

Q1: How would you describe yourself, your work on art, and your scholastic achievements in brief?

I am a Turkish Cypriot Artist, born in Cyprus in 1945. My work is Abstract Expressionist. I graduated with a Master of Arts in 1972 from the Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts (İ.D.G.S.A İstanbul Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi) where I studied under Devrim Erbil and Ali Çelebi before graduating from the atelier of Dincer Erimez. Unfortunately I lost the use of my right hand when I was shot with a Dum-Dum bullet during the 1974 Cyprus War. This injury left me unable to draw or paint for many years. I made my living as an Art Teacher in TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) until I returned to painting as a full time professional artist in 2005.

Q2: Could you describe your art philosophy?

The mother thought or central concept of my work is concealment. My artworks point towards what is hidden and question why this happens. Firstly, nobody can know all that is inside another person. I see that human beings hide or partially mask their thoughts, feelings and motivations, even in many cases from themselves. I observe that human relationships are not open and there are many hidden agendas in personal, social and political life. I came to understand this psychology by watching the decisions, behaviours and actions of individual people around me and of the political actions of nation states. Secondly when I look to nature, all my life I could see expressive faces hidden in the trees, rocks, stones, pebbles, waterfalls, rivers and clouds. My idea is that faces hidden in nature are a metaphor for the way humans hide their thoughts, feelings and motivations. In my art I join these two observations to show that many things in human society are obscured. I achieve this by concealing many abstract faces inside the colours and textures of my works in the same way that I see these faces hidden in nature. Of course, many people do not see these hidden portraits in my paintings in the same way that they don't see them in nature. I want to show that most people only notice superficial aspects of external reality and question why so many people do not perceive what is happening below the surface. Most people don't recognise that much goes on in a secret dialogue, behind closed doors or beneath the veil. In my artworks I explore the reasons for this hiding from deeper reality. I question why people are content to

sleepwalk through life, blind to what is happening around them. I want my paintings to help people wake up from the effects of social conditioning and brainwashing so that they can see what's really going on in the world.

Q3: What has been your chief source of inspiration?

I feel very connected to nature and to human life and so everything can inspire me. For me all life is like a painting. There is the human world we create and the natural world we inherit. In the human world can be seen injustice, inhumanity, dishonesty, greed for material goods and status, political manipulations, the will to dominate through aggressive abuse of power and the tendency to exert control through ideological brain washing. These things occur every day in personal relationships, through every level of society including political dominance and manipulations by powerful nations hungry for grabbing land and resources. This is the human world. Then there is the counterbalance of the natural world, which I feel to be very alive and real. It offers much to humanity, but it is a silent presence, often ignored and unheard. Everywhere I see expressive faces secreted in the trees, rocks, stones, waterfalls, rivers and clouds. Sometimes I think the rocks are crying to me with the memory of all that has passed.

My creations can be inspired by one word, one look, one event or by the faces of people I see around me and the internal emotions expressed. I see these portraits reflected everywhere in nature but most people don't perceive them. This reflects human experience; most of what is felt inside is hidden from other people or from ourselves and we express it consciously or (often) unconsciously in many different ways. To communicate this concept I weave deep into the texture many hidden portraits expressing a range of intense emotions. Some of these portraits are large and others very small. Some are more obvious than others and some are very concealed. Some art appreciators see some faces immediately, others begin to see them on careful observation, however many people can't consciously see them at all.

As I paint I work through my thoughts and feelings on the tangle of personal relationships, social life, culture, politics, and all of the troubles, hopes, dreams, loves, disappointments, manipulations and betrayals that I have experienced or observed. I see it all hidden in nature just as I see much that is concealed in

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life. It is all art. I mix my feelings into my paint and I use my imagination to create images that shout very loud in the hope that the people can wake up to see what's really going on.

Q4: Could you tell our readers what art and research training have you received?

I have conducted research into art all of my adult life. This involves studying the development of art in different countries, different movements and in different historical contexts. This habit of always researching and exploring began when I was at the Academy of Fine Arts. We were taught about the history of art from cave paintings until the present day. We learned about different schools and periods of art and the different art technologies used throughout history, such as cave art, fresco, oils, and water based etc. Even today at the age of 69, I continue to spend time every day observing what's going on in the art world. For those with an inquiring mind, the internet is a wonderful research tool.

In the academy we were taught the rules of composition including unity, balance, movement, rhythm, focus, contrast, pattern, proportion, notan, construction, structure, texture, chiaroscuro, and resonance. We studied anatomy, aesthetic anatomy, osteology, architecture, design, perspective, art mythology, and the colour of emotions. We practiced using a range of different techniques such as sgraffito, engraving, ebru, and we worked with many different materials. However, my teachers always emphasised the importance for an artist to find their own style. One of the most difficult things for an academically trained artist is to find a way to internalise all the learning and the rules, and then be able to break free of them in order to find a new way to visually interpret the world.

When I was at the academy I noticed that modern artists in Turkey were heavily influenced by the western artistic tradition. It seemed to me that we had turned away from our Turkish artistic heritage that could be traced back through Ottoman, Persian, Sumerian empires, with clear eastern influences from Indian, Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian cultures. I had a dream to find a new mode of contemporary artistic expression that could be recognised as having a Turkish root.

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After graduating, I knew I had gained in depth knowledge and understanding about three very important things:

- 1) The history of art, the range of artistic traditions and art technologies.
- 2) The rules of art composition and the importance of being able to push those boundaries to break the rules in order to find your own mode of expression.
- 3) The desire to create a style that is recognisable as having its roots in Turkish culture.

Q5: Please describe your fondest memories: your childhood, family, teachers and classmates, likes and dislikes, loves and hates,

I was born in a small village in Cyprus. My family had very nice land with animals and we grew every type of food. We had a deep well with sweet water. In many ways it was a beautiful life amongst nature, although it was very hard work on the land. We had fresh organic food and my mother made us a very clean, comfortable home, she looked after us very well and did many good things for us, but it was village life with limited educational opportunities.

Growing up as a Turkish Cypriot in the 1950's - 60's was a very difficult time. We were an ethnic minority regularly subjected to bigotry, discrimination and a stated policy of ethnic cleansing by EOKA. Fear was a large feature in the landscape of my world. Our villages were regularly attacked and Turkish Cypriots often went "missing". I saw ugly behaviours and witnessed some horrific scenes of people found dead, shot in the fields or in the mountains. I can remember there was always a background feeling of fear and uncertainty in my life. Even from about thirteen years old, I often had to stand guard for part of the night to sound the alarm if the extremist Greek Cypriots came to attack the village. I was most happy and free in nature on our land and around the village but I didn't like the feeling of being frightened to go to swim in the sea in case we were attacked for being Turkish. I remember I went with my grandmother to a Greek village to sell some vegetables – I was only a small kid maybe five years old and boys threw stones at us and called us "Turkish Dogs". None of the adults stopped them from doing this. I was very upset for my grandmother as she was a very good, kind, decent woman. These are memories I don't like.

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Even so, within our village and family life there are many beautiful memories. We had a beautiful river running near the village and it washed down soft white stones. We had no toys but I had a very nice penknife and I carved portraits onto tree trunks and I carved stones from the river to make small sculptures of faces, figures or animals. In the village I didn't have any paint or paper so I made drawings in the soil with sticks. Whenever I came across a piece of wet ground I would try to draw faces in the mud with a stick. My father was a farmer and I also used to play with the mud around the irrigation channels in his fields to try to mould little sculptures. Sometimes the villagers became angry with me because whenever I saw a whitewashed wall I would draw donkeys or portraits on it with homemade charcoal. I remember being chased on several occasions. I don't have any of these small figures or any of my early paintings and drawings as my family lost all possessions when we were made refugees and had to leave our home and lands in the Cyprus War.

A good memory was when my father might make a trip to Lefkoşa (Nicosia) and come back with presents, maybe a pair of new shoes. When I got a pair of new shoes I would sleep with them in my arms I was so happy to receive them.

Q6: Tell us about the earliest phase of life as a young scholar?

My early schooling was quite limited for a number of reasons. One day when I was about six or seven years old I was knocked over by a donkey and I fell down an embankment and broke my leg. In those days there was no good access to hospitals, so when they found me I was taken home and spent months in bed waiting for the leg to heal. I was given books and exercises at home to teach myself to read and write. In the local primary school I got a basic education but the teaching was very limited. I was very clever and I was naturally good at language, reading, writing and drawing. One year when I was about ten years old we had a very bad teacher and I don't think I learned anything during that whole period because he had no idea how to teach. So I never learned algebra or mathematics. When I went to secondary school in Paphos I became shocked and upset when I realised how little we had been taught in primary school. I felt very far behind, particularly in maths and algebra.

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I was a boarding student in secondary school because it was very far away from our village and I had more time because I was not doing chores on the land. I spent a lot of time drawing portraits of pupils, teachers or the Turkish leader Atatürk, and other people recognised them and congratulated me. My Art teacher encouraged me and I began to draw and paint more seriously. I started to dream that I could become an artist but I felt I had no opportunity to make it happen. I had no money to buy paints so I had to try to make my own paints by mixing olive oil with shoe polish and with any paint I could borrow from my friends. Sometimes these paints wouldn't dry properly and my teacher became angry with me, but I couldn't tell him that I had no money for paint because I was too embarrassed. I kept experimenting with anything I could get my hands on. This habit of experimenting stayed with me all through my studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul. It is still my habit today – I have always in my mind that I want to keep trying new combinations of materials and mixing many different paints and other media. I constantly play around with shapes, forms, textures and different techniques.

Q7: What is your favourite genre and style in art, linking it to your focus in research?

I am particularly interested in art that comes from expression of the natural world around us. I have spent many hours researching the art of cave men, "primitives" and the art of indigenous peoples such as Aboriginals, American Indians, Polynesians etc. I think it is because I feel these people are very close to nature and I perceive them to be less detached from their humanity than so called sophisticated people.

But even artists whose work may seem very "urban" may have influences in nature. When I moved to Scotland in the winter of 2011 I was immediately struck by the forms and shapes of trees stripped naked of their leaves in winter. It was a very different natural environment and I spent many hours absorbing the forms, walking and taking photographs. I could see many faces in the barks of the trees. But one thing struck me – I could see Jackson Pollock everywhere in the criss-cross of the small branches against the sky. From my research on Pollock I knew he had many deciduous trees around his studio. Pollock's work is very crowded and may seem random, but there is an underlying order in the

same way there is in the trees. I can see that many artists absorb the forms of nature, either consciously or unconsciously.

I admire many artists but I don't think I favour any one particular artist or style. What I most admire is when I can see how an artist pushes towards or beyond certain boundaries or constraints in order to make a creative expression from their own interpretation or experience or reality. Rothko very smooth, seemingly very simple, but making a big statement and making us to look at the impact of one pure band of colour next to another. Picasso changed the classical rules to give us modern art. Dali's imagination took us to a world of fantasy that made us question our own reality. Kandinsky and the dissolution of form. All of these masters pushed the boundaries and made us see the world in a new way.

Q8: In your own words, how would you describe your aim in research?

I explained already that I wanted to find my own artistic voice and that I wanted to develop a style that could be recognised as having roots in the Turkish tradition. My other major aim was to find a way to change the rules of how works are exhibited. Even now it is not easy for me to achieve that goal completely. I have in my mind certain ways I want to exhibit some of my large scale wood and carved wood works and I need to find exhibition spaces large enough to do it.

Q9: Would you like to tell our readers what is the most recent change in your art life?

Working on wood is one of the significant changes in my art life. It came about as a result of my aims to change the rules of exhibition. I found it very boring always working within a rectangular or square frame so began searching for a way to change the rules of exhibition. I knew my intention but did not know what I was searching for, only to hold the question and keep looking. One day I noticed a huge tree felled at the side of the road. When I saw the shape and diameter of the tree trunk I realised that this organic form would provide me with a unique canvas. So I went to the mountains in Turkey and bought a tree, then had it transported to a sawmill to be sliced, horizontally and vertically to provide a range of shapes. I had to dry the woods for about 18 months. Then the wood was planed, sanded, treated and undercoated before I could begin to

paint. My First Wood Series was produced in 2010 and the artworks are all painted on natural wood shapes. Then I got the idea to carve the outlines to provide elements of line and structure and make composition across multiple pieces. This can be seen in my Carved Wood Series (2011). More recently I have developed the wood shapes further in my Abstract Carved Wood series (2013-14). My new 3D Carved Wood series involves warping the wood to create concave or convex pieces as a way of further stretching my exploration of working with this material.

Q10: We would like to know how you underwent different phases in your art and research career.

In the academy my teachers always said the most important thing is firstly to learn to see, to learn the rules of art, to learn how to break them and to find your own style. I never wanted to copy another artist. As a student I was taking academic ideas and trying to translate them into my own works. I used classical techniques to try to produce modern art. For example using geometrics in the planning and construction of my compositions such as the old masters. But instead of using perspective, realism and working within the frame I took the geometry beyond the frame and I made flat abstract compositions, but not breaking the body or changing it like Picasso.

I don't know what direction I might have taken if my hand had not been damaged, but despite my injury I went on making compositions in my head. I also continued my research into developments in art. It became clear to me that I had to find a way to return to painting and gradually day by day I recovered the use of my hand. There were many lost years. They felt quite bleak and empty and I felt lost inside. But something made me keep going.

As I resumed my life as a professional artist, the two most important things are that my artistic style must be my own recognisable mode of expression and that my artistic practice must remain fresh. I'm always restlessly searching and very hungry for new experiences, new ideas and new ways to express my ideas through paint. Every day I explore new approaches because I don't want to keep repeating the same thing. I don't want to be stuck in one kind of painting or one technique. But discovering new modes of expression in paint is not easy.

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In 2005-6 I was finding my way forward and searching to find my own style or technique. One day I was eating several colours of ice cream and the sun shone through the glass bowl. I could see the swirling effects of the colours as I scraped the ice cream with my spoon. I became very excited when I realised I could try to achieve the same effect in oil paint using the sgraffito technique to engrave into the paint. Around this period I had been researching the forms of old Ugyur writings and the combination of both of these ideas became the basis for my Turkish Weave style, which I began to develop in 2007, but which can be seen most clearly in my Cyprus Time Bomb Series (2008). Around this time I began hiding faces in the weave. Then I got the idea that it might be possible to adapt the fluid forms of Turkish Ebru to create a dynamic technique in oils. I experimented for some time with different paints until I found the effect I wanted, which is known as my Turkish Whirling technique, where I create a texture from fluid forms with many abstract portraits hidden inside. I was experimenting with the development of this style in my Joy of Discovery series (2009) and then more fully developed in the Endless Expression series (2009). Around this time I was bored with the constraints of the rectangular canvas and I began to suspend my images in 2D space, inside the edges of the frame. Also when I discovered that electron microscopy revealed the hidden world of disease, I got the idea to embed images of disease, to contrast with the outer world, as another way to signify what is hidden within the person or hidden within the society.

In 2010 I began working on the wooden shapes as a way to change the rules of exhibition and I already explained about how that came about. Working with irregular outlines makes for interesting compositional challenges and I still have many more ideas for working across multiple irregularly shaped pieces. There is still much work to do.

During 2011, I began to experiment with using a type of organic tree resin as an oil painting medium. I wanted to create a different textured effect in my works. During my student days in Istanbul I learned that ancient masters had used natural products to create their paints and painting mediums. I conducted some research and discovered how to develop a special organic resin from the roots of several trees. This medium is the right consistency to allow me to dissolve paint in ways that achieve the effect I want. I began doing some small paintings that I call "tryings". Then I produced my Dissolve Series of twelve rectangular works

on board before going on to incorporate the technique into the Carved Wood series. I continue to use large and small portraits as an expressive form but they vary in appearance from those made using the Turkish Whirling and Turkish Weave techniques.

Q11: How did changes in your life change your perception about art and its application?

A major change was when I went to secondary school I had to be a boarder as I could not travel every day from my village. I was meeting different types of people and I had more time for drawing. I made sketches and portraits of my friends, teachers and famous people. For the first time people took notice and I began to secretly realise that maybe I could be an artist.

When I achieved the scholarship to go to the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul it was my most wonderful time. I realised that all I ever wanted to do was to paint. At the academy I felt for the first time in my life that I was really going somewhere and I had the real chance to change my life. My teachers taught me well and they encouraged me. I found ways to earn a living to supplement my scholarship. In my final form I had my first exhibition in Istanbul and I sold several paintings. It felt wonderful to have money in my hand from the sale of my artworks.

After graduation I got invite to exhibition in Norway and in Germany. I was preparing for this when the troubles started again in Cyprus. Then I was shot in the right hand with a dum-dum bullet by Greek Soldiers at the start of the 1974 Cyprus war. In the same period my family lost their home, land, animals and possessions. We lost our whole past life but also when I lost the use of my hand I felt that I lost my whole future. I was in complete shock. Of everything that could go wrong in my life, to be shot in the right hand seemed like the worst disaster. Recovery was very slow and for many years I tried to draw and paint with my left hand but I couldn't do it. I took a job as a teacher to earn a living. I taught many creative things, art, woodwork, pantomime, photography, theatre. In doing this work I learned many things also and it left me time to continue my research about the art. After several operations, skin grafts, physiotherapy and years of working with my hand I gradually began to use it

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again. It is still badly damaged but I console myself with my idea that art and creation are made with the eye and the brain, not with the hand. Fortunately they did not blind me or blow my brains out! My hand will never have the drawing ability that I once had, but the injury forced me to find new and different ways to express my ideas, which might in a strange way have been an advantage. Also the range of emotions I experienced were very deep and very strong. Now I mix them into my paint and pour them into my works. It is a free flow. Perhaps without my injuries and the trapped life it led to I might not have had the same emotional well to draw on.

Since 2006 I have developed a portfolio that is comprised of ten series with more than 350 paintings. From now until I die I intend to go on painting. I paint every day in my studio unless we are travelling to exhibitions or on holiday. Then I take photographs and sketch my ideas in my notebooks.

In all of this I learned to be patient, never to give up your dreams or ideas. I always believed that "Tomorrow will be better than today" and that had kept me going. A few years ago I made a painting and gave it this name. I felt very thankful that I was able to make the painting.

Q12: Would you like to say something personal about yourself, your feelings and your response to how the art world has treated you?

The art world has not really noticed me very much (yet). The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is under embargoes so when I lived there I did not have many opportunities for international cultural exchange. I mostly sold art to some notable people in the community or to visitors from Turkey or Germany. After I met my partner (who is Scottish), I came to live in Scotland in 2011. Since then I began to exhibit internationally I am now receiving interest from curators, art critics, art journalists and art historians. My work is in private collections in UK, Turkey, Germany, Japan, and USA. I have won a few prizes and awards. But there are many artists and it is not easy for emerging artists to have the time and the money to promote themselves in order to be "discovered" on the International Art scene.

Q13: Please give an emotional account of your art fairs. How you felt about them?

Some things I like about the international art fairs and biennales is that they are an opportunity to connect with people and talk to them about my works and about the meaning behind them. But I see that many people are looking for decoration, not for meaning. However I find that a percentage of people are discerning and perceive much more. It is a very nice experience to talk to them about the artworks. I have met many beautiful people this way. Also the art shows are a wonderful opportunity to meet and discuss with other artists. I have met many good friends this way. Art fairs are also a good place for artists to present their works to curators, collectors, art critics, art historians, art journalists and gallery owners.

Q14: About old or new masters who really inspired you.

I am inspired by many artists for different reasons. When I was at the academy I discovered Bosch and was greatly influenced by his use of fantastic surreal imagery almost 500 years before the Surrealist Movement. I greatly appreciated Rembrandt for his dramatic use of the central light. When I was a student one of my favourite artists was Modigliani because of his clean lines and strong forms. Also his work was very abstract for his time and that was something I admired. I have much regard for Picasso, Klee, Kandinsky, Magritte, Dali, Chagall, Pollock and Rothko, all for different reasons. Picasso's Guernica is a wonderful abstract creation that broke so many boundaries to convey a strong sense of the horrible grim reality and terror of war. It is a very powerful personal statement in an authentic artistic voice and that is something to be very much respected. All of these artists were masters who stretched the boundaries of compositional rules and made us see things in a different way.

Q15: What is your foremost ambition in life?

I want to have my own museum. When I paint it is not to make the wall beautiful. I paint because I have something to say and I need to express it. I want people to wake up and think about what goes on in this world. I want people to see what is hidden and think about what is really going on at the back, behind the scenes. I want my works to speak out against inhumanity and injustice and I hope they might encourage people take actions to make the world a better place for those who are disadvantaged. Every painting has a

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message and a meaning. Some of these meanings of course are very personal, but they all broaden out to a wider universal meaning for all humanity.

Success for me is if my paintings can make people see or question aspects of life from an altered perspective. Some people have told me that they don't rationally understand my works, but that they can feel a lot of strange emotions in them. I am very happy if the emotion in my works is unsettling enough to make people wonder what's going on and begin to question some aspect of their life or the wider social and political context they inhabit.

Also I would like to help people recognise the power of art to communicate things in a different way from normal. I am very happy if my works can help people think differently about the world in order to understand something more about the human condition. Many of my paintings are metaphors; they have a very clear message or idea behind them. A lot of them have something to say about specific incidents or aspects of life that affect people on a personal level and yet also have a much broader meaning about life in general. Of course, many of the things that concern me relate to the isolated condition of my community in Cyprus and to the difficulties that I have experienced in my own life. But also I see, feel, and think many things about life in the whole world and in my paintings I want to express my thoughts and emotions. Sometimes when I am discussing something interesting or important with a close friend, I just "see" a painting about it and then I must try to make it. Success is when I can produce a painting that matches the image that I feel in my mind. Of course I probably don't have enough time left in my life to produce all the images that appear in my mind, so I have to be content with the ones that I manage to produce.

Probably like all artists I want recognition of my work and some understanding of what I am trying to communicate. I understand that an artwork will prompt other people to have their own thoughts, feelings and interpretations, and that is also very important. But I would like my thoughts, feelings and ideas to be understood in the world.

Q16: Your comments on art selling and buying. What changes do you wish for?

Buying and selling is an economic transaction. I would prefer that the discourse for artists is not about money. I don't paint for money. I paint because I have to communicate and making paintings is my way to do it. I want to provide social and cultural value, but the world is more interested in economic value. We know that when artists die their paintings are worth much more than when they are alive. I know many artists who struggle to survive and yet they keep going. This is a reflection on our society. We don't value the artists, instead we value the amount of money that someone invests in the work. It is a pity that society does not find more ways to support artists when they are alive. Of course I don't want to sell my paintings cheap, that is what many collectors are looking for – a way to make money, not a way to support the arts. I prefer to keep as many of my works as possible and to make a museum. In particular my Cyprus Time Bomb Series because it is about the problems my community has faced and I want to keep those 34 paintings all together as one exhibition.

Q17: Any other comment that comes to your mind at the moment.

I'll try not to die for many years as I still have a lot of work to do and a lot of things to say. I lost many years because of the injury to my hand and I have a lot of catching up to do. I read that Picasso made over 10,000 works, so I have a long way to go.

Q18: What would be your last wish?

To have my own museum for the people to see the works, not for the works to be shut away in a cupboard, because the purpose of this art is to be seen in order to communicate to the people. This is my aim. Everyone must earn a living but I don't paint just to gain commercial value.

Q19: Your artist statement.

I already explained my artist statement in response to question 2, which asked about the philosophy behind my art. However I could say something more. When I paint my aim is not to make the wall look beautiful. I paint because I

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have something to say and I need to express it. I want to make people think about what's going on in the world and what lies concealed behind outward appearances. My artworks often begin with a personal feeling or idea about something I have experienced or observed. As I paint I explore my thoughts and feelings about human life and human relationships on a personal, social, cultural and political level. I mix my ideas and feelings into the paint and use my imagination to find new ways to voice them. My paintings reflect my experience of life; with much light and darkness, some events appearing very clear on the surface, but many hidden agendas going on in the background.

Constant themes I explore are on-going human struggles about identity, dominance, ideological brainwashing, power and powerlessness, betrayal and double-dealing. I work with fluid forms to create a dense texture composed of many hidden portraits, ranging in size from very large to tiny, some obvious, others hidden deep within the composition. The large portraits provide structure and the smaller portraits are woven into the texture. The large and tiny portraits symbolise how similar patterns of behaviour and events play out in people's personal lives and also at the level of communities, nations and international politics. The large and small juxtaposition is also intended to convey my thoughts about the relationship and impact of world events and major ideologies on the conditions of each person's individual experience. Yet although each person experiences their own individual fragment of the world, there is an identifiable range of emotional responses that are part of our shared human condition.

Oil is the primary medium. I developed the Turkish Weave, Turkish Whirling and Dissolve techniques by mixing oil paint with alkyds and resins to create my own language of expression that reflects my Turkish cultural heritage. Since 2010, I began painting on carved wood as a means of breaking free from the convention of working within a rectangular frame. Early influences were Bosch, Rembrandt, Picasso, Klee, Kandinsky, and Chagall, but mostly I work from nature.

Q20: Your personal message to art enthusiasts worldwide.

Know your craft. Practice every day. Keep on exploring and trying new things. Never give up on your dream.