



SHANY VAN DEN BERG

DREAM POND



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Dream Pond

18 October – 9 November 2019

EVERARD READ | LONDON



For her first solo exhibition at Everard Read London, South African artist, Shany Van den Berg, presents *Dream Pond*, a new body of work inspired by water as a life force. Created over the course of the past year, these works reflect the artist's journey of self-discovery through the seasonal cycles. At their heart are the water lilies, rising up from muddy waters; a powerful metaphor for rebirth. Van den Berg's paintings have a sensual and ethereal quality, but they also evoke a sense of calm and a quiet strength. They reveal a woman deeply attuned to the beauty and power of nature and a profound gratitude for the gifts that the natural world offers us. Through the layers of petals, floating foliage and shimmering reflections, these works are permeated by an overwhelming sense of new life.

Georgie Shields, September 2019

LEFT (DETAIL)

Lily Portrait X
oil on board
30 x 24 cm

PAGE 1 (DETAIL)

She Blooms at Night
oil on board
137 x 91 cm

PAGE 2

Swimming in the Pond Towards Herself
oil on board
90 x 70 cm

Photography: Michael Hall – mikehallphoto.com



DREAM POND

During the summer of 2019, I was fortunate to swim in natural lily ponds in the Western Cape, South Africa where the indigenous blue water lilies were in full bloom. I interacted with the ponds, felt the water, the lilies and their leaves, stems and the mud against my skin, documenting their growth and colours.

My memories of water and lilies, from childhood to present day, has driven my practice conceptually in this body of work. I have found myself for days in the Stellenbosch Botanical Gardens, a small, quiet gem with lily ponds and quite near where I live and work. This location initiated painterly and drawing-based experiments and research over the past two years. In essence, it served in real time to manifest my own lilies and water spirits through documenting my thoughts as they were mirrored back to me by the watery reflections.

Originally the memory of a devastating house fire 26 years ago, had given way to my own phoenix, rising out of the ashes, and to creative rebirths. This most recent rebirth was through the water and waterlilies as it started to symbolically wash through me bringing new understanding and artistic growth.

The water lily is one of the first plants that children become familiar with in fairy tales. I was reminded of these stories, like the indigenous blue waterlily (*Kaaimans-blom*) in South Africa and the myth around it as a water spirit, half-human and half-fish.

These whispers from a lily pond evolved into the *Dream Pond*. Walking through the lilies, feeling them and the water emotionally,

physically and spiritually, was meditative and thus began an organic transitioning to a new phase in my work.

Thinking and reading about water lily myths, the nymphs, naiads and goddesses, I found myself searching, taking photos underwater in the ponds for the essence of their colours and textures and through this, I felt and heard their voices and stories. I found myself cutting and releasing the drowned, entangled flowers that never got a chance to bloom. Back home I dissected these lilies, searching inside for answers and feelings – ultimately for an insight into my own thoughts and directions.

The cycle of growth and the underwater world is a metaphor for our lives in this world of diversity, profoundly increasingly affected by a scarcity of water and by pollution. As the seasons changed, I was watching the last of the lilies and their green pads that gradually became smaller and went dormant. This left an emptiness in the ponds, but an abundance of reflections on the liquid surface, such as the nearby oak tree whose skeletal fingers reached out over the water.

The emptiness gave me space for creation and the mirroring of my own musings and experiments. It served as a haunting metaphor, a reminder of the life underneath that had gone into a deep comatose sleep. It remains evocatively quiescent, all the while as the fascinating reflections skim across the water ... the plants, birds, blue skies, the clouds as well as other visitors and my own face.

Shany van den Berg, 2019

LEFT (DETAIL)

Pond of Kaai'mans-blom
charcoal and oil on board
137 x 183 cm

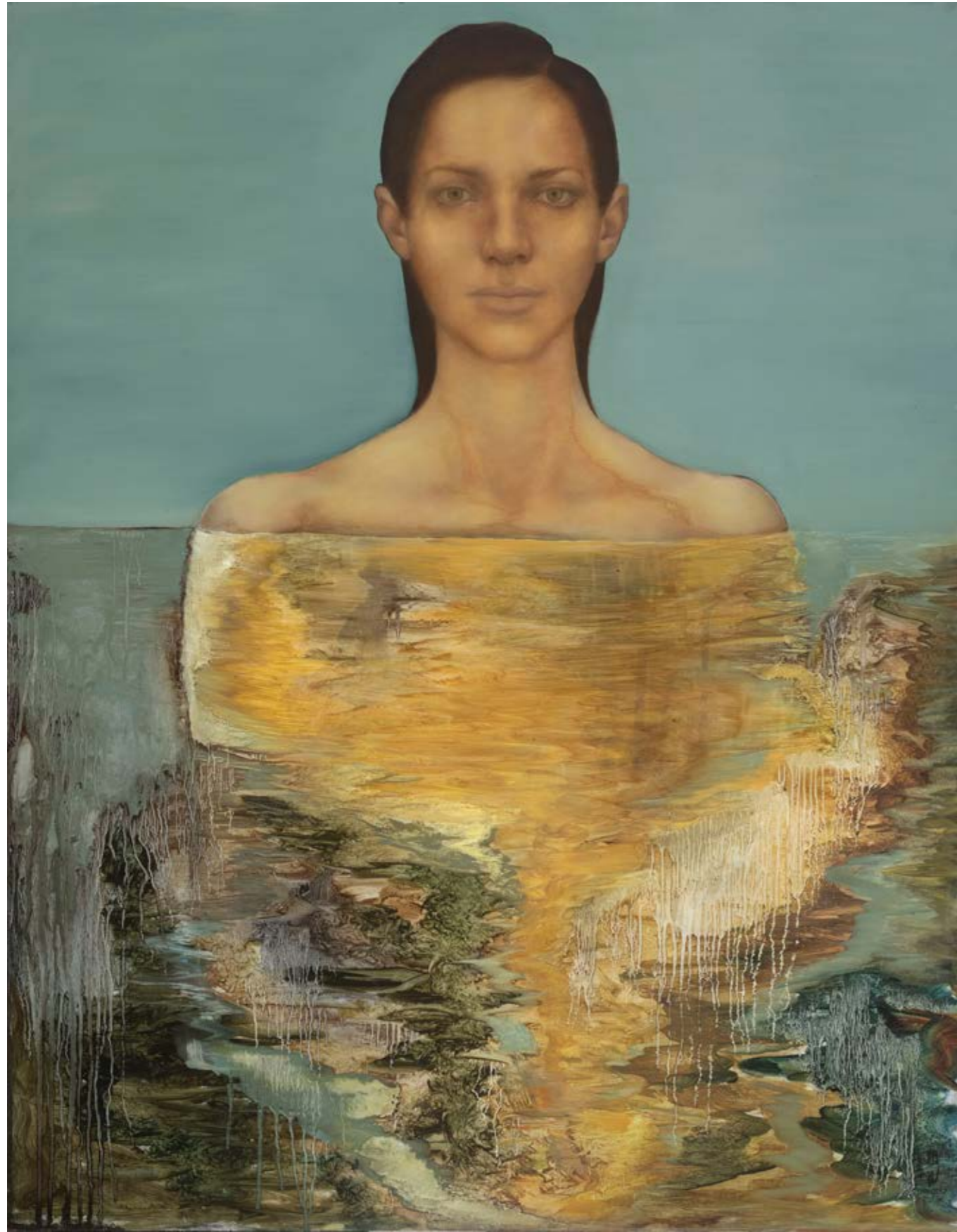


*Swimming in the Pond
Towards Herself*
oil on board
90 x 70 cm

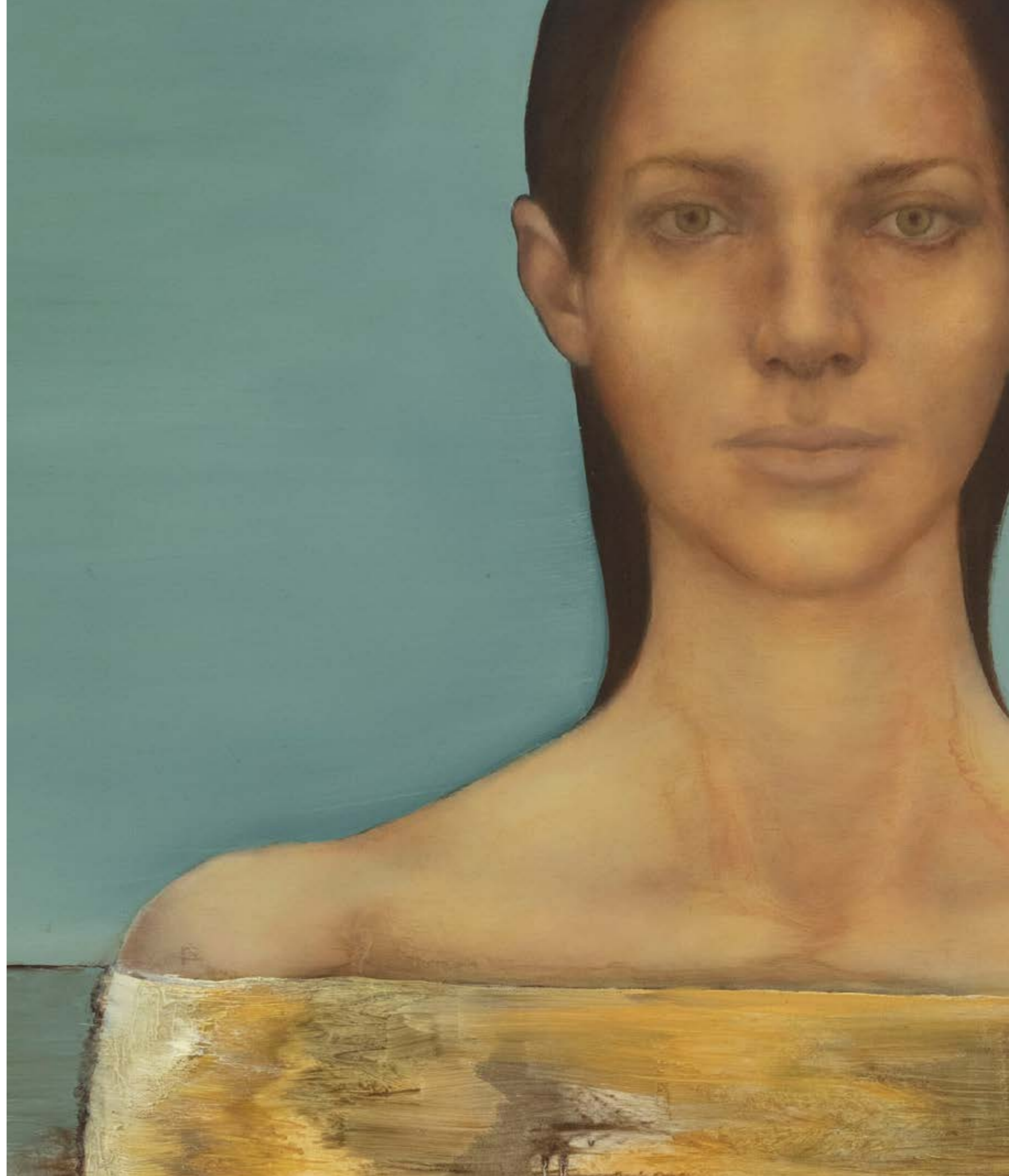


LEFT AND PAGE 6 (DETAIL)
She Blooms at Night
oil on board
137 x 91 cm





LEFT AND RIGHT (DETAIL)
Summer 2019
oil on board
90 x 70 cm





LEFT AND PAGE 9 (DETAIL)

Afterglow

oil on board

137 x 91 cm





ABOVE AND RIGHT (DETAIL)
As the Clouds Flew Past
oil on board
90 x 70 cm

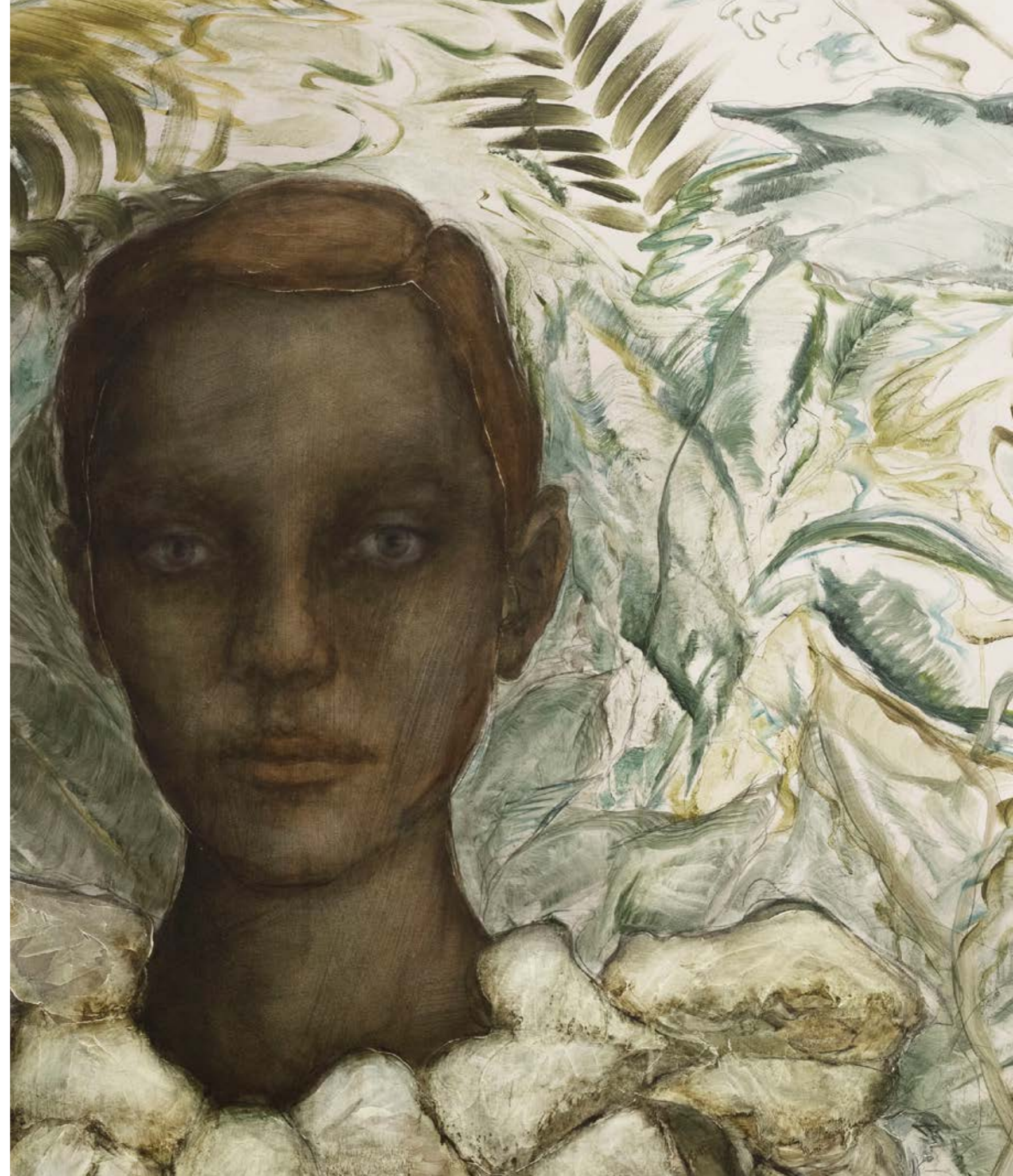


ABOVE AND LEFT (DETAIL)

To Feel and Hear Their Voices

pencil, charcoal, collage and oil on board

130 x 130 cm



ABOVE AND RIGHT (DETAIL)

Antheia – Goddess of the Garden
pencil, charcoal and oil on board
130 x 130 cm



Pond of Kaai'mans-blom
charcoal and oil on board
137 x 183 cm



Entwined
ink, charcoal, oil and collage with vintage book
cover on linen
160 x 150 cm



Ophelia is Dreaming
pencil, charcoal and oil on board
70 x 183 cm



Lily Portrait I
oil on board in copper frame
30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait II
oil on board
30 x 24 cm

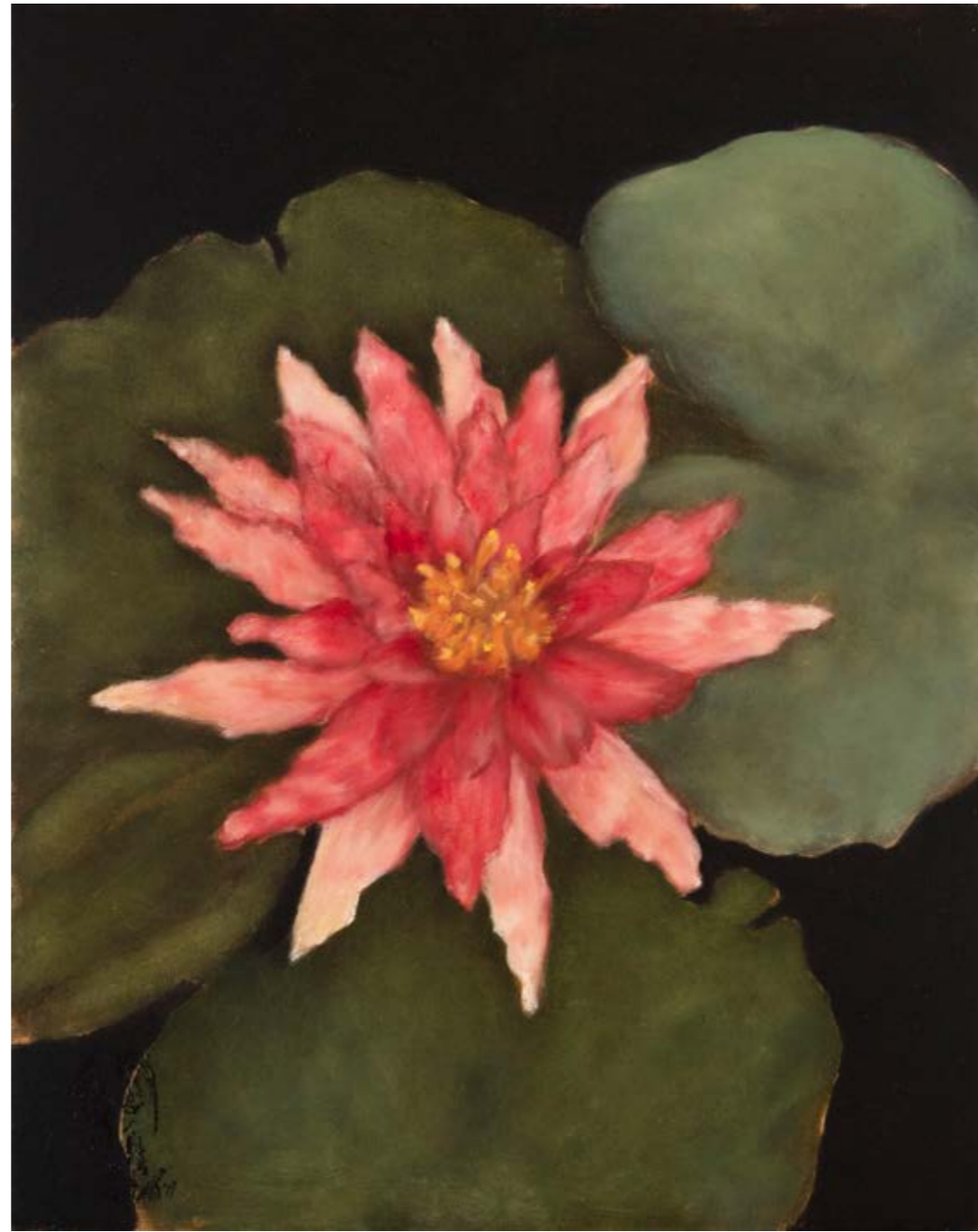


ABOVE AND PAGE 17 (DETAIL)
Lily Portrait III
oil on board in copper frame
30 x 24 cm





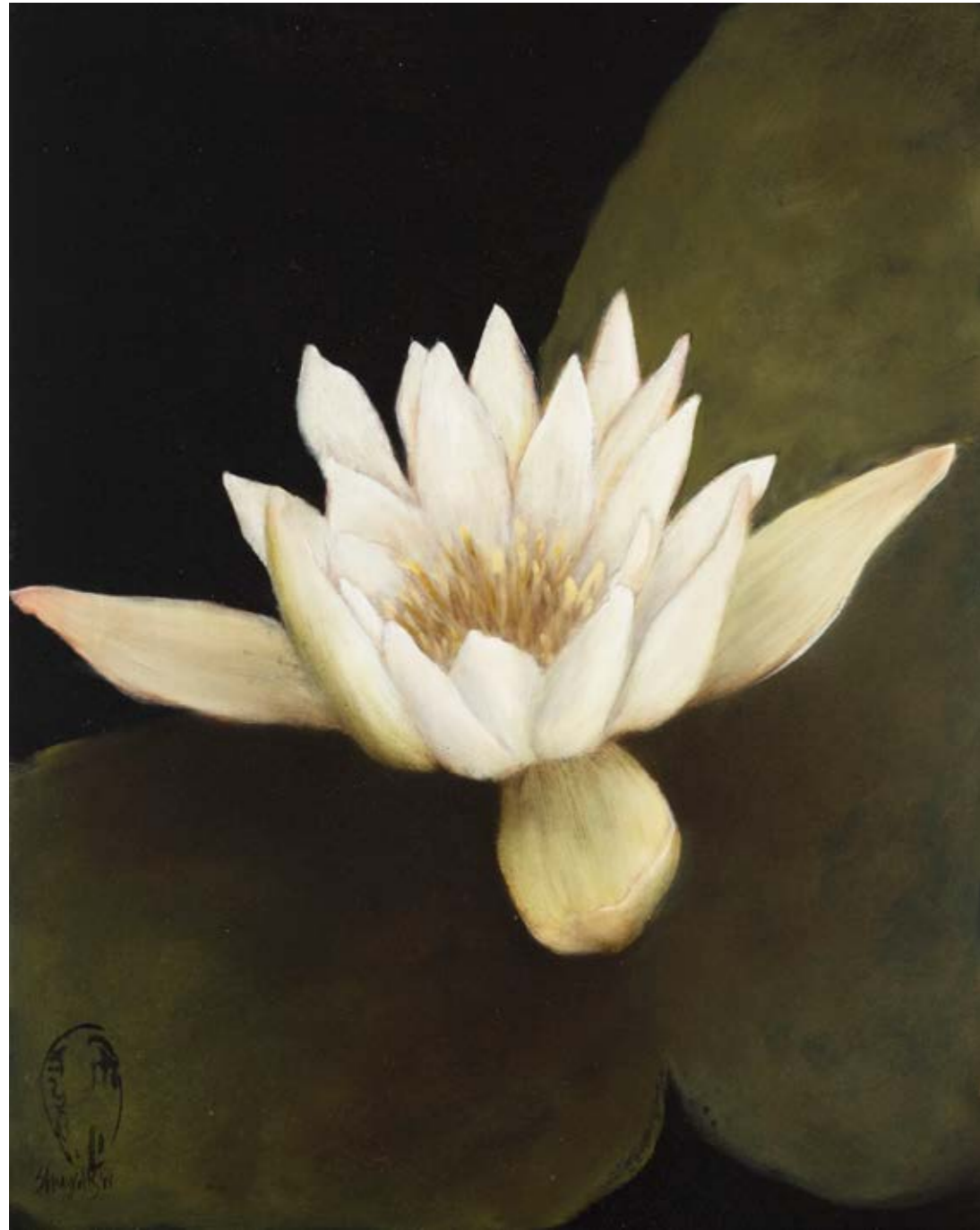
Lily Portrait IV
oil on board in copper frame
30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait V
oil on board
30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait VI
oil on board in copper frame
30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait VII
oil on board
30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait VIII
oil on board
30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait IX
oil on board
30 x 24 cm



ABOVE AND PAGE 21 (DETAIL)
Lily Portrait XI
 oil on board
 30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait XII
 oil on board
 30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait X
 oil on board
 30 x 24 cm





Lily Portrait XIII
oil on board in copper frame
30 x 24 cm



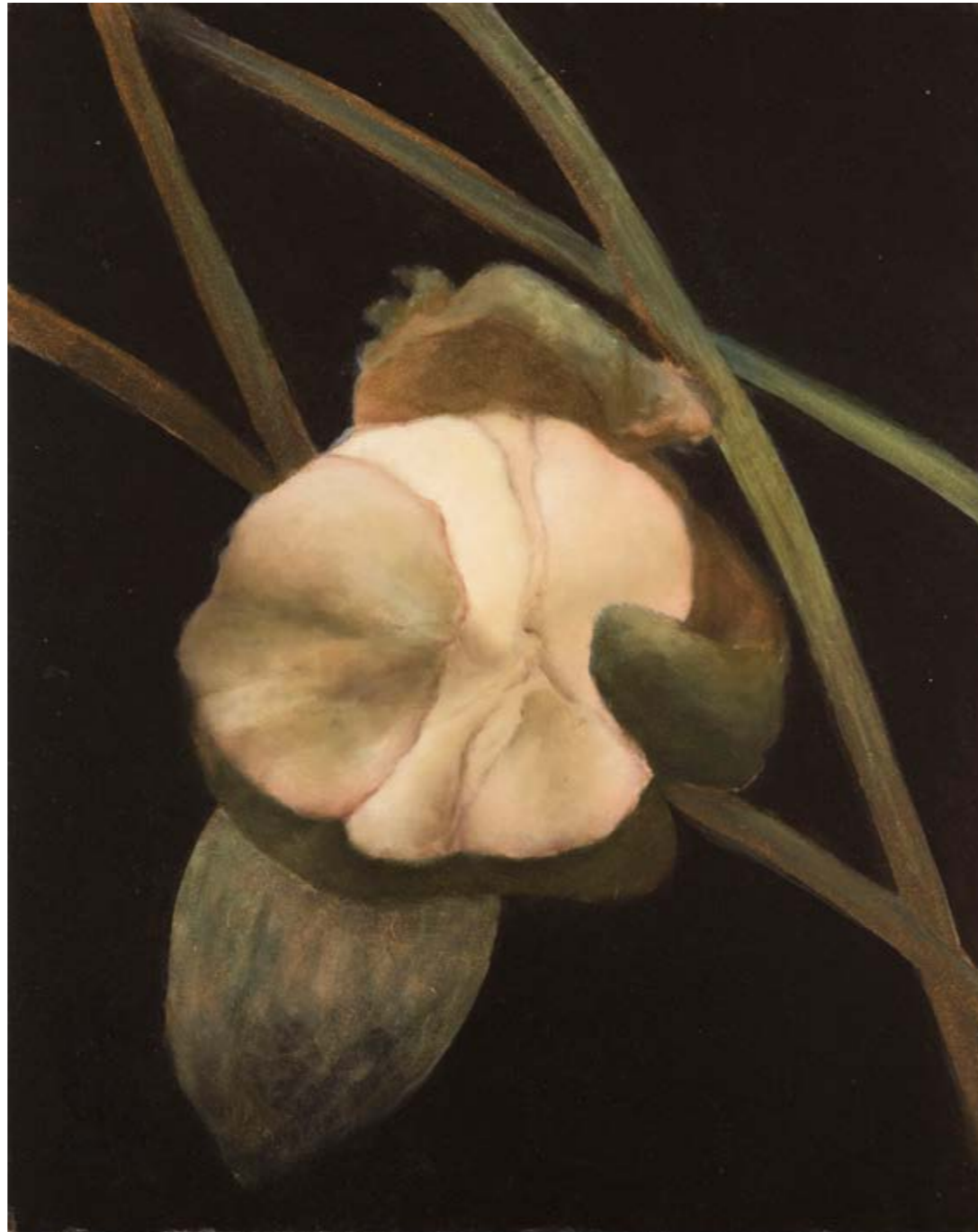
Lily Portrait XIV
oil on board
30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait XV
oil on board
30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait XVII
oil on board in copper frame
30 x 24 cm



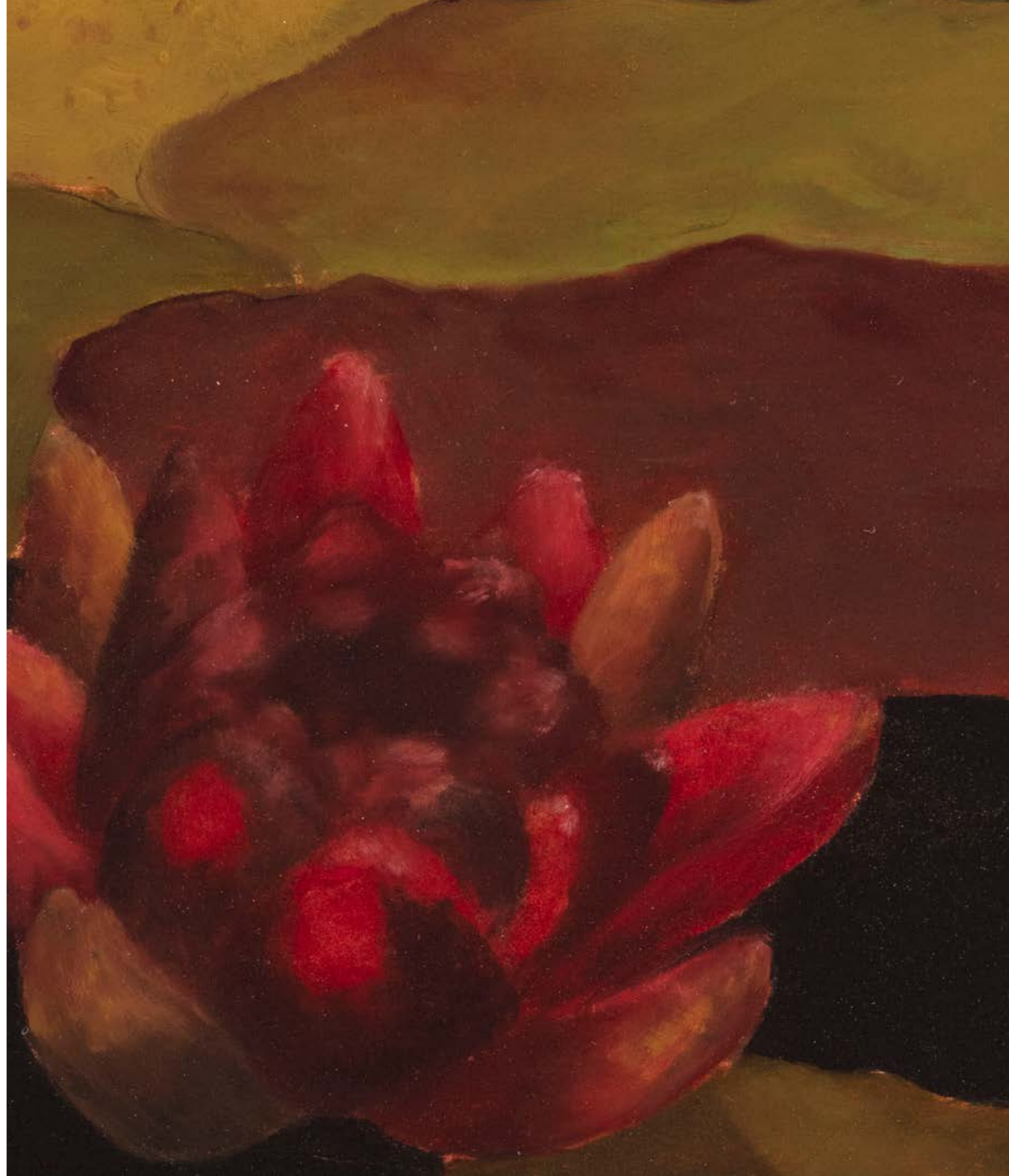
Lily Portrait XIX
oil on board
30 x 24 cm



Lily Portrait XVI
oil on board
30 x 24 cm



ABOVE AND RIGHT (DETAIL)
Lily Portrait XVIII
oil on board
30 x 24 cm





All Too Soon They Fly Off in the Wind
watercolour and collage on vintage paper
62 x 42 cm



Phoenix
watercolour and collage on vintage paper
62 x 42 cm



ABOVE AND RIGHT (DETAIL)
A Prophetic Dream
watercolour and collage on vintage paper
62 x 42 cm





Childhood Memories under the Langeberg Mountains
 charcoal, watercolour and oil on vintage map
 115 x 90 cm



At Water's Edge
 charcoal, watercolour and oil on vintage map
 115 x 90 cm



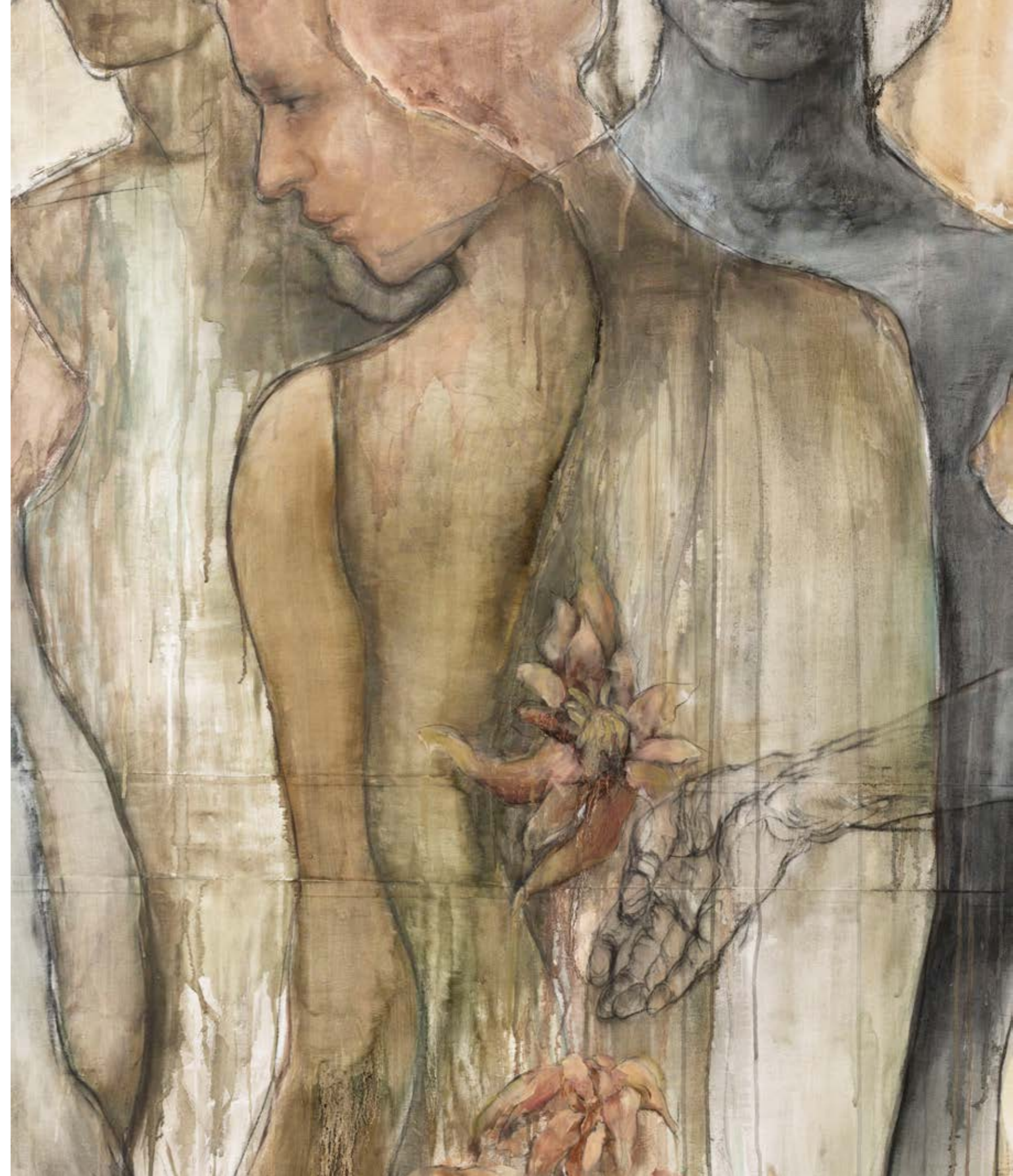
*The Naiad – Water Nymph / Female Spirit
Presiding Over Any Body of Fresh Water*
charcoal and oil on linen, cut out nude mobile
75 x 200 cm



A Short Myth
pencil and gum arabic on
vintage paper
38 x 28 cm



A Short Fable
pencil, ink, watercolour and
collage on vintage paper
38 x 28 cm



ABOVE AND RIGHT (DETAIL)

From Here to There

charcoal, watercolour and oil on vintage map

200 x 180 cm



Nymphs, Naiades, Goddesses
charcoal, ink, watercolour, oil and linen collage
on linen
Triptych, each panel 100 x 100cm



Nymphs, Naiades, Goddesses I
 charcoal, ink, watercolour, oil and linen collage on linen
 100 x 100 cm



Nymphs, Naiades, Goddesses II
 charcoal, ink, watercolour, oil and linen collage on linen
 100 x 100 cm

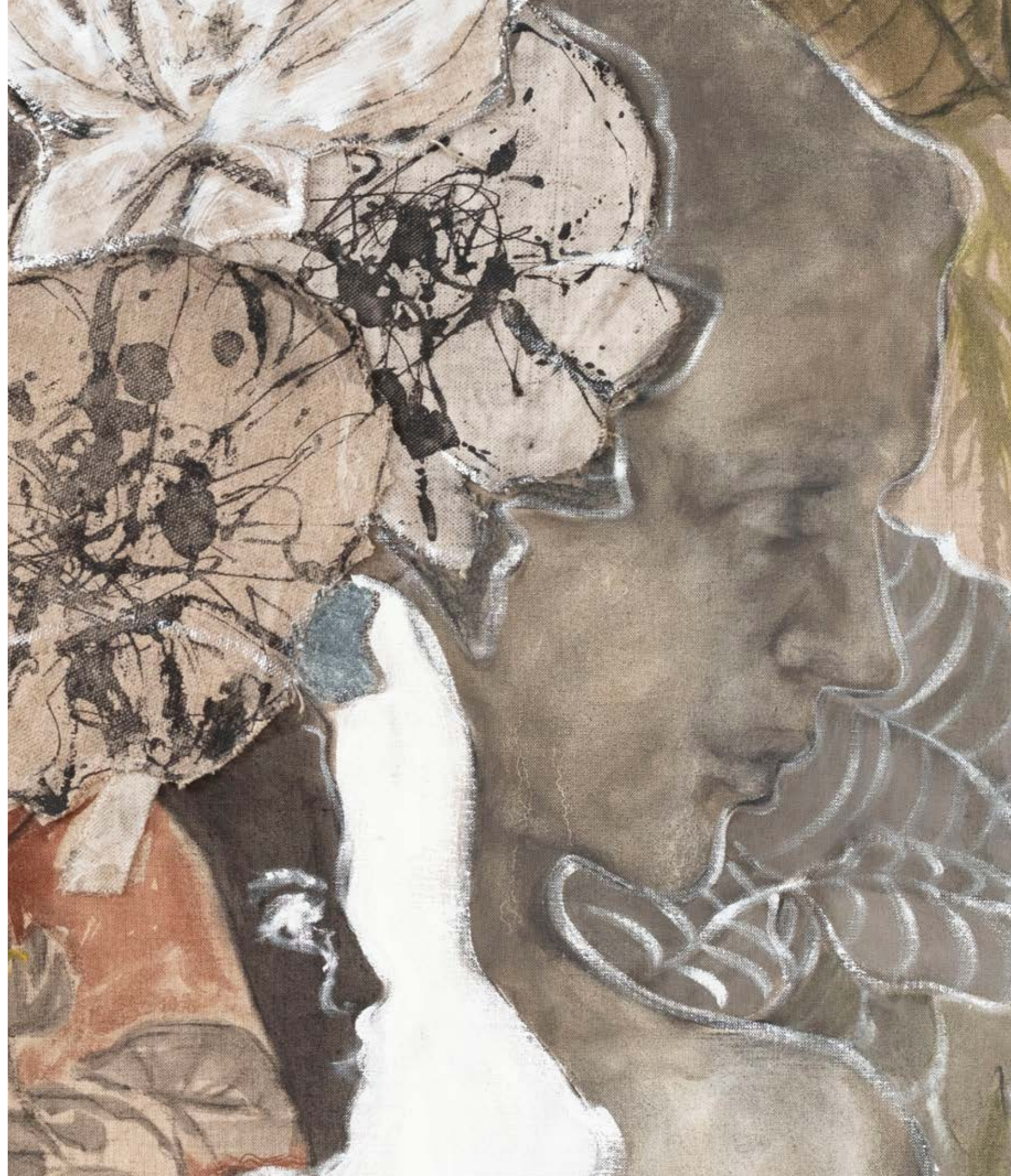


ABOVE AND RIGHT (DETAIL)

Nymphs, Naiades, Goddesses III

charcoal, ink, watercolour, oil and linen collage on linen

100 x 100 cm





Kaai'mans
wooden plinth, glass, steel, impasto
oil paint and engraving on 1920's
wooden hat stand
68 x 35 x 25 cm



SHANY VAN DEN BERG

b. 1958, Riversdale, South Africa

Shany van den Berg's multifaceted practice is centred around notions of identity in contemporary portraiture and figurative work as well as sculpture and conceptual collage-based objects that complete a diverse and often performative artistic practice. Underpinning her work are the ever-present themes of patriarchy, womanhood and the passage of time for humanity.

Van den Berg's ethereal oil paintings evoke the mood and texture of Old Master paintings, conveying complex emotions, moods and ideas through exacting attention to detail, an extraordinary facility with paint, and subtle symbolism. Repetition across surfaces are built up in swathes, layered onto the board, linen and found objects. Shadows are imbued with texture and 'skins' that exude an almost viscous evocative sheen. Forms can conjure a sense of animalism through their attenuated bone structure, and an underlying but subtle sexuality pervades many of the forms.

Unmistakably feminine, many narratives suggest recognition, confirmation and the bitter-sweet knowledge of love, loss and letting go. Her portraiture is most often of women whose features morph

into a composite of the artist and her loved ones, serving as portals to narratives of love, sacrifice, and ultimately transcendence.

Van den Berg's work also explores and interrogates the critical contemporary themes of identity, family and connectedness to the world around us through multimedia expressions of drawings, paintings, collages and sculptural forms. There she reconstitutes her stream of consciousness – as both fable and history. This binds together as a layered 'map' – both of her interior solitary landscapes and of more universal concerns – the passing of time as we all journey through life. This poignantly serves to remind us that we are alone but also inescapably part of one human race.

Van den Berg has worked as a full-time artist for almost thirty years, initially as a ceramicist. Her practice includes painting, drawing, sculpture, site specific installations, mixed media, three-dimensional work as well as poetry, performance, video and music.

Van den Berg's work is represented in private collections in the UK, South Africa, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, Cayman Islands and the U.S.A.



SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019** *Dream Pond*, Everard Read Gallery, London.UK
- 2018** *Fluisteringe vanaf 'n Leliepoel/ Whispers from a Lily Pond*, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2017** *(In)filtration of Time*, Everard Read I CIRCA Gallery,Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015** *AL (L) EEN*, Grande Provence Gallery, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2012** *Hinterland*, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2011** *Siel van my Vel*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2010** *In gesprek met (1)*, IS Art at Le Quartier Francias Gallery, Franschhoek , South Africa
- 2009** *Halfmens/Heelmens, Red, Black & White* at Pier Rabe, Stellenbosch, South Africa
- 2008** *In gesprek met (2)*, Smellick & Stokking Gallery,Den Haag, Netherlands
- 2007** *(H)erken, ken, en ...*, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2006** *Dwaaltuin*, Grande Provence Gallery, Franschhoek, South Africa
- 2005** *Die Fees Gees*, Vrede en Lust Wine Estate, Paarl, South Africa
- 2003** *Construction Site*, Lime Line Design, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2001** *'n Vlug in Tyd*, Dorp Street Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa
- 1999** *My shadow, my echo, and me*, Bang the Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

AWARDS

- 2019** Sanlam Portrait Top 40 Finalist 'Leah se Water' Rust-en-Vrede Gallery ,Cape Town, South Africa
- 2016** BP Portrait Finalist, 'SELF' Portrait Gallery, London
- 2016** BP Travel Award Shortlisted Finalist, Portrait Gallery, London
- 2010** BP Award Portrait Finalist, 'Bloedlyn/Bloodline Sannie en Leah', Portrait Gallery, London
- 2009** BP Award Portrait Finalist,'Dit is ek Gladys' Portrait Gallery London
- 2005** Sasol New Signatures Finalist, 'Weefdrade' Pretoria, South Africa
- 1990** Corobrick Ceramic Competition Finalist, Cape Town, South Africa

ART RESIDENCIES

- 2013** Fellowship to The Ampersand Foundation in New York USA
- 2007** Art Exchange Hubei Institute of Art in Wuhan Central China and Everard Read, Cape Town,SA
- 2004** Community Arts Workshop where 10 artists from diverse walks of life exploring the first 10 years of democracy through individual and collaborative artworks
Everard Read, Castle of Goodhope in Cape Town, South Africa
- 1998** One of 12 artists, 6 from South Africa and 6 from Germany working together in Lauenberg Germany.

LEFT (DETAIL)

Ophelia is Dreaming
pencil, characoal and oil on board
70 x 183 cm



SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

- 2019** Selected Artists, Knysna Fine Art Gallery, Knysna, South Africa
The Ampersand Foundation / 21 Year Celebration Exhibition / *A Vision of Jack Ginsberg*, UJ Art Gallery, Johannesburg, SA
Winter Everard Read, Cape Town, SA
Southern Aspect, Everard Read London, UK
- 2017** Investec Cape Town Art Fair, Everard Read Booth, CTICC, Cape Town, South Africa
Winter, Everard Read | CIRCA, Cape Town, South Africa
People and Portraiture, CIRCA, Cape Town, South Africa
Summer, Everard Read, London, UK
Winter, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2016** *Summer*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Everard Read | CIRCA Gallery Opening Group Exhibition, London
Summer, Everard Read, Franschhoek, South Africa
Art Patron MAD Leadership Foundation, *Celebrating a Century of Geography in South Africa*, Stellenbosch University Museum, Stellenbosch, South Africa
- 2015** *Fear & Loss* – Industrial Karoo Group installation, Pretoria Art Museum, South Africa
100 Years, Die Burger Artscape Group Exhibition, Cape Town, South Africa
Summer Sculpture Garden – Group Exhibition, Mount Nelson Hotel Gardens, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Homage, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Winter, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2014** *Fear & Loss* – Industrial Karoo Group Exhibition, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein, South Africa
- 2013** *100*, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
Universal Suffering – Group Exhibition, Anglo-Boer War Museum, Bloemfontein, South Africa
Feminity – Group Exhibition curated by Eva Maria Roer, President and CEO of DT&SHOP Germany
Cape Town Re-Imagined, Suidoosterfees, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2012** *A Summer of Sculpture* – Group Exhibition, Mount Nelson Hotel Gardens, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Small Works, Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2010** Collaboration with Mogalakwena Art and Craft in Limpopo for Waterkloof Biodynamic Wine estate
- 2009** *The Great South African Nude*, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg, SA
Sex, Power, Money, Everard Read, Cape Town, SA
- 2008** *Confluence* – A Two-Woman Exhibition between China and South Africa, Everard Read Gallery, Cape Town, SA
Art Fair Utrecht, Netherlands
- 2000** *A Celebration of Art and Technology*, Hewlett Packard Project, Group Exhibition and Auction in support of Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, Johannesburg, SA

LEFT (DETAIL)

Nymphs, Naiades, Goddesses I
charcoal, ink, watercolour, oil and linen collage on linen
100 x 100 cm

PAGE 38 (DETAIL)

Lily Portrait VIII
oil on board
30 x 24 cm



EVERARD READ | LONDON



ER JOHANNESBURG | CAPE TOWN | LONDON | FRANSCHHOEK

Modern and contemporary art from southern Africa

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