



LOCAL STORIES

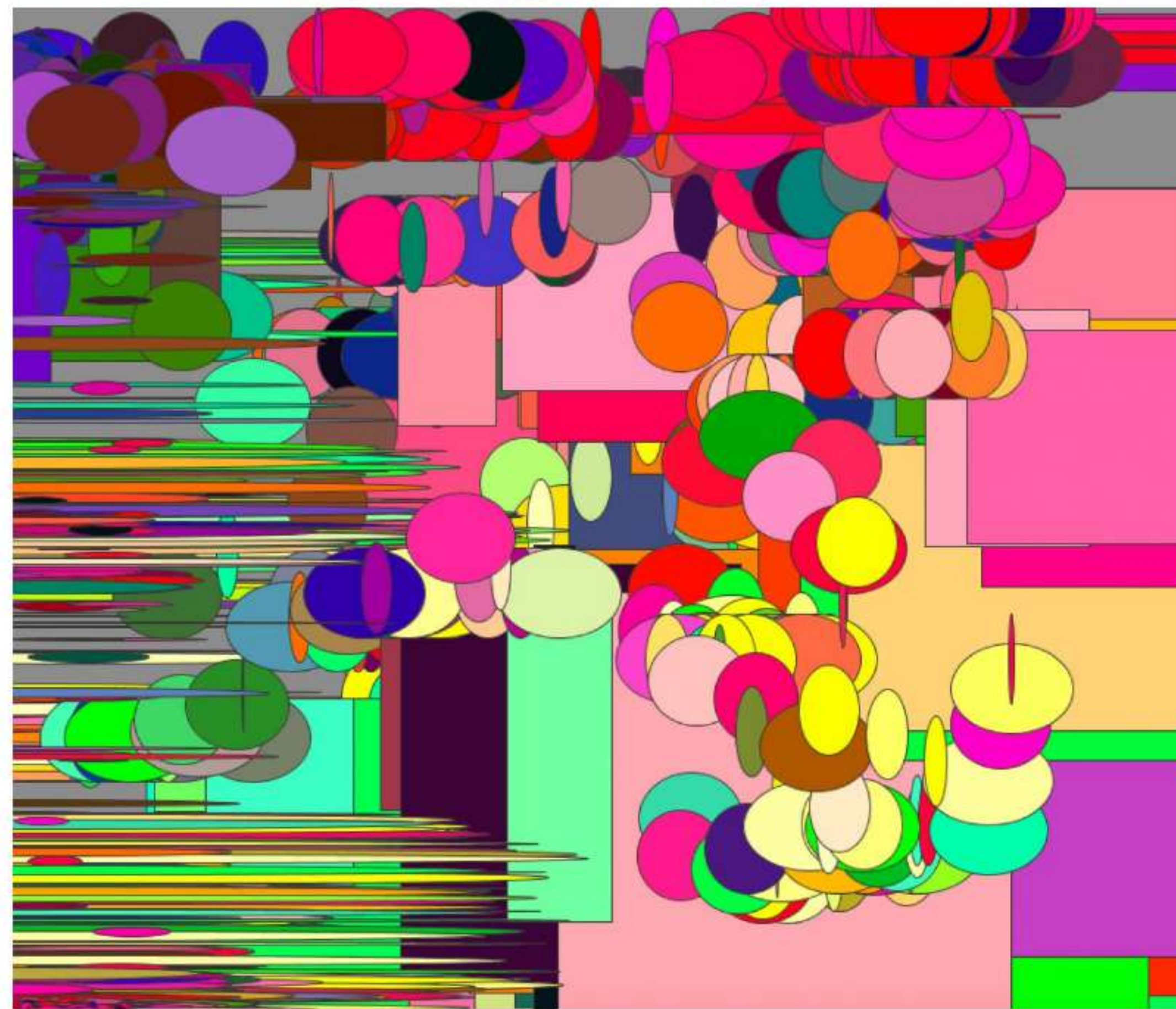
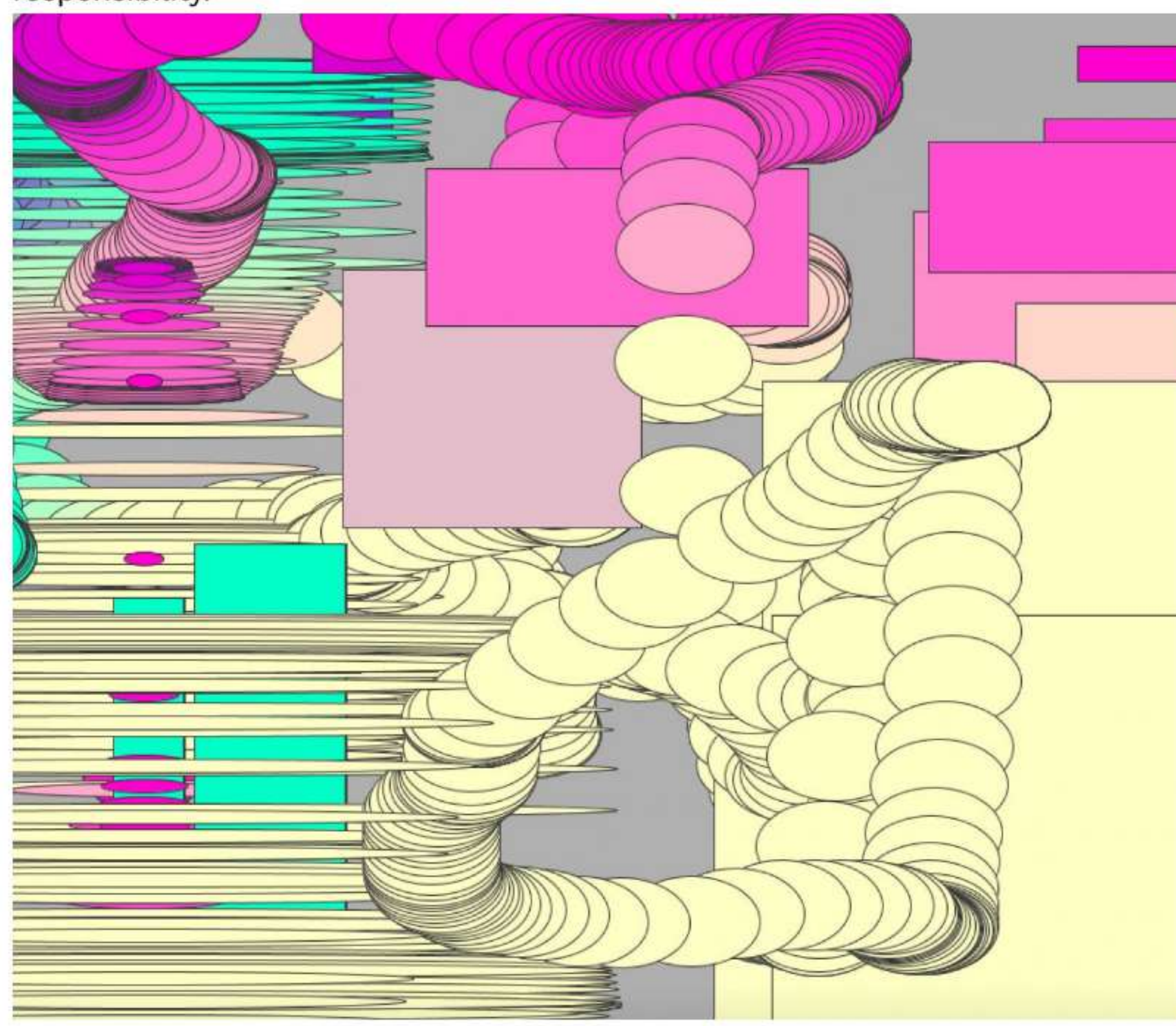
Meet Albert Abdul-Barr Wang: Conceptual Artist, Curator, Student

March 29, 2021 · Leave a reply

We had the good fortune of connecting with Albert Abdul-Barr Wang and we've shared our conversation below.

Hi Albert Abdul-Barr, what principle do you value most?

The value which is key to my studio art practice is transparency/compassion and having strong ethics in my relationships with other artists and art world professionals. The contemporary art world is predicated on trust and for me, the dialogue becomes a lot more difficult if people decide to act selfishly and not be open to the critical issues which artists face. Transparency also helps me to become stronger in being able to help others more freely with good responsibility.

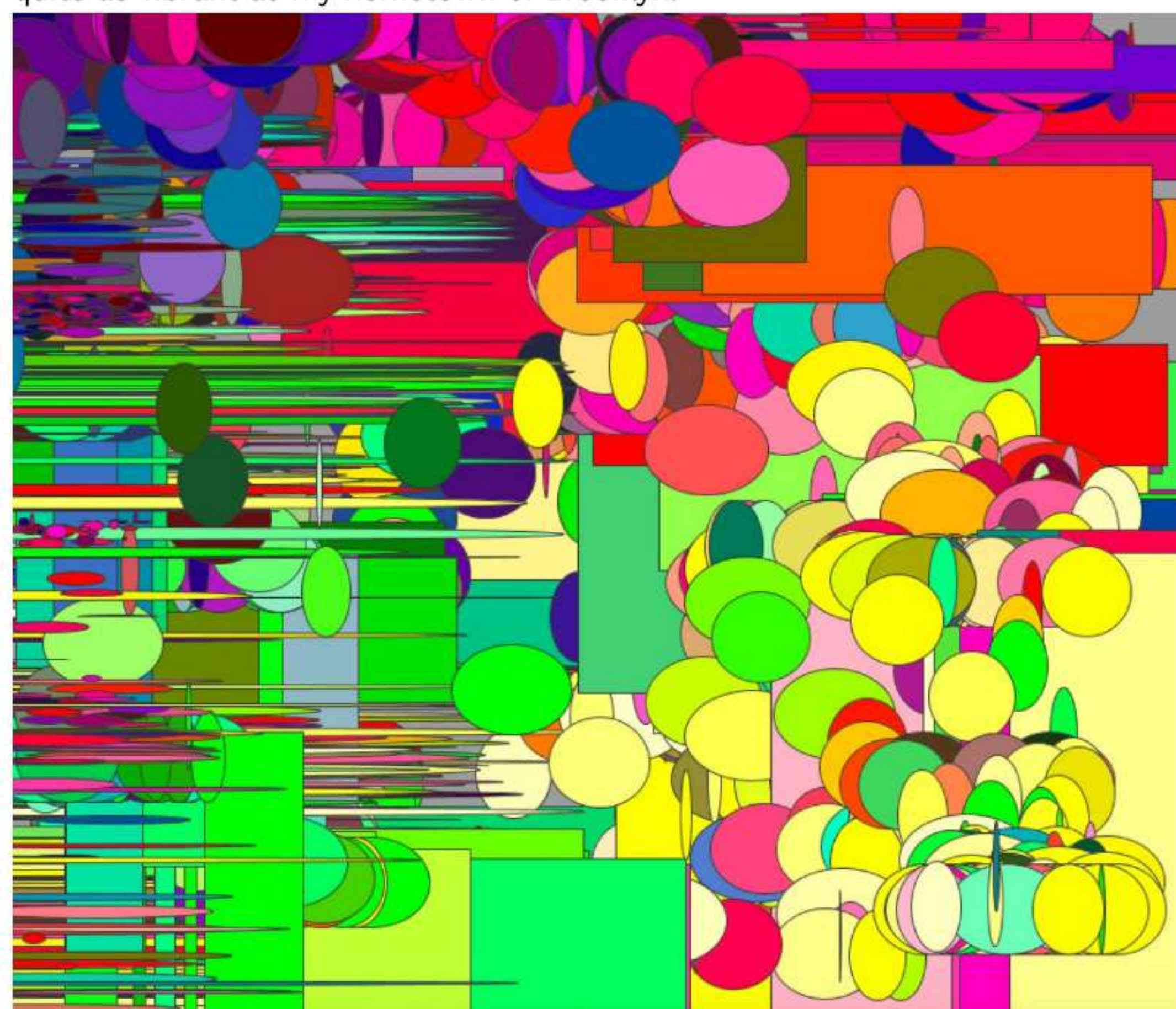


Can you open up a bit about your work and career? We're big fans and we'd love for our community to learn more about your work.

I am a working conceptual artist and my work focuses on historical and economic archives, glitches in artificial intelligence as related to Muslim identity, surveillance and linguistics, science fiction, capitalist machinery, Afro-linguistics, and the commodification of political violence through technology and social media. I utilize multiple visual languages and driving concepts ranging from literature to jazz/hip-hop/classical music to computer technology. I am proud of having won a WorkingArtist.Org grant last year while being an undergraduate BFA student here at the University of Utah. Most art grants do not allow students to apply so I am grateful to Jesse Ross for supporting my studio practice. It is hard to do the exhibition schedule and other artistic endeavors because I am very busy with classes, helping out with curation at the Office Space gallery here in downtown Salt Lake City. As an Asian-American Muslim person, last year I faced some scary moments with racists out in the open streets so I feel blessed to be alive to help others and make more artworks. Some of the lessons I have learned is to be radically open to new possibilities in life and have faith despite the seemingly difficult periods in history. I would like other people to look at my artworks as an archive for times past, present, and future like a long-form science fiction novel. Even if the form and content are risky, bringing that piece to fruition is very key.

Let's say your best friend was visiting the area and you wanted to show them the best time ever. Where would you take them? Give us a little itinerary – say it was a week long trip, where would you eat, drink, visit, hang out, etc.

I have been to Los Angeles once and I really enjoyed it but I think that looking at the work of Edie Beaucage at Luis de Jesus Los Angeles is quite incredible. She is brilliant and very insightful in the way humanity comes together. In the Salt Lake City area, I do recommend for food multiple places here. Ginger Street, Kaze Sushi, and Spencer's Steakhouse are just a tip of the culinary iceberg over here. For books, I do recommend local booksellers such as Weller's Book Works at Trolley Square and Ken Sanders Rare Books. In terms of hanging out within the contemporary art world, I like to frequent the UMFA, UMOCA, and Modern West Fine Art. Those provide a good measure of pleasure even though it's not quite as vibrant as my hometown of Brooklyn.



The Shoutout series is all about recognizing that our success and where we are in life is at least somewhat thanks to the efforts, support, mentorship, love and encouragement of others. So is there someone that you want to dedicate your shoutout to?

I would like to give a shoutout to my artist collective I Found U at <https://ifounducollective.com/>. We meet up once a week and discuss new projects in a cooperative manner. We originally met last summer at the SVA Artist Residency online program and it has been a blessing to be in the company such brilliant and humble artists. I would like to thank so many of my instructors here at the University of Utah, particularly Jaclyn Wright, Edward Bateman, Laurel Caryn, and Wendy Wischer. I also would like to thank my close artistic friend Patrick Winfield Vogel, Madison Donnelly, Edie Beaucage, Chunbum Park and so many others for helping to inspire my art practice. On a personal level, I would like to thank my mother and an unnamed person here. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Allah for His blessings and guidance towards multiple hardships and future adventures within my life.

Website: <https://albertabdulbarrwang.art/>

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