

BOYNES ARTIST AWARD



[Home](#) [Prizes](#) [Jury](#) [Partnerships](#) [Articles](#)
[Monthly Art Award](#) [Previous Winners](#) [About](#)

[SUBMIT](#)

ARTIST ANNA ZUSMAN

Sep 23 • Written By Chantal Boynes

Congratulations to Anna Zusman for earning her place as a finalist in the 6th Edition!

WHO ARE YOU?

Who am I? That's a big question. As far as biographical information - I was born in the former Soviet Union and moved to the US with my family when I was 12. For as long as I can remember, art has been a way for me to understand the world and to process new information. I decided that I wanted to be an artist pretty early on because I could not envision my life without making art.

I got my BFA in Illustration from Rhode Island School of Design hoping to become an illustrator since I loved reading and drawing. Later I realized that I was more interested in expressing my own thoughts and ideas rather than illustrating somebody else's, so eventually I got an MFA in Painting and Drawing from San Francisco Art Institute.

I have lived in New York City, Providence and San Francisco before settling in southern Arkansas five years ago. Having lived in a variety of different places, I see the world with an eye of an outsider, noticing strange things in what other people find familiar. My natural way of thinking is metaphorical, and I often use symbolism and surreal elements in order to comment on human condition and society.

I always loved looking at art and I have a huge collection of art books. Lately, I have been looking a lot at the work of Albrecht Dürer, Franklin Booth and Bernie Wrightson, and I think that their influence is present in my artwork.



"Floating Away" (Finalist Work)

Digital Drawing

By Anna Zusman

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO UTILIZE DIGITAL DRAWING AS A MEDIUM?

While my artwork is firmly rooted in traditional drawing, I am always excited to learn new techniques and materials. I got an iPad Pro in 2018 and most of my drawing these days is done digitally. I am a perfectionist and working digitally allows for constant revisions and improvements.



"Alice"

Digital Drawing

By Anna Zusman

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ARTWORK?

My artwork is a natural result of my life. As I mentioned earlier, it is a way for me to process information.



“Fair”

Digital Drawing

By Anna Zusman

CAN YOU DISCUSS THE INSPIRATION AND THOUGHT PROCESS BEHIND "FLOATING AWAY"?

“Floating Away” is part of a series of surrealist drawings based on the pandemic. The subject matter of the drawings reflected my changing preoccupations as the situation evolved. My early drawings focused on the sense of impending catastrophe and loneliness. Later drawings in the series such as “Floating Away” focus more on the idea of escape, getting away from the past. The character is depicted in the nude because when one leaves their past, one has to start completely anew with nothing.



"Reflection"

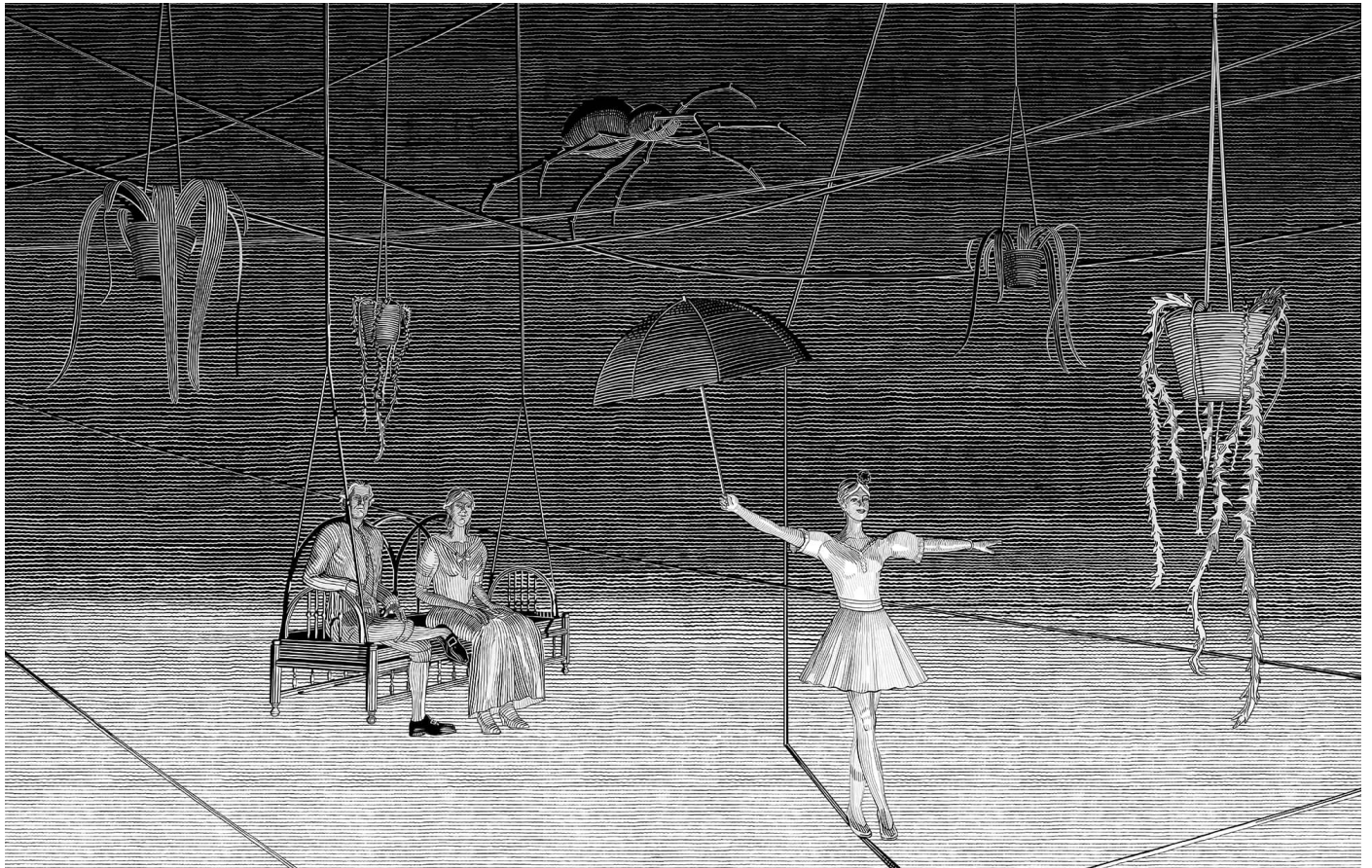
Digital Drawing

By Anna Zusman

CAN YOU WALK US THROUGH THE TECHNICAL STEPS OF CREATING "FLOATING AWAY"?

Once I have an idea for a drawing, I make several quick sketches to capture it visually. After that I create a 3D model in Maya. Working in 3D feels very natural to me since it allows me to imagine how something would look from every angle and truly makes me feel that it is real. Afterwards I choose the best angle from the 3D model and render it as a 2D image which I use as a rough draft. Lastly I make the final drawing. I have been asked before why do I bother to make a drawing when a 3D model has all the main ingredients of the final piece. My answer is that

line work is a language of its own that adds a layer of meaning to an artwork. Lines can be angry, happy or uncertain, imbuing the piece with feeling. Lines also follow the form of the objects making them feel more real and believable. In “Floating Away” I used line quality to capture the underwater feel of the space and a sense of floating.



“Spider World”

Digital Drawing

By Anna Zusman

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO COMMUNICATE TO AN AUDIENCE WITH YOUR WORK?

I would like my drawing to express that it is always possible to leave the past behind and start anew.



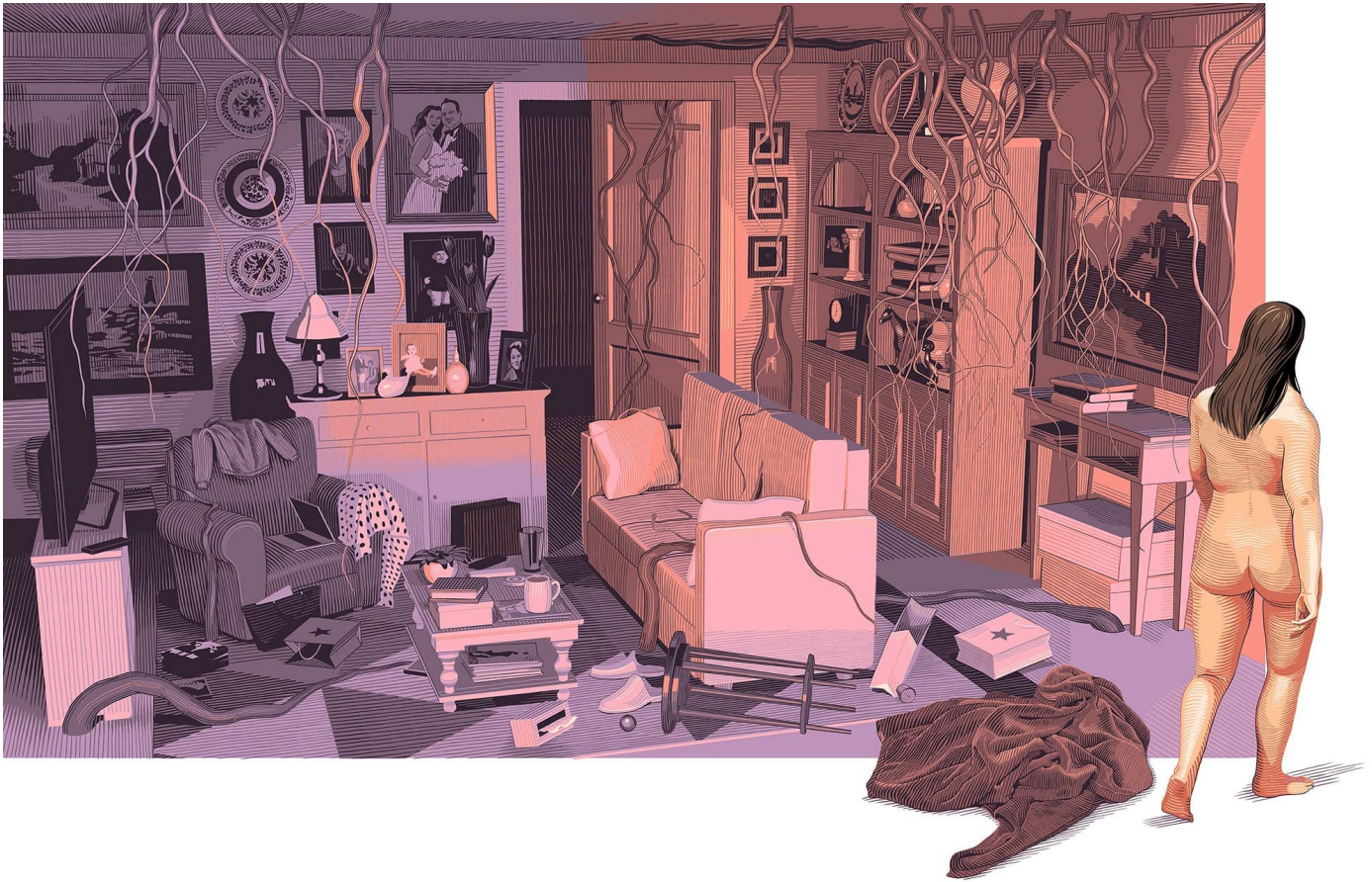
“Those Who Stay”

Digital Drawing

By Anna Zusman

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR BIGGEST LEARNING EXPERIENCE DURING THE PROCESS OF CREATING YOUR WORK?

My biggest challenge working on “Floating Away” was figuring out how to use line to convey motion and space in an effective manner. Working digitally allowed me to try several different approaches until I found the one that worked.



"Time To Go"

Digital Drawing

By Anna Zusman

CAN YOU DISCUSS YOUR BIGGEST SUCCESS SINCE STARTING YOUR ARTISTIC JOURNEY?

My biggest success is achieving a sustainable lifestyle that allows me to make art every day. Over the last five years I have been teaching at Southern Arkansas University and this year I have been promoted to Associate Professor. I love sharing my passion for art with my students and I love having time to create my own artwork. I can't imagine a bigger success than being able to do what I love.



“Untitled”

Digital Drawing

By Anna Zusman

WHAT PROJECTS ARE YOU WORKING ON CURRENTLY? CAN YOU DISCUSS THEM?

I am currently working on a new piece tentatively titled “Impression”. I have created a 3D model already and am working on a finished digital drawing. Lately I have been contemplating what is left after we are gone and what impression do we leave. This led to thinking about the most basic kind of impression that meteorites leave on earth even after the meteorite itself has mostly evaporated. The scene that I am working on has several people transfixed by a large crater in a shape of a woman who is no longer there.



“Waiting”

Digital Drawing

By Anna Zusman

WHAT IS YOUR DREAM PROJECT OR PIECE YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?

Over the last couple of years my drawings have been getting bigger both physically and conceptually. I have started experimenting with printing my drawings on different materials including aluminum and cloth. In the future, I would like to create works that are more immersive, possibly with 3-Dimensional elements, animations and augmented reality features.



"Floating Away [Draft]"

3D Model

By Anna Zusman

LASTLY, I LIKE TO ASK EVERYONE WHAT ADVICE THEY WOULD GIVE TO THEIR FELLOW ARTISTS/PHOTOGRAPHERS, WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE?

The main advice that I have is not to give up. Keep making art and keep applying to shows. When I started applying to shows after grad school, I would get into one out of ten shows. These days my ratio is significantly better, but I still get more rejections than acceptances. I think that the biggest challenge for any artist is to keep producing art and continue putting yourself out into the world despite the rejections.

Also, buy work of other creatives. Go to MFA shows and local art shows and buy work that stands out to you. Let's start building a culture where art is a natural part of our environments. If we as creatives don't do that, how can we expect it of the general population?

To view more of Anna Zusman's work

[Website](#)