

# Passe-Partout

# Kunstmagazine

## Edition 11.5

**Ceramist Dean McRain is  
blessed and cursed with a  
restless mind**

**Lindisfarne Gospels survive  
13 centuries**

**Laurie Mika's gems.  
Influenced by Medieval and  
Renaissance art**

**Shoes on the Danube  
Embankment**

**The tragic life of  
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**Kristian Tsvetanov  
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At school his native culture  
was suppressed and  
speaking his native  
language was prohibited**

**244 Artisans from 28  
countries work for 12 years  
together on 1 red dress**







*Model: Creepy Princess*



# Passe - Partout Art Magazine

Passe-Partout Kunstmagazine is published 6 times a year.  
The digital magazine is a free edition of:  
Leerdams kunstenaars collectief.  
(foundation)

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Cover photo: Ton Swiderski

This foundation is also organizer of  
the Art Competition Leerdam.

German Cosplay model on the cover & page 2: Creepy Princess.

<https://www.facebook.com/CreepyPrincess>

[https://twitter.com/creepy\\_cosplay](https://twitter.com/creepy_cosplay)  
[cosplay@takersplace.de](mailto:cosplay@takersplace.de)



## Shall we become friends?

We are a foundation without subsidy.  
Our goal is to make people interested in art.  
Because art colors your life!

The activities that we organize as volunteers are easily accessible so that they are accessible to everyone.  
In order to continue to do this in the future, we need friends who support our foundation with 10 euros per year.

Would you please become our friend too?

Our account number is:  
NL82 Rabo 01671774 00  
t.g.v Stichting  
Leerdams Kunstenaars Collectief

# L A U R I E M I K A





## Laurie's gems continue to amaze you.

Laurie Mika is a mixed-media artist with a passion for combining and overlapping a variety of mediums creating an original style of mixed-media mosaics using handmade polymer clay tile.

Laurie's background in painting is evident in her mixed-media works influenced by medieval and Renaissance art. The gilded devotional panels of the past become secular icons imbued with personal narratives. Art and folk traditions referenced in her work derive from her travels and experiences of living abroad, (East Africa).

The highly embellished surfaces, including segments of text, form sumptuous tapestries of traditional and modern materials. Like a modern-day alchemist tinkering with the ancient art of mosaics, Laurie finds magic in combining disparate elements. Laurie shares her distinct style teaching at national and internationally recognized art retreats like ArtFest, Art Unraveled, Art and Soul, Raevn's Nest and Hacienda Mosaico in Mexico. She recently taught a workshop in Reims, France.

Laurie is often on the move also teaching at venues across the States. Closer to home, Laurie participates in juried shows, teaches workshops and has her work in local galleries.

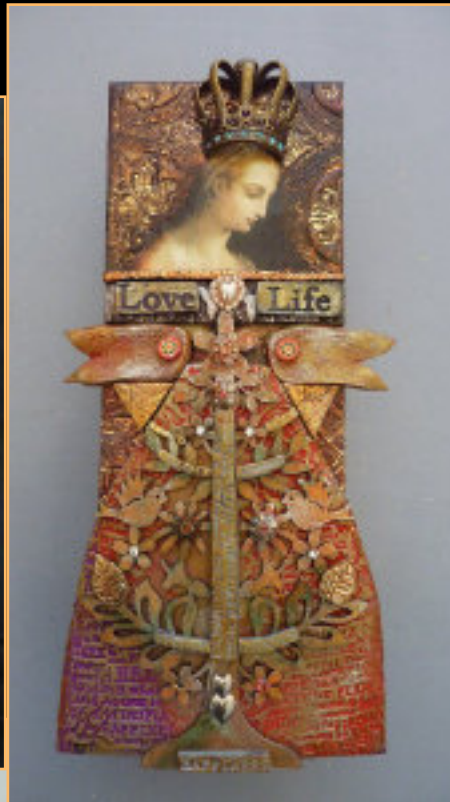






Mexican style





Laurie Mika







Collage:  
Tree of love and loss  
20 x 20 inch  
(50 x 50 cm)





Laurie Milka

## What is Polymer Clay?

This is a kind of clay that consists of Polymer (Polyvinyl Chloride), more colloquially known as PVC, mixed with a liquid plasticizer.

By the presence of plasticizers in the clay, the clay is very good malleable and will remain soft as long as it is not baked. The clay can be baked in a regular kitchen oven: 30 minutes at 110 degrees C

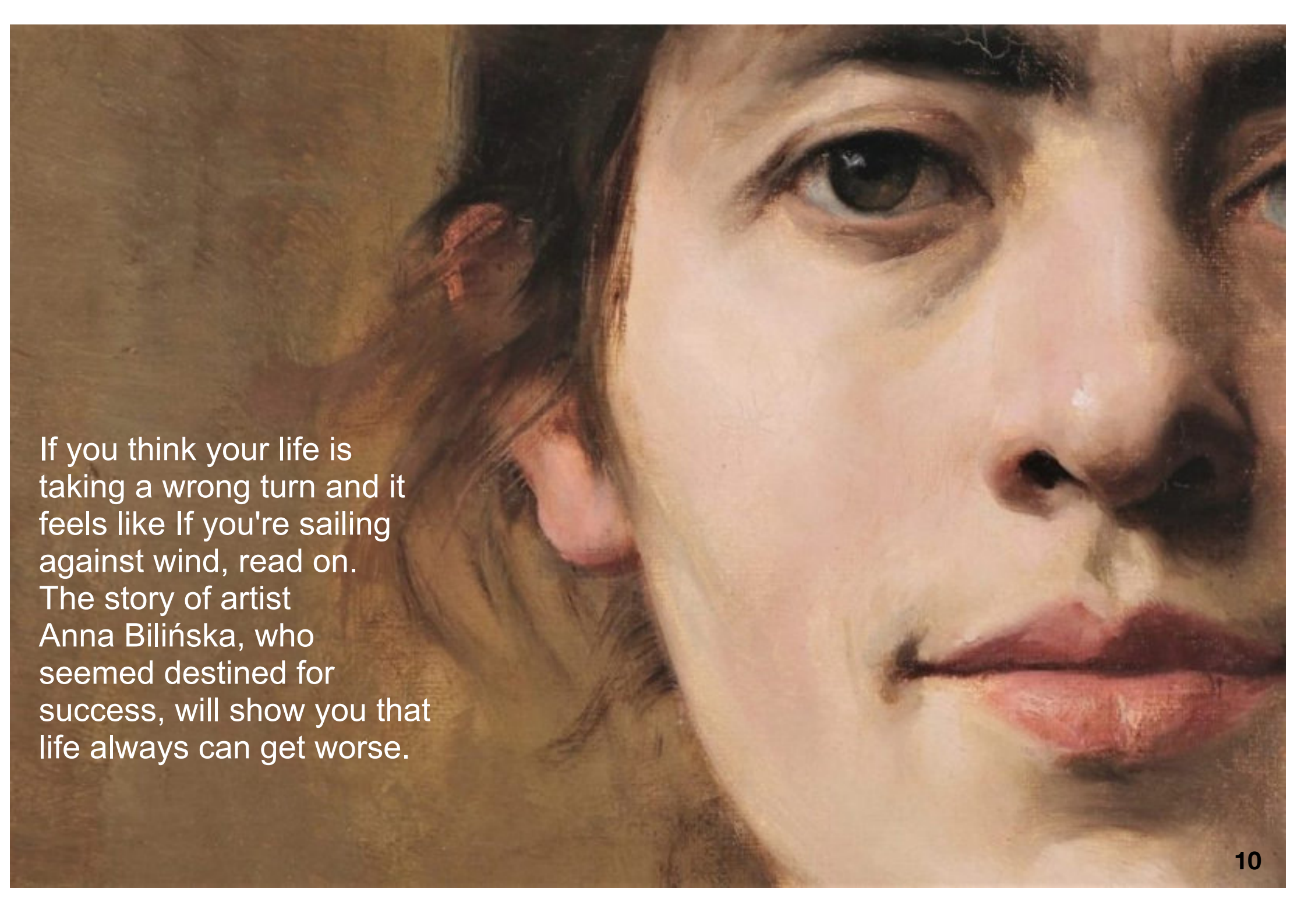
Also watch Laurie's instructional video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4X3sqEZzWw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdSwvph7hOE>







If you think your life is taking a wrong turn and it feels like If you're sailing against wind, read on. The story of artist Anna Bilińska, who seemed destined for success, will show you that life always can get worse.



# Anna Bilińska's Parisian Career and Tragic Life.

## Determined to get the best education.

When Anna Bilińska, born on the territory of present-day Ukraine, moved to Warsaw with her mother and siblings, she began to take private drawing lessons.

Her talent allowed her to contribute to the family income by selling small drawings and portraits.

At the age of 28, she ventured with a friend on a tour of Europe, which could be considered her Grand Tour, visiting Vienna, Salzburg, Berlin, Rome and Paris.

Seeing Paris helped her understand that she mainly wanted to pursue painting.

So she moved there and stayed at the friend's house. In the late 1800s, women were still not allowed to attend public art schools, so Anna joined the private but highly prestigious Académie Julian in 1882.

Women could also not share workshops with men due to the presence of nude models, so Anna only practiced with her other female colleagues.

## Mourning years.

Emmeline Dean and Bilińska most likely met in Paris in 1884, both studying at the same women's art school. Dean showed Bilińska in typical mourning clothes because Anna's father had died in 1884, leaving her without money.

In the same year, Bilińska's friend with whom she had traveled through Europe also died.



*At the Seashore - Bilińska 1886*



She received a small allowance from his will so that Anna could continue to live in Paris. Unfortunately, the mourning period did not end there.

Her fiancée Wojciech Grabowski, also died a year later.

In deep despair, she traveled to Normandy in 1885 and 1886 to sketch and paint landscapes.

## Promising career.

Bilińska showed her self-portrait as a competition entry at the Paris Salon. This was a great success, as women in those days were rarely recognized in important exhibitions.

The jury was impressed by the skill and depth of emotion she presented here.

The black dress suggests that Bilińska is still mourning the loss of her loved ones. The victory at this prestigious competition opened doors to an international career and Bilińska's works began to tour Europe and even reached the US. It also caught the attention of the Parisian *creme-de-la-creme* and expanded her clientele.

In the period that followed, Bilińska had many commissions for portraits of representatives of the higher ranks of the social classes.

At the same time she painted small pastels of children from the Lyon area, as well as portraits of Polish immigrants in Paris, who later gave them to the nannies or their families.

In addition, she worked as a guardian at the Académie Julian, where she supervised young students.

*Bilińska showed this self-portrait as a competition entry at the Paris salon.*







*Bilińska in mourning clothes painted by Emmeline Dean 1884*



*Portrait of a Young Woman - Bilińska 1892*



## An abrupt end.

In 1892 Anna Bilińska married a Polish doctor Antoni Bohdanowicz and returned to Poland with him. She had ambitious plans to set up a women's art school in Warsaw, but she died suddenly of heart disease just a few months after her marriage.

In 1928 her husband published a memoir about her on his own initiative with newspaper clippings, Bilińska's letters and archive photos.

Even after she died, her works were not left alone.

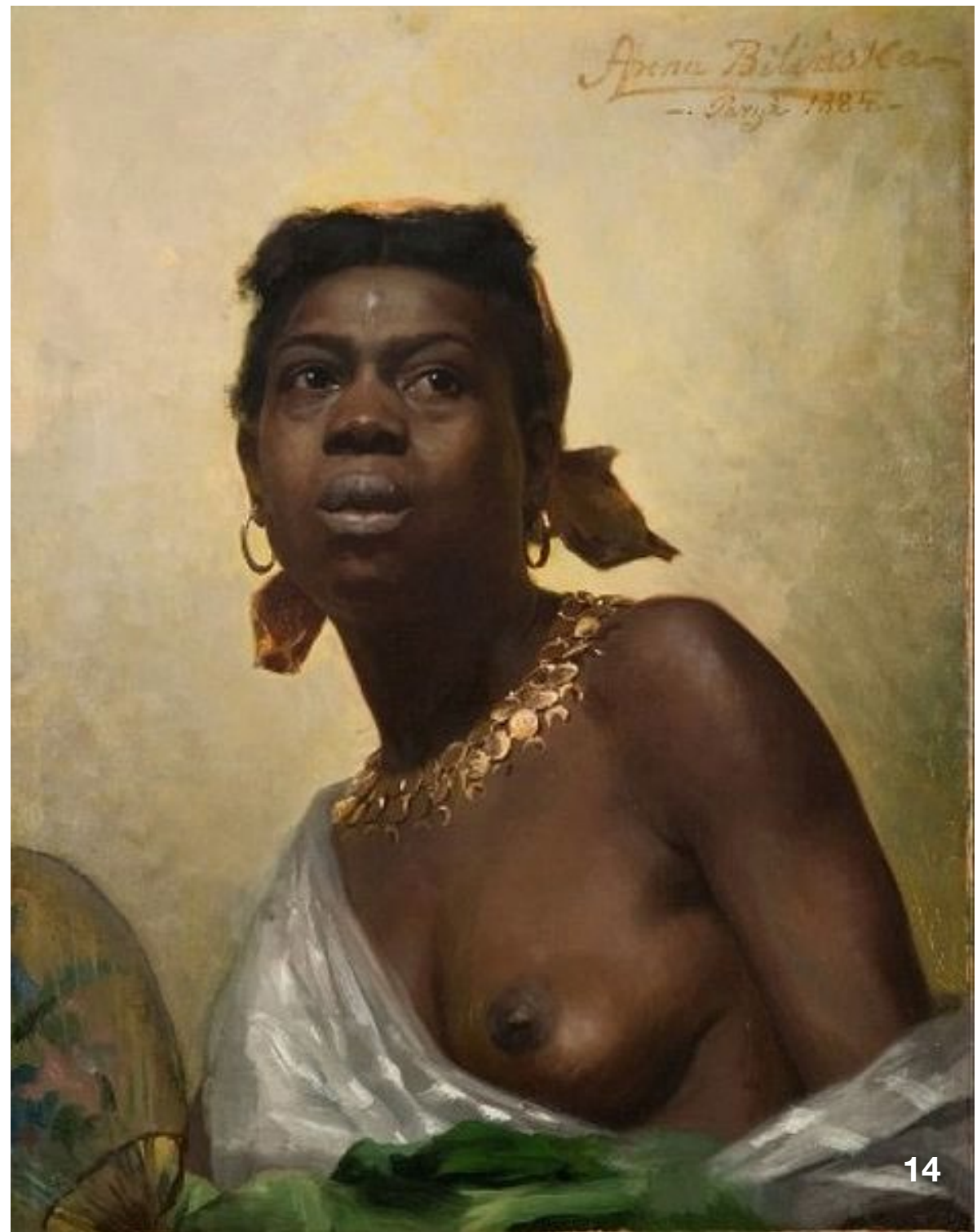
During World War II, two of her paintings went “missing”. Since 1945, the Polish Department of Culture and Heritage has been looking for both works.

One of the two paintings stolen by the Nazis from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw during World War II has been returned to Poland.

It was not until 2012 that the painting 'Negress' from 1884 resurfaced at an auction at Villa Grisebach in Berlin.

The painting would go under the hammer, but the Polish Ministry of Culture was tipped off that the artwork belonged to a Polish museum.

The ministry has hired a German law firm to manage the refund.



*Painting 'Negress' from 1884 has resurfaced.*



The 63 x 48.5 cm oil painting was included in the official list of Poland's war-lost cultural heritage, and it was also included in the Stolen Works of Art database of the international police network Interpol.

Poland was obliged to pay compensation to the German citizen who had put the work up for sale.

The painting "Negress" from 1884 has now returned to its proper home.

The other, a portrait of an Italian woman, is still missing, so keep your eyes peeled!

Maybe you can be the one who finds it somewhere...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUIM18EAbzl>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BPVurJD4L8>

***This painting  
"The Italian Woman"  
Was Robbed by the Nazis and is  
still missing.***







Mural in Warsaw by Michal Dziurkowski





# The Red Dress





Kirstie Macleod has been working as a textile artist for 16 years and has been working on the Red Dress for the last 12 years.

What started in 2009 as a sketch on the back of a napkin has grown into a global collaborative project involving hundreds of people from all over the world.

Textiles were always present while growing up. The women of Kirstie's family were all skilled seamstresses, knitters, so it was only a matter of time before she picked up a needle and thread herself.

When she was 9 years old she lived in Lagos Nigeria. There she learned embroidery from a warm Indian lady and they clicked right away.

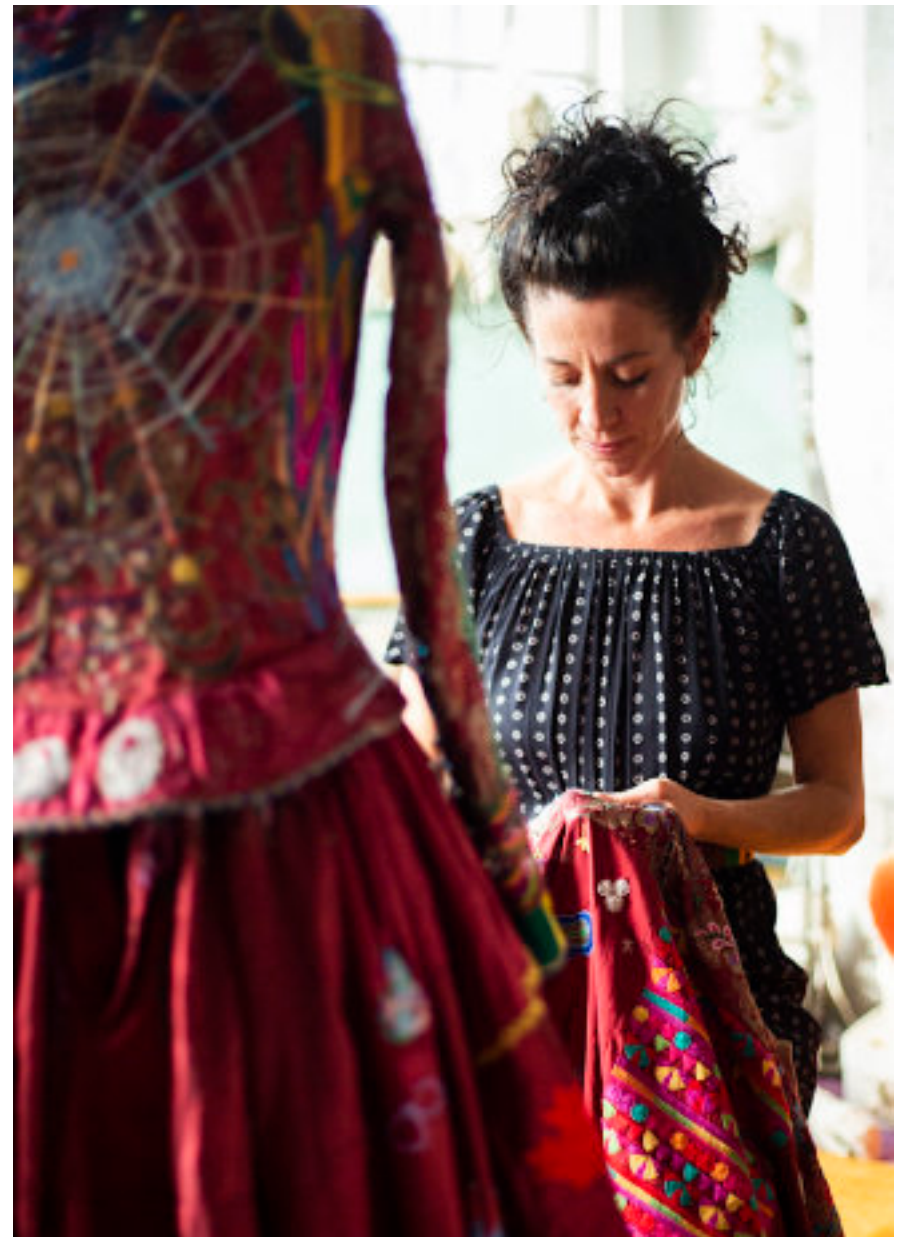
An important point came in 2002 during a trip to South India, where Kirstie spent many hours sewing and embroidering together with Karnatakan - gypsy women who made a simple jacket.

They were unable to communicate with each other in words, but shared a connection through the reciprocal act of sewing.

An award-winning collaborative embroidery project and platform for women's voices to be heard.

12 years, 28 countries, 244 craftsmen, 1 dress.





The Red Dress began in 2009 as a search for identity, with a desire to connect with outside women without borders.

As the years went on, the garment's potential also increased to become a vehicle for expression and a platform for voices.





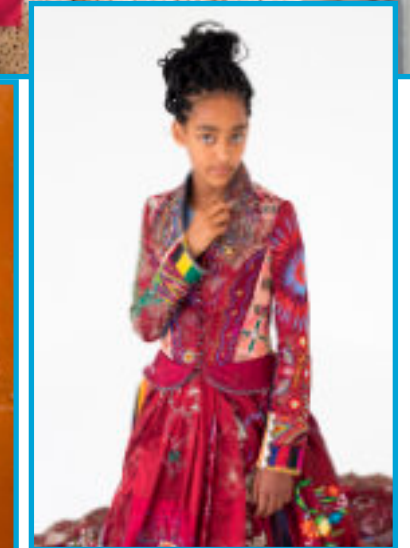
The Red Dress has managed to access disparate communities around the world, allowing connection and conversation between individuals who are unlikely to ever meet in person.

Right now, as the world continues to fight the pandemic, the clothing message seems even more important.

What we can achieve by working together in the community and collaboration has much more impact than trying to work alone.

Because there are so many boundaries, and by breaking down boundaries and coming together in service, with compassion and humility, we can lift and support each other and hopefully build a better world for the next generation.






<https://reddressembroidery.com/Video-one>

[www.reddressembroidery.com](http://www.reddressembroidery.com)





**Kunstenaar  
of hobbyist?**

**dekwast.nl**



# Shoes on the Danube Embankment

Shoes on the Danube Embankment is a memorial in the Hungarian capital Budapest.

This monument is located on the embankment of the Danube and on this spot there are sixty pairs of metal shoes standing on the edge of the embankment over a length of forty meters. About ten meters behind this is a seventy centimeter high bench.

The memorial is placed in memory of the Jews who were shot along the bank of the Danube during the violent attacks carried out by the Arrow Cross Party, a movement sympathetic to Nazi Germany.

The Jews were first forced to take off their shoes (Shoes were precious) and then stand on the edge. After this they were shot dead after which they fell into the river and were carried away by the current. This memorial was created by Can Togay and Gyula Pauer and was unveiled in 2005.

In 1944 there were still about 100,000 Jews in Budapest. Many of them were forced to live in the walled ghetto of the city. People died there not only from hunger and cold, but also from the extreme violence of the Arrow Cross militiamen.



The youth brigades of the Arrow Cross militiamen, boys aged fifteen to twenty, were led by a Roman Catholic priest of the Franciscan order, Father Andras Kun, who himself wielded the gun, raped Jewish women and shouted at executions: 'In the holy name of Christ - fire!'

Wikipedia has an account of what this sadistic Andras Kun has done, and all in the name of God.

He was convicted of murdering 27 people while committing more than 3,000 executions. A disgusting story. Fortunately, he was convicted and hanged in September 1945.

In total, the Holocaust in Hungary claimed the lives of more than 500,000 Jews.



# Renovation in Amsterdam unveiled war mural.

In the attic of a building on Leidsekade in Amsterdam, employees of a contracting company discovered a wall drawing of a Spitfire fighter plane made during the war.

The drawing is dated January 2, 1942 and signed with "H. Janssen".

The discoverers of the drawing with a size of approx 50 by 110 centimeters were so impressed by the find that the demolition work was suspended.

The contractor called the Resistance Museum, which subsequently investigated the origin of the drawing.

Information from the Amsterdam population register shows that the Janssen family lived at the address in question during the war. Their youngest son Hans (1924-2003) was a gifted draftsman and would make a career as an interior architect after the war. The Resistance Museum succeeded in tracking down Janssen's daughter Margje, who was able to tell that her father went into hiding in the same attic to escape forced labor in Nazi Germany.

Witness the many cut-out photos of fighter planes and bombers that can still be seen in the attic, young Hans had a fascination for airplanes.



The Spitfire, the aircraft he chose for his drawing, was a widely used model of the British Air Force that was deployed in large numbers in Dutch airspace during the war.

Drawings referring to the war have been found in houses more often. However, these are rarely in such good condition and usually not made by someone with such a pronounced talent for drawing. It is also rare that both a name with a story and a surviving relative of the artist can be traced.

The wall drawing has since been disassembled and transferred to the Resistance Museum. The panel can be admired as a new acquisition in the foyer of the museum until the end of this month.

Source; History







# Norval Morrisseau

He was a native Canadian artist of the  
Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek tribe.

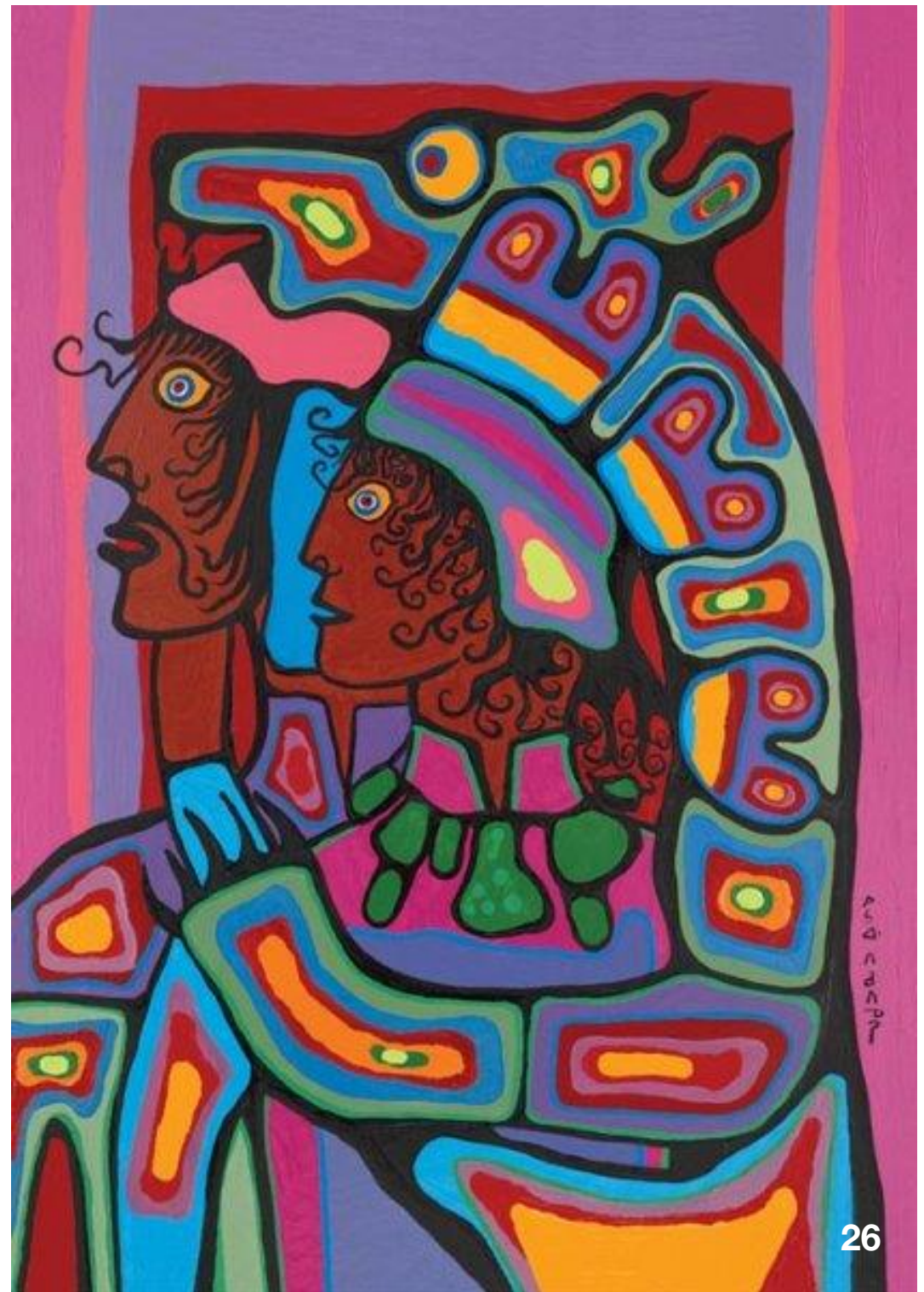
Morrisseau is known as the "Picasso of the North".  
He created works that portray not only the legends of his  
people, but also the cultural and political tensions between  
indigenous Canadian and European traditions.

His style is characterized by thick black  
outlines and bright colors.

Morrisseau was born on March 14, 1932, on the  
Point Ojibwe Reservation near Beardmore, Ontario.  
Norval was sent to a Catholic residential school and  
educated in the European tradition, the native culture was  
suppressed and the use of the mother tongue was banned.

In accordance with the Anishinaabek tradition, he was raised  
by his maternal grandparents.  
His grandfather, Moses Potan Nanakonagos, a shaman  
(a type of priest and seer who communicates with the spirit  
world and uses magic to cure illness), taught him the  
traditions and legends of his people.  
His grandmother, Grace Theresa Potan Nanakonagos, was a  
devout Catholic and from her he learned the teachings of  
Christianity.

The contrast between these two religious traditions became  
an important factor in his intellectual and artistic  
development.









*At the age of six, Morrisseau was sent to a Catholic residential school, where students were educated in the European tradition, the native culture was suppressed and the use of the mother tongue was banned. After two years, he returned home and attended a local community school.*

## Renaming ceremony and a new name for sick Norval.

At the age of 19 he became very ill. He was taken to a doctor, but his health continued to deteriorate. Fearing for his life, his mother called a medicine woman who performed a renaming ceremony: she gave him the new name:

*'Copper Thunderbird'*

According to the tradition of the Anishinaabek, giving a dying person a powerful name can give him new energy and save his life. Morrisseau recovered after the ceremony and from then on always signed his works with his new name. When he started painting, he was discouraged from sharing traditional stories and images outside the tribe, but he decided to break this taboo.

## Great interest in Norval's work.

Morrisseau contracted tuberculosis in 1956 and was sent to Fort William Sanatorium to recover.

There he met his future wife Harriet Kakegamic with whom he had seven children.













After the anthropologist Selwyn Dewdney met the artist, he became an early advocate of Morrisseau's work, taking a deep interest in Morrisseau's in-depth knowledge of Indigenous culture and myth. Dewdney was the first to take his art to a wider audience. Jack Pollock, an art dealer, helped bring Morrisseau's art to a wider audience in the 1960s by organizing a retrospective for him in Toronto. All works were sold on the first day of the exhibition.

## Jesus encourages Norval in a vision.

In 1972, Morrisseau was struck by a hotel fire in Vancouver and suffered severe burns. On that occasion, he had a vision of Jesus encouraging him to be a role model through his art. He converted to the apostolic faith and began to introduce Christian themes into his art.

A year later, he was arrested for drunkenness and disorderly conduct and imprisoned for his own protection. He was assigned an extra cell as a studio and was allowed to go to a nearby church.

## Norval example for other native artists.

Morrisseau was the founder of the Canadian art school called Woodland. His influence on the Woodland school of artists was recognized in 1984 by the Art Gallery of Ontario. In 1978 Morrisseau was made a Member of the Order of Canada. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

In 2005 and 2006, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa organized a retrospective of his work.

This was the Gallery's first time to dedicate a solo exhibition to a native artist.





In the last months of his life, the artist used a wheelchair and lived in a house in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Due to his poor health he could no longer paint. He died of cardiac arrest — complications from Parkinson's disease on December 4, 2007 in Toronto.

Norval Morrisseau was honored with a posthumous Lifetime Achievement Award at the NAAF Awards show in 2008.

**By self-study, apart from any guidance, he created his own special style.**

Morrisseau was a self-taught artist.

He developed his own techniques and artistic vocabulary that captured ancient legends and images that came to him in visions or dreams.

Initially, he painted on any material he could find, especially birch bark, and also moose skin. The subjects of his art in the early period were myths and traditions of the Anishinaabek people, but also the primitive cave paintings made by his ancestors, the so-called Petroglyphs.

His later style changed: he used more standard material and the colors became brighter and brighter, eventually taking on a neon-like sparkle.

The themes also shifted from traditional myth to portraying his own personal struggles.

He also made art with Christian subjects: during his incarceration he attended a local church where he was struck by the beauty of the pictures on the stained glass windows. Some of his paintings, such as the Native American Jesus Christ, imitate that style and represent characters from the Bible with indigenous features.



*Primitive cave drawings made by his ancestors, the so-called Petroglyphs.*

## Relentless fight against counterfeits.

In 2005 Morrisseau founded the Norval Morrisseau Heritage Society. The Society has been exposing fakes ever since.

Using the database of Norval Morrisseau paintings, the Society is able to discredit common Morrisseau forgeries.

<https://www.officialmorrisseau.com/>



A photograph of Lindisfarne Castle, a historic stone fortress perched on a grassy cliff overlooking the sea. The foreground is a rocky, pebbly beach. The sky is filled with dramatic, colorful clouds from a sunset or sunrise, with the sun visible on the horizon. The text 'Lindisfarne' is overlaid in a stylized, orange-gold font.

# Lindisfarne



# Lindisfarne Gospels.

Recorded 13 centuries ago  
with primitive writing material  
and by candlelight.

Lindisfarne, is a tidal island off the northeastern coast of England, off Berwick-upon-Tweed. It is also the name of a monastery and castle on this island.

Lindisfarne is also known as "Holy Island". The island is accessible at low tide via a causeway. When the tide comes in, the road disappears under water, and it is an island again.

The island has a very special place in history as the birthplace of the Lindisfarne Gospels, one of the most celebrated and illuminated books in the world.

(Book illumination is the art or craft concerned with the illustration and decoration of early medieval manuscripts and other documents)

13 centuries ago, the Gospels in Latin were written under very primitive conditions by priests living in the monastery.

250 sheets of calfskin were needed for this.







The manuscript has survived 13 centuries and the terror of the Viking gangs.



A word-for-word translation into Old English (Anglo-Saxon), was added in the 10th century by a priest named Aldred. He wrote his translation under every word in the book. If you look closely you can see his delicate handwriting very small below the words.

The rich decoration of the book is done in a wide variety of colors, drawn from animal, vegetable and mineral resources, some of which were imported over great distances.

A very distinctive form of adornment is used in the Lindisfarne Gospels with more striking effect than in other manuscripts.

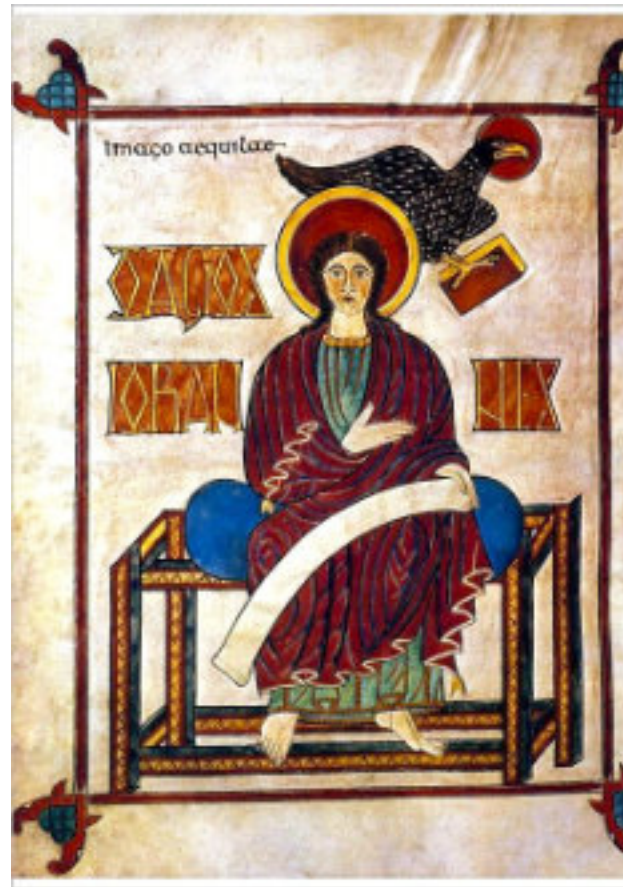
The technique of applying small drops of red lead to form backgrounds, contours or patterns.

The first page of St. Luke has 10,600 dots. Experimentation suggests a rate of 30 dots per minute – this would have taken at least six hours of hard work, all by primitive means and by candlelight.

According to an inscription added in the 10th century at the end of the original text, the manuscript was made in honor of God and of St Cuthbert by Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, who died in 721.

The original leather binding of the book was supplied by Ethelwald, who succeeded Eadfrith as bishop and died about 740.

An outer layer of gold, silver and precious stones was added by Billfrith the Anchorite, probably around the mid-8th century.







*Painting Lindisfarne Castle and Abbey, - Holy Island by Moonlight - by John Moore of Ipswich (1820-1902) (National trust)*



## Vikings sow death and destruction.

Both covers are long gone, but the manuscript itself has survived the thirteen centuries. That in itself is a miracle, especially since in the year 793 the Vikings came ashore in Lindisfarne.

Mad gangs of savages with helmets and horns are wreaking havoc on Lindisfarne. Priests were murdered, their possessions burned, valuables were stolen and the population was enslaved.

The original book is on display at the British Library in London. A copy can be seen in the church of Lindisfarne.

Other interesting illuminated books are: Book of Kells & Book of Durrow.

Lindisfarne (Holy Island) Causeway Tide Timelapse  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31vedZa7Y>

Drone video of an UBER TAXI that tries to drive from Lindisfarne to the mainland despite all the warnings and the rising water.

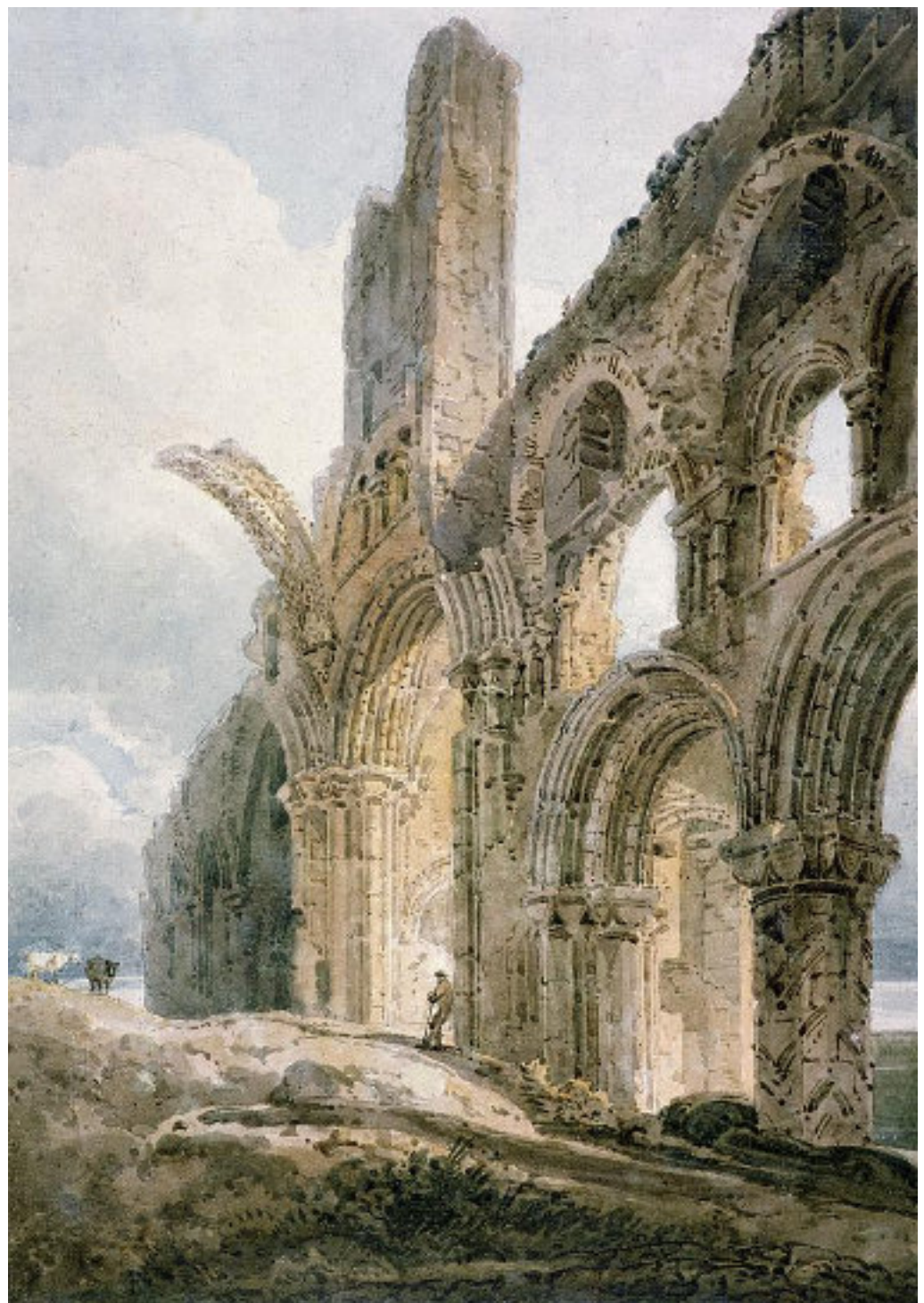
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9hAcFCiMxU>

The name Lindisfarne also appears in contemporary music. In 1971 the song Lady Eleanore was released by the British Folk-rock band Lindisfarne.

The lyrics were inspired by the short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) Written by Edgar Allen Poe.

In the link below to the YouTube video you can watch a live version of the song, interspersed with some footage from Lindesfarne.

Lindisfarne - Lady Eleanore link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILp9MyKURo4>



*Aquarel - Lindisfarne Abbey ruin - Thomas Girtin. 1797*





*Lindisfarne Abbey ruin 2009 @ Antony Swiderski*



## Kerstmis

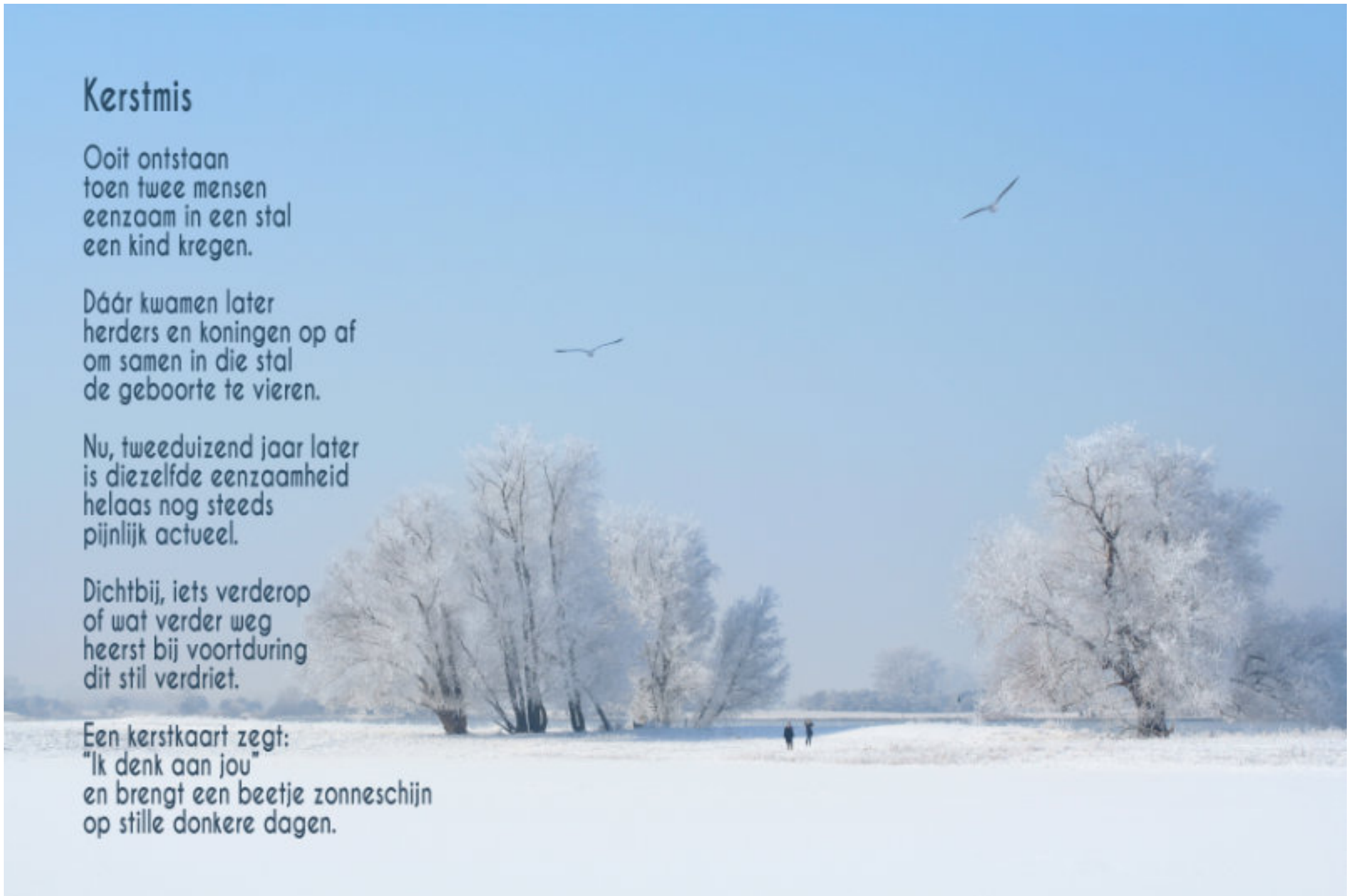
Ooit ontstaan  
toen twee mensen  
eenzaam in een stal  
een kind kregen.

Dáár kwamen later  
herders en koningen op af  
om samen in die stal  
de geboorte te vieren.

Nu, tweeduizend jaar later  
is diezelfde eenzaamheid  
helaas nog steeds  
pijnlijk actueel.

Dichtbij, iets verderop  
of wat verder weg  
heerst bij voortduring  
dit stil verdriet.

Een kerstkaart zegt:  
"Ik denk aan jou"  
en brengt een beetje zonneschijn  
op stille donkere dagen.







## LightWave

LightWave deals with the magic of creation and the alchemy of ceramics. ceramic artist Dean McRain's work is inspired by the beautiful tropical environment of Kauai Hawaii.



## Ceramic artist Dean McRain says:

My goal as an artist is to create work that is beautiful, uplifting and brings joy to those who see it. I am self-taught.

My journey has led me to explore many relatively unknown paths in my quest for beauty in ceramic art. That is why many of my making techniques, glazes and firing processes are original and unique.

I have been making pottery and developing glazes for 35 years. For the past 15 years my main interests have been the vibrant colors and rich patterns that can be created with colored clay.

All my pottery is handmade in my studio. It is high fired porcelain. Everything I make is food, dishwasher and microwave safe. I always love to give a tour of the workshop and share my techniques with people.

I sell my work through my studio showroom and through online sales.

Making art is a playful activity for me. I want my customers to enjoy my work too. In everything I do I try to express the beauty and brilliant colors of higher dimensional realities.

Although I have always been artistic, I did not have much formal training in ceramics.







My vocational training is family therapy.

I started doing pottery to balance the stress of working with dysfunctional families.

I am mainly self-taught in ceramics and as a result I have followed some unusual paths such as:

Single firing,  
Making cone 10 oxidation glaze,  
Firing with vegetable oil and  
Colored clay millefiori techniques.











I have read many books and magazines and websites about pottery over the years.

A large part of my training as a Ceramic artist has come about through trial and error. I am always curious to try out a new technique or approach.

Even after 30 years of pottery making I am still curious.

The colored clay work I am doing now seems to have limitless possibilities and I will probably continue to explore it for a long time to come .





Preparing a large clay block can take up to two months.



## Colored clay fascinates me.

Nine years ago I attended a short, novice workshop in Colored Clay Techniques and I knew immediately that I had found “my thing”.

Since then I have developed my techniques rapidly. Colored clay offers unique visual possibilities of color, detail, pattern, image creation and abstract design that are not available with any other ceramic technique.

It's psychedelic! I like that word. It is like a new art form, beyond the traditional boundaries of ceramic techniques.

I've always been an 'out of the box' type. I've never fitted into a traditional mold. I am blessed and cursed with a restless mind. I always want to discover something new. I can do this with colored clay.

Every new design I create opens up a whole new world of possibilities.

<https://www.facebook.com/extraordinarymindproject/videos/this-artist-makes-psychedelic-pottery-using-an-unusual-technique/2286168738076401/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clikP1eEkvw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSC-2ud7x3M>

Contact Dean McRain:

Web: [lightwavepottery.com](http://lightwavepottery.com)

Instagram: [instagram.com/lightwavepottery](https://www.instagram.com/lightwavepottery)





# Kristian Tsvetanov - Bulgaria

In the previous edition we introduced you to the special works of artist Kristian. In the future he will contribute more often to Passe Partout Art magazine.

Is it Foresight or just coincidence.

Notre Dame Paris in ruins.

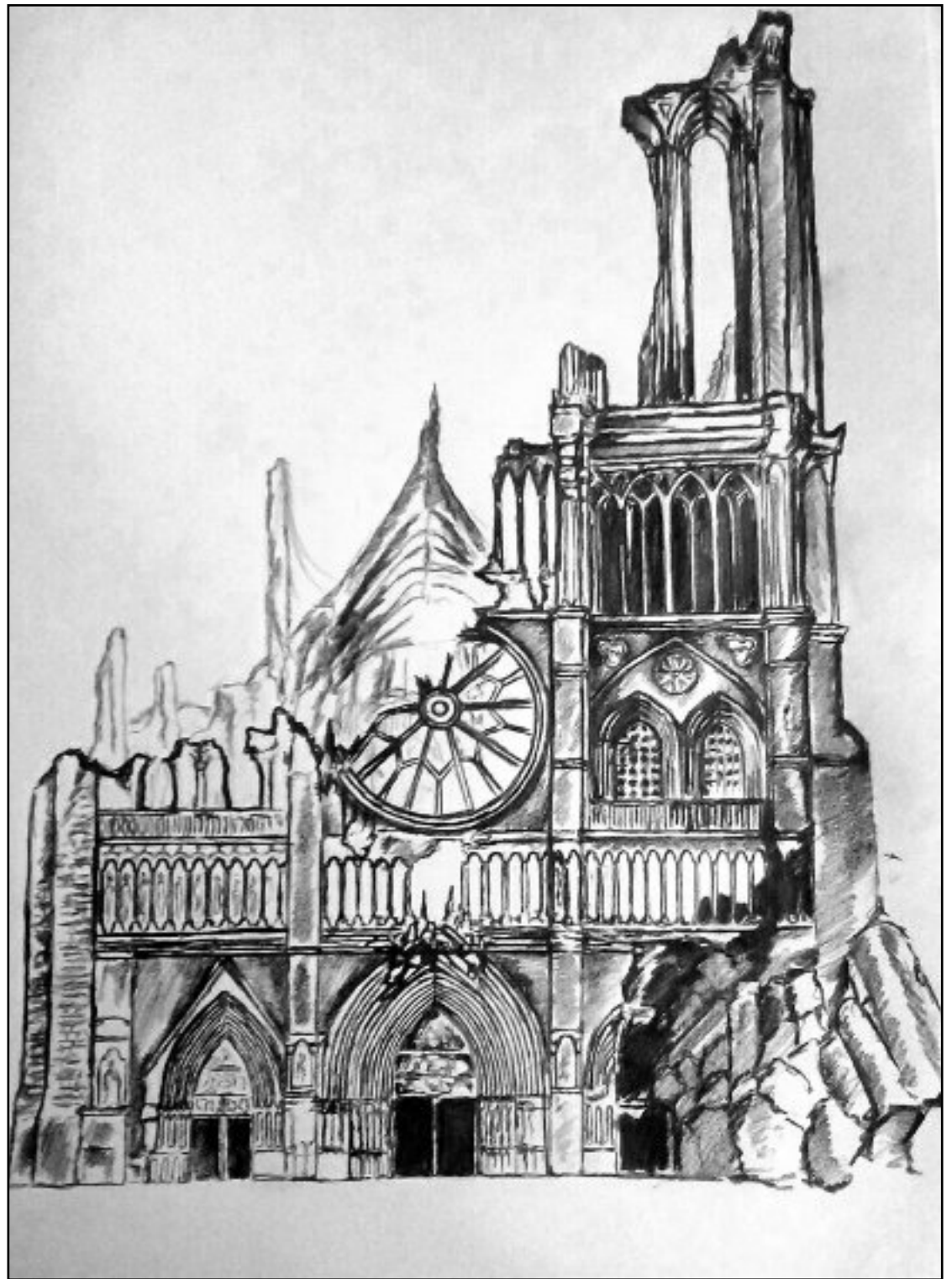
This is a pencil drawing from a few years ago, when I started exploring the idea of depicting the destruction of things that people thought unimaginable.

I was fascinated by how fragile everything in the world was, and how people tried to avoid this fact, never anticipating anything dangerous might actually happen.

I've drawn a couple other buildings in ruins, just for that purpose, to allow myself a tiny window through which I could show people what was hard for them to imagine.

What was curious about my drawing of the ruined Notre-Dame was that I drew it shortly before the actual fire of Notre-Dame happened, and some people came to me saying I had predicted it with my art.

I found that occurrence psychologically curious, although ridiculous as a statement, as I don't subscribe to any ideas of preordained future..





# Sofia University in ruins.

This is the university where I graduated, it is one of the most iconic buildings in our capital Sofia.

Over a period of about 5 years I spent all my time in that amazing building - studying, eating there, spending my free time there and even taking the occasional nap between lectures (and sometimes even during, I'm a little embarrassed to to admit).

During those 5 years, Sofia University was my world and my reality. And I, the imaginative dystopian that I am, eventually started asking myself: What if that reality was taken away from me? What if the world as I know it collapses, and it literally does?

I wanted to make a window for myself, where I could witness that happening, and that's how this drawing came about.

*\*Dystopia is an (imaginary) society with only unpleasant features in which one would definitely not want to live. It is the opposite of a utopia.*





And speaking of the gift of foresight, here's another work by Christian. The Oracle. He tells about it himself.

## The Oracle's words

The idea of a predestined future is an amazing philosophical occurrence.

Human history is riddled with prophecies and attempts to try and understand the future, and historical events are to a large extent driven by people's expectations of what the future will be. And why is that?

It is because people fear the future, and they fear it, because they can never know it. But nobody asks themselves the question, what would happen if we DO know the future?

Will that be a good thing? Do we really want to know? What if the future turns out terrible, and we then wish we never knew it in the first place ?

Well, the oracle in the painting knows what the future holds. But she looks at us and asks the question - Do you really want me to tell you the future ?

*Happy holidays and  
greetings from  
Kristian Tsvetanov.*

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**Painting: The Words of the Oracle by Kristian Tsvetanov.**

An oracle was one who communicated with the Gods of the Greeks and made predictions about the future..



# Ad de Rouw

Ad de Rouw from Kerkdriel makes art from found metal objects.

Screws, bolts, pieces of iron, etc. everything he encounters on his (bicycle) path.

He collects this in a box that he turns over on the workbench every now and then to see if he has anything can make it interesting.

## Christmas 2021

The combination of glass and metal has always attracted me. Art Deco was my guiding principle, with its beautiful shapes in combination with the warm glass colours.

Years ago this was the seed to forge a warm item like a Christmas tree using these hard ingredients.

The glass decorations in the form of an angel, a snowman and stars are based on examples from the 1920s.

I would like to wish all readers a Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Yours sincerely, Ad de Rouw. .



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# Sjah Tsjeragh

Shah Cheragh (Persian) is a mausoleum and a monument in the Iranian city of Shiraz. It was built around the year 1130.

The building has been destroyed several times by an earthquake and rebuilt. It is an important pilgrimage site.

Some eye-catching elements are the decorative mirror glass mosaic, stucco inscriptions, and the silver-panelled doors and the large courtyard.

When the sun falls on the mirrors and the silver, the whole building lights up and it becomes very fairytale-like, just as you would expect in the tales of One Thousand and One Nights.





# Kissing under the Mistletoe

*The mysterious history behind the Mistletoe, which we call Maretak' in Holland. How the plant was associated with Christmas traditions and the holidays.*

According to the mistletoe tradition, a man may kiss any woman who is under a branch or bouquet of Mistletoe, and vice versa. If a kiss is refused, bad luck befalls the person who said "no".

Mistletoe is a semi-parasitic plant that produces small white berries and grows almost exclusively in trees. It finds its home as many seeds do - through bird droppings. As the seed begins to grow, the plant attaches itself to the "host" tree to steal water and the essential nutrients it needs to survive.

Did you know that the use of Mistletoe in ritual form started with the Celtic Druids. This ancient civilization lived in the British Isles in what is now Ireland and Scotland. But also in Norse mythology there are stories about the mistletoe.

Balder, son of supreme god Odin and Freya, goddess of love, was protected from all but the power of Mistletoe.



*Druids bringing home the Mistletoe - George Henry (1858-1943) en Edward Atkinson Hornel (1864-1933)*





*Mistletoe Card - Anne Cotterell*

*Hanging the Mistletoe - Dante Gabriel Rossetti*



Loki, the god of evil, found out and made a Mistletoe arrow to kill Balder.

Tears.

When he was struck by that arrow, Freya wept for days on end. Freya's tears became the white berries of the mistletoe. Finally, Balder was brought back to life by the gods and the Mistletoe was given to Freya. Since then it has been 'the plant of the goddess of love', which grows high so that there is no danger.

The kissing tradition as we know it seems to have started in 18th century England, where it was first widely used as a Christmas decoration.

The tradition quickly spread around the world. Started as a custom among common everyday people, it made its way to the nobility and became a universal festive ritual.

The theme is also a favorite of many artists in art. We've looked up a few for you.

So what do you do under the plant of love .....  
Right!

*Merry Christmas with  
lots of love!*

*Druids cutting the Mistletoe on the Sixth Day of the Moon,  
By Henri Paul Motte 1890.*







*We wish you a happy  
2022 !*





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