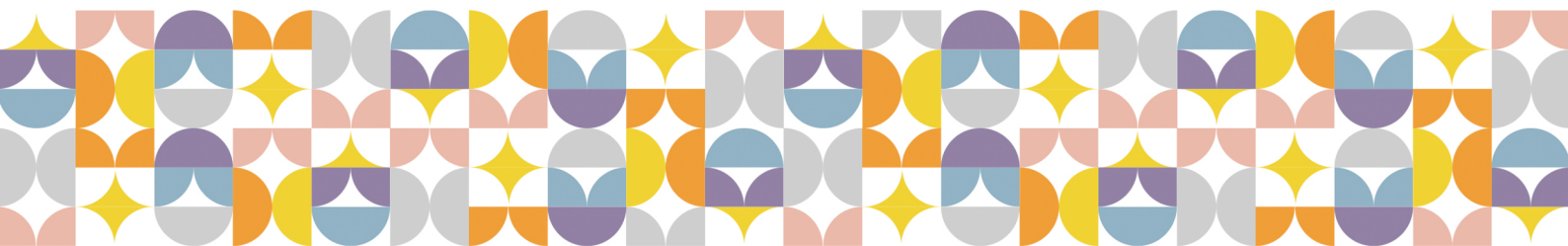


**THE ART CIRCLE AWARD 2024
SHORTLISTED ARTWORKS**





WORLD MAPS AS REFLECTIONS OF HUMAN GREED | 2024

Angelka BASHESKA

Acrylic paint and mixed media on Canvas, 90x90cm

The artwork represents my vision of world maps and the reasons for changing country borders and their appearance. It is divided into 4 zones, each depicting a phase in world history and how borders were formed. The first zone represents the "pure" period when borders were natural or God-given (rivers, mountains, sand belts). Each state, defined by these natural borders, has a power center (golden color), and life is peaceful. The second zone, 1ST DEGREE OF GREED, shows 4 power centers disrupting the natural order because of greed, seizing power from the people. This leads to increased discontent (depicted by red circles radiating from power centers). As dissatisfaction peaks, nations reclaim power through bloody wars, leading to the 2ND DEGREE OF GREED, with red borders and rivers of blood. The final zone, 3RD DEGREE OF GREED, ends in ashes and oceans of blood, making it irrelevant where the boundaries are set.

Angelka BASHESKA

I'm born in Prilep, Macedonia in 1970. My journey into the world of art commenced during my early years, sparking my decision to enroll in an art-focused high school. My chosen path led me to the Department of Costume Design and Textiles in Skopje, Macedonia, where my education encompassed not only painting techniques, but also sculpture, drawing, and a comprehensive study of historical costumes. This journey illuminated the ways in which art seamlessly intertwines with clothing, allowing me to harness self-expression. Through the intricate crafts of tapestry and weaving, I discovered the transformative power of art, which has the capacity to enhance every facet of life. I live in Dubai almost 3 years.



MAPPA MYSTICA | 2024

Rima MOUKHAL

**Acrylic and Mixed Media on Canvas,
60x60cm**

The work is a minimalistic visualization of the journey of a female, in abstract way mapping her odyssey with shapes, colors, and textures.

For me, Women come from a mystic glowy lace land; to start a journey guided by the divine to discover, explore, produce, and shine with her evolvement.

Circles represent her life cycles from her pink fluffy childhood to her red shining youth reaching her motherhood, maturity and completed femininity in the center, to her declining when experiencing dullness and dryness to her rising toward wisdom and the gifts earned during her lifespan.

Texture defines nature of each stage. The geofabric textile used to show women's ability to absorb and embraces all emotions and experiences they go through.

Colors are chosen by the chakra wheel color guide, to signifies the level of progress; the direction shows the evolution process and the ups and downs that women go through.

The Gold thread represents the sacred connection and guidance between her and the divine.

Finally using the fleshy color in the background of the canvas represents the human experience with all its delicacy, fragility, and fluidity.

Rima MOUKHAL

Moukahal, a Lebanese Artist divides her time between Dubai and Beirut. Her artistic journey faced a significant interruption during the nearly two-decade long civil war in Lebanon. Having spent an extended period in the corporate sector, Moukahal eventually felt the call to rekindle her passion for art. Determined to delve deeper into the world of creativity, she embarked on a journey of self-discovery and skill refinement. She pursued intensive private courses in drawing and painting, under the guidance of esteemed Arab artists hailing from Beirut, Cairo, and Dubai. Moukahal's artistic style primarily falls under the realm of abstract expressionism. Her work is deeply influenced by her personal emotional and psychological responses to the shared human experiences that shape our lives.



THE MAP II | 2024

Laura XENOPOL

Acrylic, pencil, and marker on Paper, 46x67cm

The Map II comes from a series on mapping started in 2017. The work visualizes a sacred space, creating encounters between the earthly and the otherworldly. It adheres to the idea of two realms, a visible and an invisible one—the conscious and the unconscious.

The painting draws a path toward the invisible, but rather than taking a reductive route, it gathers concepts, states, and feelings into a cumulative visual system—a personal iconography. This visual system is based on archetypal notions of color, form, and symbolism. Otherworldly figures and dream-like miniatures depicting anthropomorphic flora and fauna feature in the map. Constellations of geometric abstractions become worlds unto themselves.

The map draws inspiration from nature, and the symbols often resemble organic elements such as the sun and the moon, lions, leaves, branches, or seeds. In this way, the painting develops a distinctive language of forms, symbols, and notations grounded in an intimate system while defying obvious legibility. This opacity is critical for the creative process, as it invites the audience to explore and decipher the clues themselves, attributing new meanings and connections to the work.

Laura XENOPOL

Laura Xenopol (b. 1999, Romania) is an artist and cultural practitioner living and working in Abu Dhabi. Her work revolves around visual research to explore a new sacred, drawing on anthropomorphism and symbolic values of nature. Her mixed-media practice addresses the complexities between physical and imaginative environments and follows an interdisciplinary approach by employing painting, sculpture, and research in natural landscapes.

Passionate about tackling relevant questions about heritage, Xenopol has specialized in museum studies and cultural management and has collaborated with Dhakira Center for Heritage Studies and NYUAD Art Gallery. She has a BA in Art and Art History from New York University Abu Dhabi.



BIG BLOOM THEORY | 2024

Liudmila PANEKOVA

Ink and acrylic on Paper, 77x57cm

The artwork presents the artists vision of the “new world order” , whilst the Eye of the Almighty Universe keeps observing the transformations. The humanity should perceive the world without the borders and divisions: in the front of the Universe and throughout the History , the world on the planet Earth is solid. We all are United by inhabiting the planet eligible for living.

The Artificial Intelligence Technology delivers the black swan to humanity but simultaneously there is a game of meanings: in some ancient scriptures the swan symbolizes resurrection and especially the black swan appears as the messiah of the new world.

The world should reconcile after living over centuries in the mode of “trade vs. being awoken” and come to its blooming again.

Liudmila PANEKOVA

Liudmila Panenkova (b. 1986, Moscow, Russia), is a professional full time Artist, based in Dubai, UAE since 2016. Liudmila held 3 solo exhibitions in Dubai and and participated in numerous art shows and projects across UAE, Europe, UK and Asia, creating unique detailed ink and mixed media drawings of different scale. Her content is mostly dedicated to the spiritual and surrealistic topics, and her style is defined by curators and collectors as magic realism. Her work is popular among private and corporate collectors and interior designers. Liudmila has also taken part in governmental art exhibitions, collaborated with Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation, took part in established art fairs at Carrousel Du Louvre, World Art Dubai and Sikka Art Fair, Imago Mundi project, Macao Biennale. She was granted UAE cultural golden visa as a “plastic artist” in April 2022.



POINTING NORTH | 2024

Caroline HEMING

Oil on Canvas, 76x61cm

In response to the theme of maps and mapping, I reflect on my journey shaped by both heritage and personal evolution. Map making is in my blood and soul, instilled in me by my uncle, a historical cartographer who mentored me from a young age. His influence led me into a corporate career as a land cartographer, mapping corporate real estate through data, research, and precision.

For 30 years, my work followed linear paths to meet client demands. However, my view of mapping has evolved. Maps are no longer just tools for navigation or representations of physical spaces. To me, they now symbolize a journey toward self-expression, a quest to break free from the constraints of today's data-driven paths.

I have represented this evolution with a hand bound by thin threads and secured by bolts, symbolizing the pressures, expectations, and external forces that have held me in place. These threads represent tradition, precision, and corporate duty, binding me to structured paths. But as a map is more than its lines, this hand seeks to break free from old conventions.

In this work, I reinterpret mapping as a metaphor for personal exploration. I am searching for my true North, a place of free expression where the ties of my past no longer bind me. My map now leads into uncharted territories, where boundaries are meant to be broken, and the journey itself becomes a canvas for creativity.

Caroline HEMING

Why stick to one style? I thrive on blending realism, expressionism, and abstraction. While I might settle on a single path someday, I'm dedicated to a boundless creative journey for now.

My artistic roots in silkscreen, taught by my dad, inspire me to layer rich paints on distressed canvases, creating delicate transparencies and bold contrasts. This approach reflects my commitment to experimentation and creative freedom.

For 30+ years, I worked as a graphic designer and creative director. The COVID lockdown reignited my passion for painting, and from 2020 to 2024, I produced the large-format pieces you that can be seen on my website.



Asmar Tayyebi

DAVVAR | 2024

tufted yarn on Canvas, 80x80cm

The word “Davvar” in Persian means Orbiting. The philosophy behind the artwork, Davvar is the belief that everything in this universe comes from a unified source of existence (known as God in many religions and/or energy, light, supreme according to many other cultures and beliefs). Not only everything is originated from this wholesome source but is also revolving around it and will eventually reunite and weld back into it.

Mappa Mundi is depicted as a group of concentric circles. These circles are in different shades of human skin colors. Meaning, all human beings no matter what nationality, race or ethnicity are from the same essence. All of them are concentric to the same red color at the core. Blood, this beautiful red elixir of life is a common denominator no matter what race, culture or era humans are from. Yarn has been used as the main medium of this work. The concept behind this goes to the origin of a ‘map’ or as the Latin root of the word “mappa,” meaning in antiquity a napkin, a cloth or flag. The weaved yarns give the same correspondence as fabric and cloth and is literally the Mappa of the Mundi.

Asmar TAYYEBI

Asmar Tayyebi, born in 1980 is a self-taught artist specializing in the art of tufting rugs. Originally from Persia, Asmar draws deep inspiration from the rich cultural heritage of Persian rug-making. With each piece, they translate their unique ideas and designs into tactile expressions of art, weaving yarns to craft intricate and meaningful rugs. Blending traditional influences with modern aesthetics, Asmar brings a fresh, contemporary approach to an ancient craft, making each rug not only a functional item but also a vivid work of art.



WHO GIVES? | 2024
Gabriella MASETTI
 Acrylic on Canvas, 60x90cm

The Title of this piece is 'Who Gives?' I was fascinated by the research in the early 2000s into blue zones, a concept that identified locations where people live longer and healthier lives than average.

Research into Mappa Mundi led me to appreciate that these maps were intended to be schematic and demonstrate a principle rather than for navigational use. With this interpretation I wanted to visualize schematically the equivalent of blue zones for generosity as this kindness has a clear link to health alongside its external positive multiplier effect.

Data from CAF's World Giving Index identified highest ranked 'givers' based on 3 giving behaviors; helping strangers, donating money and volunteering time. Interestingly the outcomes suggest an even mix of nations in the top rankings that are suffering through conflict, environmental trauma or political strife as those prosperous and peaceful nations. I have blended the repetitive strokes, layers and movement that I use in my painting and the tones follow a theme of recent paintings inspired by the natural world but on a more micro scale. This has been overlaid with an ombre tone for the 'giving hotspots'.

Gabriella MASETTI

Gabriella is an Artist and Coach living in Abu Dhabi with her family. Coming from the corporate world, she always practiced art as a passion with painting as her key interest alongside collecting art. She is now an Executive and Creativity Coach working with corporate and creative leaders. She has a particular interest in working with visual artists and also coaches pro bono for a British charity supporting military veterans. Gabriella has worked with mixed media and sculpture but has kept returning to painting as her favorite medium and uses repetitive pattern, movement and colour to form her pieces. She finds painting to be a form of natural thought processing and unpacking of the subconscious, with the patterns unfurling as if releasing excess thought and information from the mind to help clarify it. In this way she finds her art and coaching practices symbiotic. She is heavily inspired by abstract expressionists including Jackson Pollock, Joan Mitchell, Louise Bourgeois, Hussein Sharif, Gillian Ayres and Rashid Johnson.



MAPPING PLEASURE | 2024

Sana WAQAR KHAN

Acrylic on Canvas, 80x90cm

"Mapping Pleasure" is a captivating abstract painting that visualizes data collected over two distinct 50-day periods during the summers of 2023 and 2024. This artwork serves as a comparative study of the artist's everyday life, contrasting the experience of being employed full-time in 2023 with the freedom of being jobless in 2024. Through a dynamic interplay of colors, shapes, and textures, the

painting offers a poignant commentary on how capitalist structures shape our perceptions of success, prosperity, and happiness. The composition serves as a map, meticulously color-coded and structured according to the data collected over 100 days, offering a visual timeline of the artist's experiences and emotions.

In the 2023 segment, the painting is dominated by rigid, coarsely textured forms and muted tones, reflecting the artist's experience of long working hours in shades of grey. The pursuit of financial and professional stability leads to burnout, leaving little time for the activities that bring true pleasure. Life is depicted as a series of repetitive, mechanical actions, underscored by a stark absence of joy and creativity.

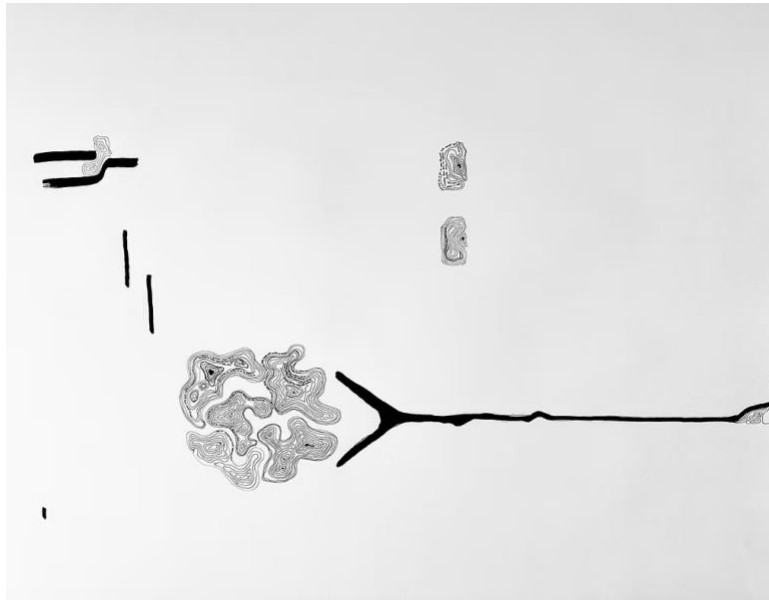
Conversely, the 2024 segment bursts with vibrant colors and fluid forms, symbolizing the artist's shift towards activities that genuinely bring joy and fulfillment. Freed from the constraints of a 9-to-5 job, she delves into travelling, painting, writing, praying, working out and spending time with her loved ones. This part of the painting exudes a sense of liberation and contentment, celebrating the intrinsic value of pursuing one's passions over materialistic pursuits.

Sana WAQAR KHAN

Sana Waqar is a multidisciplinary artist/designer from Pakistan, based in Dubai. With over a decade of training and experience in the field of textile, fashion and visual arts, Sana has participated in numerous freelance projects and exhibitions, both locally and internationally. Her work has been awarded at the 15th annual Young Artist Exhibition by Alhamra Arts Council Lahore and also included in the Imago Mundi Project Venice.

Sana graduated with an MA in Art and Design Studies from Beaconhouse National University in 2019 and later joined as a teaching associate in the School of Visual Art and Design. Sana is passionate about decoding abstract imagery, data visualization, exploring mapping techniques and critical writing. She is represented by Artezaar online gallery and exhibited her paintings at World Art Dubai 2022 and 2023 along with group shows at Reem Art Gallery, The Ren House and Cross Borders Art Gallery. She also won a design competition held by Alserkal Avenue and participated in the first Design Summit Lahore, 'Simultaneity as Design'.

As a creative practitioner, Sana is always open to learning new skills and gaining diverse experience in the field of art and design. She has been a part of Campus Art Dubai 10.0 Programme as an Exhibitor Relations Assistant and later joined the Jameel Arts Centre as a Learning Assistant, designing and facilitating interactive family workshops, leading exhibition tours and managing learning events. Sana continues to develop her practice and take on exciting new projects and commissions along with conducting family workshops at Jameel Arts Centre as a freelance workshop coordinator.



SELFSCAPE | 2024

Nivin AL KUZBARI

Ink on Paper, 65x45cm

"Selfscape" is a visual and poetic exploration of a journey of the 13 years I spent navigating life in France. Mappa mundi of emotions, elevations and depressions of the heart and soul. The altitude lines etched across the canvas symbolize the peaks and valleys of existence, the soaring moments of joy and the plunging depths of grief.

In the center lies a form inspired by the shape of a tear under the microscope. Symbol of grief, but also a testament to the

cleansing power of sorrow, the kind that washes over the soul and paves the way for new beginnings. Each line, each curve of this microscopic tear, tells a story of pain confronted and embraced, an echo of the moments when words fail. Only silent tears can speak.

The dominant white space represents the untold stories. It is the space for healing, for growth, for new memories to be written. Not emptiness, but rather the fertile ground of possibility, hope and renewal.

The lines stretching beyond the canvas, hint at the infinite horizons of personal growth. The tear, born from pain, has become a crystal—a testament to resilience. It is a story of not just surviving the storms, but learning to navigate them, to find the calm in their midst.

This piece stands as a celebration of the human capacity to heal, to turn scars into maps that guide us toward a more profound understanding of ourselves. An ode to the strength of vulnerability. In the end, "Selfscape" is a call to keep exploring and find within us the seeds of hope that lie dormant, waiting to bloom.

Scattered across this landscape are the words I penned in minuscule letters:

"Who are we to question love and pain, | Guardians of sorrow's endless reign? | The body's memory, filled with strife,
| Carving love and loss throughout our life.

Like a flower blooms in time's embrace | Dust turns to stone, no hiding place. | Can we be free from wounds that bind,
| Or trapped by masks and pain confined?

The notes of life, a dance in space, | The universe floats, slowing the race. | Should we be shocked by autumn's tune,
| That echoes deep within too soon?

What you've endured, you cannot flee, | We're but a fruit on a doomed tree. | Bound to unravel, break apart, | And
self-destruct, right from the start."

Nivin AL KUZBARI

With a background of Graphic design and visual art from college, Nivin brings a unique blend of creativity and strategic thinking to her role as a design leader. As the Senior Product Design Manager at talabat, she crafts engaging user experiences, transforming complex ideas into intuitive designs. With a background that spans Bedrock Streaming and Société Générale, Nivin has a knack for building design teams that innovate and inspire.

Her work is driven by a passion for storytelling through design, using every project as a canvas to explore new idea



FROM WITHIN: SUNSET | 2024

Yang Lan

Oil on Canvas, 60x80cm

My landscape paintings express my emotions and experiences, embodying my footsteps across the land and the excitement of travel. This sunset painting illuminates the atmosphere around me and the dynamic motion I felt, revealing intricate abstract mark-making up close, contributing to texture and depth. These marks reflect my immediacy and intuition in capturing atmosphere and motion.

YANG LAN

Yang Lan is a dedicated visual artist and educator originally from China, whose artistic journey spans diverse geographical and cultural landscapes, including the Middle East and North America. With an MFA in Painting from the University of Saskatchewan (Canada) and a BA in Visual Arts from the University of Jordan, Yang has developed a practice that deeply engages with nature's dynamic energy, translating it into vibrant, emotionally charged compositions.

Her artwork often reflects a fascination with landscapes, explored through various mediums such as painting and mixed media. Beyond the studio, Yang has over three years of experience teaching at the university level, inspiring students to discover their creative voices. Her work has been exhibited in Jordan, America, and Canada, and she remains committed to expanding her professional practice through her journey.