

Powerful, despite it all.

Sophie-Yen Bretez



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JD MALAT
GALLERY

Le ravissement
de Lol V. Stein

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MARGUERITE DURAS



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In celebration of the gallery's 5th anniversary, JD Malat is thrilled to present *Powerful, despite it all*, a solo exhibition by French-Vietnamese artist Sophie-Yen Bretez. A champion of emerging female artists, JD Malat is proud to collaborate with WAAW World: Women Artist Art Week in promoting Bretez's captivating show. On display at the gallery from June 8 to July 8 *Powerful, despite it all*, invites viewers to embark on a kaleidoscopic journey reflecting on themes of memory, pain, and resilience through the lens of universal femininity.

Thought-provoking and relatable, Bretez presents a timely narrative on femininity. Inspiring hope and healing through vibrant surrealist compositions she poses questions on self-expression and the social conformities imposed on women. Expressing her own understanding of femininity in the title of her exhibition as *'Powerful, despite it all'*, Bretez, a Vietnam-born French artist, incites an influential dialogue on universal womanhood. Referring to her own identity, history, and resilience. Bretez further addresses events inflicted on many women such as violence and sexualization through symbolic and colorful paintings. Resonating with Simone Beauvoir's notion of the 'the second sex' in a society where male power is predominant, Bretez thoughtfully composes the portrayal of resistance and strength.

Rooting her artistic practice in self-awareness Bretez, a self-taught artist, is inspired by the freedom found in observing her own experiences and simultaneously translating them into an enigmatic visual language. Striving to present an infinite dialogue between herself, the paintings, and the viewer, Bretez confronts themes of the human condition and the ambivalence of life. *Powerful, despite it all*, presents an engaging narrative encouraging reflection on sexuality, trauma, and healing through vibrant chromatic compositions.

A natural storyteller, Bretez begins each painting with a poem linked to memory. Titling her works after these spontaneous and instinctual poems Bretez incorporates an additional layer of dialogue between the work, the viewer, and Bretez herself. Testifying to the intimate

and the universal through substantive narratives Bretez seeks to perpetuate a wider reflection of political, societal, philosophical, and existential themes.

Interested in challenging the traditional male gaze, Bretez utilizes reverse voyeurism as a tool to question our societal relationship to the naked female body. The figures in Bretez's paintings are evidently nude with bodies that appear 'perfect' corresponding to the beauty canons of our contemporary society and posing reflections on sexualization. A signature in Bretez's works is her figures' direct gaze on the viewer. Unflinching and strong, the women look directly out at the spectator, serving to simultaneously create distance and prove they are not at the viewer's disposal rather they assert control of their own bodies.

Presenting a thematic fusion of autobiography and narrative identity, *Powerful, despite it all* illuminates Bretez's relationship with the world. Building upon her signature style of dream-like surrealist figuration, Bretez skillfully depicts complex emotional states isolated within painterly narratives. Utilizing vibrant colours to create an alluring sense of both warm and cold, Bretez creates an ambivalent aesthetic. She successfully weaves together past and present through compositions marked by repetitive geometric lines as seen in the decor, checkerboards, and the horizon. Steeped in symbolism the checkered floors extend the allusion to a game in which the body is held within. Additionally, each piece displays a sunlit infinite horizon symbolizing "the possible and the elsewhere", a salutary beyond when the present seems too difficult to overcome. Messages of hope and perseverance permeate Bretez's work as she seeks to provide strength in the face of vulnerability. Showcasing the powerful and dynamic feminine, Bretez's work succeeds in meaningfully adding to the feminist discourse.

An influential and engaging exhibition JD Malat is proud to present Sophie-Yen Bretez's *Powerful, despite it all*.



Sophie-Yen Bretez in her Studio, 2023



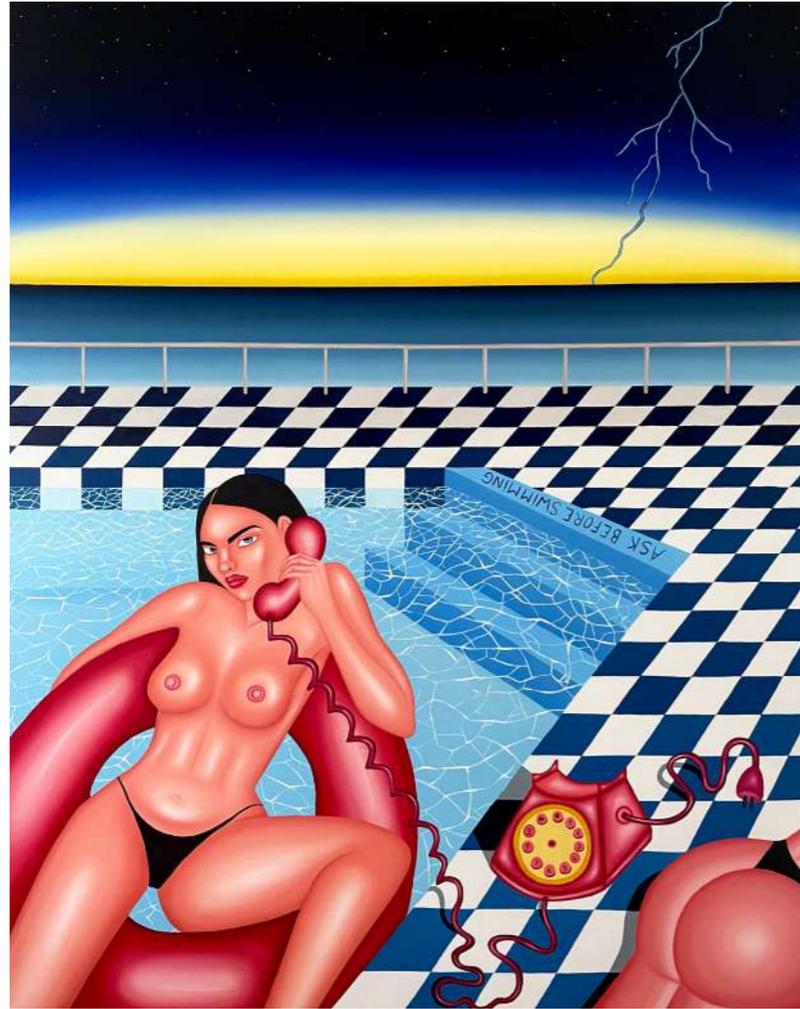
*« I ran to find out What it means to live I fled from
rain-soaked lands, To embrace the wet dawn
Without understanding that I had to first of all
Caress what has been buried for too long. - I exist,
despite my past.», 2022*

Oil painting on linen canvas
59 x 59 in
150 x 150 cm



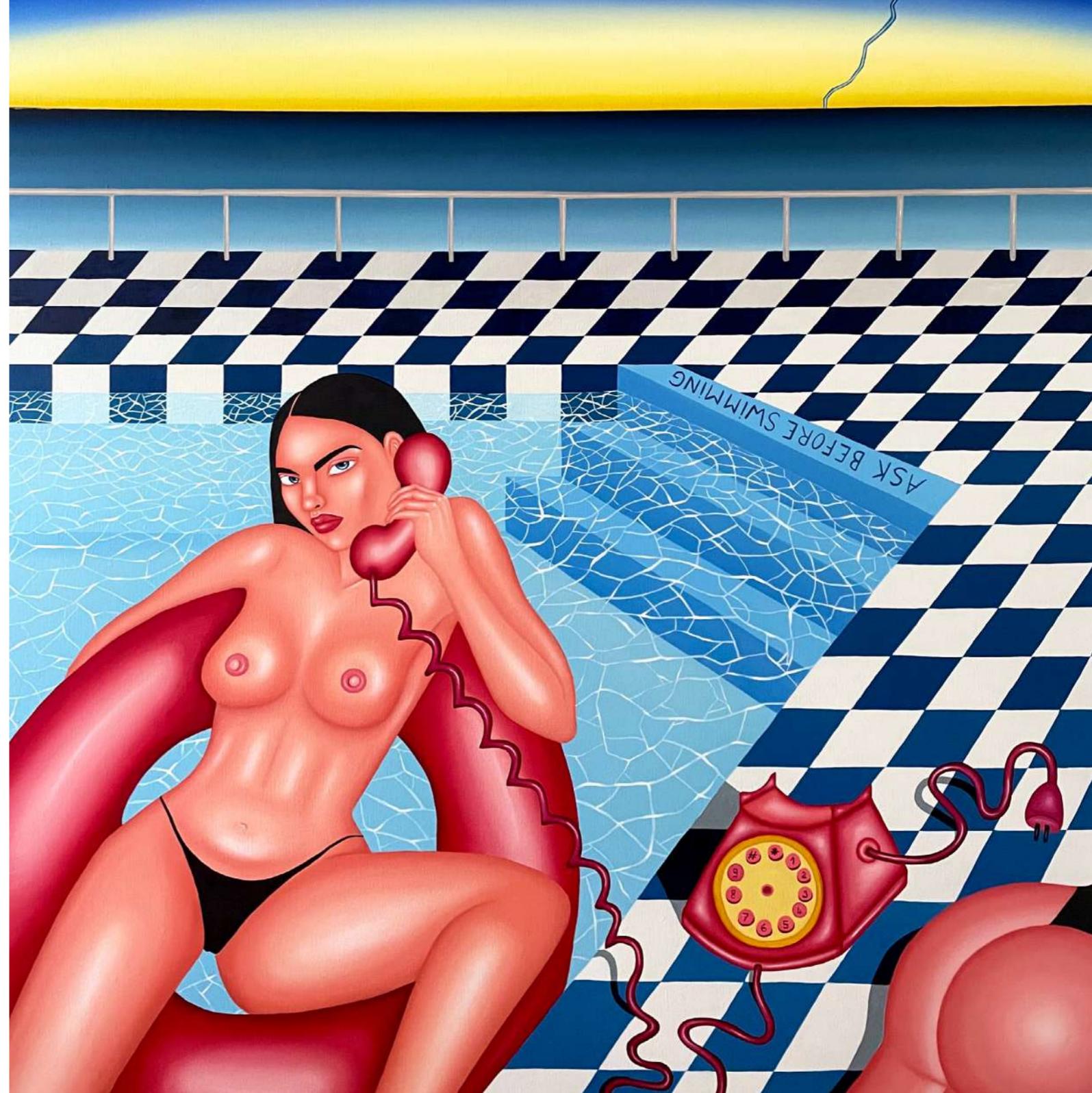
« I saw you again after eight years. But deep in your eyes I could no longer see myself. What could I've done against illness And memories fading away? - Nothing but to accept. », 2023

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*« I woke up in the gloaming Thinking I was safe
from the silent thunderstorm That shatters
without warning The innocence of a luminous sky.
You didn't wait to take it from me: - My body (and
my consent) », 2022*

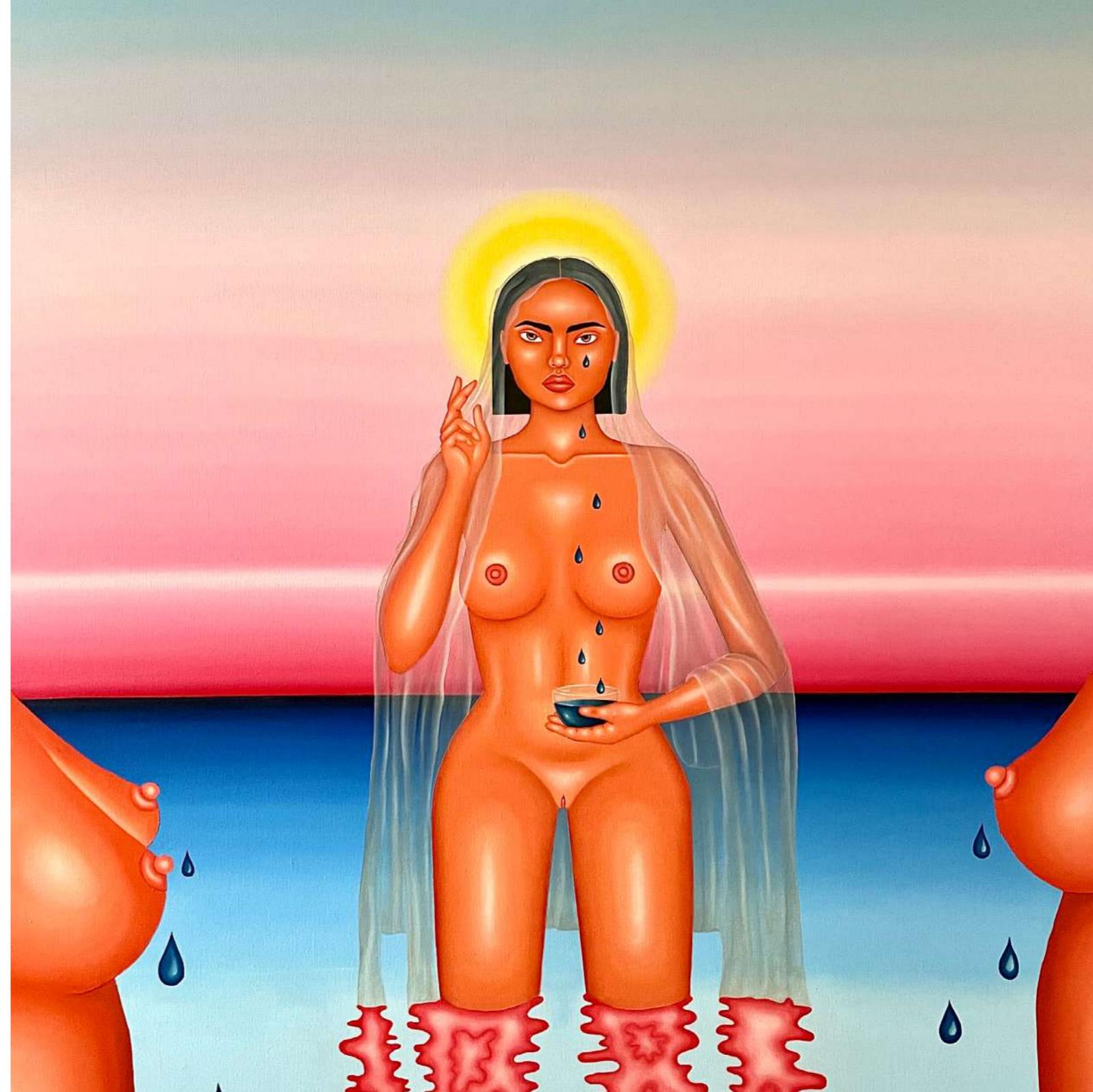
Oil painting on linen canvas
63 3/4 x 51 1/8 in
162 x 130 cm





« In one night they took from me What I have not yet Managed to find again. Left in the open sea, Holding back my tears With a bitter shamelessness. - First times. », 2022

Oil painting on linen canvas
63 3/4 x 51 1/8 in
162 x 130 cm





*« It is on the horizon That the sky and the sea Beat
in unison, That my sighs are in tune
To the tumult
of the world. - I am the wave that breaks. »*, 2023

Oil painting on linen canvas
57 1/2 x 44 7/8 in
146 x 114 cm



« There were rainstorms And exquisite unclouded skies, Those moments at dawn, When I was the first to believe in the sun, Then you left. - But you never really came. », 2022

Oil painting on linen canvas
59 x 59 in
150 x 150 cm





« It's not your fault If the roses fade. Ceaselessly enjoy everything: The foam and the rain and every morning. There is only one regret, Not having had enough - time. », 2023

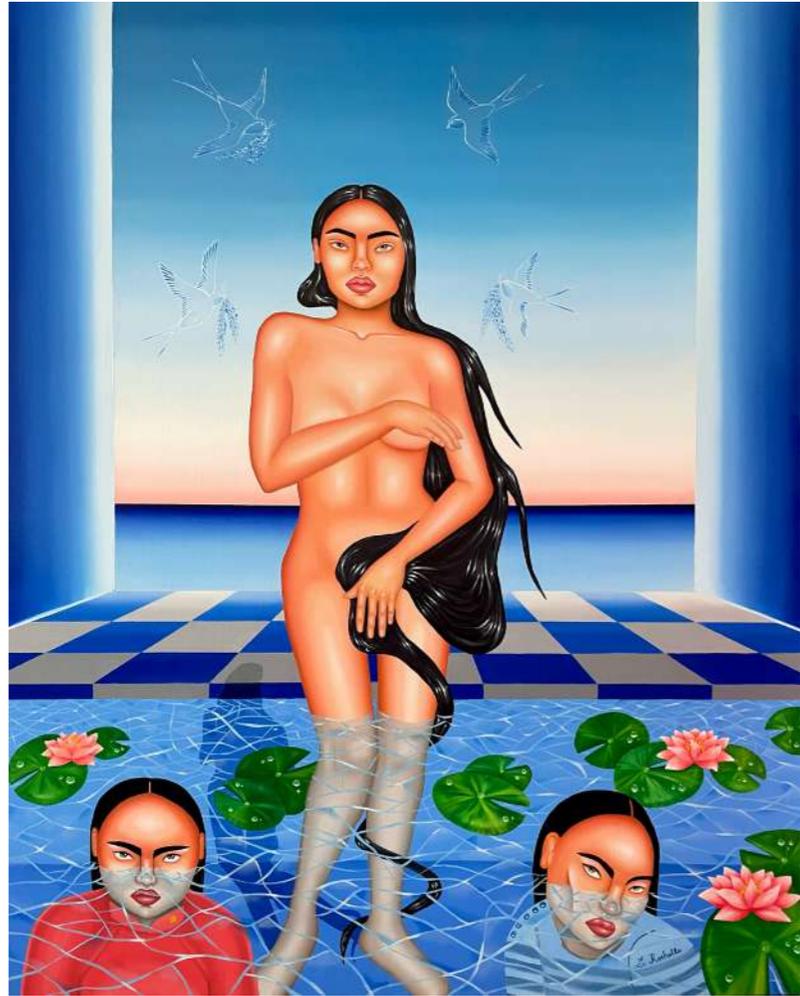
Oil painting on linen canvas
51 1/8 x 31 7/8 in
130 x 81 cm



« My desire is made of representations Which have never been mine, Those who projected onto my body Their dreams of exoticism And their darkest fantasies. - To desire beyond the male gaze. », 2023

Oil painting on linen canvas
76 3/4 x 44 7/8 in
195 x 114 cm





« Swallows of goodbye, Waved by the sad wind of summer, You were not born here. You were taken from the East, And put in the middle of the ocean. - You were meant to be reborn. », 2023

Oil painting on linen canvas
63 3/4 x 51 1/8 in
162 x 130 cm





*«One day we will find a home Where the sound of
silence, Outweighs the din of tears, Far from the
violence of wine And shattered doors, Close by
the ocean. - Hope as shelter.»*, 2023

Oil painting on linen canvas
51 1/8 x 76 3/4 in
130 x 195 cm



« Should I have seen tenderness, Instead of the blows, And bruises on her face. Another way to love, To learn how to love myself - Being in the grip of his hands. », 2022

Oil on canvas
63 3/4 x 51 1/8 in
162 x 130 cm





« Taking care of each other, As the rain flows into, The sea and the spelt. I am nectar and honey, Pistil and flower - To be picked with gentleness. », 2022

Oil on canvas
51 1/8 x 35 in
130 x 89 cm



« What to do with an existence, Marked with the seal, Of contingency? Open and gaping wound, Much too easy to hide. - To find one's place », 2022

Oil painting
59 x 59 in
150 x 150 cm





*« And maybe one day, When the blue of the night,
Will drop on the world, I will no longer be like the
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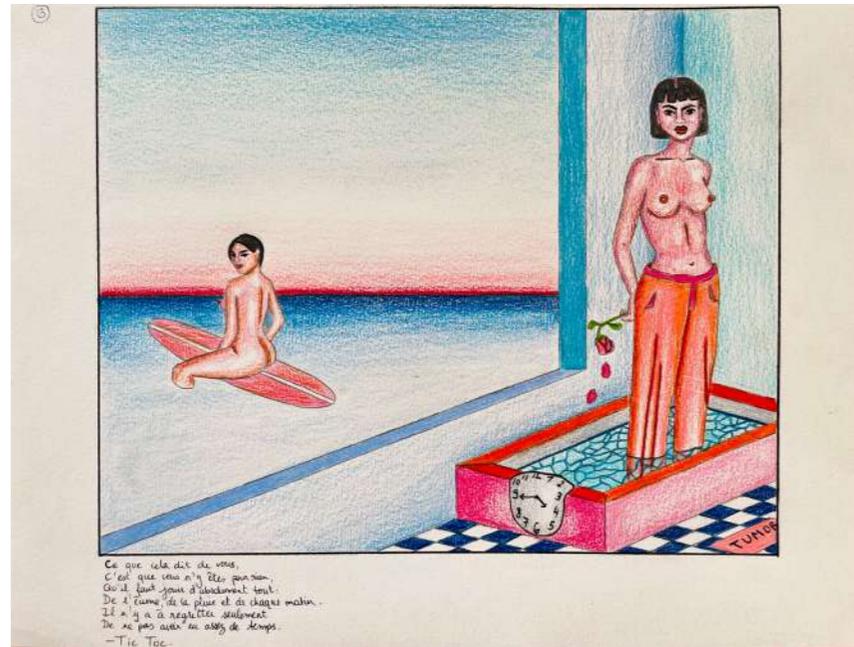
Oil painting on linen canvas
51 1/8 x 38 1/4 in
130 x 97 cm



I EXIST

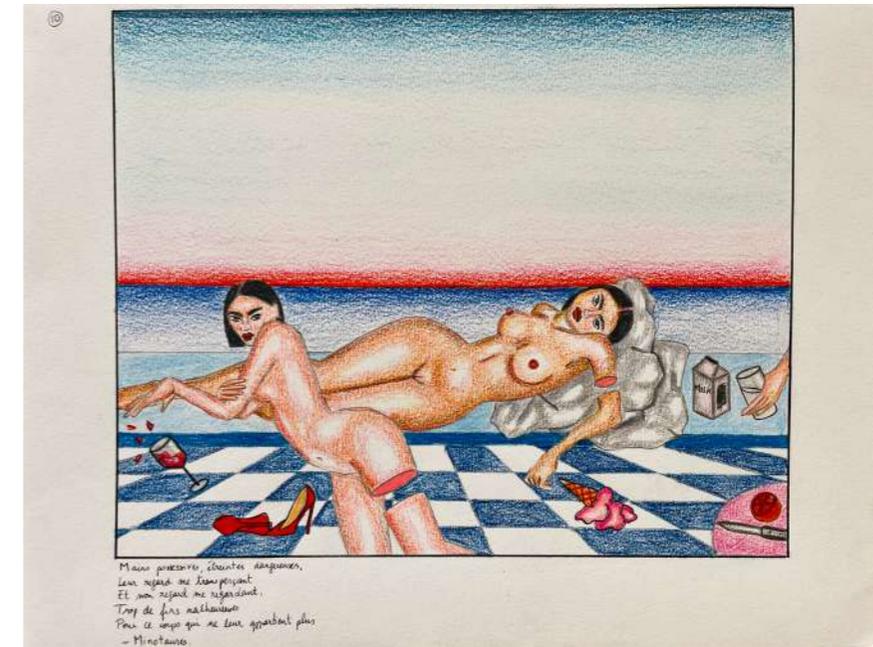
L'ART DE LA JOIE
GOLIARDA SAPIENZA

TH



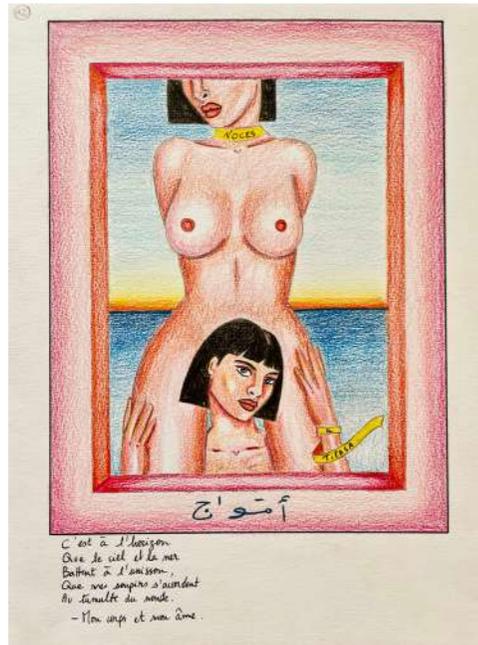
**Dessin: « It's not your fault If the roses fade.
 Ceaselessly enjoy everything: The foam and the
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 Not having had enough - time. », 2022**

Crayons on paper
 9 1/2 x 12 5/8 in
 24 x 32 cm



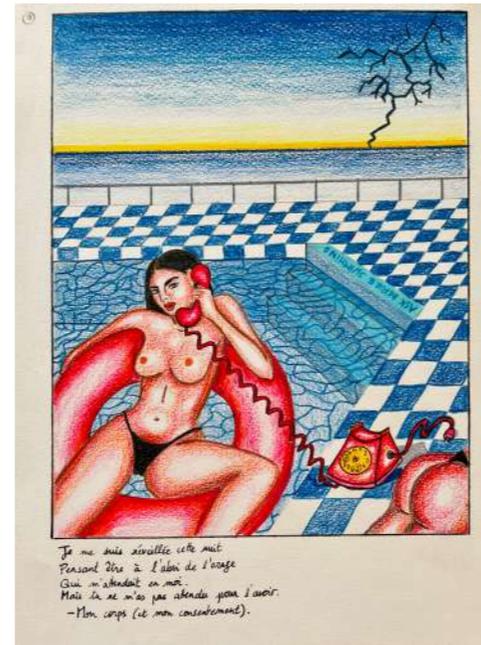
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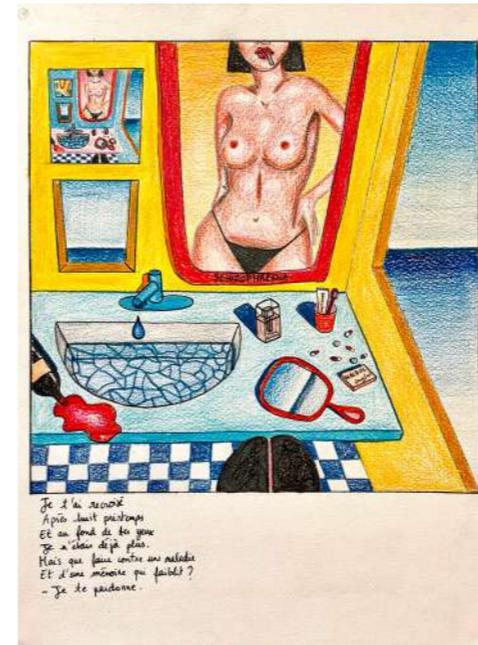
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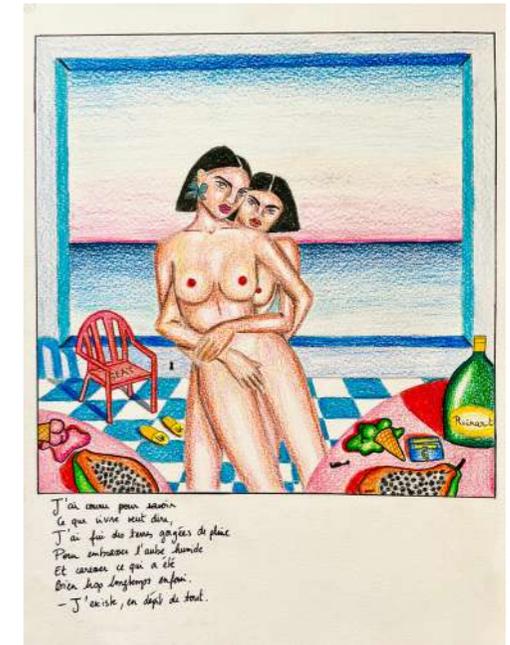
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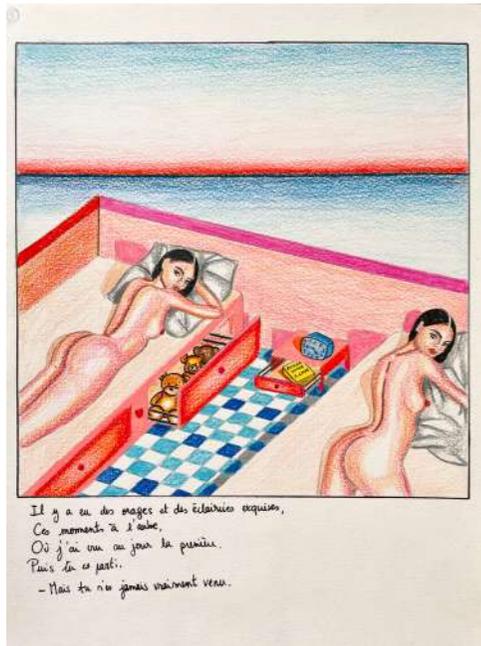
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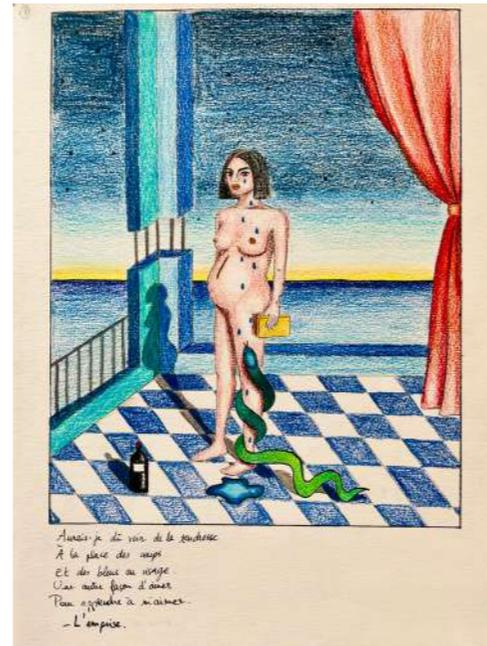
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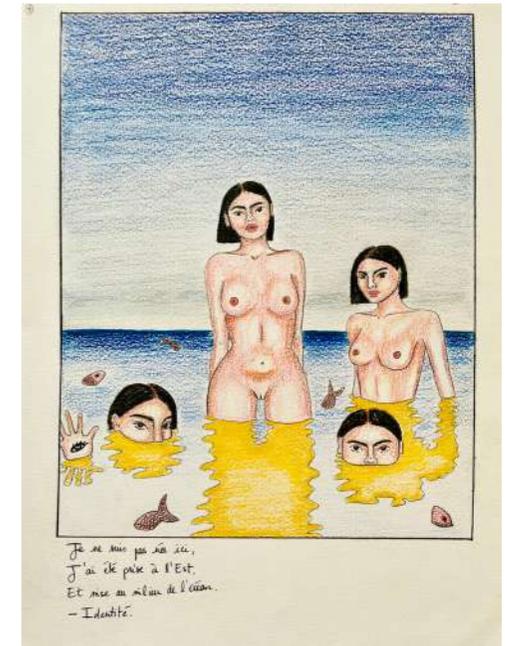
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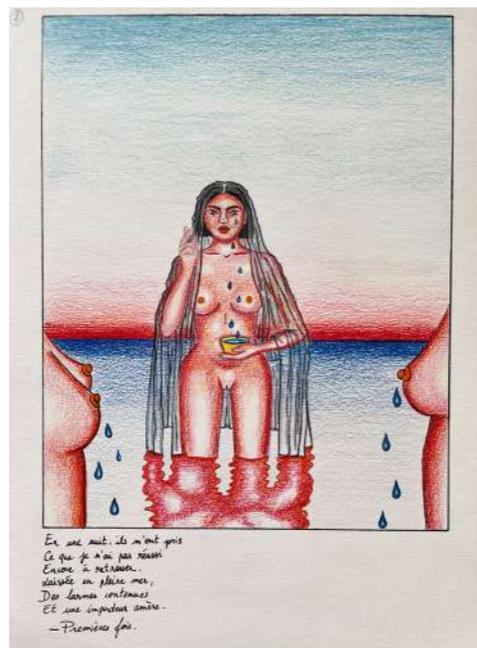
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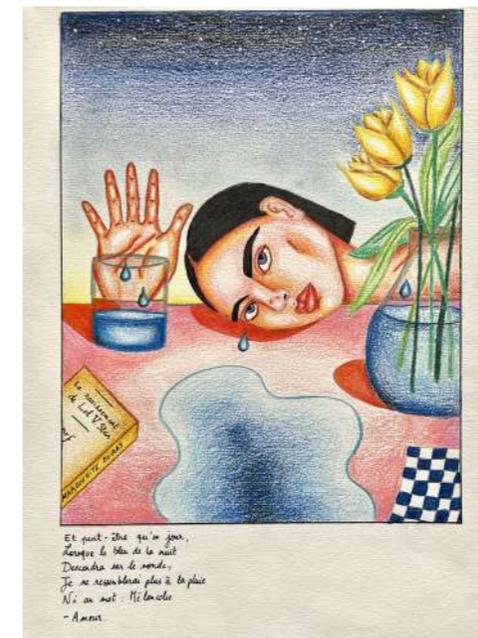
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A woman with dark hair and bangs stands in a surreal, brightly lit room. She is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved button-down shirt that is heavily splattered with various colors of paint. Her hands are clasped in front of her. The room features a black and white checkered floor, a large window with orange curtains, and a blue wall. A green, wavy, snake-like object is on the floor near her feet. A bottle of Petrus beer is visible on the floor to her left.

Acknowledgments

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AIR FRANCE
FROM: HANOI
TO: PARIS CDG
DATE: 12/07/1957
Bourling 1965



Mme. DECRET
NOM: DECRET
NOM-AN
TALLE: 175 cm
Signature: [Signature]

