



# RETURN ON ART

## A NOTE FROM THE FOUNDER

Return On Art started as a very simple idea two years ago: to bring transparency to the art market, to provide art lovers with a meaningful collecting experience and to allow artists to make a living by doing what they love to do: create art.

We live in a hyperconnected world, allowing us to consume goods and information at an unprecedented pace. Yet, we also live in a time where most of the products we consume on a daily basis become increasingly commoditized, lack soul and individuality. A unique artwork, crafted with love and passion tells a different story.

There is no doubt that 2020 has been a challenging year for all of us, but I truly believe that there is an important lesson to be learned. Being confined to our homes has taught us to rethink our values and priorities, who and what we cherish the most. It has shown us that being surrounded by the few people we love and artworks we can identify with, can make all the difference.

Return on Art is a place where gifted hand-picked artists from all over the world come together to exhibit their talents. It's a place where artists receive fair pay, and where talent is nurtured as well as promoted on a global scale. It's a place where collectors and lovers of art are provided with the latest tools and information to collect art in the most enjoyable way possible. But most importantly, it's a place where humankind is reminded that even in times of crisis and uncertainty, there are individuals who continue to inspire. We believe that art is not a luxury that should be limited to only a few, but a necessary cultural good that should be available to everyone.

Through detailed stories, imagery and personal interviews, this book offers a closer look at some of the talented artists of Return on Art. I hope that it brings you joy, inspiration and happiness, because this is how we feel working with such extraordinary individuals each and every day.



Amir Akta  
CEO & Founder

31/500

# WHY REVOLUTION?

When we think of revolution we might think of riots and revolt. We think of something that is forceful and instantaneous. But perhaps revolution is just the final step in a development, a shift that has been a long time coming. If we consider revolution the disruption of an existing system in favor of the new, this poses the question: can radical change be a beautiful thing? Are beauty and change connected? And how do the arts factor into this?

Throughout history, art and change have been intrinsically linked. Whether the arts served as a mirror, a reflection of societal shifts, or were an integral part of bringing that change about. Many artists have foreshadowed society's changes not due to any prescience, but because sensitive perceptivity is part of their talent of seeing. For the artist, innovation is an essential step in their development of a unique visual language. This process can happen slowly, gradually, or all at once. It can be a break with old habits or a sudden discovery of hidden possibilities. Art history, in turn, has known several moments of radical transformation; moments that caused a break with conventional notions of beauty and in which not only artists, but society, had to re-define the values that shaped the visual world.

The system surrounding the artist and the art however, has been surprisingly stagnant in its development. Therefore, we pose the question: are the structures we know sustainable – or is it time for a re-examination of the familiar? In the framework of today's technological advancements and the endless dissemination of digital images, the experience of the physical and the virtual have come to be so closely intertwined that it has become hard to separate them. It can no longer be denied that accessibility has come to play its part in establishing the artists of today, and that a democratization of the system could cause the artworld to flourish.

We wonder: are evolution and revolution more intricately linked than we might think? Can one happen without the other? Or is evolution just a series of micro-revolutions, small sudden shifts in the system – subtle movements that cause a ripple that builds to a tidal wave of change?

In many ways, one could say that 2020 has cracked the world; it has fractured the way we see things and forced us to adjust and innovate in countless unexpected ways – but it has also created a space for re-evaluation. With our daily routines overthrown we have gained some time for reflection, to stop and think, to question what we know, and how we arrange our lives. What do we value? What do we want to surround ourselves with? It has caused a shift in our priorities – often a shift towards simpler, more beautiful things. It has provoked us to re-think: what is essential? Is art essential? Can art be a vehicle for change and help us reformulate what we value? Or has it come to play a vital part in the creation of a safe space?

For those in creative professions it has been a time of seemingly insurmountable challenges; while probably now, more than ever, we need art to enrich our daily lives. Perhaps we need to embrace revolution to seize this moment and from this rupture, this crack in the world, grow something new – something beautiful.

We want to express our deepest appreciation for the artists who contributed to this book, but also to the collectors who chose to support the arts in turbulent times and who are an integral part of bringing about the future.



# MARINA SAVASHYNSKAYA DUNBAR



Belarus - 1992

The captivating paintings of Marina Savashynskaya Dunbar bear resemblance to elements in nature, but avoid any form of literal representation. Through a very physical process of harmonious movement the artist manipulates the surface of each piece to give it a sculptural quality. Steadily, she pushes the boundaries of her material, while carefully navigating a balance between control and spontaneity. She thus creates a new visual language of endlessly layered nature-based abstractions to provide a form of visual meditation for the viewer.









# INTER

*GROWING UP. DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO BE AN ARTIST?*

I always had a passion for creating and I started to focus specifically on painting when I was in high school. I experimented with oil, acrylic and watercolor during my first years in college. Then, I took a ceramic sculpture class, and it broadened my perspective in relation to painting. I began thinking of painting in three dimensions, instead of two. As I experimented with different media, I learned that my interests lie in process and the balance between control and spontaneity.

*WHERE DO YOU FIND YOUR INSPIRATION?*

Inspiration comes for me from everywhere, sometimes from the natural world, sometimes from the interaction of color. I think being an artist means being open and sensitive to your surroundings which allows inspiration to come in freely rather than seeking it.

*WORKING WITH FLUID MEDIA. DO YOU HAVE A CLEAR IDEA OF THE EFFECT AND OUTCOME YOU WOULD LIKE TO ACHIEVE OR IS THIS DEPENDENT ON THE PROCESS?*

I tend to approach each painting with an open mind and a loose idea of the feeling or atmosphere I hope to capture. For me, too much premeditation can hinder the outcome. The process is a conversation, with each mark and shape being a response to the last. The nature of my medium is immediate and unforgiving, so my way of working requires an embracing of spontaneity and a keen sense of timing. My dedication to the process is rooted in my love for the material, pushing its boundaries and expectations.

*HOW HAS YOUR WORK EVOLVED OVER TIME – HAS IT BEEN A GRADUAL PROCESS OR RATHER RAPID DEVELOPMENTS?*

My ideas evolve through a gradual progression. Experiences build on each other. Ideas are cultivated with the passing of time and filtered through various memories, eventually rising up to the surface of consciousness. Sometimes, I feel ideas on the brink of realization but it takes time for them to materialize into tangible thoughts.

*WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR WORK TO EVOKE IN THE VIEWER?*

I hope my work evokes a sense of curiosity while also becoming a visual meditation for the viewer.





**DO YOU FEEL LIKE THE LAST YEAR HAS CAUSED A SHIFT IN YOUR PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL PRIORITIES?**

This year has made me reconsider how I approach connection and impart the message of my work in the isolation of a pandemic. I focused on utilizing technology and how the documentation of my process can be used to invite the viewer beyond the surface of the painting. In doing so, I found myself sharing, more openly than before, the decisions behind colors and compositions to show how these elements relate to the greater context of my work. I prioritized the use of photography and video as aids in the practice of visual storytelling.

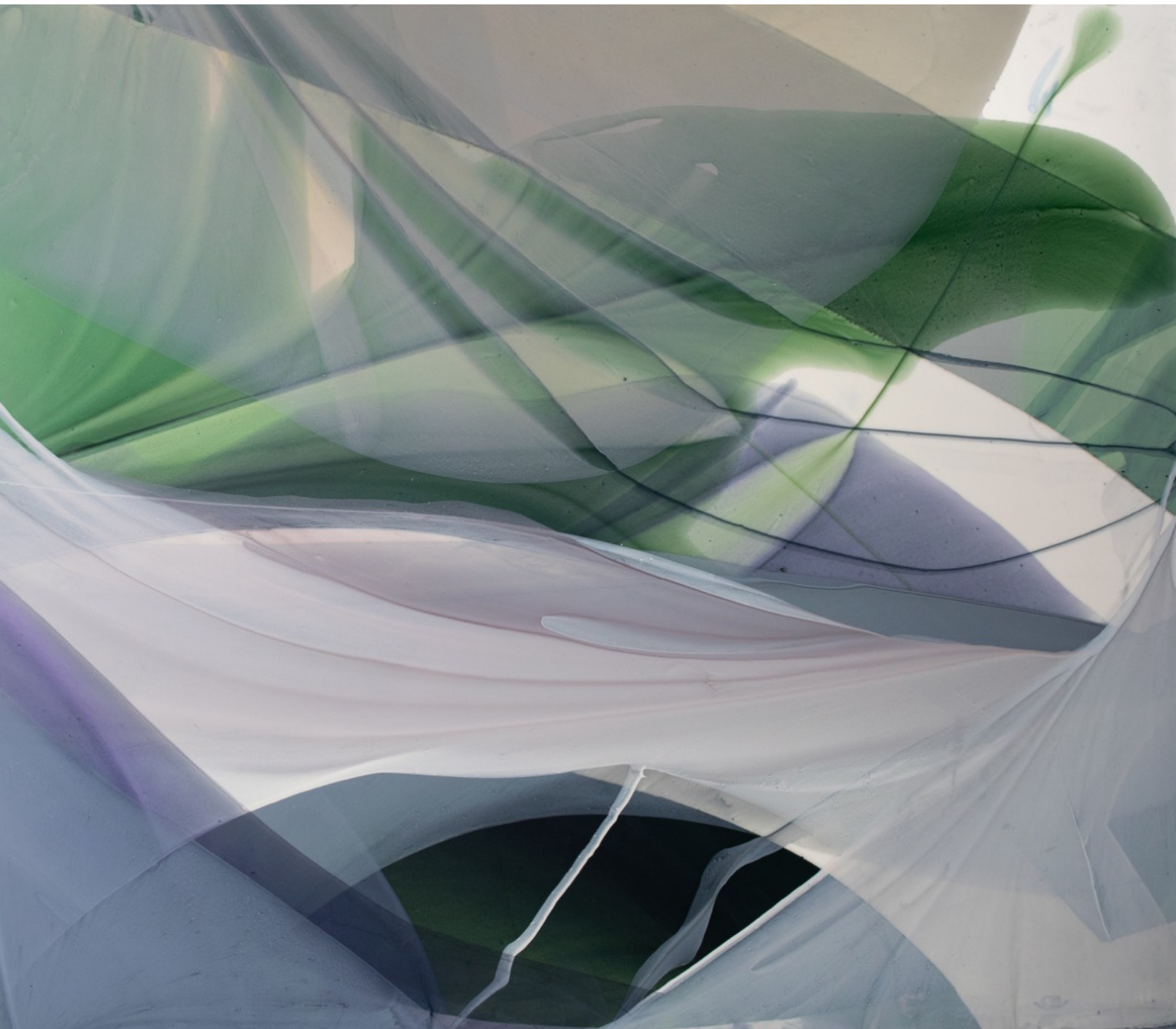
**HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH SELLING ART ONLINE?**

The internet has had an incredible impact on the art world - I believe we are at a pivotal moment for art in the grander context of history. Accessibility to art via social media has greatly broadened the audience, with art becoming more available to individuals in all social classes. As for artists, the internet has given us a voice to directly communicate with our audience and for my career this has been an invaluable phenomenon.

**DO YOU THINK ASPECTS OF YOUR WORK CAN BE CONSIDERED REVOLUTIONARY?**

"Revolutionary" is a sensational adjective. I believe all artists hope to convey their perspective in a way that is unique. If that effort is genuine, the result will be novel and innovative. In my practice, I am interested in creating a new visual language for personal expression by pushing the conventional boundaries of my medium. Yes, I consider my approach to be inventive but there are so many creatives exchanging ideas, and an artist is least objective to rank their own originality in this age of information. We have to let history decide.

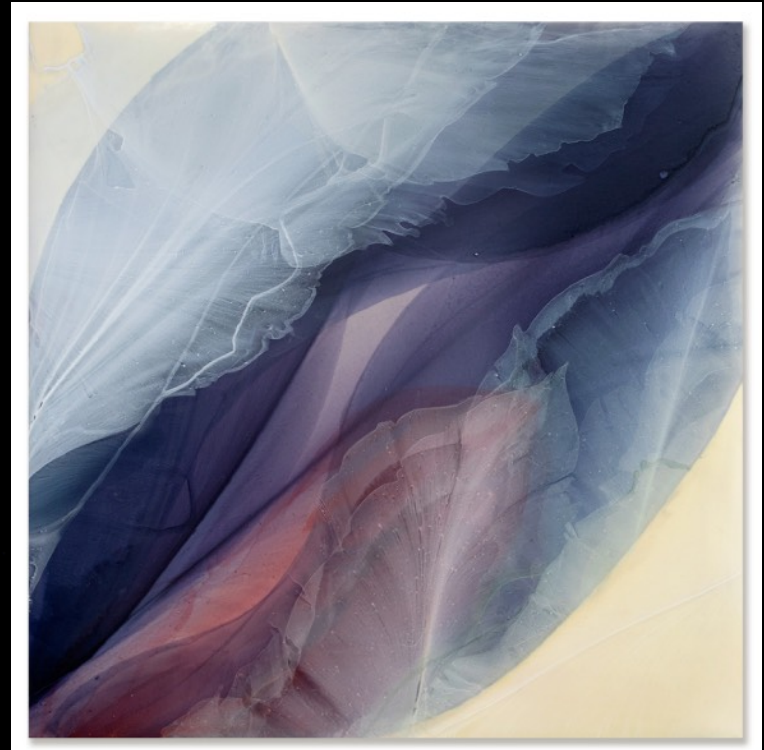




MARINA SAVASHYNSKAYA DUNBAR  
LAPSE, 2020  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
81.2 X 106.7 cm  
32 X 42 in



"THE PROCESS IS A CONVERSATION. WITH EACH MARK  
AND SHAPE BEING A RESPONSE TO THE LAST."



MARINA SAVASHYNSKAYA DUNBAR  
BLOOM, 2020  
Water Media on Canvas, Framed  
70 x 70 cm  
29 3/4 x 29 3/4 in