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FLANEUSEMAG

ISSUE

19

CHRISTOPHE CORREIA - EBRU SICAKYÜZ
EMİNE GÖKÇE KAVİ - FRANCESCO TOPINO - ALARA BAŞAR
KAAN TUNÇBİLEK



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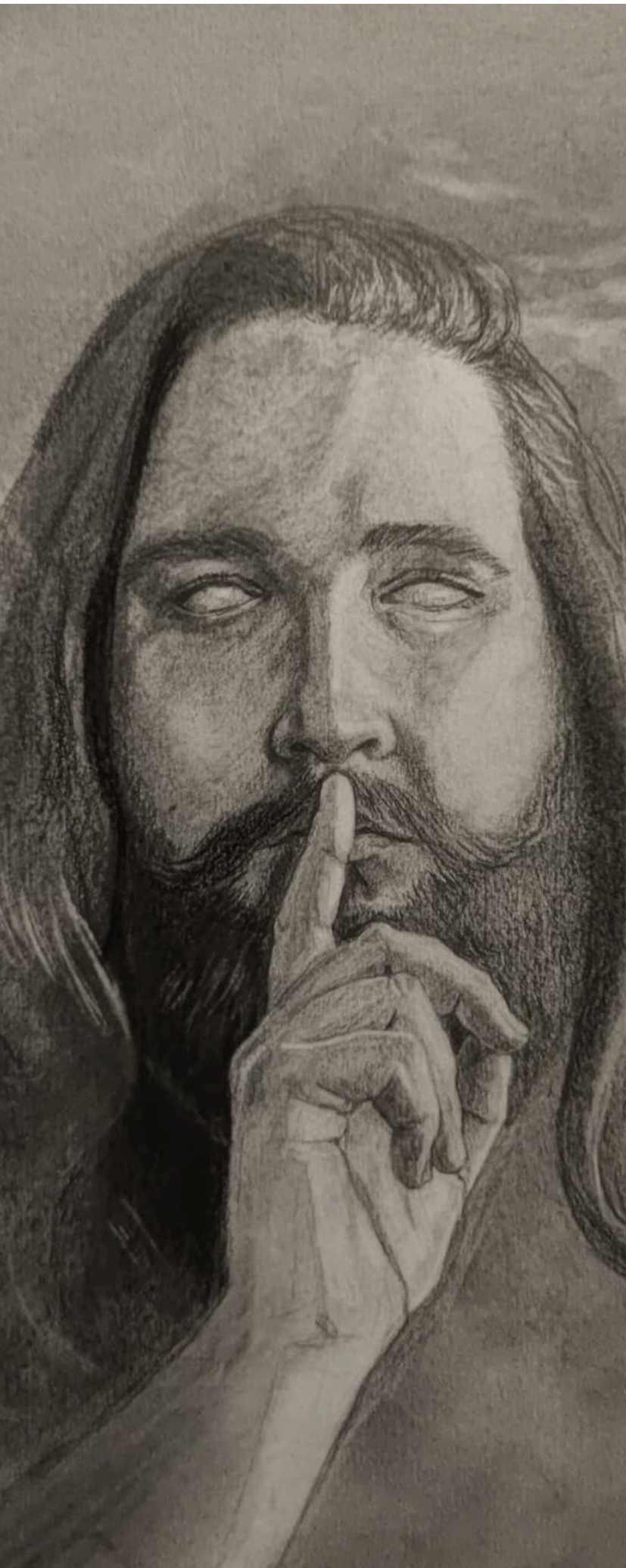
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Christophe Correia

BIOGRAPHY

My name is Christophe Correia. I was born in 1988 in France, in the suburbs of Paris, like many children of Portuguese immigrants, and I grew up in Portugal, between Braga and Viana do Castelo, immersed in an ancient culture shaped by the sounds of bass drums and Celtic bagpipes from the north of the country. It was in this environment that my connection to drawing and painting took root at an early age, after discovering the life drawings of my mother's cousin, Lucinda, a plastic arts teacher.

Winning my first drawing competition at the age of five remains a story I enjoy telling: I didn't yet know how to tie my shoelaces, but I could already hold a pencil with enough seriousness to impress a jury.

Although my academic path did not lead me directly to fine arts, it has always remained closely connected to creative practice. Trained in product design in Viana do Castelo, I never stopped drawing and painting, pursuing this practice continuously almost as a vital necessity.

A decisive turning point came in 2018 during a road trip through southern Spain. From Figueres and Cadaqués to Seville, this journey revealed art not as a hobby, but as a true direction in life. It was at that moment that I committed more seriously to painting, particularly oil painting a medium that has accompanied me ever since.

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Christophe Correia

BIOGRAPHY

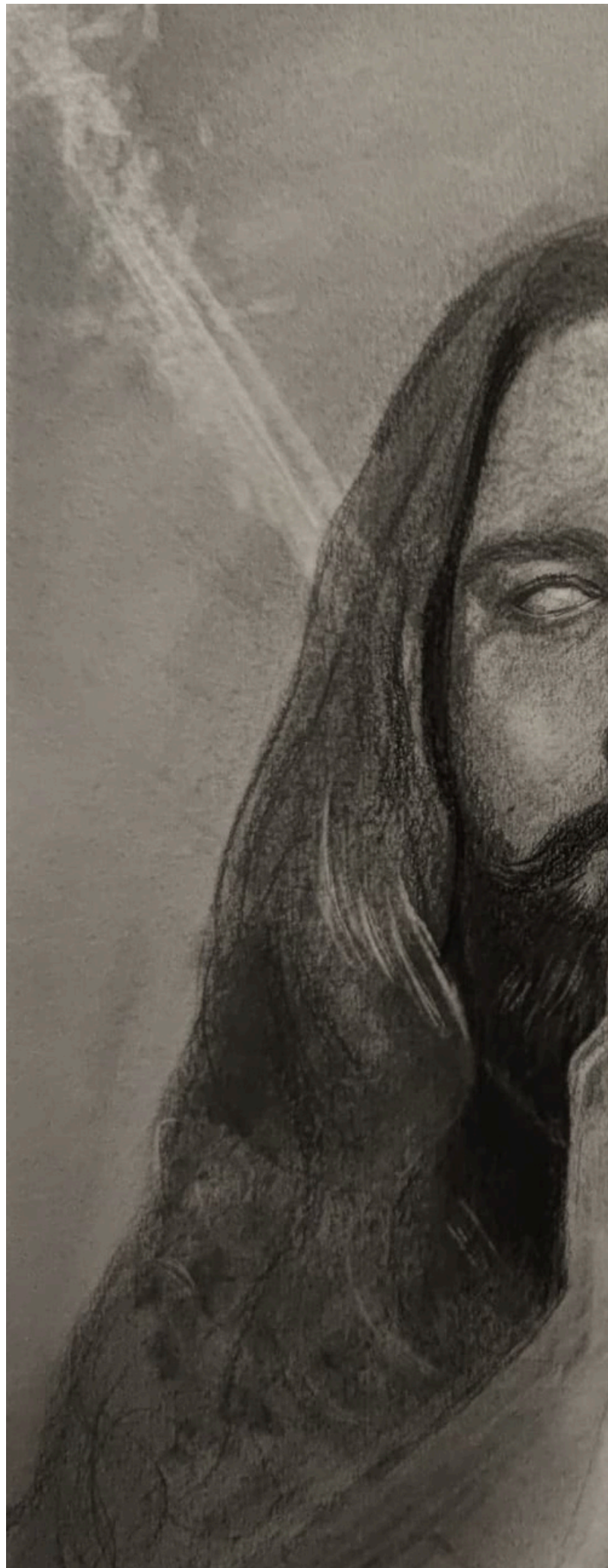
Since then, I have had the opportunity to present my work at several artistic events, including a group exhibition at Galerie Gabrielle in April 2019, as well as the "Peintres dans la Rue" events in Brie-Comte-Robert in 2023 and 2024.

Speculum Mentis

In *Speculum Mentis*, Christophe Correia interrogates the nature of the gaze as a threshold between the tangible world and the invisible territories of consciousness. Emerging from an indeterminate organic form, the eye appears less as an organ of perception than as a presence suspended between matter, memory, and cosmic immensity.

At the heart of the composition, a vertical structure recalling a mirror, a reliquary, and a portal simultaneously reveals a second gaze. This visual *mise en abyme* explores the mechanisms of introspection and reflective consciousness: seeing becomes an experience of self-return, in which the observer discovers himself through the very act of observation.

Around this symbolic architecture, the astral space unfolds through constellations of planets, nebulous formations, and profound darkness. The work weaves a dialogue between the infinitely vast and the intimate realm of the psyche, transforming the cosmos from a setting into a metaphor for an inner landscape. Each element appears to participate in a silent cartography of thought, memory, and lived experience.



ARTIST

Christophe Correia

Rooted in the symbolic universe of Regnum Silentii, the painting deploys a reflection on silence as a territory of knowledge and revelation. It convenes a contemplative space where the boundaries between inner reality and cosmic reality gradually dissolve, while the gaze becomes at once witness, threshold, and mirror of existence.



"Speculum Mentis"
Oil on linen canvas, 80 x 60 cm, 2026

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Christophe Correia

Lux in tenebris

Lux in Tenebris was inspired by the inner journey of confronting one's deepest shadows to discover the true self hidden beneath external identity. A crouched woman floats alone in the void of a vast dark ocean, symbolizing vulnerability, introspection, and the courage to descend into inner darkness. Her subtle radiance represents the light that emerges only when external distractions fade.

I hope viewers will question their own identity and reflect on whether they are living through external influences or their authentic essence. The work invites them to see darkness not as fear, but as a necessary path toward self-discovery.

I chose oil painting for its depth, richness, and ability to create powerful contrasts between shadow and light. Its realism strengthens emotional connection, while its symbolic style transforms the figure into a universal reflection of the human search for inner truth.

"Lux in tenebris"

Oil on linen canvas, 60 x 80 cm, 2026

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Christophe Correia



"Lux in tenebris"
Oil on linen canvas, 60 x 80 cm, 2026

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Christophe Correia

The voice that sees the way

There is a reason why the third eye is depicted as a fine in the vertical. For it is through this that the observer's reality is created and interpreted.



"The voice that sees the way"

Oil painting on wooden board, 30 x 39.5 cm, 2022

ARTIST

Christophe Correia

Dominus clavium

As the title suggests, the character possesses the keys to his own locks. Sometimes we forget that we are the masters of our own keys, mistakenly believing that others hold them. This misconception can sometimes be instilled in us by those who seek to exert control over us. Sometimes, out of cowardice and a lack of courage to live fully, we hand over our keys to those who seek to dominate and gain power.

*How are you doing with your keys?
Good mediation!*



"Dominus clavium"

Oil painting on wooden board, 30 x 39.5 cm, 2022

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"Intimately n. 2"

Oil painting on wooden board, 30 x 23 cm, 2022

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ARTIST

Christophe Correia



"Intimately n. 1"

Oil painting on wooden board, 29,7 x 19.6 cm, 2022

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"Veiga São Simão"
Oil on linen canvas, 70 x 50 cm, 2023

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Christophe Correia



"Cuba"

Oil on linen canvas, 50 x 70 cm, 2023

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Ebru Sıckyüz

BIOGRAPHY

Ebru Sıckyüz was born in Istanbul. She graduated from the Fashion and Garment Department of Mimar Sinan University in 2002 and began her professional career as a textile designer. Combining her experience in design with her artistic education, Sıckyüz graduated as the top student of her class from the Painting Education Program within the Department of Fine Arts Education, Faculty of Education, at Ege University in 2021. In her artistic practice, she integrates the knowledge and experience gained through her design background with her academic training in painting, pursuing a multidisciplinary approach in her work.

Existential inquiry constitutes a central theme in my artistic practice. This process is shaped by details encountered in everyday life that resist easy interpretation. Elements that may initially appear ordinary, yet do not readily reveal their meaning, gradually become the building blocks of my visual language.

Through my work, I explore the sense of fragmentation and incompleteness that emerges in the relationship between the individual, the world, and the self. This condition manifests on the canvas through fragmented figures, disjointed body parts, and incomplete representations.



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Ebru Sıckakyüz

BIOGRAPHY

As perceptions of reality are transformed through imagery, inner reflections and perceptual ruptures create a framework for conceptual expression.

By transforming physical forms and symbolic elements, I seek to establish connections between the personal unconscious and universal archetypes. I am interested in investigating how symbols operate within the individual psyche as well as within broader social and cultural contexts. While questioning their historical and contemporary meanings, I visualize my personal relationship with these symbols, aiming to construct a visual language that carries traces of collective culture while evoking an intuitive process of individuation.

Inspired by theories of the unconscious and dreams, my work focuses on translating the fragmented and discontinuous nature of dream experience into visual form. Through this approach, I hope viewers engage with the work not only on a visual level but also on intuitive and intellectual ones, discovering spaces through which they may embark on their own emotional and reflective journeys.



ARTIST

Ebru Sıckyüz



"Küçük Çalışmalar"
Oil painting on canvas, 30 x 40 cm, 2025

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Ebru Sıcakyüz



"Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk Anısına"
Oil painting on canvas, 80 x 40 cm, 2019

ARTIST

Ebru Sıckyüz



"Şeylerin Ardı"
Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2021

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Ebru Sıckyüz



"Sen Bilmezsene Kim Bilecek?"
Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2024

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Ebru Sıckyüz



"Şeylerin Metafizigi"
Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2021

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"Panayır"

Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2021

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Ebru Sıckayüz



"Nesneler Kimi İzler?"
Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2020

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Ebru Sıckyüz



"Başka Bir Yerde"

Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2020

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Ebru Sıckayüz



"Onca Yolculuk"

Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2020

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Ebru Sıckayüz



"Gözleyenin Bağlamı"
Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2020

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Ebru Sıcakyüz



"Kainatta Bir Yerdeydim "
Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2020

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Ebru Sıcakyüz



"Yeşeren Bağlar"

Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2024

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ARTIST

Ebru Sıckayüz



"Uyanıyorum Hiçliğe"
Oil painting on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2020

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Emine Gökçe Kavi

BIOGRAPHY

Emine Gökçe Kavi views art as an expression of human emotions that cannot be confined to a single plane, yet remain aesthetically resonant. For her, no action is without cause; every line drawn on a piece of paper, every constructed plane, carries meaning and reflects the artist's state of mind at that very moment. Freud's statement, "Science explains us, art explains the Self; together they form the shortest path to understanding a human being," holds an important place in her conceptual approach.

At times, Emine Gökçe Kavi addresses social issues; at others, she chooses to express emotions that cannot be articulated through words, using painting as her primary language. By setting aside theory and literal representations of reality, she focuses on colors, traces, and the effects they create. Existing within the harmony of colors, developing a language unique to herself, and exploring the impact of marks and gestures lie at the core of her artistic practice.

ARTIST

Emine Gökçe Kavi



"Shooter"

Oil painting and gold leaf on canvas, 90x120 cm, 2025

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ARTIST

Emine Gökçe Kavi



"Pikachu"

Oil on canvas, 100x100 cm, 2023

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ARTIST

Emine Gökçe Kavi



"Görünmeyeni Açığa Çıkarmak"
Oil painting on canvas, 80x100 cm, 2024

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Emine Gökçe Kavi



"Betty Lisa"

Oil painting on canvas, 120x120 cm, 2024

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ARTIST

Emine Gökçe Kavi



"Partners in Crime"
Oil painting on canvas, 100x100 cm, 2024

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ARTIST

Emine Gökçe Kavi



"İnsan Olma Çabası"
Oil painting on canvas, 80x100 cm, 2023

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Emine Gökçe Kavi



"Araf"

Oil painting on canvas, 160x100 cm, 2023

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Emine Gökçe Kavi



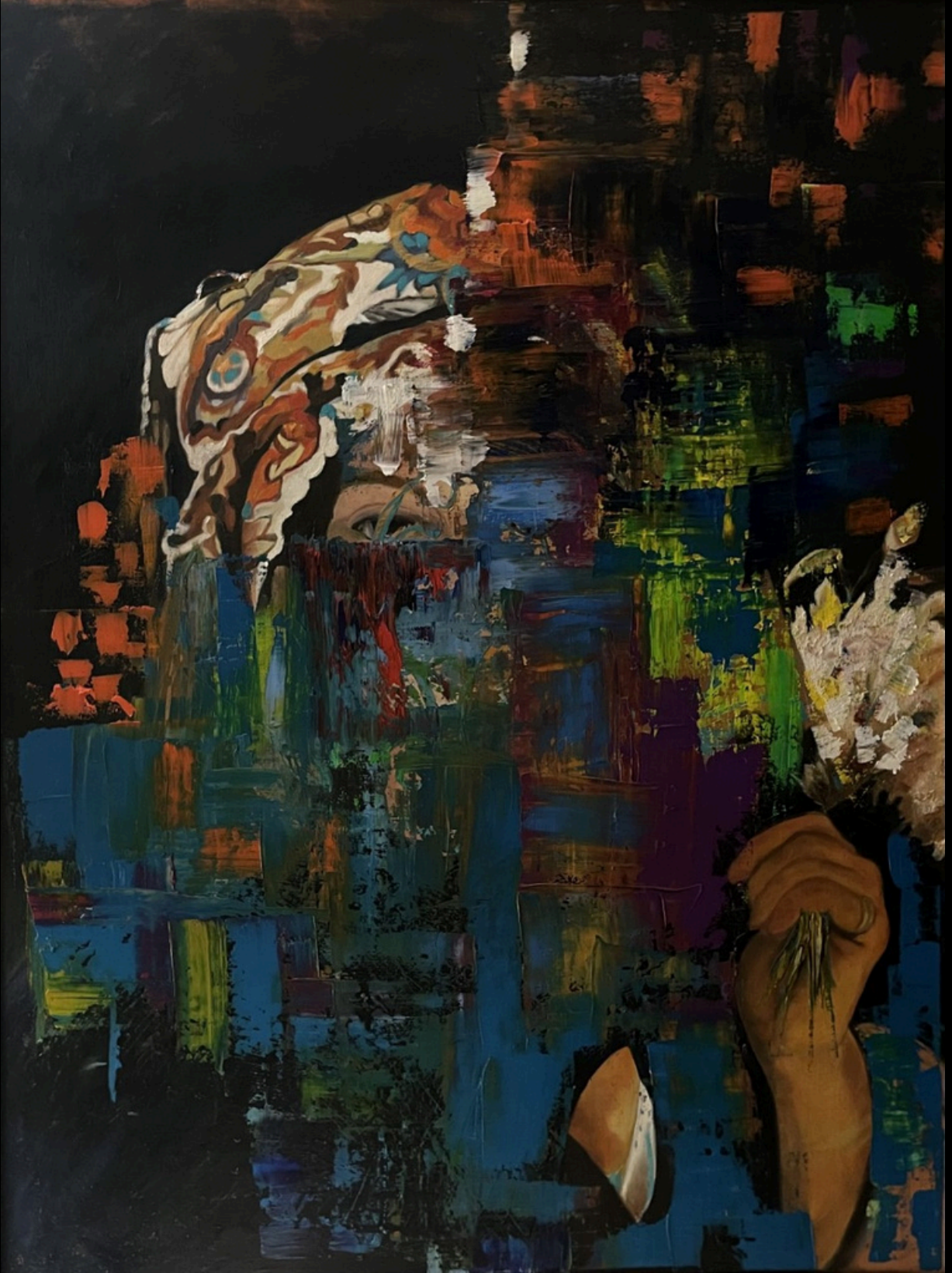
"King"

Oil painting on canvas, 100x160 cm, 2023

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Emine Gökçe Kavi



"Kalash Woman"

Oil painting on canvas, 90x100 cm, 2022

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Emine Gökçe Kavi



"Coin and Bills"

Oil painting and gold leaf on canvas, 90x120 cm, 2022

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Emine Gökçe Kavi



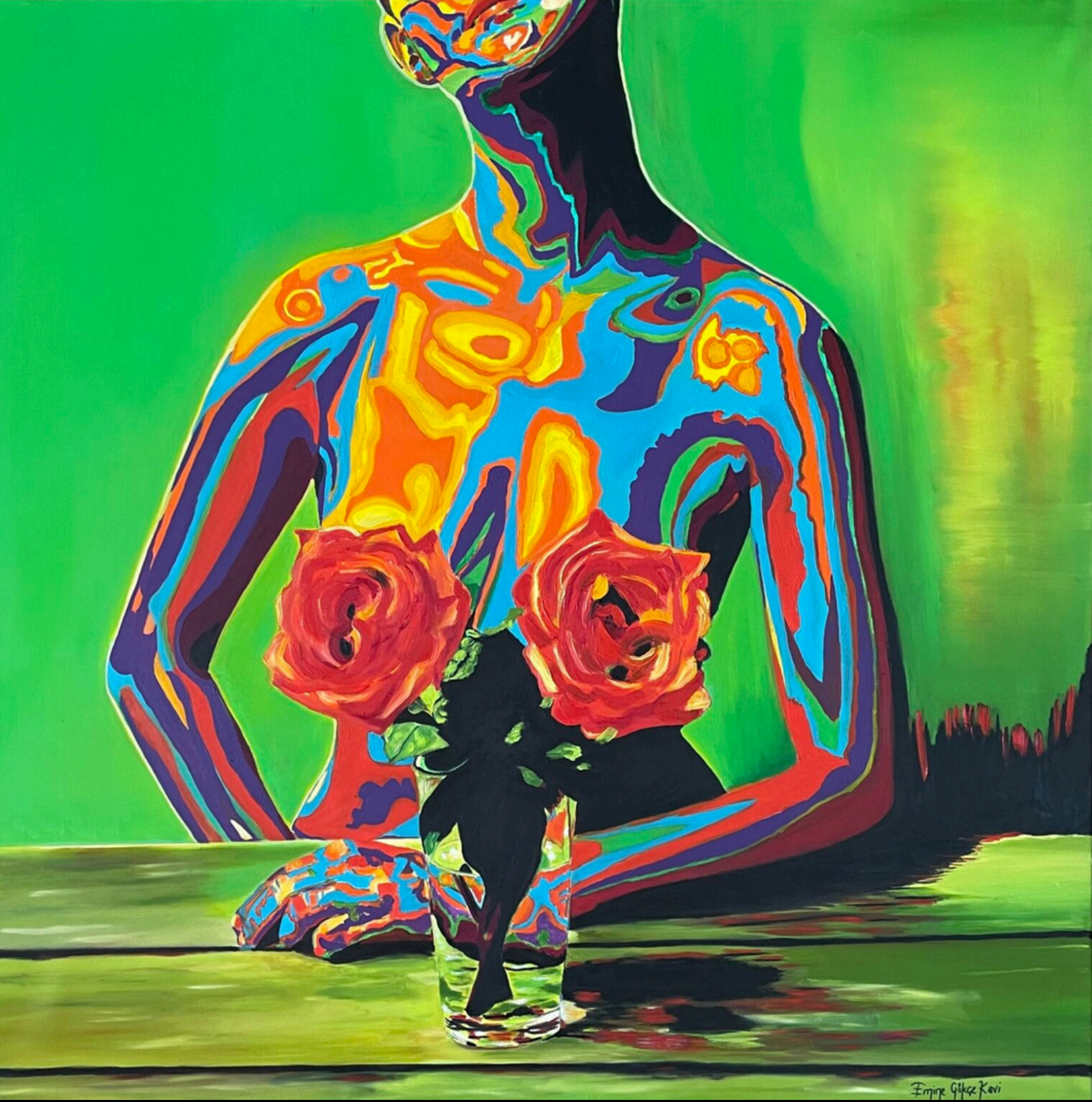
"Bilge Bilyoner"

Oil painting and gold leaf on canvas, 90x120 cm, 2021

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Emine Gökçe Kavi



"Subrosa"

Oil painting on canvas, 100x100 cm, 2022

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Emine Gökçe Kavi



"Desert Girl"

Oil painting on canvas, 80x100 cm, 2021

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AUGUST

Francesco Topino

INTERVIEW

Francesco Topino: Inner Fog, Digital Layers, and the Aesthetics of Raw Desire

Moving between Italy and the United States, Francesco Topino blends digital negatives with alternative printing techniques, transforming photography into a space of internal confrontation. We discuss the fluidity of memory and human vulnerability through his series "Blurred" and "Decadentia."

Your first encounter with photography came through your mother, who was also passionate about the medium. How has her influence shaped the artist you are today?

Photography has always been about visual and emotional legacy for me. My mother was a passionate enthusiast, and I grew up surrounded by the smell of film and her early shots, along with her albums. Rather than just focusing on technique, she taught me to be curious her way of seeing the world and pausing to notice details that others overlooked. Embracing photography felt like a natural extension of that dialogue with her and with the world around me.



ARTIST

Francesco Topino



"Blurred"

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Francesco Topino

INTERVIEW

You describe photography as a way to understand your fears, hopes, and inner self. How has this relationship with photography evolved over the years?

For me, photography has transformed from just a way to capture the outside world into a meaningful reflection of my inner self. It serves as a visual journal, where every decision, what to focus on, leave out, or emphasize reveals my psychological experiences, making the process truly therapeutic.

Over time, this relationship evolves through several distinct stages:

In the beginning, the emphasis is often on technical settings or photographing visually striking subjects. As the years go by, the focus shifts inward. Images that may not be technically perfect start to resonate more because they capture genuine emotions or specific mental states.

Photography serves as a mirror, prompting you to face what your mind might avoid or cling to. By pointing the camera at yourself or observing how you capture the world, you externalize your internal struggles. This process allows you to confront, unpack, and find peace with your personal emotions.

At first, you might take photos to control how others perceive you.

As your relationship with photography matures, you begin to use the camera to define your own identity, moving away from the need for external validation or societal expectations. The camera transforms into a tool for building confidence while helping you focus on hope and gratitude.

Blurred is described as the result of a self-healing process. What personal experiences inspired the creation of this series?

Back in 2014, my world fractured. My wife and I separated, beginning the difficult transition toward divorce. Our son was only two at the time far too young to understand why his world was changing, but exactly old enough to be caught right in the middle of it. The stress of that transition took an immediate, heavy toll on my relationship with him. For the next two years, I was completely lost. I was trying to find a new direction and a sense of purpose, but it felt like wandering through a pitch-black tunnel with no guarantee of light at the end. That period of survival eventually inspired my creative project, Blurred. I want to clarify that the title doesn't mean the actual images are out of focus or poorly shot. Rather, "Blurred" describes the internal fog I lived through. It is an exploration of how I navigated a world that had become unrecognizable and hazy in the wake of my separation.

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Francesco Topino



"Decadentia"

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Francesco Topino

INTERVIEW

In *Blurred*, the boundaries between reality and dreams seem to dissolve. Why are you drawn to exploring this fragile space between consciousness and imagination?

Delving into the space between consciousness and dreams is important for me because it's a vibrant, free-flowing state where the mind relaxes its strict boundaries. This "twilight zone" enables pure creativity to emerge, providing a direct link to the subconscious without the interruptions of everyday life.

The figures in *Blurred* often appear as fleeting traces of light and shadow rather than solid bodies. What does this visual transformation represent for you?

In visual art, turning solid objects into fleeting traces of light and shadow captures the fleeting nature of how we perceive things and the way memories fade. It hints that our identities and presence are more fluid than fixed, changing as we grow and learn. This visual approach serves as an emotional language, using contrast to strip away unnecessary details and focus on the core of a moment or feeling. Thus, reminding us that our physical forms are temporary, but the energy or spirit we leave behind is what truly lasts.

You work with both analog and digital photography. How do these two approaches contribute differently to the emotional atmosphere of your images?

Currently, I only use digital images. Even though I have a few film cameras, I find that digital photography allows me to express myself more easily. Since I travel frequently, carrying around a bag of film rolls would be pretty inconvenient!

Aside from the weight and logistics of carrying film, the ability to review images right away, back them up while on the go, and adapt to various lighting conditions without stressing over film stock or processing options is a huge plus.

I do have a small darkroom at home, which I mainly use for printing cyanotypes from digital negatives and experimenting with other alternative processes.

Creating prints from digital negatives gives me a lot of control over the final image while still keeping the tactile qualities of a handmade print. In a way, I'm separating the capture medium from the printing medium and choosing the best tools for each stage of the process.

Your work frequently explores the relationship between humans and nature. Do you see nature as a setting, a character, or perhaps a reflection of our inner states?

I would say nature in my photography work is frequently a reflection of my inner self but not always. Therefore, nature isn't just one thing in my work; it's a vibrant interplay of three roles.

It serves as the backdrop for human actions, a lively character with its own

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Francesco Topino



"Blurred"

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Francesco Topino

INTERVIEW

spirit, and a mirror that beautifully reflects the complexities of our human experience.

For example, in certain cases, nature sets the stage for our actions and gives my narratives a real foundation as in my Blurred body of work. On the other hand, in my series Lost Son I feel nature plays a totally different role closer to a reflection of my inner feelings. How we see a storm, a forest, or a dimly lit cave is usually influenced by our own emotions like sadness, grief, or search for clarity. By looking at nature this way, I encourage everyone to reflect on themselves while taking in the world around them.

Decadentia challenges conventional ideas about morality, pleasure, and the body. What motivated you to embark on such a provocative project?

I stumbled upon this project quite by accident! A friend of mine frequently visits adult content chat rooms, and he mentioned that there might be some fascinating photos to capture just from the preview adult chats. He was totally right! So, I began taking pictures of people who were willing to show themselves freely in these preview chats. In the end, I gathered over 500 snapshots, and some of those ended up being featured in the Decadentia series.

The project portrays individuals who reject society's expectations and reveal their authentic selves. What have you learned about human vulnerability through this work?

Through my work on Decadentia, I discovered that human vulnerability is deeply paradoxical. Although we're often taught to conceal our imperfections to escape judgment, intentionally shedding these false personas is crucial for building authentic relationships, liberating ourselves from restrictive social norms, and nurturing real emotional strength. Hiding your true desires to fit into strict social norms can lead to anxiety, inner conflict, and even more serious issues.

In Decadentia, pleasure often appears as a transformative force. How do you think pleasure shapes our understanding of identity and selfhood?

I believe that pleasure plays a significant role in shaping our identity by serving as an internal compass that guides us toward our true desires. Rather than seeking only fleeting satisfaction, taking the time to explore what genuinely brings you joy can uncover your core values and boundaries. This journey can be a powerful catalyst for self-discovery, motivation, and a deeper understanding of who you are.

For marginalized groups, embracing pleasure can be an essential source of strength and a powerful way to define oneself. By looking through a "pleasure-identity lens," we can see how personal desires and a sense of community support each other, helping to solidify an individual's identity.

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Francesco Topino



"Blurred"

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Francesco Topino

INTERVIEW

Some viewers may find certain images in Decadentia unsettling or controversial. How do you respond to strong reactions from audiences?

I have yet to receive strong reactions from audiences as far as the Decadentia project is concerned.

Your photographic projects often resemble visual diaries. How important is personal experience in shaping your narratives?

My personal experiences are the foundation of my photographic visual diaries. They keep me grounded in reality and present an authentic, self-reflective perspective that transforms the ordinary into a vibrant, personal story. In these visual diaries, my life experiences craft the narrative, making sure that each image captures the essence of a treasured memory or feeling.

By deeply engaging with personal viewpoints and life challenges, I'm able to create visual stories that resonate with many. It's the sharing of authentic experiences that truly sparks empathy in these narratives.

Living between Italy and the United States, have your perspectives on identity, belonging, and cultural influences changed over time?

For me, living between Italy and the United States turned identity into a dynamic process rather than a fixed concept. Perspectives constantly shift, connecting American individualism with Italian relational culture. Over time, the sense of belonging shifted from simply fitting into one society to crafting a unique, blended cultural space.

Rather than picking just one culture, I've come to appreciate the unique qualities of both. For example, there are times when I embrace American efficiency in administration while also valuing the Italian emphasis on community and high-quality food.

In an age of fast-moving digital content, your work invites slow contemplation. What role do you think poetic photography plays in contemporary visual culture?

In our fast-paced digital age, where we're constantly surrounded by a flood of content, poetic photography offers a delightful escape for the senses. Rather than just delivering information, it invites us to pause, reflect, and engage emotionally. This approach turns images into profound, contemplative experiences rather than simple records.

By focusing on suggestion rather than a clear-cut narrative, poetic photography creates a space for viewers to infuse their own memories and feelings into the experience, making it truly personal and unique.

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Francesco Topino

INTERVIEW

In a world often dominated by heavy editing and AI-generated visuals, elements like soft focus or intentional grain can feel refreshingly genuine, emphasizing authentic emotional connections over rigid objective representation.

Throughout your career, your photographs seem to reflect an ongoing search for meaning and presence. What questions are you currently exploring in your artistic journey?

My photography journey is all about really enjoying the moment. Instead of trying to capture that perfect shot, I've turned my work into a mindful reflection on being present. I focus on how stillness, intention, and authentic observation can reveal the amazing stories hidden in our surroundings and the human experience. I feel this really sums up my place in my artistic journey.



"Blurred"

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Alara Başar

INTERVIEW

Alara Başar on the Sterile Order of the Mind: "There's an Initial Sense of Tension in the Feedback"

Investigating AI, 3D, and the perception of the digital image through her series Human Creations, Alara Başar joins Flaneuse Magazine. Spanning the transition from traditional painting to the fluidity of new media, this conversation unpacks the sense of incompleteness in art, the search for mental order behind sterile white rooms, and the uncanny tension awakened in the viewer.

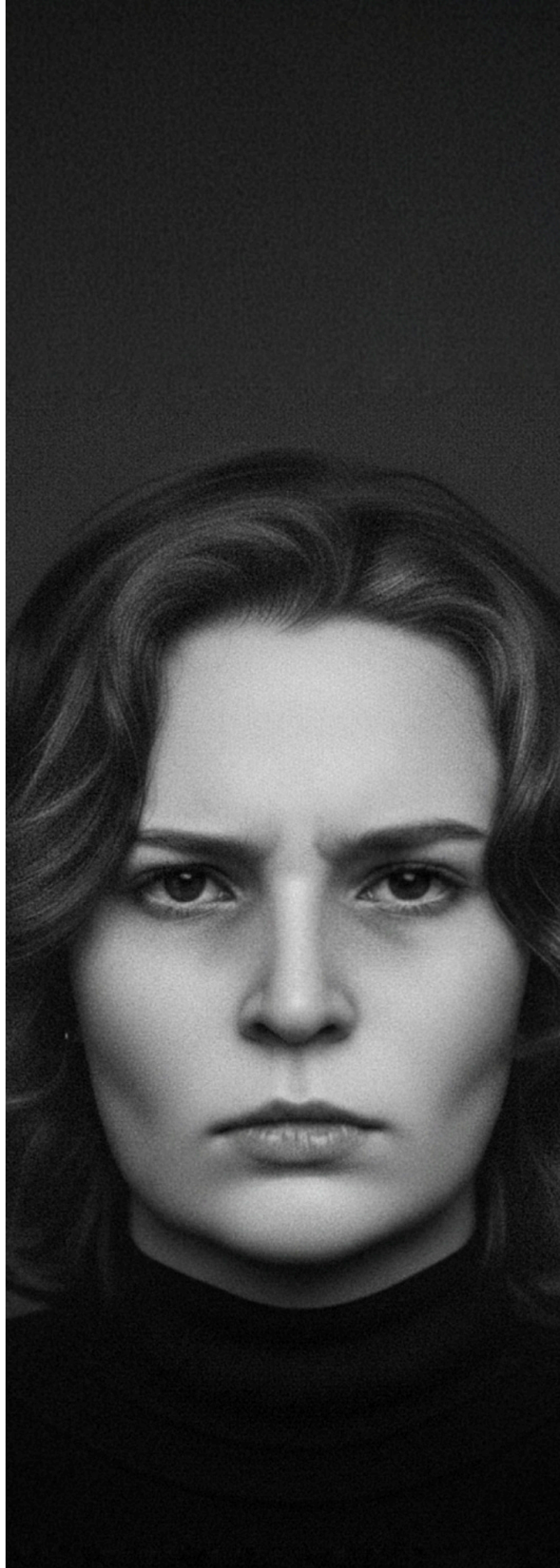
Could you briefly tell us about yourself?

I am Alara, born in Sakarya in 1998. I graduated from the Graphic Design and Photography department in high school. I completed my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the Painting Department at Duzce University. Currently, I am producing works centered around New Media.

How would you define your style? (Artistically)

In my previous artistic productions, I created works focused on painting and photography. Recently, I have been using computer technologies (3D, Artificial Intelligence, etc.) to produce photography and video works.

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Is art a way of escape or more of a form of expression?

I think this depends entirely on the individual; if someone is creating to escape from something, it can be a way of escape. But that, in itself, is already a form of expression.

Have you ever had a work that you felt was never completed? Or, how should a "completed" piece of art be?

During my transition period to new media art, some of my works felt unfinished, but this wasn't an "incompleteness" in terms of text or expression; it was purely technical. By developing this technique on my own, I am now able to complete those previous incompletenesses.

Was there anyone who inspired you in the past? Perhaps a friend, a teacher, family, etc.?

There were people in the past, and there still are. I prefer not to mention a single name, as it might be unfair to others from whom I have unconsciously drawn inspiration. I can find inspiration in many things.

Do you prefer to be alone while creating your art?

Most of the time, I prefer to be alone while producing.

This applies to many things in life; sometimes I do enjoy working within a crowd, but that is entirely something I do to reset myself. I am much more comfortable when working alone.

Has any particular period in your life brought a new perspective to your artistic outlook? For instance, a relationship or a journey?

A past period that I thought I had closed down actually plays a massive role in my current productions. A very brief moment can bring a new perspective, and so can something you thought you buried a long time ago. I cannot diminish this by categorizing it under just a relationship or a journey.

Has there been a movie or a book that influenced you recently? Have you thought about how it affects your art?

Lately, I have been enjoying watching the series *Pluribus*. It hasn't influenced my work yet, but I think it will. Apart from that, I really appreciate Jarand Herdal's film *Cadaver* and Pedro Almodóvar's *The Human Voice* from a visual standpoint, and I know they have influenced my productions.

What was the strangest thing you learned about painting?

It's not strange, but what I learned later

ARTIST

Alara Başar



*"İçimizde Bir Düzen Var Her Şey Olması Gerektiği Gibi " Human Creations Series
photograph, made by human + ai, 2025*

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on about painting is that there is no need to be so strictly rule-bound. Personally, since I'm not very good at following those strict rules anyway, I am not continuing with painting.

Did you experience a turning point or an "Aha!" moment while making your art? Can you tell us how transformative that moment was?

This doesn't happen all the time, but the most recent one I recall was experiencing this feeling while watching the video works in Shirin Neshat's *Land of Dreams* exhibition and Marina Abramovic's *Flux* exhibition. I can't describe how transformative that moment was, but I hope I can show it one day.

Do the colors, shapes, or techniques you use in your art reflect an impression or an emotion from your personal life?

They absolutely do. In my private life, I do not live inside a sterile whiteness or a centimeter-perfect order like in my works, but inside my mind, I am always searching for that sterility and order. And I reflect this frequently into my work.

Have you ever said that you love the process more than the results? To what extent does that feeling of "getting lost" while creating belong to you?

It belongs to me completely, because before starting the Human Creations series which I am currently continuing I was in a period where I felt deeply stuck and was putting too much pressure on myself. I needed to tell something, but I didn't know how to tell it. Then, the results that emerged as sketches gradually made me love my process as well. Right now, I am taking great pleasure in both the result and the process.

Does an inner voice guide you while creating your art?

My inner voice always guides me; it stands over me not just as a voice, but constantly as a critic. I criticize myself heavily while working. That's why when I receive criticism, even if it is negative, I am not surprised because I have already said it to myself in the first place. It's just that sometimes when I offer constructive criticism to myself, I change; and when it isn't constructive, I learn to pay no mind to it.

In your opinion, what do people usually feel when they examine your art?

What I notice most in the feedback is that it initially makes the viewer feel tense, but at the same time, it offers a warm space like empathy. Since this is exactly how I feel, I love that they feel what I feel. I prefer not to guide them too much while they are examining it.

ARTIST

Alara Başar



*"Biz (Detail from the short film) " Human Creations Series
photograph, made by human + ai, 2025*

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Alara Başar

INTERVIEW

What are your top 3 favorite songs?

The songs I am listening to the most lately: Sevdaliza - On My Own, Michael Jackson - Break of Dawn, and Unloved - Danger.

What are your top 3 favorite books?

Rosi Braidotti - The Posthuman, Patti Smith - M Train, and Luke Jennings - Codename Villanelle.

What are your top 3 favorite activities?

Thinking in front of the computer, watching my favorite TV series over and over again, and taking things apart to reassemble them or failing to reassemble them.

Is there money in art?

There is money in everything; it's just that we don't get to write the rules.

What are your recommendations for beginners?

My dear former studio instructor's constant advice to me: Experiment.



ARTIST

Alara Başar



*"Lullaby" Human Creations Series
photograph, made by human + ai, 2025*

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AUGUST

Leadership Lessons from Mauricio Pochettino: Why Systems and People Matter More Than Big Budgets

KAAN TUNÇBİLEK



Are you talking about inefficiency? In other words, struggling to achieve high output with limited resources?

Are you frustrated by your circumstances? Perhaps you are not getting enough support, resources, or backing from those above you.

Are budget constraints holding you back? Maybe you simply cannot afford the brightest talent in the market.

In short, are you expected to deliver exceptional results with limited resources? Then let me tell you about Mauricio Pochettino.

Pochettino turning a U.S. national team with few established stars and limited technical quality into what it has become

today may seem like an impressive achievement. But his story goes far beyond that.

Wherever he has worked, he has consistently rewritten the same story. It is the story of building sustainable systems with limited resources.

Does Money Really Open Every Door?

One of football's most common misconceptions is that success only comes through blockbuster signings and enormous budgets. Then, halfway through every season, executives inevitably ask themselves, "Where did this kid come from? Why didn't we spot him earlier?"

This is exactly where Pochettino enters the story.

During Pochettino's time at Tottenham, Manchester City and Manchester United each spent well over £400 million in net transfers, while Spurs' net spending was just around £50 million. They even spent less than relegated clubs such as Stoke City and West Bromwich Albion.

The result?

Pochettino guided Tottenham to four consecutive top four Premier League finishes. Before his arrival, the club had achieved that feat only twice in the previous 22 Premier League seasons. He delivered their highest league finish since 1963 by taking them to second place. Most remarkably, he led them to the UEFA Champions League Final.

That squad had been assembled for less than £60 million.

Perhaps the most striking example was Harry Kane.

Kane had been sent out on multiple loan spells, and many had already given up on his potential. Pochettino did more than simply believe in him. He became his mentor. Late at night, he would send Kane WhatsApp videos analyzing the world's best strikers, shaping his game with the patience of a craftsman.

If Harry Kane became one of the world's elite forwards, that individual attention and long term investment played a significant role.

Harry Kane:

"Pochettino wasn't just a manager for me. He became someone I trusted far beyond football. He has two sides. He's incredibly respectful. If you respect him and work incredibly hard for him, he'll give you all of his time. But if you cross the line, you simply can't be part of his team."

The Southampton Years: A System That Changed English Football

Let's go back a little further to Southampton.

When Pochettino arrived, the club was fighting relegation. Instead of relying on transfers, he invested almost entirely in tactics and system building, transforming the club's culture.

He introduced an aggressive, high tempo pressing game built around possession in a 4 2 3 1 formation.

Football analyst Michael Cox has described Pochettino as one of the pioneers of the modern pressing revolution.

But this was never about running harder than the opposition. It was intelligent pressing. The forwards initiated coordinated pressure high up the pitch, disrupting the opponent's build up play while reducing the defensive burden on the back line.

Southampton helped turn structured high pressing into a new standard in English football.

In reality, Pochettino had already tested these ideas in Spain while managing Espanyol.

Against Pep Guardiola's Barcelona, widely regarded as one of the greatest teams in football history, Pochettino consistently caused enormous problems with his tactical approach. Across eight meetings, Barcelona managed to beat him only three times.

I have to admit that Barcelona versus Espanyol became one of my favorite fixtures during those years because of this fascinating tactical battle.

Unlocking Overlooked Talent

Pochettino's true genius lies in raising the ceiling of the players he already has. His impact extends far beyond sporting success. It also creates enormous financial value.

At Southampton, players such as Rickie Lambert, Adam Lallana, Jay Rodriguez, Luke Shaw, and James Ward Prowse arrived from the academy or lower divisions for a combined cost of roughly £13 million.

Integrated into Pochettino's system, they were eventually sold for around £190 million.

The financial return was extraordinary. More importantly, every one of them earned international recognition with England during his tenure.

Pochettino didn't just improve their football.

He changed their careers. He changed their lives.

Adam Lallana:

"He didn't only improve me tactically. He taught me how to lead and how to take responsibility. Without him, I would never have reached the level I eventually did."

Son Heung-min:

"When I first arrived in the Premier League, I was really struggling. I wanted to leave. But he believed in me. He taught me how to walk again."

Decision Making Under Pressure: Managing High Stress Moments

None of this is magic.

It is the combination of science and exceptional people management.

During training, Pochettino uses the Gacon Test. The objective is not to exhaust players. The goal is to push them beyond a scientific threshold where they must continue making good decisions despite fatigue and elevated heart rates.

His pressing system demands that players make split second decisions in tight spaces.

While constantly pushing players beyond their comfort zones on the pitch, Pochettino creates an enormous sense of psychological safety away from it.

Much like Sir Alex Ferguson, he sees the person before the player.

His players understand that he is not pushing them to punish them. He is pushing them because he genuinely believes in their potential.

Danny Rose:

"He gives us so much energy and belief. If Pochettino had asked me to run through a brick wall, I would have done it without looking back."

The United States: Cultural and Athletic Alignment

When Pochettino took charge of the United States in 2024, he admitted that he had underestimated the country's football culture.

"We were naive."

That was his honest assessment.

But instead of resisting reality, he leaned into America's greatest sporting strength. American sports culture thrives on athleticism, physical challenges, data driven improvement, accountability, and relentless competition.

Pochettino's scientific and highly disciplined methodology proved to be an almost perfect match for that mindset.

As always, he started with mentality.

"We're not looking only at talent. We need the right characters. We need people who are willing to fight for this badge."

That commitment to building the right culture became one of the foundations that carried the United States to where it stands ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The Real Leadership Lesson

Pochettino leaves club executives, leaders, and the business world with a remarkably clear lesson.

Sustainable success does not require unlimited budgets or endless financial resources.

It requires a well designed system.

It requires genuine human connection.

Most importantly, it requires leaders who believe in people before expecting people to believe in the system.