



JOHN MURRAY

Resurface

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14 March – 16 April 2025

ER | 10 YEARS



Resurface

The term, resurface, is a fitting description of John Murray's artistic process. His studio practice is governed by a creative labour that both conceals and reveals traces of the painting process. He paints in an intuitive communication with the evolving surface of a canvas, favouring the material act of making as a means of guiding the artistic outcome. Ring file stickers and tape enable him to reveal older paint layers through lifted masks, bringing the history of his process into conversation with more freshly painted surfaces.

Murray shyly admits to a sense of *horror vacui* when confronted with the blank canvas. Perhaps this is what motivates his artistic labouring. His actions as a painter become an intriguing metaphor for contemporary consumerism that continues to make and remake the surfaces of our environments through pervasive acts of labour. In their final state the paintings could allude to peeled commercial signage, the rusted machinery of rural labour or a satellite view of human settlements. The fragments of form that Murray provides engages a game of imaginative reconnection with the objects and surfaces of one's surroundings.

Murray's imagery is unconsciously derived from the changing objects and scenes, signage, and streets of his home in South Africa. While previous works have tended towards the agricultural, this series evokes the industrial palimpsest. His surfaces tend toward the look of rusted machinery or painted metallic surfaces that peel helplessly beneath the intense rays of an African sun. Murray's forms in this exhibition seem excavated from the landscape like entropic industrial tools.

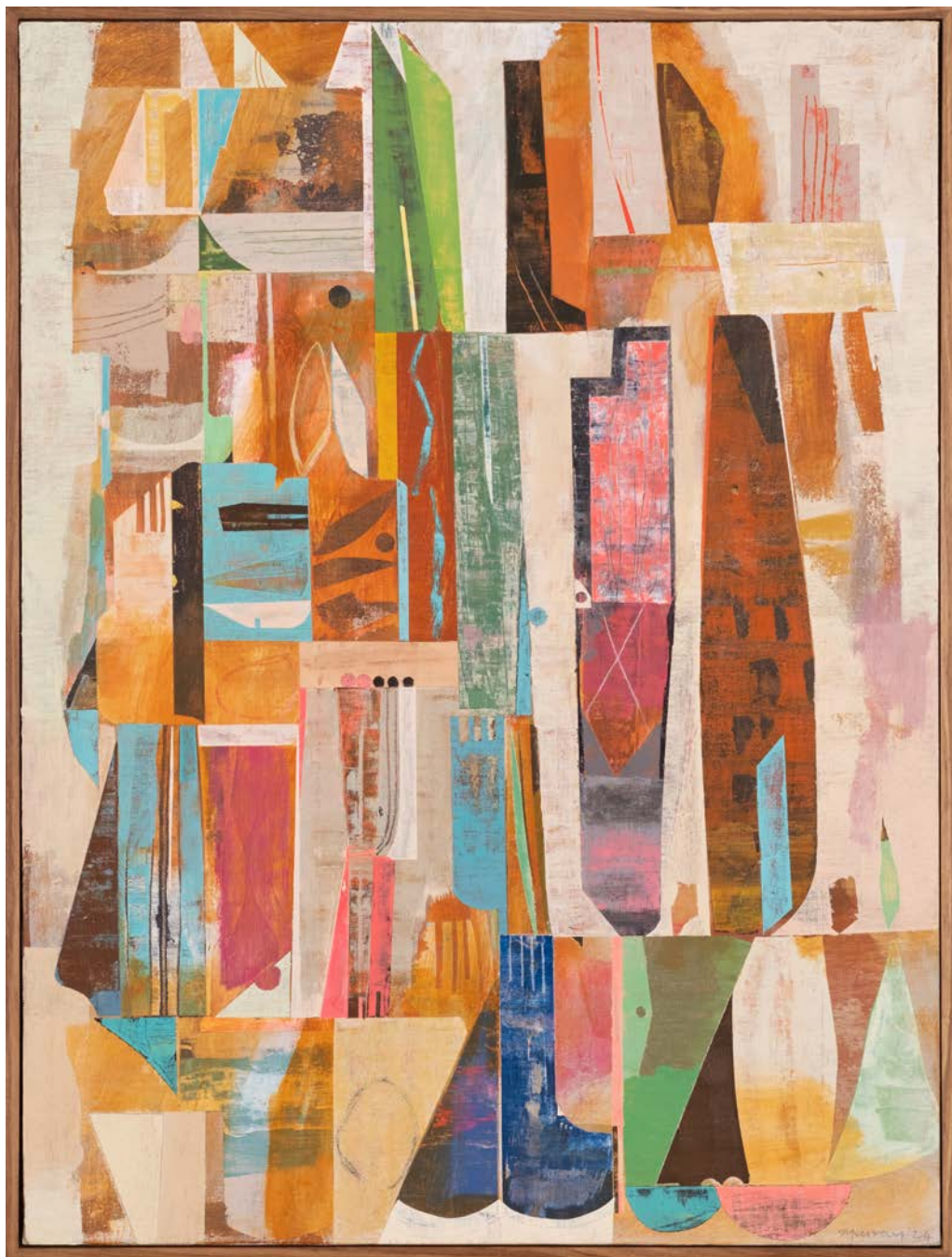
In Murray's paintings the process of how the mind connects pictorial fragments and observations recalls the darting of the eye, the saccade at the heart of how the human brain processes visual information. The resulting images on canvas are a rewiring of conventional seeing, a mapping of the unconscious scramble of visual moments. The juxtaposition of forms and surfaces in Murray's works are accumulative yet they simultaneously speak to the breaking down of a comfortable way to look at or 'see' the world around us.

– Natasha Norman





Cul-de-Sac
acrylic on board
70 x 60.5 cm
31⁷/₈ x 24 in.

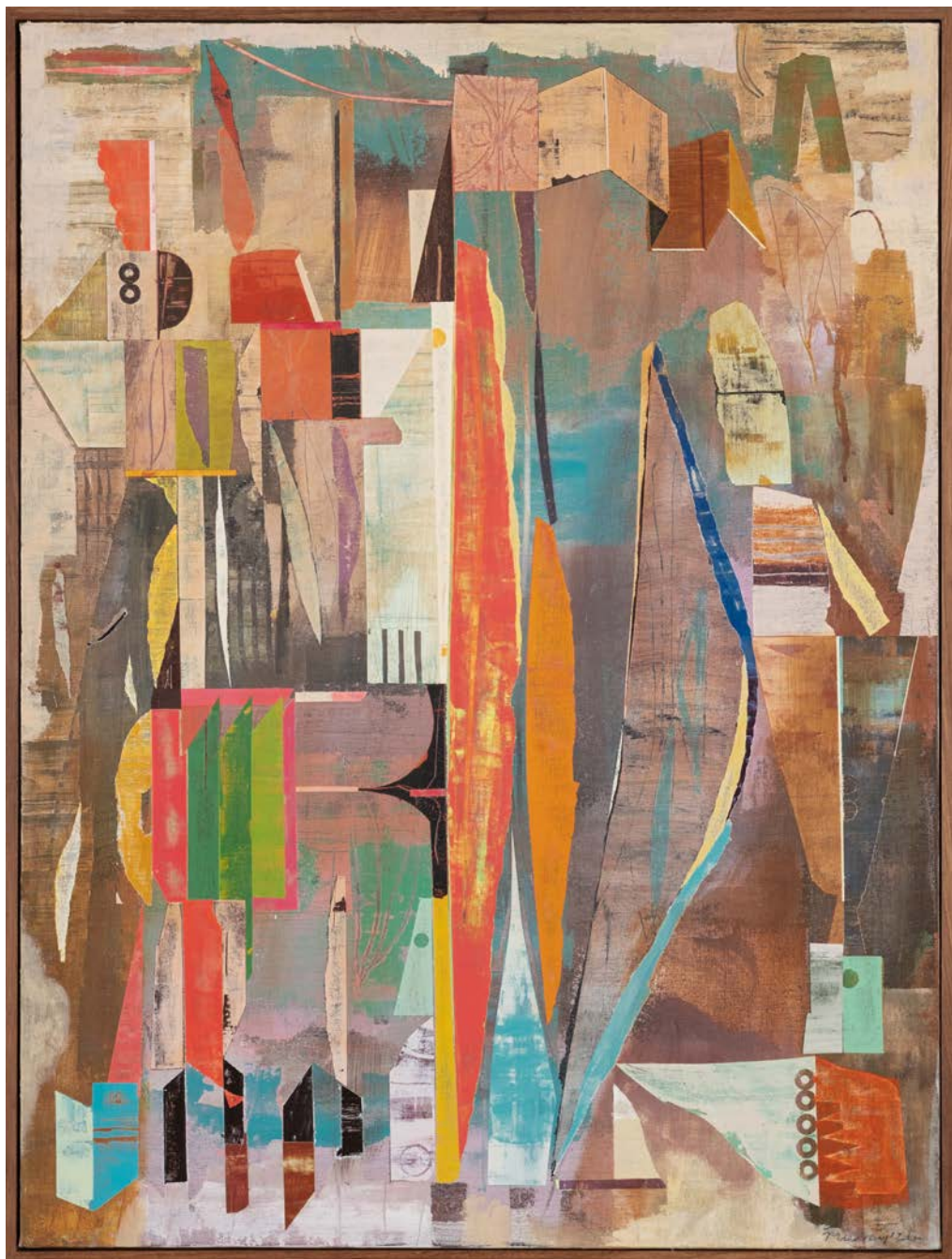


Curtail

acrylic on canvas

80 x 60.5 cm

31³/₈ x 23³/₄ in.



Parts Revealed
acrylic on canvas
80 x 60 cm
31³/₈ x 23¹/₂ in.



Out of Sight

acrylic on canvas board

61 x 45 cm

39 ¹/₄ x 31 ³/₈ in.



Hinterland I

acrylic on canvas

100 x 80 cm

31³/₈ x 23¹/₂ in.



Hinterland II

acrylic on canvas

100 x 80 cm

39 ¹/₄ x 31 ³/₈ in.



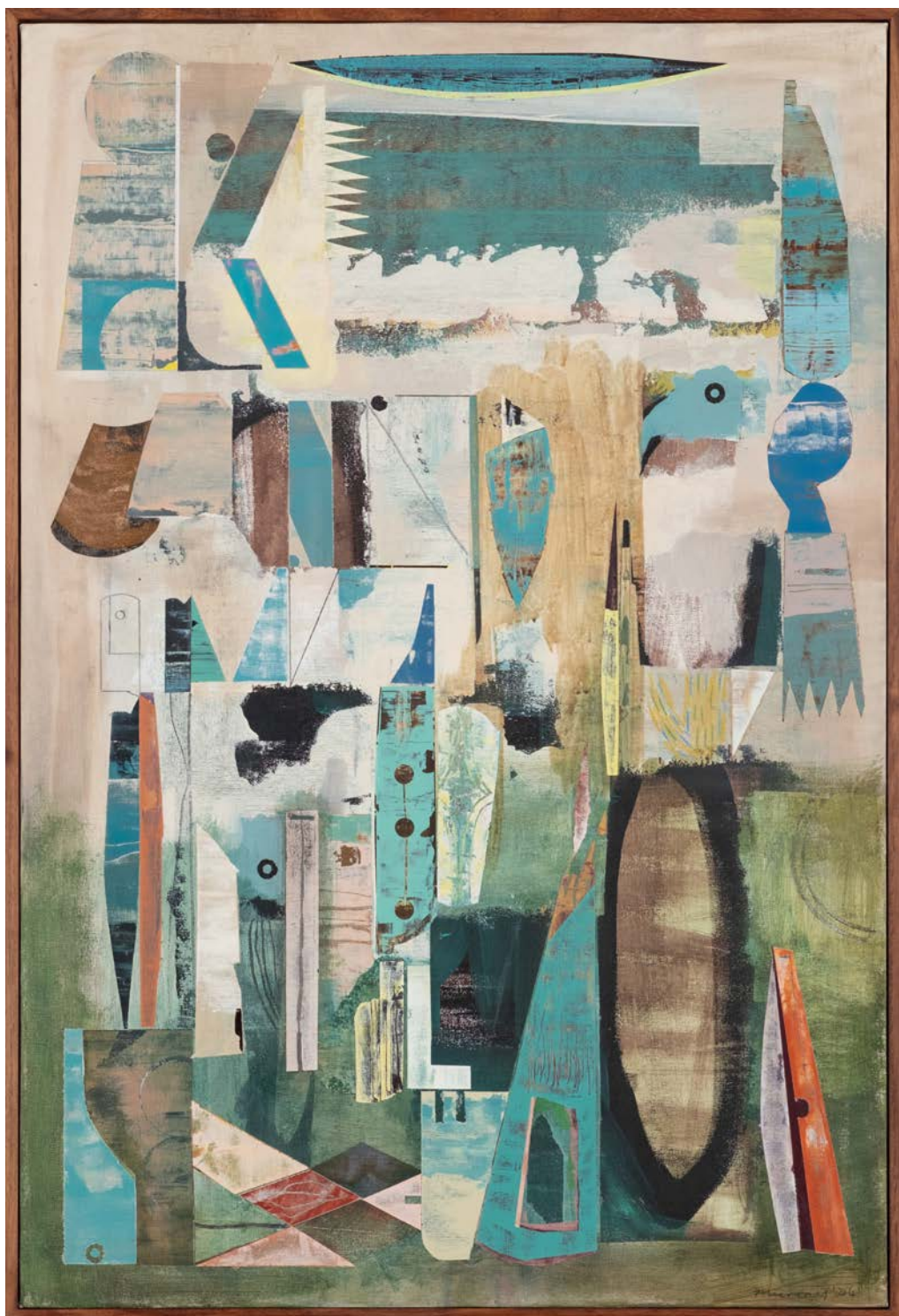


Barred

acrylic on canvas

55 x 45 cm

21⁵/₈ x 17⁵/₈ in.

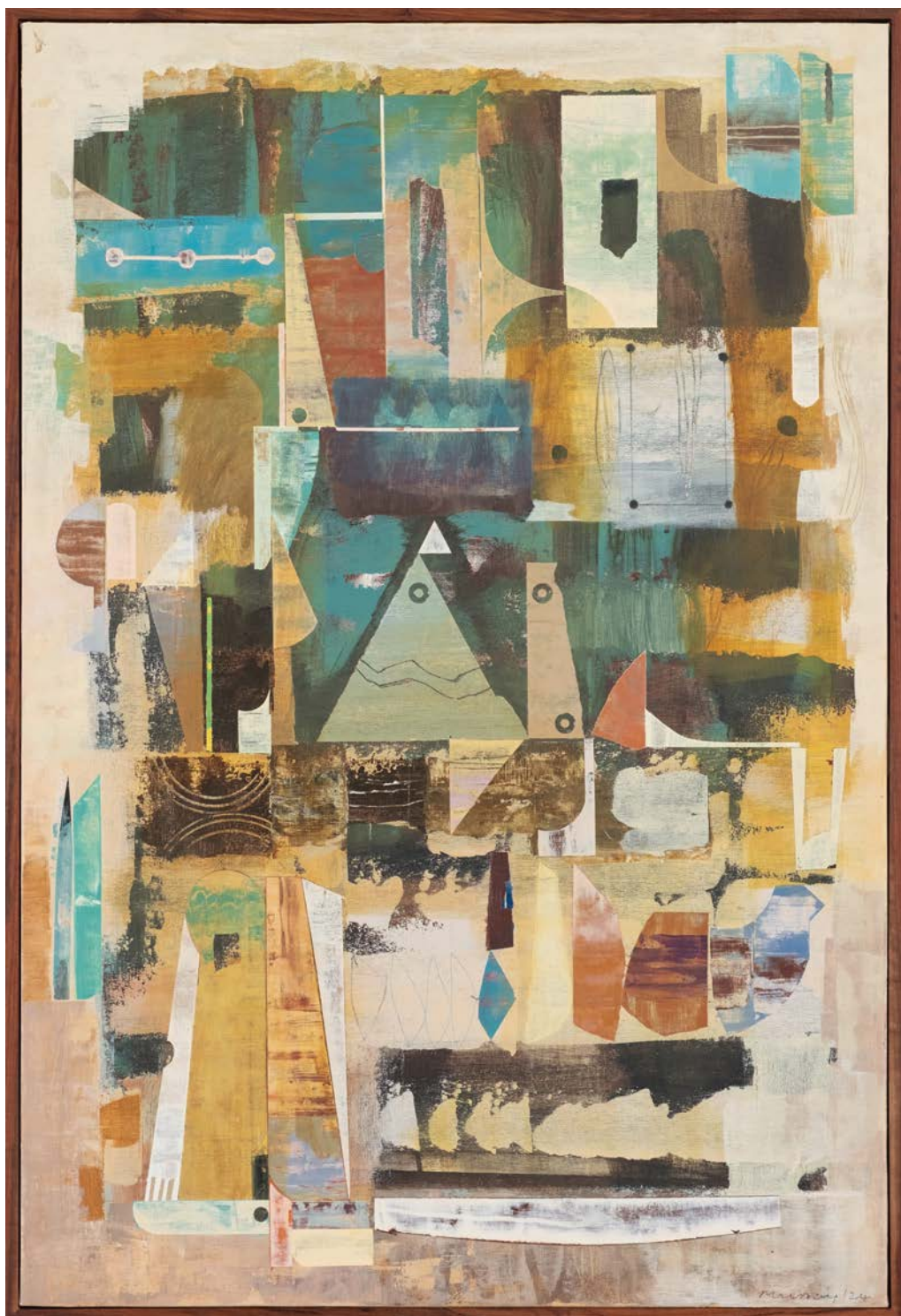


Retreat I

acrylic on canvas

85 x 57 cm

33³/₈ x 22³/₈ in.



Retreat II

acrylic on canvas

85 x 57 cm

33³/₈ x 22³/₈ in.



Second Yield

acrylic on board

59 x 45 cm

23 ¹/₈ x 17 ⁵/₈ in.





Stitch

acrylic on canvas

45 x 35 cm

17⁵/₈ x 13³/₄ in.





Unpack I

acrylic on canvas board

30 x 21.5 cm

11³/₄ x 8³/₈ in.



Unpack II

acrylic on canvas board

30 x 21.5 cm

11³/₄ x 8³/₈ in.



Unpack III

acrylic on canvas board

30 x 21.5 cm

11³/₄ x 8³/₈ in.



Unpack IV

acrylic on canvas board

30 x 21.5 cm

11³/₄ x 8³/₈ in.



Unpack V

acrylic on canvas board

30 x 21.5 cm

11³/₄ x 8³/₈ in.



Unpack VI

acrylic on canvas board

30 x 21.5 cm

11³/₄ x 8³/₈ in.



Unpack VII

acrylic on canvas board

30 x 21.5 cm

11³/₄ x 8³/₈ in.



Unpack VIII

acrylic on canvas board

30 x 21.5 cm

11³/₄ x 8³/₈ in.

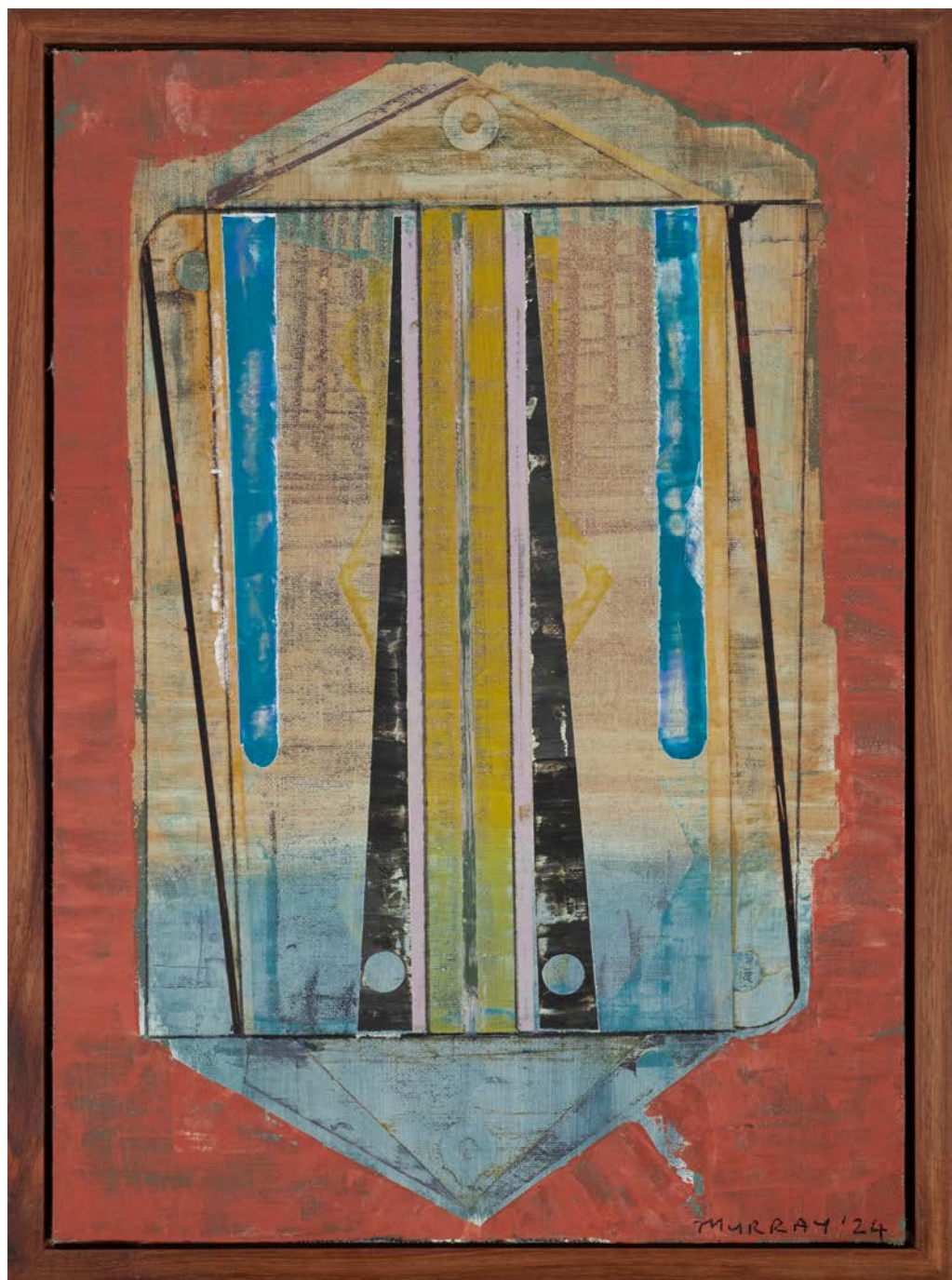


Unpack IX

acrylic on canvas board

30 x 21.5 cm

11³/₄ x 8³/₈ in.



Unpack X

acrylic on canvas board

30 x 21.5 cm

11³/₄ x 8³/₈ in.





JOHN MURRAY

b. 1973, Cape Town, South Africa

John Murray is a South African painter living and working in Cape Town, South Africa. Finding significance in the contrasting states between the tangible and the imperceptible, playfulness and seriousness, Murray moves between representational and nonrepresentational forms.

Working in oil on canvas as well as in collage and bricolage, the images used in his figurative compositions are often interpretations of found objects and photographs. Some of these images have specific cultural, historical or political significance, while others are trivia collected from the artist's everyday surroundings. These

composite images or compositions prompt viewer specific responses and associations, with the juxtaposition of images acting as triggers or catalysts for meaning.

More recently Murray's work has leaned towards abstraction, not in its purest sense but rendered in a way that still hints at representational forms beneath the surface. These works – originally inspired by the different colours and hues that accumulate on the artist's mixing palette – have evolved into an ongoing series of paintings that allude to structures that are simultaneously in the process of forming and disintegrating.



SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019** *Sum of its Parts*, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2017** *Aftermath*, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2015** *Undo All*, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2014** Southern Guild 2013. Museum of African Design (MOAD), Johannesburg
- 2013** *Ecstatic Entropy*, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2012** *Flotsam&Jetsam*, Artspace Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2005** *Africa for Africans*, Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2004** *Uniformed*, Solo Exhibition, Michael Stevenson, South Africa
- 2002** *Black & White*, AVA, Cape Town, South Africa
Meanwhile. . . ., Solo Exhibition, Art. B, Bellville, Rose Korber Art Salon at the Bay, The Bay Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2001** *Undercover*, Bell-Roberts, Cape Town Waver Group Exhibition, Oudtshoorn Arts Festival, Oudtshoorn, South Africa
- 2000** Solo exhibition, AVA, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2014** *Southern Guild 2013*. Museum of African Design (MOAD), Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2013** *Ecstatic Entropy*, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town, South Africa
Stellenbosch Revisited, Sasol Museum, Stellenbosch, South Africa
Group exhibition curated by Julia Meintjes, Cavalli Gallery, Somerset West, South Africa
Positive Tension, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town, South Africa
The Loom of the Land, Stevenson, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2012** *Making Faces: Exploring contemporary practice through Portraiture*, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town, South Africa
'Tjorts!/Cheers!' Curated by Marna Hattingh and Liza Grobler, A conversation between acclaimed and award-winning poet Danie Marais and participating visual artists Marna Hattingh, Tina Jensen, Marlise Keith, John Murray and Liza Grobler, Association for Visual Arts (AVA), Cape Town, South Africa

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024** *Winter Show*, Everard Read, London, UK
Summer Light, Everard Read, London, UK
- 2016** *Cape Town Art Fair*, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2015** *Undo All*, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town, South Africa
Joburg Art Fair, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2011** *Ik ben een Afrikaner | Reviewing the heritage and onus of the Afrikaner*, Group Exhibition with Francki Burger, Hannelie Coetzee, Johann du Plessis, Pauline Gutter, Clare Menck, John Murray, Mea Ox, Henk Serfontein, Cobus van Bosch, Réney Warrington, Artspace, Johannesburg, South Africa
Thinking Around: Mapping Sculpture, Tokara Gallery, Stellenbosch, South Africa
Art on Paper – selection of South African art on paper, Casa Labia Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Thami Mnyele Foundation – 20 years, CBK Zuidoost, Amsterdam, Holland



- Contemporary South African Painters*, Simon Stone, Kate Gottgens, John Murray & Giovanna Biallo, Kalk Bay Modern, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2010** *99c*, Drawing group exhibitions at Platform on 18th, Pretoria, South Africa
Rose Korber Art Salon, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2009** *Spaza Sketsboek*, Drawing group exhibitions at Platform on 18th, Pretoria, South Africa
- 2006/7/8** Teaching drawing at the University of Stellenbosch for the Visual Communication and Design course and Postgraduate Mphil Illustration course
- 2005** *Art @ Work: A decade and more of the Sasol art collection*, Oudtshoorn Arts Festival, Oudtshoorn, South Africa
South African Art 1840–Now, Michael Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2004** *South African Art 1850–Now*, Michael Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
Rose Korber Art Salon at the Bay, The Bay Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa
40 years: Artists and designers from the University of Stellenbosch, Salsol Art Museum, Stellenbosch, South Africa
Identity, Group Exhibition of South African Art, Scheveningen, Fortis Circus Theatre, Holland
- 2003** *Teken*, Art on Paper, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Rose Korber Art Salon at the Bay*, The Bay Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa
Contact Zones, Michael Stevenson, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2002** *Absa l'Atelier competition finals*, Johannesburg, South Africa
Group exhibition, Millennium Gallery, Pretoria, South Africa
White Horse Group Exhibition, Oudtshoorn Arts Festival, Oudtshoorn, South Africa
- 2001** *Group Exhibition of South African work*, Mac 21 Art Fair, Marbella, Spain
Exhibition of miniature paintings, Art Association of Bellville, Studio Exhibition, South Africa
- 2000** *Absolute: Colour Group Exhibition*, AVA, Cape Town, South Africa
Plastic Bag Awareness Campaign, Collaborative Installation, Kirstenbosch, South Africa
Exhibited and co-curated Emergency Group Exhibition, Bell-Roberts Container, Rust-en Vrede Gallery, Durbanville, South Africa
- 1999** *Canvas*, Arts Association of Bellville, Cape Town, South Africa
- 1998** *Kunsdinge*, US Gallery, Stellenbosch
US Staff Exhibition, Association for Visual Arts (AVA), Cape Town, South Africa
Unplugged 3, Market Theatre Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

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Everard Read London | 80 Fulham Road | Chelsea, London SW3 6HR
+44 (0)20 7590 9991 | info@everardlondon.com | www.everardlondon.com

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Friday 10 am – 5 pm | Saturdays 12 pm – 4 pm

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

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