

EDGE
ARTSPACE



ARIANE HELLOISE HUGHES
HornY Catholic Girl



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HOrnyCatholicG1rl

April 13th - May 25th 2024

HOrnyCatholicG1rl

In her work titled "HOrnyCatholicG1rl", Ariane Heloise Hughes constructs a visual commentary on the perversion of online existence, in which nothing has value, and nothing is private or sacred.

At once surreal, sensual, irreverent, and ironic, she investigates the concept of patriarchy in its various forms and examines the visual codes that continue to influence the images that appear on the web. This can be seen in the wealth of emblems that contemporary women draw on in order to express themselves. Their cultural landscape is detached from the "idols" of traditional Catholic symbolism, embracing a perceived freedom of expression that arises from and is fuelled by the narcissistic phenomenon that is typically found in social media.

Hughes critically dissects these elements, uncovering the notion of a "false freedom". Despite multiple attempts at emancipation, the filter - or code - that is used to interpret the female figure is consistently shaped by patriarchal intent. This aligns her with writers and critics who adopt a similar theoretical approach. To quote the filmmaker Laura Mulvey:

"In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female form, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional

exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness."

(Laura Mulvey, "Visual And Other Pleasures")

Similarly, Hughes states:

"I believe that the entire notion of the female gaze is meaningless, for all views are and will continue to be inherently male."

In contrast to what Lacanians might think, this idea suggests that not even technology would have the power to bring about a sort of "eclipse" of the patriarchy. On the contrary, it would be a subtle reformulation of the previous power which, by promising the illusion of unfettered female manifestation, actually confirms its own dominion.

The idea is that, today, a woman who shares a picture of herself on Instagram only has the illusion of being "empowered", for this ultimately entails seeking social - and specifically male - approval. This may bring gratification and point to success (in the form of likes, views, and so on), but she is forced to define herself (the ego-related dimension of narcissism) by the standards of what Julia Kristeva refers to as the "I/ Not I" dichotomy.

The consumerism of images serves as a deceptive pretext for once again reinforcing the control of the patriarchy. The web takes the place of God - Hughes says that "with the decline in religion we are inherently lost" - but in actual fact, the way women view themselves remains unchanged.

On the one hand, Hughes becomes a "witness of impotence", and yet on the other she offers a clear sardonic nod to the viewer with regard to the contemporary world. A world in which online platforms replace yesterday's altars, creating pseudo-oracles that draw the user into a form of progressive isolation. This is brought about and manipulated by means of a screen that both "masks" and "reveals" us.

The display diminishes our senses, and particularly that of touch, in favour of visual hyper-enhancement, promoting the powerful exhibitionist image of the selfie at the expense of our more fragile and intimate domains:

"The horny girl part is a childish infantile immature never-ending struggle of wanting to be desired and seen in the digital age without the ability to (the fear of even?) actually be perceived or tangibly understood."

New symbols such as hairstyles, long painted nails, and nude bodies exposed to voyeurs, overlap with the clerical imagery of a young woman of the new millennium. A woman heroically grappling with self-(re)discovery within the paradoxes of the venerable and the profane, of self-awareness and social complexity.

HOrnyCatholicG1rl

Surreale, sensuale, dissacrante e ironica, Ariane Heloise Hughes forgia con "HOrnyCatholicG1rl" un commentario pittorico rivolto al perversimento dell'esistenza online, in cui nulla ha valore, nulla è privato o sacro.

L'artista indaga il concetto di patriarcato nelle sue diverse accezioni e ne studia i codici visivi che tuttora influenzano la presenza delle immagini nel web; basti pensare all'universo di significati a cui la donna contemporanea attinge per declinarsi all'interno di un contesto culturale che si scolla dagli "idoli" tipici della simbologia cattolica, celebrando a sua volta una presunta libertà espressiva. Urgenza che nasce e viene alimentata dal fenomeno narcisistico tipicamente riscontrabile nei social media.

La Hughes sviscera questi elementi sino a riscontrare l'ipotesi di una "falsa libertà". Il filtro (o codice) con cui la figura femminile viene interpretata sarebbe sempre e comunque, nonostante i molteplici tentativi di emancipazione, veicolato dall'intendimento patriarcale. Si pone conseguentemente in una posizione favorevole ad autrici e critiche dal simile impianto teorico – citando la cinematografica Laura Mulveys:

"In un mondo ordinato dalla disparità sessuale, il piacere del guardare è stato scisso in attivo/ maschile e passivo/ femminile. Lo sguardo maschile determinante proietta la sua fantasia

sulla figura femminile, che è definita di conseguenza. Nel loro tradizionale ruolo esibizionistico, le donne sono simultaneamente guardate e mostrate, con il loro aspetto codificato per ottenere un impatto visivo ed erotico; si può dire che vengano connotate dall'essere oggetto dello sguardo."

(Laura Mulvey, "Visual And Other Pleasures")

Analogamente la Hughes afferma:

"Penso che l'intera nozione di sguardo femminile sia svuotata di senso, tutto lo sguardo è e continuerà ad essere maschile."

Partendo da tale presupposto, neppure la tecnologia – al contrario di quello che potrebbero pensare i lacaniani – avrebbe il potere di generare una sorta di "eclisse del patriarcato". Sarebbe, al contrario, una subdola riproposizione del potere precedente che promettendo l'illusione della libera manifestazione femminile conferma in vero il proprio dominio.

Oggi una donna che pubblica la propria immagine su Instagram sarebbe pertanto solo in apparenza padrona di se stessa. Quest'ultima insegue, in ultima istanza, una confortevole approvazione sociale, nello specifico maschile, che possa renderla gratificata, e per raggiungere il successo (likes, viewers, ecc...) è costretta a definirsi (dimensione ego-riferita del narcisismo) attraverso i canoni di quella che Julia Kristeva chiamerebbe la *I/ Not I dichotomy*.

Il consumismo dell'immagine diventa una sorta di ingannevole pretesto per

riassegnare al patriarcato nuove redini. A Dio si sostituisce il Web – Hughes afferma: "con il declino della religione siamo irrimediabilmente persi" – ma di fatto la condizione della donna nella sua auto-percezione immaginifica non cambia.

L'artista, se da un lato diventa "testimone di impotenza", dall'altro propone all'osservatore un dichiarato cenno sardonico relativamente allo scenario attuale, in cui piattaforme online di diverso genere si sostituiscono al vecchio "altare" e predispongono risposte pseudo-oracolari che costringono il fruitore all'isolamento progressivo, predisposto e manipolato attraverso uno schermo che ci "maschera" e ci "rivela" nel contempo.

Il display attenuerebbe infatti i nostri sensi – soprattutto quello tattile – in virtù dell'iperpotenziamento visivo, promuovendo l'immagine forte ed esibitiva del selfie a discapito della nostra sfera più fragile e intima:

"Recitare il ruolo della ragazza eccitata è una lotta senza fine, immatura e infantile - una lotta per essere desiderata e vista nell'era digitale, senza poter (o aver paura di?) essere compresa o realmente capita."

Nuovi simboli come acconciature, unghie lunghe colorate, corpi nudi esposti al voyeurismo si sovrappongono alle iconografie clericali di una giovane esponente del nuovo millennio, eroicamente incline a (ri)scoprire se stessa entro le contraddizioni del venerabile e del profano, autocoscienza e complessità sociale.

Respectfully Declined

Oil on linen

100 x 60 cm

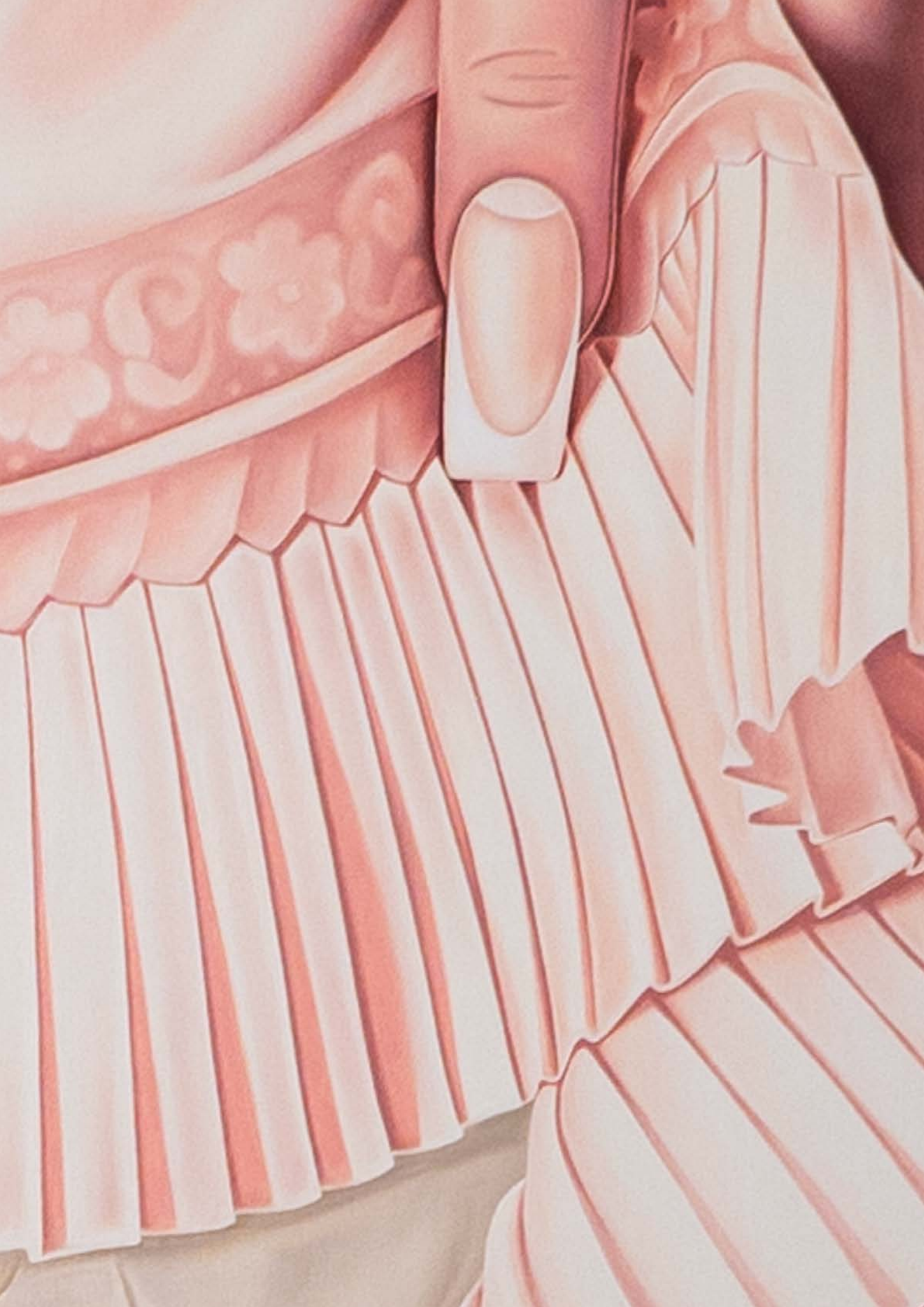
39.4 x 23.6 inches

2024



IT IS
STRICTLY
FORBIDDEN
TO TOUCH





That's Not Very BabyGirl Of You

Oil on linen

70 x 40 cm

27.5 x 15.7 inches

2024

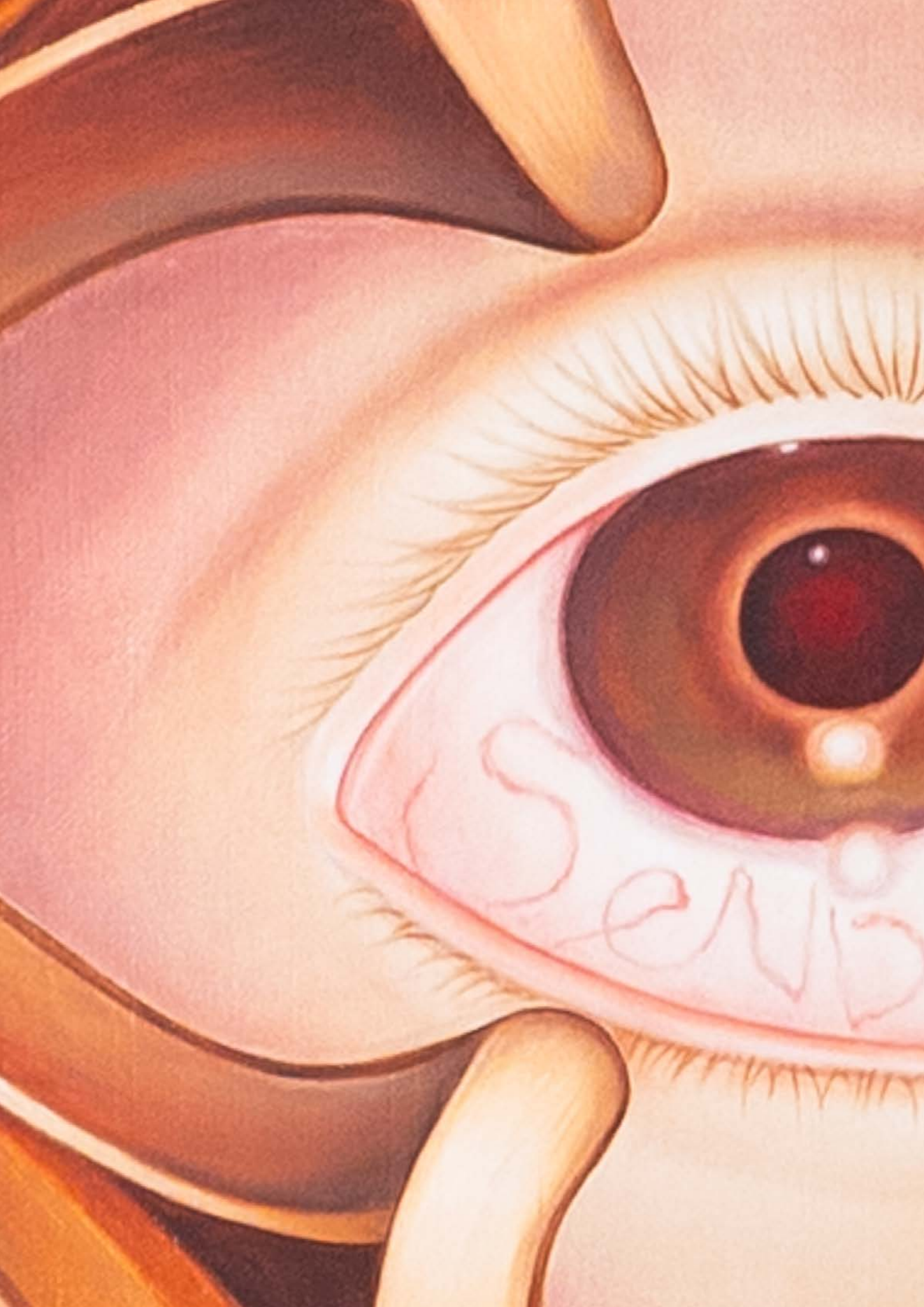


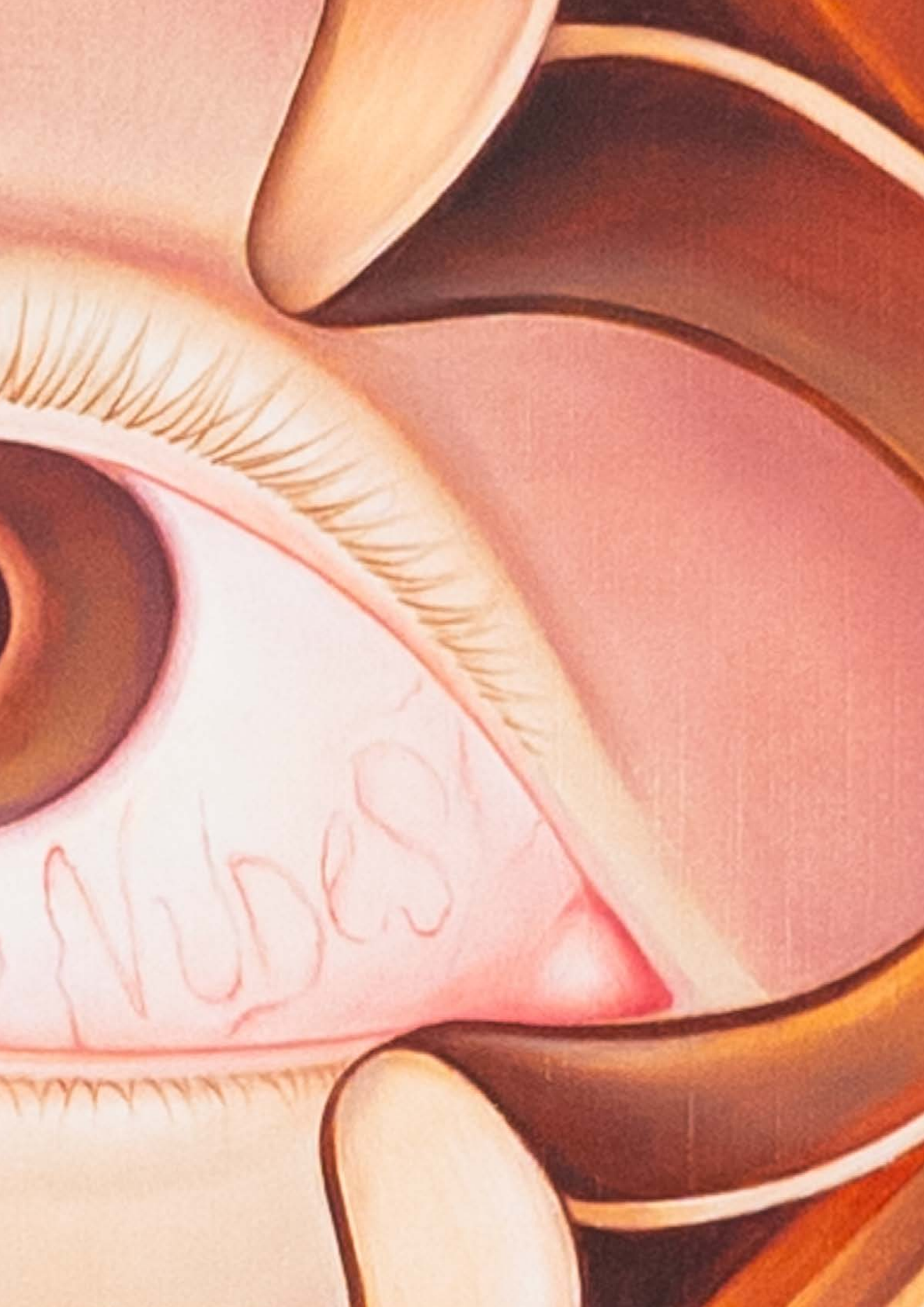




So I Know It's Real
Oil on linen
40 x 25 cm
15.7 x 9.8 inches
2024

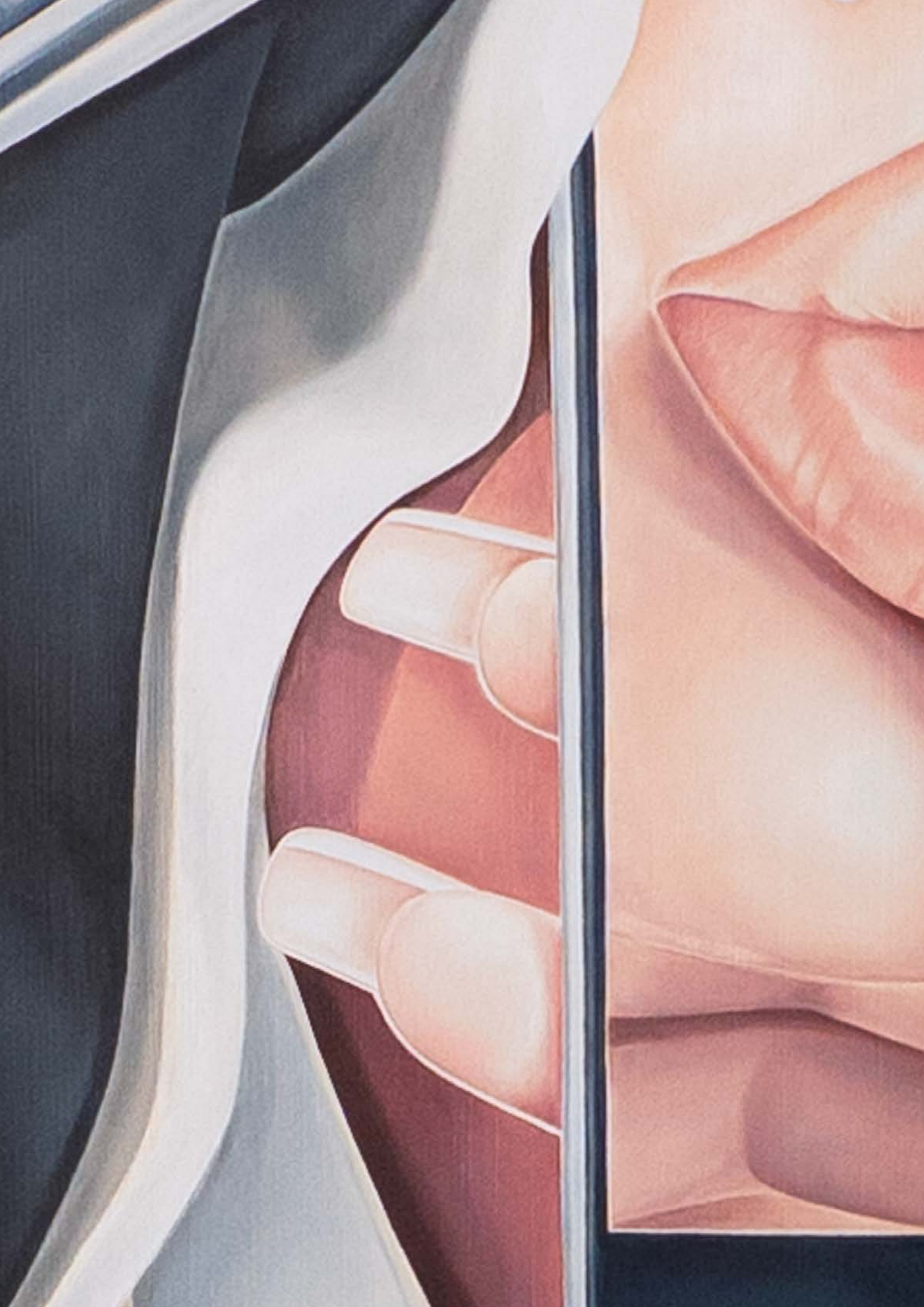


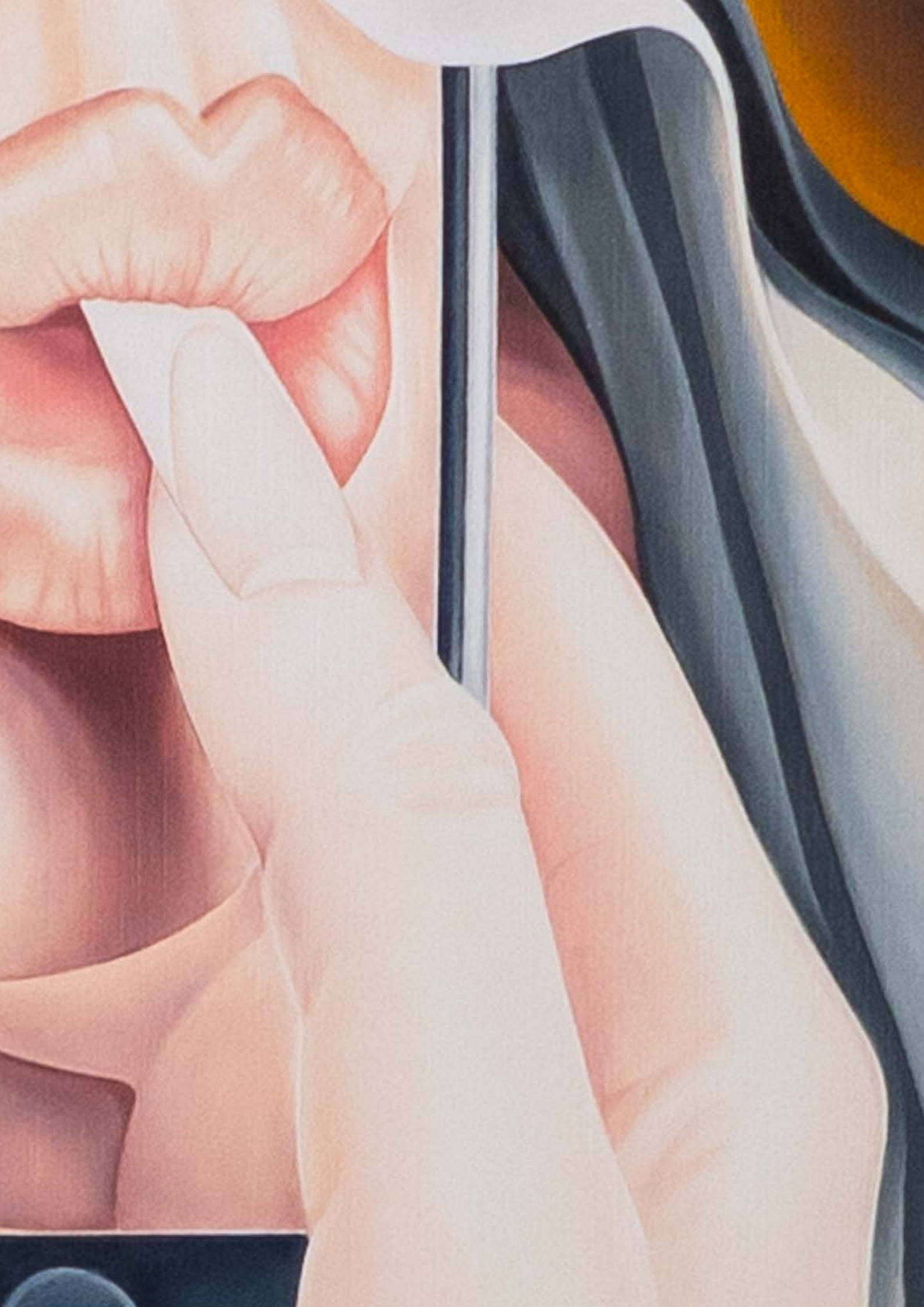




678triple98212
Oil on linen
70 x 40 cm
27.5 x 15.7 inches
2024







The Rot Consumes

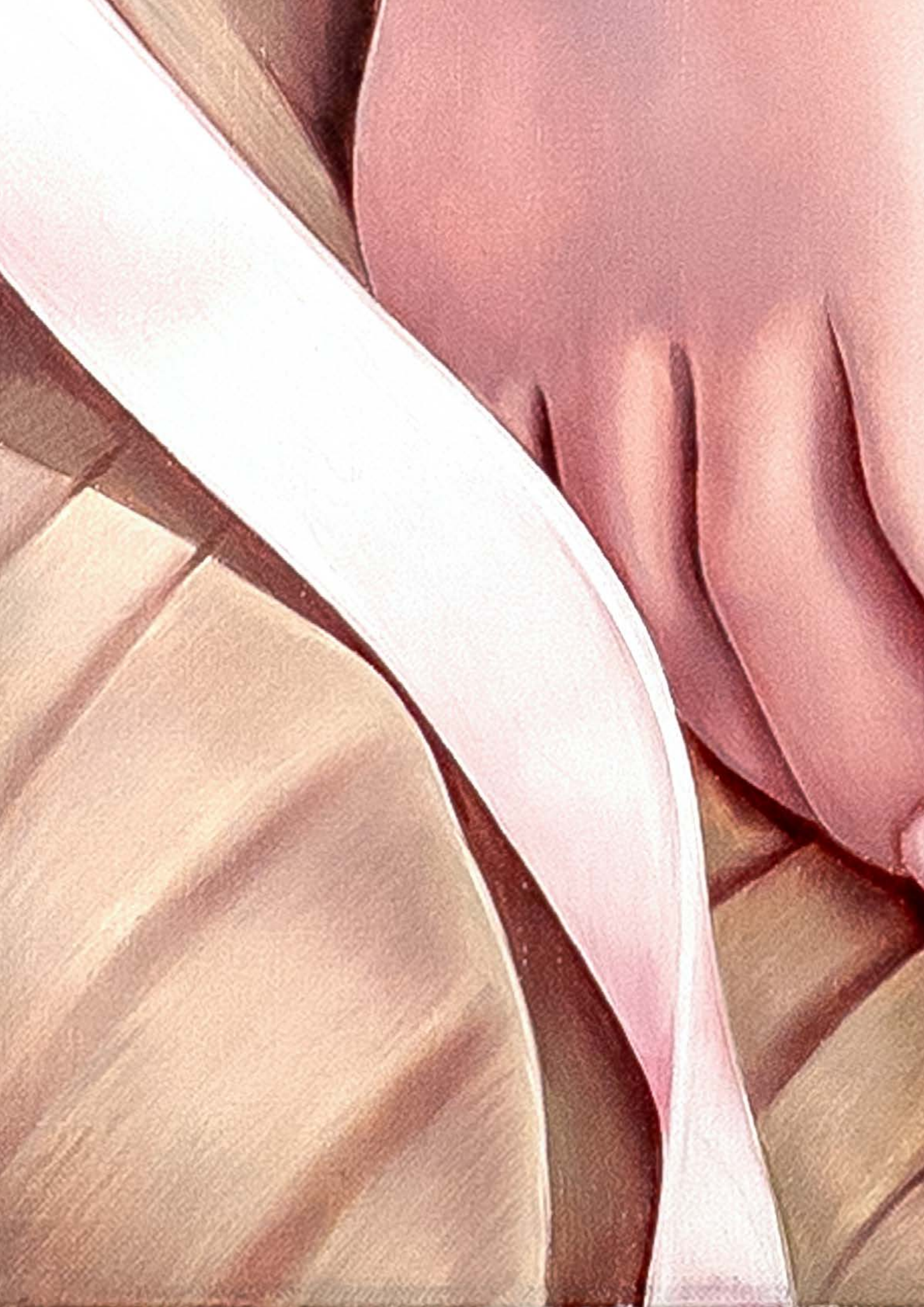
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Blind Leading The Blind
Oil on linen
100 x 60 cm
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2024







(The Original Is) For Your Eyes Only

Oil on linen
130 x 80 cm
51.2 x 31.5 inches
2024









Ariane Heloise Hughes in her studio.

ARIANE HELOISE HUGHES

The British-Australian artist Ariane Heloise Hughes describes her work as intricate, sensual, absurd. Appropriating often banal and unwittingly familiar narratives into a visual vernacular full of unusual and exaggerated forms, Hughes' surrealistic depictions create a world that aims to draw the viewer in, engaging them in a

process of active looking and contemplative thought. Through anachronistic objects and elements, distortions of scale and uses of color, the artist usurps her reflections of now into ostensibly traditional and curious settings. By simultaneously drawing attention to the artifice of the image while presenting it as truth through

naturalistic renderings, she is reflecting on the function of social media. Engaging deeply with the aesthetics and history of surrealism, Hughes' paintings draw on and exaggerate the interplay between the real and the unreal. Hughes holds a BA in Painting from Camberwell University.

L'artista britannico-australiana Ariane Heloise Hughes descrive il suo lavoro come intricato, sensuale, assurdo. Appropriandosi di narrazioni spesso banali e involontariamente familiari in un vernacolo visivo denso di forme insolite e portate all'estremo, le rappresentazioni surrealistiche di Hughes plasmano un immaginario che mira ad attirare lo

spettatore, favorendo uno sguardo attivo e un pensiero contemplativo. Attraverso oggetti ed elementi anacronistici, distorsioni di scala ed un peculiare uso del colore, l'artista si appropria di alcune riflessioni circa il presente trasponendole in ambientazioni apparentemente tradizionali e curiose. Attirando l'attenzione sull'artificio dell'immagine

e presentandola allo stesso tempo come verità attraverso rappresentazioni naturalistiche, riflette sulla funzione dei social media. Abbracciando profondamente l'estetica e la storia del surrealismo, i dipinti di Hughes attingono ed esaltano l'interazione tra il reale e l'irreale. Hughes ha conseguito una laurea in pittura presso la Camberwell University.

CHECKLIST



Respectfully Declined

Oil on linen
100 x 60 cm
39.4 x 23.6 inches
2024



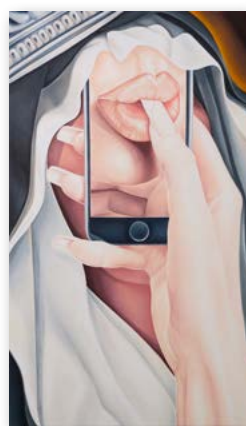
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PAST EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions & Publications

- Jan 2024: Horripilation, Group Show, The Hole (New York)
Jan 2024: New Now Part 2, Group Show, Guts Gallery (London)
Dec 2023: Moons, Group Show, Enari Gallery (Amsterdam)
Nov 2023: Surrealism & Witchcraft, Group Show, LAMB Gallery (London)
July 2023: CAN Art, Group Booth, Allouche Benias (Ibiza)
July 2023: Don't Cry Because It Happened, Smile Because It's Over, Solo Show, Steve Turner (Los Angeles)
July 2023: Illuminations, Group Show, Steve Turner (Los Angeles)
April 2023: Art Brussels, Group Booth, The Hole (Brussels)
April 2023: I Want To Turn Into You, Three Person Show, Coulisse Gallery (Stockholm)
Jan 2023: (It's My Party) I Can Cry If I Want To, Group Show, Guts Gallery (London, curated)
Nov 2022: Untitled Art Fair, Group Show, Steve Turner (Miami)
Oct 2022: Vacation II, Group Show, Vacancy (Shanghai)
Sept 2022: Salt And Mud, Group Show, Kupfer (London)
July 2022: Better Luck Next Time, Solo Show, GNYP (Berlin)
May 2022: win Sisters, Group Show, Roman Road (London)
April 2022: Damned If I Do, Group Show, Gallery 46 (curated)
Dec 2021: Eyes Of The Night Creatures, Group Show, Delphian Gallery (online)
Oct 2021: Don't Go South, Group Show, Studio Berkheim (Stuttgart)
July 2021: End of Roman Residency Exhibition, Group Show, Columbia Hotel (London)
July 2021: If The House Sets On Fire, Three Person Show, Chapelle XIV (Paris)
June 2021: Art On A Postcard Summer Auction Show, Group Show, Hoxton Gallery (London)
June 2021: Ones To Watch, Group Show, Auc Art (online)
May-July 2021: In residence with Roman Road at the Columbia Hotel (London)
May 2021: Caught In The Act, Group Show, Wells Art Project Space (London)
April 2021: Get A Load Of This, Group Show, Daniel Raphael (London)
April 2021: Interview with Mollie Barnes (She Curates)
April 2021: First Swing Of The Bat, Group Show, Gallery 46 (London)
March 2021: Mnemosyne, Group Show, Purslane (online)
Dec 2020: Interview with Metodo Milano
Nov 2020: With Love, Group Show, Paint Talk (online)
Oct 2020: Off Kilter, Solo Show, Oped Space (Tokyo)
Sept 2020: GoWithYamo Group Show, Hoxton 253 (London)
Aug 2020: Merch collaboration with AYOUNG plaza (Xiamen)
Aug 2020: Idle Thoughts, Group Show, Soho Revue (London)
May 2020: Featured in Linked Yet Contact Free Editorial for 1883 Magazine
May 2020: Featured in the third issue of Venomous Magazine
April 2020: Interview with Intermission Bristol
Oct 2019: Featured in the first issue of Pure Filth Magazine
June 2019: Degree Show Camberwell University

This catalogue was published on the occasion of the exhibition
Ariane Heloise Hughes HORnyCatholicG1rl at Edge Art Space
Turin, April 13th - May 25nd

All artworks © Ariane Heloise Hughes

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Design by Riccardo Fattore

Translation by Simon Turner

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