



Um momento de trégua CAROLINA SERRANO

ISTVÁN
DUKAI
MOIRE study I

Al-Tiba9
CONTEMPORARY ART

Limited Edition

Discover the international art scene with Al-Tiba9 Art Magazine



Al-Tiba9 Contemporary Art Magazine reflects modern society and its environment through the works of experimental contemporary artists, showcased for their innovation and vision in photography, sculpture, performance, painting, installation, design, architecture, and fashion. The ISSUE08 features 40 selected artists from around the world who embody in their work a spirit of inspired forward-thinking and vision provoking conversation and action. This edition is a unique space where individual artists and designers can express their vision and become the original media themselves. The artists in the ISSUE08 enjoy the full international reach of Al-Tiba9's extensive network of galleries, museums, art dealers, collectors, art professionals, art lovers, and academics all over the world while engaging daily with followers through social media, print, website, and digital publication. The magazine is also recommended for the Doctoral degree in Design at the largest Art universities in Japan and the United States.

Al-Tiba9 is proud to have a cultural partnership with one of the world's most influential contemporary art fairs and competitions. The magazine will be showcased as a limited edition art book in ArtsLibris Barcelona, Madrid, Lisbon, and distributed worldwide.

ARTISTS | Pedro Gramaxo, Joanna Wlaszyn, Zaccheo Zhang, Maria Luísa Capela, Maria Elisa Vale, Sue Vo-Ho, Gala Semenova, Chris Corridore, Patrick Vandecasteele, Berk Kır, Jose Cruzio, Giuseppe Francavilla, LI MO, Marco Waldis, Iwa Kruczkowska-Król, Anastasia Kuznetsova, Omar Reyna, Aimee Ruoff, Athina Masoura, Syl Arena, WiseTwo, Fikos, Kaoru Shibuta, Sergey Piskunov, Magdalena Bukowska, Fotini Christophillis, Krzysztof Strzelecki, Sasha Neschastnova, Vilma Leino, Amr Alngmah, José Luis Ramírez, Jayakar Priyadharshan, Carolina Serrano, István Dukai, Lucrezia Rossi, Peter Backhaus, Zaam Arif, Sam Heydt, Fan de Fantástica.

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ISSUE08

Al-Tiba9

CONTEMPORARY ART

PEDRO GRAMAXO

Pedro Gramaxo (1989) is a Portuguese contemporary artist. His constructive artistic practice explores the dichotomy between natural and artificial, material and immaterial, by manipulating the contextualization of primary artificial elements, creating large-scale installations.

Intending to measure and reinvent the landscape, the artist works with an exclusive measurement unit created by himself, developing artificial works that contrast between object and context in which they are inserted.

Deeply interested in public art and urban intervention, he is currently developing projects that explore new contexts for artistic explorations - 2011 Project Portrait - 2015 HOME series - 2016 Bright Hour series - 2018 Landscape series - and in 2020 the Dimension Series.

Since 2012 he has exhibited solo and group shows at various scales and countries, with formats like - installation, photography, and short film.

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 @pedrogramaxo
 Lisbon, Portugal

Home Series #44 PEDRO GRAMAXO



HOME is a serie of temporary, non-visitable site-specific installations.

Home Series #22 PEDRO GRAMAXO



Home Series #22 PEDRO GRAMAXO



These unfamiliar locations and installations are kept secret and out of sight to provide us with the most uncanny perceptive experience. The artist's photographs are kept as a "physical memory."

In our minds, concepts such as length, height or width are not related to a specific shape. It is just when we bind together these terms, that we can build an idea around physical space and dimension. In order to make them understandable, "we" had the need to establish measurement units to be able to handle its existence = Time, space, mass, etc. This process allowed us to bring indefinite and abstract concepts into concrete, measurable and, as a last resort, tangible forms.

Here is where Pedro settles his practice, deepening how an individual has been able to understand these abstract and artificial concepts and how one-self engages physically and psychologically with volume, scale or dimension – consciousness awareness.

On his artworks we see different expressions such as: dimensional, luminous, and tectonic, placed in an unknown location, with a few scale references. These site-specific pieces force us to think about these abstract concepts that we were talking before and have been guided by, for so long. We are not sure about their dimensions, in what materials they were built, nor even if they're real or not. Through this complex body of work, the artist becomes the one in control of our perception and how we visualize the artworks and nature itself, forcing us to express doubt about what you are watching. His aim is to make the viewers ask themselves how they interpret scale, length, height, weight of forms, and how we engage with a con- text with no dimension references.

Pedro Gramaxo puts in a material world ideas that are intangible, in order to make these abstract concepts, real. It's all about a relation between the immaterial and the artificial with a material and natural presence. This is the topic that he has been researching for the last years and has been able to translate into a complex body of work.



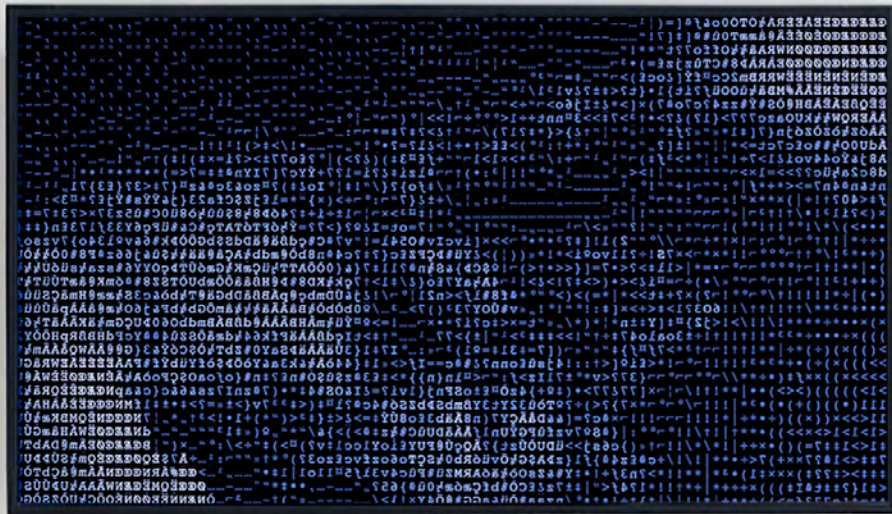
Home Series #33 PEDRO GRAMAXO

HOME SERIES

JOANNA WLASZYN

Joanna Wlaszyn is a Polish-French interdisciplinary artist, teacher, and researcher based in Paris. Her work fuses visual language with conceptual experiments. She attempts to create alternative interpretations in response to a constantly evolving post-digital culture. Rather than distorting reality, she challenges perception and representation through video, installations, digital art, and hybrid drawings and Paintings. Joanna Wlaszyn as an artist, designer, and interdisciplinary researcher from the architectural world, explores various

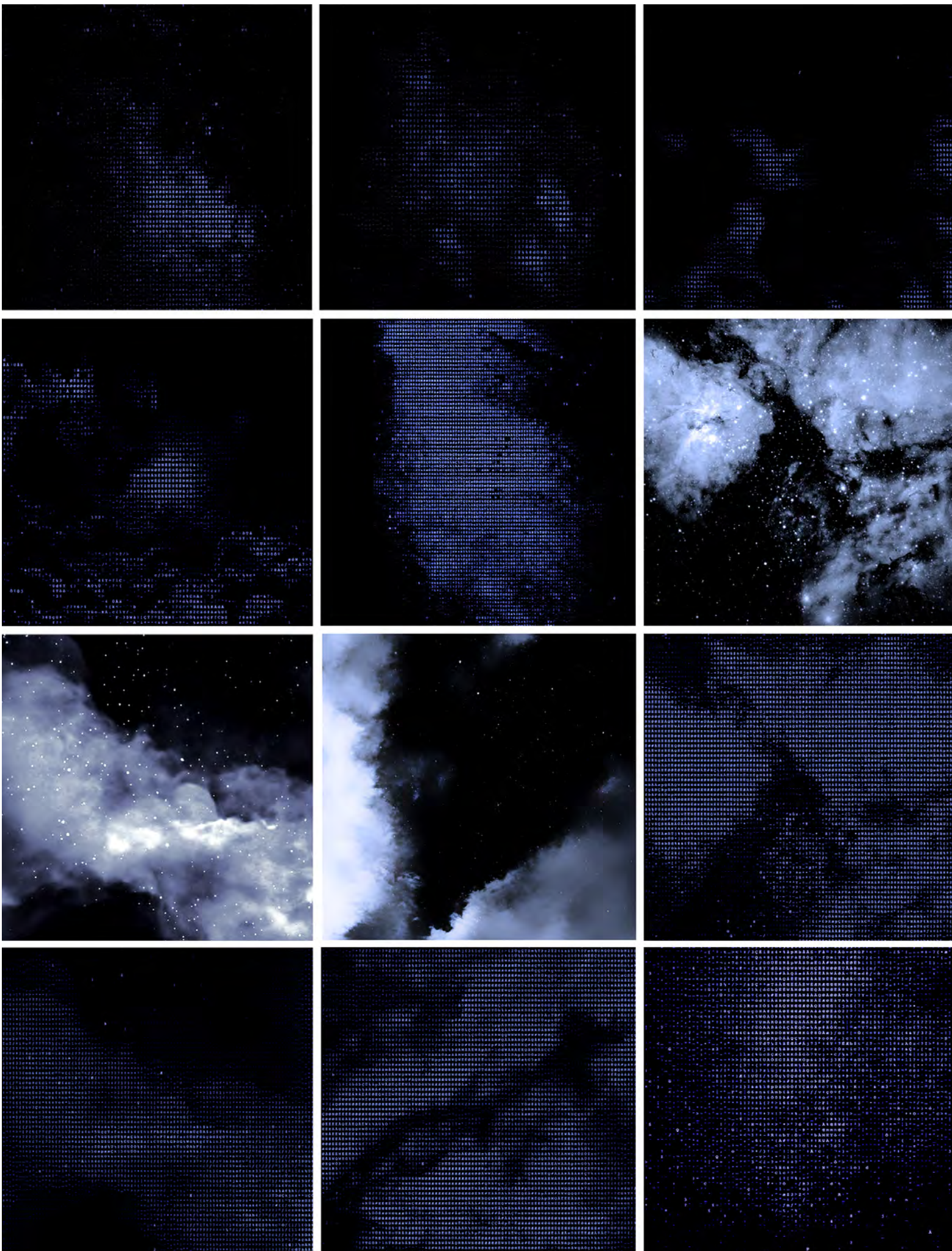
possible interpretations of reality resulting from current technological phenomena. Joanna studied architecture, art, and design in new media. She held a doctorate in architectural theory and criticism from the University of Paris-Est and a Specialized Master's in Creation in New Media from Ensai in Paris. She is also the author of several scientific publications on the multifaceted impact of recent technological advances on art, design, and architecture disciplines. Born in Poland, she lives and works in Paris.



DATA CLOUDS

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You have an interesting background, coming from architecture and new media. At the same time, you are the author of several scientific publications. How did you start getting involved with art?

My scientific publications explore the impact of digital technologies on architecture and visual arts. This theoretical interest came during my doctoral research about the reception of architecture and recent technologies. Far from supposed subjectivity, that analysis has been guided by the notion of perceptual experience based on aesthetic and phenomenological concepts. I was interested in this double reflexivity that relates to the study of conceptual and “concrete” in speculative tensions between the “digital” and physical worlds. My research has investigated architecture as increasingly related to the artistic field. Analyzing the aesthetic factors of various concepts and case studies, I apprehended the cognitive aspect and the aesthetic value of “technological reception.” Next, I started to represent this questioning through my artistic research.

How would you describe your development as an artist and the way you have transitioned towards your expression?

Art is, for me, a transitive reflection of the reality that oscillates in-between illusion and the multidimensional relevance of perception. I’m working on the potentiality of the real by creating its possible interpretations. My visual explorations contain figures that are not construed voluntarily but offer representations, with universal narratives accessible to all. In my work, I intentionally meld the visual language and conceptual experiment into alternative representations. Through an interdisciplinary approach, my artworks propose to rethink digital as new forms of aesthetics. By merging different traditional and digital technics, I explore various phenomena of reality nowadays, such as the ubiquity of digital identities, their limits, presence, and visual simulation. Based on the fragility of the gaze that often characterizes our current view of the world, my inspirations come from cultural dualities present in our lives and constantly amplified by evolving technological progress and their impacts on our malleable realities.

Your work is a reflection on communication and data transmission. What is the main aim of your project, “Data Clouds”?

DATA CLOUDS refer to the (in)visibilities of digital data that, according to time zones, are traveling driven by the wind of networks to unknown destinations. Translated here into illusory correlations, these “clouds” reveal pareidolia composed not of water particles but fragments of lives, coded in digital clouds and stored in 45 million centers all around the world. This video installation is created

through cross-digital technics and can be projected on HD flat screens or on a large wall to create another aesthetic experience. The stereo sound is important in this work because it gives another dimension to the passing clouds. Regardless of the rhythm difference between both of them, the superposition of the incomprehensible voices creates an effect of surprise and appears and disappears at times as an echo. This project refers to our data privacy, its (in) secure protection and transmission.

How important is virtuality and the digital world for your work? And what do you find so fascinating about it?

Virtuality has always been present in our lives, as coexistence. This concept was well described by the philosophers Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze. For Deleuze, virtualization is the passage of current to the virtual and refers to an ideal aspect of reality, but nonetheless real. Both Bergson and Deleuze build their virtual concepts about a quotation of Marcel Proust that defines virtuality as “real but not actual, ideal but not abstract.” Virtual is a kind of potentiality that becomes fulfilled in the actual, it is still not material, but it is real. This is how I understand virtuality, and effectively, I find it fascinating significantly amplified by the digital world. Today, we have technologies that allow us to capture these different states of virtuality and show the invisible side of what is real. I am thinking about representing this phenomenon in the virtual extension of my HIGH DEFINITION BLUR series. I want to create a virtual experience based on incomplete, and sometimes unreal dreams represented randomly. Although this virtual dream-walk will be individual and not predefined, it always becomes a sensitive and subjective story.

On the other hand, the viewers seem to be very important for your project, “Data Clouds,” as they activate the work through their fruition. How do you engage the viewers in your artworks?

DATA CLOUDS is a ten-minute-long video installation and runs in a loop without accentuating its beginning or the end. Variable dimensions for the installation depend on projection support and change the perception of the work according to the projection space. If the projection takes place in a big closed room, the immersion is immediate. The dominant blue color of the video and the stereo sound absorb the visitors. This presentation of DATA CLOUDS allows experiencing this work for many visitors at the same time. Another possibility is to project the video on an HD flat screen and to listen to the sound with headsets — this presentation is more intimate. It allows only two visitors to appreciate the video at the same time. These different possibilities of representation accentuate the subjectivity of aesthetic experience.

What do you hope that the public takes away from your work?

I was told once that my work is troubling. I truly prefer to hear this kind of reflection, than what I am doing is beautiful. I like to think the public receives my work as a part of a cultural value and intellectual production, coordinated by technological means which amplify it. As I work with digital tools, it introduces a new kind of aesthetics, it can be seen as inquiring, but in any case, I hope the public finds it singular. The reception of art is a subjective, emotional, and aesthetic experience. I hope once seen, the public will remember my work and grabs its conceptual aspect and its hidden sensitivity.

How much new technologies influence your artistic practice? And how do you keep up with the latest digital trends and technologies?

For me, technologies are a conceptual tool of reflection and a practical way of realization. Usually, I have a conceptual idea that is revealed through visual research using cross-digitals technics. I believe the meaning of my work is to emphasize how easy reality can become today, the illusionary world filled with fake ideas, information peoples. I explore areas, which reflect both the post-digital nature of creativity in our age and the critical perspectives of blending boundaries between the virtual and physical worlds. It is also important for me to reconsider the cultural, social, and ethical implications of new technological tools for manipulating reality and facts conceptually. I interpret the meaning of my work as infinite research of sensibilities, emotion, and matter behind the simple visual effects using digital as a tool. Using cross digital technics, I create a unique approach guided by my artistic intuition and no by digital trends. Some of the latest technologies like artificial intelligence are fascinating; I think of integrating them into my future artistic experimentations.

On the same topic, NFTs seem to be the latest trend, and everyone is talking about it. What are your thoughts on this subject? Are NFTs here to stay or just a temporary trend?

As many others have noticed, NFTs seems to be a new possibility for many digital artists to tokenize their creativity. All crypto platforms reflect a multitude of digital approaches and make the question of aesthetics even more problematic. Endless digital variety should not be confused with cultural vitality; privileging artistic originality is no longer adequate when evaluating art today. It is yet difficult to predict the future of NFTs, there are so many artistic and pseudo-artistic works that are bidding right, but many others are drowning in the crowd. Like in any blockchain, there is an environmental footprint issue,

particularly related to the energy demand. Some platforms pretend to be more environmentally friendly than others, like hicetnunc.xyz. Eventually, more and more galleries are interested in NFTs, so I believe it is much more than a temporary trend, and NFTs are here to stay but not in the current configuration. I’m still waiting to get into the NFTs crypto market and, at the same time to preserve my artistic legitimacy.

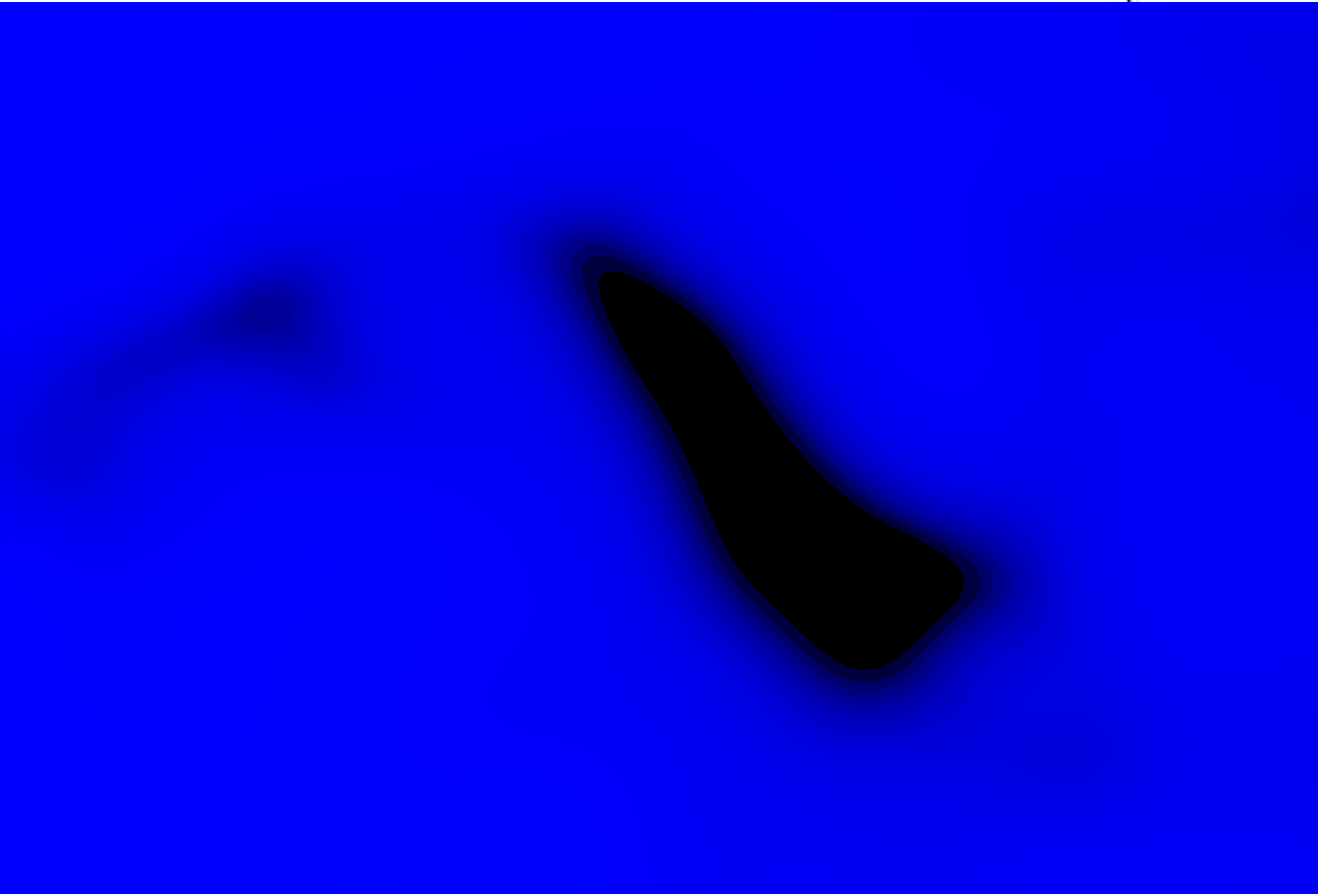
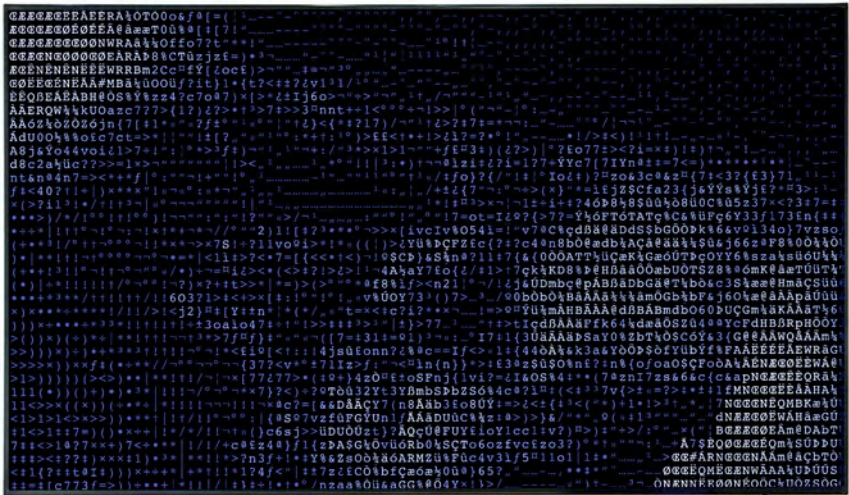
As a digital artist yourself, what are your thoughts on digital presentations, like fairs and exhibitions, for artists? Do you think these are good opportunities, or do you wish to go back to life as it was before the pandemic?

I believe we will never be able to come back to our lives before the pandemic to forget what happened and continue like before. This global condition changed our perception of the world forever, digital became a part of our life, and this will not change. What the pandemic achieved was a total flattening of all forms of artistic display across online platforms. On the one hand, these merging economies revealed the lie of contemporary art’s separateness from the wider culture. On the other hand, it catalyzed the growth of virtual marketplaces in which a new wave of digital art could leverage the blockchain for verifiable digital scarcity. But even if I saw some very good online exhibitions and art fairs, nothing can replace physical contact or face-to-face discussion. However, the digital world will remain an additional opportunity to connect with collectors and art lovers. If all would become digital, we could get lost easily, overwritten by the number of virtual images, information, and online exhibitions. I think the solution will be a well-defined coexistence of the digital and physical art worlds.

What projects or exhibitions are you most looking forward to in the near future? Anything exciting coming soon?

Currently, I am working on a new series called CORPUS MEUM. It is a series of paintings in which I am exploring the visible and invisible perception of corporeality. This work is about awareness of the body, passing time, and changes. Using both digital techniques and traditional painting, I want to allow the viewers to project themselves into the painting, to become part of it through reflection, like in the mirror. I am looking to create a new dimension in-between abstraction and figuration of the digital and analog worlds. This new work unveils a different perspective of the female bodily experience that can be seen as digital distortions that explore contemporary physical conditions. I hope to show this new work soon, as soon as the pandemic allows the galleries to reopen. I am looking forward to this!

Data Clouds JOANNA WLASZYN



HD Blur #4 JOANNA WLASZYN

ZACCHEO ZHANG

Zaccheo Zhang is a Chinese artist studying in the United States. Her works focus on the spiritual connection with the external world and individuals and strive to rejuvenate the photographic medium in modern art. This young artist's exploration of photographic materials has opened up more possibilities for photography. She is convinced that the characteristics of photographic materials are the elements that make photography diversified and rejuvenated. At the same time, she believes that her creative, experimental methods have allowed photography to go back to the close relationship with science and reborn from it to a unique way of artistic expression.

After completing her graduate studies at the Savannah College of Art and Design, she will continue her studies in New York. Her artworks have been exhibited and published in the USA, China, France, Italy, the UK, and UAE.

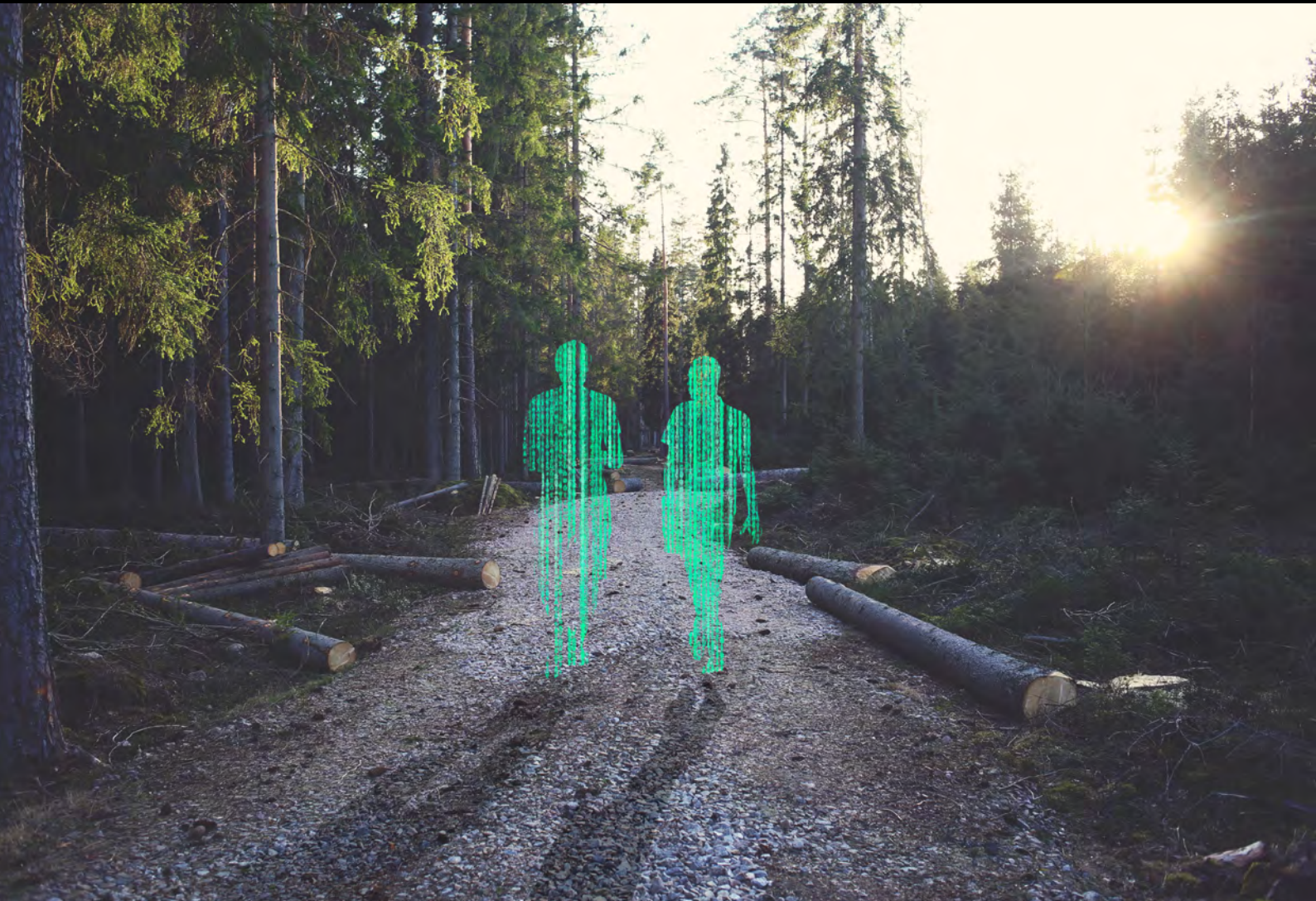
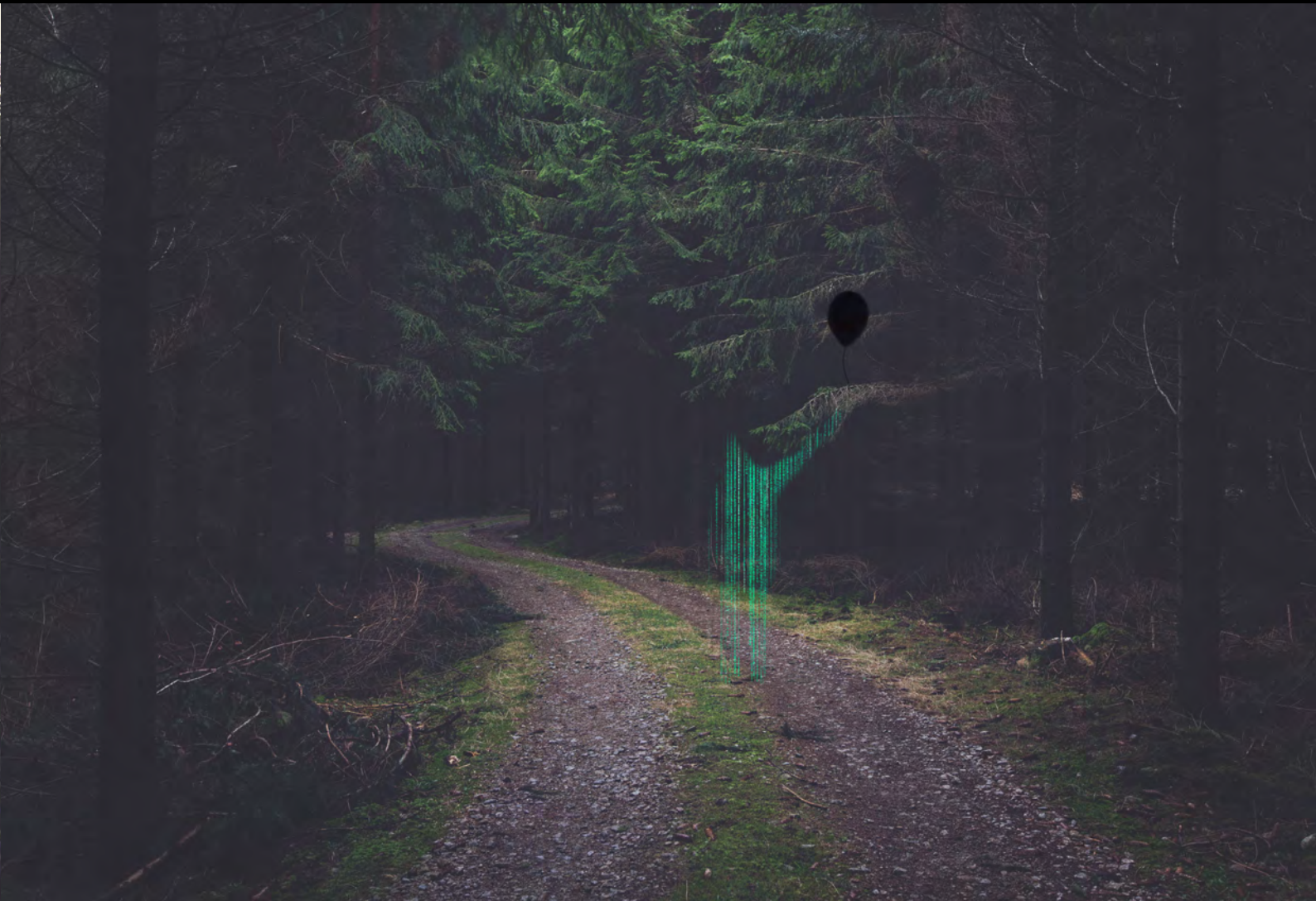
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Savannah, United States

Artist profile by MAN ZHU

TRANSLATION SERIES



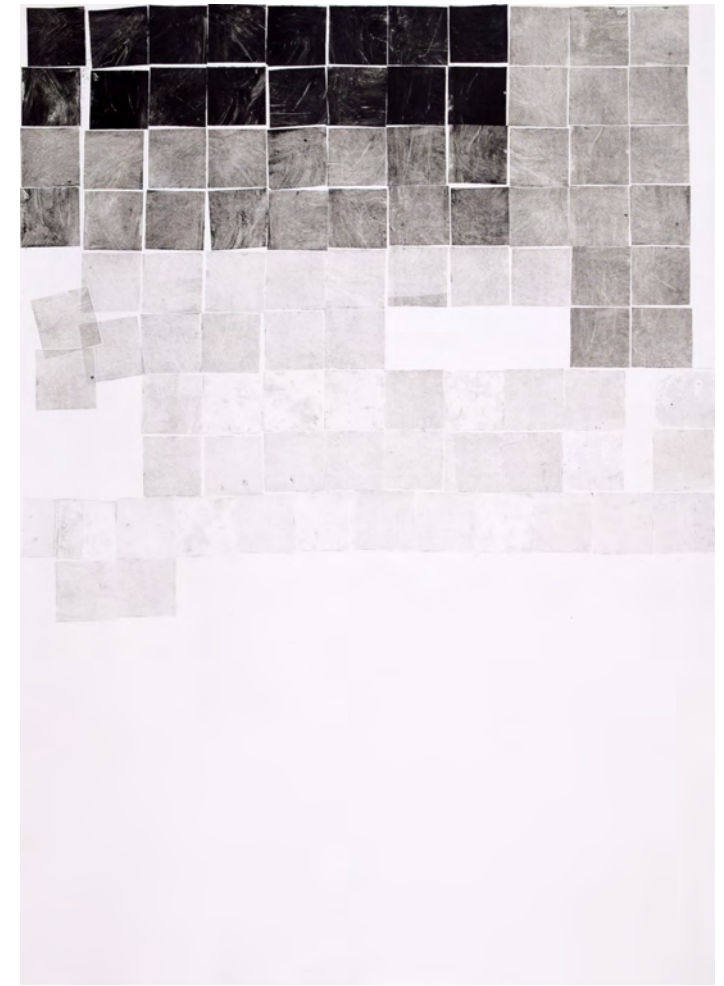
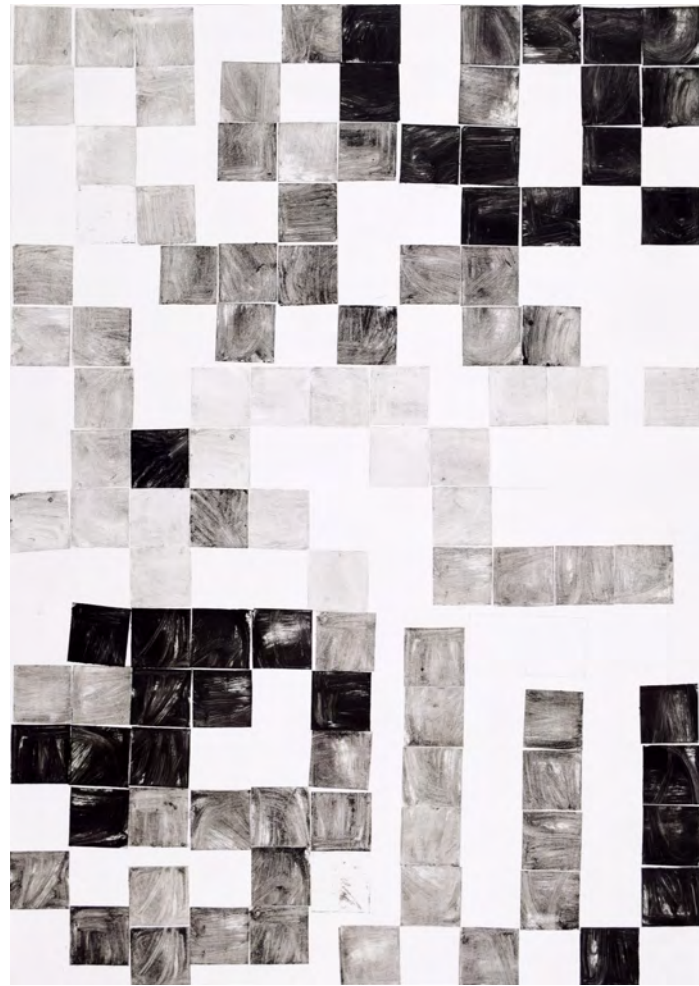
As Barthes writes in *The Death of the Author*, "a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the message of the Author-God), but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash." Barthes negates the possibility of finding a stable interpretation of a text or image. He suggests that language is inherently unstable—that is, not governed by artistic intention—and that meaning is generated outside the conscious intentions of the writer or artist.

Translation Series #3 ZACCHEO ZHANG*Translation Series #1* ZACCHEO ZHANG

In Zacccho Zhang Translation Series, the photographer uses the audience's different concerns and knowledge accumulation to create different picture interpretations. In the creation, there is no picture taken by the photographer; these pictures are collected by the photographer for secondary creation, and then "processed pictures" are presented to the audience for a read. These works are not so many works presented by artists to the audience but rather a question of choice. What the audience sees is what they want to see or what they can read.

MARIA LUÍSA CAPELA

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 Lisbon, Portugal
 Roma, Italy



Untitled MARIA LUÍSA CAPELA

Maria Luísa Capela was born in Porto in 1997. Graduated in Painting from the Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade de Lisboa and completed in 2019. She also studied at the Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti through the Erasmus + Program (Turin, 2018/19). She currently lives and works between Rome and Lisbon.

Through a disciplined process of synthesis through rigorous chromatic choices and volumetric presence, it is clarified in a new space of the sculptural dimension. This programmed choice, which aims to belong to the intermediate space, between two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality, leads to the territory of the object through the construction it contains. A compositional unity that lives in the permanent dynamic between form and color that by definition surpasses painting.

Won the prize of the Prémio D. Fernando II - XV Edition in MU.SA Museu das Artes de Sintra, Portugal (2020). She participated in BIENAL INTERNACIONAL DE ARTE JOVEM - Vila Verde (2020); TRIDIMENSIONALIDADE APARENTE, Galeria António Prates in Lisbon (2020); XXI BIENAL INTERNACIONAL DE ARTE DE CERVEIRA, Fórum Cultural de Vila Nova de Cerveira (2020); MERTOLARTE, Casa das Artes Mário Elias, Beja, Portugal (2020); BARBEITO, Casa-Museu Medeiros e Almeida, Lisbon (2020); JOV'ARTE - Bienal Jovem 2019, Galeria Municipal Vieira da Silva, Loures, Portugal (2019); Prémio Paula Rego - 3rd Edition, Casa das Histórias, Cascais, Portugal (2018); GAB-A, 12th Edition Galerias Abertas das Belas Artes na Faculdade de Belas Artes, Lisbon (2018) and Prémio Paula Rego - 2nd Edition, Casa das Histórias, Cascais, Portugal (2017).

The series presented are carried out at different times and approaches, but allowing both processes to cross each other through a constant methodology. The notion of orthogonality concerns the artist regardless of the used techniques. This register remains in one direction of the understanding of the supports.

Using this inherent principle of objects in the linen pieces under the three-dimensionality that wood is made to contain a perspective construction with a clear search about the realization of the image. In the case of series, it dismantles the rigor and proposes an interpretation of the collected tension high contrast from black to the pure white paper. Reinforcing the meticulous organization and fitting the matrices into the two-dimensional space, they live from unforeseen events and experience harmonious gradations of color by the action of the matrix force against the support.

MARIA ELISA VALE

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Maria Elisa's studies of contemporary sculpture allowed her to unite the strong historical heritage of stone sculpture with a more modern and abstract approach. Influenced by the visual and conceptual richness of the main medium chosen – stone – Maria Elisa's work focuses on concepts such as fragility, origin, beginning, and death. She establishes relationships and dialogues between fluid forms and the firm and rough texture and symbolic meaning of limestone or marble.

After graduating in sculpture from the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon, she attended the Intensive Life Drawing Course at the Accademia del Giglio in Florence, where she explored the importance of drawing in her practice. She has, since then, been participating in several group exhibitions in Portugal and abroad. Maria Elisa Vale currently lives and works in Porto, where she has been producing work in visual arts since 2019.

The artist uses found natural objects as a reference for her sculptures, focusing on their organic volumes to represent grenades – compact closed bodies on the brim of eruption. Thus, her pieces resemble seeds or fruits, portraying their adaptive nature of containing and protecting the core. They emanate the very beginning, what exists before creation, already ready to explode. As a matter of creation, the stone concentrates in itself the balance between the instant and the infinite, between its rapid capacity for change and the petrified form. Each view is consumed by energy that invades and modifies it. It becomes a softened body but still on its way to ascend. The essence of its original form remains and is passed onto new forms that take over it, giving the stone a new life, a new image. The sculpture "Metamorfose (Metamorphosis)" unveils that moment of creation, taking the matter as the theme of the work. Its compact and ambiguous form invites the speculation of new images and figures, of new symbols, of new creations. As Pygmalion, we become artists, anxiously awaiting the moment of its transformation into something real, of its inexplicable, yet so desired, metamorphosis.



Metamorfose, 2020 MARIA ELISA VALE
Dark Limestone, 26 x 16 x 26cm

SUE VO-HO

A native of Saguenay in Canada who grew up in the heart of Mother Nature, Sue Vo-Ho stands out as a photographer through her approach to memory and evanescence. The melancholy of open spaces inspires her work as well as the emptiness of nature or cities. Her preferred themes revolve around the desert, buildings, the ocean, urban landscapes, and city walls and are tinged with a hint of melancholy.

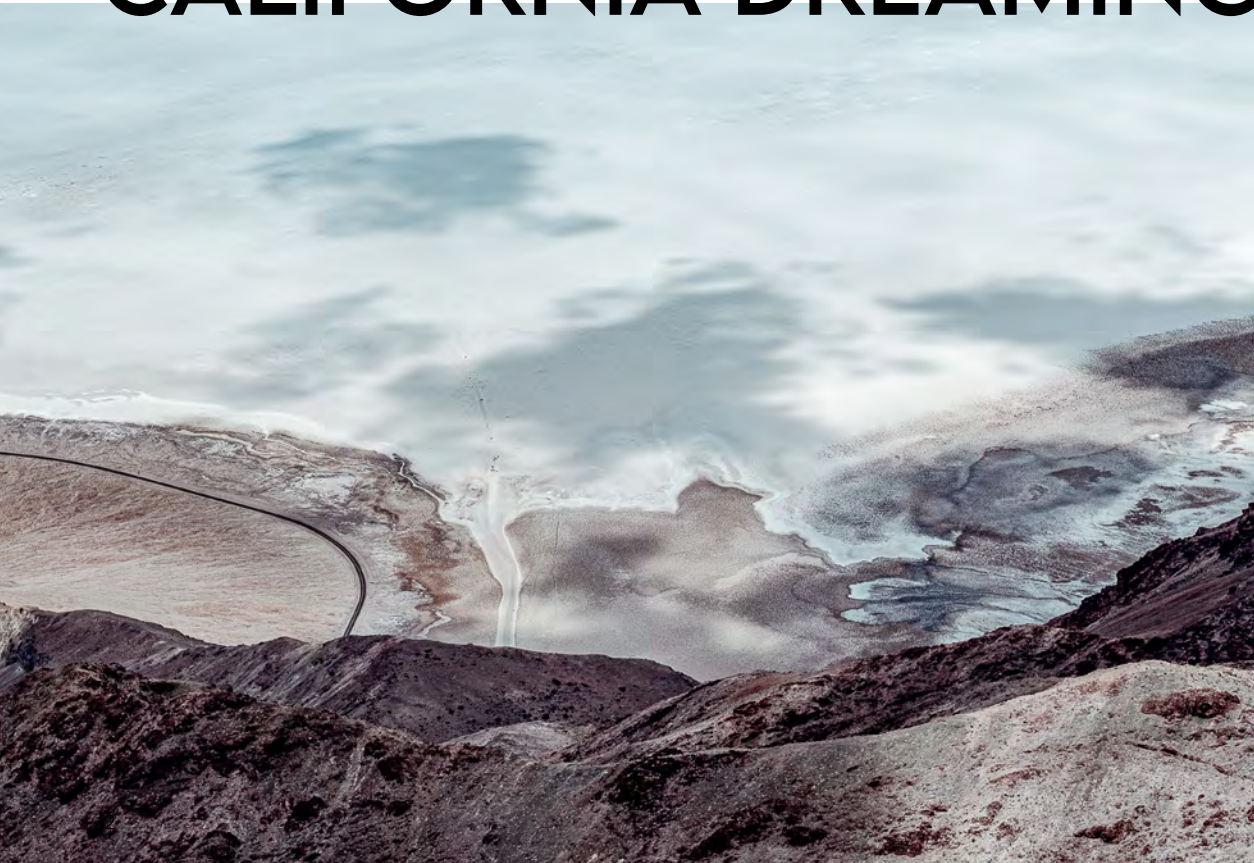
Her very technical training in the use of argentic techniques has strongly influenced how Sue Vo-Ho works with digital media today. As soon as a shot is taken, she has an exact view of what will come out in post-production. Her photographs are often the result of superimposing argentic images that have been digitally reworked. For example, she often resorts to the digitization of negatives.

Sue Vo-Ho's photographs have been published in numerous publications. She received Price and Honorable Mentions in contests as International Color Awards and Black and White Spider Awards. Her works such as "City Memories" and "Herbarium in Urbe series" were exhibited in various places like Musée populaire de la Photographie, Art-Mûr Gallery, Connections Gallery, Bibliothèque Marc-Favreau, etc.



The Other Planet, Death Valley National Park SUE VO-HO

CALIFORNIA DREAMING



Dante's Virgo, Death Valley National Park SUE VO-HO

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California Dreaming, Death Valley National Park SUE VO-HO





Zabriskie Point, Death Valley National Park SUE VO-HO

Avant l'Orage #2, Death Valley National Park SUE VO-HO



In the series "California Dreaming," for example, Sue Vo-Ho analyses California, a state bordered by the Pacific Ocean on one side, containing a dry environment, which creates a unique diversity of flora and rock formations that enables its deserts to flourish. Its barren wastelands and endless horizon provides a calm and peaceful feeling and a supernatural landscape simultaneously. Traveling across California throughout the years has filled the artist with nostalgia and joy. She appreciates what it has given to her, the time to cherish the beauty of national parks and their immense deserts, and she dreams to one day return.

California Dreaming, Death Valley National Park SUE VO-HO



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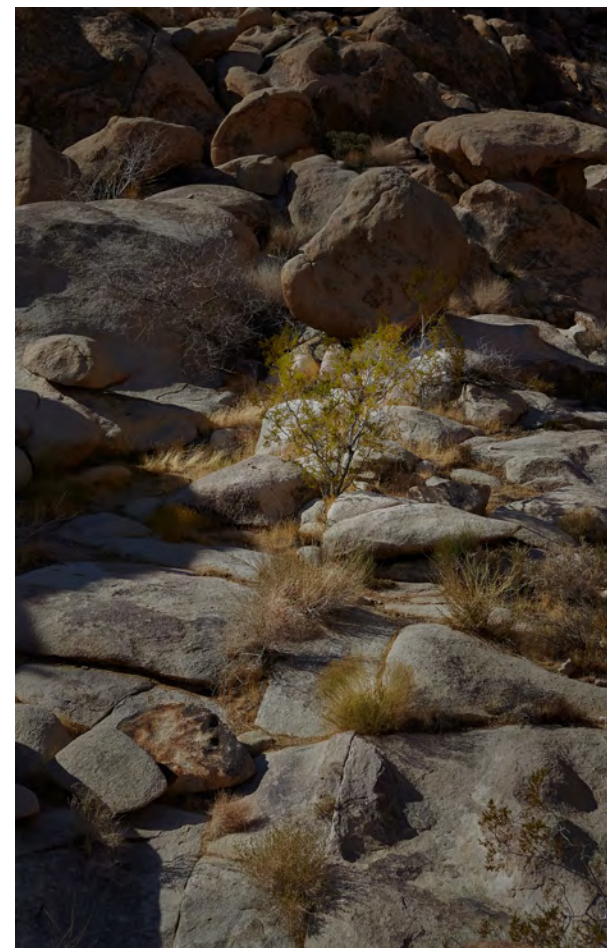
San Diego, United States

*Artemis* GALA SEMENOVA*Wind of Change* GALA SEMENOVA

Gala Semenova is a self-taught Fine Art Portrait photographer. She was born in Tula, Russia, in 1981 and relocated to the States in 2009. Her journey to discovering her femininity revealed a deep connection to women as the subject of her artistic expression. Every expression of femininity—a woman's personal story, her cultural context, every defeat, and victory—sheds light on the complexities of her womanhood. Semenova's work responds to the pressure-filled, patriarchal culture she left behind in Russia and the youth/beauty, a power-obsessed culture she now experiences in America. She strives to capture the true spirit of women, amplifying and revealing something personal that often is shared by many yet hasn't been acknowledged or exposed. With each portrait, she aims to show the vulnerable woman inside to allow space for recognition, healing, and empowerment.

Semenova's photography presents women and their stories and documents their lives in such a feminine, powerful, and touching way. Each photograph she takes reflects a part of her, of who she is. In the series of portraits entitled "And then I remembered," Semenova explores the connection to the natural world. Women and nature are aligned in a variety of ways, from symbolic to the material. The concept of connecting women with nature dates back to ancient classical mythology, with several goddesses being strongly connected to the earth, to animals, to different stars and planets.

The beauty of the natural world is everything, from a majestic vista to just paying attention to a tree or an animal or our bodies. That sense of connection to nature grounds the artist to the very forms of life that she cultivates and nurtures. Without this connection, where is the energy, the caring, the inspiration?

*Knowledge* GALA SEMENOVA

CHRIS CORRIDORE

Christopher Corridore has fashioned himself as a dominant figure on the digital arts stage while living as a photographer and retoucher in Toronto, Canada. His unconventional techniques blur the line between art and photography to create a surreal hybrid reality. Chris describes his aesthetic as a harmonious balance of dark, otherworldly elements with light, ethereal symbolism.

In the series "Angel," the artist shows us how reality doesn't exist for him when he is behind the lens. He creates his best work when lost in his dreamlike world, searching for the perfect moment. He thinks very little about the lighting setup or a pose the model should make. For himself, the beauty is to experience it all as it happens without expectations. Time moves free, and so shall we.

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Um momento de trégua CAROLINA SERRANO

Angel CHRIS CORRIDORE

Blue Dream CHRIS CORRIDORE

Envision a girl in a dreamlike world
painted blue by cerulean sky.

Vandecasteele has been practicing painting and drawing for over ten years. Since 2012 he has exhibited his work extensively both in France and in the UK.

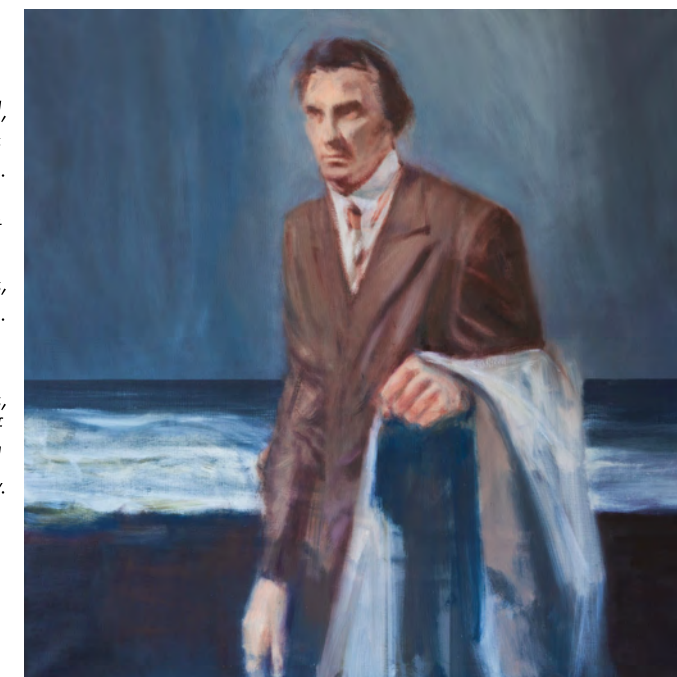
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Meeting PATRICK-VANDECASTEELE



Man On The Beach PATRICK-VANDECASTEELE



Patrick Vandecasteele explores humans' physical, psychological, and social posture, the various costumes they wear to dress their intimate hiatuses.

He tries to restore the spontaneity of human posture, its fleetingness, the unconscious that inhabits a body and its outfit, the links between composure and thoughts, gestures and intentions, mental melee.

He paints our struggle to face others, approach others, struggle between our multiple intimacies, between our imperative of life in society, of submission to servitudes, and the imperative need for autonomy and individuality.



What is your aim as an artist?

That of accomplishing an interior voyage, a transcendence. Painting is a huge field of experimentation; venturing into it is a bit like a lone sailor setting sail on his boat and advancing through the immensity. For me, the work of an artist is also similar to a fight. Painting can be a formidable adversary, you take hits, but you also surpass yourself. Each progress is a small victory over existence. Each little mystery understood from the act of painting illuminates daily life and allows one to stand up in front of the world. I am happy when I feel I have passed a milestone in my journey as a painter. It seems a bit selfish. On the other hand, the intensity of the process and the energy it requires continually forces me to be open to the world, observe nature and people, and understand them.

Man PATRICK-VANDECASTEELE



Each Side PATRICK-VANDECASTEELE

Your work reminds me of Francis Bacon and perhaps even Adrian Ghenie. What artists influence or inspire your work most?

You really hit the nail on the head! These two are in my pantheon. I particularly like the concept of Francis Bacon's "painting accidents," which are the embodiment of plastic expression in painting. Knowing how to leave representation by technique in favor of the power of what the painting will produce in a single gesture without being able to really predict its result is part of my current attempts.

Adrian Genie fascinates me above all by his path and his research. He went from intense figuration to great plastic ambition through daring composition while retaining figurative markers like a climber's holds in the rock. I saw him on a video throwing paintballs on his paintings. He has great freedom, and I still have a long way to go...

I also find Giacometti's paintings fascinating, and some of Gustave Courbet's, like the Ruisseau du Puits Noir, a kind of absolute masterpiece.

BERK KIR

Berk Kir is a young photographer based in Istanbul, Turkey. Subjects such as body, conceptual thinking, image theory, and gender are among the subjects he is prone to. The artist contains an intervention that goes against the flow of life in his photographs. Instead of photographing the events taking place over time, he mounts the moments with a common-sense approach he has created himself there. He supports the compositions he will create with the objects he finds by taking long-distance walks centered on Istanbul. By rejecting photography techniques, he goes after the moments that he finds closest to his reality. The artist develops approaches to emotional transitions and contemporary problems by focusing on the relationship between the human body, space, and object.

Berk Kir graduated from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Art History department in 2019. He continues to live and produce as an independent researcher and artist in Istanbul. His work has previously appeared in National Geographic Your Shot, Vogue Italia Online, Apple Inc., Flickr. He is among the rising artists with the Center of Contemporary Artist 2020 edition supported by the Pino Pascali Museum Foundation. Currently, it takes on the Brand Embassy of Samsung.

@creperzs
Istanbul, Turkey

Genre Series #1 BERK KIR

36 | Al-Tiba9 Art Magazine



Genre Series #5 BERK KIR



In "Genre Series: The Object Of Femininity In Turkey," Berk Kir reflects on the idea of genre painting. It is defined in the genre of art history literature as the productions made with paint on canvas that present the daily life shaped in the home space to the viewer. Kir takes his dynamics from standing against the traditionalism in which genre painting associates assigned female figures to a specific space or a specific job description. He questions the visual transformation of the feminine objects in the house sites in Turkey as a visual theme for the idiom "Latch

string is always out" or "You have a place on my head," which is an attitude of tolerance in Turkish tradition with linguistic integration.

Berk Kir tries to associate his impressions with objects he randomly finds in Istanbul during his photography production. In terms of production attitude, he reproaches the planned creation of the traditional notion with the flow, presenting the idea of having defined sexual identities in the flow metaphorically and inviting people to think about objects.

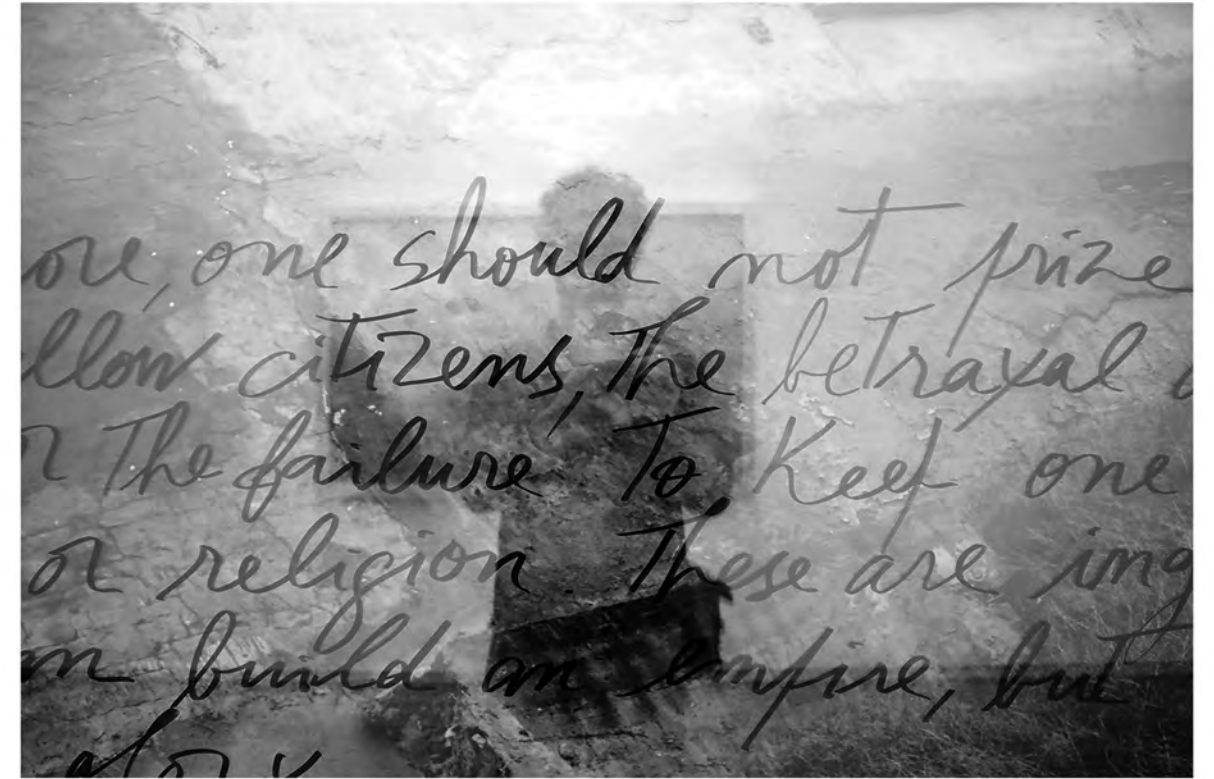


[NOTES TO SELF_s Project] JOSE CRUZIO
on JPSerafim's work #10, V1

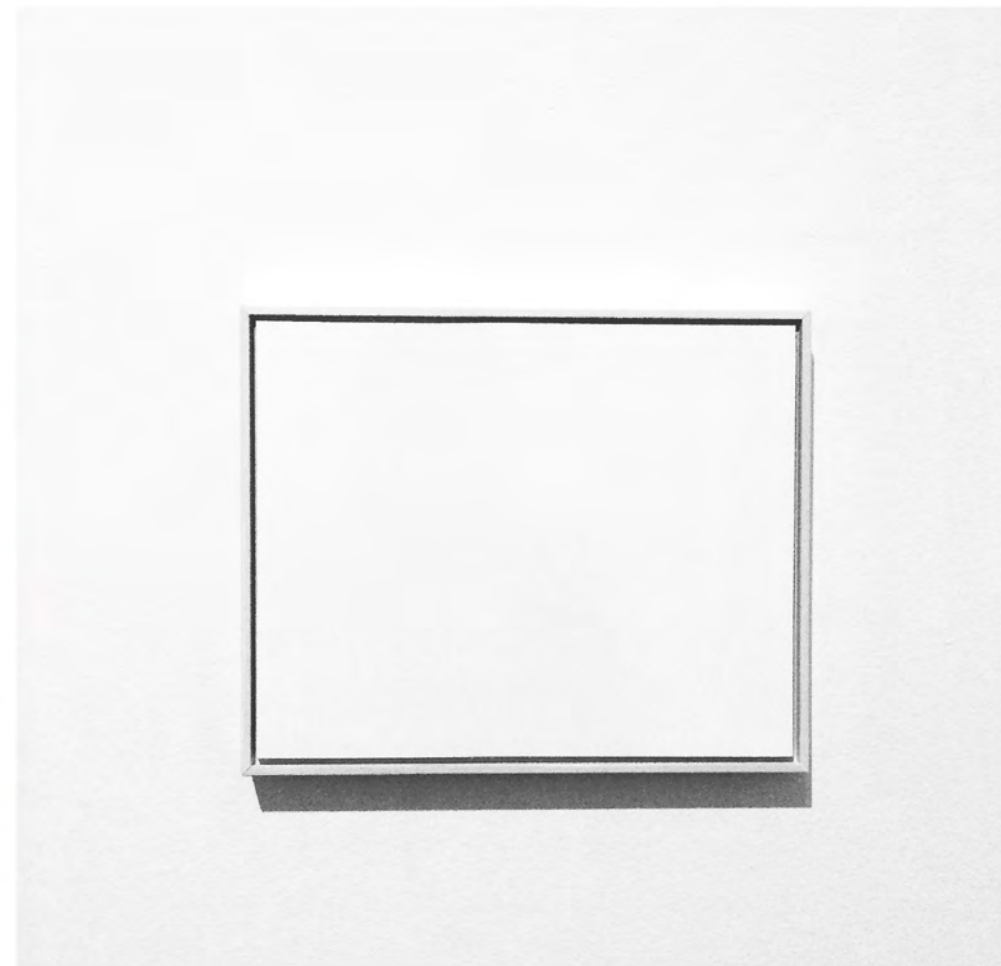
JOSE CRUZIO

José Cruzio is a Portuguese artist, based in Viseu, Portugal. He graduated in Fine Arts and Painting and has a one-year post-graduate master's degree in Contemporary Artistic Creation at the University of Aveiro. He currently works as a teacher of Visual Arts and as an artist. Since 1998 he has attended many photography, video, and video-art workshops; he worked as a scene photographer in various collective scenic-performative art groups and as a photojournalist in the 2012 Ephemeral Gardens, among other events. He participated as an artist in the International Biennials of Vila Nova de Cerveira, Douro / Alijó, and Porto Santo, in the World Triennial of Chamalieres (FR), Miniprint of Cadaqués (ES), and at several events, such as the Ephemeral Gardens in Viseu (PT).

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THIS INSIDE YOU KILLS 3, #2 JOSE CRUZIO
with JOSE LUIS NETO's work



His research addresses different concepts, such as the continuous questioning of the "place" as far as artistic creation is concerned. Through both collaborative and individual practices, he reflects on questions of identity, simulations, materiality and immateriality, place, on the objective and subjective, the appropriation and re-contextualization, the archive, and, eventually, the arts in multidisciplinary collaboration, as well as its processes for new insight and policy in art.

This vision unfolds in different projects, each one recurring to a dominant artistic subject matter and its media, practices, and achievements according to the research lines of each one of them.

"Pure Emulsion"s works JOSÉ LUIS NETO

GIUSEPPE FRANCAVILLA

Giuseppe Francavilla (Palermo, 1974) is an Italian photographer based in Rome. His interest in street photography is strictly connected to architecture. Speaking about architecture is thinking about it as a form and evolution of the format in the civil habitat, such as palaces, buildings, and monuments shape. Photography must archive visions of the present and be the object of evaluation and criticism of the territory for the future.

Francavilla has been having a natural flair for the shot since he was 10, using a Polaroid 1000 model borrowed from his elder brother. He is often inclined to capture the outside world in one click for simple moments of celebration or relaxation with family or friends.

In 2011 he inaugurated his portfolio on Vogue Italia's PhotoVogue website with more than 500 photos. Since then, international honors have dropped with some regularity, which has pushed him to challenge his skills more and more. Currently, he dedicates himself mainly to street and documentary photography. He recently finished his documentary triptych about his mother's family.

The Simple Life Of A Common Retiree #6 GIUSEPPE FRANCAVILLA

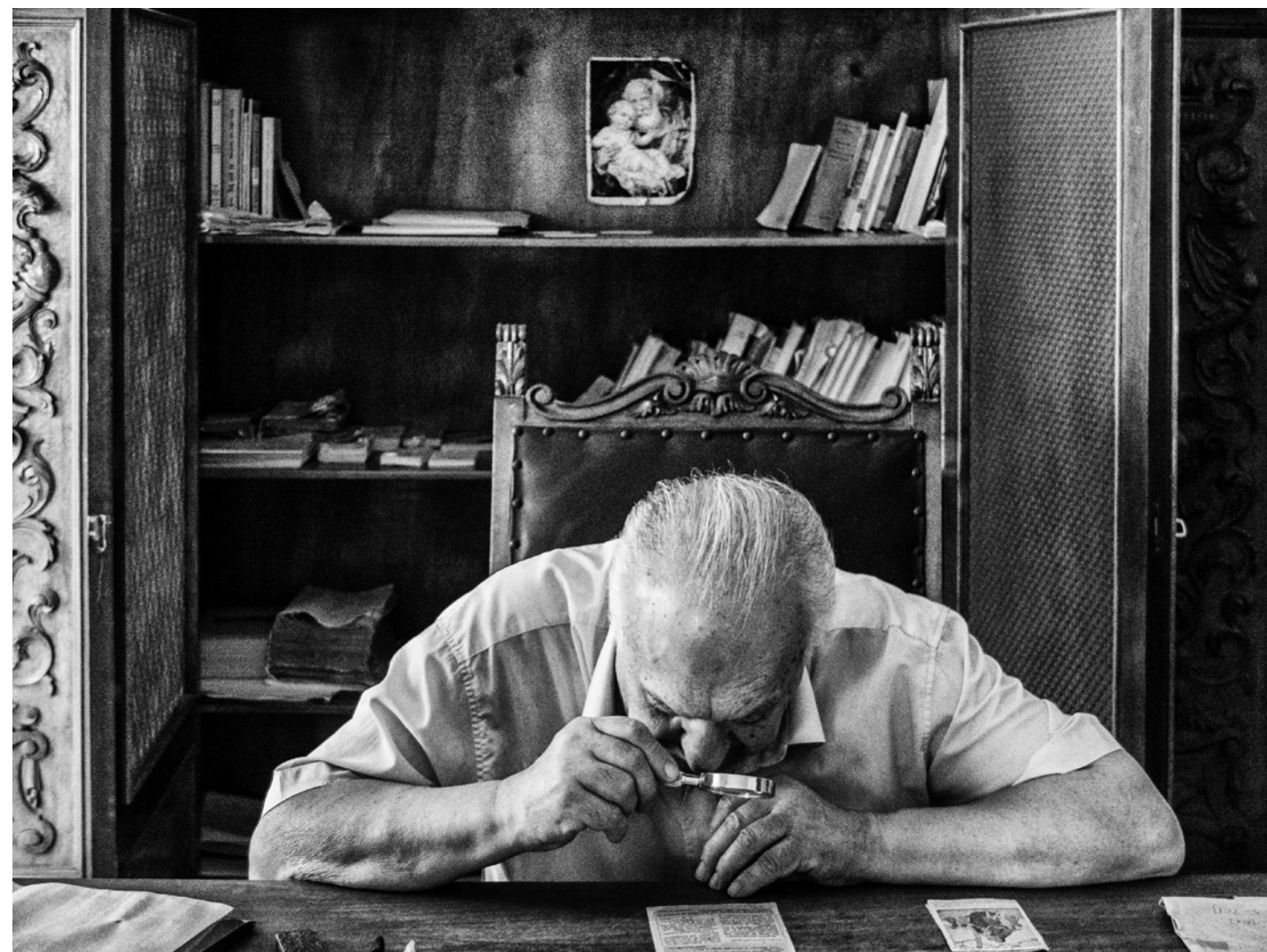


Artist Profile GIUSEPPE FRANCAVILLA

THE SIMPLE LIFE OF A COMMON RETIREE

As an artist, Giuseppe Francavilla makes the documentary discourse something universal starting from personal experiences such as recounting the illness of a family member in a way that is accompanied by moments of poetry, and that speak not only to those close to him but that suggests a universal vision.

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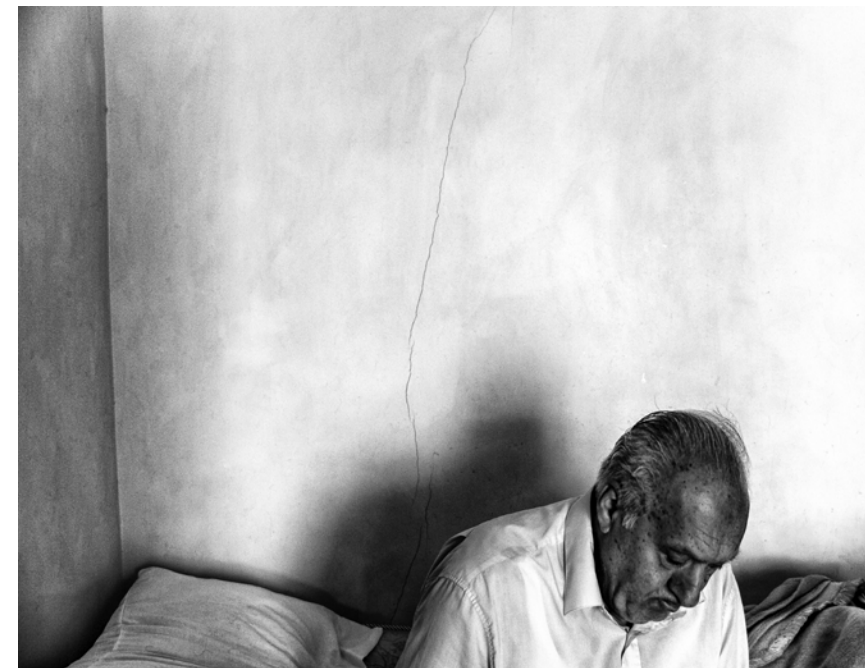


The Simple Life Of A Common Retiree #12 GIUSEPPE FRANCAVILLA

This documentary testifies to the typical day in the life of the artist's uncle Augustus, who passed away in 2017. The artist lived with him for about ten years, and he passed on to him his love for poetry, music, and culture. His attitude to life, his unwillingness to let himself be discouraged by daily constraints instilled in the artist a profound serenity.

As a retiree and a lover of culture, his day was always punctuated by regular and very well-timed rhythms: dressing with the everyday items of clothing, the counting of any change for shopping at the supermarket, the slow return home, and dedication to his favorite activities: cooking, reading, and writing. Unmissable was the kit of his religious objects that permeated almost every room of the house so that when he opened his beloved bookshop, there was always behind him a reassuring image of St. Joseph to whom he was mainly devoted. Then in the evening, immediately after dinner, it was time for a movie on TV, strictly from past years, as if to remember more peaceful times.

The Simple Life Of A Common Retiree #1 GIUSEPPE FRANCAVILLA



LI MO

LI MO is a Los Angeles-based fashion and knitwear designer who grew up in Shenzhen, China. When she was 16 years old, she started her life journey in the United States. Under the collision of Eastern and Western culture, she aims to bring the diversity of ethnicities, architecture, cultures, and high artistic tastes into her artworks. In 2015, she graduated from Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising with an AAS degree.

She never stopped chasing her dream. The unwavering passion for fashion paved her way to one of the most renowned fashion schools, Fashion Institute of Technology, and she graduated with a BFA degree in 2020. During the years of staying in New York, she has worked for fashion brands including NAADAM and Carlisle Etcetera. The experiences from the professional industry encourage Li Mo to work with other artists and photographers that created her portfolio, which has been published by fashion magazines and exhibitions.

limo13.myportfolio.com

@lixxmo

Trabuco Canyon, United States

Spark LI MO



LI MO's artworks reflect herself. She has a talented mind to explore the distinctiveness and newness of the world, and she characterizes her design by elevating the innovation of spirituality and uniqueness. In a long-term goal, Li Mo's ambition is to create her own brand and focus on sustainable projects and minimal style, emphasizing the significance between the friendly-environment and the fashion industry. In her series Spark, the inner garment is inspired by the Chinese cheongsam style, the place where the artist used

to live, and that has a lot of influence on her life. The architectural shape of the look was the most challenging part to make, including reshaping the wire and calculating the math in terms of achieving the finalized look. The color black that was used as the main tone stabilized the mystery and modernized style. The bottom part of the garment is made of wire and PVC vinyl materials, which can be separated from the inner garment used by Velcro.

SPARK



MARCO WALDIS

Born in 1987, Marco Waldis is an Italian photographer and film director. Passionated by the visual arts since his boyhood, he studied at the Umberto Boccioni art school in Milan. He then started his professional career getting to realize some advertising photography for important international brands. He has been living in Rome since 2009 in an attempt to shift his work toward television and cinema. Since 2012 he has focused his production on some more personal series of photos and documentaries that granted him the recognition of several international contests, including the Prix de la Photographie Paris, the International photography awards, and the One Eyeland Photography awards, among others.

www.marcowaldis.com
 @mwaldis
 Rome, Italy



Guðland #3 MARCO WALDIS

This series reflects the hostile beauty of the silent landscapes of Iceland, the majestic powers of nature, and yet its severity. The aseptic sceneries are void of people or any signs of human presence. It is not the place to live in; it is the place to look at. The humanless landscapes need the human eyes to grasp them from their eternal stand.

This project is the product of the long walk of the photographer across the green frozen island. It is through the unknown 600 kilometers walked on ice and fire that these photos became possible. The heavy bulk of the backpack loaded with food and gas, the frozen feet after the crossing of glacier rivers, the limited films adding to the weight and carried across the island, the fog on the lens, and the rub of camera strap on the shoulder for the long 20 walking days are out of the viewfinder. What is left on the film - is the fairytale enchantment.



Guðland #2 MARCO WALDIS

Guðland #4 MARCO WALDIS

GUÐLAND



Guðland #1 MARCO WALDIS



IWA KRUCZKOWSKA-KRÓL

Iwa Kruczowska-Król is interested in the relation between man and nature and the possible attitude of a human being towards nature. Nature is understood here as the world of flora, fauna, and inanimate nature. Her project is inspired by the philosophy of Zen and the treatment of nature; it allows keeping distance and noticing and appreciating the insignificant matters – “insignificant” from the point of view of modern men oriented to materialistic and pragmatic values.

In addition to the pure fascination of nature and the perception of seemingly inessential elements of life, a man himself plays a very important role in my work. A man is seen from different internal lives from someone who observes “the same” from the outside. The direct, instant stimulus follows from the inner experience of other cultures, the contact with met people, and from the connection with nature that gives the artist a feeling of “gazing novelty,” which is comparable to the experience of the world in someone’s childhood when everything is perceived as new and fascinating. One can find a unifying element constituting the fascination mentioned concerning nature and travels the touch of some timeless moments of the aware and fresh admiration of life that is distant from everyday superficial routine. Her works are presented in many public and private collections in the country and abroad.

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Zabrze, Poland

First Snow IWA KRUCZKOWSKA-KRÓL



Meditation with the Cat IWA KRUCZKOWSKA-KRÓL



Untitled IWA KRUCZKOWSKA-KRÓL



ANASTASIA KUZNETSOVA

Anastasia Kuznetsova was born in 1986 in Ufa, Russia. Studied Textile at the Saint Petersburg Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design (2005-2011) and Ufa Art and Humanities College, department of Design (2003-2004).

She has participated in many exhibitions in Russia and the USA. Member of Union of Russian Artists, painting section (2017). Lives and works in Saint-Petersburg, Russia.

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Saint-Petersburg, Russia

Awakening ANASTASIA KUZNETSOVA



Deep ANASTASIA KUZNETSOVA

Anastasia Kuznetsova's paintings reflect some simple things – and a kind of analysis of our reality through some familiar everyday actions. She does not veil – but underlines them, involving us in a routine by means of extra fantastic elements being introduced. That is the way the 'surrealistic effect' comes making the paintings look like dreaming. The pictures are still trivial, though – they are familiar to us: crumpled sheets on the bed, TV translation, a table being served. The point is they are cut off the context, being put in another space. That principle could be found in Max Ernst's collage composition – he often used to band some subjects with disparate meanings – making them complete in that way. Max Ernst created some mythological narrative,

though – and Anastasia Kuznetsova does quite the opposite thing – she eliminates all the details, even the background. The 'wrecks of memory' are being put one above another like paint coats in a completely unpredictable manner. Monochrome makes these contrasts of meanings even more obvious. These paintings avoid being genre paintings by the end of things – though the painted objects might seem familiar and routine. Moreover – these isolated objects interfere harmoniously, in a brand-new magical way that means a new sort of poetry despite a conflict of meanings. The beauty of our world could be found even in some atypical situations – you only have to look more attentively.

OMAR REYNA

Omar Reyna (b. 1971, México City) is a Canadian artist exploring chemical and digital photography and mixing it with sculptural elements and other art practices. He interacted with diverse art forms early in his life; photography came many years later at university and never left. Omar moved to Whitehorse in 2008 after living in a megalopolis for more than three decades. Canada's north was a perception change for him: Yukon's natural environment offered him an incomparable backdrop where he felt in tune making art. His relationship with this land has altered the outcome of his artistry endeavor.

Omar Reyna has a degree in Visual Communication, a Diploma in Philosophy of Image, a Diploma in Contemporary Art Photography. He also has studied sculpture with the OCA. He has a 9 to 5 job and juggles his free time between his art practice and maintaining a healthy lifestyle at home.



Alter #2 OMAR REYNA



Alter #1 OMAR REYNA

ALTER

2007-2008

Series composed of 13 photographs.
Film photography.

*These images are not about death
neither violence, they are about what it
means to be human and the possibility
to reach its best.*

omarreyna.ca

@omar_reyna_flores

Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada

Alter #5 OMAR REYNA





Omar Reyna sees his art practice as an act of contriving worlds beyond the visible, between the real and the imagined. He aims to trigger events and actions that connect, disturb, and question what we perceive. Life is full of those events.

Omar Reyna has found correspondence to his art narratives in death and illness, "Perishable corporality." In the irrational violence of humanity, "We, the animals"; in the face of the unknown, when we put meaning where none exists, "Forces"; we establish an active stance against what we see, "Landscapes" or when we develop empathy with the other to ease the burden of being, "Alter." In all his photographic series, creating and capturing what is not visible is a constant.

Omar works in between photography and the physical manipulation of objects and materials. His approach is much as cerebral as a physical engagement. Research and reflection are a big part of his process, but he also thinks, articulates, and conceptualizes through the activity of making.

He believes that holding the photographic camera and moving with it can be, besides a physical act of beautiful complexity, a philosophical, poetic, and violent gesture. Many of his art-making processes rely on an unfocused mind where he makes progress eluding direct thinking.

AIMEE RUOFF

Aimee Ruoff is a young female artist living and working in Ontario, Canada. She has a BA in Studio Art and Psychology.

Aimee Ruoff has participated in local group shows with friends and colleagues and collaborates with other artists whenever possible, from making album art to live painting at community events. These days she makes oil paintings as well as drawings and prints from her home studio.

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Toronto, Canada

With Me in The Morning AIMEE RUOFF

Aimee Ruoff's work is sourced from daily observation in conversation with her imagination, focusing on the dreamlike and ethereal. Aimee is drawn to the dreamy moments that are found wrapped up in everyday life. An unexpected fog is settling over a morning commute; golden sun shining through a window to illuminate the cold floor; a plush pink chair abandoned on the side of the road and gone the next day. What is fleeting and ethereal reminds her of the temporality of life and her own place within eternity. Being present and seeking out these small sublime moments within the mundane is the place that Aimee makes art from. She works from her photographs, often combining many different moments within one composition to build a visual narrative that feels both familiar and strange. For Aimee, making art is an avenue to see the world and hold it close.



Tomorrow They Will Be Gone AIMEE RUOFF

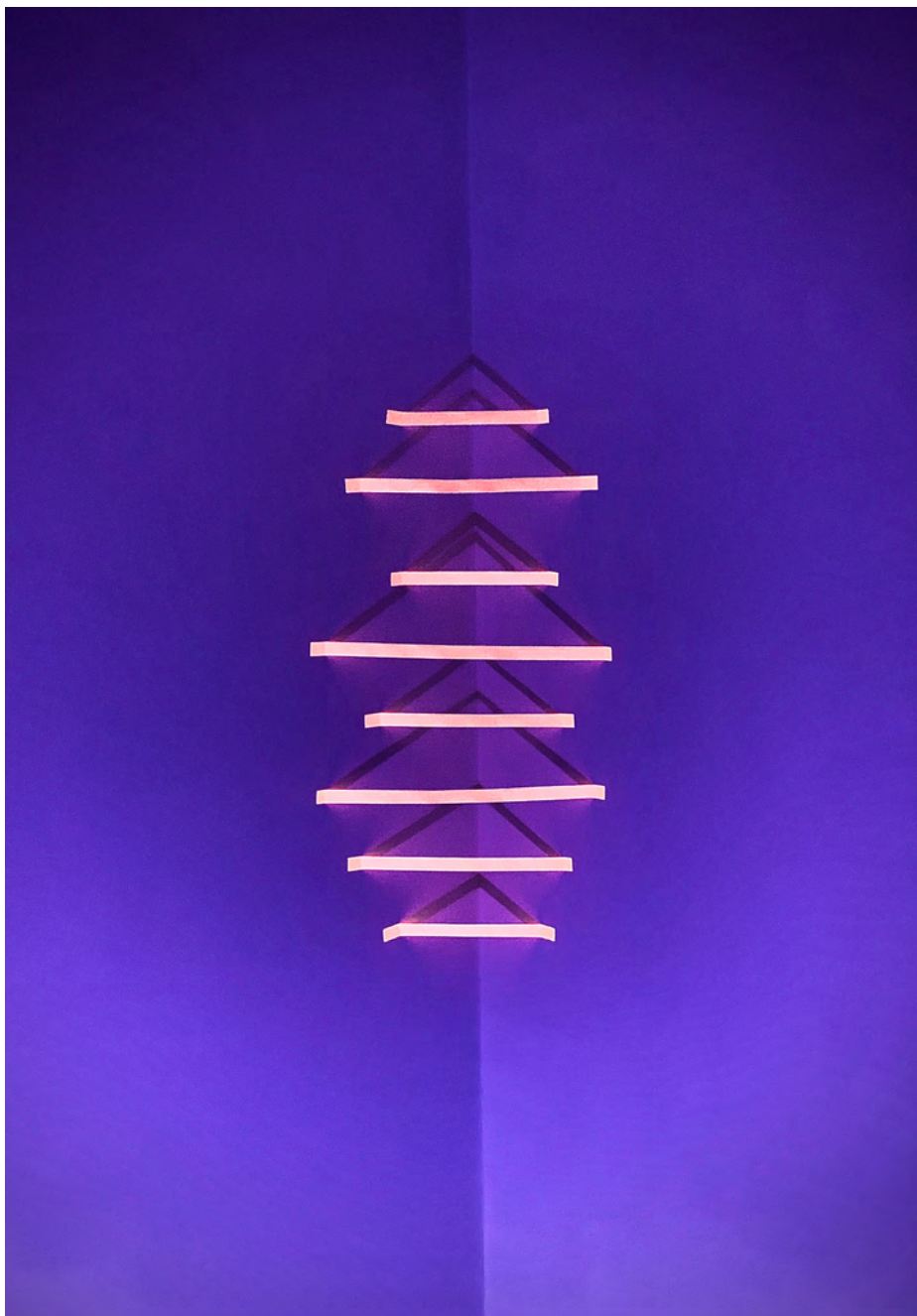
ATHINA MASOURA

Athina Masoura is a Paris -based visual artist and doctor in Aesthetics, Sciences, and Technologies of Arts. She creates installations, sculptures, and interventions in public space to explore perception, toeing the line between familiarity and uncanny, body and space.

She is often invited to academic talks about contemporary art, and she has participated in several solo and group exhibitions in both France and Greece. She is currently teaching art at the University of Toulouse, in the department of Fine Arts and Design.

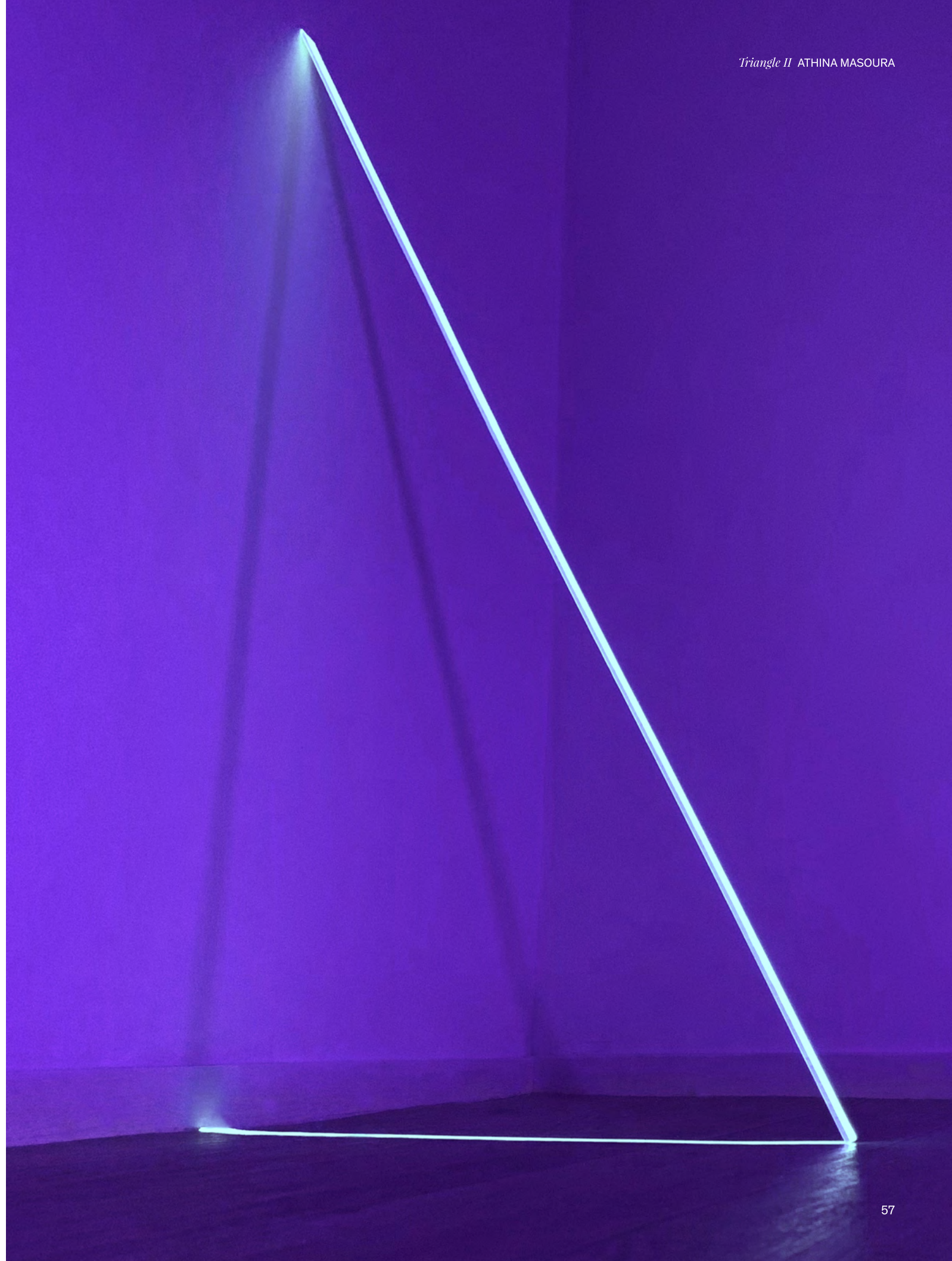
athinamasoura.com
@athinamasoura
Paris, France

Triangle I ATHINA MASOURA



Athina's work testifies her fascination for perception, a perception that is intellectual and embodied, and emotional. Through the use of light, color, and space, she aims to change our gaze and to produce an experience that highlights our bodily and spatial awareness. The artist does not put us in front of an object but into an environment that renews our perception and strengthens our attention, an environment where she invites the beholder to simply look, observe, feel what surrounds him. What interests her the most is to model a sensory universe where the artwork is being experienced in an immediate, dynamic, sensitive, and phenomenological way, forcing us to reconsider the aesthetic reception and the world around us.

Triangle II ATHINA MASOURA



SYL ARENA

Syl Arena is a California-based artist born in Phoenix, Arizona, in the US. She's known for his explorations of non-representational photography. He freely admits that he is addicted to color and shadow. In his current series, Constructed Voids, Arena deconstructs white light into vibrant hues and mixes them onto monochromatic constructs. Through the intersection of light, construct, and lens, Arena finds transformative relationships that he describes as "inner landscapes."

The Arena is also greatly interested in commenting on the loss of the image object in our screen-based world. Increasingly he positions his photographs as objects rather than merely as images. To this end, the Constructed Voids are hung as bare sheets of chromogenic paper in a manner that bends the prints outward from the wall and allows them to undulate gently.

Arena earned an MFA from Lesley University (Cambridge, Massachusetts) and a BFA from the University of Arizona (Tucson, Arizona). He has taught workshops for Maine Media Workshops, Santa Fe Photographic Workshops, the Rocky Mountain School of Photography, and at events in Brazil, Canada, Cuba, and Dubai.

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Paso Robles, United States

Syl Arena's Constructed Voids step into the spaces of the in-between. One can gaze upon these photographs and wonder if their metaphor represents spaces inside us or if the metaphor points to our presence inside a larger multiverse.

These Voids merge mystery with spectacle in a manner that queries expectations of the contemporary photograph. Arena positions them as ethereal landscapes—sublime yet otherworldly—and embraces the idea that their visual ambiguity invites interpretation. To that end, their titles (Parna, Quin, Amsu, Jern) are fabricated words intended to strip away narrative connotation and encourage meditative consideration.

Many mistakenly see these photographs as computer-generated. Certainly, they appear to contain non-photographic qualities—deeply saturated colors, shifting figure-ground relationships, shadows that randomly change the hue, and zigzags that suggest glitches in digital code. Such misconceptions speak volumes about the desire to see the truth within photographs.

Their visual truth echoes the spirit of many Bauhaus photographers. These images originate as tabletop constructs of paper, plastic, glass, and metal, the glossy materiality of which provides form and reflection. Arena does not strive to make photographs of scenes before the lens. Revealing the specificity of assembled materials is not of interest. Rather, Arena strives to create photographs of scenes that we cannot see.

CONSTRUCTED VOIDS

Please introduce yourself to our readers. Who are you, and how did you start experimenting with art?

Hello! My first name, “Syl,” rhymes with “Bill.” It’s short for “Sylvester,” which was my grandfather’s name. From my earliest years, I have always identified as being a creative maker. The alchemy of darkroom photography captured my imagination as a youth, a fascination that I continue to embrace today. After earning my BFA (University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona), my career wandered for several years, eventually settling down to work as a freelance photographer for a decade—creating work that fulfilled clients’ needs rather than expresses my personal ideas. In 2013, I accepted a full-time position teaching art. My induction as an educator catalyzed my return to focusing on the creation of personally significant art. After completing my MFA in 2017 (Lesley University, Cambridge, Massachusetts), I continue to pursue my passion for analog and digital photography across an eclectic range of projects.

What is your aim as an artist?

I strive to create aesthetic experiences that invite the viewer’s meditative consideration. In the best moments, one detaches from the present and wanders through my work. I seek to be a catalyst rather than an arrow that points to a destination. I intentionally present space and scale on an ambiguous basis. Yet, my addiction to color and shadow is evident. While the former may seem obvious, the latter deserves an explanation. Light illuminates, but shadows enable one to see nuance. I see this dichotomy as indicative of western and eastern philosophies of photography. You may be familiar with the entomology of “photography” from the Greek φωτογραφία “Fotografia”—which translates literally into “light writing.” Contrast this with the richness of the seemingly contradictory view offered by traditional Mandarin where the word for photography—摄影—is the concatenation of two characters—摄 “shè” and 影 “yǐng.” “Shèyǐng” literally means to “take in shadows.” That photography can be seen both as “writing with light” and as “gathering shadows” provides a rich source of creative inspiration.

Your “Constructed Voids” are ethereal and ambiguous landscapes, almost abstract works, where the viewers can immerse themselves. How did you come up with the idea for this series?

My Constructed Voids step into the spaces of my in-between. I gaze and wonder if their metaphor represents spaces inside of me or if the metaphor points to my presence inside of an infinite multiverse. As art objects, the Constructed Voids merge mystery with spectacle in a manner that queries expectations of the

contemporary photograph. I position them as ethereal landscapes—sublime yet otherworldly—and embrace the idea that their visual ambiguity invites interpretation. To that end, their titles are fabricated words intended to strip away narrative connotation and encourage meditative consideration.

Viewers often look at the Constructed Voids and mistakenly describe their non-representational as abstract. To create an abstraction is to focus one’s view by extracting apart from a larger whole. Siskind abstracted. My photographs point to the antithesis of abstraction. As I will explain shortly, they are the tripartite merger of deconstructed light, ambiguous substrates, and the vision of a contorted camera—a concretion of a reality that does not exist until I externalize the void within.

What do you see as the strengths of your project, visually or conceptually?

The Constructed Voids confront the common expectation is that photographs convey truth through mimetic representation. While there are clues in the works about the nature of what was photographed, creating photographs as documents is of no interest. I often lose my way in the studio when looking at the image on the back of my 4x5 camera. I literally have to reach out from behind the ground glass with a long stick and touch the object being explored to understand what the camera is seeing.

If one only looks for evidence and visual logic with an analytical mind, one’s consideration will be short-lived and disappointing. Conversely, suppose one engages with the Constructed Voids through an unstructured consideration, seeing what one will see and thinking what one will think, without the expectation of logical comprehension. In that case, one will discover that personally, significant engagement emerges.

I also feel fortunate to have come up with the series title “Constructed Voids.” For some time, I did not see this paring of words as an oxymoron. I continue to reflect on the tension between the nature of constructing and the nature of a void.

Another key theme in your series is the “loss of the image object in our screen-based world.” Where do you see photography going in the future? Do you think the digital will prevail on the physical objects?

The Constructed Voids literally bow outward as image objects. They are exhibited as bare sheets of chromogenic paper (96cm x 140cm) with internal frames that hold the edges of the prints perpendicular to the gallery wall. Viewers are often surprised to find that these photos curve outward into space and that the unsupported surfaces undulate gently.

There is no doubt that the majority of photography’s future will be digital until technology comes along

that replaces digital. Most of my students do not remember their lives in a pre-iPhone world. While I remain concerned that their primary engagement with creating and viewing photographs happens on the small devices that are incessantly in their hands, I have accepted this as a quantum shift in the idea of “being creative.” The ubiquity of mobile technology and social media has given birth to new forms of intangible artistic expression, the significance of which will only manifest through hindsight.

That said, I expect that I’ll always be among those who continue to immerse themselves in photography as a means of hand-made expression. The authenticity of experience is increasingly important to me as an antidote to our digital engagement with the world and each other.

Your works are complex and layered pieces. What is your creative process like?

The Constructed Voids originate as tabletop constructs of paper, plastic, glass, and metal; the glossy materiality provides form and reflection. A trio of stage fixtures deconstructs light into projections of primary colors. Where two hues merge to create a third, shifts in perceived depth occur when the interference of the construct’s edge casts a shadow that reveals just one of the parent colors. In more recent works, substrates create mystery by absorbing light internally and radiating it elsewhere.

Many mistakenly see these photographs as computer-generated. Certainly, they appear to contain non-photographic qualities—luminous colors, shifting figure-ground relationships, shadows that randomly change the hue, and zigzags that suggest glitches in digital code. Such misconceptions speak volumes about the desire to see the truth within photographs.

I strive to create photographs as anti-documents that offer connections to unseeable spaces. I intentionally break the parallel relationship between lens and image plane by stretching and contorting the two ends of my 4x5 view camera. With the lens looking in one direction and the image plane looking in another, my photographs portray scenes that exist beyond the horizon of human vision.

Do you have an essential philosophy that guides you in your creative expression?

In the aftermath of my brain aneurism in 2015, I learned that much of my ongoing recovery is based on inner calm and compassion—for myself and others. Understandably, these traits proved essential to finding a path forward through the pandemic. While my ego continues to rise up and assert itself loudly on occasion, for the most part, I am tuned in to nurturing my, as Paul Caponigro wrote, “calm and inner stillness.”

I have long believed that the universe speaks to me and that the challenge is to be quiet enough to hear the message. Through this philosophy, I have strongly grasped onto the importance of discerning resonance in my life—of connecting to ideas and opportunities that truly matter and letting go of those that prove to not be nurturing. For me, this process takes considerable time—not in the doing, but in allowing it to happen.

While I might initially think that my strongest ideas are flashes of genius, I typically come to understand in retrospect that I wrestled with them for some time. All of this is to say that creating the space within to allow for the gentle accumulation of inspiration is a significant aspect of my creative process.

We all miss a lot of things from our lives pre-Covid. But is there one thing that you have discovered over the last year that you will keep with you in the future?

The duress of the approaching lock-downs last year gave birth to a new body of work that was completely unexpected. The Constructed Voids were to be the subject of a university solo exhibition in March 2020. When I arrived on campus, it became evident that hanging a gallery exhibition of prints in the planned manner would be futile in that a lock-down was eminent. Still, as the campus was not to close until the day after my gallery opening, I wanted to present something for the students. Through three days of intense experimentation and collaboration with my dear friend, Jer Nelsen, the Constructed Voids evolved into an entirely new body of work. I dubbed the Projected Voids.

Using one- and two-channel video projections, we animated the floors, walls, and ceilings of the gallery spaces with the Constructed Voids. I discovered that adding movement and mirrored reflection created immersive environments that evaporated boundaries. Both gallery and viewer merged into the work. After years of thinking about starting in video art, the pandemic pushed me over the edge. Now, I see a vast field of discovery that awaits my exploration.

What are you looking forward to in 2021?

I embrace the theory that we are now heading into the ‘Roaring Twenties’ of the 21st-century. Just as the ‘Roaring Twenties’ a century ago were the reaction of years of global malaise, I expect that we will see an explosion of expression and consumption as the pandemic loosens its grip on our lives. This sense of optimism has fueled an explosion in my creativity. I have already created more work in 2021 than I created across the breadth of 2020. I look forward to this spirit of optimism and creativity spreading around the globe.

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@wisetwo
Nairobi, Kenya



Bhupi Jethwa, is a Kenyan Multi-Disciplinary Artist. Widely recognized as Wisetwo, he is currently based in Nairobi, Kenya.

His journey into the world of street art and graffiti started in the streets of Nairobi, mainly in the high-density areas of Kibera and Jericho. The name Wisetwo was self-given, a breakdown from the word wisdom but still humble hence the two, about “not everyone can be the Wise One.”

Wisetwo’s artwork takes a critical view of social and cultural issues. Often referencing ancient civilizations and the invisible connection between people and cultures through intricate color palettes and symmetrical shapes and forms that create a universe of masks. Having engaged subjects as diverse as ancient languages, scripts, shamanic mask rituals, and dying tribes.

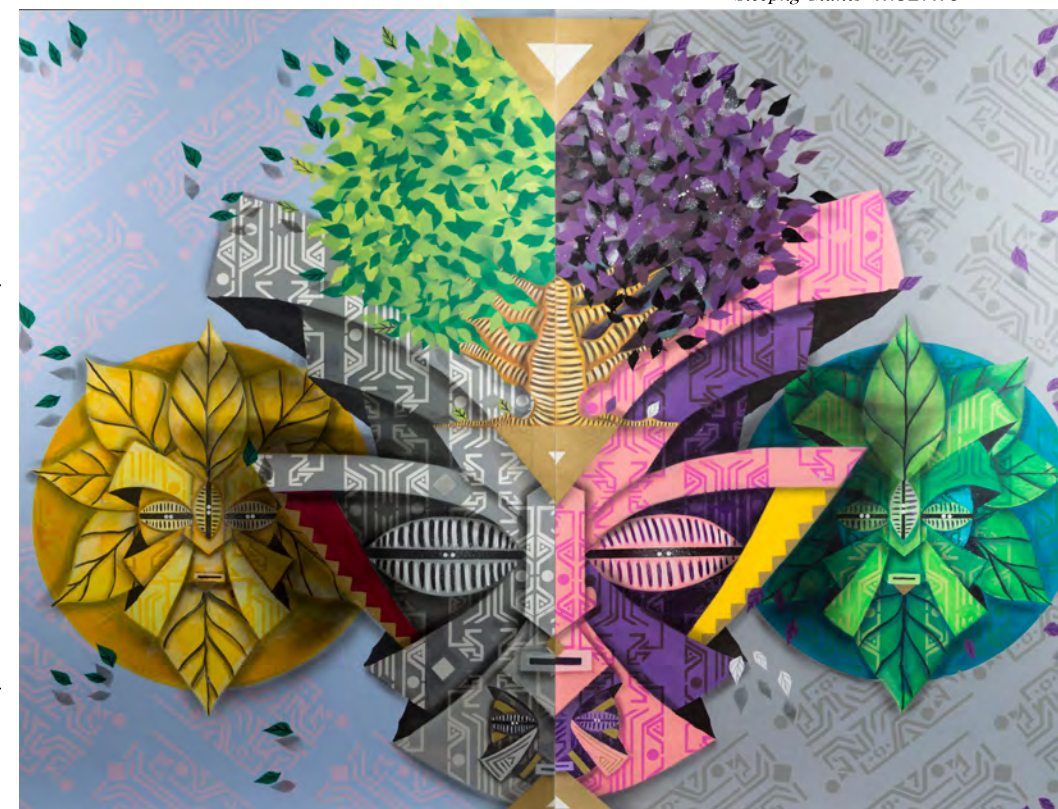
Wisetwo’s artworks adorn massive wall spaces across the globe. Some paintings are held in private collections and others in intimate site-specific locations. Today his artwork can be found in several private and public collections, including: Converse Head Offices in Mexico City, Mexico, Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, Kenya, Michael Goldstein Law Offices, Los Angeles, California, USA, United Nations, Zurich, Switzerland, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Nairobi, Kenya.



Artscape, 2019 WISETWO

Wisetwo’s curious nature and urge to explore and discover more has allowed him to create a strong bridge between art worlds, from traditional approaches to contemporary art influences, he has been able to create a plethora of work, from collages, watercolors, and paintings to large scale murals, thus creating a universal thread that runs through all the masks he paints and creating a connection that holds humanity together.

Wisetwo’s work reproduces familiar visual and aural signs, arranging them into new conceptually layered murals and paintings. While he uses a mix of acrylic, ink and sprays paint in his artistic processes. His methodology remains consistent. During his research and production, new areas of interest arise and lead to the next body of work.



Sleeping Giants WISETWO

In that venture, one can see the personal quest, a tug of war between ancient worlds and newer ones, creation of harmony between the intricate choice of color palettes and masks that carry an entire universe. Each artwork invokes a feeling of psychedelic trance, a premise for important questions about life, existence, culture, race, ideas, wisdom, knowledge, representation, identity, inclusion, and more. All serves to reinforce his narratives and perspectives of balance, a world based on impulse and meditation, one with joy and pain, language and symbols, art and science, life and death, hence giving the viewer a chance of contemplation and why we exist on this earth.

FIKOS

Fikos is a painter and muralist from Greece. Byzantine Art first captured Fikos at the age of 10, when he started embroidering and drawing Christian saints with colored pencils. Since 13 yo, he has been an iconographer, a graffiti writer, a street artist, and now a muralist; he has created "Contemporary Byzantine Painting."

Looking back at his 20 years art journey, he considers his artistry similar to a gold digger. He travels the world, reads books, and sees numerous pieces of art every single day. He searches through thousands of mental icons to find the one tiny gold fragment that he can add to the long history of Greek-Byzantine Art.

His vision is to create the spark that will revive ancient painting traditions in the contemporary art world. He works to reconcile Past and Future in the Present Time. Among his murals is the largest mural in the history of Greek-Byzantine art (46m high) and indoor murals at ETH Zurich University. His focus is on the ways traditional arts can revive and serve the contemporary world.

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Gorgo, Detail FIKOS

Gorgo, Details FIKOS



Gorgo, Nicosia, Cyprus FIKOS



KAORU SHIBUTA

Kaoru Shibuta was born in the Hokkaido region of Japan in 1980. His research is based on music and natural sounds, which he turns into paintings based on synesthesia.

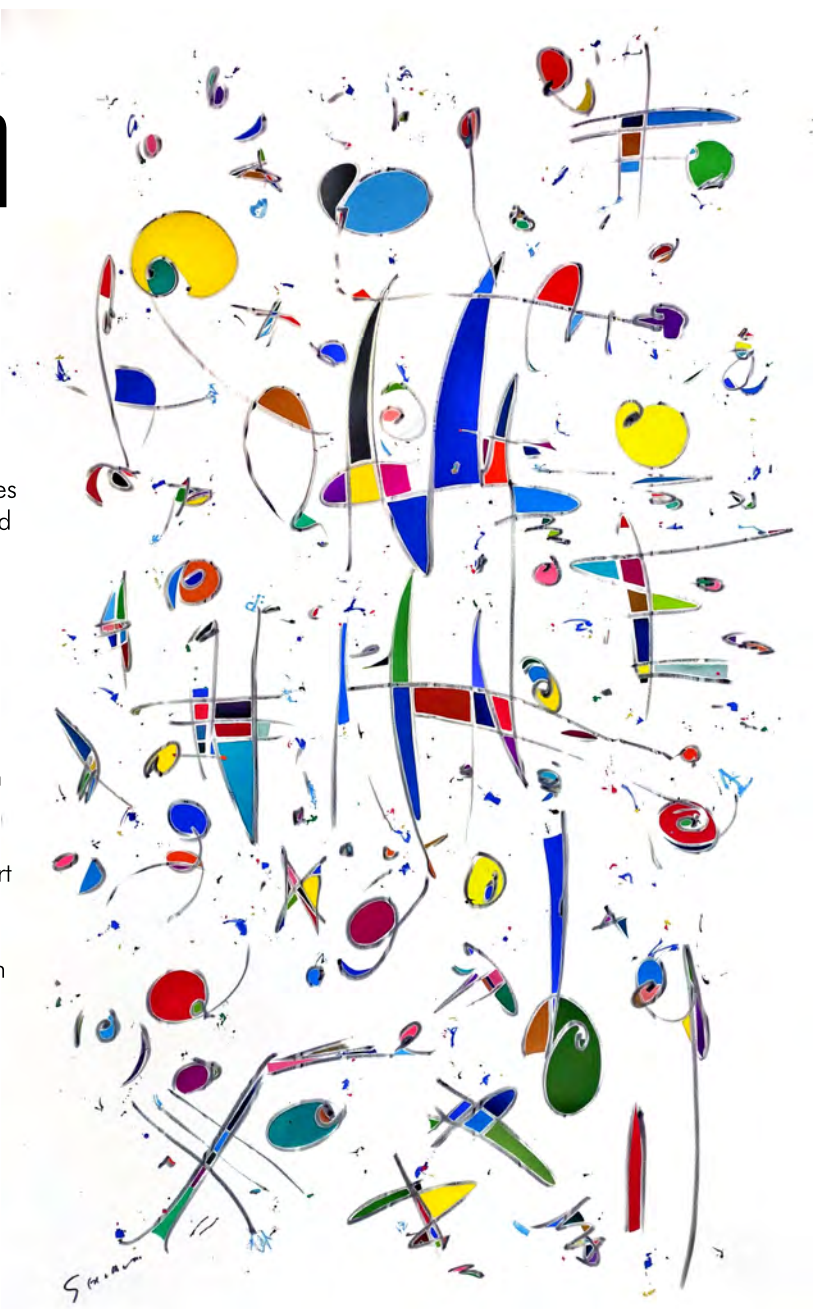
Shibuta translates musical notes into images and contemporary installations. In addition, through the local culture and the atmosphere's energy, he creates a poetic symphony composed of images, colors, and harmony, which is a perfect fusion between nature, music, and art.

If Mozart was the one who composed music to link the terrestrial world to the celestial world, he aims to be the one who undertakes him to propagate it with his painting. If Beethoven composed to surpass philosophy, then he wants to give them a shape with his paintings.

He has presented his works at the Elisabeth Jones Art Center, the Barcelona Center for Arts and Culture, the Santa Monica Museum of Art, the Russian National Center for Contemporary Art, and the 14th Arte Laguna Prize Special Award (Arsenale, Venice), among others.

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Artist Profile KAORU SHIBUTA



BALOONS

BACK COVER ARTIST

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SERGEY PISKUNOV

Sergey is a Ukrainian artist based in Kyiv. A genre-defying painter passionately committed to exploring the core principles of hyper-realism, he seeks to redefine the genre with his breathtaking works. The Ukrainian artist creates a stunning anthology of works that he sees as a “burst of emotion,” forcing the artist to turn inside out his soul and leave it on the canvas. Piskunov creates work that moves seamlessly between many approaches to realism while always remaining committed to the truth of his subjects and their stories. Piskunov’s striking paintings go far beyond hyper-realism, drawing the viewer into an enigmatic, transformative, exotic, and sensual world of fantasy, seduction, and spirit. His paintings form an interior dialogue on the intersections of space, place, time, memory, culture, and history. His art emphasizes an aesthetic that is at once alluring, sensual, and salacious, yet intensely intimate and personal. Whether Piskunov is painting an intimate portrait, a narrative scene, or even still life, his style is always grounded in the internal psychology of people, places, and symbolism.

Sergey Piskunov is the embodiment of a free artist, independent of market trends, whose faithful compass and guide is the world’s perception through the prism of his own inspiration and talent. Piskunov holds a degree from the Ukrainian Academy of Customs, with a diploma of computer system engineer. He has exhibited and is collected not only in Ukraine but also in Germany, Great Britain, the USA, Switzerland, and many other countries.





MAGDALENA BUKOWSKA

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Magdalena Bukowska (Dębica, Poland, 1995) is an Artist and Fashion Designer. She graduated from Kraków School of Art and Fashion Design and Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków. She mostly focuses on painting, drawing, sculpting, and designing clothes. Her artworks focus on the world which is around her. She shows common situations expressively and abstractly.

In her works, Magdalena tries to show the world which surrounds her, from thoughts, dreams, and memories to common things such as bread on the table, ripe strawberries, and flowing clouds. It allows her to convey emotions and feelings that she experiences daily. Her work is characterized by expressions, freedom, and bold, vibrant colors. She is inspired by everything that surrounds her and shows unique spaces in her own way, adding elements that make everything uncommon and different from the real world. Sometimes it is a thoughtful and intentional artistic process, but it is often spontaneous, without planning. She makes unreal spaces in which she can take the viewer to another universe.

Lazy Eggs MAGDALENA BUKOWSKA



Strawberry Obsession II MAGDALENA BUKOWSKA





Fotini Christophillis recently returned from New York, NY, to Greenville, SC. She has an MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts/Tufts University 2016 and a BA in Studio Art and Arts Management from the College of Charleston 2008. She received two Arts Grants from the City of Charleston Cultural Affairs Office to present group exhibitions, including an exhibition as part of the Piccolo Spoleto Festival. She has exhibited her work nationally in galleries in cities such as NYC, San Diego, and St. Louis and the Redux Contemporary Art Center, and the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art in Charleston, SC, and at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. She is represented by Artios Gallery in New York, NY, and Melange Arts in Greenville, SC.

FOTINI CHRISTOPHILLIS

Fotini Christophillis is an American painter. She explores the presence and absence of figurative suggestions, eliminating specific details to express a dream-like snapshot from her subconscious, a kind of cinematographic film still that's neither "here nor there." This "in-between" space is where she currently is in these times of the pandemic; she wants to see the streets alive and bustling, but there is an eeriness in the absence of people, a spaciousness with open streets, empty tables, doors wide open, but no one walking through them. This paradox drives her. She seeks to reconcile both ends of the spectrum in her work, juxtaposing bands of color with plays of light and shadow, precise hard edges, geometric forms, and improvisational and fresh brushwork that is both turbulent and free as well as controlled and sustained. Essentially, the paintings reflect her current experience as she seeks to understand where she is, where she is going, and how she relates to this place where she finds herself in these strange times.

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Greenville, South Carolina, United States



Krzysztof Strzelecki was born in 1993 in Świdnica, southwest Poland. Strzelecki's influences encompass Christian iconography and ancient mythology; he explores the differences, and similarities between man and the environment, contrasting the wilds of nature with the fragility of the human form. His work often engages with queer culture and considers how different societies relate to LGBT+ issues of acceptance and prejudice.

His photographs are often taken in the open air, where the naked body is exposed to the elements. His own body is central to this approach, and he often acts as both model and photographer. This represents a kind of performance, where he seeks to find answers to universal uncertainties regarding 'where I belong' and 'how I see myself?' He incorporates photography into his ceramics and embraces the Japanese attitude of wabi-sabi, which accepts and appreciates the unpredictable beauty of any 'imperfections' – each form, therefore, is unique, and every 'broken' piece adds to his understanding.

The artist studied BA (Hons) in Fine Art Photography at the University of the Arts London (UAL), Camberwell, 2016-2019. Currently, he works in a variety of media, including ceramics, photography, and site-specific installations.

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KRZYSZTOF STRZELECKI



During the lockdown, Krzysztof Strzelecki developed a project to explore the idea of 'cruising fantasies'. He made sixteen vases so far around the theme of 'cruising.' Many artists have visited parks and lakes to watch people and sketch them at play, but gay men used parks, forests, and abandoned parts of the city as venues for illicit sexual encounters. Cruising sites have now lost their 'aura,' and today, most gay 'cruising' happens online, privately behind their phone screens. Following this shift to online life, the artist has focused on sourcing images from the web to conjure up

new scenarios, new encounters. The content is often explicit, but some of his vases are based on famous paintings offering a new perspective. Mimicking these 'utopian' painterly visions instills the idea of 'cruising' as integral to everyday life. Paul Gauguin and Georges Seurat depicted a heteronormative utopian vision in their paintings but imagined, instead, what might have been conjured up had they adopted a blatant same-sex agenda? Some of Strzelecki's vases are inspired by famous paintings (such as 'Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe'), giving them a particularly contemporary sensibility.

SASHA NESCHASTNOVA

The three main principles that Sasha Neschastnova (born in Voronezh, 1993) uses in her work are logic, humor, and emotion. The artist's primary goal is to show everyday life through provocative and shocking art that reveals different aspects of life and evokes emotions in everyone. She considers various topics, such as the relationship between men and women, love, everyday life, women in different life situations. Still, she also designates the absurdity of many life moments and partly ridicules them. Sasha's work isn't about feminism, but it can deal with patriarchy. At the same time, she also pays tribute to men in her work. Neschastnova refuses established stereotypes in her work and focuses on the main aspects of the modern world as the main influence on people's lives. Sasha Neschastnova has a degree in architecture and has participated in various exhibitions and projects. Her works are collected worldwide.

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Leave us alone SASHA NESCHASTNOVA



Freedom in love SASHA NESCHASTNOVA

Lunch SASHA NESCHASTNOVA



ART OF THE QUARANTINE ERA

The project "Art of the Quarantine Era" was created during the period of self-isolation due to Covid-19. This project is a study of couples' behaviors in a relationship and how this affects their actions during a period of shared proximity — those living conditions in which people find themselves. What does a couple do in a confined space? How can you protect your relationship and yourself with shared humor and sarcasm? What is household erotica?

Destroying everything, you need to build a new world on its ruins. The absurdity of everything that is happening is rendered in simple actions. The artist's goal is to demonstrate that it is possible to survive any depression thanks to a non-standard attitude to that situation. It would be best if we did not look for the simple in the complex and the complex in the simple. Life is life, and that is what Sasha Neschastnova shows in this project.

VILMA LEINO

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Learning How To Fall VILMA LEINO



Douche With A Stache VILMA LEINO



Vilma Leino is a 1999 Finnish-born, Berlin-based photographer. She has been using photography as a medium since 2015. Her work focuses on self-portraiture. As a photographer, director, model, and stylist, she creates multiple characters to reflect inner feelings, society, and womanhood. Her work experiments with strong color schemes, composition, and the human body; it is a one-woman show, where being in control and the fear of losing it are in a constant dialogue. The story balances beauty and horror, forming a story about personal growth, where fears are forming into strength.

For her, the camera is an ally who doesn't judge, and it gives her freedom to express her true self. She works with a digital camera and stages photographs that tell the stories about her peculiar daily life. Leino's photographs give the viewer many possible endings, and it's never completely obvious what happens next. In her work, Leino portrays solitude, society, loneliness, inner feelings, and interaction with ourselves. Her working methods are impulsive. She gets inspired by spontaneous thoughts that are born subconsciously, and then she starts creating from there.

AMR ALNGMAH

Amr Mohammed Alngmah is a Yemeni artist born in Alexandria (Egypt) and currently based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Amr holds a Bachelor's Degree in Dental Surgery. He is a self-taught artist who began painting at a young age and has become increasingly interested in trying different materials, from the traditional to the digital. Over the years, he has participated and showed his work in South Korea, France, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

Batman AMR ALNGMAH



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Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

In his work, he uses programs (software) and computer parts (hardware) to research and explore the relationship between the digital age and people, the community, architecture, culture, religion, science, and medicine, and the resulting impact on them both analytically and descriptively.

He uses electronic circuits from various devices and computers (such as motherboards, ICs, and CPUs), which he collects, dismantles, studies and recycles in his artworks while maintaining their electronic properties. Nevertheless, he releases them from their functions. He introduces them into concepts and dimensions befitting his perspective of his artwork's ideas, for it is the beauty of ideas that he relies on.

Amr Mohammed Alngmah also uses the computer language (codes, symbols, binary, code, games, and programs) to create new formation shapes that produce new contacts.

The artist has a special interest in conceptual works, installations, and digital media that reflect the culture of the region and his personal vision. His works depend more on concepts and ideas (including extensive research) rather than traditional aesthetic objectives. He is driven by the desire to positively affect people through the communication of contemporary art.



Super Mario AMR ALNGMAH



JOSÉ LUIS RAMÍREZ

One of the characteristics of José Luis Ramírez work is a sense of freedom. His artwork is surrounded by key characters from his daily life as a group of random characters who tell their own story, but at the same time, they combine into one, creating a deconstructed social analysis that critiques our time.

Born in 1981, José Luis Ramírez lives and works in Durango, Mexico. He graduated from The School of Painting, Sculpture, and Crafts of the Juárez University in Durango state (EPEA-UJED).

Throughout his career, he has participated in artistic projects of the National Fund for Culture and the Arts and made four murals in the native land: "Mexican Historic Landscape" in the Public Central Library "José Ignacio Caballero," "New Earth" in the Public Central Library, "The time, the shadow and the shelter" in the Central Building of the UJED, "The Pending Rights" which stands on the walls of the local State Congress. His artwork has been shown internationally in countries such as China, Austria, United Kingdom, Egypt, Qatar, Canada, the USA, and Colombia. It currently has more than 60 individual and collective exhibitions.

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Ciudad JOSÉ LUIS RAMÍREZ



El Dueño De La Casa JOSÉ LUIS RAMÍREZ



La Señora De La Casa JOSÉ LUIS RAMÍREZ

José, welcome again to Al-Tiba9 magazine. Please tell those who are discovering you today who you are and when you first decided to become an artist?

I'm José Luis Ramírez, born and raised in Durango, Durango, Mexico. I decided to become an artist when I won a national award, that's when I felt a responsibility not to abandon this profession that I have been polishing day by day.

What is your favorite experience as an artist so far?

The 2019 Cairo Biennale was a great experience, living in another culture, sharing talks and opinions with people around the world.

Your paintings are inhabited by several different characters. Who are these people? Are they real people you encountered in your life or imaginary characters?

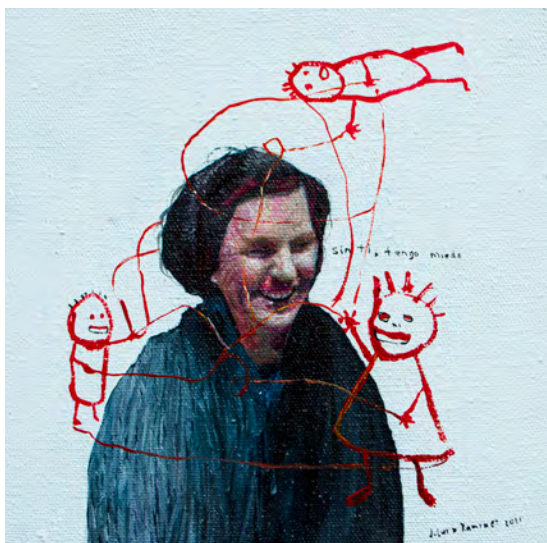
Many are imaginary, and others are real that I meet on the streets that I walk, but most are imaginary.

What are the main themes behind your work?

I am proposing a different way of looking at painting from an aesthetic sense. I try to make my work very funny, cynical, disturbing and keep it from losing that childish spirit.



La Tía Solterona JOSÉ LUIS RAMÍREZ



La Tía Risueña JOSÉ LUIS RAMÍREZ

Your paintings are very peculiar and recognizable. How do you differentiate your work from the rest? In other words, what do you feel makes your work unique and truly your own?

In each work that I do, I put disturbing characters outside the composition above all else. I am very fascinated by realism or the figurative theme that, in my modest opinion, I consider achieving quite acceptable. However, when defining a work, I believe that what is well done is what ends up making noise or disturbing me. Then that's where I give way to fun, to the gesture that questions the uncomfortable element, the context, or speech that does not have to have the solemn seriousness that most of the works have today. Each one of my works is a story or a tale where someone who truly exists or is present lives or is present.

From inspiration to the final result, what is your creative process like?

I never plan a work, nor do I like to make sketches. I work with a lot of presence of a human figure, but I like to make juxtapositions, perhaps that is what gives the touch to my work, the scratch, to cover the work completely, add a person with the head of a cow, I use that language when I tell the work. My work is done minute by minute. I drink water and go back and put a dog and create a story with everything I did, not the other way around. I think that nowadays painting has to be done at the moment; sometimes, there are too many things in my head that I wouldn't be able to translate them into a sketch.

What are your thoughts on digital presentations, like online art fairs and exhibitions, for artists? Do you think these are good opportunities, or do you just wish to go back to life as it was before the pandemic?

I think they're good; they help many others so that their work reaches a more wide public, but physically you have the possibility of sharing talks with other artists who live in another reality, and I am much more interested in the opinion of the people who walk, those who enter the museums of society. That's more important and not so much the collectors.

What does "being creative" mean to you?

Have the ability to adapt to the present, consider everything that is happening around you daily, make a problem a challenge, something uncomfortable to see, give you visual gratitude, try to convert. I think it is important to have that ability.

What are your plans for the upcoming months? Any exhibition or project you are particularly looking forward to?

Yes, I have a few exciting invitations for a couple of great events in Europe and also just keep painting, like always.

Finally, who's José Luis Ramírez in three words?

Discipline, emotion, and surprise.



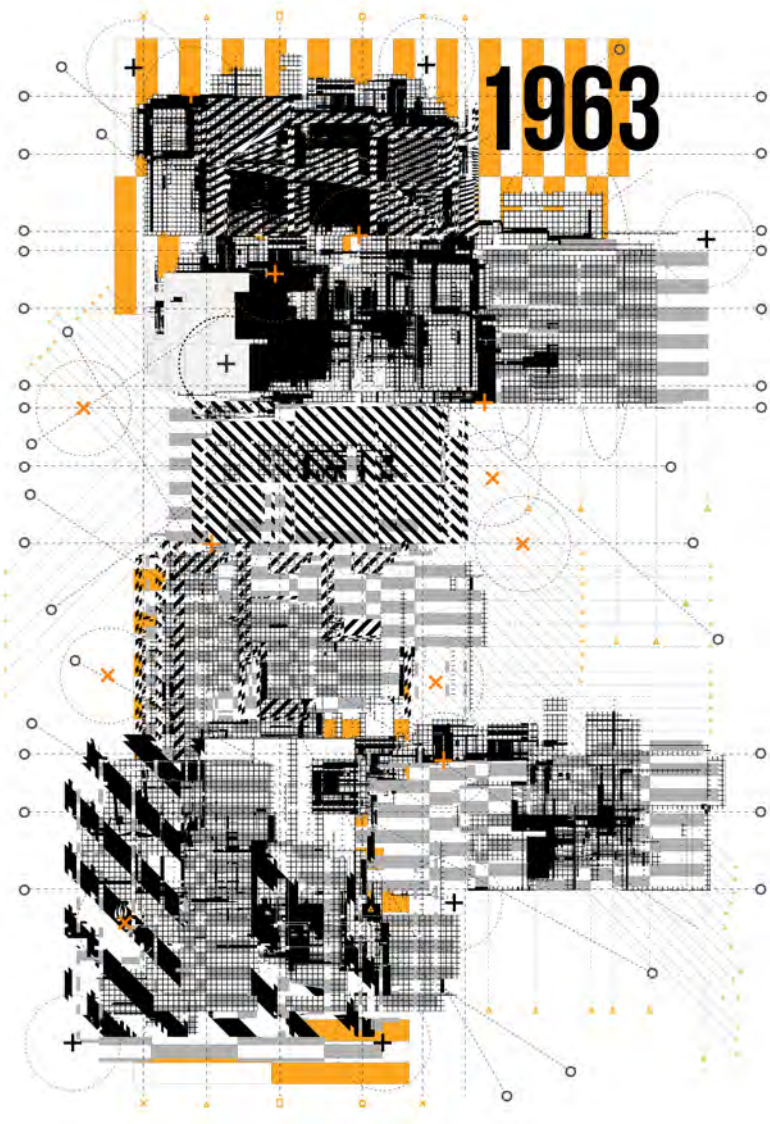
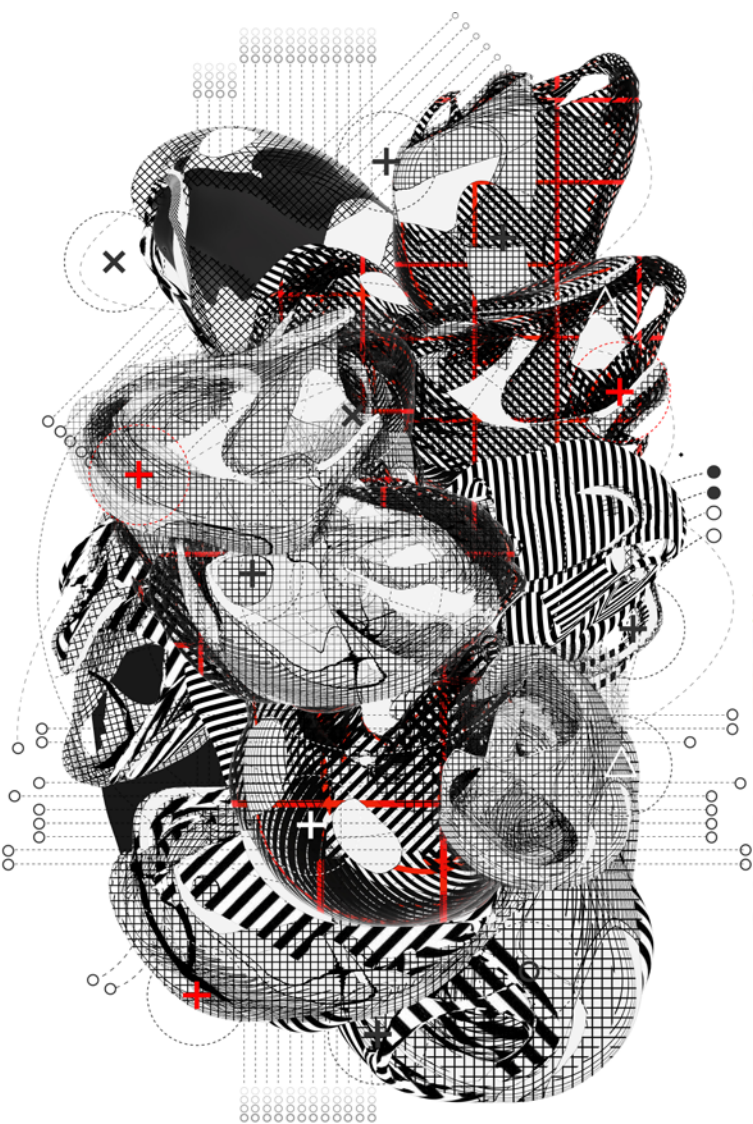
El Destino JOSÉ LUIS RAMÍREZ

JAYAKAR PRIYADHARSHAN

Jayakar Priyadharshan is a Contemporary Speculative Architect of Indian origin currently based in the UK. Jayakar currently works on the question of authenticity and austerity of the defunct modernist doctrine of drawings. He explores the new contemporary ways of transmuting ideas into drawings through modern-day tools that can be used "for representing architecture" or can be understood "as architecture by themselves" by capitalizing on the various technocratic digital tools that are analogous and available for establishing a peerless stronghold of the ubiquitous zeitgeist.

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Jayakar Priyadharshan holds a Master's Degree in Art in Architecture from Stadelshule Architecture Class, Germany. He is now living a dual life as an architect and an academician enriching the young upcoming minds with contemporary ideologies. He is well known for his works in the field of architectural aesthetic practice. One of his famous works is what he calls the invisible building (a building facade that can hide itself from the eyes of Artificial Intelligence), where he talks about the flip sides of artificial intelligence and countering the rise of AI.



Extreme Grids JAYAKAR PRIYADHARSHAN



CAROLINA SERRANO

Carolina Serrano (Funchal, Portugal, 1994) lives and works in Cologne, Germany. Serrano finished the Masters in Sculpture at the Faculdade de Belas-Artes of the Universidade de Lisboa in 2018, with the dissertation “The spiritual dimension of Sculpture through the work of XIX artists”.

In 2017, Serrano completed the Post-Graduation in Art Curatorship at the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas – Universidade Nova de Lisboa and in 2015 the Degree in Sculpture at the Faculdade de Belas-Artes of the Universidade de Lisboa.

Carolina Serrano presented two solo shows in 2020: *Entre o polegar e o indicador*, text by Alexandre Melo, UMA LULIK_ Contemporary Art Gallery (Lisboa, 2020) and *Para sempre prestes a terminar*, curated by Mattia Tosti, Galeria FOCO (Lisboa, 2020). Among the group exhibitions in which Serrano participated, the following stands out: *Grão—Residência Artística de Investigação*, Capitania do Museu de Aveiro (Aveiro, 2020); *XV Edição do Prémio de Pintura e Escultura de Sintra D. Fernando II*, MU.SA- Museu das Artes de Sintra (Sintra, 2020); *Tarimba apresenta a ESQUINA*, curated and produced by Tarimba Coletivo and BECO, Esquina Atelier (Lisboa, 2019); *Estouro*, curated by Beatriz Coelho, Francisca Gigante and Inês Espada Vieira, Espaço Cultural Mercês, (Lisboa, 2019); *5a Bienal Internacional de Arte de Espinho*, Museu Municipal de Espinho (Espinho, 2019); *I will take the risk*, curated by Carolina Trigueiros and TH Studio, Tomaz Hipólito Studio (Lisboa, 2019); *Singular Pace*, curated by Helena Mendes Pereira, Zet Gallery (Braga, 2018); *Inside/Outside*, Palácio do Marquês de Pombal (Oeiras, 2015). In 2018 Serrano received the SHAIRART G-ABA Award.

COVER ARTIST

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Carolina Serrano’s work and research revolves around the temporal dimension of sculpture. The artist sculptural thinking collapses, recurrently, with the notions of light and shadow; with the ideas of destruction and appearance; and with the duality between interior and exterior and between full and empty space. Serrano is interested in the concept of the restricted, inaccessible and therefore unknown “place”, and in the uncertainty of the extent of it.

In recent years Carolina Serrano has been working almost exclusively with paraffin wax because of its plastic possibilities, as is the reflection of the light, but above all because of the theoretical and conceptual possibilities that this material can originate in the field of the observer’s imagination. Serrano is also interested in the idea of a potential spiritual transmutation and transubstantiation of the sculptural object.

Um momento de trégua CAROLINA SERRANO
© UMA LULIK__ & Bruno Lopes. Galerie Alex Serra



Hello Carolina, you are our featured Cover Artist for ISSUE08 magazine. First of all, describe yourself in 3 words.

(to) Feel, (to) Think, (to) Try.

Now, let's go a little deeper. How did you start making art? And when did you first get interested in sculpture?

In a more considerate way, I followed my studies in a secondary school in Lisbon, which specialized in art education. I discovered that my artistic thoughts were happening through images of three-dimensional objects when, as a 17-year-old student in that school, I was asked to make a figurine for a play. I decided to make a grotesque-looking full-body sculpture for the actress to wear on her back and head as if she were carrying her own weight on her back, the weight of her existence. There was the presence of two bodies, that of the actress seen from the front and that of the sculpture/figure seen from behind. The question of duality-suffering as an intrinsically human characteristic and sculpture as the thought was already present in my work without knowing it.

In your recent works, you use paraffin wax “because of the theoretical and conceptual possibilities that this material can originate in the field of the observer’s imagination.” Can you explain this a little further to our readers?

One of those possibilities - and the one that interests me the most - is the temporal dimension of sculpture. For, I ask myself if time can be used as a material. Paraffin (usually used as fuel and recurrently used in the making of candles) together with fire (as a living element in the imagination and memory of the observer) is what, until now, has allowed me to come closest to building a sculpture with “time”. When we think of the idea of a flame consuming a candle, this inert object “gains” time; that is, it acquires a temporal dimension because it becomes extinguishable. The object starts to exist in the ‘time’ that is ours by acquiring, as we acquire at birth, a death sentence. In my work, by using paraffin and sometimes the candle-wick, this act of ‘receiving life’

through self-destruction is, however, hypothetical; it occurs as a possibility in the observer’s imagination. The action, by being ‘activated’ by the viewer’s mind, occurs both in the sculpture he sees but also at the same time within himself.

Paraffin also comes as a substitute for the physical and spiritual body. Sometimes when I visit Cathedrals, I like to look at the holders for placing devotional candles because all those trembling flames are of people who have been there to lit them and who are now somewhere in their own affairs. But when I look at those holders, those people are there in front of me, present in those various spots of light. Something like transubstantiation happens. And with the sculptures the same.

Your sculptures are minimal objects that convey contrasting ideas, such as light and shadow, destruction and appearance, interior and exterior, and full and empty. Why do you use this visual language? And what does your art aim to say to the viewers?

Who knows, that may be the viewers see themselves by seeing my work that they see themselves in the mirror. Just like the flames in the cathedrals that, deep down, are absent presences of various people. If I wish sculptures to be extensions of ourselves, knowing that we are beings that wander and oscillate in time without being able to control it or pacify ourselves with it (because time is finite to us and escapes us), then they must seek to be true mirrors. Since we are beings of antagonism and contradiction, since we are beings of error and, at the same time, of glory, the sculptures must be reflections that are exact and simultaneously dubious, complex, and at the same time simple. However, it is also necessary to know that polishing that mirror to its sharpness - that is, understanding what it is to be human - is a task possibly doomed to have no end.

What do you see as the strengths of your project, both visually or conceptually?

Perhaps aiming to create works that have in themselves formal dispossession, an irremediable simplicity. I try not to add or take more away to the

Faz Aí A Tua Casa CAROLINA SERRANO
© UMA LULIK__ & Bruno Lopes. UMA LULIK_



point that, in one extreme, by wanting to remove more, one can see the bone.

The energy of work is often channeled in the space between two polarities: between the emptiness and the fullness, the internal and the external... It is necessary that the works are in that space “in-between” so that we, in them, can recognize ourselves in the reflection of a mirror, seeing at the same time both the error and the glory.

The idea of the possibility of self-destruction, the destruction of the body (paraffin/ours), and the idea of ascension through vanishing, and the temporal dimension that is somehow present in my sculpture are deeply human. Basically, it’s an attempt to blow or even scratch the little hole that each of us has open in our chests and just won’t close, won’t close.

Tell us about the process of creating your work. What is your artistic routine when working? Any aspects of your work do you pay particular attention to?

Usually, the “unborn” sculptures first appear in my mind as an idea in the form of an image. Sometimes I see their figures on the walls, on the ceilings, in the corners of the room. Sometimes I retain images that I see on the street: a metal fence, a dark window, two half-closed curtains, and which can later become a drawing of work

if a mental image appears from that.

I transfer those images of sculptures that I see in my mind to my notebook. I usually write down a few words, or half sentences, which are basically what the image suggests to me in verb form or even technical aspects of it.

Later, sometimes much later, I review my notebooks, flip through them all, and in the middle of the pages, there is an image (an unborn sculpture) that stands out for some reason. As I see it, this one is ready to come into being, and the next step is to materialize it, to make it exist in the world. The others are still there in the notebook, waiting. Maybe many will never be born. Then things become more technical, and I have to think about how to build it and engineer it. I have to think about the measurements, the cuts, the quantities. When I work for an exhibition or trace a specific intention of work production, usually my working rules and my discipline are strict. I like to work during the day, from early morning until late afternoon. Every single day, After this, after everything is ready, there is a resting period for me, and later on, everything repeats itself.

Is there one thing you have discovered, or a lesson you have learned, over the last year due to the pandemic you will keep with you in the future?

Be even more attentive, be even more aware.



Onde eu e tu estamos CAROLINA SERRANO
© UMA LULIK_ & Bruno Lopes
© Galeria FOCO & Photodocumenta. UMA LULIK_



Os Amantes CAROLINA SERRANO
© Galeria FOCO & Photodocumenta. Galerie Alex Serra

You work with a lot of galleries and have exhibited extensively over the past years. What do you think about the art community and market today?

I work with two galleries: UMA LULIK_ Gallery in Lisbon and, more recently, with a new gallery in Cologne, Galerie Alex Serra, which will open very soon, dependent on the pandemic situation in Germany. Regarding the art market and the art community, I try not to think about it too much.

What is one thing you hope to achieve in 2021?

“Mehr Licht! Mehr Licht!”

Finally, What are you working on now, and what are your plans for the future? Anything exciting you can tell us about?

After I participated in the online format of Artissima 2020, with UMA LULIK Gallery, it seems that finally, in this year of 2021, presential fairs are starting to happen. So, regarding art fairs, as far as I know now, I will participate with the same gallery at Drawing Room Madrid that will happen in the last week of May. I am also starting the project for a solo exhibition in Germany at Galerie Alex Serra, which will take place this year if the pandemic situation stabilizes. I also have on my agenda a possible exhibition with a public institution in Berlin for 2022.

ISTVÁN DUKAI

After spending 15 years in the world of graffiti, Istvan Dukai started his solo career as a graphic artist. He gained his knowledge in fine arts and graphic arts mostly by self-taught. As a freelancer he works on logo, abstract graphics, and nonfigurative pattern designs.

His very own style has its roots mostly in geometric tradition, the philosophy of constructivism, and op-art. The minimalist way he uses colors and forms, the repetitive rhythm – which he skips occasionally but wittingly – results unusual and illusion-like forms in the plane.

The fundamental principle of his compositions is reduction, which is based on natural elements being stylized to geometric shapes and the diverse ways of combining these elements. Sensuality also plays a key role in his pictures. He has opened towards interdisciplinary fields: his work is often used on different materials hence he became one of the top graphic designers and art directors for several European-based brands.

Selected Clients: Vodafone, Telekom Electronic Beats, Herschel Supply Co., LogMeln, ITU, Cukovy, Solinfo

INSIDE COVER ARTIST

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Budapest, Hungary

Some experiences of the artist are often reflected in his art. In particular, the curfew during his childhood in Yugoslavia shaped by the Balkan war came to the forefront recently due to parallels to the current „quarantine-life” during COVID: the feeling of loss, confusion, and uncertainty when confined to our trusted space. He is to convey a transcendent calm and order in these artworks—something eternal amidst troubling times. Textures and forms of his childhood are a strong influence, such as roughly woven linens of military tents, basic motifs of folk art, and the bold shapes of brutalist architecture in post-war Yugoslavia. OP-Art, with its repetition of geometric shapes, is

a salient inspiration. He uses strongly abstracting forms and muted colors. Such austerity underlines the calm atmosphere of his works. Contrasts and clashes define his art. These works are digitally designed, yet he uses traditional printing techniques and materials.

This duality emphasizes the thresholds of cyber-space and reality, of digital and human connections. Contrasts between light and dark, between contained forms and disruptive lines, express calm and upset, freedom and confinement, life and death.

Artist Profile. Photo by Pinewood Lifestyle ISTVÁN DUKAI



You started in the field of graffiti and later approached graphic design. Would you tell us more about your artistic development so far?

The feeling of total freedom is what I loved about graffiti. It was a rebellion; I could do whatever I wanted without any expectations or measure up – I mean literally. For me, it was mostly experimentation and gaining new experience; and it was the same thing when I got into computer graphics software more seriously. It is also weird that basically, I started to showcase my first works on the streets for the wider public, then I ended up having my latest ones in private collections of art dealers. To be honest, I don't know precisely how and when, but at one point, I just realized that all of a sudden, my digital designs started to merge with my manual ones. I still work with this method, I feel comfortable about it, and I feel that it is mine.

What is important for me is to pay attention to the right proportion and the balance between them, so none of them gets too much. That is why symmetry keeps reoccurring in my works and plays a key role.

What is your aim as an artist?

I think, maybe more or less, but all artists are individualists. It might result from creating a solo, being a bit introverted, or getting lost in their inspirational bubbles. Obviously, there may be exceptions, but I work alone, unaccompanied as well.

What I experience when I create is a truly amazing and astounding feeling for me. And if the given piece can pass on only a tiny fraction of this to the audience, then it completely fulfilled its purpose I originally intended.

Your works are both soothing and hypnotizing. You cite as references both folk art and post-war Balkan Brutalism, but also Op-Art. How did you get to this mix? And what messages do you want to convey with this aesthetic?

Well, these were the most intensive pictorial impressions I came across in my life by now. In other words, they could be defined as my 'indirect visual education'.

I clearly remember that I was playing in the attic as a little kid, and I found prints of Vasarely, which had been bought by my Mom. I was staring at them for hours, mesmerized. It was love at first sight.

I had the same impression of the Brutalist style. I grew up in a tiny and relatively isolated village in Vojvodina. When we had trips in the neighborhood, I got amazed by the huge concrete buildings and structures.

Regarding folk art, the different motifs and techniques were right in front of me all the time. I believe they just got imprinted in my subconscious unintentionally.

Obviously, I know what my art means to me, what their message is for me, what kind of feelings it can cause in me. But I don't want to force or influence the audience to share my opinion. I am curious about their own way of thinking.

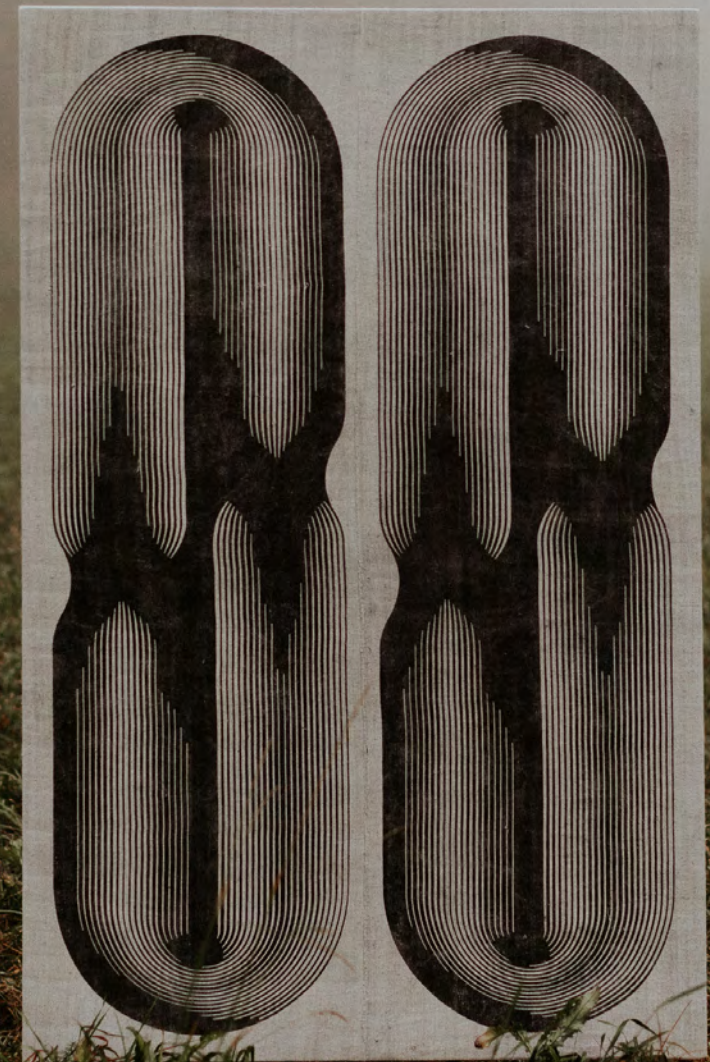
My pictures might generate different emotions depending on the mood and the psychical state of a person - whether people would be calm, frustrated, happy, depressed, frustrated, or with whatever feelings. This is what I love about abstract/geometrical art. It doesn't necessarily impact your current mood, rather the opposite: your current mood composes the meaning of the picture, which could be completely different on another day and with another state of mind.

In your latest works, you compared the curfew that was in place during the war in your childhood with the latest events due to the Covid pandemic. One underlining and recurring theme is not only isolation but rather the feeling of loss and uncertainty. How much does art help you cope with those feelings? Do you use art to escape from reality, even just for a little while?

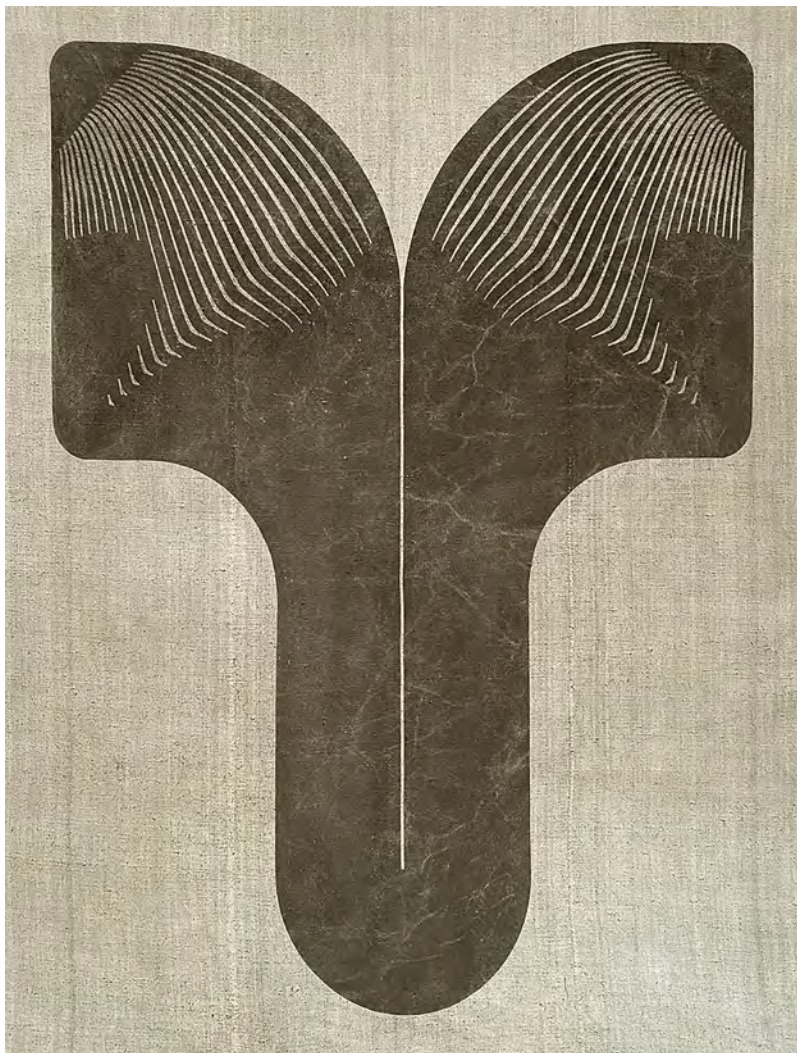
It would be hard to state how I feel exactly during creation or, let's say, when I am deeply lost in creating. Way too many feelings break up at once, but after a while, somehow, they start to merge into one single undefined emotion, which overwhelms me. Then average, common things won't really affect me; I cannot sense time, for example. It is just us together: me and the given art piece. I guess it is fair to say that many times I daydream about this alternative reality when I have to cope with the real one. I refer to it as my asylum. This, plus true human connections and bonds, keeps me sane and alive in this world.

Contrasts seem to be another recurring theme in your art. What are the major contrasts you experience in your life right now?

In general, I would say the biggest contrast roots in existence itself; my everyday thoughts revolve around life and death a lot. These come hand in hand with withering and the possible definition of timeless things. I also contemplate a lot on how paradoxical our lives are these days, how we experience both freedom and unwanted restrictions at the same time. Honestly, it is pretty tough to cope with this, although I know I am not the only one in this boat.



RUR-SUS, Photo by Pinewood Lifestyle ISTVÁN DUKAI



Where do you find inspiration for your work, and what is your creative process like?

Inspiration can come from pretty much anywhere, and it is not even necessary for it to be visual. Most of the time, the work of other artists from different art fields provides a source of motivation, but human relationships also inspire me. Sometimes the most simple things have the biggest effect on me: a gentle touch, a cute smile, a few kind words...

When I get into the mood, I start to chalk out immediately. This usually starts as a digital process (I never sketch on paper). If I cannot start and get to the bottom of the project, I can hardly concentrate on anything else. Music also helps a lot during the process, as it catalyzes and accelerates the dynamism of my workflow.

Over the past year, our world has been shaken to the bone, and the art world was affected too. How do you feel about the current situation?

Do you see any positive changes happening during this time? Besides the various restrictions occurring in our private lives, the current pandemic situation brought me just positive things in the work scene. Although I wouldn't be able to tell how it could be different otherwise, I mean if this improvement was due to the situation, or it would have happened anyway.

My studio receives better and better orders, pitches, and graphical projects from all around the world, but meanwhile, I am able to reserve some quality time to deal with my own autonomous art work as well. This is really important for me, and this is the kind of balance I always aimed for.



Sanctitas II ISTVÁN DUKAI

How did you stay active and engaged with your public over the lockdowns and the global pandemic?

Obviously, online communication and digital platforms helped my communication a lot. Although I should note that the pandemic didn't change my workflow or my work ethic. I mostly had online discussions with my international clients before, so its efficiency didn't catch me by surprise.

I believe that there is also something inspirational in this lockdown, and with continuous mental concentration and physical readiness, there can be a lot of potential in it.

As a graphic designer and digital artist, what do you think of NFTs? Do you see this more as an opportunity or a threat?

I have mixed feelings about this, so I will wait to see how it turns out. I definitely find it beneficial that the copyright could be implemented in all our art works which ends up on the internet.

Connecting humans and cyberspace - especially when it comes to social media - should be limited and less exposed. It is good for business, but we should be cautious with what we share regarding our private lives.

Finally, what are your plans for the future?

I have put together several future exhibitions, which seem to be ready for launch and to be showcased to the greater public. I also have new projects with fashion houses to design their own textile prints or refresh their classic silhouettes with up-to-date patterns – these are paid collaborations but usually end up being love projects. I really like these. Hopefully; there will be a lot more to come in the future.

I also invested in some old printing machines, and I am looking forward to doing some experiments and tests with them.

And it would be lovely to spend more time with my family, my friends, just to be surrounded by people, and if it were possible and safe, I would travel more.

LUCREZIA ROSSI

Lucrezia Rossi is an Italian photographer. She photographs staged self-portraits in her work and daily life encounters by combining humor with reality, intimacy with softness. By re-signifying her past experiences through her images, this search for meaning becomes present, honest, and delicate, and light. She currently lives and works in Berlin.

Rossi's early formative years were spent in Italy. She was born in 1992 in Lucca, Italy, and after high school, she first studied Photography at the L.A.B.A Academy in Florence and later moved to Berlin, Germany. In Berlin, in 2021, Lucrezia was awarded a BA In Photography from the University of Europe for Applied Sciences.

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In her series "My Traviata," the pictures show a being in white form, searching, crawling, standing in pompous, noble rooms or on stony streets - put up theatrically in the truest sense of the word, the pictures are madly alive. Although there are spatial structures and lines in the pictures, it is much less about abstraction than about an abandoned person's emotions and feelings. The escape in the confrontation with oneself takes an important place. The central question is: Where do I

belong, where do I find myself, what do I leave behind to see and feel my true self? The theme of a young woman's redemption - through art in time and space, is in fact, strongly connected with a fatefulness and to the image of a lost woman who has strayed from the path of virtue. Despite the strong expression of the images and the young woman's anguished presence, she remains untouched, slightly repellent, and cool. She dies, and at the same time, lives in her own (inner) spaces.

My Traviata LUCREZIA ROSSI



PETER BACKHAUS



Shadow Movement PETER BACKHAUS

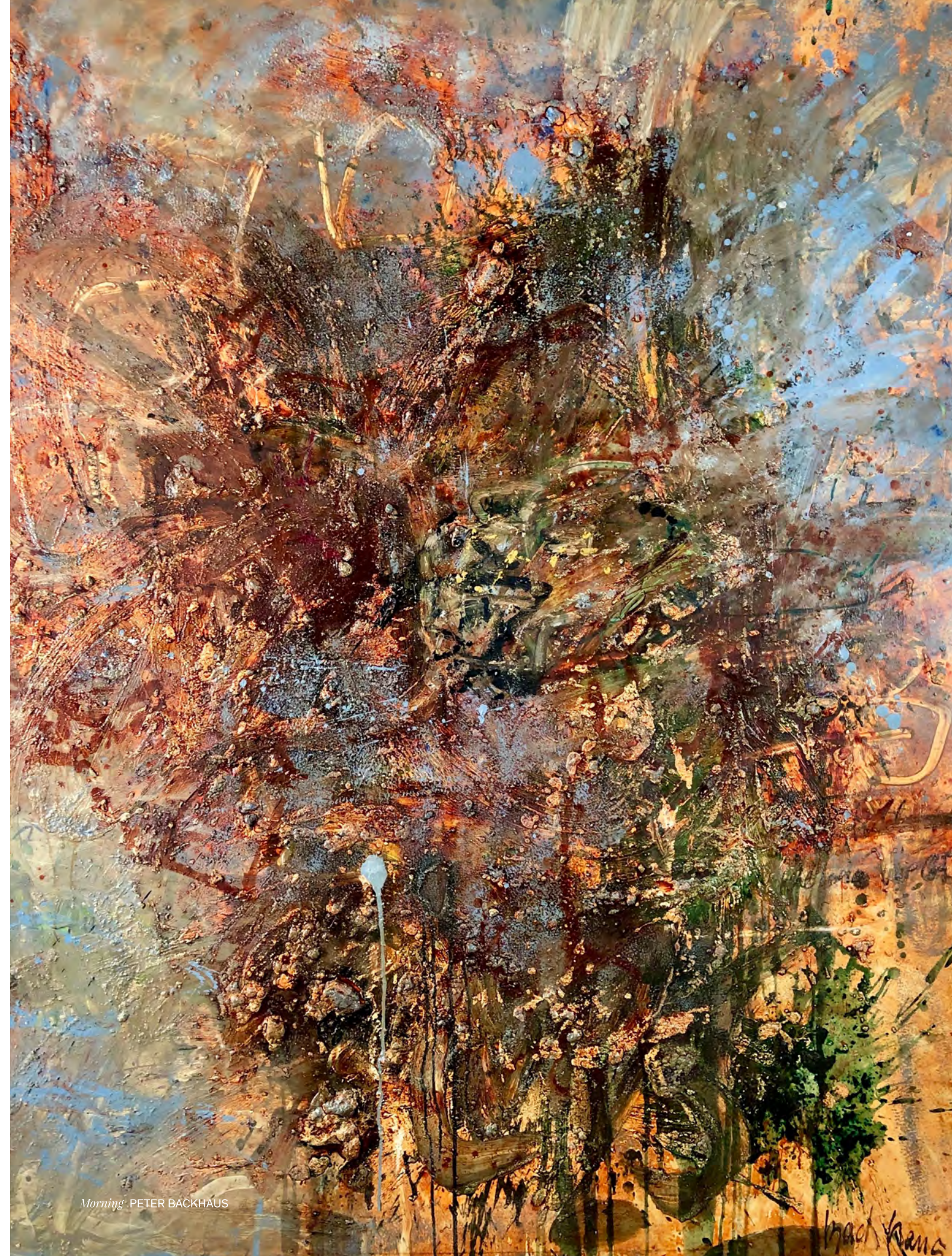
Peter Backhaus is an award-winning artist based in Sweden whose paintings have been exhibited nationally and in Luxembourg, Germany, Denmark, and China. He describes his works as being created in a space that lies between “intellectual thinking and uncontrolled instinct.” Backhaus refers to his compositions as inner pictures with no purpose, where “total silence and total chaos co-exist.”

He is a painter at heart who has always loved to express himself with colors. He started as a realistic painter, and by different experiences in his life, he ended up as an abstract expressionist. However, he believes that if he didn’t study reality like the old masters, he couldn’t develop his abstract expression in painting like this.

Peter Backhaus was born in 1947 in former East Germany, moved with his family to West Germany in 1950. In 1968 he moved to Sweden to study philosophy, psychology, sociology, and art history, and there he took his bachelor’s degree at the University of Gothenburg. During 1973-1978 he studied art at the Hovedskous Artschool in Gothenburg, where he later became an Associate Professor. In 2000 he became the headmaster and owner of the same school. Since 2014, he has retired and can now dedicate all his time to art in his studio in the countryside.

Since 1980 he has exhibited his art in many different Swedish Art galleries and museums and Swedish and German galleries. His name is well known in the Swedish art community. In 2001, he was chosen to represent painting in the exhibition “Painting & Painting” at Kristinehamns Art museum, Sweden.

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Morning PETER BACKHAUS

ZAAM ARIF

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 Houston, United States

The Immigrant ZAAM ARIF

The Wait ZAAM ARIF



Zaam Arif is an American-Pakistani contemporary artist residing and working in Houston, Texas.

Zaam Arif explores existentialist experiences of the layman, the experiences that we tend to hide. He confronts it with a penetrating interpretation of human nature, transforming it into a visceral reality. His work is a manifestation of his understanding of the contemporary human condition and insights garnered from his study of classical literature and psychology. He is adamant in exploring the harsher truths and inner conflicts

that plague us all in this day and age, using visual contrast in all his pieces, whether through color, lack thereof, or the medium itself, to express it.

Zaam is currently pursuing his BFA in Design but has been taught and been an apprentice of his artist father for several years. Zaam's work has been published across many platforms, most recent being "Gulf Stream Magazine" in Miami, Florida, and "The Gasher Journal" in Boulder, Colorado.



SAM HEYDT

Sam Heydt (1986) is an American social practice and recycled media artist born/raised in New York City. Although currently residing in Vienna, Heydt has lived/worked in Paris, Venice, Amsterdam, Athens, Buenos Aires, Sydney, Reykjavik, and Rajasthan.

Her academic career traversed Parsons School of Design, The New School, Cooper Union, University of Amsterdam, Universidad of Buenos Aires and La Sorbonne. In 2012, Heydt launched Jane Street Studio, L.L.C. in Manhattan. Since established, the photo studio has broadened its performance to provide both design and marketing consultation in addition to art direction. It's growing roster of clients spans Europe, North & South America, Asia and Oceania.

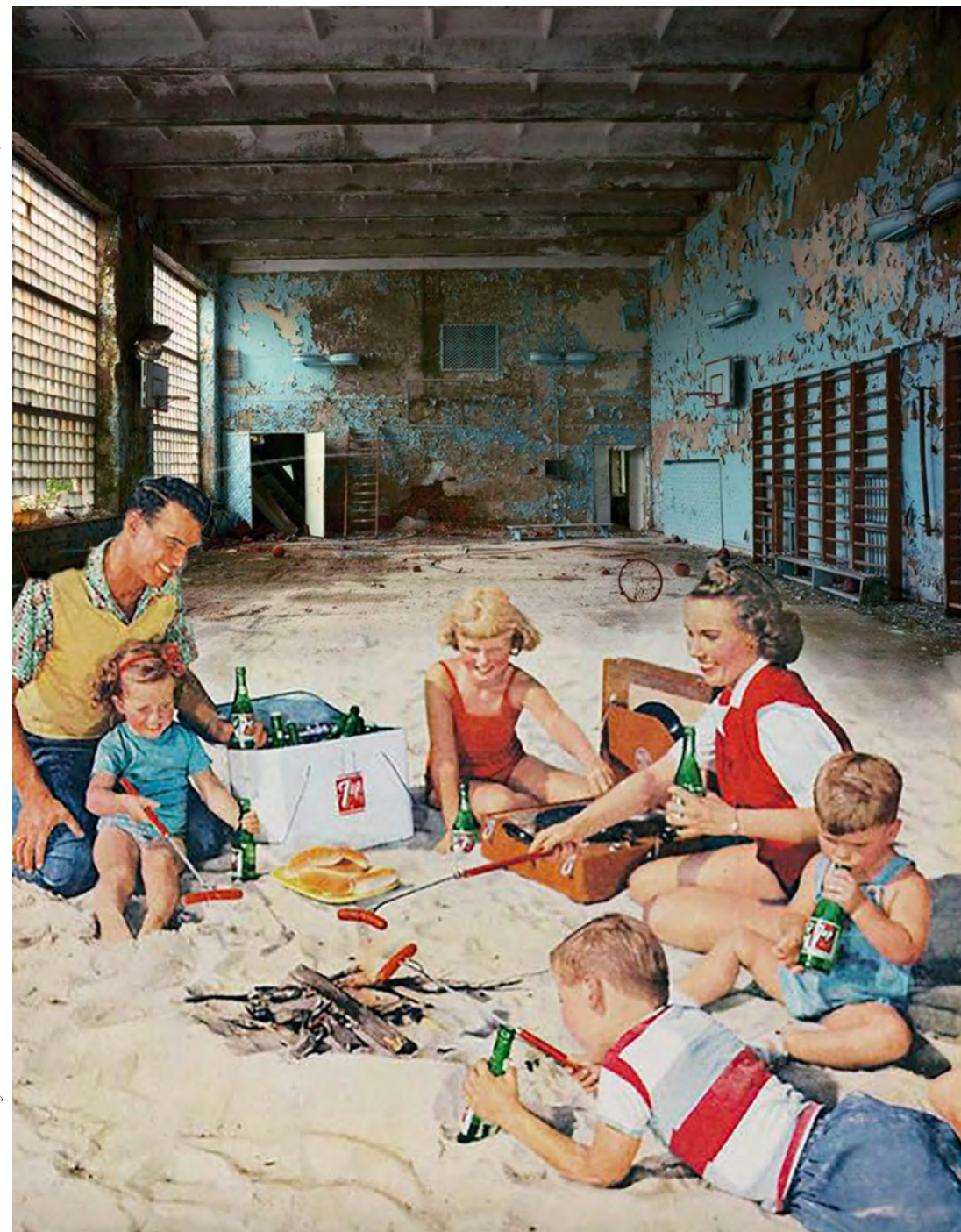
In addition to this entrepreneurial undertaking, Heydt has attended artist residencies in Iceland, Australia, and New Zealand, where she has documented different forms of environmental exploitation. A published author, producer, and lifelong activist, Heydt has undertaken a range of altruistic, non-profit work. Her art, anchored in social advocacy, attempts to give a voice to the veiled, forgotten, exiled, and silenced.

In her practice, she works across various media- film, video, installation, photography, sculpture, sound, merchandize, text — and employs a range of materials, often reinventing or trespassing their associative use. Heydts' vision looks beyond the ordinary. Esteemed as one of the pioneers of the recycled media movement, Heydt's work has been shown in galleries, museums, art fairs, and film festivals worldwide.

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@samheydt
Vienna, Austria



LipService - Heterotopia SAM HEYDT



Family Picnic SAM HEYDT

Legos SAM HEYDT



The edge is closer than we think, but illusion won't free us from reality, even as the sustained narrative of tabloids becomes history and the myth of progress continues to perpetuate inequality. As the natural world is liquidated and substitutes with an artificial one, public discourse is being defined by even narrower bandwidths. While social processes defy the logic of individualism in global capitalism, the underbelly of profitability fueling globalization emerges as exploitation. In a time marked by a mass extinction, product fetishism, diminishing resources, and patented seeds, we find ourselves in a world exploited beyond use, a world increasingly reduced to a bottom line. Concerns for which are drowned out by the white noise of the media and the empty promises it proposes for the future it truncates.

Working across different media- film, video, installation, photography, sculpture, sound, and text, Heydt presents an abstract proposition for a world on the periphery of history, one that not only appears haunted by the ghosts of the past but built on it. Heydt's layered imagery conflate time and place, colliding and merging generations of possibilities and disrupting logical relationships between occurrences. Combining images of destruction with portrayals of the virtues born from the American Dream, Heydt confronts the disillusionment of our time with the ecological and existential nightmare it is responsible for.

FAN DE FANTÁSTICA



Artist Profile FAN DE FANTÁSTICA

Fan de Fantástica is a Film Director, Collage Maker, and Multi-Talented Artist currently based in Madrid, Spain, where she is developing new films & art projects. Fan de Fantástica was born into a family of university professors; both of Fan's parents are heavy machinery engineers & musicians. She began to study classical music from a very early age and achieved excellent piano and Olympic Mathematical competitions. Fan attended Beijing Film Academy and London Film School. She has worked on more than 40 feature films, short films, and documentaries, and she has collaborated with London theaters, such as the Royal Opera House and the O2 Arena. She studied Luxury Bag Design in Milan, Professional Photography at Efti (Madrid), and flamenco dress-making in Seville. Fan de Fantástica is also a traditional tea artist and a classical ballet dancer.

fandefantastica.com
 @fan.de.fantastica
 Madrid, Spain

Decamerón Day Six FAN DE FANTÁSTICA



There are numerous details of traditional far east philosophies and contemporary Western points of view in her funky, playful, and over-the-top imaginary world of mixed media collages. All are mixed with music, Science Fiction, poems, industrial engineering, dancing, mathematics, natural sciences, manga, street art, and many other seemingly unrelated cultures. One way or another, she has mixed all her 'weird' personal experiences into her collage creations. One piece of collage is like a full-length film. Each element is like a single shot (in the film). She selects each element carefully and composes them in a certain way to make the final piece tells a complete, meaningful yet fun story.

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