

CHARLIE SCHAFFER: SCALPEL-LIKE EYES



A RETROSPECTIVE OF THE
WORK OF AWARD WINNING
ARTIST CHARLIE SCHAFFER,
FEATURING PAINTINGS AND
DRAWINGS FROM HIS ONGOING
PORTRAIT, SELF-PORTRAIT AND
REVALUATIONS OF OLD MASTER
ARTWORKS.

CURATED BY JACK TRODD.



CHARLIE SCHAFFER: SCALPEL-LIKE EYES

10:00AM - 7:00PM | 17.05.23 - 30.05.23
LAUNCH EVENT | 6:00PM - 9:00PM | 18.05.23
15 BATEMAN ST | SOHO | LONDON | W1D 3AQ

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE HAYNES





CHARLIE SCHAFFER

ARTIST STATEMENT

We live in a world in which people feel guilty for not always doing something. People don't give themselves enough time to sit and just be. The social and historical weight behind the idea of painting, does, however, allow a sitter to talk to another person while sitting for a painting, the presence of the canvas and the artist enabling them to sit in a room, twice a week, often for many months, and thereby establish a close relationship with another person. The act of painting allows such a unique and frequently intense relationship to form, and result in a painting that is more a visual record of an experience rather than a goal in and of itself.

“The Old Masters have always been incredibly important to me, especially the National Gallery. I have been going to the National Gallery at least once a week for ten years in order to either draw or paint directly from the pictures. There are two primary reasons for this: firstly, one can learn something new about the ‘game’ of painting (i.e. composition, colour, line); secondly, the gallery is like a library to me - I know all the paintings in it - but I wander around in order to think, and allow time for a painting I have previously overlooked to jump out at me as relevant to what has recently been on mind, and thereby help to send me in the direction I needed to go, but may not have consciously realised so.”

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Charlie Schaffer (born 1992, London) holds a Foundation Diploma from Central Saint Martins and a BA in Fine Art: Painting from Brighton University. He lives and works in London, UK.

In his final year of study (2014) Schaffer was awarded the Lynn Painter-Stainer Young Artist Prize. Schaffer appeared on Sky Arts' Portrait Artist of the Year in both 2014 and 2016. In 2016 Schaffer won the Pastel Society Young Artist Award, and in 2016, 2018 & 2019 he won the Brian Botting Prize “for an artist aged 30 or under for an outstanding representation of the human figure”. In 2019 Schaffer went on to win the prestigious BP Portrait Award with his painting *Imara in her Winter Coat*.

Since graduating Schaffer has exhibited extensively in galleries both as a prize winner and regularly as part of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters annual exhibition. Galleries venues at which Schaffer has exhibited include The Mall Galleries; The Royal College of Art; the National Portrait Gallery, Ashurst Gallery; Cello Factory; Pygmalion Fine Arts and as part of the Ruth Borchard Collection. Since his 2019 award win, Schaffer has dedicated himself purely to his practice, finally returning to the public eye May 2023 with the launch of his solo exhibition *Charlie Schaffer: Scalpel-Like Eyes* with BWG Gallery, a retrospective looking back at eight years of work.

Schaffer's work is held in many private collections internationally, and is also featured in the Lincoln's Inn Collection, the University of Bedfordshire Collection and the University of Leicester Collection.

EXHIBITION ESSAY

USING SCALPEL-LIKE EYE TO GRASP LIVING IMAGES

STEPHEN BAYCROFT

The painter Francis Bacon claimed to be descended from his namesake Sir Francis Bacon, the latter of whom pioneered a natural scientific philosophy in which human beings acquired knowledge of essential truths ('secrets') that had been lost to humanity since the Biblical 'Fall' of Adam and Eve, by using anatomical techniques of dissection and vivisection of non-human beings to cut away the bodily surfaces of these beings which until then had allowed 'Mother Nature' to veil these secrets from the prying eyes of 'fallen' human beings. According to Sir Francis Bacon, natural scientists should therefore 'torture' Mother Nature into giving up her secrets, by using the 'art' of dissecting and vivisectioning away the bodily surfaces of non-human beings to unveil these secrets to a 'fallen' humanity.

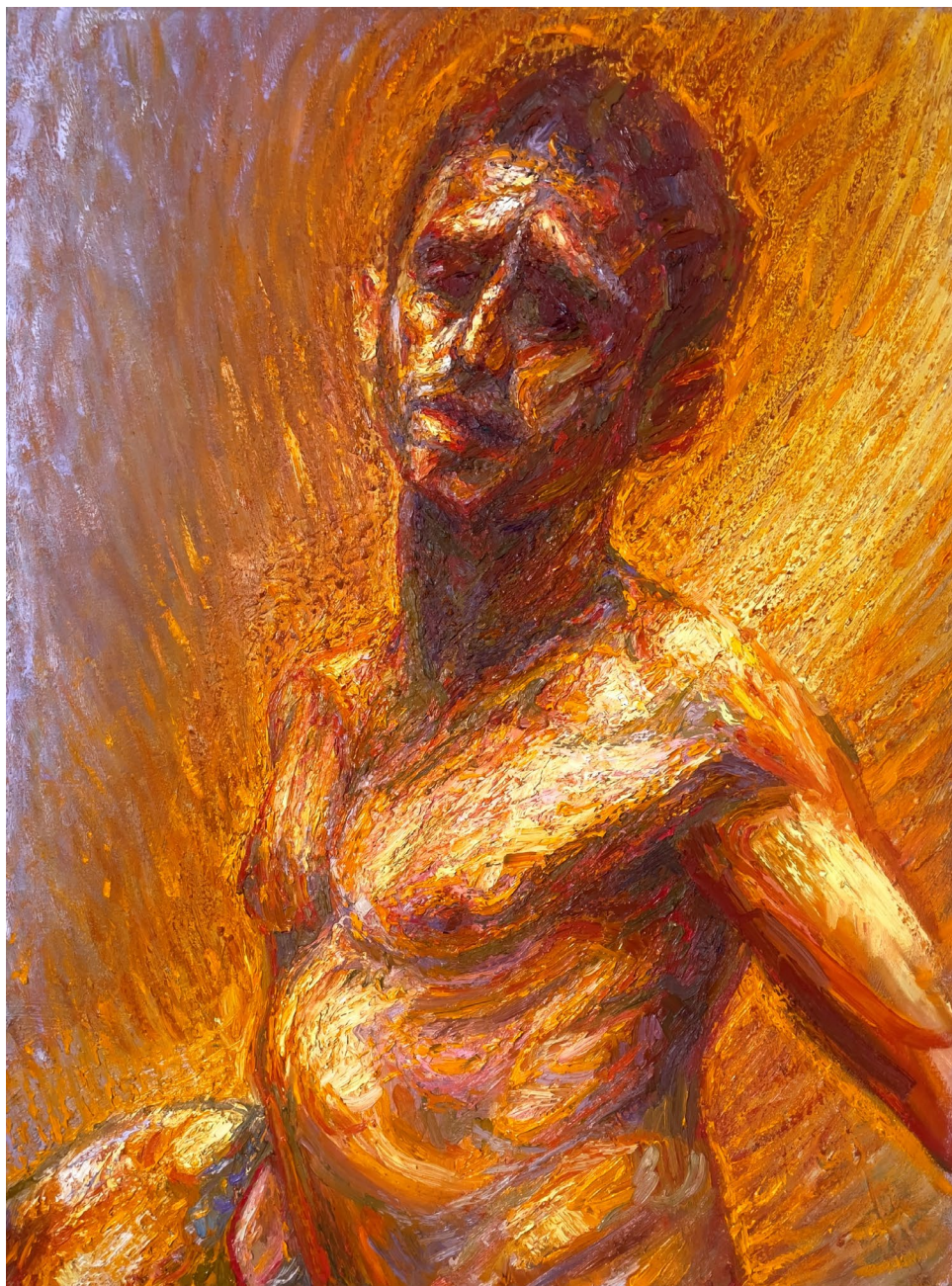
Sir Francis Bacon's empirical use of his scalpel-like eyes to physically perform dissection and vivisection techniques at unveiled natural scientific knowledge of essential truths which had previously been veiled from him; was comparable to Francis Bacon's empirical use of his own scalpel-like eyes to mentally perform a dissection technique that was akin to vivisection, in which he cut away the bodily surfaces of human animal beings and/or non-human animal beings in photographic images; and thereby unveiled artistic knowledge of essential truths about 'life'-forces and 'death'-forces that had previously been veiled by the bodily surfaces of these beings. Bacon then revealed these essential truths as 'auratic' 'pulsations' which appeared to 'emanate' from the mentally dissected bodily surfaces of these photographed beings in his portrait and self-portrait paintings.

Unlike Francis Bacon and his contemporary Frank Auerbach, most of Charlie Schaffer's painting practice is compatible with that employed by Lucian Freud. Like Freud, Schaffer mentally uses his scalpel-like eyes to reveal essential truths about the human subjects of his portraits and self-portraits, without vivisectioning their facial and bodily surface features; in order to make drawings and paintings in which these features are preserved and used to reveal more than just essential truths about the human subjects in these artworks.

Western art history and aesthetics has often valued portraits and self-portraits because they only revealed essential truths that had previously been veiled by the bodily surfaces of the human subjects in these artworks. Schaffer instead mentally uses his scalpel-like eyes to produce portraits, self-portraits, and revaluations of his own experiences of paintings by Old Masters like Rubens, Titian and Veronese, in which he reveals essential truths about both the formal 'life' of the bodily surface of a being that is part of one of his artworks, and the structural 'life' of the whole image of this artwork. Schaffer tries to push the processes of drawing and painting to the point where his scalpel-like eyes threaten to mentally tear the surfaces of his own portraits, self-portraits and revaluations of Old Master paintings; and thereby maximise his (undogmatically unfixed) religious communications with (undogmatically unfixed) essential truths about the formal 'life' and structural 'life' of his artistic images which until then had been veiled by their surfaces.







The Act of Painting (Self-Portrait)

Oil on Canvas
122 x 90cm
£10500.00
2023



The Artist's Father
Oil on Canvas
66 x 52cm | Framed
SOLD
2015



A Crucifixion
Oil on Canvas
111 x 75cm | Framed
SOLD
2016



Bram
Oil on Canvas
97 x 75cm | Framed
£6000.00
2018



Self-portrait in Margate

Oil on Canvas

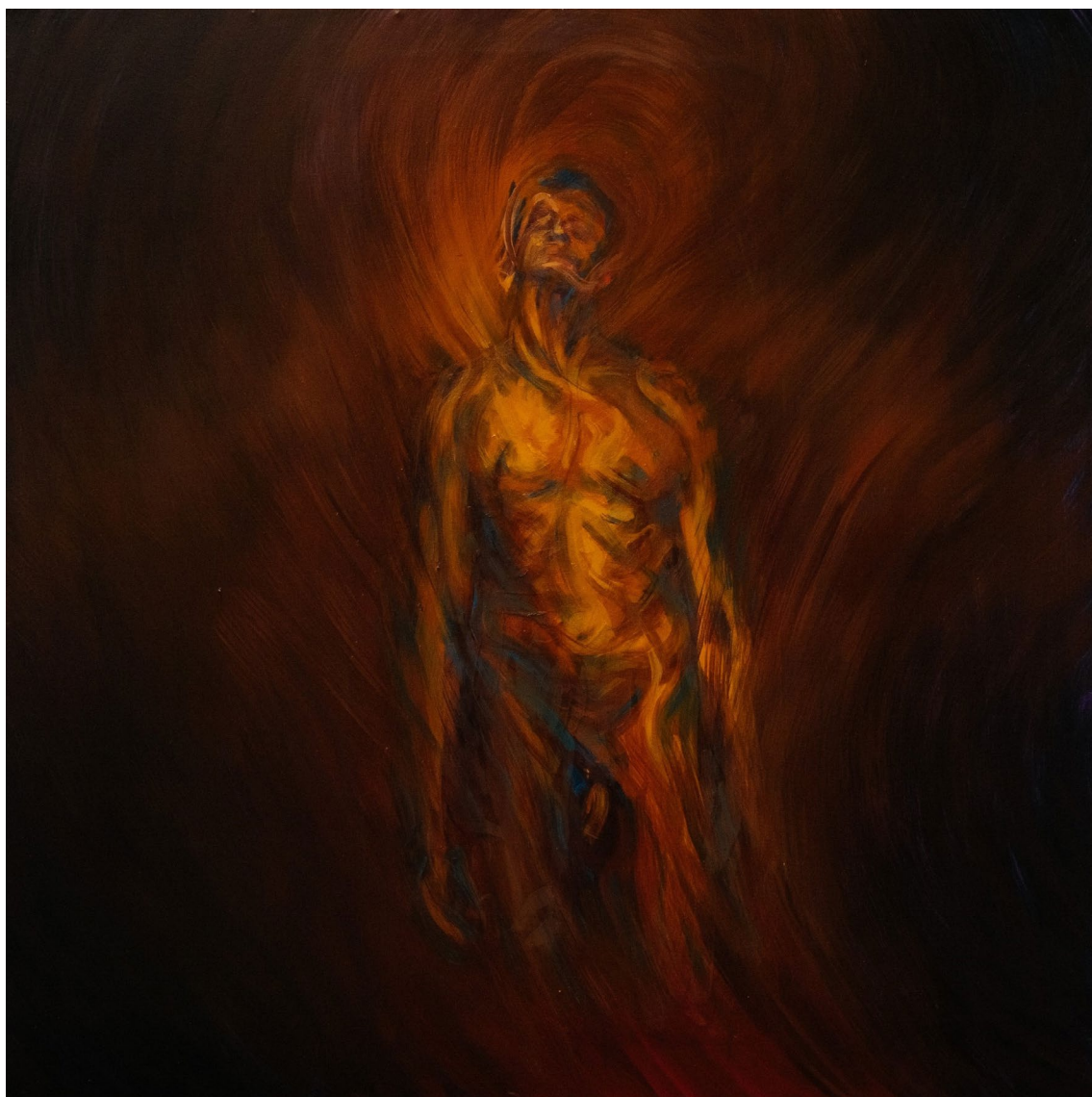
115 x 70cm

SOLD

2017-2018



Bridget
Oil on Canvas
122 x 90cm
£9000.00
2020



Self-portrait
Oil on Canvas
100 x 100cm
SOLD
2016



Andrew
Oil on Canvas
90 x 90cm
£7000.00
2019 -2020



Frey
Oil on Canvas
60 x 60cm
RESERVED
2022



Self-portrait with Rembrandt's Jewish Bride

Oil on Canvas

122 x 90cm

£9000.00

2020



Head of Rob
Oil on Linen
41 x 30cm | Framed
SOLD
2017-2018



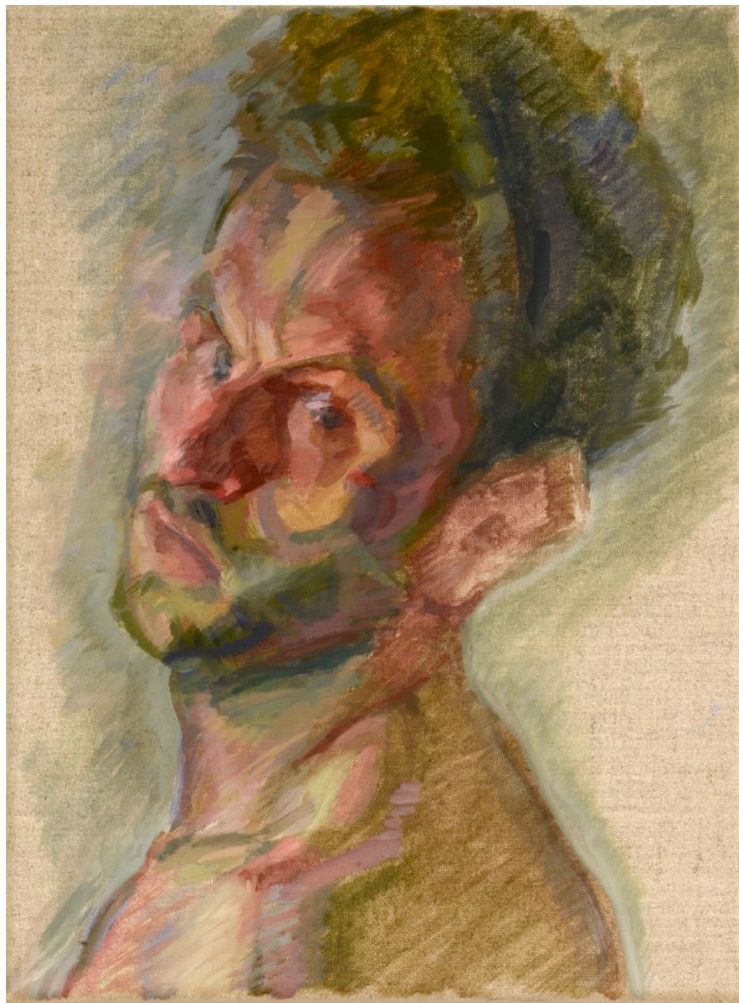
Head of a Musician

Oil on Canvas

45 x 45cm

£4000.00

2017



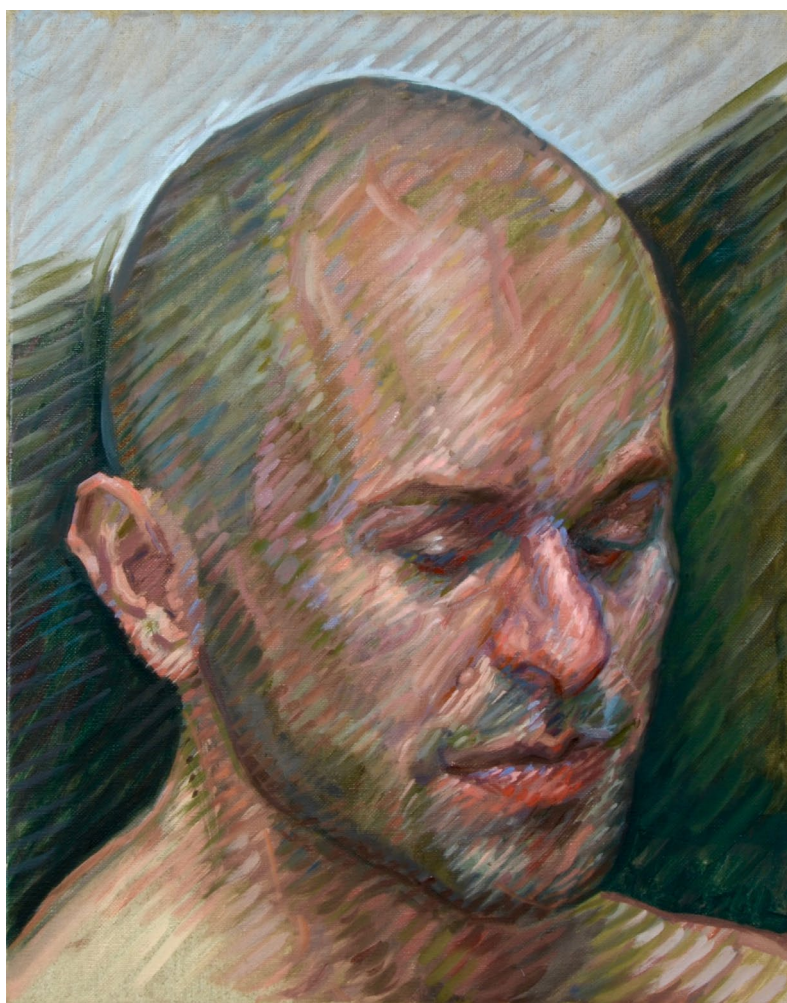
Self-portrait Looking Back

Oil on Linen

45 x 35cm | Framed

SOLD

2018



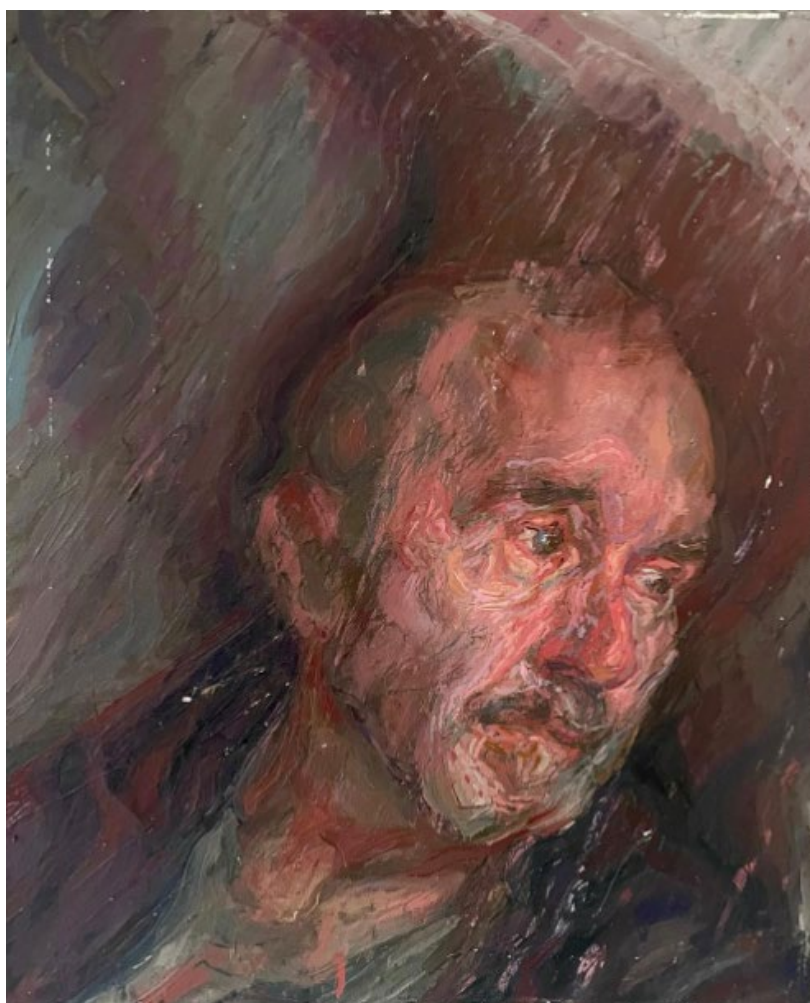
Head of Riccardo

Oil on Linen
50 x 40cm
£4800.00
2020 – 2021



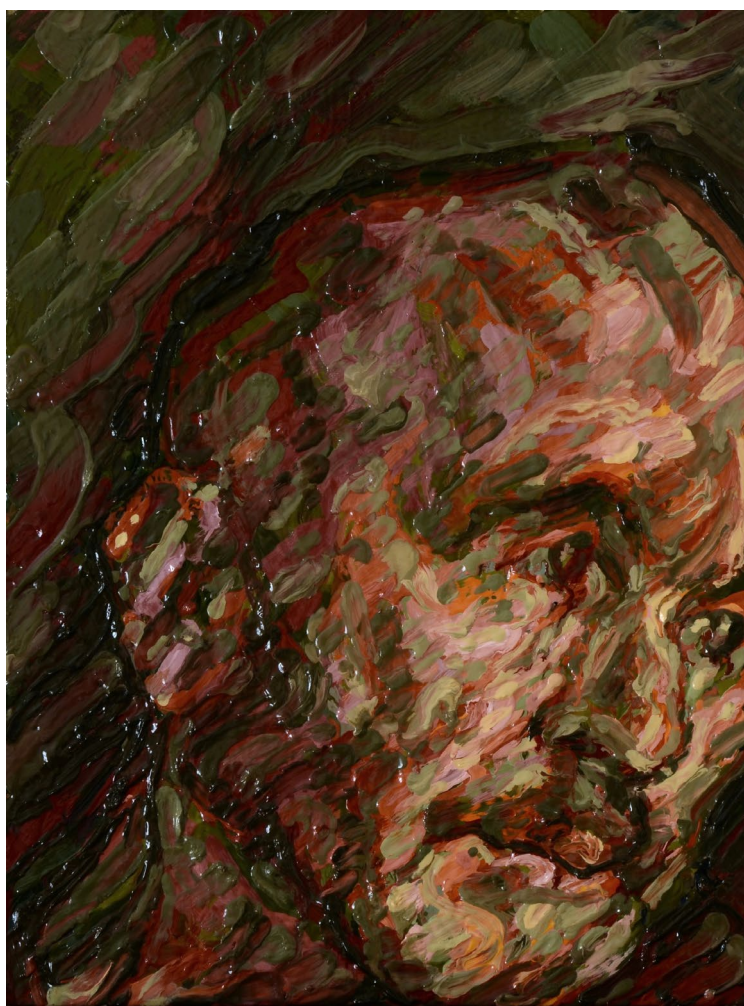
Self-portrait in Winter

Oil on Linen
50 x 40cm
£5000.00
2020



Head of Antonio I

Oil on Linen
60 x 50cm
£5000.00
2020



Head of Antonio II

Oil on Board

50 x 40cm

£4300.00

2021



Self-portrait, Early Morning

Oil on Board

50 x 40cm

£4500.00

2021



Untitled (Self-portrait)

Oil on Linen

22 x 18cm

SOLD

2017



After Poussin III

Oil on Canvas

60 x 80cm

SOLD

2022



After Turner
Oil on Canvas
62 x 92cm
£5000.00
2017 - 2018



After Titian
Oil on Canvas
70 x 50cm
SOLD
2019



Self Portrait I

Ink on Paper

29.5 x 21cm | 39.5 x 30cm (F)

Window Mounted, Walnut Frame with Art Glass

SOLD

2019



Self Portrait 2

Oil Pastel on Paper

29.5 x 21cm | 39.5 x 30cm (F)

Window Mounted, Black Stained Oak with Art Glass

SOLD

2023



Self Portrait 3

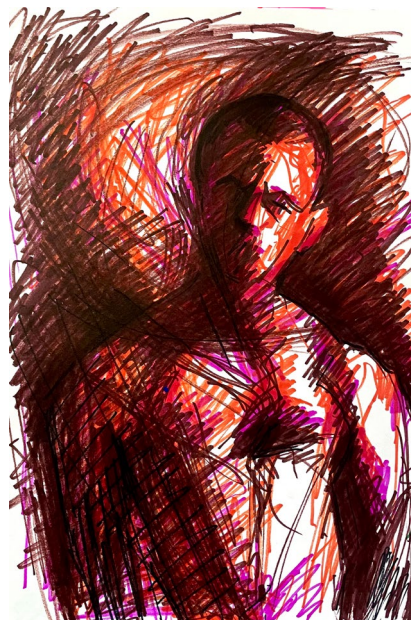
Oil Pastel on Paper

29.5 x 21cm | 39.5 x 30cm (F)

Window Mounted, Black Stained Oak with Art Glass

£550.00

2023



Self Portrait 4

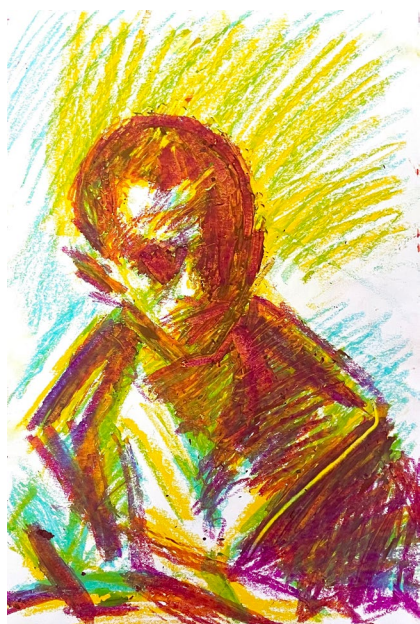
Coloured Pen on Paper

29.5 x 21cm | 39.5 x 30cm (F)

Window Mounted, Walnut Frame with Art Glass

SOLD

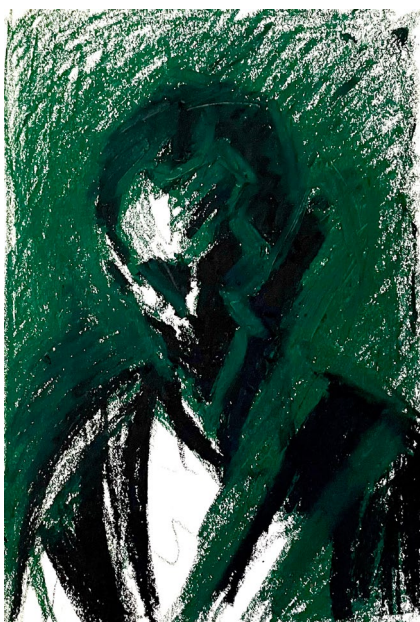
2023



Self Portrait 5
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm | 39.5 x 30cm (F)
Window Mounted, Walnut Frame with Art Glass
SOLD
2022



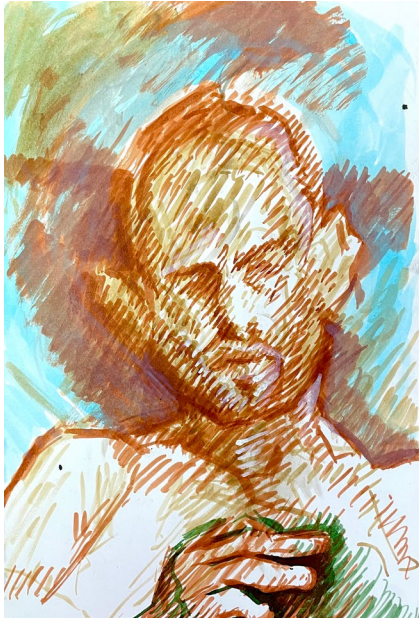
Self Portrait 6
Ink on Paper
29.5 x 21cm | 39.5 x 30cm (F)
Window Mounted, Walnut Frame with Art Glass
SOLD
2018



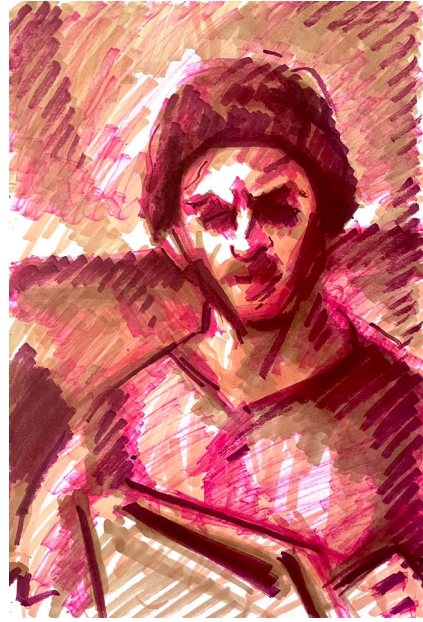
Self Portrait 7
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm | 39.5 x 30cm (F)
Window Mounted, Walnut Frame with Art Glass
SOLD
2022



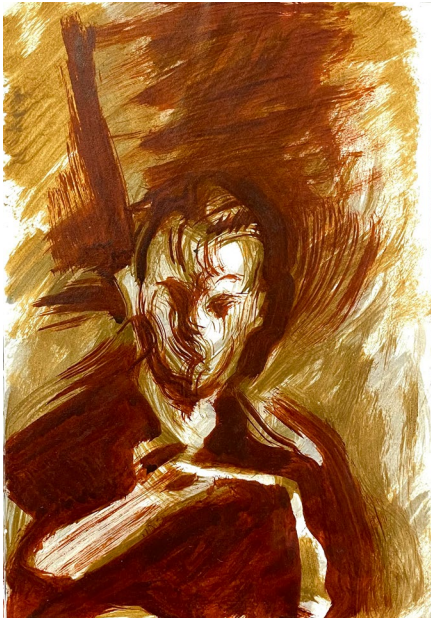
Self Portrait 8
Conte on Paper
29.5 x 21cm | 39.5 x 30cm (F)
Window Mounted, Walnut Frame with Art Glass
SOLD
2017



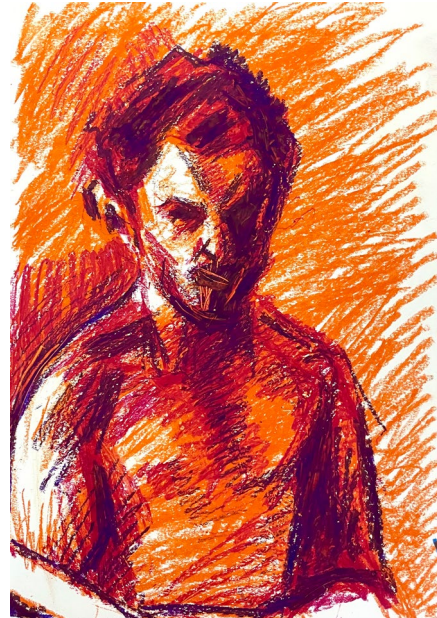
Self Portrait 9
Ink on Paper
29.5 x 21cm | 39.5 x 30cm (F)
Window Mounted, Walnut Frame with Art Glass
SOLD
2019



Self Portrait 10
Coloured Pen on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2020



Self Portrait 11
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
SOLD
2022



Self Portrait 12
Coloured Pen on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2022



Self Portrait 13
Ink on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2018



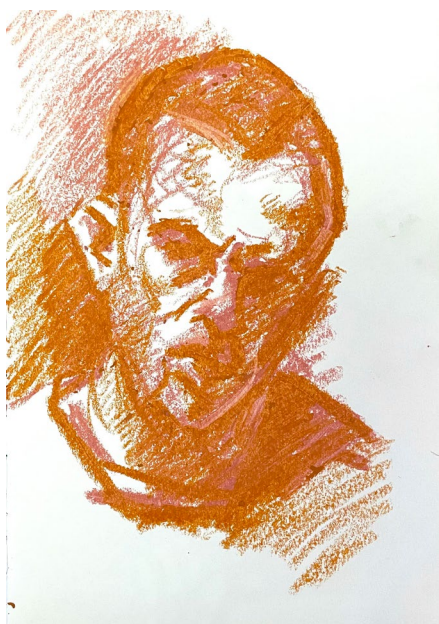
Self Portrait 14
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
SOLD
2022



Self Portrait 15
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2021



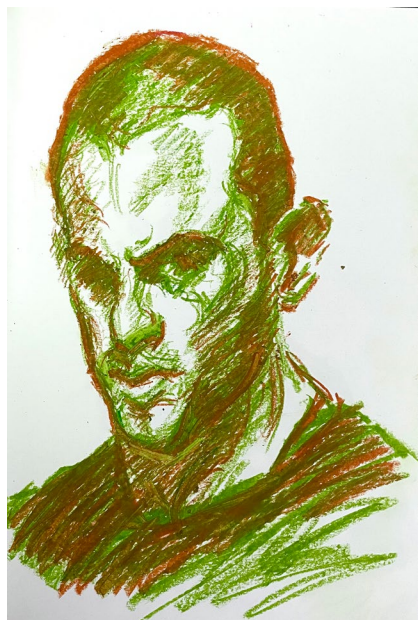
Self Portrait 16
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2020



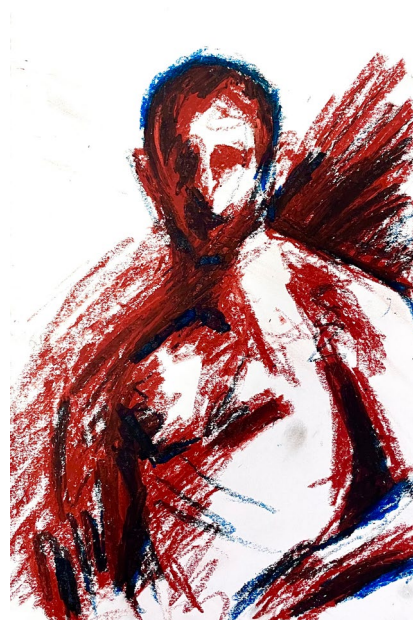
Self Portrait 17
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2021



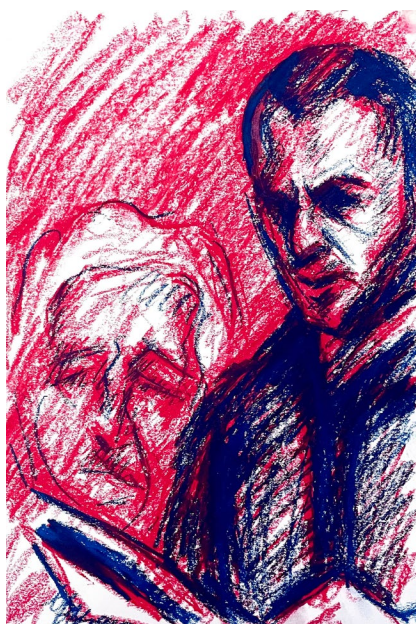
Self Portrait 18
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
SOLD
2020



Self Portrait 19
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
SOLD
2023



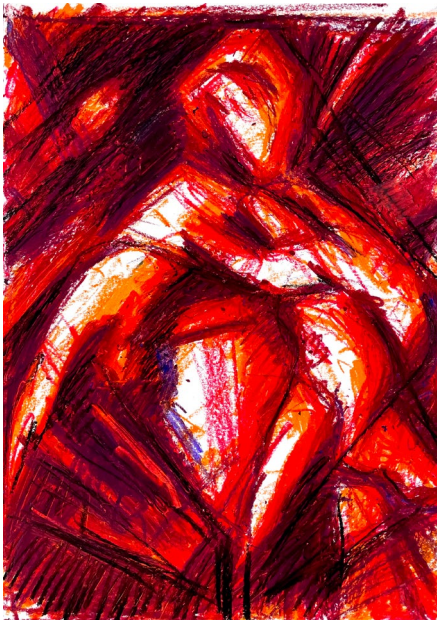
Self Portrait 20
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2023



Self Portrait 21
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
SOLD
2021



Self Portrait 22
Chalk on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
SOLD
2023



After Del Piombo
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2022



After Degas
Coloured Pen on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2018



After El Greco
Coloured Chalk on Paper
21 x 29.5cm
SOLD
2019



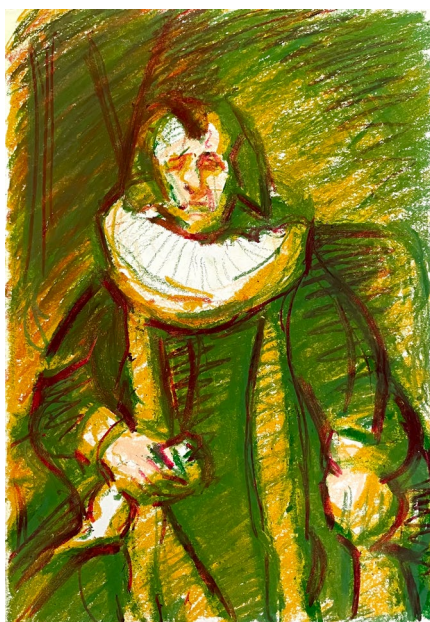
After Guercino
Coloured Pen on Paper
21 x 29.5cm
£400.00
2019



After Millet
Conte on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
SOLD
2019



After Rembrandt I
Pencil & Coloured Pen on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2019



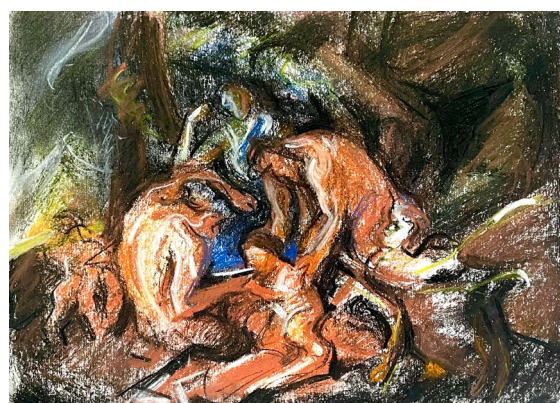
After Rembrandt II
Oil Pastel on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
SOLD
2019



After Sassoferrato
Coloured Pencil on Paper
29.5 x 21cm
£400.00
2017



After Poussin I
Coloured Pen on Paper
21 x 29.5cm
£400.00
2019



After Poussin II
Coloured Pen on Paper
21 x 29.5cm
SOLD
2019



After Rubens
Coloured Pen on Paper
21 x 29.5cm
£400.00
2019



After Velázquez
Crayon on Paper
21 x 29.5cm
£400.00
2017

**EXHIBITION
PAINTINGS
ON LOAN
FROM PRIVATE
COLLECTIONS**





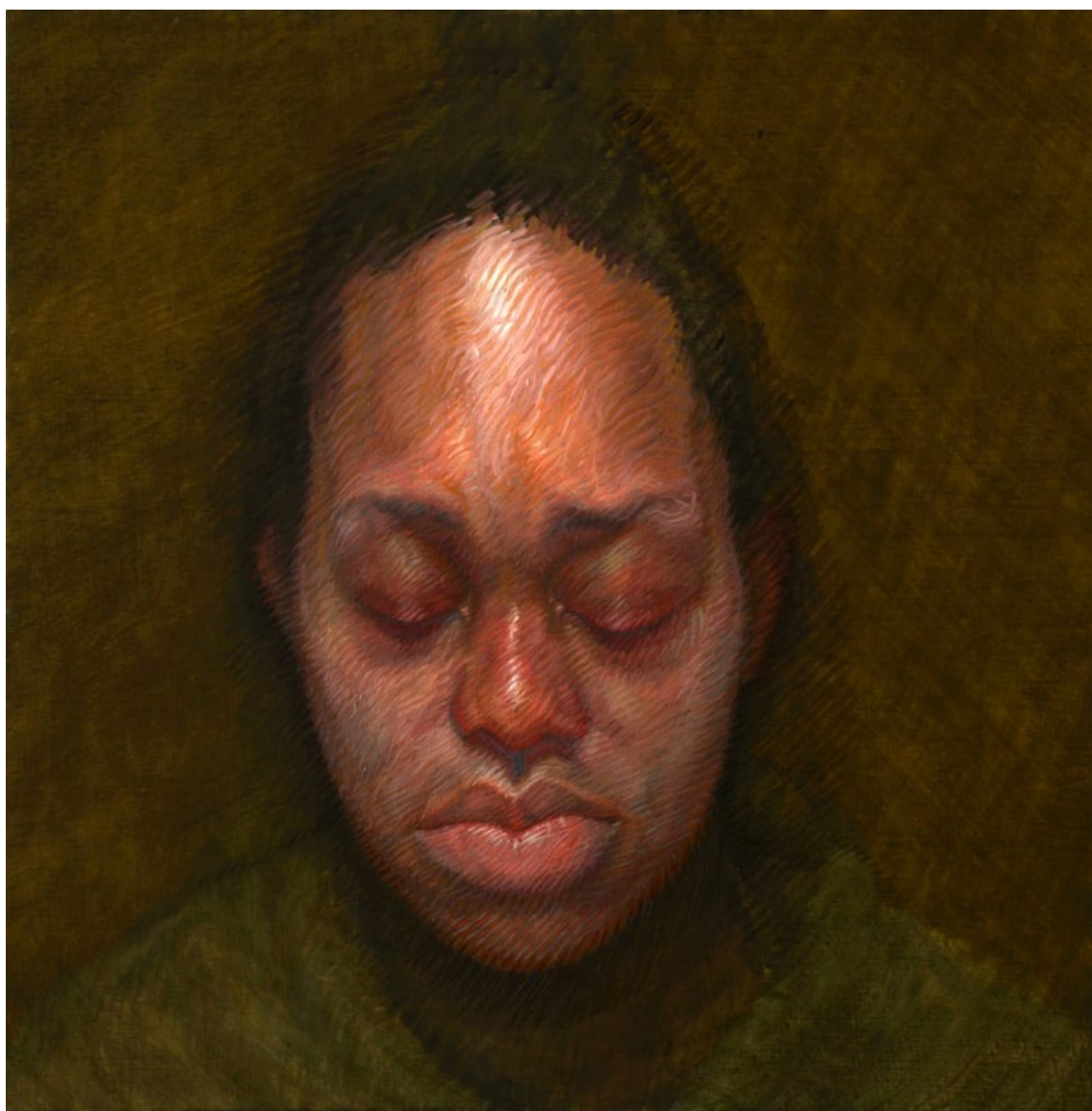
The Artist (Self-portrait)

Oil on Canvas

100 x 80cm

2016

PRIVATE COLLECTION



Imara
Oil on Canvas
65 x 65cm | Framed
2019
PRIVATE COLLECTION



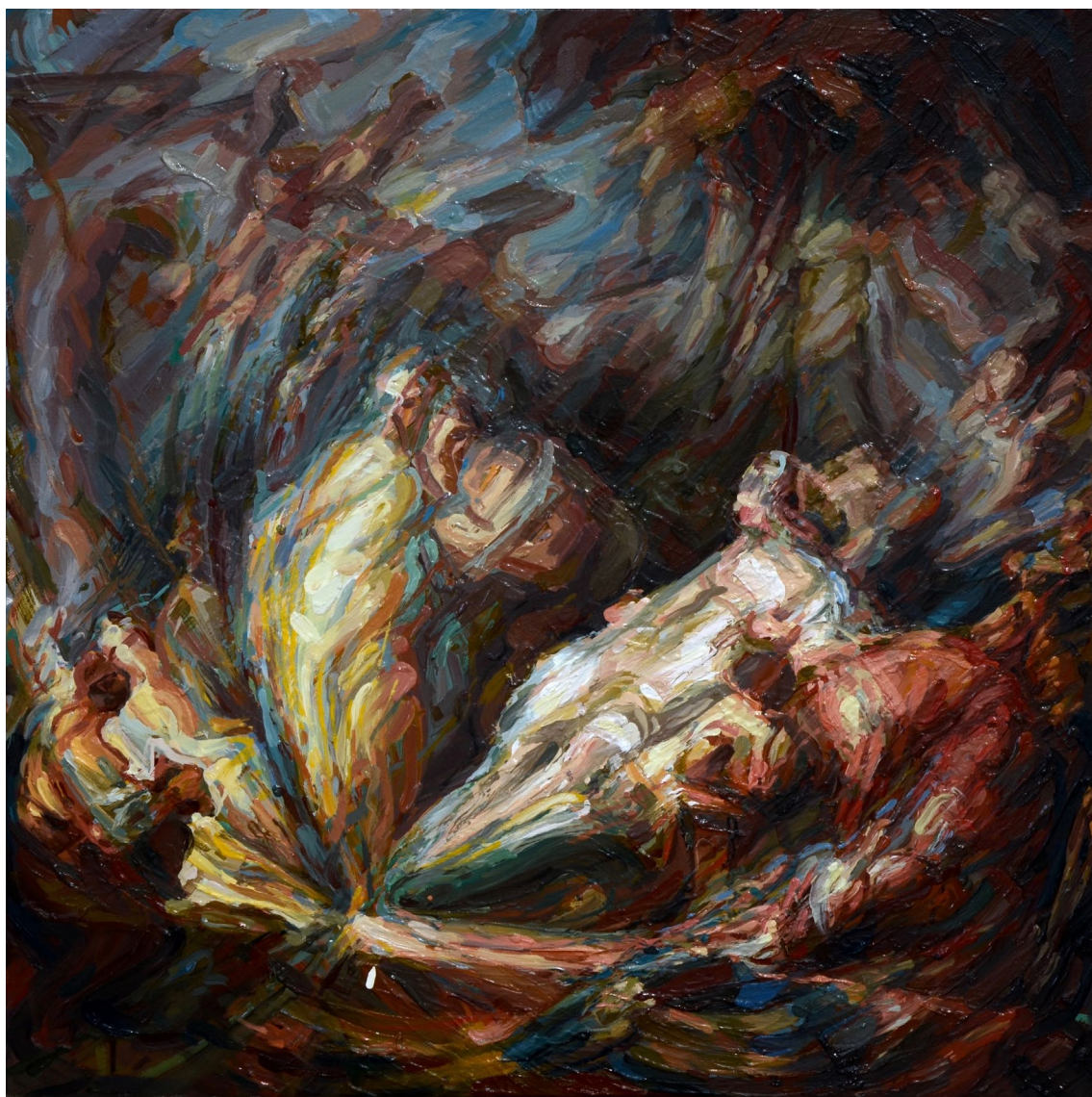
Imara in her Winter Coat

Oil on Canvas

130 x 100cm

2019

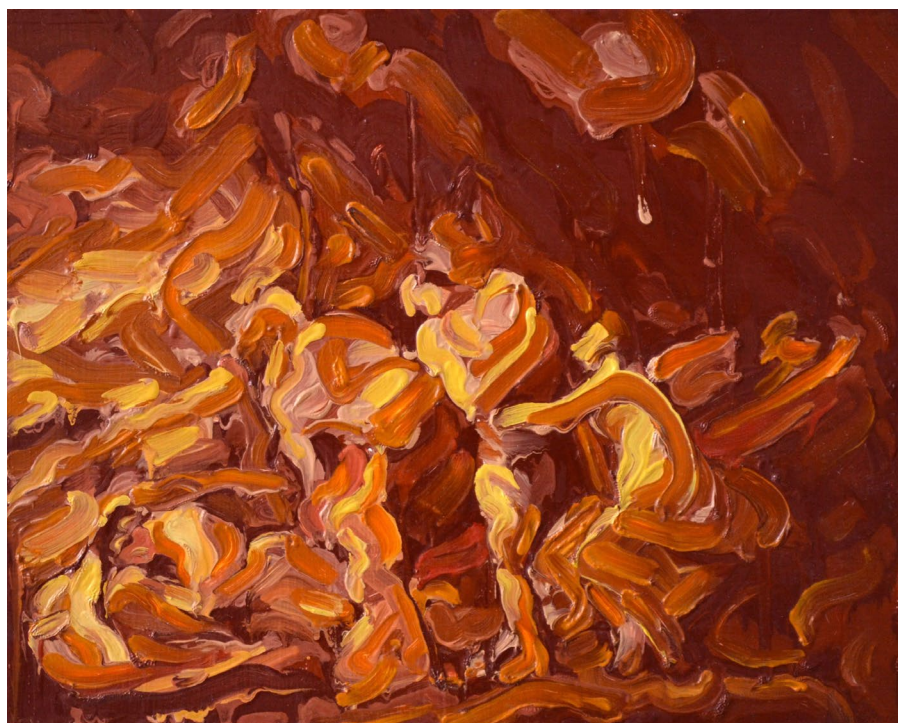
PRIVATE COLLECTION



After Fragonard
Oil on Canvas
60 x 60cm
2021-2022
PRIVATE COLLECTION



After Poussin I
Oil on Board
40 x 50cm | Framed
2021
PRIVATE COLLECTION



After Poussin II
Oil on Board
40 x 50cm
2021
PRIVATE COLLECTION



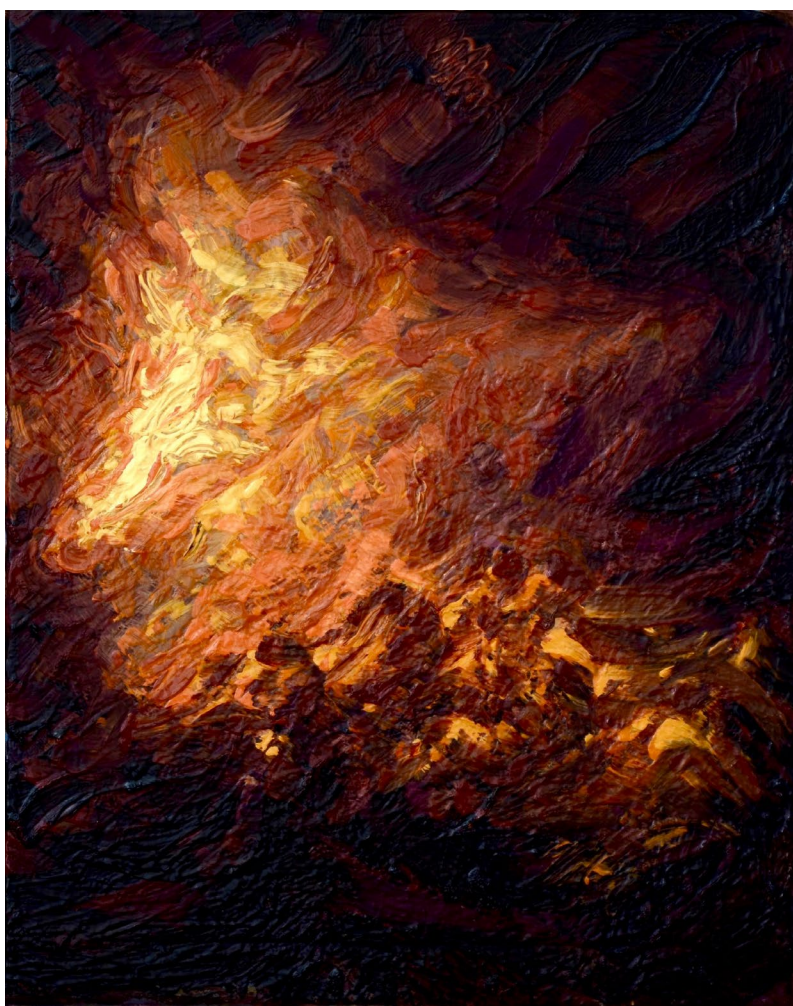
After El Greco
Oil & Wax on Canvas
40 x 50cm
2021
PRIVATE COLLECTION



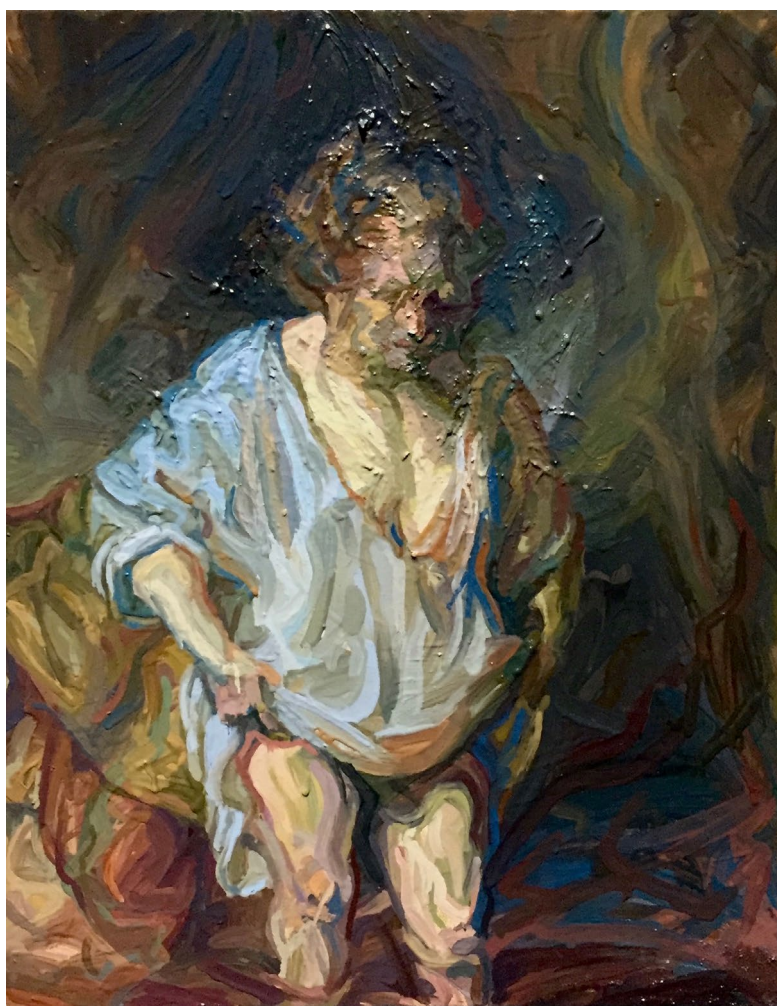
After Rubens
Oil on Linen
50 x 40cm
2019
PRIVATE COLLECTION



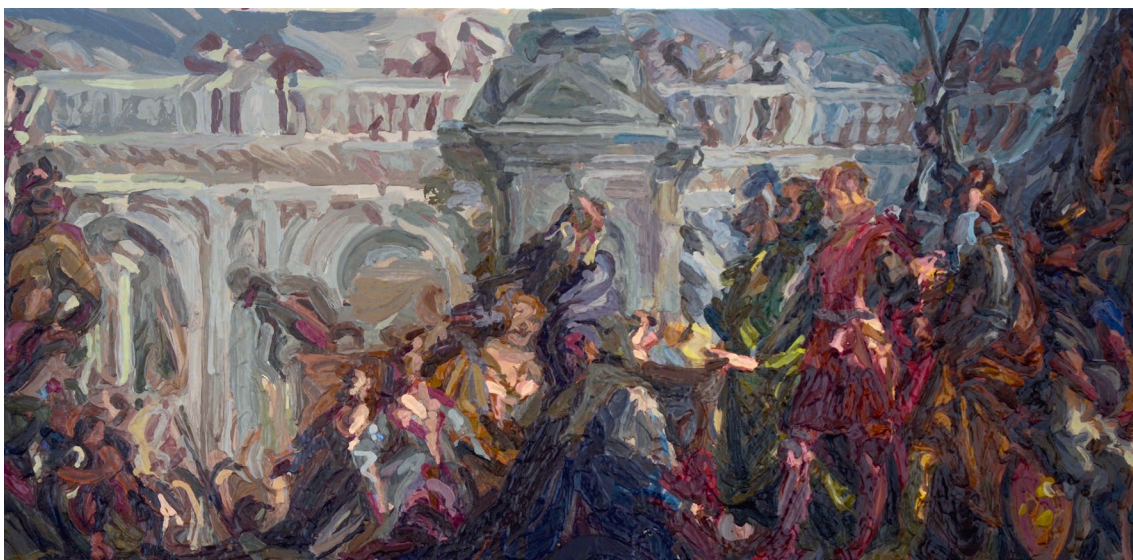
After Goya I
Oil on Linen
60 x 50cm | Framed
PRIVATE COLLECTION
2019



After Goya II
Oil on Linen
50 x 40cm | Framed
PRIVATE COLLECTION
2021



After Rembrandt
Oil on Canvas
50 x 40cm | Framed
2017 - 2018
PRIVATE COLLECTION



After Veronese
Oil on Canvas
35 x 70cm | Framed
2016 - 2017
PRIVATE COLLECTION



Charlie Schaffer was visited in his studio by Dr Alison Smith, National Portrait Gallery Chief Curator, to discuss Schaffer's practice, relationships to the old masters, people and painting, and journey thus far; in anticipation of *Charlie Schaffer: Scalpel-like Eyes*.

[VIEW INTERVIEWS](#)

Below: Charlie Schaffer with exhibition Curator Jack Trodd



PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY BY REECE GIBBINS



CHARLIE SCHAFFER: SCALPEL-LIKE EYES



Certain artwork is available on no-interest payment plans by request, as agreed by the gallery and the artist. Enabling artwork accessibility.

For sales enquiries & appointments contact Curator Jack Trodd:

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