

NIKI MCQUEEN ART



BIOGRAPHY, TECHNIQUE AND SELECTION OF ARTWORKS
OCTOBER 2023



ABOUT

My artworks are manifestations of an urgent, unquenchable need for the expression of years of unspoken truths, unthought thoughts, unfelt feelings, unfulfilled longings, losses, triumphs, lessons and personal evolution. ~ NM



BIOGRAPHY

Niki McQueen is a visual artist and communications and graphic design specialist from Cape Town, with a background in Marine Biology. She has pioneered a technique in which richly-coloured, finely detailed, surreal and otherworldly artworks are created from digital composites which are painstakingly hand-printed and hand-drawn onto archival papers and then washed, painted colored and finished using a variety of materials, in an 8 to 12 step process she has developed and perfected over several years.

Enamored with the extraordinary, she draws inspiration from multiple sources including vintage medical, biological and scientific illustrations, and museum and library collections, as well as surrealism, street art and magical realism. Her art explores the places beyond reason and the familiarity of everyday existence. Themes include anatomy, biology, psychology, archetypal interplay, eroticism, decay and rebirth. Every work tells a story, be it personal or magical – the viewer is invited to explore meaning in their own interpretation.

Her body of work, comprising over 400 artworks, is broadly divided into two portfolios which cover everything from deep examinations of dreams, desires, memories, and traumas to more innocent dream-and wish fulfilment work.

The light and playful work ([Life Beyond Reason](#)), often featuring children and animals, speaks to the flashes of a childhood that was magical and surreal at times, and inner-child therapy. Through connecting with facets of the playful inner child, she seeks to express innocence and wonder. The more surreal and symbolic art ([Niki McQueen Art](#)) is a process of channelling psychological and emotional disturbances or realisations and happens on a subconscious level. While some of these works begin with a deliberate theme, topic or purpose, a lot of the work emerges and develops subconsciously and may take days, weeks or months to create, understand, contextualise and explain.

Niki sold her first artwork within a month of making her work public in 2020 and started exhibiting about 6 months after that. She has sold over 130 artworks in under 4 years, to both local and global buyers and collectors. In 2021 and 2022, she placed in the top 40 finalists in the Vuleka Art Competition. She also placed in the Top 100 in the Sasol New Signatures Art Competition in 2021, and the November, won the Africa Regional Award in the international Copic Awards 2021. In 2023, she represented South Africa at the Art Connects Women Exhibit in Dubai in March 2023. She published her first book of art and poetry in 2022 and was very proud to collaborate with The Dresden Dolls and Amanda Palmer to create a collection of artworks for their 2023 tour and Amanda's latest single.

You can find out more about Niki in [this interview](#).

ARTIST STATEMENT

From day one, my artistic experimentation and endeavors irresistibly pulled me toward the realms beyond reason and the familiar aspects of everyday existence.

I seek to examine emotional reactions, engrained beliefs, thoughts, and societal norms through the lens of my personal paradigm, to try and understand myself and others, our connection to, and the language of the psyche.

My work often speaks to my profound fascination with the human experience. With deep appreciation for Jungian theory, I strive to expresses powerful personal symbolism using elements of psychology, whimsy, humour, mythology, anatomy, biology and the macabre.

Jarring or unsettling juxtapositions and impossible encounters appear commonly in my compositions, pushing the boundaries of my understanding of self. The significance of these works sometimes only become apparent after some time has passed. I strive for authenticity, trying to never contrive meaning or force interpretation on viewers, but these pieces often provoke unbidden triggers in others, and connecting with my audience and peers on these topics has been invaluable.

My life's journey through this looking glass that art has opened, will be pursuit of the truths I seek in myself and the wish to bring joy and meaning to others.

TECHNIQUE

The techniques I use and processes I follow in creating my artwork are, as far as I know, relatively unique. I developed them myself over several years through a process of experimentation and modification of traditional artmaking techniques.

MY PROCESS:

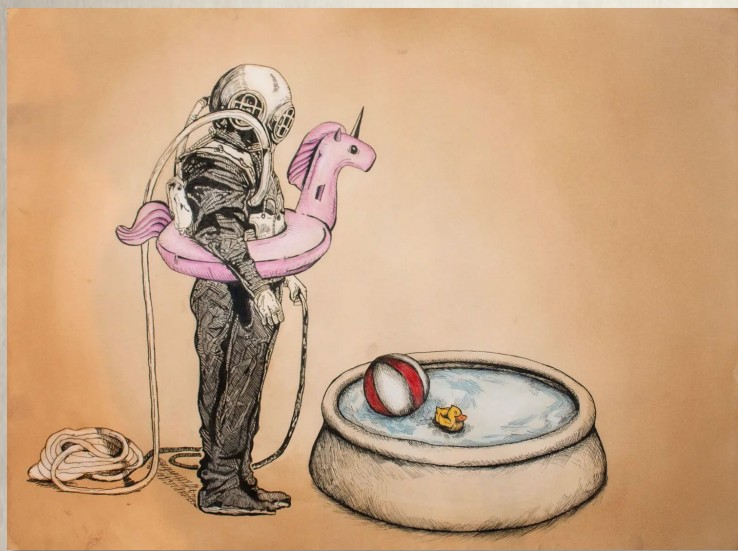
1. I start my process by creating a digital composite consisting of up to 50 different images and image fragments drawn from public domain collections and my own hand-drawn work.
2. Once I am satisfied with the digital layout of the picture, I hand-print the composition onto Fabriano Artistico 300gsm or 640gsm Hot Pressed archival paper. I laser-print components of the composition, transposed so that they will be the right way around on the paper, and then carefully place them onto the paper using a light box. I transfer them using solvents and I layer some darker areas several times over.
3. I then use the solvents and laser toner to paint and even out the composition. This forms the underprint which I work with,
4. Using the underprint, I hand-draw the entire picture using fineliners, technical pens and art pens, adding depth, detail and balancing elements of the drawing to perfect the composition.
5. For works with black backgrounds, I next apply masking medium over the drawn and printed areas I want to preserve.
6. I then create the background of the picture, using watercolour and ink washes (for pictures with lighter backgrounds) or a matt black charcoal formulation (for images with black or dark backgrounds). These are applied with a variety of brushes and tools.
7. I then remove the masking medium (if used) and touch up the pictures and add finer details where needed.
8. This is followed by adding colour to the pictures using inks, watercolour pencils, Copics, metallic powders and a variety of other mixed media.
9. I then UV-seal the picture using a universal fixative and sealant.
10. Next, I add any metallic leaf if the work involved has leafing detail and I finish by varnishing this leafing.
11. I finish by signing, numbering and photographing the picture.

As hand-printing is a foundation step in my creative methodology, a very limited series of original variants of each artwork is made available, unless the buyer requests a commission or sole edition. I typically make between 1 and 9 limited edition original variants of each work, the exceptions being commissioned works and extra-large (22 x 30") works, wherein only one iteration is produced. The variants are curated with meticulous care, and while no two are exactly alike, with nuanced distinctions setting them apart, the intrinsic spirit of the original creation is carefully preserved in subsequent iterations.



Example: Variants 1 and 2 of 5, of Perfect Ruin, 2022

NOTABLE WORKS



SUMMER IN PLAGUELAND

Placed in the top 100 in the Sasol New Signatures Competition 2021



WONDER

Placed in the top 40 of the Vuleka Competition 2021



THE DANDY LION (L)

KEEPER OF LIGHT (R)

Both went viral on social media, garnering over 10000 likes collectively, and over 3000 comments. Audience reach impressions were over 1 million



F-STOP: REPURPOSING
THE GAZE (L)

DEER ME: SELF PORTRAIT
FEB 2022 (R)

Both placed in the top 40 of the
Vuleka Competition 2022



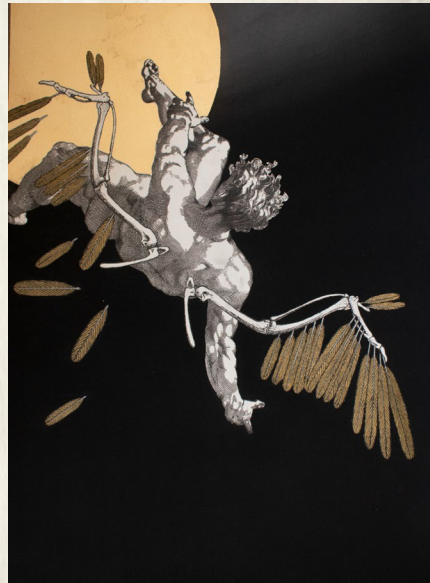
PORTFOLIOS

My work is divided into 2 portfolios, which have different selling prices:

NIKI MCQUEEN ART

Fine art, surreal and symbolic works

Link: <https://nikimcqueen.com/portfolio/niki-mcqueen-art/>



LIFE BEYOND REASON ART

lighthearted, decorative and fairytale works

Link: <https://nikimcqueen.com/portfolio/life-beyond-reason-art/>



THEMES AND COLLECTIONS

What follows are a few of my favourite artworks from various themes and collections in my fine art portfolio.

THE DARK MUSE TRILOGY



UNSUNG:
SELF PORTRAIT JULY 2022

ICARUS IN GOLD

UNFORGIVEN

These are the first three extra-large format works I made, all 56 x 76 cm, on Fabriano Artistico 640gsm HP paper, currently on show at Fine Art Africa in Hout Bay



THEMES, SERIES AND COLLECTIONS

SELECTED WORKS FROM THE BLACK AND DARK COLLECTION

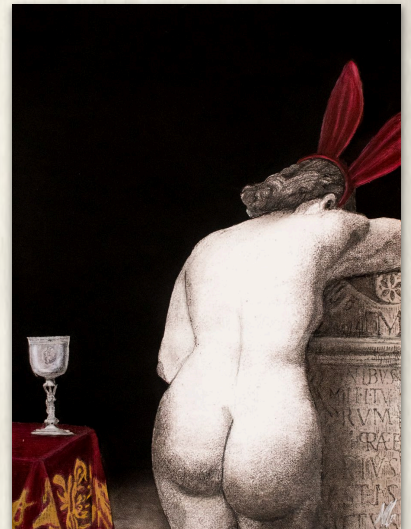
<https://nikimcqueen.com/portfolio-category/black-artworks/>



BEAUTIFUL STRANGE (2022)



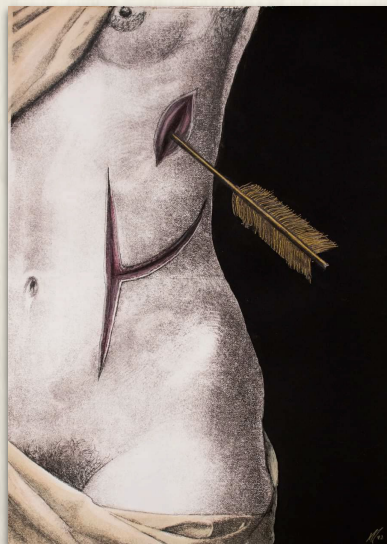
SWANSONG (2023)



SACRAMENTALITY (2023)



THE SEEKER (2023)



LOSING MY RELIGEON (2023)



LIFE OUTSIDE TIME (2023)

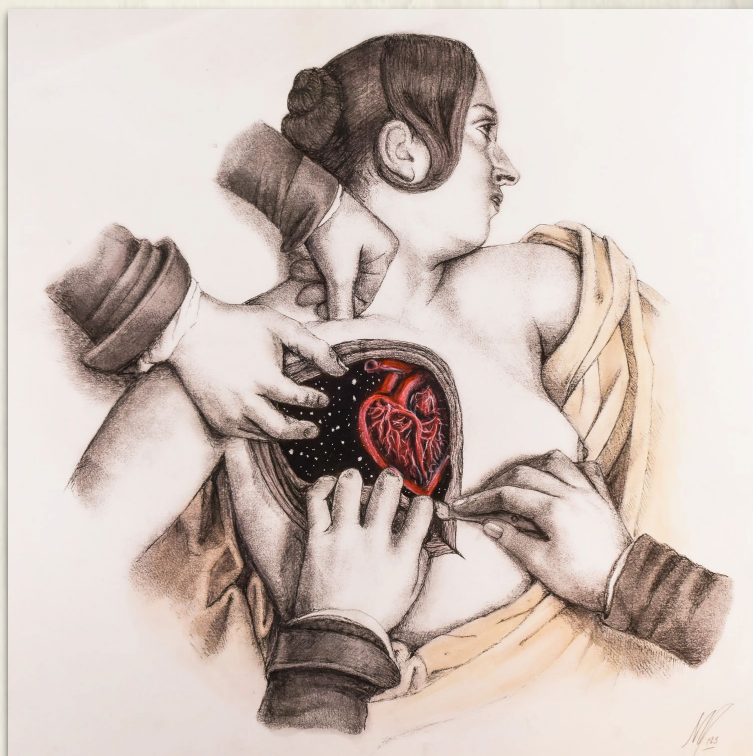
DEEP INSIDE: THE PSYCHE

Discordant feelings and fragile awakenings. Love and loss. Lost and becoming.

<https://nikimcqueen.com/portfolio/the-psyche/>



MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPER
SELF PORTRAIT NOV 2021



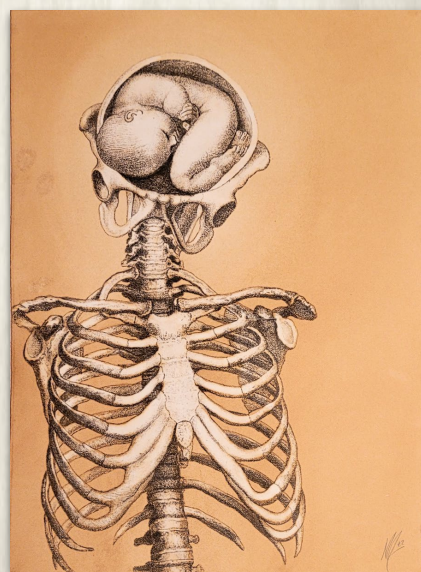
TAKE IT



PERCEPTUAL FRAGILITY



NARCISSA: THE VOID INSIDE

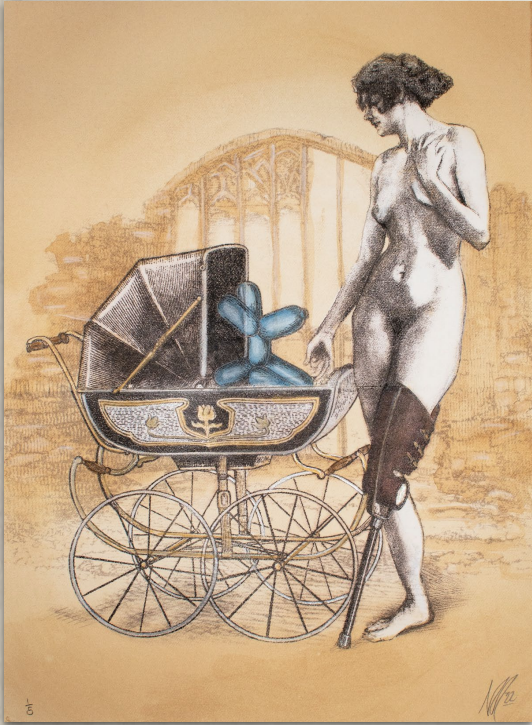


IMAGO II: THE PERSISTENCE OF
MEMORY

TALES BY GASLIGHT

A survivor's journey collection, created for victims and survivors of domestic and narcissistic abuse.

<https://nikimcqueen.com/portfolio/tales-by-gaslight>



PERFECT RUIN



THE REFUGE OF CONSTRAINT



A DREAM OF YOU



ALL THAT REMAINS

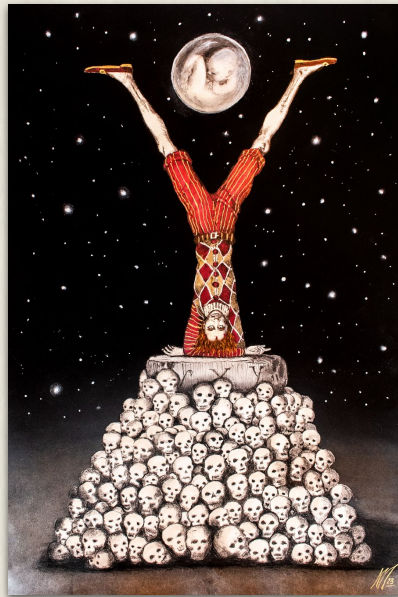


DOMESTIC BLISS

WHIMSY AND WEIRDNESS



QUEER FLOCK



THE LAST LAUGH



THE TROUBLESOME
MUSINGS OF MISS VICTORIA



SERENADE FOR BLUE 52



ONDINE

THE ELYSIAN DREAMS COLLECTION

The very first stories I remember were tales from Greek myths and legends, Goddesses, gods, nymphs, titans and a cast of characters and archetypes that still hold me spellbound. These are they, reimagined, repurposed, revived.

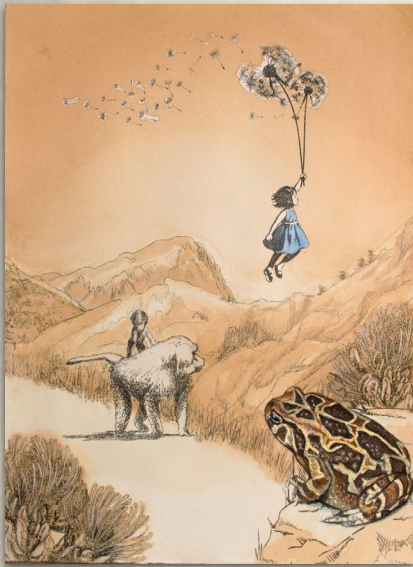
<https://nikimcqueen.com/portfolio/elysian-dreams/>



WHERE THE WIND BLOWS

This series aims to raise awareness of threatened and endangered species, particularly in South and Southern Africa. Little Max has embarked on a journey to visit these beloved and beautiful creatures before they are gone forever.

<https://nikimcqueen.com/portfolio/where-the-wind-blows>



FYNBOS WINDS



RIVERINE WINDS



BUSHVELD WINDS



WISE WINDS



WILD WINDS



HARDLAND WINDS

AMANDA PALMER AND THE DRESDEN DOLLS

These are from a collection of work created for the Dresden Dolls and Amanda Palmer with whom I frequently work. used as posters for their 2023 tour. <https://nikimcqueen.com/in-unison/>.



REUNITED

Main tour artwork for 2023 tour



LOVE IN RUINS



DEFROCKED

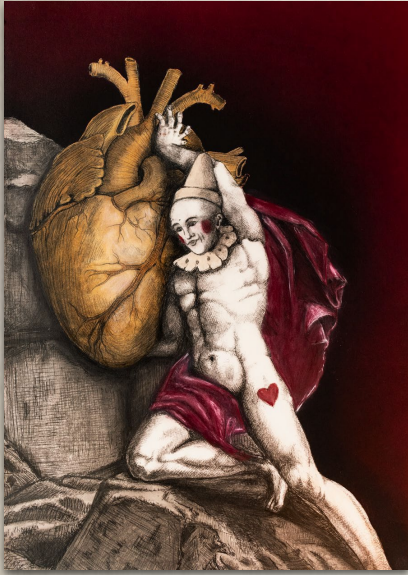


MY SALVATION

THE DARK CIRCUS

Smoke and mirrors, Perriot's paradise. Here lies face the surreal comichorror of everyday existence, gnarled and brittle, blighted and beautiful.

<https://nikimcqueen.com/portfolio/dark-circus>



FOOL FOR LOVE



THE TOLL



THE MOURNING AFTER



MODERN LOVE



THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY



THE PERILOUS POSE OF
THE PATRIARCH

LIFE BEYOND REASON

FAIRYTALE AND FANTASY WORK

This is a selection of available works from my fairytale and fantasy works – there [are many more HERE](#)



THE GREAT ESCAPE (2021)



THE ORCHARD (2021)



CARRIED AWAY (2021)



BUSHVELD WINDS (2021)



FAR, FAR AWAY (2021)



THE GIFT (2021)



CATCHINE STARS (2021)



I DREAM OF THE SEA (2022)



BLOWFISH (2021)



KEEPER OF LIGHT (2022)



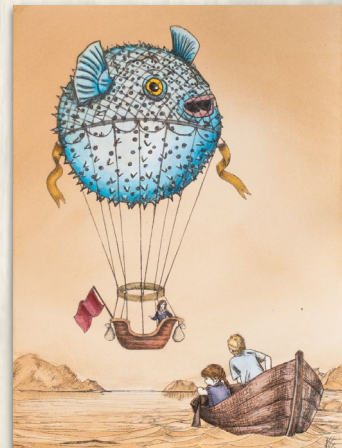
TIME FLIES



WINGMILL



MOONFISH



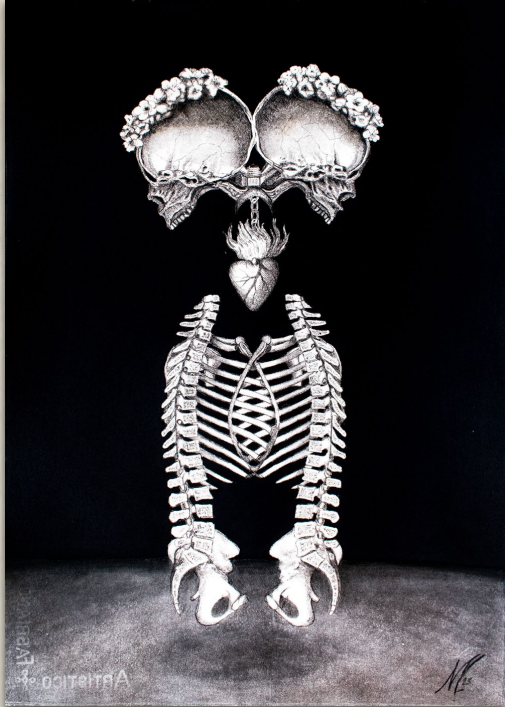
BALLOONFISH

CURRENT PROJECT

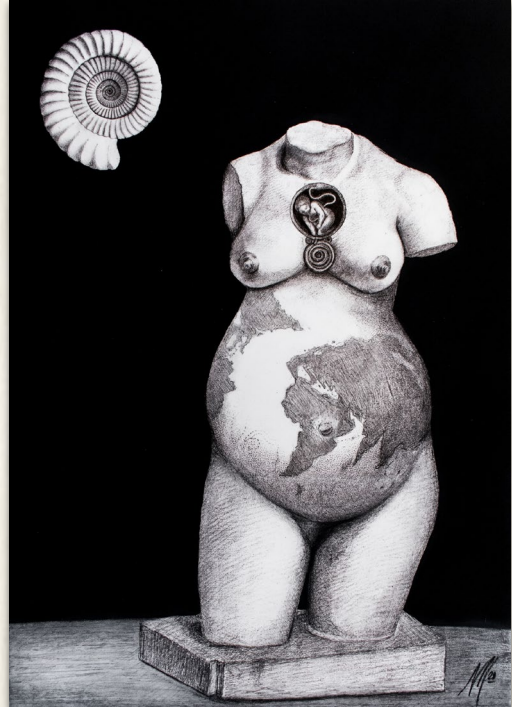
ARCHETAPESTRY

<https://nikimcqueen.com/portfolio/archetapestry/>

he be-all and end-all. The facets of US. These are Jung's Archetypes through my eyes.
This series is a work in progress which I aim to finish by the end of the year.



THE LOVER



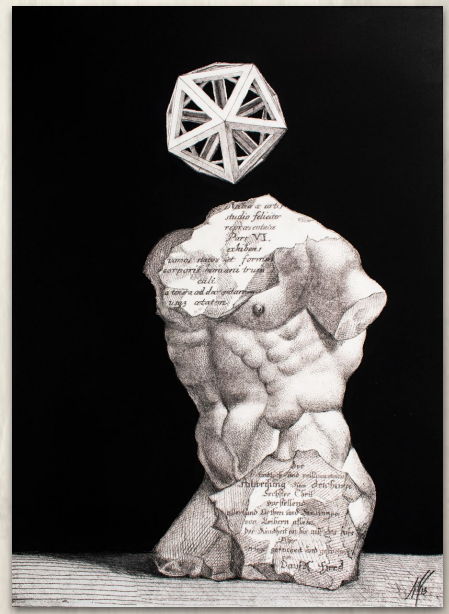
THE MOTHER



THE ANIMA



THE CREATOR



THE SAGE

CURRENT PRICING

The prices of works depend on their size, rarity and complexity – I sell from the Niki McQueen portfolio through galleries, while I sell Life Beyond Reason privately

NIKI MCQUEEN ART

Original artwork created using hand-printing, hand-drawing and mixed media (including inks, watercolour, fineliner) on Fabriano 300gsm or 640gsm watercolour paper, UV sealed.		
Medium work	28.5 cm x 38cm (11 x 15 inches)	R4000 – R8000 (\$450 – \$600)
Large work	38cm x 56cm (15 x 22 inches)	R 8500 – R11000 (\$650 – \$800)
Extra-large work	56cm x 76cm (22 x 30 inches)	R27500 ZAR (\$1000 – \$1700)

ARTIST PRICE, TERMS, NOTES

- I am open to negotiation
- I have arrangements with 2 galleries, who take a 30-40% commission.
- I am comfortable with the gallery taking a 33 – 50% commission.
- I fix the prices of my work across the board, and they are available on my website. I am open to suggestions about pricing and commission.
- I am not VAT registered and ask for payment on clearance of transactions, VAT not to be deduced from the artist price.
- I am happy for the gallery to offer discounts and specials on my work of up to 10% but would like to be informed. Should a higher discount be requested.
- I make 1-10 original variants of each work (see [variants](#)) – each comes numbered with a certificate of authenticity. I only make ONE extra- large variant per work.
- If a piece is requested / ordered, I usually request a deposit o 40-50% of the artist price to cover costs.
- I invite the galleries to have a look at my [Niki McQueen portfolio](#) and choose any works they feel they may want to exhibit. I can produce these at large and extra-large sizes (for most works), given a turnaround time of about 2 –3 weeks for production.
- I am open to discussing the selection works in my Life Beyond Reason portfolio

CONTACT



CONTACT DETAILS:

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WEBSITE:

<https://nikimcqueen.com/>

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/nikimcqueenart/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lifebeyondreason/>

I am more than happy to provide any additional information you require, including exact prices at various commission rates, full terms, a detailed breakdown of my portfolio and collections, etc. I will just need a day or so to calculate.

Please feel free to ask me anything.

Many thanks,

Niki McQueen

NIKI McQUEEN

ARTIST

