

IN CONVERSATION
WITH

KURT PIO

BY
SMITHA SADANANDAN

Tell me about your earliest art memories

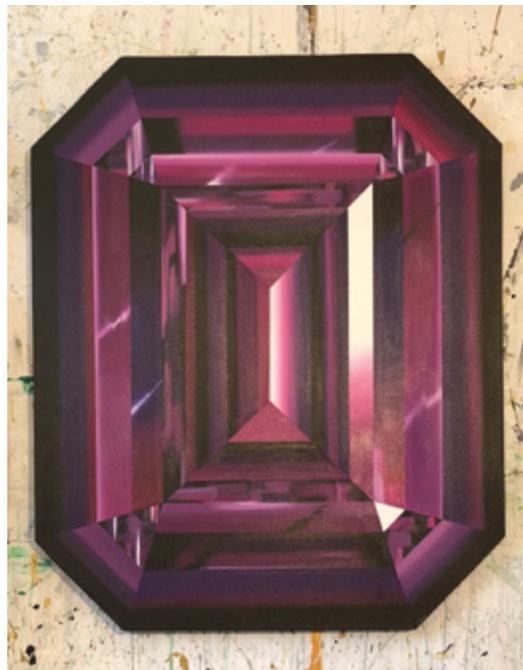
My earliest memories of art were my mom bringing me lots of off cuts of colourful paper and little pairs of scissors and crayons, and I would often just sit and cut out and draw on these pieces of paper for many hours alone in my bedroom.

When did you realise you had an inclination for art and what did you do since?

I always find with this profession that you don't choose "it," but "it" chooses you and as much as I tried go down different routes and careers, this is the one that I had to say yes to for my own personal wellbeing.

What do you love most about painting?

The escape from reality that it brings.



You are an interior designer and self-taught artist – how has design influenced your perspective in art and your own work?

I often use my home to kind of express myself and do different visuals in my home, and often use my artwork as part of the visual of the interior and

therefore has deeply influenced my work as well as my home.

How would you describe your style – and what is your key medium?

My style varies, as I get bored very quickly and need to change it up. It could be experimental, pop art. My key medium is often acrylic on canvas. I am impatient and, therefore, acrylic dries quicker than oil.



What prompted you to explore diamond and gem artworks? And how long have you been painting such pieces?

I moved to Amsterdam and completed a three-month Artist in Residency program with Open Ateliers Zuidooit in 2011. Here, I started drawing geometric patterns and with the combination of always feeling the need to represent parts of my country's resources, the gem artworks were birthed. We have large diamond deposits that are mined in South Africa and these are only a few of the things that I was drawn to and excited by.

Which would be your favourite gemmy artwork, if you had to pick just one?

It would be the Green Emerald.

What has been the highlight of your artistic career?

My first solo exhibition in America was a sell out and within the first two hours of opening – the gallery

owner came to me and whispered in my ear that we had sold out.

You've done an array of artwork, including murals, botanical paintings (aloe), magazine cover art, black and white abstracts. How do you choose your subjects?

I'm drawn to certain subjects and I kind of make mental notes of these along the way – and often if I get a few mental notes that are all the same, then I am drawn to actually produce something within that subject.

What's the newest you've been working on?

The latest body of works have been cigarettes.