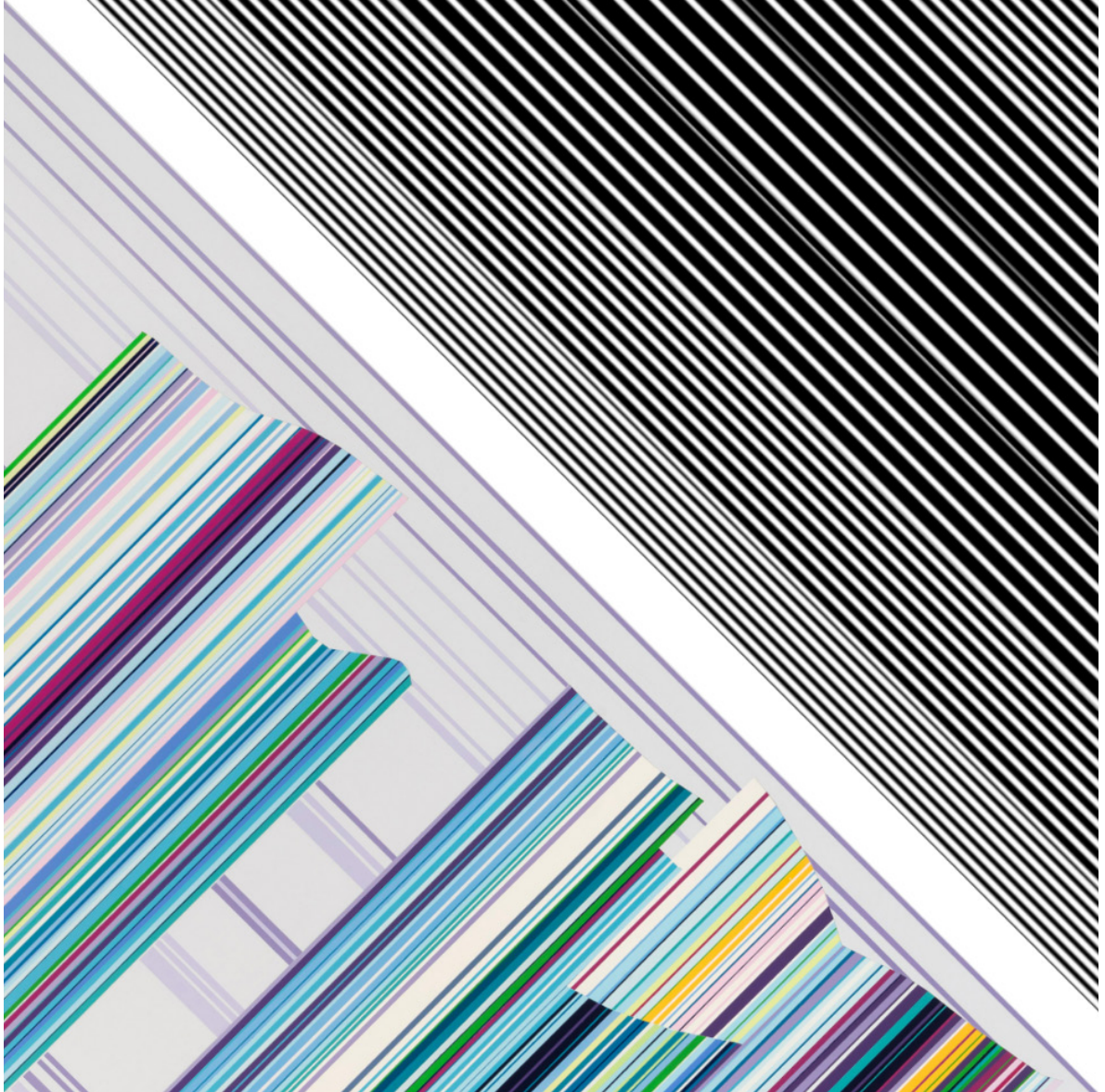


BREAKING BOUNDARIES

NASSER AL SALEM



JOSH ROWELL



FIRETTI

CONTEMPORARY

Breaking Boundaries by Nasser Al Salem and Josh Rowell

In *Breaking Boundaries*, Nasser Al Salem and Josh Rowell use language as the core of their artistic practice, however, both artists explore and juxtapose concepts of communication in diverse ways.

February 4 to April 13, 2022 | At Firetti Contemporary, Dubai, UAE

Curated by Celine Azem and Kayna Lang
Co-curator Mohammed Al Saqqa

FOREWORD

Breaking Boundaries brings together antipodal linguistic and cultural aspects of communication through the works of Saudi Arabian artist, Nasser Al Salem and British artist, Josh Rowell.

It is considered a truism that language is a crucial tool for successful communication in all walks of life. Since early history, humans have crafted languages in order to refine communication. The emergence of language was a defining moment in the evolution of modern humans, setting the pivotal foundation for all means of dialogue. Throughout the history of linguistics, the expansion in methods of communication has led to an unlimited potential for interpretation.

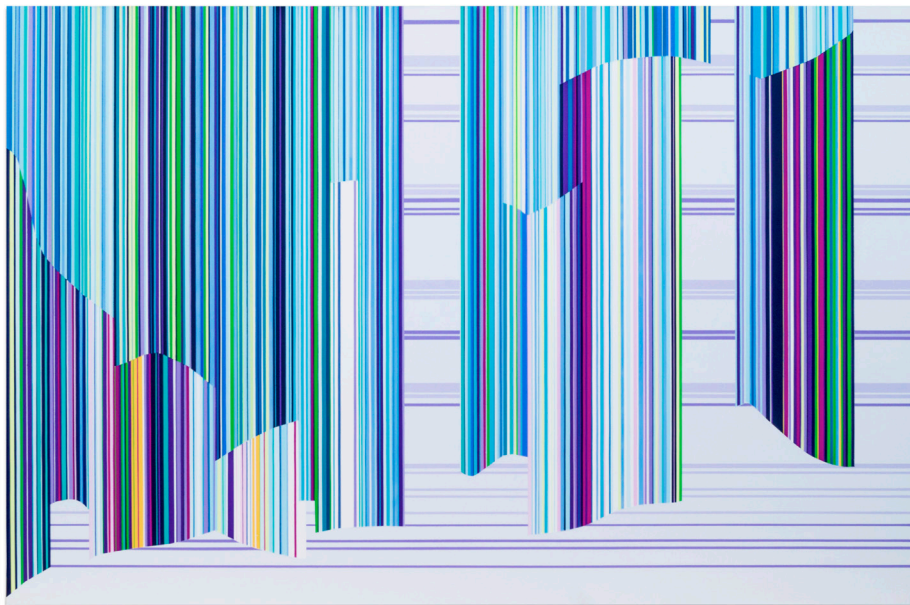
In *Breaking Boundaries*, Al Salem and Rowell use language as the core of their artistic practice, however, both artists explore and juxtapose concepts of communication in diverse ways. Through the works of Josh Rowell, we are presented with a language that explores and reshapes information, and celebrates the hand-made in a time that is increasingly being enveloped by the virtual. Nasser Al Salem, on the other hand, pushes the boundaries of age-old Islamic art by re-inventing it in non-conventional mixed media forms and by exploring its conceptual potential.

With *Breaking Boundaries*, Firetti Contemporary once again pushes the importance of the gallery to act as a platform for connecting minds and concepts within a global cultural space, by intersecting ideas and themes of significance towards the forefront of the art scene.

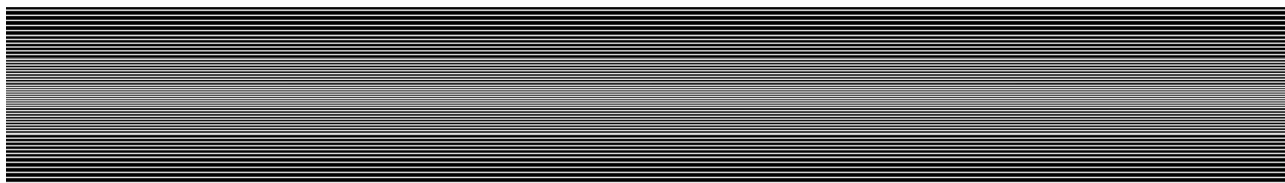
Breaking Boundaries presents viewers with a variety of works by both artists. Rowell's *Virtually Fragile* series, features the moment in which connectivity is lost to the digital world. This series highlights the loss of the ability to connect and communicate within the virtual realm, a great shift from a space where functions of data and connectivity is transformed into abstract chaos.

These alternated abstract linear movements are interpreted by Al Salem, through his multimedia installation, *Allah*. The visual manifestation of the word Allah is an abstracted representation in which its letters are stripped down to basic geometric lines and shapes. Nasser explores through a minimalist approach, how form and light can imitate an approximate representation of the divine. Al Salem radically eschews the conventional and traditionalist aesthetic appeal of a calligraphic form, creating an immersive and experiential representation. Both artists signify a shift in language, breaking it down to deliver separate messages.

We see this once again in *What if the Circle was to Disappear?*, where Al Salem explores the use of the circle throughout history in relation to traditions of calligraphy in particular. The calligraphy used here by the artist is called Mushaf Koofee, or Old Kuffi—meaning before the introduction of the 'dot', and of the three main traditional Arabic calligraphic systems created by the Arabic calligrapher Ibn Muqlah in the ninth century. In this work, Al Salem is questioning what effect the possible non-existence of the circle may have had, using calligraphy as a vehicle for exploring social and religious questions.



JOSH ROWELL
Virtually Fragile #6, 2019
Acrylic on Wooden Panel
120 x 180 cm



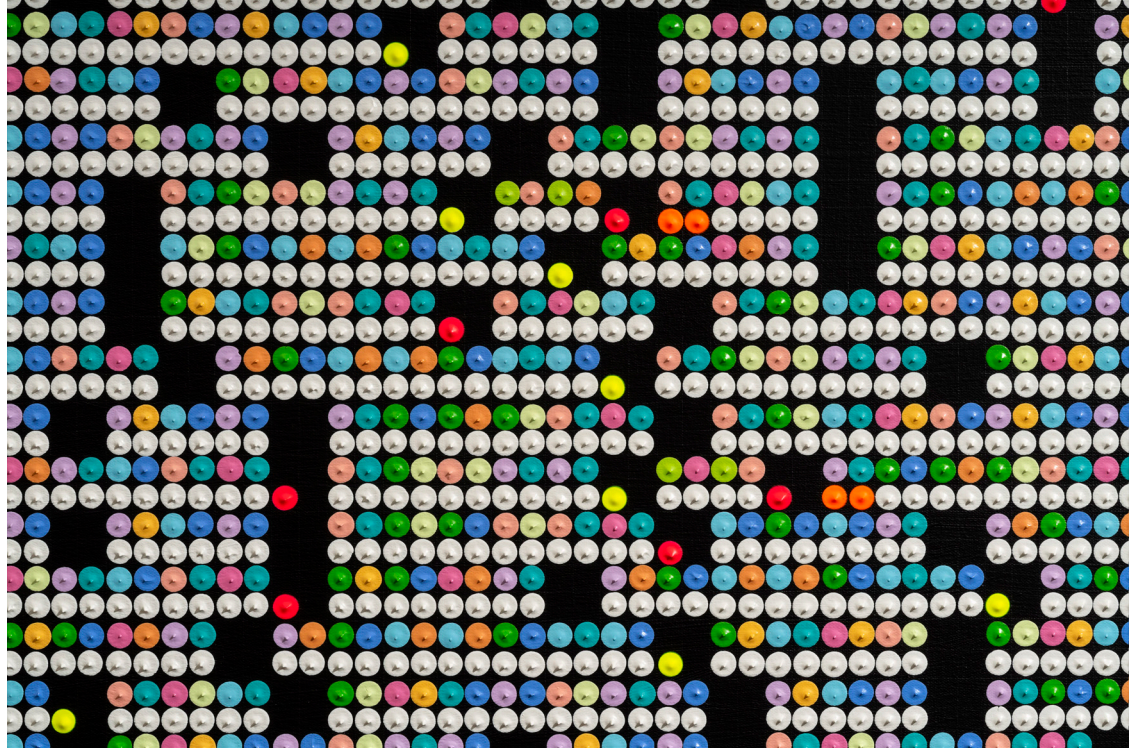
NASSER AL SALEM
Allah [He is the First and the Last] II, 2018
Inkjet on Paper
32 x 180 cm
Ed. 1/7

An additional series presented by Rowell is *Painting Language*, which was born out of a long-term interest in the functions of language and information, especially in light of the digital age. These paintings are coding systems for language, each one contains in them a body of text that can be taken from any source (book, magazine, script) and from any language. The system operates through colour, sequence and pattern, and ultimately the language becomes transformed into detailed and symmetrical paintings.

Similarly, in Al Salem's work *State of Affairs*, the artist unveils the power of words and the production of meaning. Al Salem deconstructs the verse "He arranges [each] matter" into a letter or groups of letters, which are then repeated or duplicated and scattered across the surface of the paper. The expansion of the letters on the paper represents the continuous expansion of the universe and the constant movement that characterises it in its entirety. Here, each letter is a unique element of formal organisation within a system. Al Salem is not only concerned with the way the system expands, but is also interested in exploring notions of matter within such a system, such as the endless motion and vastness of the universe, the intense diversity of nature and the world and the logic that affirms the belief in God.

NASSER AL SALEM
Close up of *He Rules All Affairs (White)*, 2018
Inkjet on Paper
600 x 150 cm
Ed. 2/3

JOSH ROWELL
Close up of *First
97 Numbers
of the Fibonacci,*
2022
Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 300 cm





NASSER AL SALEM

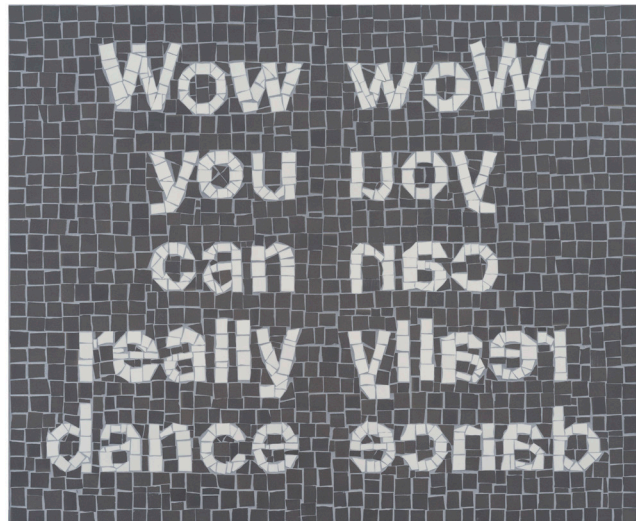
Curfew / Risk of Transformation, 2020

Yellow Neon

46 x 155 cm

Ed. 2/5

JOSH ROWELL
Really Dance, 2021
Unglazed Portugese Ceramic Porcelain
Tiles, Grout, Wooden Substrate
40 x 50 cm



While highlighting emerging cultures and behaviours within the internet space, Rowell presents the *Mosaics* series. These bodies of work also comment on the importance of archiving events within the internet's history. For each of these pieces, Rowell has been taking inspiration from trending comments that you can find on various social media platforms; these comments vary from comical, to weird, to alarming! One of the striking features about comment memes, is the fact that they only seem to be popular for a short period of time, perhaps a couple of months at best, before they are then replaced with the next popular comment to copy and paste. The idea to recreate them as mosaics, is a way to play on the idea of the works being almost archaeological. There are real similarities when you start searching through the forgotten detritus of social media feeds, to digging up the earth and discovering some ancient artefact.

This exploration of language shaping society is further portrayed by Al Salem's *Curfew / Risk of Transformation*, which symbolises future changes and signals to a new world. Two Arabic words swing back and forth between two meanings through simple and clever changes in placements of the accent marks, which playfully urges the viewers to consider the precariousness of life and the fragility of our existence. Arabic calligraphy that is used in most warning panels usually require simplicity, speed of reading and clarity, therefore *Curfew / Risk of Transformation* becomes a continuous warning sign that transcends our present time.

NASSER AL SALEM

Saudi Arabian artist, Nasser Al Salem, was born in Mecca in 1984. His family's trade was tent-making so Nasser spent much of his childhood helping his family sell tents to pilgrims who came to Mecca for the Hajj. Later he studied architecture at Um Al-Kora University in Mecca, and he currently lives and works as an architect in Jeddah. Nasser also holds an Ijaza qualification in calligraphy.

Al Salem works with the Arabic written word. His practice pushes the boundaries of the age-old Islamic art of calligraphy by re-inventing it in non-conventional mixed media forms and by exploring its conceptual potential. His work in general incorporates modern design elements with traditional calligraphy and Islamic geometry, often referencing verses from the Qur'an. He has been hailed as "pushing the boundaries of Islamic calligraphy" for his use of unconventional mixed-media platforms to present his work.

As quoted by Al Salem "Although you could say my work is very much inspired by my religion, I by no means have a specific audience, and hope that my messages have a spiritual or historical significance for everyone".

In 2012 Al Salem had a solo show at Athr Gallery, Jeddah, titled, *And It Remains....*. He has exhibited internationally in group shows including: *Common Grounds*, Villa Stuck Museum, Munich (2015); *Hajj: The Pilgrimage to Mecca*, Institute Du Monde Arabe, Paris (2014); *Edge of Arabia: We Need to Talk*, Jeddah (2012); *Hajj*, British Museum, London (2012). Awards include: a nomination for the Prudential Eye Awards (2015); being shortlisted for the Jameel Prize (2013); awarded second prize in the Saudi Arabia's national calligraphy competition (2010). His work is included in the collections of The British Museum, LACMA, and Centre Pompidou among others.

Al Salem is a member of the National Guild of Calligraphers and is an active member of Saudi Arabia's Arts and Culture Group. He is actively involved in community calligraphy projects. Al Salem was previously in residence at Delfina Foundation in August 2014.

CURFEW / RISK OF TRANSFORMATION

It has been almost a year since the world plunged into a lockdown due to Covid-19 in a sudden and unusual way which forced us to re-examine our humanity, our interactions and connections. *Curfew/ Risk of Transformation* symbolizes future changes, both familiar and unfamiliar, and signals to a new world.

Two Arabic words swing back and forth between two meanings through simple and clever changes in placements of the accent marks which playfully urges the viewers to consider the precariousness of life and the fragility of our existence. The artist as well has adopted the Arabic calligraphy that is used in most warning panels and signs for COVID-19 pandemic which usually require simplicity, speed of reading and clarity. As we are still in the midst of this crisis, *Curfew/ Risk of Transformation* becomes a continuous warning sign that transcends our present time.

NASSER AL SALEM
Curfew / Risk of Transformation , 2020
Yellow Neon
46 x 155 cm
Ed. 2/5

خطرت جمل



LANGUAGE IS STRONGER THAN LIGHT

Nasser Al Salem's latest body of work, *Language is Stronger than Light*, certainly turns the old adage on its head whereby a single word can certainly speak a thousand images. Al Salem's roots are founded in calligraphy, which by its own virtue is the art of giving form to signs. Upon reflection with this latest body of work, Al Salem pushes the boundaries of expression and representation by portraying forms of photographic imagery to linguistic signs. Al Salem plays on his audience's sense of memory and imagination, by carefully selecting words that draw on one's personal notions of belonging and identity. Al Salem's creative roots are deeply founded in his calligraphic practice.

The development of this body of work, which bridges the conceptual with the traditional, pays a marking tribute to the significance and power of the written word. Al Salem's use of language draws on the malleability of the mind in projecting one's memory of self, drawing from the past, into the present and possibilities of the future. The selection of words are carefully considered to represent the everyday and familiar experiences that anyone can relate to, painting such imagery quite literally into words. Such a process democratises this form of language, giving back the power of personal interpretation and visualisation into the viewer's eyes and mind.



NASSER AL SALEM

Language is Stronger than Light ("A Family Portrait"), 2014

Silkscreen Archival Paper

70 x 50 cm

Ed. 1/5



NASSER AL SALEM

Language is Stronger than Light ("Artwork"), 2014

Silkscreen Archival Paper

70 x 50 cm

Ed. 1/5

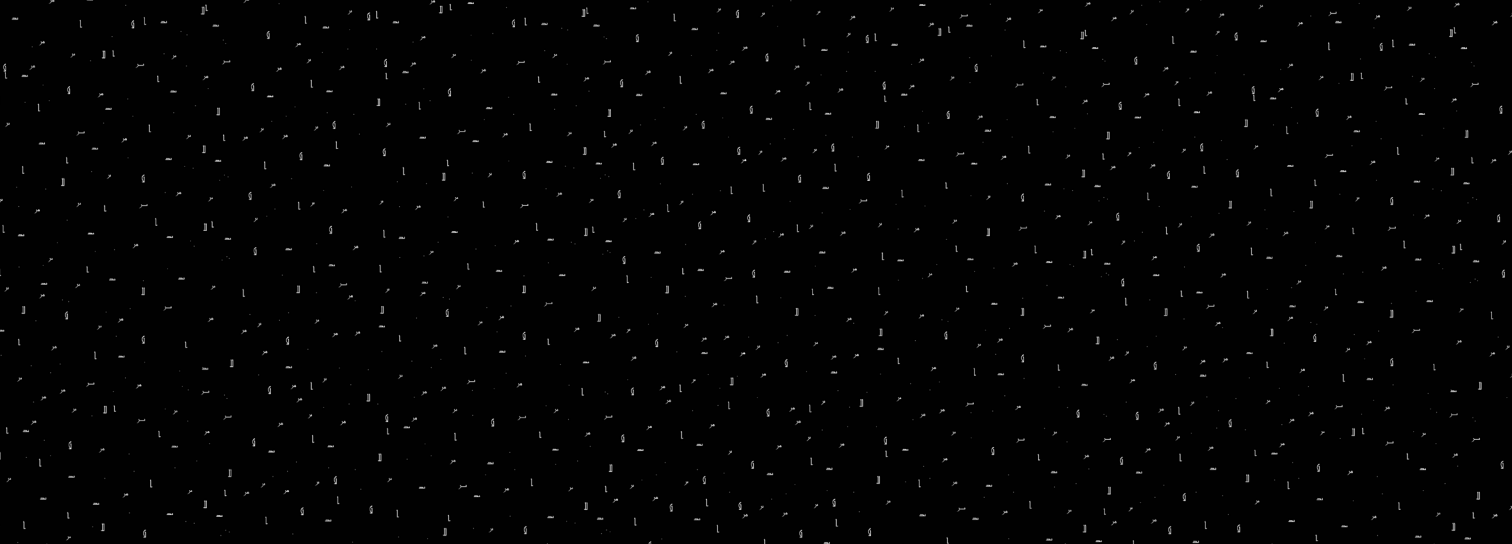
HE RULES ALL AFFAIRS

Nasser Al Salem revised a work that addresses the power of words and the production of meaning. Often using sentences from the Holy Qur'an, his multimedia installations reflect the complexity, affirmative notions and contemplative qualities of this religious text. In this work, the artist expands on the interpretation of Surat Al Sajda (the Prostration), which attests: "He arranges [each] matter from the heaven to the earth; then it will ascend to Him in a Day, the extent of which is a thousand years of those which you count. [32:5]"

Al Salem deconstructs the verse "He arranges [each] matter" into a letter or groups of letters, which are then repeated or duplicated and scattered across the surface of the paper. The expansion of the letters on the paper represents the continuous expansion of the universe and the constant movement that characterises it in its entirety. Here, each letter is a unique element of formal organisation within a system. Al Salem is not only concerned with the way the system expands, but is also interested in exploring notions of matter within such a system, such as the endless motion and vastness of the universe, the intense diversity of nature and the world and the logic that affirms the belief in God.



NASSER AL SALEM
He Rules All Affairs (Black and White) , 2018
Inkjet Print on Paper
600 x 150 cm
Ed. 2/3



NASSER AL SALEM

Close up of

He Rules All Affairs (Black), 2018

Inkjet Print on Paper

600 x 150 cm

Ed. 2/3

NASSER AL SALEM

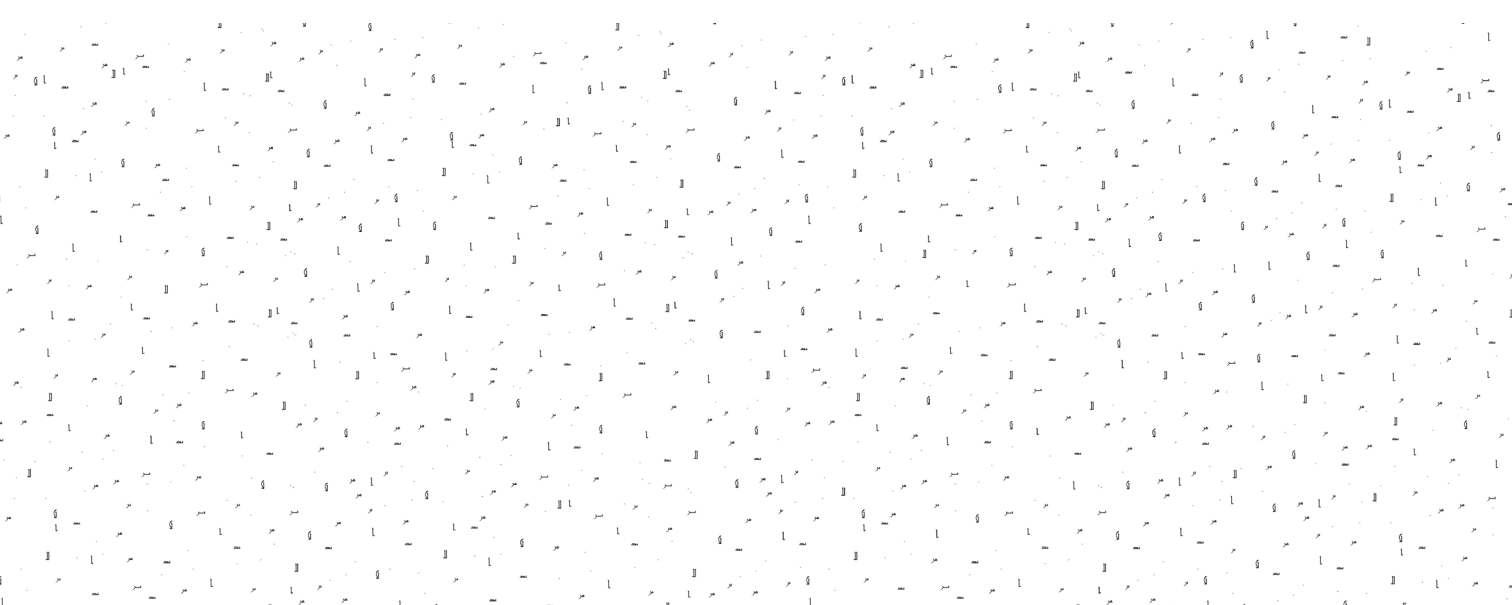
Close up of

He Rules All Affairs (White), 2018

Inkjet Print on Paper

600 x 150 cm

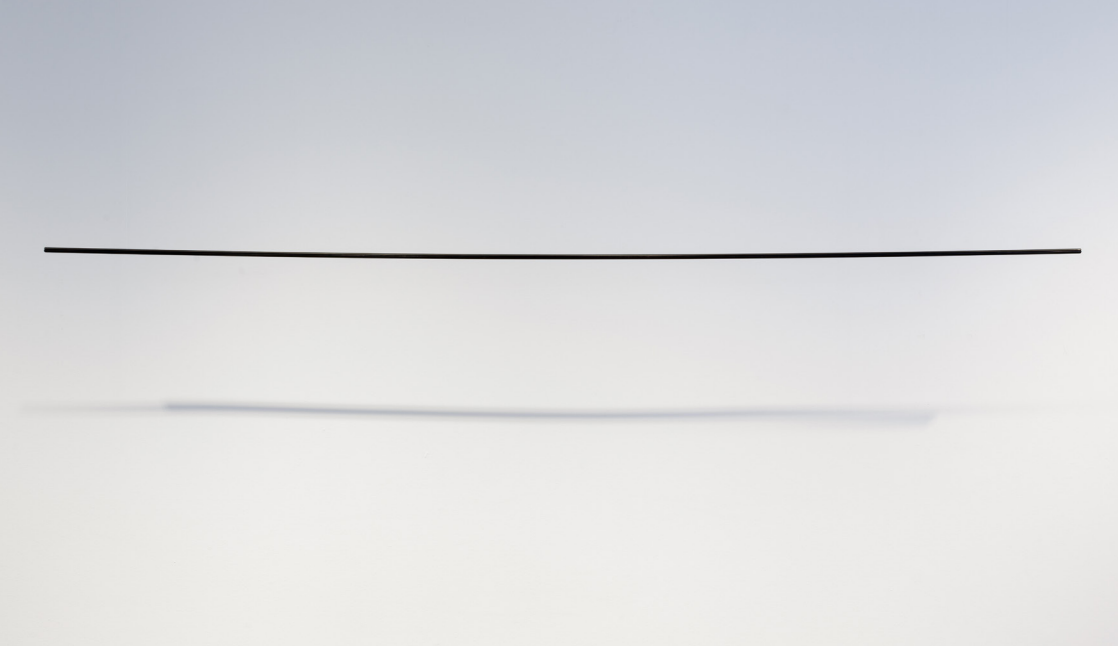
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AMMA BAAD

Amma Baad continues the artist's expansive approach to the practice of Arabic calligraphy, both in terms of form and through his conceptual approach to the phrases with which he works. In this new series, Al Salem contemplates the Arabic phrase 'Amma Baad', an expression that proves difficult to translate into English. Often found in formal Arabic correspondence, the expression follows initial salutations and greetings, while preceding - and perhaps anticipating - the main subject or story to follow. It is a moment dense with expectations.

Through sculptural, print and hand-drawn renderings of *Amma Baad*, Al Salem takes a philosophical approach to this phrase, considering how it occupies a liminal space in the present, with its existence predicted on both that which precedes and follows it. Playing with scale and materials, the artist's manipulations of the text seek to challenge and expand our perceptions of time and space. Al Salem invites reflection on our current moment, as well as what might follow *Amma Baad*, and the agency we have in bringing potential futures into existence.



NASSER AL SALEM

1 Second, 2018 (From the *Amma Baad* series)

Aluminium, Black Matte Paint

1 x 1 x 200 cm

Ed. 1/3

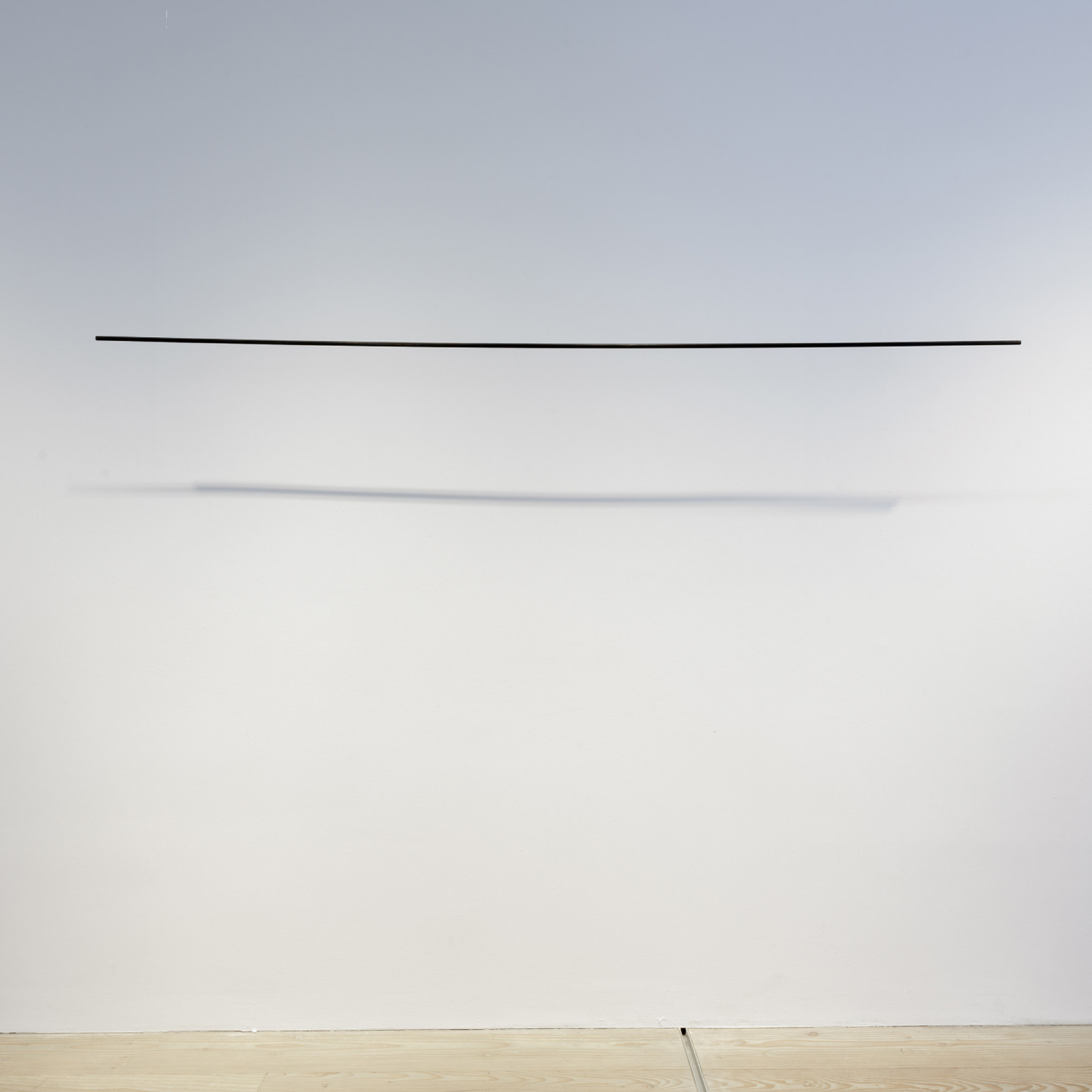


NASSER AL SALEM

close up of

1 Second, 2018

(From the *Amma Baad* series)



What if the Circle was to Disappear?

What if the Circle was to Disappear? is a study on the use of the circle throughout history in relation to traditions of calligraphy in particular. Around 45 AH (Hijri calendar), the dot or circle was introduced to the Arabic language. It appears in conjunction with the early spread of Islam, and the slow merging of different cultures and people whose first language was not Arabic. The calligraphy used here by the artist is called Mushaf Koofee, or Old Kuffi—meaning before the introduction of the ‘dot’, and of the three main traditional Arabic calligraphic systems created by the Arabic calligrapher Ibn Muqlah in the ninth century.

The three systems he created are Nizam Al-Dairah (system of the circle), Nizam Al-Nuqat (system of the circle) and Nizam Al-Tashabuh (meaning imitation). In this work, Al-Salem is questioning what effect the possible non- existence of the circle may have had, using calligraphy as a vehicle for exploring social and religious questions. In Arabic culture, the circle is used as a way of social ordering—families eat seating on the floor, in a circular form; prayer and movement around the Ka’aba is done in a circular motion, even the steps within prayer movements are cyclical and hence, circular in nature. In Islam, the circle is considered to be the beginning and end of every shape, it is the initiator for a myriad different geometric forms used throughout Islamic art.

NASSER AL SALEM

What if the Circle was to Disappear?, 2015

Silkscreen on Paper

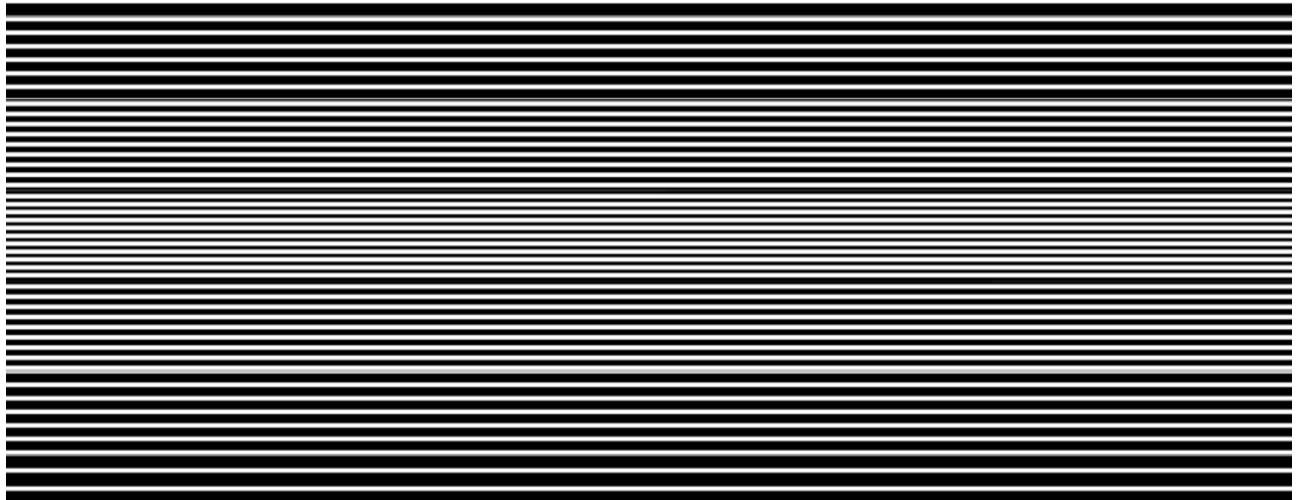
100 x 170 cm

Ed. 1/5

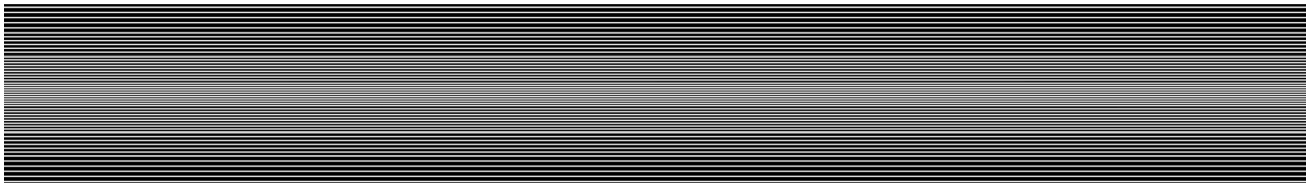
ما لا يحق للداره

ALLAH

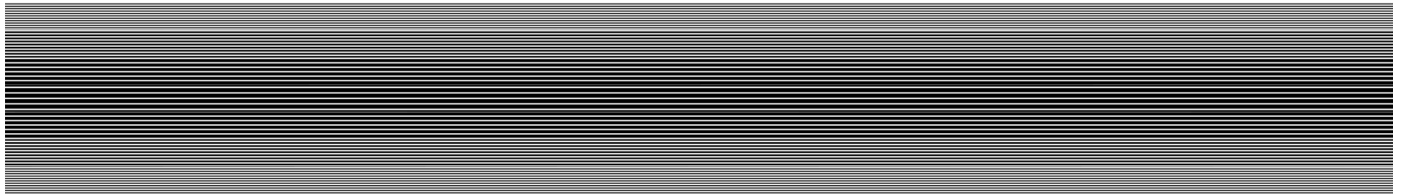
Allah is a multimedia installation by artist Nasser Al-Salem and the second iteration derived from an earlier work by the artist. The visual manifestation of the word Allah is an abstracted representation in which its letters are stripped down to basic geometric lines and shapes. Nasser explores through a minimalist approach how form and light can imitate an approximate representation of the divine. The artist radically eschews the conventional and traditionalist aesthetic appeal of a calligraphic form in representing Allah, and creating an immersive and experiential representation.



NASSER AL SALEM
Close up of *Allah* [*He is the First and the
Last*] II, 2018



NASSER AL SALEM
Allah [He is the First and the Last] II, 2018
Inkjet on Paper
32 x 180 cm
Ed. 1/7



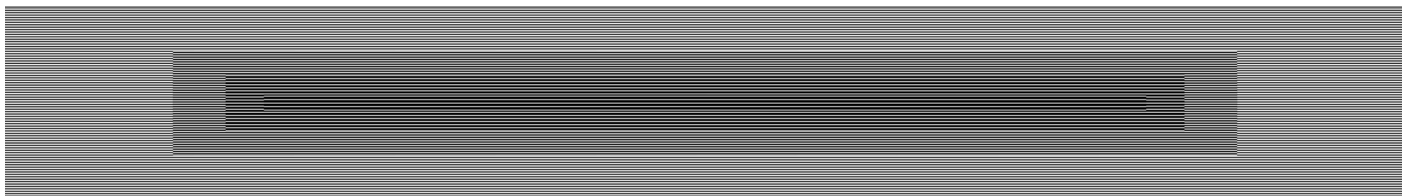
NASSER AL SALEM

Allah [He is the First and the Last] II, 2018

Inkjet on Paper

32 x 180 cm

Ed. 3/7



NASSER AL SALEM
Allah [He is the First and the Last] II, 2018
Inkjet on Paper
32 x 180 cm
Ed. 5/7

JOSH ROWELL

Born in 1990 in Kent, England, Josh Rowell graduated from Kingston Art School in 2013, where he received a first class BFA with honours. Following a course in Art Criticism at Central Saint Martins college, Rowell returned to Kingston Art School for an MFA in 2015, where he was awarded a first- class distinction.

Rowell generates his artistic vision by focusing on technological advances that shape our contemporary lives, communicating our increasingly mediated human interactions within the confines of visual art. The artist balances analogue techniques with the instantaneous nature of the digital age. This juxtaposition produces a language that explores and reshapes information, and celebrates the hand-made in a time that is increasingly being enveloped by the virtual.

Since his emergence as an abstract painter, Rowell has expanded to sculpture, mixed media, and oftentimes works with light, video, and sound installations. Despite these disparate media, everything is underpinned by a coding system, "everything can be reduced to a molecular binarism where all systems can be simplified to yes/no decisions," as the artist explains.

Mirroring the proliferation associated with the technological advancements these codes can generate, Rowell paints a vernacular, as evident by his *Painting Language* series, far more complex and carrying greater levels of information than a traditional one-zero binary. The language of colour, pattern, and form, is seen as dots laboriously covering canvases. These sequences, which the artist developed himself, read as a codified statement to create new forms of visual text that explore the possibilities and boundaries of expression and information.

Rowell's works have been exhibited in London, New York, Miami, Seattle, Basel, Hong Kong and Mexico and his works are part of public collections including the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, the Gregorian Foundation in Washington, London Kingston University's contemporary art collection, and the Matilda collection in San Miguel De Allende. In 2017/18 he had his first museum exhibition at the Palacio Nacional de Guatemala. Rowell won the Public Choice award at the VIA Arts Prize 2017, and was included in *Future Now*, the yearly publication by *Aesthetica* listing the 100 most exciting emerging artists of the year. In 2019 he was selected for the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London. In 2020 he was named joint winner of the Dentons Art Prize and was invited to participate in 'False Memory', a group exhibition at Rugby Art Museum curated by Lindsay Seers. Rowell has works in private collections as well, in the UK, USA, Canada, China, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, Monte Carlo, Australia, Ireland, Russia, Kuwait, Bermuda, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, and Peru.

PAINTING LANGUAGE SERIES

Rowell's *Painting Language* series was born out of a long term interest in the functions of language and information, especially in light of a digital age. These paintings are coding systems for language, each one contains in them a body of text that can be taken from any source (book, magazine, script) and from any language. Rowell processes the information through a coding system of his own design. The system operates through colour, sequence and pattern, and ultimately the language becomes transformed into these paintings. In each work there is the potential for it to be read, as it was in its original state, and, as it is in its altered state.

All of the *Painting Language* works in *Breaking Boundaries* are themed around the idea of Sacred Geometry. This branch of early mathematics sought to ascribe symbolic and sacred meanings to geometric shapes and proportions. The varying theories and formulas can be seen throughout man made art and architecture, such as Leonardo Da Vinci's use of proportions according to the Golden Ratio; but also in the natural world where flowers, shells and trees seem to grow according to the same ratio. Sacred geometry is associated with the worldly principal laws of the Earth and was studied and utilised across many religions.

In many ways, sacred geometry and its numerous theories were the precursors to modern day quantum physics. They were an attempt at finding fundamental rules or 'codes' that governed the physical universe. This is where Rowell's interest in them came from. Rowell believes that clear parallels can be drawn between the way in which the digital/virtual world operates and the way in which the physical universe is organised. They are both governed or predetermined by sets of rules, just as the Fibonacci sequence for example can be understood as a fundamental rule that seems to be intertwined with the cosmos, all digital interaction is equally structured by these invisible commands. Simply put, the physical universe and all that exists within it, is as coded as the digital world.

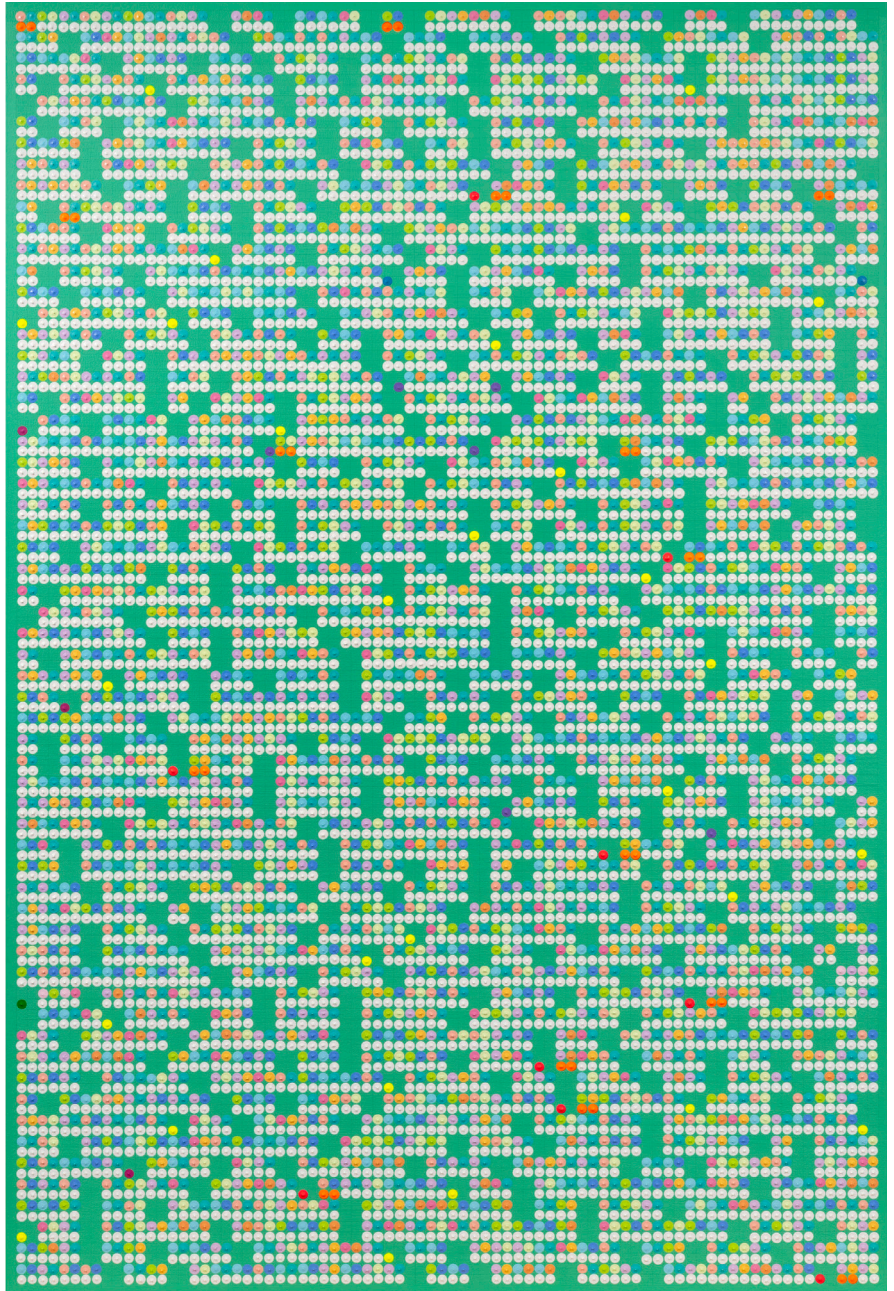
KEPLERS HARMONICIES SERIES

Johan Kepler was a German astronomer and mathematician working in the 16th and 17th centuries and was best known for his work on the laws of planetary motion. Kepler was fascinated by the way in which the Solar system operated and was driven to search for some connection between the planets that would serve as proof that the universe was all connected by a formula.

The four canvases in this series contain a passage of text from Kepler's *Harmonices Mundi* which suggested that musical harmonies exist within the positions of the planets. The musical theory provided astronomers and philosophers with a rational explanation for the arrangement of the heavenly bodies. Kepler updated the theory by proposing that the harmony was produced, not just by the planets' positions, but by the relationship between the distances of the planets from the sun to their orbital periods. Kepler thought that very occasionally, and possibly not since the time of creation, all of the planets "sang" together in perfect harmony. The idea that the solar system operates within the mathematical constraints of music theory to create a 'celestial choir' is not only beautiful, but lays down the foundations for Newton's theory of gravity.

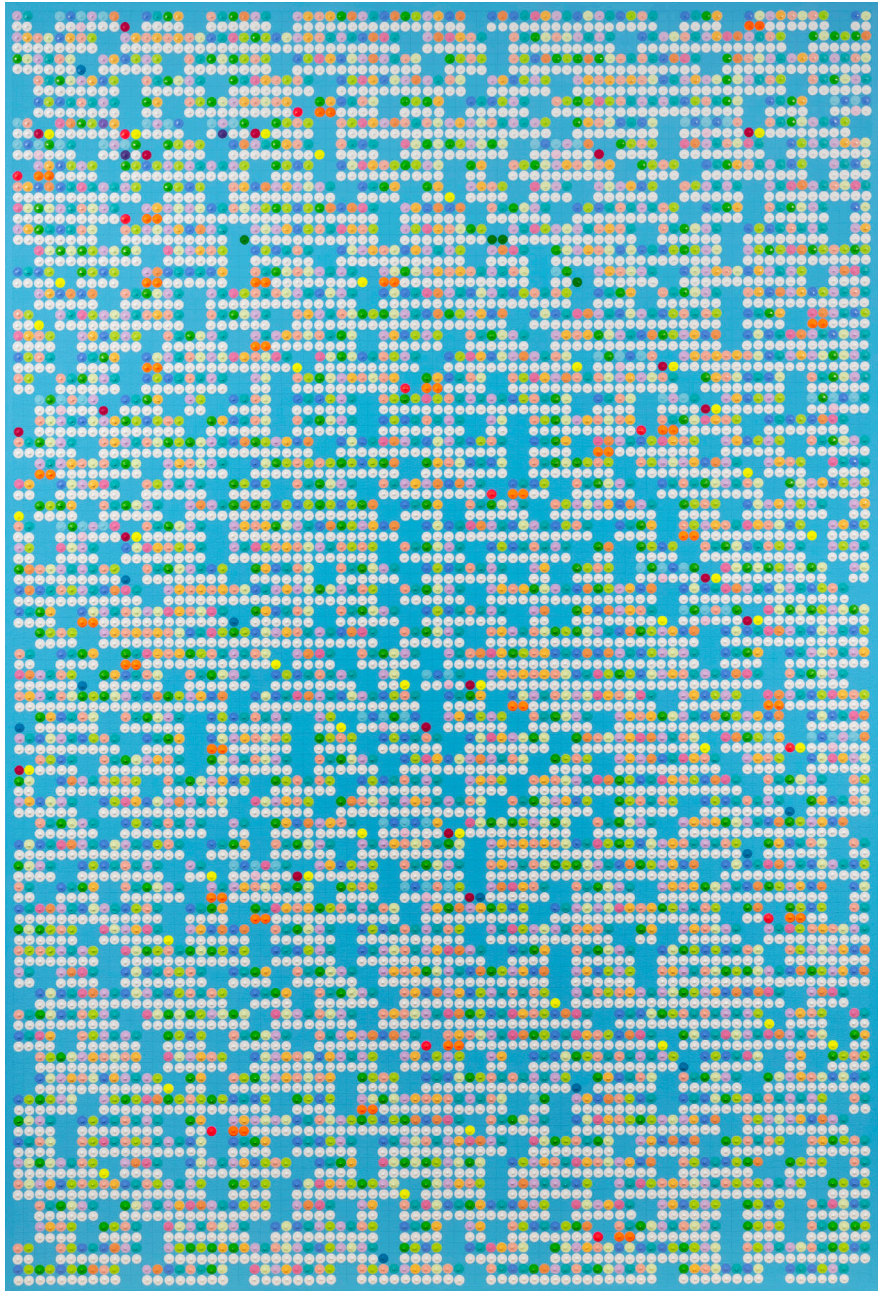
Kepler's early attempt to rationalise the physical world, although disproved, opened the gate to the fundamental laws of physics, and was an early attempt at 'codifying' our existence.

JOSH ROWELL
Kepler's Harmonics - Part 1, 2022
Acrylic on Canvas
122 x 82 cm





JOSH ROWELL
Kepler's Harmonics - Part 2, 2022
Acrylic on Canvas
122 x 82 cm



JOSH ROWELL
Kepler's Harmonics - Part 3, 2022
Acrylic on Canvas
122 x 82 cm

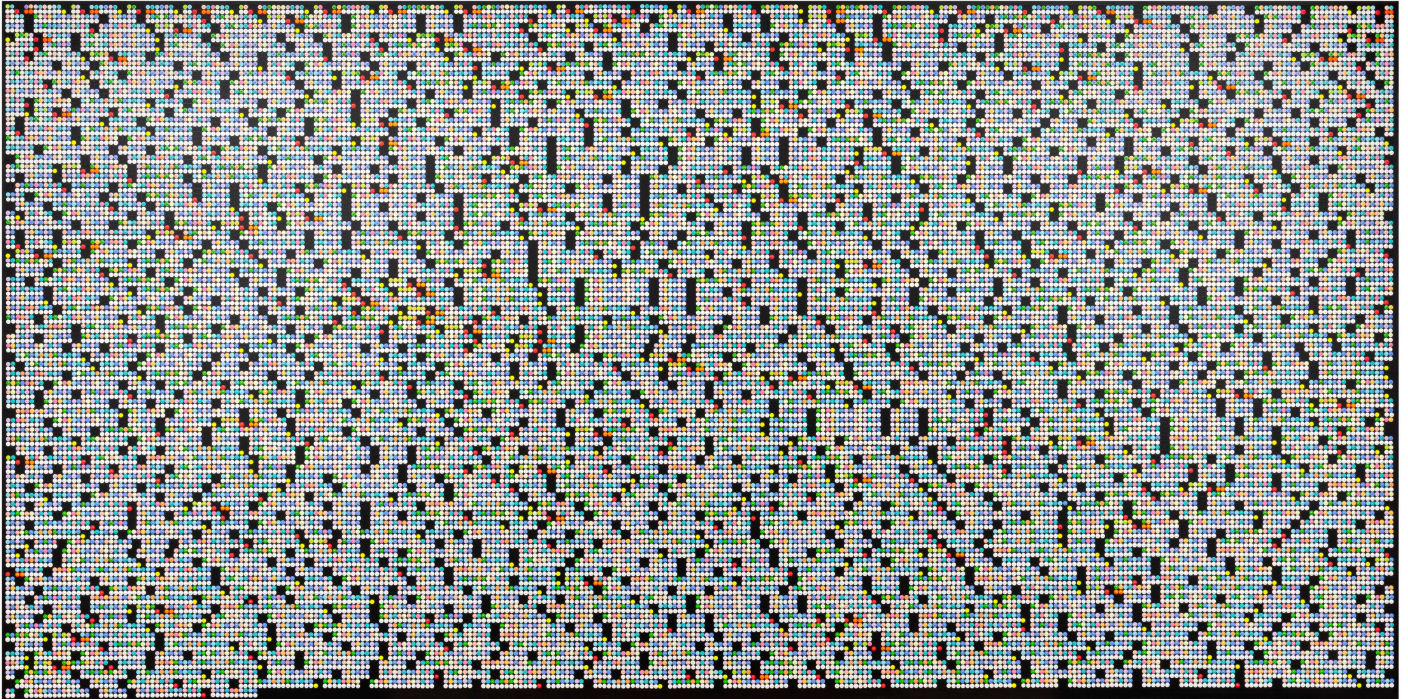


JOSH ROWELL
Kepler's Harmonics- Part 4, 2022
Acrylic on Canvas
122 x 82 cm

FIRST 97 NUMBERS OF THE FIBONACCI

The Fibonacci sequence is a series of numbers in which each number (Fibonacci number) is the sum of the two preceding numbers. The series begins 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8. Despite often being attributed to Italian mathematician Leonardo Pisano (referred to as Fibonacci) in 1202, it's roots actually go back to ancient Indian writings as far back as the 6th century. The sequence has been nicknamed nature's 'secret code' as it seems to exist inherently in the growth development of flowers, plants, trees, shells and so on. It occurs so frequently in nature that many mathematicians over the centuries have believed it to be proof of a divine pattern or structure to the universe.

The painting itself is a simple transcript of the first 97 numbers in the sequence, starting with Zero and ending with Eighty-three quintillion, six hundred and twenty-one quadrillion, one hundred and forty-three trillion, four hundred and eighty-nine billion, eight hundred and forty-eight million, four hundred and twenty-two thousand, nine hundred and seventy-seven. Rowell's decision to turn the sequence into a Language Painting is a way of paying homage to perhaps the most important of the 'Sacred Geometry' discoveries, epic in scale the painting seeks to reflect the grandeur and importance of the Fibonacci numbers. Just as the sequence provides a universal code for the natural world, the paintings themselves mimic this by creating a universal code for language, reducing it to colour and sequence.

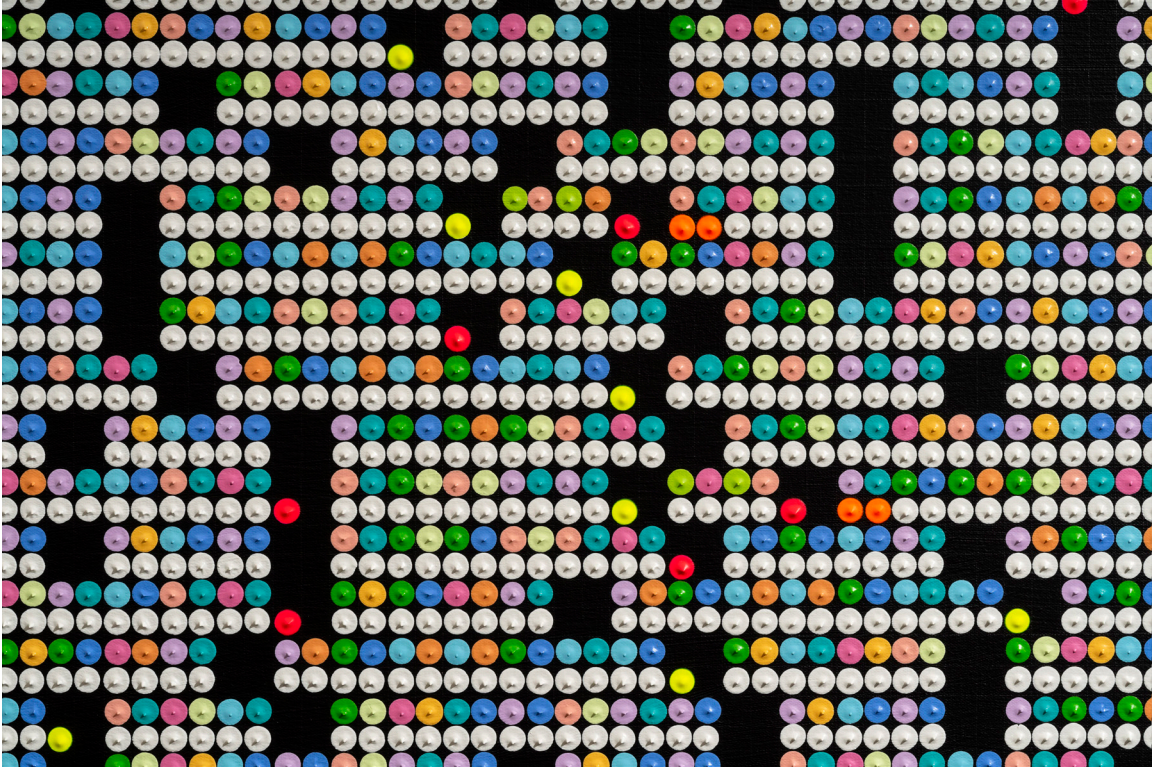


JOSH ROWELL

First 97 Numbers of the Fibonacci, 2022

Acrylic on Canvas

150 x 300 cm



JOSH ROWELL

Close up of

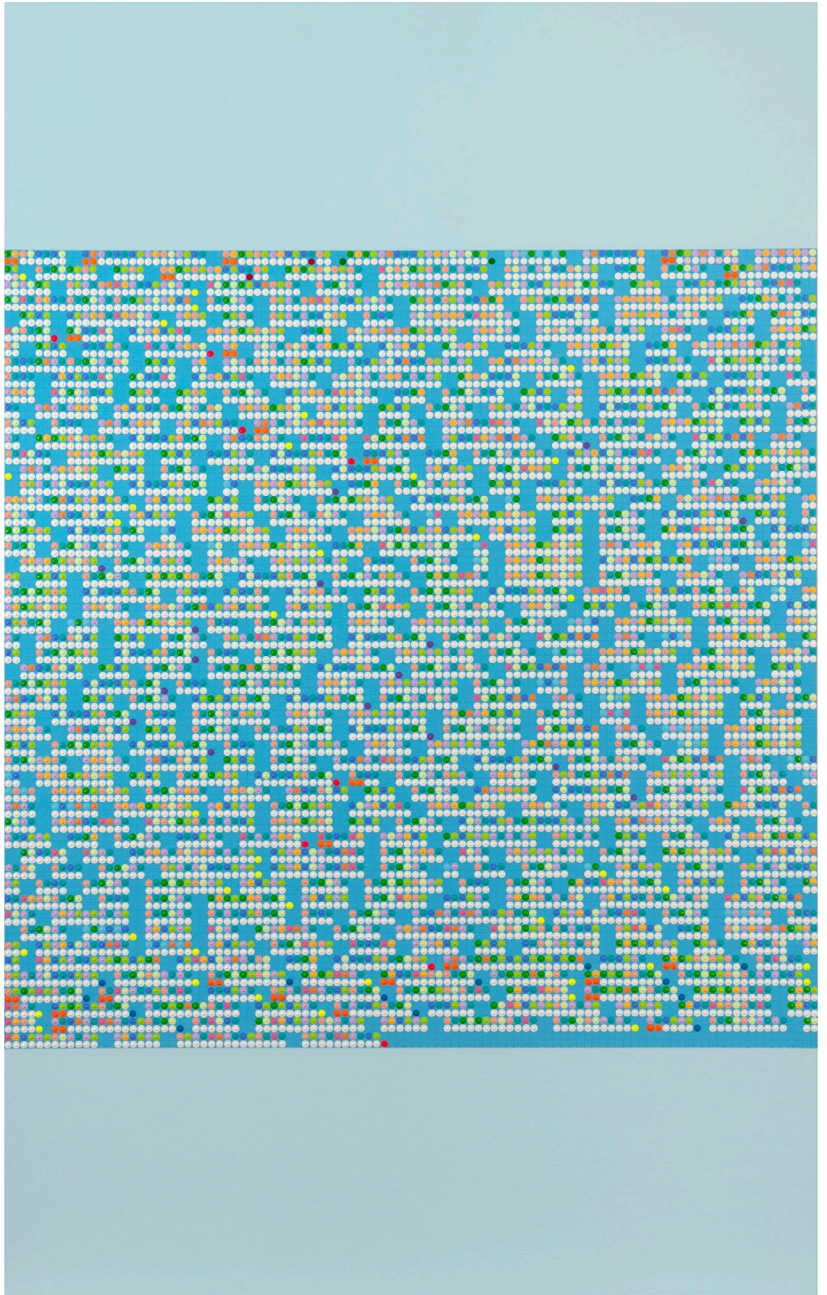
The First 97 Numbers of the Fibonacci



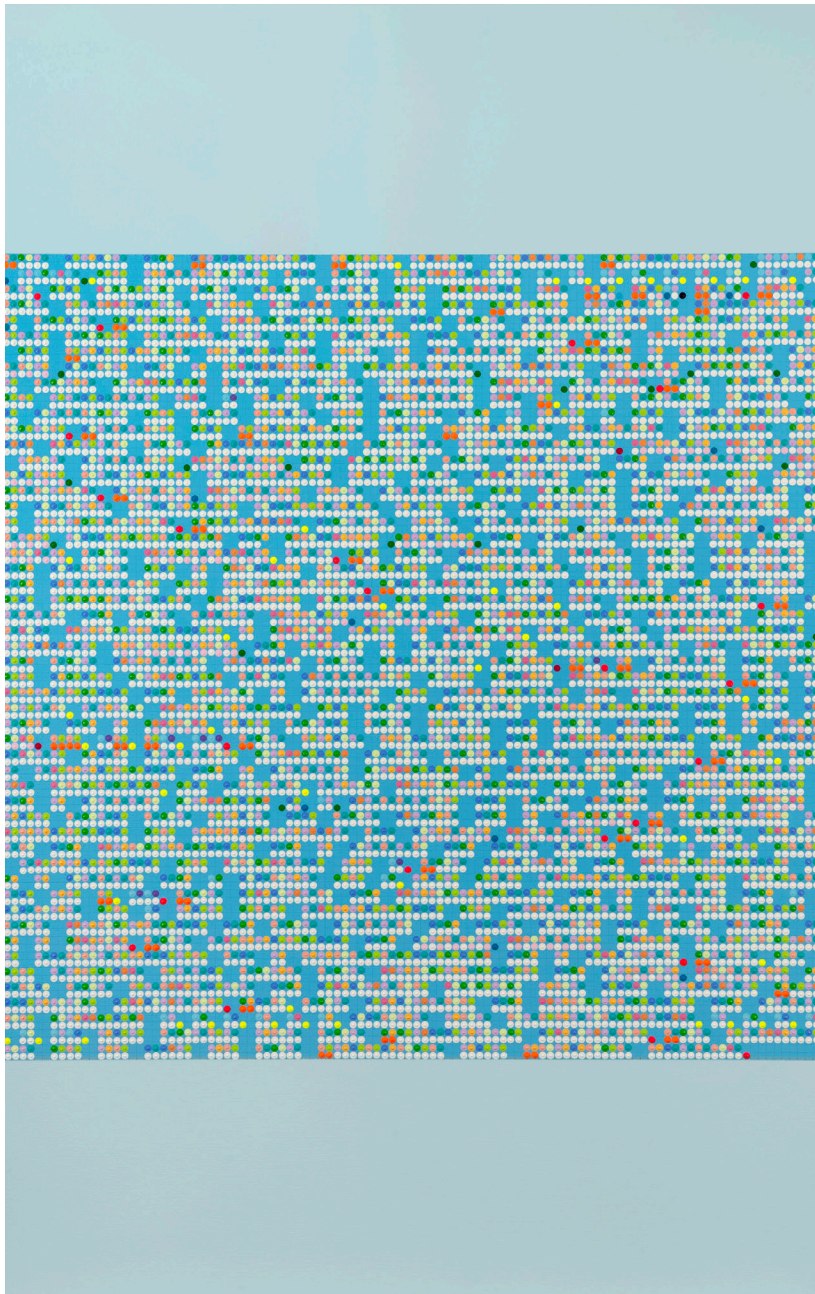
LIBER ABACI & FIBONACCI NUMBERS FROM ANCIENT INDIA

These two works exist together as an investigation into the origins of the Fibonacci Sequence. Whilst the discovery of the sequence is often attributed to Leonardo Pisano 1202 book *Liber Abaci*, the true discovery of the sequence dates back to ancient Indian writings in the 6th century. It would be more accurate to say that Fibonacci introduced the sequence to the western world some 600 years after its true discovery. The 'Liber Abaci' canvas contains a text directly translated from Pisano's first ever writings concerning the sequence. Often referred to as 'Fibonacci's Rabbit Problem', Pisano used the sequence to consider the growth of an idealized (biologically unrealistic) rabbit population in the time frame of 1 year. This was the first record of Pisano writing about and utilising the Fibonacci sequence. In contrast to this, the canvas *Fibonacci Numbers from Ancient India* contains a text taken from the seminal essay by Parmanand Singh in the 1985 edition of *Historia Mathematica* 12. In it, Singh reveals that the 'so-called' Fibonacci numbers were well known amongst Indian mathematicians well before the time of Pisano and date as far back as the 6th Century.

These two canvases further highlight the importance of the sequence, but also comment on the history and origins of understanding itself; history is littered with examples of discoveries being wrongly attributed. It is also worth noting that both canvases, with the dimensions of 168 x 104 cm, are proportioned according to the golden ratio.



JOSH ROWELL
Liber Abaci, 2021
Acrylic on Canvas
168 x 104 cm



JOSH ROWELL
Fibonacci Numbers
from Ancient India, 2021
Acrylic on Canvas
168 x 104 m

VIRTUALLY FRAGILE SERIES

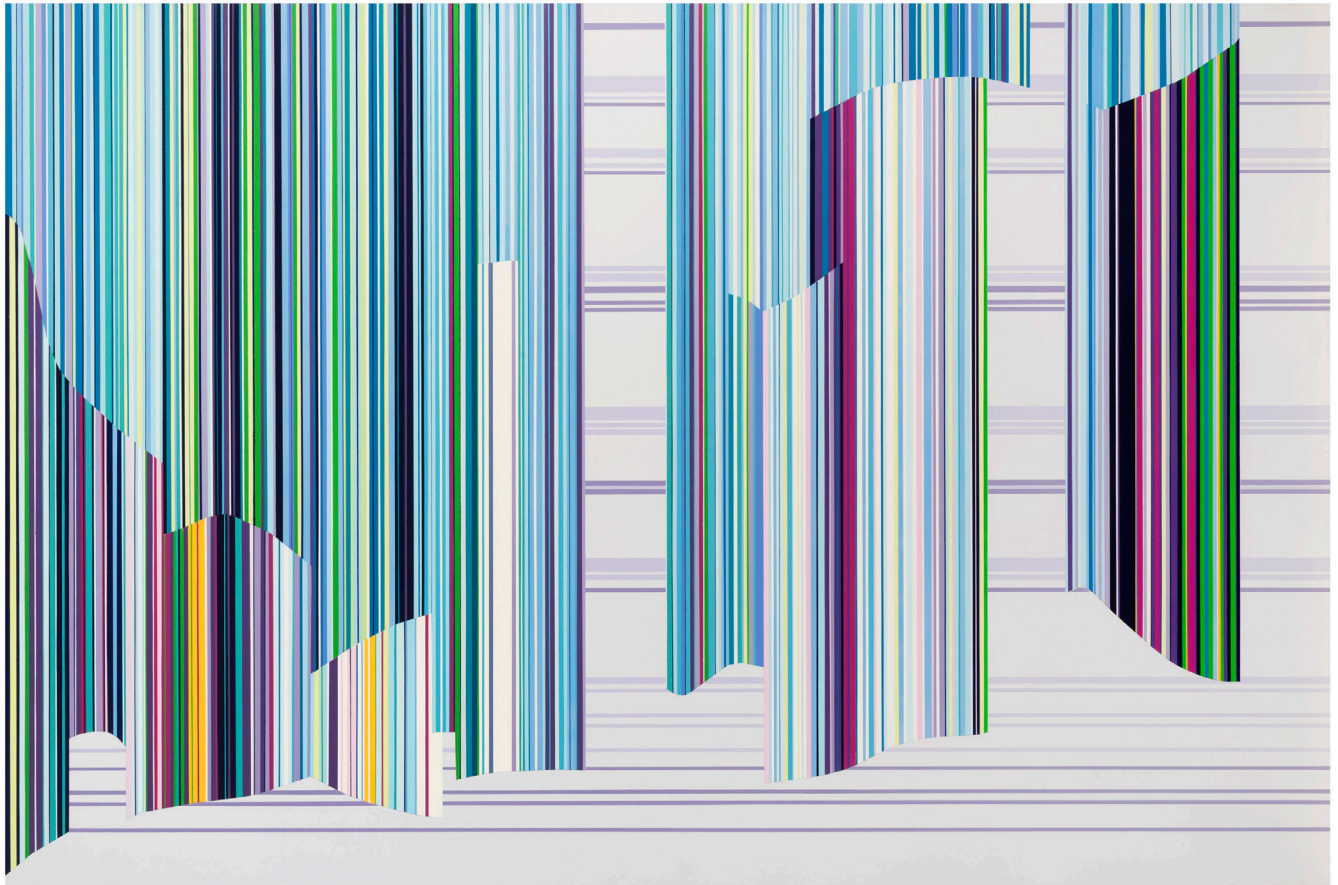
The series *Virtually Fragile* takes its inspiration from images of broken screens in order to paint digital landscapes of complex colour and form, simultaneously geometric and spontaneous in their composition. Working from found images of a variety of broken devices, Rowell highlights the fact that the digital world, despite its seemingly limitless potential, is not yet immortal. Like all things, our personal relationship with the virtual realm is temporal; as we enter into the digital world through our screens, the gateway through which we travel can just as soon be taken away from us with one false move, one simple drop of our cell phone. Ultimately, we can understand here that the digital world is still answerable to the physical world.

The function of the screen in contemporary society lends itself naturally to Rowell's work. Screens represent the border between our natural, tangible and potentially limited reality, and the intangible yet expansive realm of the virtual. Through painting broken screens he takes away from the common conception of 'digital perfection', and instead creates a dialogue that is arguably more accurate, or 'real', than the falsehood of flawlessness. In this sense the *Virtually Fragile* series can be understood as hyperreal, both on a conceptual and aesthetic level.

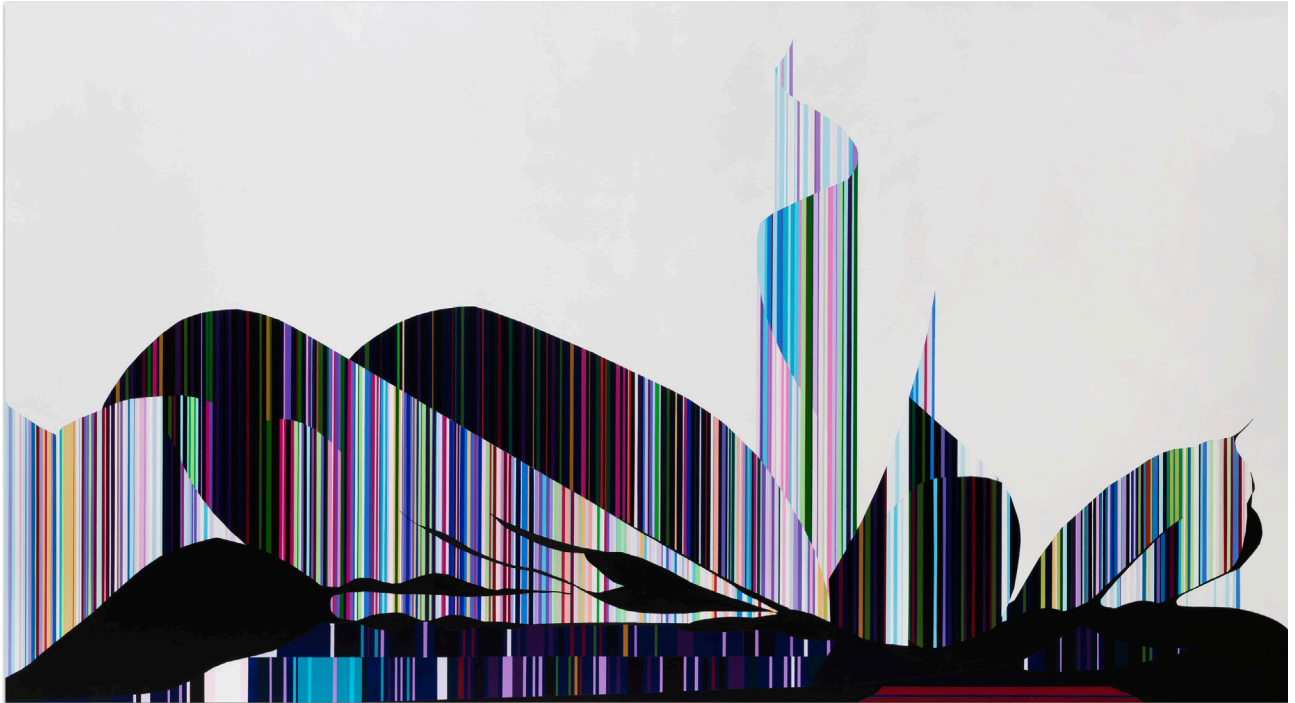
The series' title is inspired by the position we find ourselves in, although we invest more and more of our time and energy in our internet selves, we are never far away from losing it all, hence the 'fragility' of the situation, running in parallel to the fragility of the devices themselves.



JOSH ROWELL
Virtually Fragile #14 (Study), 2020
Acrylic on Wooden Panel
40 x 60 cm



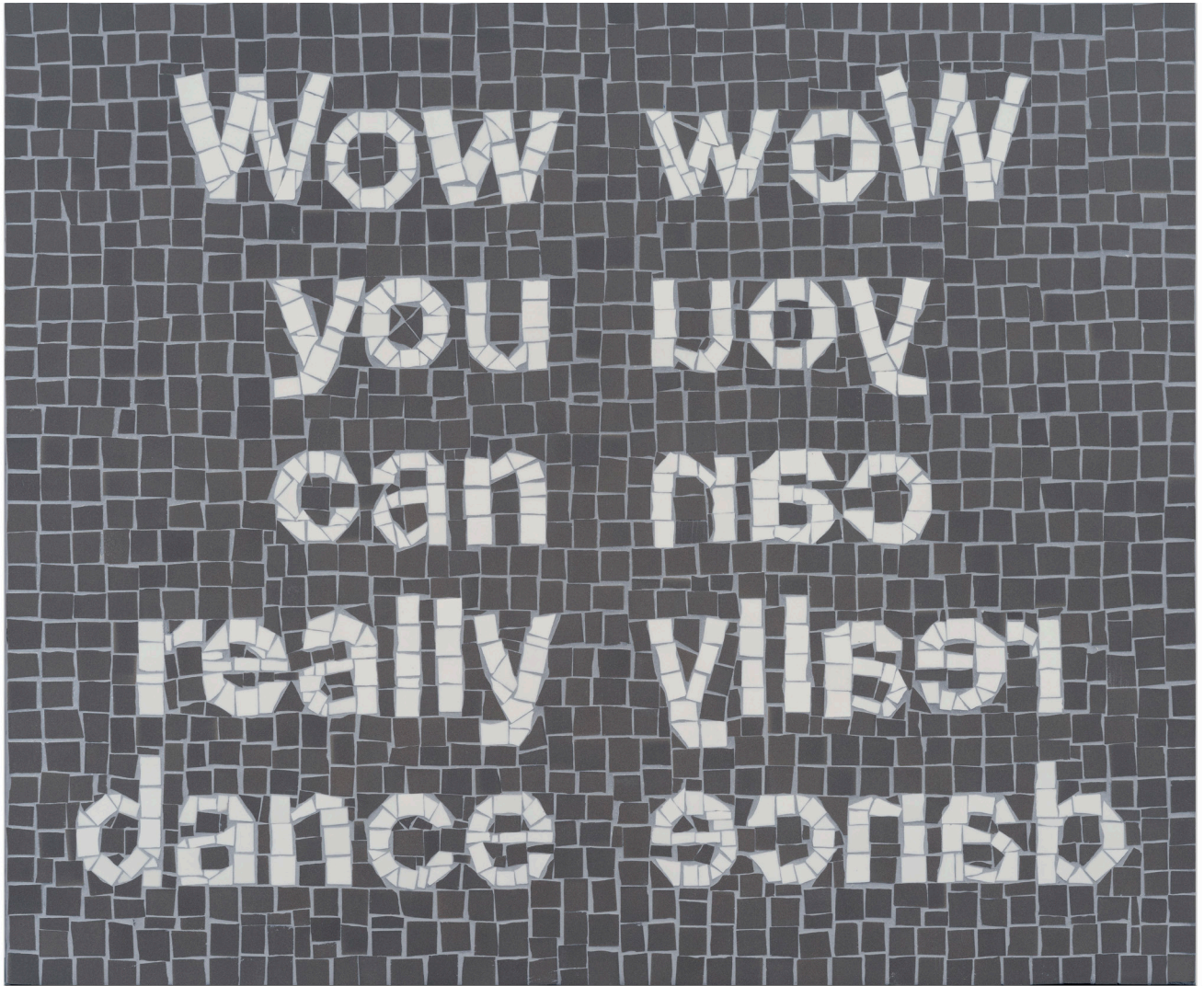
JOSH ROWELL
Virtually Fragile #6, 2018
Acrylic on Wooden Panel
120 x 180 cm



JOSH ROWELL
Virtually Fragile #10, 2019
Acrylic on Wooden Panel
122 x 224 cm

MOSAIC SERIES

While highlighting emerging cultures and behaviours within the internet space, Rowell presents the series *Mosaics*. These bodies of work also comment on the importance of archiving events within the internet's history. For each of these pieces, Rowel has been taking inspiration from trending comments that you can find on various social media platforms; these comments vary from comical, to weird, to alarming! One of the striking features about comment memes, is the fact that they only seem to be popular for a short period of time, perhaps a couple of months at best, before they are then replaced with the next popular comment to copy and paste. The idea to recreate them as mosaics, is a way to play on the idea of the works being almost archaeological. There are real similarities when you start searching through the forgotten detritus of social media feeds, to digging up the earth and discovering some ancient artefact.



JOSH ROWELL

Really Dance, 2021

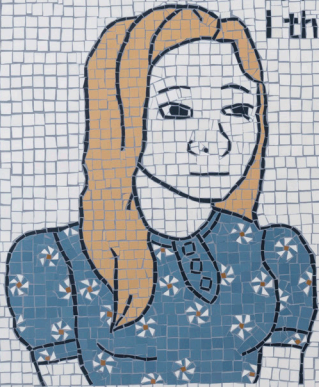
Unglazed Portugese Ceramic Porcelain

Tiles, Grout, Wooden Substrate

40 x 50 cm

My Parents at age 30

Now that we've been saving for two months
I think it's time we bought a house and a car.

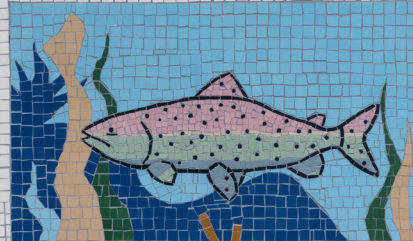


Yes



Me at age 30

Nice, I just spent
my life savings on
a digital salmon.



Lonely_Salmon_NFT

JOSH ROWELL

Digital Salmon, 2022

Unglazed Portuguese Ceramic Porcelain Tiles,

Grout, Wooden Substrate

123 x 124 cm



NASSER AL SALEM

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2012

And It Remains..., Athr Gallery, Jeddah, KSA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022

Breaking Boundaries - (two person show), Firetti Contemporary, Dubai, UAE

2015

Common Grounds, Villa Stuck Museum, Munich, Germany

2014

The Language of Human Consciousness, Athr Gallery, Jeddah

Past Tradition, Exhibit 320, New Delhi

Hajj: The Pilgrimage to Mecca, Institut Du Monde Arabe, Paris

Moallaqat, 21,39 Jeddah Arts, Jeddah

2013

Words & Illumination, in collaboration with the British Museum, Madinah, Saudi Arabia

Hajj: The Journey Through Art, Museum of Islamic Art, Doha

Echoes of Islam, Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City

Calligraphiti, Leila Heller Gallery, NY

Against The Grain, KAP, Kuwait

Show of Faith, KATARA, Doha

Mostly Visible, Grouo Exhibition, Jeddah, Saudi Arabi

2012

Hajj: Journey To The Heart of Islam, The British Museum, UK

Made In Makkah, Artspace, London, UK

We Need To Talk, Edge of Arabia, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

2011

Collage/Assemblage Exhibition, Athr Gallery, Jeddah, KSA

(In Collaboration with Cuadro Fine Arts Gallery, Dubai)

2010

Terminal, Edge of Arabia, Istanbul, Turkey

Young Saudi Artists Exhibition, Athr Gallery, Jeddah, KSA

ART FAIRS

2014

Abu Dhabi Art, Abu Dhabi, UAE

FIAC, Paris, France

ArtInternational Istanbul, Turkey

Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE

The Armory Show, NY, USA

Art14 London, London, UK

2013

Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE

ArtInternational Istanbul, Turkey

2012

Abu Dhabi Art, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Artissima, Torino, Italy

Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE

2011

Marrakech Art Fair, Marrakech, Morocco

NABATT, Beirut, Lebanon

2010

Edge of Arabia, Istanbul, Turkey

Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE

RESIDENCIES

2014

The Delfina Foundation, London

PROJECTS

2013

KACWC, King Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture, Dahrhan, Saudi Arabia

2012

KAIA, King Abdulaziz International Airport, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

PRIZES & AWARDS

2015

Nominated for the Prudential Eye Awards

2013

Shortlisted for the Jameel Prize

2010

Won second prize in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Calligraphy competition.

2009

Won first prize in largest mural in Makkah, KSA.

Won first prize in Arabic Calligraphy & Fine Arts at the Children's Museum, Jeddah, KSA

COLLECTIONS

The British Museum, London, UK

Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), LA, USA

Greenbox Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Mukhmal Tower, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

National Commercial Bank Corporate Collection, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Al Mansouria Foundation, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia



JOSH ROWELL

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2020

Salon Acme - Daniel Benjamin Gallery, Mexico City, Mexico

The Freud/Jung Letters - Moyshen Gallery, San Miguel De Allende, Mexico

Virtual Room II - Daniel Benjamin Gallery, London, UK

2018

Analytics and Aesthetics - Moyshen Gallery, San Miguel De Allende, Mexico

Seattle Art Fair - UNIX Gallery, Seattle, USA

2017

Origins - Moyshen Gallery, San Miguel De Allende, Mexico

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022

Breaking Boundaries - (two person show), Firetti Contemporary, Dubai, UAE

2021

Mythologies, Kopple Projects, Neon Gallery, London, UK

NFT | IRL, Firetti Contemporary x Morrow Collective, Dubai, UAE

Volta Basel - Blond Contemporary, Basel, Switzerland

Art Verona - Atipografia, Verona, Italy

WOP Art - Atipografia, Lugano, Switzerland

2020

False Memory, Rugby Town Art Museum, Rugby, UK

Dentons Art Prize - (JOINT WINNER) Private Exhibition, London, UK

Kinesis, Kopple Projects, Neon Gallery, London, UK

Reset, Tales From The Vanguard, Programa Taide with Colección Aldebarán

Arte Verona - Atipografia, Verona, Italy

WOP Art - Atipografia, Lugano, Switzerland

2019

Author's Translations - (TWO PERSON) Daniel Benjamin Gallery, London, UK

Royal Academy Summer Exhibition - Royal Academy, London, UK

Pareidolia, Daniel Benjamin Gallery x Space Station, London UK

Art Central Hong Kong - UNIX Gallery, Hong Kong

Hospital Rooms 2020 Exhibition - Elephant West, London, UK

WOP Art - Atipografia, Lugano, Switzerland

Summer Exhibition - Daniel Benjamin Gallery, London, UK

2018

All About My Selfie - (TWO PERSON) The Department Store, Brixton, London, UK

Art Miami - UNIX Gallery, Miami, Florida, USA

Volta Basel - UNIX Gallery, Basel, Switzerland

2017

New Territory - (TWO PERSON) Unix Gallery, New York, USA

Asi Se Siente Mexico, Palacio Nacional de Guatemala, Guatemala

VIA Arts Prize, Brazilian Embassy, London, UK

Future Anesthetics, UNIX Gallery, New York, USA

Artefax, Shoreditch Platform, London, UK

2016

Aesthetica16 - Aesthetica Art Prize, York St Mary's, York, UK

Summer Show - Moyshen Gallery, San Miguel De Allende, Mexico
You Can't Always Get What You Want, UNIX Gallery, New York, USA
Art Miami - UNIX Gallery, Miami, Florida, USA
Art Southampton - UNIX Gallery, New York, USA

2015

Show Business, Stanley Picker Gallery, London. Curated by Isobel Harbison
Bittersweet Christmas, Trispace Gallery, Bermondsey, London

2014

Escorts - MFA Show 2014, Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston-upon-thames, London

Render Useless, Stanley Picker Gallery, London

Metamorphosis, Knights Park, Kingston-upon-thames, London

2013

Flat White Wall Machine - Collaborative Publication, X-Marks the Bokship, Matt's Gallery, London

KU13 - Degree Show Exhibition, Kingston University, London

2012

Swanage - Group Exhibition at the Centre for useless Splendour, Kingston-upon-thames, London

SEED - Group Exhibition, 02 Centre, Finchley Road, London.

Everything Is Amazing - Group Exhibition, Meanwhile Space Gallery, Whitechapel, London

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy

Contemporary Art Collection, Kingston University, London, UK
Gregorian Foundation, Washington DC, USA
Min Art Museum, Guadalajara, Mexico
Hotel Matilda Contemporary Art Collection, San Miguel De Allende, Mexico
Private Museum, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

Capital One

Morrison & Foerster

Accouter Design

Periskop

CT Group

Cottonwood Venture Partners

Value Graphics

PRIZES & RESIDENCIES

Dentons Art Prize 9.0 Spring/Summer 2020 - Joint Winner, London UK

VIA Arts Prize 2017 - Public Choice Award Winner, London, UK

Moyshen Gallery Summer Residency 2017 - San Miguel de Allende, Mexico

Aesthetica Arts Prize 2016 - Finalist, York, UK

PUBLICATIONS

Future Now - 100 selected contemporary international artists from 2016,
published by Aesthetica

FIRETTI

CONTEMPORARY

www.firetticontemporary.com
info@firetticontemporary.com
+971 (04) 5462276

Al Quoz 1, Street 8
Alserkal Avenue, Unit 29
Dubai, UAE