



nara roesler

maria klabin
língua d'água
curated by galciani neves

nara roesler são paulo
opening
november 26, 2025

exhibition
nov 2025 – feb 2026

língua d'água

maria klabin

Painting is an experience that begins before painting itself. Painting drags time along with it. It interrogates vision, weighs what is seen, restores the visible and, through all this, invents new temporalities for the visible. Painting involves the body rising toward the act of painting, the movement of the brush between the fingers, the wandering of the eyes before what is about to emerge. Painting is the body's response to matter, a thought-gesture that negotiates with the visible, a flow of movements in which each gesture unfolds and summons the next.

These observations help us enter the creative processes of artist Maria Klabin. In her work, the act of painting and what is painted are contiguous; they touch and circumscribe one another, suggesting pathways and understandings. Her painting is enveloped in both time and body, stemming from a kind of visual recognition that the intimate space of daily life presents imagetic hypotheses that may undergo metamorphosis through colors and visualities, as if life migrated to canvas, though never immediately. Aware of these crossings, Maria organizes a compendium of images, as if they were flashes that become arguments carrying a meaning not immediately explicit, yet guiding a growing curiosity toward a thing or occurrence that might become a painting – and then once again an image, once again a thing, once again an event.

As sensitive as one's perception of things and one's search for occurrences in daily life might be, this chain of visual processing is dense and non-linear. "Something seen, re-seen, visually experienced many times becomes deeply internalized, almost an abstract idea, so absorbed it becomes," the artist explains, describing painting as a gesture through which reality is swallowed. There is a transformation of the seen thing into its poetic potential: something begins to be seen for what it might become. Photography was an exercise that trained Maria's gaze to detect such potential – a method for observing and retaining the world. Thus, the imagetic path took shape through photography, indicating what to select from what already exists in the world, from what happens and is witnessed. Following paths carved by photography that would lead Maria's artistic practice toward painting was a natural process, as if one language left traces upon the other.

Maria's artistic practice opened a field in which painting revealed itself to be connected to a specific logic of image construction: painting is constituted through its own senses as it is produced; each decision enacted by each gesture becomes a nearly endless sequence of compositions to which the painting is, inevitably, susceptible. Thus, we encounter multiple relationships in her works: of causality, affinity, lineage, and even an ambivalent relationship with the quotidian. "Painting does that: things do not cease to be what they are, but they become something more. A thing is more than itself when in a painting. It is more than it seems to be. For example, there is something in that apple that gestures toward many other things. There's

nothing fantastic, no trick – it is simply painting operating upon things," the artist argues.

Observing people, objects, places, watching how scenes take shape, seizing fascination in fleeting happenings and re-witnessing them without forcing what isn't there — these procedures structure her work. Maria reinvents the everyday, blending scenes, allowing herself to be carried by the movement of painting, absorbing the suggestions her gestures reveal. In the works comprising *Língua d'água*, her first solo exhibition in São Paulo, Maria presents textures once captured by her gaze as she inhabited a space, later reenacting them, because the world, at least once, suggested that it should be so. These are recreated visualities that interrogate how the world might receive them in countless other ways. Perhaps it is worth recalling Maurice Merleau-Ponty's reflection in *Eye and Mind*: "The eye sees the world, and what the world lacks to become painting, and what painting lacks to be itself, and, on the palette, the color the painting awaits; and once made, it sees the painting that answers all these lacks, and sees the paintings of others, other responses to other lacks" (1960).

Maria's paintings are dense, with simultaneous events and images that do not divide themselves. In the superposition of layers, everything coexists, forming a space in which the components can move, inviting the eye to enter and participate. Thus, Maria creates temporalities and settings, allowing them to wander along the thin threshold between what we recognize in the quotidian and a fantastical atmosphere in which life operates in other logics – at once fantastical and metaphorical. Painting then

becomes the result of a rooted pleasure in observing what happens in the world, in savoring the disorder of living, and afterward reshaping things to recompose them. For instance, from inside a forest, among the textures of leaves, if we look closely, we discern a woman. Languid, her arm slips downward. Is she made of leaves, or does the line that outlines her coincide with the colors of the landscape? In another work, a woman-rhea merges with the blue of water and sky. Pregnant, with breasts and belly exposed and hair floating, she fuses with the feathers and anatomy of a rhea. This is not a centaur-like figure. We witness two bodies coexisting, at times blending and becoming indistinguishable.

Different from these “imagination paintings,” the “quick paintings” arise from a fascination with the elemental quality of life, which barely settles before making its way onto the canvas. Maria paints occurrences of the everyday – scenes seen and lived. Everything here once existed. A sleeping child, a vase of wilted flowers, stones along a seascape. Between these two pictorial conceptions, other things appear: a bedsheet, a forest reflected on water, a resting woman. Very simple scenes. In painting, Maria reorganizes these elements and confers something extraordinary upon them: the folds of the bedsheet seem to cover a waterbed, the forest and its reflection become indistinguishable, the neck of an rhea aligns with the trunk of a tree.

Maria plunges into color, building a wet light in undulating gestures. She paints things floating, gravitating, ascending. Everything is nearly dissolving, forming accumulations of matter and

remaking itself with each gaze we cast. Everything evaporating, rising, like an inverted waterfall. “The brush is like a tongue that licks the canvas and brings back echoes from somewhere,” she says. Maria draws on the strength and on the certain mystery that painting holds: why does painting contain something that contains the world without exhausting it, and without exhausting itself as a language? Her pictorial practice seeks to construct perceptions of what is seen, witnessed, or imagined, without anchoring itself to a so-called original meaning, which would either be impossible to emulate or would quickly succumb to the question of veracity. Maria learns about what she paints while she is painting it. Thus, what matters is not a confrontation with truth, but what sensibility and, more broadly, the body perceives, stores, and chooses to narrate in order to create something that reverberates in perception.

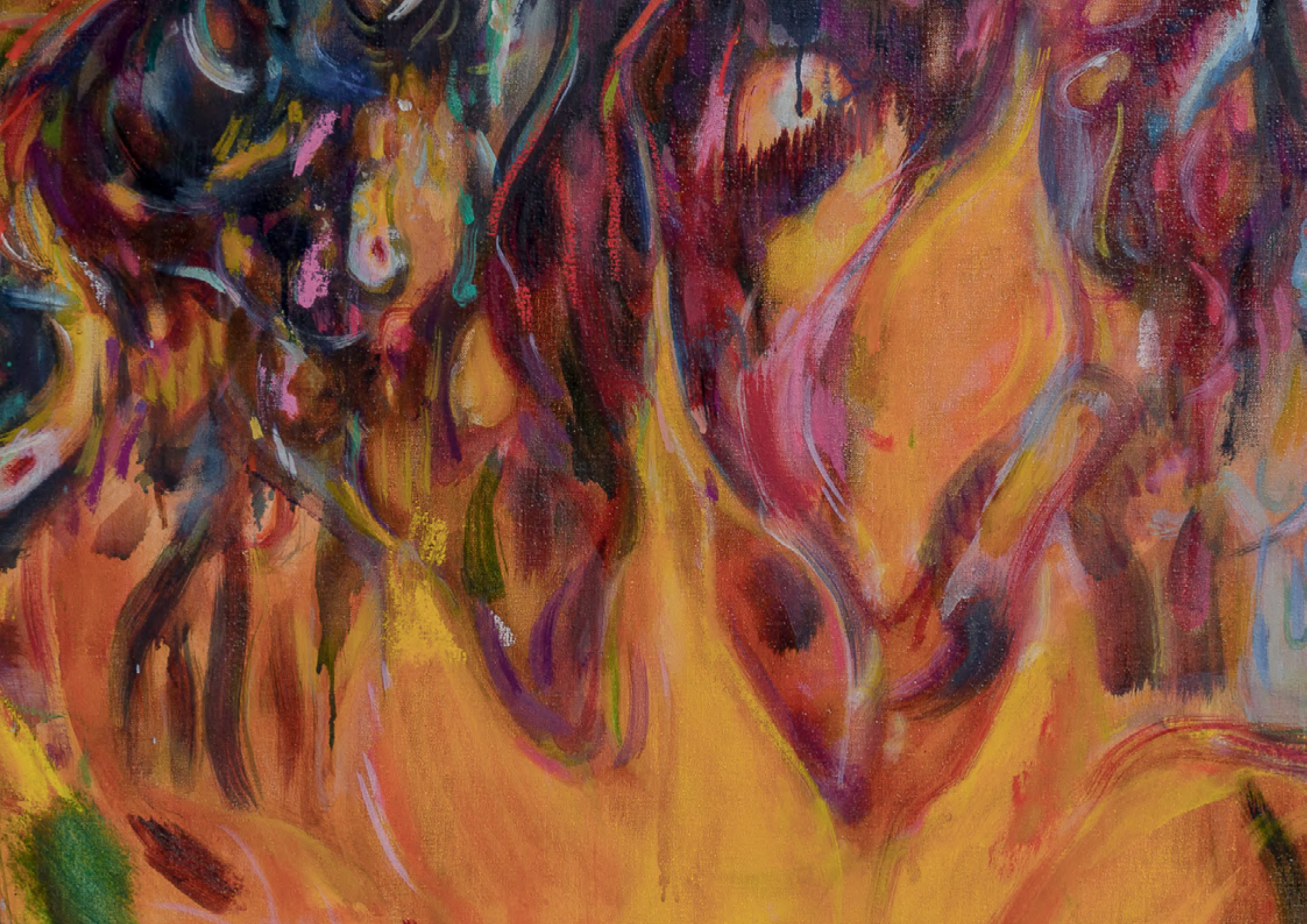
Língua d’água is an exhibition about the everyday, the fleeting, the temporary – a time nearly impossible to seize because it is too brief, too intense, too elusive, or because it mixes all these qualities, or perhaps because its traces are pure speculation or invention. *Língua d’água* gathers works that dare to recuperate a visual sensation sparked in a particular place and reconstruct that sensation through painting. Perceiving what these times generate as image (imaginary, imagination – why not?) perhaps frames one of the show’s fundamental artistic questions: a reflective painting of the “now,” one that avoids a merely analytical or descriptive gaze or one that objectifies things, instead surrounding itself with the indices and perceptions produced by things and events.

Maria’s paintings suggest, simply, that we need not anchor ourselves in the many philosophical problems submitted to rational scrutiny. Instead, they point toward something that would move us deeply if we allowed it: what might we learn if we rested upon the whirlpools of perception? Drifting, drifting... What if, instead of controlling things, we inhabited their mysteries, looking at them closely and from varied distances? In *Língua d’água*, the artist’s poetic exercise travels along these paths: “Painting inverts the order of things, changing what we see and how we see.”

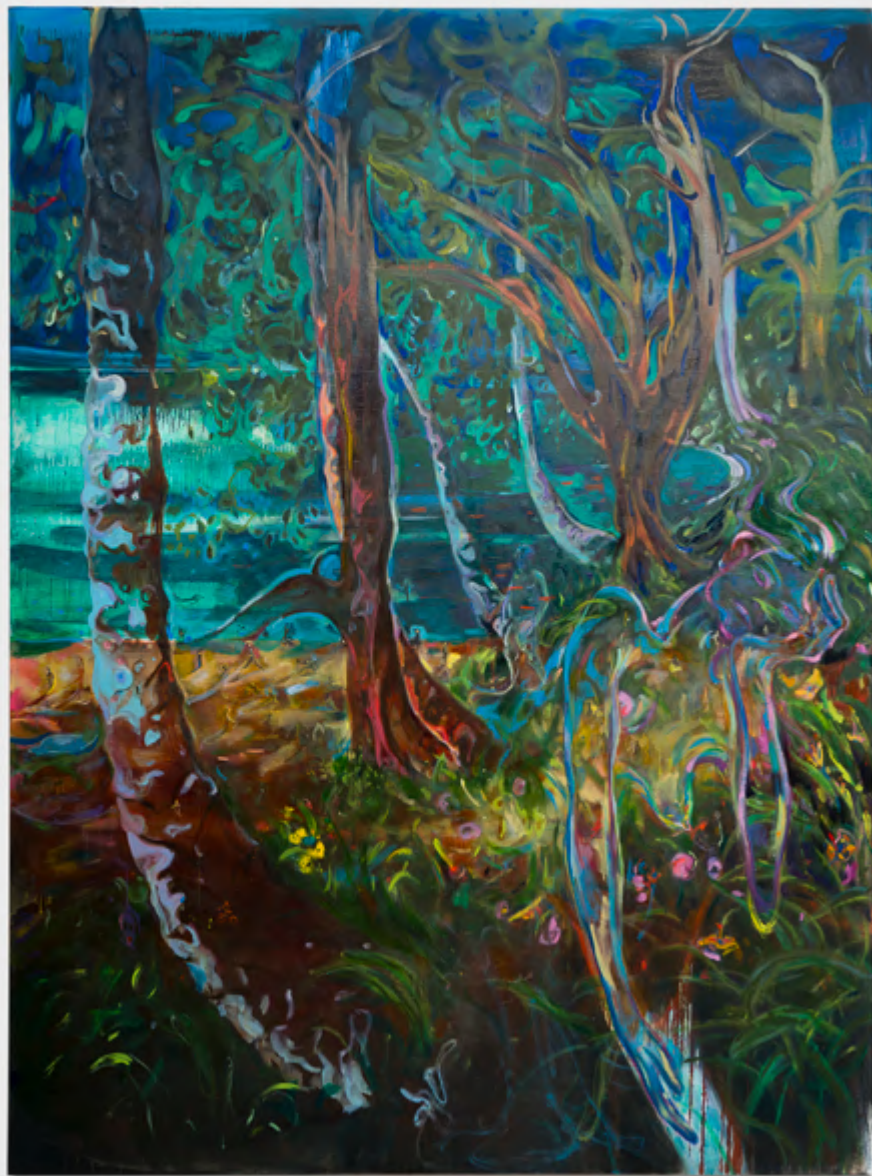
— Galciani Neves



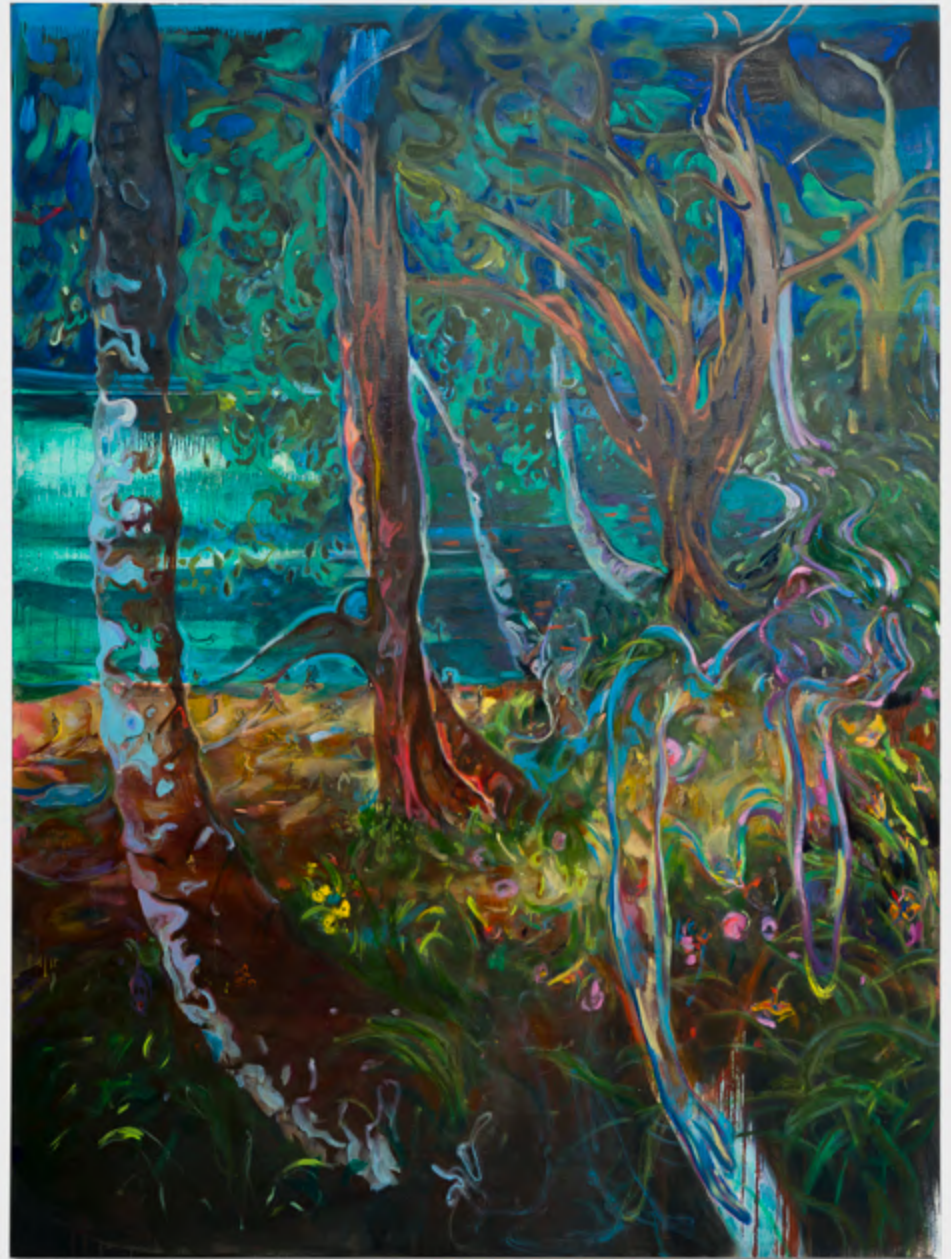
Morning, 2025
oil paint on linen
180 x 240 x 3,5 cm
70.9 x 94.5 x 1.4 in







Tongue of water, 2025
oil paint on linen
270 x 200 x 3,5 cm
106.3 x 78.7 x 1.4 in







Eye of fire, 2025
oil paint on linen
270 x 200 x 3,5 cm
106.3 x 78.7 x 1.4 in





Gal, 2023
oil paint on linen
220 x 300 x 3,5 cm
86.6 x 118.1 x 1.4 in

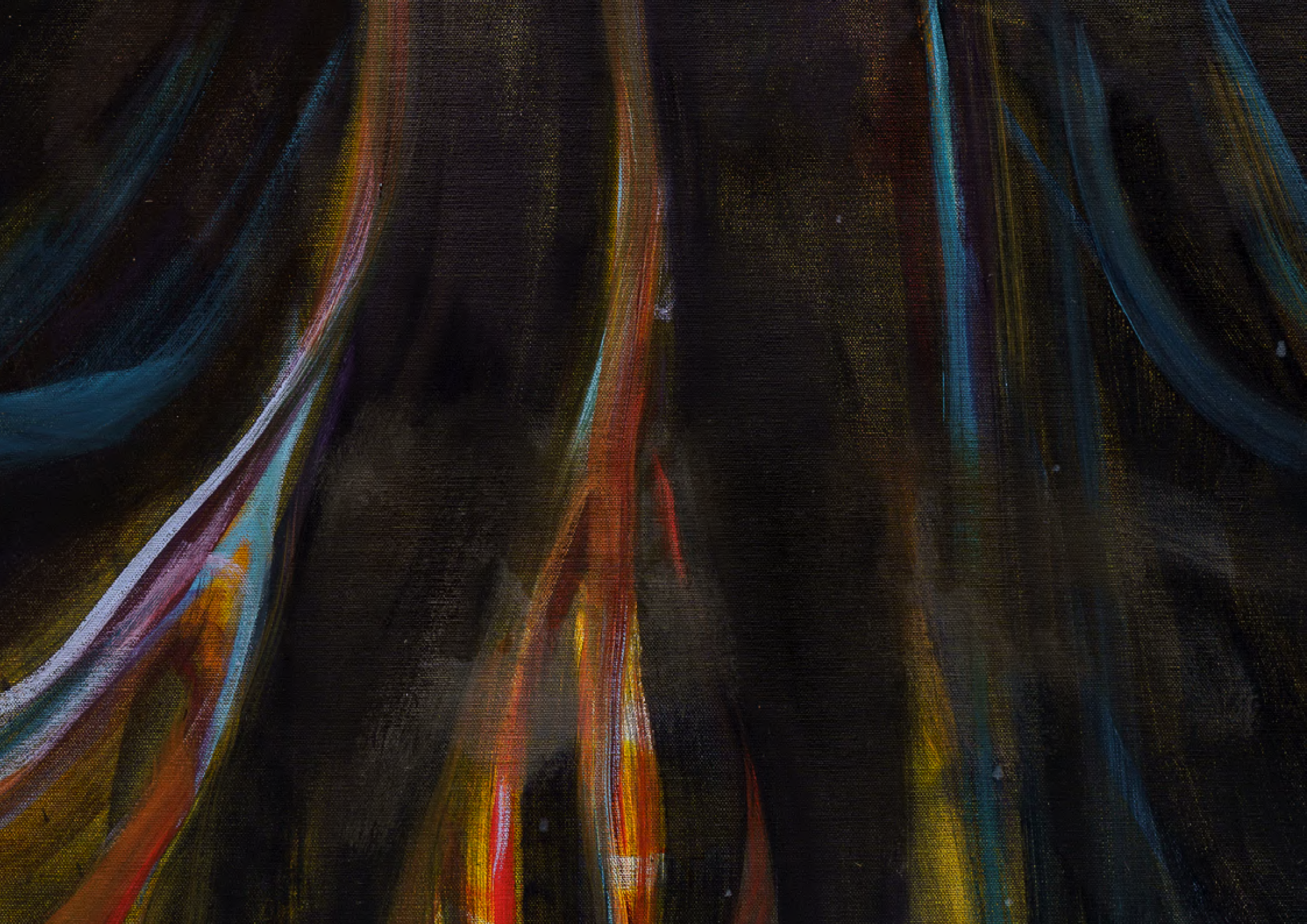






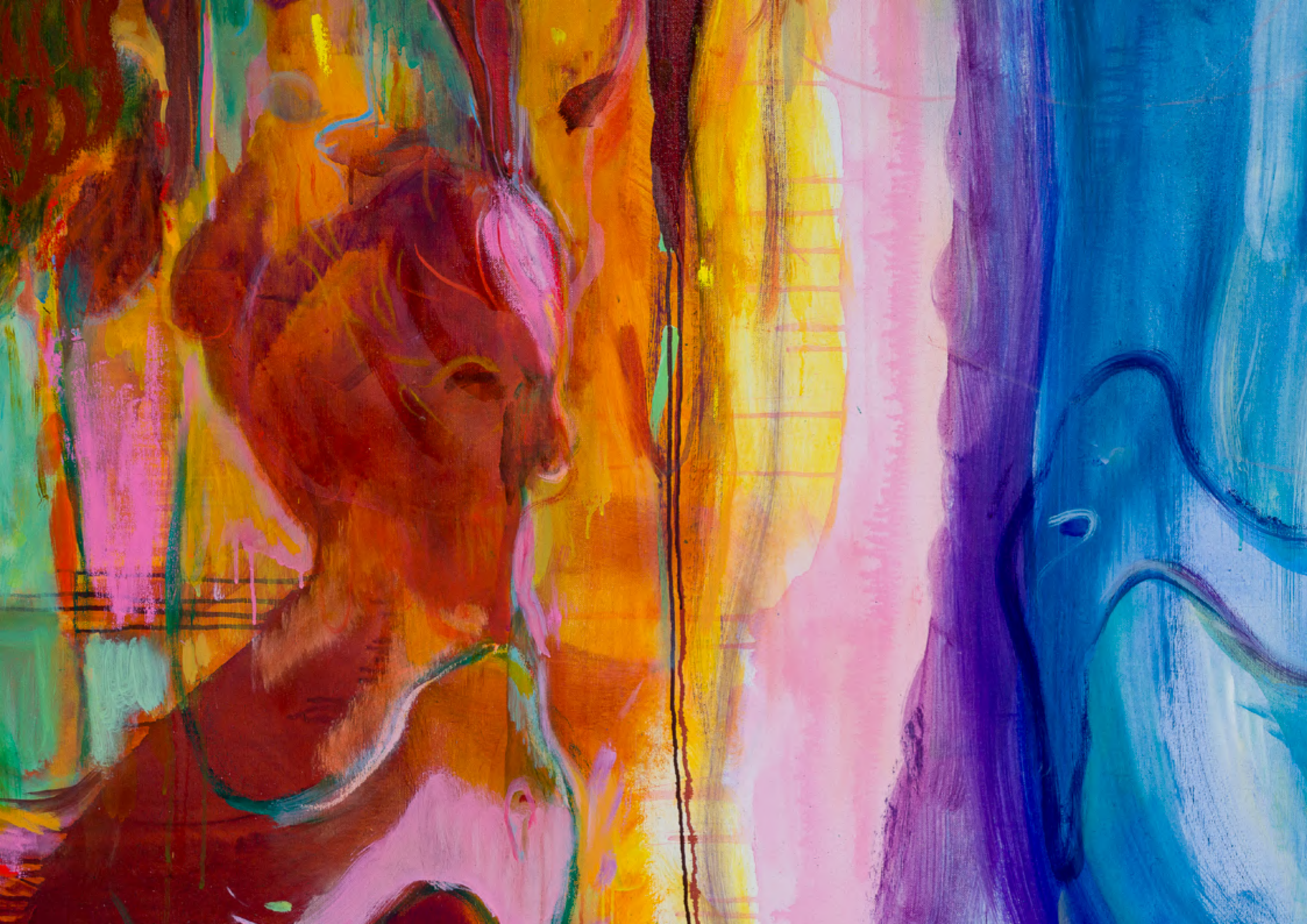
Nature, 2023-2024
oil paint on linen
170 x 120 x 3,5 cm
66.9 x 47.2 x 1.4 in



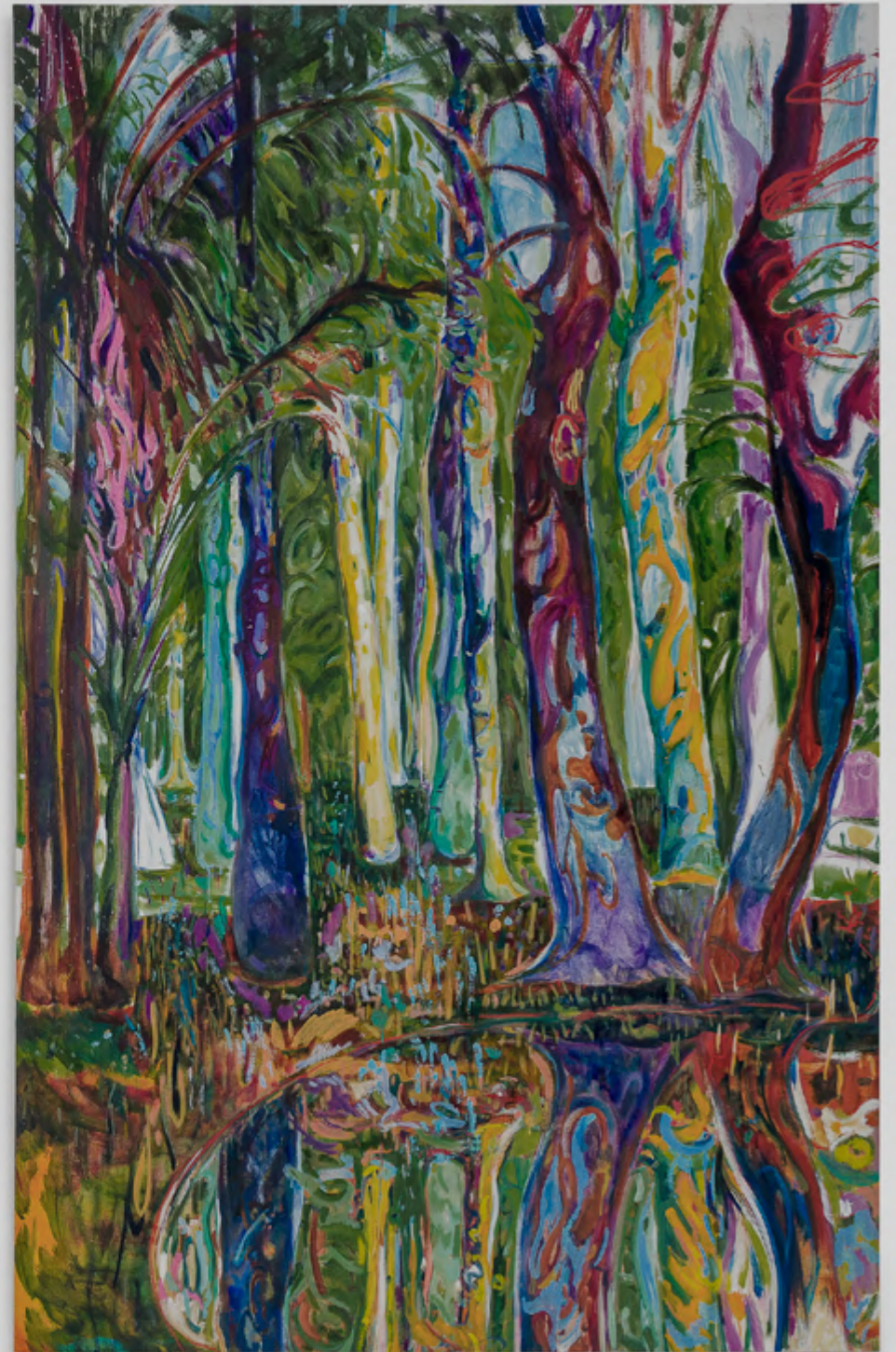




Hello Hello, 2025
oil paint on linen
160 x 185 x 3,5 cm
63 x 72.8 x 1.4 in



Flame, 2025
oil paint on linen
250 x 160 x 3,5 cm
98.4 x 63 x 1.4 in







Creature, 2025
oil paint on linen
200 x 140 x 3,5 cm
78.7 x 55.1 x 1.4 in



Jonas in spiral 3, 2024
oil paint on linen
25 x 18 x 2,5 cm
11.8 x 9.8 x 1 in





Jonas in spiral 2, 2025
oil paint on linen
30 x 25 x 2,5 cm
11.8 x 9.8 x 1 in



*When we all fall asleep,
where do we go?*, 2025
oil paint on linen
150 x 120 x 3,5 cm
59.1 x 47.2 x 1.4 in





3 p.m., 2025
oil paint on linen
100 x 80 x 3 cm
39.4 x 31.5 x 1.2 in







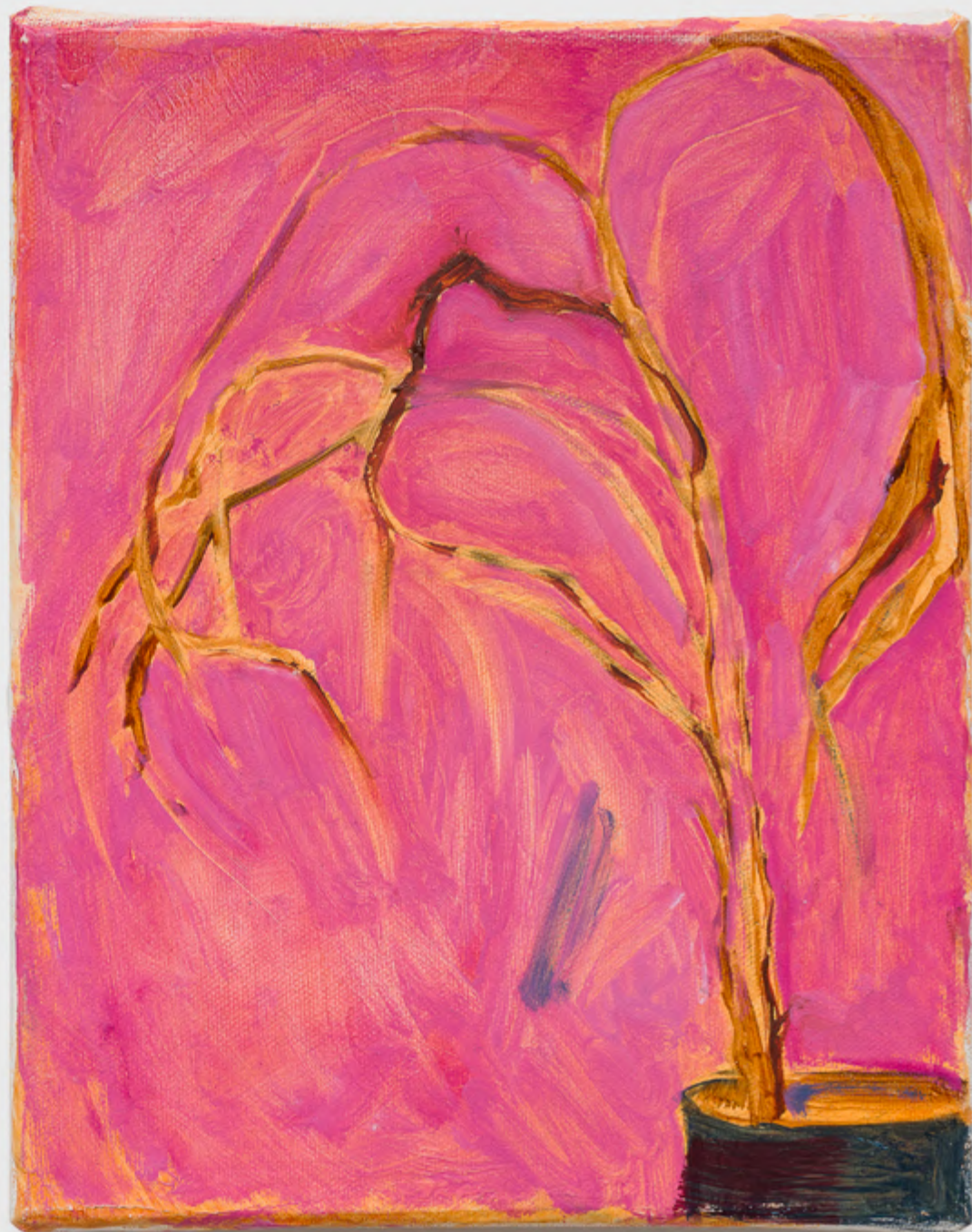
7 p.m., 2025
oil paint on linen
100 x 80 x 3 cm
39.4 x 31.5 x 1.2 in





310 ml, 2025
oil paint on linen
100 x 80 x 3 cm
9.4 x 31.5 x 1.2 in





Pink, 2018
oil paint on linen
23,5 x 19 x 2,5 cm
9.3 x 7.5 x 1 in





Maria Klabin
Stones (dawn), 2022
oil paint on linen
18 x 25 x 2,5 cm
7.1 x 9.8 x 1 in





Stones (midday), 2024-2025
oil paint on linen
30 x 25 x 2,5 cm
11.8 x 9.8 x 1 in



Stones (*dusk*), 2024
oil paint on linen
14 x 22 x 2,5 cm
11.8 x 9.8 x 1 in







Lady and Boy, 2024
oil paint on linen
190 x 260 cm
74.8 x 102.4 in





Giacometti at work, 2025
oil paint on linen
3 pieces of 30 x 25 x 2,5 cm (each)
3 pieces of 11.8 x 9.8 x 1 in (each)



maria klabin

b. 1978, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she lives and works

Maria Klabin's work engages with scenes, occurrences, and landscapes that permeate everyday life and thus, have been seen and experienced exhaustively. In dealing with omnipresent elements, Klabin extracts the cadence of their recurrence, seeking to capture the formal rhythm embedded in the repetition, or banality, of their existence. The artist's process lays in constantly producing and assembling drawings, photographs, and annotations, which she draws from her immediate entourage. The accumulation of thoughts and images entwine and come to make sense as a whole, unveiling intriguing relations that form the backbone of the artist's pictorial endeavor. In her own words, Klabin develops her work 'as if writing a story, or a diary, but a diary of things that don't really happen. It's a narrative that could only be told through painting, but that touches themes that seem closer to writers than to painters.'

Maria Klabin oscillates between extremes in terms of the scale of her works, producing both very small and monumental, large scale paintings, depending on the nature of her subject. Her small canvases often serve as support for rapid streams of thought—like writing on paper, perhaps harnessing an unconscious mind—and effectively capturing the rhythm of her surroundings, while her large pieces embody more contemplative, oneiric perceptions. Most recently, Klabin has produced a series of almost mural-sized landscape paintings that depart from fragments of autobiographical elements, distilled from what she describes as an improbable and fluid patchwork of memory, that results in non-objectifiable, enticing yet daunting compositions.

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selected solo exhibitions

- *Liquid Air*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2022)
- *Paisagem com Casinha*, Galeria Silvia Cintra, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2021)
- *Entre rio e pedra*, Galeria Silvia Cintra, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2017)
- *E o dia havia acabado, quando começou*, Galeria Silvia Cintra, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2014)

selected group exhibitions

- *Abrasive Paradise*, Kunsthal KADE, Amstervoort, The Netherlands (2022)
- *Já estava assim quando eu cheguei*, Ron Mandos, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2020)
- *Festival de Arte Contemporânea*, SESC VideoBrasil, São Paulo, Brazil (2012)
- *Novas aquisições da Coleção Gilberto Chateaubriand*, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2012)
- *Rumos 2005/06 Paradoxos Brasil*, Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil (2006)
- *Além da imagem*, Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2006)

selected collections

- Instituto Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil
- Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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