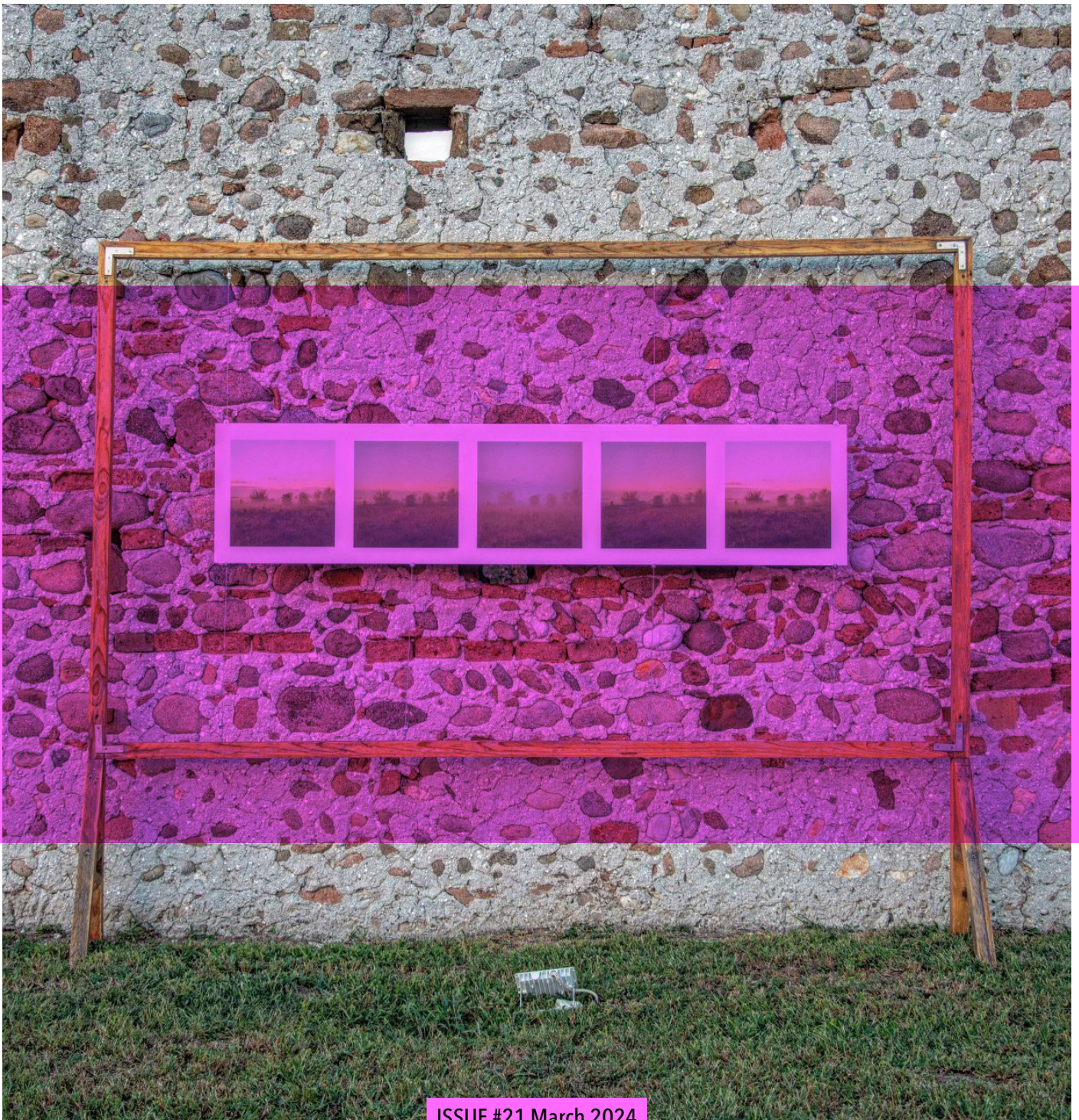


# CONTEMPORARY

# IDENTITIES

International Art Magazine

Manal AlDowayan | Shaqayeq Arabi | Hamidreza Emami | Jason Middlebrook | Nona Namazi | Margaret Noble  
Victoria Porkay | Lidija Ristić | Beesan Salhab | Yousra Wahba | Francesco Capasso



ISSUE #21 March 2024

Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable.

Banksy



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Francesco Capasso, Beyond my eyes, 2023,  
Photography, 40x190 cm

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March 2024

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## EDITORS' NOTE

As we celebrate the anniversary of our art magazine, we cannot help but reflect on the past year and how much the world has changed. Despite the challenges and uncertainties, we have faced, we have continued to showcase the beauty and power of art in our pages.

Throughout the year, we have featured a diverse range of artists and artworks from around the world, highlighting the unique perspectives and voices that make the art world so vibrant. From thought-provoking installations to stunning paintings, we have strived to bring you the best of what the art world has to offer.

Issue twenty-one features an interview with Francesco Capasso. He was born in Naples in 2001, and he approached photography as a teenager. Today his photographs focus on the impersonation of man within a possible landscape, as a communicating mediator of work.

But above all in his latest works, he conceives the image as a form of experience, between the observer and what is represented. Photography as an immersive performance, between the author's experience and the observer's reflection, the latter is part of the final process and contributes to a possible idealization of the represented image, a new landscape.

We extend our appreciation to our esteemed artists and art writers who have contributed their remarkable talents to this issue. Special gratitude goes to our dedicated board member, Zoltán Somhegyi (Hungary), whose insightful contributions to the magazine continue to enrich our content. Additionally, we had the privilege of collaborating with international art critics, including Federica Falchi (Italy), Majid Heidari (Iran), Sophie Kazan (UK), Flounder Lee (USA) and Brajan Vojinović (Serbia) whose expertise and perspectives have added depth to our discussions.

Finally, we are thankful to Fabio Gamberini our editor in Artificial Intelligence section for his interesting article. This article is the result of a deep collaboration between humans and machine. Fabio Gamberini is a business consultant and freelance creative from Bologna, Italy. Currently he is the manager of the gallery "The Prism Core Center" in Milan.

For this Issue we had a chance to find out more about Association TIMIDWA. Timidwa means 'Friendship' in Tamasheq. Friendship is the foundation of Association Timidwa, bringing people together united in common creative goals. Timidwa, founded in 1997 by Mohamed El Maouloud Ag Hamid, is a collective of over 100 male and female artisans, including silversmiths, leather, and wood workers, from Timbuktu, Mali.

As we look towards the future, we are excited to continue our mission of promoting and celebrating art in all its forms. We are committed to providing a platform for emerging and established artists alike, and to creating a space where art can be appreciated and discussed by all.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to sharing many more years of art with you.

Sincerely,  
Sara Berti & Elham Shafaei

# Manal AlDowayan

Saudi Arabia | Sophie Kazan



Esmi - My name, 2012, Exhibition views at The Edge of Arabia show We Need to Talk, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

The artist Manal AlDowayan represents Saudi Arabia in this year's 60th Venice Biennale. AlDowayan grew up in Saudi Arabia, at a time when women led separate existences from men outside the home and for her, art is about "identifying the gaps" in existing perceptions. Prior to creating an exhibition, AlDowayan runs workshops and from these interactions, she builds 'layers' that include lived experiences and emotions, along with her own analysis and creative ideas. The artist creates installations that can be both contemplative and ironic. Works such as giant beads bearing women's names, Esmi (my name) or Suspended Together, an installation of 200 ceramic doves, bear the signed permission forms needed for female travel. AlDowayan's art expresses social issues familiar to the Arab viewer, but its immense creativity and innovation engages with growing numbers of admiring followers from around the world.



Middle Eastern circle presents: From Shattered Ruins, New Life Shall Bloom, 2023, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.  
Photo credit: Midge Wattles© Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation



Suspended together, 2011, Installation view at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Qatar

# Shaqayeq Arabi

Iran-UAE | Federica Falchi



Migrating garden, 2023, Courtesy of NADA House, Courtesy of Signs & symbols, New York, USA



And there were gardens..., 2021, Courtesy of Total Arts, Courtyard, Dubai, UAE

Aide-mémoires of her past and current reminiscences, Shaqayeq Arabi's abstract installations acquaint us with her experimental quest of conceiving landscapes graced with ecological sentiments. To regard Arabi's practice as indispensably nature-symbiotic is to laud her engagement with natural media and recycled elements. Weaving a material and existential narrative of birth, demise and rebirth, the artist crafts sublime, multi-sensory realms where visual, auditory, and fragrant nuances intertwine; where daintily suspended or loosely interwoven, diverse elements strive for a harmonious equilibrium.

Arabi's site-specific installation for NADA House 2023, titled Migrating Garden, epitomizes her quest into the resonance of the frailty and resilience of nature, which inexorably mirrors the human experience. As the latter widely bears the daily upheavals of displacement and the resonances of wars, her landscapes also enact the precarity of dwelling in her native Middle East – a conceptual allegory that we shall deem crucial for comprehending current challenges in the region.



Fragments, notes & lines, 2018, Group show together with Fereydoun Ave and Ali Razavi, Courtesy of Total Arts, Courtyard, Dubai, UAE

# Hamidreza Emami

Iran | Majid  
Heidari



Untitled, 2016, Oil on canvas, 115x165 cm



Untitled, 2016, Oil on canvas, 115x165 cm

In the quiet and introspective world of Hamid Reza, the bustling chaos of urban life is replaced by the serene desolation of cityscapes at dusk. His art captures the profound silence of empty streets and homes, using the solitary glow of light from windows as powerful symbols of a society fading into obscurity. Hamid Reza is a prominent figure among a group of contemporary Iranian artists who delve into the architecture of urban environments, not merely to appreciate their beauty but to critically examine the outdated and rigid cultural frameworks they embody. Through his striking depictions of uninhabited spaces, Reza eloquently critiques the alienation and disconnection that define modern urban existence, offering a reflective look at the hidden depths of city life and the cultural voids it harbors.



Untitled, 2016, Oil on canvas, 115x165 cm

# Jason Middlebrook

USA | Zoltán Somhegyi



Making my own grain, 2016, Acrylic on walnut, 88x58x4 cm, Courtesy of Firetti Gallery, Dubai, UAE

In his artworks Jason Middlebrook investigates how geometrical patterns can coexist with natural forms. Applying carefully projected lines and shapes on the flat surface of random natural elements like tree trunks results in a curious examination of the duality of planning and chance. Their dichotomy is often further emphasized by the use of strong colors, that may again remind us – besides the geometry in itself – of the classical figures of geometric abstraction from the second half of the 20th century. Even if in the beginning this may seem an arbitrary pairing between mathematics and the chance forms, but through this process Jason Middlebrook surveys what kind of possible further modes we can discover to describe our complex relationship with and appreciation of our natural environment.



Installation view at Art Abu Dhabi Booth 2023, Courtesy of Firetti Gallery, Dubai, UAE



The line where an object begins and ends, 2023, Acrylic on walnut, 259x66x3.8 cm, Courtesy of Firetti Gallery, Dubai, UAE

# Nona Namazi

Iran | Majid  
Heidari

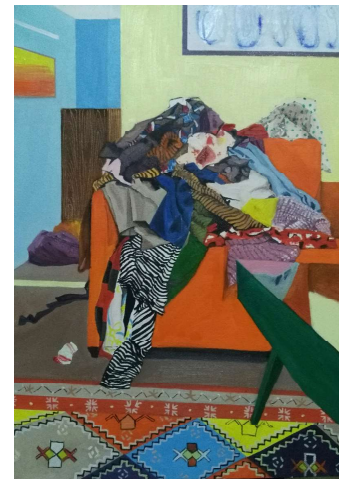


Hanging, 2021, Oil on canvas, 100x70 cm

Nona stands out not only as a dedicated painter but also for her profound commitment to nurturing conversations among artists in her hometown of Mashhad. Her unique approach to fostering this dialogue shines through in her artwork, where she meticulously depicts various garments scattered across different corners of a household. Remarkably, these clothes, absent of any human presence, seem to engage in a silent dialogue of their own, suggesting a form of communication that transcends words. They are presented as pure, unoccupied forms, symbolizing perhaps the absence or the search for unity among the artists in her community. Through this creative expression, Nona appears to be exploring and yearning for a sense of togetherness and understanding that has so far seemed just out of reach within the artistic circles she is a part of.



Mass, 2021, Oil on canvas, 100x80 cm



Untitled, 2021, Oil on canvas, 70x50 cm



# Margaret Noble

USA | Flounder  
Lee

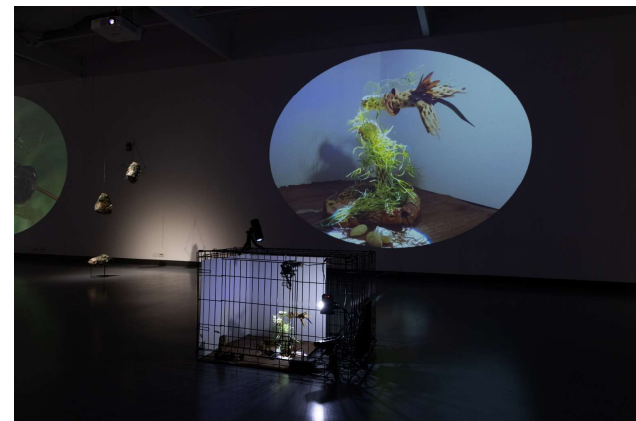


Dark loops, 2024, sculptures, live-streaming videos, preserved insects, and technology-infused components, Installation view, Photo credit: Stacy Keck

With a BA in Philosophy and an ongoing interest in the dance music cultures of Southern California, Margaret Nobel's work has impressive breadth and depth. With so many dynamic works, it is difficult to narrow down works enough for this article, but I'll focus on the works in Dark Loops, a current exhibition, and Tides because both have Solarpunk elements and sound. Tides was a temporary public art installation with kites holding windchimes. Solarpunk thematically uses wind power for energy production and possibly transportation. The lovely sounds of the windchimes push these creations into something different than typical kites. Several of the works in Dark Loops combine biological and technological in interesting and thoughtful ways to pull at our awareness of impending ecological failures. Yet, playfulness gives me hope, and hope is an important aspect of Solarpunk. We need to be preparing for the ongoing and forthcoming crises through creative endeavors, keeping all technological, biological, human, and more-than-human solutions on the table.



Dark loops, 2024, sculptures, live-streaming videos, preserved insects, and technology-infused components, Installation view, Photo credit: Stacy Keck



Dark loops, 2024, sculptures, live-streaming videos, preserved insects, and technology-infused components, Installation view, Photo credit: Stacy Keck

# Victoria Porkay

Germany | Brajan Vojinović



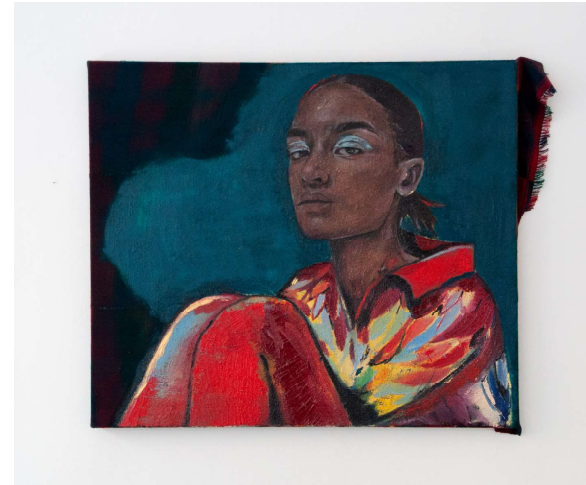
Dancing geometrics, 2016, Oil and spray paint on Djadjim, 140x140 cm

Seeing beyond the limits of social conditioning, one can observe honest and clear development in the characters of Victoria Porkay's portraits. Delving into her subjects' spiritual depths, she depicts those unknown, enigmatic sensations. Victoria employs 'djadjims', a material akin to the better-known 'kilim', as a base on which she paints, enhancing the vibrancy and intensity of her artworks.

The harmonious balance between abstraction and figuration in these portraits can encourage engagement in thoughtful consideration of the unknown person looking back. Painted individuals exude a strong aura, perceptible only to the artist, portrayed in intimate moments of vulnerability and introspection.

The complexity of the characters serves as a reminder to embrace one's own identity and authenticity.

Victoria explores the richness of human experience, embodied through conventional notions of identity. She connects cities, personalities and various cultures.



Safe privilege, 2021, Oil and spray paint on Djadjim, 120x140 cm



Hair like water, 2023, Oil and spray paint on Djadjim, 170x150 cm

Each character depicted is a winner, exuding strength in their presence and certainty amidst the unexpected. Victoria's portrayal of contemporary identities offers a fresh perspective that resonates with the values and tendencies of today's emerging generations. By presenting her subjects from this unique viewpoint, she captures the essence of the present moment and reflects the evolving landscape of human identity. Victoria's portrayal of contemporary identities offers a fresh perspective that resonates with the values and tendencies of today's emerging generations. By presenting her subjects from this unique viewpoint, she captures the essence of the present moment and reflects the evolving landscape of human identity.

# Lidija Ristić

Serbia-USA | Brajan Vojinović



Ribbons of blood, 2022, mixed media, 194x88x32 cm

Lidija Ristić employs various artistic media as tools, the objects she exhibits serving as articulate expressions, while the very notion of creativity embodies its essence. Utilizing commonplace, readily available products, she contemplates the theme of the novel circumstances confronting the world. In both micro and macro contexts, the artist applies a "top coat" to these objects - a final, protective layer. By imbuing the objects she handles with an alternative reality, she collaborates with the materials she employs. Through interventions upon the surfaces of her works, Lidija manipulates them, rendering them unique spatial entities conducive to individual interaction. This process constitutes a form of subversion, guiding the viewer towards abstract contemplation. Given our predisposed perceptions of the



Coated hide and peach fuzz, 2022, mixed media, 110x51x57 cm



Surface coat, 2022, Digital print on Vinyl, 244x169 cm; Two sided twins-Two, 2022, mixed media, 33x 25x11 cm; Printed taught across, 2022, Mixed media, 167x37x10 cm; Dripping pierced sinew, 2022, Mixed media, 170x55x60 cm, Installation view at Cultural center Dorcol, Serbia

realities surrounding us, Lidija's artistic trajectory remains inherently unpredictable. Conceptually, this approach is manifested through the amalgamation of various elements of contemporary life, while in its tangible execution, it is evident in the ephemeral nature of her works and the luminous quality of their colors. Depending on the observer's vantage point, the hues shift, altering the work's form accordingly. The interplay between the exhibition space and reality serves as a focal point within this context. Through a site-specific installation crafted for the Cultural Center Dorcol, a metaphorical "top coat" is applied to the space itself. The relationship between exterior and interior, surface, and surroundings, becomes the subject of contemplation upon encountering the installation.

# Beesan Salhab

Syria | Flounder  
Lee



Clothesline, 2023, Fabric, metal wires, scent, light, 300x700 cm

The Madad Art Foundation recently launched to support emerging Syrian visual artists. For their first exhibition, Beesan Salhab created an immersive installation, Clothesline / حبل غسيل. The 7x3 meter space features delicate fabrics draped over wires that run like contour lines throughout the space. Scent and light are used to help create a multisensory environment. A feeling of serenity and comfort suffuses the space. Sleep and tranquillity are themes that run through some of her other works as well. I feel like these are all themes that we need more of recently.



Clothesline, 2023, Fabric, metal wires, scent, light



Clothesline, 2023, Fabric, metal wires, scent, light, 300x700 cm

# Yousra Wahba

Saudi Arabia-  
Egypt-UAE | Federica  
Falchi



Wild beauty, 2022, Epoxy resin, ink, wood, 90x90x40 cm, Courtesy of Firetti Gallery, Dubai, UAE

Of harmonious and serene appearance, yet symbolic of existential unease, Yousra Wahba's sculptures lay bare the cosmic twining of nature and the female human condition. Wahba daintily confers vitality upon her organic contours: in these, human emotions reverberate, echoing the poetry of an ever-shifting nature. In an alchemical and ontological process, the artist, drawing upon her pharmaceutical expertise, transcends the material realm, sculpting resin into blossoms, corals and liquid unfurls – an ethereal symphony crystallizing into sublime, evanescent energies.

Wahba's resonant ode to the resilience of womanhood was musically rendered in her debut solo exhibition, titled Translucent Threads of Life at Firetti Contemporary in Dubai. Each sculpture exhibited, laden with a collective, feminist aura, reconciled the rhythms of nature with the souls of womankind, reflecting their analogous strength and delicacy – a sculptural testament to the resilience of beauty, which gracefully endures and unfolds amidst adversity.

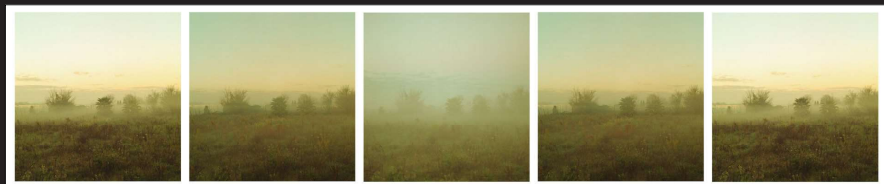


Red reef, 2023, Epoxy resin, ink, acrylic, 150x150x20 cm, Courtesy of Firetti Gallery, Dubai, UAE



Harmony unbound, 2023, Epoxy resin, ink, acrylic & cement, Different sizes (82, 91, 108, 130)x40x40 cm, Courtesy of Firetti Gallery, Dubai, UAE

# Francesco Capasso



Beyond my eyes, 2023, Photography, 190x40cm

CI: Please introduce yourself.

FC: My name is Francesco Capasso and I approached photography as a teenager. In the first years my expressive research focused on the content of the forms and the peripheral landscape, through an analytical and central representation of the subject. Subsequently I decide to dedicate myself entirely to photography and its theoretical study. Today my works focus on the representation of man within a possible landscape, as a communicating mediator of work. But above all in my latest works I conceive the image as a form of experience, between the observer and what is represented. Photography as an immersive performance, between the author's experience and the observer's reflection, the latter is part of the final process and contributes to a possible idealization of the represented image, a new landscape. According to my research, photography is asking ourselves the why of every situation, so that everything can make sense, the "why" is synonymous with waiting, study and research. I use the image as part of the process. Photographic thought is defined through the study of one's own being, opening up to a theoretical education that helps us establish who we are and what we can do. Since 2020 I have been enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples. Graduated in History of Photography with 110 cum laude, with a thesis on the Italian landscape, between reality and possibility. I am currently pursuing a second level specialization in photography as an artistic language. My works have been published in various digital and paper photography magazines and periodicals, I have exhibited in group exhibitions and participated in multiple photography festivals in Milan, Annecy FR, Belgrade, Brescia, Verona, Capri, Brazil, Groningen.

CI: Can you tell us about your early influences?

FC: My first influences are linked to the peripheral landscape of the 70s and 80s, from America with the "New Topographics" of 1975 and authors such as Lewis Baltz, Robert Adams and Stephen Shore, I identify a lot with their approach to the image and the way of representing things, being linked to the territory that surrounds me, on the other hand I have Italian influences due to the landscape of the 80s with the "Italian landscape school" and one of the greatest successes of the time such as "Viaggio In Italia "1984, photographers such as Luigi Ghirri, Giovanni Chiaramonte and Mimmo Jodice.

CI: What art do you most identify with?

FC: I identify with visual art, as photography for me is just the basis for creating a body of work.

CI: Tell us about your current practice.

FC: My current practice is based on a photographic triptych trying to reflect on a determining concept, that is, between reality and imaginary possibility, my works aim to provide a way to reflect within the landscape but above all to make dreams and possibilities objective of man. It's the landscape.

CI: What does your work aim to say?



Beyond my eyes 1, 2023, Photography, 40x40cm



Beyond my eyes 2, 2023, Photography, 40x40cm

FC: I have always understood the landscape as a reincarnation of my thoughts, making my mental utopias visible and tangible. This triptych represents a dialogue between dream and reality, between inside and outside, between heaven and earth but above all between me and my grandfather. His presence manifests itself through a double form, this I also allow myself to be able to identify within the landscape, almost as if it were his figure accompanied between places but above all it makes the dream and reality perceptible, they represent the sky and the earth, linked by its central figure who manifests and disperses in the places themselves,



Beyond my eyes 3, 2023, Photography, 40x40cm



Beyond my eyes 4, 2023, Photography, 40x40cm



Beyond my eyes 5, 2023, Photography, 40x40cm

because this is "our landscape". The other works presented represent an internal reflection between man and landscape, through time. Mood swings that coincide with the fog, which clears and darkens, represent the concept of hypochondria and depression in a possible form, a fog that walks, grows and decreases, like the mental swing that often binds the majority of humanity.

# To tear the veil of Duality

Dissolving illusion as a tool  
for AI Art Analysis

By: Fabio Gamberini



Expanding duality sequence, 2023

Among all the professions in this world, that of the artist stands out as one deeply rooted in the dissolution of what is often referred to as the illusion of duality.

But what exactly is this illusion, and how does its dissolution prove invaluable when analyzing the forthcoming advancements in art techniques?

The concept of the illusion of duality originates from philosophical, spiritual, and scientific traditions worldwide. It's explored in Eastern philosophy through ideas like Advaita and Sunyata, in Western thought by figures such as Plato and Aristotle, and in mystical traditions like Kabbalah and Sufism. In its essence, the illusion of duality encapsulates the perception of reality as inherently split into opposing categories or concepts. It encompasses the dichotomy of good versus evil, mind versus body, and self-versus other. This worldview inherently inclines us to perceive the world through binary opposites, where one side is often deemed superior or preferable to the other.

However, this dualistic perspective has deep-seated origins in our evolutionary history, stretching back to the time when our ancestors roamed the plains of the sub-Saharan regions. Survival dictated a simplistic "fight or flight" response; there was little room for nuanced contemplation amidst the imminent threats of predators. It was a time when our cognitive faculties were largely geared toward immediate survival rather than nuanced understanding.

Yet, as humanity progressed and societies evolved, so too did our capacity for comprehension and contemplation. The advent of art marked a pivotal moment in this evolution, serving as a catalyst for transcending the confines of dualistic thinking. Through artistic expression, individuals began to explore the complexities of existence, delving into the nuances and shades of gray that lie between the stark binaries of our perception.

Artists have played a crucial role in challenging and deconstructing the illusion of duality. Through their works, they invite us to question our preconceived notions, to embrace ambiguity, and to confront the multiplicity of perspectives that shape our understanding of the world. In doing so, they serve as trailblazers, guiding us toward a more holistic and inclusive appreciation of reality.

As we stand on the precipice of unprecedented advancements in art techniques, the dissolution of the illusion of duality proves to be more pertinent than ever. Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, offer novel avenues for artistic exploration, blurring the boundaries between creator and creation, human and machine. In this dynamic landscape, rigid dichotomies give way to fluid intersections, opening boundless possibilities for innovation and collaboration.

For this reason, the artistic community should spearhead the dismantling of the veil of duality in an increasingly polarized world, where complex ethical and artistic considerations are often reduced to

simplistic judgments of "I like it" or "I don't like it."

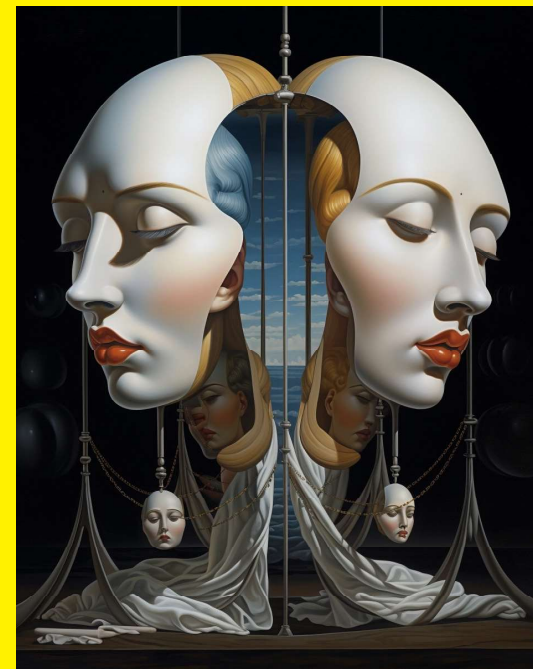
The relationship between humans and machines is already widely accepted within the artistic community. Consider, for instance, art forms such as photography and cinema. We readily acknowledge these mediums as legitimate forms of artistic expression, understanding that they rely heavily on the tools provided, down to the very fabric of the creative process itself.

In photography, the camera is not merely a passive tool but an active participant in the creation of images. The choices made by the photographer—whether in framing, lighting, or post-processing—interact with the capabilities of the camera to produce the final photograph. Similarly, in cinema, the camera serves as the eye of the director, capturing the narrative unfolding before it and shaping the viewer's experience through its lens.

Yet, despite the undeniable role of technology in these art forms, we do not diminish the artistic merit of the photographer or filmmaker. Instead, we recognize that true artistry lies in the creative vision and expression of the individual, transcending the limitations of the tools at hand.

In embracing the symbiotic relationship between humans and machines, artists dissolve the illusion of duality between creator and creation, acknowledging that technology is not a barrier to artistic expression but a catalyst for innovation and exploration. Just as the painter wields a brush and the sculptor molds clay, the photographer and filmmaker harness the power of technology to capture moments, evoke emotions, and convey meaning.

As we navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by emerging technologies, let us keep in mind that the essence of art transcends the tools we employ—it resides in one simple yet profound element: intention.



Exploring the concept of duality, 2023





Concepts art installation about illusion of duality



Concepts art installation about illusion of duality



Movie still No32

Intention serves as our anchor amidst the vast expanse of a world where the illusion of duality has dissolved. It is the guiding principle that allows us to navigate the complexities of artistic expression with clarity and purpose.

In a realm where the lines between good and evil blur, intention becomes our compass. We recognize that these binaries are merely two facets of a singular entity—the yin and yang of creative expression. Focusing on their apparent opposition only serves to distract us from what truly matters: the unity and harmony inherent in all artistic endeavors.

In acknowledging the complementary nature of these dualities, we should note that both sides of the coin—the light and the shadow—are valid and essential manifestations of the same creative spark. It is through intention that we reconcile these apparent contradictions, weaving them together into a tapestry of meaning and significance.

In essence, intention is the heartbeat of art—the driving force behind every stroke of the brush, every note of music, and every frame of film. It is what imbues our creations with depth, purpose, and resonance, transcending the limitations of form and medium.

Disclaimer:  
This article is the result of a deep collaboration between humans and machine.



The right key for the wrong hole, 2023

# Cultural Currents: Association TIMIDWA

Timidwa means 'Friendship' in Tamasheq. Friendship is the foundation of Association Timidwa, bringing people together united in common creative goals. Timidwa, founded in 1997 by Mohamed El Maouloud Ag Hamid, is a collective of over 100 male and female artisans, including silversmiths, leather, and wood workers, from Timbuktu, Mali.

Tuareg jewelry is known as some of the most unique silver jewelry in the world. They produce stunning jewelry in bold, geometric, and symmetrical designs using traditional tools of the trade, many of which are of their own construction and design. Each piece contains historical symbols and meanings, which are passed down from generation to generation.

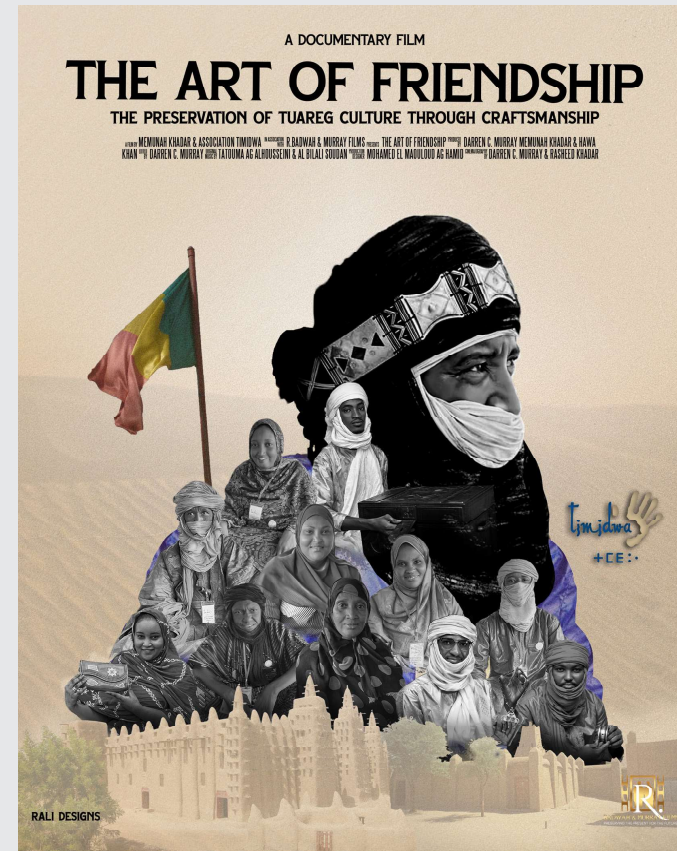


Courtesy of Association Timidwa



## Tuareg Jewelry

Timidwa's jewelry and crafts are designed using silver, ebony wood, leather, and polished, semi-precious stones (onyx, agate, cornelian, turquoise). The ability of the artisans to endlessly vary their designs around common themes and their innovative use of a wide range of materials leads to jewelry that few can duplicate, even with better and more sophisticated tools and techniques.



Courtesy of Association Timidwa

## Leather Work

Women artisans of Timidwa focus mainly on the intricate leather work. They soak the raw leather and tan the leather with natural tannins and soften them with oil or butter. The colorful, geometrically precise, hand drawn motifs are used to decorate each piece using natural dyes. Each handcrafted piece includes brilliant adornment that combines painted, embroidered, and incised decoration. An array of artworks is created such as hand bags of various sizes, pillow and floor cushions, saddle bags, and coin purses as well as other accessories.

Timidwa's members are united in creating some of the finest, and most breathtakingly unique, artwork imaginable.



Courtesy of Association Timidwa

As modernization and globalization threaten the extinction of their craftsmanship, discover the untold story of Tuareg artisans from Timbuktu, Mali as we witness a timeless journey of resilience and beauty. Unveiling the intricate artistry passed through generations, this film navigates the delicate balance between tradition and progress. Follow the artisan collective, Association Timidwa's, mission to safeguard their culture, preserving not just jewelry but a way of life.

<https://youtu.be/Jk-ubefrw0E?feature=shared> (AOF TRAILER Link)

## Exhibition Announcement

# FAISAL SAMRA

Immortal Moment II – Coping with the Shock  
27 February | 15 April 2024

Ayyam Gallery presents Immortal Moment II  
Coping with the Shock, a solo exhibition featuring Faisal Samra's recent body of work.



PSF-P2, 2023, Charcoal, Ink & Oil on Canvas, 50.5 x 50.5 cm

### About the exhibition

This exhibition showcases the second body of work from the Immortal Moment project, in which Faisal Samra creates artworks through the accumulation of instances, pushing the viewer to question the opportunities of a single moment.

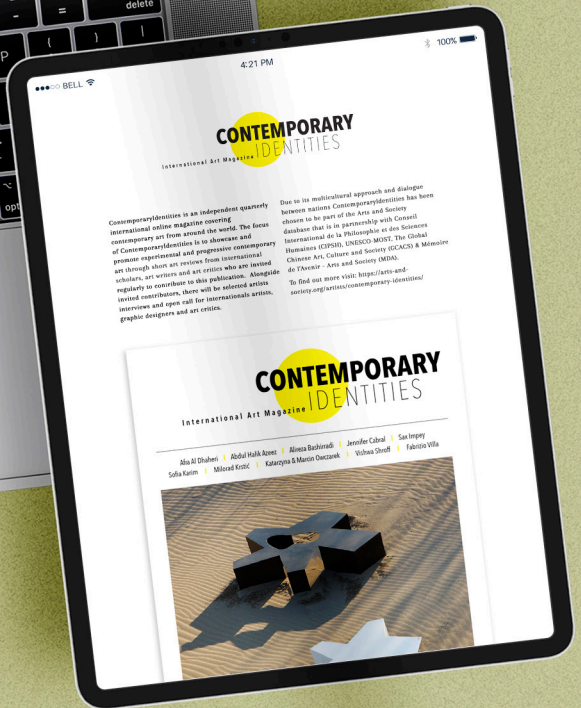
In the first chapter of this project, Faisal describes the technique as capturing a moment and immortalizing it in time through gestural performances, serving as an expression of emotions. However, now, he defines the outcome as a "shock". This exhibition will reveal the process of Coping with the Shock.

While the concept of fight or flight is thoroughly examined in the fields of medicine and psychology, Faisal introduces a novel conceptualization of it through his artistic practice. At a moment of shock, either the moment dominates and controls us, or we absorb and adapt to it, metamorphosing into a new form. To survive and overcome the shock is what we call coping.

In the spirit of fighting, the artist intervenes with post gestures to cope with what chance and the laws of physics produce. The study of improvised creation allows the artist to seek meaning within the abstraction. Therefore, creating post-shock creatures and figures. In a meditative process, the summation of dots and splashes of color amount to what the artist is looking for. Ultimately, this artistic endeavor

becomes an endless cycle of documentation, acts, and gestures that trace time and immortalize it, one overcoming the other.

The cyclic timeline in capturing the essence of moments is evident in his concepts and the evolution of his artistic practice. In the Distorted Reality series (2011/2005), Faisal chose a moment from countless stills of filmed performances. In the subsequent project, Thriving Emotions - Immortal Moment the artist identifies the moment before anything else. The emphasis lays on the emotion conveyed through the spontaneous act of creating marks. The Immortal Moment project comes to a full circle in this exhibition: through gestural mark-making, Faisal restructures the singular moment of action to birth a new series of moments to establish control amidst the unpredictable. The dialogue between the abstract and figurative, conceptually, or formalistically, is essential to Faisal's work. Time, being one of the most abstract ideas, becomes figurative when Faisal visually notes down specific points in time through the use of charcoal and paint. The result is formalistically abstract, but the final creation becomes figurative through several interventions, which represent a culmination of temporal instances.



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