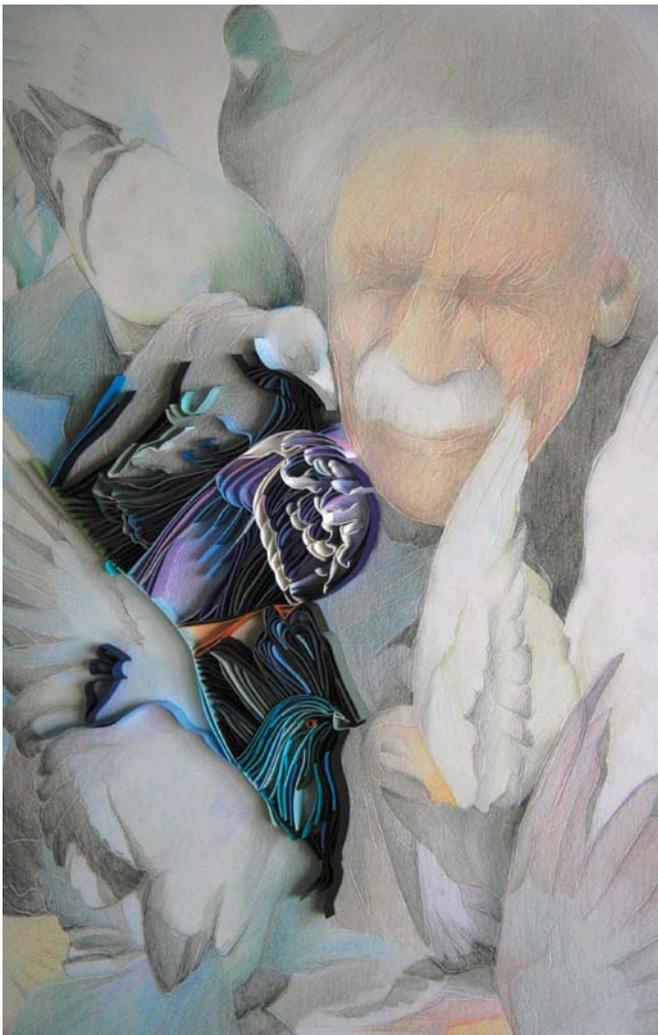




Loves Doves
Part of a series of self-initiated artworks exploring portraiture and the theme of death in art. Photography by John Ross.



there is no place for errors. I need to have a very clear idea about what I'm doing from the beginning. However, there is always room to experiment when the actual paper work starts because sometimes it is difficult to see what will work best at the outset. Once the paper artwork is ready, it is photographed. This is a very important stage because lighting can make or break this type of paper artwork: It shouldn't be complex, but there are certain "no-nos" when it comes to photography.

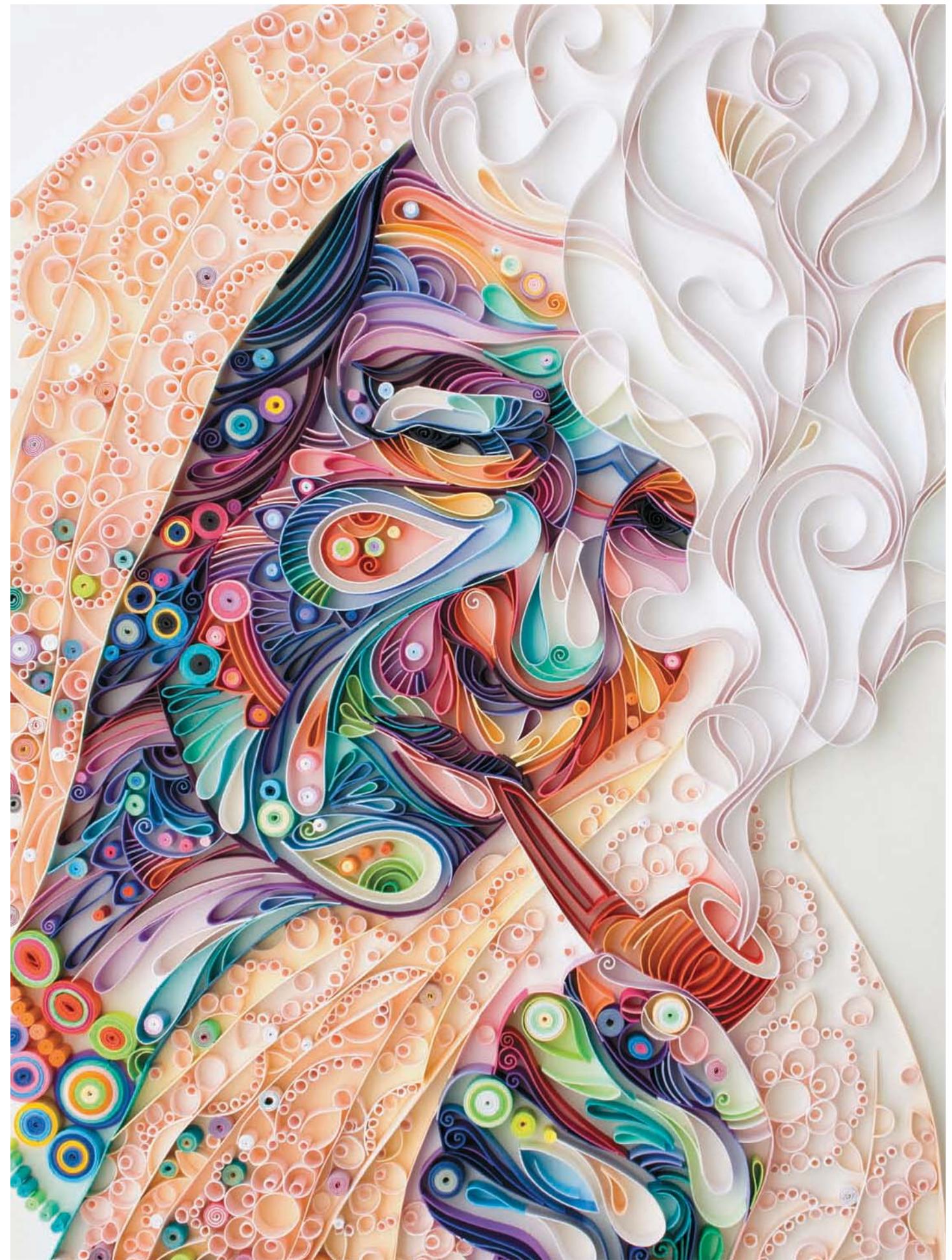
What tools do you use to create your work? Are there any particular paper stocks that you favor?

I use a cocktail straw and little cocktail sticks for rolling the paper strips. (I didn't know that there are specially designed tools available when I taught myself to shape the paper strips.) I use lots of different types of paper, but in general, I prefer heavy ones that are still flexible enough to be rolled without creasing or exfoliating.

You've recently been developing a range of personal works that take a more artistic approach focusing around portraiture. What was your inspiration for this series?

I'm happy to get as many commissions as I do, but after a while, I started to think that I was missing something, so that's why I decided to dedicate some of my time to personal work. I've chosen to work with portraiture because I'm always curious to find out what can and cannot be said within the boundaries of a chosen medium and material—if it is possible to successfully convey meaning and emotions. And what is more challenging than a person's face?







Far Left
Gypsy
 Personal project.
 Photography by
 John Ross.

Left
Babushka
 Personal project.
 Photography by
 John Ross.

Very true! Most of the characters in your personal portraits are based on elderly people. What led you to choose these particular characters to illustrate?

There are two main reasons, I think. One is related to the theme of death in art; there are hundreds and hundreds of works of art devoted to the subject. My personal interest is in the aspect of approaching death—old age. I'm fascinated by it; it worries me. I have really strong, mixed feelings about it that make me look through photographs of old people in a search for inspiration for my personal work. Another reason is material- and technique-related: The edge-glued paper strips are a great way of depicting the wrinkles. For a younger face, I would probably look for a slightly different paper treatment, but I'm definitely going to attempt that at some point too.

What would you say have been your most challenging projects so far?

In general, I enjoy projects most when I'm given creative freedom to follow my own vision and direction; the more rigid and controlling the client, the more stressful any cooperation becomes, and often the result is not as good as when I am given more freedom and control. I suppose this is a common thing among designers and artists.

Looking toward the future, in what direction would you like to take your work?

I would like to explore the fine-art direction a bit more, and maybe look into mass production. Also animation. I have many different plans. I'm sure that the most exciting project in my career is yet to come.