

SYNTHESIS



T·U·M

The Unapparent Magazine





Editor's Letter

Synthesis:



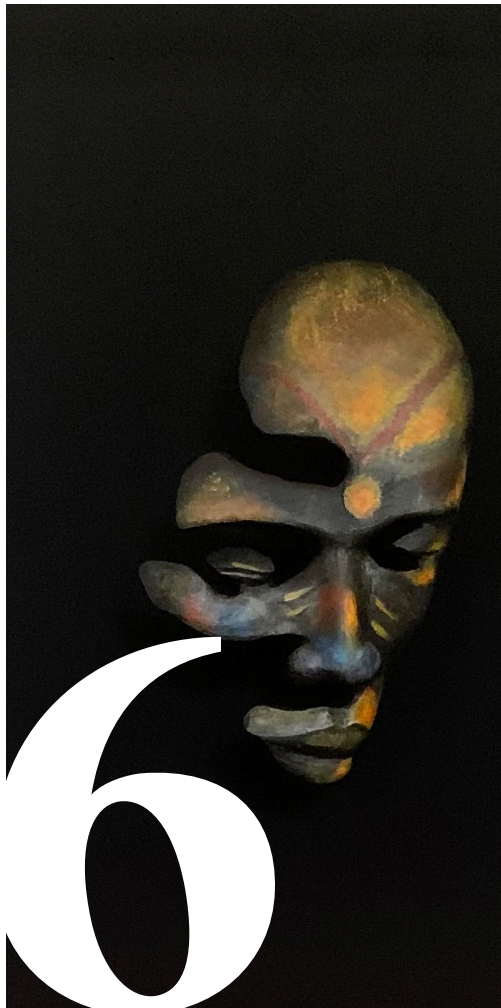
Synthesis isn't just a method—it's a mindset. It's what occurs when fragments of identity, experience, and influence are collected, examined, and shaped into something that feels whole. It doesn't pursue perfection, but rather meaning. It's the art of creating something beautiful from what life provides us.

In art, synthesis is everywhere. It's how a single moment becomes eternal, translated through gesture, color, word, or sound. It's how memory collides with vision. It's the patience to allow something unfamiliar to unfold and the boldness to weave it into our work. It's how artists create not only from scratch but from what's been lived, felt, lost, and found again.

Sometimes we start with a path in mind. But as we move forward, new influences find us—people, places, mistakes, revelations. Without realizing it, they become part of the process. They deepen the story and change the outcome. That's synthesis: not just appearing in our lives but reshaping them.

In this issue, you'll find artists who understand that synthesis signifies growth. It encompasses detail, intention, and freedom. It's where vulnerability meets design—where raw becomes refined. These pages delve into how the act of combining isn't chaotic—it's clarifying. It's how art evolves to be not just expressive, but expansive.

— The Unapparent Team —





CONTENTS:

- 6 - 7** **Salvator M:** *Light & Shadow.*
- 8 - 17** **Sankara Mutoni:** *Rediscovering Roots Through Art.*
- 18 - 21** **Will Shively:** *Spontaneity & Creativity.*
- 22-25** **Naomi Fuks:** *Artistic DNA.*
- 26 -29** **Bahram Ashoteh:** *Recycled Masterpiece.*
- 30 - 33** **Samuel M. Saucedo:** *Painting Through Silent Observation.*
- 34 - 41** **Aleks Grilz:** *The Natural & Technology.*

SALVATOR M:

Light & Shadow

As a self-taught artist, I began exploring sculpture three years ago, merging my love for art with my fascination for light and shadow. Inspired by chiaroscuro masters like Caravaggio and Rembrandt, I create unique pieces using acrylic and wood. My sculptures are framed in a 6 cm-deep structure supported by an aluminum rod. The frame's deep black bottom absorbs over 99% of light, enhancing relief and contrast.

I sculpt only what the light reveals, leaving shadows to emphasize the tension between visibility and absence. This invites viewers to engage with the work, encouraging them to mentally fill in the gaps. The dialogue between the artwork and the audience is integral to my artistic vision. My themes encompass influences from pop culture, faces, the esoteric, music, and Hollywood cinema of the 1940s to 1960s, inviting exploration and emotional connection.



SANKARA MUTONI:

Rediscovering Roots Through Art

A Conversation with SANKARA MUTONI

by Anna Atsu

Sankara Mutoni is a Belgium based artist, architect, painter and sketchbook author. Sankara's work explores themes of identity, nature, culture, and resilience. In this conversation, he takes us on a journey into his roots in Rwanda and the discipline that drives his artistry.





Can you tell us a little about your childhood? What kind of environment did you grow up in, and how did it influence your artistic journey?

I was born in Rwanda in 1983, not far from the Congo, near Lake Kivu. I'm not sure if you know the region—it's a border area with Congo, in the part that connects to the south of Rwanda. So, I was born there, but we didn't stay for long. I think... I can't even say how many years. Then, my parents moved to Kigali. So, I spent my childhood there until 1994, until the genocide war. I was 11 when we left Rwanda. That's my childhood.

So, I would say I had a rather simple childhood. Simple in the sense that my parents had the means to provide us with what we needed. We didn't lack anything. But it's a childhood I often think back on and really loved. I was a very restless and active child. Yes, yes, you can still see it, I think, because I haven't changed! Well, I've changed, but I've kept this need to always be doing something.

As a child, I often broke my toys because I wanted to create my own. So, I made my toys out of wire. It was already, in a way, an act of creation.

Another significant element of my childhood was my connection to the countryside, especially to my grandparents. A few times a year, we would visit my grandmothers—both of them. My father's mother, in particular, was a countrywoman. She raised livestock and worked in the fields. I often

accompanied her because, for me, it was my favourite environment. There was so much to do, so many hills to explore! My grandmother let me do anything I wanted, as grandmothers do, and I loved going there.

There, I saw animals I didn't see in Kigali—chickens running around, turkeys... I remember wanting turkey eggs, but those animals are very mean! It was a childhood I truly appreciated, and now, as time passes, I realise how much it shaped me.



In reality, I'm someone who could live in a forest.



And this was evident even when I was little—I was very sensitive to eat animals.

My mother even built a chicken coop in Kigali for me because I wanted animals at home. At that time, we bought live chickens in. They lived in an enclosure, and after a few weeks, I would cry when it was time to eat them... but I eventually did. It was a very curious cultural relationship with animals.

Today, at my house, I also have chickens. I love my chickens. If they get sick, I treat them and do everything I can. But at a certain point, we are human beings: I end up consuming them. My neighbour is shocked that I kill chickens I've raised while he buys chickens already killed at the store.

Childhood in Rwanda was very free, and I realise now that it was filled with carefreeness. For example, I notice that today, here, there is much less carefreeness, even for children.

Parents are often anxious about their future and their children's ability to become autonomous and make choices. In Rwanda, parents were not overly worried about the future, and I think this allowed us to grow up in a less anxiety-ridden environment. Perhaps it was also because we didn't have social media or much awareness of what was happening elsewhere. This lack of exposure may have played a role.

My childhood, despite everything, was something I appreciated deeply. It shaped me and gave me a perspective on freedom and carefreeness. Today, working on my projects, I am uncovering stories I was never told, stories I didn't even know existed. Through this work, I also explore architecture—not just buildings but the way people live, their beliefs, their routines, and even how they eat.

Architecture reflects the synthesis of life in a single object: the house.

This project allows me to rediscover parts of my upbringing that I miss.

Speaking of setbacks, when did you first understand this was your passion? How did it all begin? Was it at your grandmother's?

drawing that you've developed?

I've always drawn; it has never stopped. I still draw. I never took breaks. I take breaks from painting or the mediums I use—for example, I might not paint for a year. But in that year, I would draw. I would create a new book in which I drew. So, there's no stop.

Even if there were times when I didn't paint, I was designing furniture. That's also a form of creation. Drawing has always been there; it's never stopped. By the way, I discovered late that I was dyslexic. I write as I think, not as I "should." I've never been good at spelling.



From childhood, I always drew. In school, I was the one with the best drawings. That never changed. I always drew, and I was always above average. That was never questioned.

Generally, the people I encountered as a child already recognised me as an artist, even though I didn't recognise myself that way. In any case, when I arrived in the West, they outright called me "the artist." Sometimes, my name would even disappear; they'd just call me "the artist." That was my nickname, even though I didn't describe myself that way, which was quite funny.

Do you have a specific process or routine for

Unconsciously, I think I developed drawing to express myself. When I drew something, people understood what I wanted to say better than with my words. That's where I think the idea originated, something I had internalised since childhood. I developed drawing to counterbalance the lack of writing skills. When I went to study architecture, I didn't learn to draw because I already knew how to paint, draw, and understand perspective. I didn't learn those things at architecture school.

What I did learn was new mediums. That's the thing. You can't say someone "taught" you to

draw; that would be a lie. I learned mostly on my own. Drawing is like music—you can't say someone "taught" you to play guitar. Yes, someone might give you tips, but ultimately, you teach yourself because the discipline comes from doing it.

I didn't have money to buy materials at the time, so school was a great opportunity to experiment with products. For instance, I discovered acrylics and markers used on tracing paper at school.

I couldn't afford to buy those materials until I started working. In school, I would borrow water markers from classmates whose parents could afford them. The school didn't provide those materials because they were too expensive. Thanks to classmates with different financial means and access to materials, I discovered new tools for drawing. That's what school primarily offered me.

Personally, I didn't learn to draw at school. It's pointless to go to school to "learn" to draw. What I learned, I learned by doing it a thousand times, not ten times—a thousand. Sure, there's theory. Theories about drawing faces or perspectives can be helpful, but honestly, you don't need someone to teach you those. You can start on your own, make mistakes, and learn.

You mentioned rediscovering your roots and how your experiences shaped your art. Could you tell us about the connection between your personal history and your creative work?

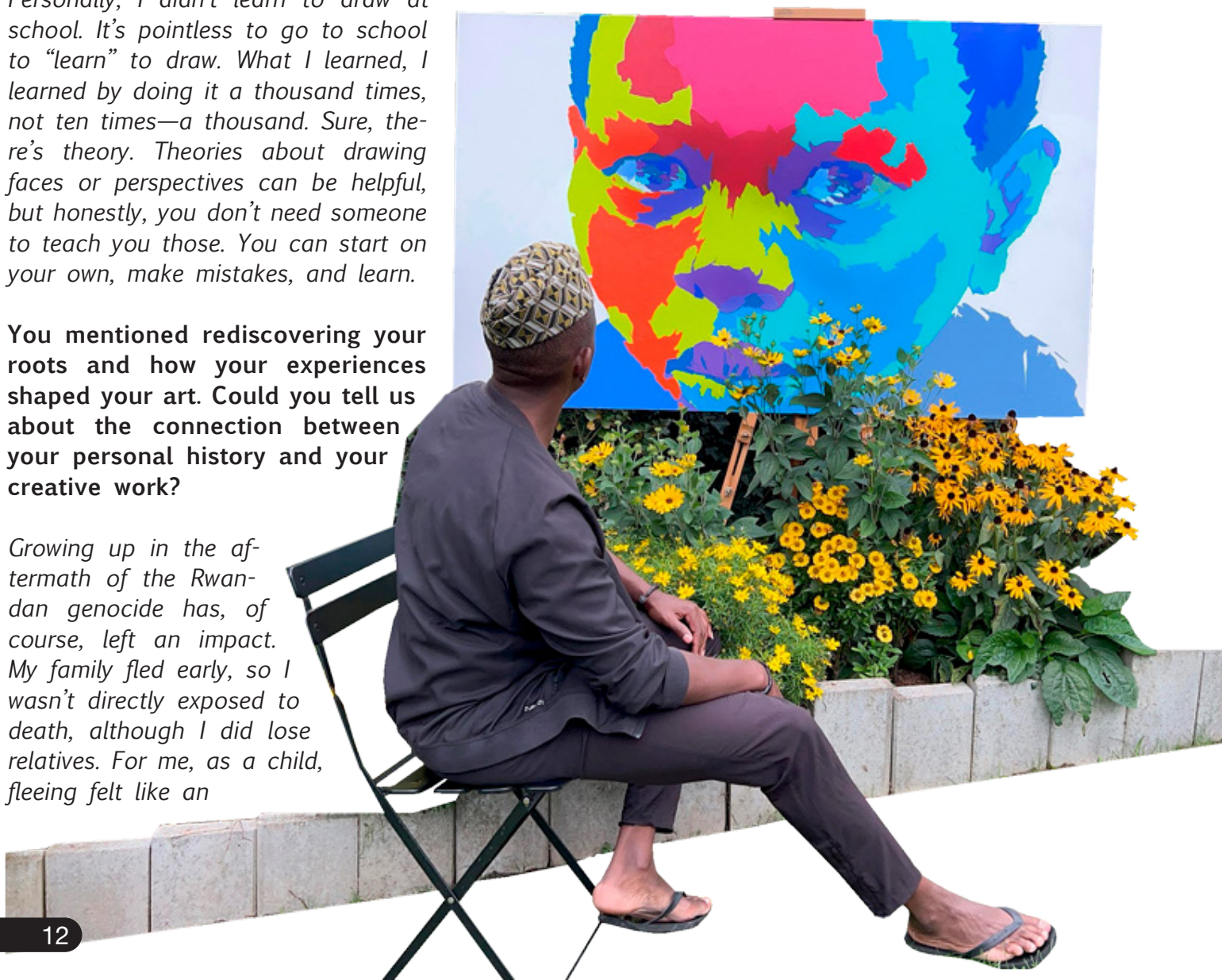
Growing up in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide has, of course, left an impact. My family fled early, so I wasn't directly exposed to death, although I did lose relatives. For me, as a child, fleeing felt like an

adventure. Although we saw some corps on the way, it didn't feel heavy. I loved change, so travelling brought new experiences—new people, objects, languages.

What challenges did you face when transitioning to the West, and how did they shape you as an artist?

It was only when we settled in Belgium that the weight of everything began to surface. It wasn't that long ago when I experienced a personal crisis. It was the war catching up to me, the memories and questions resurfacing: Why did my father die? Why did we leave Rwanda? What is my place as a Black person in the West?

These questions led me back to Rwanda. For the first time, I confronted a world where people who looked like me were the majority.





It was a shock, even though I had grown up in that environment. Seeing a Black person greet you at the airport, carry your bags, drive the taxi—it was a striking contrast to my life in Belgium. Returning to Rwanda made me realise how disconnected I had become from my roots. I felt both foreign and familiar there.

Every death takes a part of us with it. Art, in a broad sense, became a way to reconnect with those lost fragments of myself.

Art, for me, became a way to process these experiences. I began painting children—huge portraits I consider self-portraits.

The war affects everyone, directly or indirectly. Losing family means losing parts of yourself and your history. My grandmother died 3 years ago. While writing my book about Rwanda, I regretted not being able to ask my late grandmother questions about her life, her mother, and our heritage.

Around the same time, my personal style transformed. I wasn't always dressed as I am now; old photos show me in rap-style clothes and caps. That transformation was symbolic, reflecting my journey of self-awareness and embracing my story.



When you think of the young artists living in Kigali, or in general, in Rwanda or anywhere else around the globe, what advice would you give to young artists who are just starting their artistic careers?

I live from my art, but I don't think I am well-placed to advise anyone. I wouldn't claim myself a right to counsel but in my consideration, it is just as in life: You have to professionalise. If you wish to live out of something, become a cook or a gardener—it's the same principle.

That's my approach—you have to professionalise what you do and work—to find your sector and make your production useful. As in the market, if



you would like to create something for sale, you need to get to your market. The difficulty with that is similar to many other professions; you all approach becoming an entrepreneur of your own art, which is scatted. Often, artists lack that approach: we don't have a vision of our art and the way our art is commercially "useful".

So yes, there is talent; people require your work because they recognise talent, but there is an added requirement that doesn't count as much in other professions—your personality, which sometimes counts even more than what we produce. We have to work on ourselves and on what we produce. Let's imagine that I sell computers. In fact, the person who wants to buy a computer from me doesn't need to know much about me, whereas if I am required to make illustrations in a project, people want to know who I am. That's the difference. Your personality is a sales driver and, in some cases, the only sales factor! And that's kind of the deal in the story. Often, artists are not business-minded.

How do you balance commissioned work with your personal projects? Is there a distinction in how you approach them?

I have commissioned work—illustrations with precise schedules, deadlines, and budgets. That's a straightforward job like any other. For my personal

work, it's the same thing because, for me, it's still work. I don't rely on my personal feelings to start creating.

I set goals and stay professional. Whether I feel good, bad, or normal, I work. It's like going to a job. I apply that same approach to all my projects. Whether you're sick or not doesn't matter. I've adopted that mindset, which works well for me. For instance, when I was preparing for an exhibition in Dakar, I started painting the pieces in late August for a November show.

I didn't wait for the "right" moment to paint. Feeling bad or good didn't matter. You have objectives to meet. Once you start working, introspection naturally follows. It's not something you wait for—it begins as soon as you pick up your tools. This discipline is vital because art is not just about feelings.

To be an artist, you have to professionalise your craft.

It's not about waiting for inspiration; it's about doing. That's how you become an artist—by setting goals and working towards them. That's why I say: We are not artists, we become artists by professionalising. All great artists who could live from their profession we admire were either able to professionalise their art or someone has done it for them.

I believe that artists who have commercialised their art have influenced your work.

I recently watched a documentary on Claude Monet, a painter I deeply admire for two reasons. First, he was a master of colour and gardens, both of which resonate with me. Second, he transformed his art into a business in his 40s. During the Franco-Prussian War—France's conflict with Prussia, now part of modern-day Poland—he fled to England. Upon his return to France, he professionalised his art by becoming his own gallerist. There are numerous anecdotes of him actively seeking ways to commercialise his work. Take Mark Rothko, for instance. While not a painter I admire entirely, he serves as an interesting example. Rothko was not particularly commercial.





An introvert by nature, he relied on his gallerists to promote and sell his art, something he couldn't have done himself. Public engagements made him uncomfortable, and he often avoided answering questions. As a Lithuanian Jew in America, he faced ridicule for his accent during his university years, often from the sons of the bourgeoisie. Ironically, it was this same bourgeois class that later bought his paintings. This deeply unsettled him, and he sold his works reluctantly, as he didn't fully grasp the "game" of the art market.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, there's Salvador Dalí. Love him or not, he wasn't shy about selling his art. He essentially became his own gallerist. Here, we see two contrasting approaches: Rothko's hesitance and Dalí's unabashed commercialisation.

Then there's Pablo Picasso, who stands apart. Picasso turned his art into a brand and amassed an estimated fortune of 800 million euros by the time of his death. His legacy led to a protracted legal battle among his ex-spouses and heirs, lasting six years to divide his fortune. Picasso started with nothing, living in a squat in Paris. Yet, he ascended to incredible wealth by embracing a vision of himself as a creator of luxury art. Like Monet and Dalí, he understood the value of his work and its place in the market.

René Magritte offers another perspective. He wasn't initially commercial, but his career took off after World War II when American collectors began seeking European artists. Unlike Monet, whose career spanned decades of consistent success, Magritte's recognition came in the last ten years of his life. Claude Monet, however, stands out for his lifelong ability to balance art and commerce. He lived comfortably, producing and selling his work for fair prices. Visiting his home and gardens in Giverny, where he lived for 43 years, offers a glimpse into his success. He died in 1926 at the age of 86—a remarkable age for that era—after a life devoted to art.

As artists, it's tempting to say, "This is what I've created. Please take care of it." But that approach rarely works. Monet understood this. He recognised that art must sustain itself, not only as a creation but also as a business.

You understood very early that you wouldn't want to live a life like Van Gogh...

Exactly. I realised that very early on. I knew I wanted to live from my art and avoid the financial struggles that many of my artist friends face. I didn't want that life. I wanted to be creative, but that's the paradox—your creativity can make you poor if you don't have resources. You have countless ideas and projects you could accomplish, but the lack of means turns them into unfulfilled dreams, leaving you bitter.

I've seen many artists grow resentful by the end of their lives. I often say there's nothing worse than having a talent you can't live off because it becomes a heavy burden. It's better not to have a talent than one you don't know what to do with. Without talent, you might find yourself happier than living with the agony of unused potential.

That's very true. As Maya Angelou famously said, "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."

Exactly. If you know how to sing but never pursue singing, teaching, or anything related to music, you'll live with constant regret. And a life lived in regret is not a life at all.

Let this be a closure of our conversation: "It is regret for the things we did not do that is inconsolable."—Sydney J. Harris

It's been such a pleasure delving into the details of your inspiring story. Thank you for sharing your perspective on art and creativity. We wish you the best of luck with your future projects—and it sounds like you have many ahead!

WILL SHIVELY:

Spontaneity & Creativity

Shively's artistic journey is a synthesis of spontaneity and creativity. With over 40 years of experience, he has embraced photography as a career and a playful extension of his creative vision. His willingness to defy convention and experiment with techniques allows him to create works that resonate with deeper meanings, showcasing his ability to transform ordinary subjects into captivating art. This blend enriches his photography and invites viewers to engage with the complexities and nuances inherent in each piece.









NAOMI FUKS:

Artistic DNA

Synthesizing my creations has always been essential to my vision, woven into my artistic DNA. This process involves merging the new with the ancient to create a temporary artistic language. By blending the old with the new and the ancient with the modern, I produce distinct and original works of art.

I have always known deep down that I would one day become a famous artist. I began painting at the young age of three and haven't stopped since. I draw inspiration from many great art masters: Leonardo da Vinci, Dalí, Picasso, and, of course, my beloved Frida Kahlo, all of whom have greatly influenced me. However, my primary inspiration comes from my beloved Gustav Klimt, whose talent for portraying women and the unique textures of gold in his artwork has always fascinated me. Additionally, I find inspiration in ethnic and ancient textures, including Egyptian symbols and African designs.

In my portraits, I tell a unique story; each vision conveys a distinct expression, while the eyes and body language whisper a mysterious poem. There are lights and shadows, numerous layers, and translucency. I entered this world knowing my purpose: I am here to illuminate it with my creations and visions. The most important thing for me is the ability to connect with the souls of my supporters. I want them to feel the excitement and share the emotions that arise when viewing my art. My art is contemporary, blending various visions and unique ideas from the ancient past to the present.

It's mystical, mysterious... It's my artistic DNA.





NAOMI FUK





BAHRAM ASHOTEH:

Recycled Masterpiece

Although I've been passionate about drawing and painting since childhood, I worked as a car mechanic for 17 years. I began sculpting at the age of 33 and am entirely self-taught. My sculptures are one-of-a-kind, distinguished by a unique technique that combines recycled metal and wood. The warmth of the wood balances the coldness of the metal, resulting in a striking synthesis of materials and feeling.

By working with recycled metal, my goal is to promote sustainability and environmental awareness. I aim to inspire a culture that values recycling and creative reuse. Through my work, I want to show that it's possible to create powerful, meaningful art, even masterpieces, using discarded metal and waste materials.









SAMUEL M. SAUCEDO:

Painting Through Silent Observation

In Samuel M. Saucedo's painting, what seems lifeless possesses a quiet form of vitality. His still lifes, landscapes, and narrative scenes are not just exercises in observation but intimate environments where time bends and unfolds.

Samuel paints from contemplation, guided by a naturalistic sensitivity that aims not to document but to uncover the symbolic within the real. His works do not shout; they whisper. They speak of mourning, fear, memory—of what fades away quietly. In that silent gesture lies the strength of his painting.

Trained in academic drawing and painting, and deeply drawn to chiaroscuro, Samuel creates images where light reveals not only form but also emotion. There is a restrained melancholy in his compositions, as well as a quiet acceptance of time's passing. His painting does not dramatize death: it listens to it. It observes it in dried leaves, in stems that still hold on, in the austere beauty of what no longer is.







ALEKS GRILZ:

The Natural & Technology

Blurb: "There is a synthesis between the natural and technology.
It's the gradual direction of our culture"





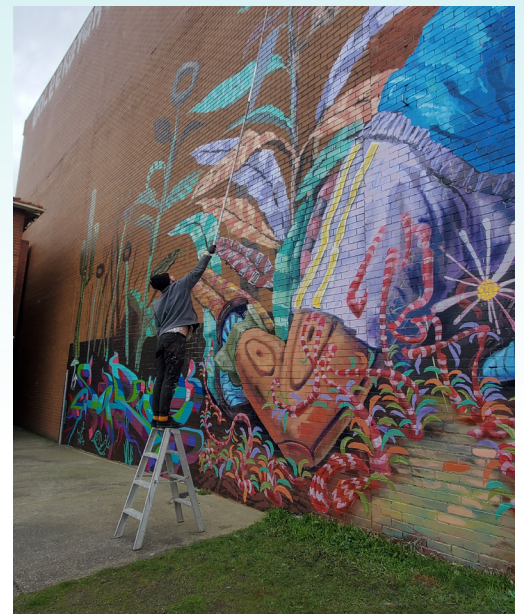












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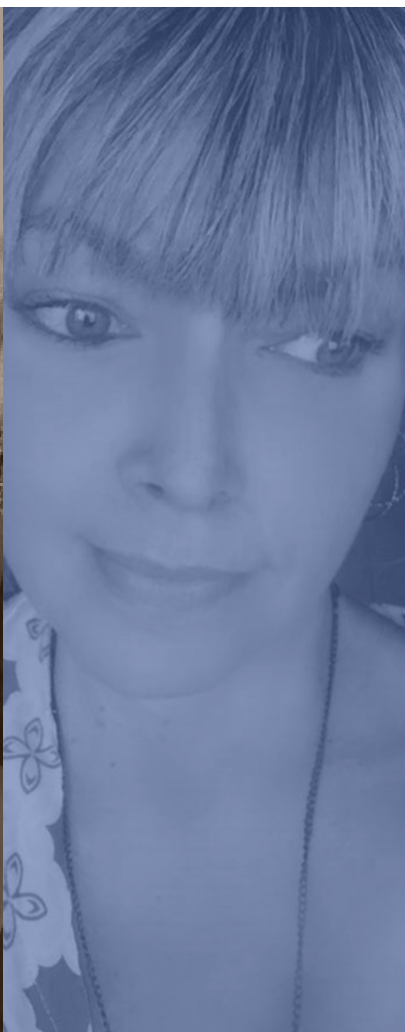
I



II



III



IV

I ~

Salvator M.

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III ~

Will Shively

Columbus, Ohio (USA)

IG: @willydogboy

II ~

Sankara Mutoni

Rwanda (Based in Belgium)

IG: @mutonisketches

IV ~

Naomi Fuks

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V

V ~

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VI

VI ~

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VII

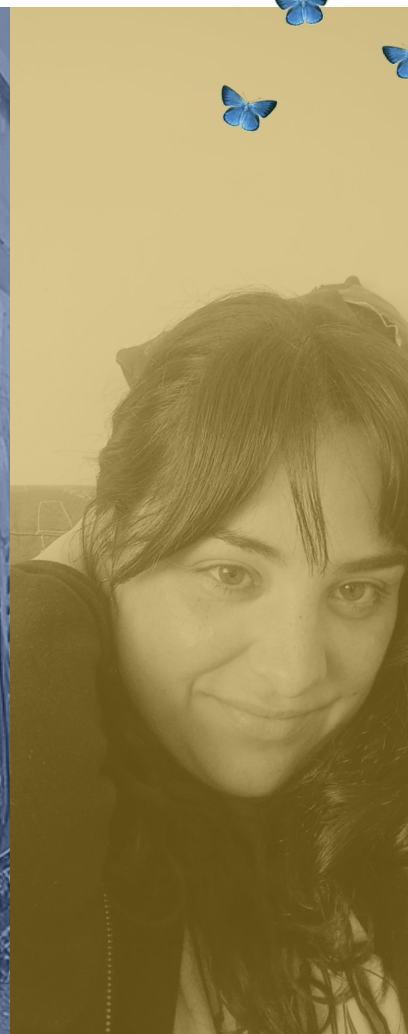
VII ~

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VIII

VIII ~

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