



We live in a world where images are carefully curated and manipulated, where social media platforms present us with a distorted view of reality, and where the lines between the authentic and the contrived blur, the quest for truth and meaning becomes an ever-elusive pursuit. We are constantly bombarded with messages that dictate who we should be and what we should desire, and it can be difficult to discern what is real and what is not. In a global society where reality itself seems shrouded in ambiguity, it's no wonder that certain theorists speculate that the world we perceive might, in fact, be a sophisticated simulation.

Dina Zakman is an artist who draws from the illusory nature of the world using varied genres and materials to

delve deep into the dream world, constructing her own mythologies that challenge preconceived notions and encourage viewers to reflect on their lives and their place in this world. Zakman invites her audience to participate in a dialogue that goes beyond the boundaries of her artworks, to provoke thought and reflect on the fluid and ambiguous nature of our reality.

Her portfolio is diverse, weaving together an array of artistic mediums. From painting to graphics and sculpture - she adorns her canvas with the vibrant hues of her unique perspective, aesthetic sensibilities, and personal experiences. Her art is a journey into her thoughts combined with an exploration of the intricacies of the world that surrounds us.

It's the diversity in her works that means it can appear on canvas but also on album covers, and she has even been commissioned to create liveries for aircraft and racing cars. However, this versatility doesn't mean she's prolific - Zakman approaches her craft with meticulous attention to detail, ensuring that every subtle nuance in her work is precise. This dedication results in a limited production of a maximum of ten paintings a year.

Upon entering the world of Dina Zakman, we're transported to a dreamscape where the boundaries between reality and fantasy blur. Her works are an intricate tapestry of imagery, featuring fish, faces, idealised nudes, and surreal bodies. Her art feels like a contemporary take on surrealism and magical realism, encouraging us to engage with otherworldly visions and explore the delicate knife edge between perception and imagination.

Her art draws resonance from the allegory of Plato's cave, a philosophical metaphor that shines a light on the transformative power of enlightenment. In Plato's allegory, prisoners in a cave mistake shadows on the wall for reality until they escape and see the true world outside. Most of us will happily go through life without ever stopping to think if we're seeing the world in all its beauty or merely the shadows - are we in fact prisoners to our preconceptions and could we see so much more if we could escape our own personal caves? Zakman's creations draw from this allegory and seek to serve as a pathway to enlightenment. The works are designed to call us to escape the cave of illusions, guiding us toward a deeper understanding of the world and, in the process, deeper self-awareness.

At the core of Dina Zakman's artistic mission is the creation of the "illusion of illusion." Her art aims to demonstrate that our world is never static for a single moment. Through her work, she challenges us to contemplate how we perceive and interpret the world that surrounds us. Her creations want to serve as catalysts for emotional responses, prompting individuals to question

their conceptions of the world and their place within it. It is an invitation to scrutinise our own values and seek out our own answers.

While it may seem that Zakman's work is designed to dismantle our worldview, the opposite is true. Her artistic intent goes far beyond deconstruction; it is inviting us to engage with the world on a deeper level, peeling back the layers of illusion to reveal the hidden beauty that often eludes our perception. Her art serves as windows to an alternative reality, one where the ordinary is transformed into the extraordinary.

Her art encourages us to view the world with renewed wonder and curiosity, as if seeing it through the eyes of a child discovering the world for the first time. It challenges us to pull back the curtains that are obscuring our understanding of the world and to rediscover the richness and complexity of our surroundings and our existence. Art should be a provocation, a moment to stop and think about why we are here and what the purpose of our lives ought to be. Zakman is asking us to do exactly that when looking at her works.

The ever-evolving nature of our world is not a source of fear or instability but an opportunity for growth and renewal. We should be able to find beauty in the imperfections, to celebrate the transitory nature of existence, and to recognise that the most profound truths often reveal themselves in the midst of change.

In a fast-paced world where we are often consumed by the daily grind, Dina Zakman's creations ask us to seek the truth, question our preconceptions, and embrace the ever-changing nature of our reality. Her art encourages us to embark on a transformative journey, one that leads us to a place where true happiness can only be found through the dispelling of illusions. If we could all answer this call, then surely the world would be less stressful and more joyous.

-Tabish Khan

Tabish Khan stands as a pillar for democratizing art access. As a prominent art critic deeply embedded in London's art scene, he is the visual arts editor for Londonist and a staple contributor to Culture Whisper. Through his weekly top 5 exhibitions for FAD, Khan continually sheds a light on the top exhibitions to see. His dedication transcends just critiques, Khan actively supports institutions like ArtCan, City & Guilds London Art School, and Discerning Eye, championing artists and exhibitions.