

CONFLUENCE

VIRTUAL
GROUP
EXHIBITION

6 - 26 DECEMBER 2021

www.ieartprojects.com



CONFLUENCE

VIRTUAL
GROUP
EXHIBITION

6 -26 DECEMBER 2021

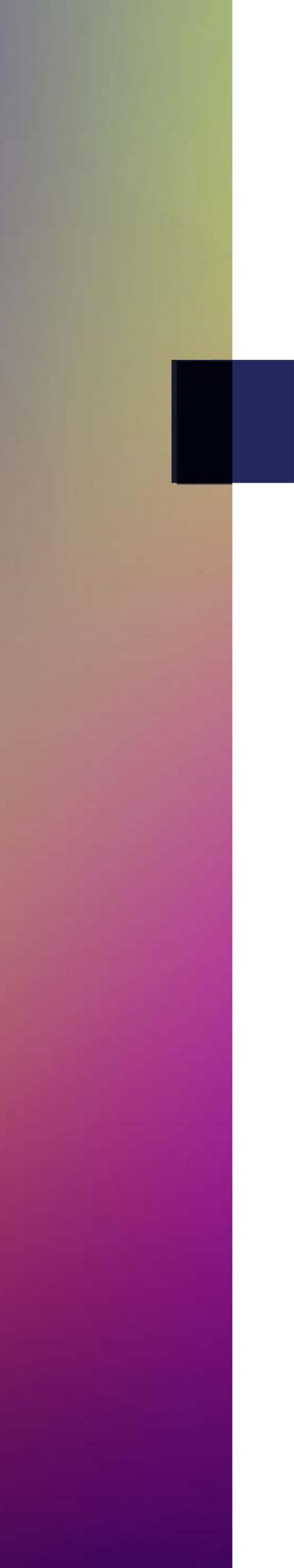
www.ieartprojects.com

Confluence
Virtual Group Exhibition
6 - 26 December 2021

School of The Arts,
Universiti Sains Malaysia,
11800 Penang, Malaysia
Tel: +604 653 3888 ext 3621 / 3415
Fax: +604 6576296
Email: dean_arts@usm.my
Website: www.art.usm.my

Catalogue published by School of The Arts

All right reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted or published in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owner (s). The views expressed in this catalogue are not necessarily those of the publisher.



Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Introduction	2
Dr. Tetriana Ahmed Fauzi	
Curator's Note	4
Dr. Elham Shafaei	
Exhibition Reviews	6
Cheryl C. Thiruchelvam	6
Alessandra Villa	8
Artworks	9
Dima Abou Zannad	10
Amir Bahador Bayat	14
Donja Fard	18
Khalil Muhsain	22
Zul Hanafi Rosfazdilah	26

Acknowledgements

Dean

Dr. Mumtaz Begum Aboo Backer

Exhibition Curator

Dr. Elham Shafaei

Coordinator

Dr. Tetriana Ahmed Fauzi

Exhibition Reviewers

Cheryl C. Thiruchelvam

Alessandra Villa

Editor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Safrizal Shahir

Graphic Designer

Nur Azreen Chee Pi

Documentations and Video

Nor Shahidan Mohamad

Operations

Nur Fadillah Ab. Ghani

Introduction

Dr. Tetriciana Ahmed Fauzi



Fine Art Chairperson
School of the Arts
Universiti Sains Malaysia

Confluence is a two-week program that provides a platform for artists to interact with curator, art critiques and each other while producing artworks. The artists produce artworks that are based on their significant strengths and skills that they already possess and acquire during their graduating days. Participants include Dima Abou Zanad, Amir Bahador Bayat, Donja Fard, Khalil Muhsin and Zulhanafi Rosfadzilah.

What happens when two people stumble upon each other when they are walking, hence the sidewalk shuffle. They fumble, briefly did an awkward dance of moving to the side to get out of each other's way but fail as they both move to the same side and repeat this several times until one of them gives way to the other or they stop going to the same side. That is what happens to people moving to a different direction. What happens to people moving towards the same direction but not knowing each other well, they walk at different paces and attitudes. Those who walk closer

together may communicate more than the others. Nowadays distances are not physical and geographical but more on the wavelength which may connect or disconnect people. Values, concerns, and attitudes towards attributes are what make people connect. Art can also be a medium that binds people through understanding of contexts and creative processes.

People move about and progresses from one place and phase to another. For recent graduate it can be overwhelming when one realizes that life is not simply surviving college assignments and social life. Directions, strategy, and life goals start to appear and the feeling that life may not be as we planned them to be arises. The journey of being an artist can be a long and fruitful as a fertile tree, bright as fire which can keep burning into useful ember or bust in flames and quickly dies. Some artist feels the need to be together and keep the artistic spirit moving in a team or collective while others feel that working in silo is productive and efficient.



Art residency provides a refuge or retreat which can further advance an artist's career through the creation of new body of works, widening of networking and even sustain living expenses with the support of stipends or allowances. Online art residency is becoming a more popular choice as travel ban and physical contact restriction became a new norm. Online residency presents difference challenges and advantages. The benefit of online artist residency is that it is achievable within our own space and comfort. How does one take steps in online residency? The hermit will keep to his or her comfortable shell and comes out when needed and the extroverted will yearn more to communicate and build networks. Although it is true that a deeper connection and experience can be a challenge in an online residency but these days it has become a norm that what most people are experiencing such as meeting, chatting, dating, communicating, or playing games are mostly through online platform and simulations. People connect through social media interactions, buy things online and stalk at people from remote part of the world via online. Time and types of activities determine the kind of connection and experience gained in a residence, and in the end it's worth to see the products which is produced from the brush of shoulders, sidewalk shuffles, 'holding hands', the silence of an awkward walks together, the small talk or chatter and how it affects the creativity and artistic production.

Curator's Note

Dr. Elham Shafaei

Exhibition Curator

Industrial Fellow
School of the Arts
Universiti Sains Malaysia

Founder and Director
i.e. Art Projects Online Art Foundation

Co-Founder & Co-Editor
ContemporaryIdentities
International Online Art-Magazine-Gallery

'Confluence' is an Online Art Exhibition proceeding from 'Confluence' Online Artist Residency designed by School of the Arts (SOTA), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and hosted five Alumni from School of The Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia; College of Fine Arts and Design, University of Sharjah; College of Fine Arts, Tehran University; School of Arts, Science and Culture University and School of Arts, HBKsaar Germany.

'Confluence' is an online artist-in-residence program created in tandem with the current changes resulting from the pandemic of Covid-19 which increased social distancing limited traveling for individuals across the globe.

'Confluence' is an act or process of merging. As such, we seek to provide an interactive virtual space which merged the physical (artist studio) and virtual (artist residency) spaces and imply tangible connections between these spaces and the artists. These tangible connections offered new ways of experience and production and its effects of being-there.

The embodiment afforded by this interactive virtual space allowed artists to know about their surroundings, themselves, and others by being actively engaged with this provided space. The artists produced artworks within the



spaces they are part of physically and virtually.

This exhibition is an indication of the range and diversity of creative practices by young visual artists with different culture and background to understand, experience and produce art in this provided merged space.

'Confluence' invites the viewer to examine and engage with these multifaceted artworks to provide a new space to find the link to be there.

In addition to the artworks, Confluence online exhibition also features texts by art history Alumni: Cheryl C. Thiruchelvam from Universiti Sains Malaysia and Alessandra Villa from University of Turin.

Confluence will run at i.e. Art Projects Online Art Foundation (www.ieartprojects.com) from 6th until 26th December 2021, featuring the artworks by:

Dima Abou Zannad, College of Fine Arts and Design, University of Sharjah

Amir Bahador Bayat, College of Fine Arts, Tehran University

Donja Fard, School of Arts, USC Tehran/HBKsaar Germany

Khalil Muhsain, School of the Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Zul Hanafi Rosfazdilah, School of the Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Exhibition Review

Cheryl C. Thiruchelvam



PhD Candidate

School of the Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Lecturer

Department of Advertising, Faculty of Arts and Social Science,
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia

Based on the array of works produced by these five artists, the challenges faced by most people in these unprecedented times of the pandemic--relentlessness, lost, stuck, uncertainties, hopelessness, or even confusion; seem to be the prevalent pattern that emerges. Khalil Muhsain composes a panel of narratives based on his dreams and subconscious mind. Using mix-media combined with painting and collage technique, Khalil explores his dream of being chased by a gorilla in a palm oil plantation in what seems to be a constant re-play and reset of a video game. Such continuous loop of his dream - does it reflect the similar cycles of lockdown, restrictions and easing of SOPs that Malaysia in particular had experienced during the pandemic?

Dima Abou Zannad applies writing together with symbols and lines to somewhat express her thoughts and feelings. The choice of writing chosen by the artist perhaps implies the experiences she faces to express her thoughts or evoke a particular emotion. Growing up in an artistic family, Amir

Bahador Bayat uses his photography skills to compile a collection of works of his late grandfather's home and portraits of his grandmother. Using the analogy of his late grandfather coming to visit his home and his wife (Amir's grandmother), the artist uses an old stained glass covered in mold and dust as a filter for his photographs. Positioning himself between the real world (his grandmother and remains of his grandfather's house) and world of the dead (his late grandfather), Amir seems to reminisce his memory of his family and negotiate a meaning of what life means to him at the present moment.

Donja Fard, an Iranian artist, experienced culture shock when she moved to Germany. The agitation and discomforts caused by moving to a new country and fitting into their culture instigated Donja to record body sounds (such as nose blowing which are considered not a proper etiquette in Iran but perceived normal in Germany) that were not fitted in the culture. Taking a slightly bold and different approach from



the rest, Zulhanafi Rosfadzilah draws inspiration from nature and produces a series of posters. Depicting his inspiration on the richness, power and luxury of Middle Eastern countries, Zulhanafi uses gold as a prominent color in his abstract expressionism posters that reflect graphic print. The clashing of 'grandeur, magnificence and luxury' of the Middle East with the idea of 'fun and superficial' of comics disrupts and ruptures the idealized privileges of some of these oil rich nations. The variety of ideas and inspirations brought forth by these artists in their works makes one to re-think and redefine how we perceive and understand life especially in these unprecedented times. Although some of the artists have managed to articulate their ideas clearly, some may still need to work and develop their ideas for better comprehension or interpretation.

Exhibition Review

Alessandra Villa



Independent Curator, Editor and Art Writer

Marketing and Communication Student (Mimec)
Bocconi University

History of Art Student (MA)
University of Turin

Graduated in Modern Literature (BA)
University of Turin

Curator
N.I.C.E Paratissima srl. Turin

As the name itself says, Confluence online residency was created with the intention of being a place of interaction and artistic exchange. Involving international emerging artists from all over the Middle East and Asia, this program aims to establish a dialogue between various artists with different backgrounds, styles, and media. The common purpose of the residency was to develop an artwork or a project starting from the inspiration which can be taken from each artist's home, city or environment. Then each artist involved started to create a personal representation of his/her house, family, hometown, or self-person.

During the two weeks scheduled, 'Confluence' converged with different stimuli and let artists measure themselves with their artistic aims and to debate about their work. Some of them like Amir Bahador Bayat and Donja Fard, approached the project with a very strong and personal identity, developing original works of art focused on contemporary issues, like family affiliation and integration. Using media

like photography or sound/video art, these two artists embodied punctually the topic of the residency, using their local environment as source of inspiration. Other artists such as Dima Abou Zannad and Khalil Muhsain used their own sensitivity, like their own language or dreams, to create an in-progress work originated by the overlaying of their own feelings and experiences. The critics of Tor Seidel and Safrizal Shahir, two internationally-known professors and artists, provided the emerging artists the possibility to focus in a better way on their purposes and on their artistic creative process. The final catalogue tries to collect all these creative attempts, linked under the spirit of generating a confluence of artworks, cultures and media.



Artists

Dima Abou Zannad

Amir Bahador Bayat

Donja Fard

Khalil Muhsain

Zul Hanafi Rosfazdilah



Dima
Abou Zannad

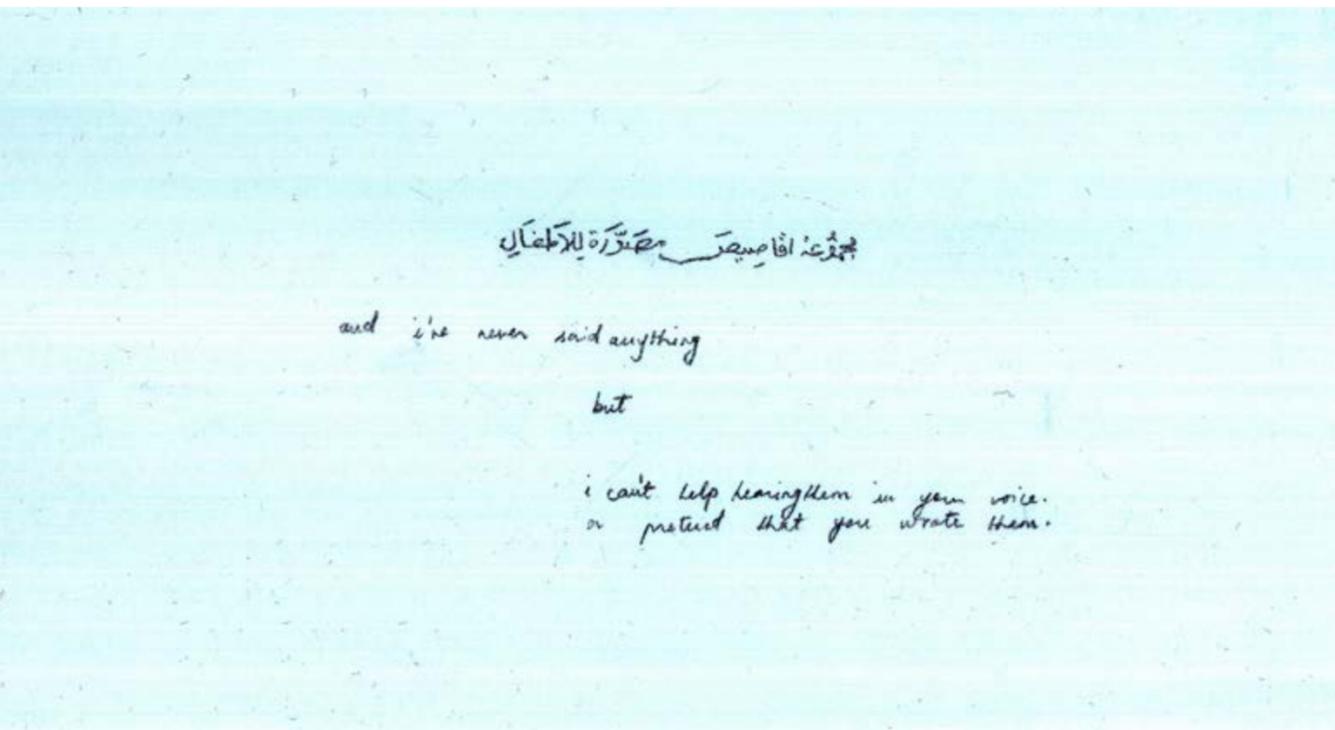


Dima Abou Zannad is a Dubai-based Palestinian-Lebanese artist. She received her Bachelor in Fine Arts at College of Fine Arts and Design (CFAD), University of Sharjah (UOS).

“Art works are a non-conceptual form of what my words are—non categorically and non-conceptually.” She explores themes of catharsis, language, symbolism, psychoanalytic transference and the use of visual metaphors within her work. Her work edges around elements of confession whilst riddling, and playfully withholding and disclosing. In her recent works, she explores the use of language within the relaying/confessing of personal vulnerabilities. Within the vulnerability there is almost a sense of aggression or maybe even hostility behind the works. Due to the strong impulsive nature of her process, she is drawn to frail and delicate media and the interaction between said materials.

Her work is driven by a need to confess and a compulsion to quickly make a mark of the overriding emotion and thought, to prove it exists, to let it out before it disappears.

Dima Abou Zannad Artworks



(Sometime between 16 march and april 29, 2021)

don't go away so soon.

2021

Carbon drawing on acetate sheets

29.8 x 42 cm

“

(Sometime between 16 march and april 29, 2021) *don't go away so soon.* is a form of documentation, a diary, a record of memories, feelings, and thoughts made through the transference of drawings of images and extracted words. The sheets hold interactions between myself, childhood stories, first language and the process of transference. The process implies thorough contemplation through the layering of the materiality within the work. Using transference, both symbolically and technically to take thought and memory onto surfaces that make a mark onto a transparent sheen surface.

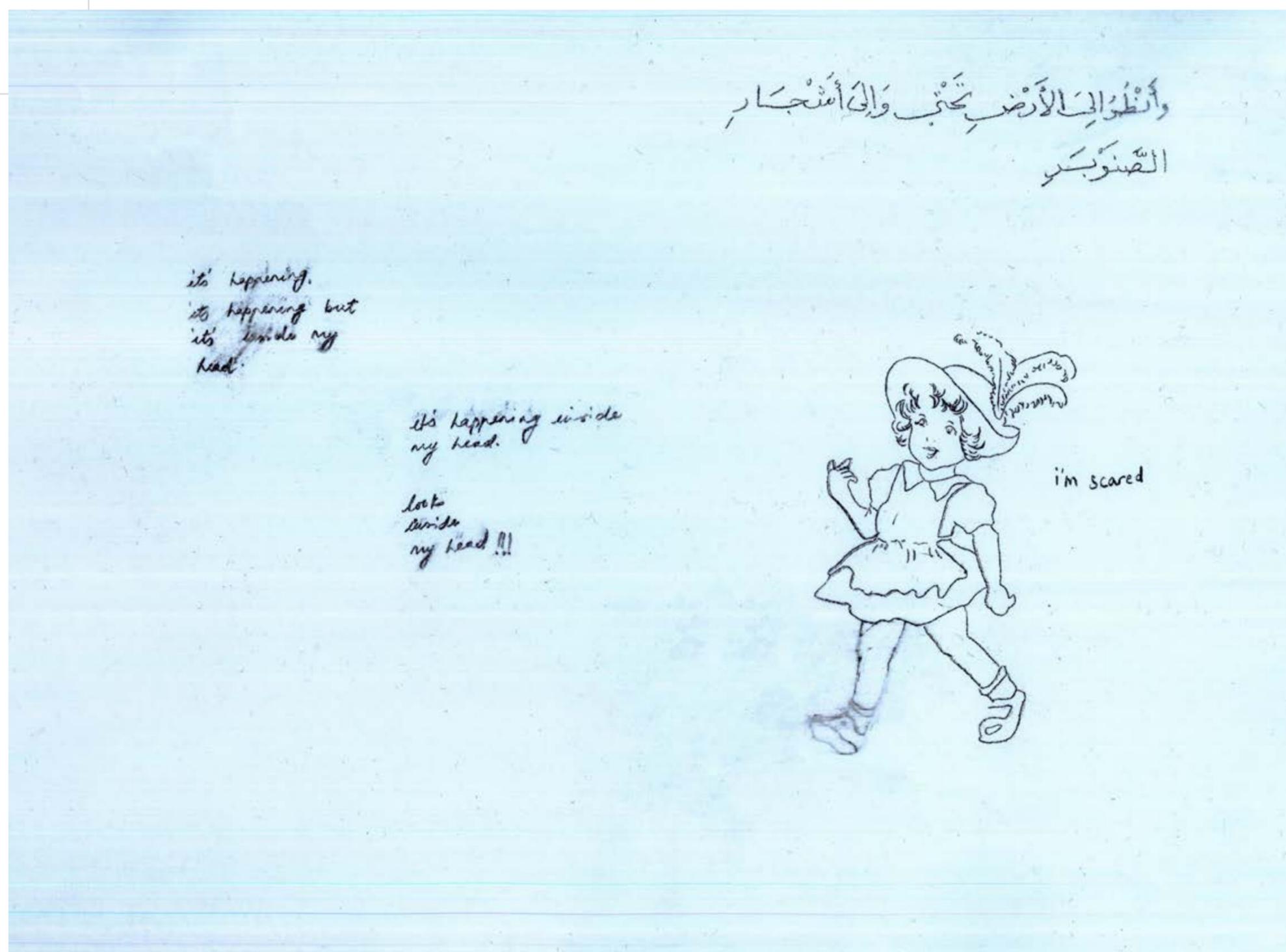
The work is not meant to ground an idea and plant it or be communicative of a specific issue. It is meant to be diminishing and fleeting, barely visible but still acts as a proof of contemplation. A proof of holding on to the tip of the thread and trail of memory somewhere. Somewhere where it's origin can be negotiated further and made sense of.

”

(Sometime between 16 march and
april 29, 2021)
don't go away so soon.

2021

Carbon drawing on acetate sheets
29.8 x 42 cm





Amirbahador
Bayat



Amirbahador Bayat was born in 1997, Tehran, Iran. He was raised in a family with artistic flairs. His educational experience includes Graphic Design from Conservatory of Fine Arts in Tehran in 2016 and BA in Photography from the College of Fine Arts in Tehran University in 2020. Photography is his preferred medium for artworks. His practice is a combination of involvement with mental space and daily life, images of fantasies and dreams that have been abstracted in parallel with the real world. All of his artwork projects are somehow integrated into his daily life in Iran. 'I don't shoot just for making an artwork, but in fact, to represent my environment, atmosphere and my experiences in a visually aesthetic manner'.

Amirbahador Bayat Artworks



Between us
2021
Photography
25 x 20 cm

“

Somewhere between two worlds, a place for the breeze to blow between here and there. I created these images by using the moldy old glass from my late grandfather's photo frame. It has been 10 years since my grandfather's passing.

The glass from his old photo frame was taken and used as a filter for my camera to look at my grandma's world. The photos are related to a confluence between my grandfather's presence and absence, and it can be interpreted as: This artwork becomes a link between the two worlds, of the living and the dead.

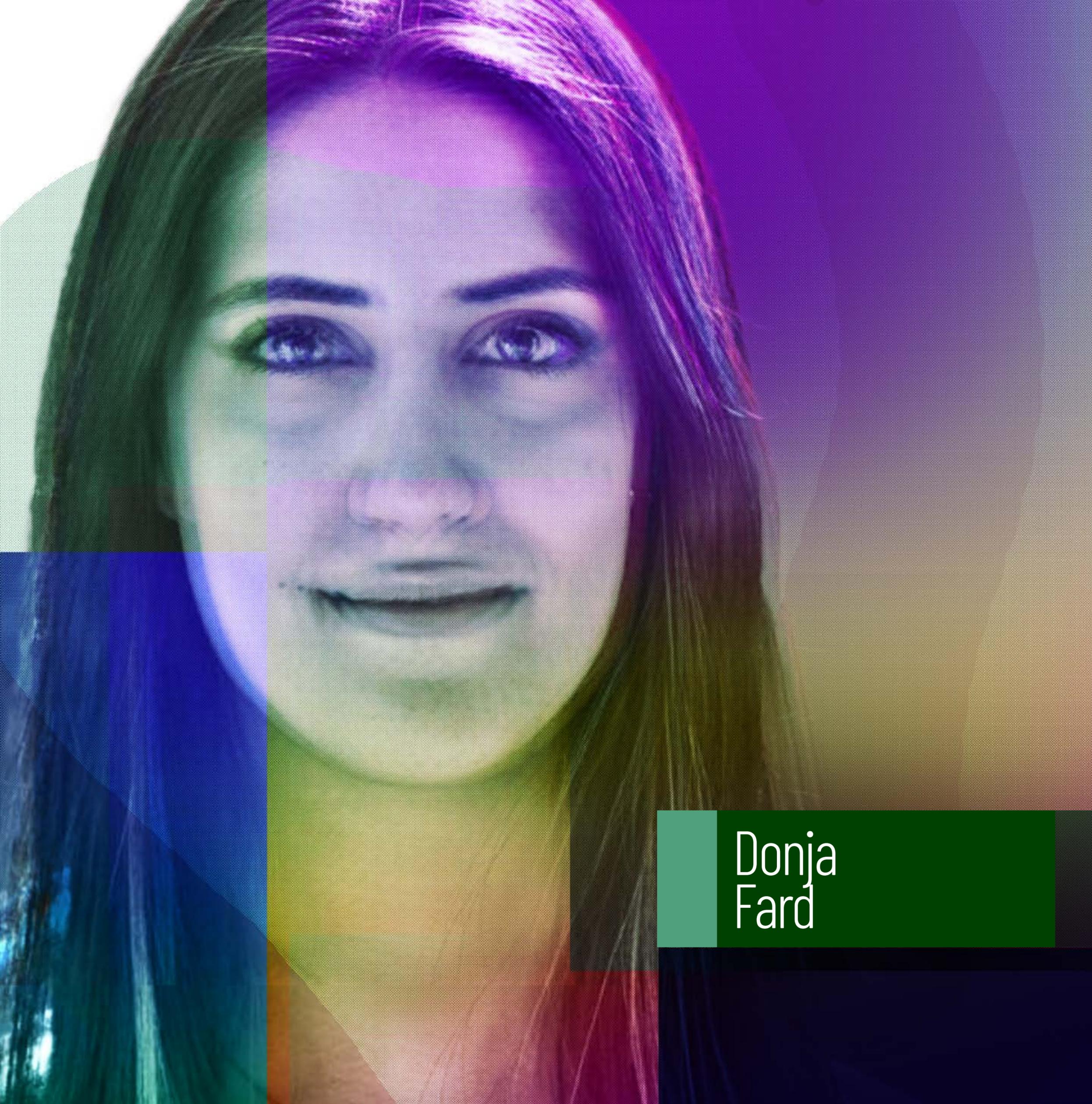
The green mold seems to have penetrated everywhere after ten years and it seems like my grandma is not like how she was before and is tired of life. But is this the view of my grandpa? How she perceived my grandmother? Or is it just the dust that has clung to grandma? It seems that he returned and looked at his house and his wife, but after his ten years away and being inside the grave, his eyes were dry. It has become rotten and could not be seen as before.

Are the photos a result of grandpa vacancy or is it grandma's life condition after ten years not having to see a single sight of grandpa's? I do not know, maybe both.

”



Between us
2021
Photography
25 x 20 cm



Donja
Fard



Donja Fard is a Tehran-based Iranian artist who was born in 1995. She received her Bachelor of Painting from University of Science and Culture (USC), Tehran in 2018. She began her Master degree in Fine Art at HBKsaar aftAer moving to Germany.

Her work primarily consists of multimedia installations incorporating natural elements like water and focuses on concepts such as sustainability.

Donja's work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in a number of countries.

“

Your perception of things is not independent of your body or culture. You grew up in the same body as everyone else, learning things that not everyone else appears to have done. You've had a unique upbringing. However, at some point, you will come into contact with people who are very similar to you. You even have the impression that they are you, and not just another half of you. "The world is a much more similar and unified place than we once thought." said Daniel Lee. So are the people! We understand each other, which enables us to coexist. We begin to believe that we are all one. But then you notice they can't even pronounce your name! Is this the way your body was raised and practiced? Do you think you have more expertise, or do you think it's because of cultural differences? SickMe is an audio installation located in the center of Saarbrücken, Germany. The Nose Blowing Sound was installed and again recorded as a documentary video with all of the city's environmental noises, focusing on the sounds that the body can make inside out, which can be disgusting or normal depending on the situation and culture. Sounds (things) that have been muffled due to our inattention to them.

Donja Fard Artworks



SickMe

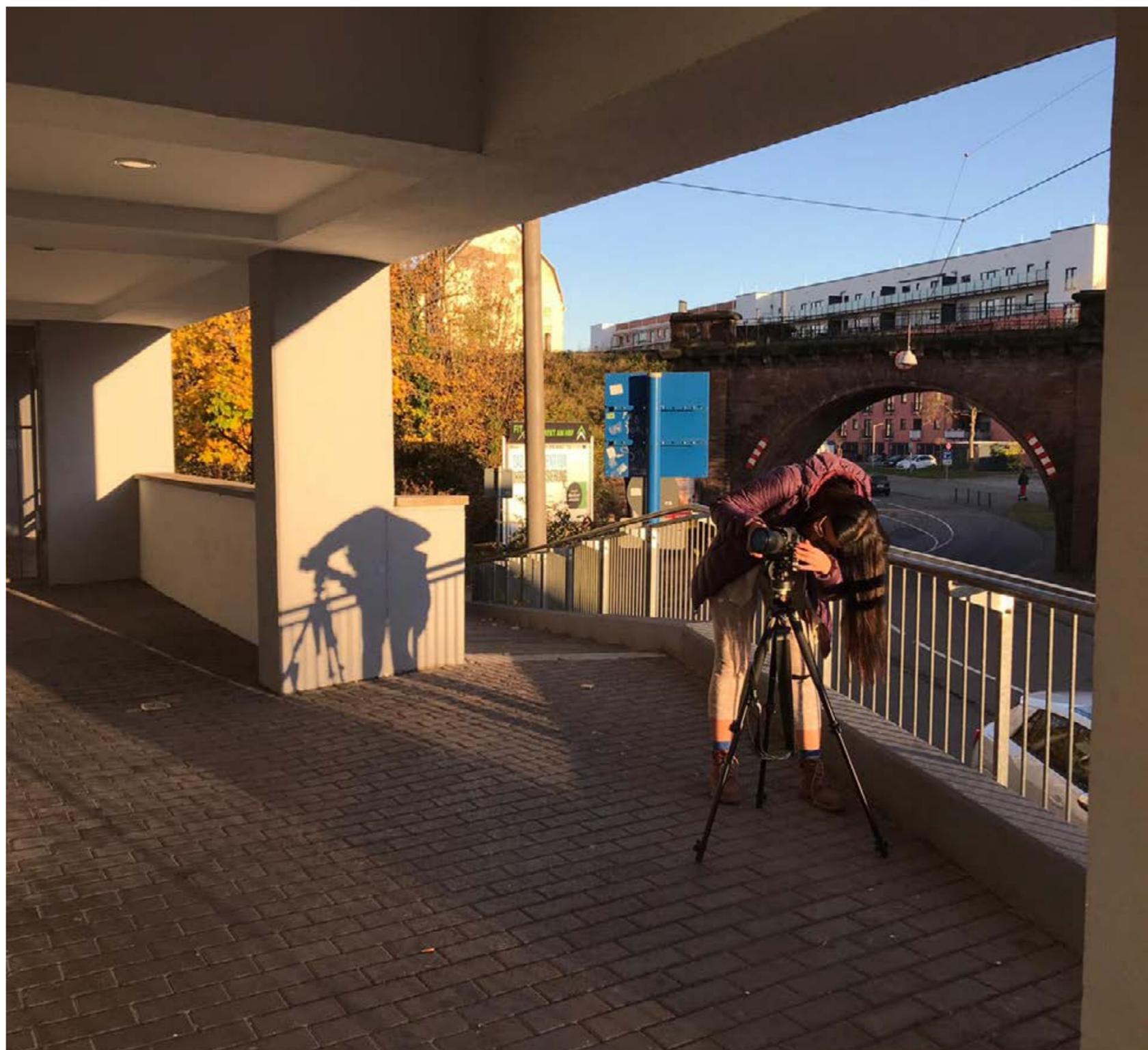
2021

Audio installation

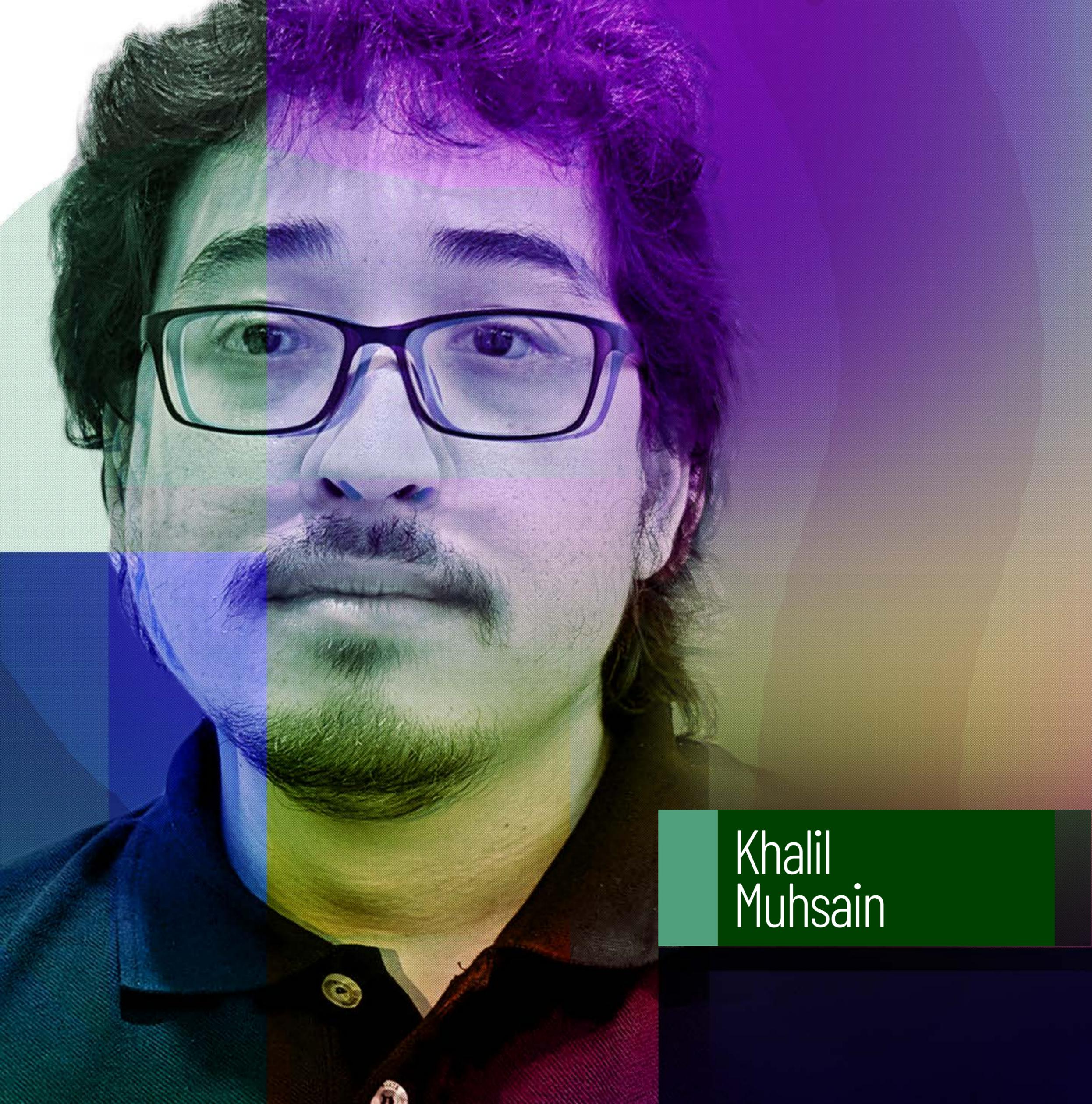
Saarbrücken, Germany

<https://donjafard.com/758/sickme/>

”



SickMe
2021
Audio installation
Saarbrücken, Germany
<https://donjafard.com/758/sickme/>



Khalil
Muhsain



Khalil Muhsain was born in 1989 in Penang, Malaysia. He is a Kuala Lumpur -based artist and has produced many media works related to paintings and sculptures. He holds a diploma in art from the Malaysian Institute of Art and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). His current practice revolves around materiality and the process of artmaking. Khalil's work also encompasses a consistent multidisciplinary approach inspired by nature in which he explores the interrelationships between landscape and memory through both constructed and discovered textures.

Khalil Muhsain Artworks



Shadow territorial disputes 5

2021

Polycaprolactone filament, acrylic paint, enamel spray paint, ethylene vinyl acetate glue on stretched polyvinyl chloride mesh
45 x 45 cm

“

While sleeping on a palm oil plantation, the artist dreamt of the exact location and was aggressively approached by a gorilla. The dream was projected as a gaming scene format. The challenge was to overcome the gorilla and finally realize that the gorilla wasn't a domestic species and was able to wake up from the dream. He speculates that it is a repressed feeling of hatred toward the palm oil industry, which is the cause of deforestation. That causes conflicts with his interest in camping trips to the waterfalls of Malaysia, which places him in a situation similar to sleeping in enemy territory. He explores methods to analyze and reconfigure pictorial space to describe and digest his dream's dense compression and interpretation. Khalil's sources were buried deep in his memory and in that mysterious part of the psyche where yearning, aspiration, and the will to express oneself live. This series of works investigate stages of "ontological space," including physical, remembered, eternal, and dream realm, all of which exist in a universe devoid of temporal restrictions.

”



Shadow territorial disputes 5

2021

Polycaprolactone filament, acrylic
paint, enamel spray paint, ethylene
vinyl acetate glue on stretched
polyvinyl chloride mesh

45 x 45 cm



Zul Hanafi
Rosfazdilah



Zul Hanafi Rosfazdilah was born in 1996, Malaysia. He graduated with Bachelor in Fine Arts (Hons) from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). His practice is usually using painting and drawing medium with visuals inspired from personal experience. His tendency to focus on drawing and painting medium's characteristic and manipulating them with his own visual sense is a major part of his working process. Currently he drew inspiration from graphic stylization of rendering and stroke especially evident in printed materials such as comics.

His experience as an artist assistant with Hasanul Isyraf Idris and apprenticeship with Haffendi Anuar, both Malaysian born artists, at the early stage of his career has helped him a lot in the development of his work especially regarding visualisation style. He was the winner of Penang Art Open 2019 (Penang State Museum and Art Gallery) for 3D category. He also completed the K[otak]Ku Virtual Art Residency organized by Haus KCH, Sarawak, Malaysia in 2021.

Mark 21

2021

Mat watercolor, ink and
acrylic on paper,
29.7 x 21 cm



Zul Hanafi Rosfazdillah Artworks

“

Frivolous impression is what the work for this residency centers upon. I was prompted to look deeper into the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Middle East, during the artist residency, since one of the artists who joined the program was a UAE graduate.

My next move was naturally to search for random images from the internet about the cities in UAE. An inconsequential image of a city in the UAE that I stumbled upon during the search inspired me for the production of the current series.

I was drawn to superficial references on movies regarding luxury, materialism and urbanization. These lead to the choice of golden armor or suit as subject matter that represent something powerful and of high value. Golden armor or suit is generally linked to superheroes. I took part of the golden armor glare and shine and rendered it in comic style. Simplification, hard edge and bold design makes the subject stand out and look dynamic. This random yet complementary relationship between inspiration, subject matter and style is a fun and playful approach which I am exploring at the moment.

”

Mark 21

2021

Mat watercolor, ink and
acrylic on paper,
29.7 x 21 cm each



CONFLUENCE

VIRTUAL
GROUP
EXHIBITION

www.ieartprojects.com