

VANESSA GEMAYEL



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OTHER WORLDS...

A way to world

Music is the emotional life of most people

Leonard Cohen

Some observations on painting:

The sun can be in darkness, the sky can be dark and have a sun.

The sky can be split.

There can be a moon with striking, striking illuminations.

The way is a direction in space.

The paintings are a continuing.

Colours make sounds.

There is always a building to retreat into.

A white road is thick with paint — something is undone, undoing underneath, thick, dried and re-painted. An old, re-painted road.

The colours are shining, metallic.

The illumination of sound hitting land

Sound has been described as the most abstract and yet the most direct artistic expression. Ask anyone about their relationship with music, with sound, and the response will likely be direct, felt. More than this, sound is located, locates. When a sound is heard, it is possible to feel where it comes from, to locate it in relation to ourselves, near or far, up or down. In electronic music, the importance of this phenomenon has been recently discussed, Petri Toivianen arguing in the *Psychology of Electronic Music* that ‘humans have a remarkable ability to localize sound sources accurately and rapidly...and further that in relation to electronic music, localization has played an important role’.¹ When listening to electronic music the spatial experience of location, of depth, is encouraged, amplified. There are new architectures to be felt in the abstracted and repetitive structures of the beat.

The paintings of Vanessa Gemayel are visual representations of her auditory world, electronic music that is emotionally resonant, full of distortion and familiarity. Her paintings are a direct and unmediated ekphrasis, a movement or description between one artistic form and another, auditory to visual, sound to painting. While clearly informed by sound, Gemayel’s paintings equally exist on their own visual terms, transforming their source and making of it a visual sense, relatable for a world of tangible things. In this world, colour, shape and line, distance and depth, are delineated by the boundaries and possibilities of the visual world. Yet, Gemayel retains a connection to the freedom of sound, its spatial wandering.

¹Petri Toivianen (2007). *The Psychology of Electronic Music*, in ‘The Cambridge Companion to Electronic Music’ Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, p.121.

A first encounter with Gemayel's paintings joins visual and auditory senses. Her colours make noise, screech, express an overwhelming, shining brightness, contrast, that is heard, felt, in the body as well as viewed, seen on the canvas. In this moment of ekphrastic disturbance the line between viewer and painting dissolves, there is no intermediary, no interpreter. Enter directly from here and the painting begins to understand you.

See it that way.

Gemayel's paintings are a journey, a way to world.

Spatial organization is the strongest marker of Gemayel's paintings. She is holding to the order of space, perspective. We are in place, the sun is in a sky, the ground is moving away from us. Buildings rise. The order of perspective she employs might shift but never entirely disappears.

As I look I am enjoying a feeling, an unfolding experience. There is a transformation. This is closer to experiencing music than painting, the paintings are unfolding in real time. They are time.

Paintings are not often experienced in time.

Try it like that.

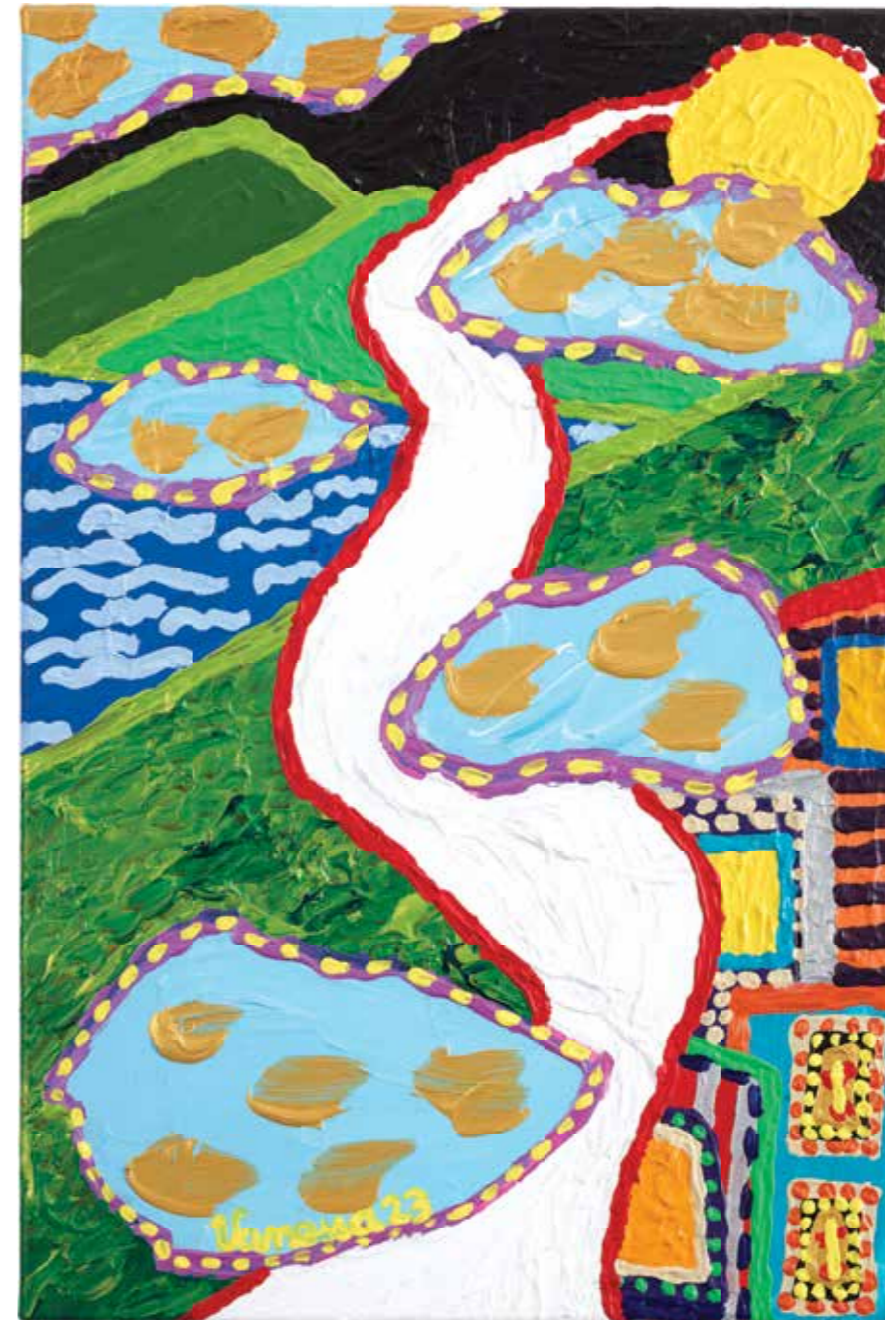
In each painting there is a road, a road stretching away from the foreground, reaching to sky, moon, sun. The road picks the viewer up from the foreground and takes them in, up, away. This is the most direct description of a journey, the road laid out. Of course this is an entry into a new world, the road to the moon, around the sun.

The work of Gemayel holds aloneness and togetherness in relation, has the ability to be at once alone and together in succession, still separate but relatable. Each painting might be seen on its own, perhaps in a darkened room, through a small pinhole, a shrouded box opening a tiny eye to a glimpse of cloud, silver, a screech of yellow, lamplight, sun, moon, sea. At the same time, the paintings could be arranged in a line, a singing succession of this world. Seen together in this way they become the small differences, gaps between one experience and another, and in this way this pile, this road, of paintings, might be seen as the leaves of books, an accretion of moments becoming lives.

Solitude is often seen as a problem, dangerous, perhaps sad. And yet, in the paintings of Gemayel there is a deep joy in streets emptied of human and animal life. What else can be felt with the bright lights of the moon, the sun, the red outline of a road stretching back, the silver tracing clouds.

There is joy and life in solitude and solitude in relation to others. Enter with Gemayel, and you walk the streets alone and in company, feeling both the certainty of solitude and the continuities of the world. And if you will allow it, you will look directly and see the shining, shining illumination of sound hitting land.

Amy Todman
Beirut. June, 2023



A white carpet on the world | Acrylic on canvas | 60x40 cm | 2023

D'autres mondes...

Mes immeubles reflètent une société, le temps qui passe, un lendemain qui prend forme.

Ces immeubles sont mes personnages, un aplat de fragilité dans une nature qui se veut apaisante malgré l'aspect fragile qu'elle commence elle-même à revêtir.

Alors, j'imagine d'autres mondes, des mondes futurs peut-être, d'un ici qui sera autre, ou de planètes différentes avec, toujours, une teinte de l'Orient dans le cœur.

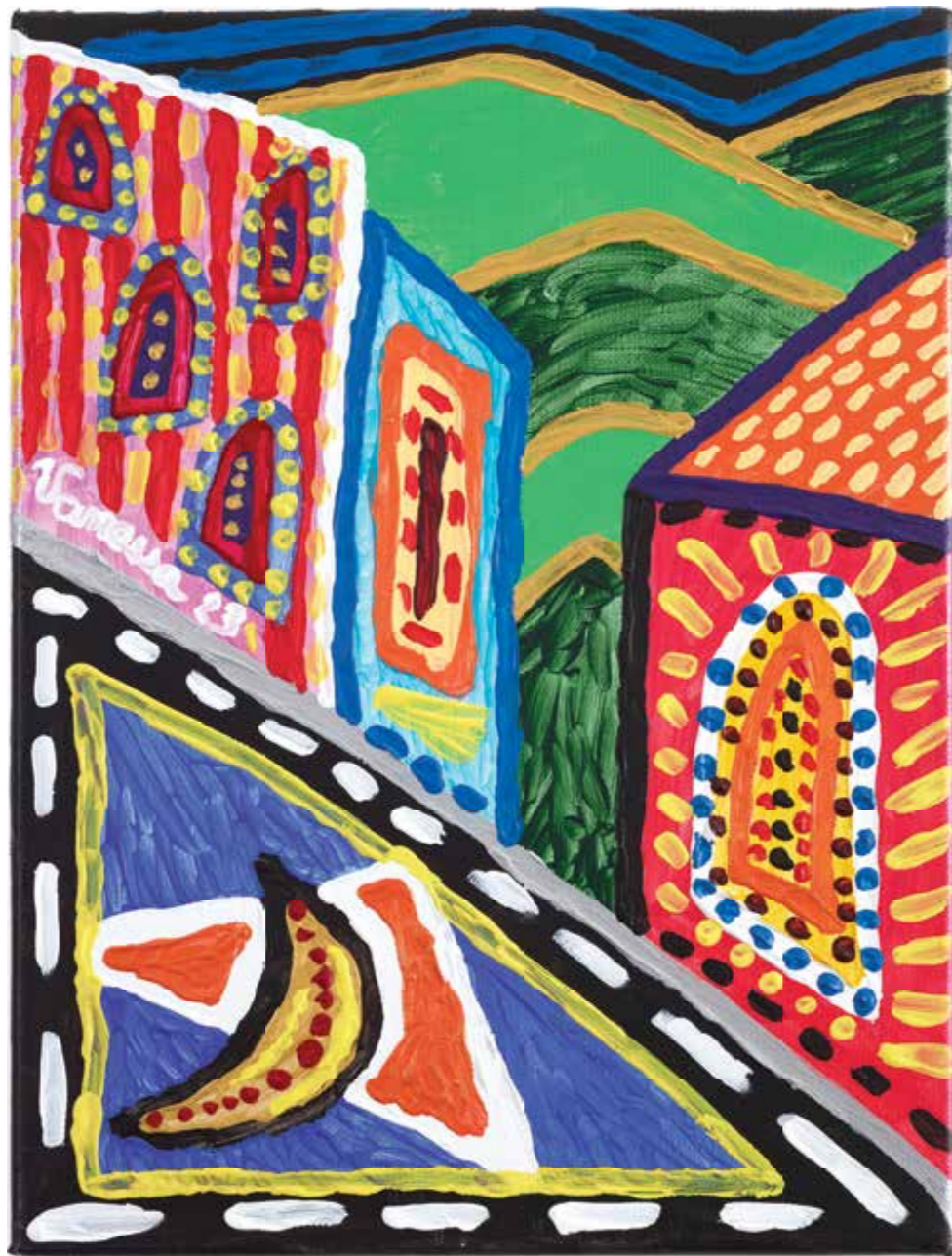
Ces immeubles sont aussi l'expression d'un dialogue en cours, entre humains et galaxies, ils sont rêves, réalités, avec une note d'espoir qui refuse de tourner le dos.

Vanessa Gemayel

Other Worlds...



Red Moon | Acrylic on canvas | 40x30 cm | 2023



Moon | Acrylic on canvas | 30x40 cm | 2023



Almost | Acrylic on canvas | 40x30 cm | 2023



Yin Yang | Acrylic on canvas | 40x30 cm | 2023



Life in the Sky | Acrylic on canvas | 40x30 cm | 2023



Nights Interlude | Acrylic on canvas | 30x40 cm | 2023



Magritte | Acrylic on canvas | 30x40 cm | 2023



A Cloudy Day | Acrylic on canvas | 30x40 cm | 2023



Highway | Acrylic on canvas | 30x40 cm | 2023



I have a Dream | Acrylic on canvas | 30x40 cm | 2023



Cheri Cheri Lady | Acrylic on canvas | 30x40 cm | 2023



Somewhere in Winter | Acrylic on canvas | 30x40 cm | 2023



Civilization | Acrylic on canvas | 40x40 cm | 2023



Autumn and the Moon | Acrylic on canvas | 30x60 cm | 2023



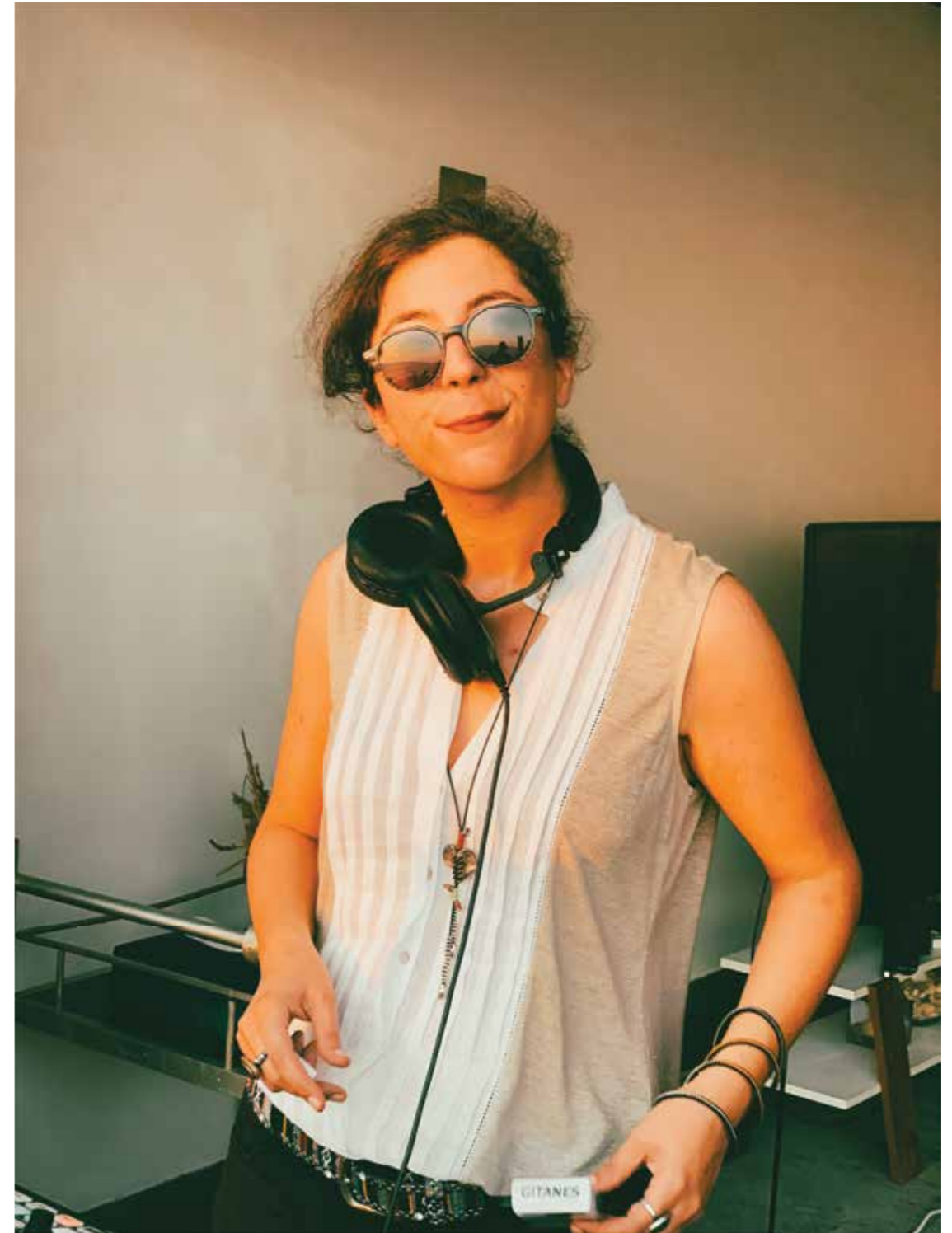
Out of Space | Acrylic on canvas | 40x60 cm | 2023

About the Artist

Vanessa Gemayel is a Lebanese American painter, writer, and DJ. She was born in Paris in 1985 and is currently based in Beirut.

Gemayel has 6 solo exhibitions to her name, her first taking place at Artlab in 2013. She has participated in numerous group shows. One of her works appears in the J. D. Jacquemond collection at the Anatole Jakovsky Museum in Nice. Her work appeared at the Outsider Art Biennale in Lyon, 2011's New Talents, International Art Exhibition by Artists of the Lebanese Diaspora. In 2009 Gemayel's art was displayed at the city/country that was often the subject of her work; Lebanon's Salon d'Automne. In 2021, her most recent piece of writing "*La chantuse bleue*" was published in the book "*Le Cirque*", featured alongside the drawings of Dominique le Tricoteur.

Gemayel paints with direct intensity. Her work captures Lebanon's urban landscape and all the different textures and colours which inhabit it. Art historian Jean-Dominique Jacquemond has described Gemayel's colouration as 'luminous'. The artist paints in the composite perspective; compiling several 1st person perspectives onto one image and tackling the simultaneous flatness and depth of the medium of painting. She is currently represented by Agial Art Gallery.



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Design by Carol Chehab
Photography by Mansour Dib
Printed by Salim Dabbous Printing Co. sarl
May, 2023
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