

# UPWARD's *Quarterly*

FINE ART | GRAPHIC ARTS | DIGITAL PAINTING | CRAFTS | MIXED MEDIA

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OLGA MCNAMARA  
*Iris Conversations*





CARINA IMBROGNO

*Odette the ballet swan*

## Foreword

The editorial team of UPWARD's Quarterly is pleased to present new summer issue of our publication.

Current issue reflects all innovations that took place in the last quarter — the magazine has published solo exhibitions of artists, the format of our interviews has been changed and supplemented.

We are gratified to note that the thematic range of participants in our exhibitions continues to expand.

So, thanks to the interview with Rob Snyder, we were able to look into the fascinating world of contemporary ceramic art.

And Ulf Koenig's story about his new project, which clearly rhymes with our gallery's keyword "Upward," took us to the dizzying and exciting heights of his fanciful skyscrapers.

The striking projects of London-based artist Mefio, who participated in our Animals exhibition, are an amazing journey into the little-explored realms of mixed media techniques.

Our magazine also features interviews with artists for whom creativity is not only a natural way of life, like Aaron Krone or Casey Mensing, but also a form of mental therapy for themselves, like Shane McAleer, and a way to help others, like Susan Harmon.

And, of course, we must mention two wonderful artists who work in very different styles and techniques, Olga McNamara and Amy Newton-McConnell, whose work is not only featured in their solo exhibitions, but is also brightly interspersed throughout this issue, starting with the covers.



**Ollie Basham**  
CEO and Curator  
UPWARD gallery

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**EXHIBITION  
ARTIST  
OF THE SUMMER**

**FEATURED ARTISTS:**

**SUSAN HARMON**

**OLGA MCNAMARA**

**ROB SNYDER**

**AMY NEWTON-MCCONNEL**

**JEMSY PRADUN**

**JIAQI PAN**

# SUSAN HARMON:

## My work begins with the words which come from my books

**UQ:** Tell me a little bit about how you first got into creating art.

I first had my first art class at age 7 from a neighbor offering an art course in her home for adults and of course I was the only child. Believe it or not, my first art picture was made on canvas and with oil paint and that first painting at age 7 won a \$50.00 oil painting set in Chicago. I continued taking art classes then at The Art Institute of Chicago where I began drawing from nude models at age 11. In high school at the University of Chicago High, I was allowed to leave my high school classes to work in the college art classes like drawing classes (as I had taken every art course offered in high school).

**What artists or movements have had an impact on you?**

Obviously Abstract Expressionist, and Outsider art movements had the greatest impact on me within the last ten years, when after completing my MFA graduate degree and then my PHD research work at Monash Uni In Australia, my work drastically changed from realistic imagery to Abstract and Conceptual work about ideas. The emotionality and rawness in these art movements resonate with me, stirred me, made me want to create.

**What themes does your work involve?**

My work is informed by stories about people who suffer from trauma with



*My work is a visual collection of emotion. All art surfaces are rich in color and texture, coming from my emotional, intellectual, and spiritual states of being. My work is free from the boundaries of traditional picture-making; thus, it is easier to explore my own psyche. with the textural layering of paint, and sometimes added materials of sand, string, and discarded drawings, lead to expressive mark-making in meaningful contexts evident in this body of art. That the subconscious is at work, there is no doubt, that is almost sacred and where I strive to prepare my subconscious for painting in a ritual that may involve a more pensive/meditative state of being. All of these artworks were informed by literature about people who have suffered trauma and their journey to survival and more recently informed by stories from the island of Saipan where I was teaching and living prior to the Pandemic. These artworks strive to heal and evoke positive feelings in the viewer.*



## **Color is emotion, and I create emotional art thus color is extremely important to my work**

a focus on their survival and their strength in living afterward.

I choose stories which “give me that lump in my throat” if you will, and thus make me want to paint... in the hopes that my art, when viewed will help heal those who have suffered. Catharsis! (Catharsis is from the Ancient Greek word κάθαρσις, Katharsis, meaning “purification” or “cleansing”).

### **What is important to you about the visual experiences you create?**

My art process is important to me as I create. Art has been a part of my life for so long that I do not even think about it, it is who I am and what I do, simply.

### **What is the significance of medium and colour?**

Color is emotion, and I create emotional art thus color is extremely important to my work. I incorporate many different media into my pictures, and it is exciting to be able to use these tools to enhance my pictures. I use sand, string, discarded drawings and torn old canvases, oil sticks, oil paint, acrylic paint. Anything I find I use I am a collector of discarded things.

### **Do you work from memory, life, photographs, or from other resources? Describe your creative process.**

My work begins with the words which come from my books. Words are

## INTERVIEW



*In the forest of vanishing stars #4*

written all over my books, they are circled and underlined and written large and small and in color. They are

## **My goals for the future are to make important art**

what drives me, and they are the titles of my works. They are the beginnings for me.

### **Do you have any artistic goals for the future that you would like to share?**

I have created a 60' mural for a city in Texas, it was chosen from 100 entries

and the first time an abstract art was created and chosen for the entrance of the city of San Marcos, a Texas city. This was a very exciting opportunity so that people could see an artwork for “art’s sake” and not have to go to an art museum to see this. The University of Central Oklahoma chose five of my artworks to re-create into costumes for a play informed by the “Me Too Movement” and this was a very exciting opportunity for me. Recently I have won a first prize award at The Koch Brothers Mark Arts Gallery in Wichita with a very nice monetary award and my work published on the invites, posters. I have been lucky to live and make art in some wonderful fairytale places: Venice, Italy (when I was working on

a Masters through NYU), Salzburg, Austria (when in undergraduate art college), Australia (when working on a Ph.D. in art), Costa Rica (PhD art fellowship), most recently teaching art on the island of Saipan. My goals for the future are to make important art. ●

*She let the clouds carry her*





**SUSAN HARMON**



*The wind sings a song far away*

## SOLO EXHIBITION

### OLGA MCNAMARA



Based in Dublin, Ireland, Olga Karlson McNamara creates abstract expressionist and impressionist-style paintings that explore profound impulsive and instinctive emotions and the intrinsic desire for happiness. Through her vivid plein-air paintings of landscapes and still life depictions of objects that captured her imagination, Olga encourages the viewer to appreciate the beauty in everyday places. More recently, the evolution of her creative seeking has led her towards a new direction of emotion-filled abstract expressionism and her paintings have taken on a new meaning that she hopes will resonate with her audiences.



***Daffodil Dreamscape***  
Oil, canvas, 100 x 150 x 1.5cm (unframed)  
**750 Euro**



***Fragrance of a Forgotten Dream***  
Oil, canvas, 100 x 120 x 2cm (unframed)  
**850 Euro**

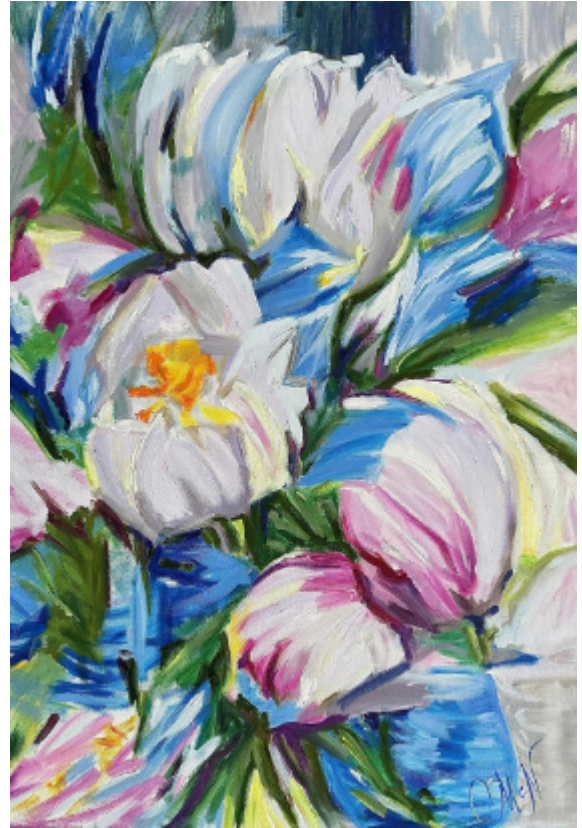


***Moonlit Midnight Bouquet***  
Oil, canvas, 45 x 60 x 1cm  
**750 Euro**





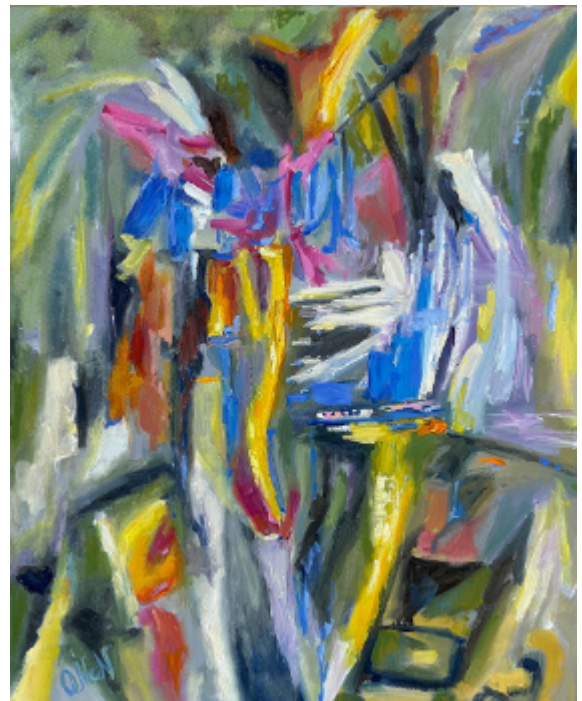
***A Midsummer Day's Whisper***  
Oil, canvas, 70 x 100 x 4cm (unframed)  
750 Euro



***Peonies' Promise***  
Oil, canvas, 70 x 100 x 4cm  
850 Euro



***Unspoken Tales of Pansy Petals***  
Oil, canvas, 60 x 80 x 1.2cm  
600 Euro



***Cornflower Carnival***  
Oil, canvas, 50 x 60 x 1cm  
650 Euro



**SOLO EXHIBITION**



***Ethereal Pansy Gardens***  
Oil, canvas, 70 x 100 x 1.5cm (unframed)  
**550 Euro**



***Celestial Spring Ensemble***  
Oil, canvas, 40 x 60 x 0.4cm (unframed)  
**600 Euro**



***Freedom of Choice***  
Oil, canvas, 120 x 120 x 1.5cm  
**850 Euro**



***Moments of Gold and Turquoise:  
Ephemeral Daffodils***  
Oil, canvas, 50 x 60 x 1.2cm  
**600 Euro**





*Violet Irises in Emerald Greens*  
Oil, canvas, 45 x 60 x 4cm (unframed)  
750 Euro



# ROB SNYDER: Creativity is natural



**UQ:** How did you decide to become a ceramic artist?

I never decided to become a ceramic artist. Ceramics chose me.

**You have studied abstract painting and note that you have been most influenced by artists who worked in the style of abstract expressionism. How and why did you move into ceramics? What prompted the change?**

I did my Master's at Pratt Institute. And there was George McNeil. Living legend. Leading member of the American Abstract Artists. An important American abstract expressionist. Student of Hans Hoffman.

Rob Snyder got a BFA from Southampton College of L.I.U. He was mentored by Neo-Plasticist Ilya Bolotowsky and sculptor Ibram Lassaw. Then Rob Snyder was educated at the Pratt Institute, where he graduated with a Master's degree in Fine Arts. He studied with abstract expressionist leader George McNeil.

Rob was an Executive Creative Director/Art Director with 30+ years of experience in advertising. He ran several agencies, served on their Board of Directors, owned his own agency. In 1996, Rob joined Linda Kaplan Thaler to form the Kaplan Thaler Group. Rob's was an adjunct professor at The Art Institute of Phoenix, CMO at the Arizona Clay Association and a board member of the AAF (American Advertising Federation).

Rob believes that pottery is the bond between the earth, art and utility. Pottery serves as our emotional connection to our environment. You can see Rob's pottery at [perpetuitypottery.com](http://perpetuitypottery.com).

Rob Snyder has a working studio in Scottsdale.

Showed at the Whitney and galleries all over Manhattan. Wonderful art historian. But his drawing classes



*Black Blowtorch*

Wheel thrown and hand-built porcelain. Fired to cone 5. Third firing with silver luster.

**Did you have a mentor when you were growing up? How about in your development as an artist?**

When I was 17, my sister Sandy gave me a canvas, brushes and a set of oil paint. She said “do something.” She was my first mentor. She still is. As an artist, I was mentored by Neo-Plasticist Ilya Bolotowsky and sculptor

**I believe pottery is the bond between the earth, art, and utility and serves as our emotional connection to our environment**

confused me. What was the idea? What was he trying to say? But he showed me Picasso ceramics. (He studied under cubists.) The marriage of painting and ceramics. I'm in!

Ibram Lassaw. And by Howard Boesendahl. An amazing painter. Unique technique. Inventive. Exciting. Innovative. Spectacular color palette and design. An artist with big ideas.

## **I always look for the “Big Idea”. The big idea must have an interesting story to tell and be able to connect and effect the observer**

**What influences and inspires you the most in your creation? How would you describe your current body of work?**

I consider my work eclectic and eccentric. I'm inspired by human emotion. Human foibles. Culture. Environment. Design. Past experiences. Utilitarian objects. Great artists. Great art movements. Beauty.

**In what ways does being a ceramic artist differ from working in other creative disciplines?**

I started life as a painter and was mentored by Ilya Bolotowsky and

### *Deco iron*

Wheel thrown and hand-built porcelain. Fired to cone 5. Third firing with silver, gold and Mother of Pearl lusters..



Ibram Lassaw. I worked with notables such as Willem DeKoonig, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Dash, Alphonso Ossorio and Larry Rivers.

I worked as a curator at The Parrish Museum in Southampton, The Guild Hall Museum in Easthampton, The Metropolitan Museum/Queens Museum and lectured at the Cloisters. And worked closely with Victor D'Amico on the “Barge” for the Museum of Modern Art.

I started making pottery when taking my Master's degree in painting at Pratt Institute. My friends were potters. They got me into the “mud”. Little did I know that pottery would turn out to be my passion. Working in dimension was the turning point for me.

**What are the main materials and ceramic techniques that you use?**

I'm partial to cone 5 porcelain. But occasionally I work with B-Mix especially on tall pieces. B-Mix has more body and stiffness than porcelain which makes it easier to build large forms.

**Do you have a favorite form? Why does form by itself play such an important role in your work?**

I love heart-shaped forms. Wide, billowy at the top. Tapering to a narrow foot. But I have a soft spot for “moon jars”. Large, ball-shaped,





*New Sunglasses*  
Porcelain, Wheel thrown, hand painted with underglazes and fired to cone 5.

round pieces with a small opening on top and flared foot for support.

**What emotional states do you express through visual representations?**

I believe pottery is the bond between the earth, art, and utility and serves as our emotional connection to our environment. As an advertising Executive Creative Director, I always look for the “Big Idea”. The big idea must have an interesting story to tell and be able to connect and effect the observer. Make me feel something!

**You live and work in Scottsdale, one of the recognized centers of contemporary art in the United States. How would you characterize its artistic landscape? Does the artistic environment around you help you to create?**

I have been fortunate to meet many talented potters, painters, graphic artists, and sculptors since I moved from New York City to Scottsdale. ASU has a fine collection of pottery. And in galleries, studios and

workshops, artists are developing new and interesting techniques and concepts.

**You have worked in advertising and teaching for a long time. Have you been able to combine your pedagogical, creative and leadership activities in advertising with your ceramics practice?**

As an advertising Creative Director, I worked on national and global fashion/beauty accounts. One day I drew a close-up of a model on a plate I had thrown. Blue eyes looking straight ahead. Golden hair tumbling. Makeup defining facial features. And luscious red lips. Oh, those lips! The focus was the middle of the plate. Such was the birth of an idea for me. Fashion Plates. Fashion Plates are fashionable plates made for fashionable people. Fashion Plates are hand thrown plates, bisqued and then hand painted with

*Pipe Pot*  
Porcelain, wheel thrown and hand-built. Glazed with pewter, fired to cone 5. Final firing with silver lusters.



## INTERVIEW

underglazes. They are then sprayed with a clear glaze and fired to cone 5, about 2,180°.

**What motivates you as an artist? Do you think that ceramics is a suitable medium for young artists?**

I'm often asked what motivates me as an artist. Motivation does not create art. Creativity is natural. It's a burning desire to take a thought, an idea and give it dimension.

**How do you view the relationship between reward and demand? What do you find most rewarding at this job?**



*"Hmmm..."*

Porcelain, Wheel thrown, hand painted with underglazes and fired to cone 5.

## **The demand is the motivation. The reward is simply the work. Creating, executing, and exhibiting**

The demand is the motivation.  
The reward is simply the work.  
Creating, executing, and exhibiting.

### *Oil Can, Too*

Wheel thrown and hand-built porcelain. Fired to cone 5. Third firing with silver luster.



**What projects are you currently developing and what are your future plans?**

I'm currently working on a project creating Canteens. Living in Arizona, there's a real sense of our past. Frontier culture. Rodeos. Horses. Saddles. And yes, canteens. Old canteens are in antique stores, thrift shops and in auctions. They're used as ornaments in restaurants, hotels, and homes. Canteens are a reminder of how precious water is in Arizona. What water means to our survival and our environment. So, to acknowledge our culture, I've created my image of the modern canteen. You certainly won't see them in a saddlebag, on the range or around a campfire. But welcome to the new West. ●

**ROB SNYDER**



***White Flamethrower***

Wheel thrown and hand-built porcelain.  
Fired to cone 5. Third firing with silver luster.



**JEMSY PRADUN**



*Snake Eyes*

**JIAQI PAN**



*The 44th Sunset*



## SOLO EXHIBITION

### AMY NEWTON-MCCONNEL



Amy is a passionate photographer based in Phoenix, Arizona, USA. Having developed an interest in the effects of intentional camera movement, she enjoys creating painterly and abstract artistic effects. She shared a series about dancers, where the motion blur is particularly striking. Amy brings to us a unique way of visual storytelling, depicting her critical thinking through 'In Camera Movement' photography. ICM photography utilizes techniques where the camera is intentionally moved during the exposure to create painterly and abstract artistic effects. This allows Amy to create abstract art engaging her camera as a tool to define the story she wishes to express.



***No Solution***  
ICM Photography

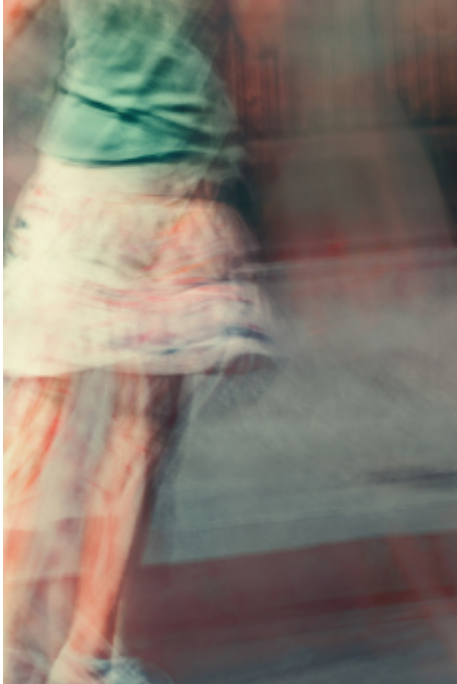




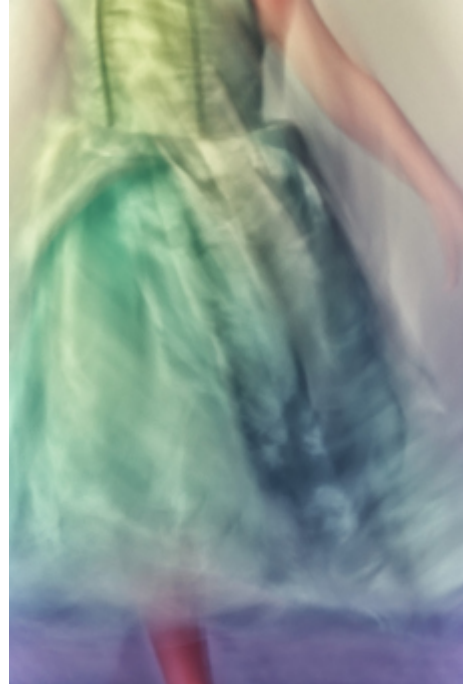
*Runaway*  
ICM Photography



*Sassy*  
ICM Photography



*Shy*  
ICM Photography

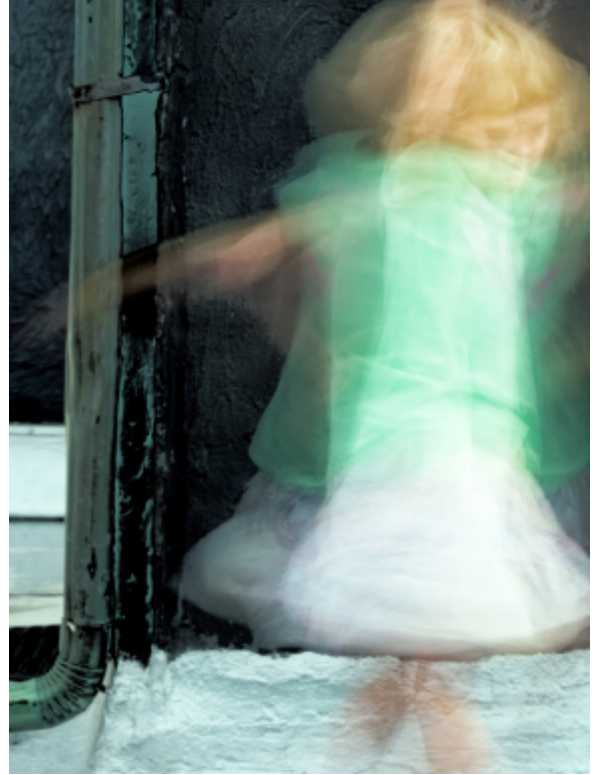


*Certitude*  
ICM Photography

**SOLO EXHIBITION**



***Parallel of Latitude***  
ICM Photography



***Without A Care***  
ICM Photography



***Time For Bed***  
ICM Photography



***Le Sigh***  
ICM Photography





*Lux*  
ICM Photography



*Syncope*  
ICM Photography



*Sashay Away*  
ICM Photography

**OLGA MCNAMARA**



*Iris Conversations*

Oil painting



**EXHIBITION**  
**ANIMALS**

**FEATURED ARTISTS:**

**MEFIO**

**AMY NEWTON-MCCONNEL**

**CHARLOTTE JORDAN**

**SHANE MCALEER**

**VALERIE NOVICK**

## MEFIO:

# The journey is often just as satisfying as the destination

**UQ:** Tell a little bit about how you first got into creating art.

Art and I, we go way back – back to the very beginning when I took my first breath. Even in those early days, I turned blank walls into colourful canvases, decorating them with the scribbles of a young dreamer, much to my mothers discernment.

As the years flowed on, something shifted inside me. The lines, curves, and shadows in my drawings started to reveal my interest in the world of light and shadow. It was during those moments that I felt the urge to explore the art of shading, to understand how the interplay of light spectrum could breathe life into my creations.

What I've come to realize is that the true beauty of art isn't just in the final image, but in the intimate connection between me and the act of creating

itself. The journey is often just as satisfying as the destination.

**What artists or movements have had an impact on you?**

During my artistic journey, Salvador Dali played a significant role as he set me on my path. His surrealism intrigued me with its ability to delve into the mysterious and unexpected. As I delved deeper, I came across the captivating abstract glass art of Jiri Liska and the remarkable works of Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarman. Their artistry has subtly woven its influence into my own creative exploration.

**What themes does your work involve?**

In my artwork, I'm driven by a few key themes. First and foremost, I aim to



*Mefio is a contemporary abstract artist from London, UK, who specialises in the creation of Goniochromatic art. Born in Slovakia, Mefio has been interested in art from a very young age, eventually pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Modelmaking, honing valuable skills to create intricate and technically detailed works of art. Currently, Mefio is studying for a Master of Arts degree in Fine Art, which has expanded artistic repertoire and encouraged the exploration of new mediums and techniques, including mixed media assemblages. Mefio's works have been exhibited in various exhibitions and shows, showcasing the Mefio's unique style and Intense artistic expression whilst participating in group exhibitions, curated exhibitions and competitions. These exhibitions have been well-received, with critics and art collectors praising Mefio's ability to create works that are both visually intriguing and thought-provoking.*



capture the elegance found in geometry. I'm really drawn to the interplay of vivid iridescent colours, and I often weave logarithmic patterns into my pieces, taking inspiration from the beauty of symmetry and considered composition.

Nature plays a big role in my creative process. I find myself drawn to things like refractions, reflections, and fractals – these elements bring a unique touch to my contemporary designs.

To add depth and intrigue, I like working with holographic and metallic materials, especially because they create these amazing effects that shift and change with different lighting conditions. It's fascinating how the

interplay between materials and light can create such dynamic and mesmerizing outcomes in my work.

**What is important to you about the visual experiences you create?**

The essence of my visual creations lies in their ability to evoke emotions, spark dialogue, and contribute to our cultural and intellectual landscape. By challenging artistic norms, I aim to inspire fellow artists while providing aesthetic experiences that stir emotions and contemplate human perception.

Through luminous displays that shimmer in light's spectrum, I craft moments that invite viewers to engage and reflect. These encounters go

## INTERVIEW

beyond aesthetics; they're about touching hearts, sparking thoughts, and connecting us on a deeper level.

### **What is the significance of medium and colour?**

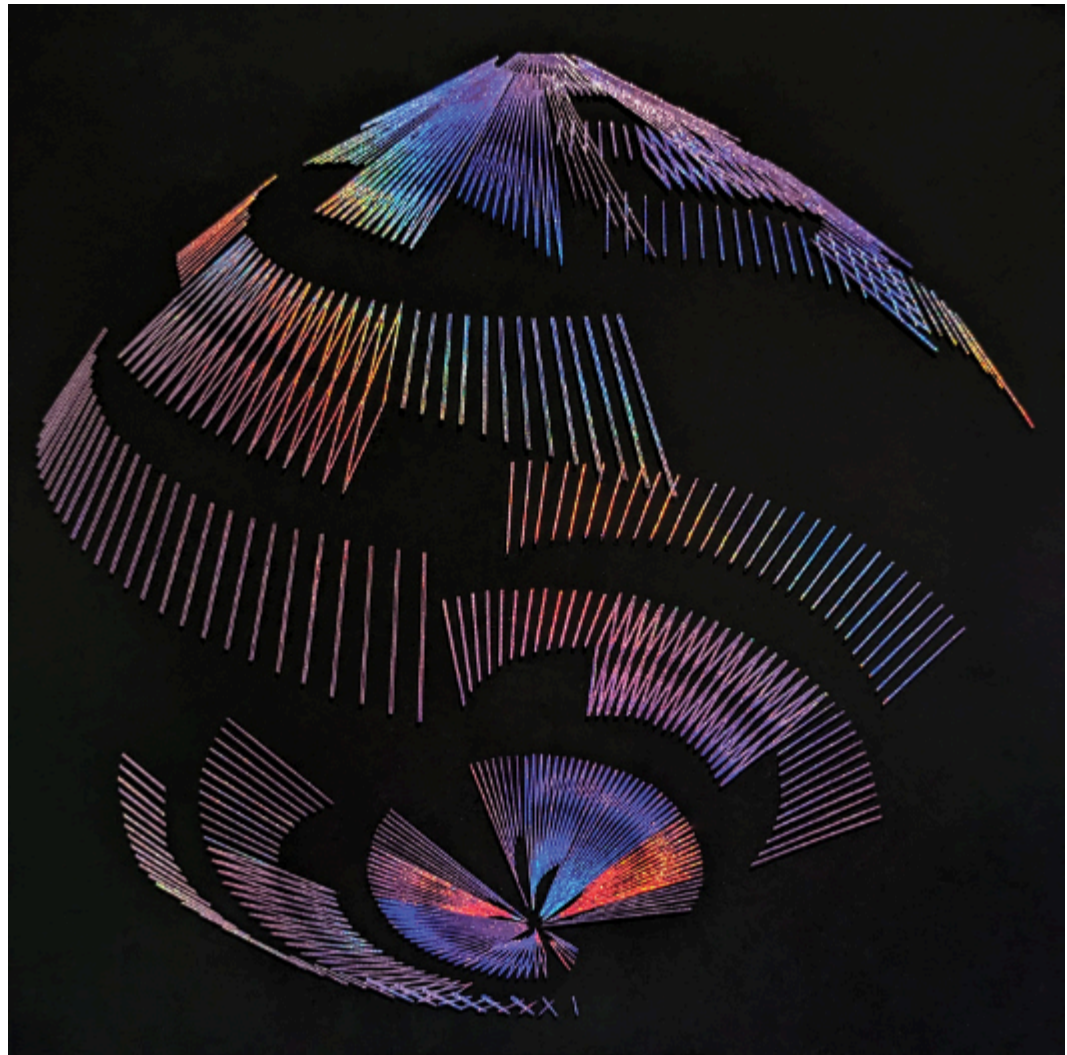
The significance of medium and colour in my work is intertwined with the allure of modern materials. Colour, within this context, becomes a catalyst for transformation – not just of the canvas, but also of the viewer's experience.

It enhances the change of perspective, inviting audiences to delve deeper into the layers of meaning to be discovered within the artwork.

Modern materials like polychromatic films, add dynamic optical effects that invite viewers to engage and see from new angles.

Colour becomes a transformative tool, enhancing the way we perceive art and enabling a deeper connection between the artwork and its audience.

*Kholl*





**Do you work from memory, life, photographs, or from other resources? Describe your creative process.**

My creative process is a fusion of influences and resources. It stems from memory, life, photos, and various sources. I absorb art, installations, and their visual impact. Natural phenomena, especially Fibonacci patterns in nature, captivate me. I also utilise basic graphic design tools to play with composition. Yet, I delve further into generative algorithmic tools. These tools usher me into unexpected territories, crafting surprising patterns and shapes. Ultimately, my process is about translating the world into unique visual experiences that connect with both me and my audience.

The shattered glass unveiled a hidden beauty of its liquidity, reminding me of the unexpected look that can arise from the interplay of materials and chance events.

**Do you have any artistic goals for the future that you would like to share?**

Looking forward, my artistic aspirations encompass a multifaceted expansion of my creative journey. My aim is to not only continue crafting art but to also immerse myself in the global art scene. Exhibiting my work on an international platform in galleries and esteemed art events worldwide, stands among my ambitions.

My goal is to stir joy and inspiration in those who connect with art. Through sharing my creations, I seek to elicit

## **The essence of my visual creations lies in their ability to evoke emotions, spark dialogue, and contribute to our cultural and intellectual landscape**

**What is your favourite art accident? Did it change your perspective?**

My favourite art accident happened when a flat piece of glass unexpectedly shattered, forming intricate shattered patterns resembling polygonal structures. This incident was a revelation in terms of the way glass broke, revealing its inherent crystal-like structure.

This experience significantly changed my perspective. It made me realise that even accidents can be valuable sources of inspiration and insight.

emotional responses, ignite imaginations, and enrich lives through artistic expression.

Witnessing the positive impact of my work, as it brings happiness and intrigue to others is an incredibly gratifying aspect of my artistic path.

**What do you consider the role of an artist today?**

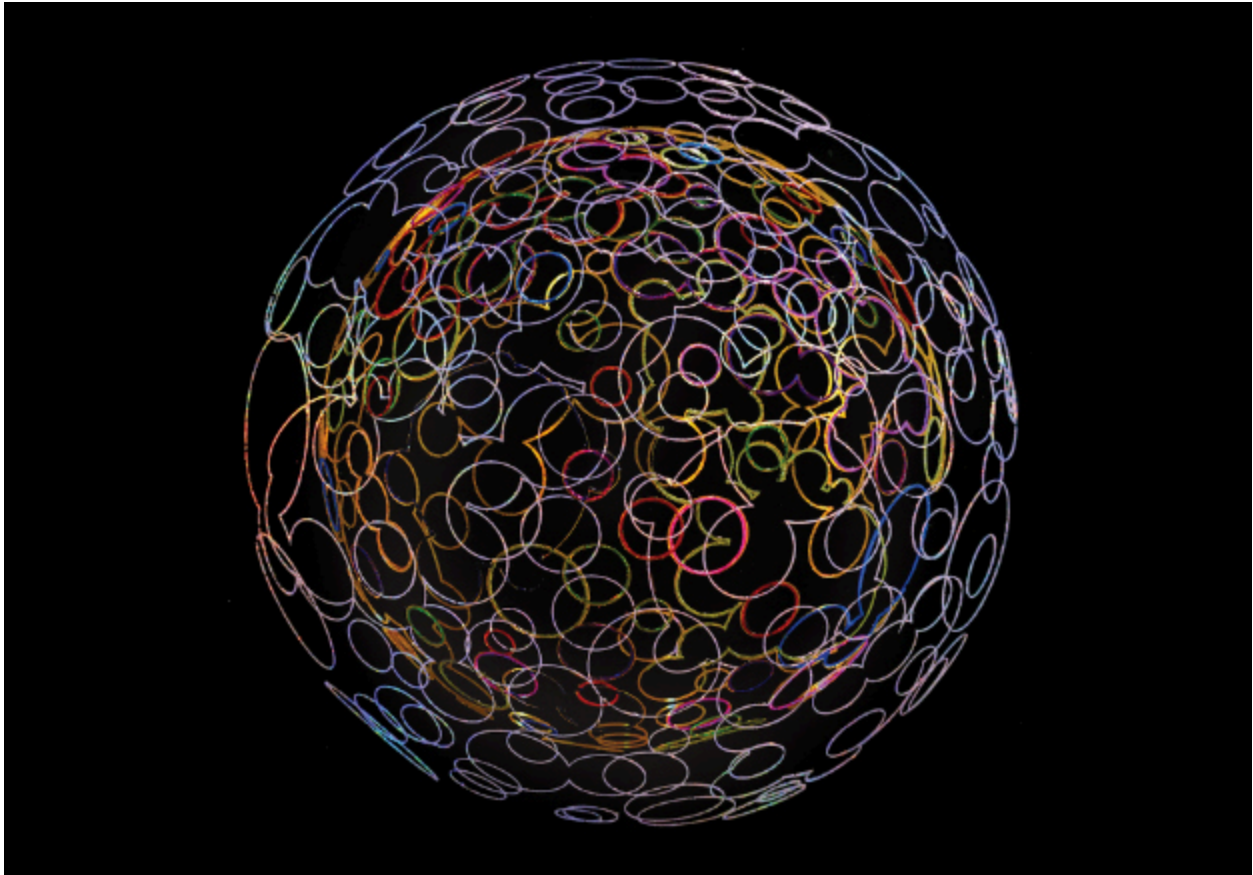
In the contemporary world, artists play a multi-faceted role that goes beyond creating art. They serve as catalysts for societal reflection and change,

## **Ultimately, my process is about translating the world into unique visual experiences that connect with both me and my audience**

interpreting the complexities of our times through their unique lenses and ability to see things differently. An essential role of artists today is to challenge norms and provoke dialogue. They prompt viewers to critically engage with pressing issues and consider alternative viewpoints. Artists also inspire by evoking emotions and empathy, connecting people across boundaries.

Yet in a new digital era, artists contribute to innovation by exploring new mediums and technologies, redefining traditional forms and pushing creative boundaries. In essence, artists today shape narratives, foster conversations, and leave an enduring impact on culture and society, reflecting the spirit of the times and influencing our shared journey. ●

*Bolea*



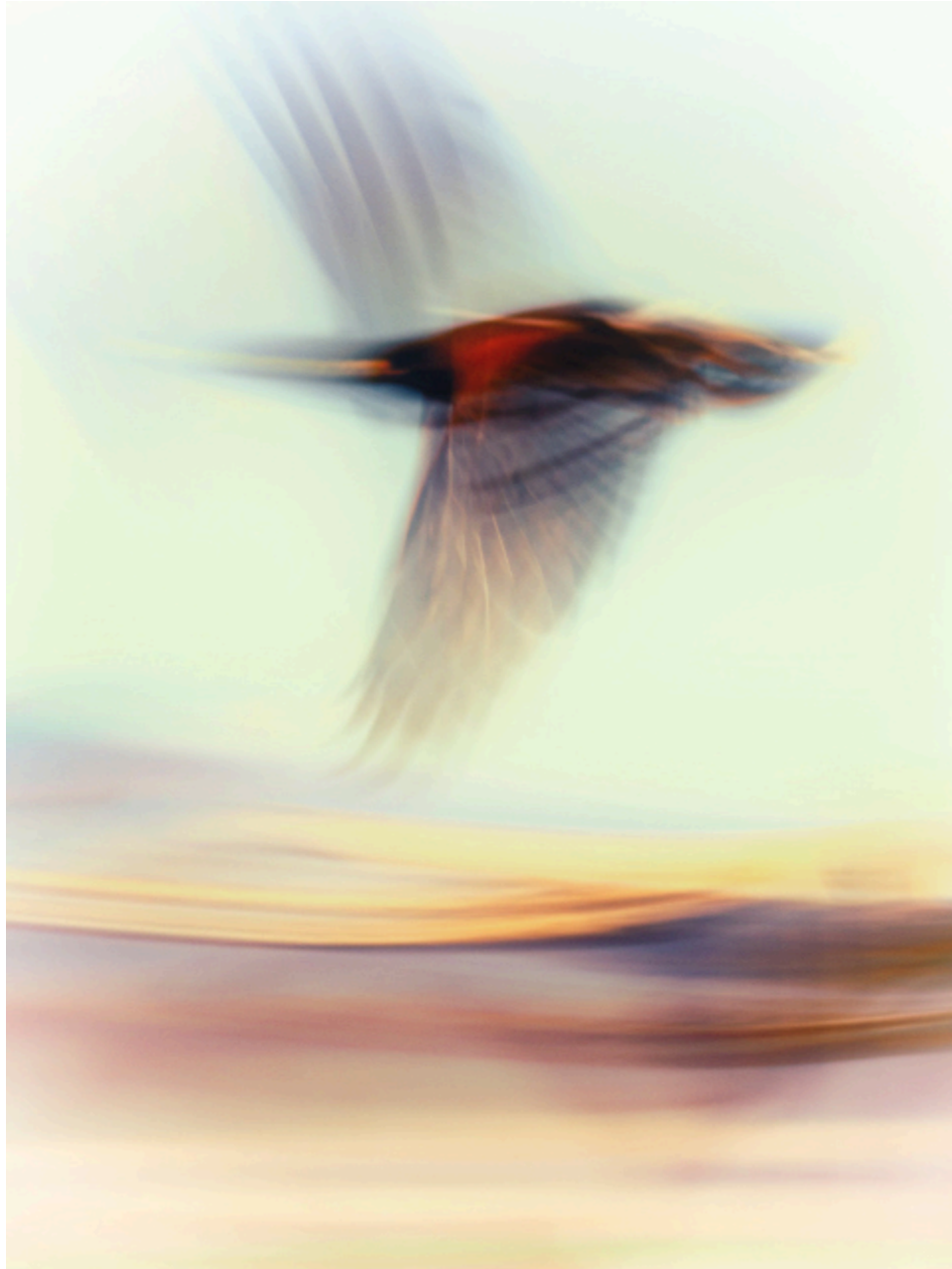
**MEFIO**



*Ara Macao*



**AMY NEWTON-MCCONNEL**



*Flight of the Falcon*  
ICM Photography

**CHARLOTTE JORDAN**



*Watchful Jungle*  
30" x 40", Acrylic on canvas

# SHANE MCALEER: I found that art was a phenomenal therapy for me



---

*Shane is an 18 year military veteran that currently lives in southern California with his wife (Miranda) and their two young sons (Cameron and Carson). Shane has always had a passion for art and after an extensive deployment cycle that spanned ~10 years, he is rediscovering his love for art. He has published several children's books and expects to continue to encourage others to stay in touch with their creative side.*



**UQ: Tell a little bit about how you first got into creating art.**

I started drawing at an early age, it's something I had always enjoyed. Art continued to be a part of my life during my high school years, but I took a fairly long hiatus when I joined the US military. I've served the majority of my career in special forces, so deployments and being away from home kept me from a canvas for many years. After my operational tours and the onset of covid, I found my world hand came to a standstill, which was extremely hard on my mental health. After a bit of time, I found that art was a phenomenal therapy for me and it has become such a critical factor to my mental fitness as the gym is to physical health.

**What themes does your work involve?**

I feel that I have a pretty wide range of expression, as I like to try new mediums and themes to keep it fresh.



Koala

**What is important to you about the visual experiences you create?**

The most important factor to my art is that I enjoy what I am creating and it does not become a task that I dread.

## **I really enjoy teaching and sharing life lessons with others — especially motivating our younger generation**

However, my roots go back to realism paintings — in the form of landscapes and portrait art. Lately, I've been mixing up my expressions as seen in my 'ChImp' painting; I first painted the chimp and then put a spin on it. My expression changes throughout time, and I hope to continue to evolve into the future.

Of course, we all have days that we don't want to do something for one reason or another, but that's to be expected. It's important that even on those days of low motivation, I still possess dedication to a piece because it's important to me. I try to eliminate burdens in life so that I can stop to enjoy the cherishing moments we have

## Humans like to experience life through that of others, which I believe it's at the root of human nature

as much as possible; if art or anything else ever becomes a burden, then it may be time to move on.

**Do you work from memory, life, photographs, or from other resources? Describe your creative process.**

It's dynamic! I tend to lean on realism as previously mentioned, so photographs and life experience/memory come into play a lot. It's dynamic these days because of my interest in abstract art; I bounce back and forth and usually have about three pieces I'm working on at any given time.

**Do you have any artistic goals for the future that you would like to share?**

I really enjoy teaching and sharing life lessons with others - especially

motivating our younger generation. With that said, I've started to illustrate children's books that I have written. My latest book "Dale's Snail Trail" is a book about a snail that teaches children to embrace their differences and to have moral courage to stand up for what they believe in. I would love to continue writing and illustrating children's books while also practicing my visual art techniques.

**What do you consider the role of an artist today?**

I believe the role of an artist is to share their vision and perspective with others. Humans like to experience life through that of others, which I believe it's at the root of human nature. We listen to stories, watch people live in their vans on YouTube, and some enjoy looking at visual creations made by other people. We express ourselves in so many different ways and all come from different walks of life; it's imperative that we share and experience that of which others do, say, think, feel, etc. I want to take my art to the next level and really start to visualize what I think/feel, especially from my deployments that weigh heavy on me. I've seen and experienced a lot of crazy, and sometimes terrifying things - to be able to capture that in visual arts to share my story is where I would like to be someday. ●

*Sunset Bridge*



**SHANE MCALEER**



*ChImP*  
Oil on Canvas



VALERIE NOVICK



*Clearing*  
Oil on canvas

**EXHIBITION**  
**ABSTRACT**

**FEATURED ARTISTS:**

**ULF KOENIG**  
**TAL LAHAT RAPPEL**  
**CASEY MENSING**  
**JUSTIN SCOTT**  
**OLGA MCNAMARA**  
**ERIKA HEFFERNAN**

# ULF KOENIG:

## My visual language aims to the pure abstraction of models for city architecture



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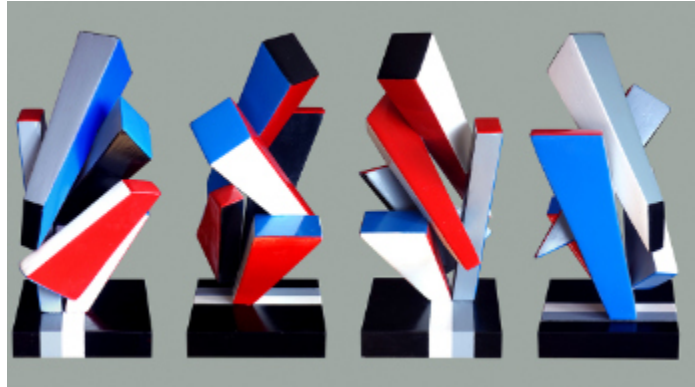
*Ulf König lives in the City of Ulm, south of Germany. Ulf has studied physics and received a PhD in electronic engineering. During decades, he has been employed as a scientist and R&D-manager in industries. In 2004 he completely changed his profession, he started working as a self-educated freelance artist and designer. Ulf's artworks mainly address architecture, a relic from his youth, or science and technology reflecting his industry background. He has participated in around 70 solo-, group- and online-exhibitions in Europe, Canada, USA, received 29 honors and awards, and has published in 9 art-magazines. In order to combine fine art with novel technologies, Ulf has founded 2 interdisciplinary artist collectives (see e.g. the YouTube-channel AV-SCILLS).*



**UQ:** Your work “Skyscraper VII”- **Multiperspective Side Views**” was recognized as the winner of the **Abstract by UPWARD gallery competition**. Please tell us more about the “Skyscrapers” series.

I explore architecture from different viewpoints, from provocation, like in my wall sculpture series “Architecture Criticism” up to beautification, like in my here reported sculpture series “Skyscrapers” and in my installation series “Vertical Constructivist Urbanism”.

I have pursued this concept since 2011 intermittently until today. As years went by, the sculptural complexity has steadily been increased, from three up to six different 3D-shapes. I strictly use constructivist features with rigid geometric, asymmetrically arranged modules which cross, intersect or interpenetrate. Together with a minimalist primary color scheme, either blue-red, yellow-red, or only yellow contrasted with black, white and gray, innovative un-orthodox aesthetic skyscraper models have been created. In addition, these are multi-perspective, no side looks like the other.



*Skyscraper VII*

My most recent “Skyscraper Giant 1“ is significantly taller and due to 13 inside modules he is characterized by a striking structural diversity and multiperspectivity in outside views.

**The geometric forms of your works intersect, interpenetrate, seem to sprout from one another. What inspires you to create such expressive architectural images?**

“Sprouting” is the natural process by which simple grains grow to complex plants. Indeed, that describes my working process very well, the stepwise development of my sculptures, by placing one module after the other. So the sculptures

## **“Sprouting” is the natural process by which simple grains grow to complex plants**

The awarded “Skyscraper VII” is one of fourteen similar artworks with the same external dimensions. The inner structure of a sculpture appears seemingly chaotic, nevertheless revealing a certain order and exceptional aesthetics and beauty.

“grow” indeed higher and higher and becoming more complex. That’s conform with my general artistic goal, “Complexity from Simplicity”.

It looks as if I would be inspired by nature. No, that’s only true concerning the mounting process. My artworks

## INTERVIEW

never deal with topics of nature around us. I'm stronger influenced by technological, man-made objects, here the skyscrapers. As I don't like their too functionalist designs, I try to modify them in an artistic manner.

### **From sculptures to installations. What do you intend with those?**

Occasionally, my skyscrapers, mostly ten of them, have been composed as installations with the title "Vertical Constructivist Urbanism" and the subtitles "Avenue", "City District" or "Buildings Row". All sculptures therein are individually placed on a slim "skyscraping" pedestal, what both together merge to a thematic unit. The installation "City Square" has the man-high "Skyscraper Giant1" in the center, while four smaller sculptures

are grouped around. This installation series shall provide visualizations of more artful cities.

In mid of 2022 the "Avenue" has been presented in Berlin's Forum Factory. The audience has been fascinated by walking around to establish the artistic variety. During a video-shoot, I walked through and could report about my background and intention.

An exclusive quality of the skyscrapers should be emphasized, the chance to present them in various artistic arrangements. Not only as floor sculptures on pedestals, as I have mostly exhibited them, alternatively, however, even in "stalactite-like" compositions on apartment ceilings. Furthermore, I have tested their hanging on walls of galleries or living rooms, one or more close together,

## **Why not listening to my own feelings settled between art, architecture and engineering to design unorthodox sky-scraper-like sculptures, built of simple geometric modules?**

*Multiperspective Skyscraper XIX*



either framed or not. Such installations might associate crystals, literally growing out of the wall.

### **Was there a specific impulse that served as a basis for the creation of these series?**

Decades ago, during business trips I saw a lot of metropolises, for instance, New York, Boston, Tokyo, Shanghai. I had been impressed by the huge skyscrapers on both sides of the

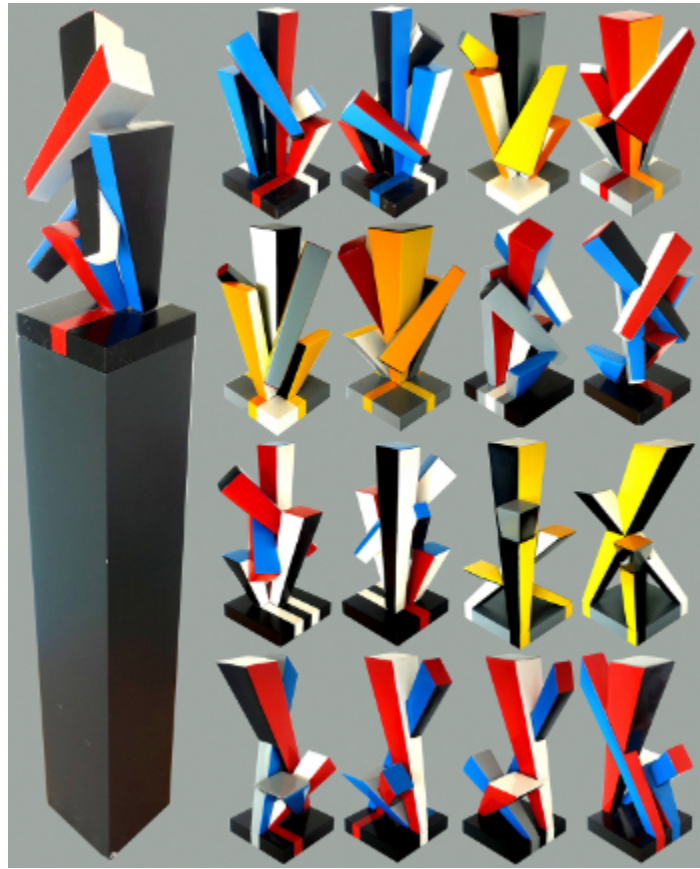
streets. However, apart from a few contemporary exceptions, most of them have terrified me due to their boring functionality. They looked like upstanding, almost unstructured cuboids with facades, only interrupted by window holes.

I must confess, there is of course a need of vertical urbanism with residential and business towers close together, to fulfill environmental, economical, energetical and transport requirements. But the societal value lags far behind, due to their monotonous design and the absence of aesthetic. It's obvious, that can't touch the minds and hearts of people, in no respects.

It motivates me, to think about solutions for changing that. Why not listening to my own feelings settled between art, architecture and engineering to design unorthodox skyscraper-like sculptures, built of simple geometric modules? I imagined a visionary city full of "my" skyscrapers, represented by the above mentioned city-like installations, but as high as the actual ones in metropolises. I was convinced to achieve beautiful and multiperspective architectural models for a future, humane city-life.

**Does your artistic, architectural research relate in any way to your previous experience as an engineer and physical scientist?**

Well, at first glance you wouldn't attribute intuition, creativity and aesthetics to engineers or physicists! But the skills of these professions are not so far from those of artists, like perceptiveness, attention to details, experimentalism, iterative working

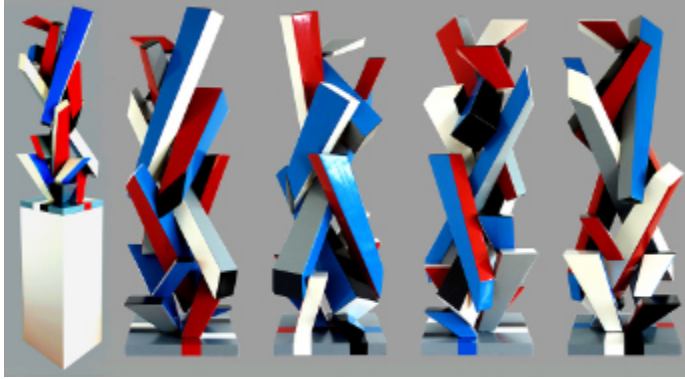


*8 Skyscrapers each in 2 views plus Skyscraper XII on pedestal*

and problem solving. The only difference is the "target objects", in the case of engineers mostly hardware like the construction and testing of machines and for physicists materials and their development and improvement. Especially engineers may not waive of beauty, at least a technical one, in order not to lose for buyers their system's attractivity. Based on my physics background, I realized in the beginning of my artist's career minimalist organic sculptures, inspired by structures I have seen in microscopic, molecular scales, or sculptural star-perceptions based, however, on an astronomical scale. As time went by, engineering-wise more geometric forms have



## INTERVIEW



*Modular Giant 1 with pedestal and side views without*

## **My concept follows in some ways the “interlacing principle” of the famous Ole Scheeren’s architecture**

pushed through, and still dominate my artworks.

Your question addresses as a further topic, I.e. the architecture. Honestly, this discipline can’t be related to my educational and professional background. That dates back to my youth, where I had a strong fable for architecture. However, don’t ask me why I didn’t study architecture! At least remains my passion for that.

### **Will we ever be able to see something like this in reality in the urban landscape?**

My concept follows in some ways the “interlacing principle” of the famous Ole Scheeren’s architecture. His buildings are also composed of crossing, intersecting, interpenetrating rectangular elements. My skyscraper models, instead, use angularly or asymmetrically arranged modules, exploiting my greater design-freedom as an artist.

A strong desire is, that once upon a time I might enter into a dialogue

with architects to discuss the possibility of feeding into their skyscraper development the one or the other layout elements of mine. That dream would then perfectly satisfy the social mandate of art and create artful cityscapes, not only with “Art on Buildings” as practiced nowadays, but by a consistent implementation of a “Sculptural Architecture”.

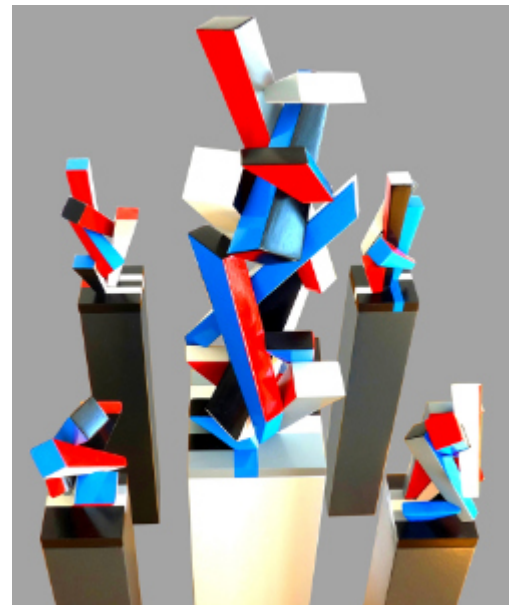
By the way, I’m actively working on

this dream and are in email contacts with various architecture offices. Most notably, they know my layouts now.

### **Can you describe your creative process?**

It might sound surprising, that’s just for the artworks reported here, I directly start with the realization,

*CitySquare Installation with 4 Skyscrapers around Modular Giant 1*



unlike applying the usual process flow of artists, starting with sketches. “I let it grow” from one 3D-module to the other, depending on my current mood and my spontaneous intuition.

In advance, however, I had prepared several lightweight modules of different dimensions, with styrofoam in the body covered with a thin layer of wood and colored with acrylic. I start placing two or four on the ground plate, and insert as a test further modules, either upward or downward directed. When it meets my aesthetic perception I fix them. This stacking of modules ends up when the planned height is reached.

**How would you describe your aesthetic or visual language?**

My visual language aims to the pure abstraction of models for city architecture. It encompasses styles like futurism, constructivism and minimalism, as concerned with structure and color. From a far distance, the external shape of each sculpture shall look like an upstanding cuboid, structures which we know from actual city architecture. What features my sculptures is the inner structure, with various interlacing orientations of modules. Precisely these are rectangular, truncated pyramids of elongated dimensions. Partly the modules have got oblique end-faces. In the viewers mind that creates confusing, but inspiring impressions, ranging from strength, stability and regularity up to the opposite e.g. imbalance and diversity. Stylistically viewed, I have merged constructivism with deconstructivism in a stunning way. The audience will recognize that as an amazing

dynamism. While in the true teaching, constructivism turns away from displaying reality, in my more utopic post-constructivism I tolerate, I even prefer associations to real things. Related to my skyscrapers, I try to figure out a reshaping of city architecture for the benefit of the society.

Considering finally the language of colors and their significance for my models. Consistently, I use primary and so called noncolors. The last act as contrast and emphasize the spatial design. My blue-red skyscrapers evoke thoughts of techniques. The yellow one do “speak in softer tones”.

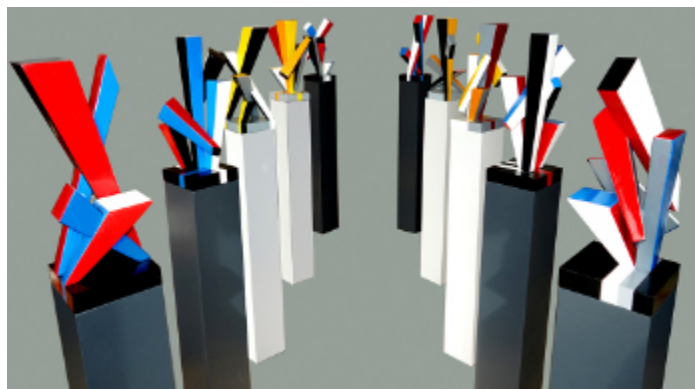
What happens, if one would omit the colors, e.g. in the case of an architectural implementation?

Fortunately, we will still have the thrilling language of the modular construction.

**Has there been a project you would say has failed? If so, why and what were your learnings from it?**

Yes, unfortunately in respect to the series reported here. So far, all skyscrapers are in-house sculptures. However, I also want to make them suitable for outdoor placement, in order to bring colors together with the

*Avenue Installation invites to walk through*



**My mission:**

**Art meets Architecture, Architecture like Sculptures,  
Art beautifies Architecture, Artists inspire  
Architects, Artful Architecture enriches City-Life**

nature-contrasting constructivist style into gardens, parks or city-places. For this purpose I tried to cover the sculptures with various weatherproofed clear varnishes. But due to the inside lightweight styrofoam terrible things happened with my test-models. My first lesson from that: “be content with what you have”, i.e. already attractive in-house sculptures, my second one: “don’t give up and try it again”, and a third: “find experts to solve it”. Indeed, I discovered a fair-

construction company, whose interest I could win.

**What were your first memories around art? Was there a moment of epiphany when you thought you had found your calling?**

I grew up in a culture-affine family, my mother a musician, my father a painter and cartoonist, who taught me in painting. I drew a lot, especially architecture visions, I read books about modern and fantastic architecture and I saw the icons of architecture in the world. During my professional period as a scientist and industry manager, I designed in my spare time flats for me and my friends and painted occasionally an artwork. But what should I do after my retirement, traveling, volunteering, reading or simply fulfilling household chores?

Once, sitting comfortably in in my armchair, my old sketch-book happened to be next to me. That was a pretty key moment, as thoughts of architectural structures flew on the paper. Even a few days later I realized the sketches by means of styrofoam and wood... and ever since I’ve been doing sculpturing.

**What is most important to you about the visual experiences you create?**

Thanks, this question allows me to summarize a bit my statements given

*Ulf Koenig during a video shoot in Berlin 2022*

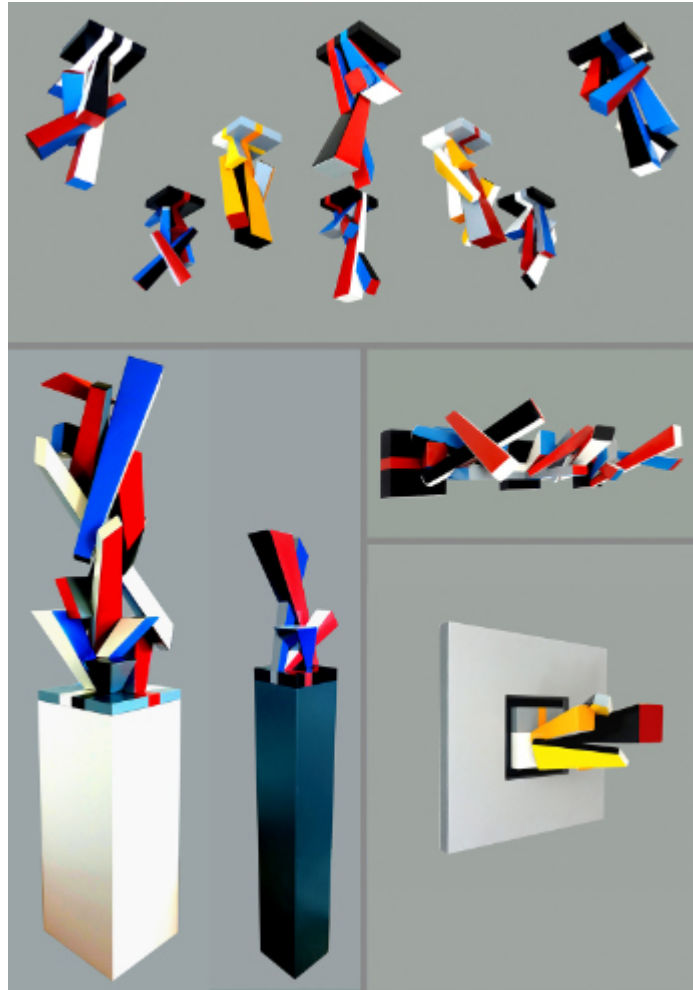




before, and to make some critical remarks. Art and architecture are related disciplines, at least art-historically considered. Unfortunately, in practice there is not an intensive exchange of information, not to mention from a close cooperation. However, both groups are responsible for that. Architects are limited in their construction flexibility by building laws, site locations, topography, costs and more. Artists are living in a cloud-cuckoo-land, in a state of over-optimistic fantasy and are not truly caring about reality. This gap I try to bridge by offering more artful models of buildings. I don't want to revolutionize today's construction features, like the pioneers of organic architecture commonly have to do. I apply standard geometric constructivist elements, simple ones which nevertheless allow nearly unlimited design flexibility. However, I must admit, that due to their uncommon interlaced arrangement a skyscraper-sized realization of my concepts would also require the one or the other technology development. But the effort seems to be worthwhile. Artists whom I have presented my models in physical and online exhibition, like yours, confirmed that by their positive response. However, whether architects do like the concept too, is still completely unclear.

**What are your future endeavors? Do you have any new projects you can tell us about?**

First of all, I'm presently constructing "Skyscraper Giant 2", having the yellow-red, black, white, gray color scheme. Two medium-size skyscrapers shall follow. I plan to combine all



*Skyscrapers as floor-, wall-, ceiling-sculptures*

skyscrapers to the new installation "Avenue-Extension" of the series "Vertical Constructivist Urbanism". I hope, to find a gallery, where I can exhibit this many meters-long installation, and where the audience can safely walk around. The most challenging project, however, concerns a "monotonous" art-management. Urgently, I have to revitalize my previous contacts to architecture offices and to establish new ones. I would be grateful for a polite, motivating feedback, even if an implementation may reasonably happen only sometime in the future. ●

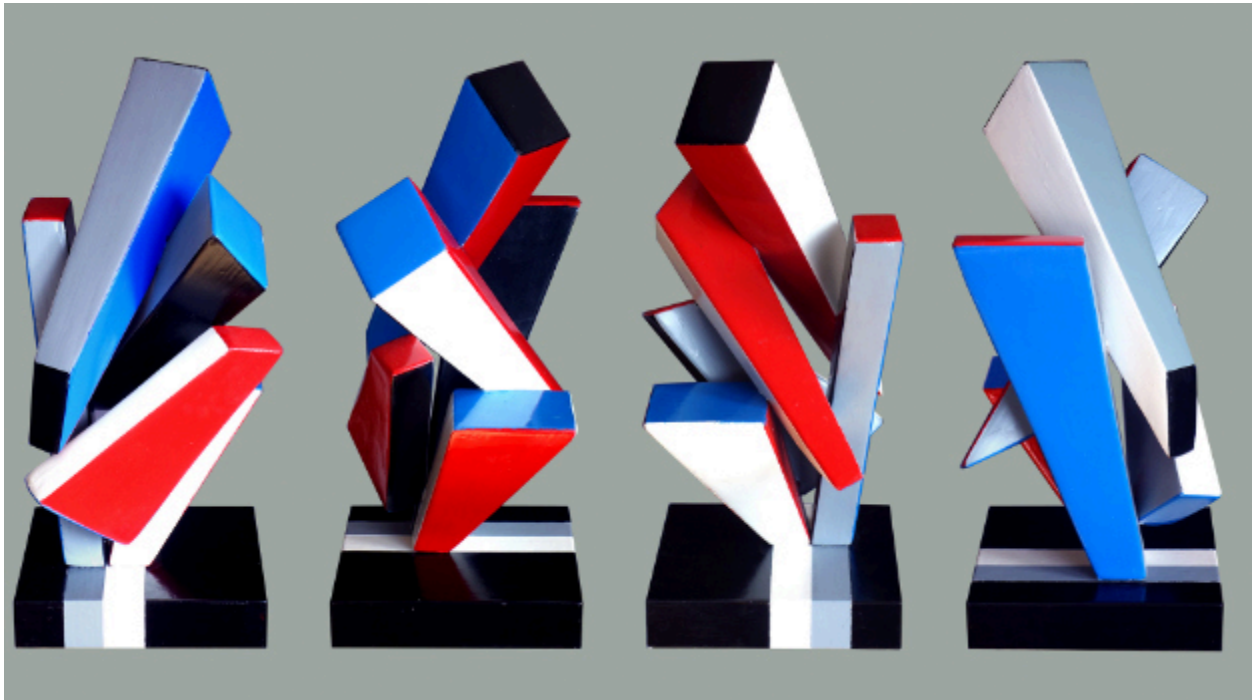
TAL LAHAT RAPPEL



*Untitled*

Oil on canvas. 50 x 70 cm

**ULF KOENIG**



*Skyscraper VII - Multiperspective Side Views*  
34 x 15 x 15 cm each of the 4 sides



# CASEY MENSING: Creativity is like a river and its tributaries



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*Casey Mensing is an award-winning screenwriter and author of the books *I Am Ahab*, *The Unimaginable City*, and *Judith*. His nomadic existence currently finds him living in Downtown Los Angeles. In his free time, he enjoys painting, taking photos, and bringing home stray books.*

**UQ:** You are well known as a filmmaker, screenwriter, author and poet. Is visual art a new creative challenge for you or still more of a hobby?

This is an interesting question. I don't think of visual art as necessarily a new creative challenge. Creativity is like a river and its tributaries. I started painting around the same time I started writing but received more recognition as a writer than a visual artist early on. Because of that,

I focused more on writing. I had stopped making visual art for several years for a variety of reasons; then, when everything shut down in 2020, I picked it back up in earnest.

**How do the different forms intersect in your art?**

Everything I create intersects in various ways. The novels and screenplays I've written are almost all connected and form a private universe. The poetry I've written and that has been published is closely related to the visual art I create. The titles of many of my paintings have a poetic quality.

**You talk about yourself as a nomad. What does the place where you make art mean to you? How does the place influence what you do at any given moment?**

Place has always played a significant role in everything I've created, from a macro to a micro perspective. Being



*Nights That Can't Be Undone*

**Place has always played a significant role in everything I've created, from a macro to a micro perspective**

an artist in the United States, to being an artist in Los Angeles, to being an artist in Downtown Los Angeles, to writing and painting in a small workspace, all play a role in the type of things I create and the influences that I bring into my work. And what I'm doing now is different from what I was creating and what influenced me when I lived in Hawaii or Florida. I do seem to have an affinity for warm weather and sunshine.

**What artists or movements have influenced you?**

Jean-Michel Basquiat was the first artist that made me want to pick up a brush and try painting. Before experiencing his work for the first time, my exposure to art was limited to fine art painters and famous masters. And though I love all that, seeing Basquiat opened a door to new possibilities. His work seemed so radical and inventive to my teenage

eyes. Soon after that, I was introduced to Rauschenberg and Twombly, and I experimented with techniques and found art combines. Currently, I'm

a film is a tightrope walk. Everything has to work together in unison to create something great. Painting is definitely my favorite visual media to

## **...there is something beautiful, messy, and tangible about painting that I love**

taking everything in. Poetry, films, many different art styles, and just everyday experiences. I have been revisiting the paintings of Helen Frankenthaler, Joan Mitchell, and Grace Hartigan lately.

**What are your favorite visual media? How do materials, color, and form influence the creation of your artwork?**

Film might be my favorite visual media because it combines many elements simultaneously to create a cohesive experience. Also, the act of making

create in, though. Because painting goes back tens of thousands of years, the very action makes you part of this continuum, which is incredible when you think about it. And there is something beautiful, messy, and tangible about painting that I love.

**What is your source of inspiration?**

Absolutely everything. One of my few ambitions in life has always been to live in a heightened state of inspiration, where everything appears to you as a moment of creation.

**Do you have any artistic goals in your visual art?**

I would very much like to be able to keep making visual art and pushing myself in new directions. Obviously, being in positions to show my work to more people and with a greater frequency would also be great.

**What are you currently working on?**

Regarding writing projects, I'm working on a noir-influenced crime novel and two collections of poetry, and I'm in the research stages of two feature-length screenplays. On the visual art front, I continue to paint or make collages as often as possible, including a series of larger pieces inspired by a particular song or composition I love. ●

*Weird Lullaby*





**CASEY MENSING**



*Shadows & The Color Of Wishes*

Acrylic

JUSTIN SCOTT

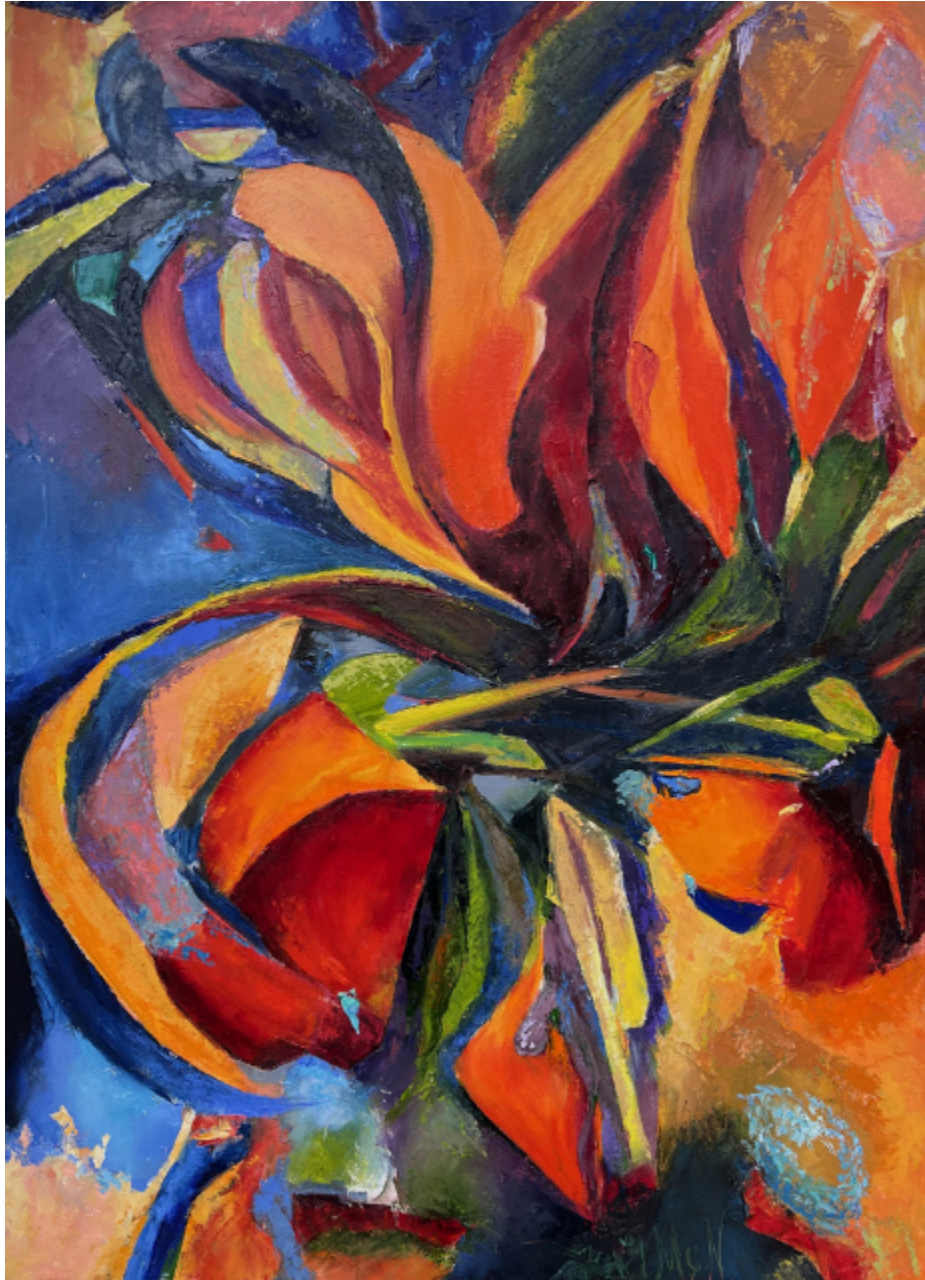


*Different Views*

Acrylic and Pastels on Canvas, 11" x 14"



**OLGA MCNAMARA**

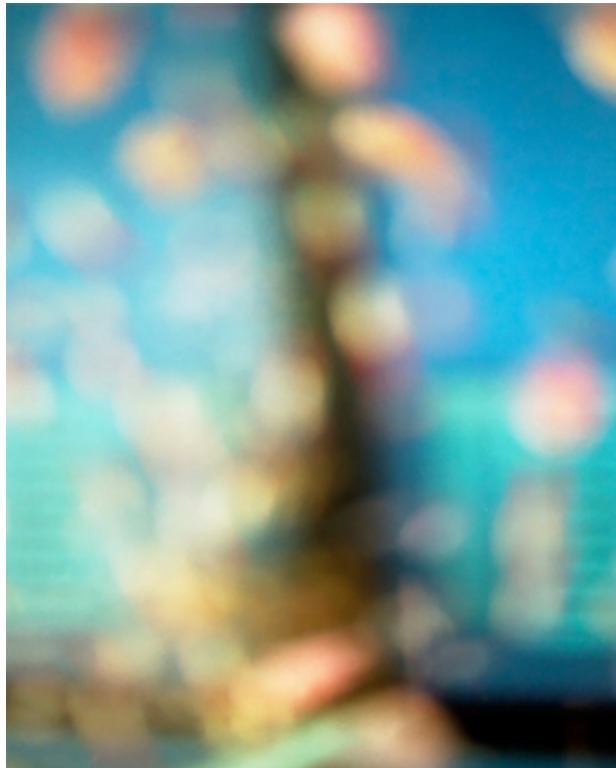


*Floral Rhythm*

Oil painting



**ERIKA HEFFERNAN**



*Last Aisle Second Shelf*

**EXHIBITION**  
**REFLECTIONS**

**FEATURED ARTISTS:**

**AARON KRONE**  
**AMY NEWTON-MCCONNEL**  
**NOELLE O'HANLON**  
**PATRICIA HOCHHAUS**

# AARON KRONE:

## In my work, I explore the idea of motion and emotion and how the two interrelate



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*Aaron Krone has a B.A. from Friends University, Wichita, Kansas and an MFA from Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas. He is an Associate Professor of studio arts at Friends University, Wichita, Kansas where he teaches the compositional design, drawing, painting, and figural classes. He has won regional and international recognition for his artwork.*

**UQ:** Tell a little bit about how you first got into creating art.

I have been active in art all my life. Both of my parents were art teachers. My mother had me do sample art education lessons when she prepared to teach her college art education classes. All through my childhood, I would go to Mom and Dad's classrooms and make art while my parents were working on other things.



Making art just seemed natural to me, so when I went to college, I chose that as a major.

**What artists or movements have had an impact on you?**

I'm impacted not so much by art movements or styles as much as specific artists that attract my attention. When I studied art history in graduate school - I was influenced by painter Richard Diebenkorn, who said, "Reality has to be digested, it has to be transmuted by paint. It has to be given a twist of some kind."

I was also fascinated and impacted by the beauty and elegance of the artwork "Nude Descending a Staircase, No.2" by Marcel Duchamp. In my work, I explore the idea of motion and emotion and how the two interrelate. A unique beauty happens when a person is in the middle of a process or action. In photography, motion blurs are often seen as ruined or wasted images because the face is out of focus or distorted due to the action, but



*Reflection*

immediate surroundings. The act of watching human activity blends into my art making as I try to capture the relationships between the humans in my life. I strive to capture the essence of my subjects through showing their character and emotions.

## **I strive to capture the essence of my subjects through showing their character and emotions**

I enjoy the ambiguity of these happy accidents. The uncertainty of who the subject is and the focus of the action and emotion displayed is what I'm interested in.

**What themes does your work involve?**

Much of my work is autobiographical, incorporating family history and memories. I often find content in my

As I mentioned before, I also address the theme of motion, particularly in some of my drawings. I have always been impressed by the beauty and elegance ballet dancers have been able to portray in their movements. If you have ever tried to photograph their actions, you see an interesting ghost-like motion blur that very beautifully compliments their poses. When observing them in their process,

## INTERVIEW

the arms, head, and legs are constantly in motion and the torso stays relatively stagnant, describing an ambiguity.

### **What is important to you about the visual experiences you create?**

It's important to me that my art captures life in the moment and shows a range of emotions and movements, creating open narratives that can be interpreted in different ways by the viewer.

expressive portraits and scenes that attempt to tell a story and involve the viewer. With graphite and charcoal, I create soft shading by using a combination of drawing, brushing and erasing to get subtle effects, particularly in drawings of the human face. I use graphite and charcoal to capture the energy in movement and motion blur. This mixed media approach allows me to blend the lines of movement and erase other

## **The content or meaning I want to express leads me to chose a specific media for an artwork**

### **What is the significance of medium and color?**

The content or meaning I want to express leads me to choose a specific media for an artwork. I feel black and white compositions can have as great an impact as color images. I use graphite and charcoal to make dramatic,

movement lines and blurs to get the effect of a figure in the process of moving through time and space. These lines and erasures leave the trace of the vibrations of action. I consider the following idea when I represent the human experience with visual images: "By portraits I do not mean the outlines and the coloring of the human figure but the inside of the heart and mind of the man." (Lord Chesterfield, 1747).

When I want a stark contrast of black and white to express a specific emotion, I sometimes use pen, ink, and wash.

To add to the emotional content of an artwork, I include vivid color.

The gesture, the energetic painterly brushstrokes, and the vivid use of colors are elements that distinguish my painting style. The ornamentation in my compositions may bring to mind the decorative works of Gustav Klimt, well-known for his rich patterns of color and texture.

*The Door*



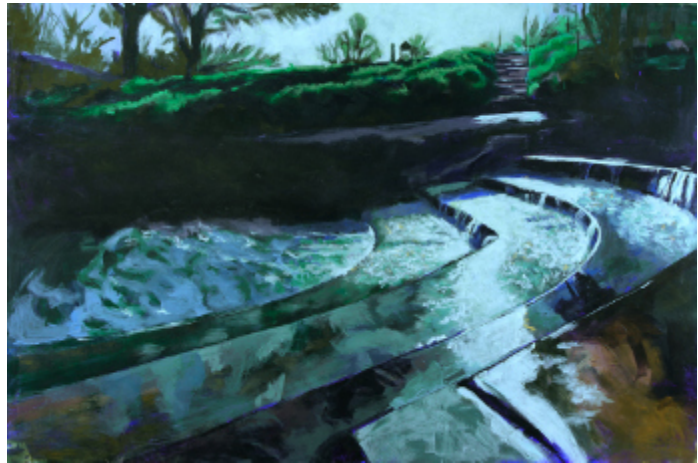
By allowing paint to drip and blend with neighboring colors, the painted images take on mysterious dimensions, adding to the story being told. The result is unexpected imagery. The emotional element gains even more value through the skillful use of colors. My interpretation of the word abstract is the act of “taking or drawing from” an image the essential aspects including the emotional essence. This scene of a person in a room staring out a window is abstracted to the point that the colors and shapes express the mood or emotion of the scene, leaving out the realistic details.

**Do you work from memory, life, photographs, or from other resources? Describe your creative process.**

I work from photographs I have taken of the people and places in my life. I use photographs from family gatherings and personal collections of images for my compositions. I explore the human experience in my work. My art style ranges from realism to Impressionism. I attempt to portray the lives of ordinary people in their environment with an emphasis on the emotional aspects of the scene.

**What is your favorite art accident? Did it change your perspective?**

Using the eraser to add white areas in my drawing resulted in an interesting appearance of motion, with traces of ghost actions of the figure. As a consequence, I discovered unseen moments. I'm fascinated with the idea of motion and emotion and how the two interrelate. The use of motion provides the idea that we are moving through time and not stagnant; we are



*Waterfall Levels*

ever changing. Also, by allowing paint to drip and blend with neighboring colors, the painted images take on mysterious dimensions, adding to the story being told. The result is unexpected imagery.

**Do you have any artistic goals for the future that you would like to share?**

I want to continue to explore the unseen possibilities I can discover by experimenting with media, technique, content, and imagery.

**What do you consider the role of an artist today?**

Art is invaluable to society as a whole: It is a form of self-expression and escapism; it allows us to be more open-minded and engaged with the world around us. It is a form of problem solving. It serves as a common language in which we can communicate across cultures. Art is an archive of human and societal memory. It preserves history, promotes change, and can be used as a powerful political tool. Art intersects with and enhances every other discipline it touches. ●



**AMY NEWTON-MCCONNEL**



*Through Colored Glass #7*  
ICM Photography

**AARON KRONE**



*Looking Out*

**NOELLE O'HANLON**



*Ponte storto, Venice*  
Oil pastels on pastel paper



**PATRICIA HOCHHAUS**



*Keiki Kaku*

AMY NEWTON-MCCONNEL  
*Flight of the Falcon*

