

PHILIPPE UZAC

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9 June – 8 July 2023



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Everard Read London presents an exhibition of new oil paintings by French-born, South African-based artist, Philippe Uzac.

Uzac finds beauty in the weathered and rusting cityscape of downtown Johannesburg where he kept a studio for many years. The patterns and textures resulting from layers of peeling or fading paint serve as inspiration for Uzac – a manifestation of time passing which evokes a sense of nostalgia and melancholy. ‘I look for an aesthetic in decay and try to capture it on canvas,’ says the artist.

Uzac’s works are achieved through repeated layering of oil paint – up to 15 layers painstakingly applied and allowed to dry before the next is added. Using knives, spatulas, wax and sandpaper, he emulates the effects of time by scratching, rubbing and sanding the layers of paint to achieve his signature, textured surfaces.

The artist’s apparently scarred works serve as metaphors for humanity’s futile pursuit of perfection. His process of abstraction has been described as ‘a peeling away of idea of perfection and [the] Western pursuit of man ordering nature

– a pursuit that has taken our planet into its present crisis ... Uzac peels away all the outer layers to lay bare the scars and imperfections of world around him, and himself.’*

Uzac’s relocation from an urban to a rural environment has prompted a profound shift in his awareness of the changing seasons and the sense of his place in the universe. He now perceives his own scars as universal – part of the messiness of a life lived.

‘My process starts with a layer of black paint’, explains Uzac. ‘Black is the absence of light and evokes the nothingness so dear to Heidegger. But black is also one of the first colours used by man in the neolithic age so although “nothing” is on the canvas at this stage of the process, it carries already the potentiality of “everything” . My work is abstract in essence, but since relocating to a farm I have been stunned by the burnt colours of the dry, Highveld winters and I felt the urge to reproduce them on my canvases.’

This is Philippe Uzac’s first solo presentation with Everard Read London and his third with the Everard Read group.

* Jessica Deutsch, *artstolife world*, February 2023





Gaia II
gold leaf and oil on canvas
150 x 150 cm



Atahualpa Yupanqui
 gold leaf and oil on canvas
 120 x 90 cm



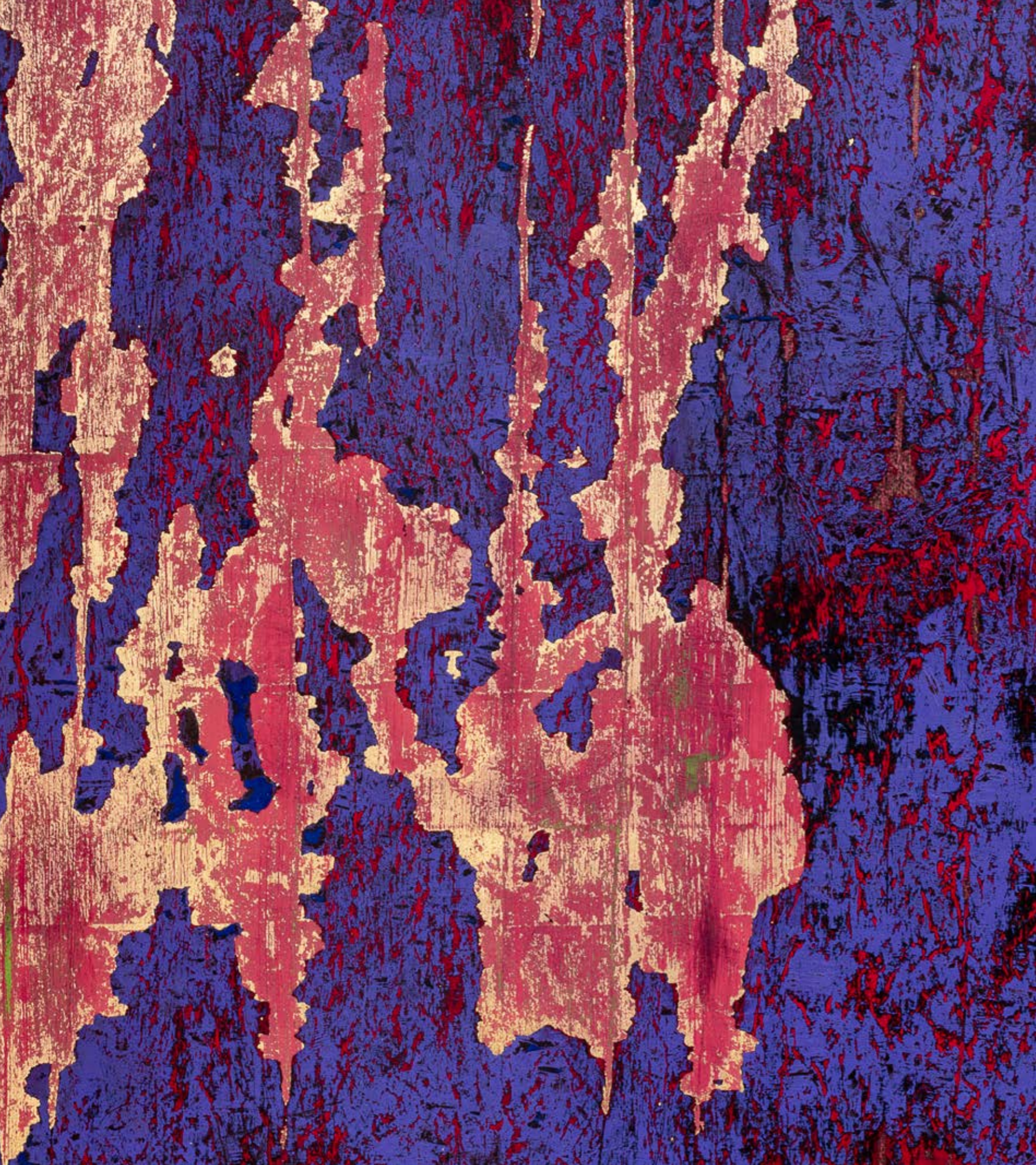
Transition
 gold leaf and oil on canvas
 152 x 101 cm

Y OTENGO TANTOS HERMANOS QUE NO LOS PUEDO CONTAR
EN EL VALLE LA MONTAÑA EN LA PAMPA Y EN EL MAR
CADA CUAL CON SUS TRABAJOS CON SUS SUEÑOS CADA CUAL
CON LA ESPERANZA ADELANTE CON LOS RECUERDOS DETRAS
Y OTENGO TANTOS HERMANOS QUE NO LOS PUEDO CONTAR
GENTE DE MANOS ALIENAS POR ESQUEMA AMISTAD
COMO EN EL ORDEN LE DEJAN LA COMUNICACION PEREZAR
QUE EN EL HORIZONTE ABIERTO QUE SIEMPRE ESTÁ MAS ALLA
Y ASÍ PERDIZO PARA BUSCAR LO QUE SON Y VOLUNTAD
CUANDO PARECE MAS CERCA ESCUANDO SE ALEJA MAS
Y OTENGO TANTOS HERMANOS QUE NO LOS PUEDO CONTAR
Y ASÍ SEGUIMOS ANDANDO CURTIDOS DE SOLEDAD
NOS PERDEMOS POR EL MUNDO NOS VOLVEMOS A ENCONTRAR
Y ASÍ NOS RECONOCEMOS POR ELLEJANO MIRAAR
POR LA COPLA QUE MORDERMOS SEMILLAS EN MENSIDAD
Y ASÍ SEGUIMOS ANDANDO CURTIDOS DE SOLEDAD
Y EN UN MUNDO QUE SE ENCONTRA EN EL MUNDO



Fields V
silver leaf and oil on canvas
150 x 150 cm





Scatched Blue
oil on canvas
150 x 90 cm



Fields I
gold leaf and oil on canvas
90 x 150 cm



Fields II
gold leaf and oil on canvas
90 x 150 cm

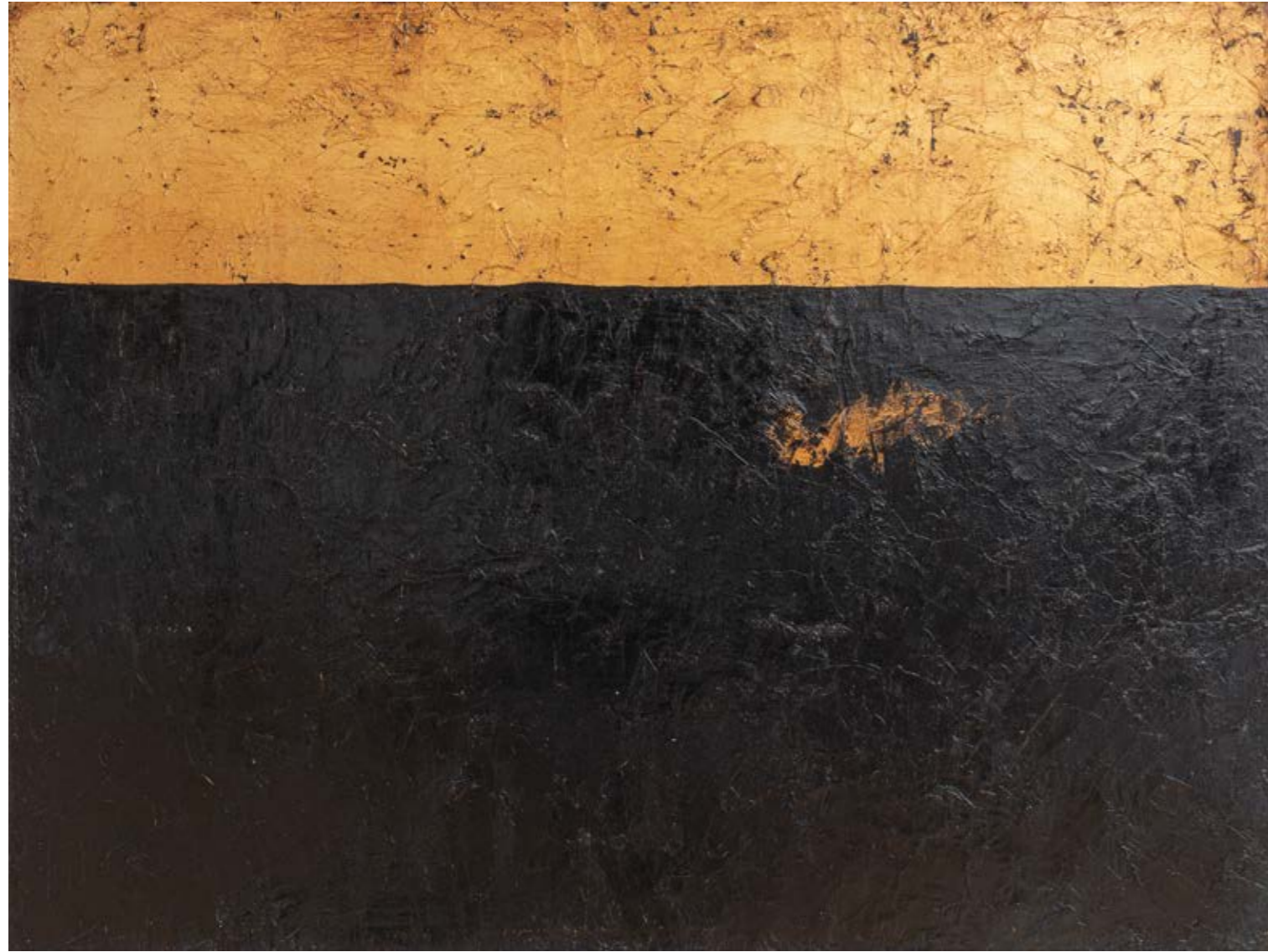


Fields III
gold leaf and oil on canvas
85 x 115 cm



Fields IV
gold leaf and oil on
canvas 56 x 71 cm

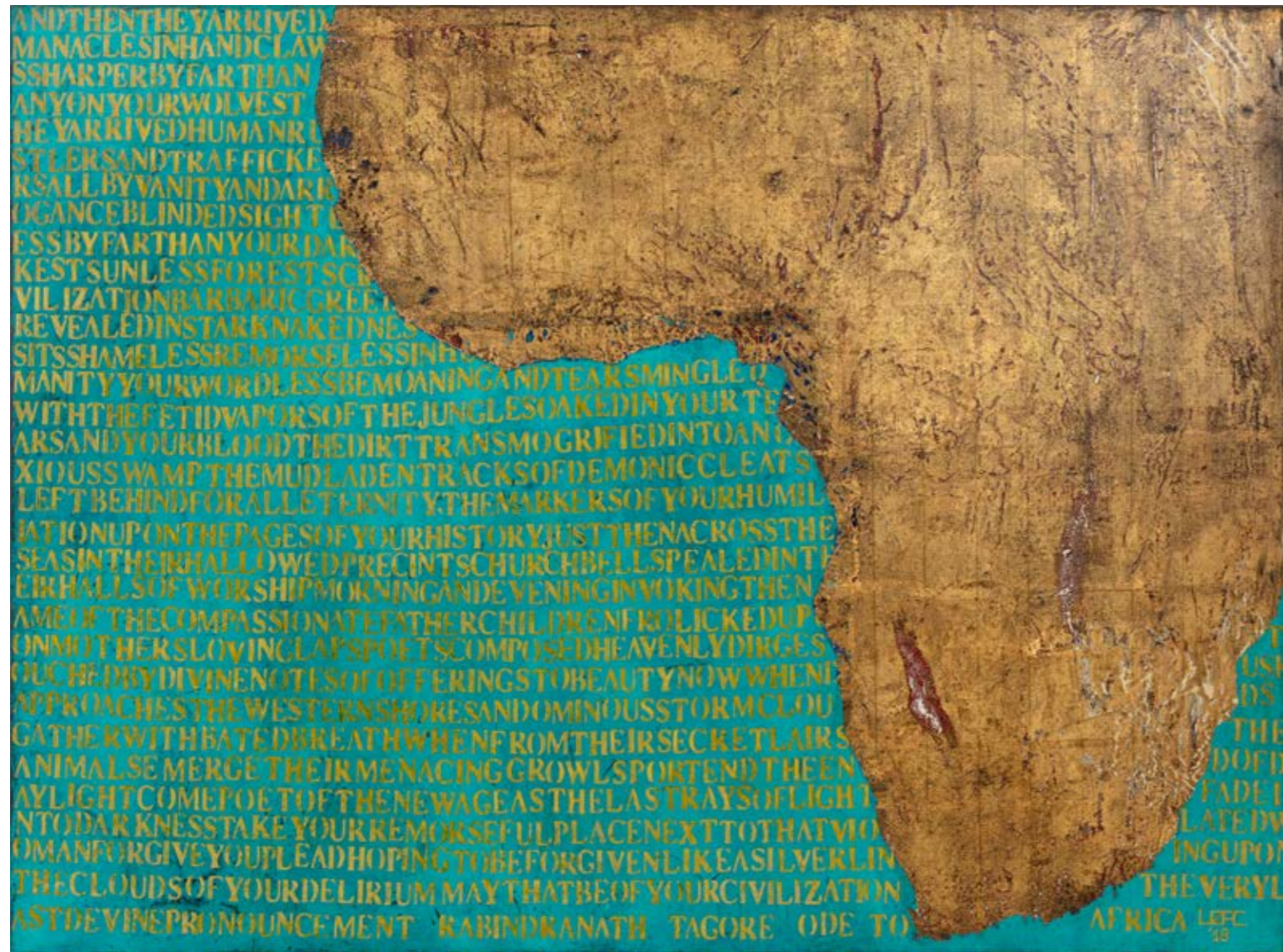




Lost
gold leaf and oil on canvas
90 x 120 cm



Gold
gold leaf and oil on canvas
56 x 75 cm



Ode to Africa
gold leaf and oil on canvas
85 x 115 cm

WORDLESS BEMOANING AND TEARS MINGLE
DVAPORS OF THE JUNGLES SOAKED IN YOUR
BLOOD THE DIRT TRANSMOGRIFIED INTO
THE MUD-LADEN TRACKS OF DEMONIC
ORALLETERNITY THE MARKERS OF YOUR
HE PAGES OF YOUR HISTORY JUST THEN AC
ALLOWED PRECINCTS CHURCH BELLS SPEA
WORSHIP MORNING AND EVENING IN VOKIN
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ERGE THEIR MENACING GROWLS SPORT
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YOU PLEAD HOPING TO BE FORGIVEN LIK
F YOUR DELIRIUM MAY THAT BE OF YOU
ONOUNCEMENT RABINDRANATH TAGO



PHILIPPE UZAC

b. 1953, France, lives and works near Johannesburg, South Africa



Born in Paris, Uzac spent his youth in Peru, Mexico and Spain. He studied Economics and Management in France and following a career in diplomacy, Uzac became an independent Economic Intelligence consultant for major corporations. He has lived in Costa Rica, Chile, Russia and South Africa, where he has resided since 1992.

Uzac has been immersed in art since his youth; his grandmother

was a watercolourist and his mother a sculptor. Essentially self-taught, Uzac has worked with established artists to deepen his understanding of oil paint techniques (his medium of preference). After a decade of working in downtown Johannesburg, he moved his studio to a rural area some 70km outside of Johannesburg where he enjoys the quiet solitude, fresh air and big skies. An old tobacco curing barn has become his studio.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2022** *Summer Exhibition 2022*, Everard Read, London, UK
Winter 2022|23, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2021** *Summer Exhibition 2021*, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2020** *Philippe Uzac: Quest*, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
ONLINE: Tiny 2020, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Winter 2020, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2018** *Summer Exhibition III*, Everard Read, London, UK
Winter, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2017** *Summer Exhibition II*, Everard Read, London, UK
Spectrum, Everard Read, Johannesburg, South Africa
Southern Abstraction, Everard Read, London, UK

