

# Arteviste.

## An Interview with Turkish-born Artist Hayal Pozanti in her Studio in Queens, New York

By Flora Alexandra Ogilvy

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Portrait by Flora Alexandra Ogilvy

Hayal Pozanti is a Turkish artist based in Queens, New York. Upon our first meeting, I arrived at what looked like an abandoned warehouse and climbed the stairs to find corridors of individual artist studios. Reflecting her personal aesthetic, Hayal's work space was clean and white, but also punctuated by bold splashes of colour. As we looked out across Manhattan, she talked about her roots in Istanbul, and how it compares to the East Village, where she now lives in New York. At first, I mistook Hayal's artwork for pure abstraction, but I soon discovered that those evocative splashes of colour are actually representative of an alphabet, which she invented. She has her own encryption system, which is only translated through her paintings.

What makes Hayal's work unique is her interest in how technology effects our lives, as well as cyborg anthropology, which is the study of how humans and machines interact. Drawing on theory and science, her work also discusses wider concerns about technology and progress - especially within the context of art. In terms of process, there's an extraordinary attention to detail in her work. For example, Hayal's choice of neon paint is deliberate, because it effects the work's ability to be perceived in a physical reality. To be fully appreciated her colourful paintings need light, because light needs to bounce off fluorescent colours for them to work.

Represented by Jessica Silverman in San Francisco, Hayal also has an exhibition with Rachel Uffner, which has just opened in New York this September. She has also exhibited at a range of art fairs from the Sunday Fair during Frieze London to the iconic Armory Show and NADA fair in New York. When asked how engaged she is with her city's contemporary art scene, Hayal gave a thorough description of her monthly pilgrimage to Chelsea during which she walks methodically between 29th and 19th street to see all the shows as well as crossing to Chinatown and the East Village galleries. As both artist and intellectual, there's no doubt this young artist has starry skies ahead. Follow @hayalpozanti to keep up to date.



*Celestial Semen*

**Was there a pivotal moment when you decided to be an artist?**

It was not a conscious decision.

**Can you tell us about the process of making your work?**

My work relies on an invented alphabet of 31 shapes, which I have named *Instant Paradise*. This lexicon is source material for all my paintings, sculptures, animations and sound pieces. Each shape in *Instant Paradise* has been assigned a number and a letter from the English alphabet, allowing me to literally 'translate' information through a personalized encryption system. I have also created a typeface and phonemes for these characters, which I resource for my animations and my sound pieces, respectively.

**What piece of your artwork would you like to be remembered for?**

The ideas and ideals it is striving to proliferate.

**If you could work within a past art movement, which would it be?**

I'm not particularly attached to one.



*2 Glances, 21 Electrodes*

**How would you define beauty in 140 characters or less?**

Unconventional.

**Do you have a favourite photograph or painting, which inspires you?**

Marcel Duchamp's *Wedge of Chastity* has been a continuous source of pleasure and inspiration.

**What is your greatest indulgence in life?**

Sleeping in.

**Can you offer some insight into the culture of the East Village, Manhattan?**

A lot of bars and restaurants and busy nightlife - especially on the weekends. People start drinking at brunch and go late into the night. I just sort of make a bee dive into my house and try to ignore it all.



*Frisky Mercy*

**Which artist of the past would you most like to meet?**

I fear I would most likely be disappointed so it's best I don't know them in person.

**Do you interact with the digital world/technology in your work?**

Yes, I sometimes photograph paintings and work on them in Photoshop or I make a painting on the computer and translate it into physical life. I also code, make digital animations and sound pieces.

**What do you wish every child were taught?**

Compassion. Tolerance. Kindness. And programming.

**Have you ever had a moment when you questioned your career entirely?**

I've questioned the art world and my place in it but not making art, no.

**What is your favourite art gallery in New York and why?**

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. It's not a gallery but has many galleries within it and never fails to inspire me.



*10 Neurochips, 8 Chuckles*

**Who would you most like to collaborate with and why?**

My process is very introverted so I've never really fantasized about collaborating.

**Why do you make and receive studio visits?**

It's a great way to exchange ideas. I also do really well with one-on-one communication so it gives me a platform to fully express my ideas and share my work intimately.

**What visual references do you draw upon in your work?**

I am very interested in absolute abstraction so I try and make things that do not reference anything in terms of form.

**What is your daily routine when working?**

I try to get to the studio as early as possible because daylight is essential for painting. When I arrive, I do an hour or so of e-mailing and then will get to whatever I am working on in the studio. I will work until the sun sets and then head home.



*Radiant Relief*

**What advice would you give to a young artist following in your steps?**

Never lose sight of what compelled you to make art in the first place.

**Do you find that New York's art scene inspires or influences your art?**

I can only divorce myself from my immediate surroundings to a certain extent.

**Do you love what you do?**

I do.