

# ART MAZE Mag

Issue #3, 2017



**“Creativity is  
contagious.  
Pass it on.”**

*– Albert Einstein*





## ART MAZE Mag

ArtMaze Magazine supports the artistic community worldwide and promotes the work of emerging artists. ArtMaze Mag offers each artist a great opportunity to be published in print and digital issues bimonthly, as well as online on our website and social media.

### SUBMIT

#### Print and digital publications

Each issue we are delighted to invite a curator/juror or a group of curators /jurors to select works for one of our sections in the print magazine: an exciting competition and a great chance to promote your art works!

Artists are welcome to submit works in any medium: painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, photography, textile, installation, mixed media, digital etc. Artists or any art organisations on behalf of artists from all countries are welcome to submit.

Please visit our website for more details (see p. 126-127):  
[www.artmazemag.com/call-for-art/](http://www.artmazemag.com/call-for-art/)

As well as the juried competitions (curated selection and editorial selection), ArtMaze also provides a chance for print and online publications through the online blog and studio visit.

#### Online publications

##### Blog

If you wish to submit to our online blog, you are welcome to send us a few images of your work and a written bio and statement to [blog@artmazemag.com](mailto:blog@artmazemag.com) for consideration.

##### Studio Visit

If you wish to submit for a studio visit please visit our website: [www.artmazemag.com/submit-for-studio-visit](http://www.artmazemag.com/submit-for-studio-visit) and read the instructions on how to submit.

### CONTRIBUTE

#### Curators/Jurors

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You are welcome to submit an article, review or interview for consideration for online or print publications. Please send us an email to [info@artmazemag.com](mailto:info@artmazemag.com) or read more information on our website about how to submit a piece: [www.artmazemag.com/writers](http://www.artmazemag.com/writers)

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We welcome announcements and reviews of your current and upcoming exhibitions. Please send installation views and existing photos of the artist's work as well as other relevant images to [info@artmazemag.com](mailto:info@artmazemag.com) for consideration to be featured on our website and promoted through our social media.

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#### FRONT COVER:

Jen Mann  
*heart eyes emoji*  
oil on canvas, 60 × 48 inches  
p. 28-37



# ART MAZE Mag

## EDITORIAL

Let's celebrate the start of the 2017 Summer with a new vibrant issue of ArtMaze Mag!

In ArtMaze we strive to offer our readers an insight into the powerful, spirited and stimulating artworks of today's emerging art scene. As an international independent art publication, overseen by a group of pro-active artists and creatives from different parts of the world, we aspire to provide you with a perceptive appreciation of other artists' lives, experiences, wisdom and inspiration in order to encourage all those who are starting out in their careers and who seek support and motivation from like-minded individuals.

Take a look through the rich and colourful pages and immerse yourself in the engaging stories, interviews, biographies and narratives of our featured makers. In this issue's Curated Selection of works (p.54-95) we were honoured to have worked with Bree Delian who is the Director and Head Curator of Retrospect Galleries based in Byron Bay, Australia. Bree has a great eye for young, and up and coming artists, and travels the world exhibiting their works in many international art fairs. Be sure to check out our in-depth interview with Bree (p.20-23) where she shares valuable experiences of her art destinations, views on art funding, observations on artists' successes and downfalls, international art scenes and more.

We explore for new talents on a daily basis, and our Editorial Selection (p.96-125) presents a great mix of the art submissions we receive-both for print issues, and our online blog. We very much hope that you will appreciate the artworks of this Summer Issue as much as we do and spread the word about the talented makers!

We would also like to draw special attention to the work of our cover artist — Jen Mann. Her distinct, eye-catching style and embrative concepts have ignited our interest in her work. Check out our interview with Jen (p. 28-37) in which we discuss her current and past work, the influence of social media and technology, her thoughts on the cover artwork of this issue and more.

We want to thank everyone for each purchased copy of the magazine and each kind word shared with ArtMaze. We endlessly appreciate the support of our contributors and all those involved who make this publication live and flourish every day.

Creativity is contagious, let's pass it on and make our lives sparkle a little more!

Maria Zemtsova,  
Editor and Founder

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# *Interviewed*

*Featuring:*  
*Bradley Wood*  
*Bree Delian, Retrospect Galleries*  
*Blake Neubert: Death of a Coworker*  
*Jen Mann (cover artist)*



Bradley Wood’s scenes of domestic life are anything but the ordinary, monotonous settings of everyday life. Each of his paintings is a window into lavish interiors; a theatre of opulence where paintings and artefacts adorn every inch of the walls and the wealthy lounge about in elegant gowns and suits, if they are wearing anything at all. Wood cleverly blends wit and social satire, as the excessive display of wealth he creates reveals this lifestyle as garish and almost ludicrous. We as viewers are turned into voyeurs, as we appear to be seeing these scenes from the outside looking in. We watch his subjects like specimens; trying to understand their lifestyle and perhaps discover who these people are behind the fur rugs, champagne and chandeliers. Referring to his paintings as “domestic fictions”, there is an undertone of theatricality in the display of wealth that leaves us feeling that Wood’s characters are performing, acting for the viewer as they play the role of the rich and beautiful housewife or the successful and interesting businessman.

Wood’s use of thick, expressive paint strokes together with vivid patterns shape the atmosphere in his interiors, flattening his compositions. The shallow depth of each setting enforces the harsh angles present in Wood’s work. Sharp diagonals, which are often the long legs of women, cut through the space while commanding your eye to follow. These angles are often mirrored in the boldly coloured patterns found around the interior such as drapes, wallpaper, or carpet. The subjects lounging in each scene often wear similar vibrant patterns that flatten and blend them into the luxurious items around them, as if they themselves are objects of indulgence. Interested in the complexities of living in a high-class environment, Wood balances the boldness of his patterns and angles with loose, painterly strokes of colour that soften the rigidity and demands of a life of status and wealth.

We were delighted to sit down and chat with Bradley about his day-to-day work process, career and life. Read on!

**AMM: Female figures resting in luxurious interiors is one of the main themes in your work. Have you always painted this subject or did you start your artistic journey focusing on a different topic or medium?**

BW: While female figures are well-represented in my work, I actually don’t see them as the main theme. Men are quite present throughout my work as well.

I see all of the figures as actors. I use them as characters to create narratives involving people in luxurious settings. My work is a series of domestic fictions centered around the human condition. The luxury is a focus that comes a bit out of my subconscious – from experiences living in and absorbing San Fran during the height of the dot com era and subsequent crash, living in New York pre- and post-recession, living in the Trump era now. As a painter, I am interested in both the allure and complexities of wealth.

In my paintings of women lounging, I’m drawn to the whimsy and the absurdity of opulence and how that can be explained with thick, rich, luscious oil paint. Even though my paint application is completely different, the qualities of late 18th Century Rococo artists like Fragonard are what first got me interested in this idea. I’ve been pretty focused on it for the past decade, though there has been a definite evolution in my approach to the subject matter.

**AMM: You mention that you play out fictitious fantasies in your work in a voyeuristic view – what led you to this fantasy ‘world’?**

BW: It started when we moved from Williamsburg in Brooklyn, back when it was more of an artist’s community, to Westchester, NY. It was a drastic change. We literally went from living in a bare, open loft next to a concrete factory (a place we loved, by the way) to this perfectly manicured suburban (and very foreign) land. I was completely fixated on a few large homes nearby that reminded me of the house in Stanley Kubrick’s Eyes Wide Shut. Then it became a bit of a modern day Great Gatsby scenario. I began to imagine the eccentric characters who might live there and what might be happening within those walls.

**AMM: It fascinates us how such dramatic figurative interior scenes in your works look so effortless in the way they are painted. How long does it take you to complete one painting and what’s the process from finding an idea of what to paint to a finished piece?**

BW: My process starts with drawings from many different references. It’s always a mash-up from quite an extensive visual research library of imagery I’ve collected over the years — everything from architecture and fashion to cinema to my own photographs to Tom & Jerry. The process is somewhat similar to that of a filmmaker as I search for inspiration and piece together bits and parts for my mises en scène. I will literally have forty black and white printouts scattered on the floor. I might be inspired by a nose I like from one reference, a chair from another. I love the drawing stage, the possibilities of it all. Each drawing can become something completely different based on the decisions I make — the colors and patterns I choose, the thickness of paint, and looseness of the strokes.

When I am in this painting stage, I’ll usually have about seven pieces going at the same time. When I’m working on one, I’ll often get really excited about what I’m doing and be so sure that I’ve really got something, and I’ll move on. Then I’ll circle back after doing several others and realize it’s not as good as I first thought and I’ll work on it some more. This whole part of the practice can happen, for the most part depending on the painting, relatively quickly. There’s a looseness to it. It’s the finishing touches that can take a while, when I start obsessing over the details — those are more time-consuming as well as the most nerve racking. But they’re also the most rewarding and give the painting its soul.

**AMM: What are your studio rituals?**

BW: Every day pretty much starts with coffee and Glen Gould. Other rituals would be writing random thoughts and drawing in a black book, palette mixing, doing color studies, long bouts of uninterrupted painting, ignoring phone calls, stepping away from time to time to sit in a folding chair on the roof, taking a five minute nap when I need to re-energize — always fixes me right up, sitting there staring at the paintings for an awkwardly long amount of time before walking out the door.

**AMM: What does your work represent to you and what do you hope the viewer takes away?**

BW: My work represents a commitment to tradition and a genre far bigger than myself.

I flirt with the idea of the work being a bit of a cultural mirror. It’s funny, people are constantly telling me they see themselves in my paintings.

**AMM: What are your biggest challenges to creating art and how do you deal with them?**

BW: Longevity, prolificacy, balance. I just finished a pretty intense schedule, and now I’m excited to have a little bit of time to take some bigger risks, not be afraid to try something that might not work, scrap it and move on. It’s a challenge to keep work fresh and to evolve when you are constantly producing to meet show deadlines. It’s also important to take time away from the painting and be inspired, or simply rest. I recall an interview where Peter Doig said the time not painting can be just as important as the time painting. I don’t plan to ever retire, so I’m still striving to find the right balance.

**AMM: How long have you been a full time artist? Do you have any advice for those who are just starting out and strive to build a strong artistic career such as you have?**

BW: I started painting later in life, and I’m fortunate to say I have been a dedicated full-time painter for the past 4 years. It took most of my life to be able to be in the position I’m in.



Bradley Wood, *Sitting with Franz*; oil on canvas; 38 x 29 inches

...A window into lavish interiors;  
a theatre of opulence...  
by Bradley Wood





Bradley Wood, *Dad's House*; oil on canvas; 80 x 100 inches



Bradley Wood, *Hamptons Power Suit*; oil on canvas; 40 x 40 inches

For me, producing a lot of work is key, and recognizing the small opportunities as steps to bigger ones. While I was based in New York, my career started at a really great, smaller gallery (Parts Gallery) in Toronto that believed in my work and gave me a chance. I worked really hard and over the course of a few years, I started getting more and more recognition, which caught the attention of Angell Gallery, a gallery that represented some pretty big Canadian artists, which I'm still with today. Simultaneously, I worked with other smaller galleries and consultants who showed my work at fairs around the world, starting at first with Affordable Art Fairs, then eventually doing fairs like Context, Pulse and VOLTA. I think it's important for artists to find ways to get their work out there and be patient with the process. Stay focused on always producing your best work, not being afraid to experiment and evolve as an artist.

**AMM: You show your work in many international art fairs, particularly in the US and recently in Hong Kong, China. How would you say these two art scenes differ and how are your paintings received by the audience abroad?**

**BW:** Art fairs are a bit of a litmus test. I've actually found that my subject matter seems to be understood universally. I'm grateful to galleries like Sim-Smith and Angell Gallery who have helped to expose my work to many different audiences around the world.

**AMM: You paint the imagined lives of others inside their walls, but what might the viewer find looking into your home?**

**BW:** My wife beautifully lounging as she stares into a laptop, my kids running around like Gremlins in the background, my dog taking up most of the couch, and me watching the Tennis Channel with an icy martini.





Bradley Wood, *Grumble's Brunch*; oil on canvas; 34 x 24 inches



Bradley Wood, *Pinchurst*; oil on canvas; 40 x 30 inches





Bradley Wood, *Colloquy*; oil on canvas; 82 x 65 inches



Bradley Wood, *Sicilian Suite*; oil on canvas; 66 x 44 inches





Image: Hagar Vardimon, *Going In Circles I*; paper collage; 25 x 25 cm  
artist represented by Retrospect Galleries

# Meet Bree Delian, Director and Head Curator of the always–innovative Retrospect Galleries in Byron Bay, Australia

Retrospect Galleries features an eclectic array of unforgettable artwork like the embroidered, mixed-media work of Hagar Vardimon and the powerful watercolour portraits of Lisa Krannichfeld (whose work can be found in ArtMaze Issue II). Delian is consistently exhibiting a compelling visual aesthetic that supports unique, emerging artists that are certainly making their mark on the art world. With a background working in the music industry, Bree Delian brings an amalgamation of different life experiences into creating a gallery that creatively engages with its public, whether it's in their home-base of Byron Bay or across the world in one of the many international art fairs they attend.

Participating in art fairs from London to New York to Mexico City, Delian discusses the ups and downs of this growing aspect of this business, the ever-changing flux of the current art market, and its effect on both artists and galleries alike. Believing in the importance of staying true to the artist's voice, Delian delves deep into the life of a gallery director and the importance of trusting her gut instincts. Join us as we explore the art scene in Hong Kong, issues of the industry like the lack of funding in the arts, and the “psychic energy” found in a piece of art.

**AMM: Let's start our conversation with a little introduction from you. Tell us what brought you into the world of contemporary art? Was curating something you always wanted to do?**

BD: I was always involved in arts and started out working in music promotion and publicity. I toured a few bands around the world and brought bands from overseas to Australia, and working in this industry gave me invaluable skills in management, multitasking, communication, running events and publicity. My mother and grandfather were artists, and then I met my husband who was also an artist, so I guess I had no choice! Art followed me and eventually consumed me. I approached visual arts and running a gallery differently to others around that time. Before launching our international platform, I ran artist talks and dinners, collaborating the arts with festivals like Splendour in the Grass and the Blues and Roots festival. This was where I organised themed shows that were relevant or political or obscure, like live tattoo shows. We had art that wasn't just high art but encouraged expressions from different genres and sub genres, for example we embraced urban, pop, illustration, as well as loving realism and conventional forms of art. One of my biggest passions has always been to look out for new talent and give space to many emerging artists. Byron Bay is hard because of the mixed demographic and socio-economic audience, and as a 10,000 person town that has 1.5 million tourists passing through every year, you have to cater for different tastes.

**AMM: How and when were Retrospect Galleries founded, and what was your initial inspiration behind this project?**

BD: Twelve years ago Retrospect Galleries started as photographic space tucked down a side street of Byron Bay. After two years of people and artists asking if we would show their works, we took the next step - we found a spot in the main street of town which was a huge risk as the whole thing needed renovations but I had to start paying rent on the day we took the lease. We finished the week before Christmas and we had to open, and we thought, 'oh my god, we need artwork and we need it now!' It was chaos and completely on the fly but it worked and we sold art on the first night. My inspiration was always to represent contemporary culture, and what I found interesting in Byron Bay was that although it is a regional area, it wasn't a place for a seaside-themed gallery. Instead we found that many people thought of themselves as urban individuals choosing to live in a semi-rural environment, that Byron was more like a suburb of Sydney than the nearby tourist trap of the Gold Coast, and I wanted art in the gallery to reflect that sense and mindset. It was perfect as when we opened there wasn't really anything like us between Sydney and Brisbane, making us one of the first contemporary galleries operating outside of a major city.

**AMM: We love that even though the gallery is based in Australia, you manage to participate in numerous international art fairs and travel the world. It's very inspiring how you put yourself out there! Could you share the experience with us: what was the first art fair your gallery was involved with and what is your outlook on the art scenes in different countries and cultures?**

BD: Our first show was a disaster! I had no idea about different cultural expectations about art and different art fairs, though I always had an accurate gut instinct that has remarkably helped me navigate the early days of the art fair labyrinth. I had a wonderful French assistant working for me at the time and our first show was the Singapore Affordable Art Fair (AAF), where we had a really successful show and were spurred on to do more! We decided to do a more extensive program the next year and booked a string of shows all in a row - Shanghai Contemporary, Korean International Art Fair (KIA), the Mexico City AAF, Art Toronto, finally to the New York AAF and then back home. The schedule made sense as by the time the work leaves Australia, we overcome jet lag, and the shipping crates arrive, it is worth our while to do a collection of shows and bunny hop around the continents. We quickly learnt about the corruption of shipping industry in this time. Our artworks were withheld in China, Korea and Mexico, with each place refusing to release the artworks unless we paid thousands more dollars even after we had paid the original bill. We learnt this amidst booking accommodation and last minute flights with only days between shows. We lost so much money but we had so much wonderful feedback from

curators and the public at the shows, and sales were good enough to encourage and enable us to continue. In the last few years we have honed our skills although logistics are a continual negotiation and battle. Even when you think you have it covered at the last minute there is always a surprise.

You need a flexible mind to be in this industry and you need to be able to handle stress and pressure well, and to work to a tight deadline. Coming from Australia, this island so far from everywhere else, has many challenges but as you said it's part of our appeal and many of our artists are so well received as they offer a point of difference. Our colours are often bold and bright and even how we communicate sets us apart from many other galleries in these exhibitions. We always greet with a smile and do extensive marketing campaigns, and we offer the clients a bridge between an artistic experience and the real world. It's this communication that is vital because you only have a short time to engage at art fairs. They're changing the way we sell. How do you establish a relationship in such a short time? How do you keep people engaged after you go home? In the past when you purchased art, you formed a relationship with a favoured gallery and chose works from their selection. These art fairs encourage faster sales, as clients need to make decisions before the fair ends but they love seeing the ranging choice of the world's art in a more condensed way. It's exciting and you can put your artists and collections in front of thousands of people in a short space of time.

The art scene in China is difficult although I haven't been back since Shanghai because of the disaster of the logistics. Hong Kong however has become one of the important artistic hubs where you need to show your art. I love being in Hong Kong as it's one of the most vibrant cities and is such a mixed community — everyone is coming there to work and meet and it's an epicentre of business and communications. When I first was there, the kind of art that they revered was what the western world would see as tacky or too colourful or featured too much happiness. It is a place where superstition reigns and objects such as birds in certain formations or too many faces or references to the spirit world are off-putting. Portraiture was especially hard to sell. Colourful abstracts were very popular with Asian collectors and this remains unchanged. We are lucky because we always get a great ex-pat clientele, so we always bring work that we want to introduce to our diverse collectors but we also don't want to marginalise local populations and seek to communicate well with them too. I've always hired translators and local talent to help wherever we are.

We have spent much time developing our European clientele. Northern European areas like Germany and Scandinavia have a much more serious inclination towards art, tending to favour moody and deep paintings and photography, whereas we found that the UK and New York love bright, popping colours and illustration. It's amazing how different each country is and it's exciting to keep learning about these trends and points of difference.

Although it's important to work within your assumption of what each market wants, it's important as a curator to uphold your vision for work you love and artists that you admire and cherish. For me selling art is about my love for that art and how I can authentically share that with our collectors. It has been an absolute privilege to work with our group of artists especially as they believed and invested in their future with us. For many of them their investment is paying off and they have broken into markets that were before unreachable to them. Developing your art isn't an instant buck but a long term vision and a relationship, so I'm so thankful I can provide the platform for my talented artists to reach all over the world.

**AMM: Planning a distinctive and coherent display that lasts for a few days in a foreign country sounds like a challenge. How do you prepare for your international art trips and what does it involve? And how difficult is it to prepare for a show coming straight from another show as you did going from London straight to New York this spring?**

BD: Intense. Nobody really has an idea of how difficult it is working behind the scenes at an art gallery doing these exhibitions. So many people ask for jobs thinking they get to look at art all day, but I've never actually worked harder in my whole life. I'm lucky to have a small team of really great staff that helps with logistics and coordination. The first step is obviously to select art and have it approved by selection committees at the art shows, which is done months in advance. After that, there's financial planning, the logistics and coordinating shipments from artists and the extensive admin involved in organising the artwork - uploading to our website and stock management systems, email campaigns, post cards, press releases, artist CVs, then we have our invitations to our collectors. This step can feel impossible at times as artists always work to the last minute, and we want the images of that work circulating before the clients even arrive to the show. For example, last year a client might have loved a work but chose not to purchase, so we let them know we have a new series of works by the same artists. Sometimes we ship unsold work from one show to the other and then have these artists ship more work directly to the show as a top up. Sometimes artists send entire collections to two different fairs on opposite sides of the planet when the fairs are just days apart. Ultimately it means I'm on the road for about 6 months of every year, as it makes sense to work remotely in a location more central to the next show rather than returning to Australia. I have a 1 year old daughter who travels with me which is a whole other challenge in itself but it allows me to attempt to balance my family life. The beauty of working in this industry is that it is your life, and there is no actual separation.



# “Digital platforms might have an incredible voice, but they aren’t enough because art needs to be seen in the flesh.”

– Bree Delian

**AMM: Is there more pressure on artists these days to make saleable works – for fairs, for example?**

BD: Yes, artists need to make a living. The challenge is to balance saleable work with an integral artist vision. We have found that some artists we represent started out really true to their voice and sold well, but after realising certain configurations sell better, they have suddenly tried to replicate works over and over and in that process have lost something true to the piece. I've seen it happen overnight - sometimes an artist can stop selling for no apparent reason, but I believe this reason is that art transcends what is actually on the canvas, it's the psychic energy that artists infuse into their work and people can sense that even if they don't know exactly what it is. Of course there is the ability and composition, balance and originality etc., but it's this energy that makes something that is truly special. As a gallery you also have to believe in the artist and his/her vision, and your collectors that feel the same will also promote the artist to their groups of friends as well which is how an organic groundswell begins. So many of our collectors have brought back friends who have then invested after hearing their friends speak so passionately about the work. I think the pressure on artists is overwhelming at times and in a commercial world we are all faced with those challenges not just in arts, so no matter what job you do you are confronted with how you live this reality and how true you are being to yourself, your community and the planet. We can all be consumed by rampant commercialism and some people can make lots of money but we must ask: are they really successful? I do believe that artists have more responsibility within the world as they are the eyes and voice of expression particularly in these politically trying times, and this voice is needed more than ever.

**AMM: Are there presently too many art fairs?**

BD: I think at the moment I am getting more emails from new art fairs each day than from artists! Some markets are sadly becoming oversaturated and are losing their appeal to some clients. Art fair organisations have become big business and some have quite low quality in their curation and are accepting self-represented artists to fill spaces. As galleries are closing over the world, art fairs are definitely taking over because to remain relevant as a gallery you need to be involved in some kind of art fairs to play on the world stage. I guess with any burgeoning movement there will be periods of flux; I'm hoping that it will find its natural order over time and doesn't burn out and oversaturate this amazing platform for galleries and their artists.

**AMM: What do you think currently influences buyers’ taste most?**

BD: Social media has changed the way buyers view art. Trends are becoming fads led by peer review rather than by skill and achievement. Instead of following their own gut instinct and what they like within themselves, sometimes buyers are being defined by these trends. A good example is matching certain colours to go with the curtain fabric. I always cringe when I see people going around with their interior designers and swatches of colour samples. I tell clients to buy the art they love first and then buy a couch or curtain to go with that piece. Purchasing art should be driven by your subconscious to reflect who you are as an individual. Art publications and media are now more important than ever before to counter popular views and give audiences an

educated vision of what art is, its place in the world and the inspiration behind artists' visions, rather than just pretty colours.

**AMM: What is the main advantage of being a commercial gallery?**

BD: I think commercial galleries are the backbone of the art movement. We don't get any or very little funding. As a result, we can show whatever we like - we can show the work that we believe in and curate it with an individual style and vision.

**AMM: Have the demands on the curator changed since you first started out? How has your approach evolved over time?**

BD: I think there are always demands on curators to find their own voice. I've learnt to trust my gut instinct more. I would say my personal demands on myself are always the hardest. I am always tough on what I do and can already see ways I can improve and get better for the next show.

**AMM: How do you establish links with artists you represent? Where do you find them and what qualities are you looking for in the work itself?**

BD: It's an exciting time for us finding artists. When I graduated from school I wasn't even using emails and now the internet has made the world so much smaller and at the same time opened up incredible opportunities for communication. We have a lot of artists applying to our gallery on an almost daily basis, but I also read heaps of art journals and publications as well as blogs by critics and artists alike to find new talent. Sometimes I'm looking for a particular style and sometimes I meet an artist by chance. There's no formula for this, sometimes it's just pot luck. Communication between artists and galleries is always a work in progress and requires constant maintenance. Sometimes it's really hard when we're so busy especially as we are such a small team. It's definitely something that I can improve on but thankfully the artists we work with understand how hard we are working and also give us the energy we need to keep going. Sometimes a little email thanking us for the hard work is better than the best coffee you'll ever drink. To ensure communication is really flowing I've employed a new assistant who travels with me to work with artist relations and recruitment which means our artists can have real time updates about the result of exhibitions.

**AMM: What do you think is the best way for a young artist to approach a gallery or a curator to show his/her work?**

BD: Not to send us a link to their Facebook, Instagram or Flickr account! Artists should treat it like a job interview and show us how professional and serious they are. I always look for the full CV as well as examples of their work. If I have to download huge files or access drop boxes... I don't have the spare time to spend on this. Artists should send a small selection of their work, showing their talent and originality, as well as a full CV including awards, education, exhibitions, artist statement as well as an introductory letter. The files should be web sized and cropped properly - you'd be surprised at the amount of work displayed in iPhone photos with a clashing background or with part of an easel creeping into the photo. How professional and presentable an application is indicates to us how easy it would be to work with an artist in a digital age. It shows us the artist can rename files, photograph an artwork properly, that they have an original way of presenting themselves and that they can write and communicate about their artwork because we are working all over the world we need to be able to exist in this paradigm.

**AMM: What advice would you give anyone thinking about working as a curator?**

BD: So many people graduate from curatorial courses and wish to follow the status quo. You have to remember to find your own voice just as an artist has to. Believe in yourself. The world is so big - there is room for every type of expression, and a lot of artists need help to exhibit their work. Art reflects who we are and projects where we are heading and questions the nature of our very existence. This world needs curators to weave these threads together. Art is a necessity for the survival and growth of our species.

**AMM: What do you think the art world lacks these days?**

BD: Funding!!! The cost of the USA bombs on Syria last month was their entire annual budget for the arts. So many institutions and galleries are closing around the world. What I think the problem is that in the past so many artists have tried to undercut galleries and galleries have exploited artists. We need to find a way to work together more to promote each other. Together we are so much more powerful and can help artists reach new heights! Especially because galleries work with institutions because they introduce new talent that institutions otherwise wouldn't know of. Everything has its place and I hope with this new digital world that people don't choose to remain isolated from the help that surrounds them, so that hopefully we can go back to becoming a collective. Digital platforms might have an incredible voice, but they aren't enough because art needs to be seen in the flesh. With the support of the government galleries can help artists more, reinvigorating the flow of talent and beautifying this relationship between galleries, artists and institutions.

[www.retrospectgalleries.com](http://www.retrospectgalleries.com)



Image: Gabriel Moreno, *Russian Prisoner II (detail)*; pencil, Bic blue pen, charcoal, on paper; 174 x 200 cm  
artist represented by Retrospect Galleries



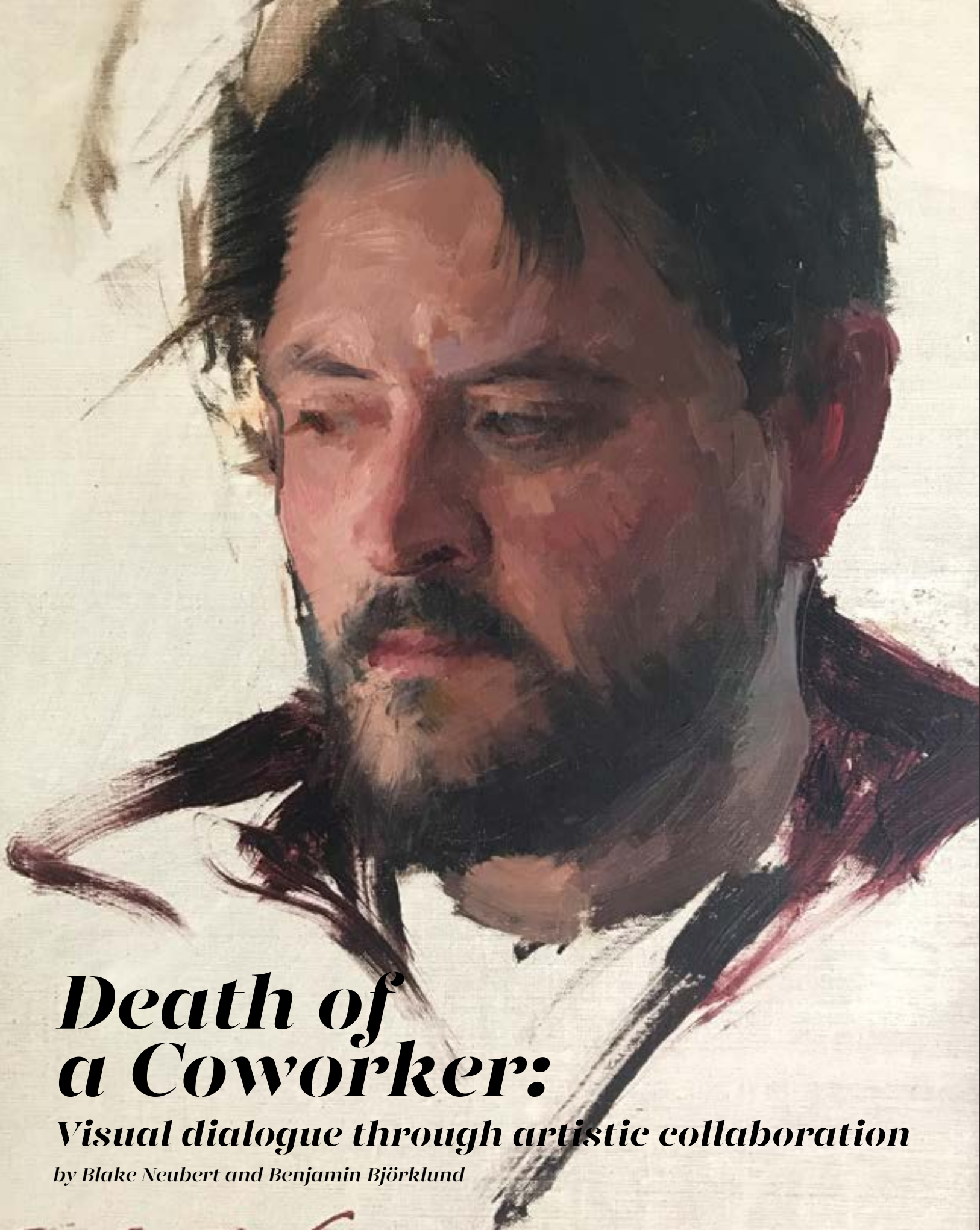


Image: Jeremy Lipking, portrait of Blake Neubert

# Death of a Coworker:

## Visual dialogue through artistic collaboration

by Blake Neubert and Benjamin Björklund

Drawing on his experience working in environments that are ripe with psychological tension, Swedish artist Benjamin Bjorklund creates palpable, emotional portrayals of people he encounters in his day-to-day life. With a background working as a psychiatric nurse, the inner turmoil he sees influences his stylized painting technique. The expressive quality in his brushstrokes creates a movement in his work that seems to mirror the anxiety felt in his subjects. His portraits are neither realistic nor abstract, but instead form a unique, surreal vision that blurs facial features to an almost unrecognizable state, creating an opaque obscurity that alters his subject's identity.

Also influenced by the mental health system, Colorado based artist Blake Paul Neubert paints portraits that embody a similar darkness, but personify this psychological tension through emphasizing specific facial characteristics. Rather than blurring these features, elements like mouths and eyes are amplified to the point of exaggeration, confronting the viewer with their intensity. Neubert paints his faces entirely blackened out before scraping away the material to reveal the features underneath, forcing what is exposed to us to become even more striking. While Bjorklund uses the subtlety of soft brushstrokes to convey a cloud of emotion, Neubert utilizes alarming features that articulate the extremities of human emotion.

Coming together in solidarity through their shared experiences of working in the fields of criminal justice and mental health, Neubert and Bjorklund have formed a tight, cross-continental bond in their project “Death of a Coworker”. In this project, different artists create self-portraits of other artists involved, and trade their works within the group. Although the works of the artists involved vary in approach and style, a common disposition is shared amongst the group. Weaving visual dialogue through artistic collaboration, “Death of a Coworker” forms a unique community for artists to experiment and grow amongst like-minded thinkers.

We’ve been delighted to speak to Blake Neubert about the vision for the project, its inspiration and future plans. Enjoy the interview!

**AMM: Hi Blake, could you introduce yourself and give us a glimpse into your work and life? What led you and Ben down the route of becoming artists and what brought you together?**

BN: Ben and I have similar backgrounds working in the criminal justice and mental health fields. When I first saw his paintings, I felt like he was someone who had seen the same things that I had and I loved them immediately. I emailed him and bought as many available paintings as I could. Over the following months we continued to talk and I invited him to Colorado during his first trip to the United States. From our first time hanging out together we got along like old friends.

**AMM: When did you found ‘Death of a Coworker’ and how has it evolved since its creation?**

BN: It evolved around the time of his first visit. We were discussing music, specifically Sufjan Stevens’ “Fourth of July” from the Carrie and Lowell album. We talked about how that song looked to us. We discussed it would be interesting if artists would each paint what that song looked like and trade it to each other. As we discussed, we changed the idea to portraits since it seemed to be a more equitable trade to the respective artists.

**AMM: ‘Death of a Coworker’ is a dark and mysterious name, how did it come about?**

BN: The day I was coming up with all the names, I had gotten the news that a former work mentor had committed suicide.

**AMM: We are very sorry to hear about your colleague... would you like to share some more memories?**

BN: He died under very unfortunately specific circumstances. I guess I’m a little concerned if any of his family ever read this that I might be making light of his death. That’s very kind of you to offer though.

**AMM: How many artists are involved in the project? What are the main qualities an artist should have in order to enter or get invited to be part of the venture?**

BN: I think it’s in the 30s who have participated in some form or another. Artists have to have a strong technique and a unique style or approach. Artists are invited. If I see an artist I like, I see how many artists we have in common. It sounds narcissistic, but if they aren’t following me, they’re out. Not because of my fragile ego, but more about, if they don’t like my work or the other artists involved, it’s not going to go well. As much as I like to think artists can work together well and work up to their abilities to meet the standard of their counterpart, it’s not always the case. Unfortunately, there tends to be drama with all things of this nature. So, I need to be mindful of the right fit; not only technique, but personality.

**AMM: How many portraits have artists created for ‘Death of a Coworker’ so far? Could you name some of the most memorable pieces?**

BN: It’s over 100 at this point. There are so many amazing pieces! James Bonnici’s portrait of Felipe Alonso  
Kenichi Hoshine’s portrait of Lou Ros  
Wendelin Wolgemuth’s portrait of Benjamin Bjorklund

Introduction text by Christina Nafziger  
Interview by Maria Zemtsova

Nicolás Uribe’s portrait of Kenichi Hoshine  
Lou Ros’ portrait of Alex Beck  
Daniel Segrove’s portrait of Nicolás Uribe  
Emilio Villalba’s portrait of Wendelin Wolgemuth  
Mia Bergeron’s portrait of Blake Neubert  
Benjamin Bjorklund’s portrait of Colin Chillag  
Benjamin Bjorklund’s portrait of Nicolas Uribe  
Nicolás Uribe’s portrait of Benjamin Bjorklund  
Michael Reeder’s portrait of Benjamin Bjorklund  
Michael Reeder’s portrait of Wendelin Wolgemuth

And my personal favorite is Jeremy Lipking’s portrait of me. This was such an incredible experience for me to work with him since he has been such an influence on me. Sean Cheetham is my trade this month, and I am honored to be doing this trade. Both of these guys are the ones who got me into painting about 12 years ago. I never would have guessed that I would know them let alone be trading paintings with them.

**AMM: Where does the artwork go after it’s finished? Do you only showcase it online, particularly on Instagram, and do the artists exchange their portraits?**

BN: The idea is that the artists send their work to each other. I made sure I get mine out to people. It’s a fun project, but when you receive your paintings in the mail, it’s a whole other experience.

**AMM: How does ‘Death of a Coworker’ invigorate your own work and that of the artists participating in the venture?**

BN: When I first started working on the project, I hadn’t experimented much with portraits. When I did Emilio’s portrait, I decided to do several versions of him and experiment each time. When I did the black headed portrait of him, I hit a new level and just took off from there. After that, the project almost hinders me a little. My current work is fairly subversive and not everyone wants that, so I need to be mindful of my partner in the trade. So, it’s definitely a different side to my art.

**AMM: In particular about your own art: there is a sense of darkness but also of joyful rebellion and sarcasm. What does your work represent to you and what do you hope the viewer takes away?**

BN: Thank you — those are the elements I want people to see. The world is all of those things. You can still be a passionate caring person and still have an irreverent sense of humor and it doesn’t negate any sincerity. The world is mostly a cruel, horrible place. Find the people that give you energy and laugh at it all.

**AMM: You tend to paint two-layered portraits and then create a video of how the top layer is scraped off to uncover the hidden ‘mask/emotion’ of the character you painted in the first place. Could you tell us more about your approach to creating such artworks?**

BN: I wanted a very quick, analog way to tell two stories. I wanted something that people look at, the technique, but also just to be curious about what is about to happen. Art for anyone. It just seemed like the perfect style to combine all the things I wanted to say and do with art.

**AMM: How would you like to see the project evolve in the near future? It sounds like a sort of new intricate ‘social media’ for artists in particular, with only the language of painting. Do you envisage a bigger network of participants?**

BN: In the current format, I see it fizzling out. I can see it going another two cycles possibly. More artists keep inspiring me, but soon, I’m sure those numbers will get smaller and smaller. I have another idea with getting more people on board. More of a community.

**AMM: Why do you think ‘those numbers will get smaller and smaller’? And could you share more thoughts on the expansion to a community? It sounds really interesting.**

BN: I’m very specific for the artists that I’m looking for. There are just a few more that I want to work with. There are some other artists that might be nice to work with, but our personalities would clash. That’s always a big issue with getting groups of people together. I have regretted getting some artists involved because of ego or them trying to direct how the project should go.

My hope is to have more people pairing up and doing portraits of each other and featuring more on the page. I think it would be fun and potentially good exposure for people. Sometimes I’m very concerned with the future of the project, but mostly I’m not. I don’t really have an agenda with it. It’s fun, but if it disappeared tomorrow, I would be ok with that too.

**AMM: Would you like to see an exhibition of ‘Death of a Coworker’ in future?**

BN: I do like the idea of that, but I’m not sure how that looks. Any gallery will want to make money on any show they have. I’m not sure what to do with the portraits since they are (ideally) being traded. I suppose I’m more excited about a book highlighting the work.

[www.instagram.com/death\\_of\\_a\\_coworker](https://www.instagram.com/death_of_a_coworker)



GALLERY OF WORKS: Death of a Coworker



Michael Reeder, portrait of Wendelin Wohlgenuth



Wendelin Wohlgenuth, portrait of Benjamin Björklund



Nicolás Uribe, portrait of Benjamin Björklund



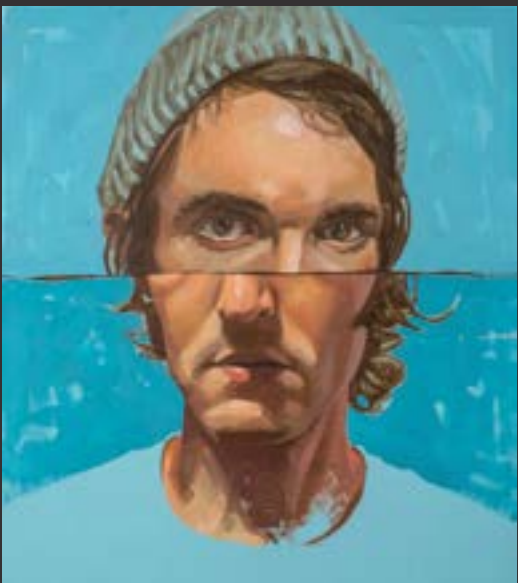
Nicolás Uribe, portrait of Blake Neubert



Benjamin Björklund, portrait of Wendelin Wohlgenuth



Daniel Segrove, portrait of Blake Neubert



Michael Reeder, portrait of Emilio Villalba



Emilio Villalba, portrait of Blake Neubert



Wendelin Wohlgenuth, portrait of Blake Neubert



Nicolás Uribe, portrait of Daniel Segrove



Michael Reeder, portrait of Benjamin Björklund



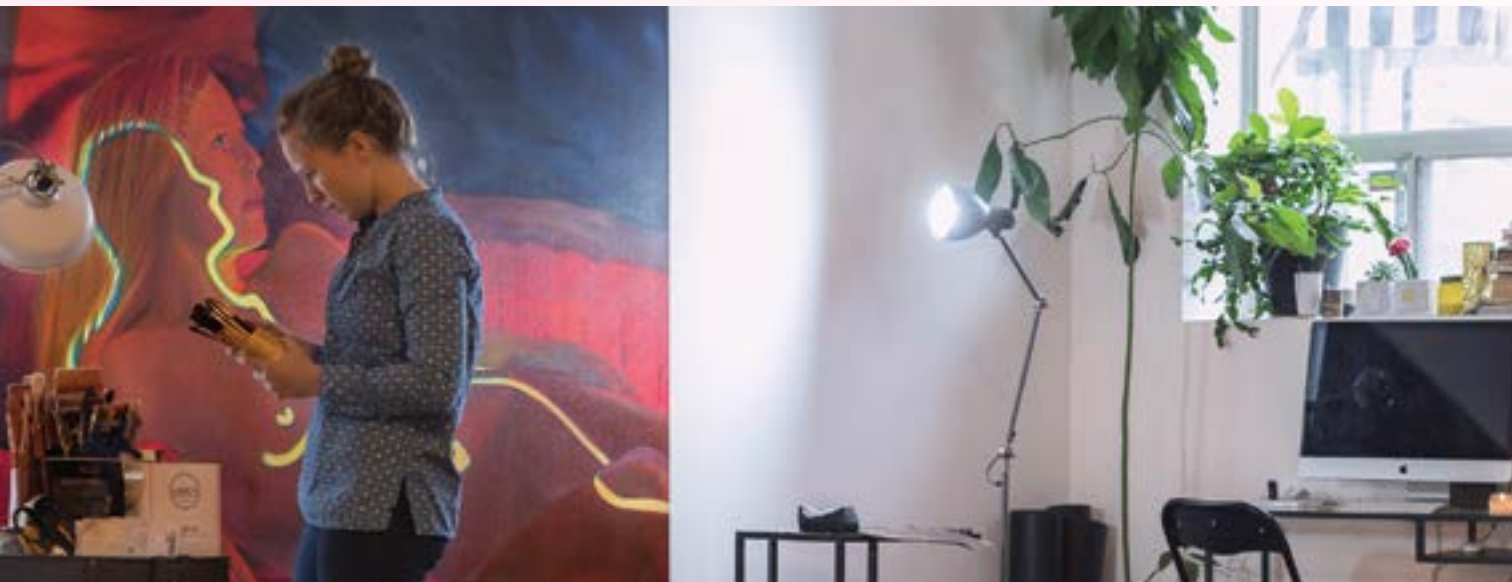
Kenichi Hoshine, portrait of Blake Neubert



# Jen Mann:

## *“I find relationships the most fascinating, and the relationship you have with yourself...”*

[www.jenmann.com](http://www.jenmann.com)



Jen Mann's work takes that all too familiar feeling of what lies on the other side of our computer screens in the form of likes and emojis and presses it into paint. Sometimes her artwork quite literally features this now permanently ingrained, social media iconography, such as a 'winky face', lighting up a subject's features, while other compositions simply just embody that impending feeling of isolation you get when communicating mostly through Instagram. Her work poignantly brings to surface the complexity that is individual identity in a world where we have the capability to digitally self-construct our own narratives, composing through online photos our own fictions. In her series Q & A, we see individuals haunted by the phrases projected across their faces, phrases like, "Not The One" and "Just Fine". These words seem to be radiating out of a computer screen that sits facing the subjects, as if to reveal the traces of emotions left behind once the words have been sent via social media. Were these words sent to them, did they send these words to someone else? Mann asks, "Who am I compared to you? Who are you compared to me?" She is interested in how we understand each other; how authentically, or rather, inauthentically we portray ourselves to the rest of the world.

Mann's use of colour is distinct and strategic, as each unnatural hue manipulates the painting's atmosphere, invoking sharp emotions. There is a brightness and beauty present in her work, but behind every delicious-looking cake and glitter-speckled

face, there is a hint of darkness hidden. In her piece Cult of Femininity, the woman (who is the artist herself) is surrounded by happy shades of pink along with shiny surfaces and pretty glitter. However, the look on her face is not one of enjoyment. She appears despondent as she looks away from the viewer. Is she avoiding eye contact with us, or does she not even notice our presence? It is as if she is in another place, isolated from her surroundings. There is a familiar uncertainty present; one that each of us has felt in certain moments in our own lives. Being part of Mann's series Self Absolved, the work holds this notion of uncertainty, or perhaps more of a self-discovery, a journey searching for our identity, the essence of our uniqueness. As part of the same series, her piece Venus glows with neon red lights with Mann posing nude as the muse, creating multiple silhouettes and shadows. Experimenting with this notion of the male gaze, Mann reclaims her identity as female by becoming her own muse. The use of the triple silhouette alludes to the idea of having multiple personas, one that is truly you and one you intentionally put on display; the image of how you want others to see you. However dark, her work is not without a sense of humour. Paintings like Do You Like Meow? offer us a satirical cynicism that humorously points out the lunacy in certain interactions. Mann's clever word play and the powerful sentiment present in her artwork together beautifully capture the never-ending struggle for satisfaction in self-identity.

*Text by Christina Nafziger  
Interview by Maria Zemtsova*

Jen Mann, *sad emoji*, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches





AMM: What prompted you to take up art in the first place?

JM: It seems so long ago I can't even remember deciding. It's always been a part of who I am, and it was a natural progression.

AMM: Your work is deeply personal, indeed a recent solo show “Q/A” and your newest body of work, “self absolved” are centered around questioning yourself. Where do you think the nature of your self-questioning is coming from?

JM: I have always been very introspective, and also very interested in relationships and identity. I find relationships the most fascinating, and the relationship you have with yourself as well. My newest series of paintings, “self absolved” is a look at the creation of the idea of 'self identity', and the curation of one's identity. We are always changing, keeping parts of ourselves alive, and letting other parts die. In this series I look at cultural references, the media, new technologies, and social media, in a coming of age tale of sorts. Creating a visual diagram of self, and maybe through that, a loss of self. Like when you say a word over and over, it loses all meaning, does that also happen when you look too closely at self, the way our generation is so prone to do?

AMM: You’ve highlighted “self”, relationships and identity, whereas previously concepts of feminism, beauty, dreamscapes and even existential philosophy have featured; are they still important to your work?

JM: Most definitely. These themes of existentialism, femininity, feminism, surface vs substance (beauty vs content) and identity, are integral to my overall body of work. My series “self absolved” is heavily saturated in these main concepts. Paintings like “how am I not myself”, “endless loop”, and “wet dreams” deal with existential thought; what am I, why do I exist, and what is life. Whereas paintings like “cult of femininity”, “men are from

baby photos - social media has found a way to use each other to sell things to each other. The idea of happiness, sold to you from your friends, constantly, on any day, right from your news feed; smiling faces of happy people, 'really doing something' with their lives. Your “friends” you never see or talk to, but who you know everything going on in their curated lives. I'm fascinated by the complexity of how technology and social media affect the psyche, and our identities, how we cope, and communicate.

AMM; Your artistic video on your website homepage is very sensual and mesmerising. We think it is a truly amazing piece about you as a person and your work in general which touches deeply. Could you share some thoughts on the creation of this short film and how it came about?

JM: The film was a collaboration between my ex boyfriend Cameron Bryson and I, and it roughly covers two years in my life as I create work and sort through my thoughts. He is a cinematographer, and wanted to do a side project about my work, so we did. I'm glad you like it. It is a very personal look at my life.

AMM: You mentioned that ‘we are always changing, keeping parts of ourselves alive, and letting other parts die’ as well as saying that the short film about you covers roughly two years of life and work. If you were to create a new video of your present work and life, how different would it be?

JM: It would look significantly different, but maybe only to me. I no longer live in that studio for one. I now have a great big studio where I live with my partner in the Junction, and where he also has a music studio. I occasionally host residencies at my studio for artists from around the world to come for a month and create work here in Toronto. I still spend long days painting, and my practice is relatively similar, but since the video came out in Jan of 2016, I have moved twice, my parents sold my childhood home, I have ended

“Human contact and physical activity is integral to our overall wellbeing and happiness... Right now social media and technology is an unavoidable evil.”

Jen Mann

Mars, women are your Venus” and “they see me rollin they haytin’” deal with feminine themes, beauty, and essentially are quite feminist. Because this new series focuses on the self, does not mean that it doesn't focus on these main themes of my work, but instead gives me a bigger better platform to discuss things that are important to my “self” haha, as I not only explore my identity as a human being, but also my identity as an artist.

AMM: In regard to technologies and social media – these have possessed the whole generation and made it dependent. What is your opinion of social media – what do you think is bad and good about it? Does it encourage us to be superficial in our understanding of who we are?

JM: At this point it is hard to exist without social media and technology, in some form, permeating your life and relationships. Whether it's texting your friends, curating your instagram, or creating an online profile of yourself trying to meet “the one” - social media has become a part of our first world human culture. My opinion is that it is definitely not healthy for humans as animals to be so sedentary, and alone; something that technologies are making easier and easier for us to be - shop from the convenience of your bed, you don't need to actually see or talk to your friends, just txt them short quips, shortening and shortening everything until we are only sending emojis. Human contact and physical activity is integral to our overall wellbeing and happiness. Right now social media and technology is an unavoidable evil. My work isn't really making critiques on social media, but maybe making satire of our culture, and how we use it. Our generation has been sold everything we have in our lives, from our lifestyle, friends groups, and self identity to our toilet paper. We have been sold this idea of “individualism” : “you're unique, special, different”, and so we go out, and look for how we are different, and special, and end up feeling like no one understands us, no one “gets us”, which inevitably leaves us feeling alone, and unhappy. The media sells us happiness, because we don't get it from ourselves and connections to others anymore, we get it from the things they sell us, the next achievement, graduation, all inclusive vacation, backpacking across Europe, posting photos with significant other on a beach, photos with the wedding party, the wedding, the

a relationship, and started one, lost and gained friends, and gone on many adventures. Often the people around you can come to define you, and we outgrow relationships, with no bad feelings, it is important to allow yourself to change, and to let go of the past as we grow.

AMM: Do you create to understand or do you express what you have already learned? Or is it some combination of both?

JM: I usually write things down to understand what I'm thinking. Once I write lists, and poems, and short stories, I come up with images and titles that sort out the ideas, and more accurately convey the idea than my words can do. Then I paint them.

AMM: Is the end result more important than the process?

JM: Usually the ideas are more important to me than the finished pieces, but the process of painting is only a very small part of the process in my work. Ideas, writing, planning, thumbnails, photoshoots, photoshop... there's so much that goes on first.

AMM: What thoughts and impressions do you imagine the viewers retain after looking at your artworks?

JM: I welcome any thoughts and impressions, but I couldn't begin to imagine how someone else sees the world.

AMM: Is there an artwork of which you are most proud? If so, why?

JM: Hm, I'm not sure proud, but definitely I have some favorites. Usually they're the ones I'm currently working on, have just finished, or the one I'm about to start. “Men are from Mars women are your Venus”, “The facade”, “plz <3 Me”, “I don't feel blue I feel delft blue”, “Wet dreams”, “How am I not myself”, “Not The One”, “Wall Flower”, “True blue”, “Self portrait as a reflection”. These are some of my favorites.

Jen Mann, *Cult of Femininity*; oil on canvas; 60 x 80 inches







***“You are the one  
who dies at the  
end of your life,  
do what you love  
and be happy  
because your life  
is for you, not for  
anyone else.”***

– Jen Mann

AMM: In regards to your work which is on the cover of this Summer Issue – “heart eyes emoji”: you have a slightly similar work but with a sad emoji from your solo debut at Cordesa Fine Art in Los Angeles which on your website is described in a 2016 Artsy review as being: “... At once unsettling and humorous, this interrupted portrait points to the shorthand ways we share our thoughts through premade symbols, which do not always get to the heart of who we really are.” Is there a link between the two works “heart eyes emoji” and “sad emoji”? Would you like to share more thoughts on the “heart eyes emoji” work?

JM: They are somewhat of a pair. They both show sides of myself, and ways I hide who I truly am, and my emotions. One is being goofy and fun and playful. The other is experiencing pain and worry. Neither show a real face but instead a face for the public; glamorized, unconfontational, ingestible, consumer emotions.

AMM: What does success mean to you?

JM: I’m still not really sure. Humans are prone to always want more than what they have... the next step, goal etc. I think success for me is connecting with people, if I had to really nail it down.

AMM: If you had all the time in the world and unlimited financial means, would you create the same art, or would you create something different?

JM: I would probably be doing exactly the same thing right now.

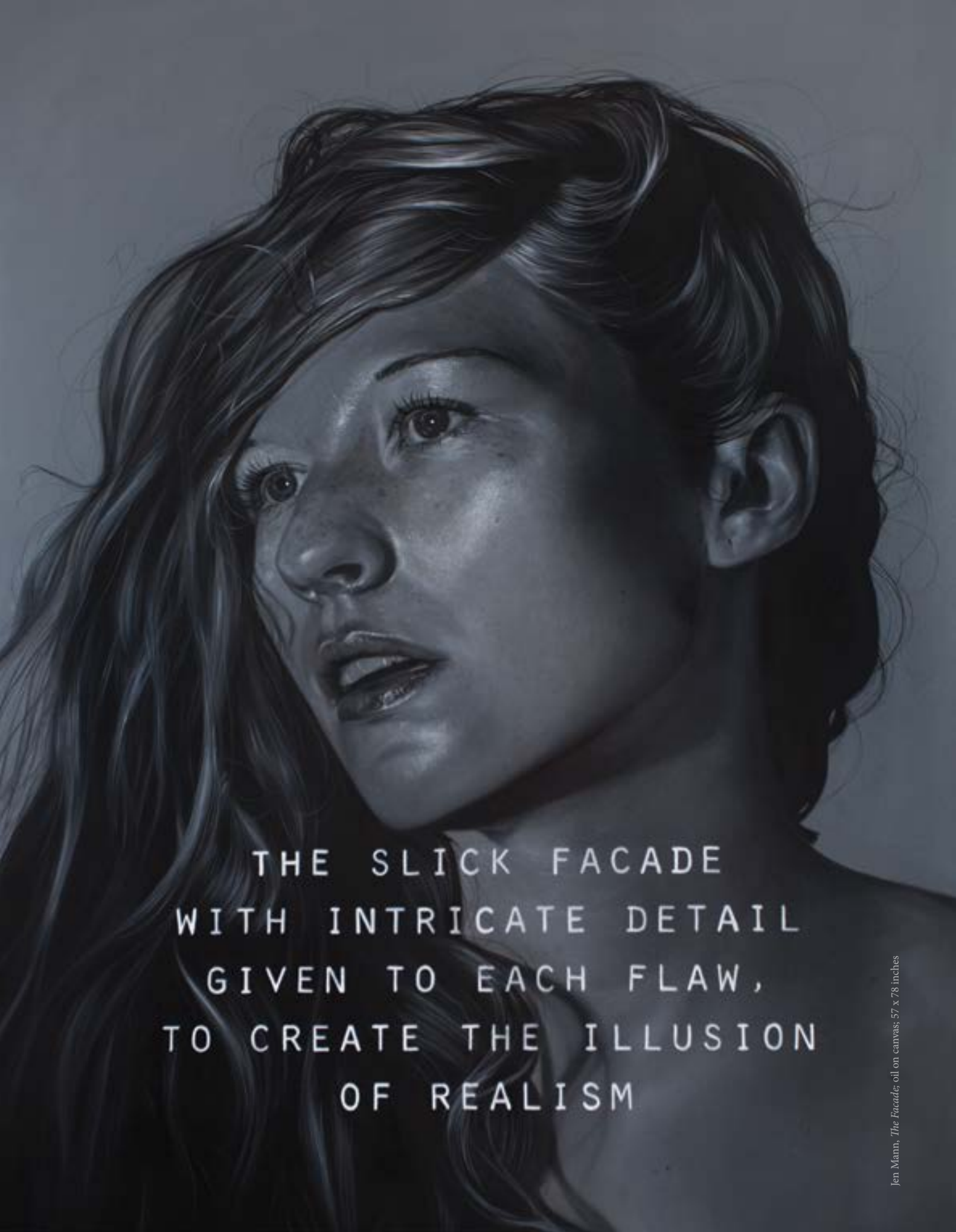
AMM: Is there any piece of advice you’d like to share with our readers or any inspiring quote that has stuck with you throughout your career?

JM: You are the one who dies at the end of your life, do what you love and be happy because your life is for you, not for anyone else.

Jen Mann, *How Am I Not Myself*; oil on canvas; 60 x 90 inches







THE SLICK FACADE  
WITH INTRICATE DETAIL  
GIVEN TO EACH FLAW,  
TO CREATE THE ILLUSION  
OF REALISM

Jen Mann, *The Facade*; oil on canvas; 57 x 78 inches



Jen Mann, *PLZ <3 ME*; oil on canvas; 57 x 78 inches





Je me demande si la vie est aussi  
romantique que ce dont je rêvais



# *Studio Visit*

*Featuring:  
Johan Barrios  
Shanna Van Maurik*





# Studio visit with Johan Barrios:

## Working with light and challenging the limits of the medium

Text and interview by Layla Leiman

A prostrate figure lies obscured behind a row of pot plants, a man balances upside down in a headstand facing towards a wall, a woman's hand is submerged in a glass of water. This is the kind of surreal subject matter that characterizes Colombian-born artist Johan Barrios' hyper-realistic artwork. Working in drawing and painting, Johan's work has a haunting quality about it. This is in part the result of the uncanny compositions, but also the medium. Johan is interested in the relationship between photographs and painting. In his practice the two mediums become interwoven and interchangeable. Johan explains: "The photographic action is perpetuated by the painting, which the eyes of the spectator explore in order to recognize, amongst the bodies, the existence of an abstract landscape and the framing of the object that accompanies the scene but which maintains its independent character."

Unlike other artists who work in a hyper-realistic style, Johan is less concerned with virtuosic detail, and more with how this can be conceptually manipulated and explored. As such he plays with representation and interpretation, and the ideas of observing, looking and perception. Johan's work invites the viewer to look up close, to step inside the frame of the picture, into a shifting world where things perhaps aren't quite what they seem.

We were fortunate to have the opportunity to speak with the artist and find out more about his surreal compositions, career, and ongoing enquiry into concepts of time, movement and space.

**AMM: Do you remember the first piece of art you sold ? How has your career as an artist evolved since then?**

JB: My first official sale was when I was in high school. I sold three drawings to my principal! My art teacher introduced us to chalk pastels and when she saw I was really interested in experimenting with them, she sent me home with a brand new pad of Canson paper and borrowed pastels. I showed up with drawings the next day that impressed her so much, she decided to show our principal. Fair to say that my career has dramatically evolved since then, but one of the things I've conserved from that story is the passion for the simplicity in basic things like drawing.

**AMM: Does your work space influence you creatively? What does your studio look and feel like?**

JB: Absolutely, the size of my studio directly affects the dimensions of my larger paintings. The amount of natural light and color of the walls in my space inspire a totally different palette when I paint. Many objects I see and use daily make strong appearances in my work, for instance, my chairs, my pillow, my sheets, my tools. I recently moved my work space out of my home and I could not be happier. My studio is completely white with high ceilings and a lot of natural light. Simple things like being able to back away from my work and observe it from a distance have become extremely important in my process.

**AMM: Do you have particular daily rituals that influence your art practice? What is your creative process?**

JB: Well, lately, I have been trying to change up my morning routine with doing things that have nothing to do with my art like exercising and taking my time at home before rushing out to work. This has allowed me to arrive at my studio and see my work in progress with a clear mind each day. As for my creative process, it generally begins with a thought, then a quick sketch or words on paper that evolve into a meticulous process to capture my idea in photograph. I then move on to painting or drawing from the selected photos I've taken.

**AMM: Who are the people in your artworks? Is there a story behind each one?**

JB: As people, they are typically friends of mine, but in my work, they become props in my scenarios. Aside from that, I do enjoy working with models who themselves are creative, like artists, designers, photographers etc., because they bring much more to the work.



Johan Barrios, *Reposo 2*, oil on canvas; 24 x 24 inches





Johan Barrios, *Desvelo*; oil on canvas; 72 x 48 inches



Johan Barrios, *Reposo I*; oil on canvas; 24 x 24 inches

**AMM:** Your work has a surreal, haunting aesthetic that is at once captivating and unsettling. How does this visually convey some of your conceptual concerns?

JB: Yes, it's true, my work does have those components, but I try not to dwell there. Behind the forms or the uncomfortable poses, I try to speak about the work itself. I intend to question the limits preconceived in the different mediums I've used throughout my bidimensional, artistic production in search of points of convergence within basic concepts like pictorial representation, negative space, and the absence or presence of the form.

**AMM:** How do you use light sources and color in your work?

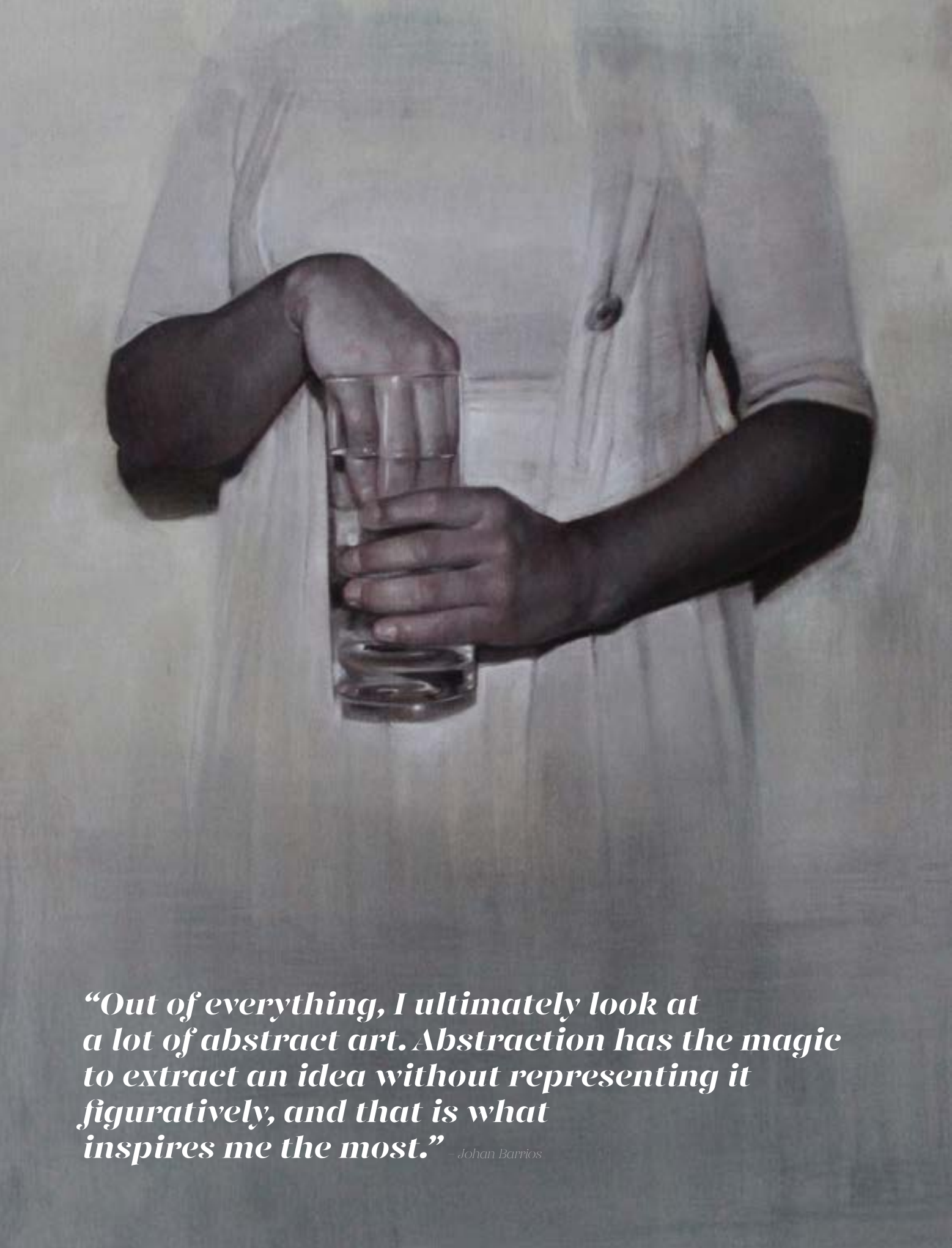
JB: Light is one of the most important factors in both my drawings and paintings. For example, I often use flash or a strong light source to generate dramatic contrast that adds mystery to the question of where my characters are. With the simple visibility of shadows in my work, a close wall or a floor appears in an empty space. I have an interesting relationship with color when it comes to painting. I am constantly adjusting my very own desaturated palette that has become vital to creating the right atmosphere in my work.

**AMM:** While the figures in your work are rendered in intricate, photo-realistic detail, their faces are often obscured. Can you tell us more about this?

JB: Although I am a figurative painter, I do not intend to paint portraits. Perhaps not to give the people identity. The models I place in my imagery are objects or pieces that make up the idea.

**“Simple things like being able to back away from my work and observe it from a distance have become extremely important in my process.”** — Johan Barrios





Johan Barrios, *Leveling*; oil on canvas; 24 x 30 inches

***“Out of everything, I ultimately look at a lot of abstract art. Abstraction has the magic to extract an idea without representing it figuratively, and that is what inspires me the most.”*** – Johan Barrios

**AMM: How long do you typically spend working on each artwork?**

JB: Depends, often the amount of time is directly related to the size of the piece, but not always. I would say I spend about one week on my drawings and one month on my larger paintings.

**AMM: In your artist text you bring up the notion of the artist as autobiographer. In what ways can your paintings and drawings be read as an extension of yourself?**

JB: Simply in the way that my paintings and drawings speak about my process and how torturous it can be constructing an image. I feel that I do not need to literally paint myself to portray myself in my work, but in the end, each piece is a small self portrait.

**AMM: When you’re not in studio where would we likely find you?**

JB: Now that I live in Texas, you can find me fishing in my spare time or playing soccer on the weekends!

**AMM: Part of being an artist is knowing how to look. Where do you look for inspiration?**

JB: Out of everything, I ultimately look at a lot of abstract art. Abstraction has the magic to extract an idea without representing it figuratively, and that is what inspires me the most.

**AMM: Do you have any exhibitions coming up? What’s next for you?**

JB: This year has been amazing. I had the opportunity of having my first solo exhibition here in Houston with Anya Tish Gallery. This summer, in June, my work will be shown at SCOPE Basel with my gallery in Barcelona, Galeria Victor Lope, and I will also be participating in this year’s Moleskine Project with Spoke Art. To finish the year, I will have another solo in California. Therefore, I will be pretty busy with little time to do any fishing. :)

[www.johanbarrios.com](http://www.johanbarrios.com)



Johan Barrios, *Contrapeso*; oil on canvas; 60 x 72 inches





Left image: Shanna van Maurik, *Peony*; oil on panel; 10 x 8 inches

Shanna Van Maurik is a Canadian artist who lives and works in Toronto. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from OCAD University in Drawing and Painting with a minor in Art History. Her practice is centered on the creation of invented characters in painting.

Taking inspiration from her ‘own youth and high school experience’ Shanna creates the world which she describes: ‘feels like a perpetual wandering-around-after-school daydream where everyone is a little bit awkward and heartbroken but all the while, magical and celebrated’. Being raised in a very creative environment from an early age Shanna has practised art making from drawing and painting to creating jewelry and other crafts. Being attracted to everything with colour, neon lights and carnival-inspired elements Shanna explores how light and colour mix and play on the human form.

We were totally hypnotised by the dreamy youthful feel coming from Shanna’s paintings and were delighted to have an in-depth look into her art practice through the interview below. Enjoy!

**AMM: Hi Shanna! Tell us about your journey of becoming an artist. What was your first experience in making art and how has your practice developed over the years?**

SVM: I remember mixing paint colours together probably around age 4. Discovering colours I liked and trying to recreate them again and again. I guess before I was even drawing things that were recognizable, I was obsessed with colour and the possibilities it held.

**AMM: Which events or experiences in life have made the strongest impact on your work?**

SVM: I come from a pretty creative family. My grandfather was a sign painter from Holland and two of my aunts are really talented painters. Growing up, we had paintings from all of them in our home. When I was little my dad would make animals out of clay, and he could draw cartoon characters right out of his head. I remember my older brother bringing home his art projects from school and really looking up to him. My mom has always supported me being creative in every way, we were always doing crafts together when I was young. Anything art related I needed, my family was, and is still, willing to help out. Having creativity around me from such a young age definitely fostered the idea that art is something positive and fulfilling. Because my family encouraged it, I learned to value art and see that it could lead to something in life. I feel pretty lucky to have had that upbringing.

**AMM: Could you outline some of the themes you explore and convey within your art?**

SVM: I consider myself a kind of visual storyteller. I create fictional environments and fill them with imagined characters. A lot of my inspiration comes from my own youth and high school experience. To me, the world I’ve created feels like a perpetual wandering-around-after-school daydream where everyone is a little bit awkward and heartbroken but all the while, magical and celebrated. I feel like my work captures the whimsical nature of youth, but also the angst and boredom of that time. Before you have your own place in the world and you’re just hanging out in parks and forests getting up to no good after school. That’s the place my subjects inhabit. Scumland is a land of wasted hours.

**AMM: The female characters you are creating are full of vivid colors and dreamy, youthful appearances. Who are the figures in your paintings and how do you go about creating their looks?**

SVM: I grew up watching Disney movies and reading a lot of picture books as a kid. I’ve always liked keeping busy with my hands like doing crafts, making



## ***Fictional environments with imagined characters in the ‘land of wasted hours’ by Shanna Van Maurik***





jewelry, and drawing. I started off drawing princesses and the Spice Girls and branched off into imagined characters and it expanded from there. My subjects are a mishmash of imagination, online references, and photos I take, blended with memories of people I see in my day to day. Reference photos for me only serve as a jumping-off point. I am not really interested in portraying a likeness.

**AMM: Why did you choose such a vivid palette for your paintings? Where does your love of colour come from?**

SVM: I have a huge sweet tooth and that spreads to my use of colour. Cotton candy, ice cream, neon lights, carnivals, and dingy bars all have colours that attract me. Colour draws me in. I go to a lot of concerts where typically the stage and performers are lit by neon lights. While I'm watching the musicians, I'm equally attentive to the way the light plays on their faces and bodies. How light and colour mix and play on the human form in that setting is really inspiring. I love seeing bright and dreamy colours appear naturally in the world. I live for those days with cotton candy sunsets or rainbows in the sky. They have a way of making a regular day feel so magical. Colour has a huge impact on my mood and it's usually the biggest inspiration in a piece. It can start the whole idea for a painting, make me hate a piece, or bring everything to a full circle and feel finished.

**AMM: How would you say your day in the studio looks like?**

SVM: I usually bike to the studio if it's a nice day and grab a coffee on my way. If I don't have coffee from my favourite spot, it feels like the whole day is off haha. I am pretty tidy at the studio. I can't work if things aren't organized. I usually start out by cleaning my brushes from the day before and setting up my palette. Clean brushes and a fresh palette are such a mental starting point for me. I guess I'm superstitious, but having everything perfectly set up just puts me in the right headspace. That along with the fact that I'm super particular about colour. I mostly work with clean, bright colours so a muddy palette just doesn't work for me. My day's work can really depend. Sometimes I have an idea I've been thinking about before I get to the studio, other times I have to look through ideas I've written down and sometimes, if there's nothing in particular I want to do, I'll work on studies or smaller paintings. On a good day I can usually get 2 or 3 really small paintings done or 1 small portrait. My larger works take a few days to complete. I try and get paintings done all in one go if I can but sometimes it varies. Generally, once a painting feels done to me, I leave it alone for good. I try to give myself as much time at the studio as I can. I hate feeling rushed while making work. While I'm painting I usually listen to music or old episodes of Columbo, or RuPaul's Drag Race. I have an amazing west facing window in my studio so I'm always checking out the clouds at dusk to see what the colours will be like. Often those colours find their way into my work.

**AMM: Do you experience creative blocks? If so, how do you replenish your inspiration and bring yourself back on track?**

SVM: I don't really have creative blocks in the sense of not being able to produce anything at all. However, I do have bad days. It can be hard but you just have to stick with it. Nothing can be rewarding all the time. You need those days where you doubt yourself, then when you make a work you're happy with it feels more like you've earned it. I do sometimes struggle with parts of paintings. I'll scrape off faces of my portraits and redo them multiple times until they feel right to me. It's almost like when you think too much about what you're doing, it's harder to do. It's difficult to describe, but any painter knows the feeling, when something just feels right and your hand just knows what to do without even thinking about it. Those are the really rewarding moments.

**AMM: Do you try to promote your own work, and if so, could you share some of your strategies and experiences?**

SVM: Social media is where I promote myself the most. I like it because you can reach people who wouldn't normally see your work in a gallery setting. You can reach people from various age and social groups, as well as geographic regions. For the most part, my work appeals to a younger generation of women and teenage girls, most of whom aren't in Toronto and likely wouldn't have seen my work otherwise. Having that online platform to connect has introduced me to collectors and other artists in my own city and abroad that I wouldn't normally have access to.

**AMM: Who are your favorite Canadian artists?**

SVM: Kris Knight, Shary Boyle, Kim Dorland, and Eliza Griffiths are some of my favourite Canadian artists. I have to mention a couple of non-Canadians too because I love them, Allison Schulnik and Otto Dix.

**AMM: What is your outlook on your local artistic community in Toronto?**

SVM: My friends and I have this kind of ongoing joke about our work that it's "too weird to sell" in Toronto galleries. I love my city and the art scene here is home to some of my favourite artists. Unfortunately, the cost of living here is high. Although there are some really talented people in Toronto, many have to work side jobs to make ends meet. This city has the potential to have an even more thriving arts community but because of high rent there isn't as much of a possibility for smaller galleries to find a place here and stay afloat. That means



Shanna van Maurik, Studio shot of *Unicorn Study*; oil on panel; 4 x 4 inches



Shanna van Maurik, *Jynessa*; oil on panel; 20 x 16 inches





that a lot of talented artists who are less commercial don't really have a space here. Toronto seems to be turning into condo land. There's been a lot of knocking down older buildings and putting up condos instead. I wish that instead of announcing plans for a new condo, the developers announced plans for new artist centres, studios, music venues, or big paid murals. That would be really cool. Art in Toronto feels like more of a destination rather than an all around experience in the city. I love it here, but right now it feels like artists are being kind of pushed out.

**AMM: What's on your agenda for this year?**

SVM: I'm always just trying to make work and improve and grow as an artist. I'm really excited to be heading to Japan in the summer of 2017. Like I said, I'm really inspired by colour, neon signs, and fashion so I'm excited to see what Japan has in store. I'm probably going to be switching materials for my trip as well, because oil paints aren't the easiest to travel with. I'm looking forward to experimenting with some

new mediums and getting inspired by what Japan has to offer.

**AMM: If there was one artist or film/book character that you could hang out with for a day, who would that be?**

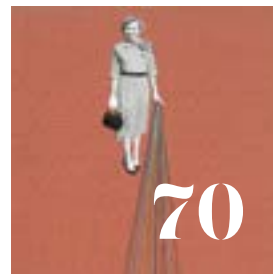
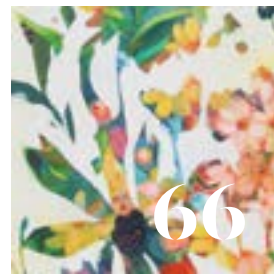
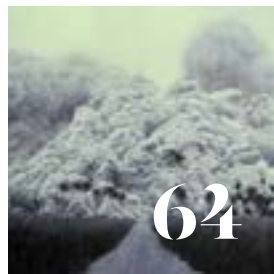
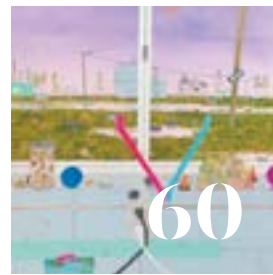
SVM: I would love to hang out with Lieutenant Columbo for a day. Columbo is one of my dad's favourite shows and I would always watch it with him when I lived at home. The show has a really nostalgic and vintage feel, which I love. I rewatch the seasons over and over. Columbo has such a disheveled and awkward appearance, but is so genuine and caring. People always underestimate him but in the end the method to his madness is revealed. I feel like everyone can identify with the notion of being underestimated and then proving yourself, it's empowering.

[www.shannavanmaurik.com](http://www.shannavanmaurik.com)

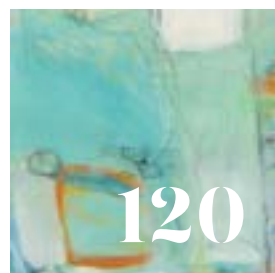
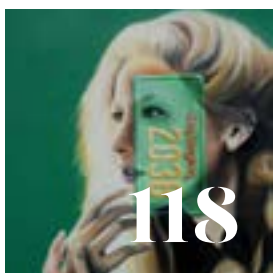
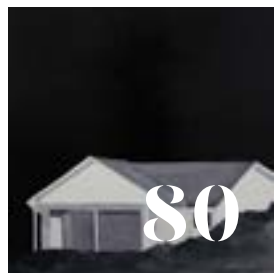
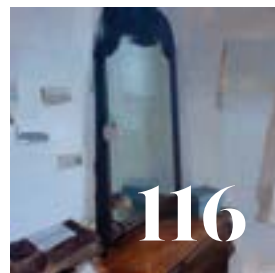
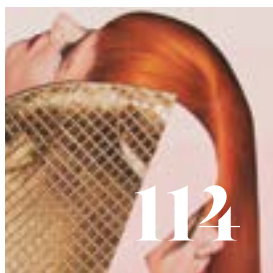
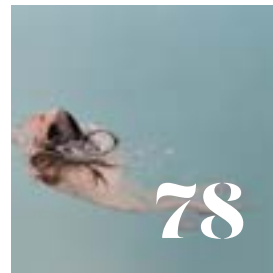
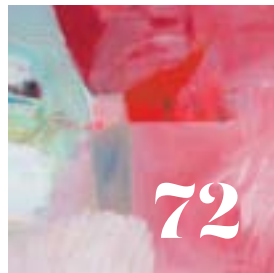
Right image: Shanna van Maurik, *Wanderer*, oil on panel, 48 x 36 inches



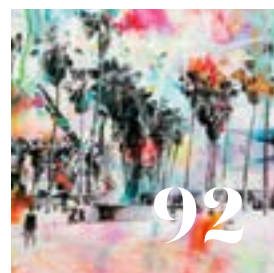




*Editorial  
selection  
of works*



*Curated  
selection  
of works  
by  
Bree  
Delian*





# *Curated selection of works*

*by Bree Delian*

*Featuring:*

*Elise Wehle*

*Shiqing Deng*

*Max Seckel*

*Jorg Karg*

*Adrian Gouet*

*Amy Spassov*

*Jason Lee Gimbel*

*J. Cherie Marriage*

*Lola Donoghue*

*Ronen Raz*

*Féline Minne*

*Nicole Tijoux*

*Samantha Morris*

*Young Gi Han*

*Marleen Pennings*

*Ners Neonlumberjack*

*Jingyi Wang*

*Martha Zmpounou*

*Kei Ito*

*Marcelina Amelia*

*Alberto Sanchez*

*Gabriel Moreno*

*Hagar Vardimon*





Elise Wehle, *Path 2*, cut paper collage; 13 x 26 inches

# Elise Wehle

[www.elisewehle.com](http://www.elisewehle.com)

My artwork revolves around the time-intensive act of cutting intricate patterns using a utility knife. Moving my hands in the repetitive movements required by my work transforms my art practice into a meditative experience essential to my process. The themes of my art are centered on my attempts to connect my physical surroundings with the rich, complicated, internal and spiritual environment experienced within. The cut-out pattern interferes with the representational imagery, obstructing the seen with the unseen. No matter how many paper layers intersect with the representational image of the photograph, the cut outs ultimately act as negative space, forming lines and shapes out of nothing. Despite the patterns' clearly defined edges, they are actually invisible, like the experiences they represent. I studied art at Brigham Young University in the United States and graduated with my BFA in 2012.

Elise Wehle, *Like a Fire Is Burning*, cut paper collage; 13 x 20 inches







# Shiqing Deng

[www.shiqingdeng.wixsite.com/artist](http://www.shiqingdeng.wixsite.com/artist)

At the beginning I was fascinated by classical paintings, like Van Dyck and Ingres. Studying and copying their works was my first step into art; to a great extent those works influenced my painting significantly. Painting portraits is one of my strengths, and my training has provided me with a solid modeling ability. I typically enjoy the soft touches with elegant subtleties. I do not like the photo realistic approach because it does not have the artistic essence, which is the most important language that defines a painting as painting. In the early days of my practice in painting when I thought of how to create a work, I felt a little bit lost. After repeated attempts, I decided to express my feelings in the form of the human body. My interest in nudes came from my admiration for the great master Michelangelo Buonarroti. His vigorous attitude towards art and his fantastic skills impressed me a lot and I am very sensitive to the structures of human bodies. So this would be the main direction of my painting practice in the future. Currently, I am exploring ways of combining abstraction and figuration in my new paintings to find an innovative breakthrough.



Shiqing Deng, *Vent No.3*; oil on linen; 36 x 24 inches



# Max Seckel

[www.maxseckel.com](http://www.maxseckel.com)

Graduated with a BFA in Printmaking from the University of Delaware in Spring 2009. Moved to Philadelphia fall 2009, briefly volunteered at print co-op Second State Press before joining and working out of artist run Space 1026 from 2011-2014. Moved to New Orleans fall 2014 and joined and began to volunteer at the New Orleans Community Printshop and Darkroom. Currently live and work in New Orleans. My work addresses relationships between objects and space, exploring how these relationships affect perception and memory. Working in a variety of media (gouache, acrylic, latex, silk screen) I hope to echo some of the complexity and uncertainty I perceive in the world. Simple objects and every day occurrences are thrust into absurd and sometimes contradictory circumstances. More information than can be processed with a simple glance is presented all at once, as a landscape viewed from a shifting and uncertain perspective.



Max Seckel, *Loose Window*; gouache, acrylic, spray paint, and latex on canvas; 36 x 48 inches

Max Seckel, *Pizza Beer*; gouache, acrylic, spray paint, and latex on canvas; 48 x 36 inches







Jorg Karg, *Strange Fruits*; digital collage, fine art print under diasec; 130 x 118 cm; edition of 6

Jorg Karg, *Shiny Ruin*; digital collage, fine art print und diasec; 130 x 110 cm; edition of 6



# Jorg Karg

[www.jorgkarg.com](http://www.jorgkarg.com)

“Back to the Beholder” is a good brief description for the approach to my digital collages. This approach to my work can probably be best described as an entirely personal commentary on, or reaction to the present-day function and handling of visual language. On the one hand an armada of media awaits us everyday, penetrating into every aspect of life and practically bombarding us with visual language. Its commercial background stands beyond doubt, but this type of depiction nonetheless subjectively shapes our perception. A refreshing antipode to this is formed by the art world, which unfortunately seems ever more unapproachable. Artists seem to make art for artists and to seek success only within realms defined by themselves. Visitors are nonetheless highly coveted, because attention is the new gold. The “welcome” visitors thus make use of an earbud that explains to them what they would not understand without this technical aid or extensive research carried out in advance. But there is still art on the street: bitterly needed new developments outside any markets and made solely for the public space. Its protagonists seem to be clearly aware that “Everyman” is the toughest critic. In no way does this make their messages clumsy. They are more highly developed, so that they can still succeed in presenting themselves to their fast-paced critics alongside a flood of colourful advertising messages. Where these realms are then linked to the fundamental idea of producing images that once again move their viewers directly, without earbuds and without a commercial motivation, a commentary on this situation is produced through the only acceptable means: the image itself.



Adrian Gouet, *Mesophase*; oil on canvas; 160 x 200 cm



Adrián Gouet (Santiago, 1982) holds a BA in Arts from the Universidad Católica de Chile and a Master's in Visual Arts from the University of Chile. He has exhibited collectively in various shows, including *Untitled* (2010, Matucana 100), *The Earthquake of Chile* (2009, Triennale of Visual Arts, MAC), as well as individually in *Animal gallery* (2010), *Macchina gallery* (2012) and *CCU Art Room* (2015). He has obtained FONDART funding for various production and exhibition projects on three occasions (2010-2013), and in 2011 the CONICYT scholarship for postgraduate studies in Chile. He has been awarded the third prize MAVI-Minera Escondida (2015), the Juan Mackenna Prize for academic excellence (2011, P. Universidad Católica) and the first place in the XXI Century Artists contest (2007). Along with his teaching work, he has developed a pictorial and graphic production in various supports, as part of his technical proposal, which has been compiled in *Technical Review: Painting in Chile 1980-2010*, edited by Jorge González-Lohse and Ocho Libros editores. My work is focused on the influence of mass media on the practice of painting, inquiring how the relations between tragedy and spectacle determine the painting conditions of production and circulation. In this context, I'm interested in the translation process from photography to painting, since the uncertain surroundings created by new media spread the visual to an entirely unpredictable system of references. If using photography was a way of registering the specific materials, and therefore presenting the differences between two distinct realities, painting helps me to erase those differences. The color manipulation intensified the confusion of not knowing whether the referent pertained to a real volcanic disaster or to 3D animated movie about the end of the world. From Muybridge's chronophotographic experiments to the latest slow motion technology devices, my practice is about representing potentially emotive situations through an aseptic and depersonalized pictorial treatment. The emphasis lies in the strictly formal description of all kinds of sublime explosions, incredible energetic discharges, eruptions, sublimations, vertigos, falls, suspensions, precipitations, disintegrations, deformations, fusions and confusions of all states of matter. That suspension, that astonishment, the physical containment of that bordering moment of change and transformation, is what I seek in painting.

# Adrian Gouet

[www.adriangouet.com](http://www.adriangouet.com)

Adrian Gouet, *Fatuous fires*; oil on canvas; 250 x 180 cm





# Amy Spassov



Amy Spassov, *Flower Moon*; mixed media on panel; 48 x 48 in

[www.amyspassov.com](http://www.amyspassov.com)

Mixed-media artist Amy Spassov has cultivated a loyal collector base that began in the Pacific Northwest. Her process, adept and calculated, is also spontaneous and impulsive. This ebb and flow allows the artist to unearth the premise of each body of work. It is often a struggle, but in the artist's words: "The development of each piece is as important as the finished work." Spassov works in layers using numerous tools, collage and paint, revealing and hiding the information as a means to deduct what is relevant. The surfaces are left with a rich topography, adorned with marks and images that are expressive and rely heavily on the relationship between order and chaos as well as beauty and pattern. Born in 1980, Spassov currently works out of her studio in Seattle, WA, and has shown across the United States, as well as Canada and the United Kingdom. Over the last decade she has worked on a number of corporate and private commissions and has been recognized in the national publication, Studio Visit Magazine.

Pollination: Beauty, seduction and desire; all are precursors to pollination and all are the centerpiece for these new works. They are the seeds of love and the foundation for the advancement of life. It is through them that pollination occurs, nature is created and love exists. And so it goes; this crucial cycle that begins and ends with love. There is no better place than nature to see the role these elements of attraction play in pollination and ultimately in the survival and evolution of nearly every form of life. A flower's beauty is not accidental. It is specifically designed to seduce pollinators. Humans are equally susceptible to their charm and while we do not pollinate flowers it does shine a light on perhaps our most important characteristic, which is to love and protect. My own struggles with conception led me down a path of discovery on the subject and it was through this careful research that this body of work came to be. This new understanding gave me peace, patience and ultimately my first child. I am due in May around the full moon, the Flower Moon. Spring is blooming all around me, and more than ever, I feel I am a part of it.



Amy Spassov, *Ecstasy (detail)*; mixed media on panel; 36 x 24 in





Jason Lee Gimbel, *Eight Legs*; oil on panel; 57 x 45 inches



# Jason Lee Gimbel

[www.jasonleegimbel.com](http://www.jasonleegimbel.com)

Known for his monumental figurative paintings, Jason Lee Gimbel renders full figure works through abstraction-expressionist brushwork and non-naturalistic colors. His instinctual approach, incorporating random use of color and mark marking, pushes figurative work to the edges of representation and, in some instances, into abstraction. These painted drawings breaking up the surface through a visual harmony that disrupts the partially outlining figures provide the viewer with a complex balance between the merger of the figure and background. In addition to painting, Gimbel creates classically informed drawings, often depicting the human figure with the skin removed to display the musculature. These *écorché* drawings borrow from Greek mythology, classical sculpture and traditional figure drawing. He incorporates visual metaphors that explore the ephemeral qualities of the yellowing and degrading newsprint on which they are drawn. There is a playful juxtaposition of these large scale drawings with larger than life size staples, magnets and thumb tacks. An optical perception is often associated with Alice in Wonderland Syndrome. Jason Lee Gimbel is a fifth generation Coloradoan who graduated from Metropolitan State University of Denver and studied Fine Art Drawing and Printmaking. Gimbel has participated in group shows in Denver, Colorado; Athens, Georgia; Astoria, Oregon; and the Manifest Gallery International Painting Annual publication in Cincinnati, Ohio. He has also appeared in numerous shows with Space Gallery in Denver, CO. He previously hosted a non-instructive figure drawing workshop in Denver's RINO Arts District at Redline.





J. Cherie Marriage, *Geek Love*, found photograph & thread on vintage book covers; 8 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

# J. Cherie Marriage

[www.jcheriemarriage.com](http://www.jcheriemarriage.com)

As a classically trained violist turned visual artist, Marriage stresses her process just as much as the finished product. Through the manipulation and reinterpretation of lost or forgotten objects, her work looks to blend the untold story of strangers' quiet, and often personal, moments with her own ruminations. Marriage currently lives and works out of her studio in Southern California.

J. Cherie Marriage, *She Left Her Husband for the Circus*, found photograph & thread on vintage book cover; 6 x 8 1/2 inches







Lola Donoghue, *Heirloom #6*, oil; 36 x 36 inches

# Lola Donoghue



Lola Donoghue, *Heirloom #4*, oil; 36 x 36 inches

[www.loladonoghue.com](http://www.loladonoghue.com)

Lola Donoghue is an Irish artist living and working in Galway, in the West of Ireland. She graduated at the top of her class with a first class honours degree in Fine Art (Painting) from Limerick School of Art and Design. Imbued with a painterly, ethereal quality, her work is characterized by a predominantly white-on-white palette, layered with a mix of muted colors and splashes of bright neon. Her work is light and fresh and the compositions are a delicate balance of intricate linear forms and concentrated layers of colour. Her work makes a statement on the social milieu, an interpretation and exploration of everyday contemporary culture and society, representing the unseen internal emotions without the distraction of meaningful images. Hidden in the subtle, delicate washes are details, renderings that draw the eye and hint at the exploration of the unconscious, clashing narratives and the tension and balance that exist therein. Her work is held in private collections all over the world.



# Ronen Raz

[www.ronenraz.com](http://www.ronenraz.com)

Ronen Raz (born 1964) is an artist living and working in Israel. Professionally trained as a fashion designer, Raz's works, mostly made from processed leather, focus on body and structure, and the concept of creating something that is both animate and inanimate at the same time. Raz has had two solo shows and participated in many group exhibitions. In the winter of 2017 he took part in the prestigious residency program at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire, USA. Raz's works have been purchased by private collectors in Israel and abroad and have won several awards and commendations.

Body and structure fascinate me. In my early years, I practiced taxidermy and maintained an insect collection. Years later, I could define this as an "animate-inanimate" enterprise, an attempt to say something about the very skin we inhabit. Today I mostly deal with leather and hair, as representations of my interest in the gap between their organic, living essence, and their current dead state, as it applies to broader human questions regarding the place of mortality within our relationships and lives. My works are comprised of life-size leather shell reproductions of trivial objects. The pieces are painstakingly cut and sewn based on a model, and rest upon traditional work disciplines related to the creation of "haute couture". Everyday consumer products (car parts, road parts, supermarket carts, flush pipes and more) undergo surgical and chemical manipulations as they come to life with biological tissue and evoke associations towards an organic body, which, though exhibiting signs of sexuality and sensuality, remains compressed, drained, exhausted, and primarily human.



Ronen Raz, *Cart No. 5: Heart of Silver*; processed leather mounted on white wooden shelf; 35 x 30 x 23 cm



Ronen Raz, *3/4 Cow 1/4 Pig*; processed leather; 131 x 90 x 20 cm



Féline Minne, *Wisdom Teeth*; acrylic paint on canvas; 135 X 135 cm



# Féline Minne

[www.felineminne.com](http://www.felineminne.com)

Féline Minne, *The Tigers from Chicago*; acrylic paint on canvas; 140 X 170 cm



Féline Minne (born in Ghent, Belgium, 1987) is doing a MA in Painting at the prestigious Royal College of Art, London. She has a BA with great distinction in animation filmmaking from KASK Ghent, Belgium. She spent an Erasmus year at the Kunstakademie Münster, Germany, worked and travelled in Canada, had exhibitions in New York and will be doing an artist residency at Eastside International Los Angeles in August 2017. Her debut novel, *Medea and I*, was nominated for the Bronze Owl in 2014 and the Debut Prize of Boekbe in 2015. She was named Eveline Gevaert at birth, but being estranged from her father, she decided to change her surname to Minne, which means love in old Dutch and memory in Norwegian. Both love and memory are major themes in her work. She chose Féline as her first name because it's the name of Bambi's girlfriend. Bambi was her favourite childhood movie. She loves animals and nature.

My paintings refer to the conflict between Rothko and Warhol. Rothko thought that, with his colour field paintings, he was the end of art history. But then, all of a sudden, Warhol started painting Mickey Mouse. This upset Rothko, before he committed suicide. My work is a response to both. There will never be an end to art history. Just like the road signs in Alice in Wonderland, my work points in all directions. Painting contains a lot of movement: the way your eye moves over the canvas, and the way I place and drag my brush. My paintings are about editing, hiding, layering, concealing and the tension between the figurative and abstract. In my opinion, art is about escaping into self-made worlds and inviting people in. My interest in play can be seen in my other series of paintings called Tetris. I am serious about the importance of play and often refer to Donald Winnicott's theories about play and reality. It has been proven that playing Tetris helps people with post-traumatic stress syndrome. Tetris is like life. A lot keeps coming at you, and you have to give it all a place. Sometimes there is not enough time. Then the bricks accumulate and holes appear in-between the rows. What it also teaches us about life is that we can't wait for the right brick to come along. If it works well, a few rows disappear and that feels great, it evokes a feeling of release and relaxation. This act of play describes my way of working. My nonsensical paintings show stories without beginnings or endings. The Stairs lead to nowhere and everywhere. The paintings mean nothing and everything.





Nicole Tijoux, *Profundú*; oil on canvas; 10 X 10 inches

# Nicole Tijoux

[www.nicoletijoux.com](http://www.nicoletijoux.com)



Nicole Tijoux, *Camila*; oil on canvas; 90 cm x 130 cm

Nicole Tijoux was born in Santiago, Chile in 1981. She paints in oil, acrylic and watercolor. She received her Master's degree in visual arts at the University of Chile with a Fondart Scholarship in 2013. The same year she held a workshop GAEP GOLDEN PAINTS and had an Art Residency, at the Sam and Adele Golden Foundation in 2016. Nicole Tijoux has held numerous individual and collective exhibitions in Chile and abroad, including: "2.50" individual in Paris in 2006; ArteBA Fair in Buenos Aires in 2006 and 2008; individual exhibition "Interstices" in Buenos Aires in 2010; collective "young MAVI award" Mavi museum in 2014 Santiago, Chile; "Art and Intervention" urban intervention in Sao Paulo, Brazil 2015; "Muestra Manhattan" collective in New York, US 2016; "Open Studios" collective at Sam and Adele Golden Foundation New Berlin, New York 2016; Affordable Art Fairs: Stockholm (Oct 16), Brussels (Feb 17), London (Feb 17), New York (March 17) and Hong Kong (May 17) with Retrospect Galleries Byron Bay, Australia. Nicole Tijoux lives and works in Santiago, Chile. My work studies visual transformations that a human body has when interacting with water. How the figure makes active the flat (almost abstract) background with it. Water and background act as a veil in the figure, covering it almost completely, cutting or joining a great source of energy that knocks it down. It further attempts to show the change of state and shape of both the water and the figure in the moment they are found . The finiteness of the body, over time, the instantaneity of the images that I chose and their freezing on the canvas. I attempt to investigate with painting a melancholic desire to bring to the present, in the process, a time when the body changes shape, when it becomes a spectrum or is defined or a liquid turned to something else.





Samantha Morris, *One Square Window*; oil on panel; 30 x 40 cm

# Samantha Morris

Samantha Morris was born in 1995 and grew up in Madison, Connecticut; she now lives in Philadelphia and attends The University of the Arts. She is currently a senior majoring in Fine Art with an emphasis in Painting and Drawing. Morris has also studied in Paris, France, at Paris College of Art. Recent exhibitions include Resonance, The University of the Arts, Intimate Spaces, Le Pave d'Orsay, and Joint, The University of the Arts among others. Her work has also been published in FreshPaint Magazine, Opción Magazine, and Underground Pool. She works primarily in the mediums of drawing, painting, and collage. Her work focuses on architecture and landscape, and the intimate connection we have with everyday spaces. She seeks to challenge the way we view space, asking the viewer to stop and investigate further as place is revealed in her artwork.

In my artwork, I focus on the idea of an individual traveling through a space; exploring place through architecture and landscape, abstracted through line, shadow pattern, contrast, and negative space. I am interested in dynamics, what can and can't be seen. The seemingly mundane aspects of everyday life, one light shining through the square of a window frame, or the corner of a plant casting shadow on glass. Influenced by photography and film, my work investigates the stillness of night; the frozen moments before something happens. It exists in the "in between", the time when your eyes adjust to the contrast of natural illuminated light and the depth of darkness. I feel immersed, traveling through such spaces. Each piece has reference to an environment, while existing in its own space.

[www.samanthamorris.org](http://www.samanthamorris.org)



Samantha Morris, *Leading*; oil on panel; 30 x 40



# Young Gi Han



Young Gi Han, *Eternal Place 2*; acrylic and colored pencil on wood panel; 10 x 8 inches

People think that if you do this five hundred times somehow you know it. Well, the more you do these things, the harder it is to really do them as new. I never go with what I feel an audience wants and also I'm not even going with what I want. I'm just trying to let my feelings tell me... show me a sound I haven't heard. -Keith Jarrett, (born May 8, 1945) American jazz pianist.

As I try to find my own signature art style and polish it up, I end up with repetition of myself, and obvious post-modern art. Truly, purpose leads to pressure and limits myself. However, indulgence in the quest for novel visual insight from my unconscious daily mark making doesn't confine me. My intuitive art process without goal allows me to 'discover' my genuine art, which generates as new always, rather than 'make' art. I am learning from what I generate unconsciously. So, my practice starts from layering my unconscious daily mark makings. Once in the studio, they get consciousness, forms, story, through arrangement.

Layering material of my daily life, like a palimpsest, drawings from the many notebooks that get transcribed into the studio. Their medium morphs, sometimes drawings get combined or become cut and layered. Once in the studio, automatic doodling gains form and structures as if to explain itself, gaining consciousness through arrangement. Like all of my source material these spontaneous, free drawings are intimate, from my daily life. Columns, balusters, ships and coconut trees emerge from the architectural or fluid compositions. In this balance of a daily free-form drawing practice and architectural details, the works are given a sense of topography, like maps tracing a daily journey and imagination.

Young Gi Han (aka Tina Han) was born and grew up in South Korea. The artist currently lives and works in New York. She holds MFA in Fine Arts from School of Visual Arts, New York, and BFA in Fine Arts from Kyung Hee University, Seoul. Her work has been exhibited by SVA Gramercy gallery; Abstract Intentions (2013), Artifact gallery; Close Quarters (2013), Blue Mountain gallery; The National Juried Exhibition (2013), New York, Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts; Palimpsest (2014), New York, Interstate Project gallery; Group Velocity (2013), New York, Soap Box gallery; Drawn (2014), New York, 56 Bogart space; Visible-Invisible, (2015), New York, Brooklyn Art Cluster gallery; 'Where Nature Ends' (2017), New York. She also participated in Select Art Fair (2013), Miami.

[www.younggihan.com](http://www.younggihan.com)

My name is Marleen Pennings, born in The Netherlands, currently based in Germany. I studied Fashion Design & Illustration in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. During the process of designing my graduation collection, I noticed that I found designing and styling the concept of the collection more interesting than the actual making of the pieces. After I graduated, I started working in Fashion Design and Styling. But it wasn't what I wanted to be doing. So I quit my job and founded my studio 'Stroke a Bird'. Out of curiosity I began painting. I liked it so much, the process, the mixing of the colours, the layering. It's a mysterious process, I wanted to get closer. Now it feels like a part of me I can't stop. I started with painting portraits. I learned how to mix colours, how to paint skin, fabric and hair. I have always been drawn to abstract painting, though. I experimented, but it felt like it was too soon, I didn't know how to begin such a process. There's so much in it. I like the confrontation in abstract work. It's a good change of focus for me. I like both, very different, processes and techniques. I can get lost in both just as easily. At the moment I'm more focused on abstract work, because I want to explore more, it inspires me to not know where it's going. I usually work on multiple pieces at the same time. Colour has an important role in the decision-making. New works I start are often a follow-up to the previous works. Like painting one big abstract work, on multiple canvases, over a long time period. This way a 'never-the-same' perspective creates a depth and an off-balance in the story of the images. I don't plan ahead. It can go anywhere anytime, which can be inhibitory too. Because the work is personal and coming from my mind, mixed with my feelings and surroundings it gets to me in another way as it does to the viewer. The image is seen by so many eyes, processed in so many minds, in a way I can't experience. This makes me curious and drives me into new ideas for paintings. For me, painting is the most obvious way to translate an ongoing pace, the world, its people and environment. It's my language at the moment, it's always there.

# Marleen Pennings



Marleen Pennings, *Copper*; acrylic paint, spraypaint and tape on paper; 4 x 36 x 48 cm

[www.strokeabird.com](http://www.strokeabird.com)



# Ners Neonlumberjack

[www.neonlumberjack.com](http://www.neonlumberjack.com)

Ners Neonlumberjack bikes suburban neighborhoods and city streets collecting detritus, visits museums and galleries, enjoys landscaping and art making, yet... Ners Neonlumberjack would enjoy nothing more than to hike or canoe deep into the wilderness to camp for months at a time; learning, exploring, and admiring the natural world ecstatic at the glimpse of a majestic deer, bear, magnificent tree, crystal encrusted geode or fluorescent dinosaur while living off chocolate and roasted marshmallows.



Image: Ners Neonlumberjack, *Hatchet Gash (What My Insides Look Like)*; acrylic on wood; 15 x 8 x 4 inches

Jingyi Wang is a realistic artist who is based in New York. She was born and raised in China. She received her BFA degree in oil painting from China Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2013, and received her MFA degree from New York Academy of Art in 2016. She was selected for an artist residency at the Terra Foundation of American Art in Giverny, France. Her works have been widely exhibited at Art New York 2017 art fair, Sotheby's New York, the Metropolitan Pavilion, Flux Factory Gallery, Portraits Inc. and Jacob K. Javits Center. Jingyi has been painting botany since 2014 when she moved to New York. In her current artworks, she selected cacti as her creative theme. In the series of artificial cactus paintings, cacti represent all creatures in nature. Through the strong and independent characteristic that the cacti represent, she intends to express the impact that human activity has on nature.



Jingyi Wang, *Pink and Green*; mix medium on panel; 8 x 10 inches

## Jingyi Wang

[www.jingyiwangart.com](http://www.jingyiwangart.com)





Martha Zmpounou, *Hide Reveal*; watercolour, inks and coloured pencil on paper; 69 x 97 cm

# Martha Zmpounou

[www.marthazmpounou.com](http://www.marthazmpounou.com)



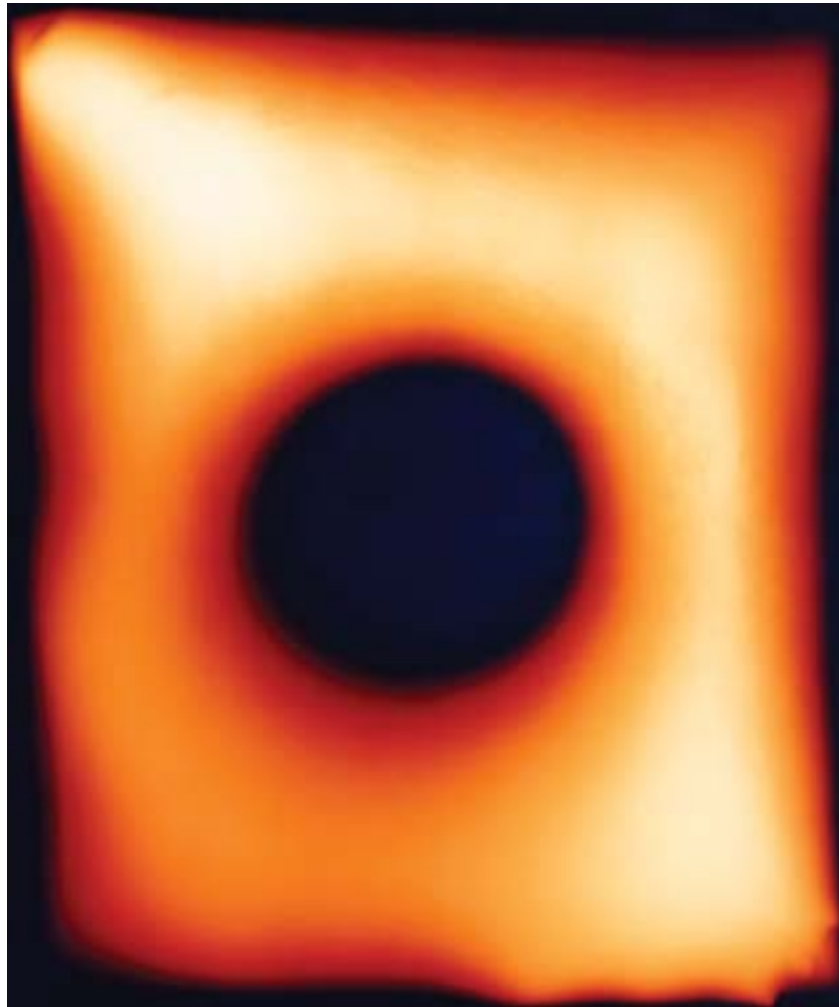
Martha Zmpounou, *Pink Face*; acrylic, watercolour and oil on paper; 30 x 45 cm

Martha Zmpounou is a visual artist based in London. She holds a degree in Fine Arts and Painting from Aristotle University of Fine Arts and in 2011 she completed her MA at Central Saint Martins College of Art. Since then she has been awarded several awards including the De Laszlo Foundation Award from the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, the Secret Art Prize, and she was shortlisted for the Jerwood Drawing Prize and the Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize. Her work has been exhibited and published widely in the UK and abroad. Some of her exhibitions include the Jerwood Drawing Prize, the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, the Royal Institute of Watercolour Painters, The Threadneedle Prize, the Discerning Eye, Modern Panic III, Xhibit and AOI's Best of British Illustration Images 35. Her work was selected to be published several times in Aesthetica's annuals, Creative Works and her professional portfolio also include collaborations with several clients including Nike and UAL. My recent work revolves around the idea of the portrait as a means and space of exposure. It seeks to subvert the apparent glorification in portraiture and invoke the fragmentary and the discursive. Using a colourful mix of water based media and working from fashion and pop culture, masking and layering are deployed to create figures whose identities emerge out of a play of hiding and revealing. I seek to create fragmented and grotesque portraits that touch upon the misinterpretation of the human figure in media and evoke the undermining of the idolized personas that are portrayed, balancing between beauty and repulsion.



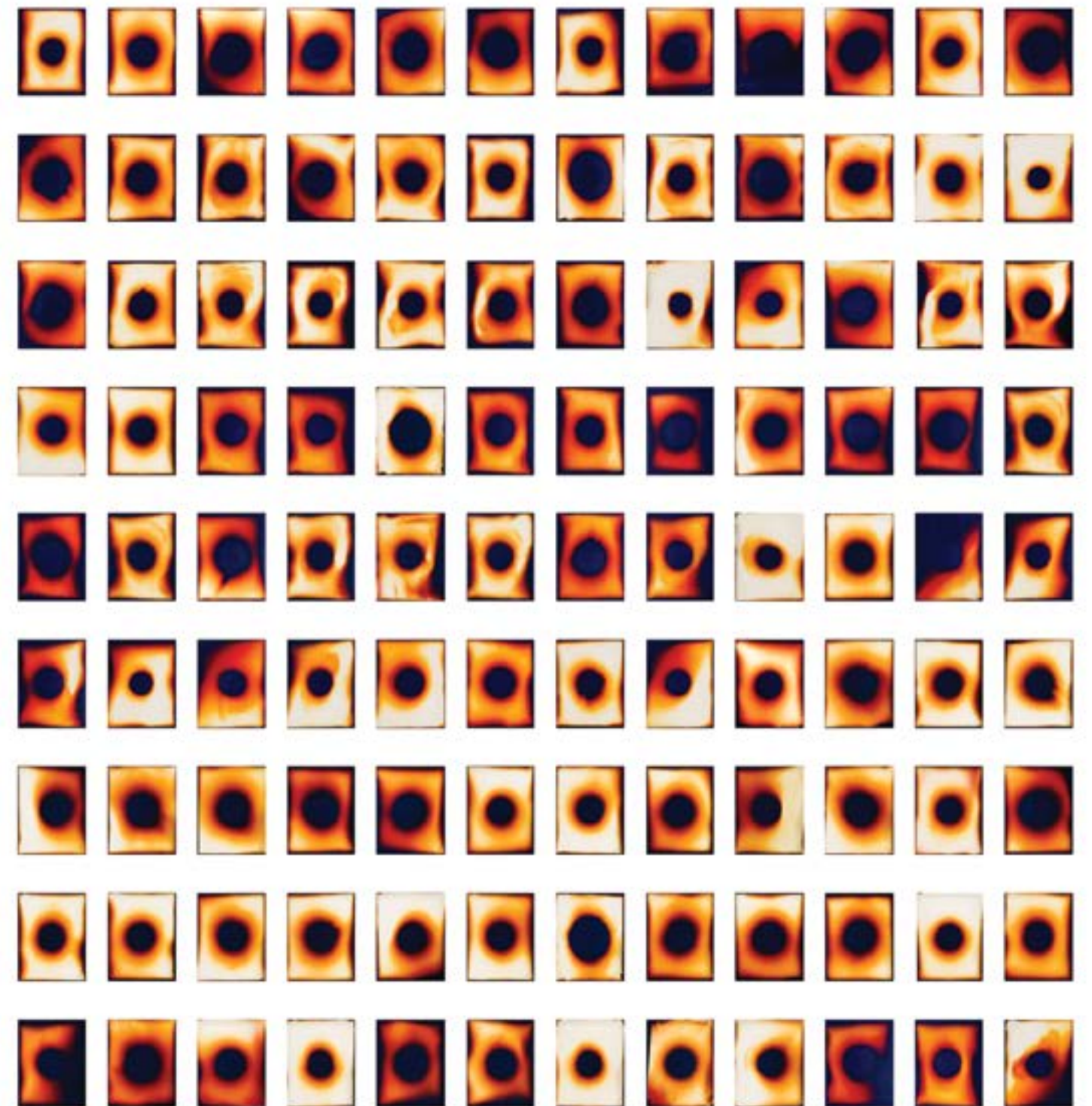
# Kei Ito

[www.kei-ito.com](http://www.kei-ito.com)



Kei Ito, *Sungazing Print 59/108*; chromogenic color print; 8.5 x 11 inches

Kei Ito is a photographer and installation artist who graduated from Maryland Institute College of Art ('16) with an MFA in Photography, following his BFA from Rochester Institute of Technology ('14). Kei's work addresses issues of generational connection and deep loss as he explores the materiality of photography as a medium. His recent work deals with the tragedy and legacy passed on from his grandfather who survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, yet died from cancer, and the threat of nuclear disaster which is still present today. Kei's works are in the permanent collections of institutions, including the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, and have been shown in major cities in USA, Japan, China, and Hungary. On August 6th, 1945, at 8:15 AM, my grandfather, Takeshi Ito, witnessed a great tragedy that destroyed nearly everything in Hiroshima. He survived the bombing, yet he lost his sister from the explosion and other family members from radiation poisoning. As an activist and author, my grandfather fought against the use of nuclear weaponry throughout his life, until he too passed away from cancer when I was ten years old. I remember him saying that day in Hiroshima was like "hundreds of suns lighting up the sky". In order to express the connection between the sun and my family's history, I have created 108 letter size prints which were made by exposing Type-C photographic paper to sunlight. The pattern on the prints corresponds to my breath. In a darkened room, I exposed the paper in front of a small aperture to expose it to the direct sun light for the duration of my one breath, inhaling and exhaling. I repeated this action until I breathed one hundred and eight times. One hundred and eight is a number with ritual significance in Japanese Buddhism and culture, called Joya no Kane. It's an event where all of the Buddhist temples in the country strike human size or larger bells one hundred and eight times from New Year's Eve to New Year's Day. The number corresponds to the number of evil desires that we suffer from on earth, which is believed to cause war. This rids us of our evil passions, and purifies us for the upcoming year. The ritualistic image making of this repeating act, which corresponds to my breath, has become the act of remembrance. If the black parts of the print remind you of a shadow, it is the shadow of my breath, which is itself a registration of my life, a life I share with and owe to my grandfather. The mark of the atomic blast upon his life and upon his breath was passed on to me, and you can see it in the shadow of this print.



Kei Ito, *Sungazing Print all 108*; chromogenic color print ; 120 x 110 inches



# Marcelina Amelia

[www.marcelinaamelia.com](http://www.marcelinaamelia.com)



Marcelina Amelia, *Communion*; painting on canvas; 200 x 140 cm

Marcelina Amelia is a contemporary artist, working with mixed media approaches to print, painting and drawing. Amelia draws inspiration from her Polish heritage, looking to religious iconography and folk tales, as well as childhood memories, the power of dreams, sexuality, and the human condition. Her work plays at the tense borders between lust and innocence, creating an uneasy aesthetic that is delightfully difficult to pin down.

She has been featured in publications including Booooooom, The Psychologist, Digital Arts, Bomb Vogue and Ballad Of Magazine. Worked with many commercial clients including Debenhams, John Lewis, Topshop, Asos and many more. She has exhibited both nationally and internationally including D&AD, New Designers, London Design Festival, London Illustration Fair, BOOOOOOM x Herschel's exhibition in Vancouver, also took part in Fabergé's Big Egg Hunt across London.

Marcelina Amelia, *Wishing you were here. Greetings from the seaside*; painting on canvas; 100 x 70 cm



Marcelina Amelia



# Alberto Sanchez

[www.albertosanchez.org](http://www.albertosanchez.org)



Alberto Sanchez, *Sueno Despierto*; hand-painted photograph, mounted on diabond, resin coated; 140 x 120 cm

Spanish/Australian Alberto Sánchez is a photographer and multi-media artist based between Byron Bay, Australia and Madrid, Spain. He prints, hacks and re-invents his own photographs using a unique hand-colouring technique, creating a hybrid reality of physical and imagined worlds where photographic documentary is meshed with improbable landscapes, creating his own form of magic realism.

Sánchez rediscovers the world through his viewfinder and re-visions that experience through his textured layering and evocative palette. His body of work explores the notions of urban expansionism, capitalism and how individuals define themselves in an increasingly overloaded sensorial environment.

Represented by Retrospect Galleries in Australia Alberto has exhibited extensively at Art Fairs in Europe, USA, South America, and throughout Asia where a significant portion of his work is photographed. Alberto has been gaining recognition from both institutions and commercial galleries around the world. His work has appeared in many press articles and publications.

I grew up in a small town in Castilla (Spain), an area surrounded by medieval castles, Roman aqueducts and gothic cathedrals, culture and traditions that are still very much anchored in old Roman hierarchical structures. Moving to Australia 10 years ago, I have been able to reflect, with the safety of distance, on how our identity, defined by place and time yields to the ever present spectre of change.

With these new works I wanted to capture the metropolis: the pulse of the city. There is a pre-defined idea of what an urban setting is supposed to look like, a strong visual identity and by default, a set of rules. I like to challenge these rules with my painting and hand-colouring. By modifying and hacking this setting I hope to bring a new perspective to it. Cities have broad potential for landscape narrative. There are so many elements. You can use them in your favour, subtract them, or play with them. It extends the idea of what the landscape can be without necessarily having to tear down buildings. Re-imagining the city, how it could be, exploring how it could be modified, a city in a timeless space. They are sketches of the future, simply a proposition.



Gabriel Moreno, *Iris*; etching and digital on Michel Archer paper 240 grs.; 52 x 100 cm

# Gabriel Moreno

[www.gabrielmorenogallery.com](http://www.gabrielmorenogallery.com)

Gabriel Moreno is an artist based in Madrid, Spain. He has been chosen as one of the hundred most influential illustrators in the world of advertising over the past decade by the publication 100 Illustrators by Taschen and was featured on the cover of Illustration Now! 4. He has also created covers for the Wall Street Journal and is the only illustrator to ever make the cover for the Los Angeles Times. Moreno's work is featured regularly in the Wall Street Journal, Squire London, GQ USA, The Country Weekly, Sunday Times and Rolling Stone.

Although he is best known for his work as an illustrator in advertising, where his experience and reach is remarkable (campaigns of iconic brands such as Nike USA, Rolex, Victoria's Secret, Universal Music or Coca-Cola), in the last few years Moreno has successfully developed and presented his original and creative art works to audiences around the world.

His pieces make striking statements about female beauty through graphic and elegant images. The obvious eroticism of Moreno's work is contained by a modesty and delicacy of temperament which infuses the technical and aesthetic elements of his work. His works are usually comprised of flowing and precise fine black lines, over which he deploys shocks of colour accenting on clothing, faces, or environments. He uses dramatic gradients of colours and multiple layers that emerge from the images and involvement of the figures. In order to fulfil his vision, he works with etching and he uses multiple artistic mediums and tools such as pencil, ink, marker, water-colour, and digital art.

Ninety percent of my work is about women, and the remaining ten percent is also related to women. The sensuality of the woman sitting in front of you, with her head to one side, revealing her neck, her collar...the eyes of the woman you cross on the street... To be able to reflect that on paper is magical. That's what I try to do every time I draw.



# Hagar Vardimon

[www.hagarvardimon.com](http://www.hagarvardimon.com)



Hagar Vardimon, *Isometric Threads*; embroidery on paper; 30 x 42 cm



Hagar Vardimon, *Roots I*; mixed media on wood; 25 x 30 cm

Hagar Vardimon is primarily known for her distinctive threads on paper works. She lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, with her husband and two children. Hagar studied at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem (BFA) and at that time worked predominantly with oil and acrylic on large scale canvas.

More recently Hagar's work has incorporated thread and fibre as a primary theme, after self-teaching herself the art of weaving. Hagar cites this development in her work as being directly influenced by her mother. Her work is an exploration with creating pegs and anchors through memories. These memories are mostly in the shape of photographs. Working with threads symbolises a journey that connects her past and present.

Hagar's work has been seen in Robert Mann Gallery in New York, The Schneider Museum of Art in Oregon, Bedford Gallery in California, Photo Biennale in Ireland and many more in Europe and Worldwide. Her work has been reviewed in local and national publications including the Village Voice, Needle Work: Stitched illustration, Monsa publication, The Textile Art Magazine, Frankie Magazine, Uppercase Magazine, Musee Magazine, A5 Magazine and more. In 2012, an artist book about her art "Coutures" was published by the French publisher Edition Marguerite Waknine. In 2015 she won the Aesthetica long list Art prize.

My primary inspiration for working with thread was my mother. She is an amazing weaver, working on a huge wooden loom. There were always baskets full of hand-dyed yarn, with rich, deep colors and wonderful (and sometimes strange) smells. As a child, I used to make embroidery work with my mother. So, looking back it all started from there.

With thread and collage, in contrast to painting, I feel free to experiment and create my own method and path. In my studio, I have boxes and drawers full with all sorts of experiments with threads, textile and paper. I enjoy the process of discovering new ways of working. I use photos mainly from the 50's and 60's, that I take from old books and magazines. I put lots of thought into trying to understand the relationship between the objects in the photo. Finding the story inside the photo itself, I then work on connecting the objects with threads. It's a story within a story.



***Top pick from the Blog:***

*Naomi Vona*

*Robert Minervini*

*Jay Riggio*

*Kristina Corre*

*Ákos Ezer*

*Stella Kapezanou*

*Tate Leone*

***Featuring:***

*Fei Alexeli*

*Jennifer Nehrbass*

*Mike Ryzek*

*Alex Achaval*

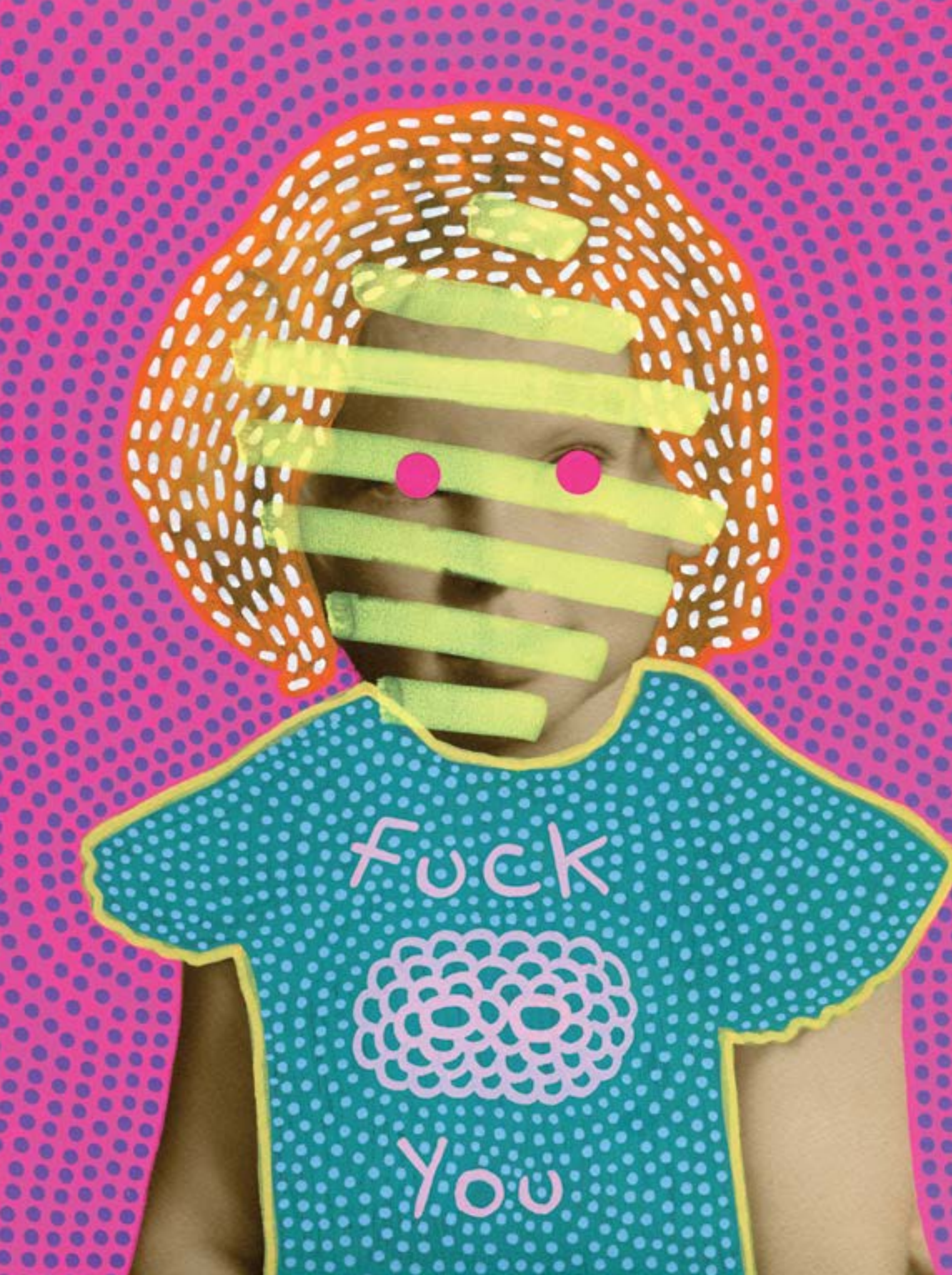
*David Mankin*

*Annie Hermes*

*Peggy Lee*

*Editorial  
selection  
of works*





Naomi Vona, *Nasty Girl 002*; collage; 9.1 x 6.6 inches



Naomi Vona, *Nasty Girl 001*; collage; 9 x 6.7 inches

# Naomi Vona

[www.saatchiart.com/naomivona](http://www.saatchiart.com/naomivona)

Naomi Vona is an Italian artist who lives in London. Her work combines different interests like photography, collages and video art. Her latest project is focused on collages, where she works on vintage found vinyl covers, photos and postcards creating a new interpretation of the original shots. Simply using pens, paper, colored tape and stickers she gives to every image a new life. Every work is basically composed of three elements: her life background, her inspirations and subconscious; that is also the glue that puts all together.

"I am an Italian experimental artist who lives in London. My creative research is mainly focused on handmade mixed media collages, but my interest also involves video art and photography. The forgotten memories as vintage found pictures, postcards, messages and other random materials, are the obsession that drove me to start this art journey. I work on vintage and found images creating freaky handmade collages. I consider myself as a "photo and video archival parasite", but with no bad intentions. I draw portals on old photos, postcards and vinyl covers, because I believe that in some way they can allow me to travel in time and space."



# Robert Minervini

[www.robertminervini.com](http://www.robertminervini.com)

Robert Minervini is an artist working in painting, drawing, mural painting, and site-specific public art. His work examines spatial environments and notions of utopia in large-scale cityscapes, landscapes, and floral still-life arrangements, which addresses the ecological impact of humanity. He received his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, and his BFA from Tyler School of Art. He has an extensive exhibition history nationally and has participated in artist in residence programs at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, and the Headlands Center of the Arts. His work has been reviewed and published in the LA Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, Art Ltd. Magazine, Beautiful Decay Magazine, and New American Paintings. He currently lives and works in Oakland, California.



Robert Minervini, *Improvised Garden II (Water Street)*, acrylic on canvas; 84 x 72 inches



Robert Minervini, *Improvised Garden VI (Pacific Heights)*, acrylic on canvas; 72 x 60 inches





Jay Riggio, *What Became Of The Inspired*; handcut paper, archival ink and glue; 11 x 15 inches

# Jay Riggio

[www.jayriggioart.com](http://www.jayriggioart.com)

Jay Riggio, a self-taught visual artist, was born in Long Island, New York in 1978. Utilizing original source material from discarded magazines and books, Riggio's work brings new life to once forgotten imagery through complex, hand cut and pasted, mixed media collages. His works depict dream-inspired stories through unique, surrealistic visual pairings: a reflection of the artist's interpretations on life, love, humor and the human condition.

In addition to exhibiting work in galleries around the world, Riggio has done commercial illustrations for brands like Gather Journal, The New York Times, Brooklyn Magazine, Alice McCall, A24 Films and more.

Jay currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.



Jay Riggio, *Before The Beginning and Before The End*; handmade mixed media collage on cold press paper; 11 x 15 inches





Kristina Corre, *Willow*; Found images and leaves on watercolour paper; 12.5 x 15 inches

Kristina Corre is an analog collage artist based in Ottawa, Canada. Born in Manila and raised in Toronto, a lifetime of imagining new worlds led Kristina to study architecture at Carleton University's Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism in Ottawa, where she graduated with her Master of Architecture degree in 2012. Beyond the history, theory, and practise of architecture, Kristina's education instilled the importance of narrative in image making, of meticulousness in her craft, and of making as a means to discovery. These paramount lessons are currently driving her explorations into handcut, found-object collage.

For Kristina, collaging is a meditative process. This manifests in her work through quiet details and the use of negative space to give her found elements room to breathe. Rather than telling the whole story, Kristina wants her work to be catalysts for narratives and for the viewer's imagination to wander freely in the contemplative spaces and small worlds that she creates.

Kristina is currently represented by Ottawa's Studio Sixty-Six.

[www.kristinacorre.com](http://www.kristinacorre.com)

# Kristina Corre



Kristina Corre, *Summer Spectacular*; found images on watercolour paper; 8 x 10 inches



# Ákos Ezer



Ákos Ezer, *Thorn*; oil on canvas; 200 x 175 cm

[www.ezerakos.wixsite.com/painting](http://www.ezerakos.wixsite.com/painting)

Hungarian painter Ákos Ezer currently lives and works in Munich and has participated in a number of group and solo shows around Europe in cities like Budapest, Prague, Munich, London and others. Ákos describes the subject matter of his paintings as follows:

“The heroes of my stories, with their activities are searching for their own roots – individual histories which they have inherited from art, and especially from painting. Their movements reflect their own pasts, and crystallize in their present. I think of their environment as a fabric which tries to find its own shape, which with its tangled fibers waits for a final arrangement.

I think of the process of painting as a kind of game, where the main emphasis is on exploring the different aspects of painting, and trying out diverse painterly roles. A picture is never homogeneous, because I never think alike about the various elements which build up my paintings. My pictorial choices are completely subjective: I paint whatever I want to paint. The motifs, which I have used before can reoccur in other contexts, or with slight changes.

The picture starts its life on the canvas. The end result is a product of discussion between me, my painterly tools and the canvas. With the expansion of the motifs I don't exclude things, on the contrary I strive to include more and more. With the incorporation and use of different styles I communicate my pictorial taste, but I don't want to confine myself with setting barriers to stylistic matters. The paintings are made through a continuous dialogue between the previous marks I have made, and my own reactions to these marks.

My artworks are seemingly different, because my goal was not to reflect on a single topic, or phenomenon. These pictures are different ideas and each shows their possible painting solutions.



Ákos Ezer, *Relaxation*; oil on canvas; 170 x 205 cm





Stella Kapezanou, *Brit Pond*; oil and acrylic on fine art paper 410gr; 152 X 122 cm

# Stella Kapezanou



Stella Kapezanou, *From heavens with love*; oil and acrylic on canvas; 200 x 300 cm

[www.stellakapezanou.com](http://www.stellakapezanou.com)

Stella Kapezanou was born in Athens, and studied Painting at the Athens School of Fine Arts (ASFA) where was awarded an honorary scholarship and an award by the Greek National Scholarships Foundation (IKY) on taking first place in the ASFA entrance examinations in 2011. She is currently a postgraduate student, under Motorail Hellas scholarship, with Chelsea College of Arts, London, where she was also awarded The Frank Bowling, OBE., RA award.

I'm interested in images from everyday life. I'm curious about what we consider to be "everyday" habits of groups of people living in capitalistic and material western societies. I like to develop a critical approach to the beliefs of these societies. I'm intrigued by subjects that are not considered "high art" but are common to the viewer's eye and I strive to allow the viewer to observe more deeply what is happening right next to them.

I want to capture the emotional state of people who seem disconnected from their surroundings, who look to be defined by their personality and not their soul. I also wish to capture the temporariness, decay and mortality of humans.

My paintings seem somehow unreal because they are, they depict scenes that never quite occurred, the sky is the ideal sky, the green grass the perfect stand-in for all lawns. The color reproduction happens in accordance with my wish, not reality. The world gets captured not as it appears but as I want to perceive it.



# Tate Leone



Tate Leone, *All heads turning after the ball; mine, the only, after the girl's legs*; mixed media on canvas; 48 x 48 x 2 inches

[www.tateleone.com](http://www.tateleone.com)

Tate Leone is currently painting out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with a BFA in Studio Art in May of 2016. She studied abroad at Chelsea College of Art, University of the Arts in London, UK during Spring of 2015. Tate has worked with the Mattress Factory Museum and the Carnegie Museum of Art both in Pittsburgh, and the Strohl Gallery, Fowler-Kellogg Gallery, and Melvin Johnson Sculpture Garden at the Visual Arts at Chautauqua Institution in New York.

"I am a painter of biographical interior spaces in which the decorations, objects, and furniture depicted are referential to and representational of my memories, emotions, desires, and dreams. Internal mind spaces become interior rooms. My paintings are symbolic of spaces in my mind, constructed by my experiences, which only exist in my blood.

These spaces are pieced together from rooms and events throughout history: Cy Twombly's studio, Budapest, Matisse's Red Room, Bonnard's bath tubs, Ophelia by John Millais, Wes Anderson films, Versailles, prints from Utamaro, memories of places of travel, Phipps Conservatory, walks home, London, Morikami museum, North Park, Chautauqua Lake, cities I've flown over, oceans, new friends' homes, interactions with and characteristics of loved ones, Puppy's Marlboros, water glasses Mom leaves around the house, Snookie's chaise longue, Riggs's gecko, Dad doing yardwork, Aunt Wylle's jewelry collection, dreamcatchers Barrett creates, lusts for textile prints and runway styles, Gucci campaign ads, Peruvian textiles, wedding dresses, Victorian prints, Vogue spreads, Miu Miu sunglasses, flora and fauna, lupines from Miss Rumphius, cheetahs, clementines, luscious peony petals, flamingos, dragon fruits, lily pads, ikebana.

I aim to create oddly luxurious and unapologetically feminine mind spaces into real spaces, where my audience can exist and dream in."



Tate Leone, *It's all over now, Baby Blue (Are red hot chili peppers hot?)*; mixed media on canvas; 60 x 40 x 2 inches



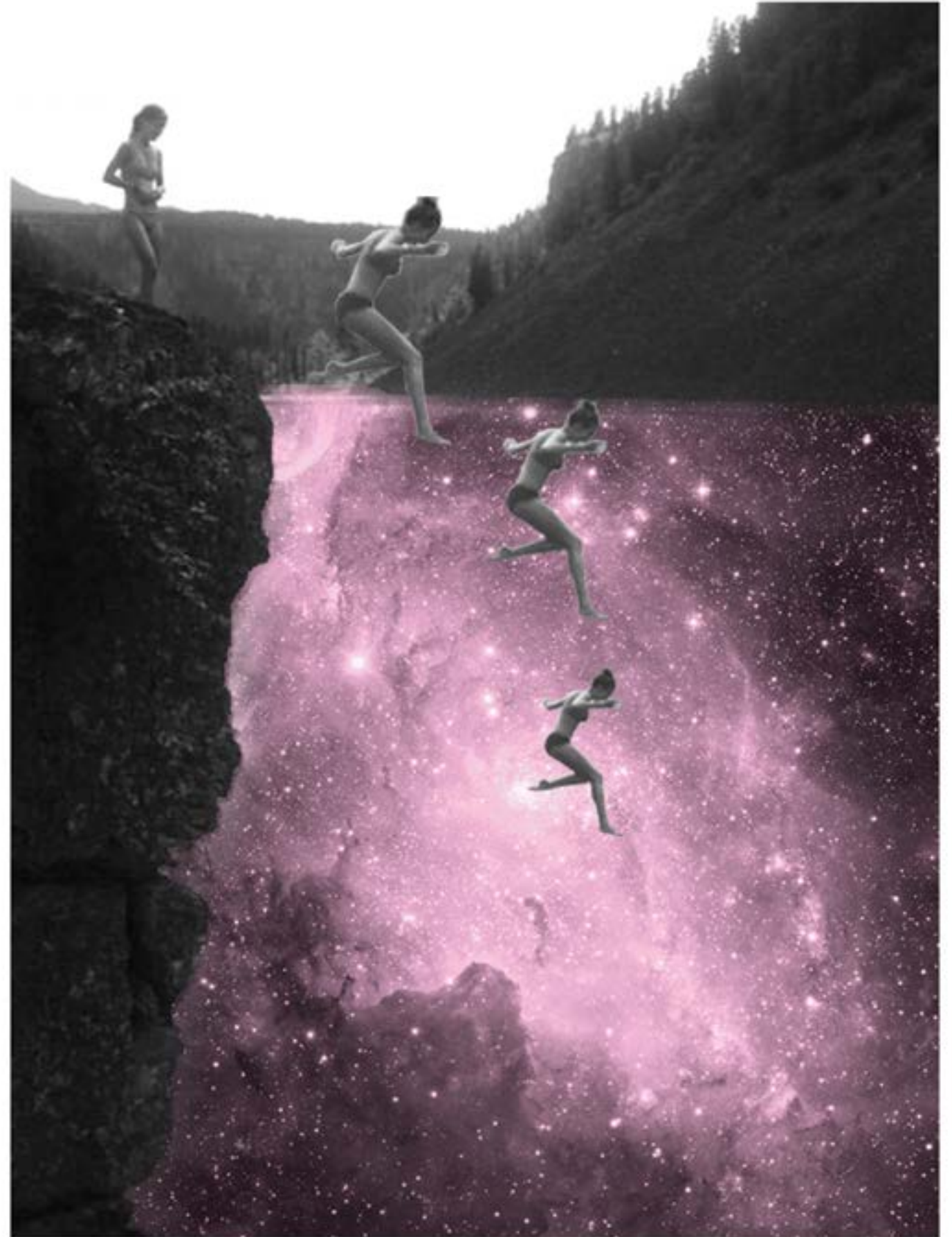
# Fei Alexeli



Fei Alexeli, *No Bad Days*; digital collage giclee print; 70 x 70 cm

Fei Alexeli is a digital visual artist. Fei was born and raised in Serres, Greece in 1987. While studying architecture in Oxford, she found her passion for visual arts. Her practice involves a combination of different and mixed media. Fei uses photography, photo-montage and digital collage to create surreal environments and situations. Fei loves traveling and started taking photos during her journeys. She loves experiencing a place through her camera lens. Fei is fascinated by places she visits for the first time. The collages can be seen as a surreal interpretation of places she's never been to. Fei currently splits her time between London, Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Fei gained her Bachelor of Arts, while studying Architecture in Oxford Brookes University and later on she finished her postgraduate architectural studies in London, at the University of East London. She currently studies in Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam.

[www.feialexeli.com](http://www.feialexeli.com)



Fei Alexeli, *Girls On 452B*; digital collage giclee print; 15 x 20 cm





Jennifer Nehrass, *Celestion Wip*, oil on canvas; 84 x 66 inches

# Jennifer Nehrass

Jennifer Nehrass, *Cleopatra*, oil on canvas; 38 x 38 inches



[www.jennifernehrass.com](http://www.jennifernehrass.com)

Jennifer Nehrass is a painter living and working in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She was born in West Bend, Wisconsin in 1970. She received her BS in Art and Textile Design from the University of Wisconsin, a MA in Painting from New York University, and a MFA in painting from the University of New Mexico. She spent 10 years working as a Design Director at Ralph Lauren before pursuing her art career. Her work is represented by Brunnhofer Gallery in Linz, Austria, Circuit 12 in Dallas, and Tina Goodwin in Denver. Her work is in in many private collections in the United States as well as Europe. Recently her work was included into the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art : Feminist Art Base at the Brooklyn Museum.

In our cultural desire for flash and attention, advertising can be a potent and seductive means of identity formation – a fantasy aggressively expanding its value as a commodity beyond the means for any real satisfaction. This series of paintings focuses on style as a sublime element of tension within beauty. Thematically they evoke modern dilemmas of what it means to see and be seen in a manner that is simultaneously ancient and contemporary. Ambiguity, realism and fantasy play atmospherically in a narrative moment akin to magic realism. These paintings speak to forbidden thoughts and desires and also suggest that what is hidden and forbidden inside the painting is ultimately denied to the viewer. What the paintings yield is an intimacy of time and place that meanders through rich details and nuanced perplexity – bafflement being as necessary to the experience of viewing as is delicate reasoning.



# Mike Ryczek



Mike Ryczek, *Brooklyn Misremembered\_5*; oil on masonite; 12 x 16 inches

I see each of my paintings as a dense collection of layered missteps guided by a single underlying intention. I generally aim for an ideal balance of aesthetically pleasurable and visibly roughened, anchored by recurring themes of nostalgia, my own existential anxieties and the corruption of human memory. In most of my work, I'm attempting a semi-realistic interpretation of an imagined environment, employing realism and abstraction in a way that gives the impression of a scene on the verge of collapse. The photographic source material I use serves as both a jumping off point and something to fight against. While working, I'm constantly making sure to glean from the source only that which resonates with me and dispose of the rest so as to avoid slavish depiction. The result is a faint echo or a total reconstruction of what is observed. I see this process as a form of self-examination – the end product's value lying in the thoughts, emotions and memories I've projected onto the objective source. My sources include both photographs I've taken and found imagery, used individually or combined into collages using Photoshop that I then reinterpret through paint. I've also built small-scale models for some interiors – something I've had a lifelong fascination with and that lend a scene more realism than a digital collage may allow for. I currently paint mostly with oil and occasionally oil pencil – applying the paint with all kinds of brushes and a variety of squeegees for blending and mark making. I also use masking tape to pull up paint and cut Scotch tape for edge definition and masking. Mike was born in Connecticut and grew up in a very unremarkable, middle-class New England neighborhood in Wallingford, CT – a very unremarkable, middle-class New England town. He graduated from Montserrat College of Art in Beverly, MA in 2006, where he gravitated toward no one teacher in particular, participated only in mandatory exhibitions and barely scraped by due to mounting absences. Mike lives and works as a painter and designer in Wellesley, MA with his girlfriend Liz and their rotund and lovable cat Izzy. He is currently represented by 13Forest Gallery in Arlington, MA.

[www.mryczek.com](http://www.mryczek.com)

Mike Ryczek, *Bicoastal\_4*; oil on masonite; 12 x 12 inches





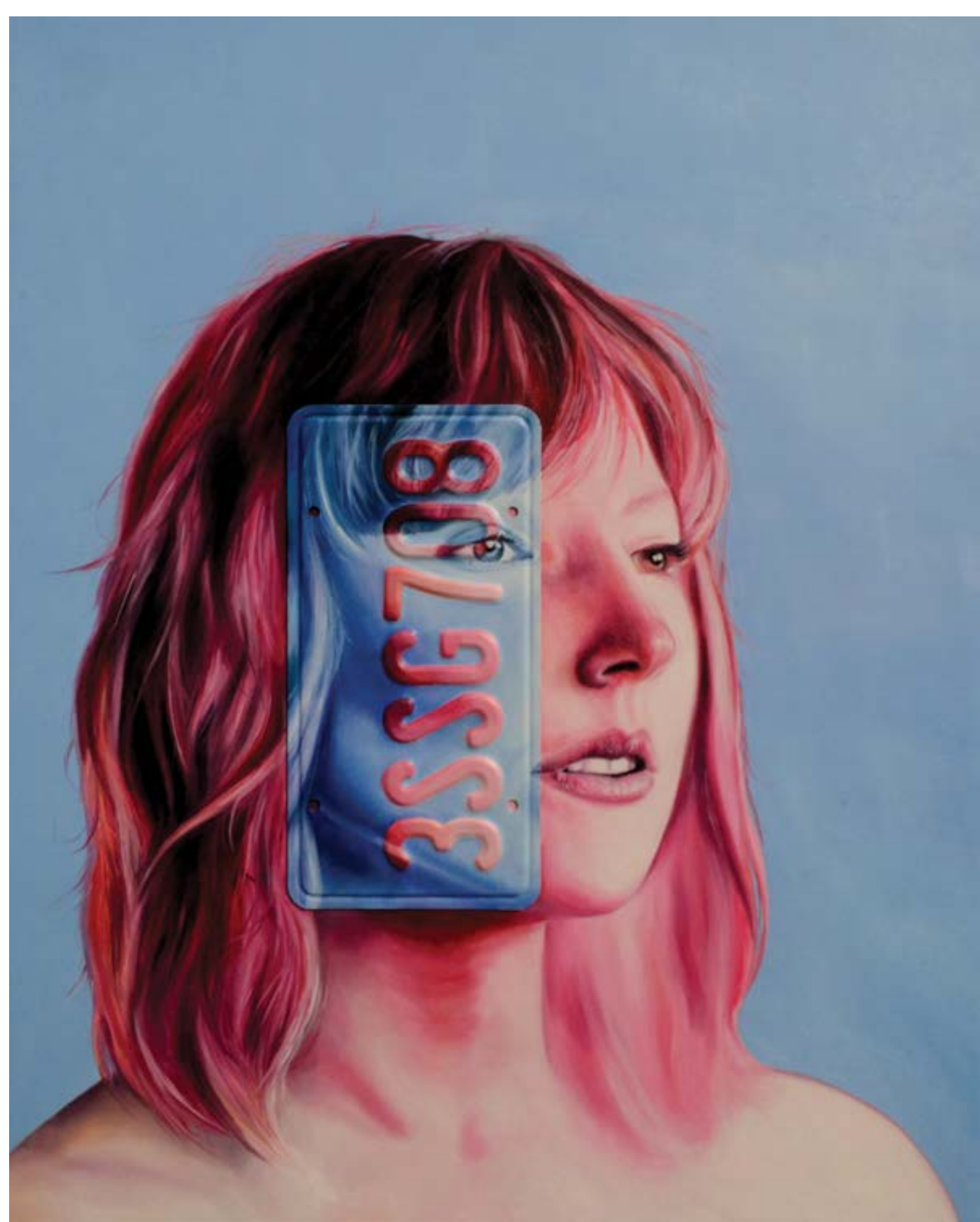
# Alex Achaval



Alex Achaval, *Twenty thirty hate to leave you*; oil on wood panel and license plate; 24 x 30 inches

[www.alexachaval.com](http://www.alexachaval.com)

Alex Achaval is a self-taught contemporary portrait painter/mixed media artist. He has participated in more than 30 group or solo exhibitions in Australia, Miami, California and the Seattle and Washington areas. He is currently represented by 19 Karen Gallery in Mermaid Beach, Gold Coast, Australia. His recent and most recognizable work is a mix of oil and acrylic portraiture combined with unordinary objects incorporated onto the piece itself. For example his signature series of “paintbrush people” consists of classic bristle brushes placed in the middle of the figures’ faces and painted over. He is currently living and working in Seattle, WA where you can find him painting in his gallery/open studio “Artificial Gallery” at Pike Place Market. My work can be described in many different categories but I would simply define it as contemporary portraiture. I look and find inspiration in everyday life and I’m always searching for new things to incorporate into my work and constantly thinking about how I can relate everything to painting! I’m interested in creating work that changes the way people classify a painting and breaking boundaries. I came up with the idea of adding objects into my work when I saw this truck that had been painted over to blend in with the wall behind it in front of an old business. These objects are represented as the obstacles in life that you have to overcome. You have to embrace the challenges you face and paint over them.



Alex Achaval, *The merge*; oil on wood panel and license plate; 24 x 30 inches



# David Mankin



David Mankin, *Longer days*; acrylic and mixed media on wood panel; 61 x 46 cm



David Mankin, *Meander*; acrylic and mixed media on wood panel; 60 x 75cm

Through my painting I aim to express something of the sensory experience of being in the landscape. Living and working in the far west of Cornwall is uniquely inspirational. Daily walks on the coast path near my studio provide a visual stimulation that can't help but find its way onto the canvas. Textures, colours, shapes, sounds, movements and spaces collide to create a wealth of visual and spatial relationships in constant flux. This is my source. The work is both an emotional response to the natural environment and an attempt to communicate a sense of the freedom, the vastness, the rhythm and the ebb and flow of nature, which is characteristic to this part of Cornwall. I work in an intuitive and gestural way, burying and unearthing marks and textures through an energetic process of destruction and excavation, which mirrors the acts of nature on the landscape. Through the process I explore surface, shape, colour, texture, composition and mark making in order to articulate and form images which express my experiences in the Cornish landscape.

[www.david-mankin.com](http://www.david-mankin.com)



# Annie Hermes



Annie Hermes, *I'm A Fan Too*; acrylic; 36 x 36 inches



Annie Hermes, *Information*; acrylic; 36 x 48 inches

[www.anniehermes.com](http://www.anniehermes.com)

Though my work is visually diverse, it is consistent in what drives it. This is — at its core — relationships. I am often propelled by human rights violations, both past and present. The paintings you see here are taken from my series “INFORMATION”. This particular series is focused on mid-century America. These paintings explore my whimsical nostalgia for all things mid-century, and how this conflicts with the social reality of mid-century America. When these wistful feelings mingle with the reality of the condoned, ignored, or sanctioned violence perpetrated during this time, it creates a whole new feeling; one I can never articulate. But if this feeling was a sound it would be the sound of a vinyl record skipping. That’s the only way I can describe it. So...I paint. I find a sense of suppressed darkness in the dripping, foggy, splattered backgrounds, and a vibrant light in the subject matter and colors I use. Ultimately, this series is simply me asking myself one question: “Why do I love mid-century objects so much and have such a deep nostalgia for them, when the history of that time is filled with such egregious crimes in America?” Annie Hermes is a full-time artist living and working near Chicago, IL.





Peggy Lee, *Message From the East (detail)*; acrylic on canvas; 48 x 48 inches



Peggy Lee, *Message From the East II*; acrylic on canvas; 48 x 48 inches

# Peggy Lee

[www.peggyhlart.com](http://www.peggyhlart.com)

Peggy Lee was born in Seoul, Korea and has lived in the United States for a long period of time. Having achieved a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Korea, she also studied art in the United States. Since the beginning of her stay in America, she has been educating art students for over 15 years, while managing her own art career. She has a strong work ethic and keeps busy as a full-time artist. Her level of creativity is outstanding, and her stamina to continuously produce works is endless. Peggy's work has influenced both Korean and American culture. While teaching her students throughout the years, she observed a pattern in their lifestyle which came about through social media. Due to the overload of technological information, she slowly began to see that these students were dissipating into their own world of isolation. Peggy's works can be seen as a huge cobweb in its entirety, which ironically mirrors how technology works. It represents our obsession with networking, and the need to return back to tradition, unity, and a love for humanity. Her work continues to be inspired by mutuality in people and building relationships.



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ArtMaze Magazine is pleased to announce an open call for the Late Summer 2017 International Issue!

ArtMaze Mag offers an opportunity to be published in print and digital issues bimonthly, as well as online on our website and social media.

DEADLINE: JUNE 25, 2017

GUEST JUROR: Cheyanne Sauter, the Executive Director of Art Share LA

ELIGIBILITY: The competition is open to all artists, both national and international, working in all mediums. Artists are welcome to submit works in any medium: painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, photography, textile, installation, mixed media, digital, film etc.

DISTRIBUTION: ArtMaze Magazine is an independent international publication which is distributed both nationally and internationally via book shops, galleries and museums, art events and via the online store: <http://artmazemag.com/shop/>

HOW TO APPLY: please visit our website for more details and fill in the online form via the following link: [www.artmazemag.com/call-for-art](http://www.artmazemag.com/call-for-art)

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES: Artists are welcome to submit their works to our online Blog and Studio Visit online interviews section. These opportunities also provide a chance to be published in print issues bimonthly. Please visit our website for more information: [www.artmazemag.com](http://www.artmazemag.com) or contact us at [info@artmazemag.com](mailto:info@artmazemag.com).

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# *Late Summer Issue* *call for art!*

**DEADLINE: 25 JUNE, 2017**

Guest curator:

**GUEST CURATOR: CHEYANNE SAUTER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ART SHARE LA**

Image courtesy of Brenda Zappitell



