

Introduction to Ni Weihua's Paintings

Recent Works (Incorporation of 3D Printing Materials)

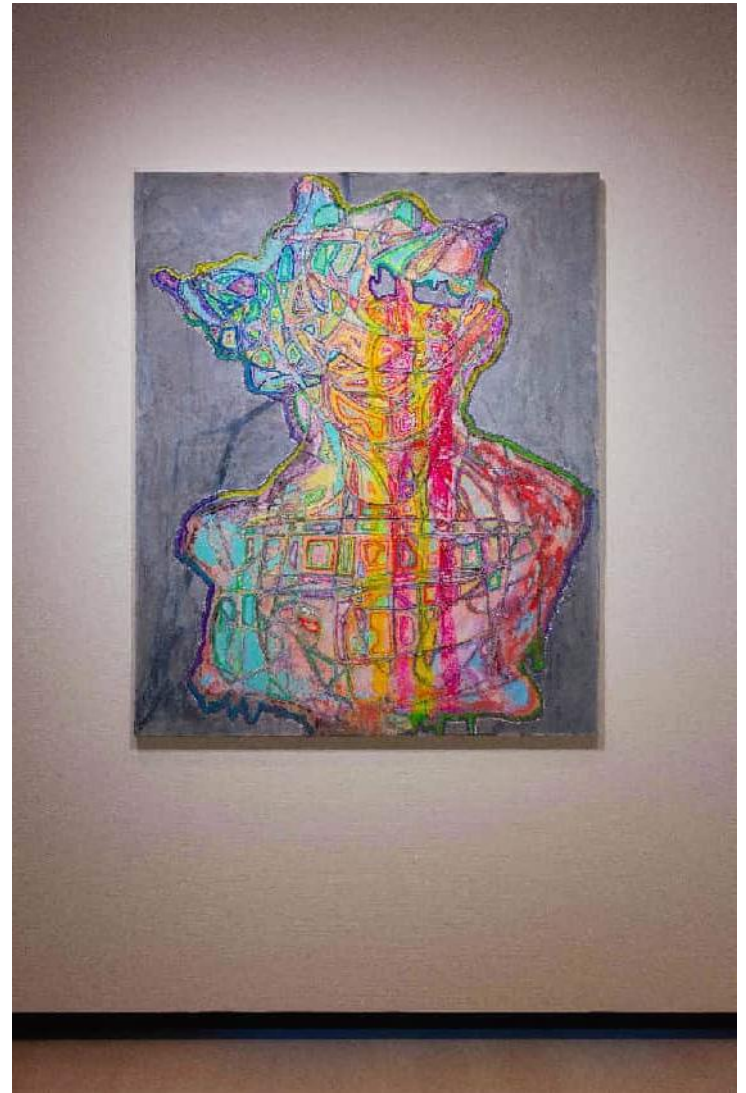
2023-2025



The Trace of the Future – The Silicon Age 165×135cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2025

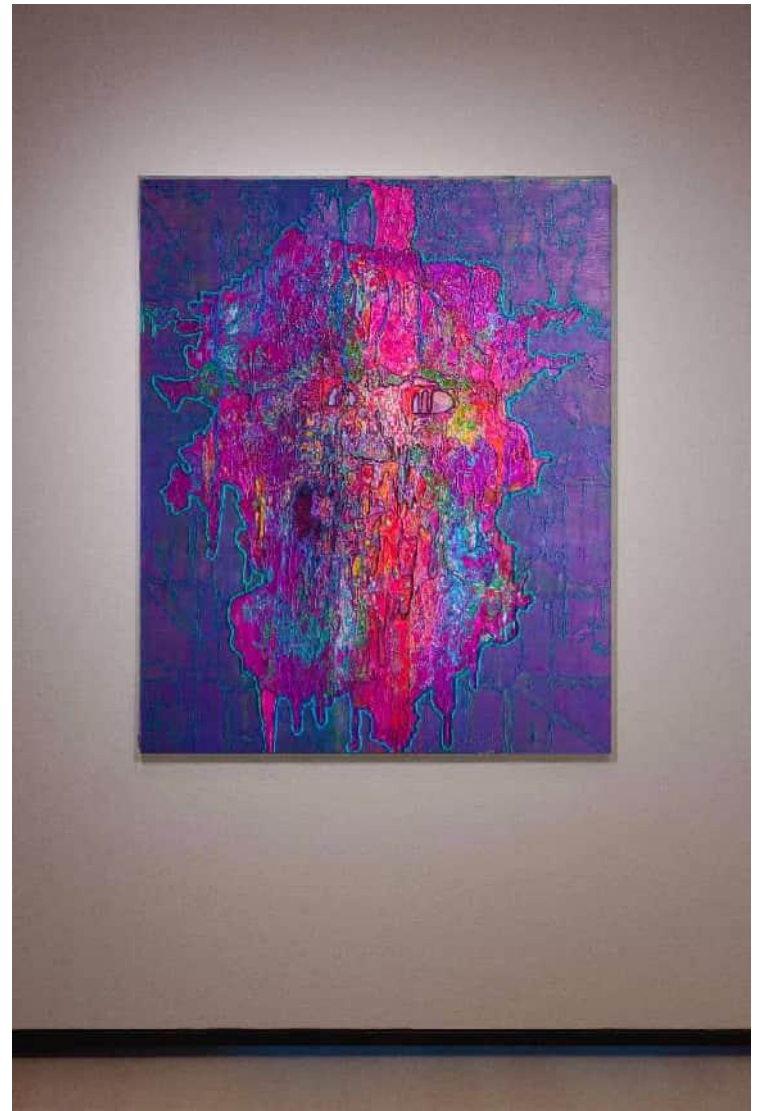
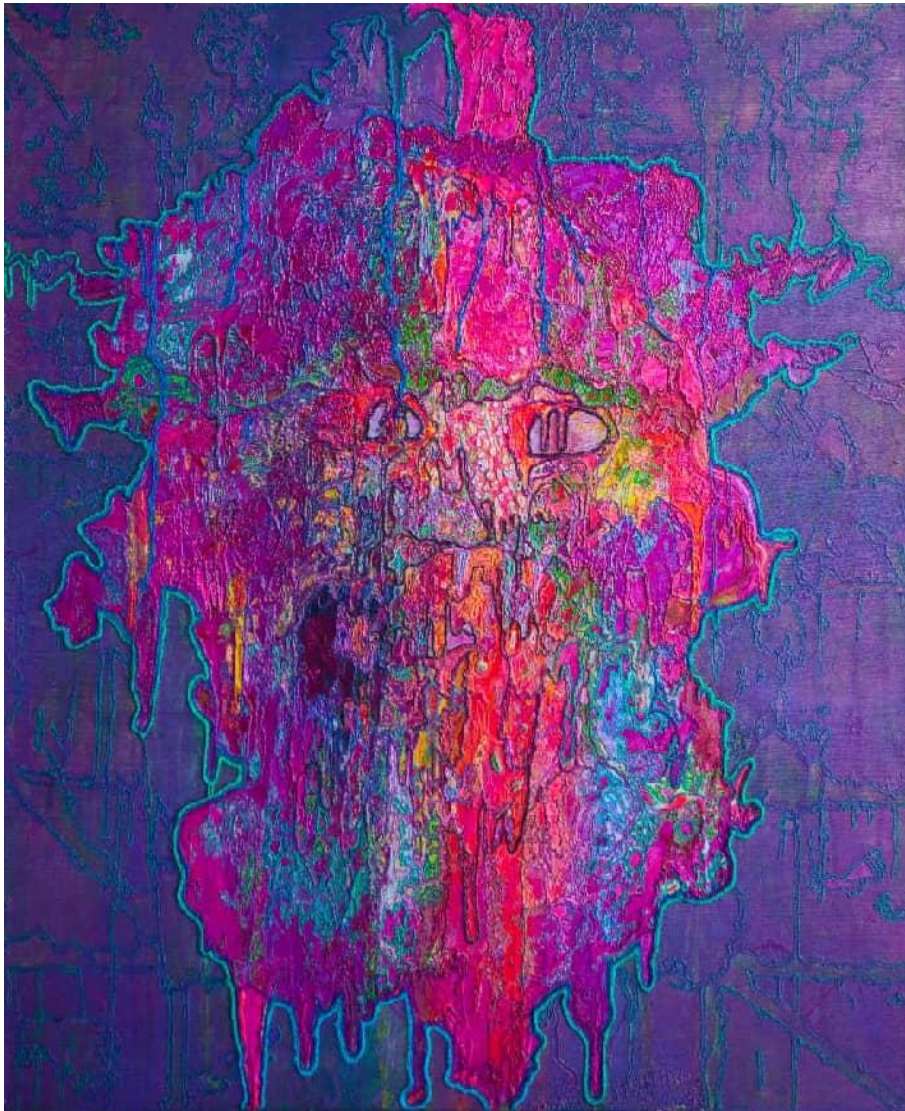






The Trace of the Future – Ultraman 135×165cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2023



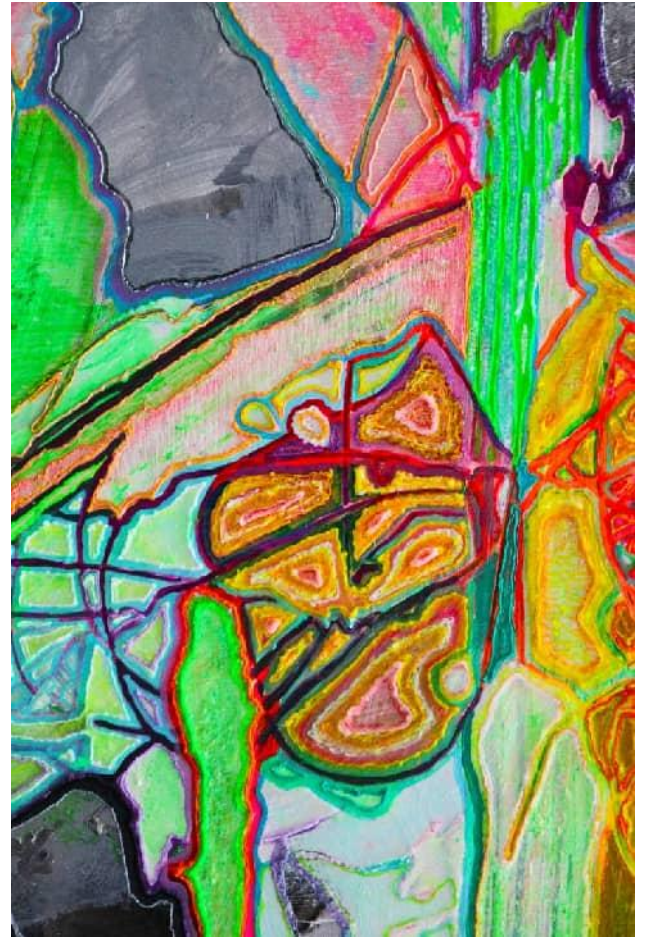


The Trace of the Future – Divine Light 135×165cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Materials, 2024





The Trace of the Future – Subconsciousness 165×270cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2023



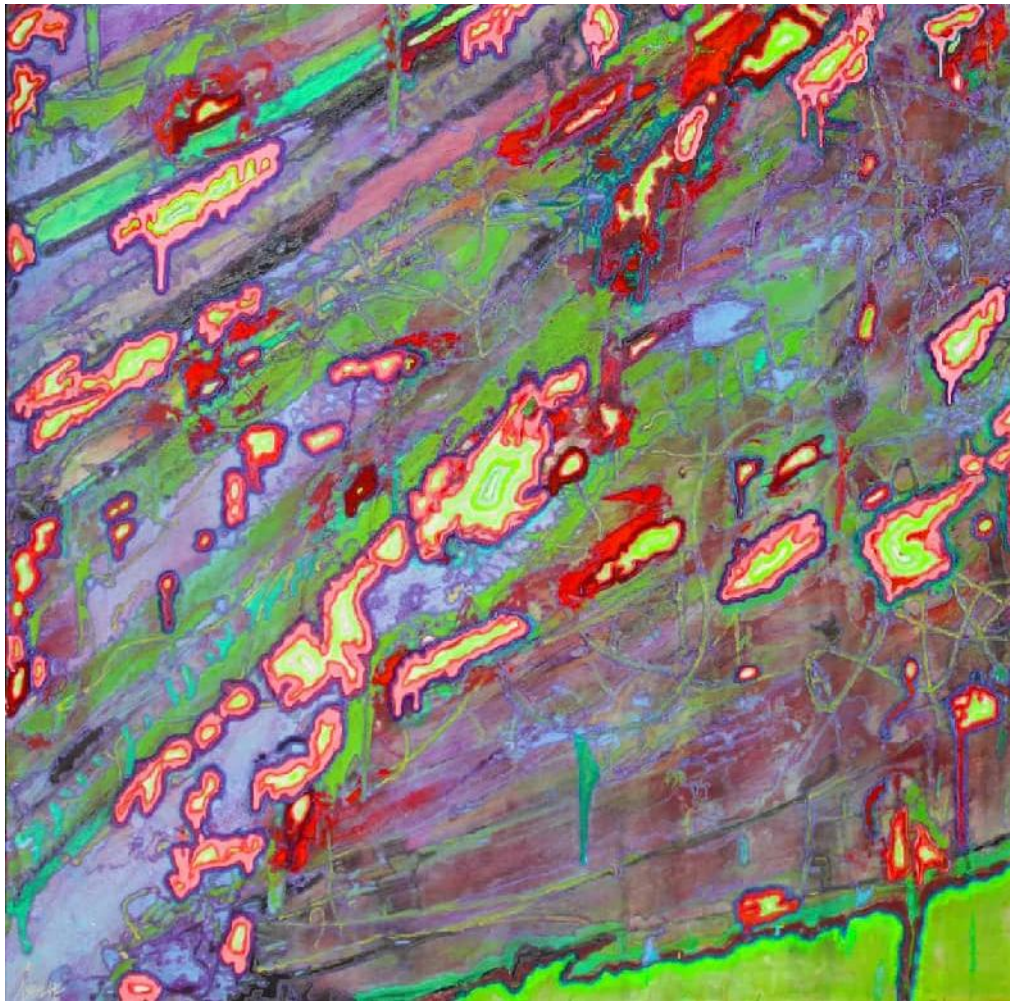


The Trace of the Future – Quantum Fluctuation 165×135cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2024





The Trace of the Future – Scar 135×165cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2024





The Trace of the Future – Pond 165×135cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2024

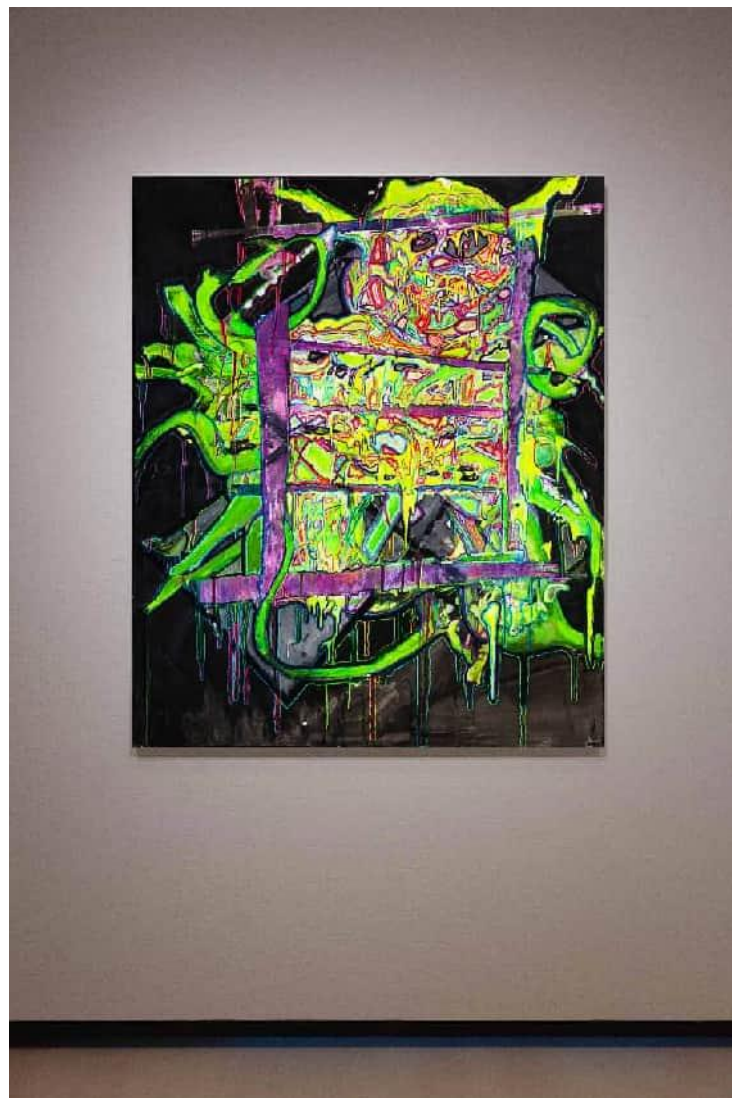






The Trace of the Future – Beast Tracks 165×135cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2024





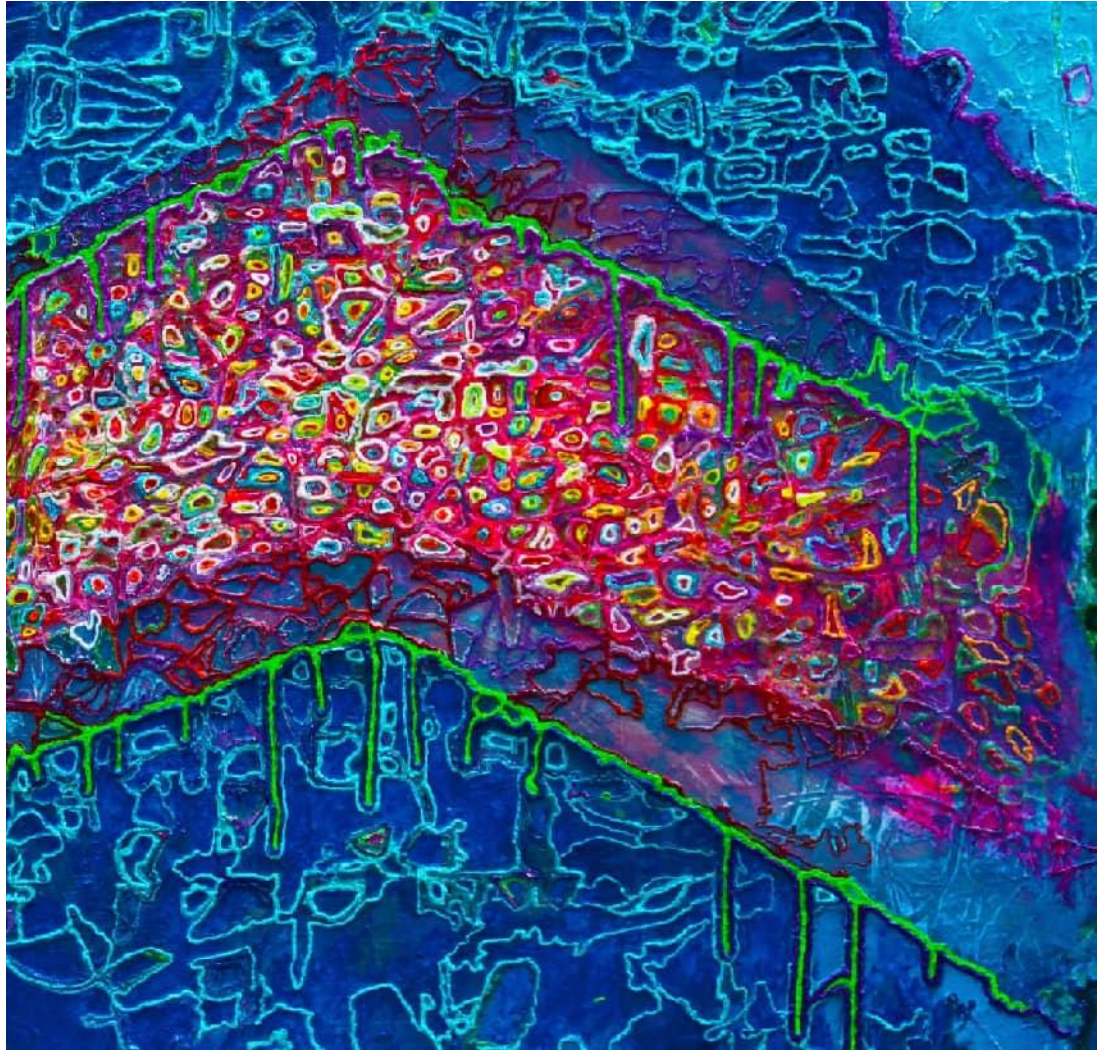
The Trace of the Future – Octopus Appearing 135×165cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2023





The Trace of the Future – Space City 165×135cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2023

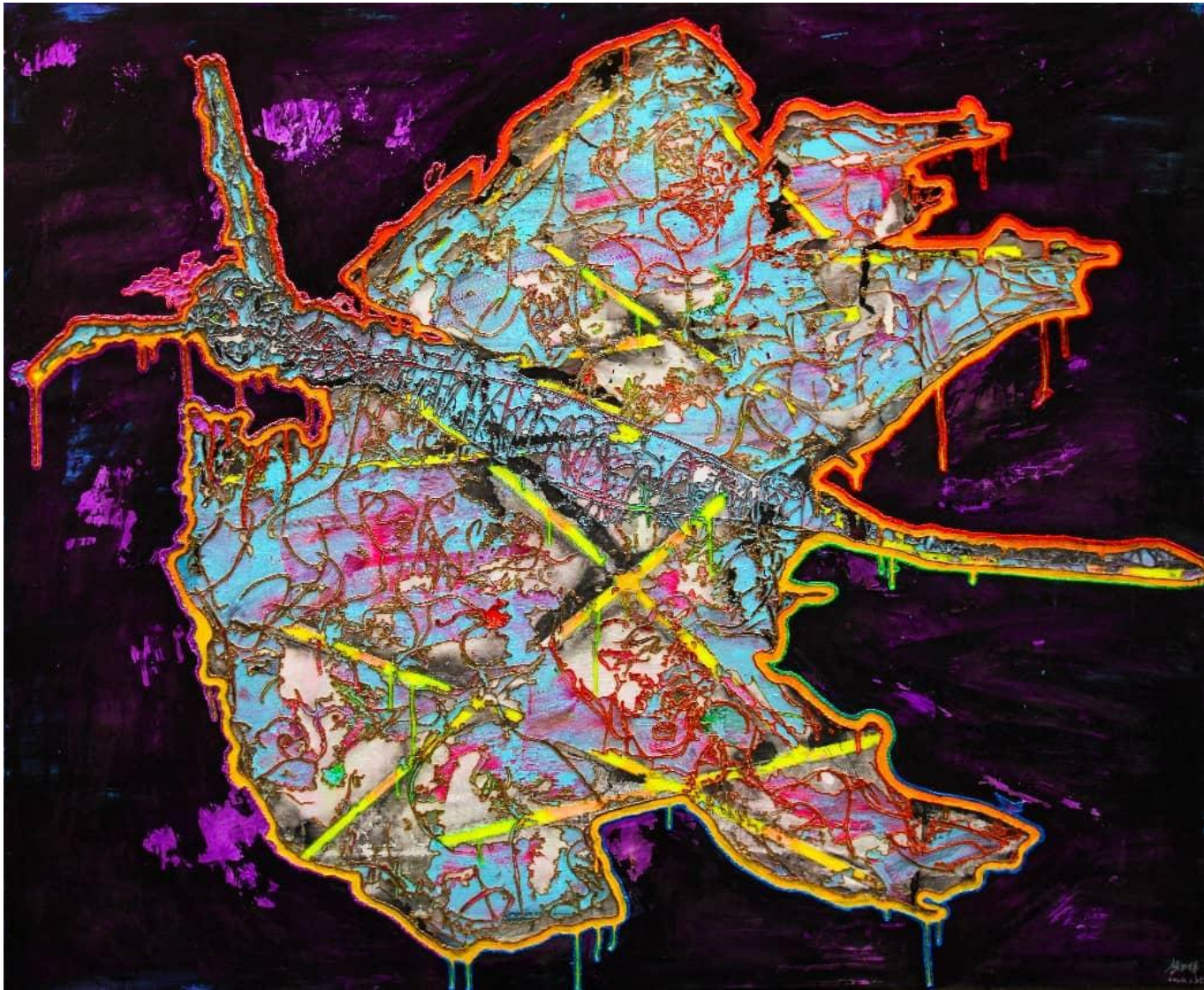






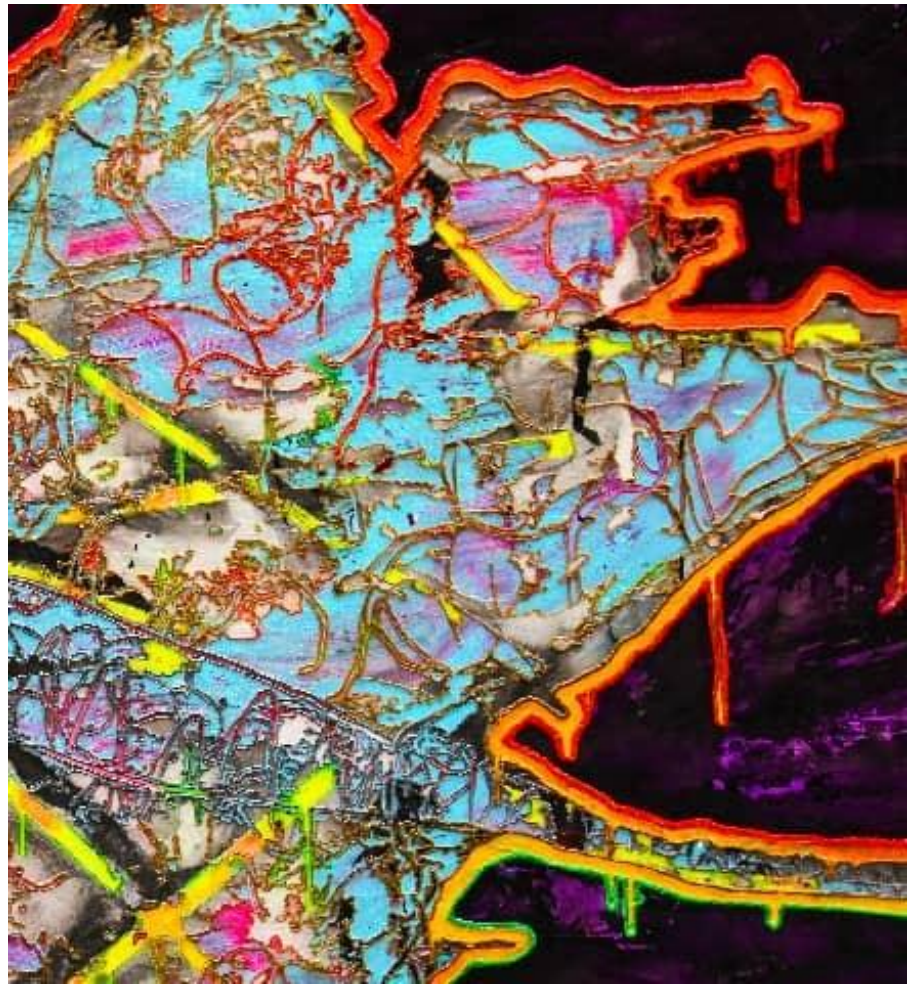
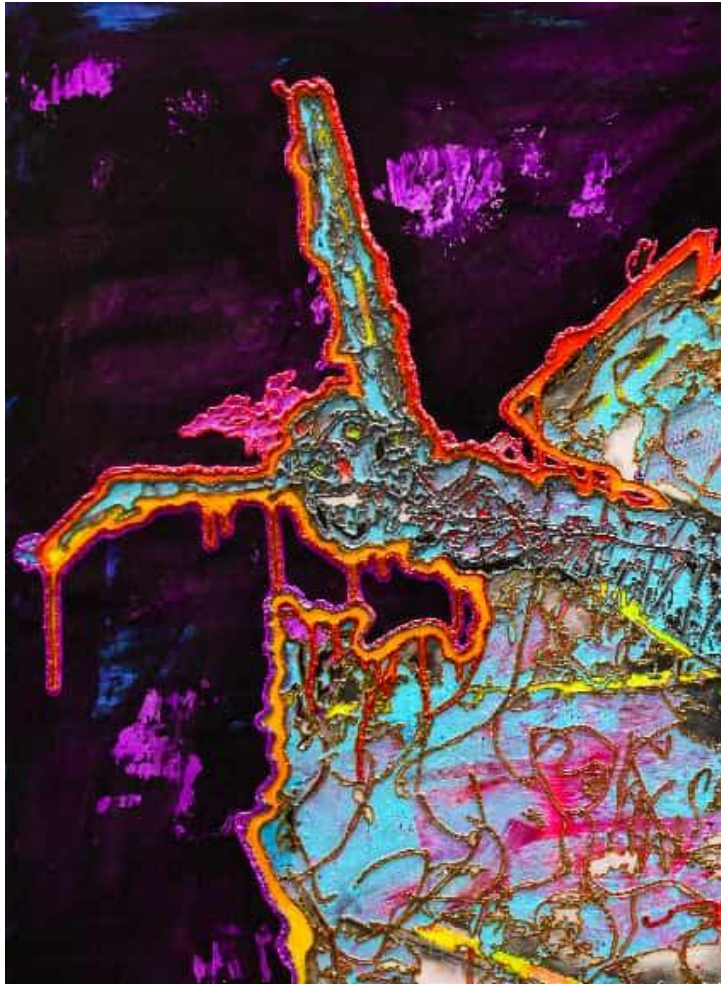
The Trace of the Future – Doraemon 165×135cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2023





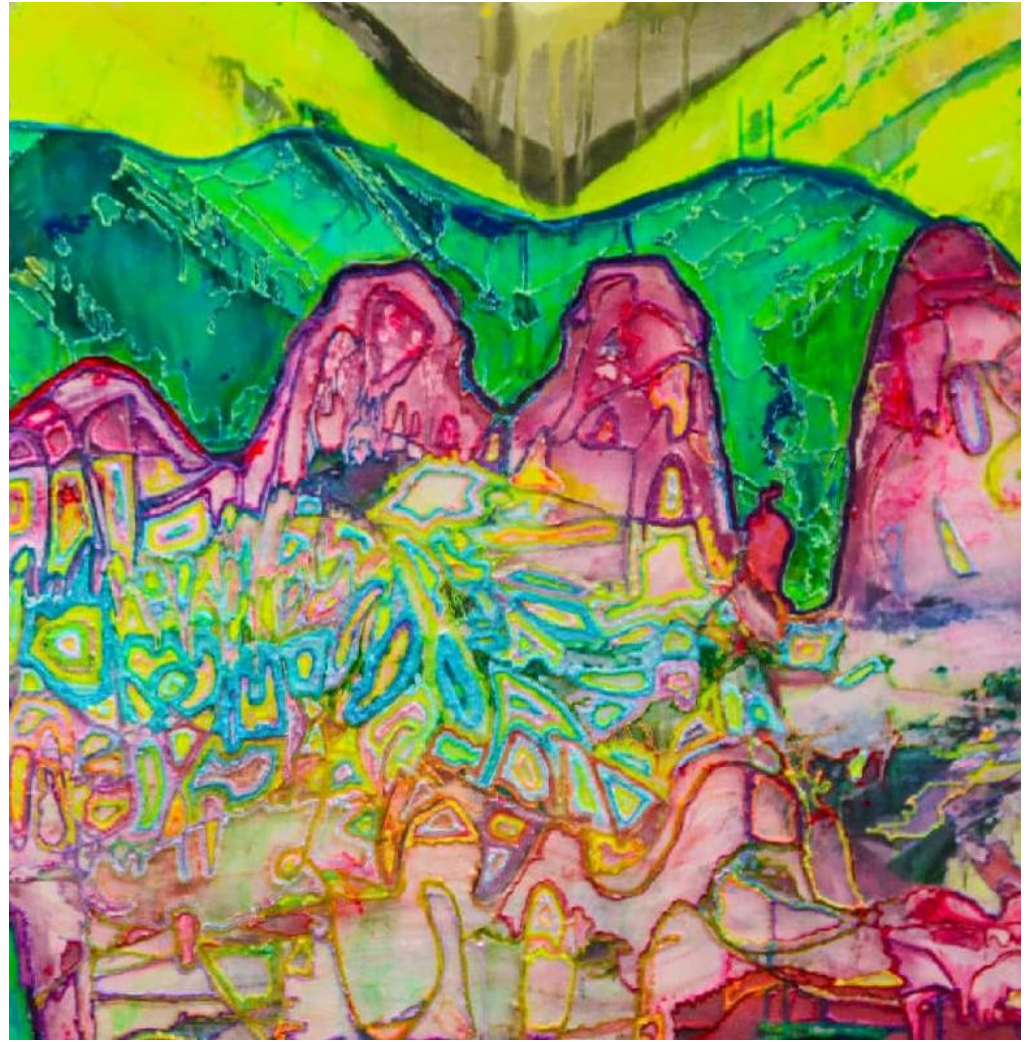
The Trace of the Future – Flying Specimen 165×135cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2024

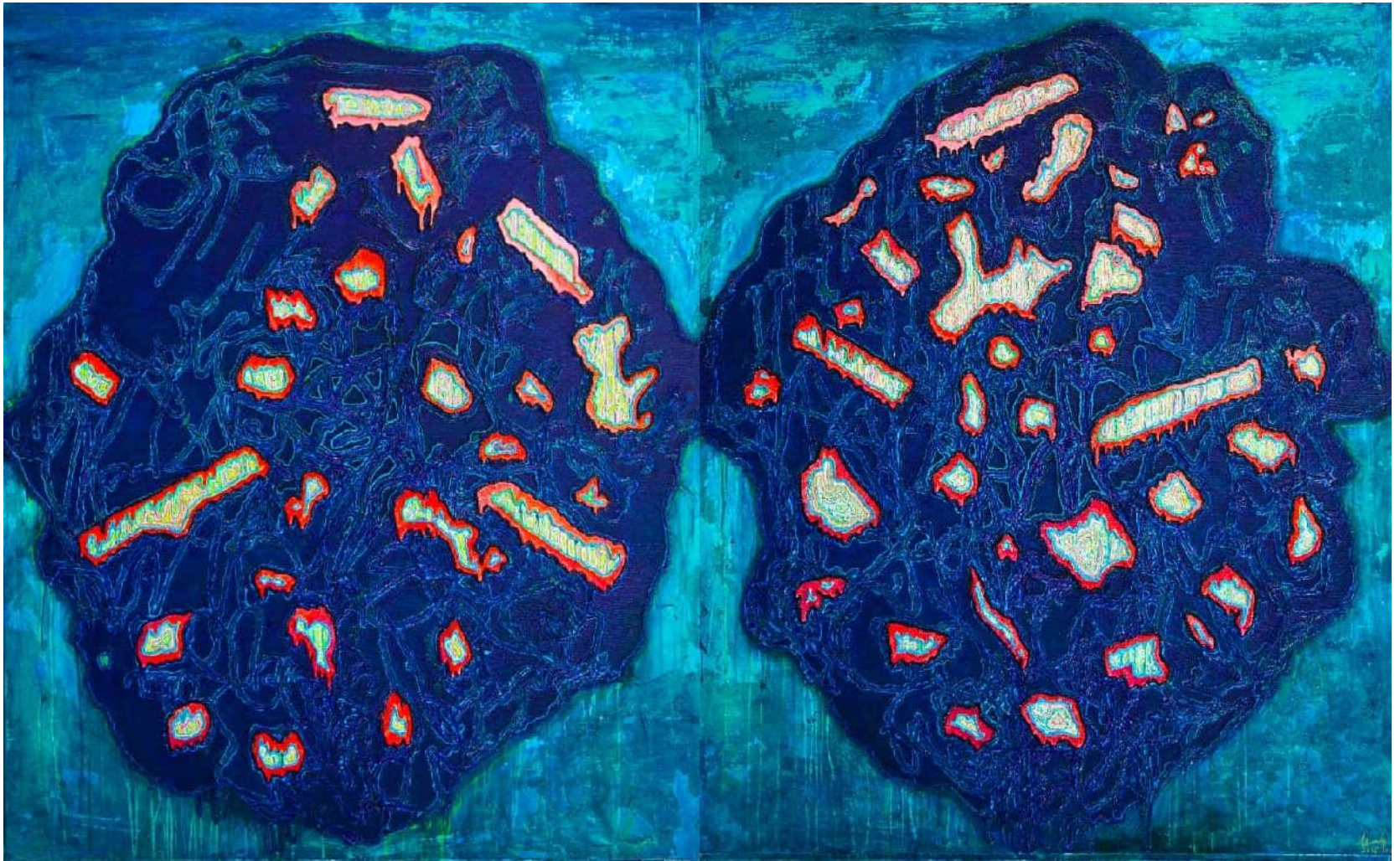




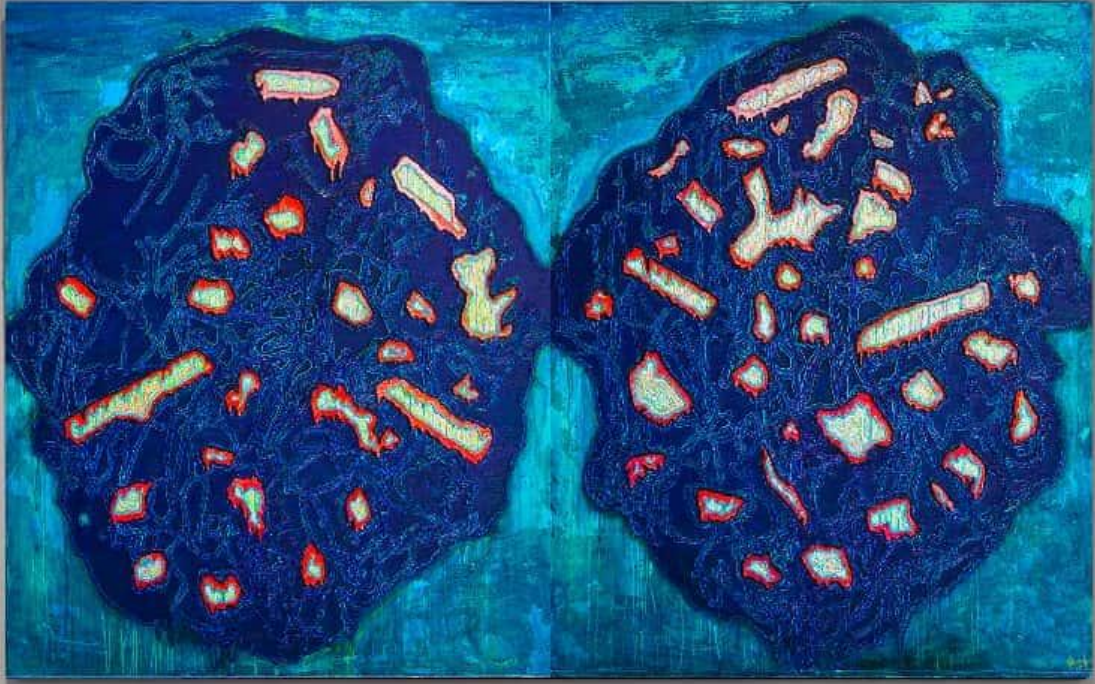


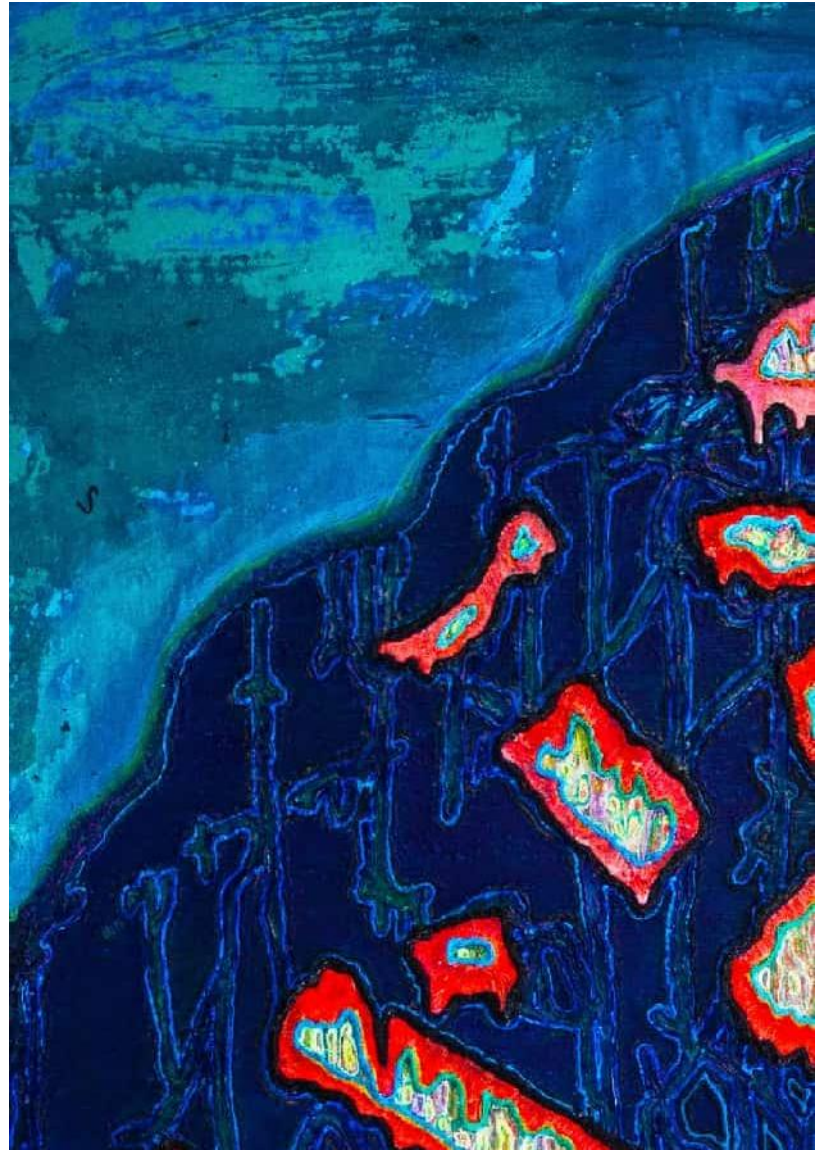
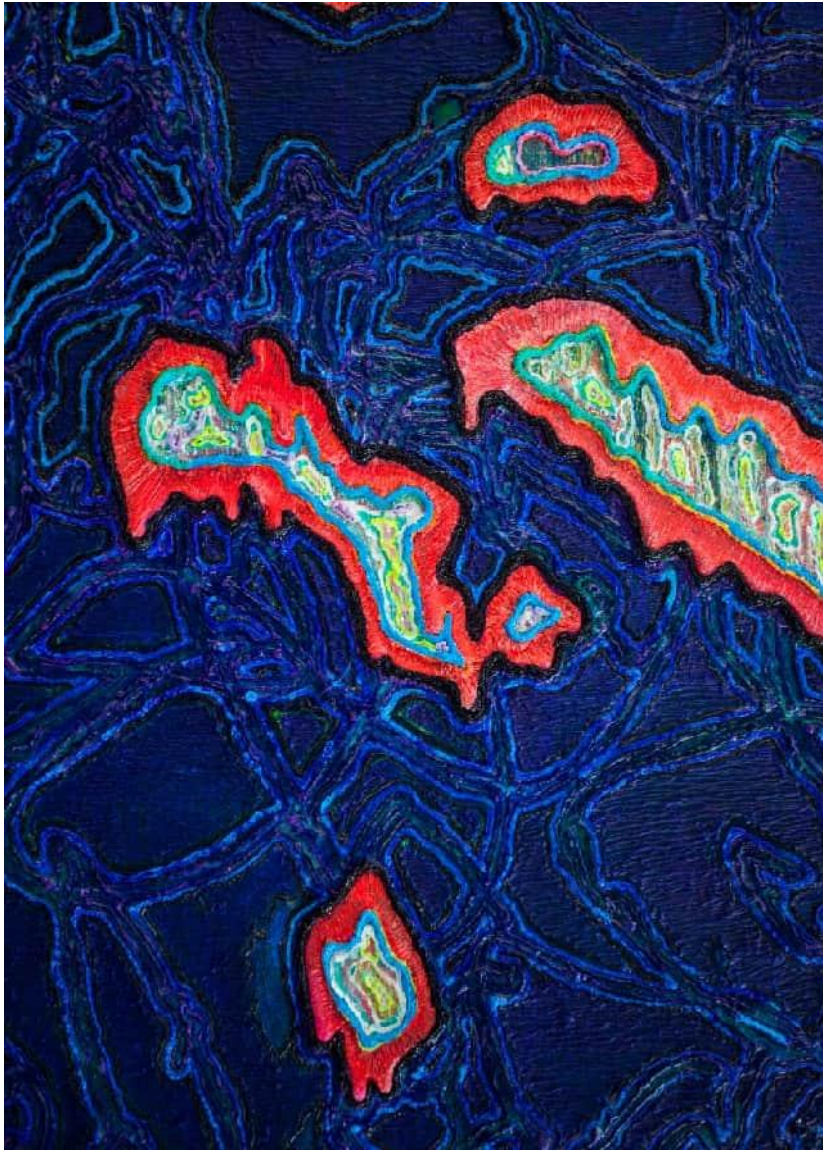
The Trace of the Future – Mountain Human Human Mountain 165×135cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2023





The Trace of the Future – Blue Treasure 165×270cm, Acrylic on Canvas and 3D Printing Materials, 2025





2、 Middle-Period Works (Diversified Experimentalism)

2020-2024



The Trace of the Future – New
Classic of Mountains and Seas (X)
135×165cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2024





The Trace of the Future – New
Classic of Mountains and Seas (IV)
165×135cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2023





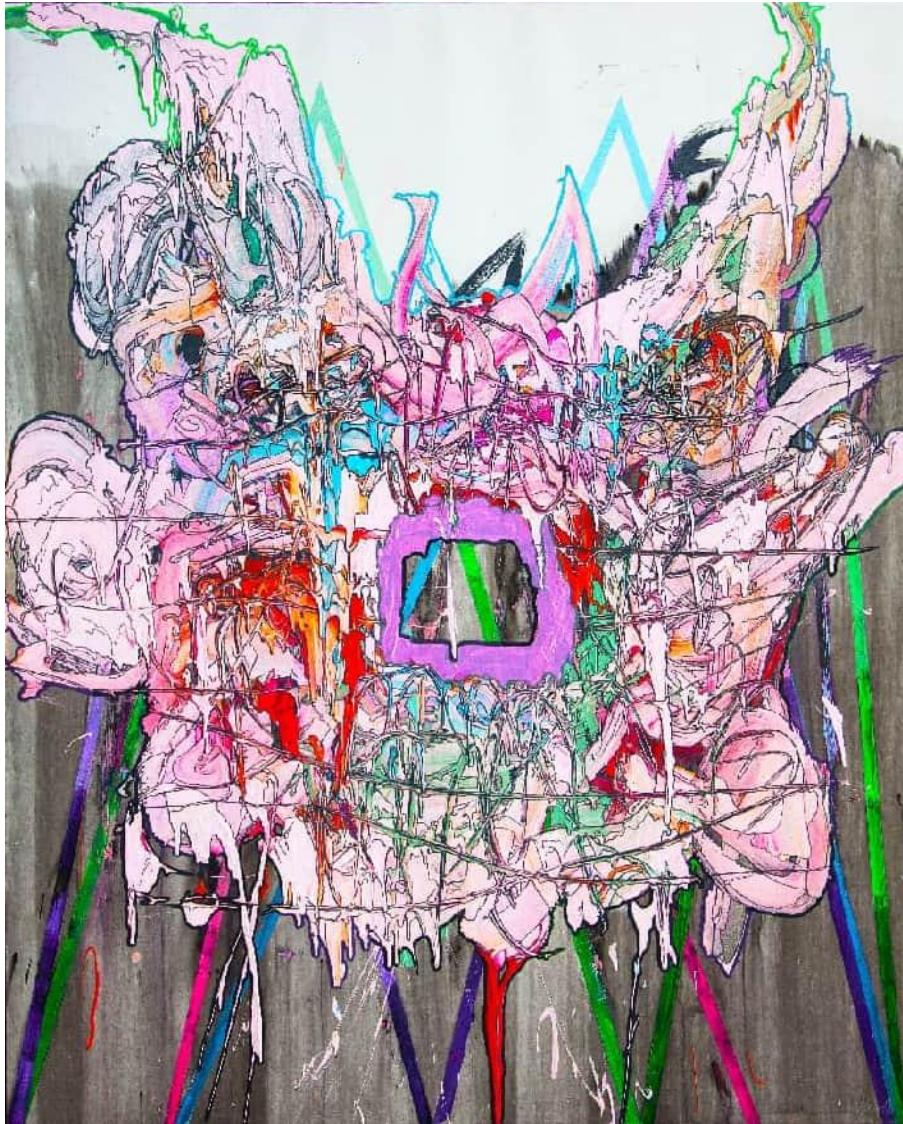
The Trace of the Future – New
Classic of Mountains and Seas (VI)
165×135cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2023





The Trace of the Future – New
Classic of Mountains and Seas (VIII)
135×165cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2023



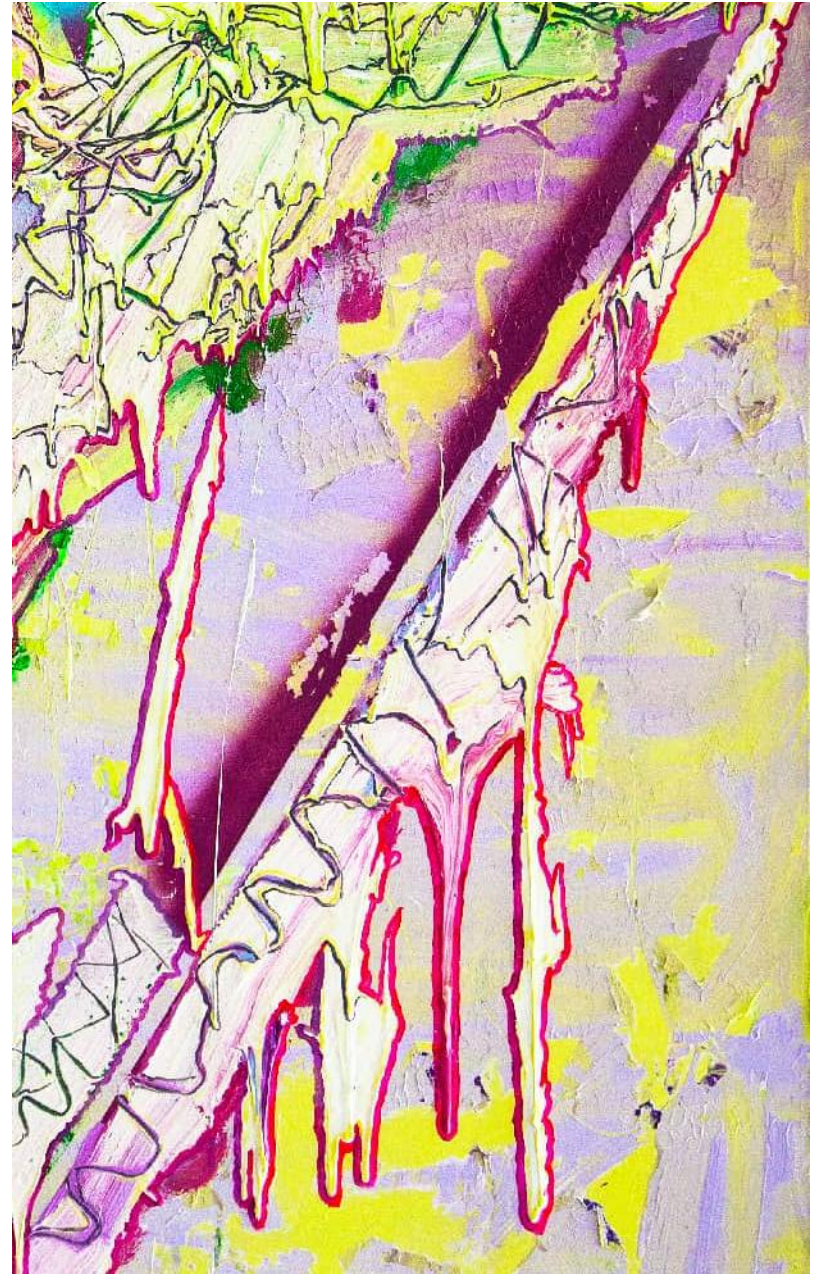


The Trace of the Future – New
Classic of Mountains and Seas (IX)
135×165cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2023



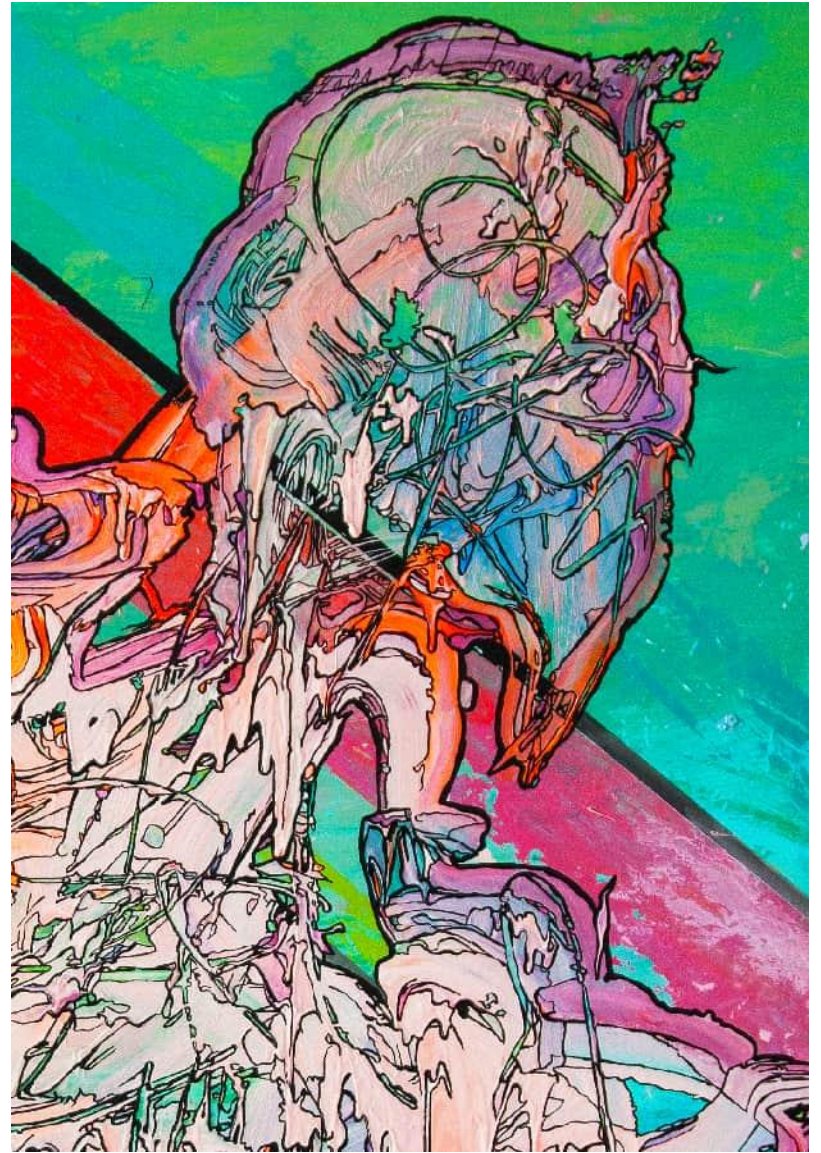


The Trace of the Future – New
Classic of Mountains and Seas (X)
135×165cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2024





The Trace of the Future – New
Classic of Mountains and Seas (I)
135×165cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2023





The Trace of the Future – New
Classic of Mountains and Seas (II)
135×165cm
Acrylic on Canvas + 3D Materials
2023

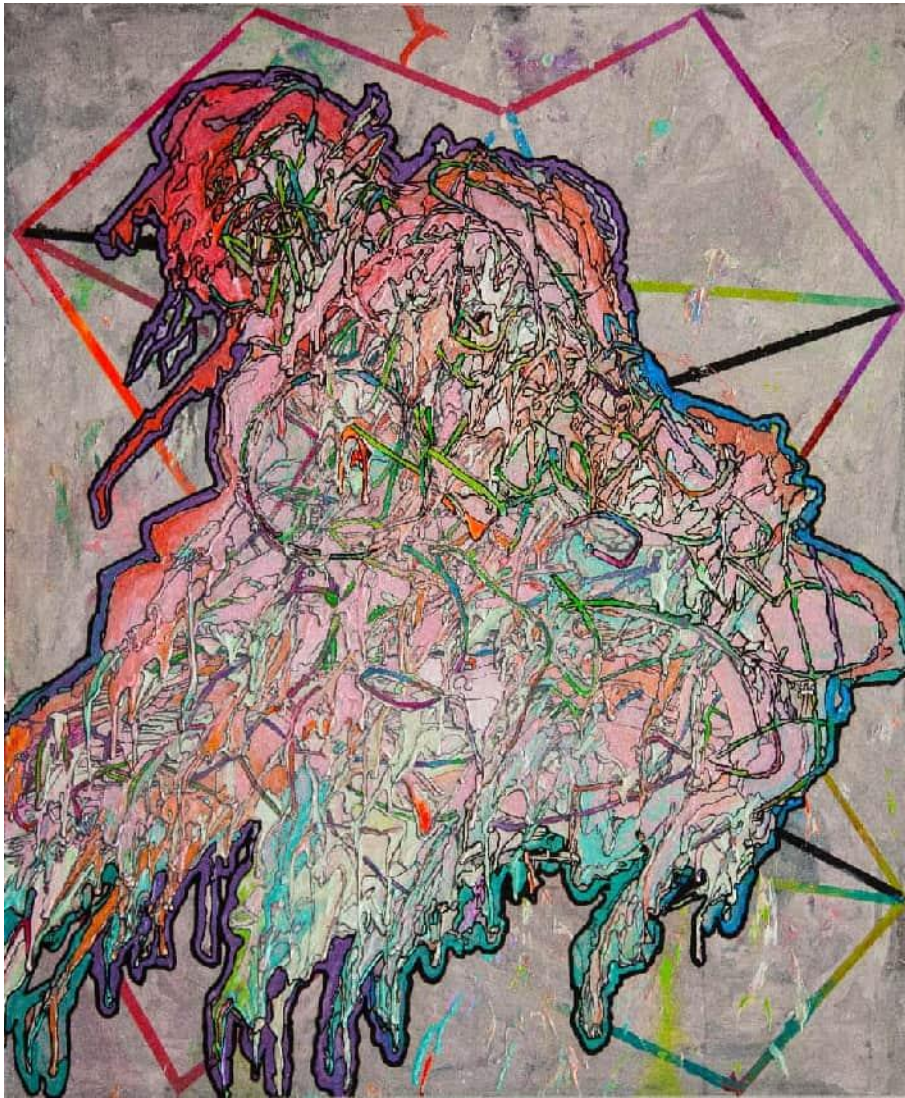




Figure Against a Golden Background 160×120cm, Acrylic on Canvas, 2022







Floating Objects in Front of Color Bars
100×120cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2022





Monster Against a Purple-Blue Background 160×120cm, Acrylic on Canvas, 2021





Figure in Front of Hard-Edge
Geometric Shapes
120×160cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2022





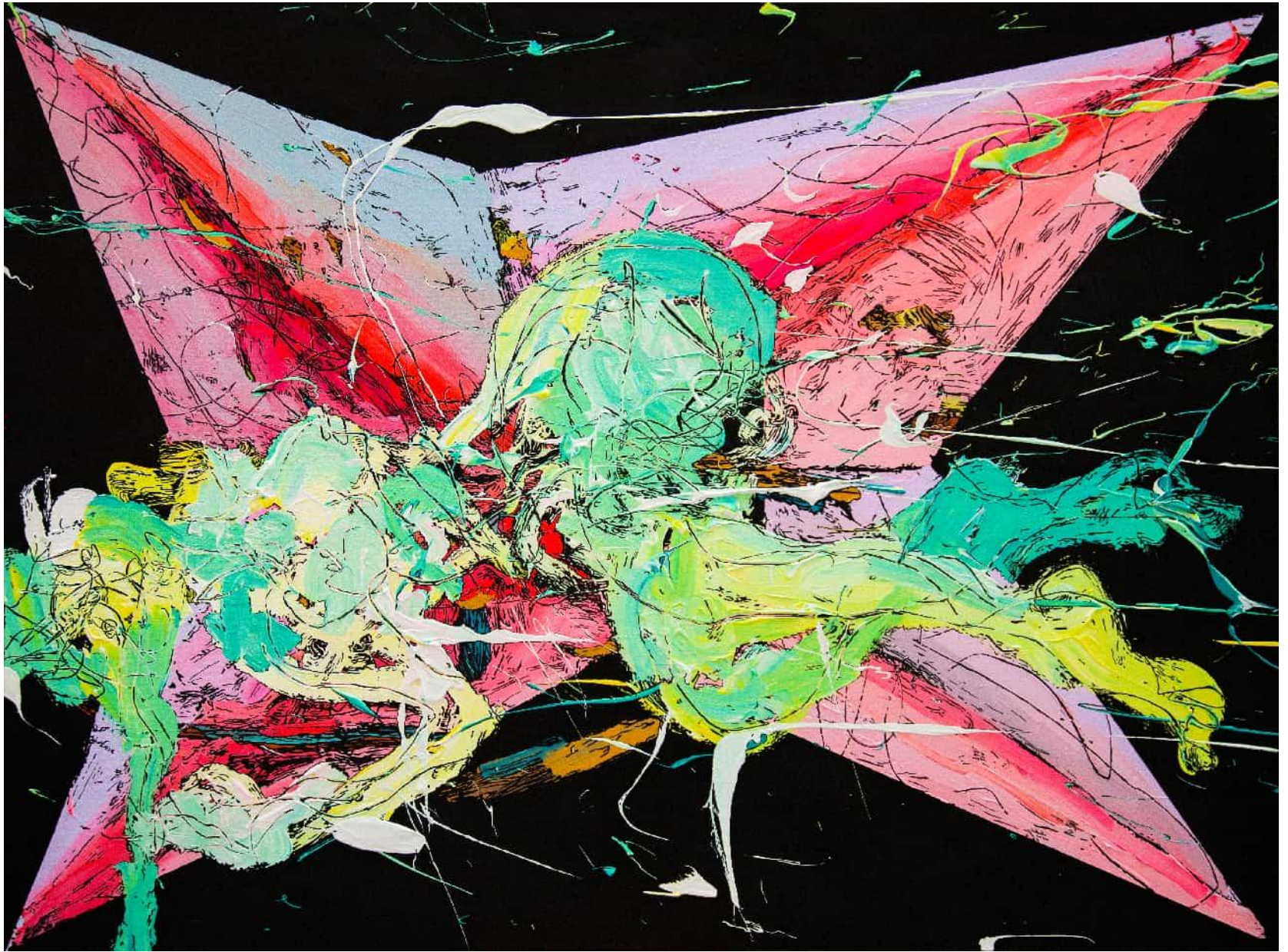
Dragonfly on Screen 100×120cm, Acrylic on Canvas, 2022



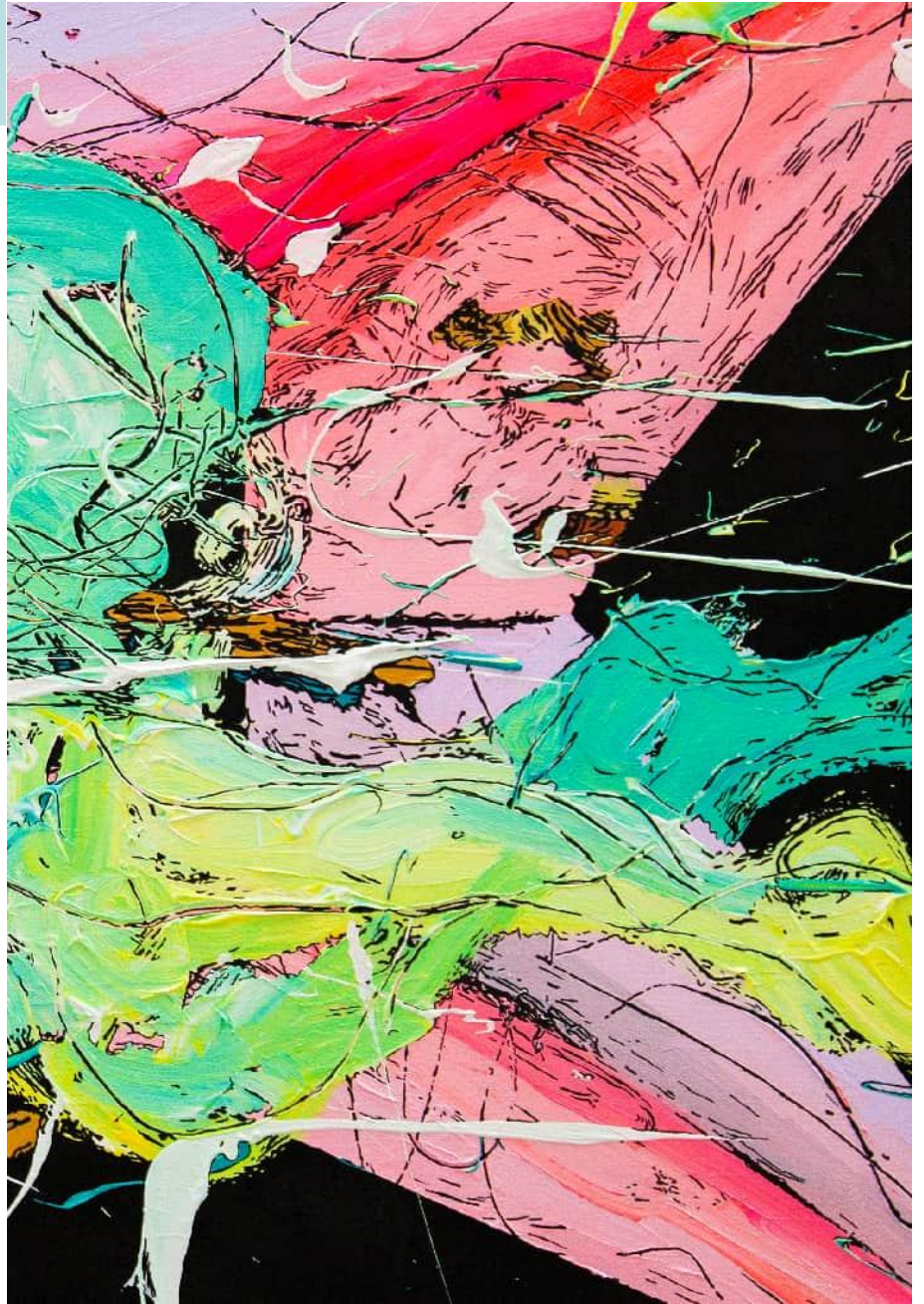
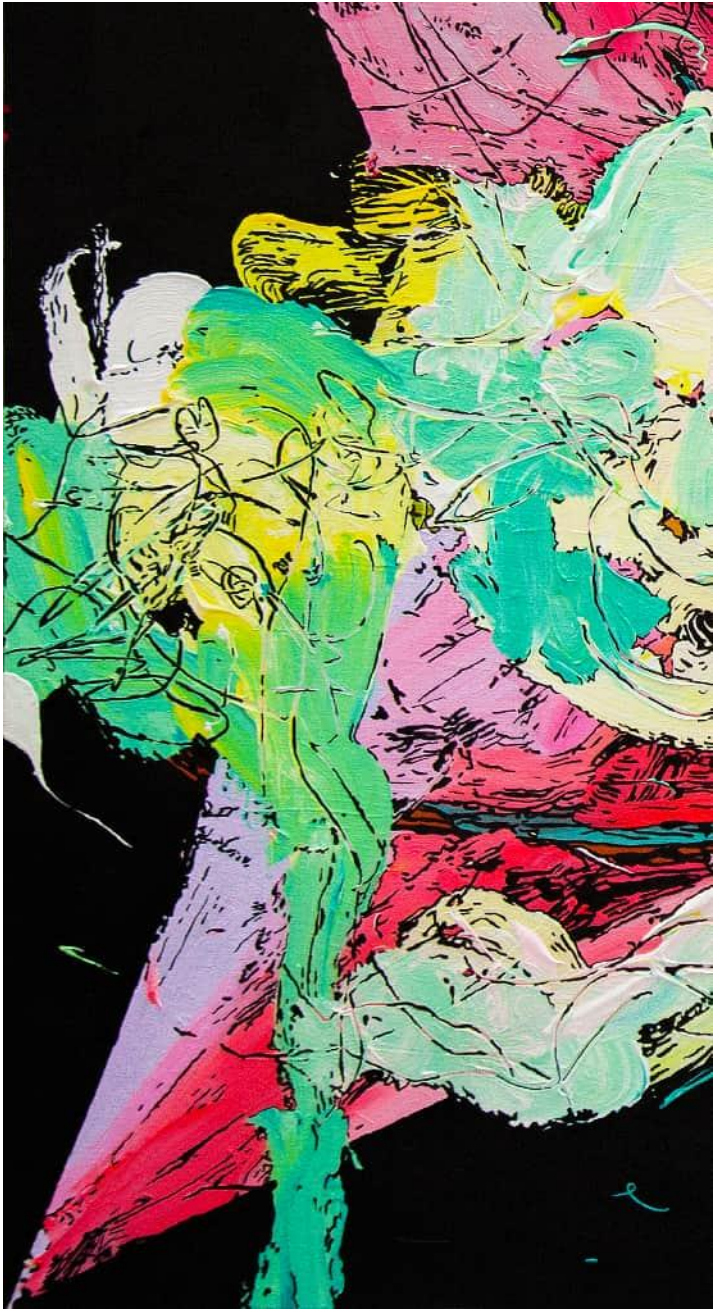


Figure on the Grass 120×100cm, Acrylic on Canvas, 2022





Four-Pointed Star 120×100cm, Acrylic on Canvas, 2022





Tiger in Front of Color Bars 160×120cm, Acrylic on Canvas, 2021



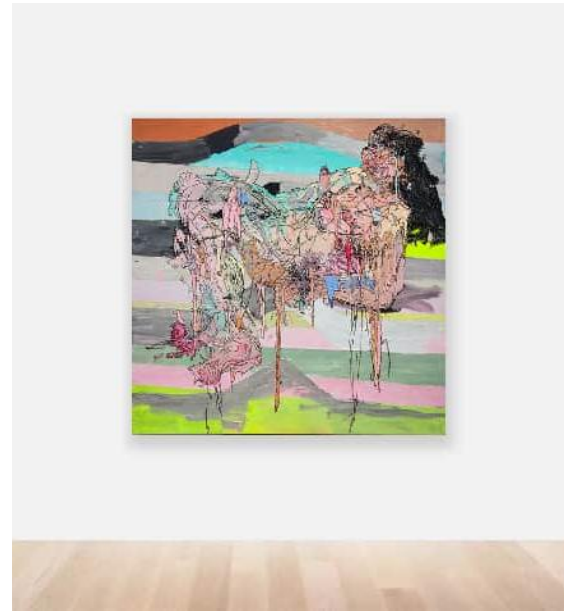
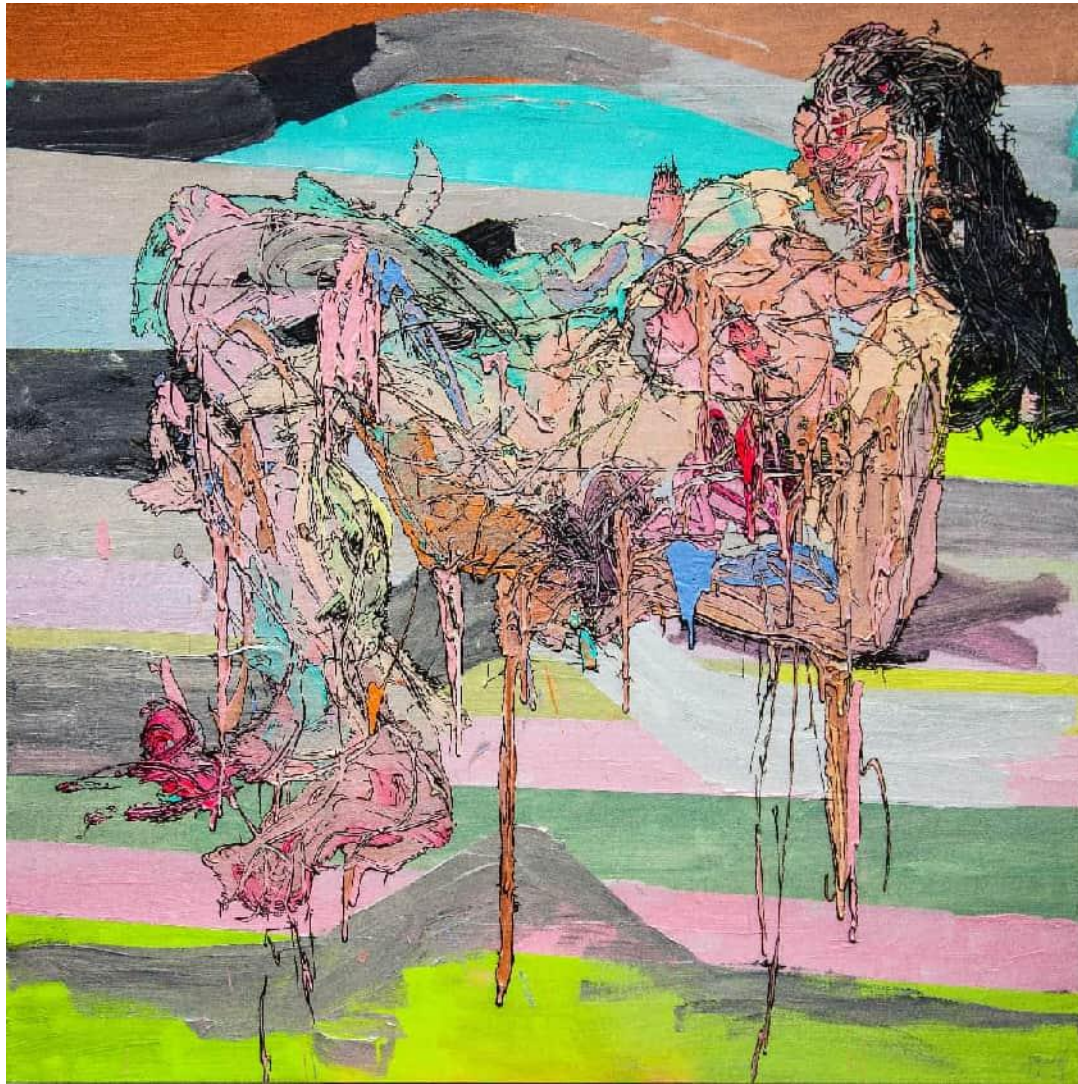
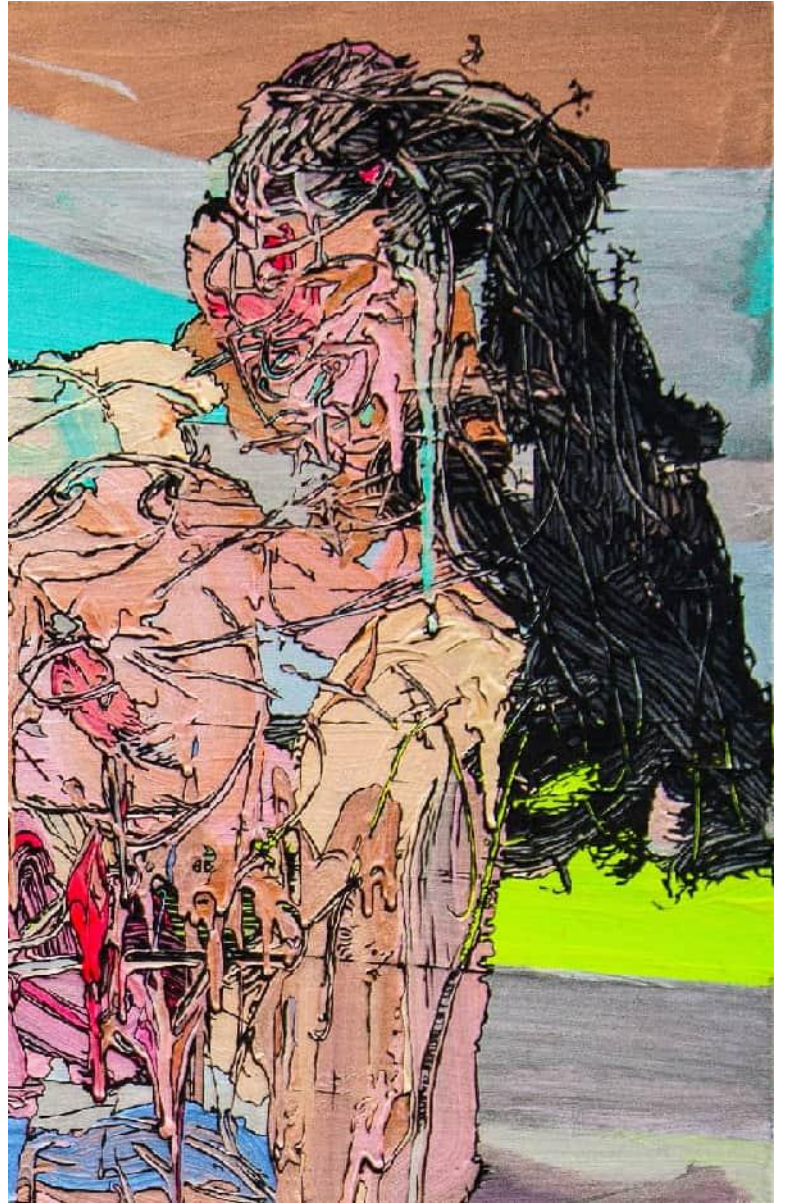


Figure on Raised Color Bars
100×100cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2021

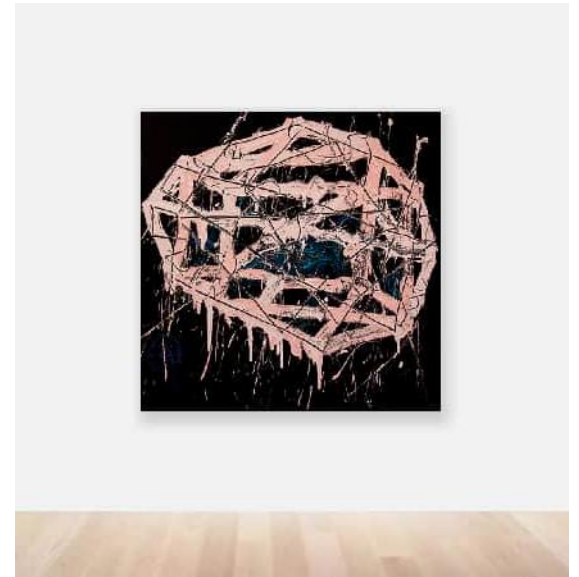


3、 Middle Period (With *Tracing* as the Core Thread)

2017-2021



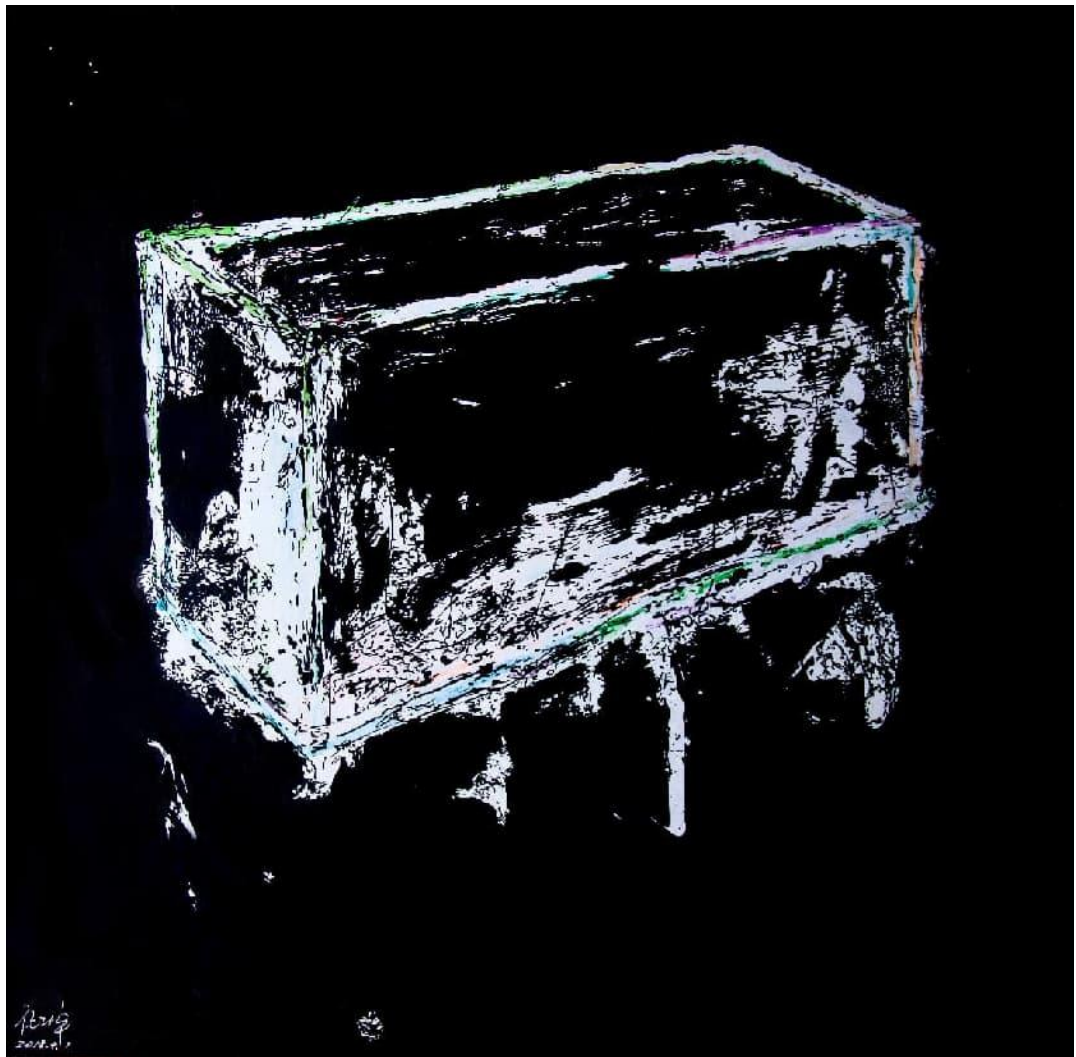
Figure in Front of Orange
Frames
100×100cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2020



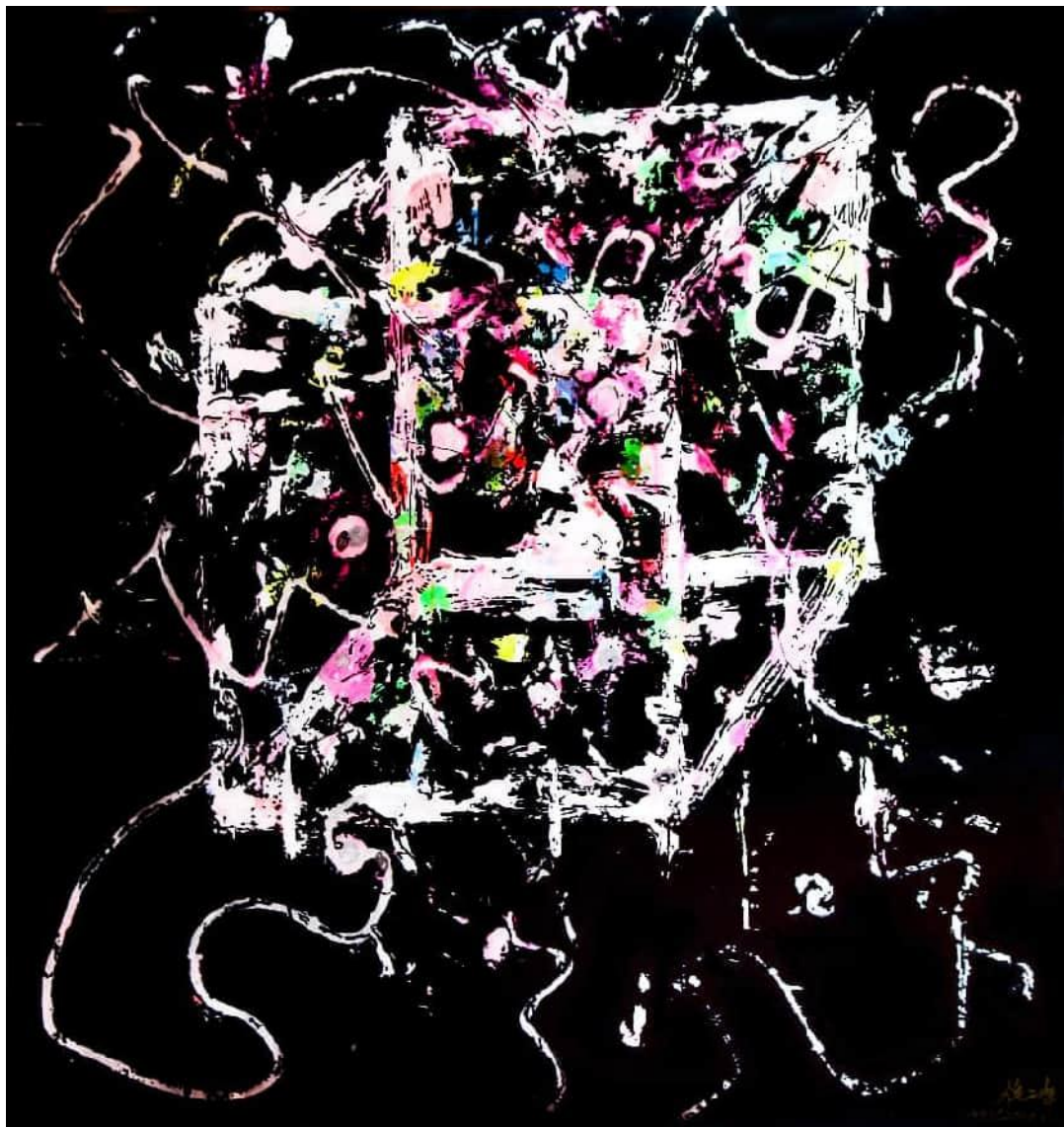
Tracing – Multilateral
Structure
150×150cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2019



Tracing – Yoga Posture
79×79cm
Watercolor and Acrylic on Paper
2018



Tracing – Magic Box (I)
79×79cm
Watercolor and Acrylic on Paper
2018



Tracing – Cube (II)
79×79cm
Watercolor and Acrylic on Paper
1991/2017



Tracing – Annular Body (III)
79×79cm
Watercolor and Acrylic on Paper
1991/2017



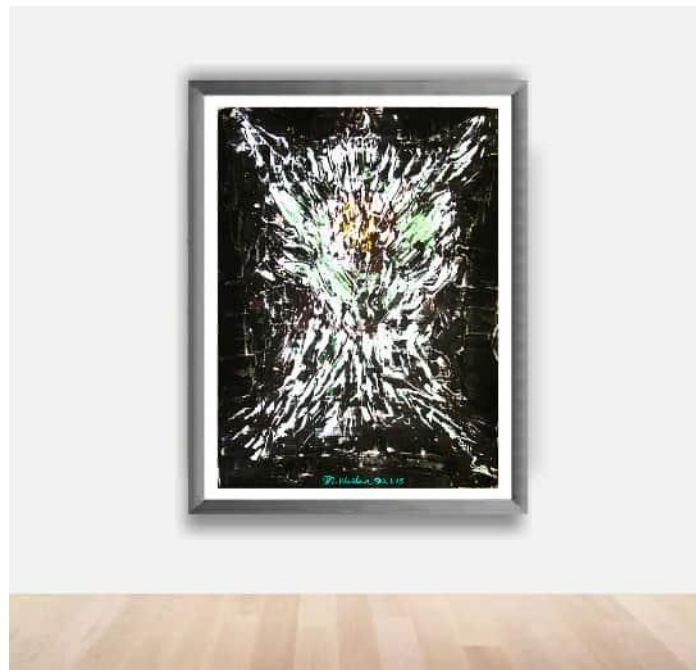
Tracing – Annular Body (I)
79×79cm
Watercolor and Acrylic on Paper
1991/2017

4、 Early Period (Initiating Trace Painting)

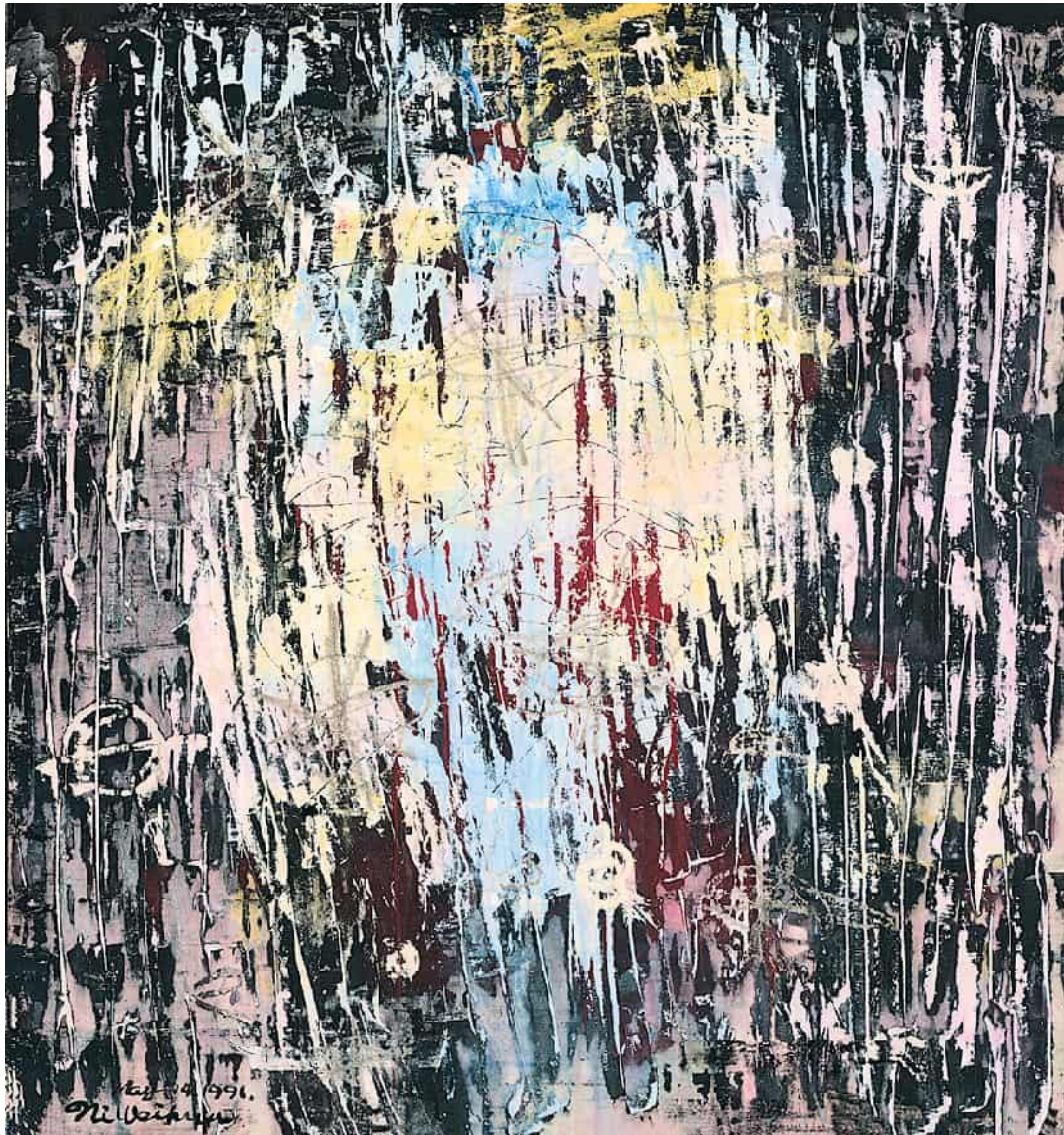
1987-2016



Floating Traces of Civilization (XIII)
79×109cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed
Media on Paper
1990



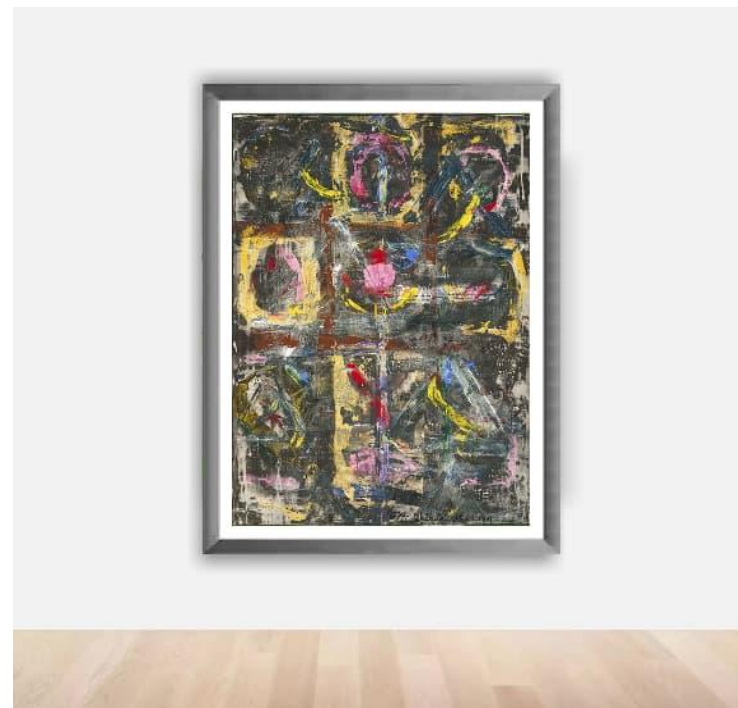
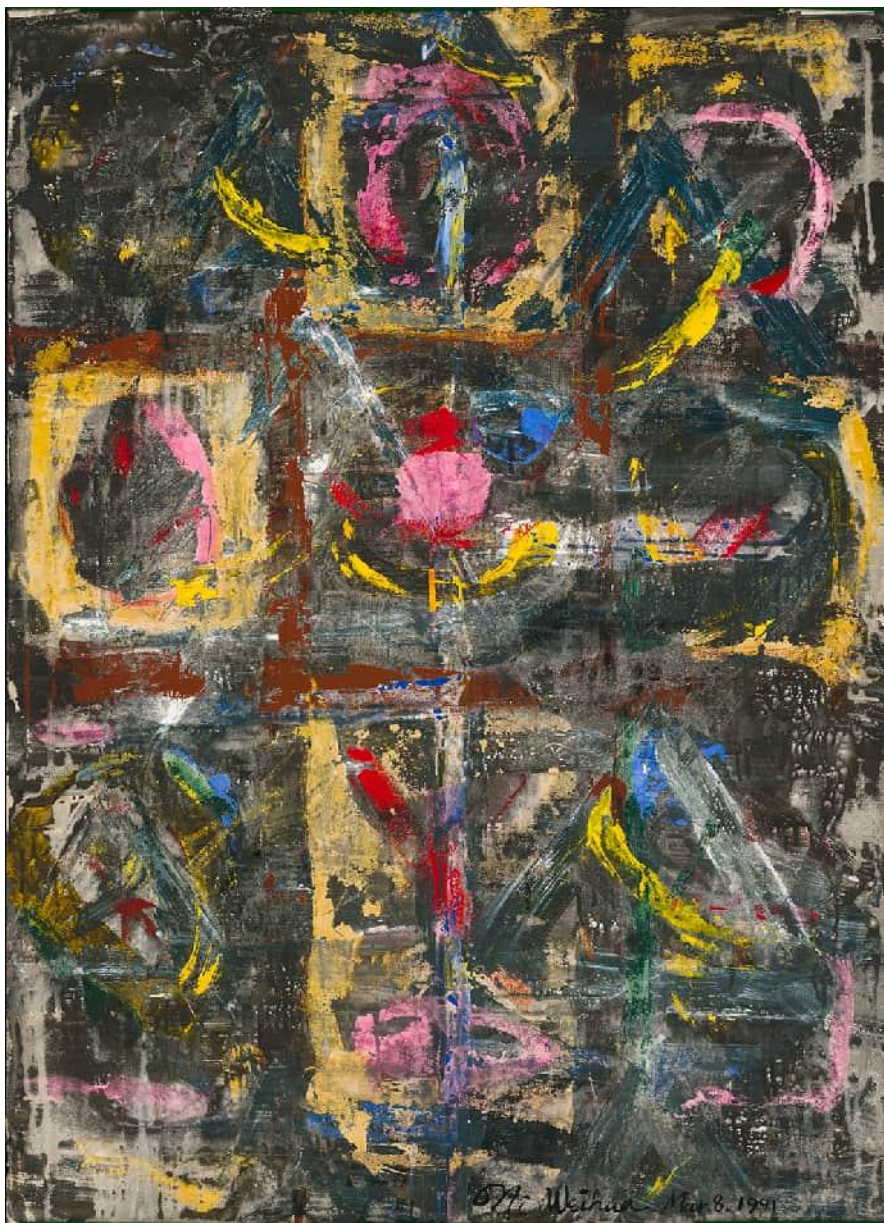
Floating Traces of Civilization (XXI)
79×109cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed
Media on Paper
1990



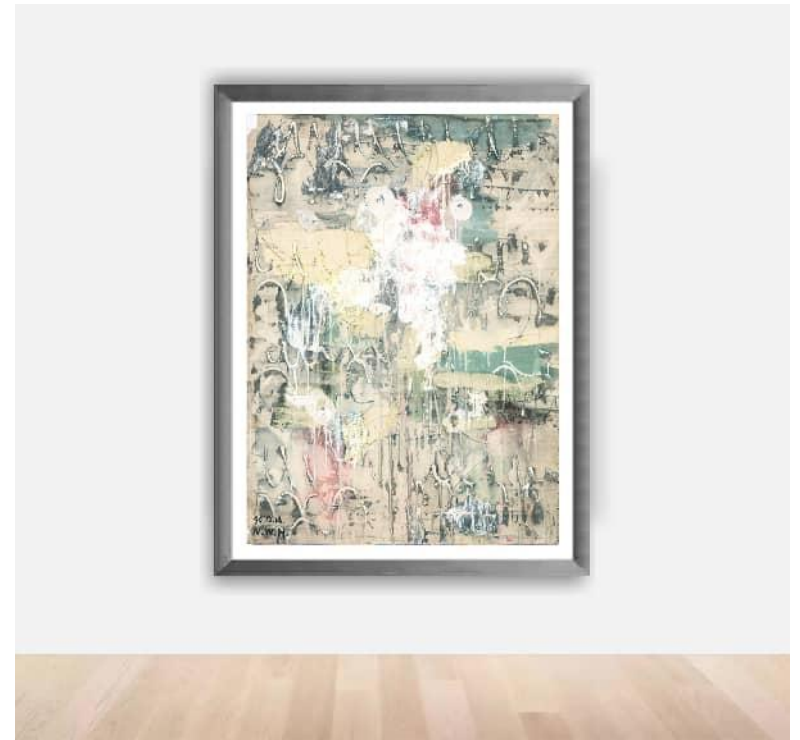
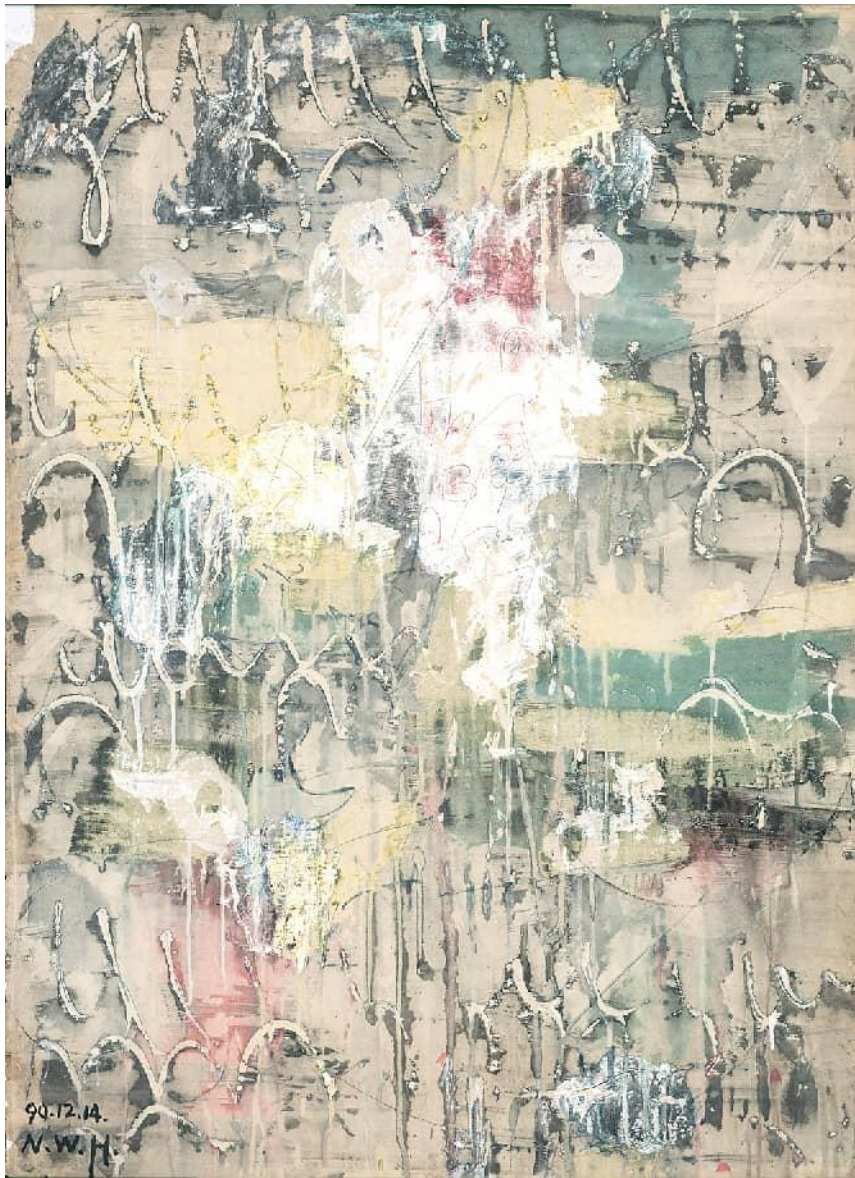
Floating Traces of Civilization (XX)
79×79cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed
Media on Paper
1990



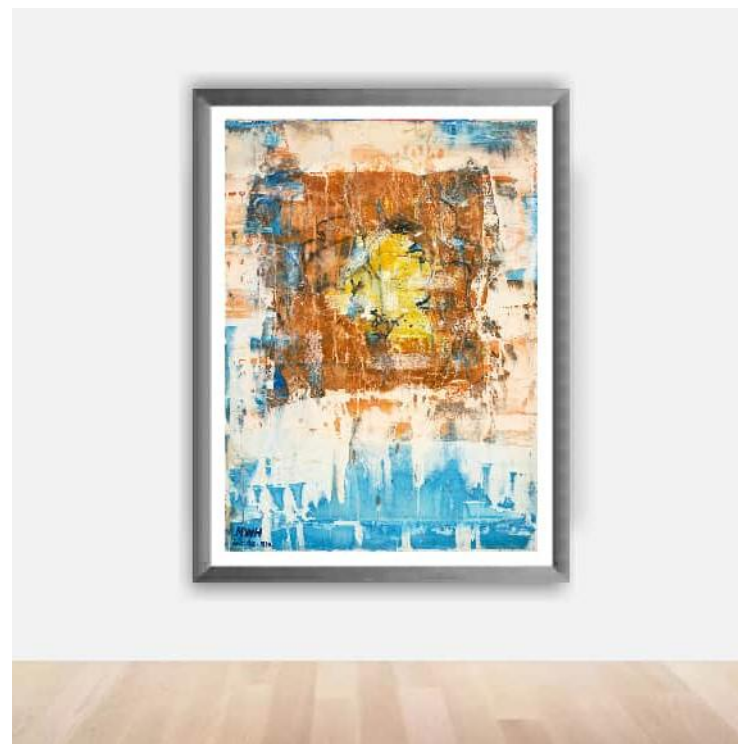
Floating Traces of Civilization (XI)
79×79cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed
Media on Paper
1990



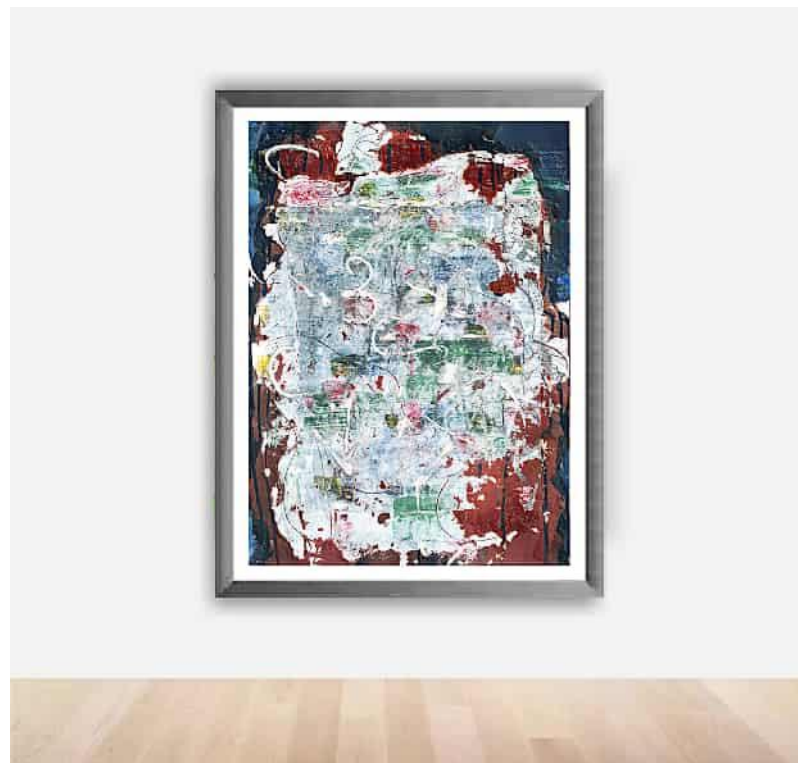
Floating Traces of Civilization (X)
79×109cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed
Media on Paper
1990



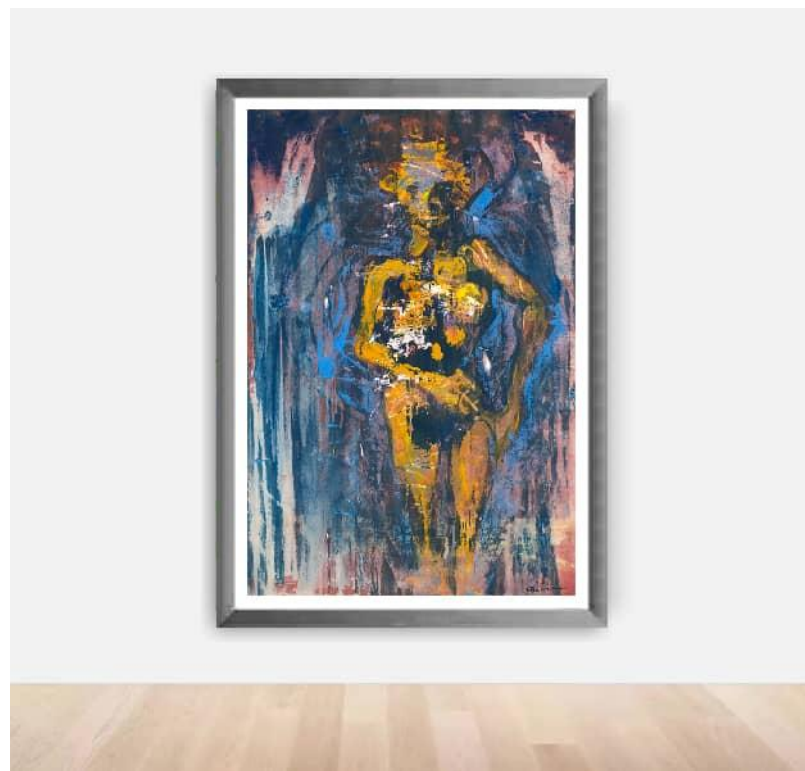
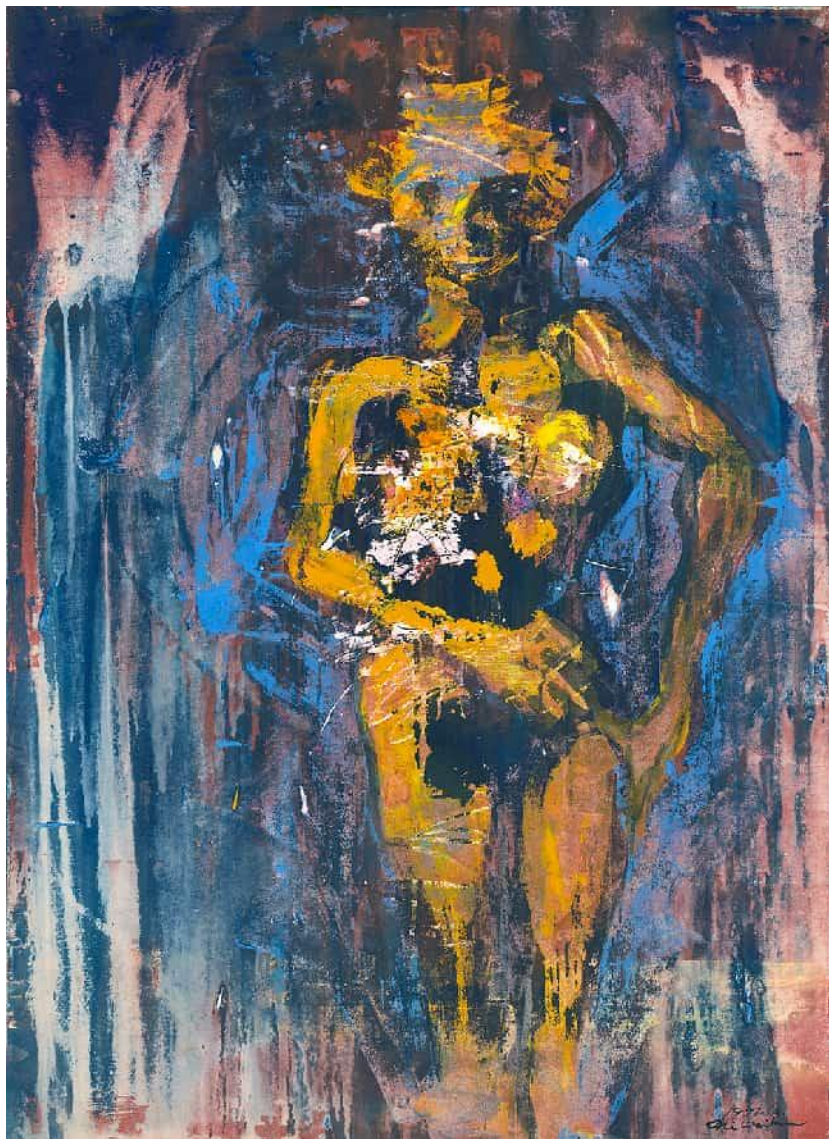
Floating Traces of Civilization (IV)
79×109cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed
Media on Paper
1990



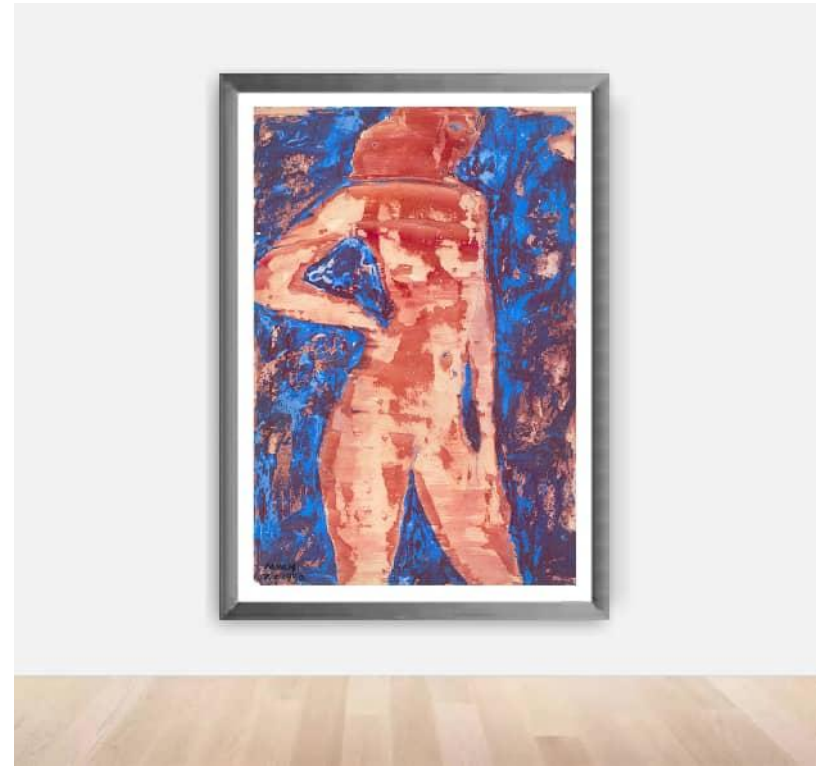
Floating Traces of Civilization (III)
79×109cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed
Media on Paper
1990



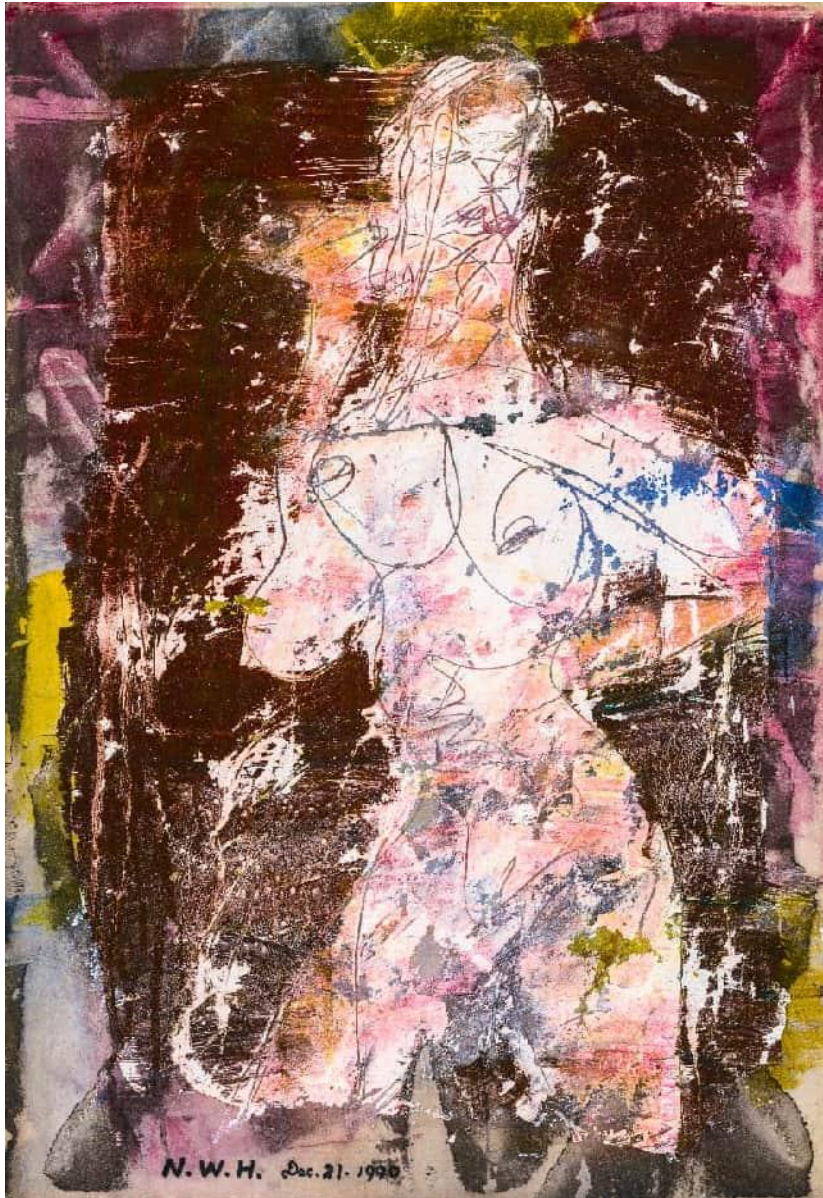
Floating Traces of Civilization (VII)
53×79cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed
Media on Paper
1990



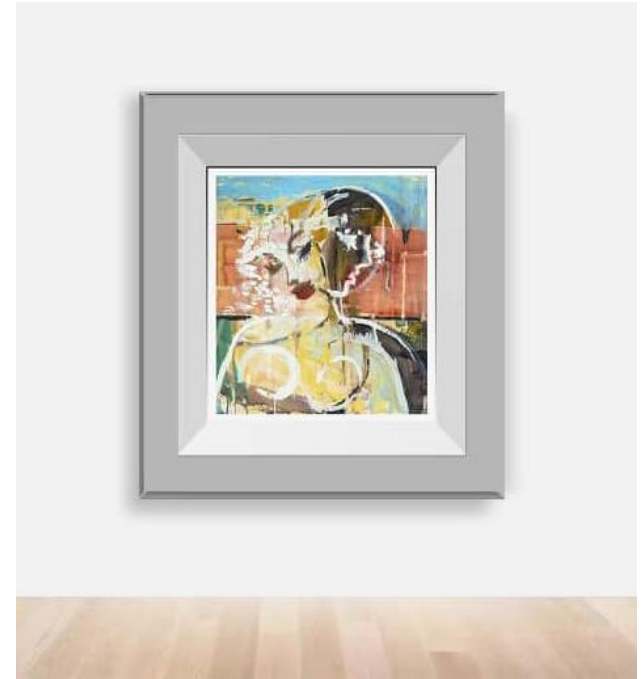
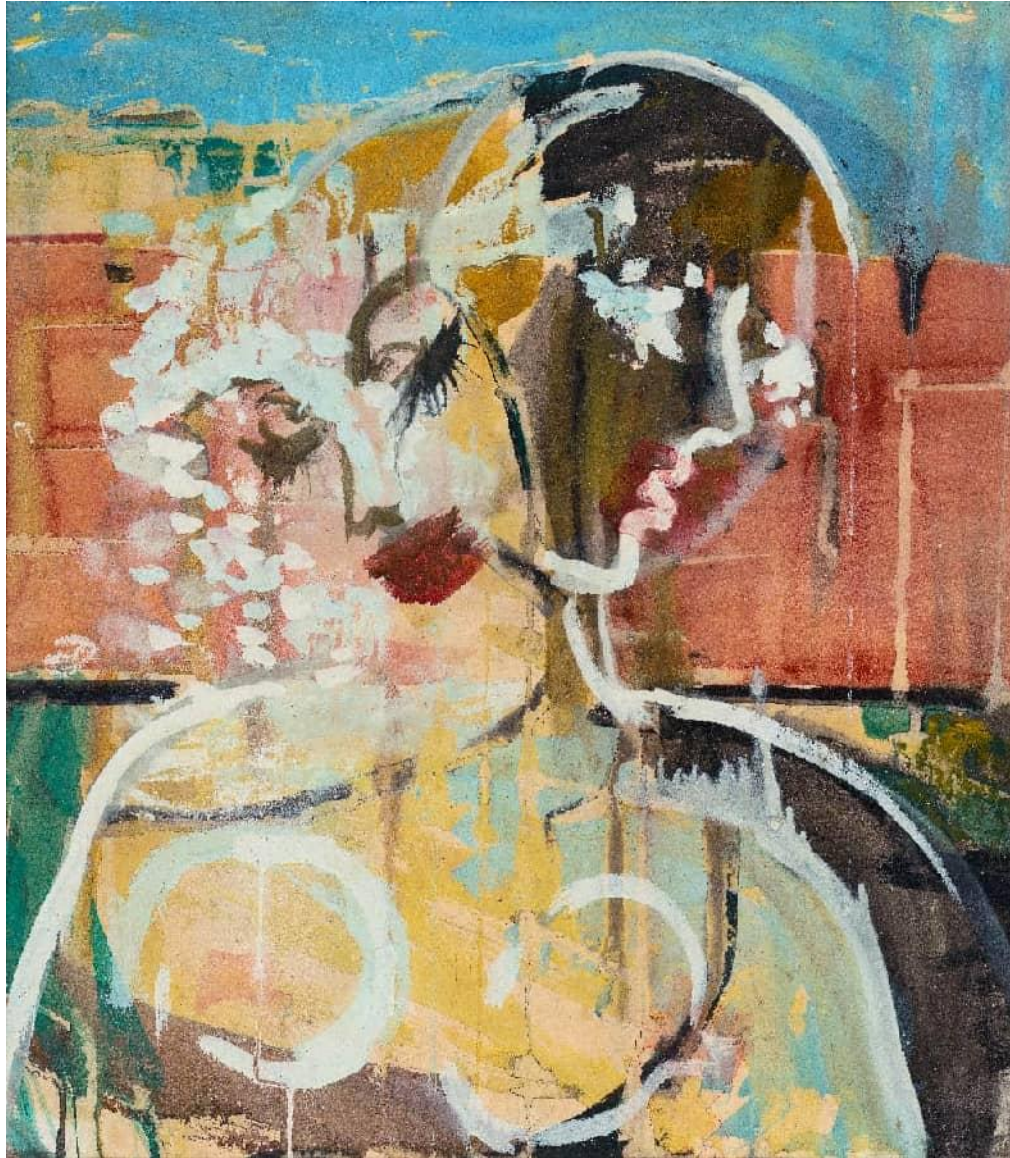
Rock Paintings Across Time and Space (XII)
79×109cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed Media on
Paper
1992



Rock Paintings Across Time and Space (I)
79×109cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed Media on
Paper
1990



Rock Paintings Across Time and Space (IV)
54×79cm,
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed Media on
Paper
1990



Marilyn Monroe in Front of the
Red Wall
48×55cm
Watercolor, Acrylic and Mixed
Media on Paper
1988

5、 Painting Statement & Art Resume

My Painting Experimentation Genealogy

My artistic life took root in the fertile soil of painting, roughly spanning from 1985 to 1993. This early phase was never a mere process of technical polishing, but a relentless exploration of the forms of artistic language. Paper emerged as my most faithful medium—precisely because it could perfectly capture the unrestrained, vivid texture traces left by the flow and permeation of water-soluble materials, allowing every moment of creation to leave a tangible mark. I was obsessed with breaking the boundaries of materials, weaving together conventional water-soluble media such as acrylics, watercolors and gouaches with seemingly unorthodox elements like toothpaste, alum and rice paper collages. These water-compatible substances triggered fascinating chemical reactions on the paper surface: the granular texture of toothpaste created unexpected raised textures; the water-repellent property of alum generated mottled blank spaces; and the overlay of rice paper added layers of depth. Through continuous learning, experimentation and refinement, I gradually developed a set of distinctive integrated techniques—the heaviness of piling, the profundity after covering, the transparency brought by washing, the mistiness of rendering, the sharpness of scraping marks, and the richness of overlapping layers. Conceptually, my works emphasized a sense of historical scarring, with a sharp focus on themes of social public space and anthropology. This line of thinking led me to put forward the artistic philosophy that "contemporary images are historical images". The core idea is to embed or integrate contemporary figures, objects and their activity trajectories into rock painting-like "relics"—as if they were scenes uncovered by people thousands of years later, after brushing away layers of dust and grime. It is also an act of excavation through "visual archaeology": from the perspective of trace restoration, the canvas reveals the characteristics, evolutionary paths and aesthetic-cultural information of modern humanity. After this foundational period of painting, I embarked on a lengthy phase of experimental conceptual art across diverse mediums including installations, performance art and video. Eventually, I circled back to painting as the starting point, embarking on a new journey of integrated artistic experimentation.

Later, I launched a new set of technical experiments using paper as the medium again. Specifically, I adopted extreme colors, mainly black, to intensively outline the edge lines and traces on the canvas, and applied contrasting flat washes, making those textured marks stand out more prominently. I named this painting method "Tracing", which is a further extension of my earlier "relic painting" experiments. It aims to highlight the fusion of deliberate "artificial" traces and accidental "serendipitous" marks, forging a "pop-art-infused" abstract visual language that combines both cold and warm abstract expressions. In doing so, it invites viewers to contemplate the paradoxical relationships and philosophical implications between wildness and tranquility, chaos and control, sensibility and rationality, as well as nature and humanity. Beyond the canvas, "Tracing" has also expanded into the realm of social public space art that embraces decentralization and public participation, giving rise to a series of works including the Outdoor Tracing 1.0–4.0 projects

(measured by the scale of public engagement), as well as the Water Tracing and Facial Tracing series. Taking social "Tracing" activities as the axis, my painting practice has entered the starting point of a new journey. The linguistic extension of studio-based "Tracing" is no longer confined to the trace-repeating approach similar to outdoor "Tracing"; instead, it has spawned more complex, multi-method, and "branching-out" linguistic experiments. Naturally, the starting point of these linguistic experiments stems largely from the observation and visually intensified experience of contemporary daily landscapes—similar to the forced intrusion of visual tones derived from big data statistics, the excessive rendering of popular cultural elements, and the inspirations brought by the intervention of high technology (such as the significant replacement of physical viewing by screen viewing, and AI thinking modes). In this new phase, I have abandoned paper as the carrier and turned to canvas instead. I mainly use various modern industrial paint materials such as acrylics, including pink, metallic colors, pearlescent colors, white glue, silica gel, and modeling paste, to conduct new experimental creations.

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This kind of creation further emphasizes action-oriented expression, where techniques like rapid brushwork, blind painting, impasto, splashing, washing, and random scraping are employed to build up complex color-field textures. Under the force of gravity, these textures naturally produce the visual effect of liquid drips, which often blend with various brushstrokes and the balance of wet and dry layers, resulting in a visual outcome that is both contradictory and harmonious.

"Multi-layer superimposition" and "zero-degree compression" are also key features of my painting experiments during this phase. When working on the background of the canvas, I favor using tape and straightedges to create

industrialized, regular visual patterns. These patterns are usually rendered with thin, gradient, and randomly selected flat color washes—even after multiple layers of superimposition or blending, they still maintain a delicate, translucent quality, achieving the "zero-degree compression" I pursue. The hard-edged visual elements of these flat color layers often engage in a mutual interplay and dialogue with the soft color masses formed later through action-driven image construction. Once the processes of flat color superimposition, action painting, and random scraping are completed, a trace-based underlayer is formed, awaiting further refinement.

Next comes the reworking of the trace-based underlayer, which can be done in several ways. First is "intensive tracing": batch outlining and darkening the relatively shadowed areas of the entire canvas, such as boundary lines, dark color fields, and drip edges. Second is "subtle tracing": selectively and randomly enhancing traces and edges with colors of varying shades and tones. Third is targeted refinement: selectively or batch-processing image symbols of the same tonal quality (such as drips) with makeup-like modification or enhancement. Fourth is the integrated approach: a combination of the above three methods.

When it comes to the treatment of images, I tend to suggest only the broad outlines of human figures and objects, without setting any predetermined directions. I strive to minimize or even eliminate narrativity as much as possible, instead letting the images evolve under the guidance of procedural and accidental elements. In other words, it is perhaps the "mistakes", "deviations", "errors" and "flaws" emerging during the creative process that serve as the main basis for my image construction. The further I progress into the process, the more I abide by the visual outcomes it generates—that is, I do not wrestle with the canvas, but seek reconciliation with it. This bears a resemblance to the visual results generated by AI through extensive learning, self-training and continuously optimized algorithms.

In the recently upgraded Traces of the Future series, I create micro-folded textures for visual tracing through the composite lamination of acrylic imprints and 3D materials. This collision of materials enables the visual translation of time from a unidirectional linear form to a multi-dimensional interwoven state, generating a temporary, flowing, and uncertain magical landscape. Through this brand-new painting perspective, I aspire to explore post-contemporary sociological topics at the intersection of carbon-based and silicon-based life, such as the subconscious, identity recognition, subject-object transformation, and cultural monster imagery, ultimately turning the works into visual archives that carry temporal information and ideological issues.

Ni Weihua
January 2026

Ni Weihua's works cover various media such as painting, installation, action and video. He is one of the important practitioners who promoted the development of Shanghai's contemporary art in the early stage, and also one of the earliest artists in China to carry out "art intervention in society" and respond to "digitalization". His representative works including the series "Continuously spreading event — Red Box and Poster", "Meishu(Fine Arts): The Legitimate Presence of Words and Objects", "Linear City", "Landscape Wall" and "Tracing" have attracted wide attention for their multi-dimensional language experimentation and topics such as "social intervention". His works have been exhibited in dozens of important domestic and foreign exhibitions, including the Chinese Contemporary Art Documentary Exhibition, Marrakech Biennale, Photo Biennale Odense, Venice Biennale, Chinese Art in Brazil, Cannes AVIFF Art Film and Jeonju International Photography Festival. He has also held solo exhibitions in Shanghai, Beijing, Los Angeles and other places.



Born in 1962, Ni Weuhua graduated from Shanghai Light Industry Institute in 1983 and currently lives and works in Shanghai.

Major Solo Exhibitions

- 1989 Neo-expression — 1989 Ni Weihua's Solo Painting Exhibition, Shanghai, China
- 2008 Keywords -"Development" and "Harmony" Solo Photography Exhibition, Beijing, China
- 2012 Landscape Wall: The Chinese Reality Through Different Angle of View – Ni Weihua's Solo Photography Exhibition Shanghai,China
- 2013 Landscape Wall——Ni Weihua's solo exhibition Beijing,China
- 2015 Shadow of the Spectacle: Urban China in Ni Weihua's Conceptual Photography Los Angeles, USA
- 2017 Ongoing Dual Landscape——Ni Weihua & Fan Shisan Joint Solo Exhibition Shanghai, China
- 2020 Graphic Society——Landscape Wall and Ni Weihua's Practice Documentary of Art
- 2021 The Original Code-The Tracing——Ni Weihua's solo exhibition Shanghai,China
- 2021 Tracing Beuys/Global Flash Mob of Water Tracing Guangzhou,China
- 2025 Now and Here: Language Practice Based on Traces, Shanghai, China
- 2025 Tracing: Freezing Time and Space Memories/Shanghai United Art Space Shanghai,China

Major Group Exhibition

- 1992 Ni Weihua & Wang Nanming Works Exhibition and Seminar on the Current Situation of Shanghai Contemporary Art, Beijing,China
- 1993 The 2nd China Contemporary Art Documents Exhibition Guangzhou,China
- 1995 Installation: the Dimension of Language Shanghai,China
- 1996 In the Name of Art—Chinese Contemporary Art Exchange Exhibition Shanghai, China
- 1999 In/from China:Art+Architecture” Berlin,Germany
- 1999 The Intervention in Media Hongkong,China
- 2000 Individual & Society in Art—A Collection of Works of Art by 11 Chinese Artists Guangzhou,China
- 2002 The 1st Guangzhou Triennial Guangzhou,China
- 2005 Inward Gazes—Documentaries of Chinese Performance Art Macau, China
- 2009 History in the Making Shanghai 1979-2009 Shanghai,China
- 2010 The 6th Lianzhou International Photography Festival (A total of 5 times) Lianzhou,China
- 2012 Jeonju Photo Festival Jeonju,Korea
- 2013 1st Beijing Photo Biennial Beijing,China
- 2013 5th Bi-City Biennial of Urbanism\Architecture(A total of 2 times) Shenzhen,China
- 2014 5th Marrakech Biennial Marrakech,Morocco
- 2014 China Art in Brasil Sao Paulo, Brasil
- 2014 AVIFF in Cannes France Cannes ,France
- 2014 Contemporary Photography in China 2009-2014 Shanghai, China
- 2015 56th Venice Biennale (Collateral Events) Venice, Italy
- 2016 Cities and Memory——Photo Biennale Odense, Denmark
- 2017 Living in the City——Bushman International Architectural Culture Festival Pusan, Korea
- 2018 Avant-garde • Shanghai——30-Years Shanghai Contemporary Art Document Exhibition Shanghai, China
- 2021 Ways of Seeing: The Reflection of History in Contemporary Photography Changsha,China
- 2021 Almost Paradise: Mis/Perceptions of Leisure and Labor in the Asia-Pacific Shanghai,China
- 2022 We How Create Art: Post Experimental Ink Nanjing,China
- 2023 Facing the Scene - Chinese Contemporary Art Criticism Documentary Exhibition of the 1990s, Shanghai, China
- 2024 ART & Go - China-Japan-Netherlands Art Group Exhibition Tokyo/ Shizuoka, Japan
- 2024 12 th UP-ON International Live Art Festival Chengdu, China
- 2025 Beyond the Location: The Walking Man on the Shanghai Grand Stage, Shanghai, China

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