



ANKA ART PRIZE

Celebrating the Power of Illustration

SELECTED ARTISTS



2026

FOREWORD

Art begins with the freedom to see.

Every artist brings a different way of looking at the world shaped by experience, imagination, culture, memory, and curiosity. Anka was created to provide a space where these individual voices can be discovered, presented, and shared with a wider audience. Rather than defining a single way of making or experiencing art, Anka seeks to embrace the diversity of artistic expression. Across its editions, the platform aims to bring together artists working through different disciplines, mediums, and approaches. For the 2026 edition, the focus is on illustration. We intentionally chose not to prescribe a theme, allowing artists to present work that reflects their own interests, ideas, and visual languages.

The result is a collection of works that differ in subject, technique, style, and perspective, yet share a common quality: each offers its own way of communicating through images. This catalogue presents the artists selected for Anka 2026 and celebrates the individuality of their practices. We are pleased to share their work and to begin this journey with them.

Anka 2026

ABOUT US

Anka is an international platform dedicated to discovering, presenting, and celebrating artists and their diverse forms of creative expression.

The platform was founded on the belief that meaningful art can take many forms, and that every artist has a distinctive voice worth encountering.

Anka seeks to create opportunities for artists to share their work, reach new audiences, and become part of an evolving international artistic community.

While each edition may explore a different discipline or creative field, the central purpose remains the same: to recognize individual artistic voices and create a space for their work to be seen and appreciated. The 2026 edition marks the beginning of this journey with a focus on illustration. Through an open and international selection, Anka brings together artists whose works demonstrate different approaches to image-making, storytelling, technique, and visual expression. This catalogue is a record of that selection and an introduction to the artists who form the first edition of Anka.

THE 2026 EDITION

Illustration

The 2026 edition of Anka is dedicated to illustration and to the many ways artists use images to communicate ideas, stories, emotions, and perspectives. There was no prescribed theme for this edition. This decision was intentional. Rather than asking artists to respond to a common subject, we invited them to present work that represented their own interests, experiences, and artistic practices.

The resulting selection reflects a wide range of subjects, techniques, styles, and visual languages. Some works begin with narrative, others with observation, imagination, experimentation, or personal experience. Together, they demonstrate the openness of illustration as a creative form and the individuality of the artists working within it.

The 2026 selection is therefore not defined by a single theme or aesthetic. It is defined by the artists themselves.

THE SELECTION

The Anka 2026 selection was developed through an open submission process.

Artists were invited to submit work that represented their individual creative practice. With no predetermined theme, the selection remained open to different subjects, techniques, styles, and approaches to illustration. The works were considered as individual artistic expressions, with attention given to the strength and distinctiveness of each practice.

01 . ORIGINALITY

The individuality and originality of the artist's approach.

02 . VISUAL LANGUAGE

The development of a distinctive and recognizable visual voice.

03 . CONCEPT

The ideas, intention, and thought behind the work.

04 . ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

The ability of the work to communicate through image, composition, technique, and atmosphere.

05 . CRAFT & EXECUTION

The quality and considered use of the chosen medium and techniques.

06 . OVERALL IMPACT

The strength of the work and the impression it creates as an artistic expression. The final selection reflects a diversity of artistic voices rather than a single visual direction.

THE JURY

The Anka 2026 selection was reviewed by Anka's professional jury team, composed of creative artists and with experience across illustration and the visual arts.

Bringing together diverse perspectives and areas of expertise, the jury considered the submitted works with attention to originality, artistic expression, visual language, concept, and overall impact.

We thank all participants for their time, insight, and contribution to the first edition of Anka.





ANITA MOTTAGHI
CANADA



A simple rainy day

Medium:
Acrylic on Cardboard

It is a poetic visual journey following the quiet presence of rain as it touches the lives of birds, farmers, playful children, and busy city dwellers. As the rain intensifies into a flood, the villagers arrive with boats, warm meals, and comforting stories offering aid and hope. With the sunrise, the city is renewed and washed clean, reminding us that rain is not only a challenge but also a symbol of abundance, unity, and fresh beginnings.

AZAR
TEIMOURI
IRAN

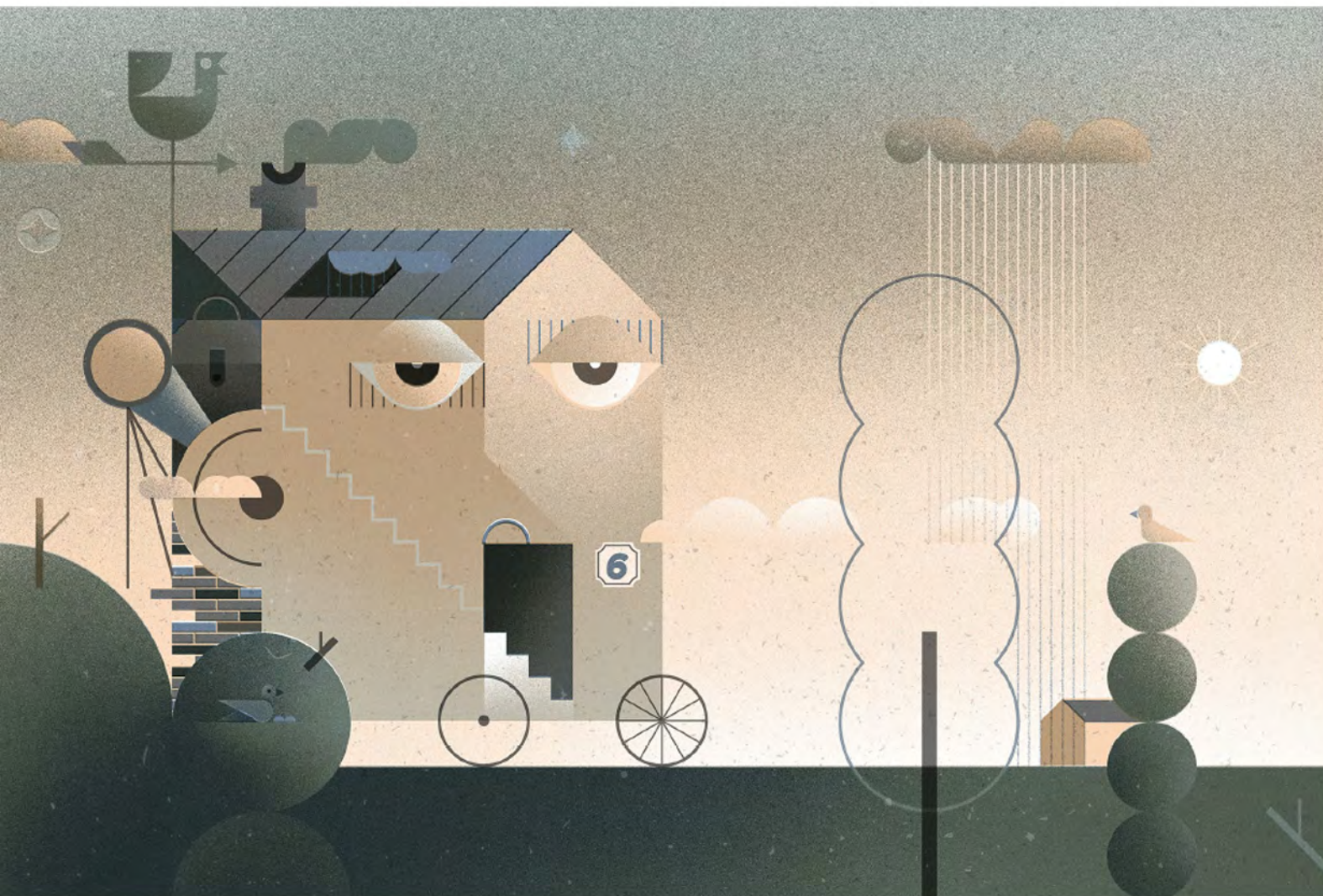


Neither Wet nor Dry

Medium:
Mixed Media

In a village, a tiny bird flies across deserts to a city where it sees Princess Golpar, radiant as sunlight, and falls in love. The king sends it on an impossible quest: to find wood neither wet nor dry. The bird vanishes, yet its longing remains, symbolizing hope, love, and resilience.



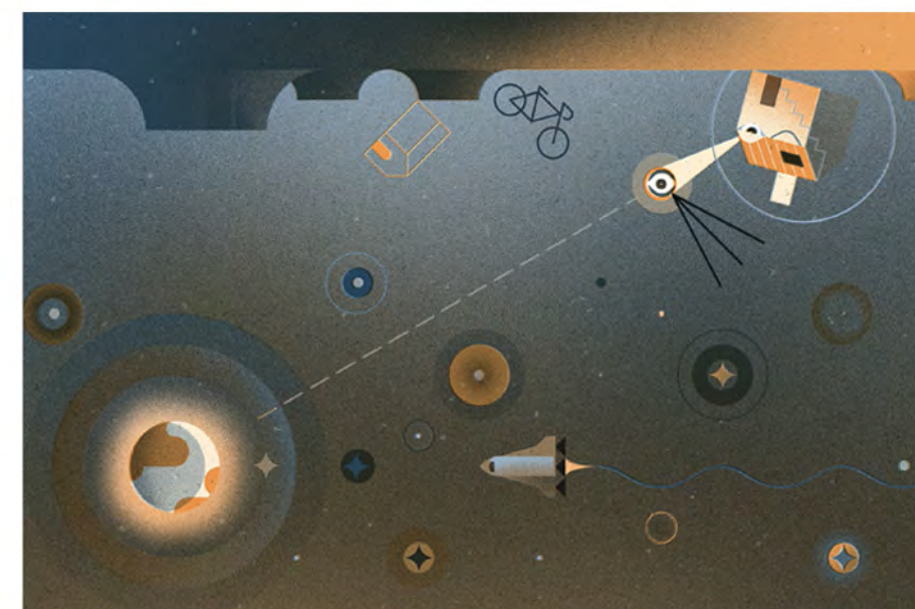
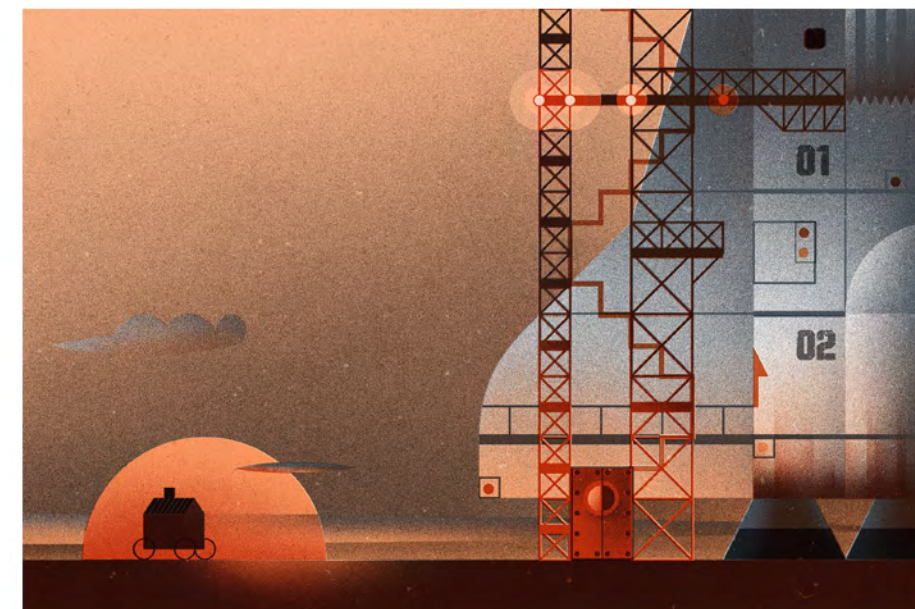


ANDREI
KOSHALEU 
BELARUS

The House on The Moon

Medium:
Digital Silkscreen Printing

What is the purpose of a Dream? To pursue it and ultimately achieve it? Or to remain a beacon for aspirations and desires? These are illustrations from the personal unpublished project "The House on the Moon". It is about the importance of having a Dream in life and how a Dream doesn't always have to become reality. Sometimes it must remain a phantom Star...



**FARNAZ
NADIM**
IRAN

Jamshid Tale

Medium:
Mixed Media

Jamshid Tale is a Persian folktale recounting the adventures of Jamshid, the youngest son of a king, in the demon's territory. The tale begins with the nightly theft of golden apples from the king's magical tree...



Jamshid Tale | Riding With The Rams



Jamshid Tale | Heading Home



MANINIWEI

TAIWAN

The Taste of Being Alive

Medium:
Acrylic on Canvas

The Taste of Being Alive is a gentle poetry picture book that follows a childlike narrator as they discover the subtle scents of life dreams, grass, flowers, forests, the moon, the sea, and the warmth of love. It is a tender celebration of presence, touch, and breath the quiet fragrances of being human.



ECATERINA BIZGU

MALDOVA

Moldovans in Space

Reimagines Moldovan tradition as a cosmic journey! Two figures in embroidered folk dress fly across a ribbonlike path that echoes a woven belt, carrying familiar motifs into an infinite night.

Summer Memories

captures the kind of carefree joy I only feel when I'm with my best friend, sun, warm skin, salty water, and laughter that bubbles up without a reason





EHSAN ABDOLLAHI

IRAN

The Night Seller

Medium:
Mixed Media

There was a man who never slept. Each night, he gathered the fragrances of night and poured them into glass bottles. At dawn, he sold them to the townspeople all but one, a small bottle he always wore around his neck.

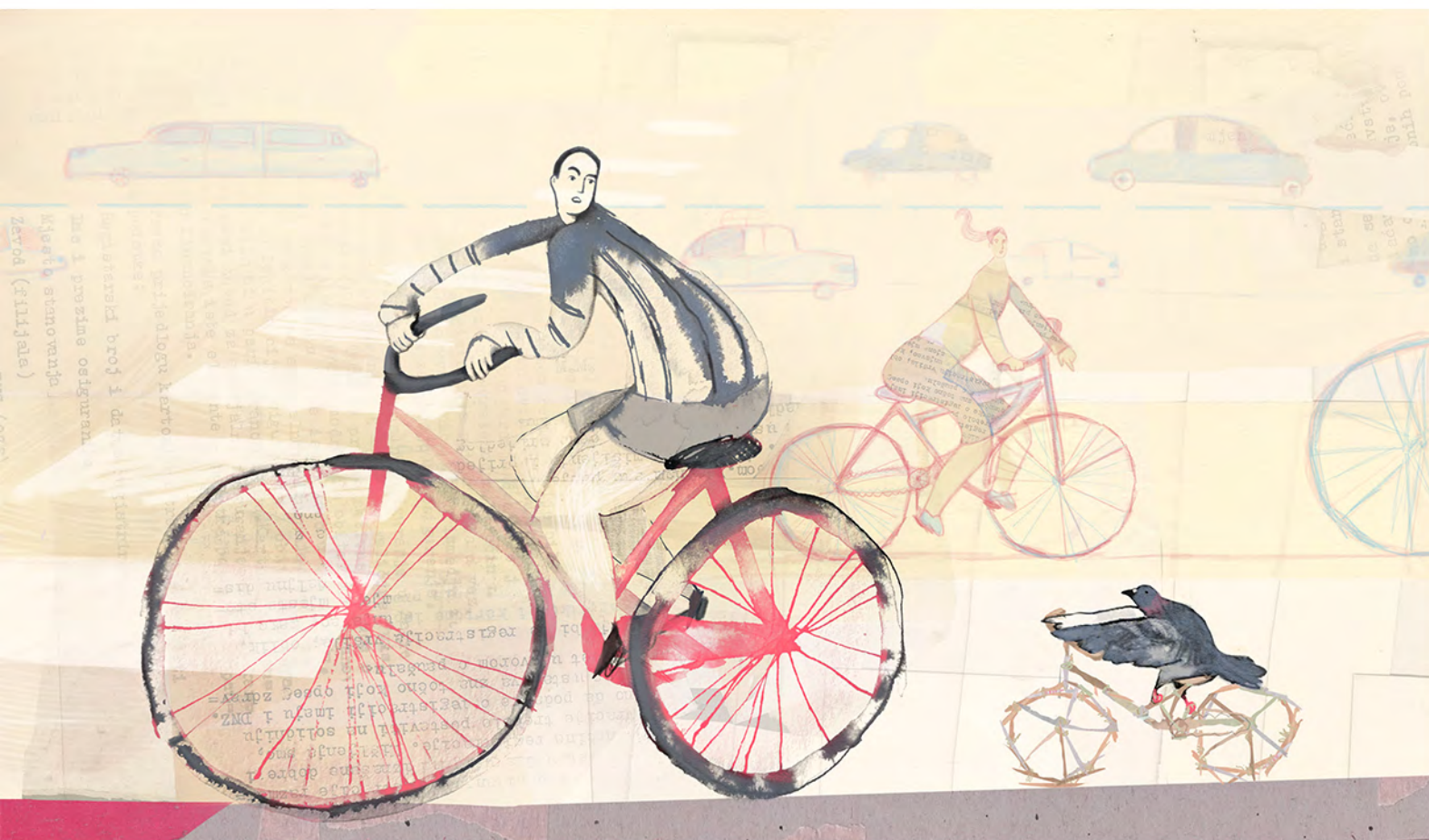
TEA VRHOCI

CROATIA

What About Pigeons?

Medium:
Drawing, Collage, Digital Editing

Ever since I moved to Zagreb, I noticed there are a lot of pigeons everywhere. Most people don't seem to like them at all, they shoo them away, make fun of their looks, scare them for fun... I was wondering how they feel living alongside us. Is there a pigeon trying to fit in to feel accepted?





HASSAN AMEKAN

IRAN

Queen of The Reeds

Medium:
Acrylic

Queen of the Reeds In the morning, a red girl is born from a cocoon in the forest. All the insects and birds are surprised to see a strange thing. They talk to each other. Where did this come from? I ask the hunter to see her. In this forest, a small hunter lives. Upon seeing this girl, he falls in love and builds a house for her, and in the end they live together in the forest.





FARNAZ KIANI

IRAN

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Medium:
Linocut on Fubric

This illustration series presents a visual interpretation of the Epic of Gilgamesh, with a focus on the ancient city of Uruk and its heroic king. The story begins with the arrival of Enkidu, a wild figure equal in strength to Gilgamesh, whose transformation from rival to companion forms the emotional core of the narrative. Their evolving relationship shaped through encounter, friendship, and shared adventure drives the visual storytelling. The journey of Gilgamesh and Enkidu to the Cedar Forest introduces a series of trials that challenge their courage, strength, and moral values.



MAYA BORA

TURKEY

Thumbelina

Medium:
Digital

A tiny girl born from a flower, suddenly finds herself carried into an unfamiliar world where others keep trying to decide where she belongs. Through unexpected encounters, courage, and kindness, she keeps moving forward until discovering a place where she can finally belong on her own terms.

A story about freedom, kinness, and finding the courage to be yourself.





MINA NAEIMI

IRAN

*War Doesn't Know
How To Laugh*

Medium:
Digital

The illustration is based on an idea and visual concept originally developed to explore and study how children perceive events happening in the world, particularly the impact of war and its unfamiliarity from a child's perspective. In the story, I approached this theme through the character of Little Red Riding Hood, who does not explain or judge events but simply narrates what she sees.





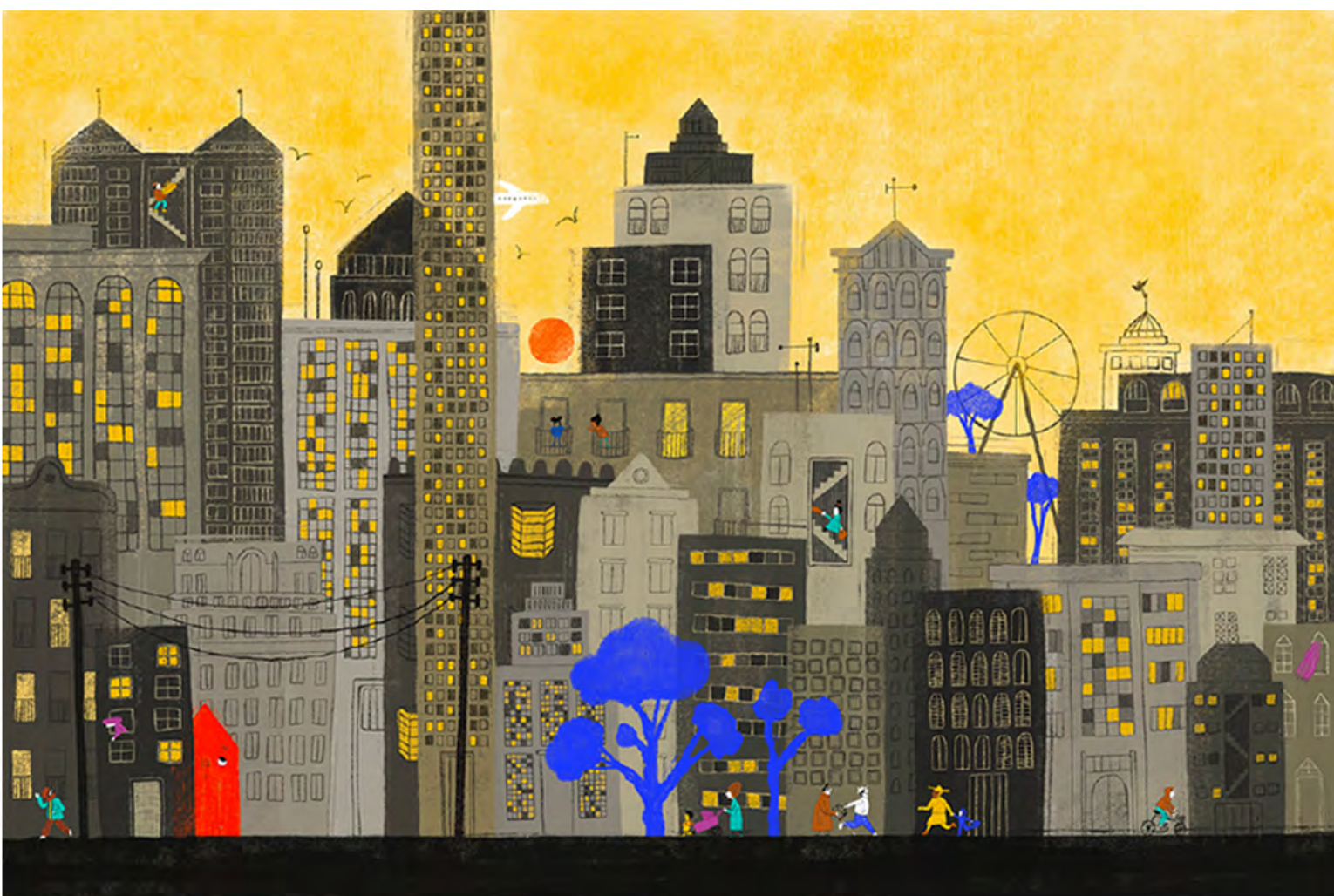
Little Mouse doesn't take care of himself at all because he never eats breakfast. But he really needs to change this habit. So, Mama Mouse comes up with a funny idea...



SAEIDEH AHMADI
IRAN

Little Mouse



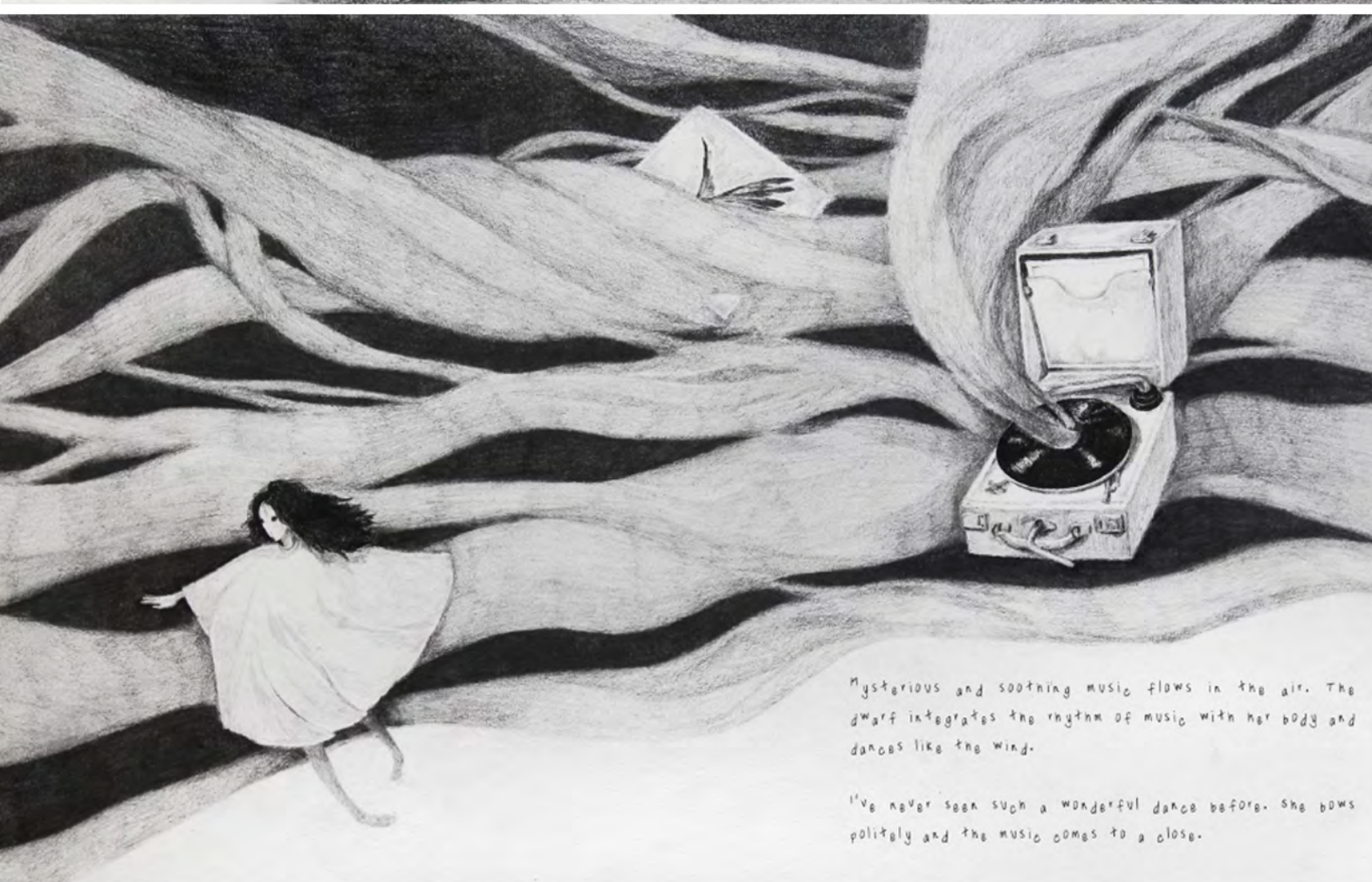


SOMAYE
MOHAMADI
IRAN

Anything But Me



The story is about a girl who wants to be something other than herself. She considers different things. And after thinking about the different aspects of that role, she decides not to be that role. For example, at first she decides to be a cat because cats play all day. But she comes to the conclusion that being a cat is not very easy. In the end, she thinks about one more thing: is her new mother a good cook? Is there a father who will read to her like her father?



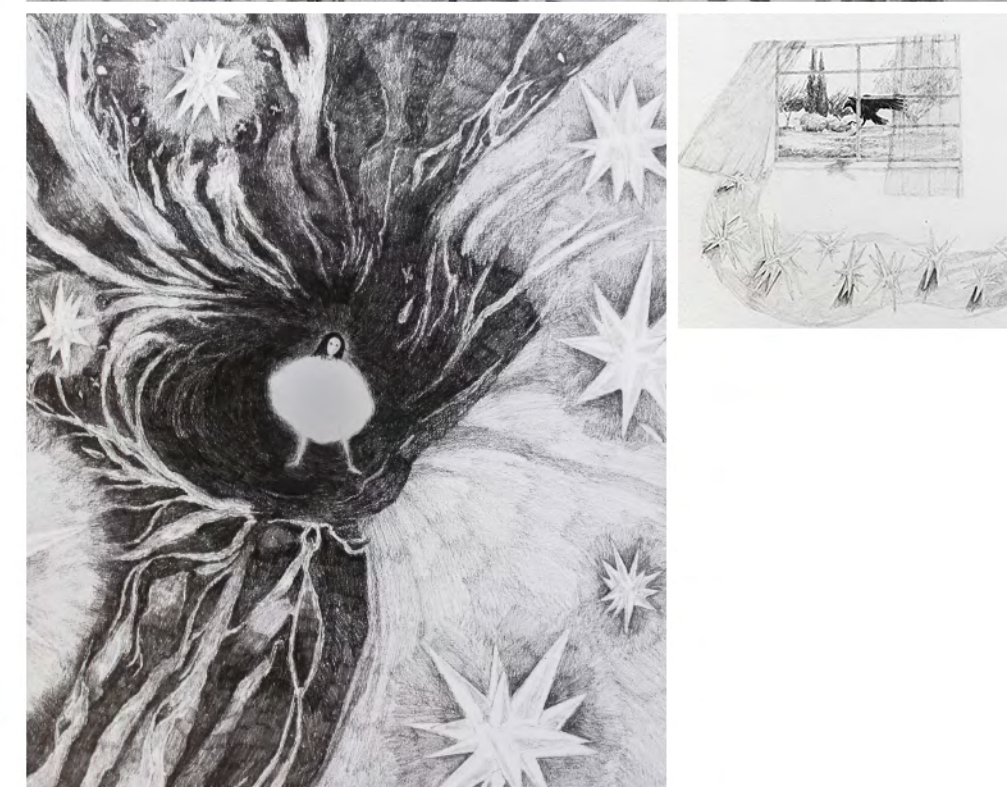
ZHONG SUN

CHINA

A Dream About The Dancing Dwarf

Medium:
Pencil

This is based on Mrakami Haruki's short story "The Dancing Dwarf", in which, the character dreamed of a dwarf who can manipulate you and steal your body by dancing. In this work, I convert the story. One day, a dancing dwarf appears in a dream. She is solithe and graceful, bringing joy to the entire city...





HAMIDEH MOTAMEDFAR

IRAN

The magic of kindness

*In a forest full of animals
lived a young lion named
Moon-Lion.
From his tail, shining stars
would drip bright and
beautiful stars that all the
animals loved...*



The World Over There



The Following Under The Garden



YU-HAN LIU
TAIWAN

The Following

Medium:
Ink, Soft Pastel, Oil Pastel and
Colorpencil on Paper

Have you ever felt that the world outside looks bright and dazzling, while only your own feels dark and gloomy? By chance, I followed a strange little creature to explore the world beyond. What unexpected sights might we witness together?



JILA PASHAEI

IRAN

Haft Peykar
or
Bahramnameh

Medium:
Mixed Media

Haft Peykar is one of the famous works of the Persian Poet Nezami Ganjavi. It tells The story of Bahram Gur, a Sasanian King. Bahram Builds seven domes, each associated with a different color and land, and spends each night listening to the story of one of the seven princesses. These stories expore themes of love, wisdom, morality, and human destiny. By the end, Bahram gains spritual and moral maturity, and the work emphasizes the importance of wisdom, balance, and self-knowledge.

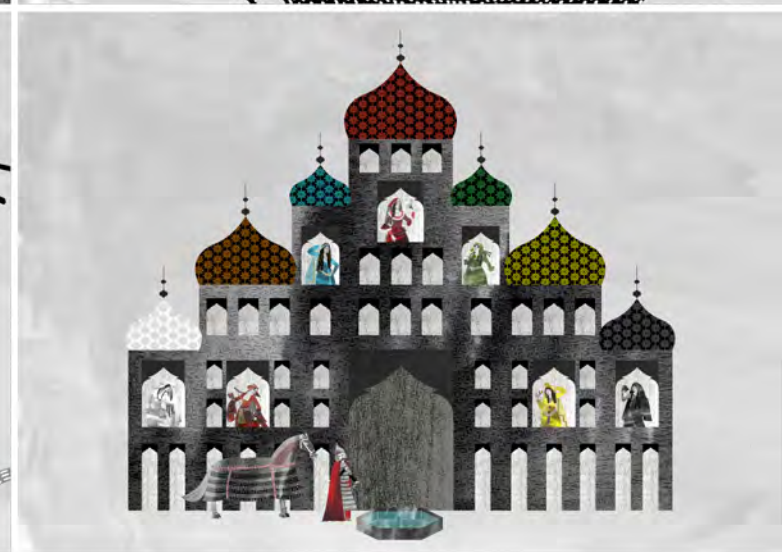
Fitna carried a six-year-old bull on his shoulders to the roof. Bahram said that this was not due to his strength, but because he had accustomed himself to it over many years.



Bahram shot an arrow, and the battle with the dragon began. In the end, Bahram split the dragon's belly open.



Bahram, who has no fear of battling lions, entered the fray for the kingship of Iran and successfully managed to take the crown safely.



In the Khawarnaq Palace, Bahram encountered a closed room. He entered the room and saw a painting on the wall depicting seven beautiful, moon-faced girls, with his own image sitting among them

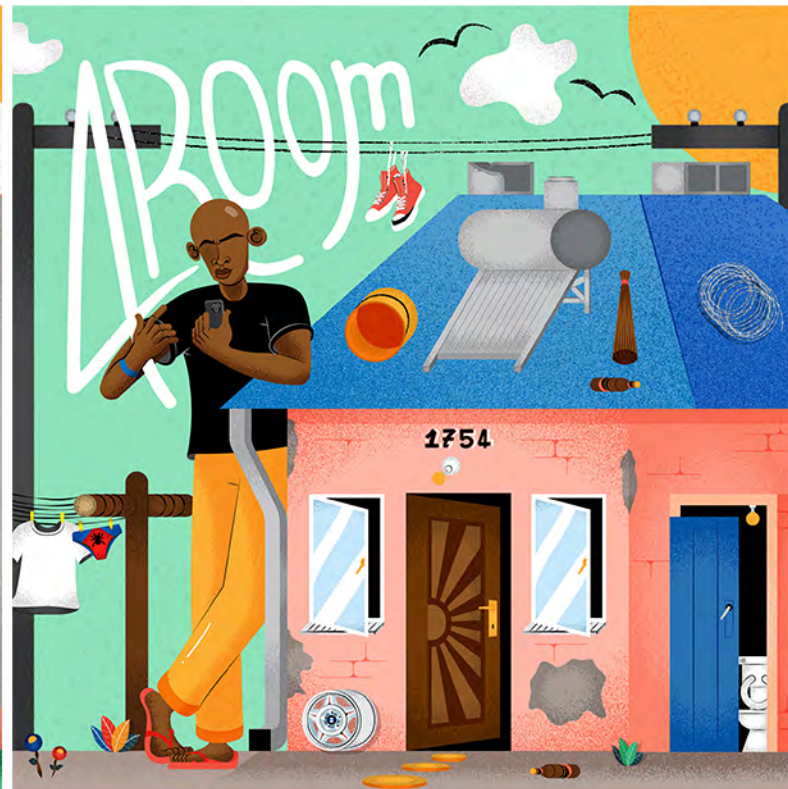
RABATHO LAKA

SOUTH AFRICA

4 ROOM

A Forum of The Mind

Medium:
Digital



An illustration series that transcends the physical limitations of a common, four-room township (ghetto/project) dwellings that explore the boundless nature of the human spirit.



**SAMANEH
RAHBARNIA**
IRAN

The Watching Tree

Medium:
Mixed Media

The watching tree tells the story of a young girl who loves birds and dreams of becoming one herself. She and her friends bring birds into cages so she can admire their beauty, but when one of the birds dies from sadness, she realizes that true beauty can only exist in freedom. To make things right, she and her friends plant trees throughout the city and create nests for the birds, transforming the city into a place where people and nature can live together freely.





**SALIMEH
BABAKHAN**
IRAN

Dreams, Whwther Far or Near

An old narrative of a human being who was always not satisfied with where he was standing or what he was doing and wanted to reach a higher or higher or stronger place. But the nature of man is that he is not satisfied with his position even higher and stronger. This narrative wants to be an answer to this question. If I am a woodcutter, will I become a king? Have I achieved all my dreams? If I become a king, am I not looking for another position? As a king, I wish to be the sun so that I can command him. Because the king realizes that the sun is stronger than the king. And this chain contiues. Even if there is someone or something stronger than me instead of the sun, cloud, wind, and ominous mountain? The final answer is that being higher and stronger depends on inner satisfaction. Because man has limited power and the world ahead is unlimited and infinite.





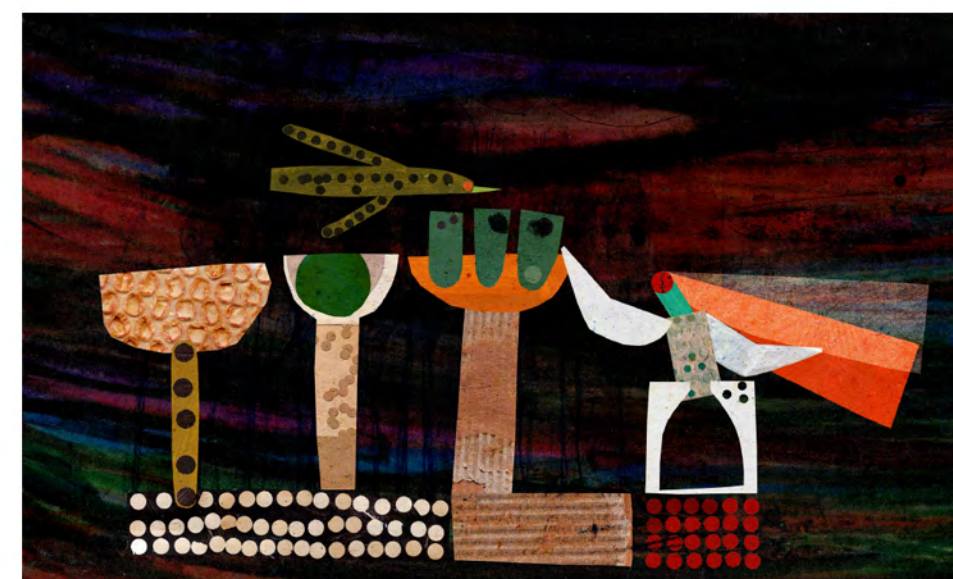
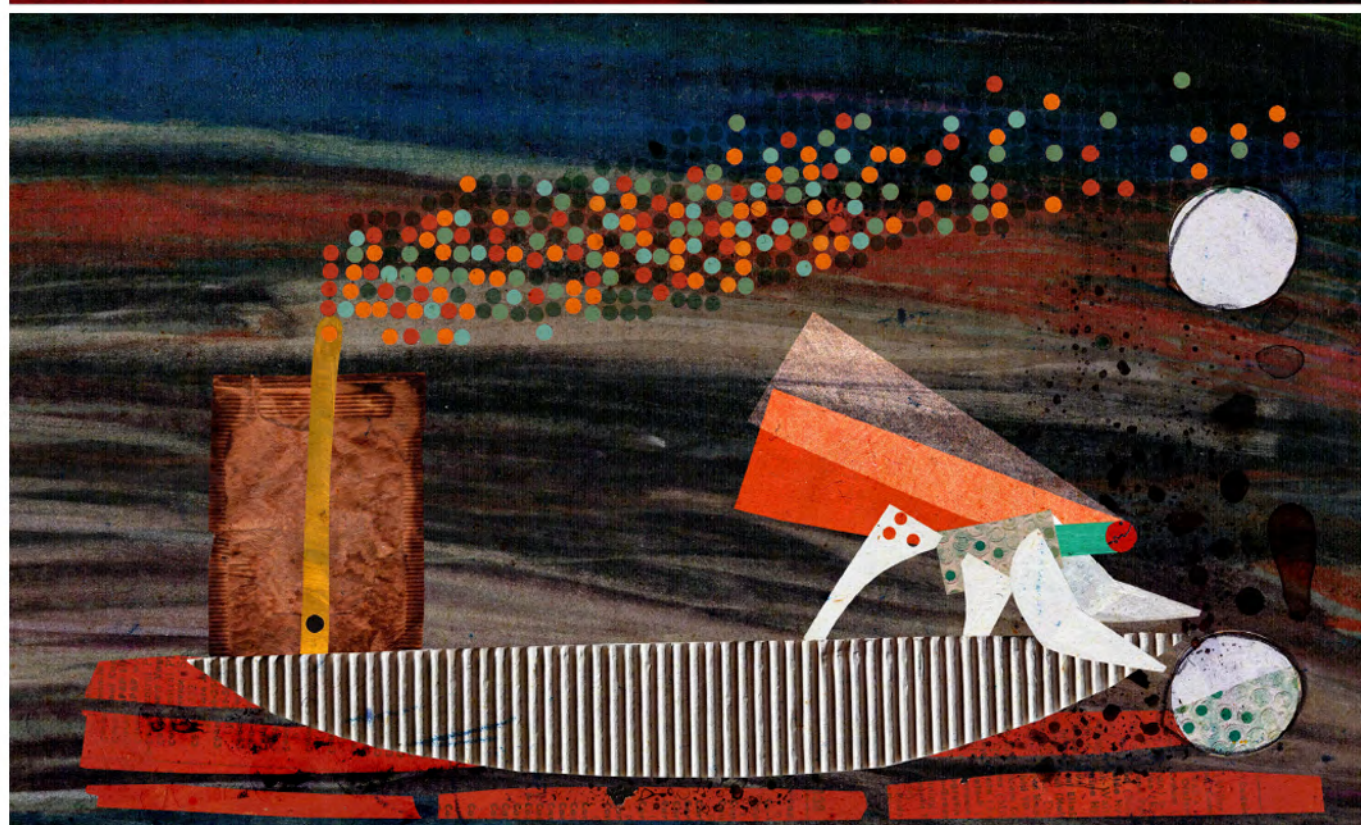
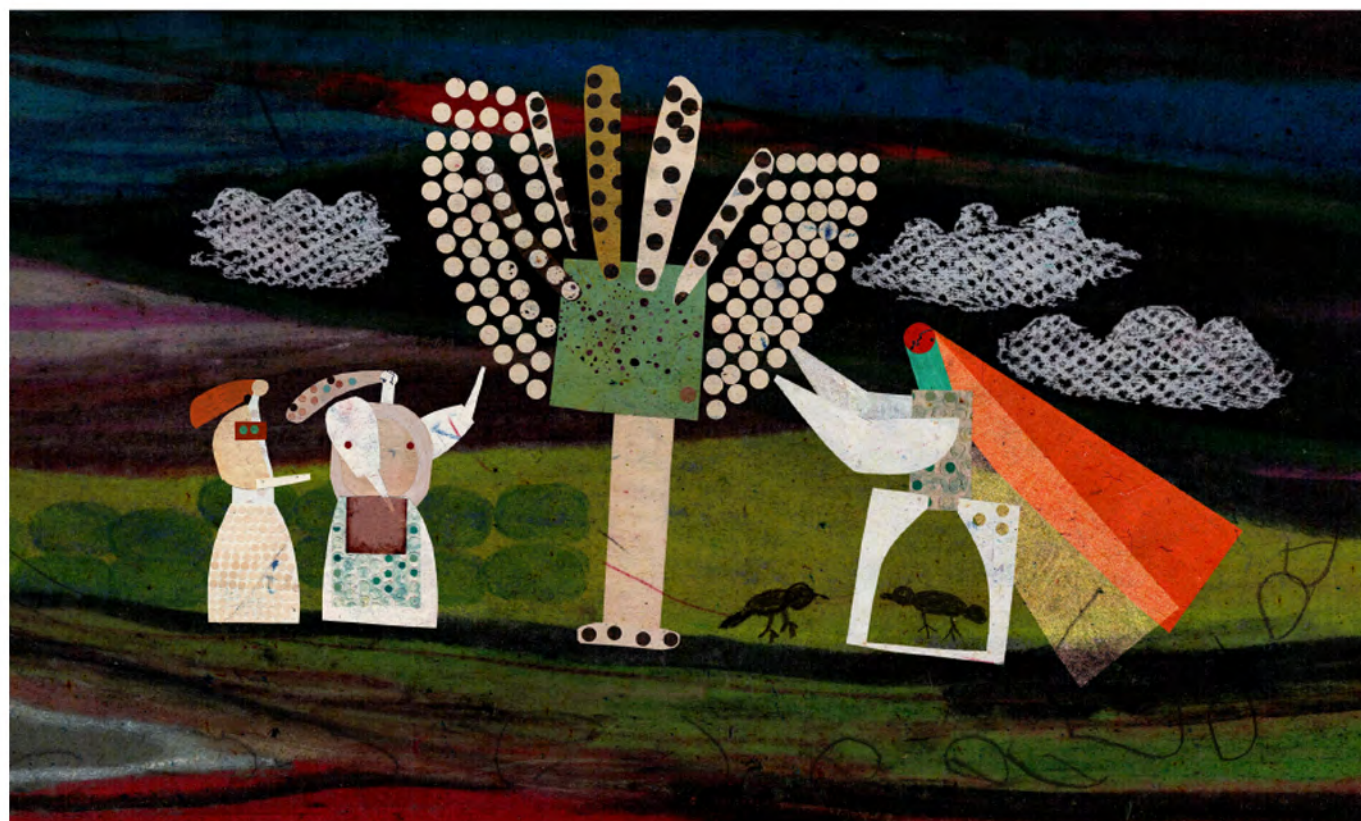
SIMA
REYHANI
IRAN

Dervish and His Donkey

Medium:
Acrylic

The story of Dervish and his donkey is an old story of Rumi. In this story, Dervish blindly imitated those Sufis who were trying to deceive him and lost his donkey.





**MARAL
FOROUZESH**
IRAN

A Girl Named Mari

Medium:
Collage

Mari is a little girl with 47 chromosomes. She sees the world filled with simple yet extraordinary beauty. Fascinated by tulips, she looks for them everywhere. To her, clouds, leaves, stones, the wind, the sun, the moon even the sound of rain all resemble tulips.



**MAHMONIR
BABAZADEH
ZAREI**
IRAN

*Snake Catcher
and Dragon*

Medium:
Collage and Mixed Media



*A snake charmer found a
large, frozen, dead dragon
in the snowy mountains
and decided to bring it to
town.*





TAHMINEH SOLEYMANI

IRAN

Santa's Happiness Factory

Santa in Search of Ibrahim's Happiness Factory begins when Santa receives an unusual letter from Ibrahim, a Muslim boy who, instead of asking for a gift, wishes to borrow Santa's sleigh and flying reindeer so he can spread happiness to others. Curious about Ibrahim's mysterious "happiness factory," Santa sets off on a journey and finds himself in the heart of Eid al-Adha, surrounded by generosity, kindness, and togetherness. Along the way, he discovers that happiness is not something made in a factory it grows when we share what we have with others. Warm and imaginative, the story builds a bridge between Christmas and Eid while celebrating friendship, compassion, and respect for different cultures and traditions.

