

PORTFOLIO
ADANA MAM LEGROS





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After overcoming cancer at 21, she launched her career with her first exhibition in New York in 2019, followed by 13 other international exhibitions.

Blending art and philanthropy, she organized several exhibitions where sales of her works were donated to NGOs, with one reaching \$150,000.

Her paintings have been collected by influential figures such as Oscar-winning actress Susan Sarandon, the director of private sales at Sotheby's Hong Kong, and Mr. Vattanac, a business magnate.

CONCEPT

Adana's artistic vision transcends mere aesthetics, aiming to convey through her exhibitions the profound hypersensitivity she developed from two life-altering experiences: growing up among victims of sexual exploitation and overcoming cancer. Her work creates a space for viewers to deeply reconnect with themselves, fostering empathy and heightened consciousness.

At the core of her approach lies the euphoric sensation of universal interconnectedness. Uniquely, Adana pairs her paintings with transcriptions of her psychoanalysis sessions, offering a raw and honest glimpse into her psyche. This vulnerable self-exposure invites viewers to embark on their own journey of "individuation" - a process of deep self-understanding that illuminates one's emotions, motivations, and values.

As a Eurasian artist, Adana synthesizes diverse cultural perspectives, creating a holistic approach that harmonizes mind, body, and spirit with intellect, cognition, and psychology. Her artistic methodology aims to forge a new paradigm for relating to the world, one that emphasizes empathy, self-awareness, and interconnectedness.

Through her deeply personal and socially conscious approach, Adana is redefining the role of the artist in society, using her experiences and talents to promote healing, understanding, and positive change on both individual and collective levels.

Some of these texts are transcriptions of the
artist's psychoanalytic sessions with her therapist.
(Translated from French to English)

ADANA MAM LEGROS

°C27° AFFIRMATION

"You paint with an idea of what you want to paint, what you want to convey. But at the same time, inevitably, the work also conveys something to you. The exhibition is likely to have the same function. You will present a message, but inevitably, there will also be something presented to you."



Acrylic on canvas, 2024
65 x 92 cm

€ 3500

០២១ AFFIRMATION

Adana: I'm asserting myself through this exhibition. The title is clear, I AM Kat Khmer. It's the first time I'm doing an exhibition where I affirm myself as a whole and complete being. (...) This is the woman I am today and want to assert, I invite the public to do the same. (...) Carl Jung's individuation process greatly influenced me in creating this exhibition. To understand oneself, to be able to feel complete with oneself. This process is possible, feasible, important, and necessary for everyone to find their path.

Therapist: You paint with an idea of what you want to paint, what you want to convey. But at the same time, inevitably, the work also conveys something to you. The exhibition is likely to have the same function. You will present a message, but inevitably, there will also be something presented to you. It's wonderful, it's true creation. It's the essence of creativity. That is, you think you're creating something, and then you find it. Our friend Winnicott would be pleased.

(...) Facilitating a process of symbolization. There is indeed something of the order of sublimation of the drive, but it seems to me that what you're talking about, there's a kind of digestion. We can make paintings to evacuate these tensions, to make something of them, but they will always be there as long as the affect hasn't passed into the light of symbolization. That's what you do when you paint, it's a process of symbolization.

Adana: I use it as a reflection.

Therapist: I was thinking about that, there is a reflective process, it's certainly something of the order of mirror reflection, but it's interesting because it's not a static mirror, but like a mirror that speaks. A mirror in the Winnicottian sense, in the sense of the mirror like that of the mother or other people who take care of the child, which reflects something of himself to the child that can be new. But what's interesting in this story is that this mirror, it's you who creates it. That's what's singular in any case.

SELF-RECLAMATION

"There are ultimately two types of connections.

The connection as a red thread, as you represent, conceive, and experience it, with this dimension of a chain of traumas, things that are difficult to free oneself from and that one wants to cut. And then on the other hand, there's the connection as a braid, which carries permanent links of transmission, like the bond between a mother and her child, the transmission of femininity, something more positive. How can we transform the red thread marked by trauma into a braid, into hair?"



Acrylic on canvas, 2024
100 x 100 cm

€ 4800

SELF-RECLAMATION

The Red Thread":

Adana: For the May 25th event, we want to create an artistic video around interviews with a young French-Khmer director. I came back with the same idea. This time, instead of using a red band or sheet like in my previous short films, I wanted to use red threads. In Phnom Penh, there's a Japanese building, the Hiroshima House, an NGO that helps street children. It's a strange building, with a very raw style, as if it were unfinished. There's a staircase in the middle of the building. I thought about what the red threads could represent in this context. I was inspired by photos of people tied by red threads, as if they couldn't detach themselves from them.

The common point with all the artists I'm going to interview is that we all have Khmer blood, and therefore ancestors who died during the genocide. In wanting to talk about my identity, I find myself only talking about that. I feel like these red threads are what holds us back or holds us together. In the painting I made, I feel like the small version of the woman represents the little girl torn by her parents' projections. Following my psychology classes, I understood that parents project a part of themselves and how they complete themselves through their children.

Therapist: The narcissistic contract.

Adana: I started to understand why my mother was mean and loving at the same time. This ambivalence was very disturbing. Therapist: Because there's projective identification. Therapist: Hatred of what she was, of what happened to her, which was projected onto you.

Adana: I wondered if I should cut these threads, but it was impossible for me to imagine it.

Therapist: I'm picking up on what you're saying about the Khmer Rouge, these threads would be their limiting, restricting sides that also come from lots of things that haven't been said. There are secrets, there are things that come out in the connections.

Adana: There are certain things that aren't mine, like my parents' projections, family history, their roots, traumas. That's why it's important to know one's past, that of the family, to select what we'd like to keep and what we'd like to set aside.

Reintrojection:

Therapist: There are ultimately two types of connections. The connection as a red thread, as you represent, conceive, and experience it, with this dimension of a chain of traumas, things that are difficult to free oneself from and that one wants to cut. And then on the other hand, there's the connection as a braid, which carries permanent links of transmission, like the bond between a mother and her child, the transmission of femininity, something more positive. How can we transform the red thread marked by trauma into a braid, into hair?

Adana: I have an obsession with the color red and these hairs! In the first short film, I absolutely wanted the girls to braid their hair, but technically I couldn't manage to do it. I went from the red sheet or red band to the red thread in my short films. There's also evolution. This thread takes up less and less space, maybe after this film, I won't need to put a red thread anywhere anymore. Like an integration. That's the reclamation.

Therapist: That's it. These connections, these threads are loaded with experiences, not necessarily yours. There are some of yours, some that are not yours that have been poorly internalized, to use strong words, that have been incorporated instead of being introjected. You need to let them go, or see about reintegrating these experiences in a way that's discharged of what they might have represented as trying. Indeed, there is a reintrojection. This translation maintains the psychological terminology and concepts discussed in the original French conversation, such as "introjection," "incorporation," and the metaphorical use of "red thread" and "braid" to represent different types of connections and experiences.

မိမိ MOTHER DAUGHTER

"Ultimately in your expression, there is indeed this idea that the daughter plays a role in the mother's psychic economy.

The hair extends, the veins extend.

There's always this connection that continues. But in fact, what you're doing is evolving it. It's not about cutting it, but about evolving it."



Acrylic on canvas, 2024
120 x 100 cm

€ 4800

👩 MOTHER DAUGHTER

Day 1 - Two Women in Mirror

Adana: I wanted to draw two women looking at each other as if in a mirror. Both women are kneeling, their gazes locked onto each other. One of them is reaching out to tenderly caress the other's head. I added a touch of gold to her fingers, as if she was contributing to adding light to the other woman's halo. This golden circle represents for me time, wisdom, fullness, and knowledge.

Mother and Daughter

Adana: The other woman is in a withdrawn position, head lowered. I wanted her to represent the mother. However, I added my own beauty mark, the one on my cheek, to both women.

In my relationship with my mother, I had to take on the role of the mother, like a therapist who comforts. I think that's a bit of the position I've given myself.

A Visceral Connection

Adana: Initially, the image I had in mind was that we have a common heart, that we were linked emotionally, genetically, biologically. Her blood flows in my veins. While painting, I realized that I was sacrificing myself, as if I was giving her my own heart.

A Gift of Self

Adana: This wasn't my initial intention at all, but it's by observing the painting that I was able to reflect on this relationship of giving or sacrifice. (...) One of the women bears a very recent scar, which I added in December 2023, like mine on my chest. The moment I drew this scar, I finally said to myself: "I'm going to exist." It's no longer the representation of the exploited women around me, it's my self-portrait, it's who I am. This scar was an important symbol for me, a mark of my existence.

An Unbreakable Bond

Adana: The veins connecting the heart to the arms of both women symbolize visceral bonds, a deep connection that transcends physical boundaries. We are one, our blood is one.

Alienation and Sacrifice

Therapist: It speaks of sacrifice but it also speaks of alienation. Especially alienation. Being a slave. They're connected. When we're in debt, we're alienated. Children of the sacrificial mother are alienated until they realize it. You're looking for a posture, which revolves around the word individuation, mirror, etc. When we're face to face, we're not one inside the other. The mirror is distinct from oneself. I have the impression of what you're seeking, although you say you want to assert yourself but also free yourself from ties that are alienating, with which we're bound. We don't have a choice.

(...)

Evolution of the Mother-Daughter Bond

Therapist: I'm revisiting what you were saying about narcissistic extension. Ultimately in your expression, there is indeed this idea that the daughter plays a role in the mother's psychic economy. The hair extends, the veins extend. There's always this connection that continues. But in fact, what you're doing is evolving it. It's not about cutting it, but about evolving it. (...) it's a sign that you've emerged from what's alienating in the sacrificial mother-child relationship for which the mother sacrificed herself.

Adana: I find that these plants, all the plants I draw, represent libido, the life force. Therapist: The vital energy (...) You have that capacity. To be in resonance with what surrounds you. It's precious.

ជំងឺ
MAL À DIT (DISEASE)

"It disturbs me that the body is mutilated this time,
while I was always trying to mutilate it."



Acrylic on canvas, 2024
80 x 100 cm

€ 2800

မြန်မာ MAL À DIT

DAY 2 - The Operating Table

Adana: During my cancer, I drew myself on an operating table surrounded by all my scars, all the interventions and injections I had undergone. Today, I want to renew this experience, but this time integrating my psychological pain. Redrawing myself on this symbolic operating table means opening myself up to the public, revealing myself completely. I think I can finally free myself from all of this.

Therapist: It comes with permissions that you give yourself. That's how I understand the word "free." Like a gradual progress, because the defenses are not there for nothing, and you want to lift them progressively. And at the same time as you lift them, you have your life to live, there are moments when it's about being and conducting your emotional, professional life, etc. Then there are moments when you can reopen the taps.

What do you mean by "resolving" the abandonment issue?

Adana: The consequences of my suffering, the effects of those traumas, they are more or less there. (...) I eat normally, I see myself as I am in the mirror. I feel good in my body. I have fewer emotional fluctuations. It's no longer pathological. (...) I can finally thrive in life. I have resolved these issues.

Therapist: I think it's important that you phrase it like that. It's not for nothing that you chose this wording. "I have resolved." You've done enormous work. In what you describe as having been resolved, these feelings of emptiness that are no longer there, you have appropriated something of the order of separation, where it was once endured, where it was difficult. Too many experiences of separation that were not processed. By working on yourself and implementing lots of separations, you were able to overcome hurdles. Now you are a grown person who knows how to separate without suffering, without being hurt. Yes, you have resolved that, in the sense that it's the fruit of your labor.

Adana: I want to be kind to myself now. I don't want to torture myself anymore. I want to draw this body on this operating table. It's to symbolize the passing of this cancer chapter, that it was a part of me, that it marked me for life, but I need to externalize this suffering and put it outside of me. This "mal a die" (wordplay on "maladie" meaning illness), these ailments. Therapist: It's all of a piece, it's on the operating table, it's your body on which there are these scars. They're no longer bubbles coming from everywhere, nor fragmented pieces of body like in your old drawings. What struck me when looking at your latest paintings is that the bodies were whole!

(...) Adana: This painting allows me to have the eye of the observer and no longer that of the patient. I see the anxieties coming, but from the outside. I realize what's happening in my body, I see my fears coming. Deep down, I would like to help people. I think therapy is a beautiful gift to offer.

DAY 3 - Restoring the Body

Adana: Unfortunately, I didn't manage to paint what I intended to paint. (...) It disturbs me that the body is mutilated this time, while I was always trying to mutilate it. I still left my scar and my cancer. I needed to color the tumor in gold. I had to do the same for my scar. The moment I added the gold, I felt an extraordinary sensation between liberation and well-being that brought tears to my eyes. (...)

Therapist: These are primary symbolizations, in the sense of being first. It's part of psychoanalytic work. It's art therapy for you alone. To the extent that you do something with all these feelings, you symbolize them.

Adana: The use of gold made me think of the restoration of broken bowls in Japan. I needed to put gold on these scars, on the cancer, on the woman's body, even on the braid.

Therapist: You've actually restored this body?

Adana: I also restored the braid too.

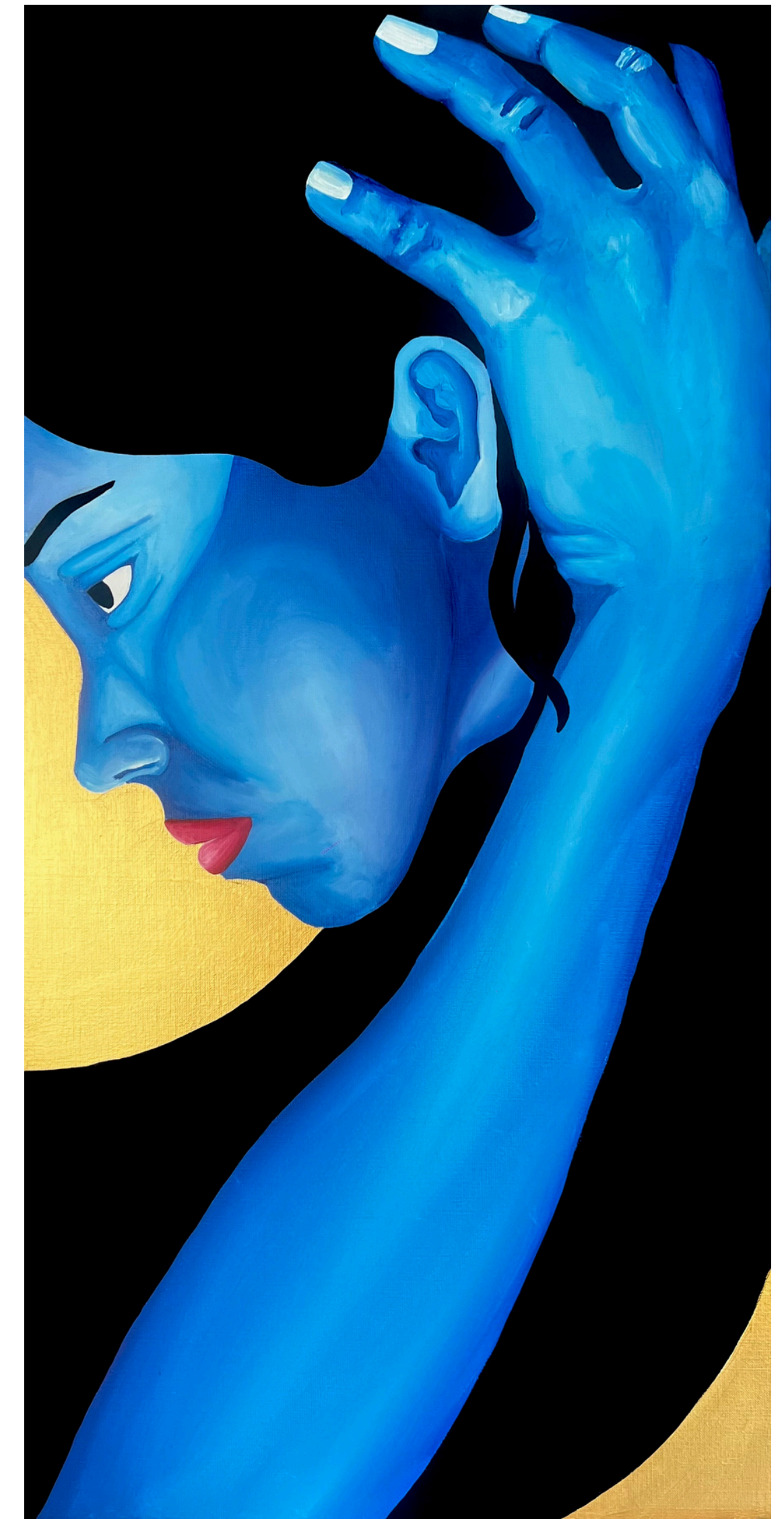
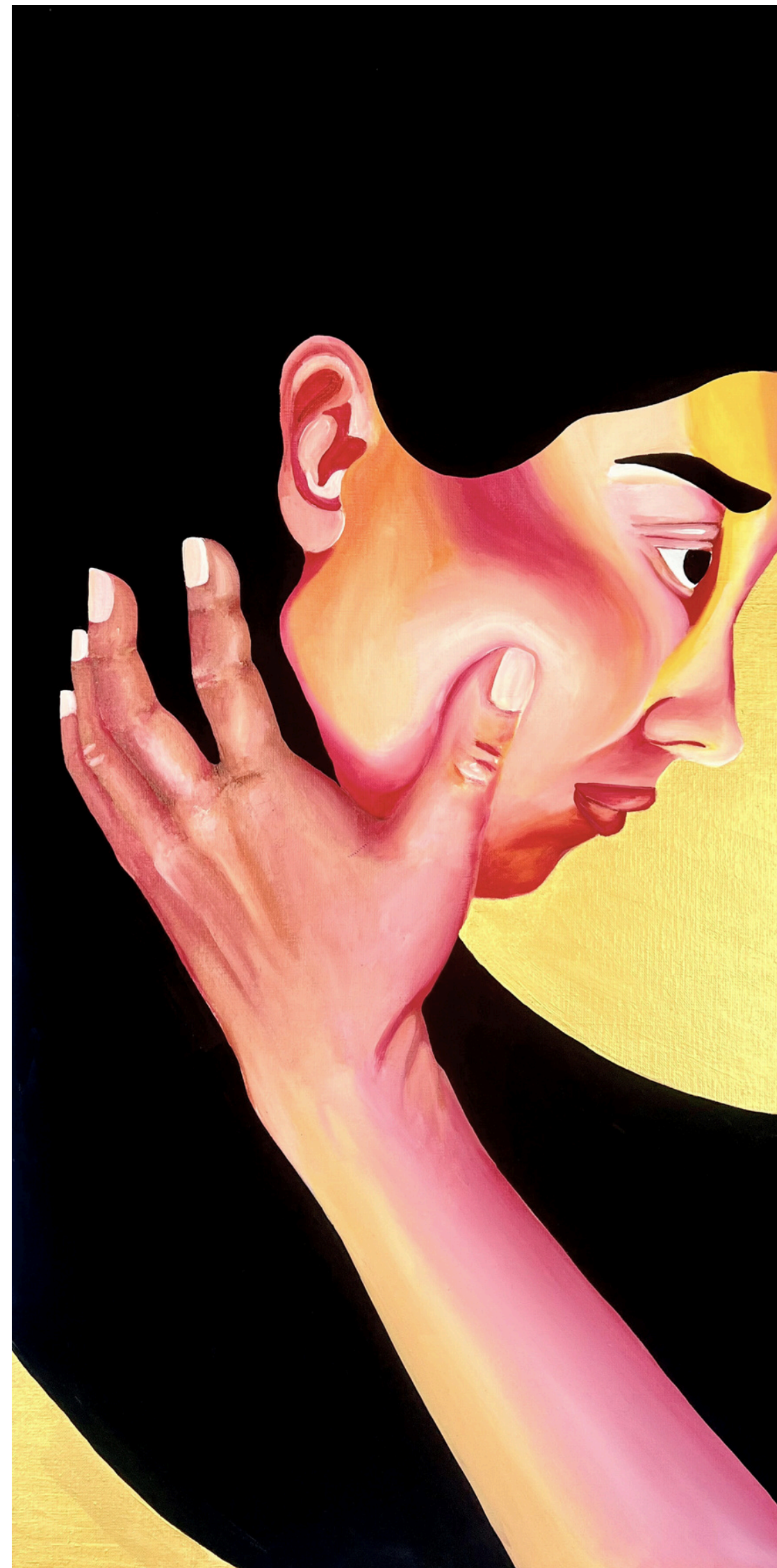
Therapist: What do the braids make you think of?

Adana: The genocide. Adana: I've always loved braiding hair. I added banana tree trunks everywhere behind the woman, because I like the shape that resembles braids. So in painting these trunks, we come back to the braid, to the origins. This need to anchor oneself, to take root. I feel that in this painting, I'm once again talking about my roots.

Therapist: Which are wounded. That's what you told me during our first session, I come from two genocides.

កាត់ខ្មែរ
HALFKHMER
**CUT &
REASSEMBLE**

I'm trying to reassemble myself in all my paintings. A fine balance between excessive submission and disproportionate aggression. I strive to cultivate a harmonious presence, anchored in respectful and benevolent self-assertion. It's a perpetual journey, a quest for balance.



Acrylic on canvas, 2024
Diptyque 50 x 100 cm

€ 4500

កាត់ខ្មែរ HALF *KHMER* CUT & REASSEMBLE

Day 3

I painted two faces of two women resting their foreheads against each other. The hands of each woman are holding the face, we don't know if it's a gesture of tenderness or aggression. Painting the two women with two different colors made me think of mixed-race, of the Khmer word "kat khmer" ("mix Khmer"). Is it a gesture of welcome or a confrontation?

Therapist: This gesture reminds me above all of reassurance. In the womb, the fetus constantly has its forehead against that of the mother. When we place our hand on children's foreheads, we contain them, we reassure them. It's comforting.

(...)

Adana: I want their hair to be tied together.

Therapist: There's nothing to do, they need to be tied.

Adana: The first painting I made was of women tied together. Here, I'm starting the process again. I have to bring them together at some point. (...) These two paintings remind me of my two sides. The submissive girl who says nothing, the one who lets herself be trampled on, and the other girl who practices martial arts and is ready to fight.

Therapist: The good and the bad little Adana. The one who was isolated. It can also be brought back to the question of the breast. A more Kleinian split, the good and the bad breast. How to associate the two?

Adana: How to associate the two, that's the question of the painting! Indeed, I'm trying to bring things together in all my paintings. I think that when I talk to people, I have either this overly submissive side or overly aggressive side, and I'm trying to find the right balance between the two.

WONDER

The colored body of the woman reminds me of my Vipassana meditation sessions, where vibrant sensations course through the flesh, awakening the mind.

Our physical body, this temple with a thousand receptors, is the channel that connects us to the physical and spiritual world.

Let us be carried away by the most primal sensations, let life flow through us completely.

Awaken your temple, restore its sacred nature.



Acrylic on canvas, 2022
148 x 89 cm

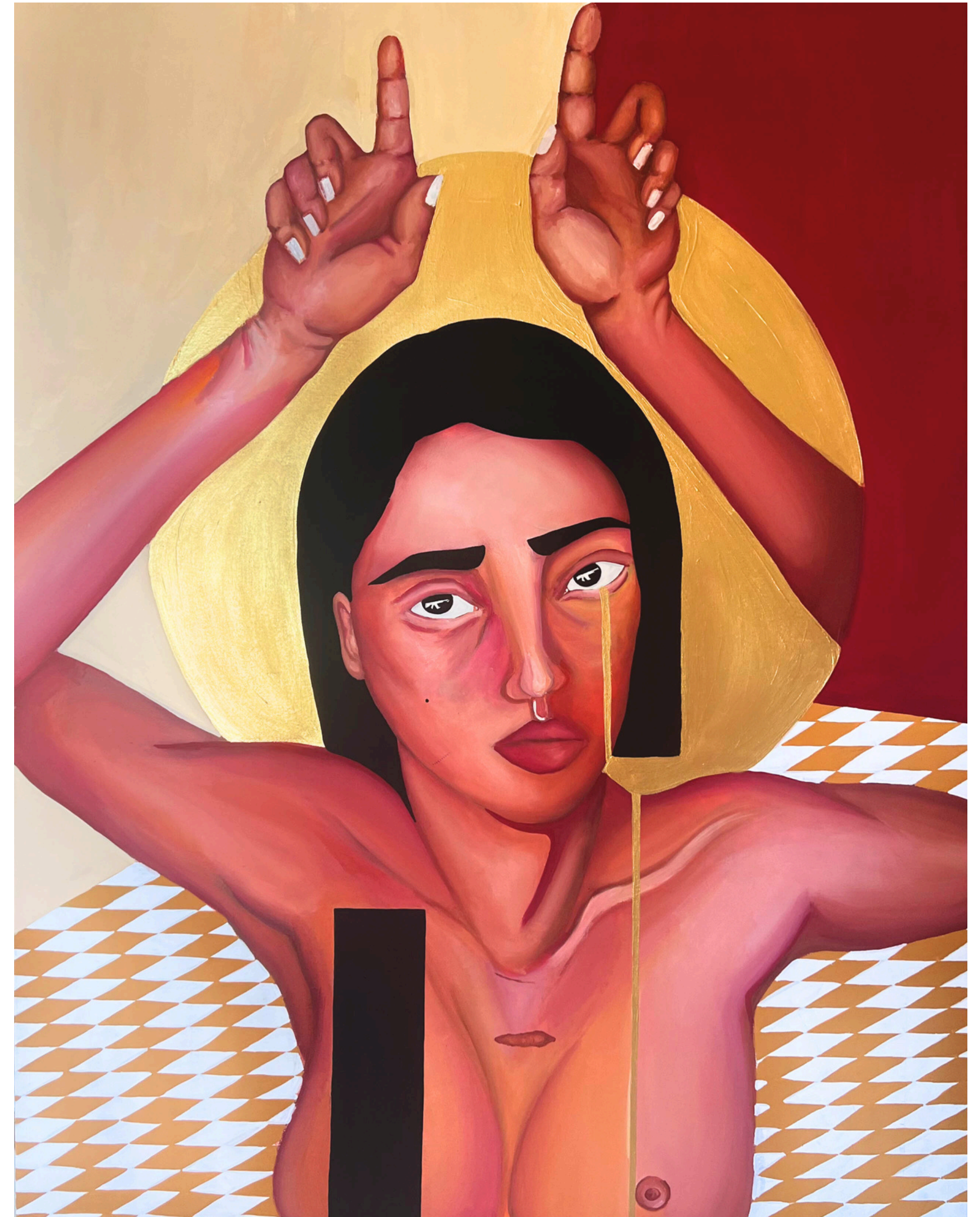
€3500

*IN*DIGNATION

In my veins flow two genealogical heritages, victims of genocides. This indignation, this hatred, this ardent revolt breathe life into the flame of my art, my activism, my being, and my life.

These walls of colonial buildings, erected by France, were once the scene of massacres. I, born of two worlds, French and Khmer, what is my place in this tragedy? We proclaim Human Rights, we establish institutions to guarantee peace... But only when it suits certain people.

The Khmer Rouge, recognized by the United Nations, a bitter symbol of justice with two faces.



Acrylic on canvas, 2023
148 x 89 cm

€3800

THE SAGE - ÂTMAN

This perpetual struggle between the three instances that inhabit us. This ceaseless quest for a fragile and precious balance. Isn't learning wisdom, the keystone of our inner journey, the quest of a lifetime?

A pilgrimage towards oneself, where each step brings us a little closer to this much-coveted harmony.

Time, that merciless sculptor, leaves its mark on our bodies. Experiences, like relentless waves, come to chisel our faces, engraving the striations of our ephemeral existence.

Each wrinkle, each furrow reminds us that life flows, inexorable, like an implacable water clock.

But in the murmur of these whispering voices, our Atman, our deep essence, finally reveals itself, like a flower opening to the light



Acrylic on canvas, 2022
100 x 100 cm

THE SIBLINGS

Unknowingly, I painted the faces of my siblings. Unconsciously, I captured the family dynamics that animate us. We have all suffered from separation, but despite everything, we try as best we can to preserve this unbreakable bond that unites us. These converging gazes, turned towards the same object, in search of parental figures. This quest for the maternal gaze, for the paternal presence, which we lacked so much.

Acrylic on canvas, 2023
148 x 89 cm

€4500



Now that we have found them, the ultimate challenge is to extract ourselves from this posture, to straighten up and move forward, strengthened by these rediscovered roots.

In this canvas, souls meet, hearts connect, transcending trials and distances. An ode to the resilience of these fraternal bonds, indestructible, that defy time and space.

THE WOMAN & *THE CHILD*

I spent a large part of my childhood and adolescence hating myself. Despite the ordeal of cancer, this self-destruction relentlessly pursued me.

After a long struggle, carried out with unwavering perseverance, a glimmer finally pierced through this darkness: this inner complicity, this deep friendship that we owe ourselves to have with our most intimate dwelling. I have become my own confidante, my own daughter and my own mother.

After so much torment and uncertainty, I have finally discovered this treasure, this soothing place where I can welcome myself.

Have you found it?



Acrylic on canvas, 2022
Diptych, 92 x 60 cm

€3500



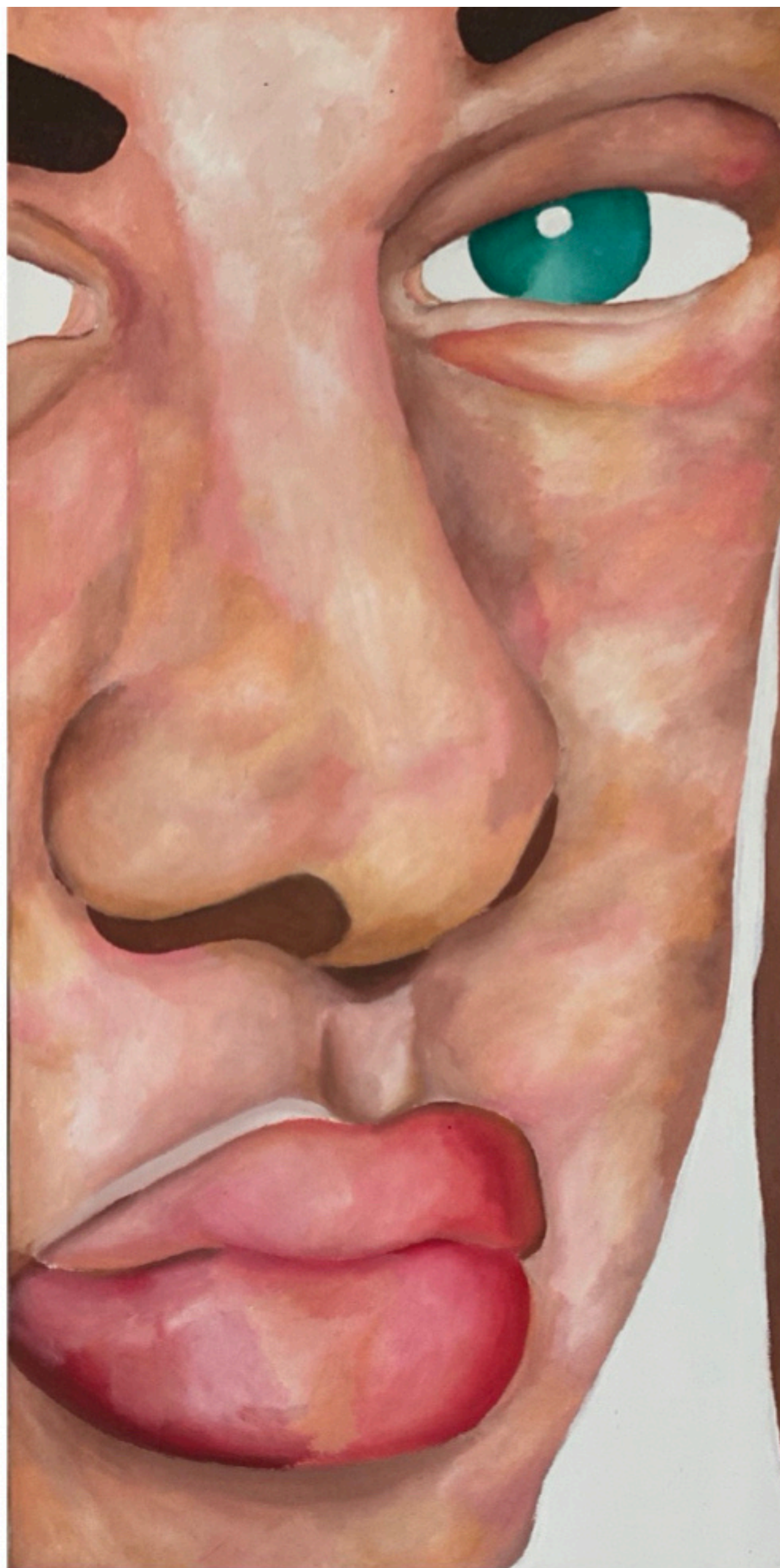
Praise,
Acrylic on canvas, 2023
80 x 80 cm

€2800



Euphoria
Acrylic on canvas, 2023
80 x 80 cm

€2800



Homo Sapiens
Diptych Acrylic on canvas, 2023
120 x 60 cm

€2400

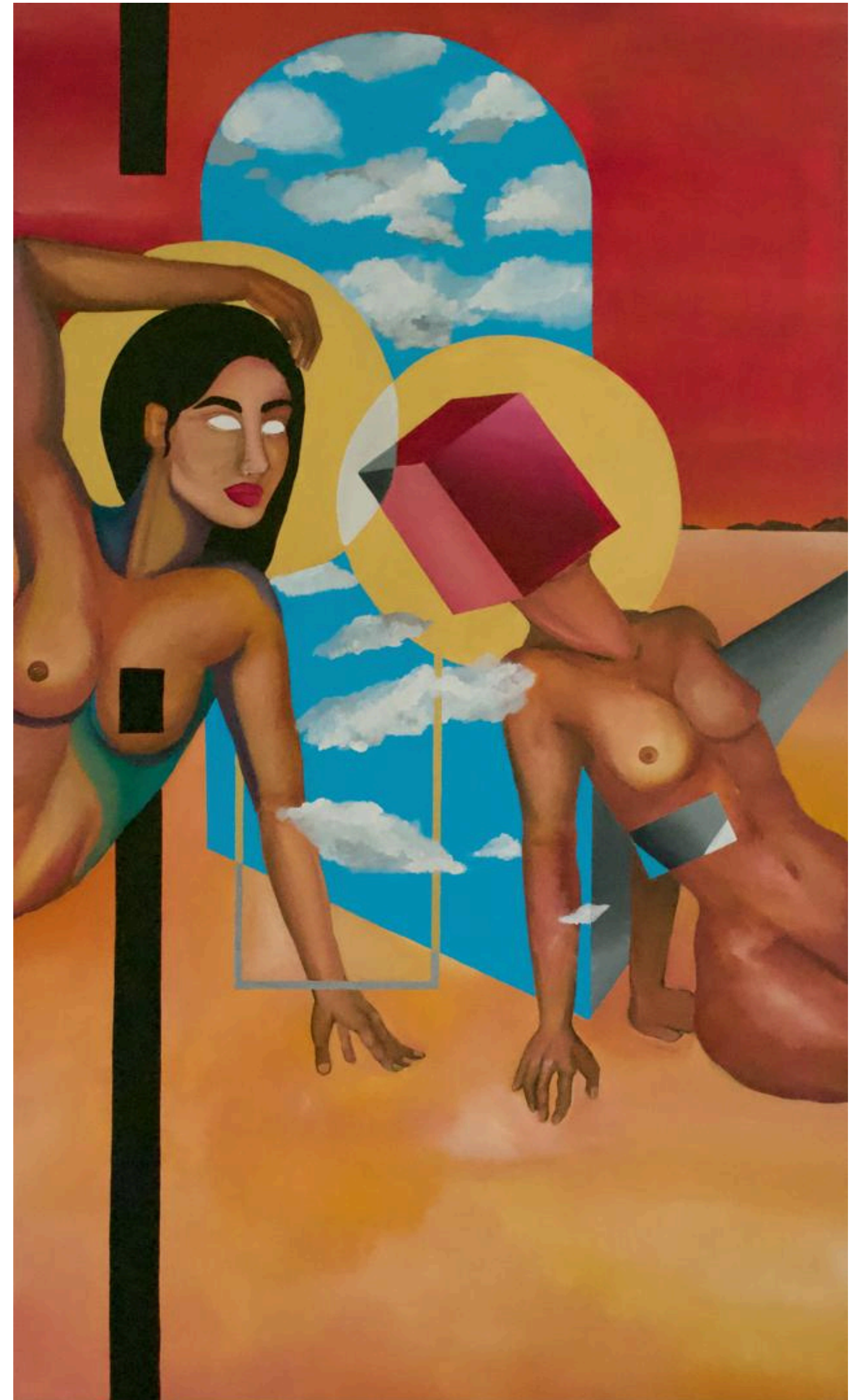


Human rouge
Acrylic on canvas, 2021
200 x 120 cm

€4000

Limbo
Acrylic on canvas, 2021
200 x 120 cm

€4000



EXHIBITIONS

01. **Je suis Ātman - Résidence de l'Ambassadeur du Cambodge**
Paris, FRANCE (June 2024)

02. **Je suis métisse - Maison du Cambodge**
Paris, FRANCE (May 2024)

03. **Art'ivisme - Gazette**
Montpellier, FRANCE (April 2023)

04. **Collective Exhibition, EntrelacsFlechtwerk - Espace des Dominicains**
Clermont L'hérault, FRANCE (June 2023)

05. **Conviv'Art - TheCommune**
Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA (December 2022)

06. **ASEM ART FESTIVAL - National Museum of Cambodia**
Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA (November 2021)

07. **I'LL SHOW YOU WHO I AM - FT Gallery**
Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA (September 2021)

08. **ORIGINS & BECOMING - The Plantation**
Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA (February 2021)

09. **THE ART OF SHARING - SOSORO Museum of Economy & Finance**
Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA (January 2021)

10. **I PLEDGE - Raffles Hotel Le Royal**
Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA (June 2021)

11. **COMPLEMENTARITY - Rosewood Gallery Space**
Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA (September 2020)

12. **THE ART OF DETACHMENT - Sra'Art Gallery**
Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA (August 2020)

13. **REINCARNATION - Strange Fruit Gallery Space**
Siem Reap, CAMBODIA (June 2020)

14. **THE MEANING OF LIFE - Alliance Française**
Bangkok, THAILAND (January 2020)

15. **COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION - Gallery Sarto**
Paris, FRANCE (June 2020)

16. **RACHANA & RENAISSANCE - Maison Du Cambodge**
Paris, FRANCE (November 2019)

17. **THE SENS OF CONSCIOUSNESS - Gallery 109**
Sydney, AUSTRALIA (June 2019)

18. **RACHANA - Brussel Fashion Days**
Brussels, BELGUIM (October 2019)

19. **MY RENAISENSES - The living Gallery Outpost**
New York, USA (June 2018)



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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adana_Mam-Legros