CONTEMPORARY
IDENTITIES

International Art Magazine

ISSUE #18   June 2023

"In the realm of contemporary art, we transcend the boundaries of tradition and venture into the uncharted territories of imagination. It is through the language of colors, shapes, and concepts that we express the multifaceted nature of our ever-evolving world. Art has become the mirror that reflects the complexities of our time, inviting us to question, to challenge, and to embrace the beauty that resides in the unexpected."

Banksy

SOHEIL HOSSEINI

HALLUCINATION

i.e. Art Projects

CONTRIBUTORS

www.contemporaryidentities.com

ARTISTS

EDITORS' NOTE

As we embrace the arrival of summer, we are thrilled to present the 18th Issue of ContemporaryIdentities. We invite you to embark on an art-filled adventure that will enrich your summer plans. This issue offers a captivating exploration of aesthetics from diverse perspectives, providing a comprehensive overview.

ContemporaryIdentities endeavors to ignite your imagination and evoke a sense of wonder through the power of art. It is our mission to facilitate your viewing and experiential journey with the artworks. By immersing yourself in this issue, we hope to enhance your understanding and appreciation of the artistic realm.

Issue eighteenth features an interview with The Prism. The Prism AKA Stefano Simontacchi, a personality who has been at the top of the legal profession and a key player in Italian economic life for years. He has served or currently serves as a board member in prominent companies and associations (RCS, Prada, ISPI). He combines professional and entrepreneurial activity with ethical, cultural, and humanitarian commitment. As The Prism, he has pursued an in-depth exploration of shamanism and spirituality in general that finds synthesis in his artistic expression.

We would like to appreciate the participation of our artists and art writers. In addition to our board member Zoltán Somhegyi (Hungary), who writes for the magazine regularly, we also had the pleasure of working with international art critics such as Anna Guillot (Italy), Dorottya Olekszik (Hungary), Gabriella Uhl (Hungary) And Brajan Vojinovic (Serbia).

Finally, we are thankful to Fabio Gamberini our editor in Artificial Intelligence section. He interviewed Peter W. Szabo. He manages his own AI program, Tengr.AI, shaping the art world from the developer's perspective.

Sincerely,
Sara Berti & Elham Shafaei

Avi Roth

Romania | Zoltán Somhegyi
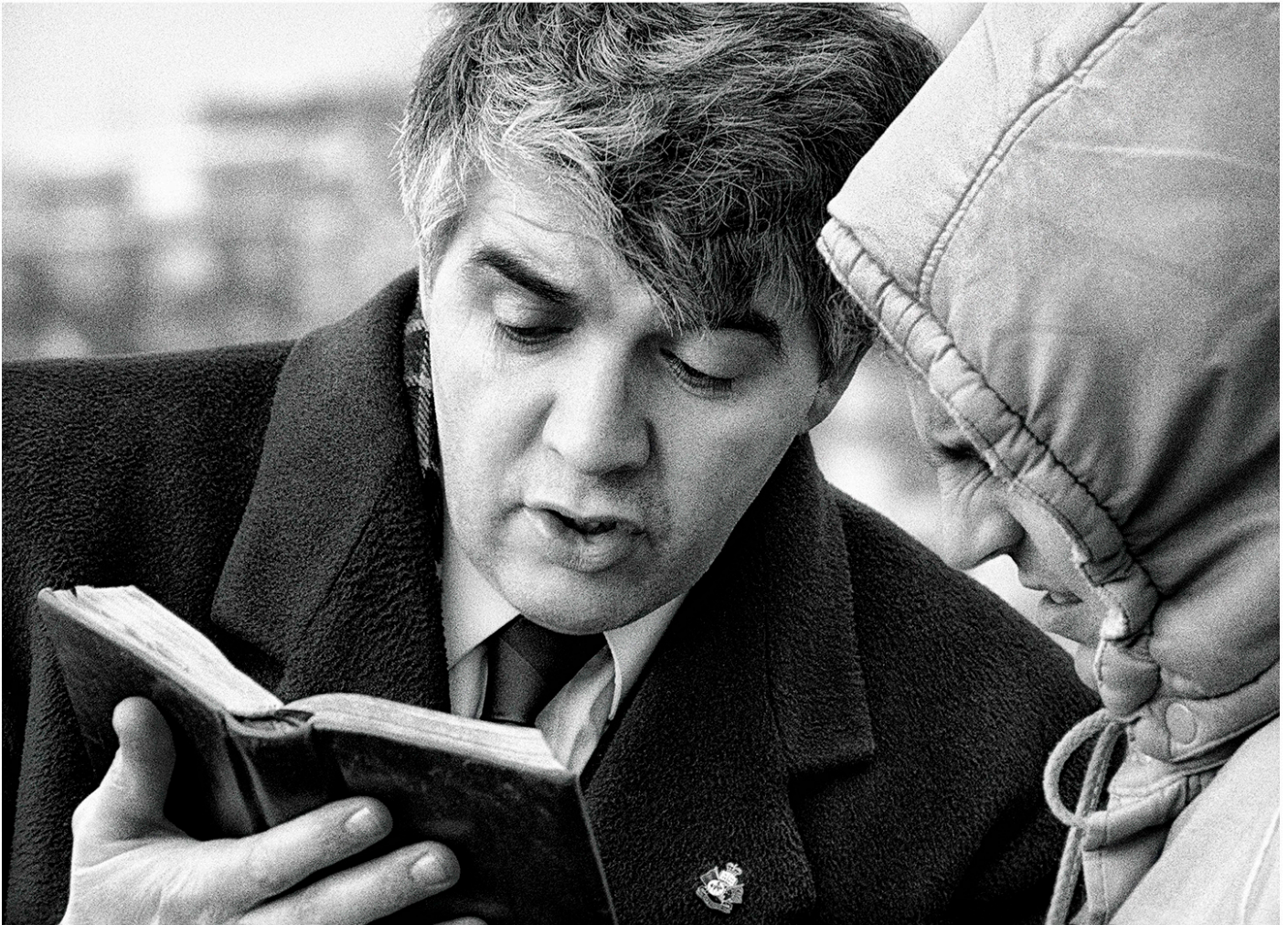
Carpenter's Apprentice, London, 1973, Limited Edition (3) 11x17 inches 43cm x 28cm, B&W film/Digital Scan/ Signed archival pigment print, Canson® Platine Fibre Rag 100% cotton

On his website, Avi Roth describes himself as a "street poet". With this expression he refers, on the one hand, to his "studio", i.e. the streets where he often finds his subjects. On the other hand, through this term he also implicitly connects himself to the important forerunners of this photographic genre. However, he adds that he is "a street poet of a different kind". He finds it essential to patiently wait for the most expressive moment, instead of chasing the accidental serendipity. This results in pictures in which we often have not much more than a face, with minimal indication of the environment or other minor details, but we nevertheless feel that we would be able (re)construct the whole story behind.

Mirrored Affinity, London, 1979, Limited Edition (3) 13x15 inches 33x38 cm, B&W film/Digital Scan/
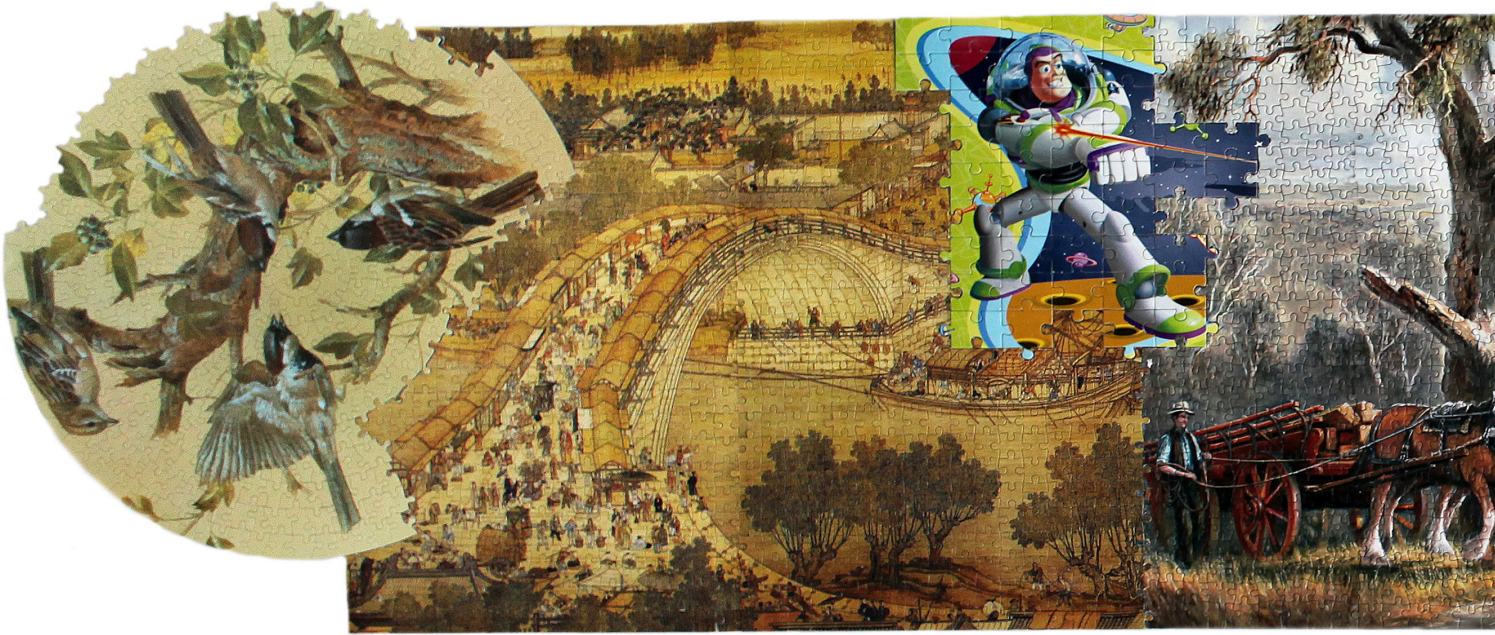Signed archival pigment print. Canson® Platine Fibre Rag 100% cotton

Music-haunted Eyes, Paris, 2009, Limited Edition (3) 14x16 inches 41cm x 36cm,
Signed archival pigment print, Canson® Platine Fibre Rag 100% cotton

Clive Barstow

UK-Australia | Dorottya Olekszik

Otherview, 2017, Jigsaws, 50x230 cm

Clive Barstow as an artist, art professor and art writer is highly interested in the multi-cultural reality of human mankind. Living in Australia and having European cultural backgrounds he involves in his art Aboriginal and Chinese ethnic groups' art traditions as well in order to ask questions about colonization, national identity, cultural hegemony and migration. He tries to make a new repositioning of the concept of time and place, physical and mental, as well as real and imagined existence.

He uses drawings, prints, sculptures, and the bricolage of colorful puzzles to express the multidimensional frame of his way of understanding. He believes in a puzzle-like society and liquid personality. He is Professor of Creative Arts at Edith Cowan University, Honorary Professor of Art at the University of Shanghai Science & Technology China, and Honorary Professor of Design at Guangdong Baiyun University China. Clive has lived since 1992 in Australia.
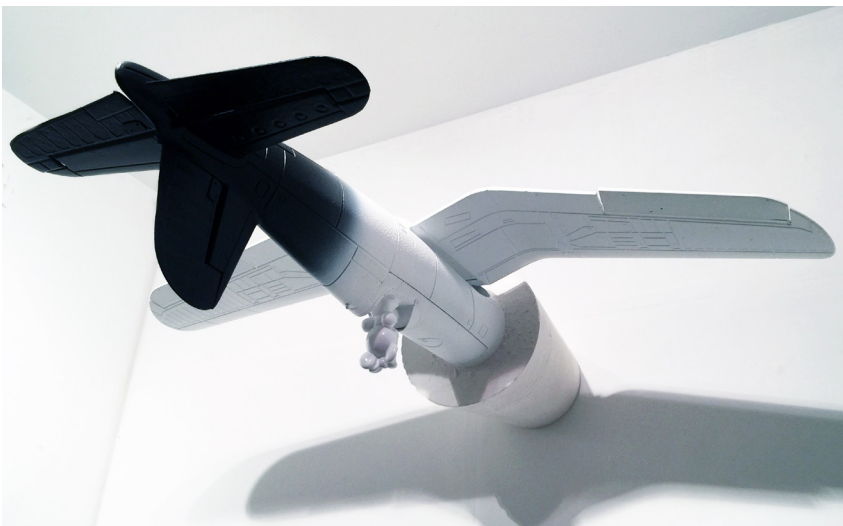
We Will Decide, 2017, Plaster, plastic, 132x120x15 cm

Giving Yesterday a Tomorrow, 2015,
Performance in collaboration with Chinese artist Xu Shanxun

Michel Couturier

Belgium | Anna Guillot

La friche, la galaxie (The wasteland, the galaxy), 2022, Video still, Courtesy of On the Contemporary, Catania, IT

Michel Couturier, eclectic Belgian artist, and connoisseur of Italian literature began his activity with video and photography in the 1970s; out of that initial research came the repeated outlines of trellises, satellite dishes and other objects from contemporary landscapes in his drawings from 2008 onwards. In recent years Couturier has spent much time in Italy and is steeped in the culture and the sites of the ancient Roman and Greek myths. On the trail of Proserpine, in an area of the Sicilian interior known as "Umbilicus Siciliae", "L'Enlèvement de Proserpine" was conceived and created close to the Pergusa Lake – a 2018 video that forms an important part of the cycle, "Un Royaume sans Frontière". "La friche, la galaxie" ["The wasteland, the galaxy"] is instead a work from 2022. Once again shot in Italy, this time in the eastern periphery of Rome, it is a work that reflects on the duality sought by the artist: between nature and culture, reality and fiction, historical heritage and urbanization, poetry, and prose. It presents the degradation, the incongruence and at the same time the poetry of the Roman hinterland that was dear to Pier Paolo Pasolini. In the video the faces of the bas reliefs of the tombs along the via Latina at the south-eastern exit from the city are granted a significant role in testifying to memory and, in a more political dimension, in observing-commenting on contemporary reality.

Together with drawings, photographs, and notes, "La friche, la galaxie" constitutes "Autour de Rome", an intervention conceived ad hoc for On the Contemporary (Catania, IT), in parallel with an analogous operation with the title "Verso la Casilina a destra di chi viene dal Centro!" ["Towards Casilina to the right of those who come from the Centre!"], which has only just had its first Italian showing at the Belgian Academy of Rome.

La friche, la galaxie (The wasteland, the galaxy), Video, 2022, Courtesy of On the Contemporary, Catania, IT

Génie des lieux, Video installation, 2018, Courtesy of the artist

Anjelica Davidkova

Bulgaria | Dorottya Olekszik

Non-human[1], 2023, 42x29.7 cm, Sofia, Bulgaria

Laboratory, 2022, Sofia, Bulgaria

Room for broken dreams, 2022, Sofia, Bulgaria

Anjelica Davidkova is a young Bulgarian photographer who began her career in the fashion industry. On the way to her artistic development, she slowly approached concept art and art installations in order to provoke discussions about the new world we are facing. Her photographs demolish boundaries between woman and man's roles, gender stereotypes, existence and beyond. As a woman artist she has expressive visions about female topics like beauty, body shape, fertility, and motherhood.

The latest inspiration of her art is human existence and beyond. With her questions of how mankind would be in the post human existence and what makes humans human? She tries to shape her imagination about the future. Her very new art project Abstraction is performed with art designer sister Kamelia.

1. Non-human team:
Fashion Photography and Video by Anjelica Davidkova from ABSTRACTION
Music in the video provided by Collin Barr
Actors: Karina Ilieva and Marin Djishev
Sculpture jewelry, styling and leather wardrobe by Kamelia Davidkova from ABSTRACTION
Clothes from "GENERATOR" collection by Diana Ilieva
Make-up by Victoria Mitova
Music performance Sgobom 1000

Daniel Oshundaro

Nigeria | **Brajan Vojinovic**

Briznas, 2022, Cotton fabric, rice, detail of the installation, variable size, Ph. Studio Mōrf, Courtesy of on the Contemporary, Catania, IT

PLAY ON CLASSICISM exhibition showcased a fresh view on models of intercultural exchange and the transformative power of change in art. Oshundaro incorporates diverse perspectives and historical knowledge into his paintings, blending classical and contemporary elements. His experimental approach stems from his experience with different artistic media. The Pals sculptures represent his unique signature and embodiment of community beyond physical boundaries. Oshundaro incorporates the Mandela Effect, creating a surreal and thought-provoking visual narrative that challenges perceptions of reality.

Forge, 2022, Acrylic, spray & oil on canvas, 200x150 cm, Courtesy of X VITAMIN gallery, Belgrade, Serbia

Concussion, 2022, Acrylic, spray paint and oil on canvas, 150x200 cm

Nasim Pachi

Beyond the Red, 2015, Oil and acrylic on linen, 90x115 cm

Nasim Pachi is an artist in hiding. In the sense that concealment, covering, turning away, wrapping up appear in her paintings as an artistic practice. Concealment, whether by hiding or protection, is a feature of all civilisations, and its varied forms and quantity describe the character of a community very precisely. The artist has experienced geographically and culturally diverse appearance of concealment in her forced or chosen moves and travels throughout her life.
Nasim Pachi's paintings, constructed from carefully rendered fragments, melting the use of materials and symbols and layers of different cultures and social groups. Gesture and covering become emphasized and focused in her images. Symbols meeting each other in the structured space of the canvas have been engaged in a serious game, creating exciting and surprising interactions.

Molting series, 2014, Oil and acrylic on linen, 80x100 cm

Dreaming of Lions, 2016, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 140x180 cm

Corinna Rosteck

Germany | Zoltán Somhegyi
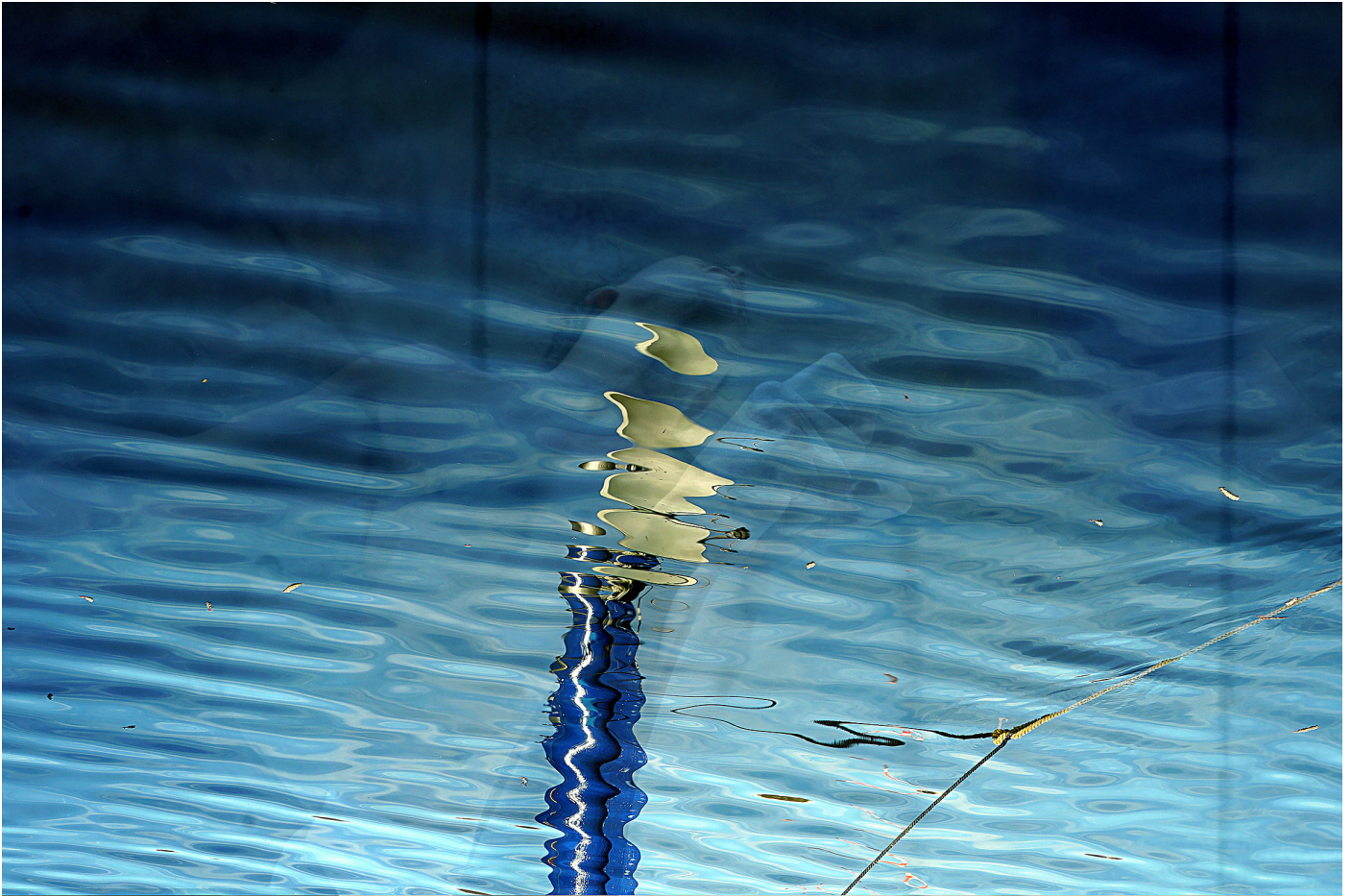
Lunar, 2018, Photography, Edition 1/3, 90x130 cm, Fine art metallic print on Alu-Dibond

In the photographs by Corinna Rosteck the central and recurring motifs are dancing figures and water. Both are characterized by their fluidity and constant motion; thus, their overlap is a natural combination. However, it is not a simple or banal merger, rather the bringing together of two forms of free-flowing motion and uninterrupted transit that will thus complement each other and help the observer to ruminate on the nature of human existence, limits, and desires. Her photographic works are sometimes created with a limited color palette, though are still very pictorial, thus stimulating the viewer to focus on the essence of the movements and their significance.

Saori bridge, 2017, Photography, Edition 1/3, 40x60, Tecco iridium silver gloss on Alu-Dibond
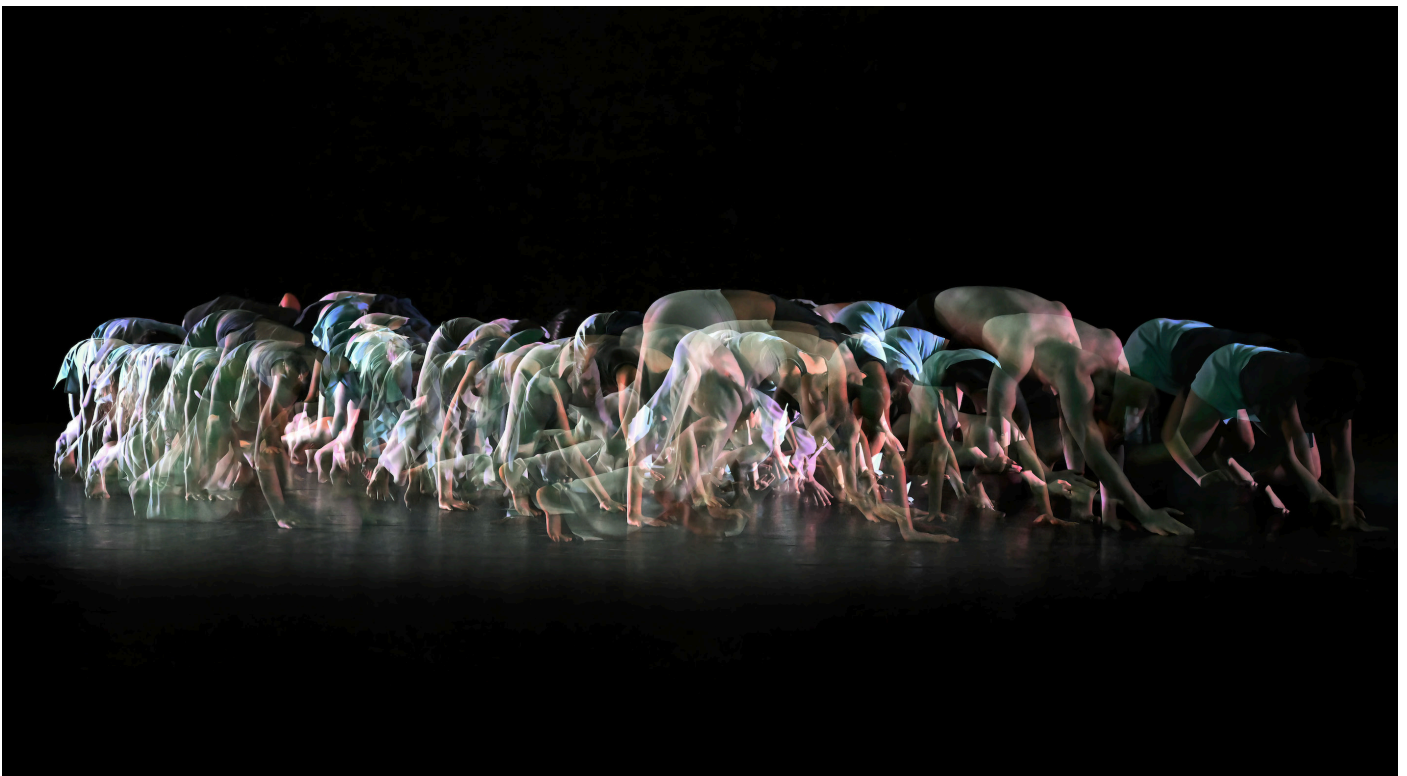
Janus Masse 2022, 1/3 Tecco, Iridium Silver gloss on Alu-Dibond

Anja Tončić

Serbia | Brajan Vojinovic

Echo Chamber, Exhibition view, 2023, Courtesy of X VITAMIN gallery, Belgrade, Serbia

The Echo Chamber series discusses the consequences of an awareness crisis resulting from the global pandemic, leading to alienation and a sense of confusion and anxiety. It highlights the role of algorithms in shaping our online experiences and creating echo chambers, where individuals are exposed to information that aligns with their existing beliefs. These echo chambers can reinforce personal biases and isolate individuals from alternative viewpoints. Anja Tončić's artwork explores these concepts, using painting methods based on technological analysis, to create spaces through this seemingly paradoxical approach that reflect the cyclical nature of knowledge and the architecture of digital environments. Echo Chamber series incorporates elements of sound and vibration research, evoking a sense of monumentality and eternity.

Recommended Rabbit Hole, 2022, on canvas, 180x120cm,
Courtesy of X VITAMIN gallery, Belgrade, Serbia

Oneless Oneness, 2022, oil on canvas, 180x120 cm,
Courtesy of X VITAMIN gallery, Belgrade, Serbia

Francesco Voltolina

Italy | Anna Guillot

Nature loves to hide, 2023, Print fine art on canvas Hahnemühle, Courtesy of On the Contemporary, Catania, IT

Nature loves to hide, Detail, 2023, Print fine art on canvas Hahnemühle, Courtesy of On the Contemporary, Catania, IT

Francesco Voltolina's studies, motivated by an angst for the environmental and ecological future, have generated in the artist a curiosity regarding the essence of nature, the complexity of the forest. "Over the course of my research," Voltolina writes, "trees have shown me their perceptiveness and their reactivity, their ties and their conversations." Through observation and study this artist-researcher has come to an understanding of the intelligence of the forest, to a reflection on how to regain respect for its wisdom and how to look after mankind's relationship with nature. Capturing the messages, the trees exchange by means of an underground network of fungi and keeping track of the flow of exchange, Voltolina learns that this network permeates the entire ground of the forest, connecting the trees in a constellation of nodes that sort data similarly to the network of fungal connections. An initial map – once again, according to the artist, revealed that the larger, older trees, are at the origin of the fungal connections that lead to the formation of new plantules connected to those nearby – old and young – and serve as fulcrums for the jungle of threads, synapses, and nodes. The surprising aspect of this scheme, he once again reveals, is the analogy with the human brain: in it the old and the new perceive one another, they communicate and they respond, emitting signals. In the recent exhibition "Ostensioni" at On the Contemporary (Catania, IT), Voltolina is present with photographic frames of images from forests in Trentino (IT) devastated by a 2018 storm; superimposed on the images are symbolic concentrations directing towards the depths, towards the practice of meditation, towards the tie between nature, man and the divine.

Temporarily untitled, 2018, Print fine art on paper Hahnemühle, Courtesy of the artist

Yash Vyas

India | Gabriella Uhl

Material Objects of Memorial Culture – II, 2022, Mixed Media, 38x35x20 cm

Mental construction of a landscape model this is a creative method of Yash Vyas which elevates the construction of a model into an artistic tool. It is a complex reconstruction of a complicated and problematic process that seeks to capture a detail of reality. The art of accurate documentation and concentration has been evolving for thousands of years and its methods are found in all cultures. Objects are both sculptures that condense time and fragments of an imagined past, pieces that can be reassembled again and again. The world made, or rather constantly being made, no matter how much it tries to imitate reality, will never be exactly the same in the model. Memories are faded, altered or the available material is not flexible enough. Whatever the reason, despite the installation's seemingly solid foundation, the memory-construction is always unstable.

Material Objects of Memorial Culture – I, 2022, Mixed Media, 20x28x22 cm
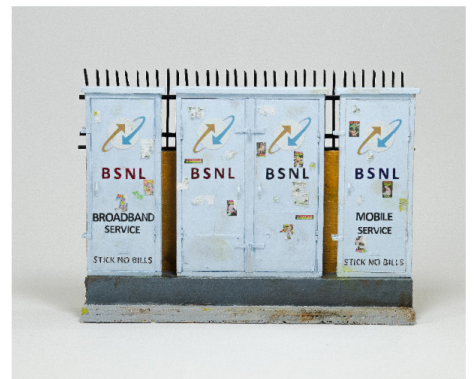
Material Objects of Memorial Culture – III, 2022, Mixed Media, 30x16x20 cm

The
Prism

The Prism

It is a rare occurrence to encounter an enlightened individual, someone who not only embraces their own beliefs but also lives in complete harmony with them. Such individuals have transcended the illusory dualism of right and wrong that pervades our society, offering a profound example of authenticity and liberation.

Allow me to introduce you to The Prism, a visionary artist of the modern era who embodies the essence of a shaman. Despite being professionally linked to the often cold and detached world of finance, he has successfully managed to deliver his transformative message. Like a grain of sand capable of triggering an avalanche, The Prism has become a catalyst for profound change.

I had the privilege of working alongside The Prism during his inaugural exhibition, "Project Revelation." (Milan, open until 29th of July) This remarkable showcase embarked on a spiritual journey of conscious rebirth, guiding participants towards profound self-discovery. Through his installations and artworks crafted from ethereal light, The Prism creates portals and talismans that possess the power to awaken and ignite the depths of meditation within each individual. These creations serve as catalysts, propelling one's ability to delve into the realms of deep introspection and spiritual connection.
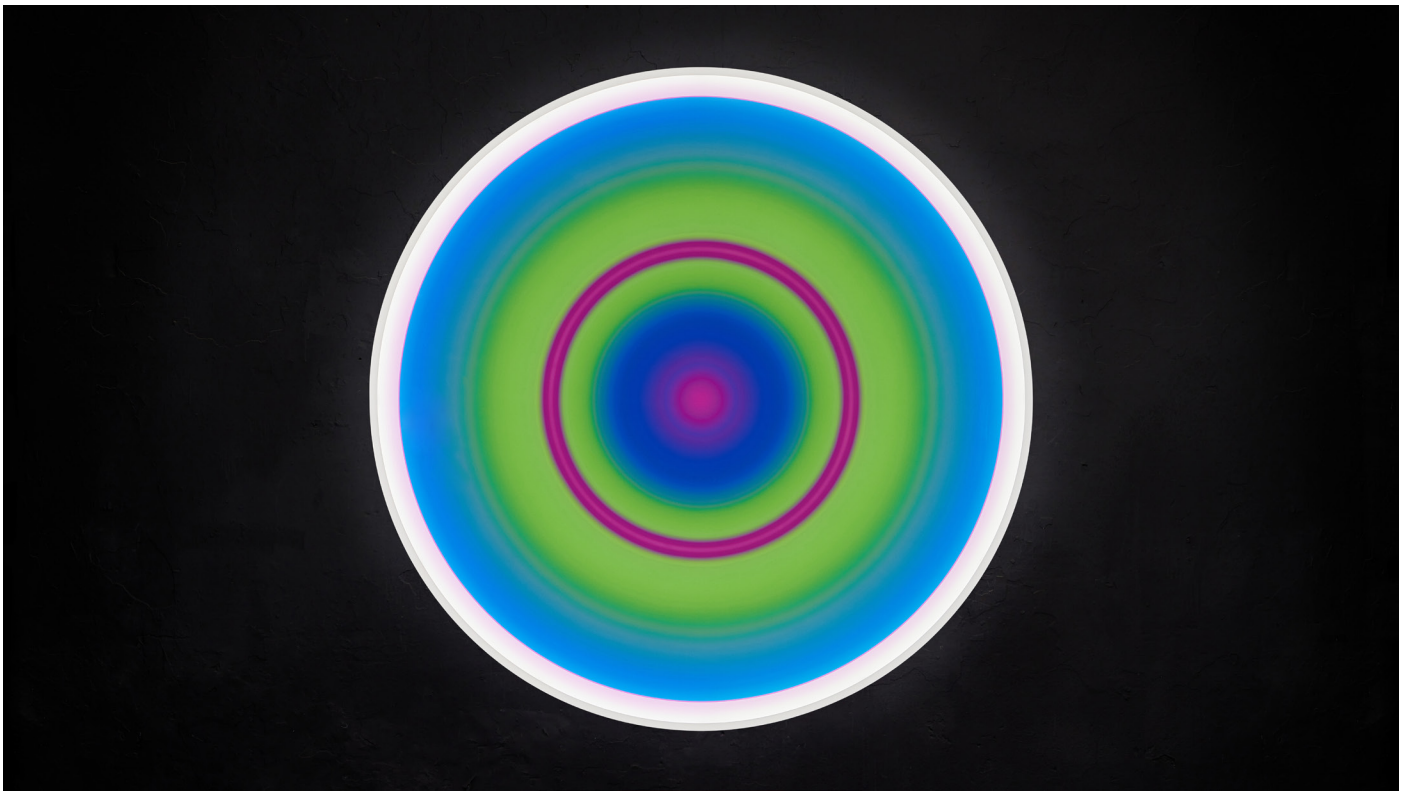
Deeply into you, 2018, Lightbox, 200cm diameter

FG: Now, The Prism, please introduce yourself.

TP: I would describe myself as someone who strives to fulfill and pursue their purpose. Firstly, I had to uncover my purpose and accept it; in other words, I had to find myself. This process involves a phase of liberation, where I gradually unveil all the conditioning and sense of duty that society or family have instilled in me, determining what is right or wrong. The goal is to truly connect with my soul, the free part of myself, like a sparkling flame that resonates with the universe. At that moment, when I find myself deeply immersed in darkness, I come to realize who I am, why I came into this life, and what my purpose is. In this regard, the answer is not simply "I'm an artist," "I'm a businessman," or "I'm a professional." I am a person who strives to live in alignment with my inner self and soul. Therefore, my artwork plays a significant role within the context of my spirituality, my spiritual life, and my vision of life.

FG: Can you tell us about your early influences?

TP: Everything began approximately 25 years ago when I embarked on a search to discover the meaning of life and, consequently, the meaning of my own life. Why am I here? What is my purpose? What are the reasons behind it? I have an education, holding a PhD, which makes me a researcher. I have published books and taught at universities in both Italy and abroad. Therefore, I initially approached this quest with a research-oriented mindset, immersing myself in extensive reading and seeking guidance from experienced teachers.
As I delved into this process, I gradually shifted from the logical left side of my brain to allow intuition to guide me. I liberated myself and unveiled the enchantment of synchronicity. Through these magical synchronicities, I encountered numerous significant individuals along my path: shamans, healers, and masters. While they did not specifically teach me anything, they appeared in my life to provide confirmation, particularly given my initial scientific approach. Their presence affirmed that what was happening to me had meaning and could be explained.

Liberation, 2019, Lightbox, 200 cm diameter

Interestingly, a considerable part of this journey involved walking alongside friends who were doctors or scientists, such as physicists. This led to finding a balance and seeking explanations through the lens of quantum physics. Meditation played a crucial role in this process, initially guiding me and later evolving into shamanic journeys. Through these practices, I developed an ease in entering a trance-like state, a meditative state where the entire world seemed to fade away. I establish a connection with the source, with the energy, and with whatever unfolds. Therefore, I often describe myself as an empty channel. I let go of ego, expectations, conditionings, and judgments, allowing thoughts to flow naturally into my mind. After many years of this process, approximately 13 years ago, friends of friends or acquaintances started approaching me for assistance with certain situations or circumstances in their lives. I began entering meditation to seek guidance for them. During these meditative states, forms and shapes would appear to me, which I would then transfer onto pieces of paper as designs. I gifted these designs to the individuals who sought help, and they derived great benefit from them. On one occasion, during a shamanic workshop, one of these designs was shown to an Indian Shaman. Intrigued, the shaman inquired about the specific nature of the design, as the person who received it had been meditating upon it. The points and forms I created were in constant motion, evolving and changing. The shaman was astonished by this phenomenon and explained that these forms and designs were instinctively derived from a place known as the "place of formation" in shamanic terms.

After creating designs for specific individuals and their unique needs for many years, I began entering meditation to create designs as an empty channel for the broader audience, for the world. Each design carries a distinct meaning. Some are intended to bring calmness, while others aim to recharge or connect with specific energies. There are also designs meant to unveil the subconscious or recalibrate aura energy. Each piece of art holds a specific purpose and meaning.

FG: Tell us about your current practice.

TP: I firmly believe that spirituality is the physics of the soul, and there is a strong connection between quantum physics and spirituality, particularly in relation to the entanglement experiment. So, initially, what I started doing was creating designs on paper and transferring them onto canvas. Later, I explored new avenues by transforming these designs into light boxes. Additionally, I began
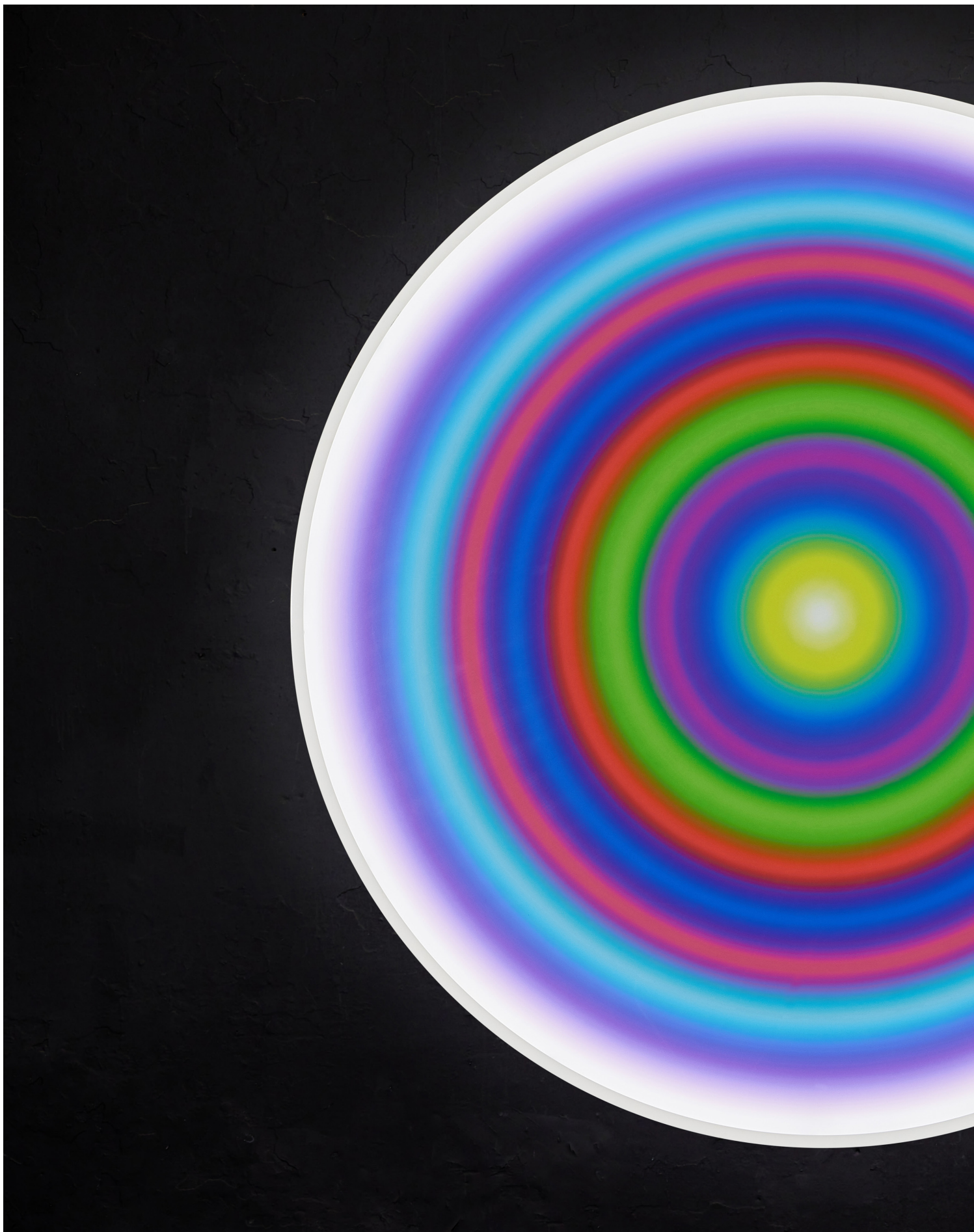
Rebirthing, 2017, Lightbox, 200 cm diameter

experimenting with creating art on metal, such as gold, silver, and copper, either reflective or matted. I refer to these pieces as alchemical portals or talismans, through which individuals can interact. In the current phase of my artistic journey, I am working on a series that goes beyond just a single piece of art. This exhibition is designed to provide not only standalone artwork that collectors may wish to acquire, but also a path to follow. More than just individual pieces of art, my creations allow for a deep dive into progressive levels of energy and facilitate a connection with that energy. Many collectors have expressed interest in acquiring multiple interconnected artworks that they can display in their homes or offices. For instance, I recently created a piece of art representing the dynamic nature of fire. I developed three different versions, each depicting a distinct energy associated with fire: yellow, blue, and red. The red version corresponds to the first chakra, representing material power, while the blue version signifies the crown chakra, representing spirituality. The collector's idea is to have the diverse energies of fire readily accessible, enabling them to tap into the specific energy they require depending on their activities or needs. In the recent period, I have been heavily focused on working with an alchemical approach on canvas. These works involve past associations and aim to incorporate a chemical element, further enhancing their symbolic and transformative qualities.

FG: What does your work aim to say?

TP: The aim of my work is not to convey a specific message. Instead, it is intended to create resonance and open portals that allow individuals to have transformative experiences, to uncover emotions, and to evoke deep responses. Emotions play a vital role as they are the driving force behind the energy of life. Through my spiritual work and research, I have come to realize that we enter this dimension, this life, to gain experiences and leave behind emotions. These emotions shape and propel the energy that permeates our existence.
Mastering our emotions is one of the key aspects of navigating the path of life. It is through maintaining a positive emotional state that we can generate resonance, which, in turn, attracts synchronicities and helps us navigate the vast river of life. By taking charge of our lives and assuming responsibility for our actions, we can traverse this journey with a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Magic Circle, 2017, Lightbox, 200 cm diameter
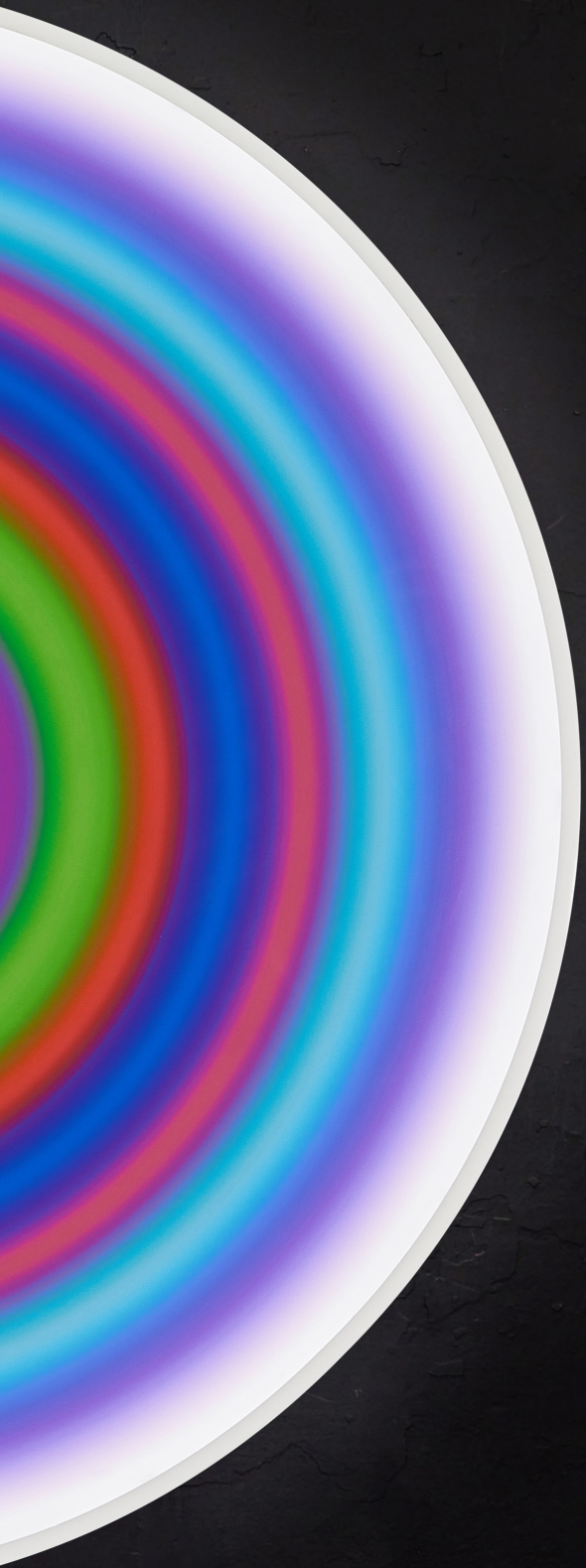
Fabio Gamberini
Interviewed with Peter W. Szabo

City of the future

Last year, on a sunny day in Milan, I stumbled upon AI generative visual programs and joined various groups and forums. Amongst the users, one person stood out: Peter W. Szabo. Peter is a developer and had a unique perspective from the beginning when I began collaborating with him.

Our collaboration on "Promptomania" aimed to create a database of artistic styles and keywords for meaningful AI prompts. Peter's journey skyrocketed, and he now manages his own AI program, Tengr. AI, shaping the art world from the developer's perspective. Despite humble beginnings in a Transylvanian village, he overcame adversity and founded Ace Tech with +40 employees after earning a master's in graphic design.

Tengr.AI represents Peter's next milestone, enabling effortless, uncensored image generation in any language, potentially replacing stock photo sites and challenging image editing software. With closed beta launched in April 2023 in Stuttgart, Germany, Peter's visionary plans extend to a robotic arm for canvas painting and an AI disrupting web development by creating full websites with text, images, UX design, and code.

FG: Can you simplify the workings of generative AI and explain how datasets are constructed for AI programs like Tengr.ai?

P.W.S: All machine learning, from the simplest models 30 created years ago to ChatGPT and beyond, is software designed to minimize an error function. Machines learn the way humans do by trying to avoid mistakes or at least minimize them. In the simplest terms, to create AI, we need to define the error. Obviously, the error is easier to explain in trading stock or predicting the spread of disease, even if the solution is not. On the other hand, for art, the "error" function is ever so elusive. What is an error in art? Non-art is the opposite of art. But then, what is art? Countless generations were spent trying to answer that question, and we are still far from a generally accepted answer.

One of the two mainstream ways to approach AI image generation is GANs or Generative Adversarial Networks. You can imagine this as having two AIs competing. One is the generator, like an artist trying to create accepted artwork. The other AI is the discriminator, acting as an art critique, trying to distinguish art from non-art. We randomly mix accepted artwork with artwork created by the generator, usually the works of the masters from Botticelli to Boccioni and train the discriminator to differentiate. On the other side of the equation, the generator tries to fool the discriminator and get its artwork accepted. Those essentially are in a constant zero-sum game, trying to outperform each other, and thus, better images are created.

The other approach is the diffusion model approach. This solution became more popular last year and is behind virtually all solutions, such as Midjourney or Stable Diffusion. The idea is to add a little bit of noise to an image. Think of it as sprinkling salt on a painting. If the AI can remove the noise, it is learning. Not recreating the original picture or at least a picture with the same textual meaning is an error. Let's say that I have The Kiss by Hayez described as "a painting of a passionate kiss between two young lovers, male and female, in the hallway of a medieval castle, in the style of Francesco Hayez" if, after the noise removal, the description fits the result we call it a success. If it contains a pink unicorn, well, not so much.

We went with the best of both worlds, and Tengr.ai is a Diffusion-GAN model with quite a reliable and fast pipeline, usually generating 16 images faster than other solutions come up with 4.

Datasets are the other crucial part of machine learning, and for image generation, you need gargantuan datasets, as in terabytes of images. Like most people in the industry, we started with the Laion dataset (open-source and publicly available) and added our own. For instance, we got the artwork from Mechthild Großmann, an artist from Germany who was also quite involved in creating our exhibition in Stuttgart. Unfortunately, most living artists have mixed feelings about AI if they are not outright hostile to it. Even for deceased artists, using their art can be tricky. For example, we got a large, digitalized collection of pastels from a museum. They were the works of Maszelka, a Transylvanian pastel artist (2003 - 1929). After training our AI and creating an exhibition in Maszelka's hometown, his son approached us, and he was not happy with this outcome. Fortunately, we can make our models "unlearn" things, so it was easy for Tengr.ai to forget Maszelka's style. This is, I believe, one of the main differences between EU and US startups. We believe in privacy and copyright, and we have this approach called "privacy-by-design," so everything we do follows the EU law as much as possible, in spirit and to the letter.

FG: Why do you think many companies opt for heavy censorship in AI, and how do you see the potential of unrestricted AI output in reshaping art and challenging societal norms?


Stormy night at sea

P.W.S: Training AI and running AI startups is insanely expensive. My hunch is that it is at least three times more costly in the States than in Romania. So, you need money from investors sooner or later, and even if you have millions in your account, you may want to sell your company to a big US corporation to make them billions. Remember, we are talking about a country were showing female nipples or a Renaissance sculpture is taboo. Expensive developers and the looming dread of a possible glimpse of a nipple caused those companies to opt for the most straightforward solution: banning words. This led to more-and-more words being banned, reaching ridiculous levels, like "pleasure" or "big black" being banned in Midjourney.

I was born in a heavily censored dictatorship, where a bad joke could send you to jail or worse. Thus, I hate censorship of any kind. Our models will create what you ask to the extent of their current possibilities. Now it is possible that you don't want to see nudity, gore, or other things, usually solved by banning words. Maybe you are underage, in a work environment, or have religious reasons. To solve this, we will add blur to questionable images. If you want to see those nipples, you need to confirm that you are an adult, and then the blur will be removed.

This way, every Tengr.ai can express their creativity in any shape or form. After all, the history of art is full of nudes, and I see nothing wrong with this. I also firmly believe that censorship will vanish because it is the biggest detriment of freedom. With censorship, a country, or even worse, a company, is making decisions instead of you, restricting your creativity while also claiming moral high ground. And this is just wrong, even if you try to frame it as protecting children or restricting anti-social behavior.

FG: Looking ahead, what do you envision as the next groundbreaking advancement in the art world? Could it involve the convergence of generative art and 3D printers or a paradigm shift in hardware/ human interfaces?

P.W.S: That is certainly one possibility. The other equally valid one is augmented and virtual reality. Not Zuckerberg's failed Metaverse project, but virtual worlds created by AI models. Obviously, those are not mutually exclusive. They even have common ground, like 3D-printed statues generated by AI with an AI layer on top, and existing in VR, as well as in real life, creating a seamless AR/VR art experience.
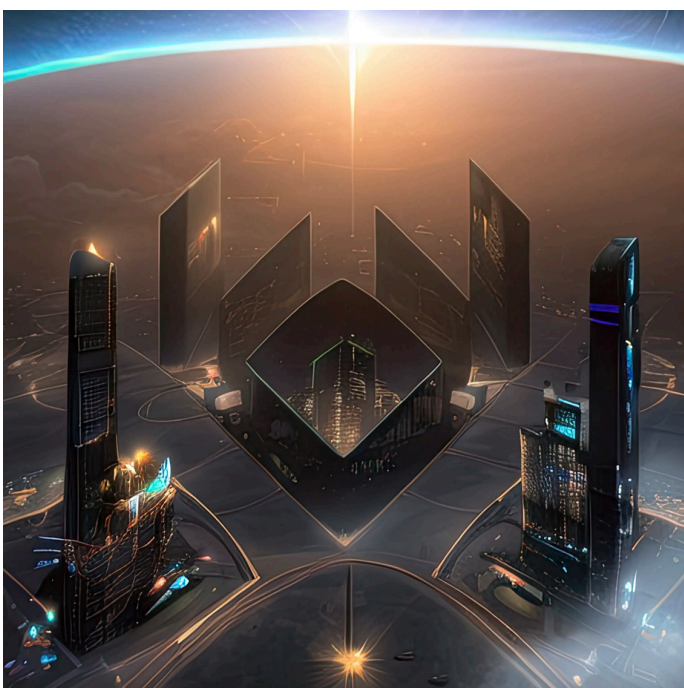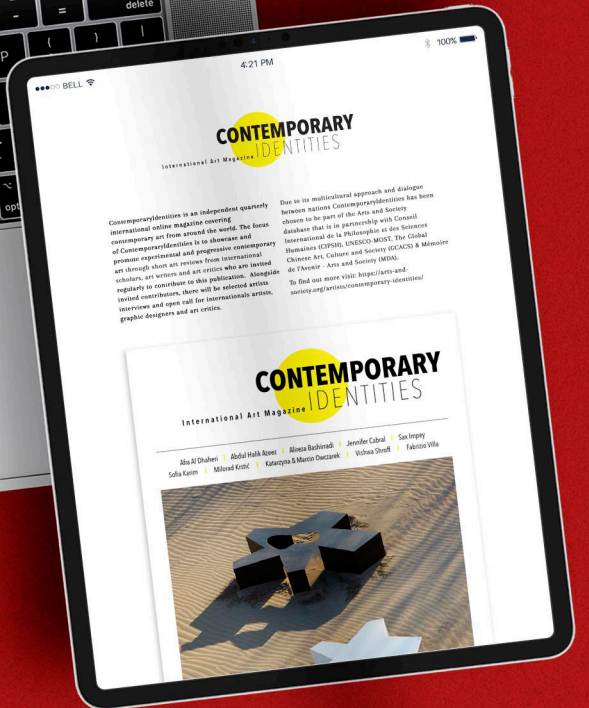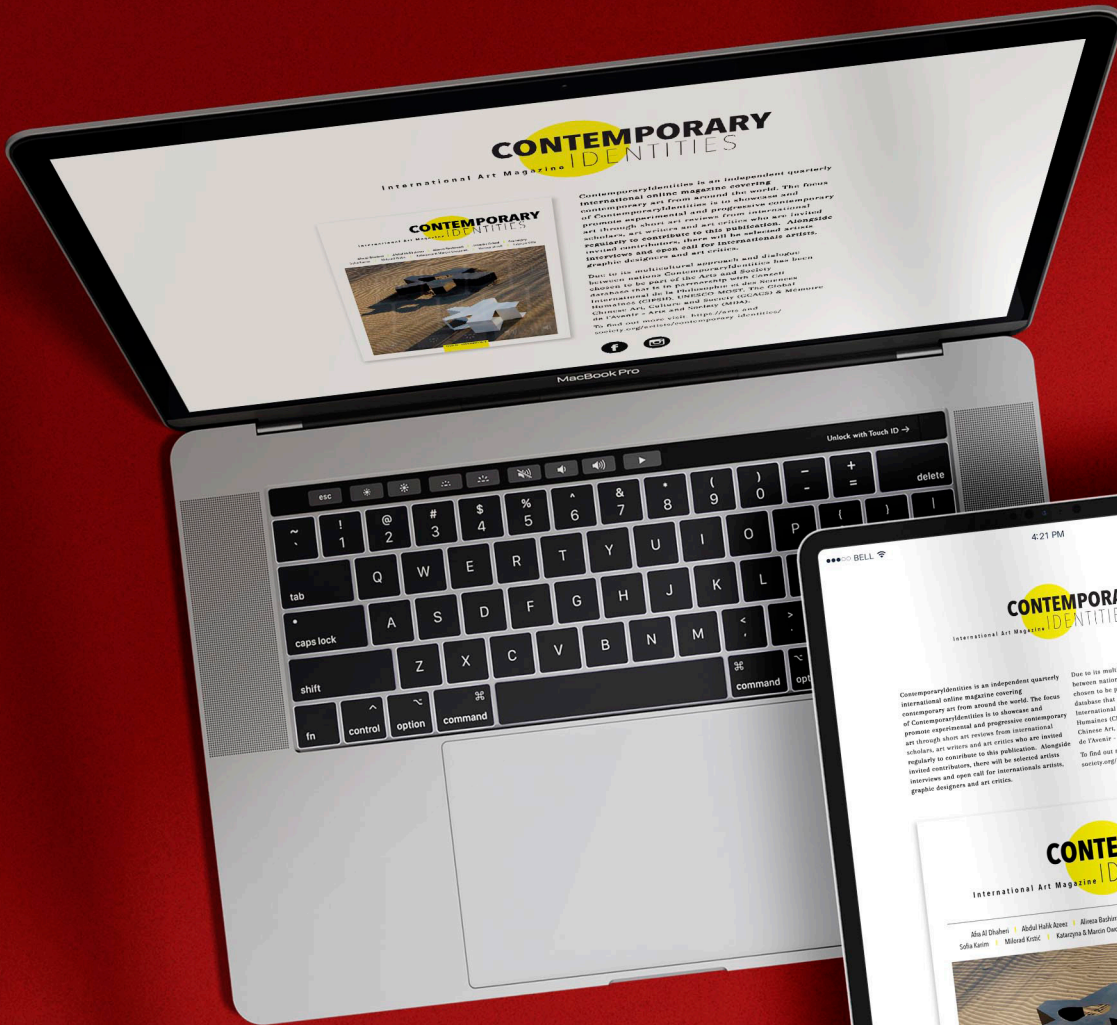

City of Tengrai on Mars

Mountain of Tengrai

FG: As a pioneer in the field, how do you navigate the balance between harnessing AI's capabilities and ensuring responsible development? Are concerns about uncontrolled AI growth justified or perceived as obstacles to unprecedented innovation?

P.W.S: Thank you, but I don't really consider myself a pioneer in the field. AI has gotten lots of media attention since 2022, but the theoretical underpinning of modern AI was created even before I was born. AI scientists also didn't become much smarter overnight (I wish we were), but we got magnitudes more powerful hardware (nowadays, it's mostly Nvidia A100s in DGX). But you are right in your concerns. It's not just growth. The dangers are here, and they are real. For example, last March, a seemingly tame article was published titled "Dual use of artificial intelligence-powered drug discovery" (Urbina et al., 2022). The report was one of the most frightening I have ever read. In simple terms, an AI suggested 40,000 new possible chemical weapons in just six hours. It did this not because it is evil. It is as evil as a hammer. It did this because it was an AI searching for helpful drugs, but the humans switched its error function to the opposite. As in the opposite of lifesaving: Deadly! AI can bring a new golden age to humankind if we are mature enough to use it for right instead of killing each other.

FG: Could you briefly explain the essence of prompt art and its unique ability to bridge artistic vision and AI-generated creations, particularly within the context of your collaboration on Tengr.ai?
I believe that art is in the mind. Not the product of the hand after thousands of hours of training, not in the expensive pigments stuck to a canvas, but in the spark of genius hidden in the human soul. Imagine the best painter you can think of. Would they cease to be an artist if paralyzed from the neck down?

P.W.S: I created Tengr.ai to allow everyone to create visual art, regardless of training, background, wealth, or ability. You can use it if you can shape your thoughts as a prompt. I even made it multilingual, so people who are not native English speakers can also benefit.
But prompt art is not just a few words. For those few words and the selection of a style, you will get variants. Most of the time, the first few, or even the first few hundred tries, will not be aligned with your vision. You will keep adjusting and rewriting until you reach an acceptable variant. But not perfect. Prompt artists using other AI will export them and import them into Photoshop or similar tools to add the finishing touches. With Tengr.ai, you don't even have to leave the software because we have added many post work options and will add more before release. This post work will make the artwork truly yours.
I believe that there will always be a place for painting with a brush on a canvas or a Wacom stylus on a digital paper, but AI art will add a new option. Your paintbrush will be replaced with words or a few broad strokes of a stylus, but ultimately art will evolve. Like the benefits of photography to the evolution of art, AI will also lead to an artistic revolution in our century.

CONTEMPORARY
IDENTITIES
International Art Magazine

ContemporaryIdentities is an independent quarterly international online magazine covering contemporary art from around the world. The focus of ContemporaryIdentities is to showcase and promote experimental and progressive contemporary art through short art reviews from international scholars, art writers and art critics who are invited regularly to contribute to this publication. Alongside invited contributors, there will be selected artists interviews and open call for internationals artists, graphic designers and art critics.

Due to its multicultural approach and dialogue between nations ContemporaryIdentities has been chosen to be part of the Arts and Society database that is in partnership with Consell 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).

To find out more visit: https://arts-and-society.org/artists/contemporary-identities/