

I SPEAK ART

ZAHRA ENTEZARMAHDI , ANIL YADAV, GOODA,
JOEY QI, LIGAYA DOMINGO, SAHAR HAKIMI,
CLAUDIA BENAVENTE, MACARENA RUDÍAZ

EXHIBITION STATEMENT

The Immigrant Council for Arts Innovation (ICAI) is proud to introduce five visual artists that are newcomers to both the Arts Community and Canada. This exhibition is awarded to graduates of ICAI's Immigrant Artist Mentorship Program (IAMP), a year-long program that connects the top ten immigrant artists in Calgary, as chosen by a jury of experts and immigrant artists, to established artists and mentors. The artists, from all over the world, share their perspectives as immigrants and their self-expressions as artists in this powerful new exhibition.

In celebration of mentorship in the arts, I Speak Art also welcomes additional works from newcomer immigrant artists who are emerging from their dedicated mentorship initiatives which were lead both independently and through Arts Commons.

Zahra Entezarmahdi

ARTIST BIO

Zahra Entezarmahdi was born in Shiraz, Iran and moved to Calgary, Canada in 2018. Zahra is a painter, photographer, and art instructor with 35 years of experience of working with various painting media: oil, pastel, pencils, ink, chalk, and watercolor. However, her favorite medium is pastel. In Iran, she has participated in many provincial and national painting exhibitions like "The First and Third Biennial Painting Exhibition of Iran".

ARTIST STATEMENT

My art practice is a visual representation of my passion for the natural world and landscapes. I believe that our relationship to nature should be intuitive and is connected to our emotional state. As humans, we are rooted in nature and play a fundamental role in building a balanced life. In my landscape paintings, it is important to demonstrate that humans are not the center of the universe but a part of the ecosystem and land. It is vital that we take better care of the land around us no matter where we are from in the world. I use painting as a vehicle to discuss these views on conservation, emotional wellbeing, and our connection to nature. In this way, I would like to create a bridge between my audiences and my conception and understanding of nature and painting.

*Find more information
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Anil Yadav

ARTIST BIO

Hi, I am Anil Yadav. An urbanist and an urban sketch artist living and working in Canmore, Alberta. I am originally from northern India where I spent most of my life. I have been in love with sketching for as long as I can remember. I enjoy capturing vibrant urban spaces and natural landscapes to reflect beauty in our daily lives.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I use paper and ink as a medium to draw energetic combinations of lines to express the mood of a scene. My sketches are drawn directly using ink on paper leaving no possibility to edit once drawn. I usually start sketching as a casual daily sketch in my little pocket sketchbook that I carry everywhere I go.

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Gooda

ARTIST BIO

Gooda is an Egyptian visual artist who lives and works in Mohkinstsis/Calgary. Self-taught, he began painting as a way to examine light and colour and how they influence and affect human perception. He has since completed multiple art courses at the University of Calgary and Emily Carr University of Art + Design and for the past year has been apprenticing with artist and educator Mark Vasquez-Mackay. Gooda has exhibited both in Egypt and Calgary. His work has received the support of Calgary Arts Development, and is held in private collections in Egypt, throughout Asia, Europe, and the United States.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My art is rooted in the material curiosities of colour and light, and their inherent playfulness. Working between the figurative and the abstract, my paintings explore the depth and essence of a culture and the generations of individuals who have experienced and embodied it. As I paint, I focus on layering colour intuitively yet within certain palettes and then I utilize the way light reflects on the surface to give texture and depth. I want viewers to be transported into a vibrant world that I create with my art.

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Joey Qi

ARTIST BIO

Joey Qi is an illustrator, Who was born in China and lives in Calgary now. She is a digital artist. About twenty years ago, a magazine asked her to illustrate for them. From there, she began her career as an illustrator. During this time, she illustrated publications, some picture books and comics. And provide illustrations to companies for their brand used in advertising, social media and websites. She always tries to tell a good story with illustrations, whether in publication or in commercial illustration.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I love drawing and I love telling stories, and as an illustrator, it's a combination of the two.

Over the years, I have completed many projects. Including internet illustrations for business promotion, as well as the illustrations for literary themes like history and poetry publications. I like to try different styles in different projects.

I paint with computer. I am open to new technology. It could bring something new to art.

I am currently interested in the things around me and hope to create more works that are close and come to my life.

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Ligaya Domingo

ARTIST BIO

Ligaya Domingo is a Filipino artist based in Calgary. Her work focuses on women's experiences, social justice and feminism through photography, painting, drawing, installation, video and performance.

Ligaya has a BFA from the College of the Holy Spirit Manila and a MA in Art History from the University of the Philippines. She was part of the Mowelfund Film Institute's Cinematography Program where she explored video production.

Ligaya has exhibited her work at The Cultural Center of the Philippines, The Singapore Film Festival, Galeria Dela Raza San Francisco, among others. She is a member of the collectives "Kasibulan Women's Artists Group" and "Sinekalye".

ARTIST STATEMENT

My present interest is to explore women's experiences and narratives, such as a mother, homemaker, immigrant, employee, and artist in the middle of a pandemic. The representation of women's stories is something that has been important to me as an artist. I aim to capture domestic life from an outsider's lens - which is my camera. For this reason, my process relies heavily on documentation. I believe in the power of encapsulating these narratives as means to learn from and honor them. Exploring this in various media also allows me to look at the concepts that I discover from different angles.

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Sahar Hakimi

ARTIST BIO

Sahar Hakimi is a visual artist with remarkable proficiency and powerful intuitive approach to creativity utilizing female form and routine life. She originates from Tehran, Iran and currently resides in Calgary, Alberta. Her masterful fusion of realism with abstraction comes to fruition through an innate and harnessed use of color and composition, and deft use of oil and acrylic paint. She achieves a myriad of palpable textures and moods with every confident brush stroke. Her remarkable versatility is a tribute to her sensitivity to her subjects and keen observation skills. Sahar obtained Bachelor degree specializing in art composition and painting from Azad University and Master of Art in painting from Alzahra University in Tehran.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My artworks are inspired by the femininity of women as well as components of everyday routine life including time, space, nostalgia and dream. This art paradigm is inspired by photography, magazine and collage observations transferred onto canvas. The repetition and close observations and engagement of ordinary objects on canvas are described as a memory of a precious moment, where the past and future of that moment is felt through the painting by using female form, patterns of rugs, tiles, and wallpapers. My goal is to inspire those who see my work to look more carefully at the world around them, to discover beauty in unusual places.

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Claudia Benavente

ARTIST BIO

In Chile, her artworks were awarded many times during her school-days. This stimulus impuled Claudia to create several pieces in her life using different media as oil painting, clay and wool as a self taught artist. Claudia started mosaic in 2006 through serendipity, and was fascinated with the ancient artworks. As a result, she created few religious pieces which found home in different families with devotion to the Virgin Mary and "Dios de la Misericordia". She emigrated to Canada in 2007. As a veterinarian, her artworks reveal her passion for horses and their spirits. Her love of nature is evident in her colourful compositions.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Discovering tiles in different colours and textures is like a treasure with which you can create an artwork with details as a painting. It is fascinating the transformation from a piece of ceramic in a piece of art. My interest are religious motifs, horses portraits and birds inspired in the ancient Greek and Roman era. They communicate something special to me; behind them I can find peace, joy and delicateness at the same time. Each of my artwork has a story behind and a reason to be created at a specific time. Mosaic would again become a grounding force for me upon moving to Canada.

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Macarena Ruidíaz

ARTIST BIO

Macarena emigrated to Canada from Chile in 2007. Moving to this country proved challenging with language and learning at high school, but also it allowed her to participate in groups with special needs, discovering people with an enormous human compassion. She restarted working with oil paintings through the mentorship of a Chilean-Canadian artist, inspired by the observation of the amazing Canadian scenery. Macarena has improved significantly her painting skills with Rocio Graham, mentor who has deepened her connection with the natural world. Macarena has exhibited with SPARK Disability Art Festival twice, and Arts Commons window galleries in 2016, 2018 and 2019 respectively.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The story of my life, I have never been able to express myself fluidly using the oral or written language due to my learning disabilities diagnosed early at school. Fortunately, I discovered painting, and art allows me to convey my emotions and feelings and communicate to the world how I see it. My paintings reveal my observation of Mother Nature, her landscapes, flora and fauna. Through the use of bright and pure colours, my artworks reflect the enjoyment of life, the purity and simplicity of nature in a way that is not affected by the use of words. Green, my favourite colour, evokes lush vegetation and transfers peace to my soul.

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