



OIL PAINTINGS

AN ARTISTIC ODYSSEY THROUGH THE WASTE LAND

YOUNGHEE CHOI MARTIN

NABI PRESS • NEW YORK CITY

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Cover:
Aftermath of an Ancient Battle
2004
oil on linen
61" x 80"

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I
Inundation
2003
11" x 11"

"Please help these marks to cry out loud their songs."
—Ancient Egyptian Inscription



The paintings of Younghee Choi Martin bring a refreshing *frisson* of drama to the contemporary scene. They are like slices of grand opera. The stories they tell are tragic and sensual: scenes of violence and lamentation, or sunlit, watery reveries. Legends are the templates from which her images, over months of revision and many layers of paint, come excitingly to life.

The *Magic Flute* inspired one series; *Salome* another. Eliot's *The Waste Land* preoccupied her for years—a characteristic choice, with its blend of myth and modernity and its echoes of *Tristan*. Today she is mining the *Aeneid*. There is something akin to the music of Berlioz in her method: the startling gestures and colors, underpinned by classical discipline, and the ancient tales thereby made new. The *Aeneid* obsessed Berlioz too.

Younghee is a voyager between far-off lands, a New Yorker from Korea whose quest led to Rome; an artist from the 20th century who yearned for the full-blooded drama of past epochs. As a child in Korea she learned still-life painting and calligraphy. In Italy, Michelangelo and Raphael became lasting influences. The two peninsulas are alike, by the way, in their long, tragic histories, strong emotions and flavors, and zest for musical theater.

East and West, classical and cubist, Poussin and Cezanne: there are many facets to this original artist. Beyond scenarios and comparisons, however, is her mastery of color and form. You don't have to know the plot of an opera to love the music, though it sounds even better if you do.

ABOUT YOUNGHEE CHOI MARTIN

Younghee Choi Martin embarked on the poetic narratives of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as her subject matter in 1990. She set out to create paintings with the understanding that the poem is a paradox. It is a vast statement about the disconnection from our rich past. However, reading the poem reconnects us to the deep reservoir of western civilization and restores new meaning through the exploration of myths, languages, customs and traditions, as well as allusions to works by Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare.

In her *Waste Land* series, Younghee created over 200 paintings, drawings, and prints. This body of work is stylistically developed and highly expressive. Her approach is an open-ended, organic process to arrive at unexpected images. The subject matter evokes human drama of primal energies. These paintings are visual enigmas with urgent messages, replete with metaphors, quotations, and multiple meanings waiting to be deciphered.

In 1972, she started a rigorous academic training at the Brooklyn Museum Art School as a high school student. Even then, Younghee perceived that there was a schism between recent art and what came before. The new art seemed empty. By contrast, she responded to the treasures she encountered in the museums—the Babylonian reliefs of military conquest, the Egyptian frescos of resurrection, the European Renaissance religious and mythical paintings, and the outdoor paintings by the Impressionists.

Continuing her art training in Rome on a scholarship from the Rhode Island School of Design, Younghee became more convinced that painting is silent poetry. She intensified her study of the Old Masters while incorporating modern concepts and procedures in order to arrive at something different and personal. Upon returning to New York in 1977, she further developed and refined her art using literary and operatic source material such as *Siegfried*, *Norma*, *Salome*, and *Poppea*. This work continues to this day.

In the early '80s she received a number of painting fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York Creative Arts Public Service Program. She has had 18 one-person shows and over 50 group exhibitions in New York and throughout the United States, as well as in France, Italy, Japan, and Korea. In 2000, her painting titled *By the Water* from the *Waste Land* series was exhibited in the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. She lives and paints in Chelsea, New York City.

This painting book records Younghee's artistic odyssey using *The Waste Land* as a Delphic oracle. As with any oracle, the enigma has to be translated and interpreted. Then the journey begins: traversing the hostile land and navigating through the rough waters, avoiding monsters and sorcerers—or through the unfriendly modern art scene with its critics and naysayers—until the safe harbor is in sight. Please enjoy these rich discoveries.

II
Winter Dawn
2003
42" x 45"

"Painting is a silent poetry and poetry, a chattering, talking painting."
— Simonides



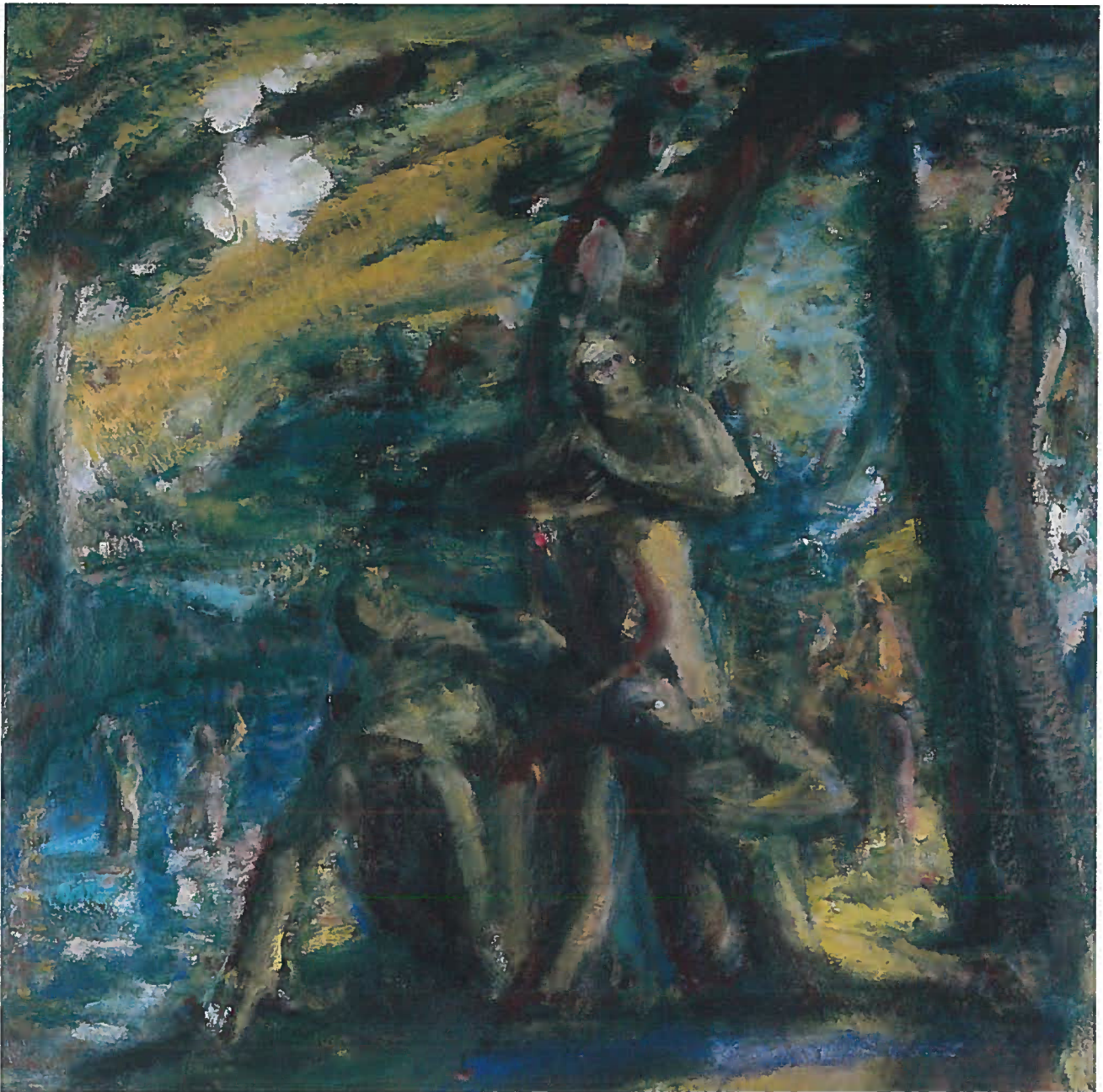
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All art work is painted in oil on linen prepared with lead white ground, unless otherwise specified.

Art Photography:
Chin Chi Yang: All except I, II, XVIII; Chris Carone: I, II, XVIII.

III
Gleaming Night
2003
31" x 31"



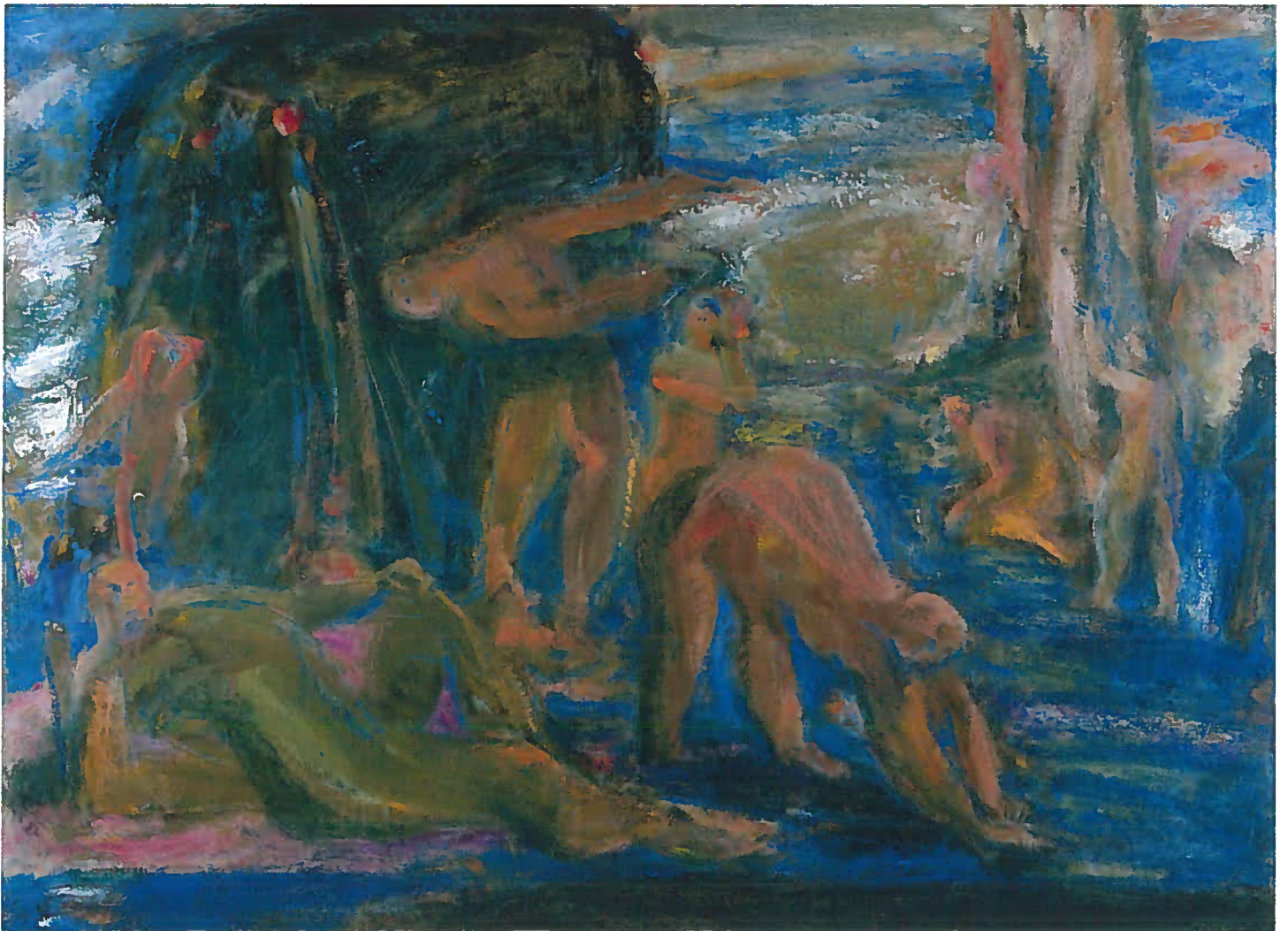
IV

Waiting for Rain

2003

44" x 59"

"Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Hark! now I hear them, —Ding-dong, bell."
— Song of Ariel, Act I, ii, Shakespeare's *Tempest*



INTO SOMETHING RICH AND STRANGE:
YOUNGHEE CHOI MARTIN AND T.S. ELIOT

A continuing problem for contemporary culture is the use of an employable past. This is particularly true of painting, where pressures have merged it with other media or undermined its once preeminent status. Even as we consider the bewildering amount of visual information and historical styles open to artists, we must problematically grapple with the destruction of the sublime, the ironic bracketing of authenticity and the proposed irrelevance of the "Old Masters." In this regard, Younghee Choi Martin's wonderful works stand out as a reminder of painting's possibilities.

Choi Martin's current body of paintings is based on T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Published in 1922, the poem is cited as the summit of both Anglo-American poetry and the culture of high Modernism. More importantly in this case, it is employed by Younghee as a philosophy and methodology addressing the act of painting. She seeks a working analogy with Eliot's ideas, rather than to simply illustrate his poetry. *The Waste Land's* classical allusions and mythic references to Virgil's *Aeneid*, or Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, for example, translate into the artist's complex figurative compositions based on an intimate knowledge of master paintings. In this pursuit, she has assimilated a broad range of figurative gestures from Titian, Poussin and others. Her creative process is closely related to looking and interpreting, as well as executing hundreds of drawings. Rather than relying on a neo-classical language bound by conservative academism, the artist's repertoire depends upon an improvisatory impulse. These works are dictated by feeling and intuition rather than mere knowledge, retaining their openness and wealth of association.

From each painting's onset, the surface is reworked many times without the aid of models, photographs or other figurative accoutrements of observation. Note *Waiting for Rain*, 2003. Its tactile immediacy is derived from the gestural overall qualities of painterly abstraction. Like de Kooning, Younghee may also be called a "slipping glimser," but one

V
Sea Nymphs
2004
80" x 81"

who balances the painting process with an ongoing analysis of the literary text. Such a reliance on literature flies in the face of mid-century Greenbergian formalism with its presumptions of materiality, self sufficiency and abstract flatness. Her use of painting's past, conceived without irony, circumvents much contemporary art based on post-Warholian pop culture. In other words, the categories Classical, modern or post-modern don't particularly concern her. It is her intent to restore painting as a source of aesthetic resonance and reflection in the service of cultural renewal. This idea is not simply bound to our own time and place. At the beginning of the last century, Eliot and other artists shared similar aspirations in the hope of creating a new art. It was an art that paralleled the archaic works of the past, but echoed the minutiae of modern life. According to Eliot's vision, Modern Art must go beyond the old dualities



VI

Copy, Cezanne's
Five Bathers
2000
Pencil on paper
16" x 16"

VII

Spring Rain
2004
74" x 112"

of past/present and subject/object in order to create a state of transcendence. One of his primary techniques was the introduction of multiple perspective within a single poetic narrative, fusing separate characters. This goal was historically concurrent with the planar overlapping and distortions of Cubism, as well as the Vorticism of Eliot's own England.

Transcendence still provides a meaningful category for Younghee's imagination. Rather than seeking it in the genre of landscape as many neo-romantic artists have done, she addresses a much more difficult territory. She mixes the pre-modern traditions of figurative construction within a fully saturated web of paint, made possible only after the advent of Cubism, Surrealism and the New York School. Each stroke describes a human referent pulled out of the void, even as memories of academic machines and cohesive figurative structures persist, confronting us with the limits of our own time, taste and presumptions. Her nudes are the result of a careful logic and working process. Much to our surprise, these deceptively simple accretions of paint stride, pose, languish, ponder, strain, or brandish dangerous intent, all within a believable but fictive space. Traces of their humanity are always present. Their gestures,



VIII

Copy, Poussin's
Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne
2000
Pencil on paper
10" x 7"

IX

Copy, Titian's
Bacchus and Ariadne
2001
Charcoal on paper
19" x 25"

relationships and haptic intervals are oddly parallel to Poussin's careful rhythms and sculptured pictorial depths. As in traditional history painting, someone is doing something to someone else. Bodies and their interstices form a clear visual plane, rife with incident. They evoke Cezanne's bathers or the prostitute/goddesses of *Les Femmes d'Alger*: opaque, heavy limbed, filled with the gross materiality of paint as well as the medium's inherent expressivity. Sometimes limbs and spaces firmly overlap in the equivalent of a Roman frieze, as in *Sea Nymphs*, 2004, or else fuse and meld into a surrealistic dance, in *Inexplicable*, 2002. At other times, calligraphic and gestural strokes knit the entire surface together, welding individual bodies into a single impenetrable mass: *Gleaming Night*, 2003. The paintings vary from each other, just as passages differ within a single work. The shift in figurative notation and the evocation of grand manner painting form the equivalent of Eliot's multiple perspective and classical allusion.

In *The Fall of Troy*, 2004, the artist depicts Aeneas leaving the besieged city. As referenced by Eliot in *The Waste Land*, Aeneas must marry Lavinia to found Rome, yet he is already engaged in a liaison with Dido. Past



X
Copy, Raphael's
Galatea
1999
Pencil on paper
20" x 16"

XI
The Fall of Troy
2004
61" x 80"

and present converge, as the artist employs the motif of the World Trade Center's charred grid in the lower right hand corner, tying the two eras together. Younghee subscribes to the classical idea that tragedy is best contained within an enclosed form, removed from gross emotionalism. It is a way we may contemplate horror without becoming enmeshed in it. Yet her nudes also have their joyful and hedonistic aspects. In *Thunder of Spring*, 2004, she depicts the ease and erotic pleasure of the body as in the tradition of Matisse or Gauguin. At its most radical, this approach propounds the utopian nature of the figure and its integral relationship to modernism. It is a tradition in which Younghee Choi Martin participates fully.

Examine the background of *Thunder of Spring* and notice the boats reminiscent of Raphael's *The Miraculous Draft of Fishes*, 1514-15, or the gestures of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, 1520-22. Placed into a generalized abstract structure, we no longer know what the narrative is. We merely hear its whisper. In this regard, openness is neither a simple function of form nor content, but the dynamic organizing principle stemming from the work's inception.



XII

Copy, Poussin's
Tyro and the Nymphs
2000
Pencil on paper
10" x 10"

A series of stunning smaller works highlight the artist as a jewel-like colorist, achieving maximum chromatic intensity through a few tones. *The Moon Shone Bright*, 2002, is awash with nocturnal light, communicating magical secrets of sex and death. *Vernal Pool*, 2003, achieves all the heft of a large figurative painting with a few carefully chosen smears of gray, russet and emerald green. Finally *Inundation*, 2003, is drenched in sunset beach light despite its non-naturalistic palette. All these works are smaller than 30 inches and pose a fascinating addendum to Choi Martin's oeuvre by suggesting the grand tradition of masterworks through the most economic of means.

Language pushes us toward meaning, toward a coherence that does not exist in the real world. We prefer that our realities defer to the codes of language, to the discourses of formal structures, despite the dangers of their false presumptions and impressions. The strength of *The Waste Land* is that the poem renounces ultimate meanings and calls attention to the ways we read and make sense of the world. *The Waste Land's* ultimate triumph is that, like James Joyce's *Ulysses*, it resists the temptation to insert the coherence of language into the panoramas of myth, history and modern urban crowds, despite poetry's pressure to do so. This is the hallmark of its modernism and the inspiration for the artistry of Younghee Choi Martin.

Younghee has achieved something marvelous with her paintings. The strength of the artist's work is that she has successfully gone back to the creative sources of inspiration without being swallowed up by them. In this context, *The Waste Land* is a seminal text, but it leads to other texts. The "Old Masters" are great artists, but they are essentially the source material for other paintings. Her creative process is based on the confluence of text and image as she alludes to their mutual co-dependence and interchangeability. Choi Martin's working relationship with *The Waste Land* has developed over 15 years of close reading. In that time she has produced a significant body of work. We may discern in her experience the ongoing rele-



XIII

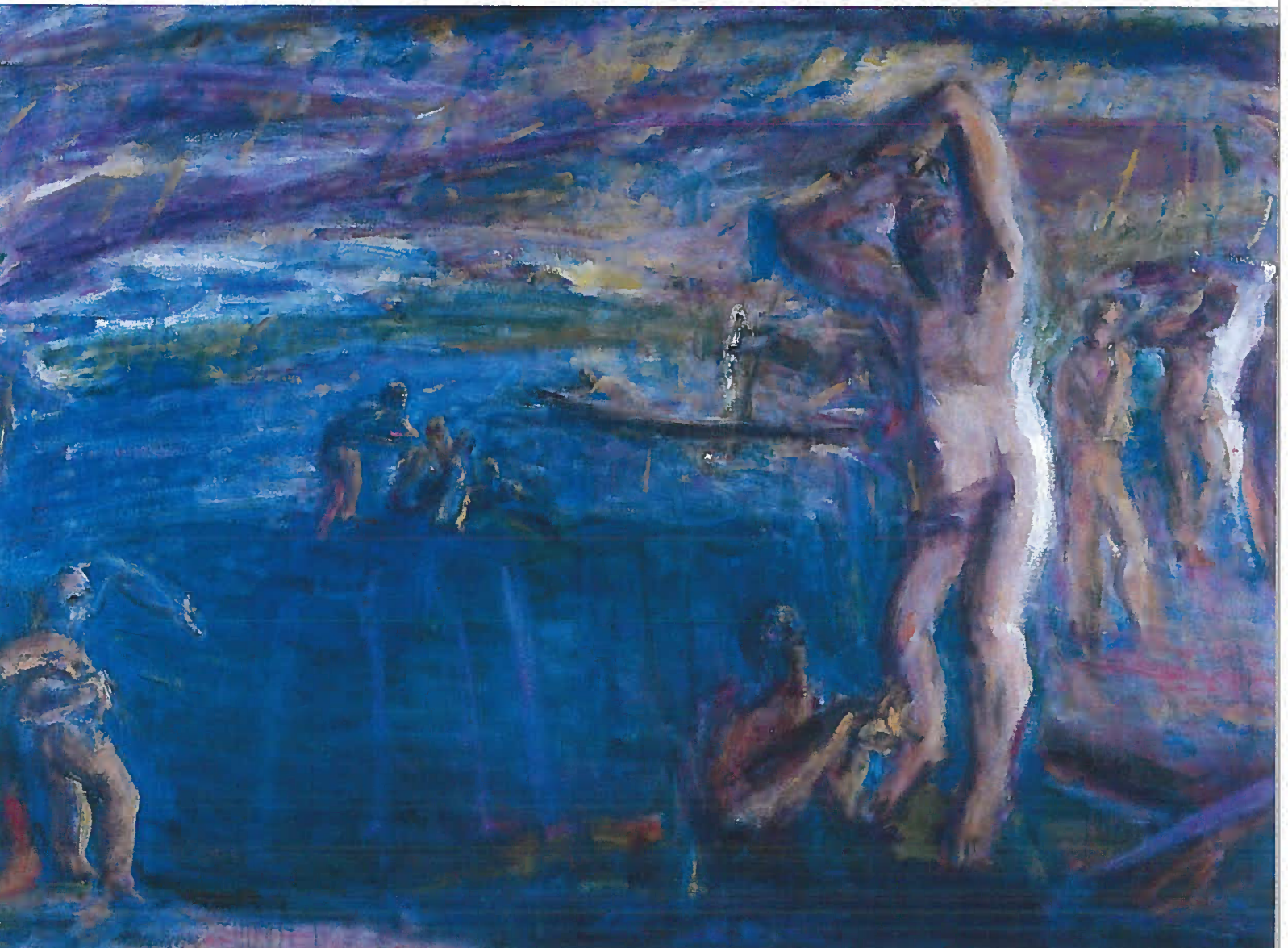
Thunder of Spring

2004

75" x 100"

vance of modernity, the legacy of the 20th century and the continuity of painting's glorious tradition. Yet even if these assumptions aren't made, her message speaks with import and authority. Painting and reading are aspects of a single protean process, a hermeneutic of creative interpretation. The artist makes us aware that creativity is a defining act for herself and her audience, one arising from a historical context. Its nature is fluid and transformative, a power which cannot be reduced or deconstructed. She understands that its essential gift is one of freedom.

© Joel Silverstein 2004



XIV
Murmur
2003
16" x 16"



XV
Thetis
2002
12" x 12"

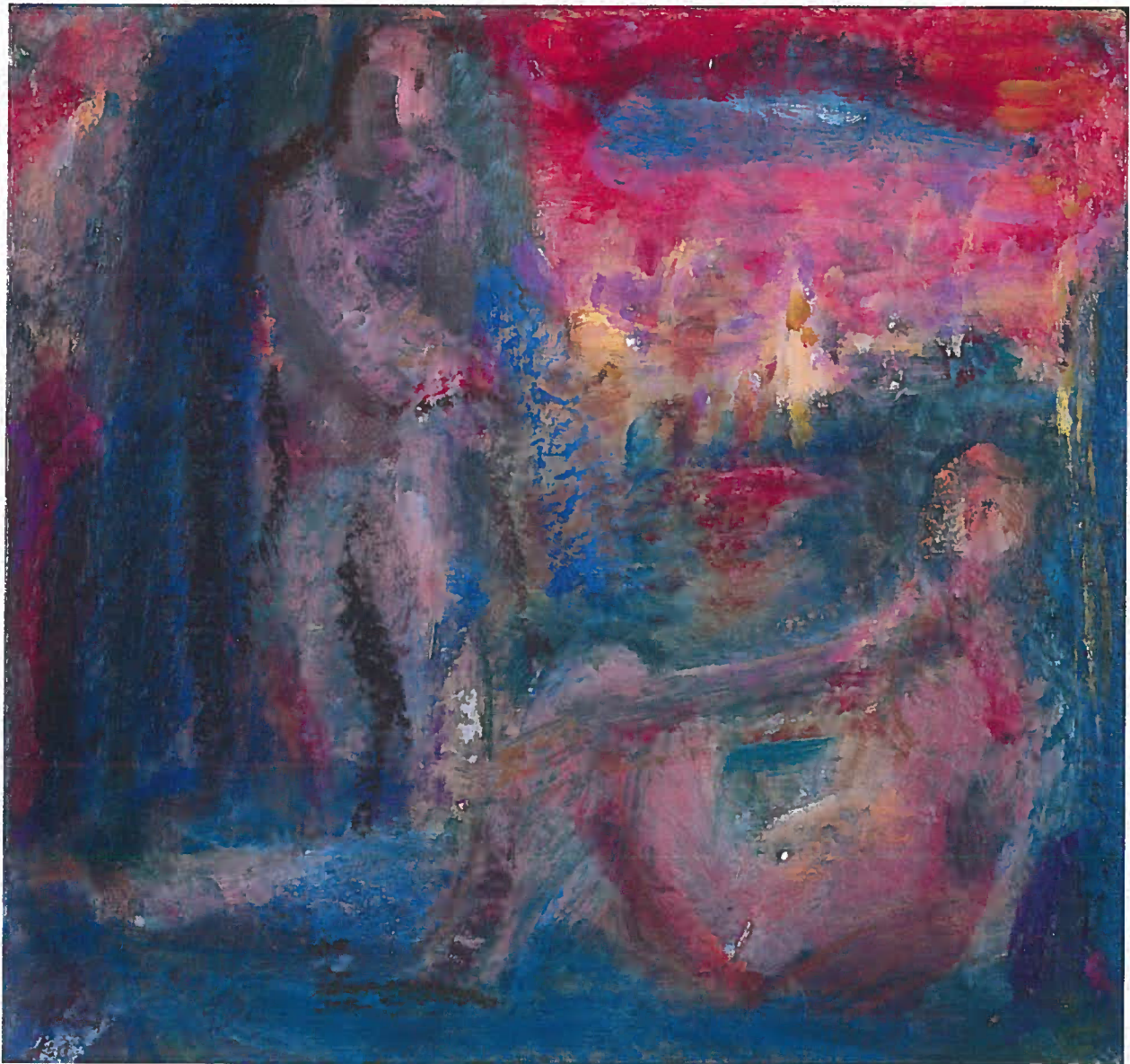


XVI

Red Rose Dawn

2004

11" x 12"



XVII

Shadow at Morning

2001

11" x 12"



XVIII

Moon Shone Bright

2002

15" x 22"



XIX

Inexplicable

2002

16" x 18"



XX
Sylvanus
2003
15" x 15"



XXI
Night Fall
2004
75" x 80"



XXII

Aftermath of an Ancient Battle

2004

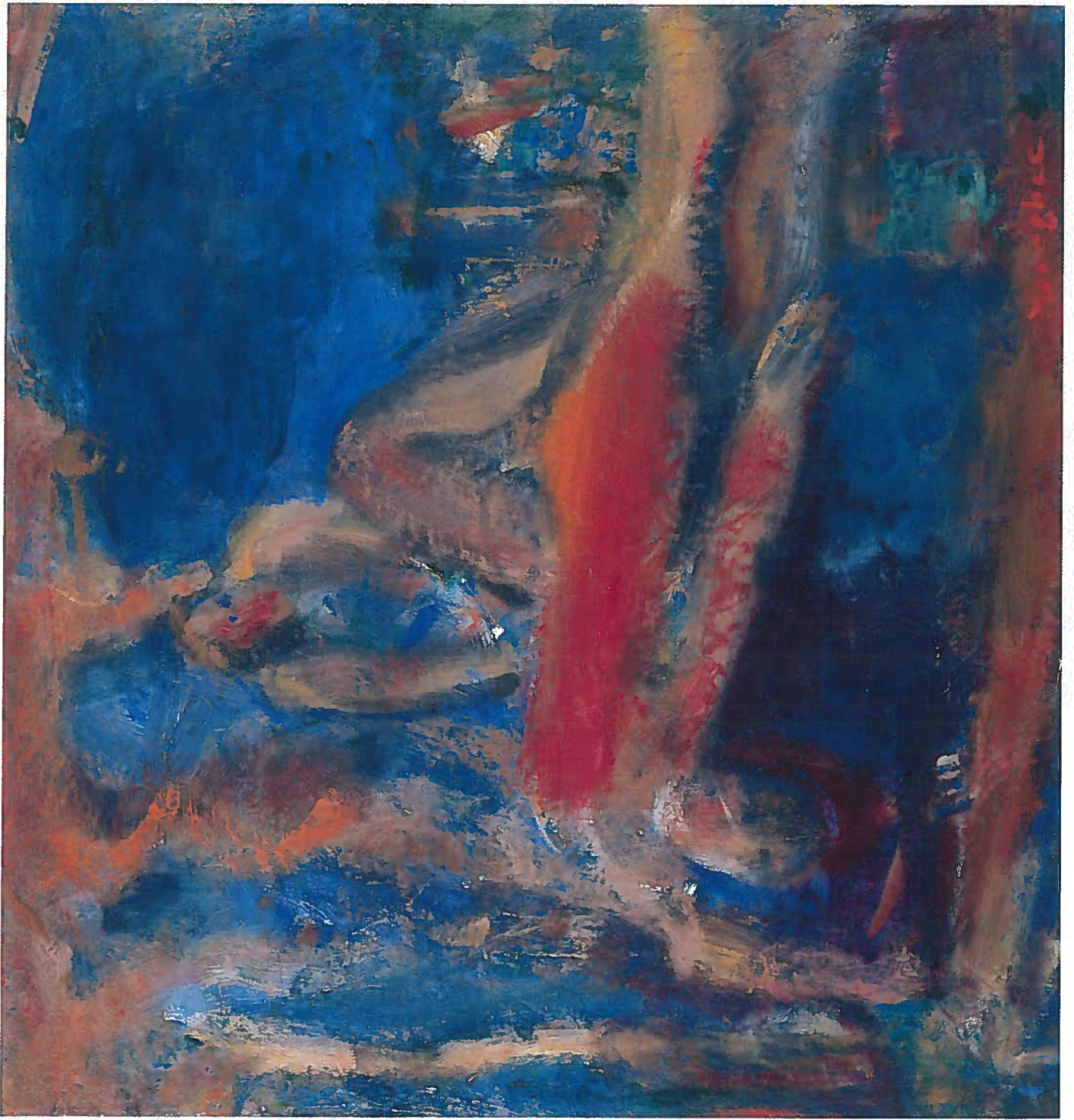
61" x 80"

Above all, Younghee loves to paint. Her new body of work is earthy, textural, and full of movement. The artist's brushstrokes create an undertone of surface pattern, as she alternately disrupts and preserves the flatness of the picture plane. Her compositions bring together color, space, and line, to create a world where the predictable and the unexpected merge.

In the painting titled *Aftermath of an Ancient Battle*, Younghee gives us a glimpse of the chromatic underpainting through a hazy muted surface of Naples and Indian yellow. Light seems to come from inside the canvas. The human forms, varying from just under life size to five or six inches in height, are drawn in such a way that they appear to be looking at each other and at the same time seem to revel in self-reflection. The size of the brushstrokes, as much as the scale of the figures, suggests space that is deep and vast. The artist makes the figure-ground relationship ambiguous. The group of survivors, Aeneas, Anchises, Iulus, are looking toward the distant city of Carthage where they are to take refuge, while Neoptolemus, Cassandra, Athena, and others are embroiled in struggle in the remnants of the sacked city of Troy. These and other images merge and re-emerge through painted and scratched marks.

The palette is open. With contrasting bits of colors, such as Madder Lake crimson, Viridian green, or Manganese blue, lead white and black, she punctuates the canvas creating movements from edge to edge. She uses vertical, curved lines to affirm the picture plane. All these elements come together with an authenticity and emotional intensity that give this painting its power.

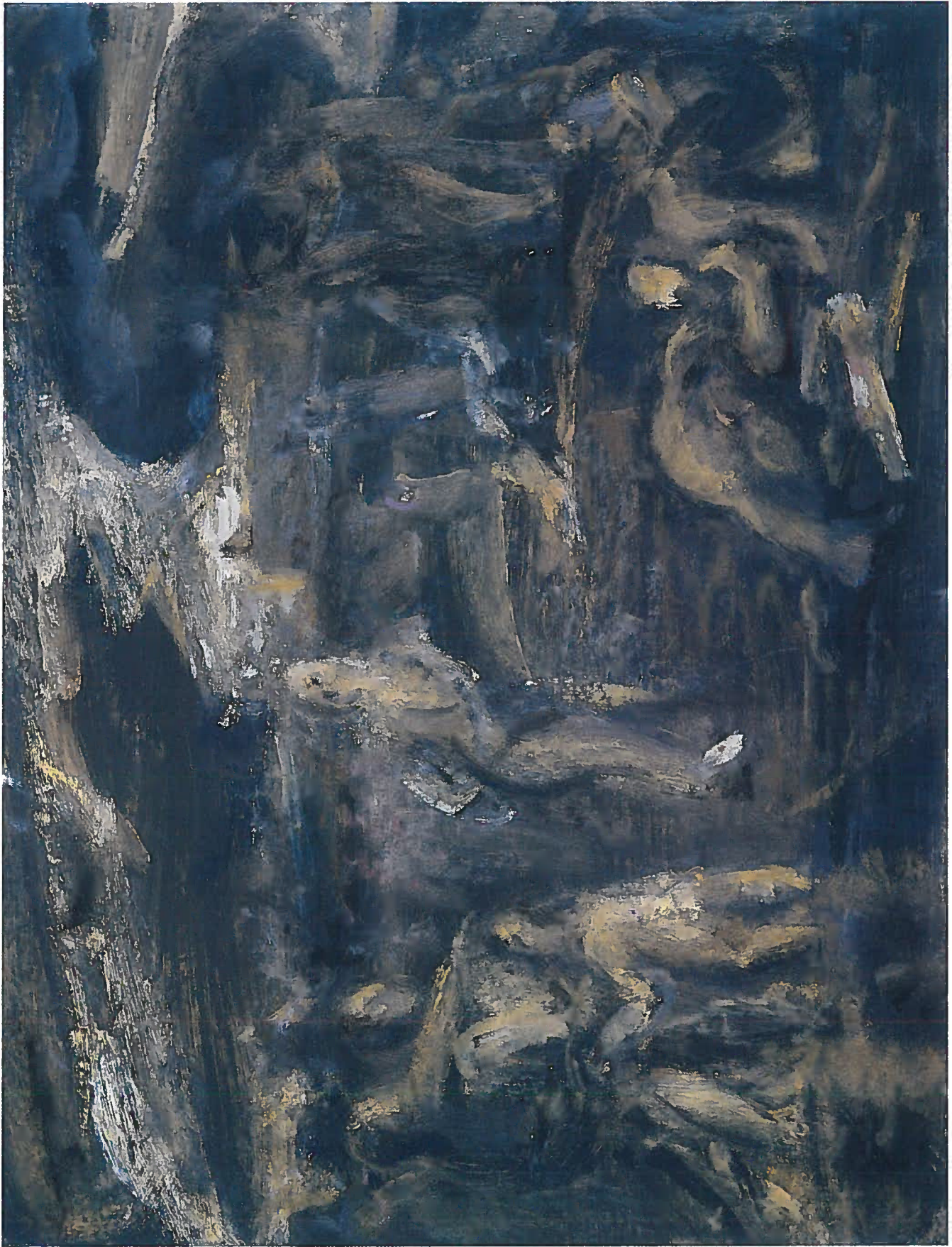
© Carol Heft, August 2004

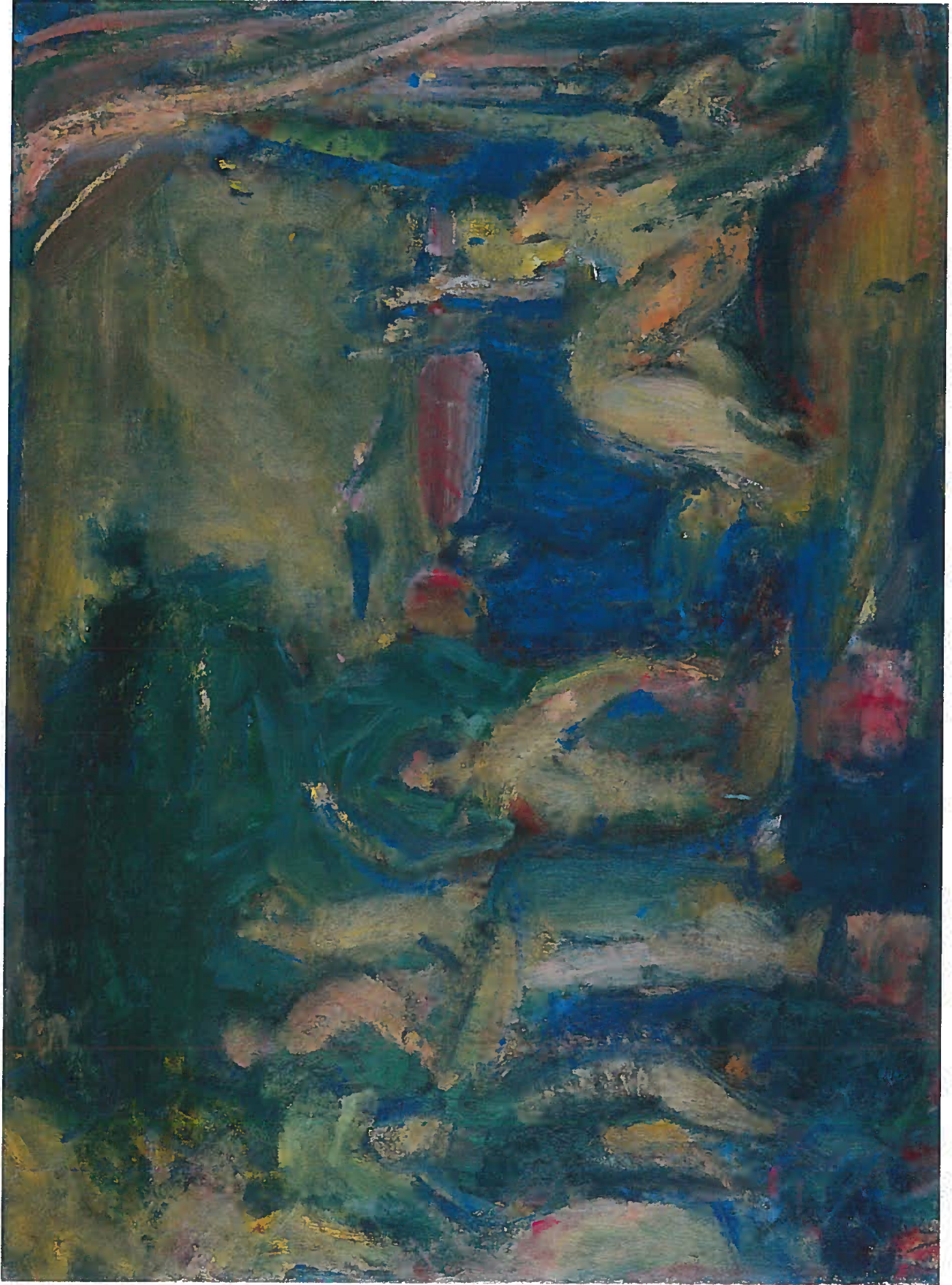


XXIII Patroklos 2003, 21" x 22"



XXIV *River of Forgetfulness* 2003, 16" x 20"

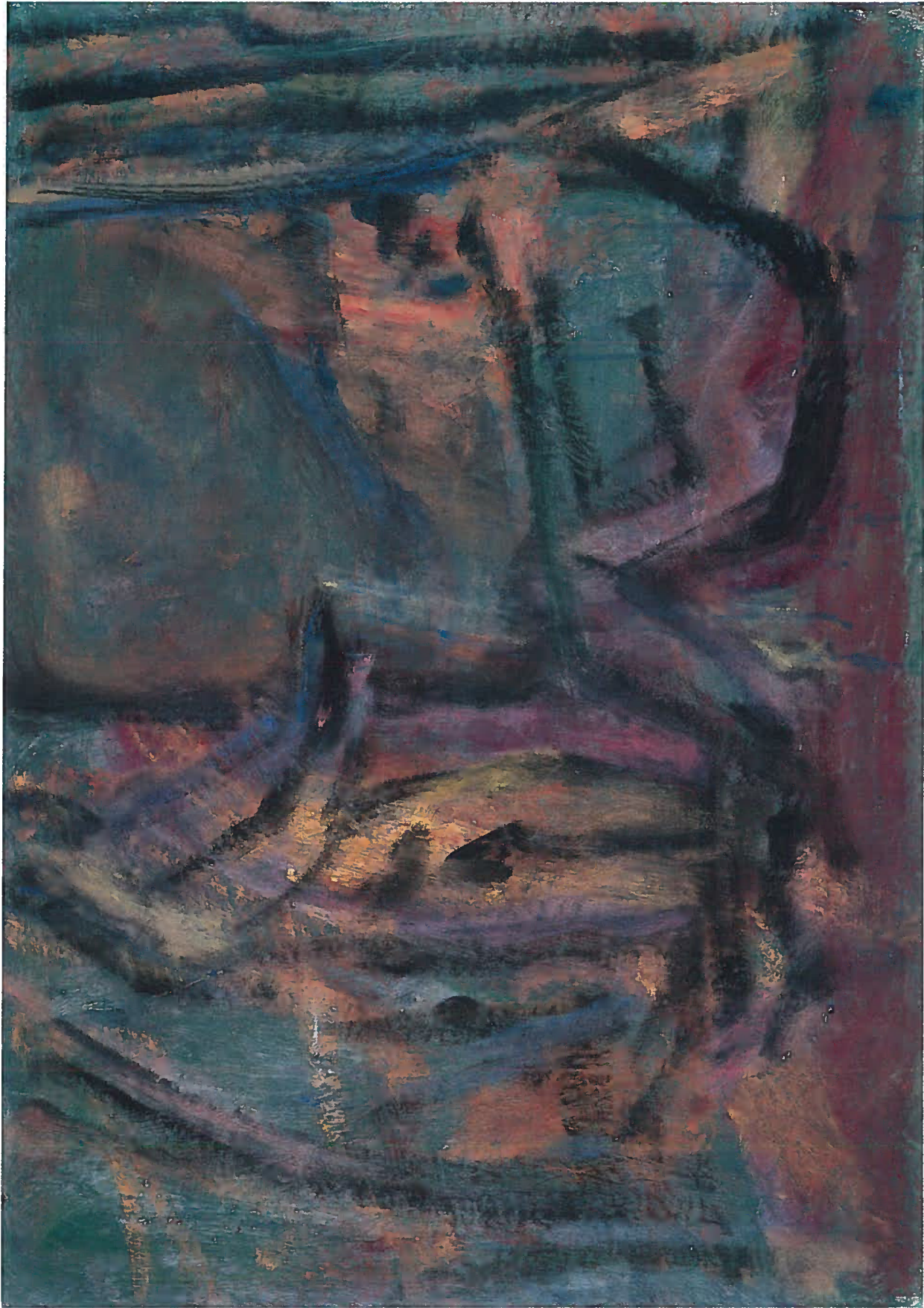




XXV *Vernal Pool* 2003, 22" x 30"

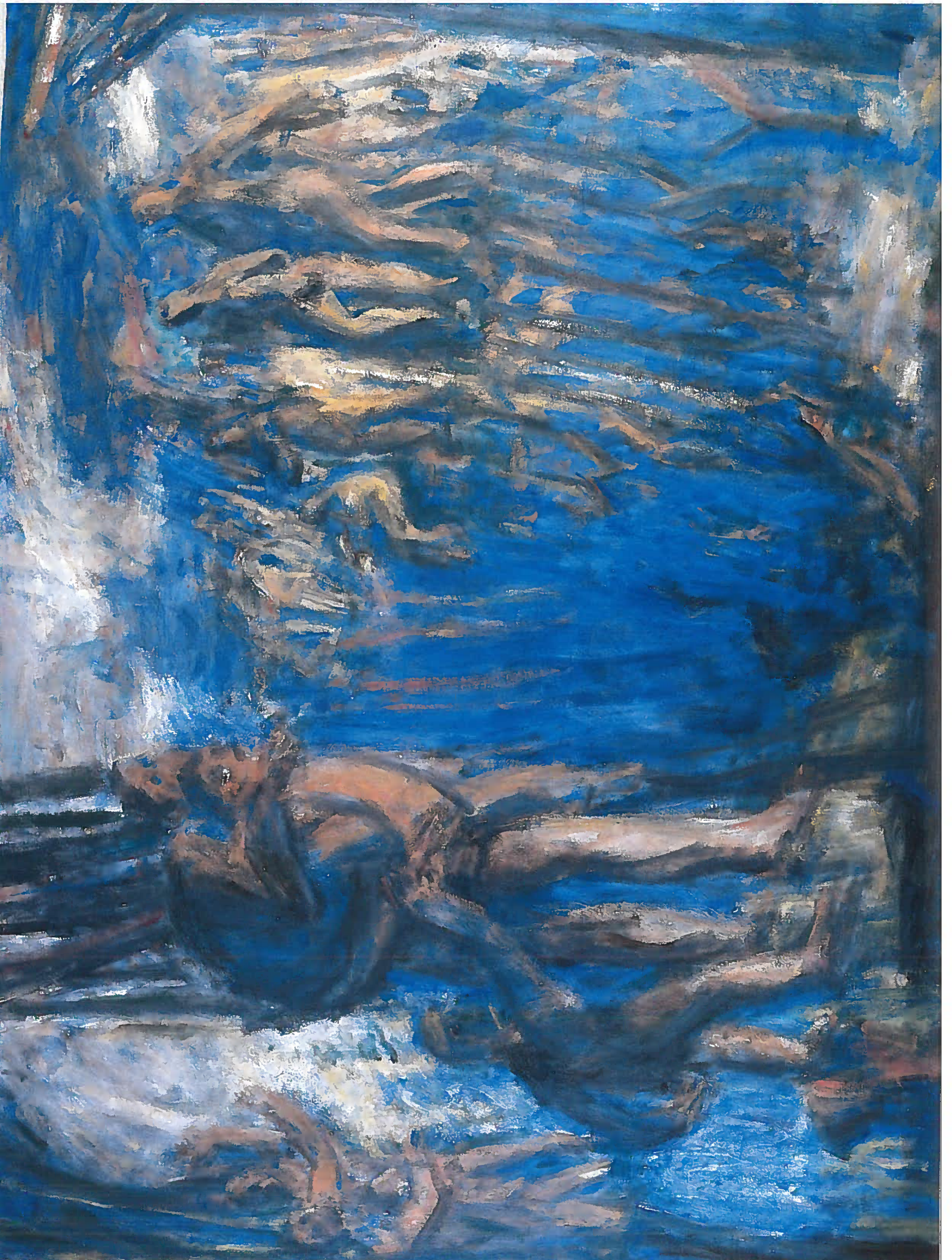
XXVI *Trembling Oak* 2003, 34" x 45"

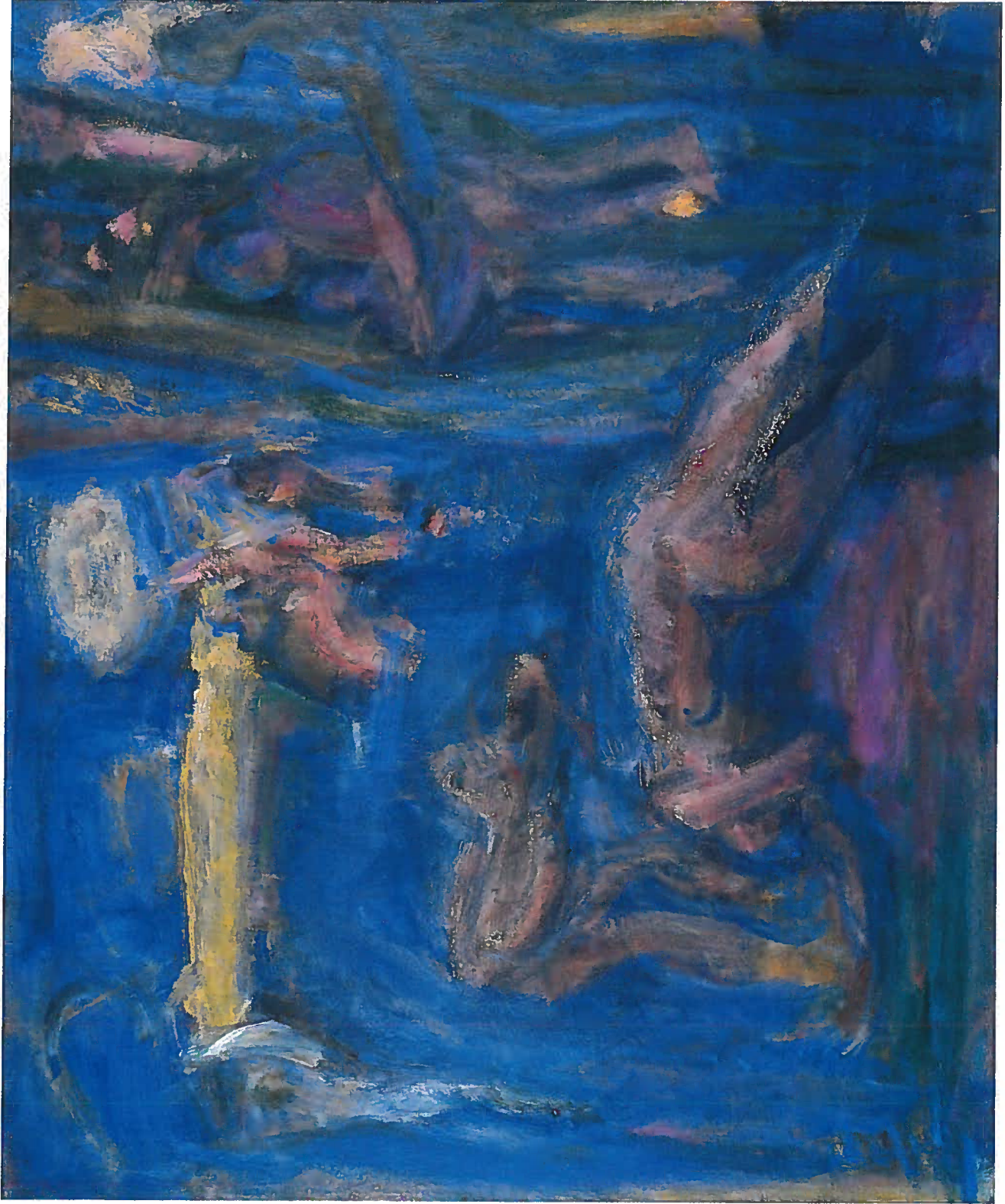




XXVII *Libation Bearer* 2004, 22" x 31"

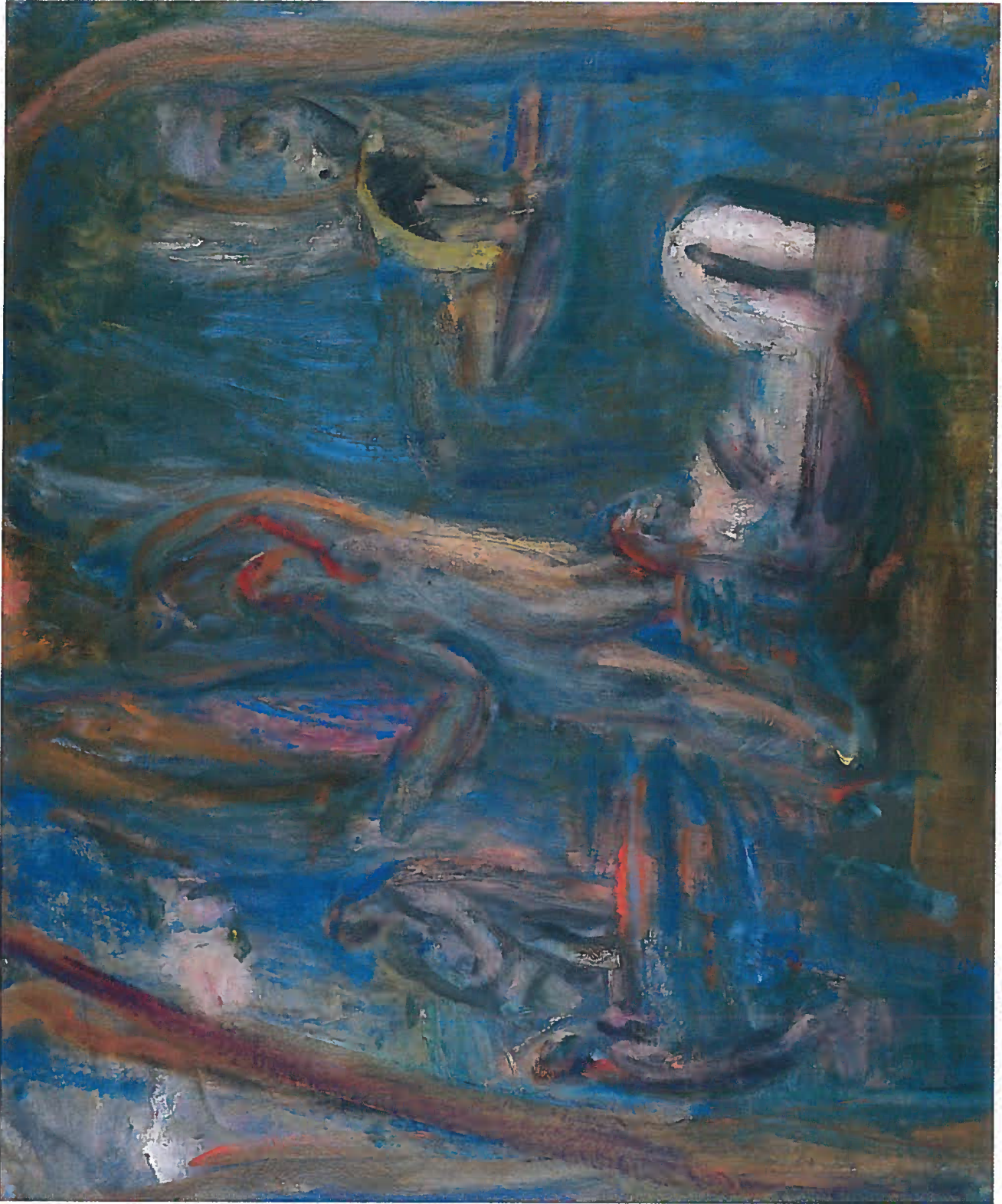
XXVIII *The Fall of Troy* 2004, 61" x 80"

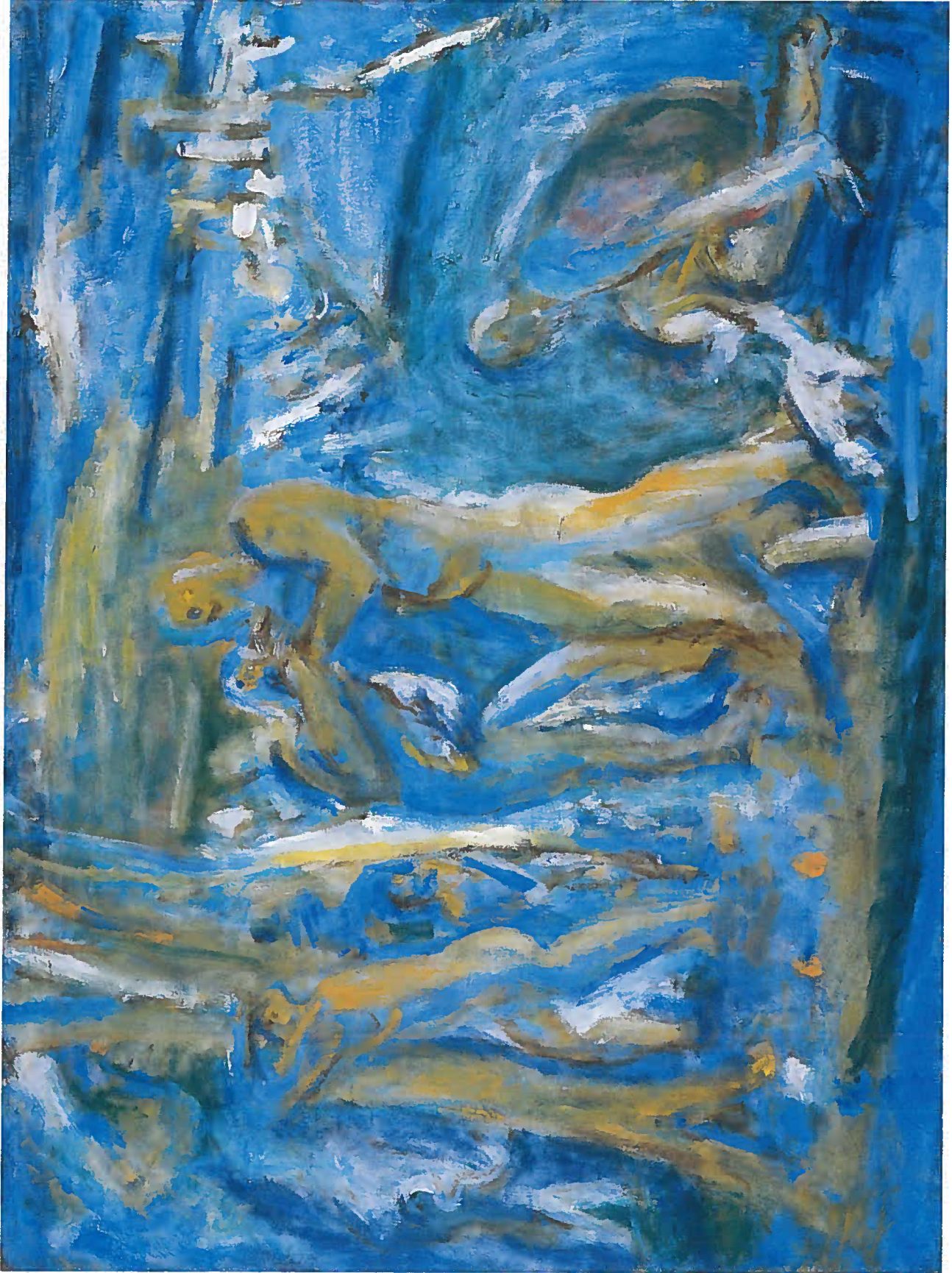




XXIX Summer Night 2004, 45" x 54"

XXX Arcadian Memory 2004, 45" x 54"





XXXI Sudden Frost 2004, 44" x 59"





XXXIII

Arcadian Memory — detail

2004

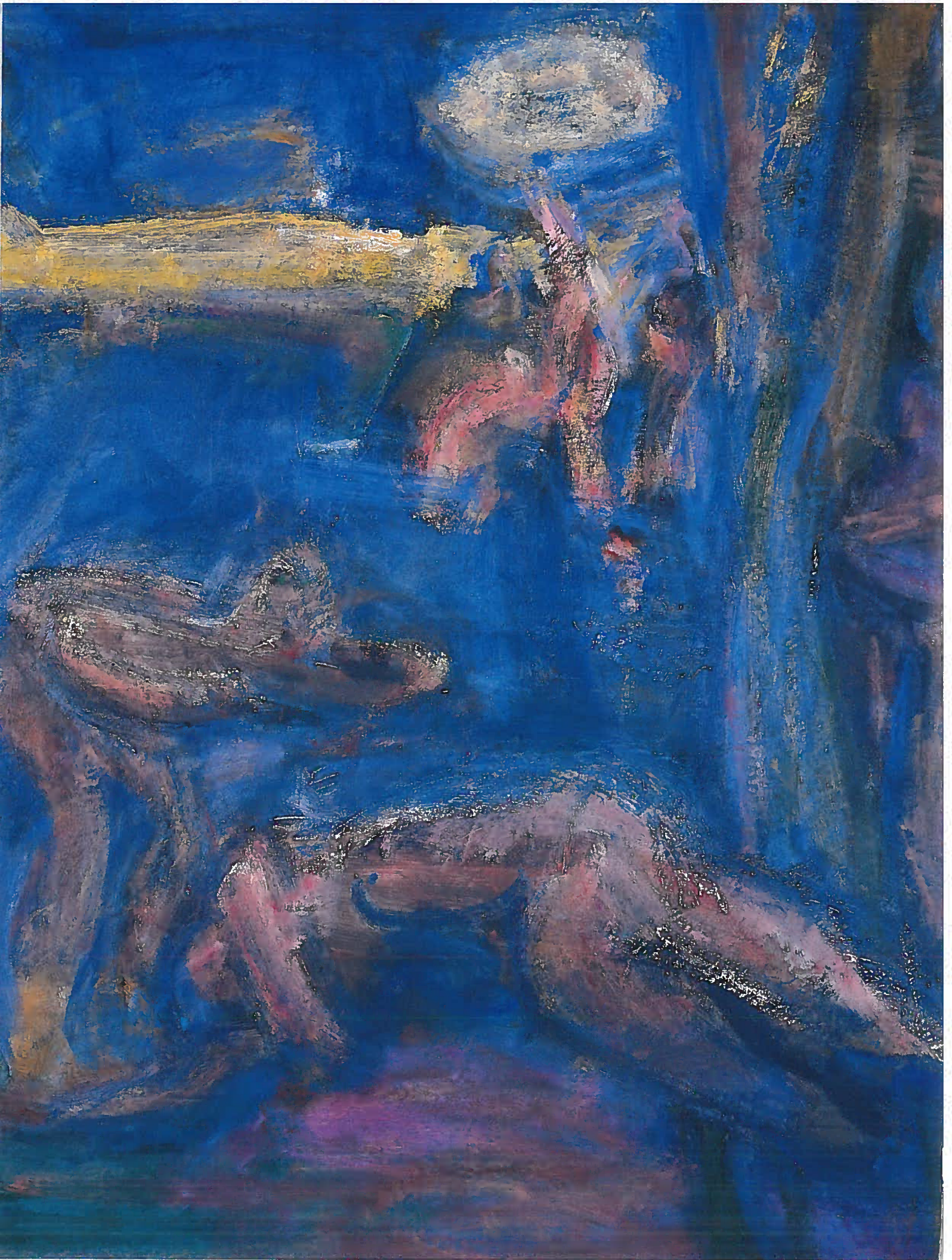
45" x 54"

I enjoy so much visiting Younghee's studio. I feel very close to what she is doing and our conversations about paintings in progress are wonderfully collegial, rich with specifics, and far ranging. The real joy for me, however, is in the next visit where I glimpse her thinking over time—how she has turned a particular work and has gone to a completely unexpected place. To see that is a rare privilege.

Hardly anyone struggles with the right things in painting anymore: figuration, conceptualized space, color keying, texture, the life of the paint, the narrative with baggage—in short, the full catastrophe. Younghee takes it on as it should be taken on, as one metamorphic, organic whole, defined by the format, slightly shifting now, then completely reworked, more concrete at a certain point, or less so, or more psychological, or more formal, or more diffused, or, perhaps, lost all together for a moment in just paint, to be refound again, this time as the shadows cast in the aftermath of an ancient battle, the glow of an Arcadian memory, or the pathos of separation.

One falls into these works, into their sophistication and their open hearted embrace of painting. They beckon you to float lightly along their surface until you are enveloped, finally, in their compelling feeling of longing for some sense of the wholeness we have lost.

© John Bradford, August 2004



XXXIV

Summer Night — detail

2004

45" x 54"

XXXV

Murmuring Waters of Xanthous

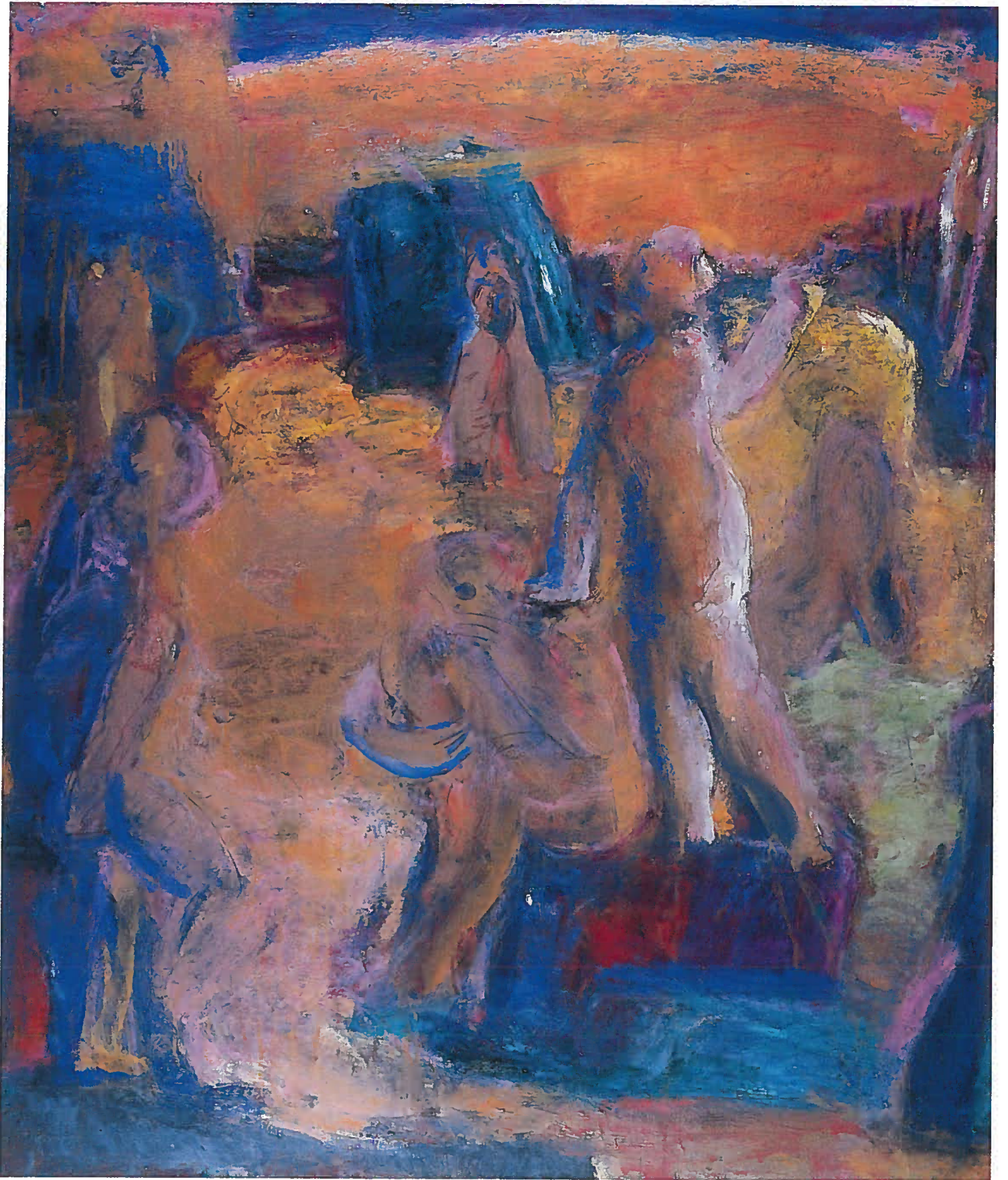
2004

Charcoal on paper

22" x 22"

"What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory
Of calling shapes, and beckning shadows dire,
And airy tongues, that syllable mens names
On Sands, and Shoars, and desert Wilderness."
— *Comus*, John Milton





XXXVI

Sun's Last Rays

2000

54" x 45"

Nicolas Carone

XXXVII

Whisper Music

1999

36" x 45"

Younghee Choi Martin is a painter with a concept. Her plastic philosophy has a dialectical premise which deals with conscious and unconscious imagery whose drama, in plastic terms, are poetic statements. She integrates these plastic concepts with her own life experience through a synthesizing organic process, narrating conditions and events of human drama in a stream of consciousness where hidden rites, yearnings, and taboos express her personal myth.

© Nicolas Carone 2000





XXXVIII

The Heart of Light — detail

2000

71" x 76"

XXXIX

Ethereal Rumors

2001

72" x 75"



XL

Stirring the Pattern

2001

24" x 28"



XLI
Violet Air
1999
23" x 26"



XLII

Hyacinth Garden

1997

45" x 45"

XLIII

Ganga

1999

36" x 42"



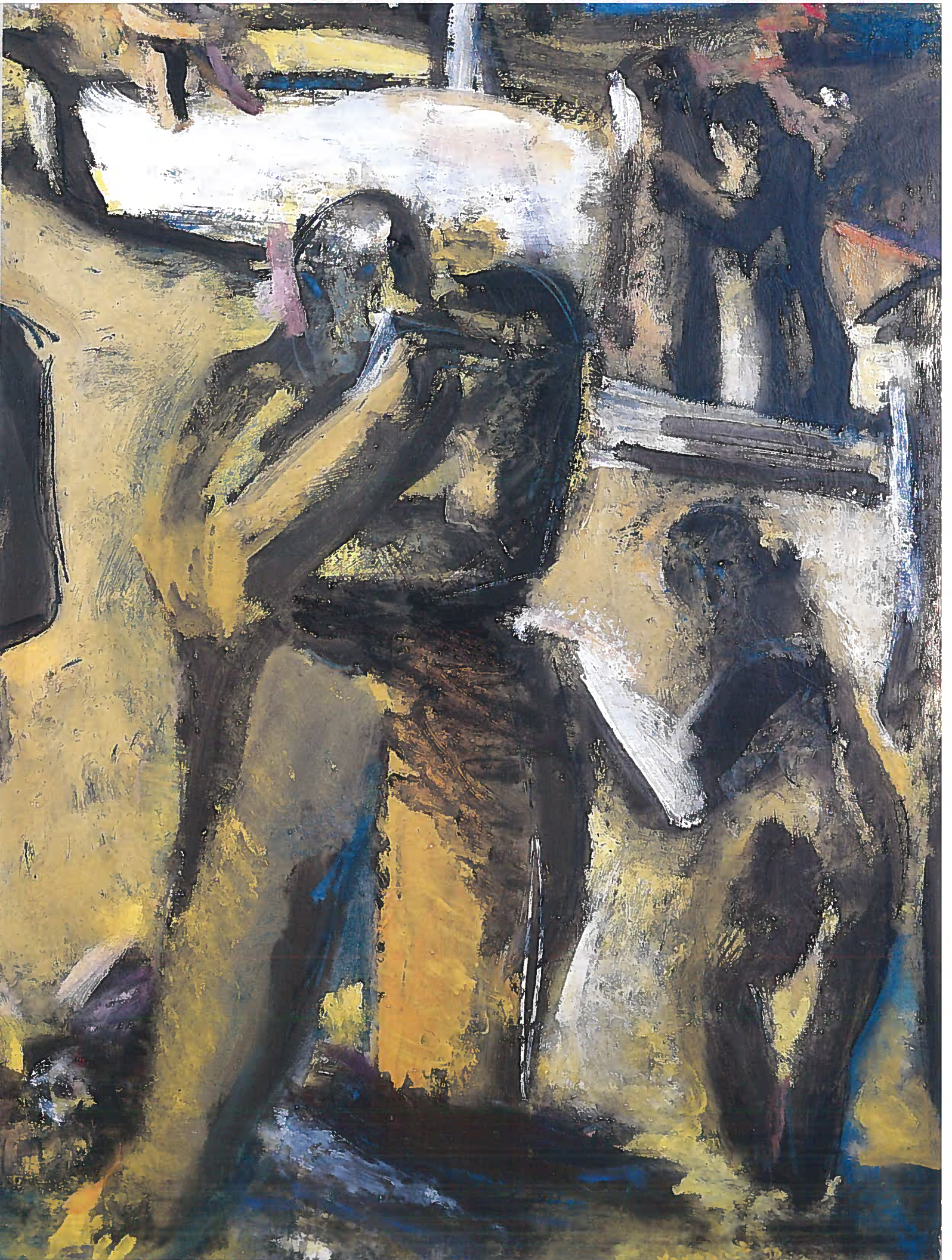
Louis Finkelstein

The dialogue between drawing and color is sustained, for example, by Younghee Choi Martin, one of the few artists painting complex figure compositions. She simplifies the figures in terms of rhythm and shape so that they interlock with the background into a massive play of forms on the surface and in depth.

—An excerpt from “Two Generations of New York Women Painters”

© Louis Finkelstein 2000





XLIV
Ganga — detail
1999
36" x 42"

XLV
By the Water
1997
31" x 31"

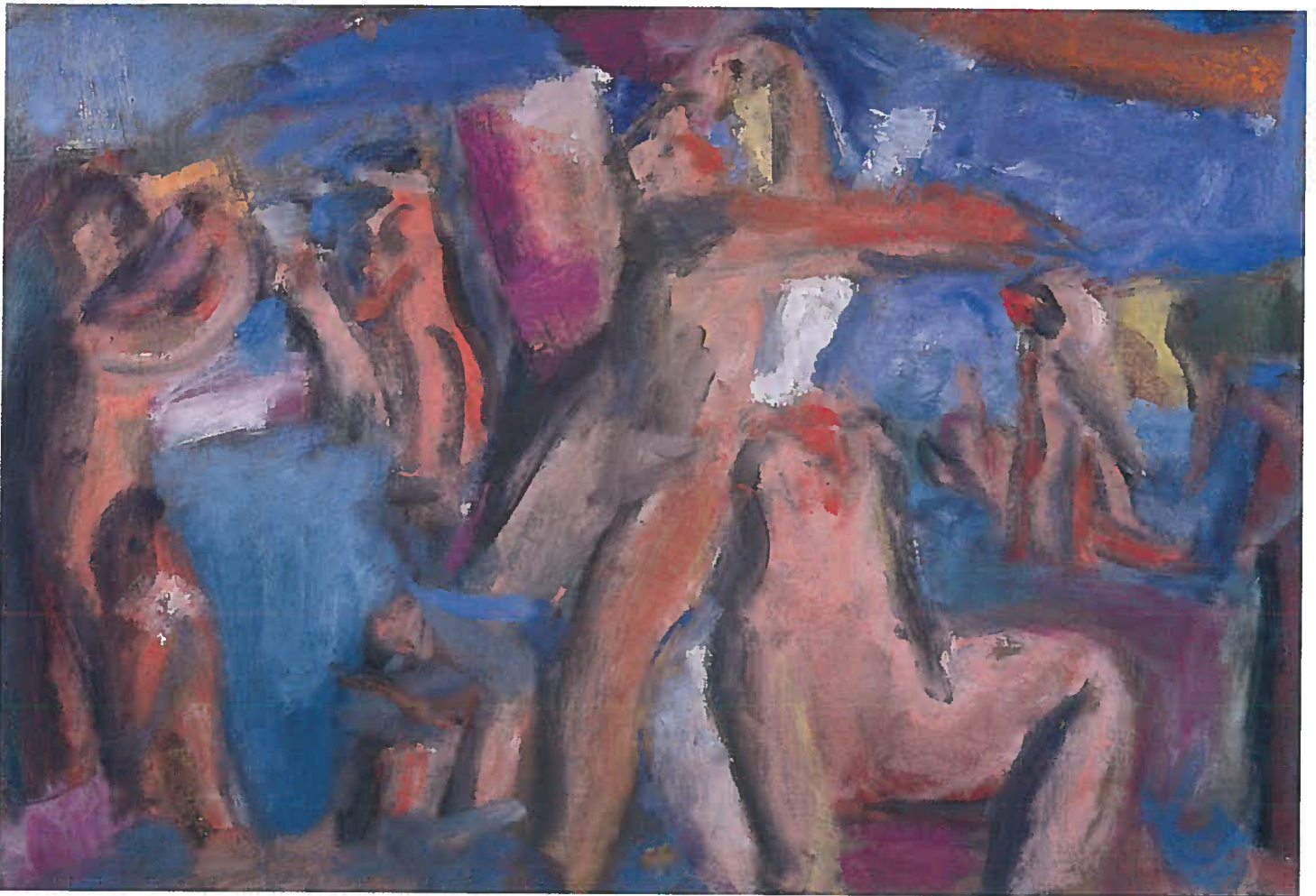


XLVI

Faint Moonlight

1998

22" x 35"



XLVII

Thunder of Spring

1999

18" x 25"



XLVIII

Over Himavant

1997

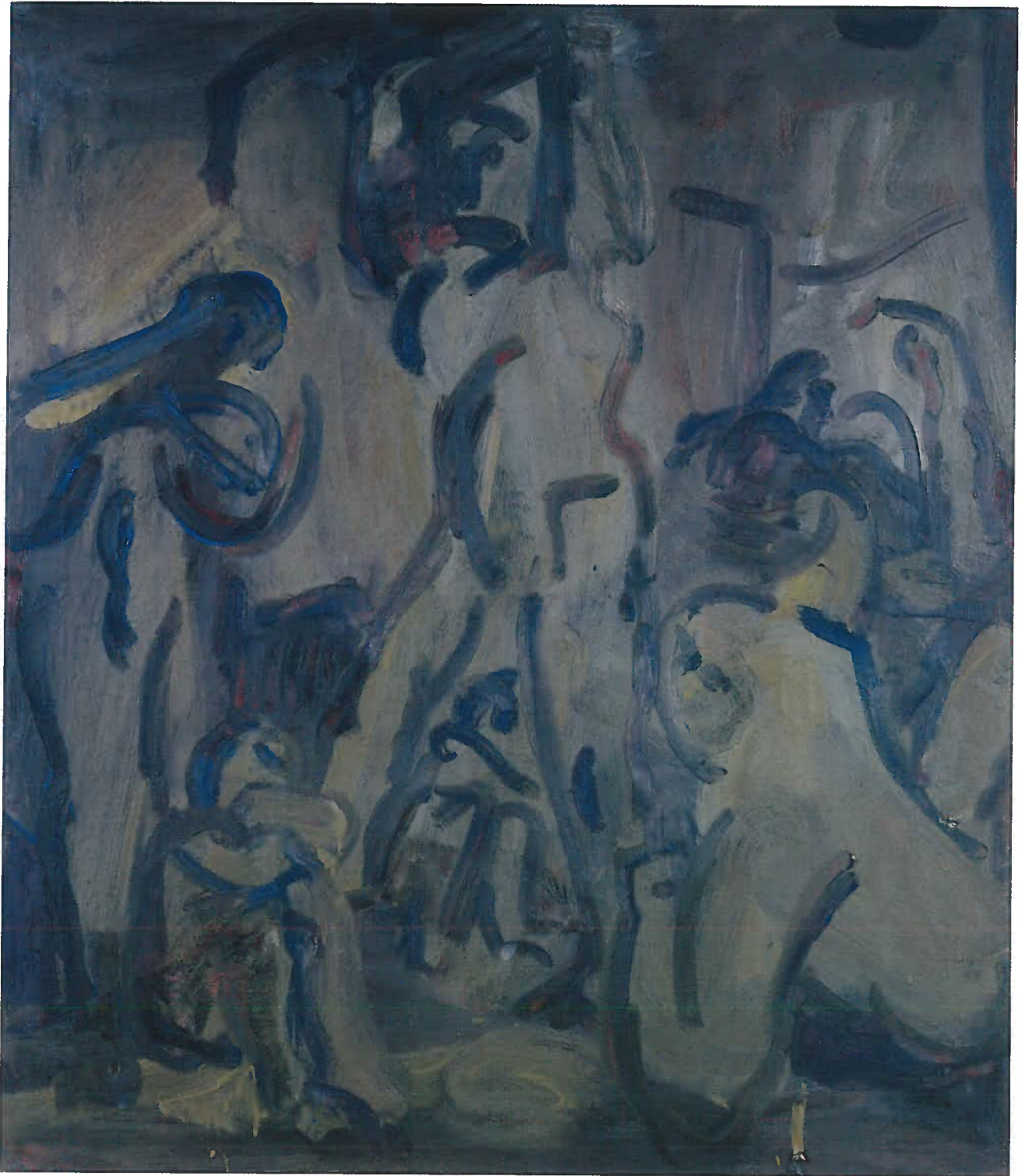
42" x 36"

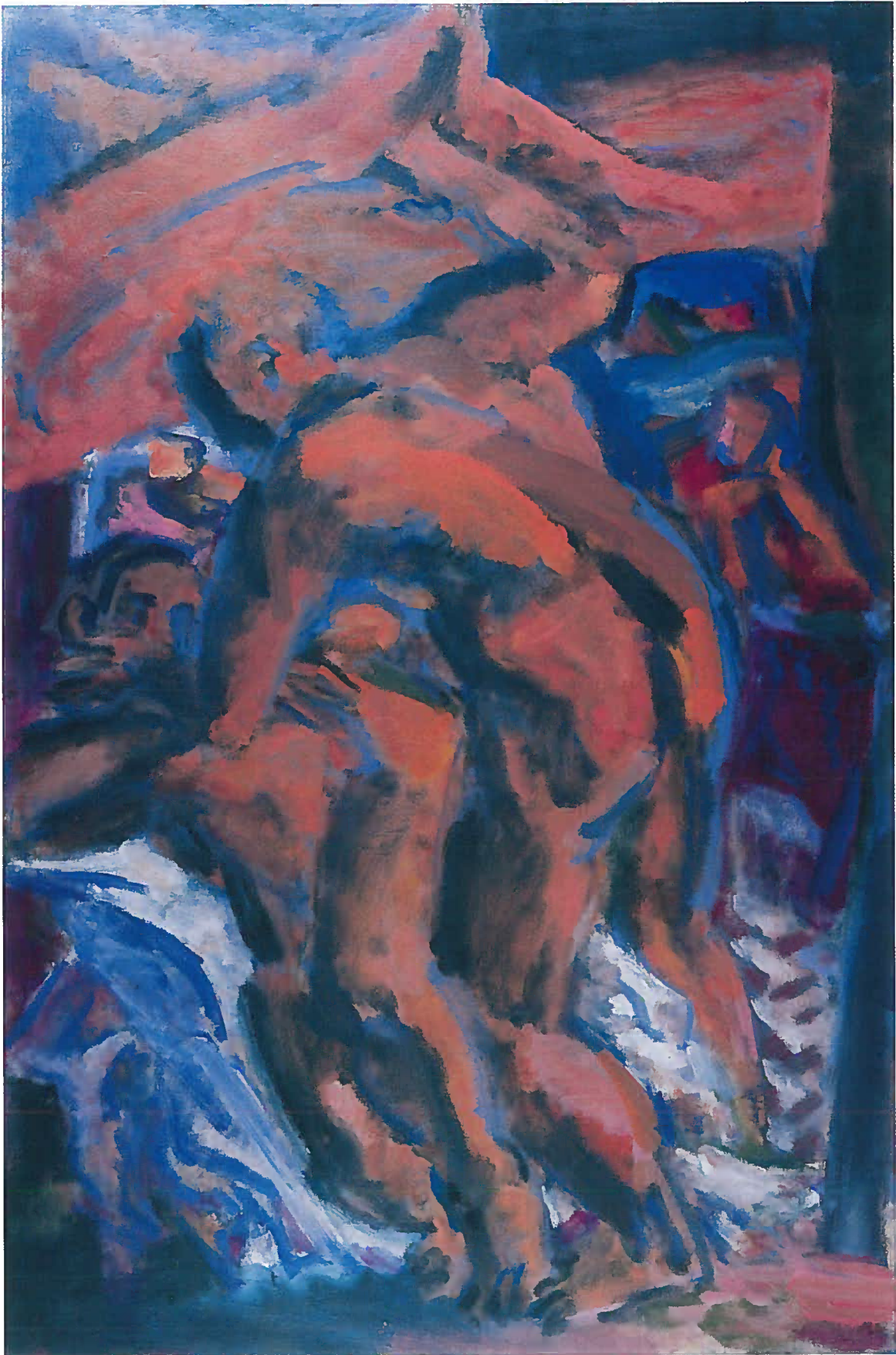
XLIX

Philomel

1995

79" x 52"





L
Phlebas
1995
36" x 30"



LI
Fragments
1994
Monotype
18" x 18"



ARTIST RÉSUMÉ

EXHIBITIONS

Younghee Choi Martin was born in Seoul, Korea in 1954. She moved to Brooklyn, NY in 1971 and became a naturalized citizen in 1978. She lives and paints in Chelsea, New York City.

Education

- 1977 Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI;
RISD, Rome, Italy; BFA in Painting
- 1976 Yale Summer School of Music and Art, Norfolk, CT
- 1975 Provincetown Artists Colony, Provincetown, MA
- 1972 Brooklyn Museum Art School, Brooklyn, NY

One Person Exhibitions

- 2004 Nabi Gallery, New York, NY
- 2002 Maurice Arlos Fine Art, New York, NY
Horikawa Gallery, Kobe, Japan
- 2001 Miss Porter's School, Farmington, CT
- 2000 Miss Porter's School, Farmington, CT
- 1999 Cedar Crest College, Allentown, PA
- 1998 Simon Gallery, Morristown, NJ
Wheeler Gallery, Providence, RI
- 1997 Mesa Public Library, Los Alamos, NM
- 1995 Jeong Song Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Jeong Song Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 1994 Barnard-Biderman Fine Art, New York, NY
Jeong Song Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Space Gam Mee Ok, New York, NY
- 1992 Barnard-Biderman Fine Art, New York, NY
- 1986 Haas Gallery, Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, PA
Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, VA
- 1983 College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA

Group Exhibitions

- 2004 National Academy Museum, New York, NY
- 2002 Kyoto City Museum, Kyoto, Japan
Maurice Arlos Fine Art, New York, NY
- 2002 The Affordable Art Fair, New York, NY
- 2001 Biennale Internazionale, Florence, Italy
Nabi Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY
College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA
- 2000 Musée d'Art Modern de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France
Nabi Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY

Group Exhibitions, continued

- 2000 Haverford College, Haverford, PA
Elsa Mott Ives Gallery, YWCA, New York, NY
- 1999 Nabi Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY
Kyoto City Museum, Kyoto, Japan
LewAllen Contemporary, Santa Fe, NM
- 1998 National Academy Museum, New York, NY
- 1998 Simon Gallery, Morristown, NJ
- 1998 Drew University, Madison, NJ
- 1997 The Painting Center, New York, NY
Elsa Mott Ives Gallery, YWCA, New York, NY
PSA Art Showcase IX, New York, NY
- 1996 Microsoft Corporate Campus, Redmond, WA
Smith College, Northampton, MA
- 1995 PSA Art Showcase V, New York, NY
- 1995 The Painting Center, New York, NY
Boston Symphony Hall, Pepper Gallery, Boston, MA
- 1994 Cheekwood Museum, Nashville, TN
New England School of Art and Design, Boston, MA
Ute Stebich Gallery, Lenox, MA
PSA Art Showcase III, New York, NY
Han Ga Ram Museum, Seoul Art Center, Seoul, Korea
- 1993 PSA Art Showcase I, New York, NY
Sotheby's, New York, NY
Chicago Art Fair, Chicago, IL
Miami WIZO Art, Miami, FL
- 1991 Cie Moderne & Contemporaine, Paris, France
- 1988 Ten Worlds Gallery, New York, NY
- 1987 Tradition 3 Thousand, New York, NY
- 1985 The University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK
- 1982 Green Space, New York, NY
- 1981 Munson-Proctor Art Center, Utica, NY
Bard College, Annandale, NY
Silvermine Guild Gallery, New Canaan, CT

Gallery Affiliations

- Nabi Gallery, New York, NY
- Jeong Song Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- Gallery Horikawa, Kobe, Japan

COLLECTIONS

Private Collections

Los Angeles, Altadena, Oakland, CA; Chicago, IL; Springfield, Lenox, MA; Minneapolis, MN; Morristown, NJ; New York City and throughout New York State; Providence, RI; Rome, Florence, Italy; Kyoto, Osaka, Japan; Seoul, Korea.

Corporate and Public Collections

The Bond Market Association, New York, NY
The Carpenter Design Group, New York, NY
Jeong Song Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Korean International Merchant Bank, Seoul, Korea
The Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY
Nabi Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY
Scott Memorial Collection, Bryn Mawr College, PA
Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea

Lectures, Visiting Artist and Residencies

- 2001 Miss Porter's School, Farmington, CT
- 2000 Haverford College, Haverford, PA
Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT
- 1999 Cedar Crest College, Allentown, PA
Kyoto International House, Kyoto, Japan
- 1998 Dorland Mountain Arts Colony, Temecula, CA
- 1996 Dorland Mountain Arts Colony, Temecula, CA
- 1987 SUNY, Center for Music and Arts, Plattsburgh, NY
- 1986 Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, VA
Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, PA
- 1985 University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK

Awards

- 1983 National Endowment for the Arts, Fellowship
- 1981 CAPS of New York, Painting Fellowship

Other

- 2001 Art consultant for permanent collection, The Bond Market Association, New York, NY
Co-curator for The Art Showcase, The Bond Market Association; 1993 to 2000
RISD Honorary Degree Committee member; 1997, 1998

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Selected Bibliography

- 2004 Silverstein, Joel; Book Essay, Nabi Press, New York, NY
- 2002 Hrbacek, Mary; The New York Art World, May Yamamoto; Kobe Shin Bun, Kobe, Japan, 5/2/2002
The William & Mary Review: Vol. 40, Williamsburg, VA
- 2000 Ernst, Eric; South Hampton Press, South Hampton, NY, 5/25/2000
Finkelstein, Louis; Haverford College, PA,
- 1999 The East Hampton Star; East Hampton, 11/4/99
Express Times; Easton, PA, 1/22/99; 2/5/99
Hearthstone Town & Country; Pennsburg, PA, 1/21/99
Intelligencer Record; Toylestown, PA, 1/22/99
Pocono Record; Stroudsburg, PA, 1/29/99
- 1998 Flora Magazine; St. Louis, MI, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4, No. 5
RISD Views; Providence, RI, Summer Issue
The New Jersey Ledger; Morristown, NJ, 3/10
- 1997 Sawin, Martica; Catalogue Essay, Los Alamos, NM
Los Alamos Monitor, Los Alamos, NM, 8/13/97
Sutter, W. Noel; Exhibition Essay, PSA, New York, NY
- 1995 Leher, Brian; "The Korean Americans,"
Introduction by Senator Moynihan;
Chelsea House Press, New York, Philadelphia
Lee, Gu Yeol; Essay, Jeong Song Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Kuh, No Ryo; Creative Home Living Magazine,
Seoul, Korea, February Issue
The Arts Monthly, Seoul, Korea, September Issue
- 1994 Bergmann, Meredith; The New York Review of Art, Dec.
Shaw, Leslie Eva; Cover Magazine, New York, NY, Sept.
Parks, Addison; Gallery 28, Boston, MA
Zimmer, William; Biderman Fine Art, New York, NY
Schwendenwien, Jude; Jeong Song Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 1993 The Korea Central Daily; 4/8, New York, NY
- 1992 North Coast News; Mendocino, CA, 9/3/92
Heo, Suna; Korea Times Sunday Magazine, New York,
NY, 9/19/92
- 1982 Eder, Bruce; Arts Weekly, New York, NY, 12/8/82

abstract — Emphasizes a remoteness between the subject and the artist's visual interpretation, i.e. art in which realistic portrayal is not the primary concern. Instead, the artist presents an interpretation by simplification, alteration, or distortion.

academism — Describes an over-emphasis on theory, formula, and canon; suggests a dry—not passionate—approach.

Aeneid (29-19 B.C.) — Epic poem by Virgil, written in Latin and cast in dactylic hexameter. It weaves Greek mythic tradition with Roman history. Like the *Odyssey*, it is the story of a great journey, however, unlike Odysseus who battles to re-establish himself as the rightful king, Aeneas battles to secure his future home—the new nation of Rome.

Bacchus and Ariadne (1520-23) — Oil painting by Titian in the National Gallery, London, England. Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos, eloped with the Athenian hero Theseus after he killed the Minotaur, but Theseus abandoned her on the island of Naxos. As she laments, she sees Bacchus (the God of wine) approaching. Later, she goes mad, but her crown is placed in the sky as the Corona Borealis. There is a full size copy of this painting by Poussin in Accademia di San Lucca in Rome, Italy.

Bathers, The (1898-1905) — Oil paintings by Cézanne, Barnes Collection, Marion, PA; Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; National Gallery, London, England. These three monumental, idyllic scenes are the climax of Cézanne's life-long interest in people bathing. They are so innovative and fresh that they cannot be termed neo-classical.

Bradford, John (1949-) — Born in Wilmington, DE. He received a B.F.A. from Cooper Union, New York, NY, and an M.F.A. from Yale University, New Haven, CT. A Soho-based painter who works in monumental scale, integrating the Modernist vocabulary with biblical narratives. He is a member of 55 Mercer and was a founding member of the Bowery Gallery, as well as a Director of the Figurative Alliance. He exhibits and lectures around New York.

Carone, Nicolas (1917-) — Born in New York City, NY. After returning from service in World War II, he attended the Hans Hofmann School. Part of the younger generation of Abstract Expressionists, he was active in artistic dialogues with Pollack, de Kooning, Matta, Guston and Rothko. His expressive vocabulary is both abstract and figurative, and includes his own inventions. His work is in numerous museum collections including the Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Museum, New York City, NY, and the Museum of Art, St. Louis, MO. He is a founding member of the New York Studio School and the International Art School in Italy.

Cézanne, Paul (1839-1906) — Born in Aix-en-Provence. An outstanding post-Impressionist forerunner of modern painting whose work continues to inspire and influence painters to this day. He went to Paris to study art and had brief encounters with the

Impressionists. Later, he retired to Aix to paint outdoors and developed a highly personal style that is deceptive in its apparent simplicity. (see Bathers, Cubism)

calligraphic — Refers to brush strokes developed by Chinese, Koreans and Japanese in writing poetry. The Abstract Expressionists adopted calligraphic marks.

Chen, Jacy (1966 -) — Born in Taichung, Taiwan — Received a B.A. from the National Taiwan Normal University, and an M.Ed. and Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK. In 1994 she joined 66 Communications, Inc., an advertising agency specializing in cross cultural marketing, and became the Account Executive for international clients and corporations. In 1997 she co-founded 123soho.com, a website which features artists, art collections, cultural institutions and international museums. Dr. Chen is the author and designer of the interactive foreign language computer program titled "Learning Chinese is Fun."

Classical — Refers to art which endures through several generations and adheres to traditional values, such as simplicity, balance, order, proportion and restraint; also describes the art of ancient Greece and Rome.

composition — Various concepts (unity, contrast, etc.), pictorial elements (line, color, shapes, textures, etc.) and even smaller details (brushstrokes, drip marks, etc.) are combined for the singular purpose of achieving an effective artistic goal, which is the "composition."

Cubism — An intense exploration of spatial concepts by Picasso and Braque in Paris about 1907. They were deeply affected by Cézanne's late paintings. At first, they presented multiple aspects of the subject simultaneously with a series of broken lines, planes and dabs. This style is known as Analytic Cubism. By 1912 there was a shift toward flatness, and a balance between foreground and background, known as Synthetic Cubism.

de Kooning, Willem (1904-1997) — Born in Rotterdam, Holland. He arrived in New York in 1918 and became the central figure of the Abstract Expressionists. His painting series *Women* and *Merritt Parkway* (examples at Whitney Museum of American Art) are charged with vivid colors and violent brush marks. Although his paintings appear to be abstract, they are linked to tradition, often retaining the human figure, the landscape, or even paintings of the Old Masters as subjects. (see the New York School, slipping glimser)

Dido — The Queen of Carthage who falls in love with Aeneas. Aeneas abandoned her in order to continue his primary mission, the founding of Rome. In anguish, she stabs herself and burns on a funeral pile. Later, when Aeneas visits her in the underworld, she refuses to acknowledge him.

Eliot, Thomas Stearns (1888-1965) — Born in St. Louis, MO. He moved to London, became a British citizen, and converted to the

Anglican Church. In *The Waste Land* and *The Four Quartets* he achieved an apparent resonance of continuing interpretation, making them among the most influential poetry of the 20th century.

figure and ground — A relationship within the pictorial dimension. The “figure” is the positive volume (the object), and the “ground” is the negative space (the airy space around the object).

Finkelstein, Louis (1923-2000) — Born in New York City. A painter of remarkable versatility, also known as a theoretician. He pursued diverse genres including brightly colored landscapes and fantastic amalgamations of unrelated objects in extreme vertical space. For over a decade he was Chairman of the Art Department of Queens College, New York, and as a teacher, he influenced a generation of younger painters to pursue the tradition of outdoor painting.

frieze — A strip around the top of a room, column or building (between the lower architrave and the higher cornice) that is ornamented with painting, design, or bas-relief.

Gauguin, Paul (1848-1903) — French Painter. He gave up his job as a Paris stockbroker and left his family to pursue painting, which took him in search of a simpler life, in Brittany and then to Tahiti. He developed a style that involved an intensification of color and a simplification of form. Also well known was his problematic friendship with Vincent Van Gogh, the termination of which led to Van Gogh’s tragic self-mutilation.

Greenberg, Clement (1909 - 1994) — American art critic who promoted Jackson Pollock and the Abstract Expressionist movement.

Greenbergian formalism — The prediction that Modernist art was moving toward a greater emphasis on the flatness of the picture plane.

haptic — Relating to the sense of touch.

hermeneutic — Pertaining to the methodological principals of interpretation.

Heft, Carol (1954 -) — Born in Philadelphia, PA. An abstract painter in the modernist tradition whose work reveals a dramatic tension between the surface and the image. Drawing is an integral part of her vocabulary through which she often creates space of openness and transparency. She received a B.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, and an M.S. Ed. from Hunter College, New York City. Currently, she is an adjunct professor at Mullenberg and Cedar Crest colleges, Allentown, PA.

History of Art, the — Primitive man drew pictures to communicate. For thousands of years, the Egyptians and Chinese recorded information through images. The Greeks delighted in life-like art, and the Romans copied it—this influence spread east, through India, China and even Japan. Painting in the Middle Ages told the story of suffering and salvation. The painters of the Renaissance asked, “what do we see?” The shadow they cast last-

ed centuries, until the Impressionists asked, “what do we think we see?” The answer was unclear, and the painters of the 20th century began to understand that seeing, itself, is interpretive, and introspective—and the act of recording it, more so.

Joyce, James (1882-1941) — Irish novelist. His rich Modernist masterpiece is *Ulysses* in which Homer’s epic *Odyssey* is transported to a single day in Dublin, Ireland, during the Pentecost.

Lavinia — The daughter of Latinus and Amata, she is promised to Turnus, but is destined to marry Aeneas.

Les Femmes d’Alger (O.J.) (1907) — Oil painting by Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, NY. A breakthrough painting of monumental impact showing the influence of African masks. Are they prostitutes, or goddesses?

Miraculous Draft of Fishes, The (1514-15) — Cartoon drawing for a tapestry by Raphael in the National Gallery, London, England.

Martin, Robert (1952-) — Born in Hagerstown, MD, husband of Younghee Choi Martin. He attended Peabody Conservatory and won several national awards for music composition before coming to New York in 1976. His struggles as a composer lead him to seek employment on Wall Street where he retired as a Senior Vice President in Investment Banking in 1994. His music is published by the Theodore Presser Co., King of Prussia, PA.

Martin, Younghee Choi (1954-) — Born in Seoul, Korea. Her parents suffered the Japanese occupation, and later escaped from North Korea, but the family was again displaced by the Korean conflict, and finally came to New York in 1971. Younghee attended several art schools in New England and finally in Rome.

Returning to New York in 1977, she set up her painting studio in the Chelsea and turned her professional attention to Madison Avenue, rising to Art Director at a major magazine. In 1990 she retired to paint full-time. (see included résumé)

Matisse, Henri (1869-1954) — Known as the master of color in the 20th century, he developed a style of color purity and flat shapes. He was an early Fauvist with Braque, Derain, and Marquet. He was also influenced by his two trips to Morocco. Picasso regarded him as his only rival.

Modernism, modern, modernity — Refers to the major trend in art toward abstraction that occurred from the beginning of the 20th century. This movement greatly expanded the vocabulary of concepts, approaches and techniques available to artists.

narrative — The story that a painting tells, for example, the religious story of the martyrdom of a Saint, or the mythological story of the deed of an ancient hero.

Neo Classicism, neo-classical — An attempt to revive the universal characteristics of the art of ancient Rome and Greece, for example, by the French Academy of the late 18th century (David, Ingres, etc.).

- New York School** (also known as the Abstract Expressionists) — In the early 20th century, New York received an influx of artists from Europe, including Gorky, de Kooning, Hoffman, Beckmann, Mondrian, Andre Masson, Duchamp and Ernst. Americans joined, including Pollack, Kline and Rothko. They greatly expanded the visual vocabulary with their developments in abstraction.
- Odyssey** (c. 750 B.C.) — Epic poem by Homer, written in dactylic hexameter. It relates the tale of Odysseus' home bound adventures. Along the way, he meets a race of one-eyed giants, a group of sea-dwelling seductresses, a dead prophet, a sorceress, a man-eating monster, a ship-eating whirlpool, an affectionate nymph, and a bag of wind. Upon returning to Ithaca, he must battle to re-establish order in his own house which deteriorated as a result of his 20 year absence. Nowadays, any long journey with many changes of fortune is called an odyssey.
- Old Masters** — The group of painters who have earned an unquestioned place of esteem in the history of art, for example: Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo, Titian, Dürer, Rembrandt, Giotto, Rubens, Caravaggio, Velázquez, Masaccio, El Greco, Tintoretto, Van Eyck, Poussin, et al.
- picture plane** — The surface of the canvas defines the picture plane. However, this term emphasizes this reference for better understanding implied spatial relationships within the painting. Following Greenberg's prediction, many painters (from the 60's on) attempted more flatness. (see Greenbergian Formalism)
- plasticity** — Manipulation of two-dimensional surface to represent three-dimensionality.
- post-modernism** — Art and culture from an indeterminant period beginning around 1975. It is typified by a revival of historical styles, post-structuralist theory and the break with both High-Modernism and formalism.
- post-modern** — Modernism, once revolutionary, became better understood and accepted by the 1960's, when younger artists rebelled, especially against its intensity and intellectual challenges. Post-modernism loosely denotes anything that comes after Modernism, including Minimalism, conceptual art (where the artist is freed from presenting his work in final form) and installation works (constructed at a certain site for a specific duration). Also present is the concept of deconstruction—initially used to disassemble the components of Modernism—but later to further political ends. (see Modernism)
- Poussin, Nicolas** (1594-1665) — French painter. He spent most of his time in Rome creating narrative paintings based on Old Testament subjects and Roman history. He developed a rational spatial concept involving the placement of complex multiple figure groups in the setting of ancient ruins. Later, the French Academy attempted to codify his work.
- Raphael** (Raffaello Sanzio), (1483-1520) — Italian painter. More than anyone, his style came to define High Renaissance painting. He painted a series of magnificent frescoes in the rooms of the Vatican.
- representational** — Close inspections reveal that artists take great liberties in portraying their subjects. "Representational" emphasizes the closeness between the subject and the artist's visual portrayal. (see abstract)
- rhythm** — The repetition of a design element, especially in a recurring pattern, creates "rhythm" within a composition.
- Schaffner, Val** (1951-) — Born in New York City. Author of *Algonquin Cat, Lost in Cyberspace: Essays and Far-Fetched Tales*, and most recently, *The Astronomer's House*. He is co-director, with his wife Min-Myn, of the Nabi Gallery in Chelsea.
- Silverstein, Joel** (1957-) — Born in New York City. He is an artist, critic, curator, and certified Art Therapist. He received an M.F.A. from Brooklyn College, an M.P.S. from the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY. He has written for Cover, Review, ArtCritical.com, Sculpture, Gallery Review, and also numerous exhibitions catalogue essays for galleries in Soho and Chelsea. He served as Panel Organizer and Moderator for Artists Talk on Art, and Guest Curator for the Yeshiva University Museum. His art is exhibited in the Painting Center and 55 Mercer and widely throughout the New York area.
- slipping glimpse** — From de Kooning's interview with David Sylvester, mentioned in reference to his *Women* paintings: "Content is a glimpse of something, an encounter like a flash." (from *Location*, vol. 1, Spring 1963)
- surface and depth** — A canvas is a two-dimensional surface, but the painting suggests a three-dimensional space. This either/or tension enriches the visual experience for the painter as well as the viewer.
- Surrealism** — An artistic movement that emphasized the subconscious and the artist's dreams as valid source material for artistic expression. See the permanent Collection at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.
- Titian** (Tiziano Vecellio), (c. 1488-1567) — The profound Venetian colorist of the 16th century. His work achieved the highest mastery of oil painting and mystery. See examples of his work at the Metropolitan Museum, New York City.
- transcendence** — Surpassing the limits of ordinary experience.
- Tristan and Isolde** — The legend of the epic love between the knight Tristan and the maiden Isolde, but tragically they perish. Composer Richard Wagner used the story for his revolutionary opera in which the metaphor of unconsummated love is powerfully projected with an underlying harmonic idiom that continuously delays resolution.
- Ulysses** (1914) — Novel by James Joyce. A Modernist masterpiece of immense scope that superimposes the 10-year epic journey of Ulysses over a day-long venture of characters in Dublin, Ireland.

LII

The Fire Sermon

1996

49" x 72"

"... from the proper height everything comes together: the thoughts of the philosopher, the works of the artist, and good deeds."
—*The Philosopher*, Nietzsche



GLOSSARY

It is replete with intellectual acrobatics.

Virgil (Pulius Vergilius Maro) (70–19 B.C.) — Author of the *Aeneid*, and the greatest Roman poet. He asked for the *Aeneid* to be burned at his death bed because it was incomplete.

Vorticism — An English offshoot of cubism and Italian futurism relating all art forms to machines. Bomberg and Lewis were the leaders.

Wagner, Richard (1813–1883) — A highly influential composer who achieved the consummation of 19th century German Romantic opera and whose innovative music and ideas about drama affected generations of composers and artists. He invented the “leitmotif,” a musical fragment associated with a character or a dramatic idea.

Waste Land, The (1922) — The great Modernist poem by T.S. Eliot about the breakup of culture, ending with humankind’s oldest known truth. The poem resonates with multiple perspectives and the continuous interplay of surface and depth. On the surface, characters are delineated, but meld when viewed from afar.

Foreground parallels reveal deeper ironies, while surface contrasts coalesce into deeper thematic parallels.

Warhol, Andy (1928–87) — The American Pop Artist, who brought commercial images and more flatness into museums in the 1960’s.

World Trade Center — The 1,350-foot-tall, 110-story twin towers that once dominated the skyline of lower Manhattan. They were destroyed on September 11, 2001.

Yang, Chin Chi (1956 -) — Born in Taipei, Taiwan, received a B.F.A. from the Parson School of Design, New York, NY and an M.S. from the Pratt Institute, New York, NY. In 1994 he founded 66 Communications, Inc., an advertising agency specializing in cross cultural marketing. In 1997 he co-founded 123soho.com, a website which features artists, art collections, cultural institutions and international museums. He is an accomplished photographer and artist, and his recent project titled *The Control of Fear*, which focuses on AIDS, SARS and 9/11, was featured in the November 2003 issue of *The Art Asian Pacific*.

Reading List

The Aeneid — Virgil

The Iliad — Homer

The Odyssey — Homer

The Divine Comedy — Dante

The Tempest — Shakespeare

The Waste Land, Four Quartets, Tradition and Individual Talent

— T. S. Eliot

Reading the Waste Land: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation

— Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley

Understanding Poetry — Cleanth Brook

Art and Illusion — E. H. Gombrich

Willem de Kooning — Thomas B. Hess

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Opera List

The Return of Ulysses — Claudio Monteverdi

Dido and Aeneas — Henry Purcell

Les Troyens — Hector Berlioz

Tristan and Isolde — Richard Wagner

Museum List

Accademia di San Lucca, Rome, Italy

Barns Collection, Marion, PA

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY

The Fine Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

National Gallery, London, England

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

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Disclaimer

Every effort has been made for accuracy. Any errors will be corrected at the earliest possible opportunity.

“To err is human; but to forgive, Divine.”

— *An Essay on Criticism*, Alexander Pope