings, be it societal, historical, or cultural contexts. It was a process of unlearning some constraints while finding new ways to infuse storytelling into my visual language.

How does your cultural background in Serbia influence your creative process and artistic expression today?

Growing up in Serbia, a region rich with history, folklore, and resilience, deeply shaped my artistic voice. There's a duality in my work, balancing the

weight of tradition with the drive for contemporary expression. The cultural symbols and stories I was surrounded by often emerge in my pieces, reinterpreted through a modern lens. My background also instilled a sense of resourcefulness, which influences how I approach challenges in both art and life.

Your work features unique symbolism and vivid imagery. Can you explain the significance behind some of the recurring motifs in your pieces?

Many of the recurring motifs in my work are rooted in personal experiences and universal archetypes. For instance, I often feature animals like birds and dogs. Birds are a nod to my father, who was passionate about racing pigeons, a hobby I couldn't stand as a child but have come to deeply appreciate as an adult. I'm now a big advocate for pigeon rights because they're such remarkable, beautiful creatures.

Dogs, on the other hand, serve as allegories for societal archetypes and, at times, even as self-portraits.

The vivid colors and dreamlike compositions reflect my desire to blur the line between reality and imagination, inviting viewers to emotionally connect with the work in their own way.



Can you share a particular moment or event in your life that has deeply impacted your artwork?

Honestly, there's many moments I could mention now, but I think existing in today's world is plenty inspirational.

What do you hope viewers take away from experiencing your artwork?

The interplay of beauty, glamour, and violence in my work. I'm fascinated by how these elements coexist. How something beautiful can carry an undercurrent of tension or unease. The allure of what's polished and perfect versus the raw, sometimes brutal reality underneath.

How do you approach collaboration with other creatives, particularly in the fields of fashion or theater?

Collaboration is an exciting way to expand my practice and explore ideas I wouldn't have considered alone. I would say that people who need people are the luckiest people in the world. Don't you think? I approach every collaboration with curiosity and respect, always seeking to find the balance between my vision and the collective goal.

Carlo Ferraris

I like to create visual puzzles depicting the day-to-day reality, from the home of ordinary people involved in “everyday” domestic rituals. Because I think while my subjects can seem completely normal, the setting, which initially seem completely normal and innocuous, soon reveal some strange detail or illogical paradox. But in spite of this contradiction, I do not count consider them as surreal situations. I think reality needs some illogical intervention to be more “real.” Without it, life would continue its existence, but it would be a flatter world.





— Interview

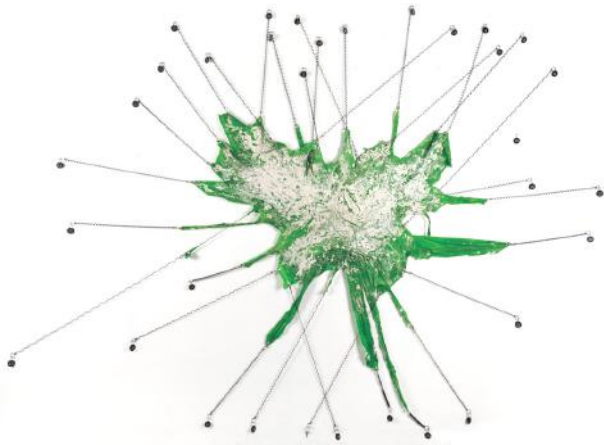
Yeejae Kim

How have your personal experiences growing up in South Korea influenced your artistic practice, particularly your exploration of beauty standards?

Growing up in South Korea, I was constantly exposed to rigid beauty standards that emphasized fair skin and certain body types. These societal expectations shaped the way I viewed myself and others. My experiences with colorism and body image were not just personal struggles, but deeply embedded in the cultural fabric. In my work, I aim to confront these standards by dissecting how they're perpetuated, particularly through practices like skin whitening and the pressure to conform to a specific mold. I explore how beauty standards impact our sense of identity, using materials and performance to critique the idea of beauty as something that needs to be achieved, rather than accepted.

Your work often focuses on the intersection of vulnerability and societal norms. How do you channel these concepts into your sculptures and installations?

In my practice, vulnerability is a key theme because it's often through our most personal, fragile experiences that societal pressures are most felt. I channel this vulnerability into my sculptures and installations by creating objects that engage the body—either through performance or tactile interaction. For example, in pieces like "Mogyoktang," I used the ritual of exfoliation, a practice that embodies both care and violence, to symbolize the internal conflict between



self-acceptance and the societal drive for perfection. My sculptures often incorporate materials that are both delicate and harsh, reflecting the tension of trying to meet external expectations while confronting personal insecurities.

Could you describe the inspiration and process behind your recent project, Happy Factory, and the significance of the repeated, imperfect faces in the installation?

"Happy Factory" was inspired by the larger systems of beauty, competition, and societal hierarchy. Rather than focusing on individual experiences, I wanted to create a commentary on how these systems operate on a collective level. The repeated, imperfect faces in the installation reflect the idea that no matter how much we try to conform, the idealized version of beauty is always out of reach. Each face in the piece is slightly different, symbolizing the constant struggle to fit into a mold while acknowledging that true perfection is unattainable. The repetitive nature of the faces emphasizes how the cycle of striving for perfection is unending, creating a sense of discomfort for the viewer.

How does the Korean exfoliating mitt symbolize your relationship with beauty standards and cultural expectations?

The Korean exfoliating mitt, a tool often used for body scrubbing in public bathhouses, represents the physical manifestation of beauty standards. Growing up, I was subjected to treatments designed to make my skin "cleaner" and "lighter," which ties directly into the colorism embedded in Korean beauty culture. The mitt itself symbolizes both the violence and care embedded in these beauty practices—scrubbing away imperfections while reinforcing the need to conform. In my work, I've used the mitt as a metaphor for the societal pressure to erase parts of ourselves in order to fit into an idealized version of beauty.

The kinetic elements in your work create an immersive experience for viewers. How do you decide on the movement, sounds, and interactivity of these elements?

The kinetic elements in my work are designed to be more than just physical movement—they serve as metaphors for the internal dynamics of struggle and release. For instance, in some of my recent installations, I use sound and movement to reflect the tension between the body and the system. The decision on how to move these elements comes from considering the emotional impact I want the viewer to feel. The sounds can be jarring or soothing, depending on whether I want to evoke discomfort or reflection. Movement can be slow and deliberate, or rapid and chaotic, representing how societal pressures can feel overwhelming and relentless. The interactivity invites the viewer to engage with the piece on a personal level, making them an active participant in the narrative of struggle and healing.

You describe a mix of playfulness and discomfort in your art. How do you achieve this balance, and what reactions do you hope to evoke in your audience?

The balance of playfulness and discomfort in my art comes from creating a space where the viewer is invited to question the status quo, but also to engage with the work in a way that feels approachable. I often incorporate humor or absurdity in my pieces, which



creates a sense of playfulness, but then juxtapose that with elements that make the viewer feel uneasy, like repetitive motion or exaggerated body imagery. This balance helps to make the critique of societal norms more accessible while still challenging the viewer. I hope the audience walks away feeling both reflective and unsettled—questioning not only the beauty standards they may uphold but their complicity in perpetuating them.

In your statement, you mention the “impossibility of fitting our bodies to obsessive standards.” How do you see your art contributing to the conversation about individuality versus societal expectations?

My art seeks to challenge the idea that we need to fit ourselves into a mold created by external expectations. The impossible pursuit of fitting into narrow beauty standards is at the heart of much of my work, and I use my sculptures, performances, and installations to make visible the tension between individuality and societal pressure. By portraying the body in ways that are exaggerated or deformed, I aim to highlight the absurdity of trying to fit into one singular idea of beauty. Through this process, I hope to spark a conversation about how we can begin to value individuality over conformity and understand that our uniqueness is not something that needs to be erased to fit into society's ideals.

Barbara Marcantonio is a creative, working with graphic design, illustration, motion graphics and loves to experiment with different medias such as collages and painting. Born in São Paulo, Brasil, she started studying graphic design, but her love to travel sent her to New Orleans and Barcelona to learn more about art, animation and illustration. She has been working in the editorial world for renewed Brazilian magazines such as CAPRICHÔ and ELLE Brasil. She is always creating, to convey a message or to express her feelings and vision of the world in her illustrations. Barbara is currently a freelance designer, creating editorial illustrations for ELLE View, the digital magazine of ELLE Brasil. She has done two exhibitions in Barcelona and is preparing her first illustrated book.

Artist Statement

Barbara loves to transform her internal world and surroundings in colorfull illustrations.





— Interview

Borbala Eszteri

In your artwork, there is a strong sense of intuition. How do you balance the emotions and thoughts you wish to express with the technical aspects of painting?

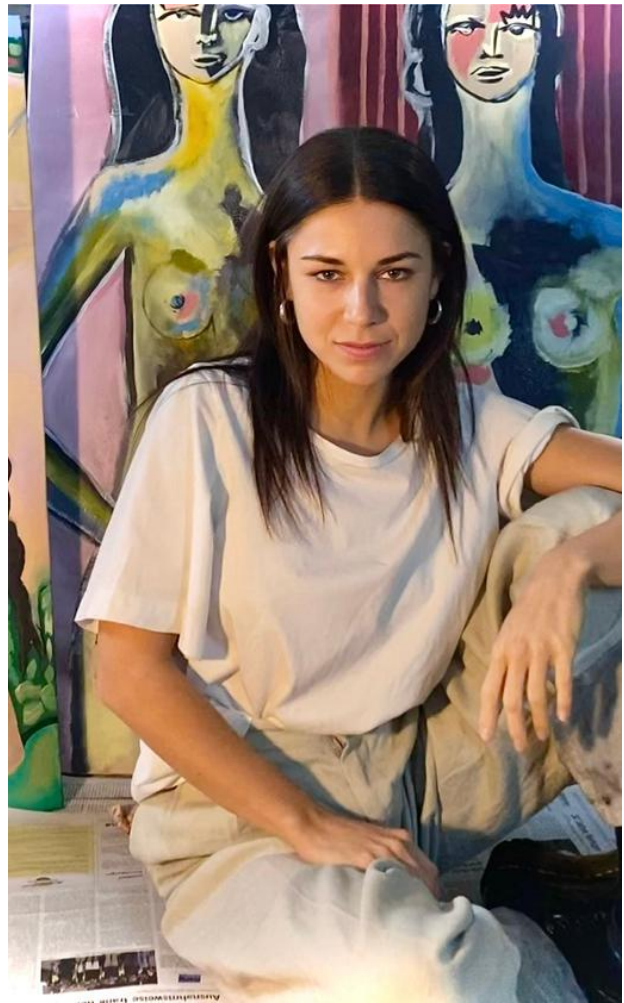
Most of the time I start painting to a certain song. Music is like a switch on and off mechanism for me and I can listen one song multiple times, I mean really on repeat for hours to inspire me through the start of a painting process. It keeps me in one certain mood and helps me to focus.

You are self-taught in oil painting. What challenges did you face when learning this medium, and what drew you to it?

Yes, to this day I have never watched videos or read books to learn how to paint with oils. But even acrylic was new to me when I started painting.

First of all, I had no idea how slowly oil paint dries on canvas, and this fact made me work with it gently and slowly.

In fact, the challenge itself drew me to use oil, because acrylic is much easier to work with. It takes a lot longer and a lot of patience to work with it. It has even shaped my personality, and I have become much more patient in many areas of life than before.



Your artistic journey began with fashion design before moving to canvas painting. How did this transition influence your approach to art?

I really enjoyed drawing model sketches. With watercolor, it was so fluid to draw the lines, the clothes, and the figures. I think these sketches eventually led me to experiment with painting elongated figures.

What advice would you give to other self-taught artists who are trying to find their voice and style in the art world?

I would say put in the effort and invest the time to create something you can be proud of in your own eyes. A lot of people these days, when everything is so quick, expect quick results, even on canvas. I mean, Da Vinci spent 4 years painting The Last Supper, and it's a masterpiece for the world. I think your voice and style will eventually find you if you spend time alone, creating and listening inward.

The figures in your artwork often seem to be in motion despite being captured in stillness. Can you elaborate on how you achieve this dynamic quality in your work?

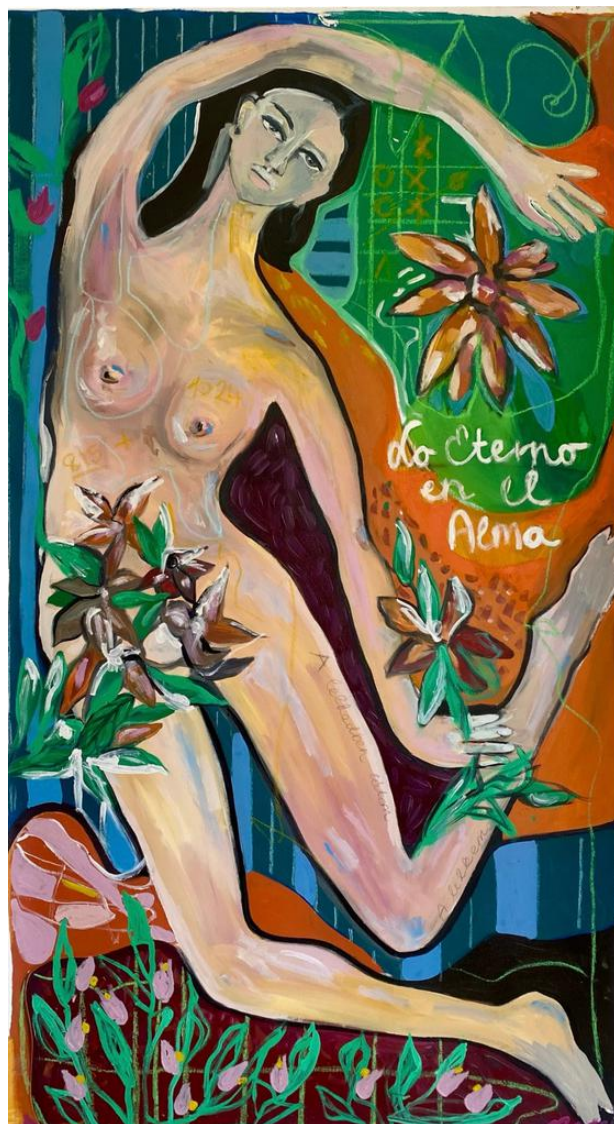
My method is to draw the lines in one go. I try to draw the basic lines with charcoal or pencil and then apply the paint. Honestly my goal is, to achieve more softness in the movement, I often feel the figures are not smooth enough. I learn by doing.

Your works often focus on the female form and movement. What is it about the female body and its fluidity that inspires your work?

On one hand, as mentioned earlier, it comes from the model sketch.

On the other hand, I am a woman, so I am more feminine than masculine and I love natural beauty, imperfection and the confidence that I try to express through my paintings: ultimately, women in motion.

The figures are often in a kind of dance-like movement, I think dance is fun, and you know,



there is quite a lot of bad, depressing stuff in the outside world, I want to feel good when I look at my paintings. The dance, the movement, the flexibility, the colors and the flowers are beautiful and inspire me every day.

How do you decide on the colors and textures you use in each piece? Do you have a particular process that guides you?

Most of my paintings are mixed media, which means I use oil, oil pastels, acrylics and sometimes charcoal. This gives each piece a certain texture, sometimes a rougher texture, sometimes a softer texture, I like to work in multiple layers.

The colors have to be balanced. I paint over the colors several times during the process, as many times as necessary. My goal is to look at the work and feel that the colors are balanced, which sometimes takes a long time.

Leavon Bowman GRBSA – RBSA Graduate Artist

From his early childhood years, art has always been Leavon's passion. It is an intrinsic part of who he is and has always engaged him above everything else. In 2017, he completed a Degree in Fine Art Painting and Drawing at Northampton University.

At University, Leavon immersed himself in painting. Up until that point he was solely a pencil artist, and because of the fact he had never painted before, he spent a lot of time trying to understand the art of painting. His work is governed by a set of morals and values that is underpinned by his spiritual upbringing to reflect some of his most inner passion, desires and sensitivities.

Leavon's mild obsession and affinity for nature began as a child. He was surrounded by nature's beautiful scenes of the Caribbean that was often permeated with spectacular colours and composition, from the very subtle to extremely vibrant colours. This engaged his childish mind and that childhood fascination has grown into an artistic obsession and appreciation for nature. He is particularly drawn to the sea and the sky for the following reasons; aesthetically pleasing, evoking a sense of spiritual awakening, solitude, nostalgia, fear, and reverence to that or he who is greater.

Leavon's work aims to capture an accurate glimpse of nature's raw alluring and infinite beauty. With his close-up paintings of the subject, he hopes to transport the viewer's mind into the beauty and wonders of nature, and also inspire the viewer not only to appreciate nature, but to recognise that nature has an origin, it has a perfect design and by this observation it must therefore be appreciated and protected. The visual he creates is also to give reflection and perspective to the seen and unseen, the unseen force or being that has created all that is seen.

Leavon had won many art competitions, awards and was a participant on Sky Art Live TV programme in 2019.



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Carole Jury is a versatile artist whose talents span photography and abstract painting. Her creative process begins with photography, which she skillfully translates onto canvas, resulting in evocative series such as *Dark Sea*, *La Vie en Rose*, *Time Goes By*, and *Metal Song*. Her artistic signature is defined by bold, textured brushstrokes, an exceptional mastery of light and shadow, and a refined sense of color. From vibrant reds to soothing blues, delicate whites to deep blacks, her work exhibits a dynamic interplay of hues. While oils remain her primary medium, she also experiments with acrylics and other materials to push the boundaries of her artistic expression. Jury's abstract works carry an intriguing versatility, seamlessly enhancing any interior setting—whether a private residence or a public space. Her passion for design inspired her to study interior design at the New York Institute of Art and Design, further blending her artistic vision with modern aesthetics. Represented by prestigious galleries in the United States, France, and Italy, as well as virtual platforms, Carole Jury's art is celebrated globally. Her pieces have been showcased at renowned events, including Context Art Miami, Scope Miami & NYC, Aqua Art Miami, Art on Paper NYC, Art World Dubai, Affordable Art Fair NYC, Austin and Stockholm, Art Show Los Angeles, Art Market San Francisco, and Market Art & Design Hampton. Born in France, Jury holds a master's degree in Sociology and Human Resources. Now based in Houston, Texas, after two and a half years in Bangkok, her work reflects the cultural influences of her French heritage and her experiences in Asian. In addition to her artistic pursuits, she is the founder of Women Artists from France, a platform celebrating creativity and empowerment. In Houston, Carole Jury continues to explore and expand her artistic horizons, drawing inspiration from her diverse experiences and a profound passion for art and design.

Artist Statement

"A painting needs to be made one's own. It's a kind of secret space where everyone can find one's own personal refuge. Through painting, I feel anything is possible...The viewer can imagine anything and everything he wants. My reliefs and colors allow for countless interpretations. Then, the viewer will have made my painting his own."

Carole Jury | B.K.King Collection | 2024





— Interview

Tetiana Ridosh

Our journey into textured art began as a personal hobby and evolved into a career. Can you share how this transition happened?

My journey into textured art began as a personal exploration, something I turned to as a form of therapy after the loss of my mother. During that time, I found comfort in the physicality of art, especially with materials like modeling paste and textured paste. These textures allowed me to express emotions that were hard to put into words. Over time, I realized that what started as a personal outlet had developed into a deep passion. The process of creating these layered, tactile artworks became a way for me to connect with the world and share something meaningful. Eventually, I began showcasing my art publicly, and the positive feedback encouraged me to take it further, transitioning from a hobby to a full-time career. Now, I'm able to use my art to bring beauty to others, and it has been incredibly fulfilling to see how textured art resonates with people.

Could you explain the process behind creating your unique textured paste? What inspired you to develop your own materials?

Creating my unique textured paste was a natural progression in my artistic journey. When I first started experimenting with textured art, I found that many commercially available pastes didn't provide the exact texture or flexibility I needed to bring my visions to life. I wanted a material that would allow me to create a wide range of textures, from delicate patterns to bold, expressive surfaces, without compromising on quality.



Tetiana Ridosh | CupCake

This desire led me to develop my own textured paste. The process involves blending various materials to achieve the right consistency and texture, allowing me to manipulate it with precision. I focus on achieving a balance of durability and workability, ensuring the paste can hold intricate details and textures while remaining versatile for different techniques. The inspiration behind this development came from my need for a more personal connection to the materials I used. By crafting my own paste, I feel more in control of the creative process and can experiment with new textures that reflect my unique artistic style. It also allows me to push boundaries in my art, giving me the freedom to create pieces that are truly one-of-a-kind.

How do you feel your Therapy Box has impacted people's lives? Are there any memorable stories or feedback from those who've used it?

The Therapy Box has had a profound impact on many people, and I'm humbled to hear such moving feedback. One of the most meaningful experiences came from veterans at a facility in Colorado Springs, where they care for military veterans with serious health conditions like Parkinson's disease, dementia, diabetes, and inclusion body myositis. Many of these veterans have shared how the Therapy Box helped them emotionally, providing a space where they could forget about their illnesses, even if just for a moment, and truly immerse themselves in their

inner world. It was incredibly rewarding to hear how the box brought them peace and a sense of calm in such challenging times.

Another inspiring story came from a woman who watched my videos and took a small course I offered. She was so inspired by the process of creating textured art that she began painting and eventually sold her works for \$750 each. This success gave her the confidence to leave her job and pursue a full-time career as an artist. It's incredible to see how the Therapy Box and the resources I've shared have helped people transform their lives and pursue their passions. These stories fuel my passion for art and remind me of the power it holds to change lives.

After experiencing the loss of your mother, art became a form of therapy for you. How do you channel such personal emotions into your work?

After losing my mother, art became my way of processing and navigating the complex emotions that came with that grief. It was a deeply personal experience, and I knew I needed to find a way to express the sadness, pain, and even

moments of clarity that I was feeling. I turned to textured art because of its ability to embody those emotions in a physical way. The process of layering paste and creating textures allowed me to pour my feelings into something tangible, something I could touch and shape.

When I work, I don't think too much about the final outcome at first. Instead, I focus on the sensations and emotions that arise as I move through the materials. The textures I create are often a direct reflection of how I'm feeling—sometimes rough and chaotic, other times smooth and calming. Art gave me a space where I could embrace those raw feelings without the need for words. It allowed me to honor my mother's memory and express things I might not have been able to articulate otherwise.

For me, the most important part of the process is being in the moment and allowing myself to feel what I need to feel, knowing that the art will evolve as I do. It's a journey that's been incredibly healing, and over time, I've learned to channel that raw emotion into pieces that carry not only my own story but also the potential to touch others who may be experiencing their own grief or struggles.

Tetiana Ridosh | Layers of Time | 2024





Your work combines modern techniques with natural textures. What role does nature play in your creative process?

Nature plays a vital role in my creative process, and I find its influence woven throughout every piece I create. The textures, colors, and rhythms of nature inspire me to bring a sense of organic movement and depth into my work. I often look to the natural world—whether it's the rough texture of tree bark, the smoothness of a river stone, or the delicate layers of a flower petal—as a way to connect with something universal. These elements remind me of the constant changes and cycles in life, something that deeply resonates with me as an artist.

In my work, I use these natural textures as both inspiration and as a grounding force. The modeling paste and textured paste I create often mimic the rawness and authenticity of nature, capturing the beauty found in both the harshness and softness of the environment. I blend modern techniques and materials with

these natural influences, ensuring that the art feels grounded in something real and tactile, just like the world around us.

Nature's rhythms also influence the way I approach a piece. The way the light hits a landscape or how the weather shifts can guide how I layer or manipulate materials, reflecting the impermanence and beauty of the world. I see each creation as a small tribute to nature's ability to inspire and transform, just as art has the power to do for the viewer.

Social media has played a significant role in your artistic growth. How do you decide what to share with your audience?

Social media has indeed played a significant role in my artistic growth, not only by helping me connect with a wider audience but also by providing a space for me to share my journey and creative process. Deciding what to share with my audience is always a balance between authenticity and inspiration. I want to give people

an honest look into my work and how it evolves, but I also want to inspire them to explore their own creativity.

When choosing what to post, I focus on moments that resonate with me—whether it's a breakthrough in technique, an emotional milestone, or a work that feels particularly meaningful. I also share insights into the materials and processes I use, as I believe this helps demystify the art-making journey for others. I try to give followers a behind-the-scenes look at how I create, not just the finished pieces, but the layers, textures, and emotions that go into each work.

I also like to share personal stories or moments that have shaped my creative path, like the loss of my mother or how art has helped me heal. I believe these authentic glimpses into my life and my struggles make my art more relatable, and I've found that this openness often encourages others to share their own stories or get involved in creative pursuits.

Ultimately, what I choose to share is driven by a desire to foster connection—to create a space where others feel inspired to explore their own creativity, heal through art, or find comfort in shared experiences. Social media allows me to build this community, and I take care to create content that feels genuine and purposeful, both for me and my followers.

What advice would you give to someone starting their journey with textured art as a form of healing?

If you're just starting your journey with textured art as a form of healing, my advice would be to approach the process with patience, openness, and self-compassion. Art, especially textured art, is an incredibly powerful tool for emotional expression, but it requires a willingness to connect with your emotions and allow them to guide you.

Let go of expectations: Don't worry about creating something "perfect" or "finished" right away. The beauty of textured art is in the journey of creating it. Allow yourself the freedom to experiment, play with textures, and see where the materials take you. Some of the most profound discoveries in art come from letting go of the need for control.



Tetiana Ridosh | Bound by Contrast

Use your emotions as a guide: Texture can be a direct reflection of how you're feeling. If you're angry or sad, you might find yourself creating rough, bold textures. If you're seeking peace, you might work with smoother, more flowing patterns. Don't shy away from the emotions that come up—embrace them and let them be a part of your work.

Be gentle with yourself: Healing through art isn't about rushing or forcing an outcome. It's about being kind to yourself as you explore, grow, and release emotions. Remember, it's okay if the process feels messy or overwhelming at times. Art is meant to be a space for you to process, not just a finished product.

Find joy in the process: While art can be a form of healing, it can also be a source of joy and personal fulfillment. Celebrate small victories, whether it's discovering a new texture, finishing a piece, or simply feeling a sense of peace while creating. Let the process itself become part of your healing journey.

Keep going: Healing takes time, and your art may evolve alongside your personal growth. There will be days when it's easier to create and others when it feels more difficult. Trust that each step, no matter how small, is part of your path. Be patient with yourself, and don't give up. Above all, remember that art is a personal journey. There's no right or wrong way to approach it, just your way. Allow it to be a safe space for self-expression, and over time, you'll discover how it can help you heal, grow, and connect with yourself in a deeper way.

Ánima Red is a Chilean illustrator and visual artist, trained in architecture at the University of La Serena, with complementary studies in art and illustration. Her work is characterized by the fusion of nature, fantasy, and introspection, creating worlds that invite exploration of the magical within the everyday. Using traditional techniques like watercolor, graphite, and acrylics, Ánima brings to life characters and scenes full of details that spark the imagination. Since 2018, she has participated in numerous illustration and art fairs, as well as collaborating as an illustrator for magazines such as Autiblog (Spain) and Firenze (Argentina), along with illustrating covers and interiors for young adult books. In 2024, she was selected by Arts to Heart Project for the book 100 Emerging Artworks and the edition Women Artists to Watch. She has exhibited solo at the Casa de las Artes in Coquimbo with the show Seres de luz. Her work reflects an intimate connection with nature, fantasy, and human emotions. Through her illustrations, she aims to create visual narratives that spark curiosity in those who view them. With each piece, Ánima invites us to explore the imaginary worlds in our minds, reminding us that beauty is found in the simplest details, capable of leading us to a place of awe and reflection.

Artist Statement

My work is based on the exploration of the connection between nature, fantasy, and human emotions. Using traditional techniques such as watercolor, graphite, and acrylic, I create worlds that invite contemplation and introspection. I'm interested in what lies within the ordinary, seeking the magical and extraordinary in the simplest moments. Each piece I create is an invitation to explore an imaginary space where details and textures come to life. Nature is a constant source of inspiration, as I believe the small things around it have a transformative and evocative power. I aim for my works to awaken curiosity and provide a space for reflection, reminding us that beauty is often found in the simplest details. My goal is not only to create art but also to tell visual stories that resonate with those who view them, inviting them to reconnect with what once filled them with wonder and admiration.





— Interview

Matt Gabler

Your work is deeply influenced by your family legacy, especially your grandfather, Matt Lamb. How do you balance honoring his artistic influence while also finding your unique voice as an artist?

My grandfather's work taught me the power of art to tell stories and connect with people on a deeper level. While his legacy inspires me, I focus on expressing my personal experiences and emotions, finding my voice in bold colors and dynamic compositions. It's not about following in his footsteps but building on the foundation he laid with a fresh perspective.

What role do you think art plays in helping people process or overcome difficult experiences, and how do you aim to reflect that in your own pieces?

Art has a unique way of creating space for



healing—it's both a mirror and a sanctuary. For me, every piece is a reflection of human resilience. I aim to channel my own struggles and triumphs into my work, inviting viewers to see themselves and perhaps find comfort or strength in the shared experience.

The use of vibrant colors and bold strokes is central to your art. Can you talk about how these elements help convey the emotional weight of your work?

Vibrant colors and bold strokes are how I communicate what words often fail to express. Each hue represents a layer of emotion—joy, pain, hope—and the strokes create movement, echoing the chaos and beauty of life. They're not just aesthetic choices; they're an emotional language.

You've participated in exhibitions around the world, including prestigious events like the Louvre Biennale. How have these experiences shaped your artistic practice or your view of the global art scene?

Exhibiting globally has broadened my perspective on how art transcends language and culture. It's humbling to see how universal the emotional connection to art can be. These



Matt Gabler | The Cotton Candy Blues

experiences have also pushed me to evolve, not just technically but in how I approach storytelling in my work.

In your artist statement, you mention that your work is an invitation to reflect on our shared human experiences of struggle and triumph. Could you share a specific piece that embodies this theme for you?

One piece that stands out is A Meeting of Worlds. It's a deeply personal work inspired by experiencing new event, blending chaotic textures with bursts of color to represent the messy, beautiful path from pain to growth. It's about embracing the journey rather than the destination.

You've collaborated with organizations like the Cancer Treatment Centers of America and the Rizzo Foundation. How do these collaborations influence the direction of your art and your mission?

These collaborations remind me of the transformative power of art. They push me to create with purpose, knowing my work can



Matt Gabler | Blue Snowcone

contribute to healing or bring hope to those facing difficult times. It's deeply fulfilling and aligns perfectly with my mission to create art that resonates on a human level.

What can audiences expect from your upcoming exhibitions in Europe and the Middle East? Are there any new themes or projects you're excited to share?

Audiences can expect pieces that delve into themes of connection and resilience. I'm experimenting with layering techniques to create depth, both visually and emotionally. These exhibitions will also introduce a series reflecting on how cultural identities shape our shared human experience.

As a self-taught artist, what challenges did you face in developing your style and technique, and how did you overcome them?

The biggest challenge was trusting my instincts. Without formal training, I felt the pressure to "prove" myself, but over time, I realized that my authenticity lies in my self-discovery. Experimentation and persistence were my teachers, and every misstep became part of my growth.



Matt Gabler | The Judgemental Crown

Sergey Zimarin

I call the style of my works "Grunge" or "Noise" in visual art. My style is characterized by an abundance of bold, messy strokes and contrasting color dynamics. The faces of the characters in my paintings usually express apathy, loneliness, and sadness.



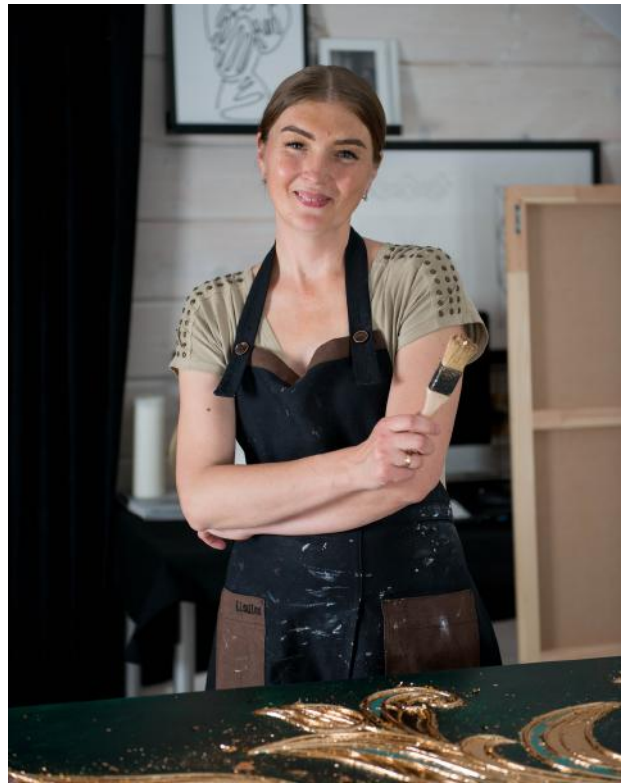


— Interview

Lilia Milne

Does the strength of an artist's personality play a role in their creativity?

Yes, the strength of an artist's personality is the foundation of their art. It is not merely a reflection of their inner world but the ability to choose freedom in their creativity, to set their own rules, and boldly distort reality so that viewers can see something greater—the truth. It is a unique gift—to transform the familiar and reveal new meanings. The strength of personality is reflected in the ability to be honest, to defy



standards, and to discover one's unique artistic truth.

When an artist remains true to themselves, their works become more than just creations; they become a gateway to a world where reality is infused with new colors and meaning.

How does nature, especially your garden, influence your creative process?

When we bought our house, the plot was empty, without a single tree. It was like a blank canvas waiting for its first brushstrokes. Over time, trees, hydrangeas, and cozy corners for relaxing and strolling with children appeared. I created the garden the same way I create paintings, only this process takes much longer. Each plant, like a new brushstroke, added texture, depth, and dimension. These changes and the gradual unfolding of the composition teach me patience and attention to detail. My garden has become a living painting for me. Its rhythm, natural colors, and textures are reflected in my work. I strive to translate these sensations onto the canvas, aiming to convey the harmony I find in nature and in my little green world.

What inspired you to explore textures, minimalism, and materials such as gold and



epoxy resin in your work?

I have always been inspired by the idea of refined simplicity—where there is nothing superfluous, yet every decision is filled with deep meaning and harmony.

Textural minimalism is particularly close to me because it allows beauty to be experienced not only visually but also through other senses. Humans are tactile by nature, and these sensory impressions have become an important focus in my work.

I use gold as an accent that adds sensuality and warmth to my paintings, highlights the light, and creates a sense of elegance.

Your paintings are described as artifacts that can be passed down through generations. How do you approach creating works with such emotional and lasting value?

I would truly love for my paintings to become those very artifacts that people pass down from generation to generation. Creating works with such profound value is a great responsibility. For me, it is essential to pour not only my soul into the painting but also a piece of the client's soul. It is a collaborative process where the client becomes a co-creator: their thoughts, emotions, and expectations



Lilia Milne | Coastal | 2024

become part of the work. This connection is what makes a painting especially significant and meaningful.

A painting gains true value when it is filled with meaning. We imbue importance into what we create together, making each piece not just beautiful but genuinely personal and timeless.

What role does your family play in your creative journey? Do your daughters inspire specific works or themes?

My family is my foundation, my support, and my source of energy. I know it sounds cliché, but for me, it's absolutely true. Their support is what helps me move forward and bring my ideas to life.

My daughters are also my main critics. Support in our family isn't just about words of encouragement; it's also about being honest and expressing opinions openly. Their attentiveness and honesty help me see my work from a fresh perspective and notice things I might have missed myself.

Together with them, I'm learning to listen, accept criticism, and use it to benefit my art. It is within this dialogue that my most sincere and powerful works are born.

Lilia Milne | Created by the Wind | 2024



Emanuele Bevilacqua, a painter and artist, was born in Milan on October 19, 1978. He lives and works in a small countryside town in Tuscany. He has always pursued art as a quest for balance in the beauty of imperfection, making it a lifestyle and a principle to uphold under any circumstances.

Detached from formal education and free from the indoctrination of concepts and techniques devoid of expressive content, he has lived on the streets, observed, and transformed. The street, his only teacher, continues to be a source of learning and inspiration—a street understood as everything outside and beyond.

He enjoys creating surreal figures, where motifs and filling colors blend almost in competition with the lines that emphasize the shapes composing the themes of his paintings. His style is characterized by continuous lines that extend beyond the edges of the painting.

For his works, he almost always uses Indian ink on paper.





— Interview

Ovsanna Harutyunyan

Could you tell us about your journey from studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Yerevan to becoming an internationally recognized artist?

An artist, in my opinion, should receive professional education but then partly forget much of what they were taught in order to find their own path. Academic education, while providing a solid foundation, often becomes a limitation: some artists remain stuck at the level of their student works, unable to achieve creative progress. To go beyond, one must break free from these chains of knowledge, leaving only their echoes as tools for discovering one's unique identity.

My journey included not only studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Yerevan but also attending art schools and college, followed by membership in the Union of Artists, which was not an easy accomplishment at the time. Nevertheless, I joined shortly after graduating from the academy. However, I soon felt the need to free myself once again from all conventions and simply create.

To achieve financial independence, I began working in interior design. This field helped me expand my perception: painting temporarily transformed into design, where two-dimensional thinking was enriched by a three-dimensional spatial approach. I found it



fascinating to conceptualize volumes of space and turn every corner of an interior into an art installation. This experience allowed me to think on a larger scale and integrate art with design. Today, I continue to combine both spheres, and I can say that they complement each other harmoniously.

At this stage, painting poses new challenges for me. Each piece carries certain mysteries, and the keys to unlocking them are held not only by me but also by the viewer. Interaction with the audience—their interpretations and emotions—is an essential part of my creative process.

As for the phrase "international recognition," it does sound a bit grand, but my work does have its admirers. They eagerly anticipate new pieces, share their impressions, offer their interpretations of the narratives, and express a desire to acquire my works. This inspires and motivates me to keep moving forward, exploring new paths and forms of self-expression.

How has your Armenian heritage influenced your artistic style and choice of themes?

When it comes to art, national borders fade away. For me, art is an expression of the universal: a person, an object, an idea, a concept in a global context. However, every artist inevitably carries their own national identity in their DNA, which, when combined with global ideas, creates a unique result.

My Armenian heritage brings a certain temperament to my work. Vibrant colors, like reflections of the sun and nature of my homeland, coexist with monochromatic elements, which are also often present in my art. However, the bright colors in my work do not always signify celebration, just as the absence of color does not necessarily symbolize

Ovsanna Harutyunyan | False Balance | 2023



despair.

Armenia is a country that has endured countless trials, falls, and rebirths. This history shapes a philosophical approach to both life and art. These experiences teach one to see beyond the surface, to seek meaning in the details. The events unfolding in my homeland also leave a profound mark on my art. All of this can be seen as a cardiogram, where the lines of life and art intertwine—peaks and valleys as part of the natural order.

Perhaps color can make the world a little better, bringing harmony to this complex reality? After all, the ultimate purpose of art is to make the world better. It inspires, unites, and opens new perspectives—and in this, I see its highest goal.

Your artist statement highlights symbolism as a key element of your work. Could you share an example of how you use symbolism in one of your pieces?

Symbolism, allegory, and surrealism are concepts that are particularly close to me. I will try to elaborate on these ideas using the example of my recent triptych titled "False Balance."

The starting point for this triptych was Eugène Ionesco's play "Rhinoceros." In his work, Ionesco described the stages through which any idea, alien to society, can be legitimized. In the 1990s, this concept was formalized into a theory known as the "Overton Window." According to this theory, any idea, no matter how absurd, can be accepted by society as normal if it passes through six stages: unthinkable, radical, acceptable, sensible, standard, and normal.

"Rhinoceros" serves as the key to understanding the symbolism of the triptych. However, the main narrative revolves around events that my people have experienced.

The first piece:

It depicts a complex, twisted pose of a yogi balancing on a thin rope stretched over a precipice. This symbolizes our desperate attempts to hold on during difficult times. The rope represents the fragility of the situation, and, unfortunately, the outcome is predictable. The rope is held by two pink rhinoceroses using their horns. These rhinoceroses symbolize false ideas and notions, disguised as something safe. The fierce animal, cloaked in a pink hue, appears to "save" the twisted figure, but this is merely an illusion.

The second piece:

The yogi, still in the complex *Garudasana* (Eagle Pose), is now balancing on the back of a pink rhinoceros. This moment is ambiguous: have we overcome our fear of falling into the abyss, or have we merely temporarily transferred ourselves onto a dangerous beast, disguised as something harmless? This stage feels like a pause, leaving the future

uncertain.

The third piece:

It seems the fears have been conquered, and the yogi has reached nirvana. Have we risen above all our problems... or have false ideas fully taken over, infiltrating our consciousness and becoming the norm? If it is the latter, the situation becomes even more troubling. The pink rhinoceroses disappear, replaced by more threatening creatures—pink crocodiles.

This triptych leaves the viewer in a state of reflection. It raises questions about the manipulation of consciousness, how ideas transform and are accepted by society, and how we respond to these changes. It is both a philosophical and emotional exploration of the collective and individual journey through a complex reality.

Your artworks are described as puzzles for the viewer to assemble. What reactions or interpretations from viewers have surprised you the most?

There was a humorous incident involving one of my works—a semi-abstract composition titled "The Strip of Life." In this piece, I used the symbol of infinity, the inverted number eight. The two circles, formed by human figures, were divided by a black strip. Each element of the work carries a specific meaning. The first circle symbolizes the past, the second—the future, and the black strip between them represents the present. However, the black strip doesn't signify



Ovsanna Harutyunyan | Balance | 2023

something negative, like a “dark period” in life. Instead, it’s a metaphor for uncertainty. We cannot truly grasp the present moment: the instant we try to capture it, it becomes the future; and as soon as we recognize it, it’s already in the past. In this way, the present is a “draft space”—a state of unknowing.

When the piece was exhibited, it sparked many interpretations. One that particularly amused me came from my colleagues. In jest, one said it resembled a woman’s chest struggling to escape from a corset; another saw it as a plump owl gazing at the viewer and asking for food.

These playful interpretations made me smile. Overall, I enjoy it when viewers piece together their own puzzles while interpreting my work. I’m not opposed to the idea that each person’s perception can be entirely unique. While I know that many artists prefer their work to be understood in a specific way, for me, this diversity of perspectives is an essential part of the dialogue between the artist and the audience.

You explore the relationship between old and new technologies in your art. How do you approach integrating these elements into your works?

Working in the field of design, I inevitably rely on graphic programs to bring my ideas to life. These tools continue to evolve, and I make a point of keeping up with their new features, mastering them through practice. I am inspired not only by the tactile act of drawing a flowing line on canvas but also by the possibilities of creating digital images. At one point, I developed surrealistic furniture and characters in 3D, which remained as visualizations, yet the process itself allowed me to push the boundaries of my creativity. Today, I find the topic of artificial intelligence particularly fascinating. In design, I am already experimenting with it, leveraging my knowledge to explore new forms. For me, AI is an additional tool in the artist’s arsenal—one that expands creative possibilities and inspires unexpected solutions. That said, I do not believe artificial intelligence can



Ovsanna Harutyunyan
Fauns (Balance series) | 2023

replace painting or graphic art created by hand. Handcrafted works carry a unique energy and immediacy that no machine can replicate. Ultimately, the artist’s personality, inner world, and unique vision play the most critical role in any creative process. These human elements ensure that art, in all its forms, remains deeply personal and irreplaceable.

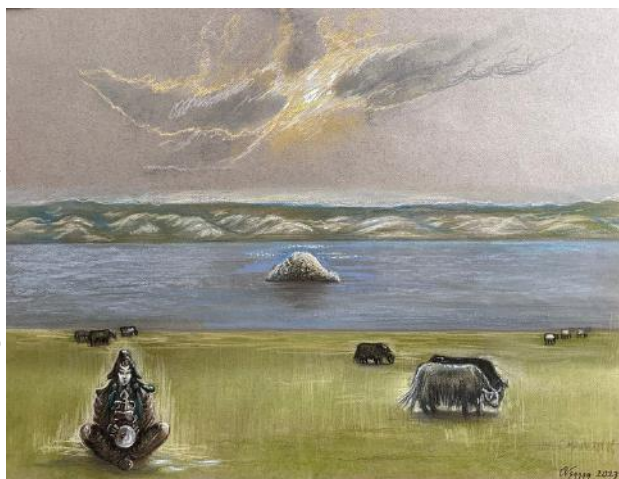
What role does philosophical thought play in the development of your artistic concepts?

At the beginning of my artistic journey, I was inspired by existentialist ideas and the works of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and psychologists like Jung and Hume. These philosophical influences left their mark on my early creations. I sought to craft aphorisms through forms, lines, imagery, and color—expressions that could exist independently of words. This exploration continues to this day, uncovering new dimensions of concepts that can be communicated solely through visual language.

The idea of will and intellect still resonates deeply with me. It inspired one of my works, where half-faces of two individuals are depicted on either side, connected by a thread. A hand, seemingly belonging to the viewer, attempts to break this thread, which symbolizes the connection between consciousness and emotion.

Later came a period of internal reconciliation, yet the search for balance between will and intellect has always accompanied me. Initially, the image of a person rooted in the ground symbolized immobility. Over time, these roots transformed into horns, and the horns evolved into the branches of a faun. This evolution brought a sense of balance achieved through the interweaving of forms.

I understand that each person perceives balance in their own way, and I offer only my interpretation. It is not an attempt to impose, but a desire to share. Still, I feel that deep within our subconscious lies a universal, almost sacred yearning for equilibrium. It is a force that unites us, even though we each express it in our own unique way.



Ovsanna Harutyunyan
Call of the forgotten ancestors | 2023



Ekaterina Mareeva

I don't have professional art education. I graduated State University of Management in Moscow and many years I worked as business consultant and entrepreneur. Those years I didn't draw at all. Couple of years ago I completely changed my life`s route and decided to devote myself to art. The time came to listen my heart at last. Nowadays I work as an artist, creating artworks and actively taking part in art exhibitions. I joined 2 art unions. To be a part of art society gives me inspiration and energy for growing as an artist and creating new artworks. For my paintings I use oils enjoying their texture and preferring them for possibility to change picture many times while drawing.

Artist Statement

Sometimes our lives are not easy and full of sad events that can upset, lower our mood and take away energy. I believe that my role as a painter is to make our world a little brighter and more beautiful through my art. In my artworks I try to convey pleasant emotions from contemplating the beauty and nice moments around us. Joy of life is what I want to express with my art.





E. MAREVA

— Interview

Yulia Rotkina

Your work combines both two and three-dimensional elements. What led you to explore this intersection of mediums, and how do you feel it enhances your artistic expression?

We live in a three-dimensional world (with time as the fourth dimension), yet most of our ideas are confined to a two-dimensional space, existing on screens or within the frames of paintings and photography in museums or galleries. This contrast fascinates me and led me to explore the intersection of two and three-dimensional elements in my work. By combining painting with sculptural and assemblage elements, I aim to bridge this gap creating a more immersive experience that reflects both the physical and intangible aspects of human existence.

Many of your installations seem to address complex themes such as memory, identity, and human struggle. How do you decide which themes to explore in your work?

The themes I explore in my work—memory, identity, and human struggle—are deeply influenced by my background in psychology, where I developed a sensitivity to human trauma. My personal history also plays a significant role in shaping these explorations.



I've come to understand that these themes are not isolated or individualistic; they are collective experiences that bind us all. In my art, I aim to translate these shared struggles and emotions into a visual language that allows others to connect with and reflect on their own experiences. By engaging with these themes, I hope to foster a dialogue about the human condition, offering a space for empathy and understanding.

Can you share your creative process when conceptualising a new installation or painting? How do you translate your ideas from thought into physical form?

The mystery of where ideas come from has always been a question I can't fully answer. However, once a concept or even a strong feeling toward something settles in my mind, I take action by first conceptualising the emotional and intellectual core of the work through rough, "ugly" drawings—the uglier, the better. Once the core idea becomes clearer, I select the materials and techniques that will best bring it to life—often combining two- and three-dimensional media, found objects, and unconventional materials. If it's an installation, I think about the space and how to make the intangible aspects of the idea fit within it. The process is fluid; it evolves as I engage with the work physically, allowing me to refine and expand on my initial thoughts as the piece develops.

You often use found materials and unconventional mediums in your installations. How do these materials play a role in the storytelling of your art?

Found materials and unconventional mediums are central to my art practice. They carry their own histories and associations, adding depth and meaning



to the work. By repurposing these materials, I connect the past with the present, allowing the viewer to engage with the piece not just visually, but emotionally. Each material brings its own narrative to the installation, often evoking a sense of memory that viewers might personally relate to. Using found objects blurs the line between the everyday and the artistic, encouraging the viewer to reflect on the familiar in a new context. These materials become active participants in the narrative, enhancing the themes I explore and creating a more immersive experience for the audience.

Your art seems to create an immersive experience for viewers. How do you intend for people to interact with or reflect upon your work?

My intention is for viewers to engage with my work on both an intellectual and emotional level. I aim to create an environment that invites reflection and connection, allowing the viewer to experience the piece not only visually, but also through their own personal associations and memories. The use of space, materials, and layered media is designed to draw the viewer in and foster a more intimate engagement. I hope the work sparks personal memories and prompts reflection on our shared human experience. Ultimately, I want my art to serve as a catalyst for thought, where the viewer's emotions and interpretations contribute to the ongoing conversation the work evokes.

As someone who transitioned from psychology and filmmaking into art, how have these previous fields influenced your approach to art-making?

Psychology has provided me with a unique lens through which I approach every theme. I actively seek out subjects that affect us on a deep, sensitive level—



Yulia Rotkina
Self-Identity II
2024

things that trigger or soothe us, as humans in general. Filmmaking, on the other hand, has helped me think about narrative structure and the importance of timing, atmosphere, and movement within my work. I often create video works in conjunction with my installations. It also taught me how to engage with my audience through visual storytelling, a skill I carry over into my installations and paintings. These fields have combined to shape a practice that is both introspective and immersive, where the emotional and intellectual core of the work takes precedence.

How does the fleeting nature of existence influence the emotional atmosphere of your works?

The fleeting nature of existence is a central theme in my work, and it deeply influences the emotional atmosphere I aim to create. I'm drawn to moments of impermanence—those brief, fragile experiences that define human life. This idea of transience often shapes the tone of my work, infusing it with a sense of urgency or melancholy. The materials I use, along with the layering of two and three-dimensional elements, are intended to evoke a feeling of instability, as if the work itself is on the verge of disintegration or change. I want the viewer to feel that nothing is fixed, that time and memory are constantly shifting, and that the emotional resonance of the piece is a reflection of this transitory nature. Ultimately, I hope to evoke a sense of both fragility and resilience, inviting reflection on the impermanence of our own lives and experiences.



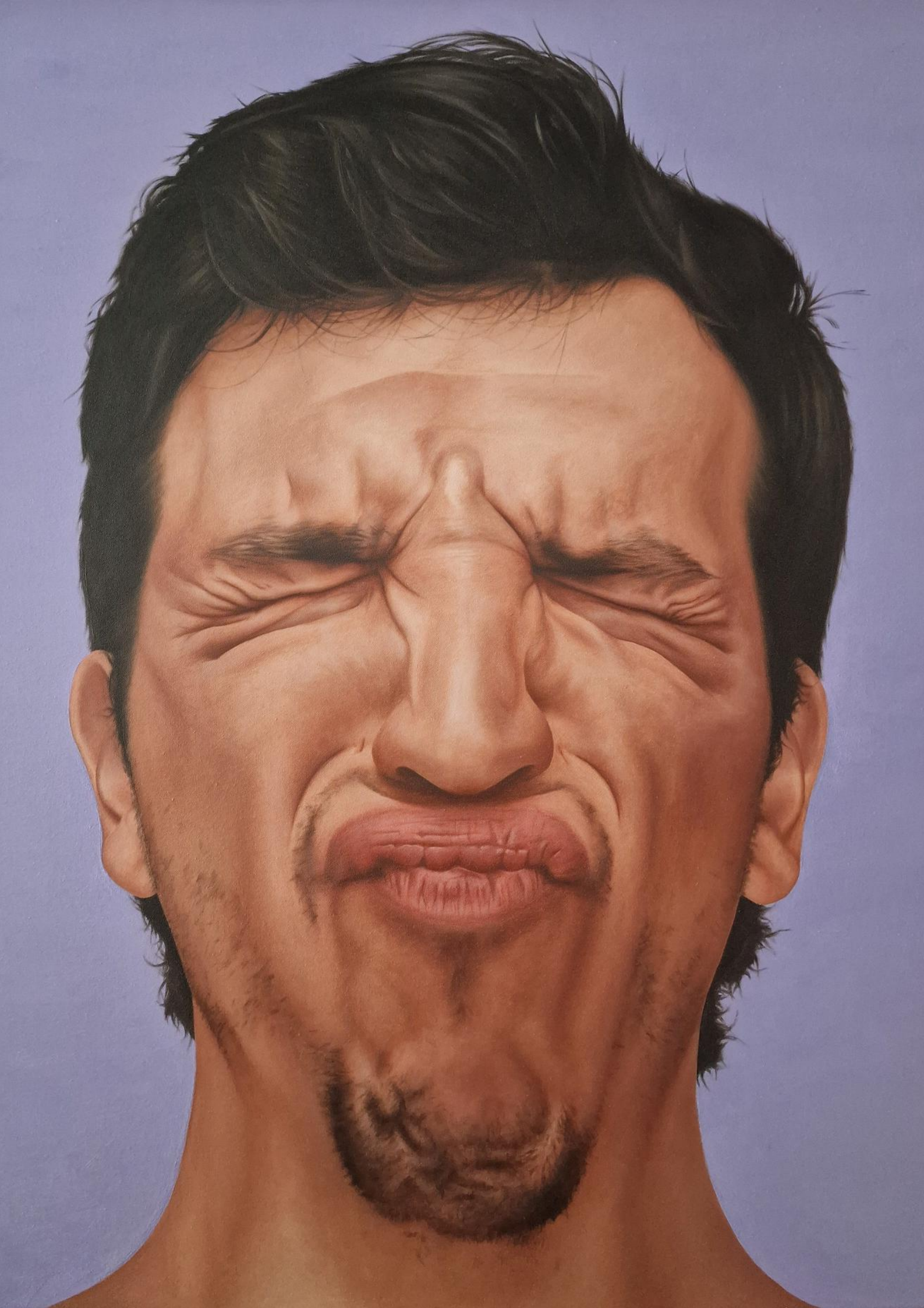
Yulia Rotkina | Self-Identity I | 2024

Juan Carlos Nava Contreras

I'm a Mexican artist living in Barcelona, Spain. My work has been evolving technically and creatively for a few years even though I stopped painting for a long while. This painting marks my return to my roots and love for painting and portraits.

Project Statement

I've always been mesmerized by facial deformations and how abstract they can become and this last painting plays with that idea: The extremes of expressions. The human face has an incredible range of motion that we rarely use. The muscles and skin move in a particular way for every single one of us, something like a live faceprint, creating beautiful shapes and shadows that sometimes become abstract.



— Interview

REBELLICCA

Your work gravitates around themes of consciousness, time, and freedom. What initially drew you to explore these profound concepts through 3D art?

My fascination with these themes stems from an innate curiosity about existence itself. You won't find me in places where small talk reigns supreme. I crave depth, meaning, and sensitivity. I've always believed that art provides a rare opportunity to visually articulate the intangible—like the fluidity of time and the layers of human consciousness. I've worked with both physical and digital media before, creating mostly abstract and floral art, but I felt strongly that the surreal poetic within me needed a different medium. 3D art gave me the language to create with light, space, and texture in ways that bridge the material and metaphysical worlds, allowing me to bring surreal universes—visions I see fully in my mind—to life.

You've described your art as a dialogue with the subconscious. Could you elaborate on how your visions come to life and how the subconscious guides your process?

My creative process usually begins with an image I see in my mind for a while. If the piece is meant to be created, the image won't leave until I bring it to life. It took me some time to embrace this, as it feels as though the art comes through me, rather than solely from me. It's a process of surrendering, allowing, and



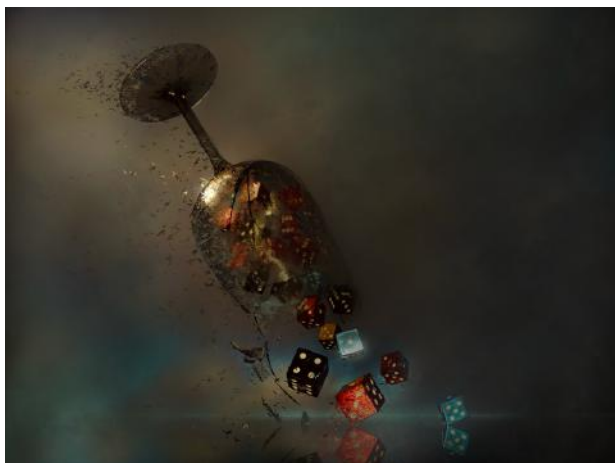
trusting. I let the visions guide me, layering textures and forms intuitively until they reveal themselves in a tangible form that matches what I see in my mind's eye. Each piece feels like a visual meditation, a way of listening to what lies beneath conscious thought and bringing it to the surface.

The interplay of destruction and rebirth is evident in your pieces. How do you approach balancing these contrasting elements in your work?

I see destruction and rebirth not as opposites, but as partners in the same cycles of evolution. My creations mirror this duality: breaking down concepts or shattering shapes, then piecing them back together with a new perspective. I love carving the extraordinary out of the seemingly mundane. I think it's this delicate tension, this dance between vulnerability and boldness, erosion and rebirth, that breathes life into my work.

Light and symbolism play a significant role in your art. What does light represent for you and how do you use it to convey emotions?

I often think of light as darkness that simply needed a little love before it transformed. In my art, light represents the presence of truth—the ultimate witness, if you will. It is the thread that binds and shapes everything. I use it not just to illuminate, but to carve moments of tension and release. The interplay of shadows and glimmers allows me to evoke emotions that words often fail to capture. Light, then,



becomes the language in which I can express what cannot be said in any other way.

You've exhibited globally, from Milan to Melbourne. How does exhibiting in different cultural contexts influence your artistic practice?

There is something magical in knowing that my pieces have been exhibited even in places I haven't yet visited. It's even more incredible to see them interpreted in wildly different ways, filtered through the lens of diverse cultural and personal experiences. I'm always touched by how people connect with my work. Over time, I've received amazing analyses, messages, and had encounters with fans and collectors who have found strength and inspiration in my art. While I'm not sure this directly influences my art, it certainly has a profound impact on me as a person. I realize how blessed I am to be able to create and touch lives, and I feel both honored and humbled.

In your artist statement, you mention that "time is sentient." Could you explain this intriguing perspective and how it shapes your work?

Time isn't something I keep; it's something I honor differently. I don't wear a watch, and there's no clock in my home. Yet in my art, I portray time as a sentient being. It bows only to the indestructible connection between souls and dances with fate. It's vulnerable, powerful, elusive, and magical, all at once. It's in us, and we're in it. It's the currency of life, yet it needs us to remind it of its significance. Time is also an



REBELLICCA
What Time Dreams of When It Is Asleep | 2024

emotional space, a sandbox where existence unfolds and immortal love defies the impossible. My fascination with time's paradoxical nature is the source of this portrayal.

Your art often evokes a feeling of unresolved tension. What role does this tension play in inviting the viewer into your pieces?

Unresolved tension is what compels us to look deeper—it mirrors the uncertainties we all carry. By leaving certain elements open-ended, I invite viewers to step into the work, to explore their own emotions. The tension becomes a bridge, a way to connect the art to the viewer's imagination or lived experience, so they co-create the artwork time and time again through their perception and interpretation of it.



REBELLICCA | When Time Realized My Forever Was | 2024

Ploy Sridichainanta

Content Creator from BKK, Thailand.

Project Statement

Doll Photography is a project that is meant to make people smile. My inspiration came from the time that I got stress out from long working days, play with the dolls and they heal somehow. Just as simple as that. I want to pass on this feeling that heals the mind and souls of other people in their bad days. So did you smile today?

Ploy Sridichainanta | Nut Cracker





— Interview

Tristan Perrotti

Can you tell us about how growing up in rural Oregon has influenced your artistic vision and approach to painting?

It's done a few things for me, firstly it's given me an appreciation for and the will to push through physical discomfort and difficult work. Finding that space between action and thought so you can simply DO whatever it is you need to do and not get hung up on the aches or pains. Secondly it's given me an appreciation for the little moments in life, the things that go unnoticed by the wider world, that still happen nonetheless. I love those little dramas that could be the subject of elegant prose, or the simplicity of watching wildlife go about its day unbothered, or sitting by a seasonal creek before the summer months dry it up again.

What draws you to explore the emotional connection between feelings and the physical body in your work?

For me, painting is in and of itself a physical act, our emotions and our physicality are inherently intertwined, so it seems that painting as an expression



or exploration of that relationship is only natural and interesting. We feel our emotions in our body, and I want my paintings to invoke a physical connectedness with the viewer. I hope to activate the viewers sympathetic nervous system through the universality of action and motion.

Your use of bold colors and dynamic movement is striking. What inspires your color palette and the energy in your paintings?

I originally taught myself to paint trying to copy the Impressionists, their choices in palette have stuck with me as a result. Along with that influence I have always gravitated towards visual intensity. So, saturated contrasting colors and marks achieve this nicely and lend themselves again to my need for physical intensity. In terms of movement, people are always in motion, I don't think of anybody ever being truly static, so I try to show that honesty in our constant movements, both emotional and physical, the ever present vibrations of life.

How do surreal and classical influences shape your expressionist style? Can you share specific examples?

Romanticism and Renaissance era classical works are huge influences, i've always found their grandeur seductive and their interest in depicting universal human experiences as something I really strongly relate to. At the same time, I consider Renee Magritte's absurdist humor as something very similar to my own interests. Humor and absurdity are accessible, they can open our minds to different ways of thinking without being strict about interpretations. These influences and others all get filtered through my love of the expressiveness of Leon Golub, Lucian Freud, and Francis Bacon, who are major visual influences on my style.



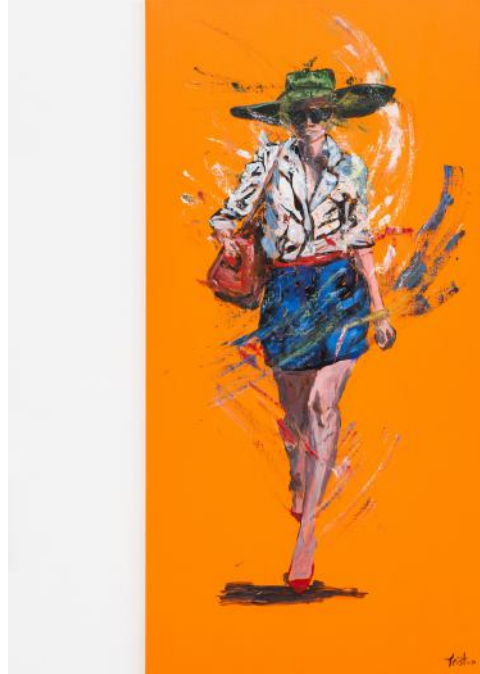
Tristan Perrotti | Free fallin

As an artist and political consultant, how do these two roles intersect in your creative process, if at all?

Fun note, I actually just recently changed jobs and now work in the Oregon State Legislature! I try to not have these different sides of my life intersect at all, though the realities of life sometimes mean that they do. While if we're talking about the creative process, my work is interested in systems of power and of interpersonal moments, which may overlap with the political world. However I am strict about not falling down the rabbit hole of political commentary or speaking to contemporary political issues or figures. It's just not where I want to take my work, especially since I deal with the function of politics everyday in my regular job, I like to get away from that a bit in my artwork.

You mentioned rarely revising your paintings. How does this rapid, intuitive process affect the final piece?

I work in acrylics, which dry quickly. If want my piece to look or turn out a certain way, that means I have to work fast, I also like that it means I don't have time to over-intellectualize my decisions. Following intuition and reacting to what's happening with the paint in real-time adds a certain level of energy and texture to a piece I think. You can look at it and feel the motion that went into it.



Tristan Perrotti | Sarah | 2024

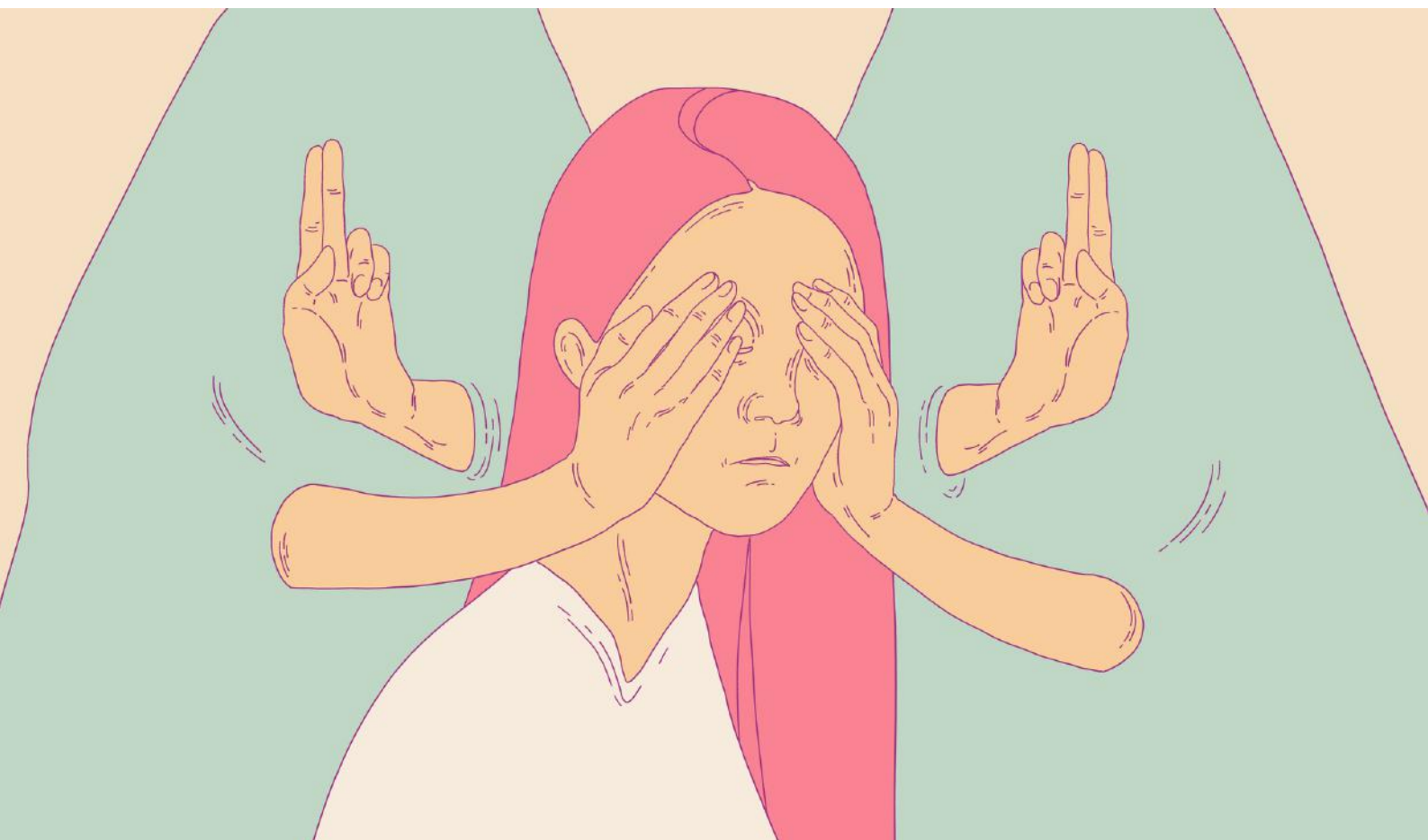
Could you elaborate on the themes of machismo and corporate culture critique in your work?

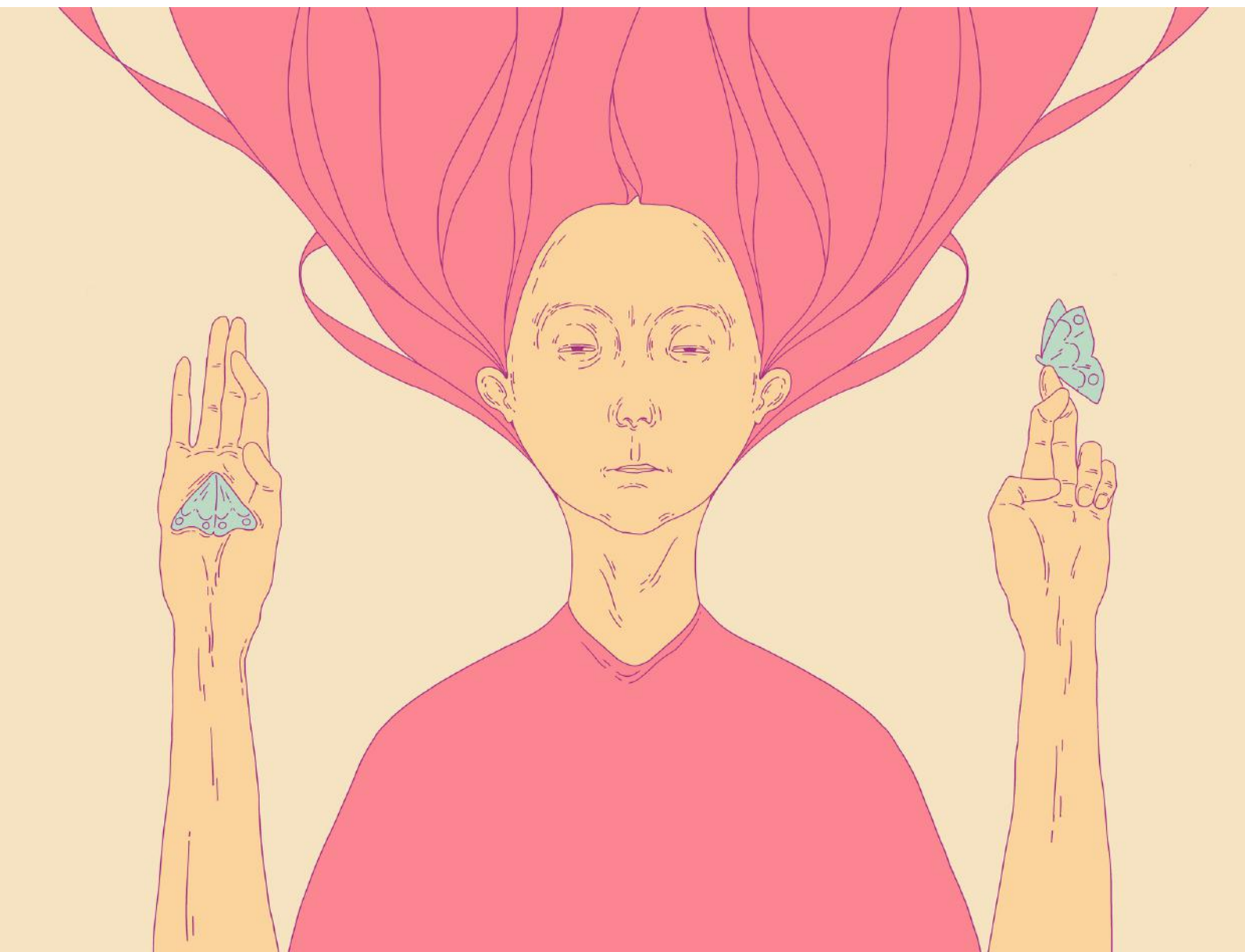
I think there's something fun in taking these two identity or affectations, which are very self-serious, and just doing something minor but noticeable enough to make them funny. I find there's joy in not taking oneself too seriously, especially when you work in a high-stress environment. We need some absurdity in our lives. The important thing though is that when I critique corporate or machismo self-seriousness, i'm not tearing them down or saying that they ought not to exist, but rather pointing out there are healthy ways to inhabit these identities which are not harmful or toxic towards others.



Tristan Perrotti | Fellini Holiday | 2024

Agata Jawor is a self-taught illustrator and a graduate graphic designer at the University of Arts in Poznan (Poland). She has always been an attentive observer of human daily interactions and emotions. In her sketch works, she often captures unknown people seen in trains, restaurants, and buses. In her digital illustrations, the artist tries to express her deeply hidden emotions and thoughts, treating them as self-therapy. As those artworks are intimate or even neuralgic for her, she attempts to cover them using symbolic, metaphoric, and elucidative gestures, compositions, and a soft, calming color palette.





Agata Jawor | Swear | 2020

— Interview

Kiara Florez

Can you share the inspiration behind your current series of works? How do spirituality and femininity influence your creative process?

I have been inspired by nature even in the early works, but lately, I have taken the inspiration to another level. In daily life, I am looking for patterns and shapes in the trees, clouds, and overall landscapes. I capture mental pictures from my outside observations and take them into consideration for the next painting when it is time. Concepts of earthly tones and environments are portrayed in vivid palettes. Nature can be moody, transformative, and expressive just like us, and I like to show that to viewers. Spirituality and femininity play a role as they are pulled from personal experiences and reflections. It took years to discover what femininity meant for me. It is a routine for everyone to express how they feel or want to feel through a certain mindset, clothing attire, attitude, etc. My style consists of cool tones and maintaining a determined mindset on workdays. When it comes to art, I let loose, take in all the colors, and allow myself to feel whatever I want. I rely on loose factors of spirituality to curate my artistic craft and practice self-love. Painting gives me that voice as it reflects all the moments that led me here.

Your work often features human-like beings in surreal, abstract settings. How do these forms represent your personal experiences or emotions?

The forms can be represented in many ways. They are seen



Kiara Florez | Withering Slowly



as guardians, actors in a story, angels, or a self-portrait. Most times, they do not have distinct human features as it allows space for interpretation. The loose outline of a figure gives them the illusion of being a human being placed in a dreamlike, surreal setting. The human beings, or “ghost friends” as some people have called them, are there to define my current feelings. My emotions constantly fluctuate when painting, and the “ghost friends” play their role in it. If I feel lost or confused, they’re floating aimlessly in the sky or painted in darker tones. If I am feeling bubbly or happy, they glow in bright yellow, surrounded by a rainbow of colors. They become symbols of my inner thoughts, struggles, triumphs, and overall imagination. The human-like beings are easily relatable as it’s a reminder of what it is to be human and carry much emotion. Viewers like to place themselves in my works as the “ghost friend” and decide their own emotions and experience.

You mentioned that your paintings reflect your healing journey. How has art helped you process and navigate this path?

Art has been my best friend since I was a kid, but as I got older and was figuring out who I wanted to be, it became my voice. My healing journey began when I developed major anxiety in early adolescence. I realized the power of being anxious and overwhelmed can truly affect the body physically. I could not quite articulate these struggles in words, and so I turned to painting/drawing to let the thoughts flow. It was better than bottling it in. Themes of spirituality and nature took shape in my works as it provided calmness and strengthened self-love. For some, an outlet would be running, journaling, or gardening. For me, it was always art, and it kept me grounded in my vision of physical health, confidence, and a positive mentality. My art has evolved since the beginning of the healing journey, and so have I.

The use of bold colors and wavy lines is a distinct feature of your work. What do these elements symbolize in the context of your paintings?

Although there may be times I use a limited palette, I am naturally inclined to use all the colors of the rainbow. The last step before starting a painting is to lay out all the colors on the palette because, at some point, I intend to use most of it. The boldness and brightness make a statement to the viewer.

I have heard my works can be too colorful, but to others, it is the right amount. At the end of the day, I cannot help but paint what I feel is right. The intended audience will understand. The colors communicate with each other through wavy lines and circles. There are not many sharp edges like triangles or squares seen in the works. Waves and circles represent a softness and easiness, which sets the spiritual tones that are sprinkled in. They speak to me more in the artistic process. Dark, vivid colors and sharp lines appear if I am feeling conflicted or concerned. If I were to tell someone a shape that defines me, it would be a round circle with waves of colors swirling within.

How does your connection to nature, such as the Delawarean beaches and Pennsylvanian hills, shape the themes and stories within your artwork?

Sometimes I paint from imagination, which has been a routine since childhood, but now I draw from familiar landscapes or search for new environments within reach. I have lived on the eastern shore for eight years and find many beautiful scenes even from my own backyard. Delaware holds beauty and hidden landscapes like any other place—it is a matter of looking for it at the right time. The beaches are beautiful. The waves are my happy place as I can listen to the waters overlap and observe its movement as the weather progresses. I recently started traveling to Pennsylvania more and have fallen in love with the hillsides and farmlands. The endless rows of greenery and fields of yellows and reds are a wonder to look at. I can only imagine the paintings I would make whenever I travel around the world. I am constantly influenced by the natural scenes, and my works would not feel complete without it. For the moment, I am a homebody at heart and simply enjoy the beauty of nature not too far away. The landscapes in my works are now painted from real life, and abstract forms are fused with it.

Many of your works are intuitively developed. Can you describe how intuition guides your creative decisions and the final compositions?



Kiara Florez | Alignment



Kiara Florez | Chaos Ensues

My paintings are all intuitive, meaning I never sketch out preliminary studies. The vision is often stuck in my mind until I finally get it out on a canvas. The idea could strike if I am outside and see something that stands out. I could think of a scene randomly or wake up with an idea. I cannot force the idea to happen—it must arrive naturally. This means that I could go weeks without painting if the ideas do not appear. Once they do, however, I have the urge to paint it. The idea can change later, and something I once thought of before could transform or be left out as the painting comes to life. I do not label any later changes as a mistake. It is simply a different direction that will take me to a better one. That is what I find the most fun part of intuitive painting: the composition can be changed rather quickly or not at all. Most times, the initial idea does come to life. I never do two paintings at once. I will finish whatever I started even if I have other ideas in my mind. It is a patient, slow process that can have various endings. My best works are 100% intuitive. It's the only moment I do not have to think about anything but just paint the vision stuck in my head.

Your paintings explore the idea of other dimensions and imaginative worlds. How do these themes relate to your view of the human psyche?

I feel as though dreams or strong imaginations are a way to escape from reality. Reality does not have unicorns and fairies, but with art or any other creative form, you can make anything come true. Imagination is extremely powerful, and art fuels that to any extent. It truly can say so many words without having to write any. Dimensions and imaginative worlds are concepts discussed by many, whether it is through religious, scientific, or just general perspective. Humans are free to think of the imaginable and impossible. I like to paint a beautiful surrealist landscape or dreamy portals because I imagine myself in such places. It makes me feel happy, and it is fun to see what I can come up with. So many classics and famous art are made from those with vivid imaginations while still influenced by realities of life. In my works, I paint familiar things but then add in the imaginative elements so others can get lost in it. They see my story, struggles, and successes just as much as my imagination. It is complex and relatable, which allows great conversation and connection.

I'm **Carlee Diamond**, a self-taught Canadian analogue photographer from Cambridge, ON. My work focuses on empowerment, identity, and human connection, using techniques like multiple exposures, film souping and candid portraiture. As my artistic practice continues to evolve, I'm deeply passionate about using my photography to explore environmental themes, capture alternative lifestyles, and amplify the voices of women and youth.





— Interview

Zohreh Mohammadhosseinpour

What initially inspired you to create the "Abandon Bikes" project, and how did your background in documentary photography influence this work?

Upon my arrival in London, I was immediately struck by the prevalence of unhoused individuals throughout the city. It was a distressing observation that left me eager to address this pressing social issue through my work as a documentary photographer. However, I was also conscious of the need to respect the privacy and dignity of those affected, avoiding the direct use of their likenesses or exploiting their circumstances for the sake of making a point.

Drawing upon my background in documentary photography and honing my skills as an observant photographer, I sought a unique approach to document this important subject matter. It was through this process that I discovered the symbolic power of abandoned bicycles on the streets of London, which served as a potent representation of urban neglect and the individual hardships faced by many living on the margins of society. This realization inspired my photography project, allowing me to thoughtfully address the challenges of homelessness while maintaining a respectful distance from its victims.

Could you elaborate on the connection between abandoned bikes and homelessness in London? How do you see these bikes as symbols of the struggles faced by unhoused individuals?



Abandoned bikes and homelessness in London share a connection rooted in the themes of neglect, loss, and detachment. Just as unhoused individuals are often left to fend for themselves on the streets, these discarded bicycles are left to rust and decay in public spaces, becoming a symbol of the city's neglect towards both inanimate objects and, more importantly, its marginalized citizens.

How does your experience running the photowalk workshop for the "Single Homeless Project" charity influence the way you approach your art?

My photowalk workshop with the "Single Homeless Project" significantly shaped my art, emphasizing empathy, inclusivity, and connection. Engaging with vulnerable individuals underscored their resilience and creativity, reinforcing the importance of valuing their stories in society. This experience deepened my commitment to employing art as a catalyst for social change while upholding ethical considerations. By ensuring my work is rooted in compassion and respect, I strive to create meaningful art that recognizes the inherent worth of every person and advocates for a more inclusive world.

What was the process of selecting the abandoned bikes for this project, and did any particular bike or location stand out to you as especially meaningful?

The selection process for the abandoned bikes in this project was guided by the emotional impact each image evoked and how well it conveyed the intended message. I searched for scenes that effectively captured the essence of urban neglect and resonated with the stories of homelessness I wanted to portray. There wasn't any specific location that stood out, as homelessness is an issue present throughout London. Each bike represented the same underlying narrative of abandonment and struggle, signifying the shared experiences of those affected by homelessness. By featuring images from various locations, I aimed to

emphasize the widespread nature of this issue and the need for a collective response.

Why did you choose to hand-color your photographs? What role do the vibrant colors play in the overall message of the project?

In the "Abandon Bikes" project, hand-coloring the photographs symbolizes the potential for hope and resilience amidst adversity. By contrasting the reality of discarded bicycles with the possibility of positive change, the series seeks to ignite discussions about empathy, community support, and solutions to address homelessness and related challenges. The vibrant colors emphasize resilience while highlighting the connection between urban neglect and the experiences of those affected, aiming to inspire urgent action and conversations around these critical social issues.

How do you think your work challenges or alters the way people view homelessness in urban environments like London?

"Abandon Bikes" aims to challenge common misconceptions and apathy about homelessness in cities like London. By using abandoned bicycles as a symbol, the project encourages viewers to recognize the personal stories of unhoused individuals and question the factors contributing to their circumstances. Through this work, I hope to foster a more empathetic understanding of homelessness and inspire a greater sense of urgency in addressing the challenges faced by those affected, ultimately promoting more inclusive and supportive communities.

What do you hope viewers take away from the "Abandon Bikes" series? How do you envision the impact of this project on conversations surrounding social issues?

The "Abandon Bikes" series seeks to encourage viewers to reflect on the personal stories of



homelessness and urban neglect. By using abandoned bicycles as a symbolic representation, the project aims to foster empathy and acknowledge the resilience of those affected.

I envision this project contributing to larger conversations on social issues by highlighting the interconnectedness between urban neglect and the experiences of city residents. By offering a unique perspective on homelessness, I hope the series inspires a greater sense of urgency in addressing the challenges faced by unhoused individuals and promoting more inclusive and supportive communities.

Ultimately, my goal for "Abandon Bikes" is to serve as a catalyst for positive change, encouraging a deeper understanding of homelessness and advocating for solutions that prioritize the needs of marginalized individuals.

My name is **Roman Kovtonyuk**, I am 19 years old. I was born and raised in Kyiv, and at the age of 16, I moved to a Europe . Like many young people, I'm currently searching for my path and a place under the sun. I've been connected to drawing for as long as I can remember, but I never took it seriously. About two years ago, I decided to change that by finishing my works, experimenting more, and developing my own style and technique. I'm currently working on my first collection titled "Detachment." Some of the works are already completed, and I'm eager to present some of them to the audience. For me, art and drawing are essential parts of life. It's my way of expressing love and seeing myself in what I am not, while dedicating my paintings to the people who are dear to me. I would be very happy if my works find their audience, inspire someone, or encourage action. What you see on the canvas is a reflection of who I am.



Roman Kovtonyuk | Soothe | 2024



P.K. 24

— Interview

Marz Gebhardt

Your work spans multiple creative forms: writing, painting, and filmmaking. How do these different mediums complement each other in expressing your ideas?

Most of my childhood was spent at a piano bench, where my teacher of nine years often told me to "paint a story" through the pieces I memorized. I think that practice taught me to find comfort in how written words and visuals are always connected—one often bringing the other to life- or at least to deeper understanding. *Martian Mail*, for instance, blends free-verse poetry, vivid paintings, and varying forms of cinema to create a more dynamic and layered narrative. Ultimately, the project's goal is to merge these elements in a way that fosters deeper engagement with the audience. It invites individuals not only to reflect but also to engage—through their own written responses or by sending a physical card to a loved one—reawakening the tradition of personalized tangible communication.

When I write, I often envision a painting or a scene accompanying the text. And when I'm working on a painting or filming, I can't help but think of an unrelated but visually connected story. That's why I love working with multiple mediums at once- the exciting unpredictability of my results. Sometimes, those unexpected ideas—whether visual or written—turn out to be even more meaningful than what I originally envisioned.

I find that letting an idea stretch across different mediums creates a larger space for people to connect with what you're communicating. It becomes a multi-layered collaboration between the different aspects of my creative practice and the different reactions of varying audiences. When I was little, I used to ask my dad what he imagined when I played at piano recitals and competitions. His answers always surprised me—they were so different from the stories and "paintings" I clung to in my mind.

I've come to believe that the audience's unique and



Marz Gebhardt | Dreaming of Lost Love | 2024

personal methods of interpretation are complementary extensions of the artist's own ways of creating—whether through writing, painting, or filmmaking. One of the most fascinating things for me is seeing how others interpret or engage with these mediums. Sometimes a poem will prompt someone to talk about a painting or a film scene (or vice versa), and it's like the art begins to have a conversation with itself. I love how these perspectives answer each other's questions while prompting new ones, blending words and visuals into something greater than either could articulate in solitude.

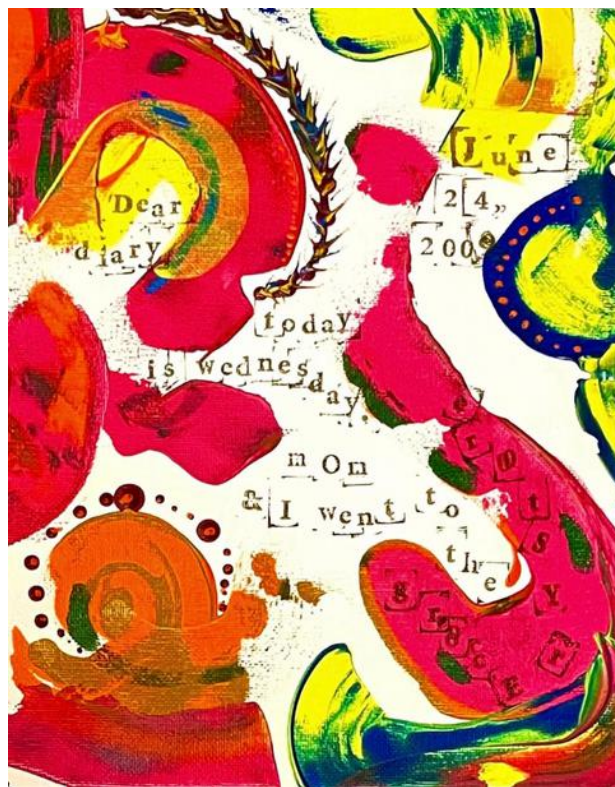
How has growing up in Saskatchewan influenced your artistic vision and the themes you explore in your work?

One of the best things about growing up in Saskatchewan is the quiet encouragement it offers- to simply stand still. The vast, often solitary and uncanny landscapes of the Prairies, with their open skies and bleak winters fosters a quiet kind of fantastical reflection within my own brain. As I've grown older, seen glimpses of other places, and met many people with stories vastly different from my own, I've come to treasure the sense of grounding that comes from standing firm in the roots of vibrant kindred relationships formed within a smaller community. My art often draws from this sense of belonging, but also from the complex feelings of distance and longing for return that emerge when leaving in hopes of discovering a varied terrain. In *Martian Mail*, Saskatchewan is central to the project's narrative

structure. Each chapter of the project reflects a different relationship to the land and to home: the excitement of rediscovery in released Chapter One, the homesickness of leaving the prairies in unreleased Chapter Two, and the personal exploration of childhood spaces in unreleased Chapter Three. Ultimately, the project uses the prairies as a backdrop to explore more universal experiences of love, loss, and connection. The image that comes to mind when discussing the project's relationship to this province is sustained eye contact—a simple act I used to shy away from for many years. Now, it's something I've grown to cherish, a daily reminder of the importance of standing still in the moment alongside loved ones. In many ways, the various themes of every poem, script, painting, or short film I've created over the past year with Martian Mail feels like my own way of sustaining that eye contact: a glimpse of gratitude toward the people and places that shaped me on the Prairies, and an invitation to meet the gaze of those I have yet to meet.

Could you share the inspiration behind your project Martian Mail? How did you come up with the idea of combining greeting cards with poems and paintings?

Martian Mail was born out of a desire to reconnect with others in a meaningful way, especially during the isolation and aftermath of the pandemic. I've always used writing to process emotions, and during the pandemic, that need for connection became even more apparent as my relationship with my parents underwent a profound shift. My dad is immunosuppressed, and as a full-time student working at a candy shop, I couldn't risk being near either of my parents for their safety. But the distance was difficult, and I wanted to find a meaningful way to stay connected. At the same time, I recognized the fading tradition of sending physical mail. Growing up, I often sent letters to my friends—even though I saw them regularly. There was something so special about having that extra layer of communication, a tangible piece of someone's thoughts you could keep and cherish in a memory box for years to come. That's when I turned to something simple yet heartfelt—letters. My parents often communicated through handwritten notes, so it seemed natural to use that format. But I wanted to take it a step further; I wanted to combine my love for poetry and painting in a way that could rekindle that personal touch. So, I began creating greeting cards that paired my poems with my paintings. The cards weren't just about art—they were about connecting, about offering a small piece of my universe to someone else's. The Martian Mail project evolved from there in February 2023, incorporating themes of love, loss,



Marz Gebhardt | June 24 | 2023

youth, and the passage of time. Each card becomes a unique piece of art that invites the recipient not just to read, but to engage in a dialogue. It's a way of sparking conversation and a desire to create through viewing another's creative expression.

The concept of sending "signals" through your art is fascinating. What kinds of responses or connections have you received from audiences?

Ultimately, I believe the true beauty of sending "signals" through art lies in the power of each audience to spark life into every poem, painting, and film that resonates with them. Once you put something out into the world, it's no longer just for you—it becomes part of someone else's experience, shaped by their memories, emotions, and imagination. That ongoing interaction between creator and audience is one of the most rewarding aspects of sharing your creations with your community. One of the most personally unexpected things about Martian Mail has been the catalytic connections I've formed in new places. The idea behind sending out "signals" is about offering something personal—whether it's a card, a poem, or a painting—and seeing how loved ones, strangers, or even future you respond. And well, the responses have been overwhelmingly positive. Some recipients have reached out to say that receiving a card reminded them of the importance of staying connected, especially in times when it can be easy to let those bonds slip. I've also been moved by a couple stories from people who have sent one of my greeting cards

to a loved one after years of little or no communication. Another dear friend framed the first set of cards they received, not for their artistic value but because they represented an important moment in our relationship.

That, to me, is the entire purpose of Martian Mail—it's not just about art; it's about creating a platform for emotional connection. Through this project, I've been able to connect with diverse audiences, both locally in Saskatchewan and globally, including two group exhibitions in Brooklyn, New York and an upcoming solo exhibition in Toronto, Ontario. The responses I receive—whether in the form of thank-you notes, shared memories, or people sending me their own creative responses—are a constant reminder of the power of human connection and the unique experiences found within the universality of many experiences.

Many of your works explore themes of family, femininity, and loss. Why are these themes important to you, and how do you approach them in your art?

Family, femininity, and loss are deeply personal themes for me, and I think they find their way into my work because they're so intertwined with my understanding of identity and connection. As all young people do, I've witnessed the many intricacies of family dynamics time and time again—the constant bonds that form the fabric of our development, but also the tensions that arise when those bonds are stretched. In Martian Mail, the exploration of family is about the love and complexity of those connections. My cards and poems specific to this theme serve as an invitation to reflect on our own relationships, offering a space where we can acknowledge both the joys and the struggles we experience in these bonds—on the Prairies and beyond.

Femininity, on the other hand, feels like an ever-evolving dialogue in my art. I use written and visual mediums to explore how the personified Femininity's qualities of strength and vulnerability coexist, not just as societal constructs but as deeply personal experiences. In Martian Mail, the idea of femininity is about embracing the quiet power that comes with care, resilience, and self-discovery— even during chapters of life when a mere glimmer of femininity is personally sufficient. My work reflects the complexity of the ultimate "feminine identity" and offers space for others to see even a fragment of themselves in that narrative. Loss is a recurring theme for me, not because it's inherently negative, but because I believe it's important to recognize that it's not always a dreadful experience. On the contrary, loss is a vital part of our evolving relationships with family, femininity, and the human experience itself.



Marz Gebhardt | Star Girl | 2023

Loss isn't only about what we physically lose; it's also about what we gain through remembering, grieving, and growing. This understanding shapes everything I create, as I strive to both literally and linguistically portray loss, highlighting the unexpected joys and excitement it can bring. I often represent loss with the color yellow—whether through yellow backgrounds or accents in my paintings and short films, or through references to yellow or golden objects in my poems. It's a reminder that we are all bound by our experiences of love and loss, and through creative expression, we can find healing.

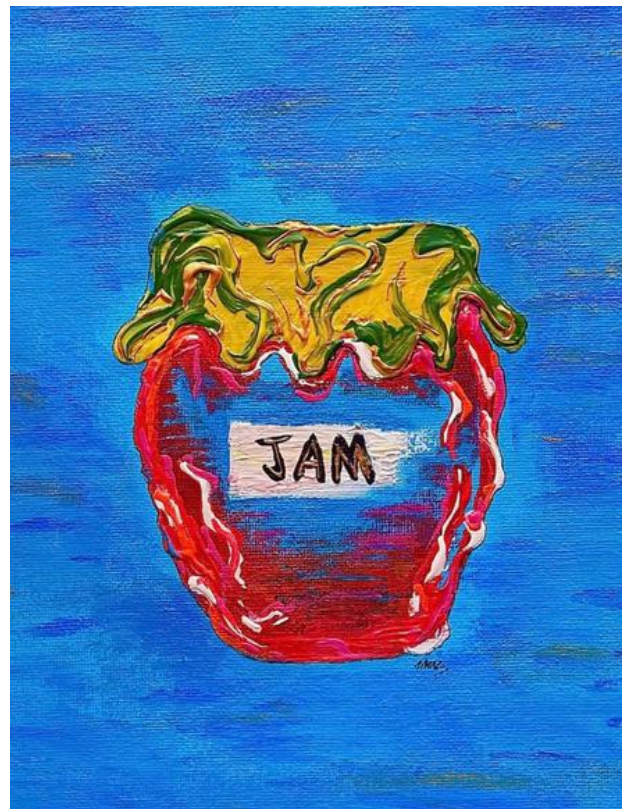
What ties these themes together is their general universality but specific instances of variety—they're all experiences that most people encounter in many different situations and forms. By weaving them into my work, I hope to create spaces where viewers or readers can reflect on their own unique relationships, identities, and memories. For me, art is about connection, and exploring these themes allows me to invite others into that shared human experience. I think there's something powerful in reframing those moments as worthy of artistic exploration.

Your thesis focused on the Holocaust's Sonderkommando, which is a deeply challenging subject. How did this academic work shape your creative practice?

My thesis on the Holocaust's Sonderkommando was one of the most challenging projects I've undertaken, not just academically but emotionally. Engaging with such a profoundly painful and morally complex subject required a level of focus, empathy, and self-

reflection that fundamentally shifted how I approach storytelling and art in the following years. One of the key lessons I took from my research was the importance of honoring silence as much as expression. The stories of the Sonderkommando are often marked by gaps of unrepeatable experiences—things that are unspeakable, moments that will resist full comprehension by modern academics and audiences. I think that experience taught me to appreciate the spaces between words, the power of what's left unsaid, and how modern art can help fill those voids in ways that history or academia alone cannot.

This perspective has directly shaped my creative practice. When I write, paint, or work on a film, I try to hold space for complexity, ambiguity, and the emotional weight of what isn't immediately visible or obvious. The Holocaust, and particularly the experiences of the Sonderkommando, revealed the depths of human resilience and suffering, and those themes of survival, memory, and ethical responsibility often find their way into my creative work—even in subtle ways. For example, I have pieces coming out in Chapter Three that are wholly inspired by the moment I first encountered the writings of Filip Müller. I will never forget how I felt when I discovered that this young Sonderkommando was exactly my age upon entering Auschwitz, and he too played the violin for many years. I cannot put this feeling into words- and so I will paint and discuss my own experiences as a child with my own violin, in a world where I will never experience such depth of human suffering. My thesis also reinforced my belief that art and storytelling have a unique ability to connect people to history, to each other, and to emotions that might



Marz Gebhardt | The Jam Jar | 2024

otherwise feel inaccessible. Whether I'm writing a poem or crafting a short film for Martian Mail, I often think about how those pieces can carry meaning beyond what can be thematically expressed- all thanks to audience members who come from different backgrounds with different experiences that I will never share.

Ultimately, my thesis wasn't just an academic exercise—it was a deeply human experience. It reminded me of the profound responsibility we have as artists, writers, and creators to bear witness to stories, even the most difficult ones, and to create work that invites others into that process of understanding and remembrance.

What advice would you give to someone looking to explore both visual and literary arts as a way to tell personal stories?

My advice for someone looking to explore both visual and literary arts in tandem is to embrace the chaos of formulating dialogue between the two mediums, trust the unique power of your own voice, and never underestimate the power of patience when your ideas aren't quite developing according to plan. In the end, the greatest lesson I've embraced this year is to surrender my grasp on control, and reach for my camera when the paintbrush no longer feels like the right tool for the story



Marz Gebhardt | In These Spaces We Find People | 2024

I'm **Ambra De Polo** from Tarzo (very little village in north east of Italy), I grew up surrounded by nature and animals so they became my first source of inspirations. I used to love drawing and create things with my hands during childhood but then I kind of forgot this part of me since 2023, when I had a bad depression which forced me to stop from my job (safety machinery engineer in a company). When I started to feel better, naturally my hands looked for pencils and other drawing tools. From that moment I started to be "obsessed" by art. I'm studying with the international school of illustration of Sarmede and with independent illustrators, enjoying the journey and trying to be better day by day.

Ambra De Polo | Tornerà un altro inverno | 2024



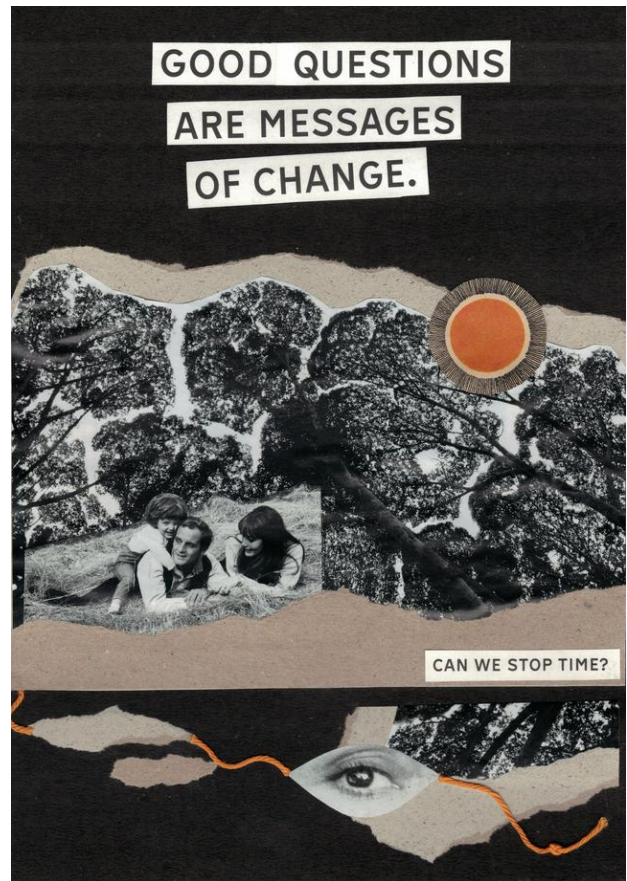


— Interview

Irmina Wachna-Sosin

Your journey to becoming an artist started after a career in adult education and organization development. What inspired you to transition into creating analog collages?

Yes, it was after ten years in organizational development and then after another 7 years in running a business together with my husband. We started a small company 10 years ago and we are still developing it. It was just two of us at the beginning and currently we hire 15 people. So I may say I had strong business ground to jump into the art field. Before I let any inspirations influence me, there was something meaningful that started my journey with collage. A few years ago, I prepared a gift for someone's birthday and I made a funny collage with a photo of this person. After finishing my work, I felt pure joy and happiness. I was surprised how strong it was. I felt the need for creation and loved this method of artistic expression. Since then, I have started to collect information about collage, learn about it and observe other collage artists. Some time later, having a hard time after too much work and stress, I was looking for something that could give me positive, fulfilling energy. Something that will not be connected to business, goals, achievements. That was the point when I came back to this remembered feeling of joy and happiness. It was a turning point when I decided (or was pushed) to create my own works. This decision was crucial for transition into creating collages. In terms of inspiration I would say my major inspiration are other artists. I observe many amazing collage artists on instagram, I collect publications with collage art. I also love to learn and read about Polish women artists from the past (for example Kobro, Stryeńska, Boznańska). Their biographies combined with their artworks are huge inspiration for me and encourage me to create, to fight for space in life for that. Another area of inspiration is looking for examples of applying collage technique in albums covers, posters, books or magazines and other areas of art. For example, lately



Irmina Wachna-Sosin | Time | 2024

I saw an interesting exhibition of the Polish photographer Zofia Rydet, who applied collage technique in her photographs. Using gelatin silver prints she created monochrome photo collages that were combined from her own photos only.

How has your educational background in curriculum and teaching influenced your artistic process or the themes you explore in your collages?

It was definitely the need for better and deeper understanding of the process of creating and growing me as an amateur artist. Observing me as a beginner in the art process and how it influenced me through the time was interesting. For a long time I was creating my collages secretly from others, hiding papers, glues and frames in many drawers. Then I shared it only with my husband, kids and closest friends. They started to ask me for a collage for themselves. At the beginning I was convinced that I had no right to create because I was not a formally educated artist. It took me about 2-3 years to openly talk about making collages, arrange „official” space for creating them, and finally set up an Instagram profile with my works. In this time of slow experimenting with paper collages I observed myself and my transition during the process. I was gaining more and more courage, satisfaction, joy. I was more open to making a mistake, experimenting, being ok with not knowing. I was

amazed how good and healing it was for me. It was really powerful. My need for understanding this on a deeper level definitely comes from the education field, but also the field of organizational development. Unrevealed processes in companies have a huge influence on people and their behavior on the surface. I saw a clear parallel here.. I had to find out what is under the surface of the art process itself. That is how I found out about art therapy and started to explore this topic. I finished Academy of Art Therapy and started to use collage techniques in art workshops with women and seniors. It is a very interesting and satisfying time for me. I plan to develop my knowledge and experience in this area.

Many of your works incorporate themes of memory and family, as seen in your collages. Can you share more about the inspiration behind these themes?

I am actually surprised with this fact but I decided not to fight against it. Usually I don't plan it. Sometimes when I find or receive an old picture of someone from the family I feel a very strong need for changing the context from the picture. That need usually corresponds with my unaware emotions or feelings. At the end, when work is done I am very often exhausted but very happy. When the collage is done I also usually already know the answer why I wanted to work with a particular piece. And it has a great additional effect for me. Maybe I will explain it better with examples. Collage „My young grandmother” is one of them. I used a black and white photo of her from her youth which I found in her old albums. I placed her figure in the background of the setting sun, among colorful flowers, in energetic, positive colors. This context strengthened her smile and allowed me to see her as a happy, carefree woman before any social role she had to bear later in her life. That collage brought me relief and peace but also awareness of this missing part of my grandmother's memory. In the collage „You got this” you can see me as a small kid. I found this black and white photo at my parents' house. This not

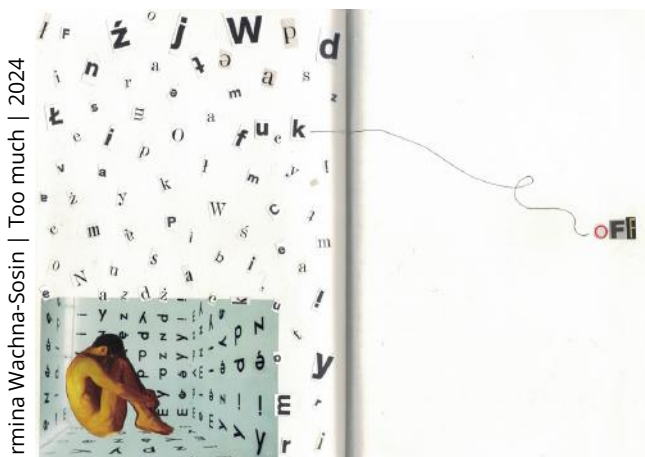


Irmína Wachna-Sosin | Generations | 2024

relevant photo was taken among other kids on the street. I cut myself out of this crowd and put myself on the high mountain that is a symbol of life challenges for me. I gave myself, as a little girl, encouragement and self-support I always needed. Sun and mountain are pieces from my children's paintings as a symbol of this need that is accurate for any generation, including my kids.

You've mentioned your interest in art therapy. How do you see the connection between your collages and therapeutic practices?

There are many definitions of Art Therapy, but to put it as simply as possible, it is the use of various forms of art in the therapeutic process – music, art, dance, theatre, sculpture. The final work itself is less important than the process of creation. The process affects the mental and physical well-being of the person who creates. Creating and interacting with art is a great way to relieve negative emotions and reduce stress. It has a positive influence on our brain. It also helps to contact deeply hidden emotions and express them. This is exactly what happened for me when I started to create collages. I felt this positive additional aspect of creation and wanted to learn more about it and spread it among others on collage workshop. Collage method is great to start an art-adventure



Irmína Wachna-Sosin | Too much | 2024

because you reuse what is already made, printed, painted. You don't have to draw or paint what can be more stressful at the beginning. At the same time it forces you to connect with yourself, your thoughts, dreams, emotions. They are very often unconscious but during the process of creating they become noticed, real and visible. I love observing the creation process and I am always amazed how it influences workshop participants. They always start with stress, reservation and no faith in their abilities but when they finish they are happy, proud and satisfied. When I see a spark in their eyes, I am also happy.

What emotions or messages do you hope your audience will take away from your works?

If my collages could bring any emotional „effect“ for someone other than only me, then it would be more than I have ever expected. I can only hope it happens. Through my experience and workshops I want to spread the message that anyone can create. That art creation is a wonderful process, we all love it as children. We should never give up on it. We don't have to create advanced paintings, we don't have to show it to anyone. Very simple drawings of dots and lines, scribbles or coloring pages are absolutely enough. Art is powerful and healing, just let yourself try it.

Can you describe your creative process when working on a new collage? What materials or techniques are most important to you?

I may compare it to the journey. The creative process is like the best adventure for me. Sometimes it is easy and short but sometimes it is hard, frustrating, requiring changing plans or new ideas. But it is always a fascinating, learning time with satisfaction at the end. Very often it starts with the word, sentence, picture or photo I find. I feel I want to work with it, although very often I am not sure why and I don't have any particular idea about it. I learn to trust this feeling. I cut it off or take it aside and I start having it in my mind. Waiting for more, being patient. I know it tells me something and I want to find out what it is. Then I look for other parts, I continue researching and thinking about it. Sometimes it takes weeks or months. For example, collage with grandparents took me over a year. I collected the parts I wanted to use and finished it after I found an old postcard from their hometown. I bought it in a bookstore in a totally different part of my country. A complete coincidence, but when I found it I knew I had everything to finish this collage. Composition is another important part of the process. Choosing backgrounds, frames, and types of materials are very important for me. Usually I feel and see very clearly about what is „good or wrong“ for

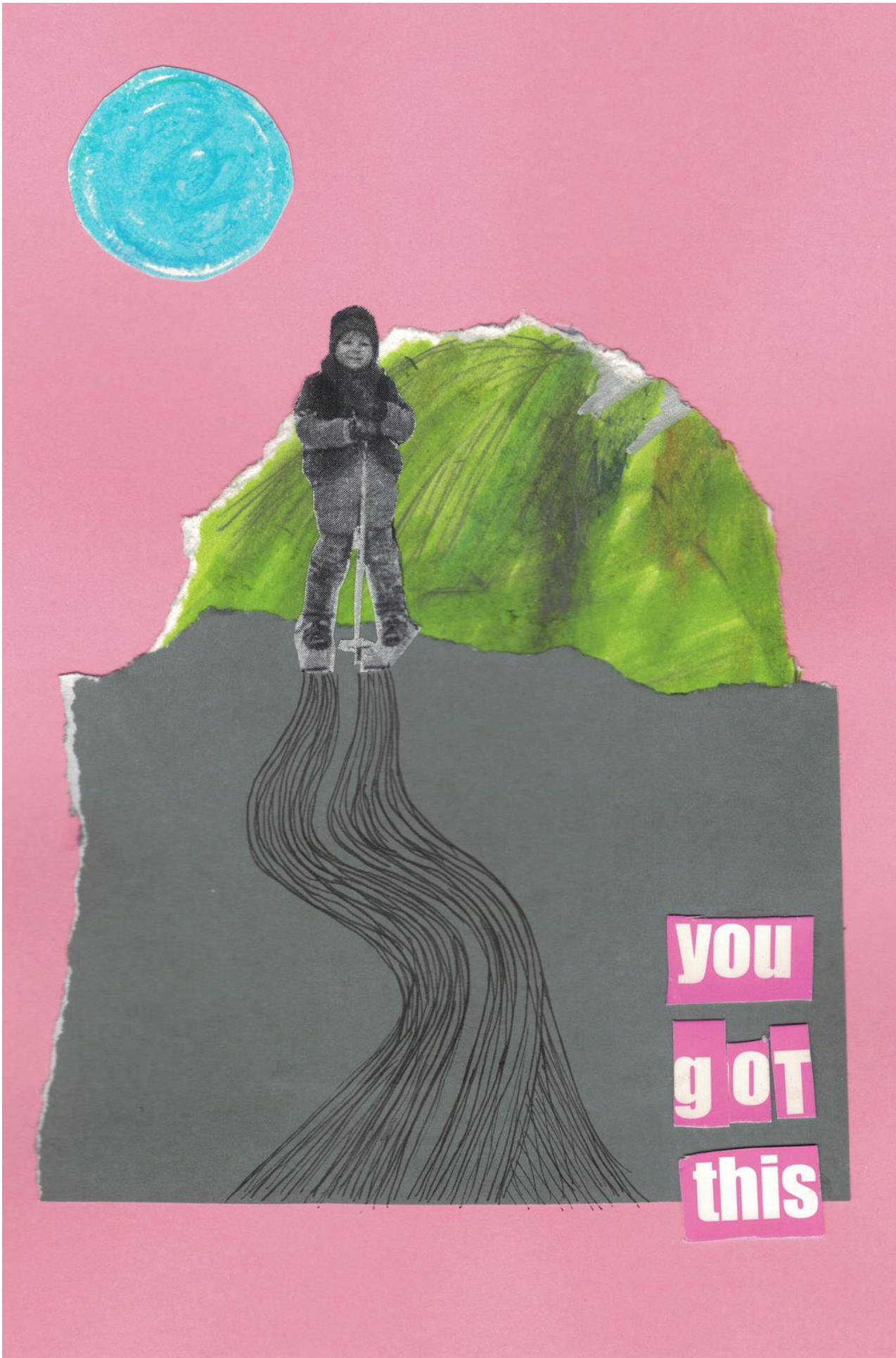


Irina Wachna-Sosin | Grandparents | 2024

the picture but I still have to learn to trust that. In case of doubts towards final details I take photos of different variants of the collage and keep them in mind for some days. I look at them a few times and then I know. Then I can move on to final assembling.

How has your cultural background, being from Poland and studying in the USA, influenced your artistic vision?

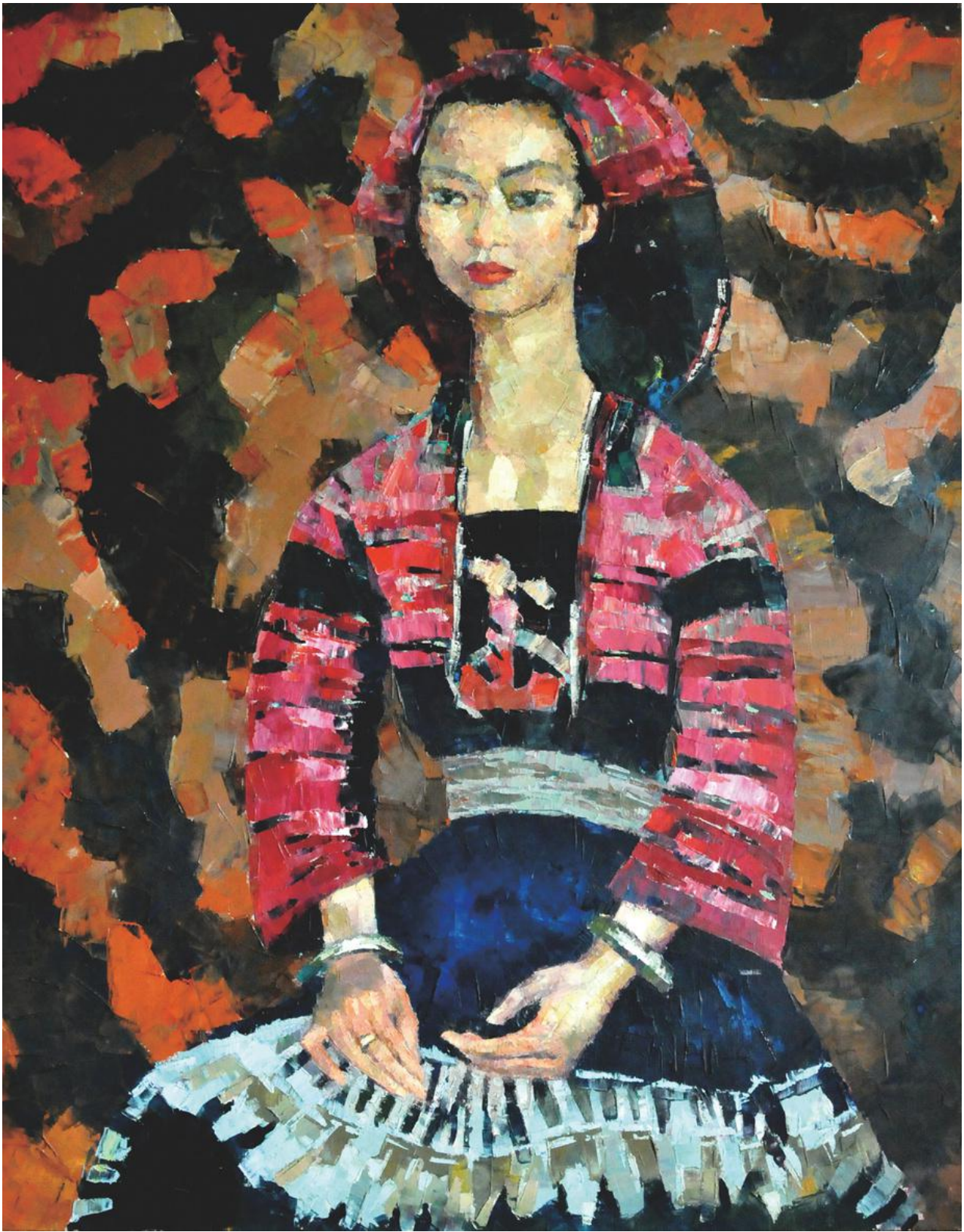
Studying in the USA gave me an amazing chance to see the variety, complexity of the world, different attitudes, life strategies, values. It was a very interesting but also challenging experience that automatically forced me to rethink who I am. It initiated reflection on my ethnicity, but also rethinking my beliefs, values, choices and seeing if they are really mine or they were rather given me by my cultural background. This aware process of knowing who I am started then and has been growing in me through other experiences. Showing what you think and who you are in a vulnerable and authentic way requires courage. Creating collages is my way to do that.

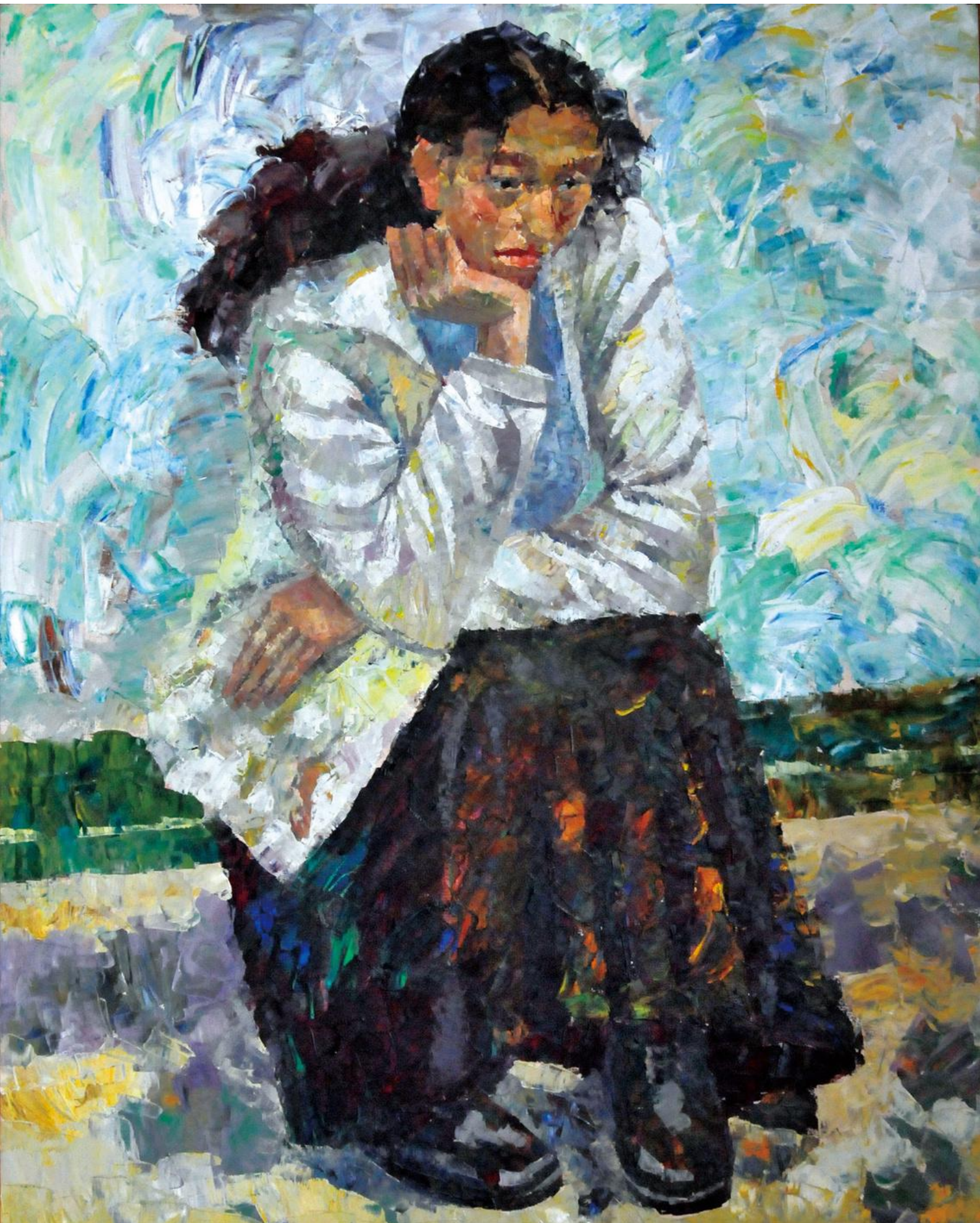


Irmina Wachna-Sosin | You got this | 2024

Ying Zhai

Born in Beijing in 1963, graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1988, a member of the Chinese Artists Association, a professor of painting, a graduate tutor, a member of the Academic Council in Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology; researcher of Li Keran Painting Institute; researcher of the China Oriental Culture Research Association; deputy editor -in -chief of "Chinese Artists" magazine; experts from the Chinese Federation of Literature and Art Fund; experts of Degree Center of the Ministry of Education; Good at oil painting, Chinese painting and watercolor painting of old Beijing folk custom.





— Interview

Małgorzata Jabłońska- Wawrzyniuk

Can you share the story behind your decision to specialize in visual identification systems? What inspired this direction in your work?

When it comes to design, I'm all about systems that connect the dots. I'm constantly on the lookout for ways to translate my clients' needs into a visual language that speaks volumes. The more variables, the better. The beauty lies in finding the system within the chaos.

So, my decision to dive into visual identification systems wasn't random. It came from a need to create designs that don't just look cool, but actually work—in a functional way that communicates a brand's true vibe and solves real problems. It's oddly satisfying when everything clicks, when the system works



seamlessly from concept to execution. For me, that's the perfect blend of logic, strategy, and creativity that leads to consistency. And, at the end of the day, let's not forget about the fun part. (Because there's always fun in funky.)

How did your background in both graphic design and marketing shape your approach to projects?

Both specializations have given me a cross-disciplinary approach to my work, allowing me to get the best of both worlds. Graphic design sharpens my eye for crafting with precision and style, project management taught me how to navigate the process, and marketing gave me the ability to step back and see the bigger picture—how designs truly perform. So, every project exists in a 3-dimensional space between creative vision, process, and strategic thinking.

What led you to found Funky Studio, and what is the studio's mission or philosophy?

Starting Funky Studio was a no-brainer for me. I needed a space to fully embrace my design philosophy—what I like to call „optimalism”—which celebrates clean, essential design and focuses on both form and function. My goal is to create designs that are not only visually striking but also rooted in structure and logic, with a reason behind every decision. It's all about blending creativity with functionality, aiming for good form and fun. (Because, F stands for fffffunky!)

Your design style emphasizes modular grids and a balance between abstraction and readability. How do you develop and refine these principles in your projects?

I kick off every project by diving deep into the client's

core message and goals, building a list of assumptions. From there, I set up a modular grid system that strikes a balance between flexibility and structure. The grid becomes the backbone of everything: logos, ID systems, illustrations, animations, ect. This structured foundation lets me play with form without losing sight of clarity, while also being responsive. Abstraction is where creativity flows in a visually appealing form, while readability ensures the message stays sharp and clear. I like to position the point of view right in the middle of these two opposites. (And that's what makes it both fun and funky.)

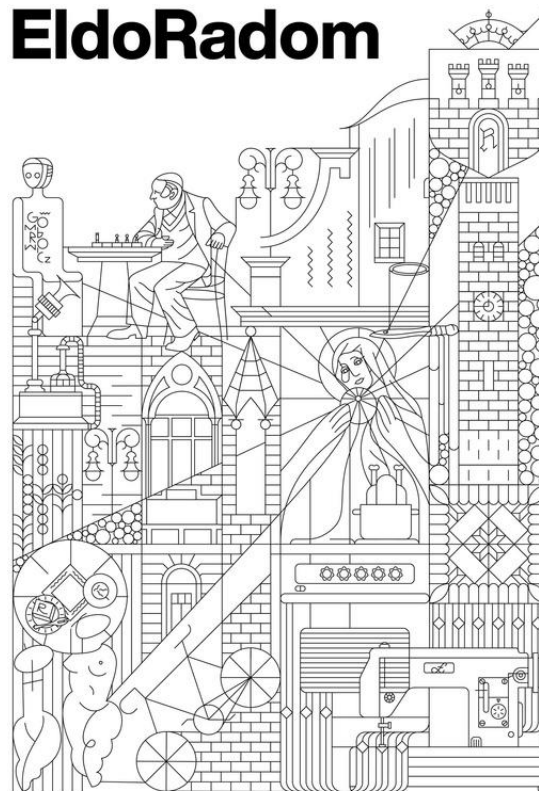
The 'less is more' approach is central to your work. How do you ensure functionality while maintaining visual appeal?

For me, the 'less is more' approach is all about stripping away the unnecessary and keeping only the essentials that truly communicate the needs ending up in „optimalism”. To keep things optimal, I rely on a grid—providing structure, black-and-white contrast—offering balance, and geometry—striking the right balance between readability and abstraction. Each project is an experiment, built on plenty of assumptions along the way to see how it plays out in the end.

Your POLISH TOWNS project demonstrates your unique style. Could you tell us more about the creative process behind this project?



EldoRadom



The „Polish Towns” project kicked off with playful slogans that captured the vibe of both small and bigger towns across Poland. I've always had a thing for urban vibes—there's something about discovering the unique DNA of a city that really tickles my creativity. This project gave me the opportunity to blend cultural heritage with modern, yet playful design. It started with research into the architecture and quirks of each town. The magic happened when I started playing with mathematics—using modular grids, scale, tangents to the circle—to create interest, all while keeping things almost primitive in their simplicity and cleanliness. It was also the perfect playground to experiment with characters by geometricizing figure sculptures as well. Capturing it all with the playful copy—that was it.

How does your experience as a former lecturer in psychophysiology of vision influence your design process?

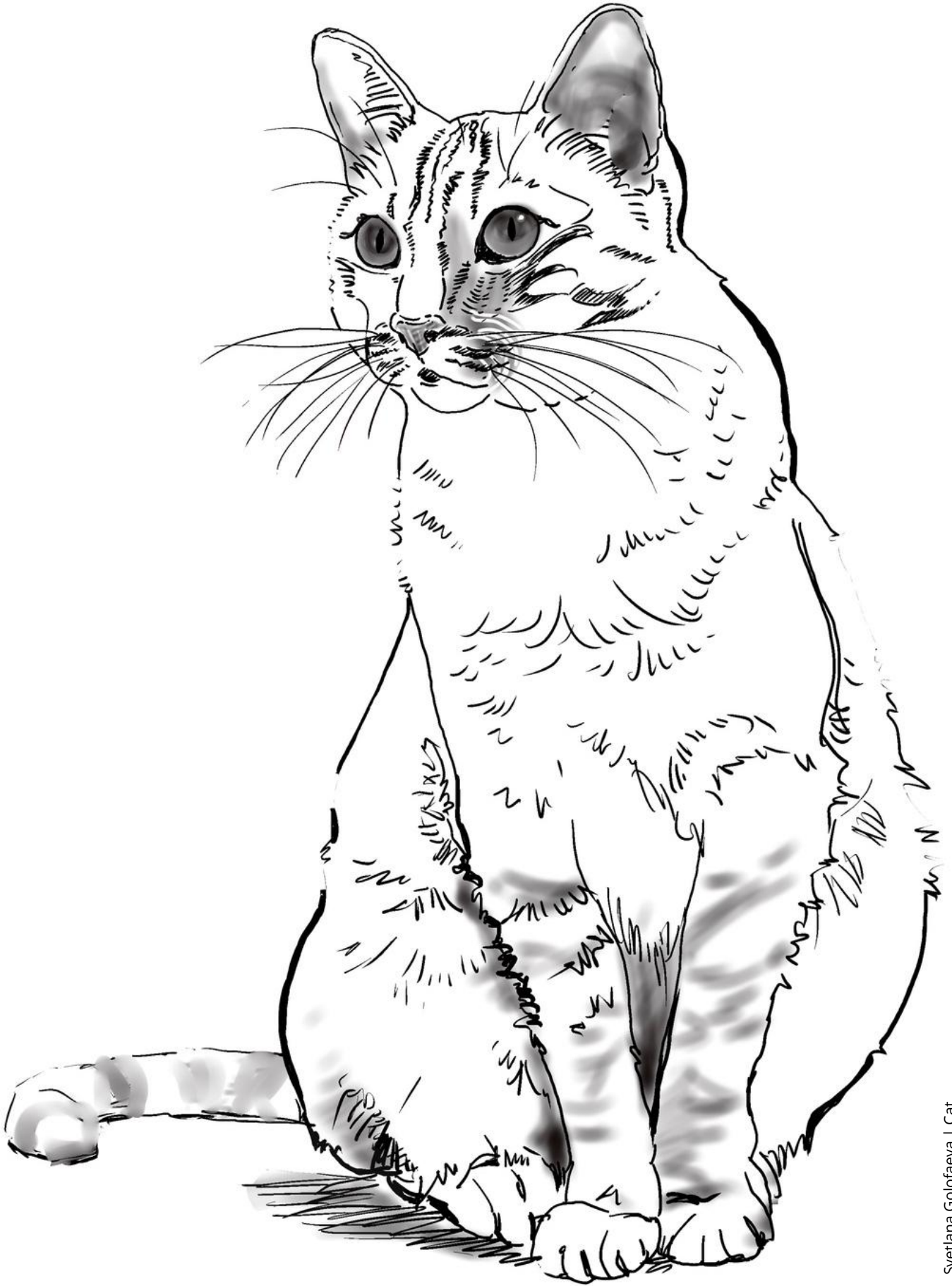
I've always had a soft spot for mathematics, but teaching Psychophysiology of Vision at the Academy of Fine Arts was a game-changer for me. It taught me the importance of optical improvement in my work. My designs are no longer as analytically rigid or mathematical, but they still carry that experimental edge. It also taught me how we perceive and process visual info. I'm always thinking about things like how our brain interprets shapes, colors and spacing creating all sorts of illusions. And that's how it influenced my design process.

Svetlana Golofaeva

Not a professional artist, self-taught, born on 30.10.1968 in the settlement of Magdagachi, Tygdinsky District, Amur Region. She worked as a designer of decorative tiles, developing collections. Currently, the artist lives in the city of Novomoskovsk, Tula Region, paints with acrylics, and decorates walls. How do I create my works? First, an idea is born in my head. I make sketches from life, which I later use as the foundation for images on a graphic tablet, incorporating photographs into the process. Line and color patches complement each other in my works. During the creative process, my hand and the stylus become one, bringing the images to the screen of the monitor, and at that moment, time and the world around me drift away.



Svetlana Golofaeva | Tiger



— Interview

Joey Cruz Margarejo

How did your journey into abstract art begin, and what inspired you to choose acrylic on canvas as your primary medium?

Even as a kid, I always wanted to be different. In our art class, while my classmates were all concentrated on drawing, I was more interested in shapes and colors. Although I was amazed by typical rural scenery, realistic pictures, paintings of humans, or photographic sketching, I found myself more fascinated by abstract shapes that I didn't fully understand. These shapes didn't depict visual reality, yet I loved analyzing them. I just loved the effect of pouring tons of paint onto my canvas—the more paint, the more I loved it. I enjoy using acrylics because they allow me to play freely with colors, and I find them easier to work with. My original concept might start with pure blue, but it could end up as green. After pouring tons of red paint, it might turn into purple. I always want my paint to dry faster so I can add even more colors. That's why my clients often wonder how my finished paintings, despite being the same size, have such different weights—some are much heavier than others. I guess I'm just very generous with my paint!

Your works are often created during the night with a classical soundtrack. How does this setting influence your creative process?

I cannot paint during the day; I love to paint when everything is calm and quiet. It's just me, my canvas, my paint, palette knife, and my old brushes—the older, the better. Classical music makes me feel more inspired; my creativity and imagination work better. It brings me to another



world. There have been some nights when I feel like I'm Van Gogh. Yes, I love everything about him, even his insanity, lol. Listening to Mozart or Bach gives me a sense of euphoria and inspiration.

You often use a palette knife and old brushes in your work. What draws you to these tools, and how do they shape the texture and emotion of your art?

My old 2 brushes and my old palette knife are my best companions, I cannot create something without them. At the beginning of my career as an artist my best friend and his father both famous artists in the Philippines lend me their old brushes, paints and canvas so I've learned to use old materials, and at the beginning of my career, as struggling artists, I can't afford to buy new and expensive materials, I've just settled with the old ones. I don't want to be dramatic but when I look at my old palette knife and brushes it's always brings me back with my beginnings and it always shows to my finished art.

What role does your Filipino heritage play in your artistic vision, and do elements of your cultural background appear in your works?

Probably with the colors and titles, but not so much with the paintings themselves. I believe, and even my collectors think, that I am more European and American.

Your artist statement poses the question, “Is this art?” How do you feel about the various interpretations your viewers bring to your pieces?

I love it when people give different interpretations, whether constructive or destructive. I've never been offended; it means they are thinking about and analyzing my works. I feel like I've touched their hearts and souls.

Can you tell us more about your experience exhibiting across Canada and the United States? How has the reception of your work differed between these locations?

Moving to North America is one of the best things I've done, bringing my art to different kinds of people and ethnicities. Every time I join an art exposition, listening to different accents and experiencing various cultures and traditions, I believe that art has the power to unite the whole world.

My 1997 exhibition was in Montreal, Quebec, during the ice storm. How could we expect people to buy paintings in such conditions? But



Joey Cruz Margarejo
Gladiolus
2022



Joey Cruz Margarejo
Flight of an Angel
2023

on the last night, somebody invited me to a party, and I met a man who ended up buying all my paintings.

After that, I had a few more exhibitions, and I've noticed that I always seem to sell pieces after the shows. It might be a coincidence, but it always happens either after I've already packed up my things or the day after.

The biggest breakthrough was at Art Vancouver, where I met more people—collectors, artists, gallery owners, and critics. It really opened bigger doors for me. It introduced me to galleries in New York, brought invitations from Monaco, France, the UK, and other European countries, as well as from Southeast Asia.

Presently, I have a regular display at ACCA Gallery in Beverly Hills, CA. North America has worked wonders for my art, and I hope Europe will soon do the same.

What advice would you give to aspiring self-taught artists who are looking to exhibit their work internationally?

Never stop dreaming big, even the impossible dreams. Always believe and work hard for them.

Ashley Byars

Step into the vibrant world of Simone Bee Artistree, curated by **Ashley Simone**, a Philadelphia-based self-taught artist. From an early age, she has always been captivated by different realms of creativity, whether it's through the strokes of a paintbrush, the grace of dance, or the harmonies of music. Ashley fully embraced her passion for painting in 2016, using acrylics as a powerful means of expressing thoughts and emotions that words often fall short of capturing. In Ashley's artistic realm, the color black takes center stage, defying its conventional connotations, harmoniously intertwined with bold and vivid hues that effortlessly catch the eye. Her creations primarily focus on the portrayal of women, delving into the exploration of femininity, black culture, and the beautiful connections that bind humanity together.





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— Interview

Zarema Gadaborsheva

What does minimalism mean to you in the context of your art, and how do you achieve balance and lightness in your work?

For me, minimalism is the flight of the soul, balance, and harmony that fills the space with restraint. Proper composition is the foundation of the work, creating balance and simplicity, while the color palette adds additional lightness and smoothness to the canvas.

You mention using textured painting techniques and gilding in your creations. Can you walk us through your process of incorporating these elements?



Zarema Gadaborsheva | Goryanka | 2024



Texture gives the painting an attractive appearance, making one want to look at it for a long time. Each stroke creates volume and depth, forming uniqueness. The texture can be smooth or rough, depending on the desired effect. Gold leaf, a delicate and exquisite material, requires precision and adds brightness and expressiveness to the painting. Gilding creates a special atmosphere, and the play of light brings the painting to life.

How does your cultural heritage influence the themes and subjects of your artworks?

I want the Ingush people to appreciate their culture, know their history, and remember the trials of our people. Without culture, there is no nation, and its preservation is the foundation of our existence. Our identity includes values such as respect for the elders, hospitality, traditions, lezginka, and unity. Ézdel are unique moral, ethical, and aesthetic principles instilled in the Ingush from childhood. I hope my works will inspire the preservation of these traditions and their transmission to future generations.

In your artist statement, you talk about the importance of creating works that not only decorate a space but also evoke emotions. Could you explain how you achieve this in your paintings?

A painting should evoke emotions—joy or sadness, but not fear and anxiety. Art should bring light and beauty, allowing a person to think and see that there is room for hope and goodness in the world. I pour my soul and love into every painting to make it filled and alive, leaving bright feelings in the hearts of people.

How has your background in architecture and fine arts shaped your artistic approach?

My education helped me open up, learn to see beauty in details, understand composition, and feel color more deeply. A special role was played by my teacher, Alexander Anatolyevich Lishnevsky, who believed in me and supported me along the way, becoming an important step in my creativity and a source of confidence for further achievements.

You mentioned the influence of modern



Zarema Gadaborsheva | Delight | 2024



Zarema Gadaborsheva | Fearless | 2024

artists in your work. Are there any specific contemporary artists whose work resonates with you and influences your style?

I am interested in observing the work of different artists. I admire many masters, but I don't create idols. For me, it's more important to value the process by which people turn ideas into reality. I feel this respect for all professions where labor and perseverance create something meaningful.

Your art reflects both personal feelings and philosophical reflections. How do you integrate these aspects into your paintings while maintaining the visual harmony of the piece?

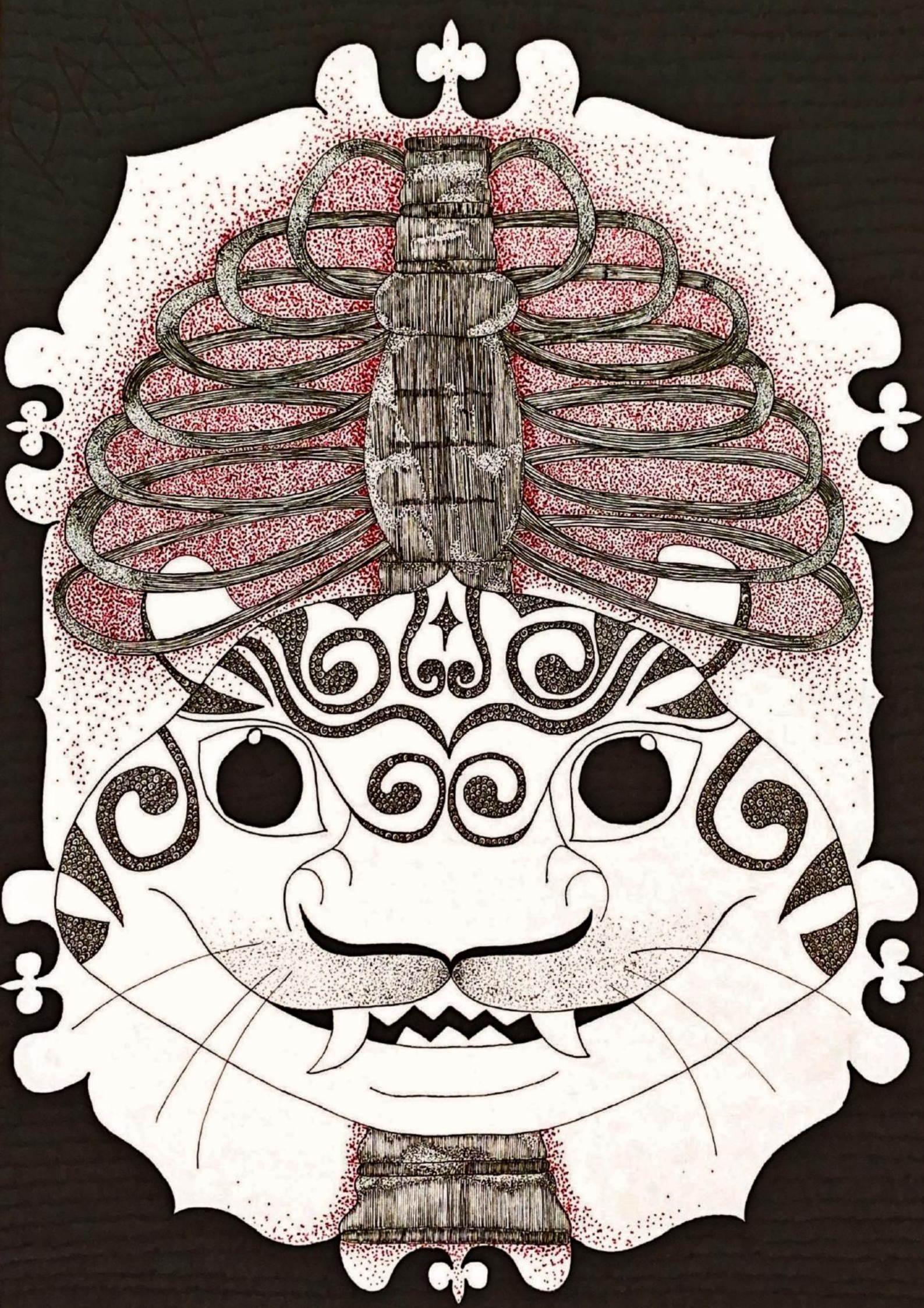
Each of my paintings is a dialogue between the inner world and external impressions. Personal experiences inspire the creation of images. It is important that the work not only conveys emotions but also encourages reflection. Visual harmony is achieved through thoughtful composition, colors, and textures. Every detail finds its place, creating integrity and space for interpretation. My paintings should inspire and leave a pleasant aftertaste.

Arina Simanchuk

I am an emerging graphic artist and illustrator. Once my family left breathtaking views of fertile Carpathian foothills for vast expanses of Far Eastern dense boreal forest called taiga. Time passed and upon reaching the 2004 year, the very middle of Autumn, the 15th of October, appeared, when I came to this world. Unfortunately, I was born with atrial septal defect and dysplasia of connective tissue. These diseases caused weak immunity and led to frequent illnesses during my childhood and adolescence. So, I did not communicate with peers much and started spending my spare time drawing. Growing up in the heart of unparalleled Nanai lands, I discovered a lot about the Nanai culture. In my mind Nanai ornaments intertwined with traditional Ukrainian motifs and Russian folklore tales images. This unique mix became the basis of my drawings. After graduating from Khabarovsk Art School, I began to create images with such inking techniques as stippling and hatching, using plenty of different ornaments too. So far I have participated in the International exhibition-competition "Experimental graphics". Also, my comics "The Star" has been included into the short-list of the International illustration competition "13 stories" held by HSE Art and Design School and my poetic diptych "The way of a whale" accompanied by a drawing by me has been published in GERBERA magazine.

Arina Simanchuk | Life | 2023





— Interview

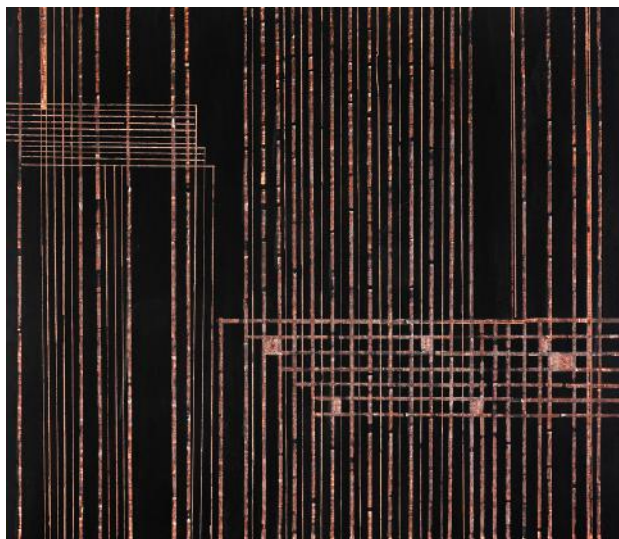
Snow Dollkinson

Your work deeply explores the unpredictability of life and human experiences. Can you describe a specific moment or event that greatly influenced your artistic direction?

When I was very young, a teenager, I had to go outside of my city, outside of my country, outside of Europe, to the unknown. Confronted by what was a jungle compared to the protected life I had in my parental environment, I was then forced to introspect, to discover the real values that matter to me, to know myself, and artistic creation was like a mirror to me.

You use geometric shapes and the color white in your work. How do these elements reflect your view of the world and your relationship with nature?

Nothing is perfect, or should we say, "everything is perfect"? Nature is pure, like a white color, a never-ending horizon with so many unknown answers, calm and a little naive. Simple and



unpredictable, it can surprise you at any moment, knowing that your mind does not have control over it. Then, we have humans, power, and the brain working together to interview the world of nature. Adding those straight lines, the opposite of soft and curved, in the middle of this beauty does not seem to match but still has its deep purpose. The contrast between those two worlds is fascinating.

Your paintings evoke both simplicity and profound emotional depth. How do you achieve this balance in your compositions?

Just like we all live our lives, we learn how to make a balance in everything that we do. Nothing can be done properly if the balance is not right. Adequation. Think of it as the perfect cake; one wrong measurement will ruin it all ... how terrifying is that! It is all about harmonizing things together until you are fully satisfied. My paintings always tell me when to let my brush go ...

How does the connection between people, the earth, and all living beings manifest in your art? Are there specific relationships or interactions you aim to convey?

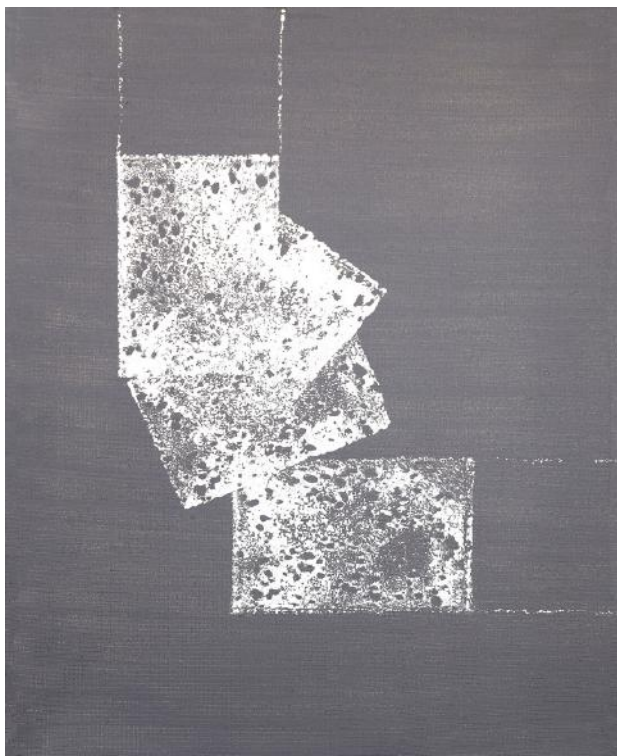
Working together and understanding each other is the only way to build harmony and the right path to achieve our desires in life. Acknowledge the space and needs of everything and everyone,

is the lesson that will reflect on our own destiny. We are not alone, and we can't be alone. What would be the plants without photo-synthesis... one element can't live without the other. A simple bee species missing can end the world. We have to learn how to respect each other and our surroundings, like I naturally blend and harmonize emotions together in my paintings.

Your work incorporates a blend of personal, intimate themes with raw, exposed elements. How do you approach the challenge of portraying these contrasts in a visually harmonious way?

Elements that are contrasted are always talking to me. I am fascinated by things that are very much the opposite. I love simplicity; however, extraordinary people, situations, and objects also inspire me. Therefore, I wouldn't call it a challenge but rather a way to see the unexpected vision combined with a little drama. We all need a little spice to push ourselves to the highest level or realize the potential danger before it is too late.

The use of white in your art symbolizes the mystery of the universe. How do you think this contributes to the emotional resonance of your paintings?



I like to leave a white page for the viewer, letting them imagine the impossible becoming the possible. You can turn anything into a positive outcome only if you believe and leave room for the magic to happen. Life is mysterious, which is a great thing! Expect the unexpected! A positive state of mind will bring you very far, further than you think. I wish my paintings were an open book to step out of your comfort zone and focus on the main path to bring you to your desired sanctuary.

Your work seems to explore both joy and depth. Can you share how you navigate between these two emotions in your creative process?

Thanks to my ability to travel, I have discovered different cultures, met with exceptional people, and seen the ups and downs that only my brush can describe. You can make it over a night, and you can lose it all over a night. And like the French say: "C'est la vie." Accept and learn from it. You can change anything you like in your life, you are creating your destiny. A highway with multiple lines, which one would you choose? It might be a difficult decision, but sometimes it's easier than you think. Back to the animal basics, follow your instinct... and you will find your way.

Piet Biniek studied German and philosophy in Berlin, as well as dance and acting. She takes photographs and produces short videos, dances, writes and brings her own moving pieces and performances to the stage and into public spaces. The first performance-oriented photographs were created in the early 1990s. Since 2006, Biniek's artistic work has focused on photography. In recent years, her work has increasingly moved into space, including installation and sculpture. Her first photo exhibition took place in 2008 at Usedom Castle, together with artists from France and Germany. Many of Piet Biniek's works invite you to delve deeper into the subject matter, without pursuing psychological approaches and without claiming to be the sole interpreter. At first glance, they often appear to be simple works, but there is almost always a kind of image disturbance, a staging of aspects that are not immediately perceptible in everyday life. The roots of the performing arts are used here. Biniek's works repeatedly address injury and healing as well as the exploration of boundaries. The artist works without a studio, preferring natural light. Collaborations with other artists are important to Piet Biniek. She is a member of the BKG (Bergische Kunstgenossenschaft) and the artist community "Neuer Kunstverein" (Wuppertal).

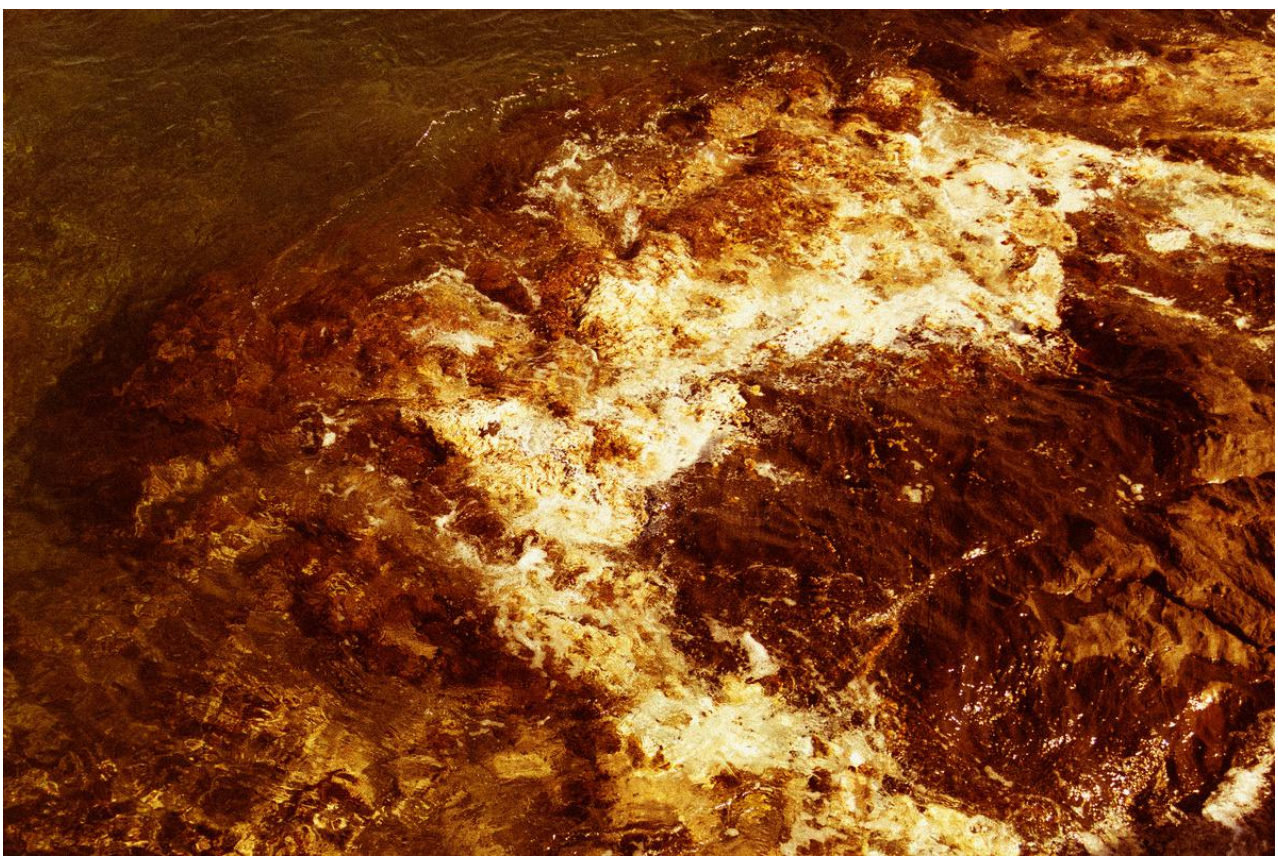




Ignacio Atkins is a Panamanian photographer with indigenous roots whose passion for art, nature, and science fiction has driven him to explore and experiment in various creative areas from an early age. His curiosity and love for the world around him have shaped his artistic vision. At the age of 21, Ignacio delved into different photographic styles, collaborating with small businesses and NGOs. With a desire to further perfect his photography, he moved to Barcelona in 2021 to study documentary photography, narrative photography, and the various styles of photobooks. Ignacio's photography invites viewers to discover new perspectives and connect with the emotions and experiences captured in each shot. Whether through portraits, landscapes, or thematic projects, Ignacio continues to leave his mark on the world of photography, sharing his unique vision and commitment to raising awareness through his art.

Artist Statement

My deep connection with nature has driven each of my photographic works, revealing beauty both in the ordinary and the extraordinary. Inspired by my indigenous roots, my passion for art, and science fiction, I strive to create photographs that tell stories, evoke emotions, and awaken the viewer's curiosity, inviting reflection on the complexity and beauty of the world around us. In my constant pursuit of creative innovation, I continue to explore new forms of visual expression, challenging the limits of perception and expanding the horizons of photography.





— Interview

Yulia Khazova

Your journey as an artist is unconventional, starting from music and banking. How has this diverse background influenced your artistic expression?

If painting is my love, then music is my passion, and it directly influences my creativity. Almost all of my works are created under the impression of music in one way or another. I enjoy various genres of music and do not limit myself to any specific type. Music evokes emotions that are then reflected in my paintings.

As for the banking field, the experience and skills I gained there are also useful in my art: a systematic approach, discipline, planning, the ability to work hard, and negotiate. My first clients and buyers were former colleagues. They were also the first to support me on my path of change, along with my family.

What led you to explore textured abstract painting, and how do you balance color and texture in your works?

As a viewer, I have always been drawn to volumetric paintings, whether it's thick impasto techniques with oil or acrylic, or mixed techniques using texture pastes or appliqué. You can almost feel the surface of the image. It seems as if it's about to step out of the canvas. I



would say that it creates a sense of presence. I became interested in applying such techniques in my own art, and the experiments began, which I absolutely love :).

In my works, color is still the primary element. It plays the main role. Texture serves as a supporting tool: to emphasize or enhance color, line, or form. But sometimes texture can become the main protagonist (as in the work "Dream!"). The combination of color and texture helps me more vividly and accurately convey the concept, creating a play of light and shadow.

Your art is focused on evoking emotions and introspection in viewers. How do you approach creating such emotionally engaging pieces?

The foundation of my paintings lies in my own emotions. How and what I feel, I transfer onto the canvas. The viewer, in turn, may experience different feelings and find other meanings, see their own images. The most important thing is that they are not indifferent — for me, that's the greatest reward. I'll share a story. Once, on the opening day of an exhibition, I received a call from an unfamiliar woman asking if she could buy one of the exhibited works: "I can't sleep, I close my eyes and it (the painting) is before me." Of course, as the author, it's joyful to create a piece that makes someone a little bit happier.

What inspires your choice of themes and colors in your textured abstract paintings?

Once again, emotions and feelings inspire me. And their sources can be nature, encounters, events, and of course, art (painting, music, photography, cinema) — anything that prompts

Yulia Khazova | The Time Loop



us to feel and empathize. I'm a very sensitive and emotional person. Often excessively so :))). And then I pour my whirlwind onto the canvas. In this sense, creativity serves as a kind of therapy for me.

Could you describe your creative process? How do you begin a painting, and how do you decide when it's finished?

The process begins with the emergence of an image, often very blurry. At the initial stage, there is usually no clear idea of the composition, plot, or form, no final concept. Only colors and/or their combinations are defined. The rest emerges in the process. The work starts with creating the background, working with color, and transitioning from one shade to another. As the canvas is covered with color, the composition is born, and based on the composition, texture is introduced, forms and details are defined. In the final stages, small details and elements are refined.

I never (or almost never) know what the finished piece will look like. It can change drastically during the creative process. This was the case with the works "Dawn" and "Time Loop."

I judge the completion of a painting by my inner feelings: if I don't feel the need to add or change anything, then it's ready.

Key features of the process in my art would be spontaneity and intuition. Of course, complete control isn't excluded, and analysis of the work is present, especially in the final stage. But the driving force is precisely the spontaneity.

You left a stable career to pursue art full-time. What challenges and rewards have you



Yulia Khazova | Birth



Yulia Khazova | Listening to the Silence

encountered on this journey?

Oh! This is such an interesting topic; I could talk about it for a long time :))). Perhaps one day I'll write a book about it :).

The fulfillment of a dream — that's probably the greatest reward! A strong feeling that you are in the right place, that you exist. And yes, the freedom in decision-making: I, and only I, determine how my working day, week, or year will unfold.

And the difficulties... Transitioning from being a system person (the banking sector — a rather rigid structure) to freelancing, where there's no stability in income, orders, or schedule. And the fight with imposter syndrome. I don't have a formal art education. I've studied disciplines like composition, color theory, and drawing on my own.

What advice would you give to aspiring self-taught artists who are just beginning their journey?

In those moments when you face disappointment, despondency, or thoughts of giving up, turn to like-minded people. You are not alone on your path; someone has already gone through similar doubts. In the company of like-minded people, you'll find support, practical advice, and help. And overall, treat the journey and everything you encounter along the way as an adventure. Sometimes it makes sense not to focus too much on the goal and not obsess over the result, but simply enjoy the process. What will happen if... ? Who am I when I face... ? Shift your focus from expectations, and any result will be interesting!

LOBIS (Laureline Lemoine)

I have been a professional artist since 2019, exhibiting mainly in group shows in the East of France where I live, and in my home region Occitanie, in the South of France. I'm also an active member of the Nancy-based artist collective 379, responsible for exhibition projects in schools, local authorities and businesses. I have taken part in numerous exhibitions, mainly collective, including "Cent Centimètre carrés" at Galerie du Philosophe (Carla-Bayle, 2024-2025), "Sauvages" at Galerie Neuf (Nancy, 2022), and "les Estivales" at Château de Montbron (Montbron, 2022). I also recently had a solo exhibition at the Médiathèque Simone Veil (Sauvian, 2023).

Artist Statement

I collect advertising or discarded images and give them a second life in my collages. The images are given equal dignity, whether they be reproductions of works of art, commercial advertisements or tourist brochures. My main aim is to summon cultural stereotypes and archetypes present in common Western culture into new narratives. My collages are invitations to tell oneself stories, to evoke for oneself stories constantly renewed by the imagination of each individual and by the prism of current issues. My works in volume are also based on the collection of elements considered as waste. Accumulating and giving form to these "insignificances" is a way for me to be more alert to things, more sensitive to the world.

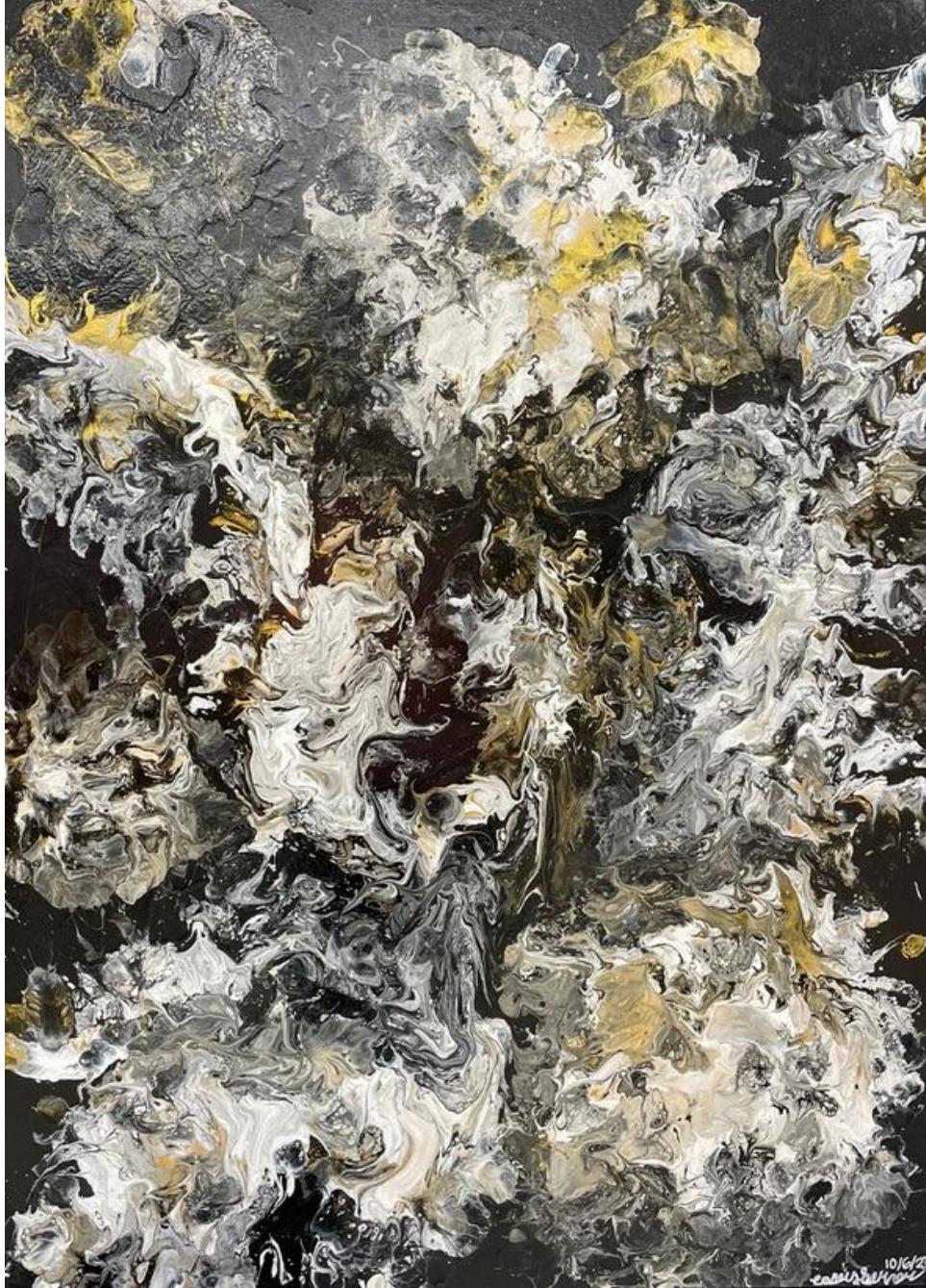




Casey Lerner primarily works with acrylic paint. His artistic inspirations include balance, motion, and color. Although Casey has been painting since the age of five, he became much more serious about his craft when he was fifteen. Since making his first well-executed painting, titled "Stormy River" during his freshman year in high school back in 2020 which drew attention from his peers, Casey has shown his work at a variety of markets, shows, and auctions in his hometown. Casey has drawn profound inspiration from Earth's natural beauty, his personal wisdom on life, and the interplay of color and movement during his years on this planet. Casey painted a diverse range of art that caught the eye of the community of Weston, Connecticut, as the years passed, establishing a name for himself. He sold his first painting for \$30 at a local vendor's market in late 2021. Following this landmark, Casey's work gained traction, and his audience started to grow. Casey consistently sold out at each show where he displayed his works after the initial sale. He is now selling his art on a regular basis, solidifying his presence and continuing to make a name for himself in the art industry.



Casey Lerner | Golden Splatter



Casey Lerner | Flow

Artist Statement

My style of Art consists of splattered and marbled designs created with large amounts of loose acrylic paint. The principles of Balance, Movement, Perspective, and Color are used to inspire these paintings. Creativity has played a significant role not only in my life, but also in my upbringing, from childhood to early adulthood. Art allows us to fully immerse ourselves in emotions and our imaginations, and it is my hope that my work will convey this to others. I always strive to evoke a sense of emotion and connection with every painting I make. When I'm at ease with the balance of the painting, and I have confidence that there will be a connection between the viewer and my work, I know the work is finished. I hope to provide people who look at my art with imaginative experiences and remind them of the value of ideas by using my eye for color combinations and the captivating effect of vibrant colors. Many messages flow through my work, but one message that remains consistent is the value of living in the moment.

Milena Santirocco, a pianist, certified music therapist, and self-taught contemporary painter, was born in Lanciano (Chieti) in 1970. From an early age, she was immersed in an artistic environment—her father painted and sculpted wood, often taking her to visit exhibitions. Her paternal grandfather, a musician and painter, was her musical mentor.

Milena pursued musical studies and graduated from the conservatory. She only approached painting in adulthood, initially creating stylized mural works for public spaces. More recently, she began painting on canvas using acrylic techniques, exploring surrealism, and decided to present her work to the public.

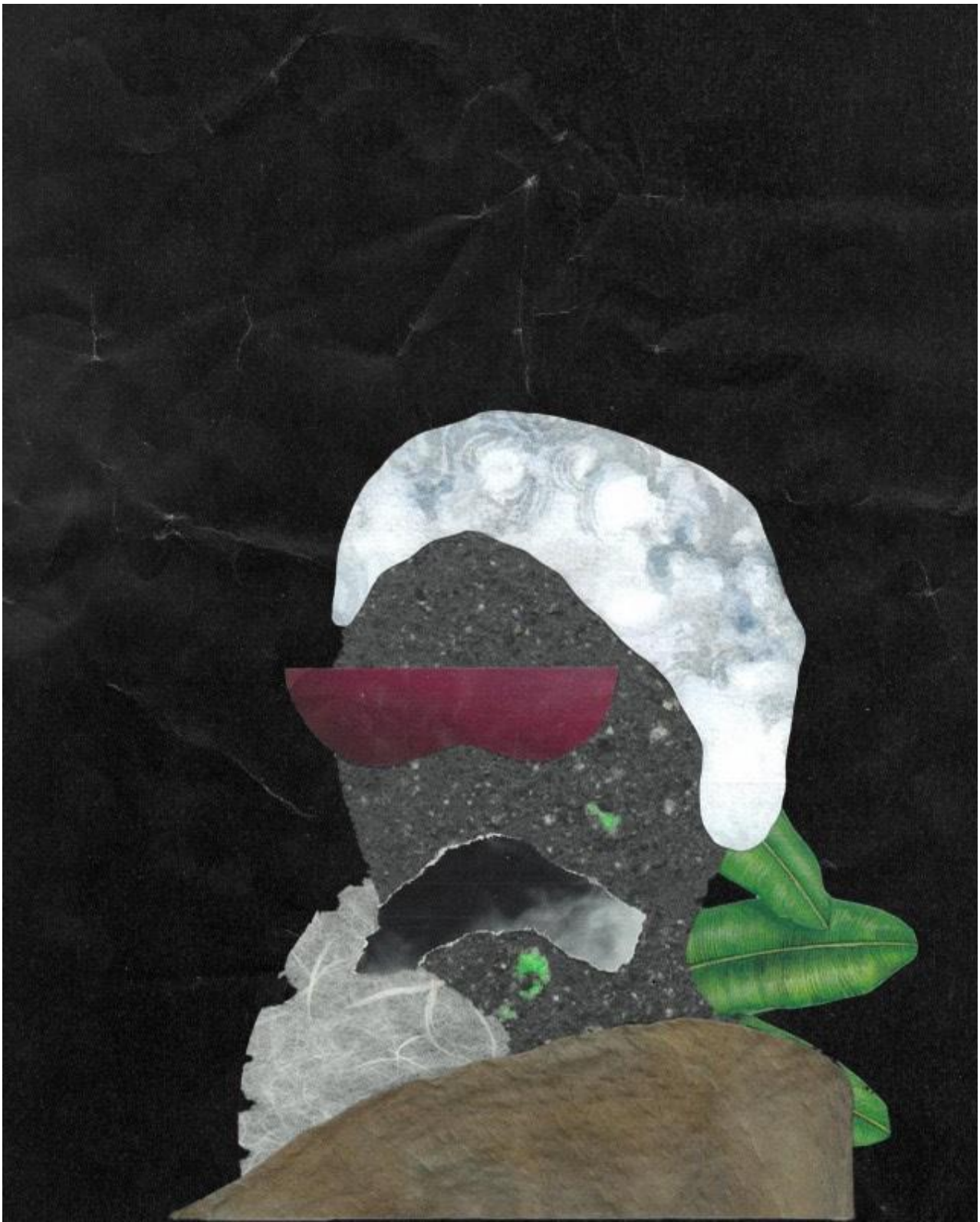
From December 8, 2024, to January 6, 2025, she will exhibit her painting "La Natività" at the Presepi Exhibition at the Auditorium Diocleziano in Lanciano.

From January 17 to 19, 2025, at the Area Contesa Arte Gallery in Rome, she will present her painting "Occhio di vanità" during the Terno Secco exhibition.

From January 24 to February 22, 2025, at the Omniart Open Gallery in Latina, she will showcase her works "Madre Terra" and "Equivoci di colore".



Marco LeMar defines himself as a craft artist. The distinctive features of his works are the careful use of his own papers, often combined with natural elements, with the aim of visually enriching his pieces and giving them an almost 'tangible' dimension. His creations evoke imagination and fascination. The strong surrealist component and attention to detail ensure that each piece is a collage of impressions and meanings, not just an artistic expression, but also a reflection of a deep delicacy.





Keira Rubtsova is a contemporary artist born in Moscow in 2005. She uses different techniques and mediums to find a form of metamodernism and express her personal experiences. Her career as an artist has just begun, and so far, Keira has participated in a couple of exhibitions in her hometown.



Keira Rubtsova | Hands | 2024



Keira Rubtsova | The Band Kiss | 2024

Simona Muzzi is a photographer and visual artist who lives in Bologna, but considers herself a citizen of the world. Born in 1962, she graduated in Architecture in Florence in 1990, but her artistic career took a different direction when, self-taught, she began to explore photography as an expressive means. In January 2020, Simona exhibited her unpublished works for the first time at Paratissima Bologna, with a series entitled "Incidents". In this series, he addresses the proposed theme with a powerful contrast between the selfie as a phenomenon of digital neurosis and narcissism and the dramatic scene of a car accident, where the victim takes a last selfie on the verge of death. This performance marks his public debut. Subsequently, in 2021, he exhibits again at Paratissima Turin with the work "covi-tude (covid-solitude)", a series of images taken during the first lockdown, which develop into a four-part narrative. Since 2023 his art has spanned multiple cities, with exhibitions in Milan, in UK and Barcelona. Before embarking on an artistic journey as a photographer, Simona had always documented the reality that surrounded her. His artistic approach to photography changed in 2015, after visiting an exhibition on Helmut Newton, considered one of his mentors. It was in that period that he began to use the self-portrait technique as a means of expression, marking the beginning of a personal and artistic research. Since then, he has developed a series of works ranging from nude boudoir to conceptual and surreal photography, tackling contemporary themes with a free interpretation. His work is notable for its integration of video and sound. Each image is accompanied by an audio component, which can vary between melodies, instrumental songs and noises taken from the real world. This synergy between images and sounds is fundamental in Simona's creative process, creating an immersive experience that amplifies the meaning and intensity of her works.

Project Statement

BOND When someone dear to you dies, you have to choose whether to keep something of them or let them go altogether. As a daughter, I kept the clothes. Everyone has a smell. And when you decide to wear those clothes you take people with you along with the load of pain or joy. My mom passed away at the end of 2017 when I had already recently lost my grandmother. I found the strength to face the loss and in 2020 I made a photographic series giving the pain a personal interpretation through the self-portrait. Like animals, for which smell has a fundamental importance in mutual recognition, I found the smell in their clothes and marked the territory of my future by wearing them and taking them with me on my journey. The hanging clothes, kept in celophanne, thrown on the bed, moved by the wind and finally disappeared, represent mourning, past life, my memories and the projection towards my future and that of my family.





Sofia Facchinelli

Art is my expression for every feeling i have. Words cannot describe feelings in the way art can.





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