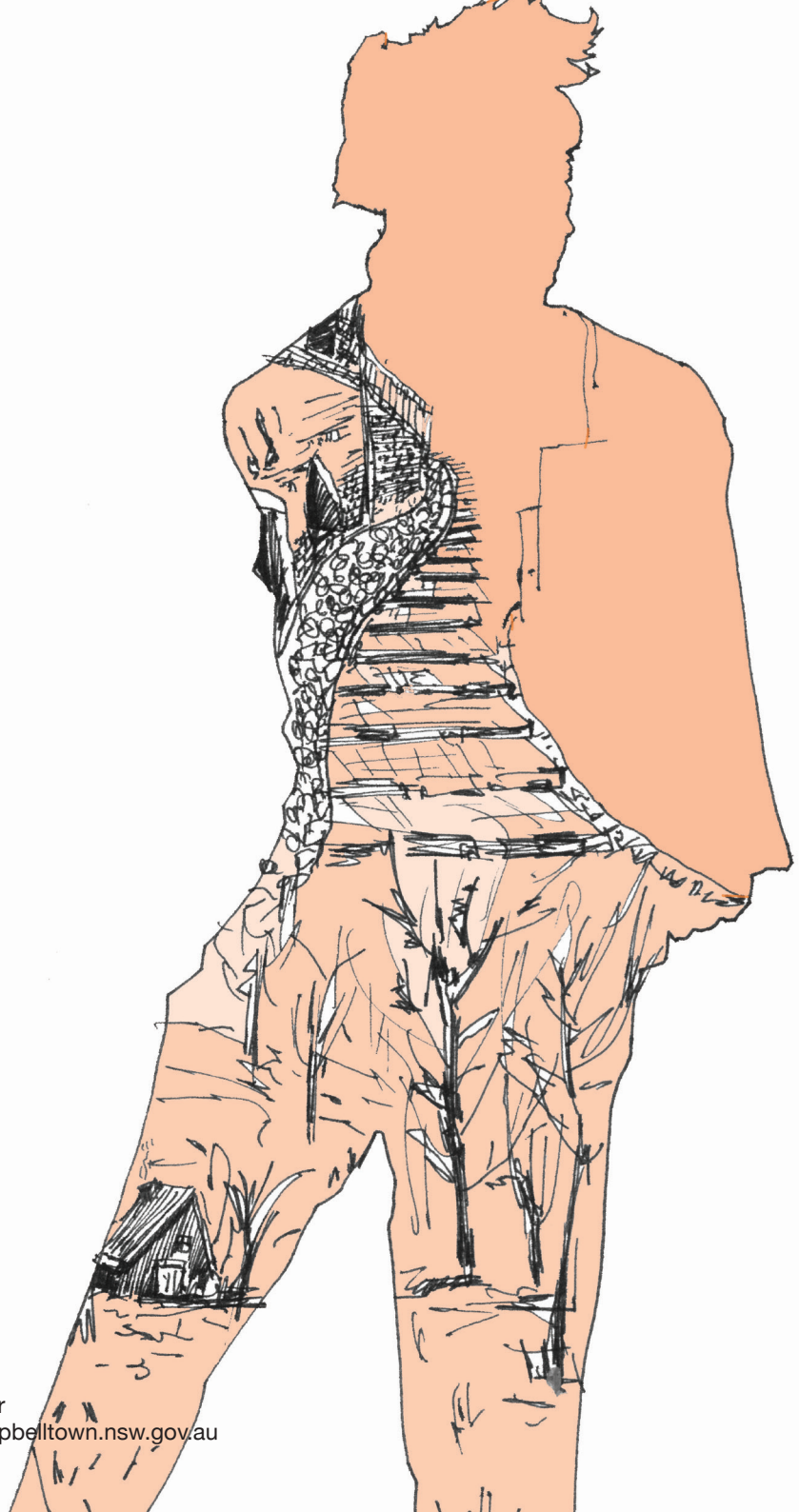




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Eleven On Paper



Contact

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Eleven On Paper

Eleven On Paper explores the work of Khaled Sabsabi, through the divergent and interconnected practices of three contributing artists and members of the *eleven* collective, Elyas Alavi, Rusaila Bazlamit, and Zeina Iaali.

Each artist shares their own work and offers creative responses to one of the works on exhibition in *Khaled Sabsabi: A Hope* at Campbelltown Arts Centre, with art-making activities for children and adults to make and explore 'on paper'. The booklet unpacks complex ideas through simple acts of making, experiencing and reflecting, working across poetry, drawing, design and mixed media.

Elyas Alavi, Rusaila Bazlamit and Zeina Iaali are members of *eleven*, a collective of contemporary Muslim Australian artists, curators and writers. *eleven* was initiated by Khaled Sabsabi in 2016 and was inspired by the dynamic and highly successful Indigenous artistic collective proppaNOW.

Children and adults, ages 8 – 108 are invited to enjoy these art-making activities to be completed in the galleries, at home or in school.

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Khaled Sabsabi

A Hope

at Campbelltown Arts Centre

Image Credit: 40, 2021. 2 channel UHD video installation, stereo sound, enamel and oil stick on acrylic glass and paper (detail). Commissioned by Campbelltown Arts Centre with support from Australia Council for the Arts. Courtesy of the Artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Khaled Sabsabi: A Hope is the second chapter of a survey exhibition held across two venues, Campbelltown Arts Centre (C-A-C) in partnership with the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW).

Spanning more than two decades, *A Hope* is an invitation to explore Khaled Sabsabi's multidisciplinary contemporary art practice and his unique perspective on the world.

Sabsabi states, *"our world is often described by a relationship between the material and the immaterial, between the physical and the spiritual. However, these binaries are not mutually exclusive."* Instead, Sabsabi is interested in collapsing these divides, where ordinary aspects of our world can offer opportunities for moments of interaction and heightened states of spirituality.

"A hope is in essence an offering of the in-between space – the slow and unseen space where changes like life can pass us by without noticing... Hope itself is a possibility, something that is familiar and common to us all and something that lives deep down in our humanity. It is the belief and intent of a better reality or circumstance. It sometimes embodies anxiety and fear and in other times joy and will. Regardless, hope requires patience and perseverance."

Born in Tripoli, Lebanon in 1965, Khaled Sabsabi migrated to Australia in 1977 to flee the Lebanese civil war. His family settled in Western Sydney and this is where he continues to live and work.

Embodiment & Disembodiment with Rusaila Bazlamit

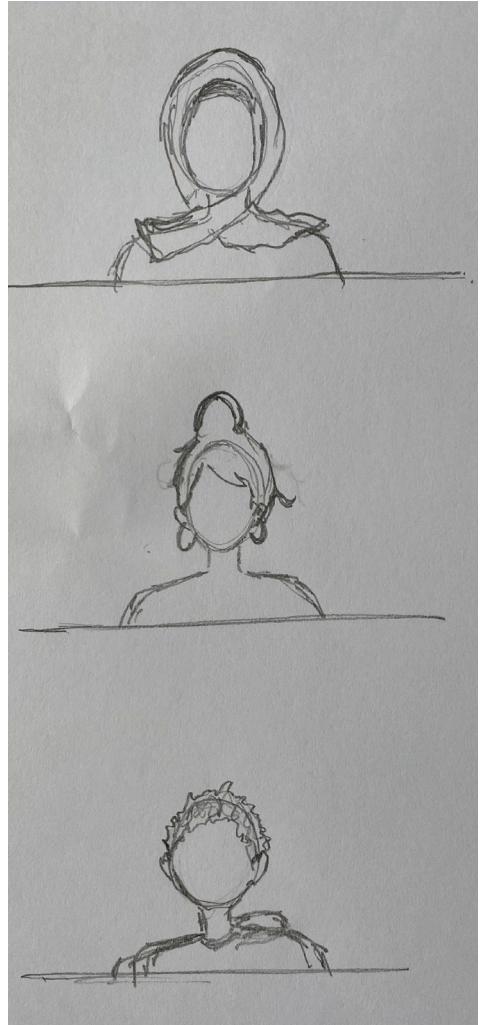


Images: Rusaila Bazlamit, *Techno me* 2009 (installation views)

Hello! About Rusaila Bazlamit

Hi, I am Rusaila Bazlamit and it is nice to meet you. I am a digital designer, visual communicator, lecturer in design and digital media and an experimental artist. Mostly, I have been teaching at tertiary level in areas of Architecture, Design, Digital and Interactive Media. I did that at leading universities in Jordan and Australia. Also, I have exhibited several digital and video art projects, interactive installations, and photography work worldwide.

Over a decade ago, I founded *Lab Tajribi | Experimental Expressions*, to represent my creative identity. My practice employs experimentation, with different tools, media, and modes of expression, as a methodological approach. Mainly, I am interested in design activism, social justice, and representations of the misrepresented. I believe that we are all born as creative beings. What differs between us is how we choose to embrace and manifest that.



Khaled Sabsabi, *Divine Victory* & Rusaila Bazlamit, *Techno Me*

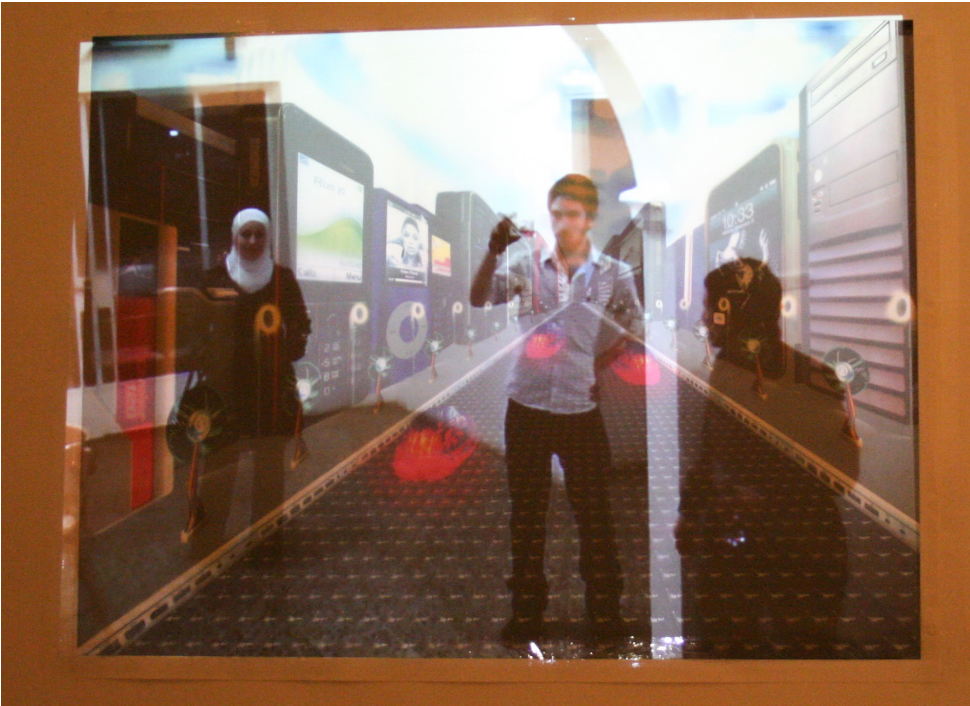
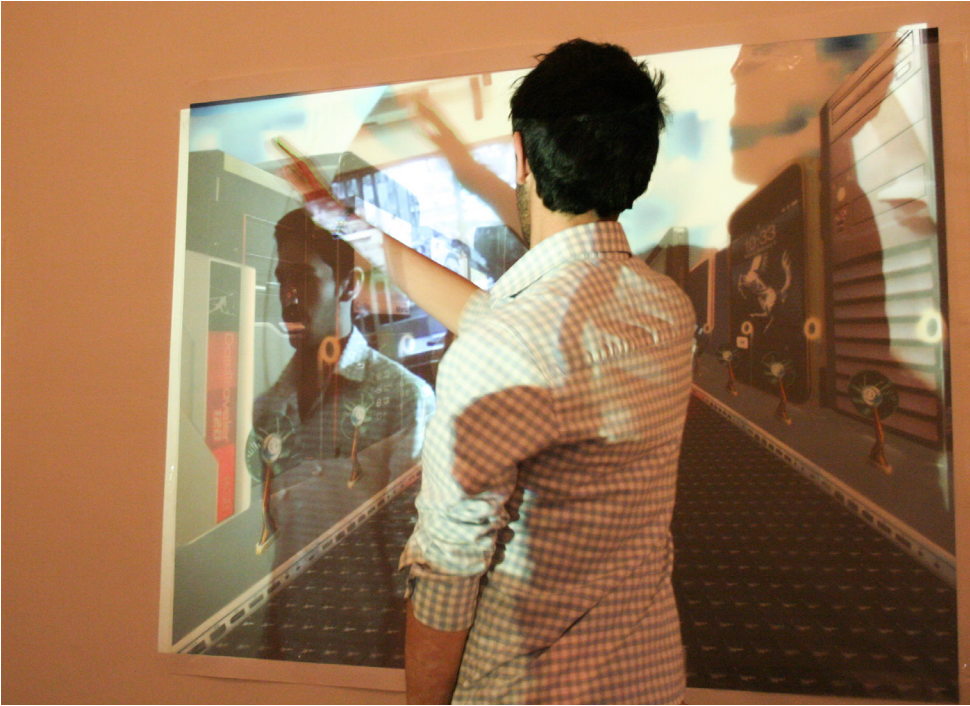


Image: Khaled Sabsabi, *Divine Victory*, 2010 (installation view).
4 channel HD video installation with audio

Where do I stand in this world around me? How do I take, reflect, or embrace the events that happen around me? These were the first questions that popped in my head when I saw Khaled's Sabsabi's work *Divine Victory*. The dark silhouette caught my attention as it sometimes blocked what was happening in the background; sometimes it emphasized it. This idea of being and not being, embodiment and disengagement, reality and shadows are all themes that resonate with the visual and conceptual themes of my work.

We are often witnessing events around us, whether these events are social, political, or environmental. Sometimes these events relate to our places of origin, but we feel a degree of removal or disengagement because we are now in a different place. But can that change if we "place" ourselves back there? Can we still be embodied in those events? Or are we silent bystanders and witnesses?

Image (right): Rusaila Bazlamit, *Techno me* 2009
(installation views)



Techno me is a series of interaction installations and video art that I created in 2009. One of the key installations is “Me/City” which is an interactive video installation that highlights the collective impact of technology on our lives and the way we navigate the built environment. The installation uses CCTV camera to capture viewers’ movement in the gallery space then project it on an imagined techno world poster. A central element of the piece is the play of being in front of the poster, seeing a delayed projection of yourself on that poster and then your own shadow as you obstruct that projection. This play is meant to entice viewers to think about embodiment and disembodiment within our new techno world.



**SCAN TO VIEW MORE ABOUT
THE EXHIBITION, *TECHNO ME***

Art-making: Embodiment & Disembodiment

In this activity we will be exploring how we place ourselves within our world and events that occur around us.

1. Use one of the templates on the insert, or choose from the four online templates.



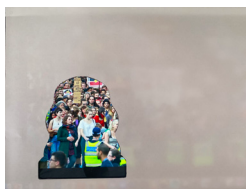
**SCAN TO VIEW
MORE TEMPLATES**

You can also make your own template, as I will explain later. The templates work in pairs so make sure you have copies of the two variations of each template. The template works best on an A5 size paper but you can print it on an A4 as well.

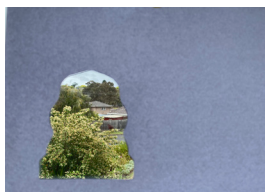
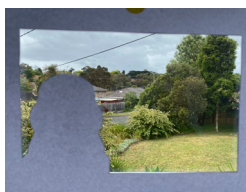
2. Cut the templates around the silhouettes as illustrated. It is best to use a cutter, but you can use scissors as well. Just be careful when you are cutting around the edges.



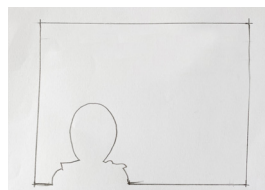
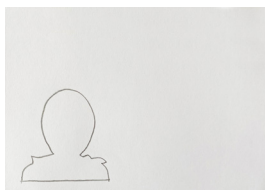
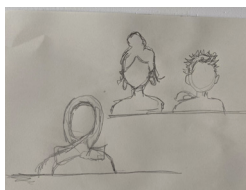
3. Look for images of events or places that are important, significant or resonate with you. You can look for those images in magazines, newspapers, printed from digital files or even as seen on your computer screen.
4. Place the cut silhouette templates you have one at a time over the selected images. Observe the differences.



5. You can also try this activity by holding the cut silhouette template against the environment around you as illustrated.



As I mentioned before, you can try making your own template. Start by drawing an outline of yourself on a piece of paper. Then trace or photocopy that drawing to make the two variations. Proceed with the activity as explained in steps 2 – 5.



Reflections

This activity is exploring the dichotomy of embodiment/disembodiment, engagement/ disengagement between us and the events of the world around us. So here is a series of prompts to help your personal reflections.

- 1. Write down why you chose the image you used. What was your initial connection with that image?

- 2. Now, place the cut silhouette templates on the image, one at a time and think about how your reaction and connection with the image changes. Do you feel more connected, or more alienated from the subject of that image?

Can you feel there is a different between the “absent” versus the “present” silhouettes? Write down your thoughts.

- 3. Share your findings and reflections with the rest of the group.

Glossary

Look up, then write or draw the meaning of these words.

Alienated

Embodiment

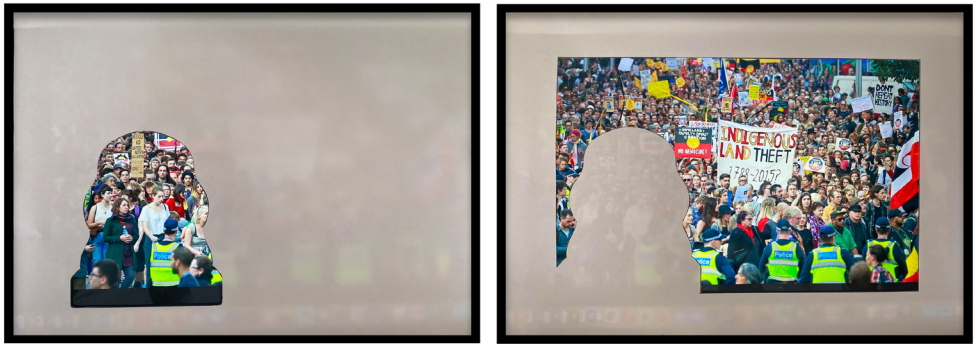
Dichotomoy

Diptych

Disembodiment

Further explorations

If you are to turn this activity into an artwork, think of various ways that you can present this to others. For example, you can work on a diptych piece where you place the two silhouettes next to each other, as illustrated.



You could present them as a series with various images placed the same way, in a similar visual language to Sabsabi's work.



Geometry & Infinity with Zeina laali

Hello! About Zeina laali

I was born in 1978 in Warrang/Sydney, where I now live and work.

I was always interested in making art from when I was in Primary school. I grew up watching my mother, who was an exceptional seamstress, measure, cut and mould fabric to create complex designs. My father was a carpenter and was very methodical in his trade and had a sharp mind for problem solving to create his designs.

My parents migrated to Australia from Lebanon in the 70's and worked hard to perfect their trades their whole lives. They influenced me more than I realised in my art practice as I started drawing and creating intricate works from a young age. I would mimic my mother's sewing skills on my Barbie, I would always draw symmetrical, repetitive patterns in my art books and I know I channel my father's meticulous craftsmanship in my intricate sculptures. I employ a range of traditional and industrial materials in my work including Perspex, wood, clay and metal. My work explores the shifting politics and representation of gender referencing my personal experiences and histories to reveal the conflicts, tensions and dualities of culture and identity.

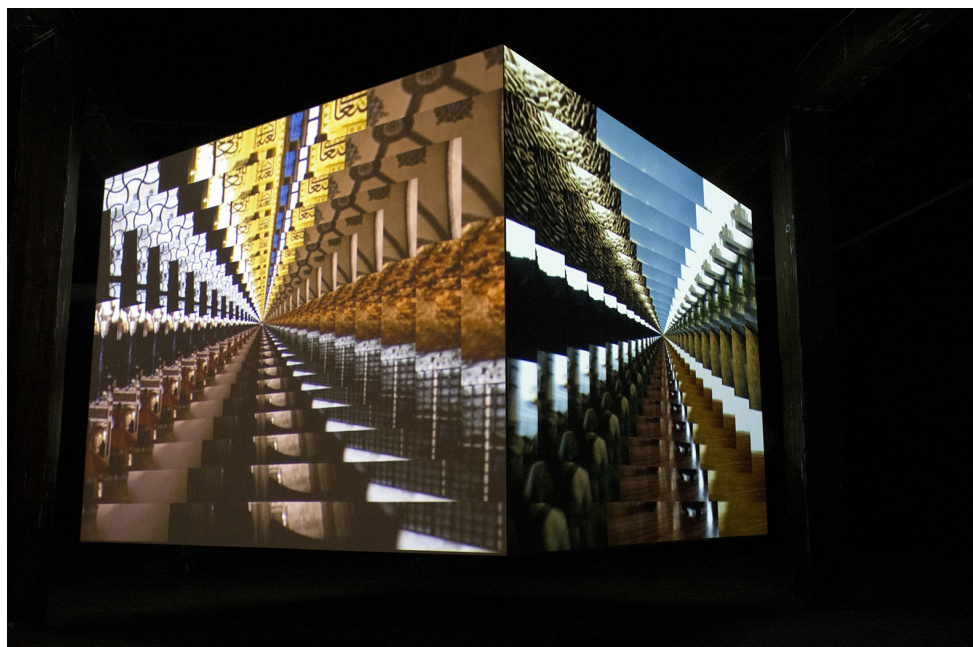


Image: Zeina laali, *Sweetly Moulded*, 2012, hand cut Perspex, 6 pieces, each 25 x 11 x 4 cm. Photo by Leon Shoots

Khaled Sabsabi, *Mush* & Zeina Iaali, *Echo Chamber*

This activity was inspired by Khaled Sabsabi's artwork *Mush*, 2012. I was interested in Sabsabi's process of digital meditation that shifts across time and space and I like this work because it explores the idea of infinite possibilities and "*the transitory yet repeating potential of existence.*" Dr Michelle Antoinette. The repetition of various geometric compositions is the innate thread of connection I am drawn to.

This is something I also explore in my work *Echo Chamber* where I utilise the modern-day utilitarian product of reflective mirror Perspex to create a series of intricately fashioned gem-like sculptures. These delicately crafted shapes and forms explore the practice of deep listening, also achieved through a type of meditative approach. I create a kaleidoscopic complexity of pattern that implies the possibility of infinite repetition and connection to a higher state. I utilise pattern as a continuum between past and present, converging sacred geometry with contemporary making to create pieces that are at once intimate and communal, inviting the viewer to look and listen through reflection.



Images: Khaled Sabsabi, *Mush*, 2012 (installation views)
 5 channel HD video sculpture installation, audio, wood, wire, aluminium and paint

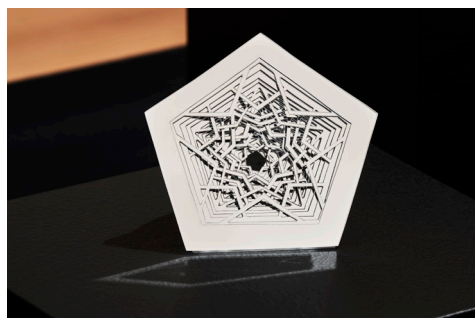


Image: Zeina laali, *Echo Chamber*, 2020–21 (installation view and details)
 Hand cut Perspex, 5 pieces of varying size: 8.5 - 9.5 x 8 - 11 x 6.5 - 8 cm
 Photo by Leon Shoots

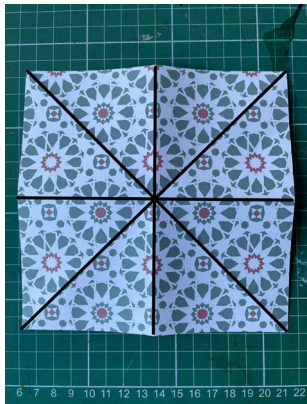
Art-making: Geometry & Infinity

Activity One: Infinite Geometric Paper Collage

This activity is aimed at ages 10 – 14 years or stage 3 students

Materials: Assorted patterned paper (squares) & scissors

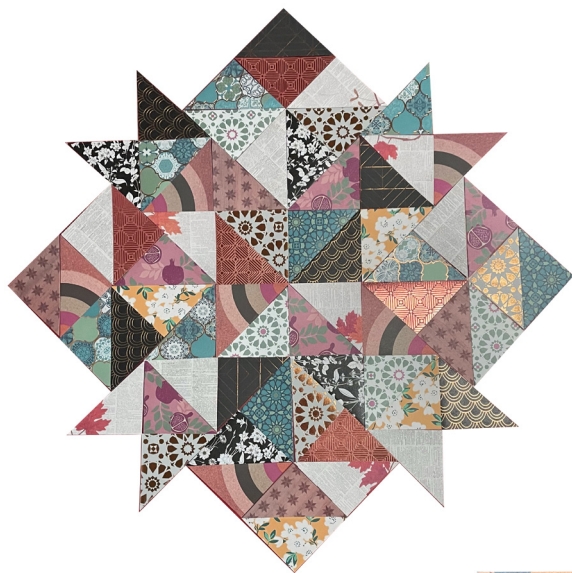
1. Fold your selection of papers into 8 parts.



2. Cut out the triangle shapes so that you have a selection of triangles in different patterns.



3. Start creating different combinations with your triangle shapes. Experiment with placement of colours and patterns. Have fun with geometric patterns! You will notice that it starts to look like quilt patchwork as you expand your patterns.



Further explorations

- Instead of using patterned paper, you can use magazines or newspapers
- Explore place and time by printing out pictures of your family, friends or places you have visited. Repeat the same process.

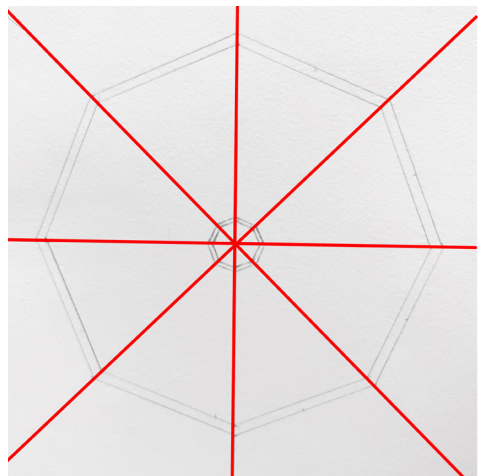
Activity Two: Mindfulness Geometric Drawing

This activity is aimed at ages 12 – 17 years or stage 4 and 5 students

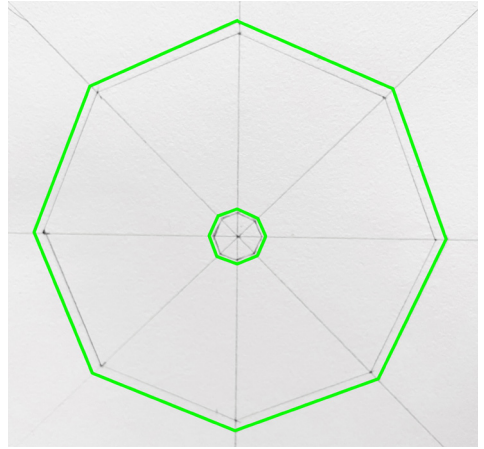
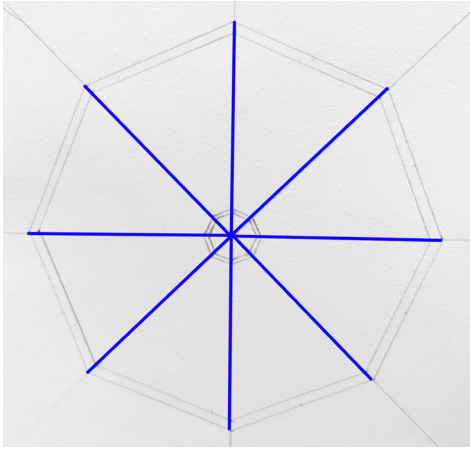
Materials: Compass, ruler, protractor, sharp pencil or pacer, A4 paper

Use these mathematical instruments to create artistic designs, formed from the infinite possibilities of geometric combinations.

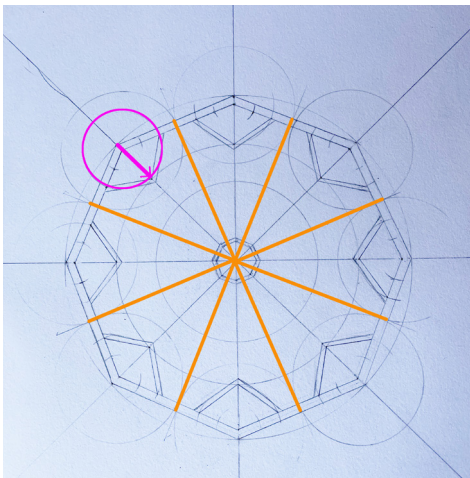
1. Divide your paper into 8 sections as seen in red .



2. Measure the same length as seen in blue on each line and place a mark at the top.



3. Connect the lines at the top, to create an 8 sided shape (green outline) – this is an Octagon. Do the same to make a small Octagon closer to the centre.
4. Measure and mark another line in the middle of the triangle shapes (orange) and then use the compass to mark out midpoints on each side of the shape (pink).



Finding the midpoint: If you draw a big circle between the end of two orange lines, the pink circle is half the size of this. It has a diameter that is the radius of the larger circle.

Don't worry if your design ends up a little different, just be consistent in your measurements.

5. Create your own designs!

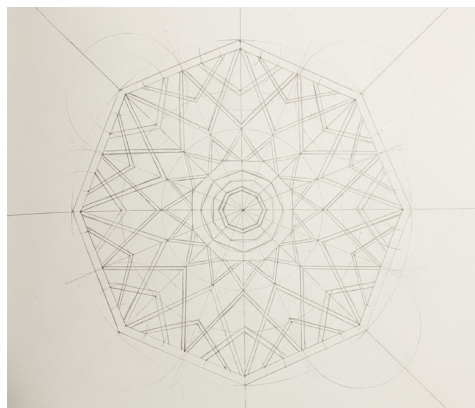
This is the foundation measurements of the design I created. It's up to you now to create an intricate geometric pattern of your choice by adding more measurements and then connecting them.

There are infinite possibilities! It's all about line work and mathematical problem solving. You will build your understanding angles and measurements with this. I created Echo Chamber like this but in a 3D format.

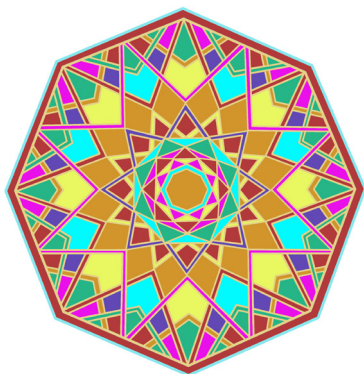
6. I've included my own outline on the next page, for you to colour and enjoy playing with colourful designs.

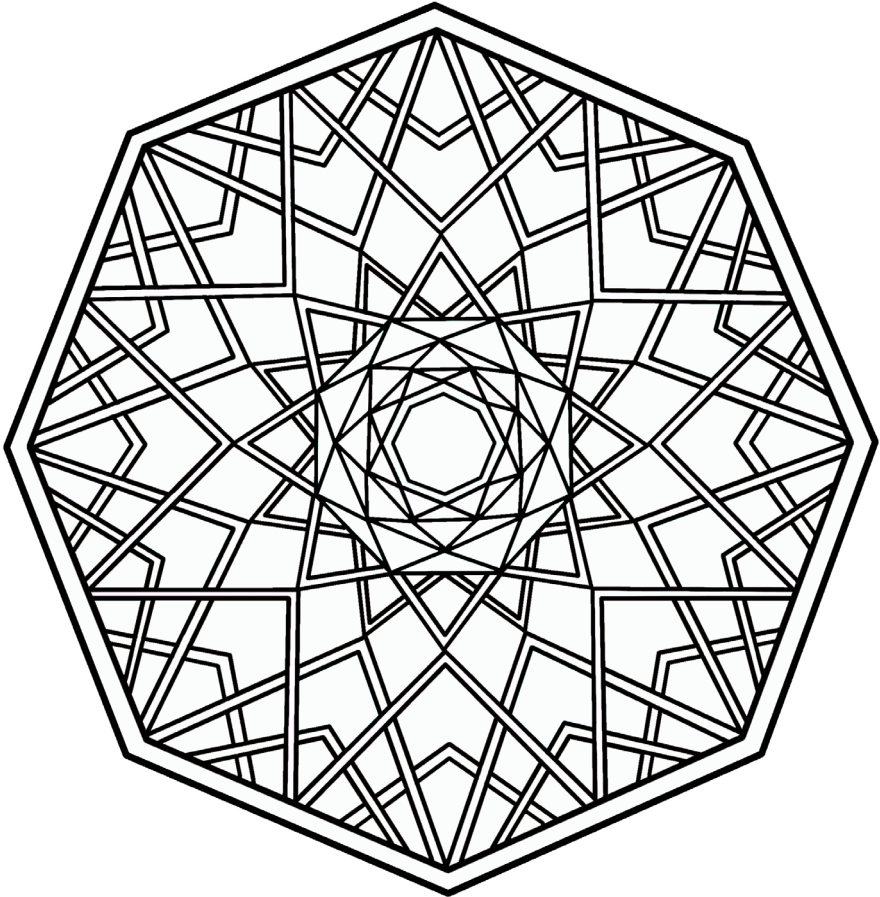
Maybe you'd like to trace your own outlines and share with a friend to colour too.

My final design in pencil



My final design in colour





Reflections

The interesting thing about using a ruler, compass and protractor, is that you start to connect ideas as you find shortcuts. The more you use them, the more geometric combinations start to form naturally. You start to contemplate combinations. Possibilities are limitless. Your hand and eye coordination improves. Your lines become steady. Your brain stops thinking about mundane things and your focus shifts to solving the drawing in front of you. Sparks of ideas and bursts of creativity start to happen. Your brain starts to see symmetry. It wants to make sense of what you are doing. You don't need to know what you are creating. Just begin and let each line guide you. Notice the positive and negative spaces and shapes within shapes. You can create depth with colour as an extension. You realise that geometry is one way you can make sense of your world as your artwork starts to communicate with you. You might get visions of what you want to make next. I always see the work in my head before I make it.

Activity Three: Digital Meditation

This activity is aimed at ages 14+ or stage 5 and 6 students, and requires a basic knowledge of Photoshop.

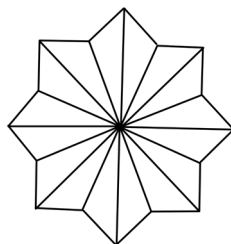
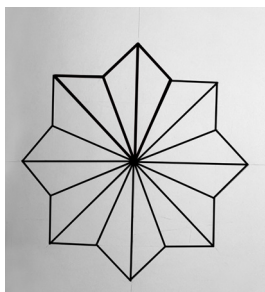
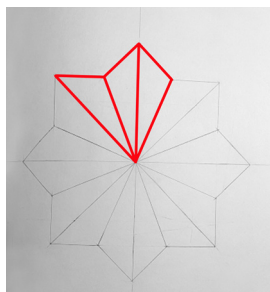
Materials: Pictures of time and place that you are connected to, and a device with Photoshop installed.

1. Choose pictures that you are connected to. I decided to use old images of the women in my family - my strong ancestors. As I was collecting the images, I started to notice threads of connections with patterns from the clothing as well as the colour. Each image triggers a memory.
2. Open a new document in Photoshop. Insert the template of the 8 pointed star provided or the square divided into 16 segments.




**SCAN HERE TO DOWNLOAD
THE TWO TEMPLATES**

3. Add a new layer (Ctrl+N) and trace the shape using the paintbrush tool. Click on one point, press and hold “Shift” and then click again on the next point to draw a straight line. Turn off the template layer when completed.



4. Copy (Ctrl+C) and paste (Ctrl+V) your first image onto a new layer. Reduce the opacity to 50% so you can see the template underneath. Press (Ctrl+T) to transform the shape. Enlarge the image if needed and move around until you are happy with the placement of a section of the image in a triangle shape.



5. Find the Polygonal Lasso Tool.  This is used to make selections by connecting straight lines. Use this tool to select the triangle shape. Make sure you are on the image layer.
6. Right click on the selection and click “select inverse”. Press delete. Repeat this process for all the triangle segments. You can also make adjustments to the image such as hue/saturation and brightness/contrast, by going to “Image” then “Adjustments”.

My final artwork



Reflections

Adding the old family photos into this geometric framework is a way for me to reveal my personal stories and family history in fragments that are part of a bigger picture - where the semantics of memories exist, intersect and radiate.

I see this framework as sacred. There is significant meaning to the 8 pointed star with two overlapping squares or 8 sided octagon shape. I used to notice these shapes in traditional Palestinian cross-stitch patterns and in intricate geometric compositions in mosques.

For Sabsabi, *'this eight-pointed star symbolises balance and counterbalance... taking its form from the superimposition of two four sided squares: four being the lowest spiritual number, eight being the highest for many cultures and religious faiths.'*

Glossary

Look up, then write or draw the meaning of these words.

Geometry

Infinity

Intimate

Communal

Semantics

Ancestors

Radiate

Individual & Universal with Elyas Alavi

Hello! About Elyas Alavi

Hello! My name is Elyas Alavi and I'm a Tarntanya (Adelaide) based artist and poet. I work across visual art and poetry, and I'm interested in issues around displacement, trauma, exile, and sexual identity.

I was born in a mountainous area of Daikundi province, Afghanistan, and I moved to Iran when I was a child because of war in my homeland. In late 2007 I moved to Australia as a refugee.

Through my work, I reflect on my Hazara background. Hazara is the name of an ethnic group originally from Afghanistan.

I have studied in visual arts and exhibited around the world, and published three poetry books – for which I've won literature prizes. I continue to enjoy running art and poetry workshops in schools and community centres in Adelaide.



Khaled Sabsabi, *A self-portrait* & Elyas Alavi, *Naan/bread*

When I saw Khaled Sabsabi's work, *A self-portrait*, I felt how simple it is and at the same time how deep and meaningful it is. It made me to think deeper about myself, my thoughts and my emotions.

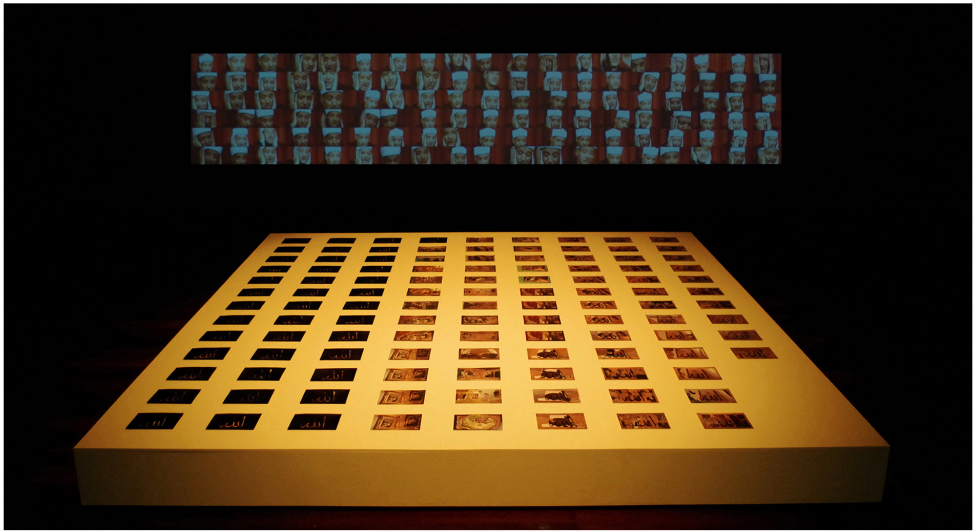


Image: Khaled Sabsabi, *A self-portrait*, 2014-2018

Many of Khaled Sabsabi's artworks, including this one, are inspired by Sufism. Sufism is a group or branch in Islam with a mystic path or system. Someone who practices Sufism is called a Sufi, a Dervish or a Fakir. You may have heard of the Whirling Dervish which is a type of ceremony practiced by some of the Sufi followers.



**SCAN TO WATCH A VIDEO OF
WHIRLING DERVISHES RITUAL**

One of the most famous Sufi poets is Jalal al-Din Rumi. His poems are about spirituality, love, inner peace and his personal life. My poetry and art are also autobiographical. This means I write about myself, my family, my people and the journeys I had physically and spiritually. Today we are going to write a short poem about ourselves! It does not have to rhyme.

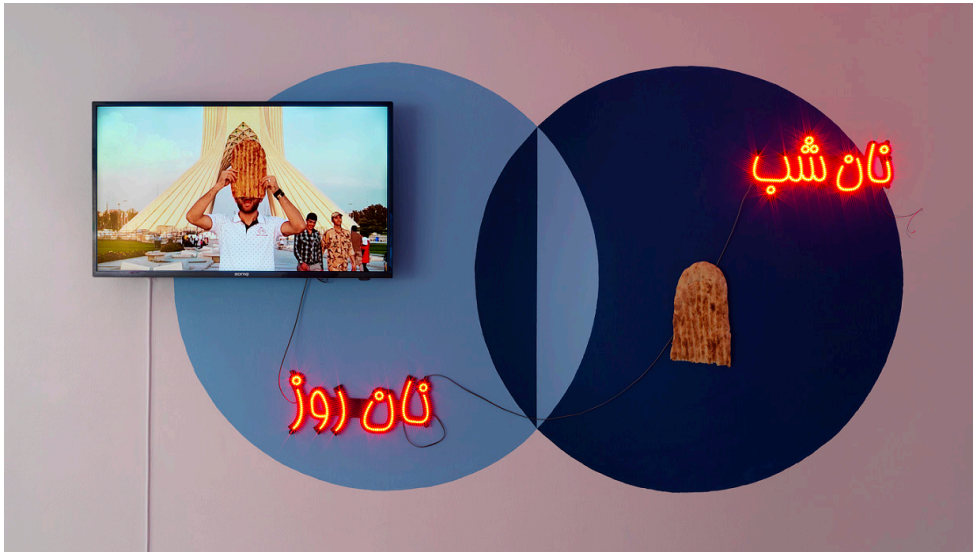


Image: Elias Alavi, *Naan/bread*, 2017, LED light, bread, acrylic on wall, video, 4:45 min.
Photo by Grant Hancock

The artwork above was inspired by a poem I wrote about bread. Here I recorded myself and people in different cities around the world holding a piece of a local bread in front of the face.



**SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT THIS ARTWORK ON
ELIAS ALAVI'S WEBSITE**

Art-making: Individual & Universal

Activity One

Write about yourself using the sentence starters on the right. You can simply introduce yourself. You may start with your name.

Note: use pencil so you can erase it if you make a mistake.



I am

I am

I hear

I see

I want

I wonder

I dream of

I feel

I try to

I hope

Who is Rumi?



Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi (1207–1273), is one of the world's greatest poets. He was born in city of Balkh, Persia in what is today Afghanistan. At age 12, Rumi and his family left his home because of war at the time. They travelled to Uzbekistan, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and finally to Konya in Turkey where he lived most of his life.

Now let's read part of one of my favourite poems by Rumi.



**SCAN TO READ AND LISTEN TO
THE FULL POEM ON VIDEO**

I am dust particles in sunlight.

I am the round sun.

I am morning mist, and the breathing of evening.

I am wind in the top of a grove, and surf on the cliff.

I am a tree with a trained parrot in its branches.

Silence, thought, and voice.

I am all orders of being, the circling galaxy,
the evolutionary intelligence, the lift,
and the falling away. What is, and what isn't.

You who know Jelaluddin, You the one in all,
say who I am. Say I am You.



Image: Drawing by Elyas Alavi, based on Rumi's shrine in Turkey

As you see in this poem, Rumi compares himself with other things, objects, animals, natural elements and the universe. In these kind of poems, Rumi uses “metaphor” and “simile” which are both figures of speech used to make a comparison between two things that are not alike.

Simile

When you compare two different things to show a similarity by using the words ‘like’ or ‘as’.

For example: *Her eyes are kind and beautiful like doves.*

More examples:

You are as pale as a white sheet.

My hands are as cold as the Arctic.



Metaphor

Metaphors make the comparison by saying that something is something else. Unlike a simile, metaphors do not use the words 'like' or 'as'.

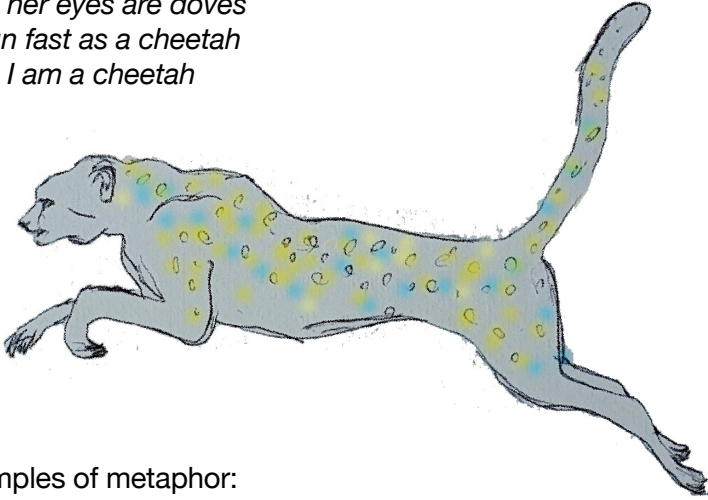
For example:

Simile: *Her eyes are kind and beautiful like doves.*

Metaphor: *her eyes are doves*

Simile: *I run fast as a cheetah*

Metaphor: *I am a cheetah*



More examples of metaphor:

I'm a wild horse climbing high mountains.

He is a night owl.

The wind was a howling wolf.

The snow is a white blanket.

My brain is a computer.

I am so excited...

My pulse is a race car.



Activity Two

Continue your autobiographical poem. Write at least 10 sentences using simile and metaphor. You can compare yourself and your characteristics and qualities to other things such as animals, natural elements, objects and more.

Be creative! Think deeper to come up with exciting and unique sentences about yourself.

If you feel stuck, read Rumi's poem again for inspiration. Start with short sentences and then continue with longer ones. If you know other languages, make sure to write a few lines in other languages. Some of your sentence could start with "I am".

I am strong as _____

I am happy as _____

I am loud like _____

I am funny like _____

Today I am feeling as _____

My _____

Activity Three

Now your poem is almost ready!

Read your lines and make changes if needed.

To make it more interesting, cut out 10 of your favourite sentences from activity 1 and 2, and rearrange as a collage.

Compare your final poem with your friend/s and recite it to one another.



Here are some tips on poetry reciting:

- Present yourself well and be attentive. Use good posture. Be confident and make a direct connection with the audience.
- Be sure you know the meaning of every word and line in your poem.
- Think about how you should interpret the tone and voice of your poem.
- Relax and be natural.
- Enjoy your poem!







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Located on Dharawal land, Campbelltown Arts Centre is proudly owned by the people of Campbelltown. A cultural facility of Campbelltown City Council, assisted by the NSW Government through Create NSW and by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. Campbelltown Arts Centre receives support from the Crown Resorts Foundation and the Packer Family Foundation and the Neilson Foundation. This project is supported by the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund and developed in partnership with the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Image Credit: *40*, 2021. 2 channel UHD video installation, stereo sound, enamel and oil stick on acrylic glass and paper (detail). Commissioned by Campbelltown Arts Centre with support from Australia Council for the Arts. Courtesy of the Artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.