



# VIRTUAL GROUP EXHIBITION THE SENSE OF PLACE

PROCEED OF ONLINE ARTIST  
RESIDENCY

AYSHA ALDHAHERI, FADILLAH GHANI,  
MARJAN SHARIAT, MOZA ALFALASI,  
NURIA GONZALEZ ALCAIDE

29 MAY-18 JUNE 2023

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## **THE SENSE OF PLACE**

Virtual Group Exhibition

29<sup>th</sup> May 2023 – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023

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# The Sense of Place

Dr. Elham Shafaei

Recently, i.e. Art Projects invited visual artists to consider the identities of “places,” the ones we walk over and through and live in. Some of these places are our homes, or locations where we have had formative experiences that are significant only to us. As the philosopher Edward Casey wrote in the foreword to his book *The Fate of Place*:

“To exist in any way,” “is to be somewhere. Place is as requisite as the air we breathe, the ground on which we stand, the bodies we have...We are surrounded by places. We walk over and through them. We live in places, relate to others in them, die in them.”[1]

This phrase expresses concisely the fundamental significance of place and the fact that it is through places that we know much of the world. In general, sense of place describes our relationship with places, expressed in different dimensions of human life: emotions, biographies, imagination, stories, and personal experiences (Basso, 1996).[2] In environmental psychology, sense of place—how we perceive a place— includes place attachment and place meaning (Kudryavtsev, Stedman and Krasny, 2012).[3] Place attachment reflects a bond between people and places, and place meaning reflects symbolic meanings people ascribe to places. In short, “sense of place is the lens through which people experience and make meaning of their experiences in and with place” (Adams, 2013) [4]. Sense of place varies among people, in history, and over the course of one’s lifetime.

To put it simply, "a sense of place" underscores the necessity of elevating the concepts of place and its impact in our thoughts and creative endeavors. This virtual artist residency sought to provide a platform for visual artists from diverse cultural backgrounds to immerse themselves in and create art within a virtual setting. The culmination of their efforts is showcased in "The Sense of Place Virtual Exhibition."

[1]Casey, Edward S, (1997), *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, University of California Press

[2] Basso, Basso, K.H. (1996). *Wisdom sits in places: Notes on a Western Apache landscape*. In Feld, S., and Basso, K.H. (Eds.), *Senses of place* (pp. 53-90). Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press.

[3]Kudryavtsev, A., M. E. Krasny, and R. C. Stedman. 2012. The impact of environmental education on sense of place among urban youth. *Ecosphere* 3(4):29.

[4] Adams, J.D. (2013). Theorizing a sense of place in transnational community. *Children, youth and environments*, 23(3), 43-65.



## BIOGRAPHY

Aysha Aldhaheeri (United Arab Emirates)

Aysha Aldhaheeri, a visual artist, was born in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, in 2001. Currently pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Visual Art at Zayed University's College of Arts and Creative Enterprises. Throughout her artistic journey, Aysha has consistently drawn inspiration from the captivating beauty of the natural environment. She finds herself deeply fascinated by the intricate patterns present in nature and landscapes, recognizing their profound impact on human emotions and perspectives. This fascination serves as a significant driving force behind her studio practice. In her artwork, Aysha skillfully merges the vibrant palette and rich textures derived from nature, imbuing her audience with a compelling sense of nostalgia and serenity. By capturing these elements, she creates an immersive experience that invites viewers to connect with the natural world and rediscover its inherent beauty.



## ARTIST STATEMENT

Aysha Aldhaheri

Creating immersive mixed media art, I draw inspiration from the enchanting visions of Abu Dhabi's islands, particularly Saadiyat and Al Reem. These islands have taken me on a transformative journey, delving deep into the realms of color theory and memory. Through my artwork, I skillfully weave together various elements to evoke a profound sense of place, capturing the essence of these extraordinary landscapes. Informed by my exploration of color theory, I carefully select and blend colors and textures that mirror the natural hues found in the surrounding landscapes.

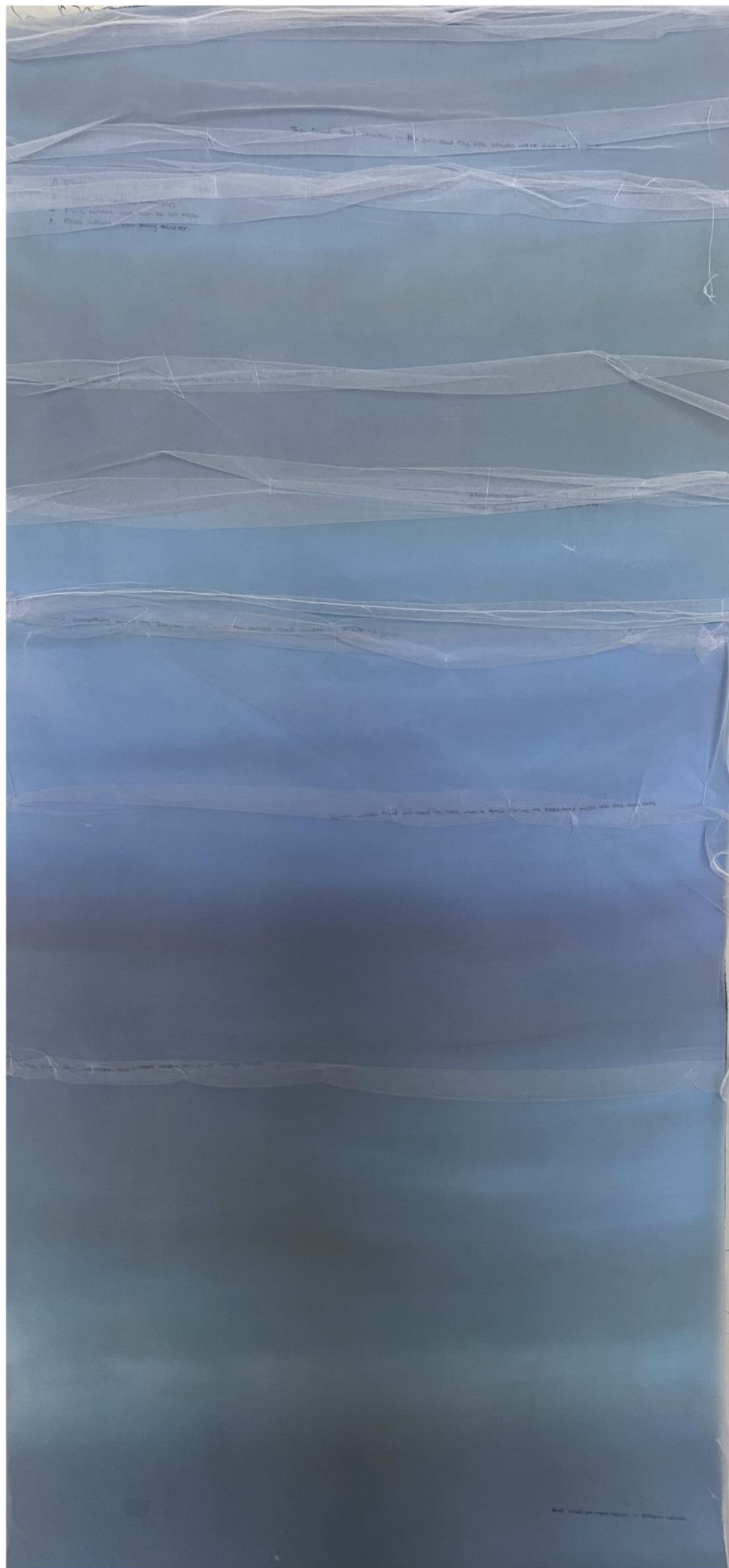
This deliberate blending enables me to establish a powerful connection between my artwork and the environment it seeks to portray. The resulting layers unfold a captivating narrative, drawing viewers into a sensory experience that echoes the sights and sensations of the islands themselves. To add an extra dimension to this immersive journey, I integrate written poems into my artworks: "The blues of the sky and sea are one, the world is bright like the shining sun, mesmerizing every day." These poems serve as a bridge between the visual narrative and the emotions of the viewers. Within my artworks, I employ various techniques and elements to facilitate a fully immersive experience for the viewers, inspired by the islands' natural beauty. By creating a multi-sensory encounter, my aim is to transport viewers to the heart of these captivating islands and leave them with a lasting impression.

Through my art, I strive to reveal the remarkable beauty of Abu Dhabi's islands and evoke a renewed appreciation for the evocative power of art. By intertwining color, poetry, and sensory elements, my work serves as a conduit for cherished memories and a celebration of the unique essence of these places.



Saadiyat Island,2023  
Canvas roll, acrylic, transparent  
paper, tulle fabric, stitching  
54 x 144 cm





Al Reem Island, 2023  
Canvas roll, acrylic, transparent  
paper, tulle fabric, stitching  
67 x 148 cm





## BIOGRAPHY

Fadillah Ghani (Malaysia)

Fadillah Ghani, a talented artist from the artistic land of Malaysia, is an emerging figure in the contemporary art scene. With a unique perspective and a passion for her work, Fadillah is currently in her final year of a Bachelor's (Hons) degree in Fine Art, with a major in sculpture and a minor in painting. Her artistic journey began in 2018 during her studies in the International Baccalaureate, where she discovered her passion for visual art. It was during this time that she was introduced to oil painting, which rapidly enhanced her artistic skills. Fadillah's creativity knows no bounds, and she continually challenges herself beyond her limits. Alongside her academic commitments, Fadillah has taken full control of her artistic journey. She dedicates her free time to creating artworks, participating in various art competitions, and exploring new art organizations. Her passion and dedication have earned her the distinction of being a promising emerging artist. Most recently, she received a consolation prize in the prestigious SetiaKarya Hotel Art Contest 2022.



## ARTIST STATEMENT

Fadillah Ghani

"Threads of Home: A Tapestry of Shared Memories" weaves a captivating exploration of the transformative power of a building-turned-sanctuary. As an artist, I delve deeply into the sense of place, extending beyond tangible structures to explore the profound impact of transforming a mere building into a meaningful sanctuary. This artwork reflects my own experiences and the cherished bonds within my family, revealing the profound influence of each sibling who creates homes filled with comfort, trust, and unwavering support. Every corner of this mesmerizing composition tells a story, capturing the essence of childhood memories and highlighting the unique interests that define each sibling. The nine square paintings seamlessly unite, symbolizing personal space within the embrace of a shared roof, as if intertwined with red thread. This intricate red thread symbolizes the unbreakable ties of our shared bloodline, forever connecting and binding us together. It is also derived from my mother, who is a tailor herself, and her side income has financially supported our family throughout the years, while my father provided for us through farming.

Adding a dynamic twist, the incorporation of short video art juxtaposes the stillness of oil paintings with the vibrant motion of life, infusing the narrative with an extraordinary sense of vitality. Through this enchanting fusion, I invite the audience on a journey of growth, evolution, and depth, traversing the passage of time while evoking the comforting nostalgia of returning to one's childhood home. Prepare to be captivated as you immerse yourself in the intimate narratives, histories, and profound sense of kinship that permeates every corner of this artwork. It is my personal celebration of the beauty and significance of home, where cherished memories are etched into the very fabric of my life.

As you stand before this artwork, immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of emotions, connections, and cherished moments that define the concept of home. What memories and bonds will resonate with you? What hidden threads of your own story will become known? Step closer, explore the intimate narratives. May this immersive experience ignite a deeper appreciation for the power of familial ties, the transformative nature of spaces, and the enduring impact they have on our lives. Allow the threads of this artwork to intertwine with your own, and together, let us discover the extraordinary stories waiting to be told.





Thread of Home: A Tapestry of Shared  
Memories, 2023  
90 x 90 x 2 cm (h x w x d)  
Video Art on Oil Painting





## **BIOGRAPHY**

Marjan Shariat (Iran)

Born in Iran in 1983, Marjan Shariat demonstrated a passion for painting from an early age. She pursued her interest by earning a bachelor's degree in painting from the University of Science and Culture in Tehran, with a focus on the representation of women in contemporary Iranian painting. In addition to her ten years of experience as a magazine graphic designer, Shariat has been showing her artworks in national and international exhibitions since 2016.



## ARTIST STATEMENT

Marjan Shariat

The Women, Life, Freedom movement is a transformative protest movement that originated during the Uprising of Iran in September 2022. In continuation of this revolutionary movement, I explore the foundations of revolution, with a strong emphasis on its democratic nature and the demand for equality and freedom, particularly in the face of compulsory hijab.

This exploration led me to focus on the element of "hair" like never before, prompting me to view it through a different lens and incorporate it into my paintings. Initially, I used synthetic hair, which proved to be an interesting and motivating combination. However, I sought to provide the audience with a more vibrant experience, leading me to work with natural hair. Natural hair possesses the ability to showcase finer details and distinctive features, enabling me to effectively convey the emotions and personalities of the characters.

By integrating natural hair into my artwork, I strive to establish a deeper human connection with the viewer. The presence of natural hair within a piece of art evokes sympathy and companionship with the characters, transporting the viewer to a profound emotional and psychological realm. Such an encounter can elicit powerful human reactions.

Hair plays a significant role in expressing the unique traits of the characters. The color of hair can directly relate to aspects of personality. For instance, dark hair may symbolize seriousness, resilience, or profound emotion, while light hair can represent elegance, youthfulness, or energy. Furthermore, the length and style of hair contribute to portraying specific personality traits. Long hair may denote depth and mystery, whereas short and tidy hair can suggest simplicity and perfectionism. Whether short or long, plain, or colored, hair can symbolize both our freedom and our confinement.

The inclusion of hair of various colors and genders, as integral parts of women's existence, has been a great source of inspiration for me. Previously, I viewed hair solely as a component of the body. However, perceiving it as an independent entity, capable of displaying its own characteristics separate from the body, sparked the idea of creating these works.



## ARTIST STATEMENT

Marjan Shariat

My objective was to utilize hair as an artistic material—an unconventional element with distinct colors and textures. This choice stems from the fact that our emotions are intertwined with our hair. Just as our hairstyles, colors, and genders reflect our mental states and feelings, hair possesses the ability to evoke a range of emotions.

Hair holds a profound connection to our moods and lifestyles. Its structure carries an air of mystery and peculiarity. It can conceal information within itself or exhibit exceptional strength, capable of bearing considerable weight. Indeed, hair is more than a mere adornment for the head and body; it holds its own unique narrative.

Researchers have even developed methods to identify individuals quickly using just a single strand of hair, demonstrating the wealth of information hair can provide.

Driven by these considerations, I have embarked on a journey to narrate a new story from the perspective of this remarkable element, thus giving rise to this collection.





Dance of Hair.No 8,2023  
105 x 80 x 2 cm (h x w x d)  
Mixed media



Dance of Hair.No 9,2023  
80 x 150 x 2 cm (h x w x d)  
Mixed media



Dance of Hair. No 3, 2023  
105 x 80 x 2 cm (h x w x d)  
Mixed media





Dance of hair.No4,2023  
80 x 105 x 2 cm (h x w x d)  
Mixed media



Dance of hair.No 2,2023  
105 x 80 x 2 cm (h x w x d)  
Mixed media



Dance of hair.No 1,2023  
80 x 105 x 2 cm (h x w x d)  
Mix media





## BIOGRAPHY

Moza Al Falasi (United Arab Emirates)

Moza Al Falasi is a multidisciplinary Dubai-based Emirati artist. She recently graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Arts from the College of Arts & Creative Enterprises, Zayed University. Moza works with different mediums, such as drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpting and photography. She is interested in the art and architecture of the Islamic world, notably illustrated manuscripts. Additionally, she is interested in poetry, horseback riding and traditional jewelry. Al Falasi is a member of the Emirates Fine Art Society and Tashkeel Art Center. She exhibited her work in the annual group exhibition of Made In Tashkeel in 2017. Moza also participated in The 33rd and The 36th Emirates Fine Art Society Exhibition in 2016 and 2019, held at the Sharjah Art Museum. In 2021, she took part in the group exhibition 50 x 50: The Golden Exhibition of Emirates Artists, which marks the UAE's 50th National Day at Alowais Cultural Foundation in Dubai. She has won numerous regional and international awards, including a gold medal in the 5th China International Digital Photography Art Exhibition 2015. Moza aspires to pursue further studies to obtain a master's degree in Fine Arts.





## ARTIST STATEMENT

Moza Al Falasi

In 'Murmuration,' a series of mixed media artworks on fabric, I delve into the concept of impermanence and the reconstruction of memory.

Human memory formation occurs in three stages: encoding, storage, and retrieval. The process begins with encoding, which involves creating memories. Storage and retrieval follow suit, influenced by stress levels, emotional states, and age. Memories that are frequently revisited undergo frequent re-encoding, resulting in alterations. Consequently, memories are not faithfully stored.

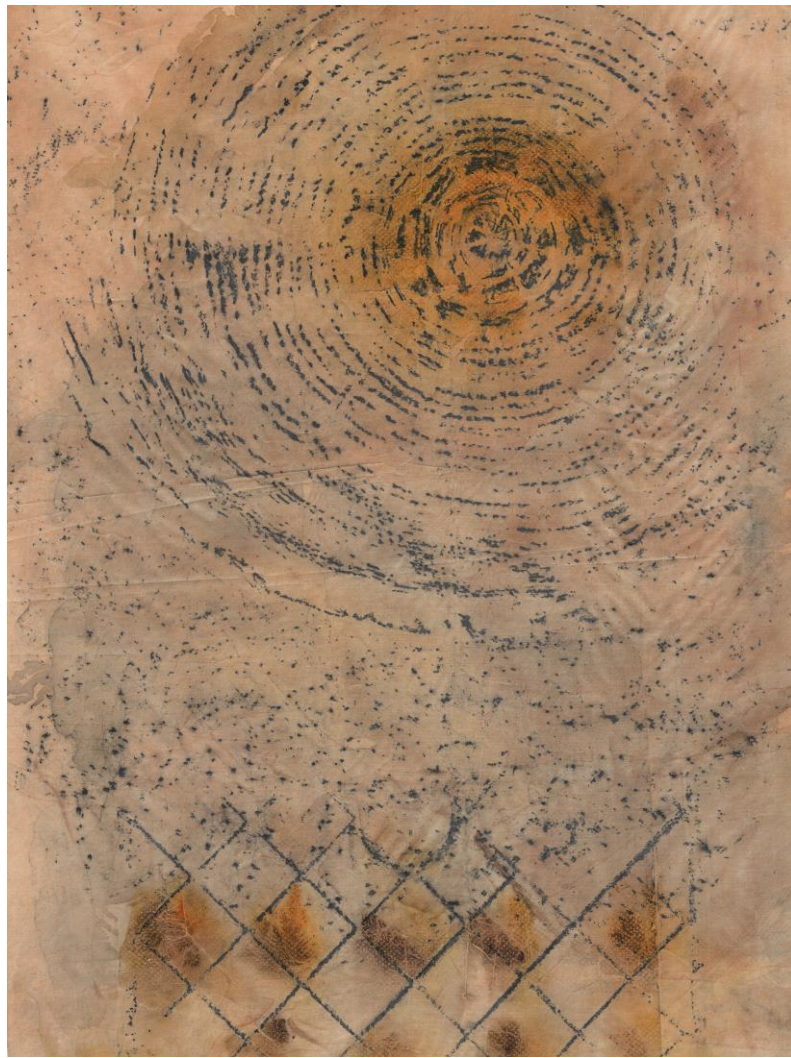
To commence my exploration, I revisited the neighborhood where my parents and I lived and grew up. My intention was to establish a connection with those who are no longer with us by studying their living spaces and remnants. This residential area is situated on Dubai's rural side and was constructed in the 80s. It comprised 80 houses to accommodate families, some of whom migrated from different Emirates to settle in Dubai. The houses were arranged in an irregular geometric shape, encircling a mosque and a play yard, emphasizing closeness, and fostering a sense of community among the neighborhood residents.

Through rubbing on fabric using graphite, I captured various surfaces such as tree trunks, building blocks, and household items. The nature of graphite makes it susceptible to constant alteration, which mirrors the shifting nature of memories. Paint washes contribute to the graphite's spread across the fabric, creating layers of unexpected shapes. Within these shapes, one can discern human figures, animals, mythical creatures, maps, and seascapes. The rotation of the fabric also influences these interpretations.

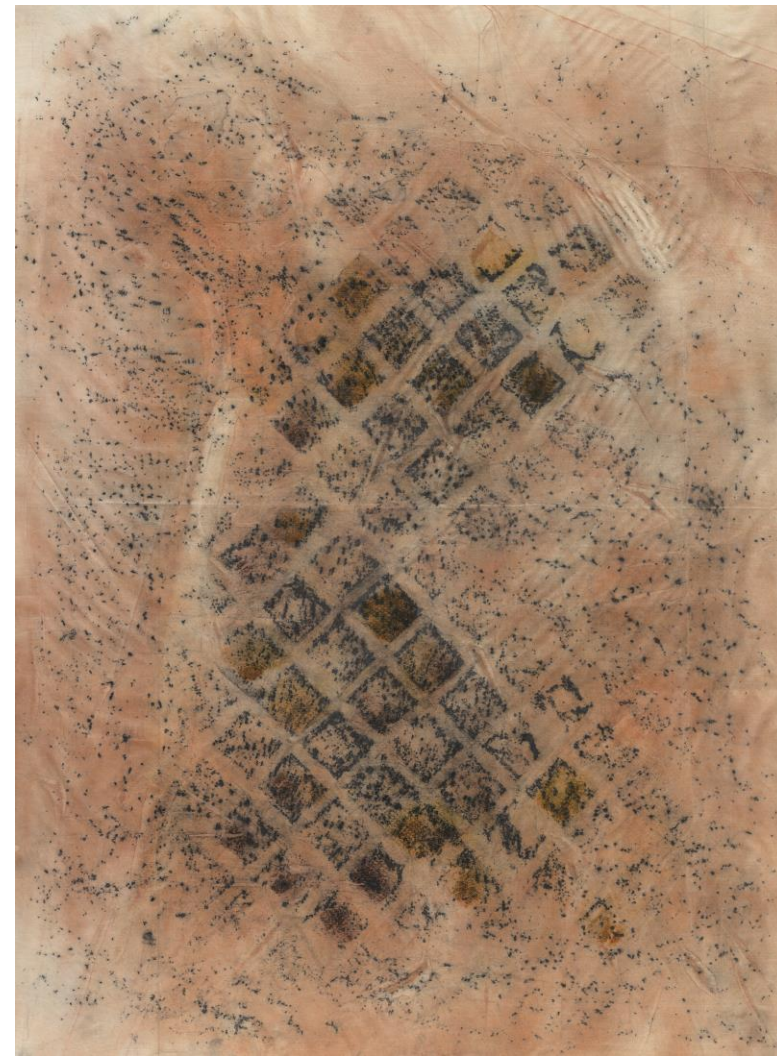
'Murmuration' serves as a visual representation of the nature of memory, blurring the boundaries between the tangible and intangible. It invites viewers to explore and reflect upon their own memories, prompting them to question and reinterpret what they perceive.



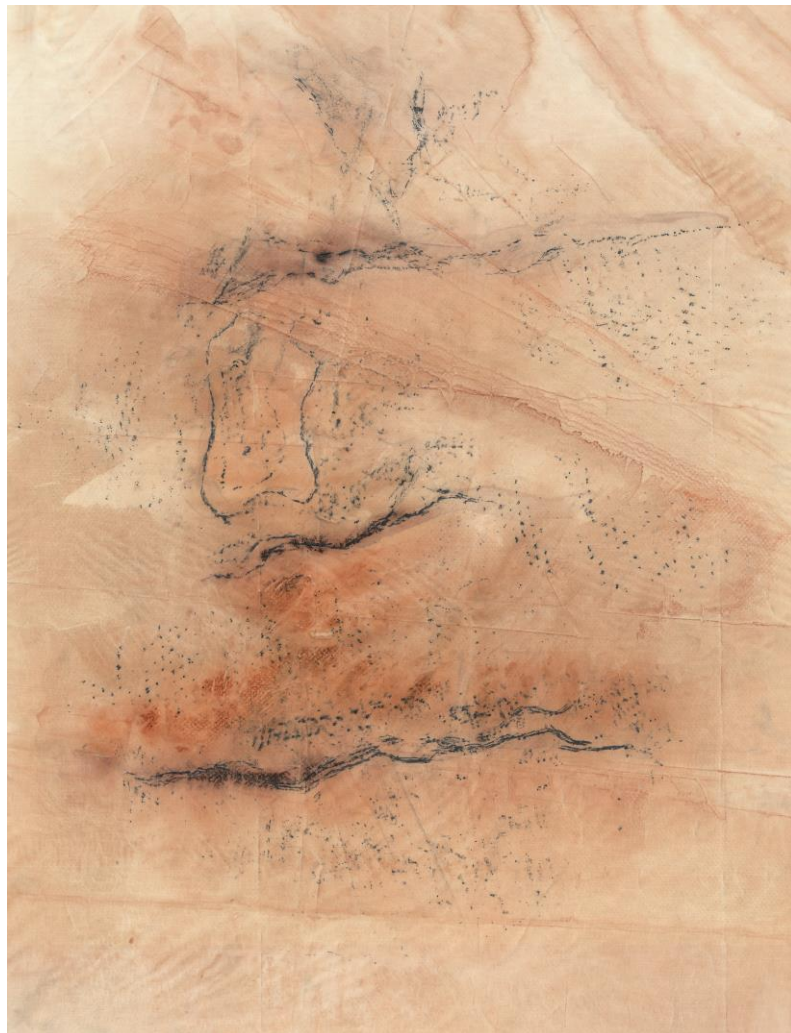
Murmuration 1, 2023  
55 x 45 cm (h x w)  
Graphite and Paint on Fabric



Murmuration 2, 2023  
55 x 45 cm (h x w)  
Graphite and Paint on Fabric



Murmuration 3, 2023  
55 x 45 cm (h x w)  
Graphite and Paint on Fabric



Murmuration 4, 2023  
55 x 45 cm (h x w)  
Graphite and Paint on Fabric





Murmuration 5, 2023  
55 x 45 cm (h x w)  
Graphite and Paint on Fabric



Murmuration 6, 2023  
55 x 45 cm (h x w)  
Graphite and Paint on Fabric



Murmuration 7, 2023  
55 x 45 cm (h x w)  
Graphite and Paint on Fabric



Murmuration 8, 2023  
55 x 45 cm (h x w)  
Graphite and Paint on Fabric







## BIOGRAPHY

Nuria González Alcaide (Spain-Singapore)

Nuria González Alcaide (1995) is from Barcelona, Spain, and is currently based in Singapore. She is a self-taught visual abstract artist. Nuria attended a Contemporary Art workshop at the Metàfora Academy in Barcelona and has also pursued online courses offered by MoMa (USA) and the FotoCreativaBA Artists Program "FotoComBA" (Argentina). She has participated in collective exhibitions in Vic (Spain), Madrid, Cava de' Tirreni (Italy), and London. In London, she was a finalist in a competition organized by Southbank Printmakers. Nuria's works have been published by Al-Tiba9 and Art Reveal Magazine. She has also completed online residencies with Mango (Argentina) and WOC (Bulgaria) and has showcased her art at the Artist360 art fair in Madrid and The Other Art Fair Virtual Edition (by Saatchi Art). Currently, Nuria is working on a new collection scheduled to be released in September 2023. Additionally, she has been selected to exhibit in Rome with the Fondazione Modigliani.



## ARTIST STATEMENT

Nuria González Alcaide

### IAMAP

*I walk in my mind, where once I walked with my feet.  
I feel in my head everything I once felt in my heart.  
I know all the people I used to be but am no longer.  
I see all those people as different, yet they all reside within me.*

Reflecting on my journey as a human, I realized I have ventured into numerous countries, absorbing the culture and colors of each one. Maps have always intrigued me. Whenever I visit a place, I make it a point to collect maps from the tourist information center. I appreciate the colors, the streets, and the symbols that guide you through the discovery of that particular location. This led me to the realization that every map is pre-constructed, dictating how and when to explore. As a naturally curious person, I possess my own unique perspective on the world before me. With "The Sense of Place" lingering in my thoughts, I came to the realization that "I am a Map" and desired to create my own version of it, through my own lens.

Looking back at the most significant places I have lived; I chose four of them as they still hold significance in my present:

Barcelona - BORN - represented by yellow  
Torino - LOVE - represented by blue  
Stockholm - WORK - represented by red  
Singapore - GROW - represented by green

Each place represents a part of me and has shaped the person I am today. I can vividly retrace my steps through those streets, closing my eyes and inhaling the distinct aroma of each location. I transform those walks into shapes derived from the maps of each city. I merge four shapes, each standing for one place, onto a single sheet of paper, thus creating my own map—my personal map. There exist multiple maps because I encompass more than one identity, and each of these identities coexists within me.





Sketch n1, 2023  
21 x 14.8 cm (h x w)  
Acrylic and Pencil on Paper



Sketch n2, 2023  
21 x 14.8 cm (h x w)  
Acrylic and Pencil on Paper





Sketch n3, 2023  
21 x 14.8 cm (h x w)  
Acrylic and Pencil on Paper



Sketch n4, 2023  
21 x 14.8 cm (h x w)  
Acrylic and Pencil on Paper



2023