

NEW YORK ACADEMY OF ART

MFA 2021 Thesis

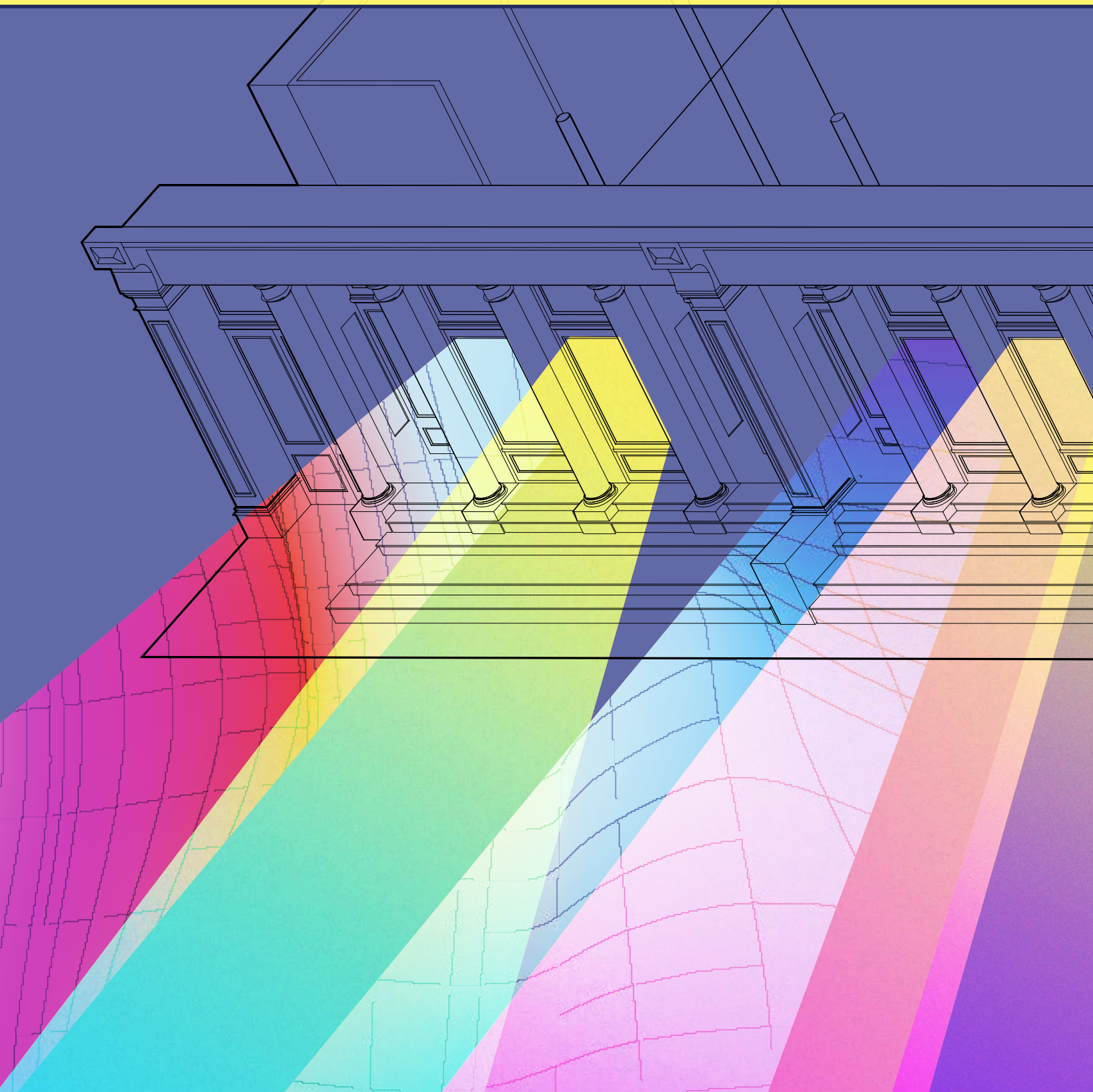


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Founded in 1982 by artists, scholars and patrons of the arts, including Andy Warhol, the New York Academy of Art is a graduate school and cultural institution that combines intensive technical training in the fine arts with active critical discourse.

The Academy believes that rigorously trained artists are best able to realize their artistic vision. Academy students are taught traditional methods and techniques and encouraged to use these skills to make vital contemporary art. Through major exhibitions, a lively speaker series and an ambitious curriculum, the Academy serves as a creative and intellectual center for all artists dedicated to highly skilled, conceptually aware figurative and representational art.

New York Academy of Art 2021 Thesis Exhibition

Walter Robinson

What is it that we like so much about paint? The physical stuff, the pigment itself, foregrounded in abstract art, provides an elemental, visceral connection with the natural world. The New York Academy of Art is known for figuration, though among the 46 artists in the class of 2021 and the three Chubb Fellows, a handful engages directly with abstraction. In **Lingbo Zhu's** tiny ink on paper titled *-N*, concentrated earth tones flow and puddle as if a model of geological alchemy. Earth hues also mark the six-foot-wide *Reclining Nude* by **Daniel Carlini**, who builds up a rough abstract surface of concrete and construction adhesive as well as oil and acrylic pigments, for a surface suggesting barren earth, not obviously marked by the human touch or human tools. The title with its synesthesia moves away from the purely visual, an interest seen in several of the works here. That timeless, primordial feeling we associate with expressive abstraction is also part of the pen and ink drawing by **Leo Kang** titled *Book 2 #76*, in which abstract black trceries both mark the movement of the artist's hand, purposeful and impulsive, and summon up the painterly illusion of a primitive cave-like space. By contrast, the arabesque of biomorphic and rectilinear forms in the five-foot-tall oil *Engineer* by **Dayana Beisenova** seem modernistic and look to the future. The imagery suggests both the rationality of mathematics and the epic dimensions of science fiction.

Needless to say, the tactile qualities of paint (and clay, and other art materials), so important in abstraction, remain at play in figurative art as a kind of constant. An elision from the abstract to the figurative characterizes *Somewhere off Glaneuse Road* by **Wilba Simson**, a large -- almost eight foot wide -- abstracted landscape in which painterly marks -- baroque brushstrokes -- posit an uncanny otherworldly activity out in a field that is barely indicated, though "barely" is enough. Clearly, many images of the land can pictorially approach abstraction. The realistic charcoal drawing of a watery surface patterned with foam by **Rohini Sen**, titled *Becoming*, doubles as an irregular pattern of dark and white receding into the distance. Sen's drawing of a sea hiding unknown depths is a witty play on the sense of surface and depth that is central to modernist abstraction.

For portrait painters, direct address is the challenge -- the face must imply more than what we see -- and the effect can be uncanny and atavistic. *Abyss*, a tiny naturalistic oil on panel by **Anita Clipston**, presents the closely framed, weathered visage of a woman whose thoughts, somehow, seem far distant.

The work invokes the ever-subtle mechanics of human communication. The small oil portrait *Soft Boy* by **Santiago Galeas** gives us a realistic image of a pensive young man, certainly masculine in all his features, but adds floral attributes, red and pink flowers, suggesting a more complicated male passion. In **Djilas Gomez's** pencil portrait in dark shades of gray, titled *Kintsugi*, a young man's meditative visage seems to maculate and merge with an irregular stone mosaic background that also sprouts a trio of flowers. Unsettling the boundary between representation and abstraction, **Sophia Weisensel's** five-foot-wide oil portrait *Claudia* tightly frames an intensely realistic rendering of a young woman's face by a bright aqua field. It's as if she's looking out of, or up from, a flat pool of water, though the background doubles as a completely abstract field that presses in on and threatens to overwhelm the human subject.

The intricacies of a composition can subsume identity, even in portraits. For her self-portrait, a small oil titled *Ride to Live*, **Allison Riback** sidesteps the imperative of a direct gaze, hiding herself behind the titular slogan and distortions of a chromed motorcycle gas tank, though you can make her out, in her Led Zeppelin t-shirt, taking the photo with her phone, a premier example of latter-day Photorealism for the selfie era. **Zoë Davis** discards direct representation in favor of simplified forms in *Girl I*, a small gouache that excludes facial features in favor of a few, almost abstract elements -- turquoise earrings, terra-cotta skin. Still, the personality is vivid. The self-portrait by **Phil Eliot Padwe** is patched together via collage and sewing, and has the subject looking away from the viewer to feature a "zygomatic emphasis," in the words of the title. The elaborate topography of Padwe's cheekbone is upstaged by the several days growth of beard, whose pattern is a witty, real life crosshatch.

Two artists give us hyper-realistic portraits of standing women. **Hannah Murray's** *Robini* depicts a young woman in a golden gown, mink and martini at the ready. She leans against an ornate table with a pseudo-primitivist weaving on the wall behind her. Her unwavering gaze is the kind of challenge we know from the pulp imagery of a half-century past. **Ellie Kayu Ng's** five-foot-tall oil, *I Wish You Would Listen like a Mannequin*, is overtly multilayered: an elegant young woman -- the artist? -- surrounded by luxuriously patterned fabrics, looks out at us without expression, in the company of the titular

mannequin, whose bulblike head is black and featureless. The scene is lit as if by a camera flash. Mannequins have no personalities of their own, of course, other than as forms for human projections. By contrast, in **Heather V McLeod's** realistic oil, titled *Untitled*, we have an interior scene with no human figure, though plenty of human presence. A porcelain figurine is posed precariously on the seat edge of a Regency-style chair with a skewed leg, while a small painting of an ear hangs on the wall nearby. One inanimate object listens for the sound of another in a vertigo of interior design.

Sculpture preoccupies a minority of the NYAA class of 2021, but the works do take up positions on the familiar spectrum from classicism to the modern, now so decentered by postmodern pluralism. The half-draped, larger than life-size nude male *Standing Figure* by **Christopher Kunk** is perfectly classical, except, perhaps, for a smart reversal of gender. **Joseph Zovickian's** terra cotta *Portrait of David* is a traditional bust of a hipster subject, placing it in a sort of temporal limbo. **Regiane Donadio's** pale clay sculpture *Stride* depicts a female torso in torque, a "core" that seems pulled in contradictory, almost spastic directions, an all too apt demonstration of the torsions of female sexuality. The small votary *Stone Figures* made from soapstone by **Bryna McCann** have simplified heads with bodies that trail off, as if representatives of spirits that no longer walk in our world. Sometimes the quest for primal authenticity can have a contemporary presence, as in the stoneware relief by **Jessica Hernandez**, titled *Atabey, Espiritu de la Madre Naturaleza*. Atabey is the supreme goddess of the Taino people, and the work is a kind of invocation of indigenous premodern spirit. With **Irina Lakshin's** *Profit Maker*, a two-foot-tall, fired clay figure of a teddy wearing a necktie and holding a calculator riding a dog wearing a Covid mask with a Band-Aid on its leg, we are firmly in the realm of the ironically corporate postmodern.

One notable goal of the graphic arts is to produce memorable images, eye-catching and evocative, like **Gabriela Cohen's** *Deeply Rooted*, a woodcut of a gnarled low-branching tree -- I think of ancient olives -- whose limbs turn into tightly twisted lariats of what might be hair, which reach down to touch the earth. In *Glitch*, a small oil tondo by **Alexandra Zarins Rolls**, a pair of pink hands are literally threaded together by an obsessive skein of bright green embroidery thread, ties that are too intimate and very tight.

Painting likes to capture those moments familiar to us all, as in *At Night*, a pastel by **Caroline Gates**, a bedtime scene that shows an arm reaching over to find only an empty pillow. You can feel the wondering at the absence.

Gunslingers, a large watercolor diptych by **Jed Webster Smith**, features realistic renderings of two men, cropped at the torso, wielding old-fashioned six-shooters. One has dark skin and the other light skin, and they're posed back-to-back, the tactical position we know from buddy movies when our heroes are outgunned and outnumbered.

All art is an expression, though since the early 20th century we have had a style that is generically "expressionist," typically involving elements such as pronounced color and an agitated surface that seems to reflect an agitation in the mind of the maker. Chubb Fellow, **Lydia Baker's** color pencil drawing, *They Found Grace in the Soil*, features dancers (and a dog) in an Arcadian landscape rendered not in realistic detail but rather in pure hues of joyous feeling. **Nathan Brutzman's** *Blued Grief*, a four-by-three-foot oil, is an emotional representation of a naked unshaven man -- Cain, perhaps? -- collapsed in primal grief, the expressive brushstrokes and overall blue coloration suggesting a cold darkness. The maternal figure and child in *Serie Maternity* by **Leonardo Rodriguez** are built up through a motley of fabrics and mixed mediums, giving the image a material reality, a contemporaneity emphasized by the Covid mask on the mother figure. The human interpellation with nature is the subject of Chubb Fellow, **Luján Pérez Hernández's** large woodblock *When These Vessels Felt Like Giants (Mirándote, Mirándome)*, which superimposes a mournful face on the body of a vase of twining flowers. The immersion of the identifiable self in a mélange of uncertainty seems to be the theme of **Elena A. Ulansky's** black-and-white *Araya*, which shows a fragment of a dreamer's face set in an abstract Cubist space. *Woodside* by **Julie Chandra Walsh** is a small drawing in soft-edged gray tones of an essential urban scene -- the view into an airshaft between buildings -- featuring the image of a moody young man and, moving into the oneiric, a tumbling Chagallesque figure of a woman with a broom. **Maggie Macgregor's** oil *A Bright Cold Day* emphasizes the formalism of her classic subject -- a figure in a bath surrounded by geometric fixtures -- with a bird's eye vantage of a composition dominated by a checkerboard tiled floor. In his large drawing *Untitled (The Blood of a Poet)* -- a reference no doubt to Cocteau's high-Surrealist film from 1930 -- **Carl-Edouard Keita** devises an unusual space that is both schematic and emotional, via two transparent figures whose intertwined, sectioned bodies sprout futuristic forms as they may or may not engage in some intimate activity.

Groups of three, with their overtones of myth, are an abiding theme in figural painting. The three figures in *Contrition* by **Alicia Leigh Lang** sit in an uncertain space with their backs to each other. Though turned away, each gives a sidelong glance at another, in a puzzle of the gaze suggesting shame and regret. **Lauren Hamilton's** three muses in *On Ballston*, an oil on canvas, are at the beach, communing with nature in the only way contemporary bathers know how -- in sunglasses, patterned swim-suits, and a blanket on the sand. In his small oil titled *Converge*, **Jeffrey L. Wood** places three figures -- or is it three manifestations of a single person? -- deep in library stacks, where the subjects' framing is supplied by rows of books on tall shelves, as if to hint at the postmodernist notion that we are all but texts.

Art connects desire and the senses, and though painting is largely visual and tactile, it does indulge in synesthesia. The sense associated most closely with desire, with hunger, is taste. In **Holly Blum's** tondo, *A Sense of Things*, a pink sphere covered with open mouths, tongues out at the ready, floats in the clouds in an eternally avid quest. **Kayley Kemp's** small oil *Cherrybomb* gives grotesquerie its all via a grimacing mouth dripping with blood, a motif that uses painterly technique to turn away from fine art towards horror culture.

Narrative scenes -- pictures that tell a story -- may well be the apogee of figurative painting. **Yang Du** titles her animated Arcadian view of two swimmers among oversized foliage at waterside -- are they sprites? -- as *The Way*, aligning the path to the swimming hole with the way to some possible Nirvana. The subject of **Alessandra Hogan's** pastel *The Yellow Paper* -- a dramatic auto accident featuring two victims and three nonplussed observers -- is obvious, though what happens next seems uncertain. **Timon YC I's** oil titled *Rainy Day*, depicting the mysterious patterns of light and shade on a slickered figure under a sidewalk construction shed, feels both metaphysical and wet. Swirling emotional states are graphically suggested in **Anastasia Lopoukhine's** pen and ink work, *Falling into Sleep*, whose depiction of a body embedded in multi-textured bedding easily suggests the drift of consciousness into unintelligibility. **Carlos-Abrahan Pineda Palma**, in his militantly titled oil tondo, *Put the Money in My Hand and I Will Do the Things You Want Me To*, reveals an everyday scene of recycling bins in a back alley, though when you zoom in "Blow-Up"-style you can make out two figures in the shadows where something -- a sex act? -- is taking place.

Narratives can be solemn, or they can be ribald and ridiculous. A tangle of legs and arms crowd the composition of Chubb Fellow, **Maud Madsen's** large acrylic painting *Flightless Bird*, as a couple engages in a bit of bedroom high jinks, the woman being held aloft by the feet and hands of a man lying on his back in bed. Stars dot the ceiling and a rainbow arches over the door. They're blue, like twilight. Everyday perils of domestic life feature in **Erin Milez** comic *Trip Wire*, a smallish blue-toned painting that zooms in on the torsos and agitated limbs of a couple entangled by the vining cord of a vacuum cleaner. The thing seems to have a life of its own, and wraps seductively around her big toe, as if in tribute to the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

As we've seen here, semiotic puzzles and sophisticated self-reference are integral to much figuration today. A kind of philosophical metaphor characterizes **Matt Meserve's** *Dialectic*, an oil on birch panel that depicts a chess set in a kind of haze. The game has already begun, but not all positions are legible, making an eventual synthesis far from certain. *View from the 21st*, a small oil by **Julie Barbeau**, illustrates a couple departing from a tottering cityscape, like Adam and Eve after the Fall, but the image is done as cut-paper silhouettes on a windowsill, with a "real" city view showing behind. The figures suggest the untrustworthy cast shadows in Plato's Cave, and the picture's title poses a droll question: Is the view from the 21st floor or the 21st century? **Melanie Berardicelli's** minute-long video animation, *At The Met (Scene 2 Still)* -- represented here by a still -- pictures with paint and line what might be called the three levels of everyday culture: great artworks that represent important historical moments; the institutional frame of the museum that preserves and presents these icons; and the transitory, all-too-human daily visitors to these real and conceptual spaces.

2021 Chubb Postgraduate Fellows

Lydia Baker

Maud Madsen

Luján Pérez Hernández



Lydia Baker
They Found Grace in the Soil, 2020
colored pencil on Rives BFK paper
22 x 30 inches



Maud Madsen
Flightless Bird, 2020
acrylic on linen
58 x 78 inches



Luján Pérez Hernández
When These Vessels Felt Like Giants (Mirándote, Mirándome), 2021
multi-block woodcut, handmade oil based inks, water based oil paint,
oil stick pastels, magic sculpt, and wire on Evolon paper
80 x 58 inches
edition unique

2021 Master of Fine Arts Graduates

Julie Barbeau

Dayana Beisenova

Melanie Berardicelli

Holly Blum

Nathan Brutzman

Daniel Carlini

Anita Clipston

Gabriela Cohen

Zoë Davis

Regiane Donadio

Yang Du

Santiago Galeas

Caroline Gates

Djilas Gomez

Lauren Hamilton

Jessica Hernandez

Alessandra Hogan

Timon YC I

Leo Kang

Carl-Edouard Keita

Kayley Kemp

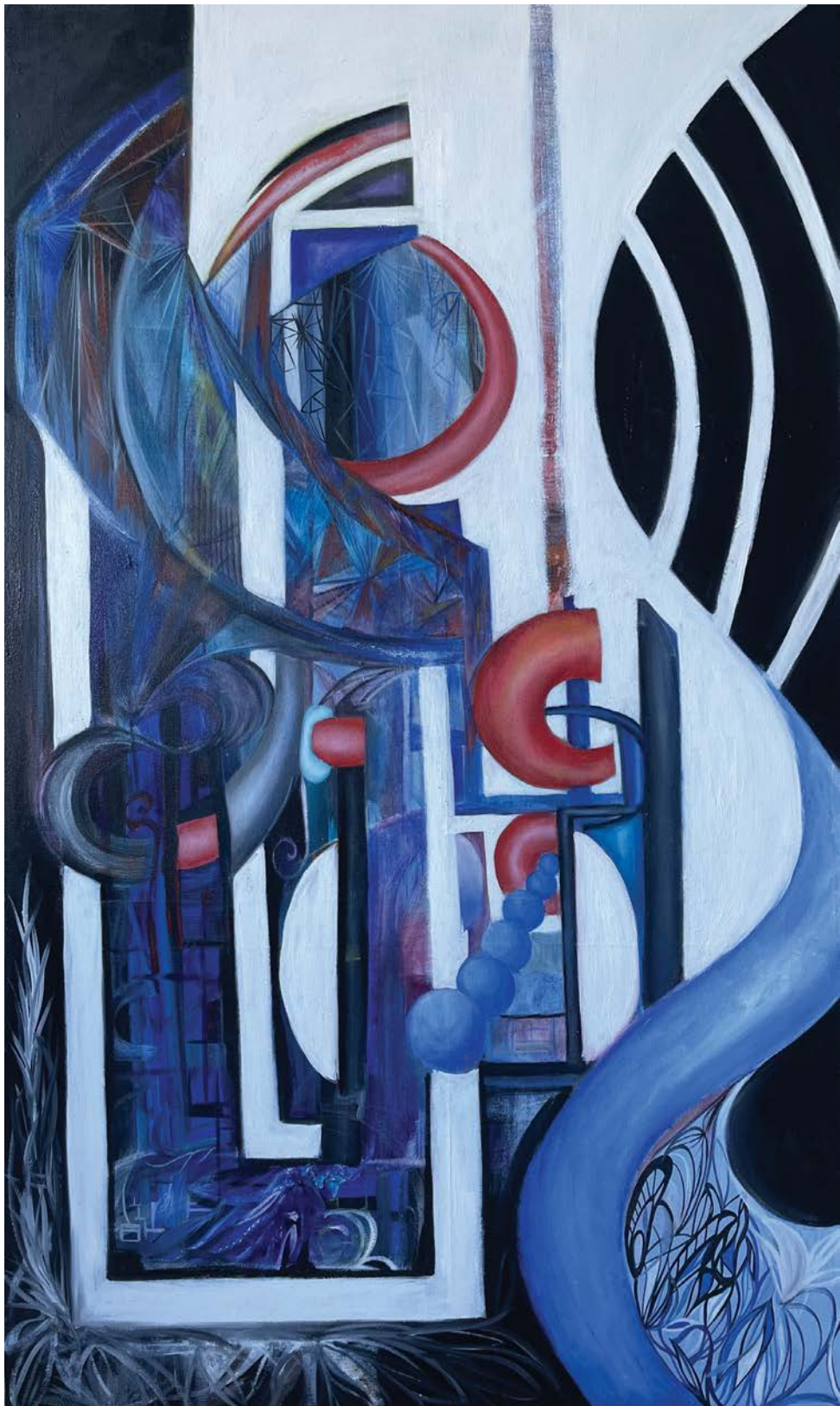
Christopher Kunk

Irina Lakshin

Alicia Leigh Lang
Anastasia Lopoukhine
Maggie Macgregor
Bryna McCann
Heather V McLeod
Matt Meserve
Erin Milez
Hannah Murray
Ellie Kayu Ng
Phil Eliot Padwe
Carlos-Abrahan Pineda Palma
Allison Riback
Leonardo Rodriguez
Alexandra Zarins Rolls
Rohini Sen
Wilba Simson
Jed Webster Smith
Elena A. Ulansky
Julie Chandra Walsh
Sophia Weisensel
Jeffrey L. Wood
Lingbo Zhu
Joseph Zovickian



Julie Barbeau
View from the 21st, 2020
oil on canvas
24 x 30 inches



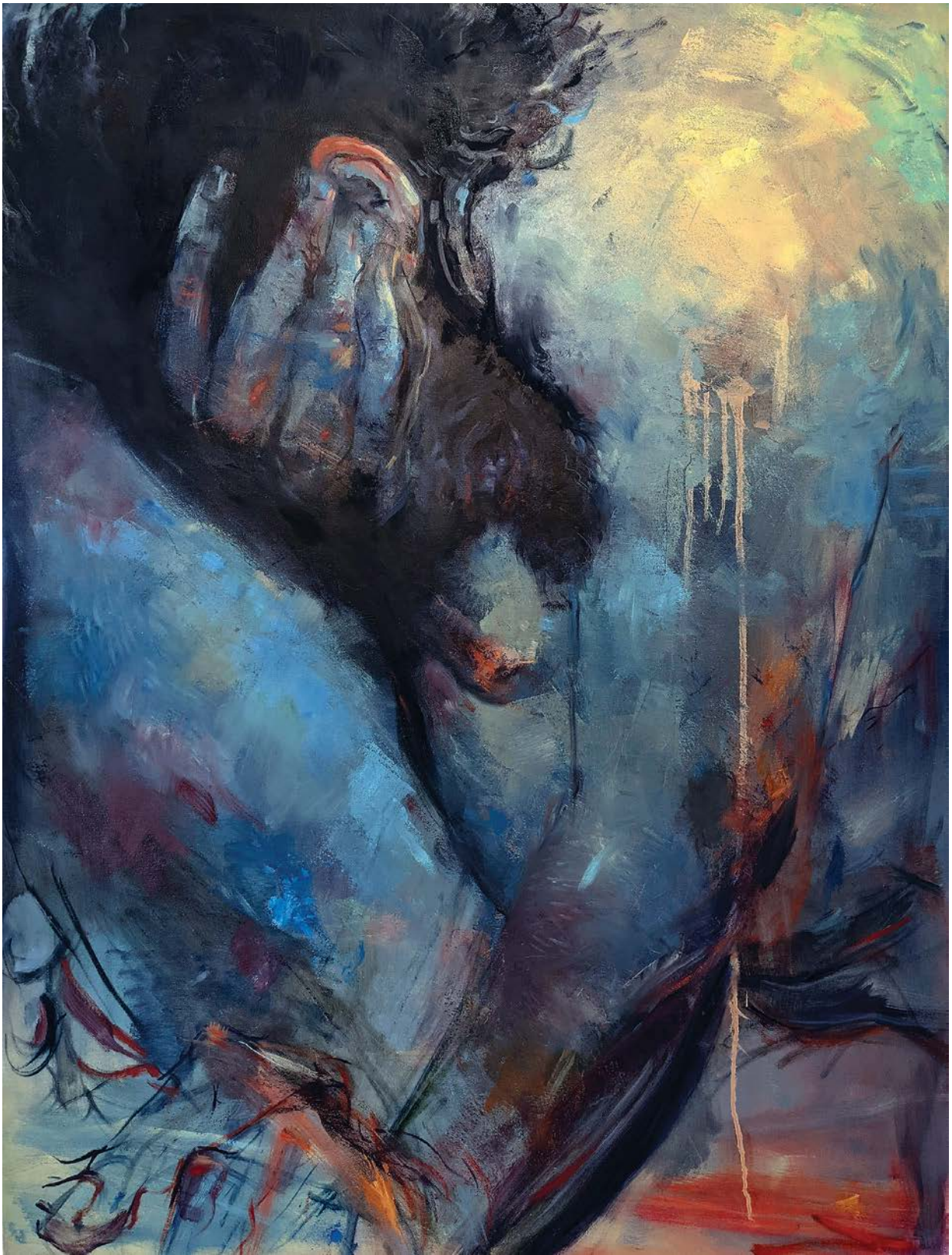
Dayana Beisenova
Engineer, 2021
oil on canvas
64 x 38 inches



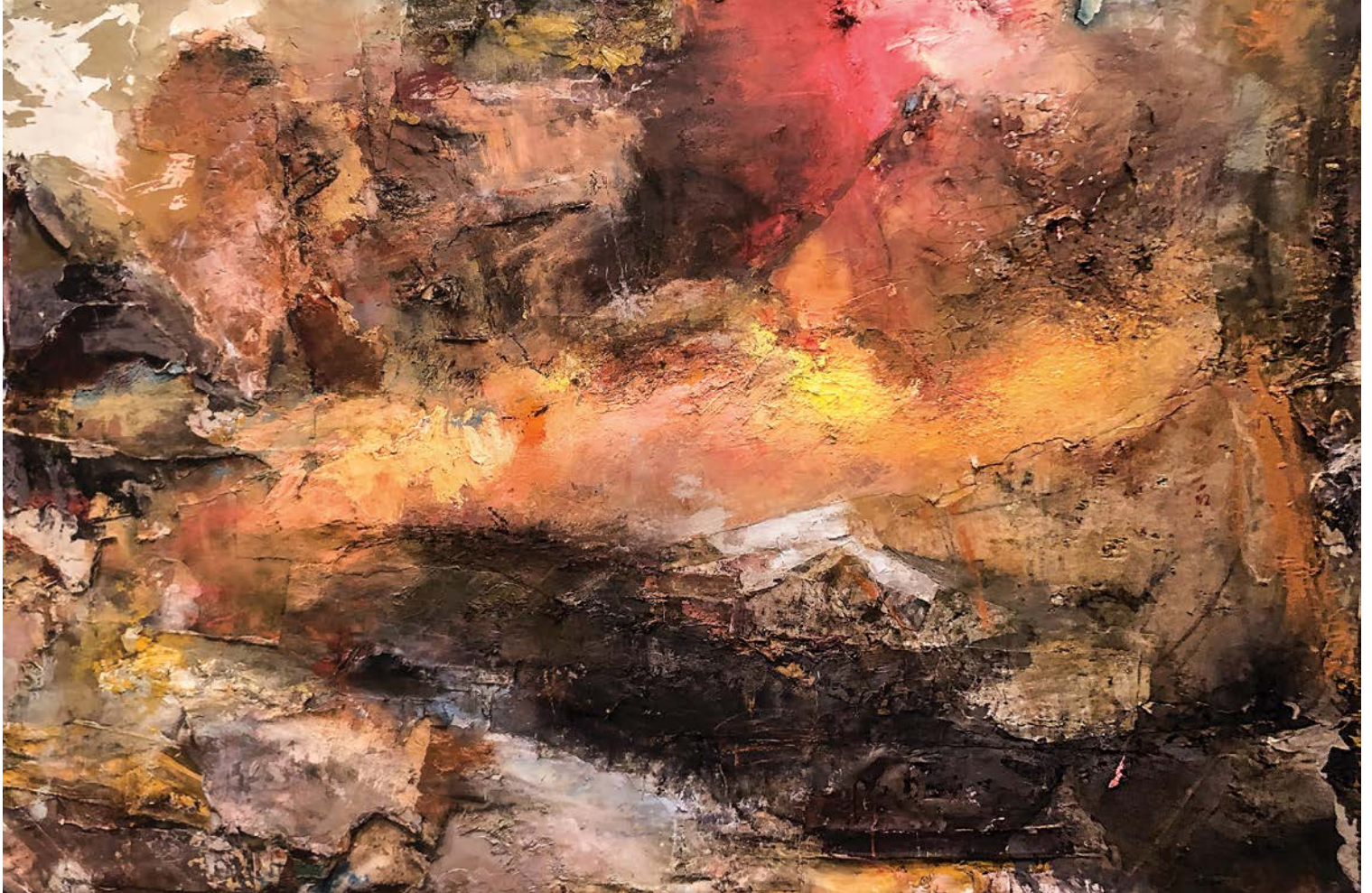
Melanie Berardicelli
At The Met (Scene 2 Still), 2021
image still from video, cel animation
1:00 minute



Holly Blum
A Sense of Things, 2021
oil on linen
24 inches diameter



Nathan Brutzman
Blued Grief, 2020
oil on canvas
48 x 36 inches



Daniel Carlini
Reclining Nude, 2021
oil, acrylic, pastel, construction adhesive, and charcoal, and canvas on panel
48 x 72 inches



Anita Clipston
Abyss, 2020
oil on panel
7 x 5 inches



Gabriela Cohen
Deeply Rooted, 2021
woodcut print on paper
33 x 48 inches
edition 1 of 10



Zoë Davis
Girl 1, 2020
gouache and ink on watercolor paper
12 x 9 inches



Regiane Donadio
Stride, 2021
terra-cotta
19 x 9 x 12 inches



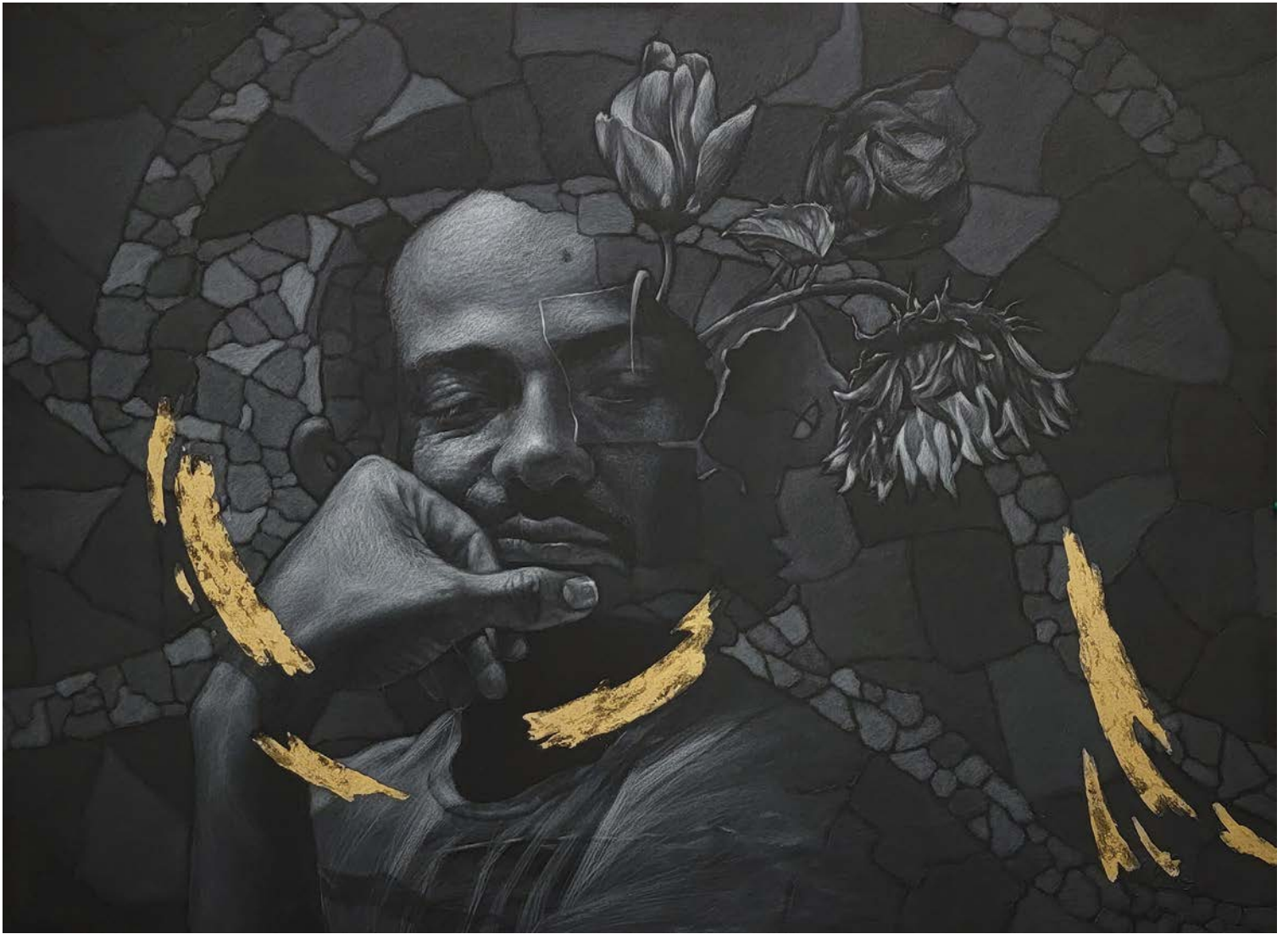
Yang Du
The Way, 2021
oil on canvas
36 x 30 inches



Santiago Galeas
Soft Boy, 2020
oil on canvas
16 x 12 inches



Caroline Gates
At Night, 2021
pastel on paper
18 x 23 inches



Djilas Gomez
Kintsugi, 2021
pencil and gold leaf on paper
22 x 30 inches



Lauren Hamilton
On Ballston, 2020
oil on canvas
30 x 40 inches



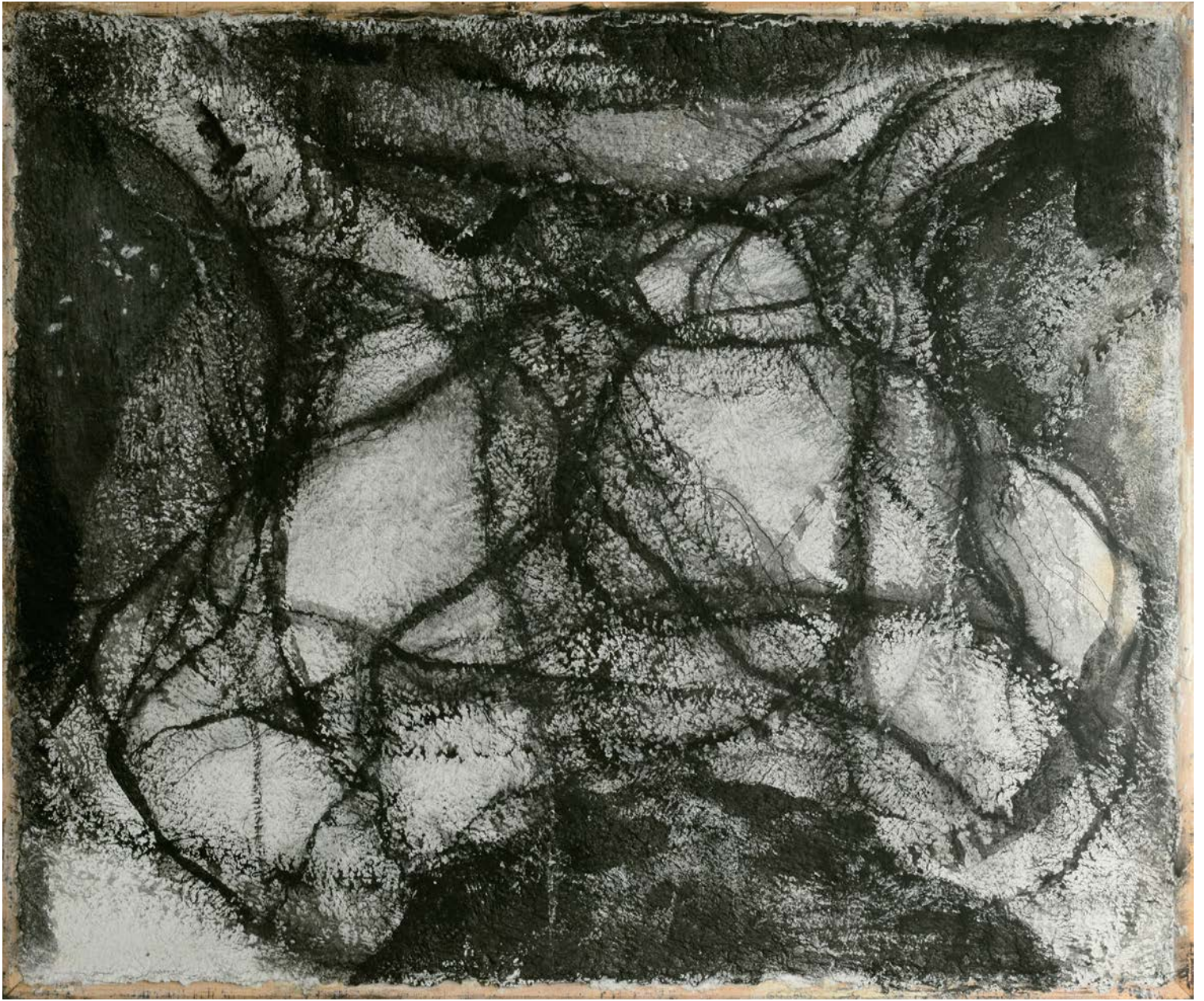
Jessica Hernandez
Atabey, Espiritu de la Madre Naturaleza, 2021
stoneware and high fire glaze
26 x 10.5 x 0.75 inches



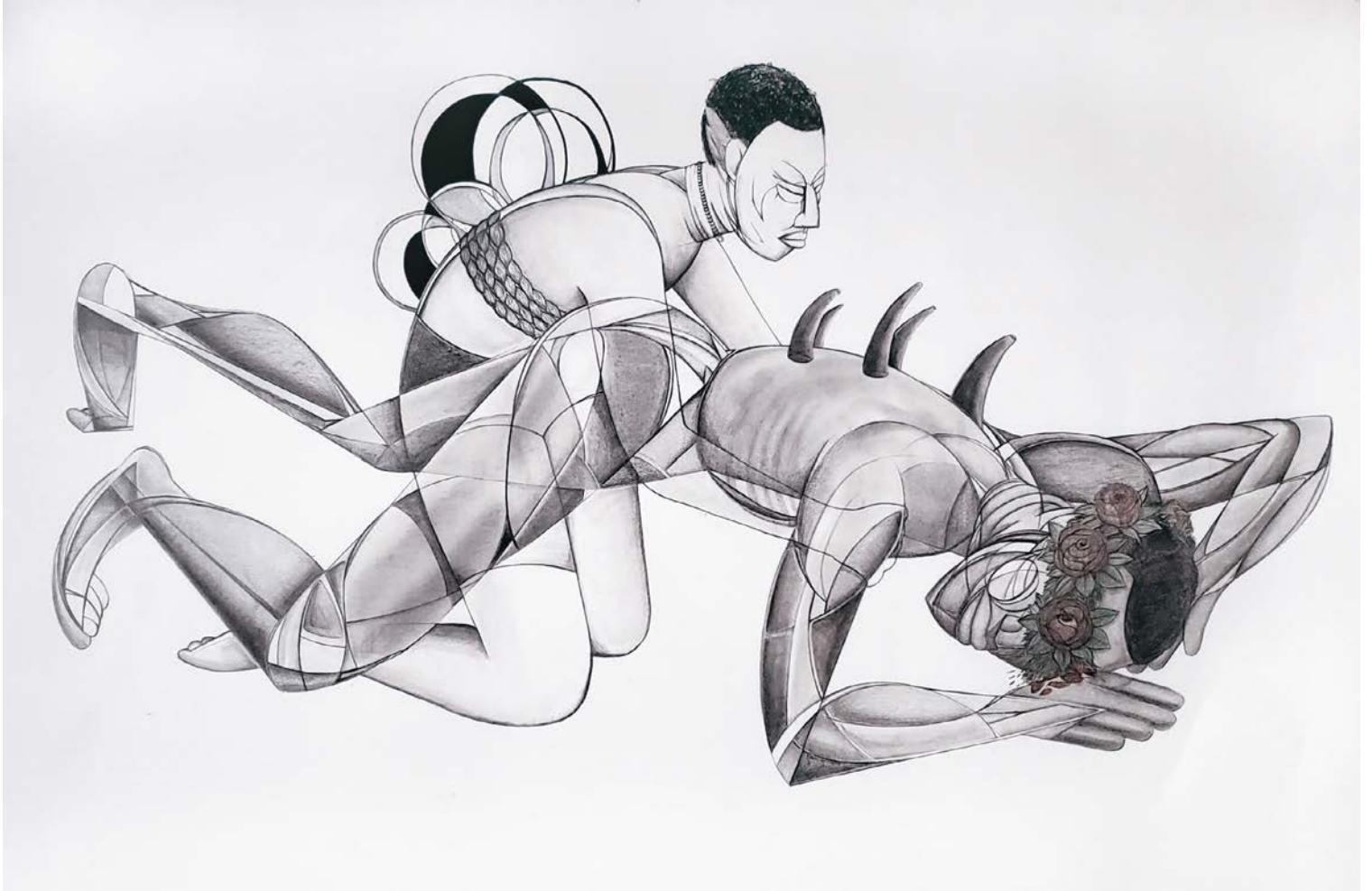
Alessandra Hogan
The Yellow Paper, 2021
chalk pastel on handmade paper
8 x 14 inches



Timon YC I
Rainy Day, 2020
oil on canvas
60 x 46 inches



Leo Kang
Book 2 #76, 2021
pen, ink, and gouache on paper mounted to panel
20 x 24 inches



Carl-Edouard Keita
Untitled (The Blood of a Poet), 2021
graphite, charcoal, colored pencil, and silver marker on paper
38 x 50 inches



Kayley Kemp
Cherrybomb, 2021
oil on canvas
20 x 16 inches



Christopher Kunk
Standing Figure, 2020
clay on armature
79 x 20 x 15 inches



Irina Lakshin
Profit Maker, 2020
fired clay covered with terra sigillata and blue stain
24 x 16 x 14.5 inches



Alicia Leigh Lang
Contribution, 2020
oil on canvas
24 x 36 inches



Anastasia Lopoukhine
Falling into Sleep, 2020
pen and ink on paper
54 x 54 inches



Maggie Macgregor
A Bright Cold Day, 2020
oil on canvas
48 x 36 inches



Bryna McCann
Stone Figures, 2021
soapstone
11 x 52 x 2.5 inches



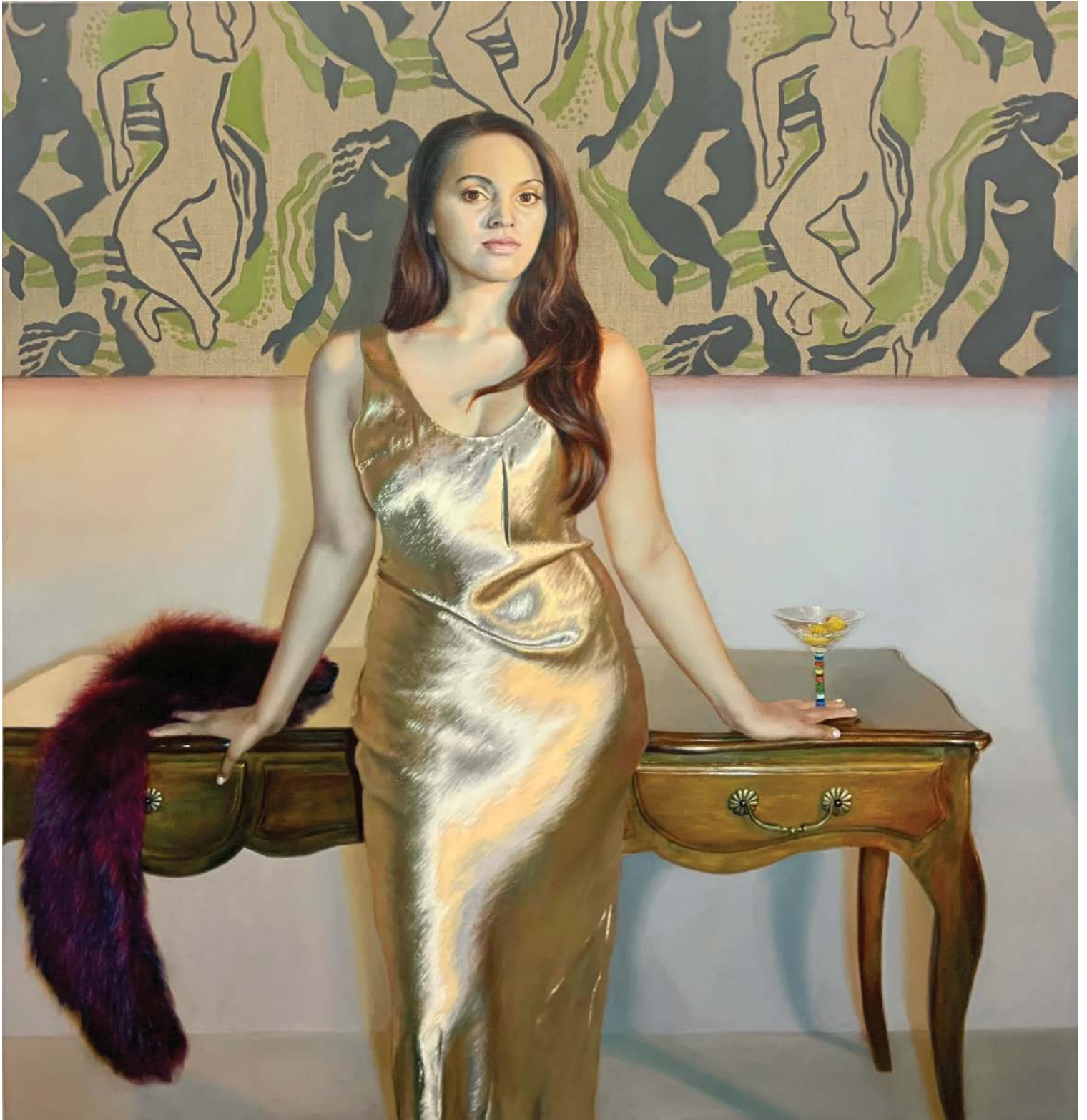
Heather V McLeod
Untitled, 2021
oil on panel
30 x 24 inches



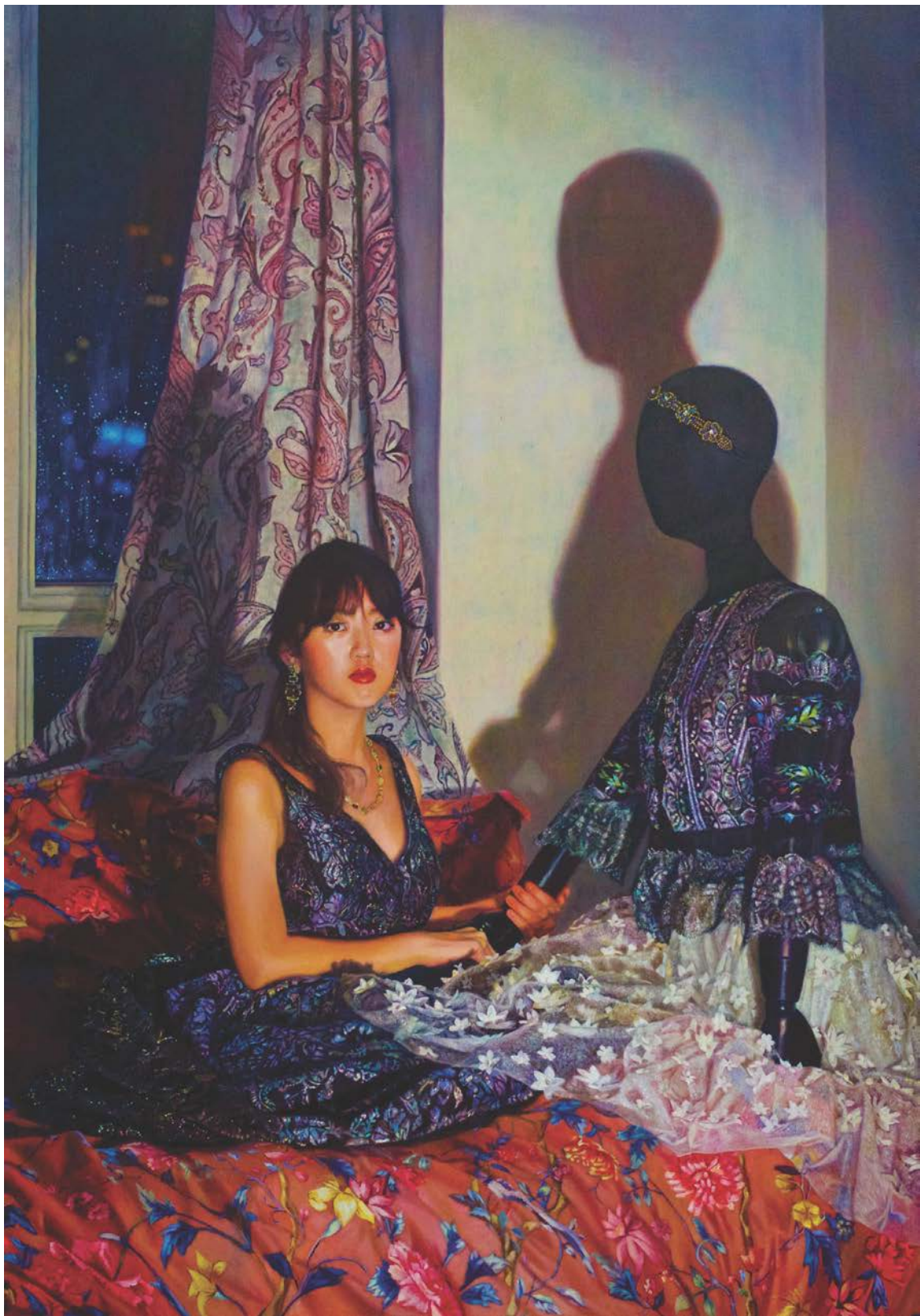
Matt Meserve
Dialectic, 2020
oil on cradled birch panel
20 x 24 inches



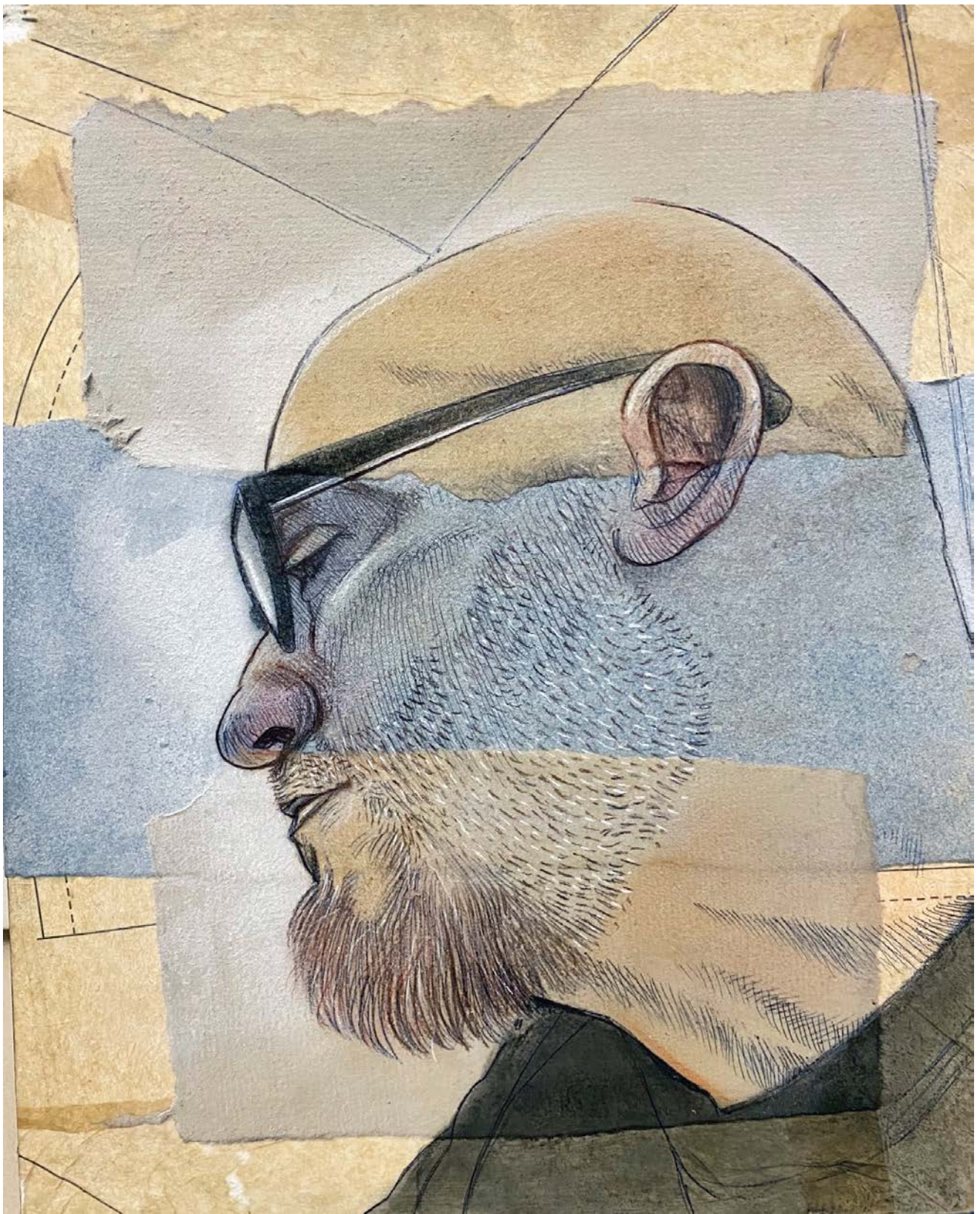
Erin Milez
Trip Wire, 2021
oil and acrylic on canvas
24 x 18 inches



Hannah Murray
Robini, 2021
oil on linen
48 x 46 inches



Ellie Kayu Ng
I Wish You Would Listen Like a Mannequin, 2021
oil on canvas
60 x 42 inches



Phil Eliot Padwe

Self-Portrait, March 2021 - Zygomatic Emphasis, 2021

ballpoint pen and soft pastel on handmade paper, and collaged sewing patterns mounted to board
10 x 8 inches



Carlos-Abraham Pineda Palma
Put the Money in My Hand and I Will Do the Things You Want Me To, 2021
oil on linen
48 inches diameter



Allison Riback
Ride to Live, 2021
oil on linen
8 x 10 inches



Leonardo Rodriguez
Serie Maternity, 2020
wood, paper, fabric, wood filling, sandpaper, acrylic, and oil on cardboard
30 x 22 inches



Alexandra Zarins Rolls
Glitch, 2020
oil and embroidery thread on canvas
12 inches diameter



Rohini Sen
Becoming, 2020
charcoal on paper
16 x 23 inches



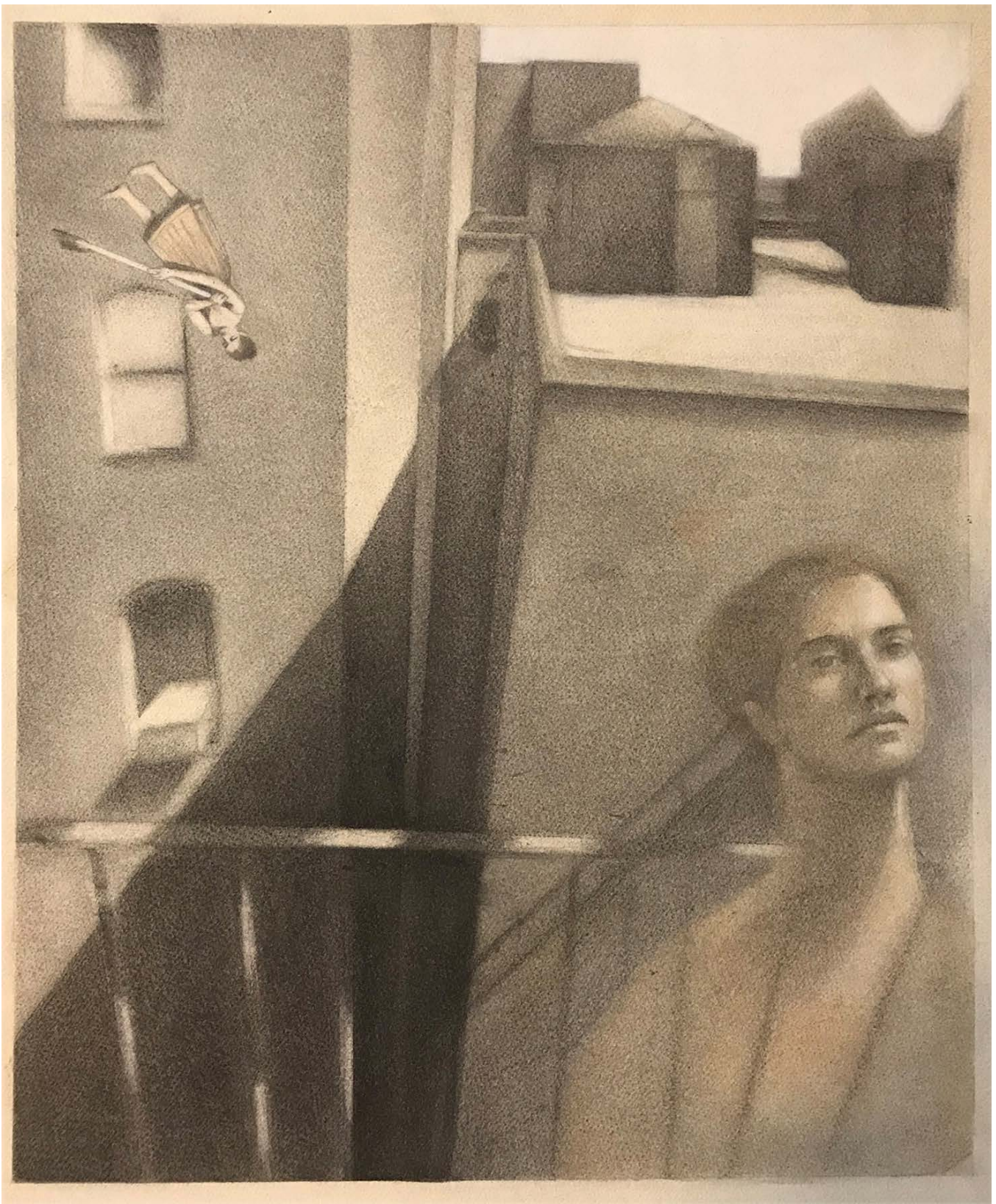
Wilba Simson
Somewhere off Glaneuse Road, 2021
charcoal, oil, and natural resin on canvas
62 x 92 inches



Jed Webster Smith
Gunslingers, 2020
watercolor on paper mounted to canvas
25 x 54 inches



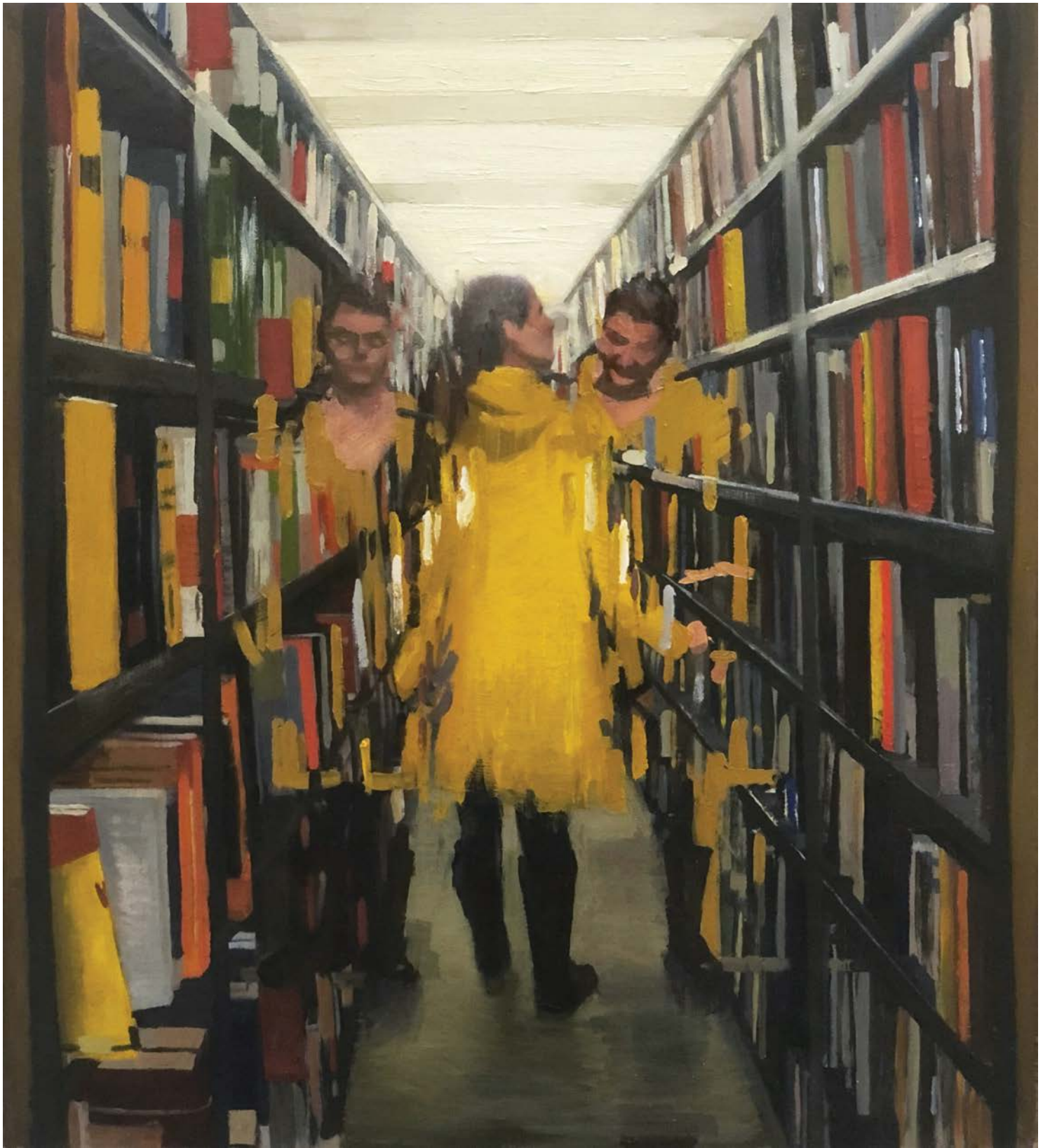
Elena A. Ulansky
Araya, 2021
ink, oil, and charcoal on panel
30 x 40 inches



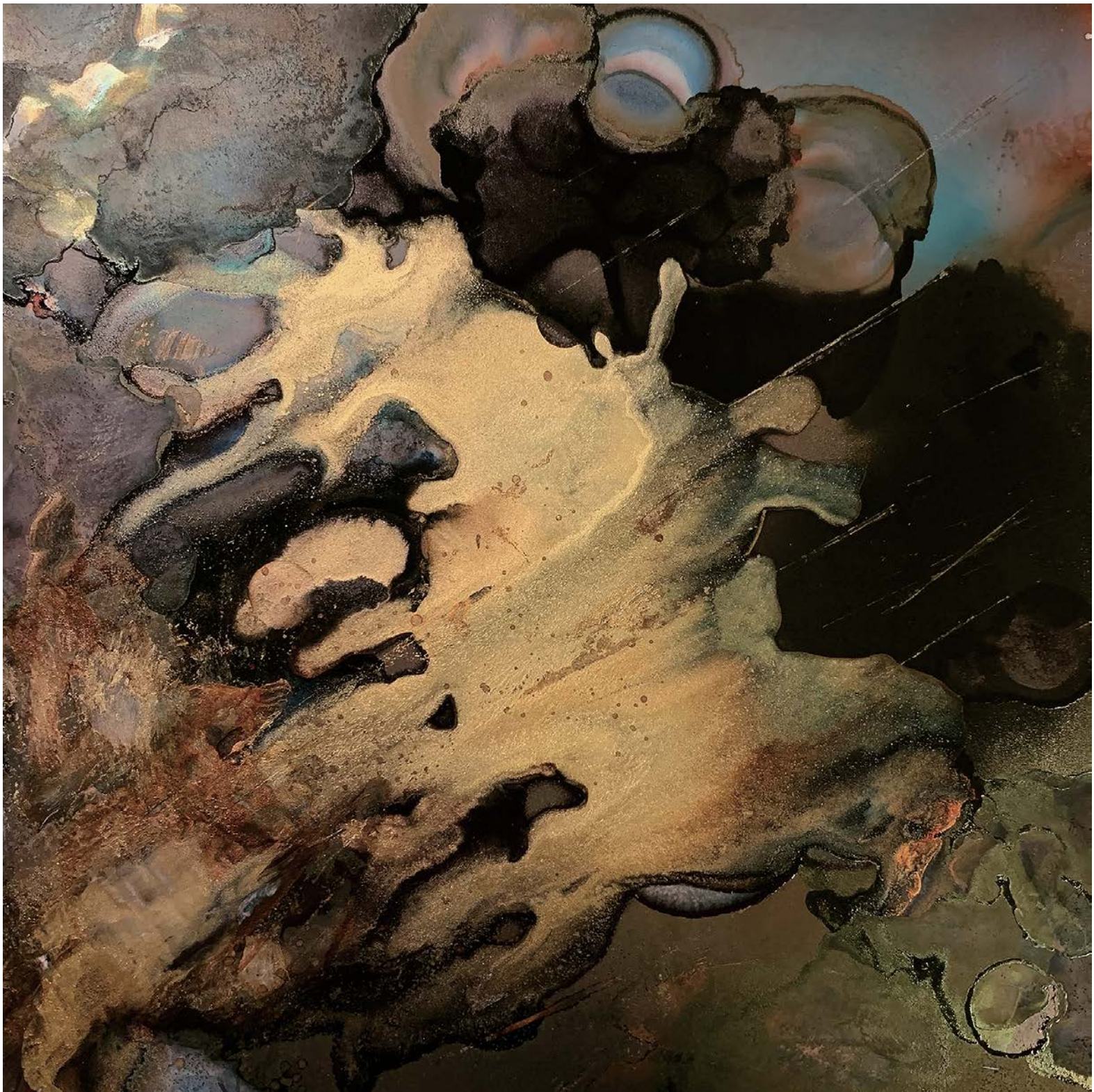
Julie Chandra Walsh
Woodside, 2021
graphite, charcoal, and ink wash on watercolor paper
21 x 15.5 inches



Sophia Weisensel
Claudia, 2020
oil on linen
36 x 60 inches



Jeffrey L. Wood
Converge, 2020
oil on panel
18 x 16 inches



Lingbo Zhu
-N, 2021
alcohol ink on Yupo paper
7 x 7 inches



Joseph Zovickian
Portrait of David, 2020
terra-cotta
31 x 25 x 12 inches

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Will Cotton, Painting

Vincent Desiderio, Drawing & Painting

Eric Fischl, Painting

Judy Fox, Sculpture

Edward Schmidt, Drawing

Tschabalala Self, Painting

Dexter Wimberly, Professional Practice

Alexi Worth, Critical Studies & Painting

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Catherine Howe, Director of Critical Studies

John Jacobsmeyer, Director of Printmaking

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John Belardo, Sculpture

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Kajahl Benes, Painting

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Sharon Butler, Critical Studies

Ariel Cabrera Montenojo, Painting

Deborah Chaney, Printmaking

Jiwoong Cheh, Sculpture

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Jon DeMartin, Drawing

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Elizabeth Glaessner, Drawing & Printmaking

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Amaya Gurrpide, Drawing

Rie Hasegawa, Printmaking

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Mu Pan, Drawing

Guno Park, Drawing

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Jiannan Wu, Sculpture

Zane York, Painting

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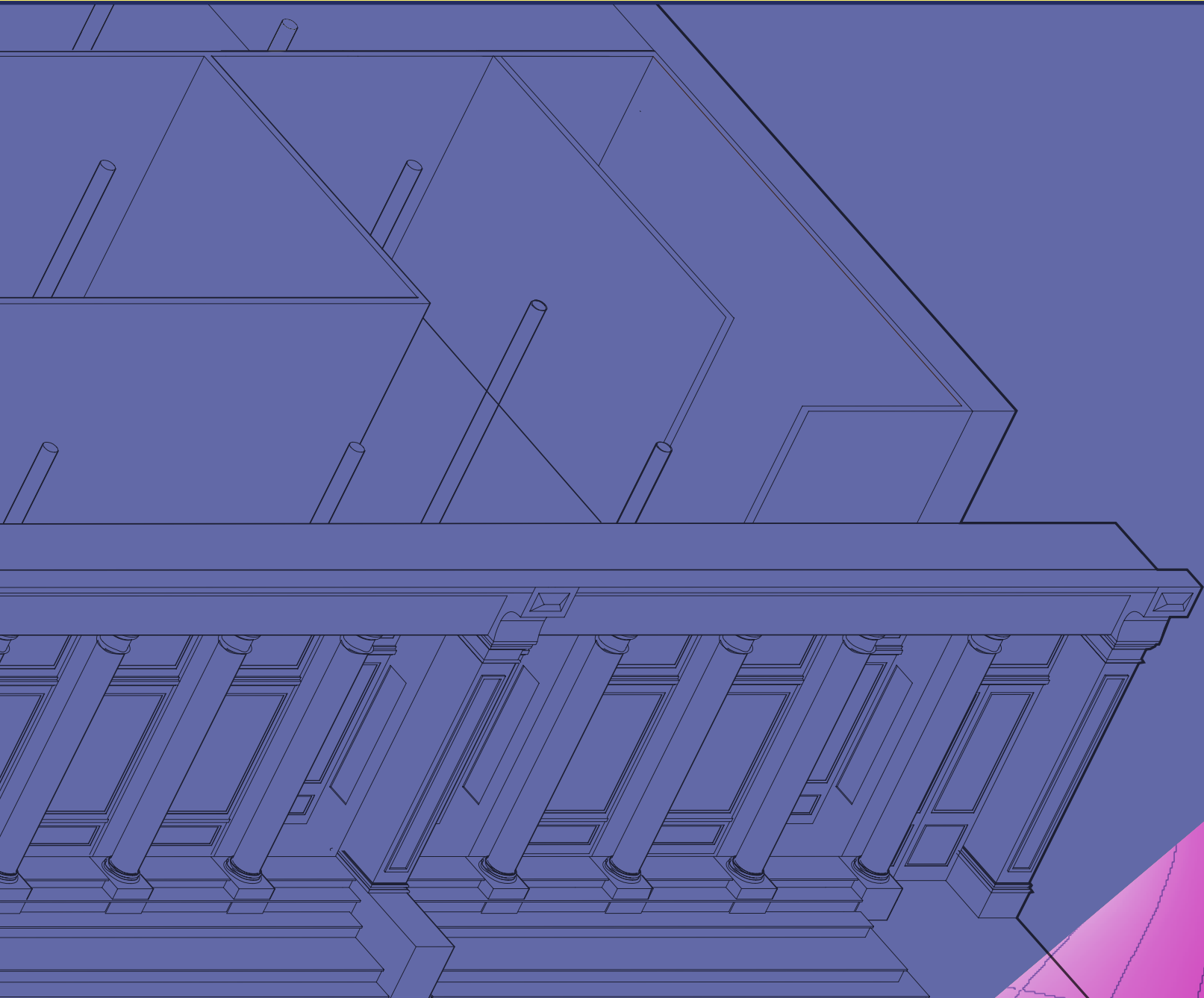
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Hilary Harkness

Michael Joo
Damian Loeb
Enoc Perez
Alexis Rockman
Bosco Sodi

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