

# Picar Portfolio

Selected Works

Visual Artist

August 31, 2024

# Picar

**Born in Venezuela, Picar is a multidisciplinary artist whose work branches out into sculpture, painting and installations. His journey into art serves as a contemplative exploration of life, death, and the perpetual cycle of nature.**

Picar's art is characterized by the use of organic and discarded materials—elements sourced from the forest, salvaged wood, fallen leaves, to name but a few—which are thoughtfully juxtaposed against the detritus of human consumption. This intentional pairing goes beyond mere aesthetics, reflecting on the deep symbiosis between humanity and nature. Employing colors inspired by the forest's seasonal shifts, his work underscores the transformative journey of life, emphasizing our ongoing bond with the living, decaying, and regenerating processes of nature.

At the heart of his artistic expression is the prominent use of red clay, symbolizing the industrialization that has shaped modern society. While bricks and mortar have been fundamental in building the physical structures of our contemporary world, Picar reinterprets these elements, integrating organic shapes to question and redefine our built environments. This approach highlights the stark contrast between human-made objects and the organic, cyclical processes of the natural world.

In response to the current ecological crisis, Picar's work draws parallels to the existential challenges faced by humanity, advocating for a renewed reverence for our planet. He champions the beauty found in decay, such as the life cycle of a leaf, as a metaphor for nature's inherent cycles, underscoring the importance of endings as precursors to new beginnings.

Picar's work invites reflection on our legacy and our inevitable return to the soil, highlighting our transient yet significant role within the vast tapestry of nature. It is a call to recognize our part in this cycle, to value and protect the world that nurtures us all.

<b>Born</b>	<b>1980</b>	Maracaibo, Venezuela
<b>Education</b>	<b>2001-2009</b>	Camberwell College of Arts (London, MA Visual Arts) London College of Communication (London, BA Illustration) Werbeakademie (Austria, Diploma in Graphic Design)
<b>Master Classes</b>	<b>2019-2024</b>	4-Day course with ceramic artist Kiho Kang (South Korea) 5-Day course with internationally acclaimed artist Martin Mc William (Germany) 4-Day course and field studies with Anja Slapnicar—wild clay exploring geology (Slovenia) 6-Month apprenticeship with ceramic artist Jean Pierre (Mauritius)
<b>Exhibitions</b>	<b>2009-2023</b>	Fragile Balance, IFM (Rose Hill, Mauritius) Samudra Art Prize (Port Louis, Mauritius) Tamarin Arts Center (Tamarin, Mauritius) Caudan Arts Center (Port Louis, Mauritius) Borderlines, The Third Dot (Port Louis, Mauritius) Thirteen, The Third Dot (Port Louis, Mauritius) Porlwi by Nature (Port Louis, Mauritius) Porlwi by Light (Port Louis, Mauritius) Yaam Gallery (Berlin, Germany) Bloom Art Fair (Koeln, Germany) Museumsquartier (Vienna, Austria) Sneakerness (Vienna, Austria) RunVie Festival (Vienna, Austria) Pratersauna Artspace (Vienna, Austria) Common Ground Gallery (Berlin, Germany) Sneakerking (Frankfurt, Germany) Altest Arresthaus (Mayen, Germany) Nuthouse Gallery (Karlsruhe, Germany) Stroke Urban Art Fair (Munich, Germany) Pretty Portal Gallery (Duesseldorf, Germany) Camberwell College of Arts (London, United Kingdom) You-Me (Osaka, Japan) Dreamspace Gallery (London, United Kingdom)



## P01 → Fragile Balance

Albert Schweitzer once said, “Never say there is nothing beautiful in the world anymore. There is always something to make you wonder in the shape of a tree, the trembling of a leaf.” Trees are vital to our environment, contributing in myriad ways by providing oxygen, improving air quality, moderating climate, conserving water, preserving soil, and supporting wildlife. Through the process of photosynthesis, trees absorb carbon dioxide and release the oxygen that sustains life on Earth. But beyond their physical benefits, every tree carries a story, a narrative deeply rooted in cultural, spiritual, and ecological significance.

The ancient symbol of the tree represents more than just a living organism. Across various cultures, it embodies physical and spiritual nourishment, transformation, liberation, growth, and resurrection. In many folk religions, trees are revered as the homes of spirits, a belief that is particularly strong in Japanese folklore. According to this tradition, Kodama are spirits that inhabit trees. Trees housing Kodama are considered sacred, and cutting them down is thought to bring misfortune. To protect these revered trees, they are often marked with Shimenawa, lengths of rice straw or hemp rope used in the Shinto religion for ritual purification. Shimenawa ropes are typically adorned with paper streamers and signify that the space within is sacred or ritually pure. These ropes are commonly found at Shinto shrines, Torii gates, and sacred landmarks, acting as wards against evil spirits. Trees believed to house Kodama are often encircled with Shimenawa to prevent them from being cut down, thereby avoiding the misfortune that would follow.

The story of “Fragile Balance” began in May 2021 as an homage to a 60-year-old dead Tecoma tree that was about to be cut down at the French Institute of Mauritius. The project draws inspiration from the Japanese mythology of Kodama. The Eastern belief that each tree could house a spirit deserving of reverence laid the foundation for the art installation “Fragile Balance.”

## P01 → Fragile Balance



Each tree tells a story. Each tree has a spirit. The installation extends to recognize the inherent beauty of this 60-year-old, dead Tecoma tree, which once stood proud at the French Institute of Mauritius (IFM). It represents a mean of honoring the tree, which had been part of the building for six decades, and acknowledges the spiritual significance and physical contribution it made during its lifespan. Although the tree had to be cut down for safety reasons, rather than simply disposing of the material—as is often done—the installation seeks to preserve its story, ensuring that its legacy would not be lost. The idea of humans honoring the dead becomes an important aspect, translated to a tree and emphasizing that each tree, whether living or dead, carries a spirit.

**French Institute of Mauritius (IFM)**  
Rose Hill, Mauritius

**2021**

## P01 → Fragile Balance



Whilst researching and observing trees in nature, analyzing their presence and the effects on humans, a question emerges: What gives trees their sense of life and beauty, despite their static form? The answer seems to lie in movement, particularly the gentle swaying of leaves. Watching how energy transfers from one part to hundreds, then thousands, feels magical. This motion not only has a therapeutic effect but also gives the impression that trees are communicating with their surrounding. It inspired the development of circular spheres—like leaves on a tree, the spheres are fragile, responding to wind and light, fulfilling essential roles in the living organism. Since dead trees feel static, having shed their natural foliage during their dying process, it felt natural to conceptualize an installation which is dynamic—feeling alive, thus carrying a soul.

**French Institute of Mauritius (IFM)**  
Rose Hill, Mauritius

**2021**

## P01 → Fragile Balance



Of all possible shapes, the circle is considered the most perfect, both from a mathematical standpoint and a spiritual one. An endless loop with no beginning or end, it represents the cyclical nature of life and death, as well as completion, unity, wholeness—it has been considered a significant shape across various cultures and history.

5734 circular plates, each carved from the reclaimed wood of the Tecoma tree, are assembled to form 2867 moving spheres. The physically demanding task of cutting each plate by hand, along with the extensive woodworking required to create an installation of this scale, felt like a ceremonial endeavor. The labor involved was intended as a gesture of respect toward the dead tree. Despite their fragility, these spheres, much like leaves, respond dynamically to environmental stimuli such as wind and light, underscoring their critical role within the broader living system of the installation.

**French Institute of Mauritius (IFM)**  
Rose Hill, Mauritius

**2021**

# P01 → Fragile Balance



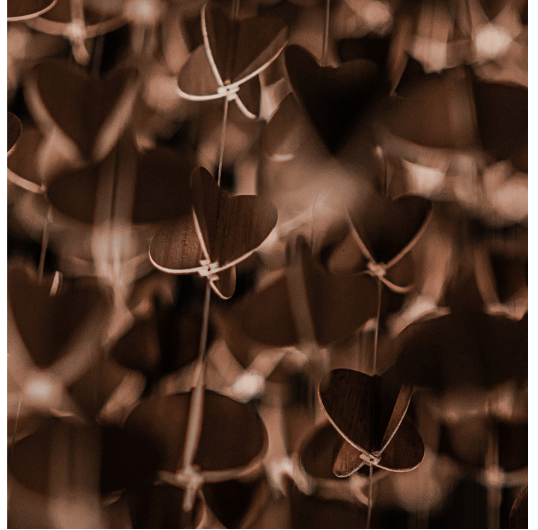
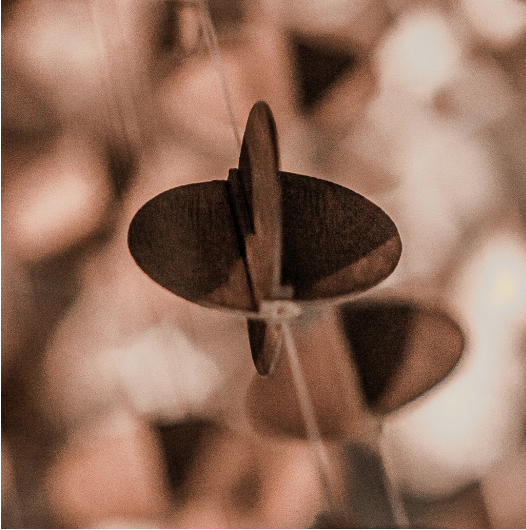
The 2867 spheres, naturally coated in two color tones, carefully balanced on 169 lines, laid out in a Fibonacci pattern to form a Shimenawa rope, serve as a bridge between our physical and ethereal realms, reminding us of the profound connections that sustain us. The installation moves, it carries a life of its own. A symphony of individual parts working in unison to maintain balance.

**French Institute of Mauritius (IFM)**  
Rose Hill, Mauritius

2021



## P01 → Fragile Balance



Stretching over 10 meters in height, the installation points from the ground upwards, with no particular beginning or end as it floats in space. Not only does it pay respect to the memory of a single tree but also crafts a universal narrative of the enduring cycle of nature and the indelible marks trees leave on the human consciousness.

**French Institute of Mauritius (IFM)**  
Rose Hill, Mauritius

**2021**

# P01 → Fragile Balance



The installation engages the soul in a dialogue about the fragility and resilience of life, urging viewers to reflect on our place within the natural world and the profound cycles which define our existence. The visual and metaphysical journey serves as a reminder of nature's delicate balance and our responsibility to preserve it, making of every sphere a bridge to understanding vital balance—one which connects and sustains us all.

**French Institute of Mauritius (IFM)**  
Rose Hill, Mauritius

2021



## P02 → For whatever we lose, it's always ourselves we find in the sea.

Coral bleaching refers to a phenomenon that occurs when corals, which are marine invertebrates forming extensive reef structures, expel the symbiotic algae (zooxanthellae) living within their tissues. These algae are crucial because they provide the coral with food through photosynthesis and give them their vibrant colors. When corals experience stress—often due to elevated sea temperatures, pollution, or changes in light—they expel these algae, causing the coral to turn white or “bleach.” While coral can survive a bleaching event, they are under increased stress and are more susceptible to disease. If the stressful conditions persist, the corals may die. Coral bleaching is a significant environmental concern, as it threatens the biodiversity and health of coral reef ecosystems, which are critical to marine life and human economies.

The viewer's interaction and engagement with the piece “For whatever we lose, it's always ourselves we find in the sea” (Quote: E. E. Cummings) serves as a metaphor for the interdependence between humans, the oceans, and coral structures. The piece alludes to a society deeply reliant on capitalist progress and highlights our unawareness of the waste we produce in the oceans and the coral bleaching that results. The imperfections in the piece reveal the damaging reality of global warming and the significant impact humans have on our oceans. The jarring flow of the installation aims to confront viewers with the harsh reality, encouraging them to recognize the broader role humanity plays in environmental destruction and the critical importance of the oceans to our survival.

**Sculpture**  
Concrete, Chalk Paint, Plaster, Color Pigments  
60×60 cm

**Caudan Arts Center**  
Port Louis, Mauritius  
Samudra Art Prize Winner (Best Artist)

2022

P02 → For whatever we lose, it's always ourselves we find  
in the sea.



**Sculpture**  
Concrete, Chalk Paint, Plaster, Color Pigments  
60×60 cm

**Caudan Arts Center**  
Port Louis, Mauritius  
Samudra Art Prize Winner (Best Artist)

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**Sculpture**  
Concrete, Chalk Paint, Plaster, Color Pigments  
60 × 60 cm

**Caudan Arts Center**  
Port Louis, Mauritius  
Samudra Art Prize Winner (Best Artist)

**2022**

## P03 → Landscapes

This ongoing series of small-scale, experimental organic “Landscapes” serves as a visual diary exploring form and surface. By experimenting with various firing techniques and surface treatments, this body of work reveals what lies hidden beneath or between the cracks, mirroring the concept of what we, as humans, often conceal within ourselves.



**Sculpture 24035**

Hand-Built Sculpture  
White Raku Clay  
Gas Fired 1100°C  
28x21 cm

**Studio Work in Progress**  
Styria, Austria

**2024**



P03 → Landscapes



**Sculpture 24036**

Hand-Built Sculpture  
Yellow Stoneware Clay  
Wood Fired 1280°C  
30×30 cm

**Studio Work in Progress**  
Styria, Austria

**2024**

## P04 → Objects

Ongoing series of objects exploring various hand-building techniques, as well as the surface and form of different pieces. By treating the surfaces with diverse firing methods, these objects serve as a visual diary.

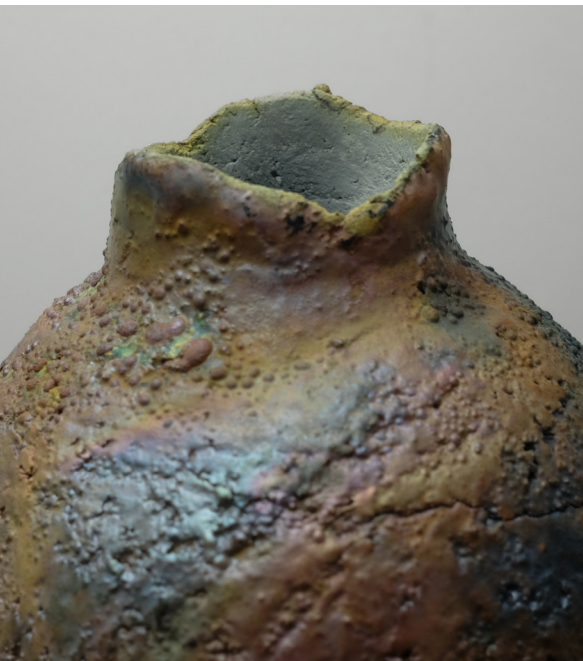
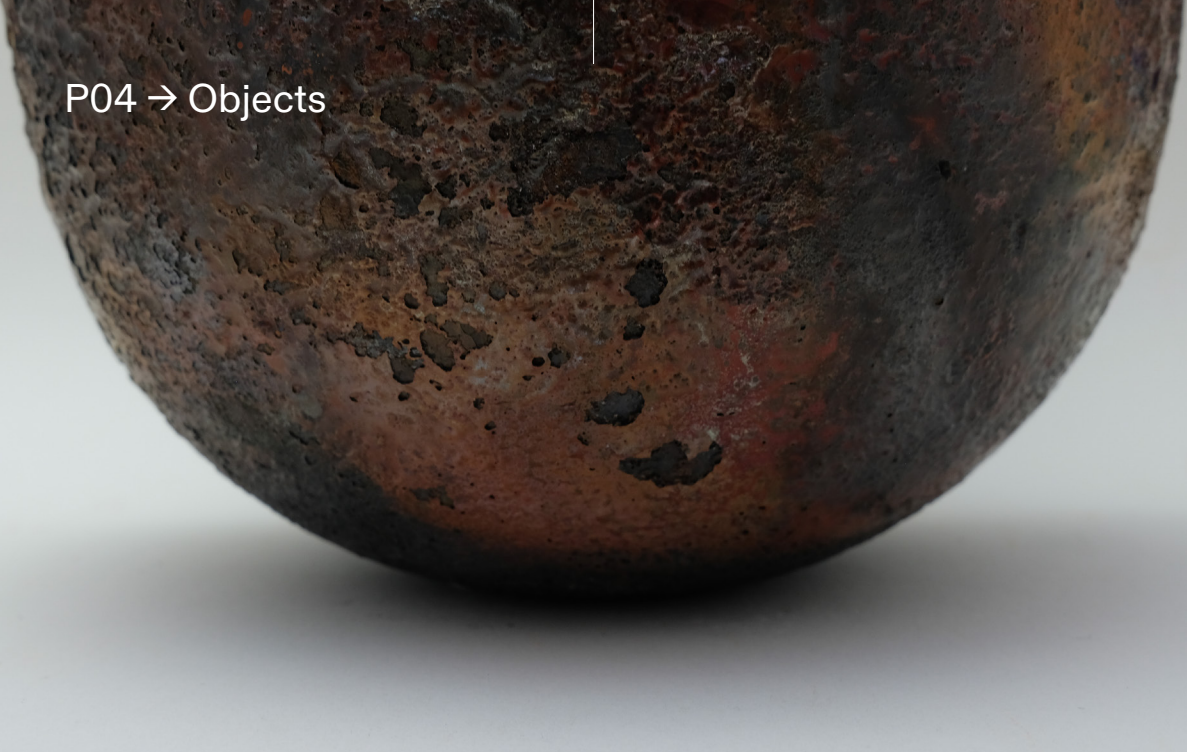


**Object 24067**  
Hand-Built Vase  
White Raku Clay  
Gas Fired, 1100°C  
30×12 cm

**Calienna**  
Vienna, Austria

**2024**

P04 → Objects



**Object 24067**  
Hand-Built Vase  
White Raku Clay  
Gas Fired, 1100°C  
30×12 cm



**Calienna**  
Vienna, Austria

2024



**Object 24047**  
Wheel-Thrown Vase  
Grey Stoneware Clay  
Electric Fired, 1230°C  
White Matt Glaze  
12×30 cm

**Calienna**  
Vienna, Austria

**2024**

P04 → Objects



**Object 24047**  
Wheel-Thrown Vase  
Grey Stoneware Clay  
Electric Fired, 1230°C  
White Matt Glaze  
12×30 cm

**Calienna**  
Vienna, Austria

**2024**

## P05 → What Lies Beneath

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that global wood production in 2023 was around 4.3 billion cubic meters. This figure includes wood used for various purposes such as construction, paper production, and fuel. The increase from previous years highlights the ongoing demand for wood resources worldwide.

In the series “What Lies Beneath,” black paper is utilized to delve into themes of concealment and the hidden aspects of existence. The technique involves meticulously removing the top layer with a scalpel to reveal underlying elements such as tree branches, bark, and leaves. The choice of black paper symbolizes mourning, respect for the deceased, and the depth of concealed realities. This approach serves as a metaphor for the layers of human experience and the inner life of nature, suggesting that nature is profoundly embedded within us. The repurposing of waste material and offcuts to create the leaves, further highlights the significance of recycling and underscores the dynamic and often hidden life of trees.

P05 → What Lies Beneath



**Paper Carving Artwork**  
Hand-peeled Paper  
FCS-certified, 300 gsm

**The Third Dot**  
Port Louis, Mauritius

2018



P05 → What Lies Beneath



**Paper Carving Artwork**  
Hand-peeled Paper  
FCS-certified, 300 gsm

**The Third Dot**  
Port Louis, Mauritius

2018

## P06 → Ebony Tree

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Ebony was highly sought after for its dense, dark wood, leading to extensive logging in Mauritius. This exploitation, driven by demand for fine furniture and carvings, led to a dramatic decline in Ebony forests. Today it is estimated that only 3% of endemic forest remains. Due to their overexploitation in the past, Ebony trees are now rare in the wild, and conservation efforts have been put in place to protect and restore them.

This mural, painted during the Porlwi by Nature Festival, serves as an homage to the Ebony tree and its history of logging. Set against a weathered surface, it evokes the passage of time and the looming threat of extinction due to continued deforestation. The peeling and fading of the mural symbolize the gradual disappearance of this once-flourishing species. Additionally, paper leaves were attached to the wall, gradually falling off to mimic the shedding of leaves, reinforcing the idea of the tree's slow demise. This work stands as a poignant reminder of the Ebony tree's past abundance in Mauritius—something many island inhabitants are unaware of today.

P06 → Ebony Tree



Mural Artwork  
Acrylic Paint, Molotov Cans & Paper Leaves

Porlwi by Nature Festival  
Port Louis, Mauritius

2017

P06 → Ebony Tree



**Mural Artwork**  
Acrylic Paint, Molotov Cans & Paper Leaves

**Porlwi by Nature Festival**  
Port Louis, Mauritius

2017

## P07 → Wakashio Disaster Awareness Study

On July 25, 2020, the MV Wakashio, a large Japanese-owned bulk carrier, ran aground on a coral reef off the South Eastern coast of Mauritius, near the Blue Bay Marine Park. The vessel, carrying approximately 4,000 metric tons of fuel oil, began to leak after striking the reef. This grounding resulted in a massive oil spill, with about 1,000 metric tons of fuel oil leaking into the ocean. The spill caused extensive damage to the marine environment, severely affecting coral reefs, mangroves, and marine life. The contamination had devastating effects on the local ecosystem, harming crucial coral reefs and impacting various marine species, including fish, birds, and invertebrates.

In the Wakashio awareness study, individual letters were transformed into a series of abstract paintings. Instead of focusing on the direct imagery of the environmental devastation, I approached the project as a study of surface texture and reaction. By combining water-based red and black colors—reflecting the colors of the vessel—with oil-based paints, I intentionally created chemical reactions that over time caused the letters to crack and peel, ultimately forming the name “Wakashio.” This technique underscored the environmental impact of the oil spill disaster that occurred in Mauritius during the time of creation. Naming the piece “Wakashio” was essential to mark it as a historical event that should not be forgotten.

P07 → Wakashio Disaster Awareness Study



Cover Artwork & Typography Study  
Acrylic Paint and Oil Combined on paper

Fourmi Rouz  
Port Louis, Mauritius

2020

# Thank You!

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