

ARTICULATE

flesh

OLIVER JONES
MOSTAFA NODEH
FERNANDO SUÁREZ REGUERA
CECILIA KLEMMENTSSON
JUDITH DE LEEUW

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#27
APR 21

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HYPER REALIST PAINTER

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flesh

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flesh

/flɛʃ/

noun

The soft substance consisting of muscle and fat that is found between the skin and bones of a human or an animal.

"she grabbed Anna's arm, her fingers sinking into the flesh"

As the sentence stating the example above suggests, flesh is also metaphorically used, as a synonym for skin or more superficially, the surface of a person, as you will read about with the British visual artist Oliver Jones. While the Iranian photographer Mostafa Nodeh, give us an insight into the surface of nature, and beyond.

When the Spanish artist Fernando Suárez conducts his sculptures, flesh has the meaning of embodiment and the surface of his materials becoming the skin. Sweedish painter Cecilia Klemmenson suggests that the reproduction of skin in visual arts, need fleshiness to seem real. To obtain this fleshy assimilation of reality, she will let you into her methods of mixing colors. Dutch urban artist Judith De Leeuw, dives deep below the surface in her projects, where flesh assimilates the core of her creations, designed to make awareness and social justice.

 Hyper Realist Painter

OLIVER JONES

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OLIVER JONES

THE SURFACE OF A BEING

The illustrations of Oliver Jones are rendered using pastel, which is an important component of the works, by the way of further describing the surface of flesh

an article written by **Carmen Line Hust**

The drawings of the British artist Oliver Jones (b. 1985) aim to dispel a contrived imagery of flesh that is flaunted to us through media, social media and industry, and endeavors to re-advertise a more truthful version of it, which is not limited to the mainstream media version of it. His work questions society's requirement for social inclusion and perfectionism, by observing the regimes and procedures widely used in the pursuit of these.

In these exact social observations, Jones finds his creative drive. He argues that the need to observe might be inherent in all artists, while he finds social behaviors and the ways in which they are manipulated intriguing. He states that now more than ever the pursuit for social acceptability seems frantic certainly driven by one of the most significant societal drivers in history – social media, which is one of the key influencers informing his ideas.

The drawings of Oliver Jones are rendered using pastel, which is an important component of the works, by the way of further describing the surface of flesh. This is largely due to the similarities it has to flesh not only physically, because of its fragile,

delicate nature, but also through its application, which is directly comparable to the way we would touch and handle our own skin, especially when applying products.

His work is absolutely pre-determined. Jones works closely with the photographic image and the toughest part of the work is the recreation of the mental image he's conjured, physically, in order to take the exacting resource images to work from. The work does not stray very far at all from the photo which he initially created, which is why he knows largely whether a piece of work will work or not, when transferred to paper with pastel. The toughest part of the work is also one of the most exciting parts of the processes to Jones – to be able to pluck the image out of his head and make it reality.

The works of Jones are rarely constrained by the 'who' he is, and is not really trying to describe the actual individual, but more superficially the surface and the exterior. A recurring theme in the work is commenting on advertising/industry and the representation of flesh in the media and social media.

PREVIOUS PAGES: [3 Steps to Younger Looking Skin Pt 1](#), [2](#) & [3](#)

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3 Steps to Younger Looking Skin 2.0

A close-up photograph of an elderly person's face, showing wrinkles and a blue surgical glove touching the forehead. The person has grey hair and a serious expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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OLIVER JONES
THE SURFACE OF A BEING

OLIVER JONES

THE SURFACE OF A BEING

Oliver Jones, aim to dispel a contrived imagery of flesh that is flaunted to us through media, social media and industry, and endeavors to re-advertise a more truthful version of it.

According to Jones, very little of that sort of imagery is centered upon representing the sitter or model as an individual and because he plays upon similar imagery, the images don't rely upon the perfect model. Instead, Jones tries to re-advertise a more everyday version, one that we encounter so often that we become unreceptive to it, much like the visions of perfection flaunted to us through media and industry and as a consequence fueling the pursuit of a false reality. That being said, the subjects that Jones do use have to possess a certain level of intrigue for him, as it might be a texture, a coloration or a structure that he believes to be visually impactful. It is not uncommon for Jones to use models that he knows, since he can visualize them in the work and have already mentally used them as reference when concocting the idea – however it is not unlike him to stop someone in the street and ask them to be part of a piece of work..

Oliver Jones is very taken by the technical skills of the artists of old times, the Swiss painter Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702-1789) for example, a fellow pastel painter. Jones can identify aspects of Liotard's work, where Jones' own method of using the medium would throw up certain issues and he can only marvel at how Liotard might have overcome them. However, Jones takes inspiration from so many creatives, not always correlating to his own work, but serving as an instigator for wanting to get into the studio and do something. He loves really gestural, painterly works, such as the British visual artist Flora Yukhnovich (b. 1990), the British contemporary artist Jenny Saville (b.1970), the later work of American artist Chuck Close (b. 1940) and the British painter Peter Doig (b. 1959), where you can see the presence of the artist. Jones is also inspired by the ideas and work ethics of the British sculpture artist Kate MccGwire (b. 1964), the visual art of British Sarah Maple (b. 1985), the portraits of British Andrew Tift (b. 1968), the British, figurative artist Phillip Harris (b. 1965), the works of British Ben Sadler (b. 1977) and the contemporary Australian artist CJ Hendry (b. 1988).

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02

 Creative Photographer

MOSTAFA NODEH

MOSTAFA NODEH

Mostafa Nodeh's minimalist photographs invite us to slow down and meditate on what is truly important in life

an article written by **Milia Wallenius**

Mostafa Nodeh (b. 1980) is an Iranian artist and self-taught photographer based in Guilan, on the northern coast of Iran. He is known for his captivating minimalist landscape photographs in black and white, which, inspired by conceptual photography, are strongly rooted in themes, ideas and symbolism.

Nodeh has a background in painting and while photography is his preferred medium today, he recognizes a strong link between painting and photography, and often combines aspects of both in his working process.

Here painting stands for the artist's imagination and the possibility to create in accordance with whatever is in one's mind, while photography offers the ability to capture a pure and unique moment. Nodeh's works are thus a combination of premeditated ideas, often inspired by his own thoughts and dreams, and chance and coincidence.

Nodeh's earlier experience in painting is also visible in the photographs themselves. It can for example be seen in his masterful transitions between light and shadow, the texture, tone, shading and color, which at times resemble aspects of painting, but also in his dreamlike treatment of the subject matter and in the overall composition.

With a limited and carefully selected arrangements of elements, Nodeh's minimalist works reach a level of abstraction, which twists the notion of time and space. In other words, when we look at his pictures, it is impossible for us to tell when and where the pictures were taken, which makes them difficult to anchor in any reality known to us.

This surreal and otherworldly reality depicted in his pictures creates an interesting and unexpected tension, or contrast, between the work and the medium of photography, which traditionally carries with it an idea of capturing or documenting reality.

M O S T A F A N O D E H

The dark shadows, strong lines and sharp geometric shapes create a striking presence. Like an emerging storm they hint of unease, which is further empathized by the distance to the subjects that appear small against large landscapes, constructions and the overall brutal and raw force of nature.

At the same time, the light, warm tones and soft organic textures emit a strong sense of serenity, peace and hope. A calm after a storm and the promise of a bright future.

What becomes evident in Nodeh's work is a delicate balance. A play between strength and elegance, rigor and softness, heaviness and weightlessness, where shadow and light are equally compelling.

These strong contrasts create a powerful, almost hypnotic presence, that is both threatening and inviting, while the apparent minimalism emits a feeling of loneliness and solitude, that is both frightening and reassuring.

Nodeh has described his working process by drawing parallels to film making. Much like a film director shooting a movie, he picks the location, sets the scenario and decides on the appropriate subject, which at times is chosen, at times waits at the location and at times just happens to be there when the picture is taken.

When we look at Nodeh's work from this film maker perspective his photographs become part of a narrative process. Like still images from a film they hint of a story, but do not reveal the full tale. This leaves space for interpretation and for us to make up our own story.

Nodeh's works are highly symbolic and the barren landscapes, footsteps in the snow, structures that indicate buildings or cages, birds flying towards freedom, tiny people against large constructions, ladders, roads, and endless stairways can be interpreted as metaphors of life. They all hint of a journey, a long slow walk and the paths there are to choose within it.

M O S T A F A N O D E H

Very poetic and existential in nature, Nodeh's works invite us to reflect on the deeper questions in life. What is the meaning of it? How are we spending it? Or to engage with more politically charged questions such as which lives matter? Or who is disposable? All the while they also hold another important message, which perhaps is the root of Nodeh's minimalism:

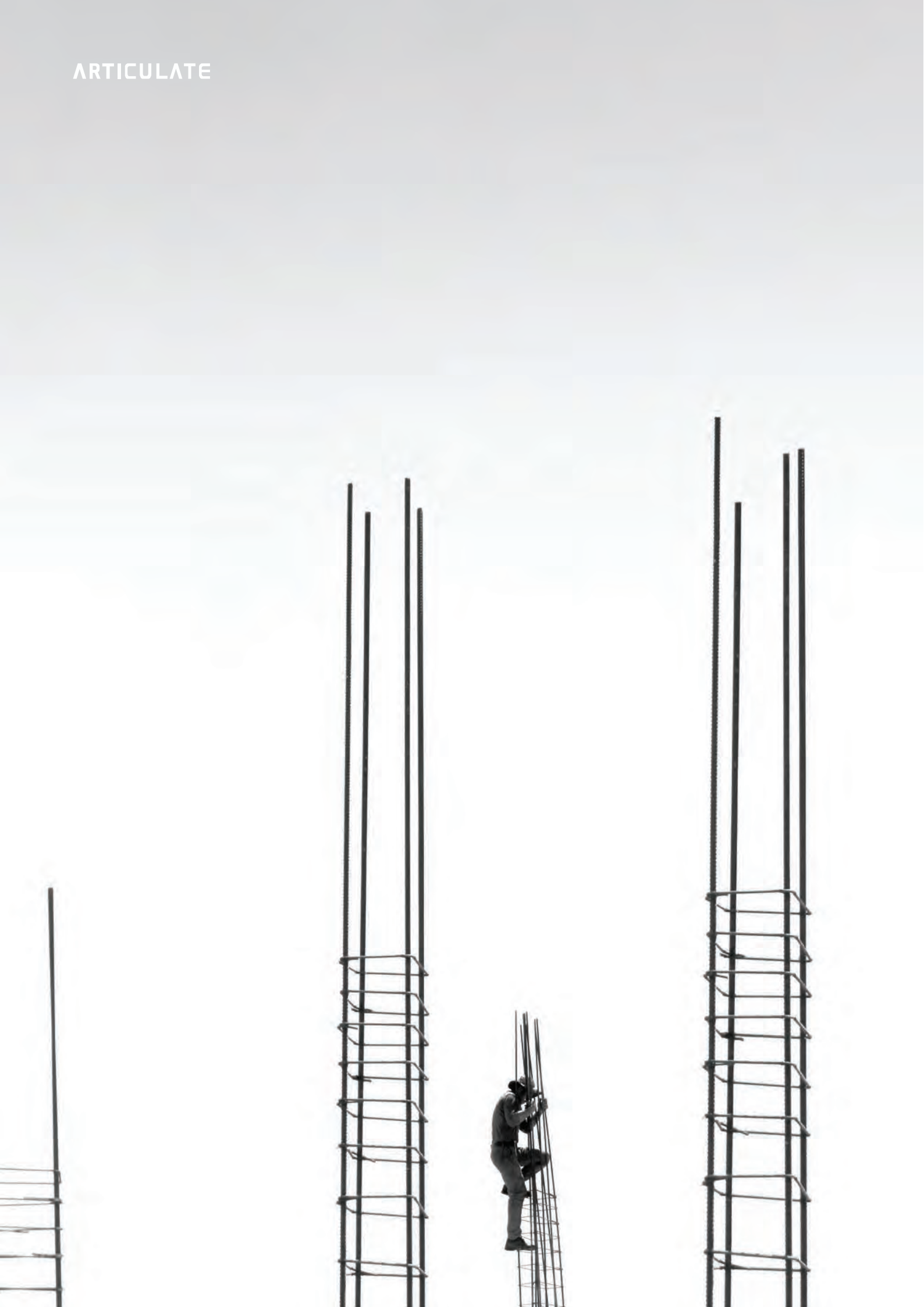
*"To me minimal photography is an art
in the way that artists learn how to omit the extra elements
which seems to be very necessary in such a hectic life.
I see it as an international language to communicate
with the people round the world."*

As such, Nodeh's works encourage us, not only to ponder existential or political questions, but to move away from a hectic contemporary lifestyle. His works are invitations to slow down, meditate, connect with and work on figuring out what it is that is actually important in life. While spiritual and timeless, his works are thus also – especially in the light of the contemporary situation of the world – highly current.

CONTACT

M O S T A F A N O D E H
www.instagram.com/nodehphoto/

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CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY





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 Sculpture

FERNANDO SUÁREZ

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FERNANDO SUÁREZ REGUERA

Fernando Suárez Reguera possesses an unusual mastery of capturing the rhythm and gesture, the precise moment to freeze an image in time, while studying its dynamic potential

an article written by **Carmen Line Hust**

The Spanish artist Fernando Suárez Reguera (b. 1966), has known his creative path, since his early childhood. As a child, Suárez spent his days in the studio of his grandfather, who was a painter. While the grandfather was painting, telling stories, Suárez was drawing with his colored pencils – listening carefully.

It was at the University of Fine Arts in Madrid (1994), Suárez chose his sculptural direction. The three dimensions took charge, as he developed his artistic voice. His favorite materials in pursuing three dimensions, are metals, such as iron, bronze and steel, which he normally combines with wood, resins, waxes, plastics and glass (mirror), which he's using to diversify its production and exploit all the options offered by the Spatial occupation, with a singular obsession for movement

and weightlessness. To Suárez, it's important to have a solid notion of, and own a certain comfort in working with, all these materials.

Suárez usually works with several pieces at the same time, and with distinct themes. This way, he persists in working with no pauses, which is 'when the good stuff occurs', according to Suárez. His artistic process has always included developing various themes and different paths in his work. This process allows him to continuously enjoy his sculptures, as if it was the day, he created them, and further: to continuously learn from them – looking for new solutions and results, within the work itself.



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FERNANDO SUÁREZ REGUERA

Suárez possesses an unusual mastery of capturing the rhythm, the gesture, the precise moment to freeze an image in time, while studying its dynamic potential. And thus, the key element of creating a good composition to Suárez is rhythm. To him, the magic is knowing how to combine all the elements that completes the piece, and to achieve harmony between all the implemented elements.

In every journey, Suárez experiences a moment of action that creates an uncertainty before the events that are to come, just as in the process of realization of a creative work, a creator is surrounded by a permanent uncertainty. During this period of time, the artist must answer and face different questions and issues that frequently come up during the creative process. In such, he has a clear idea of the creative work, but not of its complete form. For this reason, the search for formal solutions is constant and requires an enormous mental and cognitive effort. This uncertainty of the mind is what stimulates him, both in order to develop as an artist, but also motivating him to take on new projects. He suggests that it's dangerous to dwell in monotony and conformism, either by the exhaustion of ideas or, even if it seems contradictory, by the rewards of success. You must always ask new questions that lead you to doubt and cause you to think anew without considering what has already been done.

To him, the creative process is by no means linear, there are many failures. Mistakes that lead to corrections and changes in the way you work in order to continue to grow in your personal career. As stated by Alfredo Muñoz, a social psychologist at the Universidad of Complutense in Madrid: 'You should not lose the ability to have fun'.

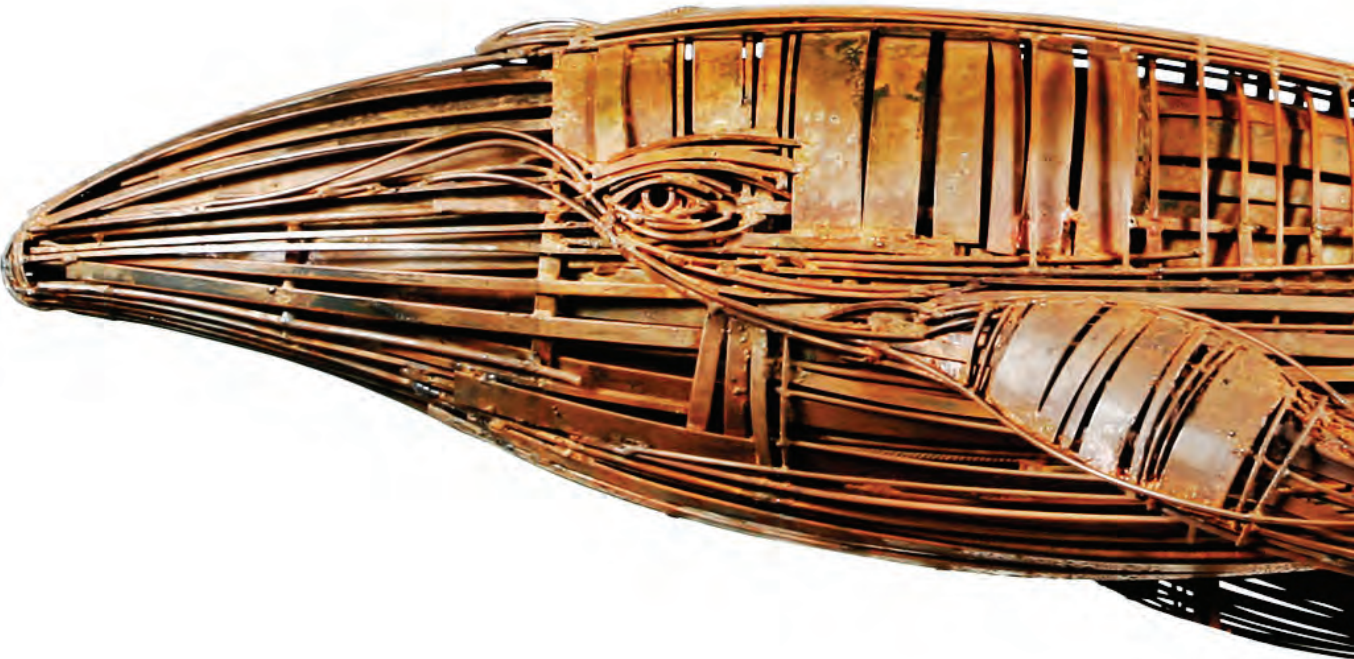
Suárez suggests all artists to be sponges, absorbing knowledge from all their experiences, trips and of course other artists. He himself, has always visited a lot of art exhibitions of very different artists and has even, as he puts it, taken a lot from all of them. Even so, Suárez is very eclectic in his tastes.

CONTACT

FERNANDO
SUÁREZ
REGUERA

www.fernandosuaresreguera.com/
www.facebook.com/fernando.suaresreguera
www.instagram.com/fernandosuaresreguera/
www.twitter.com/suares_fernando

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04

 Visual Art

CECILIA KLEMENTSSON

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CECILIA ULFSDOTTER KLEMENTSSON

The Swedish artist Klementsson likes to confuse her audience conceptually by having men pose like women and vice versa. In doing so, Klementsson argues that gender is also an illusion

an article written by **Carmen Line Hust**

The Swedish artist Cecilia Ulfsdotter Klementsson (b. 1990) paints fleshy bodies reinterpreting nudes from fashion advertising by switching genders and extracting colours in the skin. Keeping John Berger's *Ways of seeing* in mind, Klementsson takes the nude to naked in painted appropriations, from incorporeal to corporeal. Poses in the archives of 1990s and early 2000s fashion advertising feed Klementsson's work, an era when big fashion brands particularly pushed the boundaries of the nude, with Kate Moss in the forefront. While Klementsson takes inspiration from the suggestive poses, she also twists them by having men pose like women and women pose like men. When we are confronted with opposites, differences in male and female poses become all more apparent - women seductive but passive, men seductive but active.

The second aspect challenged in Klementsson's work is the monochromatic skin tones used in advertising, letting the nude seem more sculptural and less morbid - perhaps a strategy for big fashion brands to get away with nudity. Klementsson limits herself to four colours only, layered on top of each other like a manual silk screen printing process. There is a paradox in the colours because they are beautiful yet uncanny while they reveal the fragility of the flesh. It is the mortality which advertising avoids. The viewer sees something is odd while men pose like women in a transparent iridescent skin, daring the viewer to be drawn to them despite their colourful flaws.

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CECILIA ULFSDOTTER KLEMENTSSON

The creative drive of Klementsson is generated from what she calls a restlessness inside of her. This anxious feeling makes her want to paint, which she has been doing since her childhood. To Klementsson there's no other medium, than oil paint, that depict flesh in a trustworthy way, for which this remains her preferred medium. Her paintings, as she exclaims, are all about fleshiness and the transparency of the skin, which makes it vulnerable. To Klementsson, oil is also a transparent medium, meaning it's possible to get vibrant colors, straight out of the tube, without having to mix it and yet it preserves its transparency.

The works of Klementsson are, as she describes them, 'very pre-thought', however, certain aspects or qualities within the surface do emerge on their own. Through every painting, she discovers something new. Yet the compositions and the poses of the models are 'very much pre-thought'. When initiating a new work, Klementsson starts by choosing an image from iconic, famous and infamous nudes in fashion advertising, such as Kate Moss for Calvin Klein. Afterwards, she picks her own model and makes that model pose the same as the original image. But hey, there's a twist. Klementsson always changes the gender, or the coded gender, to the model she's painting and to the model she's interpreting.

Meaning that she's painting male bodies posing like women and female bodies posing like men, as a way of distracting and confusing people and to say that gender is a performance that can be expressed simply in a pose, nothing else needed.

To Klementsson, the key element in creating a good composition is balance, which to her makes beauty.

In terms of inspiration, Klementsson is highly influenced by the British painter Jenny Saville (b. 1970), the American painter Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1989) and the Austrian painter Egon Schiele (1890-1918). According to her, they all work with the body, the fleshiness and its pose. Jenny Saville for her capability to capture fleshiness through painting. Robert Mapplethorpe for his incredible composition skills and ability to capture beauty, particularly in posing bodies. Egon Schiele for his ability to capture fragility of the flesh. In their essence, the three artists each capture an aspect of Klementsson's work: fleshiness in painting (Saville), gender fluidity in the pose (Mapplethorpe) and fragility of the flesh in its transparency (Schiele).

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CECILIA ULFSDOTTER KLEMENTSSON

Klementsson limits her colors to the following four: magenta, phthalo green, cadmium red and Italian pink. Klementsson applies one color across the entire figure and let it dry before she applies the next. In doing this, she aims to extract the odd colors of human skin, and to break them down in order to build them up again. Also she uses this technique in order to give the illusion of skin color from afar. When you look closely, you'll see the painting's composition of a number of non-neutral base colors lying on top of each other, giving the illusion of one neutral skin color. Klementsson likes to confuse her audience, both with color illusion, but also conceptually by having men pose like women and vice versa. In doing so, Klementsson aims to make an argue that gender is also an illusion.

CONTACT

CECILIA ULFSDOTTER

KLEMENTSSON

www.ceciliaklementsson.com/

www.instagram.com/cecilia_ulfsdotter/



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05



Urban Art

JUDITH DE LEEUW

JUDITH DE LEEUW

Judith de Leeuw creates murals as a voice for the voiceless and uses art as a tool to draft attention for social issues, combining emotional visualization

an article written by **Carmen Line Hust**

The Dutch artist Judith de Leeuw (b. 1995) also known as JDL Street Art is turning the dark edges of humanity and society into beauty and mutual understanding through her murals. Since the age of 12 JDL has been wondering what her role was in society, and how she could contribute to a system in which she feels alienated. Due to her passion in drawing, she now finds herself happy and fulfilled, using her murals as a tool to address social issues by emotional visualization.

For instance, JDL has just completed a giant mural in the center of Rome for the LGBT community (Yourban2030). The mural has received a lot of attention and was covered by worldwide press and admiration from the local community. To JDL this means that the topic has had been met and addressed – as a small victory for all the hard work that the LGBT activism organization has been doing through time. Thinking back at the collaboration, JDL feels honored to be part of something so important to society.

“When I think of the beauty and soul that we brought to the people that were in need, I smile when I can see them smile. That is my drive to move forward.”

The creative tools of JDL include photography, acrylic paint and aerosols. To capture her idea, she uses photography, modelling the basis of the mural from that point on. The work of JDL is always pre-thought. She chooses her subject carefully, using mind maps and a wide range of research. She always tends to plan out her designs in every specific detail, although she often experiences ‘happy accidents’ (as she calls them) during the creative process. With ‘happy accidents’ JDL refers to events within the process, that she didn’t foresee, but works out perfectly. Once in Sweden, when making a mural for Artscape, JDL accidentally gave her model three arms, but as the subject of the mural was saturated around a psychotic musician, it somehow made sense.



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Kosovo, Bosnia.

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Germany