

Special Edition

ART

H A B E N S

CONTEMPORARY ART REVIEW

KRZYSZTOF ŚLACHCIAK

CHRIS KLEIN

LAURENCE de VALMY

ELDARIN YEONG

JORDI ROSADO

VAIVA KOVIERAITĖ-TRUMPĖ

ANGEL CORREA

ONJUNG AMY KIM

SARAH CHYAN

OnJung Amy Kim

ART

Contemporary Art Press



CONTEMPORARY ART REVIEW



Laurence de Valmy

France / USA

My work on the POST series, is based on the life and work of some major artists through fictional Instagram posts from the past.

My goals are to share about the stories behind the artworks, the connections between these artists either through time or because they were contemporaries, and to make my viewers consider these iconic artworks with a renewed interest by replacing them in the context of their creation.



Krzysztof Ślachciak

Poland

Once I thought a good photograph is when a viewer understands it exactly as a photographer wanted. I disagree with that today.

What if a photographer never wanted to say anything? Photography is not a language, a least my photography is not. My works do not tell any stories, they do not have any obscured sence, and above all they do not tell any universal truth.

My photographs serve down to earth purposes.



Onjung Amy Kim

United Kingdom

OnJung Amy Kim's art works are about her process of showing frictions between external environments and internal selves. The selections of works presents her detection of contradictory desires - which has an overwhelming power, but at the same time functioning as the driving force of her life. Each artwork expresses acceptance and embracement of contradictory and often distorted self, away from its correction or acclimation.



Chris Klein

Being a scenic artist, I paint the sets for film and the stage. But I work closely with other departments and my costume paintings are my way of reaching out to some of the other forms of art that I am involved with.

I work closely with designers, and this is my tribute to their work. It's also my tribute to the actors, performers and dancers whom these costumes are made for.

And these costumes invoke so many stories.



Vaiva Kovieraitė-Trumpė

Lithuania

The current body of artwork includes mixed media which transforms into own technique.

During the creative process I look for new and different ways of visual expression and a wider range of measures forming compositions.

While interpreting the postmodern worldview, elaborating on paradigm of this aspect I jump to conclusions and use them for my searches, composition and creation of artworks.



Eldarin Yeong

USA / United Kingdom

Eldarin is a theatre director, writer and producer. She studied the works of Rudolf Laban and the Theatre of Absurd at the drama school, and became heavily influenced by the writing of Sartre, Lautréamont, and by Expressionist Dance. Her passion lies in physical theatre, cross-disciplinary work, and research of psychology. She often takes a stand on controversial social issues like justified killing, child abuses, forced marriage, plastic surgery, life of older LGBT people, and more.



Angel Correa

United Kingdom

Such an enquiry of matters such as physicality, morphology and fragmentation must ultimately explore both cultural and individual understandings of what is acceptable in terms of the manner in which the body, physical presence, and ultimately life and death are perceived. It can also with some justification interrogate various themes concerning what is termed the supernatural and the sense of 'hauntedness' that often arises from traumatic experiences.



Sara Chyan

United Kingdom

Sara reckons jewellery is an object that carries more than just an intrinsic significance, for it is not merely an ornament but also a medium for expressing one's individuality. Temperature plays a major role in her project. Changes in temperature can lead to changes in the physical forms of the chosen metal. This transition between solid and liquid phases caused by heat gives metal an emotional character and transforms the metallic jewellery into an emotional



Jordi Rosado

Spain

All the thought about existence, reality and free thought is what I do with my work. At the same time I love working aesthetics for aesthetics. If more pretensions, without more hidden ideas, without anything. When you flow with your surroundings, when the image speaks to you, you only make it appear on paper. This is a way of working that I love. An artist with whom I feel very comfortable is Pablo Picasso, because when I do not think that the world is m, aravilloso and fantastic, I think of the amount of shit we have at our disposal.

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On the cover: **OnJung Amy Kim**

Chris Klein

Chris is a British artist, currently sharing time between Quebec and Ontario in Canada, exhibiting his work in Europe and North America. In 1983 Chris's work was accepted by the Royal Academy of Arts in London, UK for their prestigious Summer Exhibition. Before coming to Canada he was also an associate member of the Guild of Motoring Artists. As well as producing his own work, he is also a scenic artist for film and theatre. For ten years he was the head of scenic art at the Stratford Festival of Canada in Ontario, and at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Chris has worked on many sets, creating backdrops and related artwork and has contributed to many productions in London's West End and Broadway. In Canada, he has painted for many major Hollywood films and many shows for the Cirque du Soleil. Chris's "Costumes Series" was largely inspired by his work in theatre. As the Head of Scenic Art in the largest classical theatre in North America, he worked next door to their costume archive, thousands of costumes from all periods waiting for their next performance on the stage. It was here that his costume series began to crystalize.

"Being a scenic artist, I paint the sets for film and the stage. But I work closely with other departments and my costume paintings are my way of reaching out to some of the other forms of art that I am involved with. I work closely with designers, and this is my tribute to their work. It's also my tribute to the actors, performers and dancers whom these costumes are made for. And also to the vast array of skilled people who actually create these pieces, cutting and stitching, embroidery, leather and metal work, the list goes on. And these costumes invoke so many stories. The people who have worn them, the performances they have played and the stages they have walked. I am working on projects to celebrate famous designers and choreographers. Recently I was holding and photographing a costume worn by Rudolf Nureyev, I feel humbled by all that creative energy behind the design, the choreography and the dance, all I do is paint them!"

Not only does Chris paint costumes from film and theatre, recently he has started painting from designer collections and has been allowed access to paint from museums and the Royal collection from Kensington Palace in London, UK, painting some of the clothing worn by past royalty going back hundreds of years. Chris's other body of work is his "Second Hand" series. Mainly depicting scenes of salvage yards and recycling materials, twisted metal, rust and paint. "I feel my Second Hand series compliments my costumes. Both play with colour and texture, light and shadow. Although I paint them with a light, child-like humour, often titling the paintings with my personal thoughts and placing objects and toys among the wreckage, there are also deeper motives, reflecting the contemporary age of "disposable everything", they are landscapes of our modern era, humanity's global stamp on our planet". In recent years Chris has exhibited in Romania, Portugal, Montreal, Toronto, London, Miami, Houston, and New York. In June 2019 he has a solo show in New York at Bernarducci Gallery in Chelsea.

Solo exhibitions

- 2019 Bernarducci Gallery, New York
- 2017 Westland Gallery, London, Ontario, Canada
- 2016 Agora Gallery, Stratford, Ontario, Canada
- 2013 Galerie Richelieu, Montreal, Canada
- 2013 Galerie Luz, Montreal, Canada



Chris painting the show floor for "The Sound of Music" p



performed at the Stratford Festival in 2015. Set designed by Michael Gianfrancesco



One of many fun moments on the set of "Journey to the Centre of the Earth" 2008. A dinosaur skull to be hoisted up out of a volcano shaft carrying the stars to safety.

An interview with

Chris Klein

An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens.biennale@europe.com

Hello Chris and welcome to ART Habens. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would invite our readers to visit <https://www.chrisklein.com> in order to get a synoptic view about your multifaceted artistic production and would start this interview with a couple of questions about your background. It's important to remark that you are an experienced scenic artist for film and theatre and that you have served for years as the head of scenic art at both the Stratford Festival and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. How did these experience influence your work as a painter and how does the imagery from cinema and theatre inspire your creative process?

Firstly, you feature some incredible artists in your magazine, so I want to thank you very much for including me among them.

For almost all of my life so far, I've been a painter, so initially this influenced my scenic work. But working as a scenic artist expanded my horizons and slowly became an influence on my own painting style.

When I entered the world of scenic painting, it's a very different world. You're never your own boss. If you're not working for a head painter then you're working for the designer. I started out in theatre working in London. I worked for a highly respected scenic artist couple painting sets and backdrops for companies like the Royal Opera House or Walt Disney's The Lion King. You have to employ so many diverse techniques for large scale works, often wielding brooms and mops instead of small brushes. But working for and with other people, you learn so many different ways to create similar effects, and



Chris Klein

some of these techniques can be applied to the small canvas.

I've learned to be more open and flexible in my approach to a painting. And my style has evolved from my scenic work. I paint quite loosely, and slowly pull out the details, tightening up the image until I feel happy. I don't want to hide the fact that it's a painting. I always want people to see, on closer inspection, the brushwork and how it's painted.



“Bodywork Needs a Little Rust Treatment”, acrylic on canvas, 120x120cm

But when you stand back, it starts to look more photographic. It's a similar style to scenic painting for films. Backdrops need to be photo-

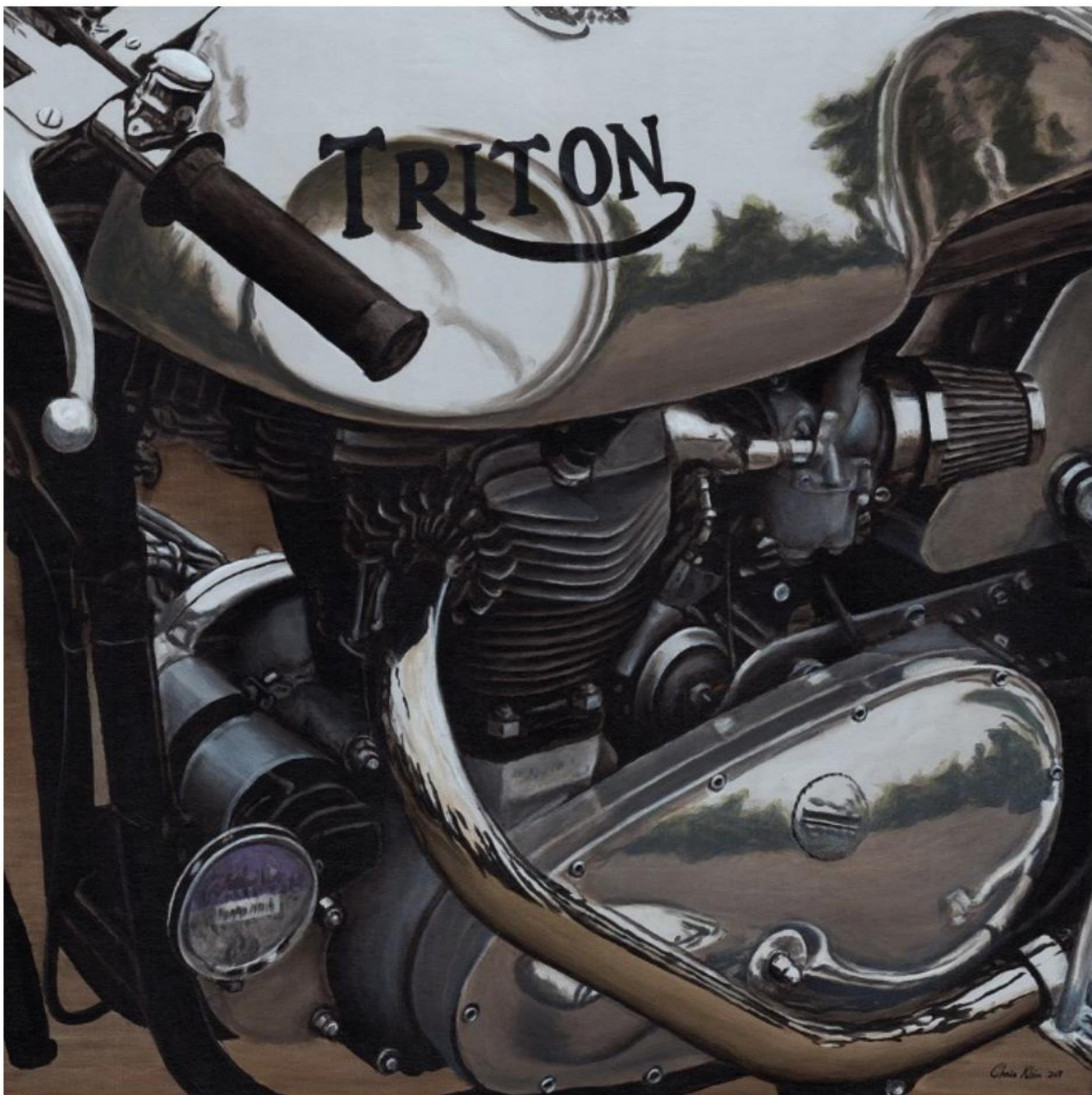
realistic for a movie, but we need to paint it very fast. So we learn to paint quick and loose but you need a good eye to see how it will look



“Teddy Bear’s Playground”, acrylic on canvas, 120x120cm.

from afar. Most often we are walking on the canvas and you cannot simply step back to see the whole image. So it can look extremely crude

up close but when it is hung on set it has that realism for the camera. The imagery in theatre is controlled so much by lighting, it can make or



“The Best of Both”, acrylic on canvas, 85x85cm

break a show. When you watch a piece of theatre, it's often like watching a painting come to life. Each scene can be frozen and enjoyed as

a work of art in itself. I think theatre is more visual than cinema which is more often dependent on storyline. Not always of course,



“Dinosaur’s Picnic”, acrylic on canvas, 120x60cm

but generally speaking I’m more influenced by the visual imagery in theatre which can be very “chiaroscuro”.

The body of works that we have selected for this special edition of ART Habens and that our readers have already started to get to know in

the introductory pages of this article, has captured our attention for the way your artworks invite the viewers to transcend the picture plan, to create an open space that soothes and excite the spectators. When walking our readers through your usual setup and process, we would like to ask you if you think that there is a central idea that connects all your works.

In the physical painting and the processes, I feel both my costumes and recycled materials are very similar and connected. Folded and crumpled materials, it doesn’t matter whether fabric or steel, my painting technique is the same. I sometimes divorce my mind from the fact that I might be painting silk or rusting metal, all materials have their own texture and reflection. I actually find more diversity in the textiles that I paint than the difference between steel or plastic or glass.

But the underlying idea behind the two series have similarities and differences. You could say they’re all “second hand”. So that puts history and past lives into both the series. But I think it ends there.

My Second Hand series generates more diverse thought, and opens up far more possible scenarios, both true and imaginary. The Costumes convey the story of the actors or models who wore them, the stages or streets they have walked. Also all of the creative processes and steps before I even began my painting. The designers and the many skilled craftspeople who create these textile masterpieces.

As you have remarked once, your artworks create their own stories, they can tap into people’s subconscious minds, sparking memories or creating stories that may or may not have existed: how do you consider the role of the viewers in order to complete, with their

visual experiences, the powerful narrative drive conveyed in your paintings? And how do you consider the roles of memory and imagination playing within your creative process?

I think it's very important. After all, surely all art is worthless without a viewer. But the viewer's role changes, depending on the artwork and the creators intentions. I think my intentions are a little different depending whether it's my Second Hand or Costume series.

My costumes are much easier to define in terms of memory and imagination. People who have seen the show, a particular scene etc. And then the people involved in theatre, their appreciation is different, especially designers and the folks involved in creating the costumes. It means a lot to me when the people involved, including the actors of course, tell me how much they appreciate my work. Not long ago someone wrote that they helped create the actual piece that I painted, so many years ago. I must also mention, just as importantly, another audience, who appreciate my costumes purely for the aesthetic beauty, which I don't think I can say for my Second Hand series.

My Second Hand series is even more "viewer-interactive", the diverse imagery and placement of objects in, sometimes incongruous settings, helps prompt the viewer into searching for a story or an explanation of what they are looking at. Some have seen a dark, morbid side, and make analogies to Warhol's "Crash" series. Indeed, I often place toys and playful objects to lighten the feel, but this only prompted one viewer to say, on closer inspection, and already thinking of crashed cars and then noticing the toys, to think of dead children in the wreckage.

It shocked me at first, but then you can't help admiring the power of human imagination and the differences between us all. This thought



"Customised Convertible needs some Attention", acrylic

never occurred to me and happily, almost everybody sees a much lighter side to my paintings.



ic on canvas, 153x244cm

A couple of artworks that we would like to expressly invite our readers to examine are entitled *Bodywork needs a little rust*

treatment and *Teddy Bears Playground*. Differently from what many artists as Man Ray and Max Ernst — who often decontextualized



“Swan Lake”, Acrylic on canvas, 122x182cm

their objects in order to attempt to nudge their audience to new conceptualizations — your artworks seem to heavily draw from the

context that they represent, urging the viewers to appreciate beauty in the ordinary: how is your daily life projected into your



artworks? In particular, where does your fascination with such unconventional subjects come from?

I think this is the “artist’s eye”. Other artists have said similar things, artists are more likely to notice the unnoticed. Walking a busy street, I see the light hitting a plastic garbage bag and see the forms within. It could simply be an abstraction but it’s the play of light and dark, or the texture that grabs my attention. In fact just a couple of months ago in London I was to be found taking many photos of garbage bags in the sun, they looked wonderful. But everybody was walking past them not even noticing. There is a beauty to be found everywhere but sadly most goes unnoticed. I have had people who have seen my paintings, later remark that they’ve been noticing scrap metal and other objects that they would never have done so before and thinking of my work.

One interesting story, when I was only painting theatre costumes at the time. I was working at the Stratford Festival in Ontario and a few of my colleagues had seen them. Our driver whom I really didn’t expect to have such an amazing visual eye, (he was a musician and so still artistic) told me how he drove past the local scrap yard and saw a stack of crushed cars. He immediately thought of my costume paintings, but instead of fabric it was folded steel, and horizontal rather than vertical. I went straight over there in my lunch hour to take photos. This is where my Second Hand series was born.

Many of your artworks are marked out with an elusive still ubiquitous symmetrical perspective and quite varied contrast between light and dark tones: how do you consider the relationship between such a captivating rigorous sense of geometry that pervades your artistic production and the tones you select? How do you structure your palette in order to achieve such brilliant results?

I’m influenced by several artists whom I’ve admired since I was very young. Particularly the masters of chiaroscuro, such as Caravaggio and





“Cinderella’s Ball”, Acrylic on canvas, 138x214cm





Chris painting "Le Misanthrope"
for his solo show coming up at Bernarducci Gallery in New York in June 2019

Joseph Wright of Derby, and some of the Dutch masters. I used to stare at “An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump” for many hours. An incredible composition, everything is so perfectly balanced. Only a few months ago I was back there again in the National Gallery, staring at this painting once more.

I don't feel I'm making a conscious effort to structure my compositions, but obviously I do to an extent. I work mostly from photographs I take. So firstly I choose a frame that already I would consider would work for a painting. If I'm outside, I often prefer sunlight to strengthen the shadows. Inside, I need my own light to control. I cannot always move objects or place them in the real world, so when I study the photos, I may then adjust them a little, moving an item or placing new objects in the frame, sometimes having to move shadows a little. I do this in Photoshop to create the image that I am happy with.

And finally, as I paint and the image develops in front of me, I may make alterations which may not be in my worked/Photoshop image but I feel is necessary to complete the picture. I often use a softer and warmer palette than in my image too, particularly for my Second Hand series. It somehow “softens” the cold hard edge of metal. One artist once mentioned the “velvety” quality to my paintings, I understood, but realized this wasn't a conscious decision on my part, it just came from my subconscious aesthetic.

Photographer and sculptor Zoe Leonard once stated, "the objects that we leave behind hold the marks and the sign of our use: like archaeological findings, they reveal so much about us". We'd love to ask you about the qualities of the materials that you include in your artworks, with a particular focus on your Second Hand series, where you combined



“Costumes of William Schmuck”

Acrylic on canvas, 120x60cm

recycled materials: as an artist working with diverse media, how do you select them and what do you address to combine found materials?

This is an interesting question. I feel I don't choose the objects but rather they choose me.



“Christina the Girl King”, Acrylic on canvas, 85x85cm

This subject began when I was wondering around a local scrap yard. It felt like a kaleidoscope of opportunities! I took so many

photos that day, and it produced so much material for me to paint from, I still haven't finished going through it all yet. As I look at





“Alice Through the Looking Glass No.07”, Acrylic on canvas, 153x214cm



“The House of Capulet”, Acrylic on canvas, 152x183cm



“The Phantom of the Opera, Carlotta”, Acrylic on canvas, 148x148cm

each object, stories manifest in my mind. Sometimes I find an almost perfect composition, but my imagination creates a story

that suggests to me that it needs some additional object. Only then do I intentionally find that particular object to place in my work.



“Romeo and Juliet, Two Capulets”

acrylic on canvas, 120x60cm

A typical example would be “The Teddy Bears Playground”. The composition of this was almost perfect as in the original photograph. But all the objects suggested to me a playground, but the objects were small, I think one item looked a little like a hamster wheel. So

I added the teddy bear, he became my alter ego so that he can enjoy the playground that I had invented. But I also want people to create stories of their own. I try to nudge them away from too many dark thoughts, as I mentioned earlier, it’s surprising where some people’s imaginations can take them. That’s why I often use playful titles, they have meanings taken from my own imaginings, but I try not to influence people’s thoughts too much.

As a painter, you have a very distinct visual identity and you often paint large canvases that provide the viewers with such an immersive visual experience: how do the dimensions of your canvas affect your workflow?

I really enjoy painting larger canvases. They do take a lot of time but I do love the “immersion” that they give, you can “walk into them”. I’ve always wanted to paint large. It helps when you’re also a scenic artist. In film and theatre you can really paint big! One film I worked with a team of 3 others to paint a forest scene almost 60 metres wide.

You can also paint “looser” on a large canvas, which fits my preferred style. Not as extreme as scenic painting but I still like the crudeness up close, so the viewer can study the technique. As you step back it becomes more photographic. When painting small, you know the viewer will be very close to the image, so I feel the need to put much finer detail into it, thus my style changes.

German artist Gerhard Richter once underlined that “it is always only a matter of seeing: the physical act is unavoidable”: how do you consider the relation between the abstract feature of the ideas you aim to communicate and the physical act of creating your artworks?

I think when the artist creates, they see no separation between the two. You don’t think of



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The set of **"Beyond Borders"** 2003
Behind the wood cabin and some real trees is
the forest backdrop Chris helped to paint measuring almost 60 metres wide.

the abstract idea and then the physical painting and try to integrate the two, they flow seamlessly together. While I paint, the feeling of the idea permeates through. Sometime I make adjustments to the painting and my wife might say “why did you change that?” I cannot always explain, but I think that perhaps the idea that I want to convey might have drifted and I’m simply pulling it back in line.

You are an established artist and over the years your artworks have been showcased on several occasions, including your upcoming solo show at Bernarducci Gallery, New York. The spectator plays an active role in determining meaning in your artworks: What do you hope that the public takes away from your work? Is audience engagement a critical consideration for you, and is there a particular way of engagement that you seek to encourage?

I think it’s wonderful if the viewer can engage with my work, I imagine most artists would want this, if not they would leave with nothing, a waste, and surely no one would buy a piece of art that conveys nothing. I try not to push my personal agenda onto anybody, I would encourage viewers to interpret my work within their own personal experiences. Perhaps more so with my Second Hand series. I have had people saying how playful my paintings are, a lot of my titles reflect this also. But occasionally people have seen darkness and tragedy, it’s all down to the individual. But if art moves you, in any way at all, it means it is working.

My Costumes series affects people quite differently, and for obvious reasons. They are popular with designers, in fact all craftspeople involved in creating the costumes that I paint. Also theatre people, whether involved in production, the actors or the audience members. My paintings are a tribute to all these people involved in the craft. Also, they are rich in aesthetic beauty, unlike my Second Hand series, which provokes more discussion. This



Anot



her set for “Journey to the Centre of the Earth” 2008, one of Chris’s colleagues adding final touches to a cave scene



Initial construction of a vast set for “The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor” 2008. The final set shows many statu



es carved from the living rock, included a huge reclining Buddha

can explain why my costumes are more popular, the colours, the textures, normally the only tragedy that a viewer can place in these works are if they are from a theatrical tragedy like Romeo and Juliet.

We have appreciated the originality of your artistic research and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, Chris. What projects are you currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you hope to explore in the future?

I'm working on a few projects and have more on the horizon. Currently I have started on a series of costumes from the famous choreographies of Fernand Nault, a name that will be back on the map for Canada, particularly Quebec for the oncoming two of years. His "Nutcracker" has been performed in Montreal for more than 50 years during the Christmas season. "Carmina Burana" is being restaged with the Colorado Ballet this spring. And Tommy, choreographed on The Who's Rock Opera.

His 100th birthday is coming up in 2020 and there will be lots of celebrations.

Also, last year I was invited by Zandra Rhodes to her studio in London to photograph from her collection. She is an incredible fashion designer and this year she is celebrating 50 years in design. She's designed for Freddie Mercury for his Bohemian Rhapsody tour, many dresses for Princess Diana, Princess Anne as well as countless celebrities like Elizabeth Taylor, Helen Mirren, Jackie Onassis and Lauren Bacall. I've also been allowed to photograph the collection of Martin Kamer and Wolfgang Ruf, they have one of the most important collections of period costumes in the world.

I'm also working on more costumes from the Royal Ceremonial Collection from Kensington Palace as well as from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. I'm starting to paint



A line up of terra cotta warriors, made especially for the film **“The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor”** 2008

costumes from the Phantom of the Opera and hopefully some other shows designed by the incredible Maria Bjornson.

And lastly I have been talking with movie director Tarsem Singh and producer Nicholas Soutanakis for permission to paint some of the

stunning designs of the late Eiko Ishioka. Her spectacular, dreamlike designs were used in all of Tarsem’s films until she passed away. She won an Oscar for her costumes in Francis Ford Coppola’s “Bram Stoker’s Dracula”.



The popularity of my costumes series seems to be taking over at the moment, but I'm looking forward to exploring my Second Hand series further, there's so much more I could develop from this series but I have a great deal to catch up on, I have to be patient.

There are other plans on the horizon but I think I've said enough!

*An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
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Eldarin Yeong

Eldarin is a theatre director, writer and producer. She studied the works of Rudolf Laban and the Theatre of Absurd at the drama school, and became heavily influenced by the writing of Sartre, Lautréamont, and by Expressionist Dance. Her passion lies in physical theatre, cross-disciplinary work, and research of psychology. She often takes a stand on controversial social issues like justified killing, child abuses, forced marriage, plastic surgery, life of older LGBT people, and more.



An interview with

Eldarin Yeong

An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens.biennale@europe.com

Hello Eldarin and welcome to **ART Habens**. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would start this interview with a couple of questions about your background. You have a solid formal training and you studied the works of Rudolf Laban and the Theatre of Absurd at the drama school: how did those formative years influence your evolution as an artist? In particular, how does your cultural substratum direct the trajectory of your current artistic research?

Hello and thanks for having me.

I was brought up in a typical conservative Asian family. By being 'typical conservative' I mean your career options are limited to doctor, lawyer and civil servant. I thought of myself as a rebel in the family. Prior to drama school, I had my degrees in Life Sciences. My parents were entirely unaware of the change until I completed my study at the drama school - they simply thought I was taking an internship at a research institute.

I don't consider my years in Sciences wasted though. Sciences taught me logic, a sense of detachment, and to be critical with yourself, which defines a large part of me not only as an artist but also as who I am. And this was what initially drew me into Laban. He was an architect before he found his passion for choreography. His systematic method of examining body movement and emotions is very similar to conducting a psychological experiment. You start to identify the causes (i.e. the motives) by analyzing the



Eldarin Yeong

phenomena (i.e. the gestures and body languages). And through manipulating the parameters on the body movement scale, you can produce interesting results, however harmonious or absurd. This provides me with the vocabulary to articulate what I want to achieve and to describe something intangible. Laban took a lot of inspirations from Nature and abstract forms, which made his language practical

and yet poetic. It generates a different type of reference for the artists to put their imaginations upon.

About Theatre of Absurd, I think I am always a bit pessimistic about the human conditions. So Theatre of Absurd seems to be a natural affinity to me, although having a logical mind can sound a bit contradictory. The absurdity of this genre, however, lies merely in the language and sometimes the scenarios. The truth is concealed in the relationships between characters and the subtext. The undeniable beauty of Theatre of Absurd, from my point of view, is its playfulness, as well as the rich density. It gives the artists plenty of space to incorporate their own ideas to fill all the gaps.

You are an eclectic artist and your cross disciplinary practice embraces dance, performance and installation, to pursue such *engaging* visual results: before starting to elaborate about your artistic production, we would invite to our readers to visit <https://www.eldarin-yeong-studio.co.uk> in order to get a synoptic idea about your artistic production: would you tell us what does address you to such captivating multidisciplinary approach? How do you compose such a wide variety of artistic disciplines in order to explore a particular aspect of your artistic inquiry?

Forms are solely different means of interpreting reality and thoughts. I don't think one's artwork should be restricted by forms.

The content comes first, and then the form. I first realised this when I was working on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* at the



drama school. It is an extremely ambiguous play, raising questions on social and moral values. We were asked to work on some elements of the story and express it in any chosen format. My classmates wrote



poems, short scenes, and argumentative essays, while I drew a pile of installation sketches: I simply couldn't find a better substitute for Shakespeare's own words, his symbolically charged imagery left me

speechless. I felt the only way for me to express myself was through anything but words. I failed the coursework, of course, because it was after all a written assignment. Then, later on, I came across



Beckett's *Breath*, and I resented that I did not read it earlier...

I very much resist the idea of categorizing one's practice – it's like some kind of by-

product of the Industrial Revolution, where each person has to specialise in one particular area. Making art is a polymathic process. Even for artists who employ a single medium, it is unavoidable of engaging



the aesthetical, social, political, philosophical, psychological or intellectual aspects. So for me, it is not 'how you make it' matters, it is 'what you make'. Many of my works are collaborations.

They don't often start as multidisciplinary projects. It is through the development of the concept we slowly find out what we need. The team may start with two people and gradually grows bigger. The initial idea then becomes a shared vision. By integrating mixed skills and disciplines you can build something beyond an individual vision. It is difficult to let your self-consciousness stay out of the room because we are all artists with our own egos. However, sometimes no matter how brilliant an idea is, you have to jump out of the box and see what actually works for the piece, for the whole image.

For this special edition of *ART Habens* we have selected *Dry Room*, an interesting project that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article and whose trailer can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/259065207>. What has at once impressed us of your insightful exploration of *the theme of childhood trauma* is the way it provides the viewers with such a multilayered visual experience, capable of challenging their perceptual parameters. When walking our readers through the genesis of *Dry Room*, would you tell us how did you develop the initial idea?

Dry Room is a performance installation. The narrative follows three children who are the survivors of childhood trauma. To escape from their sufferings, they embark on a journey of self-discovery and encounter the demons of the past. Some fragments depicted were taken from real life, but it is nowhere near an autobiography. The idea of *Dry Room* came when Zi Ling the visual artist and I decided to develop a dance piece based on Magritte's paintings. We started to







discuss Magritte and the way he portrayed women. His female figures are often presented in a submissive manner, erotic yet vulnerable. Martha Wolfenstein the psychoanalyst suggested that this may be caused by the traumatic experience of seeing the half-naked body of his drowned mother as a child. We were compelled by the psychological impact that childhood trauma has on adults, and soon started our research on the topic.

My case studies on MacArthur Story Stem Battery technique laid the foundation for my writing. It was an approach used by psychologists to understand children's experience and their relationships with others through story-telling. The stories that these children wrote are weirdly disturbing and imaginative. They reminded me of the Mother Goose rhymes. It was an unbearably painful process to read through the analysis of each story and to imagine what these children went through. The story I wrote is not a happy one, and I extinguished any wishful thinking. It is not about pleasing the audience and let them have a good time.

There are thirteen titled scenes in the performance, and we embedded allusions and symbols in the titles, the lyrics, the sound, the gestures, the shapes, the colours... We integrated some of Magritte's signatures into the visuals, the use of bowler hat and umbrella, for example. Ling designed a lot of conceptual assemblages made of household objects. By arranging these objects in a particular way, it creates new stimuli to the audiences' eyes.

Since the experience of childhood trauma and the pains caused by it can stay unspeakable and unnoticed, I wanted the audience to decode the performance themselves and discover the underlying messages.

Heavily influenced by Expressionist Dance, Dry Room has drawn heavily from the specifics of urban surroundings and we have highly appreciated the way you have created such powerful resonance between the intimate qualities of ordinary locations and the atmosphere that floats around the performance: how did you select the locations and how did they influence your shooting process?

I chose Canary Wharf as a filming location because of its dystopian look: the emotionless office workers dressed in suits walk speedily passing each other, the coldness of post-modernism architecture, the fragile and sleek glass windows. In my view, it is the perfect place to permanently to install one of Bruce Nauman's *Raw Materials* devices, which shouts 'work work work' repeatedly. We tried to illustrate a sense of isolation, selfestrangement and social meaninglessness in this kind of setting.

We filmed during the day when the office workers were hiding in their highly populated concrete blocks. Then it snowed. The street looked more deserted than ever. The flesh of the dancers who danced on the snow, their bright-coloured summer outfits, the sound of the running train in the distance, the occasional interactions from the passersby, in a combination, created a surreal atmosphere.

The combination between sound and visual plays a crucial aspect in *Dry Room* and we have particularly appreciated the way its soundscape created provides the visual experience with such an enigmatic and *ethereal* and a bit *unsettling atmosphere*: according to Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan there is a '*sense bias*' that affects Western societies favoring visual logic, a *shift* that occurred with the advent of modern alphabet as the eye became more essential than ear: how do you consider *the role of sound* within your artistic research?

I remembered the director Katie Mitchell once said in an interview that she saw sound and music as two separate categories that are equally crucial for her work. I quite agree with her.

In dance, especially, sound and music are the vessels to contain the soul of the piece. We experimented a variety of ideas during the process. We explored a great depth in music, including live improvisations, cappella singing, and recorded music, and several genres of music too. I love Mitchell's way of creating sound effects live on the stage using the actors' bodies and simple equipment. It added an extra layer to the audience experience in the way that you can witness that it is happening.

So I try to include as much as the live experience I can in my work. Most of the music in *Dry Room* is played live by the cellist Carolina Bartumeu. We did not have many opportunities to explore sound, except captured environmental sound, the sound that you may encounter every day in your city life yet hardly pay attention to. Like, the flying of the pigeons. We heightened these



sounds to attach a more urban feeling to the piece. It is something that I would like to explore a bit further in my next piece.

Marked out with a powerful narrative drive



and rich of symbolically charged elements, *Dry Room* seems to aim urge the viewers to look inside of what appear to be seen, rather than its surface, providing the spectatorship with freedom to realize their own

perception. How important is for you to invite the viewers to *elaborate personal meanings*? And how do you develop your storytelling in order to achieve such brilliant results?



I was born under the one-child policy while the country was undertaking a great deal of political and economic changes. The pressure was huge both on the parents and the children of that generation. There were

various labels put on to us, like 'lonely', 'oversensitive', or 'spoiled'. According to Stanley Hall, we are even *diseased*. I believe that a large part of the problems were caused by the originated family and the



social pressure surrounding them. And without the presence of siblings, the conflicts between parents and children intensified.

When we toured in Taiwan, a few audience

members were my age. I was glad to hear that they felt the show resonates with them.

There are too many things I would like to express in this piece. The audience may not understand all of them, but I hope they can at least see some truth in it.

At the end of the piece I did not answer the question of how one can overcome his traumatic childhood. I don't think I have the answer. And I hope the audience would think for themselves.

I would not say that I have so far achieved any brilliant results. But I have been very fortunate to be given wonderful opportunities such as the World Stage Design Quadrennial to present my work.

Many of your artworks also take a stand on controversial social issues like justified killing, child abuses, forced marriage, plastic surgery, life of older LGBT. Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco once remarked that "artists's role differs depending on which part of the world they're in. It depends on the political system they are living under": does your artistic research respond to a particular cultural moment? How do you consider the role of artists to tackle sensitive cultural issues in order to trigger social change in our globalised contemporary age?

I don't think my research follows a particular movement. I am just trying to comprehend what I've experienced or witnessed.

I do believe the artist's responsibility to invoke and to inspire. It is a powerful tool that can generate more possibilities for solutions.







Many artists express the ideas that they explore through representations of the body and by using their own bodies in their creative processes. German visual artist Gerhard Richter once underlined that "it is always only a matter of seeing: the physical act is unavoidable": how do you consider the relation between the abstract feature of the ideas you aim to communicate and the physical act of creating your artworks?

For me, the self-debate process decides whether it is indeed necessary to materialize that idea fully through action, and with the presence of the artist or the lack of it. It can last for a long time until I reach that conclusion.

Sometimes it is better to leave certain ideas on the page. But at the same time the act of rejecting can also be seen as a physical act of creating (e.g. Hsieh's *Thirteen Years Plan*). The artist is the embodiment of his work.

Over the years your artworks have been showcased in a number of occasions: DRY ROOM is going to start its UK tour in April and THE MEAL OF MADAM CANDLESTICK will participate to Florence Biennale in Autumn. One of the feature of your works is their ability to create direct involvement with the spectatorship: how do you consider the nature of your relationship with your audience? And what do you hope your audience take away from your artworks?

Kaprow claimed that a space occupied by inactive spectators is a dead space. I'd love to think that I am challenging my audience and forcing them to be active. It is easy to underestimate the audience's intelligence

and dilute the experience, or make it passive.

As you said, my works are controversial. For me and my audience, it is about confrontation, producing a naked organic experience for each other.

We have really appreciated the multifaceted nature of your artistic research and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, Eldarin. What projects are you currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you hope to explore in the future?

My next project is *The Meal of Madam Candlestick*, an analysis of 'honour' killing and 'honour' based violence. I decided to create this piece after I read about Leonora Carrington and her imprisonment in a Spanish mental asylum as a result of her parents' wish. There are some continued threads between *Dry Room* and *Madam Candlestick*, e.g. parents and children relationship, but I still consider them as distinctive projects.

We have also been developing a new piece called *The Revolutionists*. It is currently on hold because of the other two projects, but we aim to realise the production of it within a year or two. It is inspired by Jean Genet's writing, reflecting the themes of violence, ideology, and democracy. You may call it a Political Theatre.

An interview by Dario Rutigliano, curator and Melissa C. Hilborn, curator
arthabens.biennale@europa.com

Vaiva Kovieraitė-Trumpė

Lives and works in Šiauliai, Lithuania

The current body of artwork includes mixed media which transforms into own technique. During the creative process I look for new and different ways of visual expression and a wider range of measures forming compositions.

Mysterious, logic disobeyed, disregard, or even disavowal of principles of beauty. For my graphics I try to give a new spatial and temporal characteristics, to highlight what's close to subconsciousness, pseudo-reality, perverse imagination and uncertainty. While interpreting the postmodern worldview, elaborating on paradigm of this aspect I jump to conclusions and use them for my searches, composition and creation of artworks.

The states of impermanence and the resulting aesthetic, variety of details that simultaneously attracts and disturbs are the key elements of my expression. My reality has a slightly different format, dimensions and parameters. I concern myself with integrating the paradoxical consciousness of the seen and unseen words, from something totally mundane, commonplace and, perhaps trite, to unseen, unheard and unimaginable.

Rather than concealing the personal aspects of experience, I recreate them as marginalised elements. The 'limen' is 'the threshold between the sensate and the subliminal, the limit below which a certain sensation ceases to be perceptible.'

Jordi Rosado



Liminen, No. 10, mixed medium, 2018





Album. Anticipated Nostalgia, No. 19, mixed medium, 2013

An interview with **Vaiva Kovieraitė-Trumpė**

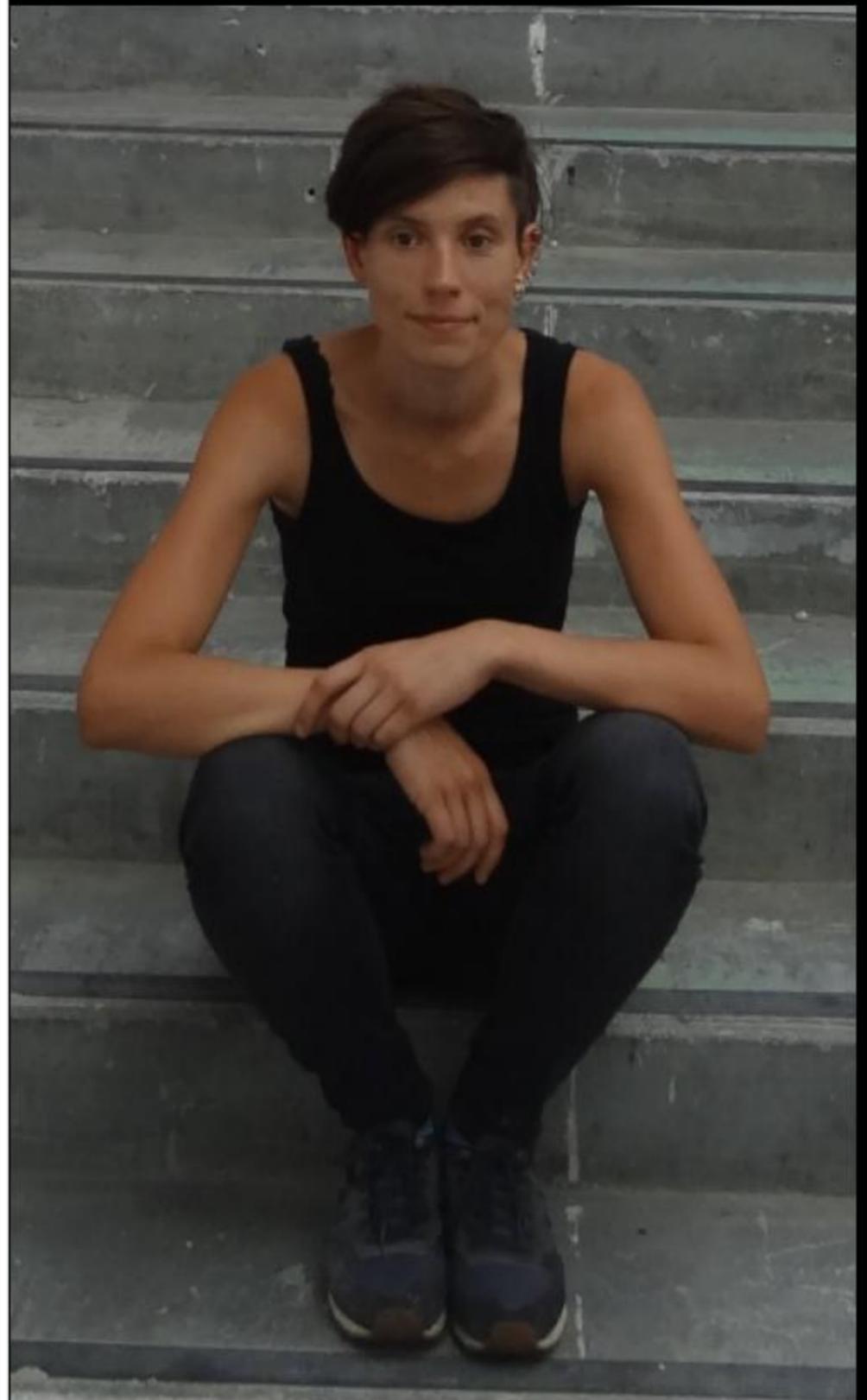
An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
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Hello Vaiva and welcome to ART Habens. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would start this interview with a couple of questions about your background. You have a solid formal training and you hold a MA in Graphic Arts, that you received from Šiauliai University, in Lithuania: how did these formative years influence your evolution as an artist? In particular, how does your cultural substratum direct the trajectory of your current artistic research?

Formal training is a way to develop specific skills, whereas education is a typical system of learning. During my studying years I experienced both training and education, but I wouldn't say that it was the crucial ingredients in my artistic development.

In my case, informal training was as important as formal one, learning from colleagues, from what was going around and being at the state/condition of becoming or more likely wanting to become an artist. Those were the crucial keys which directed the trajectory of my artistic research. During my studying years I had a lot of chances to get measured feedback and measure myself in a particular context.

We have appreciated the way the results of your artistic inquiry convey such a coherent combination between imagination and a rigorous aesthetics, and we would like to invite our readers to visit <http://vaivakovieraite.weebly.com> in order to get a wide idea about your artistic production: when walking our readers



Vaiva Kovieraitė-Trumpė

through your usual setup and process, we would like to ask you if you think that there is a central idea that connects all your works.

I think I could say that in majority of my pieces I focus more on aesthetics than on concepts.

Despite the fact that the art world of nowadays is submerged by conceptions,

concepts, notions, researches etc. and visual, aesthetic side of piece loses its importance I still believe that an artwork is also considered to fulfill a primarily independent aesthetic function.

During my creative process which often is quite undefinable as I use experimental means, including techniques, tools, materials, I search/research the aesthetics which makes me very comfortable in that particular moment, episode or long-lasting state. Getting back to the question if there is a central idea that connects all my works - I couldn't say that all my works has it, but I think there is a central idea that connects particular collections, sets - to capture the beauty, the ugliness, the thrust, the essence, the substance, the core, the matter of that moment, that feeling, that state, of that something which is indeterminable by verbal and written language.

For this special edition of ART Habens we have selected Liminem, an interesting series that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article. What has at once captured our attention of your body of works is the you sapiently combined delicate tones with abstract feeling, to provide the viewers with such an enhanced visual experience, to explore the threshold between the sensate and the subliminal: when walking our readers through the genesis of Liminem, would you tell us how did you develop the initial idea and what were your sources of inspiration?

In 2013 during 18th International fine arts colony in Lendava's Castle in Slovenia I actually started to create my portraits series. While being there I started manipulating with





Liminen, No. 3, mixed medium, 2018, fragment



Liminen, No. 7, mixed medium, 2018



the portraits of the artists who were with me during the residency.

The real characters and experiences are conjoined with imagined, subjective ones and in that way they are breaching the binary of inside/outside concepts.

My goal is to capture the portraits and the inner selves that is to say what exist in the space between inside and out, personal and public, or real and imagined. Liminal space is where all transformations take place, if we learn to wait and let it form us. Moreover, the liminal space is the time between the 'what was' and the 'next', between belonging and un-belonging, between physical and metaphysical, etc. The states of impermanence and the resulting aesthetic, variety of details that simultaneously attracts and disturbs are the key elements of my expression.

We like the way your artworks convey such a stimulating combination between figurative elements and captivating abstract feeling, whose background creates such an oniric atmosphere: how would you consider the relationship between abstraction and figurative in your practice? In particular, how does representation and a tendency towards abstraction find their balance in your work?

I was never much into abstraction, on the other hand I was never much into realism. I like the balance between those two extremities, a passage between two spaces. Sometimes I enjoy having a photograph as a starting point creating my artwork and little by little I recede from it and go towards abstraction. The photograph throws up the threshold as a possibility and a challenge to



Liminen, No. 6, mixed medium, 2018, fragment

reach that other place.
Despite my relationship and connection with

the photograph there is always personal
resonances within the piece. The meaning

W.O.R.F. SCHMIDT
13.6.21



Liminen, No. 1, mixed medium, 2018



Liminen, No. 9, mixed medium, 2018



Liminen, No. 2, mixed medium, 2018

and purpose migrate from one discipline to another, from one medium to another, from something clear with concrete existence to

the image or construct of unknown, unapprehended, undistinguished and become inserted in new discourses while



Liminen, No. 11, mixed medium, 2018





Album. Anticipated Nostalgia, No. 45, mixed medium, 2013

opening up new fields of enquiry and spaces of imagination.

We have really appreciated the vibrancy of thoughtful nuances of your artworks, and we like the way they create tension and dynamics. How did you come about settling on your colour palette? And how does your own psychological make-up determine the nuances of tones that you decide to include in a specific artwork and in particular, how do you develop a texture?

The colour in my art is very important even though my artworks aren't too colourful. I enjoy the really small amounts of different tones in a piece, a slight retreat from dark. Recently I found the colour between violet and magenta which I am using in the series Liminal Portraits. I managed to gain this tone from old typewriting ribbon using different kind of dissolvents. The other colour I use gives very warm brownish effect, affectionate feeling.

However, it is gained from dark or dull shaded, nebulous, cementitious material that can be found in various structures. It's a black viscous mixture of hydrocarbons obtained naturally mixed with solvents. The amount of solvent defines the strength of the colour. All my pieces of art strain to understand the subtleties of state of mind and feelings, to find the right balance between soft tones and strong colours. Distinct value contrasts in monochromatic colour scheme effectively convey a mood and atmosphere to my graphics.

We like the powerful narrative drive that marks out your artworks: who are the people that you include in your series of portraits? And in particular, what are you

looking to emotionally draw out of them and how do you hope the viewers connect with your portraits?

People that I include in my series of portraits comes from different fields. As I mentioned before I started modifying portraits of colleague artists. For inspiration, I go through my family albums as well, I use photos of my grandparents, relatives. Moreover, I have searched for an interesting captures of people on different channels of social media. Furthermore, there was a period when I worked with a self portrait. No matter with what image I am working, each time it is a new approach to the figure - differently done, anew reflected, with it's own story and brings different emotion and experience. I strive to grasp a comprehension of the human-being and I expect so from the viewers. Questions are frequently asked of the viewer about how we interpret our being/state in the perspective of liminal space and time.

Marked out with rigorous sense of geometry, you artworks have a very distinct visual identity and create such a coherent combination between intuition and peculiar aesthetics: do you conceive you works instinctively or do you methodically elaborate your pieces? In particular, how importance does spontaneity play in your work?

It is evident that understanding of any "betwixt and between" situation or object opens up space for possible uses of the concept. A tension exists between the transmitted visual image of the photographic source and the manipulations, experimentations with the material on



Album. Anticipated Nostalgia, No. 20

mixed medium, 2013

paper. The image flickers with varying degrees of visibility between abstraction and realism and me, as a creator, I balance in the mist of transposing easy-to-identify faces and obscuring visuals, scenes. Until the last moment I do not know how the final result will look like.

My creativity is based on experimentation, visualisation of the inner self and presentation of instant feeling rather than long-lasting appearance. No specific conclusions can be made to the meaning of the individual works aside from the acknowledgement and indulgence of image,

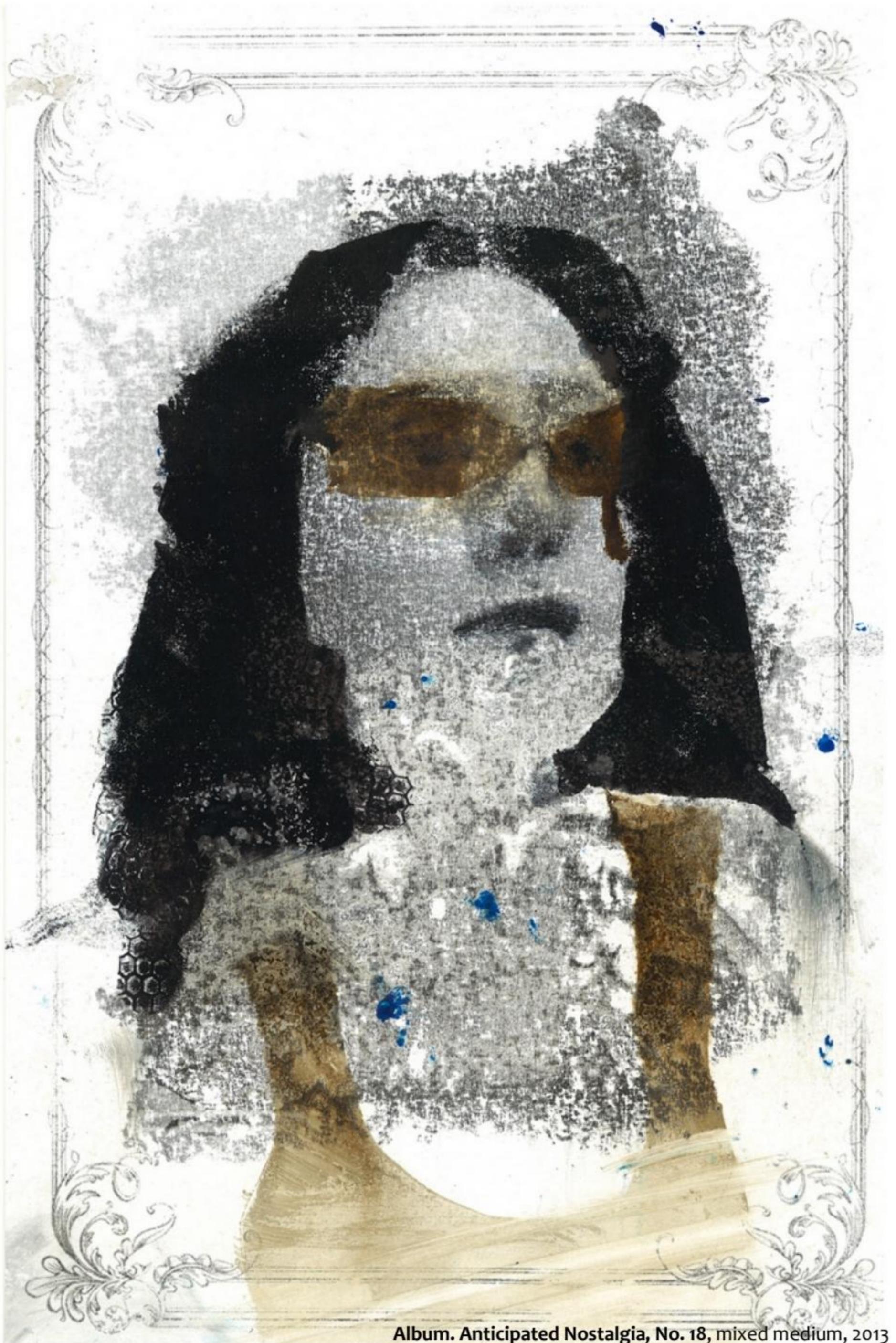


Album. Anticipated Nostalgia, No. 12

mixed medium, 2013

expression and technique. In order to accentuate the richness, expressiveness of depiction I try to use a variety of artistic expressions and techniques - pulsating, delicate, and sometimes sketchy line, different splashes, patterned elements.

We like the way you highlight what's close to subconsciousness, pseudo-reality, perverse imagination and uncertainty aims to invite the viewers to look inside of what appear to be seen, rather than its surface, providing the spectatorship with freedom to realize their own perception. How important



Album. Anticipated Nostalgia, No. 18, mixed medium, 2013



Unexplored Empty Faces, No. 74, mixed medium, 2012

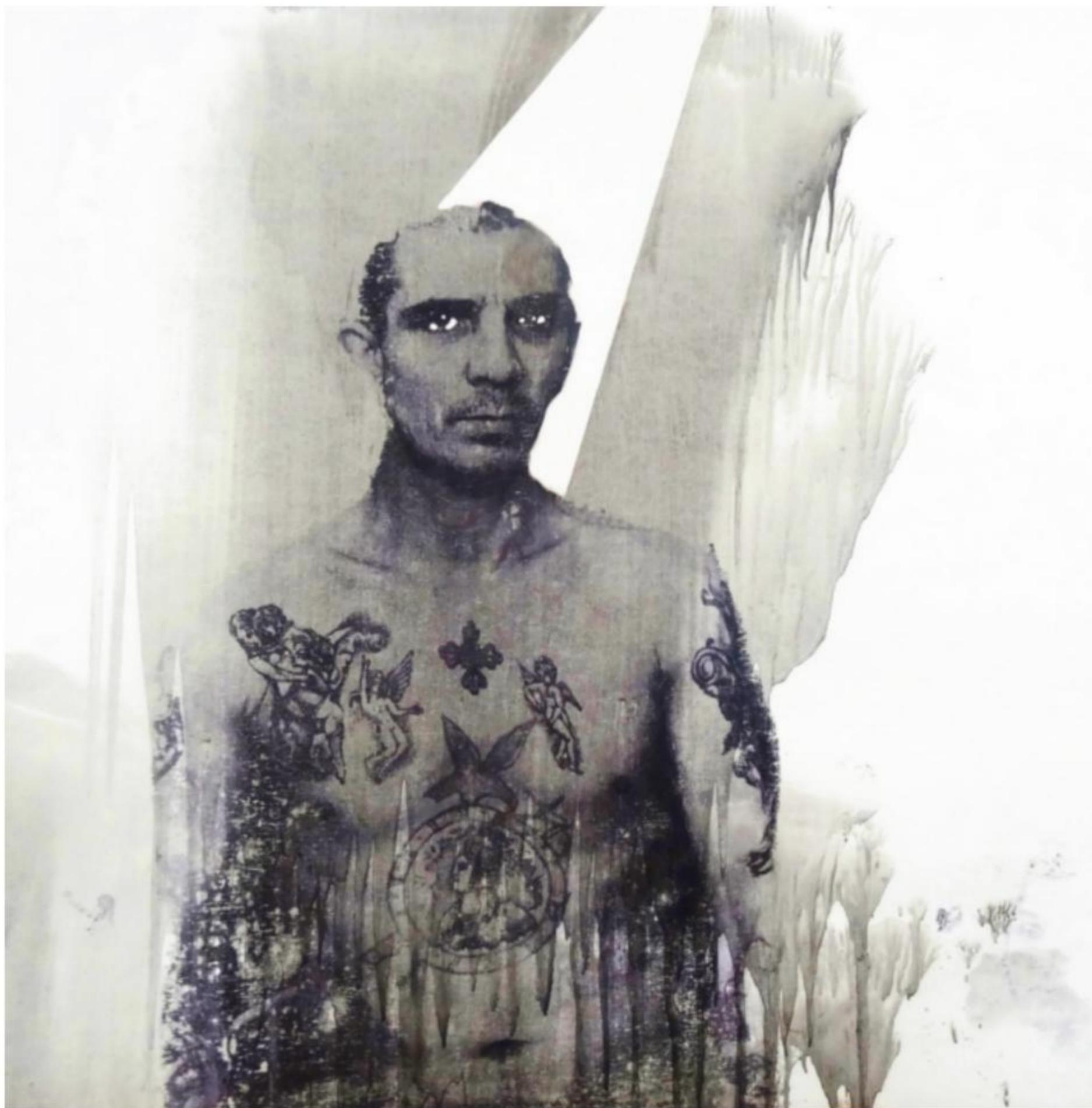
is for you to invite the viewers to elaborate personal meanings? And in particular, how

open would you like your works to be understood?



Unexplored Empty Faces, No. 73

mixed medium, 2012



Liminen, No. 5, mixed medium, 2018

To be honest, during creation of an art piece, I never think about the viewer. I am not sure if it's a bad thing but in my opinion it's more

likely to be honest with myself and not trying to please the audience. So as you said, I provide spectatorship with freedom to

realize their own perception knowing that our interpretations are always partial and subjective. They are partial because we cannot perceive everything and they are subjective because they are shaped by our physiology, culture, standpoint, social roles, cognitive abilities and personal experiences.

With my series of portraits various images appear and disappear. I do not want to perpetuate certain people, personal or socially recognised heroes, just simply trying to visualise the state and the form of a particular moment. It does not matter how it looks - beautiful, hideous, slobbery, obsolete or wrinkled, each time it varies visually - differently done, differently experienced, differently reflected and it brings different emotion.

Over the years your artworks have been showcased in a number of group and solo shows: how do you consider the nature of your relationship with your audience? And what do you hope your audience take away from your artworks?

I could start with the question - do works of art essentially involve a relation to an audience? For me, as an artist it is important to produce aesthetic experience. A work of art expresses emotions and most likely has a disposition to elicit similar emotions from an audience.

Whether or not we think of art as the central or defining example of the aesthetic object, there is no doubt that it provides the most distinctive illustration both of the elusive nature and the importance of aesthetic interest. I also believe that art is not only an object of sensory experience but also an instrument of knowledge. In particular, art seems to have the power both to represent reality and to express emotion, and some argue that it is through

appreciating the properties of representation and expression that we recognise the meaning of art. Generally speaking, it is undeniable that works of art are about the world in general. And finally, it could sound harsh but art has nothing essential to do with an audience.

We have really appreciated the multifaceted nature of your artistic research and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, Vaiva. What projects are you currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you hope to explore in the future?

Thanks for interesting questions which made me reconsider everything I am doing and why I am doing so. What concerns my current projects, there are always a lot of things going around and within my mind so I am still learning to pick the most valuable, interesting and useful.

Currently I go deeper into my portrait series knowing the fact the deeper you dig the darker it gets :) I search for new ways of expression both aesthetic and technical. Moreover, I do commercial graphic design where I try to put as much art as my client agrees. What is more, me and my colleague, we recently started a fashion brand (APCHI) which tries to combine art and fashion without focus on strategies or relevance. Sensuality, fortuity, experiment and kind of intuitive process are the key points on which we pay particular attention.

*An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator*

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OnJung Amy Kim

OnJung Amy Kim's art works are about her process of showing frictions between external environments and internal selves. The selections of works presents her detection of contradictory desires - which has an overwhelming power, but at the same time functioning as the driving force of her life. Each artwork expresses acceptance and embracement of contradictory and often distorted self, away from its correction or acclimation.

Her attempt is to produce vibrant and imaginative works that demonstrate a coherent approach, which shows layers consists of delicacy of labor, with a cocktail of childlike imagery. Intestinal abstractions, candy colours and confectionary is resulting in intoxicating pictures that shift over discomfort and pleasure. Subjects such as emotions and spirituality are translated into a visual language, staged for the viewers to empathise with a bodily form, shifting between the line of intimacy and uncanniness.

Her recent works uses integration and crossover methods between painting and printmaking, with constructing hand-crafted images. Using the objects/subjects that she was once obsessed with, OnJung yet continue to acknowledge the unnecessary of those objects/subjects for her survival. This ironic condition is being created in her works as virtual spaces, where different dimensions come together.

OnJung Amy Kim







An interview with

OnJung Amy Kim

An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens@mail.com

Hello OnJung and welcome to ART Habens. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would start this interview with a couple of questions about your background. You hold a BFA in Painting, that you received from Ewha Womans University, in Seoul, and after having attended the pre-master's course in Art, Design & Media at the University of Brighton you nurtured your education with an MA in Printmaking, that you received from the prestigious Royal College of Art, in London: how did those formative years influence your evolution as an artist? In particular, how does your cultural substratum due to your South Korean roots direct the trajectory of your current artistic research?

Hello and thank you for your interest my practice. It is an honour to be featured in your publication.

I got into artistic path simply because I liked painting and drawing. But shortly after I encountered world of contemporary art in a College, I realised that becoming an artist was a very different journey than what I had known.

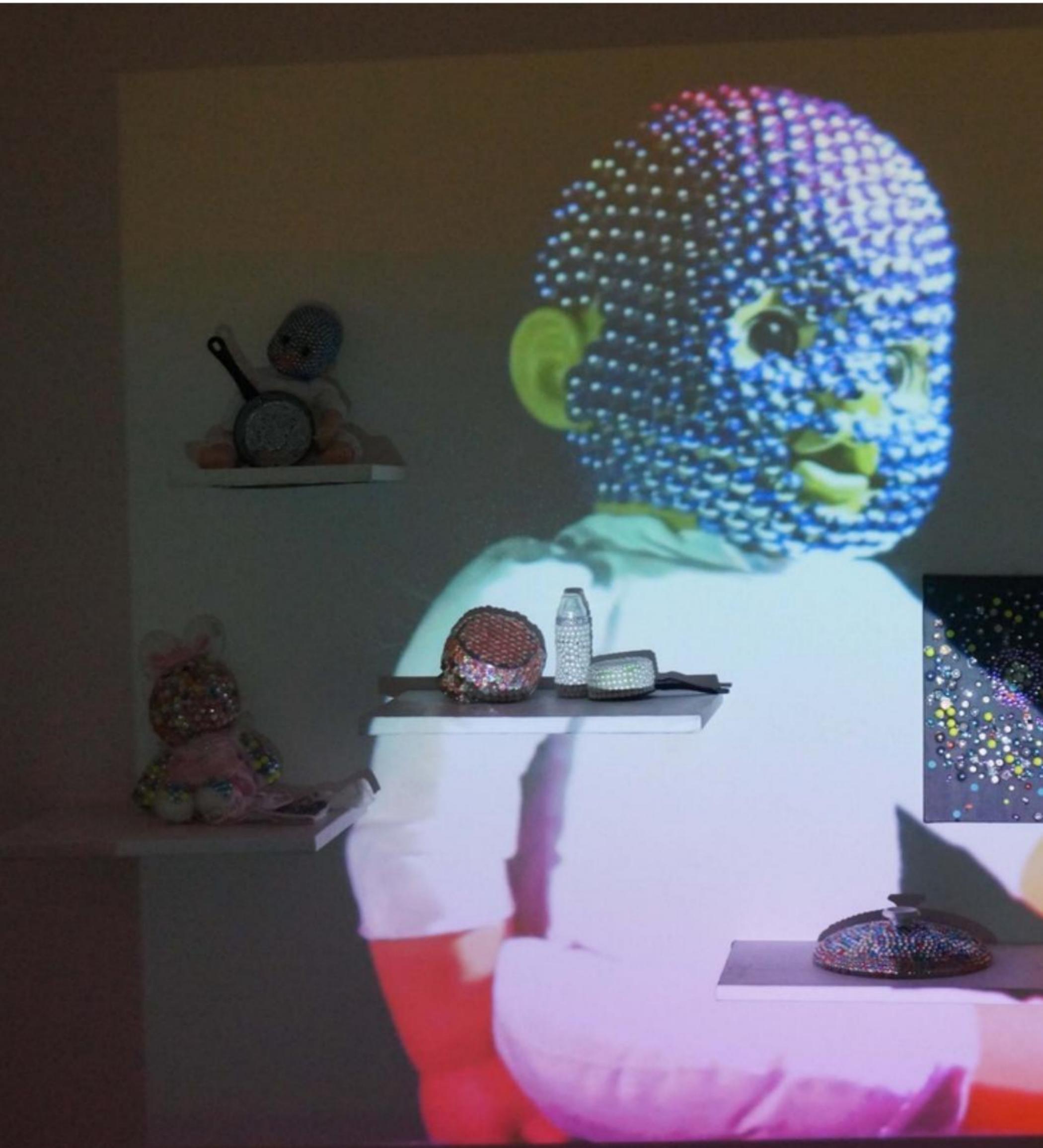
At Ewha, I found out that creating something without any purpose was very naive. I needed to provide some narrative into my work in order for my works to have power and people to empathise with my work. Amongst millions of ways, searching about what my work would convey and trying to find my own language had broadened my perception of art. To enhance my inner self, I double majored International Studies at Ewha. Due to the University being female University, I naturally got interested in feminism, motherhood and studying International Studies has lead my interest to

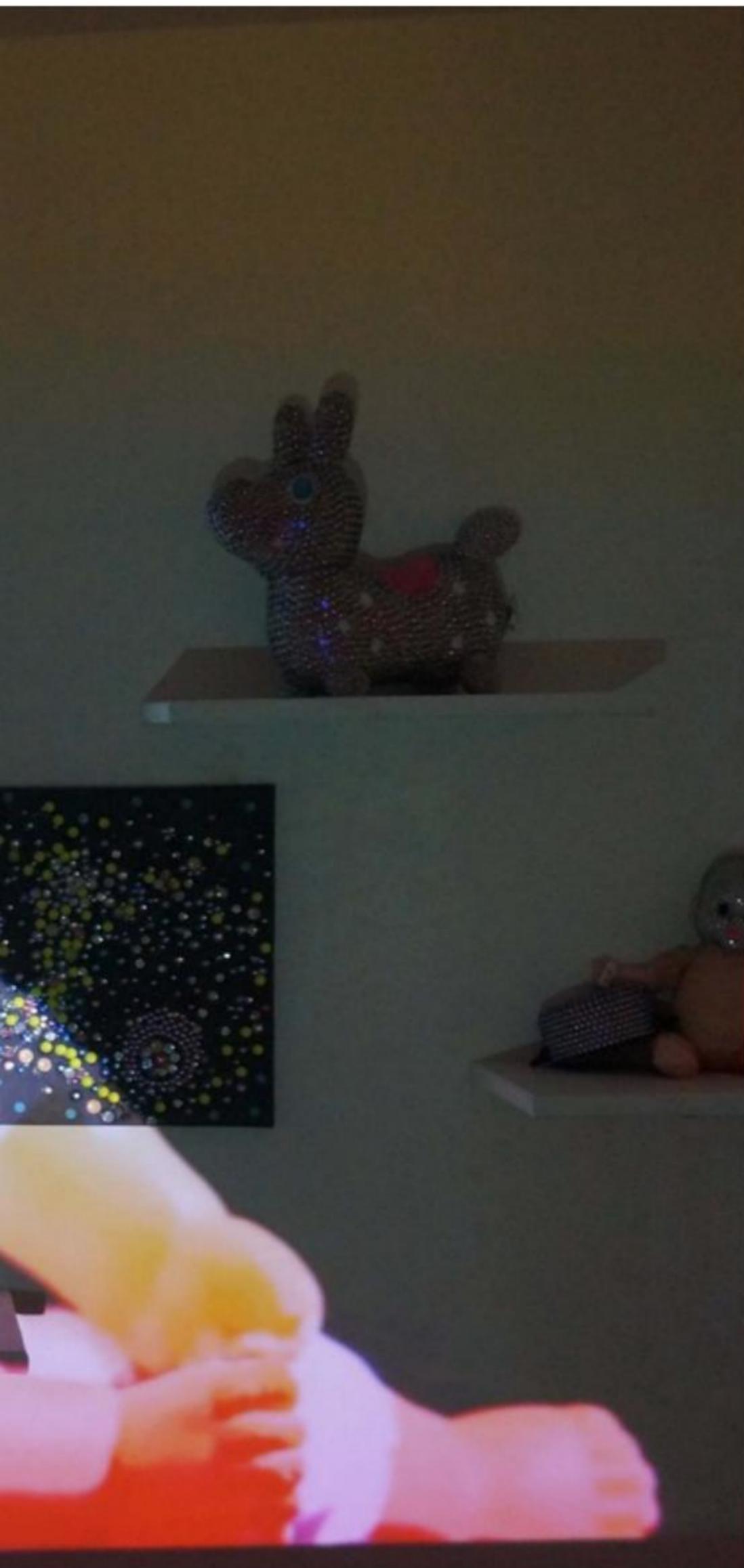


OnJung Amy Kim

social and political issues, thus they became the main interest in my art subject. I started to enjoy conveying the woman desires and myself being as a young South Korean woman.

I had an urge to be in a bigger pool of art, so I decided to advance my studies in UK. Being at Brighton was a very important starting point for me to enhance my critical thinking as well as learning a more self-directed and interdisciplinary approach. It was both a





challenge and an opportunity to become more independent using my second language and studying with people from different parts of the world.

I challenged myself even more by coming to RCA, and I really feel I am privileged to be in place where I have the access to one of the biggest art scene and modern facility in the world. Here it is not difficult to get inspired and challenge myself with provocative thinking, new values and unprecedented visuals. Also, I am learning how to take more serious approach toward my practice in order for me to keep my artistic path as my career that lasts. I learn a lot from the lectures, tutors, and fellow students, who are also very professional artists.

Regarding the impact of my South Korean root in my practice, I enjoy using toys and sweets that was imported to Korea which I was interested in when I was young. I think it reflects what was popular to children in South Korea in the 90s such as Disney, Harry Potter, Chupachups, fake jewels and Western baby dolls, etc. and children my age would have some kind of familiar connection, or warmth when they look at those objects.

You are a versatile artist and your recent practice includes integration and crossover methods between painting and printmaking: before starting to elaborate about your artistic production, we would invite to our readers to visit <https://www.onjungamykim.com> in order to get a synoptic idea about your artistic production: would you tell us what does address you to such captivating cross disciplinary approach?

At first, the fact that Print being conventional and disappearing these days while new definitions of printmaking are still being made came across as very charming to me. I have





always been interested in the value of hand-made work, and the value of labour. Painting was what I was used to from young and what I had enjoyed, but I only had little chance to experience printmaking before I came to RCA and I was always curious about printmaking.

I thought it was suitable for my practice because I love producing illustrative works - most of my paintings are illustrative - and thought it could be more effective if my skills meet printmaking. What intrigued me was that Printmaking was a conventional field, that can be mixed with modern technology and it is always possible to invent your own method. I love mixing unbalanced images, and print was the good way to play with reproducing layers with my illustrative artworks of drawing and paintings. It enabled me to broaden the usage of different materials, various colours and combine other levels of dimensions. I am still learning because there are millions of ways to print and decide how to use them mixed with different works, so it came across to me as a field that has unlimited possibilities.

For this special edition of ART Habens we have selected I have a dream, an interesting mixed media installation, that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article. What has at once impressed us of this captivating artwork is the way it challenges the viewers' perceptual parameters, urging them to explore the blurry boundaries between the concepts of intimacy and uncanniness. When walking our readers through the genesis of I have a dream, would you tell us something about your usual setup and process?

I do not think I have a certain pattern in process of my art-making. Sometimes it starts with trivial conversations with my friends, from my personal mediations or just a small drawing can









be chosen to be made into a big project. So I will talk about how I have a dream was made.

I grew up with globalisation I encountered so many different values that are constantly changing although I have a specific gender, race and religion. I have a dream is the attempt for me to put together the contradictory desires that has been formed within myself that has been formed encountering those desires.

To talk about how I have a dream was made, I have to talk about the background of interest at the time. I was in Ewha Womans University, where the importance of female rights was the issue and still is. Women have right to be successful in their careers as much as men, should not be sacrificing their own desires and life to achieve societal enforced perfect household pictures. At the time I became critical about the recognition of society that the sacrifice of woman to become a housemaid was required to form a stable household. I grew up with that value and a lot of women were taught to become 'good wife and wise mother'. There can be many interpretations about how to define 'good wife and wise mother', but in Korea a lot of girls grew up – forced- with playing dolls and houses, usually only exposed to kitchen and baby caring toys.

However, I started to think about what I wanted as a child compared to what I desire now, which was to become a free, untied to nothing artist, and how it can be confusing to desire different things. When I had this idea, I decided to mix those images, the images of my success in life- to become artist, the gallery images, exhibition images with plinth and objects being exhibited, with the household stuffs and toys that was used in my childhood memories. I had this idea of forming utopian slash dystopian theatrical space, where



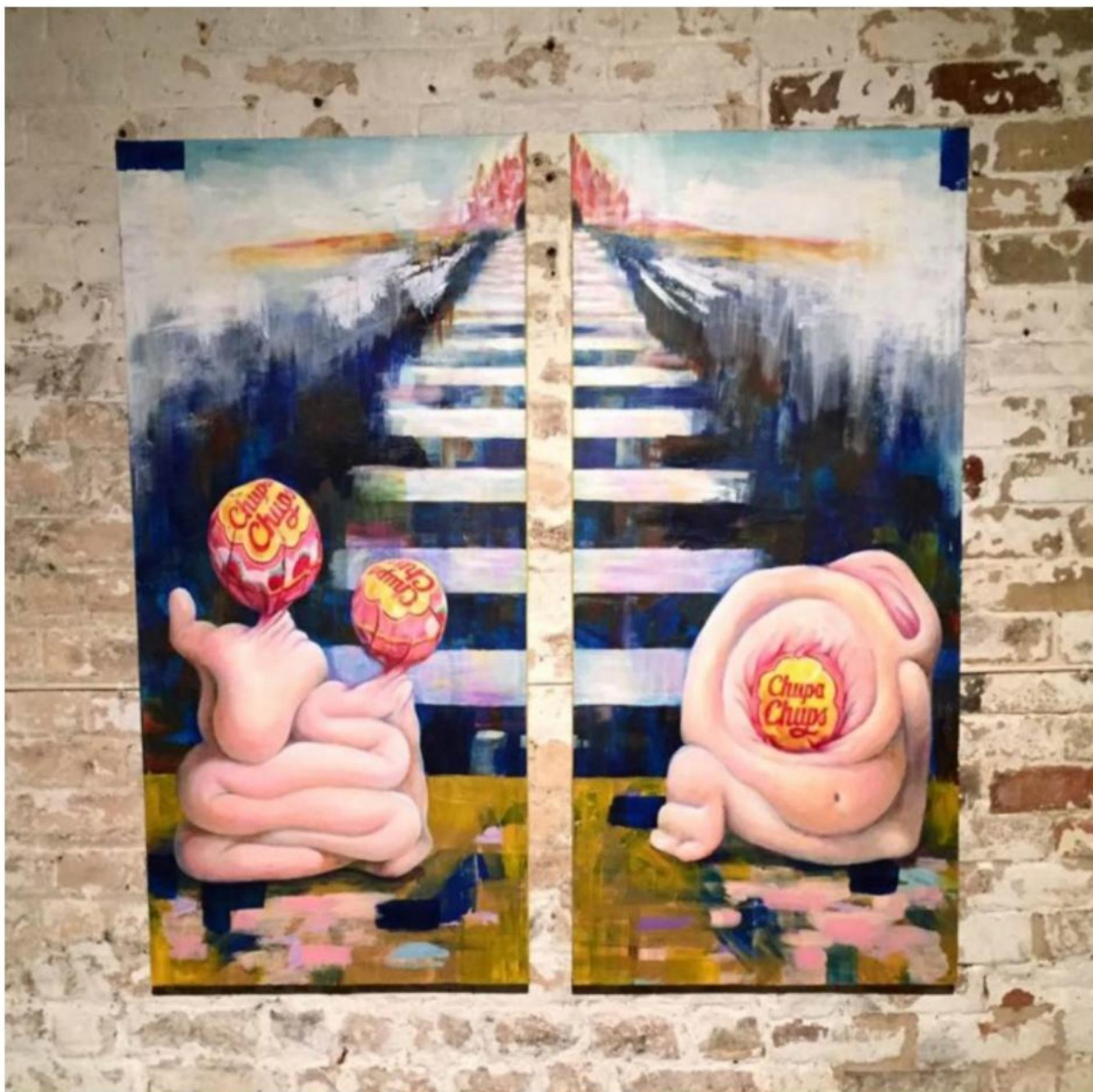






everything was mixed and everything was achieved.

I wanted to each objects to be seen as overwhelmingly tempted and idolized, desired too much to give a sense self-ridicule humour. I made multi-dimensional works of paintings,



pictures, sculptures and film, because I wanted to take it to the extreme. To communicate desires more, I have decided to use the music that was fairly known to public and myself. The

music Bolero I had put in the background of the project symbolized the art of pleasant and paint, and it was the music that was used in many plays and contemporary dance to











represent desires. The first version of I have a dream was more like forming a personal space, more private room atmosphere, and the second version of it was more like exhibition, each objects exhibited on the canvas screwed to wall horizontally.

Inquiring into the relationship between the real and the imagined, your artworks seem to invite the viewers to look inside of what appear to be seen, rather than its surface, providing the spectatorship with freedom to realize their own perception. How important is for you to invite the viewers to elaborate



personal interpretations? And in particular, how open would you like your works to be understood?

I usually use my imagination and memories regarding my fears and desires, and I myself do not even know the boundaries between what is

real and imagined. So I would say I am very opened to and respect the viewer's own interpretations.

Historically we can easily find that there were a number of artists, especially surrealists, who used their fears as the subject of their work to





overcome them. It is said that they have earned satisfaction or thrill by turning their fears into art. Although they do not go into details about their personal desires, fears or their boundaries, people can sense what they are talking about or at least feel what kind of complications they wanted to convey and feel interested.

Underlying in my work, I can relate to the idea that pleasures and fears are somewhat complicatedly connected to some degree, as I am working on the subject of desires like surrealists. In my opinion, whether it was sublime or repetition of a trivial event, a positive or negative, art is a recreation of something that gave a huge impact that has left deep impression to artists' subconscious. I am not willing to explain all my personal traumatic stories or fears, or sinful desires to the viewers because it is unnecessary and even I would not know I could be fully honest or diagnose my subconscious. For example, I use multiple images of Lollies because I find them desirable since young. The reason I find them especially desirable, is because both my parents were dentists, so they never let me have them as much as other kids in the family. But when I used them, I found out that Lollies were symbols of sexual desires. But I used them anyway, because I think all the desires are somewhat connected, could empathise, the feeling of desires that people cannot have enough of even though they know it is harmful to them are always similar. I found out that although I elaborate everything into words, it cannot reach them because individuals are all different. Although I try to explain, it will not fully reach anyone.

It is my goal to somewhat communicate the subconscious and draw empathy for all the humans who have complexes in their desires. I want to connect people with empathy without logical explanations. There is a Korean poem by

Ho-seung Jung saying, 'There are islands between individuals'. In short, I want to be as open as I could without any boundary but only with visual expressions, and neglecting having to explain the narrative into words.

Photographer and sculptor Zoe Leonard once stated, "the objects that we leave behind hold the marks and the sign of our use: like archeological findings, they reveal so much about us". We'd love to ask you about the qualities of the materials that you include in your artworks, with a particular focus on your Tales of sugars: how do you select your materials?

Usually I indulge in fantasy while I am drawing, prior to diving straight into sculptural work. Drawing is a method for me to mediate, and I prefer basic pencil rather than going into colours like my paintings. Then when I am inspired, I search and choose the materials which attracts my instincts. Because I tend to talk about my memories, desires, and subconscious, I like to use materials that I am naturally drawn to since I was a kid. Usually they are either that relates to my childhood directly like soft cotton or something that has jewel-like figures that shines and glows.

In Tales of sugars, I was looking for an object that could form surrealist figures, similar to lollies. In this particular work I wanted to recreate Disney Fantasia in the 1940s, particularly the Sugar Plum Fairy part, which although there was no narrative I could not stop watching. I would have used resin as a sculpture, with its ability to shine and form attractive lump, but then I have found out that I was allergic to it. Searching for similar material, I came upon bee wax, which can relate to honey and sweetness, as well as its quality of melting could relate to sugar.

To make a piece with has drawn heavily from the specifics of their domestic ambience and we have highly appreciated the way you have created such powerful resonance between the intimate qualities of the location that you created and the atmosphere that floats around the installation: how did you conceive such ethereal and a bit unsettling atmosphere in order to achieve such powerful results?

When I started to make To make a piece with, I was contemplating the idea of a person's identity is like a fog or ghost, that cannot be captured. I had a chance to go through the collection of letters that I gathered since I was six. Those letters were from someone who loved me, and close enough to write me letters. Inside those letters, a variety of aspect were reflecting me, but interestingly, they were all familiar but somewhat different - uncanny. The person 'OnJung Amy Kim' changed according to who wrote the letter, or at which time and position in my/their lives we were situated.

So I came to a conclusion that what defines an individual is not a state that is stable, but it is rather a floating memory of relationship between people, which is placed in passed times and constantly accumulating. In this project, I wanted to add an identity that is beyond one's control, in mix with my usual theme of work that comes from romanticising the past. That is how I came to give attempt to build a cosy room with childish fort, that looks somewhat haunted but once invited inside, would see it is filled with the atmosphere of beautiful dreams.

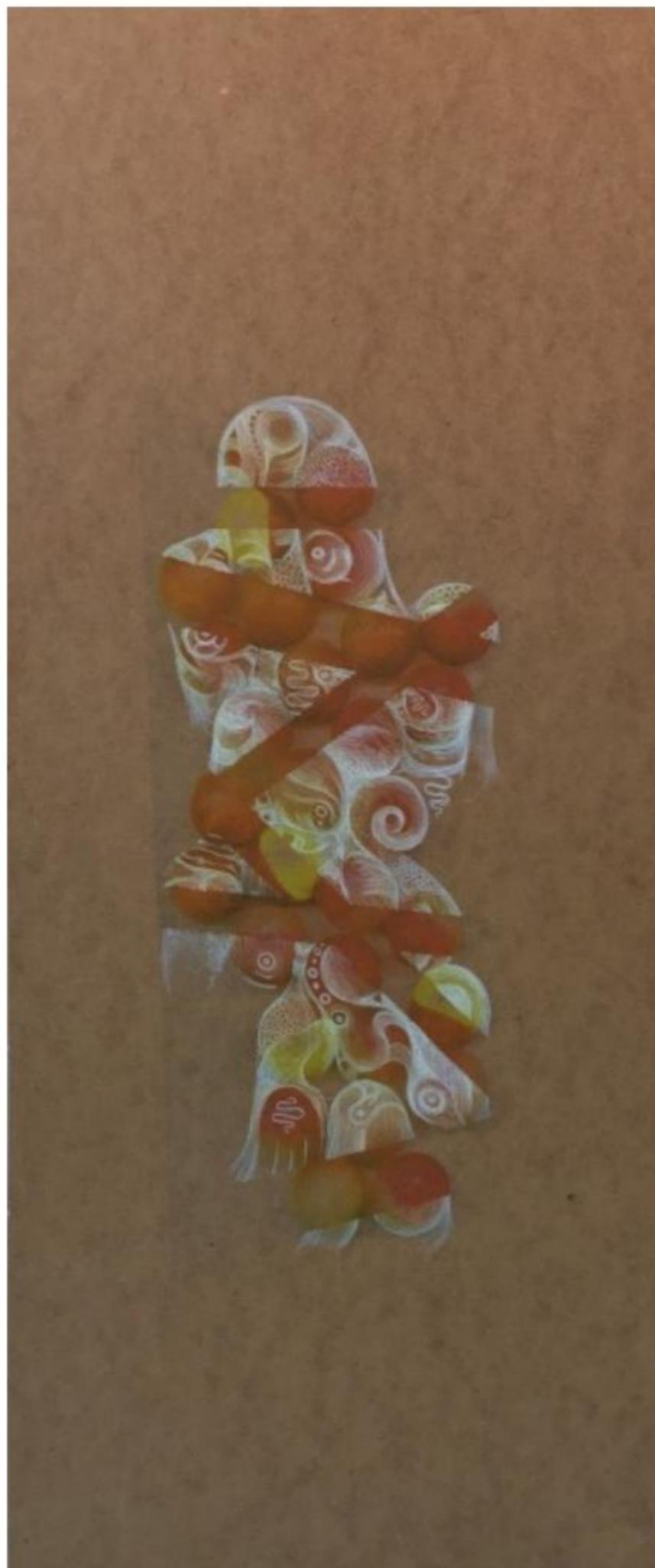
The film projected inside the fort has no plot, it is just filled with shining colourful sparkles. However, the main part of film is the hypnotising sound in the background. I had picked 10 of my letter collections and read in chronological order, then played them



backwards. The reason for reversed sound is not only because I thought the hypnotising atmosphere of it went quite well with the



outlooks of the installation, but also contains the meaning of going back to the past, and because the letters were quite personal, I



wanted it to sound like a spell rather than comprehensive words.

The cloths that were used to build the fort was found in Milan. I was there to help with my friend's art work, and found them abandoned inside a deserted house. The delicacy and beauty of ragged Italian whites was captivating, because those were talking about the history that cannot be crafted with my hands. They successfully gave the ethereal feeling to my work that I wanted. The time is passes, left behind, but the memory and trace lasts by becoming a part of one's identity. That is how 'To make a piece with' was made.

A relevant aspect of your artistic practice is centered on constructing hand-crafted images. German artist Gerhard Richter once underlined that "it is always only a matter of seeing: the physical act is unavoidable": how do you consider the relation between the abstract feature of the ideas you aim to communicate and the physical act of creating your artworks?

Just like you noticed, I find physical labour very meaningful in my practice. It is a method for me to communicate sincerity of my ideas. Human labour has always been cherished even considered sacred. It is not wrong to say crafted objects are more seen as valuable than mass produced objects. I as well use the labour of human to show what had moved me, that could help people to empathise with art.

I once read an article that people often get frustrated with some of the contemporary arts because their visuals or efforts putted into a work that are visible does not meet the expectations compared to the idea that a work is talking about. I also have experienced several disappointments, and I did not want my work to be seen that way. I like fantasising and mediating, but those are not organised enough to be delivered logically. I









am not good at writing, and I am not good with modern computer technologies. In order for me to communicate with the world, I needed to find a way and I found using my body was the most efficient way. I believe by putting the physical movement and body inside an art, it could make people tend to look more carefully into who was there and what that person wanted to convey.

You also produce stimulating paintings and we have really appreciated the vibrancy of the nuances of that marks out your artistic production: likewise, we like the way many of your works show that vivacious tones are not indispensable in order to create tension and dynamics: how does your own psychological make-up determine the nuances of tones that you decide to include in a specific artwork in order to achieve such brilliant results?

I do like to play between lines of pleasure and repulsion when I make my work. I think it is because I am familiar with both pessimistic and positive world view. I grew up in a strict, conservative Christian family in South Korea. Thanks to this background, I easily get enlightenment when I encounter new culture and values, and I think I have tendency to sharply analyse inner-self, and enjoy humour ridiculing the self. When I get attracted to certain theme or deplores my subconscious, these aspects are naturally smeared into my work. I tend to embrace contradicting sides of subconscious, which are naïve, innocent child-like state with already confused dystopian state, thus these bizarre romanticism is shown in my work.

Your imagery deviates from traditional painting to provide the viewers with such a heightened visual experience, to subvert the clichéd techniques, developing the



expressive potential of the symbols that you included in your work, as the Chupa Chups in *Sometimes I want to be a child, sometimes I want to bear a child*: how importance do symbolically charged images and reminder to collective memory play in your work?

I would say because the symbols and products like Chupa Chups are remaining romantically in my memory, they naturally are shown in my work rather than I am attempting to talk to

people with it. I used to call my work romantic-pop. Some people may question why I say my work is romantic while I use merchandised commodity, because usually in romanticism they tend to be away from secularism and focus on showing nature or natural state of people's physicals. However, I think I have been living in the time where the symbolic products could represent romance because people grew up with them since they are born. Disney, Sesame Street, the variety of sweets and people



Krzysztof Ślachciak

Lives and works in Pobiedziska near Poznań, Poland

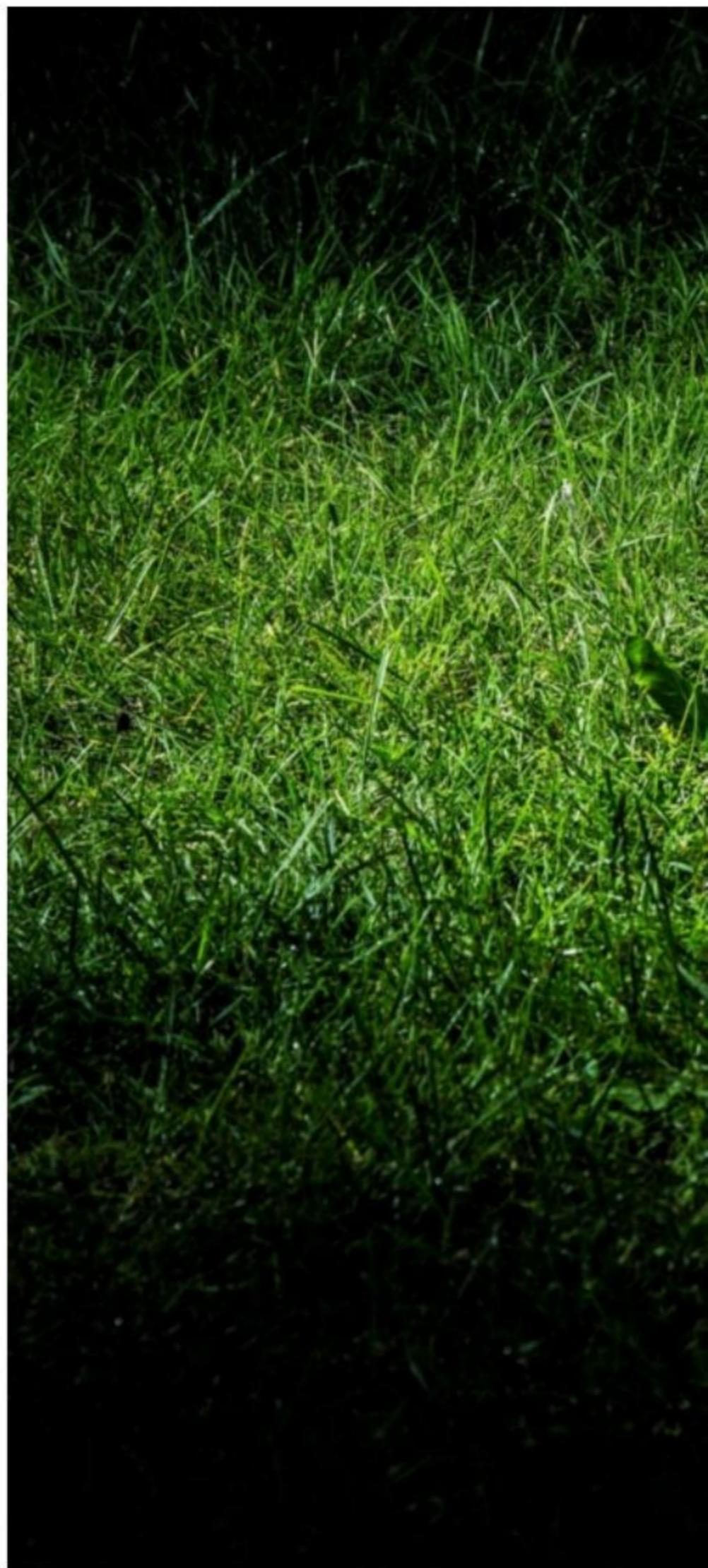
Once I thought a good photograph is when a viewer understands it exactly as a photographer wanted. I disagree with that today. What if a photographer never wanted to say anything? Photography is not a language, at least my photography is not. My works do not tell any stories, they do not have any obscured sense, and above all they do not tell any universal truth. My photographs serve down to earth purposes.

Once a while I get this feeling when I have to get rid of some emotions. This is when I start to look for a picture that can do it for me. This feeling rises, gets more and more unbearable, and at its climax makes me work. Photographs happen, or sketches of them, on which in many cases I work for months until they get final shape.

My inspirations are natural for a process like this. Subjective Photography artists like Minor White, Otto Steinert, Bronisław Schlabs, Zdzisław Beksiński, but also Edward Hartwig, Krzysztof Pruszkowski, Stanisław Woś, and painters: Włodzimierz Włoszkiewicz, Francis Bacon, Jackson Pollock, William Turner.

I present my works to You, because the final act of their existence is my viewers' feelings about them. Maybe you can find something in them, maybe I can get to know myself better, if you share your opinion, of course.

Krzysztof Ślachciak



From the Mara series





From the **Mara series**

An interview with

Krzysztof Ślachciak

An interview by *Dario Rutigliano*, curator
and *Melissa C. Hilborn*, curator
arthabens.biennale@europe.com

Hello Krzysztof and welcome back to ART Habens we already got the chance to introduce our readers to your artworks in a previous edition and we are now particularly pleased to discover the development of your artistic production. In particular, for this special edition we have selected *MARA*, an intriguing series marked out with such a surreal and a bit unsettling atmosphere, that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article. When walking us through the genesis of this body of works, would you tell us how did you structured your process on a technical aspect, in order to achieve such brilliant results?

I have always seen slavic myths interesting. The first reason is a mystery surrounding this culture. We actually don't know much about slavic beliefs, and we can only suspect that they differed from region to region, or even from village to village. The second reason is christianity. Poland is traditionally a christian country, however it is now becoming less religious, which I welcome by the way. So what we know about slavic beliefs is most probably distorted by hundreds years of christianity. That's why, I suppose, characters from slavic mythology are demons, half dead, ugly women, beasts and so on. And I was wondering "was that really so?". Those thoughts led me to make the *MARA* series. It was supposed to portray mythical woman, frightening but in some way beautiful. *MARA* consists of two parts, which I call: green and brown. These colours symbolise two different and opposing aspects of natural world.

From technical point of view *MARA* works are a mixture of multiexposure and light-painting



Krzysztof Ślachciak

techniques with a little touch of postproduction where I fiddled with colours.

Deeply inspired by slavic mythology, *MARA* recalls the figure of a phantom that came in night to feed herself with sleeping person's blood: how did your cultural substratum due to your Polish roots influence the development of the idea behind this series? In particular, as a fine art photographer who has already

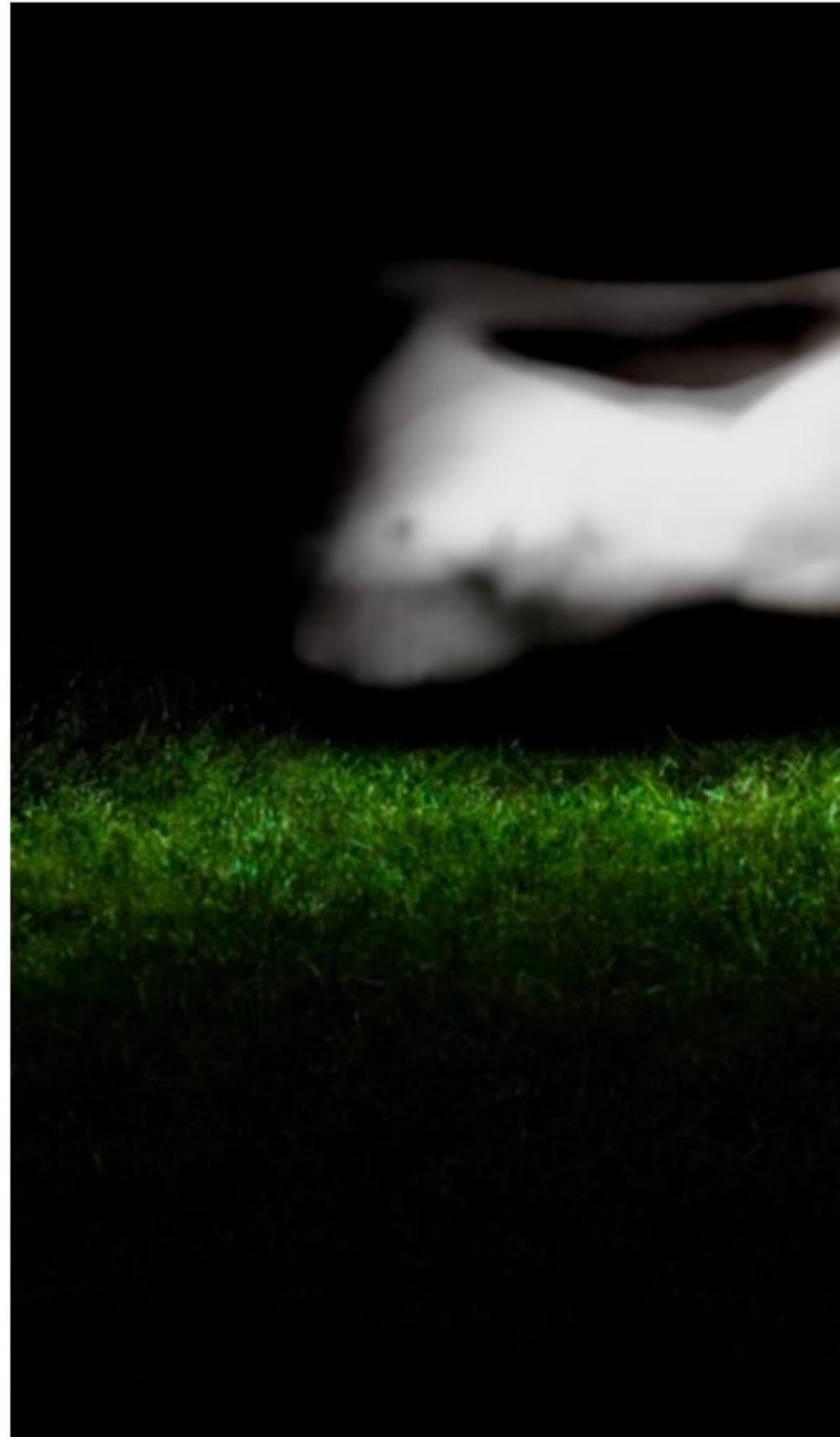
explored the poland glorious past of your native country in your *ORGANISM* series, the how do you consider the relationship between cultural heritage and contemporary sensitiveness?

Acutually I don't consider myself to be bound to my Polish roots so much. I was just fascinated by a world wich is not here any more, and because of a christian distortion I mentioned earlier, probably lost forever. Well, having said that, I must be specific and say that what fascinated me was actually what I imagined this culture could have been. In some sense MARA is a synthesis of more than one deamon I imagined.

Region where I live has very rich cultural heritage, probaly too rich to be comprehended by one person. But what I see through what I know about it, is change. Contemporary life is more subtle, definately less brutal than it was in the past, more civilised. These are good things of course. But there is the second side to it. We are more and more vulnerable to dangers, to all dangers as I see it, from allergy to terrorism. I personally think that this sensitiveness is also the reason of hubris. We give to much attention to such problems as sidewalks, bikes in the cities, social issues. We look inside too much rather than outside. We don't want to be explorers any more, we just want to live comfortably. And despite we like to be ecological, we still think, we are the lords of the world, not sheppards, not gardners. It also leads to decline in education and ultimately our cultural heritage becomes incomprehensive.

Maybe we see the begining of similar phenomenon of slavic culture and christianity. At least we're gonna leave some written sources for future generations.

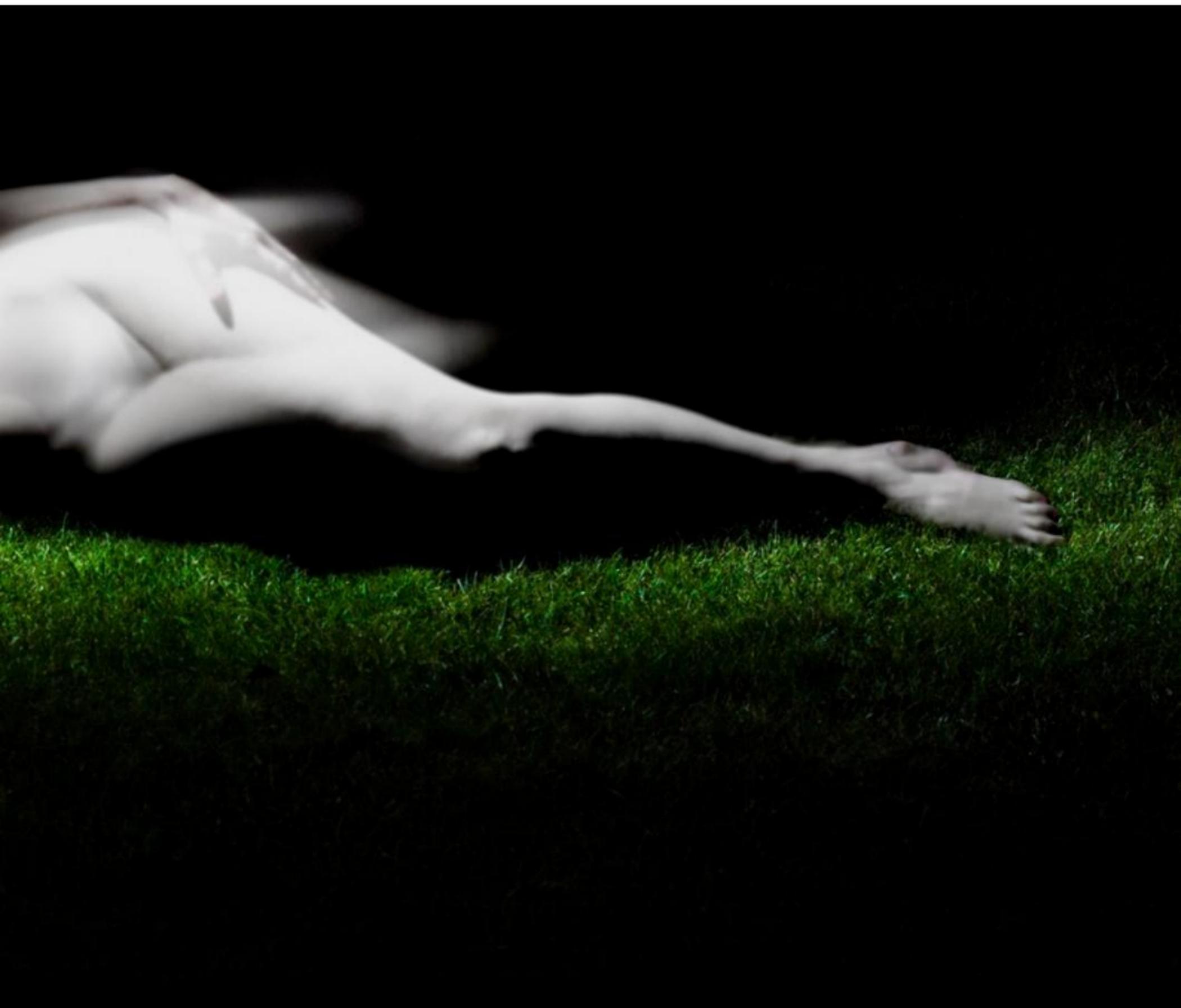
MARA has drawn heavily from the specifics of its environment and we have highly appreciated



From the **Mara series**

the way you have created such insightful resonance with the landscapes: how did you select the specific locations and how did they affect your shooting process?

Every picture of MARA series, which is a feature of



my creative process, was pre-designed in my mind. So choosing specific locations was quite tricky. In my imagination the most important part of images were visual effects which I thought would be the most satisfying to achieve. For instance backlighting grass, and half

transparency effect of a silhouette needed a place where I could lightpaint a moving body and backlight, clear, fresh grass at the same time. What is also important is that I wanted to bound MARA to the environment as much as I could. The reason for this is that I have always



From the **Mara series**

imagined these pictures as wet, muddy, fresh and in some sense primal.

Which probably works, because during one of MARA exhibitions I got a feedback from an old lady that was on the reception party. She said

that these are the ugliest photographs she has ever come across.

You work in cross disciplinary technique, often involving multiple exposure, an aspect that has particularly impressed us of MARA is the way



you sapiently mixed reality and imagination. In particular, you seem to invite the viewers to question the tension between the abstracted and the surrealistic: in this sense, we daresay that your artistic practice seems to aim to look inside of what appear to be seen, rather than its

surface, providing the spectatorship with freedom to realize their own perception. How important is for you to invite the viewers to elaborate personal meaning?

Actually when I work it doesn't concern me at all. However, when the work is done it becomes very important. Mainly because my works are based on my thoughts on a subject and I wonder how do people receive it, and how do they interpret what they see. My motivation is not to gain knowledge whether I've done my job well or not, my motivation is pure and childish curiosity. I also never wanted to influence people with my own views or opinions. That's why you will probably never see me publishing anything about politics or social issues.

Your approach to photography stimulates the viewers' psyche and consequently works on both a subconscious and a conscious level. How do you consider the role of memory playing within your artistic practice? And in particular, how open would you like MARA to be understood, especially by a part of the audience that doesn't know its reminder to slavic mythology?

I know that knowledge about slavic mythology is not common. However, characters from stavic myths were personifications of people's fears and also their explanations of natural phenomena.

And this is common in every traditional culture. Moreover, MARA is strong and frightening yet beautiful and fascinating. This view of a woman might be interesting for today's society. Because of that slavic mythology becomes just a pretext and if someone tries to interpret these works from today's point of view, forgetting about mythology, I would be really glad. I'm not only not imposing the interpetation, I welcome different views and opinions.







From the Mara series



From the **Mara series**

We would like to invite our readers to visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrmM1wzT-el&t=34s>, in order to get a wider idea of *Cosmic Perspective*, an interesting series that

subverting the cliché techniques, develops the *expressive potential of the symbols* - as parts of human body - to unveil the ever growing *unbalanced relationship* between humans and



From the **Cosmic Perspective** series

the outside world: how importance do symbolically charged images and reminder to collective memory play in your work? And how do you think your works respond to it in

finding hidden, crystallised moments in the everyday?

Actually I didn't anticipate that these works can



From the **Cosmic Perspective** series

be seen as symbolic. But more I think of it, more I realise that they can be. In a sense these works were supposed to express my thoughts about cosmos, or as I often say – they were supposed

to end my dilemmas on a subject. It is interesting that in a process I produced something which can be symbolic.

Maybe my thoughts were more universal than I



From the **Cosmic Perspective** series

realised, after all we all face similar existential problems, and probably the answer to the question about our place in the Universe is the ultimate one.

Those hidden and crystallised moments in the everyday life you ask of, are moments where we stop and contemplate the significance or rather insignificance of our existence.



From the **Cosmic Perspective** series

This on a one hand can make you feel small and humble, on the other hand it can, and often it does for me, give you power to pursuit your goals no matter what others think, what your

society wants you to do, but to be really independent, still humble, but independent nonetheless, and live your own life as good as you can. After all its all what we have.



From the **Cosmic Perspective** series

It's important to remark that the captions of *Cosmic Perspective* are quotes from science educator and astrophysicist dr Neil DeGrasse Tyson, moreover, since 2013 you run the

photography section of the *Artistic Science Club*: how do you consider the relationship between artistic production and scientific research? And how could Art expand the



From the **Cosmic Perspective** series

involvement of non scientists into scientific themes?

Firstly, I would like to underline that I'm not running photography section of artistic science

club any more because I stopped working for the university 2 years ago. However, I visit them from time to time, last year I was even invited to give a lecture, which was very satisfying, I must



From the **Cosmic Perspective** series

say. Contemporary science unveils incredible vision of the Universe. For example, we know today that every star in our galaxy has its own planets. There are probably countless earthlike

worlds as well. Even, there may be more than one Universe. Moreover, the string theory, which is the best candidate to become the theory of everything, tells us that there may be

7 more dimensions than 4 we are familiar with. We're not able to observe them, because they are in the quantum world, but nonetheless they probably are there. That is, if string theory is true, because it's not proven yet. In some sense contemporary science opens up a bag of possibilities for modern art. Starting with visions of other worlds to philosophical and social consequences of the latest discoveries. The art has a unique chance for becoming a communicator and interpreter of science. This, in the future of artificial intelligence doing for us most of our work, might be very important for every one of us.

A common theme in *Cosmic Perspective* series is your sapient use of such a huge amounts of black and white nuances, that you laboriously structured, as usual. The results are forms and patterns that have a powerful visual impact. What was your intention behind choosing this hybrid style?

My main intention for choosing this style is the expression of material destruction, organicity of stains and roughness of cracks. It harmonizes with feeling small in the wake of vastness of the Universe but at the same time it also harmonises with a beauty and complexity of its structure. For example, my selfportrait with a hole in the back of my head and a cracked surface around it is my expression for being unable to comprehend how much more there is than just the things we can experience.

Over the years you have exhibited your works in over thirty collective and solo shows and it's important to remark that you also conduct your workshops and open-air events: how does your relationship with your audience evolved over these recent years? In particular, how do you consider the role of emerging online technosphere in creating new links between artists and worldwide audience?

In the last couple of years I gave more of my attention to exhibit rather than to present on the

web. That's because I value personal contact with my viewers. In the space of an exhibition, viewers can focus more than they can do it scrolling through the Internet. But 2 years ago I have made some significant changes to my websites and social media and I started paying more attention to it.

I focus on Facebook the most, because Instagram seems to be less suitable for my works to present. In my opinion social media can be very good in sustaining relationships with your viewers, but social media should work as a means to promote not to be primary platform of presenting art. Art should be viewed in space specially created for it providing time and opportunity for contemplation.

Thanks a lot for your time and for sharing your thoughts, Krzysztof. Finally, would you like to tell our readers something about your future projects? How do you see your work evolving?

Right now I'm working on a series of portraits which I do with collaboration with Abstrakt – a rock band from my hometown. This series is going to be in some sense a continuation of COSMIC PERSPECTIVE and it goes with a new album that Abstrakt Band is realising in couple of weeks from now titled POST SAPIENS. My photo project is titled the same, and COSMIC PERSPECTIVE is also going to play a part in it.

In case of evolution, I cannot tell. It always starts with my thoughts, fascinations or concerns. These can be pathetic or down to earth themes, but for sure as I mentioned earlier, you won't see me working on social or political issues.

Thanks a lot for such a professionally prepared interview!

An interview by Dario Rutigliano, curator

and Melissa C. Hilborn, curator

arthabens.biennale@europe.com

Learn more about Krzysztof Ślachciak's work at <https://krzysztofslachciak.myportfolio.com/>

Laurence de Valmy

My work on the POST series, is based on the life and work of some major artists through fictional Instagram posts from the past. I appropriate a famous artwork, that I reproduce using acrylics, and combine it with imagined dialogues between the artists and their friends, all historically accurate and based on my research.

My goals are to share about the stories behind the artworks, the connections between these artists either through time or because they were contemporaries, and to make my viewers consider these iconic artworks with a renewed interest by replacing them in the context of their creation.

The POST series also takes place in a reflection about the importance of social media for artists nowadays, the fact that art is more often seen through a screen than in person and the relativity of fame at one moment in time.

I am currently developing a series of duo highlighting famous women and men artists who worked closely and influenced each other. Art history has often made a bigger place to the men and this point of view is now reconsidered. I'd like to contribute to the recognition of their value and artwork.

Laurence de Valmy







gustav.klimt



♥ 7234 likes

gustav.klimt the beautiful and clever @adele.blochbauer
#patronofthearts #supportlivingartists #gratefulartist 🙏

adele.blochbauer I guess I'm immortal now! #letsdoitagain

egon.schiele Gustav, your art is not modern. It's eternal ✨

MAY 1, 1907

An interview with

Laurence de Valmy

An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens.biennale@europe.com

Hello Laurence and welcome to **ART Habens**. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would like to invite our readers to visit <https://www.laurencedevalmy.com> in order to get a wide idea about your artistic production and we would start this interview with a couple of introductory questions. You studied at the University of Michigan, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Ann Arbor: how did those formative years influence your evolution as an artist and help you to develop your *attitude to experiment*? Moreover, how does the relationship between your *cultural substratum* due to your French roots and your current life in the United States direct the trajectory of your current artistic research?

My year in Michigan in 2003 was crucial because it gave me a full year to focus on art: on the one hand I learnt about art history and on the other hand, I practiced art in various studios. Until then I had been mostly self-taught, so experimenting different approaches and styles has always been my way of learning. During that year, I became familiar with the work of Janet Fish and started to explore contemporary realism. I spent the following years



Laurence de Valmy

studying realism. Back in France, I had to balance my full time job and my family (I had 2 sons) so it became more challenging to find time for art but it was always there.

To answer about the French roots, I'm not sure my French background plays a big part in my current artistic research but I can say that my move to the USA in 2013 does. The relocation gave me the opportunity to have my own studio, and more time, which I decided to dedicate to my art. I had to start from scratch in a new country and I started by building a community in the arts mostly thanks to Facebook at the time. For someone who wasn't on social media, I totally changed my take on them.

For this special edition of *ART Habens* we have selected your *POST series*, a stimulating project that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article and that is based on the life and work of some major artists through fictional Instagram posts from the past. What has at once impressed us of your careful research and sapient reconceptualization of the ubiquitous connections between masters of the past, is the way you sapiently captured the essence of their artistic research, providing the viewers with a multi-layered intellectual experience, through history and collective memory. When walking us through the genesis of your *POST series*, would you tell us how did you develop the initial idea?

Thanks for your kind feedback; I love this way of describing my work! The initial idea of the *POST series* was born from the fact that I was using Instagram as an artist and exploring how other artists were using it both as a media and a material.

Being a fan of art history but mostly of the personal stories which make art history, I got this idea of sharing some of the stories behind artwork through fictional Instagram posts of the past. I made 3 paintings and showed them to two friends and talented artists, Allan Gorman and Mary Beth McAllister. They both liked the idea and encouraged me to work on it. Then Allan supported my application to the artist residency of the ESKFF where he had been a resident too. The ESKFF loved the project and granted me a residency in the Spring of 2017. The residency was key for me because I had a dedicated time to develop a body of work that I could present to galleries and I got direct feedback from studio visitors and art professionals. Among them, art critic Paul Laster recommended my work to art curator Renee Riccardo and I got into a first group show in NYC. Things took off from there, bringing me to show in Miami in December 2017 during the Miami Art Week.

We like the way your artworks show sapient mastery regarding their



claudemonet



❤️ 3986 likes

claudemonet 2 ans & 30 cathédrales dans la quête impossible de peindre l'air et mes émotions 😞 #séries #impressions #lumières #instantanéité

pissarro Sublime ensemble ! 🙌

cezanne 👍

MAY 10, 1895

Handwritten signature or mark.



andywarhol



♥ 7559 likes

andywarhol 4 of my Marilyn's got shot. Had to repair! 🙄
#crazywoman #Factorybanned

dorothy.podber You should thank me I only shot them 🍷
and now they are ART! LOL #PerformanceArtRocks 💋

SEPTEMBER 28, 1964

af*

composition and balance, and that at the same time they didn't flaunt self-referential aesthetics. Rather, your approach seems to break the barriers with the viewers to involve them into a more personal visual experience. Do you conceive your textures instinctively or do you methodically elaborate them? In particular, how importance does spontaneity play in your artistic process?

My paintings are created in 2 steps: I start with the choice of the artwork / artist and the story that I want to share. That first step is a research phase, thanks to biographies and interviews both on and off line. During that phase, I select which image(s) I will include and imagine the dialogues, at least the main idea. Then comes the studio part when I physically create the painting. So I would say that it's quite a methodical process!

The spontaneous part of my process is the choice of the artworks and the stories... and usually one idea leads to another. For example, I made a first POST painting about LOVE by Robert Indiana and read about his relationship with Ellsworth Kelly and the latter's influence on Indiana; so I decided to make a duo on their connection.

I like anecdotes and details that add a new light: when I worked on *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh, I researched his letters. In one of them, Vincent was

thanking his brother Theo for some art supplies that he had received from him and mentioning his recent work, *Starry Night*, that he considered a study. Upon receiving the painting, Theo told Vincent that it was not his best painting and advised him to stick to "real things"... The irony of that exchange was my starting point and I chose to paint *Starry Night* behind brushes as a reference to the letters.

As for involving my viewers, it's at the root of the POST series: sharing stories and inviting the viewers to discover or rediscover these artworks. That's why all my paintings come with their own story, available on my website and on the certificate that my collectors receive.

As you have remarked once, the POST series also takes place in a reflection about the importance of social media for artists nowadays. It's no doubt that the massive use of tiny screens heavily affects the viewers' perceptual process and that most of the time they curtail many crucial features of a work of art, first, the visual impact of the dimension of the work depicted in the screen. Do you think that the awareness of the fact that a large audience will view their works through a screen may even influence - on the subconscious level, indeed - the process of contemporary artists?



rodin



❤️ 1567 likes

rodin artists must be ready to be consumed by passion like these marble lovers [#joinedforEternity](#) on view [#salon1898](#)

claudemonet 🍷 you are unique. [#GreatAmongTheGreatest](#)

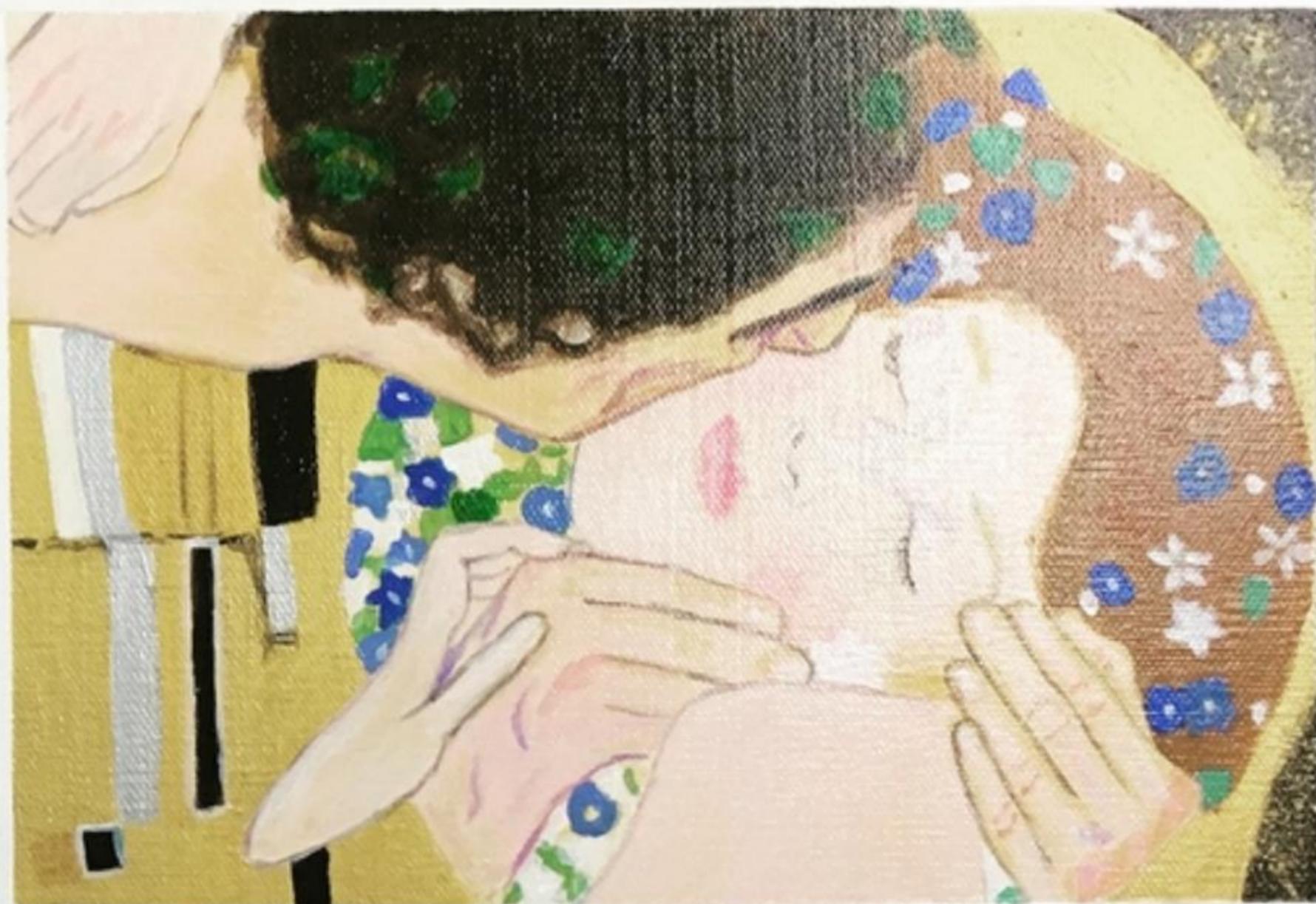
gustav.klimt 👍 so inspiring

MAY 1, 1898

dl*



gustav.klimt



❤️ 6458 likes

gustav.klimt inspired by eternal love 🧡 #lostinintensity

emilie.floge 😊 🌟 #ForeverYours

rodin 👍 🤔 Art is nothing but feeling. Your art is alive!

AUGUST 30, 1908





vincent



❤️ 34 likes

vincent 🙏 Theo: brushes 🙌 Do you like the night study? I fear my 🙏 R too big... #Ilovestars #NightIsAlive #dreams

theo.vg 😊 Good style research but you're best with true things like your irises! #keepitreal

JUNE 22, 1889

dv*

It's a good question! What is new is to be able to share photos instantly with everyone but sharing artwork through photos is not new, and having that tool has been an amazing opportunity for artists. When photography appeared some artists were afraid that painting was dead! In fact it helped artists to share their work and enabled more people to have access to culture, knowledge, and to democratize art. Nowadays artists can easily connect with other people with similar interests and that's a positive thing.

I believe that most artists create their works without thinking about the fact that they will be mostly viewed through a screen - much as yesterday's artists did not take into account the fact that their works would be photographed in black and white.

That being said, I once read an interview of an artist who created large outdoor installations and who was mentioning that she was going to work on smaller works that would be more "instagramable" which I would say is the new word for "photogenic". So I guess that depending on the medium, scale and style, the challenges to sharing the artwork are not the same for each artist... The good news is that between photos of amazing quality, videos and apps which will showcase the work in

virtual galleries to give a sense of scale, artists never had so many tools to share their work.

What certainly can impact the daily routine of artists is that having an effective online presence implies that you share good photos and appealing content. So it's not enough to be creative in the studio, artists need to be creative in their communication. But then again it's probably not new either, simply the tools have changed and things are going faster.

Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco once remarked that, "artists' role differs depending on which part of the world they're in. It depends on the political system they are living under". At the same time, Art history has often made a bigger place to the men: it's a two-way process between the host society and creatives. How do you consider the mutual influences between Art and society, especially in our globalized one? Moreover, does your artistic research respond to a particular cultural moment?

I totally agree with Orozco's statement. Not only is the artist's role different, but influences are too. Artists create works, which reflect who they are, including their gender, age, culture and time. It's true too that since we had access to instant information, everyone has been impacted by what happens in the world



hokusai



❤️ 3268 likes

hokusai starting to make progress at 73. At 100, I may reach the marvelous and divine #神奈川冲浪裏 #keeplearning

katsushika.oi happy birthday Dad! ❤️ #prouddaughter

keisaieisen 🍰 I like your portrait 😊

OCTOBER 31, 1833

dl*

so the “society” we live in is probably broader than the “society” people would have experienced centuries ago.

I’m not different from other artists... By painting Instagrams of the Past, I merge a media of our time with artworks and



roylichte



❤️ 1824 likes

roylichtenstein Hokusai started #ArtisaContinuum #reinterpre

irvingblum 👍 masterpiece

andywarhol 🤖 does the girl

APRIL 1, 1963

relationship stories that are timeless.

You are currently developing a series of duo highlighting famous women and men artists who worked closely and influenced each other. Women are finding their voices in art: since

enstein



takashimurakami



❤️ 874 likes

takashimurakami combining 🇯🇵 tradition & modernity
#MrDOB #727 #hokusai 📷 🐾

emmanuelperrotin 👍 you're the #nextbigthing

hudson your voice is unique #FeatureCreature 😊

DECEMBER 15, 1996

d it. No high or low Art. Just Art
etation 📷

on view @ferusgallery

make it? #suspense



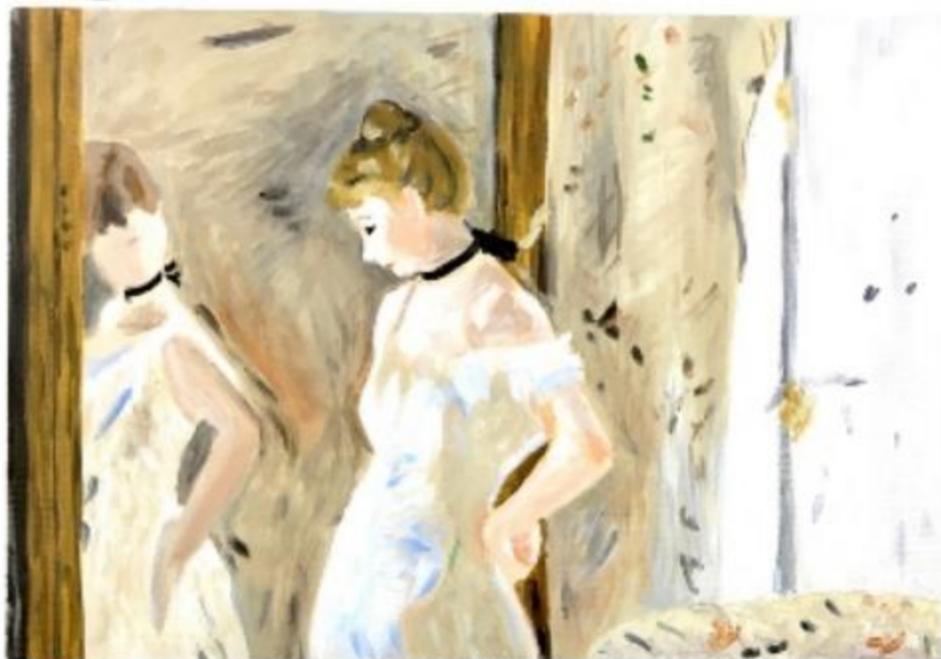
Artemisia Gentileschi's times to our ever changing contemporary art scene, it has been and it will be a long process but we have already seen lots of original awareness among women artists. What's your view on the future of women in the art scene? Moreover, do

you think that your being a woman may provide your artistic research with some special value?

I believe that the place of women on the art scene is a mere reflection of their place in society, as it is the case for any



berthemorisor



♥ 756 likes

berthemorisor capturing #modernparisian 🥰 #fleetingmoments soon @artistesindependants #3rdExhibition #contemporaryart

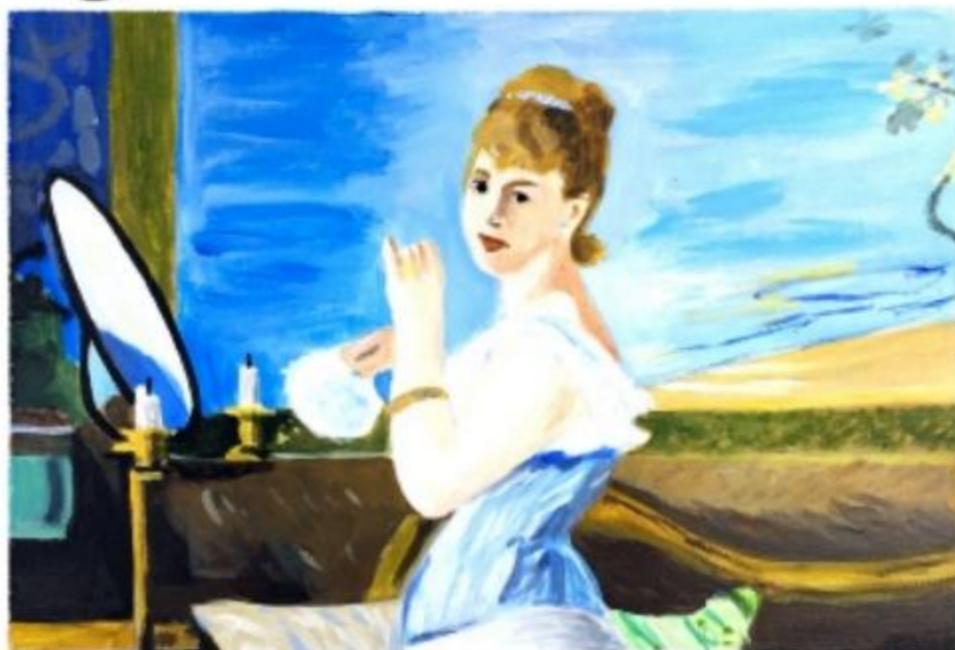
flor.osquarr 🥰 blond, transparent, light, full of grace! 🦢

edouardmanet new & unique: your success is assured! 🌟 ✨

DECEMBER 2, 1876



edouardmanet



♥ 1287 likes

edouardmanet 🙄 no Salon for Nana! Being REAL is #indecent 🙄

edgardegas Nudes ✅ a model half-dressed: 🚫 🙄 🙄

emile.zola.blog you're the most original painter since Courbet & originality is hard to accept! #futureisyours 🌟

MAY 13, 1877



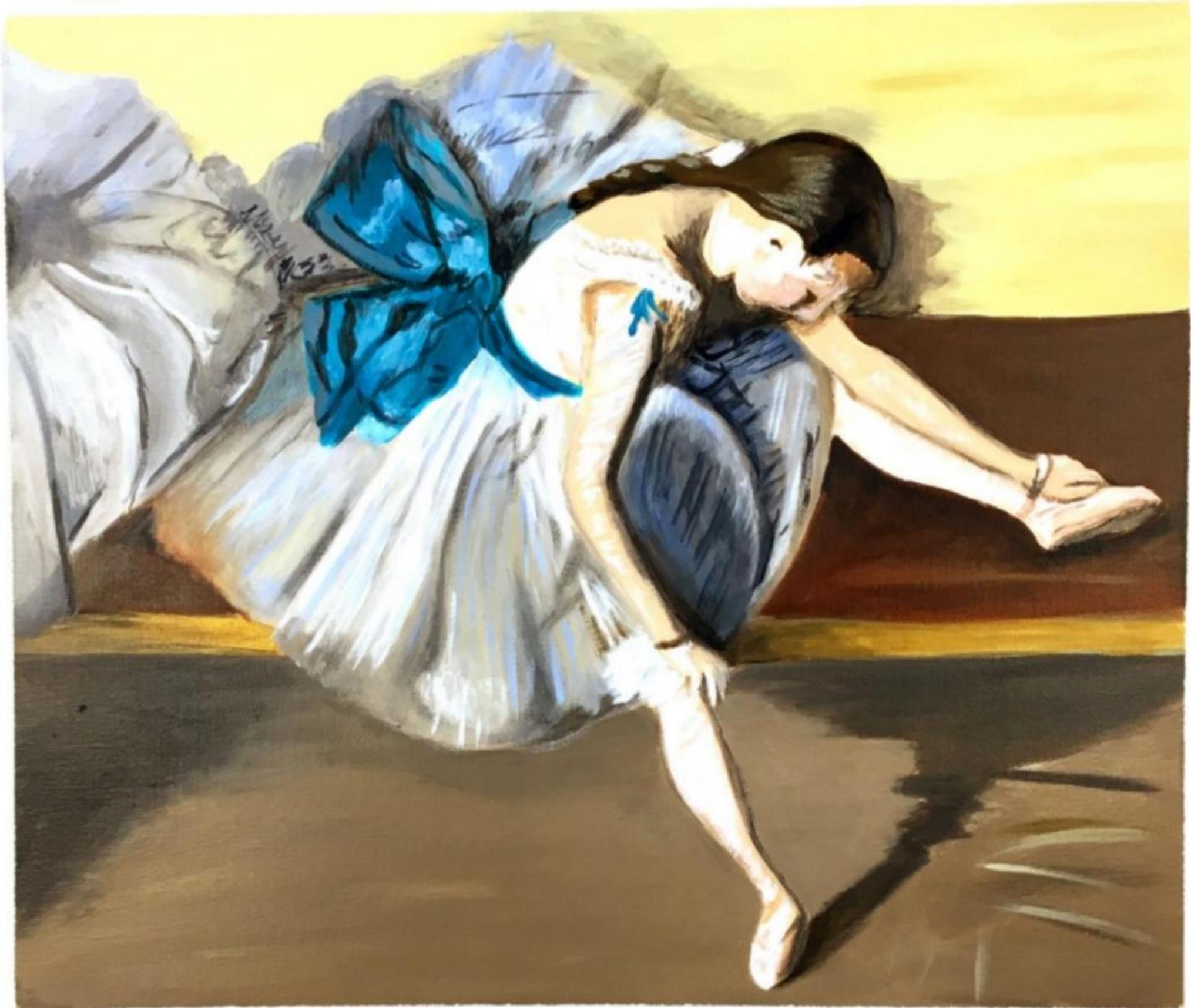
“minority”. The art scene is not different from other fields and probably not the hardest place to be a woman nowadays- I’m thinking about women working in the army or politics for example. Things are far from being balanced but if you take a step back, the global trend is that the place of women is improving in most cultures and most sectors... at a different pace depending on the place. So I’m optimistic both for the place of women in general and for their future on

the art scene and grateful to the women before me who won many battles.

As for the impact of my gender on my work: when I do my research, I pay special attention to the women around the artists. For example when I worked on *Olympia* by Edouard Manet, I had a choice to make between different stories around it and decided to highlight the relationship between Manet and Victorine Meurent who sat for him, and I read the only decent



edgar.degass



❤ 575 likes

edgar.degass in dance as in art, nothing is done by chance
#hardbattle #behindthescenes #restingdancer 🍷

marycassatt 😊 can't get enough of your art!

huysmans 🙌 both a cruel & subtle analysis : true & alive!

SEPTEMBER 9, 1879



richardprince



❤️ 93 likes

richardprince now this image is a real photograph (again) 😊
#rephotographing #NowitsMine #goodrevolution #whatisArt?

barbaragladstone appropriation of a copy of a myth 🐎 😊

marvinheiferman 👑 your "look" is close to the sublime!

JANUARY 19, 1989

dk*

biography of her available so far.

So I guess my special value is that, as often as I can, I highlight the women who had a special place in the life of the artists, either as partners, collectors, art dealers or muses.

New York City based artist Lydia Dona once stated that in order to make art today one has to re-evaluate the *conceptual language behind the mechanism of art making itself*. We sometimes tend to ignore the fact that a work of art is a three-dimensional, physical, artefact: how do you consider the relation between the *abstract nature of the concepts that you explore in your artistic research and the physical aspect of your daily practice as an artist?*

The conceptual nature of my work became more important in that series than in some of my previous work and I like the fact that there is a nice balance between the two.

When I do the research and when I paint I do not use the same skills so I'm happy to alternate between these different activities. When I'm painting and appropriating these amazing works, I feel closer to the artists who created them. The fact that it takes time, gives me time to feel this connection.

Your work can be found in several private collections including Hubert Burda Collection, Abrishamchi Family Collection, Vinik Family and Eileen Kaminsky Foundation. In the last years your artworks have been showcased in art fairs and exhibitions, including an exhibition at the Museum of Urban and Contemporary Art of Munich in 2018. How do you consider the nature of your relationship with your audience? And what do you hope your audience take away from your artworks? In particular, how do you consider the role of emerging *online technosphere* in creating new links between artists and worldwide audience?

One of my motivations for creating art is to share it. I cannot always attend the exhibitions which present my work, but I love to do so and see the reaction of the viewers, especially when they smile and connect with it. I had very nice encounters during art shows either with professionals or collectors. Quite often collectors I haven't met post something on social media and connect with me because they are happy with their acquisition, and that's the best reward.

All in all, my goal is to share stories and renew the interest in artworks that are often very well known. Many of my viewers are fans of art history in general or of an artist in particular, so they get



hilmaafklint



❤️ 5 likes

hilmaafklint for your eyes only, my friends @the5 🌺
Painting for The Temple sent by the High Masters ✨ ∞ 🟡
#automaticpainting #EverythingisUnity #SpiritualArt

annacassel 🙏 🙌 ⚡️ ❤️ #Artforthefuture

SEPTEMBER, 9 1907

Handwritten signature or mark

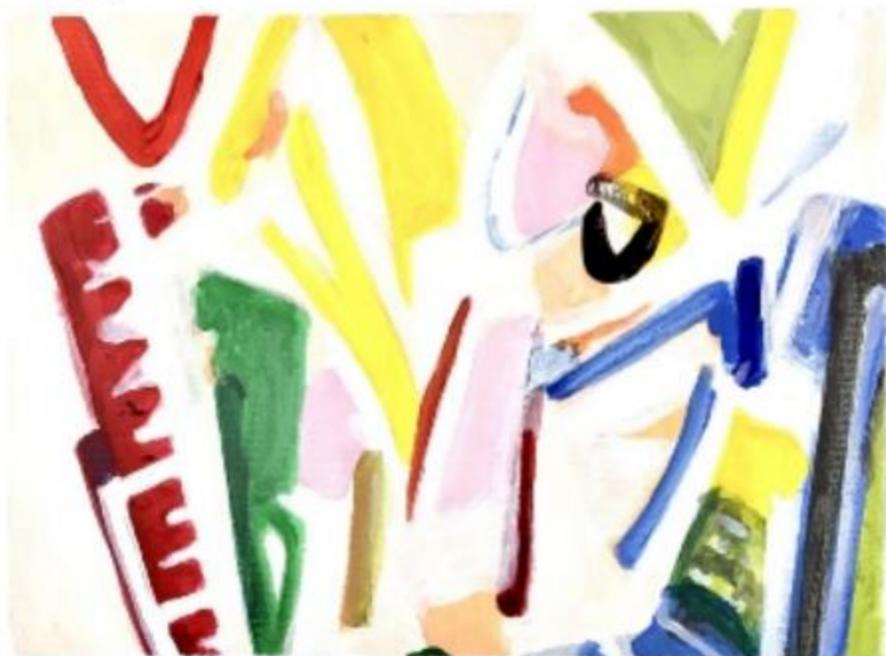
#story.behind.the.art

In 1907, the Swedish artist Hilma Af Klint, member of the Royal Academy, created the first abstract paintings of modern art history, in complete secret, and years before Kandinsky or Mondrian. Hilma Af Klint practiced spiritism with 4 other women "The 5", Anna Cassel being one of them. The artworks were "automatically" painted, following the guidance of the "High Masters". Hilma painted 193 works "for the Temple" between 1906 and 1915. Since the artist believed that the world was not ready for her work, she kept them hidden and asked in her will that they remained as such for 20 years after her passing. Thanks to the art historian Åke Fant, her art was introduced to an international audience in the 1980's and she had a retrospective at the Guggenheim in NYC in 2018-2019.

Hilma and The 5, 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 24" x 18"



leekrasner



❤️ 1356 likes

leekrasner exploring and moving away from #cubism #allover #studyfromlife #lyricalabstraction

hhofmann 👍 so good you wouldn't know it's done by a woman

pietmondrian 🎵 very strong inner rhythm. never lose it! 💎

SEPTEMBER 18, 1938



jacksonpollock



❤️ 565 likes

jacksonpollock I paint what I am. Technique is only a mean to make a #statement #NoBeginning&NoEnd #biggestcanvas

leekrasner ❤️ @cgreenberg stop by to check it out!

peggyguggenheim 😊 so happy with my new mural #genius

NOVEMBER 12, 1943



the references immediately. Some are curious but might know less about them and they are happy to learn that the facts related are real and to learn something new.

All these links with collectors and viewers are certainly made easier thanks to online connections. I've had collectors buying from me through Instagram, but of course nothing replaces meeting in person and seeing the works for oneself.

We have really appreciated the multifaceted nature of your artistic

research and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, Laurence. What projects are you currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you hope to explore in the future?

Right now I'm still expanding the POST series. It's been about 2 years since I made the first ones and I still have a lot to explore. I started the series with "stand alone" paintings and duos or trios. I have developed the duos because they are



marycassatt



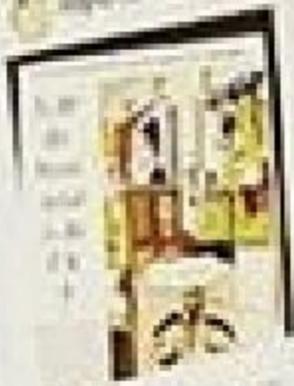
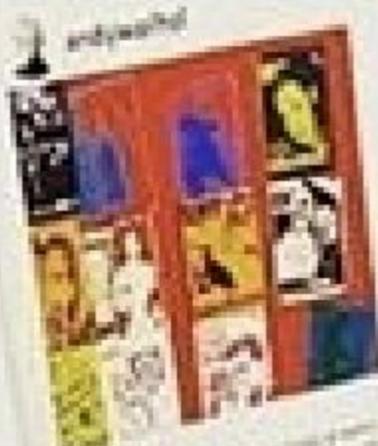
❤️ 534 likes

marycassatt World Fair jury refused it? 😡 Now on view @artistesindependants 😊 #NoJury #NoAwards 💪

edgar.degass 💙 💎 even if I'm not willing to admit that a 🧑 can have so much talent... 😞 #onlyyou

APRIL 10, 1879

edg*





DER PAPST IN POLEN

BUNTE



ANDY WARHOL



kerryjamesmarshall



❤️ 1968 likes

kerryjamesmarshall we mourn our loss & carry on the legacy [#repainthistory](#) [#ordinarygrace](#) [#blackangel](#) 🙏

jackshainman ✨ your art belongs to museums

carriemaeweems ❤️ [#blackisbeautiful](#)

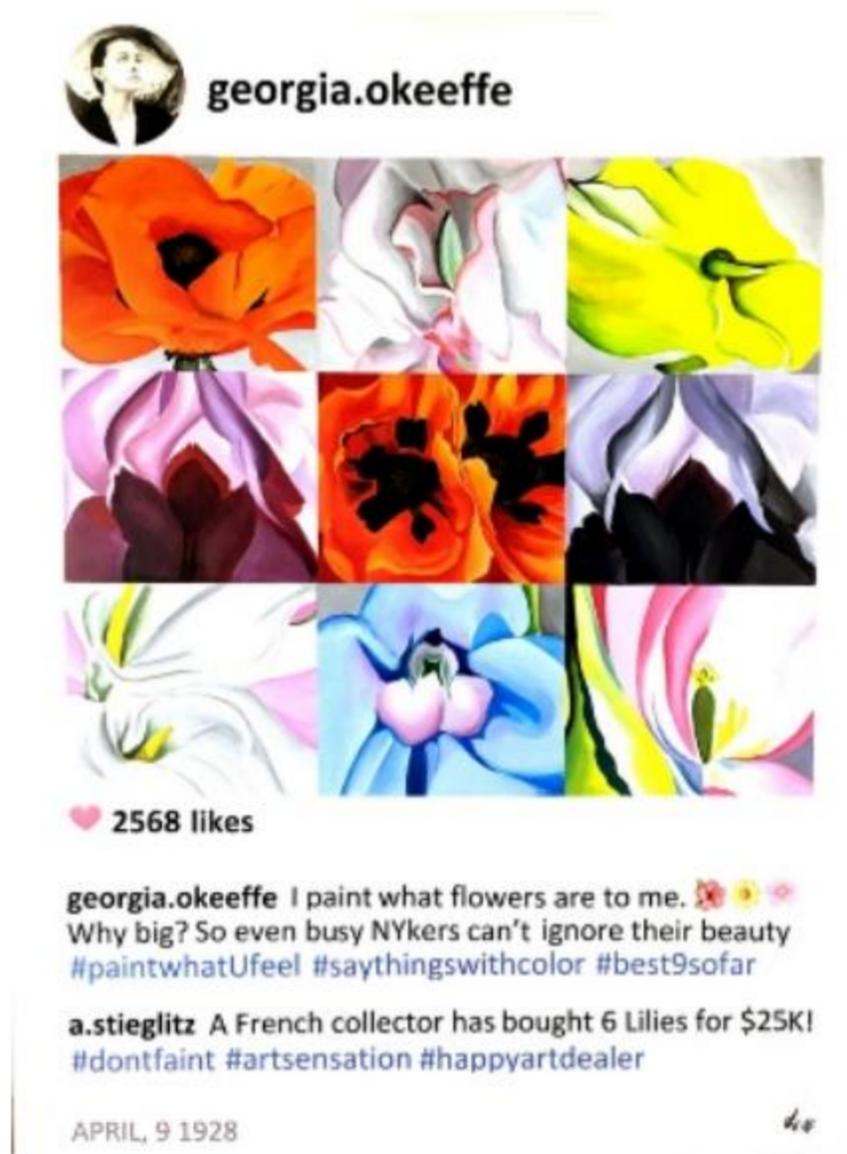
MAY 6, 1998

d/*



great to share the connections and influences between artists. The HER and HIStory duos is my most recent development and still in progress.

I'm lucky to be working with supporting galleries and I have several events coming up in May: Art New York with [Kahn Gallery](#) during the Frieze Art week and then I've been invited to take part in the 6th edition of [Museum Week](#) (May 13-19) an initiative to promote culture online and offline. This year the main theme is #womeninculture for which they have the support of the Chanel Foundation, Unesco and the New York



Times. On this occasion, I will have a solo exhibition at [Michele Mariaud](#) Gallery in New York with a conversation on May 13 about women in the arts co hosted by [Le Petit Journal New York](#) and [Homeis](#). I will also present new works with Kahn Gallery at the Affordable Art Fair in Hong Kong that same week.

As for future projects, I'd like to continue to explore art as a subject... I have a couple of ideas on how to do so but it's not mature yet so stay tuned!

An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens.biennale@europe.com

Jordi Rosado

Lives and works in Vilar d'Urtx The Pyrenees (Barcelona / Girona)

In these sentences I will not explain exactly what I want to tell in my work, what it means what I photograph. I really express myself visually, so I try to explain in words what photography would be like chewing the food for someone else. Giving too many explanations about your own work leads to people seeing your work as you want them to see it and not really how they see it. For that reason my words try to justify that I am going to give only a few references of what my creations are, since you need them. In many of my works and part of my work, it is related to existence. Not only with the existence of the human being, if not, what the human being does not see or does not know does not exist. I mean that in many of my works what I do is to make things exist, that would not exist without the presence of the human being. I understand that if you see one of my works, if I do not explain exactly what it is, you will never think what I want to express. Therefore, the existence of thought in front of the same image is multiple. Hence the idea of, my works need to be explained before being seen? Only suggestive titles that evoke you to my thought? or free interpretation?

I would like more the free interpretation, what evokes the image to the spectator is its reality and the spectator makes his existence his.

All the thought about existence, reality and free thought is what I do with my work. At the same time I love working aesthetics for aesthetics. If more pretensions, without more hidden ideas, without anything. When you flow with your surroundings, when the image speaks to you, you only make it appear on paper. This is a way of working that I love. Since I think the world is fantastic and beautiful. I have a lot of luck to think like that and have found a photographer like Michel Kenna, I really do not know if he is an inspiration source, or an influence in my work. An artist with whom I feel very comfortable is Pablo Picasso, because when I do not think that the world is m, aravilloso and fantastic, I think of the amount of shit we have at our disposal. It is from there that some of my works have a character more ... INFINITE SUFFERING, These works, are not influenced by Pablo Picasso, if not they are encontaradas with his work.

Jordi Rosado



From the SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO series





From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series

An interview with

Jordi Rosado

An interview by **Josh Ryder**, curator
and **Katherine Williams**, curator
arthabens.biennale@europa.com

Hello Jordi and welcome to ART Habens. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would start this interview with a couple of questions about your background. Re there any experiences that did particularly influence your evolution as an artist? In particular, how does your cultural substratum due to your studies in Barcelona direct the trajectory of your current artistic practice?

I was born in a small town in Girona. The concrete town is Hostalric. Since always, I think I remember, I wanted to create art. During childhood and youth, thanks to village life, I experience a great satisfaction for life in freedom in nature and alone. During those years I spend long hours walking and admiring the little things of nature that surrounded me.

I can perfectly remember the words I said to my parents when I left home: I'm going to the river to think, I'll be back later.

At 17 I moved to Barcelona to study, my great dream, to study photography. It took me several years to get into the institute where the classes were taught. I lived for 10 years in Barcelona, study, work and above all, I lived my life. I kept creating, but without finding any path to follow. It isn't until I was 30 years old that I returned to my hometown, that I decided to live in a house in the middle of the forest,



Jordi Rosado

with my partner who gave me the strength and all the support to dedicate myself exclusively to creating art. And thanks to the lonely forest and the energy of my partner, is when I start to create.

I start with several ideas that come to me to the present aesthetics for aesthetics and my own existence.

We have appreciated the way the results of your artistic inquiry convey such a coherent combination between intuition and a rigorous aesthetics, and we would like to invite our readers to visit <https://photos.jordirosado.com> and

<https://www.artsy.net/artist/jordi-rosado> in order to get a wide idea about your artistic production: when walking our readers through your usual setup and process, we would like to ask you if you think that there is a *central idea* that connects all your works.

I really don't work so that my works have a relationship with each others, but I'd like to think that everyone has something that is always inside of me, that's the idea that the world where I live is really beautiful and painful at the same time.

As you very well say, my work comes from intuition, a macerated intuition, which I like to let run wild, so I can later order it and marvel at a vision as aesthetic as possible.

For this special edition of *ART Habens* we have selected *SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO*, an interesting series that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article. What has at once captured our attention of your successful attempt to *invite the viewers to question the boundary between the visible and the unseen*, is the way it establishes direct relations with the viewers: when walking our readers through the genesis of *SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO*, would you tell us something about your usual setup and process?

For a time, whenever I went out for a walk in Targassone's boulders, while climbing, thinking and configuring my Exist series, I





From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series



From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series



saw a trunk with the appearance of a horse's head.

I began to photograph that trunk, camera in hand, with a tripod, in the snow ..., and I began to think about it every day.

Something had to be done together. I got the idea that the trunk, once dead, had become a horse.

A horse in eternal suffering, like the horse of Guernica, by Pablo Picasso. I started to give it life.

We like the way you artworks convey such a stimulating combination between figurative elements and captivating abstract feeling: Your approach to photography seems to stimulates the viewer's psyche and consequently works on both a subconscious and a conscious level. How did you decide to focus on this form of photography?

The work is a sum of ideas, convictions and experimentation. The idea of navigating without direction and moving according to the orography, is the closest simile of how I came to finish my work.

Going from not wanting to communicate anything concrete, with how wonderful is the world that surrounds me, to give at the same time arguments to the spectator to create his own story, from a main idea.

We daresay that *SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO* seems to aim to look inside of what appear





From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series

to be seen, rather than its surface, providing the spectatorship with freedom to realize their own perception. How important is for you to invite the viewers to elaborate personal meaning? And in particular, how open would you like your artworks to be understood?

This question is key and very interesting for me. I think that my work must communicate on its own, and not through me.

Once the work of art is created, it must be detached from the author in order to be able to take its own meaning. If the work must speak through my own voice, it means that the work doesn't communicate anything. Therefore, the viewer must listen to what the work tells him, not what I tell him.

In this way, the work acquires the meaning that each viewer wants to hear. If I get my work to speak for itself, and that each viewer can understand it in its own way, it will be my great satisfaction. Really, I want to communicate something with my work...?

SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO has drawn heavily from the specifics of its locations: the ambience doesn't play the mere role of a mere background: how did you select the locations and how did affect your shooting process?

Find the perfect place to make the shot, requires a time and a crucial moment.





From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series



From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series



Some of the photographs are nocturnal; If I'm sincere, it gives me great pleasure to photograph at night.

After reading the work mode of Daido Moriyama, who liked to walk in the night like a lost dog in his own city and get lost, I thought; hey, that's what I like too! But instead of getting lost in the city, I get lost in the mountains and in a more rural world.

So, I cut the piece of tree with the head of a horse, in the middle of nowhere and moved it as far as I could to the edge of a road, where I loaded it in my car.

And so began a long journey of nights roaming the roads of the Pyrenees. Where I thought it fit, I downloaded it and started a photo shoot. Sometime, lighting with spotlights and flashes; other times with a flashlight and even with the lights of the car.

Really, it's very funny and orgasmic when you find a place where it fits perfectly.

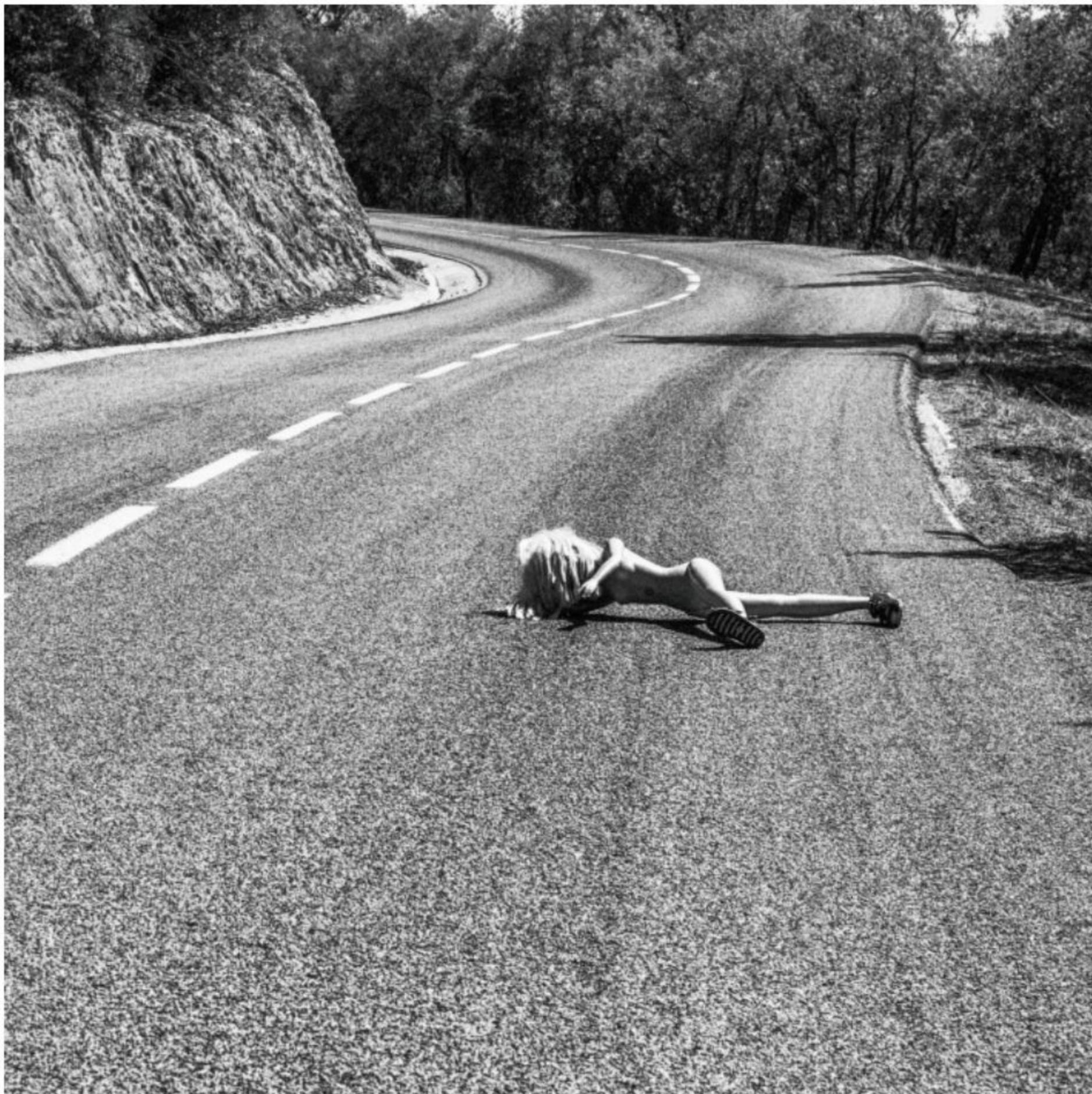
Manipulation in photography is not new, but digital technology has extended the range of possibilities and the line between straight and manipulated photographs is increasingly blurry. How do you consider the role of digital technology playing within your work?

For me, the use of digital photography is a salvation. It's to be able to experiment and create freely without being subject to





From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series



From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series

having money or not. I still use my analog cameras, but only when I have enough

money. Oddly enough, even if I use my development studio, the cost is very high.



From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series

On the other hand, in digital, the cost is very low.

As you have remarked once, you love working aesthetics for aesthetics: do you



From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series





From the **SUFRIMIENTO INFINITO** series

create your works in order to achieve a precise aesthetic result or do you prefer to snatch beauty in a more spontaneous way?

I think the world is beautiful; sometimes too beautiful; so beautiful that I can't even get close to him.

That's why I like to approach him from spontaneity. That doesn't mean that I try to find the precision of the beauty I seek.

Over the years your artworks have been internationally showcased in United States, Europe and Asia, including your recent participation to a group show at Union street Gallery, Chicago: how do you consider the nature of your relationship with your audience? And what do you hope your audience take away from your artworks?

I think I have a very intimate relationship. It would be like a shy and sensitive look. There's the feeling of looking without seeing.

The public gets sensations, and sometimes I've had occasion to listen to what they transmit to them. With great pleasure I listen to them and it gives me pleasure to know that they come to transmit, what each look comes to see.

We have really appreciated the multifaceted nature of your artistic research and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, Jordi. What projects are you

currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you hope to explore in the future?

The small detail of huge landscapes, is something that always leads me to be alert. A few days ago I rediscovered the death of a Catalan thinker, Mr. Josep Maria Xirinacs. A person who decided the day of his death and wanted to die in symbiosis with nature. That's, one thing that can be very sad, death, can become beautiful and pleasurable.

At the same time, I like to get lost in places that I already know and to be able to surprise me.

I really want to create an installation in a garden ... I don't know what will come out of this dream ... there is something and soon it has to come out.

I'm happy to answer these questions, because they invite to the reflection of my own creation. It's true that I express myself better, or more comfortably, with my photographs, than with words.

I'd like to comment on works from the Exist series. They are a job that I'm very happy to do, and without clarifying where they come from or where they are going ... they are the ones that best serve me to explain aesthetics for aesthetics, and they are the ones with the most sensations I have perceived from my audience.

An interview by Josh Ryder, curator and Katherine Williams, curator
arthabens.biennale@europe.com

Sara Chyan

Sara Chyan graduated from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Jewellery & Metal last year, currently based in London.

Sara reckons jewellery is an object that carries more than just an intrinsic significance, for it is not merely an ornament but also a medium for expressing one's individuality.

Temperature plays a major role in her project. Changes in temperature can lead to changes in the physical forms of the chosen metal. This transition between solid and liquid phases caused by heat gives metal an emotional character and transforms the metallic jewellery into an emotional symbol. Sara chose to use bismuth because she believes this metallic material possesses symbolic attributes that can be employed to reflect the emotional state of the wearer. This project is inspired by her obsession with heat, exploring the possibility of using temperature to assess one's emotional state.

The application of bismuth is rarely seen in our day to day life. Bismuth melts at 271.5°C, the low melting point allows her to instill heat factor into her jewellery pieces. The oxidation of bismuth is stunning, where nature crystallised forms and colours can tell us the temperature.

Each colour represents different temperatures, so every piece is unique and one-off.

Sara Chyan





An interview with

Sara Chyan

An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens.biennale@europe.com

Hello Sara and welcome to ART Habens: we would start this interview with a couple of introductory questions. You have a solid formal training and you hold a M.A. in Jewellery and Metal, that you received from the prestigious Royal College of Art, in London: how did those formative years influence your evolution as an artist and help you to develop your attitude to experiment with different media? Moreover, how does your cultural substratum direct the trajectory of your current artistic research?

During my two years at the Royal College of Art, I was fortunate to be amongst an amazing student body of talented designers and artists, who were very supportive to each other's artistic journey. I've learnt a lot from them. RCA is a liberal institution that motivates students like myself to challenge the framework, and encourages us to think outside the box. Therefore, in RCA students' works often make viewers unable to identify which department the students belong to. RCA offered me an opportunity to escape the stereotype atmosphere, and gave me courage to experiment with new materials and to explore ways of expression and ideas. These experiences instil courage and motivation in my creations.



Nazik Aslanyan

In addition to RCA's liberal approach towards originality, London is a city full of creativity and literary atmosphere. It is surrounded by the latest information and technology. It also has a long heritage of history and culture, and is renowned for its wide range of exhibitions, lectures, and events. There is never enough time to quench my thirst for art. London's



flourishing arts sector made me feel safe to be myself, for I won't be classified nor labelled, and I don't have to worry about whether I am doing something that is too eccentric or difficult to procreate. In London I feel my work can find its place and the resources needed to deliver it. It is here in London where I found art has no limits. I can play to the fullest and express everything I could possibly think of.

I can see how London and RCA's liberal attitudes toward art influenced my journey as artist. The most obvious change was I became braver in

experimenting with experimental works. Because of the open-minded atmosphere here, even a fairly experimental or avant-garde work will have a place. Once I stepped outside my comfort zone and started doing experimental avant-garde work, I couldn't go back. I often want to use novel materials or techniques to create, the more eccentric the better! I found myself enjoying this exploring process. These are experiences I have not had before.

Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would like to invite our readers to visit



<https://www.sarachyan.com> in order to get a wide idea about your artistic production. What has at once captured our attention of your unconventional style it's the way it allows you to condense in a single work of art such a coherent *combination between intuition and a rigorous aesthetics*: when walking our readers through your usual workflow and process, we would like to ask you if you think that there is *a central idea* that connects all your works.

My creations mainly revolve around the proposition of body curves and emotions. Although each time the angles of each

proposition vary, there are obvious connections between my creations. Reviewing these connections often helps me learn about myself and discover what kind of creator I am. For me, creation is like a record of self-development, reflecting the things and values I care about at that moment. What I hope to give to the creation is the spirit of innovation, and exploring how the new materials and expressions can be related to the audience.

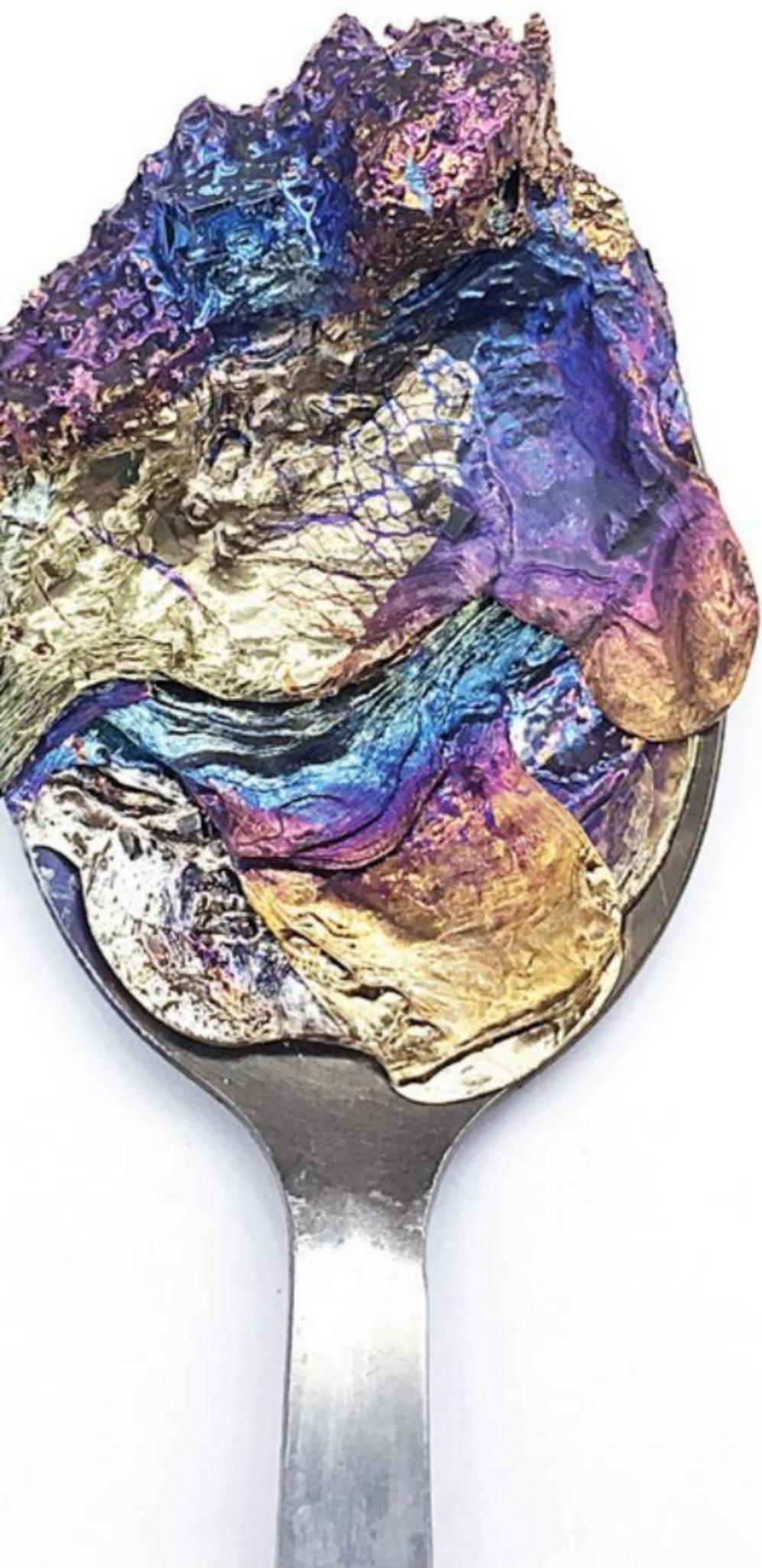
For this special edition of *ART Habens* we have selected *The Straight Lines*, an interesting project that our readers have

already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article. What has at once impressed us of your insightful exploration of the notion of *line as a basic element of art that directs where the eyes move* is the way it invites the viewers to question their perceptual process, providing them with a multilayered visual experience: would you tell us something about the genesis of *The Straight Lines*? In particular, how did you develop this project on the technical aspect, in order to achieve such brilliant results?

I first began the project with making moulds of different body parts. Once I had all the moulds ready with me, I cut all of them into half and studied the positive and negative spaces of the body. Based on my observations, I then used AI to outline all the shapes and saw the beautiful landscapes created by our body. After many times of trials and errors using laser to cut the perfect shapes, this project finally achieved to direct audiences to question our body lines.

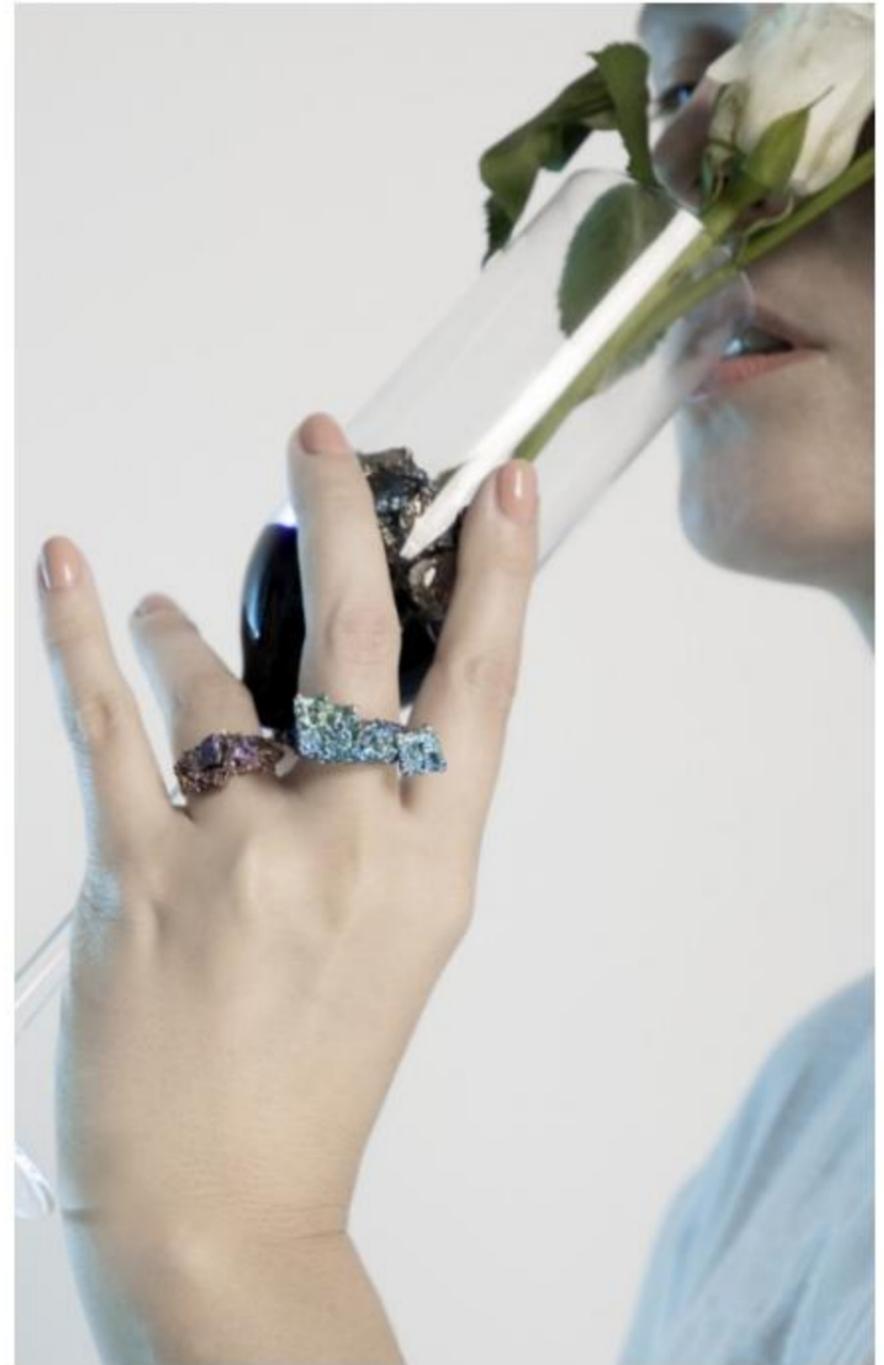
In *The Straight Lines* you also questioned your relationship with your body: lots of artists express the ideas that they explore by using their own bodies and through representations of the body and in their creative processes. German visual artist Gerhard Richter once stated that "*it is always only a matter of seeing: the physical act is unavoidable*": how do





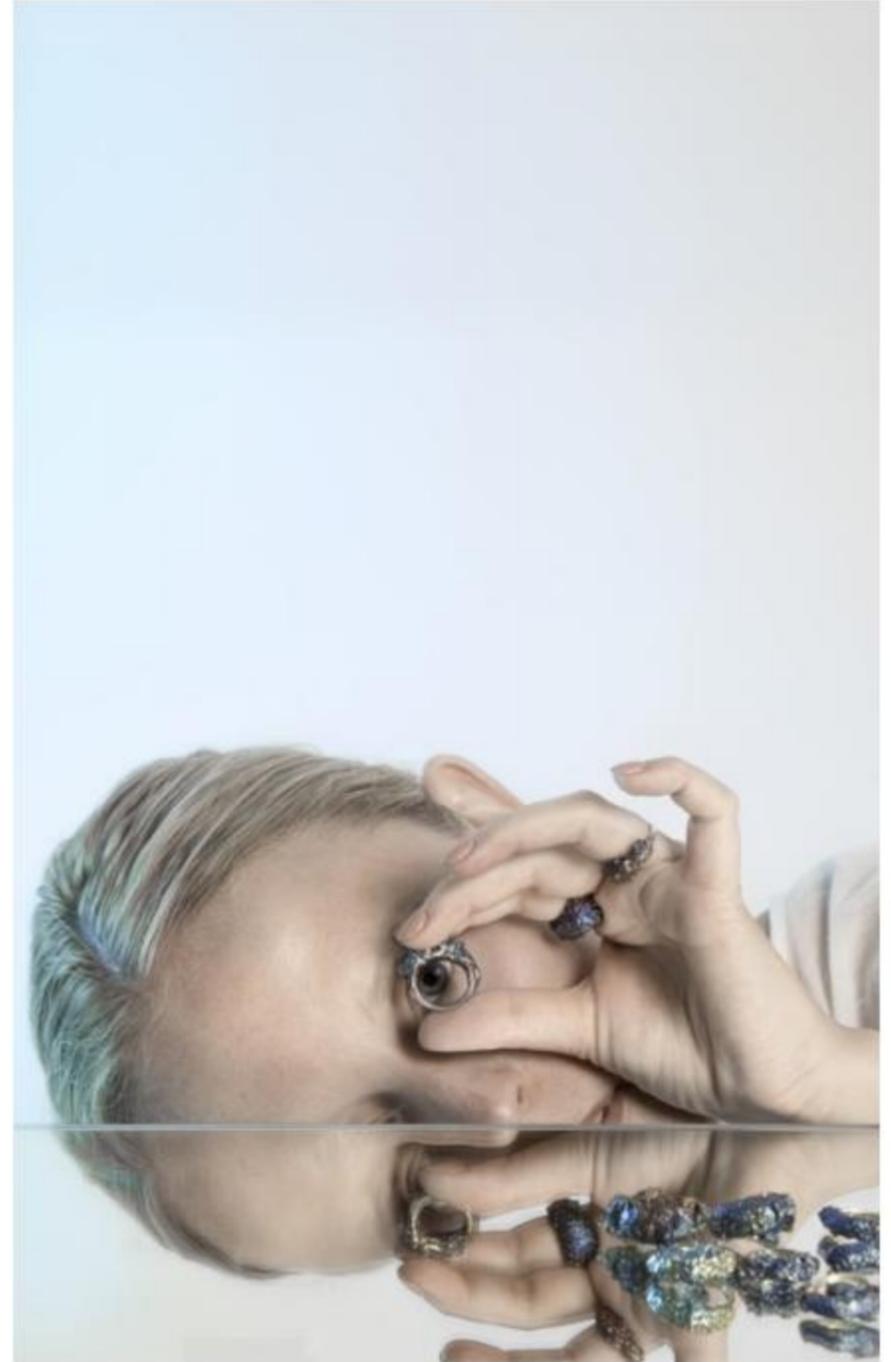
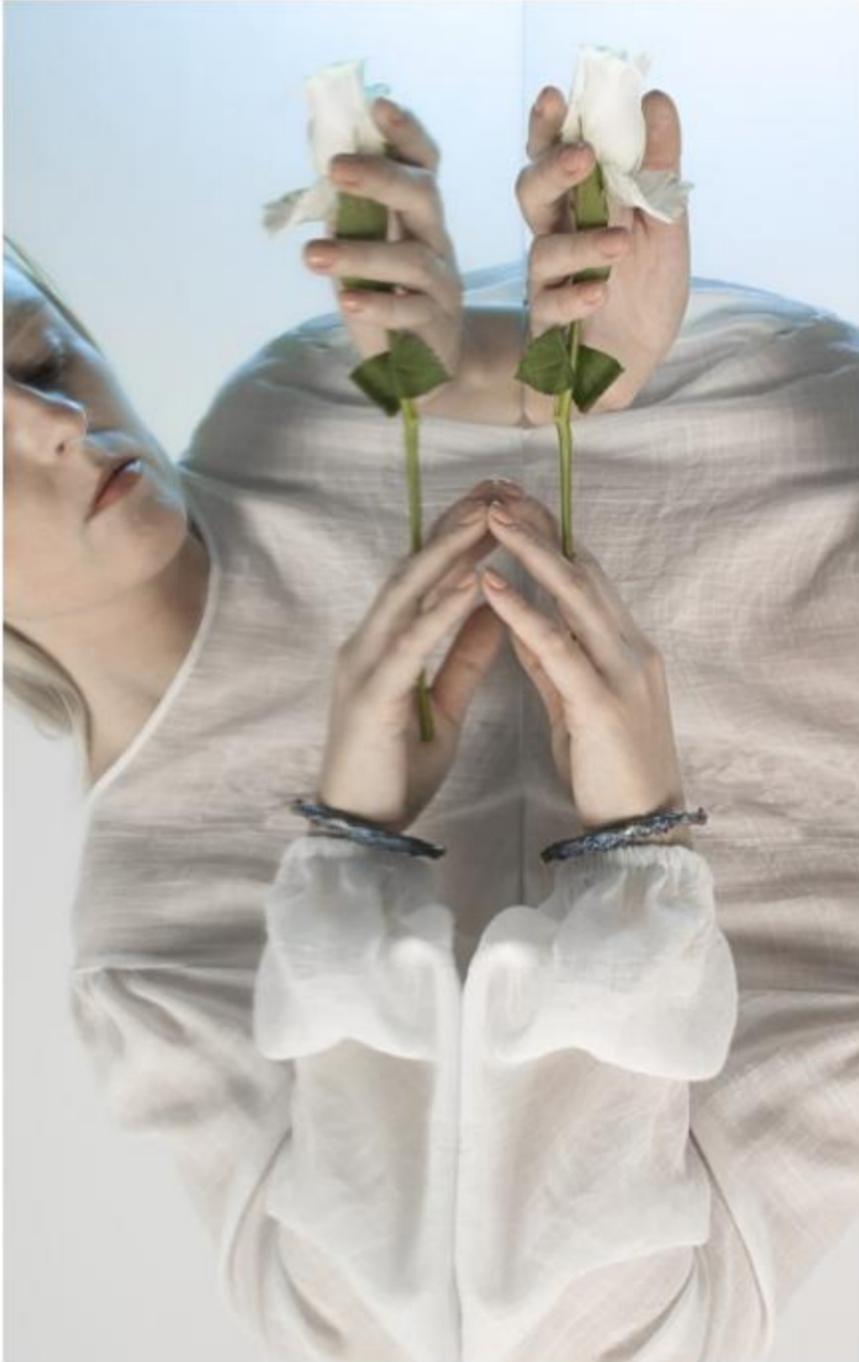
you consider the relation between the abstract feature of the ideas you aim to communicate and the physical act of creating your artworks?

I started to create body lines and spaces related works because I was intrigued at the time. Gradually this interest became the core of my creation and the perspective of things, so my works began to focus on the "body-related" axis. Initially developing from the physical part of the body line to the sensuous part related to recollection, my graduation collection was also inspired by my paranoia of heat, which is closer to the spiritual level and more inner-self. As self-searching plays a role in my creative process, I feel the current creation of the main axis has changed to "self-related". However, my creative style is very diverse, and the source of inspiration is extensive. Although there is a central axis of creation, I still often do some small works according to intuition, trying a variety of things and materials, and some of the tried works would return to the origin. The context of development revolves around the main axis, but some will not. I don't limit myself to the inspiration, the context of creation and the relationship between abstract ideas and creations. Inspiration may come from my own experience, an exhibition, a song, a book, or even a street scene or a conversation with others. There are a variety of sources for inspirations, and when I have inspiration, I can make small



works and sometimes the works become new series.

We have appreciated the way Extension of Sensory provides the audience with a special touching experience. We sometimes tend to ignore the fact that a work of art is a three-dimensional, physical, artefact: how do you consider the relation between the abstract nature



of the concepts that you explore in your artistic research and the *physical aspect* of your daily practice as an artist?

The two notions, abstract and physical, are complementary aspects in my works. I must understand the abstract concepts I want to express in order to create works that can accentuate each other. So before I enter the making stage, I will

spend some time understanding the motives, contexts, techniques and language of creation, and so on. I view concept as a way of expression or a way of speaking and use this as a benchmark to think about what direction I should go to communicate with the audience or enter the audience's expression. This helps to have a refreshing feeling, so I







like this mixture of the abstract nature of the concepts and the physical aspect of the daily practice as an artist.

You often work with materials rarely seen in our day to day life, as gallium and bismuth: what were the properties that you are searching for in the materials that you include in your works?

When I am sourcing materials for my projects, I don't necessarily select them based on their characteristics, I tend to focus more on what inspires me. Since I was very young I have always had a passion for combining different materials together in the chance that I might like the end result. This has become a habit of mine through my career and consequently I feel I am fairly flexible in my approach to the resources and supplies that I utilise in my work and owing to this my work really benefits and inspires me further. I was fortunate enough to attend the RCA (The Royal College of Art) exhibition two years ago which was a fantastic opportunity to preview and experience some of the very best emerging contemporary design and art. At the exhibition I was privy to an exhibit from a colleague I had studied with, she had pushed the boundaries of using traditional materials in an abstract and powerful way. She had smashed feathers into a diverse range of materials, in order to reduce the weight whilst allowing increased strength. I felt this was avant-garde and unique; it really

motivated me to want to try this technique myself in future creations.

Marked out with a powerful narrative drive, your artistic practice seems to invite the viewers to *question the idea of perception look inside of what appear to be seen, rather than its surface*, urging the spectatorship to see beyond the surface of the work of art. How important is for you to invite the viewers to *elaborate personal meaning*? And in particular, how open would you like your artworks to be understood?

My belief is that it is crucial for the viewers of my work to be able to elaborate meaning. For me art is essentially personal, there is no right or wrong it is all about individual perception. If someone can take a more profound enjoyment and understanding from my work by reflecting their own personal context to the work, then this is how it should be enjoyed and appreciated. Ideally I would like my works to resonate with my audience and with me, as an artist and a person because ultimately my work and my creations are an extension of me. Having people not only appreciate your designs but actually connecting with them and comprehending them, not only appraises my art but makes me feel appreciated and valued as an individual.

We like the stimulating abstract quality that marks out your artworks: due to the lack of figurative references, geometric



abstraction has *a universal quality*, in the sense that it can be appreciated by audience regardless of their cultural background. What do you think are the advantages and limitations of working in this style?

To all intents, art, for me is for everyone. I believe it should be accessible for all and not selective or regarded as elite. By working in the way that I do, it leaves an opportunity for the viewer to use their imagination, rather than being directed



or shown what to think or feel. The viewer should be able to digest and absorb what is before them and interpret this in their own way. Working in this style, for me, is the best approach; it is open, adaptable and accessible for

all, so for me, there are no limitations.

Over the years your artworks have been extensively showcased and you are regularly participating in international exhibition: how do you consider the nature of your relationship with your

audience? And what do you hope your audience take away from your artworks?

I have been very fortunate to have been able to exhibit my work so frequently and so widely but I do this for the feedback and satisfaction I gain from seeing my audience appreciate and enjoy my work. Yes, art is my passion, but engaging your viewers also becomes part of that passion. The connection between my work and the audience is in essence, the connection between I, myself and the audience, it comes hand in hand. My work is a part of me, even when it leaves me; it is still my extension, an avatar if you like. I want this extension of me to bring satisfaction and happiness to the audience once it leaves me. I adore hearing people's praise of my work and relish hearing their personal feedback.

As I progress and advance into international exhibitions, my aspiration is for the audience to begin to understand the affiliation between our bodies and jewellery. My designs are not just built around the concept of jewellery and wearing it as an object, it is, for me, how the piece of art interacts with the body.

My design process is not envisaged by working on the jewellery as a separate entity, it has to be connected and united with the body, this is critical for me. The body signifies the central axis of my designs and so it has great significance to my work, I do not class them as separate articles. I try to remember the example

that there is a difference between seeing the story and experiencing the story, therefore I allow the audience to observe the body itself through the actual, physical movements, as it interacts with the jewellery.

This implies to the audience that they too can share this same experience when they wear the jewellery. When you experience something for yourself, the whole five senses are engaged and consequently the memory resonates, this is the most profound way of experiencing.

We have really appreciated the multifaceted nature of your artistic research and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, Sara. What projects are you currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you hope to explore in the future?

Thanks so much for the interview, it has been an amazing opportunity to share my creations. Currently I am working on a material that can constantly change its forms according to the temperature. I hope to explore artworks related to gravity in the future. Please stay tuned!

*An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens.biennale@europe.com*



Angel Corred

Lives and works in London, United Kingdom

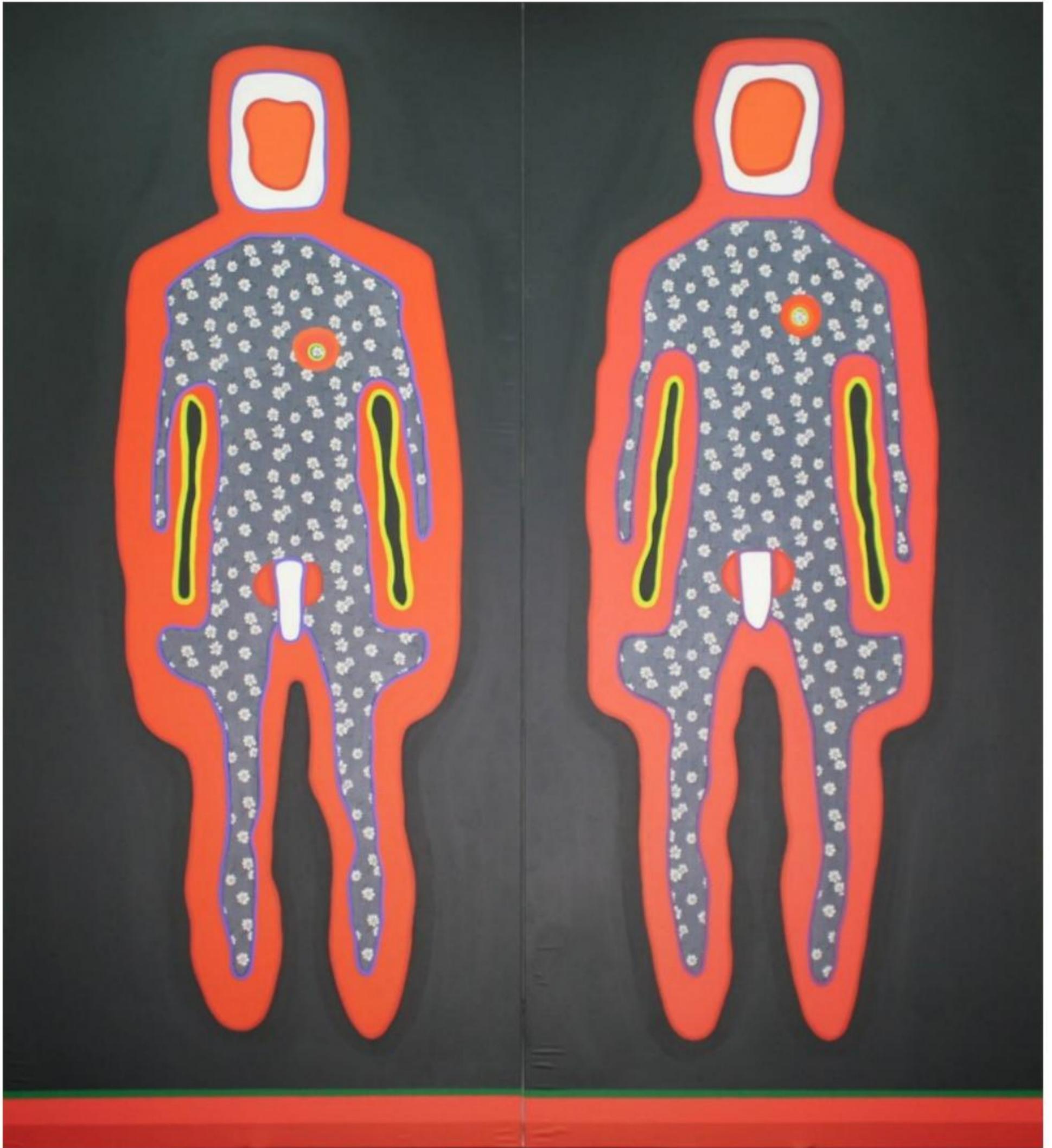
Angel's current focus is a portfolio of work which evolved into an exploration centred on the human body, its frailty and the consequences of various forms of physical and mental trauma, disfigurement and disability. His present body of work thus entails an enquiry and interrogation of the universality of such matters, explored by means of abstraction of imagery of military servicemen who have been disfigured and/or subjected to reconstruction and impairment from war injuries, wounds and other traumas including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Such an enquiry of matters such as physicality, morphology and fragmentation must ultimately explore both cultural and individual understandings of what is acceptable in terms of the manner in which the body, physical presence, and ultimately life and death are perceived. It can also with some justification interrogate various themes concerning what is termed the supernatural and the sense of 'hauntedness' that often arises from traumatic experiences.



KPMG Exhibition 2018 - Enter Life More Fully





Rename Us as Strangers - Otto & Hans

An interview with

Angel Correa

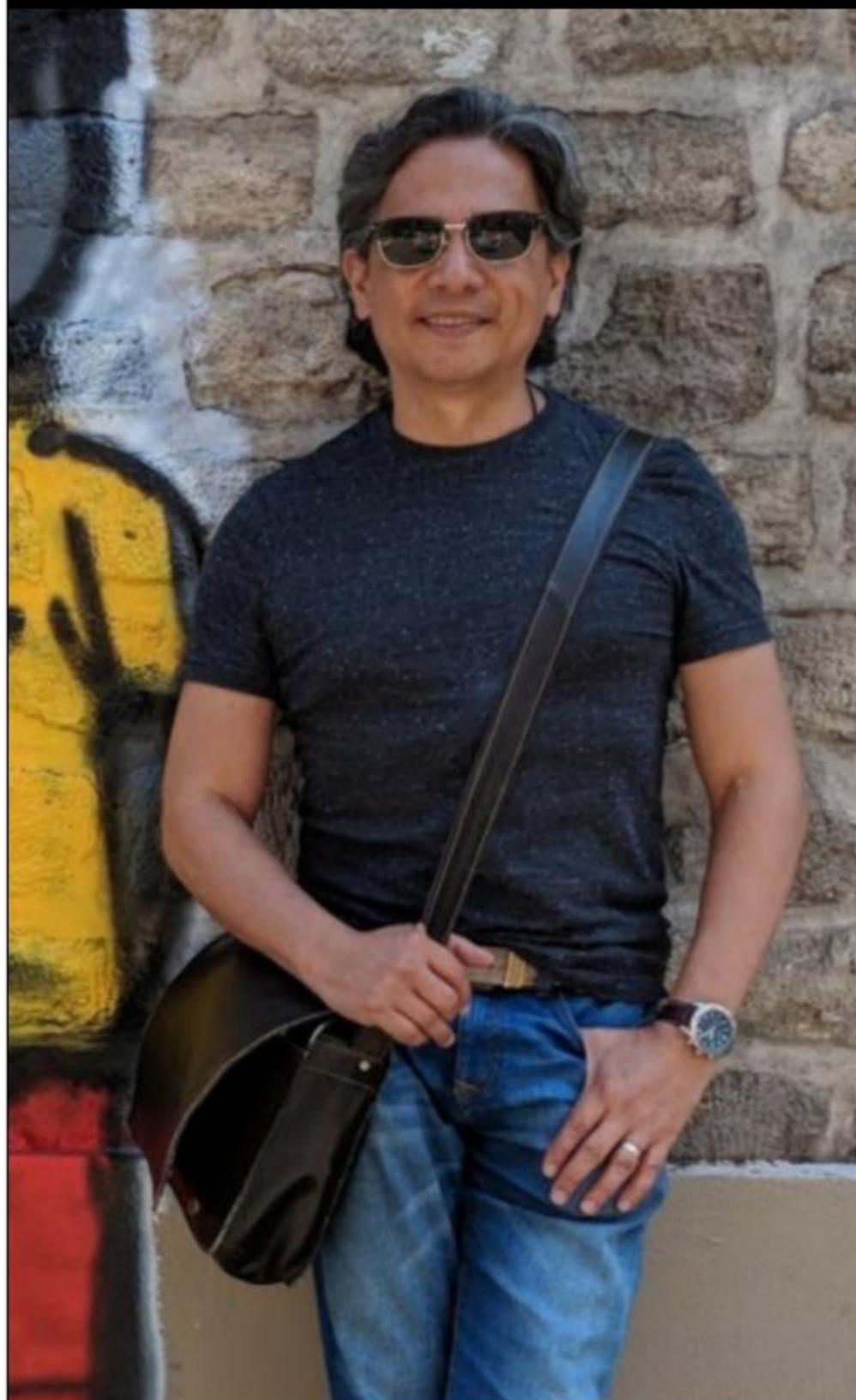
An interview by **Josh Ryder**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens.biennale@europe.com

Hello Angel and welcome to **ART Habens**. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would start this interview with a couple of introductory questions. Centered on the exploration of the theme of human body and its frailty, your artistic research conveys such a *coherent combination between imagination and a rigorous aesthetics*, and we would like to invite our readers to visit

<https://www.studioangelcorrea.com> in order to get a wide idea about your artistic production: in the meanwhile, would you tell us something about your usual setup and process? Moreover, are there any experiences of training that did particularly direct the trajectory of your artistic journey?

Angel Correa: In terms of my setup and process, I think I probably do something that others would find difficult. I immerse myself in the 'story' behind the person or persons which have inspired me to visit certain universal themes.

This very frequently entails looking at autopsy photographs and sketches, or viewing with profound difficulty the photographs of families, lovers and friends cradling the body of a deceased



Angel Correa

victim of some form of injustice. Sometimes, when the subjects of my art emerge from their experience alive but somehow 'scarred' I take the time to locate photographs of them many months after their period of initial challenge, and

somehow, they seem to 'speak' to me of their pain and their valour piercing through their eyes. My experiences of being around conflict, since a child, have a direct impact on my artistic journey. My early sketches, as a child, were always of my mother and her neighbours and friends gossiping about the latest gruesome death or outright disappearance of someone in our farm town. My training with art and sculpture was always haunted by the shadows of these early experiences during *La Violencia* which were so 'ordinary' to me, but which I am finally starting to accept were extra-ordinary to my friends and peers.

For this special edition of ART Habens we have selected *In The Midst of Breakdown* and *A Foreboding Sense of Uncertainty*, a couple of interesting artwork that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article. We have particularly appreciated the sapient mix between essential still rigorous sense of geometry and evocative symbolism. When walking our readers through the genesis of this artworks, could you tell us how did you develop the initial ideas?

Angel Correa: It always surprises people to learn that my initial sketches are no bigger than a postcard. I'm interested in the infinity of the line, and sometimes I play mental games with myself, such as not picking up the pencil as I draw, until I am finished. Working at this scale provides me with a





A Foreboding Sense of Uncertainty



In The Midst of Breakdown

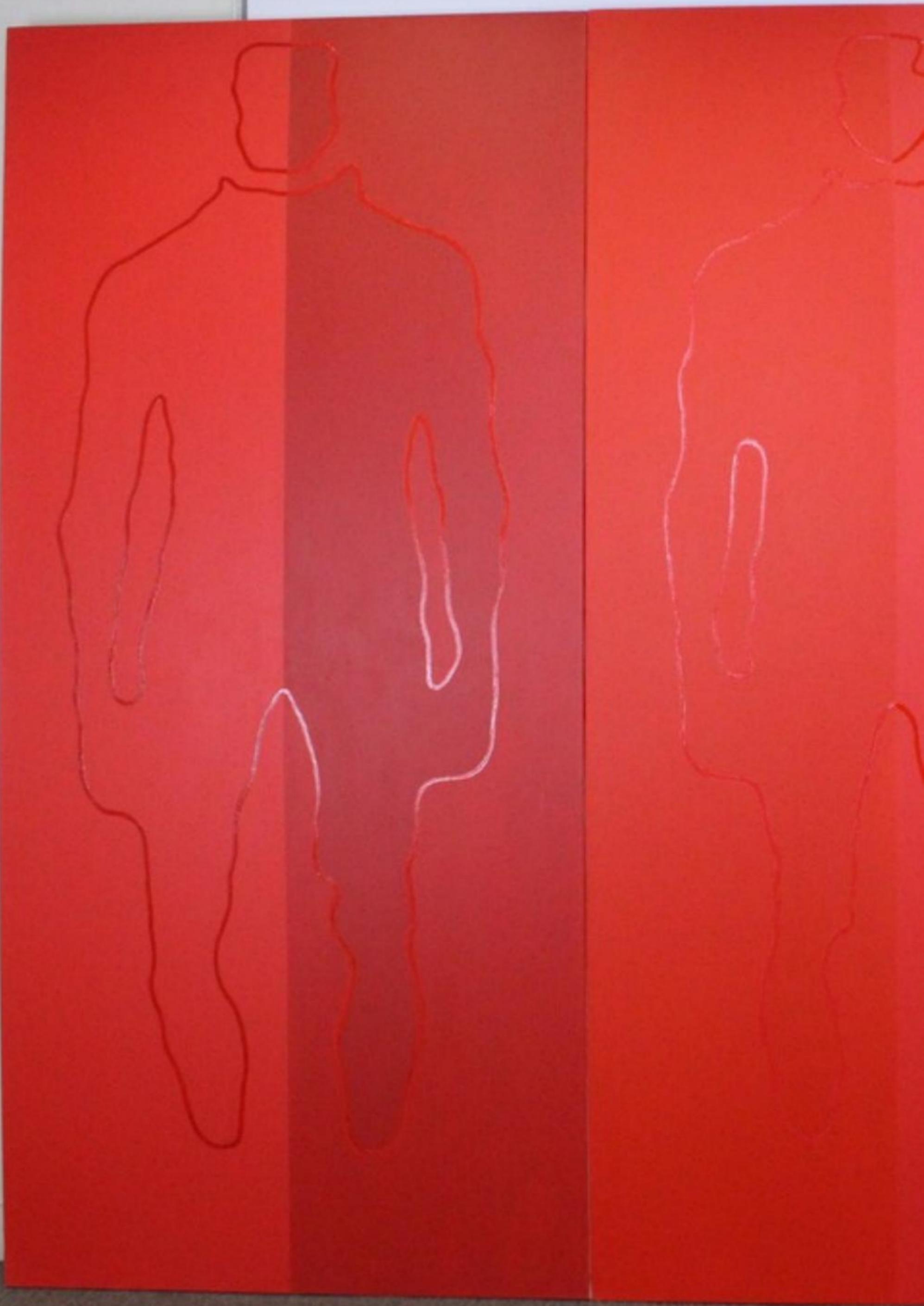


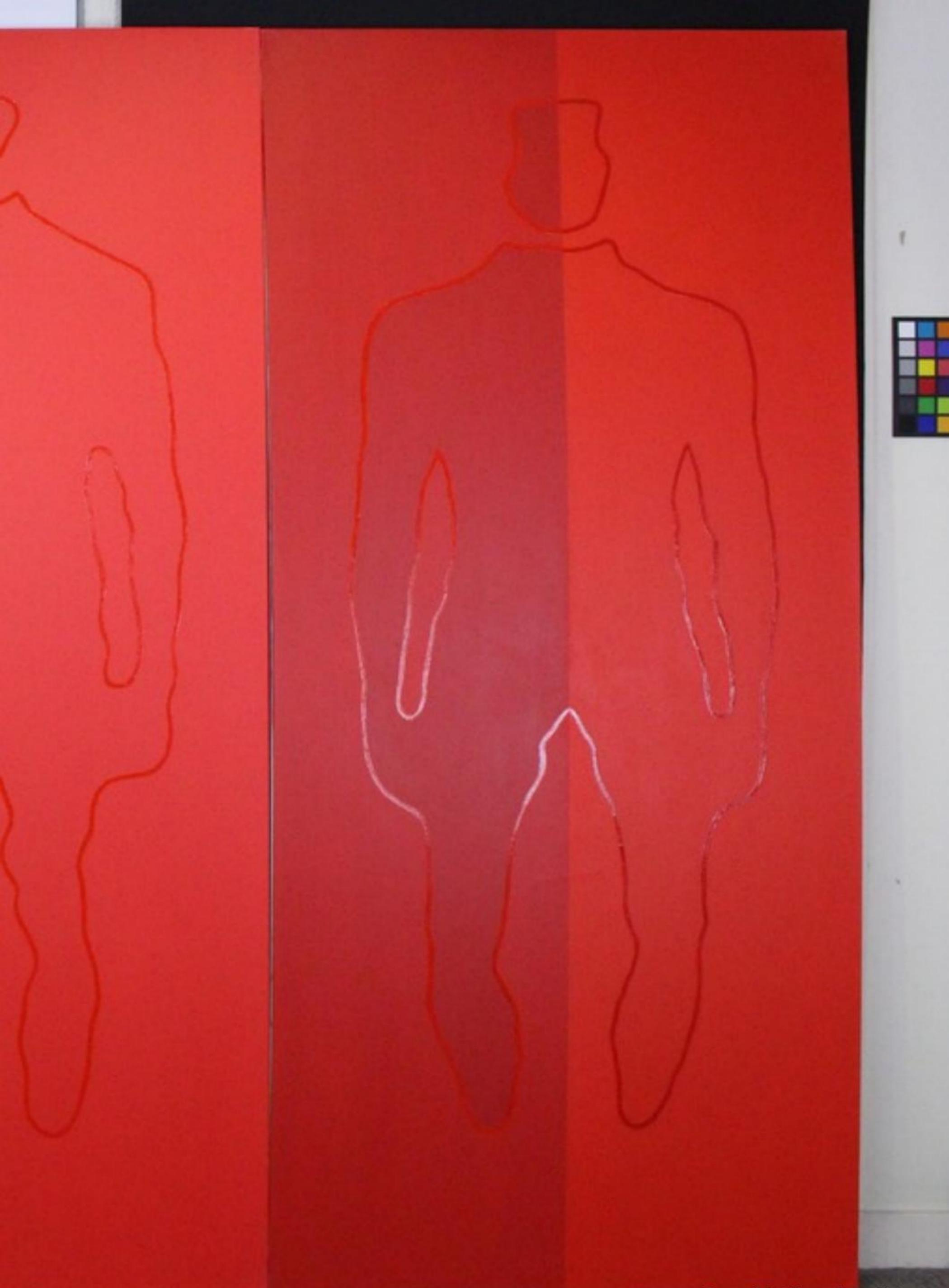
certain intimacy, and the symbolism and geometry can become whatever they want to be.

Sometimes I scan these images and work with them electronically, and sometimes I stay with a more painterly approach. With 'In the Midst of Breakdown' I really wanted to convey the concept of 'life-force' and we all have our different ways of thinking about it. To me, I wanted to represent a 'veil' and thus the earlier sketches had a very ethereal quality.

When I decided to retain this quality, dozens upon dozens of 'washes' were necessary because I wanted to convey the notion that our life-force 'pulsates'. As I scale up, I often need to find different ways of retaining what I saw in the initial maquettes. When I worked up from maquette to the finished sizes of 'In the Midst of Breakdown', the idea of a body being 'broken down' meant that I felt drawn to more sharp distinctions; after all, these are depictions of men who have been assaulted by bullets, so that idea of fragility coupled with strength kept taking me back toward enhancing the contrast of the colours.

We have really appreciated the vibrancy of thoughtful nuances of your canvases, that - as in the interesting *One with Nineveh and Tyre* - create tension and dynamics. How did you come about settling on your color palette? And how much does your own psychological make-up determine the nuances of tones that you decide to include in





a specific artwork and in particular, how do you develop a texture?

Angel Correa: With 'One with Nineveh and Tyre' I found that my initial maquettes were much more painterly and detailed than the final result. The idea of 'noble sacrifice' seemed to be essential to me, and in the United Kingdom this is represented by the poppy. I found, however, that this notion of blood 'staining the soil' of a nation kept coming back to me. So, as I sized up the schemes, they just got simpler and simpler. I decided to make central this idea of a schism between 'valour' and humility, and to do this, I felt that it was only possible to mix two complementary tones of colour. Of course, then when I represented the figures themselves, the only way to remain in keeping was to mix from within these two colours. I decided to make them glisten, and it is difficult to see except in-person and close up, but it almost appears that these figures leave behind the backdrop of their struggle, facing an uncertain life... but life nonetheless.

We have really appreciated the way your artworks invite the viewers to engage with their own unique past histories to recreate the powerful narrative drive that marks out your artworks: how do you consider the role of memory playing within your creative process?





Six Degrees of Separation



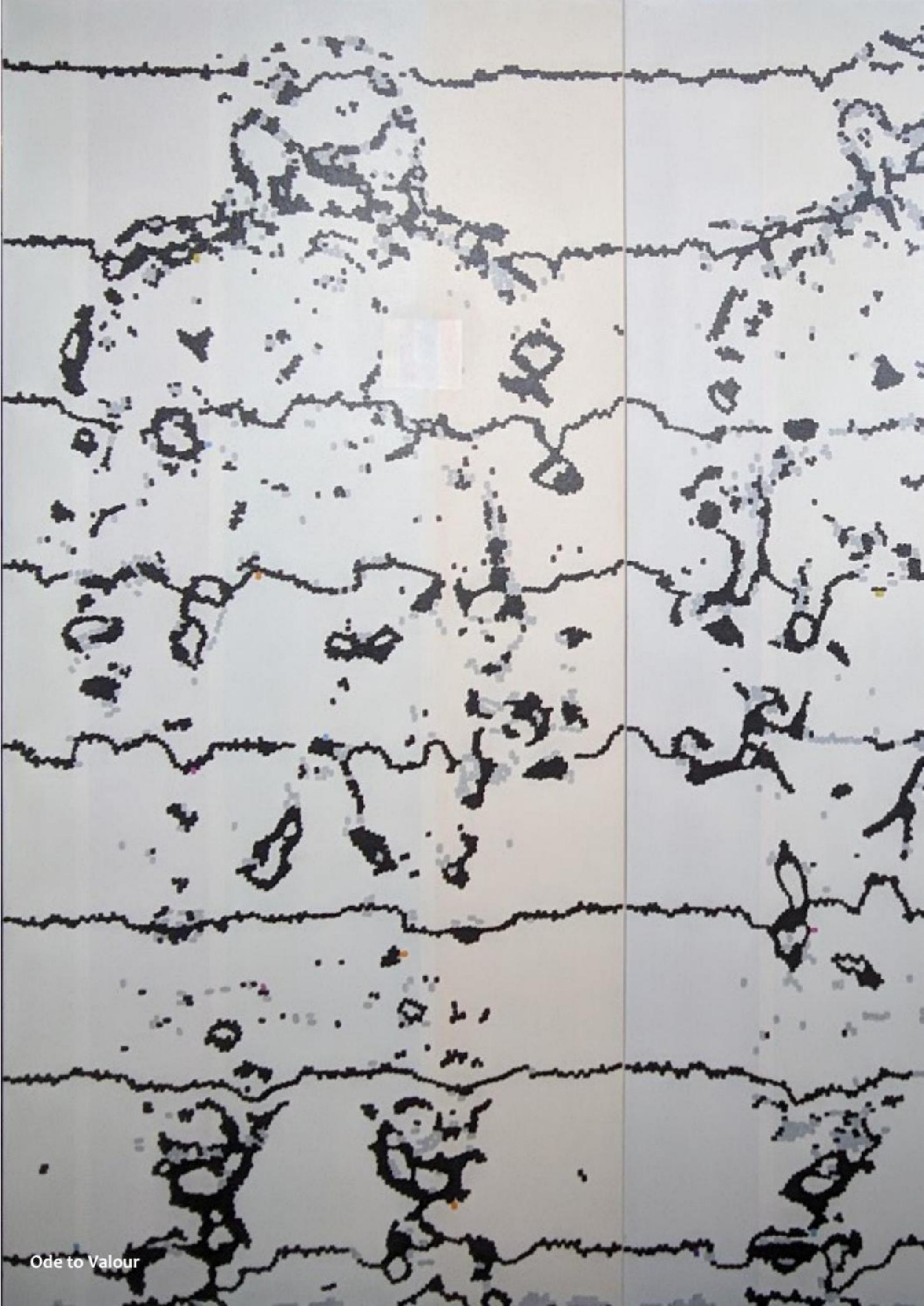
What Casts Our Lives Asunder

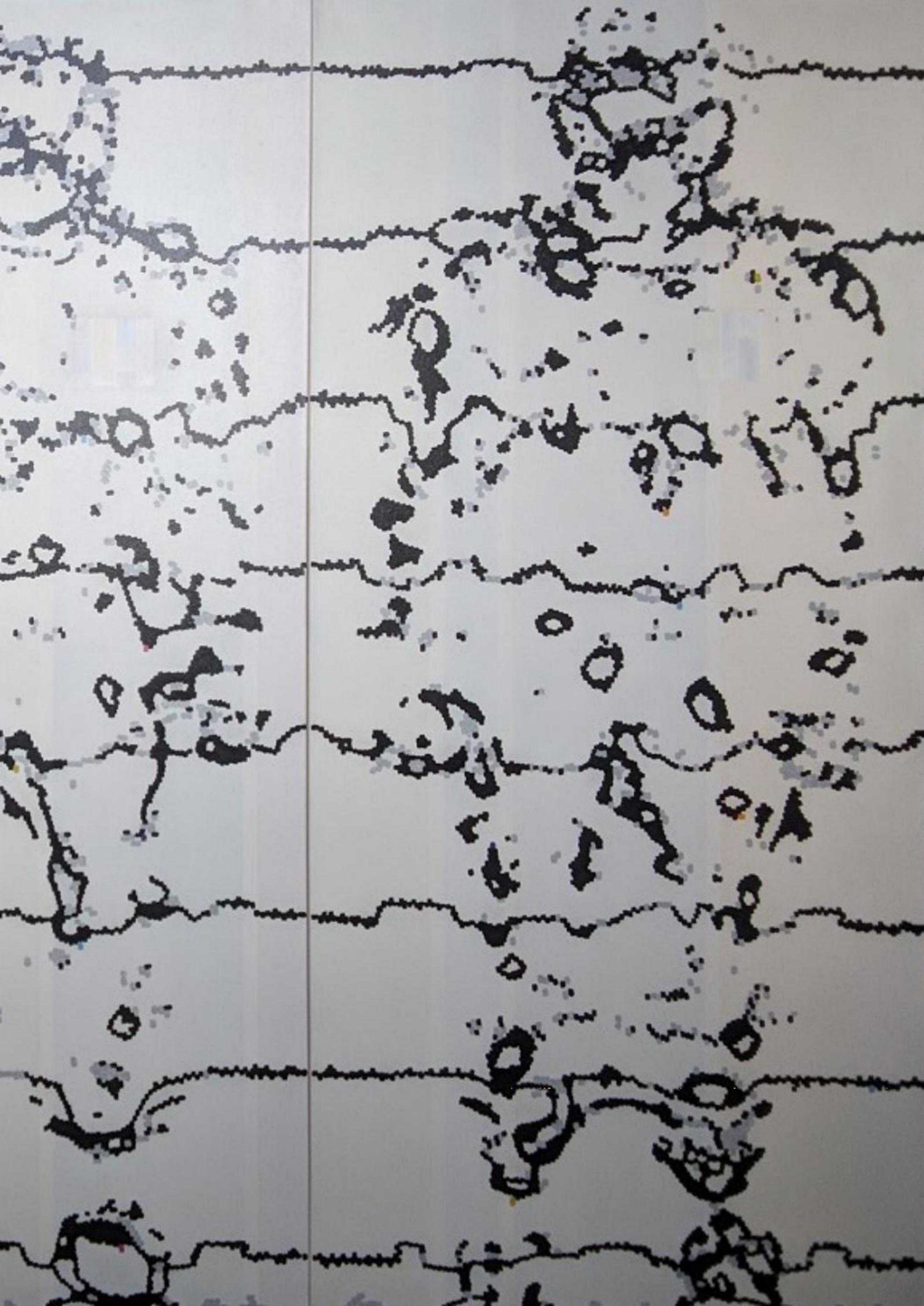


For me, memory plays a huge part in my creative process. But it's important for me to make a distinction. I myself believe that there are both individual and collective memories, and I also believe they are handed down inter-generationally. For example, there are hundreds of thousand of first-generation Colombian immigrants living in London, and each of us has a complex story as to why we are here. I do believe I notice the 'imprint' of these stories being passed down from parent to child. There is a complicity amongst us first-generation immigrants; there is much that is 'no-go' material when we are around the offspring who could tell their children so much about life, survival, and turning the page. But somehow these children and young adults... know... yet they don't know in words, and they don't know directly. It's just a whisper in their ears, and for me that 'whisper' is the sound of a vast collective memory.

We like the way your artworks convey such a stimulating combination between figurative elements and captivating *abstract feeling*, whose background creates such an *oneiric atmosphere*: how would you consider *the relationship between abstraction and figurative* in your practice? In particular, how does representation and a tendency towards abstraction find their balance in your work?

Angel Correa: I am very interested in the co-





creation and communication of signs and symbols, as well as the various totems we often arrange to express our collective nature and identity. In 'Rename Us as Strangers' I decided that the symbol of the rainbow flag had been examined to such a degree, and by so many others, that I needed to abstract it, so that the dreamlike quality of the juxtaposition of the constituent colours would 'sneak up' on you when you viewed the collection in one exhibition space. It's very interesting; this question you've asked makes me realise how quickly I set about to deconstruct almost anything which can be seen as a whole. Each of the ill-fated couples in 'Rename Us as Strangers' stands apart from themselves, from other couples, and from the collective identity depicted by the rainbow flag. I suppose this is partly because I do believe that those who are on the margins of the mainstream must search far and wide for a sense of togetherness. For me, and for others, it seems more of a sense of 'relief' than entitlement to be made part of a fraternity, and I suppose I tend to unpack anything that starts to feel too entitled or too comfortable with itself.

Exploring the duality of the notion of "purpose and meaning" in the creation of beliefs, we daresay that your artistic practice seems to aim to look inside of what appear to be seen, rather than its surface, providing the spectatorship with

freedom to realize their own perception. How important is for you to invite the viewers to elaborate personal meanings?

Angel Correa: In this idea of fragmenting things that cohere too comfortably together, I suppose that I have seen people get lost in collective thinking; collective memory; collective aggression and victimhood. So I hold the hope and the belief that personal meanings will serve as the antidote to 'getting lost' in a collective view, and I think it is essential not only as viewers of art, but co-creators of culture to stand apart, gain perspective, and then 'opt back in' to whatever we've decided to believe or become part of.

Part of that is letting one's eyes go out of focus, so that what is *beyond* that which is seen can be perceived. When we speak of themes of purpose and meaning, it is usually those of us who stood apart, and then opted back in, who have the strongest sense of conviction about our true purpose, and about how we co-create 'meaning' in our lives.

Your works inquire into the horror of certain aspects of our present-day world and we have really appreciated the socio-political engagement of your artistic research, that inquiries into the themes of war, conflict, violence, as well as oppression. Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco once stated, "an artist's role differs depending on which



Enter Life More Fully - Jakob & Misha



Enter Life More Fully - Thomas & Daniel

part of the world they're in. It depends on the political system they are living under": does your artistic research respond to a particular cultural moment? In particular, is important for you to convey a positive message to the viewers?

Angel Correa: As much as I might choose to try to escape it, for whatever reason, the roots of my artistic research are riveted to the themes of war, conflict, violence and oppression. This was the socio-cultural backdrop of both my childhood and my coming-of-age, and yet in every collective horror (and there have been so many, haven't there?) we can find camaraderie, valour, conviction, kindness, empathy, resilience and humour.

This is the positive message that I wish to convey, and I hope that somehow viewers glimpse that hope in everything I create... in order that they can glimpse it more strongly in themselves and those around them.

You draw a lot from the years that you spent in the Colombian social context, that has enriched the results of your exploration of Magic Realism, to provide your artistic journey through the borders of fantasy and reality with such a strong identity. How does your cultural substratum due to your Colombian roots influence your artistic research? and how does your everyday life's experience fuel your creative process?

Angel Correa: I identify with the notion of being an outsider, and I identify with the idea of taking nothing for granted. So much was ripped out of the clutches of my mother and her siblings that she takes nothing for granted, and she is full of joy and vitality as a result. That's not what happens to everyone, to be sure, but sometimes when you are stripped down to the bareness of facing the inconceivable, you discover what you're made of. I also think that, as is the case of many cultures which have coming-of-age rituals, that occasional stripping-down makes the boundary between so-called reality and so-called fantasy difficult to distinguish.

That's a place which is both exciting and scary. What strips one person down to next-to-nothing will be different from the person standing next to him. Magic Realism conveys with potency those occasional moments in life when you stare into the mirror and you don't know who is staring back at you.

Especially for your surrealistic artworks, you usually paint large canvas, as your *Enter Life More Fully series*, that provide the viewers with such an immersive visual experience: how do the dimensions of your canvass affect your workflow?

My canvases are truly larger-than-life, and when I first started experimenting with this format, I





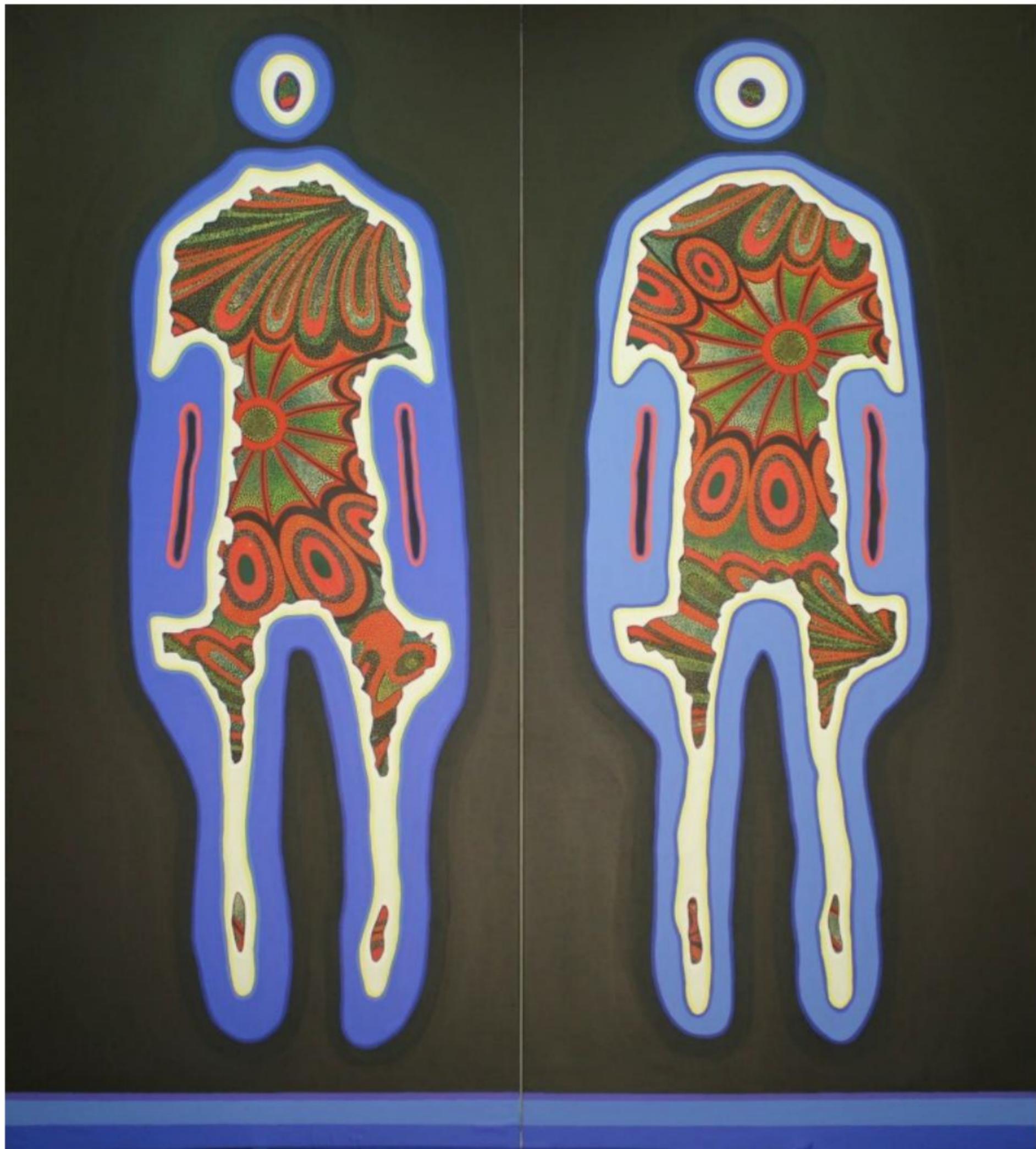




Enter Life More Fully - Andrew & Demetry







Rename Us as Strangers - Max & Leo

decided to use the dimensions which cartoonists use to depict super-heroes. That still seems right to me, in that most of the people I depict are indeed super-heroes.

It's very difficult to work in this format, because sometimes I have to lay them down on a table, and sometimes I have to turn them upside-down. My friends have frequently said, "Make me a small triptych like that one, and I will put it in my apartment" and sometimes I experiment with doing so, but the strength of the voices, so to speak, of those who I depict become faint whispers. Somehow it doesn't seem to pay them the respect they deserve. So for now, even though each panel of a triptych is the size of a household door and shipping them elsewhere is a real challenge, that is the size these characters seem to want to be.

Over the years your artworks have been showcased in several occasions, including your recent solo at the KPMG Headquarters, in Canary Wharf, London: how do you consider the nature of your relationship with your audience? And what do you hope your audience take away from your artworks?

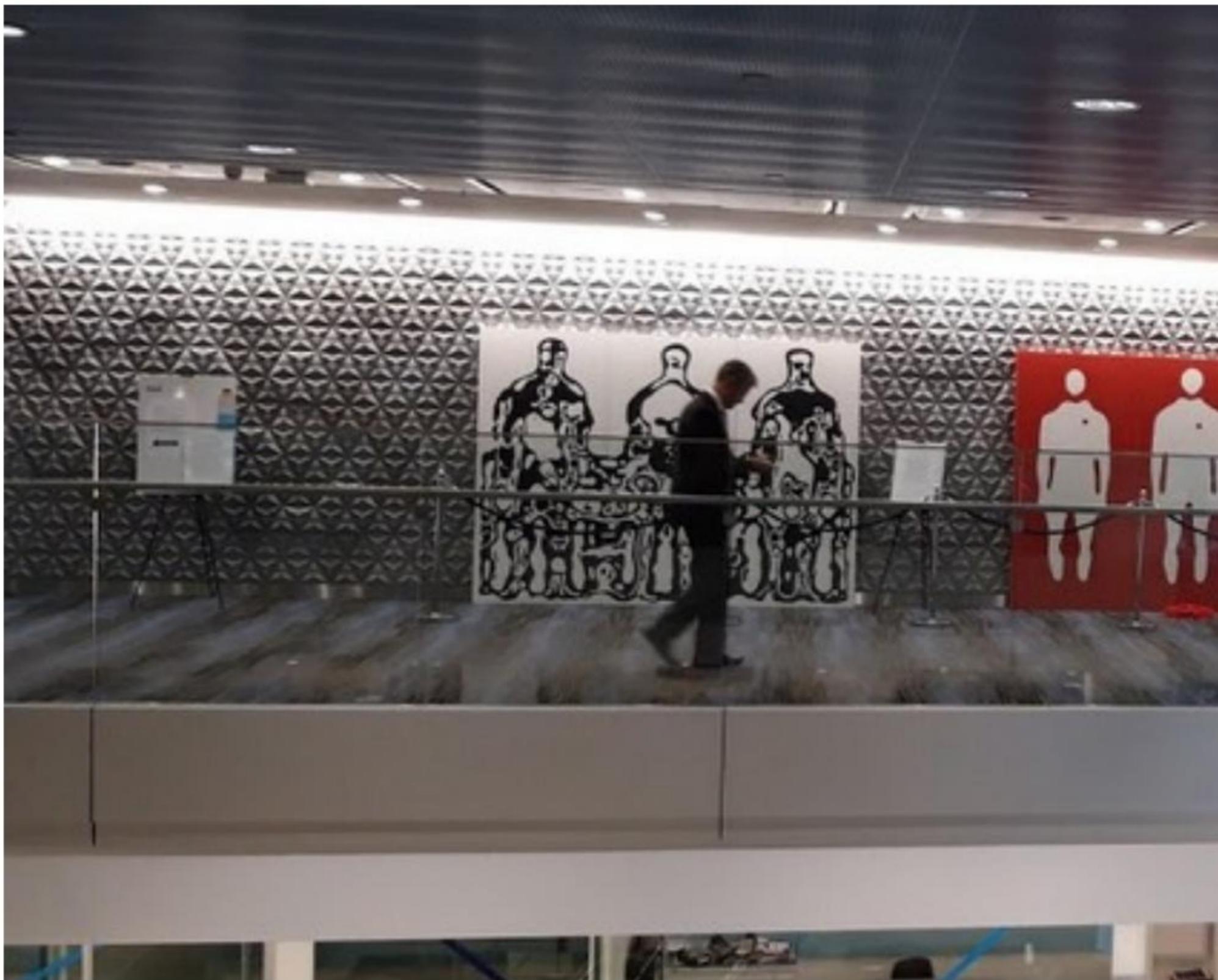
Angel Correa: I always love hearing what others take from my work, given that it is so abstract. These works speak to some people in completely unpredictable ways. I hope that what they see

most of all is the sense of connection between all of us, and I hope that they glimpse in their own realisation of their mortality the notions of valour, pride, contribution and strength. There are so many people who have not had a reason to really see what they're made of – my work hopefully shines a light on this realisation, whilst serving as an invitation to be ready to do so.

We have really appreciated the multifaceted nature of your artistic research and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, Angel. What projects are you currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you hope to explore in the future?

I'm excited about what I'm working on right now, and because I'm very interested in the manner in which so many people are oppressed in the name of religion or politics, cannon-fodder for the agenda of others. The drug culture, organised crime, sex-trafficking, and the like sit uneasily astride the more well-packaged forms of what I see as oppression in the name of faith, valour, tradition or ideology.

A great many people will always be duped into doing things "in the name of X" and they can't imagine, until it is far too late, the degree to which they have often been 'hung out to dry'. It seems to be some aspect of the nature of humanity that

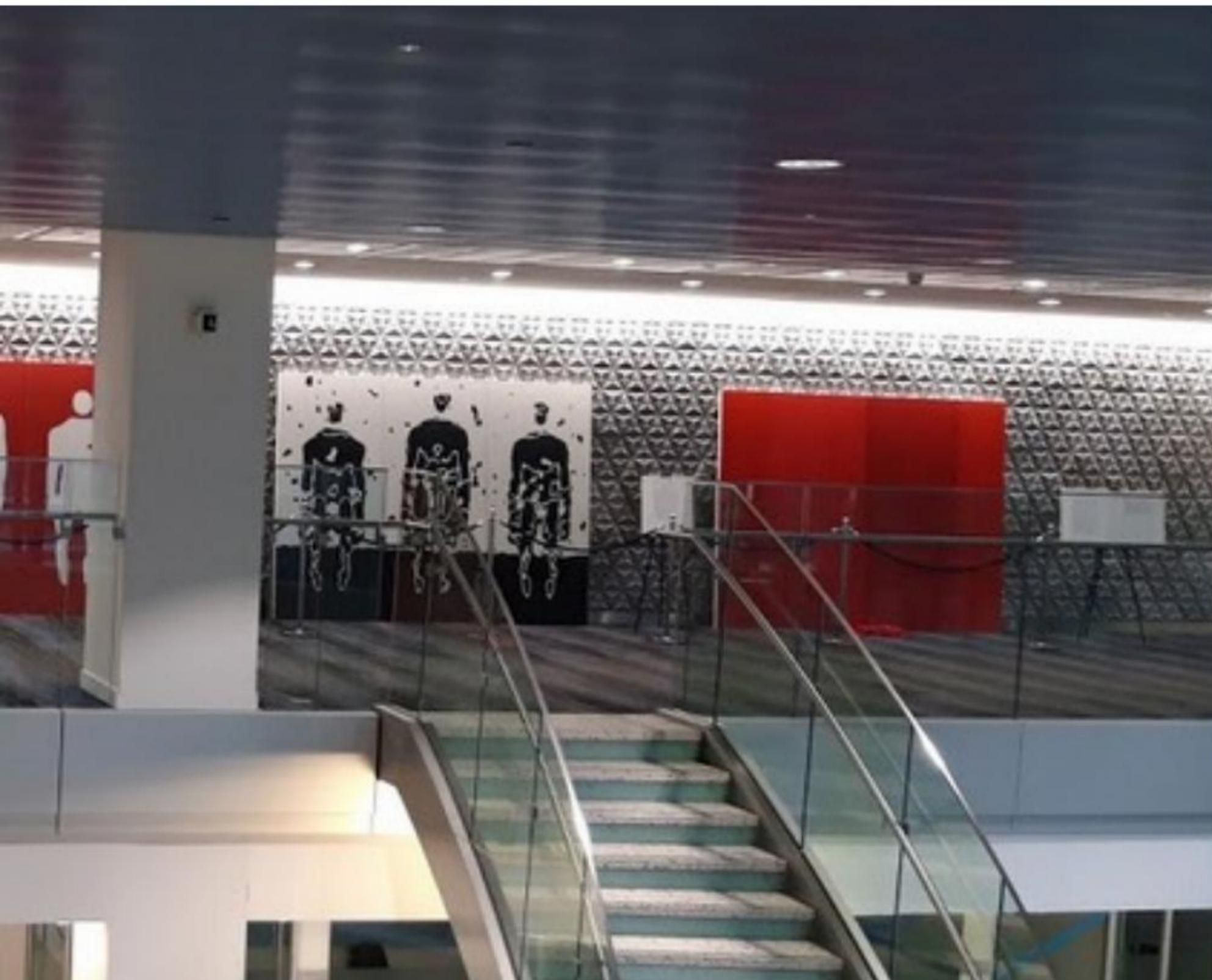


KPMG Exhibition 2018 - Broken Beyond Repair

this takes its many forms. So, I'm working on a series of depictions of those who were duped into serving various causes, paying a price – or the ultimate price – in advancing the agenda of those who oppressed them. What excites me the most is that I will be using a completely different

format for the 28 works which will form this collection.

These will be coupled with a sequence of art prints which complement this theme. I'm also very excited about a solo residency scheduled for this summer in Sicily.



Lastly, I'm also preparing maquettes for an exploration of the sense-making processes that people go through after acquiring an unexpected disability. These are all inspired by stories of challenge, strength and resilience in the context of radically altered self-concepts – and they are

totems of the excitement of discovering what is possible in the face of adversity.

*An interview by **Josh Ryder**, curator
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Angel Correa grew up in rural Colombia, South America before emigrating to the United Kingdom at the age of 38. During his formative years, he became passionately interested in the emotive power of signs, symbols and metaphors – and this fuelled a later professional interest in journalism, as well as a lectureship in semiotics. In terms of what drives Correa's creative process, he cannot help but hold at the forefront of his mind a deeply personal narrative which reflects on the emblems of horror inherent to certain aspects of our present-day world.

Having lived through the midst of six decades of social conflict, violence and terrorism in which millions were violently killed, injured or simply vanished without a trace, Correa harbours nothing short of a deep-seated 'compulsion' to articulate rich personal experience within his enquiry.

As a child, for example, Correa used to sketch his mother having coffee with her neighbours, relatives and friends, all whilst listening to them gossip about how many people had been recently killed, all whilst recounting some of their own childhood horrors during the period known as La Violencia. A catch-up on the latest spate of unexpected suicides, killings and funerals was simply a part of everyday life. Art has always proven to be Correa's most effective means of discovering, articulating and somehow processing the various strands of a complex personal and cultural narrative. "The horrors of life somehow stopped

becoming noteworthy," he recalls, "and that's because no family was untouched by death or violence – including mine."

Such themes as death, war, conflict, violence, crime, destruction, mutilation, religious and cultural oppression, personality disorders, mental illness and the 'shifting sands' of inextricably-linked socio-political identities are thus considered and explored in the context of deep and personal meaning. These are the themes which for years served as the backdrop of Correa's day-to-day life; various and often tangled threads which comprised the warp and weft of a social context that will be working its way inter-generationally through the collective psyche of Colombian men, women and children – no doubt, for many years to come.

Correa explains that "in the midst of this backdrop of civil conflict and anonymous deaths which featured in 'lowbrow' newspapers such as *El Espacio* and *El Caleño*, there were endless first-hand accounts – accompanied by gruesome front-page photographs – of an unexpected denouement to the drama of someone's day-to-day life."

Correa recalls that, at the age of six, "one of my mother's childhood friends found out that his wife was having an affair with a much younger man." Despite her age, she was, by all accounts, one of the most beautiful and well-dressed women in town. To avert scandal and preserve the reputation of a prominent family, it was decided that this matriarch and mother would leave town with all her children, never to return. According to Correa, "her young lover, however, announced that he would kill himself were she to leave him. And when she actually packed up and moved away, he made good on his word – only three days after her hastily-arranged 'exile'. Devastated, she returned to town immediately on hearing of his death, but the funeral proceedings were already well underway.

"It was like a scene from a Hollywood film," Correa recalls. "This exquisitely-dressed middle-aged woman stopped the funeral cortege as it chuntered toward the cemetery. She climbed onto the open-topped car typical of rural funerals and headed for the floral bouquets, tossing them aside before opening the coffin lid. Keeping her expensive handbag on her arm, she proceeded to take her young lover's body in her arms, kissing him passionately on his lips whilst screaming and crying.

"I happened to be in town with my mother, who was shopping, and we witnessed all of this in what seemed like a slow-motion cut-away of a horror movie. Clutching my mother's hand in terror amongst the unexpected high-street commotion, what I can still see as if it were yesterday was his purplish-blue lips and eye-sockets – which didn't matter one bit to his bereaved lover. My mother hastily explained to me that in order to commit suicide he had drunk pesticide, and that was the reason for the ethereal discolouration." Soon afterward, and for what at the time seemed like "no particular reason" Correa and a group of friends took to regularly "hanging out" in the town's cemetery. They would explore not only the tombstones, but the crypts, the coffins and their contents. Some of the deceased appeared mummified, whilst others were no more than skeletons with rotten clothes. It was common practice to disinter the deceased after four or five years. This was so the bones could be broken into parts, pulverised and then re-interred (sometimes en masse) in longer-term tombs known as osarios.

Amongst this group of childhood friends, he recalls, "there was a shared fascination with the varying stages of decay after death. For example, women who had dyed their hair in life now had grey roots, and it was as if they had been partying until dawn but wearing only costume jewellery; always cheap plastic... and the pearls were always embarrassingly fake. The more devout amongst the deceased, on the other hand, appeared austere – they were dressed in the garments of a nun's habit, in tribute to La Virgen del Carmen and other Catholic saints."

At the age of fourteen, Correa was taken to the house of his next-door neighbour, and in the ground-floor room known as la sala was a simple coffin which cradled the mutilated body of his friend's father – he had been executed by shotgun for not paying the regular extortion money to the Guerilla and there were multiple wounds as a result. "My mother whispered to me, drily observing that "Pobre hombre; la gente dice que lo dejaron como un colador" (Poor man; people did warn me that he would look like a kitchen colander!). Orphaned in

similar circumstances at an early age herself, my mother lamented the fact that, like her, my friend and his sisters would now be raised without a father.

"A bowl had been placed on the floor to catch the dripping plasma. I have never forgotten either the rhythm of the 'drip-drip-drip' which seemed to deafen the various expressions of condolences, the pickles-and-piss stench of formaldehyde, or the translucent pink colour of plasma as it dripped into the bowl. It didn't escape my notice that my friend's mother had used one of the bowls that I had been served hot chocolate in... many times before... as a guest at their home. Seeing someone 'lying in state' was an increasingly ordinary and frequent event – every six months or so throughout my childhood – and it was all the more uneventful because the formalities of booking a funeral director were few and far-between in the small farm-town in which I was raised.

Such tableaux were not the least bit uncommon, according to Correa: "A great many of my childhood friends and neighbours were orphaned as children and, grief-stricken, they killed themselves before they reached the age of adulthood. One of my classmates, whose father was similarly executed by an extremist group for a perceived betrayal, soon ended her own life by lying on the railway tracks, on the timely arrival of the afternoon cargo trains. She had left a note in her grandparents' house, but they didn't find it until it was too late. It simply said, 'Without my father, I cannot continue.'"

Just a few years later, Correa's best childhood friend's father died unexpectedly, and again the formalities were dispensed with. Correa recalls that "in fact, my grief-stricken friend opened up the casket before it was to be lowered into the freshly-dug grave. He grabbed the besuited torso of his father, raised it to seated position, and couldn't stop himself from hugging and kissing his father's forehead and face. Everybody was crying, including me, but nobody tried to stop him. This was how we expressed grief in our community – simply, collectively and passionately."

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

In terms of his overall goals in creation and production, Correa explains that "I am particularly drawn to executing surrealistic compositions whose shapes can be used to represent the human body and somehow convey the concept of the 'body-mind'. In so doing, I draw from the literary, cultural, and artistic genre known as Magic Realism, in which the world of myth and fantasy merges with the world of our various individual and collective realities and perceptions.

"I continue to find myself drawn to the vast body of research on themes relating to personality and psychology; as a former journalist I am particularly intrigued by the media's evolving representation of physical and mental distress, noting that despite many inroads there remain a set of prevailing myths and beliefs about mental illness, in particular.

He adds that, "such an enquiry of matters such as physicality, morphology and fragmentation must ultimately explore both cultural and individual understandings of what is acceptable in terms of the way the body, physical presence, the 'body-mind', and ultimately life and death are perceived. It can also with some justification interrogate various themes concerning what is termed the supernatural and the sense of 'hauntedness' that often arises from traumatic experiences."

Correa's work thus gives voice to an enduring curiosity about how human beings retain a sense of 'purpose and meaning' by co-creating various beliefs and then accepting them as truths. He observes that "I thus often find myself in pursuit of such polarised and universal concepts as death versus life, hate versus love, chaos versus balance, violence versus peace, and fantasy versus reality.

"Ultimately, I am intrigued by the manner in which the experience or awareness of death in context of our day-to-day living affects each of us implicitly; in particular, I am drawn to an exploration of the various ways it is possible to endure the ultimate 'knowingness' of our own mortality.

"As the development of my work directs me toward various concepts embedded in contemporary art, my internal process has become one of distorting the line in pursuit of depicting a sense of wholeness; and of life-force; to an otherwise impaired body or mind. Such distortion, it is argued, perhaps imbues the canvas with a sense of freedom and participation."

Ultimately Correa's work serves as an invitation to explore the essence of 'life' in context of one's own historical, cultural, and social antecedents. His commitment is that such an invitation be made in the context of "what I consider to be a surrealistic notion; namely, that of human holograms. Much of my work in recent collections depicts deceased or profoundly injured servicemen in a moment during which they somehow found the means to 'come back from the brink' intending to inspire their loved ones, comfort them, and encourage them to extract greater meaning from their own lives and contributions."

Whilst knowing that it is not possible to 'bring back the dead', Correa remains intrigued by the various intersections between faith, spirituality, and the means by which various cultures draw upon them in order to rationalise instances of what he terms "personal and collective sense-making which occurs when the so-called Hand of Fate randomly tightens and loosens its grip."

In "A Foreboding Sense of Uncertainty" Correa explores in some degree of depth the vagaries of the Hand of Fate; in this instance, in the context of military combat. He observes that "when the fallen injured are despatched to the operating table, they will have lost blood; they may have lost limbs; they often have lost hope in their own recovery, despite assurances from those who know that the life-force must give the medics something to begin to work with."

This triptych depicts the moments before surgery, when scars, disfigurement, ripped uniforms and a foreboding sense of uncertainty are presented for physical repair. The light grey areas attempt to depict the life-force, tenacity and unalloyed pride; almost emitting an aura; shrouded in torn clothes that must be carefully removed, exposing their vulnerability. For Correa, "the multi-layered veiling of the forms somehow speaks to me because it's easy to forget that each of us can experience loss to an unimaginable extent and survive it, so long as we hold tight to our self-belief in the face of uncertainty."

With his work "In the Midst of Breakdown," Correa presents the viewer with a stark depiction of vulnerability: "Each of us shares a commonality: we all will succumb to the inevitability of decrepitude and disintegration. This triptych depicts the impact of a body assaulted by bullets, in order to demonstrate the ebbing of strength and resilience, in the midst of breakdown.

"It's not always possible to find obvious ways keep going; to maintain equilibrium; to remind ourselves of our journey back toward completeness when either our minds or our bodies are unexpectedly and uninvitedly broken down. This is why the representation is of those who appear so vulnerable; so fragile – and yet seem to be moving forward with strength and conviction."

In Correa's triptych entitled "What Casts Our Lives Asunder," themes of loss and survival are depicted as 'fragmentation' in its many forms, exploring how the nature of the human condition is one in which we constantly seem to be forced to re-assemble our emotional, social and even physical structures when life-circumstances cast them asunder. The depiction is of quite literal physical fragmentation – and the lack of stability when coming to terms with our own vulnerability – whereby the depiction is of feet which are missing, enhancing the effect.

As Correa observes, "It's often axiomatic that physical defragmentation results in emotional trauma. Not all of us have been 'cast asunder' physically, but most of us have been destabilised by loss, disappointment, grief, and the sudden cessation of long-held dreams or taken-for-granted abilities."

In "Ode to Valour," Correa observes that, "Sometimes we seem alive when we are dead; sometimes we seem dead when we are alive. What I was trying to depict in "Ode to Valour" was the life-force, by means of a representation of a pulse-meter reading, which weaves and connects us to ourselves and, inevitably, each other. I consider that the result is celebratory of life's moments of valour, in that the impression of celebration is conveyed by what appear to be handfuls of confetti.

"The notion of valour – which can be everyday valour but in this case is depicted as the valour of fallen heroes – is conveyed by their being awarded a posthumous medal. The medals themselves are meant to appear as tattoos; in that sense, they have become irrevocably part of the identity of those who wear

them – these medals cannot be removed and consigned to a box in a bedside drawer.” It is Correa’s view that, “we all have instances of valour in our lives which become part of our makeup and identity, and the sense is that until we breathe our last breath, such imprints remain with us. In death, they serve as talismans; as reminders of the greatness that resides in each of our souls.”

Building on the subject of strength and valour, Rudyard Kipling’s poem ‘Recessional’ was written for Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and it commemorated the 60th anniversary of her reign. It is said to be one of Kipling’s most enigmatic compositions.

Although Kipling was apparently not a particularly religious man, he shared Correa’s appreciation for the sacred nature of religious texts. His was a warning that a country’s earthly conquests must be considered in context of the profundity of the mighty work of God. In particular, Kipling warns that a sense of noble sacrifice and fellowship is soon accompanied by troubling fragility, and it is the latter which stains the soil of a nation-state’s collective memory.

Kipling makes compelling reference to the fallen empires of Nineveh and Tyre, serving as admonition that humility can follow valour like night follows day. What struck Correa from Kipling’s poem was the sense that the fragility and humility is surely individual, before it can manifest in the mind of a nation. Correa observes that, “A great many men and women who serve their countries return to day-to-day life with ‘a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart’ (Psalm 51). They struggle with injury; both physical and emotional; and they typically struggle with a great deal more. The intent of “One with Nineveh and Tyre” is to remind the viewer of the schism between valour and humility, and to depict the uneasy struggle which accompanies a return to normal life for those lucky enough to return at all.”

For Correa, the theme of personal struggle inevitably adopts the stance that somehow ‘struggle’ itself is made part of a ‘collective unconscious’. His triptych entitled “Six Degrees of Separation” explores this notion visually. As Correa explains, “For many years I have been directly inspired by Picasso’s mural-sized painting *Guernica* (1937), which was created in response to the bombing of a Basque Country village in northern Spain. It is regarded by many in the art world as the most powerful and moving anti-war painting in history.

He adds that “I remain drawn to the concept of ‘six degrees of separation’ in which it is said that we are all connected to each other and to the world around us in six or fewer steps. In this work, most viewers see multiple human forms, multiple faces, and multiple expressions of violence, chaos and distress.

“My country of origin has experienced more than sixty years of social conflict, and intergenerational chaos and distress remains part of the fabric of daily life in most, if not all, families. Stories are handed down from parent to child, perhaps part of a collective sense-making process which ignores geographic borders, never intended to be trivialised or forgotten – stories that connect us all to one another, and to each other’s pain.” It is the nature of the human condition to rationalise our personal and group experiences, and to use these rationalisations to form ‘models’ of accepted norms. Each of our agreed models tends to be grounded in a social context – a mixture of events, personal histories, and the vagaries of time and place.

Lying dormant within every social context are various ‘constructs’ which communities adopt interpersonally and often intergenerationally. For example, wonders Correa in consideration of his life in the United Kingdom, “What does it mean to sport a curvy physique? To have a high IQ? To carry an overdraft on your current account? To own a beach hut in Whitstable? To love someone of your own sex?”

A central issue embedded in the theory of social constructionism is the need to interrogate the many ways in which individuals and groups participate in the co-creation of social norms. To trace the ‘archaeology’ of a social norm, it would prove necessary to uncover the many ways in which social phenomena are developed, institutionalised, made known, and then reified by tradition. When it comes to the social constructs of same-sex love; largely concerned with the acknowledgment or formal recognition of same-sex relationships; the LGBT+ community in Great Britain is afforded with an increasingly taken-for-granted reality. It is now possible, as one of many minority groups, to be open about

who they are culturally, how they love, and with whom. This is arguably a privileged position.

Correa was in November 2018 the featured artist in an exhibition configured as an ‘immersive’ overall experience at KPMG’s London-based headquarters. It presented viewers with two distinct narratives which were inextricably linked – not only to each other, but to those present; that part of each of us which has felt the pain of being aware that we were, by some untraceable process of ‘social ordination’, the lone outsider of a group or gathering.

The first narrative concerned itself with a matter of fellowship, identity and faith which is of interest to many in the LGBT+ community. That which followed was a stark reminder that – despite strident moves in the Western world – millions of people worldwide continue to suffer unduly, serving as totems of our comparatively good fortune.

In “Rename Us as Strangers,” six solemn figures stood in solidarity, robed in the ceremonial garments which remind us of the limited embrace of those who belong to a faith community. Each figure was a representation of the proponents of the top six ‘organised religions’ (i.e., Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Judaism) and their core beliefs. Situated around them were couples who were not able to express their love and commitment in the manner taken for granted by others who shared their faith. Like Correa and his partner, they too were able to unite legally and publicly in the social context of modern-day Britain, but not in their place of worship.

A passage from the writings of theologian Dan B. Allender offers a sense of how this was for Correa: “In every story, in every life, there are moments of death that take away our name and rename us as strangers, orphans or widows. At the moment of being unnamed, we are thrown into our story.”

Despite their disappointment at one of life’s ‘moments of death’, each couple was depicted with a brightness of colour which is intended to jump off the canvas with jubilation and joy. In all instances, the floral pattern is the same as that which embroiders, like a halo or aura, the ceremonial garments worn by each happy couple’s corresponding faith-representative.

The flowers themselves referred to a Latin-American custom, in which women typically wear garments printed with brightly-coloured flowers to commemorate an array of celebratory life-events. The union itself, however, never earns its rightful place in the catalogue of shared narratives and personal histories. The couples are depicted without feet because, in reality, there is ‘nowhere to stand’ in terms of being blessed explicitly by their community.

Most of these couples also lack hands, and this is intended as a reference to Michelangelo’s depiction of *Dextera Domini* (the right-hand of God) in his sculptures and frescoes. In the Bible, one of Correa’s books of faith, to be ‘at the right side of God’ is to be identified as occupying a special place of honour.

These couples, despite the joy of being recognised by law, have been denied the ‘special place of honour’ which others before them took for granted. The more personal reason these couples lack hands; struggling with freedom-of-movement; is to depict what sometimes represents for Correa a societal strait-jacket, one in which “nothing ‘wedded to my faith’ was permitted to commemorate formally my wedded bliss. Like a blindfolded child at play, it proved necessary to orient myself around various fixed-versus-fluid boundaries. That is why each of these celebrating couples is, ultimately, shrouded in darkness.”

That said, Correa is certainly aware that “when viewed from a wide-angle perspective, I wager that most people would hold the view that this is a ‘first-world problem’ of minor consequence. I’m not championing change in this arena; not when people’s very lives and identities are at stake elsewhere across the globe. As a man of deep faith, however, I remain intrigued by the complex ways in which religion can be deployed to influence social conventions and – ultimately – the various precepts which shape the practicalities of daily life.”

For example, whilst contemplating the broader themes explored in “Rename Us as Strangers,” Correa frequently found himself wondering “who must be looked up to, and who should be looked down upon? What can never be discussed, if witnessed? What is honoured, and what is the acceptable reaction to instances

of 'dishonour'? Which writings and artworks are permitted to make people think... or to laugh at themselves? And under what circumstances is a community encouraged to 'rename as strangers' its brothers, sisters and friends?"

Remarking that, "the strength of my faith has carried me through some very uncertain times, as well as one or two devastating tragedies," Correa shares that "I have a collection of books, including holy books, which I'm never without. These have often become the inspirations for my art. A poem; a passage; even a fragment of a sentence will speak to me."

Despite more than ten years of living in the UK, Correa often prefers to develop his ideas in Spanish (his university degree was in journalism). He observes that, "It's thus now a bit of a surprise that when I 'write', I'm inclined to do so with a paintbrush, in favour of a pencil. Communicating visually affords me with the ability to articulate multiple layers of meaning. At university, I used to study and teach 'semiotics'; the various meanings we co-create using signs and symbols; largely from within a Latin American worldview and socio-political perspective.

"I am sometimes drawn to the writings of Michael Meade, whose career is centred around what he terms 'cultural healing'. Meade's concern for the struggles of returning veterans, at-risk youth, the homeless and disaffected populations are themes which have interested Correa, inspiring his artistic work to date. In one of Meade's works, a particular passage became the inspiration for the second part his recent LGBT+ themed exhibition, which was entitled "Enter Life More Fully."

Meade writes: "Whether it be an individual, a community or a country, when faced with tragedy or fearful uncertainty, we either become bigger and enter life more fully, or else we accept a diminished life and resign ourselves to a smaller way of being."

What you viewed in the main space of the "Enter Life More Fully" installation," explains Correa, "were a set of six men whose heads are placed at their feet. Situated between them were six couples who decided, on one level, to 'face their fearful uncertainty' – to 'enter life more fully' by loving each other. What wasn't apparent at first glance was that if you faced each couple, and then turned slightly, you would view the corresponding lifeless figure, with his head resting at his feet. "There are visual cues which attempt to strengthen each couple's bond and give it more meaning, both in life and in the afterlife: The printed backdrop links each loving couple to the lifeless body. The band of colour matches that of the left-most figure; in each depiction, it was he who paid the ultimate price for a life more fully lived, however brief.

"What is important is to realise that each of the lifeless men I depicted was, not so long ago, hanged on a single day," explains Correa. "Six countries worldwide continue to enact the death penalty for people found to be in same-sex relationships: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, Nigeria and Somalia. Despite media coverage, we do not know the names of the six departed souls I chose to commemorate, nor the strength of their love. We don't know whether there were family-member pleas for them to be spared or pardoned, due to position or circumstance. We don't know whether they were fathers or husbands, or how they came to be 'outed'.

"We do know, however, that after they were hanged publicly, their bodies were repeatedly defiled. Aside from decapitation, their corpses were subjected to various and unimaginable brutalities. Often, I use police reports and autopsy sketches combined with photographs to assist with my abstractions of bodily injury. Whilst doing so is gruesome, it makes the trauma more real to me, and it reminds me of the power of stigma, shame and other social constructs which vary from region to region.

"Each of these men – and the men they allegedly loved, if perhaps only briefly – speaks to me individually. After all, having grown up in Colombia, mine was an era in which – until recently – one would pay a heavy price for being oneself... and in fact, I did.

"No doubt, I would not have found the impetus to leave the country of my birth and resettle in the UK had it not been for my being 'outed' by a family member, thus ending in a stroke my university career. You'll notice that, as a couple, the figures depicted in "Enter Life More Fully" have heads like oil-



lanterns. This is because I wished to depict the all-seeing 'hypervigilance' which I felt throughout much of my time in Colombia.

"After all, in my twenties, my friends and I were only too aware of the 'social cleansing' efforts of the Mano Negra groups, who regularly executed gay men and transvestites. I thus needed to keep near-constant track of everything; a glance from a stranger; a glance I instinctively threw back; where I was seen; how I carried my body and monitored my non-verbal communication. It must have been all the more fraught for these six men I learned about when researching for the "Enter Life More Fully" collection." "When placed alongside those they dared to be with, Correa explains, "these figures attempt to convey the damned-if-you-do; damned-if-you-don't position of countless others. After all, these couples risked the enactment of the death penalty if caught expressing their love (depicted as fragmented; slightly broken; but yet somehow a testimony to the principles of truth and valour). The alternative was to invoke the death of their souls, by suppressing the very essence of their being. Up to the moment of their passing, a truly existential schism was the price they paid for their 'place' in the social construct which ultimately stigmatised and shamed them before friends, family and community."

The backdrop of each canvas is adorned with a symphony of strewn flowers, each more fragmented as the series progresses. The flowers refer to a Latin-American custom, one in which women wear garments printed with black-and-white flowers to dignify a funeral; doing so pays heed to the notion of proper respect for the deceased. According to Correa, each is meant to depict a secret 'bouquet' passed from mother to son; from sister to brother, as if to say: "I had to do this, and do so publicly, but know that I still love you."

Correa continues to find himself working towards a 'visual vocabulary' through which others may be guided to access their own past visual and somatic memories of instances of trauma, challenge and impairment. It is Correa's hope that viewers of his work are drawn to something visceral; a consideration of 'the space in between' the gift of life and the moment of death, given each of our inevitably unique and special past histories. He realises that such a reflective journey in the context of largely unexamined considerations of the profundity of life can catch one off guard; it can be powerful, emotive and sometimes profoundly healing, as well.