

The Artsy Vanguard 2019

THE ARTISTS TO
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The landscape of contemporary art is ever-changing. It shifts according to countless factors, from artists' principles and the political climate to auction records and collectors' tastes. Nevertheless, each year, a new crop of ambitious artists stands out. They catapult from obscurity to ubiquity, earn representation from top galleries, garner interest from prominent collectors, and pack their schedules with exhibitions. Most importantly, they make work that expands our understanding of what art can be.

The Artsy Vanguard 2019 features 50 artists, hailing from 27 countries and working in 27 cities around the world. Ranging in age from 28 to 93, they pursue painting, sculpture, photography, filmmaking, and performance, as well as investigative research and virtual reality. They delve into topics from human rights violations to youth culture, and capture the attention of powerhouse collectors and celebrity royalty, like Beyoncé.

Artsy editors developed this list from a pool of 600 artists who were nominated by more than 100 curators, collectors, and art-world professionals. These artists represent three distinct career stages, which we've arranged into the following categories: Emerging, which introduces artists who recently started showing at leading institutions and galleries; Newly Established, which presents the artists making noise at major art events and gaining representation with influential galleries; and Getting Their Due, which recognizes artists who have worked persistently for decades, yet have only recently received the spotlight they deserve. The Artsy Vanguard highlights the artists paving the future of art right now.



Melike Kara by Diana Pfammatter. Courtesy of Peres Projects, Berlin.

Melike Kara, *secret whispers*, 2018. Photo by Alessandro Wang. Courtesy of the artist and Peres Projects, Berlin.

Melike Kara's graphic, stylized painted figures—part-futuristic frontiers-people, part-tribal civilization—have earned her a steady progression of interest from curators, dealers, and collectors alike over the past few years. In 2018, the Turkish-German artist received her first solo show at an institution, the Yuz Museum in Shanghai. This year, she's had solo shows at Rotterdam's Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art and London gallery Arcadia Missa. This September she made her solo debut in New York, at Salon 94, firmly establishing her presence across the international art world. The artist also shows with Berlin's Peres Projects.

Kara comes from a shamanic family line in Turkey. Much of her work is, in one way or another, channeling this heritage, and is based in an understanding that "knowledge is ultimately produced through rituals and oral histories," said Sofía Hernández Chong Cuy, director of Witte de With.

The artist engages in her own forms of myth-making, via oil-stick murals and paintings of elastic figures that are surrounded by (and nearly inseparable from) illumination-like patterns in a minimal palette of cool blues and pastels. Sometimes, she combines them with installations of hanging façades with ornamental borders redolent of Islamic doorways. But it's not just imaginary human subjects and architectures that populate Kara's oeuvre; she has a penchant for representing animals, too—in the form of carved wooden sculptures of dogs, or armadillos decorated with ornamentation and stacked atop one another in idiosyncratic formation.