

# The FLUX Review

A visual feast of art, culture and world exploration - Edition 5 - £15



## ARTIST INTERVIEWS

Polly Morgan  
Roxana Halls  
David Hoyle  
Jordan Baseman  
Nae Zerka

## WORLD EXPLORATION

Surin Islands, Thailand  
Saffron Floats, Laos  
Gaudi's Barcelona, Spain  
Paros Island, Greece  
Latitude 15 Lusaka, Zambia

## FEATURES

Artist Colonies  
Mark Hix  
Nexumorphic  
Alexandra Gallagher  
Daniele Mah



9 772633 643008

ISSN 2633-643X

## An Interview with Nae Zerka

Nae Zerka was born in 1969. He lives and works in Salzburg, Austria.

As a traveller of the analogue-digital synthesis, talented visual artist Zerka never stops exploring. The artist's inspiration for his work is from digitalisation, along with graphic design and music. He produced electronic music and became a techno DJ in legendary clubs. His work blends the design element with technology, graphic design with a painterly finish. His dynamic paintings represent opposites, they polarise, and therefore they are rich in contrast. Things reflect each other, and the explosive composition gives an expansive richness of shapes and forms. Warm, cool, frantic, quiet, dynamic lines and shapes are combined with colours and forms and finally merge into an overall composition.

His abstract works of art challenge the viewer, the respective-thought building of the viewer counts. In his works, Zerka creates a transformed atmosphere that should let the viewer feel, sense and discover a new reality. His explosive and dynamic approach creates a kaleidoscopic reality.

He was recently nominated as, 'Artist to Watch 2021' from art connect.

For more info, visit: [naezerka.com](http://naezerka.com)





9FIVE, digital painting, giclée print on hahnemühle fine art paper mounted on dibond © Nae Zerka | Photo: Freeda Michaux

**In your previous career, you were a techno DJ. Can you tell us about your journey from music to art and how has electronic music inspired your work today?**

Initially, my work as a graphic designer brought me to electronic music in the early 90s. Salzburg was the birthplace of the Austrian techno scene back then. A small group of enterprising people, who later called themselves The Homeless Performance, started to organise small but fine techno events in a former private club. This then-new kind of electronic music blew me away. It wasn't long before I had my sound studio and became a techno DJ. During this time, I met a lot of creative people, many of them artists. This, in turn, brought me closer to visual art. I started to create digital works in the style of pop art. My dream was to produce these works on silkscreen à la Robert Rauschenberg in an appealing size on canvas. Unfortunately, I didn't have the money for that at the time. However, I remained artistically active in the digital environment and presented my paintings very early via the Internet.

Electronic music still inspires me today, but, in the meantime, I have developed a tendency towards jazz. In principle, I only work with headphones, so the music can directly trigger my artistic impulses. Therefore, music has a crucial role in the creation of my works.

**Your work is now completely digital painting. Can you talk us through your process?**

In the past year, I have taken another step in my development. That is, my works and also the approach have changed seriously. I have completely detached myself from the traditional materials of painting and begun to paint purely digitally. I'm entering a terrain previously only inhabited - with few exceptions - by graphic designers and illustrators producing abstract digital artwork. I also consciously do without my drawing tablet with pen and instead use the mouse to counteract the typical hand movements with a brush. I experiment, make mistakes and try to correct them later on. Most of the time, I work on several pieces in parallel and sometimes combine them. Here, of course, the purely digital approach offers almost infinite possibilities.

**'Blockchain technology now makes it possible to sign and sell digital artworks as unique one-offs.'**

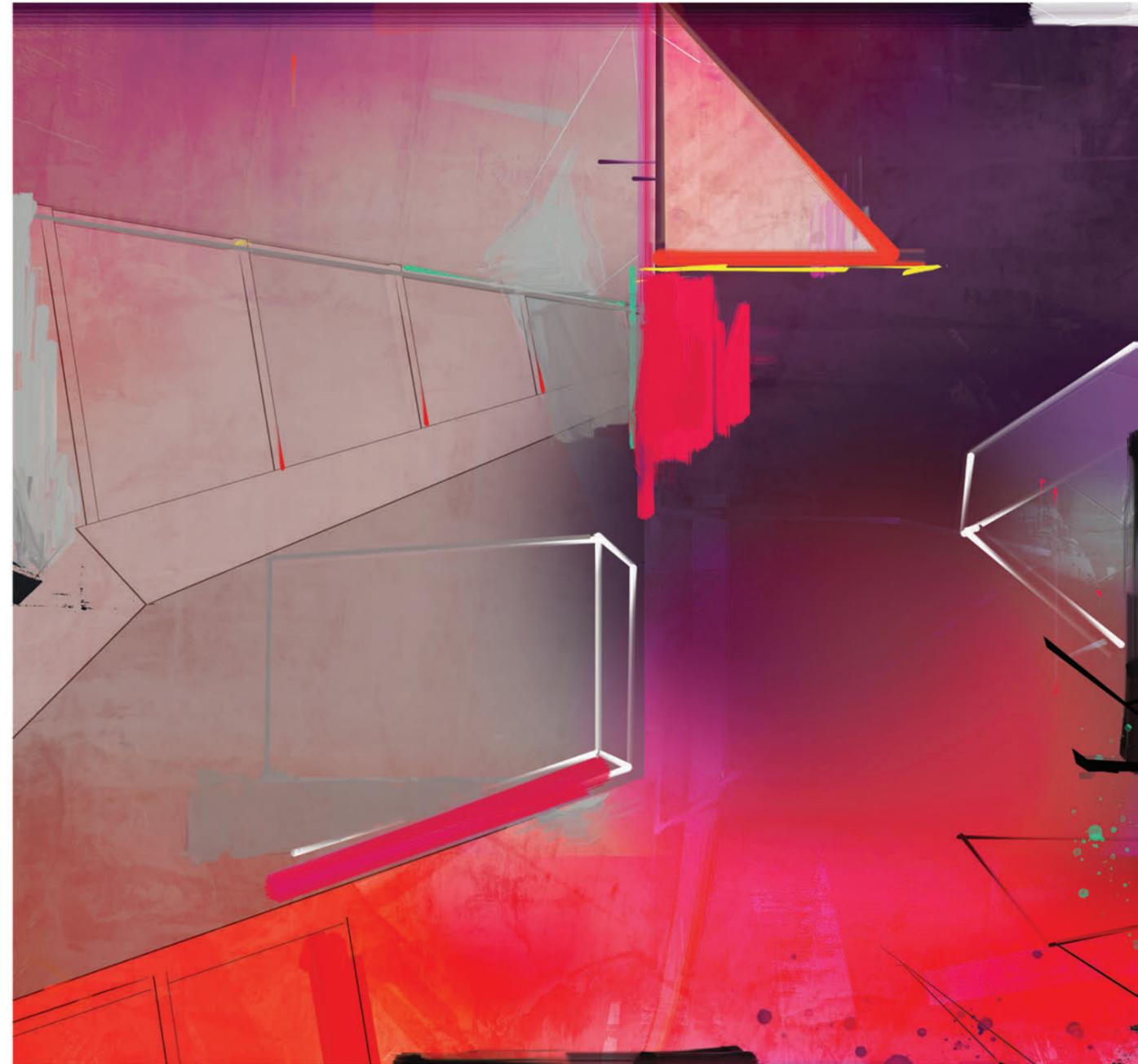
In March of this year, the auction house Christie's ushered in a new era with the world's first auction of a purely digital work of art. In my opinion, this will permanently turn the art world upside down. NFT (non-fungible tokens) is on everyone's lips. At the moment, the whole thing is still somewhat limited to 3D nerds and motion artists who sometimes achieve crazy prices on various platforms. However, the topic itself is fascinating, and, for visual artists in the digital field, a fundamental change in collectors' perceptions could occur.

**You create a kaleidoscopic reality. What does this mean for viewers of your work?**

This comes from the geometric shapes and patterns which I apply to create a new reality, but also to create, in turn, an artificial atmosphere through further manipulation of this reality. While I'm working on a painting, I rotate the one I've just created many times by 90 or 180 degrees, as in a kaleidoscope, and then continue working. This releases the elements of their position in the two-dimensional representation, and also my thoughts on the representational, always anew.



ONE.1 [2021], digital painting, blockchain registered by Verisart.com © Nae Zerka



ZERO DARK [2020], digital painting, giclée print on hahnemühle fine art paper mounted on dibond © Nae Zerka

**Can you tell us about the importance of fragments within your compositions?**

Fragments create transparency where there is no longer any connection. What can no longer be told as a whole is constructed as a fragment. It thus does not promise an explanation but merely an approximation and functions differently from direct information. Accents hint, but ultimately only to leave a labyrinth. Thus, the viewer is challenged to fill this void himself, and, in the process, also take the wrong paths. For me, this makes it a certain kind of abstraction.

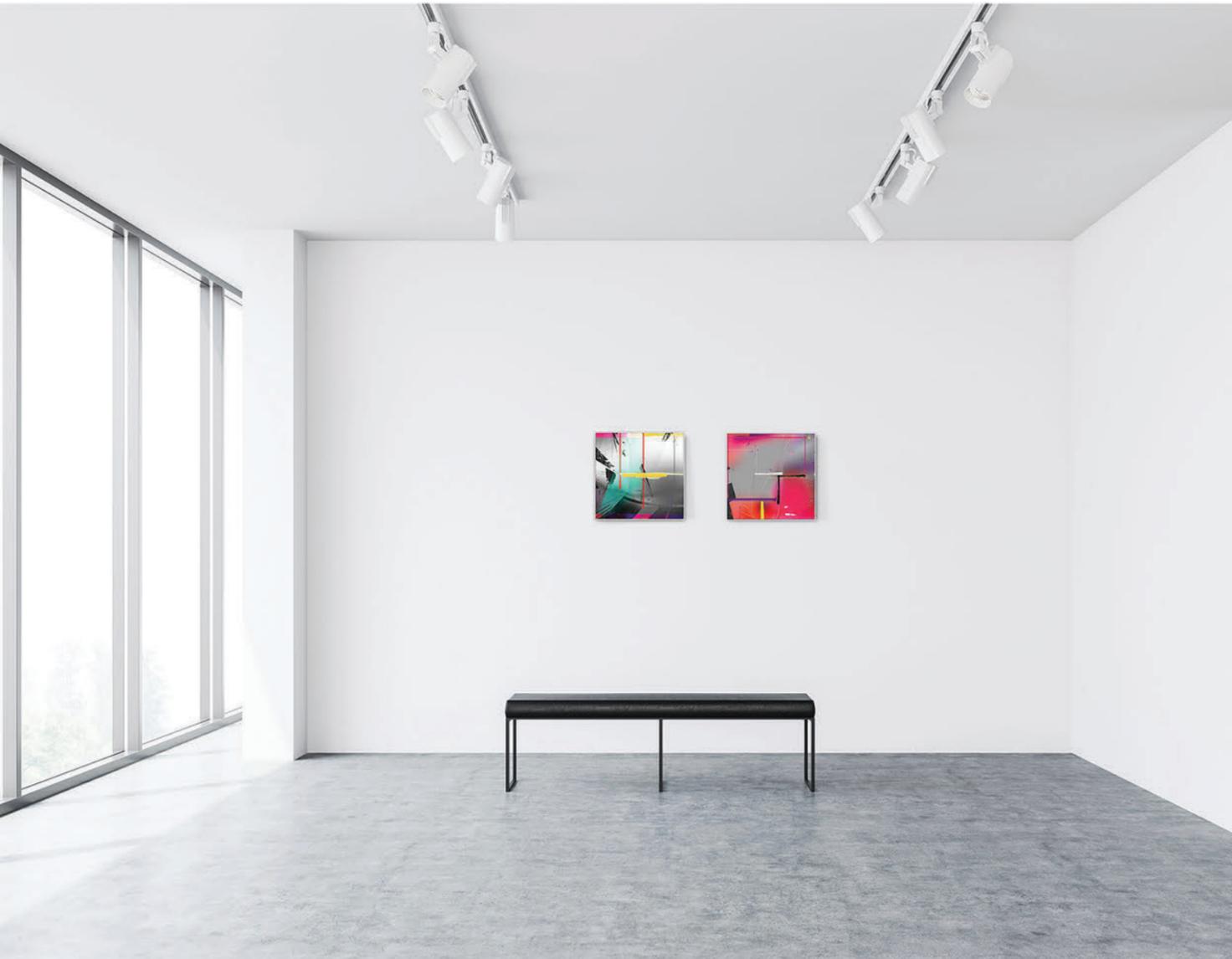
**Are there any trends/themes present in your work?**

Yes and no. By yes, I mean that I naturally absorb everything that happens in the world in my existence as a human being. And with no, I generally never approach a work thematically but only follow my impulses. The BLCK series was an exception; the theme was not difficult to decipher.

**What is it about Robert Rauschenberg's art that inspires you, and who else influences your work?**

Robert Rauschenberg was the first artist who directly influenced me artistically. I was very impressed by his way of searching for a new way of painting. He innovated techniques and media, using unconventional art materials ranging from dirt and house paint to umbrellas and car tires. Through his image transfer and printmaking techniques, which he established in the late 1950s, he was very far ahead in this regard. As an artist with a graphic background, there's no getting around him. Even today, I discover many a digital work step that he already anticipated in analogue 60 years ago. Take, for example, the Combine paintings and their relation to the digital three-dimensionality artworks today.

At this point, I would like to mention Thomas Ruff, and my portrait already provides a concrete hint in this regard. I have always been fascinated and inspired by his ideas, especially around manipulation and design of already existing image material.



9EIGHT, 9SIX [2020], digital painting, giclée print on hahnemühle fine art paper mounted on dibond © Nae Zerka | Photo: Image Flow



9NINE [2020], digital painting, giclée print on hahnemühle fine art paper mounted on dibond © Nae Zerka

**Where can we view your work?**

At the moment, mostly in virtual exhibitions. You can always find the latest information on my webpage or my Instagram profile. And, who knows, maybe future concepts for exhibitions will be based purely on the blockchain and the Internet. Only digital screens provide a contact to the image source, the original, for the viewer.

**What are you working on currently?**

On the one hand, I am currently working on the images for a solo exhibition that will take place towards the end of this year. Here digital images will be shown 'tangibly', but I do not want to reveal more about this yet. Unfortunately, the planning is rather tricky at the moment because of the pandemic. So it could well be that it will be a virtual exhibition, and the concept will have to wait until 2022 for implementation. On the other hand, I am working in parallel continuously on the output of new digital compositions and would like to deal more intensively with the topic of NFT.

### A Thousand Faces

The idea behind this was to take many small digital sections from existing work and grind them over. However, the basic features of the original image were to remain intact. The work(s) mask themselves, so to speak, they manipulate themselves. They want to be different. More beautiful, more attractive, more colourful.



### Girl On A Wire

This work was created after I saw an old photograph of Bird Millman, a very famous high-wire artist of the 1920s. The black-and-white picture, taken between two skyscrapers in New York, radiated an incredible elegance and depth. My composition, on the other hand, is rather flat and only hints at depth. The delicacy of the dancer I have expressed through the colour old pink, the insanity through orange.



### Next and After

The difference between next and after is that next is in a time, place or sequence closest or following, while after is behind; later in time; following. I stand next to the window, inside. Here and now. Looking through the window to the outside. Does the outside come after the inside?

### Forma Botanica

An overpainting of the Austrian artist Arnulf Rainer gave me the idea for this work. Rainer painted over the original image of his overpainting almost entirely with black oil paint. I thought I would swap these positions again and bring the original picture, a botanical drawing, back into the foreground. After all, plants need light.

