

FORA

Niyaz Najafov

b. 1968, Azerbaijan

"I enjoy when my paintings provoke thought, annoyance, or a sense of discomfort in the viewer. I believe art should spark a desire to engage and perhaps even 'fix' something within the piece".

Niyaz is a self-taught artist and a prominent figure in contemporary Azerbaijani art. He primarily works with oil paint on unconventional surfaces, including canvases previously painted by anonymous artists. *"The process of transforming these found artworks is particularly intriguing to me. My friends often bring me pieces they discover on the streets or near bins".*

While he mainly uses canvases, he also employs pressed wood plates and even cartoons. Growing up in Baku profoundly influenced his color palette; he believes that the best painters are those who created art with whatever materials were available to protect their yard gates from the salty breeze of the Caspian Sea. This approach to transforming found materials fosters a dialogue with the past and reinforces his thematic focus on transformation and rebirth.

Najafov's practice is rooted in a life marked by profound personal challenges and transformative experiences. His early years were shaped by a strict upbringing, service in the Soviet army, and work in the police department. It wasn't until he overcame significant personal struggles, including addiction and imprisonment, that Najafov turned to painting in 2003 - a pivotal moment that redefined both his life and artistic trajectory.

Najafov's work is deeply personal, drawing inspiration from his life experiences and cultural background while delving into the complexities of human emotion. He frequently explores themes of resilience, identity, and the intricate interplay between chaos and beauty, reflecting on the nuanced relationship between the past and present. Rooted in his admiration for women and nature, he employs flowers as powerful symbols of femininity and strength, perceiving women as embodiments of perfection and acknowledging that a man's deepest needs often reside in the love and affection of the opposite sex.

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Another significant theme in Najafov's work is the exploration of perspective and space. He pursues precision in his lines, viewing them as a distinct language through which he communicates his vision.

Each line conveys a narrative, inviting viewers into a dialogue about their perceptions of life and existence. A poignant moment from his personal journey reinforces this connection: during a rehabilitation stay in a psychiatric hospital, he found solace in expressing emotions through lines when words failed him. Each stroke on paper articulated thoughts and feelings he struggled to convey verbally, showcasing the profound capacity of visual language to communicate the complexities of the human experience. Through his work, Najafov invites audiences to engage with their own narratives, reflecting on the delicate balance of beauty and struggle that defines our lives.

EDUCATION

Baku Technical School of Physical Culture, Azerbaijan

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 "Curtain Twitching" / Gazelli Art House, London, UK
- 2020 "Summer Group Show" / Gazelli Art House, London, UK
- 2019 "Silver Lining" / Gazelli Art House, London, UK
- 2018 "Bodily Landscapes" / Yay Gallery, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2017 "Correspondances / Vasistas / Histoire du regard à travers la fenêtre / Il se passe quelque chose entre nous..." / Galerie Mansart, Paris, France
- 2017 "Untitled" / Galerie Schwab Beaubourg, Paris, France
- 2016 "8+/-2" / Galerie Mansart, Paris, France
- 2015 "Gözü Yaşlı Hocalım" / Beşiktaş-based Palace Collections Museum, Istanbul, Türkiye
- 2015 "Plant it!" / Galerie Mansart, Paris, France
- 2015 "The Approach" / Gazelli Art House, London, UK
- 2014 Ningbo Museum of Art, Ningbo, China

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- 2014 "E·phem·er·a" / Baku Museum of Modern Art, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2014 "MEGAPOLIS" / Baku Museum of Modern Art, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2013 Zona Maco, Mexico Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico
- 2013 "Fly to Baku" / Spazio D, MAXXI, Rome, Italy
- 2013 "Home sweet home" / YARAT jointly with the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Centre of Azerbaijani Culture, Paris, France
- 2013 "Fly to Baku" / Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow, Russia
- 2012 "Merging Bridges" / Baku Museum of Modern Art, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2012 "Fly to Baku" / ME Collectors Room, Berlin, Germany
- 2012 "Fly to Baku" / Phillips de Pury, London, UK
- 2012 "Fly to Baku" / Hotel Salomon Rothschild, Paris, France
- 2012 "012 Baku Public Art Festival" / YARAT, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2012 "Commonist" / YARAT, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2012 Comparaison Salon, Grand Palais, Paris, France
- 2011 "Untitled" / Galerie Danant, Paris, France
- 2011 "Dawn to Earth" / Gazelli Art House, London, UK
- 2011 "Untitled" / Le Lab'Art, Melun, France
- 2011 "Illusions parallels" / I-Gallery, Paris, France
- 2011 "Ön Söz (Foreword)" / YARAT, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2011 "Avant Première" / I-Gallery, Paris, France
- 2011 "Terres de Pensée" / Brissot Gallery, Paris, France
- 2011 Da-Ent Gallery, Paris, France
- 2010 "Untitled" / Galerie Vivienne, Paris, France
- 2010 "Year of Russia in France" / Galerie Brissot, Paris, France
- 2010 "Vision Solidaires" / Galerie Brissot, Paris, France

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- 2009 "Cogito ergo sum" / Azerbaijan Pavilion, 53th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
- 2009 "BAKuNLIMITED" / Voltahalle, Basel, Switzerland
- 2008 Art and Culture festival / Sigvardson Gallery, Rødby, Denmark
- 2007 "Patterns from Qobustan" / Geneva, Switzerland
- 2007 "5+" / The Museum Center, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2006 "L'Autre Art" / U.N.O, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2006 "Movement & Space" / Ministry of Culture & Tourism of Azerbaijan, Baku
- 2005 "Man and Woman" / The Museum Center, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2004 "New Circle" / ACH, Moscow, Russia

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 Gazelli Art House, Dubai Art Fair, Dubai, UAE
- 2017 "Untitled" / The Museum Center, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2017 "Absorb, Adhere, Advance" / Gazelli Art House, London, UK
- 2017 "Flower Power-Ludi", Galerie Mansart, Paris, France
- 2015 'HET'/ 'NON' / Baku Museum of Modern Art, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2014 Galerie Nikki Diana Marquardt, Paris, France
- 2014 "LOVE LOVE NOT" / Heydar Aliyev Center, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2013 "Dancing on Bones" / Gazelli Art House, London, UK
- 2013 "Why Fourchette?!" / Yay Gallery, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2012 "Untitled" / Galerie Nikki Diana Marquardt, Paris, France
- 2012 "Cycle 'Invasion'" / IG Gallery, Paris, France
- 2011 12th International Art Biennale of Cairo, Cairo, Egypt
- 2011 Galerie Nikki Diana Marquardt, Paris, France

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- 2010 "Niyaz-Daria" / Vivienne Gallery, Paris, France
- 2010 International Cite des Arts, Moscow, Russia
- 2009 Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland
- 2009 French Embassy in Azerbaijan, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2009 "Untitled", Q Gallery, Baku, Azerbaijan

Museums and Collections

Housed within private collections belonging to European collectors, galleries, and institutions.