

ANNA FORSBERG & QUARANTINE STORIES

GROUP EXHIBITION GALLERI SEBASTIAN SCHILDT
30th of JANUARY – 20th of FEBRUARY 2021



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What has quarantine meant to artist around the world?

In the art project Quarantine Stories six international artists have met in the creation of one rug. This rug is a joined composition of stories, interweaving the experiences of artists based in different epicentres of the Corona pandemic.

Quarantine Stories was initiated by Swedish designer Anna Forsberg, in connection with Galleri Sebastian Schildt's group exhibition Quarantena in April 2020.

Quarantine Stories aimed to inspire artists, who were all separated from their usual contexts and isolated at home during quarantine, to reach across national borders and create work on their individual experiences of this unique situation.

The participating artists hadn't met each other before, and wouldn't have been connected if not for this global pandemic - illustrating the ability of crises to bring people together and spur creativity and art making.

The one-of-a-kind rug is a still image of this period in time, serving as testament to what the pandemic and quarantine have meant to artists of the far corners of the world.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS:

Anna Forsberg (Stockholm, SWEDEN)

Zhou Kuang (Wuhan, CHINA)

Mattia Turco (Milan, ITALY)

Ana Cano Brookbank (Madrid, SPAIN)

Estefania Leighon (Santiago, CHILE)

Vizie (New York, USA)

Anna Forsberg (1982)

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN



Märkligt nog sammanföll denna historiska pandemi med att jag blev mamma för första gången. Min dotter föddes den 7 februari, bara några veckor innan Covid-19 officiellt bröt ut i Sverige. Plötsligt ställdes samma krav på alla andra i världen som på mig: Stanna hem. Ta det lugnt.

I detta nya skede i livet har jag främst ägnat mig åt tre saker: Amma, äta och laga mat.

Matlagningen blev till små stunder av kreativitet, inklämda mellan amningen, och amningen i sig sporrade min hunger. Med mitt mönster vill jag illustrera symmetrin i dessa dagliga rutiner. Det förmedlar också en matlust och glädjen över ett mindre stressigt liv.

It's weird how a new era in my personal life - becoming a mother for the first time - has coincided with a historical pandemic. My daughter was born on the 7th of February, just before Covid-19 officially hit Sweden. The pandemic demanded the same kind of change from everyone in the world: Stay home. Slow down. A change that was already happening in my life because of my newborn baby.

I've found myself doing mainly three things in this new mode of life: Feeding, cooking and eating.

For me, cooking became small moments of creativity squeezed in between breastfeeding - and breastfeeding in itself only spurred my hunger. The pattern illustrates the symmetry of my daily routine, highlighting the joy of food and a less stressful life.

Zhou Kuang (1986)

WUHAN, CHINA



疫情期间的经历不仅仅是关乎身体的，亦是关于心理和心灵的创伤和愈合，画里有一些看似中国文字的笔划，实际上仔细看又不是正确写法，它们暗示着一些不可说的秘密，正中间的一个被刺的“心”字，是我们在这场疫情中一些心碎的声音。

The pandemic experience is not only physical, but also deals with trauma and healing of the mind and soul. In my pattern, there are some strokes that appear like Chinese characters, but upon closer inspection they are in fact, not. They imply unspeakable secrets. The Chinese character for heart '心' in the middle of the rug has a sword stabbing through it, and is a symbol for our heartbroken voices during this pandemic.

Mattia Turco (1987)

MILAN, ITALY



My research is based on noise - an inner noise made from frequencies, hidden messages and interference.

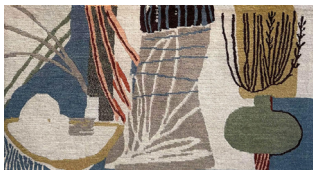
An eye on the inside, towards an anti-universe. An interception of visual noises and frequencies which emerge as overlapping flashes and frames, and bring to light blurry compositions of interferences like a remote message from the universe, to be deciphered and analyzed.

This quarantine was a period of intense work, a way to increase my research and continuously compare it with my own internal noises. It was an uninterrupted time where I faced and critically examined these noises.

In this work, a movement sought to carry forward fragmented compositions, seeking strength in moving forward. A non-stop movement which, even if you stop, by looking inside you understand that time and life continues to flow even if temporarily blocked by quarantine. This has been a source of rediscovery and strength for many people in this time.

Ana Cano Brookbank (1987)

MADRID, SPAIN



My quarantine stories are based on simple designs where abstract forms take centre stage, in the form of pure color representations that dialogue with objects that many of us have in our homes; an environment in which we have spent a lot of time in during quarantine. These objects include vases, plant elements and textiles.

For my design to be in harmony with those made by the other artists, I have chosen simple shapes and flat colors, incorporating resources such as texture and graphic elements to provide more dynamism to the composition.

I participate in this global project representing Madrid, a place where so many people have died due to the pandemic of this virus. It is real pride for me - both as a person and as an artist - to be able to be part of this initiative and help to reverse part of the damage caused in disadvantaged communities. I hope that this artistic cooperation can be the prelude to greater international cooperation between countries.

Estefania Leighon (1988)

SANTIAGO, CHILE



Mi obra está inspirada en dos formas en las que reflexiono este tiempo de cuarentena, uno tiene que ver con las nuevas maneras de comunicarnos a través de la mirada, hoy en día con el uso de mascarillas más el distanciamiento social la mirada se vuelve una manera de expresión y comunicación fundamental que puede superar esta distancia y comunicar cercanía y tacto.

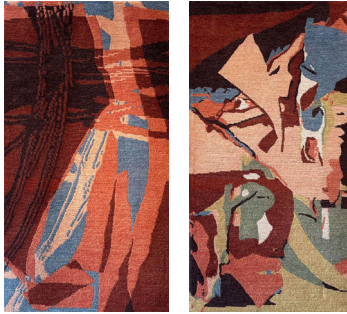
La otra imagen tiene que ver con reflexionar una nueva vida en estos tiempos complejos tiene que ver con el volver al origen, reconectarnos con lo esencial, volver a la raíz, poner manos y pies en la tierra para apreciar lo que tenemos, lo fundamental en la vida, la naturaleza y nuestras manos para cuidarla y trabajarla. Hoy con tantas restricciones nos damos cuenta que es lo que realmente necesitamos para un buen vivir.

My work is inspired by two reflections that I've had during this time of quarantine. Firstly, how fundamental the eyes are as a means of expression and communication in times of face masks and social distancing. The gaze is a way of overcoming the physical distance and to express connection and closeness.

The other image has to do with reflecting on a new mode of life. In these complex times we have to go back to the origin and our roots, reconnecting with what's essential in life. Putting hands and feet to the ground to appreciate what we have, the fundamentals in life, and to work with and care for nature. With all of today's restrictions, we realize what is truly needed for a good life.

Vizie (1982)

NEW YORK, USA



Making art has not been a big part of my quarantine experience. With a brand new baby and my 5 year old daughter home from school, most of the time spent is cooking, cleaning and schooling/entertaining.

Throughout the past 3-4 years, I have began to work a lot with my oldest daughter's artwork, focusing on the pure randomness of making marks and shapes that characterizes a child's first artistic endeavors.

During the quarantine, I managed to gather enough random paper scraps from various failed home schooling projects to make a collage. I spent an hour or so arranging the arbitrary shapes to make a collage that I liked and then left it on the table. Later that day, I found that my daughter had tore the collage to shreds, most likely out of the everyday frustration and confusion brought about by the quarantine. I collected these shreds and reassembled them for the final piece.

The second was made a month later, another attempt at making a collage from paper scraps but instead of gluing it down, I arranged the composition and then took a picture of it. The pieces were then moved and my daughter arranged the same pieces almost identically to mine without seeing what I had made. This pattern is our two overlaid versions forming the final composition.

Nepal

The Quarantine Stories rug is made in Nepal according to local age-old traditions. It's a complicated and delicate process, requiring skilled craftsmanship and years of experience. The rug is made of more than 600 000 woolen knots, naturally dyed with herbs, flowers and plants – giving soft tones and slight colour variations from season to season. Thus, the rug is as unique as a painting!

Normally the production takes 12-16 weeks, but this time, production was delayed due to a second lockdown in Nepal.

This pandemic has made it clear that, while slowing down has brought some positive changes to people in certain parts of the world, it has had direct and even life threatening consequences to people in other parts of it; their livelihood totally dependent on our surplus. This pandemic shows how interconnected we all are.

This is also why Anna Forsberg initiated the Quarantine Stories project – to tell different and unique stories of life in quarantine while at the same time being able to support Nepal, a country that was already struggling financially before the outbreak of pandemic, and has been hit particularly hard in multiple ways.

The proceeds from the rug sales are therefore donated by the artists to the GoodWeave organization in Nepal, to support the rug weavers and their families.

