

# Contemporary Identities

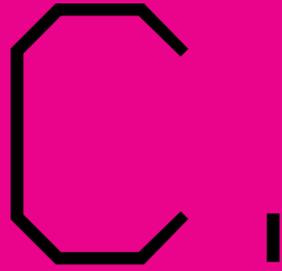
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International Art Magazine



ISSUE # 4

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## EDITORS' NOTE

The 4th issue represents the closure of the first year of ContemporaryIdentities and a moment to reflect on the audience reaction to this start up project. We are pleased to note that ContemporaryIdentities has received nice comments and responses not only from writers and artists but also from the wider public.

We are excited that our project is gaining recognition. Due to its multicultural approach and dialogue between nations ContemporaryIdentities has been chosen to be part of the Arts and Society database (<https://arts-and-society.org/>) that includes Conseil International de la Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines (CIPSH), UNESCO-MOST, The Global Chinese Art, Culture and Society (GCACS) & Mémoire de l'Avenir - Arts and Society (MDA).

We want to celebrate the achievement of ContemporaryIdentities with forthcoming special issues to be published twice a year about young artists from art academies around the world. With such project in mind we had the chance to interview two young artists based in the United Arab Emirates who had recently received their bachelors' degree in Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts and Design, University of Sharjah, regarding their participation in a group exhibition at Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE.

Finally we would like to note that in addition to our board members, we also had the pleasure of working with international art writers such as Sergio Gomez (Mexico), Aurelia Nicolosi (Italy) and Anna Seaman (UK).

Sara Berti & Elham Shafaei

## CONTRIBUTORS

### Art Critics:

Izmer Bin Ahmad  
Sergio Gomez  
Aurelia Nicolosi  
Anna Seaman  
Zoltán Somhegyi

### Editors:

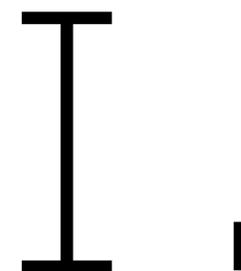
Sara Berti  
Elham Shafaei

### Front Cover:

Dania Altamimi  
(Disillusionment series,  
Car, 2019, Plastic, 5x5x8  
cm)

### Media Consultant:

Emad Pournasiri



## ARTISTS

3. Daniah Al Saleh  
By: Anna Seaman
7. Francisco Benitez  
By: Aurelia Nicolosi
11. Martin C. Herbst  
By: Zoltán Somhegyi
15. Arash Fesharaki  
By: Izmer Bin Ahmad
19. Lisa Kokin  
By : Sergio Gomez
23. Adam Magyar  
By: Zoltán Somhegyi
27. Fabian Matz  
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33. Matteo Mauro  
By: Aurelia Nicolosi
35. Naz Sharokh  
By: Anna Seaman
39. Izumi Ueda Yuu  
By: Sergio Gomez

D |

## DANIAH AL SALEH

(Saudi Arabia-UK)

ANNA SEAMAN

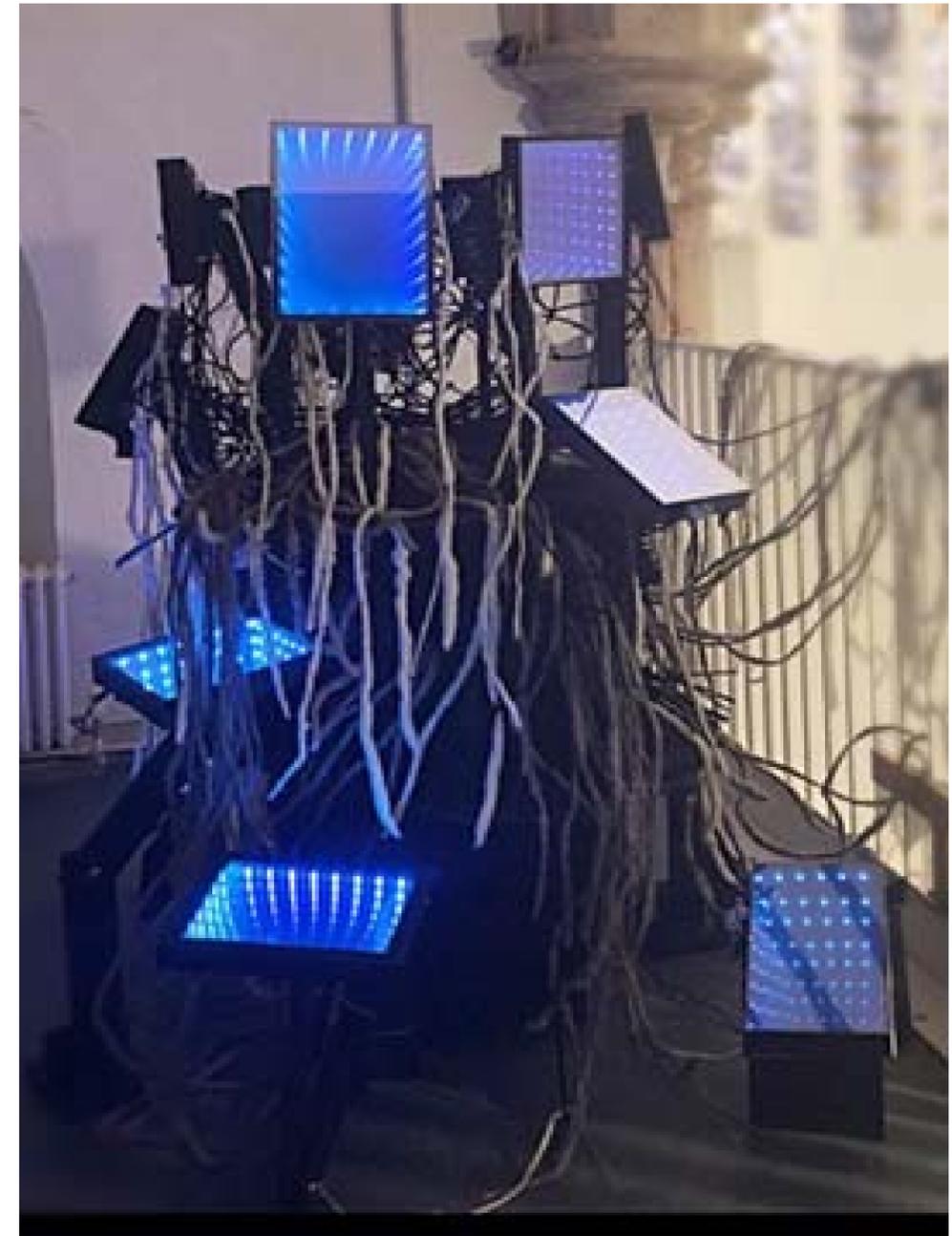
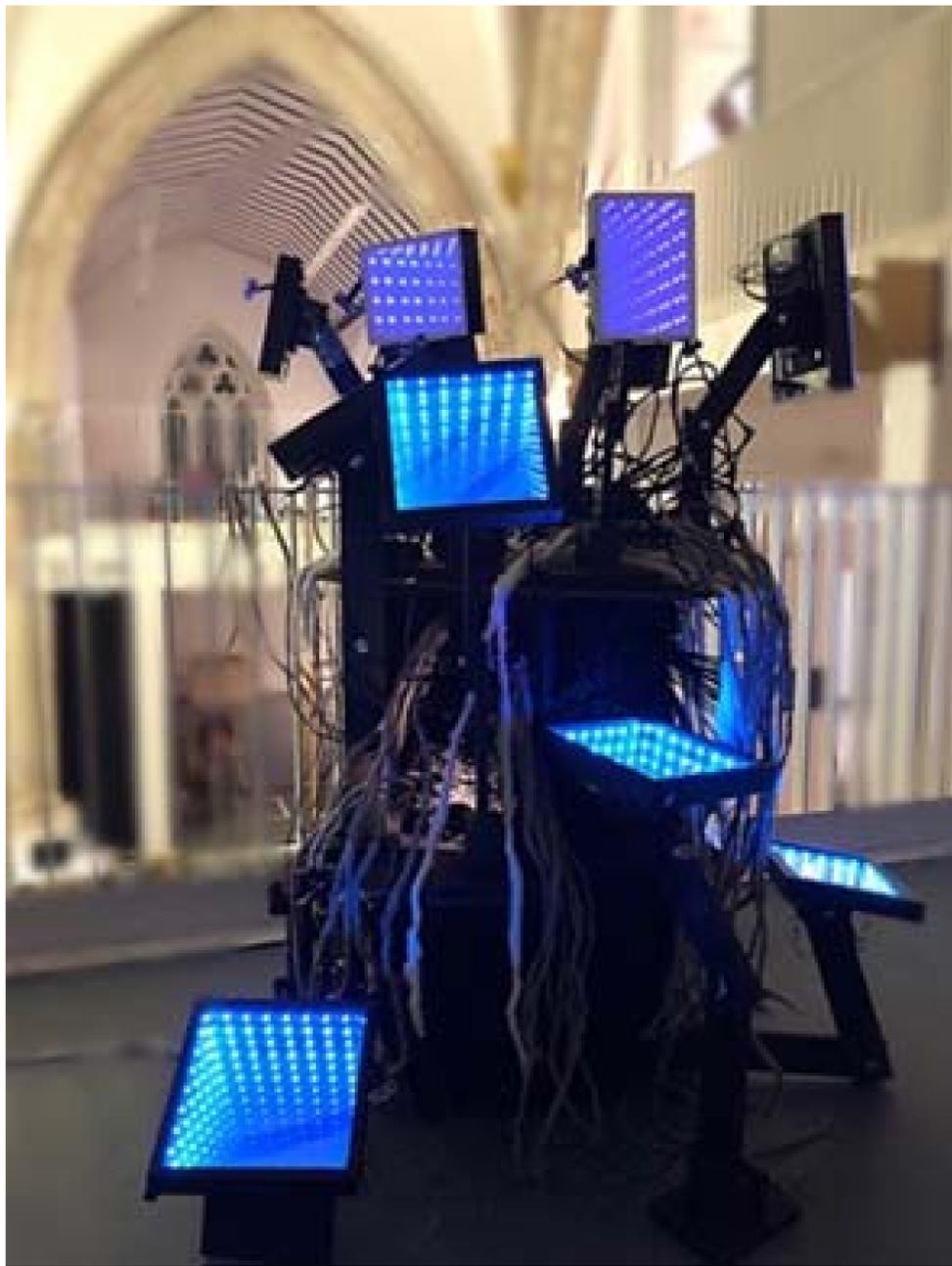
With a combined interest in sacred geometry and mathematical formulae, Daniah Al Saleh's practice has evolved from conventional methods to the fascinating world of computational art (she will graduate from an MFA in Computational Art from Goldsmiths in Sept 2020). Subject matters range from the seemingly banal details of everyday life to overarching social issues such as climate change; the common thread is a deeply philosophical approach.

Born in Riyadh in 1970, she lives and works in London and was the winner of the second edition of the Ithra Art Prize in 2019. The winning work, Sawtam, was a digital wind chime that deconstructed the Arabic language into phonemes. Specifically the work was a commentary on communication but more broadly and across her practice, Al Saleh investigates the meaning of thought itself and presents it in clever, installations that reveal her careful theoretic consideration.



Behind the barrier, 2014, Watercolor, Pencil, Acrylic, (Hafez Gallery Anonymous) Based on a room of one's own: Virginia Woolf, 144x144 cm

A |



Alien, 2018, Interactive sculpture, Electronics, Wood, Felt, Mixed media  
300x300x200 cm, Degree show view

F.

## FRANCISCO BENITEZ

(USA)

AURELIA NICOLOSI

Francisco Benítez, born in Taos, New Mexico (United States) in 1967, lives and works between the United States and Europe. His artistic vision is influenced by his Spanish and Spanish-American family environment. His main references range from late Hellenistic and Roman painting to Caravaggio, from the pictorial currents of the seventeenth century, operating between southern Italy and Spain, to metaphysical painting. The preferred techniques are essentially oil painting and encausto, as well as drawing, which make his paintings very structured and rich in wise quotations.



Flora, 2019, Encaustic on panel, 40x40 cm

B.



Atomic portrait of Doña Inés at the age of 6, 2018, Oil on panel, Ø 40 cm



La cantatrice, 2019, Oil on panel, Ø 90 cm

M.

## MARTIN C. HERBST

(Austria)

ZOLTÁN SOMHEGYI

Martin C. Herbst's works fascinate the viewer in their ability to direct our attention to important theoretical reflections through aesthetically - we could also say: sensuously - appealing artworks. The question is not only the often-asked philosophical enquiry what the work is, but we can even add to it other ones: where is the work, and how far is it extended? The original painting practically becomes virtual, but at the same time the complete artwork, including this original motive's reflection will become real and substantial. The hidden - or at least partly unattainable - original, the reflecting metal surface and the mirrored image of the original will then together create the final artwork.

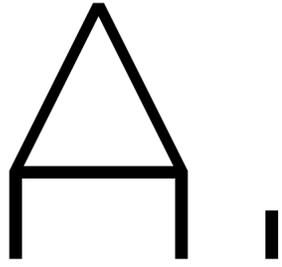


Hidden treasures 32, 2014, Oil on mirrored aluminum, 60x60x30 cm

H.



Hidden treasures, Oil on mirrored aluminum, Exhibition view



# ARASH FESHARAKI

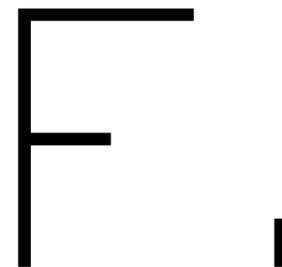
(Iran)

## IZMER BIN AHMAD

Arash Fesharaki displays a remarkable mastery and sensitivity of materials. His sculptural objects present surprising combinations of materiality: soft fabrics in dialogue with a shaped lump of plaster seated on a slab of metal, or a roll of fuzzy stuff in the company of a solid form in a transparent glass (or plexiglass) box. The horizontality of these objects conjures a sense of hybridity, meditative organism-machine that labours to emanate a feel of life, movement and dialogue among themselves. There is an unmistakable sense of interaction between these forms and the matters that make up their existence. This interaction is tense, a gift of energy and eros that is at once magical, sacrificial and haunting.



Untitled, 2019, Mixed media, 67x140x10 cm

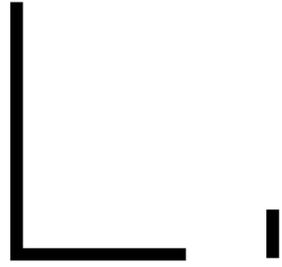




Untitled, 2019, Mixed media, 18x72x12 cm



Untitled, 2019, Mixed media, 22x126x10 cm



# LISA KOKIN

(USA)

## SERGIO GOMEZ

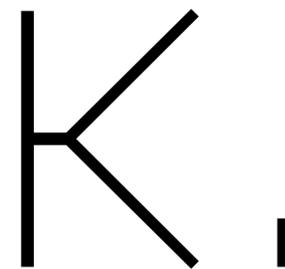
In the words of Benjamin Franklin, “Instead of filling a vacuum, it makes one,” money represents both a power that gives and takes. Its dualistic function invokes emotions for the one who has it and the one who lacks it. Yet, in the hands of Lisa Kokin, money and its devouring symbolic power become null and subdued.

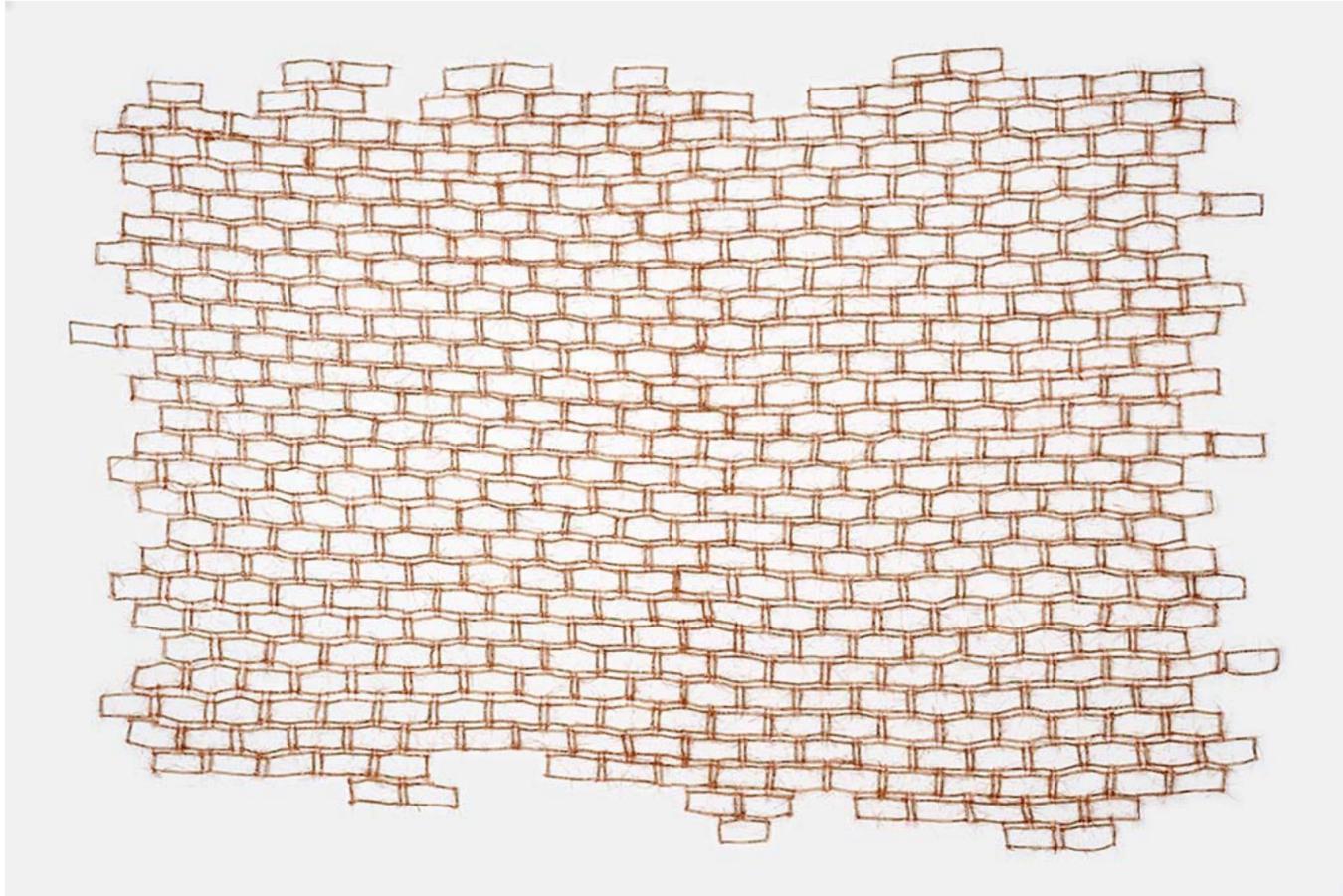
Her intricate sewn works appear to be carefully constructed structures. In some instances, they may appear to take the forms of ancient manuscripts, maps or written texts. However, at close proximity, it becomes obvious that the material sewn together is money.

The sudden realization unleashes the emotional baggage each one of us has associated with money. Kokin flips the coin of the conversation with every stitch to demand our attention and construct our own narrative. As some say, “If only money could talk.” It has definitely done so through the work of Kokin.



Brokeade #1, 2016, Shredded money and thread, 93.98x63.5 cm

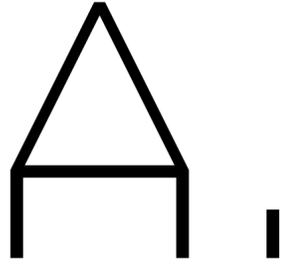




Wall, 2017, Shredded money and thread, 86.36x132.08 cm



Almighty (Debts), 2017, Shredded money and thread, 20.955x33.655 cm



# ADAM MAGYAR

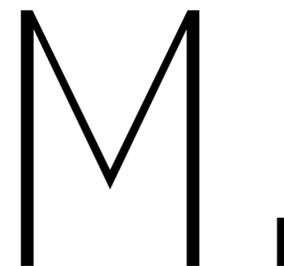
(Hungary)

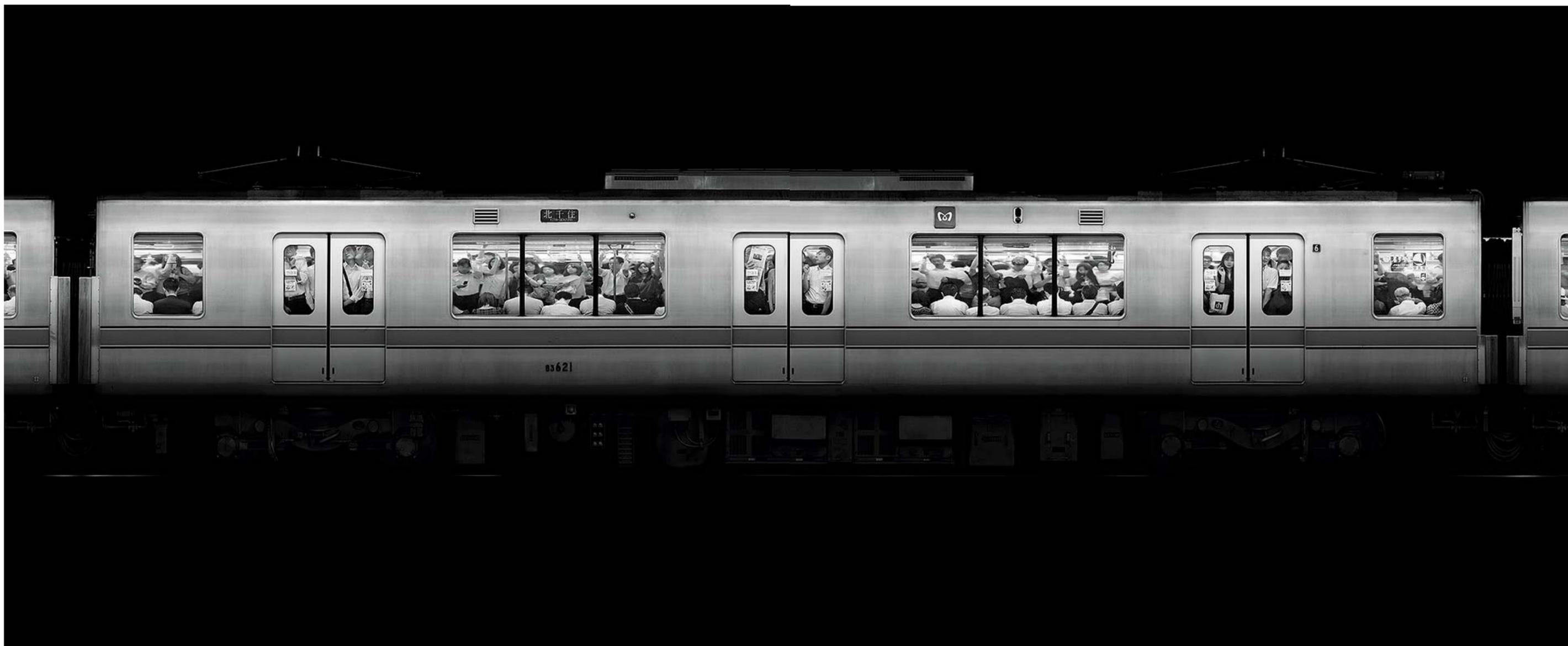
ZOLTÁN SOMHEGYI

The metro trains on Ádám Magyar's series titled "Stainless" at first seem like stopped vehicles, only after a few seconds the observer realises that they are, in fact, actual subways in use. The artist developed a special way of recording moving objects and representing them in a highly detailed and meticulously accurate way, in an orthographic mode and not in usual perspective, as if they were plans on an engineer's desk. At the same time however this almost sterile and "stainless" representation is in an inspiring opposition with the randomness of the subject-matter, i.e. the fact that the artist documents the quickly arriving train, without being able to control for example the travelers and their posture on the train. This leads to a whole set of considerations on the role of organisation and chance in contemporary urban reality.



Stainless, 2010, Photograph, New York, 80x180 cm





Stainless, 2010, Photograph, Tokyo, 80x197 cm

F.

## FABIAN MATZ

(Switzerland)

### IZMER BIN AHMAD

Fabian Matz creates soft objects using fine-mesh polyamide tights, a banal fashion accessory that assume sculptural dimensions by being stuffed with three-dimensional forms. The artist is clearly interested in the corporeal effect conjured by a material that is most intimately bound to the body, contouring our various modes of appearance and secrecy. While the bodily aspects of Matz's exploration is arguably less representational in the pieces featured here compared to his other works, these abstract forms affirmatively allude to the flesh in their reference to 'bodybuilding' and 'anatomy'. They render visible and sensible the artist's investment in body deformations, abstraction and the grotesque, which, together with the corporeal function, intimacy and secrecy of tights, expose the realms of the familiar and visible to that of absurdity and concealment. These objects are elegantly uncanny, vessels that are excreted into the world as witnesses to the pleasurable content of our dismay.



And when you wake up, You can't really sleep anyway, 2019, Inkjet print on poster paper, Billboard view, Paderborn (Germany)

M.



Six-pack-bodybuilding, 2017, Polyamide socks, Epoxy resin, Glass, Wood, 56.8x60x15 cm



The anatomy of the escaped air, 2018, Polyamide tights, Epoxy resin, Natural rubber balloon, Glass, LED-spotlight, Variable dimensions

M.

## MATTEO MAURO

(Italy-UK)

AURELIA NICOLOSI

Matteo Mauro is a Sicilian artist, architect and designer, who has been living in London since 2010. After completing his studies in Italy and Germany, in England he obtained the Royal Institute of British Architecture (RIBA) diploma from the University College of London. His works are unique in their being reproducible. Even if created through an algorithm that replaces the pixel with the burin, they are the result, in fact, of an intense historical research undertaken in close contact with an important expert print collector of the Rococó period, Oliver Domeisen. The result is absolutely extraordinary and not comparable to generative digital art because each line of the baroque style is transformed into a new spatial concept, where the search for form becomes the beginning and the end of the inventive process.



Hall of mirrors, My First hall of mirrors, 2019, New media, Aluminum, Detail view

M.



Hall of mirrors, My First hall of mirrors, 2019, New media, Aluminum, 200x510 cm, Exhibition view

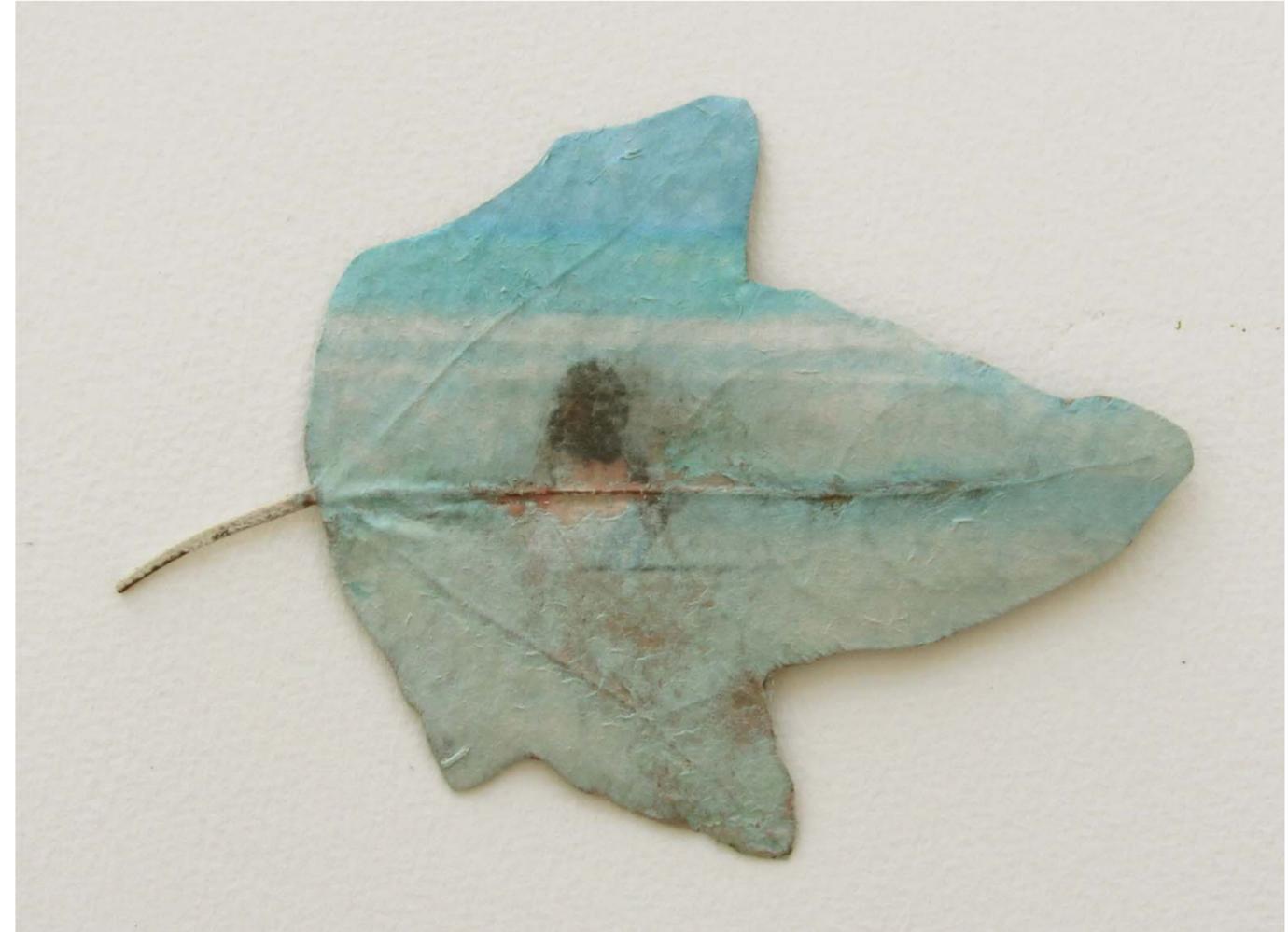
N.

## NAZ SHAHROKH

(Iran-UAE)

ANNA SEAMAN

Nomadic in spirit, gentle and easy-going by nature, Naz Shahrokh's personality is somehow embodied in her delicate artworks. Born in Iran, raised in Paris and the United States, she now lives and works in Abu Dhabi where she is an art professor at Zayed University. Made from a variety of media with a focus on photography, drawing, video, and installation her work is usually small in size yet grand in narrative. Shahrokh has a poetic outlook stemming from literary research and her visual stories often involve the use of cartography. She maps out the journey of her own life, intertwined with the elevated journey of the soul whilst simultaneously scrutinising the connections - both real and ethereal - between man, society and nature.



Leaf Studies, On the road series, 2016, Digital photo transfer, Watercolor, Acrylic on silver maple leaf, Dimensions variable

S.H.



Map Series, Ode to the Emirates (For Nefertiti), 2014-2019, Acrylic, Watercolor, Ink, Drawing media and thread on maps (series of 16 studies), Dimensions variable



Map Series, Ode to the Emirates (For Nefertiti), 2014-2019, Acrylic, Watercolor, Ink, Drawing media and thread on maps (series of 16 studies), Dimensions variable

I |

## IZUMI UEDA YUU

(Japan-Portugal)

**SERGIO GOMEZ**

Artist Izumi Ueda Yuu grew up in Japan and moved to the United States at the age of 30 while raising a family. Although her work may not be a depiction of such journey, the narrative of the objects she creates embody a sense of nostalgia, memory and personal association. These recognized ordinary objects or fractions of them are meticulously constructed to depict individuality instead of manufactured items. They are created for a specific purpose, not collected for the sake of pride. They provide a sense of comfort, belonging, respect and spirituality. In that context, Ueda Yuu captures the nostalgia and invisible emotional qualities vested upon the objects we surround ourselves with in our daily life. Perhaps, we may not be traveling to the other side of the world, yet, in the works of Ueda Yuu, we embark on a journey from the material reality to a sacred dimension.



A pair of tie dye shoes, 2017, Sculpture, Cast abaca, Fiber, Pigment, 24x15x8 cm

U |



Hold it in, 2018, Sculpture, Cast abaca, Fiber, Sawdust, 68x55x4 cm



Ego, 2018, Installation, Cast various, Paper fiber, Sawdust, painting and collage, 98x47x5 cm



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