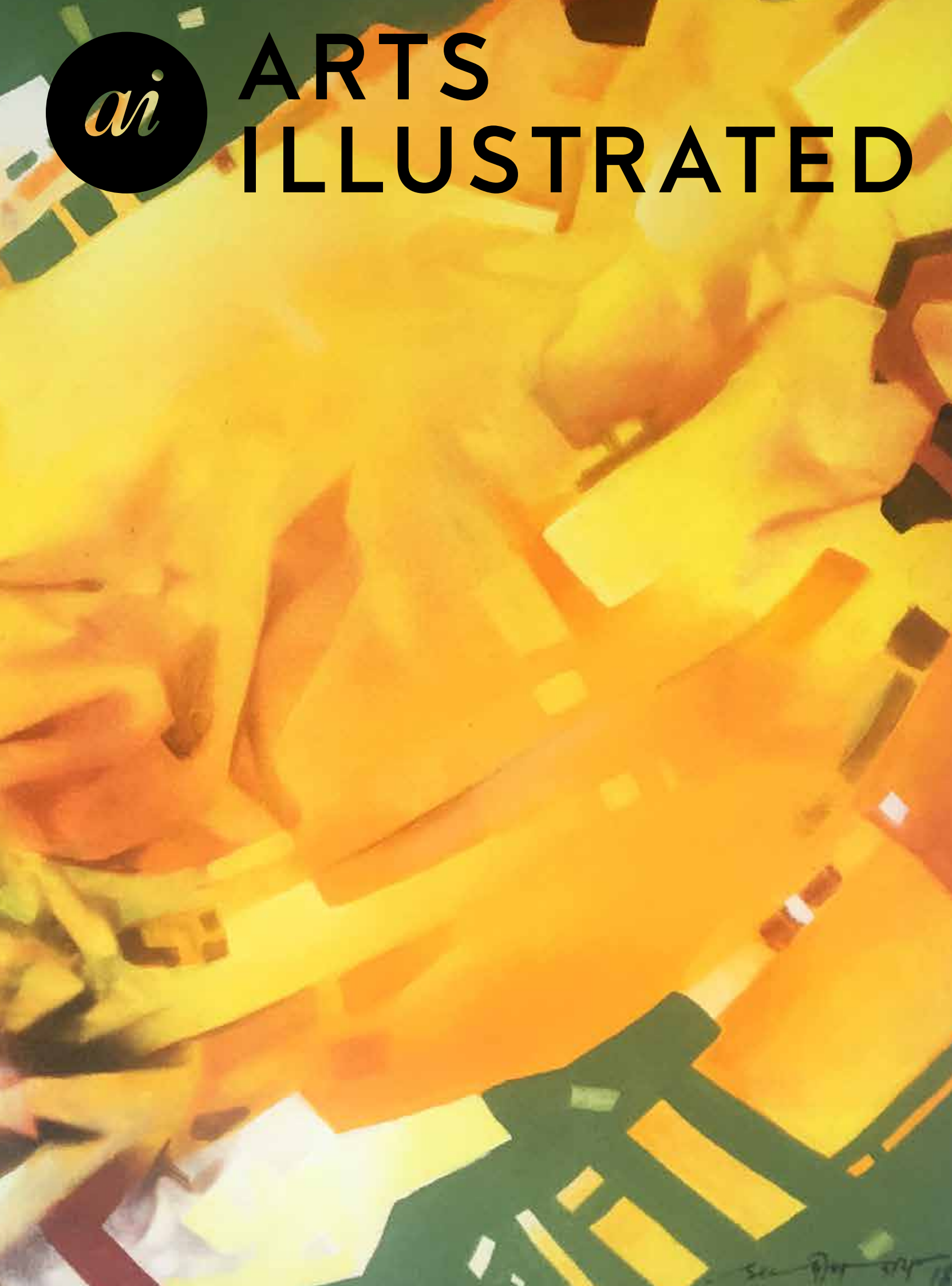




ARTS ILLUSTRATED

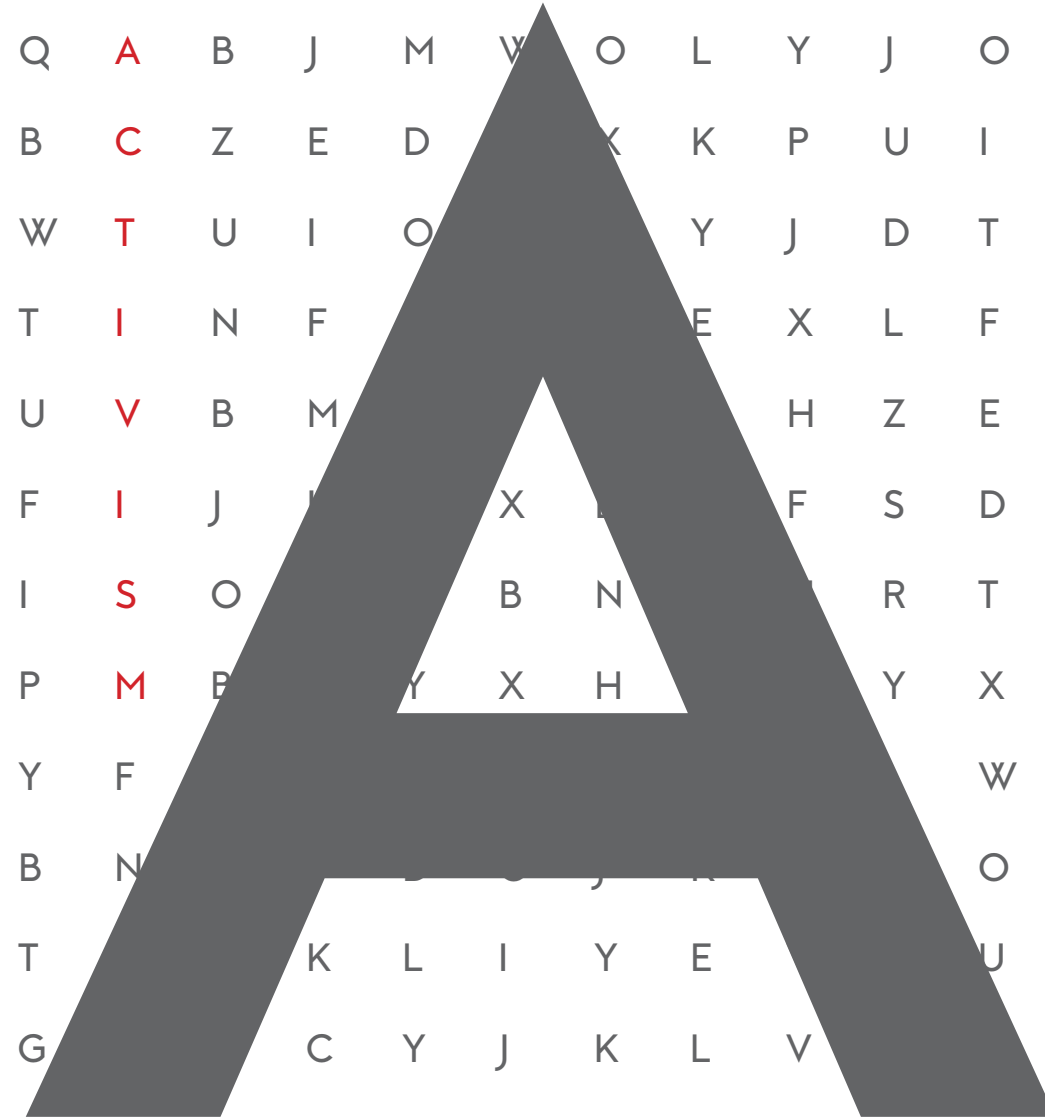




W.O.R.D.S

Like Getafix the druid, we take the five vowels and put five artists and five words into a cauldron to make a magic potion for invincible strength to imagination and to the power of images it creates.

PRAVEENA SHIVRAM



All together, A for Activism

'First we need to calm down, breathe, and get over ourselves.' Chimamanda Ngoji Adichi

Anansi, half-man, half-spider, carrier of stories and wisdom, walked into a story about himself. This one didn't seem like the others, comforting and familiar, with words and silences known – this one seemed rife with questions, sometimes like a relentlessly thundering waterfall and sometimes like a quiet brook. His walk, through this minefield of identity, was anything but old and distant. It was old and pulsating with life. The Kwaku Ananse here seemed to be living in a different kind of forest, where consciousness doubled with every step.

Anansi was curious.

He continued, further and deeper into this realm, and found a girl braiding the hair of a white doll. It arrested him, this seemingly innocuous activity. The doll was naked, with the body of a woman in the prime of her life, with one leg missing. The girl seemed oblivious to the doll's condition as the doll's blonde hair fell into a neat plait, invoking with it the understated but always-present debris of colonialism and the legacy it leaves behind, and Anansi found the debilitating expanse of 'triple consciousness'.

Anansi was tired.

He saw a cottage in the distance and moved towards it. Just outside, on the grass, sat a queer young man, writing a letter, his face lost in the light of the sun streaming through the trees, as his mind struggled to find the words to express the internal conflict of his being. He didn't even notice Anansi, submerged as it were in the telling and retelling of his own stories, however reluctantly. Anansi walked quietly by and stood outside the house. He would rest awhile here. Before knocking on the door, he stopped to read the name on the door.

It said Akosua Adoma Owusu.

Akosua Adoma Owusu is an award-winning Ghanaian-American film-maker, producer and cinematographer actively working with the politics of identity, feminism and gender.



Akosua Adoma Owusu, Still from the film Mahogany Too (2018). Image Courtesy of the artist and Obibini Pictures LLC.

Akosua Adoma Owusu, Still from the film Reluctantly Queer (2016). Image Courtesy of the artist and Obibini Pictures LLC.

Akosua Adoma Owusu, Still from the film Me Broni Ba / My White Baby (2009). Image Courtesy of the artist and Obibini Pictures LLC.

Q	E	B	J	M	W	O	L	Y	E	O	
B	V								X	I	
W	P								P	T	
T	I			P	L	H	W	X	E	F	
U	N			O	D	U	I	H	R	E	
F	O								F	I	D
I	G								H	M	T
P	M			Y	X	H	J	U	E	X	
Y	F			A	D	Y	H	Q	N	W	
B	N			D	G	J	K	I	T	O	
T	H								A	U	
G	P								L	Y	

Excellent! Now, E for Experimental

Every now and then, the man dressed in black, the hood of his jacket covering his face to the world, would venture out into the streets. He would find a quiet corner, an empty wall, a waiting space, and stop. He would then surround himself with different coloured spray paint cans, bags with mysterious things we cannot see standing around like spectators watching the man crouch in front of a low wall. And then, he would paint.

'Edward von Lõngus is a fictional character, an informational being, emerged from the informationally nutritious cultural environment of the digital age. There is no single physical body. There are only ideas. He is a collection of thoughts in the datasphere. A computer virus outside of computers, spreading from brain to brain through his creation.'

A skeleton does the dance of death, a hedgehog is busy working on a laptop, a woman spins her wheel, a character from an Estonian children's book is being apprehended by the 'witch-hunter' – except, this character has marijuana growing in place of his beard. In the Man in Black's graffiti, there is an obvious playfulness, a lightheartedness that carries within it layers that are sharp, incisive and deliberately loud.

'His works can be found all across the streets of Estonia...His actions have met both fierce condemnation and praise by the online audience. He has been chased by the police and also named artist of the year by his home town Tartu. Some of his works have been vandalized or buffed by the authorities, some of them have sold in auctions at record prizes. Some call him "Estonian Banksy", others have promised to kick his ass when they find him.'

In Berlin, the Man in Black created Augmented Reality street art that invited passers-by to interact with the characters he had created via a Smartphone or tablet. Why is that important? In itself, it probably is not. By itself, it will become an old memory of a lived experience. But of itself, it is a version of another dialect, a virtual dialect, one that is increasingly becoming closer than breath and deeper than an ancient tongue.

Edward von Lõngus remains a mystery artist, although his street art in several parts of Europe are far from mysterious.



Edward von Lõngus, *The naked emperor*, Stencil Graffiti, Kitsas (Narrow) street in Tartu, Estonia.

Edward von Lõngus, *Kannahabe ja nõiakütt*, Stencil Graffiti, Toomemäe hill in Tartu, Estonia. It is located next to Supreme Court of Estonia.

Q E B J M W O L Y I O
 B V [REDACTED] X I
 W I U I O R Y J P T
 T M N F P H W X N F
 U M B M O U I H R E
 F E J I D E N F E D
 I R O R X N M H W T
 P S B C Y H J U P X
 Y I W Q A Y H Q N W
 B V G F D K I B O
 T E [REDACTED] R U
 G P [REDACTED] L Y

I said, I for Immersive

I am an Iblarder. And this is my world. This world of colour and beauty and memory and nostalgia is what I breathe in and breathe out. The world is formless, constantly moving in stillness, constantly in a state of becoming and unbecoming. The people of Iblard move through this paradox with the grace of a peacock dancing in the rain, our environment making up the flamboyance to what our movements lack.

Our history is as nebulous as our present. We rose out of Naohisa Inoue's rich imagination. Seemingly disparate colours on canvas that then take a particular shape over time – perhaps mimicking a restaurant where Inoue had his breakfast, or the skyscraper he saw on his walk back home. And then, something about the surrealistic air of Iblarder takes over and perspectives shift, something new emerges, only to disappear later. We are a shifting mass of realities – yours, mine and Inoue's.

Do you remember the Rime of the Ancient Mariner? And how he talks about the willing suspension of disbelief? That's really what you need to enter my city. If you take our train, you need to remember that it moves in the direction of the people's will, or that our tram service is literally door to door, changing its route to suit the day's weather, or that you can watch our stars grow into gardens, or that the towers in our city are like mini-cities. I can already see it, and I implore you not to wear your disbelief like an albatross around your neck; in Iblarder, it will weigh you down, and the secrets that our winds carry, the lullaby of the evening breeze, will simply pass you by.

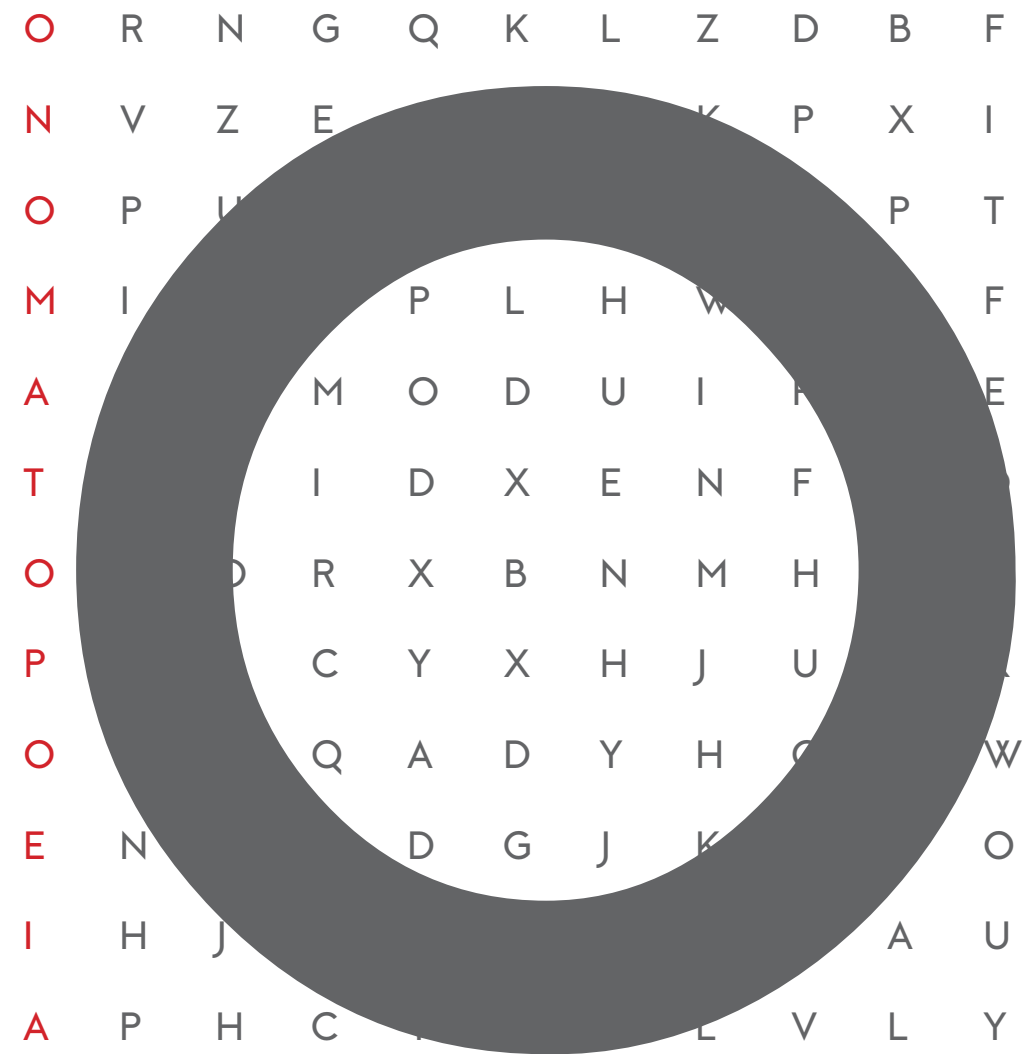
We are not big in number, us, citizens. But we are big believers in the Iblarder way of life. We have movies that use our city as the backdrop, books that attempt to explain this phenomenon, and paintings that bring one aspect of our lives alive. We are immersed, so to speak, in Inoue's imaginative landscape, but we are also immersed in the stories born out of this impressionistic space that gives us life and that through us is nurtured.

Something a lot like a planet once called the earth.

Naohisa Inoue is a Japanese fantasy artist famous for the world of Iblard that he created. He is currently a professor at Seian University of Art and Design.



INOUE Naohisa, Stills from the Japanese anime OVA Iblard Jikan (2007). Image Courtesy of the artist.



Over to O for Onomatopoeia

When sound scapes speak
 Walls resonate
 Old and new coming together
 In memories innate

You remember the song
 Lips vibrating
 Of music once inherited
 Now a new melody singing

The voice is now material
 Instruments resounding
 The age that is becoming
 A reflection of dissonance shifting

If silence is golden
 Quietly shining
 Then in this invisible sound
 Aesthetic visual experience is thriving

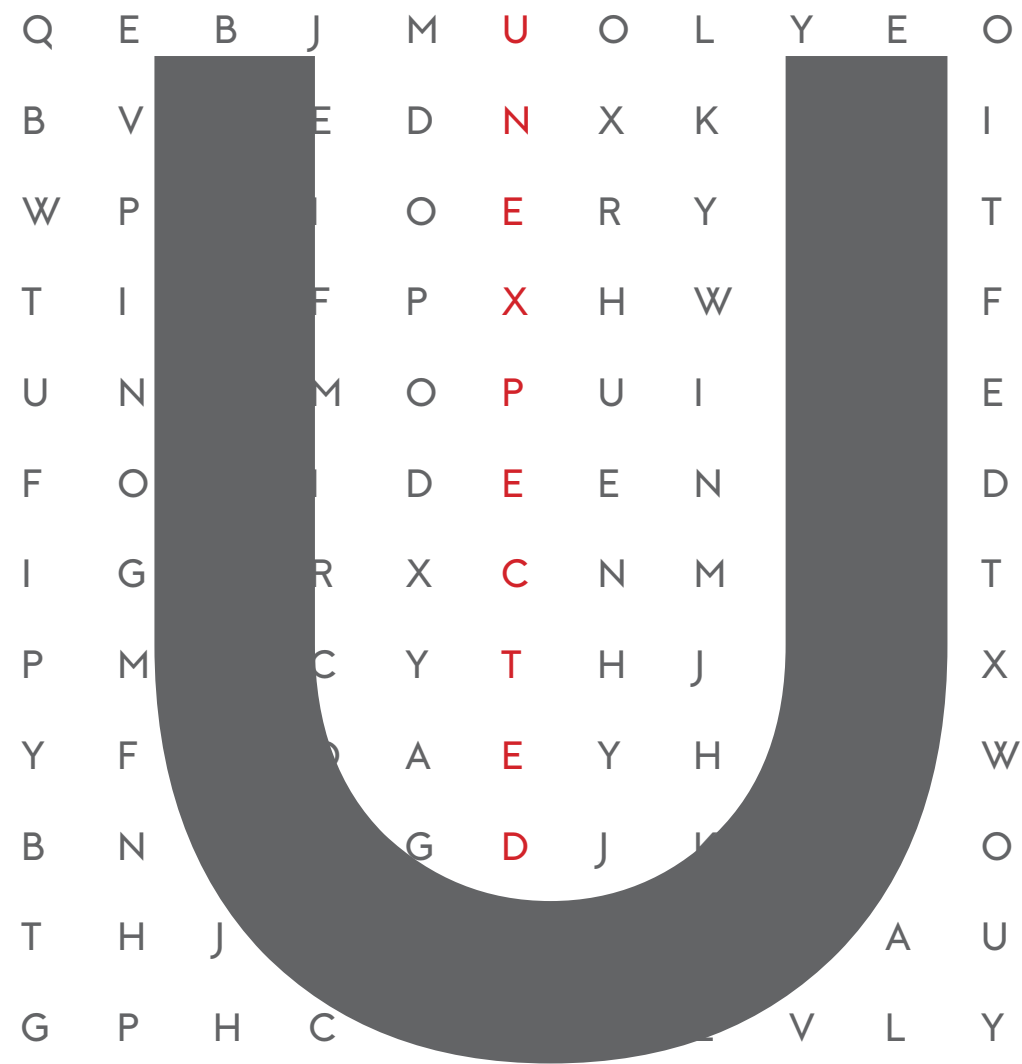
Oliver Beer is a British artist primarily working with architecture, sound and image and exploring the many nuances within that dynamic combination.



Oliver Beer, *Man's Struggle for Peace and Freedom from Superstition*, 2017, Violin, sectioned and set in resin; gesso Overall: 60,5 cm x 42 cm x 8,2 cm. Image Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London • Paris • Salzburg. Image © Oliver Beer. Photograph by Stephen White.

Oliver Beer, *Composition for Mouths (Songs My Mother Taught Me) I*, 2018, Single-channel video with sound. Duration: 4m10s. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney and the Sydney Opera House with generous assistance from the British Council. Image courtesy of the artist; Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London; and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

Oliver Beer, *The Resonance Project: Composition for a New Museum*, 2014, Architectural acoustic performance for Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris In collaboration with singers from Les Cris de Paris. Image © Florence Joubert. Image Courtesy of the artist.



Underscore this: U for Unexpected

This is an image.

No, not that. This, right here. These bunch of words. This is an image. An image of interpretation. An image of interpretation that changed direction. An image of interpretation that changed direction but ended up where it began. An image of interpretation that changed direction but ended up where it began and then changed

direction again. An image of interpretation that changed direction but ended up where it began and then changed direction again to build another image. This could go on, of course, the words looping into each other till infinity and a part of the image as yet unexplained, as yet undiscovered, as yet interpreted.

For we are now looking at the world through a different kind of lens. That travels from the analogue to the digital, from the spiritual to the surreal, from the real to the imagined with the flourish of a seasoned performer – it enters your mindscape from the left wing, delivers its monologue, sometimes right under the spotlight, sometimes a little away, and exits from the right wing, waiting for the next cue. Mostly, from you.

The photograph stands there like an offering, surrendering to your questions of inner and outer realities, asking for an 'authentic human response' – 'Gee, this is weird,' or 'I had a dream like that', or 'Boy, that makes me feel lonely or happy' – where the intellect takes a backseat and emotions rule. Like a leap of faith, the body is free from the shackles of the mind and dreams are unleashed in an eternal spiral of knowing and not knowing.

And where does that leave you? Right at the centre. And the centre is everywhere, the circumference of experience contracting and expanding, creating new forms, and asking you to trace the movement of the forms to find the image, the sum of all your experiences arriving simultaneously at the centre. To you.

This is an image, not a photograph.

Jerry Uelsmann is an American photographer and early exponent of photomontage who believes the 'camera is essentially a license to explore'.

Jerry Uelsmann, *Untitled*, 1982. Image Courtesy of the artist.

Jerry Uelsmann, *Myth of the Tree*, 2016. Image Courtesy of the artist.



