

Thameur Mejri Novo

curated by Pier Paolo Pancotto

November 17, 2022 - February 4, 2023

Thameur Mejri Novo

Solo show curated by Pier Paolo Pancotto

Eduardo Secci is pleased to announce the first solo show by Thameur Mejri in Milan, opening at NOVO in Via Olmetto on November 17, 2022. The exhibition curated by Pier Paolo Pancotto in the independent experimental space of the gallery takes place until February 4, 2023.

Known for his complex but balanced compositions and for the destructuring of human bodies, Thameur Mejri, through his works, he explores a political and critical vision of Tunisian society, while engaging the responsibility of the artist with regard to contemporary issues. His precise and prolific iconography constitutes a device critical of our relationship with the objects and symbols that surround us in daily life and which impose, whether consciously or not, certain forms of alienation.

In these new series of works he tried to keep certain constants, and in particular the attention to the human body, which charges with a powerful political interpretation and which he has until now largely developed, especially in the large-format paintings. A change is nevertheless noticeable in the expression of this political body. It is now also a matter of existential and metaphysical questions that occupy the artist. But the main reflection still around working to deconstruct the relations of power and domination that structure contemporary

societies, identifying in particular capitalism and the traditional ideologies that make them their instruments of control. In these new paintings themes like Love, Desire and human psychology are deconstructed. These new series are more like questions that Thameur ask himself about humans and their behaviors.

With a certain degree of violence, whether in terms of the composition of his paintings or in the pictorial vocabulary used, Thameur attempt to deconstruct the mechanisms of power and control put in place by the political, economic, cultural and religious systems in Tunisia and by extension, in North Africa.

Thameur Mejri Novo

Solo show a cura di Pier Paolo Pancotto

La Galleria Eduardo Secci è lieta di annunciare la prima mostra personale di Thameur Mejri a Milano, che aprirà presso NOVO in Via Olmetto il 17 novembre 2022. La mostra, curata da Pier Paolo Pancotto nello spazio sperimentale indipendente della galleria, si terrà fino al 4 febbraio 2023.

Conosciuto per le sue composizioni complesse ma equilibrate e per la destrutturazione dei corpi umani, Thameur Mejri, attraverso le sue opere, esplora una visione politica e critica della società tunisina, impegnando al contempo la responsabilità dell'artista nei confronti delle questioni contemporanee. La sua precisa e prolifica iconografia costituisce un dispositivo critico del nostro rapporto con gli oggetti e i simboli che ci circondano nella vita quotidiana e che impongono, in modo più o meno consapevole, alcune forme di alienazione.

In questa nuova serie di opere, l'artista ha cercato di mantenere alcune costanti, in particolare l'attenzione al corpo umano, che si carica di una potente interpretazione politica che finora ha ampiamente sviluppato, soprattutto nei dipinti di grande formato. Si nota tuttavia un cambiamento nell'espressione di questo corpo politico. Si tratta ora anche di questioni esistenziali e metafisiche che occupano l'artista. Ma la riflessione principale che l'autore porta avanti è ancora quella di lavorare per decostruire i rapporti di potere e di dominio che strutturano le

società contemporanee, individuando in particolare il capitalismo e le ideologie tradizionali che ne fanno gli strumenti di controllo. In questi nuovi dipinti vengono decostruiti temi come l'amore, il desiderio e la psicologia umana.

Questa nuova serie di lavori è strettamente alle domande che Thameur si pone sugli esseri umani e sui loro comportamenti.

Con un certo grado di violenza, sia in termini di composizione dei suoi dipinti che nel vocabolario pittorico utilizzato, Thameur tenta di decostruire i meccanismi di potere e controllo messi in atto dai sistemi politici, economici, culturali e religiosi della Tunisia e, per estensione, del Nord Africa.





Thameur Mejri Novo

curatorial text by Pier Paolo Pancotto

Thameur Mejri (Tunis, 1982; lives and works in Nabeul, Tunisia), trained as a painter at the Institute of Fine Arts in Tunis (2001-05), he also gained a Doctorate degree in Science and Technology of the Arts at the same institute (2008). Since the beginning, the artist has investigated the semantic complexities of human existence, and placed it at the core of his paintings, drawings, and videos. The human figure is a central element in his work, and it is represented in different forms, as a standing figure or reduced into a skull or a skeleton. The works have a symbolic allusion to the artist himself and to his own experience that become the parameter to understand the surrounding world, and the privileged interpretative framework to explore this dimension. His compositions are thus characterized by a highly expressive language where the background colours, as an interplay of solid and tonal strokes, are juxtaposed to graphic or written texts from an articulate and dense iconographic and iconological repertoire where history and chronicles, reality and imagination, rationality and chance blend. Also colours blend through his artistic techniques: acrylic and pastel colours, charcoal and pencil lines, and collage pervade his collection of paintings and works on paper of different sizes, sometimes also featuring large-scale artworks bringing to life real installations. An emphasized narrative fluidity contributes to strengthening this amalgamation of shapes and contents invigorated by an inner force that lends an incredible energy to the artwork. The same energy that permeates the contemporary world and its increasingly rapid and changing means of communication the

artist seems to emblematically represent. He captures and freezes this energy on the surface like a still image to create cinematographic works thanks to the sense of motion they convey.

A motion that can be compared to the one caught in a film frame that evokes a “before” and an “after” of an event that become fully visible only by viewing the complete video footage, dissolving the restraint that blocks it. Energy that, even more amplified, characterizes some of Mejri’s videos to confirm his interest in the exploration of the moving image, including *The Plague* winner of the best experimental short film in 2007 at the New York International Independent Film Festival.

Milan’s exhibition, his first solo show in the city, is testimony to this. It brings together a collection of works on canvas and paper composed in 2022, most of which for the exhibition, and characterized by the above technical and semantic syntax. These works allow the spectator to experience Mejri’s original visual and emotional imagery that we also find in *Sink*. The video, divided into three parts (*Sink 1, 2 3*), was shot in 2007-08 and edited in 2021 in collaboration with director Kays Mejri, the artist’s brother, and evokes other works on display that highlight the art-making process. A unitary visual path links the different works by emphasizing the common linguistic and operational aims.

Thameur Mejri Novo

testo curatoriale di Pier Paolo Pancotto

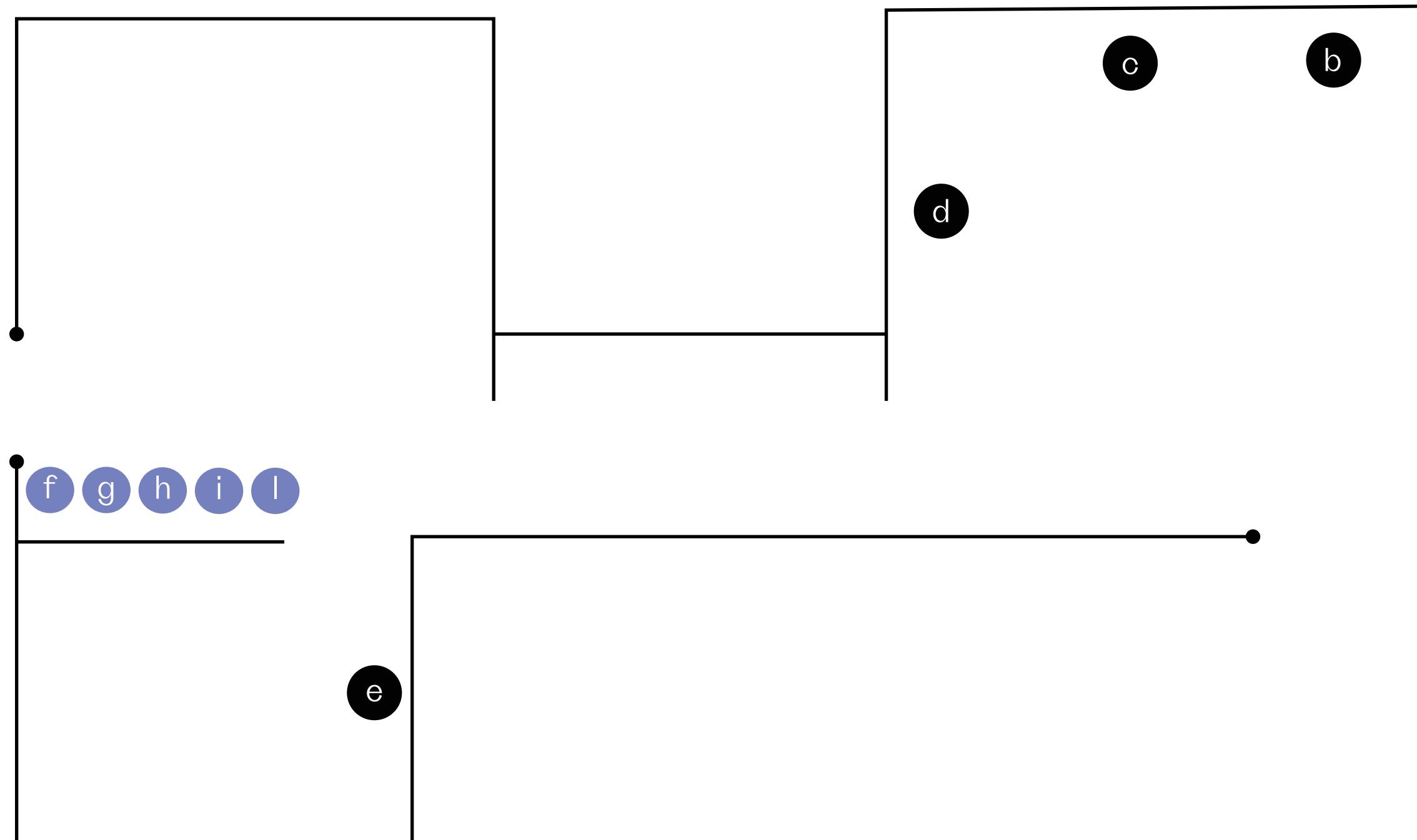
Thameur Mejri (Tunisi, 1982; vive e lavora a Nabeul, Tunisia), diplomatosi all'Istituto di Belle Arti di Tunisi (2001-05), ha proseguito gli studi avviando un dottorato di ricerca in Scienze e Tecnologia delle Arti presso lo stesso istituto (2008). Sin dagli esordi egli riflette sul tema dell'esistenza, colta in tutte le sue articolazioni semantiche, e lo pone al centro delle sue prove di pittura, disegno e video. In molte di esse ricorre la figura umana presentata sotto forme diverse, ora figurative ora ridotte alla sagoma di un teschio o di uno scheletro. Dietro di esse non è difficile individuare un richiamo simbolico all'autore stesso e alla sua esperienza personale che diviene così il parametro di raffronto con la realtà circostante e la chiave di lettura privilegiata per esplorare tale dimensione. Nascono così opere caratterizzate da un linguaggio marcatamente espressivo ove ampie campiture cromatiche, ora timbriche ora diluite sul piano tonale, si alternano a brani grafici o di scrittura originati da un articolato quanto denso repertorio iconografico e iconologico ove storia e cronaca, realtà e fantasia, razionalità e casualità si fondono. Come pure si fondono le tecniche messe in atto: colori acrilici, pastelli, carboncino, matita e collage si alternano su tele o carte di varie dimensioni, talvolta anche notevoli, dando luogo anche a vere e proprie installazioni. Un'accentuata fluidità narrativa contribuisce a rafforzare questa amalgama di forme e contenuti che una forza vitale interna anima conferendo alla composizione un vigore sorprendente. Lo stesso che pervade la realtà contemporanea e i suoi sistemi di comunicazione, sempre più rapidi e mutevoli, ai quali l'artista sembra così, emblematicamente, fare riferimento; e, quasi facesse uso del fermo immagine, egli

cattura e blocca in superficie questa energia dando luogo a delle composizioni dal sapore quasi cinematografico tale è il senso di movimento che esse sono in grado di contenere.

Un moto, paragonabile a quello trattenuto nel fotogramma di una pellicola, capace di evocare un "prima" e un "dopo" di un evento che solo la visione completa della ripresa filmata può rendere pienamente visibile, sciogliendo l'azione dalla prigionia che la blocca. Un vigore che, ancora più amplificato, si ritrova in alcuni video dell'artista a conferma del suo interesse per lo studio dell'immagine in movimento; tra i vari esempi, *The Plague* vincitore nel 2007 del premio per il miglior cortometraggio sperimentale al New York International Independent Film Festival.

La mostra di Milano, la prima personale dell'artista in Italia, prova tutto ciò. Essa raccoglie varie opere su tela o su carta del 2022, la maggior parte delle quali realizzate per l'occasione, caratterizzate dalla sintassi tecnica e semantica appena accennata. Attraverso loro è possibile entrare a contatto con l'originale immaginario visivo ed emotivo di Mejri che torna anche in *Sink*. Il video, suddiviso in tre parti (*Sink 1, 2 3*), è stato realizzato nel 2007-08 e montato nel 2021 in collaborazione con il regista Kays Mejri, fratello dell'artista, e fa eco alle altre opere in esposizione ribadendone il procedimento creativo. Un percorso visivo unitario riconduce i diversi lavori enfatizzandone le comuni intenzioni linguistiche e operative.





Check list Novo

● Paintings

● Drawings

a

Thameur Mejri
The echoes of you, 2022
Acrylic charcoal pastel and
pencil on canvas
180 x 140 cm
70 7/8 x 55 1/8 in
(TME006)

b

Thameur Mejri
Something you can never
have 2, 2022
Acrylic charcoal and pencil on
canvas
200 x 200 cm
78 3/4 x 78 3/4 in
(TME002)

f

Thameur Mejri
Not so far from here, 2022
Collage charcoal pastel and
acrylic pencil on paper
32 x 24 cm
12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in
(TME009)

i

Thameur Mejri
Not so far from here, 2022
Collage charcoal pastel and
acrylic pencil on paper
32 x 24 cm
12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in
(TME018)

c

Thameur Mejri
Something you can never
have 1, 2022
Acrylic charcoal pastel and
pencil on canvas
200 x 150 cm
78 3/4 x 59 in
(TME001)

d

Thameur Mejri
My idea of you, 2022
Acrylic charcoal pastel and
pencil on canvas
200 x 150 cm
78 3/4 x 59 in
(TME005)

e

Thameur Mejri
While we still here, 2022
Acrylic charcoal pastel and
pencil on canvas
180 x 150 cm
70 7/8 x 59 in
(TME004)

g

Thameur Mejri
Not so far from here, 2022
Collage charcoal pastel and
acrylic pencil on paper
32 x 24 cm
12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in
(TME012)

h

Thameur Mejri
Not so far from here, 2022
Collage charcoal pastel and
acrylic pencil on paper
32 x 24 cm
12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in
(TME010)

i

Thameur Mejri
Not so far from here, 2022
Collage charcoal pastel and
acrylic pencil on paper
32 x 24 cm
12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in
(TME015)

Thameur Mejri

1982, Tunis, Tunisia

Thameur Mejri lives and works in Nabeul, Tunisia.

Thameur Mejri investigates complexities of human existence by identifying parallels between paradoxical ideas of violence, innocence, guilt and shame. The human figure acts as a central element throughout his compositions, the vigorous manner in which Mejri places the figure onto the canvas, reflects the relationship between painting and painter, suggesting self-portraits that battle to fully emerge and reveal themselves. There is an interplay between painting and film. He approaches painting as a film director and he films with the vision of a painter, allowing for the qualities of each discipline to manifest upon one another; the chaos and movement in his paintings are a testament of this. The energetic application of colour establishes the atmosphere in this confrontation between heaven and hell, each represented by blue and red. In choosing these colours as a departure point and importantly for their opposing religious connotations of heaven and hell, he confirms the major influence of these symbols, particularly in the Muslim world.

He graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts in Tunis, He has exhibited widely, including the 13th Cairo Biennial, Cairo, Egypt / Dakar Biennale of Contemporary African Art, Dakar, Senegal / N' Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, Detroit, USA / New York International Independent Film and Video Festival, New York, USA / solo exhibition at le MAC Lyon / France. Mejri's work forms part of many prestigious collections of art, including Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE / The Sindika Dokolo Foundation, Luanda, Angola / Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon. The Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden (MACAAL). Marrakech. Morocco.





Thameur Mejri
Something you can never have 1,
2022

Acrylic charcoal pastel and
pencil on canvas
200 x 150 cm
78 3/4 x 59 in

(TME001)

Thameur Mejri
Something you can never have 2,
2022

Acrylic charcoal and pencil on
canvas
200 x 200 cm
78 3/4 x 78 3/4 in

(TME002)





Thameur Mejri
Physical, 2022

Acrylic charcoal pastel and pencil on canvas
180 x 150 cm
70 7/8 x 59 in

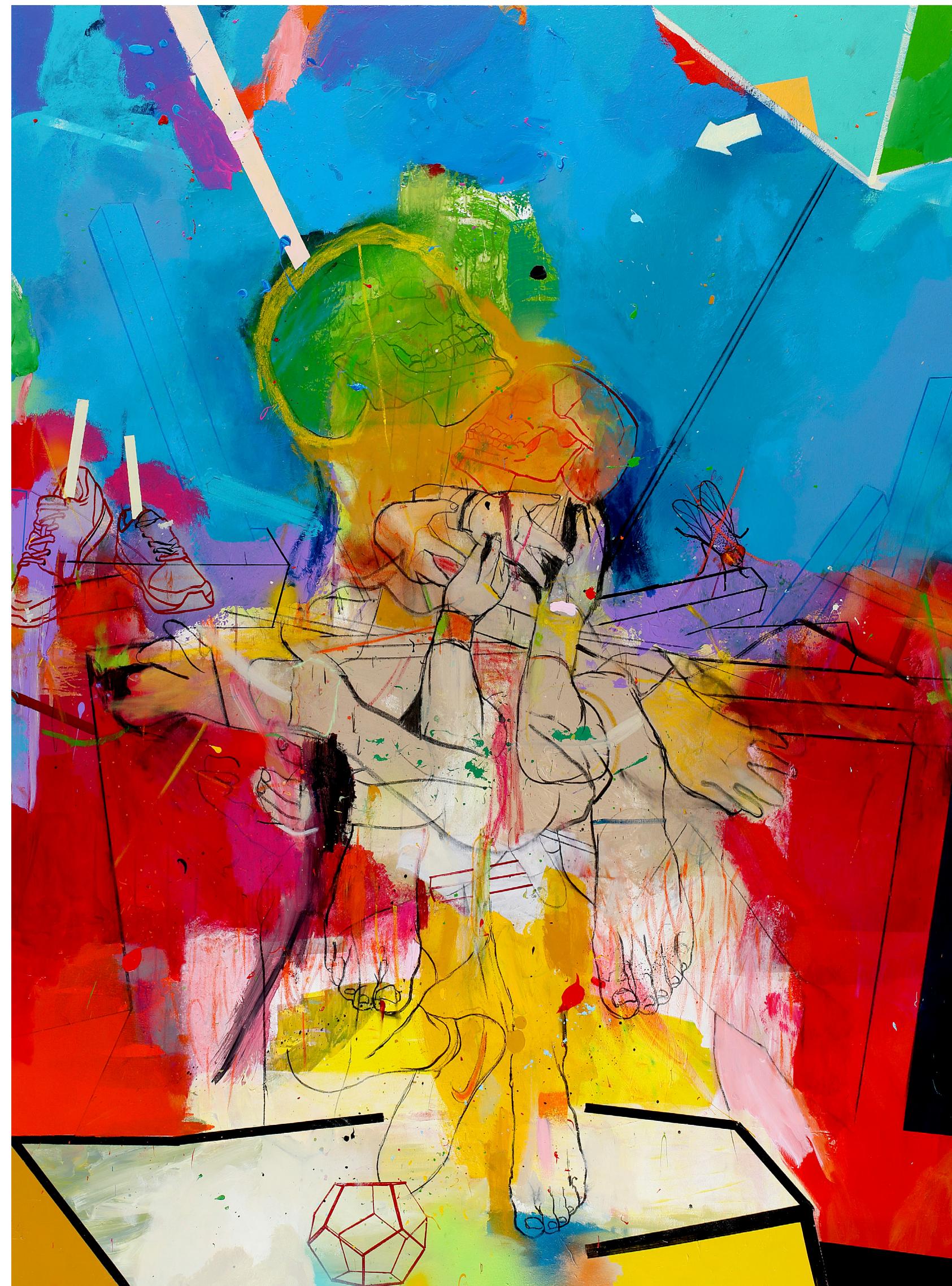
(TME003)

Thameur Mejri
While we still here, 2022

Acrylic charcoal pastel and
pencil on canvas
180 x 150 cm
70 7/8 x 59 in

(TME004)





Thameur Mejri
My idea of you, 2022

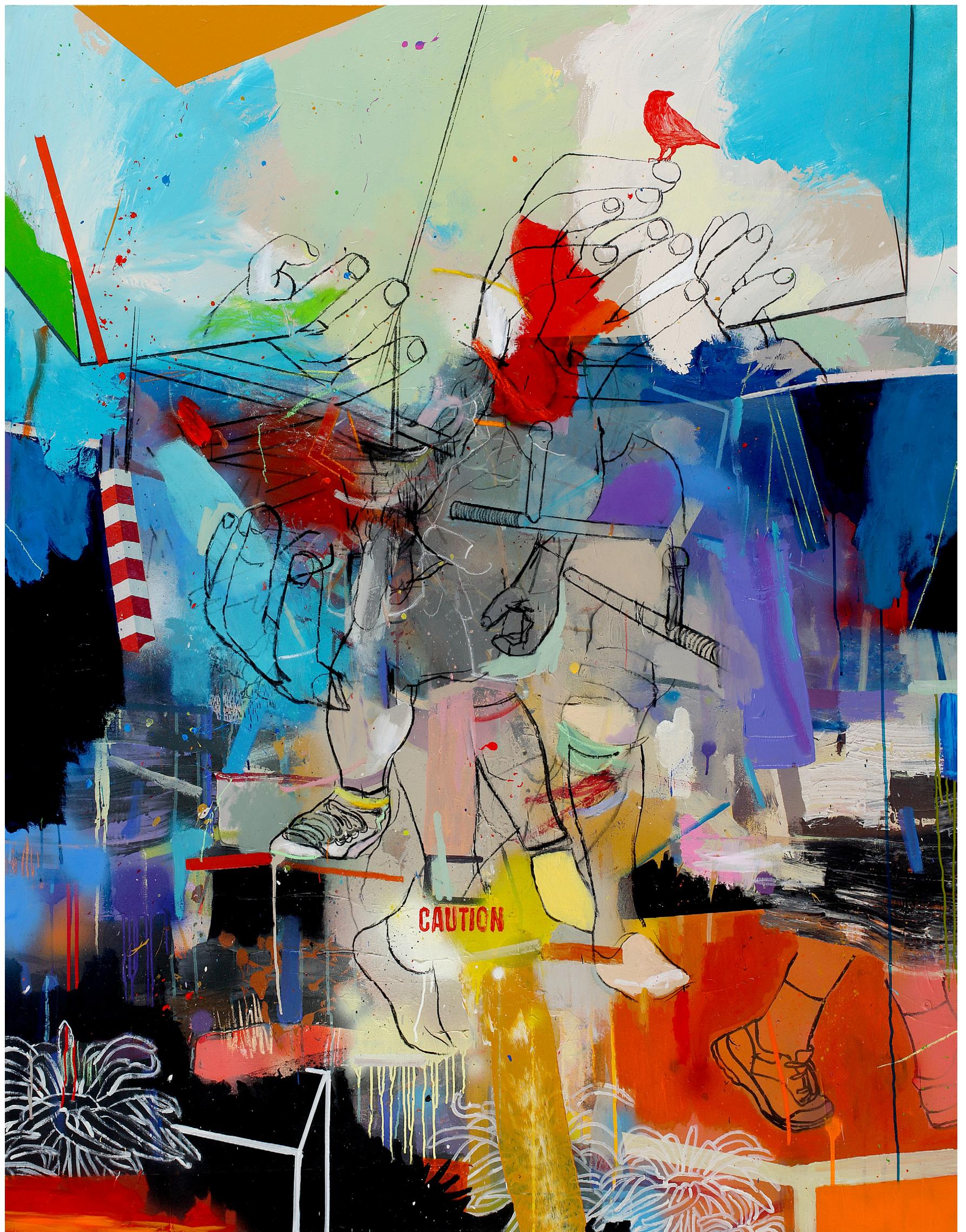
Acrylic charcoal pastel and
pencil on canvas
200 x 150 cm
78 3/4 x 59 in

(TME005)

Thameur Mejri
The echoes of you, 2022

Acrylic charcoal pastel and
pencil on canvas
180 x 140 cm
70 7/8 x 55 1/8 in

(TME006)





Thameur Mejri
All that's left for you, 2022

Acrylic charcoal pastel and
pencil on canvas
180 x 150 cm
70 7/8 x 59 in

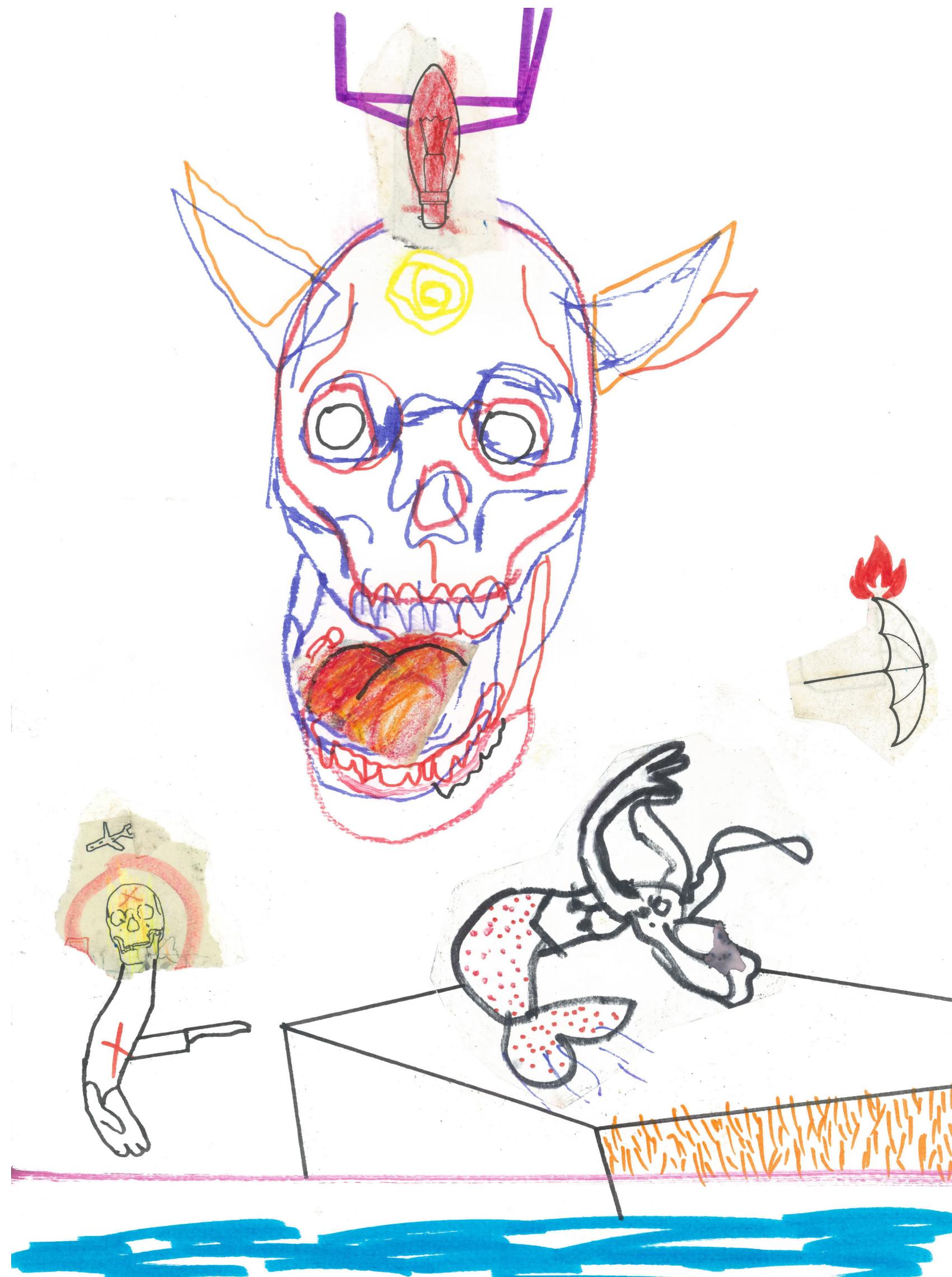
(TME007)

Thameur Mejri
Untitled, 2022

Acrylic charcoal pastel and
pencil on canvas
150 x 130 cm
59 x 51 1/8 in

(TME008)





Thameur Mejri
Not so far from here, 2022

Collage charcoal pastel and
acrylic pencil on paper
32 x 24 cm
12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in

(TME009)

Thameur Mejri
Not so far from here, 2022

Collage charcoal pastel and
acrylic pencil on paper
32 x 24 cm
12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in

(TME010)





Thameur Mejri
Not so far from here, 2022

Collage charcoal pastel and
acrylic pencil on paper
32 x 24 cm
12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in

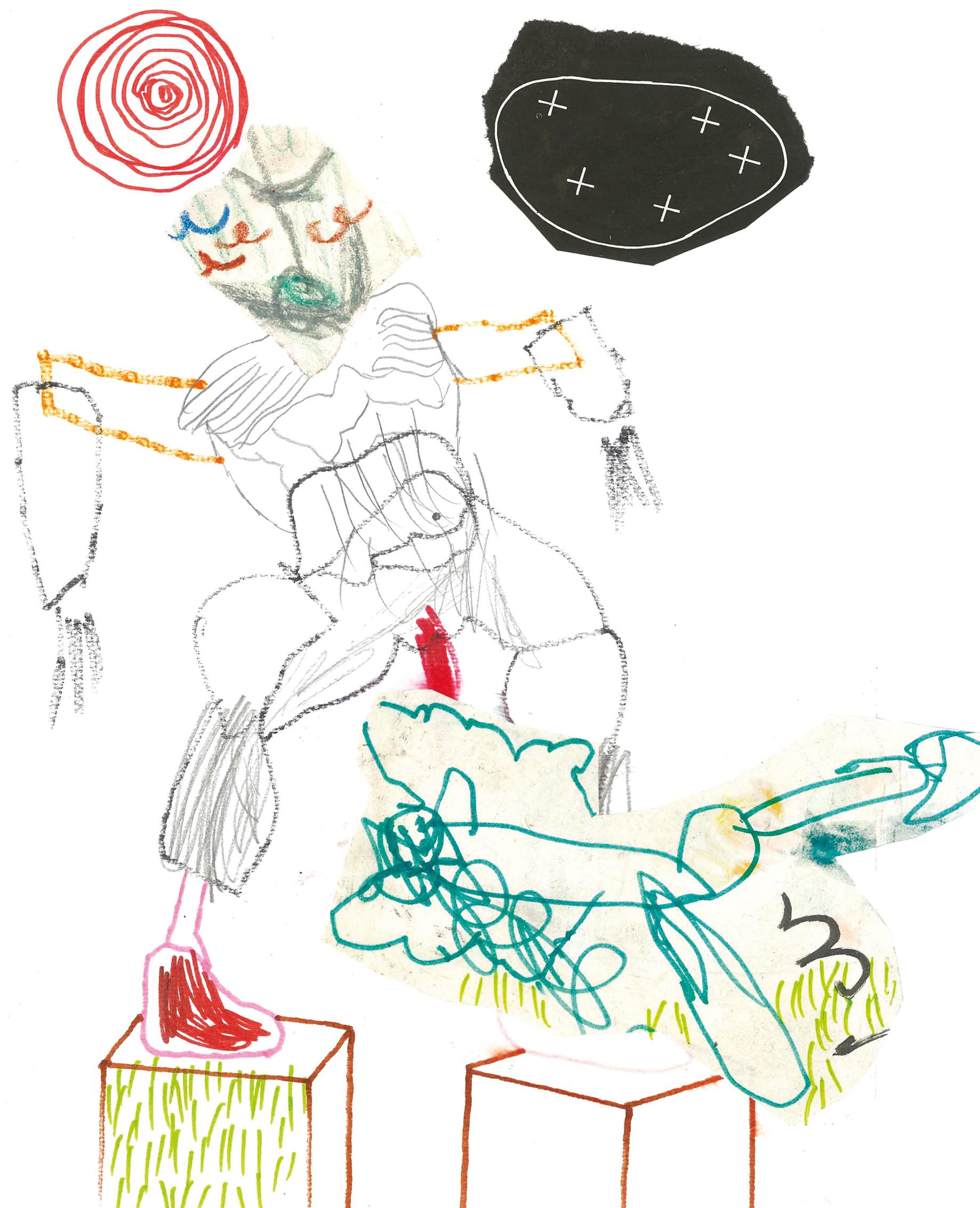
(TME012)

Thameur Mejri
Not so far from here, 2022

Collage charcoal pastel and
acrylic pencil on paper
32 x 24 cm
12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in

(TME015)





Thameur Mejri
Not so far from here, 2022

Collage charcoal pastel and
acrylic pencil on paper
32 x 24 cm
12 5/8 x 9 1/2 in

(TME018)

Thameur Mejri

Born 1982 in Tunis, Tunisia.
Lives and works in Nabeul, Tunisia

Collections

MacLyon Museum of Contemporary Art in Lyon France
Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE
The Sindika Dokolo Foundation, Luanda, Angola
Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon
The Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden (MACAAL), Marrakech, Morocco
The Kamel Lazaar Foundation, Tunis, Tunisia
Private Collections in Paris, London, Doha, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, NY, Johannesburg

Solo Exhibitions

- 2022 Ashes to dreams - Montague Contemporary New York
Over the edge -Selma Feriani Gallery London
Until My Veins Collapse (States of Emergency), macLYON – Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France (curated by Salma Tuqan & Matthieu Lelièvre)
- 2021 Folds in the soul - Curated by Khadija Hamdi Montague Contemporary New York
States of Exception, B7L9 Art Station, The Kamel Lazaar Foundation, Tunis, Tunisia (curated by Matthieu Lelièvre)
- 2020 Walking Targets, Selma Feriani Gallery, Tunis, Tunisia (curated by Matthieu Lelièvre)

- 2019 Eroded Grounds, Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana
- 2017 Heretic Spaces, Elmarsa Gallery, Dubai, UAE
Before You Split the Ground, Jack Bell Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2012 Disaster Pieces, Elmarsa Gallery, Tunis, Tunisia
- 2011 Narcissism VS Cannibalism, solo exhibition at the Signature sector, for the Abu Dhabi Art Fair
- 2010 Male (God) Scarecrow, Artyshow Gallery, Tunis, Tunisia

Group Exhibitions and Art fairs

- 2022 1-54 contemporary african art fair London UK
And i must Scream. Carlos Emory Museum Atlanta USA
African abstraction Montague Contemporary New York USA
- 2019 1-54 contemporary african art fair, New York USA
Strasbourg Art fair
AKAA Art fair, Paris France
13th Cairo biennale, Cairo, Egypt
Incarnations: African Art as Philosophy (Sindika Dokolo Art Collection), BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels, Belgium
What Is A Box, Elmarsa Gallery, Tunis, Tunisia

2018 Art Dubai 2018 UAE
 1-54 contemporary african art fair, New York USA
 Cultural Narratives, Selections Art Magazine, Dubai, UAE
 Tunisian Pavilion, XIII Dakar Biennale of Contemporary African Art, Dakar, Senegal
 Mitli Mitlak (Like You, Like Me), N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, Detroit, MI, USA

2017 1-54 contemporary african art fair, London UK
 Art Paris Art fair , Paris
 Galleries week Abu Dhabi UAE

2016 Art Dubai 2016, UAE
 Yesterday Is Tomorrow's Memory, Elmarsa Gallery, Dubai, UAE
 Place de la gare, Ghaya Art Gallery, Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia
 Effervescence, Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris, France

2015 You Love Me, You Love Me Not, Galeria Municipal Almeida Garrett, Porto, Portugal
 Coup de crayon, Ghaya Art Gallery, Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia

2013 Art Dubai, UAE
 Marrakech Art fair, Marrakech, Morocco

2012 Intervalles, Elmarsa Gallery, Tunis, Tunisia

2011 Une histoire sur l'art, Elmarsa Gallery, Tunis, Tunisia

2010 8th edition Printemps des Arts Plastiques de La Marsa, Palais Abdellyah, Tunis, Tunisia
 Collection, Kanvas Art Gallery, Tunis, Tunisia

2009 Point Rouge Gallery, Montreal, Canada
 7th edition Printemps des Arts Plastiques de La Marsa, Palais Abdellyah, Tunis, Tunisia
 Annual Exhibition of the Visual Artists Association, Tunis, Tunisia

2008 6th edition Printemps des Arts Plastiques de La Marsa, Palais Abdellyah, Tunis, Tunisia

2007 The Infusion Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA

2005 Galerie Ali Guermessi, Tunis, Tunisia

Film Screenings

2009 Screening of the experimental short films Silicon and The Gift, Art Now Film Festival, Damascus, Syria

Screening of the experimental short film Silicon, New York International Independent Film and Video Festival (NYIIFVF), session in New York City, NY, USA

Screening of the experimental short film Prélude, Festival de l'Image et Art Vidéo, International Cultural Centre, Sicily, Italy

2008 Film click Online Festival
 Screening of the experimental short film Silicon for the exhibition Le Cinéma Libre, Espace El Téatro, Tunis, Tunisia

2007 Screening of the experimental short film The Gift, New York International Independent Film and Video Festival (NYIIFVF), session in New York City, NY, USA

2006 Image Video Art Festival, Hammamet, Tunisia
 International Film Festival of Kelibia, Kelibia, Tunisia

Awards

2007 Best experimental short film for The Plague at the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival (NYIIFVF), March 2007 Awards, session in Los Angeles, CA, USA

Galleries

Florence

Piazza Carlo Goldoni 2, 50123, Florence, Italy
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