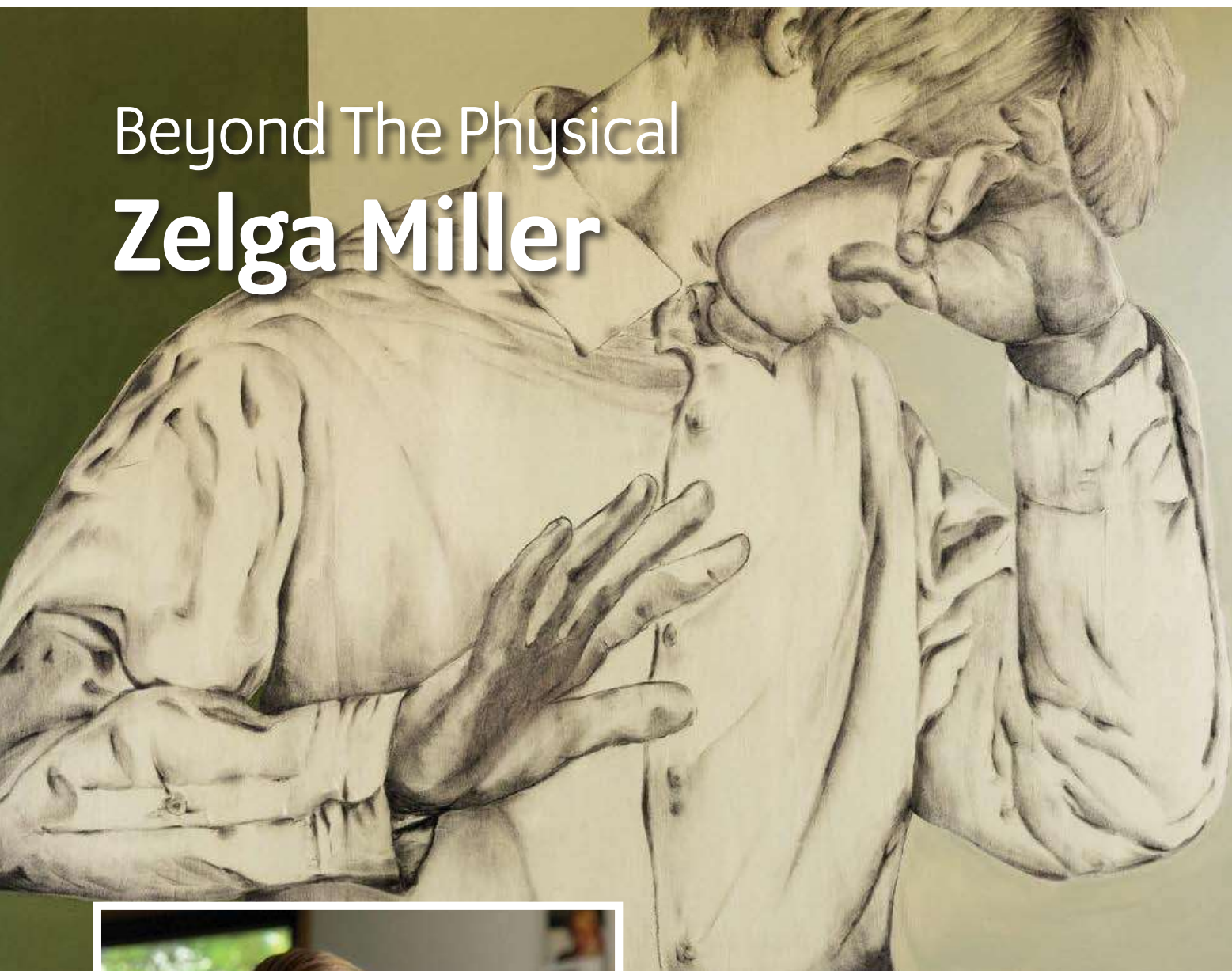


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# Beyond The Physical Zelga Miller



The Sewell Centre Gallery is pleased to be showing the work of Zelga Simone Miller from 19 April-17 May, as part of Oxfordshire Artweeks 2024. Zelga joins the gallery's contingent of contemporary artists whose work embodies a keen interest in the human experience. Her exhibition *Drawing Thoughts* will focus on our response to trauma, resilience, and healing.

Running through this body of work lies a personal interest in and reflection upon the therapeutic nature of art, for both the artist and the viewer, as evidenced in subject, composition, and materiality.

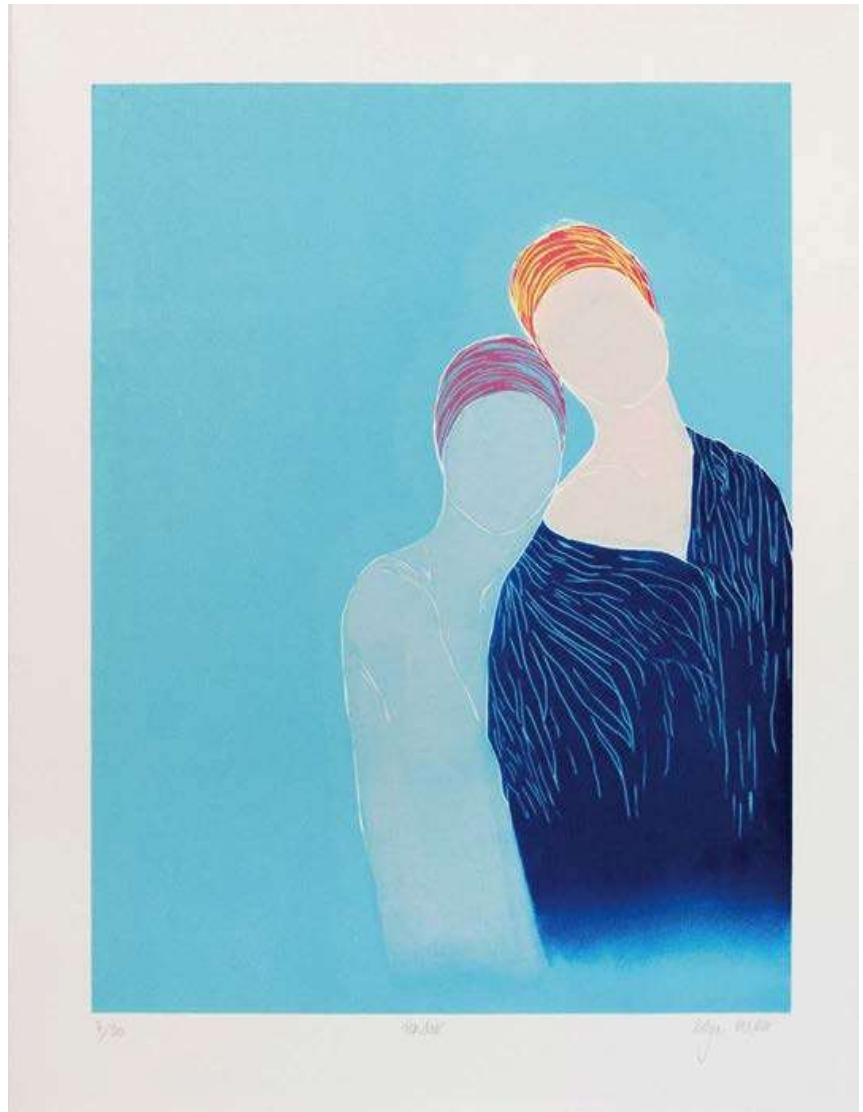
Zelga's work speaks of layers, of peeling back the veneer of the everyday to contemplate what lies beneath. She asks us to look deeper, to question the otherwise serene scene which – when examined closer – belies a deep sense of disquiet.

Ultimately, Zelga sees her practice as “examining our emotions and resilience”. She is fascinated by “our capacity to adapt to adversity, to move forward beyond the events of our lives to better times and more hopeful beginnings”.

In this intimate collection Zelga draws us in and invites to us to take a closer look. She explains that her practice looks beyond the physical elegance of the line, and more “intensively towards the emotional vulnerability of the figure”. The scene may appear simple, but the human emotion and memory contained within is far from this.

Rooted in an archival approach, with an appreciation of the rich potential of drawing, Zelga's work often begins with a figure from memory or a photograph, a book she has read, an idea she cannot shake. She works with a range of media, moving between woodcut printmaking, drawing and painting, in constant pursuit of telling her story and finding a balance between a sense of stillness and dynamic fluidity. Each composition is poised, still on the surface but always emotionally restless. She seeks a sense of balance and momentary reflection, of capturing a moment before, or perhaps after, an event.

In addition to the subject of her work, she is interested in the notion that colour and decoration have been downgraded as aesthetics because they are associated with femininity and foreignness by a critical elite. Here Zelga references Rosalind Galt's book *Pretty: Film and the Decorative*



**“our capacity to adapt to adversity, to move forward beyond the events of our lives to better times and more hopeful beginnings”**

Image (2011) which explores how society is conditioned to look down on prettiness and avoid it if we want to be seen as serious-minded. It is fair to say that Zelga is not interested in upholding such a critical elite. Her works intend to be both questioning and aesthetically feminine.

When not in her studio, Zelga is a student with Turps, a mentor with the Koestler Trust (where she works with artist ex-offenders) and a volunteer with a-space-be-tween charity where she held her residency and works with them on workshops in London hospitals and healthcare settings.

The Sewell Centre Gallery's mission is to educate and to make accessible the visual arts to all whilst supporting the work of emerging artists of all ages and backgrounds. Zelga's exhibition is designed to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Week UK 2024.

Since graduating with her MFA in Fine Art in 2019 she has exhibited in over 60 exhibitions in France, Germany, USA, and Japan. Furthermore, in 2023 she received First Prize with Oxford Arts Society and the Woolwich Contemporary Printmakers Prize 2022.