

ANTONIA PIA GORDON

THE FREEDOM TO FLY





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PROLOGUE

BIRDS

THE FREEDOM TO FLY

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With her Birds Freedom to Fly series of artistic photographs, Antonia Pia Gordon has not only captured the brief moment of a flock of birds homing in on a swarm of fish set against the magnificent horizon viewed from above the beach of Ras Al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates, and put these into the most modern context. With this series of photos Antonia Pia Gordon has created the logical progression on her multi-media art series Colorizons with a further advancement of bold and expressive colours and a further occupation with the horizon and has integrated a juxtaposition of nature and technology that very much like her art series Past Present Future focuses on technology's effect on mankind and nature, with a bold combination of colour reminiscent of her art series Money & Love. And yet the Birds Freedom to Fly series indeed surpasses this. With a nod to Percy Bysshe Shelley's Ode to a Skylark where birds wing over the blue deep in profuse strains of unpremeditated art, she has captured the epitome of freedom - mankind's yearning in his strives after effortless flight. Alluring to Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost the cormorant calls on us to savour the present breath, be peaceful and become heirs of eternity – the search for infinity and peace being a central theme of much of Gordon's art. The subject of her photos is a witness to Gordon's signature duality of theme with nature combined with technology, black interacting with bold red, historic times meeting modern day. It is not coincidental that this is a flock of cormorants: Cormorants - an ancient group of birds, whose ancestors reach back as far as the era of the dinosaurs and that are still very effective

flyers and fishers today, are set in the scenery of Dubai, a most modern metropole, with a history as a home for mankind of more than 7000 years. And yet both are very active today. Cormorants that are featured in heraldry and medieval ornamentation, known with their wing-drying pose as a symbol of the Christian cross are also known as sea ravens. Ravens are a symbol in Islam to take the right path. Thus the choice of theme is typical for Gordon's art that spans different religions and cultures whilst posing intrinsic universal questions. Characteristic of Gordon's quest to catapult tradition into the modern, in the series the birds go on to soar with aeroplanes and helicopters. A precious representative of the past, the endangered species of Socotra cormorant, whose survival is supported by Dubai's nature reserves, flies with the dynamic and ever advancing attributes of a shining metropole and modern day buzzing times. The sky is the limit. Or is it?

With this Birds Freedom to Fly series of 27 art photos, Gordon invites her viewers to soar on the horizon in the beautiful abundance in the Strait of Hormoz and take a bird's eye view of how tradition meets the modern and where we originate from and where we are going, how technology is affecting our world, whilst posing the intrinsic question of whether nature follows mankind or mankind nature and underlining mankind's conquering of the sea and sky in a mutual search for abundance.















ARTIST STATEMENT

Birds Freedom to Fly

Antonia Pia Gordon

“By art the mind is given wings”

Watching the coastline from above Ras Al Khaimah beach in Dubai and looking on into the horizon, I spotted a gregarious flock of Socotra cormorants homing in on the fish in the Strait of Hormoz. A brief moment in which it was key to capture this endangered species on film and in which the themes that have occupied me all of my life seemed to come together for an instant. The birds from heaven or near it moved with grace and speed and the pure ecstasy of the freedom of flight, where no obvious boundaries are set. The flocks of birds seemed to be dancing where the sky meets the sea and the horizon invites us to breathe its infinity, leaving white aerial lines on the water surface where they had been. Changing from one element to the other, air and water were two playing grounds for the numerous birds. Birds that have the unique gift of being able to walk the earth and soar the skies magically drew me into their world, where they rose and plummeted painting vortices with their wings. And within the brief space of fifteen minutes, they took flight and disappeared, reminding me of the series of moments that have moulded me and filed themselves in the archives of my soul.

When I viewed the photographs for the first time, I was reminded that the bird in its fascinating flight now lives side by side with man’s machines that have conquered its world. The bird the symbol of unpremeditated freedom and the machine that functions according to a set of principles laid down by man cohabit the skies. Similar to my paintings the world of the birds has changed over the centuries with layer by layer of man’s inventiveness. Layer by layer I added our symbols of freedom and velocity to the pictures, choosing red to symbolize the irresistible never-ending search for freedom. The aeroplanes and helicopters first flew above the birds and then integrated themselves into the bird’s world just as the bird has integrated itself over the centuries into our world. The ancient and the modern live together in pure seemingly contradictional harmony , reminding me that the alleged contradictions of twists and turns and heights and depths are the map of our souls. Does nature follow man or man nature and with these thoughts I was reminded that with art the mind is given wings.



To a Skylark

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflow'd.



What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace-tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its æreal hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflower'd,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awaken'd flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.



Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Match'd with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest: but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.



Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.



















A SPIRIT ON THE MOVE

Antonia Pia Gordon was born in Hamburg, Germany and lives and works in the United Arab Emirates.

She was educated in Germany, Switzerland and in France. Her diversified interests and talents manifested themselves early on in her choice of studies in French, Literature, Art, Design, Psychology and Business Administration.

After leaving the business world to explore the works and techniques of famous artists such as Van Gogh, Chagall, Picasso, Rodin, Hockney, Warhol, participating in theatre, film, cross-cultural and media projects all over the world, and investigating different life patterns, *Antonia Pia Gordon* went on to leave the beaten path with her own individual artistic style, creating works of art that encompass highly expressive paintings, striking sculptures and continual experiments with new materials, and eloquent and poignant writing, presenting classic thoughts in modern contexts. She participated in a number of artistic projects such as screenplay and play writing at UCLA, Los Angeles and studying and reading plays at the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Gordon has a distinct and unmistakable style of multi-media interdisciplinary modern and expressive art. What makes *Antonia Pia Gordon's* works unique are her occupation with dualities of colour and theme and the harmonic combination of opposites such as male and female, child and adult media, light and dark, serenity and chaos, that comes to life in her series "COLORIZONS". Gordon possesses the exceptional ability to tame chaos with harmony and to move tradition into the modern with classical installations reminiscent of masters with modern media. She is gifted to bridge cultures with her works. Her pre-empting social and economic theorism and her visionary genius are combined with timeless fashionability.

Antonia Pia Gordon's art bears witness to the deep and secure values of tradition, whilst simultaneously questioning the staidness of tradition with breaks to move it into a forward-looking basis for innovative movement and reflection.













BY ART THE MIND IS GIVEN WINGS







Dubai is the first zoo anywhere in the world to successfully keep and breed Socotra cormorants,
<http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/dozens-of-rare-birds-released-into-wild-at-dubai-creek>
They are under the protection of the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socotra_cormorant
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ras_Al_Khor
<http://www.visitdubai.com/en/pois/ras-al-khor-wildlife-sanctuary>

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They are native birds of the United Arab Emirates and they are on the list of endangered birds of extinction on the [IUCN Red List](#) since 2000.



I AM A FAN!

ANTONIA PIA GORDON
Born in Hamburg, Germany
Lives and works in Dubai, UAE

2023 Online Gallery Open for Business
2022 Completion of Digital Business Model
2021 Execution of digital transformation & new business model
2020 CORONA VIRUS LOCKDOWN - Idea for digital transformation & new business model
2019 ANTONIA is currently on a research trip through Asia developing new artworks

SELECTED BIENNALES
2017 Florence Biennale, Florence, Italy
2017 Biennale Venezia Colateral, Venice, Italy
2017 MEAM (Museu Europeu D'Art Modern) Barcelona, Spain
2017 Biennale of Peschiera Del Garda, Mont Pellegrino, Italy
2017 Biennale MEART(La Biennale Internazionale d'arte del Mediterraneo), Palermo, Italy
2016 Biennale Riviera Del Brenta, Mira, Italy

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS
2011 Hotel De Paris, Monte Carlo, Monaco
2011 Hotel Majestic, Cannes, France

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS & FAIRS
2018 Gallery THE ROOM, Venice Contemporary, Venice, Italy
2018 Rhys Art Fair & Salon, Basel, Switzerland
2017 Palazzo Ca' Zanardi, Venice, Italy
2017 Palazzo Flangini, Venice, Italy
2017 Gallery THE ROOM, Venice Contemporary, Venice, Italy
2017 Società delle Belle Arti-Circolo degli Artisti, Casa di Dante, Florence, Italy
2017 Clio Art Fair, New York, USA
2017 Misericordia Chapel, Venice, Italy

2016 Palazzo Flangini, Venice, Italy
2016 Palazzo Ca' Zanardi, Venice, Italy
2016 Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy
2016 BAU International Academy of Rome, Rome, Italy
2016 The Hotel Show, Dubai, UAE
2016 Gallery Laura Haber, Buenos Aires, Argentina
2016 Hilton Molino Stucki, Venice, Italy
2016 Clerici Palace, Milan, Italy
2016 Kent University, Kent, UK
2016 World Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE
2016 Basilica of Saint Paul, Rome, Italy
2016 Index International Design, Dubai, UAE
2016 Alliance Francaise, Dubai, UAE
2016 Palazzo Fantuzzi, Bologna, Italy
2016 Palazzo Borghese, Florence, Italy
2015 Gallery BAC – Bogotá Arte Contemporáneo, Bogotá, Colombia
2015 LACDA Los Angeles Center for Digital Art, Los Angeles, USA
2015 Politeama Theatre Palermo, Palermo, Italy
2015 Art Elysees – Art & Design, Paris, France
2015 Villa Castelnuovo, Palermo, Italy
2015 Tarrant County College, Fort Worth, USA
2015 Palazzo Duchi di Santo Stefano, Taormina, Italy
2015 Tokio International Art Fair, Tokio, Japan
2015 Nina Torres Fine Art, Miami, USA
2015 Palazzo Ca' Zanardi, Venice, Italy
2012 Gallery Art Rays, Shanghai, China
2012 Top Marques, Shanghai, China
2012 Arternativelight, Monte Carlo, Monaco



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