



Worlds collide in the studio of German-born surrealist, Joachim Schmidt. Intricately detailed panoramas adorn the walls in preparation for a forthcoming exhibition. This current series of mesmerising imagery travels through a fanciful landscape in a volcanic realm; each painting a masterful layering of juxtaposed elements plucked from the experiences of Schmidt's well-travelled mind.

And travelled he has. After leaving a ten-year career as a draughtsman in Germany, where he sharpened his drawing skills, Schmidt retrained as a teacher and departed for Kenya for a further decade. While there, he developed an interest in silk painting, producing garments adorned with his floral artistry. Today's paintings still brandish his signature from that period, Mashada – Swahili for 'Flower'-. There's even some resemblance to the savannah and Africa's Rift Valley onto their wind swept plains.

The astonishing facet to Schmidt's paintings though, is their tactile surface treatment. Three-dimensional scenery undulates across the canvases. He achieves this by introducing a range of media into his acrylics. Marble, tiny pebbles, and coarse wood dust being favourites. He has even gone as far as Australia's Kimberly desert to source just the right toning of sand; and in one work an emerald green river of patina bronze, mixed in with the pain, creates an otherworldly consequence to the resulting landscape. These whimsical paintings of fantasy retain exactly the right balance to remain believable, and my own response to them is a wish to join Schmidt on his next journey to the spectral location he paints.