



VISUALARTJOURNAL.COM



# VISUAL ART JOURNAL

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# — Intro

Hello, dear reader,

I am delighted to welcome you to our third issue! I could ask if you've ever wondered what art is, but I'm sure that since you're here, you certainly have.

In this issue, we have gathered everything that can be called art, everything through which a person can express their thoughts, feelings, fears, joy, and suffering. Here you will find paintings, photographs, sculptures, and collages. Vivid colors and subtle shades, paper, paints, fabrics, and the human body.

All of this gives us, the viewers, not only the opportunity to understand the artist, to grasp their thoughts and feelings, to ponder things we hadn't considered before, but also to understand ourselves, to discover something new about ourselves.

Thank you very much for your attention to us and to the artists featured today. After all, the most valuable things we have are our time and attention.

I hope you enjoy meeting the artists as much as we enjoyed working on this issue!



**Anna Gvozdeva**

Curator of  
Visual Art Journal

*On the Front Cover:*

**Federica Zancato**

The Five Continents, Africa  
2020

*On the Back Cover:*

**Kristian Røn Andreasen**

Interviewee with objects  
2024

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

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Danish artist making paintings in the styles of surrealism, still life, potraiture etc.

— Kristian Røn Andreassen



Kristian Røn Andreassen | Alchemic non sequitor | 2023



## — Interview

# Alisa Asatryan

**Can you tell us about your early experiences in art school and how they shaped your artistic journey?**

Art school wasn't a pivotal moment in my life that shaped my art. Instead, it taught me valuable lessons in time management, understanding limitations, and working efficiently and punctually. These skills are beneficial in any field, not just in art.

**What was the most important lesson you learned from your mentor, Leonid Petrovich Lyakh?**

"You need to leave this city (Gelendzhik); it will suffocate you, as it suffocates everyone."

Although he prepared me and many others specifically for entrance exams to higher art institutions, that was not the main



thing. What mattered most to me was his image — the image of a true artist who lives and breathes art. His paintings, hanging on the walls, always inspired and amazed me. His small room with a huge wooden easel, smeared with paint, seemed to whisper, 'Stay here.' Leonid Petrovich was a true mentor, a parental figure.

**Your works exhibit a unique blend of abstract and concrete elements. Can you explain your process of merging these two styles?**

Actually, I don't set any limits for



myself in art. Like many other artists, I'm sensitive to many things, if not everything. That's why my work can be entirely abstract or depict a human figure, each carrying its own unique meanings connected to human essence.

**What specific life experiences or observations have significantly influenced your recent works?**

It's hard to pinpoint a single moment, but I can safely say that August 2022 was transformative. Shortly before that, I moved to Armenia, where it felt like I was surrounded by art. The air seemed saturated with creativity. It was



Alisa Asatryan  
Pandora.Awakening  
2024



Alisa Asatryan  
Pandora.Awaiting  
2024

then that I decided to pursue art professionally. Until that point, painting had been my hobby since my school years.

**Could you discuss the inspiration and process behind one of your recent pieces, such as "VULNERABILITY" or "TERRA. Vibe"?**

Almost all of my work comes to me spontaneously, driven by feelings rather than specific events. However, "TERRA. Vibe I" and "TERRA. Vibe II" had a different origin. While organizing my first solo exhibition, "Gazing into the Silence," I had a concept in place, but one element was missing. I needed to depict the instability

occurring not within a person, but externally. Once I identified this missing piece, an image formed in my mind, leading to the creation of two paintings that complement each other perfectly. They reflect my perspective on the current external state of the world.

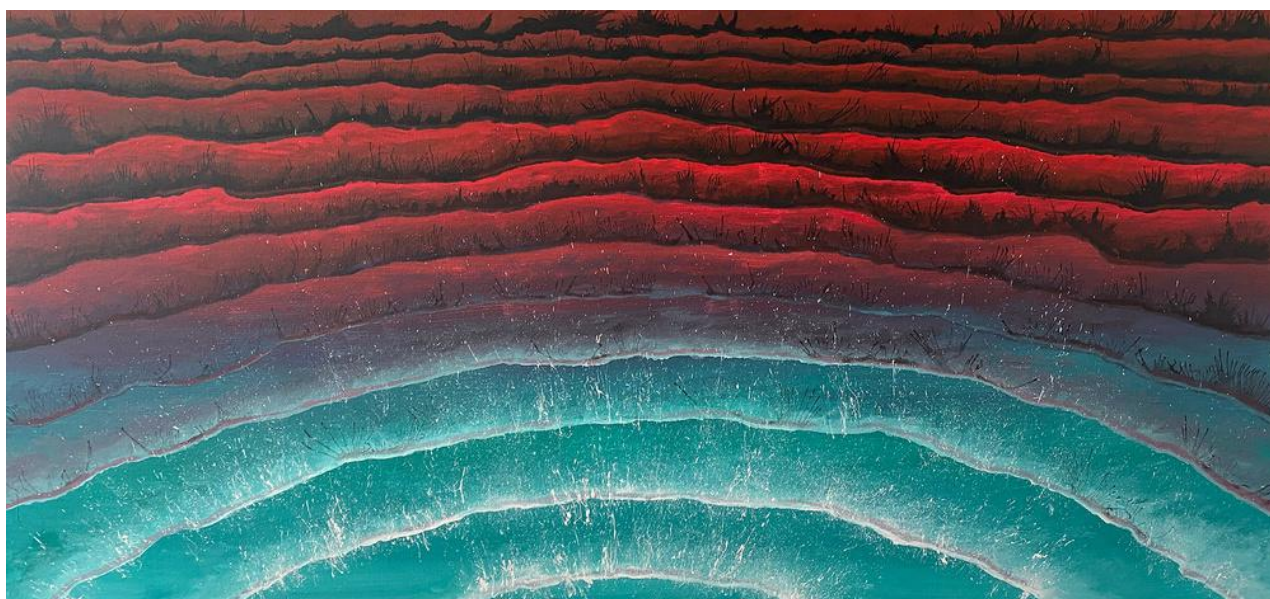
**How has your art changed or evolved since you first started, and what has remained consistent?**

I began engaging with the art world professionally only recently, since the end of 2022. It's hard to say if there will ever be a moment when my painting stops evolving because life changes every day. Everything is constantly evolving and transforming. However, one

thing remains unchanged for me: the study of the human being, their internal states, and their reactions to the external world.

**In your opinion, what is the most important quality for an artist to possess?**

That's a good question. This is precisely the topic that excites me the most and that I explore in my art — resilience & hardiness. It's about the ability of a person not only to live harmoniously through all external changes, no matter how challenging they may be, but also to transform these changes for their own benefit. I am currently working on organizing a group interdisciplinary exhibition on this theme.



Alisa Asatryan  
TERRA. Vibe I  
2024

**Your child wants to go into art. Your task is to convey important thoughts about this path to help them join this journey as easily, safely, and interestingly as possible, while also getting to know you better.**

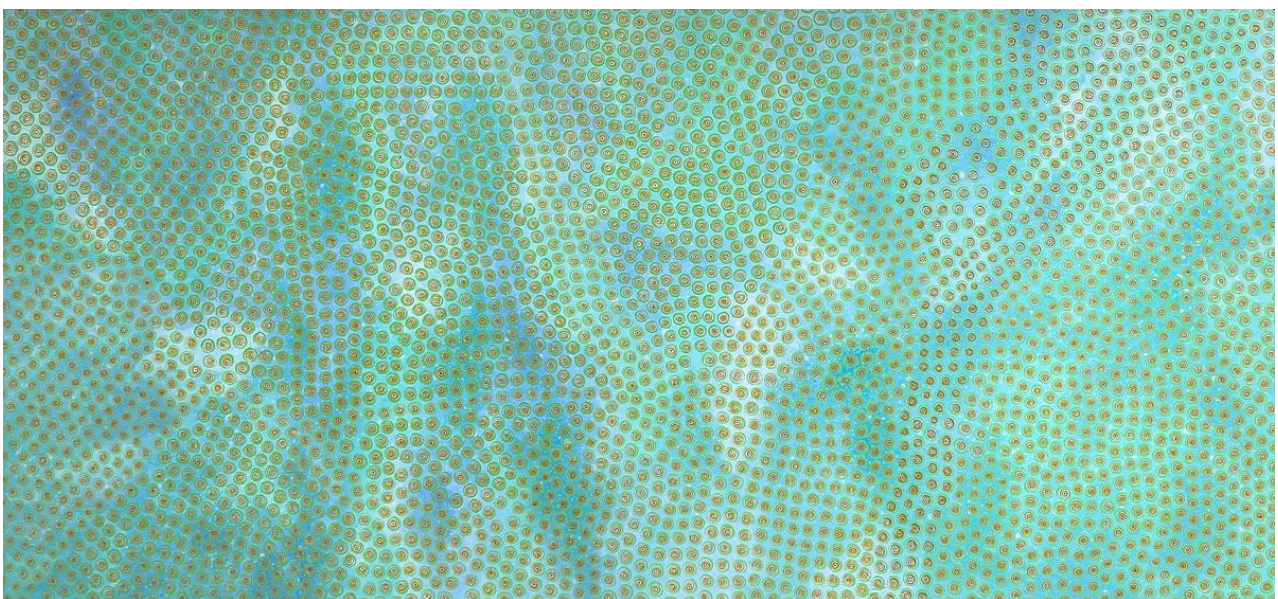
For me, art is the most important part of human life. It's not just about creating beautiful pictures; it's about transformation. This is why contemporary art matters to me — it reflects what we should pay attention to today. I don't concern myself with whether a particular work will be significant in a hundred years; what matters is that it resonates and is understood now. It doesn't matter what a person finds in the artwork; they will definitely catch something



Alisa Asatryan | VULNERABILITY | 2023

meaningful for themselves at that moment.

I believe art is the voice of God, and artists are translators of this information. If being an artist is a true desire of your soul, then you have no other path. You must approach this profession with the utmost responsibility and honesty.



Alisa Asatryan  
I AM EVERYTHING, EVERYTHING IS ME  
2024

Francesca Mandolini was born and raised in Recanati, where she currently lives after spending over a decade abroad, in Madrid. She also has lived in London, and a brief period in São Paulo. She works as a communications and marketing manager in the audiovisual sector, nurturing numerous passions including dubbing, writing, and art, which she sees as a means of discovering the world and, consequently, herself. Her serendipitous encounter with the technique of analog collage happened during a recent trip to Madrid. Since then, she has been experimenting with and developing this magnetic and unexpected love for paper, scissors, and glue, which leads her to create surreal microcosms that are often cathartic.



Francesca Mandolini | Be Water | 2023



FLV

My work reflects my quirky approach to colors, blending the structures, principles, and utility of design with the rawness, chaos, and freedom of fine art. In my multidisciplinary works, I discovered my artistic niche by manipulating materials and presentation platforms to create art in one medium that looks to have been created in another. Constellation Series (2022): Shapes are present in every part of our existence. They have significantly more power over our lives than we realize, as they literally mold our world into three dimensions. The circle is one of these forms that may be found in practically every part of life. Because it has no beginning or finish, the circle portrays development as a process of transformation from death to birth, ending and beginning. A circle denotes eternity in this sense. A circle represents the Divine life force or spirit that keeps our world moving in many cultures and spiritual beliefs. It represents vigor, fullness, completion, and perfection.

— My Linh Doan Mac



My Linh Mac | Danica | 2022



Talk 2 Me Project: Throughout human history we have used pictures, symbols and other iconography to communicate with each other. Over the years we have developed simple but complex symbols that have evolved into an international language. By using emojis someone in London can communicate with someone in Tokyo and be understood. This has allowed us to talk 2 each other so... Talk 2 Me.

— Oliver L. Jackson Jr.



Oliver L. Jackson Jr.  
T2M Cool



## — *Interview*

# Oliver L. Jackson Jr.

**Can you share more about your journey as an artist and what inspired you to create the "Talk 2 Me" project?**

My journey as an artist started as a child. During my younger years art was supported but not necessarily encouraged as anything but a side hobby. My families focus was a proper education. But I always kept a toe, so to speak, in the arts. I took art classes in high school but didn't really enjoy it, photography was more to my liking. After high school while doing military service I started to study photography. That journey of photography lead me to graphic design. While studying graphic design the itch of the fine arts, particularly drawing and painting started to grow. While working in the art department of a major publishing company I started to pursue the fine arts studying at Herron School of Art. Studying color theory was when it



all sorta clicked. I enjoyed bright colors. Bright colors to me are like a symphonic kaleidoscope.

The Talk 2 Me project came from my living overseas. My group of friend are a very international, eclectic group. German, Italian, Libyan, Moroccan, Polish, etc. Just good people from all over. And in our text threads we were using emojis for quick responses and we all understood the conversations and even the little nuances or the sacrastic jokes. While we were having one of our text threads it just dawned on me how much like the Rossetta Stone this was. I really started to noticed all around me the symbols, iconography and

pictures we use to communicate. Then looking back on history how much pictures and symbols were used. And now we have developed a simple but complex system of symbols that have involved into its own international language, our modern hieroglyphics . By using this system someone in London can communicate with someone in Tokyo and be understood.

### **How did your experiences with your mentors and training in Europe influence your artistic style and approach?**

I was very fortunate to have some great mentors. Kevin J. Wilson encouraged me in really paying attention to the importance of drawing and how that is the fundamental foundation of a good piece. No matter how much paint one uses, it can never cover a bad or off drawing. Your mind will register as something is off. Kevin also introduced me to airbrushing. My use of airbrushing is for certain effects I may be trying for in a piece. I don't really use it as the main technique, but I understand it and have a proficiency to use it for what I want. While in Europe I had the opportunity to study with German artist and designer



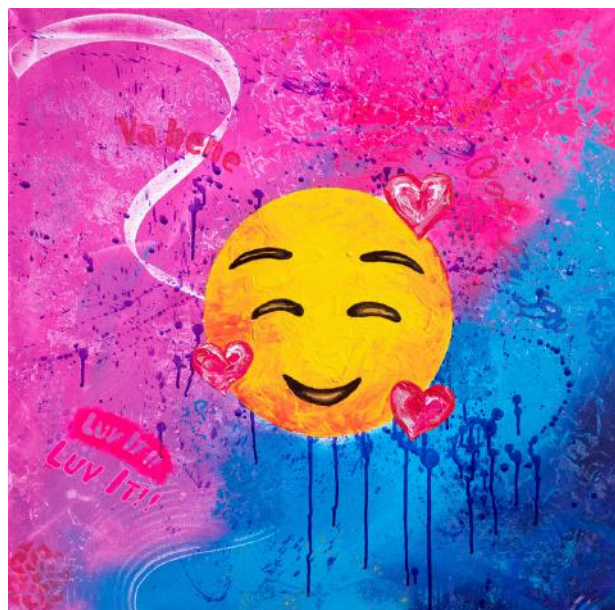
Oliver L. Jackson Jr.  
T2M WTF Ig

Brigitte Guhle. While there were some language hurdles the language of art allowed us to still converse. Brigitte pushed me into more portrait type skills as well as exploring mediums I thought I had no interest in. Water Colors being the biggest. Working with watercolor is such a different mindset from other wet media. Traveling with Brigitte and studying in Venice, Cinque Terra, or even Provance was instrumental , not just from the guest instructors but being surrounded by the history and works of old and new masters. Traveling and studying from different perspectives has opened me up to possibilities and to look to the past to help solve a problem in technique or be inspired to create future works. It really

changed and influenced my view of an artist and my approach to living an artistic life. Not to get caught up in what others opinion of an artist is. To move in my own space and time.

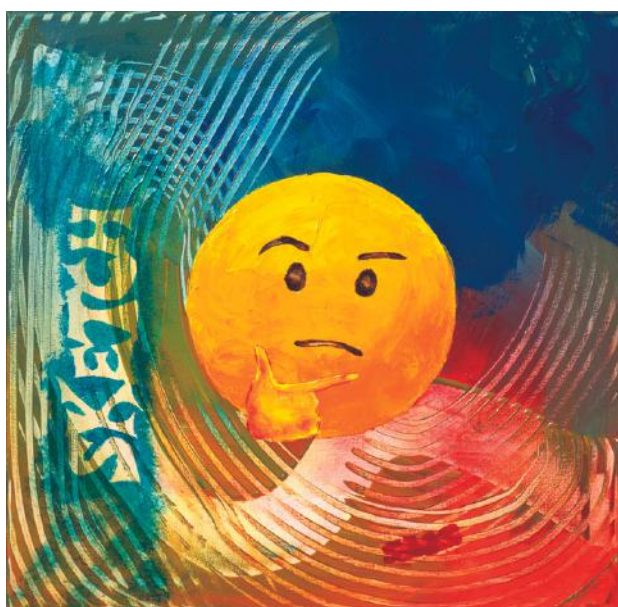
### **How do you decide which colors, shapes, and figures to use in your artwork?**

I will be inspired by something. It could be another work of art, a dance piece, or a line of poetry. I will then marinate the idea and get a structure of what I want but marinating the idea can sometimes be like meditating where I listen for what the pieces wants to be. This also includes what medium I'll create it in. So really it's just going internal with



Oliver L. Jackson Jr.  
T2M LuvIt Ig

the concept and being open to my intuition and listening to the voice of the piece. It always tells me what it wants to be. Sometimes the direction it goes may be, and has been different than my original thought. But the original concept or idea is still there.



Oliver L. Jackson Jr.  
T2M Hmm 01

### **How do you choose which emojis to incorporate into your art, and what significance do they hold for you?**

I researched what seemed to be the most common used emojis in different countries and noticed the similarities. But I also used ones I liked and used often with the WTF one being one of my most used and favorites. As people get to know each other emojis can take

on an alternative meaning. Most times we would use that particular one as cussing but it also shows frustration with a bit of disbelief. Sorta like when someone cuts you off in traffic you're like "WTF Dude!"

**What has been the most memorable response or interaction you've had with someone who viewed your artwork?**

Well there are 2. One was when I first debuted the Talk 2 Me series. A lady came into my studio, not knowing I was the artist, and was very dismissing of the work. I asked her why and she said "Oh

these are just emojis and nothing special." I then asked her if she had read the Artist statement on the series which she said no but proceeded to read it. I then seen the click in her eyes and she looked closer at the pieces and started to discover the hidden elements in the works. She then stated she really liked the "Luv It" ones and wanted to buy one of the artist prints. She asked if I knew where the artist was, at which time I then introduced myself as the artist. The second lead to my meeting my fiancé and collaborating partner the poet Maureen McDole. She enjoyed a piece from my "Just Be" series which lead to our discussions on



collaborations of art and poetry, sorta in an ekphrastic way and well one thing lead to another.

**Are there any other artistic styles or mediums you are interested in exploring in the future?**

Hmmm..., I'm always open and exploring. I'm sorta into incorporating collage and more texture into my paintings. I'm also exploring using and combining my photography background and printmaking. As well as exploring a more chaotic free flowing use of charcoal.

**What advice would you give to aspiring artists who are trying to find their unique voice and style?**

First I would say develop a proficiency in drawing and draftsmanship, and an understanding of color theory. Second, go and look in museums, sides of buildings, magazines get to know what you like and start to incorporate those elements into your work. And third which I feel is the most important. Don't limit yourself. Explore and find out what works. I mean I push oils through an airbrush. Why not?

Oliver L. Jackson Jr.  
T2M smallHeart



## **Guillermo 'Chino' Martinez**

Born on January 24, 1990, in Viña del Mar, is a passionate photographer and graphic designer whose life has been steeped in creativity and exploration. His education in Graphic Design at the Faculty of Architecture, Design, and Urbanism at UBA laid the foundation for his career.

From a young age, Guillermo had the privilege of traveling due to his father's job, which stimulated his innate desire to capture the essence of different places through art. He has always considered art a means of expression and found in it a way to share his unique perspective of the world.

His focus has primarily been on the field of imagery, particularly in the creation of posters and photographs that reflect his artistic vision.

A distinctive feature of Guillermo's journey lies in the synergy between design and photography. Beyond his work as a designer, he has also ventured into the world of advertising photography, bringing his distinctive style to it.

However, his true passion lies in his role as a traveling photographer. With an insatiable curiosity about the world around him, he seeks to capture his rich life experiences through his images. His landscapes transport viewers to distant places, and the corners that catch his eye become immortalized in his photographs.



Chino Martinez  
CusiCusi  
2020



Chino Martinez  
Cactus  
2020



Chino Martinez | Patagonia | 2020

graphypphoto\* is an (almost) anonymous film director & photographer from europe who prefers not to talk about himself too much. \*came up with this name 20 years ago and it stuck.

"I am called Erik Satie, just like everybody else"

— Erik Satie

GRAPHYPHOTO  
Being An Actor  
2024







1987

**Olivier Tenedor** is a visual artist whose artistic approach focuses on the creation of fantastic and chimerical creatures through various forms such as painting, ceramics, wood sculpture, and engraving. Tenedor's works are populated with imaginary and chimerical creatures that evoke fantastic and mythological worlds. These often hybrid figures, blending human, animal, and imaginary elements, invite one on a journey into a dreamlike and mysterious universe.

He primarily works in black and white, giving his creations a graphic and timeless quality. This restricted palette emphasizes forms and textures, highlighting the raw and primitive aspect of his works. Art Brut and Primitive Arts are major influences in his work, bringing an archaic and authentic dimension to his creations. These influences manifest in the use of natural materials and artisanal techniques, such as engraving, wood sculpture, and ceramics. The choice of these techniques allows Tenedor to explore diverse universes and engage in dialogue with different cultures and temporalities.

A strong connection to nature is also present in Tenedor's work. He draws his inspiration from organic forms and natural textures, integrating elements of the plant and animal world into his creations. This connection is evident in his use of raw materials and traditional artisanal techniques, which emphasize the intrinsic link between man and his environment. Tenedor's creatures seem to emerge from the earth, forests, and rivers, as if they were ancient spirits embodying the primordial forces of nature.

Tenedor's intimate mythology is revealed through his works, where each creature seems to carry a personal and symbolic story. His creations evoke ancient tales and forgotten legends, while reflecting an inner quest and exploration of the depths of the unconscious. Tenedor's art invites reflection on the duality of human nature and the mystery of existence.



Olivier Tenedor | Mange Peur | Linogravure



Olivier Tenedor | Serie Bestias, Sans Titre | Linogravure



Olivier Tenedor | Mange Peur | Linogravure



Olivier Tenedor | Serie Bestias, Sans Titre | Linogravure

## — *Interview*

# Muyan Gao

### **What drew you to work with paper-mâché and pulp-based composite materials?**

The feeling that paper-mâché gives me is primitive, simple, light, and highly malleable. The uncontrollability during the process of making pulp also brings me a lot of freshness. Compared to traditional clay sculpture, the natural texture that forms after the pulp dries has always fascinated me. It is precisely this texture that brings a sense of clumsiness and handcraft that I intend to express.

I enjoy exploring and researching materials, attempting to gradually "functionalize" the work and blur the boundary between sculpture and product. The work is "squeezed" between the two. Through understanding color, structure, and current popular culture, I continuously advance the development of my work while



maintaining a certain degree of unpredictability.

### **How did your experiences at Chelsea College of Art and Design and Glasgow School of Art shape your approach to art?**

During my studies, I mainly researched various materials and mixed media. For example, cement, resin, and plaster were common materials in my past works. The creative thinking in the West is very different from the art that I grew up with in China. This period of study gradually made me realize that I wanted to do

something different. Or rather, I wanted to understand and explore myself more deeply, expressing my perspective on life.

**Can you walk us through your creative process, from initial concept to finished piece?**

At first, I would roughly sketch some drafts. These shapes usually stem from my pursuit of nature and organisms. However, I usually do not directly translate these sketches into three-dimensional sculptures. For me, the images bring new experiences, maybe through lines or colors. Next, I build models based on my memories of the sketches. I feel this is a slow and interesting



process where I gradually establish a personal relationship with each piece through a dialogue with it. I often start with a typical shape and gradually distort it into a character. It might not be about "looking like" something specific but rather about evoking a certain feeling. During the process, I layer and shape the pulp until I find a satisfying form. Finally, I paint the dried white pulp. The colors enhance the realism of each character, making them feel close and endearing, providing me with a lot of imaginative space.

**How do you choose the colors and forms for your sculptures?**

I want to incorporate elements of nature, such as fossils, organisms,

soil, or seeds. However, I do not aim to completely replicate nature. Instead, I use highly saturated colors and gradient techniques to express a fresh, easily captured, and fluid feeling. To me, color signifies vitality and emotion. Colored pieces seem more alive, as if they are breathing. This is a crucial part of what I want to express. Bright colors are cleaner, purer, and more dynamic.

I want to explore the feelings that "containers" evoke, blurring the boundaries between sculpture and containers. This reflects the concepts of enveloping, surrounding, and containing, emphasizing the subtle imprints of individual existence and the



dialogue between self and nature. The somewhat dazzling changes in color and shape break the stereotypical perceptions of sculpture and vessels, inspiring the viewer's poetic imagination and subconscious personal experiences.

**Can you elaborate on the concept of "upcycling" in your art and why it is significant to you?**

The concept of "upcycling" is essential in my art. My sculptures aren't just about creating art; they also emphasize the importance of recycling and reimagining the endless possibilities of discarded materials. To me, upcycling is about turning discarded or seemingly useless materials into new, valuable creations. This aligns with my beliefs in sustainability and environmental awareness. By reusing materials that might otherwise become waste, I aim to highlight the beauty and functionality that often lie hidden in things we overlook or throw away.

In my work, I use pulp made from recycled paper. This not only gives new life to materials that might

otherwise end up in a landfill but also brings a unique texture and character to my sculptures. The process of turning old paper into pulp and sculpting it into new forms is a metaphor for transformation and renewal. It reflects the idea that everything has the potential to be reborn and reimagined.

Upcycling also allows me to create art with unique qualities and stories. Every piece of recycled paper I use has its own history and background, which adds depth and character to the finished sculpture.

**What has been the most memorable response or feedback you have received from an exhibition?**

One of the most unforgettable pieces of feedbacks I received at an exhibition came from a young child. As he looked at my sculpture, he exclaimed loudly, "I want to live inside this!" I was very surprised; it showed that my work can touch the imagination and emotions of audiences of different ages. The child's imagination enlarged what was originally a small sculpture, giving the work infinite possibilities beyond itself.



This has inspired me to explore a larger and more enriching artistic world in my next steps.

**How do you feel your sculptures reflect your own personality and experiences?**

My artworks often take on an abstract or semi-abstract form, reflecting my pursuit of expressing inner emotions and feelings. I tend to explore the relationship between form and color, seeing these elements not only visually but also as expressions of emotions and spirituality. This abstraction allows for multiple interpretations of my work, and I hope each viewer finds resonance and understanding in it. As a

female creator, I believe my artworks have certain gender inclinations—they can be beautiful, sensual, robust, rational, and infinitely charming. By integrating art with functionality or everyday life, I aim to reflect on and explore the role that art can play in daily life.

**Do you see a connection between your sculptures and any broader environmental or social themes?**

Through the use of renewable materials and emphasizing sustainable creative methods, my

artworks directly reflect a concern for environmental protection and sustainable development. This practice is not only about artistic expression but also a way to actively support environmental conservation through practical action. My artworks often explore the relationship between humans and nature, or delve into the roles and identities of humans in modern society. Through abstract forms and multi-layered visual interpretations, I aim to stimulate viewers' reflections on the complex interactions between nature and humanity.







## Gathered Love

Made from pieces of fabric collected from clothing and blankets that once belonged to my loved ones, Gathered Love is a freeform textile mosaic. Each piece has been sewn in to make seen the poignant but often invisible contribution my loved ones have made on the person that I am, have been, and am becoming. I Love You Mummy I Love You Mummy is all for my mom. Breast cancer took her away from me very recently, she is my hero and my biggest motivation. I chose to create a daisy in the tapestry because my mom loves daisies, and I included 3 floating butterflies with a floral pattern to cast shadow over my work, because my mom has always used butterflies as a representation of her, my sister, and myself. All of the fabric used in the daisy and the background are my mom's clothes. I chose pink for the daisy because it is my mom's favourite colour, and I chose to use the bright yellow for the border because my mom radiates happiness. Even though my mom is no longer with me physically, doesn't mean that she is completely gone from me. She has been with me the whole way through the process of creating my tapestry, she is holding my hand from above. I know that she loves what I have made, and her clothes have a new life as art now; I love you Mummy.

— Ella Bos



Ella Bos  
Gathered Love  
2022  
Textile

My work "The show is over" is about emotional burnout, devastation, and loss of meaning in my business. It's not about the circus. It's about each of us. A clown is a collective image, understandable to everyone, a metaphorical character who hides personal tragedy and hopelessness, loss and loneliness in this world behind his mask and bright clothes.

— Sasha Dym



САША ДЫМ  
2024



## — Interview

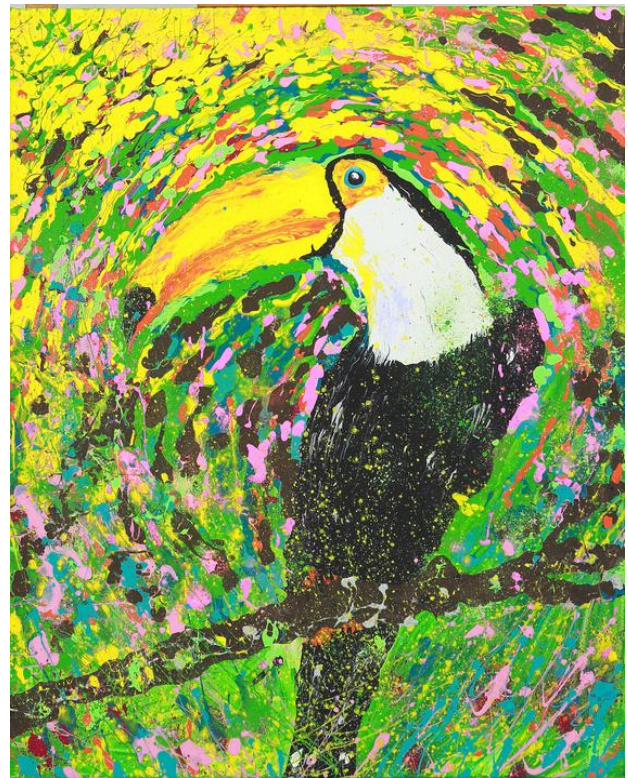
### **Dr Lowly (@ Low Lee Yong)**

**Could you tell us about your journey from medicine and healthcare technology to becoming an abstract artist? What motivated this transition?**

*From Medicine to Abstract Art: A Journey of Passion and Transformation*

As a child, I harbored a deep passion for art. At the tender age of 8, I won an art contest at school, igniting my creative spirit. I eagerly participated in the Art Club during my extracurricular activities, nurturing my love for artistic expression.

However, life took an unexpected turn. Driven by financial constraints, I aspired to become a medical doctor. I dedicated myself to serving in a government hospital, but fate had more surprises in store. To supplement my income, I ventured into home-



Dr Lowly | Beak and Splatter | 2022

based typing services, inadvertently immersing myself in the world of computers and information technology.

The spark of entrepreneurship ignited within me. Inspired by the possibilities, I embarked on a remarkable journey. Over 25 years, I built a network of 2000 clinics, connecting healthcare providers across Singapore. Eventually, I had the privilege of selling my successful health technology business to a Swedish buyer, allowing me to retire.

In 2019, fate intervened once again. The global pandemic confined me to my home,

providing an unexpected opportunity. I revisited my childhood passion for painting, and this time, I embraced it wholeheartedly. The canvas became my refuge, and I explored various forms of artistic expression.

Abstract art captured my heart. Its therapeutic qualities, the joy of unbridled creativity, and the liberating feeling of brushstrokes on canvas drew me in. The transition from medicine and technology to the vibrant world of abstract art was both exhilarating and transformative. Now, as a full-time abstract artist, I continue to channel my vision, discipline, and relentless pursuit of excellence onto the canvas.



Dr Lowly  
Cosmic Collision  
2023

## **What inspired you to create your signature technique “squeeze and splatter,” and could you explain the process behind it?**

*From Medicine to Canvas: The Birth of the “Squeeze and Splatter” Technique*

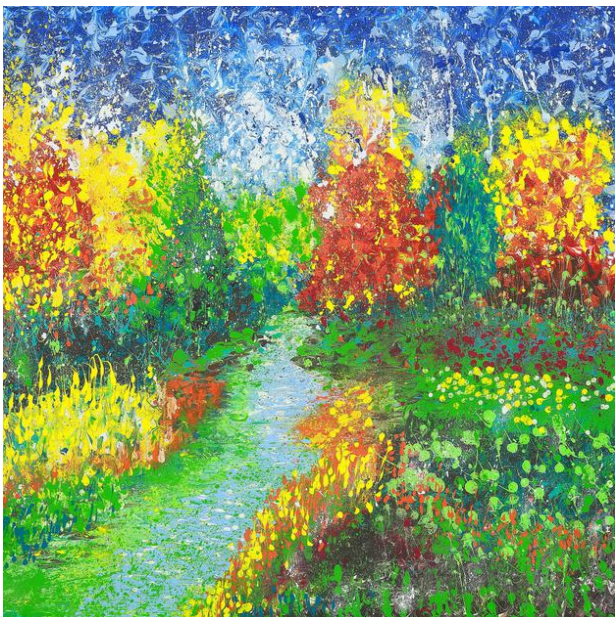
When I embarked on my artistic journey, I found myself starting from scratch. The canvas awaited me, blank and full of potential. The first decision I grappled with was choosing the right type of paint. Oil or acrylic? My medical background led me to opt for acrylic paint due to its non-toxic nature—a choice that resonated with my commitment to health.

My experimentation knew no bounds. Brushes, palettes, balloons, and even unconventional tools like spoons, forks, and yes, a toilet brush—all became my companions in this artistic exploration. I delved into the fluidity of acrylic paints, discovering their captivating flow. Syringes allowed me to inject creativity onto the canvas, while blowing paint through hospital drip tubing became an intriguing experiment.



Yet, something was missing. The traditional methods felt stifling, and the results didn't quite capture the vibrancy I sought. Then came the breakthrough: squeeze bottles. With newfound enthusiasm, I began to splatter and squeeze paint onto large canvases. The rhythmic motion—swinging the squeeze bottle from shoulder to wrist—created a dance of colors. Paints scattered, collided, and merged, infusing the canvas with energy and movement.

This became my signature technique—the “squeeze and splatter.” Friends who witnessed my vibrant artworks praised the technique’s liveliness. Hours of practice refined my skill, and with



Dr Lowly  
Autumn Reflection  
2021

each squeeze, I felt exhilaration and liberation. The midair descent of paint, guided by intuition, transformed the canvas into a testament of resilience, hope, and connection.

### **Who are some artists or mentors who have influenced your work and artistic development?**

#### *Guiding Lights: Artists Who Shaped My Path*

As I delved into the world of art, I immersed myself in the rich history of renowned artists. Their techniques, struggles, and creative philosophies became my compass. Here are the luminaries who left an indelible mark on my artistic development:

1. Vincent van Gogh: His vibrant and emotive works resonated deeply with me. Van Gogh's use of color, especially in his iconic sunflowers and starry nights, evoked a romantic sensibility. His commitment to self-expression, even amidst personal challenges, inspired me to embrace my own artistic voice.

2. Jackson Pollock: Pollock's revolutionary approach to abstract expressionism captivated me. His technique of splattering paint onto

large canvases—often with frenetic energy—was liberating. I found kinship in his belief that art should flow from within, unencumbered by convention.

3. Cyril Kongo Phan: A contemporary force, Kongo's graffiti art bursts forth with life. His colorful alphabets dance across vast canvases, infusing urban energy into traditional spaces. The vibrancy of his work speaks to resilience and connection—a theme close to my heart.

In a serendipitous twist, I had the privilege of connecting with Cyril Kongo Phan personally. As an art collector, I cherish the dozen masterpieces from his brush that now adorn my walls.

These artists—each a beacon of creativity—have guided my journey from medicine to canvas. Their legacy fuels my passion, reminding me that art transcends boundaries and speaks to the soul.

### **How did the challenges and uncertainties brought by the Covid pandemic affect your creative process and art?**

*Navigating the Pandemic: A Canvas-Bound Journey*

The onset of the Covid pandemic arrived just as I had sold my business and entered retirement. It was a serendipitous alignment—a moment when life's unexpected twists intersected with my artistic aspirations.

Before the pandemic, my wife and I were avid travelers. We explored countless countries, soaking in the beauty of scenes like the autumn scene, glaciers in Argentina and iconic landmarks—the Pyramids, the Eiffel Tower, and more. But then, the world stood still. Flights were grounded, borders closed, and our physical wanderlust came to an abrupt halt.

Yet, within this confinement, a new horizon opened. My canvas became my passport. Unable to traverse the globe physically, I embarked on a vibrant journey through color and form. Each stroke carried me to those distant places we once visited—the sun-kissed sands of Egypt, the wrought iron elegance of Paris, and beyond.

The pandemic's uncertainties fueled my creativity. I channeled hope, resilience, and connection onto the canvas. The vibrant hues danced, capturing memories and

emotions. In my studio, I soared—unfettered by travel restrictions, guided only by the brush’s whisper.

As the world grappled with challenges, my art became a sanctuary. It allowed me to revisit those cherished scenes, infusing them with newfound depth. The Pyramids stood tall, not in stone, but in the luminous cadence of acrylics. The Eiffel Tower shimmered, not in steel, but in the rhythm of my brush.

And so, I painted—a traveler without a suitcase, a wanderer within four walls. The pandemic may have grounded us, but it couldn’t tether our imaginations. Through vibrant colors, I rekindled the beauty, the joy, and the happiness of our shared adventures.

**Can you discuss your involvement with Goducate Ltd. and how your philanthropic efforts have impacted your art and life philosophy?**

*Harmonizing Compassion and Creativity: My Journey with Goducate*

As a sponsor supporting Goducate,



Dr Lowly  
Echoes of Giza  
2024

my wife and I have woven philanthropy into the fabric of our lives. Our mission extends beyond mere charity—it’s about empowerment, resilience, and nurturing dreams.

1. Building Shelters and Sanctuaries: In the Philippines, we’ve contributed to building shelters and sanctuaries for those in need. These structures aren’t just physical; they’re havens of hope. For impoverished families, a safe roof overhead means more than mere protection—it signifies dignity and possibility.

2. Empowering Farmers: Through livelihood projects, we’ve uplifted struggling farmers. Their calloused hands, weathered by toil, now grasp new techniques. We’ve shared knowledge—seeds of growth—that yield not just crops but also self-sufficiency. The fields

bloom, and so do their spirits.

### 3. Nurturing Youth through Music:

In these same communities, children and teenagers face daunting odds. Education eludes some, while others teeter on the precipice of despair. But music—the universal language—became our bridge. We donated instruments—violins, recorders, guitars—and trained young hearts to play. Some found their rhythm, enrolling in college to study music. Others formed bands, serenading at parties and weddings. Music became their livelihood, their compass in a tumultuous sea.

### 4. A Canvas of Possibilities:

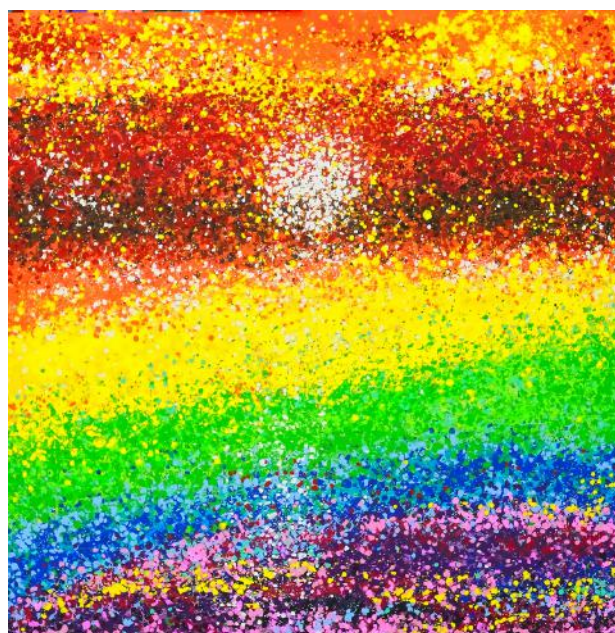
Inspired by these journeys, I've planned a similar philanthropic endeavor—one that resonates with my own passion: painting. Talented children and youth, their souls ablaze with creativity, will find solace in colors. Through my business acumen, I'll guide them toward recognition and self-sufficiency. Their canvases will tell stories—of resilience, of dreams unfurling, of hope brushed onto life's canvas.

Life Philosophy Unfolding: My art mirrors this journey. Each stroke carries echoes of compassion, resilience, and connection. The

pandemic may have grounded us, but our imaginations soared. Just as Goducate's work transcends borders, my brush dances across continents. Art becomes sanctuary—a passport to places unseen, emotions unspoken.

In this fusion of philanthropy and creativity, I find purpose. The canvas whispers: "Paint resilience. Sketch hope. Color connection." And so, I do—brush by brush, stroke by stroke.

**What advice would you give to aspiring artists who come from non-traditional backgrounds, similar to yours?**



Dr Lowly  
Spectrum Solstice  
2024

## *Navigating the Artistic Landscape: Insights for Non-Traditional Artists*

1. Embrace Your Unconventional Path: As a non-traditional artist, you bring a unique perspective to the canvas. Your journey—whether through medicine, technology, or other fields—shapes your art.

Embrace it. Your background isn't a limitation; it's a palette of experiences waiting to be expressed.

2. Create Despite Constraints: Art can be costly, especially when starting out. Canvas, paints, and studio space—all demand investment. But remember, creativity thrives within constraints. Start small. Use what you have. A corner of your home can be a studio; cardboard can be a canvas. Let scarcity fuel innovation.

3. Market Your Art Like a Business: Picasso and Dali weren't just masterful painters; they were savvy entrepreneurs. Treat your art as a product. Learn marketing. Social media—especially Instagram—is your ally. Showcase your work, share your process, and connect with fellow artists and collectors. The digital world is your gallery.

4. Art Calls and Contests Matter: Participate. These platforms

amplify your voice. Art calls and contests provide exposure, validation, and sometimes even financial rewards. Don't shy away. Submit your work. Even if you don't win, your art reaches new eyes. Remember, recognition often snowballs.

5. Balance Creation and Promotion: Yes, focus on creating beautiful art—that's your core. But allocate time for promotion too. It's not vanity; it's survival. Attend exhibitions, collaborate, network. Your brush strokes matter, but so do your words, your presence. Be your own advocate.

6. Learn from the Masters, Adapt to the Present: Study the greats—Picasso, Dali, and beyond. Their techniques, their audacity—they're timeless. But also adapt. The digital age demands agility. Learn digital tools, explore multimedia, and stay curious. Art evolves; so must you.

Remember, your journey isn't linear; it's a mosaic. Each piece—whether medicine, technology, or art—adds depth. Your canvas awaits. Paint resilience, color dreams, and let your non-traditional spirit soar.

Andrew Hetherington is an emerging artist specializing in abstract art with a vibrant twist. Known for his bold use of acrylic paint, Andrew creates dynamic compositions that captivate the eye and ignite the imagination. Each piece is a celebration of bright colors and innovative design, reflecting a deep passion for visual experimentation. Drawing inspiration from the world around him, Andrew explores the interplay of shapes and forms, pushing the boundaries of traditional abstract art. His work invites viewers to embark on a journey of discovery, where every glance reveals new layers and perspectives. With a fearless approach to creativity, Andrew continues to evolve as an artist, constantly seeking new ways to express his unique vision. His dedication to his craft and unwavering love for bright, bold colors makes Andrew Hetherington a distinctive voice in the contemporary art scene.



Andrew Hetherington | Jumbled Digits | 2024



## — Interview

# Vitaly Mikheev

### **Can you tell us about your journey into the world of art and how it began in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky?**

From a very young age, around three years old, I loved to draw. I remember the first time I took a pencil in my hand and decided to draw a postcard for my dad for February 23rd. He was sailing on a ship to the USA at that time, and upon his return, my mom and I gave him this postcard, which had graphic elements. Dad was very happy, and my mom and dad then said, "He will be an artist!"

### **How did your education in graphic design and environmental design influence your artistic style?**

Graphic design directly influenced me. At that time, I was very passionate about studying art history, especially the history of



pop art, the history of Andy Warhol and his followers. And, I think design reflected in my work primarily in the color scheme. I prefer pure colors without excessive restraint. Design also influenced the concentration, naming, and combination of all elements. I can't say that I directly copied something, but I think it all settled somewhere in my subconscious.

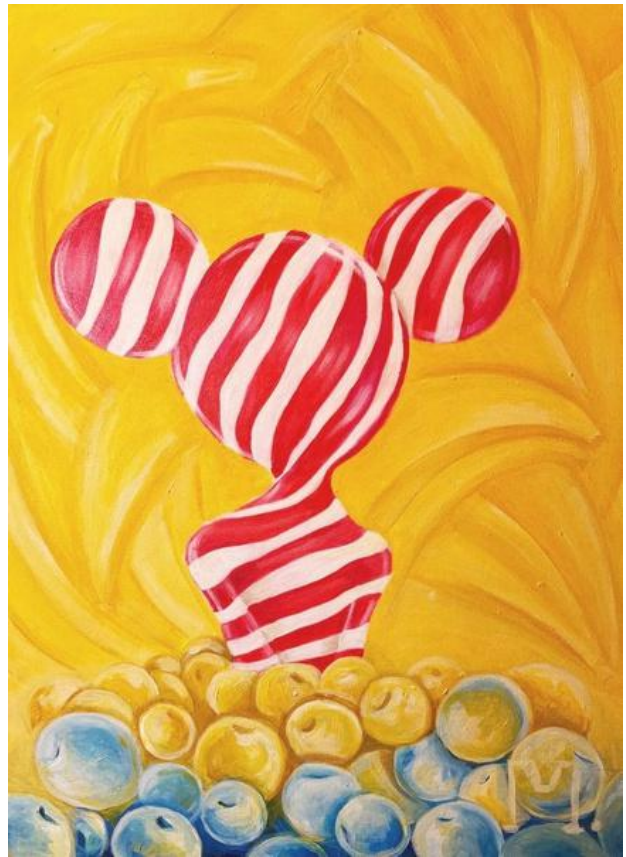
### **Could you share more about the art project "Next Line" that you organized in Siberia? What impact did it have on the local art community?**



The "Next Line" project emerged because I initially participated in exhibitions of the Artists' Union and at some point, I realized that it looked somewhat outdated - the concepts of the exhibitions were slightly outdated. So, my creative friends and I decided to organize a project that any artist could join, from painters and sculptors to designers, dancers, musicians, and so on. I found various locations from bookstores and cafes to abandoned premises and galleries



Vitaly Mikheev  
Bloody Mary  
2015



Vitaly Mikheev  
The Yellow in Me  
2018

where we held joint exhibitions. It was progressive and conceptual for that time. I consider it a very successful project; we still communicate and fondly remember those times. We repeatedly engaged in the city's social projects entirely on a voluntary basis. We didn't receive any grants from this but got pleasure out of it.

**What draws you to the pop-surrealism style, and how do you interpret this style in your works?**

Honestly, at first, I didn't understand that my direction belonged to the pop-surrealism style. I just had inspiration, I painted, painted, and accumulated a certain number of works. One day a critic told me that my work was very similar to this style. I began to study it and realized that yes, it really is. It is a very progressive modern American style that intersects with pop art, which I always liked, so it is close to me. I really like the colors of this direction; they are usually bright and juicy. And I like that with a combination of bright colors, there can be very complex content. The paintings can address both serious social issues of life and personal ones, and all this comes together as a whole. A person can look at the painting and think it's just a bright picture, but in reality, the meaning can be completely different. The visual can differ from the meaning, and you need to dissect elements, hints to understand what I wanted to say.

### **How does your travel experience influence your artwork?**

Traveling is a crucial part of my work. For me, it's an exchange of experiences, broadening horizons,



Vitaly Mikheev  
Universal Hunger  
2009

and getting acquainted with new cultures and traditions. For example, before my first trip to Mexico, I didn't realize that I could exhibit my paintings. I just painted because I had inspiration and the desire to paint. In Cancun, I visited a local artist's gallery, and his work made an impression on me, they were bright, juicy with an interesting direction and technique. I realized that you can see the world more vividly. From that moment, I defined my style and understood that I was moving in the right direction. Now I am confident in my style, paintings, and art.

**As the director of the "KAPUSTA" design studio, how do you balance your roles as an artist and a leader?**

I have been organizing exhibitions since 2009, and the design studio appeared in 2012. I was engaged in both simultaneously. I was a freelance designer, working on several jobs at once. Design was not my main activity. 2012 was a turning point, of course, I started painting less because I had to manage processes, strategies, and development. Plus, communicating with clients... There were many different nuances that I had to resolve. At that time, I was tired like any ordinary person, but nothing prevented me from painting at night. In such difficult, stressful moments, I would just come home and start painting. I could paint for days. Nothing stopped me, I easily deal with such moments.

As long as I have impulses from my head, I create.

I want to talk about the process of creating paintings. I never prepare sketches in advance. All the paintings are created directly on the canvas, in the moment. I can finish it within a year. But all the



Vitaly Mikheev  
Exotic Dreams  
2012

key moments are immediately written down while it's still in my head. As a rule, all these pictures, motifs, plots for paintings come in the moment of some interesting situations in life. I get an image in my head, or I observe people. Most often people create some moments and scenes. Or maybe I see some situation in the gym, I work out - I look at people, they do something, and I always imagine in my head some kind of image. From which a new work is born. Most often people argue or make peace. In any case, they give emotion. Everything comes together, I don't know how it works, but the result is a painting.

Artistic dish Ingredients: imagination, idealism, magic, story, perfection (optional). Take a little bit of imagination, steam it, add to a large container with chopped-up idealism, whip in some magic until you reach a smooth consistency and grind in a story. Mix everything together, cook for a little while either in hell or heaven (as you wish). If desired, could be sprinkled with a pinch of perfection. Voilà, the dish is ready. Bon Appetit! P.S. The recipe is open to interpretation and free to be modified, the content and quantities of the ingredients are not fixed. The final result of the fairy dish can be made differently to the original recipe, just like the end of any fairy story...

— Nata Buachidze



Nata Buachidze | Inside | 2022-2023



Nata Buachidze  
Emptiness  
2019

## — Interview

### Antje Wauer

**Can you tell us more about your journey from studying economics to pursuing a full-time career in art?**

I've always been interested in art. But I grew up in an environment where art wasn't considered a profession. People went into sales, cosmetics or construction. When I showed what I could do, it was considered a hobby. So, at 16 years old, I started an apprenticeship in economics. I did well enough and worked in the field for about three years. While working, I started doing more creative things, like creating brochures and marketing materials. I realised then, that there were creative professions and I started pursuing them. I took my A-levels, did an apprenticeship in Graphics and Communication and studied Design. After that, I worked in Agencies doing Graphic and Web Design. I could finally use my creative energy and drive. But it was not fulfilling. I missed my



Antje Wauer | Underwater | 2024

drawing pad, my pencils, inks and everything else. I missed the conflict with myself when a drawing was becoming. When everything is possible but so hard to achieve. While working for clients I had neither the time nor the energy to draw or create freely. Everything I did was with a clear goal and purpose in mind, often with set colours and shapes and many opinions floating around. So, in 2023, I decided to go solo for real. I've tried a few times before, but this time was different. There was no way back. I was finally ready. I needed to become an artist.

**What inspired you to take the leap and quit your job in 2023 to focus solely on your art?**

Sadly it was less inspiration and more necessity. I was burning out. I wasn't well where I was and didn't feel appreciated in my work. I had to make a change.

**Who or what has been your biggest influence in your artistic career?**

I get inspired by all kinds of things. People, shapes, forms, a walk in the woods or even a random picture on the internet. What has influenced my artistic journey though, are a few big things. One: The old masters. How they use light and shadow, and how they tell a story through objects and symbols.

Two: Textures and patterns. I see them everywhere and they



Antje Wauer  
Future  
2024



Antje Wauer  
Web  
2024

fascinate me. Ever since I was little I liked that they were everywhere, but no one actively noticed them. Yet they carry so much information.

Three: The art of my adolescence. I grew up with Edward Scissorhands, The Adams Family and Buffy - the Vampire Slayer. Those movies and series have influenced my perception of beauty a lot.

**Can you describe the feeling you get when you create art compared to when you were working in an agency?**

Yes. Pure joy. I love creating art. And I love that I am less dependent on what other people might think. Don't get me wrong. Of course, I want my art to resonate with people, spark a conversation or even just be enjoyed for what it is. But while creating a piece, I am

with myself and my inner world. I might let information in and consider different angles for certain topics, but it is a choice. I don't have to consider specific things. And that is very liberating and makes the art better.



Antje Wauer  
Wind  
2024

**Why do you choose to work primarily with black markers without corrective media?**

The markers are the most natural to me. I've tried different mediums, including acrylic, oil, ink and watercolour, as well as stencils and collage. But markers for me work best. They give a sense of finality.

You have to think about what you want to do and then go with it. You cannot easily paint over it. And mistakes happen. But that is ok as well. You learn how to make them work. And maybe the mistake becomes the key element of my drawing. In that way I like chance.



Antje Wauer  
New World  
2024



**Do you have a favorite piece among your works? If so, what makes it special to you?**

Definitely. It is actually the one that most people around me have commented on. I wanted to show a woman in water, and the piece is called "Underwater", but people often don't see the water. The piece is just black and white, made up of lines, patterns and shapes. Quite abstract, but for me it sparked a poem and opened up a whole world of possibilities. I love it.

**Are there any new mediums or techniques you are interested in exploring?**

Besides different markers and inks, I've been going back to watercolour for a few pieces. It is nice to have some colour in my work once in a while. :)



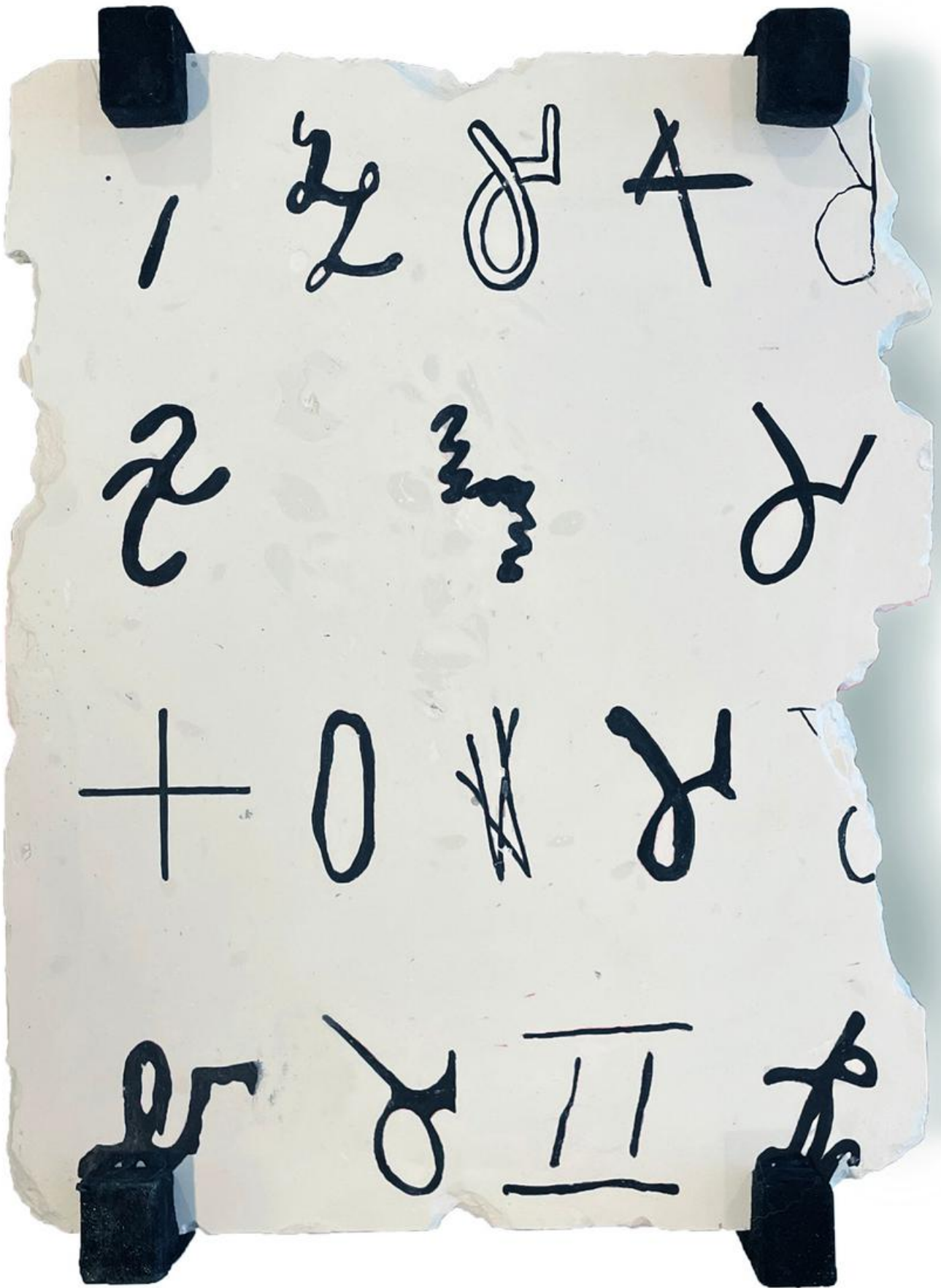
Antje Wauer  
Pieces  
2024

Situated within a realm of complex alternate histories, and systems of belief, my work employs various media to tell the story of an imagined reality. The traditions of narrative and visual history are mined to produce artifacts and scenes from a unique reality. Working within this faux-historical context, the “artifacts” serve as a chorographic backdrop behind which infinite stories unfold. These pieces exist as representation of a both physical and conceptual chronological dating upon which the ritual of historical narrative is glimpsed as an alternate reality.

— Taylor Black



Taylor Black | Birtthofan Empire



Taylor Black  
Artifact No.32

Italian illustrator mainly focused on the paper art technique, I also love cinema and stop motion animation. The paper art portraits I create are born directly from cutting paper, without preparatory drawing, and focus on the pose of the characters through clear and geometric cuts. In contrast to traditional collage with newspaper clippings and printed figures, I mainly use plain colored cardboard. My illustrations were selected at the Golden Pinwheel Young Illustrators Competition in Shanghai (China) and at the International Biennial of Humor in Art in Tolentino (Italy).

— Federica Zancato



Federica Zancato | The Five Continents, Europe | 2020



## — Interview

# Agnieszka Rowinska

### **How did your upbringing in a Polish Catholic home influence your early artistic development?**

Growing up in a Polish Catholic home deeply influenced my artistic development. Religion was an integral part of our daily lives. My parents, both well-educated professionals — my father a mathematician and my mother a doctor — presented religion to me as something as real and important as math or science. This meant that from an early age, I was surrounded by the stories, rituals, and symbols of the Catholic Church, which I accepted without question.

As a child, I naturally incorporated these elements into my art. I was fascinated by the stories of saints, the beautiful iconography, and the sense of mystery and reverence that accompanied our religious



practices. Art became my way of exploring and expressing these spiritual and metaphysical ideas, allowing me to visually interpret things that were important in our home but difficult to see or touch.

When I reached my teenage years, I began to question many things, including my religious beliefs. I met a teacher who encouraged me to explore different religions and cultures. He showed me that spirituality is a universal human need and is not limited to one particular faith. This broader perspective was eye-opening and freeing, allowing me to incorporate a wider range of spiritual and cultural elements into my art.

**How do you approach the concept of spirituality in your art, and how has it evolved over time?**

My approach to the concept of spirituality in my art has evolved significantly over time. Initially, I viewed spirituality as inseparable from specific religions, reflecting the Catholic environment in which I was raised. My early work was imbued with religious iconography and themes directly tied to Catholicism.

However, when I was in my early

twenties, I encountered Freud's essay "The Uncanny," which was a pivotal moment for me. This text helped me shift my focus from specific religious doctrines to the broader anatomy of belief and the psychological underpinnings of spirituality. It was liberating and allowed me to explore spirituality beyond the confines of any one religion.

Now, my work seeks to create a universal artistic portrayal of spirituality. I draw inspiration from various prayer traditions, such as meditation, mantra repetition, and



Agnieszka Rowinska | Ark | 2024

praying the rosary. I aim to find a universal language that transcends specific religious contexts and can be translated onto canvas.

Currently, I am particularly interested in the repetitive gesture as a means to detach from reality and connect with the subconscious, where I believe our spirituality and faith reside. This repetitive process, which I explore through techniques like the veil of dots in my "Prayer" series, serves as a meditative practice.

**Your work often explores themes of memory, dreams, and the subconscious. Can you**



Agnieszka Rowinska  
Unity  
2022

**elaborate on how you translate these intangible aspects into visual art?**

I don't think I've found my final way to show these things. I think this will be my life's journey, exploring these topics. I am currently using a very light monochromatic color palette to create a dreamlike hallucinatory effect. I'm doing an exercise with my subconscious: just before falling asleep and upon waking up, I try to focus on my art. My mind, free from conscious narrative, allows me to wander through old unconscious memories or completely random visions. At the moment of awakening, I have a finished composition in the creation of which my consciousness was not involved, only my subconscious. This feels as if the idea for the next painting doesn't belong to me. Interestingly, these compositions born from my subconscious turn out to be more universal than if I had consciously invented them. I love discovering with the viewer that I don't need to explain the painting, as they intuitively understand what I meant.

I am also drawn to the repetitive



gesture in my work, which taps into the subconscious. The veil of dots I create serves as both a visual element and a meditative practice. This repetition helps me detach from reality and enter a state where my subconscious can surface.

In essence, my work is a continuous exploration of how to visually represent the intangible aspects of memory, dreams, and the subconscious. It's a journey involving my own subconscious, techniques to evoke dreamlike states.

**Your paintings have a unique monochromatic color scheme. What is the significance of this choice for you?**

The monochromatic color scheme in my paintings is crucial for creating a hallucinatory effect, akin to seeing something out of the corner of your eye. It plays on the idea that it's within your power to believe in what you're seeing or not. This ambiguity invites viewers to linger and look closer.

At first glance, the paintings might appear as if there's nothing there. However, the longer you gaze at



Agnieszka Rowinska  
Introspection  
2024

them, the more details start to emerge. Subtle textures, delicate lines, and intricate patterns gradually reveal themselves, drawing you deeper into the work. This gradual unveiling mirrors the way our subconscious reveals hidden memories and dreams over time.

**You aim to create a new spirituality for the 21st century. How do you see this evolving in your future works?**

I aim to create a new spirituality by detaching from traditional

religions and seeking universal feelings of the uncanny that resonate with everyone. Exploring these themes is a fundamental human need and explains why religions have been created independently across different cultures. However, I believe that modern individuals, like myself, need a form of spirituality that is detached from politics and hierarchy.

That's why I've embarked on this journey. It's challenging to predict exactly how this will evolve in my future works, as I prefer to let it develop naturally, without imposing strict directions. I trust



Agnieszka Rowinska  
Mother  
2022



Agnieszka Rowinska  
Silence  
2022

my subconscious to guide me, allowing the ideas to emerge organically.

### **Which artists, writers, or thinkers have influenced your work the most, and how?**

It's really hard to choose, but off the top of my head, several artists and thinkers have profoundly influenced my work.

Mark Rothko's ability to evoke deep emotions through abstract forms, Agnes Martin's serene minimalism, and Agnes Pelton's spiritual abstractions have all contributed to my approach to

creating a new, universal spirituality. Additionally, Hiroshige's intricate and evocative landscapes have inspired me with their ability to convey mood and atmosphere.

Freud's essay "The Uncanny" helped me shift my focus from specific religious themes to broader concepts of belief and the subconscious. This text inspired me to explore the eerie and unfamiliar aspects of the human psyche, which I aim to reflect in my work.

Recently, I read Katy Hessel's "The Story of Art Without Men," and I found it fascinating. It introduced me to many overlooked female

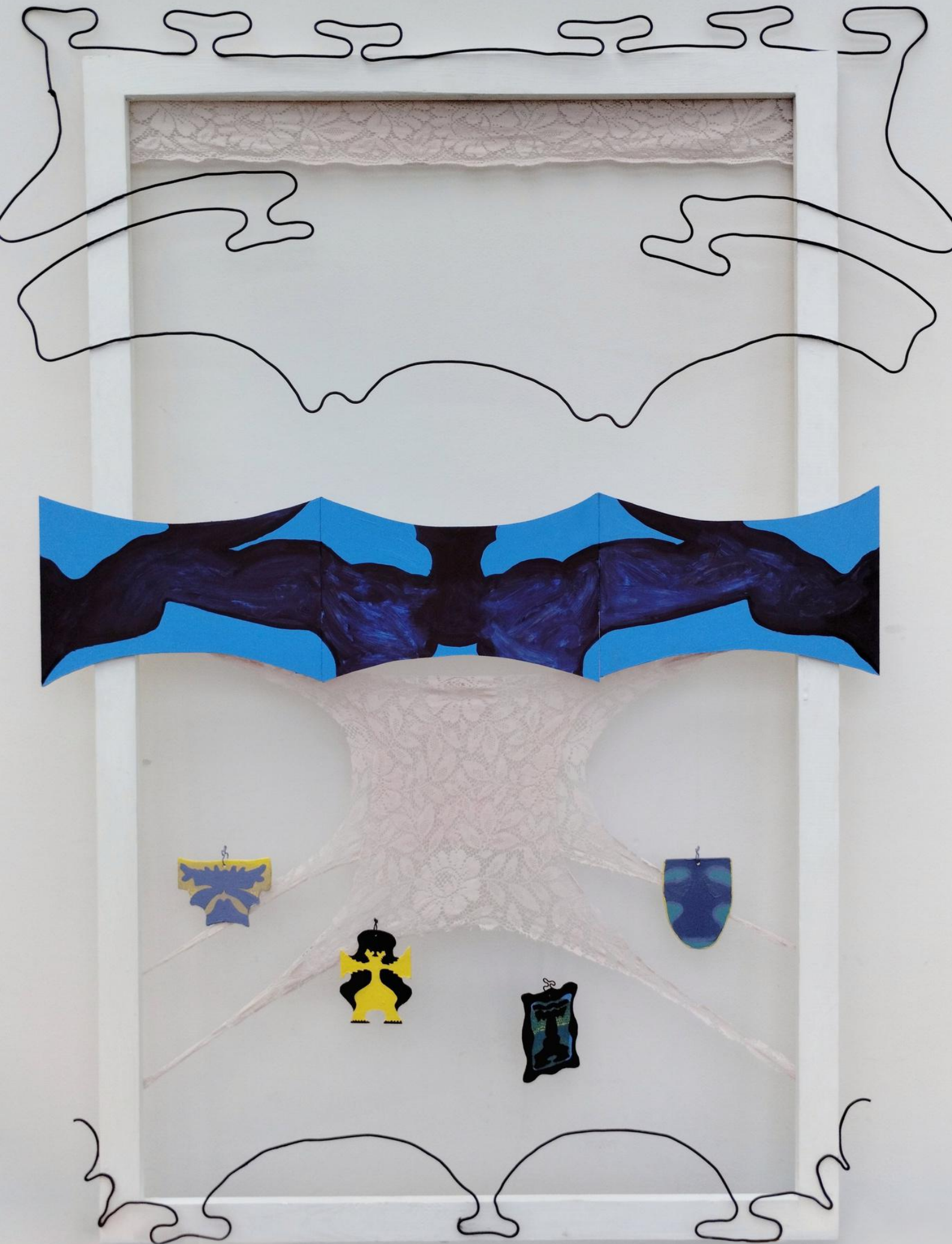
artists and broadened my perspective on art history, encouraging me to explore a wider range of influences and perspectives in my own art.

What advice would you give to emerging artists who are exploring themes of spirituality and personal development in their work?

Be open-minded and tolerant, but also mindful of what feels right for you. It's important to trust your instincts and protect your well-being. Remember, you are the main narrator of your own journey. Focus on what resonates with you personally, and allow your unique perspective to shine through in your work.

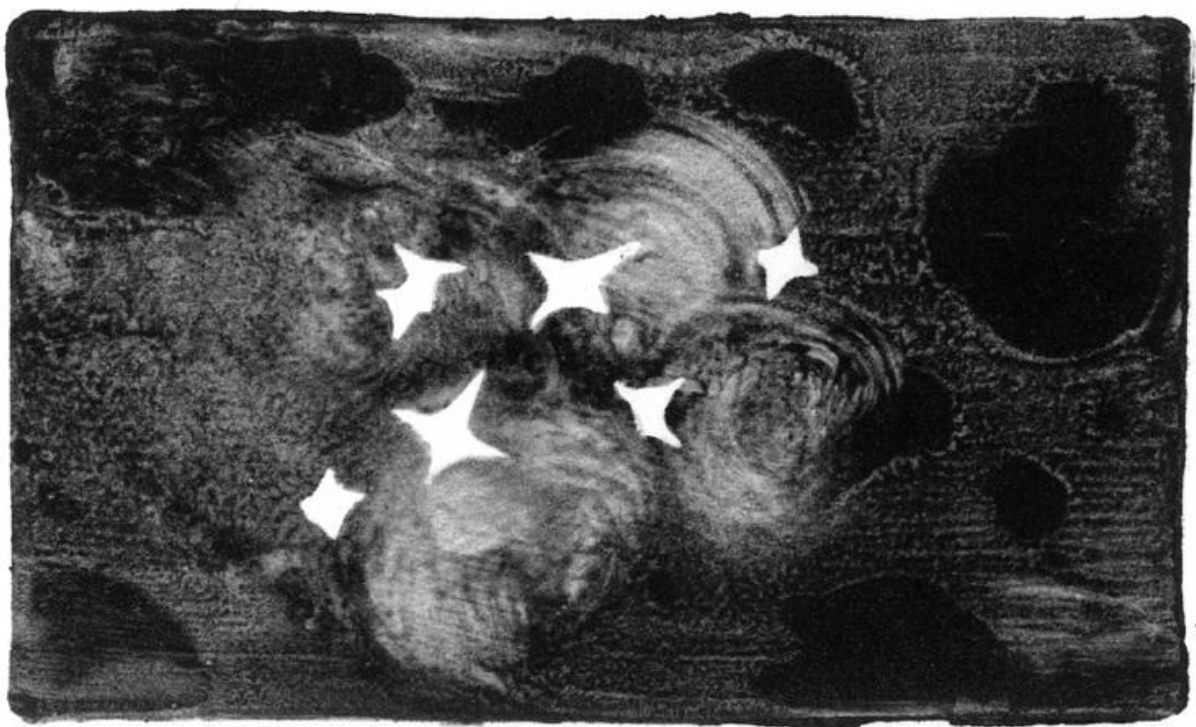


Agnieszka Rowinska  
Ark II  
2024



I come from Bydgoszcz in Poland, but right now I practice art in the city of Łódź. My main medium is painting, but recently I started working with paper and sculpture.

— Paulina Czajkowska



Paulina Czajkowska  
Constellation  
2023

## — *Interview*

# Cat Lipiec

**Can you tell us more about your background and how you got started in ceramics and fibre arts?**

I have always been creating. When I was two I started drawing out the story of princess Catalina, named after the salad dressing, drawing out this character doing different mundane activities. A few years later my mother taught me how to knit, a skill passed down through generations. I continued to draw throughout my childhood and then applied to Canterbury High School's visual arts program. Alongside my regular studies there I did classes in painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, and ceramics. As odd as it sounds now, ceramics was my least favourite subject at the time. It wasn't until our ceramics teacher changed halfway through my highschool years and Mrs. Glover came in and changed my life. Her passion was



contagious and made me fall in love with ceramics. In my studies at Concordia University I used most of my electives to take all the necessary courses for a major in the Fibres and Material Practices too. I have been very lucky to be able to combine my passions over the years and in my studies which has led me and my work to where I am now.

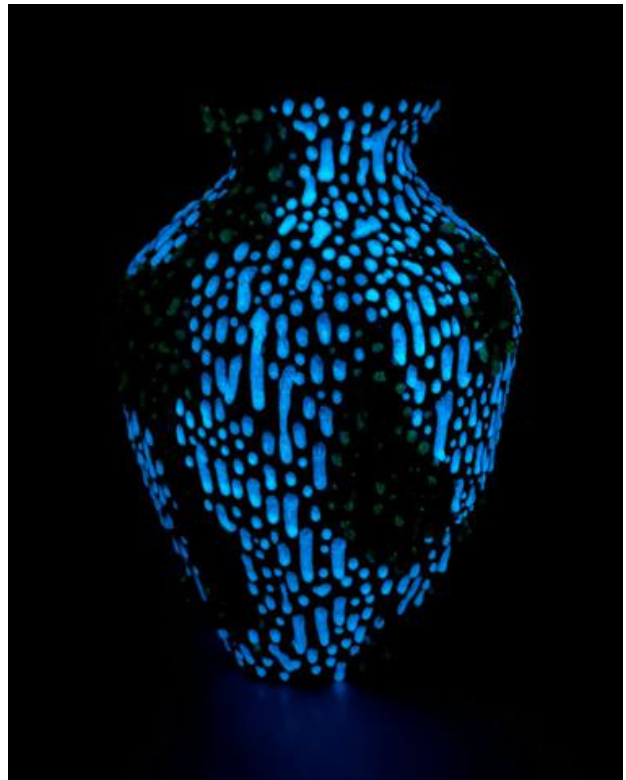
**Can you walk us through the process of developing your custom fluorescent glazes?**

What were some of the biggest challenges you faced? Getting it to work was by far the hardest part. I

didn't expect it to work. I won't give too much away but I made countless tests and variations of different glazes and recipes I had found online and in books. I found some really helpful articles and used hyperglaze, a downloadable ceramic glaze software to create many recipes and experimented with different rare earth oxides which eventually led to my success.

**How do you balance the technical aspects of ceramics with the creative process?**

The technical stuff is fun! It's fun to experiment and measure out ingredients and put it in the kiln to



Cat Lipiec  
Radiant Clay  
Glazed Ceramic, 2024

see what happens. Making glazes is a lot like baking in that way, but with ceramics I feel like an alchemist. It's thrilling.

**What was the initial inspiration behind the "Radiant Clay" project?**

A few months ago I had a discussion with some of my classmates about where my work was going. I started making pieces with the intention of being light fixtures and I got to thinking about making glazes that could interact with different forms of light.



**Can you describe the feeling when you finally achieved the desired fluorescent effect in your glazes?**

Pure excitement. I couldn't believe it worked if I'm being honest. After so many failed tests my expectations were low. And don't get me wrong, I'm still working out kinks with the recipe and application of the glaze, there's still lots of research to do, but I'm ecstatic that I have a successful starting point to keep working off of.

**Are there any new techniques or materials you are excited to**

**experiment with?**

Yes, all of them. I know that sounds broad but there's always something new to explore and discover with ceramics. I know ceramicists that have been in the field longer than I've been alive and they're still learning new things everyday. Ceramics is all about experimenting and learning and embracing failure as part of that process. It's a constant challenge which is part of the fun. Currently I plan to continue developing these fluorescent glazes in the upcoming months and start experimenting with 3d printing. I'd also love to try Raku soon, I'll just need to find the right facilities.



Cat Lipiec | Radiant Clay | Glazed Ceramic, 2024



**What has been the most rewarding aspect of your journey as an emerging artist so far?**

The support from friends and family. I feel extremely lucky to have such great people rooting for me and supporting me on this journey.



Cat Lipiec | Radiant Clay | Glazed Ceramic, 2024

My name is Vlada Teaca, a 21-year-old beginner creative portrait photographer. I am originally from Moldova, however, currently, I am based in Brussels. My inspiration is to create, mystical and enchanting creative portraits, tailored to each individual.





## — Interview

# Chryso Petrou

**Can you share a bit about your journey from working with pencil and charcoal to experimenting with digital art and color? What inspired this transition?**

Working with pencil and charcoal started very naturally in my primary school years where I would use any time available in class to sketch things on the sidelines of every textbook. Using colour however was something that I chose consciously. It wasn't a natural transition but rather a decision that I knew would challenge me and take me on an unknown path that would perhaps help me grow. I would have these coloured pencils in my studio for years never used and one day it felt like an adventure to place them in my hands and start exploring. Digital art began similarly. I would often find myself in places where taking a



sketchbook and a bunch of pencils, inconvenient. I wanted to draw more and at random times too. Social media played a role in that too. I wanted to see what my style would be like in the digital art realm.

**Your art features a lot of shapes to express emotional states and flow. How do you decide which shapes and colors to use for different emotions or memories?**

When it comes to my current digital creations I always create them when I'm in the flow state. I don't analyse or think consciously

which shape goes where. Even in my daily life shapes are part of my thinking. They help me mentally visualise time in both senses of structure and continuous. Even during my pencil and charcoal times, shapes would be used to express or symbolise the complexity and combinations of emotions that I was pouring into the art I was creating.

What I'm trying to say is that my emotions and my memories guide me through it in a very natural way since my mind has been using shapes to deeply comprehend and organise my reality. Colours however, are not coming to me as

precisely as shapes do. Colours come in very vague essence which I get to figure out by trial and error. It may take me a while sometimes but I'd know if I got it right by the way I feel as I colour in.

**How do your personal experiences and memories influence your artwork? Can you give an example of a specific piece that is particularly meaningful to you?**

I definitely feel that some of my artwork are mosaics of my emotions and memories that I get to recognise once it's all



completed. Although it's never been my intention to include my own personal experiences and memories in my work, it has become evident to me that I tend to create things that reflect what my mind has processed and it's ready to reveal or let go. "Roots in My Dreamland" is probably one of my most recent and meaningful pieces. When I finished it, I truly felt like I was looking at myself in the mirror. It's reflecting my endless hours of daydreaming and my constant eagerness to escape physical reality and go to a place that is greener and flourishing and ready to yield everything that I've been dreaming of. I haven't had clarity of what my next dream would be in life but after completing this piece I understood that perhaps I'm very close at finding out and it gives me so much hope every time I see it.



**Digital art offers a different medium compared to traditional pencil and charcoal. What challenges and opportunities have you encountered in this new medium?**

Creating digital art has definitely been a challenge. The feel, the connection is very different to traditional pencil. At the start and even now I guess it feels like I have a little less control. I think it's because the physical connection between my hand and the line that gets drawn across the screen isn't as strong as that on paper. There was so much uncertainty and a feeling of going back to zero, which was quite humbling. Nevertheless, I got to experiment with colour in a more safe environment. It feels that way at least. The trial and error stage is now fast paced and so I feel that I learned about colour combinations and contrast quicker. Creating art digitally was

also very exciting. It ignited a curiosity in me that had been dormant for a while.

**Your works are very vibrant and detailed. How long does it typically take you to complete a piece from start to finish?**

This is really hard to say accurately. My current art feels like it's created by the child in me. It's like I'm back at school drawing on the sidelines of my book trying to kill time by escaping into my inner world. I never timed myself but it definitely takes me hours and hours to fully complete one piece. I start with a pencil or a pen on a paper which I then transfer onto my tablet. One piece can take days or even weeks of scattered hours.

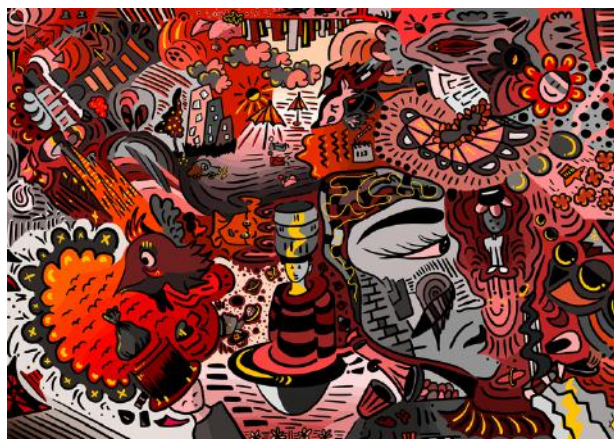
**Who are some of the artists or other influences that have shaped your approach to art?**

I value the work of many but most of them are the old school kind like Van Gogh and Monet. Ironically I don't see my art reflecting theirs. The only person that comes to mind who has influenced me is probably my mom and dad. Because of my mom I got to get my hands on a fashion design

drawings kind of book when I was a young child that fascinated me and made me want to draw my own mannequins. On the other hand my dad would always draw shapes on a random piece of paper like the envelope of an opened bill. If I were to pinpoint my art to two influences it would be my parents.

**Looking ahead, are there any new techniques or themes you are excited to explore in your future works?**

I really get excited to think about creating my mosaics onto big scale canvases. I'm thinking about paint or markers. I want to experiment with different mediums and choose one that will be perfect for detailed yet large scale pieces.



A multidisciplinary artist, whose practice encompasses sculpture, printing and drawing. I follow the idea and thrive on exploring materials. On finishing my diploma in sculpture from L.S.A.D Limerick, Ireland. I followed my dream of going to Africa after qualifying in art & design education, and moved to Botswana in 1997 to work as an art teacher and artist. I had my first exhibitions there, and have continued to exhibit internationally. I returned to Ireland in 2000 and finished my BA in sculpture, from Limerick. Since I have worked as an artist, educator and mother, currently based in Germany. I am a member of the Scottish based Spilt Milk Gallery, BBK Kunstforum Düsseldorf and Malkasten e. V.

My work is influenced by my life and the world around me. I am interested in exploring living and everything can be an inspiration. Ideas and themes vary as my curiosity and passion for a theme and material catch hold. Ongoing inspirations have been mythology, women in society, environmental themes, family, the unpaid labor of women and mothers etc. I am drawn to the use of different materials and techniques within my practice, working across a range of mediums from sculpture, photography and drawing.

— Michelle Gallagher





## — *Interview*

# Ekaterina Kuzmina

**Could you share more about your background and how it has influenced your artistic journey?**

My mother is an artist, and my father is a metallurgical engineer by profession. When I was a child, they had different perspectives on my life prospects. My mother taught me to draw from a very young age, and I was quite good at it. My father, on the other hand, said that an artist could not earn a living and that I needed to get a serious technical education. In high school, I became interested in psychology and even tried to apply to the psychology department, but I failed the math exam.

Nevertheless, I easily got into the Academy of Cold and Food Technology, specializing in cryogenic engineering and air conditioning. Initially, I thought I would study for a year and then try



again to get into the psychology department, but I got used to it, settled in, and finished my technical university. At the same time, I studied English under an experimental program during the fifth and sixth periods at the same institute. Thus, I received two diplomas simultaneously - one in engineering and one in technical translation from English in the field of low-temperature physics and technology.

After graduating, I worked in my field, but closer to 40, I had a crisis and realized that I urgently needed to change something in my life. My hand reached for the canvas and paints, and since then, I haven't been able to stop.

**How did your education in engineering and technical English translation influence your approach to art?**

I really like straight lines and geometric shapes in painting. I often use them as an additional means of expressing thoughts. This is undoubtedly an echo of my technical education.

**Growing up with a professional artist as a mother, how did this shape your perception of art and your own development as an artist?**

My mother is still my main critic and mentor. In my childhood, we

constantly visited museums and theaters; you could say I absorbed my love for art with my mother's milk. Since I never received formal education in painting, the knowledge and attitude she instilled in me became the basis and foundation for my feelings towards painting and all my creative activities.

**How do you decide on the symbolism and themes in your work?**

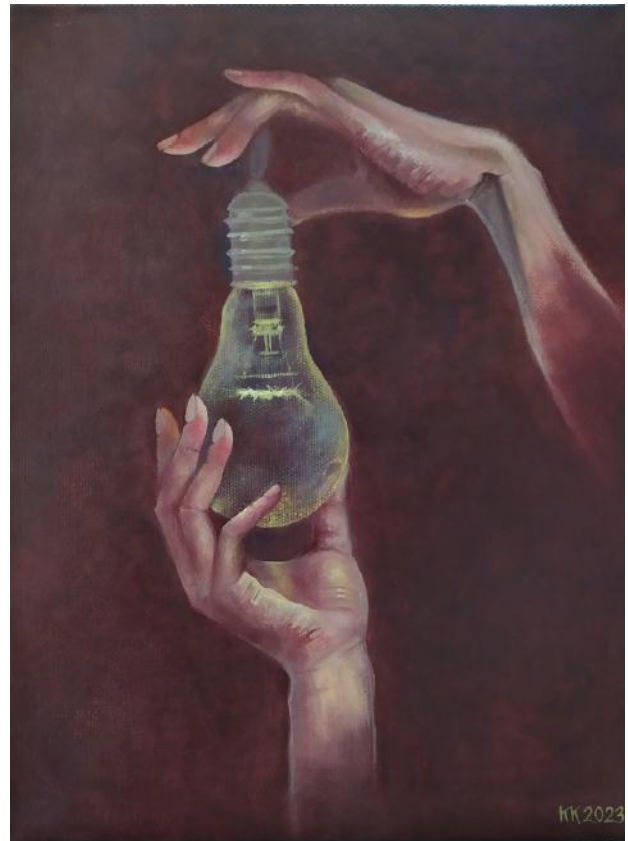
I forgot to mention another love of mine from childhood - astronomy. My friend and I, even as preschoolers, would go to the nearest park in the evenings and



Ekaterina Kuzmina | Hypocrisy in Rhodonite

observe the stars on clear nights, identifying constellations, sketching satellite movements, and waiting for UFOs. Periodically, we would catch their messages (or so we thought) on an old radio receiver, recording dots and dashes and trying to decode them using Morse code. We wanted results, of course, but the process was much more important.

Therefore, the themes of painting naturally and organically defined themselves for me: I paint what interests and concerns me. It results in an intangible, otherworldly symbiosis of space,



Ekaterina Kuzmina  
Let there be light



Ekaterina Kuzmina  
In the Grip of Anxiety

psychology, philosophy, and esotericism, fully in the spirit of our times.

**Your works often explore themes of self-identification and reflection. How do you translate these abstract concepts into visual art?**

I think the most important thing is to find yourself and your place in this world. Therefore, the heroines of my works reflect, recognize themselves, feel their strengths, and look closely at their shadow. I try to show this through symbols.

However, it often happens that things that are obvious to me are not at all obvious to the viewer. Probably because the world is our mirror, and we only see in it what is within us.

**What has been the most memorable response or feedback you've received from someone viewing your work?**

I have always been amazed at how different things people see in my paintings. There have been times when I disagreed or didn't understand what the viewer meant. Sometimes, someone

would look at my painting, share their thoughts, and it seemed to me that they understood it better than I did. These moments are the most valuable to me, probably because that's when we start to resonate - the artist and the viewer.

If I were to talk about a specific moment, I vividly remember a girl at an art fair who said about my work "Geometry of Unfreedom" that the human body is both our protection and our prison. I really liked and remembered those words.



Ekaterina Kuzmina  
Geometry of Unfreedom



## — Interview

# Aleksandra Vizin

**Can you share the story of how you discovered your passion for photography during the quarantine?**

I am always in a constant “discovery phase” even in my fifth decade, there is still so much more to uncover within myself. The pandemic period was challenging. It felt like my freedom had been taken away, so I traveled as much as possible, often against all odds. Yet, the lingering isolation took its toll, prompting me to do something constructive within the confines of four walls. I had a spare room in my apartment, which I transformed into a mini studio, and the rest is history (laughter).

**What initially drew you to a non-commercial approach to your work?**

Nothing in particular. I was



Aleksandra Vizin  
The Stranger  
2024

naturally drawn to it, just as I am drawn to myself. I feel there are already more than enough commercial projects, and I didn't want to be just another artist in the line of generic popular beauty creators. I mean, even if I wanted, I couldn't. Not interested.

**How do you decide on the themes and characters for your photographs?**

Everything happens very naturally and effortlessly. I have so many ideas that I would need another

lifetime to explore them all. Mostly, I'm inspired by moments, things I catch out of the corner of my eye, or even more frequently, things aren't visible to the naked eye.

**You prefer minimal post-production. What challenges and benefits does this approach present in your work?**

I prefer raw. Raw photos, raw emotions, raw beauty. Unretouched life. Real. It aligns naturally with a non-commercial ethos, capturing authenticity.

**Your work often includes elaborate costumes and character development. How do you go about creating these elements?**

Costumes and scenes are integral to my artistic expression as well as developing characters. They breathe life into my photographic narratives, filling the frames with purpose. Without these elements, photography would appear empty, meaningless to me.

Aleksandra Vizin  
After Work  
2022







Aleksandra Vizin  
The Gathering  
2022

**What has been the most memorable reaction or feedback you've received from viewers of your work?**

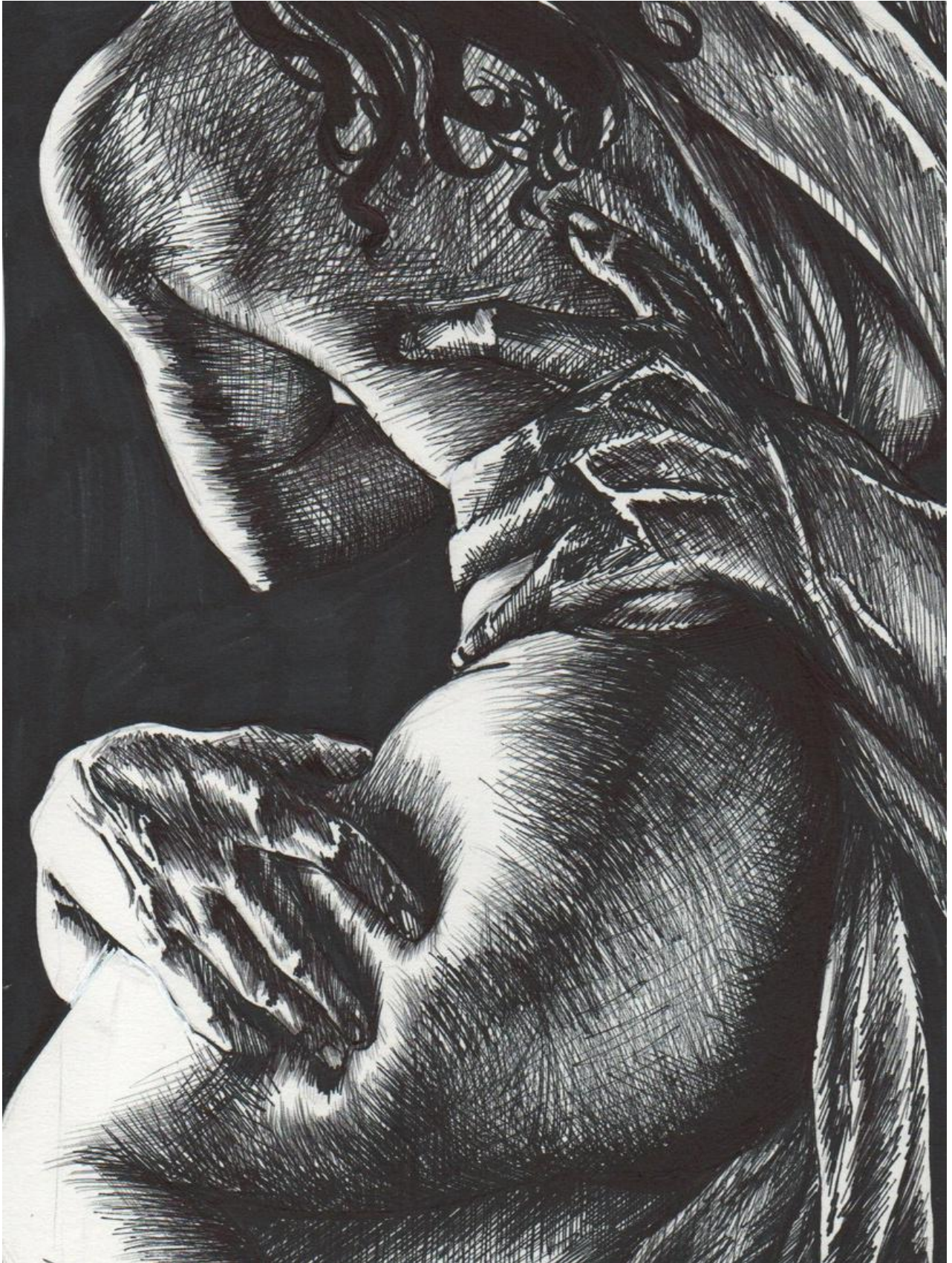
Well one of mine acquaintance, upon encountering my work, humorously remarked, "You'll either end up as a bohemian burnout failure or grace the walls of esteemed galleries". (Laughter).

**Which artists or photographers have influenced your work the most, and in what ways?**

Surprisingly, none of them, so far. I believe my journey is still evolving awaiting for the vision and voice from the biggest art minds of our time.

I'm a seventeen years old girl from Italy. I've always liked drawing, I'm a self taught artist.

— Vanessa Delmastro



Vanessa Delmastro | The abduction of the Sabine Women | 2023



# *Interview*

## **Vicky Patrikakos**

**Can you tell us more about your early experiences with art in Greece?**

When I was growing up in Greece I started drawing as soon as I was able to hold a pencil and a pad. I colored with crayons then colored pencils. I would find great enjoyment to draw and color by myself and with my older siblings while they were doing their homework. In primary and secondary school the curriculum concentrated on languages (ancient and modern Greek, later Latin, French and English) as well as math, physics, chemistry, geometry, religion, algebra, history and geography. In high school we had one class in home economics where we were taught how to knit hats.

My Mother recognized my artistic abilities and assigned me to make



salads with beautiful edible decorations. I also participated in decorating the house for different holidays and seasons. In high school I would walk by the little harbor in town to go to school and I loved looking at the reflections of the colorful fishing boats in the water.

**What inspired you to pursue art despite your other responsibilities?**

My passion for art has always been in me. I appreciate and love nature; the complex way that everything works around us and in us, the everchanging hues of flowers and leaves, the contrasts of light and shadow, the

mesmerizing reflections in the water or on shiny surfaces and the facial expressions of people.

### **How has your education in psychology influenced your artwork?**

Besides art, I have always been interested in people's behaviors. While I was studying psychology one of my courses was art therapy, which gave me a deeper understanding of how art can empower individuals to discover and communicate their innermost feelings and thoughts, facilitating healing and growth. Of course, the psychology education helped me to understand my strengths and weaknesses. It helped me gain insight into what I need to achieve peace and fulfillment. One of my main ways is by creating art.

### **Can you explain your process for selecting colors and how you achieve the vibrant palettes in your paintings?**

I start with a white canvas, enthusiasm, brushes and an all-color palette. Primary colors plus some secondary color paints serve as my foundation to achieve the precise tones and hues that I



Vicky Patrikakos  
Power Girls  
2019

envision. I leave a big space in my palette for blending the different colors with the medium which makes the oil paints dry faster and changes the viscosity. I always have white on my palette for highlights or to create lighter values. White also helps me cover and correct the mistakes. To achieve vibrant colors, I strategically brush contrasting hues alongside each other to enhance their brightness. I begin by layering colors progressively, applying glazes after each previous layer has dried.

**Can you share the story behind one of your recent paintings, such as "Butterfly" or "Marina in New Smyrna Beach"?**

The image of "Marina in NSB" comes from a snapshot my daughter took during her morning run. We frequently drive by the marina and every time the boats, the sky and the water look so different and intriguing. My daughter knows that I like the sunrise glow and reflections, so this was the perfect combination of both. I was excited to start painting this piece and as soon as



Vicky Patrikakos  
Marina In New Smyrna Beach  
2021



Vicky Patrikakos  
Butterfly  
2024

it was completed and dried it was sold. It is important to mention that I do not replicate exactly what I see. I put my own feelings and vision in every painting I create.

**Are there any new techniques or mediums you are eager to explore?**

I am eager and planning to explore more media. Besides oils, watercolors and colored pencils, I have made murals and faux paintings. Now, I am beginning to work with natural materials from palm trees. I use power tools to transform them into works of art. While Michealangelo was painting the Sistine Chapel, he said he should be sculpting instead. Sometimes I feel the same way. I

love chiseling blocks of plaster and shaping them the way I want. Soon after these creations I am excited to start something totally new and innovative: 3D Printing.

**How important do you think formal education is for artists compared to self-taught methods?**

I think formal education is very important combined with innate talent and desire to make art. Judging from my own experience I have noticed that my paintings I tried to create before I attended USF are very different than what I can do now. Formal education broadens the horizons of the artists. It gives us opportunities to learn from experts about history of art, techniques, styles how to manipulate different media and transform them into works of art and solve problems.

Personally, I achieved my higher education by attending the nearest educational institution everywhere I lived synchronizing my classes with my family's schedule. My master's degree was online and gave me more flexibility with my schedule.



Vicky Patrikakos  
Monembasia Greece  
2019

A lot of my artwork is inspired by my garden. I have a passion for growing plants, flowers, fruits and vegetables then creating paintings of them so they last forever. I also write poetry and recently published my first poem book of 50 poems titled, "Life's Ups & Downs: Poems That Make You Laugh & Cry." You can find the book on Amazon -

<https://amzn.to/3WrHAff>

**No matter the medium—be it painting, poetry, sculpture, gardening, or culinary arts—my objective is to stir emotions in my audience, going beyond aesthetics to create a meaningful connection.**

Clean colors, different textures and flowing shapes. An, based on personal experience, tries to immerse us in an understanding of what it means to be human today. What is her/his concern? In a slightly warped and distorted way, themes of beauty, individuality, value, diversity and freedom emerge. When reality and fantasy are mixed, there is a visualization not right in the forehead, but gently and in a slightly veiled way. The use of not only classic paints, pastels or charcoal, but also embroidery and fabric in the works makes it possible to create an immersive work.

— An Viaznikova



An Viaznikova  
Night bloom, series Adaptation forms  
2024





There are so many themes to explore and share, especially with topics like graffiti, skateboarding, internet pop culture, reggae music or historical events and symbols. I combine my personal life, influenced by the living in the underground of my province with war stories or world climate disasters. In my work, I am interested to portray great poets, cowboys, influencers, sportsmen, superheroes, historical and religious figures in typical war stories, climate and economical crises, and hunger contextualised in the modern world. How contemporary society is forged by the culture of 'internet, movie, photography and literature'.

— Simone Tomasello



Simone Tomasello  
Afronouts.Gangsta G. Alien Coming From  
Outer Space To Climb The Dark Web.  
2021



Simone Tomasello | Tiger eyes | 2023

## Ross Gravance

**What inspired you to start creating art that is tailored for those who feel out-of-the-ordinary or outcast?**

I have always felt that I didn't fit in. I know that sounds cliché, but really— it took me years to start making art seriously, and ever since I have, I've even felt like I couldn't be an artist. I'm trying to take those two parts of myself and make them work together.

That's why I create the way I do. I want my art to reach out to those who feel that no matter where they go, they'll always somehow be apart from everyone else. I see so much beauty in strange and even mundane, simple things. I want that to come through in my art, even the most ordinary, or strange, or sad things can be so beautiful. I want them to see my art and feel called to, maybe even feel seen. I know, that's a lot to ask from my

little paintings! But that is ultimately my goal with my more "serious" paintings.

**Can you describe your artistic style and how it has evolved over the years?**

I think my style is still hard to define and tends to vary across media, but I would call it dream-like. It took a long time to get to this point where there is any consistency at all. I had a very awkward start, where I was learning both digital art and traditional art at the same time. After about 4 years I had a semi-recognizable drawing style, that I didn't stick with. I eventually became decent at technical drawing; I loved typography, anything with ink and bold lines, and I started learning calligraphy.

After a few years of college drawing courses, and a Repetitive

Strain Injury starting up, I had to switch gears again. I developed a way of painting that was finally more expressive and felt like an extension of me. I was forced to loosen up, plan less, and play more. This resulted in the somewhat whimsical style I have now.

**"Blood Moon" has a very striking use of color and contrast. What was your thought process while creating this piece?**

"Blood Moon" is a good example of how I take simple elements from the natural world, and put them together how my mind sees them. I was observing a blood moon for the first time in 2020, I even got pictures of it on my phone. Seeing all the photos of it on the news and social media inspired me to paint it. But I didn't want to just copy a photo... I wanted it to look a bit more unusual than it already was.

I thought, "Having the stars and clouds in the sky drab white and grey when the moon is RED... that moon is a bit garish, isn't it? That doesn't really work. It already looks like something out of a dream, a nightmare maybe." I didn't want to



Ross Gravance | Blood Moon | 2020

change the moon back to white, to make it more realistic; I wanted to change the rest of the scene along with it. I thought the stars needed some color variety to match the moonlight, and clouds should always be colorful, of course... I can't stand to paint monochrome clouds. I always see cotton-candy clouds in my dreams. And so that was that!

**How did your journey as an artist begin? Were there any significant milestones or turning points?**

I was briefly educated in fine art, I did advanced art in high school and some in college. While I was also learning digital art, traditional

drawing somehow felt easier. As I mentioned, I used to be more focused on drawing than painting; I loved doing studies from life, figure sketches, little comics, anything. For a few years I carried a sketchbook with me everywhere. I was very serious about practicing every day and pushed myself a lot for my college art. I started inking my sketches, learned calligraphy,

and typography. I got better at digital art and design, still very technical and stiff-looking. I did some almost professional-level work. But, I didn't realize how physically taxing this type of drawing was on me. I would never take breaks. I would sit down and do 2 or 3 pieces start-to-finish in one day, on top of my college work.



Ross Gravance | Embrace Growth | 2023

I didn't submit any of those old pieces for this publication. I was decently skilled, but there was nothing really remarkable about my artistic style. At that point, you couldn't look at many of my pieces and immediately recognize it as mine. I was more concerned with getting things absolutely perfect. I was always terrified of starting over, "wasting" time and materials. That hindered my growth as an artist in a big way.

I definitely took a hard turn towards painting more loose, less realistic subjects about 5 years ago when I developed the Repetitive strain injury in my dominant hand. It made drawing almost impossible for the better part of a year. It really forced me to loosen up! I found that painting was more relaxing mentally, and less of a strain on my wrist. I even started to use old, cheap powder paints and crayola markers to do ink-wash and watercolor paintings in an old book. Not a sketch book, a pulp hardcover book. The fear of wasting expensive materials was gently washed away by dirty brushes and diluted Crayola ink. I had already "ruined" the book once I painted on one page. After that, I could simply open it up and

start painting whenever I felt like it.

That was when my art became a bit more expressive, colorful, and original. There is a focus on the night sky, clouds, plants, and very bright, irregular colors. To most people, my paintings are just a bit "off"— there is usually a recognizable subject, but I don't use realistic color palettes, and nothing feels like a connected scene, just individual parts that could be related, almost like a collage— and I think my art has a dream-like quality to it. I know, that's not a very original way to describe it. I think it reflects how I experience the world; I have a hard time seeing things as one big, cohesive picture. I see every individual thing as separate, and look at little details first. That's how a paintings come together for me now, fragmented but still whole.

**Have there been any artists or movements that have particularly influenced your work?**

It might be hard to believe, but I love the work of Warhol, Kehinde Wiley, and Bob Ross. Not very similar artists! I definitely got my love of irregular color palettes

from Warhol's pop-art, although it's not something I try to emulate directly. Kehinde Wiley has been an inspiration for skill and cohesive visual style ever since I first learned about him in school. His naturalism, depth of color, and lush floral motifs are things that I always wonder, "What if I tried that? What if I could do something like that..". Bob Ross is obvious; though I'll never want to paint naturalistic landscapes that are quite so rich with detail, at some point I saw him painting clouds and I just went, "OH, like that,"

after years of sketching and studying and struggling to get them really cloud-like.

**How do you hope viewers will interpret and connect with your work?**

I can only hope that the right audience will see it. Even among artists and art appreciators, only very few people really understand and/or enjoy the majority of my work. Only one person in the whole world does both. But I want to reach more of those people who



Ross Gravance | Nobody Was Here | 2021



don't fit in, feeling like aliens walking around in disguise on a strange world. I hope they will see it and feel called to. If nothing else, know that I am here and I see the world differently, too. Know there IS beauty in the strange, the sad, the mundane— not despite those things. Know that means you, too.

**What advice would you give to other artists who feel out-of-the-ordinary or struggle with being outcasts?**

I can say that, eventually, if you are

the type of artist who wants to: you WILL find your people. You will find someone in the world, even if it is just one single person, who really truly understands your art! They are going to love it, and cherish it, and no matter what your brain is telling you, no matter what criticisms or insecurities you feel about your work— you really must let them. Let them love and cherish and understand your artwork. It could help them to understand you. And it could help you to find a place or people where you really do fit in.



My inspiration comes from the interconnectedness of all things (the Tree of Life) and the richness of the human inner world, the light of their soul (Hedonist, Saranka, Red Sun). I am deeply touched by that inner light, which may be invisible to others, the warmth that helps a person get through even the darkest periods of their life. I am pleased to present my work to you.

— Krystsina Astraukh



Krystsina Astraukh  
Hedonist  
2024



## — Interview

# M. Veronica Hillesheim

**Your work often incorporates different materials such as metal and gold leaf. What inspired you to start experimenting with these materials?**

I think I have always been an old

soul. I refinished furniture, and one day came across a picture frame with layers of paint. It was beautifully constructed, and French in style. I removed the paint, saw areas that had residue of gold leaf. Researching the process just started my interest in



M. Veronica Hillesheim  
Farmhouse Window

metal, gold and silver leaf.

**How do your Midwest roots and current residence in Arizona influence your art?**

Whether it's the changing seasons in Minnesota, or the copper mines and rock of Arizona, surroundings and nature are always a influence.

**You mentioned that old buildings and history speak to you. Can you share a specific experience or memory that has particularly influenced your work?**

It is difficult to put in words.

Sometimes it's just a under current of energy. Sometimes it's right in your face. An example, I stayed at a old hotel. We put our things in the room, left. Returned immediately because we forgot something. No one else entered the room. When we opened the door, the room was filled with a perfume smell. Nothing like what is on the market today, and I don't wear perfume . It was very strange. At any rate , I love old buildings and houses. I keep old pottery shards on my work bench. Some are large enough to mix my paint in. I like to think this helps inspire me.



M. Veronica Hillesheim  
Penny for your thoughts



M. Veronica Hillesheim  
Dangerous

**How do you decide which medium to use for a particular piece? What factors influence your choice of materials?**

I might choose a medium to convey feeling or emotion. For cold I would use blue/gray/white and maybe silver leaf. For warmth copper metal or leaf. Perhaps gold. My intuition will guide me.

**What role does nature play in your creative process? Do you have any favorite natural subjects that you return to often in your work?**

Trees, corn fields, wheat fields are probably my favorite natural influences.

**Can you tell us about a piece of art from another artist that has deeply influenced you and why?**

Many artists inspire me. I think Vincent might be on top. Van Gogh's work is so intense, I am very drawn to it. The Night Cafe is a favorite. There is one painting though, that I am so curious about. It is the Skull With The Burning Cigarette. I wonder what his thoughts were when he painted it.

**What advice would you give to aspiring artists who are just beginning to explore their creativity?**

I have only one piece of practical advice for aspiring artists. While it is liberating to work on large canvas, keep in mind how difficult it is to pack, to ship or store. Everything else is each artists personal journey.



M. Veronica Hillesheim  
Dangerous

I paint mostly with watercolors and oils on wood. I am always trying to create my pieces with the least toxic media possible in order to work clean and sustainably. Inspired by the magical woods I was raised in and the darkness of my own inner world, I explore the union between utopian scenarios with the emotional strength of mental diseases. The unknown, the human subconscious, the fragility of the mind and our undeniable connection to nature are the constant path in my work. When creating new works, I draw inward for autobiographical themes linked with the beauty of animals and botanical elements; using the symbology of certain objects, animals and flowers to subtly show my inner feeling.

— Iratxe Yarritu Cuadra



Iratxe Yarritu | Self Lover's Eye | 2021





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