

VISUAL ART JOURNAL





— Intro

Hello Dear reader,

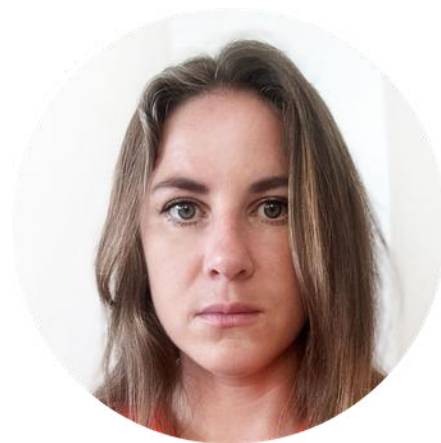
You are holding the 63rd issue of our magazine in your hands.

This issue is a kaleidoscope of beauty, bringing together painting, photography, and sculpture. Our team took immense pleasure in creating this edition. As always, we are delighted to introduce you to new artistic voices and celebrate talented professionals who are passionate about their craft.

We continue to develop our exhibitions and explore new ways of presenting artists and their work. Vienna, Paris, and Madrid have already become regular destinations for our exhibitions, and we are working to expand the geographical reach of our project even further. You can find all the latest news, exhibition reports, and open calls on our website and social media channels.

Thank you for staying with us, and thank you to everyone who is joining our creative community. It is an incredible joy to work in a world filled with art, imagination, and creativity.

Make yourself comfortable and enjoy over 100 pages of visual inspiration and aesthetic delight!



Anna Gvozdeva

Curator of
Visual Art Journal

On the Front Cover:

Vit Madr

Peak

2026

On the Back Cover:

Rage Kamiyama



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

— Interview

C. Ilaguno

You write, “My work begins where the blueprint ends”. What does this boundary between planning and intuition mean to you, and how do you navigate it as both an architect and an artist?

Architecture taught me to think through structure, proportion, balance, and intention. As an architect, I am used to anticipating a result: there is a plan, a scale, and a logic. Painting gives me the opposite experience. It allows me to begin without knowing exactly where I am going. That is what I mean when I say that my work begins where the blueprint ends. I bring everything architecture has taught me into the studio, but at some point I have to let go of



control. In architecture, I design for someone else. In art, I create for myself. I make the first gesture and allow intuition to take over, following a line, a color, a texture, or a form that appears unexpectedly.

I am constantly moving between those two parts of myself: the architect who wants to organize space and the artist who wants to disrupt it. I am interested in what happens when structure gives way to instinct.

How has your training in virtual space design influenced the way you approach depth, movement, and space in your paintings and sculptures?

My training in virtual space design taught me to think beyond the surface. I learned to understand space as something you move through, not simply something you look at, and I think that has stayed with me deeply.

In my paintings, I naturally work with layers, overlapping forms, transparencies, textures, and areas of emptiness. I want the eye to travel through the work, to discover different moments rather than take everything in at once. Even on a flat canvas, I am always thinking about what feels closer, what recedes, and where the eye wants to go next. With sculpture, that relationship becomes physical. I think about how a piece changes as you move around it—its silhouette, its volume, and even the space surrounding it. In both disciplines, space is never just a background for me; it is part of the work itself.

Your paintings begin with a gesture. What usually prompts that first mark, and how does it guide what happens next?



The first gesture is usually very instinctive. I rarely begin with a sketch or a fixed image of what the painting should become. Sometimes it comes from an emotion, a thought, a color I feel drawn to, or simply the need to make a mark and begin.

That first gesture breaks the silence of the canvas. From there, I start responding to what appears. One line suggests another, a color creates a tension, a texture reveals a form I had not anticipated. I follow those signals without trying to understand them too quickly.

For me, painting is a process of discovery. I add, erase, cover, and return until something begins to feel familiar. At some point, I stop directing the painting and start listening to it. That is usually when my mind begins to speak in a language I could not have planned.

You describe following, erasing, and returning to emerging forms. Can you share an example of a painting that changed unexpectedly through this process?

Where Blue Trees Grow is a good example. I did not begin the painting intending to create a landscape, and certainly not blue trees. I was working intuitively, building and removing layers, following marks and shapes without trying to name them.

At some point, forms began to emerge that reminded me of trees. Instead of defining them immediately, I kept painting around them, covering parts, bringing others back, and allowing the image to remain somewhere between abstraction and recognition. Slowly, an imaginary landscape appeared.

What surprised me was how familiar it felt, even though it was a place that does not exist. I think that is one of the moments I search for when I paint: when something I could never have planned reveals itself and somehow feels completely right. Where Blue Trees Grow became a place I discovered rather than a place I invented.

How do color and texture help you express emotions that you find difficult to put into words?

Color is probably the most immediate emotional language in my work. I don't necessarily associate one color with one specific feeling; it is more about the relationships between colors, the tension, contrast, harmony, or even the discomfort they can create together. I often choose color instinctively, before I fully understand why I need it.

Texture is much more physical. My studio is full of tools and objects that I use to paint, not only brushes, but spatulas, pieces of cardboard, wooden boards, metal objects, and anything that intuitively feels right in that moment. Each one leaves a different trace. I scrape, drag, cover, remove, and build again, allowing the surface to keep evidence of the process.

There are emotions I would struggle to explain in words because they can be contradictory or not completely formed. Painting allows me to give them a physical presence without having to define them. Color gives them energy, texture gives them memory, and together they give form to something I might not be able to express in words.

How does living and working in Saltillo shape your artistic practice? Are there aspects of your surroundings that enter your work, even indirectly?

Saltillo is a relatively small and traditional city, and I think its slower rhythm has given me the space to develop my work in a very personal way. It has a beautiful historic center, a strong artistic tradition, and it is surrounded by mountains, so there is always a sense of history and landscape quietly present around you.

My relationship with art also began here. As a child, I attended art workshops with local painters who introduced me to different techniques and ways of seeing. I eventually chose architecture as my profession, but those early experiences never really left me.

I don't consciously paint Saltillo or try to represent my surroundings, but I am sure they enter the work indirectly. The mountains, the light, the architecture, the colors, and perhaps even the calmness of living here become part of my visual memory. They stay somewhere in the background and sometimes appear in ways I only recognize after the work is finished.

You are drawn to moments when something unfamiliar feels deeply recognizable. Can you describe a work in which you experienced that feeling yourself?

Teardrop Records is a painting where I experienced that feeling very strongly. As I worked, marks and forms began to appear that felt strangely familiar to me, almost like fragments of a memory, a symbol, or a language I once knew but could no longer translate.

I never wanted to define them too clearly. I allowed them to remain somewhere between recognition and abstraction, because that uncertainty was exactly what interested me. Looking at the finished painting, I still have the sensation that it is telling me something I know, although I cannot explain exactly what it is. Sometimes recognition happens before understanding. I can feel connected to an image long before I know what it means.

Alexandra Uryasova

How has your background in interior design influenced the way you approach painting, particularly your attention to space and composition?

I have always been more interested in depicting not the human figure itself, but the space around it — rooms, buildings, objects, and traces of human activity. Small signs of human presence in the world inspire me much more than the direct depiction of a person.

For this reason, my education in interior design did not radically change my artistic perspective. Rather, it expanded it and helped me understand and articulate things that I had previously felt intuitively. I have always



wanted to treat space as an independent, and sometimes even the primary, protagonist of a painting. I genuinely believe that a space can sometimes reveal much more about a person than their direct representation.

Studying interior design made me much more attentive to the ways in which people organize the spaces around them: what makes a place comfortable, personal, functional, and safe, and which details determine how we behave within it. I began to notice many things that I had previously perceived almost subconsciously.

At the same time, I have never wanted to reproduce space with absolute correctness in my paintings. On the contrary, I am interested in slightly disrupting it — shifting perspective, simplifying, or distorting certain elements. I do not want the viewer's first response to be an assessment of how realistically a space has been represented. I am much more interested in directing their attention towards the meaning within the painting.

This is where a professional understanding of perspective and composition became particularly valuable to me. To deliberately disrupt a space, you first need to understand how it works. Knowing where the eye naturally falls and how visual hierarchy operates allows me to alter it consciously — shifting the viewer's focus away from external accuracy and towards the internal content of the work.

What draws you to ordinary objects and familiar surroundings as subjects for your work?

What fascinates me most are the traces of human presence and the ways in which people make the world around them familiar, intimate, and their own.

Every place has small, almost unnoticeable characteristics that create an atmosphere belonging specifically to that particular corner of the world. Most often, these are not



Alexandra Uryasova | Magic Of Creation | 2024



monumental buildings, recognized works of art, or objects of great value. They can be completely ordinary details of everyday life: an old object, something strangely positioned, something broken or hastily repaired, or an incidental piece of urban infrastructure.

In everyday life, we gradually stop noticing these things. But if we imagine removing all of them at once, the space suddenly becomes too perfect, polished, and impersonal. It may remain beautiful, but it loses the feeling of recognition and warmth.

This idea runs through different series in my practice, although the scale of observation changes. In *The Small Beauty of the World*, for example, I approached a new environment through the small details of everyday American life. In my new series, *Inhabited*, I bring the same interest into a much more intimate setting — the home, the private room, the place a person considers their own and where they feel most protected.

An everyday object interests me precisely because it can cease to be simply an object. Through use, habit, memory, and attachment, it becomes a carrier of human presence.

Your practice often explores moments of preparation, waiting and uncertainty in the studio. Why is it important for you to make these usually unseen stages visible?

This question relates directly to my series *Inside of the Studio*. I wanted to show the process of creating a painting from the inside — not as a sequence of technical stages or an instruction on how a work is made, but

through the psychological stages of creation: doubt, anticipation, searching, preparation, moments of confidence followed by new uncertainty, all of which exist alongside the original idea almost from the very beginning.

Usually, the viewer encounters a work only after this process has ended. The painting hangs on a wall as an independent, finished object, while everything that happened before that moment becomes invisible. For the artist, however, its existence begins much earlier — sometimes before the first image even appears on the canvas.

Before the finished painting, there are sketches, the search for colour, prepared canvases, unsuccessful decisions, and periods when a work simply remains in the studio because the artist does not yet know what to do next. There are moments of complete certainty and others when the entire original idea suddenly seems mistaken.

I am interested in restoring artistic value to these intermediate states. Preparation is already part of creating a work. Waiting is also part of the work. Even uncertainty is not simply an obstacle on the way towards art; it is one of the states through which art emerges. This is why prepared canvases, easels, materials, unfinished works, and the studio itself appear throughout the series. What normally exists outside the viewer's experience becomes the subject of the painting.

I am particularly interested in the moment when the original idea ceases to be the work's only meaning. The painting remains part of me and my experience, but during the process of making it, it gradually acquires additional meanings that I may not have consciously



placed there at the beginning. Material, colour, unexpected decisions, changes in composition, doubt, and the duration of the process itself all begin to influence the work alongside me. At some point, I realize that what I originally wanted to express has already moved beyond the boundaries of that initial intention.

This is why these intermediate stages fascinate me so much: they reveal not only how an artist creates a work, but also how the work gradually transforms the artist's original intention. For me, this is not a separation between the artist and the painting. Rather, it is the moment when the relationship between them ceases to be one-directional.

How do you decide which details of a space to include and which to simplify or leave out?

The answer usually becomes clear during the process of working. I ask myself a very simple question: what would I have to remove from this space for it to stop feeling like the individual place of a particular person and start looking like a perfectly polished photograph from an interior design magazine?

Whatever would cause the space to lose its individuality if removed is what I try to preserve.

Then I ask a second question: which objects belong specifically to this moment in time? What explains why a person is here right now, what they are doing, and what state they are in? Anything that answers neither of these questions can gradually disappear from the composition. It is very important to me not to select the most beautiful

or expensive objects, symbols of status, or things that possess obvious cultural value. Instead, I look for emotional anchors. An old stained blanket can sometimes be far more important than an expensive vase. If someone has come into a room to cover themselves, get warm, and feel at home, the blanket tells the truth about that moment, while the vase does not.

Function and emotional significance therefore come first. Something similar happens with simplification. Excessive detail can sometimes make the viewer look in completely the wrong direction. If I meticulously reproduce a box of paints, for example, attention may shift towards the manufacturer, the packaging, or the technical skill with which it has been painted, while what actually matters to me may simply be the carefully selected colours inside it. Conversely, an object that carries less emotional significance can sometimes be represented in considerable detail. An easel, for example, may be compositionally necessary simply because it holds the painting. Its presence is needed to understand the space, but it remains near the bottom of my hierarchy of meaning.

For this reason, the degree of detail in my work does not necessarily indicate the importance of an object. Instead, it helps me control how the viewer reads it.

People are often absent from your paintings, yet their presence can be felt through the objects around them. What interests you about suggesting a person without depicting them directly?

I genuinely believe that a space — particularly a private room or a beloved place — can sometimes reveal more about a person than the person themselves.

While someone is present in a room, our attention inevitably focuses on them: their appearance, movements, words, and actions. But once they leave, the space continues to preserve the consequences of their presence.

What particularly interests me is that this information often appears completely unintentionally. A person may leave in a hurry, leave a room in complete disorder, and give no thought whatsoever to how it looks. Yet even within that chaos, a hierarchy emerges. A favourite watch might be carefully placed on a clean surface, a book by a beloved author may be put away separately, while an expensive object might be left carelessly to one side. Priorities reveal themselves even when the person never intended to reveal them.

For this reason, the absence of a figure does not mean the absence of a person. On the contrary, sometimes absence allows me to speak about someone more precisely. The viewer begins to look for the person through their traces: in the arrangement of objects, habits, choices, and in what has been preserved, abandoned, used, or left waiting for their return.

I am interested in creating a kind of portrait without depicting the person — one in which a personality emerges through the space they have formed around themselves.



Alexandra Uryasova | Canvases In Waiting | 2026

Colour plays a strong role in your work. Do you begin with a particular palette, or does it emerge as the painting develops?

For me, colour means much more than the realistic visual description of an object. Above all, it represents an emotional state.

As soon as I have an approximate idea for a new painting and understand the feeling I want it to convey, I choose its primary colour — most often the background colour. Only after this colour space already exists on the canvas do I begin sketching the painting itself and developing the composition.

It is important for me to leave enough “air” in a painting — areas where the eye can move freely and rest between significant objects. The background is therefore never simply empty space. When the viewer’s gaze momentarily moves away from the main composition, the colour continues to affect them and maintains the emotional state of the painting.

In *Inside of the Studio*, for example, I often use a particular shade of turquoise. For me, it is deliberately uncomfortable. It feels almost artificial — a colour that is difficult to encounter in nature. At first it can appear bright and even joyful, but when viewed for longer, that sensation quickly develops into tension, fatigue, and an absence of inner calm.

This makes it particularly appropriate for paintings dealing with doubt and the psychological tension involved in creating a work. It also reflects that strange moment when a painting is finished, yet the artist has absolutely no idea what will happen to it next or whether it has any meaning or value beyond the studio.

In *Inhabited*, by contrast, I use a deep burgundy-brown background. At first, burgundy can seem heavy or even aggressive, but the longer I look at it, the more domestic it becomes. For me, it evokes the muted light of a warm lamp, an evening with a favourite book, the space beside a fireplace, or a glass of red wine in the kitchen with someone you love.

The key colour is therefore established almost at the beginning, while the other colours can emerge and be refined throughout the process. In this sense, the composition develops within a pre-existing emotional atmosphere, rather than the other way around.

Your compositions often combine solid forms, outlines and layered spaces. How do you use these elements to guide the viewer’s attention?

Outline, colour, and degree of detail form a kind of visual hierarchy in my work, but it does not operate according to the traditional principle that the most detailed object must necessarily be the most important.

Quite often, the opposite is true. If I leave an object only as an outline, it can mean that the object is particularly significant to me. In that case, what matters is not its physical appearance — its texture, material, or exact construction — but the idea of the object, its function,



Alexandra Uryasova | Fire Hydrant | 2023

and its role within the space.

An outline allows me to preserve the object while removing unnecessary visual information. In a way, it tells the viewer that what matters here is not what this object looks like, but why it is here.

When a fully rendered object appears beside an outlined one, the conceptual emphasis is therefore often on the outlined or less detailed element. For particularly significant objects, I frequently choose a monochromatic form, an outline, a partial fill, or even leave empty space inside the object itself.

In my current work, layered space functions primarily as a compositional device. I use different spatial planes to organize the movement of the eye, while creating the hierarchy of meaning through other means: outline, detail, colour, or, conversely, the deliberate absence of colour and visual information within a form.

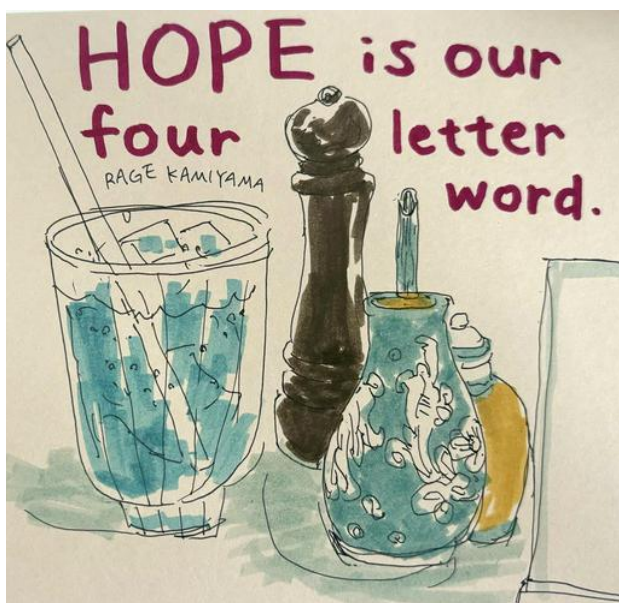
I am interested in this paradox: sometimes, to make the viewer pay more attention to an object, I need not to add something to it, but to take something away. Emptiness and omission can create a stronger emphasis than the most detailed representation.

— Interview

Rage Kamiyama

You began as a graphic novel artist and published more than ten independent zines. What did making and distributing them teach you about connecting with an audience?

Participating in a zine event is one way to connect with your audience directly. It is very inspiring, in terms of making unexpected connections with other artists and visitors. Also, to know that there are so many people who create something at the festival is very inspiring.



How did studying digital film production in the UK shape the way you tell stories through images?

Honestly, the study required a lot of group work, which drained my creative energy. Gradually I have found a way to be comfortable and creative with a group of trustworthy people, and to collaborate with these people is one way to be creative.

In 2025, you began working with visual diaries, photography and painting. What could these forms express that comics could not?

Visual diaries are one way to express your opinion directly, as you will read about my experience first-hand. I am into architecture, and I have found that photography is one way to capture its beauty. Comics require time and effort from the audience as well as from me when I make them, but painting doesn't. It's one shot that you have, and you have to nail it.

You have recently become interested in the



unexpected results of analogue techniques. Can you describe a moment when a material changed the direction of a work?

I always thought that I'm not good at watercolour because it creates results that are unexpected. On the contrary, people said that my paintings are lovely. So I started to think that maybe something unexpected is not something you have to avoid. So I started making a lot of analogue works, and I thought these can capture the rusty type of beauty of old buildings.

Your bold colours and varied brushstrokes push against the idea of a rigid system. How does that belief guide your decisions while you work?

Every element of my work is a push against a system, but I remember that in the Japanese comic industry, they are stuck in the black and white world of manga where everything has to be perfect and rigid, like everything has to be in a "manga style". I try to defy it with a single brushstroke, because humans are not made by systems. Like Nordic design tries to achieve, there have to be

wiggly and random things in life that make it natural.

What changed in your understanding of humour when you saw people from different backgrounds respond to your sketches during the Berlin residency?

I wasn't sure about my English skills, especially as it is difficult to tell jokes in your second language. But I didn't have to worry. Laughter can transcend any barriers.

You mention both British and Osaka humour as influences. What does each bring to your work, and where do they meet?

I have found that both British and Osaka people tell jokes like they breathe. It's a normal, everyday thing for them. I have also found that I love observational comedy, which is popular in both places, although they are very different geographically. I think observational comedy has a big influence on me in terms of its way of approaching life, as I like to share what I observe in daily life.

Bruel Dané is the artistic identity of Elena Brusarska, a Bulgarian multidisciplinary creative and emerging visual artist based in Sofia. With a professional background in communication, branding, and creative strategy, she brings a distinctive sensitivity to visual storytelling, symbolism, and the emotional dimensions of human experience.

Her transition into visual art represents a personal exploration of expression beyond words. Working primarily with acrylic paint and textured surfaces, she creates figurative compositions that combine raw human forms, expressive gestures, and symbolic elements. Her practice is driven by an interest in vulnerability, identity, transformation, and the fragile relationship between people and their surroundings.

Through her work, Bruel Dané seeks to create an intimate dialogue between the viewer and the artwork, leaving space for individual interpretation and emotional discovery.

Based in Sofia, Bulgaria, she is currently developing her contemporary art practice through a series of original works exploring emotional states and the concept of balance.

Project Statement

BRUEL DANÉ is the artistic identity of Bulgarian emerging artist Elena Brusarska. Her practice is guided by emotion, intuition, and a curiosity to explore the ways art can make us feel rather than simply what it allows us to see.

Working with acrylic paint, texture, figurative forms, and symbolism, she creates visual narratives that explore the relationship between human emotions and the natural world. Her current series, *Fragile Balance*, reflects on vulnerability, disruption, silence, and restoration, examining the delicate connection between our inner landscapes and the environment we inhabit.

For Bruel Dané, art is a space for experimentation, honesty, and imperfection. Each work begins with a feeling and develops into a visual story, inviting viewers to find their own meaning and emotional connection.

She does not seek to tell people what to feel, but to create something that makes them feel.



Bruel Dané | Crimson Companions



Bruel Dané | Quiet Intimacy

— Interview

Stanislav Georgiev

You began making art at a very young age and received a silver medal for young artists in Budapest while still in elementary school. What do you remember most clearly about that early recognition, and how did it shape your understanding of yourself as an artist?



Stanislav Georgiev | Flying House Rodary



I remember I was very happy. It was a moment of motivation, excitement and clarity. I knew that I wanted to continue doing art – be it as a professional or not. I guess it was the foundation stone that helped me build myself as an artist.

Your artistic journey was interrupted during high school and resumed while you were at university. What brought you back to art, and did your approach change after that period away from it?

As I enrolled in university my understanding of art changed. When I stopped it felt like a part of me was missing. As if I was going against my nature. I studied History and Philosophy as a bachelor and this played a key part of understanding who I am and what I value. Art always brought me joy as a child, but I did not understand how essential was the process to me – it helped me develop personal qualities as patience and perseverance, but most importantly, while practicing, I understood that I was being aligned with my purpose. So I decided to pick up from where I left off. I believe in God and religion is a fundamental part in my life, which helped me define my purpose as an artist. In this regard, I think that the creative process (be it art, science or any other different gifts given to man) is to be cherished, developed and shared with the world. It is something that makes you unique and to be able to make something original, beneficial, that brings joy to others is wonderful.

Your education spans programming, history, philosophy, and English philology, while your professional life is connected to IT. How do these different fields influence the way you think about and create art?

It certainly helped me develop outside-of-the-box thinking. As I mentioned above, History and Philosophy helped me better understand myself and reshaped how I view the world. You can say that I began to understand why I want to do art and what art means to me. I have



always had love for languages and this helped me with gathering books and learning articles in native language. These different fields may seem far-fetched from one another but they helped me develop interpersonal qualities that improved how I view and practice art. You can say that this journey is also artistic – gathering materials and fields that seem unmatched, but in the end, they complement each other in making something original.

You are primarily self-taught and developed many of your skills through online resources. What have been the greatest challenges and advantages of building your own artistic education?

My greatest challenge was knowing if I am on the right path of doing things. I had a lot of doubt if I was practicing right, since I did not have mentor and was relying on my own understanding of how art is done. But this also helped me develop my perseverance and confidence, so I guess this was one of the biggest advantages of this process. Eventually I met good artist that showed me that I was lacking basic skills but in general was on the right path, so in the end it worked fine. I managed to build my own set of skills and personal art style.

Your landscapes combine recognisable natural settings with strong atmosphere and vivid colour. Do you work from real places and personal memories, or are these scenes largely imagined?

Mainly from memories, blended with imagination. I have optimistic views towards life, so using vivid colours comes natural to me. I grew up with Lord of the Rings and other fantasy and sci-fi movies and literature and was amazed with the colours, ideas and landscapes. This shaped my style since I have studied different illustrators that worked with popular franchises and my fascination with mythology, religion and philosophy helped me in my

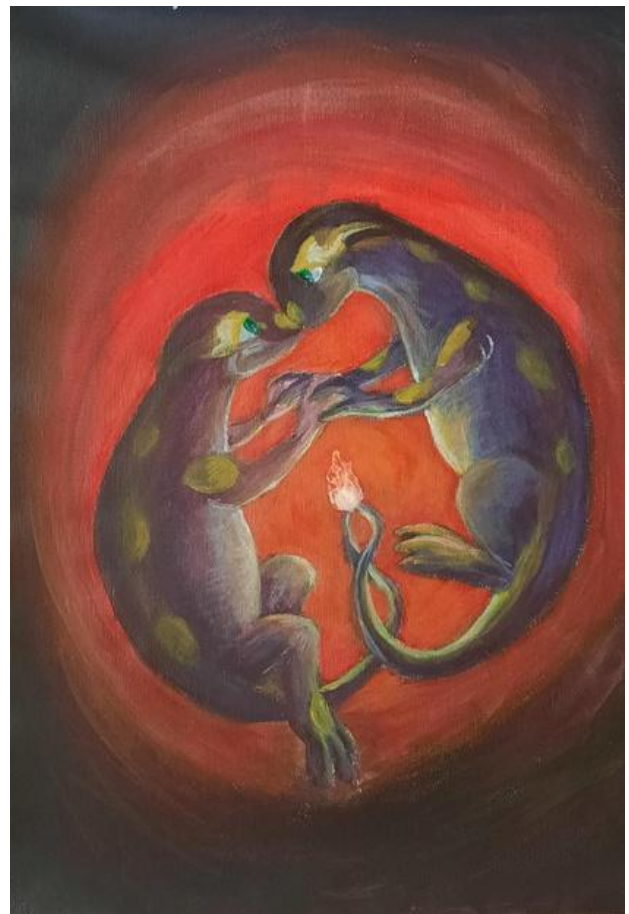
attempt to make the viewer experience living emotions in my paintings.

You work with gouache, acrylic, and digital painting. How does your creative process change depending on the medium, and what determines which technique is most suitable for a particular idea?

Each medium uses different technique so it makes my creative process more fulfilling. I like to experiment and to find the common ground between mediums, so if I practice one, I could then take an idea and try it out on the other. For example – understanding the techniques of traditional painting -blending colours, portrait painting, helps me improve my digital painting. Digital painting has almost unlimited resources on mediums so I can use it to experiment with techniques which later I can apply with real-life materials.

You have said that talent should be shared and that art should give people joy, love, and hope. What would you like viewers to feel or carry with them after encountering your work?

I hope that my paintings help people experience positive emotions. I really wish they could feel inspired to pursue their purpose and to know that when you are aligned with your calling and you are following the right way, the path may not be easy, but it is worth it and preserving your joy and purity until the end is the greatest achievement you can make.



— *Exhibition review*

The Names Gallery in Vienna – 10-11 October

On October 10–11, 2026, The Names Gallery presented an international group exhibition at The Last Abstraction Gallery, curated by Anna Gvozdeva. The project brought together artists working across painting, photography, drawing, abstraction, figurative art, mixed media, and



digital practices, creating a broad overview of different approaches within contemporary visual culture.

The participating artists were Liza Smith, Simona Visocká, Verona Petkova-Harizanova, Yulia Timür, Szilvia Frei, Bag Head (Rebecca Daly), Valentino Campos, iponmwosa Joseph Okundaye, Helena Milos, Petr Václavěk, Luting Zhang, Haley Clear, Denise Garcia Bergt, Ismail Ucci, Ayan Aziz Mammadova, Gerhard Kroyer, Oreofe Oguntola, Jessica Grahm, Ceren Ilterman, Lizette "Lizi" Rivera, Spencer Herd, Szilvi Acs, Betül Küçük, Michaela Korčáková, Tes Atelier, Ivelina Stoyanova, Maria Umrikhina, Zita Zádori-Gyapjas, Anne Wang, Sladjana Ziljkic, Luca Rosner, Gourav Sarkar, Yana Grishchuk, Matyas Nagy, Wolfgang Amadeus Pichler, Anna Zghurska, Magdolna Juhasz, Vit Madr, Mirela Lozanova Lyubenova-Mika, Lynette K Henderson, and Anita Markevica. The exhibition was defined by multiplicity rather than a single dominant theme. Each artist contributed an individual perspective, while the project as a whole created a dialogue between different ways of interpreting reality, memory, identity, landscape, emotion, and visual experience. What connected the works was not



stylistic similarity, but their ability to coexist within a wider conversation about contemporary artistic practice.

Abstraction played an important role throughout the exhibition. In some works, color and gesture became the primary means of communication, producing images based on movement, rhythm, and emotional intensity. Other artists worked closer to recognizable subjects, using the human figure, natural forms, objects, or landscape as starting points. The transition between abstraction and figuration was often fluid, showing how contemporary artists increasingly move between categories rather than remaining within strict stylistic boundaries.

Color also emerged as an important expressive element. Some artists used saturated, energetic combinations, while others preferred quieter tonal relationships. These differences created varying emotional registers: certain works appeared immediate and dynamic, while others invited slower contemplation. Texture, line, fragmentation, and spatial relationships further expanded the range of visual approaches represented in the exhibition.

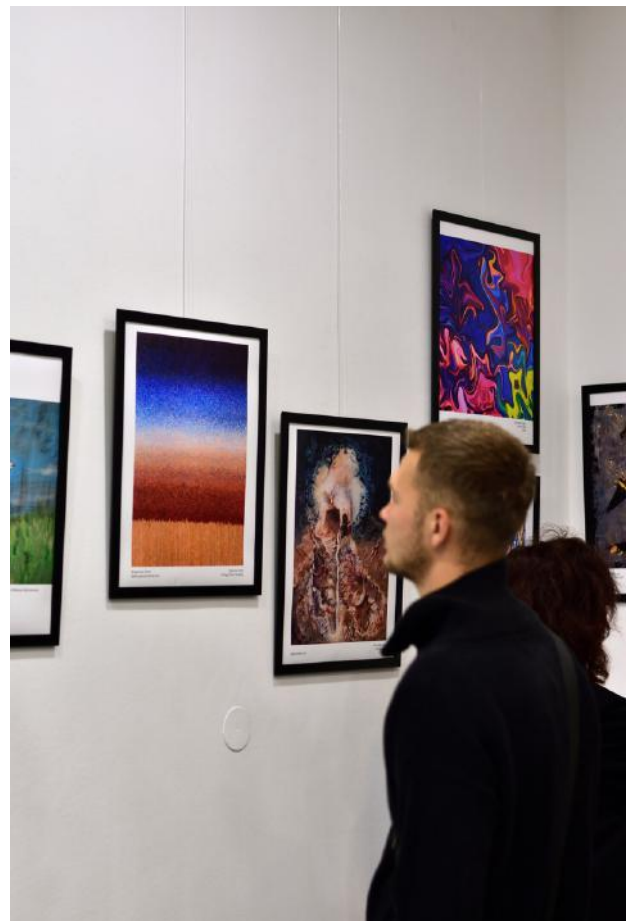
The human figure appeared in several different forms, from direct representation to more symbolic or fragmented interpretations. In these works, the body became a way of exploring identity, psychological states, personal experience, and cultural memory. Landscape-oriented works introduced another dimension, ranging from recognizable environments to images in which nature was transformed into atmosphere, color, or abstraction.

One of the exhibition's strengths was the coexistence of highly different artistic languages. The practices of the participating artists were not brought together to illustrate one fixed concept. Instead, the exhibition allowed differences to remain visible. This created a more open experience in which viewers could establish their own connections between works.

The international character of the project was equally important. Artists with different cultural backgrounds and artistic experiences temporarily shared one exhibition context. In this sense, the project functioned not only as a presentation of individual works, but also as a meeting point between different visual traditions and personal histories.

The presence of visitors added another layer to the exhibition. Artworks were experienced not in isolation, but through movement, conversation, comparison, and shared attention. The exhibition became a social space in which viewers could discover unfamiliar artists, discuss what they saw, and encounter perspectives different from their own.

Curator Anna Gvozdeva approached the project with an emphasis on diversity and dialogue. Rather than imposing a rigid interpretation, the exhibition created conditions in which each artist could retain an independent voice while becoming part of a larger collective context. The October 10–11 exhibition demonstrated the potential of the international group format when artistic difference is treated as a strength. Bringing together forty-one artists, The Names Gallery created a temporary community of practices connected not by uniformity, but by the shared act of making and presenting art. The result was a plural and open-ended exhibition: a meeting between abstraction and figuration, personal experience and collective viewing, individual artistic identities and a broader contemporary context.



— Interview

Vit Madr

You began making art in the 1980s. What first drew you to photography, and how has your approach changed since then?



Vit Madr | Meeting | 2026



Vit Madr | Peak | 2026

I originally focused on oil painting, and I came to photography by chance. A camera suddenly ended up in my hands, and I wanted to learn how to use it. It completely captivated me; within a year, I had enrolled in a correspondence course in photography, and from then on, I was swept up in the world of photography.

Back then, photography was analog; working in the darkroom was part of the process. I shot on black-and-white film.

I really enjoyed experimenting. I used long exposures, fired flashes while shooting, and so on. I actually still like that style, though my approach differs now that I shoot digitally. That said, I still shoot analog as well—for instance, I have a project involving small, dried pieces of bread that I arrange into still life compositions.

Has your technical education influenced the way you plan or construct an image?

I'm originally a medical electrical engineer. But I soon changed careers and started working as an advertising photographer. I don't think my technical background has much of an influence on my photography 😊 Perhaps the only thing is that I have no trouble handling exposure metering and lighting setups. But then again, just about anyone can do that.

You work as an advertising photographer. How does your approach change when you photograph for yourself?

I think I'm much more patient with professional assignments than when I'm working for personal enjoyment. With a professional job, I feel a greater sense of responsibility. Often, there is no possibility of fixing something. With independent



Vit Madr | Waiting | 2026

studio work, however, that is usually not an issue.

What drew you to objects that were originally edible as subjects for your still lifes?

One of my professional fields is food photography. I love commercial food photography; I view food as an object from a gallery, like a sculpture. I really enjoy it. And from there, it's a short step to taking a piece of food and thinking about how to portray it within my independent artistic work.

How do you choose an object: are you looking for a particular shape, texture, colour, or something less predictable?

After thoroughly drying the pieces of food, I look

for interesting shapes and textures among them.

In these photographs, close framing makes familiar objects appear almost abstract. At what point does an object become interesting to you as a form?

I get excited when I can see a shape in the subject that—with a little imagination—might resemble something more concrete. Then I can tell myself there is a story within the photograph as well.

What would you like viewers to notice in an everyday object after seeing this series?

I believe there can be beauty even in seemingly unattractive or uninteresting objects—the kind that end up in the trash.

Ekaterina Tokareva, born in 1994, is a Moscow-based contemporary artist working primarily in painting. She holds an MA in Contemporary Painting from the HSE Art and Design School. Her practice explores the conflict between inner identity and outward appearance, examining how social expectations, cultural trends, and ideals of beauty shape the ways individuals construct and perform themselves.

Project Statement

My artistic practice is built on the tension between the pursuit of perfection and an ironic examination of imposed standards. I explore a contemporary reality in which sincerity, beauty, and the grotesque coexist, generating new meanings at the intersection of these extremes. In each work, I create a space where opposites illuminate one another. I translate social norms into theatrical imagery: in my paintings, social masks collide with human vulnerability, while beneath outward glamour lie distorted emotions. Through vivid colours and sharp contrasts, I capture the moment when social expectations become a protective barrier. For me, this is not only a way to hide from the world, but also an attempt to discover the self, suspended between falseness and sincerity. My work is less a critique than an acknowledgment of the beauty within imperfection and a search for light within shadow. It is an invitation to step outside familiar roles and, for a moment, enter a space where there are no definitive answers, but only the search for identity.

Ekaterina Tokareva | Mask On | 2024





Ekaterina Tokareva | Black Hole | 2024

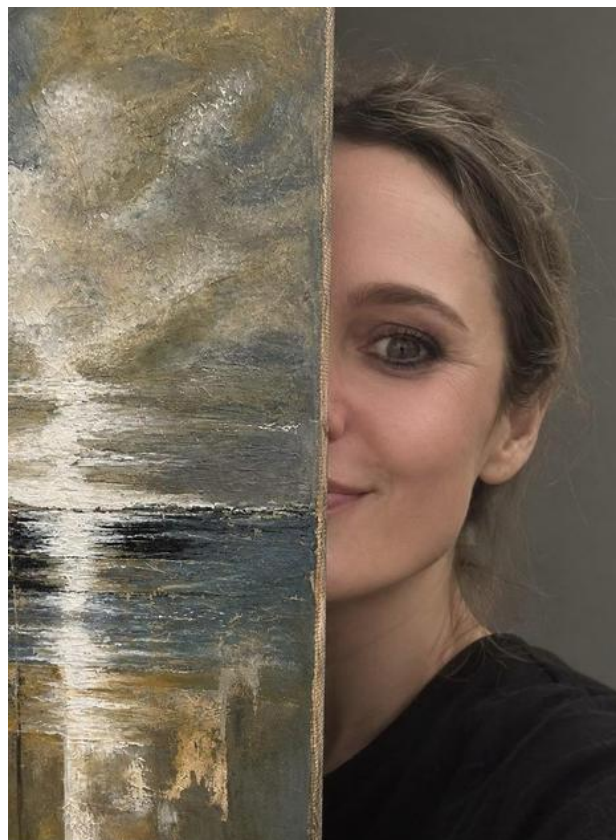
— Interview

Dr Anna Kadzik- Bartoszewska

Your background spans fine art, architecture, urban planning, and art history. How have these disciplines shaped the way you approach painting?



Dr Anna Kadzik-Bartoszewska | Vestige IV Passage | 2025



My practice has developed between disciplines rather than within a single tradition. I trained in Fine Art and Architecture and Urban Planning, and later completed doctoral research in Art History and Cultural Policy at University College Dublin, where I also taught modern architecture. Architecture taught me to think through proportion, structure, rhythm, material and void. Archaeology and art history taught me to look differently at what survives: the fragment, the surface, the trace, and the evidence of something that is no longer entirely present. Painting became the place where these ways of seeing could meet.

I don't use architecture as a subject to illustrate, nor archaeology as a theme to depict. Instead, I bring their underlying processes into the making of the painting. I construct the surface through layers, much as a building accumulates material, repair and weathering. I then interrupt, scrape, abrade and uncover it. The painting develops its own stratigraphy. For me, this is where architecture and archaeology meet: the surface is simultaneously constructed and excavated. A structural line can become a horizon. A wall can become geology. A fragment can become landscape. The image remains deliberately unstable. I want the work to retain the discipline of architecture while allowing the uncertainty of archaeology and the freedom of abstraction.

What drew you to the idea of a trace left behind by something that has disappeared?



A trace is powerful because it is incomplete. In archaeology, a fragment confirms that something existed without giving us the whole story. The absence becomes part of the evidence. That became central to Vestige. I think of a vestige not as nostalgia, but as a surviving presence a trace that has endured transformation, weather and time. The same principle operates within the paintings. A layer may disappear from view without disappearing materially. A buried line, colour or texture can remain beneath the surface and later re-emerge. The painting therefore develops a memory of its own. With Threshold, I move from what remains towards the space between states: inside and outside, visible and concealed, constructed and eroded, presence and disappearance. In a sense, Vestige asks: what survives? Threshold asks: what exists between survival and disappearance?

Both belong to a larger investigation into the archaeology of place, not archaeology as an image or historical subject, but as a way of understanding how places accumulate, conceal and retain traces of what has happened to them. That unresolved territory is important to me because it allows the viewer to participate in reconstructing the image.

Your paintings often bring structured, architectural forms together with areas that feel open and atmospheric. How do you develop a balance between these elements?

I am interested in the moment when architecture begins to dissolve into landscape. The paintings often begin with an underlying structure verticals, horizontals, intervals, divisions and voids. But I deliberately prevent that structure from becoming completely resolved. The surface is built physically. Layers accumulate and begin to suggest stone, plaster, concrete, exposed earth or weathered architectural surfaces. I then disturb them through scraping, abrasion and freer gestures. The process becomes a kind of construction followed by erosion. Sometimes the architecture contains the landscape; at other times the landscape appears to erode the architecture. That tension gives the paintings a sense of stillness and movement at the same time. Scale is also important to this experience. I work predominantly on large canvases, with the smallest works beginning at around one metre and extending to approximately 180 centimetres. I find this scale necessary because I want the paintings to be encountered physically rather than simply viewed as images. At that size, the surface can begin to operate almost architecturally. The viewer becomes aware of their own position in relation to the painting, and details that might seem small at a distance can become almost spatial when encountered closely. I don't want the viewer to decide immediately whether they are looking at a building, a landscape, a ruin or an entirely abstract space. The ambiguity is intentional. It is the point at which the painting stops describing a place and begins to become a place in its own right.

Some passages in your work suggest a landscape, while others resist any clear sense of place. How



much do you want viewers to recognise, and how much do you prefer to leave to their imagination?

Recognition is a doorway, not a destination. Ireland has profoundly influenced the atmospheric language of my work. Its weather, mist, stone, water and shifting light can transform a landscape almost continuously. Solid forms can appear to dissolve; horizons can become uncertain. I don't try to reproduce a particular Irish landscape. Instead, I translate something of its instability into the painting. A horizon can become architecture. A wall can become geology. A field of colour can suggest sea, sky, stone or memory. This is why I think of the work as abstract landscape rather than landscape painting. I want the viewer to recognise something and then lose certainty about what they have recognised. That moment matters. The painting may begin with a sense of place, but gradually becomes a place that belongs partly to the viewer.

You layer, cover, scrape, and reveal parts of the surface. Can you describe a moment when uncovering an earlier layer changed the direction of a painting?

The physical surface is not simply the support for the painting; it is part of its subject. I build the surface gradually, allowing layers to accumulate much as materials accumulate in architecture or strata

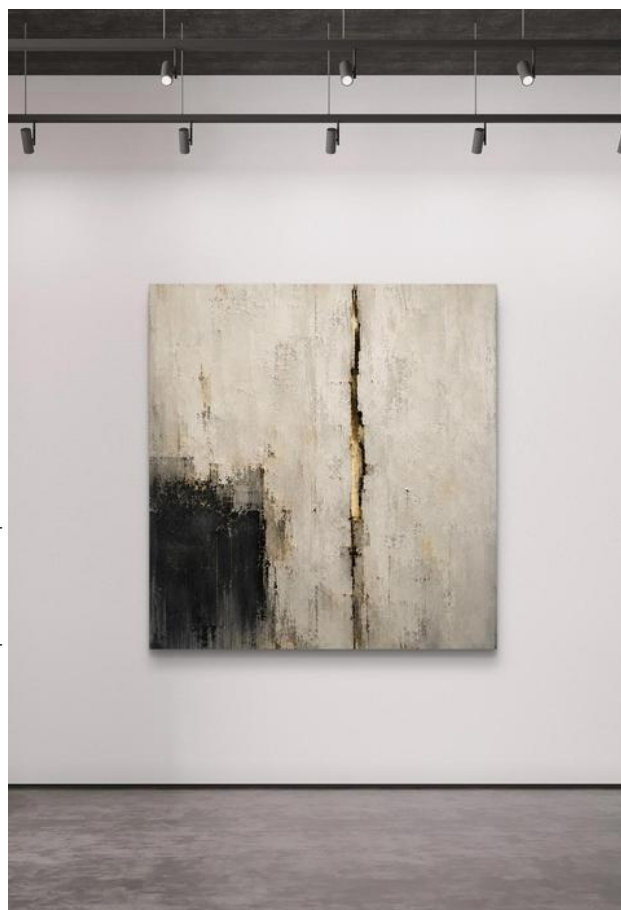


Dr Anna Kadzik-Bartoszewska | Threshold II | 2026

accumulate at an archaeological site. Then I remove parts of what I have built. Scraping can reveal an earlier colour. Abrasion can expose a line. A buried texture can suddenly establish an entirely different sense of space. When this happens, I don't see it as an accident. I see it as a discovery. The painting has revealed something to me. This is central to the way I work. I am not simply applying an image to a surface; I am allowing the painting to develop its own history. Architecture gives me the language of construction; archaeology gives me the language of uncovering. The surface contains both. There is a visible present, but underneath it are traces of everything that has happened before. I want the viewer to experience that gradually, the way an excavation changes our understanding with each layer that is exposed.

Gold appears in your work as small, sometimes subtle marks. What draws you to this material, and how do you decide where to use it?

Gold interests me as a material of light, endurance and discovery rather than as decoration. It has a long history within art and architecture, particularly in objects and spaces intended to endure across generations. But what interests me most is its physical behaviour. Gold responds to movement. It can almost disappear from one position and suddenly become luminous from another. I therefore use it sparingly. Within a weathered, layered surface, a small trace of gold can feel like something that has survived: a seam, a mineral trace, a fragment of architecture or a



Dr Anna Kadzik-Bartoszewska | Threshold I | 2026



moment of light caught within the surface. I don't want it to announce itself. I want it to be discovered. That is consistent with the paintings as a whole. Their first encounter may be atmospheric, but sustained looking reveals another level of structure, material and history. The gold is therefore not an applied symbol. It becomes another trace within the stratigraphy of the painting.

Do memories of places you have lived or studied enter your work, even when you are not depicting a specific location?

Yes, but memory enters the work less as an image than as a spatial language. Architecture taught me to notice thresholds, openings, boundaries, proportion and movement through constructed space. Archaeology taught me to notice what remains when those spaces are altered, abandoned or partially erased. Ireland contributes another layer through its weathered surfaces and constantly changing atmosphere. These experiences are not reproduced

literally. They are transformed.

A building can become a fragment.

A ruin can become an absence.

A landscape can become an atmosphere.

A memory can become a surface.

This is particularly important in *Threshold*, where archaeology becomes a way of thinking rather than an image to reproduce. The paintings exist between visibility and concealment, construction and erosion, presence and disappearance.

Vestige is concerned with what survives.

Threshold is concerned with what exists between states.

Together they form part of a larger investigation into how places retain traces of what has happened to them.

Ultimately, I want the paintings to feel as though they have been discovered rather than simply made, as if the viewer has encountered a fragment of a place whose complete history remains just beyond reach.

The incomplete is important to me.

It leaves room for the viewer to enter.

Fernando de Godoy (b.1997, São Paulo) is a Brazilian artist who uses painting as a way of engaging with the environment that surrounds him. Throughout years of practice, his research has increasingly focused on capturing and representing visual impressions of memory, time, and sensations within the everyday. He uses photographic references to develop his compositions, drawing primarily from personal photographs and film frames. Fernando de Godoy lives in the city of São Paulo and holds both a Bachelor's degree and a Teaching Degree in Visual Arts from São Paulo State University (UNESP).

Project Statement

My name is Fernando de Godoy. I was born in 1997 in São Paulo, Brazil, where I live and work. Through figurative oil painting, I explore the relationship between image and memory, mainly using personal photographic archives and film screenshots as source material. These images allow me to examine how sensations alter visual memories, creating worlds in which light, space, and color are transformed and ordinary, everyday moments can evoke a sense of transience and the unknown.

Beyond painting, observational drawing and photography are the most direct ways I relate to my surroundings. Drawing brings me into contact with what my eyes and memory have captured, while photography allows me to record part of the materiality that makes up the world at that instant.

Fernando de Godoy | *Mysteries* | 2026





— Interview

Jen Pak

Your recent work marks a shift from the city to the home. What prompted this change, and how has it transformed your approach to painting?

My earlier Legoscape paintings explored the city as a place of structure and belonging. Built largely from straight lines and geometric forms, that architecture conveyed a sense of order, but one that could also feel cold and isolating. Over time, I became more interested in what happens within those structures — the everyday experiences that give a place its personal meaning.

This shift toward interiors coincided with a deeply personal period, when my father was ill and bedridden. I wanted to create rooms of a different kind of beauty, spaces where I could imagine him feeling uplifted. Painting became a way of conjuring places for him beyond the room to which he was confined — places that could offer warmth, comfort, and possibility.

This opened up a new visual language: more organic shapes, softer forms, and living elements like flowers, which brought warmth and a sense of passing time into the work. I still think carefully about color, pattern, and architectural form, but I now also consider what a room might mean to the person inhabiting it. A table, a vase of flowers, an empty chair — each can carry a story without fully revealing it. My approach has grown more attentive to that emotional atmosphere, to how a room can feel alive while holding both presence and absence.



Jen Pak | Between Meals | 2025



You were born in New York and are now based in Seoul. How has your experience of these two places shaped your understanding of home and belonging?

Being Korean-American, I think of home as something that can exist across more than one place. New York connects me to my beginnings and education, while Seoul is where I have built my practice. Each holds a different part of my experience.

That has made me interested in belonging as something we gradually create through relationships, routines, and familiar surroundings. In my paintings, a room can bring together elements that come from different places and moments. It doesn't need to belong to a single geographical location to feel like home. That sense of familiarity, even when you cannot quite identify its source, is something I hope the work conveys.

Your interiors combine observation, recollection, and imagination. Could you walk us through how a particular room began and developed into a finished painting?

Sanctuary began with a long-overdue vacation with my sister. The bathroom was finished in beautiful black-and-white marble—it felt like my dream bathroom, so I photographed it. After the trip, I made a pencil sketch from the photograph, leaving color aside to focus on the shapes and composition. I then photographed the sketch and redrew it in Adobe Illustrator. At that stage, I began adding and subtracting elements, allowing the room to move away from the original photograph. I introduced striped wallpaper, flowers, and a rug, and changed the palette to something more playful. By the time I brought the composition onto canvas, it had become a space of its own. It still held the memory of that



trip with my sister, but the colors and imagined details transformed its atmosphere. That is often how observation, recollection, and imagination come together in my work: a real room provides the starting point, and painting allows me to explore what else it might become.

As I work, perspective, pattern, and color become ways of shaping the room's atmosphere. I build the acrylic paint through many layers to achieve the flatness and clarity I want. Although the surface can appear quite direct, it develops slowly. The finished room needs to hold together visually while leaving enough openness for a viewer to imagine a life within it.

Is there a space from your childhood that continues to find its way into your work, even in an altered or unrecognizable form?

Not a space from my childhood, exactly — but I always carry something from my earlier architectural series into the new interior paintings. A building or a structural fragment tends to reappear, sometimes tucked into the background, like a small house resting on a bookshelf, and sometimes placed more centrally in the room, taking the form of a column or another architectural element. It's less a memory of a specific place than a recurring motif — a way of keeping that earlier body of work quietly present within the new one.

Your paintings use flattened perspectives and layered patterns. What possibilities do these choices open up that a more realistic depiction of space might not?

Flattening perspective allows me to bring different parts of a room into closer conversation. A pattern on a wall can become as prominent as a table or a window, and the eye can move between them without following a single, fixed viewpoint.

This feels appropriate to the way memory works. We don't necessarily remember a room with accurate proportions;

certain objects or colors become very vivid, while other details disappear. Pattern also gives the painting a rhythm and influences how long you spend looking at different areas. I'm interested in a space that feels recognizable but remains slightly unsettled, so that looking becomes an active process of discovering connections.

You studied both painting and contemporary art. How has the relationship between making art and studying it shaped your practice, and have you ever had to set that knowledge aside to follow an intuition?

Studying painting gave me a practical understanding of materials, color, and composition, while studying contemporary art helped me think about how a work participates in a larger conversation. My background in fashion design also informs my attention to surfaces, textiles, and the relationships between patterns.

Those experiences support my practice, but I don't want to resolve every idea intellectually before I begin painting. Sometimes a color or an arrangement feels compelling before I can explain why. I try to give those decisions time to develop. There is a point when I need to stop analyzing and respond to what is happening on the canvas. The understanding often comes through making the work.

When viewers encounter your imagined rooms, how much of your own story do you want them to sense, and how much space do you hope to leave for their memories?

My own experiences shape the paintings, but I don't feel that viewers need to know my biography to connect with them. I hope they sense an emotional presence—a feeling of familiarity, longing, comfort, or perhaps absence—without being given a single explanation.

The rooms leave space for someone else's associations. A table might remind one person of a family gathering and another of a quiet moment alone. I'm interested in how the same image can hold those different experiences. My story provides a starting point, but the encounter becomes more meaningful when viewers bring something of their own to it.



Elena Lipartiia

How did you first turn to photography, and when did exploring inner emotional states become central to your practice?



Elena Lipartiia | In Circles | 2025



Photography has always filled me with a sense of wonder and childlike delight. This inspired me to explore the world in a way that was unconventional for me. Difficulties in interacting with others eventually led me to use photography as a tool for exploring my own mental states.

You describe your approach as intuitive. What makes you stop and take a photograph, and how much do you understand about its meaning at that moment?

My attention may be drawn to the slightest movement or a particular line. I never know in advance what it will be. In these moments, I experience an intense concentration of attention and a complete absorption in the process. An understanding of the image's meaning comes after the shoot, when the distance between myself and the subject grows.

Your practice sits at the intersection of conceptual and emotional photography. How do ideas and feelings influence one another as you develop your work?



This approach stems from a loss of inner balance, a loss of control over reality, and an inability to clearly assess my own state of mind.

Your photographs were made during different periods of your life. What connections emerge when you bring them together, and how do you decide their sequence?

The photographs reflect a spectrum of personal experience, ranging from meditative calm to paranoid thoughts. Together, they trace my journey from a state of gentle attraction towards one in which emotion becomes stronger than rational thought, shifting the artistic focus towards the realm of the human psyche.

How do you choose titles for your photographs? What relationship would you like a title to establish between the image and the viewer?

I choose a title not so much as an explanation of the image, but rather as a note on something that cannot be directly seen within the photograph. I would like the act of reflection to initiate an inner dialogue within the viewer, a conversation with themselves.

In the process, an idea may transform and become more complex, but it always serves as a point of reference for initially confused emotions. An understanding of these emotions, and their recognition as distinct feelings, comes later, with the emergence of a photograph or a series of photographs. This becomes the outcome of that interaction.

What does black-and-white photography allow you to express, particularly in relation to melancholy and the atmosphere of urban life?

Black-and-white photography is inherently contradictory for me. It allows me to delve deeper into my inner states, to define more clearly the fragile boundaries of the psyche, to distance myself from the noise of the city, and to intensify a sense of melancholy. At the same time, it often produces an image that feels rather categorical, as solid as granite, stripped of fluidity and fluctuation.

In the blurred street image, the figure and surroundings seem to lose their stability. What interests you about making a familiar scene difficult to read?



— Interview

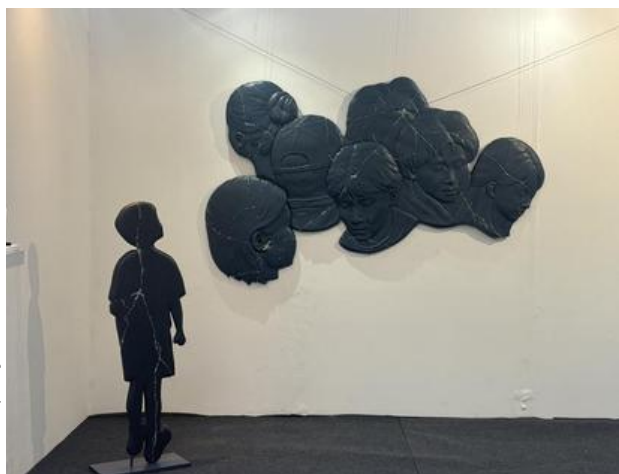
Ian Kim

What first drew you to sculpture, and how did your studies at Kookmin University shape your artistic approach?

Influenced by my father, who is a sculptor, I grew up naturally surrounded by clay, three-dimensional forms, and sculpture from an early age. As I got older, I explored many different areas of art, but those early experiences remained with me. My growing interest in three-dimensional work eventually led me to choose sculpture as my major when preparing for university.

At Kookmin University, I studied alongside many art students who, like me, dreamed of becoming artists. During this time, I was introduced to 3D modeling for the first time and became deeply interested in both digital modeling and sculpture. At first, I was strongly drawn to new techniques, materials, and methods of making. However, as I progressed through university, I began to think more deeply not only about how to make something, but about what I truly wanted to communicate through my work.

Through numerous school projects, exhibitions both inside and outside the university, and the process of preparing work for my graduation exhibition, I became increasingly certain that the theme I was most drawn to was hope. In particular, I wanted to create works that could offer viewers a sense of possibility even in moments of uncertainty, rupture, and change.



Ian Kim | Boy And Echo



How did the idea for EXIT emerge, and what made rupture and transformation its central themes?

In the year I began developing this work, I experienced moments when things that had always felt familiar and close to me—relationships, beliefs, dreams, and even the way I saw myself—suddenly seemed to fall apart. At first, those moments felt like endings. However, I gradually became interested in the possibility that such ruptures could also become the beginning of something new.

This idea eventually developed into the central concept of EXIT. I wanted to explore a moment in which destruction and creation exist at the same time—to create what I think of as a beautiful rupture.

For me, an “exit” does not simply mean escaping from something. It can also mean discovering another path that was invisible before the rupture occurred.

Through this work, I wanted to suggest that even in moments of instability or failure, the possibility of transformation can still exist. Ultimately, I wanted to tell a story of hope—the hope that a crisis can become an opportunity for change.

Your statement opens with a passage from Hermann Hesse’s *Demian*. How did this text influence your work beyond the metaphor of breaking out of an egg?

This passage from *Demian* stayed with me because it describes destruction and birth as processes that cannot be separated from one another.

What interested me was not simply the image of breaking out of an egg, but the idea that in order to become something new, we may first have to go through the collapse of a previous world. Growth can sometimes be uncomfortable and frightening, but it can also become the force that allows



us to leave behind what once felt familiar and safe and move forward.

This way of thinking became deeply connected to how I approached EXIT. A rupture may initially appear to be a trace of damage, but at the same time, it can also become an opening—a new passage.

Through this passage, I came to see destruction not as the opposite of creation, but as something that can exist within the creative process itself.

The three works in EXIT explore the possibility of a new beginning. How do they relate to one another, and what does each contribute to the project?

The three works Boy, Echo, and Self show different presences within the process of rupture and transformation, while also connecting together as a single narrative.

Boy represents both my younger self and, in a sense, my present self as well. It carries a message of encouragement for pure dreams, hope, and possibility.

Echo moves beyond the individual and connects outward toward other people, contemporary society, and the idea of community. It reflects my hope that a sense of possibility can extend beyond a personal moment and continue to resonate within many people, like an echo.

Self invites viewers to turn their gaze inward. As they look into the cracked mirror, they are encouraged to confront themselves and ask what remains, what has disappeared, and what kind of new self might emerge afterward.

You describe your materials as both solid and fragile. How do you choose them, and what possibilities does this tension offer you?

I am interested in forms and materials that contain contradictory qualities at the same time. A sculpture may appear solid, stable, and long-lasting on the surface, while still carrying the possibility of cracking, breaking, or falling apart. I find this contradiction very similar to human life.

We often try to maintain a sense of stability on the outside, while internally we are constantly changing, questioning ourselves, and sometimes going through a process of recovery. The epoxy resin and EPS used in EXIT also carry these qualities through their surface, weight, fragility, and potential to crack. The vulnerability of the materials themselves reflects the idea that instability does not necessarily mean weakness.

What discoveries or challenges during the making of EXIT

changed your understanding of the project?

One of the most important things I discovered while creating EXIT was that I could not fully control the work.

In sculpture, forms often change during the making process, surfaces can react in unexpected ways, and sometimes accidental results can feel more meaningful than what was originally planned.

At first, I tended to see these moments as problems that needed to be corrected. However, because EXIT itself is a work about rupture and transformation, the unexpected changes that occurred during the making process became naturally connected to the concept of the work. This experience also changed the way I think about failure. Rather than seeing failure simply as something negative, I began to consider what new possibilities might emerge from it.

What role does the viewer's own experience play in interpreting your work? How much room do you leave for meanings beyond your original intention?

I believe the viewer's personal experience plays a very important role in interpreting the work. Although EXIT began from my own personal story, I think anyone can bring their own experiences of change, loss, and failure into the work. Because of this, the idea of a "rupture" can carry a completely different meaning for each person.

Rather than offering a single answer, my intention is to create a space where viewers can bring their own memories and experiences into the work. If someone encounters EXIT and begins to see a difficult moment in their life not simply as an ending, but perhaps as the beginning of another path, then I believe the work has already expanded beyond my original intention.



Born in Seoul in 1949, **Kim Myung-Sik** earned both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Fine Arts from the College of Arts at Chung-Ang University. He served as a professor at Dong-A University in Busan from 1993 to 2015 while continuously presenting his artwork internationally. Over the past 50 years, he has held approximately 50 to 60 solo exhibitions, averaging nearly one per year.

His artistic activities have been primarily centered in Seoul, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. In New York, he held solo exhibitions at Reece Galleries (24 W 57th Street) in Uptown in 2005 and PS35 Gallery (547 West 27th Street) in Chelsea in 2007.

Fine arts professorships hold considerable prestige in South Korea and Japan. As a result, most artist-professors remain dedicated to creating and showcasing work during extended academic breaks while fulfilling their teaching duties.

Currently, he is represented by Sun Gallery in Seoul and Mizoe Art Gallery in Tokyo—both prestigious institutions that regularly participate in major international art fairs, including Art Basel and Frieze. Hundreds of his works are held in notable private and public collections worldwide.

Project Statement

My work is an exploration of humanity and nature.

The geometric houses depicted on the canvas transcend simple architectural symbols; they serve as metaphors for human beings. The white houses represent Caucasians, the yellow houses represent Asians, and the black houses represent Black individuals, with other colors denoting the rich spectrum of other races.

The origin of this symbolic imagery traces back to my two-year residency in New York from 2004 to 2005. One morning, while commuting to my studio on the 7 Train, I looked out the window and perceived the houses passing by as human faces—recalling the diverse people I had observed while sipping coffee in the cafes of SoHo's gallery district.

The roofs appeared as hair, the windows as eyes, and the entrances as mouths. Deeply moved by this surreal sight, I rushed to my studio and passionately poured those images onto the canvas.

Hope, Peace, and Harmony

Beyond the harmony of simplified forms and colors, my artistic world conveys a profound message about the shared human experience and community. When people of different languages and complexions gather in one space, ideological differences and conflicting thoughts naturally arise. Yet, through this proximity, we also discover empathy in the unfamiliar aspects of one another. By arranging these symbolic houses—sometimes gently, at other times freely—I depict a world where diversity is cherished not as a boundary, but as a blessing.

The word "East" in the title East Side signifies the direction where the sun rises—a symbol of hope. The calm, balanced arrangement of the houses represents peaceful coexistence. Ultimately, the ultimate vision of my work lies in hope, peace, and harmony.

Kim Myung-Sik | East Side | 2025





Kim Myung-Sik | East Side Multi Series | 2024

— Interview

Hyevin Namgoong

What first drew you to acrylic painting, and how has your relationship with this technique changed over time?



Hyevin Namgoong | Voyager | 2026



At first, I happened to see a video of someone using the acrylic fluid art technique, and I was deeply inspired by its natural, beautiful flow. Those flowing patterns looked almost like distinct shapes, and out of curiosity, I wondered what it would be like if I brought those shapes into clearer form myself. I started working on small canvases, but soon realized that to fully capture these wonderful flows, I needed a larger canvas. To be honest, I was initially intimidated by the cost of all the paint and canvases. Fortunately, however, every time I started a project and poured the paint, I could envision what shape the artwork should take, leading to a steady collection of satisfying, completed pieces. Rather than viewing this as my own skill, I believed that God was creating these beautiful flows so that I could carry out this work. That's why before starting any piece, I usually pray, asking Him to help me reflect His will in my work. Miraculously, whenever I do, wonderful flows and art pieces truly come to life.

When paint begins to move across the canvas, how do you decide whether to guide it or let it find its own direction?

Most of my process involves covering the entire canvas using a hairdryer or splattering paint with a stick. When



working with a hairdryer, I lightly blow air a few times only over the flows that have the potential to become the main focal points to shape them, while leaving the background flows to move naturally. On the other hand, when splattering paint onto the canvas with a stick, I first paint the silhouette of the shape I want to create, and then pour or splatter paint selectively to create the flow.

At what point do you recognize a figure or a story in an unexpected shape? Can you describe what happens next?

It all starts when a specific movement begins to emerge. Fluidity and movement are the core elements of my work, and there are times when a central figure—one that can naturally lead the flow—begins to emerge on the canvas. I capture that image and bring it into focus, which feels like breathing life into a flow that previously held only pure potential.

Your painting often give human qualities to forms created by chance. What does this process allow you to express about emotions that are difficult to put into words?

To me, emotions are best conveyed through those who feel them most deeply—whether that's a person or an animal. I mainly work with the human figures. Connecting distinctly human gestures with the organic flow of paint is really what brings depth and energy to my work.

How does your experience as an illustrator influence the way you develop a painting?

Beyond illustration, I have extensive experience working with a wide range of non-acrylic mediums, including digital drawing, pencil, oil painting, watercolor, and pastel. I didn't set out from the beginning to make painting my sole focus. However, rather than pursuing a single style, gathering diverse experiences and building a varied body of work has undoubtedly enriched my current artistic practice.

Childhood imagination appears in the way you discover figures within flowing paint. Has making art changed how you see the ordinary world around you?

The world we live in is not as pure as the paintings I create. Evil lurks, and it is filled with people of ill intent. Because of this, creating art hasn't necessarily changed the way I view the world. However, I believe that every painting I create is something God has permitted me to paint, and for that, I am deeply grateful. I am committed to sharing as faithfully as I can the positive, good messages that God places upon my canvas.

How do you know when a painting is finished, especially when its starting point is something unpredictable?

I tend to put my brush down when the vision I had in mind feels fully captured on the canvas. That said, I don't believe any artwork is ever truly complete. A painting can always evolve, and even something put aside for years can be revisited to refine certain details. I do that occasionally, but above all, I focus on bringing a piece to a point where it clearly speaks its message to those who view it.



Esin Çavuşoğlu is a visual artist based in Istanbul, Türkiye. She began her formal art education at Zeki Müren Fine Arts High School in 2014 and later continued her studies in the Painting Department at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University. Her practice combines painting, printmaking, and mixed-media approaches developed through her background in engraving. Working through a symbolic visual language, she explores existential themes such as vulnerability, transformation, mortality, identity, and the fragile boundary between presence and absence.

Project Statement

My work explores emotional and existential states through symbolic imagery, layered surfaces, and contrasts of light and shadow. I am interested in the fragile boundaries between life and death, presence and absence, protection and vulnerability, and reality and representation. Rather than treating emotion as something immediate, I approach it as something that develops gradually through memory, material, and image. My background in printmaking has also influenced the way I construct surfaces, allowing different textures and visual layers to coexist within the same work. Through painting, I aim to create spaces that feel both familiar and unsettling, inviting the viewer to encounter ambiguity rather than a single fixed meaning.

Esin Çavuşoğlu | The Fall | 2025



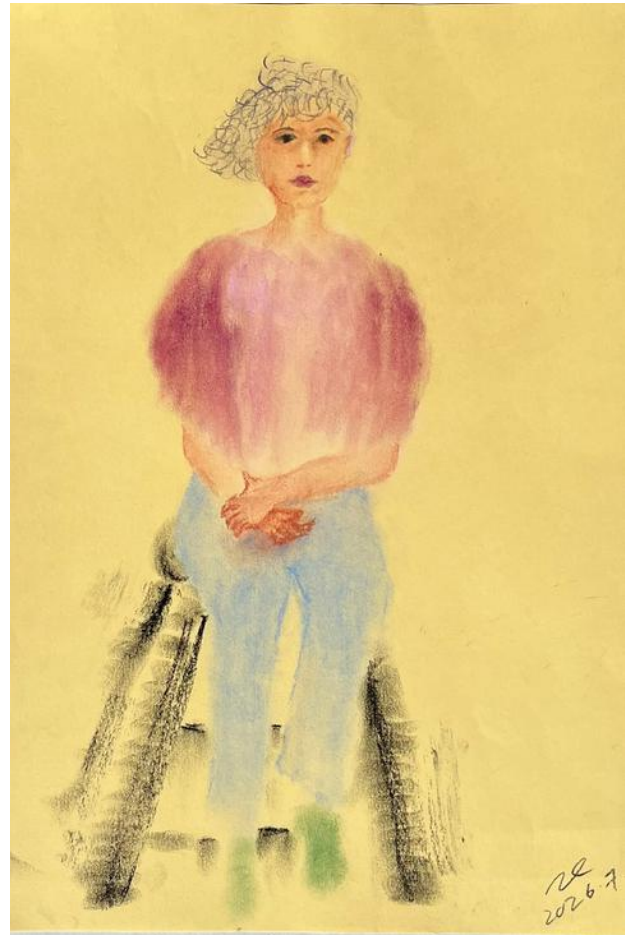


Esin Çavuşoğlu | My Ophelia | 2026



Esin Çavuşoğlu | Kurban | 2025

Alice Chan



Alice Chan | Take 1 | 2026

You describe making art every day as one of the main ways you connect with art. How does this daily practice influence the way you observe ordinary moments and your surroundings?

I become very conscious to tiny things in life and minor changes in surroundings and find art everywhere. Art can also be found easily in my routine activities because they make me to focus on forms and patterns due to their repetitiveness in nature. Many imaginary scenes could pop up from my mind, once I start thinking “what if those forms and patterns are rearranged or even diminished?” at the time I am engaging in these activities. “Am I formed by the repetitions of these forms and patterns?”. My art usually hides philosophical question(s) for viewer to think about. To me, making art is a journey of self-discovery.

Your work is inspired not only by people but also by other living creatures and their interactions with the environment. What kinds of behaviours or natural processes have been particularly meaningful to you?

I am particularly interested in observing and studying how human beings and other living creatures react differently to the pressures from their surroundings. How different are they? Do our behaviours share some similarities with other living creatures? If so, what are they? Why those happen?



Alice Chan | Secret Garden Is Not Secret | 2026



And how they happen? Such observation and on-going study of actions and behaviours always encourage me to present my artwork in a way which I have never thought of.

In Day and Night and Secret Garden Is Not Secret, individual marks come together to suggest groups of figures, movement, and social interaction. What inspired these densely populated compositions?

These paintings are actually from a festive live drawing session “Crystallised Self” and models are requested to pose in a certain way. I do not have any control and idea on the way they pose. But from them, I see the specific vibe of isolation in human interactions. That is, everyone seems to be connected in one way or the other but with the attitude of avoidance and to be alone.

Many of the figures in these works are created without detailed facial features. How important is individuality in these compositions, and what do you hope the viewer understands through posture, colour, and proximity instead?

To me, no matter what the objects are, they are a conglomeration of shapes and forms. In these paintings, I would consider all models are just part of the drawing subject. Viewers are free to interpret the paintings in the way they want. I do not want to limit their imaginations and/ or creativities. That’s why I do not draw or paint any facial features. Rather, I hope my viewer to enjoy the liveness and energies of the overall subject, brought by the different postures and colour and shape compositions.

Your works move between abstraction, observation, and portraiture. How do you decide whether an experience should be

expressed through a recognisable figure or through more fragmented and abstract forms?

It really depends on the what I want to share with my audiences at the time of creation and the philosophical question(s) behind my work. If I want to invite the viewer to explore more on the relationships among elements, energy and formation, recognisable object or figure will not be my intent. But if I want the viewer to think about the philosophical question(s) directly, I may figure out the drawing subjects with more detail and recognisable traits.

As both an art lover and a collector, how has living with other artists’ work influenced your own visual language and your understanding of what an artwork can communicate?

My art work collection always reflects “my hunger” of particular artistic knowledge or skills at certain stage. These wonderful artworks from different artists do provide answers to me in the different stages of my artistic journey. From them, I can see the possibilities of raising question(s) in a creative and funny way, without failing logics.

How does living in Hong Kong - with its density, movement, architecture, and relationship between urban life and nature - shape the subjects and visual rhythms of your art?

The present architecture and urban design of Hong Kong brings up a vibe of tension and demolition, which seasons my works in different way. Hong Kong has been changed a lot and unexpectedly fast since the year 1997. The boundaries between many things in daily life become blurred. Many memorable buildings and landmarks, together with memories have been fading out from life, which makes people struggling to preserving what they have and become unsettling. My art, therefore, is trying to make people feel alive by refreshing their mind or “resetting” their brain to observe in an intuitive way, like a child. I hope my art can remind people about their original selves. People can still remember who they are despite they are rushing to adapt for life. So the subjects I put on the paper or canvas usually from the fragments of my childhood memories, which are the feeling of energies of the heritage and local cultures I have had experienced. The visual rhythms are direct and diverse. Viewers can feel differently and see different things when their mood differ.

— Interview

Hyonjung Yoo



How did you begin painting, and how has your artistic approach changed over time?



I have always had a desire for art: film, costume, and visual arts, especially pop arts. Movies. Music. I was so happy to see it, but since I had no art education, I lacked the courage and did not even try. Then the global pandemic hit, and since I couldn't go out, I decided to try drawing. It's happened to be listening to my favorite song on the radio, "Burracuda" by Heart, so I drew a wall to cover a hole. My older sister came over, saw my drawing, and said she loved it. Did you draw it? After asking, I encouraged her to keep drawing (she had studied art). Then I did exhibition in Seoul, insadong. Was really happy, and I found my self and ego!

You mention that abstract painting did not suit you. What felt missing, and what did a simpler, more childlike approach allow you to express?

What felt missing, and what did a simpler, more



childlike approach allow you to express? Instinctive and honest emotions—joy, fear, fun, longing—capture raw feelings that are conveyed instantly upon viewing, without the need for complex aesthetic explanation.

What does seeing the world through a child's eyes mean to you as an artist?

Just as a child draws lines in a sketchbook without hesitation, translating the subject before us into an image is a process of letting go of calculation and rigid frameworks to return to the most honest version of oneself. It reflects the intention to simplify and capture the world's scenery through my own perspective, offering visitors a sense of pure sight and mental rest.

When observing nature, people, and everyday objects, what makes you want to turn a particular subject into a painting?

The reason I want to turn what I observe—nature, people, and everyday objects—into paintings is that, beyond the physical act of depicting and recording the subject, I wish to capture the inner emotions and essential warmth that arise at the moment of observation

on the canvas.

You describe wanting to reach a “pure world” through your paintings. What is this world like, and how do you try to bring it to life?

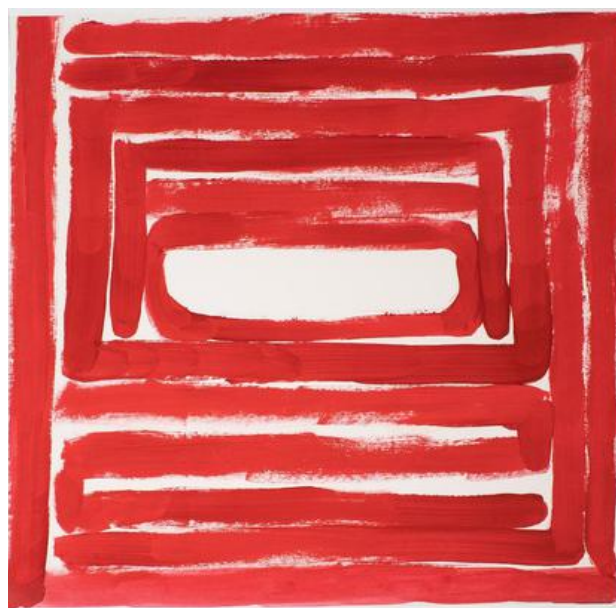
I deliberately reject calculated brushwork and artificial composition. Like a child's doodle, drawing lines over a sketchbook without hesitation, I let go of the pressure for perfection when capturing the first line and color.

How do you decide which details to keep and which to leave out when simplifying a subject?

Leave only the most basic symbols and forms that allow viewers to recognize the subject intuitively.

You say you want to draw viewers into your paintings. What kind of experience would you like them to have once they enter that world?

Framework of modern society and aesthetics, we are constantly required to analyze, seek meaning in, and evaluate the subject. However, in the world of my paintings, no historical knowledge of art or complex interpretations are necessary. The moment the visitor stands before the painting, “What has it painted?” I want them to stop searching for a single correct answer and feel the freedom to let go of their minds without any prejudice, just as a child faces a sketchbook.

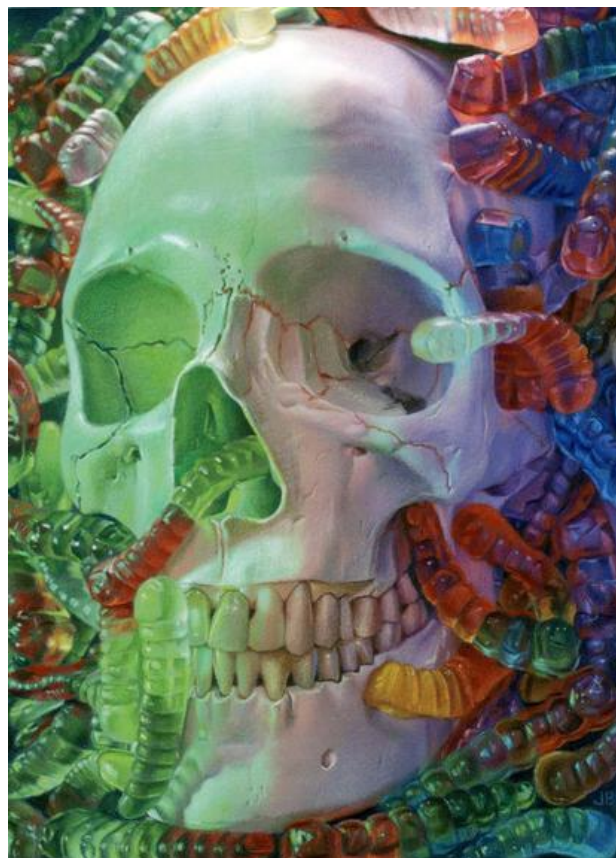


— Interview

JB Burke

Your drawings transform familiar objects into scenes that feel both recognizable and strange. What first draws you to a subject, and how do you know it can sustain a drawing?

I am very drawn to anatomical objects because they symbolize humanity without being easy to dismiss as a specific person. I am drawn to objects that explore the fragility of life and memento mori. What catches my eye initially isn't just their color, texture or physical form, but the invisible cultural baggage they carry. I look for subjects that feel comforting or familiar on the surface, but hold a subtle psychological friction underneath. Because my drawing process in colored pencil and digital media is so slow and labor-intensive, an object has to do more than just look interesting, it has to be capable of world-building, acting as an anchor that can carry themes of consumption, myth, and identity. If an object allows me to explore that delicate space between intimacy and isolation, then it can hold my own curiosity across dozens



JB Burke | Whispers From The Worms III | 2026

of hours of meticulous layering.

How do you build your compositions? Do you arrange objects in front of you, work from photographs, invent elements, or move between these approaches?

My composition process is primarily direct reference where I gather/source or build physical objects and arrange them in the studio (anatomical models, consumer artifacts, or natural specimens). My lighting is pretty basic just to create a value pattern and highlight surface textures. I usually use a single light stand with a daylight bulb so I get a strong range of value and then I apply color theory principles to transform the value map into the color scheme of my choice. I don't usually work from photo references unless my set up includes things that can rot/deteriorate or if the objects are really fragile and a tiny bump to the table could send them tumbling. Once I am drawing, the process is more intuitive and I allow for decisions to be made that respond to the moment. This allows me to anchor the image in believable, tactile realism while giving me complete freedom to construct a fictional, narrative world.



Your work can feel playful and unsettling at the same time. How do you decide where to place that balance?

That balance is really the heart of my work. I'm fascinated by how easily nostalgia, playfulness, and comfort can slip into vulnerability or unease. For me, playfulness acts as an invitation—it's the visual hook that draws a viewer in before they realize they are engaging with deeper themes of mortality, consumption, and human fragility. I don't follow a rigid formula for that ratio; it's something I respond to intuitively during both the setup and drawing process.

Color and light give these objects an almost tangible presence. What role do they play in creating the atmosphere of a drawing?

For me, light establishes the physical reality and tactile weight of an object, while color creates its psychological temperature. Light makes the subject feel touchable and grounded in space. Color, on the other hand, is where I step away from literal representation and engage more in narrative and world-building. By applying color theory principles directly to those value maps rather than just copying local color, I can manipulate the mood of the entire composition.

Your images are meticulously rendered, yet they leave room for uncertainty about what we are seeing. What does realism allow you to do that a less detailed approach might not?

For me, realism is a way to establish trust with

the viewer. When an object or surface is rendered with tactile precision, it carries a sense of physical weight and truth. The viewer's brain immediately accepts that the object exists in space, which creates a feeling of familiarity and security. Once that trust is established, I can subvert it. Realism allows the bizarre or surreal elements to land with more psychological force. The meticulous detail also forces a shift in pacing because the process of building up layers of colored pencil is so slow, the resulting drawing demands a similar slowness from the viewer. It invites them to lean in and inspect the surface, and in that moment of close inspection, the initial certainty of what they are looking at begins to dissolve.

How do you think about titles? Do they offer viewers a way into a work, or do you prefer them to raise further questions?

Titles are important to me as a way to close the chapter on a drawing since I typically title the work after it is finished. I think of it as a conceptual frame that can invite the viewer into the world I've constructed, but I never want a title to be purely descriptive or to "solve" the image. I believe the title is meant to open up the narrative while also leaving room for the viewer to navigate their own questions and associations.

Has teaching changed the way you examine your own choices or take risks in the studio?

Teaching art majors acts as a constant mirror for my own creative habits. When you spend your days asking students to articulate why a specific composition, value map, or color palette works, you can't go back to your own studio and operate on autopilot. It forces me to rigorously audit my own decisions: Am I choosing this color scheme because it serves the atmosphere, or simply because it feels safe? Teaching has also reshaped how I approach risk, particularly in a slow, labor-intensive medium like colored pencil there is a natural temptation to stick strictly to what you know will work. But watching students throw themselves into unfamiliar territory and discover unexpected solutions reminds me to remain a student in my own studio and to stay curious and prioritize discovery over comfort.

Gwendoline Diane Long is an emerging visual artist dedicated to exploring nature, flowers in organic forms, light, and texture through her creative practice. Working primarily in acrylics and watercolors with pastel accents, she captures the quiet grace of botanical subjects alongside dynamic, expressive movement. Her work focuses on harmony, intuitive mark-making, and the emotional resonance found in nature.

Series Statement / Artwork Descriptions

Collection Title: Botanical Echoes and Movement

Medium & Style: Acrylic and watercolors on canvas/paper

This curated series explores the delicate balance between structural botanical forms and raw emotional energy. Grounded in a serene palette of cool blues, soft whites, and vibrant greens, the works bridge minimalist stillness with dynamic abstraction.

Project Statement

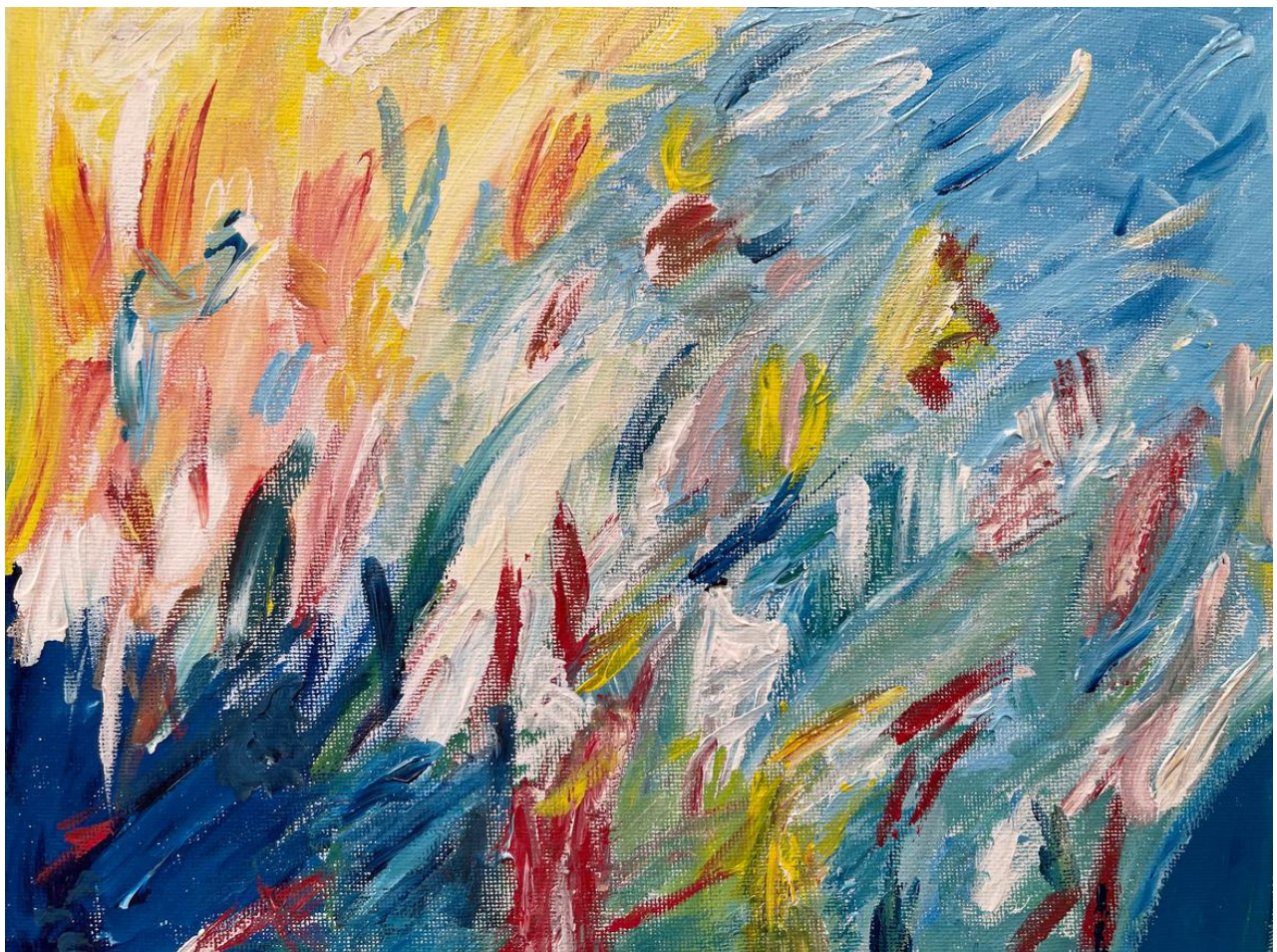
"Dynamic Color Field":

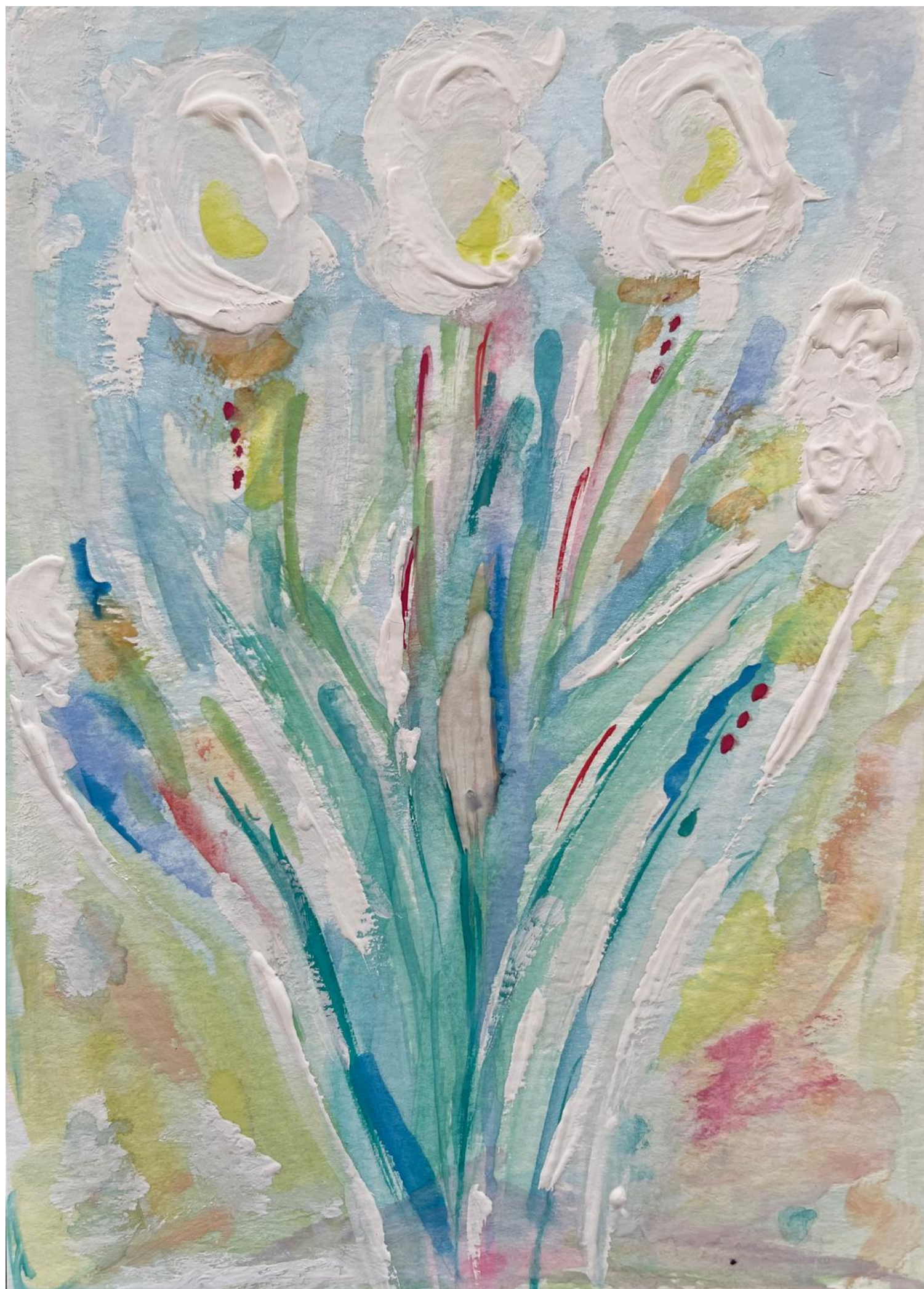
An energetic abstract expressionist work utilizing sweeping strokes of yellow, blue, and red. This piece provides a powerful emotional and textural counterpoint to the floral studies, evoking the raw movement of wind and light across a landscape.

"Lush Bouquet": (Cala Lily)

A vibrant multi-stem composition that expands on the botanical motif. Cascading vertical strokes of green and blue anchor a lush arrangement of textured white blossoms, creating a sense of growth, rhythm, and natural abundance.

Gwendoline Diane Long | Floral Color | 2026





Gwendoline Diane Long | Lily Bouquet | 2026

— Interview

Olga Horne



What first drew you to abstraction, and when did you realise that geometry could express personal experiences and emotions?

I've always been drawn to geometry and mathematics. After finishing school, I studied engineering and completed my degree, but art was always where my heart belonged.

What fascinates me most is nature's creativity. The



Olga Horne | Philosophies | 2025

movement of clouds, the vastness of space, the rhythm of waves, the texture of rocks, the endless patterns and colours around us. There is something magical in all of it. I've always been curious and eager to explore, and creating has become part of that lifelong search.

Since childhood, I've been drawn to fundamental questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What am I here to do? Those questions eventually led me to an irresistible need to create. Art is my voice, my presence and my purpose.

Over time, I realised that much of life is about bringing opposites together. Joy and sorrow, order and chaos, light and shadow. They define each other and create energy through their relationship. That energy is what drives growth, change and evolution.

Geometry gives me a way to express that. It provides structure and order, while colour carries emotion and reflective surfaces introduce movement and change. I spend a lot of time studying light and perspective, and how they transform both matter and our experience of the world.

For me, the viewer is never just an observer. They become an active participant, bringing their own experiences and interpretations to complete the work.

How does a painting begin for you: with a colour, a structure, an emotion, or something else? How much changes as you work?

Most often, a painting begins with a thought. That thought grows into an idea, which leads to research,



reflection and emotional connection. In many ways, my work starts with a word. Words evoke emotions, emotions become images, and those images gradually transform into abstraction.

Sometimes it happens the other way around and an emotion comes first. Something sparks a feeling, and the rest unfolds from there. The image changes constantly while I work, but the essence usually remains the same. Change itself is an important theme in my practice.

As layers of pigment interact with light, every viewer experiences the work differently. What they see depends on their perspective, revealing both shadow and light within themselves. I often use darker colours to speak about fear, gold to suggest love, and precious metals to represent enduring truths.

Rather than presenting a fixed image or meaning, I want the work to become a conversation between the painting and the viewer. Their perception is just as important as my intention.

Your compositions often combine precise geometric forms with softer, less defined areas. How do you find a balance between structure and uncertainty?

I'm interested in the space where structure and uncertainty meet. Through layered forms and subtle geometry, I explore how ideas emerge, evolve and settle into awareness.

The compositions reflect the balance between chaos and order. To me, thought is both fragile and

intentional.

We build meaning from memories, experiences and emotions, and I try to bring those elements together with purpose while still leaving room for surprise and discovery.

Ultimately, my work creates a space where each viewer can connect with their own inner universe and find something personal within the experience.

What role do layers and traces of earlier decisions play in your paintings? Do you ever leave something visible because it changes the meaning of the work?

Layers are essential to my process. I think of my paintings as stories that unfold over time. Each layer holds experiences, thoughts, emotions and questions, gradually building towards understanding. I often leave traces of earlier decisions visible because they become part of the painting's history. They reveal the journey rather than just the destination. Just as our experiences shape who we are, those earlier moments give the work depth, character and meaning. My paintings exist as an ongoing dialogue. Between the painting and the viewer, but also between the conscious and subconscious mind.

You explore vulnerability and resilience through abstraction. How do you approach an emotion without turning it into a literal image?

Our understanding of images comes from our



personal experiences of the world. Emotion, however, is both deeply individual and universally understood. We may describe the same feeling differently, but at its core there is often a shared human experience. Rather than illustrating emotions directly, I try to create a space where viewers can encounter their own feelings and interpretations. In that sense, the experience can be similar to meditation, where attention is gently focused on a feeling or state of being.

Colour, light, materiality and spatial relationships all play important roles in that process. I use them to create experiences that encourage reflection, self-awareness and connection.

Light is especially important in my practice. Shadow transforms into light, and light both illuminates and disrupts darkness. That dialogue between contrasts becomes the language of the painting. Each work represents a stage on a journey, from fragmentation towards wholeness, and from fear towards love.

Has a viewer ever found a meaning in one of your paintings that you had not anticipated? Did it change how you saw the work?

Yes, many times, and I find it fascinating. Sometimes people see things in a painting that I hadn't consciously considered myself. It doesn't usually change the way I see the work, but it often expands it. It's as though another chapter has been added to the story. The painting remains the same, but my understanding of its possibilities becomes richer. What's equally fascinating is when someone responds

to a painting exactly as I intended. Both experiences remind me that art is a meeting point between the artist and the viewer. One of my favourite experiences is listening to people talk about my work when they don't realise I'm nearby. It's fascinating to hear what they discover within it.

My paintings are like open books, or perhaps welcoming dreams. You never know what someone might see, remember or feel when they engage with them. Every person brings their own experiences, beliefs and imagination, so the work can reveal something different to each viewer.

The human mind is a universe in itself, full of possibilities and perspectives. Just as dreams can change each time we revisit them, my paintings continue to evolve through the interpretations of those who view them. I am constantly learning, not only from my own creative process, but also from the way people connect with the work and the meanings they bring to it.

Your work has recently reached audiences in several countries. Have those encounters influenced how you think about the relationship between the painting and its viewer?

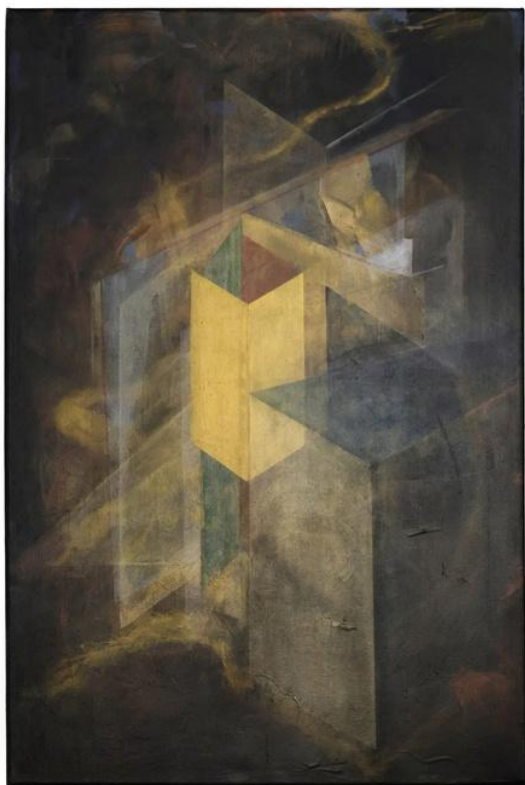
To be honest, not in a fundamental way. My view of the relationship between a painting and its viewer was shaped long before my work began reaching audiences internationally.

I've spent much of my life travelling, living in different places and experiencing different cultures, political systems and ways of life. Those experiences taught me that everything is fluid and constantly evolving. Perspective is never fixed. It can shift whenever we choose to see something differently.

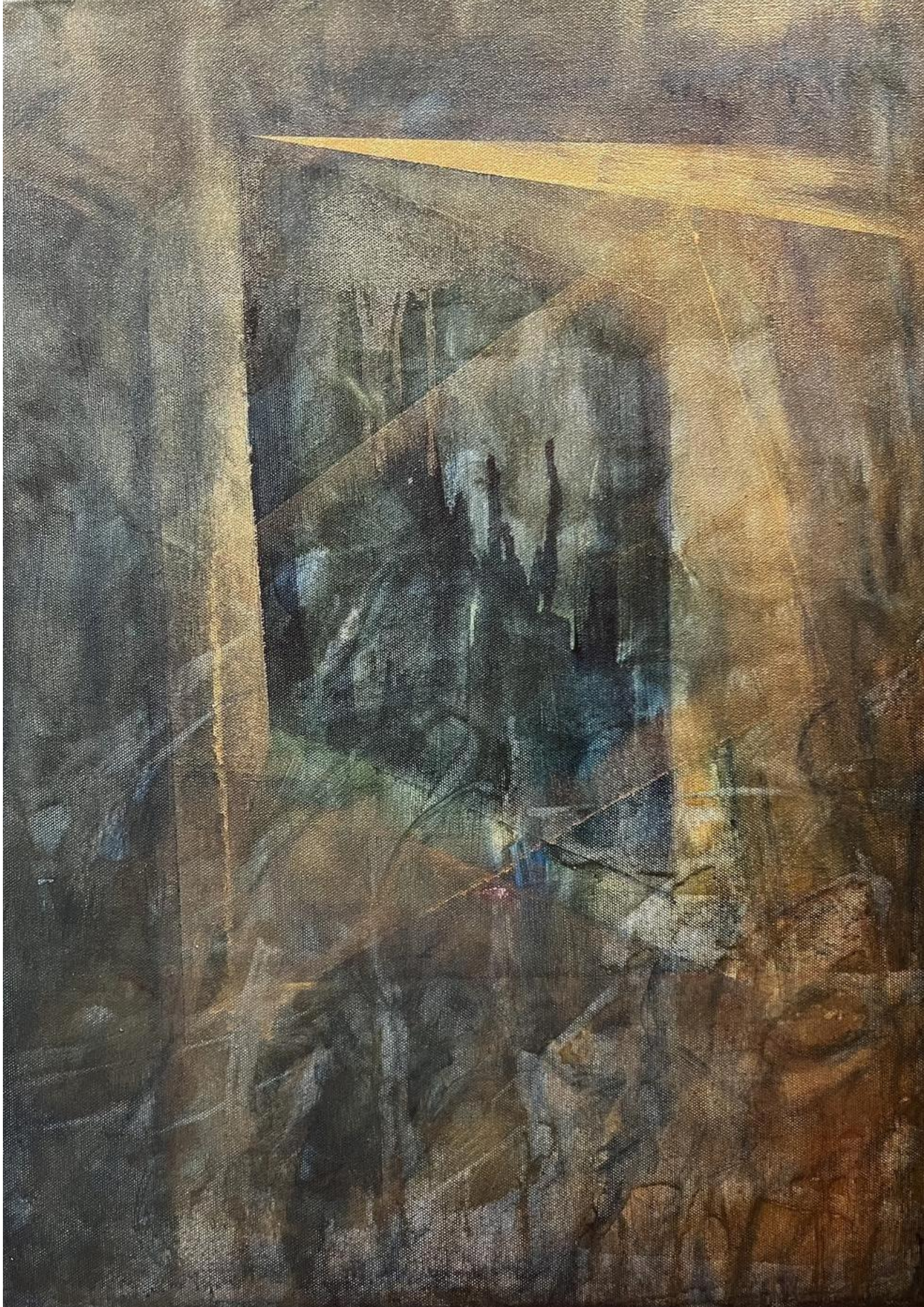
That said, I am always learning. Every exhibition, every conversation and every response to my work teaches me something. I learn from the way people interact with a painting, the emotions they bring to it, and the meanings they discover within it. I learn from my own experiences, from others' experiences, and from the ever-changing world in which we all coexist.

So while international audiences haven't changed my belief that art is a dialogue between artist and viewer, they have continually enriched that dialogue. They remind me that people from very different backgrounds can connect through shared emotions, questions and experiences. In many ways, my practice has always been global. I see myself as a citizen of the world, connected by our common humanity rather than by borders.

My paintings are a way of exploring and expressing those ideas. They allow me to share my perspective while inviting others to reflect on their own. Through them, I speak my truth and create space for dialogue, connection and discovery.



Olga Home | The Heart | 2025



Kazuhisa Oishi

Nature photographer/digital artist.

Born in Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan in 1982.

he was born and raised in Shizuoka Prefecture, surrounded by rich nature, he developed his sensitivity as a nature photographer.

At first, he took photos of flowers such as cherry blossoms, camellias, and hydrangeas as a hobby, but in 2020, he encountered Japanese wildflowers and became fascinated by their charm.

Since then, he has continued to share the charms of Japan's nature, with a focus on Japan's wildflowers, to people all over the world, including Japan, mainly on Instagram.

Project Statement

My photographic work explores the fragile presence of endemic wildflowers in Japan, situated within ecologically constrained territories. I do not photograph nature as a merely aesthetic subject, but as a space of tension between visibility and disappearance, between emergence and erasure.

Japan is marked by a profound seasonal consciousness, embedded for centuries in its literature and visual arts. My practice engages with this tradition while shifting it toward a contemporary reflection on ecosystem vulnerability and the temporality of living forms.

Born in Shizuoka Prefecture, a region defined by dramatic changes in altitude—from Mount Fuji to the Japanese Southern Alps—I grew up surrounded by diverse natural environments. This territorial diversity shaped both my perception and my relationship to space.

I began photographing in 2017. A decisive moment was discovering a wild specimen of *Cypripedium japonicum* within a Shinto sanctuary. This encounter initiated a research focus on wild plants and their specific inscription within a given territory. Later, while photographing *Parnassia foliosa*, I was struck by the visual tension between the light on the water's surface and the almost silent presence of the plant.

Wild plants do not seek to be seen. They persist under sometimes precarious ecological conditions, occupying often marginal or hard to-access areas. Many endemic and alpine species have extremely limited ranges, making their presence both rare and vulnerable.

Photography thus becomes an act of threshold: making perceptible what remains at the edge of human perception. It is not merely documentation, but an inquiry into the ways certain natural territories resist full visibility.

My images attempt to capture a suspended moment—a slice of time—where plant presence interacts with light, air, water, and season. They exist at the intersection of the seasonal awareness inherited from Japanese tradition and a contemporary approach attentive to the fragility of life.

Together, these works constitute an ongoing exploration of the fragile visibility of living beings within specific territories.

Kazuhisa Oishi | Kawazu Cherry Blossoms in Full Bloom and Mount Fuji





Mirela Lozanova Lyubenova- Mika

How has your transition from studying illustration at the Iliya Petrov School of Fine Arts to graphic design at Sofia University changed the way you approach painting?

Studying illustration at the Iliya Petrov School of Fine Arts gave me a strong foundation in drawing, composition, observation, and traditional techniques. It taught me to pay attention to detail and to think about how an image can communicate an idea or a feeling. But studying graphic



design at Sofia University has expanded the way I think about visual language. I became more aware of structure, geometry, balance, color, and how separate elements interact within a composition. I think this combination has influenced my painting quite strongly. I still approach painting with the sensitivity and freedom I developed through illustration, but I now also think more consciously about composition and visual rhythm.

You describe your work in terms of postmodernism and abstraction. What do these ideas mean to you in your own artistic practice?

For me, postmodernism is mainly about freedom — the freedom to combine different influences, styles, references, and ideas without feeling that I have to follow one particular artistic language. I like the idea that an artwork can contain contradictions and different visual approaches at the same time. Abstraction gives me another kind of freedom. It allows me to move away from simply representing what I see and instead focus on emotions, shapes, colors, and relationships between forms. I don't always want the viewer to have one specific interpretation. I like leaving space for their own associations and experiences.

Your works range from portraits and imagined landscapes to abstract compositions. What determines whether you develop an idea through a recognizable subject or through abstract forms?

It usually depends on what I want the work to communicate.



Mirela Lozanova Lyubenova-Mika | Lotos 2.0



Sometimes an idea begins with something recognizable — a person, a landscape, or a particular atmosphere — and I feel that the subject is important to the meaning of the painting. Other times, the subject is only a starting point. I gradually simplify or transform it until the recognizable elements almost disappear and what remains are shapes, colors, and movement. I don't necessarily decide this at the beginning. The painting itself often determines how far I take the idea toward abstraction.

Geometric shapes appear throughout your work, sometimes becoming part of faces or natural settings. What interests you about reinterpreting organic forms through geometry?

I find the contrast between organic and geometric forms very interesting. Nature and the human figure are naturally irregular and fluid, while geometry introduces a sense of structure and order. When I combine the two, I can look at familiar things in a different way. A face, for example, can still remain recognizable while being broken down into geometric planes and shapes. For me, this creates a balance between something natural and something constructed, which is also connected to my interest in graphic design.

Your paintings include both warm, earthy palettes and cooler combinations of blue, turquoise, and violet. How do you choose the colors that will shape the atmosphere of a work?

I choose colors according to the feeling I want the painting to have rather than following a fixed palette. Warm colors can create a sense of intimacy, energy, nostalgia, or warmth, while cooler colors can make a work feel more distant, calm, mysterious, or dreamlike. Sometimes the colors appear quite naturally while I am working. I may begin with one color that feels important and build the rest of the palette around it. I also enjoy creating contrasts between warm and cool tones

because they can give the composition more depth and tension.

Which artists, visual traditions, or experiences outside art have had the strongest influence on your work so far?

My education has definitely been one of the strongest influences on me, especially the traditional drawing and painting training I received at the Iliya Petrov School of Fine Arts. At the same time, I am influenced by many different visual sources rather than by one particular artist or movement. Graphic design, contemporary visual culture, architecture, nature, photography, and everyday experiences all find their way into my work. I am especially interested in the way different visual languages can coexist. I think that is one of the reasons I am drawn to combining recognizable imagery with abstraction and geometric elements.

As you begin sharing your work with a wider audience, what would you like to explore next, and how do you hope exhibiting will contribute to your development?

I would like to continue experimenting with the relationship between figurative painting, abstraction, and graphic forms. I want to become more confident in developing larger and more complex compositions and to explore new ways of using color and geometry.

Exhibiting my work is important to me because it allows the paintings to exist outside my own studio and become part of a dialogue with other people. I am interested in seeing how different viewers respond to the same work, because their interpretations can reveal things about the painting that I may not have considered myself. More than anything, I see exhibiting as another part of learning. I want to keep experimenting, trying new approaches, and allowing my work to develop naturally rather than limiting myself to one particular style.



— *Exhibition review*

Ivelina Stoyanova – Still Her

by **Anna Gvozdeva**

Captaloon Art Gallery, Madrid
28–29 September 2026

One Image, Many States

Ivelina Stoyanova contributed a single framed print to the exhibition at Captaloon Art Gallery in Madrid, and it held its wall with unusual authority. A Bulgarian photographer and researcher working between documentary and fine art practice, Stoyanova treats the photograph less as a record than as material to be worked on. *Still Her* (2026) takes one portrait of a woman and subjects it to fragmentation, layering, concealment and alteration.



The project's wager is that the sitter stays recognisable while never quite remaining the same.

The Tear as Method

The exhibited image compresses that process into one surface. A warm, sepia-toned portrait fills the left side: a woman with a flower-shaped earring rests her fingers against her jaw, eyes turned aside, in a pose borrowed from mid-century studio glamour. A ragged vertical tear opens onto a second layer of the same face, printed in cold cyan and set slightly off register. Its features refuse to align with the first; an eye appears where a brow should be, so the face seems to look twice - once away from us, once straight at us. A second, horizontal tear exposes the lowest fragment: an untreated section of the original black-and-white photograph, showing the hand at the chin, a bracelet that appears to be pearl, and polka-dot fabric. It reads as the series' point of origin, a glimpse of the image from which every transformation began. The white, fibrous edges of the tears act as seams between states, and they carry the work's argument. Identity here is neither lost nor restored; it is stacked, and each revision



leaves the earlier one partly visible. The title earns its ambiguity. "Still" reads as persistence - she remains herself despite the damage - and as the photographic still, the arrested frame. Stoyanova holds both meanings without forcing a choice.

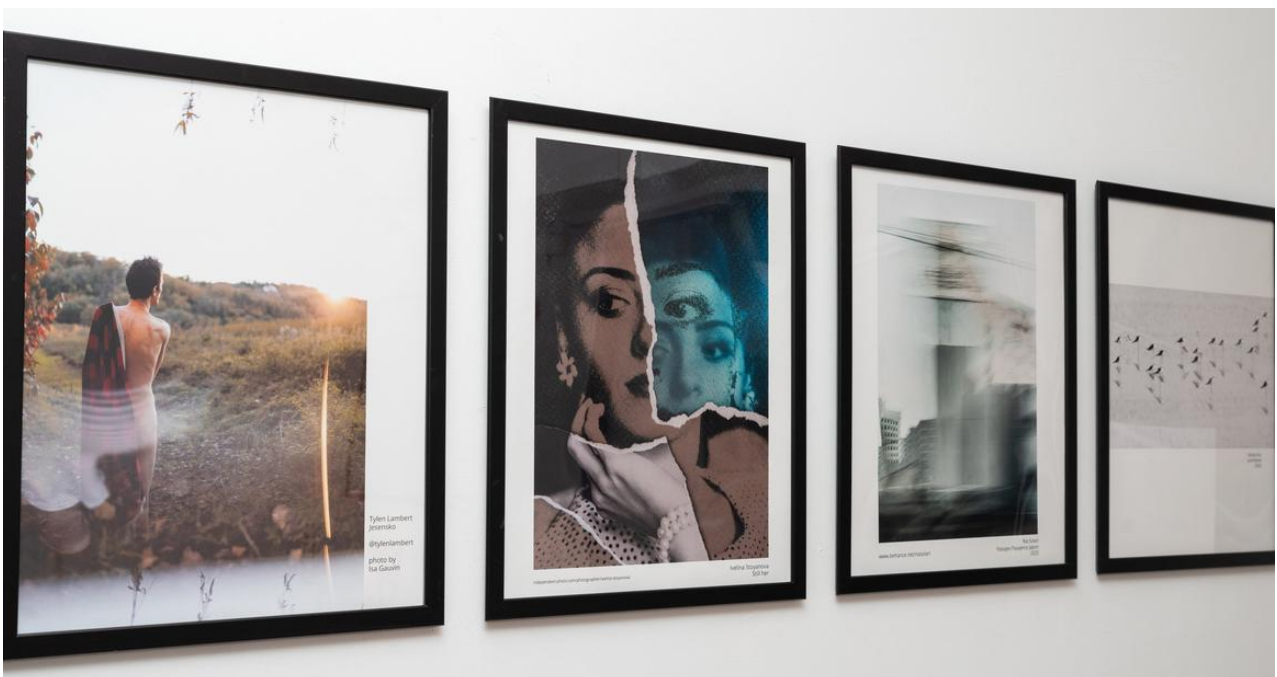
On the Wall

The work hung in a single eye-level row of uniformly black-framed prints with generous white margins. Its neighbours leaned toward muted tones, soft-focus landscape and blurred urban motion; against them, *Still Her* was the most saturated and graphically dense image in the sequence. Placed at the end of one wall, it worked as a visual full stop - the image the eye lands on first in the installation views. Its closest dialogue was with an adjacent blurred cityscape.

Both treat the photograph as an unstable surface, but Stoyanova locates that instability in a human face, which raises the emotional stakes considerably.

Assessment

The strengths are clear: a precise central idea, a confident colour contrast, and a structure in which form and content coincide. The tear is not decoration; it is the method made visible. Torn-paper imagery has become a widespread graphic idiom, and the work's force depends on the precision of its specific choices. Stoyanova meets that test: the displaced eye and the cold cyan layer turn a familiar effect into a statement about looking and recognition. In places the tears follow the contours of the face almost too neatly, guiding the eye rather than unsettling it; later states of the series could afford to take more risk. Equally notable is how much of the project a single state of *Still Her* contains. Through its layers the whole arc of change can be sensed, from the original photograph to its new versions, and the viewer completes the series on their own. The retro styling - pearls, polka dots, the studio pose - also needs careful handling, since nostalgia can easily overpower inquiry. Here it mostly serves as a reminder that the feminine image has always been constructed. *Still Her* is an intelligent, visually arresting work by a photographer whose most interesting material is the photograph itself. The series is well worth following as it develops.



— Interview

Ismail Ucci

You describe your art as constantly changing and full of variety. What gives such a diverse body of work its underlying sense of continuity?

My work occasionally entirely gets spun out of my head, from my imagination, starting off from extraordinary images that dropped into my mind, 'like a slide show'. Sometimes I feel my emotions are neurotic and almost hysterical both imagined yet observed with my own interpretation of the visceral energy. I always tend to put things as directly and rawly as I can. Somehow I want to combine the compelling sense of reality that could also be found in the greatest



Ismail Ucci | Artist Studio



paintings of Egon Schiele and Klimt with the sense of imaginative effects. It has to feel truly fresh as figurative narrative has to be searched and decoded. I want the spontaneity in the way paint goes onto the canvas or paper, not in a direct layout of the picture that I had priorly visualized. In my work the viewer can be brought much closer to the surface of the posing model's skin that one would be in a normal social encounter.

Your practice combines a search for order and harmony with spontaneous, energetic mark-making. How do control and intuition interact while you work?

I believe each time beginning something a testament forms in its intimacy in everyday physical, psychological and emotional. I've developed a idiosyncratic way of working almost captive for the others yet unknown to my own realization. When I am engaged in drawing or painting the subject must be kept under closest observation so that he, she or it could manifest everything silently about themselves. It happens unconsciously through capturing movements and attitudes through variation from one moment to another.

Many of your compositions are built through overlapping lines, figures and areas of colour. Do these layers record different stages of thought, memory or time?

When I begin at a starting point a vague and blurry vision appears and I start to execute on my easel, peering intensely at the model posing, as well as its surroundings. I jostle down faintly the atmosphere of the drawing and its nervous tension. The strangeness in which every nitty gritty details are studied with mesmerizing attention, so that it becomes as beautiful as the enriched layers of pigments painted by such



as the renaissance master Titian. The leaf is as much of importance as the figure, every sharply angle treated as individual. I usually set myself a task that is how to combine a sense of greater gusto and thicker, juicier paint with my own artistic style of depicting the distinct form and texture of each individual figure with tones of colour. For example if I am drawing or painting from life it doesn't give me the time, that I require and it continually bugs me too express that the art work is not yet finished and I must work from memory if needed be.

Human figures frequently appear fragmented, repeated or intertwined with their surroundings. What does the figure allow you to express?

I think and emphasis that to draw is a life long passion, an almost unattainable ideal, because the standards I set myself are so high. It is very challenging to learn sensibility, hence I aim to draw with a full sense of poetic reference and a real sense of belonging and holding on to it. It is as if the figures in my drawings somehow turned into a pigment, great swirls, scoops, ropes and layers of thick graphite marks. It seems to go through heaven and hell, falling in love with every happy mark-making passing all the obstacles and distortions.

Space in your work often resists conventional perspective, with foreground and background merging into one another. What interests you about creating this kind of spatial ambiguity?

What really excites me and directs my way of working is using both the pictorial and spatial ratio on the surface of the paper. The spontaneous mark-making gives my work a sort of exhilarating energy creating a sort of merging boundary. I observe both with imagination and sense of presence within given space of time. I intend for the viewer to find focal point surrounded on all sides by darting and zinging blurry lines. The elaborate confusion of lines are spurted with colour and seem to appear fierce and fascinating subjects for me to unravel and depict without thinking too much of an end result.

What role does color play beyond describing what you see? Can a work begin with a color relationship before its imagery becomes clear?

The color is too important for me in all its guises and forms as the warmth of most lovely browns, and warm grays and reds with chalky surfaces giving it that odd kind of softness. I

use color in its purest form, layering it where necessary breaking away from the rules and creating my own sense of expression, toying with emotions. I patiently and gradually add one fragment after another, and moving it painstakingly until I achieve a balance that I seek. The juxtaposition of forming texture, pattern and color create an interrelationship where nothing is segregated yet form in its entirety as one picture plane. The characteristic of bold originality incorporated into the design as a whole using color as the basis of its formation.

You work with brushes and rags, applying paint both thickly and thinly, How do these different physical approaches affect the character and direction of a painting?

My focus remains both on the surface and beneath the layers, hence it takes up lot of energy to keep it raw and clean. I intend to retain a harmonious coherence working stage by stage on each and every layer. The pigment and my handling of paint, keeps a combination of warm and cool colors in a limited palette to achieve a soft, velvety and chalky texture. My studio becomes a melting pot for experimental techniques keeping a swathe of samples and studies to take into a more refined works.

Sometimes it takes days for it to settle down into my mentality and can take awhile to dry for the next layer to be applied, until I begin to see it loosely worked on and progressively complete.

After years of experimentation, are there any artistic habits or assumptions that you are currently trying to unlearn?

My temper and occasionally an impatience leads me to break all the rules and create through unconscious realization. A more refined and a professional approach keeps me at an edge to not over work. I would instantly know if it has become tightly orientated, hence I should move inbetween finishing a work and leaving it half complete, which I can return to at a later stage, whilst I can look afresh at another. I always priorities an immediate effect that I want to achieve over preservation. The referenced sketches and research bring me back to the beginning of a relationship between what I imagine and intended at the start. I am currently engaged in the practice of drawing dance and motion at the Topolski Studio. A place where I feel to unravel great mystery of drawing movement instead of static images.



Yanina Tuyman is a contemporary artist originally from Omsk, Russia, and currently based in Ottawa, Canada, where she has lived since 2013. She holds a Master's Degree in Fine Arts from Omsk University.

After years of working as a digital designer and graphic artist, Yanina turned to painting to explore the expressive and tactile possibilities of traditional art materials. Her background in digital art informs her distinctive approach to colour, composition, and graphic forms, while her love of texture and decorative detail brings depth and a sensory quality to her work.

Animals are at the heart of Yanina's artistic practice. Fascinated by their natural beauty, strength, and fragility, she creates expressive, stylized animal portraits that celebrate the individuality and wonder of the creatures with whom we share our planet. Her work combines the decorative elegance of Gustav Klimt's golden period, the geometric sophistication of Art Deco, and the symbolism of North American First Nations totem art.

Working with acrylic paints, textured pastes, three-dimensional contours, and gold leaf, Yanina creates richly textured compositions featuring bold shapes, intricate patterns, and striking metallic accents. Her distinctive visual language transforms animal portraits into decorative artworks that balance graphic simplicity with tactile richness.

Through her art, Yanina expresses her deep love for animals and her connection with the natural world. She hopes her paintings bring warmth, beauty, and wonder into people's lives while encouraging a greater appreciation of wildlife and reminding viewers of our shared responsibility to protect animals, preserve nature, and care for our planet.

Project Statement

I have always been drawn to the beauty, strength, and gentle vulnerability of animals. They inspire me with their uniqueness and remind me how precious life is. Through my paintings, I want to share my love for these wonderful creatures and celebrate the special place they hold in our world.

My art brings together the golden beauty of Gustav Klimt, the elegance of Art Deco, and the symbolism of North American First Nations totem art. I love experimenting with acrylic paints, textured pastes, three-dimensional contours, and gold leaf to create expressive animal portraits filled with rich textures, decorative patterns, and metallic details.

For me, painting animals is a way to express my connection with nature and the emotions it awakens in me. We share this beautiful planet with them, and I believe it is our responsibility to protect wildlife and care for our common home.

I hope my paintings bring joy, warmth, and a little wonder into people's lives. Above all, I would love for my art to inspire viewers to see animals with greater tenderness and remind them how important it is to cherish and protect the world we share.



Yanina Tuyman | Azure Blue Whale | 2026



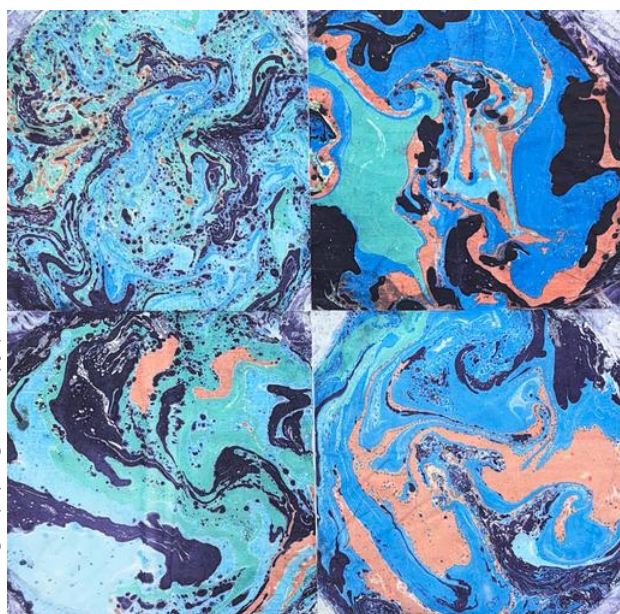
Yanina Tuyman | Emerald Deer | 2026

— Interview

Wu Mingze



Your creative practice centers on fluid color experiments and material-driven painting processes. What initially attracted you to adopt this painting approach?



Wu Mingze | Spring Tide Mapy | 2026

I was initially drawn to fluid and material-based creation because it bridges the gap between controlled artistic expression and natural vitality. Unlike traditional painting that relies solely on precise manual brushwork, fluid materials carry unique, spontaneous kinetic energy. This creation method allows colors and textures to evolve naturally, which perfectly matches my artistic pursuit of capturing subtle, unpredictable changes in life and nature. I believe the most touching artistic moments often come from the interaction between human intention and material nature, and this creative approach gives my works unique vitality and inclusiveness that traditional rigid painting methods cannot achieve.

In your works, paints flow, diffuse, collide and overlap. How do you balance the natural properties of materials and your own creative intentions?

My balance lies in “pre-set direction and fine-tuned intervention”. First, I define the overall tone, composition logic and emotional theme of the work in advance through color selection, material proportioning and canvas layout, which is the controllable creative intention. During the creation process, I fully respect the natural flow, diffusion and collision laws of pigments to retain the unique random texture of materials. When the natural changes of materials deviate from the core artistic conception I want to express, I intervene subtly through angle adjustment, partial guidance and layered superposition. In short, I take the natural characteristics of materials as the foundation and my creative intention as the core, integrating random natural beauty and subjective artistic design organically.

At which stage of creation do you begin to intervene in accidental forms, and how do you judge when a work is finished?

I usually do not intervene in the early stage of creation. I allow the pigments to flow and spread freely to generate the most primitive and accidental textures and forms. I start targeted intervention in the middle and late stages of creation, when the basic framework of the work is formed. At this stage, I will modify overly scattered structures, unify the overall color rhythm, and strengthen the visual hierarchy according to the work's theme. I judge a work to be finished when it achieves a complete balance of vision, emotion and logic. The work needs to have natural and vivid material textures, a unified and coherent overall artistic conception, and no redundant or missing visual languages. Most importantly, it can completely convey the core emotions and themes I want to express, leaving a moderate visual imagination space for the audience.

Spring Tide MapGreen Tide Vortex4. Works such as and evoke aerial views of oceans, coastlines, ocean currents and unfamiliar landforms. How important are these natural and cartographic associations to you?

These natural and cartographic associations are the core spiritual carrier of my series of works and extremely important to my creation. On the surface, ocean currents, coastlines and landform aerial visions are the visual prototypes of my works; on a deeper level, they are symbolic metaphors. The flowing tides and changing landforms represent the uncertainty, mobility and evolution of nature and life, while the cartographic texture implies the exploration, recording and cognition of the world. These associations connect my abstract visual language with real natural cognition and life perception, enabling my abstract works to get rid of empty formal presentation and carry profound emotional and cognitive connotations of observing nature and perceiving life.

Both works are divided into four independent yet interconnected parts. What role does this modular structure play in the audience's viewing experience?

This modular structure builds a layered and progressive viewing experience for the audience. On the one hand, each independent module has its own independent color rhythm and texture detail, which allows the audience to appreciate the unique aesthetic and independent artistic charm of each part separately and capture different subtle emotional changes. On the other hand, the internal connection in tone, theme and visual logic among the four modules ensures the overall unity of the work. It enables the audience to integrate the scattered independent pictures in the viewing process, perceive the complete artistic conception and progressive emotional rhythm of the work, and understand the overall creative theme through local details. This design also echoes the pluralistic and fragmented perceptual characteristics of modern people's cognition of the world.

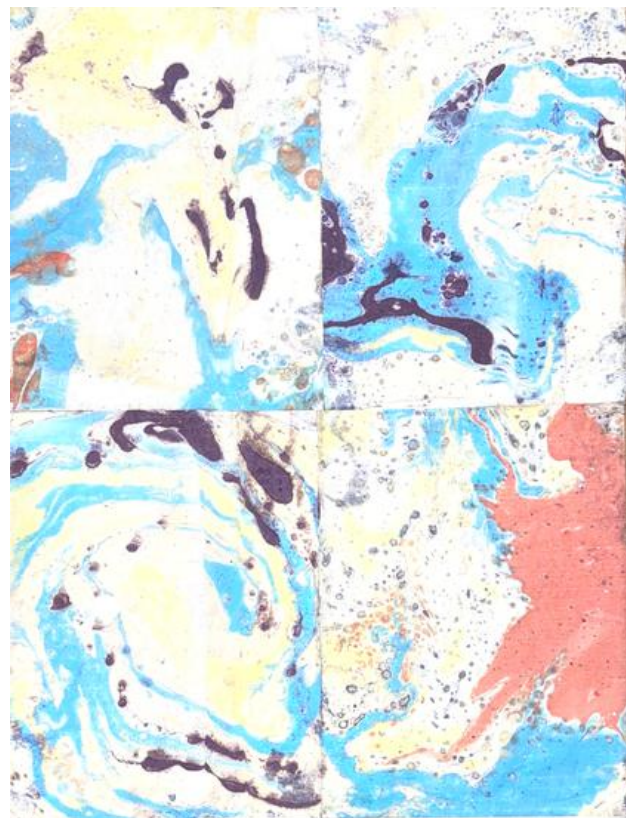
You have lived, studied and worked in the UK, the US, Canada, Singapore, Malaysia and other regions. How have these cross-cultural experiences influenced your visual language and understanding of abstract art?

My rich cross-cultural experiences have profoundly shaped my inclusive and diverse abstract visual language and global artistic perspective. First of all, the diversified artistic

education and market environments in Europe and America have made me break the single aesthetic paradigm, enabling me to understand that abstract art is not limited to fixed forms, but a diverse expression of inner emotions and cognitive thinking. Secondly, the integration of Eastern and Western cultures formed by living in multiple countries has made my works combine the free and unrestrained visual tension of Western abstract art and the implicit and inclusive artistic conception of Eastern aesthetics. In addition, cross-cultural migration and life experience have made my understanding of abstract art more focused on universal human emotions such as integration, change and adaptation, making my visual language more international and inclusive, and transcending regional cultural limitations.

Themes such as memory, migration, order and uncertainty run through your creations. How do you integrate your personal experiences into works that avoid direct representation?

I integrate personal experiences and inner perceptions into creation through abstract visual symbols such as color rhythm, material texture, picture layering and flowing tracks, instead of direct figurative representation. My repeated cross-border migration life has accumulated rich memories of wandering and integration. The irregular flow, collision and superposition of pigments in the works correspond to the uncertainty and change of migration life. The overall orderly picture framework and local random textures form the confrontation and unity of order and chaos, which precisely reflects the life state of maintaining self-order in the face of uncertain changes. All my personal perceptions and life experiences are internalized into the rhythm, tension and layering of the works, allowing the audience to perceive the implicit emotional and thematic connotation through visual experience.



Wu Mingze | Green Tide Vortex | 2026

— Interview

Pablo Gabriel Ribeiro Danielli

How has your background in architecture and urban planning shaped the way you observe and frame a scene?

My background significantly influences how I "read" a space, location, or object. I look for details that go unnoticed by the general public. Concepts of spacing, vantage points, and composition are strongly influenced by architecture.

You describe your practice as "pure photography," without image editing. What does preserving the original moment mean to you as an artist?



Pablo Gabriel Ribeiro Danielli | The Headlight



We live in a largely digital world where images can be altered to grab attention, generate engagement, and garner likes—and that's fine; I believe there is an audience for every style. However, this can disrupt the general public's expectations. Social media has amplified the illusion of perfection, so encountering reality can sometimes lead to frustration. Great historical photographs feature little to no alteration—often just a subtle adjustment of light and shadow contrast. I believe some of that purity has been lost with the advent of editing software and AI.

You aim to make your photographs evoke the feeling of a painting. What qualities make a scene "pictorial" to you before you even take the shot?

Yes, that's true; art strongly influences my approach to photography. Whenever something new emerges, people claim the old is dead; yet, the best compositions and studies of light and shadow are found in paintings. It is essential to constantly learn from art movements. I feel I've succeeded when I can convey a specific feeling or even prompt the viewer to imagine a story behind the captured moment.

Light and shadow play a central role in your work. Do you seek out specific lighting conditions, or do you react to what you find?

The contrast between light and shadow is certainly



essential, but I don't go around snapping photos like crazy just to pick out a "good" one later. I believe that part of what I do involves observing far more than just taking a picture. A photograph is a combination of factors and intentions; in my view, it reveals itself. A place or a space often shows itself in subtle ways, and paying attention to details is more important than having a gallery full of meaningless photos.

Many of your photographs show places with few or no people in the frame. What can an apparently empty space reveal about the people who use it?

The world is full! (Laughs) Showing emptiness stems from an intention to provoke reflection on the space we occupy. Life happens even when we aren't there; routines and environments exist and coexist with human beings. We are the subjects, and we give meaning to things. Meaning exists only because we exist; whether it's a complete stranger or a famous person, the space remains the same, but the meaning differs.

How does your knowledge of art history influence your photography? Are there specific artists or visual traditions that have changed the way you see things?

In architecture school, we already have courses on art studies, but when I sought to specialize in art history, a

new horizon of possibilities opened up. When you explore art movements and understand the intentions of various painters and the eras they lived in, it's very hard not to be influenced—directly or indirectly—by painting. I really like Caravaggio, Monet, Vermeer, Hopper, and so many others; it's hard to find a work of art that doesn't make an impact.

When returning from a day of shooting, how do you decide which images captured the essence of a place or moment?

The image has to express something—to "speak" and convey meaning. Sometimes I take photos that are technically sound but lack the depth needed to spark any kind of reflection in me. However, when I take a photo and later look back at it, and it somehow prompts a different way of thinking than the one I had at the moment of the shot—that is a photo that truly justifies its existence as a "painting."

But this is deeply personal; every image has a different impact on each of us. What resonates with me won't necessarily have the same effect on someone else. Although I have a background in architecture and art, the entire life experience I carry with me—the good times and the bad—forms part of this way of expressing myself through photography. It is up to the viewer to look at the photograph and, drawing on their own experiences, decide whether or not it makes sense to them. In a way, it will always be a work defined by multiple perspectives.



Allan Gregorio (b. 1992, São Paulo) is a digital artist based in Lisbon, Portugal. He has worked independently since 2012, mostly with 3D CGI characters, augmented reality filters and digital fashion. His hand-built CGI portraits have been published by Kaltblut Magazine. His AR filters are used by people on Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram, and a filter he made for TECNO Mobile set a Guinness World Record. He makes invented, post-human characters about identity, otherness and escapism.

Project Statement

These works are 3D CGI portraits, modelled, textured, lit and rendered by hand. No AI. I build invented characters, some alien, some human, who look straight at the viewer and know they are being seen. I make them to explore identity, otherness and escapism, and how a face can feel both unfamiliar and close. Loverboy began as a self-portrait and became his own person. Now i am with you shows two soft pink aliens leaning on each other. They come from the same place as my AR filters: faces people can try on.

Allan Gregorio | Loverboy | 2020





Allan Gregorio | Now I Am with You | 2021

— Interview

Ján Špireng

Broken focuses on the silence after a breaking point. What drew you to that moment rather than the event that caused it?



Ján Špireng | Broken | 2026



I did not want to show what had broken the person, because the cause can be different for everyone: loss, loneliness, a relationship, illness, failure, or something others might not even consider important. I was more interested in the moment when a person no longer knows how to go on. For me, BROKEN is about being broken and gradually surrendering. It is about feeling that no one around you hears you, even when you are asking for help. At one point, there is still an attempt to make yourself seen: 'I am here. Notice me. Give me your hand.' When that help does not come, surrender follows, along with an acceptance of what has happened.

I wanted to photograph that silence afterwards, because it still holds the question of what comes next. Acceptance does not necessarily mean that everything is over.

The figure appears small beneath a large, dark structure. What drew you to this location, and how does its scale affect the photographs?

Every series begins with an idea. Only then do I look for a location that will help me express it visually.

I found the setting for BROKEN in an ordinary outdoor workout area. To me, the structure felt like a large cage, surrounding the person and closing in on them. I deliberately kept the figure small in the frame to convey helplessness and loneliness: the feeling of facing everything alone, overwhelmed by the space around you.

The large area of black negative space intensifies that feeling. It represents the negativity, emptiness, and isolation a person can experience when they need help but feel that no one hears them.

Much of each image is almost entirely black. How do you decide what the light should reveal and what should remain unseen?

I use light and darkness to draw attention to the central meaning of a photograph. Light can do different things. Sometimes it defines the space where the story unfolds;



sometimes it suggests hope or a direction. At other times, it simply reveals what matters most in an image or a series. Darkness is just as important. It allows me to remove details that do not serve the story and keep the image down to a few essential elements. It can also express uncertainty, pressure, loneliness, or something that remains unknown. So my decisions are guided by what the viewer needs to see in order to feel the story. Everything else can remain in darkness.

We never see what happened before these photographs. How did you decide how much of the story to leave outside the frame?

I deliberately leave out the circumstances that led to the situation in a series, just as I usually avoid giving it a definitive ending. I like to leave both the beginning and the end open. I do not want to tell viewers exactly what happened before the first photograph or what will happen after the last. I show a stretch of the journey and the emotions within it, leaving room for them to imagine the rest. That gives viewers the freedom to create or complete a story of their own through the photographs, drawing on their experiences, memories, and feelings.

What practical choices helped you create the small area of light while preserving the depth of the surrounding darkness?

I photographed BROKEN in the middle of the night, when the outdoor workout area was completely unlit. That gave me almost complete control over the light and darkness. My only light source was a simple headlamp, aimed straight at the scene. It created a small pool of light around the figure, while everything else could disappear into darkness. I also often underexpose my photographs. I am comfortable letting large parts of an image lose detail and become almost completely black. In BROKEN, this was a deliberate choice. I

wanted the light to reveal only what was essential, with the darkness almost swallowing the figure.

What was most difficult about giving visual form to a state between collapse and acceptance?

I think the strength of BROKEN comes from more than the idea behind it. This time, I was photographing my own feelings, rather than an emotion I had imagined or observed. In a way, that made them easier to translate into images. I did not have to work out what that state might look like. I knew it. The hardest part was recognising and admitting that the feelings I was photographing were my own. Perhaps that is why BROKEN is one of the most personal chapters of PROJECT LIFE for me.

The title Broken can sound final, but your description leaves room for acceptance. How do those ideas coexist in this chapter?

BROKEN will not mean the same thing to everyone. For some, being broken may feel like the end from the very beginning. For others, it may be the moment they recognise what has happened. Reaching out for help can also lead to different outcomes. Some people find it; others may not. That is why I did not want to give this chapter a single, definite ending. The final photograph might suggest surrender and a final ending to one person. To another, accepting what has happened might be the first step towards something new. Personally, I do not believe that being broken means we have to remain that way. Even when we feel we cannot go on, I believe we should at least try to get back up and keep moving. It does not matter whether we do it on our own or with someone's help. Sometimes an ending can also be the beginning of something new.



Qintong Yu: Quiet Growth and the Persistence of the Self

By Tabitha Ysart Green

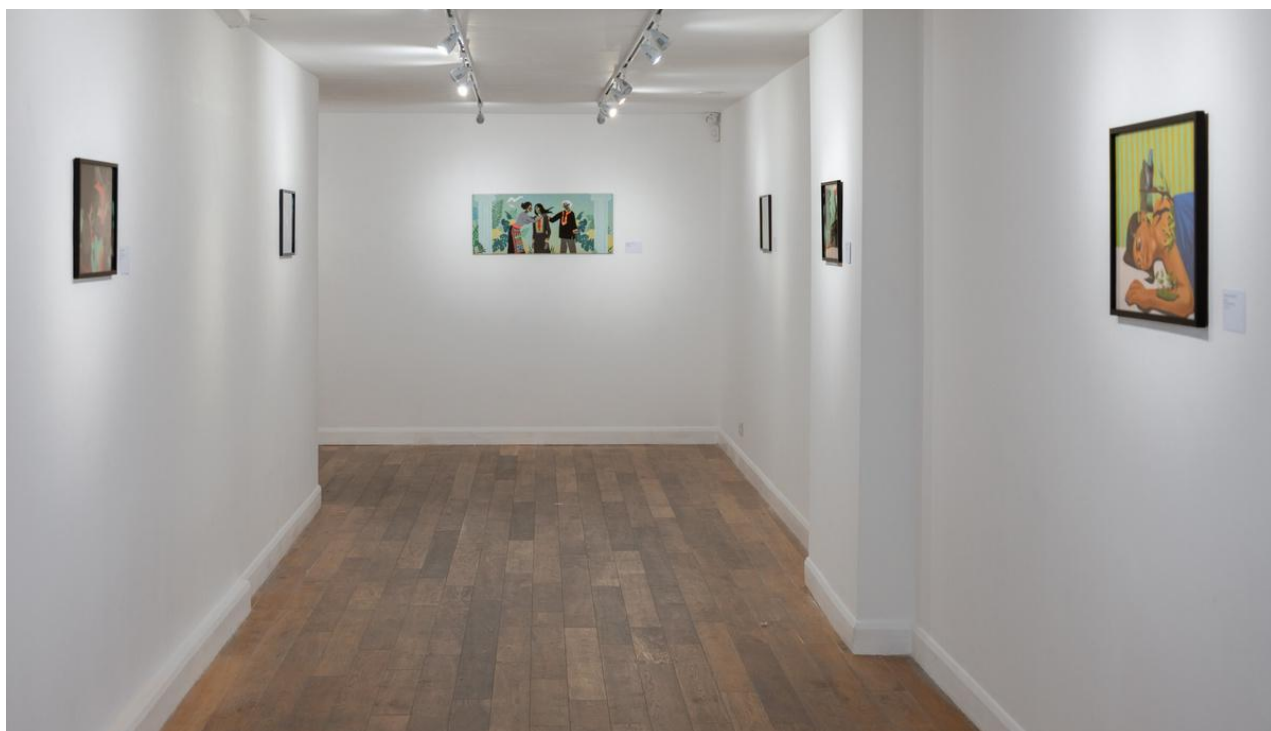
From 28th September to 2nd October 2026, artist Qintong Yu's *Quiet Growth* was presented at Fitzrovia Gallery, London. The exhibition, supported by London Art Collective, is Yu's first solo exhibition in the UK, and explores personal growth, societal pressure, and internal change.

In the exhibited works Yu explores this theme by visualising slow, often imperceptible internal change, translating it into an external force which disjoints and shatters, as well as making the human body the site of germination. Instead of offering a linear narrative of personal growth, Yu provides a multiperspectival approach on the theme, creating multiple representations through which a broad spectrum of viewers may relate to the core theme of growth. Though there is no set route for viewing the artworks, there is a spectrum of abstraction and thematic development which can be followed.

A Matriarchal Weave, the least abstracted piece, connects individual experience with female family and cultural heritage by presenting three generations of women within a family, exploring how intergenerational memory becomes part of the self. In *Veil of Becoming*, Yu simplifies her style to core forms and the interplay of a small colour palette, allowing the bright greens of a mask and muted grays of the self to present the struggle between the external and the internal persona. Through these two works Yu lays the foundation of her study, presenting both the anxieties associated with inherited identity, as well as the mind as a site of personal turmoil. Yu then dips into the world of surrealism in *The Silent Germination*, which depicts the body as a site where plants and birds emerge as metaphorical forms of growth. Here the exhibition shifts from establishing the conditions of change, to exploring change itself.

The exhibition reaches its visual and thematic climax in a trio of works: *Disjointed Perception*, *Layers of Self*, and *Splintered Remains*. These works appear as a series, sharing visual motifs and a cohesive yet jarring colour palette of greys, teals and reds. *Disjointed Perception* presents an alternate representation of the themes explored in *Veil of Becoming*, the dissonance between internal reality and external expectations. Focusing on the senses as a site of tension, Yu explores the splintering effect of attempting to pay attention to both the internal and the external, while continuing to perform. *Layers of Self* develops this internal dialogue further, presenting the two 'selves' as distinct yet interconnected presences. Their interaction suggests an understanding of identity in which concurrent versions of the self coexist instead of resolving into a singular identity. Finally, *Splintered Remains* presents the most chaotic composition of the trio, layering angular shards over multiple faces and wispy, abstract forms. Through the repeated motif of overlapping, mask-like faces, the work suggests that past identities persist in fragmented and altered forms, maintained as caricatures in the mind, and remaining part of the foundation of our present selves rather than being entirely left behind.

Quiet Growth presents a visual exploration of the tensions and personal conflicts inherent in the continual process of personal growth. Through her works, Yu traces the forces that shape and reshape identity, from inherited memory and external expectations to the transformation of the self and the persistence of past identities. The development of subject matter and style suggests a possible route through the exhibition, while the use of abstraction leaves space for individual interpretation and reflection. In doing so, Yu presents growth as a shared human experience and a deeply personal process, one in which change does not necessarily erase the past, but carries it forward into the present.



Exhibition view from 'Quiet Growth', Image courtesy of the artist.



Exhibition view from 'Quiet Growth', Image courtesy of the artist.



Exhibition view from 'Quiet Growth', Image courtesy of the artist.

— Interview

Geraldo Mercado

You have worked in advertising, television, and fashion for more than two decades. How has moving between these fields shaped the way you think about design?

Hopping from profession to profession was super helpful in many ways. I had to learn to stay current, see trends, Designing for shows, you looked at a lot of pop culture. For fashion it was all about trends and colours. Combining all these things helped to design garments for teams, and athletes. I started out designing urban baseball caps and t-shirts for a



Geraldo Mercado | Casa De Merkato "Raven"
Model: Alyssa Solis @alyssa.solis



Photo: Yoshi Amakusa @zeitgeistkiller

company back in High school, Had my Garments featured on magazines, worn by musicians. It's funny how i've gone full circle and am back where I started 25-30 years later.

During what you call your "Renaissance Year", you wrote a children's book and songs while working as a senior designer at NBCUniversal. What prompted that period of experimentation, and what did it teach you about your creative process?

I never wanted to be labeled and put into one box. I have always been a "utility knife" of sorts, it's what's kept me employed. Learning as many disciplines as possible and seeing how to utilize them. As for the children's book and country song, they were a form of therapy for me. Starting a new life of sorts, I needed an outlet. Writing did that for me.

What led you to create Casa De Merkato, and what does the brand allow you to express that your work for other companies does not?

Merkato is a labor of love. I've learned so much designing under the other houses. Designing for nations competing in events, designing for branches of the Armed Forces, Ninja Houses, Obstacle racing Teams, all great experiences. Each project had a logo,



a theme, a look. With Merkato, I get to narrate the story, choose my colours, images and dictate the message and mood. Finding the balance to make it match the athlete is always a challenge. Looking at trends and upcoming colours is my palette of sorts.

Your Bones and Butterflies collection brings together two striking visual motifs. How did the idea for this collection develop, and what do those images mean to you?

Bones and butterflies is my homage to “Balance” The Yin and the Yang if you will. It represents the life of a person and what they do with it in between. A bit cliché but its the best way I can explain it.

When designing a garment for an athlete, where do you begin: with its visual identity, the demands of movement, or the experience of the person wearing it?

It’s actually all 3. What needs to be the dominant factor? Is it the team logo, the message they are trying to get across, or the individuality of the athlete looking to wear something different and break from traditional gear. Experience is key too, If they are bigger on top, how will it drape, are the sleeves restricting, Should i switch to a sleeveless? Do I make it a loose fit, or give it a compression cut and heavier weight? What event/events are they going to be involved in? All these questions all come into play when designing a garment.

How do you balance your own visual instincts with the needs of a client or the expectations of a market? Can you recall a project where that balance was particularly difficult?

I put myself in their shoes. As an athlete myself, there are certain “needs” I would want, and those needs vary from event to event. What I would wear for an outdoor event on the mountains, is not what I would wear for an event indoors on a track or course. So I use those same markers when designing for an athlete or team.

Across apparel, branding, books, and music, are there themes or ideas that you find yourself returning to?

Because I had to solve the problem of the team or athlete, I couldn’t return to a certain theme. For myself now, it’s different, I’m influenced by Artists like Philip Tsiaras. His dot portraits, and control of colour always amazes me. For designers, I love Christian Siriano and Zang Toi, I’ve been to both of their shows and seen up close and backstage the garments on and off the models. I’ve loved constructivism art, Black, White, Red, high contrast, sharp edges.

To be honest, I go where the mood takes me on these projects. There could be something in the logo that inspires me, the colour of the team, the mood or message they want to portray. Nothing is cooler than making an athlete look “fast and sleek” while they are standing still.

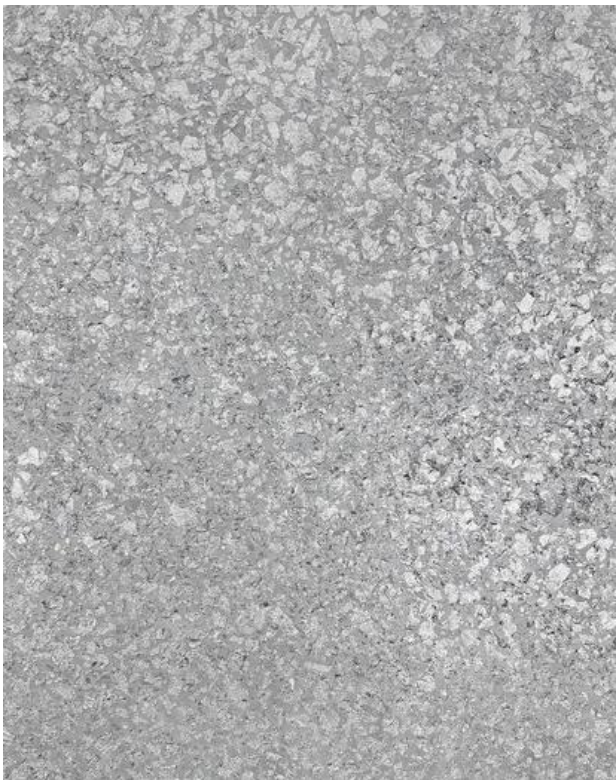


RAMI

ART STUDIO

RAMI

How did light and darkness become central to your artistic practice? Was there a particular experience that first led you to explore their relationship?



RAMI | Shade (그림자)

Many of humanity's stories have always begun with light. For some, light may be a dream; for others, it may be love, or perhaps a person who has held them together for a long time.

Throughout our lives, we each discover our own light. Sometimes we lose it, and sometimes we spend years trying to find it again. I, too, have experienced moments of loss, emptiness, and the desire to find something again while moving through life.

Through those experiences, light came to mean more to me than simply brightness. It came to symbolize hope, passion, and the direction we continue to hold onto, even when everything around us becomes dark.

In that sense, my work is ultimately about the journey of life — discovering our own light, losing it, and finding our way back to it.

What initially drew you to mother-of-pearl and silver leaf, and what does each material allow you to express that the other cannot?

The same object or material can reveal completely different qualities depending on the surrounding light and the position from which it is viewed. I believe our lives and relationships are much the same; they are never fixed in a single form. What first drew me to mother-of-pearl and silver leaf was their ability to transform light without producing light of their own.

Both materials change in color and expression depending on the viewer's position and the direction of the light. At times they shine intensely; at other moments, they almost seem to disappear.

I find this uncertainty and constant transformation deeply reflective of human life and relationships.

If mother-of-pearl represents a light that comes from within — something closer to emotion, feeling, and attitude — then silver leaf represents a light that comes from the outside, from nature and the world around us, something beyond our control.

I am interested in bringing these two different qualities together and allowing them to coexist within a single surface.

Could you walk us through your process, from the first idea to the finished surface? How much is planned, and how much emerges through working with the materials?

When I begin a work, I usually have a general direction and structure in mind, but I do not completely determine what the finished piece will look like beforehand.

With mother-of-pearl and silver leaf in particular, even a small fragment can reflect light differently depending on its position and angle. As a result, unexpected changes naturally emerge during the process.

Rather than trying to control those changes completely, I try to accept them.

I place the fragments one by one, step back to observe the whole surface, then return to the details and make adjustments. I repeat this process many times.

Ultimately, the work is completed through a meeting between my initial intention and the unexpected possibilities revealed by the materials themselves.

For me, making a painting is therefore less about imposing a predetermined image and more about having a continuous dialogue with the materials and discovering a form through that process.

Your surfaces contain countless small fragments. How do you work with their size, placement, and density to create rhythm and a sense of movement?

I do not think of each small fragment simply as a decorative element.

I adjust the size, spacing, direction, and density of the fragments to create a kind of rhythm across the entire surface. Some areas become densely layered, while others are intentionally left open.

These differences encourage the viewer's gaze to move rather than remain fixed in a single place.

More importantly, because the fragments reflect light differently as the viewer moves, I want the work to exist not as a fixed image, but as a surface that continuously changes through the viewer's movement.

Subtle green tones and scattered accents of other colors appear within your predominantly silver and white palette. How do you choose these colors, and what do they bring to the emotional atmosphere of a piece?

For me, color is less a means of directly expressing strong emotions and more a way of changing the temperature and atmosphere of light.

If silver and white create a sense of emptiness or something almost transcendent, green evokes nature, life, and the sensation of coming alive again.

The other colors contain different layers of emotion and traces of memories that we encounter throughout human life.

For this reason, I do not use many colors. Instead, I introduce them like small traces, carefully enough that they do not interrupt the overall flow of light.

I want color to be experienced less as something simply seen and more as something felt.

You describe losing light and searching for it again. Do you see this rediscovery as a return to something familiar, or as finding a different kind of light?

I think it is closer to the latter.

In life, what we lose can rarely return exactly as it was before. The same is true of people, time, and relationships.

When I speak of "returning to the light," however, I mean returning to a place we once loved most, or to the most innocent and sincere part of ourselves.

It is not about recovering the exact light of the past. Rather, after passing through loss, emptiness, loneliness, and longing, it is about facing those memories and feelings again and discovering a new way of living with them.

Perhaps there are kinds of light that we can only see because we have experienced darkness. That is why, in my work, light is not a final destination. It is a process of continually searching.

What did participating in the Unknown Vibe Art Fair in Seoul in 2026 reveal to you about how audiences experience your work? Was there a response that surprised you?

The Seoul exhibition reminded me once again that a work can take on an entirely different meaning once it leaves the artist's hands.

While creating my work, I was primarily thinking about light, loss, and the process of finding one's way back to the light. Yet each viewer encountered the work through their own experiences.

I was particularly struck by watching people spend time in front of the works, moving from different angles. It made me realize that the "light that changes with movement," which I had intended as part of the work, was also becoming part of the actual experience of viewing it.

What stayed with me most was seeing the contrast between people who simply passed by the works and those who stopped, became emotionally moved, and began talking about their own memories and feelings.

That experience made me think that art does not necessarily need to deliver a single answer. Perhaps an important role of art is to offer a question, and allow each viewer to answer it through their own life.

For some people, a work may mean nothing at all. For someone else, it may remain in their heart for a long time.

I believe that accepting this difference is itself an important part of art. If a work can create even the smallest change, or offer a moment of rest and comfort, to even one person, I believe that alone gives art a meaningful purpose.



RAMI | Ripples Of Light (빛의 파문)

Esther Kwon



After nearly two decades in brand experience design, what drew you toward painting? How has that background shaped your approach to composition?

For nearly two decades, I worked as a designer, creating images with clear purposes and messages. Design constantly required me to think about what to

communicate and how to communicate it, which naturally made me sensitive to color, form, negative space, and the way the eye moves across an image.

At some point, however, I began to feel a desire to create images that were not made to communicate something for someone else, but rather to explore the emotions and memories that remained within me. That became one of the most important reasons I turned to painting.

Design and painting are certainly different disciplines, but my years of experience in design naturally remain present in my work. When I balance colors, guide the viewer's gaze across the canvas, or decide what to reveal and what to leave out, I can still feel the influence of the visual instincts I developed as a designer.

You describe memory as retaining certain colors, light, and emotions rather than an exact account of events. How do you decide which details to keep when a memory becomes a painting?

The scenes I remember are never as precise as photographs. As time passes, the details of a place or what happened there may begin to fade, yet certain colors, qualities of light, the feeling of the air, and the emotions of that moment can remain surprisingly vivid. When I paint, I do not try to recreate a scene exactly as it was. Instead, I ask myself what has remained after everything else has begun to disappear. Sometimes it is an intense green, warm sunlight, or light shimmering across water. I follow these fragments of sensation and use them to reconstruct the memory. Ultimately, what I want to paint is not an exact image of the past, but the emotional impression that continues to live within me.

In two of your paintings, you return to a similar green landscape, but change the figures and the movement of the water. What led you to explore this scene more than once?

Even the same memory can feel different each time I return to it. On one day, I may remember the landscape



Esther Kwon | The Fleeting Moments Of Life | 2026



most vividly; on another, it may be a person, the light, or the movement of the water that comes forward. For me, returning to the same place in a painting is therefore not about repeating a scene. It is about looking at the same memory again through a different emotional lens.

As time passes, memories subtly change, and I also change as the person remembering them. The shifting figures and movement of the water within similar landscapes reflect this changing nature of memory and emotion.

Small figures often appear far away in your paintings, surrounded by luminous forms. What does that distance allow you to express?

I prefer the figures in my paintings to exist as small parts of the landscape rather than dominate the image. When we remember a moment from long ago, we do not always remember a person's face or expression clearly. Sometimes we remember them together with the light, atmosphere, and sense of distance that surrounded them. In that sense, the figures in my paintings are less like specific individuals and more like presences that remain within a memory.

By placing them at a distance, I hope viewers can move beyond the story of a particular person and enter the emotional atmosphere of the landscape itself. Their small scale also suggests how fragile and precious human presence can feel within a vast landscape.

The green light in these landscapes feels inviting, while the paths seem to lead somewhere unknown. How do you think about the relationship between familiarity and mystery in your work?

The landscapes I paint often begin with places that actually existed, but I do not want them to remain entirely realistic.

A place within memory can become both familiar and strange. We may recognize it, yet as time passes, the boundary between what we actually saw and what our minds have reconstructed begins to blur.

This is why the paths and light in my paintings often seem

to lead somewhere without revealing exactly where. I am drawn to that ambiguity. When a familiar landscape contains a sense of mystery or unfamiliarity, I feel it can move beyond a personal memory and become a psychological landscape.

What has painting helped you notice about ordinary experiences that you might have overlooked while living through them?

Painting has taught me to look more closely at very ordinary moments.

Sunlight filtering through leaves, a landscape encountered unexpectedly while traveling, or a path I once walked with my family—these were not necessarily moments I considered special at the time. Yet I have discovered that they often remain with me long after they have passed.

I do not think our lives are shaped only by extraordinary events. Sometimes the moments we barely noticed become our warmest memories with the passage of time. For me, painting has become a way of rediscovering these moments and recognizing the extraordinary within the ordinary.

When viewers encounter your paintings without knowing the memories behind them, what room would you like to leave for their own interpretations?

My paintings begin with personal memories, but I do not want them to remain only my stories.

For this reason, I try not to explain the situations or figures in my paintings too specifically. I want to leave enough space for viewers to bring their own memories and experiences into the work.

For one person, a landscape in my painting might recall a place from childhood. For another, it might evoke a day spent with family or a journey taken long ago.

I am interested in the moment when a painting that began with one of my memories encounters the memory of someone else and becomes a different story. In a way, I feel that this is when the work is completed again through the viewer.



Lizeth Barón Ruiz

I am from Colombia and hold a Bachelor's degree in Modern Languages and a Master's degree in Literature. I have participated in regional and international events in various capacities, whether speaking on science fiction or the novel of violence, sharing my poems, or exhibiting my drawings, paintings, and sculptures.

Project Statement

I am self-taught and currently learning to use various techniques such as graphite, acrylic, watercolor, oil, sanguine, and sepia. On one hand, at this moment, I seek to represent failure, despair, and depression in my works. On the other hand, I am interested in approaching social and environmental issues of national and global relevance.

Lizeth Barón Ruiz | The Nymph of the Atrato | 2021

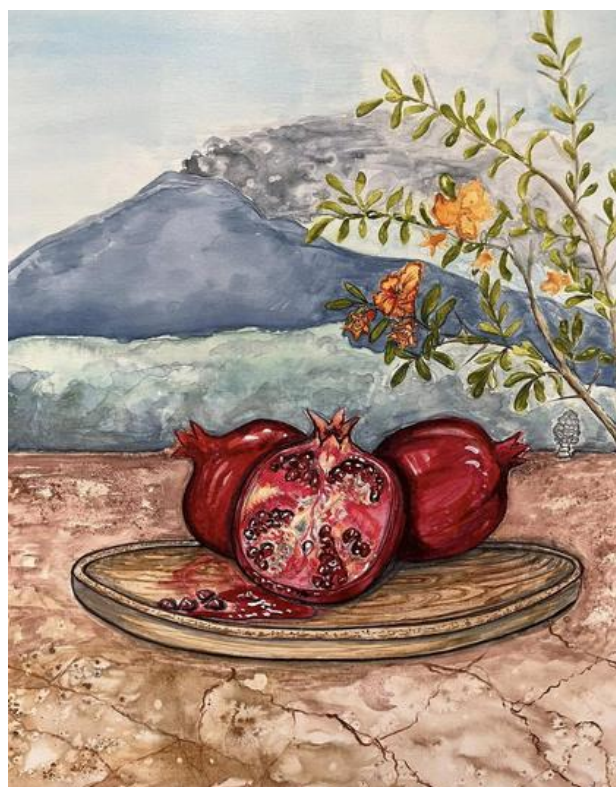




Zita Zádori-Gyapjas

You describe yourself as a self-taught artist with an early background in drawing and graphic arts. What ultimately gave you the confidence to embrace painting as your primary artistic path?

I believe that creativity has been with me since I was in the womb. It may have been passed down to me through the generations even before that. My maternal grandmother once wanted to run away with a painter, and when that dream did not come true, she had a strong wish that one of



Zita Zádori-Gyapjas | Interplay Of Textures | 2025

her daughters or grandchildren would pursue painting. As long as I can remember, I have been drawing. One of my earliest memories is of drawing spiders in their webs and using them to “frighten” my family members. Later, other subjects and forms emerged, but I particularly loved drawing animals.

In primary school, several art teachers encouraged me to continue my studies in an artistic direction, but eventually life took me down a different path. Drawing remained a part of my life for a very long time. During high school and university, it helped me to unwind and disconnect from everyday life; I could retreat into my own little “magical world.”

Then a friend persuaded me to attend a watercolor painting workshop, where I met my current teacher. I found the watercolor technique so difficult that I decided to practice it precisely because of that. I believe it is one of the most challenging painting techniques.

I also experimented with various other forms of handicraft, such as ceramics, punch needle embroidery, and making table decorations. Creativity has always found a way to express itself.

The people who encouraged me the most were my teacher, my grandmother, and my therapist.

You studied psychology and later worked with relaxation and symbol therapy. How have these experiences influenced the way you approach imagery, emotion, and symbolism in your paintings?

I have much greater access to my inner images now that I have experience with symbol therapy. I find it easier to navigate my inner world. I consciously allow myself to immerse in a particular feeling or intuition, and perhaps this makes it easier for forms and compositions to take shape. The most difficult step was moving beyond the familiar



Zita Zádori-Gyapjas | Genezis | 2026



genres of landscapes and still lifes and allowing myself to embrace something that had genuinely emerged from within me. This was the case with my painting *Genesis*, which grew out of a hospital experience.

For me, painting is a way of processing trauma.

Alongside your artistic practice, you teach Hatha and Flow Yoga and take part in workshops combining yoga and painting. Do movement, breath, or meditative attention affect your creative process?

The creative process itself is also characterized by a state of flow, when I become immersed in the brushstrokes, and space and time cease to exist. I merge with the canvas and with the forms taking shape on it. This experience is very similar to what I experience in yoga, and even in mandala painting.

After painting, I feel much more centered and focused, just as I do after a yoga session. In our yoga and painting workshops, we try to convey this feeling to the participants as intensely as possible.

Fortunately, flow is present everywhere—in nature and in life. We try to connect with that flow.

The Mediterranean world occupies a central place in your practice. What does this region represent to you personally, and why do its landscapes, foods, and atmosphere continue to inspire you?

One of the most defining journeys of my life was to Sicily. I was captivated by its landscapes and sights, and by the vibrant life that exists around an active volcano. Mount Etna often appears in my paintings.

It is incredible how much diversity can exist on a single island—from black-sand beaches to almost white sandy shores, from rocky coastlines to golden beaches. The city of Catania and its surroundings have been covered by lava several times, yet the local people rebuilt their lives again and again, making use of the fertile soil and starting over each time. The island has been occupied by different cultures throughout its history, which has made its culture so rich and diverse. There is a very strong will to live in that place, and I find these stories of renewal and new beginnings deeply inspiring.

You have said that a painting often begins with an "inner vibration" - a memory, scent, or patch of light. How do you translate such an intangible sensation into color, composition, and form?

The inner vibration can be a mood or a feeling that I try to transform into visual material. In everyday life, I am influenced by the information that flows in through my senses, triggering both pleasant and unpleasant feelings. I try to examine these feelings within myself and translate them into forms.

These impressions then interact with my mind, and I may also incorporate my sense of humor and my individual worldview into the work. For example, in my painting *Miaura*, I explore the way I see cats through my inner eye, shaped by my own experiences with them.

Watercolor allows for looseness and unpredictability, while oil painting offers a slower and more sculptural process. How does each medium shape your decisions, and how do you determine which one a particular idea requires?

Unfortunately, I do not have as much time for art as I would truly like. Time is a major factor in determining what I create at any given moment. If I have at least three uninterrupted hours, I will usually work on an oil painting. If I only have one to one and a half hours, I tend to choose watercolor. And if I have just 45 minutes, I will reach for oil pastels.

Mediterranean scenes, which are usually associated with a peaceful and airy atmosphere, naturally invite watercolor for me. When a subject is highly figurative, carries more visual weight, or when there is something I want to emphasize strongly, I am more likely to work with oil paints.

I rarely run out of paintings to work on because new sketches and ideas are constantly emerging. I often work on several paintings at the same time and switch between different techniques simultaneously.

Your works move between Mediterranean scenes, observed landscapes, symbolic creatures, and cosmic or mythical imagery. Do you see these as separate directions, or as parts of one evolving visual world - and where would you like to take that world next?

My subjects will remain diverse, as I do not want to commit myself to a single direction.

At the moment, my primary goal is to keep building, growing, and enjoying the fact that I have reached a point where I am confident enough to share my work with others. It is entirely possible that these different influences will eventually merge into a unique fusion.

Donghyun Kim / Kaksu (김동현 / 각수)

Looking at your submitted works, what recurring images or ideas tie them together? Does each piece tell an individual story?



Donghyun Kim / Kaksu (김동현 / 각수) | Dopamine City | 2026



My work primarily captures the polished facade of the city overlaid with cartoon graphics. Rather than focusing strictly on narrative continuity across pieces, they evolve through my mascot, “Myeol-mang” (Collapse). The work visually conveys an emptiness beneath the surface—a cynical reality contrasting with vibrant aesthetics. Through this inhuman character displaying very human emotions (sometimes playful, happy, or sorrowful), I aim to communicate these contrasts through a comic, visual language.

You draw directly without preliminary sketches. How do you decide where to make the first mark, and how do you determine when a detail-heavy piece is finished?

I usually place the first stroke in the center. Once the canvas is filled and it matches about 70% of the mental image I envisioned, I consider it complete. From that point on, I finish the piece through spontaneous adjustments and improvisation.

What draws you to fine pen lines and printmaking? How does each medium allow you to express what the other cannot?

Each medium has its own distinct personality. Line work offers a tactile catharsis as the pen traces the texture of the paper. It functions like a mental detox—similar to how companies brainstorm or mind-map when developing products, I organize my mind by continuously translating keywords into drawings. On the other hand, printmaking connects to my background working in print shops and advertising output labs; it allows me to explore color, various effects, and mixed techniques. While I sometimes combine or invert these approaches, my standard workflow starts with digital drawing, followed by digital



fine art printing.

How was “Myeol-mang” (Collapse) born? Does this alter-ego character reveal emotions that are difficult to express directly?

I conceived this character around 2025, during a period when I had put down drawing to work as a field laborer. Towards the end of 2024, facing layoffs, livelihood struggles, and a sense of failure in self-actualization, several challenges compounded, leading me to step away from art. From 2025 onward, I worked as a site assistant across stage production, construction, and civil engineering sites, aiming to become an industrial safety manager. Now in 2026, I balance that work while resuming my artistic career, having entered my 30s. This character reflects my unstable 20s—entering society without knowing what I liked or was good at, remaining an overgrown child unable to fit in or find a footing. While others spoke of dreams, hope, honor, and wealth, I possessed none of those things. “Myeol-mang” was born from looking back at my alienated self and the cold judgments of others.

The emotion behind this character stems from the younger self who felt completely defeated, thinking, “I can’t even do this; I’m ruined!”—even though life wasn’t truly over. In English, “Myeol-mang” translates to “Collapse,” making him something like “Mr. Collapse.” Through him, I want to share a message: even when it feels like the absolute lowest point and the future remains uncertain, you still have to keep moving forward. I channel unfiltered, borderline manic thoughts—whether anger, pain, sorrow, or transcendent joy, laughter, and love. The interpretation is left entirely to the viewer.

Your work features grotesque forms and cartoonish imagery alongside themes of rage, loss, and pain. What does this visual language convey about enduring hardship?

To explain this, I have to share a personal story. Life hasn’t always been easy. During my school years, I struggled to fit in—I was an eccentric “nerd” who couldn’t easily relate to others or find empathy. In my 20s, I took on countless jobs: convenience store

clerk, kitchen assistant, assistant curator, library aide, print shop employee, advertising agency worker, and on-site laborer. Because I hadn’t pursued higher education seriously at the time, I faced the world with bare hands, which bred intense frustration and anger. Lacking maturity, I couldn’t even identify the causes behind my fractured relationships. Feeling like an overgrown child while peers settled down and my parents aged, I shrank into myself, learning not to expect much.

Then, in March of this year, I suffered an on-site accident where tendons and muscle in my right wrist (my dominant hand) were severed. All my suppressed emotions erupted: the sheer terror that all my hard work had cost me my hand and the ability to draw forever. Yet, while that pain, anger, and despair coursed through my veins, I realized during rehabilitation and recovery that once it reaches the heart, it can bloom into love and laughter. I picked up drawing again. Reconciling past misunderstandings with my family through forgiveness and trust, alongside the unwavering support and love of my partner, showed me that nothing lasts forever. Even if the process begins in rage, the destination can be love. A cartoon style felt like the right medium to capture this journey—shaped by the visual language of Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, Marvel, DC Comics, and video games, animation, and cartoons I grew up with.

You hope viewers find catharsis in your work. Have you had any particularly memorable reactions or moments of realization?

Yes, that’s true. When I tell people that I draw directly without sketches or that images simply project themselves before my eyes, the typical reaction is, “You’re out of your mind; go see a psychiatrist.” Sometimes I wonder, “Do I see the world so differently from everyone else? Am I a monster or crazy?” But when people look at my completed drawings and react with, “Oh, that’s funny,” “That’s so interesting,” or “That looks awesome,” I realize: maybe I’m not that crazy after all.



Donghyun Kim / Kaksu (김동현 / 각수) | Nipple Beam | 2026

Mohsen Modiri

Born: Tehran, Iran

Artistic Activities: Over 45 years of activity in visual arts, including painting, drawing, graphic design, caricature, digital art, creative photography, modern art, and NFT art.

Participation in various domestic and international group exhibitions since 1971.

Exhibitions and Achievements: Selected works exhibited in the UK, Italy, Belgium, France, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, Canada, Iran, and the United States.

Project Statement

My primary goal in creating art is to evoke a sensory response in the viewer and guide their mind toward the deeper aspects of life. My innovative style blends magical realism with expressionism—a fusion I have termed "Expresurrealism."

As an artist who has previously explored various techniques—such as drawing and mixed media—and worked with materials like acrylics, I have recently turned my focus to the realms of digital art and artificial intelligence.





— Interview

Wang Ya



Your creative philosophy can be expressed as “Perceive Nature, Feel Life, and Deconstruct Inner States.” How did this philosophy develop, and how does it guide your decisions in the studio?

My creative philosophy did not emerge as a complete formulation from the beginning. It gradually took shape through long-term observation of nature and daily life, as well as through an ongoing awareness of my own emotions.

I often begin with a specific visual experience: the changing light in a natural landscape, an unexpected colour relationship in an urban space, the way mountain flowers and plants grow, or the emotional impact of an ordinary moment. However, I am not satisfied with simply depicting these subjects faithfully. I am more interested in how visual experience is transformed into memory, emotion and inner feeling when we encounter nature and life. In the studio, this philosophy directly informs my decisions. I first ask myself: What does this painting really need to express? Is it a particular kind of light, an atmosphere, a memory, or a psychological state that is difficult to put into words? If the image depends too heavily on a recognisable subject, I may reduce its narrative specificity. If it becomes too abstract and loses an emotional point of entry, I will retain traces of nature or reality. For me, painting is both observation and transformation: it must respect lived experience while allowing the work to develop its own emotional space.

You work with both oil and acrylic paint, combining their very different physical properties. What can each medium express

for you, and how do you decide which one should dominate a particular painting?

I do not see oil and acrylic as two media that must be separated or made to compete with one another. They have different physical properties, and that difference is an essential part of my practice.

Oil paint is dense, slow, rich and full of a sense of time. It is suited to building the underlying structure, spatial depth and material texture of a painting, and it can convey a feeling of accumulation, continuity and weight. Acrylic, by contrast, is more transparent, light, immediate and luminous. It allows me to preserve direct gestures, create flowing colour relationships and capture an immediate visual response.

I usually decide which medium should take the leading role according to the emotional needs of the work. If a painting requires stronger spatial depth, structure or a sense of sedimentation, oil may form its primary foundation. If the work emphasises light, transparency, speed and the breathing quality of colour, acrylic may become more prominent. This relationship is not absolute, however, nor is it simply a matter of placing one material beneath the other. I want the media to influence and transform one another within the painting. Through layering, working with both wet and dry paint, colour overlay and the modulation of brushwork, I create a dialogue between the density of oil and the luminosity of acrylic. I do not want the two media to look completely identical in the end. On the contrary, I hope viewers can sense the difference between them and the visual tension that this difference produces.

Your work often moves between recognisable landscape and abstraction. Why are you interested in this boundary, and how do you decide how much of the original subject to retain?

I am interested in the boundary between figuration and abstraction because lived experience is not fixed or singular. When we look at a mountain, a sky or a beam of light, we perceive not only its external form, but also distance, temperature, time, memory, and the

responses of our bodies and emotions.

Figuration can give viewers a point of entry into a painting, allowing them to sense nature, light or a familiar fragment of reality. But if the image is too complete, it can also limit the viewer's experience. I therefore want the work to retain a degree of recognisability without closing off its meaning.

I usually begin by preserving the core elements that carry the viewing experience: a spatial relationship, the direction of light, a colour atmosphere or a natural form. As the painting develops, I gradually weaken those parts that are overly explanatory or definite, allowing form to become colour, rhythm and texture. When I feel that the original subject is no longer the sole centre of the image, but has begun to transform into an emotional or psychological state, the painting is often approaching the direction I want.

For me, this is not a choice between figuration and abstraction. It is about allowing both to remain in continual tension. A work may enable viewers to recognise dusk, flowers, mountains or radiance, but these elements do not remain merely at the level of representation.

In your paintings, light and colour seem to function not only as visual elements but also as carriers of memory and emotion. How do your personal experiences influence your choice of colour?

For me, colour is structural; it is not merely a decorative element attached to form. It can express temperature, distance, rhythm and space, as well as convey an emotional pressure



Wang Ya | Dusk Superposition | 2026

that is difficult to articulate in words.

My experience of colour often comes from observing life. Natural landscapes, urban light and shadow, the moment of dusk, mountain plants, or an unexpected colour relationship in an everyday environment can all become starting points. Sometimes a colour reminds me of a particular time, kind of weather or personal experience. Once it enters the painting, however, it gradually moves away from the original subject and develops into an independent visual relationship.

I do not treat colour as a fixed symbol for “happiness,” “sadness” or “tranquillity.” The same colour can produce entirely different emotions in different combinations. A warm colour may convey energy, or the lingering warmth of memory; a cool colour may create a sense of distance, or an atmosphere of quiet and openness.

I am therefore more attentive to relationships between colours than to the meaning of any single colour. I observe their values, temperatures, transparencies and rhythms, and continually adjust them according to the overall state of the painting. Personal experience affects my sensitivity to colour, but I hope that, after being transformed through painting, it can become an open emotional space that viewers can also enter.

Texture plays an important role in your work, from semi-transparent veils of colour to dense, tactile passages. How do you construct these surfaces, and what do you hope viewers discover when they look closely?

I generally construct the surface through multiple layers. Different layers may involve different media, different degrees of wetness or dryness, and different pressures of the brush. Some areas retain dense paint, giving the image a sense of accumulation and tactile weight. Other passages use thinner, more transparent layers, allowing underlying colours and light to emerge. Oil helps me establish thickness, structure and spatial depth, while acrylic can heighten transparency, fluidity and luminosity. Between these two media, I continually adjust the relationship between covering and revealing, concealment and exposure. Some marks are

covered by subsequent colours but do not disappear completely; they remain faintly present in the deeper layers of the painting. When viewers look closely, I hope they discover that the painting was not completed all at once, but contains traces of time and decision. At close range, they may notice the direction of the brushwork, the relationships between colour layers and the accidental changes created by the movement of paint. From a distance, these details gather again into light, space or emotion. I do not want texture to be merely a visual effect. For me, the surface is part of the work itself. It records how the materials have acted, as well as how I have worked between control and response.

Some people describe your paintings as both gentle and powerful, both expressive and orderly. Do you consciously pursue these contrasts, or do they arise naturally from your personality and working process?

These contrasts are both something I pursue consciously and something that arises naturally from my way of working.

I want the painting to have a certain order, because composition, space and colour relationships require an underlying structure. At the same time, I do not want that structure to become completely closed. I therefore leave room for the paint, the brushwork and unexpected changes to act. One layer of colour may alter the colour beneath it; an unplanned gesture may create a new rhythm; the natural flow of the paint may open up an unforeseen space.

I describe this method as “chance within structure.” Structure gives the work direction, but it should not predetermine every result. Excessive control can drain the painting of vitality, while complete surrender to chance can make it diffuse. I prefer to negotiate between the two.

“Gentleness” comes largely from the way I handle colour, light and detail; “strength” comes from the tension of the brushwork and the movement within the image. “Expressiveness” comes from the flow of material and emotion, while “order” comes from composition and sustained judgement. These qualities are not mutually



exclusive; together they form the character of my painting.

How have international exhibitions, professional jury work and cultural exchange influenced your understanding of your artistic identity and the cross-cultural potential of your painting?

International exhibitions and cultural exchange have made me more aware that an artist's identity is grounded both in personal experience and cultural background, and in the ability of the work to enter into dialogue with different ways of seeing.

I have participated in the Monaco International Art Fair, received recognition from associated Monaco art awards, won the Gold Prize at the "MEDUSA, LA GORGONE" International Art Award Exhibition, and was invited to participate in the 162nd Salon des Artistes Français in Paris, where I received a Nomination Award. In 2026, I also became an international member of Italy's NOMYA International Art Association. These experiences have shown me that viewers from different cultural backgrounds may have

different habits of looking, yet they can still connect with a painting through light, colour, space, texture and emotion. Although my paintings originate in observations of nature, urban light and shadow, and personal experience, I do not want them to be understood only as a geographically specific visual expression. I am more interested in using material and perception to reach shared human feelings.

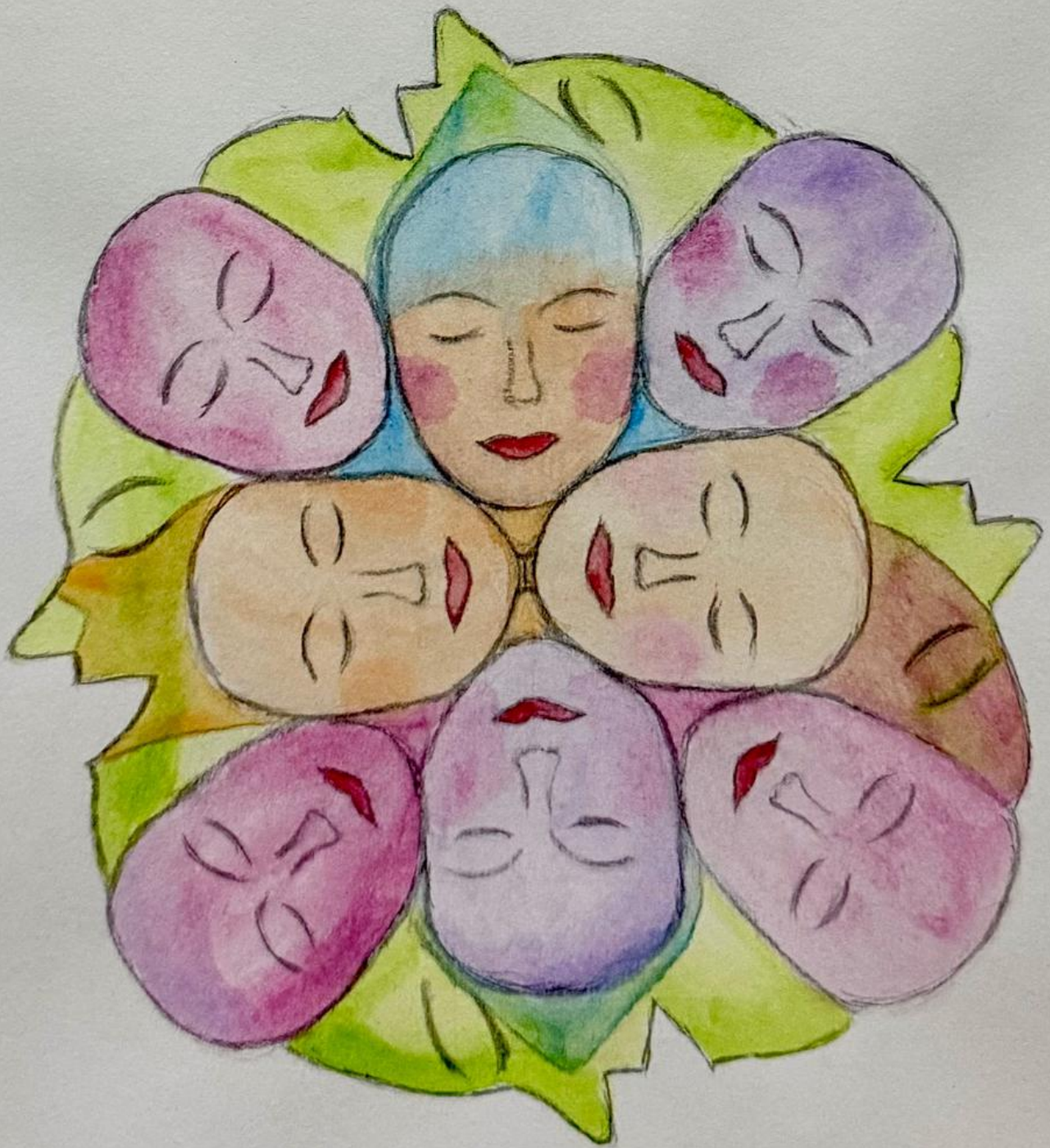
Serving as a jury advisor for the 14th Canadian Youth Art Competition and as a judge for the 2025 Art Bloom East National Digital Fine Arts Exhibition has also encouraged me to reconsider art from a perspective beyond that of the artist. I have become more attentive to how a work establishes its own language, how it balances form and thought, and what enables it to create a genuine connection with viewers.

Cross-cultural communication does not mean erasing the personal background of a work. It means allowing the work to retain its own experience while offering an open point of entry for viewers. For me, a painting can become a meeting place for different cultures and different life experiences.

Rosario Lopez

I am a contemporary artist whose work explores the inner world of the human mind through abstract forms, faces, eyes, and symbolic imagery. Working primarily with watercolor, I developed my own artistic language, Mindscape Expressionism, where emotions, thoughts, and inner experiences are translated into visual landscapes.



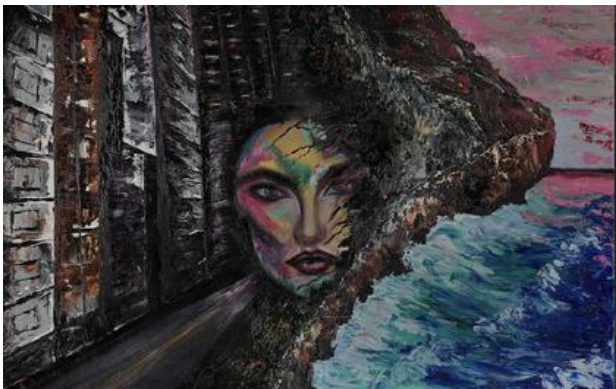


— Interview

Lia Gioti



How did you begin painting, and what made it an important part of your life?



I wanted to build a guesthouse—and ended up building an entire story.

Two years ago, I took on a project whose ambition could have earned it the “Most Beautiful Failure of the Year” award: I decided to build a guesthouse in another region, relying on a budget better suited to a small renovation than a construction project. The cost estimates were frightening, the walls were rising slowly, and I increasingly caught myself wondering, “Is this really what I should be doing?” To keep myself from going crazy over numbers and unfinished corners, I came up with the perfect escape: I would paint pictures and decorate my future mini-hotel with them. In my dreams, it all looked wonderfully cinematic: me in a linen dress, palette in hand, enthusiastically waving a brush, surrounded by comfort, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, and happy guests.

Reality, however, looked a little different. In the art supply store, I stood there looking like someone who had seen paints for the first time and suspected they might be dangerous. Then a sales assistant appeared—like an angel in an apron, sent by fate itself. She looked at me with the calm confidence that experienced people have when they see beginners who are still about to fall in love with their craft. “If it’s forever, go with oils,” she said with such conviction that I immediately imagined my paintings hanging in the hotel for decades, delighting the guests. She also patiently explained the differences between canvases and selected a



set of brushes as though she were preparing me for a solo exhibition at the Tretyakov Gallery rather than my first tentative brushstrokes.

Now I understand: oils really are “forever”—especially when you consider how long they take to dry. But back then, I simply believed her. I bought everything she recommended and began learning how to hold a brush, mix colours, and avoid panicking when another study looked as though it had been painted by a cat that had accidentally run across the palette.

I never finished the house. It is now up for sale. And you know, I don't call that a defeat. It was more of a plot twist: instead of a mini-hotel, I ended up with a mini-studio.

Of course, I later painted over my first paintings—literally putting new subjects over the old ones, as though erasing the rough drafts of a story. And you know, there was even something symbolic about that: instead of throwing away what hadn't worked, I turned it into something new. Three months of trial and error, and studies that made you want to say, “Well, at least the colour turned out interesting.”

Then one day, while scrolling through my feed online, I came across an international art competition—one of those moments when your hand automatically reaches for “Apply” while an inner voice whispers, “What if?” I submitted my painting “Substance”—and some time later, I saw the words: third place among amateurs in my genre.

I remember rereading the email several times, as though I were afraid the number “3” might suddenly turn into a “0.” Third place! Not first, of course, but to me, it spoke louder than any grand prize: it meant someone had looked at my work and said, “There's something alive here.”

What draws you to oil paint, and how did you

discover the impasto technique?

When I started painting, I had no studio, no skills, and not even a hint of tidiness—and oil paints seem to have been created to spread themselves around the entire house in the most spectacular way possible. I tried to combine art with my main job, so I painted in brief snatches: between tasks, late in the evening, or early in the morning when no one was watching. At one point, my brushes spent a month and a half simply drying out in proud solitude—and eventually, I had to say goodbye to them, like a romance that hadn't worked out.

But it was precisely amid this chaos that I discovered the palette knife—and life immediately became a little easier. Then an outright rebellious thought occurred to me: why struggle with brushes when you can squeeze paint straight onto the canvas and mould it into shapes and colours like modelling clay? That was how I painted a picture with my fingers (I later learned that the technique is called impasto)—and for the first time in my life, I didn't want to change anything. It was a strange but very pleasant feeling of freedom, as though I had told myself, “Let it be this way!”

Later, I began exploring other materials, but quickly realised that only oils met my creative needs. Their brightness, sheen, and malleability are a love all of their own. I like being able to layer colours and add details whenever it suits me—whether at night or during my lunch break. I think oils are the best



medium for people who create according to the call of their soul rather than a schedule. And, of course, whatever free time they have left.

In your paintings, texture is almost as noticeable as the subject itself. What does the physical thickness of paint allow you to express?

My paintings turn out textured—perhaps because I’m a person with plenty of texture and character myself: no softened corners or perfectly straight lines.

I have never tried to imitate anyone. After all, people have spent decades refining their techniques—and in that time, I have managed to master little more than the art of painting between other tasks. Besides, why repeat someone else’s artistic handwriting when you can create your own, even if it is a little “uneven”? There are so many wonderful artists in the world—let them preserve the classics, while I do what resonates with me first and foremost. It may not follow the rules, but it comes from the heart.

And you know, it turns out that this sincerity resonates with other people too: my paintings find their viewers. I made my first sale—and it felt as though someone had not simply bought a canvas, but taken a piece of my emotions home with them. As for the people close to me, I happily give them my work as gifts: the best compliment is when a painting finds a place not in a corner, but in someone’s home and heart.

Your process images show you using different



tools, including a spoon. How do you choose your tools, and what unexpected effects have you discovered through experimentation?

When I began working with texture, I quickly realised that you can create with anything—the main thing is to keep the idea from cooling off before the paint does. I simply didn’t have time to run to the art supply store every time and choose the perfect tools. Besides, my finances had long since taken a different path—all my money had gone into the construction project, where I had already gone well over budget. But that did nothing to diminish my desire to paint—on the contrary, it only grew stronger: as though the more difficult the circumstances, the more you want to grab a brush (or whatever happens to be at hand) and create. I couldn’t quite get the rounded shape right: my fingers made it uneven, while the palette knife seemed to cut the idea into pieces. I rushed around the house for a while, trying all sorts of things, and suddenly it dawned on me: a spoon was exactly what I needed! That was how a new “professional” tool appeared in my studio. Now, all the spoons in the house are more than just kitchen utensils—they proudly bear traces of oil paint and have taken on “creative positions,” gradually making their way from the kitchen to the easel.

And you know, there is even a certain aesthetic to it: when art doesn’t wait for ideal conditions, but takes what is available and turns it into beauty.

Mountains, water lilies, forests, and waves appear in your work. What attracts you to these subjects, and do they come from places you have visited, memories, or imagination?

Over the course of a year, my paintings turned out so different that you might think I had deliberately put together a palette of every possible mood. But the explanation is simple: because of financial limitations, my dream of travelling and having new experiences remained just a dream for the time being. So I began travelling through my own emotions—and transferring them onto canvas. That was how the subjects emerged: not according to a plan, but in response to something within. Online, I keep coming across articles in which artists lament that they have no inspiration and don’t know what subject to choose. I find that a little strange. After all, each of us has an entire world of experiences inside: quiet joys, difficult days, moments when it feels as though everything is going wrong, and those happy moments that make



you want to stop and remember every detail. Isn't that enough for a painting?

In my view, inspiration is not a rare visitor that arrives on schedule, but more of a habit of noticing. Simply take your thoughts and feelings and put them onto canvas—and suddenly, you realise that the subject has been inside you all along. Perhaps there is a little magic in that: when you don't wait for ideal conditions, but take what is available and turn it into art.

You sometimes use vivid pinks, purples, and reds in landscapes. How do you choose your palette, and what role does your mood play in those decisions?

I may disappoint you a little, but in my opinion, artists don't have "pink periods" or "blue periods"—there is only the paint that happens to be at hand right now. And there simply isn't any other paint available at that moment: perhaps it has run out, or perhaps it was bought by mistake in the first place. The result is vivid—sometimes even more vivid than intended.

There is already enough mediocrity in life—it seems to make a deliberate effort to go unnoticed and blend into the background. A painting, in my view, should not blend in, but make itself heard. Even if it does so through a single loud colour. It should carry emotions—the kind that make the viewer pause and suddenly realise, "Yes, this is about me." And

that emotion may be imperfect, a little bold, and entirely outside the "textbook"—but at least it is real.

Your paintings include both natural landscapes and urban scenes. How does your approach change when you move from mountains or water to the energy of a city?

I was born in the mountains, and now I live in a metropolis. My life has not been easy—it has been so varied that it seems to have contained several different lives at once. It is hardly surprising that I now want to put so much onto canvas: memories, sensations, and entire stories. I wanted to write a book, but fate had other plans—instead of words, I picked up a brush and began painting. And you know, there is even a certain logic to it: sometimes, feelings are easier to express through colour and form than through finding the exact words. Now, paintings with very profound, sometimes truly sad stories are emerging in my studio. They are so poignant that they would probably not suit an ordinary interior—there is too much grief in them for them simply to decorate walls. Perhaps one day, I will decide to give them to a museum: let these works live somewhere they will be treated as important testimonies to human experience. For now, I am simply waiting to see what other surprises life has in store for me—because, for an artist, every new story can become a new canvas.

Japhet Ngemi, known as Jaamy Arts, is a visual artist born in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. His artistic journey began in childhood, inspired by observing his older brother draw. He later studied at the Institut des Beaux-Arts and the Académie des Beaux-Arts before pursuing an independent artistic path.

Working primarily with ballpoint pen, graphite, charcoal, and pastel, Jaamy explores introspection, identity, inner struggles, and the invisible restraints shaped by personal, social, and cultural experiences.

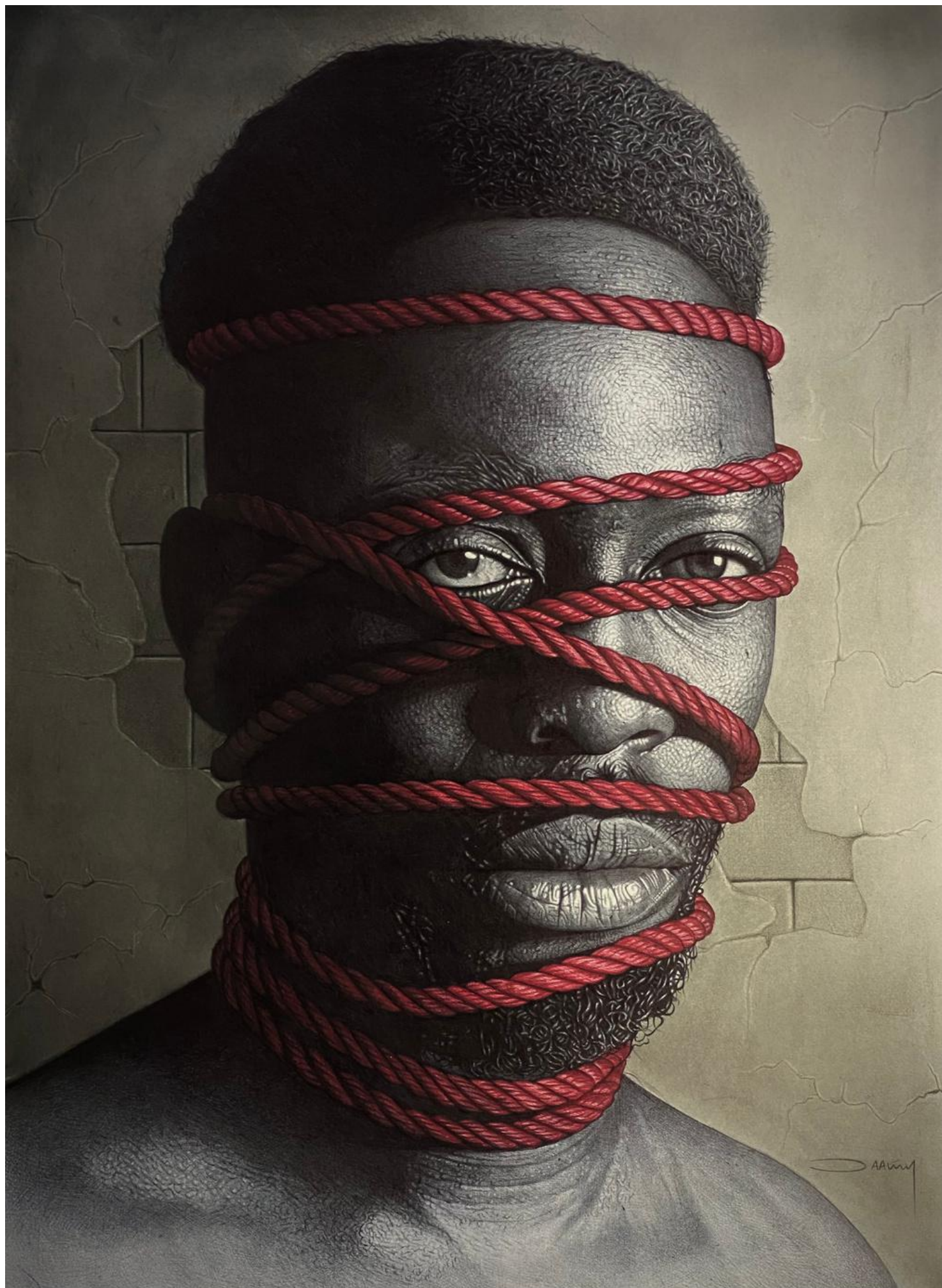
Through meticulous lines, repetition, and the layering of marks, his drawings gradually reveal images and meanings that often emerge during the creative process itself. His work invites viewers to reflect on the human experience, personal transformation, and the search for freedom.

Project Statement

My work is a journey of introspection, discovery, and transformation. Through drawing, I explore what is visible and invisible within the human experience: identity, inner struggles, personal wounds, and the restraints that shape our lives.

I work mainly with ballpoint pen, allowing each line to contribute to the gradual emergence of an image. Repetition and the layering of marks are essential to my process. I do not simply give form to a vision; I also discover that vision as I draw.

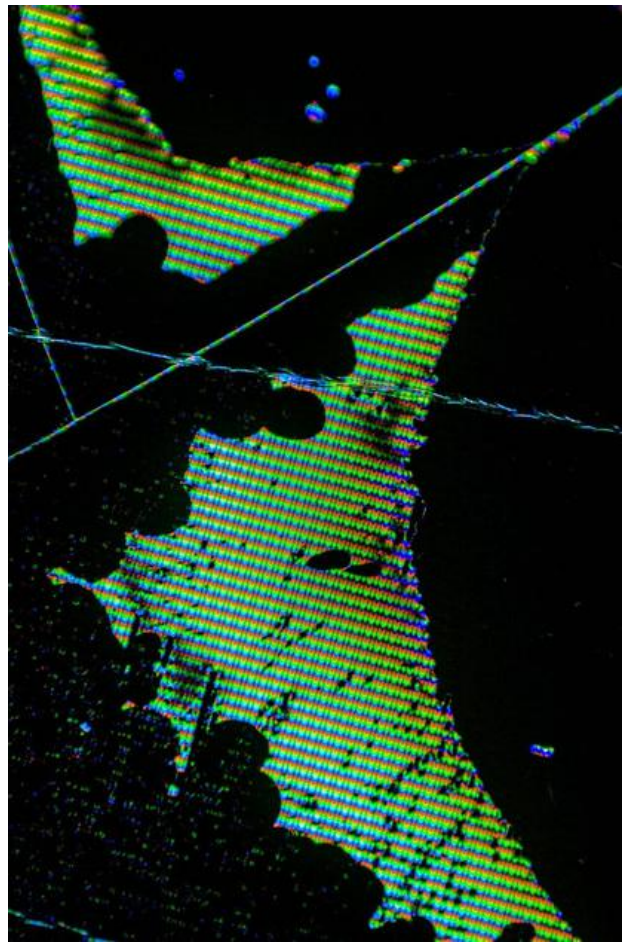
My series *Au-delà des entraves* explores emancipation, freedom, and the possibility of seeing beyond the limitations that hold us back. Through my work, I invite viewers to encounter their own interpretations and reflections.



Japhet Ngemi | Au-delà des entraves (Beyond the Constraints)

Léon Émile Loizeau

**You describe failure as a creative principle.
When did technical imperfection first become
central to your photographic language?**



This was not a decision I made at a specific point in time. Rather, it emerged gradually through different periods of experimentation, sometimes through accidental discoveries and sometimes through techniques I consciously developed.

I first encountered this idea in 2009, while taking self-portraits with a webcam. The webcam was malfunctioning, and I noticed that the image would occasionally become distorted. Instead of seeing this as a technical problem, I became interested in the visual possibilities of the distortion. Later, I began experimenting deliberately with the bottoms of glasses, crystal, plastic bags, transparent packaging, and different kinds of glass and plastic that could refract light, interrupt the image, or transform what was in front of the lens.

I also explored other forms of technological failure: a cracked LED television screen that produced unexpectedly abstract images, applications that generated distorted or fragmented visuals, and image disruptions caused by weak internet connections. These accidental forms of failure gradually became part of my photographic vocabulary.

For me, photography does not have to reproduce the outside world exactly as it appears. I am



interested in what happens when the image itself becomes unstable and begins to transform without relying on Photoshop or similar digital manipulation. By allowing photography and painting to move into each other, I try to create images that become painterly, abstract, fragmented, or ambiguous.

The aim is therefore not necessarily to create something perfect or conventionally beautiful, but to discover something unexpected and visually compelling within imperfection, distortion, and chance.

You work with broken cameras, pinhole cameras, shattered glass, nylon, and low-quality filters. How do you decide which material or intervention best expresses the idea behind a particular image?

I determine this through experimentation. I try different materials and interventions and observe how each one transforms the image. I can often understand the results more clearly when I see them on a computer screen, where subtle distortions and unexpected effects become more apparent.

I then select the photographs according to whether the intervention transforms the image in a way that feels meaningful, painterly, abstract, ambiguous, or visually intriguing to me. It is not so much a predetermined choice as a process of discovery. I experiment, observe, and allow the image itself to reveal which material or intervention works best.

How much of the final result is carefully planned, and how much emerges through accident, improvisation, and the unpredictable behaviour of your equipment?

I usually begin with a certain idea in mind. I construct the image mentally and try to visualize it

before taking the photograph—in a sense, I make the photograph in my head first. But I never remain completely fixed on that initial idea.

Once I begin working, I allow the process to become experimental. I use different objects and interventions, observe the results on a computer screen, and select the images that speak to me. I cannot assign a precise percentage to what is planned and what is accidental, because I am completely open to unpredictability and chance.

I also think it is almost impossible for an image to be one hundred percent planned. Even in traditional film photography, there is room for uncertainty: the developing of the film and the process of printing can produce results that were not entirely anticipated.

For me, experimentation means working with possibilities rather than trying to control every outcome. I begin with an intention, but remain open to what happens in the moment—to changes, unexpected effects, and accidental discoveries. Often, it is precisely the dialogue between what I imagine and what I could not have predicted that shapes the final image.

In Dimension Changed Time, Escape from Time, and Twisted Time, you physically distort the hands of a clock. What does the clock represent in this series, and why was it important to alter the object itself?

There are actually several other variations in this series, some of which I have already conceived but have not yet photographed: 4x XYZ, Pruned Time, Vanished Time — Time That Has Vanished and Disappeared, 2x Repaired Time, Fragmented Time, Time in Chains, Time Fought, and 2x No Name. The clock represents time, while its hands make visible its continuous flow and irreversible movement forward. By physically bending, distorting, or even breaking the hands of the clock, I



try to intervene in this familiar representation of time.

Yet no matter how radically I alter the object, I cannot actually slow time down, make it move backwards, or bring it even slightly closer to a previous moment. Time cannot be stopped, repaired, or destroyed.

This tension between physically altering the object and being unable to alter what it represents is central to the series. The distortion of the clock becomes a kind of futile intervention: I can manipulate the object and the image, but I cannot manipulate time itself. The physical transformation therefore turns an ordinary object into a space for thinking about the irreversibility and persistence of time.

The clocks remain recognizable even as their ability to measure time becomes unreliable. Are these works concerned with psychological time, memory, mortality, or resistance to chronological order?

I would not say that these works are directly concerned with death, but rather with ageing—the experience of slowly dying while still alive, or of living as though one were already dead. Time keeps



moving forward, and we have no way of stopping it. We are carried along with it, whether we want to be or not.

We continue to live in our own ways, trying to get through the present and make the most of each day, but ultimately we cannot prevent our own disappearance. Memories belong to the past, and we cannot return to them or relive the moments we once loved.

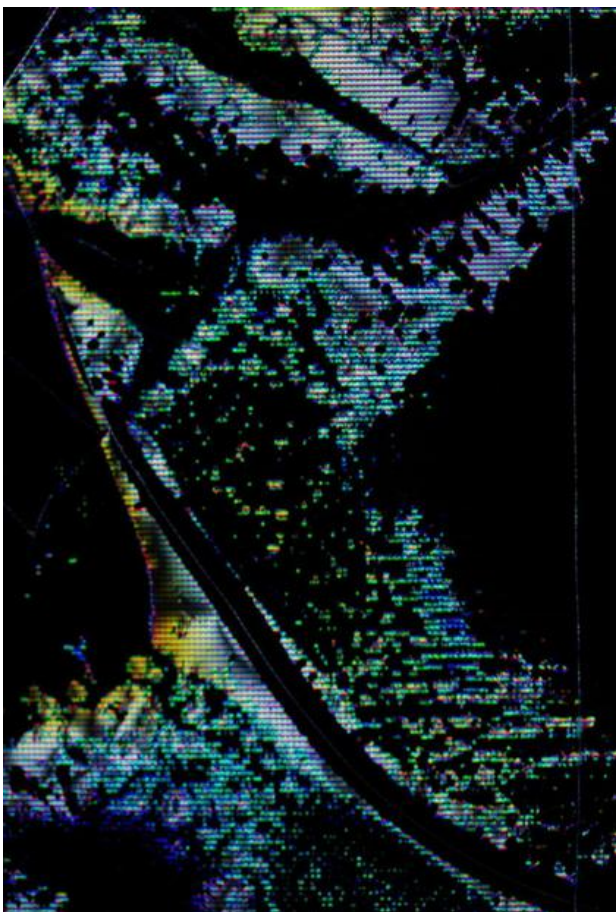
As an atheist, I do not believe in an existence beyond death. What interests me more is what happens as we grow older, when psychological and physical difficulties can appear or become more pronounced and life can become increasingly difficult.

At the same time, memories can become more vivid. Depending on where we live and the circumstances in which we find ourselves, ageing can also bring dreams of returning to another place, experiencing certain moments again, or somehow going back into the past.

In this sense, the clocks are connected to both psychological time and memory. They remain recognizable as clocks, yet their function becomes disrupted. For me, this reflects the tension between the objective passage of chronological time and our subjective experience of it—the desire to hold on to what has passed, even though time continues to carry us forward.

Born in Istanbul and now based in Geneva, you have lived between two very different cultural and visual environments. How have these cities influenced your perception of beauty, identity, and alienation?

Rather than speaking specifically about Istanbul and Geneva, I would describe this experience more broadly in terms of Turkey and Switzerland. When I came from Turkey to Switzerland in 2004, the internet was not yet as widespread as it is today, and social media did not exist. Access to information, images, and different perspectives was much more limited. I arrived with a certain understanding of beauty shaped by my experience





in Turkey.

Living in Switzerland, and more broadly in Europe, considerably expanded that understanding. I encountered a greater openness to different ways of seeing and thinking, as well as to new ideas, differences, and individual freedoms. In many ways, this experience widened my horizons and continues to influence how I perceive beauty.

In terms of identity and alienation, I have experienced a sense of not belonging both in Turkey and in Switzerland. I do not feel that I completely belong to any particular place. At the same time, Switzerland has given me a much broader space for individual and intellectual freedom, and that freedom has been important to my way of thinking and to my artistic development. For me, belonging therefore remains an unresolved and ongoing question rather than something tied to a specific place.

Your work has been exhibited across Europe, North America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. Have different audiences interpreted its distortion and ambiguity in noticeably different ways?

I can speak most directly about my experiences in Turkey and Switzerland. In both places, I have often

found that my work is difficult for people to understand. In Turkey, it received very little attention, and if there were people who understood what I was trying to do, they were very few. I have experienced something similar in Switzerland. I have often been told quite directly, "I don't understand anything about your art." This has sometimes come even from photography teachers. I think part of the difficulty is that my approach does not easily fit within conventional expectations of photography. I also do not always find it easy to describe my work using established artistic terminology. My practice has developed primarily through intuition, experimentation, and practical experience rather than through academic theory. My experiences in photography courses made the difference particularly clear to me. The artistic and photographic approaches of many teachers and classmates were very different from mine. I often felt that people were photographing the same or similar subjects, in the same or similar places, and largely reproducing what they saw rather than transforming it through their own perspective. What interests me is precisely the opposite: bringing something personal into the image, questioning what we recognize as a photograph, and allowing distortion, ambiguity, and experimentation to open up other ways of seeing.

Adyali (b. 1999, Istanbul) is a multidisciplinary artist and filmmaker based in Eskişehir, Türkiye. She has a formal background in Translation and Interpreting; this education in linguistics deeply informs her approach to visual art. Her multidisciplinary practice investigates the structural limits of language and how visual mediums can communicate beyond the limits of spoken language, working across painting, photography, and performance art. Adyali seeks to create direct, organic interactions with the public. She is best known for her site-specific interventions, most notably the mobile street gallery *Insargi* (2021) and the performative guerrilla installation *Hang Me* (2023). By placing her paintings directly on the streets of Istanbul into the raw circulation of the city, she allows everyday people to discover and keep her work, bypassing traditional, sterile gallery systems.

She is currently expanding her visual storytelling by stepping into independent cinema. As a self-taught filmmaker, she is focused on translating her background in analog art, photography and performative methodologies into moving images.

Project Statement

My practice is rooted in the act of translation and my journey into art began with a deep love for languages. Trained in linguistics, I approach visual art as a way to transcend the rigid grammar of spoken language, searching for a more visceral, expansive syntax. As a translator by trade, I eventually realized that visual mediums, specifically painting and photography, offer a universal language that transcends spoken words.

My work also intimately explores the raw human experience, such as in my piece *Stamp*, where I used my own body as a canvas to record the physical weight of living. In its accompanying performance, *Mind Me, Your Body*, I explore treating the body as both a canvas and a vessel that carries our physical and emotional histories; the physical tolls, burdens, and resilience carried by the human form.

Rejecting the traditional, sterile gallery system in my performative interventions like *Insargi* and *Hang Me*, I placed my paintings directly on the streets of Istanbul, transforming the urban landscape into on-the-go pop-up exhibitions. My focus was on orchestrating direct, unexpected and organic encounters. This intervention disrupts traditional art consumption, forcing a spontaneous, unmediated dialogue between the artwork and the audience.

Recently, my deep fondness for visual storytelling has guided me toward cinema and I am passionate about learning this craft and combining my experiences in painting, performance, and photography. I am currently discovering my voice in this entirely new medium, working on my first short film. It is an exciting, humbling process of translating everything I've learned from painting and photography onto the screen. Ultimately, my art is a continuous interpretation of life, a visual translation of raw experience.



Adyali | Studio 2024



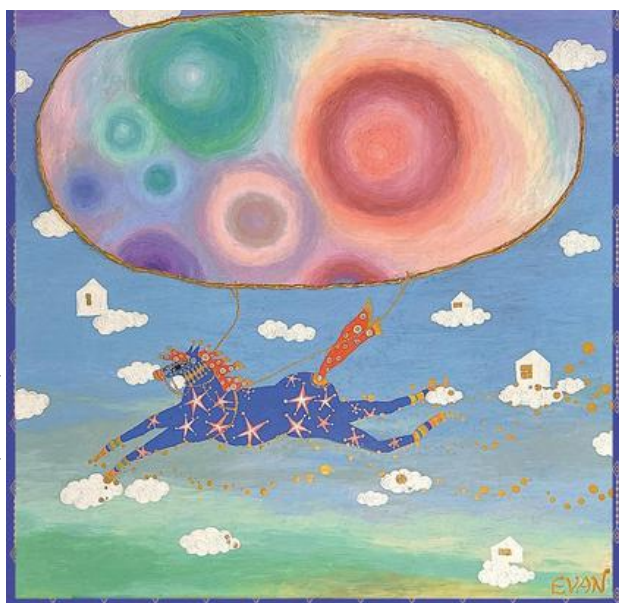
Adyali | Hang Me



Adyali | Insargi

EVAN ARTIST BOY

When you begin a painting, do you already know its story, or do you discover it as you work?



Lucrezia Nebbia | Fosfemi | 2026



Usually, before I begin a painting, I already have a small scene or story somewhere in my imagination. Sometimes it begins with a dream, sometimes with a memory, and sometimes I see something very ordinary and suddenly imagine it as something completely different.

But I almost never decide exactly what the finished painting will look like from the beginning.

Once I start painting, the story begins to change little by little. A certain color might make me think of a new place, or an accidental shape might suddenly look like an animal, a plant, a planet, or a strange character. Then I start wondering where that character came from and what it might be doing there. One idea leads to another, and the world inside the painting gradually becomes bigger.

That is why painting feels a lot like traveling to me.

I may know where I am starting, but I do not always know where I will arrive.

Sometimes I even surprise myself. Something I originally thought would be a tiny part of the painting can suddenly become the most important character, or an empty space can grow into an entirely new world. Instead of trying to plan and control everything, I enjoy allowing accidents and unexpected ideas to happen naturally.

Maybe that is why my paintings often feel like dreams. In a dream, something can suddenly transform into something else without needing an explanation. An animal can fly, a jar can become a house, a machine can have feelings, or a flower can grow larger than a person. None of those things seem strange when you are dreaming.

I want to keep that same freedom inside my paintings.

So, for me, the first idea is only the beginning of the story. I discover the rest of it, little by little, while I paint.

The stories your parents told you as a child helped shape your imagination. How do those stories find their way into your paintings today?

Stories have been part of my life for as long as I can remember.

When I was very young, my parents read many stories and fairy tales to me. I loved listening because I could imagine all



the places and characters in my head.

Even after a story ended, I would continue thinking about its world. I would wonder what happened to the characters afterward, or what might exist beyond the parts of the world that the book did not show me.

Looking back, I think this habit of continuing a story in my own imagination has had a very strong influence on the way I create my work today.

When I was little, I was also fascinated by trains and Thomas & Friends. I loved the idea that locomotives, which are machines, could have faces, emotions, friendships, worries, and completely different personalities. I would play with my trains, invent my own stories for them, and draw the worlds I imagined around them.

I think the idea that something that is not alive in reality can become alive through imagination has stayed with me ever since.

I still do something similar when I paint today.

Animals can speak, and machines can have emotions.

Flowers can grow to an enormous size, and an entire world can exist inside a Moon Jar. A creature might carry stars on its back, and an ordinary landscape can suddenly transform into a place that could exist only in a dream.

I especially love the feeling of the words "Once upon a time..." When I hear those words, I feel as though absolutely anything could happen next.

That is also how I hope people feel when they enter one of my paintings. I do not want the painting to explain the whole story from beginning to end.

I would rather it feel like opening a storybook somewhere in the middle and wondering, "What happened before this scene?" and "What will happen next?"

The stories I heard as a child do not appear literally in my paintings.

Instead, I think they taught me how to imagine.

And they taught me that the real world does not have to be the limit of a story.

Your grandmother dreamed of a phoenix transforming into a dragon before you were born. What did you feel when you first heard about that dream, and how did you make the story your own?

In Korea, there is a special kind of dream called taemong. Traditionally, it is believed to be a dream connected to a child before they are born, and these dreams are often remembered and passed down as family stories.

My grandmother told me that before I was born, she had a very unusual dream that continued over several days.

In the dream, there was clear blue water beneath a waterfall. From that water appeared an enormous dark phoenix covered with beautiful and mysterious patterns.

The phoenix rose into the air beneath the moonlight and flew toward the sky. After passing through the clouds, it transformed into a blue dragon and continued flying through the sky.

My grandmother told me that the creature was so beautiful that she thought the child connected to the dream might someday grow up to become an artist.

When I first heard the story, I was fascinated.

It felt strange and exciting to imagine that there was already a story connected to me before I was even born.

To me, the dream did not feel like an ordinary dream. It felt more like the opening scene of an ancient legend or fairy tale. As I grew older, I began thinking about the dream in a different way.

I did not want simply to illustrate exactly what my grandmother had seen. Instead, I became curious about what might have happened before and after the dream.

Where did the phoenix come from?

Why was it beneath the water?

Where was the dragon flying?

What kind of world existed beyond the clouds?

Those questions became much more interesting to me than simply reproducing the original dream.

So I began creating my own world around it.

Water and moonlight, unusual animals and plants, mysterious patterns, birds and dragons, imaginary landscapes, and creatures transforming from one form into another began appearing in my work.

Some of these things are directly connected to my grandmother's dream, while others began there and then grew into something completely new through my imagination.

Sometimes I think of my taemong as the first page of a very



long story.

My grandmother gave me that first page before I was born, and now, through my paintings, I feel as though I am continuing to create the pages that come after it. That is why this dream is so special to me. It is a memory that belongs to my family, but at the same time, it has now become part of the world I create as an artist.

The traditional Korean Moon Jar appears throughout your work. What does this form mean to you, and why do you return to it?

I love the Moon Jar because its form is very simple, yet I can imagine so many different things within it. A traditional Korean Moon Jar is round, quiet, and simple. When I look at one, I sometimes see the moon. At other times, it reminds me of a planet, a house, a giant egg, a mysterious container, or even an entrance to another world. So in my paintings, the Moon Jar does not exist only as a traditional Korean object.

I like transforming it into something else.

In one painting, it might become a house where a family lives. In another, flowers and strange plants may grow from it. Animals and imaginary creatures may appear around it, or I might imagine that an enormous world is hidden inside. One of the things I love most about the Moon Jar is the idea that something that looks so simple from the outside can contain an enormous world within it.

I think people can be a little like that too.

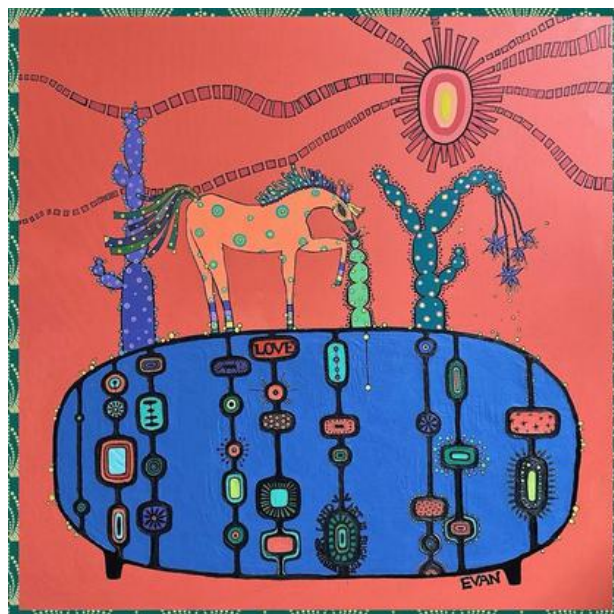
Someone may look ordinary from the outside, but inside every person there are memories, dreams, emotions, fears, stories, and imaginary worlds that other people cannot see. For me, the Moon Jar can become a vessel that holds all of those invisible things.

It also connects me naturally to Korea.

I like taking a form that comes from Korean tradition without feeling that I must always represent it in a traditional way.

I can fill it with intense colors, strange plants, animals, patterns, stars, and characters that could never exist in reality.

So each time a Moon Jar appears in my work, its meaning can



EVAN ARTIST BOY | Once Upon A Time

change.

Sometimes it is a home.

Sometimes it is a memory.

Sometimes it is a planet.

Sometimes it is a dream.

And sometimes it is simply an entrance into another story.

I think that freedom—the possibility for one simple form to keep transforming into different worlds—is what makes me return to the Moon Jar again and again.

Circles, lines, and patterns often fill your paintings. How do you use them to show something invisible, such as a thought, a memory, or a feeling?

I use circles, lines, and patterns very naturally when I work.

I do not always decide beforehand that a particular circle has to mean one thing or that a certain line has to represent something specific.

Sometimes, while I am painting, my hand naturally begins repeating the same shapes. As I continue, those shapes start creating movement or energy within the painting.

I like the idea that even things we cannot see might have some kind of shape.

For example, if we could actually see a memory, what would it look like?

What shape would happiness have?

If we could see imagination moving through someone's mind, what would it look like?

I find those questions interesting.

A circle can become many different things in my paintings. It might be a planet, an eye, a bubble, a seed, a memory, the moon, or something mysterious floating through space.

Lines can become paths or connections.

Sometimes they feel like traces showing where something has come from or where it might be going next.

Repeating patterns can also feel like energy spreading throughout the painting.

Sometimes I repeat the same form again and again because repetition creates a kind of rhythm. I think a painting can have rhythm, just as music does.

There are also times when I simply feel that a line or shape needs to be somewhere without knowing exactly why.



EVAN ARTIST BOY | Once Upon A Time



Then, after the painting is finished and I look at it again, I sometimes understand why that shape needed to be there. I like leaving room for that unconscious part of making art. I do not think imagination always needs an explanation. After all, not everything that happens in a dream needs a logical reason.

Your animals sometimes fly, carry stars, or seem to speak. How do you imagine their personalities and the roles they play in your world?

The animals in my paintings are not just ordinary animals to me. I think of them as characters. Whenever I create one, I naturally begin imagining what kind of personality it might have. Some are brave, and some are curious. Some are strange or funny, while others are very quiet. Some look as though they might cause trouble at any moment. And sometimes there is an animal that seems to know a secret that nobody else in the painting knows. I like imagining that these animals continue living their own lives even when nobody is looking at the painting. Maybe they travel at night. Maybe they talk to one another. Maybe they are protecting something. Or perhaps they know how to travel freely between the real world and the dream world. I do not think the animals in my paintings need to follow the rules that real animals have to follow. They can fly without wings. They can carry stars on their backs. They can live inside flowers or travel through space. They can speak to machines, people, and imaginary creatures. I enjoy giving them abilities that would be impossible in reality. My paintings are places where the rules of reality can disappear. Sometimes I imagine myself as a traveler inside that world too. I do not necessarily think of the animals as characters that belong to me simply because I created them.

Instead, they often feel like creatures I happened to meet while traveling through my imagination. It is almost as if they were already living their own lives there, and I simply discovered them while I was painting. That is why I often think of the imaginary world I create as "My Wonderland." In that world, everything can freely change its size, color, personality, or role depending on the story. There are no fixed rules about what something has to be.

Has a viewer ever noticed something in one of your paintings that you had not seen yourself?

Yes, and I think this is one of the most interesting parts of showing my work to other people. Sometimes someone looks at one of my paintings and tells me that they have discovered a face, an animal, a person, or even an entirely new story in a part of the painting where I did not intentionally put one. At first, I sometimes say, "Really? Where?" Then they show me, and when I look again, suddenly I can see it too. I really enjoy those moments. They also make me realize that once I finish a painting, it no longer belongs only to my imagination. Everyone brings their own memories and experiences with them when they look at a painting. For example, a shape that I imagined as a plant might look like an animal to someone else. A place I imagined as part of a dream might remind another person of somewhere they visited as a child. I do not think one interpretation has to be right and the other wrong. I think that is one of the beautiful things about art. An artist can begin a story, but the viewer can continue it. I do not want everyone to look at my paintings and understand exactly the same thing. If ten people look at one of my paintings and imagine ten different stories, I think that makes the painting even more interesting. Sometimes viewers even help me rediscover my own work. It feels as though they are showing me another entrance into the world I created.



Farah Abdul Ghani

Growing up with Iraqi, Palestinian, and Canadian identities and now living in Dubai, how has your understanding of "home" changed over time?

Farah Abdul Ghani | In My Mind



When I was younger, I associated the meaning of home with nationalism and patriotism. Growing up as an Arab in exile and as an immigrant in Canada, I always felt that I lacked a sense of belonging and a place I could fully call home.

Growing up with Iraqi, Palestinian and Canadian identities, and now living in Dubai, I have often existed as a foreigner within different spaces; never entirely local, and sometimes perceived as not Arab enough or not Canadian enough. People can interpret that detachment as something I have chosen, when in reality my detachment from my geographic identity is circumstantial rather than intentional.

As I've grown older, my understanding of home has changed. Home is no longer a country or a geographical place. It is the things that make me feel alive and most like myself: my cat choosing me as a safe place to rest, a rainy day, or the feeling of becoming completely lost in dancing or painting. Those moments give me a sense of belonging that geography never really could.

Over time, I've realised that I don't need other people to validate the authenticity of my identity. I define who I am regardless of whether someone in the room considers me "authentic enough" to belong to a particular culture. I can choose the traditions, memories and parts of my different cultures that genuinely represent me. Home, for me now, is less about where I belong geographically and more about the places, people, and experiences in which I recognise myself in.

You describe the experience of being seen as too "Western" in some spaces and too "Arab" in others. How has that tension shaped the way you portray identity in your work?



This tension has been an immense catalyst for my work. I continuously return to the question: if you lack belonging, do you belong anywhere at all? When you don't feel that you have a home, it can create a strange sense of alienation; as though you are obsolete, irrelevant, or somehow outside of the ordinary world.

That feeling of exclusion is what initially attracted me to surrealism and to things that are unusual or impossible. I'm particularly drawn to water, floating figures, distorted bodies and fantasy landscapes because they exist outside the rules of ordinary reality. There is something comforting to me about creating a world in which things do not necessarily make sense, because that reflects the way I have often experienced identity and belonging myself.

When people try to dissect my identity or arrive at a definitive opinion of who I am, particularly when my lack of conventional patriotism is interpreted as a lack of passion or authenticity, I often feel a strong desire to escape those categories entirely. In my work, that escape can mean becoming almost non-human: a mermaid, a floating figure, an alien-like character, or a body existing somewhere it seemingly shouldn't.

I'm attracted to the abstract, the uncomfortable and the fantastical because those elements capture how I sometimes feel moving through the world. If I cannot comfortably belong to the identities and spaces that already exist, In these imagined worlds, I don't have to explain where I belong or prove that I belong there.

Faces and bodies in your work often seem to shift, overlap, or break into different forms. What can a fragmented figure express that a conventional portrait cannot?

A fragmented figure breaks structure, convention and perfectionism. It can be uncomfortable, unusual, obscure and even unsettling. A conventional portrait can be beautiful, structured and emotionally moving, but it often exists within a visual language that we already

understand and accept. Fragmentation allows me to move beyond that, to create a world of distorted bodies, floating eyes, and water that feels more like a dream than reality.

The ordinary is beautiful, but it can also feel inaccessible. There is an expectation of coherence and perfection that is difficult to achieve when we are naturally imperfect and contradictory as human beings. Ironically, although surrealism depicts a fantasy world that does not exist, I find that it can come much closer to expressing emotions that do exist, particularly feelings of discomfort, alienation or confusion that can be difficult to articulate verbally. That is what I find beautiful and fun about the unconventional portrait. There is room to play, to distort and to make things that don't entirely make sense. There is also room to embrace the discomfort of being human, which, ironically, I find quite beautiful.

Eyes and expressions hold a powerful presence in your images. What role does the gaze play in the relationship between your figures and the viewer?

Being Iraqi, Palestinian and Canadian, I often feel exposed; almost metaphorically naked to other people's judgement and criticism. At times, I become very aware of people looking at me, whether that gaze comes from discomfort, confusion, curiosity, enthusiasm or even disgust. Regardless of the intention behind it, there is something about being observed that makes me feel watched and exposed.

I purposefully portray large eyes throughout my work, but my central figures often look away from the viewer. For me, this reflects an avoidance of eye contact and of that uncomfortable confrontation. At the same time, smaller elements, particularly disembodied or floating eyes often stare directly at the viewer. There is a tension between the figure trying not to look and the feeling that they are being watched anyway.

That relationship reflects the experience of feeling as though I am on display without purpose or permission. Whether or not I actually care what someone thinks of



me, I can still be conscious of their gaze. No matter how I behave, how I dress or how I present myself, there can be a feeling of being silently interrogated by the eyes around me.

The figures look away and pretend not to notice the gaze, even though they know perfectly well that it is there. The eyes, meanwhile, refuse to look away.

Some of your compositions bring several figures and visual elements into close proximity, while others focus on a single face. How do you decide how much space a figure needs?

It depends on the character I initially create and what I imagine they need. Whether they seem like they want company or whether they are the kind of figure that would rather be left alone. I often make that decision by looking at the character's eyes and expression. If they appear disinterested, unbothered or are deliberately looking away, I sometimes enjoy introducing another element specifically to disturb that sense of peace. It creates tension and allows me to explore what happens when two opposing or unexpected elements are forced to occupy the same space. Could they adore one another, tolerate each other, or simply be deeply uncomfortable together? I'm interested in that discomfort.

At other times, I know immediately that a figure needs to exist alone. In those compositions, I tend to exaggerate the characteristics that make them distinctive; a particular face shape, oversized eyes, a dramatic bowl cut, or something slightly nerdy or strange. I like taking characteristics that might ordinarily be judged as weird and making them the entire focus of the image. If I paint one figure, I want them to have enough personality and peculiarity to occupy the space on their own.

When I paint several figures, however, they often seem slightly uncomfortable around one another. I think that unintentionally or perhaps intentionally, captures me

quite well. I feel very at peace when I'm alone in my own world. Around other people, I become conscious of what they might be thinking and how I am expected to communicate, almost rearranging my own weirdness into something that will make sense to the person in front of me.

In that sense, the amount of space I give my figures often reflects the difference between the freedom of being alone and the negotiation that comes with being around other people.

When you begin a new piece, do you start with a particular memory or feeling, or do you discover its meaning as you work?

When I am painting, I am incredibly disconnected from conscious thought. I'm never really thinking or calculating. Of course, there is usually a rough draft where I consider certain elements or the composition, but once I am actually painting, I am completely in it. It almost feels as though I am possessed. The brush and my hand develop a mind and a story of their own, and my body simply becomes the home for my artistic mind.

The process becomes very automatic. I often only understand what is happening when I physically stand up, step away from the canvas, or return to it later and look at what I have created. That distance allows me to recognise things in the work that I wasn't consciously aware of while making it.

I like taking risks, being dramatic and allowing painting to become an escape from reality. If I began every piece by consciously thinking about a particular memory or trying to illustrate a specific feeling, I don't think I would get anything done. Ironically, it is the lack of conscious thought that allows the work to become so deeply connected to my inner world.

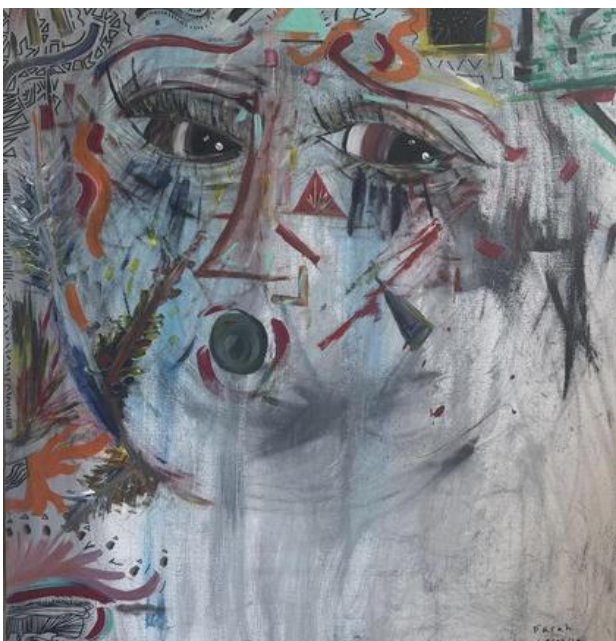
I'm incredibly thankful to be so in love with and moved by art that the process can mentally take me somewhere else entirely. I don't necessarily discover the meaning as I work, I discover it when I come back.

What would you like viewers to feel or question when they encounter the figures in your work?

Nothing particular comes to mind. More than anything, I want my work to evoke something powerful, uncomfortable or personal to the viewer's own experience of this intense and unpredictable world. If I am able to move someone, inspire them, or make them feel less alone in the absurdity of existence and life, then I feel that my work has served its purpose.

I don't expect the viewer to immediately understand my themes, nor do I necessarily want them to. I would rather they begin with my work and then become lost. Not in the world I have created, but in a world of their own, on their own terms. I want the work to give them space to project their own memories, emotions and experiences onto what they are seeing.

Ultimately, my work is only the vessel. Where it takes the viewer belongs entirely to them.





Ferrari

— Interview

Sara Fernandes

Growing up in Mumbai and later moving to Oregon exposed you to very different environments. How has this experience shaped your understanding of home and belonging?

Moving out was definitely not an easy one for me. I felt like I wouldn't miss home so much at the start. I was ready to leave and soar through the sky, be independent. But that move and that shift made me realize the value of belonging. It made me understand that there are so many things we take for



Sara Fernandes | Entwine Confluence Woven Together



granted when we live in our own homes. The comfort becomes normalized.

Looking back, I don't regret it. It taught me about growth and about finding a feeling of home in places you would least expect. Sometimes you find pieces of home in the people who care about you.

I think belonging is a feeling that can change if you give places a chance. Sometimes, places can grow into you. Now I feel like I leave a piece of myself in every place I go.

You describe architecture as a meeting point between art, ecology, and community. When did you begin to see these interests as parts of one practice?

It was definitely a series of experiences. During my bachelor's, I was grounded more in the realism of architecture. But as I grew out of that shell and experienced life and architecture in a different country, it made me expand my thoughts and realize that architecture could be so much more.

That's when I started digging deeper and looking for connections and relationships between things. And honestly, I took great advantage of the interdisciplinary side of this field. I took landscape and art theory classes, courses related to community, nonprofit work, planning policy, and a little bit of everything.

And all of those experiences made me realize that these things need to go hand in hand. There is no perfect answer, but there is always a better one. And I think when we look at something through all of these different lenses, we can create a better outcome.

Your process begins with extensive research and hand sketches. How do you recognize the moment when an idea is ready to become a spatial design?

I think an idea is ready to become a spatial design when I understand the "why" behind it. And even then, I'm not always right.

Sometimes I think it's ready, and it fails because I'm not satisfied with certain sequences or spatial organizations, or



because I pictured it as something and it ended up being something else.

The “why” is what brings me back. It's what holds the idea together, the root of the design. The ideas that come from it are usually things that branch out from that core value. And it's ever-changing. If you asked me to look back at a design and work on it again, it might be completely different from what it was back then. Not because it was wrong, but because I've learned more and now I have more to add to the “why.” And that can sometimes change the design. I think that's the beauty of it.

How did your hands-on experience with woodworking and fabrication change the way you think about materials and the spaces you design?

I remember being told to build a foldable table from scratch. Golly, it was a mess. Designing was hard enough, let alone actually building it. I almost never imagined that my past self was even slightly confident enough to take on that responsibility.

But hey, you wouldn't know unless you start.

I did it, and it totally worked. It was my first time, but it was definitely worth the shot. I'm really glad my mentor believed in me.

What that experience really taught me was how much thought can go into something that seems so small. I had to think about how the connections would work, how many nails would be required, how to create a seamless design through the joinery, the dimensions of the wood, and what could be the best design without going over budget. All of that was for a foldable table. And that made me realize that there really isn't such a thing as a small project or a big one. Everything requires thought.

What does visual art allow you to explore that architectural drawings and models do not?

I think visual art is a way to look at things that could be. For someone who has always been a visual person, it really helps me focus on how things can feel, look, and exist before I have to make them practical.

With architectural drawings and models, I'm usually trying to understand or communicate something that is becoming a space. Even when I'm exploring through models, I'm still thinking about scale, structure, material, movement, or how someone might actually experience that space.

Visual art gives me a little more freedom to explore an idea without having to resolve all of those things. I can experiment

with an image, a feeling, a composition, or even just a thought without immediately asking myself how it would be built.

I think it allows me to explore the possibility first, and then figure out how that possibility could translate into architecture.

Can you describe a moment when a structural requirement, material limitation, or practical constraint led you toward a more interesting creative solution?

There are sometimes constraints that come from the project, but sometimes there are constraints that you set for yourself. There was one project in particular where I challenged myself not to design a space only around human comfort. I started exploring the idea of more-than-human design and asking what it would mean for architecture to have a relationship with the ecosystem around it.

The project was in a small town close to the forest that had previously had a booming logging industry. That became a kind of constraint for me; I didn't want to simply put another building into the landscape without thinking about what the project could give back.

So I started thinking about how architecture could help create a different relationship between the community and the forest. Instead of simply replacing the logging industry with another industry, could the project support the community while also giving something back to nature?

That became the driving force behind the project.

Architecture became more of an interface between people and the forest rather than just an object sitting within it.

You envision collaborations with artists, ecologists, and community members. What question would you most like to explore together, and how would you share the design decisions?

How do we make the best use of what we have to create a space that is beneficial to everyone?

If everyone comes into a project with a different goal someone wanting to preserve something, someone wanting to protect something, someone thinking about the needs of the community I think the challenge is finding a solution that works for everyone.

I'm sure we've made things that weren't possible possible every day, so why not try to make something that serves both the community and the environment, and in a way that allows an artist to bring another layer to the space to make people see or experience something differently?



Robelis Rodriguez

You studied translation before pursuing further education in art. How did your artistic journey begin, and when did art become a central part of your life?



Robelis Rodriguez | Carigua | 2026

My artistic journey actually began in childhood. I knew that my grandfather painted, but I was especially fascinated by the work of one of my uncles, who was an art professor. Art and making things were always present around me.

As a child, I had a collection of twelve Spanish-language volumes from Usborne's The Knowhow Books series. I loved them and returned to them again and again. They covered everything from experiments and moving puppets to making toys from paper and constructing working machines. My brother, who is also a photographer and artistically gifted, and I spent hours trying things out together and bringing our own little creatures and inventions to life.

I also had art classes in primary school. Looking back, I think I have experimented with almost every technique at some point: collage, clay, sewing, knitting, crochet, sculpture and combinations of different materials. I simply cannot seem to stop creating and experimenting. During my university studies, however, art moved into the background. I studied Translation and later specialized in Public Management, while continuing to sew, craft and explore new techniques whenever I had the opportunity.



A turning point came in 2015, after an operation that unfortunately resulted in serious complications. During my recovery, I immersed myself in artistic activities. Creating gave me the calm and relaxation my body needed at that time. It was such a powerful personal experience that I wanted to share the potential of creativity with others. I therefore trained as a Life Coach with a focus on art therapy. But I soon realized that I could no longer ignore my own need to create. I began my Atelierista training, followed by further education in Art Education. There was no turning back. I started producing more and more work, applying for exhibitions and being accepted. From there, one opportunity led to another. Art gradually became an essential part of my life—not only as something I make, but as a way of thinking, exploring and connecting with others.

How has moving from Venezuela to Germany influenced your sense of identity and belonging, and how do these experiences enter your work?

Moving from Venezuela to Germany has deeply influenced the way I think about identity and belonging. I have lived in Germany since 2004, but Venezuela remains an essential part of who I am. I don't experience these two identities as opposites. Instead, I see myself as someone shaped by both worlds.

Migration creates a space in between. You carry memories, traditions, images, smells, stories and ways of seeing the world from one place while building a

new life somewhere else. Over time, that “in-between” becomes part of who you are.

This is reflected in my work. I am interested in identity, migration and femininity, but also in nature and the underwater world, which connect me strongly to my childhood and to my memories of the Caribbean.

My art has become a place where these different parts of my life can coexist. Rather than choosing where I belong, I allow both worlds to meet within the same work.

You work across languages as well as cultures. Has your background in translation influenced the way you communicate ideas through images?

Absolutely. Translation taught me that communication is never simply about replacing one word with another. You have to understand context, culture, intention and everything that exists between the words.

I approach images in much the same way. A symbol can carry completely different meanings depending on the cultural background of the person looking at it. Something that feels familiar to me because of my Venezuelan background may be completely new to another viewer. In that sense, I still think like a translator. I transform memories, emotions, cultural references and questions into visual language. But I don't want to provide a single “correct translation.” I prefer to leave room for the viewer's own experience. A work can begin with something very personal to me and take on a completely different meaning in someone else's eyes. Perhaps that is also why I am drawn to mixed media: different materials, textures and symbols can communicate simultaneously, almost like several languages speaking to one another.

You describe your artistic process as “a dialogue with the unforeseen”. Could you share an example of a work that developed in a completely unexpected direction?

One of the strongest examples is the evolution of my work around women.

Respect and justice are important values for me. Through coaching women's groups, conversations with friends and my own experiences, I became increasingly aware of how often women face additional obstacles in life—particularly mothers, whose caring responsibilities can have a lasting impact on their professional opportunities and independence. At some point, I saw a photograph of a building illuminated in orange and learned about the Orange Days, the United Nations campaign raising awareness of violence against women. I began reading the

statistics, and I felt that I had to respond somehow through my art.

My first works on the subject portrayed women as victims: vulnerable, threatened and in need of protection. But as I continued, I became increasingly uncomfortable with that representation. I didn't want to reinforce the image of women as powerless. Something shifted.

I began portraying women as superheroes—with enormous strength, energy and powers. That completely changed the direction of my work. I then wondered whether Venezuela had its own female figures that could become part of this new visual world. That question led me to the Venus figures of Tacarigua, which I had previously only known from photographs.

So the unexpected development was not simply a new technique or material. It was a change in perspective. I began by wanting to address violence against women and ended up exploring female strength, cultural heritage and empowerment.

Raised textures give many of your painted figures a sculptural presence. How do you choose your materials, and what does working with texture allow you to express?

Sometimes I choose the material, and sometimes the material chooses me.

I have used recycled plastic balls from children's play pools, zippers, bands, old frames, old toys and many other materials that might otherwise have been discarded. Sometimes I begin with a very clear idea and search for the material that will help me realize it. At other times, I discover a material and let it suggest what the work could become.

I generally prefer textured surfaces to completely smooth paintings. I love the physicality of a work—the way light catches a raised surface and the way different materials create depth.

Texture also gives a painting a sculptural quality and a sense of physical presence. I even encourage visitors, when appropriate, to experience some of my works with their fingers. Touch creates another relationship with an artwork; it turns looking into a more embodied experience.

And materials can surprise me. They don't always behave exactly as planned, which is part of what makes the process exciting.

What first drew you to ancient Venezuelan female figures, and what personal significance do they hold for you?

My interest in the Venus figures of Tacarigua grew out of my search for strong female figures connected to my Venezuelan heritage. I had known them mainly

from photographs, but when I began looking more closely at them, I was fascinated by the contrast between their small physical size and their enormous symbolic significance.

They are associated with fertility, motherhood, creative power and protection. I was particularly drawn to the idea of femininity being represented not as something passive or decorative, but as a source of strength.

Last year, something happened that gave the Venus an even more personal meaning for me. A publisher contacted me because they wanted to use one of my Venus paintings as the cover of a book. They sent me the manuscript, and while reading it I felt as if I had been transported back to my childhood in Venezuela. Images, smells, traditions and objects that had been hidden somewhere in my memory suddenly came alive again.

The Venus figures have a special role in the story and are described by the author. In the end, my work Carigua became the cover of the book.

That made me incredibly proud, but more than that, it gave me a profound feeling of connection to the country where I grew up. It was as though something from my past had unexpectedly found its way back into my present.

For me, the Venus has therefore become much more than an archaeological figure. She is a bridge between generations, between Venezuela and Germany, and between personal memory and artistic expression. Through her, I can reconnect with a part of my heritage while giving it a contemporary voice.



Robelis Rodríguez | Pool Ikone | 2026



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