

---

# iNVENTX Creative Exhibition

## SUSTAINAISSANCE IN PRACTICE: Quiet Materials, Loud Meaning

---

### Frozen Whispers

Nik Syahida Sabri  
niksyahida@uitm.edu.my  
UiTM Shah Alam, Malaysia  
ORCID iD: 0009-0006-9498-7951  
(Corresponding Author)

#### Abstract

*Frozen Whispers* is a monoprint produced using a handmade jelly plate, exploring dendritic pattern formations as a means of visualising emotional states through process-based printmaking. The work employs biodegradable, kitchen-made gelatine plates and water-based inks as both material and conceptual strategies, aligning sustainable studio practice with reflective artistic inquiry. Through layered mark-making and controlled experimentation with chance and surface interaction, the artwork investigates how emotional experience, memory, and identity can be articulated through abstract visual language. Situated within the thematic framework of *SUSTAINAISSANCE: Emotion, Expression, Identity*, this study positions sustainability not only as an environmental concern but also as an affective and experiential dimension embedded within artistic process.

**Keywords:** Printmaking; Monoprint; Process-based art; Sustainable materials; Emotional expression

**Received:** 26 June 2025, **Accepted:** 24 February 2026, **Published:** 30 June 2026

## **Artist Statement**

*Frozen Whispers* was inspired by the artist's introspective journey and the desire to explore personal emotion through material engagement and mark-making. The act of cooking a jelly plate, typically produced from food-grade gelatine, becomes a deliberate and meaningful ritual that bridges domestic familiarity with artistic experimentation. This process transforms an everyday material into a reflective artistic tool, positioning the studio practice as both intimate and conceptually driven. The work aligns with the theme *SUSTAINAISSANCE* by integrating sustainable methods with a personal artistic inquiry that foregrounds emotion and identity as central experiential elements. The use of biodegradable jelly further emphasises the impermanence and fragility of emotional states, while simultaneously acknowledging their lasting psychological impact.

The work seeks to articulate intangible emotional conditions such as quiet reflection, internal dialogue, and feelings that often remain unspoken. These affective states are translated into visual form through layered abstraction, where surface textures and organic marks function as metaphors for the complexity of the human psyche. By approaching artmaking as a process of emotional and expressive sustainability, the act of creation becomes both therapeutic and enduring, allowing emotion to be explored as a continuous, evolving experience. The cool colour palette reinforces a sense of contemplation and emotional restraint, while the emergent organic patterns symbolise emotional branching, vulnerability, and personal growth. Rather than relying on narrative representation, the work reveals identity through sensory perception and emotional mapping embedded within the material process itself.

## **Concept and Theme**

*Frozen Whispers* is conceptually grounded in an exploration of emotional experience as mediated through material process and abstract visual language. The work emerges from the artist's introspective engagement with personal memory and affect, using the act of mark-making as a method of translating internal emotional states into tangible form. Central to the conceptual framework is the use of a handmade jelly plate, produced from food-grade gelatine, which introduces both a sustainable material strategy and a symbolic reference to impermanence, fragility, and transformation. This choice of material positions the artwork within the thematic context of *SUSTAINAISSANCE*, where sustainability is understood not only in ecological terms but also as an experiential and emotional condition.

The work seeks to represent emotional states that are subtle, restrained, and often difficult to articulate, such as quiet reflection, internal dialogue, and unspoken feelings. These affective dimensions are expressed through abstract pattern formations, layered textures, and organic visual structures that metaphorically reflect the complexity of the human psyche. The concept of emotional sustainability is

embedded within the repetitive and meditative nature of the printing process, where creation functions as a sustained engagement with emotional awareness. The restrained colour palette supports a contemplative atmosphere, while the organic, dendritic forms suggest emotional branching, vulnerability, and psychological growth. Rather than constructing identity through narrative or figurative representation, the work conceptualises identity as an emergent condition shaped through sensory experience, material interaction, and emotional perception.

### ***Approach and Process***

The jelly plate was produced from scratch using edible ingredients, establishing a customised printmaking matrix that functions as both material surface and conceptual device (see Figure 1). The preparation of the plate forms an integral part of the artistic process, where material construction and image-making are treated as a continuous, interrelated practice. Through monoprinting, successive layers of acrylic paint and printing ink were applied and lifted from the jelly surface, generating complex and unpredictable visual outcomes that resist precise control.

The resulting dendritic and coral-like motifs emerged organically through the interaction between material viscosity, pressure, and gestural movement. This process foregrounds chance as an active component within the artwork, allowing intuitive decision-making and surface interaction to shape the final composition. Rather than aiming for predetermined imagery, the experimental approach prioritises responsiveness to material behaviour, where physical texture becomes a vehicle for expressing emotional depth. In this context, the printing process operates as a performative act, in which emotional release is embedded within the spontaneous formation of marks and patterns.

### ***Meaning and Impact***

The artwork conveys a form of quiet emotional intensity, privileging subtle affective expression over overt or dramatic representation. Rather than presenting emotion as a spectacle, *Frozen Whispers* articulates feeling through restrained visual cues, where emotional presence is suggested through pattern, texture, and tonal variation (see Figure 3). The dendritic formations may be interpreted as visual traces of inner psychological states, functioning as metaphors for vulnerability, emotional complexity, and moments of internal tension or reflection.

The work invites viewers to engage with their own emotional awareness and consider how personal experiences might be translated into visual or material form. In this sense, the artwork operates as a reflective space that encourages introspection and emotional sustainability through sensory perception. The use of non-toxic and biodegradable materials extends this reflection to environmental consciousness, proposing that artistic expression can be both emotionally responsible and ecologically mindful. By aligning affective exploration with sustainable practice, the work positions emotional expression as an ethical and reflective dimension of contemporary artmaking.

### ***Materials and Techniques***

The materials used in this work include a handmade jelly plate, water-based printing inks, and acid-free paper (see Figure 2). The jelly plate was constructed using natural gelatine, positioning the process as both accessible and environmentally conscious. This choice of material enables a flexible printing surface that responds sensitively to pressure, movement, and surface manipulation during the printing process. Through pressed textures and successive lifting of ink layers, spontaneous dendritic patterns were formed, emphasising the organic and unpredictable qualities of the medium. The technique integrates tactile experimentation with a degree of aesthetic control, allowing material behaviour to actively shape visual outcomes. Monoprinting with direct mark-making on the jelly surface facilitates natural pattern formation, where the eco-friendly properties of the material support the production of organic textures that conceptually resonate with the theme of emotional delicacy and impermanence.



Figure 1. Jelly Plate

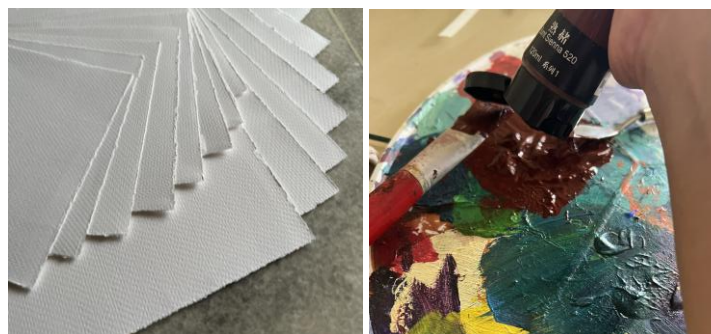


Figure 2. Materials

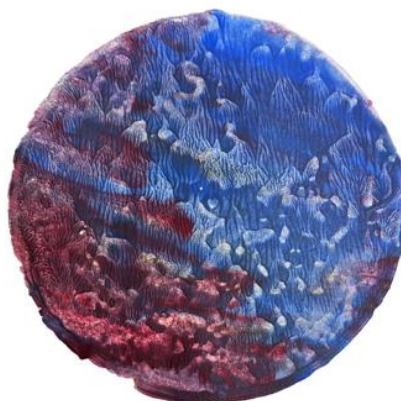


Figure 3. Final Artwork

### ***Artistic and Design Influences***

This artwork is informed by contemporary discourse on monoprinting as a flexible and expressive mode of printmaking that privileges uniqueness, experimentation, and process-driven outcomes. Monoprinting encompasses a wide range of one-off print practices, including monotypes and hybrid techniques, where the artist engages directly with surface, material, and chance. This approach aligns with the artist's emphasis on individuality, emotional expression, and the fluid construction of identity through visual form. Within the Malaysian context, the development of monoprinting practices reflects a growing interest in innovation, material exploration, and alternative printmaking methods, particularly through non-traditional tools and surfaces. The use of a handmade, kitchen-based jelly plate in this work embodies this experimental ethos, situating the practice within both local and contemporary printmaking frameworks.

Visually and conceptually, the work draws influence from Yayoi Kusama, whose immersive use of repetitive patterns and vibrant colour palettes generates emotionally charged and psychologically resonant environments. Kusama's integration of personal experience into visual structure, alongside her use of colour as a vehicle for emotional expression, informs the chromatic and pattern-based strategies employed in *Frozen Whispers*. The use of maroon, purple, and blue reflects a similar engagement with colour as an affective device, where pattern functions as a mapping of internal emotional states.

The work is also informed by the gestural practices of Jackson Pollock, particularly his approach to spontaneous yet intentional mark-making. Pollock's drip technique foregrounds bodily movement, rhythm, and temporal engagement as integral components of visual composition. This sensibility is echoed in the monoprinting process of *Frozen Whispers*, where physical gesture, pressure, and material interaction contribute directly to the formation of organic textures and layered patterns. Collectively, these influences support an artistic practice grounded in expressive spontaneity, embodied process, and a sustainable, hands-on engagement with material experimentation in printmaking.

### **Conclusion**

*Frozen Whispers* demonstrates the interrelationship between sustainability, emotion, and identity through an experimental approach to printmaking. The work advocates eco-conscious studio practice while simultaneously foregrounding introspection and reflective emotional engagement as integral components of artistic production. By integrating biodegradable materials with process-based exploration, the artwork positions sustainability as both a material strategy and a conceptual framework for understanding emotional experience.

The study highlights how meaning and aesthetic value can emerge from subtle, restrained processes rather than overt or monumental forms of expression. In this context, sustainable artmaking is not limited to environmental responsibility but extends to emotional awareness and experiential depth. Future works may further develop this approach by expanding the use of biodegradable and alternative materials as affective tools, enabling new modes of creative inquiry that bridge material practice, emotional reflection, and contemporary visual expression.

## References

- [1] Abdullah, M., Johari, M. H., Aziz, M. N. A., Ahmad, A. K. A., & Rahaman, A. A. (2022). An Overview of The Revolution in Printmaking and Monoprint Application Techniques in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(9), 620-643.
- [2] Abdullah, M., Legino, R., Ramli, S. H., & Kamaruzaman, M. F. (2016). Monoprint Technique: medium and expression. In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Colloquium of Art and Design Education Research (i-CADER 2015)* (pp. 409-419). Springer Singapore.
- [3] Hancill, M. (2023). Monoprint: an opening up of ‘printness’?. *IMPACT Printmaking Journal*, 18-18.
- [4] Maddox Gallery. (n.d.). *5 powerful mark making artists – from stone age to street art*. Maddox Gallery. Retrieved from <https://maddoxgallery.com/news/386-5-powerful-mark-making-artists-from-stone-age-to-street-art/>
- [5] Ultrafabrics. (2023). *Artist Yayoi Kusama’s prolific patterns and colors span decades*. Ultrafabrics Inc. Retrieved from <https://www.ultrafabricsinc.com/color-lab/the-edge/2023/artist-yayoi-kusamas-prolific-patterns-and-colors-span-decades>

## Acknowledgment

The artist would like to express sincere gratitude to the organiser of the iNVENTX Creative Exhibition, Faculty of Creative Multimedia, for providing a meaningful platform to explore and share creative expression through sustainable practices.

## Funding Information

The artist did not receive any funding from external parties for the creation or publication of this artwork.

## **Authors' Bio**

*Nik Syahida Sabri* who is a Master of Fine Arts and Technology graduate, is an art enthusiast. Majoring in Printmaking while she was in bachelor's degree in UiTM Shah Alam, she continues to embrace her printmaking journey in graduate school in 2016 and still actively producing printmaking until now. Her artworks, mostly monoprints were being exhibited in local galleries, are produced based on the experimentation of plate making process which results in beautiful patterns of mark making. The abstract style of her mark making is continued in her latest digital artworks as well as exploration in traditional Printmaking. With eight years of work experience as a Graphic Designer and Desktop Artist in the local publishing companies, direct involvement in the process of creative digital artworks making has never stop her to produce traditional fine artwork as well as digital artworks revolving around her experience with others. She continues to inspire others by serving as a Fine Art Lecturer in UiTM Shah Alam in the present.