

123 ART MAGAZINE

Interview with super-talented self-taught painter Beddru

[ARTIST BEDDRU](#) self-taught painter Beddru



Italian self-taught painter Beddru has distinguished himself in contributing conceptual insight to the course of contemporary art by embracing experimentation of non-traditional materials, such as thick superposed plexiglass panels.



His figurative pictorial subjects are “unconformably” represented through ink-based mixed media, applied via reverse painting technique, inspired by Italian painters from the 1600s. By developing a variation of this technique, Beddru focuses on the use of vivid pigments to create a striking vibrancy as a distinctive trait of his style. The eye of the observer is simultaneously caught by both a fascinating chromatic balance and the mystery of enigmatic figures, who from the depths of a mythological past, bring secretive symbols to our contemporary present as messages to decipher.

Beddru currently lives and paints in his studio in Brussels, exhibiting on a regular basis internationally, in venues spanning from highly ranked art- fairs to museums in both solo and collective exhibitions. His artwork is part of international private collections such as the one of the Saudi Royal Family and the one of the billionaire Graeme Hart in New Zealand.

Hi Beddru! You are a self-taught artist. How did it all start for you in the world of Art?

Beddru: I never looked for Art. I never tried to become an artist until a later stage in my life. As a kid, I wanted to become an architect. However, I loved drawing, spending hours and hours anytime I could. Art found me to lift my childhood first and then my adult life. Part of my confidence in my younger years came undoubtedly thanks to the encouragement received from my close network, my mother in particular. She never studied Art but provided me with anything I asked: books, colours, pencils, easel, canvas etc. This way, I could experiment on my own, without any formal training. Art has always been my happy bubble to escape everyday life and its, sometimes, distracting dynamics. As an adult, I have travelled the world to attend to where my Art is on display and visit museums where my favourite artists’

masterpieces are exhibited. Seeing the artwork you love in real makes a difference for anyone, I guess, but especially for an artist as you feel a different cognitive emotion in front of the piece. I have developed an obsession with some pieces of Art. I continue to go back to the same museums for the same piece again and again. An example is the painting **Boy Bitten by a Lizard** by Caravaggio at National Gallery in London.



A DAY OF JOY.

Tell me more about your style and using non-traditional materials.

Beddru: Having your style is the most challenging goal for an artist. To get there, It may mean you need to break the rules and create differently. It certainly means others inspire you, but you don't copy them. You re-elaborate things your way. I am confident that my style is the result of two main factors:

- I am self-taught. The fact of not receiving formal training allowed me not to conform to academic rules.
- Experimentation. I explore non-traditional materials such as plexiglass, taking my inspiration from the past that I revisit with a contemporary eye. I am a painter today, so my artwork must be a reflection of my time.



B-DANDY

Could you walk us through your process? How much planning do you do before you jump into a painting? If you do, what are you trying to solve at each stage of it?

Beddru: I do not follow a single process, but multiple ones as I paint different bodies of work and the approach to each of them is pretty different. Planning is involved when it comes to deciding the number of pieces in each body of work.

I believe there is nothing to solve for me. As an artist, I am not there to provide solutions. I witness experiences and express them via my paintings. Up to the observer to understand the message.



DONNA ORO

Some artists paint every day, while others paint when they feel in the mood.

Beddru: I don't paint every day. I want to keep the pleasure of it, so I do so only when I am inspired when I feel it's time to paint.

Working on specific projects with galleries to put up shows helps shape time. But still, I let inspiration drive me. There are days when everything I do is instantly right and days when it is not the case. In those days, I stop, and I wait. I know a better moment to paint will be back. Luckily, I do not usually have to wait too long.



FOLLOW ME

What enhances your motivation, and do you paint every day or when the mood strikes you?

Beddru: Usually, good light has a good effect on my mood. Managing motivation is pretty complex. Isolation and mental strength are essential. I don't want anyone around when I paint. Travelling is a source of inspiration. I collect ideas, and when I am back to the studio, I

start working on them. It's a set of multiple elements that generate my willingness to create Art.



GETTING YOU OUT OF MY MIND

Your Art has mystery elements and mythology. Is there a message you are trying to send with each piece?

Beddru: There is always a message in my paintings. I like playing with symbols, but it's not up to me to decode them for the viewer. Mythology is a recurrent element. I grew up in Agrigento, a Sicilian city founded by the Greeks, so that rich background is still in me.



THE DIVER

Who are a few artists/people that really inspire you right now, and why?

Beddru: There are specific artists I like such as Alberto Giacometti, Lucian Freud, Otto Dix, Egon Schiele, Tamara de Lempicka, Johannes Vermeer, Giorgio De Chirico, David Hockney, Amedeo Modigliani and many more. It may sometimes be about a specific part of their artistic production. It's the case, for example, for the watercolours of Michaël Borremans. Another watercolourist I love is young Russian artist Dima Rebus, in my view the most skilled living watercolourist.



THE PATH OF WISDOM

What's the most challenging part of your artistic process? And how do you overcome it?

Beddru: It's probably about having a vision and using intuition. This makes the process yours. The first factor depends on how strong your imagination is. The second one depends on how smart you are.



MATERNAL BOND

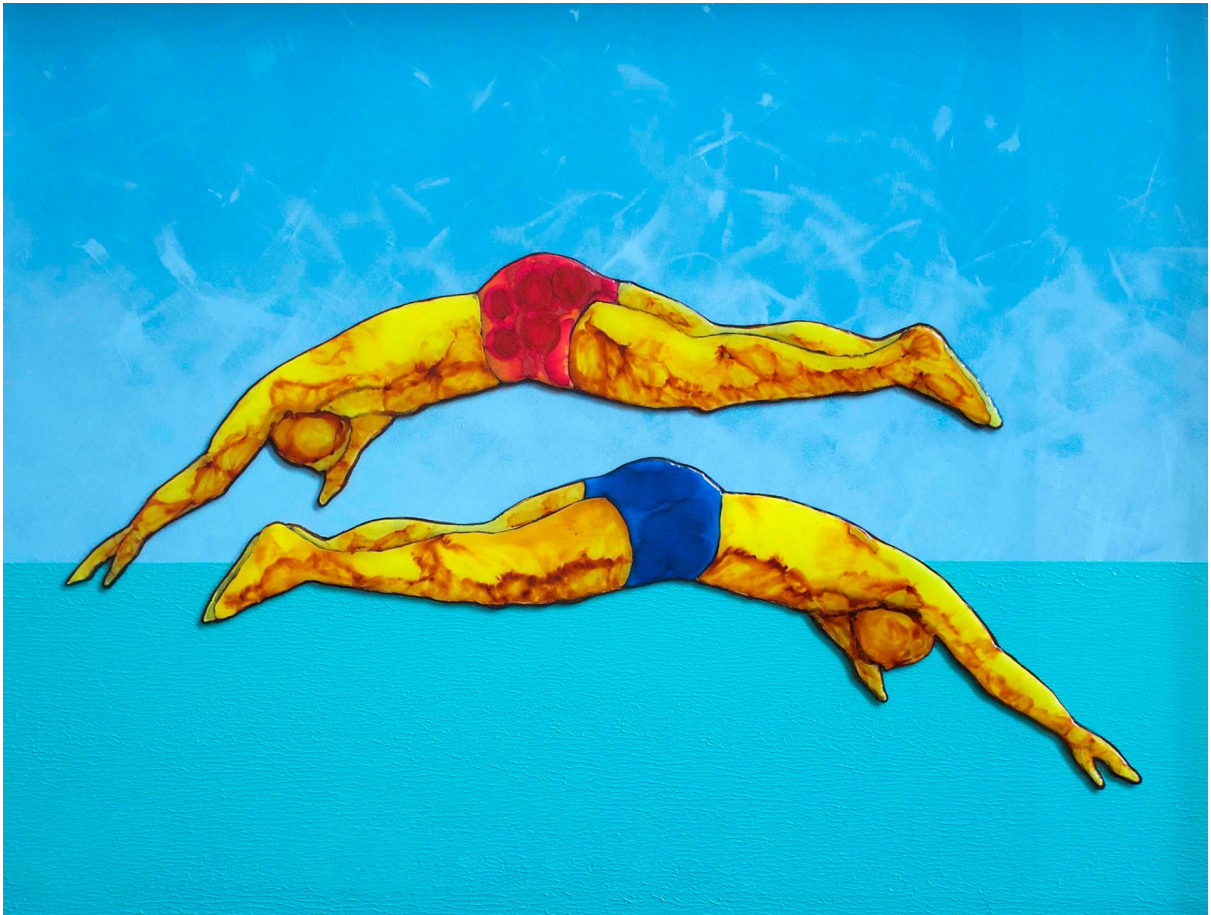
What is the most recent piece you've enjoyed working on, and why?

Beddru: I have just finished a news piece entitled "Not all those who wander are lost". I had a lot of fun painting it. It's a mixed media on linen. I love the story of this piece because the canvas was initially prepared to accommodate a different subject several years ago. I started painting it, and then I changed my mind. The canvas was left on a corner on the stairs outside my studio, I believe, for more than two years. One day several months ago, I decided to cover the first subject and paint something else instead. I drafted a male portrait that stayed unfinished for several months during the pandemic until I envisioned what I wanted this portrait to be. It has eventually turned into the story of a sailor wandering around. I like the final execution of the artwork and all the symbols embedded in it.



Do you ever experience creative blocks? And if yes, how do you overcome it?

Beddru: I never experienced creative blocks. Sometimes I may be hesitant in front of an artwork. Still, I would not really define this as a creative block but rather like searching for a better outcome. I may feel that I am done with a specific series, but I usually find my way quickly to the next one.



L'ETE INDIEN

Share some interesting facts about your Art with us.

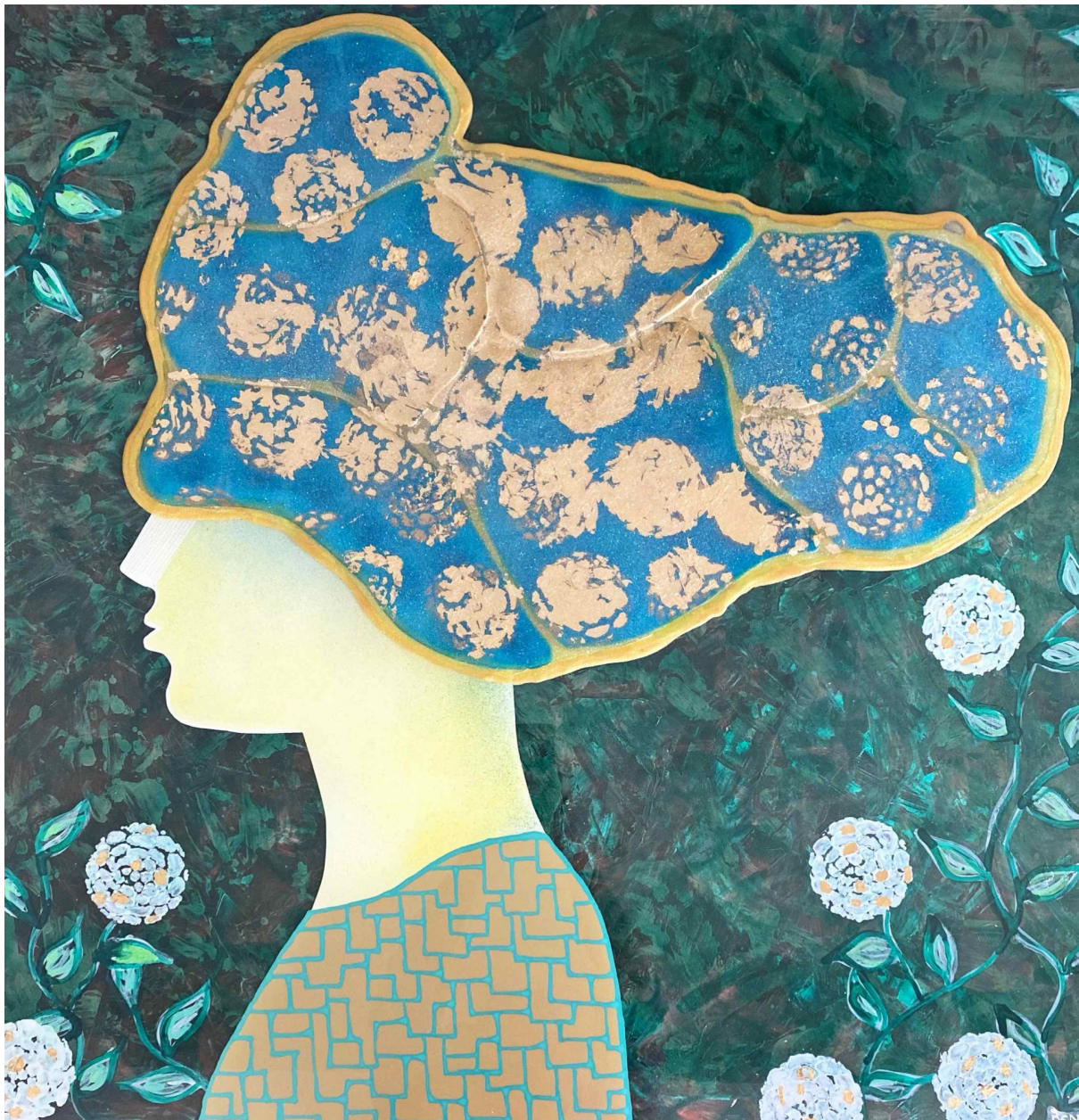
Beddru: I would simply say that the idea behind any art piece, despite the body of work it belongs to, is making collectors feel good. When a collector acquires a piece of Art, she/he will most likely face it daily, especially when placed at home. Now the palette of colours I choose for my paintings plays with positive emotions. This way, the atmosphere that the paintings created in the space is constantly positive and serene. I want my paintings to be a celebration of life.



STORY OF A SAILOR

Do you see your Art as serving a purpose beyond Art?

Beddru: Well, when I look at who creates Art, we are the only living species doing so. We have a great master showing us incredible masterpieces, Nature. I guess the purpose of Art for me is the instinctive imitation of what is around us. My Art is experiential and not a copy of what I witness. It is channelled into a creative process driven by imagination. This makes it different from reality. The purpose I serve is personal. It's really targeting me as an individual. It attempts to make me better understand who I am.



GEA LA GRANDE MADRE

Are there any upcoming shows or workshops we should know about?

Beddru: Yes, eventually, the art scene is reconquering its social territory. After a long break due to the pandemic, it looks the organization of art events is possible once again. I will exhibit with a Dutch Gallery in France at the end of June on the occasion of Art Up Lille. Moreover, with other partnering galleries, we are scheduling participation in upcoming art fairs. I will most likely exhibit in Stockholm, Amsterdam and Strasbourg in the second part of 2021. For those interested, the “events” page on my website www.beddru.com is regularly updated.



MAYDENS OF KARYAI

What's next on the horizon for Beddru?

Beddru: I am currently working on a project with a Brussels-based hospital (Clinique Saint-Jean) I helped during the pandemic last year. I raised funds for them to help manage the insane number of hospitalized patients. The hospital works with local artists. We are now placing some large-size reproductions of my paintings in an area of the hospital with the idea that Art is therapeutical. The hospital's CEO thinks that this way, the cold and often frightening look and perception that patients have of a hospital will be broken down, bringing positive vibes to the space. I am also working on organizing my agenda of events for 2022, but it's too early still for confirmations. Certainly, I will start working on a new body of work, bringing Sicilian iconic images on the spot. Stay tuned. All the related news will be announced on my social media and website.

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Thank you!