

MUNKHTSETSEG JALKHAAJAV (known as Mugi) is one of the leading contemporary artists in Mongolia.

The artist

Munkhtsetseg Jalkhaajav is born in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in 1967. She graduated from the Art Institute of Ulaanbaatar (1987). Then she studied at the Academy of Fine Arts and Minsk Theater (1989-1993). Not approving the system of studies under a socialist regime, she chose not to graduate.

Artwork

Munkhtsetseg Jalkhaajav has sought to move away from communist propaganda and revisits the elements of the somewhat eroded Mongolian culture. Her work talks about her experiences in childhood, Mongolian traditional medicine, the wisdom of tales and legends and the power of nature. The new freedom in her country led her to express her emotions through the description of women. More specifically, she worked on artistic works inspired by female anatomy with references to Mongolian concepts. She explains that women in Mongolia have always been equal to men, so they do not try to impose a 'feminist' point of view. "I express what I think and feel. The Mongols have always respected women as equals. Women have the right to manage the household and the state. When men in the past went to war, women controlled everything. In the traditional life men have to listen to women. That's why all my paintings show the power of women".

Munkhtsetseg Jalkhaajav explores issues of spirituality, birth and death, female sexuality and motherhood. She believes in notions of reincarnation through shamanism and Buddhism. Currently she focuses on the research or understanding of the air in the human body system, with the idea that the air is the main force of the human being, responsible for all human movements.

Munkhtsetseg Jalkhaajav works with oil painting, collage on paper, silk stuck on raw canvas, bronze and also sculpture. For her sculptures, she was mainly influenced by the Japanese Yayoi Kusama in New York in 2001. She creates shapes and faces with materials such as stretch fabric, yarn, sponge, mirror, fabric and silk.