

Issue 20 • Summer 2026

# ART SEEN

The Curator's Salon



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**The Curator's Salon**



Amy McLaren's studio (p. 58)  
Rochester, NY, USA  
amymclaren.art



# On being seen

**Issue 20 brings together a global roster of artists exploring emotion, identity, and transformation across painting, sculpture, fibre, and mixed media**



Gita Joshi

I'm delighted to bring you issue 20 of Art Seen Magazine for Summer 2026. As always, we proudly showcase artists who infuse passion into their diverse practices and share perspectives from across the globe.

Fibre artist Lindsey McTavish discusses her figurative work, exploring emotion through material and form.

LA-based sculptor Kevin Perrault shares insights into his work, which plays with scale and perspective while using materials such as copper, stone, and wood.

Figurative painter Amy McLaren shares the whimsy of using sock puppets as the main characters in her paintings, which allow her to respond to the human experience in a soft, accessible way.

Sheela Becton discusses themes of healing, renewal, and transformation, which are explored through her mixed-media art. Using textiles such as sarees and other materials, she discusses feminine strength as embodied through her personal experience.

In Creative Currents, artists share what they value about their studios and creative freedom. Confidence, courage, and resilience emerge when featured artists offer advice to their younger selves.

As always, I am grateful for the artists in this edition who have openly shared their art, the growing global community around Art Seen Magazine, our expanding readership and your support. 



## ART SEEN



The Curator's Salon

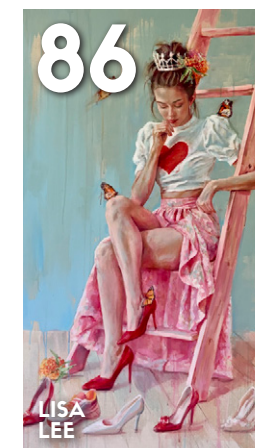
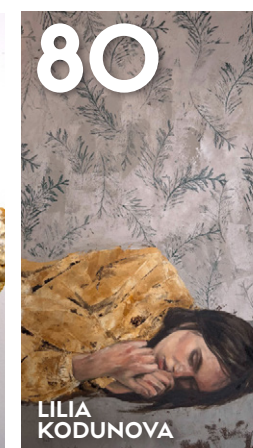
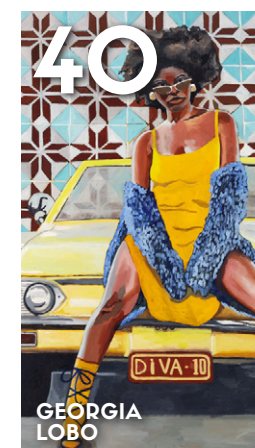
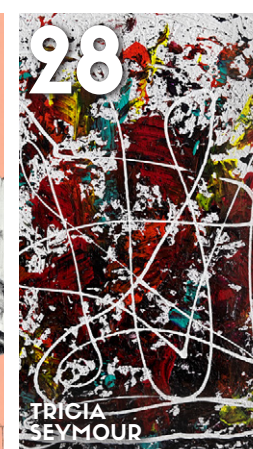
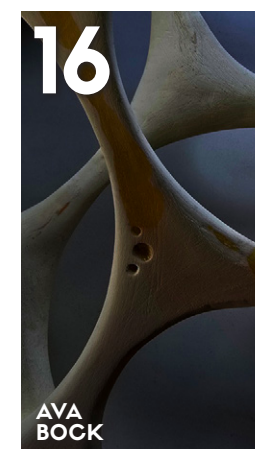
Editor Gita Joshi  
Designer @monalarchstudio

Cover: Adamo Macri, *Mariana Trench*, photography, 84 x 76 cm  
Back Cover: Yixuan Wu, *Soft Congee, Still Waters*, blown glass, cast iron radiator, rice, millet, round tubes, lemon cream cracker, glazed tile and cactus, 71 x 127 x 84 cm





THIS ISSUE'S Q&As WITH FEATURED ARTISTS





GEORGIA LOBO

ROY DAVID

SHEELA BECTON

KEVIN PERRAULT

AVA BOCK

JOHANNA ROSSI

LINDSEY MCTAVISH

ANA MELO

LISA LEE

HANSA SETHI

VANESSA WENWIESER

MICHELLE REESE

SID DANIELS

BOGDAN MURARIU

EKNOOR MATHAROO

ROBERT PAGE

LILIA KODUNOVA

VOLHA NARUTA-JOHNSON

YIXUAN WU

BRYN WILLIAMS

AMY MCLAREN

ROKITA

ORI AVIRAM

DAWN HOWELL

MARION PONS KOCH

MARK CATTANEO

NOÉMIE MARMARA

ASTRID BUCHHAMMER

ANNA JAMES

PEDRO LEOBONS

TRICIA SEYMOUR-BARRIER

ADAMO MACRI

KAROLINA KORANDOVÁ





# Bolder With Every Brushstroke: Johanna Rossi on Painting as a Devotional Act

Johanna Rossi discusses how a long personal journey of healing and self-reclamation shaped her intuitive abstract practice, and how learning to trust herself made her work bolder, bigger, and more honest than ever before.

**Gita Joshi (GJ):** Your work balances intuition and control. How do you navigate that tension while creating?

**Johanna Rossi (JR):** My practice starts with allowing myself to feel what I'm feeling in that moment. I pause to check in with my inner world, and to be honest about what I might be suppressing, denying or not allowing. At art school, I fell in love with the practice of 'blind drawing' and the freedom it gave me to express myself without judgment; I particularly remember using it in life drawing classes. So I brought this technique forward into my current practice. As I delve into my emotions, I close my eyes and allow my pencil to translate what I'm holding onto the paper. Fully leaning into my intuition and what's unsaid. I will then take time to study these drawings, abstract various forms and shapes that speak to me, and feel represent ►



## Johanna Rossi

Johanna Rossi is a contemporary intuitive abstract artist who creates large-scale acrylic paintings that explore structure, emotional clarity, and inner truth. Working with freehand blind drawings, collage, masking tape, and layered colour, her compositions are assertive, precise, and emotionally resonant. Her work is rooted in a personal journey of healing and the rebuilding of self-trust, translated into a disciplined visual language that balances intuition with control.

[johannarossiart.com](http://johannarossiart.com)

Left: Johanna Rossi, in her studio





Johanna Rossi, *Bare Essentials*, acrylic on canvas, 104 x 88 cm

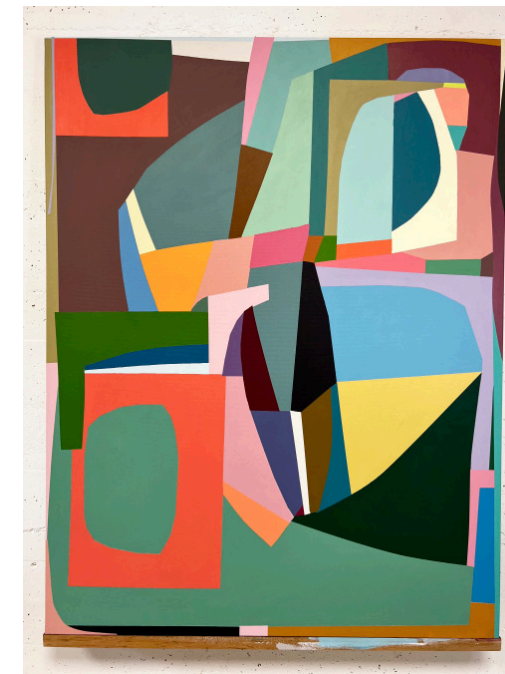


what I want to say through the piece I'm creating. I will then either trace these shapes or cut them out to incorporate them into my composition. So, I don't really experience a tension between intuition and control; I see it more as a way to communicate and make the intangible tangible. More an act of alchemy than one of taming.

**"As I delve into my emotions, I close my eyes and allow my pencil to translate what I'm holding onto the paper."**

Top left: Johanna Rossi, *Maybe It's All Coming Together*, acrylic on canvas, 162 x 130 cm

Top right: Johanna Rossi, *You Might Surprise Yourself*, acrylic on canvas, 116 x 89 cm



**GJ: You describe your studio practice as 'devotional'. What does that look like in your day-to-day process?**

**JR:** I am a certified spiritual guide who has been on a very long journey to reach this point in my life. I've come to understand that pausing to check in with ourselves and connect with the truth of who we are is a devotional act. Anything done with presence is an expression of our commitment to self and the divine. In my day-to-day practice, this involves pausing for that check-in, honestly assessing how I feel, and being fully intentional about my practice and the energy I put into what I create. I don't simply paint for the sake of expression. At this point in my career as an artist, I create pieces that hold a certain energy and weave a story destined for whoever needs it to help navigate their own journey. ►



**GJ: How has your personal journey of healing shaped the visual language of your paintings?**

**JR:** It has significantly shaped my visual language. Notably, my paintings are composed of pieces, and, more recently, of how those pieces fit together or are layered onto the painting. As a survivor of many forms of abuse, living with long periods of confusion, unanswered questions, and having to navigate the world by trusting what I know to be true without external validation, I had to learn how to piece my life together. Make it make sense. As I healed, my paintings became bolder; the more I stood in what I knew to be true, the bolder I became in my paintings.

**GJ: Scale plays a key role in your work. What does working large allow you to express that smaller pieces cannot?**

**JR:** I have been considering this question a lot myself recently. I have understood that it's not just about having a lot to say or about releasing a lot that's been suppressed. In creating the larger pieces, I have been learning and giving myself permission to take up space. Instead of staying confused and trying to piece together what I know to be true, I'm trusting and validating myself more.

**GJ: What do you hope viewers recognise or feel about themselves when they spend time with your work?**

**JR:** Many things. Above all, though, I hope they feel a sense of belonging, validation, and that they are seen and heard. I often think people might be put off by the colourfulness of my pieces and how they might fit into a home with calmer tones. However, the palettes of my paintings are also highly intuitive and meant to communicate on a soul level, going beyond an interior's aesthetic. My pieces hold an energy of truth, alignment, and a calling to return to who you have always meant to be. I want them to remember the truth of who they are in my paintings, and each one is a prompt to take the truest step in their journey back to themselves. When I started my art career, I did not understand what my work was communicating, and I doubted what I created, finding it hard to know its worth. Now I am at a place where I have done the work to understand, and I feel much more rooted in what I create, confident in what it represents and its value. <sup>Ⓐ</sup>

Right: Johanna Rossi, *Be Prepared to Leap*, acrylic on canvas, 93 x 65 cm





kunstfabrikstudio.com

# Vanessa Wenwieser

Vanessa Wenwieser is an artist born in Munich, Germany, who graduated with a degree in Fine Art Photography from the Glasgow School of Art.

About her art, she says, *“My artwork is a bold exploration of the female perspective, offering a transformative departure from the conventional male gaze. I create spaces where the women are free from objectification, capturing multi-dimensional beings imbued with wisdom, power, and profundity. I blend photographs with digital manipulation, and occasionally drawing, to weave intricate narratives that explore the tension between appearance and essence.”*

*“Crafting raw portraits that express both vulnerability and strength, I invite the viewer to look beyond the surface and contemplate what lies beneath.”*

Whether through themes of love, metamorphosis, growth, healing, or the afterlife, her artwork conveys a deep sense of transformation, guiding the viewer into profound emotional landscapes within the soul.

This transformation is often presented seasonally, with flowers, leaves, or snow, to describe the passing of time within it as well as the strength we gather from nature.

*“At the heart of my practice is a desire to create a shared experience, offering viewers not just a glimpse into the female experience but an invitation to embark on a journey of their own self-reflection. My artwork speaks to vulnerability and fragility, and to the nonlinear way we crumble and then gradually pick ourselves up again. From this loss or emptiness comes an inner strength that helps you sow back even your own wings, to soar through the air again.”*

Vanessa has appeared in numerous publications and exhibitions, and was awarded the Women United ART PRIZE in 2023 in the Digital category, and was a finalist in the Photography category in 2025. 📍

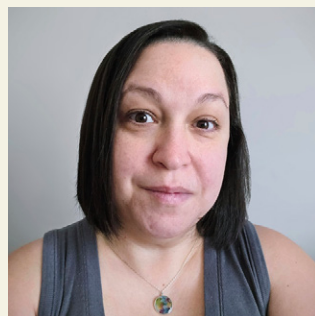


Right: Vanessa Wenwieser, *The Balancing Act*, digital art printed on archival Fine Art Gicleé paper, 67 x 70 cm



# Ava Bock

Visual artist, Eugene, OR, USA



## How does your background in sculpture influence the way you approach photography and two-dimensional work?

My background in sculpture reshaped my approach to photography. I started with photography, but moved into sculpture because both share a focus on shadow. Photography is tied to shadow, just as sculpture is. Shadow is never removed, only redirected. Following this connection, my work became about reduction, with form defined by light, edges, and spatial tension. Sculpture established a way of reading form as structure rather than

image. When I photograph a sculptural work, I am not recording an object. I am isolating a condition within it. Light is used to compress or extend space, allowing the form to reorganise within the frame while retaining its internal logic.

## What draws you to explore division, convergence, and fracture in your work?

Division, convergence, and fracture emerge from the material's behaviour. These conditions become visible when a form is altered or reworked. This photographic series developed from a sculpture that underwent physical change during repair.

Ava Bock is an American abstract artist based in Oregon. She earned an Associate of Fine Arts in Visual Arts from Cape Fear Community College and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture from the University of North Carolina at Asheville in 2022. Her work has been featured in international publications and exhibited in both independent and institutional contexts. Bock's practice spans sculpture and photography, with a focus on developing cohesive bodies of work for contemporary art and design spaces.

[avabock.art](http://avabock.art)

Right: Ava Bock, *After the Divide - Dark I*, photography, 51 x 30.5 cm



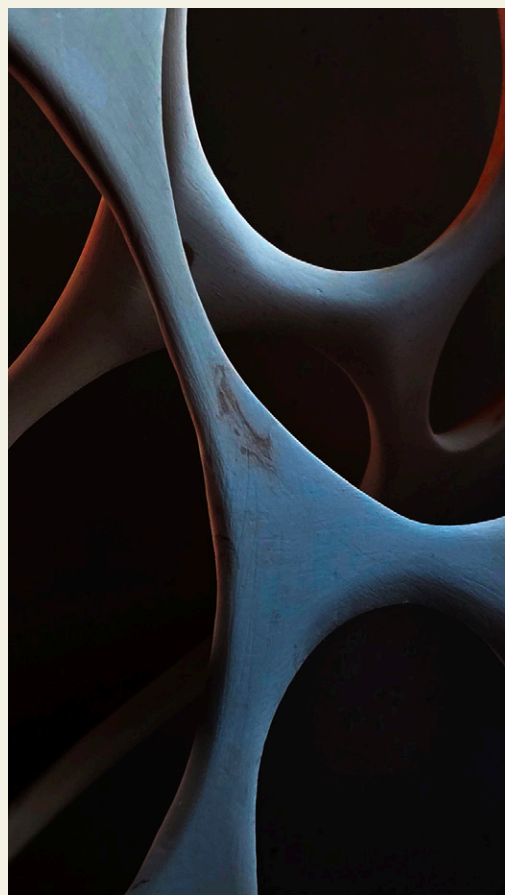
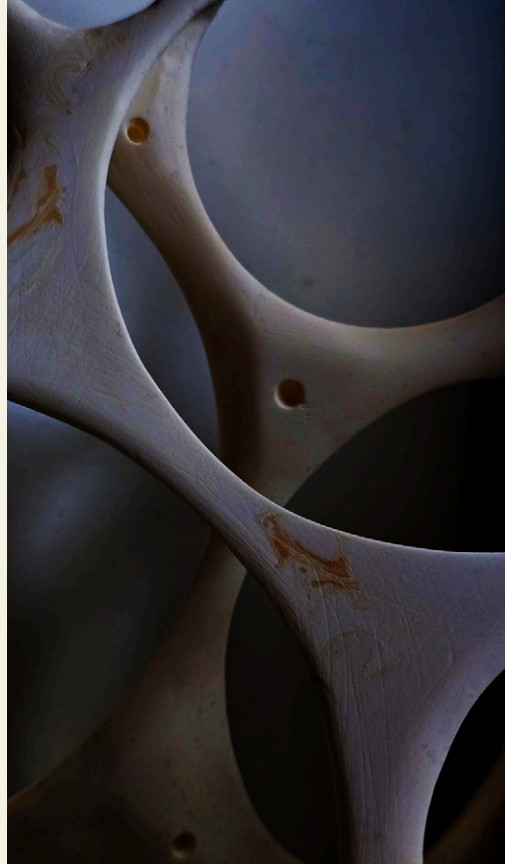


Returning to the work required a different kind of engagement. Points of separation, compression, and realignment became the focus. These moments carry both disruption and continuity. A fracture does not only indicate loss. It establishes new edges and relationships that redefine the form's structure. By isolating these conditions, the work examines how stability is reconfigured rather than restored.

**What interests you about the threshold between material objects and photographic images?**

The relationship between object and image is approached as a continuous exchange. Sculpture informs how form occupies space, while photography allows that structure to be reduced and recalibrated through light. What appears flat is still governed by depth, proximity, and pressure. The question I return to is where that shift occurs. If visual perception is constructed through light and shadow, then the boundary between object and image remains in flux.

Top: Ava Bock, *After the Divide - Dark II*, photography, 51 x 30.5 cm  
Bottom: Ava Bock, *After the Divide - Dark IV*, photography, 51 x 30.5 cm



**“If visual perception is constructed through light and shadow, then the boundary between object and image remains in flux.”**

**How do you explore balance and presence in your compositions after moments of rupture?**

After rupture, the process begins with a pause. Distance allows the work to be understood as it exists rather than as it was intended. From there, balance is established through reduction. Elements that no longer hold weight are removed or allowed to recede, while what remains defines the composition. Presence is built through restraint. Light and dark adjust to control compression and release. This allows the work to stabilise without becoming static. The final composition contains disruption and continuity within a single structure. 🕒

Top: Ava Bock, *After the Divide - Light II*, photography, 51 x 30.5 cm  
Bottom: Ava Bock, *After the Divide - Light IV*, photography, 51 x 30.5 cm







dawnhowellart.com

# Dawn Howell

Dawn Howell is a Texas-based painter who creates luminous, dreamlike worlds steeped in colour, memory, and feeling. Drawing inspiration from nature, vintage ephemera, and the emotional landscapes we carry within us, she layers soft textures, celestial motifs, and radiant palettes to create paintings that are felt as much as seen.

Dawn developed an early sensitivity to beauty, storytelling, and atmosphere. That sense of reverence for memory—how it lingers, how it glows—remains embedded in her work today.

After a spinal injury left her unable to paint or even hold her youngest son for nearly a year, Dawn entered a period of profound stillness and reckoning. When she returned to the canvas, it was not simply a creative act but a spiritual one. Painting became prayer, meditation, and reclamation. Through intuitive mark-making and intentional colour, she rebuilt her practice as a sanctuary—guided not by trends or expectations, but by what moves through her in the studio.

She says, “My paintings carry an undercurrent of devotion: to healing, to presence, to light. Each piece is infused with the belief that colour can regulate emotion, that softness can be strength, and that beauty is not frivolous—it is necessary. In a world that often feels heavy, I create portals of gentleness and wonder, inviting the viewer to pause, breathe, and remember their own inner radiance.”

“Each painting is a meditation. I rarely begin with a fixed plan—just a feeling or colour that wants to emerge. I work in slow, intuitive layers: first, an underpainting to set the emotional tone; then, pastel skies that glow with light; and finally, fine details that feel like tiny prayers—a shimmer here, a wing there. I often reference scientific field guides to honour the real-life creatures that inspire me, blending accuracy with imagination.” 🦋

Left: Dawn Howell, *Rainbow Moon and Butterfly Eggs*, acrylic and selenite on canvas, 61 x 61 cm



# Roy David

Visual artist & Architect,  
Berlin, Germany

## How does your background in architecture influence your paintings?

Architecture trained me to think in terms of gravity, order, and esthetics, or as the great Vitruvius said: firmitas, utilitas, venustas. Every line must justify its existence through these harsh parameters. In painting, I borrow that discipline but allow it to break. My structures feel engineered, yet they resist this strict triangular philosophy; they hover between logic and impossibility. I am less interested in buildings as objects, and more in architecture as a language

of tension, between weight and lightness, control and surrender.

## What inspired you to create imagined structures that can't exist in reality?

Reality is already over-defined. I am drawn to the space just beyond it - the moment where a structure almost makes sense, but then slips away. These imagined forms are not fantasies; they are propositions. They ask: what happens when we remove the ground, when function dissolves, when certainty is no longer required? In that instability, something more human begins to surface.



Roy David is an architect and artist based between Berlin and Tel Aviv, and is the founder of the architectural practice Roy David & Architects (RD&A). Known for his "UNBOUND" paintings of floating megastructures, his work explores the tension between architecture and abstraction. Working with acrylic and rapidographs on paper, he merges architectural precision with poetic ambiguity, creating imagined spaces beyond physical constraints. His practice reflects on suspension, perception, and the human condition, positioning architecture not as a solution, but as an ongoing enquiry.

[roydavid.art](http://roydavid.art)

Right: Roy David,  
*251123 Unbound*,  
acrylic, ink, coldpress  
on 300 g/m<sup>2</sup> paper,  
76 x 56 cm







### Why is the idea of “suspension” important in your work?

Suspension, to me, is both a physical condition - structures elevated above ground, and a psychological state, representing the feeling of not being anchored, of hovering between certainty and doubt. In my work, things float not as a visual trick, but as an expression of being in-between states: impossible, unresolved, searching. The suspension creates a pause, like a held breath, in which our senses become sharper. Here, doubt is not a dead end, but becomes a productive force.

### What do you want viewers to feel when they look at your paintings?

I hope for a moment of stillness, a slight disorientation, then recognition, not of a place but of a state. The small figures, often turned away, echo the viewer’s own position: observing, questioning, suspended. If the work succeeds, it lingers rather than explains. Ⓐ

Top: Roy David, 250427 *Unbound*, acrylic, ink, coldpress on 300 g/m<sup>2</sup> paper, 36 x 26 cm

Bottom: Roy David, 260120 *Unbound*, acrylic, ink, coldpress on 300 g/m<sup>2</sup> paper, 76 x 56 cm

Right: Roy David, 251010 *Unbound*, acrylic, ink, coldpress on 300 g/m<sup>2</sup> paper, 76 x 56 cm





pedroleobons.com

# Pedro Leobons

Pedro Leobons is a Rio-born visual artist based in São Paulo, Brazil. His practice explores the plurality of queer bodies through hybrid works that combine illustration, painting, 3D modelling, video, and immersive experiences.

His art explores the plurality of LGBTQIAPN+ bodies through hybrid characters that challenge binary gender norms, reflecting the continuous metamorphosis of the queer body in a society that still resists it. He conceives this body as a creative armour in constant transformation. He says, *"This armour functions both as protection and expansion: it resists marginalisation while enabling the expression of multiple identities. The figures move between the human and the animal, highlighting a connection to wild nature as a path toward freedom of expression and the disruption of oppressive social norms."*

In 2021, he became an artist-in-residence at Xepa Gallery, debuting in the Metaverse with

the exhibition Fome de Criar. He has since participated in projects and exhibitions on platforms such as Biennale.io and Streetless B22, and presented his first Metaverse solo show, Bicho Gente Bicho (2023), which was also featured at the MIX Brasil Festival with a VR experience. His work investigates fluidity of identity, bodily performativity, and constant metamorphosis. 



Above: Pedro Leobons, *Bicho Gente Bicho #06*, mixed media on canson paper, 59.4 x 42 cm  
Right: Pedro Leobons, *Corpo Fragmento*, mixed media on corrugated cardboard and canson paper, 98.5 x 73.5 cm







## ARTIST Q&A

# Tricia Seymour-Barrier

Visual artist, Plano, TX, USA



### How does your background in psychotherapy influence your artistic process?

My background in transpersonal psychology was centred on helping individuals explore deeper levels of meaning, spirituality, and inner awareness. I bring the same focus to my art practice by using non-objective abstraction—compositions of colour, form, and texture not tied to recognisable objects—to invite viewers to access and process emotions or spiritual experiences that may be difficult to express in words. Through this approach, I aim to create paintings

that serve as contemplative spaces, encouraging viewers to pause, reflect, and discover personal insights.

### You describe your work as intuitive. What does painting in a state of flow feel like for you?

Sometimes an image or direction appears before I start, but usually I centre myself and become present. The process then flows, with energy moving through me and the canvas. In those moments, I feel connected to something larger. I rarely know the final result, so finishing feels like meeting the painting for the first time.

Dr Tricia Seymour-Barrier is an abstract texture artist and transpersonal psychotherapist, whose work explores the mystical and intuitive dimensions of human experience. Her work blends colour, texture, and movement to evoke a sense of wonder, inviting viewers into quiet conversation with the unseen. Each painting is a meditation, a journey inward, and an invitation to pause and reflect. Driven by a passion for connection and discovery, she creates art that sparks curiosity, opens dialogue, and honours the mystery at the heart of human existence.

[tsbfineart.com](https://tsbfineart.com)

Left: Tricia Seymour-Barrier, *Quantum Passage*, mixed media on canvas, 61 x 46 cm





**“Each canvas becomes an exploration of consciousness - an opportunity to move beyond the purely visual and into something experiential.”**

**How does your connection to intuition and spiritual awareness guide the choices you make on the canvas?**

I see myself as an intuitive alchemist, transforming materials into something new. I sense the next step internally, as quiet guidance about the work’s direction. I use acrylic paint, spray paint, texture, marks, and collage, letting each element emerge naturally. Instead of forcing outcomes, I listen to the work and let intuition lead.

**What role do texture and movement play in expressing emotion in your work?**

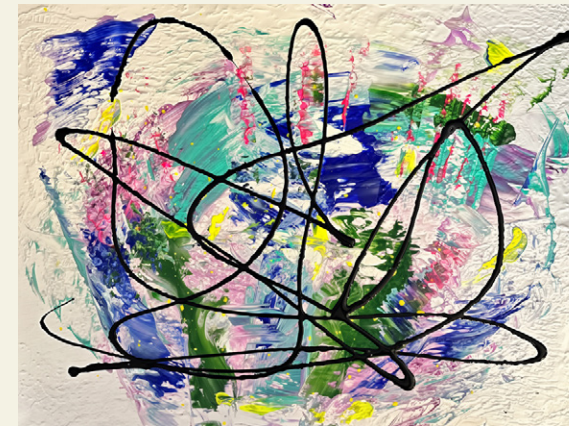
Texture is often a starting point in my paintings. I enjoy building surfaces and moving materials on canvas. Some textures include found elements or collage, adding depth and history.

Movement then carries the viewer’s eye. I hope the work draws viewers inward, beyond the canvas, into expansiveness and a glimpse of the infinite.

For me, painting is both a creative act and a contemplative practice. Each canvas becomes an exploration of consciousness - an opportunity to move beyond the purely visual and into something experiential. I don’t approach the work with a rigid plan. Instead, I allow intuition, energy, and curiosity to guide the process, trusting that the painting will reveal itself over time.



Above: Tricia Seymour-Barrier, *Harmonic Threshold*, mixed media on canvas, 61 x 46 cm



My hope is that when people encounter my work, they feel invited to pause and reflect. Abstract art can bypass the analytical mind and speak to deeper emotional and spiritual layers. The artwork becomes a portal that encourages viewers to explore their own perceptions, feelings, and inner landscapes.

Ultimately, my work is about expansion—of awareness, imagination, and the sense of connection we have with something greater than ourselves. If a painting sparks curiosity, contemplation, or even a brief sense of wonder, then it has fulfilled its purpose. At its best, art reminds us that there are always new dimensions to discover, both within and beyond ourselves. 



Top left: Tricia Seymour-Barrier, *Spirit in Motion*, mixed media on canvas, 46 x 61 cm  
Top right: Tricia Seymour-Barrier, *Radiant Convergence*, mixed media on canvas, 76 x 61 cm  
Bottom: Tricia Seymour-Barrier, *Interstellar Crossing*, mixed media on canvas, 46 x 61 cm



markcattaneo.com

# Mark Cattaneo



Mark Cattaneo works across metals, resins, terracotta, and wood, treating each material as a distinct language.

About his materials, he says, *“Corrosion, oxidation, layered acrylics, and earth build slowly over months, guided but never fully controlled. Found objects are incorporated. Atmospheric conditions leave their mark. The work resists precision in favour of response.”*

Chaos is a dominant theme in his work. He shares, *“What we consider chaotic is the part of something that at a given moment we are unable to explain, accept or grasp. We justify it as chaos, but it is simply a misunderstanding.”*

*“Given time, emotional distance, or a shift in perspective, what once seemed incomprehensible reveals itself to be in perfect, asymmetrical balance.”*

*“The most difficult experiences in life are often the most transformative — events we resented, then later recognised as turning points. The work operates by the same logic. Metal and acid interact unpredictably. Direction is given, but control is not possible.”*

*“You interact with it, and you get a response. Not as you believed it would be, not as you wanted it to be, but as it is. Because you yourself do not know which response is best for you. But it comes to you.”* 



Left: Mark Cattaneo, *Untitled*, acid-induced oxidation and corrosion on metal, 100 x 200 cm  
Above: Mark Cattaneo, *Untitled*, acid-induced oxidation and corrosion on metal, 67 x 100 cm



# Marion Pons Koch

Visual artist, Paris, France

**How did your shift from portrait and documentary photography to a more symbolic, liminal practice change the way you approach your work?**

My practice has evolved following the rhythm of my own growth and transitions. Between the ages of twenty and thirty, I was in a phase of discovery and activism. Photography, especially, was an echo of my lifestyle: I captured the energy of concerts, the immediacy of encounters, and the urgency of the field. This cycle crystallised in 2017 with my first solo exhibition, retracing

a month spent in the West Bank. It was a pivotal moment, followed by a hiatus of several years, where I set creation aside. After a several-year hiatus, I have reinvested in my practice. Returning to painting and photography, my vision and expectations had changed. This “serious” return coincided with a difficult personal period where my work became a vital anchor. I felt the need to embody my subjects both emotionally and intellectually. Without disavowing my documentary roots, shifting the focus toward the intimate has rendered my practice hybrid, more symbolic and personal.



Marion Pons Koch is a Paris-based visual artist. Evolving from documentary roots to a symbolic practice, she explores resonances between mental health, memory, and the body. Her research, exemplified by a series utilising mythological references or historical archives, creates spaces of resilience and poetic projection. Her work has been exhibited by Echomusée and Openbach Galleries (France), The Too Tired Project (USA), BBA Gallery (Berlin), and published by the Arts To Hearts Project. She is represented by the agency Art Confidential.

[marionpons.fr](http://marionpons.fr)

Right: Marion Pons Koch, *Gueule Pimpée #1*, mixed media, 20 x 14.5 cm





**Your art often explores mental health, memory, and the body. How do you translate these complex themes be put into visual form?**

These themes emerged progressively until I realised their recurring nature. As early as 2012, through a magazine-book blending photography and graphic design with testimonies, I explored gender, including trans identity. In 2024, the question of mental health imposed itself organically.

In my series *Un Monstre Sans Corps*, addressing the subject of my depression, I sought to transcribe this inner atmosphere: dim and cold lights, desaturated colours, and fragmented bodies. I integrate symbolic incursions—such as flowers or water—manual interventions on prints, and vernacular archives to enrich my narration. These concerns are also found in my plastic series, *Monstresses* or *Gueules Pimpées*. For me, the psychic, memorial, and bodily dimensions are intrinsically linked: they are the complementary layers of our humanity.

Top: Marion Pons Koch,  
*Gueule Pimpée #2*,  
mixed media, 25 x 18 cm

Bottom: Marion Pons Koch,  
*Gueule Pimpée #3*,  
mixed media, 25 x 18 cm



**What inspired you to use mythological and folkloric references in creating your *Monstresses* series?**

In this cycle, I embraced a form of letting go. My inspiration comes first from childhood references in mythology and popular culture. Female monstrous figures fill our tales and legends, often reflecting misogynistic views. My intention is to reinterpret these symbols through a feminist lens. While classical culture used these myths to label traits as “monstrous,” I see them as examples of freedom, independence, and strength. Through this process, I seek to reclaim contemporary sexist stereotypes. For my first Monstress, *La Grande Bleue*, I imagined an imposing, goddess-like figure. Her nudity takes up space without pretence, showing both power and vulnerability. In summary, this series brings together my inner feelings and my political ideas. It is an emancipatory and provocative approach to reclaiming a femininity that has been despised for too long.

Right: Marion Pons Koch,  
*The Great Blue*, acrylic on canvas,  
90 x 60 cm

**How does your use of mixed media function as an act of care or restoration in your work?**

Hybridising techniques allows me to build denser narratives. In *Un Monstre Sans Corps*, I intervene directly on the medium—scratching prints, layering text, and playing with textures. The reconstruction lies here in the very act of creation. For *Gueules Pimpées*, I worked on WWI *Gueules Cassées* to address physical trauma. As the face is the seat of our identity, my plastic gesture adorns without concealing, restoring dignity to these features. By ‘pimping’ these portraits, I transform the stigma into a figure of resilience. This artistic gesture takes the place of words; it breathes in new intentions and emotions, seeking to trigger a resonance in the viewer. **A**





vola.artcall.org

# Volha Naruta-Johnson

Volha Naruta-Johnson is a Belarusian-born, California-based painter whose practice explores motherhood, female identity, and the tension between societal roles and inner autonomy. Through layered textures, oil glazing, and fragmented human forms, she constructs psychological spaces where vulnerability and strength coexist.

Volha's work is deeply autobiographical yet universal, reflecting the lived experience of balancing care, ambition, and selfhood. Influenced by her background in psychology, she approaches painting as a process of excavation—revealing hidden emotional structures rather than depicting surface narratives.

*"My practice explores the tension between motherhood, career, and female identity - where concept overrides image, control dissolves, rules, traumas, roles, and opinions lose their authority, and inner ground remains the only truth."*

*"Drawing from lived experience, I examine the complexity of holding multiple roles while continuously reconstructing a sense of self in a fragmented, demanding world. Being a woman is challenging in the modern world. I know that every woman feels alone in her inner states and experiences."*

*"Through my paintings, I want to say: you are not alone - I am going through this too. My work is a way to support another woman."*

She has exhibited in Northern California and continues to develop a material language that merges tactile surfaces with symbolic figuration. 



Right: Volha Naruta-Johnson, *Inner Space*, oil on canvas, 92 x 92 cm





## ARTIST Q&A

# Georgia Lobo

Visual artist, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



### How has your family history shaped the themes and emotional tone of your paintings?

It was an unconscious process; art emerged as a channel for overflow and for understanding my own history. Everything begins with my paternal grandfather, a man with a singular trajectory. Among the twelve children born to an enslaved couple, he was the only one to learn to read and write. Working as a bricklayer, he went on to study Pharmacy and later Medicine. Already recognised as a respected doctor, he married my grandmother, an Italian immigrant, blonde and

illiterate. From this union came six children who lived a very atypical reality in the early 20th century, in the countryside of São Paulo: Black people occupying spaces socially reserved for white people. I grew up in an environment marked by ambiguity. My family behaved as if it were white, with no appreciation for Black culture - quite the opposite. I studied classical piano, attended elite schools in Rio de Janeiro, and was trained to excel. There was a constant pressure to be exceptional. My mother, both a doctor and an engineer, was strong, intelligent, and emotionally rigid.

Born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Georgia Lobo began painting in 2007 through an oil painting course. From the outset, she has been drawn to human figures, ancestry, and the representation of the Black body. Her first solo exhibition, *Black in Rio*, marked a turning point in her practice. Her work emerges from an interracial family history shaped by social mobility and subtle racism. By engaging with her ancestry, she transforms shame and anger into beauty, affirming Black bodies through dignity, privilege, and glamour.

[georgialobo.com](http://georgialobo.com)

Left: Georgia Lobo, *Diva*, oil on canvas, 120 x 90 cm







Although I have a phenotype that often does not experience direct racism in Brazil, reality revealed itself early on. I endured years of bullying because of my mother. Hearing repeated insults made me feel ashamed of my own history. For a long time, I tried to hide it.

Above: Georgia Lobo, *Dolce far Niente*, oil on canvas, 110 x 110 cm

Right: Georgia Lobo, *Minha Carne é de Carnaval*, oil on canvas, 120 x 90 cm

### **How do you use colour and composition to convey dignity, introspection, and presence in your figures?**

I began painting at the age of 42.

At first, I explored different subjects, but I was always drawn to portraits. When I painted Black skin for the first time, I was captivated by its rich nuances. In 2018, I was invited to present my first solo exhibition, “Black in Rio.” Without a rational plan, my work began to carry colour,

freedom, pride, and affection - everything I felt was missing from my upbringing.

In constructing my images, I make conscious choices. I reject the limited representations often associated with Black people in Brazil. I choose elegant clothing, dignified settings, carefully styled hair, and jewellery. I am drawn to direct gazes - firm, courageous, and present. I seek to portray people in their full power, not in positions of subservience.

### **Please can you share more about the complexity and richness of Black skin tones in your work?**

For me, Black skin is a living field of colour. It absorbs and reflects its surroundings - blues from the sky, warm oranges from light, tones that vibrate and overlap. There is a dialogue between what lies on the surface and what seems to emerge from within. Finding harmony in this movement and feeling that a painting has a soul are profound experiences.

### **In what ways do you see your work as a form of repair or affirmation for Black representation?**

Over time, I came to understand that my work also acts as a form



of affirmation. I receive messages from Black individuals who say they have never seen themselves represented in this way. These images function as a kind of symbolic permission: if you can envision it, you can become it. This awareness deepened through an encounter with a 14-year-old girl who visited my exhibition every day. She said she wanted to live inside my paintings, recreate the outfits, and bring friends and family. Her gesture revealed something far greater than the work itself. Although few Black people have access to the art market, I see my paintings — even when placed in white homes — as presences that challenge and reshape the gaze. Like quiet, yet firm, flags. 🚩



loveannajames.com

# Anna James

Anna James is a British artist based between London, Berlin, and Mallorca. Her distinct vision is shaped by a robust background in fine arts and decorative painting, including foundational training at Smallbone of Devizes and a period working with artist Harland Miller.

Anna's abstract paintings explore the interplay between our inner landscapes and the external world, illuminating the fundamental connection we share with the earth. She says, *"My work functions as contemplative sanctuaries, inviting viewers to engage with the beauty in their natural environment."*

*"Through a process of meditative layering of paint, guided by emotion and in situ photographic impressions, I render nature's ephemeral beauty and cosmic immensity. Metallic and earth pigments anchor her ethereal canvases, echoing fundamental elements and translating nature through abstraction."*

*"Ultimately, the paintings are an invitation: to step away from constant sensory input and screen fatigue, to cultivate inner stillness through the physical act of creating, and to embrace the simple yet powerful sense of aliveness that nature continuously offers."*

Anna's work has appeared in publications including Vogue, Elle Decoration, Frame, and Architectural Digest, and has been exhibited at institutions including The Wallace Collection. Anna's diverse career highlights a continuous evolution in her artistic journey, marked by both a deep engagement with craft and a drive to explore contemporary themes through painting. 🌱



Right: Anna James, *Hermosa*, acrylic and silver leaf on canvas, 120 x 100 cm



# Lindsey McTavish

Fibre artist, Nelson, BC, Canada

**What draws you to hand-felted and quilted wool & silk as your primary materials?**

I'm drawn to fibre because of its physical immediacy. Wool and silk carry warmth, softness, and resistance at the same time - they can be compressed, layered, and built slowly, which mirrors how emotion actually accumulates. Working this way allows me to construct an image rather than apply one. Each layer becomes part of what's being built into the surface - pressure, adjustment, and change over time. The process is slow and deliberate, and that pace is essential to how I translate feeling into form.

**How does working intuitively with fibre allow emotions to emerge in your pieces?**

I begin with a somewhat fixed image in mind. I often try to make the figures "beautiful" in a conventional sense, but at a certain point, the material starts to resist that control. As I work, the piece shifts. Features soften or harden, proportions change, and sometimes less control begins to take over. The figures start to define themselves in ways I didn't plan. That loss of control is where the work becomes most honest. It moves away from what I thought I was making, and closer to something I recognise after the fact.



Lindsey McTavish is a Canadian contemporary fibre artist based in Nelson, British Columbia. Working with hand-felted and quilted wool & silk, she creates figurative and landscape-inspired pieces that explore emotional experience through material and form. She studied Fibre Arts for three years at the Kootenay School of the Arts and holds a diploma in Fashion Design from the International Academy of Design in Toronto. Her work has been exhibited and published internationally, including features in *Sfumato Art Magazine*, and top in category selection for textile work for the Circle Foundation for the Arts in Lyon, France.

[lindseym-artwork.com](http://lindseym-artwork.com)

Right: Lindsey McTavish, *Between Guard and Grace*, hand-felter and quilted wool & silk, 45.7 x 35.6 cm







**“The work exists somewhere between control and release, where something is clearly present but not fully explained.”**

**How do you balance restraint and vulnerability in the figures you create?**

I’m interested in what is contained, rather than what is revealed. The figures are not direct portraits, but constructed emotional composites - built through subtle shifts in expression posture, and surface, rather than overt expression.

Restraint comes through simplification and control. Features are reduced, edges are quiet, and much is left unresolved. Vulnerability comes through the material itself - the softness of fibre, the visible layers, and the slight instability that remains in the form.

The work exists somewhere between control and release, where something is clearly present but not fully explained.

Top: Lindsey McTavish, *Quiet Confidence*, hand-felted and quilted wool & silk, 45.7 x 35.6 cm

Bottom: Lindsey McTavish, *On the Verge*, hand-felted and quilted wool & silk, 50.8 x 40.6 cm



**In what ways does nature influence the textures, light, and layering in your pieces?**

The Canadian landscape is a constant influence, particularly through time spent moving through it. Rather than a specific view, what stays with me is a sense of distance, light, colour, texture, and atmosphere, all of which inform how the work takes shape. The experience translates into how

I build surfaces. Layers shift, light moves through the work rather than sitting on top of it, and forms are shaped by accumulation rather than than outline.

Even in the figurative work, that influence remains. Here, the body becomes another kind of terrain—one shaped by memory, pressure, and the passage of time, continuing the interplay of nature and form. <sup>A</sup>

Above: Lindsey McTavish, *Self Possessed*, hand-felted and quilted wool & silk, 50.8 x 40.6 cm



bryn-williams.format.com

# Bryn Williams

Bryn Williams is a Los Angeles-based mixed-media artist who creates vibrant work that traverses traditional and non-traditional media. Through intricately connected abstract constructions of acrylic sheet and wire, as well as conventional portraits, Williams seeks to dissolve the artificial boundaries between self and not-self.

Materially, Williams' work challenges artistic hierarchies and patriarchal norms by uplifting unappreciated materials, such as acrylic paint and sheet, and by recontextualising "feminine" or craft-based practices, like wire-wrapping and the use of glitter.

Her work highlights her Black, female identity and expands upon it to reveal a grander self that is interconnected with all things. Her practice embodies the concept of reclamation as an active, liberating process which yields figures and landscapes that herald untapped potentials and challenge conventional notions.

*"I strive to see beyond the known conventions of race, culture, and gender by reimagining ordinary materials into new forms that represent my multifaceted and intangible selves."*

*"As a mother, wife, daughter, and educator who has supported children with learning differences, I have often found my identity and self-worth narrowly defined by these assumed caretaking roles. This realisation has motivated me to create art as a means of emotional sustenance and self-nurturing, allowing me to uplift myself and others."*

*"The desire to reinvent myself and reclaim my sense of worth has also driven me to repurpose problematic materials, such as acrylic/plastic, into new elevated visual forms in my work."*

*"By combining wire wrapping, reclaimed materials, and self-painted acrylic sheets, I transform my past understandings of myself and my art into an expansive exploration of human potential."*

Williams has exhibited in multiple group shows and collaborated with collectors to create custom, bespoke work. 

Left: Bryn Williams, *Things the Heart Already Knows*, mixed media, 107 x 81 cm





# Kevin Perrault

Sculptor, Los Angeles, CA, USA



**How do you use the contrast between delicate copper figures and monumental stone to convey emotion?**

From the very beginning, I've always envisioned the figures existing in their own space, with us as observers looking in. The stone felt like a natural way to define that space and give the figures a sense of scale. It creates a contrast in which the figures feel more intimate and human, while the stone feels larger and more permanent, reinforcing that separation and adding grounding.

**What role does scale play in how viewers experience your sculptures?**

Scale is one of the biggest factors in my work, both in the relationship between the figures and the stone, and between the piece and the viewer. I'm interested in how those shifts can change how you see things. Ideally, it creates a bit of an out-of-body feeling, where you're looking at these human connections from a different perspective, even though they're so deeply familiar.



Kevin Perrault is a Los Angeles-based sculptor working with copper, stone, and wood. His work explores human connection through shifts in scale and perspective, often pairing delicate copper figures with monumental stone. He studied design at UCLA, where he also played on a national championship soccer team. After 25 years in a family business, he returned to sculpture with a renewed focus. That path informs both his themes and process, resulting in work that feels personal while remaining open and universal.

[kevinperrault.com](http://kevinperrault.com)

**"From the very beginning, I've always envisioned the figures existing in their own space, with us as observers looking in."**

Right: Kevin Perrault, *Tiger 001*, copper, stone, wood, 28 x 20 x 12 cm







Above (from left to right): Kevin Perrault, *Synchronize 001*, copper, stone, wood, 35.6 x 15.2 x 15.2 cm; *Surf 014*, copper, stone, wood, 33 x 25.4 x 20.3 cm



Above (from left to right): Kevin Perrault, *Surf 015*, copper, stone, wood, 30.5 x 25.4 x 17.8 cm; *Leap 002*, copper, stone, wood, 30.5 x 30.5 x 17.8 cm



## How has your life experience outside of art influenced the themes and patience in your work?

After graduating from UCLA with a degree in design, I spent about 25 years in my family's business, in a role that was much more managerial and engineering-focused. That experience really shaped how

I approach my work. It made me very detail-oriented and drawn to process and technique.

When I started this body of work, I knew I wanted it to be technically challenging, but also grounded in something human.

That balance between precision and connection has become a big part of how I think and work.

## Why do you choose to leave narratives open for viewers to interpret rather than prescribing a story?

If I'm being honest, for a long time I struggled with work that didn't offer a clear narrative.

As a viewer, I always wanted more direction. It wasn't until I started making this body of work that

I began to really enjoy hearing interpretations that were completely different from what I had in mind. That shifted something for me. It made me want to leave the scenes more open and focus on a feeling or moment rather than a fixed story, so viewers can bring their own perspective to it. [A](#)



# Adamo Macri

Adamo Macri, a Montreal-based artist, incorporates sculpture, photography, painting, and drawing into his work. His art explores themes of identity, contamination, and the intricate balance of nature, often blurring the lines between the artist and the artwork itself. Macri's approach is innovative in that he often transforms his own physical presence, using his body as part of the canvas to tell the stories he wishes to convey. This concept of transformation is at the core of his process, resulting in pieces that function as carefully constructed narratives.

He says, "My creative practice is rooted in the exploration of identity, metamorphosis, and the delicate interplay between the natural and the artificial. I am drawn to the spaces where boundaries dissolve—between the artist and the artwork, the organic and the constructed, the observer and the observed."

*By incorporating my own physical presence into my work, I transform the act of creation into a dynamic, ongoing story."*

*"I construct visual narratives that invite viewers to experience transformation in real time. My pieces often merge human forms with elements of nature or myth, using masks, organic materials, and symbolic motifs to evoke a sense of mystery and introspection. The interplay of light, texture, and shadow in my work is designed to provoke contemplation, encouraging audiences to reflect on their own evolving identities and relationships with the world around them."*

*"I am fascinated by the tension between vulnerability and strength, decay and renewal, and the ways in which these forces shape both individuals and environments. Each artwork is not a static object, but a carefully constructed phenomenon—an invitation to witness the ongoing dance between presence and impermanence."* 

Right: Adamo Macri, *Telltale Manual*, photography, 102 x 89 cm





## We Are All a Bit Unravelled: Amy McLaren on Sock Puppets and Shared Humanity

Amy McLaren discusses how whimsy and vulnerability coexist in her narrative paintings - and why a cast of imperfect, expressive sock puppets turned out to be the most honest way she knows to explore what connects us.



**Gita Joshi (GJ):** Your work blends loose realism with expressive gesture and a sense of whimsy - how do you balance playfulness with deeper emotional themes?

**Amy McLaren (AM):** My deep emotional narratives come from my own experiences—I use painting to navigate and make sense of what's happening in my life and in the world around me. Humour comes naturally to me, so it finds its way into the work as well.

I don't force the balance. It's more honest to let both exist—to let humour soften the surface while something deeper lingers beneath. That in-between space is where connection happens, where viewers might recognise themselves in unexpected ways. ▶



Left: Amy McLaren in studio

Above (from top to bottom): Amy McLaren's studio; Amy McLaren, *Puppets and Shadows*, oil on canvas, 91 x 61 cm





**GJ: How have your experiences as a mother and educator shaped the narratives in your paintings?**

**AM:** As a mother and educator, I spend a lot of time in moments that are both ordinary and deeply formative. I watch how children make sense of the world through play, imagination, and connection, and how those experiences shape the stories they tell about themselves and others.

That awareness carries into my work. The sock puppet figures hold a childlike presence while also carrying the weight of learned narratives. Their loose threads and imperfect features suggest that those stories aren't

fixed—they can be unravelled or reworked.

Motherhood has made me more attentive to quiet emotional exchanges—the subtle ways we reach for or pull away from one another. Those gestures often become central in my paintings, grounding even the more playful or surreal moments in connection.

**GJ: What drew you to sock puppets as a central symbol in your recent work?**

**AM:** The shift to sock puppets evolved from earlier work with figures wearing masks, and eventually from removing the figures



entirely. I was searching for a way to represent the human experience that felt less fixed—softer, more open, and a little disarming. Sock puppets became a natural fit.

They carry playfulness and familiarity, but also an awkwardness that feels very human. Each one takes on its own character, reflecting differences in perspective, history, and identity, while also pointing to the quieter ways we are alike.

What keeps me engaged is how much they can hold. They're expressive without being overly defined, allowing subtle gestures and relationships to carry meaning.

The visible stitching and loose threads reinforce the idea that we are shaped by experience, but never fixed—always capable of change.

**GJ: You explore shifting identity. How do you personally navigate those transitions in your own life?**

**AM:** These transitions often begin as small realisations—moments of discomfort or a sense that an old way of thinking no longer fits. ►

Above (from left to right): Amy McLaren, *Therapy*, oil on canvas, 51 x 51 cm; *The Main Character*, oil on canvas, 52 x 84 cm



What helps me move through them is paying attention rather than resisting. Painting is a big part of that process—it allows me to sit with uncertainty and work through it. Being a mother has reinforced that as well—staying present, listening closely, and allowing things to unfold.

**GJ: Your work visualises inner dialogue - how does using whimsical and playful imagery change the way those voices are perceived?**

**AM:** Whimsical imagery softens the way inner dialogue is received. These internal voices can feel heavy or isolating, but when translated through something familiar and slightly absurd, they become more approachable—something we can observe rather than be consumed by.

The sock puppets create a gentle distance, allowing those conversations to exist outside the body. Each character holds its own perspective, mirroring the layered and sometimes conflicting nature of our inner narratives.

Playfulness doesn't diminish their weight—it reframes it. It creates space for recognition without overwhelm, where humour and vulnerability can coexist. That shift opens the possibility of a more aware, less judgmental relationship with those inner voices.

**GJ: What do you hope viewers take away from the vulnerability and humour in your paintings?**

**AM:** I hope the combination of vulnerability and humour helps people feel less alone. Humour makes the work approachable while softening experiences that can feel heavy or isolating. I also want viewers to feel connected through hope, joy, and wonder.

It's important to me to show that we're all a bit awkward, unfinished, and in process. The sock puppets reflect that—they're imperfect, expressive, and exposed, holding both vulnerability and resilience. If viewers can see themselves in that and recognise a shared humanity, then a meaningful connection has been made. 🐞

### Amy McLaren

Amy McLaren is a painter based in Rochester, New York, working in loose realism with expressive gesture to explore the evolving nature of human experience. Drawing on her perspective as a woman and mother, her narrative paintings reflect on personal growth and transformation. Her current work uses sock puppets as symbolic stand-ins—imperfect yet endearing figures that explore connection, compassion, and the shared humanity that unites us across differences.

[amymclaren.art](http://amymclaren.art)



Amy McLaren, *The Conversation*, oil on canvas, 76 x 61 cm





intimateimmensity.com

# Noémie Marmara

Noémie is a multidisciplinary visual artist exploring ceramics, photography, and writing to unveil the space between matter and the impalpable.

Her training in ceramics includes 5 years of apprenticeship in ceramic techniques in Europe and with a ceramic master in the traditional village of Margarites, in ancient Minoan ceramic craft methods.

In 2025, Noémie received training from the Korean Onggi Ceramics Master Kwak Kyungtae, with the aspiration to continuously expand her technical possibilities in applying ancient ceramic forms to contemporary sculpture.

She shares, *“My work with ceramic sculpture and photography elaborates a realm of dialogue between form and the essence of form.”*

*“My own perceptions, both sensory and what I call “subtle fields of information,” are shaped by my neurodivergence. They are also influenced by experiences of consciousness expansion from years of deep meditation. I have discovered in clay a creative pathway that binds me to terrestrial life. A ceramic vessel can contain a cosmos. These pieces become points of contemplation and contact with what exists behind the veil of ordinary perception.”*

*“My work is a call to place a deep trust in the form that naturally leads to its own transcendence. We are unending creational processes, and Vessels are holding processes for me. They invite us to lean into our power to bring harmony into all things and remind us of the vastness of our true selves.”*

Noemie works from her studio in Le Tignet, in South East France. She has exhibited internationally and was recently shown at the 1000 Vases annual exhibition during Paris Design Week, and the ‘Nature & Forms’ exhibition at B74 Gallery in Luzern, Switzerland. 

Left: Noémie Marmara, *Atlantis*, ceramic sculpture, 62 x 42 cm



# What do you love most about your studio?

Featured artists share details of their cherished sanctuaries. Read what these artists love about their creative workspaces.



My studio is my private sanctuary and creative little engine room. My father built it for me before he passed away, 'a Labour of Love' he called it. Inspirational words are spray-painted and scrawled on the walls; sometimes, it acts like a diary. I surround myself with flowers in jars, wigs, stilettos, old coffee cups, paint tubes, and the music is always on. A space where life spills into art, and art spills back onto life. My Beautiful Chaos.

**LISA LEE**  
ON p86

What I love about my studio is the space it gives me to slow down and think differently. There's something about being in that environment that allows for a kind of magical thinking - where ideas don't have to be logical or resolved right away.

**AMY MCLAREN**  
ON p58

Being in my studio feels like returning to myself. I love that my studio is surrounded by nature, and its quiet presence gently guides my process. It feels like I am in this sacred space that holds my stories and I whisper them back through my art.

**SHEELA BECTON**  
ON p94

I love that my studio is entirely my own. No one goes in unless invited, and there's zero compromise with anyone else within its walls. It's a space where I can leave work out, and when I come back, it's exactly as I left it, so I can pick up right where I left off without disruption. There's a sense of continuity in that which really matters to my process. I feel incredibly grateful to have been able to build the space a few years ago, and it's something I don't take for granted. In a world that often feels chaotic and noisy, my studio is a place where I can shut everything out and fully focus.

**LINDSEY MCTAVISH**  
ON p46

My studio is an unfiltered space. It isn't designed for presentation or shaped by external expectations. It reflects how I actually think and work. That level of autonomy is important. It allows the work to develop honestly, without needing to perform for anything outside of the process itself.

**AVA BOCK**  
ON p16

My studio is defined by light and openness. From the 12th floor, overlooking Biscayne Bay in Miami Beach, the space feels expansive - almost as if I'm working outside. The natural light shifts throughout the day, subtly affecting how I see color and form. There's also a quiet stillness that keeps me focused and fully engaged in the work.

**SID DANIELS**  
ON p110

I love that my home studio is in a shared space with my 7-year-old daughter. She is filled with incredible amounts of optimism, faith, and joy, and I believe having those feelings exuded within my art-making space while I'm creating has absolutely impacted my work in a positive way. We will often listen to audio books together while she plays near me and I paint.

**ROKITA**  
ON p84

What I love most about my studio is simply that I have it. It feels like a blessing - a space that holds me, supports me, and allows my work to come alive.

**VOLHA NARUTA-JOHNSON**  
ON p38







rokitaart.com

Rokita, working studio in Pittsburgh, PA, USA



lisaec.com.au

Lisa Lee, working studio in Sunshine Coast, QLD, Australia



asirionstudio.com

Karolina Korandová, working studio in Zvoleněves, near Prague, The Czech Republic



avabock.art

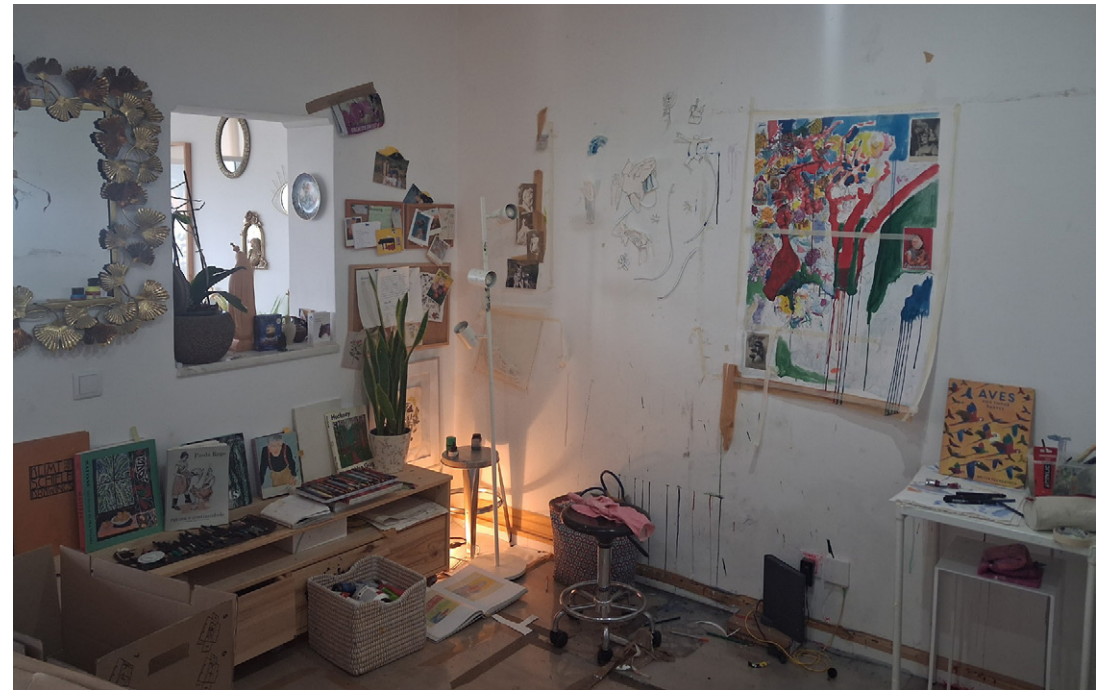
Ava Bock, working studio in Eugene, OR, USA





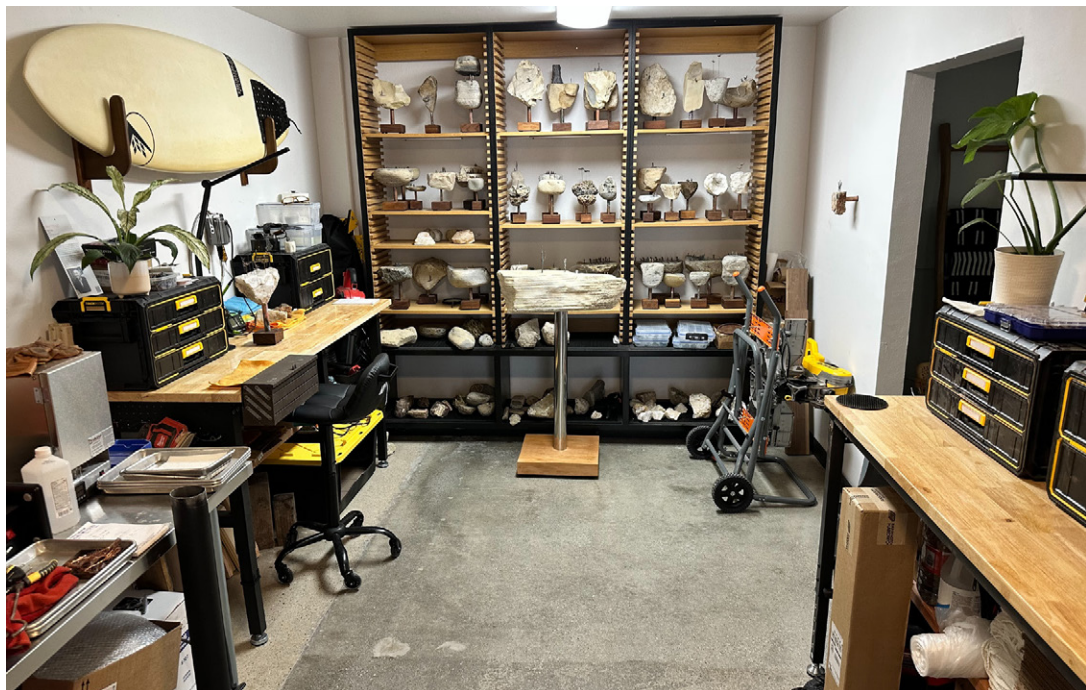
dailypaintworks.com/artists/astrid-buchhammer-2773

Astrid Buchhammer, working studio in Berlin, Germany



anajoscedemelo.com

Ana Melo, working studio in Lisbon, Portugal



kevinperrault.com

Kevin Perrault, working studio in Torrance, CA, USA



pedroleobons.com

Pedro Leobons, working studio in São Paulo, Brazil





bogdanmurariu-artsculpture.com

Bogdan Murariu, working studio in Muscat, Oman



hansasethi.com

Hansa Sethi, working studio in Jabalpur, India



siddaniels.com

Sid Daniels, working studio in Miami, FL, USA



robertpageart.com

Robert Page, working studio in Memphis, TN, USA



Reading, but almost entirely in the form of audiobooks or recordings to listen to and re-listen to, in order to delve deeper into their meanings. It's an excellent exercise. This leads, indirectly, to giving substance to my own ideas.



**MARK CATTANEO**  
ON p32

# What's a small daily habit or ritual that helps you stay connected to your creative process?

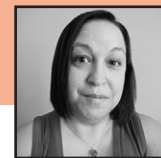
What does it take to stay connected to creativity? We asked our featured artists about the quiet rituals and everyday habits that sustain their practice, one day at a time.

Five minutes of Shavasana after hot yoga. My body's completely wiped out and my mind goes blank. That's when I get my best ideas. I'll suddenly see how a copper figure should stand, or realize how two pieces of stone should work together. It's not really thinking, more like the answer just shows up when I stop trying. The physical exhaustion clears out all the noise. Some of my biggest breakthroughs have happened laying on that mat, too tired to overthink anything.



**KEVIN PERRAULT**  
ON p52

I maintain a mindfulness practice that keeps me present, regardless of what the day brings. It's about staying engaged, even when things aren't going as planned. That commitment to being an active participant in my own life carries directly into the studio. It keeps my process steady and allows me to respond to the work with clarity rather than resistance.



**AVA BOCK**  
ON p16

Before I begin to paint. I start by lighting a candle on my Yemanjá altar, I cleanse my studio with sacred smoke, put on a playlist with music that feels right for painting, and wear a fragrance I bought from a shaman - I really am quite the little witch.



**GEORGIA LOBO**  
ON p40

For me, it is the moment when I try to forget about the outside world, and, looking at my ongoing project and analyzing what has been done, what stage I am at, and establish what steps need to be accomplished that day so that the sculpture is finalized according to the idea and the estimated allocated time.



**BOGDAN MURARIU**  
ON p92

I look at art daily, as we all do (probably?) with social media being in our pockets. It's nice to see what my friends are doing or other artists I don't personally know. To see what they are up to, it's motivating.



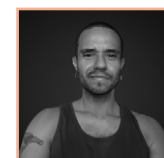
**ROBERT PAGE**  
ON p100

I spend a lot of time looking at the work of other artists, whether contemporary or from the past. This 'observational habit' feeds my gaze and enriches my references. It keeps me connected to the creative world and often triggers new ideas for my own projects.



**MARION PONS KOCH**  
ON p34

I like to constantly take notes of ideas that can evolve into visual experimentations. It's a pretty simple habit: I use the note app on my phone and write down whatever comes to mind and feels like an interesting premise to become an artwork.



**PEDRO LEOBONS**  
ON p26



I would tell her to have more confidence in herself. Everything that seems difficult right now is only temporary. And what makes her feel different or 'weird' in the eyes of others is exactly what will make her an interesting and creative person later on.



# Looking back, what would you want yourself to know?

Featured artists share the advice they wish they had heard sooner in their art career.



I'd tell my younger self to trust the slow path and stop comparing your journey to others. The doubts you feel about not being "enough" are just noise, not truth. Keep choosing the work that genuinely excites you, even when it looks impractical from the outside, because that's where your real strength lies. Protect your curiosity, rest before you are exhausted, and don't be afraid to ask for help - you don't have to do everything alone.

ANA MELO | ON p99



Focus on feeling good and being in your body. Don't look so much at others. Stay in your lane and do what feels good in your body.

SID DANIELS | ON p110



Focus on developing a consistent visual language and trust the long-term process. It takes time to refine ideas and build a body of work that feels cohesive. Avoid chasing trends and instead commit to what genuinely interests you. Be true to yourself and the work will become stronger as it evolves over time.

Please be brave and courageous, because there will be very difficult moments when you will feel like you can't go on. In those moments, please trust that you carry a strength within you that you are not even aware of, and that you will overcome everything, so you can one day show the world what is possible to overcome.



Never let anyone influence your beliefs. Usually, they lack knowledge on the topic. Take it with a grain of salt, and listen closely to your inner voice instead, as it understands what is truly best for you.



I'd tell my younger self to develop a thicker skin and not take rejection as fully personal. It's part of the process, not a reflection of your worth.

LISA LEE | ON p86



Never let anyone dim your light. Be brave, do the things that scare you and have no fear of failure.

Keep questioning the world, but don't let it consume you. You don't have to resolve every 'why' to move forward. Stay true to who you are - some people are meant to question, others to follow, and both paths hold value.

HANSA SETHI | ON p63





# Inspiration

doesn't end at the

# studio door

We asked our featured artists what fuels their creativity away from the studio and the answers are as varied as the work itself, ranging from travel to cooking.

## HANSA SETHI

I feel everything is inspiring to me, but I'm especially drawn to the mystery of existence - why we are here, how we behave, and what drives us in different directions. Why some people follow while others lead, why some settle into quieter lives while others feel compelled to disrupt and create change. These constant 'whys' are what fuel both my thinking and my work.



ON p83

## SID DANIELS

I am inspired by fashion runway shows during fashion week, all movies in technicolor and movie musicals from the 1950s, and the big band orchestras from the 1940s with the jazz greats that sang them.



ON p110

## ROKITA

Science-Fiction and Puppetry! I'm a big fan of Star Trek specifically and have been since I was introduced to it as a kid. I like to think that I approach my art like a Star Trek captain, exploring new worlds through my art, and "discovering" something new through my work that has never been said or revealed in quite that exact way before.



ON p84

## GEORGIA LOBO

Travel is a big inspiration. I'm drawn to uncommon places like Africa, India, Cuba, Guatemala, and Brazil (which is spectacular and full of nuance). The more different, the more I'm intrigued, and I believe this has helped shape the way I see art. Exploring these places teaches me who I am, what moves me, and reveals what I want to express on my canvases. It's something I've never stopped doing - something that continuously nourishes my soul.



ON p40

## MARION PONS KOCH

I am inspired by the stories I am told and those I overhear. It can be a documentary, an anecdote, or a personal story from someone I know. But I am also deeply inspired by the absence of narrative - the gaps and the blanks in a story. These silences are where I find the most room to imagine and create.



ON p34

## KEVIN PERRAULT

I enjoy surfing, scuba diving, and backpacking. So nature is definitely a big inspiration. The most surprising inspiration often comes from everyday moments with people in my community. A conversation at the coffee shop, the way two friends lean toward each other when they're talking. When you're actively looking for human connection, these tiny interactions become huge. They're everywhere. Someone will do something completely ordinary and I'll think, "That's it. That's the gesture I've been trying to figure out."



ON p52

## AVA BOCK

I'm drawn to natural environments, especially during periods of intensity - strong wind, heavy rain, extreme heat. There's something grounding about experiencing the forces that shape and sustain the conditions we rely on. It puts things into perspective. At the same time, looking at the night sky offers a different kind of awareness. Even in stillness, there is constant activity and change happening at a scale we can't fully perceive. That contrast, between what is felt directly and what remains unseen, reinforces how much transformation is always underway.



ON p16

## PEDRO LEOBONS

I get inspired by cooking. It's an action that is linked to boring daily life but it can also be treated as a habit that requires creativity and, therefore, is a source of inspiration.



ON p26

## KAROLINA KORANDOVÁ

It's the quiet and the moments of everyday life. At the same time, I am deeply inspired by inner transformation - the unseen processes we go through as human beings. Sometimes, I carry within me such a strong sense of hope and courage that I feel a need to pass it on - through my work, through my creations - and offer it to humanity. To remind others that everything is possible, and that anything can be overcome.



ON p105





## ARTIST Q&A

# Lilia Kodunova

Painter, Sevenoaks, UK



### How do personal and collective memories shape the emotional depth of your figures?

Personal and collective memory shape the emotional depth of my figures in a very immediate and personal way. My work is grounded in lived experience—both my own and that of those around me. My family and I were forced to leave our home due to the war in Ukraine, and the life we had built there now exists only in memory. It is a difficult experience that does not truly end. Instead of living with a sense of stability or long-term perspective, life becomes reduced to a day-by-day existence. This emotional condition

does not disappear; it settles in the body, and it is precisely this inner weight that I attempt to express through my figures.

### How has relocating from Ukraine to the UK influenced the themes and focus of your practice?

Relocating to the UK had a profound impact on my practice. During the first year after migration, I was unable to create at all. That time was not about art—it was about survival, adaptation, and caring for my three children. It was an emotionally overwhelming period. At the same time, that responsibility became

Lilia Kodunova is a Ukrainian-born artist based in the UK. Her figurative work transforms personal experience of displacement and trauma into layered, emotionally charged paintings. Using classical techniques, her figures carry unseen inner states—memory, loss, resilience—inviting viewers to engage with the silent weight of human experience.

[liliakodunova.com](http://liliakodunova.com)

Left: Lilia Kodunova, *The Weight of Time*, oil on canvas, 100 x 70 cm







Above (from top to bottom): Lilia Kodunova, *Connection*, oil on canvas, 100 x 75 cm; *Hold On*, oil on canvas, 70 x 100 cm

a source of strength; it required me to continue, even when it felt impossible. I spent a long time in reflection, feeling both lost and deeply overwhelmed. Gradually, I began to return to art as a way to process and redirect these emotions. I came to understand that this trauma is not mine alone. It is shared by many, often in different forms and intensities.

**What narratives do your figures carry, and how do you explore them in your work?**

The figures in my work do not represent specific narratives, but rather embody internal states—depression, anxiety, silence, tension, and, at times, resilience. I see the human body as a container for these experiences. Very often, they remain invisible. A person may appear composed, continue with everyday life, and even smile while carrying an internal load that is extremely heavy. I have witnessed how such states can develop into severe trauma, including PTSD, particularly when support is not available early on. This awareness is central to my practice. Through my work, I seek to draw attention to these unseen realities and to encourage a greater sensitivity toward one another—an understanding that what is not visible can be deeply present.



**How do your techniques - like layered mark-making and atmospheric shifts - help convey the complexity of human experience?**

Technically, I use layered mark-making to convey this complexity. The layering process suggests that there is always something beneath the surface—that what we see is never the whole story. I use a classical figurative language, which I see as both timeless and direct. I do not feel the need to reinvent it; its strength lies in its ability to communicate clearly across time and context. Painting, for me, is one of

the few forms of expression that does not require a shared spoken language to be understood.

I want my works to stand on their own, without the need for explanation. It is important to me that the viewer can feel something immediate and genuine in front of the painting. As an artist, I feel a responsibility to engage with socially important themes, to speak about what is often left unspoken, and to give a voice—through painting—to those who cannot express these experiences themselves. ▲

Above: Lilia Kodunova, *Old Mother*, oil on canvas, 75 x 100 cm



rokitaart.com

# Rokita

Rokita is a contemporary Puerto Rican artist living and working in Pittsburgh, PA, with a background in art history. Through her art, Rokita illuminates the intersection of mapping, indigenous knowledge, and environmental stewardship, using creativity as a tool for advocacy and change.

She aims to inspire a deeper connection to the planet and to one another - fostering a dialogue about ecological challenges, amplifying diverse voices and indigenous knowledge, and challenging systems that perpetuate both environmental degradation and gender inequality.

She shares, “I draw inspiration from the relationship that humans have to place and space, imaginary or real. My paintings include abstract maps of imaginary places and, at times, incorporate physical and visceral perceptions of places that hold meaning, have changed or eroded due to climate change, or are in danger of being

lost or destroyed. I am heavily inspired by patterns found in the natural world; the infinite details of lichen, the texture of kelp, and archipelagos as seen from above. Nature provides me with endless inspiration.”

“Gold ink and gold leaf are also heavily used in my work, inspired by artists like Klimt and the great book artists of the Middle Ages, who similarly loved making imaginary maps.” 



Above: Rokita, *Eternal Love for Mountains*, watercolor, ink, thread and acrylic on paper, 20.3 x 20.3 cm  
Right: Rokita, *Map of Collective Memory*, watercolor, ink, thread and acrylic on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6 cm





# Lisa Lee

Visual artist, Sunshine Coast,  
Queensland, Australia

## How do you capture the multifaceted nature of modern women in your paintings?

Across my twenty-year arts career, personal experiences and relationships have shaped my creative work. By reflecting creatively on these observations, my art documents women's daily rituals and resilience through fashion, florals, and paint.

Women embody a unique and complex blend of strength and vulnerability, ambition and introspection, and possess a remarkable capacity—both physically and emotionally—to create and nurture life.

Metaphorically, women wear many hats. Symbolic elements like crowns, power dresses, and various shoes - all highlight female empowerment and the diverse, multifaceted nature of women.

Influenced by history, high fashion, and luxury, my practice explores muliebrity—the feminine aspects of womanhood—highlighting both self-reflection and the joy inherent in women's lives.

## What role does the language of flowers, or floriography, play in telling hidden stories in your work?

I have always been drawn to symbolism. It is like the secret code in



Lisa Lee is an Australian-based fine artist, renowned for her emotive figurative works. Lee captures the sentiment of feminine life through colour, gesture and symbolism. Her oil paintings, dripping with sensitivity and secrecy, hold both elegance and attitude. Lee's artworks have been selected for inclusion in major Australian national art awards, exhibited worldwide, including London, New York, Hong Kong, and Asia, and feature in Australian public, private, and corporate collections. "Women. We are strong, beautiful and multifaceted creatures." I capture and tell stories visually, amongst my crazy-beautiful painterly mess. Pretty and gritty.

[lisalee.com.au](http://lisalee.com.au)

Right: Lisa Lee,  
*Wandering Monarch*,  
oil on raw Belgian linen,  
120 x 90 cm







the visual, waiting to be deciphered. Symbolism represents truths, emotions, dreams and subjectivity rather than naturalistic depictions.

Floriography – Language of Flowers - emerged as a clandestine method of communication through florals and botanicals, dating back to the early 1800's. I discovered a beautiful book gifted by a dear friend who introduced me to this part of history, and it resonated deeply with me. As a Peony speaks of compassion, a Protea declares strength, and an Edelweiss voices courage, etc. Weaving these into my visual stories adds layers, not dissimilar to layers of petals on a flower, really. I invite viewers to discover stories and emotions hidden within each piece.

**How do you use colour, texture, and gesture to express emotion and inner life in your paintings?**

My signature paint drips go beyond mere technique; they represent a kind of truth. These marks reveal life's imperfections and the coexistence of beauty and chaos, reminding us that even what runs or fades away remains part of the whole. I celebrate colour—it's pure joy. Can you imagine living in a world stripped to black



and white? I certainly can't. I want every shade of the rainbow! To me, the human form is an exploration of gesture, and gestures possess powerful meaning. They express the deepest emotions of the heart and can convey what words cannot. A hand tucked into a pocket might suggest something concealed, while crossed arms could indicate defiance. The body itself serves as a tool for expression. Many of my clients are located interstate and unable to pose in person, so I reference the images they provide. Sometimes I use my own body or enlist anyone nearby to be a hand model.

**Can you share how you weave symbolism, mythology, or personal narratives into a piece for a commissioner?**

Whenever I am commissioned by a client, my focus isn't on matching ►

Left: Lisa Lee, *Must Have Accessories*, oil on Belgian linen, 120 x 100 cm  
Above: Lisa Lee, *Sunbirds*, oil on Belgian linen, 120 x 120 cm





colour schemes or creating hyperrealistic portraits—our image-saturated world already has enough photographs for that. Instead, what matters to me is capturing a glimpse of the true person: their life’s details, achievements, fears, sources of joy, family, experiences, or anything they choose to share. The heart of who they are becomes a story within the painting. That’s my role as an artist—to weave their soul into the artwork, turning it into a vessel full of sentiment and meaning. Each painting is bespoke, often treasured and passed down through families—not something

fleeting or dictated by trends. Including these personal elements only strengthens the connection between viewer and art, and ultimately, art is about that connection. As someone who thrives on understanding people, I enjoy learning what inspires them. My passion for both ancient and modern history means I frequently incorporate historical influences—Greek, Roman mythology, or other eras—into my pieces, deepening my own knowledge of our roots. I blend clients’ stories into my paintings, uncovering truths about their journeys. These stories aren’t

Right: Lisa Lee, *Erato's Tome*, oil on Belgian linen, 120 x 135 cm

always meant for public display; sometimes, they remain hidden, known only to the commissioner, with subtle coded details—like secrets lightly brushed onto the canvas, half-revealed and half-concealed.

### How does your connection to nature and human emotion influence the movement and colour in your paintings?

My work captures the rhythm of life through colour and movement. My paintings can drip with sensitivity and secrecy, hold both elegance and attitude. They are feminine without apology, bold without restraint, and grounded in a deep connection to nature, nurture and human emotion. Many of my collectors are bold, spirited women who see themselves in my canvases and often serve as the subjects of my work.

I like to think my art is like a story of the muse, woven in bright uplifting colours, layered with symbols of her world, her heartbreaks, her triumphs. Not just paintings, but experiences that invite others to lean in, to feel deeply, and to celebrate the wild, emotional, extraordinary mess and magic of being human - of living la femme. **A**

Top: Lisa Lee, *The Queen and the Pawn*, oil on Belgian linen, 120 x 90 cm  
Bottom: Lisa Lee, *Power in the Palace*, oil on Belgian linen, 110 x 140 cm





bogdanmurariu-artsculpture.com

# Bogdan Murariu

Bogdan Murariu is a sculptor based between Galati, Romania and Muscat, Oman. Through his sculpture, he explores the principles of nature, the universe, philosophy and composition.

He cites Brancusi as an influence ‘going with flow’ of carving and “La taille directe” where the sculptor listens to the material he has to carve while working at the project.

He shares, “However, most at the time, I have been aiming to represent through my artworks principles which evolved through time, principles which allowed humankind to achieve the highest goals possible.”

“As a sculptor I like to embrace both aspects through which historically most of the sculptors chose to express their ideas: adding material (modelling clay or wax with the final purpose of casting in bronze or other metals) and carving wood, marble or stone. “

“The themes of my sculptures come somehow after studying the principles of

*composition, philosophy and reflecting upon the history of humankind and nature. It naturally falls under ‘To Seek/ Meditate / Reflect on and Create.’”*

His artworks have been exhibited in Romania, and are held in private collections in Germany and Ireland. <sup>A</sup>



Above: Bogdan Murariu, *Samurai II - Homage to Toshiro Mifune*, marble, 39.5 x 36 x 7 cm

hansasethi.com

# Hansa Sethi

Hansa Sethi’s paintings explore mental and emotional states rooted in lived experience. She works through abstraction to articulate non-verbal conditions such as depression, emotional numbness, and psychological rupture. She uses dense palettes, repetitive structures, and layered surfaces.

Her work is shaped by her prolonged encounters with mental health challenges. She says, “What is often perceived as decorative—the recurring

*colour palette, spirals, and gestures—functions instead as a visual language of mental stasis. These register internal states and become visual traces of a consciousness immobilised while the external world continues.”*

“These repetitions function as mechanisms of defence and survival rather than ornament. The work does not explain experience; it records it.”

Hansa’s practice spans other media, including photography. She is based in India. <sup>A</sup>



Above: Hansa Sethi, *Delicacy*, acrylic on canvas, 91 x 122 cm



# Sheela Becton

Mixed-media artist, Olney, MD, USA



## How do you convey themes of healing, renewal, and transformation in your art?

My art conveys healing, renewal, and transformation through layered symbolism, organic forms, and emotionally intuitive mark-making that mirrors personal and natural cycles of growth. Layered surfaces suggesting time and recovery, Renewal appears in my art as emergence — shapes rising, blooming, or unfolding. Nature symbolises life's ability to regenerate, showing that change can be both beautiful and restorative. Through my mixed media approach, transformation itself becomes symbolic:

materials interact, overlap, and change, mirroring emotional and personal metamorphosis.

## In what ways do you explore feminine strength and resilience through your mixed media practice?

Feminine strength is an embodied presence for me. Across my portfolio, femininity and resilience appear through recurring visual choices: the feminine posture, reclining, rising, and turning inward.

My inspiration comes from the strength of nature and the parallels between nature and feminine strength. Here, strength is tender, introspective,

Sheela Becton is a mixed-media artist, a survivor, and a storyteller whose work explores the quiet strength of the feminine spirit, the healing rhythm of nature, and the ancestral wisdom woven into everyday life. After facing cancer, she returned to her creative path to reclaim joy and meaning. "My art honours feminine strength not only as an abstract ideal but as a deeply personal truth shaped by my own journey. Each piece is both a celebration and a reclamation of that power." She uses materials such as recycled burlap, organic jute, dried flowers, textured fibre, and upcycled saris in her creations.

[sheelacreates.com](http://sheelacreates.com)

Left: Sheela Becton, *Bloom from Broken Ground*, fiber art, 122 x 91 cm





**“By using sarees and patterns that relive stories and memories, I try to carry my lineage forward even after rupture.”**



and connected to the land. It’s about being deeply rooted, cyclical, and organic—like a tree that bends, sheds leaves, and still stands. Through my art, I aim to show feminine strength not as perfection or invincibility, but as a living, breathing process: breaking, resting, remembering, reconnecting, and blooming again.

**How does your Indian heritage shape the symbolism, colour, and narratives in your work?**

The memories of growing up in India, the daily traditions, symbols, and the colour culture are etched in my mind and relived in my Art. My work constantly pulls in Indian motifs, textiles, symbols, and spiritual echoes. By using sarees and patterns that relive stories and memories, I try to carry my lineage forward even after rupture. My Indian heritage: sarees, temple-like architecture, lotus, peacocks, and decorative patterning are all spiritual and ancestral bridges. My version of sacred is ornate, embodied, and alive. In my work, feminine strength is inseparable from heritage. The women I paint carry temples, birds, and textiles within them—they are archives of both personal and ancestral resilience, an homage to the long line of strong Matriarchs I come from.

**What do you hope viewers feel or reflect on when engaging with your pieces?**

I would like to invite viewers into a contemplative space to reflect on their own journey of healing, renewal, and transformation. When viewers engage with my art, I hope they can be in a quiet emotional space; one that encourages pause, reflection, and inner connection. They may reflect on their own journey of healing or life

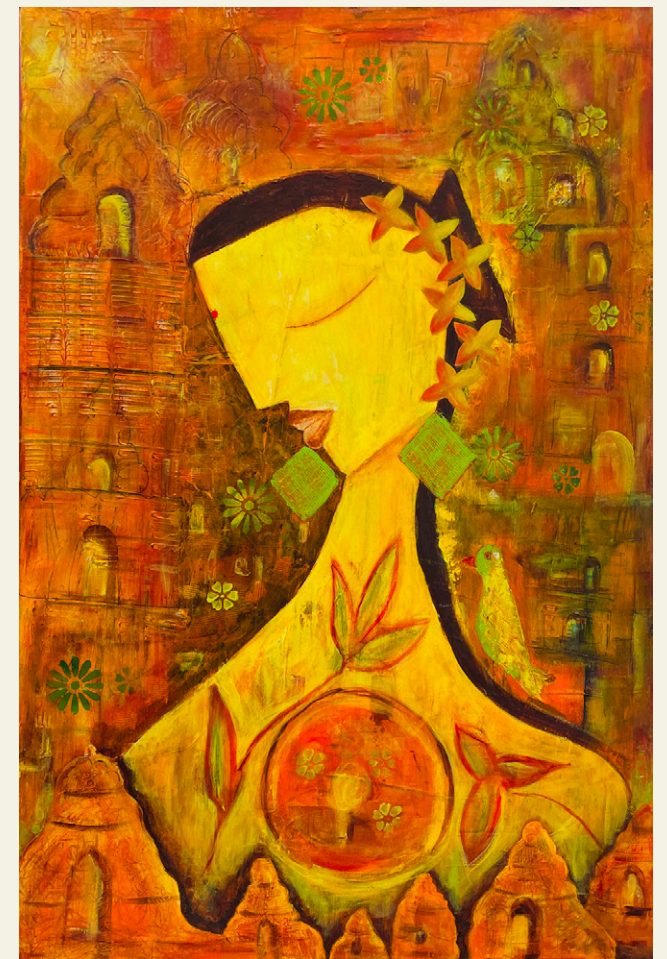


Left: Sheela Becton, *Fragile and Resilient*, mixed media on canvas, 121 x 91 cm

Above: Sheela Becton, *Abundance*, acrylic on canvas, 50 x 40 cm

Right: Sheela Becton, *Divine Mother Earth*, mixed media on canvas, 91.5 x 61 cm

transitions, on inner strength and resilience, or on their personal experience with nature. I want them to be curious about what is unfolding beneath the layers and textures. I hope to evoke, through colour, form, and texture, the same visceral emotions that fuel my creative process. I want viewers to slow down, look more closely, and discover subtle shifts, much as they notice change within themselves over time. **A**





yixuanwu.com

BACK  
COVER

# Yixuan Wu

Yixuan Wu is a visual artist based in New York. Drawing on the ungraspable yet familiar everyday, she reconstructs and reconfigures vignettes of domesticity into substructures. Her sculptural arrangements address the subtle gestures that endow the objects with sensual qualities, the incongruous systems, and the uncanny.



By embedding personal narratives across multiple cultural sources, Yixuan's practice investigates fragmented recollections through layered intricacies.

She says, "My practice centres around domesticity—the elusive, restrained and sometimes unsettling emotional responses tied to intimate spaces. I'm particularly intrigued by things that appear one way but are quite another, especially things that satisfy our needs for comfort, care, affirmation and protection."

"My recent projects revolve around my time as a caregiver for a family member. The works examine the notion of displacement through my recreation of questioned comforts, delving into the complexities of sensory deprivation and its relationship to memory loss. Often inspired by therapeutic activities designed to compensate for memory loss, my sculptural arrangements piece together recurring elements and motifs reminiscent of environmental enhancements found in senior care facilities."

Yixuan holds an MFA in Visual Arts from Columbia University and a BFA in Photography from the Rhode Island School of Design. 🍷

Above: Yixuan Wu, *The Entwined* (detail view), blown glass, wood, rice, millet, 57 x 28 x 28 cm

anajosedemelo.com

# Ana Melo

Ana Melo is a Lisbon-based artist whose work begins where most people prefer not to look. Trained as a therapist, she brings an understanding of human psychology to her art practice to get closer to the truth of things: what we hide, what we carry, and what connects us to one another.

Her art is driven by a fundamental need to decipher human nature. Melo is drawn to the shadow - the parts of the self that society teaches us to suppress. Her work tries to bring these into the light.

Ana says she wants her work to help viewers feel accepted and less alone by showing that everyone has difficult, imperfect experiences that should not cause shame.

Deeply interested in philosophy and psychology, she searches for what she calls "pearls": insights that feel worth making visible. Sometimes, this means giving form to repressed emotions. At other times, it means gently illuminating what it is to be human. 🍷



Above: Ana Melo, *The Usual Shit*, pen, pencil, watercolor, ink, 43 x 30 cm



# Robert Page

Painter, Memphis, TN, USA

**"Still life was a business card of sorts during the Renaissance."**

**What draws you to still life as a subject in contemporary art?**

There's something special about it. Still life was a business card of sorts during the Renaissance. If you were spending this much time and skill on simple everyday objects and rendering them accurately. "What would you be able to do with commissions?" I like to think it still has that approach.

**How do you choose the everyday foods that become the focus of your paintings?**

I've worked in kitchens for many years. So, it started from there.

Whenever I was cutting meat, vegetables, etc.

I couldn't help but see the colours and shapes in the marbling of the meats, the light shining off the wetness of the juices flowing out.

If something really caught my eye, I'd take a quick photo for reference later.

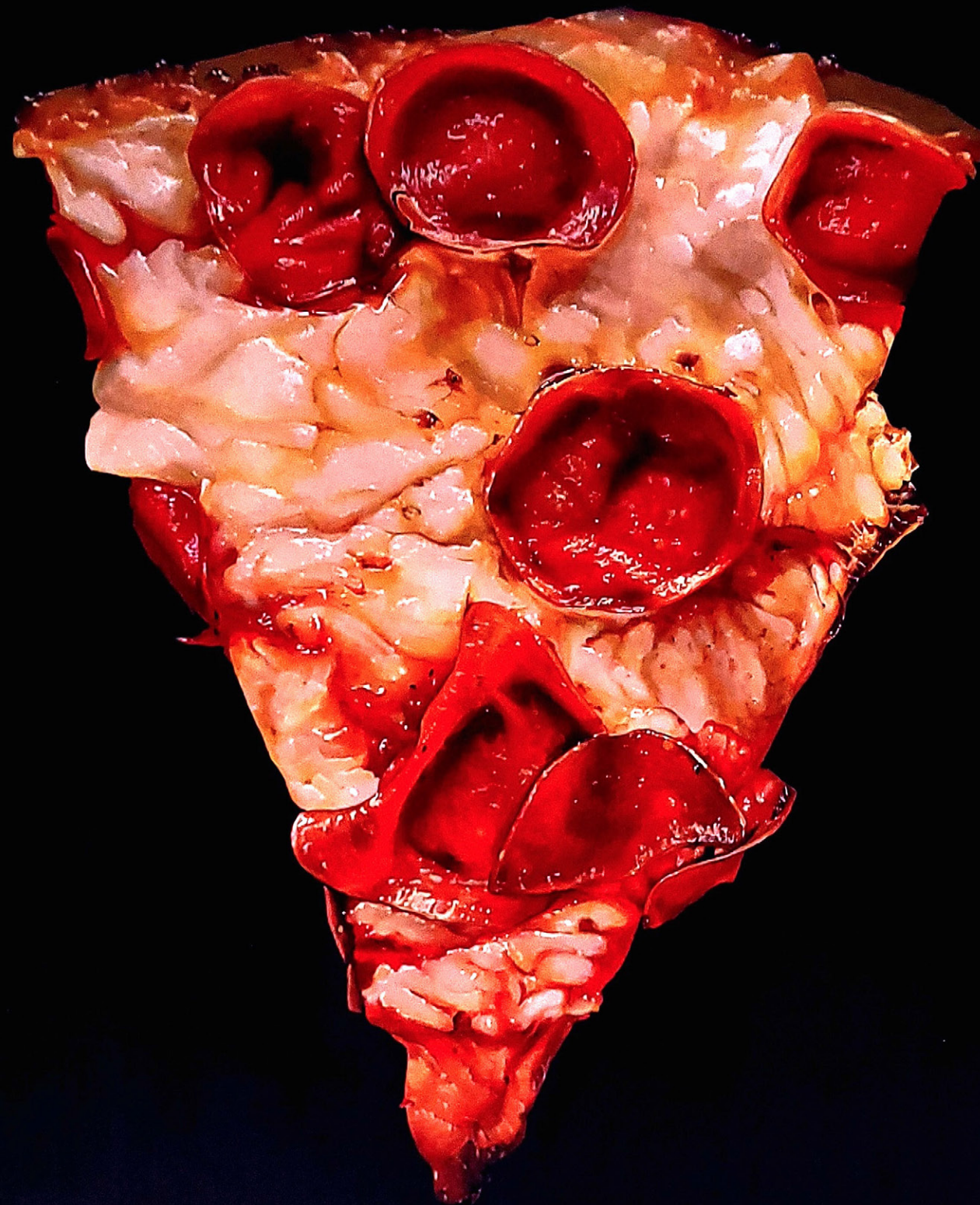
I still do that if something I cook looks particularly interesting. It doesn't have to be pretty. It's better when it isn't.



Robert Page is a self-taught traditional oil painter drawn to Still Life: a genre he feels is overlooked in contemporary art compared to its elevated status in previous artistic movements. He says, "A Still Life allows viewers to see themselves and their daily experiences reflected in the rendering of familiar, beloved objects." In recent years, he has adopted a hyperrealistic approach to depicting everyday food items. Not elaborate meals whose aesthetic merit is immediately recognised, but subjects that are often imperfect or even naive/amateurish. A reheated slice of pizza, a melting ice cream cone. Foods that connect with emotions, memory, and the pulse of everyday life.

[robertpageart.com](http://robertpageart.com)

Right: Robert Page, *Reheat / Burnt Edges*, oil on canvas, 121 x 92 cm







**What role does scale play in how viewers experience your series of food paintings?**

I hope it triggers a moment or memory in someone. A night out with friends. (That dead, day-old pizza in the fridge you forgot you bought at 2am. When you finally wake up from the night before and see it there. And the past night's events come rushing back.) That's a lot to ask from a painting, but I hope it does.



**How do imperfections or "naive" qualities in your subjects influence the story each painting tells?**

"Flaws" are more interesting. If I were to go out and paint trees. I wouldn't look for the perfectly straight ones all in a row. The ones that have been through some sh\*t. Heavy winds, broken limbs, slightly uprooted. It would be my focus and the ones I'd searched for. I do that with painting...I leave a few unrefined brushstrokes to live in the imperfect. **A**

Top: Robert Page, *Le Hamburger en Désordre*, oil on canvas, 45.7 x 61 cm  
Bottom: Robert Page, *Eggs (The Sunny Side)*, oil on canvas, 92 x 92 cm

Top: Robert Page, *Kamala "The Wrestler" Roll*, oil on canvas, 61 x 76.2 cm  
Bottom: Robert Page, *Tomato*, oil on wood round panel, 20.3 cm diameter



eknoormatharoo.com

# Eknoor Matharoo

Eknoor Matharoo is a visual artist from India with a focus on printmaking.

*“Much of my work begins with memory: fragments of places I’ve been, images that linger longer than expected, feelings that don’t have language yet. I’m interested in those imperfections, the proof that a human hand was here.”*

*“My work isn’t about grand statements. It’s about attention and honouring the small, the overlooked, the emotionally charged details of everyday life.”*

*“I’m drawn to printmaking and bookmaking because they demand presence. You can’t rush a woodblock or force an image to reveal itself. You have to listen to the material, to the resistance, to what wants to emerge.”*

She works from her studio in Chandigarh, India. 



Above: Eknoor Matharoo, *The Window*, relief woodblock monoprint, 76 x 56 cm

asirionstudio.com

# Karolina Korandová

Karolina Korandová is a contemporary painter based in the Czech Republic whose practice draws from cosmic structures and abstract spatial forms as reflections of inner landscapes shaped by time, memory, and perception.

Rather than narrating fixed meanings, her work creates open visual spaces that invite stillness and attentive viewing.

*“Painting is a way for me to look inward and far beyond the horizon. In my paintings, I approach the cosmos not as a depiction of outer space, but as an imprint of inner states, silence, expansion, and memory. The works emerge slowly, through layers, in dialogue with light and time. I create stories through time and space, stories of remembrance. I am drawn to the moment when colour stops describing and becomes a space itself, a place where the viewer can pause and perceive without the need for explanation.” *



Above: Karolina Korandová, *Birth*, oil on canvas, 40 x 60 cm





## ARTIST Q&A

# Michelle Reese

Visual artist, Nebraska, USA

### How do you use colour to express identity beyond traditional categories of race?

I use colour as a language that moves beyond fixed categories like race and instead speaks to energy, emotion, and presence. I don't see people as just Black, white, or brown—I see a spectrum. My palette reflects that belief. Saturated hues, unexpected colour combinations, and layered tones allow me to portray identity as something fluid, radiant, and multidimensional. Colour becomes a way to honour individuality while also celebrating a shared human vibrancy.

### What draws you to merge figurative portraiture with expressive abstraction in your murals and paintings?

I'm drawn to merging figurative portraiture with expressive abstraction because it mirrors how we exist in the world—grounded in reality, yet shaped by emotion, memory, and environment. The figure provides a point of connection, something recognisable and human, while abstraction allows me to push beyond surface-level representation. It gives space for movement, rhythm, and intuition.



Michelle Reese is a visual artist based in Nebraska, specialising in painting and large-scale murals. Her work explores identity through vibrant colour, blending figurative portraiture with expressive abstraction to capture the complexity of human presence. Influenced by street art and bold visual storytelling, her pieces celebrate Black beauty, resilience, and individuality. Reese has collaborated on public art projects, including Huskers Signing Day and community murals, and continues to expand her practice through both studio work and public installations.

[instagram.com/cocoxartzs](https://www.instagram.com/cocoxartzs)

Left: Michelle Reese, *Eclipsed Majesty*, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 24 cm





In my murals and paintings, abstraction carries the unseen—spirit, culture, and energy—while the figure anchors the work in lived experience.



### How do you balance strength and vulnerability in the figures you create?

Balancing strength and vulnerability is central to my practice. I often portray my figures with confident posture, direct gazes, and bold presence, symbolising resilience and power. At the same time, I soften them through expressive brushwork, colour transitions, and moments of openness.

## “There is power in being seen fully.”

Vulnerability shows up in the details—the eyes, the gestures, the fragmentation or blending of form. I want my work to reflect the reality that strength and vulnerability are not opposites, but coexist. There is power in being seen fully.

### In what ways do public murals allow you to expand the conversation around visibility and cultural presence?

Public murals allow me to expand conversations around visibility by bringing these narratives into everyday spaces. Unlike traditional gallery settings, murals exist within the community—they are accessible, immediate, and unavoidable.

Through large-scale work, I centre presence and representation, creating moments where people can see themselves reflected with power and dignity. Murals become more than images; they act as declarations of identity, visibility, and belonging. <sup>A</sup>

Left: Michelle Reese, *Lush Tempo*, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 24 cm

Right: Michelle Reese, *Elegance in Amber Hues*, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 24 cm





siddaniels.com

# Sid Daniels

Sid Daniels is a Miami Beach-based contemporary artist whose work fuses fashion, theatre, and design into a bold visual performance. Steeped in nostalgia yet distinctly modern, his paintings and works on paper channel the glamour of bygone eras through colour, wit, and cinematic drama.

*“My works on paper explore architecture as theatre-constructed spaces that feel staged, inhabited, and in motion. Using collage with painted surfaces, I integrate ink, markers, coloured pencil, and linear mark-making to build fragmented environments that suggest cities, vessels, and interiors without fully defining them. Geometry serves as both structure and narrative, guiding the viewer through layered planes that shift between solidity and transparency.”*

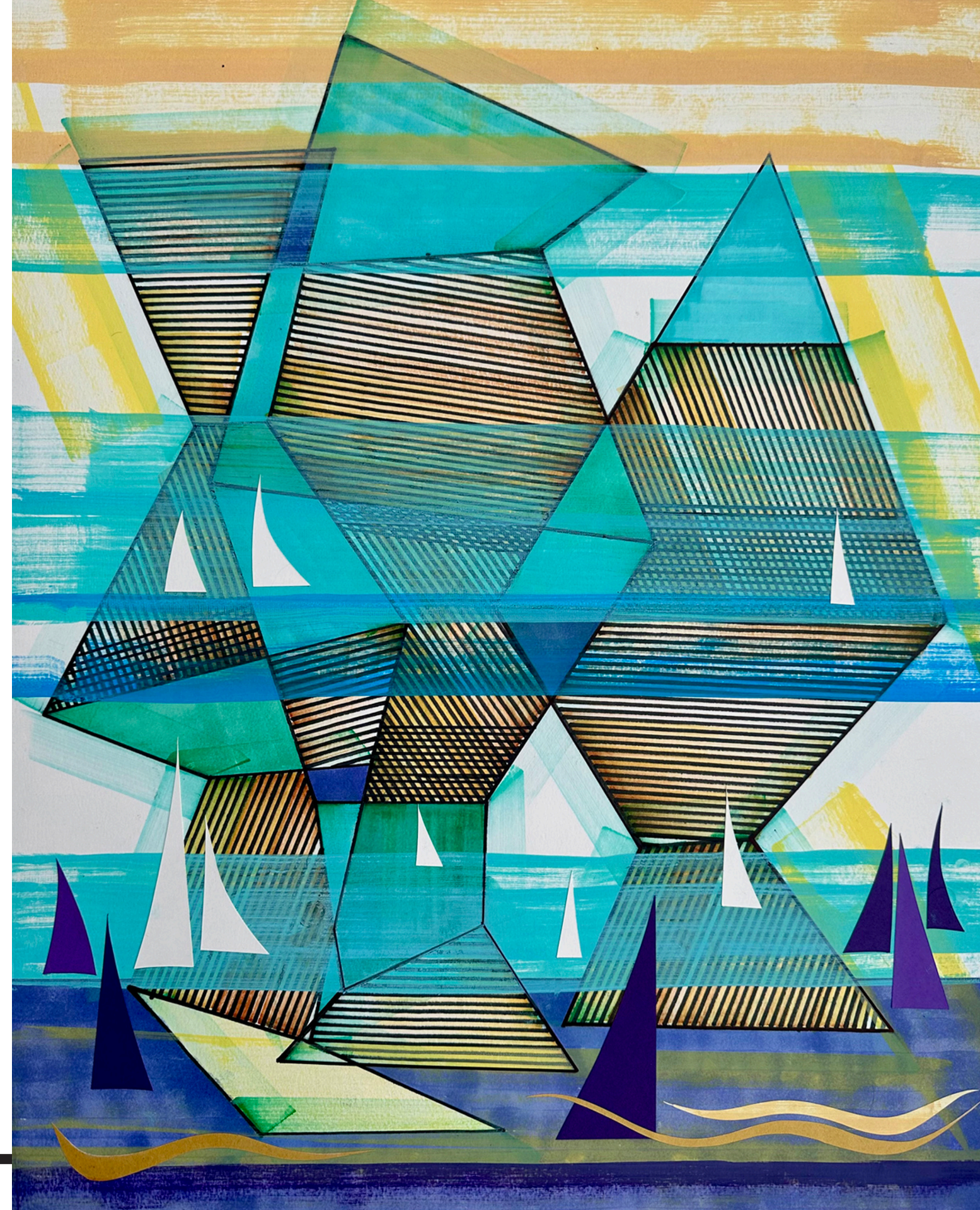
*“I am influenced by mid-century design and modernist architecture. My compositions combine grids and angular forms with*

*painterly gestures and cut paper. Each piece functions like a set design, where elements overlap, recede, and advance. Water, light, and movement recur as motifs, inviting the viewer to navigate these imagined landscapes rather than simply observe them.”*

After graduating from the Ontario College of Art (1970–1974), Daniels began his career as a fashion illustrator for Alton Lewis in Toronto. In 1978, he relocated to New York City during the height of the Disco Era, a period whose energy and exuberance profoundly shaped his artistic vision.

Since relocating to Miami Beach in 1997, Daniels has continued to evolve through public art, solo exhibitions, and fashion-inspired works on paper and canvas. His work appears in *The Great Big Book of Fashion Illustration*, *101 Contemporary Artists*, and *Beautiful Bizarre Magazine*. 

Right: Sid Daniels, *Oasis 2*, mixed media on paper, 61 x 45.7 cm





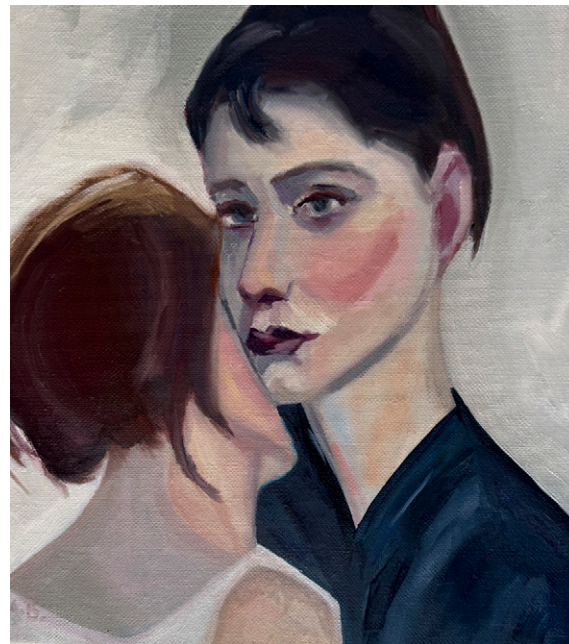
[dailypaintworks.com/artists/astrid-buchhammer-2773](https://dailypaintworks.com/artists/astrid-buchhammer-2773)

# Astrid Buchhammer

Astrid Buchhammer is a Berlin-based painter whose work focuses on quiet, introspective moments in everyday life. Working primarily in oil on linen and on small square formats, she creates intimate scenes that explore stillness, vulnerability, and the emotional distance or closeness between people.

Buchhammer took up painting later in life and says art became a way for her to reclaim space, time, and voice. This late start gives her practice a particular urgency and tenderness: each painting is approached as a concentrated, honest encounter with a moment that might otherwise disappear unnoticed.

*"My paintings are an invitation to pause in moments that are often overlooked: a room before the day begins, a quiet exchange between two people, a corner where the light briefly settles. I am drawn to the tension between stillness and emotional intensity, to scenes where almost nothing happens on the surface, and yet everything feels charged. Working in oil on linen and on small square formats allows me to keep the viewing experience intimate, as if the viewer is standing very close to a fragment of a larger story."* ▲



Above: Astrid Buchhammer, *Between Us*, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 cm

[oriaviramart.com](https://oriaviramart.com)

# Ori Aviram

Over the years, artist Ori Aviram has worked across sculpture, assemblage, collage, drawing, and painting. Today, his work is characterised by large-format oil paintings that move fluidly between the figurative and the abstract. Cultural connections — including Biblical stories and Western art history — recur throughout, corresponding with what he describes as a rich emotional world.

*"Colour and oil paint are the main issues in my art — colour as a matter that can be sculpted, shaped, engraved and shovelled. In most of my paintings, colour is strong and dominant, while line and composition, though not neglected, are secondary."*



Drawing on realism, modernism, and abstraction as his primary references, Aviram describes a practice rooted in instinct as much as tradition.

*"I create from an internal place, but the history of art is familiar to me and clearly present. When I work, I'm surprised by the gap between intention and outcome. In some moments, when the action streams effortlessly, I feel myself become a mere instrument."*

Basic forms return to him obsessively — the free play between shape and colour is, he says, what he truly relishes. ▲

Above: Ori Aviram, *Consciousness Born*, oil on canvas, 150 x 120 cm





# Beyond the Gallery: Why Open Studios Are Worth Your Time

**Step past the gallery and into the studio itself. Open studios are one of the art world's best-kept secrets, and spring is the season to seek them out.**

## Behind the Studio Door: Why Every Art Lover Should Visit Open Studios

There's something quietly thrilling about stepping into an artist's studio. Unlike the polished hush of a gallery, an open studio is raw, lived-in, and alive - half-finished canvases stacked against the wall, the smell of linseed oil in the air, and the artist themselves standing right there, ready to talk.

For art lovers and collectors, it's one of the most rewarding experiences the creative world has to offer.

## More than just paintings on walls

Open studios are delightfully varied.

Yes, you'll find painters and printmakers but you'll also discover jewellers crafting intricate pieces at their workbench, milliners surrounded by blocks and ribbon, ceramicists with shelves of quietly beautiful forms, and textile artists, sculptors, and designer-makers of every kind. The breadth is part of the pleasure. You never quite know what's behind the next door.

And not everything will speak to you that's perfectly fine. There's no obligation to buy, no pressure to enthuse.

Simply moving through the space and taking it in at your own pace is enough. Think of it as a wander rather than a mission. The work that genuinely stops you in your tracks will make itself known.

## How to find open studios

Keep an eye on local event listings, your town's council website, and the local press - open studio weekends are regularly featured in community round-ups. Facebook groups dedicated to local activities and events are particularly useful, as artists tend to share and cross-promote each other's events. And on Instagram, many artists announce their open studio dates first.

Timing matters. Spring is by far the most popular season for open studios, with events clustered across May and June in many areas. Crucially, these events typically run for just a couple of days, so if you miss the window, you'll likely be waiting until pre-Christmas or a full year for another chance. It's worth marking your calendar as soon as you spot a date.

## Be strategic with your time

I love studios featuring multiple artists.

Whether it's a shared studio building or a group of artists gathering at one of their homes, these multi-artist events have a wonderful energy, a buzz of conversation,

a natural variety of work, and the fascinating dynamic of seeing how artists within the same community relate to each other's practice.

**"The work that genuinely stops you in your tracks will make itself known."**

## Stay connected

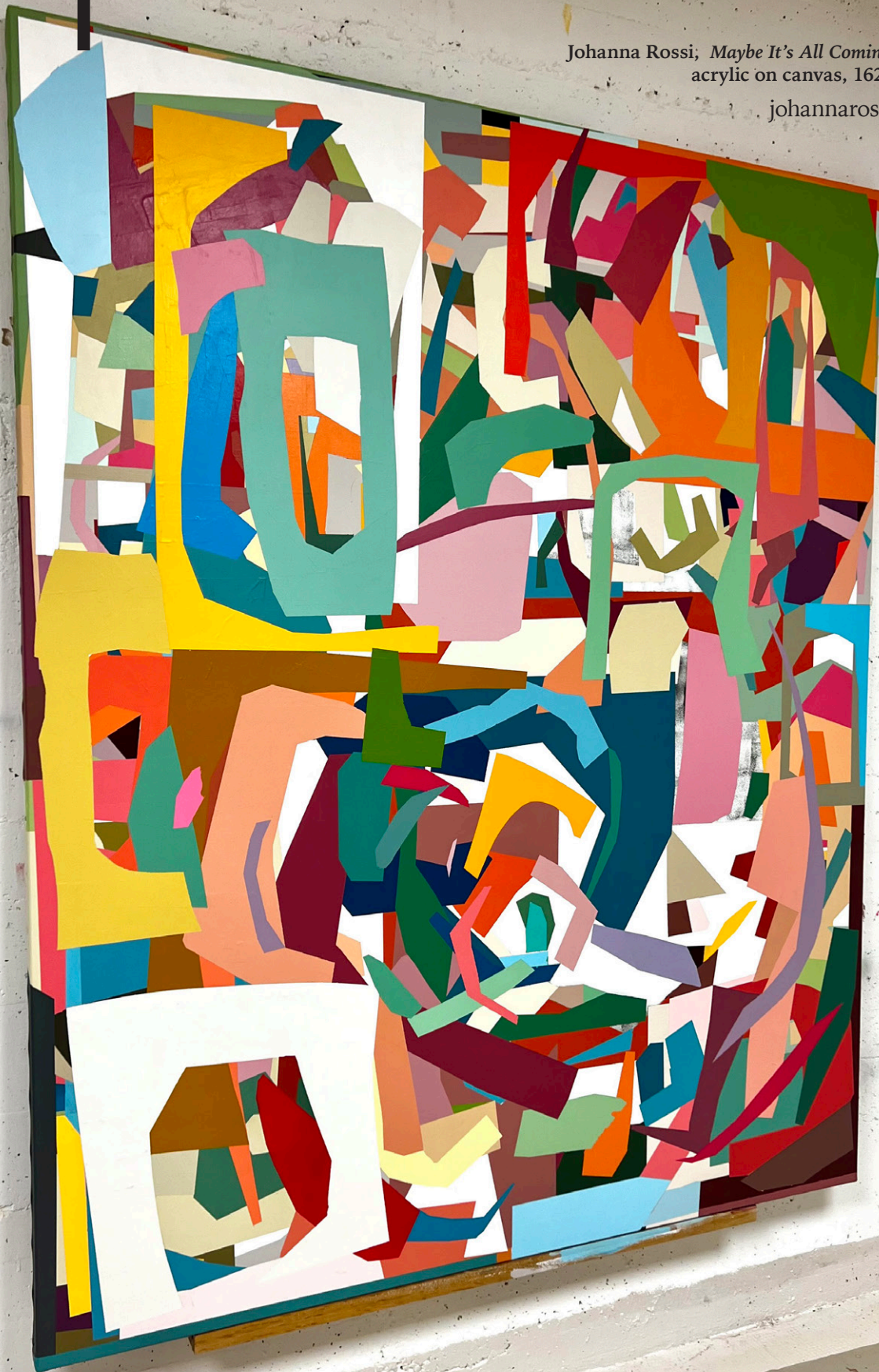
As independent businesses, artists and designer-makers rely on building their own audiences. If someone's work resonates with you, sign up for their mailing list or follow them on social media. It costs nothing and means you'll be among the first to hear about new work, commissions, or upcoming shows.

That last point matters more than it might seem. There's a particular thrill in spotting an artist you discovered at an open studio later showing at a major gallery and knowing you found them first, in the place where it all happens.

Visiting open studios lets you witness art in progress, connect with artists, and bring home stories as memorable as the works themselves. [A](#)



Johanna Rossi, *Maybe It's All Coming Together*,  
acrylic on canvas, 162 x 130 cm  
johannarossiart.com



# Ready to have your Art Seen?

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a publication that has  
a balanced representation  
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submissions from artists  
based in any location

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