



RAFAELA DE ASCANIO

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Statement

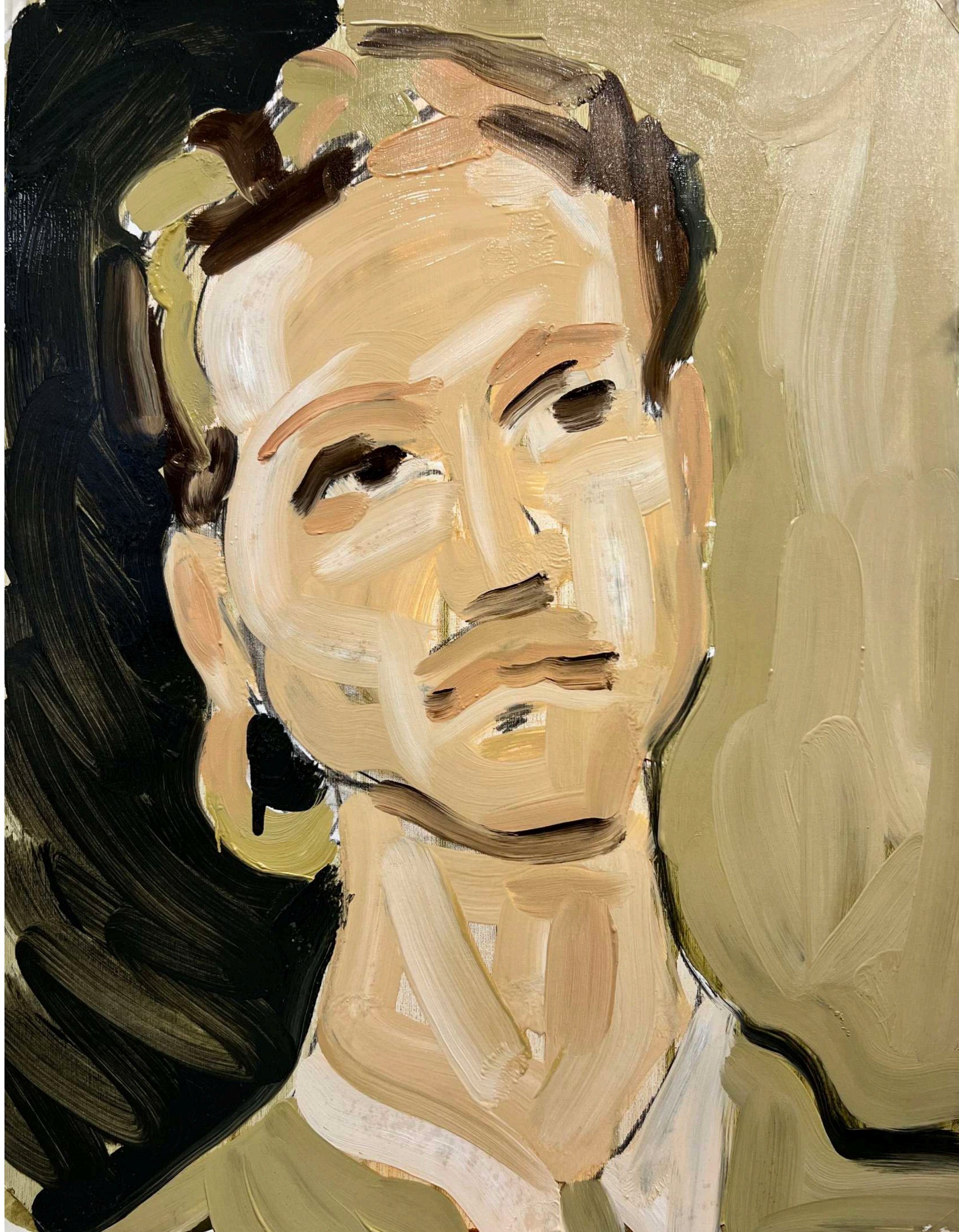
I am a multidisciplinary artist working primarily in painting and sculpture, creating immersive installations in which the female figure takes centre stage. My practice bridges ancient eras, when women were revered as gods, priestesses, and queens, with the complex, politicised realities of womanhood today. Through this dialogue, I seek to construct a visual lineage that connects sacred archetypes with contemporary representations of women, as they exist in daily life and in the media.

Materiality and craft are central to my process. Working with clay through the slow, manual rhythm of coil building, I engage in a grounded and tactile dialogue with form. This act of making connects me to ancestral gestures of creation and labour, revaluing this historically feminine space as sites of agency and embodied knowledge. In parallel, my recent painting practice draws inspiration from the psychological portraiture of Velázquez and Goya, to frame human observation through a female lens. In the studio, women pose for i-phone portraits later painted onto clay and canvas. Here, I invite conversations about their lived experiences, opening a space of shared reflection. These intertwined processes allow an exploration between the corporeal, spiritual and practical, where ancient standards meet the immediacy of the present.

Recent research has led me back to Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, which proposes the humble container, not the violent, 'heroic' and phallic spear, as the first industrial tool; a vessel for collecting foraged food, and everyday narratives. This framework resonates with my studio practice where I collect stories shared by women, gathering them into sculptures and paintings, to be documented and held. Past projects have culminated in a physical installation, a chamber covered in watercolored wallpaper, paintings and sculpture, where the visual story is activated by performance. In these spaces, I aim to extend dialogues across communities, exploring how collective storytelling and material practice can foster connections within the networks that shape contemporary womanhood.



Las Dos Rafaelas
Oil on linen
110 x 100 cm
2026



Goblin King
Oil on paper
65 x 50 cm
2025



Prince Fiontasia
Oil on linen
200 x 100 cm
2025



Un Besito Por Aquí , Oil on linen , 195 x 97 cm, 2025



Viva la Vida!, Oil on linen , 195 x 97 cm, 2025



Tinaja, glazed ceramic, 50 x 25 x 25, 2025



Installation Views, *Goodnight Moon, Sketch*, 2026

Las Dos Caras de Rafaela, Goodnight Moon, Sketch, 2026

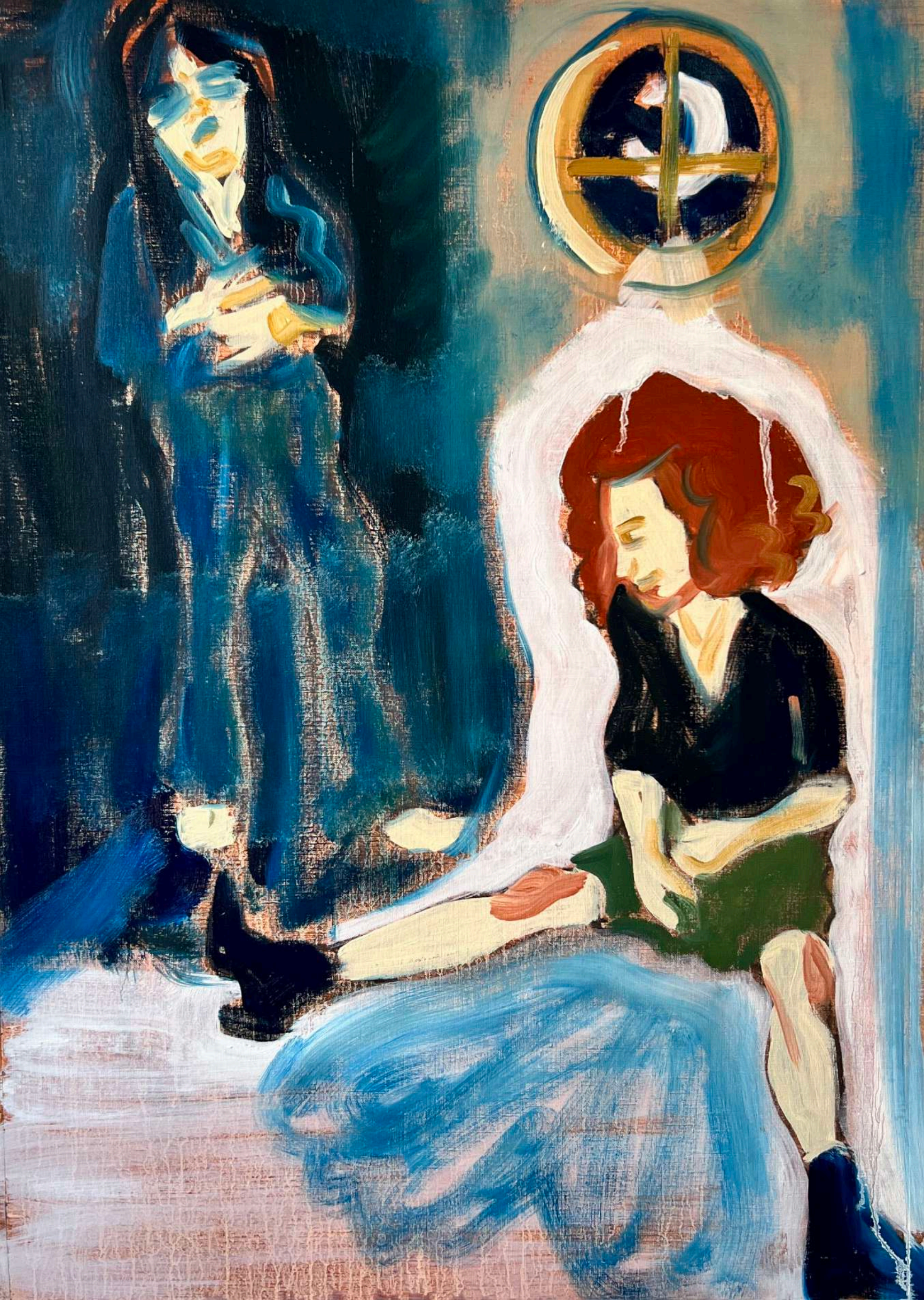




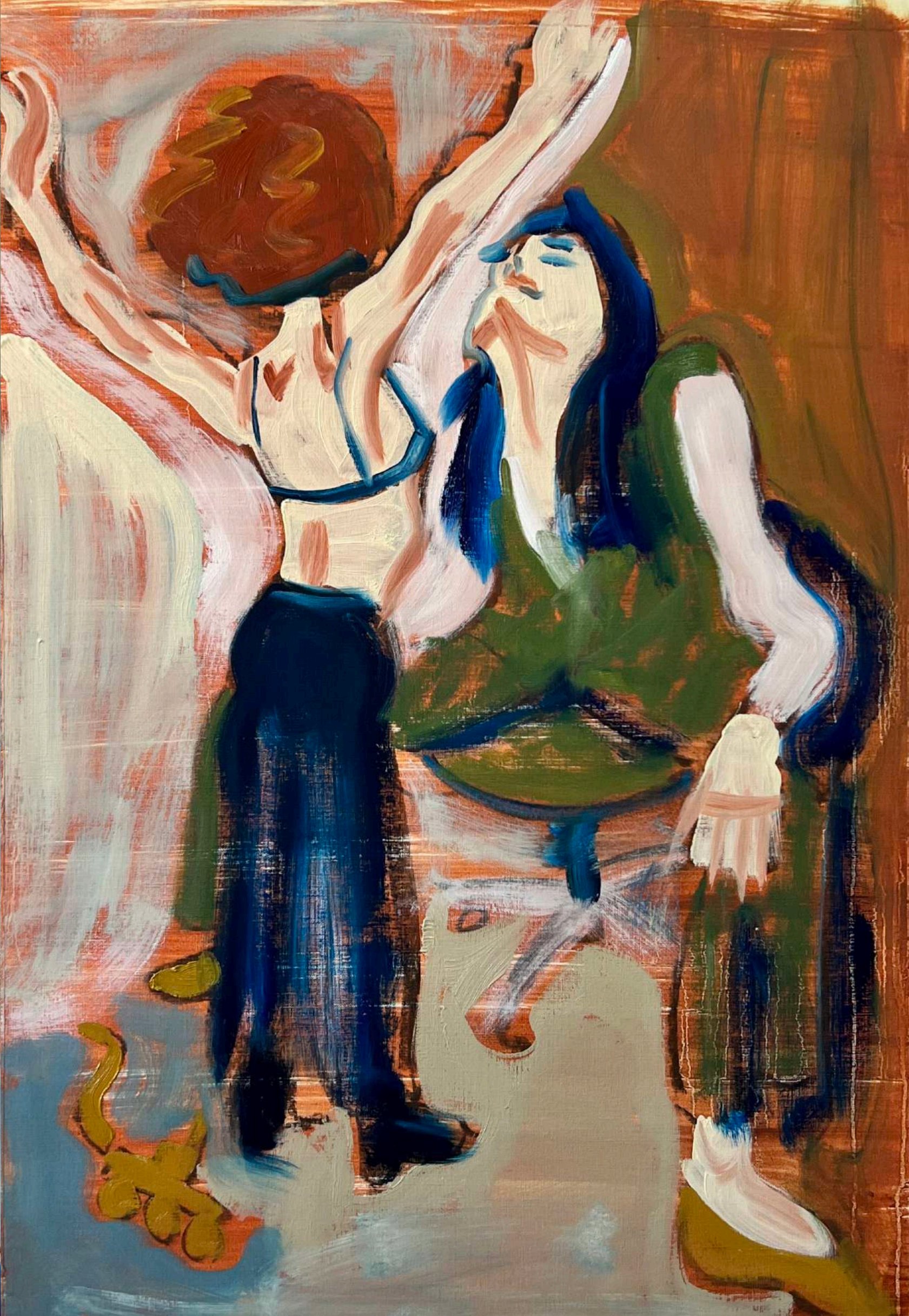
Installation View, *Goodnight Moon, Sketch*, 2026



Goodnight Moon
Oil on linen
235 x 150 cm
2025



Muñeca
Oil on paper
50 x 70 cm
2024



Quiero Jugar
Oil on paper
50 x 70 cm
2024



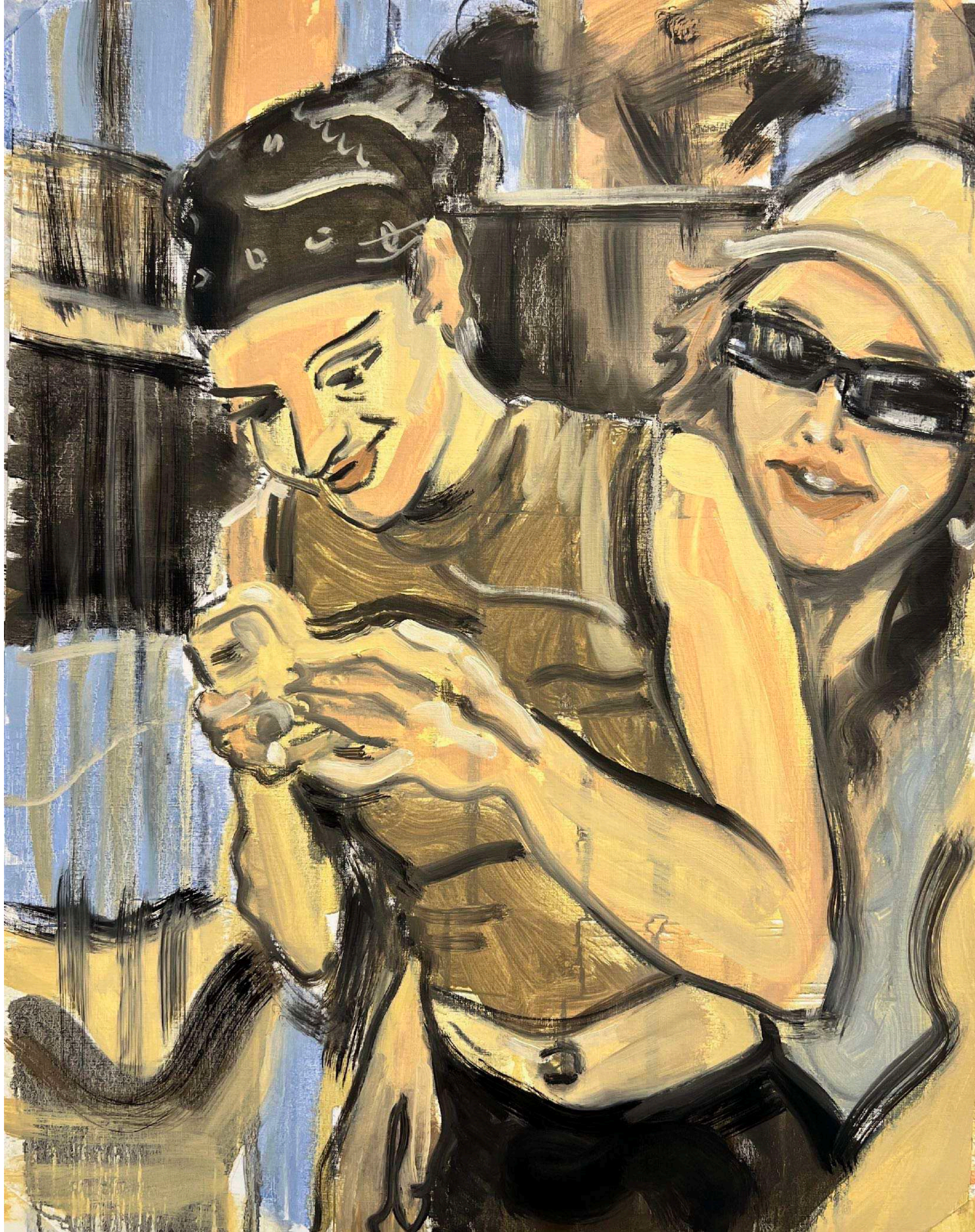
La Mirada de Mama
Oil on paper
50 x 70 cm
2024



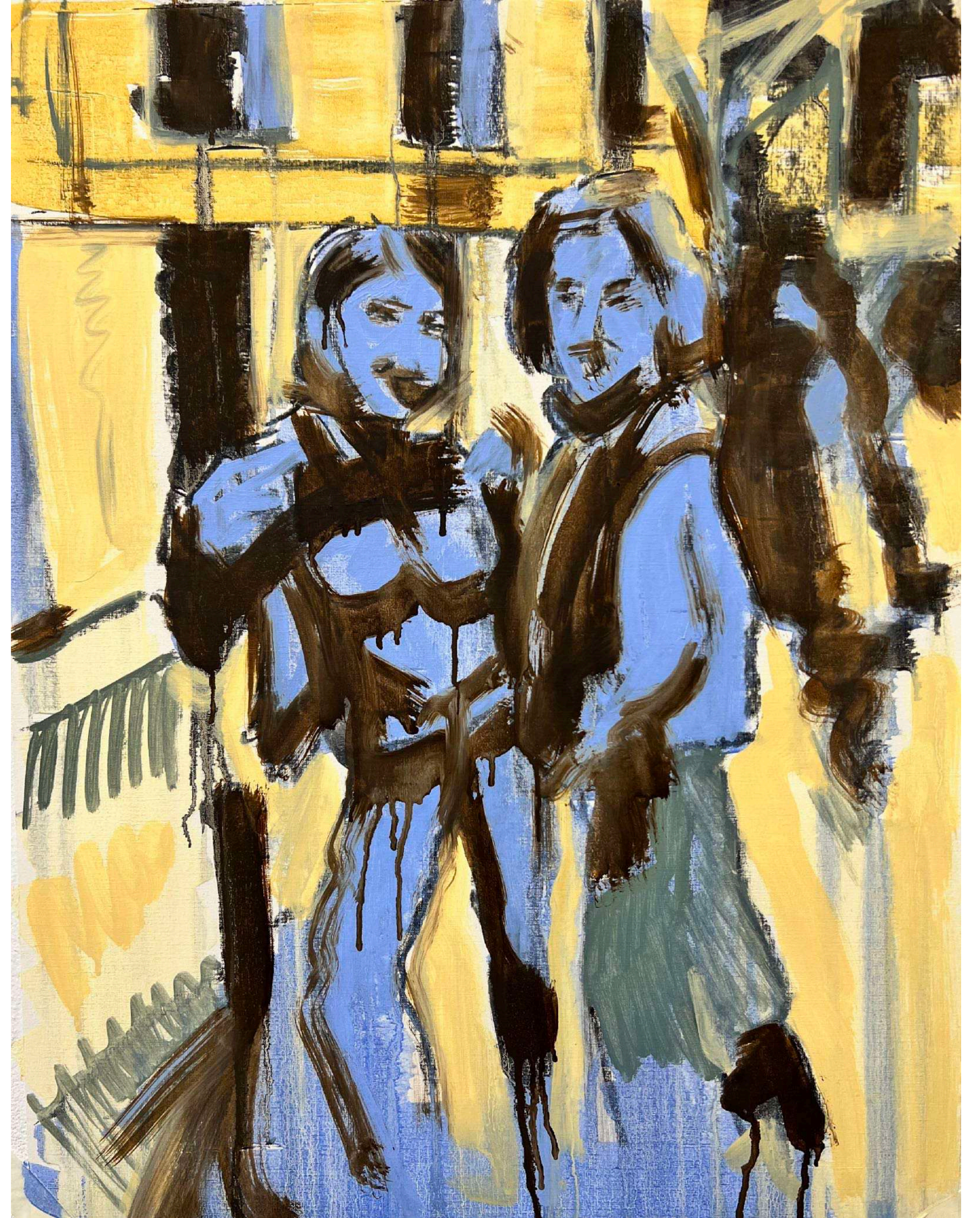
Zoë and Ava
Oil on linen
130 x 195 cm
2025



Baby Love: Rene
and Florence
Oil on linen
130 x 195 cm
2025



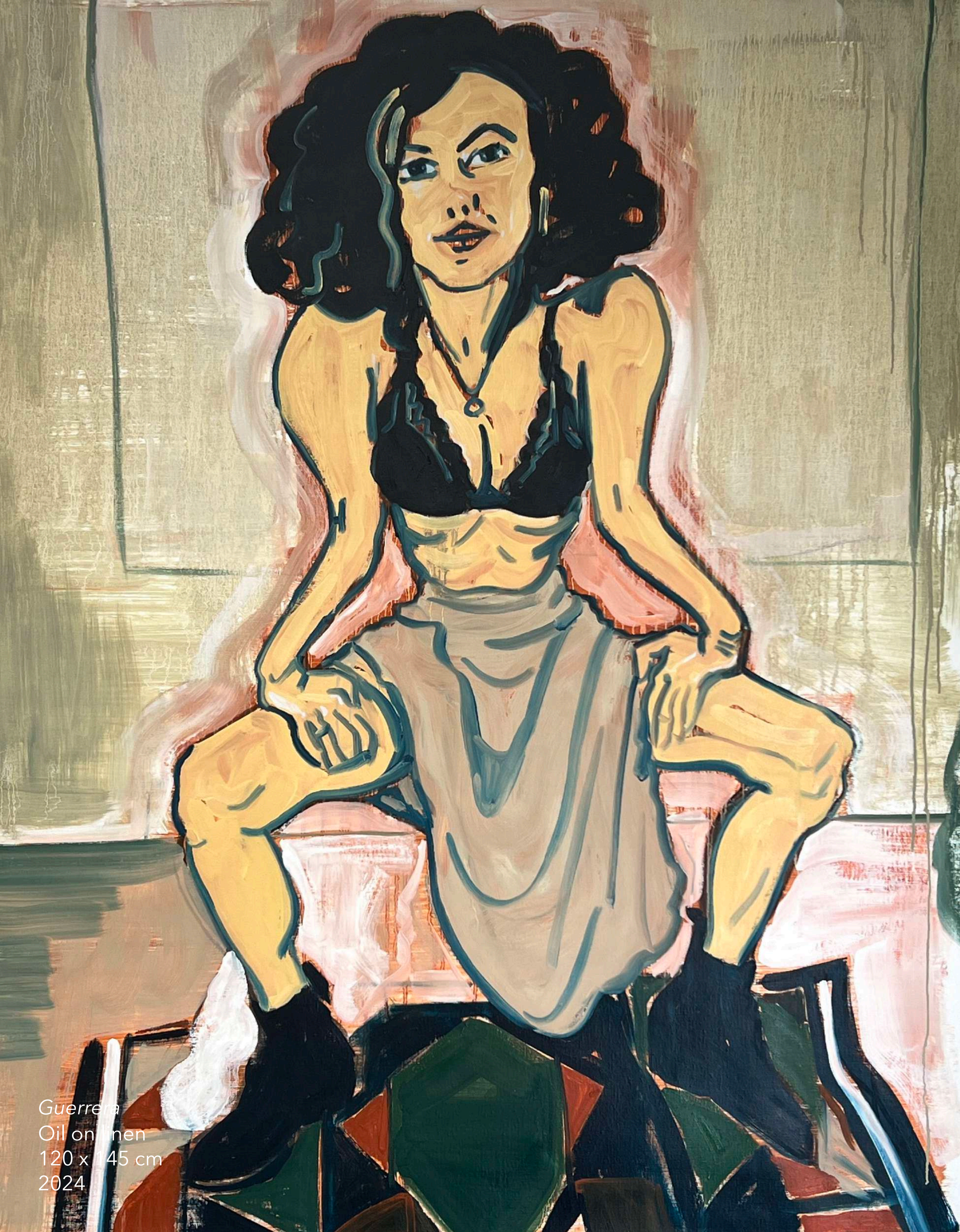
Baby Love: Rene and Florence
Oil on paper
65 x 50 cm
2025
£900



Zoe and Ava
Oil on paper
65 x 50 cm
2025
£900



Carrier Bag, glazed ceramic, 45 x 43 x 43, 2025



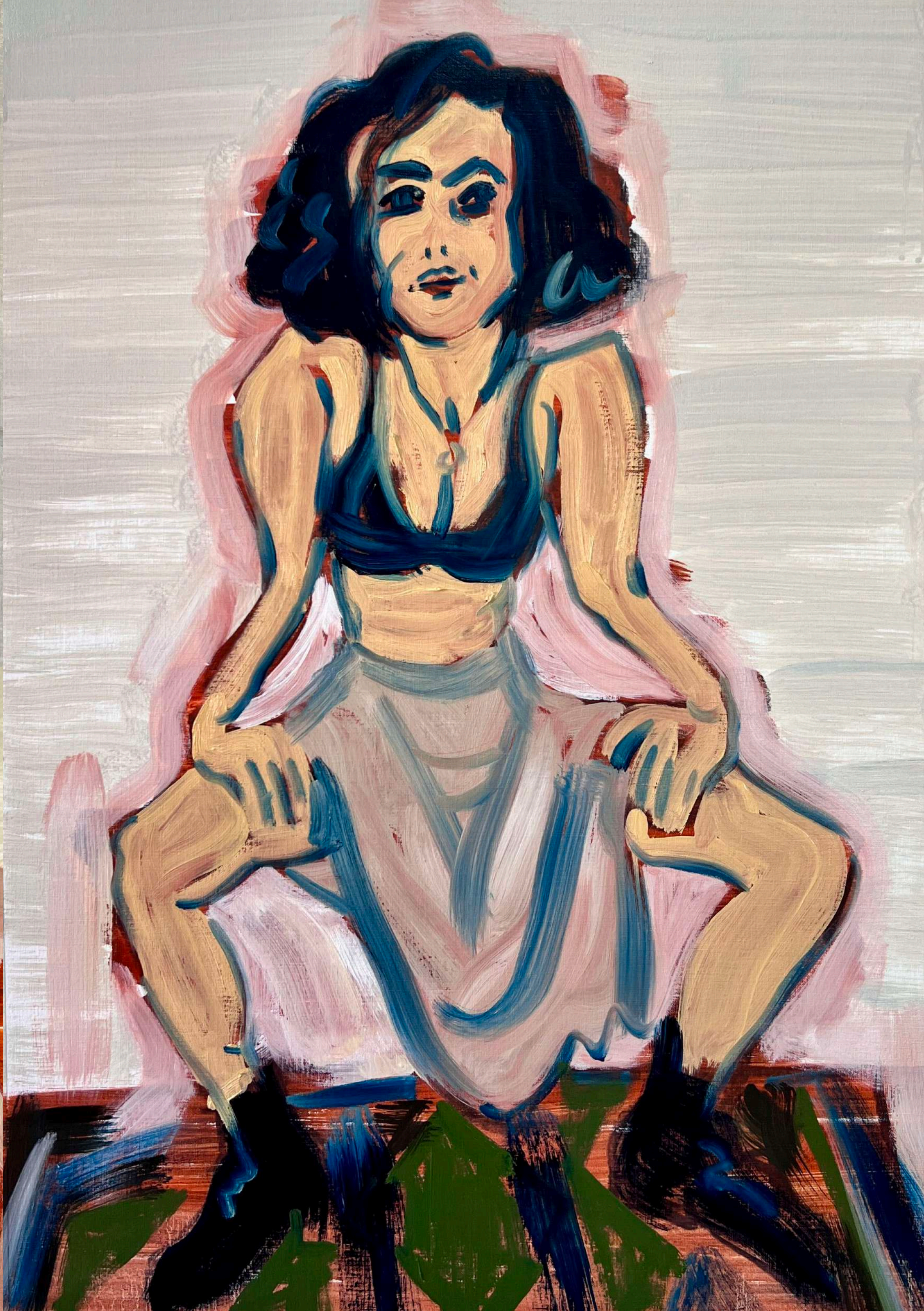
Guerra
Oil on linen
120 x 145 cm
2024



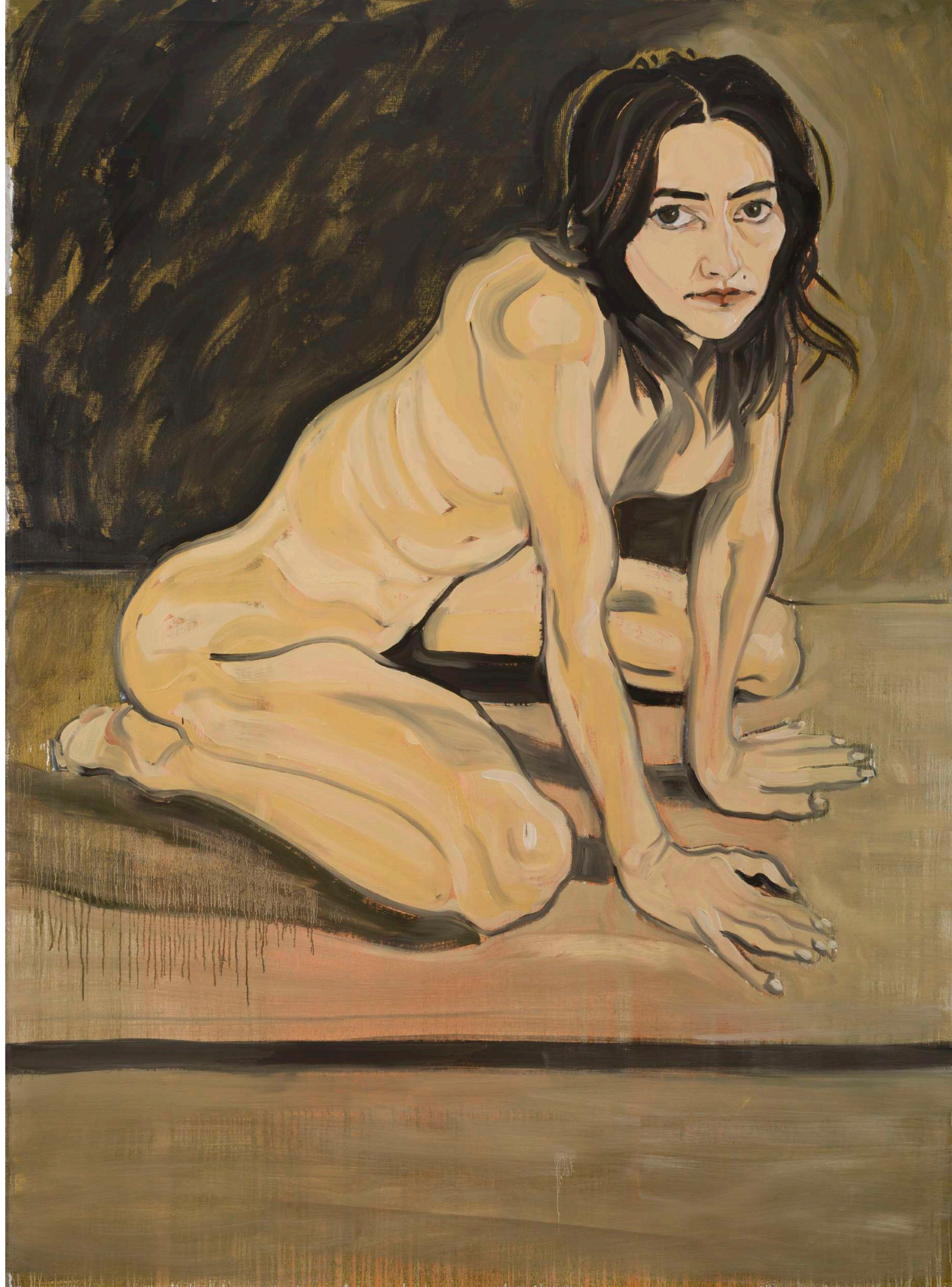
Estoy Aquí
Oil on linen
145 x 120 cm
2024.



Detail of *Estoy Aqui*
Oil on linen
145 x 120 cm
2024



Top left: *No Me Dejes*
Bottom: *Estoy Aqui*
Right: *Guerrera*
Oil on paper
50 x 70 cm each
2024



RUTH BORCHARD SELF PORTRAIT AWARD
2025, Russel Coates Museum, Bournemouth

Autorretrato
Oil on linen
145 x 190 cm
2025



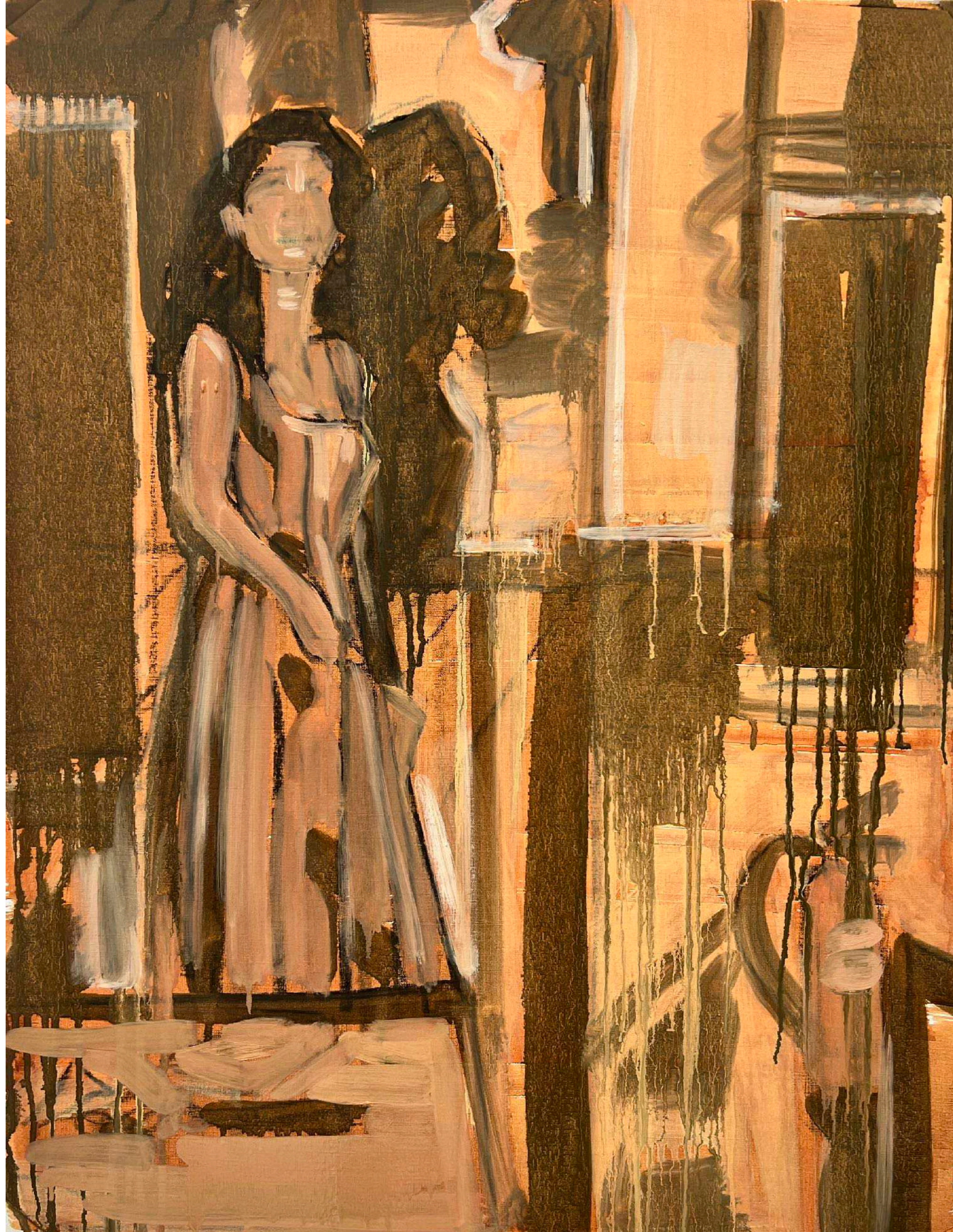
Left: Perro Centre right: Llanto Right: Agachada
Oil on paper
50 x 70 cm
2024



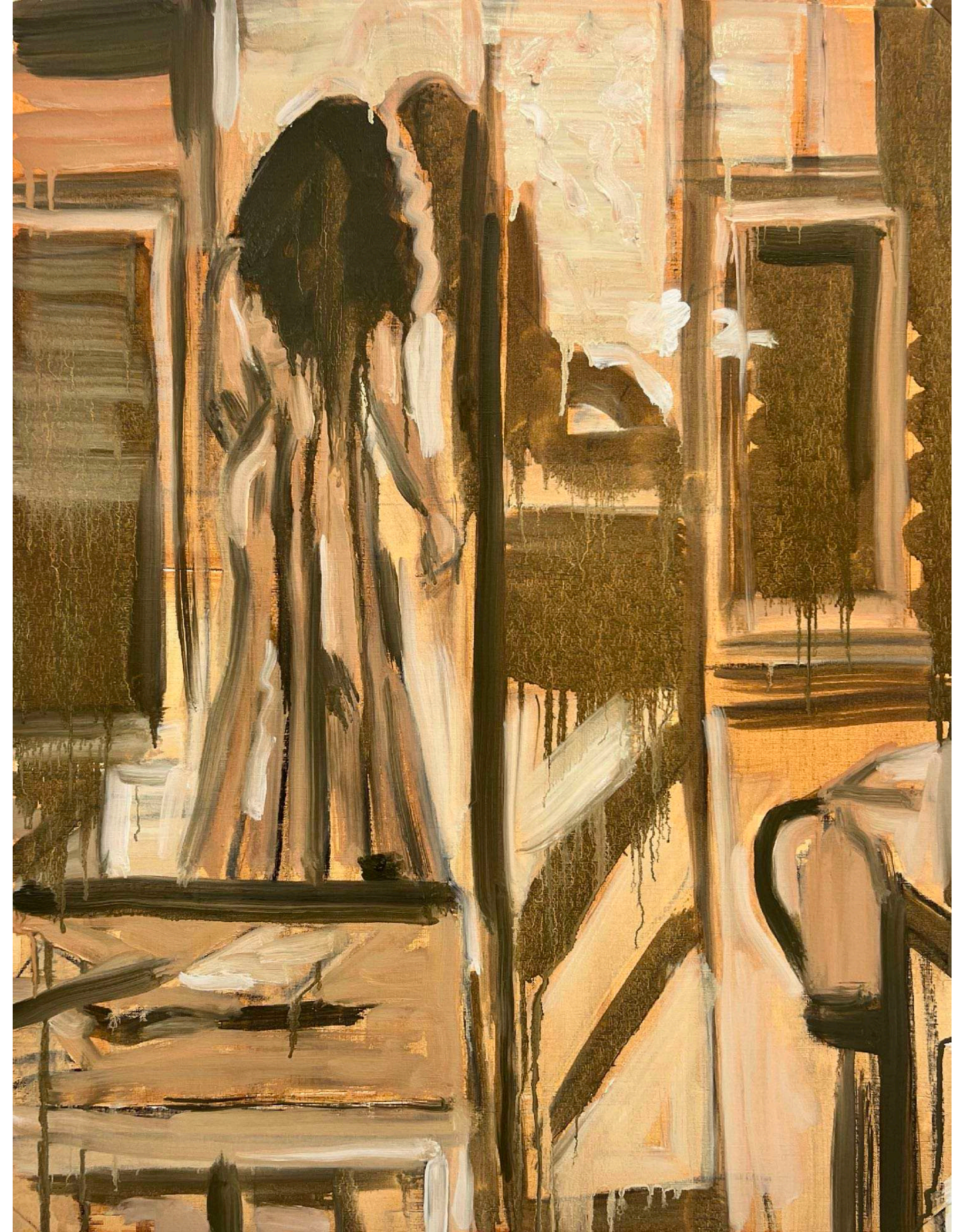
Selfie
Oil on linen
130 x 195 cm
2025

Platonic Life Partner
Oil on linen
130 x 195 cm
2025





Patricia II
Oil on paper
65 x 50 cm
2025
£900



Patricia I
Oil on paper
65 x 50 cm
2025
£900



*Property
Pornographers
Diptych
Oil on linen
130 x 97cm
2025*



Queda Te Conmigo
Oil on linen
145 x 190 cm
2024

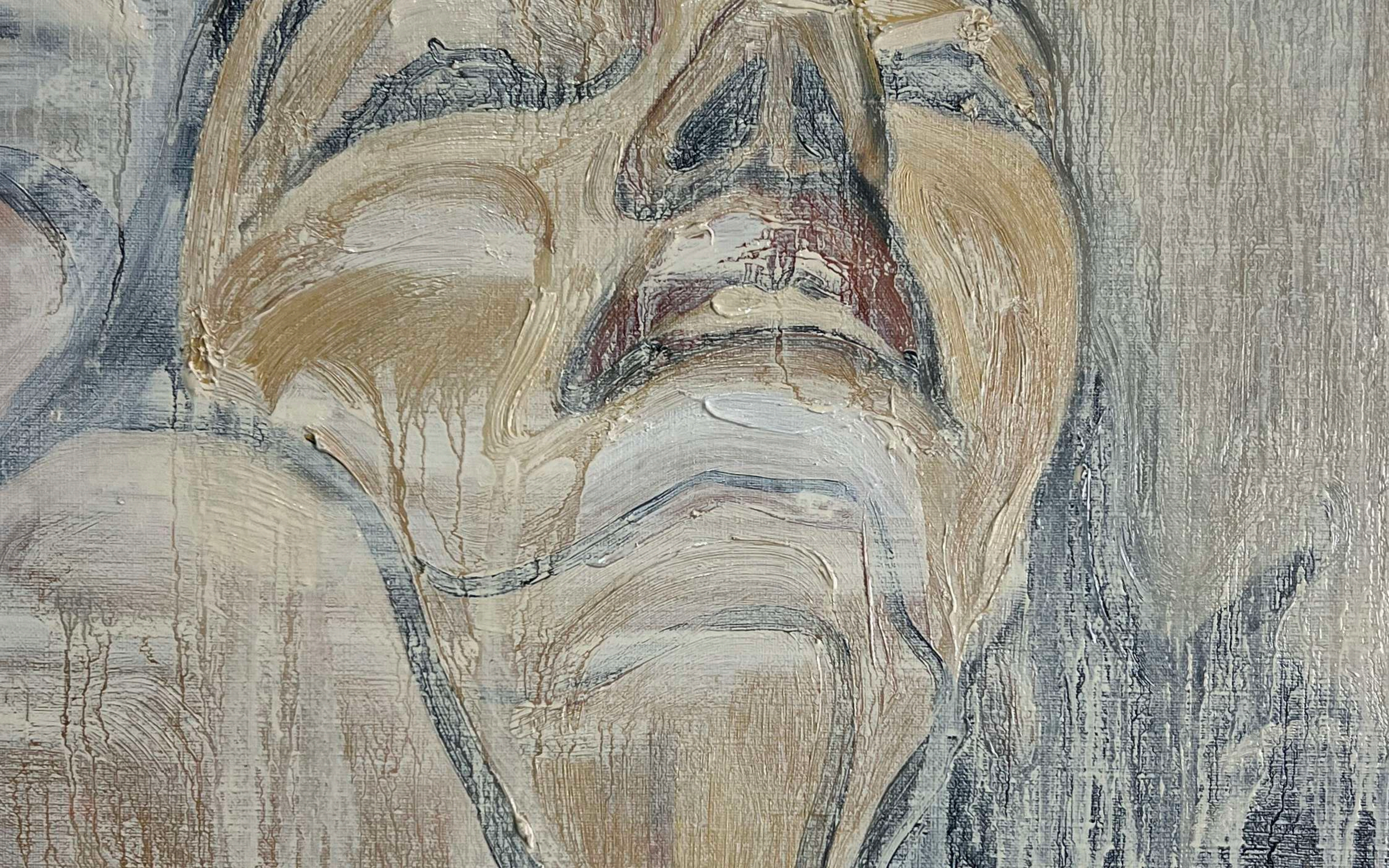


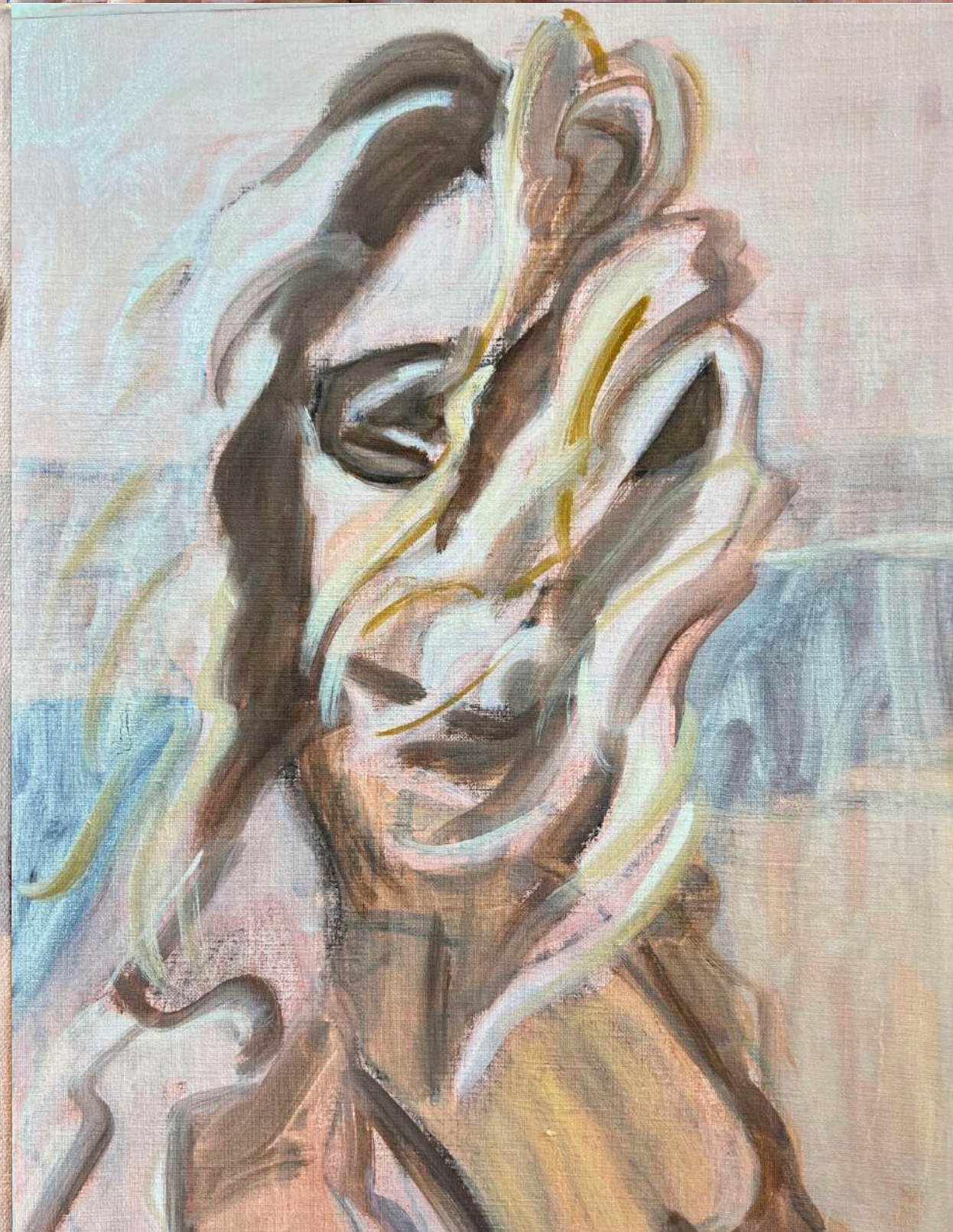
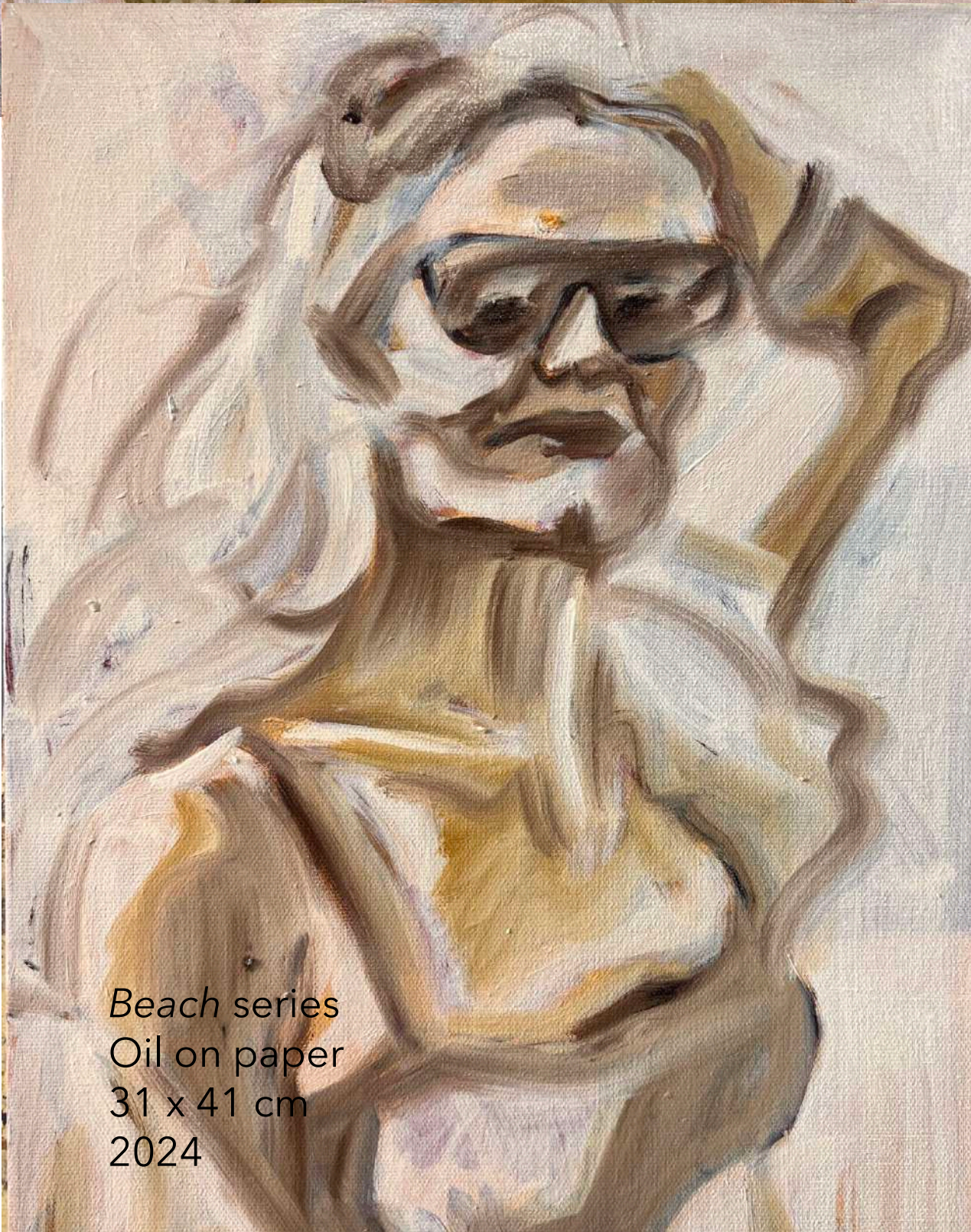
La Casa de Bernarda
Oil on linen
145 x 190 cm
2024





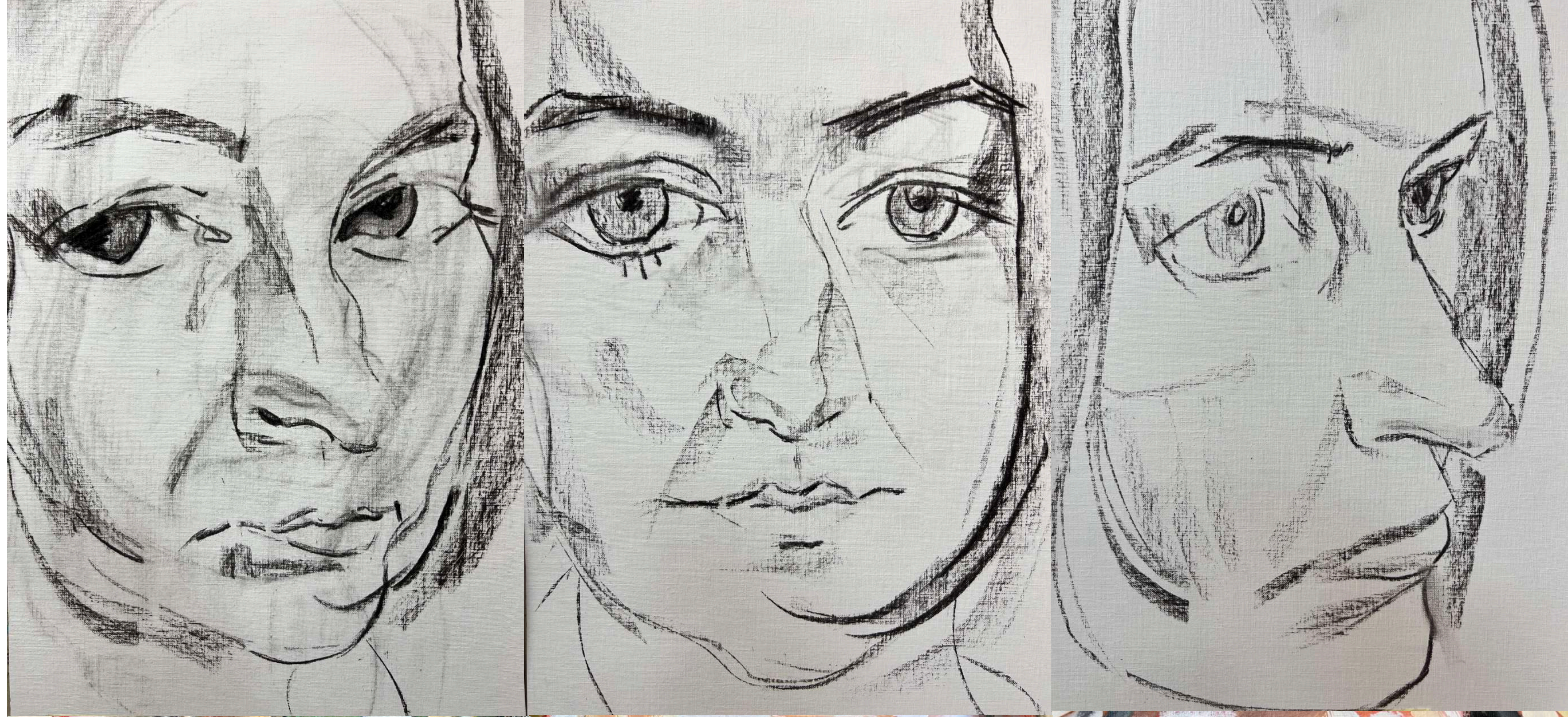
What Lies Beyond the Looking Glass Triptych
Oil on linen
146 x 97 cm each
2025





Beach series
Oil on paper
31 x 41 cm
2024

Brand Agent
Oil on paper
65 x 50 cm
2024



Self Portrait series
Top: Charcoal on paper
Bottom: Oil on paper
30 x 42 cm each
2024



Femme Maison
Glazed ceramic
90 x 36 x 21 cm
2024

'The sculptural work of Rafaela de Ascanio is filled with historical and mythological tropes. As if emerging from some primeval moment, female figures emerge and take form. Other sculptures feature animals and objects associated with folklore and pagan practices. And another grouping invokes Roman funerary practices. Ascanio's works might be understood as votive objects that have been rescued from an unhinged archaeological dig that has produced remnants of a primeval civilisation filled with queer wonder and wild symbolism.' - Niru Ratnam



Installation View, *Theia*,
Niru Ratnam Gallery
Glazed ceramics
2024



Installation view with tapestries and ceramic sculptures, *Sexing the Cherry*, Tristan Hoare Gallery, 2023



Rosalia
Glazed ceramic
60 x 40 x 40 cm
2023



Torobaka
Glazed ceramic.
42 x 50 x 25 cm
2023



'Virginia Woolf's 1928 novel 'Orlando' imagines its protagonist defying death and binary gender for over 300 years in a life of hedonistic excess and celebrity as both a man and a woman. De Ascanio's inventive, compassionate works take up this responsibility, pulling women from the wreck over centuries of frustrated ambition and foreshortened existence, and dream up for them another future.'

- Dr Rebecca F Birrell, Curator Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

Detail of *Eat your Heart Out*
Glazed ceramic
32 x 42 x 33 cm
2023



Abundance
Glazed ceramic
16 x 18 x 17 cm
2023



Pastel Warrior
Glazed ceramic
27 x 18 x 10 cm
2023



Installation view with ceramic sculptures,
Sexing the Cherry, Tristan Hoare Gallery,
2023



Las Brujas que se besan son la mejor compañía
Glazed ceramic
16 x 32 x32 cm
2023



Performance at *Pump House*, Berntson Bhattacharjee Gallery, 2022
Collaboration with classical dancer to create a choreographed piece in response to the paintings, sculptures and wallpaper. It was performed within the installation with a sound piece using excerpts from 12th century proto-feminist and Gregorian composer Hildegard von Bingen, who formed part of the exhibition research.



'A cocooning, enveloping space filled with texture and organic materials creates an otherworldly experience, with ceramic sculptures and paintings joining forces to create a narrative. An integral part of Rafaela's practice stems from history and research into imagery from ancient cultures, particularly how certain themes evolve over time and are reincorporated in new forms. While the artworks speak of an intangible female energy, they are also physically and spiritually grounded to the earth they stand on, through the medium of clay.'- Berntson Bhattacharjee

Witches Swirling in his Belly
Glazed ceramic
39 x 46 x 46 cm
2022



Installation view with ceramic sculptures on wood log plinth
The Pump House, Berntson
Bhattacharjee Gallery, 2022



Hildegard
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm
2022



Inanna
Oil on canvas
152 x 122 cm
2022



Her breasts formed in the sky and thundered milk
Oil on canvas.
31 x 41 cm
2022

for hunger
clear noise of
your mind

Fatalism

for hunger
clear noise of
your mind

mitigation



Sheela Na Gig
Glazed ceramic
34 x 33 x 27 cm
2022



Installation view, The House of Koko Collection,
Out Out
Oil on paper
65 x 50 cm
2021



Revelling in Duality
Oil on canvas
200 x 150 cm
2021

Salacia
Glazed ceramic
26 x 26 cm
2021



Bathroom Chats
Oil on paper
65 x 50 cm
2021



After Hours: Witches
Oil on paper
65 x 50 cm
2021

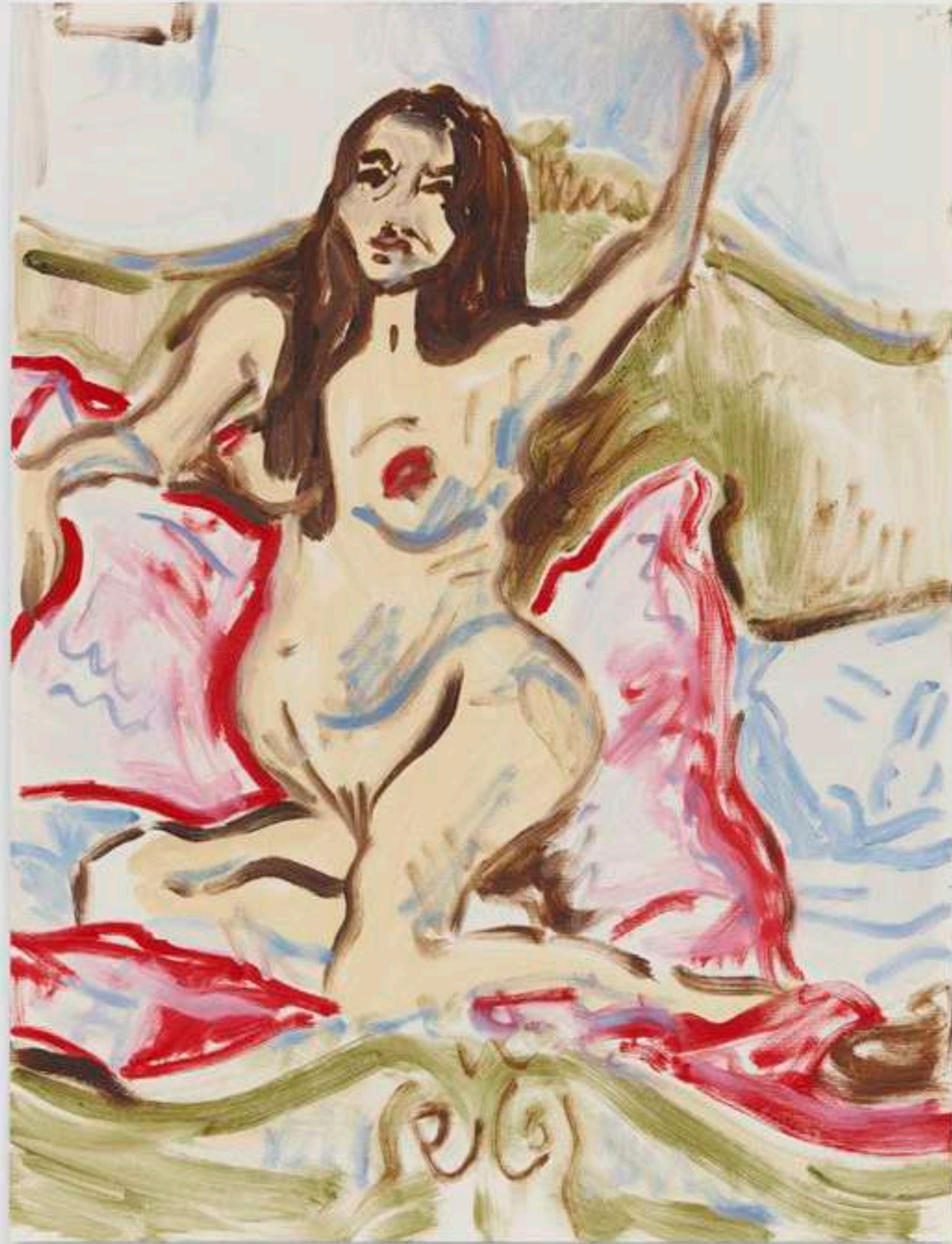


Sol - Sulis Minerva
Glazed ceramic
58 x 44 cm
2021



Callipygian
Glazed ceramic
46 x 36 cm
2020

'Rafaela De Ascanio's triptych 26 Weeks, I, II, III (2019) depicts a nude pregnant woman taking selfies three times over. Her body appears strained by the load it bears, and amongst the unstable outlines of pillows and blankets, its linear boundaries seem to grow ever-more diffuse. Yet, as the woman feigns obliviousness for her camera, the act of taking a selfie defies this lineal confusion: her body and its vicissitudes are flattened and reduced, simplified and packaged for others' consumption. The deeply human reality of the belaboured body, and the tense domesticity bodily limitation can create, is rejected in favour of the glib veneer of presentability.' Review in *The Quietus*



26 Weeks, I, II, III
Oil on paper
42 x 30 cm each
2019



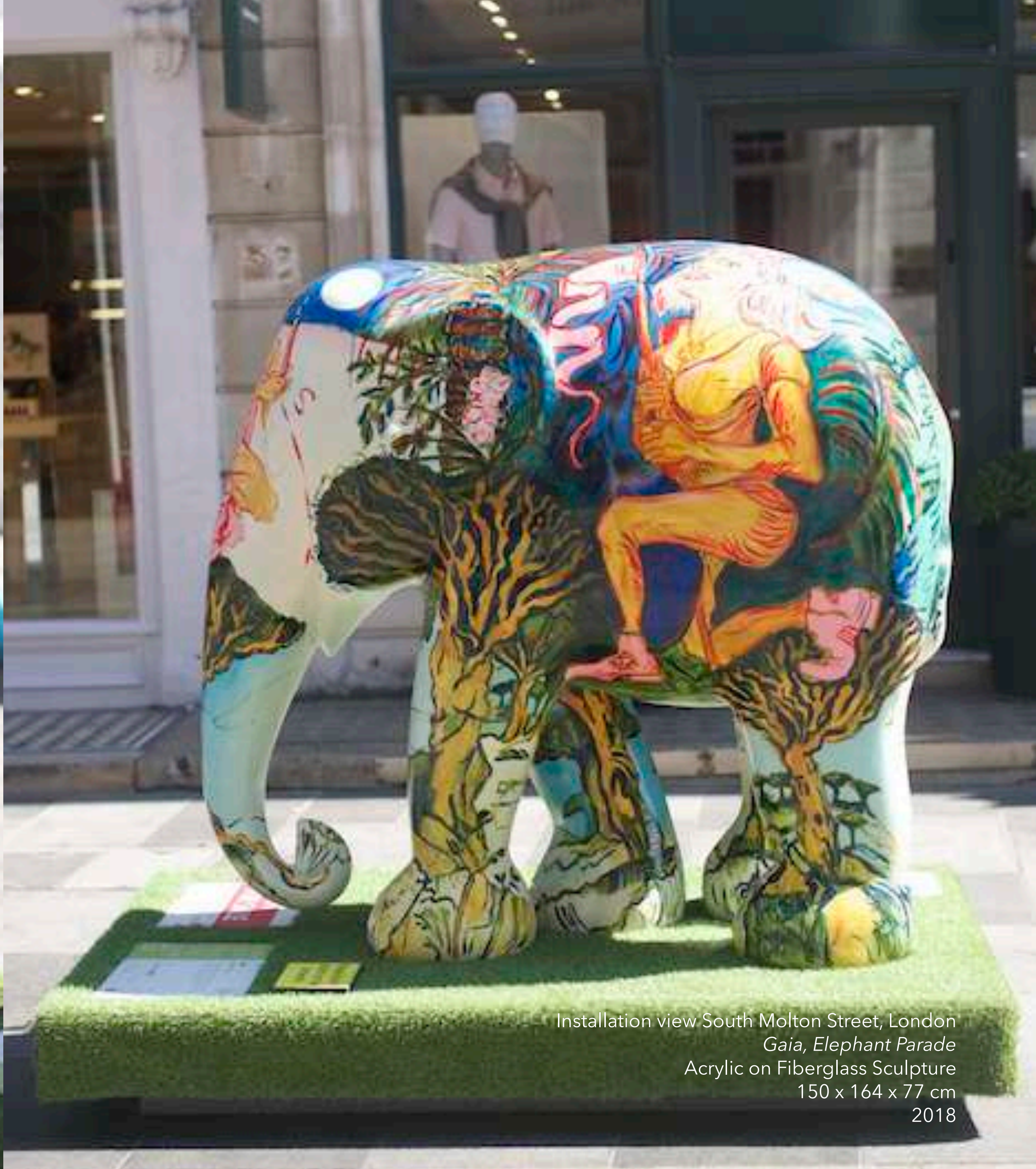
WINNER YOUNG MASTERS AWARD
FOCUS ON THE FEMALE 2021

Bottoms Up!
Glazed ceramic
43 x 34 cm
2019





Blush Response
Glazed ceramic
48 x 32 cm
2019



Installation view South Molton Street, London
Gaia, Elephant Parade
Acrylic on Fiberglass Sculpture
150 x 164 x 77 cm
2018



Violent Confrontation -
Reason Defeats Fear
Glazed ceramic
33 x 24 cm
2018



Fertility Vessel
Glazed ceramic
18 x 22 cm
2018



Installation view of *The Body is a Blessed Juicy Fruit*,
Lamb Gallery, London, 2018



Pastoral Scene
Glazed ceramic
19 x 17 cm
2018

CV

Rafaela de Ascanio (1986) is a painter and sculptor, from the Canary Islands and London, currently based between London and Madrid.

She studied Fine Art at Central Saint Martin's and completed a Masters Degree in Curating under Martin Caiger-Smith at the Courtauld Institute of Art. In 2019 Rafaela attended the Turps Banana Painters School, with mentors Benjamin Senior and Phil Allen, later joining the correspondence course with mentor Hannah Murgatroyd.

Solo exhibitions include Berntson Bhattacharjee and Liliya Gallery, and duo shows at Tristan Hoare and Lamb Gallery. Rafaela is represented by MT Art Agency.

She has also exhibited at Cob Gallery, Arusha Gallery, 180 The Strand, Lychee One, Quench Gallery, Niru Ratnam Gallery and Hauser and Wirth London.

Last summer her painting *Autorretrato* was shortlisted for the Ruth Borchard Self Portrait Prize 2025, and exhibited at Russel Cotes Museum, Bournemouth.

In 2021 she won the Young Masters Focus on the Female Prize, and in 2022 was on The Wick Culture Spotlight as well as being shortlisted for the Mother Art Prize.

Her work has been published in Dazed, Frieze, Twin Magazine, Elephant, FAD, Where's the Frame?, Ceramics Now, The Financial Times and The Art Newspaper.

In 2026 Rafaela has a solo presentation at Sketch, London, and has been invited for a three month ceramic residency in Ceramica Suro, Guadalajara, Mexico.

Awards & Residencies

Ceramica Suro Residency, Guadalajara, Mexico 2026

Shortlist Ruth Borchard Self Potrait Award 2025

Shortlisted for Mother Art Prize 2022

Winner of Young Masters Focus on the Female Emerging

Women's Artist Award 2021

Education

Turps Banana Correspondence Course 2025

Turps Banana Painting Programme 2019

Courtauld Institute of Art, MA Curating the Museum 2010

Courtauld Institute of Art, BA History of Art 2008

Central Saint Martin's College, Fine Art Foundation 2006

Performance & Curation

Queer Campervan, Uniqlo Tate Lates, Tate Modern 2017

Queer Campervan, Peckham Festival, 2018

BLOOD. TEARS. FAITH. DOUBT., Arts Council Collection & Courtauld Gallery, London 2010

Solo and Duo Exhibitions

2026

Sketch, London

2023

Sexing the Cherry, Tristan Hoare Gallery

2022

The Pump House, Berntson Bhattacharjee

2021

Universal Yearnings, Liliya Art Gallery

Back to Back, Bowes Pariss Gallery

2019

The Deccan Traps, Aindrea Emelife Contemporary

2018

The Body is a Blessed Juicy Fruit, Lamb Gallery

Selected Group Exhibitions

2025

Ruth Borchard Self Portrait Prize 2025, Russel Cotes Museum, Bournemouth and Vortic Art
Earthly Bodies, Brushes with Greatness

2024

Theia, Niru Ratnam Gallery

Works on Paper, Quench Gallery

Apocalypse Now, Tristan Hoare Gallery

A Dream Within a Dream, Haricot Gallery

2022

Wave, Cob Gallery

Conjure, Arusha Gallery

Fancy a Bite?, Studio West Gallery

The Amber Room, 180 The Strand

Swamp Legends, Terrace Gallery

2021

Focus on the Female, Cynthia Corbett Gallery

Inside | Outside, Janet Radey Fine Art

Cracked, Tristan Hoare Gallery

2020

Monster/Beauty: The Female/Femme Gaze, Lychee

One Gallery, curated by Marcelle Joseph

Paintings On, And With Paper, Cob Gallery

Clay Today: A Showcase Of Ceramics In Isolation,

Cynthia Corbett Gallery

2019

Turps Banana Off-Site Painters, Turps Gallery, curated by Phil Allen & Marcus Harvey

Summer of Ceramics, Doddington Hall, Lincolnshire

Nobu Knows Art, Nobu Hotel Shoreditch, curated by Aindrea Emelife

A Room of One's Own, Koppel Gallery Central

2018

Adventures and Curiosities, Hauser and Wirth

Elephant Parade, South Molton Street, London