

CATHERINE LONG
Heart Takes Flight

WILDER

Catherine Long | Heart Takes Flight

Curated by Wilder Gallery

Presented in collaboration with A Space For Art

14 October 2025 - January 2026 | Lucent Space, 1 Sherwood St, London W1D 7HR

Rhythm is the starting point for each of Catherine Long's paintings. With a background in contemporary cross-disciplinary dance and improvisation, Long's work is rooted in a painting process that evokes the somatic feeling of dancing. Her trio of paintings for *Heart Takes Flight* are large-scale explorations of movement, colour, and form that offer an immersive sensory experience for the viewer.

Long's current way of working emerged from a period of time bookended by operations on both hips and diagnosis and treatment for breast cancer in her 30s. Unable to dance to the same level and seeking to move away from performance, she looked to large-scale abstract painting as a means of exploring the relationship between paint and the moving body, looking to imbue the energy of dance into the surface of the canvas. Painting, which Long sees as a personal performance, activates a somatic space for the artist in which to consider improvisation, choreography, and in-the-moment reactions.

Long begins by choosing an initial colour with which to start, before selecting a piece of music, establishing a rhythm and mode of movement in which to work. She approaches the blank canvas with dynamic, rapid gestures to lay a compositional groundwork. Allowing each layer to dry, she repeatedly returns to the canvas, building up the image as an accretion that acts as an archive of her movements over a period of time. Although she begins by painting and moving quickly, as each work comes together, Long's process slows down until eventually she makes the final touches that allow the composition to mesh together.

This durational approach signifies Long's interest in traces and remnants. As she works, previously placed marks are covered, but never completely erased; resonances and traces feed through each layer. This notion is in part drawn from the artist's lived experience of the post-surgical mark on the body, and the associated idea that a mark, once made, can never be undone.

The works in this exhibition come out of a period of time Long spent on residency at Porthmeor Studios in St Ives, Cornwall. *Heart Takes Flight*, from which the show takes its title, was made during this residency, inspired obliquely by the holistic experience of being immersed in the local landscape and named after a song that was key to its creation.

Working with a bold palette that evokes a natural environment, the psychological pull and impact of colour play a key role in Long's desire to create works that continually open themselves up to their audience, offering something new on each viewing. Drawing on the world of dance, the artist seeks to invoke a feeling of kinaesthetic empathy, where the neural networks associated with movement are activated in the viewer while watching dance, even if they are sitting still themselves. Long is interested in the potential of painting to achieve a similarly embodied experience for the viewer, proposing that the bodily movement captured in the surface of painting is a fundamental part of its power.

Text by Anna Souter



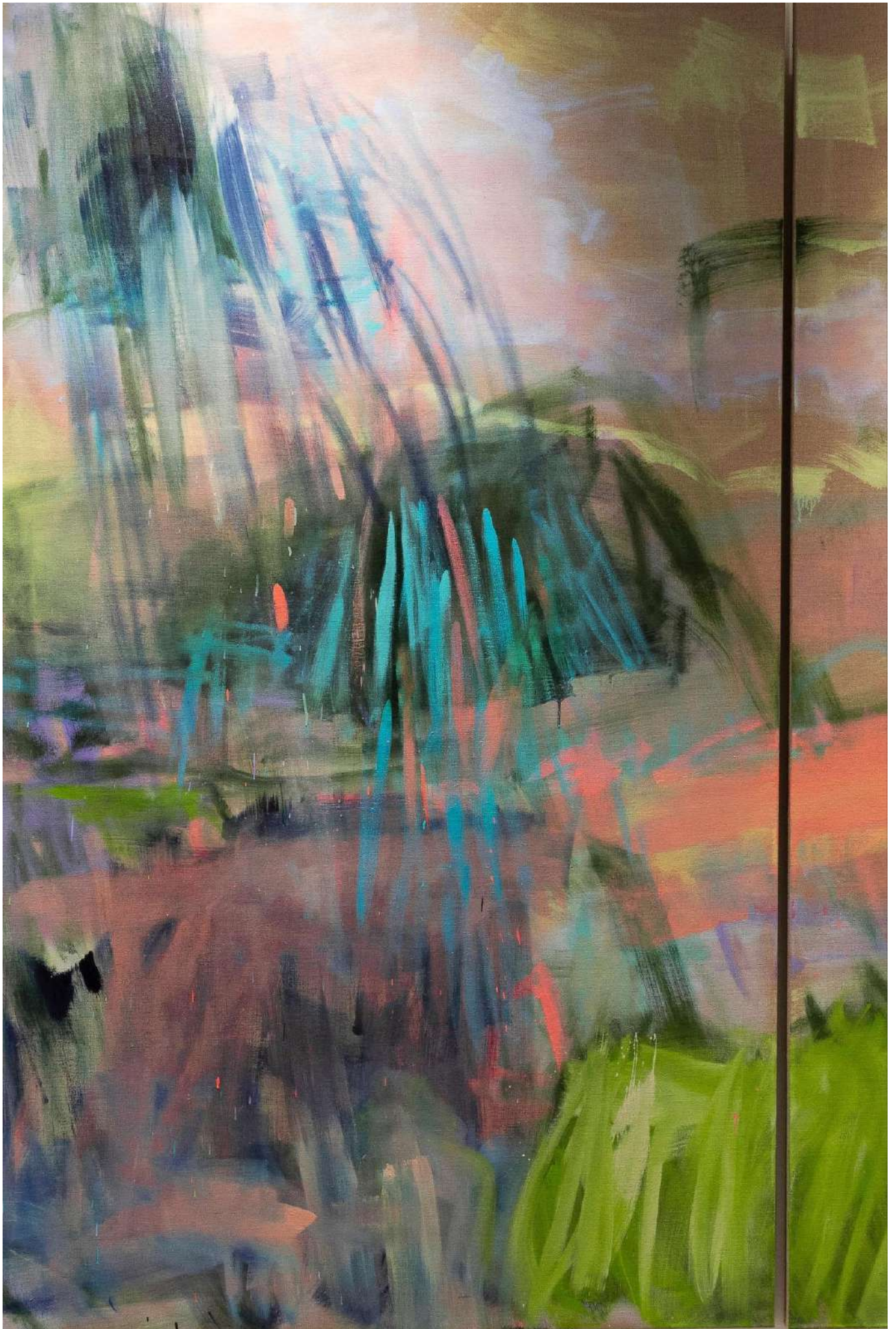
CATHERINE LONG

Heart Takes Flight (Triptych)

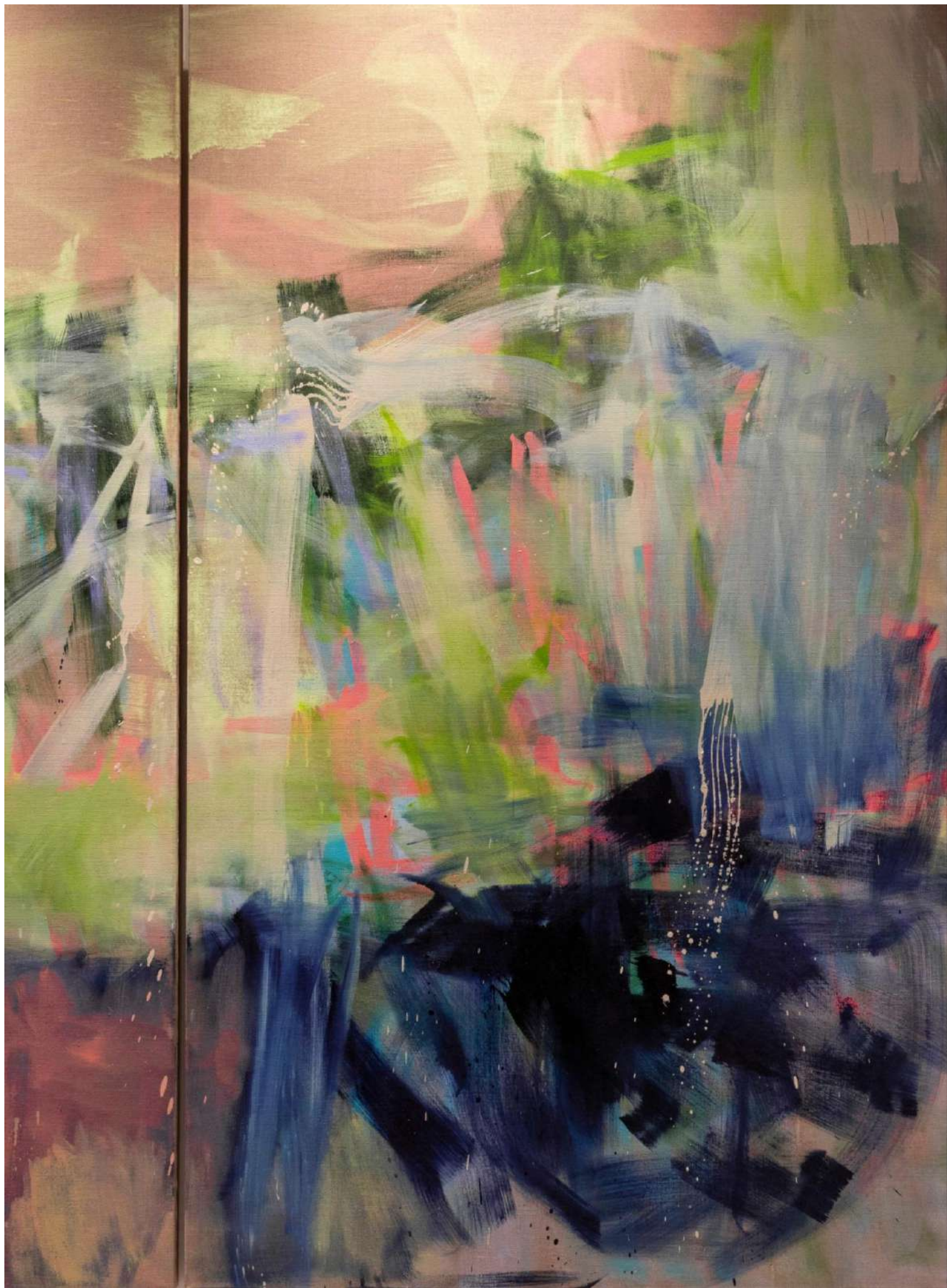
2025

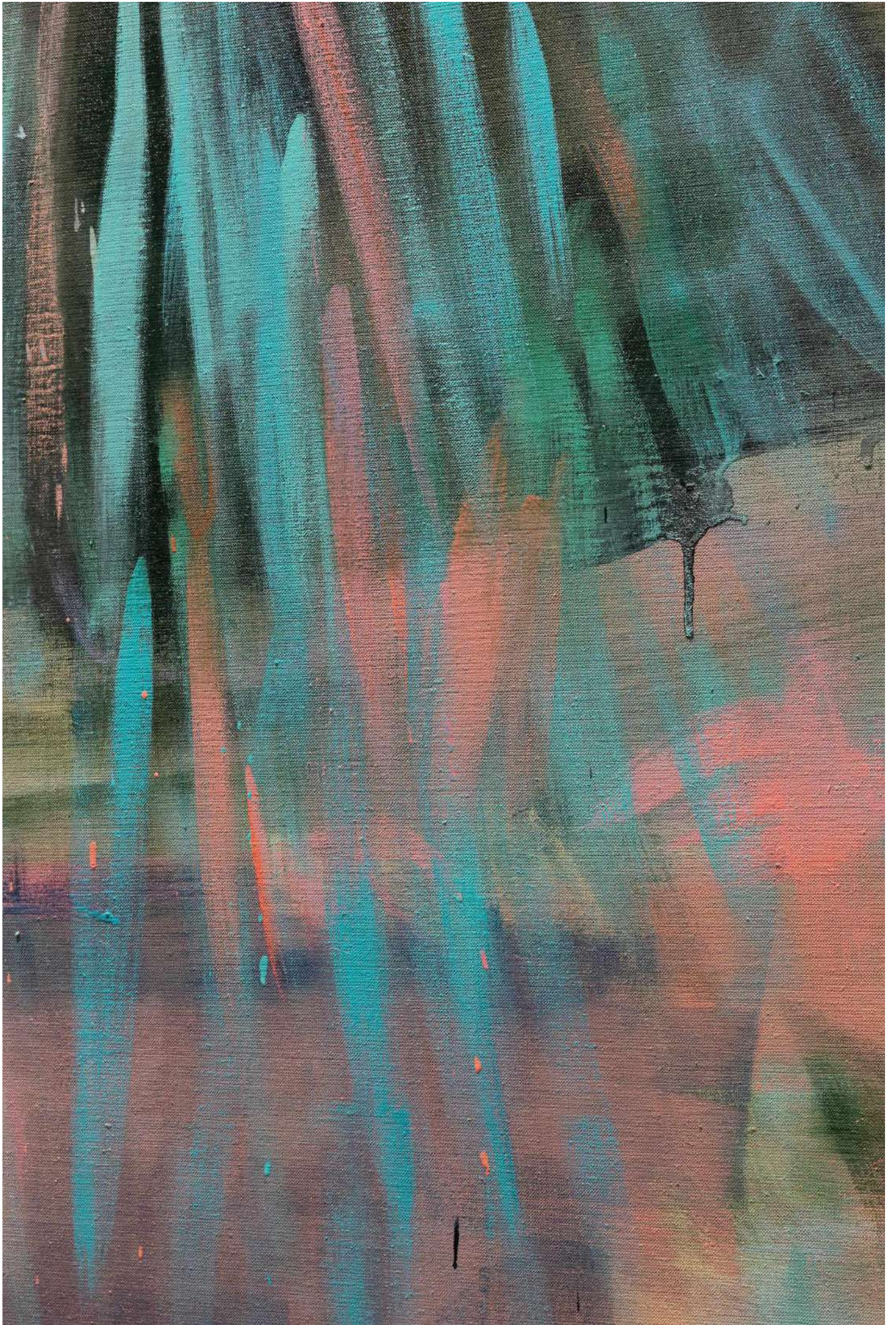
Oil on linen

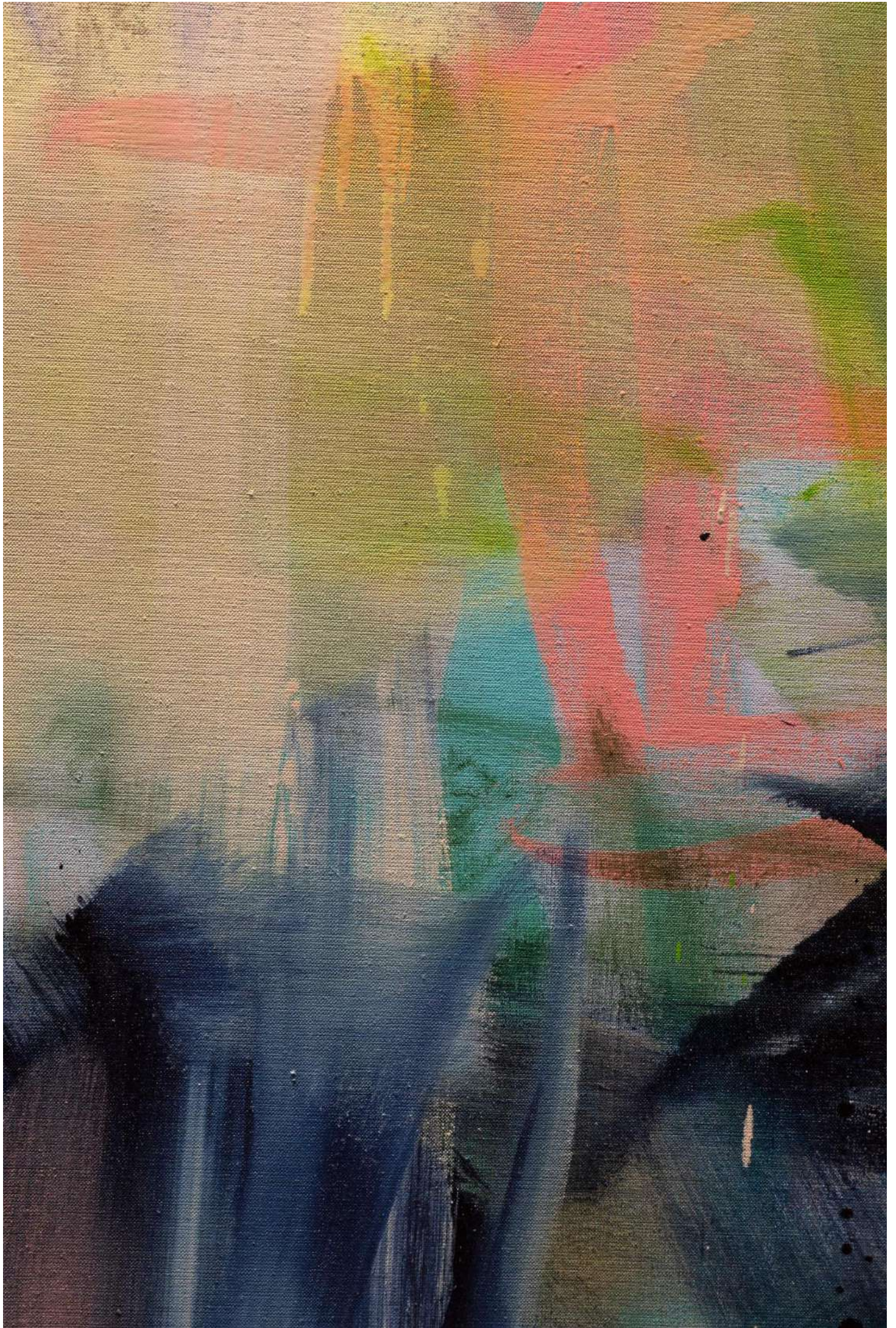
220 x 390 cm (220 x 130 cm each panel)

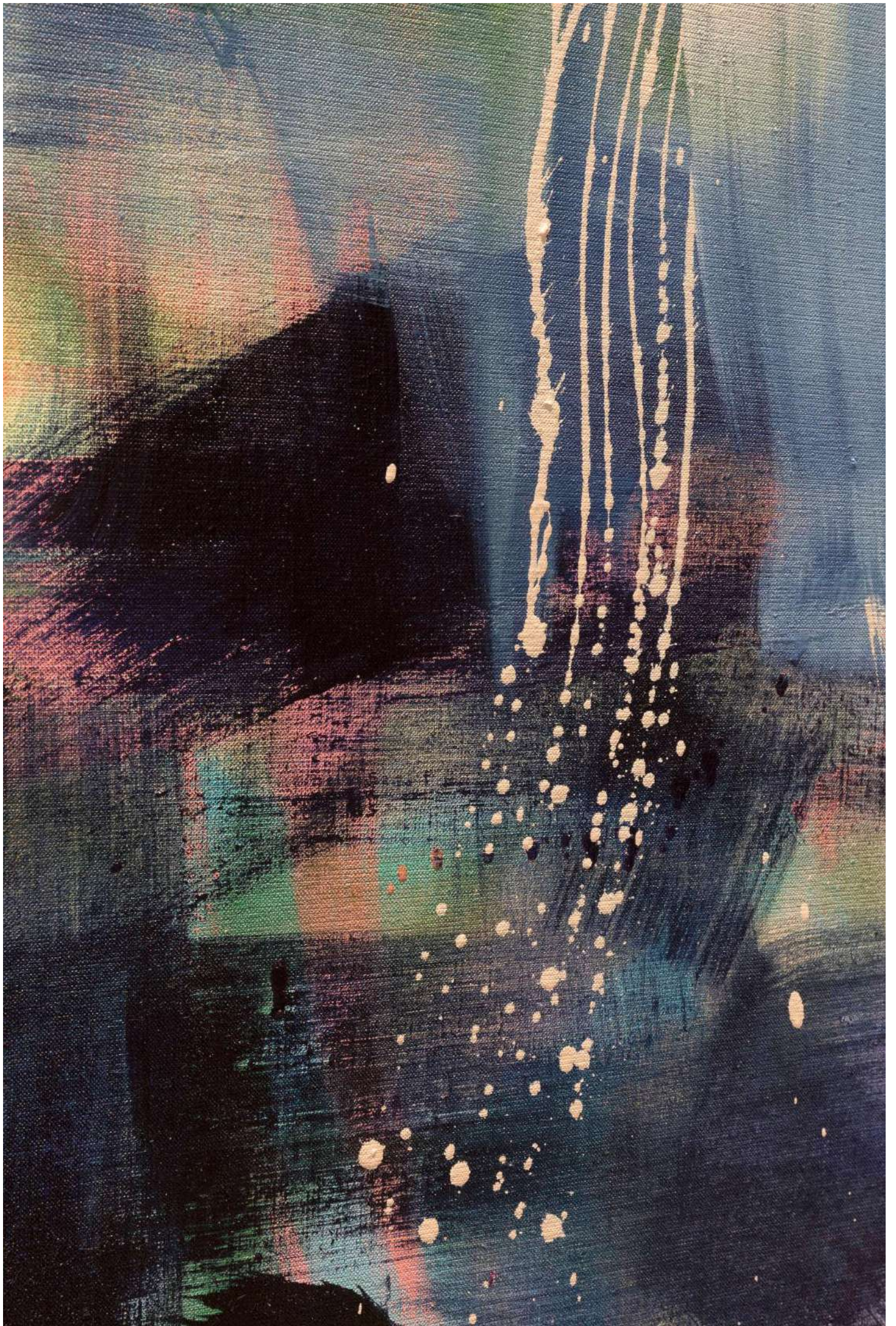


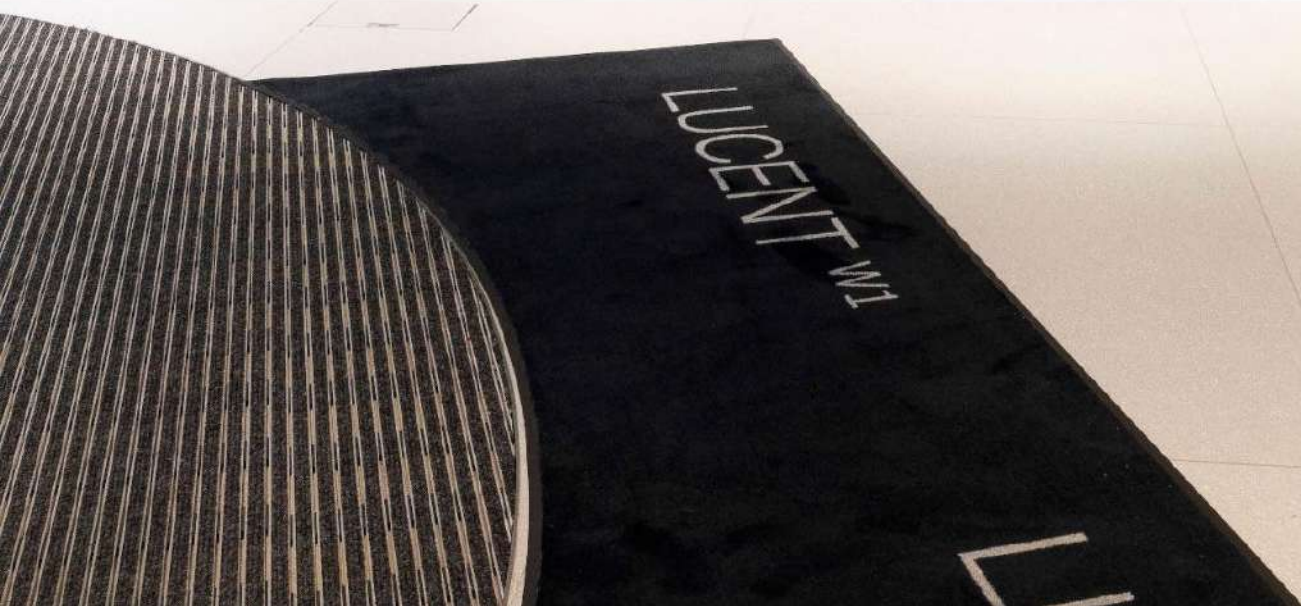


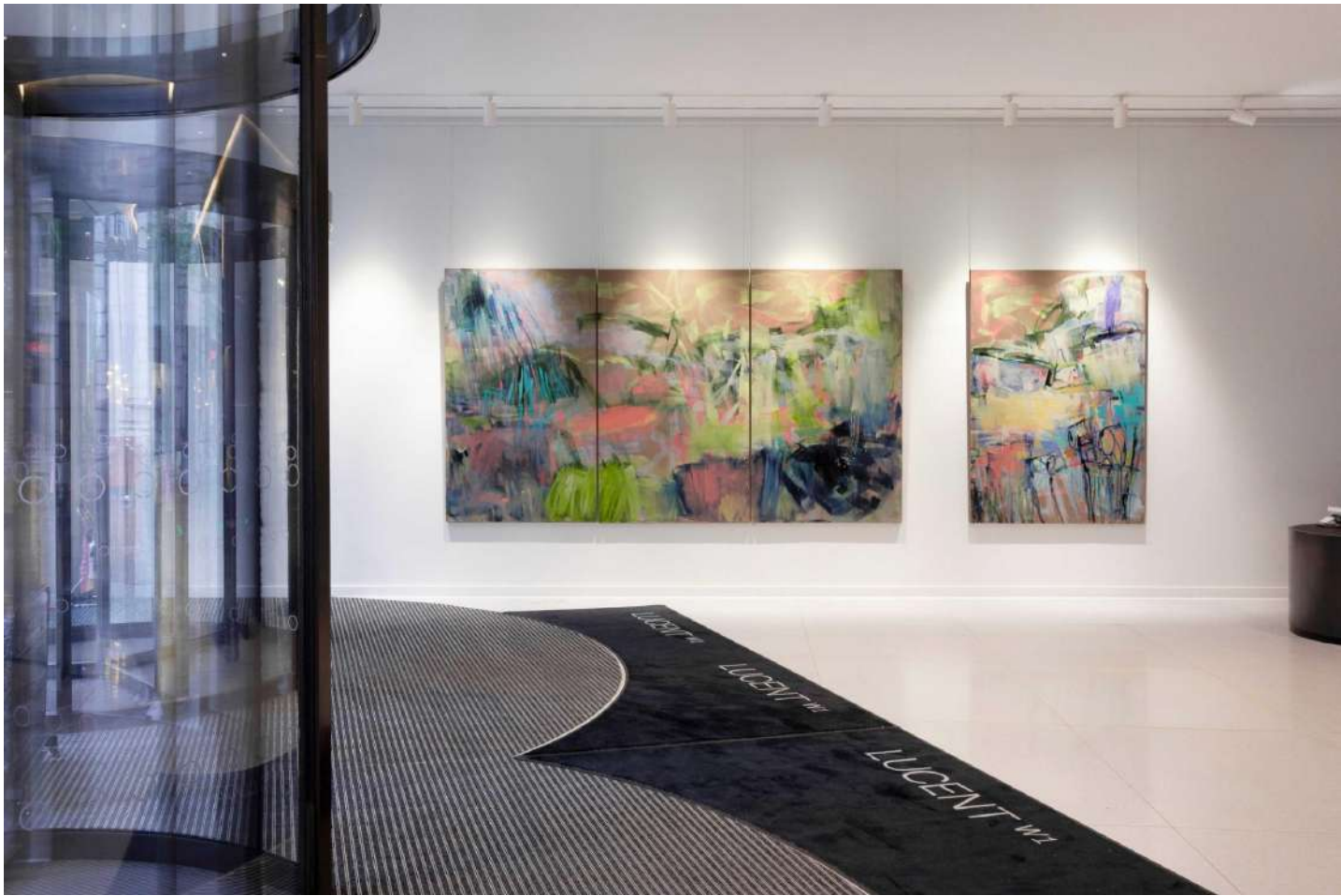


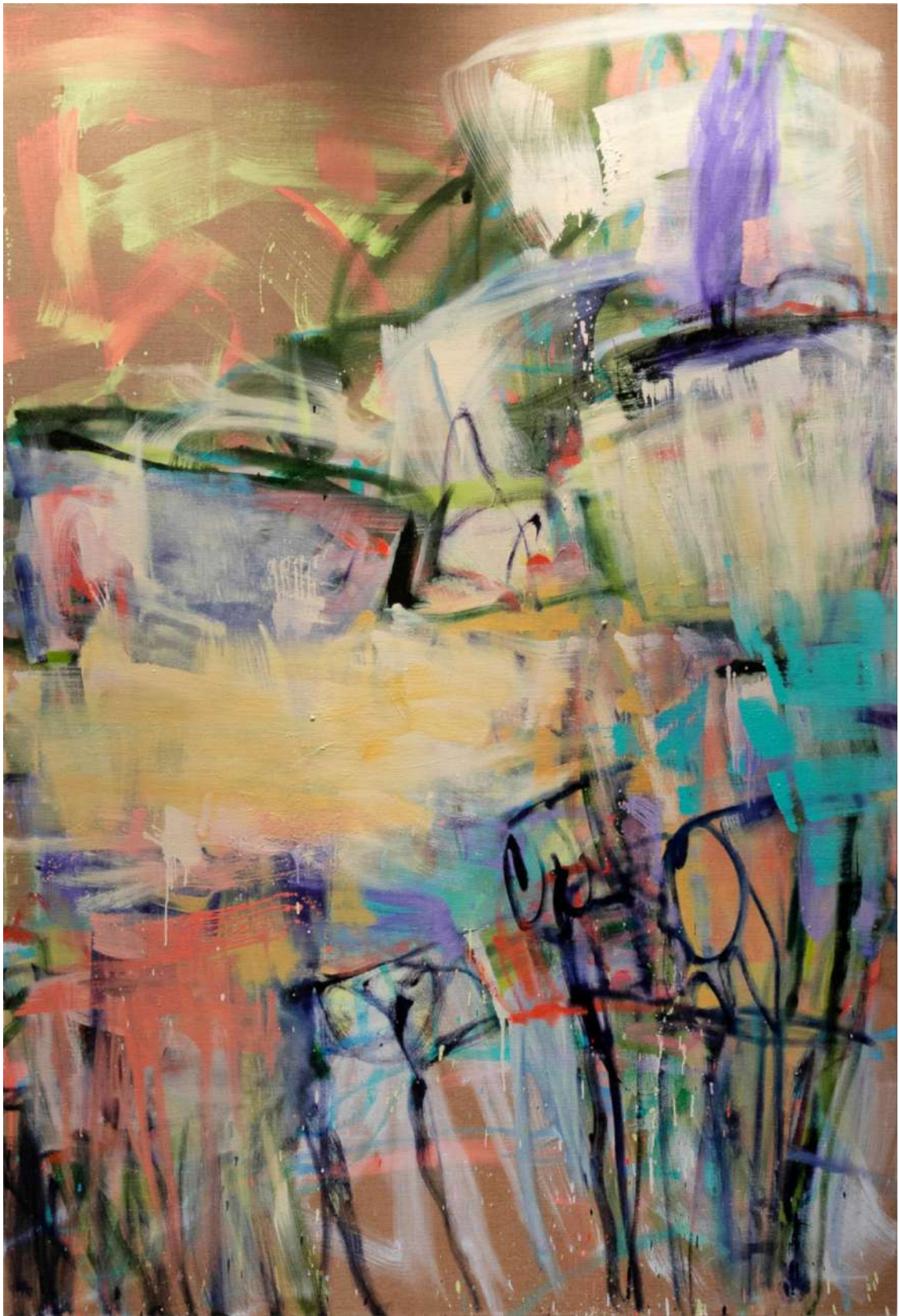












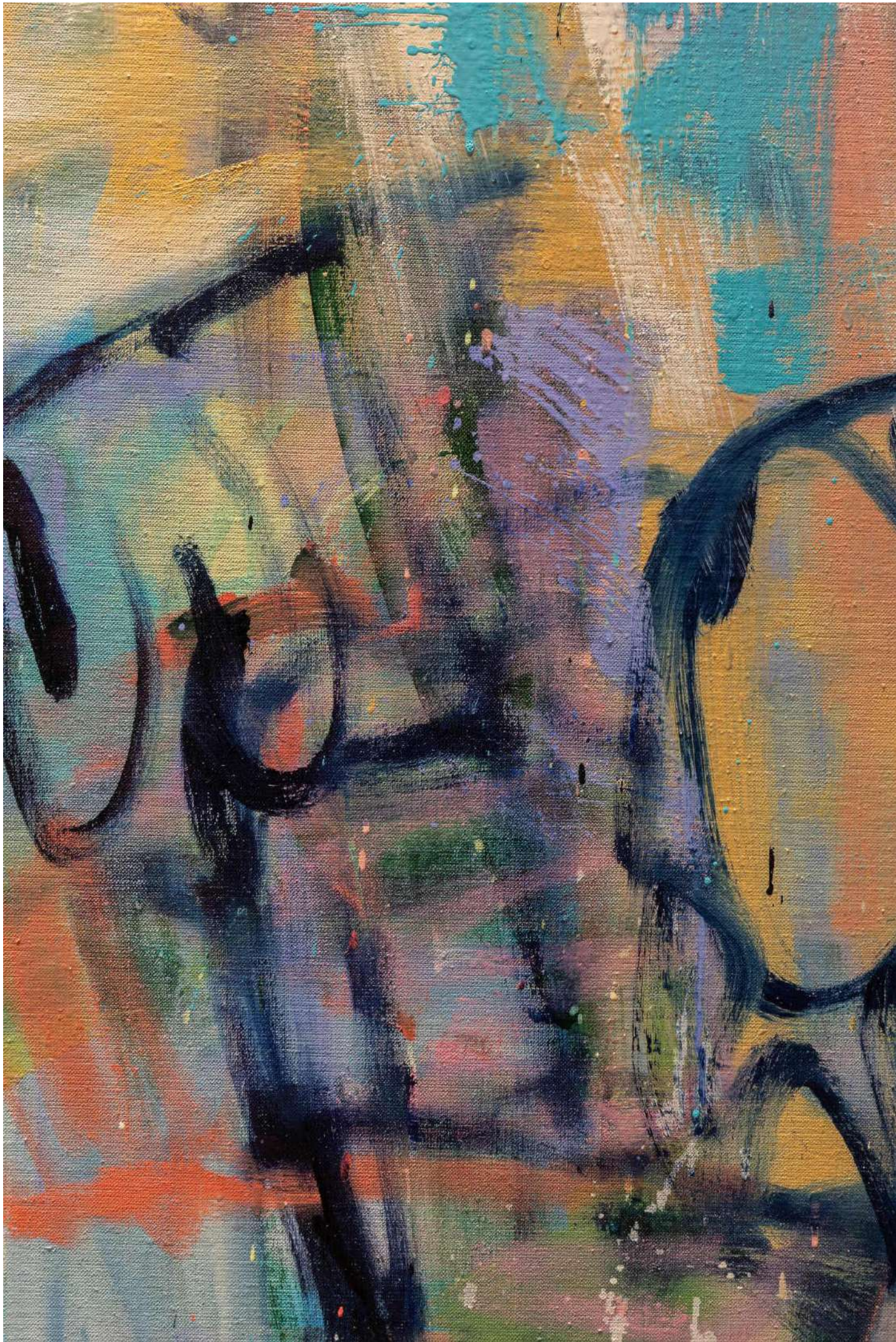
CATHERINE LONG

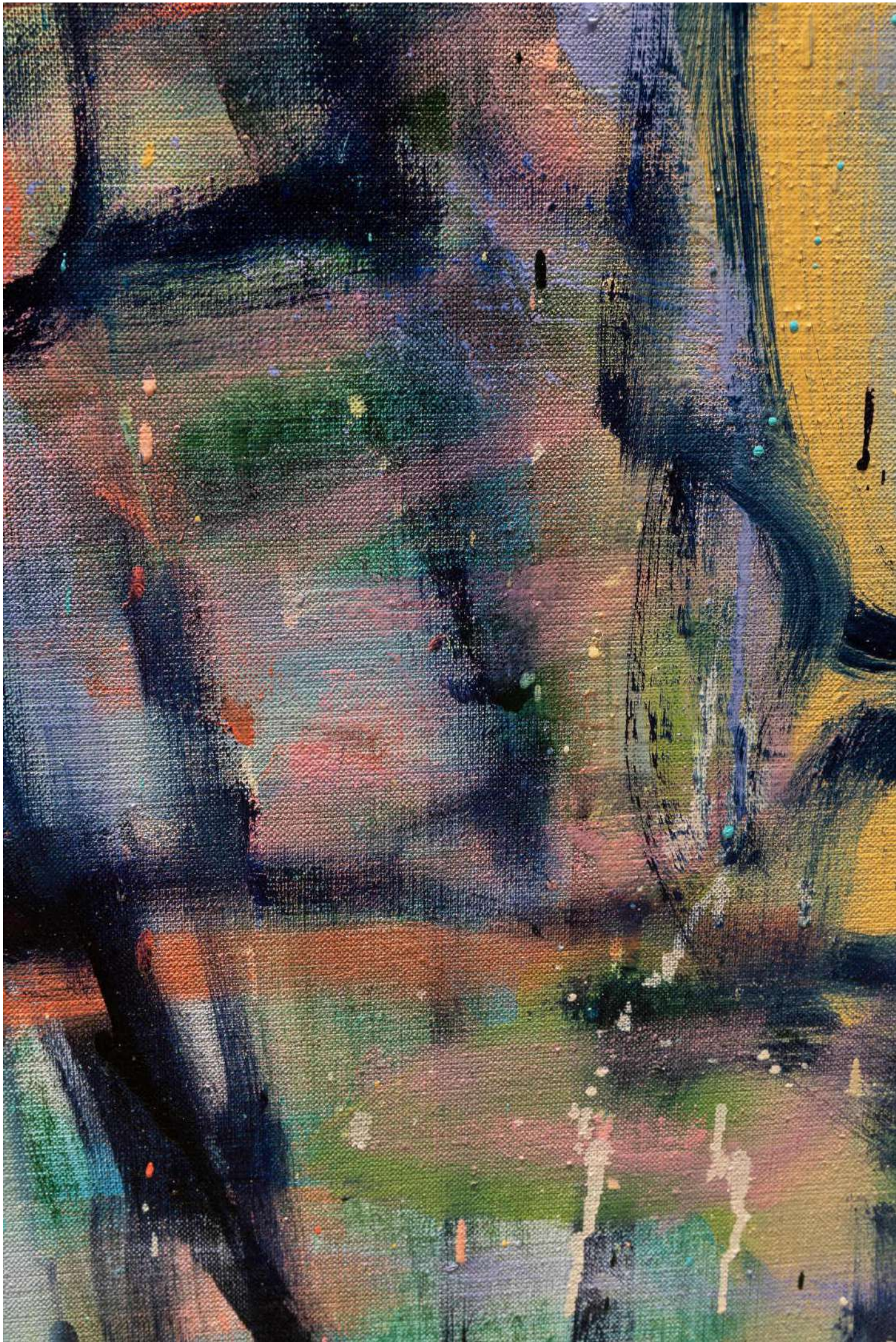
Hymn To Another Day

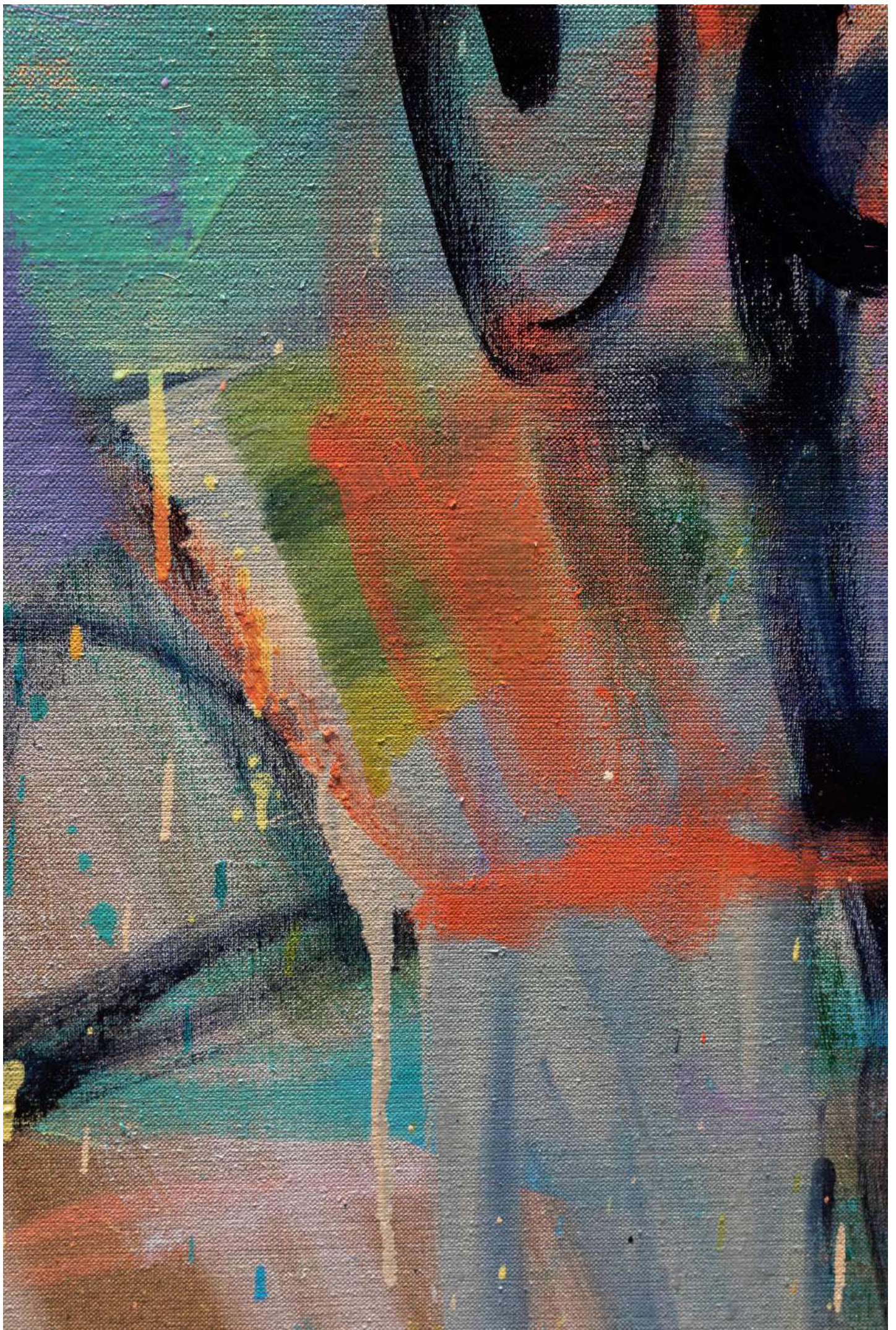
2025

Oil on linen

220 x 150 cm

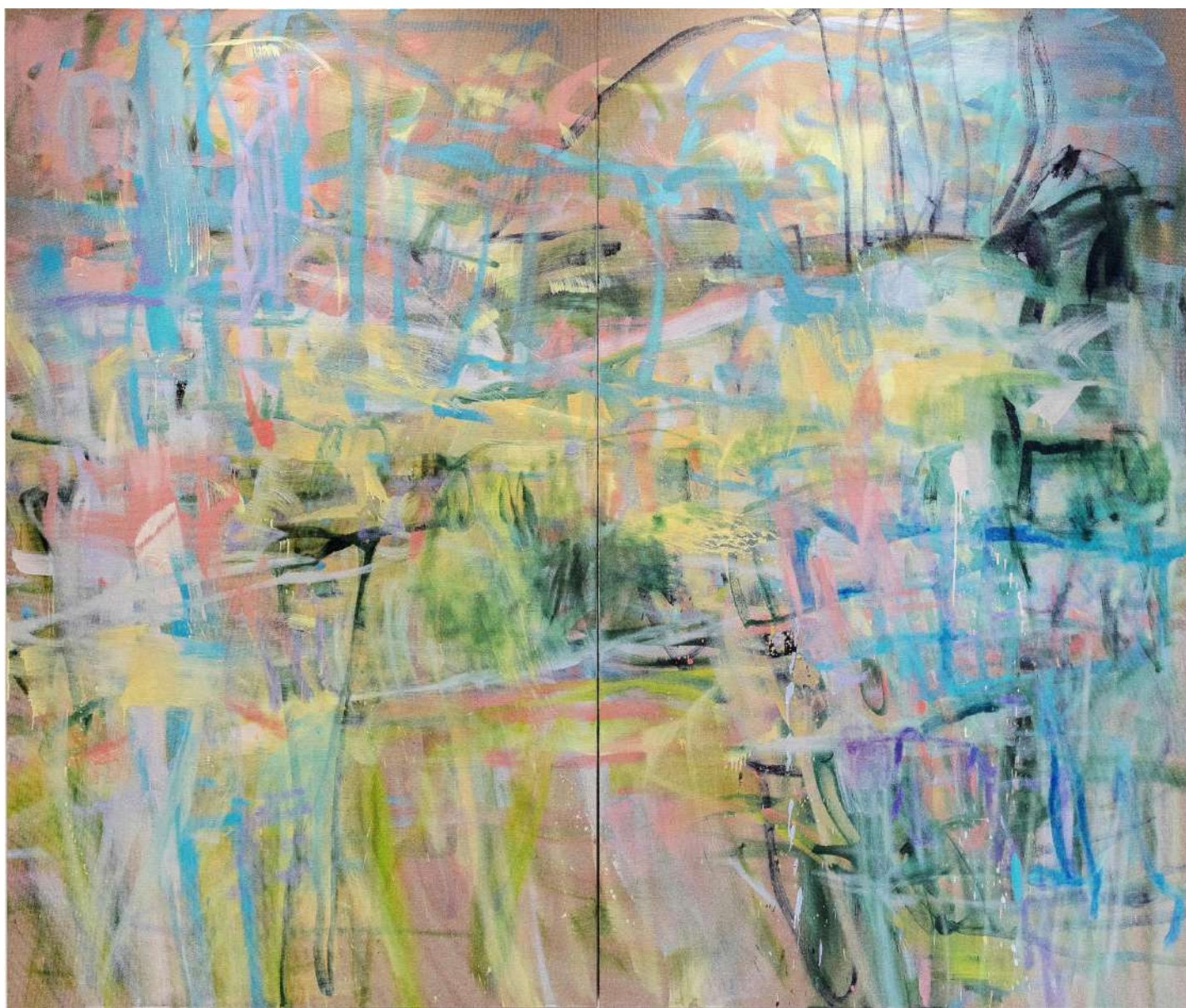












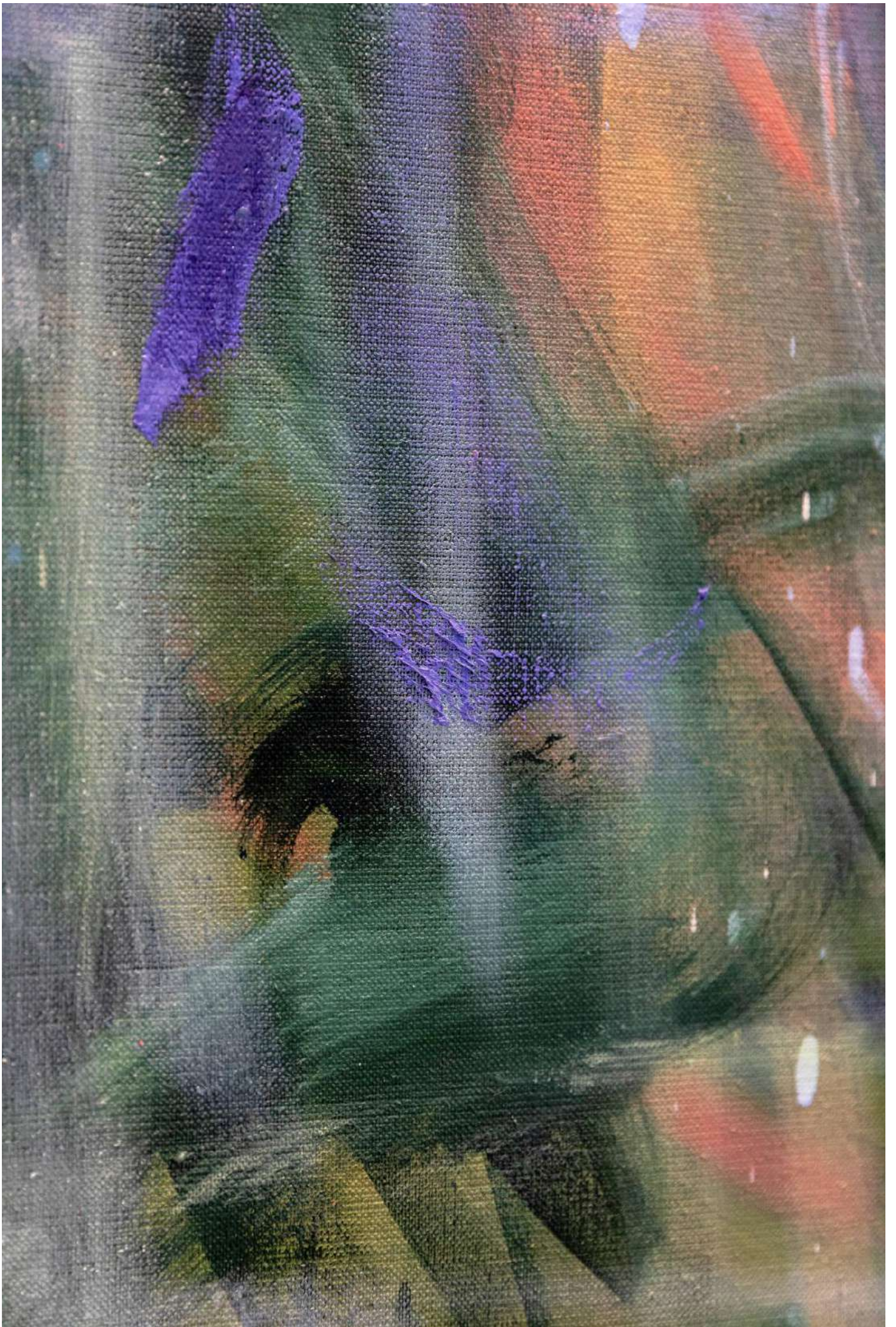
CATHERINE LONG

Here The Morning Is Like A Knife (Diptych)

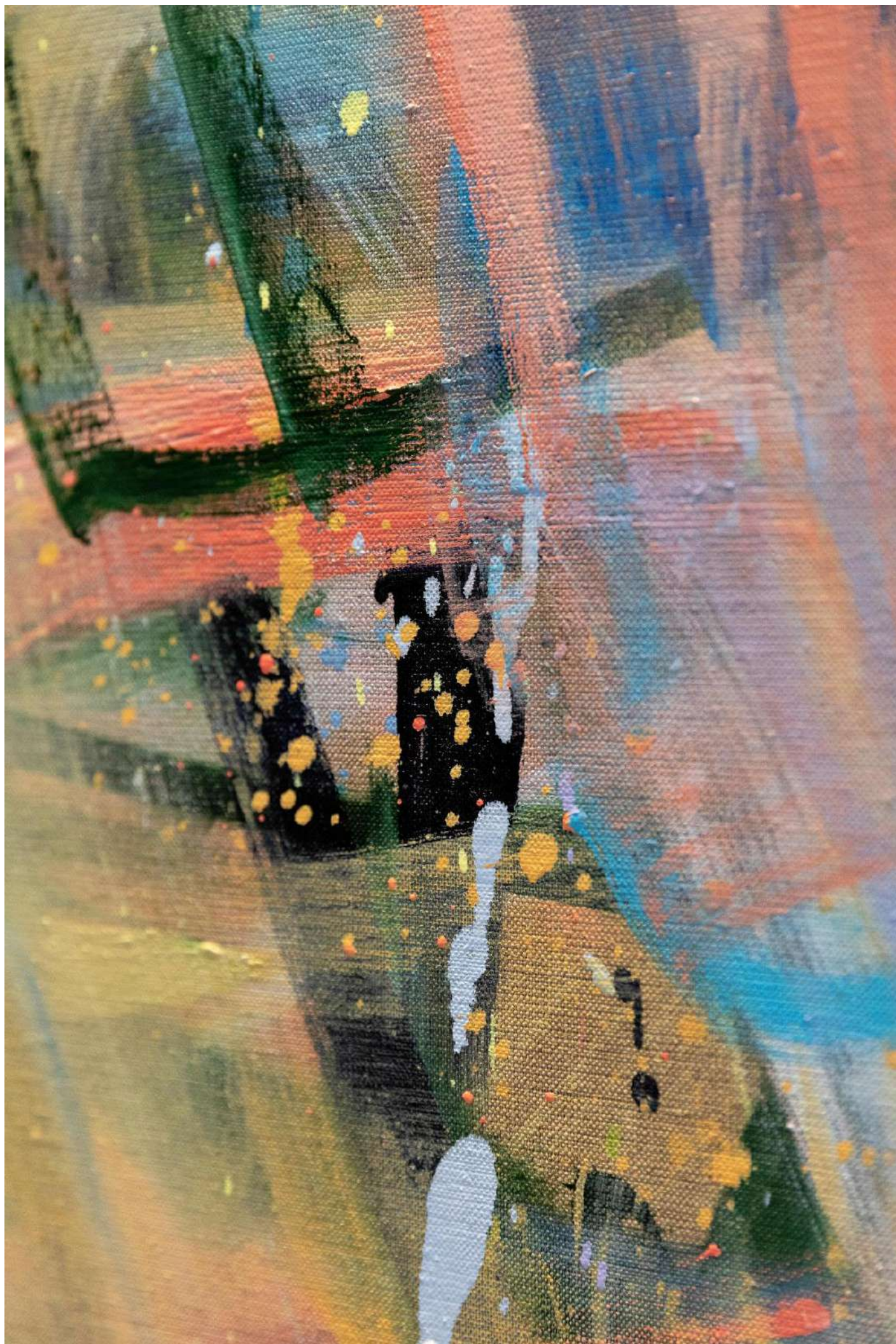
2025

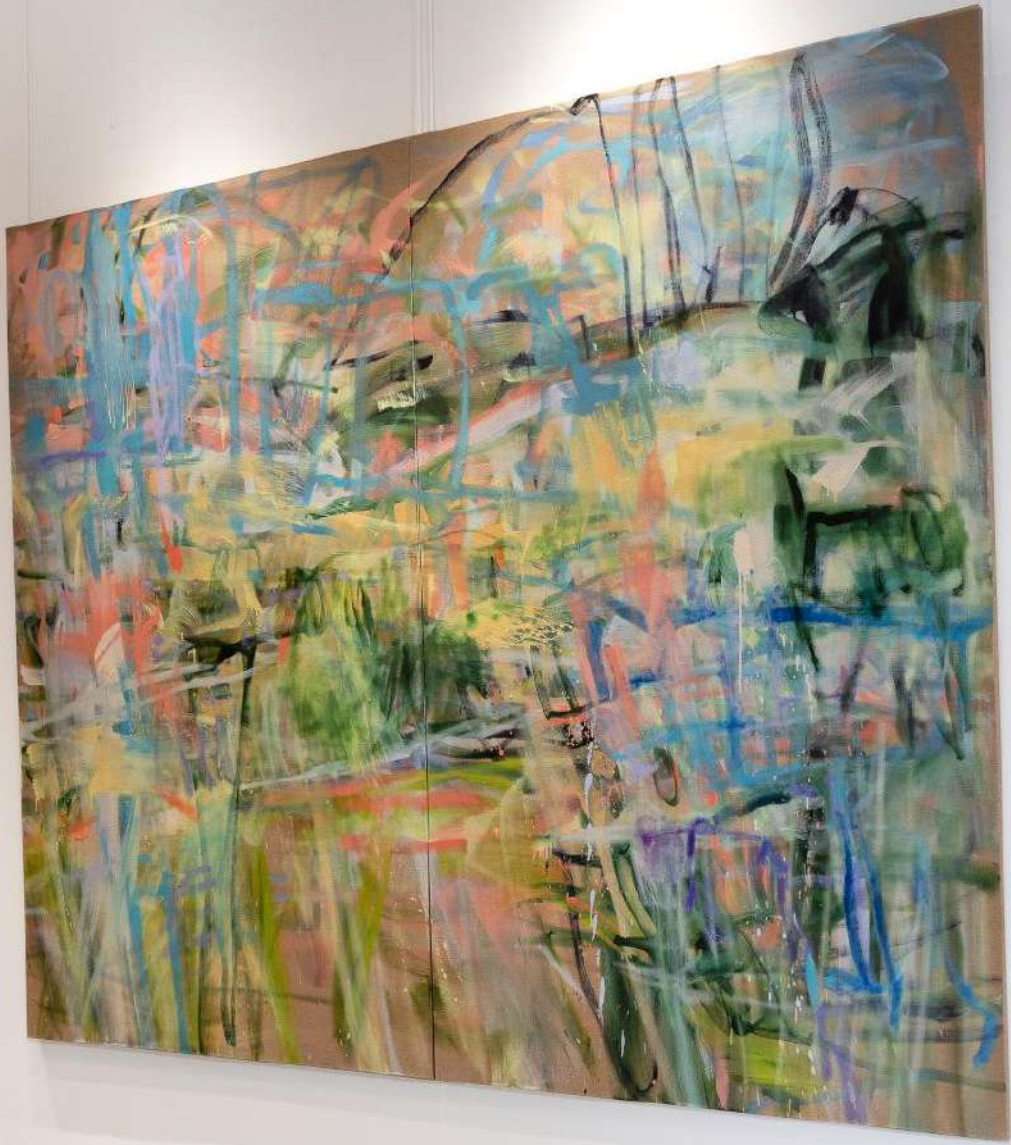
Oil on linen

220 x 260 cm (220 x 130 cm each panel)













Catherine Long is London-based abstract painter whose work is driven by a deep engagement with the physicality of paint and the expressive potential of colour. Drawing from her background in contemporary dance, Long's paintings are immersive and dynamic, exploring the visceral impact of gesture, rhythm and haptic sensation. By foregrounding the embodied experience of perception, Long's work seeks to create a sensorial engagement that draws the viewer into a richly layered world of history, patina and resonance.

Central to Long's practice is the exploration of how colour can evoke sensation, affect and mood. Her large-scale paintings are marked by a bold use of colour and a tactile, gestural application of paint that seeks to convey the rawness and sensuality of bodily experience. Through her work, Long engages with the process of layering, building up and erasing marks to create complex compositions that invite the viewer to participate in the process of meaning-making. Long's paintings are thus a testament to the power of colour, gesture and sensation to evoke deep emotion and meaning.

Long's extensive education in both dance and fine art has provided her with a unique perspective on the relationship between the body, movement and image-making. She holds a BA and MA in Dance from De Montfort University, and a PhD in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Arts. Her work has been exhibited widely, including at the ICA, Beaconsfield, The Showroom, Deptford X and Art Licks, and she has undertaken residencies at Chisenhale Studios, Siobhan Davies Studios and Pada Studios.

Education

2024 Royal College of Art, Painting MA, London, UK
2023 Turps Studio Painting Programme, London, UK
2017 Chelsea College of Arts, UAL, Fine Art PhD, London, UK
2010 De Montfort University, Dance MA, Leicester, UK
2006 De Montfort University, Dance BA, Leicester UK

Selected Solo Presentations

2021 The body keeps the score mark II, Chisenhale Art Place, London, UK
2019 Rotator Cuff, 139 Artspace, London, UK

Selected Group Exhibitions

2025

The Armory Show, Huxley-Parlour, New York, USA
LBF @ the Lake Vol.II, LBF Contemporary, Muskoka, CA
The Sway of Form, Gillian Jason Gallery, London, UK
PAPER, Huxley-Parlour, London, UK
In Dialogue with Ilse D'Hollander, Verduyn Gallery, Flanders, BE

2024

Scene V: Pas de Quatre, Matt Carey-Williams, London, UK
Royal College Art, Painting MA Degree Show, London, UK

2023

Ripe bananas!, Turps Leavers Show, London, UK
Recreational Grounds VII, Wendover House, London, UK

2022

Mood Times Ten, Fitzrovia Gallery, London, UK
Blink and You'll Miss It, Safehouse, London, UK

2019

Captives of Habit, Deptford X, London, UK
Material Gestures, Art Licks Weekend, London, UK
Beyond the Body, Wolf Cinema, Berlin, DE
2018 In Whose Eyes?, Beaconsfield Gallery Vauxhall, London, UK
2017 Vacant in use, Deptford X, London, UK
2016 We all have a problem with representation, The Showroom, London, UK
2015 Practices in Dialogue, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK

Grants & Awards

2025 Developing Your Creative Practice, Arts Council England
2024 New Blood Art Emerging Art Prize – shortlisted
2019 Developing Your Creative Practice, Arts Council England

Residencies:

2025 Porthmeor Residency Programme, Borlase Smart John Wells Trust, St Ives, Cornwall, UK
2022 Percolate, Siobhan Davies Studios, London, UK
2021 Studio4Summer, Chisenhale Studios, London, UK
2019 Pada Studios, Lisbon, Portugal, PT

Collections

Held in private collections in the UK, USA, Portugal, Singapore, China, Belgium and UAE



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International buyers: We understand the importance of flexible payment options. We offer interest-free installments directly with the gallery, and are committed to working with you to create a timeline that suits your purchasing needs. Please contact us to learn more.

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