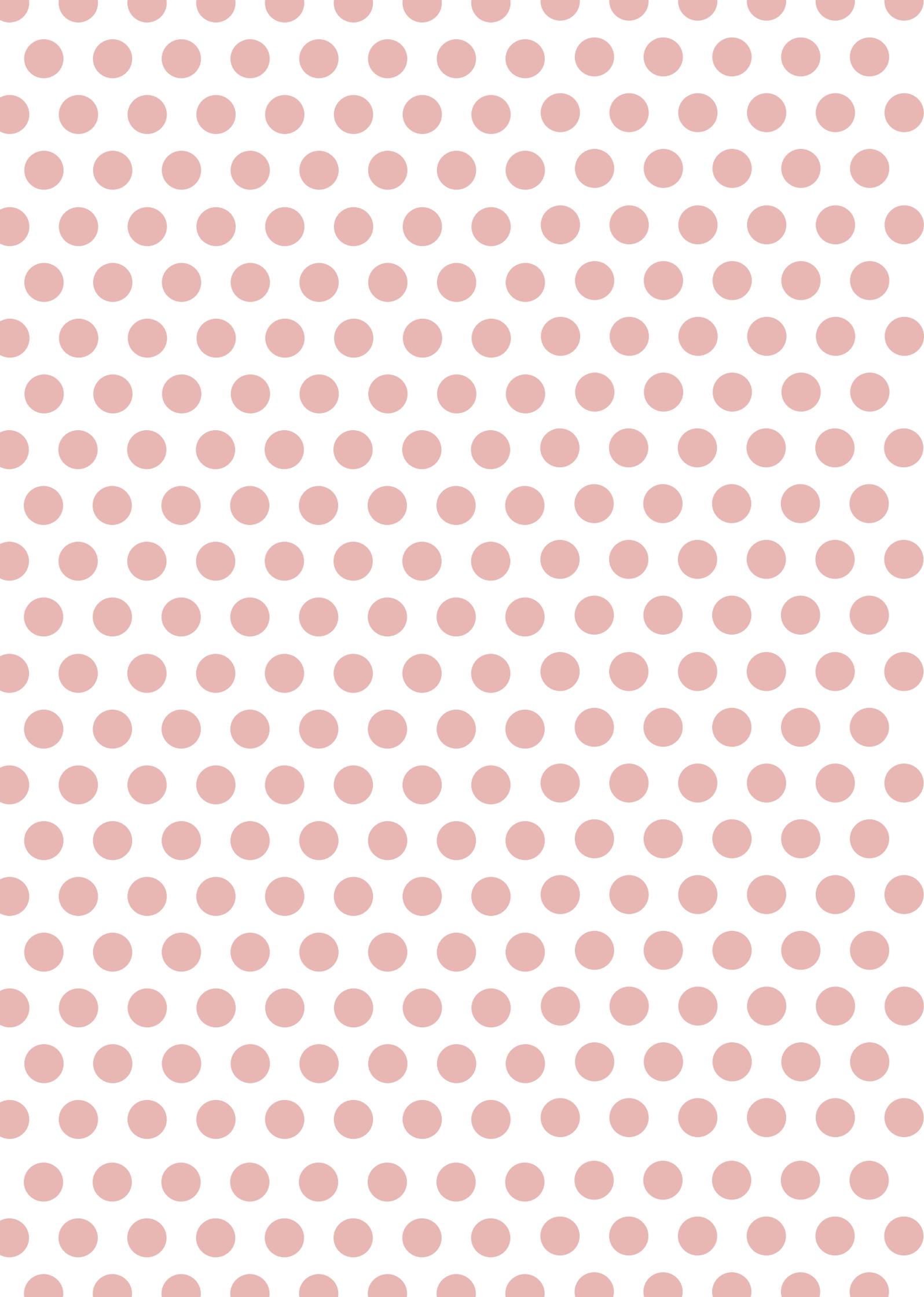




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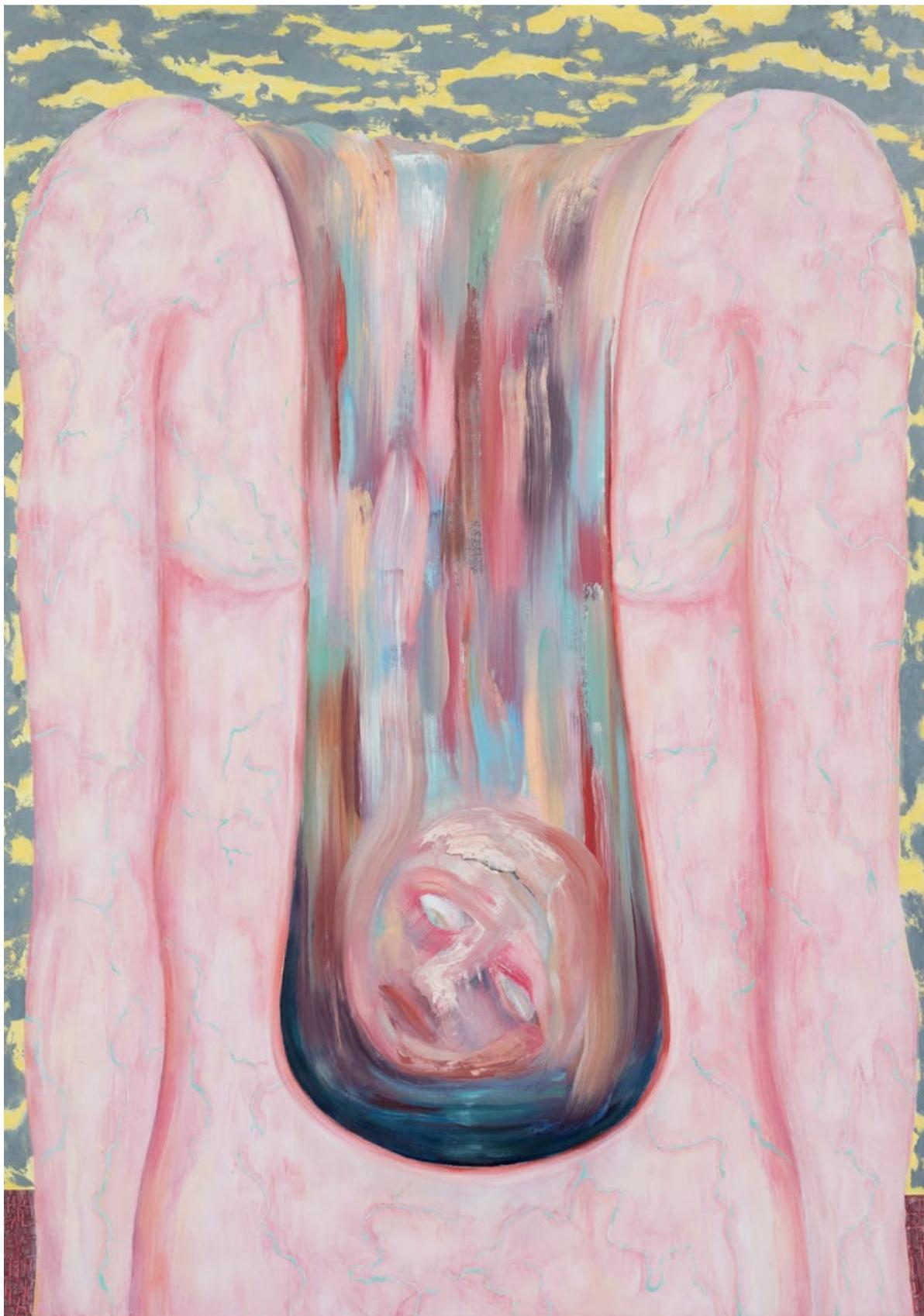
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*Pit, 2024, Oil on canvas, 94 x 66 cm
Photo©BJ Deakin Photography*

Inside Our
Bodies' Memories
and Experiences

with

Jennifer Nieuwland



London based artist Jennifer Nieuwland in her studio, 2024

Hi Jennifer, thanks for doing this interview with us. We start all our interviews with a look into the past - do you remember the first time you got in touch with visual art?

I started making art at a very young age, my mother was a graphic designer and after picking me up from school she would take me back to her studio to work, while I would draw, cut, paint and explore. It was like being in wonderland. I would observe her using exciting tools like the spray gun or the scalpel and I would scour through all sorts of fascinating books on the shelves, from the history of pattern, to the shapes in the human body. These moments of playing and creating with materials allowed me to get lost in my imagination and to understand the magic and power of visual art.

Despite your early passion for art, you went to study Geography and Sociology...

Art was always my passion at school, I was offered a place at Central St Martins when I left. However, I had also met

my offer to read Geography at LSE and decided to do the 'responsible thing' and study there, thinking I could always apply for an art degree later on...

And at what point did you decide to pursue art professionally? I read you earned a MFA from the City and Guilds of London Art School in 2021.

After Uni, I started a career in research that took me travelling around the world. I loved learning about other cultures and using my languages. While I always had a sketchbook with me and kept up a little painting, my job took up most of my time. I enjoyed the analytical nature of the work but I felt a distinct lack of creativity and purpose which created a real urge to explore what was important to me. I finally realised after having kids that I should pursue my passion for painting, by that point I was also financially more stable. I left my career and took up painting full-time.

I started developing a body of work and applied for an MA in Fine Art at CGLAS, which is one of the few art colleges

in London that consider painters on their potential (at that point I was completely self-taught). It was one of the most rewarding things I've ever done; I went through a steep learning curve and there were massive shifts in my work, I also had to dig deep within myself and unearth what was lying dormant.

“A lightbulb moment for me was realising how form, colour, shape and mark could embody meaning, this truly opened up a world of possibilities for me.”

Your work revolves around navigating the weirdness and vulnerability of living in a body. Can you please tell us more about it?

I am interested in exploring the intensity of felt experiences and the intangible sensory register that lies deep within our physical and psychic selves. Ultimately, we are made of flesh and it is through our bodies that we feel, think, move and create meaning with a complexity beyond our conscious understanding. Affective experiences are often hard to verbalise and explain, my work attempts to capture that which cannot be contained by language. I am interested in investigating how a painting can channel the nervous system and how the material can unearth inner states. I take a phenomenological approach to material and process, focusing on the relation of the mind and body in understanding the lived world and how reality acquires meaning through our 'sensed' experience of it. I seek to find a visual language to express the 'invisible forces' that shape us. In my work, meaning can be manifested through metaphor, symbolism and the placement of paint itself.

In a world that is increasingly fractured and dystopic, where levels of anxiety and stress related illnesses are rising, I feel it is increasingly important to bring us closer to a deeper understanding of ourselves, our interiority and the layered, paradoxical and tragicomic experience of living in a body.

How did you get interested in the body-mind relation and the “invisible forces” you just spoke about in the first place? Do you have a personal link to these topics?

The art I find most powerful is one that makes me 'feel' something in the gut, evoking a visceral reaction in me. Affects exist before language and meaning, they are 'felt' but not always easily explained. Susan Sontag, in *Against Interpretation* (2009), argues that the power of art lies in its ability to create an experience on a sensual level. The sensorial, mysterious power of a work of art is what excites me.

My practice is informed by my own experiences of trauma and resulting anxieties. I am interested in the way the body and psyche process emotions and sensations. However, I avoid an explicitly autobiographical narrative. My work can depart from an everyday, direct event like the sensation of pins and needles, a grazed knee or a visit to the opticians or it can reflect on bigger, more layered experiences such as loss, fear and birth. Through formal and material play these personal and implicitly female narratives are disrupted and stripped of their specificity, allowing new universal meanings to emerge.

In *The Body Keeps the Score* Bessel Van Der Kolk argues that trauma de-stabilises the self. It creates a collapse of order in the system of meaning. It is this space of instability that interests me and the heightened and distorted sensed reality that results from this. Intense experiences are 'mapped' in our body, influencing the way we behave and feel things.

“I attempt to excavate these ‘stored’ experiences and their ineffable nature, to evoke a visceral encounter with the world.”

In my work ambiguous bodily forms stretch, distort, nest, shelter, decompose, erupt, emit or suppress energy; seemingly in the clutches of internal and external forces. Poten-



Slope, 2024, Oil and sand on canvas, 95 x 90 cm
Photo©BJ Deakin Photography

tially both architects and victims of the world they inhabit, they sit host-less and centre-stage in elemental, heightened spaces. They are metaphors and symbols of beauty and horror, violence and resilience, vulnerability and strength. The work attempts to create a push and pull effect. It is at once abject, veiny, grotesque, disturbing while simultaneously it can draw the viewer in through luminous pastel hues, smooth textures or a cartoony aesthetic. I've always been drawn to art that makes one feel somewhat uncomfortable, that fascinates and repels simultaneously.

At first my works may appear outward facing, presenting bold, formally considered and dynamic compositions but on closer inspection they draw the viewer into a more intimate journey. Felt experience is embedded in the skin of the paintings, reverberating through the textures, marks, sheens and colours striking different emotional notes...

Let's speak about painting now. I read that you are "interested in the potential of paint to channel the intangible, to encode and activate sensation."

Experiences are 'materially' held in the body so they resonate intuitively with the material of paint. Paint can unlock the 'felt' suggesting new and unexpected ways of expression. I am interested in finding visual analogues for

the unspeakable, to encode and activate sensation. For example, how a nervy scratch can evoke a wounding or soreness, a cakey texture can conjure a sense of heaviness or inertia and an agitated brush mark can reflect a twitching energy. In my work, paint is variously pulled, scratched, dabbed, roughened, flicked, thickened, thinned and so on. I often use gels, sand and other mediums mixed with paint to enhance the haptic and sensory quality of the work.

Through formal and material play, I am seeking to engage the viewer in a dialogue about our interiority. This type of exploration requires time for experimentation and 'play'. For each affective state the material has to act in relation to its specificities, as a result each piece is visually different rather than relying on the same recurring motif. For example, if I am trying to evoke the sensation of pins and needles, I'm exploring how to make the form and the paint 'prickle' and fizz but simultaneously convey numbness. However, a more layered experience such as birth requires a different approach in which the paint needs to conjure ambivalent tensions such as pain and elation or fullness and emptiness.

"Human experiences are complex and often made up of contradictions, paradoxes and tensions, we are never just feeling one thing."

These 'layers' of sensation are embedded in the skin of my work, often fragmenting the canvas into different emotional and symbolic registers. The paint can be sticky, lumpy and scratchy, acting in visceral ways, while in other instances it can be smooth, translucent, quiet, conveying moments of introspection, fragility or comfort. This creates an idiosyncratic and ambiguous language that allows for a layered and charged encounter with the work.

Do you have a favourite piece of your collection of works?

It is hard to pick a favourite! I am particularly satisfied when the sensory is activated. My two recent works 'Co-

coon' and 'A New Dawn' do this in very different ways. 'Cocoon' explores the notion of containment; an insular state, a body shutting down, seeking shelter. Here the figure is embracing what could be a head or an empty space, perhaps a hollow feeling. Its skin is scratched, revealing little red wounds or filaments. It sits solitary, nesting, in a barren, 'internal' landscape where the ground is rough, itchy, dry. Shards of light fall down on the figure, like an illusory rain, injecting a quiet violence. I am happy with the simplicity yet ambiguity of the image and the charged sense of rawness yet beauty here.



*Cocoon, 2024, Oil and Sand on canvas, 90 x 120 cm
Photo©BJ Deakin Photography*

'A New Dawn' investigates the opposite feeling of release, of opening outwards. I intended to convey a sense of empowerment, a 'speaking out'. The totemic, fizzing tongue stands centre-stage, creating a chasm on the picture plane, in a space that elides the internal and external; is it a mouth or perhaps a sunset, a rainbow or a space of anger? The agitated brush marks, emitting cool and warm hues, suggest a vibrating, expanding energy, an elemental heightened space.

Together with other recent works the images tell a story of a journey through moments of pain, self-protection and inwardness to moments of purging, opening up and externalising. Part of my intent is for them to open up a dialogue about what it means to feel and to be human.

A question we always ask is about the creative process. How do you usually get from an idea to the final piece?

All of my work departs from an internal state or a bodily memory, I don't use photographs as sources but find inspiration in music, poetry, or novels. Initially, I will access the relevant emotions and sensations and consider how I might depict these feelings. I start playing around with forms and marks in my sketchbook but quite quickly I will turn to my materials and create painted studies on paper. At this point my process is very free, instinctive and playful. Sometimes it can get quite messy if I'm using gel mediums or experimenting with materials like, sand, marble dust etc.

As mentioned, because each painting deals with a different inner state, the paint acts accordingly. So, for example, if I'm trying to evoke a subtle sensation of soreness, I may layer and scratch the surface, or if it's a violent sensation the marks may shiver on the canvas and so on. Sometimes the 'solution' comes instinctively, other times I leave my studies for months before I take a look back at them and finally I know what to do!

From these works on paper, I then exert an element of control, thinking about how far I can push the image and the paint... How can I maximise the sensorial aspects? Is the work opening up new layers of meaning or it is too obvious? Is the use of paint exciting or too literal? Are the colours conveying the right mood/s? This will then lead me to think about scale and how to translate the study onto canvas, while retaining its energy and strength. As a result, my work on canvas is more controlled.

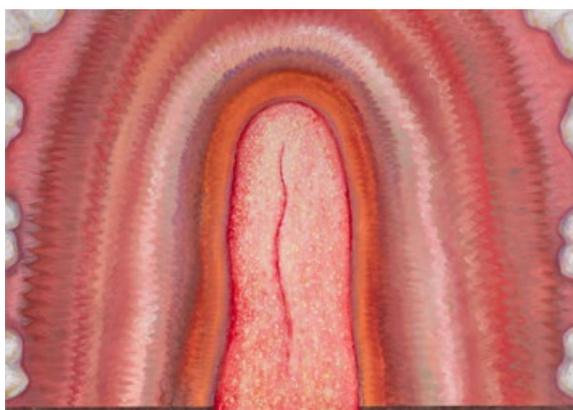
"At this stage, the challenge for me is to find the sweet-spot between the initial moment of freedom and looseness found in the experimental stage and the formal tightness in the final piece."

Painting is a very physical activity, a very hands-on process. Could you put into words how it makes you feel?

When you find yourself in the right zone while painting, the whole world melts away and you are neither fully present or absent. This allows the paint to have agency and you abandon yourself to a symbiotic force. Here time stands still... you can be painting for hours but it feels like minutes have gone by. This generates a feeling of release that can be cathartic and energising.

“Painting takes me back to a child-like state of freedom and instinct that allows me to approach my sometimes dark subject matter with humour and lightness.”

However, painting can be a rollercoaster of emotions. Some days your energy is sapped by other worries or you face a stumbling block in your work, you wrestle and get frustrated with it. But the challenge to find solutions can sometimes push you further in new directions. It is satisfying when you come across an old work you abandoned and you find the key to transforming it, to make it successful.



*A New Dawn, 2024, Oil and sand on canvas, 115 x 111 cm
Photo©BJ Deakin Photography*

Let's have a look behind the scenes now. Who are some of your artistic references and sources of inspiration?

I am inspired by Dana Schutz, Philip Guston, Christina Quarles and Barnaby Furnas amongst others. Philip Guston's work has informed my cartoonish aesthetic and the role of the fragmented figure. His body parts are absurd, sinister, human yet object-like, incomplete yet whole, on the brink of comedy and horror. They generate an uncanny ambiguity between the menacing and the menaced.

With Dana Schutz and Phoebe Unwin, I share an interest in depicting the sensory. Schutz brings to life absurd and affective scenarios such as, 'what it feels like to sneeze'. Through formal play and a cartoony aesthetic she depicts that which resists representation. Unwin captures the ineffable through a more ethereal aesthetic.

With Barnaby Furnas and Christina Quarles, I share a drive for experimentation through form and medium to convey a body centred anxiety. Their material use heightens and distorts the reading of their work, disrupting its apparent simplicity. I'm inspired by the way they harness paint's illusory potential and materiality.

And let's wrap our conversation up with five last questions. First, what are you currently working on?

It's been a busy year with a duo show at Liminal Gallery and various group shows. I also recently completed a residency at Xenia Creative Retreat this summer, where I started my new body of work exploring ideas of containment and release. The residency was a magical experience which reignited my belief in my practice and inspired fertile territory for development. I am continuing to work on the series and I am hoping to show the work next year.

Any piece of advice that has served you that you'd like to pass on to fellow emerging artists, especially to those just starting out in their career?

Keep your integrity, don't try to pander to current trends/tastes in the art world, as this will dilute your work. Al-

ways allow time for experimentation to ensure development in your practice. Build a positive community around you, engage with other artists and galleries as this will provide support and feedback.

Next, please describe your work to a stranger in 3 words.

Bold, Sensory, Layered

**Please complete the following sentence:
I believe that painting has the power to...**

...evoke the ineffable.

And last one: as the year is slowly coming to an end, what are your hopes for 2025?

I hope the world is in better shape in 2025. There is too much turmoil and conflict, anxiety and hardship.

“Sometimes art feels superficial in this context, but I remind myself that art can also be an agent for change, empathy and truth. I plan to keep making art with a healthy, positive and curious attitude.”

Get in touch with Jennifer:

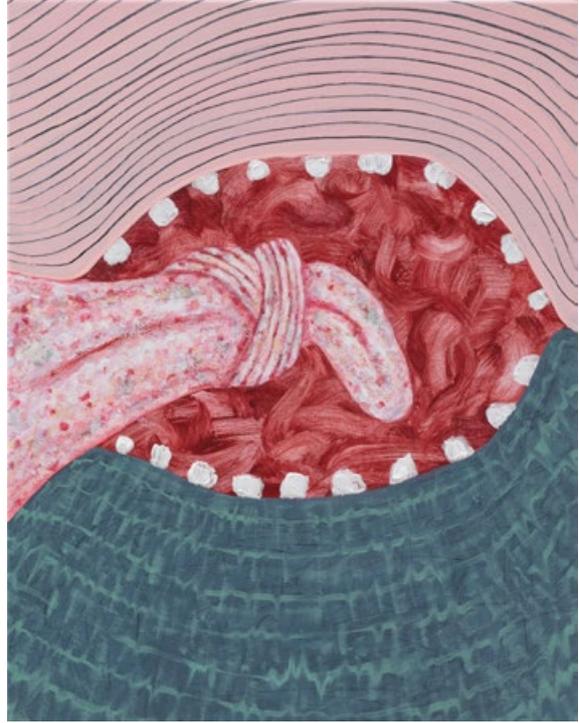
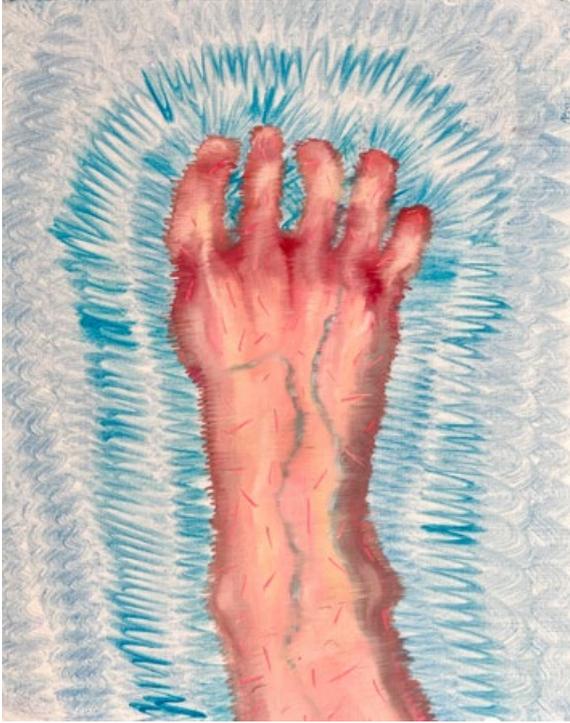
www.jennifernieuwland.com / Instagram: @jennieuwland



*Pins and Needles, 2022, Oil on Canvas, 115 x 85 cm
Photo©BJ Deakin Photography*



*Solace, 2023, Oil on wood panel, 60 x 42 cm
Photo©BJ Deakin Photography*



Up: *Prickly*, 2022, Oil on paper, 40 x 30 cm (left) / *Tongue-tied*, 2024, Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 54 x 42 cm (right)

Down: *Openings*, 2024, Oil, and acrylic on canvas, 117.5 x 150 cm

Photos©BJ Deakin Photography



*Constellations, 2024, Oil and sand on canvas, 95 x 87 cm
Photo©BJ Deakin Photography*

My practice revolves
around exploring the
evolving relationship
between humanity,
technology, and the
environment.

- Daniela Trinkl



*Satoq, 2022, sculpture (polyurethane foam, round string) 135 x 76 x 25 cm
Photo©Joanna Pianka*



Daniela Trinkl

On Blurring Lines, Technology and Capitalism



Austrian artist Daniela Trinkl at *Life's surprise guests*, 2023, exhibition at OHO Offenes Kulturhaus Oberwart, Austria
Left page: Aquatic Alteration, 2023, sculpture (polyurethane foam, hard plastic, acrylic lacquer), 50 x 40 x 35 cm (Photos©Jennifer Vass)

Hi Daniela, it's a pleasure to have you! To start with, let's go back to where it all started. What were your beginnings in the arts?

Thank you for having me! I've always expressed myself through art. It started when I was a little kid, I was always drawing. When you are a child, you still have the ability to get connected to your art in a way that you lose as an adult, or at least I find it very difficult to get back to. As a kid when you are drawing for example, you are part of the drawing, you live in the drawing. I remember I also used to sing while doing it, it was a meditative, very creative, carefree act in which I could immerse myself and lose myself in a positive way. Later, when I was a teenager, all my exercise books were full of doodles and the walls of my room at home were also full of drawings. So expressing myself visually has always been in me.

You hold a Bachelor degree in Art History from the University of Vienna and a Master's degree in Sculptural Conceptions from the University of Art and Industrial Design in Linz, Austria. Was it always clear to you that you wanted to become an artist or was there a specific moment in your life when you made that decision?

Yes, it was always in me and I always wanted to do it, but it took a while before I practiced it professionally. When I left school, I found myself disappointed by the way our world operates, shaped by values driven largely by the demands of the prevailing economic system resulting in systemic inequalities. I initially found it hard to find my place in it in a way that reflected my own values. First I chose a social profession to contribute to a fairer society. However, as a creative person, I soon realized that I was missing something essential. So it was only a matter of time before

I made art my profession. This step was indeed a decision, it was a kind of necessity, I couldn't go on not doing it because it's part of my identity.

Let's speak about your practice now, about your sculptures whose "hybrid appearance opens up a visual language between artificial and alive, alluring and bizarre," as you describe it...

My practice revolves around exploring the evolving relationship between humanity, technology, and the environment, creating sculptures and installations that exist in a hybrid space between the artificial and the organic. In an increasingly technological world, both humans and their surroundings are becoming more synthetic, with everything from nature to living entities being reshaped by artificial forces—a theme often explored in science fiction, a genre I feel very drawn to. By using materials that evoke both organic and synthetic qualities, I aim to create a sense of curiosity and unease. My work reflects on how technology not only transforms human existence but also fundamentally alters the world around us, blurring the lines between the natural and the artificial, the controlled and the uncontrollable.



*Genetic Blossom, 2023 (Photo©Violetta Wakolbinger)
Installation, approx. 170x150 cm per sculpture*

You just mentioned your interest in science fiction and the artificial creation of life, its controllability and uncontrollable, dystopian potential. I wonder if these are topics you have always felt drawn to?

Yes, I guess I've always been drawn to these topics. I read Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* when I was 13 and was fascinated by the disturbing portrayal of a future shaped world by technology and the manipulation of what it means to be human.

"I have always felt intrigued by philosophical and theological issues, especially the question of the place of humans on earth."

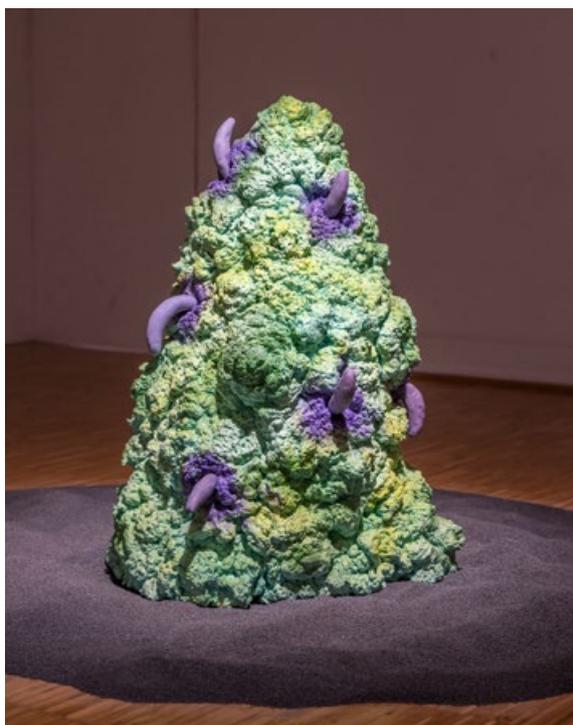
I find the human spirit of creation, particularly in the realm of technology, fascinating but at times also repulsive, especially when it leads to environmental degradation and ethical dilemmas. Our belief that we have domination over this planet is an attitude that has persisted over hundreds of years. I think technology in general has the potential to do great things, but unfortunately is often used for the wrong purposes.

At the beginning of our conversation you mentioned your disappointment with the "way our world operates" and I know you are also very critical of capitalism. How does this critique influence your practice as an artist?

Critique of capitalism resonates on a meta-level in several of my works. For example, in my last project - Genetic Blossom - I dealt with the topic of genetic engineering and its social and ethical implications. This technology is used by large corporations to maximize profits. The aim of my project was to address the question of the controllability of organic life. Do we have control over the technology we are using here, and if not, why is it being used?

You have also engaged with the issue of plastic and the pollution of the world's oceans over the last years...

That's right. This engagement has led to a series of works that explore how synthetic and organic matter intersect, giving rise to entirely new species. My works *Aquatic Alteration* and *Adapt or Perish!*, for example, show hybrid organisms whose genetic material has merged with plastic particles. These pieces are based on the real discovery by researchers that new species have indeed emerged in the Mediterranean, living on the vast amounts of plastic particles in the sea—an unknown fauna that is flooding the oceans in large numbers.



Adapt or Perish!, 2023, 80 x 50 x 45 cm
Sculpture, polyurethane foam, hard plastic, acrylic lacquer
Photo©Jennifer Vass

I'd like to take a moment to talk about sculpture and installation, the technique you work with. What fascinates you about this medium, about working three-dimensionally?

The third dimension came when I did a ceramics course before studying. Working directly with your hands, directly touching the material you are shaping, had such a strong effect on me that I didn't want to give up this experience. Working three-dimensionally has a very strong sensual

component, which in my experience is being lost more and more in our time. During my studies, I wanted to discover new materials and added synthetic materials to my work which aligned with the themes I have been exploring in recent years. The third dimension has a different presence than two-dimensional works. The object is in the room with you, is physically present in three dimensions. Sometimes it feels like giving birth to a new being.

Speaking about giving birth to new beings, what does your creative process look like? And is there any part of it you enjoy especially?

I've always been deeply drawn to materials and I love experimenting with them. This tactile exploration allows me to connect with my ideas on a fundamental level. For the themes that intrigue me, I create numerous sketches to visualize my thoughts and concepts, which helps me clarify my intentions. Apart from the materials I work with, I draw inspiration from various sources, including science fiction movies and literature, scientific knowledge and personal reflections and experiences. Once I have an idea, I engage in extensive research to deepen my understanding of the topic. The part I enjoy most is being in the studio and making the actual work, it's the part when I do already have my vision of the piece and when it comes to life.

In an interview you gave, you said it was not always easy to express yourself freely as an artist on a professional level, because of the art world's judgemental and critical character. What changes would you like to see in the art world?

“I would like to see less emphasis placed on the status of artists in the art world. What matters should be the art.”

To ensure that, I would like to see open calls to be anonymous and without discriminatory age limits and without having to provide a CV. I would also like artistic work to

be better paid and for it to become standard practice to receive exhibition fees. In general, I wished the art world was less driven by networking and connections, allowing the focus to shift more towards the quality and meaning of the artwork itself.

And let's end our conversation with four last questions. First, please complete the following sentence: I believe that art has the power to...

...transcend boundaries and connect people through shared experiences and emotions.

When you are the viewer and not the author of a work, what are you looking for in a piece of art?

I look for art that touches me on an emotional and intellectual level. When an artist consciously uses media and materials that correlate with the topic and the piece of art is done in a visually captivating way. I want to feel something like inspiration in the artwork, with a certain urgency or genuinity underlying it, or something like innovation or uniqueness in its execution.

Any advice you'd like to share with fellow emerging artists, especially with those just starting out in their career?

Ask yourself why you make art, this will help you to find your way on the artistic journey.

And last question, what are your hopes for the future?

I hope that the political situation in my country and around the world will change for the better and that we will move towards safer times. I hope that the divisions in our society will come to an end and that we will return to a common spirit!

“Personally, I strive to continue evolving as an artist, allowing myself to grow through the process, while creating a space for others to resonate with my work.”

Get in touch with Daniela: www.danielatrinkl.com
Instagram: @daniela.trinkl



Genetic Blossom, 2023
Installation (polyurethane foam, infrared light, basalt sand)
approx. 170x150 cm per sculpture
Photo©Violetta Wakolbinger



Life's surprise guests, 2023
Exhibition at OHO Offenes Kulturhaus Oberwart, Austria
Photo©Jennifer Vass

*Right page: Mámá, 2021, sculpture (polyurethane foam), 85 x 75 x 25 cm,
Page 22: Phalynx, 2022, sculpture (polyurethane foam, hard plastic), 88 x 57 x 20 cm
Page 23: Nurture me!, 2022, sculpture (polyurethane foam), 50 x 30 x 50 cm*

Photos©Joanna Pianka

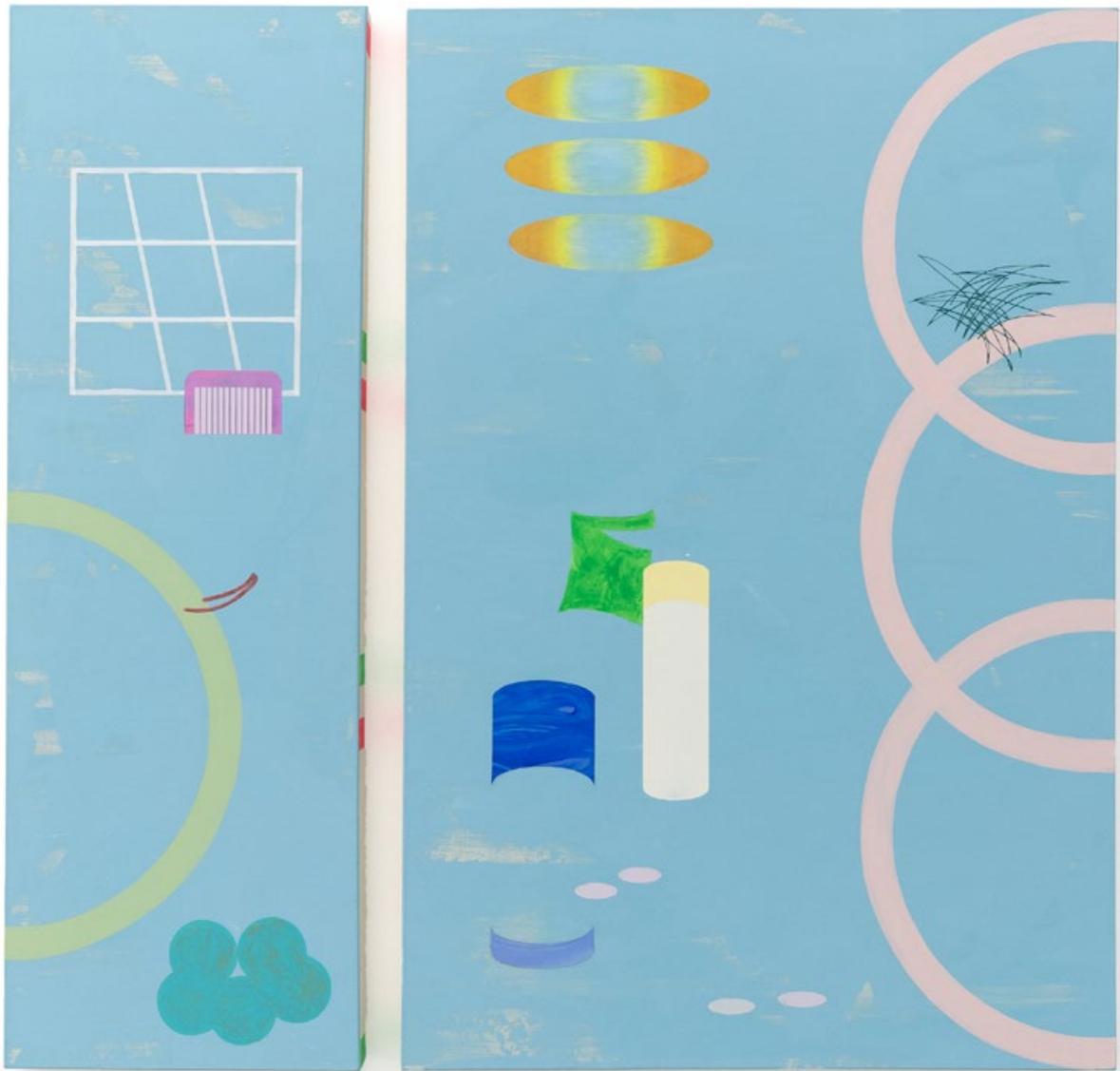






For me, the canvas becomes a space to capture and reflect desires and encounters from the everyday world, blending the ordinary with the imaginative.

- Brubey Hu



One At A Time, 2022
Acrylic Painting, 42 x 14 in & 42 x 28 in

Brubey Hu

On Memory, Home, and The Domestic Space



Chinese artist Brubey Hu currently lives and works in Toronto, Canada

Hi Brubey, thank you for taking your time to answer our questions. Before speaking about your work, we'd like to get to know you better. When did you first get in touch with visual art and what was your path towards becoming a professional artist?

Thank you for having me! I was fortunate to grow up with access to the internet and Photoshop, which allowed me to explore visual arts and design in a virtual space. However, at the time, I didn't consider pursuing visual arts as a career due to the heavy academic workload in public school in China. After moving to Canada for high school, I found myself with more free time outside of school and decided to formally study drawing and painting. This led me to pursue undergraduate studies at the Maryland Institute College of Art and later, graduate studies in studio art at the University of Waterloo. While I took many digital design courses, I always found myself returning to the tactile

experience of paint and canvas. There's something about the act of painting that evokes unspeakable poetics and subtle nuances that digital work can't replicate. For me, the canvas becomes a space to capture and reflect desires and encounters from the everyday world, blending the ordinary with the imaginative.

I read your work is deeply influenced by your interest in architecture; other common themes are the domestic space, identities, memory and the mundane. Can you please tell us more about your practice?

Of course! My practice is deeply intertwined with the mundane, architectural spaces, memory, and translation. Having moved frequently throughout my 20s—born in Xiamen, China, moving to Vancouver, Canada for high school, then to the United States for undergrad, and now living in Toronto for the past four years—this constant reloca-

tion has been both exhausting and reflective. It has driven me to question the notion of home. How is my perception shaped by the architectural structures around me? Is home defined by physical space, or by my personal attachments and belongings? What does a domestic space represent for me when I no longer have physical access to it?

“The canvas provides a two-dimensional space where I can visually explore these questions.”

My process involves deconstructing and reconstructing physical spaces and objects from both memory and real life, distilling traces of kinship and fleeting everyday moments. This allows me to reflect on the in-between state of living across multiple dwellings, capturing the feeling of transience and displacement.

Furthermore, my work reflects the aphasic state that many transnational immigrants endure while adapting to unfamiliar cultural landscapes. This aphasia not only evokes the frustration of illegibility but also sharpens one’s sensitivity to both material and spiritual surroundings. The act of painting often becomes manifestations of these feelings and situations. The titles of my works offer a glimpse into these narratives, inviting viewers to speculate and weave



Islands of Departure, 2023
Acrylic Painting, 48 x 20 in & 48 x 42 in

their own realities and imaginations into the visual story. My work serves as both a personal reflection and an open dialogue on the concept of home and belonging in a constantly shifting state.

A selection of your pieces was exhibited earlier this year under the name “Islands of Departure” at Zalucky Contemporary in Toronto. Can you please tell us more about this series and the name you chose for the exhibition?

One of the exhibited paintings, *Islands of Departure*, shares its name with the exhibition and is a diptych depicting the bathroom structures and objects in my parents’ home in Vancouver. I spent the first few months of 2023 there alone, as my parents had returned to China following the deaths of my grandparents. I had been very close to them since childhood, but due to the pandemic, I hadn’t seen them in four years.

“They lost their lives to COVID-19. It is the collective grief that many people experienced during the pandemic.”

I completed this painting during an artist residency at the School of Visual Arts (SVA). During a studio visit, someone pointed out that two shapes in the painting resembled coffins—an observation I hadn’t made myself, as they were intended to be shampoo bottles. Similarly, the pink bracket shapes were meant to represent closet handles in the bathroom. Brackets, linguistically, often enclose thoughts not spoken aloud, ideas that remain unexpressed. The more I reflected on these bracket shapes, the more they came to symbolize the things I never got to say to my grandparents. I regret not FaceTiming with them more while they were alive. Painting this piece became a means for me to process my grief and recollect the memories I hold dear. During a studio visit, someone also noted that the composition resembled a cluster of small islands. My hometown, Xiamen, is an island city, and my grandparents migrated there from other regions when they were young. Now, living away from my hometown has become increasingly familiar to me.



Thresholds, 2024
Acrylic Painting, 18 x 36 & 30 x 36 in

The word “island” holds a deep resonance for me, symbolizing both drifting and migrating from one place to another.

The paintings in my exhibition, *Islands of Departure*, function as individual islands within the gallery space—each containing its own story and evoking an abstract architectural space. The notion of “departure” reflects my personal experience of migration, living in a constant state of bidding farewell to places, objects, and people. These works explore the layered emotions tied to both physical and emotional departures, creating a visual dialogue about movement and memory.

I'd like to talk a bit more about the characteristic compositions of your pieces. The way in which you allocate the different elements on the surface has something graphic and analytical to it. Is that something you have consciously been searching for or would you say it might come from your background in Graphic Design?

I cannot deny that my undergraduate education in Graphic Design has greatly influenced the formal decisions I make in my work. I begin with digital sketches in Illustrator, which allows for quick and inexpensive experimentation with shapes, colour palettes, and composition. The motifs emerge from my ongoing observation of objects, mundane residues, and architectural structures, as well as the actions and inner dialogues of everyday life. These elements are intuitively composed, reflecting my state of being through painterly gestures rendered by my hands using a tapping knife and/or airbrushes.

The paintings distill physical sites and objects into a two-dimensional plane, embedding memory and familial connections into abstract visual compositions. Through subtraction, the works become transcribed responses to my surroundings, creating space for ambiguity and imagination due to the absence of explicit information. Each viewer engages with the paintings differently based on their own experiences, which, to me, act as mediators for reciprocal dialogues. Oscillating between premeditation and improvisation, I compose and deconstruct the spaces and objects around me, seeking to capture the nuanced visual poetics that emerge from the residues of the everyday.

The edges of my diptychs are partially painted in bright colours, casting soft-edged reflections onto the wall. These two separate panels, integrated into one unified painting, physically echo the duality of disconnection and connection—an experience I continually navigate in a transnational context. Despite their distinct physicality and differing contents, the panels are perceived as a cohesive whole, with the reflections subtly linking them in a way that remains ambiguous. These reflections also shift slightly with different lighting conditions, which to me serves as a metaphor for the process of adaptation.

“Ultimately, my work explores the interplay between structure and fluidity, and the metaphorical space in between.”

I really like your colour palette and the use of plain colours on larger areas within the composition of your pieces. Do you choose the colours consciously or is that more of an intuitive process?

Choosing a colour palette is largely an intuitive process for me. Working in a digital space allows for more efficient experimentation with colour combinations, minimizing wasted paint. After exploring options virtually, I translate the digital colours into acrylic paint, adding various mediums to achieve different textures. I strive for balanced contrast with subtlety in my work. Recently, I began incorporating airbrush techniques, which help me create smooth gradients. Neon colours, with their ability to cast vivid reflections, have become a key element, especially along the edges, in the background, and occasionally on the front surface to draw emphasis. The background is often painted with a bright colour and then layered with a contrasting tone applied with a taping knife, leaving behind accidental abstract marks—visual utterances that add an expressive, spontaneous quality to the paintings.



Grasp, 2023
Acrylic, Vinyl, and Paper on Plexiglass, 14 x 11 in

Next I'd like to speak about having a day job besides your art practice. It's a reality many artists live in, sometimes with mixed feelings. What is your relationship with that?

I am fortunate that my day jobs closely align with my art practice. One of my primary roles is teaching an introductory course on digital media at the University of Waterloo.

“I find this work both rewarding and reciprocal, as I am not only imparting knowledge but also constantly learning from my students.”

When troubleshooting issues or exploring creative solutions with them, I sometimes need to research new techniques to provide the best support. This continual exchange sharpens my own skills and keeps me engaged with evolving technologies. Teaching has also improved my public speaking, helping me feel more comfortable articulating my ideas and discussing my work with greater clarity. In many ways, my teaching practice complements my artistic process, fostering both technical and personal growth.

A look into the future before we wrap up with a few last questions. Is there any upcoming project you'd like to speak about, any plans for the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025?

Recently, I started my second graduate studies in Feminism and Gender Studies, and I have been doing more research on domestic labour. Every second of existence in this material world entails production and consumption, perpetually generating forms of detritus such as dust, sweat, food scraps, hair, wastewater, clutter, and empty containers. Domestic labour, fundamentally a task of care aimed at sustaining well-being, requires a series of mental and physical actions: planning, classifying, memorizing, moving, collecting, and arranging. Despite its ubiquity across households, the division of domestic labour has historically been marked by gender asymmetry. In heteropatriarchal settings, many homemakers across gender



Run and Hide, 2024
Acrylic Painting, 44 x 42 in & 44 x 22 in

spectrums are devalued because perpetual housework is associated with unproductive labour. Even today, many contemporary women with day jobs are still expected to bear the responsibilities of childcare and housework.

Through multimedia installations—encompassing paintings, sculptures, videos, and texts—I aim to expand my visual language by employing objects commonly found in domestic spaces, specifically in Chinese diasporic households. For those of us who dedicate ourselves to maintaining clean and orderly homes, domestic space becomes a repertoire of reproductive knowledge, involving caregiving, food and clothes management, organizing, planning, and manual labour.

My intention is to reinterpret the household discards—typically viewed as waste—by transforming them into sculptures that carry rich material implications, alongside household items like cleaning supplies and tools. Many people describe housework as a Sisyphean task in our lives. To confront this perpetual reality, I plan to incorporate looping videos that emphasize its repetitive nature. This process not only challenges heteropatriarchal norms but also reimagines the conventionally anxious and pessimistic attitudes toward housework, transforming it into a space of recognition and celebration.

I also attempt to capture the thoughts and feelings that arise during housework and embed them into the artworks. The seemingly mundane words, murmurs, and daydreams that surface while performing housework—often dismissed as meaningless or illogical—are, through their incorporation into the artwork, transformed into representations of the overlooked realities of daily life. In doing so, these works highlight the microhistories and ongoing struggles for social reproduction. I hope to gather more research through interviews and secondary literature in the coming months, and begin executing the artworks in the studio in the new year.

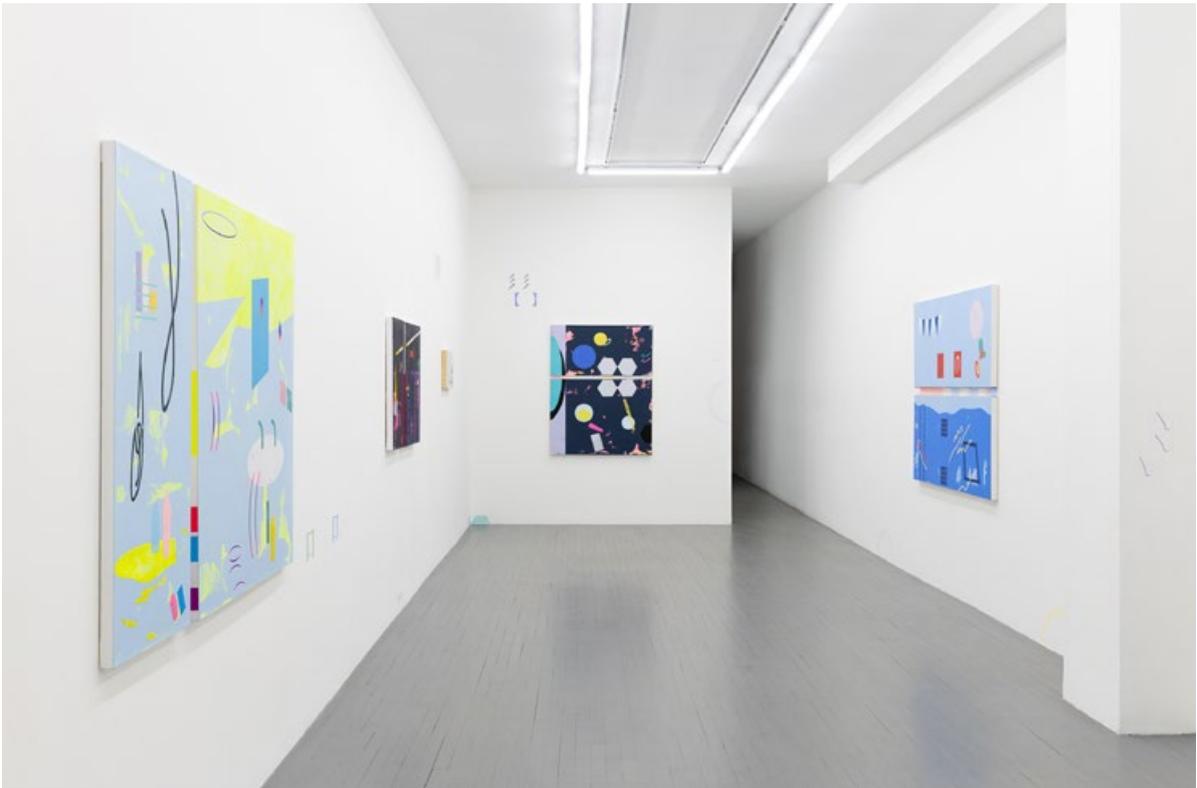
And two last questions to bring our conversation to a closure. First, are there any fellow emerging artists you'd like to recommend?

Yes, I'd like to recommend Philip Ocampo, Ye Cheng, Peishan Huang, and Tyler Matheson.

And last question, if you had to describe your work in only one word, what would that be?

Reverie.

*Get in touch with Brubey: brubeyhu.com
Instagram: @brubeyhu*



Islands of Departure, 2024, Exhibition View
Zalucky Contemporary, Toronto, Canada
Photos by Em Moor





Leftovers and Euphemism, 2022, Acrylic Painting, 20 x 40 in & 30 x 40 in

Left page: BRBK, 2022, Acrylic Painting, 24 x 60 each (up)
Perplex, 2022, Acrylic on Plexiglass, 12 x 12 in (left) / Wafing, 2022, Acrylic on Plexiglass, 12 x 12 in (right)

The female gender symbol emphasizes body language and identity beyond physical appearance. It's a commentary on the essence of femininity, exploring representation beyond societal expectations.

- Wande Oseni



At Ease, 2021
Acrylic on canvas, 30 by 30 inches



Exploring The
Essence of
Femininity

with

Wande Oseni



Nigerian artist Wande Oseni lives and works in Lagos

Hello Wande, it's a pleasure to have you! We start all our interviews with a little time travel – do you remember the first time you created something?

Yes, I do! I remember my first drawings as a child, often inspired by animations and comics. They were so impressive, and those early sketches filled me with a sense of wonder and happiness in recreating as many as I could.

Afterwards, how did your interest in art evolve and what was your path towards becoming a professional artist?

My interest in art deepened through exposure to different art styles and techniques as I grew older. I began studying as much as I could via books and YouTube and engaging with creative friends and a few local artists, which solidified my commitment to pursuing art.

Your paintings depict women in different settings and positions, and one of the characteristics of your pieces is that you substitute the women's heads with the symbol

for the female gender. Can you please tell us more about your work?

For me as a woman and artist, the quote by Frida Kahlo, "I am the person I know best. I paint my own reality," captures the essence of my paintings often depicting women in different settings. I choose to substitute their heads with the female gender symbol to emphasize body language and identity beyond physical appearance. It's a commentary on the essence of femininity, exploring how women are represented beyond societal expectations.

When did you first start to incorporate the symbol for the female gender in your work and how did it come about?

I first used the female gender symbol in my work during a particularly introspective moment in 2020, with the thought to highlight body language after realizing that often, women are reduced to just their physical looks and facial expressions. The use of the symbol serves as a powerful representation of their identity and strength.

I'd like to know a bit more about your painting, 'Wherever I go, I meet myself,' (p.41) especially about the mirror in it. Does it have a special meaning?

The piece portrays a woman in front of a mirror setting, embodying self-reflection and understanding. The mirror in the painting symbolizes an introspection and self-acceptance state.

Let's talk about painting now, your technique of choice. What fascinates you about painting, what does it offer you that other techniques can't? And could you put into words how paintings makes you feel?

Painting allows me the exploration of color and textures that other mediums don't offer. The layering process feels like gradually bringing a thought to life, building a narrative, giving me space to experiment and express my emotions boldly. Creating a painting brings me a deep sense of connection, freedom and release. It's like translating feelings into a visual creation, offering both solace and happiness.

Speaking about painting, what does your creative process look like? And is there any part of the process you enjoy especially?

My creative process begins with sketching ideas usually digitally, often inspired by experiences and words. I typically work on one piece at a time, which can take anywhere from a few days to weeks. I especially enjoy watching the piece come to life from the initial stages to layering process and the last brush strokes.

You live in Lagos, Nigeria. How is life as an emerging artist for you there in terms of opportunities and work related routines?

Life as an emerging artist in Lagos Nigeria is vibrant and cool yet challenging as the art scene here is dynamic, filled with opportunities with more exhibitions and events planned for spotlighting arts but there are hurdles in terms of resources and visibility. My routine involves studio time, networking, and participating in local exhibitions when possible.

And let's wrap up with a five last questions. First, what have you been interested in or inspired by lately?

I have always been inspired by books and films that explore female narratives and resilience of women with my recent favorites being Cho Nam-Joo's "Kim Ji-young, Born 1982", Alex Michaelides's "The Silent Patient" and Min Jin-Lee's "Pachinko." They offer fresh expressions and perspectives that resonate with my artistic themes.

If there was only one thing that people could take away from your work, what would you want that to be?

I want people to take away the idea that femininity is multifaceted and diverse. It's about identity, strength, and the collective experiences of women.

Any fellow emerging artists you'd like to recommend?

I recommend following artists like David "Kaydee" Otaru, Chidinma Nnoli, Sunkanmi Akinsanmi, Oni Balogun and Adulphina. Their works are unique and innovative.

What are you currently working on and is there any upcoming event you'd like to give shout out?

Currently, I'm working on stand-alone concepts that explore the idea of femininity across different professions, aiming to highlight the focus and unique narratives often overlooked. As for upcoming events, I'm excited about the upcoming ArtXLagos exhibition and others that focus on women's stories, aiming to create a dialogue around their experiences.

And finally, please complete the following sentence:

I believe that art has the power to...

...spark discussions, foster empathy among people and transcend boundaries.

*Get in touch with Wande
on Instagram: @wandenirvana*





At Home, 2022, Acrylic on canvas, 30 by 30 inches

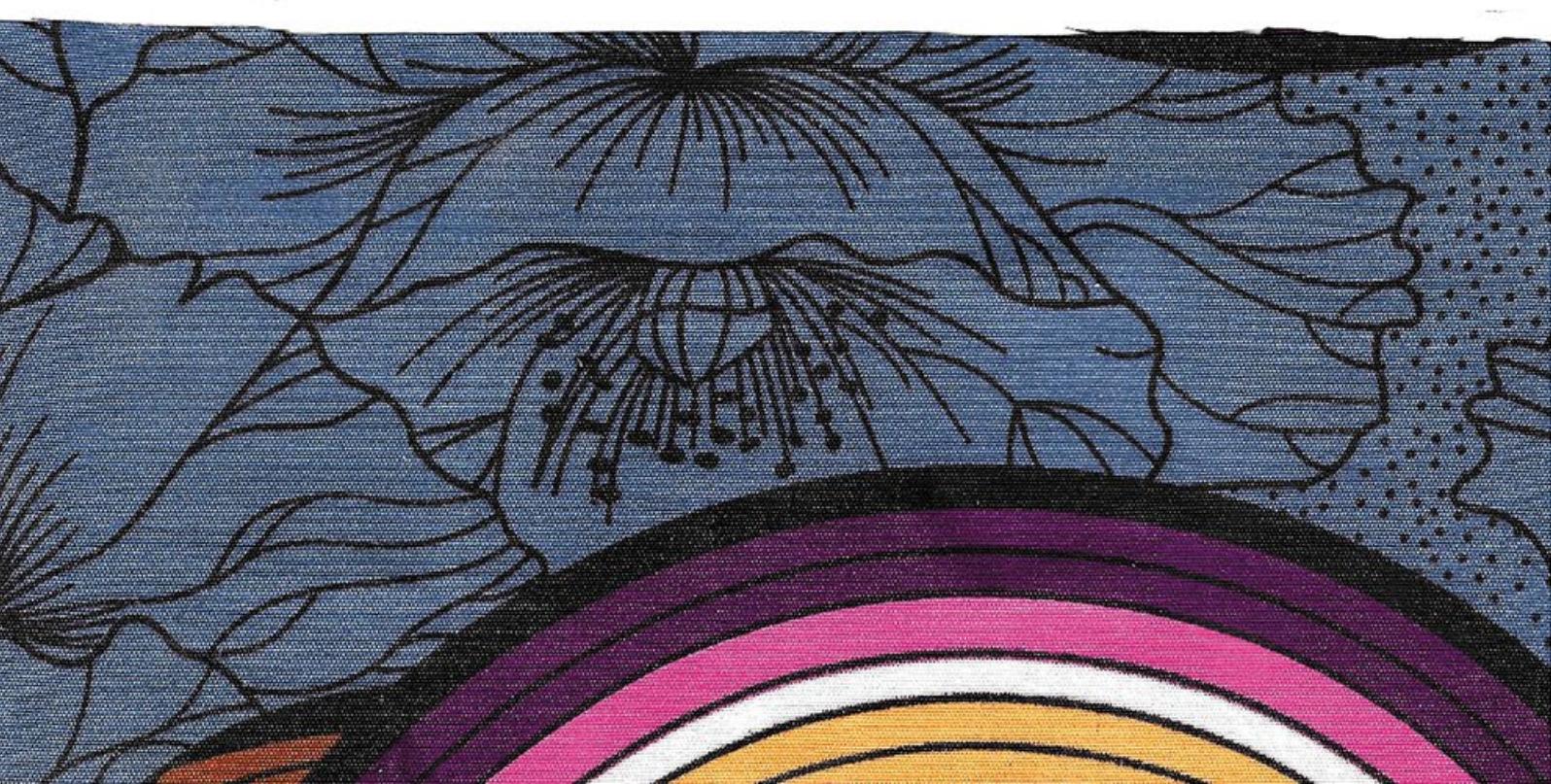
Page 39:

Like A Lotus, 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 32 by 42 inches



Wherever I Go I meet myself, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 32 by 32 inches

Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a list or a series of names, with colorful scribbles and flourishes in blue, purple, and yellow. The text is partially obscured by these markings.



The lack of inhibition
that children display is
awe-inspiring to me.

There is so much to
gain from being able
to express yourself
creatively.

– SOMA

Left page: Carrier III - Encouragement, 2022

Next page: Carrier IX - Repair, 2023

Both works: Mixed Media on Paper, 21 x 30 cm

Supper

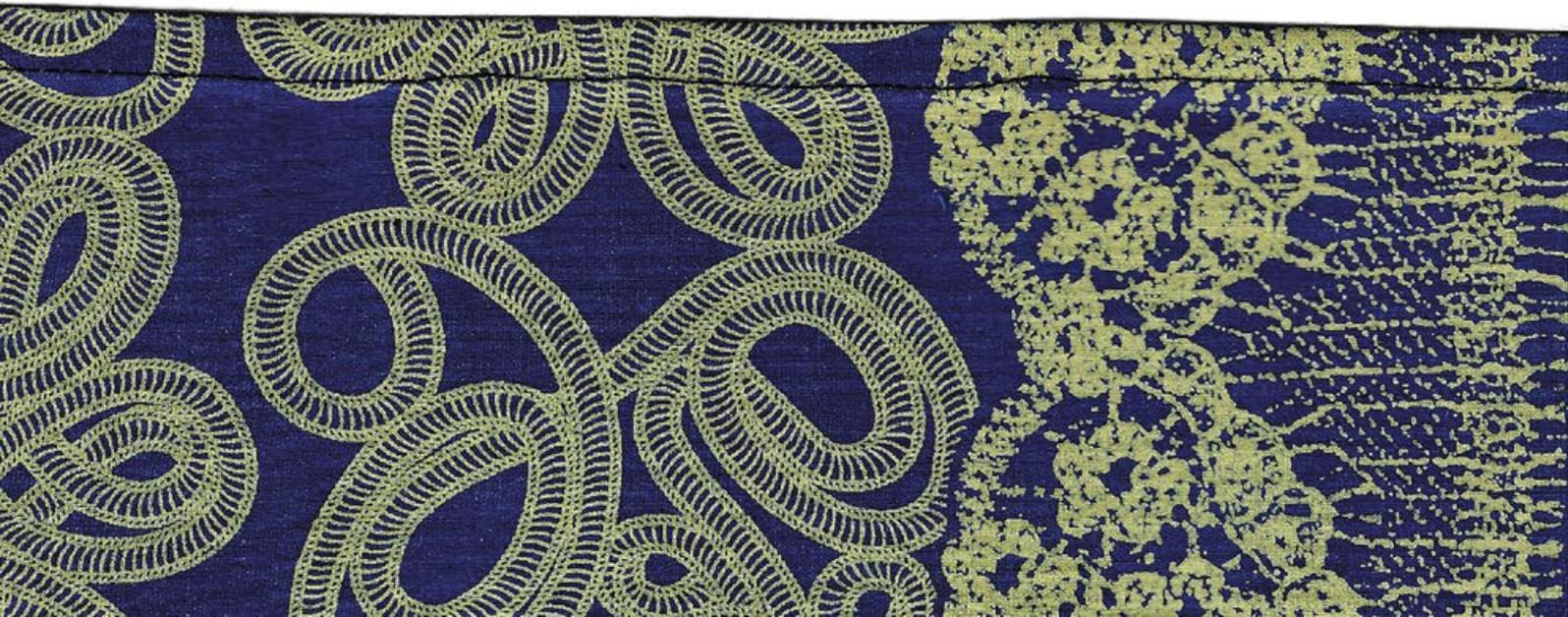
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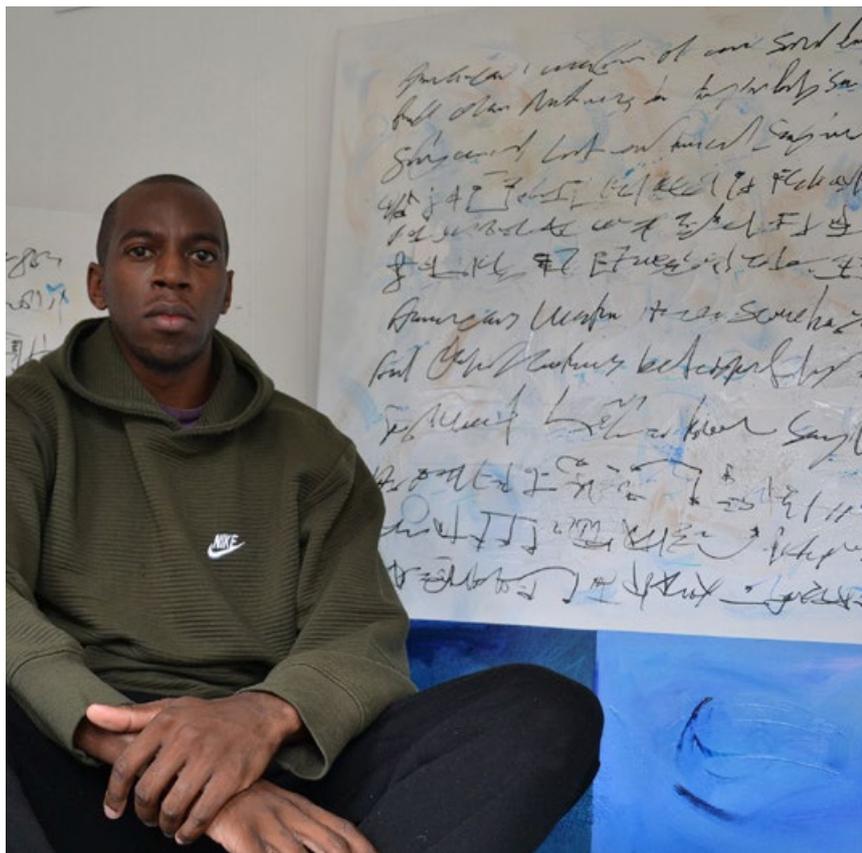
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Making Sense
Of the World
Through
Playful Art

with

SOMA



English artist SOMA in his studio in London, UK

Hello SOMA, thank you for doing this interview with us. Let's start with a look into the past - what were your beginnings in the arts? Was that during childhood?

Yes, my beginnings with art definitely go back to childhood. I've always enjoyed being creative, whether through visual art, writing raps or poetry. I studied art in school up to 17 years old (A-Levels in the UK) but dropped it in the end due mainly to pressure from my dad to do 'serious' subjects like English and Philosophy. So, I didn't study at art college so am self-taught I guess. At school, art really was one of those subjects that just allowed me to feel free. I'll never forget, I had an art teacher that would often encourage me to be authentic and keep it real, which meant a lot as I was often one of very few Black children in the classroom. Being 7 or 8 years old, those kind of messages were quite important in giving me permission to really take space and express myself in a way that was faithful to who I am.

Before speaking about your work, I'd like to know more about your path towards pursuing art professionally and the influence of your work as a play therapist on it.

After I dropped art in school, I would periodically dip into it from time to time as I went to university and started to work. However, it was after a break up that I used art to build myself up again and found that I was creating art more consistently than before. I was working on stuff pretty much every day and after some time, I decided to explore exhibiting my work. I ended up applying for a small local exhibition on an estate in North London and really enjoyed the dialogue that came with showcasing my work. Since then, I've been steadily continuing to develop my practice. Much of this has coincided with my journey into play therapy training where I was learning about the language of play and creative expression for children and how art can be used to give meaning to things that are ineffable or hard to give words to.



Sweetest Oranges, 2022
Mixed Media on Paper, 21 x 30 cm

You aim to “capture that playful spirit of childhood” in your work and you also incorporate symbols from your own childhood in your pieces. Can you please tell us more about the influence of children on your practice and about your work in general?

There’s a quote from Plato where he says that “you can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.” One of the main tenets of play therapy is that play is the child’s language. It is how they make sense of the world around them.

“Over the years as I’ve worked with children or just been around young ones as they create art, you can just see the magic of making marks.”

When I first started taking my practice more seriously, I used to create more figurative and neo-expressionist work. Then when Covid hit, my practice slowed and I took a bit of a hiatus. I’m not sure why but I just knew that I wanted to do something different when I did start making art again. And in that soul searching, I went back to observing and watching one of my great inspirations; children! I watched as they scribbled, with a beautiful mix of freedom and concentration and just knew that I had to incorporate this into my practice. The lack of inhibition that children display is awe-inspiring to me. It saddens me that this gets grounded out of us as we get older as there is so much to gain from being able to express yourself creatively. There is a quote from George Bernard Shaw that “we don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.” That’s the spirit I’m searching for in my practice.

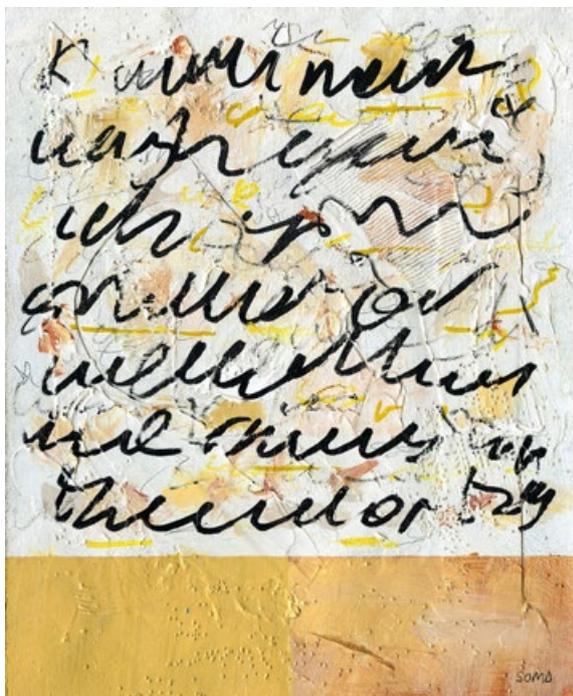
I re-read about artistic development and the stage of controlled scribbling that children go through when they start to develop more muscle control and greater fine motor skills. This stage is characterised by more organised and purposeful mark making with children learning that their marks can have meaning.

“I was so compelled by this that I started to play around with scribbles as if being back in that controlled scribbling stage, trying to make sense of the world around me.”

Later, I also discovered asemic writing which is a hybrid art form consisting of lines that appear to form words but that are without specific meaning. In this process, I am playing a game of tug of war between order and randomness. With too much order, I’m simply writing words and too much randomness leads me to abstract design. With asemic writing, I’m searching for that balance and harmony between the two – a script that isn’t writing or an alphabet without specific characters. It’s a lot of fun to play with.

“The themes in my work come from what I see in the therapy space.”

The way that children and families are able to delve into the past inspires me to reflect on my own story and symbols which have significance for me. It's often like pulling a thread once I start exploring an idea. It might be lyrics from a song which I see with new meaning now that I'm more mature. I have a whole series based on the song New World Water by Yasiin Bey (formerly Mos Def) which explores our relationship to water, this element that we all need for survival but has also become a commodity and something that we misuse and hoard in some cases. Rappers are truly skilled at being able to weave stories into a couple of bars. Sometimes two lines from a song can take me down a rabbit hole trying to make sense of what the artist is trying to communicate and then settling on my own interpretation of those lines, which might also change over time.



Lion & Mouse, 2022
Mixed Media on Paper, 25 x 30 cm

I also did a series about quotes from The Simpsons cartoons, which was probably my favourite TV show growing up. There is no doubt that the writers for that show are geniuses. What sticks out to me are the one-liners or apparently insignificant jokes which resonate to the therapy work I do, or my quest to understand more the human condition. For example, I have a piece called *Don't People Usually Breathe?* which is something that Homer Simpson says when he discovers that a man he was in a steak eating contest with had died shortly after defeating him. How we use breath is something that comes up a lot in my therapy practice, particularly thinking about how we regulate our bodies and manage stress. Hence the relationship for me between the quote and what I spend most days talking about.

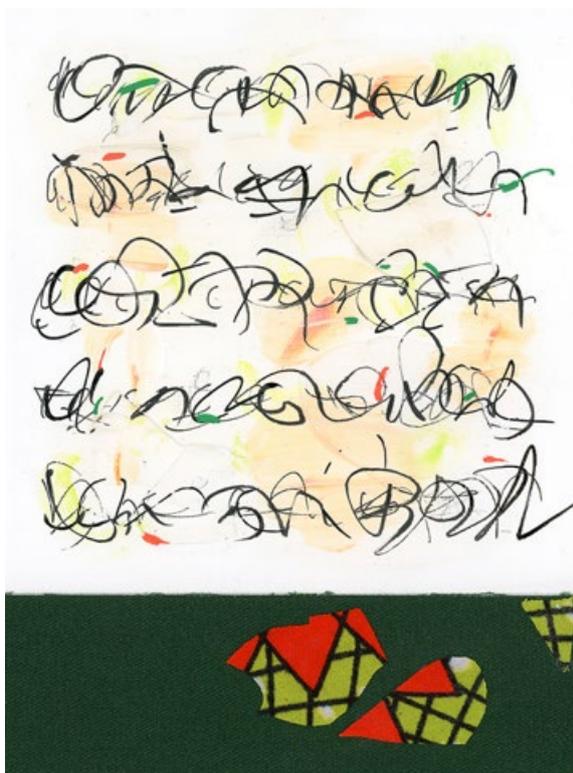
“I also play with other symbols from the play therapy toolkit and general therapy orbit.”

For example I have a collection called Carrier which is inspired by attachment theory and the templates we develop around close relationships. I have pieces around stories and games that I use in my therapy practice so there's a natural flow between the therapy that I facilitate and my own experiences and wonderings about the world.

You create mixed media paintings, incorporating paints, paper, and writings into your work. What fascinates you about working with these different mediums and how do you usually go about creating your pieces?

Working with mixed media feels inevitable. In the play therapy toolkit, there are a variety of mediums that one can use such as sand, miniatures, music, art, writing, storytelling, plus many more. And this can all come together to be the playground for expression and healing. My art practice is somewhat similar in that I like to use paint, I like to incorporate scribbles and asemic writing, I like to collage and I like to use fabric, pencils, markers and crayons, a little bit of everything. In non-directive play

therapy, the client leads the process and chooses what they want to use from the toolkit with the underlying principle being that we have an internal drive towards wellness and ultimately know what we need to get better. In some ways, my pull towards using a variety of mediums is similar. I'm just using what feels right.



Carrier XIV - Wrap, 2024
Mixed Media on Canvas, 13 x 18 cm

Usually, I'll have a theme in mind when I start a piece. There might be a quote or lines from a song or idea that I'm taken by and I'm meditating on what colours or motifs this theme brings up for me. Sometimes there is further reading about a theme. For example, I might check out other interpretations, how this theme is symbolised in other contexts and take inspiration from that.

I'm often working on a few pieces at a time so it's a bit of a dance between all of them. Lots of short, sharp bursts of putting something on the canvas, lots of pauses, before more bursts and more pauses and so on. It generally just tends to evolve in a rhythm. I mostly make work that is

quite expressive from a tactile perspective so I'll be using modelling paste and whatever items I have laying around to create some interesting textures. That might be palette knives, combs or random bits of cardboard. It gives the process another dimension which I quite enjoy. I've also found a lot of enjoyment mixing acrylics with house paint. I like to be quite liberal with finding nice base colours before the details start to come in.

The scribbles or asemic writing tends to come at the end. It's like the main event in some way. It's the bit which tends to dictate how much I resonate with a piece or not. In some ways there's a lot of pressure but I've got pretty comfortable (in art, therapy and life) with being able to surf and not see things as 'mistakes' but just interesting stuff that happens. Ultimately, if a piece doesn't come out the way I imagine in my head, it is what it is. I haven't hurt anyone, the world will go on, and if anything, it can make for interesting reflections on my inner life and the expectations I place on myself.

Is there any piece or series you'd like to speak about more in detail?

I mentioned the Carrier series a bit earlier which is a collection of works inspired by attachment theory. This theory is all about the templates we develop for close relationships based on our experiences of bonding with our primary caregiver(s). Back when I was doing more figurative work, I had made a painting called Carrier which depicted a mother carrying a child in a wrap. While browsing through old works, this painting caught my eye so I decided to revisit the theme as it was coinciding with attachment theory becoming more of a focus in my therapeutic work.

“For these pieces, I settled on using traditional West African fabrics that my mum had shared with me. As my first attachment figure and a huge inspiration for me, it felt right to integrate this part of my story into the works.”

The series focuses on various elements of an attachment relationship. For example, Carrier III: Encouragement is an appreciation for all the confidence and encouragement that my mum has and continues to give me. Carrier IX: Repair centres on the theme of repair in parent-child relationships and how important it is for adults to take the lead in re-connecting with their child after a rupture. Carrier XIV: Wrap is an homage to that original painting which sparked the series. Baby wraps have become very popular in the west over the past 50 years or so but in African cultures, they've been using them forever; having that touch and close contact with babies and infants, learning their cues and mimicking a womb-like space.

“I find that I am periodically adding to this collection as ideas continue to flow so I look forward to building on this theme over time.”

Creating your pieces must be a very physical and process-driven experience. Could you put into words how it makes you feel?

There is a feeling of release when I make the work. It can be incredibly satisfying seeing something start in your head to being a finished piece. It certainly is a physical experience for me and the process is much more important than the end product. I tend to work on the floor rather than an easel. I think easels are a bit too formal for me, plus when I work with children, I spend most of the time on the floor anyways so I'm used to it. I'll often have music on; some jazz, hip hop, soul, whatever tickles me. So there is often a lot of dancing, singing and rapping as I'm making. I dig that kind of environment and it definitely adds something energetically I feel to the work. Sometimes it feels like the art happens in between all the other stuff. A bit like therapy, often the work happens in between the actual therapy sessions.

Our conversation is coming to an end, so I have six last questions for you. First, are you currently working on

something you'd like to share with us and our readers?

I always have ideas floating around for new collections and themes to explore in my work so I look forward to that developing over time. I recently signed with an art agency called Artiq which I'm really excited about and hoping to branch out some more with collaborative work. I'm also exploring ideas for workshops, particularly integrating sound therapy which is another area that I'm interested in so watch this space.

If there was only one thing people could take away from your work, what would you want that to be?

That's a tough question as there is so much that I hope people can take away from my work. I guess one thing that would be important for me is recognising the importance of meaning-making. And that the way we make meaning of things can dictate how we see the world and engage



Practice, 2022
Mixed Media on Paper, 21 x 30 cm

in it. Something that might be clear to one person won't make any sense to someone else. No-one can see the world through your eyes and in that sense we're all just trying to figure ourselves and each other out. Curiosity is such a wonderful gift if we're willing to embrace it.

Next, please describe your work in three words.

Instinctive, lyrical and mysterious.

Any fellow emerging artists you'd like to recommend?

I really dig the work of Marina Jimenez. She has an amazing energy so check her out at marinajimenezart.com. I also want to shout out the work of BSP. She is also a musician and has a really fascinating story: <https://bspworld.shop>. Thirdly, I want to shine a light on Courtenay Kusitor, a beautiful abstract artist also with a captivating story. You can see more of her stuff at courtenaykusitorart.com.

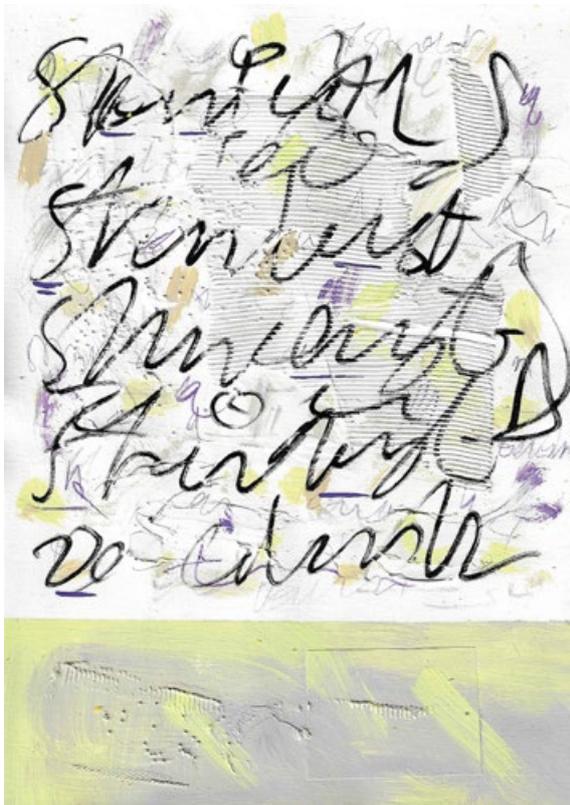
Any advice you've been given that you'd like to pass on to fellow creatives?

Someone is interested in everything. There will be people out there who resonate with you, your art, your message and your story. This planet is too big and too diverse for that not to be the case. So find your tribe, cultivate, engage and you'll find your way.

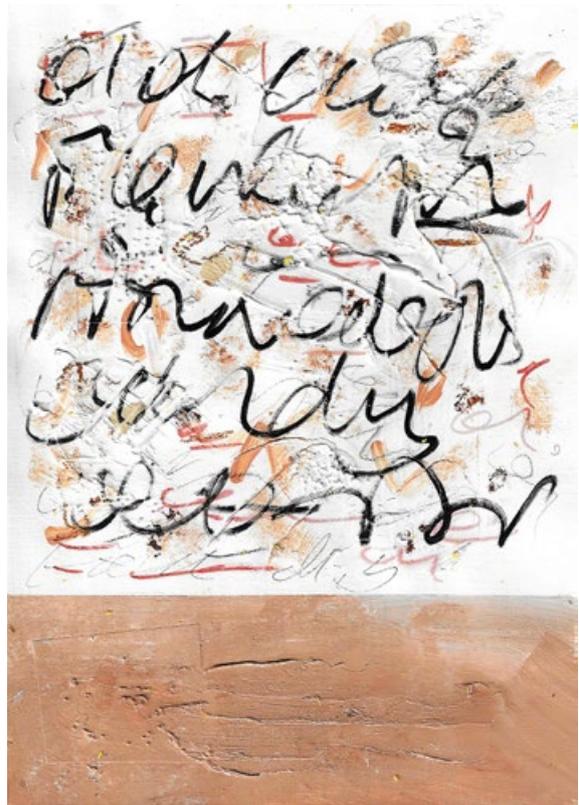
And last question, what are your hopes for the future?

There's that famous quote from Picasso that "every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up." My hope for the future is that I never lose my urge to be creative. Whether that is through my art practice or any other creative endeavours, I hope this never leaves me as I can't picture my life without creativity. Anything else that happens after that as far as my artistic practice would be a nice bonus.

Get in touch with SOMA: www.somatheartist.com
Instagram: @somatheartist



Far Away, 2022
Mixed Media on Paper, 21 x 30 cm



The Dig, 2022, Mixed Media on Paper, 21 x 30 cm
Piggy-Back, 2022, Mixed Media on Paper, 21 x 30 cm
(right page)

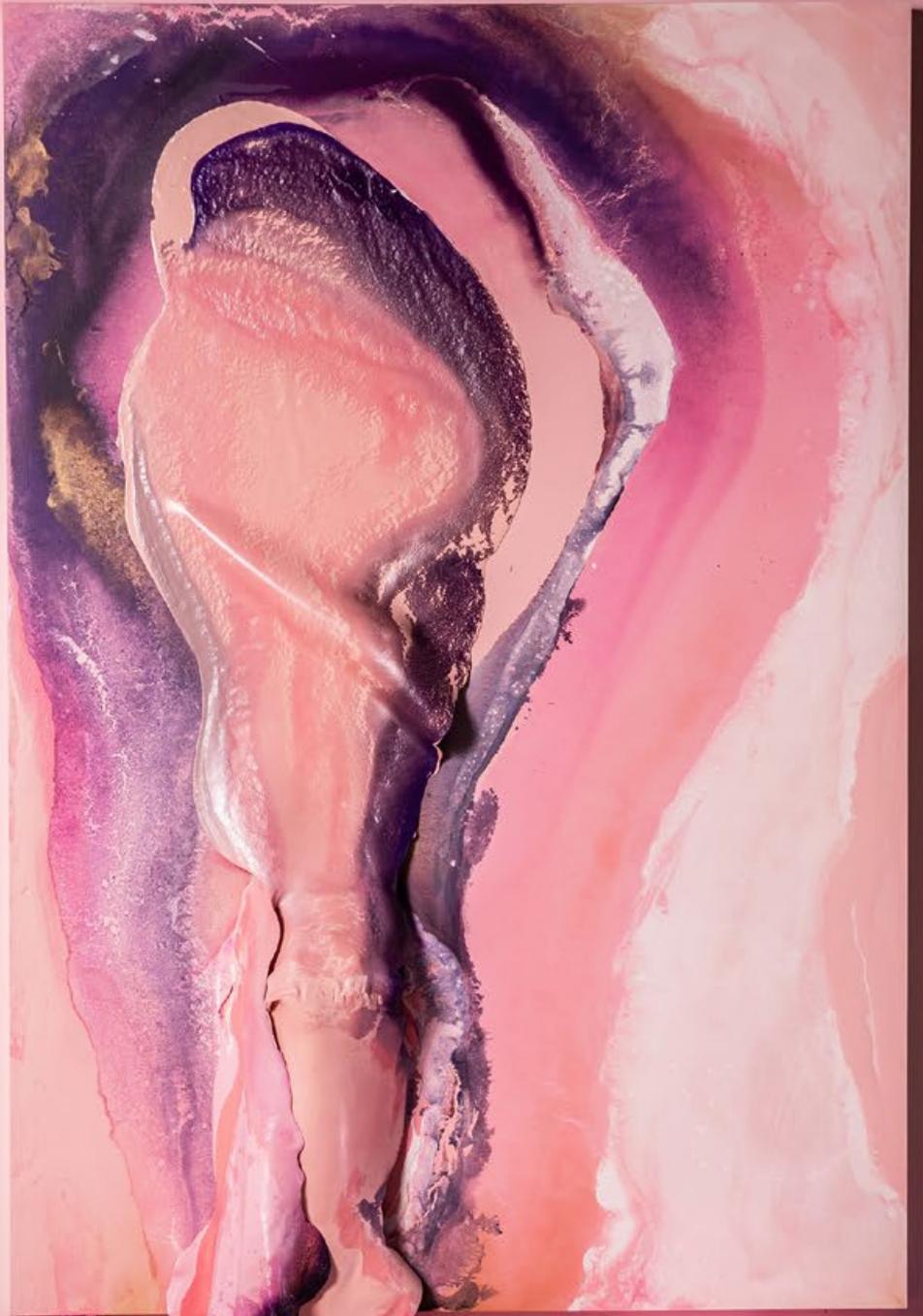
Handwritten text in a cursive script, heavily obscured by pink, yellow, and black scribbles and paint strokes. The text is arranged in approximately five lines, though the words are illegible due to the dense, overlapping marks. The background of this section is white with scattered pink and yellow brushstrokes.



It's very empowering to create large scale paintings that require physical labor. My pouring process invites the participation of my entire body, which helps me connect to the artwork on a deeper level.

– Renee Phillips

*Right page: Pink Drip, 2023
Latex Polyurethane Spray Paint, Installation, 60 x 92 inch*



On the Materiality of
Color and the
Signature
Effect

with

Renee Phillips

Renee Phillips in her studio in West Palm Beach, FL



Hi Renee, thanks for taking your time to answer our questions. We always start our interviews with a look at where it all began - do you remember the first time you got in touch with visual art or created something?

I vividly remember as a young girl, maybe 7 or 8 years old, carrying around my sketchbook filled with original drawings of otherworldly sea creatures. I remember creating very odd, colorful, funny deep sea creatures and feeling a strong connection to each one. I eventually lost this journal on a family trip and remember a part of my imaginative spirit going with it.

How did your interest in art evolve from there and what was your path towards pursuing art professionally?

I continued to pursue art throughout school and graduated with a degree in Fine Art from the University of Miami, FL, but my heart was no longer in it and I didn't have any original ideas or inspirations to pull from. I decided to move

to NYC to pursue business and landed a job with WIRED Magazine, at Conde Nast, where I worked for 7 years in the publishing industry. While it was a fun and energetic career path, my heart again led me in a new direction, and in 2009, my husband and I quit our jobs to travel the world. It was on these adventures, mostly through Southeast Asia and France, that I received my first jolt of original inspiration to create again.

You describe yourself as a process-based artist and work with the layering of color and manipulation of paint. Can you please tell us more about your practice?

When I decided in 2010 to pursue art, I was determined to develop my own authentic visual language. I found an art studio and a part time job, and gave myself permission to explore new ideas and alchemical techniques without the financial strain of having to make money from my art. My Dad was a veterinarian and scientist, so turning the art studio into a science lab felt like a natural evolution dur-

ing this time. Mixing colors, testing different paint types and mediums, altering viscosity levels, then manipulating those materials with the elements of wind, water or heat – every mixture, manipulation and test was noted in my color journal. After some years of working on an energetic paint alchemy series called “Controlled Chaos” I had a desire to slow down my thinking. I began to study just one color at a time, choosing latex paint as my material. I noticed that each hue had a specific dry time, some 4 hours, some 10 hours, which allowed me to manipulate the paint at a specific point during its curing process.

“By using gravity to tilt the curing paint, or wind to move the paint in a certain direction, each color revealed a unique sculptural effect.”

I call this the “signature effect” of color. For instance, white gave me these sensuous, lush ripples, while dark green would slide down the canvas in an undulating droop, pooling off of the surface.

You just mentioned that after your initial period of exploring alchemical techniques you decided to study one colour at a time. I’m curious to learn more about that...

When I discovered that each color had a unique textural characteristic and visual story to tell, I began my now decade long study into the materiality of color. When I study each color individually, I do so on small 8 x 10 inch wood panels I call “Meditation Studies”. With these color studies, I sit and watch paint dry for hours, noting pour time, tilt time, temperature and humidity levels. All of these factors help determine the paints manipulation timing, or when I can use gravity to tilt the canvas at various degrees to let the paint sculpt itself into form. Upon determining what the color wants to do...droop, ripple, crack, etc, I can then begin my color layering process onto larger wood panels. Sometimes the additional element of spray paint is layered onto the curing latex, or the reductive act of power sanding is employed to reveal previous layers. I have continued to push my experiments with latex paint and its

textural capabilities; creating paint skins, resin and latex sculptures, and playing with various finishes from flat to high gloss which result in different textural effects. For years I have been saving my latex paint scraps, peeling them out of pour buckets and stacking them alongside my work table. To give these color scraps agency, I reincorporated them back into my paintings. “Paint Specimens” displays 3 years worth of hoarded latex paint scraps onto the wood panel surface, elevating the raw latex color as a painting.

One of our favorite questions is about the creative process. Where do you find inspiration for your pieces and is there any part of the process you especially enjoy?

When it comes to inspiration, I am a seeker. I actively seek out inspiration through travel, meditative walking and hiking in nature. This Summer I travelled through Arizona, Utah and Colorado, hiking daily and sitting on many rocks to contemplate. I found myself drawn into the horizon line of color changes that occur at sunrise and sunset. The glow that emanates across the sky and reflects off of water at a slightly different hue. My camera roll from this Summer is filled with sunsets, water reflections and layers of rock. A specific meditative moment I experienced at 5:30am on a lake in Colorado, has seared into my memory and ignited a



*Meditation Studies
Process and Colors*

new collection of work that I am actively working on in the studio. It is about states of being as it relates to paint and material transitions, as well as mental states of being. I am attempting to capture moments of transition with color, light and material. I love the creative problem solving aspect of art making. The next step makes itself known only when it wants to and it can't be forced.

“This unspoken conversation with my artwork is my favorite part. That, and the experimentation of materials of course!”

The way you create your pieces is such a physical process. Could you put into words how it makes you feel?

It is very empowering to create large scale paintings that require physical labor - pouring gallons of latex paint makes each painting very heavy, while spraying thin veils of spray paint is more of a dance around the canvas. My pouring process invites the participation of my entire body, which helps me connect to the artwork on a deeper level.

A piece I'd like to know more about is “Earth Body.” How did it come to life?

“Earth Body” was a piece I created over a 3 year span as I was working through some new alchemical techniques and developing my layering process. The piece was inspired by the “Overview Effect” which is described as a profound shift in cognitive perspective when viewing Earth from above, one that leads to a deep sense of connection to the planet and humanity; a theory I was studying during this time. (There is an excellent documentary film on the Overview Effect on YouTube - it's a short 20 minute film.)

Due to the painting size of 60 x 72 inch, and the heavy weight the poured latex paint, it was created entirely on the floor of my art studio, so I had a unique perspective of looking down on the painting as well. As I began to solidify certain techniques, from my latex pours to spray paint

reticulation effects, I would layer my learned experiment onto “Earth Body”. The layers began to reveal years of learned alchemical technique, like the geology of time and process in my art studio, so the piece took on an entirely new meaning beyond the “Overview Effect”.

You are a lover of colors, they play one of the most important roles in your work. Do you have a favorite color, and if so, which one?

I love jewel tones. I find they create a seductive inquiry for exploration with my color layering process, and viewing. I do seem to always have a deep blue-green color available, a color reminiscent of a peacock feather.

Your studio is located in West Palm Beach, FL. How is life for you as an artist there? What are some of the opportunities, and challenges?

I relocated from NYC to Florida in 2019 after we had our daughter, Olive. We wanted to be closer to our family, and enjoy more time outdoors. It has been an incredible experience.



*Earth Body, 2018
Enamel Spray Paint Acrylic Gesso, 60 x 72 inch*

rience to see the art community in South Florida flourish over the past few years.

“There are so many talented, open-minded artists that want to connect and grow, explore the natural world and just make good art!”

I have a great community of inspired artists here that I did not have in NYC. I found that I spent a lot of my time in NYC alone in my studio. The art world, post-pandemic, is a different landscape. It's more open minded, not as judgmental about where you create. With that said, I love New York and need to keep my finger on the pulse, so I take an inspiration trip to NYC quarterly. It fills my cup just enough, and then I can happily create artwork in Florida with more space and fresh air.

And let's wrap up with four last questions. First, when you are the viewer and not the author of the work. What is it that you are looking for in a piece of artwork?

Presence. I want the artwork to catch my attention in some way that allows me to go on an exploration. I am very drawn to materiality in artwork. From the glue-based creations by Takasada Matsutani, or the poured latex and polyurethane pieces by Lynda Benglis. I find that when color and texture combine, it snaps me into a new mental state that is curious and filled with wonder.

Any advice you'd like to share with fellow artists, especially with those just starting out in their career?

Jerry Saltz, the art critic for New York Magazine, gave a lecture at my School of Visual Arts Painting Residency with advice I still live by. I have riffed off of his advise here.... First, show up every day, even if its totally obscure and is just making a set of “to-do's” at a coffee shop or taking a walk through nature to clear your head. Second, find your community and hold on to them - fuel the community with positivity and inspiration. Third, you only need a few good

collectors or business partners - not everyone needs to like you or your work, but upon finding your select few, make those relationships flourish and let them be the foundation for a steadily growing career. Also, make sure to have a copy of Rick Rubin's book, *The Creative Act*. Highly recommend!

If there was only one thing people could remember from your work, what would you want that to be?

One thing is hard! I want the viewer to feel curious and be present. What they remember is up to them.



Sorbet Strata, 2023
Latex Polyurethane, 24 x 30 inch

And finally, what are your hopes for the future?

I hope my artwork invites more people to explore their curiosity, and find their own unique process, voice and adventure in this life. I chose a path of color and material exploration, and I'm very happy with that decision.

*Get in touch with Renee: www.artistreneePhillips.com
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Paint Specimens, 2022
Latex Paint Scraps, 41 x 55 inch



Color Journal - Photo by Sonya Revell (left) / Paint Specimens Detail (right)
Down: Energy Patterns Water, 2022, Latex Spray Paint, 48 x 60 inch

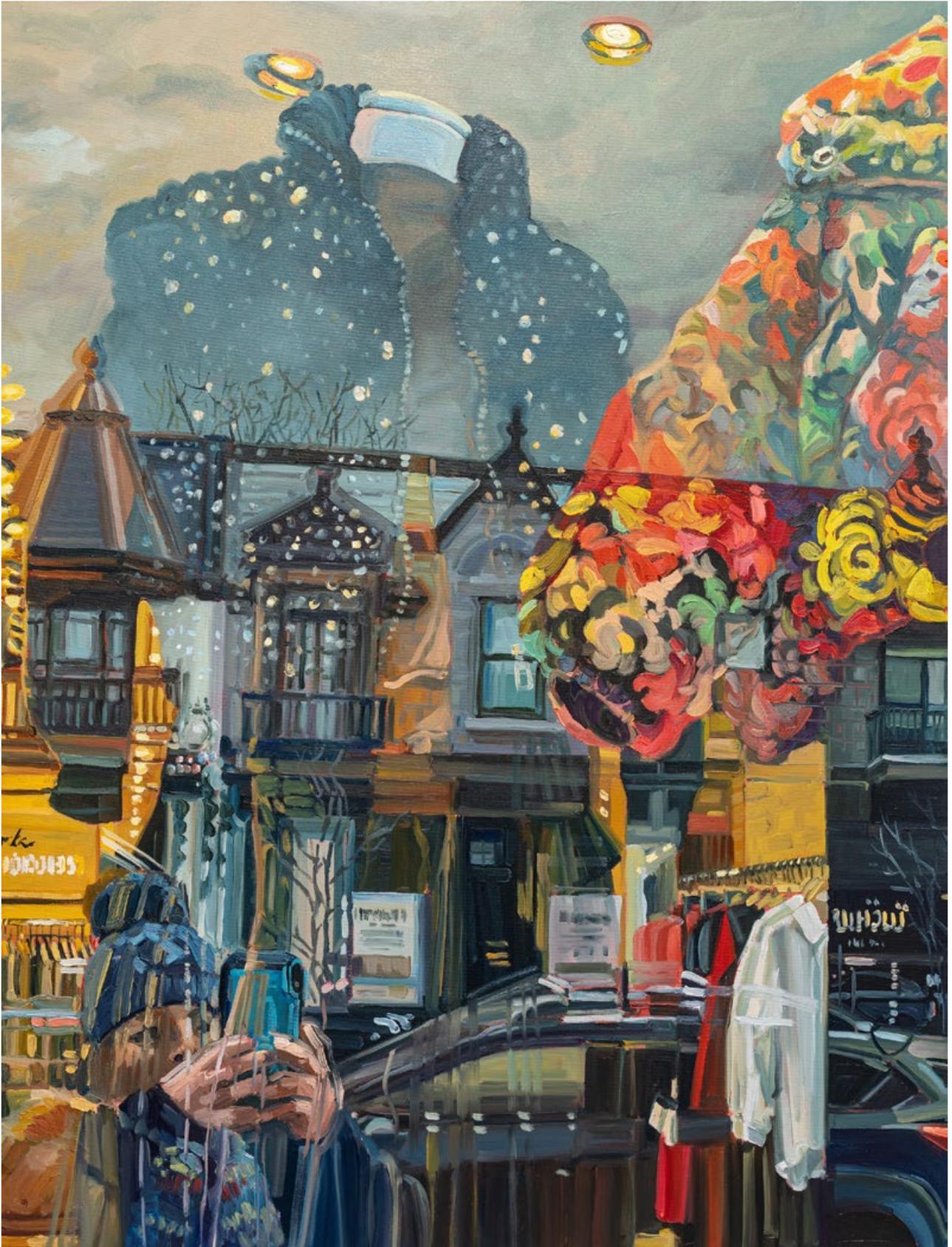
The unspoken
conversation with
my artwork is my
favorite part.

That, and the
experimentation
of materials of course!

- Renee Phillips



Meditation in Grey Green I
Latex Spray Paint, 36 x 48 inch



Shining Brightly, 2023
Oil painting on canvas 30 x 40 inches

Iryna Merkulova

About Iryna

Born in Kyiv, Ukraine, and currently based in Montreal, Iryna Merkulova is a visual artist whose creative journey finds inspiration in the intricate social processes of the modern world, especially within urban environments. Holding a Bachelor of Fine Arts (With Distinction) from Concordia University, Merkulova's artistic exploration spans painting, drawing, and mixed media. She has participated in numerous exhibitions across Canada, receiving generous support from the Canada Council for the Arts and various cultural public organizations.



Blend, 2024
Oil painting on canvas 48 x 36 inches



One Evening Walk, 2023
Oil painting on wood panel 24 x 36 inches

Communal Urban Living & Consumerism

My artistic practice is rooted in the exploration of human interaction with the built environments. Through the observed visuals, I explore the exchange of narratives between public and private spaces. With my paintings of seemingly ordinary everyday objects diffracted through a woman's gaze, I wish to investigate deeper issues related to the sustainability of communal urban living, consumerism, and constant pressure to follow socially pre-determined lifestyle.

I often use personal experience and memories as entry points into my visual narratives. In this way, my work straddles the personal and the interpersonal, creating an open space that challenges and comforts the viewer. My artworks are mainly paintings and drawings; however, I occasionally create mixed-media artworks and videos.

Get in touch with Iryna: irynamekulova.com
Instagram: @irynamek

Denise Felber

In-Between States and Dissolution

In her artistic creations, she likes to experiment with media images from newspapers, television, archives and detaches them from their original context in order to react to the found images in different mixed techniques with painting and printwork. In more recent works, Denise Felber deals with current socio-political issues and realises installations. She is interested in fleeting, temporary moments. Her latest paintings describe a world of in-between states and the process of dissolution. Ephemeral painting that moves processually between the finite and the transcendent. Hopeful and at the same time admonishing.



Ephemer 3, 2024
Mixed media on wood, 60 cm x 40 cm



Ephemer, 2023
Mixed technique on canvas, 60 cm x 60 cm

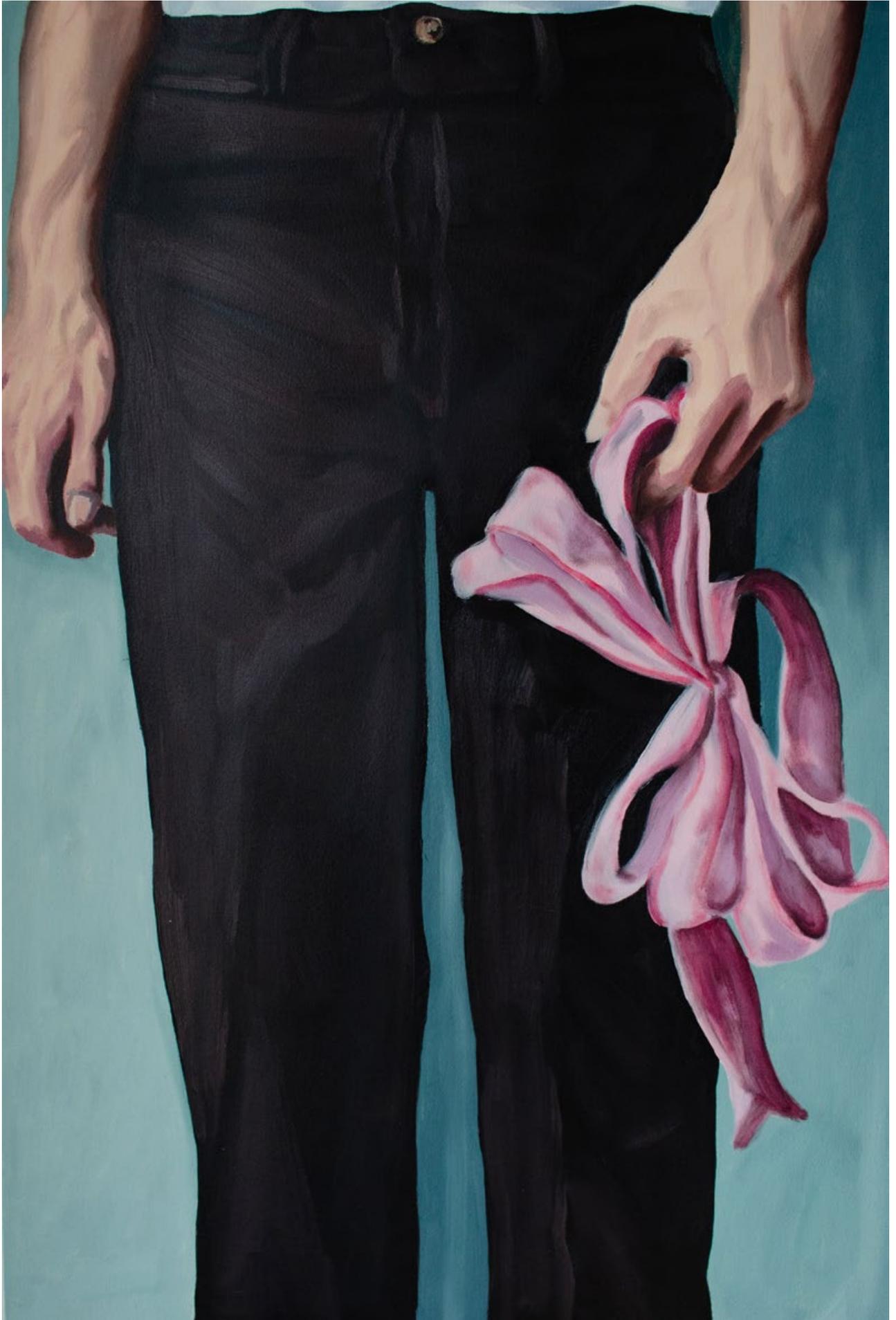
About Denise

Denise Felber *1963 (www.denisefelber.ch) is a Swiss artist with many years of experience in art education. In parallel to journalistic work (e.g. Swiss Television SRF), family work, cultural mediation and teaching as well as voluntary work, Denise Felber realises an independent artistic portfolio, which she has presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions (Museum Franz Gertsch, BE / Kunsthau Steffisburg, BE / Contemporary Art Chronicle, San Francisco / Bundeshaus Bern / Galerie Katapult, Basel etc.). She also attends further education courses at the Bern School of Design and various art studios in Switzerland and abroad (T. Blaess, C. Kochs / E. Lindenbaur / J. Linszen / Prof. Jerry Zeniuk and others).

Get in touch with Denise: www.denisefelber.ch
Instagram: [@denisefelberbern](https://www.instagram.com/denisefelberbern)



*Up: Ephemer 4, 2023, mixed media on canvas, 65 x 45 cm (left) / Ephemer 1, 2023, mixed media on canvas, 90 x 90 cm (right)
Down: Ephemer 5, 2023, mixed media on canvas, 65 x 45 cm (left) / Ephemer 6, 2023, mixed media on canvas, 40 x 30 cm (right)*



Les entrelacs, 2023
Oil on paper, 68,58 x 50,8 cm

Even if I chose to
pursue art over
fashion, my love of
clothes never left me.

It found a way to
merge into my
artistic practice.

- Mikaël Lepage

Painting Outside

The Masculinity

Box

with

Mikaël Lepage

Mikaël Lepage photographed by Anthony Fréchette



Hello Mikaël, it's a pleasure to have you. Let's start with where it all began - what were your beginnings in art?

Hey there! Thanks for having me. I've always had a pen in my hands from as far as I can remember! My grandparents had an old phone book (from back when we still had phone books!) and every time I would visit them, I would scribble a page with tones of little sketches. I was that child that could draw and create endlessly, I lived in my head a lot back then, but I didn't mind it.

I read that you have always been very passionate about fashion and that you had initially intended to work in the fashion industry. Can you please tell us more about your path towards pursuing art professionally and why, in the end, you chose art over fashion?

Art for me was a second nature, but fashion was my first true love. At 10 years old, I made my mom call every maga-

zine shop in town to see if they had the french Vogue magazine. I was particular about wanting the French version because I thought the fashion was much better in it than the American version. I wanted Paris, the couture houses, the big gowns, it was all a dream for me and I wanted to work in that industry so bad, but I soon realized that the reality of this business isn't really all that glamorous and working in the real industry was far from those Parisian couture houses I loved dearly. Meanwhile, I was studying arts in college and seemed to have found a voice of my own. It felt like I was at the right place and that I had a story to tell. Even if I chose to pursue art over fashion, my love of clothes never left me, it found a way to merge into my artistic practice. Instead of creating a garment, I preferred analysing its symbolism through paintings.

And your paintings is what I want to speak about next. You write that "through the medium of painting, I question and attempt to break down the barriers between the

different archetypes of gender representations.” Can you please tell us more about that and your work in general?

When you are a boy and you grow up playing with dolls, reading books, watching movies about fashion and runway shows on the internet, you are made aware very early on that you don't fit into the masculine way of living. The questions about identity presented themselves to me because I was constantly challenging those gender boundaries as a kid, without my knowledge. I was questioning myself about what masculinity is, what femininity is, and why it matters to us to fit into these boxes. These questions became an obsession as I was growing up and they definitely merged into my artistic practice. My work mainly questions the traditional way of gender representation, but through a more personal lens, mine. I challenge masculinity by painting myself wearing clothes and posing in a way that is traditionally associated with being feminine. I guess it's my way of responding to the pressure I felt growing up as a man, while also giving a voice to those who feel like I did back then.

You just mentioned that you mainly paint yourself, self-representation is one of the key elements in your paintings. When did that start?

I've been working with self representation since college. It started out from pure laziness on my part, I didn't want to book people for photoshoots and thought it was just easier to do them myself. Looking back though, I think working with self-portrait was also unconsciously a way to express myself freely.

“In my paintings, I could be whoever I wanted to be. In that sense, creating art was, in a way, my safe place.”

I'd like to speak a bit about the technique of painting. What fascinates you about it, especially about painting with oil paints?

This technique allows me to work slowly, which I love! Not feeling pressured to rush a brushstroke before it dries and being able to just mix colours for hours makes me appreciate the act of painting even more.

Speaking of painting, what does your creative process look like? And what is your favourite part of it?

Lately the process often starts with looking for a special garments in a thrift store. It's like a treasure hunt! Once I find something interesting, I take it home and start conceptualising how to incorporate it into a piece. I'm not one to do sketches really, my main research is through photography. I take a lot of photos from different angles and different positions and then, I choose the one I'd like to recreate in a painting. Research is the longest part of my process. Painting is easy and usually pretty quick in my case, I do most of my paintings over a period of 2 to 4 days. As for my favourite part, I'd say there is a specific mo-



Denue, 2019
Oil on canvas, 121 x 91 cm

ment while you're painting when suddenly all the shapes are coming together and you start to get the feel of how it'll end up looking like... There is something about that moment that resonates with me. Feeling like you're on the right path to succeed a piece just gives you the energy to push through!

Speaking about the process, are you currently working on something you'd like to share with us?

I am currently working on a "bride" series where I'm looking at the symbolism behind this tradition and playing dress up with big puffy dresses, I love it! This series will be a major part of my future solo show.

Next, I'd like to take a moment to speak about Drummondville, Canada, the city you come from and live in. How is life as an artist for you there and what does the art scene look like?



*Chemise 2 (étude), 2022
Oil on paper, 33 x 22,5 cm*

My hometown is at a crossroad right now, trying to emerge and evolve into a bigger city. Though currently the art scene is very shy, there is still plenty of opportunities to create and that is the main reason why I came back after graduating. I wanted to be part of constructing the art scene here and I feel like we're on the right path to do it!

And let's end our interview with a five last questions. First, please describe your work in three words.

Portrait, soft, identities

Second, if there was only one thing that people could remember from your paintings, what would you want that to be?

That I stayed true to myself and my story.

Any fellow emerging artists you'd like to recommend?

Marie-Danielle Duval, Théo Bignon and Russell Banks.

Any piece of advice you've been given that you'd like to pass on to fellow emerging artists, especially to those just starting out in their career?

It's okay to take breaks from creating. We often forget to take care of ourselves in fear of missing an opportunity, but taking space mentally and physically from creating allows you to come back to it stronger and with a fresh point of view.

And last question, what are your hopes for the future, especially for the end of this year and the start of 2025?

I'd really like to book my first solo show! I feel like this really is the next step to achieve in my career! I'm also toying with the idea of going back to school and pursue a master degree in art! Aside from that, I just wish to stay healthy and content, in the end, that's all that matters.

*Get in touch with Mikaël: www.mikaellepage.com
Instagram: [@mikael.lepage.art](https://www.instagram.com/mikael.lepage.art)*



Auto portrait en robe de mariee, 2023
Oil on canvas, 152 x 101 cm



Chiffon, 2023
Oil on canvas, 76 x 60 cm



Attendre l'anthèse, 2021
Huile sur toile, 121,92 x 91,44 cm



Déambuler I, 2023
Huile sur toile, 61 x 92 cm

In my paintings,
I could be whoever I
wanted to be.

In that sense,
creating art was,
in a way, my
safe place.

- Mikaël Lepage

The way each of us understands love is often shaped by our traumas, and so finding love is part of a healing journey – that's what I'm exploring through my work.

– María Paula Suárez

Right page: Profundo Series, 2024 Embroidery on paper, 21 x 27 cm



Finding Peace In
The Universal
Language of
Love
with

María Paula Suárez



Colombian artist María Paula Suárez lives and works in New York City

Hi María Paula, thanks for doing this interview with us. We start all of our interviews with a little time travel – what were your beginnings in the arts? Do you remember the first time you created something?

Since I was very young, my parents cultivated a sense of creativity in me! I had ceramic lessons, craft art classes, and at home, my parents always kept different materials around. My mom paints, so that certainly had an impact on my perception of creating. A beautiful memory I have from my previous home in Colombia is of my mom painting on huge canvases in the living room. I would come home from school and watch her paint for hours...

As for my first creation, I'm not quite sure how far back I should go, haha, but I remember I loved Project Runway. At around 9 or 10 years old, I created a collection of five dresses with fabrics, a concept, and even modeled them for my parents.

In your practice you work with drawing and embroidery, and I'd like to speak about the latter. When did you get in touch with embroidery and what fascinated you about it?

It was around the time I was in my sixth semester of college. At my university, we had to take six drawing lessons to meet the curriculum requirements, and in the final one, the subject matter was more open (the first five covered things like human figure, space, and still life). I had been exploring themes of territory and cartography, and I was interested in Colombia's sociogeographic distribution on the map. But due to a medical reason, my perception of territory shifted, and I wanted to explore my body as a territory, to better understand how it was composed.

By the age of 18, doctors found a cyst in my left breast, and I couldn't help but wonder: Why was it there? How did it form, and what was it made of? I asked the doctor to show me the images of the cells making up the mass, and to my surprise, they were beautiful. I decided I wanted to turn

my gaze inward and start looking from the inside out. I did a series of seven embroideries on cotton fabric, portraying the cells in my cyst. In the process, I found a technique to heal. Every stitch felt like I was making amends with my body; the act of unifying an image through a single line of thread was transformative. I began healing through my art.

That's a beautiful story. You also just mentioned Colombia, the country you were born and grew up in, but I know that you've been living in New York City for the past few years. I'd like to know more about moving to New York City and pursuing art professionally – did you always know this was what you wanted to do?

This is a great question, and the answer is no, hehe. I always wanted to work in business. My dad was the CEO of a company for most of his career, and after that, he created his own company. Just as my mom influenced my creative side, my dad fostered a sense of generating impact through business. I attended a high school with an international baccalaureate program, and in the senior years, we had to pick a "major" between social studies, economics, and art. The story tells itself – once I connected with the artistic side of me, I couldn't let go. Art gave me so much peace, fulfillment, and purpose, and I decided I wanted to make it my life.

As for New York, it has been my lifelong love. My first visit was with an ex-boyfriend, and everything felt so eclectic and fast-paced; the energy matched my personality. On my path to becoming a professional, I returned to study illustration. Every time I visited the city, I felt more connected to it. After the pandemic, I took the leap and applied for a master's degree in art business at Sotheby's. From there, life showed me the way, effortlessly.

You write that your work "reflects on love, its various forms, and the use of language as a tool to understand it." It might sound like an awkward question, but why do you choose to speak about love in your work? It is such a universal human feeling, yet not spoken about much in contemporary visual art scene...

I love this question, and I agree – it's not spoken about much in contemporary art. To be completely honest, I think there's a misconception that love isn't a "serious" or academic subject, which is why I've based much of my investigation on the psychological side of love and how human behavior is shaped by emotions. We are rational beings, but what grounds us and gives us a sense of contentment is love.

I began this journey by exploring resilience and divided it into three stages. I went through a rough time where I had to pick myself up and understand love, both from within and outward. I came to the conclusion that love is a universal language, so I made a promise to myself to share that understanding and explore it deeper.

"The way each of us understands love is often shaped by our traumas, and so finding love is part of a healing journey – that's what I'm exploring through my work".



*Monochromatic Feelings, 2024
Pencil Colors and Embroidery on Paper, 76 x 66 cm*

Living in this world gives me both the right and responsibility to feel everything. I believe the more we understand ourselves, the better we understand love, and the easier it becomes to live peacefully. Authors like Dr. Gabor Maté, Nicole LePera, and Michael Singer, among others, have been essential in shaping my research and ideas.



Quiet Is The New Loud, 2023
Pastel Colors and Embroidery On Paper

Your work depicts flowers and you also work with letters and language. Are these two categories interrelated or do you approach them separately?

100% interrelated. Like many creative processes, my ideas come in waves, and I've found a beautiful connection between nature and language. Both are interconnected, but nature leaves more room for interpretation. Since there are emotions that cannot be fully expressed with words, flowers have become an important source of inspiration for my work.

Beauty isn't just something we see—it's something we feel. You don't need to see a flower to know it's beautiful; the very word "flower" is enough to evoke a response, a sense of transcendent beauty. I like to play with those concepts and elicit different emotions from the audience. Drawing nature isn't about copying an object—it's about representing the sensations it evokes.

You use paper for both types of your work, for drawing as well as for embroidery. What is it that fascinates you about paper? And have you ever thought about working with embroidery on textiles?

What fascinates me is the fragility of paper. The act of creating something that requires breaking through the material to make something whole feels poetic and powerful. My practice has taught me patience—how to breathe, how to feel. There's a ritual I go through every time I begin the embroidery process. I have to feel the paper and search for the needle through touch; there's no other way for it to find the exact spot it's supposed to emerge from. I have to approach the paper with gentleness, patience, and love—otherwise, it can break.

As for textiles, my first series of works, which I mentioned earlier, were actually on cotton fabric. But there's a special magic in using paper for my embroidery, given its delicate nature. That said, through mpsstudio, an initiative I began this year, I've worked with knitwear, jute, and even started doing rugs! So I'm not opposed to textiles—paper just holds an important place in the process and final outcome of my artwork.

Next, I would like to know more about your creative process. How do you get from the idea for a piece to materializing it? Do you start with sketches, for example?

I rarely do sketches, if ever! I like to sit down when I'm ready to create. I do write a lot, though—pages of thoughts that I often revisit for inspiration.

“My practice involves a lot of introspection and self-reflection.”

I'm quite rational, so I try to "label" my emotions to better understand them, but human emotions often go beyond what the rational mind can comprehend. In those moments, I create what I call "new labels," which take form as my flowers—representations of emotions that transcend my logical mind.

“The words I use in my art are more like statements, guides, reminders, and reflections I want to preserve from the constant chatter in my mind.”

I enjoy working in series because it allows me to explore a concept from various perspectives, giving me a fuller palette of ideas to choose from.

At the beginning of our conversation you said making art brought you healing. Is that how you would describe your feelings while creating? Could you put into words how creating makes you feel?

Creating art brings me peace. It’s a way to face my emotions and untangle my thoughts. When something gets caught in my internal monologue, I channel it into positive creation, untangling it through drawing and then healing through embroidery.



Traveling Flowers, 2024
Pencil Colors and Embroidery On Paper, 100 x 70 cm

There is a lot of talk about finding your own voice or style in the art world, more so when you’re starting out as an artist. Is that something that has been important to you and if so, how?

Definitely. I believe staying true to one’s beliefs is what makes any idea flourish. Once I realized how important it was to focus on what was happening inside me, things began to unfold naturally. The people who support my work have connected with one of my most vulnerable sides. So, for me, it’s not about “finding” a voice—but rather giving mine a permission to speak without fear.

And let’s end this conversation with a few last questions. First, are there any fellow emerging artists you’d like to recommend?

Ulalaaa, absolutely! There are so many, but in this interview, I’d love to mention Catalina Pardo. She’s a life-long colleague with whom I’ve formed a deep emotional connection. Her paintings are soft, ethereal, and dreamy. We’ve shared walls, dreams, and many deep conversations about existence. I truly admire her work and believe she’s incredibly talented.

Recently, I had the honor of working with Mau Samayoa, and wow! The meticulousness of his work really resonated with me—his attention to detail, his care for the paper, and the vibrancy of his colors are just incredible!

Next, what have you been interested in or inspired by lately?

The changing color palette in nature with the arrival of fall—oh my gosh! Going for a run and seeing the rich, neutral tones of the urban landscape has influenced my own palette in a big way. I’m also reading *Worthy* by Jaime Kern, which has given me so much insight into the difference between self-worth and self-confidence. The mind’s ability to reshape itself never ceases to amaze me! This book has been a key influence on my latest project, *The Paradox of Being*, which I’ll be presenting in Q1 2025—stay tuned for that!



Healing, 2024
Embroidery On Paper, 21 x 27 cm

Anything you have learned in your career as an artist so far that you'd like to pass on to fellow artists, especially to those just starting out?

Be consistent and grateful. One thing that's helped me live a happy and stress-free career has been living in gratitude. Everything you need, you already have within yourself—read that twice!

“Also, don't wait for opportunities to come to you; knock on doors. If there's something you want to achieve, go get it and work for it!”

What are you currently working on or is there any upcoming project you'd like to give a shout out?

I'm working on an installation that's focused on slowing down to the speed of nature and giving space to my thoughts. It's an exciting project since it's been a while since I've worked in this format. I'll be sharing more details through social media as it evolves, but that's all I can

reveal for now. On top of that, I'm thrilled to be wrapping up November with a fantastic group show in Tribeca, in collaboration with Michael Colleman at Second Avenue Arts!

And last question, what are your hopes and plans for the rest of this year and the beginning of 2025?

I hope my art continues to grow and thrive with the amazing support I've received. This is what I've chosen to dedicate my life to, and I'm so grateful for how things are unfolding. I hope to connect with more people, share more work, and continue building my profession with passion and determination.

In terms of plans, my biggest focus is on my upcoming solo show in 2025, *Life is Alchemy*, at Big Arts Sanibel. It will feature the works I've been developing throughout 2024, and I'm incredibly proud and grateful for the team helping me bring it all together. I'll share more when the time comes, but for now, that's my main driving force for the months ahead.



Arriba delante,
Embroidery and Pastels on paper, 60 x 60 cm

*Get in touch with María Paula: www.mariapaulasuares.com
Instagram: @mariapsuarezart*



*Unconditional Love, 2023
Embroidery On Paper, 50 x 70 cm*



Up: El Paraiso, Pencil Colors and Embroidery on Paper, 100 x 70 cm
Down: Tripticco, Pencil Colors and Embroidery On Paper, 150 x 70 cm

Megan Lui



Where You Are, 2024
Mixed Media on Canvas, 24 x 24 x 1.5 inches

About Megan

Megan Lui is a mixed media artist based in Detroit, MI, USA, who works with acrylic paint, spray paint, and ink on canvas, while using modeling paste and collage paper to enhance the canvas with texture. Using natural forms along with geometric patterns, her work finds structure within chaos. Through texture, form, and vivid color, her paintings are observations of our modern existence. Megan has a Bachelor's Degree from Wayne State University. She has exhibited throughout metro Detroit and in Toronto. Her work is in private collections across the United States and in The Netherlands.

Get in touch with Megan: <https://meganlui.art>
Instagram: @meganlui.art

The Delicate Nature of Life

My art is focused on the image of paper cranes painted over collaged origami paper. The patterns of the origami paper layered with spray paint create unique visual contrast in my paintings. My daughter was hospitalized a few years ago, and during that time, I folded 1000 cranes in an attempt to earn a wish. Once she recovered and was home, I started painting these cranes on the leftover origami paper. Paper became the perfect analogy for life for me. It can be delicate, but if you put a few pieces together or fold it a couple times, it can become durable. Through the trials that life gives us, our connections to each other are what we lean on and keep us moving forward. This delicate nature of life and how our relationships make us stronger is what I depict in my paintings.



Cranes in Bloom, 2023
Mixed Media on Canvas, 36 x 36 x 1.5 inches

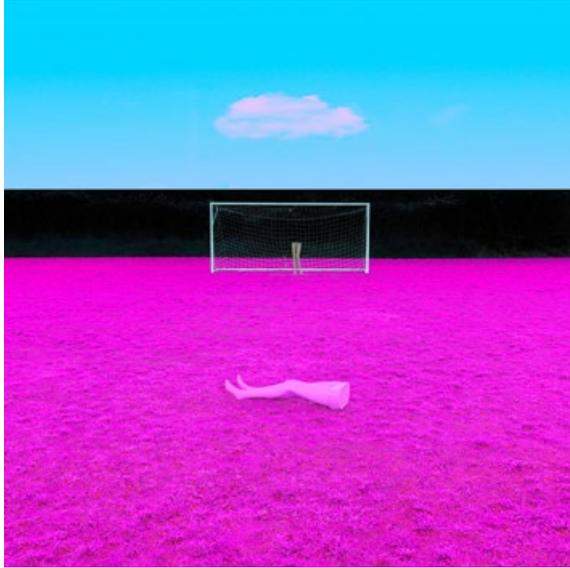
Next page: Bloom Forward, 2024, Mixed Media on Canvas, 20 x 20 x 1.5 inches (up)

Welcome Home, 2024, Mixed Media on Canvas, 20 x 20 x 1.5 inches (left)

Dawn Blossoms, 2024, Mixed Media on Canvas, 24 x 24 x 1.5 inches (right)



Jean Paul Soujol Benedetti



Ursula 5, 2023
Digital Photography, 100 x 100 cm

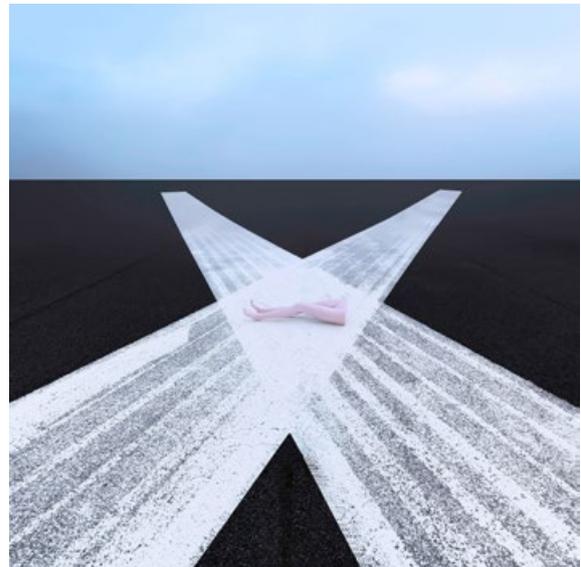
About Jean-Paul

Jean-Paul Soujol Benedetti is a minimalist photographer deeply influenced by the world of contemporary painting. His artistic vision revolves around the pursuit of purity in lines and forms, with blue serving as a dominant and ever-present element. Inspired by renowned contemporary painters such as Pierre Soulages, Mark Rothko, and Yves Klein, Soujol Benedetti's work showcases his meticulous aesthetic research. In his minimalist compositions, the horizon acts as a guiding line, imbuing his photographs with a sense of infinite space. The sea often takes center stage as a significant subject in his art. However, his latest works have taken a more abstract turn, incorporating a plastician and conceptual approach to their creation. This evolution in style adds depth and complexity to Soujol Benedetti's portfolio, offering viewers a captivating and thought-provoking visual experience.

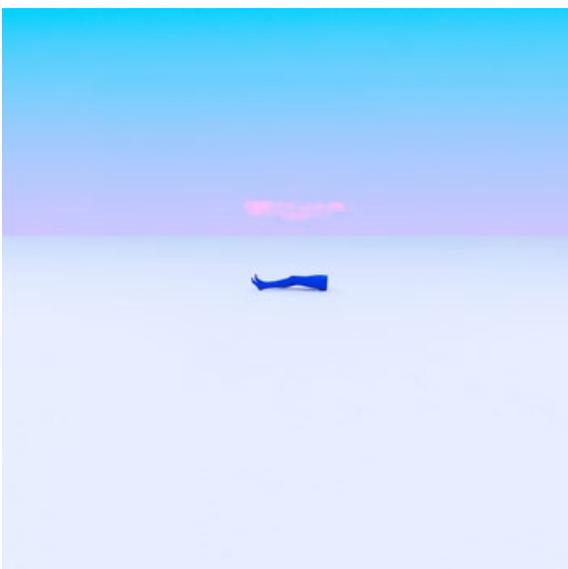
Minimalism and Creativity

I am a conceptual photographer inspired by minimalism and contemporary art. This forces me to transform the reality of what the eye sees. My images convey the fascination with the elemental nature of color into an aesthetic research. The domination of the blue color, the horizon and the square format are at the center of my work. What also interests me is the idea that each reader can appropriate their own interpretation and thus develop their imagination. To develop this concept, I rely on timelessness and the notion of infinity. Photography is a passion that allows me to develop another language, that of creativity.

Get in touch with Jean Paul: www.jproujol.com
Instagram: @jproujol



Ursula 4, 2023
Digital Photography, 100 x 100 cm



Ursula 2, 2024 (up) / Ursula 1, 2024 (left) / Ursula 3, 2023 (right)
Digital Photography, 100 x 100 cm each

Jacqueline Yvonne Tull



Pitcher & Bowl, 2024
Steel & nylon sculpture, 43 x 41 x 41 cm
Next page: *On My Own, 2024*
Mixed media sculpture, 205 x 107 x 66 cm

About Jacqueline

Jacqueline Yvonne Tull is a mixed-media, Baltimore-based artist. She is the Interdisciplinary Sculpture Studio Manager and Metal Fabrication Instructor for the Maryland Institute College of Art, a member of Automat Collective, an artist-run gallery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and a member of Gossip Girl Collective in Baltimore. Jacqueline grew up in Greenbelt, Maryland, and completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the Pennsylvania College of Art and Design in Lancaster, Pennsylvania while spending summers studying plein-air painting at the Mount Gretna School of Art in Mount Gretna, Pennsylvania, and the Rome Art Program in Rome, Italy. She completed her Master of Fine Art degree at the University of Delaware, where she specialized in Sculpture and Material Culture studies. She has taught sculpture and other fine art courses at multiple universities Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, and has exhibited works in the Mid-Atlantic region, New York, and Berlin, Germany.

On Longing and Grief

Jacqueline Yvonne Tull is an interdisciplinary artist that creates site-specific installations, sculptures, and 2D works that explore themes of mortality and identity through the lens of personal narrative. Drawing from sentimental objects and ephemera, she uses found materials such as wood, fabric, botanicals, jewelry, and metals to create art that confronts the senses of longing and grief that arise from loss, and our relationship with the impermanence of the human body.

Get in touch with Jacqueline: www.jacquelineyvonne.com
Instagram: [@Jacqueline_yvonne_art](https://www.instagram.com/Jacqueline_yvonne_art)



Donkey Head, 2023
Steel & nylon sculpture, 43 x 13 x 15 cm



Zoe Clark



I left the blue dory, 2024
Print, 17 x 19 cm

About Zoe

Zoe Clark is an artist and designer based in Brooklyn, NY. She holds a BFA in Textile Design from the Rhode Island School of Design. Zoe works as a print designer and also runs her namesake jewelry brand, CLARK. Her personal work combines printmaking and metal-smithing to create ethereal images that explore themes of memory, absence, and light.

Get in touch with Zoe
on Instagram: @clarkjewelry

*Here ... well, wanting solitude; and talk; friendship—
The uses of solitude. To imagine; to hear.
Learning braille. To imagine other solitudes.
But they will not be mine;
to wait, in the quiet; not to scatter the voices—*

- Excerpt from Sanctuary by Jean Valentine

During the still of winter, I began creating relief prints; Long runs around the park in the early morning felt like the world had quieted and there was a perceivable threshold. I wanted to capture this quality of the in-between, so I began treating my prints like screens or layered windows by impressing images into paper and then taking a second, more faded print. This work continued in my jewelry practice with enamel tiles. The enamel introduced another element of transformation (colored powder into solid glass form). I experimented with removing the tile from the kiln mid state-change. The results felt like veils partially lifted – a memory made solid.



I could see you, 2024
Print, 21.5 x 28 cm

Next page: Once, 2024, Enamel, 7 x 9 cm (up)
Happiness 2, 2024, Enamel, 8 x 6.5 cm (down)



Lucy Cade



Bad Feminist, 2024
Oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm

About Lucy

Lucy is a painter and educator. She has just completed the Turps Offsite Programme. She achieved an MA Fine Art at City & Guilds of London Art School with Distinction in 2023. She has recently exhibited with the Cynthia Corbett Gallery, Liliya Gallery and Terrace Gallery in group shows across London and was selected for a number of awards including the Jackson's Painting Prize 2022.

Breaking With Reality

Ovals on ovals, a continuous stream, eschewing the rectangular standard to repeat, sentimentalise and encircle. Blues and purpley pink pastels as colours of distance and dream, detachment. Thick pale paint like icing, sensuous, decorative and sweet but also like an iced over frozen lake, hard and fragile at once, - an icing over, closing down as a response to trauma or metamorphosis. My paintings re-deploy the past two-fold. The oval shape and presentation of my works recall a long art-historical legacy of women in cameos, and my exploration of moments of emotional intensity draws upon personal experience. My series deals with different episodic states of breaking with reality and courting chaos whilst using source imagery from old films: such paintings strike at the heart of my desire to re-mythologise and reclaim the narratives of female protagonists.



Couldn't Drag Me Away, 2024
Oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm

Get in touch with Lucy: www.lucycade.com
Instagram: @lucycadeartist



Reflection, Oil on MDF, 100 x 75 cm (up)
Girl, Horse, Woods, 2023, Oil on MDF, 75 x 100 cm (left) / Survivor, 2024, Oil on canvas, 20 x 30 cm (right)

Leyla Cui



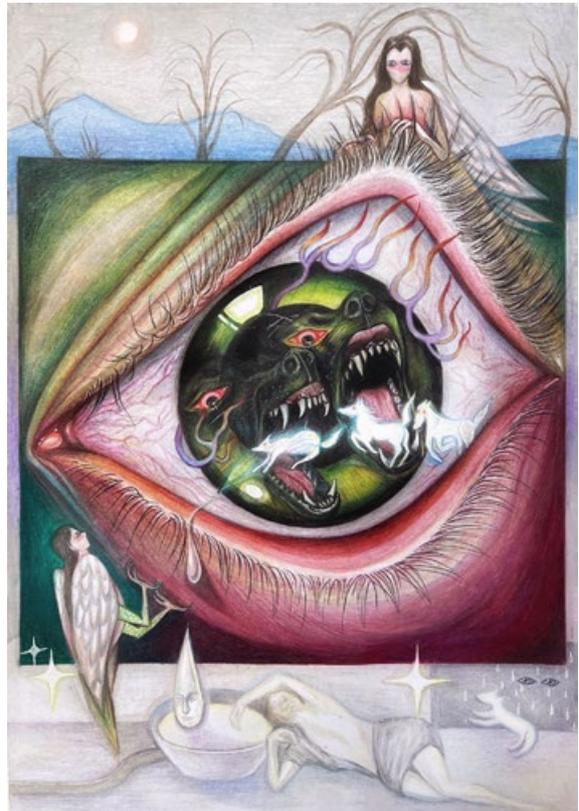
Reality and Imagination

Leyla's artistic practice is deeply rooted in exploring intimate human memories, forming and transforming identities, and the multifaceted nature of femininity in contemporary society. Her art functions as a visual diary, chronicling the emotional landscapes of her personal experiences and keen observations. Leyla delves into the contradictory emotions that define the human condition, weaving together elements of aspiration and loss, unease, and tranquility. This intricate tapestry creates a narrative that resonates with the complexity of youth—a period marked by profound discovery and deep uncertainty. Employing a surrealist approach, Leyla transcends the literal, crafting dreamlike scenarios that invite viewers to explore their memories and emotions. Her work examines the liminal spaces between reality and imagination, underscoring her empathetic understanding of the intricate layers that shape our identities.

About Leyla

Leyla Cui (2002), born in Shanghai, is a surrealist artist living in New York City. Currently studying illustration at the School of Visual Arts, she has quickly made a mark on the city's art scene. Her evocative work explores themes of identity and transformation, capturing complex emotions through a surrealist lens. Leyla started her artistic career at the very young age of 17, when she published a poetry collection at Beijing Arts and Crafts Publishing House (China), including nearly 200 poems with oil paintings and illustrations. Her notable exhibitions include Space Gallery, Shanghai (2020), Barney Gallery, New York University (2023), LATITUDE Gallery, NYC (2023), Chambers Fine Art Gallery in Salt Point, NY (2023), and Berry Campbell Gallery in Chelsea, NYC (2024). Leyla received the New Talent Merit Award at the 2024 iJungle Global Illustration Competition for "Fertility." Her visual publication includes Suboart Magazine (2024) and Artsinsquare Magazine (2024).

Get in touch with Leyla: www.leylacui.com
Instagram: [@leyla_c_art](https://www.instagram.com/leyla_c_art)





Embracement, 2024, Color pencil on paper, 9 x 12 inch

Left page: The Unveiled Gaze, 2023, Acrylic, color pencil, threads, key, board, canvas, 24 x 36 inch (up)

Revelation, 2022, Color pencil on paper, 11 x 14 inch (down)

Haley Manchon



Portrait of Gabrielle, 2024
Colored Pencil and Pastel on Dura-lar and Paper, 8 x 10 in

About Haley

Haley Manchon (b. 1996) received her BEA from the Maryland Institute College of Art. She is represented by MK Apothecary gallery and has her work displayed on the 2nd floor of The People's Store in Lambertville, NJ. She has recently exhibited with Arch Enemy Arts in Philadelphia; WOWxWOW; Collect Bean; Art Aqua Miami; Art Fair 14C in Jersey City; Surreal Salon 16 at Baton Rouge Gallery in Louisiana; the Derwent Art Prize located at Gallery@OXO in London; and with the Colored Pencil Society of America. Her work has recently been published in Beautiful Bizarre Magazine, Visionary Magazine, Booooooom's Tomorrow's Talent Vol. III, and Manifest Gallery's International Drawing Annual (INDA 15). She has been a resident artist at Overland Artworks SHELTER (2020), Gilbertsville Expressive Movement (2019) and at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art's Currents summer program (2017).

Impermanent Sense of Self

Haley Manchon's work reflects on her personal experience with shyness, exhibited through surrealistic portraiture and figurative drawings. Through her work, she explores the pervasive tendency to dwell on past events or succumb to anxiety about an unknown future, thereby disconnecting from the present moment. The patterns she designs are often embedded into the space, subtly conveying narrative with personified objects and symbols. Dura-lar, as a semi-transparent substrate, allows for marks of the drawing to delicately emerge and recede. It is within this soft framework of marks that a floating, impermanent sense of self is presented.

Get in touch with Haley: www.haleymanchon.com
Instagram: [@haley_manchon](https://www.instagram.com/haley_manchon)



Peaks and Valleys, 2021
Colored Pencil on Dura-lar and Paper, 9 x 12 in
Next page: *Playing the Part, 2024*
Colored Pencil and Pastel on Dura-lar and Paper, 12 x 16 in





Conversing Between
Abstraction and
Figuration

with

**Charlotte
Caron**

*Quebecois artist Charlotte Caron photographed by Camélia Papineau
Left page: Close-up from behind "OG epoxy" (full work p. 123)*



Hi Charlotte, thanks for doing this interview with us. For people who are not familiar with you and your work, please tell us about yourself and what you do.

I am an emerging visual artist pursuing a Master's in Fine Arts at UQAM, specializing in research-creation. I grew up in the Mauricie region, Québec, spending my summers in the Sorel Islands, a landscape that deeply shaped my connection to water. This influence is reflected in my use of epoxy resin, a fluid material I manipulate to capture frozen moments and movements.

Over the past five years, I've lived between two contrasting worlds, both of which continuously inform my artistic practice. On one hand, I deeply appreciate the rawness and authenticity of country life. I love learning mechanical skills—like working with boats—which connects to my upbringing and time spent on the water. The country lifestyle feels real and unfiltered, in contrast to the polished, often facade-driven world of the contemporary art

scene. Fortunately, I am now represented by Wishbone Gallery, whose family-oriented approach resonates with me. Everything there feels genuine, which is why I love being associated with them. These contrasts fascinate me, and I often bring them into my work, both conceptually and materially. This summer, I plan to return to my hometown of Louiseville, reconnecting with the landscape and embracing the grounding nature offers.

My personal and professional experiences have profoundly shaped my artistic path. From 2020 to 2024, I worked as a jet-ski guide in Montreal, where my direct relationship with water deepened my fascination with fluidity and transparency.

That brings me to my next question, your work...

My work explores the relationship between materials, mirroring the dynamics of my interpersonal relationships. I draw parallels between how materials interact and my



*Close-up of "I love epoxy and epoxy love me"
Photo by Wishbone Gallery*

experiences with human connections. In my epoxy-based pieces, I layer paint in a way that captures and freezes moments, much like how relationships evolve over time. The transparency of the resin allows multiple layers to be seen simultaneously, similar to the possibility of perceiving multiple realities at once. This fluidity, both literal and metaphorical, defines my practice. My art is deeply connected to my relationships, symbolized through the interplay of materials.

"I seek to establish a dialogue between the viewer and the work, exploring themes of transparency, recognition, and familiarity, with an overarching aim of pursuing relational truth."

One of our favourite questions is about the creative process. What does yours look like?

My creative process is exploratory and intuitive, focused on expanding the potential of my materials. Working with epoxy, I experiment with its compatibility with acrylic paint and pigments, layering the resin to explore how

transparency and depth can interact. I also incorporate colors inspired by my father's boat, which ties my creative process back to my personal roots. Each step feels like a dialogue between myself and the material, pushing the boundaries of what the medium can express. The process involves capturing the balance between fluidity and structure, aiming to make the material speak for itself.

My next question is about your use of epoxy resin. When did you first discover it and how does it influence the perception of materiality in your work?

Epoxy resin plays a dual role in my work, as both a symbol and a medium. I first encountered it in 2021 while helping my father repair his boat, which used epoxy as the binding agent for fiberglass. This initial experience led me to incorporate epoxy into my art practice, where I layer it to create a dynamic relationship between paint and material. The resin's transparency allows me to reveal and preserve moments.

Epoxy mirrors the qualities of water in its fluidity but also possesses the ability to capture and freeze light, creating a unique sense of depth. This shifting perception depends on the viewer's position, making the material an active part of the viewing experience. I also explore the boundary between 2D and 3D, using epoxy to create depth while maintaining a painterly surface, encouraging the viewer to question the line between painting and object.



*"My dad's boat"
photographed by the artist*



The Blue Title, 2024
Epoxy, pigment and acrylic, 24" x 18"
Photo by Wishbone Gallery

And last question, how do you envision the evolution of your practice in the coming years, particularly in terms of techniques and mediums?

I want to continue exploring the interaction between materials and how they communicate with one another. I'm particularly interested in integrating light into my epoxy works, and I'd like to deepen the transdisciplinary aspect of my practice by incorporating more photography and documentation. I also envision experimenting with larger formats to fully immerse the viewer in my work. Additionally, creating most of my epoxy artwork in my dad's garage, seeing my art surrounded by his tools and motor parts, inspires me to further expand my practice, as this environment undeniably influences my creation. My goal is to push the boundaries of transparency and truth even further, both in the materials I use and in the concepts I explore."

Get in touch with Charlotte: <https://charlottecaron.ca>
Instagram: @charlesaufeminin

And how do you navigate between ultra-realistic representation and abstraction in your work?

Navigating between figuration and abstraction is a fundamental part of my process. This act of representation highlights details that might otherwise go unnoticed, offering the viewer an intimate perspective on something originally abstract. When I paint close-up views of my epoxy pieces, I create ultra-realistic representations of something inherently abstract. This interplay between the two acts as a kind of mise en abyme, where each work references another in a continuous evolution.

My pieces are all connected, forming a genealogical structure where one work builds upon the previous, creating an ongoing conversation between abstraction and figuration. This continuous evolution allows me to push the limits of both techniques, drawing attention to the fluid transitions between different modes of representation while encouraging the viewer to engage with the work on multiple levels.



Funny Title With The Word Pink In It, 2024
Epoxy, pigment and acrylic, 24" x 18"
Photo by Wishbone Gallery



OG époxy, 2023
Epoxy, pigment and acrylic, 24" x 18"



Ma plus belle peinture ever, 2023
Oil on cotton, 24" x 18"



Untitled, 2023
Oil on cotton, 16" x 20"

Jade Mulvaney

A comment on repression, A rebellion against it

A woman is the sun, A woman is the moon explores themes of autonomy in the South African landscape. Reflective on the dichotomy of predator and prey, freedom and entrapment. Each woman stands her ground in the face of threat or fear, refusing to be disturbed or diminished in size. The overall scale of the figures demand capacity to take up space, a struggle for women within a South African context. The concept of freedom is a motivating theme for Mulvaney, as she constantly circles the idea of what liberty means to both the group and the individual. The question of how to escape confinement intrigues the artist. Mulvaney works with explosive colours, evoking a powerful palette to enhance contrast. Within each painting exists the dance of duality, exploration into contrasts and conflict - all with the intention of finding an uninhibited release.

Get in touch with Jade
on Instagram: @jade.mulvaney



Wild Wild Western Cape, 2024
Acrylic on Canvas, 144 cm x 148 cm



Bye Bye Bokkie, 2024
Acrylic on Canvas, 147m x 146 cm

About The Artist

Jade Mulvaney is a South African artist who has recently completed her second body of work 'A woman is the sun, A woman is the moon'. Her work is always inspired by her inner and outer landscape, seeking to fuse both her fantasyland and imagination with elements of her current environment. She enjoys a whimsical, mischievous and colorful approach. Taking elements of reality and twisting them into bold suggestions.

As a storyteller, Jade's work offers up a series of chapters in one painting, encouraging viewers to interpret the work with their own playfulness, delight and curiosity. Challenging the viewer to find within themselves their own element of freedom of expression. She has a rich sense of symbolism entrenched in the 'characters' and every icon representative of a memory, a feeling or a place. Jade currently is working on her third body of work and residing in Porto, Portugal.



A Woman is the Sun, A woman is the Moon, 2024
Acrylic on canvas, 132 cm x 145 cm

Rachel Weiswasser



Milly in Krakow, 2022, Oil Paint, 12 x 18 in

*Next page: Lost and Forgotten, 2021, Oil Pastel, 36 x 36 in (up)
Paris Texas #3, 2024, Oil Pastel, 48 x 24 in (down)*

About the Artist

Rachel Weiswasser is a New York City- based pointillist painter known for her intricate and vibrant works. She has received numerous awards, including the CaPA scholarship from Lafayette College and the Merit Scholarship grant from the Art Students League of New York. Her work has been exhibited in group shows at prominent galleries in New York's Lower East Side and Chelsea, and her paintings are part of permanent collections in California and England.

Despite being self-taught, Weiswasser holds a BA in Art History from New York University and an MA from University College London. She has actively contributed to the art community, volunteering at the Montclair Art Museum and assisting in teaching at the Art Students League of New York.

Reconstructing Reality

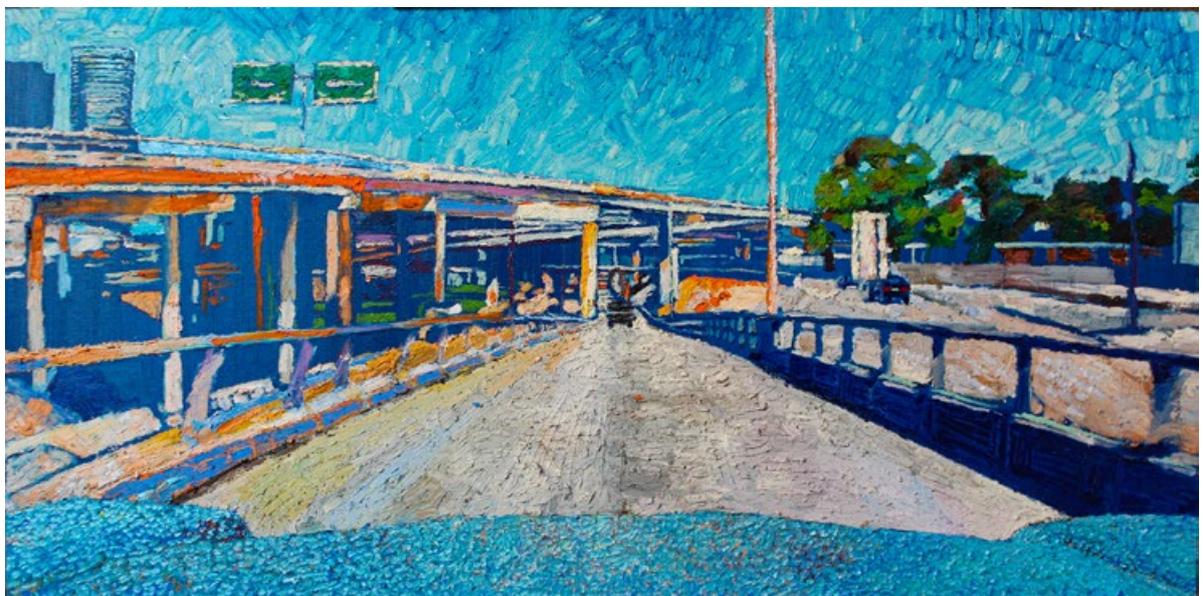
As a surrealist artist inspired by Salvador Dali and Rene Magritte, I delve into the subconscious to create dream-like landscapes that fuse impressionism and pixelation. Through this unique synthesis, I explore themes of perception and self-realization. My paintings challenge viewers to navigate the interplay between organic fluidity and fragmented precision, reflecting the growing digital mediation of our visual experiences.

By blending pointillism with surrealistic forms and colors, I craft narratives that bridge the conscious and unconscious, offering a distinctive view on the boundaries of reality. At the heart of my work is a fascination with the tension between organic imperfection and digital precision—a metaphor for how we increasingly live between the natural and the artificial. My goal is to evoke wonder and introspection, encouraging viewers to question not only how they see the world but also how they exist within it.



*Paris, Texas #1, 2024
Oil Paint and Pastel, 39 x 64 in*

*Get in touch with Rachel: www.rayweis.com
Instagram: [@rachel_weiswasser](https://www.instagram.com/rachel_weiswasser)*



Tianyun Liu



Secret Garden, 2024
Acrylic on Canvas, 50 x 40 cm

About Tianyun

Tianyun Liu is an emerging visual artist based in London, who graduated with an MA in Fine Art from the Chelsea College of Arts. Specializing in painting, small-scale sculpture and performance. She seeks to evoke both the intangible and the deeply personal in her work through vibrant colour choices and layered textures. Surrealism influences her artistic process, drawing inspiration from close relationships and nature. While still early in her career, Tianyun has participated in several group exhibitions at her university and local galleries, showcasing her evolving style. Her work continues to develop as she explores new mediums and concepts. She is currently working on a series of paintings exploring the connection between orchids and femininity, with aspirations to share her works with more people.

Get in touch with Tianyun: www.tianyunliuart.weebly.com
Instagram: @lindaliu_artart

The Richness of Femininity

I am a London-based female queer artist. My work is often inspired by life experiences and close emotional bonds with the women around me. I draw inspiration from the soft, intricate beauty of orchids, which are used as metaphors for the female sexual organs. The orchid's delicate form and textures become a recurring motif in my works, offering a poetic lens to explore desire, strength, and intimacy. Through repeated layering and refinement of vibrant acrylic paints in my creative process, I develop rich textures and intricate details, reflecting a delicate yet powerful expression from a female perspective. This approach produces works that encourage a thoughtful exploration of the richness and nuance of femininity.



Daisy, 2024
Acrylic on Canvas, 40 x 50 cm



Flying Orchid, 2024, Acrylic on Canvas, 50 x 50 cm (up)
Flying Orchid, 2024, Acrylic on Canvas, 50 x 50 cm (left) / *The Dent*, 2024, Acrylic on Canvas, 50 x 50 cm (right)

Leon Phillips



Wiggle 3, 2023, oil on paper, 56.5 x 76.2 cm
Next page up: *Wiggle 18, 2023, oil on paper, 56.5 x 76.2 cm*

About Leon

Leon Phillips, born in 1964 in Spalding, Canada, is a contemporary painter currently based in Vancouver, Canada. Phillips' work explores embodiment and perception through colour's materiality. Phillips infuses colour with structural significance and views himself as a facilitator collaborating with tools and materials.

His paintings, more than mere objects or images, serve as conduits for shared sensory experiences that engage viewers on visceral levels. Phillips' work has been showcased at venues such as the Yukon Arts Centre in Whitehorse, Canada, and the Amelia Douglas Gallery in New Westminster, Canada. His work is included in collections that include the Canadian Consulate General in Chicago, USA, and the Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre in Daugavpils, Latvia. He has participated in programs and residencies such as the International Painting Symposium "Mark Rothko 2021" at the Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre and the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Banff, Canada.

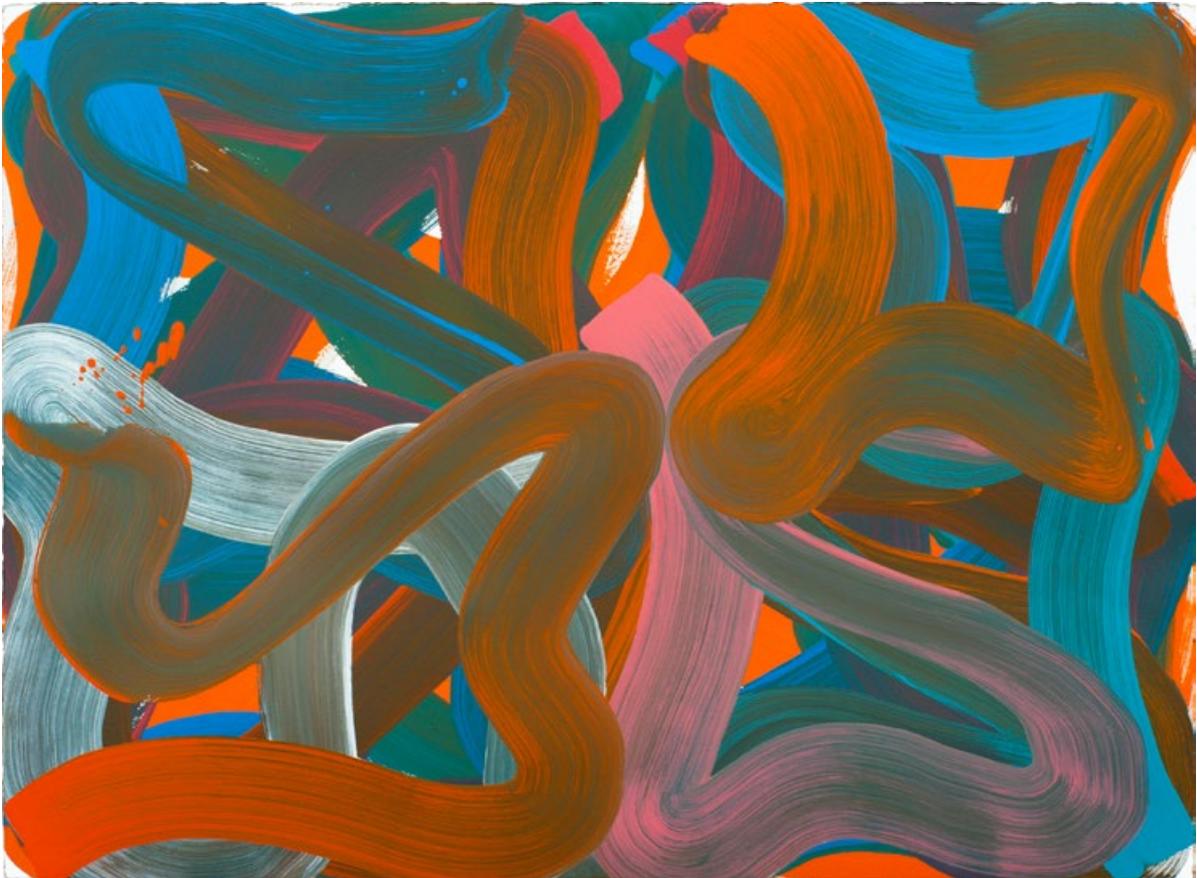
Materiality of Colour

My work is an exploration of embodiment and perception through the materiality of colour. I see myself not merely as a creator, but as a facilitator working collaboratively with my tools and materials to produce paintings that are more than mere objects or images; they are materially tangible presences and corporeal experiences. The materiality of colour has inspired me to consider the agency of all of my tools and materials. I set up colour-gesture situations that allow the physicality of my tools and materials to express themselves. My body, brushes, pigments, paints and surfaces all work together as a colour delivery system. My paintings are drawn colour. Gestures bump up against each other and move with a consciousness of the edges of the picture plane. Repetition and layering of looping and swirling gestures evoke the presence of my body and invite a vicarious bodily response in the viewer.

*Get in touch with Leon: www.leonphillips.ca
Instagram: @leonphillipsart*



Wiggle 22, 2023, oil on paper, 56.5 x 76.2 cm
Next page down: *Wiggle 9, 2023, oil on paper, 56.5 x 76.2 cm*





Karina Nova



*From The Looking Glass, 2020, Digital Illustration
Left page: Nada Me Sirve, 2021, Digital Illustration*

Art and Technology

Karina Nova is passionate about exploring the intersection of technology and art, creating works that push the boundaries of both. As the person behind iammunkee, they blend digital innovation with artistic expression to craft experiences that are both visually striking and deeply engaging. Their approach is centered around making art that invites interaction and sparks curiosity. By harnessing the latest digital tools and techniques, Karina creates pieces that encourage viewers to connect with the art in a meaningful way. Karina's work is a reflection of their curiosity and dedication to exploring new artistic possibilities. Through their digital projects, they strive to offer fresh perspectives and challenge traditional notions of art. Their goal is to inspire viewers to see art—and technology—in new and exciting ways.

*Get in touch with Karina: iammunkee.com
Instagram: [@iammunkee](https://www.instagram.com/iammunkee)*

About Me

My name is Karina Nova, born and raised in the Dominican Republic, a small country in the Caribbean. I work as a senior art director and illustrator, known in the digital world as iammunkee. Studied Communication Design at Altos de Chavón School of Design and completed my studies at Parsons School of Design where I earned my BFA.

I was first introduced to art from a very young age, my mother studied fine arts and was an arts and crafts teacher in school. Since I can remember, I was constantly doodling or drawing, sometimes in very odd places like my mother's car, which she wasn't fond of. I wasn't very talkative as a kid so I used art as a means to express myself. I grew up watching tv shows like Pappyland and Art Attack, and I was always fascinated by what they came up with, which inspired me to create.



*Inside Out, 2020
Digital Illustration*

Kathryn Kenworth



Regular or Decaf, 2019
Collage and Color Pencil on Paper, 6 x 6 Inches
Right column: *Vanilla, 2022, Acrylic on Panel, 8 x 8 Inches*

About Kathryn

Born and raised in Los Angeles, CA, I received my BFA from the University of Colorado at Boulder and my MFA from Mills College in Oakland, CA where I still live and work. I have exhibited my work in galleries, museums, universities, storefront windows, parking lots and art fairs. I have attended several artist residencies including the Headlands Center for the Arts CA, MacDowell Colony NH, Foundation House, CT, Bundaon in Australia and Au Bout du Plongeoir in France.

Additionally, I have received grants from the Pollock Krasner Foundation NY, the Leon Levy Foundation NY, Awesome Foundation CA and Théâtre à l'envers France in support of the work I do. I work in a variety of mediums from drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, installation and social practice. Regardless the medium, all my work focuses on mass-produced items, how we see ourselves in them and how are we motivated by them.

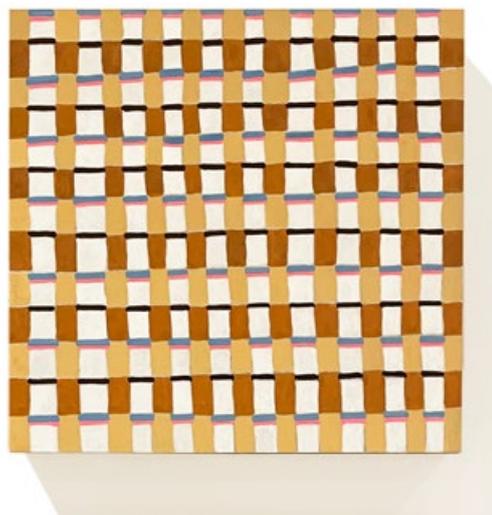
Consumer Culture & Questions of Value

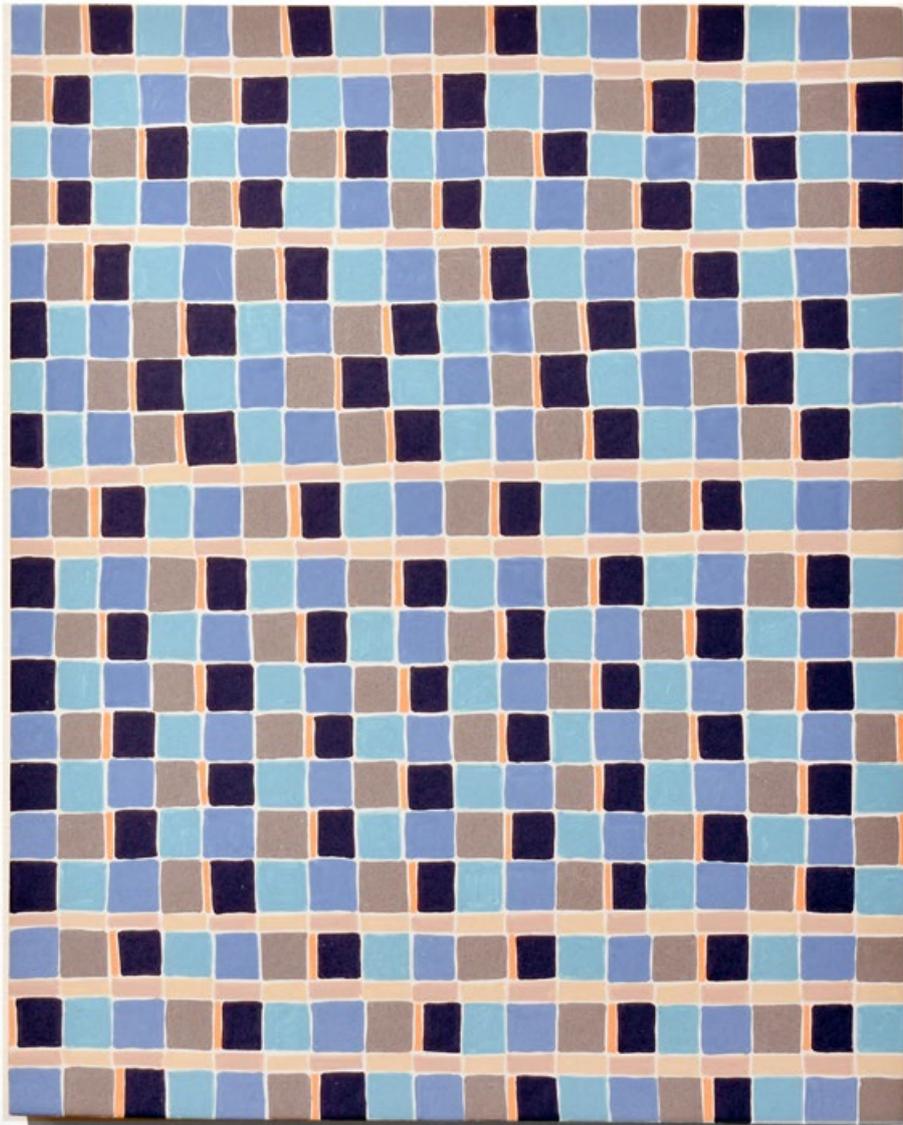
Face cream, aspirin and duct tape are a few of the countless products we might encounter and overlook in our daily lives. These consumer items and the culture that promotes them is what inspires most of my work. What if instead of buying products they become a catalyst for seeing the everyday in a new way?

The color palettes in these works come from consumer product packaging meant to attract buyers and communicate qualities like effectiveness and value. Rather than luring consumers to buy, the colors are woven together in repetitive lines and show irregularities like handmade tapestries rather than factory made goods.

Color can transmit subjective sensations, conjuring taste, touch, scent or texture. Color carries many powerful associations but also has the ability to speak universally, to draw people together and act as a unifying element and create a common ground to tell a different story.

*Get in touch with Kathryn: www.kathrynkenworth.com
Instagram: [@kathrynkenworth](https://www.instagram.com/kathrynkenworth)*





Creame Formula, 2023
Acrylic On Panel, 8 x 10 Inches

Preston Rakovsky



Letters, 2024
Physical Setup at New York City

About Preston

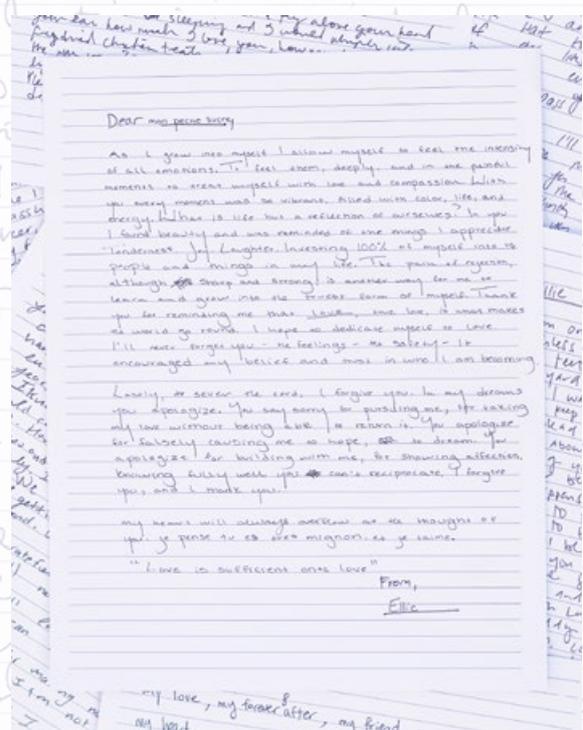
Preston Rakovsky is a multidisciplinary artist based in New York City, focusing on the complexities of human connection and vulnerability. By collecting and curating handwritten letters from strangers, Preston transforms these anonymous stories into a mosaic of human experiences.

Their work merges visual art with personal narratives, pushing the boundaries of traditional storytelling to create pieces that resonate emotionally and intellectually. Preston remains dedicated to exploring the intersections of art, emotion, and connection, inviting viewers to reflect on their own experiences and relationships.

Who will you never forget?

The Letters project is dedicated to capturing the raw essence of human vulnerability. It began as a way to foster deeper connections among strangers by offering a safe space for them to express their most profound emotions without fear of judgment.

Through handwritten letters, individuals from diverse backgrounds share intimate snapshots of love, loss, hope, and everything in between. By encouraging these acts of vulnerability, the project aspires to build a more empathetic and understanding world, one letter at a time.



Handwritten Letter, 2024

Get in touch with Preston
on Instagram: @prestonrack

to show me the world was
your apartment. From
"I would Donut the cat
Suboart Magazine

next time you see her, for
the millionth time.
Muffin

stung + cover
sleeping and I would whisper into
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Dear Hillie,

You've been on my mind recently. I can picture your toothless smile when you finally lost those two front teeth. I can hear your giggle from the front yard as you run through the sprinkler with Luke. I want to pull you aside, whisper in your ear to keep playing as long as you can. I want to plead with you not to grow up too fast. You're about to reach an age when people start praising you for being "so mature for your age" and for being "wise beyond your years." When that happens, you're going to light up, you're going to feel like people see you and you're going to buy into this narrative. I fear this will be a turning point for you and will put you on the trajectory that brings you to me. So I beg of you, stay sweet and silly and young just a little while longer. Play with Luke outside until dark, get a little muddy in the park, run as fast as you can, color outside the lines and climb to the highest branch in the oak tree next door. There's plenty of time ahead to be serious, to get perfect grades, to accomplish all the things. You got this. Short window to be young and carefree, I want you to enjoy all of it. You'll understand what I mean when you get here, I promise.

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I just don't get what I did
I wish you would
not talking to
of you

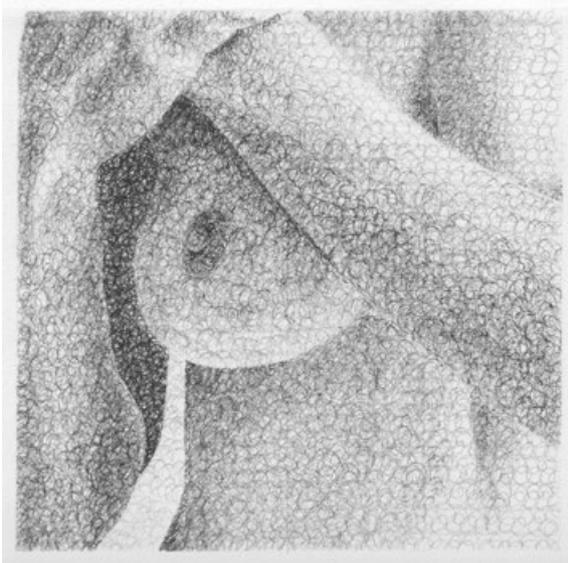
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I Day Dream about who yo
your Dreams, Ambitions, Fear

I know
could call you are
come. How much healthier I
of you and your new girlfriend or
felt so happy for you
And

Juliette Filippi



Sabrina, 2024, Fineliner on paper, 25 x 25 cm
Right column: Sylvie, 2024, Fineliner on paper, 25 x 35 cm
Next page: Juliette, 2024, Fineliner on paper, 25 x 35 cm

About Juliette

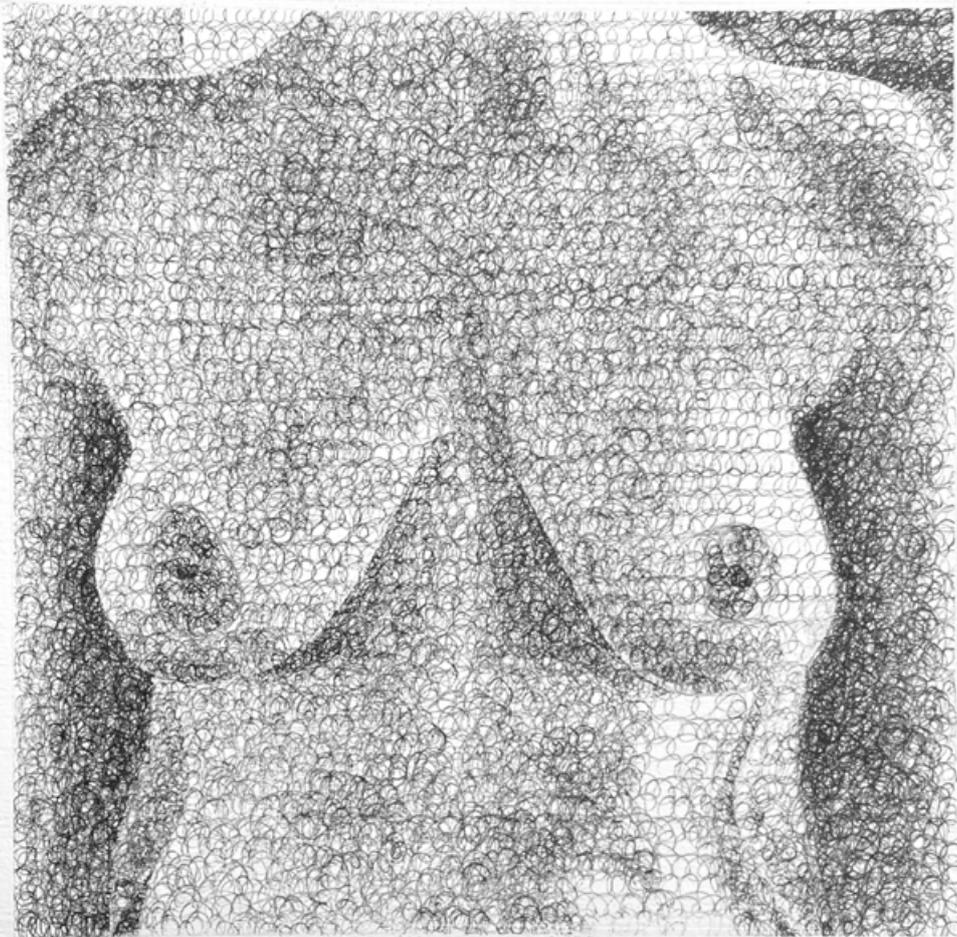
Juliette Filippi was born in 1990 in Paris, where she grew up and still lives today. Passionate about drawing and painting from a very young age, she trained in fine arts at the Mairie de Paris Fine Art school while pursuing her studies. After earning a degree in management from HEC and starting a career in consulting, she returned to her first loves by founding Le PAON (www.le-paon.com) in 2020, an art school aimed at democratizing artistic practices as a vector for creativity and well-being. In parallel, she continues to develop her own artistic practice through personal creations and private commissions. She exhibited her work twice in Paris in 2023, at the Hôtel de l'Industrie (75006) and at the Espace Temps gallery (75003).

Get in touch with Juliette on Instagram: [@juliettefili](https://www.instagram.com/juliettefili)

Treasures of Everyday Lives

Through instinctive and repetitive gestures reminiscent of doodling, Juliette Filippi crafts vibrant images that uncover fragments of the human body, inviting us to reconnect with our physical selves. Like an explorer of intricate landscapes, Juliette examines the nuances of human anatomy, finding wonder in a curve or a wrinkle. Challenging advertising stereotypes, she employs a cryptic yet modest visual language to celebrate our most precious asset — our bodies and how we navigate the world — notably through a series that candidly depicts breasts, reflecting the journeys they endure and portraying the lived reality of women. Juliette's suggestive and enigmatic works encourage us to reflect on our intimate relationship with our bodies, transcending societal norms to reveal the essence of our humanity. Her art serves as a poetic invitation to discover the overlooked treasures in everyday life.





Dániel Selyebi

About Dániel

Dani Selyebi was born on February 9, 1995 in Budapest. After graduating from high school, he participated in a two-year graphic design course from 2016 to 2018, where he already felt that illustration was the closest to him. After that, he self-taught developed himself, where he experimented a lot with figurative abstract ink drawings. He also got a taste of the tattooing profession from 2018 to 2019, but soon realized that he could not connect to this. From 2021, he started working on orders as a freelancer, where he painted numerous small-scale ink drawings and paintings, usually animal portraits in his distinctive figurative abstract style, but also created label designs as well as book and verse illustrations.

In 2023, he began experimenting with larger and larger canvas paintings, and since then he has created several series. In 2022, he created the cover design and illustrations for his new book of poems for Imre Lutter (president of the Association of Hungarian Poets). In 2022, he participated in the three-week residency program of Budapest Hybrid-cycle. (Tiszta Balaton) the works created here have participated in several group exhibitions throughout the country. In 2022, he participated in several nature-themed group exhibitions of the hybridart pop-up gallery. In 2022, he held his first solo exhibition (Balance), which was shown at the Easy Art Space in Budapest.

From 2023, his plans took a new direction, he is currently working on expanding his portfolio in order to present his larger paintings through international galleries.

Living in the Here and Now

I am mostly inspired by nature and the balance I perceive there. I feel that everything is connected to everything in harmony. Living beings known and unknown to us are in contact with higher planes of existence, but at the same time this energy is also deeply grounded. Perfect channels, thus giving a kind of flow, which can also be called primal trust. This kind of feeling or connection emerges in the here and now, which I started practicing thanks to my painting. Living and keeping the present has now become so connected to the creation that it has become more important to me than any train of thought or philosophy that I want to express.

My goal is to experience the feelings behind the thoughts. To express the dynamism of moments imbued with trust, as if these sensitive beings had a direct passage between the boundaries of the astral world. I would like to express this kind of living, the transubstantiation between the planes of life and a constant scope.

I prioritize the flow, where I use each spot and line to guide the eye, keeping in mind a dose of dynamism. I try to keep the nature of the character to some extent based on the principle of less is more, but more and more they start to deviate in the direction of abstraction compared to my early, more figurative works.

*Get in touch with Dániel: www.daniselyebi.com
Instagram: @daniselyebi*

*Up: Dream, 2024, ink on canvas, 150 x 210 cm
Down: Mr. fox, 2023, ink on canvas, 80 x 120 cm (left)
Rite, 2024, ink on canvas, 210 x 160 cm (right)*



Dear artists,

Thank you for allowing us to share your beautiful and intriguing works with the world. Receiving your submissions, reading more about your backgrounds and your practice, conducting the interviews, and lastly, putting this magazine together, has been a real pleasure. All the best for your future artistic ventures, maybe our paths will cross again.

Nina & Carolina
(Editors)



Additional credits & information

Cover Image: Jennifer Nieuwland, Solace, 2023, Oil on wood panel, 60 x 42 cm
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Editorial

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