

PROVOCATIVE PATTERNS

CURATED BY LORENA KLOOSTERBOER



PoetsArtists
Issue #106 | October 2019



Poets *Artists*

www.poetsandartists.com
GOSS183 PUBLISHING HOUSE
604 Vale Street Bloomington, IL 61701 USA

PUBLISHER & DESIGNER | DIDI MENENDEZ

GUEST EDITOR & CURATOR | LORENA KLOOSTERBOER

COVER ARTIST | KIM LEUTWYLER

ARTWORK AVAILABLE FROM 33 CONTEMPORARY & ARTSY

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Aixa Oliveras
Allan Gorman
Amanda Greive
Amy Laskin
Anne-Marie Zanetti
Ardith Starostka
Carin Wagner
Carol Stewart
Carolien van Olphen
Christopher O'Connor
Daggi Wallace
Dana Hawk
Daniela Werneck
Diane Rudnick Mann
Doug Webb
Elena Degenhardt

Elizabeth Barden
Francien Krieg
Fred Wessel
Gerd Lieder
Gezien van de Riet
Ingrid Capozzoli Flinn
Irene Georgopoulou
Jane Gardiner
Jesse Lane
Junyi Liu
Kathleen Carr
Kim Leutwyler
Kimberly Dow
Kyla Zoe Rafert
Laurence O'Toole
Lisa Ficarelli-Halpern

Lisa Fricker
Lorena Kloosterboer
Margaret Ingles
Michael Bergt
Nadine Robbins
Nanda Hoep
Narelle Zeller
Pamela Askew
Ramsay Gibb
Simon Hennessey
Sybiline
Teresa Brucher
Veronica Winters
Vicki Sullivan
Yana Beylinson
Yvonne Melchers

Copyright ©2019. All rights are reserved by *PoetsArtists*, GOSS183, Didi Menendez, and contributing artists, writers, and poets. All writings, artwork, and images remain copyright of the contributors and may not be reproduced without explicit permission. This publication may not be reproduced electronically, digitally, in print or any other form, format, or media without the explicit, written permission and approval of the copyright holders. All images and artwork are used with permission of the authors/creators or their representatives. Unless otherwise noted all sizes are in inches.

Kloosterboer on Provocative Patterns

The Premise

When Didi Menendez, publisher of *PoetsArtists* invited me to curate a special edition for the third time, I relished the opportunity. Curating *Idiosyncratic Monochromes* in 2017 and *Glorious Color* in 2018 were both immensely enriching experiences for me.

This time, to follow the monochromatic and color topics of my previous special editions, I chose *Provocative Patterns* as the starring topic. My objective: To publish a spectacular anthology of figurative artwork expressing artists' interpretations of patterns—be they visual, physical, emotional, conceptual, or symbolic.

Provocative Patterns

The theme of this special edition, *Provocative Patterns*, can be interpreted in multiple ways which I left, in large part, to the interpretation and imagination of the artists. My guidelines stated:

- A pattern can be a repeated design, decoration, motif, marks or brushstrokes. A pattern can also suggest a behavior, a habit, or a stimulus. A pattern may be recurrent, repetitive, or rhythmic.

- Provocative can mean exciting, alluring, seductive, tempting, suggestive, inviting, infuriating, or vexing. Provocative can imply causing a strong emotional reaction or suggest contemplation.

Human brains have evolved to recognize patterns, especially on a visual level. The part of the brain that controls pattern recognition is the cerebral cortex, it's the outer layer of neural tissue of the cerebrum. It is responsible for high-level thinking, problem solving, language, planning, vision, pattern recognition, and so on.

In nature patterns can often be chaotic, yet many are symmetrical and/or radial, and many have fractal dimensions—think of spirals, spots, stripes, waves, ripples, bubbles, scales, crevices, and branches.

In art and architecture, decorations, structures, and shapes are often combined and repeated to create patterns designed to have a certain effect on the us—think of tiling, weaves, columns, windows, flooring, and reiterating decorative designs.

In science and mathematics some rule patterns can be visualized. Fractals are mathematical patterns that are scale invariant, meaning that the shape of the pattern does not depend on how closely you look at it—think coast lines and tree shapes.

The human tendency to see patterns that do not actually exist is called apophenia. Examples include the Man in the Moon, faces or figures in shadows or clouds, and in patterns with no deliberate design, such as the swirls on cake. Apophenia also describes the perception of underlying connections between events which are, in fact, unrelated.

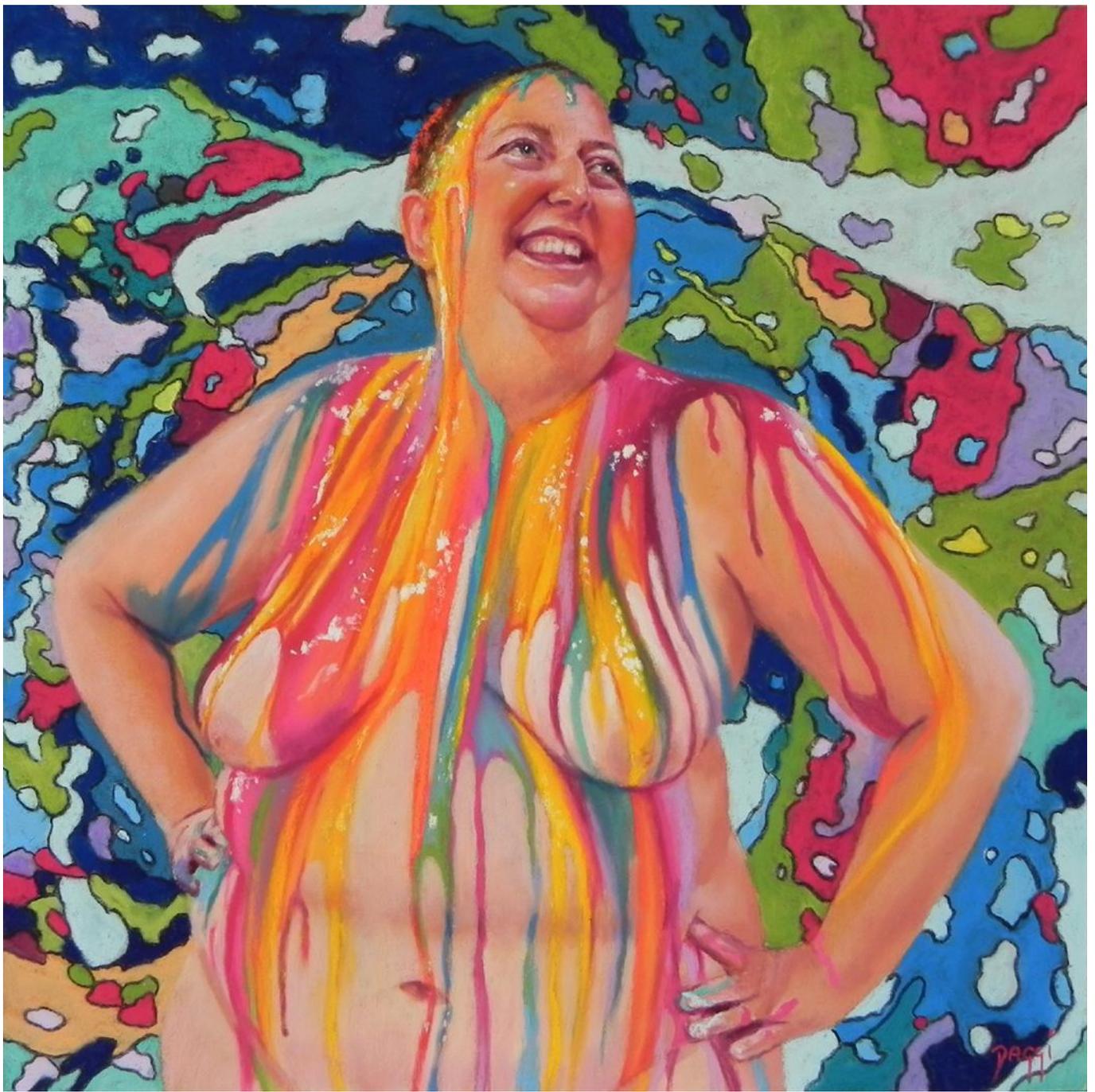
The Mission

Patterns within artwork can be eye-catching and thought-provoking. There's a sense of exhilaration in the quest to make sense of visual or conceptual labyrinths; we want to solve the puzzle. For this *PoetsArtists* issue I envisioned a sophisticated yet highly engaging collection of lavishly elaborate paintings that result in a must-have art publication worthy of special edition status.

All selected pieces fit the key principles of what I consider to be brilliant examples of *Provocative Patterns*. Some paintings rely on repetitions in brush strokes, colors, or shapes, while others rely on symbolism, narrative, or whimsy. I selected a total of 48 pieces—and yes, I shamelessly added one of my own, just because... hey, I can.

Accompanying each painting, I clarify my reasons for including the piece. Independently, each piece stands out for its individual splendor and amazing conception. Seen together as a collection, these paintings form a moving and inspiring survey of the creative expression of provocative patterns.

—LORENA KLOOSTERBOER
OCTOBER 2019



DAGGI WALLACE IS A GERMAN ARTIST BASED IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Wallace's extroverted painting, entitled *Abundance*, is a portrait of a fellow artist whose work surveys and examines all aspects of body image. Wallace adeptly captured her friend's spirit, conveying her jubilant abundance, intrepid courage, and joyous love for life.

Abundance draws me because of its delightful boldness in

shapes, colors, and textures, combining the luscious realism of the figure drenched in a rainbow of dripping paint with a playfully naïve background. The artist perfectly expresses the personality of the laughing nude, giving us a pictorial impression of a flamboyant, expressive, and strong woman who inspires admiration for her kindhearted demeanor and her defiant this-

is-who-I-am attitude.



MARGARET INGLES IS AN AUSTRALIAN ARTIST BASED IN MANLY, QUEENSLAND, IN AUSTRALIA

Ingles' fabulous painting, entitled *I prefer Dogs*, is part of her fascinating series portraying hands, showing them to be as unique and recognizable as faces, both in physical characteristics as well as their remarkable capacity to express emotions, communicate ideas, and tell stories. In this piece the subject takes tea after a valiant yet failed attempt to become friends with a cat.

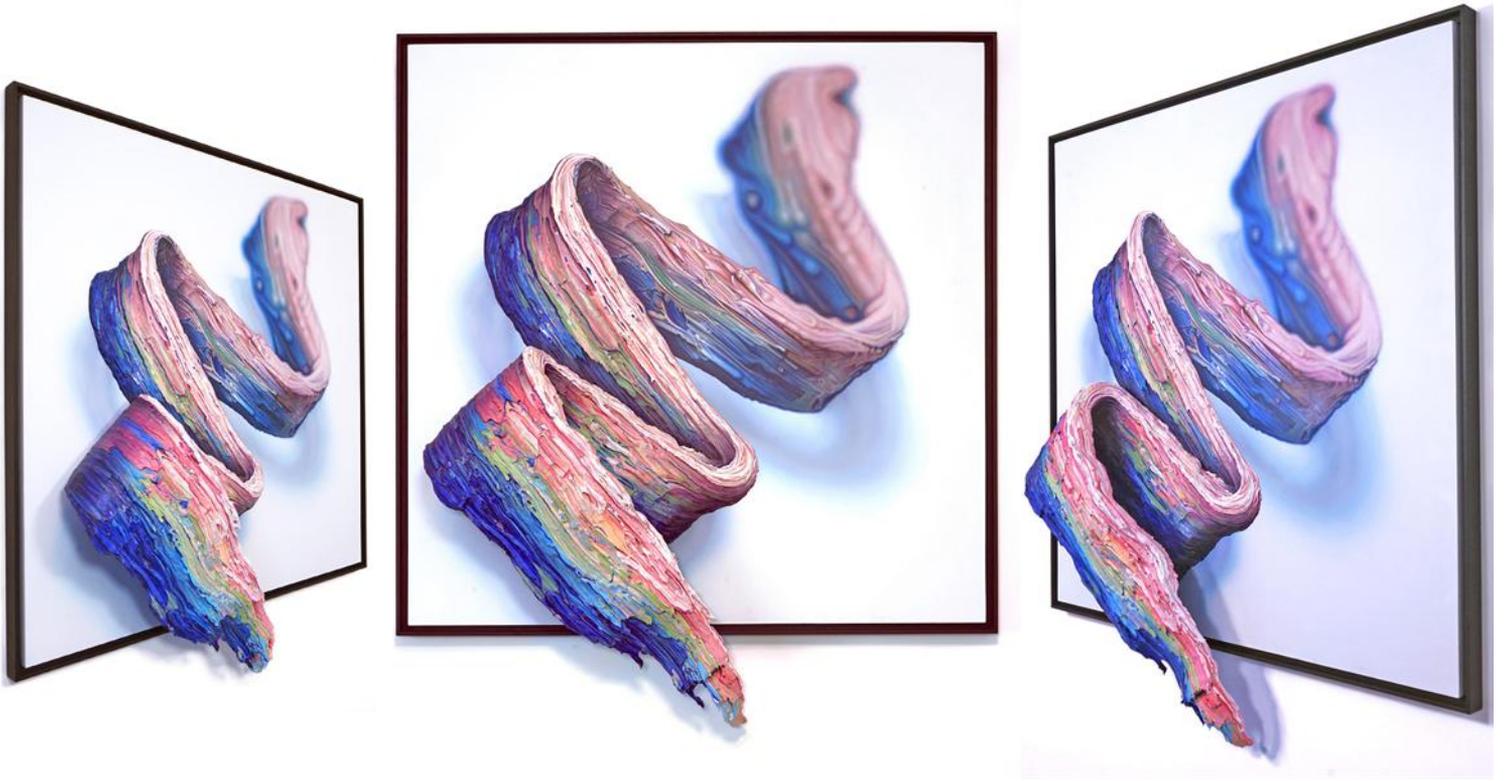
I Prefer Dogs draws me because of its jubilant polychrome palette found in the lively stripes and dots that act as a backdrop for the fine realism of human skin. The witty title can be extrapolated from the fresh scratches on the wrist, while the hands—recognizably feminine, agile and strong—securely hold on to the cup of comforting elixir that will serve to calm her nerves.



LISA FICARELLI-HALPERN IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN SHREWSBURY, NEW JERSEY

Ficarelli-Halpern's lighthearted painting, entitled *Dangling Still Life No. 1*, is a contemporary still life inspired by a historic masterpiece by Juan Sanchez de Cotán. Using a candy colored Baroque pattern as background, this swanky composition focuses on modern trends about our dependence on personal technology and the myriad of optional funky adornments available.

Dangling Still Life No. 1 draws me because of its bright rosy palette, beautifully painted hand, and its incontrovertibly modern-day subject matter. It highlights how functional objects and decorative designs have evolved from being exclusive and unique to being mass produced. Today, this dizzying diversity of easily available accessories is accessible to most of us.



SIMON HENNESSEY IS A BRITISH ARTIST BASED IN BIRMINGHAM, UNITED KINGDOM

Hennessey's ingenious painting, entitled *The Dance*, is a pioneering exploration that unites realism and abstraction within the realm of hyperrealism. It's an ode to paint in its most basic form—the glorious brushstroke—portraying its languid shape through heavy impasto that evolves into a three-dimensional bas-relief that protrudes from the surface, making it come alive.

The Dance draws me because of its inventiveness, its bold originality, and skillful expression of optical illusion and out-of-focus depth. Both the color palette and textures are luscious, and the stark black frame helps us understand how the paint leaps off its surface. Both a painting and a sculpture, this multi-disciplinary artwork needs to be seen in person to be fully appreciated.



NANDA HOEP IS A DUTCH ARTIST BASED IN NIEUWERBRUG AAN DE RIJN, THE NETHERLANDS

Hoep's quirky painting, *La Vie en Rose*, shows a pat of rosy flamingos—we can visualize these bizarre birds wading, standing erect one moment, then moving together in quick, synchronized steps in one direction and then another. The colony's ritual dance is performed gracefully, effortlessly, and perfectly coordinated, as if they have practiced their ballet many times before.

La Vie en Rose draws me because of the rhythmic silhouettes—recognizable yet chaotic—and the idiosyncratic perspective with birds fading in the background. The title is French for “life in pink,” which loosely translates to “seeing the world through rose colored glasses.” This painting epitomizes some of the most curious phenomena of the natural world, unspoken communication.



VERONICA WINTERS IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN NAPLES FLORIDA

Winters' vibrant piece, entitled *Pachamama*, is inspired by Pachamama, the goddess of Nature of the indigenous people of the Andean Mountains—Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru. This imaginary portrait merges multicultural symbolism across time. The dots and lines on her face represent energy and vibration, and the multiple eyes represent a higher consciousness.

Pachamama draws me because of its vibrant color palette, its emotional intensity, and its exquisitely detailed background. This powerful portrait is beautifully rendered, utilizing dry media to look like paint. The combination of fine realism and exciting geometric shapes expressed in a dazzling color scheme makes this an exceptionally strong and vivacious artwork.



TERESA BRUTCHER IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN SAN JUAN DE POIO, SPAIN

Brutcher's captivating painting, entitled *Snow White Meets Will Tell*, is part of a series that explores the apple as a literary symbol of seduction, temptation, and human vulnerability. Creating a new fairytale, this piece shows Snow White ignoring the poisonous apples and William Tell's arrows—she is a modern, empowered woman, mistress of her own destiny.

Snow White Meets Will Tell draws me because of the superb quality of the portrait, the striking illumination, and the lovely details of the silk kimono and chair. The strength of the model's expression inspires admiration, her relaxed pose shows confidence. The details of the hands and feet and those found in the embroidery and fringes clearly show the artist's love for her métier.



GERD LIEDER IS A GERMAN ARTIST BASED IN BREMEN, GERMANY

Lieder's vibrant painting, entitled *Love Kills Slowly*, is emblematic of the artist's passionate pursuit of painting reflections, often inspired by his travels to large cosmopolitan cities where the opulence of the urban lifestyle catches his eye and imagination. This piece is based on a window display of a trendy boutique he chanced upon on Melrose Avenue in West Hollywood.

Love Kills Slowly draws me because of its fascinating amalgamation of fashion, lifestyle, and cityscape, expressed in a flamboyant color palette. The pictorial elements within the display gracefully merge with the window's reflection showing glimpses of the street scene across.



YVONNE MELCHERS IS A DUTCH ARTIST BASED IN DIEMEN, THE NETHERLANDS

Melchers' marvelous painting, entitled *Room 32 / Venetian Summer*, is part of a series of bedroom interiors that evolved during the artist's healing process after a broken relationship. The identical watches on the bed stand and the castoff shoes suggest the presence of lovers, yet the bed is sadly empty. The morning sunlight cast on the rumpled sheets alludes to happier times.

Room 32 / Venetian Summer draws me because of its wistful melancholy, its sophisticated composition, and the wonderfully detailed drapery of the creased sheets and bedcover—all skillfully built up in dappled brushstrokes using Claude Monet's color palette. The sliver of reflection in the window pane reveals the nostalgic scene is set in Venice—Italy's city of Love.



NARELLE ZELLER IS AN AUSTRALIAN ARTIST BASED IN CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

Zeller's spirited painting, entitled *Bury Me with a Mandarin*, is a portrait of her friend Hope holding her favorite fruit and wearing a vintage shawl, set against a backdrop of 1960s wallpaper packed with a crowd of cheerful flowers. The title refers to a family in-joke she is habitually teased with and illustrates the model's quirky, playful, and family-oriented personality.

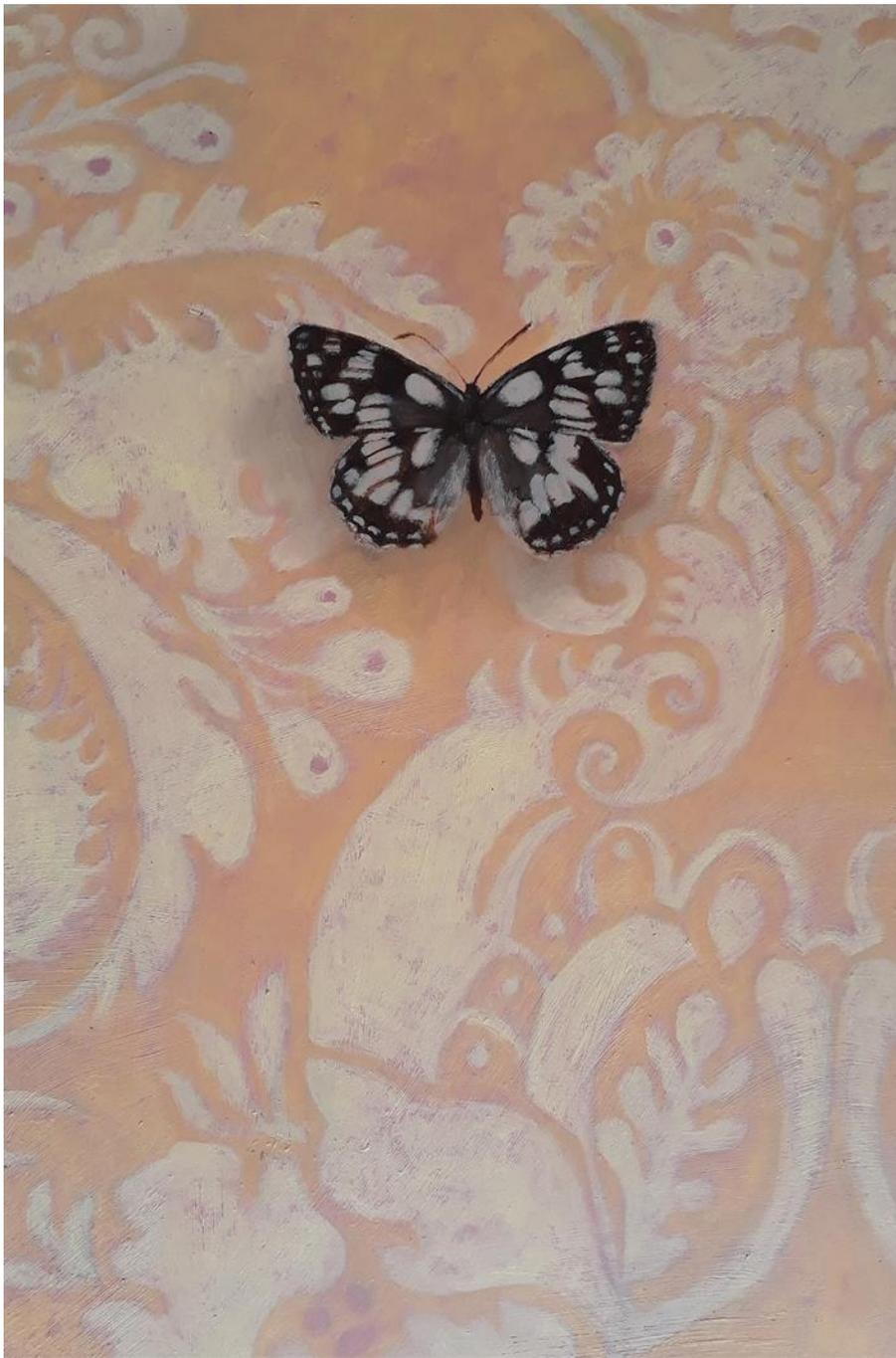
Bury Me with a Mandarin draws me because of its gorgeous details and textures expressed in skilled realism, as well as the pensive demeanor of the young woman. Her off-center placement gives a contemporary look to this composition, and even though the background is overflowing with patterns, they barely distract from the singular beauty of the enigmatic solitary figure.



KYLA ZOE RAFERT IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST, BASED IN AMANDA, OHIO

Rafert's amusing piece, entitled *The Protector*, is an adventure into the imagination—where seemingly innocent fairytales collide with the supernatural, our superstitions, and our innermost fantasies. An enigmatic female figure, dressed in traditional clothing, rides a zebra. She holds an indigo bunting in her hand while the zebra herd passively looks on. The ladder offers a viable getaway through the open window above, proposing a possible leap into the unknown.

The Protector draws me because of its imaginative ambiance, its captivating symbolism, and its abundance of delicate decorative patterns. It also poses a universal question: is the escape through the window a path to freedom, or is it better to just stay within a safely familiar realm?



JANE GARDINER IS A SCOTTISH ARTIST BASED IN GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

Gardiner's graceful painting, entitled *Yellow Marble*, is part of a series portraying insects on patterned backgrounds, both found in museum collections. In this body of work, the artist examines the relationships between human pattern-making and designs created by nature.

Yellow Marble draws me because of its gentle tranquility, tasteful

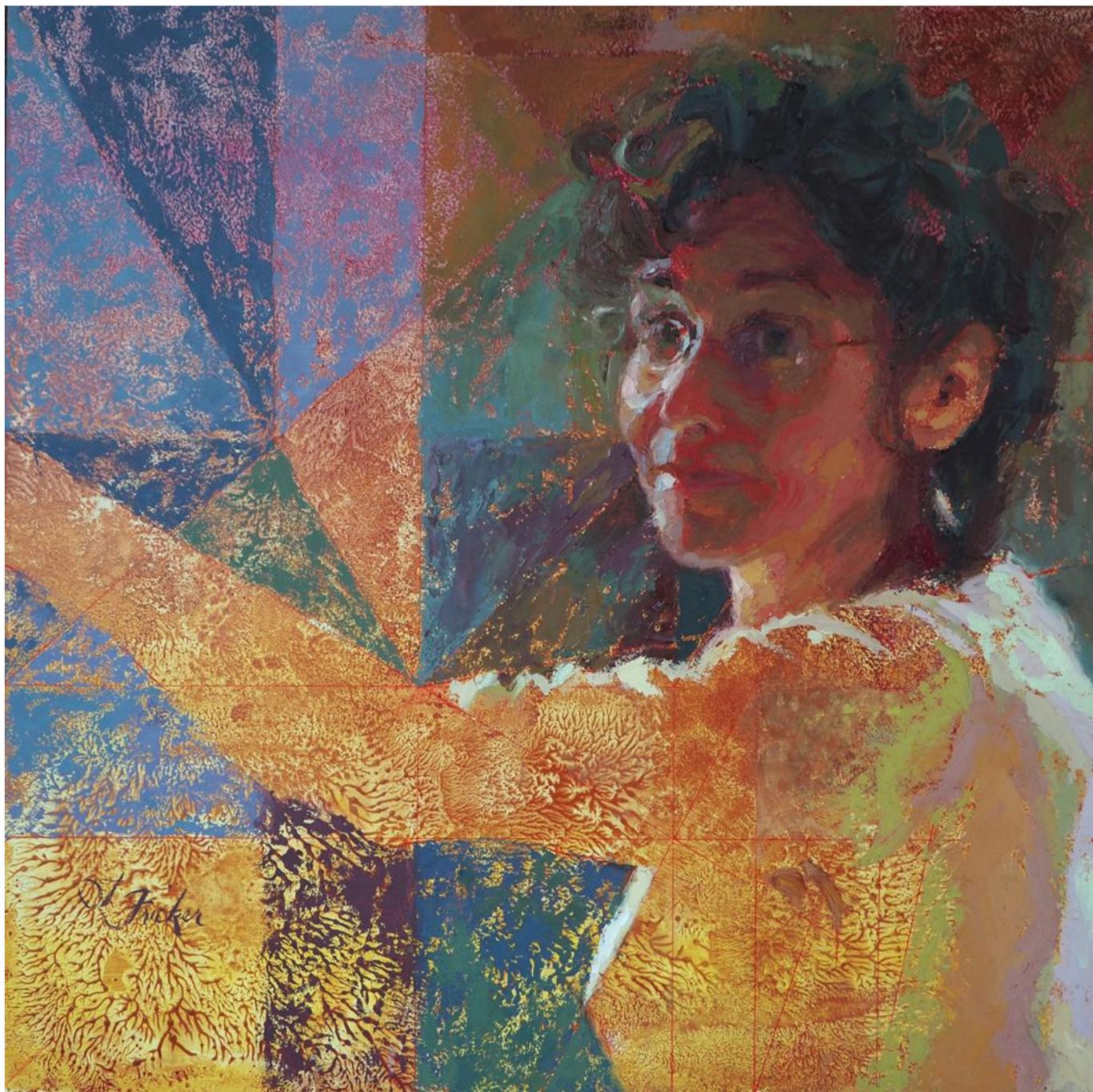
composition, and its alluring color palette. Adeptly capturing the diffuse light and understated details of both man-made and natural designs, this minute piece offers a restful moment for contemplation. It centers on the understanding that human creative endeavor—whether abstract or representational—is typically based on existing patterns of the natural world, whether on a macro, micro, or life-sized scale.



YANA BEYLINSON IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN NEW YORK CITY

Beylinson's jubilant painting, entitled *Kaleidoscope*, is inspired by the designs of William Morris as well as the artist's passion for botanical and floral life in the wild. Both are seemingly chaotic, yet upon closer observation one discovers recognizable patterns that display a captivating precise mathematical order—Mother Nature's exquisite underlying intelligence and structure.

Kaleidoscope draws me because of its stylish exuberance, fresh and romantic color scheme, and its elegant oval shape. The confident brushstrokes as well as the slanted bearing of the composition create a splendidly ambiguous impression of leaves and petals, somehow imaginatively conveying their languorous movements as they stir in a gentle summer breeze.



LISA FRICKER IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN DENVER, COLORADO

Fricker's remarkable painting, entitled *In the Studio*, is a self-portrait set against a background of geometric shapes and fine line diagrams embellished by decalomania, a technique attributed to Max Ernst that forms a biomorphic texture with dendritic shapes. These organic patterns are evocative of river valleys, trees, and brain tissue, highlighting a connection to the natural world.

In the Studio draws me because of its unforced rawness and interesting combination of painting techniques. There's a wonderful balance between light and dark hues that creates an intimate atmosphere. The impressionistic portrait—created by using a palette knife—conveys a sense of fulfilling seclusion, the blissful retreat into the creative realm so many artists require and relish.



DIANE RUDNICK MANN IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA

Rudnick Mann's superb pastel, entitled *8 or 9 Glass Bowls*, brings everyday objects to life in an exciting contemporary chiaroscuro. This delightful, unpretentious composition is masterfully conveyed through a bewildering jumble of lines and shapes using a near monochrome palette

8 or 9 Glass Bowls draws me because of its eye-catching com-

position and detailed care given to the distortions, reflections, and gradations of the glass. It truly celebrates the splendor of the simple things in life by pointing out that beauty can be found and enjoyed, even in an ordinary kitchen setting, if we allow ourselves to become aware of it. The amusing title invites us to count the number of bowls, but so far, it's unclear to me whether there are eight or nine of them.



IRENE GEORGOPOULOU IS A GREEK ARTIST BASED IN ATHENS, GREECE, AS WELL AS IN SUNOL, CALIFORNIA

Georgopoulou's lively piece, entitled *Red Apple Blue Flowers*, is a delightful depiction of a juicy apple poised on a gold-rimmed ribbed glass plate, set on top of a vibrantly retro-patterned tablecloth. The artist chose the subject matter for its beauty, design, and cheerful colors.

Red Apple Blue Flowers draws me because of its strong compo-

sition, eye-catching details, and adroit expression of forms and textures. Its top-down perspective evokes those moments one looks down on a surface, suddenly spotting a seemingly ordinary scene that, at that moment, unexpectedly hits the senses. The fragmented colors of the tablecloth, captured through the radial bas-relief of the glass plate, function as a glowing frame for the blushing fruit.



CHRISTOPHER O'CONNOR IS AN IRISH ARTIST BASED IN WESTBROOK, MAINE

O'Connor's brilliant painting, entitled *Ripples*, is a mesmerizing depiction of raindrops creating undulating patterns and fragmented circles in puddles on the forest floor. There's a soothing reverence in the fleeting beauty of the fractal-like mirror image of the trees and skies above.

Ripples draws me because of its infinite variation and vivid

tension between the still reflection and the psychedelic abstraction created by the ripples. By vivaciously overlapping recognizable and conceptual elements in a visual festival of colors and shapes, he evokes the magic of transformation that the keen observer of the natural world will recognize—that breathtaking moment of mesmerizing wonder that summons

spiritual awakening.



SYBILINE IS A CANADIAN ARTIST BASED IN SAINT-JEAN-SUR-RICHELIEU, CANADA

Sybiline's enigmatic painting, entitled *Labyrinth*, is based on Greek mythology, the story of Ariadne, daughter of Pasiphae and the Cretan king Minos. Ariadne fell in love with the Athenian hero Theseus and helped him escape from the labyrinth using a thread. Created during a breakup, this piece expresses her introspection regarding identity and love—as symbolized by the rose.

Labyrinth draws me because of its surreal, wistful atmosphere and its dark yet glowing palette. Especially the fabric of the dress is exquisitely painted. The symbolism and overall composition are mysterious and captivating, expressing a range of emotions embodied in the fragile slumbering female figure who carefully holds onto the thread that possibly will lead to love.



LAURENCE O'TOOLE IS AN IRISH ARTIST BASED IN CARLOW, IRELAND

O'Toole's marvelous painting, entitled *Cages*, is set in Portugal where the artist went to escape the harsh Irish winter. Inspired by the discovery of a wall of traditional Portuguese tile inside an early Victorian mansion, he asked his friend Jade to pose there. The symbolism of the cages refers to the strength to break free from tedious routines and being open to new possibilities.

Cages draws me because of its superb rendition of details and textures, its resplendent light, and alluring composition. Its symbolism and visual narrative appeal on a deep emotional level—undoubtedly many will recognize the dread of being trapped in a monotonous humdrum that can only be foiled by being open to explore beyond our predictable daily routines.



KIMBERLY DOW IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN FAIRVIEW, NORTH CAROLINA

Dow's lavish painting, entitled *Our Turn*, portrays an ambiguous bedroom scene that chronicles the artist and her husband as new empty-nesters. Dow's richly decorated bedroom conveys the couple's newly found freedom now that the children have grown up and left the home.

Our Turn draws me because of its sumptuous feast of colors

and patterns which are accentuated by the light emanating from behind the female figure wearing a silk kimono. The straightforward title of this painting alludes to the narrative of new beginnings for longtime couples—an expected, anticipated, and perhaps sometimes dreaded change in conversation, behavior, and shared activities to rekindle passion and reconnect in newfound ways.



RAMSAY GIBB IS A SCOTTISH ARTIST BASED IN LANCASHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

Gibb's gorgeous painting, entitled *Sea, Sand and Evening Light*, is a closeup of a seascape showing waves turning into a golden orange hue by the fine sand agitated upwards by the rising tide. The artist masterly captures an ever-changing, always moving element in a suspended moment in time, revealing its tantalizing beauty and visual complexity to be enjoyed forever.

Sea, Sand and Evening Light draws me because of its superb realism, its striking color scheme, and its graceful sinuous qualities. Water being my favorite element, this piece fascinates me and triggers memories. I can imagine the sound of the waves and the fizzing of the seafoam, how the water feels slipping through my fingers, and I can sense the push of the surge against my body



JESSE LANE IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS

Lane's exquisite drawing, entitled *Abyss*, was inspired by the artist's falling in love, described by him as a freefall of overwhelming emotions. This memorable state of mind—those feelings of immersion, weightlessness, and finding oneself in an unfamiliar place—are beautifully expressed in this fluid composition, so very recognizable to anybody who has ever fallen head over heels.

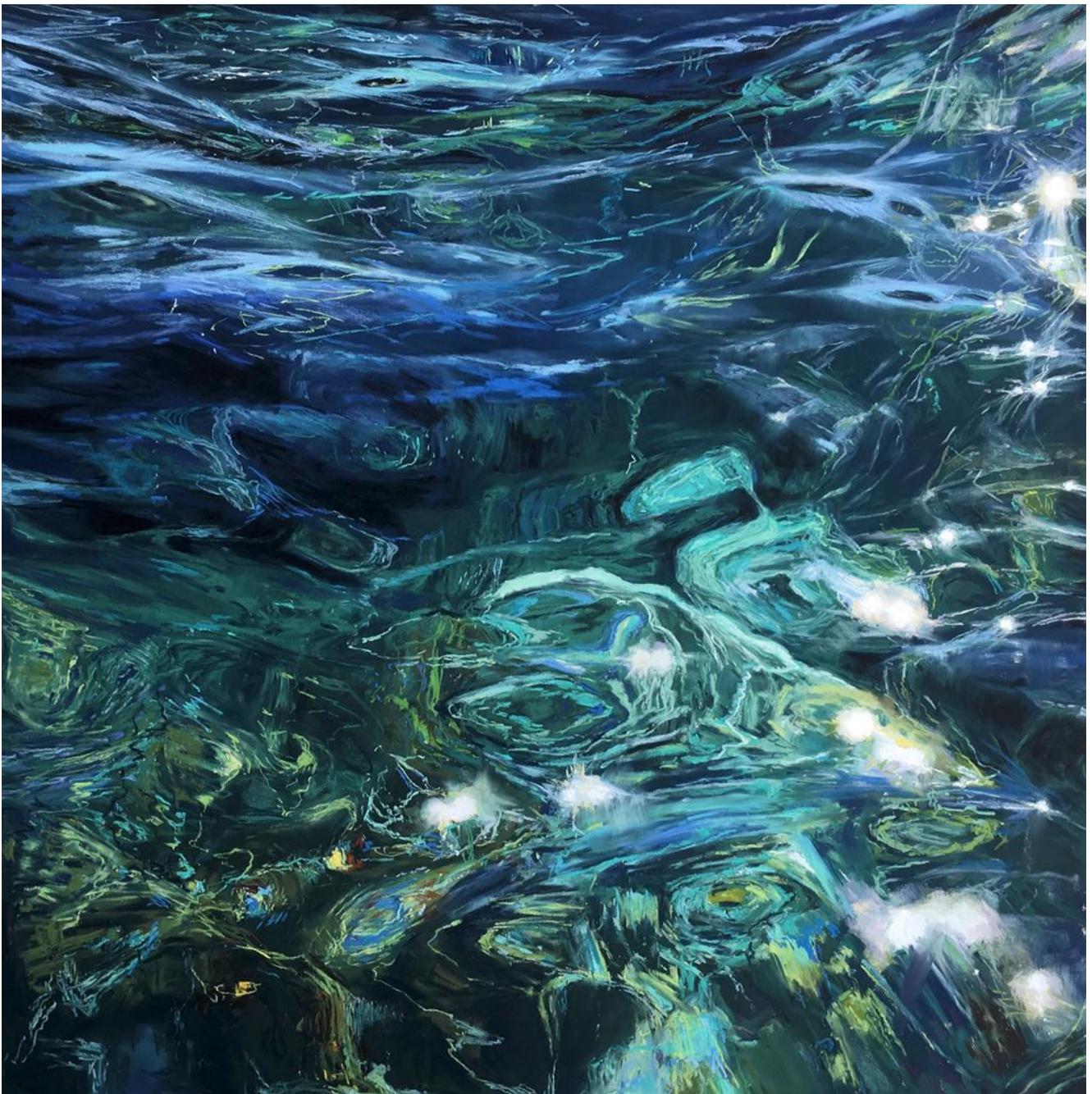
Abyss draws me because of its striking chiaroscuro, fluidity of movement, and its enchanting symbolic articulation of all-engulfing, swirling emotions. These feelings of intense infatuation are also embodied by the jellyfish, delicate yet scary at the same time. The figure breathes out, letting go of security, letting herself be drawn into the deep dark recesses of intense passion.



FRANCIEN KRIEG IS A DUTCH ARTIST BASED IN PUIFLIJK, THE NETHERLANDS

Krieg's poignant painting, entitled *Band of Moonlight*, is a tender portrait of her husband and young son during restful sleep. It represents the artist's melancholy regarding the ephemeral essence of fleeting time; it holds on to intimate moments that are expressed in a misty blue palette evoking shimmering beams of moonlight falling across this peaceful domestic scene.

Band of Moonlight draws me because of its sensitive, gentle tranquility. This composition depicts fatherhood in a caring and reassuring manner—there's both touching vulnerability as well as protective strength. The skillful rendition of soft contours, diffused moonlight, and purple shadows undeniably exude the deep affection the artist feels for her subject matter.



ELENA DEGENHARDT IS A GERMAN ARTIST BASED IN DÜSSELDORF, GERMANY

Degenhardt's graceful artwork, entitled *Meditation V – The Subconscious*, captures the intricate patterns of deep blue water, symbolizing the everchanging multidimensionality of the human psyche. Like the ocean, the mind holds unreachable depths, at once fascinating and frightening.

Meditation V – The Subconscious draws me because of its mes-

merizing subject matter—water is my favorite element, and psychology and neuroscience are my passion. The gorgeous fluid surface of the water, masterfully portrayed in an exquisite palette of deep blues and greens, presents its distinctive movement frozen in time. The labyrinth of colors and lines is hypnotic and soothing, inviting deep meditation on the true meaning of life.



CARIN WAGNER IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIDA

Wagner's delicate cloudscape, entitled *Sky VII*, is a meditation on the things that are most important to the artist. It is an ode to life on earth, where clean air and clean water are now, more than ever before, crucial to our survival. Symbolically, the shifting clouds refer to shifting perspectives, indicating how our personal outlook impacts our understanding of our daily lives.

Sky VII draws me not only because of its beauty, but also because it so movingly captures and holds an infinitesimal moment in time. Surely, all of us have looked up at a similar sky, watching wispy, diaphanous clouds floating by ever so softly, their forms and colors changing every passing moment, and suddenly realizing their peacefulness can change in a heartbeat.



GEZIEN VAN DE RIET IS A DUTCH ARTIST BASED IN CASTRICUM, THE NETHERLANDS

Van de Riet's exceptional painting, entitled *Reaching for the Sky*, is an ode to the miraculous beauty of nature, in which the skyward perspective of this grand old tree adroitly conveys the mesmerizing experience of connecting with Mother Earth in respectful awe and admiration.

Reaching for the Sky draws me because of its contemplative qual-

ity; it's a celebration of the wonders of our natural world shared by all lovers of the environment. The delicate architecture of the branches bathed in winter sunlight, their pink and yellow twigs contrasting against a dazzling sky, and the solid trunk that has withstood time—all come together in this magnificent portrait of a living, breathing entity that offers a habitat to a host of flora and fauna.



JUNYI LIU IS A CHINESE ARTIST BASED IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Liu's captivating painting, entitled *A Present For You*, shows a youthful nude reclining on a pile of raw animal flesh. The meat represents our most primitive desire; to own the body of another human being. This painting explores society's portrayal of women as consumer goods in a sharp, audacious, and somewhat surreal manner, encouraging the viewer's personal interpretation.

A Present For You draws me due to its controversial spirit as well as its accomplished pictorial representation of subject matter. The abundance of contents needs to be considered both visually as well as emotionally. The bizarre perspective, the wealth of different textures of dead animals, and the passive stare of the female nude generate very serious questions about our social norms.



NADINE ROBBINS IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN HUDSON VALLEY, NEW YORK

Robbins' fabulous painting, entitled *9:05*, is a portrait of a scrumptious plate of fresh oysters on ice, embellished by a little glass bowl holding the condiment, a mix of ponzu and sriracha, to cut the salinity of the mollusk. The two little spoons wittily reference the succinct title of this piece.

9:05 draws me because of the superb realism found in highly de-

tailed, recognizable textures, its gorgeous circular composition as seen from an elevated position, and its sophisticated color scheme. This luxurious painting speaks of opulence, wellbeing, and celebration. The abundant ice cubes, reminiscent of diamonds, stylishly frame the dozen oysters. Their wonderful abstract shapes are not only mouthwatering and inviting, but also insinuate a sensual undercurrent.



DANIELA WERNECK IS A BRAZILIAN ARTIST BASED IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

Werneck's wistful painting, entitled *Homecoming*, is inspired by her Portuguese ancestors who left their homeland and set sail to Brazil in search of a better life. The swallows represent love and fidelity, as well as departure and return—these birds are important symbols in the Portuguese culture and are often depicted in murals, crafts, sculpture, poetry, and songs.

Homecoming draws me because of its profound symbolic meaning—as an immigrant I empathize with the desire to seek new horizons while longing to return to familiar places and visit those left behind. This superb watercolor truly captures these ambiguous emotions by means of a delicate palette and a skillful eye for expressive detail, graceful form, and elegant content.



ARDITH STAROSTKA IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN ASHLAND, NEBRASKA

Starostka's luscious painting, entitled *Wallflower*, is the result of intimate conversations with the artist's youngest daughter about feelings of invisibility due to "not fitting in." This lovely young woman allegorically clings to a real flower protruding from the wallpaper. Timidly, perhaps even pleadingly, she looks at the viewer, in an attempt to not fade into the oblivious background.

Wallflower draws me due to its thoughtful symbolism as well as its delicious richness of warm colors, graceful patterns, and delicate textures. Besides being masterfully painted, this piece really captures recognizable human emotions I imagine we all feel from time to time, no matter in what stage in life we find ourselves—we all want to be noticed for who we truly are.



CAROLIEN VAN OLPHEN IS A DUTCH ARTIST BASED IN GRONINGEN, THE NETHERLANDS

Van Olphen's tender painting, entitled *Coloured Dreams*, is part of a series depicting the same intricately patterned, multicolored dress. Inspired by a passion for the revered works by the Old Masters—in this case Klimt's *Danae* and Sir Leighton's *Flaming June*—this painting expertly depicts an innocent and romantic mood in bold, fluid brushstrokes.

Coloured Dreams draws me because, notwithstanding its abundance of riotous shapes, adeptly implied textures, and vivid color palette, it conveys a peaceful, hushed setting. The sleeping figure and draped fabrics vaguely suggest swirling movement. The intimate composition invites the viewer's eyes to roam around a scene that evokes an atmosphere of wellbeing and shelter.



PAMELA ASKEW IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

Askew's charming painting, entitled *Amanda and Bengally*, is a portrait of the artist's younger daughter with her kitten. There's a sheltered, easygoing feeling to this domestic scene that includes a variety of delightful textures and patterns—such as the young woman's favorite dress, the distinctive coat of the feline, the fabric of the couch, and the leafy jumble of the houseplant.

Amanda and Bengally draws me because of its atmosphere of secluded tranquility. A pictorial moment frozen in time, beautifully captured by loose, fluid brushstrokes—the vivid colors and brightness look as if they've been enhanced by flash photography in this cozy living room setting, with soft backlighting emanating from the window that shows a glimpse of the outdoors.



MICHAEL BERGT IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Bergt's timeless piece, entitled *The Fall*, shows a striking young woman reclining against a wall of falling autumn leaves. She holds a pomegranate, split open, spilling its juicy seeds into her awaiting hands. A myriad of thought-provoking symbolic content points toward the title of this piece, referencing the fall of man after eating the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden.

The Fall draws me because of its superb technical dexterity, beautiful composition, and understated color palette. The curvaceous nude stares into the distance as if lost in thought, her auburn hair curling around her shoulders while she leans back into a cascade of oversized foliage. This piece looks quite traditional yet conveys a highly contemporary, dreamlike quality.



CAROL STEWART IS A CANADIAN ARTIST BASED IN COLUMBUS, OHIO

Stewart's lively painting, entitled *Circles and Squares I*, is a stylish tablescape built up of an energetic network of distinctive patterns and quirky marks conveying abundant energy. The artist shows a keen interest not only in the representational and highly original portrayal of her subject matter but also in its imaginative abstract qualities.

Circles and Squares I draws me due to its myriad of beguiling details that unify into a joyful still life that is anything but still—it positively vibrates. This vivid composition conveys a jubilant celebration of objects—plates, glasses, jars, citrus fruits, flowers, and several unexpected items—presented in a powerful way that invites a thorough visual exploration.



KIM LEUTWYLER IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Leutwyler's imaginative painting, entitled *G & T*, confidently challenges the boundaries between realism and abstraction, seeking to emphasize the complexities of beauty, identity, and gender. Leutwyler's work playfully surveys society's notions of glorification, objectification, and modification vis-à-vis the LGBTQ+ identified and Queer-allied community.

G & T draws me because of its striking depiction of vivid colors, sinuous shapes, bold patterns, and captivating subject matter—all flowing into one another, leaving plenty of room for the viewer's individual interpretation. There's a vague sense of eroticism that cleverly contrasts the overall lighthearted, innocuous, and lively interaction between the two young women.



ALLAN GORMAN IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN KEARNY, NEW JERSEY

Gorman's intricate painting, entitled *Shadows on 28th Street*, is a superb photorealist portrait of an old fire escape—an ordinary architectural structure most city dwellers pass by without much thought, yet captured this artist's attention, daring him to paint it. And paint it, he did!

Shadows on 28th Street draws me because of the skillful por-

trayal of repetitive, angular engineered shapes, enhanced by the afternoon sun casting eccentric shadows on walls and windows. Both realist and abstract in nature, its near-monochromatic palette is enriched by the touch of light cerulean blue reflecting the skies above. This painting is a feast for the senses and our eyes can dive right in and discover a myriad of delightful details by following contours.



ELIZABETH BARDEN IS AN AUSTRALIAN ARTIST BASED IN CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA

Barden's noteworthy painting, entitled *Jayatism*, is a portrait of a young man of Balinese and Australian Caucasian heritage—except for his face, his body is almost entirely covered in tattoos. Tattoos that started out as a way to belong to the anti-establishment subculture, have now evolved into an aesthetic identity of personalized beautifications.

Jayatism draws me because of the man's enigmatic expression, the fascinating tattoos gracing the luminous skin, and the boldly cropped head-only composition. There's a confrontational feeling about the portrait that urges the viewer to ignore preconceptions and look beyond them. The message is that the biases we hold tell us more about ourselves than "the other."



KATHLEEN CARR IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Carr's stylish painting, entitled *Bird of Solitude*, examines our coping mechanisms related to sorrow—it's a pictorial meditation on the universal human condition. The bird that is about to descend upon the shoulder of the young female figure symbolizes sadness and grief.

Bird of Solitude draws me because of its understated color pal-

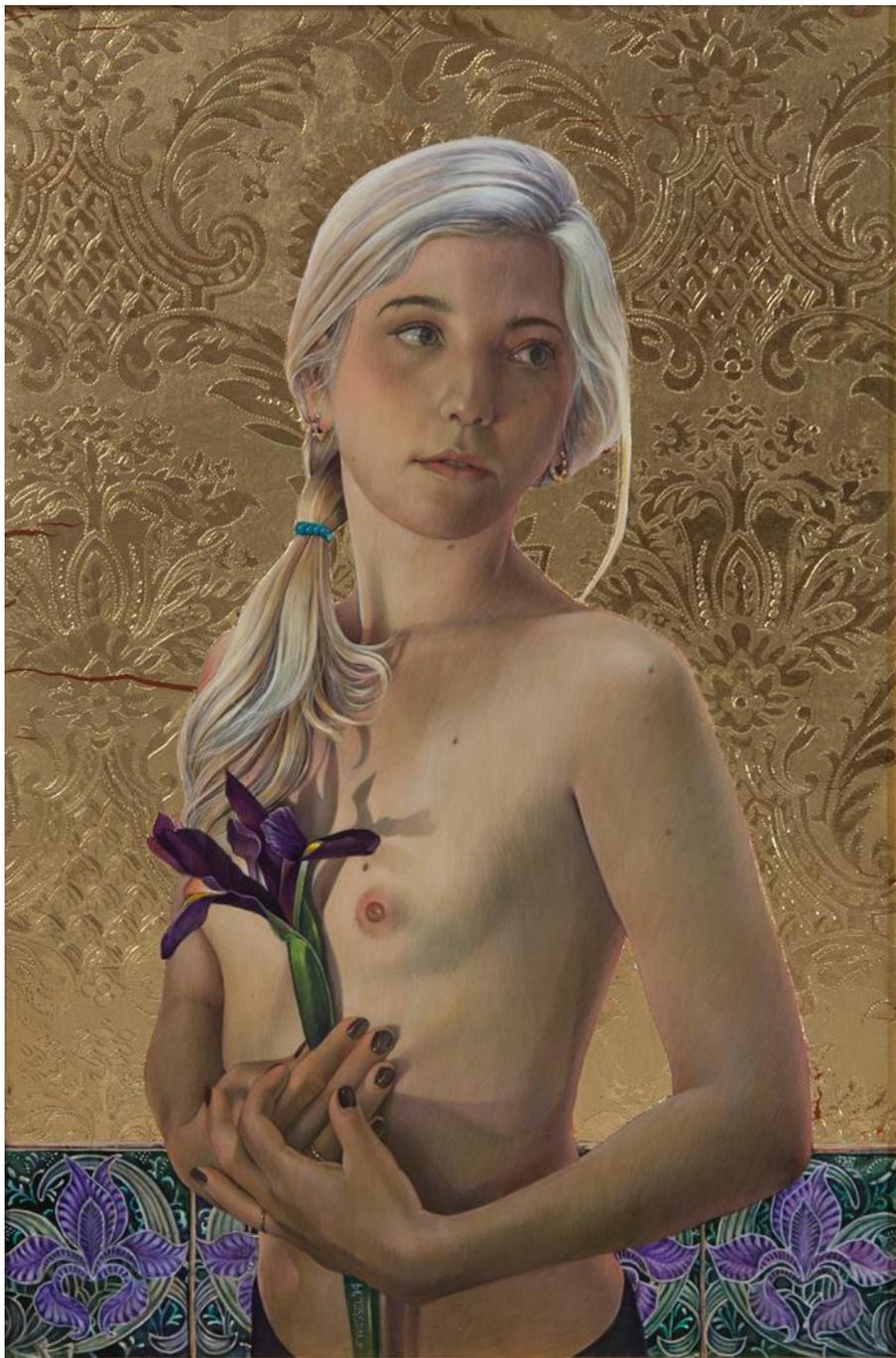
ette, as well as the exquisite pictorial textures of the bird and dress. The luminous skin of the female figure radiates youthful health—perhaps suggesting her cognitive strength—and contrasts beautifully against the subdued, powdery near-monochromes. The mournful look on the model's face undeniably sets an atmosphere of desolation, a bleak despondency we all suffer and must eventually overcome.



INGRID CAPOZZOLI FLINN IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Capozzoli Flinn's candid painting, entitled *Nude on Batik Cloth with Mirror*, is the artist's most provocative painting to date. It was created during the process of adoption to expand the family and examines the concept of two mothers—the birth and the custodial mother. A nude figure is stretched out in front of a mirror, legs wide, exposing her genitals—the symbol of procreation.

Nude on Batik Cloth with Mirror draws me because of its stark honesty, striking analogous palette, and bold brushwork. There's an interesting, expressive division—almost like a horizon—between the austere serenity of the upper section compared to the more complex patterns in the lower part of this piece, placing the female figure firmly grounded on the earth-like cloth.



FRED WESSEL IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Wessel's opulent painting, entitled *Iris Revisited*, juxtaposes the tender innocence of a young woman against a luxuriant brocade pattern, burnished and punched in the gold leaf background. The figure holds a single iris, the flower elegantly reiterated in the Jugendstil frieze underneath.

Iris Revisited draws me because of its striking visual appeal

and refined color palette that harmonizes the pale skin and fair hair with the purples and greens of the flowers. The sumptuous patterns in the decorative background counterweight the highly refined approach of the youthful female figure. It is a modern version of the Renaissance paintings of the Madonna, who is often depicted holding a flower. The iris's three upright petals symbolize faith, courage, and wisdom.



AIXA OLIVERAS IS A PUERTO RICAN-AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN LAGUNA HILLS, CALIFORNIA

In Oliveras' elegant painting, entitled *Transmutation*, the pattern of the kimono mimics the dramatic movement of the female nude. Surprisingly, the embroidery of the kimono comes alive, moving past the golden fabric, flowing beyond it like musical notes dancing in the air. The figure's contorted pose denotes rebirth, the twisted nature of change. Together, the figure and flower pattern symbolize life's primordial energy and new beginnings.

Transmutation draws me because of its elegant chiaroscuro; its colors are dusky yet jubilant. She not only tenderly captures the female figure in an unusual pose but enhances delightful details, such as the rippled skin of the back which seems to echo the silk garment and airborne flowers.



DANA HAWK IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN THE CATSKILLS, NEW YORK

Hawk's enigmatic painting, entitled *To Fly Away*, explores the artist's recurring need for escapism—a psychological flight response that has proven to be beneficial to avoid toxic situations, yet has, at times, also proven to be less helpful in life. Hawk's most constructive escapism is achieved through creativity—both through her own art as well as that of others.

To Fly Away draws me because of its interesting symbolism and the juxtaposition that the strangely comforting yet darkly ominous atmosphere conveys. The artist skillfully depicts skin, hair, fabric, and torn wallpaper using a lush, shadowy palette. The pose of the figure suggests a multitude of contradicting emotions that unequivocally express the underlying narrative.



DOUG WEBB IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN CALABASAS, CALIFORNIA

Webb's sophisticated painting, entitled *Salt of the Earth*, is based on Matthew 5:13 of the New Testament. According to the Bible, each of us has the righteousness of God within, but we must be like salt to preserve and keep it fresh. The distinct salt shakers symbolize our sociocultural differences, yet the principle of our responsibilities and duties are, in essence, the same.

Salt of the Earth draws me because of its superb attention to the multitude of details captured within a relatively small format painting. The gorgeous architectural elements of Saint Patrick's Cathedral and the sunny New York City street scene serve as an almost casual backdrop to the oversized luminous shakers—as a whole materializing into an exuberant visual experience.



ANNE-MARIE ZANETTI IS AN AUSTRALIAN ARTIST BASED IN BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

Zanetti's eye-catching painting, entitled *The Longing*, is a portrait of her youngest daughter, and is part of the artist's journey delving into childhood memories and their emotional landscape as a means to expose, reconcile, and even savor a multitude of her life's early experiences.

The Longing draws me because of the excellent portrayal of

the young woman, who simultaneously exudes a combination of fragile thoughtfulness and compelling confidence, inviting the viewer to seek her veiled eyes behind the dark retro shades. The delightful juxtaposition of the tender realism of the figure against the flamboyantly graphic 70s wallpaper sets up a wistful note of nostalgia for the bygone days of youth.



AMANDA GREIVE IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS

Greive's intriguing painting, entitled *A Habit that Refuses to Die*, is part of a series exploring women's mindsets regarding societal pressures to conform to set ideals regarding our appearance, specifically the notion that we should "put on our face" each morning before stepping out. The flowers—a dual symbol representing both fragile femininity and sturdy adaptability—obscure the faces, hiding emotions and the

true self like a mask.

A Habit that Refuses to Die draws me because of its superb expression of textures—especially note the flower petals, lustrous skin, and hair. The composition is captivating, and there's a sense of mystery which is skillfully conveyed through the compelling use of illumination.



VICKI SULLIVAN AUSTRALIAN BASED IN RYE, VICTORIA, IN AUSTRALIA

Sullivan's enchanting portrait, entitled *Windflower*, is inspired by the Japanese anemones growing in her garden, and by Greek mythology, according to which this flower springs from Aphrodite's tears as she mourns Adonis' death. Windflowers are symbolic harbingers of luck and guardians against evil. The silver leaf pattern in the background represents the spiral of life.

Windflower draws me because of the striking combination of the model's gentle expression and the vibrant color palette. There's an intense yet quiet elegance about it—reminiscent of the masterpieces of the Victorian era—that the artist masterfully captured in the beguiling beauty of the female figure. The ornate background brings this piece decidedly into contemporary times.



AMY LASKIN IS AN AMERICAN ARTIST BASED IN ST. ANDREW, JAMAICA

Laskin's remarkable painting, entitled *Portrait with Coral and Pearls*, relies on intricate organic elements to form a decorative framework surrounding a female portrait, symbolically celebrating the fundamental synergy of woman-kind with the wonders of the natural world.

Portrait with Coral and Pearls draws me because of its mul-

tifaceted details using an enchantingly muted palette. It combines both sharp and subtle realism with more graphic rendering, making the resulting image captivating, seductive, and elegant. The impression of the repetition of shapes and colors invite the eye to decipher the plethora of visual elements that come together to form this imaginative portrait.



LORENA KLOOSTERBOER IS A DUTCH-ARGENTINE ARTIST BASED IN ANTWERP, BELGIUM

Kloosterboer's charming still life, entitled *Tempus ad Requiem XXVII*, shows a western bluebird nesting in an Art Deco teacup poised on a matching ceramic tray by Boch Frères. The bluebird is a harbinger of happiness, whereas the teacup is the vessel holding harmony, peace, and spiritual enlightenment. The nest represents the love, commitment, and warmth of the home.

Tempus ad Requiem XXVII is my contribution to this publication because it contains a variety of distinct patterns—the ceramics, the bird's feathers, and the unruly arrangement of the nest—that cover the entire painting surface. This painting is part of a series that symbolizes the need for a time and a place to rest, to come to terms with life's hurdles and replenish our energies.

Aixa Oliveras
Allan Gorman
Amanda Greive
Amy Laskin
Anne-Marie Zanetti
Ardith Starostka
Carin Wagner
Carol Stewart
Carolien van Olphen
Christopher O'Connor
Daggi Wallace
Dana Hawk
Daniela Werneck
Diane Rudnick Mann
Doug Webb
Elena Degenhardt
Elizabeth Barden
Francien Krieg
Fred Wessel
Gerd Lieder
Gezien van de Riet
Ingrid Capozzoli Flinn
Irene Georgopoulou
Jane Gardiner
Jesse Lane
Junyi Liu
Kathleen Carr
Kim Leutwyler
Kimberly Dow
Kyla Zoe Rafert
Laurence O'Toole
Lisa Ficarelli-Halpern
Lisa Fricker
Lorena Kloosterboer
Margaret Ingles
Michael Bergt
Nadine Robbins
Nanda Hoep
Narelle Zeller
Pamela Askew
Ramsay Gibb
Simon Hennessey
Sybiline
Teresa Brucher
Veronica Winters
Vicki Sullivan
Yana Beylinson

