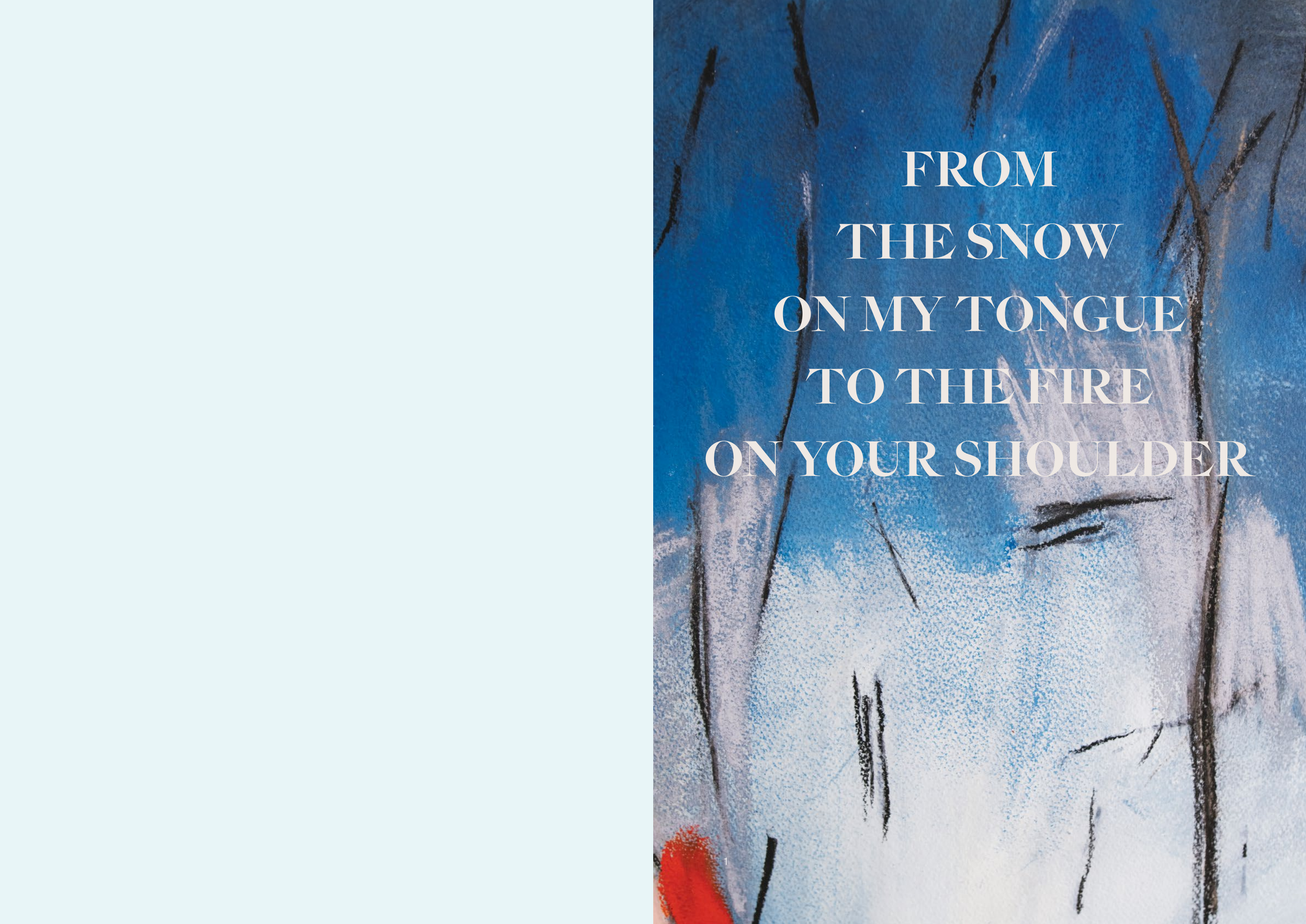




# Natacha Arena



FROM  
THE SNOW  
ON MY TONGUE  
TO THE FIRE  
ON YOUR SHOULDER

# Natacha Arena

## FROM THE SNOW ON MY TONGUE TO THE FIRE ON YOUR SHOULDER

Natacha Arena's creative journey unfolds in a realm where words yield to the vivid, unapologetic and often dramatic language of abstraction. In the artist's words, "I am a painter working in the language of abstraction," encapsulating the essence of her creative universe and her practice. By exploring her compelling body of work, *FROM THE SNOW ON MY TONGUE TO THE FIRE ON YOUR SHOULDER*, we can appreciate the profound depths of Arena's practice, which is now on display at Side Gallery.

Born in Belgium and then living and studying in multiple places around the globe, Arena has now settled her artistic painting practice in a home studio in West End, Meanjin, Brisbane. Adopting a daily painting discipline in the studio, Arena has formed signature distinctive elements that define her works.

Those distinctive elements that define Arena's artistic expression are readily apparent upon briefly examining her work. Bold, color-fueled compositions emerge, resonating with a frisson energy. Her signature rough brush strokes testify to her affinity for abstract language. Arena states that it's in the interplay of memory and emotion that she finds her guiding influences. An early visit to the Centre Pompidou in Paris when Arena was 16 transformed her creative trajectory after seeing

*Die Mädchen von Olmo II* (The Girls of Olmo II) 1981, by Georg Baselitz. This experience was transcendental to Arena, the incident creating a catalyst for her creative future. Arena intuitively orchestrates her compositions, employing a mix of acrylic, charcoal, and pastels, creating a more tactile, daring, and profound dimension.

*FROM THE SNOW ON MY TONGUE TO THE FIRE ON YOUR SHOULDER* is a collection that melds small-scale paintings and more expansive works on paper. These paintings, often the nascent sketches of her larger-scale works, offer an intimate glimpse into the artist's psyche. Arena herself describes them as "snapshots of sensations," indeed, they feel like captured moments of her emotional odyssey. Yet, her artistic signature finds its most profound articulation in the larger, predominantly more expressive works on paper. These pieces invite viewers to consider not just the outcome but also the action and physicality of the artistic process itself.

Arena's art is inexorably tied to the world around her, both the natural and emotional realms. What captivates her is the authentic connection between emotion and expression, a connection brought to life through movement. Her painting practice is a means to navigate the depths of her feelings, exploring and expressing with a physicality that abstract art has historically championed.

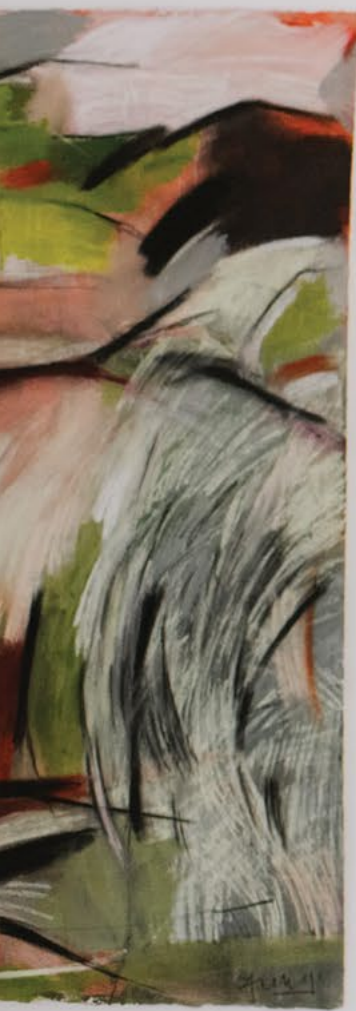
In essence, Natacha Arena paints what she sees and feels with a vibrant intensity that mirrors her perception and memory. Her artistic journey becomes a dynamic narrative that transcends the limitations of language and invites us to traverse the richness of her (and our) emotional landscapes.

The compositions that emerge from her canvas are not mere images but vibrant echoes of her experiences and emotions. They invite us to embark on a journey through the abstract, guided by the brushstrokes of an artist who has relinquished the familiar in favour of the unknown, inviting us to explore the depths of her creative consciousness and uncover the myriad emotions that resonate within her work. With each piece, Natacha Arena beckons us to relinquish the confines of regular language and join her on a voyage into the abstract, where colours, shapes, and emotions intertwine to create a language that is uniquely her own.

Laura Brinin  
CURATOR

Cover  
*Waking Up* (detail) 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on paper  
105 x 75 cm  
\$1350

Page 1  
*Against the Wind* (detail) 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on paper  
105 x 75 cm  
\$1350



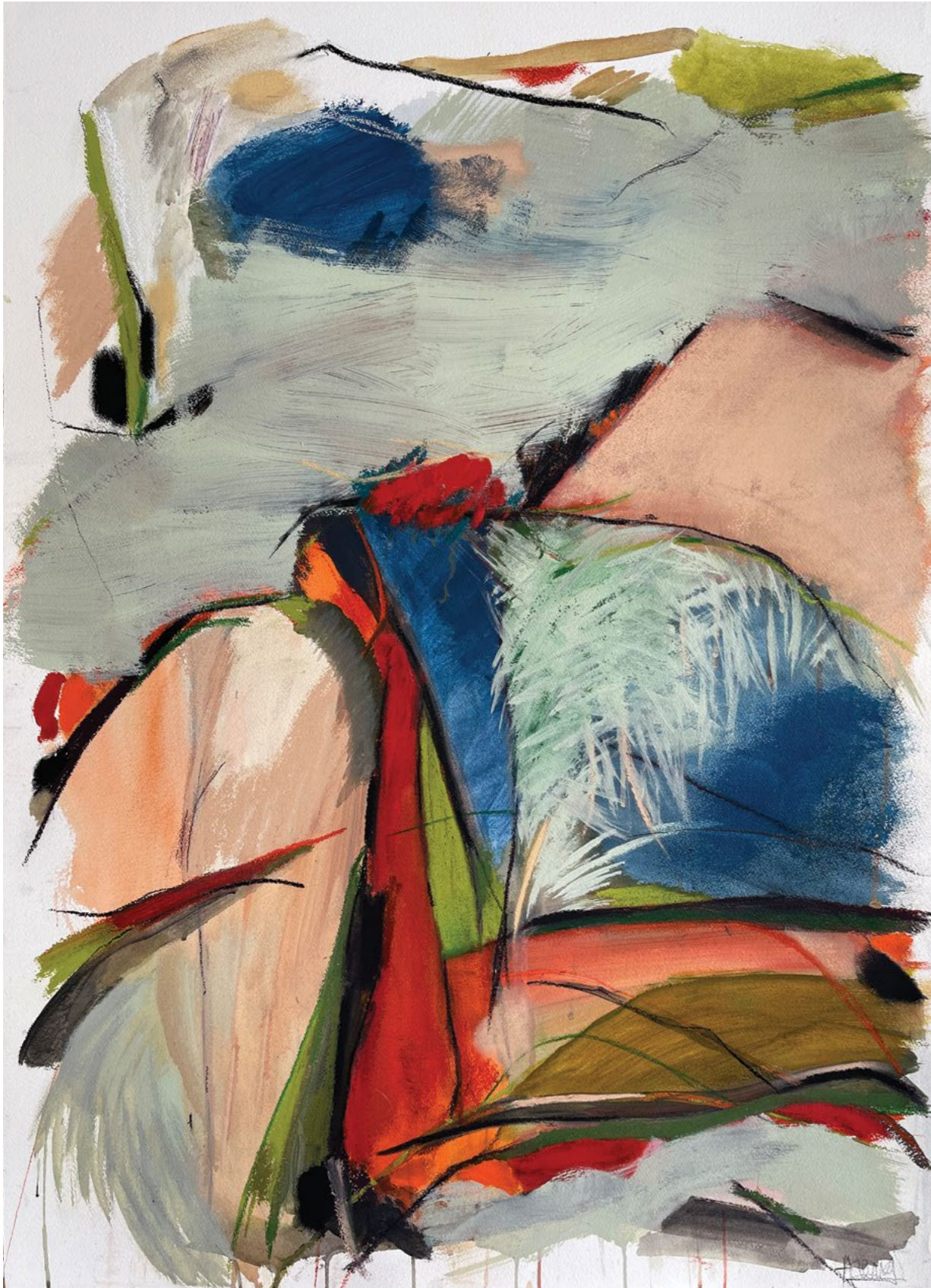


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*Evening* 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on paper  
105 × 75 cm  
\$1350



*Walking on the River* 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on paper  
105 × 75 cm  
\$1950 Framed



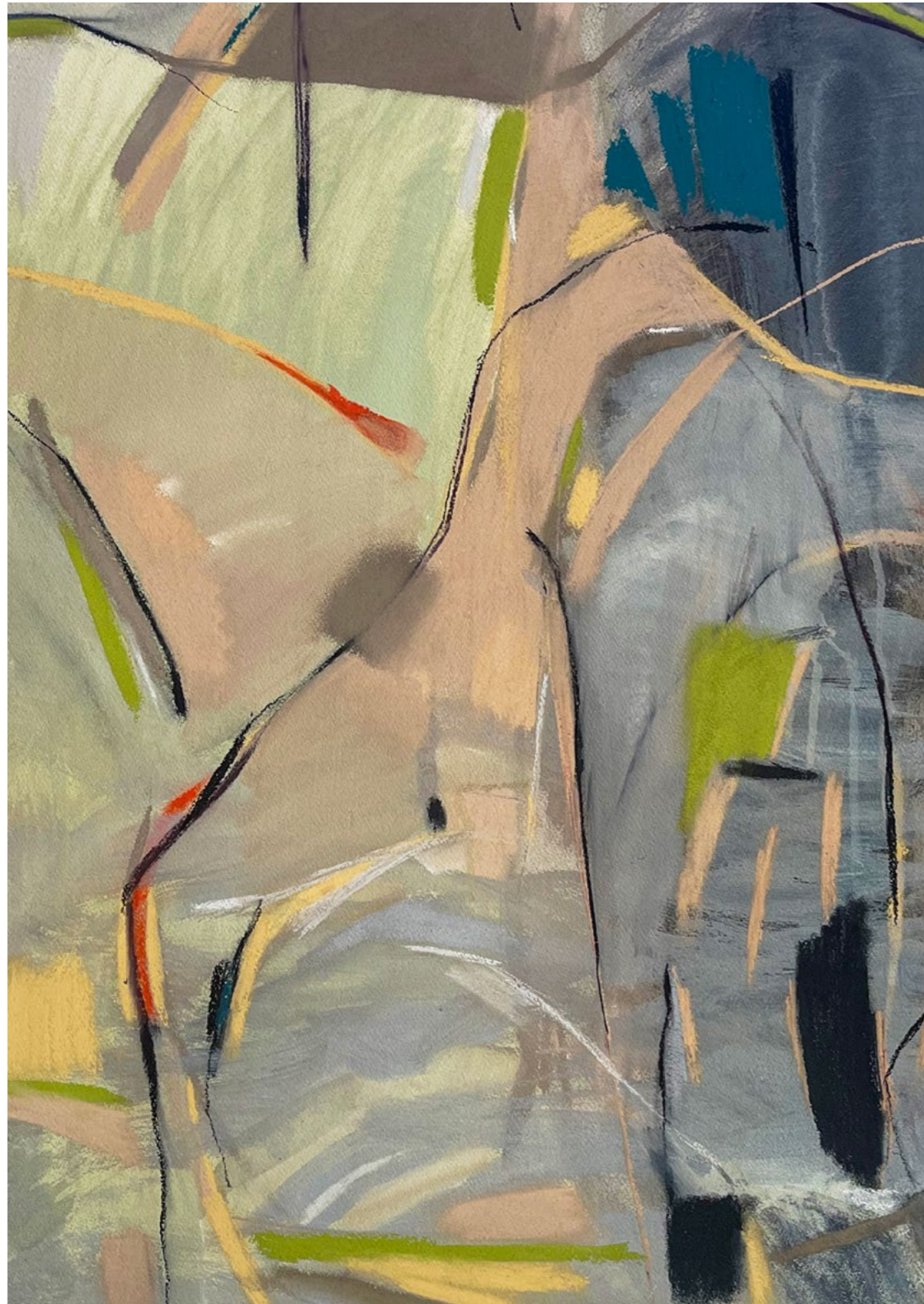
*Slow and High* 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on paper  
105 × 75 cm  
\$1350



*Against the Wind* 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on paper  
105 × 75 cm  
\$1350







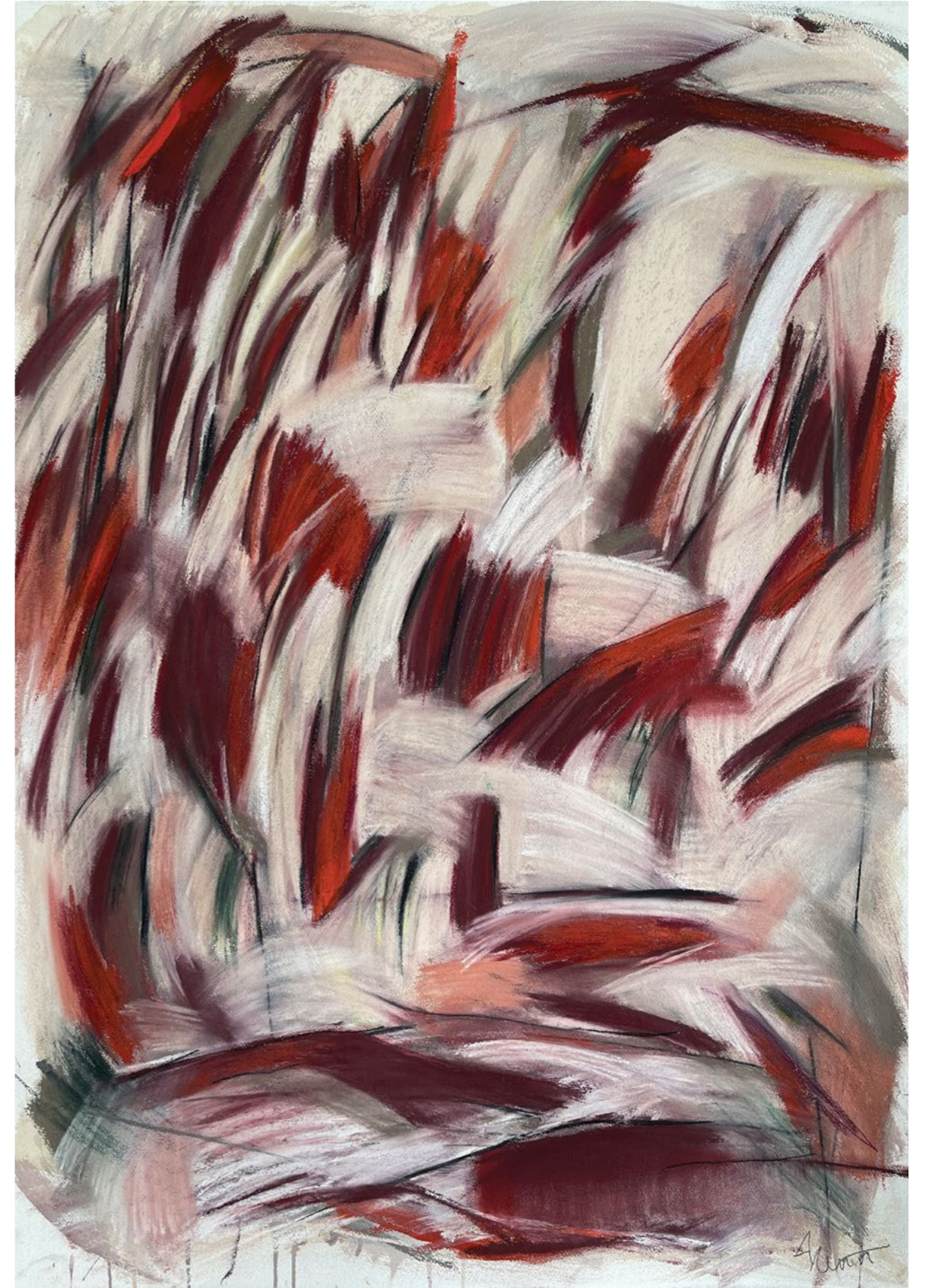
*Ikebana* 2022  
Acrylic and pastels on paper  
105 × 75 cm  
\$1350



Install view  
*Camouflage* 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on paper  
66 × 102 cm  
\$1950 Framed



*Waking up* 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on paper  
105 × 75 cm  
\$1350

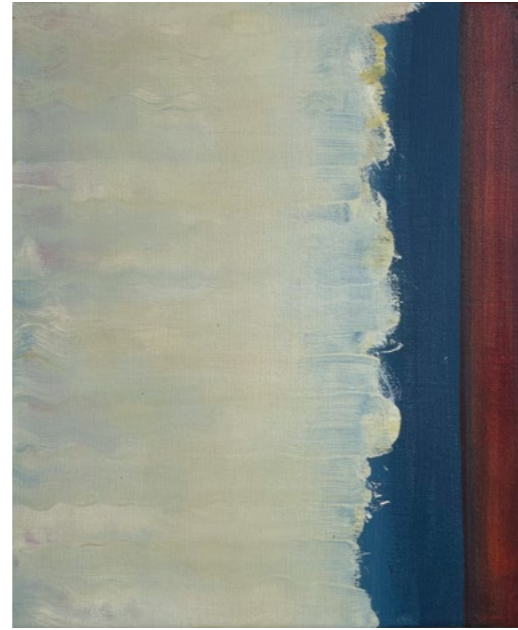


*Percussion* 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on paper  
105 × 75 cm  
\$1350

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*The Golden Rule* 2022  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 × 25 cm  
\$690 Framed



*Drowning* 2022  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed

*Panoramic In Blue* 2022  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed

*Vertical Tides* 2022  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed

*In Between* 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed

*Burning Sun* 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed

*Upside Down* 2022  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed

*Remains in Light* 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed

*Golden Shower* 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed



*Falling Out* 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed



*Closing Behind* 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed



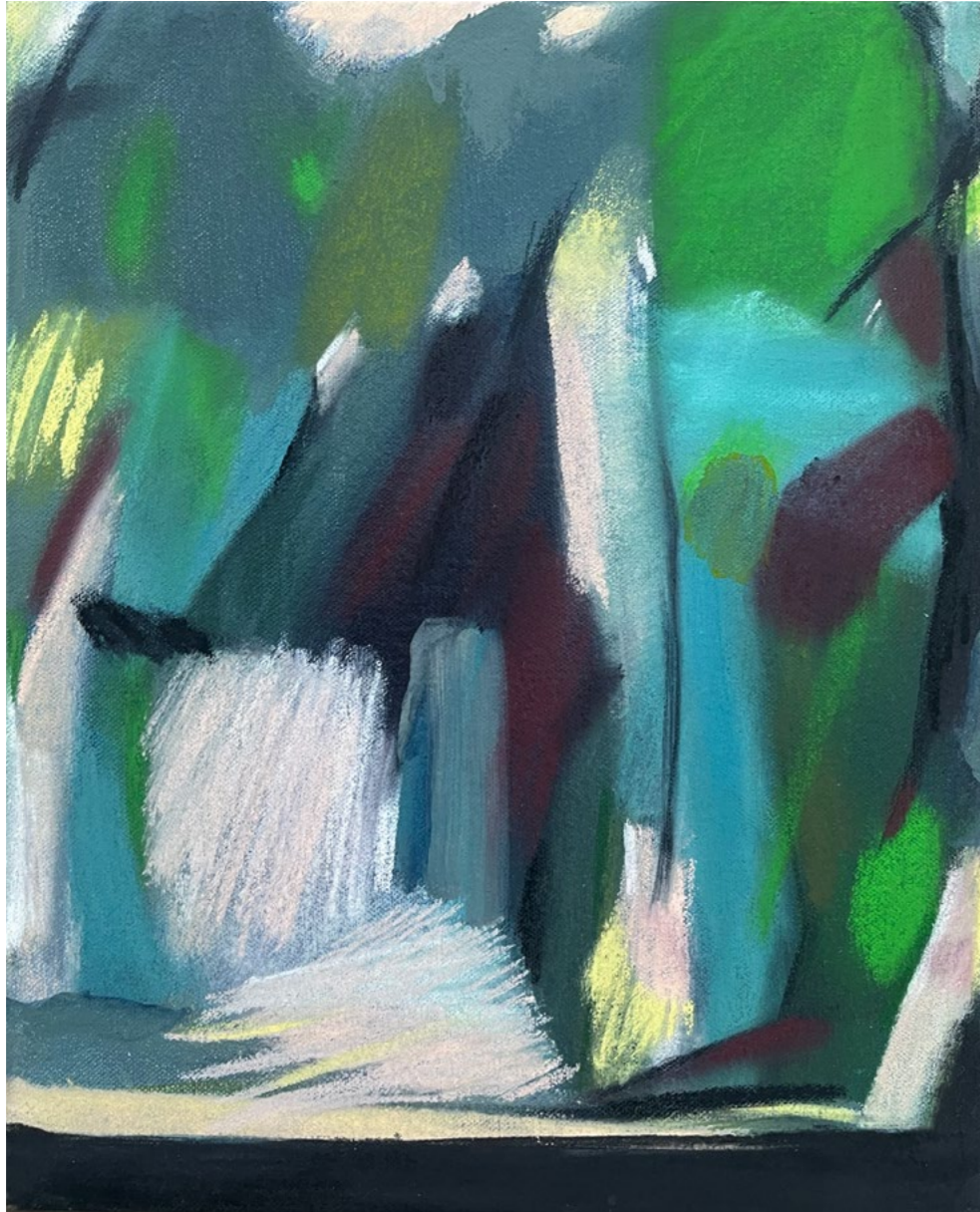
*Daydream* 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed



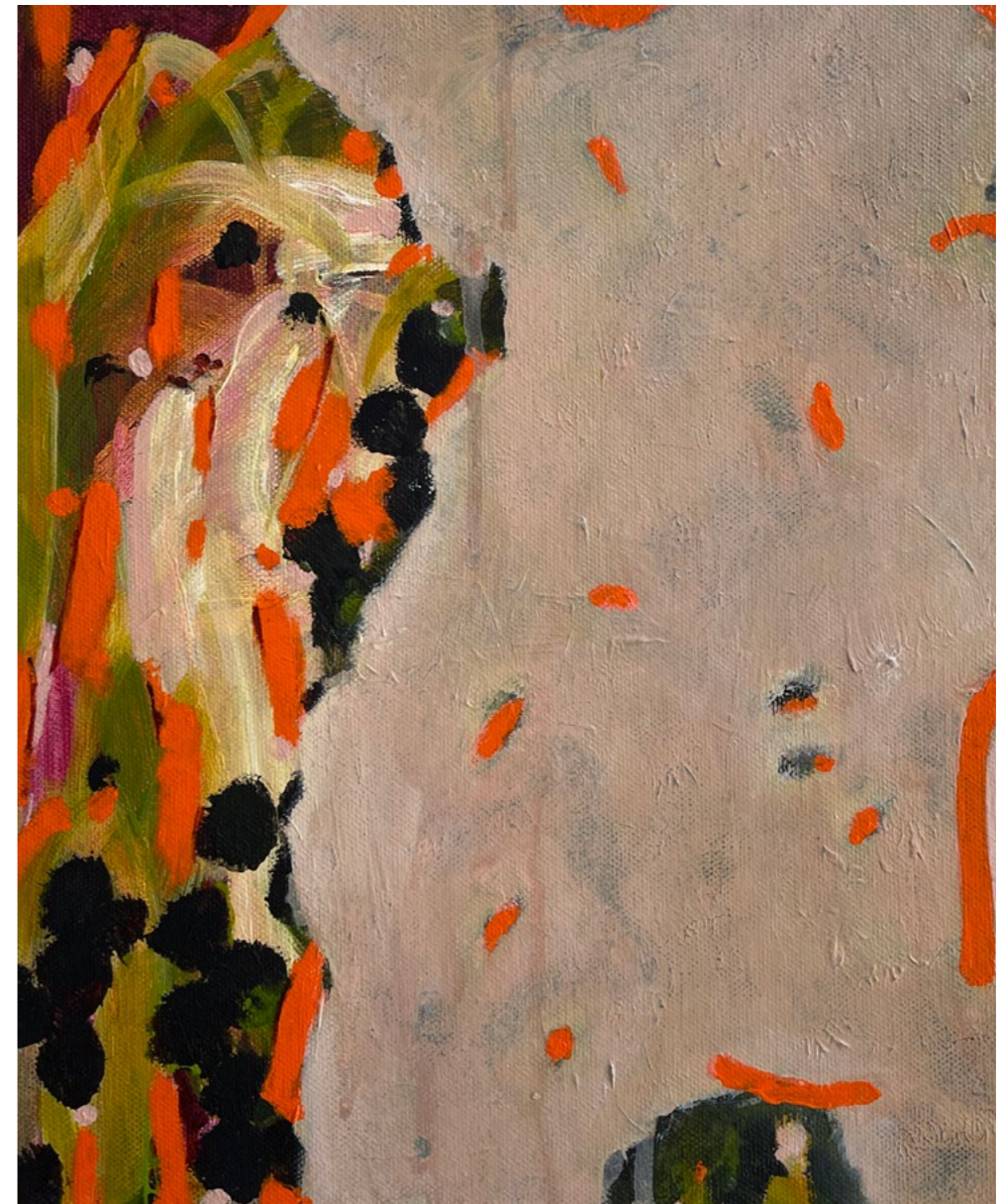
*Elastic Thoughts* 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed



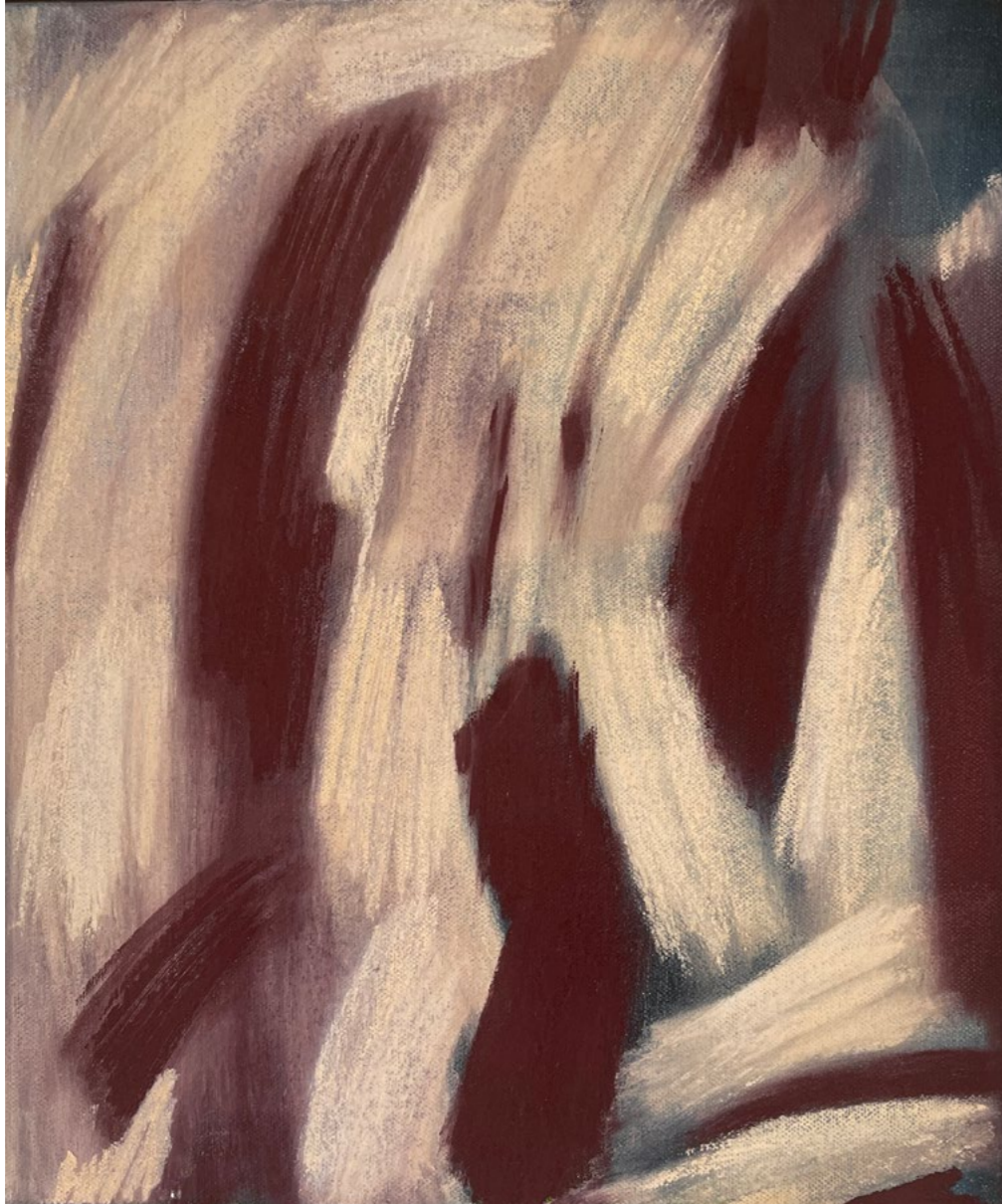
*The Great Door* 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$690 Framed



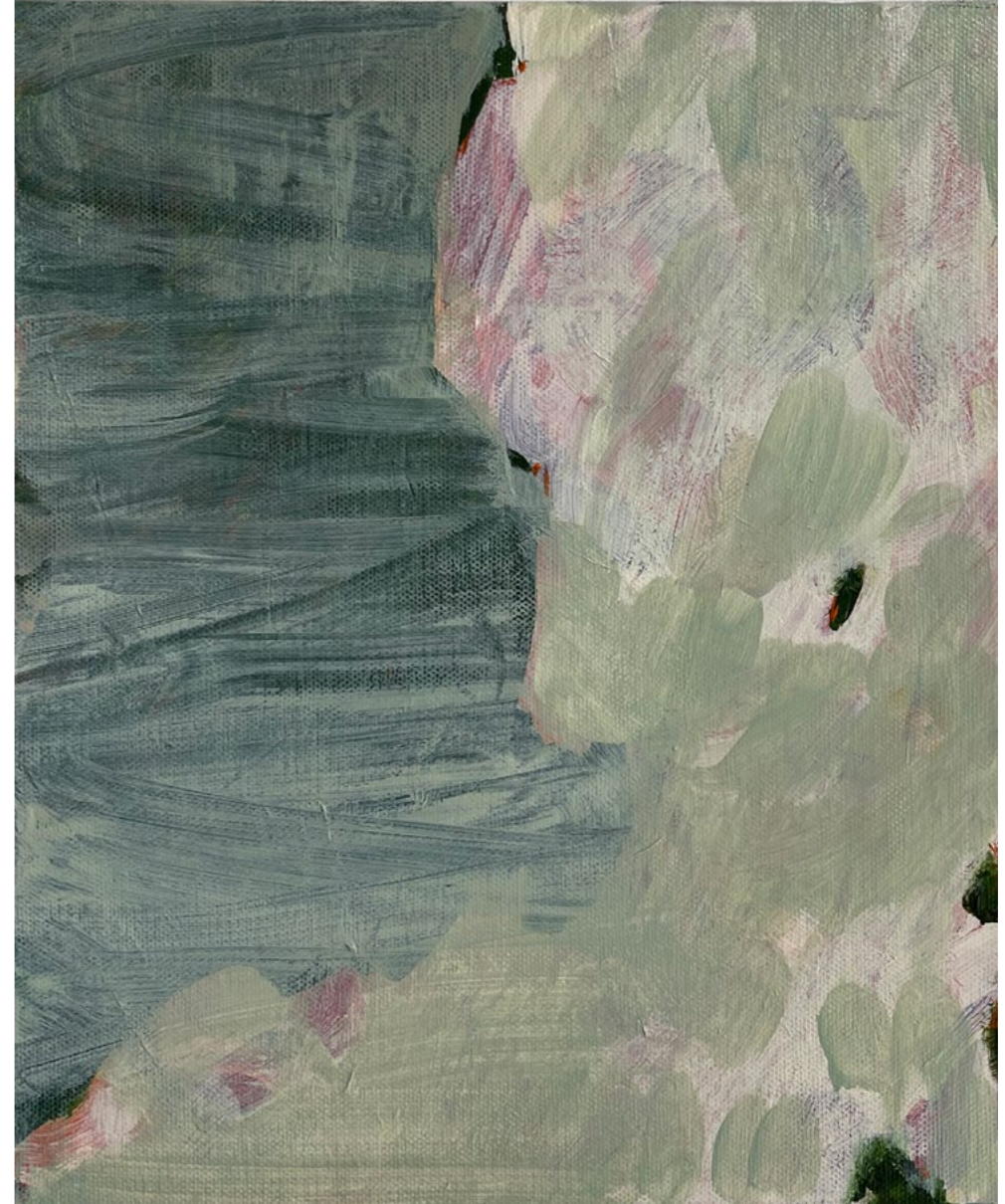
*Blue Thought In Green Shade* 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$790 Framed



*Absolutely Not* 2022  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 25 cm  
\$790 Framed

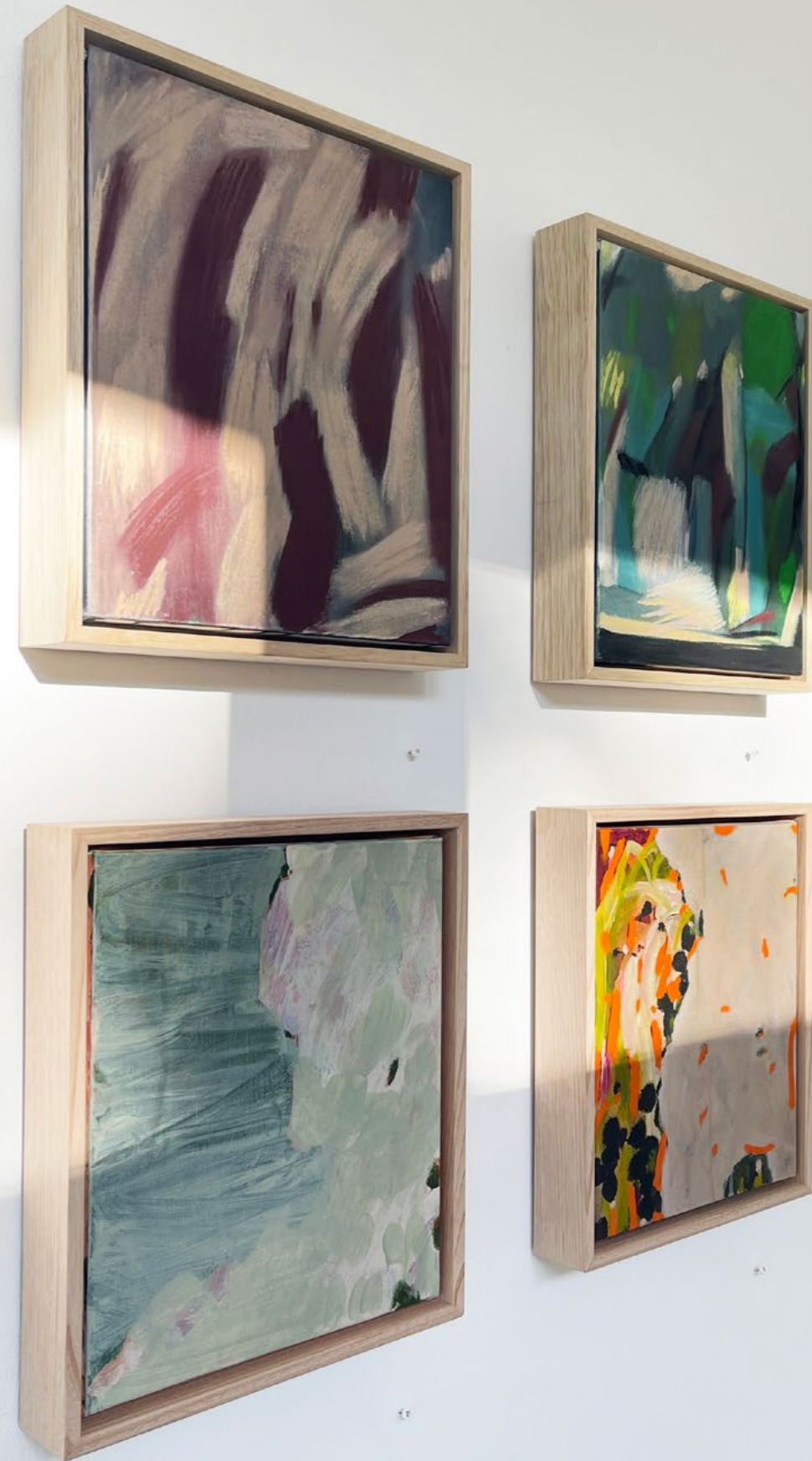


*Keyhole* 2023  
Acrylic and pastels on canvas  
30 × 25 cm  
\$790 Framed



*Rear Window* 2022  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 × 25 cm  
\$790 Framed

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# Natacha Arena

Natacha Arena's visual art practice centres on painting intuitively, referencing the natural and emotional world around her through the language of abstraction.

Natacha started her Fine Arts and Art History studies in Belgium and further studies in Singapore. She obtained a Bachelor of Art in Painting in 2009 and a Master's in Fine Arts in 2010. Natacha has been a finalist in different Art prizes in New York and Australia and has had solo shows in Belgium, Singapore and Australia. Natacha has travelled extensively in the Asia Pacific and Europe and has now settled in Brisbane, Meanjin.



## ORGANISED DISOBEDIENCE OF THE RULES

— Milenko Prvački

There are two approaches to a work of art: neutral and subjective.

I would not be able to write about Natacha's paintings from the side, as a casual observer who ignores the history of her practice of her art with some academic connections at her Master's studies at LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore and extended friendship.

By chance, I witnessed her involvement in making paintings and art. But, to analyse it, I will use my "dictionary" structure.



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Lara Furst

Design Designfront

Not in alphabetic order.

**Natacha:** Natacha is a girl's name of Russian origin. This name means "born on Christmas day" or "birthday of the Lord." While it could be perfect for a holiday baby, it also is perfect for the parent looking for a more contemporary influence.

**Arena:** an arena, a scene for certain major historical events.

**Van Eyken:** is Natacha's husband's name, which complicates the situation even more.

**Painting:** a choice that in the twenty-first century limits everyone who knows something, knows how and wants to improve it without harming anyone, a choice for slowness, an oasis for learning and a real visual experiment.

Natacha explores the image and its possibilities and tries to stretch it to the unknown constantly.

Abstraction opens those doors and windows to her and gives her the opportunity for examination and hope.

**Narrative:** Natacha gives us her own personal narrative, which is positive and not difficult to see for lay people. It is not inferior to anyone, not even to herself. Her narrative is like an archaic record; you have to discover, fathom it and only then understand it. Even if you cannot read — enjoy the harmony of disharmony.

**Marks:** A general viewpoint is that as soon as your brush (or whatever tool or method you use) touches your canvas or paper, you are making a mark! Marks can be lines, scribbles, scratches, smudges, dots, dashes, patterns, textures. Natacha likes to confuse us. Her transformations from micro to macro are bold and unexpected.

**Gesture:** A movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head, to express an idea or meaning. Very important point: A painting is not only a reproduction of reality or the power of transforming an idea into a visual story, but also the "work" of the brain. Not just skill and hand.

**Mood:** Your mood is how you feel at a particular time.

Each picture is a reflection of her current state, an honest dig into herself. That disclosure does not reveal the "yellow" reality, but the wonderful vibrations it sends out.

Luckily, her moods aren't black and white. They have an incredible palette of greys, colours between extremes and banality.

**Space:** The concept of space is considered to be of fundamental importance to an understanding of the physical universe.

Although she can understand that meaning, Natacha willingly goes to the metaphysical space, that beautiful breeding ground of real artists.

**History:** History is, or should be, an attempt to re-think the past.

Natacha does not see it only as the past but participates in its creation.

**The End:** There is no end to it.

Milenko Prvački is one of Singapore's foremost artists and art educators, having taught at LASALLE College of the Arts since 1994. He was Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts for ten years and is currently a Senior Fellow at the College and Adjunct Professor at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. He participated in significant exhibitions, most notably the Biennale of Sydney in 2006. His work is in various private and public collections including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia.



[sidegallery.com.au](http://sidegallery.com.au)