

# Digital Art

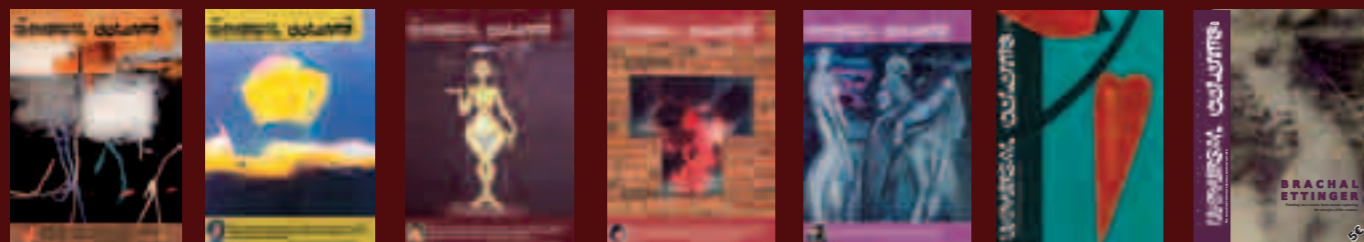
Photographs represent something.  
 This is true,  
 but they do not represent  
 the same thing that I see.

wafaa

bilal



# UNIVERSAL COLOURS



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# editorial

ISSUE 1 2010

UNIVERSAL COLOURS

Self-motivation should become the motto for our organisation because, here at EU-MAN, we have come to realise that anything can be achieved when we push ourselves that little bit further.

We are only a few months in to 2010 and we have accomplished a great deal at both EU-MAN and *Universal Colours*, which is now even better thanks to improved binding and a better quality of paper thanks to an amicable agreement with the printing house - don't your fingertips agree?

We held a wonderful launch party in cooperation with Vegas Gallery in London's Vyner Street - the place where Londoners know that on every first Thursday of the month there is some great happening at that place - and on the first Thursday of February it was our turn. We were flattered to see so many people attend our launch and amazed to discover over 500 copies of *Universal Colours* were taken home.

We offer many thanks to Ms. Suzanne Schurgers, the gallery curator and owner, and to Mr. Avtarjeet Dhanjal, who cut short his journey and came from India to acknowledge the work and necessity of *Universal Colours*.

Thanks also to Mr. Ali Najjar, who came from Sweden to give his speech on the importance of the magazine to all of the migrant artists in Eu-

rope since it is the only channel open to us, and finally many thanks to Mr. Thanos Kalamidas, who came from Finland to give a speech that really encouraged audience interaction. In his speech, Thanos insisted we work upon many issues concerning the work of *Universal Colours* and the difficulties that we face with each new issue. This is why we need your support and the need of continuation too.



EU-MAN also participated in the "IV Integrating Cities Conference", the largest European conference on migration. The necessity of our participation was to spread the message of our magazine, to give information about our organisation and, of course, to make contact with the officers and decision-makers in Europe. We were lucky to meet many important people such as Mayor of London Mr. Boris Johnson, deputy Mayor of London Mr. Richard Barnes, Mrs. Diane Schmitt, Head of Unit for Immigration and Integration at the European Commission, and Finland's former Minister of Education Mrs. Tuula Haatainen, who is now the deputy Mayor of Helsinki, to whom we presented our work in both the magazine and at EU-MAN.

As usual we remain positive about the future. We are continuing our work in Helsinki, but are also widening our work to include London. We want our message to reach as many as possible because we are here participating in life, showing our interest in living together, telling that only by love and beauty can we harmonise our world.

Amir Khatib



#### EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-chief

Amir KHATIB

tel: +358 40 558 68 96

amir.khatib@eu-man.org

Avtarjeet DHANJAL

avtarjeet.dhanjal@eu-man.org

Ali NAJJAR

alinajjar216@yahoo.com

Dr. Michael CASEY

michael.casey@eu-man.org

Moustafa AL-YASSIN

tel: +358 44 991 88 30

moustafa.al-yassin@eu-man.org

AD: Thanos KALAMIDAS

thanos.kalamidas@eu-man.org

\*\*\*

#### PROOFREADING

Asa BUTCHER

asa.butcher@eu-man.org

Shelley BENNETT

\*\*\*

#### ADVERTISING

sales@eu-man.org

+358 (0) 40 570 2899

\*\*\*

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\*\*\*

#### GENERAL ENQUIRIES

info@eu-man.org

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EU-MAN

HELSINKI OFFICE

P.O. Box 523

00101 Helsinki, Finland

+358 (0) 40 554 6896

LONDON OFFICE

27 Imperial Court, Empire Way

HA9 0RS, London, UK

Office: +44 (0)208 7952972

Mobile: +44 (0)7728 024968



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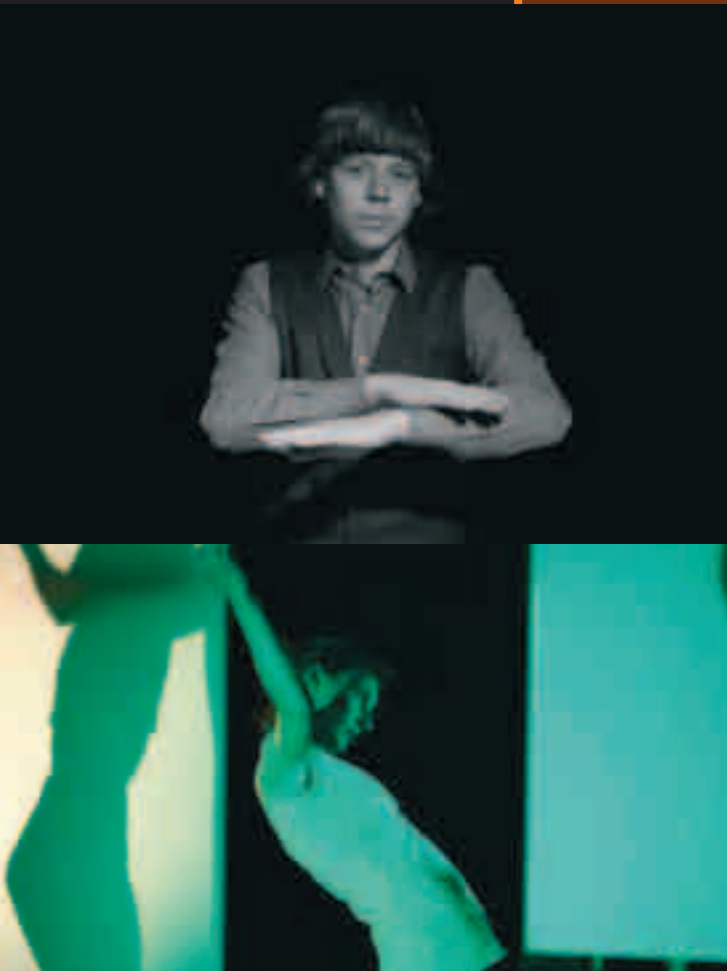
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Cover:  
Wafaa Bilal;  
Ajrass



## From Dusk Till Dawn

5pm Friday 19 March  
to 11am Saturday 20 March  
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

The entire evening, night and morning of Friday 19 March to Saturday 20 March, the Van Abbemuseum's directors are transferring the museum's management to the international *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution* platform.

The *From Dusk Till Dawn* event takes place in the 'Oudbouw' of the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. From Dusk Till Dawn is taking Masquerade as its theme and includes an exhibition, a performance programme and a series of lectures by twenty internationally renowned artists and thinkers, including Keren Cytter, Suchan Kinoshita, Joachim Koester, Peggy Phelan, and Lars Bang Larsen.

If I Can't Dance is the closing act of Part 1 of *Play Van Abbe*, a programme that started November 2009 and lasted for a total of 18 months.

Van Abbemuseum  
Bilderdijklaan 10, Eindhoven  
[www.vanabbemuseum.nl](http://www.vanabbemuseum.nl)

## International Women's Week

6-14 March 2010

Events in London's Tower Hamlets

Supported by Tower Hamlets Council and Tower Hamlets Partnership

**VOICE – Votes for Women**

looking at the past and to the future

During **International Women's Week in Tower Hamlets** a diverse range of community and women's groups across the borough will be focusing their celebrations on **Women and the Vote**. Events will explore the history of women's involvement in politics – from the struggle for emancipation to 2010 – and a look at what the future holds. The underlying aim of the events will be to inspire those unheard women's voices in our communities to be heard and encourage women to use their vote.

**EVENT HIGHLIGHT: THURSDAY 11 MARCH  
Inspirational Women**

**John Scurr Community Centre**  
1a Bekesbourne Street, Limehouse  
10am-2pm FREE

Exhibition of photography by local women about Julia Scurr, Sylvia Pankhurst and the Suffragettes and a video about the major historical events that took place locally – 'Poplar Rates Rebellion' 1921, 'Battle of Cable Street' 1936 – and made positive changes. From 12noon-2pm local Councillors Denise Jones & Rachael Saunders will attend and lead a panel discussion on the importance of voting.

The *International Women's Week* programme is co-ordinated for the *London Borough of Tower Hamlets* by *Alternative Arts*. For the full event programme, visit: [www.alternativearts.co.uk](http://www.alternativearts.co.uk)

[UNIVERSALCOLOURS.ORG](http://UNIVERSALCOLOURS.ORG)

## Peeping Tom

Group exhibition curated by Keith Coventry



Peeping Tom was a late addition to the 11<sup>th</sup> century tale of Lady Godiva and her powerful husband, Leofric, Earl of Mercia. Peeping Tom was defined in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as "a curious prying fellow" and that definition is analogous with the idea of an artist today as someone who looks where others overlook or dismiss.

The exhibition brings together many small works by various artists. Assembled together the works present a view into the multifarious interests of the artists involved - a spectacle for the scopophiliac.

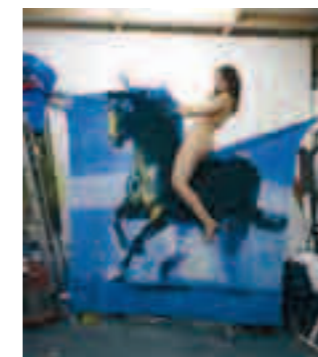


Cordella Donohoe

Sophy Rickett

Darren Coffield

Peeping Tom  
Group Exhibition  
18 February  
– 28 March 2010  
Curated by Keith Coventry  
Open Wednesday – Sunday  
12.00 – 18.00  
45 Vyner Street  
London E2 9DQ  
[www.vegasgallery.co.uk](http://www.vegasgallery.co.uk)  
T: +44 (0) 2030225850



UNIVERSAL COLOURS 1 / 2010

## Athens World Fine Art Fair

13 – 15 November 2010  
Gala Opening 12 November 2010  
The Zappeion Palace, Athens



Athens World Fine Art Fair Ltd. and ArtCultureStudio are pleased to announce that the first Athens World Fine Art Fair will take place from November 12th to November 15th 2010 in Athens, at the impressive Zappeion Palace.

Following the success of the Moscow World Fine Art Fair and of the Salzburg World Fine Art Fair, ArtCultureStudio has been commissioned by AWFAF to manage this prestigious event. This fair will bring to the city

that gave birth to Phidias and Ictinos, the artists and creators of the Parthenon, renowned galleries, jewelers and major antique dealers from around the world, as well as major auction houses.

In the last few years Athens has become a glamorous, vibrant capital, combining the energy and liveliness of the East with the modernity of the West. Athens has countless museums, many of them such as the Benaki Museum gifts of wealthy and cultured Greeks to their homeland. It also features the extraordinary and brand new Acropolis Museum, the work of New York based Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi, built in expectation of the return of the Parthenon marbles.

A city of some 5 million inhabitants, it is also the center of the Greek Shipping Industry, which counts among its main players such well-known international collectors as for example the Goulandris, Niarchos, Embirikos or Latsis families. The Greek shipowners control today over 20% of the world commercial fleet, which represents 1 trillion USD. Traditionally discreet, the Greeks count nevertheless among the world's most prominent collectors and are active in the art world. Collector Dakis Ioannou, founder of the DESTE foundation was recently quoted by Forbes among the Top Billionaire Art Collectors and the Theocharakis Foundation is well-known on the world art scene for its exceptional contributions.

At the crossroads between Europe, Asia and the Arab World, the AWFAF also intends to attract collectors from Russia, Asia and the Gulf, counting on the mild climate and pleasant environment to convince foreign collectors to visit the Athens World Fine Art Fair. Athens is an ideal upscale tourist destination.

For information concerning logistics, exhibitors, sponsorship or press, please contact:

Sixtine Crutchfield assisted by Vera Voitenkova  
Art Culture Studio SA, 6 Avenue Sécheron, CH 1202 Geneva  
Tel: +41 22 906 1520  
[iinfo@artculturestudio.com](mailto:iinfo@artculturestudio.com)  
[www.artculturestudio.com](http://www.artculturestudio.com)

SEVEN

## Sculptures of Edgar Degas

Until 25 April 2010  
Herakleidon Museum, Thissio, Greece

The exhibition "The Complete Sculptures of Edgar Degas" will be on show at Thissio's Herakleidon Museum until April 25th 2010. The exhibition presents all seventy-four bronze sculptures of Edgar Degas including his most important one "The Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen". These bronzes are on loan to the Museum by the M.T. Abraham Center for the Visual Arts.

All the bronze sculptures in this exhibition were cast from recently discovered plasters made from Degas' original waxes during his lifetime and with his consent. This is remarkable since all the other bronzes one can currently see in museums and elsewhere were cast from masters made after the artist's death. Therefore, the bronzes in this exhibition can be considered the original versions, and all the others the second versions of these sculptures. Thus, for the first time, it will be possible for experts, scholars and the general public to compare the artist's bronzes in the before and after states, which is almost unparalleled in the history of art. The exhibition also hosts the drawing of Edgar Degas "Horses and Riders" (1872, pencil on paper) from The George Economou Collection, Athens.

The Museum has published a special edition catalogue in three languages. The fascinating essay in this catalog by Mr. Walter Maibaum details the history of this discovery and the differences between the bronze editions. Dr. Gregory Hedberg's revealing essay focuses on Degas' most significant sculpture, "The Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen." Dr. June Hargrove's essay discusses the relationship between Edgar Degas' two and three-dimensional works so that appropriate comparisons can be made. The Museum has been selected as the organizer of this exhibition, which will travel around the world with Athens being the first stop. This exhibition will attract world interest since it is the first time Degas' sculptures will be exhibited in Greece and the first time all seventy-four of these remarkable bronzes will be presented together.

*The Herakleidon Museum is very proud to have been selected as the organizer of this travelling exhibition of these extraordinary bronzes. Our purpose is to make the works of this truly first modern sculptor available to a broader audience. On behalf of our staff and all our visitors, we would like to thank the M.T. Abraham Center for the Visual Arts for lending us its collection of these wonderful bronzes by Edgar Degas. We would also thank Mr. Maibaum and his wife Mrs. Carol Conn of The Degas Sculpture Project Ltd for giving us the opportunity to pay tribute to a man about whom Pierre-Auguste Renoir said, when comparing him to his contemporary, Auguste Rodin, that Degas "is the greatest living sculptor."*

Paul and Belinda Fyros, Founders, Herakleidon Museum

Herakleidon  
Herakleidon 16, Thissio, Greece  
[www.herakleidon.com](http://www.herakleidon.com)

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## Aluminium in Tribal Arts

Design Museum, Helsinki  
Until 9 May 2010



Aluminium in Tribal Arts is the first exhibition ever organized out of the objects in Giorgio Vigna's extensive private collection. Italian Giorgio Vigna is known as jewellery designer, artist and re-searcher. The birth of his collection has been like a long and fascinating journey about Vigna himself tells in the following.

Design Museum  
Korkeavuorenkatu 23, Helsinki  
[www.designmuseum.fi](http://www.designmuseum.fi)

[www.designmuseum.fi](http://www.designmuseum.fi)

## 2010 Urban Artist Initiative winner



Sonjje Feliciano Solomon has won one of the 2009/10 Urban Artist Initiative/NYC fellowships. Mrs. Solomon is a mixed media artist who creates free standing sculptures from organza and thread as well as two dimensional wall works using monofilament and mirrored acrylic.

Her most recent creations entitled "cloudscapes" appeared at ARTPRIZE in Grand Rapids, Michigan where it placed in the top twenty five. The Urban Artist Initiative/NYC (UAI/NYC) is a grants program for NYC artists of all disciplines who self-define as artists of color. In the past two grant cycles, the program has given over \$200,000 to over 100 talented individual artists living in New York City.

Source: [www.causeycontemporary.com](http://www.causeycontemporary.com)

UNIVERSAL COLOURS 1 / 2010

## Wooden Churches

in the Russian North  
10 March to 30 May 2010  
Museum Of Finnish Architecture



Old postcards made the English photographer Richard Davies travel to northern Russia in 2002 to find out what was left of the wooden churches depicted in the cards. The churches had been photographed by the Russian artist Ivan Bilibin in 1902-04, and already then the photographer was worried about their condition.

Davies followed Bilibin's footsteps on several travels in successive years. Many churches had been lost and many were threatened by destruction. Still,



much was left to celebrate. The integrity between the landscape and the architecture was as striking as before, the simple log cabin construction with extravagant decorations was just as startling, and even in decay these churches had a spiritual presence commanding respect. With his pictures Davies wishes to help preserve this extraordinary cultural heritage.

Museum of Finnish Architecture  
Kasarmikatu 24, Helsinki  
[www.mfa.fi](http://www.mfa.fi)

NINE



## Famask



After more than a year of searching how to approach the issue of faces/masks, EU-MAN member Burhan Sabir concluded that he should blend them and present his long-established theory as "Famask".

"Famask" will now be the title of his forthcoming exhibition that will hopefully be shown during the summer later this year. Sabir has not yet decided on where to exhibit his new works but he hopes that an interested gallery or venue will invite him to show and present his own theory about the "Famask".

If you are interested, then please email us at [info@eu-man.org](mailto:info@eu-man.org)



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## Wafaa Bilal: Agent Intellect

January 21 - April 4, 2010  
Curated by Odin Cathcart

The Helen Day Art Center in Stowe, Vermont will feature a major solo show by Wafaa Bilal – "Agent Intellect" -- opening January 21, 2010 through April 4. The exhibition features Domestic Tension Redux, a recreation of Bilal's award winning 2007 performance piece, and Virtual Jihadi, which stirred controversy last year after it was censored by the city of Troy, NY and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

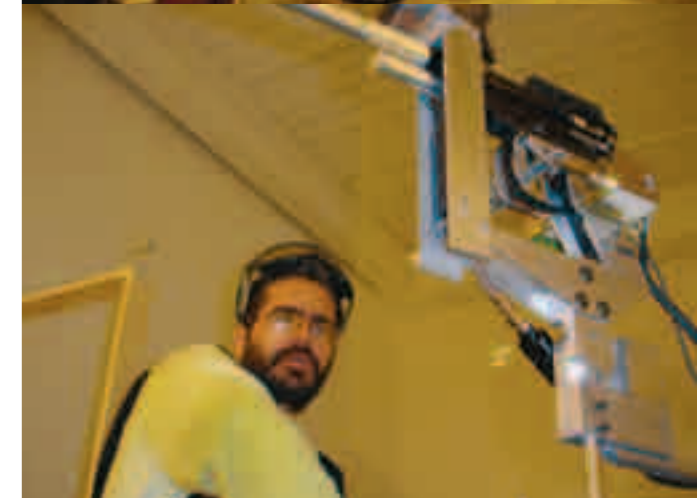
The Helen Day Art Center will also feature Ashes, a series of five large format photographs based on models Bilal constructed of scenes from the Iraq war. One of the models, Samarra, will also be exhibited. Additionally the show includes a site-specific installation titled Mighaisil (Morgue), a contemplative space created to consider death, violence and place. This is the first time these works have ever been displayed together providing a comprehensive understanding of Bilal's career since 2007.

In 2004 Wafaa Bilal's brother Haji was killed by a Predator drone attack in Al Kufa, Iraq. The drone was guided by a pilot stationed over 7,000 miles away in the western U.S. At the time Wafaa was living and working in Chicago, in what he refers to as the "comfort zone." The loss of his brother forced Bilal to consider his own personal relationship to his new home, America and his birth country Iraq as well as the relationships we now have between technology and war.

Bilal himself fled Iraq in 1992 and spent two years in a refugee camp in Saudi Arabia before emigrating to the U.S. Haji's death was the genesis of the work Domestic Tension (2007) a thirty day performance art piece where Bilal occupied a gallery for 30 days, 24/7 at the mercy of an automated paintball canon remotely controlled by anonymous internet users. Domestic Tension used performance art to focus our attention on the disparity between our "comfort zone" here in America and the "conflict zone" of Iraq by allowing individuals access to violence through a virtual experience.

What are the differences between aesthetic pleasure and aesthetic pain? How does technology desensitize us to violence? How can we reconnect with the universally shared experience of the human condition? What strategies are available to empathize with other cultures with whom we are at war.

*Photo credits: (All images courtesy of the artist) L to R: Artist rendering of Mighaisil (Morgue) 2009, dimensions variable; documentary photo of Domestic Tension art performance, Chicago, IL, 2007; Ashes: Cell, 40 x 60" archival inkjet print mounted on diebond, 2009. [www.wafaabilal.com](http://www.wafaabilal.com)*



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00101 Helsinki, Finland  
+358 (0) 40 554 6896

**LONDON OFFICE**  
27 Imperial Court, Empire Way  
HA9 0RS, London, UK  
Office: +44 (0)208 7952972  
Mobile: +44 (0)7728 024968

# Rose Issa Projects

By Amir Khatib

London is a city full of opportunities. It is a city where the people of the world live and work together without the radical feeling of nationality or religion, and the people who live here are, to a certain extent, living in harmony. London is an Arabian city, an African city, an American city, an Asian city and, of course, a European city and the English capital.

The cultural life of this city is something that no one can believe and no one can imagine. How the cultural authorities can organise the time, money and venues for all of these huge cultural events continuously happening is beyond my comprehension. It is huge by all means and it gives everybody almost an equal chance to present their culture.

Thousands of cultural projects are implemented in this city every year, with hundreds of organisations being funded and surviving. If I was the city's cultural policy maker then I would manage nothing because the management of the cultural life demands a staff of numerous intellectual people with a remarkable knowledge in all things. Besides that, there are many private cultural projects, private art projects and dozens of institutes serving both art and the artists in this expansive city.

One of these extraordinary projects is the Rose Issa Projects, which is organised by a very successful lady who has built her career from a very early age and is now the subject of our focus this issue. Rose is an artist who has managed throughout her life to dedicate herself to achieving her goals through heart, mind and willingness. For almost years she has worked in the field of curation, with her attention focusing upon Arab and Iranian Art; she has also promoted many other types of art and she is interested in all ethnic art, but her heart, or so it seems, remains attached to art from the Middle East.

Her projects are based in London, although she has had a lot of successful projects elsewhere across the globe. However, she chose this city to be her home, her inspirational land, her centre of thinking, and the relationship between her and London is one of mystery. Like almost all Londoners, she loves the city but Rose's love is slightly different to the traditional feeling people have: she loves to give this city more than it can take from her.



Mohamed Elshai

She gives colour to this city, she gives her age, her creation and her innovative career to the spirit of the city because she believes that this city has a spirit other than the one we all know. This city lives by the spirit of all - it has a Christian spirit, a Buddhist spirit, a Muslim spirit, a Judean spirit, a Hindi spirit and I even feel the ancient spirits of Greece and Rome. It is not strange to say that she lives by the spirit of all.

Rose immediately realised this collective spirit and she has worked on it ever since. Her projects are definitely qualitative projects because her experience does not allow her to work with something non-professional, so when she curates an exhibition, for

instance, she knows exactly what to do and from whom she chooses the piece of art. She has worked in many cities, including Moscow, Paris, New York, Amman and Dubai, and she has long worked in Visual Art, Contemporary Art and even the Cinema as well.

Rose Issa has served as guest curator for numerous private and public institutions, including Tate Britain, London (2008); the European Parliament (2008); the State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow (2007); the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (2007); ING Bank, Geneva (2007); the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2006); the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin (2004); the Contemporary Cultural Centre, Barcelona (2003); Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (2002-3), Germany; Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam (1996-1997); the Barbican Art Centre, London (2001, 1995); and the Leighton House Museum, London, which has been ongoing since 1992.

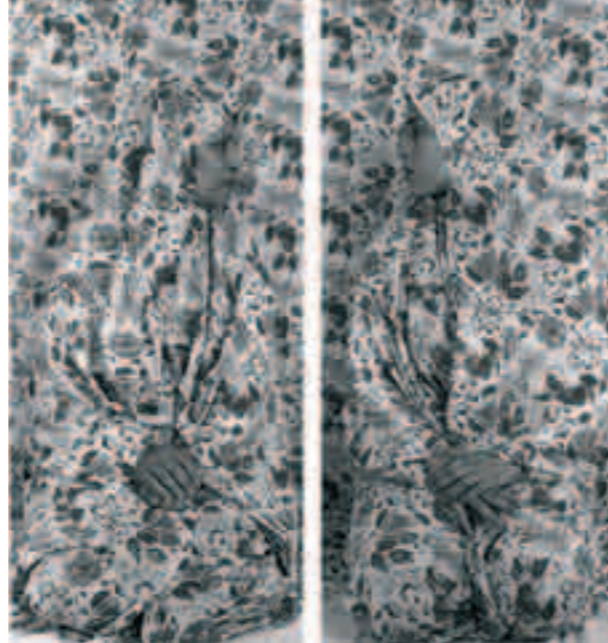
She also advises public and private art institutions on their loans and acquisitions of contemporary artworks from the Middle East, including the British Museum; the Imperial War Museum; the Museum of Mankind; the Victoria and Albert Museum; the National Museums of Scotland; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Smithsonian Institution (Sackler/Freer Gallery and National Museum of African Arts); the World Bank, Washington, D.C.; and the National Gallery of Jordan. She was a jury member for the National Pavillions at the 50th Venice

Biennale in 2003 and for the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam, in 2006.

In addition, she has collaborated with the Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane, Australia (2009); Paul Klee Museum, Bern (2009); and Belvedere Museum, Vienna (2009). She is also the Director of Beyond Art Production Ltd., which publishes many of her exhibition catalogues.

She works with known Masters from the Arab world and Iran, in both the field of visual arts and cinema, and she has worked with

Shadi Ghadririan



Arwa Abouon

Abbas Kiarostami, one of the best Iranian film directors, whose work I love watching and whom I met in Finland a few years ago. I love his 1974 film *The Traveller* and believe he directs his films on a slow fire. Many people share my love of his films around the world and many film critics have written that he is the real representative of Iran now. It is no wonder then that Rosa cooperates with him and also presents his photography works, which are no less wonderful than his films.

Rosa has connections with many personalities in today's art world, among which are Alaleh Alamir, Monir Farmanfarmanian, Bita Ghazalyagh, Susan Hefuna and Adam Henein. In 1982 Rose launched the first-ever Arab Film Festival in Paris

and worked with the Delegations Etrangères at the Cannes Film Festival between 1983 and 1985.

For a further 26 years, until 2008, she curated the Arab and Iranian film seasons in Britain and abroad. She was special advisor to the Berlinale (2003-2007); the International Rotterdam Film Festival (1996-2002); the London International Film Festival (1987-2003); and the British Film Institute (1988-1995). She has also curated Arab and Iranian film seasons at the National Film Theatre ("Hollywood on the Nile" in 2003; "Art and Life: The New Iranian Cinema" in 1999 and the "First Arab Film Festival" in 1987); the Barbican ("Unveiled Lives: Women and Iranian Cinema" in 2001 and "Melodramas, Comedies, and Mysteries: North African Film" in 1995).

In addition, she has curated a season of Iranian films for Britain's Channel 4 in 2005 and collaborated with them on "Cinema Iran", a series of documentaries on Iranian cinema. She also realised the documentary "Moving Pictures: Tunisian Women Film Directors" for BBC2 TV in 1995.

Rose has had many different interesting exhibitions and more are planned for the future. *Universal Colours* and EU-MAN wish her

even more success in her future projects that will continue to present the different people who represent art with differing influences from around the world.

Finally, Rose's projects are just like our projects here at EU-MAN in which we work for our existence in this world of art that becomes increasingly focused every day. Her works are similar to EU-MAN projects because they want to represent art and contemporary art from the other side of the world and they represent the hybrid culture of, what I like to term, the Third Culture.

Bita Ghazalyagh



Malekeh Nayini



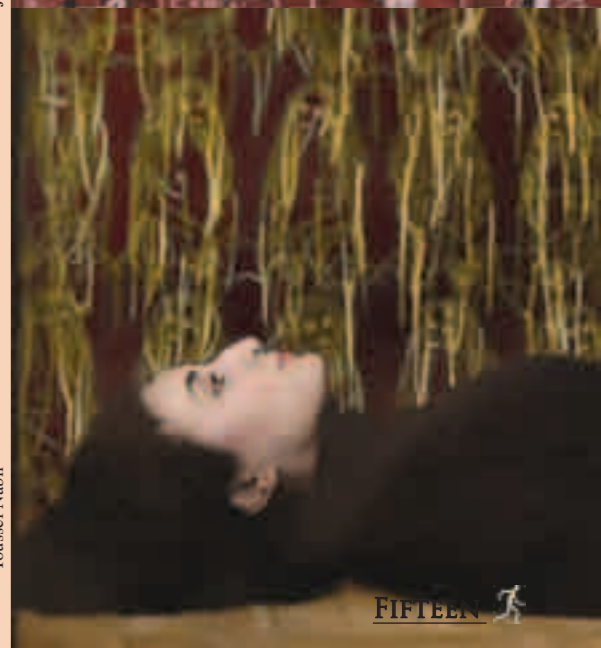
Parastou Forouhar



Jean-Marc Nahas



Youssef Nabil





*Photographs represent something.  
This is true, but they do not  
represent the same thing that I see.*  
(Wafaa Bilal)

# Bilal's New Photo- synthesis

By Ali Najjar

Translated by Alaa Juma

**N**OT EVEN IN THE MIND OF THE ANDALUSIAN astronomer poet aviator, Abbas Ibn Firnas, born in 810, who dreamt of flying with wings of feathers above the walls of his prison, did it occur to him that humans would invent a machine that could fly him to the ends of the earth. He fell into the sea and sank, though it occurred merely within a dream. Now that hypothetical stroll into every space of our planet or what we can imagine are all the spaces of the universe, is in a converse reality achieved by digital technology and its media.

Although the area of construction and artistic expression which entice us with their aesthetic appeal are created within the field of visual arts, they are also actively contributing to the discussion about global politics, particularly of the political decision-making authority and its opposition. We have, for instance in the work of *Foundation*, the new stage movie (2) of America, under the banner of "we are the front line in order to build a fair America", a new face of the American media, set up for the production of documentary films that contrast to the mainstream media, which promotes war and the interests of its makers. *Foundation* also seeks to raise awareness of social justice issues through the production of documentary films broadcast via the Internet.

And what has been produced by the Iraqi artist Wafaa Bilal is not far in its intent from the aims of the group *Foundation* which set the stage for this form of expression. What sets it apart is its personal content, based on the profoundly affecting experiences and personal injuries which he suffered within the greater collective tragedy of war.

Video art can be said to have cancelled out the need for traditional exhibition spaces, by becoming digital space which involves the viewer in a network of optical images that engage him or her in a playful, exciting, yet safe interface, the interactive video game. One of the main objectives of video art is to transform the normally passive experience of viewing art into active participation and in this it is incredibly successful.

In this, fact and fantasy derive their creative capacity from the artist's ideas and their interaction, the possibilities of computer software are boundless, depending on the artist's technical grasp of it. The performance of these programs to allow the artists to draw the Computer Generated Images (CGI) of their visions in the forms that they want, has made this a hugely popular area of entertainment growth. Many might say this is the way of future art and video technology has freed modernist artists from their personal effects, since every new video film has different characteristics which correspond to the different ideas that produce them without the quirks of individual strokes and human marks. This is what we observe in the products of the artist Bilal, and his installation in 2007, which was inflammatory to many. He would have liked to call it *Shoot an Iraqi*, but the organizer of the exhibition (Vlevel Celery 3, in Chicago) found that the name was too flagrantly political and suggested another less controversial name, *Domestic Tension*. For *Domestic Tension* or *Shoot an Iraqi* the artist was inspired by Internet hunting technology, invented in Texas by John Lockout to hunt animals from a distance. This was later denounced and outlawed there. The live ammunition was replaced later through the Internet with coloured virtual balls. Nonetheless, the killing of human beings is still going on by remotely piloted aircraft and other digital technologies in war zones.

Bilal confined himself for 42 days in a room built in the gallery space, furnished with a bed, a modest desktop computer and a plastic barricade. He designed a remote cannon control which he released onto the Internet as an interactive system that enabled users to log on and use the gun and shoot at him from all directions, firing real balls which contained gelatines and yellow dye. Also, over the duration of his confinement, people could interact with him through a live web-cam and chat room via the internet, transforming the virtual experience into a very real one. This gave participants opportunities to humiliate and discredit him, or to provide positive moral support. The room became intolerable from the paint debris long before the end of his self imposed time-period. It represented a virtual killing of himself and destruction of his personal space, the place of exhibition, which increased his tension and anxiety and fuelled the psychological suffering he was experiencing with greater intensity day by day. He was effectively undone by his mind's inability to disengage the game from the reality of his experience, and by contemplating the sinister motives of the participants.

This reminds me of our own suffering during the bombing of Baghdad for forty days in the first Gulf War of 1991. At that time the sky was ablaze and our sleeping rooms were rocked by the violent blasts. We did not know our destiny and real terror invaded our small spaces, as Bilal clearly understood. His idea was not a trivial



experiment in inducing terror, or a mere test of his endurance, but was inspired by the suffering of his family and his own personal tragedy, and aimed to question the depersonalisation of killing by those who controlled the aircraft and pushed the buttons to deploy the remote bombs. His brother was killed during an air raid by a remotely piloted U.S. aircraft in 2004 in his hometown of Kufa in Iraq, and a short time after that his father was killed. He was a survivor of the Iraqi wars and a fugitive from Iraq after the uprising in 1991 and fled to the refugee camps in the Arabian Peninsula. The survivor who lost his father and brother in the war was supposed to save them, but as in all wars, humans are subjected to brute behaviour and discover the contradictions within themselves, the self-interest beside the altruism. He was unable to fulfil his duty as protector and had to endure that guilt on top of his loss.

Over the period of his stay in his bunker he received 80 million online visitors and was shot at with 65000 rounds, by participants from 136 countries. He achieved a much larger *virtual* international group of attackers than the actual coalition of nations that fought Iraq in the last two

wars. Virtual electronic war games tap into our instinctive lust and need for violence inherited from the stone age hunters, but through digital entertainment systems, (X Box, Playstation and Wii) and the digital media they can bypass the actual realities of war and place gamers in a space of seeming harmless fantasy. In the game *Personal Phantom Haunting*, the identity of the main warrior is not shown, only his gun and whatever he shoots. These games may be a form of common culture for young people, but may also desensitise them in such a way as to prepare them for the expectation and inevitability of war. What such games will mean to youngsters will be in direct correlation with the realities of their lives.

Simplistic games circulated by large numbers of children in conflict zones include those that depict children like themselves dealing with daily events in the middle of a war. In Bilal's case, in his game, he has unconsciously repeated his experience, by once again surviving the disasters of war and its aftermath. The implications of this are that motives are ambiguous, whether the artist's or those of the politically driven, including those of the U.N. Already the war





has scarred his life by ending the lives of some members of his family, and while it touches his heart, he madly revisits the passion of his sorrow through a computer game and its virtual tools. This is remarkably powerful technology that can imitate experience and transform the virtual into the real, and perhaps the most overt symbol of this transmogrification is the extra scar he received to add to his earlier injuries, not to mention the wounds of isolation and the sense of absurdity of being hunted remotely, 21<sup>st</sup> Century style, like an animal for fun, just as the remote pilots might have felt when they targeted his brother and father.

As his installation took place he invited offers to market his concept for a digital version of the game, to be played via the Internet solely, whose aim would be to provide a dominant killing role or be subjected to the ordeal of the victim. From this, gamers would draw their own personal conclusion that would bring them to denounce remote warfare and warfare gaming, in the name of peace. All he got was live chat about the game's progress and notes on how he could expand the art work, and it was not possible for him to further engage the participants. This work has achieved fame for the artist and his other less-well known work of mixed Multi Media is now being studied. He has divided his performances between technical works of a political nature, and fantasy works exploring the art work of previous eras. In these he creates places in which he is the first occupant, such as his controversial video game *The Night of Bush Being Captured or A Virtual Jihad* in 2008, (see *YouTube*), an overturned version of *The Night of Saddam's Capture* by al-Qaeda, which includes an Al-Qaeda soundtrack, and was put together as a reaction to the killing of Saddam's family after the death of his brother, and has been used as a recruitment tool. This film is packed with mini-documentaries about the characters in the new Iraqi state, and media incidents involving the former U.S. President, and asks questions about the symbols of national authority. It attempts to circumvent the stereotypical terrorist assumptions created by the media, and to spark a debate about the American overseas projects in Iraq and Afghanistan. Underlying this, there is an assumption that there is a project to be completed in the artist finding his role in America.

In 2009 he exhibited in the Beirut Centre for the Arts alongside other artists. As the video

game transformed the concepts of war which it had intended to explore into absurdity and fun, Bilal decided to meet the absurd with further absurdity, by deleting the circular targets and the symbols of war. Without any guidance of whom, what or where to shoot, participants could be observed making their own narratives up to carry out the shootings, thus allowing the artist to explore the roots of violence and terrorism in one of its constituent forms.

Bilal is working within a secular culture trying to break his own taboos, in search of the salvation of humanity and his own personal salvation. His work is the product of the interaction of the artist's creative mind and his digital prowess, and allows him to produce almost multi-dimensional spaces enabling the viewer to roam through the mysterious images and energetic visualisations of political disasters. The gamer participates in these follies and sins, thus raising both moral indignation and primitive lusts, i.e. contradictory desires.

Finally, I believe that these two works do not represent the full range of this artist's talent, and he will go on to produce works of gravity. The character of this young Iraqi in the U.S. has been shaped by the convergences of political and personal events of his life, and like many of the older generation of migrant Iraqi artists, he has found a unique form of expression that helps to unite the conflicting emotions and ideas brought about by the disruption and degradation of wars and economic embargoes on his early life and the scars it left. He finds expression through his creative ability and the contemporary techniques he uses, especially digital imagery. There is both pain and intellectual exploration within the art, serving a dual purpose in the artist's life. For the onlooker there is a glimpse of the workings of war on the imagination.

*Wafaa Bilal was born in the city of Kufa, Iraq in 1966. After his escape from Iraq in 1991, via Kuwait and the desert camp for refugees in the Arabian Peninsula, he arrived in the United States the following year. He began studying art in 2001 in Chicago. He is now an Assistant Professor in the Department of Photography at the University of New York, Albany, New York.*



THEME

THEME

# IS DIGITAL ART REALLY ART?

By Yousif Najaf

**CAN DIGITAL ART BE INCLUDED** in the visual arts? Can this new medium really be considered a form of art or is it too early to label this type of expression “art”? We have long learned that “the human is the enemy of what she/he does not know” and that everything new and strange can be targeted. All new innovative projects must be rejected, ignored and sometimes attacked by those who have learned to follow traditions - conservatives who do not want to enter the world of experimentation.

History has given us many great examples of great scientific, artistic or political projects, and sometimes even madness resulted in humanity’s evolution - names such as Galileo Galilei, Wassily Kandinsky and John F. Kennedy demonstrate this. Humanity throughout history has needed change and these people were able to alter history on all levels. History has also taught us whom we can call intellectual, who were against these great innovative projects from the beginning and why they could do nothing but embrace life movements for a brief time in history.

What will happen when the transparent visual dream docks with the strong electronic system’s wires? Can the nerves of the existing artist turn upon itself, seized by the gushing stream in contrast to the sense of language in all of its individuality? How can art be categorised? Digital art is a name given to an art movement that uses technology with highly developed equipment and programs, but what is the mechanism of interaction between the mental vision of the artist and the “vision” on the computer screen?

In an attempt to find a fourth dimension of the image it can be

digital art, yet the opinion of those who are fanatical about the traditions of art do not care about these new invasions and the mainstream does not consider it an art form at all. For example, the New York’s Whitney Museum of American Art, Minneapolis’s Walker Art Center and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art do not categorise digital art as an art form.

The history of art is full of these types of conflicts. We all know how the mainstream reacted when abstract, cubism, surrealism and Dadaism all came in to existence and now it seems that it is the turn of digital art to go through the same experience before becoming a quantum Contemporary Art. Every movement, renewal or change in the fine arts was counteracted by a gushing stream of opposition from the classical, yet throughout history we will not find a movement or its dedicated artists who didn’t have to endure prejudice and criticism. Vincent van Gogh, Paul

Cézanne and Claude Monet are among just a few who eventually became leaders of art movements that still thrive today.

**“An attempt to find a fourth dimension of the image it can be digital art.”**

Debbie Rose Myers, MFA, EdS, a graphic designer and multimedia instructor at Florida’s Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, describes her rich experience in digital art, “When I started to draw paintings on the computer, I faced a lot of harsh criticism from my fellow artists and academics about the credibility of this art and its importance to support the contemporary art movement. Most of them detracted from the value of this work at the technical and creative levels, particularly classical

artists, but it took a lot of time and effort from me to convince them that digital art is an art and has exceptional value. The computer is an artistic tool that adds a qualitative value to it and it is like the camera some century ago when it came as value added not a negative competitor.”

Another definition that sheds further light on the mechanisms of digital art states that it is simply art

that uses the computer as a tool. Artist Robert Burger, a professor of art at the University of Pennsylvania, believes that an artist with the talent and knowledge of the computer program Photoshop can develop an infinite configuration of paintings in which they can combine artistic vision. He further adds, “I am one of the most ardent artists via the computer and know how much time and effort is required to create paintings, but they still manage to stimulate the human mind.”



THEME

THEME

# VIRTUA- LISING DIGITAL ART

By Thanos Kalamidas

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF *Universal Colours* I wrote an article entitled “The evolution of the brushes” that stated digital art is just like any other form of art, with the only difference being that your main tool is a computer and its software. However, what doesn’t change from any other form of art is the inspiration, the motivation and the beauty of the human mind.

In that article I also explained that if somebody doesn’t have what many call ‘talent’, the creations are no different from a child’s scribbling. They are not inspirational or communicative; they are not art! Instead of attempting to define digital art as a form of art why don’t we try returning to basics and attempt to define art. So, what is art?

According to any encyclopaedia, ‘art’ is the process or product of deliberately arranging elements in a way that appeals to

the senses or emotions. It encompasses a diverse range of human activities, creations, and modes of expression, including music, literature, film, sculpture, and paintings among others.

Art is a way to communicate beyond the five basic senses or even with all the senses simultaneously. I use the phrase “beyond the five basic senses” for the simple reason that we all agree that art communicates with the Aristotelian soul, which is beyond any sense and can be explained only through

philosophy. Art, as a representation of human feelings or a communicator, has deep roots in the philosophy of Aristotle, while, according to Richard Wollheim, the nature of art is “one of the most elusive of the traditional problems of human culture”.

Humanity, throughout history, has used the many forms of art to communicate and express, from the prehistoric cave drawings and the rhythmic drum on the rocks to advanced cinematographic techniques, Ioannis Xenakis’s improvisations on the art of sound and his mathematical models applying to music.

Oddly, all of these are defined as art despite the fact that from the Homo

sapiens drumming on rocks we have moved on to Xenakis’s synthesisers, and from the cave drawings that animated everyday life of the time we have moved on to James Cameron’s

**“art is the process of deliberately arranging elements in a way that appeals to the senses or emotions.”**

alien worlds. It’s all forms of art that we embrace and then reward by classing them as classics - Ioannis Xenakis is included in the classics and Alfred Hitchcock’s films are classics; and they are all digital.

And then we have Salvador Dalí. Who hasn’t seen the surrealistic experiments of the great master with cinema and photography? Dalí’s work was the quintessence of visual art and

I have the feeling that if computers had been available while he was alive then Dalí would have been one of the pioneers of digital art.

The visual arts are a class of art forms, including painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking and others, that focus on the creation of works that are primarily visual in nature. Visual arts that produce three-dimensional objects, such as sculpture and architecture, are dealt with in plastic arts. The current usage of visual arts includes fine arts, as well as crafts.

However, visual arts include the following forms: architecture, arts and crafts, asemic writing, collage, comics, conceptual art, decollage, decorative art, design, drawing, film, found art, graffiti, illustration, concept art, installation art, mail art, mixed media, painting, photography, printmaking, etching, lithography, screen-printing, sculpture, typography and video art. Please can somebody tell me why we are still arguing whether digital art is a form of art or not?

Instead of arguing about issues that divert us from reality, we should study just what digital art has to offer and try to make the most of it. Explore the side effects of the digital world. Discover the virtual reality that digital art can introduce to us.

Yet... we need to return to basics. Why create art in the first place? Do not become an artist if you want to be rich and famous. You are bound to be disappointed, and you will be creating art for the wrong reasons - the will to become rich and famous will manipulate the creations. Art is a form of communication and expression, so the virtual world that accompanies digital art is a superb chance to reach out to a wider audience and communicate and share. Here, of course, I'm talking about the Internet.

Jackson Pollack once said that he wanted to create an art that was "simple and direct". This is exactly one of the things digital art has to offer – remember, I always refer to digital art and not to popular art with computers. Finally, returning to my last article, digital art is here to stay and I believe that in years to come it will dominate the art scene in many ways.

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*Classes*

- There are two classes in the contest:
1. Children aged 7 to 13
  2. Youth and adults 14 years and older

*Dance categories*

African dances, Asian dances, Dances from the Pacific Islands and Australia, Arabic dances, European dances, American dances

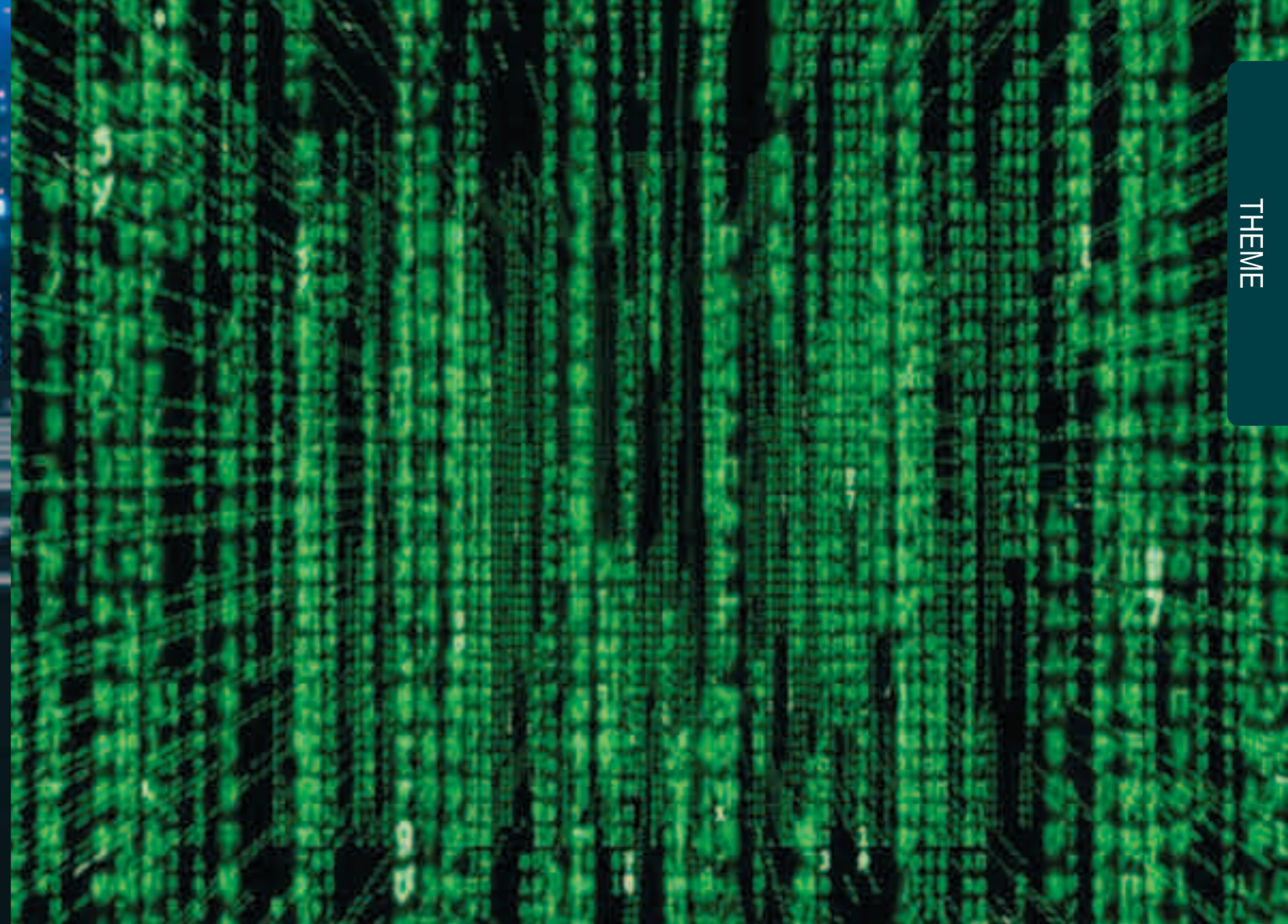
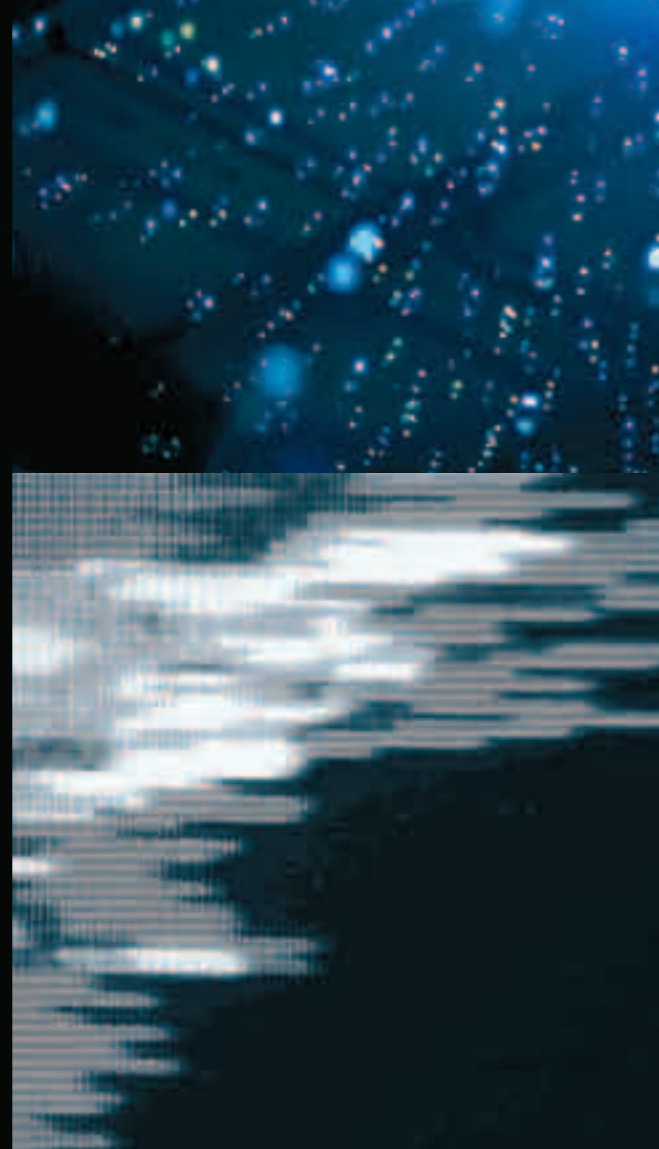
*Please note!*

Factors such as the participant's nationality and ethnic background do not play a role in the selection of the category. It's the talent and zest that matter!

For example, If you are originally from Bulgaria but love African music and dance, you are free to enter the African dance category. You can also perform a dance that you have created yourself, based on the musical tradition of a specific continent.

More information: Kitari Mayele,  
tel. 050-412 0481, [kitari.mayele@hel.fi](mailto:kitari.mayele@hel.fi)  
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# SENSE, MEMORY AND MEDIA

By Scott Weiland

*Presented to The Media Ecology  
Association at NYU, June 2001*  
[www.digitalartsource.com](http://www.digitalartsource.com)

AT A TIME WHEN ART MADE with digital media is everywhere, the discourse for describing its qualities has yet to be firmly established. The evolution and history of new media art has recently been well grounded, but further description of the moment of creation and reception of its effect, and a conceptual framework defining the distinct qualities of that effect are necessary to advances in its critical analysis.

This analysis hinges on the identification of three types of aesthetic experience in relation to the challenges they hold for both the artist and the viewer: these are the digital effect, the interactive and the immersive. The aesthetic sensibility of the artist and viewer is in question in the discussion of these three qualities. Aesthetic sensibility, in this context, is one's ability to perceive and interpret phenomena, and with the benefit of memory form a judgement within a given environment.

The digital effect, the interactive and the immersive have a specific relation to the aesthetic sensibility

of both artist and viewer. This relationship, throughout this analysis, is based upon the assumption that the media employed by the artist conveys the narrative of its structure beyond the resonance of the narrative of its content and that this structural effect must be considered by the artist. A second and important assumption here is that one would always want to be able to engage their aesthetic sensibility in relation to an artwork at the very moment of perception, not at some undetermined and unmediated time after the work is no longer being experienced.

Within a basic framework of memory, the limitations of aesthetic sensibility can be understood. Our senses take in stimuli, enter them into working memory and in the course of reflection, our long-term memory is engaged and we form a response to what we perceive. We will see that through the digital effect, the interactive and the immersive, the function of memory in the creation and reception of digital art influences the quality of intent and the quality perceived.

A work of art is defined as being a digital effect if the work is merely an effect without interactive or immersive qualities. The digital effect is relevant in that the viewer's aesthetic sensibility is not inhibited by the effect. The viewer of

a work characterised as digital effect has full access to their reflective faculties and hence have full access to their aesthetic sensibility.

**“a work of art is defined as being a digital effect if the work is merely an effect without interactive or immersive qualities.”**

Interactive works made with digital media are defined by the participation of the viewer in the works unfolding and while engaging in varying degrees are not fully immersive art works. The interactive can be as non-immersive as a website and as nearly immersive as an

interactive installation that surrounds the viewer. In each of the varying degrees of interactivity, the viewer can be described as more or less able to engage their aesthetic sensibility.

The immersive is the most problematic scenario in this model and is understood to overwhelm the aesthetic sensibility of both the viewer of such works and the artist or designer creating within an immersive environment. That is, within immersive environments the aesthetic sensibility cannot be engaged due to the multivariate and constant stimuli entering working memory. Without the ability to reflect, the viewer's perception is continuously structured by the totalising environment. Memory is read-only in this case and interpretive subjectivity is not possible.

While interactivity is currently the hallmark of digital art, immersive environments will become more common forms of expression as the technology is further adopted. In fact, artists and designers are currently experimenting with creative and practical environments which are immersive. The same problems are relevant to both the artist and designer who create within an immersive environment. That is, the interpretive interplay and contemplative adaptation inherent within typical art and design scenarios is impeded within the closed loop of the total immersive environment. The assumption is that the immersive design environment would allow for nothing other than the replication of the media structure - a resemblance of the immersive environment.

Yet, just short of virtual reality are the augmented reality systems that are being used for military simulations and construction industry scenarios. Augmented reality systems allow the viewer or creator a kind of "straddled" immersion. Through the head mounted display, the participant sees both the simulation and the temporal world. While it is clear that immersive environments do not allow for reference to anything but their own vacuum, the notion of augmentation is resonant in its application to the digital effect, the interactive and the immersive.

Augmentation marked the beginning of many of the paradigms we experience today in new media. Nearly 40 years ago, Dr. Douglas C. Engelbart envisioned the role of computers that we take for granted today and his determination to "augment the human intellect", resulted in the creation of such prototypes as the first networked workstations, hypertext, the mouse and the Augmentation Research Centre - he launched a series of evolutions of "Automated External Symbol Manipulation".

The augmentation of human intellect is in fact another way of expressing the goal of art through the stimulation of the viewer's interpretive subjectivity. The act of interpretation while viewing art is the foundation of enlightened ethical judgement outside of aesthetics, formulated recently by Eileen Scarry in her book *On Beauty and Being Just*. Augmentation, as set out by Dr. Engelbart, is cast here as the ethics of augmentation for the artist creating within highly structured media and as such is a notion of media ecology within fine art.

If the artist inherits a structured media effect and merely organises, rather than augmenting the effect, the work becomes a mere aesthetic expression; such as the arrangements made by an interior designer of furniture and fixtures designed by others. Yet,

often the most poignant works within digital media are those which, within the context of their predetermined structure, present the augmentation of that structure as the framework for meaning.

This is interpreted as the aesthetic of augmentation and can be seen throughout modern and contemporary art history in varying forms and degrees. Much of the conceptual art of the seventies elaborates and extends Engelbart's notions. Within music the aesthetic of augmentation has been expressed from Arnold Schoenberg's 12-tone system through the minimalism of Philip Glass to Caribbean dub, and eventually the old and the new school of rap and hip-hop. The web has held out as a natural home for the aesthetics of augmentation and, given the slow crawl towards universal broadband, it should remain the domain of Jodi, Netochka Nezvanova, MEZ and others, where the art resides in the takeover and augmentation of your ability to use the media in a normal way.

And so, augmentation is a strategy that enables interpretation and interpretation is fundamentally an act of media ecology. The analysis of the qualities of digital art and the arrival at an ethics and aesthetics of augmentation remains however, soundly in the realm of cultural production. That is, augmentation as interpretation does not extend as a model to strategies of pedagogy. One could draw accurate parallels between this model of augmentation and the tenets of Dewey's Constructivism but augmentation is not its justification - nor is this notion prescriptive to the material content of artistic practice.

Rather, the ethics of augmentation is a means of understanding how media ecology functions in a climate where the viewer cannot distinguish between the expressive and the canned effect. Even the digital artist who controls the language, software and hardware manifestations of their product will rarely find a viewer sophisticated enough to know that the artist structured all of the resulting effects and environments. It is practically assumed that the artist adopts and inherits structures that are created by engineers, and to their credit, engineers can certainly arrange for spectacular entertainment.

Yet, the problem facing the creation of meaning and its analysis within digital media is an understanding of how the narrative of the work is either complicit within the media's structural priorities or the narrative is of an augmentation of those priorities.

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THEME

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# DIGITAL PROBLEMS

By Ali Imran

**IT IS KNOWN THAT DIGITAL HAS** created a lot of problems and many problems came in to the world because of the spread of digital, not only in digital art, but in the whole digital world of digital graphic design, especially in the world of computer games.

If we take a look at the problems of the professional graphic designers who work and make money in designing games, we see that they face problems as strange as the age classification concerning who can and cannot purchase the digital product.

In Australia, for example, we see: *The Federal Government has now set its sights on gamers, promising to use its internet censorship regime to block websites hosting and selling video games that are not suitable for over 15 year-olds. Separately, the Communications Minister, Stephen Conroy, has been nominated by the British ISP industry for its annual "internet villain" award, competing alongside the European Parliament and French President Nicolas Sarkozy.*

Australia is the only developed country without an R18+ classification for games, meaning any titles that do not meet the MA15+ standard - such as those with excessive violence or sexual content - are simply banned from sale by the Classification Board, unless they are modified to remove the offending content.

However, at the other end of the spectrum are art researchers and art academicians who have approached the Internet as a compositional and publication/exhibition medium, while artist researchers are positioning themselves to conduct a network of digital art practices.

These networks are formed within and between academic institutions

in various locations around the world that are in the process of defining new research agendas.

One of the main goals of the TECHNE practice-based research initiative at the University of Colorado is to evolve an ongoing R&D platform focused on demonstrating the value of supporting the artist-researcher model as it relates to discovering new forms of knowledge embedded in the creation of digital art.

It is generally assumed that these new forms of knowledge, packaged as interactive digital art, will alter the way we socially engage with each other as well as educate ourselves to perform in this dynamic, computer-mediated environ-

ment. The Internet is first and foremost a globally distributed network that enables various nodal points the opportunity to bring wider visibility to successful research discoveries made at various intervals throughout the creative process.

**“digital art will alter the way we socially engage with each other as well as educate ourselves to perform in this dynamic, computer-mediated environment.”**

These discoveries can be immediately published/exhibited on the Internet and, under the right conditions, attract a network of external links that will give the research work a more significant place in the larger attention-economy.

To this effect, they are positioning themselves to take a leadership role as one of the first practice-based research initiatives at the state university level to reinvent arts education. TECHNE utilises various new media technologies

to create a collaborative learning environment for students hoping to transfer their creative and critical skills-set into the new media economy.

These students, looking to participate in a highly technologised, social process of

self-motivated personal discovery and artistic invention, are now realising that the creative process involves both online networking and real-time group collaboration.



THEME

THEME

# THE KEY-WORD IS TECHNIQUE

By Jamal Hamza

**WHEN THE COMPUTER CAME** to the architect, it saved time, effort and the result was the best shape you could get along with the most wonderful and perfect picture, plans and even calculations. When it came to medical science, you can now undertake complicated operations without great risk.

When it came to the cinema, it reduced budgets, increased Box Office receipts and allowed directors to fully realise their visions.

Computers have brought a great deal of development to mankind and they have entered almost all professions, but today we are talking about visual art.

Digital art is to magically paint upon a magical screen that can offer everything you

can or cannot imagine. It is presented upon a golden platter to the audience, whether on screen, printed or whatever choice you decide.

Digital art, or do we mean the technology, the equipment, the innovation? Digits, which really means 'numbers', so do we mean knowledge and what exactly do we then mean?

We are talking about the computer precisely; a machine

that we have seen come rapidly towards us, that becomes smaller, faster and cheaper every day, it is increasingly more developed and, because of this machine, all knowledge is spread, be it written, aural or visual - knowledge has become common to all and available to all.

Let's talk frankly about what digital art is without a computer. It is nothing, so the term should be 'digital art combined with a computer'.

The computer is really amazing in the fields of science, medicine and

technology, yet it does help artists in a very direct and clear way.

**“digital art is to magically paint upon a magical screen that can offer everything you can or cannot imagine.”**

We saw recently its abilities in cinema, in films such as *Avatar*, the Harry Potter franchise and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, each made by artists,

visual artists, who have mastered the computer's abilities and then inserted their imagination.

The keyword for this kind of art is 'technique'. If contemporary artists have no chance to learn this technique then they will have no access to this world.

If they have to remain constantly updated with that technique that develops very rapidly then the artist will face a puzzle of learning the technique and learning the themes of the art form itself.



# CROSS-WORDS AT THE TIME OF SWINE FLU

By Moustafa Al-Yassim

**FIRST CLASS BURNING ON THE LEFT** side of the morning paper, meaning that any news of the mornings paper turns your feeling equal to sadness, for the past week or for the forthcoming week. Explosion in both sides of the brain equal to the balanced terror, means we see around us on this earth that everything is reason of ugliness.

**“explosion in both sides  
of the brain equal to  
the balanced terror.”**

The ID and aids are equal to hungry cry, meaning the acknowledged identity and the all that aid you get can be on the other side of the platform of hunger. Paining on the memories colours equal to black wind of abstraction of the quantity of the storm, means it is a feeling of all that you find inside of the artist is equal to the size of the huge storm.

An oil slick in far pacific equal to thousand martyr birds and melody that never sees the light. A decision of any policy maker in a rutted corner equal to be a professional dice ion a virtual world. An opportunity to survive equal to write such an opinion.

CREATION has many faces



European Union Migrant Artists' Network  
EU-MAN

# Art goes POLITICAL

By Amir Khatib



**ART IS ART. IT IS AN ATTITUDE TO LIFE.** It is a belief of the duty and of the purpose of life. Artists believe that the reason for their existence is to make art and that is why they are happy to be creators of life for those who are using these ideas.

They create ideas for others because they are able to live and they believe in life. They do not belong, but they do strongly believe in the message of existence, yet there is a deep gap between belonging and believing.

Artists cannot belong because they should feel free, and if you belong you are not free to communicate, to feel, to express, to do what you see as

Nothing has changed that much in the way we create our so-called culture, a culture of the now, a term that is nicely called 'contemporary culture'. We just munch upon the words and we can create terms and phenomena from nothing - can somebody tell me what has happened to this mentality?

I think change always concerns mentality, since by changing the mentality of peo-

**“artists cannot belong because they should feel free.”**

suitable to do. This is a manner and also a principle - you might change your thoughts but you cannot change your principles.

The tool is tool, whether it is a brush or a computer mouse. It will remain a tool and mankind is a very clever creature who can modify it any way it is needed. It is very flexible too - when it was needed in the cave, it was there; when it was needed to fly, it helped us flying; and now when it is needed to paint via the mouse, he can do that too.

ple you can change whatever you want, whether talking about digital art because there is new tool to use to create art, or digital photography, digital television, digital cinema, digital treatments, digital country and perhaps soon we will hear about digital politics - God knows what digital politics will entail?

Digital art has its own characteristics. We have all witnessed its rapid development and would not be surprised if there was no need for museums because everybody can go there

simply by clicking a button. This time may come and we might witness it, but will we try to change the mentality of mankind?

Still there are wars, still there is poverty, and still there is pollution and the waste of global resources. I can say that there is still the mismanagement of global politics, so should we really concentrate on human affairs? I do not say here that we should begin skipping digital art, but I do not believe that digital artists work for those affairs - they rather cry than make art. I do not see the politically orientated art as serving mankind because through a beautiful song we can live a better life and through a beautiful picture that remind us of love we can better our day.

I am not against creating new images, but I am not for reproducing images that remind us of the injustices of life that lead us to cry out 'Why?' Is it because we cannot forgive? We can't be in that position for ever. Look at the digital artists who dominate museums of contemporary art, they almost all have one window and it is political.

It is someone exhibiting their works just because they show some anti-terrorism messages or have works criticising the war in Iraq. This type of art is contemporary art, so if someone wants to enter this medium they must think likewise. Is there no room to remind people of their needs because all they what is political?

Here I have used the opportunity to express my feelings for contemporary art, yet when I visit a museum I still have to be prepared that something may frighten or even attack me because of the current political global situation - is there some other globe we can visit?

Politics cannot be separated from life and it has a huge impact on us, and now it has marginalised all other roles. It makes and continues to create more negative influences, so perhaps we just need to take a breath - a bit like after the George W. Bush crazy years - or start searching for the digital drugs... I wonder.

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this a sample page and it works!

# A painting called RECESSION

By Thanos Kalamidas

WHEN ANDY WARHOL AND POP ART INVADED the art world and galleries last century they brought the feeling that art could financially flourish and bring an end to image of the romantic and poor artist who dies penniless and alone. This belief continued to the end of the 20th century with Julian Schnabel and David Salle still able to make art a very profitable business, almost turning into rock stars with luxurious cars and groupies.

Two different sides began to emerge from this: one was academics and collectors writing advertising articles in the form of essays for art magazines and gallery catalogues, while the other was the theorists who stated that these art works were overvalued and the result of a misguided capitalism that invested in commercial works of art and not in art. Sadly, a large number of artists began creating and aiming for the expected money and fame, following what the money wanted and not what art offered. Strangely, it somehow worked.

Gallery districts in Europe and the US flourished, collectors became television stars and art magazines began competing lifestyle magazines, such as *Vogue* and *Elle*. A new generation was created and a different kind of audience was discovered attending art galleries, such as London's Tate Modern that saw more than 5.2 million visitors in 2007. It wasn't a mainstream phenomenon, with the same happening in the off-mainstream galleries in the districts of London, Paris and Berlin, all of which saw their visitors increase by almost 300%.

Huge biennial exhibitions were now taking place not only in Venice, Paris, Berlin and at the Whitney Museum in New York, but also in Macau, Sydney and Kwangju in South Korea, with each one trying to make more 'noise' and mounting every new presentation as a gigantic marketing tool. Art fairs became the trendy places to be seen and art dealers began to resemble car salesmen.

New museums of contemporary art sprung up around the world like mushrooms, each of them designed by the most famous and glamorous architects, while collectors became a critical element of the museum acts and choices. Bizarrely, collectors became so famous themselves that some opened their own exhibitions, such as Charles Saatchi in London who displayed his own collections and, simultaneously, promoting their favourite artist... with a profit, of course.





None of this would have happened without the necessary market. Some of the older contemporary artists could expect over a million pounds for their work and that was before the auction began. Auctions created a new reality where the philosophy was “bigger the better” and the more they spent on a piece of art became a status symbol - a Pop Art painting hanging over the new red Ferrari was a must-have, so long as it cost the same.



It should be said, though, that a number of good works did emerge during that period. Two examples of creators who presented wonderful works are Richard Serra and Elizabeth Murray, but soon the bad news began to arrive and the auction houses were the first to bring the message. 2007 sales at Sotheby's and Christie's in New York were nearly £350 million, but they had rolled down to £110 million by the close of 2008.

The news was bad and it continued like a domino effect throughout the stock market. In the meantime, the states, through their museums, galleries and ministries, who had followed the market and the latest trends, were the first to react by realising that they had often overpaid for something literally contemporary meaning that artists were the first to hurt when the recession arrived.

Ministerial budgets changed and, in some cases, funding to organisations and artists was reduced to zero. Private galleries and collectors became aware and, after the recession had ended, used it to blackmail artists and increase their profit from the artist's work. Artists found it harder to sell their work because they were not only dealing with the recession but also the public's dismay of their overpaid reputation that had manipulated the market.

However, this is where I think the good signs began to emerge. Firstly, it is important that more people have shown interest in contemporary art and it is magnificent if this 5.2 million who visited the Tate Modern is just the beginning –the Picasso exhibition held in Helsinki's Ateneum Art Museum led to a record number of visitors and forced the gallery to extend the event for an extra two months. The number of visitors to the St. Petersburg biennial exhibition, in which EU-MAN participated, and the number of off-mainstream galleries opening highlights the strong appearance of art, especially contemporary art now appearing online.

Secondly, the artist needs to rebuild their lost dignity and credibility, not just in the market but also among the audience. Artists need to find new ways to communicate and educate this new audience, which is a challenge worth creating and motivating new art movements and waves. Finally, there is one basic aspect that we seem to have forgotten over the last few decades: art is not about money and fame. Art is about communication and expression. The audience is here waiting and it is up to us to make the next move. As far as the money part and the recession, artists are always the first to hurt, but they are also the first that can pass the message that they can also survive.

Sometimes I find  
a place to sleep

But I never dream



UNIVERSAL COLOURS

I never understood why people believe that crimes always happen at night.



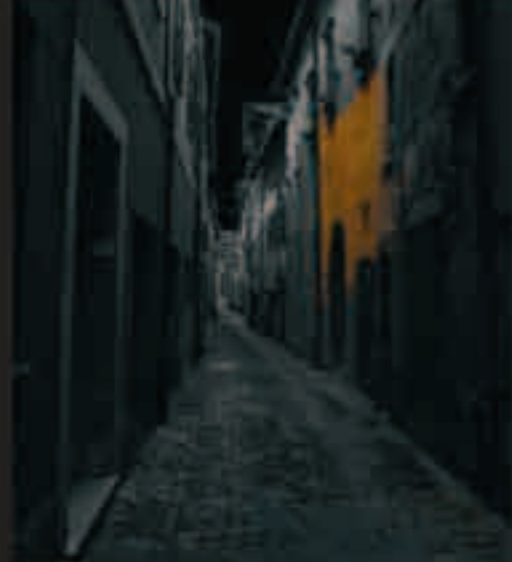
They say that crimes happen usually rainy nights without moon.



Cold windy nights.



They say that the worst crimes happen in dark small back streets where nobody hears a thing.



What are you doing there?



I'm looking for a crime.

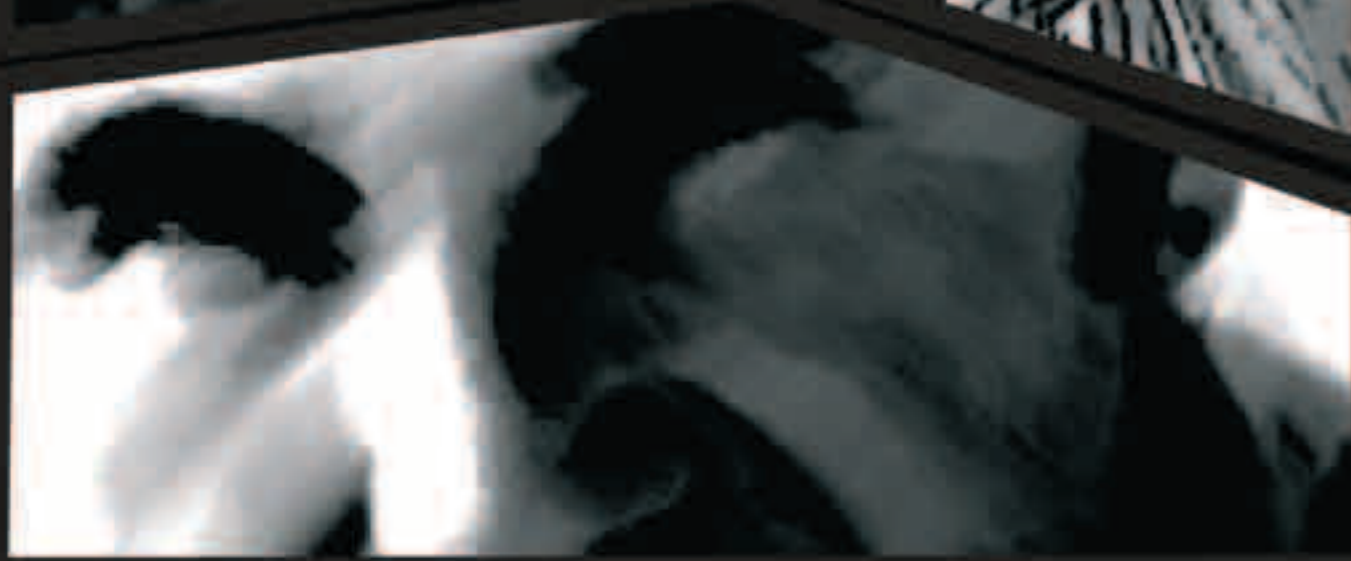


Not tonight, I hope.





Where was he this time?



He's in Somiland, sorry Ariel.

By Thanos Kalamidas

Why was I thinking that the truth would be a crime?



Not a sound from the back street!...



She didn't make any sound either!

# Creating and Carving Art

By Avtarjeet Dhanjal

**L**AST FRIDAY EVENING, Bhai Baldeep Singh, a 13th generation musician, sang and played music for the Sikh Gurus just like his forefathers in the 16th century. He is a rare combination of musician, with a rich inheritance, with a searching mind, within and beyond history, and has played with many contemporary European musicians too.

Bhai Baldeep Singh has almost single-handedly revived these traditional instruments used by his forefathers, such as Rabaab, Saranda, Tous, and Dil-rubaa - those who are mostly extinct now. In this process he has also revived the musical traditions that had also disappeared along with the instruments.

Bhai Baldeep Singh, when he could not find these instruments, created them by carving them from wood and using natural materials such as goat skin, horse hair and animal gut; he even sought help from European instrument makers.

This evening Bhai Baldeep Singh talked about his upbringing and his training under his father, grandfather and other music masters. He intricately explained the process involved in creating his music, how, before his fingers touch the strings of an instrument, the intent behind the touch makes sure of the outcome - the right sound - the right note.

He explained that it was the intent behind the touch that controls the outcome and creates the unique vibrations in the atmosphere and, in turn, creates the intended impression/feelings in the listener's mind. We are talking about the same intent that works behind the brush strokes of a painter, who makes sure of the exact combination of brush strokes using intuitively selected colours. In turn this is the same intent that creates the picture that was in the mind of the painter.

Ancient Yaqui Indians of Mexico understood the 'intent' as the force that created this universe and keeps it moving right down to the pulsating energy within an atom. The beauty of this force is that it makes itself available to the artists, poets and musicians when they rise above the mundane concerns of everyday life.

I often use another analogy: in this current temporal time, the society, in which we grow up, tells us that as a full member of society we must achieve this, this and this, and meet social expectations. We are continuously told that we must meet our mundane duties and responsibilities, and we really have no time to indulge in pursuits such as art. We are pushed to the point that we do not even have the time to think about these matters, since these issues are not essential for our physical and social survival.

I call artists the 'magicians', who can use Intent to stretch such abstract thing as TIME, to create a loop of this extended time; the space/time created within the loop is an exclusive domain for artists' creative activities. Within this magical space/time domain artists have a direct link with intuition.

Greek philosophers Leucippus and Democritus were within this space/time loop when they intuited the theory of atomic physics. In his space their intuition had laser-like focus when they conceived the idea of the smallest particle the 'atom', a Greek word that means 'a particle that couldn't be further

cut/divided' - using their sharp intuition, they also intuited the movement with an atom.

It took mankind more than 2,000 years of further development before atomic physicists, such as Bohr, Heisenberg and Pauli, proved, with their experiments and mathematical equations, that these atoms are not inert matter as Newtonian theory proposed, but have vibrating energy as intuited by the Greek philosophers.

The bigger picture, according to Indian thinking of the Vedic era, this universe, that we can see and we can't see, is the manifestation of the same force, 'Intent', or 'Brahman' or the 'Tao' as known to the Chinese. Luckily, artists, poets, thinkers and men of knowledge have learned to use this force for their creative pursuits.

As a rule, we are endowed with this magical facility but most people are not aware that we are all born with this wonderful gift. There are examples that, on rare occasions, even common people have used the same intent without knowing about it.

Many years ago a young female teacher watched my interview on Indian television and felt a strong urge to meet me. After some search she found out that I came from a village only a few miles from the town where she was teaching - she even found out that she had a student in her class from my village.

A couple of weeks later, I was visiting this town with my sister and I met a man from my village whose daughter was the aforementioned student in this young teacher's class. He stopped me on the road and asked if I had any spare time then could I visit this young teacher. He handed me a piece of paper with her name and address. We had come to

this town to visit one of our cousins, but our cousin was not at home, so had about an hour on our hands. My sister suggested that we should go and visit this young teacher in the meantime.

When we arrived at her house unannounced, we walked through a large open gate into a wide courtyard; this young woman was standing under a tree with one of her colleagues. She had just narrated a dream that she had the night before where I had visited her at her home. She was wondering how it could be possible since she had never met me. On the other hand I didn't even know until half-an-hour before that such a woman existed.

Before her colleague could respond to her question, I physically arrived on the scene. On seeing me walking into her house, she was totally shocked and her skin went white. She was about to faint, when my sister quickly made her sit down and brought a glass of water to drink. It took a while for this young woman to realise my walking in to her house was not an extension of her dream that she had the night before.

Without knowing, this young woman had used her intent to create my circumstances to come to her town that day, made this man give me her address just in time, sent my cousin to go away for an hour, and created the loop in space/time for me to walk to her house at the very moment, when she had just related her dream to her colleague.

She could not believe that it was her strong intent that had really made all this happen. Or we can say, the universal force, the Intent had placed itself at her command to make things happen very precisely with laser like precision on that day.

## UNIVERSAL COLOURS

### AN APOLOGY

In the last issue of *Universal Colours* (Issue 4 & 5 2009 - page 24) we included the article "The Relativity of Boundaries" by Flavia Caviezel accompanied by a series of photos with Pat Badani's work.

We found the article and the photos online and we thought that it would make a great addition to our content because it fitted our aims for an artistic world without boundaries and more tolerance. However, due to last minute decision we failed to contact the authors and creators of the images.

We deeply apologise and we assure you that it was not intentional. On the contrary, it was a result of enthusiasm to find an article that was so close to our vision and last minute efforts to print the magazine on time.

For more information about the author of the article and the illustrated work you can find their online portfolio here: [www.likeyou.com/flaviacaviezel](http://www.likeyou.com/flaviacaviezel)

*The Editorial Team*

### FUNDING

It is a nice magazine, with a real artistic touch. I like the design and the constants, but I could not read the title of the magazine - I think that you went very far in your artistic treatment, so please put in your mind that not all people are artists.

In London here, we have a lot of magazines, newspapers and the ads are everywhere. I hope to see no ads in your magazine because we are very tired of ads; put useful articles to read and not anything like some other magazines.

One thing more to say is that you seem a very wealthy organization and you handle your things in a successful way: can you explain your magazine's funding and the way you get money?

Alan Mony  
London

### PROMOTE

I got *Universal Colours* magazine from the distribution point in Kamppi in Helsinki, although I wondered if there is, in the world, such a group as European Union Migrant Artists Network. It is the first time I hear this name and also the magazine, but I learned that this group has been working since 1997.

That is really good, but why don't you have some propaganda for yourself, at least in the country that you have established this network and work in professionally? Is it racism or money, or what is the reason for your magazine?

Amtti Makola  
Helsinki

### THE LANGUAGE OF ART

Positively received this piece of work - I am sure there is a great effort behind it, and I am sure you work very hard to get things together, because it is not easy to continuously make a magazine like your magazine. The last issue was just excellent and I have followed your magazine for two years and I saw a real radical change, as they say.

Congratulations! May God bless you to work just for the public good, because this magazine make me happy, and it says a nice message to all immigrants that they can add a lot of things to the native culture of every country.

And you proved that the process of integration, as always, has two ways, not just that we learn from the native culture, they should learn from us how on to live together. I am here in Finland since 1998, I came with my family from Somalia, we learn in this country the language and many other things, but I do not see that Finns learn something from us.

As you say, art is an international language, and I hope that Europeans will be able to learn from the immigrants and do not underestimate us because we have much too.

Mohammad Said  
Somali live in Helsinki

TREAT THE  
EARTH WELL.  
IT WAS NOT  
GIVEN TO YOU  
BY YOUR  
PARENTS,  
IT WAS  
LOANED  
TO YOU  
BY YOUR  
CHILDREN

## UNIVERSAL COLOURS

### MORE PAGES

**Congratulations on your UK launch. I was lucky to be there and I was thrilled with the presentation, meeting you and having the chance to talk about the magazine and the EU-MAN organisation. It is amazing how much art can do, uniting people in a much easier way than any other form of communication.**

**I sincerely hope that you will find ways to fund your projects and make the magazine richer in material and of course pages. Actually this is one question I forgot to ask at the party: are you going to add more pages? Usually art magazines, especially periodic publications like yours, have many more pages.**

Best wishes  
S. K.

### DISTRIBUTION

Great magazine. Great for the immigrants, great for art and contribution of the immigrants in modern Europe. I found the magazine through a friend who brought it from England. Why don't you send your magazine to all the museums and libraries around Europe?

D. Hoffmayer  
Düsseldorf Germany

### SOME ANSWERS

Dear friends, thank you once more for taking the time to write and send us your mails and letters. We do appreciate them, we always take seriously your suggestions and of course we thank you for your prayers. In this section of course we don't publish all the letters we get – that would be impossible – but we publish the ones that the suggestions or the questions concern all of us, contribute to a further conversation or raise other questions.

And to start with some answers let's get to the adverts and funding. Our policy is to have a limited adverts but we hope that you can understand that our finance is equally limited. The magazine and the organisation are funded from culture ministries but if we were expecting to do anything with that money we wouldn't publish more than a couple of issues a

year since the funding barely covers the printing cost. Most of the work in the organisation and the magazine is contributed voluntarily and mainly because of love to what we are doing. So adverts are the necessary evil. What we are trying to do with the adverts in our magazine is represent our style, our aims and the attitude of a magazine dedicated to art.

Of course it would be nice if we could promote the magazine and the organisation more, it would be nice if we could advertise with posters or inside mainstream media but again finances limit our efforts and at the moment our target is to increase the copies of the magazine so we can reach more people before promoting the magazine more massively.

"Integration is a two-way road," that was well put and I think that the name of it is tolerance and what better way to promote tolerance and show the way than through art. Oddly, art is something even the most prejudiced accept and respect and this is what we are trying to do. Still our aim is to show that immigrants don't create only ethnic art and crafts but that we are beyond movements able to create at least in Europe an art movement ourselves.

Again everything is about financing and of course we would like to add more pages since we feel that we have ...much more to say ...but!!! Distribution all around Europe is also a big issue for us but as I said many times before, everything depends on finance and we are trying to make ...one step at the time!

Please remember that we need to add more art news from all Europe and this is something you can help us and become our correspondents in the places you live by informing us of local migrant artistic events.

Please don't stop sending us your comments we need them now more than ever.

Thank you

Thanos Kalamidas  
Helsinki

***Do you have feedback for us? We welcome all of your opinions, thoughts, criticism, praise and suggestions. Send them to:***

***info@eu-man.org***

to racism, to discrimination, to prejudice, to violence, to hunger, to poverty

no

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## LES CHOSES PERDUES



15 January / 14 February 2010  
Private View: 14 January 18:30-21:30  
Curated by Ken Pratt

Group Exhibition:  
**Bracha Ettinger, Joris Ghekierre, Geraldine Gliubislavich, Karin Hanssen, Alex Hudson**  
*Geraldine Gliubislavich 'Untitled' Oil on Canvas, 100cm x 120 cm, 2009*

## PEEPING TOM



19 February / 28 March 2010  
Private View: 18 February 18:30-21:30  
Curated by Keith Coventry

Group Exhibition including:  
**Mat Collishaw, Simon English, Marcus Harvey, Sarah Jones, Jim Lambie.**

## GIVEITANAME



2 April / 2 May 2010  
Private View: 1 April 18:30-21:30

Group Exhibition including:  
**Heringa / Van Kalsbeek, Eemyun Kang, Aram Tanis**  
*Heringa / Van Kalsbeek 'Untitled' ceramics, string, resin, 130 cm x 111 cm x 121 cm, 2008*

## ALEX HUDSON



7 May / 6 June 2010  
Private View: 6 May 18:30-21:30

Solo Exhibition:  
**Alex Hudson**  
*Alex Hudson 'Sundown Over The Sierra' Oil on board, 60 cm x 80 cm, 2009*

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