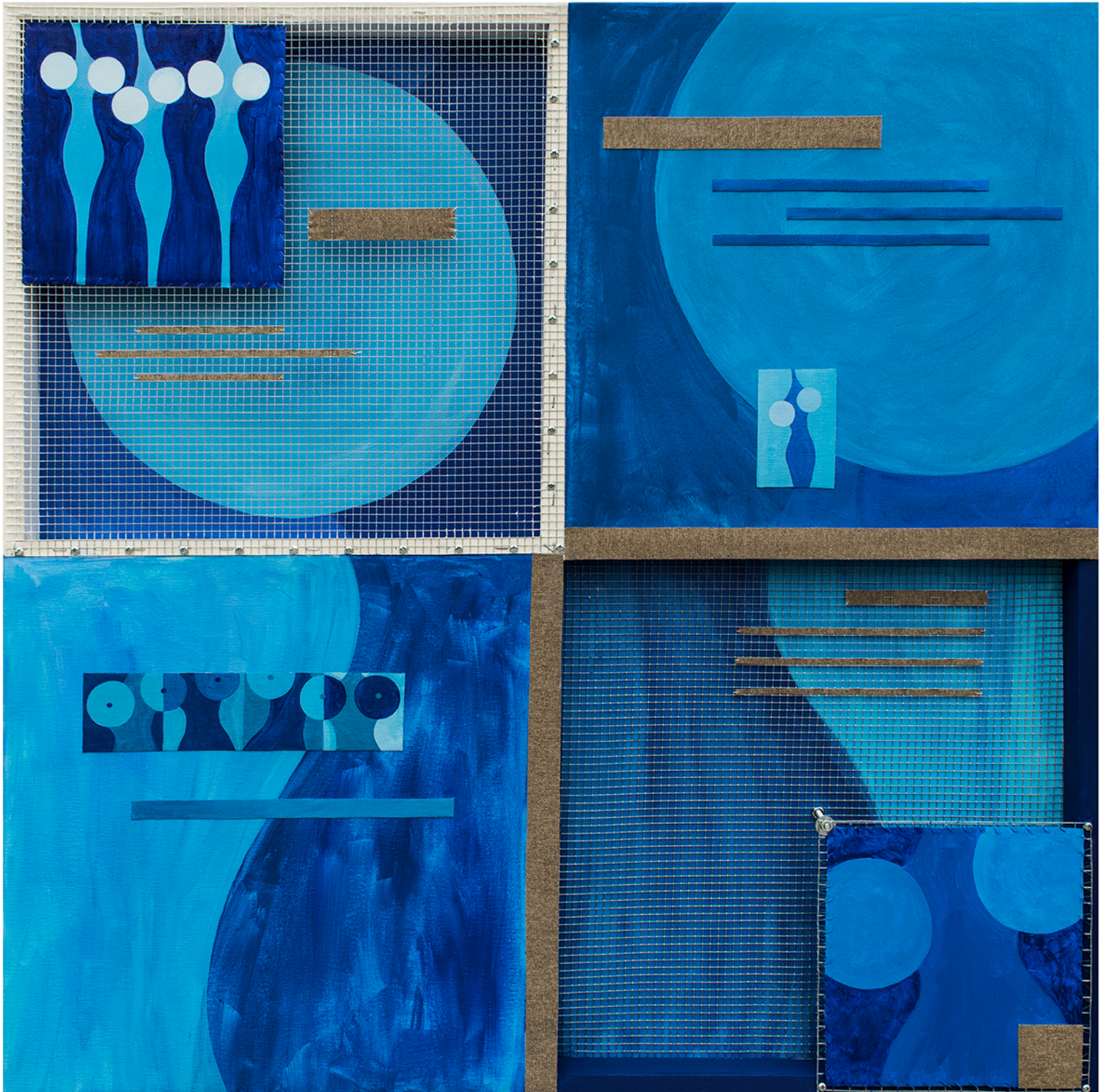


AHMET ARSLAN | KAREEM BERJAQUI | CHRIS BOYKO | ZOITA DELIA CALINESCU | JANA CHARL
CEDRIC VAN EENOO | DICK EVANS | SUSAN EVANS | CHRISTINA GEOGHEGAN | NIRVANA GEUVDJELIAN HERRERA
FIORENTINA GIANNOTTA | ARJA KÄRKKÄINEN | LICCA KIRK | TERRI LLOYD | TERESA NUÑEZ
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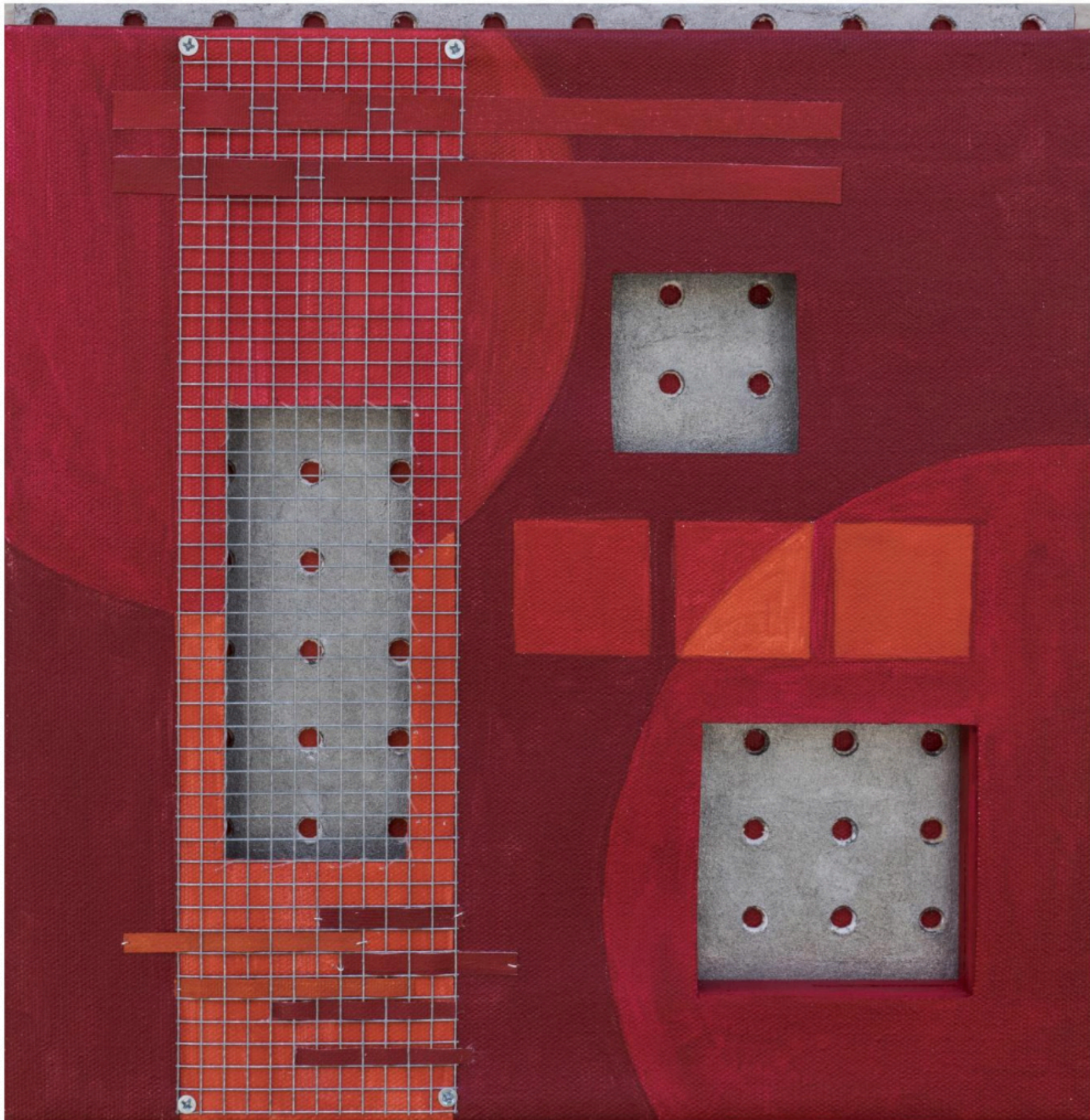
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Art Revealed magazine

FOUR CHAMBERS by Jana Charl



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Jana Charl

Los Angeles, USA

Exploring a variety of media and techniques around testing the boundaries of what defines contemporary art, especially the blurring of the traditional lines dividing craft, commercial and fine art, characterizes my creative process. Reclaiming found objects with their inherent histories adds another layer to my narrative.

The challenge to capture the human form and psyche has been my longest enduring fascination. Incorporating figures in my work is an intention for association, to personalize matters which have been analyzed abstractly. I stylize the curves that distinguish and define the sexes. By concentrating on minimal forms, I express universal experiences to encourage accessibility and engagement.

I am a passionate storyteller inspired by current issues to evoke thought on perceptions and biasing preconceptions. The key themes weaving my artwork together are feminist issues, perceptions of women's roles, identity and gender relationships. I represent words with graphic bars in order to focus on the visual experience, allow for personalized interpretations, and circumvent language barriers.

Jana Charl's creative process involves delving into different media and techniques, disregarding conventional hierarchies, to convey visual stories. She is a native of Los Angeles, where she resides, and is a dual US-Swiss citizen. While receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Art, from the University of Redlands, she studied at Waseda University, Tokyo, for one year. She continued her studies at UC San Diego's School of International Relations and Pacific Studies before moving to Zurich where she was in her first group exhibition. Since 2013, Jana has had 34 exhibitions and been featured in 12 publications globally. Her work is collected internationally, and is part of the Yuko Nii Foundation and Brooklyn Art Library collections.

Briefly describe the work you do.

Exploring a variety of media and techniques around testing the boundaries of what defines contemporary art, especially the blurring of the traditional lines dividing craft, commercial and fine art, characterizes my creative process. Reclaiming found objects with their inherent histories adds another layer of meaning and humor to my narrative.

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Tell us a little about your background and how that influences you.

I was born in Los Angeles, where I currently live; however, I am a dual US-Swiss citizen and have lived abroad in Nuremberg, Germany; Tokyo, Japan; and Zürich, Switzerland. The experiences living and assimilating to various cultures has influenced both the themes and style of my art.

The focus on the female identity is derived, in part, from growing up with three sisters. Also, both of my grandmothers were feminists; one was an activist and the other a multi-talented swimsuit and textile designer. At a

young age, I built projects in my father's wood shop where he also introduced me to acrylic painting. As a teenager, he taught me how to solder silver for jewelry-making which sparked my subsequent interest in welding steel sculptures.

Art and storytelling have been the threads woven into my life since early childhood. Although, I was encouraged to pursue a career in medicine, to follow in my father's footsteps, I rebelled and explored a broad liberal arts education, focusing on interdisciplinary studies, particularly art and psychology. My curiosity and desire to study and analyze human behavior has been an integral part of my artwork. Moreover, crossing the boundaries of disciplines has defined my current creative process.

Encouraged by my art studies mentor at the University of Redlands, California, I attended Waseda University, Tokyo, for one year. Nonverbal communication trumped verbal which created the perfect environment to focus on a largely visual experience. I was especially inspired by patterns and color combinations. Later, I dropped out of the University of California at San Diego's Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies to live in Zürich and work in advertising. While living in Zürich, I was introduced to polymer clay and was invited to be in my first group exhibition at Ars Futura Galerie, where we created 1000 polymer clay sculptures.

Upon returning to Los Angeles, I continued exploring new avenues of expression and added welding metal to my repertoire. Fortunately, I have access to a ranch's shop, including all tools and equipment, along with a scrap pile for inspiration and materials.

In your opinion, what does art mean in contemporary culture?

The relevancy of art is characterized by its impact, which can be personal or universal, instant or lingering, and

with a life that is temporary or timeless. Furthermore, the ability of a work of art to communicate an experience to our senses defines it. In contemporary culture there exists an eclectic amalgamation of "new" and conventional which is not limited by past paradigms but rather an assimilation of a variety of elements. The exploration of innovative materials and forms of expression test the boundaries of what defines art.

In this state of flux, the conventional and hierarchical labels are still prevalent even when they do not suit current practices. I believe art is a platform for dialog regarding contemporary culture and its effectiveness is not limited to being showcased in traditional settings. Art draws attention to current issues, perceptions, prejudices, injustices, varying perspectives, all in order to deepen one's understanding of the times.

Name three artists you'd like to be compared to.

The first is actually a category of artists, the anonymous ones that are unknown or unrecognized; however, their art links past to present, which is the significance I would like my work to attain. Specific examples that have influenced me are the prehistoric Venus of Willendorf figurine and the Etruscan statuette Ombra della Serra.

Niki de Saint Phalle's Nanas have been an inspiration for my stylization of the female form. Growing up immersed in a culture and era that has represented the ideal woman as unnaturally thin, and where natural curves have been underrepresented in fashion and the media, I also choose to intentionally exaggerate and celebrate the curves. Moreover, the fact that she practiced across disciplines in her exploration of women's roles.

Alberto Giacometti's elongated interpretations of the sexes have inspired my depictions. In addition, his process of working and reworking materials as evidenced in the end products. And

a more obscure aspect regarding his sense of perspective: that objects in the distance are actually small. I have created a great deal of small works and visualize them as being large.

How would you describe the art scene in your area?

Currently there is an overabundance of activity with new galleries, museums, and outdoor venues for exhibiting artwork in Los Angeles. Smaller galleries struggle to be relevant in the art market as it becomes a more saturated and competitive one. Although there are a lot of opportunities to exhibit, it is truly difficult to stand out.

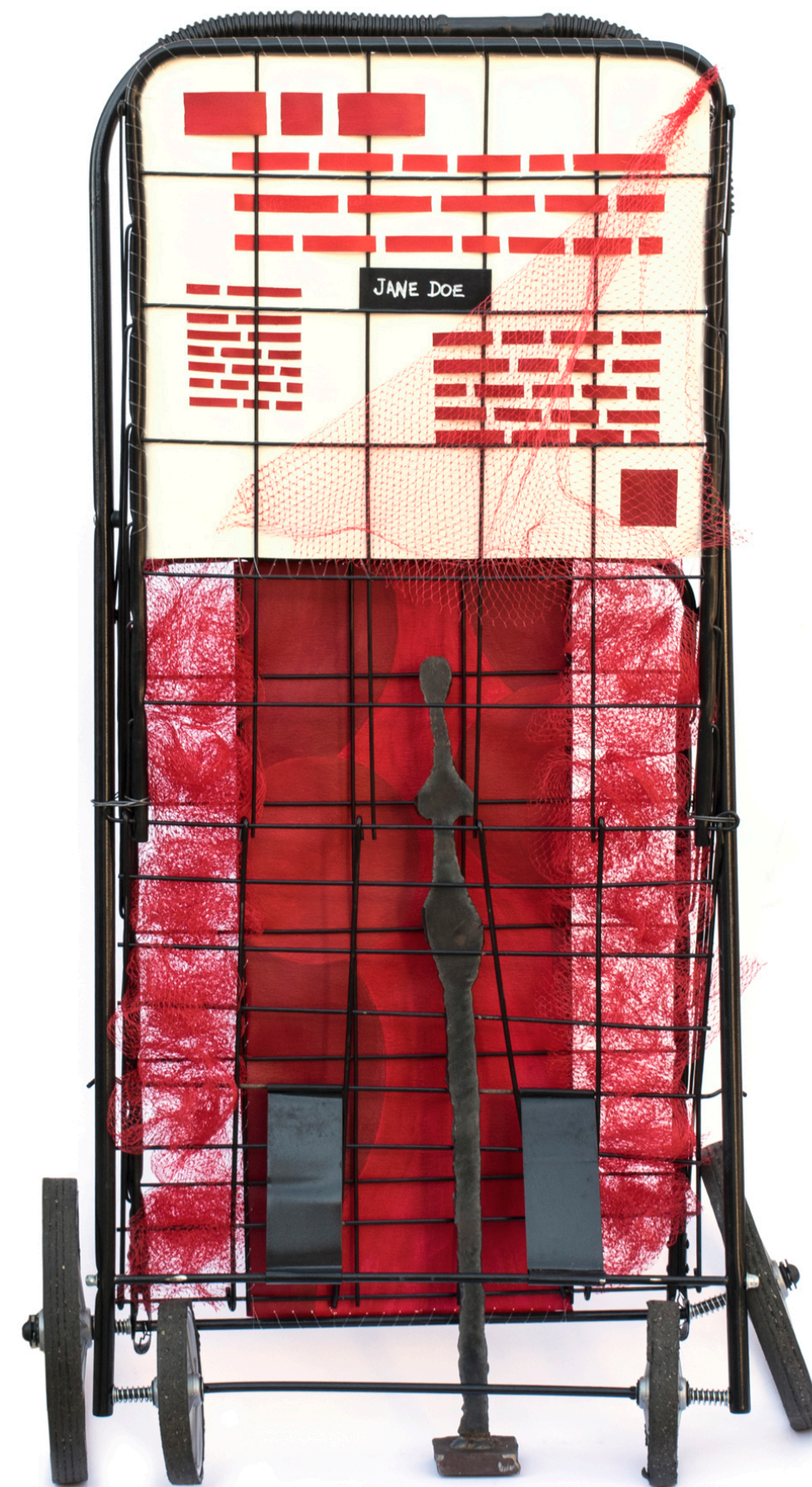
What advice can you give to those who are just starting out in the arts?

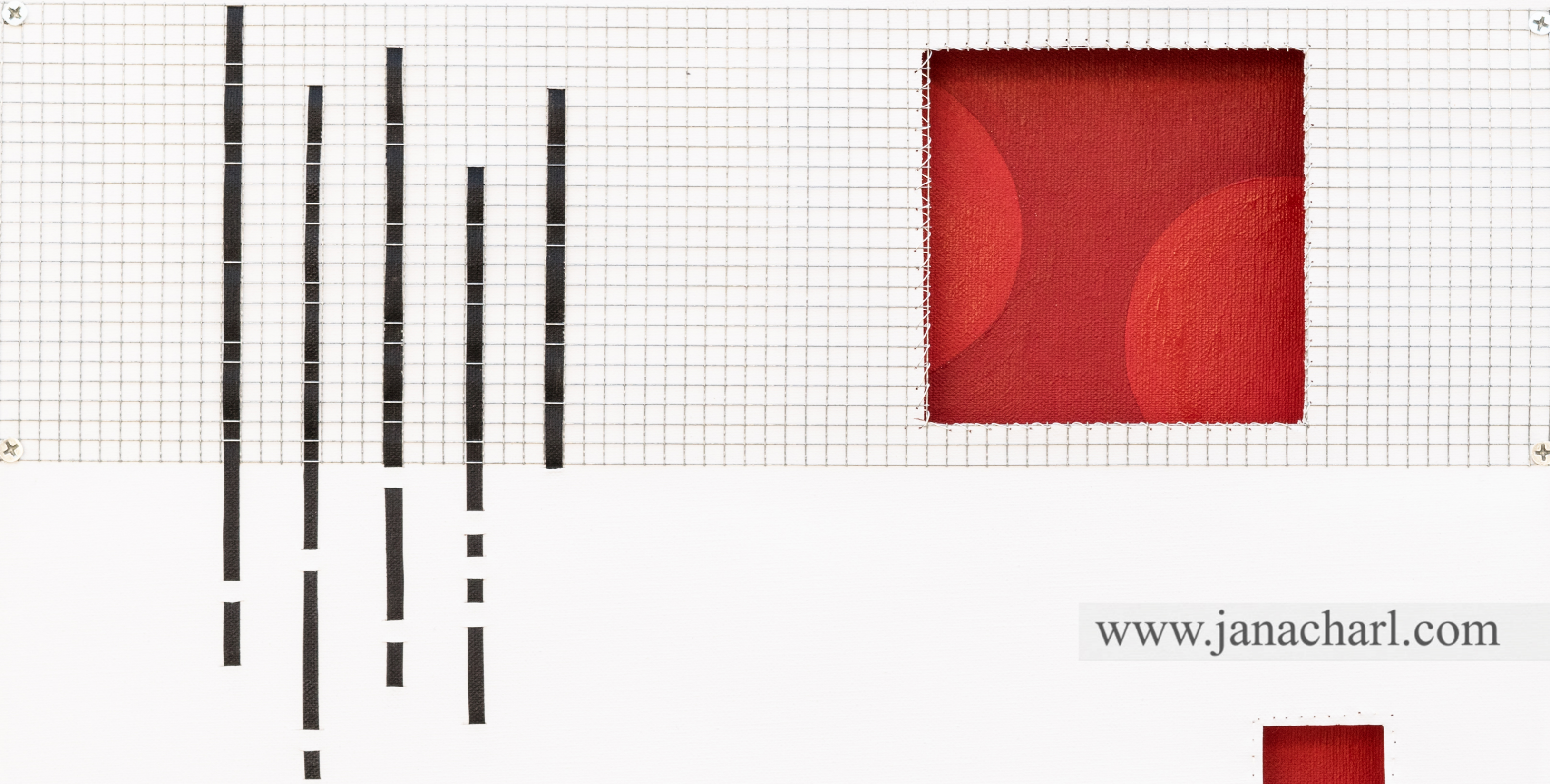
Actively engage in discussions about your artwork and others' works. Pursuing a career in art truly requires a lot of self-confidence and perseverance. Believing strongly in a sense of purpose and maintaining your passion are essential. Rejection is a factor in an artist's life and it is not synonymous with failure; be vulnerable and take risks. Overall, experiment, explore, and stay curious.

What are your future plans?

At this time, I am waiting for the notifications regarding my submissions for the following: a 3-month artist residency in Tokyo; a temporary installation in Glendale, California, titled "Venus of Adams Square" (<http://vimeo.com/178079167>, password: Charlart); and my Faena Art Prize proposal "Tables, Chandeliers, and Selfies" (<http://vimeo.com/177848439>, password: Charlart). More information can be found on my website, www.janacharl.com.

As I challenge myself by exploring various means to creatively communicate themes, I will seek out opportunities for experiential installations and to reach a broader global audience.





www.janacharl.com

