

ELLE

Hayal Pozanti: "4 Emerging Artists to Know at Art Basel Miami Beach 2023"

By Adrienne Gaffney

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Hayal Pozanti

Hayal Pozanti calls her pieces "proposals for a more hopeful future." The artist, who grew up in Turkey and now lives in Manchester, Vermont describes her unique process: "I go out and paint, make sketches in plein air. Then I come back to the studio and further abstract them through a visual shape system that I've invented to create new worlds that resemble our own." Last spring, her solo show inaugurated the opening of Timothy Taylor gallery's New York outpost, and her work is in the collections of the MSU Broad Art Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

When living in New York, where she assisted artist Glenn Ligon, Pozanti explored the human response to technology. Since moving to Vermont, where she swims in waterfalls and goes on endless hikes, she has become interested in biodiversity and sustainability. She's switched from acrylic paints to all-natural oil sticks, and uses her fingers instead of a brush.

Working with a more environmental focus has led Pozanti to think about the waste created in her studio. She's now looking to make the space fully sustainable. "I'm hoping to make sculptures from the detritus of what I'm collecting in the studio," she says. "You wouldn't believe how much stuff accrues."

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"Brethren 2023" by Ndidi Emefiele. NDIDI EMEFIELE

Ndidi Emefiele

The female figure is at the core of Ndidi Emefiele's collages. "Most of my earlier works sought to highlight the strength of the female and celebrate the female body," she says. After experiencing the loss of her sister in 2019, she now incorporates themes of time and the afterlife into her work, while still centering women. She utilizes materials like DVDs, which reflect light in a way she loves, plus vintage clock bezels, fabric remnants, acrylic paints, and watercolor pens. "When I have a variety of stuff around, I need to consume as much as possible. I just delve into it," she says. Nigeria, where Emefiele grew up, also brings a "rich narrative" to her work.

Since finishing her master's degree at University College London's Slade School of Fine Art, she has worked with London's Gallery Rosenfeld and sold works to the Nigerian Exchange Group and the University of South Africa. Her Art Basel pieces will explore the concepts of rest and self-care. "There's so much that is expected of the female to constantly [create] a domestic space or a warm place. There is this need to always prove that we can do it," she says. One piece is called "Me Watering Mom's Plants After My Third Nap," which features a woman Emefiele identifies with, who's having the kind of leisurely day she believes should be more accessible.

"I spend the whole day sleeping and I just wake up, water the plants, go back to bed, wake up. That's not my regular routine, but it's sort of a daydream world. I don't want the idea of rest to just be a phenomenon to daydream about. I want it to be part of one's daily routine."

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"Mosaic Stairs" (2019) by Hilary Pecis. COURTESY OF TIMOTHY TAYLOR

Hilary Pecis

Last March, Hilary Pecis had her debut solo exhibition at the [David Kordansky Gallery](#), where she'd formerly worked as a registrar for five years before pursuing painting full-time. She got the job shortly after moving with her family to Los Angeles, a relocation that gave a new spark to her work. "It's wildly inspiring being here. When I think of stimulating landscapes, I think of places that are warm year-round," she says. Pecis' works are currently on display at [Gagosian Athens](#), as part of a show with her friend and fellow L.A. artist Lily Stockman.

Los Angeles is well-suited to Pecis' vivid color palette and her focus on landscapes. A marathoner, she finds inspiration in her weekly 50- to 55-mile runs. "A lot of the landscapes that I paint come from places I've run by," she says. At Art Basel, she will show a painting of a house she once saw along her route.

But L.A. has much more to offer than visuals, Pecis says. "The [artists'] community here is ridiculously encouraging. There's a real enthusiasm for other people's successes and how we can help each other. Even when stuff is really hard, it's nice knowing there are so many other people championing you."

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"Outsider (After Bergman's Clown)" (2023) by Mia Middleton. COURTESY OF ROBERTS PROJECTS

Mia Middleton

Mia Middleton thinks about the things we don't understand. Her small-scale paintings feature monochromatic palettes, fuzzy tones, and disembodied scenes. "There's definitely meant to be something there that's eluding comprehension," says Middleton, who was raised in New Zealand and London and is now based in Lisbon.

After studying at the University of New South Wales, she focused on sculpture and installation. She hadn't studied painting in school and was nervous about venturing into it. "I was probably a bit scared to get started into it, and then as soon as I did, I was like, 'Oh my gosh, this is my closest thing I can get to my voice and my creative ground,'" she recalls. "It just started in a flurry and the rest is history."

Middleton's works often function as a series. "I make quite small paintings, often very small paintings, and I might show four or five of them together, and so there's a loose sense of a narrative that the viewer then completes on their own," she says. She did a residency with the Seoul Museum of Art, has shown at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art and the PM/AM Gallery in London, and had a solo show at Roberts Projects in 2023.

In the past several months, Middleton, who showed at Los Angeles Frieze earlier this year, has been focused on her work for fairs. "When you're in this whirlwind of activity that starts out when you're first picked up by galleries and things, it can be hard to find the time to slow down and really innovate," she says. "Now I feel like there's a bit more mental space for me to think, how might I further augment the space itself and the room itself?"

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