



MADDOX

HOLDING UP  
HALF THE SKY

DAWN OKORO JESSALYN BROOKS MARINA HEINTZE



# HOLDING UP HALF THE SKY

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Maddox Gallery proudly presents 'Holding Up Half the Sky,' a group exhibition that reconsiders identity and personal agency from a female artist's point of view. Introducing works by Dawn Okoro, Jessalyn Brooks, and Marina Heintze, the exhibition examines what it means to have meaning and autonomy over the female form. Through figurative portraiture, how do these artists represent themselves and women in the world amidst conventional ideals of body politics, race, sexuality, and gender?

Dawn Okoro's vibrant paintings showcase individual Black women in confident poses taking up space, both figuratively and literally across the pictorial plane. Each of their personalities are unique and made visible by Okoro's striking composition and sensitive handling of the brush. Their bodies and gestures rendered in bold, lively strokes of acrylic and gold leaf are all their own and command attention; their singular presence to be accounted for, noticed, and celebrated.

The stylized figures that populate Jessalyn Brooks canvases, on the other hand, recontextualize the tradition of female nudes painted throughout Western art history. Brooks plays with the notion of the gaze and references classical motifs, such as the Three Graces which represent the epitome of female beauty and the white ermine which represents purity and fertility. By highlighting these tropes, she challenges the ideas that beauty, fertility, and purity are acceptable measurements of a woman's worth.

The contested female body is at the heart of Marina Heintze's mixed media collaged sculptures. Those of the "POLI-TICKS" series are comprised of stickers that celebrate American values – the stars and stripes of the flag, the "I voted" election badges, and the highly visible crosshair target decals. While, "Don't Tread on Me" uses labels that elicit warnings such as 'danger' and 'high voltage' in direct reference to reproductive rights. All created within the past year and before the recent overturning of Roe v. Wade, these works ring even more relevant today, prompting questions about who determines a woman's fate, her personal liberties, and the kind of life she is allowed to lead.

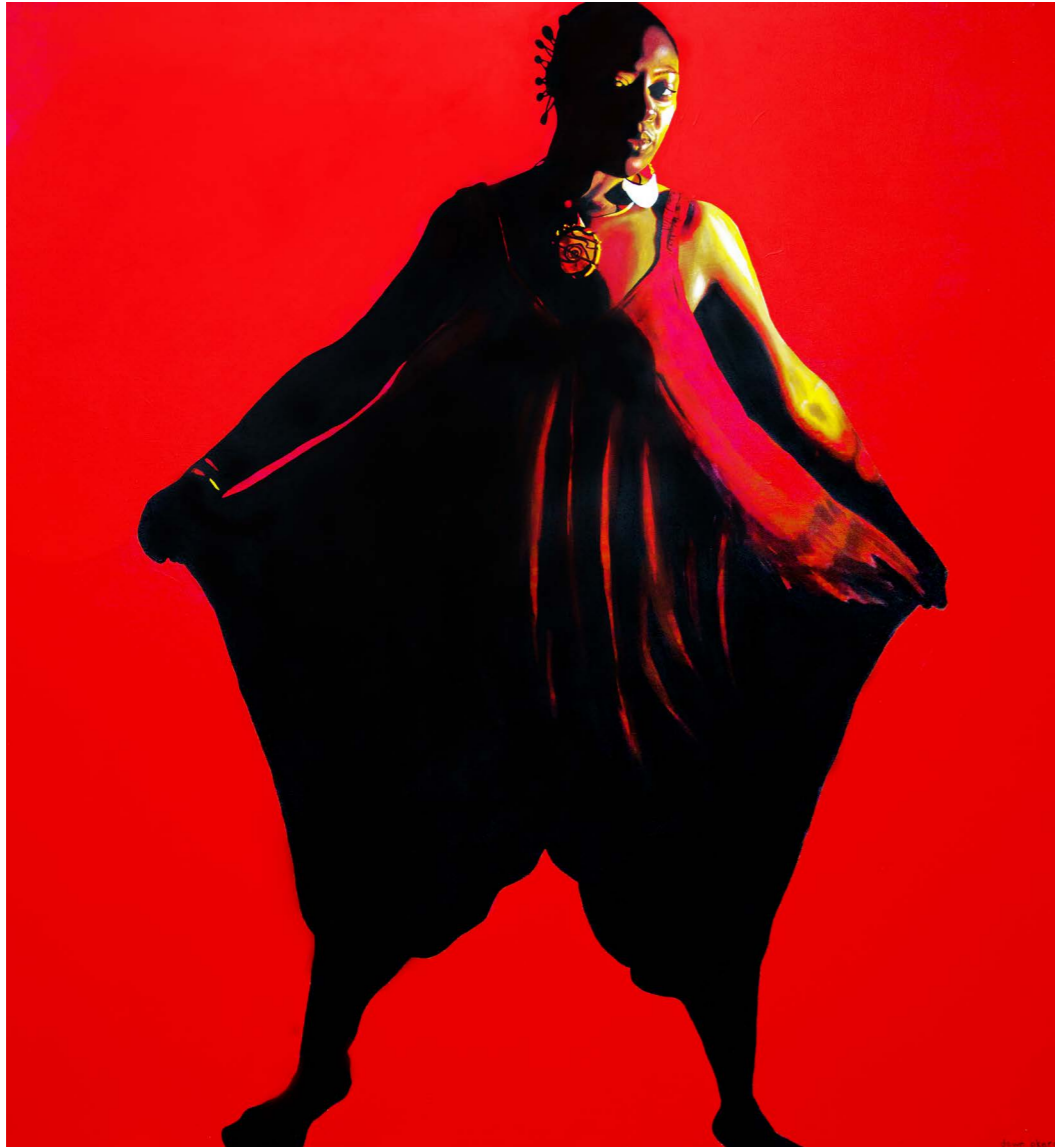
The three artists here reveal our shared contemporary experiences and inspire us to reconsider our beliefs about identity and self-determination. Their works serve as urgent calls for awareness, thoughtful dialogue, and effective action, all in the hopes of a more inclusive society.



# DAWN OKORO

Bold and vibrant, Dawn Okoro's work explores ideas of identity and self-reflexivity. Channelling her Nigerian heritage and a sense of displacement from her homeland, Okoro's work utilises colour, movement and texture to highlight the many facets behind the human persona. Painting conceptual portraiture and executed on a block colour background, Okoro's figures exist in a negative space which helps her to capture the spirit of the subject. Taken from magazines or her own photographs, the artist's command of composition and colour merge to create engaging imagery with vivid narratives. Influenced by fashion photography as well as punk culture, Okoro continues to experiment with fashion design and videography, in addition to her more typical painted style.





AYANA, 2018

DAWN OKORO

Acrylic on Canvas  
72 x 72 inches





## SPEAK, 2018

DAWN OKORO

Acrylic on Canvas  
72 x 72 inches



## LOOKING EAST, 2018

DAWN OKORO

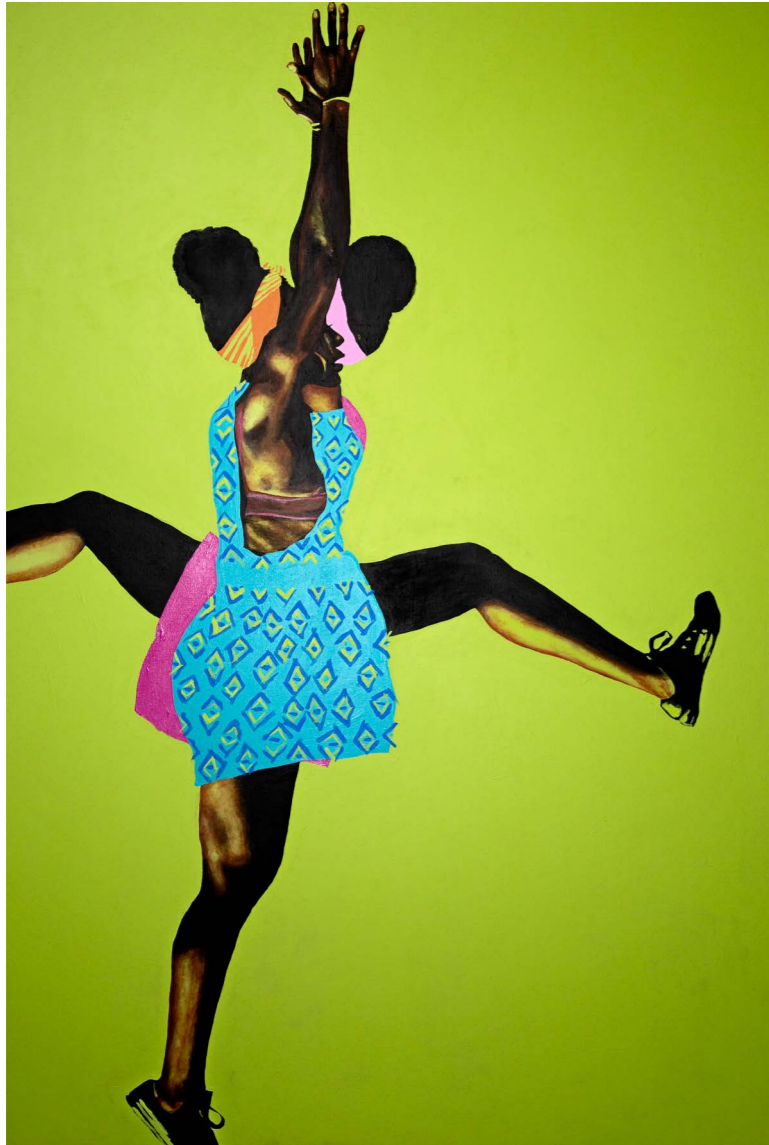
Acrylic and Copper Leaf on Canvas  
72 x 72 inches



## PAROXYSM, 2019

DAWN OKORO

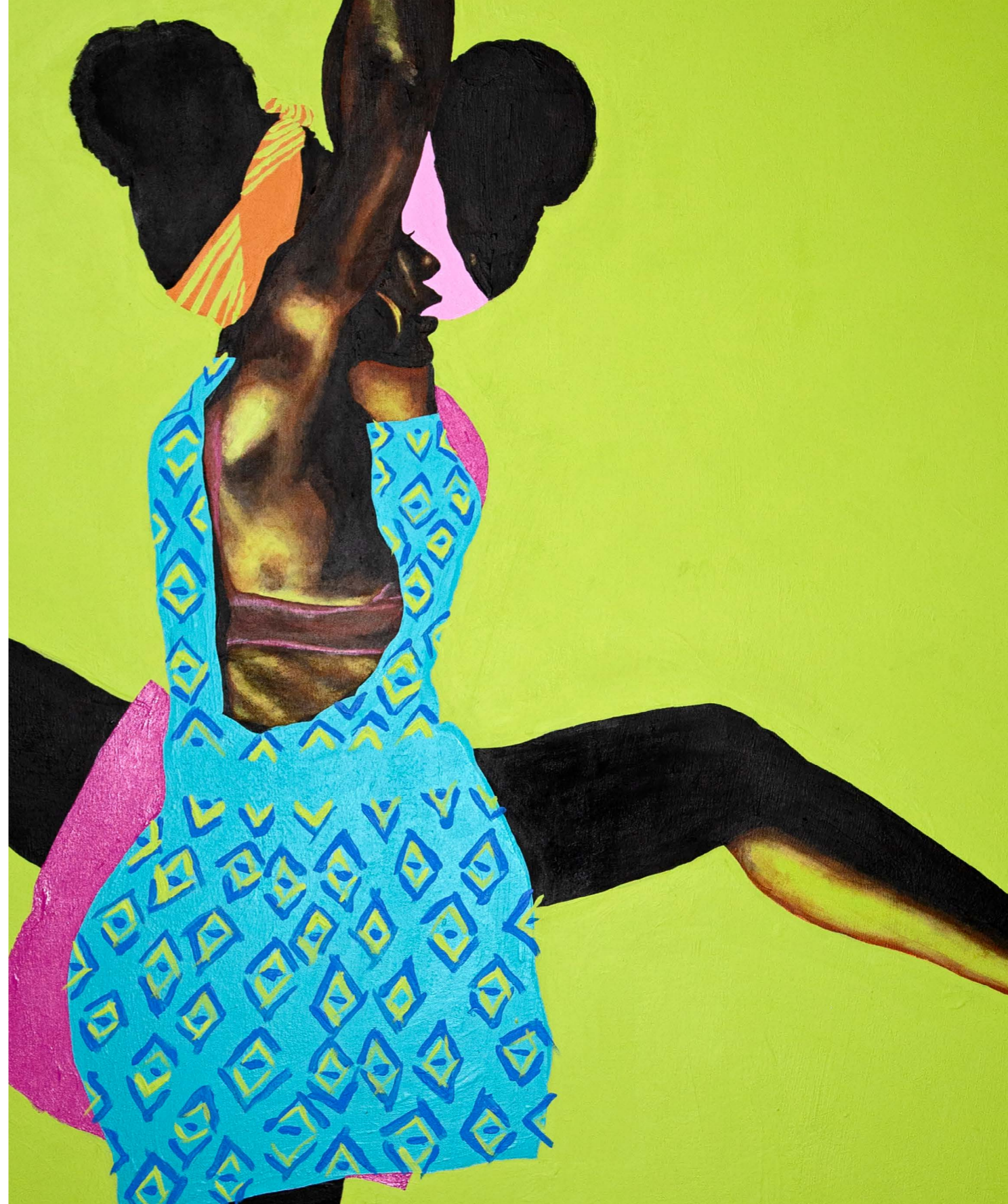
Acrylic and Gold Leaf on Canvas  
36 x 72 inches



## ANTITHESIS, 2021

DAWN OKORO

Acrylic on Canvas  
40 x 60 inches



# PRESSURE, 2021

DAWN OKORO

Acrylic on Canvas  
30 x 30 inches

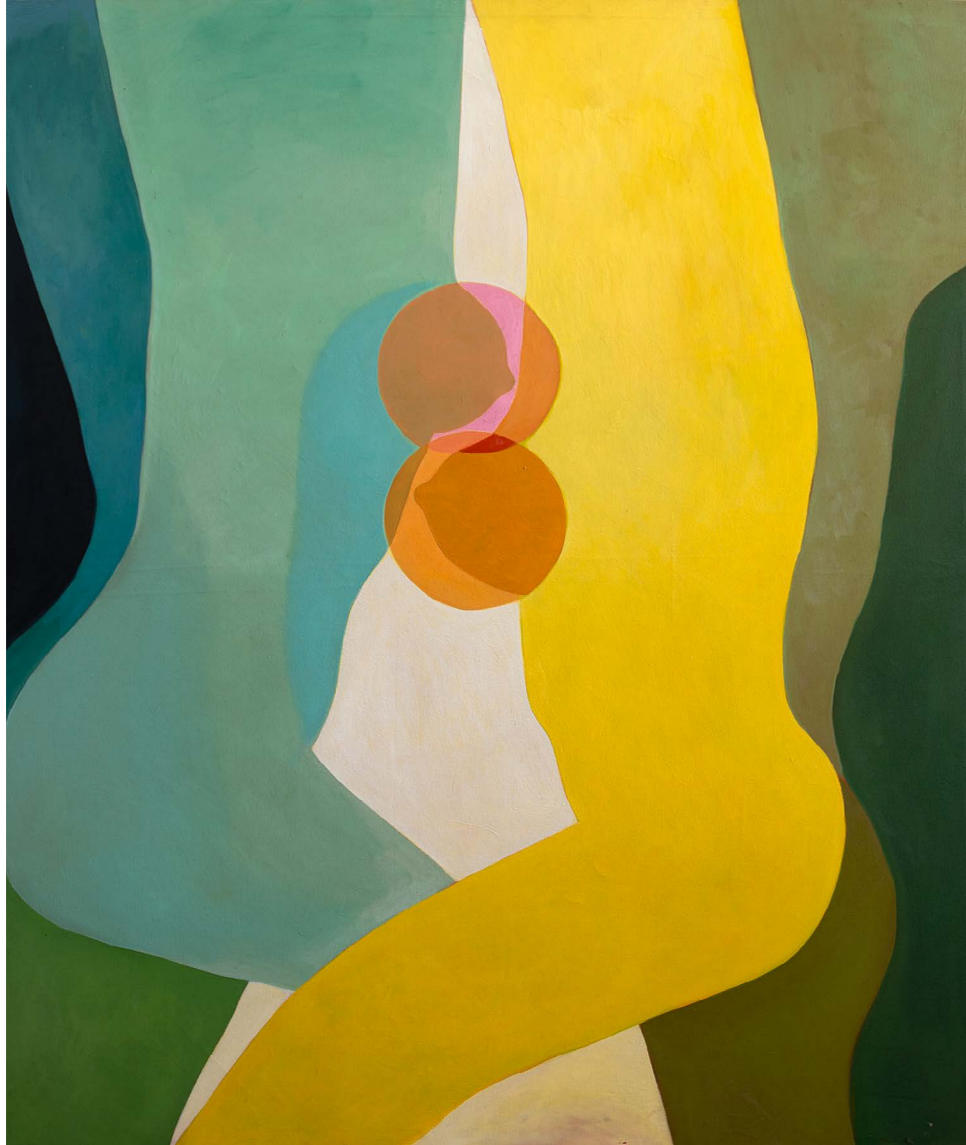




# JESSALYN BROOKS

Jessalyn Brooks is a Los Angeles painter whose female forms recall the abstract dynamism of Cubism through their geometric shapes and earth tone palette. Her interest in drawing and her assuredness of line carry throughout her oils on canvas, works on paper, and large-scale public murals. Informed by the romance of industry: machinery, shape, volume, and movement, Brooks' strong, angular nudes question our ideals of beauty, body shape, and gender. "The female form has lived and gone dormant in art so many times throughout art history", she notes in an interview. "I do believe women are having a moment right now. This is the most powerful we have been in human history. I want to document that."

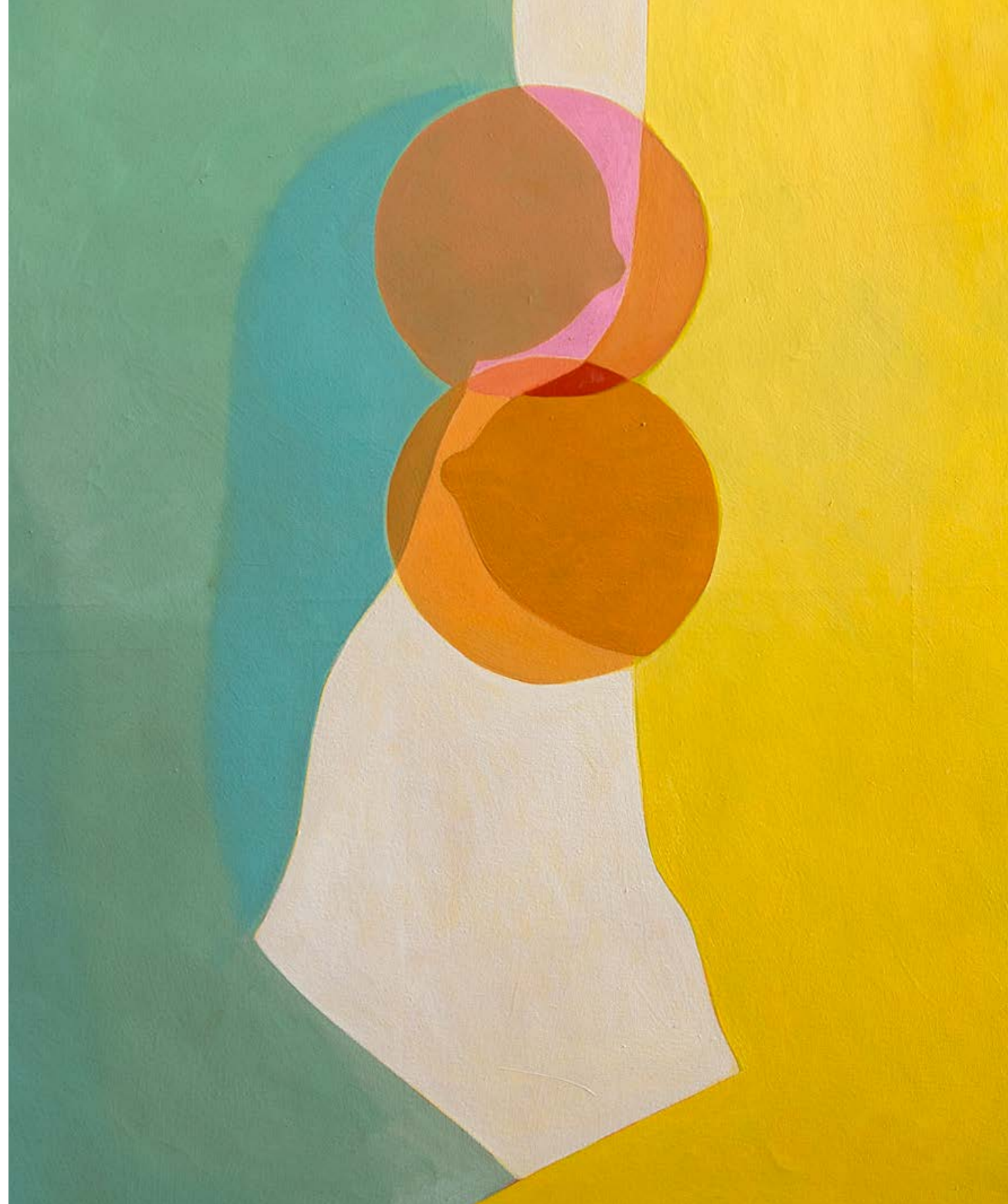




## A YEARNING FOR PARADISE, 2022

JESSALYN BROOKS

Oil on Canvas  
60 x 52 inches





CHESS, 2022  
JESSALYN BROOKS

Oil on Canvas  
65 x 55 inches



LADY WITH AN ERMINE, 2022  
JESSALYN BROOKS

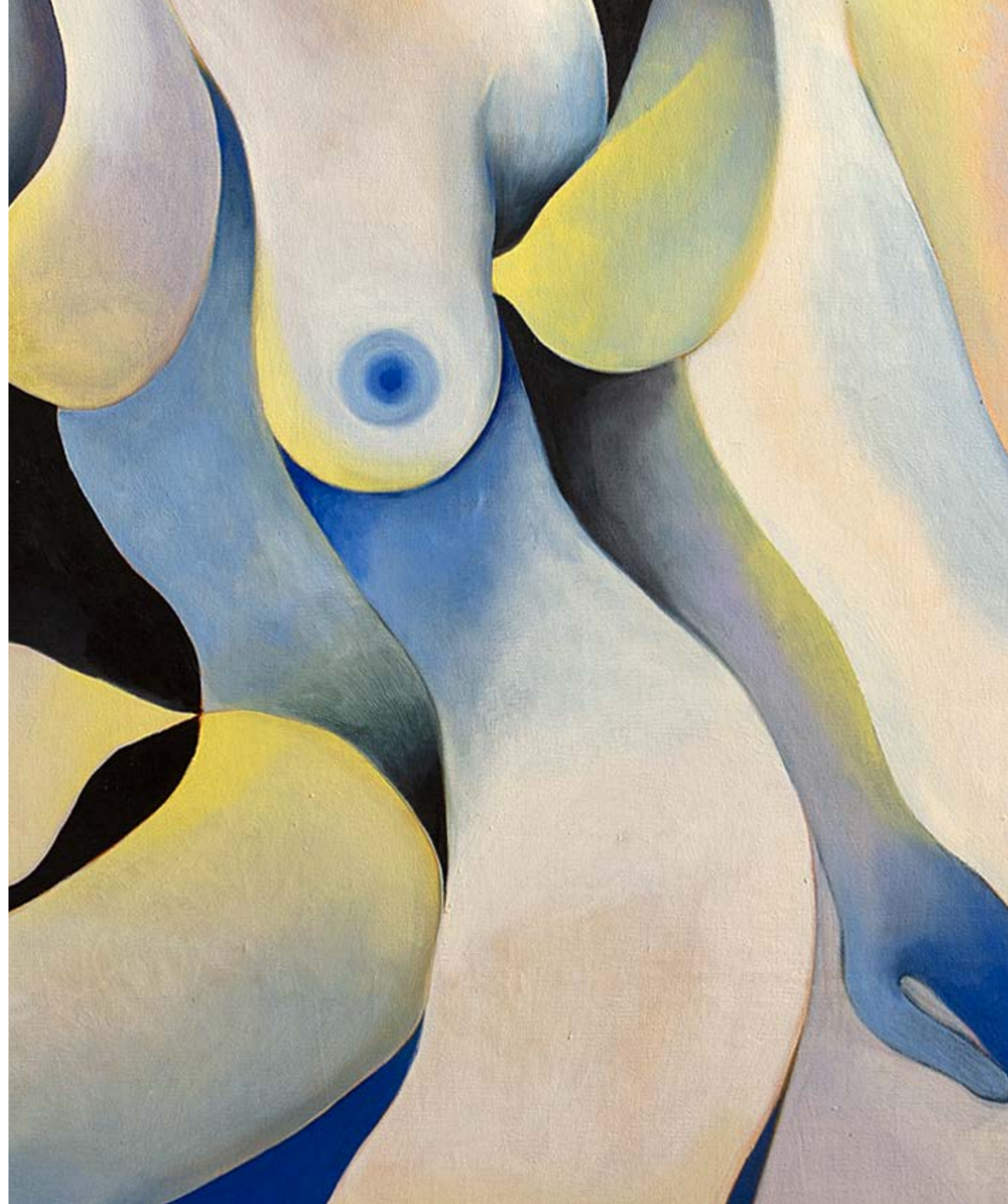
Oil on Canvas  
41 x 35 inches



## THE PASSING OF TIME, DREAMING OF BABYLON, 2022

JESSALYN BROOKS

Oil on Canvas  
53 x 51 inches



## THIRD PARTY, 2022

JESSALYN BROOKS

Oil on Canvas  
25 x 25 inches

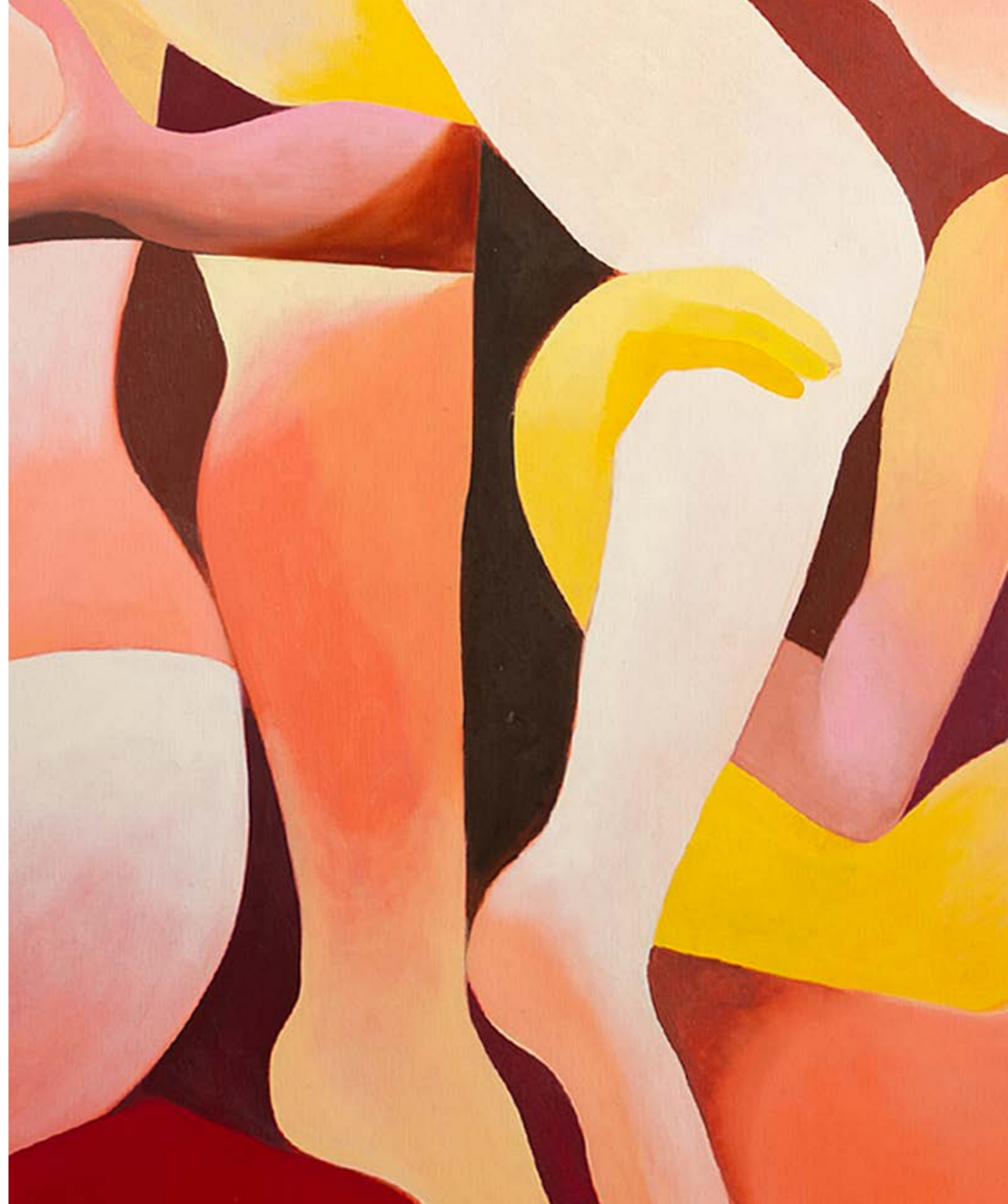




## EVEN HELL CAN BE BEAUTIFUL IN THE RIGHT LIGHT, 2022

JESSALYN BROOKS

Oil on Canvas  
55 x 63 inches







# OF THE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT YOU GET OUT OF LIFE, THERE ARE FOUR. (ONE), 2022

JESSALYN BROOKS

Work on paper  
Unframed: 15 x 11 inches  
Framed: 20 x 16 inches



# OF THE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT YOU GET OUT OF LIFE, THERE ARE FOUR. (TWO), 2022

JESSALYN BROOKS

Work on paper  
Unframed: 15 x 11 inches  
Framed: 20 x 16 inches



OF THE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT YOU GET OUT OF  
LIFE, THERE ARE FOUR. (THREE), 2022

JESSALYN BROOKS

Work on paper  
Unframed: 15 x 11 inches  
Framed: 20 x 16 inches



OF THE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT YOU GET OUT OF  
LIFE, THERE ARE FOUR. (FOUR), 2022

JESSALYN BROOKS

Work on paper  
Unframed: 15 x 11 inches  
Framed: 20 x 16 inches



# MARINA HEINTZE

Marina Heintze is a visual artist who works in mixed media with a socio-political message that focuses on sexuality, politics, and violence in contemporary culture. Most recently, in 2022, Marina Heintze was selected for Nada's Online Exhibition, 'Reset' by curator, María Elena Ortiz of the Pérez Art Museum Miami. In 2022 she received grants from The Puffin Foundation & in 2021 grants from Mozaik's 'Re-imagining Democracy', Culver City Arts Foundation 'Projecting Possibilities', and Still-Point, a non-profit exhibiting online magazine. Her work has been exhibited in public art venues and in New York and Los Angeles galleries and non-profit art organizations. Her solo exhibition 'Kama Shooter' was shown in 2020 at The Row DTLA. Her work has been in numerous publications, including ArtNet, HyperAllergic, The New York Magazine, The NY POST, and Inked Magazine. Heintze has worked as a tattoo artist, freelance graphic designer, and production director for film companies and publications such as Visionaire and V Magazine. While living in Brooklyn, NY, she was the proprietor of Meattt, Inc. which was a hybrid tattoo and art studio. Born and raised in New York City, she currently has a studio in Los Angeles. She is a graduate of CalArts and Parsons The New School for Design.

# DON'T TREAD ON ME, 2021

MARINA HEINTZE

Collaged Stickers, Target Paper, and Acrylic  
Paint mounted on Gatorboard  
75 x 66 inches





## ARIZONA (PUT THE BALLOT BACK IN THE BOX), 2022

MARINA HEINTZE

Collaged Stickers, Target Paper, and Acrylic Paint mounted on Gatorboard  
75 x 63 inches

# MICHIGAN (PUT THE BALLOT BACK IN THE BOX) (2022)

MARINA HEINTZE

Collaged Stickers, Target Paper, and Acrylic Paint mounted on Gatorboard  
60 x 60 inches



# GEORGIA (PUT THE BALLOT BACK IN THE BOX), 2021

MARINA HEINTZE

Collaged Stickers, Target Paper, and Acrylic Paint mounted on Gatorboard  
55 x 66 inches



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