

# OMAR MAHFOUDI



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OMAR MAHFOUDI WAS BORN IN 1981 IN TANGIER, MOROCCO. HE LIVES AND WORKS IN PARIS.

Omar Mahfoudi grew up not far from the Detroit, where he discovered painting within his family circle and drawing through personal experiments. But it was at the age of 12 that young Omar developed his eye and his technique at the Catholic school in Tangier, where he took part in art history and plastic arts courses.

After having long proposed compositions marked by the presence of the materials, Omar Mahfoudi turned to the fluidity of liquid acrylic and ink, favouring compositions that play on the border between figuration and abstraction.

Omar Mahfoudi's boundless admiration for cinema is perceptible in his work as much by the references that are slipped in as by the games of framing, colourimetry and luminosity present in his pictorial work. His life experiences, personal research and his cultural knowledge feed his poetic and humanistic creations.

Omar Mahfoudi plays with presence and absence through the emptiness that fills his works with a

mystery, alongside a form of existential solitude. His compositions can be distinguished sometimes by lush vegetation, sometimes by a desert biome, sometimes by disturbing shadows, sometimes by soothing figures. They unfold in a faded atmosphere, oscillating between lost paradise, melancholic twilight and unfathomable night.

Thus, in this constant balancing act between presence and absence, figuration and abstraction, tension and appeasement, Omar Mahfoudi composes a painting that is both oxymoronic and cinematic.

His work has been presented at numerous international events, such as the 1-54 fair in London in the UK, Art Genève in Switzerland and Art Cologne in Germany.

# OMAR MAHFOUDI

né en 1981  
Tanger, Maroc  
Vit et travaille à Paris, France



## SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

2023

*Dans la maison*, AFIKARIS Galley, Paris, France  
*I was Dreaming of the Past*, Atelier 21 Gallery, Casablanca, Morocco

2022

*The Forgotten Branches*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
Art Cologne, Rodolphe Janssen Gallery, Cologne, Germany

2021

*El Dorado*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
*Waiting in the Oasis*, AFIKARIS Gallery x AMA, Cap-Ferret, France

2019

*Les Égarés*, Château de Trousse-Barrière Art Center, Briare, France  
*Africa Now!*, Retoandri Gallery, Zürich, Switzerland  
*Botanica*, Conil Gallery, Tangier, Morocco

2018

*Tanjawi*, Point Éphémère, Paris, France

2015

*Tanger 1981*, Formato Comodo Gallery, Madrid, Spain  
Galerie le Purgatoire, Paris, France

## COLLECTIVE EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

2024

Art Brussels, AFIKARIS Gallery, Brussels, Belgium



2023

1-54 London, Atelier 21 Gallery, London, UK

*Ce que nous donne la terre*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

Art Brussels, AFIKARIS Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

artgenève, AFIKARIS Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland

BRAFA, Rodolphe Janssen Gallery, Brussels, Belgium

2022

*Voisinages*, Atelier 21 Gallery, Casablanca, Morocco

1-54 Paris, Paris, France

artgenève, Geneva, Switzerland

2021

1-54 London, London, UK

*Quitter la ville*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

2020

*Une nouvelle generation*, Aba Ababou Gallery, Rabat, Morocco

2018

NEUE>WELTEN, 52Lager Gallery, Zurich, France

2017

AKAA, Paris, France

*La Collective*, Montresso Foundation, Marrakech, Morocco

2016

*Expectativa y Memoria*, Cerculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain

2015

Salon Marocain, Fundacao de Serralves, Porto, Portugal

ARCO Madrid, Madrid, Spain

*Desordre*, Institut francais de Tangier, Morocco

2014

*Maroc contemporain*, Institut du Monde Arabe (Arab World Institute), Paris, France

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, United States

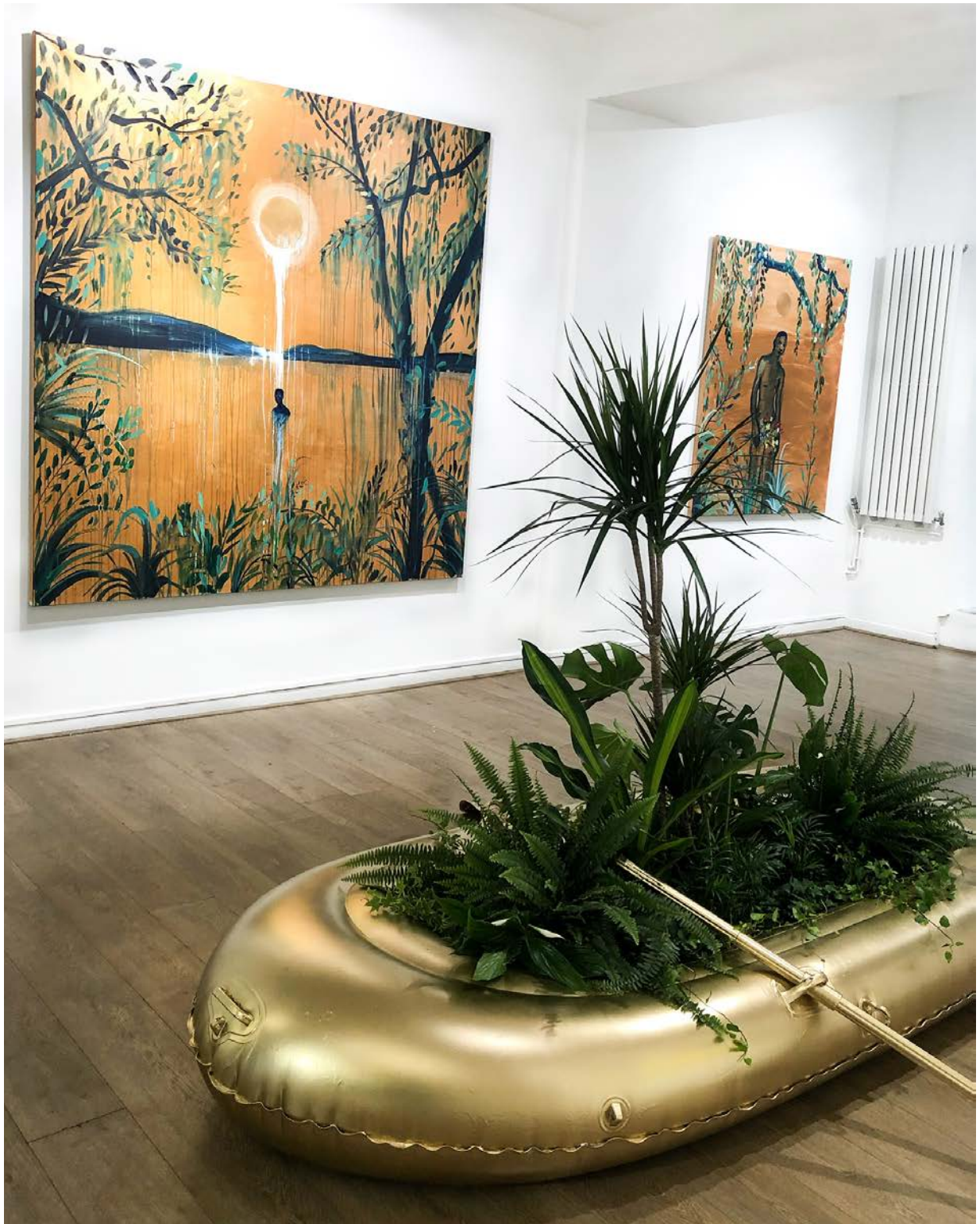




*COME BACK TO ME*, 2021  
Acrylic and ink on canvas  
200x200 cm / 78x78 in

Men and women in the forest or young bathers alone in the middle of a lake, are all silhouettes that inhabit the work of Omar Mahfoudi. Intriguing, these phantasmagorical bodies are in immersion in an unknown environment. From the canvas, emerges a call of nature. A call to return to the origin of the world, to rethink the universe in the face of its instability. In the background of his work emerges a certain ecological awareness. He initiates the idea of appropriating and getting closer to nature.





EXHIBITION VIEW  
*El Dorado*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
December 2021





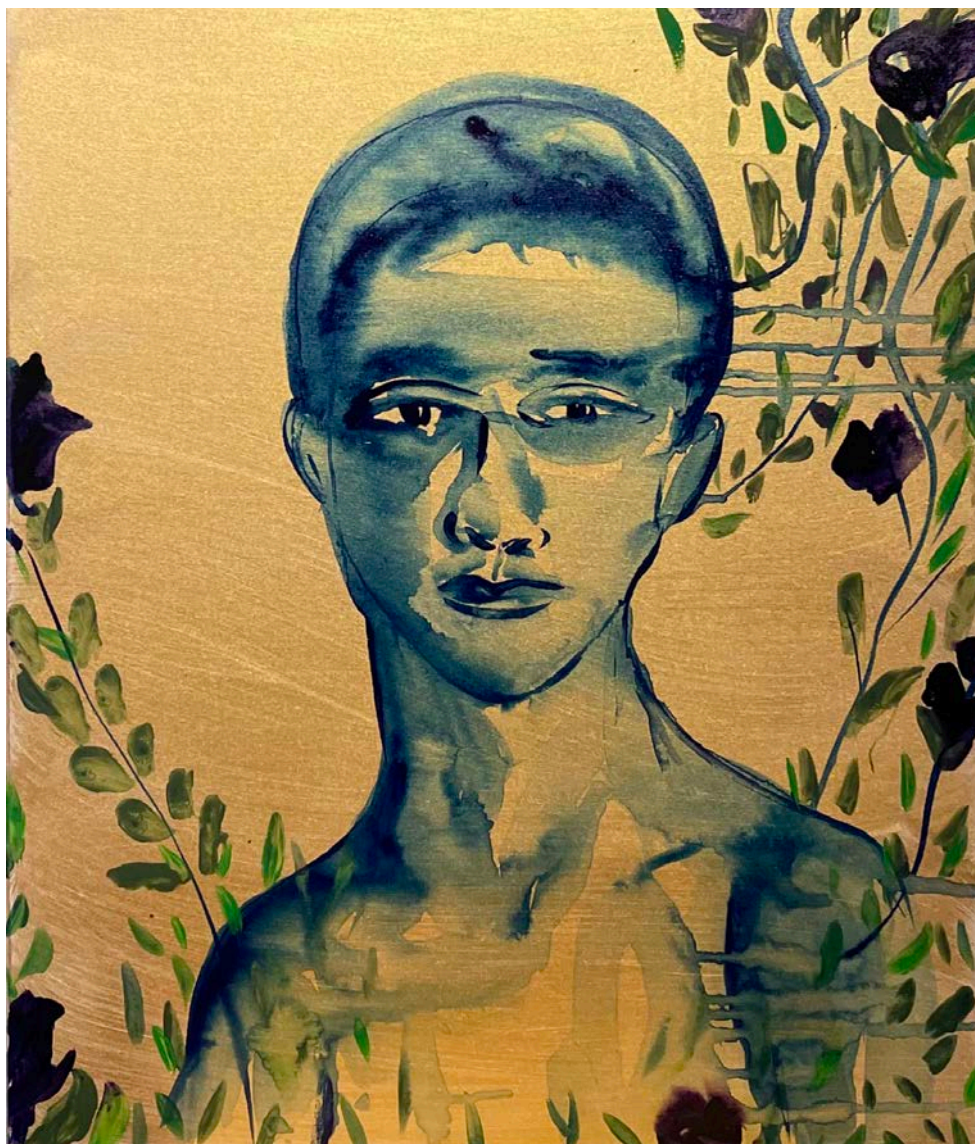
*GOLDEN OASIS #9, 2021*

Acrylic and ink on canvas

169x149 cm / 66x58 in

The bather - the artist's alter-ego - is a recurring image in the work of Omar Mahoudi. A nostalgic figure linked to his past in Tangier, it represents a suspended moment. A moment with a beginning and an inevitable end. If you look closely, you will see that these 'swimmers' do not swim. They are static. They are characters who are waiting and at the same time in a deliberate solitude.





*TOMBOY*, 2021  
Acrylic and ink on canvas  
50x40 cm / 19x15 in

In some of his artworks, Omar Mahfoudi shows a man alone, surrounded by flowers. This flower boy, as he likes to call him, symbolizes the acceptance of oneself and one's sensitivity, as well as the abandonment of the fear of not fitting in with society's standards.

The Flower Man is the man who decided to leave life as it pleases him, to reconnect with his true self and nature.

«When I was young, I hated carrying a bouquet of flowers in public. For me it was not a sign of masculinity and I wanted to be seen as a bad boy: the bad boy and not the flower boy.»



*WAITING IN MERZOUGA*, 2021  
Acrylic and ink on canvas  
185x172 cm / 73x67 in





*YOU GO YOUR WAY, I'LL GO YOUR WAY TOO, 2021*

Acrylic and ink on canvas

120x180 cm x 47x71 in

The legend of El Dorado has been transformed over time. What was originally a man covered in gold ElDorado became a promised land - Eldorado, the city of gold, the object of vain expeditions - before becoming the symbol of an ideal that embodied not only immense wealth, but also limitless love and immeasurable success. The object of desire never really mattered. On the other hand, it is the quest that inspired the myth that counts. Omar Mahfoudi appropriates this quest and makes it a common purpose by including those who find themselves in front of his works. This is how the characters - transparent beings that blend into their environment, often faceless, without origin or gender - become the reflection of those who observe them. Floating and anonymous figures with a mystical ambiguity, they embody their thoughts, their spirit and their elevation. On horseback, on a boat or walking, they embody their own journey.





LEFT  
*I WAS OUT OF TOWN GETTING LOST TILL I WAS RESCUED*, 2021  
 Acrylic and ink on canvas  
 50x50 cm / 19x19 in



RIGHT  
*I DON'T WANNA KEEP YOU WAITIN*, 2021  
 Acrylic and ink on canvas  
 50x50 cm / 19x19 in

The night is an important part of his work. It is the subject of experiments. The light of the moon fascinates him. It dresses his characters in a surreal atmosphere, close to science fiction.





*LES BRANCHES DE LA NUIT 3, 2021*

Acrylic, ink and gold leaf on canvas

150x120 cm / 59x47 in





*THE BLUE JUNGLE*, 2021  
Acrylic and ink on canvas  
150 x 200 cm / 59x78 in

« I always thought that landscapes were the most boring thing to paint, bordering on kitsch. My work initially focused on the representation of human beings and especially their presence. This presence was gradually transformed into an absence to give space to nature. Finally, I came to represent landscapes. »





*DES BRANCHES OUBLIÉES*, 2022

Liquid acrylic on canvas

203x278 cm / 80x109 in





*J'AURAIS JAMAIS DÛ M'ÉLOIGNER DE MON ARBRE 1, 2022*

Liquid acrylic on canvas

120x88 cm / 47x34 in

It is by looking out of his window that Omar Mahfoudi observes the world and lets himself go into a daydream. The tree in front of him becomes an object of his fantasy: a gateway to multiple horizons and timeframes, where he pictures beings in suspension. At the top of the branches, his characters overlook the world and let themselves be carried by their thoughts. If children climb trees without fear of falling, Omar Mahfoudi infuses his work with this same freedom. The silhouettes rise, in search of an escape.



EXHIBITION VIEW

*The Forgotten Branches*, Galerie AFIKARIS, Paris, France  
December 2022

Photo credit : Studio Vanssay



LEFT  
*SUR LA BRANCHE 5*, 2022  
Ink on paper  
40x30 cm / 15x12 in



RIGHT  
*SUR LA BRANCHE 2*, 2022  
Ink on paper  
40x30 cm / 15x12 in





LEFT  
*BLUE BIRD 5*, 2022  
 Ink on paper  
 60x42 cm / 24x17 in



RIGHT  
*BLUE BIRD 2*, 2022  
 Ink on paper  
 60x42 cm / 24x17 in





*WANDERER ABOVE THE SEA OF FOG, 2022*

Liquid acrylic on canvas  
150x100 cm / 59x39 in





#### EXHIBITION VIEW

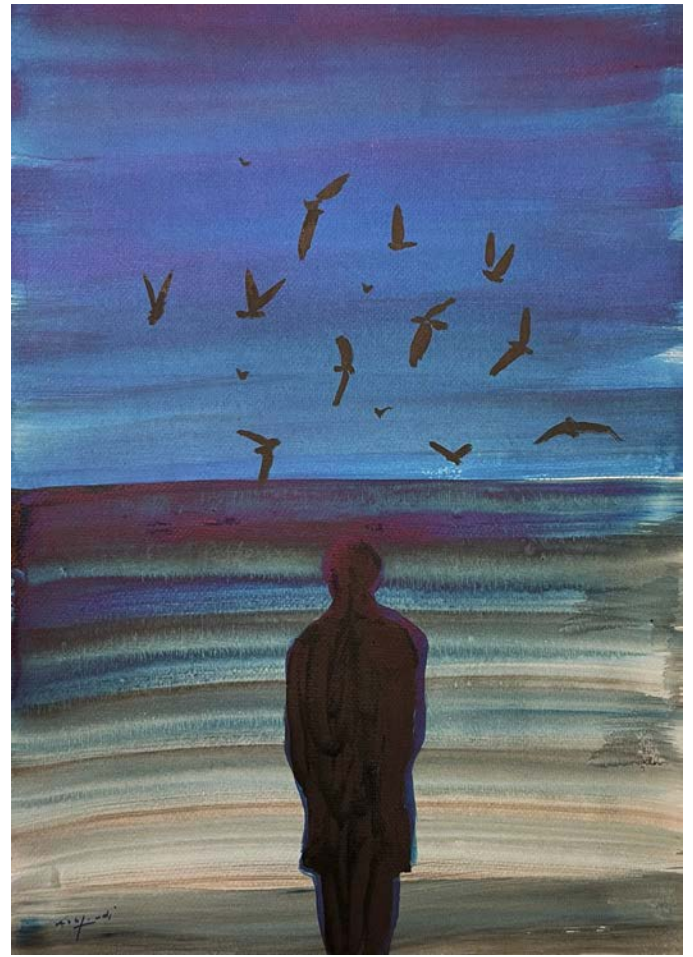
*Classique I*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
July 2022

Photo credit : Candice Nineh

Omar Mahfoudi revisits Caspar D. Friedrich's *The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (1818). The variations of blue evoke the idea of the blue flower, symbol of the Sehnsucht, of absolute love and the passage between the real world and the dream. Inherited from German Romanticism and an image of inner unity, infinity and healing, blue plays transparently with white to achieve a complete harmony and pictorial union, a symbol of man's spiritual union with the divine. Omar Mahfoudi revisits the inner loneliness, close to the tormented soul, with an abstract style that borders on the figurative to represent a dreamlike universe that breaks with the world of reason. The artist's gesture leads to a meditative state and is inspired by the Japanese prints of Hokusai by its flat colours and its intent of spiritual awakening.



LEFT  
*LES DUNES LOINTAINES*, 2022  
 Ink on paper  
 40x30 cm / 16x12 in



RIGHT  
*UZAK*, 2022  
 Ink on paper  
 40x30 cm / 16x12 in

The night is an important part of his work. It is the subject of experiments. The light of the moon fascinates him. It dresses his characters in a surreal atmosphere, close to science fiction.





*THE LAKE GHOST*, 2020

Ink on paper

40x30 cm / 16x12 in



*BLUE SUNRISE, 2023*

Ink on paper

25x25 cm / 10x10 in



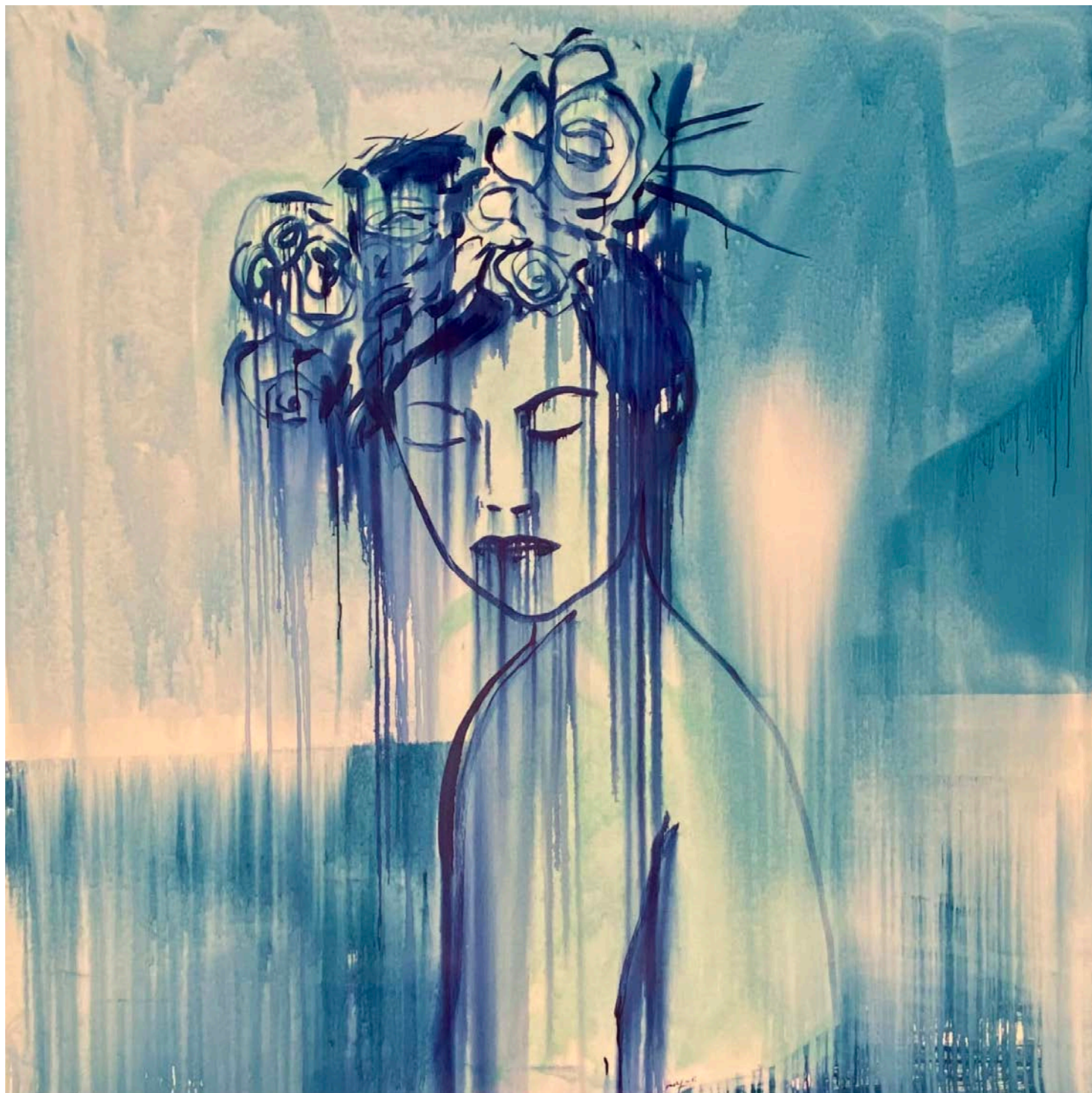


*BLUE FLOWERS, 2022*

Ink on paper

20x21 cm / 9x8 in





*LE BACCHUS*, 2022  
Acrylic on Canvas  
156x149 cm / 61x59 in





*LES CINQ GARÇONS*, 2023

Liquid acrylic on canvas

150x150 cm / 59x59 in



EXHIBITION VIEW

*Dans la maison*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

November 2023

Photo credit: Studio Vanssay





*BLUE FLOWER BOY, 2023*

Liquid acrylic on canvas

100x100 cm / 39x39 in



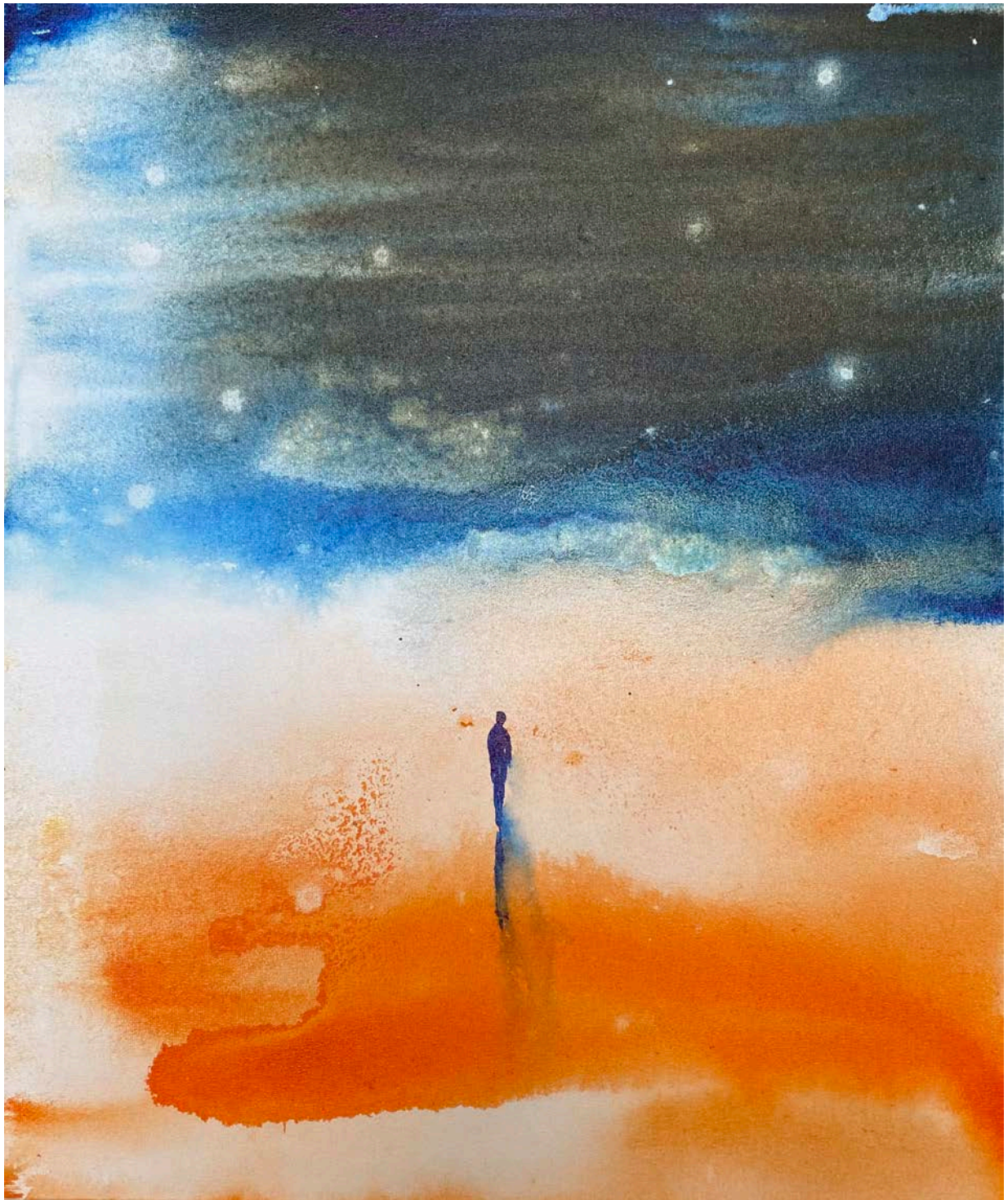


*I'M WAITING FOR THE LIGHT TO CHANGE*, 2021

Acrylic and ink on canvas

150x150 cm / 59x59 in





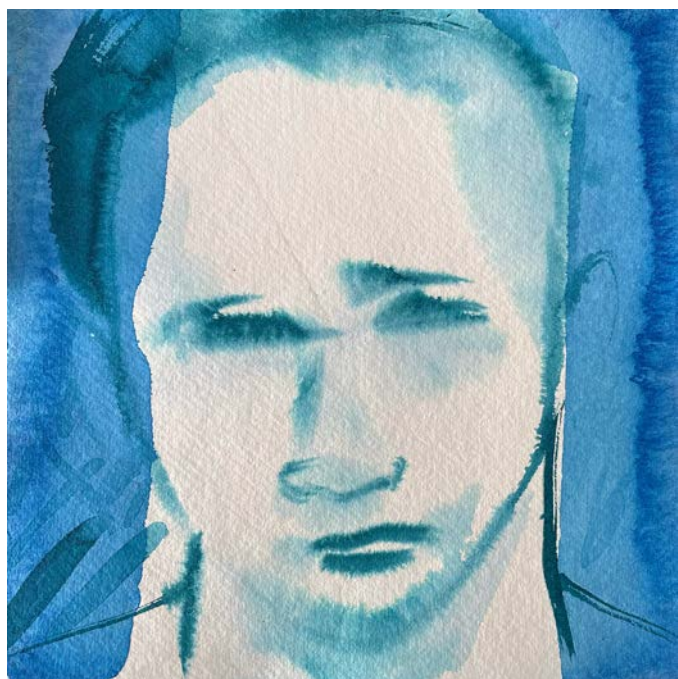
*CONSTELLATION*, 2023  
Acrylic and ink on canvas  
55x45 cm / 22x18 in



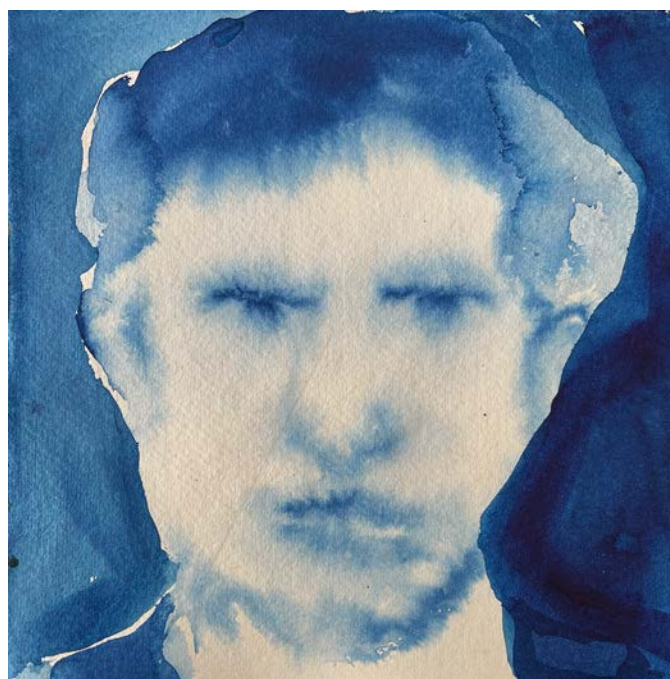


*LE CAVALIER*, 2023  
Liquid acrylic on canvas  
120x120 cm / 47x47 in





LEFT  
*BLUE FACE 16*, 2022  
Ink on Paper  
20x21 cm / 8x8 in

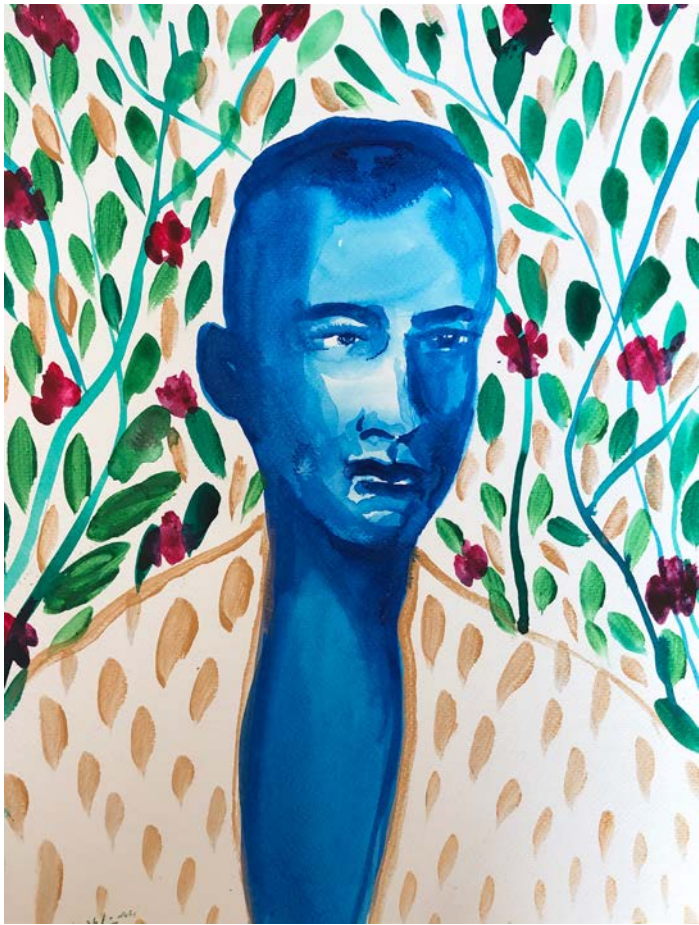


RIGHT  
*BLUE FACE 15*, 2022  
Ink on Paper  
20x21 cm / 8x8 in

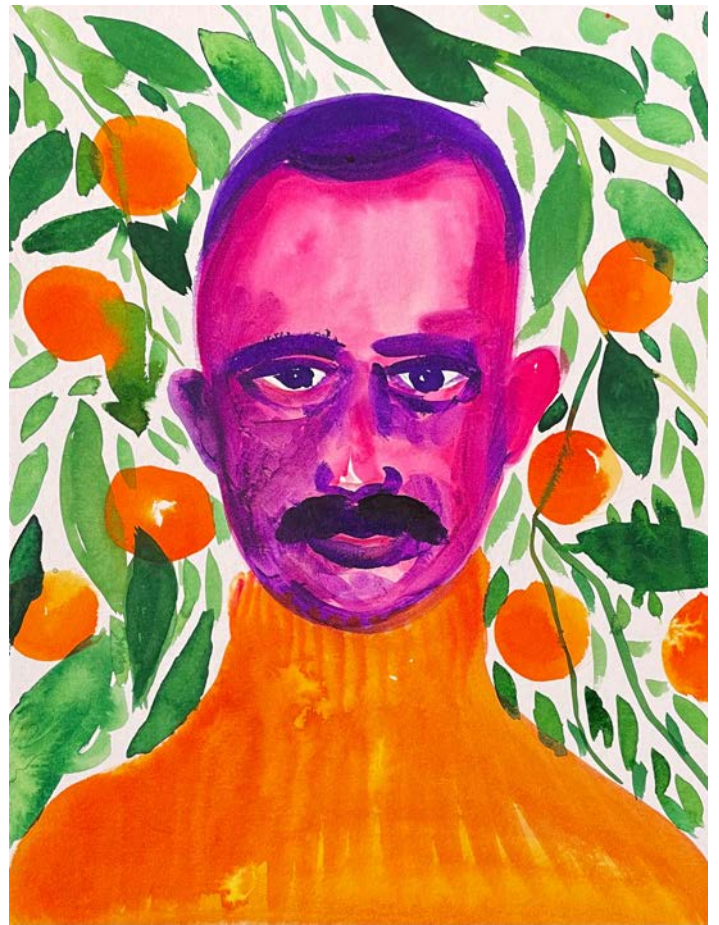


*TANGLED, 2022*  
Ink on paper  
36X48 CM / 14X19 IN





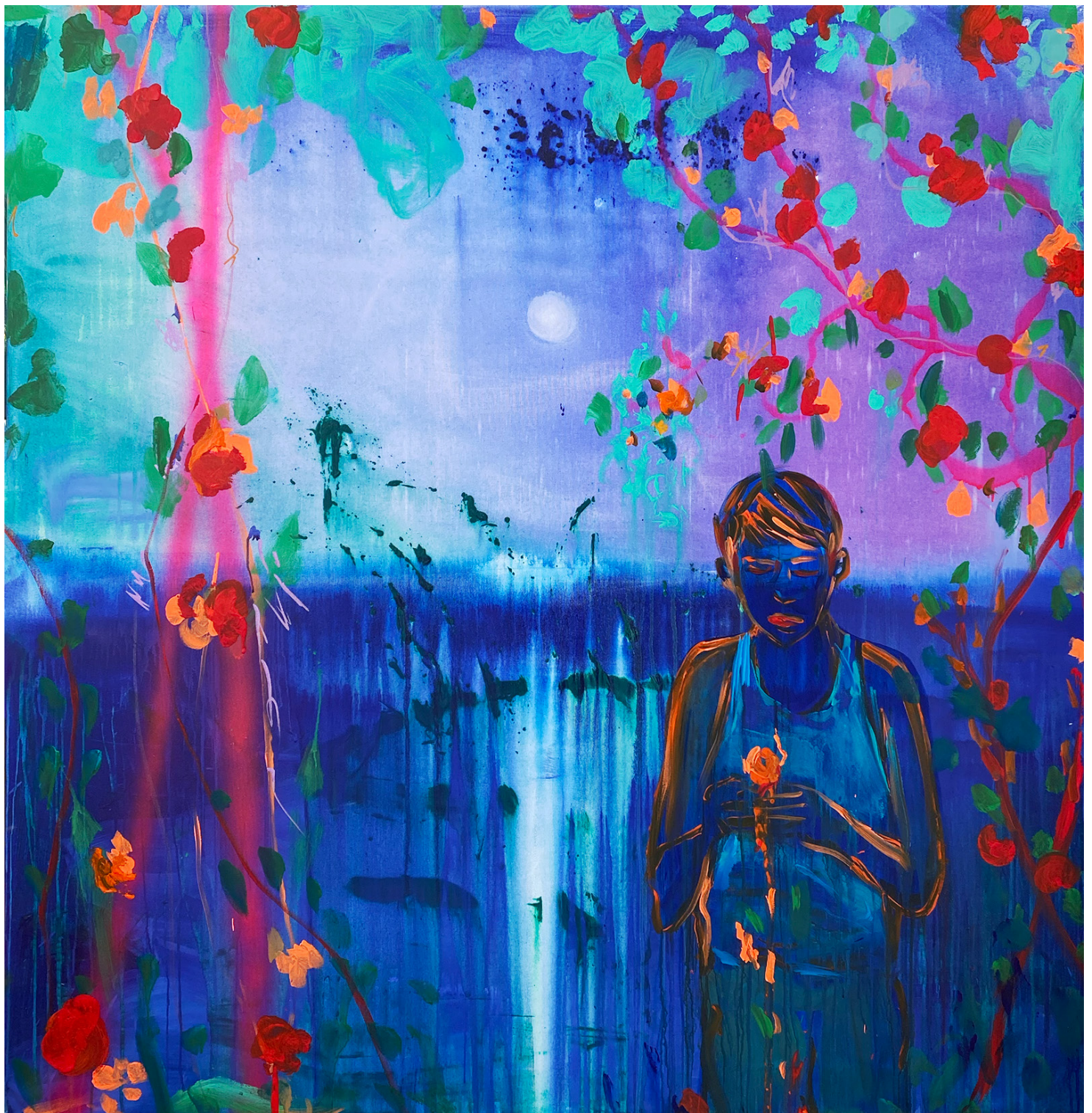
LEFT  
*LES FLEURISTES DE L'ATLAS 11, 2022*  
 Ink on paper  
 40x30 cm / 15x12 in



RIGHT  
*LES FLEURISTES DE L'ATLAS 3, 2022*  
 Ink on paper  
 40x30 cm / 15x12 in

Omar Mahfoudi travelled to the Atlas Mountains several years ago. There, he met men who cultivate the plants that are later transformed into essential oils. The *Fleuristes de l'Atlas* series is a melancholic memory of this trip. Mahfoudi explores the notion of identity by playing with the skin tone of the characters. He continues the theme of the 'flower boy' by questioning the concept of masculinity through the symbolism of flowers.





*LE GARÇON AUX FLEURS ORANGE, 2023*

Liquid acrylic on canvas

152x150 cm / 60x59 in





EXHIBITION VIEW

*Ce que nous donne la terre*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
July 2023

Photo credit : Studio Vanssay

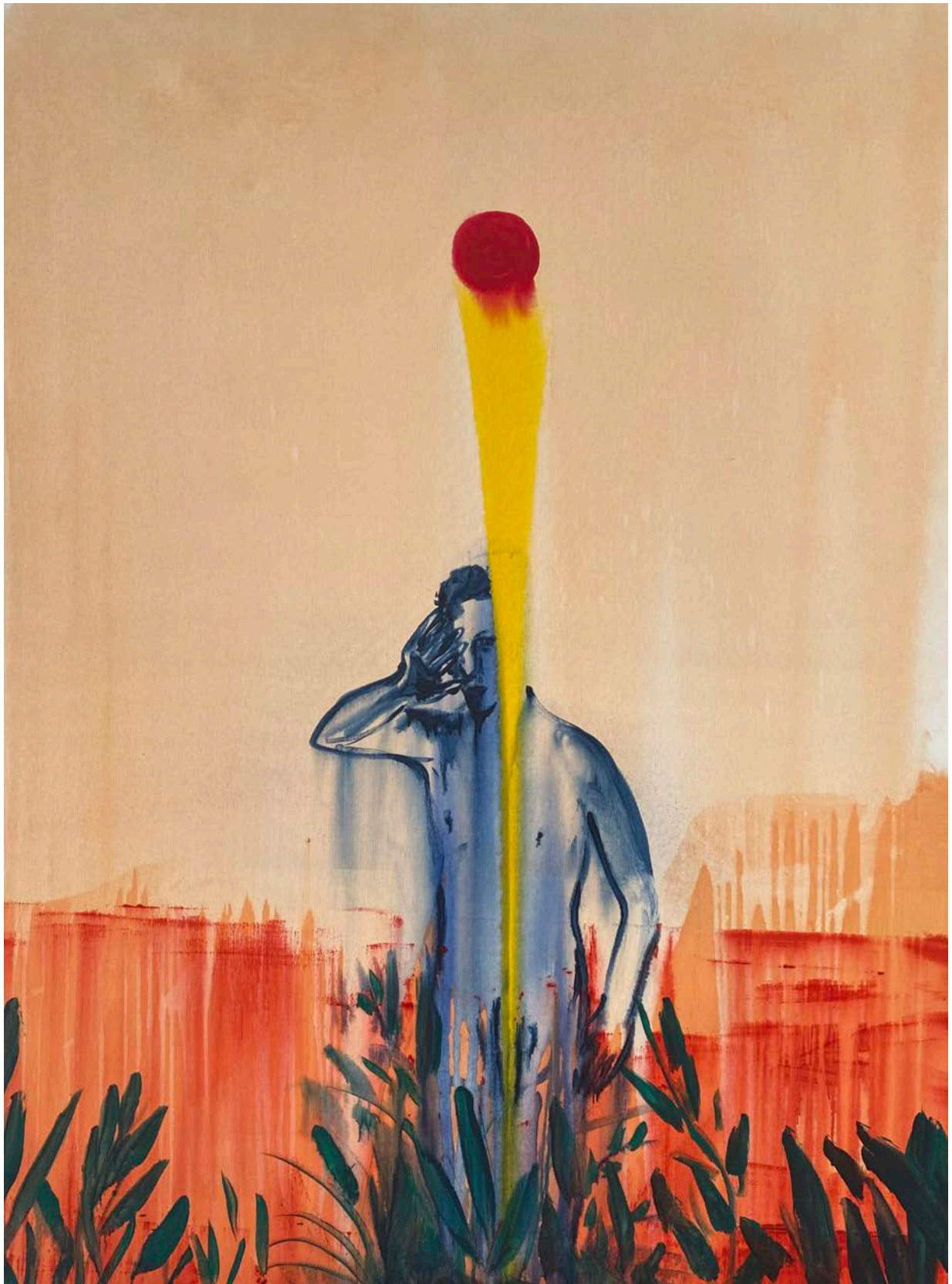


*THE PINK BRANCHES*, 2023

Liquid acrylic on canvas

150x180 cm / 59x71 in

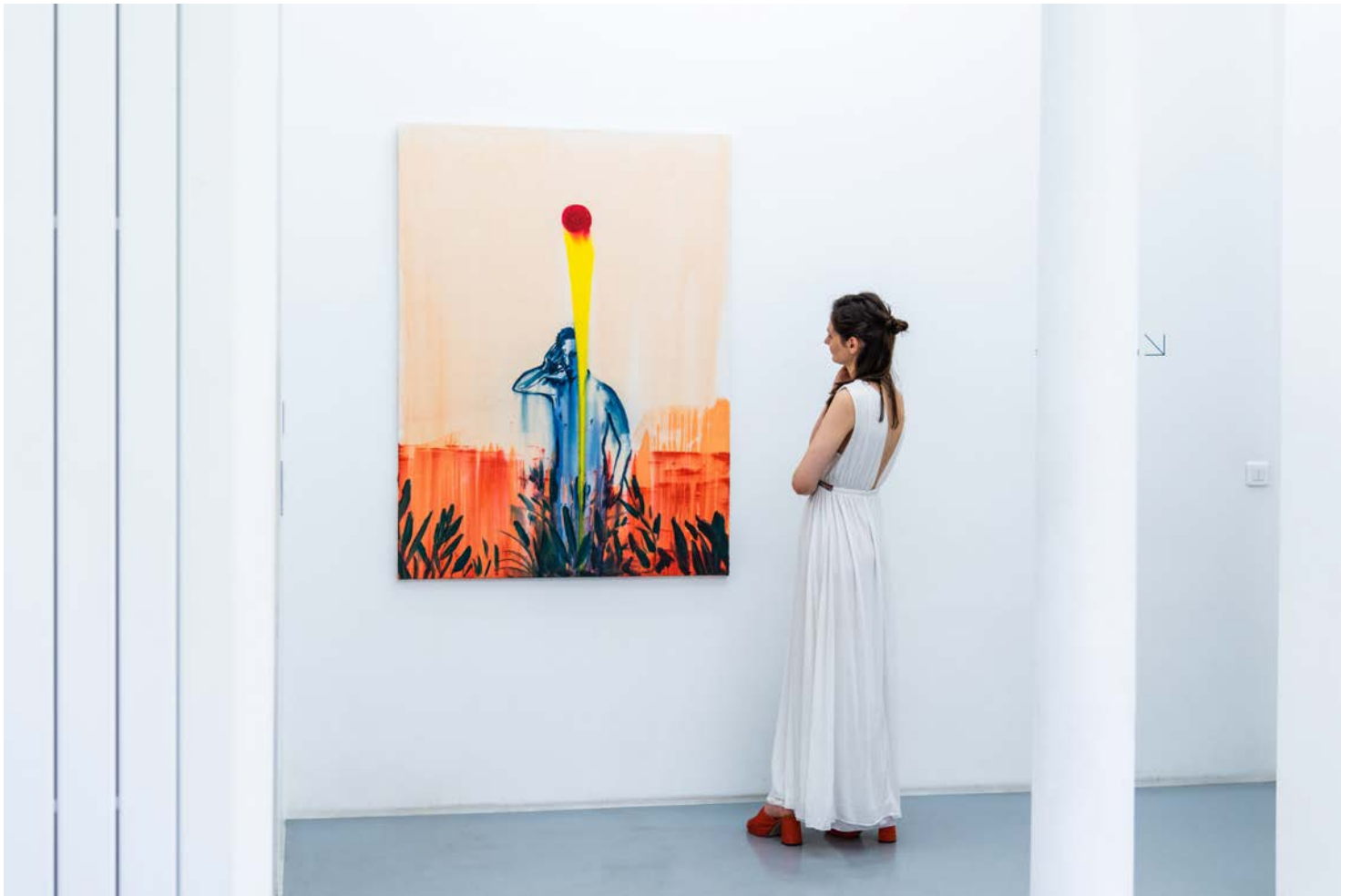




*HIDDEN BEHIND THE SUN, 2023*

Liquid acrylic on canvas

148x110 cm / 58x43 in



EXHIBITION VIEW

*Ce que nous donne la terre*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France  
July 2023

Photo credit : Studio Vanssay





*LE JEUNE HOMME A LA CIGARETTE, 2023*

Liquid acrylic on canvas

152x150 cm / 60x59 in





*L'INCONNU DE LA COLLINE*, 2024  
Liquid acrylic and ink on canvas  
127x109 cm / 50x43 in



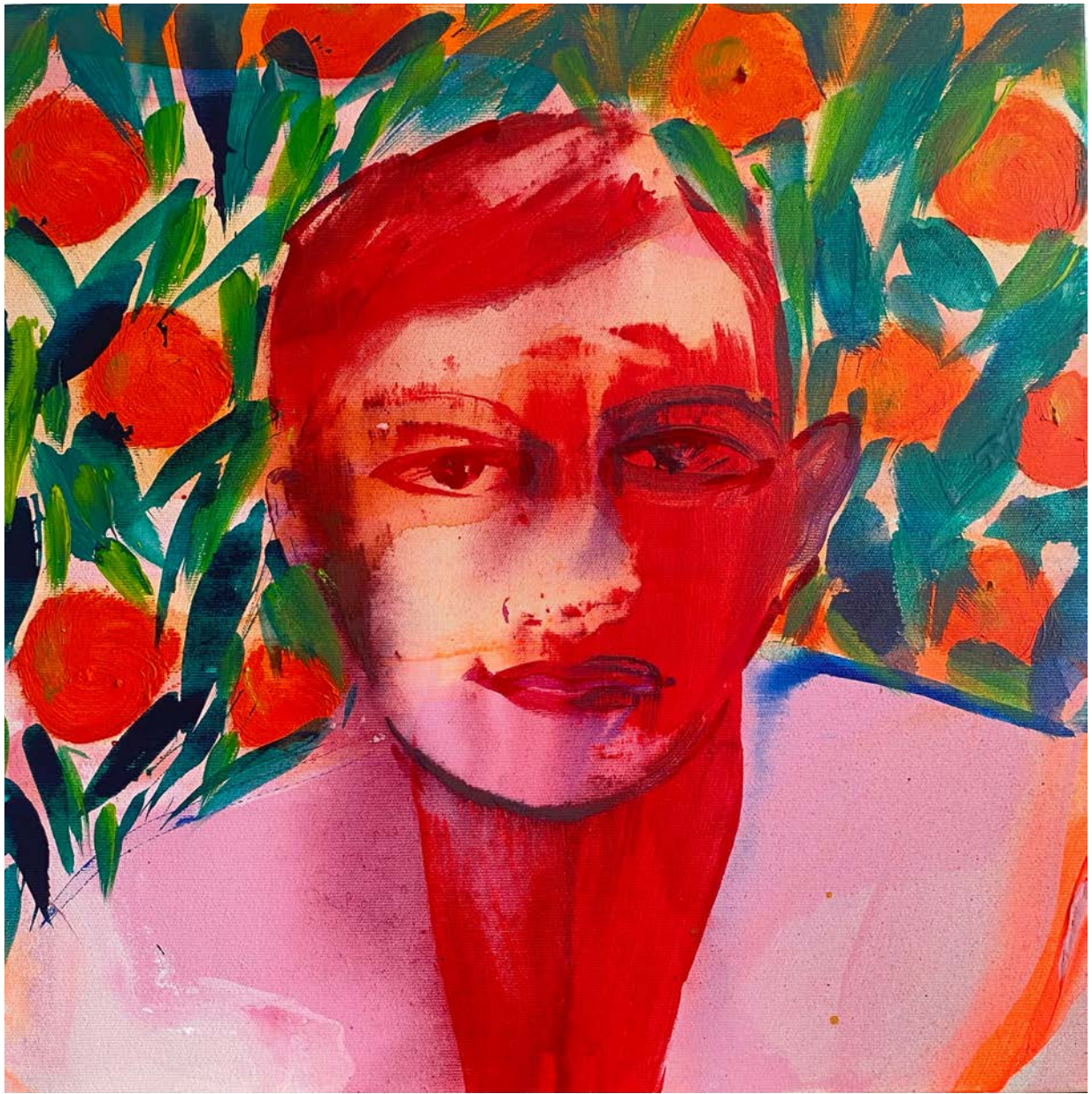


LEFT  
*LES FLEURS DU VENDREDI*, 2024  
Acrylic and ink on paper  
76x57 cm / 30x22 in



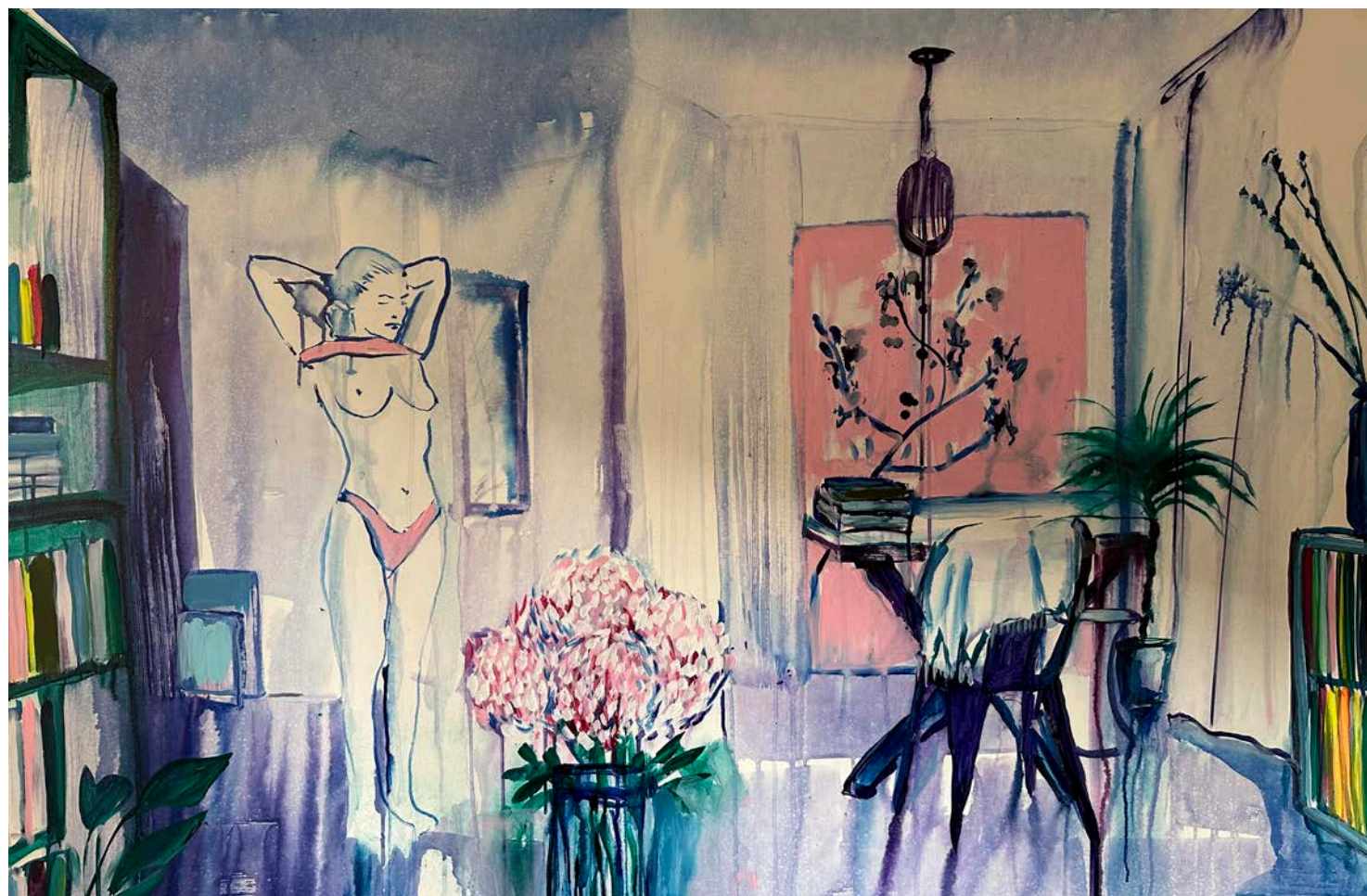
RIGHT  
*LES FLEURS DU MARDI*, 2024  
Acrylic and ink on paper  
76x57 cm / 30x22 in



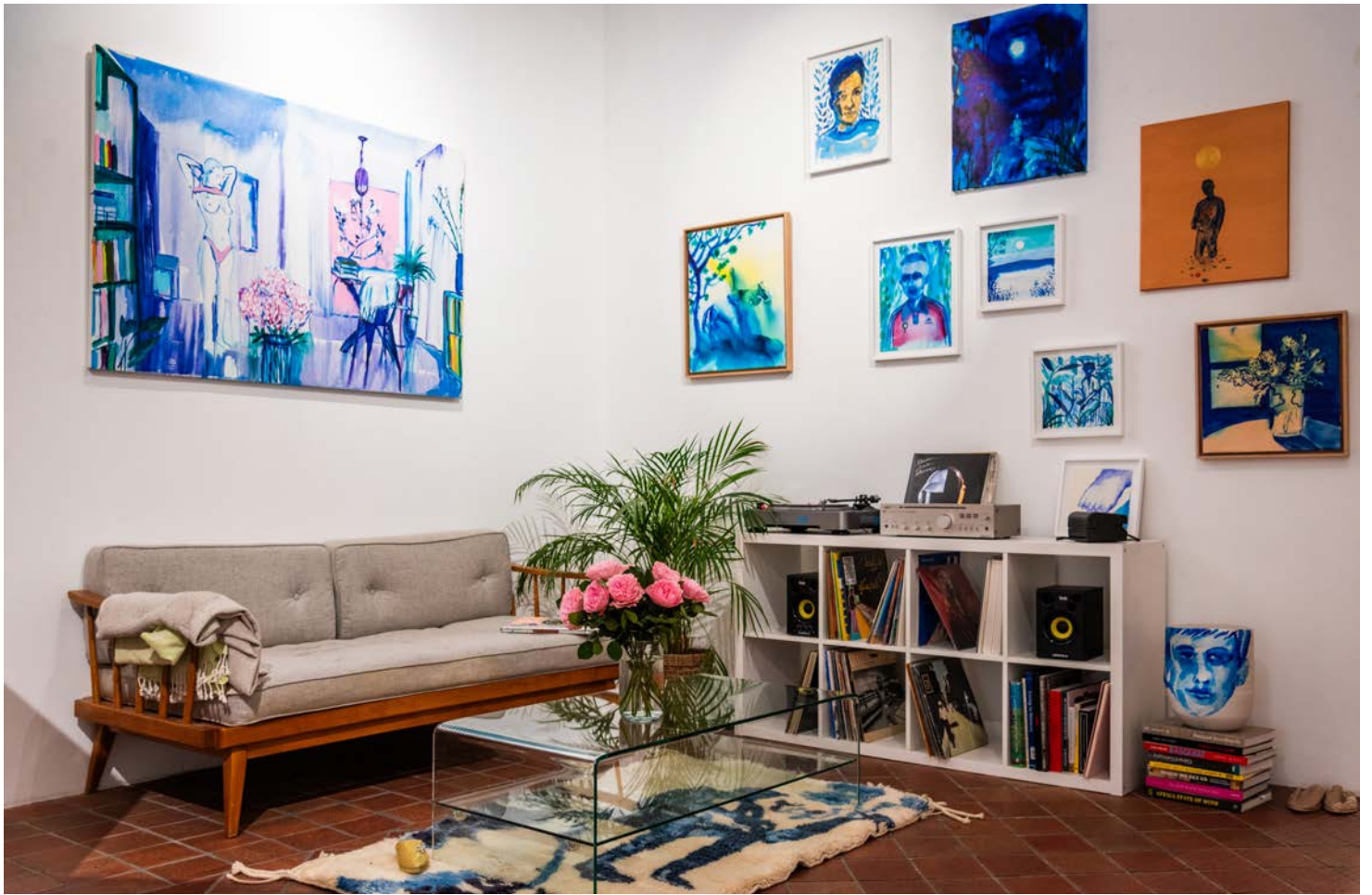


*ORANGE DREAM*, 2024  
Acrylic and ink on canvas  
50x50 cm / 20x20 in





*DANS LA MAISON*, 2023  
Liquid acrylic on canvas  
100x150 cm / 39x59 in



## EXHIBITION VIEW

*Dans la maison*, AFIKARIS Gallery, Paris, France

November 2023

Photo credit: Studio Vanssay





*THE PINK CLOUD*, 2022  
Liquid acrylic on canvas  
177x148 cm / 70x58 in