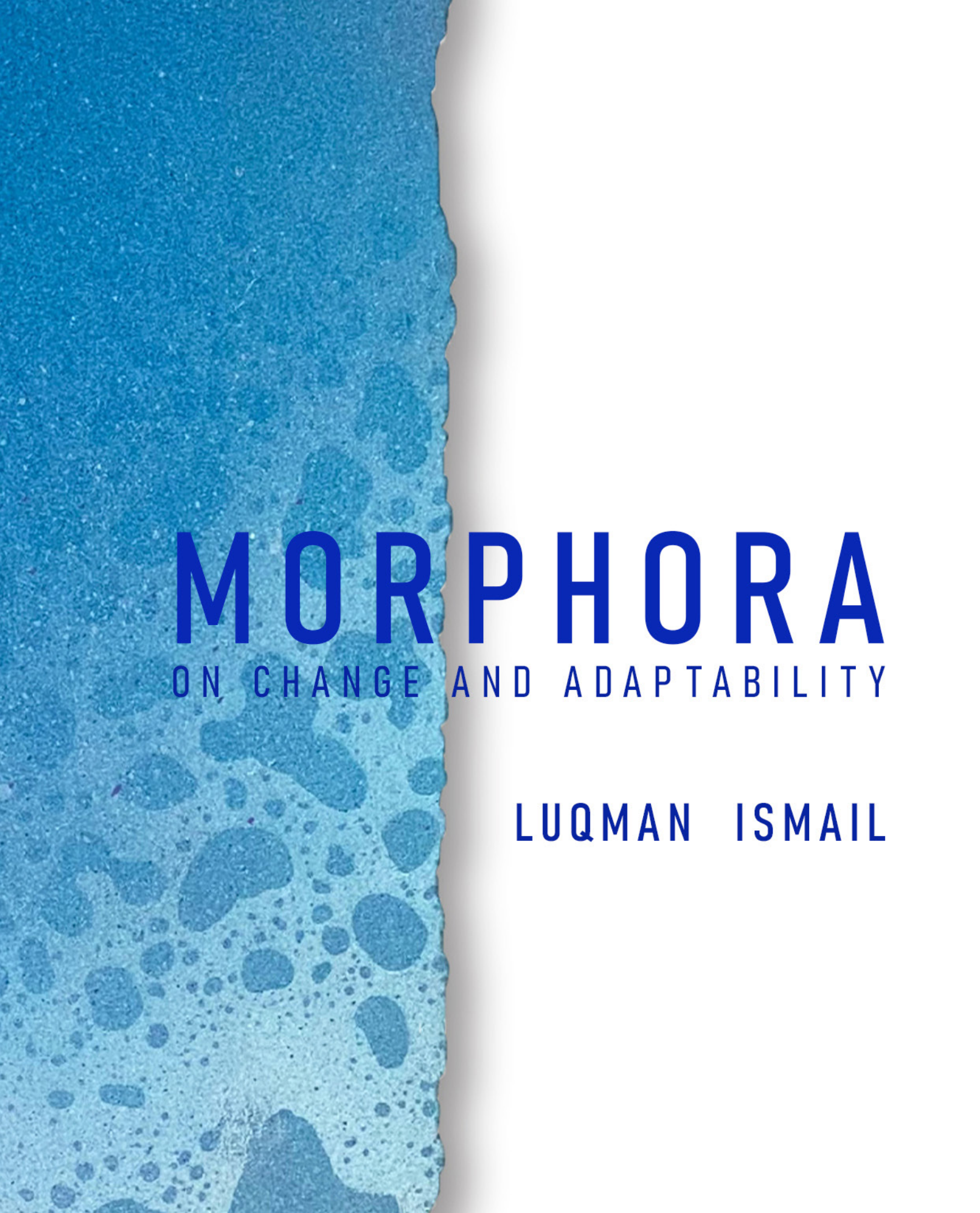




MORPHORA

ON CHANGE AND ADAPTABILITY

LUQMAN ISMAIL

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4 - 25 JULY 2026

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MORPHORA: ON CHANGE AND ADAPTABILITY

by Syakir Hashim

Human beings are often drawn to gaze at the sky when standing in open spaces such as paddy fields, football fields, beaches, or the middle of the ocean. Within these spaces, the sky evokes a sense of tranquility, wonder, and an awareness of our own smallness as human beings. It appears boundless, adorned with clouds, the sun, the moon, and stars that accompany the rhythms of everyday life. Unbeknownst to us, these creations move within an ordered and dynamic system, each fulfilling its role in maintaining the balance of nature. Every time we look at the sky, it is never truly the same. The forms and positions of clouds, sunlight, the moon, and stars are constantly changing from one moment to the next. This dynamic imagery of the sky can be observed in works by Luqman Ismail such as *Silver Line I*, *Silver Line II*, and *Mind in Awe*, which focus on diverse cloud formations and sunlight captured at different moments in time. Yet these works do not merely document clouds through the camera lens. Rather, they elevate clouds as living subjects, shaped through material experimentation and artistic processes that construct their own visual narratives.



Details of Mind in Awe

Morphora refers to a constructed inner realm where everything exists in a state of constant transformation. It reconsiders the presence of clouds as a form of existence that is never fixed, yet always present. Clouds may be understood as collections of microscopic water droplets or ice crystals suspended in the atmosphere, formed when water vapor condenses around tiny particles such as dust or salt in the air. They transform continuously, shifting between softness and density, clarity and obscurity, as though resisting the notion of a permanent identity. Within this instability, clouds become a metaphor for life itself, constantly moving between change and continuity.

Through the concept of *fitrah* within the framework of Al-Ghazali's thought, human beings do not emerge as empty entities detached from purpose. *Fitrah* refers to humanity's innate inclination toward truth, balance, and recognition of the Creator, yet it is not something static or immutable. Al-Ghazali emphasizes that the human self is shaped through inner discipline, habitual practice, and the continuous interaction between knowledge, action, and lived experience. Within this process, *fitrah* may be preserved, refined, or obscured by layers of world experience. Thus, self-formation is not merely a process of becoming something new, but a continual purification of what already exists within.

In the context of contemporary life, this process becomes increasingly complex as individuals confront the pressures of capitalism, which demands speed, productivity, and constant adaptation. Life appears driven by the necessity to continuously change and move faster, leaving little room for inward reflection and the cultivation of *fitrah*. Adaptation is no longer simply a natural process but an ongoing social and economic demand that can distance human beings from the inner equilibrium emphasized in AlGhazali's philosophy. In this sense, human beings resemble clouds shaped by atmospheric pressures and shifting winds. Yet unlike a purely physical phenomenon, human existence contains an inner dimension that continuously interacts with the external world. The world does not merely shape human beings from the outside. It also penetrates inward, while the inner world of the individual reinterprets and gives meaning to external experiences. This relationship is not one directional but reciprocal, with both dimensions of exerting influence upon and shaping one another.

Within the framework of today's world, often described as a metamodern condition, human beings oscillate simultaneously between opposing poles. These include certainty and doubt, stability and uncertainty, meaning and meaninglessness. Experience is no longer linear but layered, fluctuating between various emotional and intellectual states. Through this lens, Al Ghazali's concept of *fitrah* may be reread as an inner point of balance that individuals continually seek amidst these oscillations. It is not a static answer, but a subtle inclination that repeatedly calls human beings back to their center, even as external forces pull them in multiple directions.

In the production of these works through the technique of hydro masking, a method of image transfer in which water functions as an active medium to carry, disperse, and transfer pigments or imagery onto a surface, water serves not only as a technical tool but also as a material possessing its own qualities of flow and visual memory. The technique allows imagery to emerge through the interaction between water, surface, and spray paint in ways that cannot be entirely controlled by Luqman. This opens a space for uncertainty to become part of the creative process. Within an Islamic understanding, this condition serves as a reminder that human beings themselves frequently encounter limitations in controlling the changes that occur within them, whether in relation to emotions, choices, or the course of life. Consequently, there exists a reliance upon divine guidance through prayer, so that one is not left alone to manage oneself. This is reflected in the supplication: "O Allah, do not leave me to myself even for the blink of an eye, and rectify all of my affairs; there is no god but You."

According to Jean-Paul Sartre, human beings exist in a perpetual state of *becoming*, a continuous process of becoming oneself through choices and actions in the world. Identity is never fixed but is formed moment by moment through the meanings individuals create and the ways they respond to the situations they encounter. Freedom, for Sartre, is not merely a right but the fundamental condition of existence. Human beings are "condemned to be free", and every choice inevitably carries responsibility for shaping who they become. From this perspective, adaptation is not a passive response to change but a form of existential choice. Although individuals face external pressures such as social structures, economic systems, and life circumstances, they remain free to determine their attitudes and responses. This freedom transforms adaptation into an act of self-formation rather than a mere reaction to conditions. Yet freedom also carries the burden of responsibility, as every choice contributes to the ongoing construction of the self.



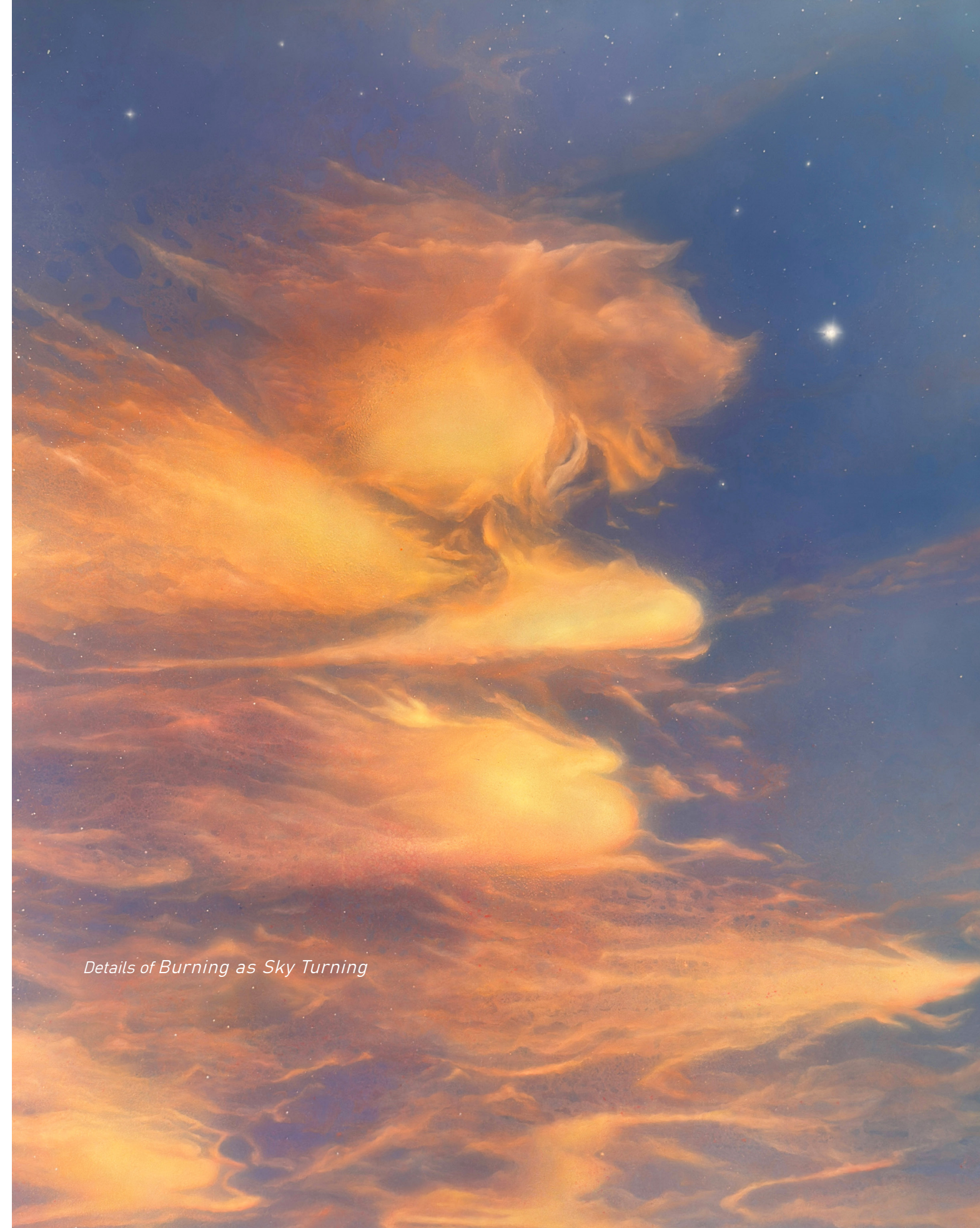
When read through the metaphor of clouds, this concept presents clouds not simply as objects shaped by the wind, but as entities continually becoming through transformation. As seen in *Burning as Sky Turning*, clouds that shift, disperse, and regroup may be understood as images of the Sartrean individual, constantly forming and reforming through responses to the world. Just as clouds never remain in a single form, human beings never cease becoming. Each transformation is not the loss of identity, but an ongoing affirmation of existence within an endless process of adaptation.

This series also marks a transition in Luqman's artistic journey. Experimentation with new materials, surfaces, and visual languages has become part of an ongoing process of formation. Among these developments is the shift from canvas to steel plates in search of a more harmonious relationship between surface, pigment, and technique. Hydro masking proves to be more effective when applied to steel plates than to canvas, producing smoother and more subtle gradients in the creation of cloud formations and their surrounding atmosphere. Luqman employs water as an agent that softens the rigidity of the steel surface, transforming its hardness into a sense of softness and buoyancy within his cloud imagery. By using metal as the primary medium, he investigates the relationship between permanence and change. Consequently, metal serves not merely as a support for the image, but as a site that challenges notions of permanence through continuous processes of transformation and becoming. This transformation, however, does not represent a departure from his earlier works. Rather, it reflects a continuity of artistic exploration, much like clouds that move and evolve without ever becoming truly detached from the same sky.

Ultimately, these works invite us to view adaptation not as the loss of an original form, but as a mode through which existence sustains itself amidst change. Just as clouds never cease to transform yet remain recognizable as clouds, human beings continue to move through experiences, external pressures driven by the logic of speed and capitalism, and the dynamics of an inner world that constantly seeks to preserve the balance of *fitrah*. At the same time, they remain dependent upon divine guidance and providence in confronting the limitations of the self within the ceaseless currents of change.

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Details of Burning as Sky Turning

ARTIST STATEMENT

This series reinterprets the physical presence of clouds, reflecting on their quiet resilience and constant transformation. Clouds shift form endlessly and never fixed, yet always present. In this way, they become a metaphor for adaptability and change.

My process of hydro-masking plays a central role in shaping this narrative. The technique uses water as an active medium, carrying its own physical memory onto the surface. This connection between material and subject creates an organic unity: the same element that forms clouds is embedded within the making of their image. Through this approach, the works are not only representations of clouds, but also extensions of their behaviour. Alongside this, my exploration of steel plate surfaces introduces a dialogue between strength and vulnerability; although steel is commonly associated with toughness, its bent corners reveal an unexpected softness, reflecting the fragile resilience that exists within every being.

Conceptually, the series explores how individuals are shaped through transformation, development, and environment. Just as clouds respond to surrounding conditions, human identity evolves through external and internal influences.

This body of work also reflects my own artistic progression. It marks a shift from my previous series, as I experiment with new materials, surfaces, and visual language. The process mirrors the subject which are fluid, responsive, and continuously unfolding.





ARTWORK

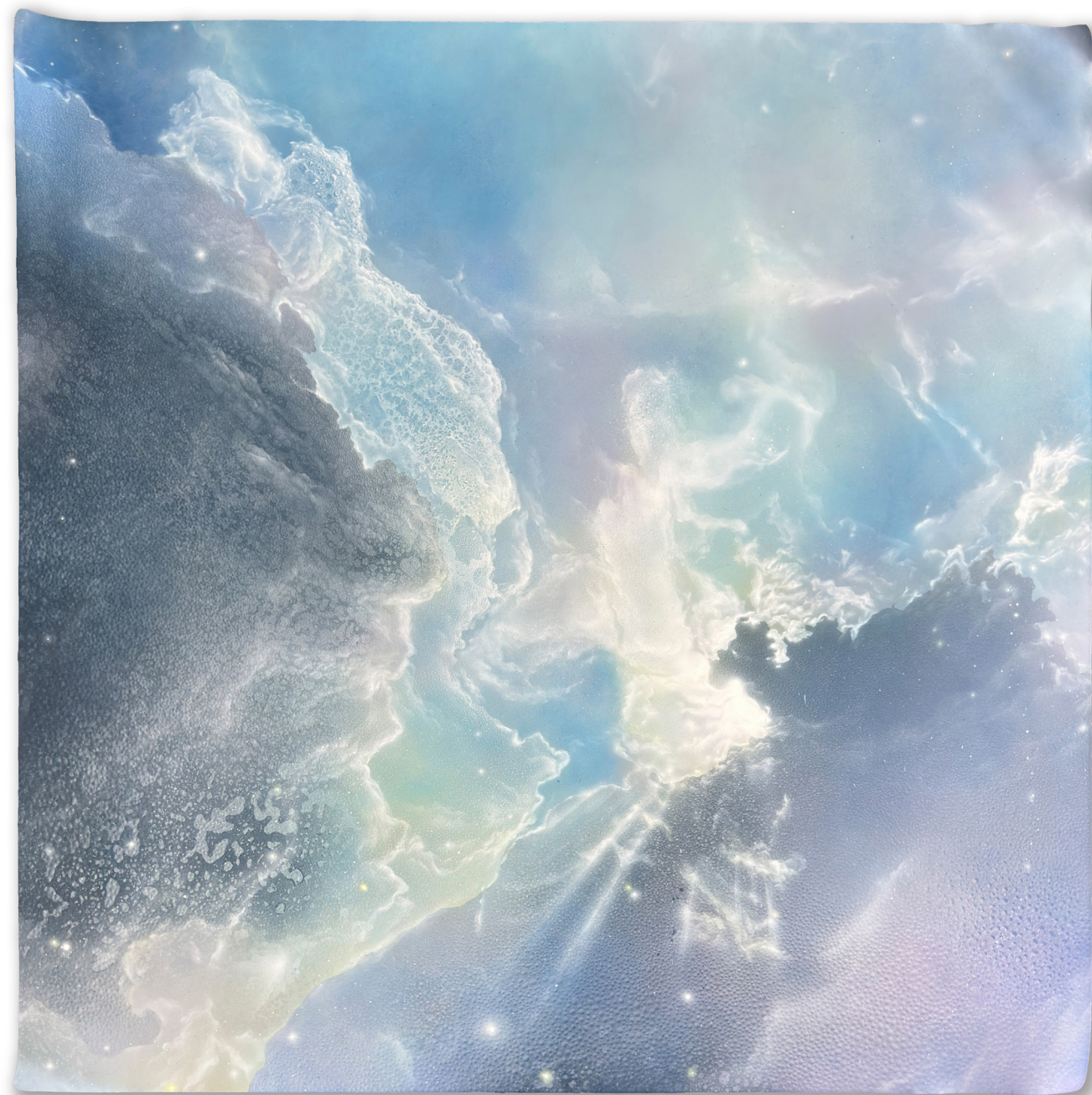


Nephophilia

122 x 183 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Burning as Sky Turning
122 x 122 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Hope

122 x 122 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Flow Away

60 x 122 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Dissolving

30.5 x 91.5 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Wandering

30.5 x 91.5 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Tumbling

30.5 x 91.5 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Weaving

30.5 x 91.5 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



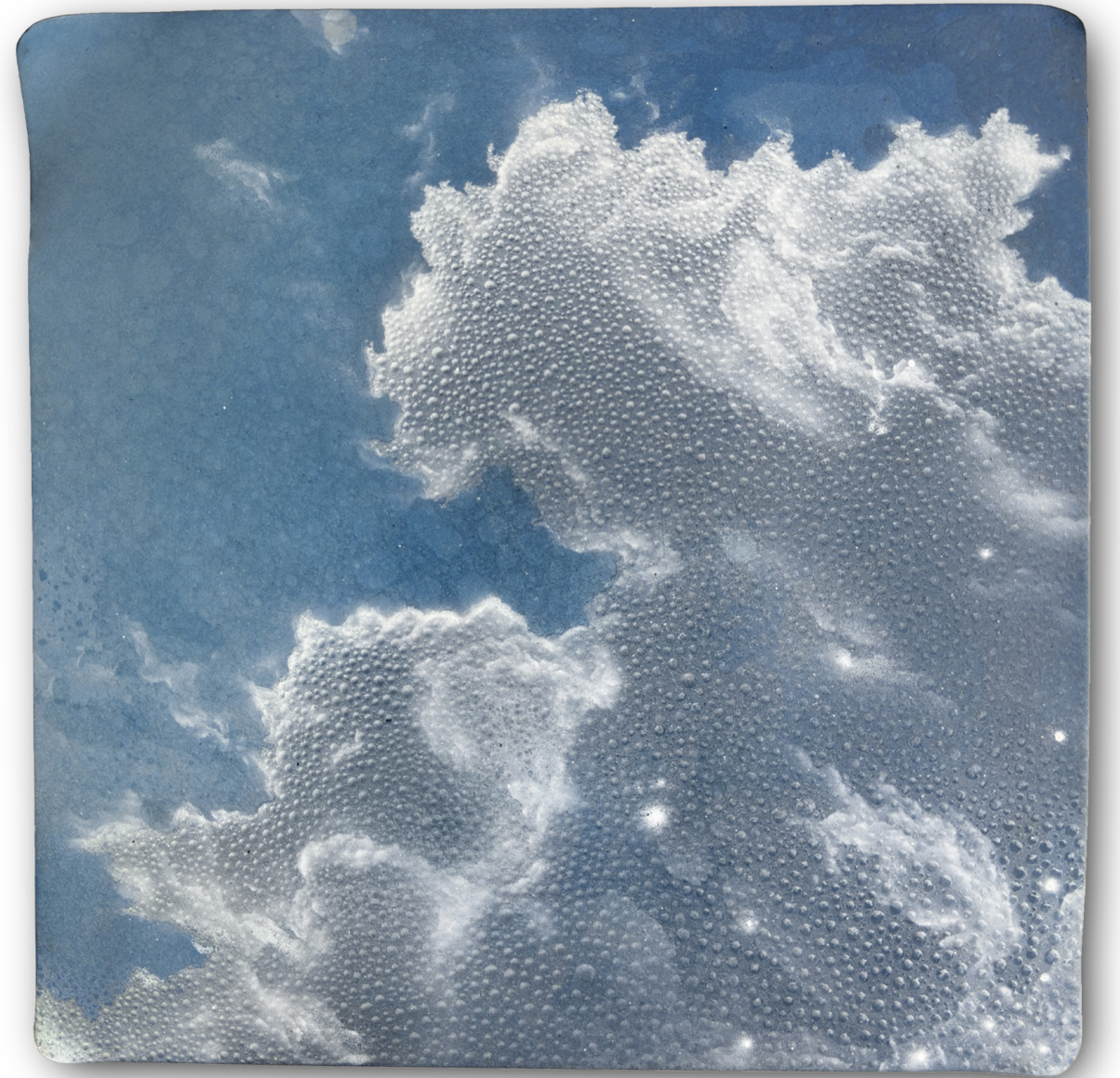
Mind in Awe

31 x 46 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Heart-shaped Cloud

31 x 31 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



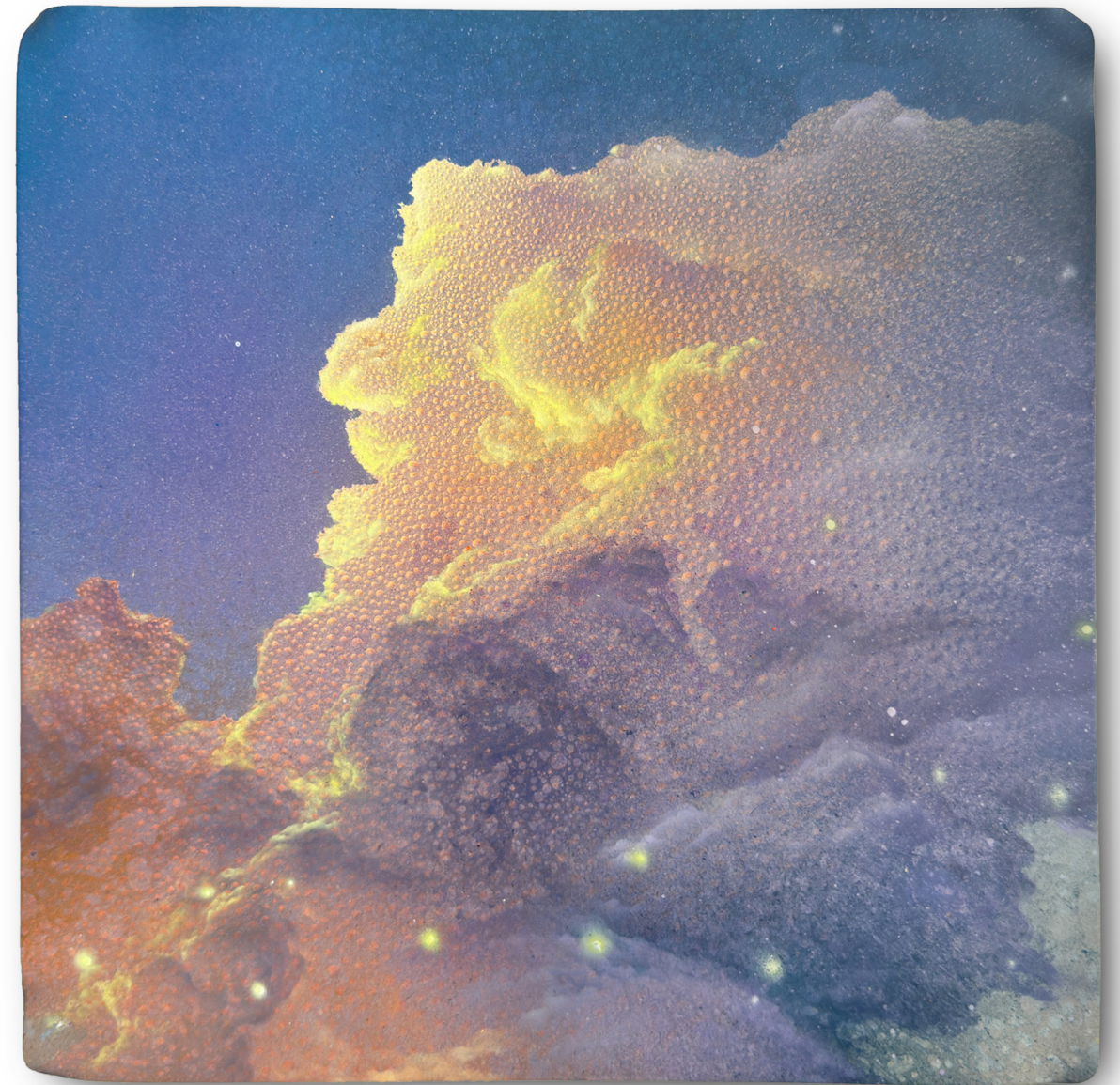
Cumulus of Times: Noon Light

30.5 x 30.5 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



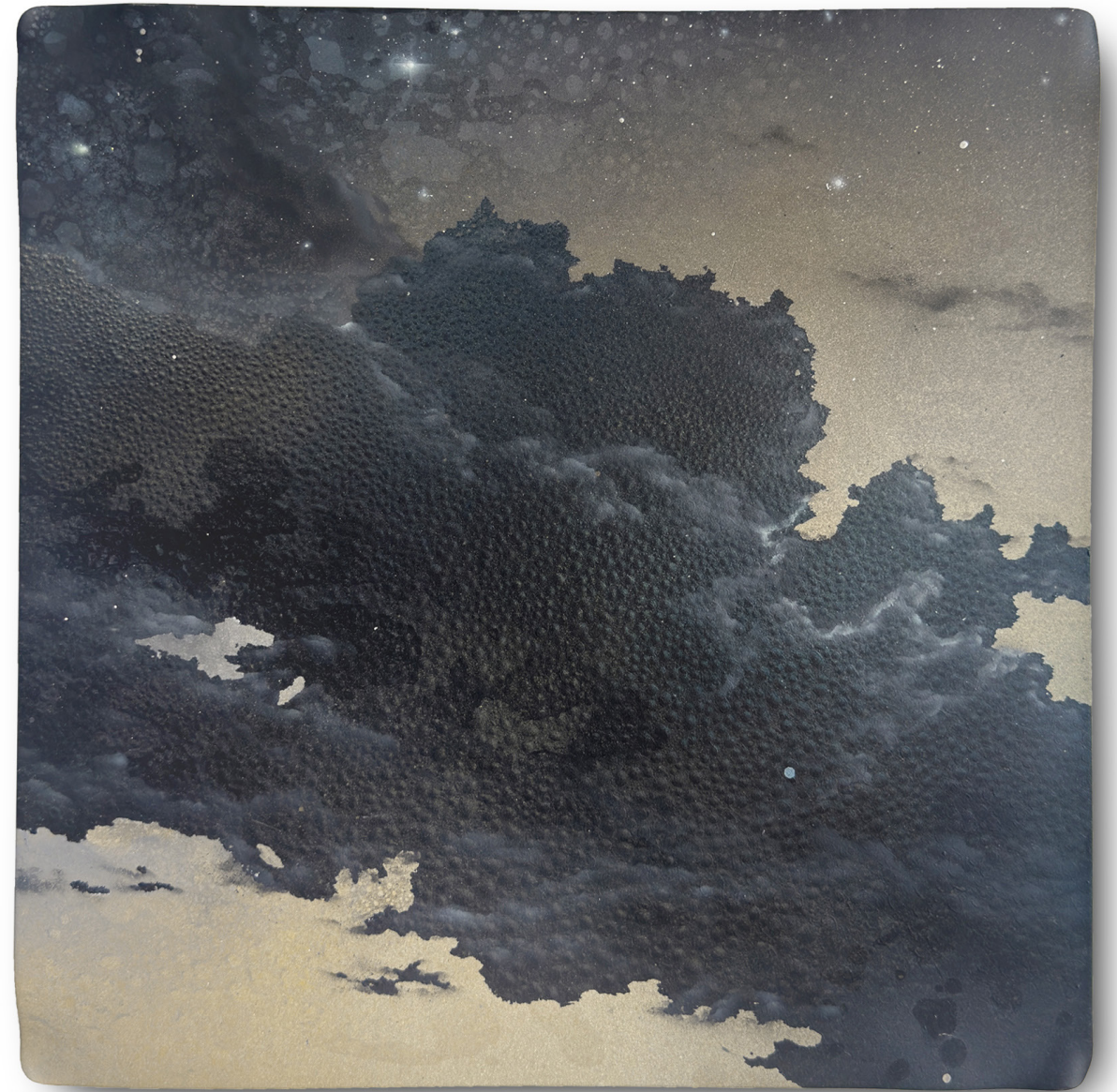
Cumulus of Times: Daylight

30.5 x 30.5 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Cumulus of Times: Afterglow

30.5 x 30.5 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Cumulus of Times: Twilight

30.5 x 30.5 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



Cumulus of Times: Moonlight

30.5 x 30.5 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Steel Plate | 2026



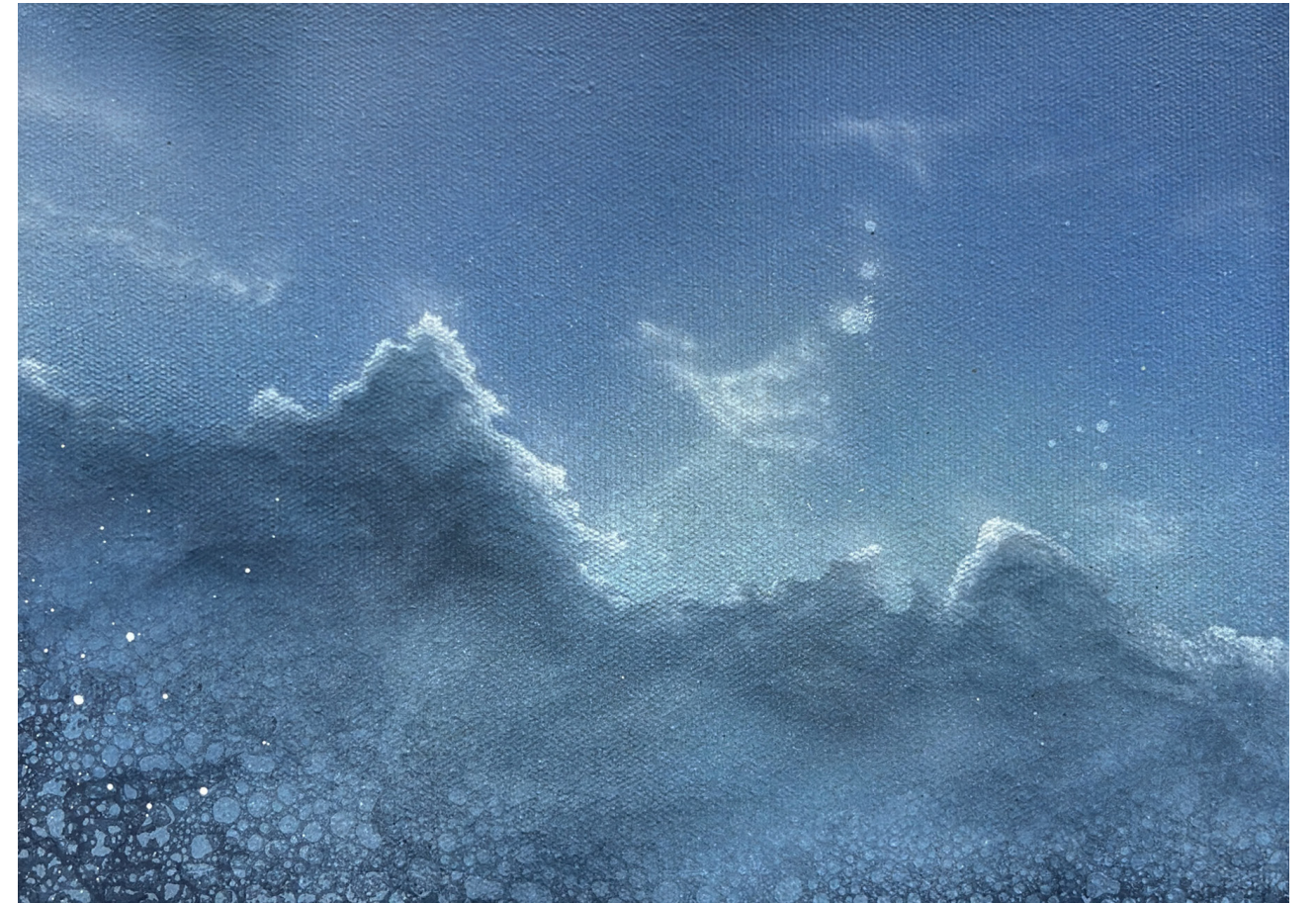
Witness of Sunset

36 x 28 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Canvas | 2026



Silver Line I

22 x 31 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Canvas | 2026



Silver Line II

22 x 31 cm | Hydro Masking Using Spray Paint on Canvas | 2026



LUQMAN ISMAIL
B. 2002 in Kelantan, Malaysia

EDUCATION
2025 Bachelor (Hons.) Fine Arts, Majoring in Printmaking, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
2023 Diploma in Fine Art, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Machang, Kelantan, Malaysia.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS
2026 Morphora: On Change and Adaptability, G13 Project Room, Malaysia

GROUP EXHIBITIONS
2026 Art Future 2026 Taipei with G13 Gallery, Grand Hyatt Hotel, Taiwan.
ACCESS KL Art Fair, Kloé Hotel, Malaysia
2025 SCALED-DOWN @ Yap Ah Shak House, G13 Gallery, Malaysia
Ephemeral, Segaris Art Center, Selangor, Malaysia.
1000 Tiny Artworks, Hin Bus Depot, Penang, Malaysia.
Art Bazaar 2025: “Camaraderie”, Bank Negara Malaysia Museum and Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Raw Real Released, Capital Fine Art, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.
This & That, Art+ Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
International Blue Print Red Edition, Galeri Seni ILHAM, UITM Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.
Collective Show, Else Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Kecik- Kecik Group Show 2025, Hin Bus Depot, Penang, Malaysia.
7 Ways of Seeing 2025, CULT Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Hin Bus Depot, Penang, Malaysia.
‘The Graduate’ Printmaking by The UiTM, Chetak 17, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
LOCALS ONLY! 2025, Taksu Gallerie, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Nuansa Fine Art Degree Show, GMBB, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
2024 Rantai Art Festival 2024, Rekascape, Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia.
International BLUEPRINT Show 2024, Port Chetak Studio, Shah Alam Selangor, Malaysia
2023 Bakat Mahasiswa 2023, Land Art: Ikatan Kreativiti Luar Ruang, Pantai Chenang, Kedah, Malaysia.
Wangsa Exhibition, Galeri Prima, Bangsar, Balai Berita, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Kairosclerosis Documentation Exhibition, (Tun Abdul Razak Library (PTAR I) UITM Shah Alam, Malaysia.
Continue Diploma Show, UiTM Machang Kelantan, Malaysia
2019 Art Club Exhibition, (Majlis Badan Muafakat MRSM), MRSM Tumpat, Kelantan, Malaysia

AWARDS & ACHIVEMENTS
2024 Consolation - Merdeka Suka Cipta: Pertandingan Lukisan Figuratif, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
2023 Winner - Cabaran Grafiti KeTSA - UbeS, Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia.



ABOUT G13 GALLERY:

Established in 2010, G13 Gallery is a leading contemporary art gallery based in Malaysia, dedicated to showcasing innovative and thought-provoking works by artists from Malaysia and Southeast Asia.

Through curated exhibitions, artist residencies and international collaborations, G13 Gallery actively shapes contemporary art discourse while fostering cross-border partnerships. As a hub for artistic dialogue, the gallery strengthens the visibility of regional art by participating in international and regional art fairs, providing artists with opportunities to expand their reach and engage with diverse audiences.

Beyond exhibitions, G13 Gallery supports scholarly research and publications that contribute to the evolving discourse of contemporary art in Asia. With a commitment to artistic excellence and meaningful engagement, the gallery continues to play a vital role in shaping and advancing the contemporary art scene in Malaysia and the region.

Published in conjunction with the exhibition :

Morphora: On Change and Adaptability
by Luqman Ismail
4 - 25 July 2026

Publisher:
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