

Portfolio

Maria Cohen

Artist Statement

The main objective of my research is to speculate about sexuality through the process, as a permanent process of producing art to express sexual energy as pain, anger, or anxiety. Feminism informs my identity as a woman; the politics of this allows me to be free to explore sexuality in my practice which is in itself the function of legacy.

I am exploring sexuality through my own identity. I approach my practice as an experience, a physical and almost performative moment: every piece of art, every artistic gesture, or a manifest is a way to overcome embarrassment to accept vulnerability, weakness, and fragility. Through the practice, I am unfolding my sexual identity with pain, anxiety, and frustrations. I am coming across boundaries and traps which I have been a part of for years because of belonging to Russian and Jewish identity. The process leads me to look fears in the eye, be aware of the voice through anxiety and frustrations, and acknowledge my power, hidden deeper inside the body. Repetitions and symbolism are saving energy, balancing, and controlling emotional and rational parts of me. The image of a bunny is an alter-ego of me and an ambiguity of human nature. I deform it making it more comprehensive or opposite confusing for reading, like sound or invisible vibration. Within layers, I unfold sexuality and push struggles out of my body with blots, strikes, erasures, and an expressionistic or graffiti vibrant painting. Through the practice, I identify myself as a woman neither only a social role and status and responsibilities as a national, a daughter, or a wife. But also as an artist or a human being who are wish express feelings through any tools and meanings.

Biography

Maria Cohen is a UK-based multidisciplinary artist who works as a painter, writer, researcher, and curator. Her art practice explores the topic of sexuality and identity through the expressive use of diverse media such as oil painting, digital drawing, animation, screen printing. Maria uses a repetitive image of a rabbit as an alter-ego and a symbol to represent both themselves and society. She completed her MA in Fine Art Painting at Camberwell College of Arts in 2021, supported by Art Ambassador Awards. During her studies Maria was involved in the development of a curatorial project at the Copeland Gallery in London. In 2022, Maria curated the regroup Collective exhibition “Intimacy” at the Fitzrovia Gallery and collaborated with Urban Outfitters. She also participated in a collective exhibition in Basel supported by Voices of Culture and her work was selected for exhibition at the South London Gallery and London Grads 2021 at the Saatchi Gallery. Maria’s artworks are held in many private collections worldwide.

In 2022 Maria launched her NFT project called Rabbits Choice, which is a platform for people to express their fears, overcome embarrassment, and show their unique personalities and voices. The project aims to bring people from diverse backgrounds together to collaborate and generate ideas for ambitious projects.

As of February 2023 Maria curated the solo show ‘Zero Gravity’ in Basel, Switzerland, supported by the Voskhod Gallery.

MARIA COHEN CV

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EDUCATION

2020-2021
Camberwell College of Arts, London, MA Painting
2019-2020
ICA Moscow MA Fine Art
2010-2016
V. Surikov State Academy Art Institute, Moscow, Russia Master of Fine Art
2004- 2009
College of Performing Arts, Moscow, Russia Bachelor of Fine Art (Hons)

SELECTED SOLO

2023
'Zero Gravity'
Voskhod gallery, Basel, Switzerland

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023 Undercurrents'
Artists Open House
Adelaide Studio, Brighton
2022 'regroup'
regroup Collective exhibition
Espacio Gallery, London
2022 'Still Happening'
Kupfer gallery, London
2022 'Intimacy'
Regroup Collective exhibition
Fitzrovia Gallery
2022 "X-Nowness"
Collective exhibition supported by Voice of Culture
Basel Art Center
2021 "London Grads Now"
Saatchi Gallery, London
2021 "Regroupcollective"
no format gallery group show London
2021
South London Gallery London
UAL MA Fine Art Graduate Showcase
2021 Copeland Gallery London
"Unmuted"
MAFA Interim Group Show London
2020 The 2nd Garage Triennial of Russian Contemporary Art
2020
Baseless, Winzavod, Moscow Centre for Contemporary Art
2020 Online exhibition "#ямогуговорить"
2020 Sokol Residence
Solo exhibition "The Event or a chaos as a form of an order"
2019 MOMMA Moscow
Performance 'What did you listen'
Dismorphophobia, or the war within your mind
2019 WINZAVOD, Moscow Center for Contemporary Art
The exhibition of "Communities and Spaces"
2019 Residence Chekhov IPI

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

2019
Member of Israeli Artist Association
2016
Present Member of the Union of Russian Artists

CURATORIAL PROJECTS:

2023
'Zero Gravity'
Voskhod gallery, Basel, Switzerland
2022
"Intimacy"
Fitrovia Gallery
Regroup Collective
<https://regroupcollective.com/exhibitions-3/>
Instagram: @regroupcollective
2019
MOMMA
Performance 'What did you listen'
Regroup FYFM'
Dismorphophobia, or the war within your mind
2019
'Paradise will be sold tomorrow'
Regroup 'FYFM'
'Communities and Spaces', Winzavod, Moscow for Contemporary Art

HONORS / AWARDS

2020
UAL International Postgraduate Scholarship
2016
Honorable Mention Award;
In recognition of the overall achievements in Fine Arts at the V. Surikov State Academy Art Institute
the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Arts
2016
Short-list online selection Marchionni Prize; MAGMMA Museum, Villacidro, Italy

RESIDENCIES

2021
Camberwell college of Art, London
2019
Chekhov API, scientific creative residence, Moscow region
2018
International Residence Kyrgyzstan

PUBLICATIONS

Publication release: <https://voskhod.ch/blog/29-greetings-from-london-interview-with-maria-cohen/>
[Graduateshowcase.arts.ac.uk/projects/296087/cover](https://graduateshowcase.arts.ac.uk/projects/296087/cover)
2021

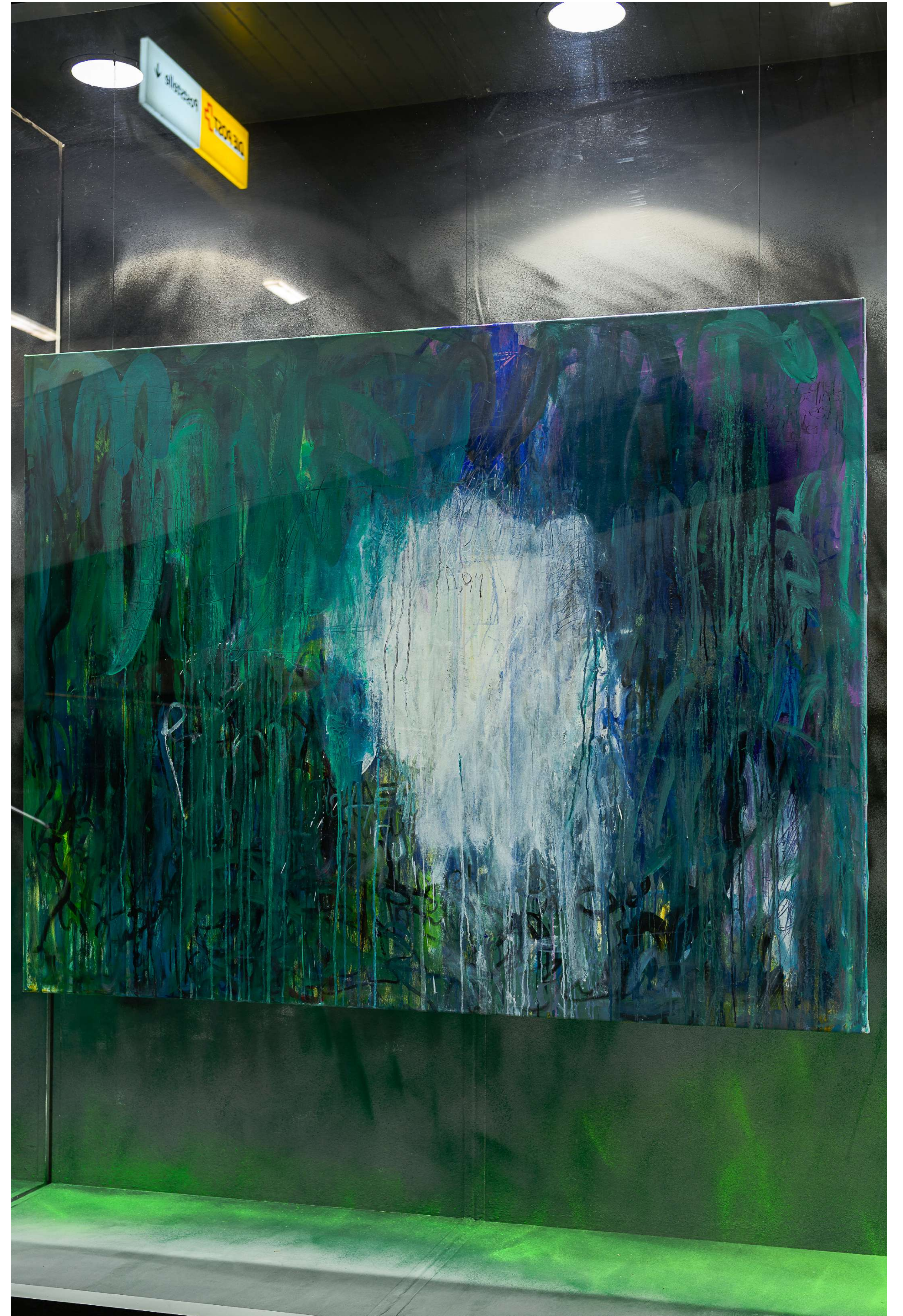


Project Zero Gravity Installation view at the Voskhod Gallery, Basel Switzerland 2023
Installation view at the Voskhod Gallery, Basel
Switzerland
<https://voskhod.ch/exhibitions/16-zero-gravity/>

The zero gravity project is a collection of paintings that depict the artist's feelings of insecurity, loss, fear, and embarrassment in response to being forcibly cut off from their homeland. The paintings are presented as an autobiographical diary, with expressive brushstrokes, doodles, and barely readable writing. The installation features three paintings hanging on invisible ropes against a deep black background, creating a sense of weightlessness and erasing boundaries between the floor, ceiling, and walls. The layering of paints in the paintings represents the unstable and rapid pace of everyday life, capturing only bits and pieces of the artist's experience in a chaotic yet ordered way.



Untitled
Oil, canvas 140*180
Project Zero Gravity
2023





“Untitled”
Project Zero Gravity
Digital print Unique
FibraPrint Warmtone Gloss 300gsm

A series of digital prints were created by using a combination of hand-drawn sketches and digital drawing techniques. The prints appear to capture moments of anxiety, falling, and frustration, which are depicted through a variety of movement-stabilizing techniques. The prints show stages of how unconscious emotions and memories can become trapped within our bodies and affect us over time.

By layering different elements together, the prints convey a complex and multi-dimensional view of the sensations, which are often difficult to express in words alone. They also convey a sense of the physicality of these feelings, as well as the way they can become embedded within our bodies and impact our movement and behavior. The prints become a powerful exploration of how our emotions and experiences are intertwined; how they can continue to affect us long after the original event has passed. They offer a unique and thought-provoking perspective on the nature of human experience and the complexity of our emotional lives.



Performance 2022

A strong message with a bored face...

How we are fighting toxic masculinity. Shouting with silence...

Project Pray&Sacrifice

The project is a self-reflection on the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The artwork is a scream and denial of belief in the tragedy that happened in Bucha. The artwork consists of multiple printed posters hanging very close to each other. The repetitive pattern and blooded red color creates the illusion of praying in a moment of suffocative fear. The transparency of the material is the metaphorical meaning of the vulnerability of the human skin and the circulation of blood under it.



The collage features the installation, screen print 'Pray&Sacrifice, and Digital print 'Pray&Sacrifice' installed in the public space.

Project Pray&Sacrifice 2022

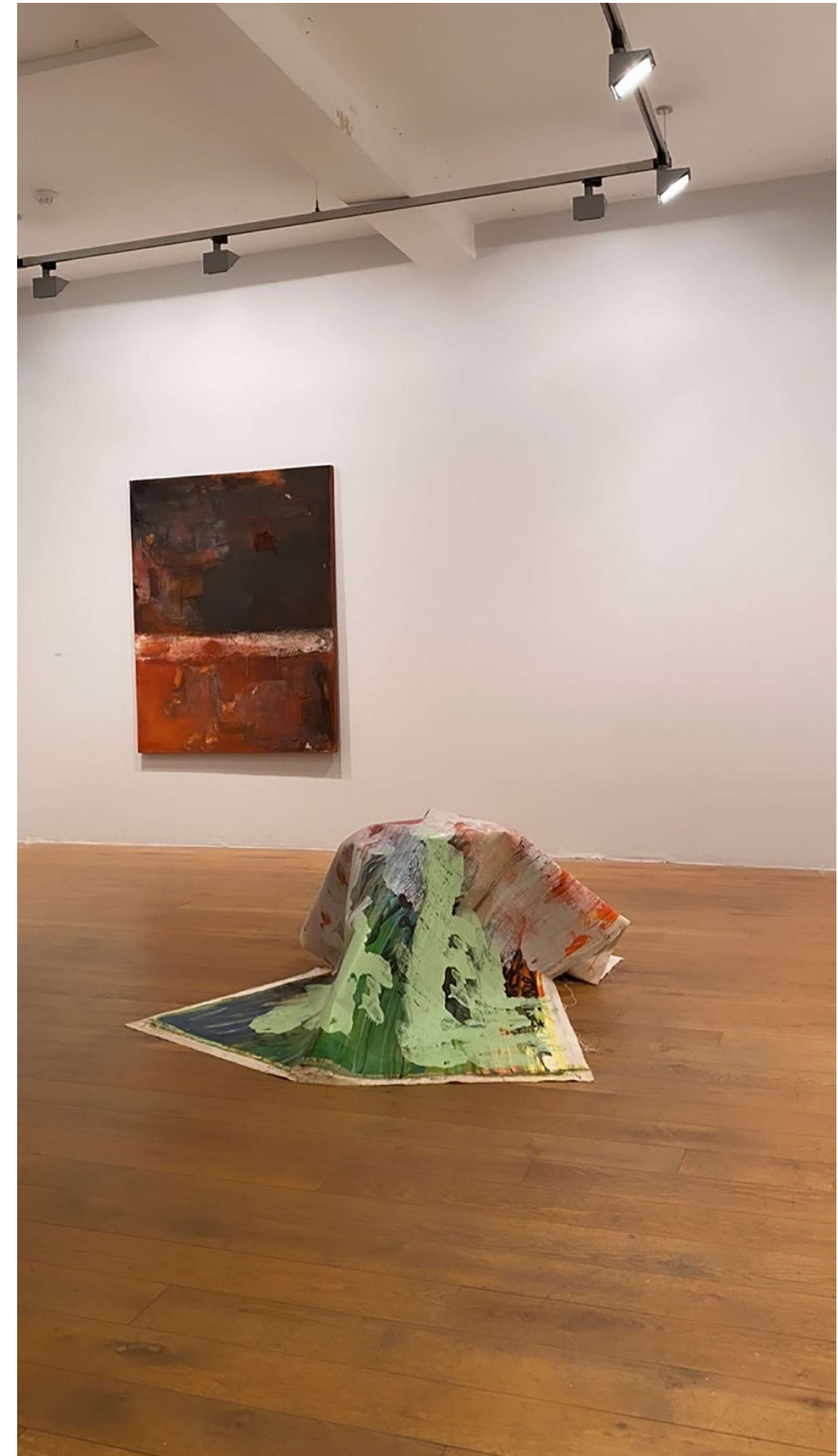
The installation is a display of collected prints that are hung closely together, creating a sense of intimacy and emotional impact on the viewer. The vibration of colour ranges from multiple reds to tones of black reinforcing the emotional impact of being overwhelmedness and exhausted.



Project "Unfolding Identity" 2022
 Deconstruction of painting
 Installation at the Copeland Park Gallery

The series of works include a few stages of deconstruction painting in the space. Every piece is a documentation of interaction between the artist and the painting . I hang the piece on a wall. Then I put it on the floor. I found myself covered into the object. I folded it and unfolded it again and again. I had an idea to deconstruct painting itself to destroy the sense of painting as a thing. Then, I moved forward, I engaged with painting imagining it as a sexual act or a dance. I rolled up myself in the painting like a rolled carpet. I felt stuck there, but safe and warm. This feeling reminded me life in comfort and stability which gives warmth and secureness, but the identical voice inside is annoyingly whispered to release.

The purpose of deconstruction of painting is showing the process of folding and unfolding identity through the exciting erotic engagement between a human being and the painting. Folds like layers symbolized traps through time which no one can impact. It traps itself, but there is only one way to find my voice to keep going unfold identity through the process every day.



Deconstruction of painting
 Four Corners exhibition London
 Project Unfolding identity.
 An unstretched painting is placed on the floor supported by a solid structure underneath, folded by natural accident.



Storyboards 2022

Peace or Tears of Blood

Link on the project: <https://vimeo.com/817620728/be7f517b43>

The project "Peace or Tears of blood" is a powerful and deeply emotional reflection on the ongoing military conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The use of a plastic transparent figure of a rabbit traveling around the world bleeding with embroidered tears of blood is a striking representation of the pain and suffering experienced by those affected by the conflict. The fine material and velvety texture of the rabbit figure contrast with the harsh reality of the conflict, highlighting the fragile nature of the human soul and the relationships that are affected by war. The transparency of the figure also reflects the vulnerability of the soul, showing how it is impacted by the environment in which it finds itself. The embroidery on the figure, which appears to have punctured the material, reinforces the sense of pain and suffering that is being portrayed. The barely readable text on the right ear, which says "MIP" or "PEACE," adds a hopeful element to the piece, suggesting that despite the violence and conflict, there is still a possibility for peace.



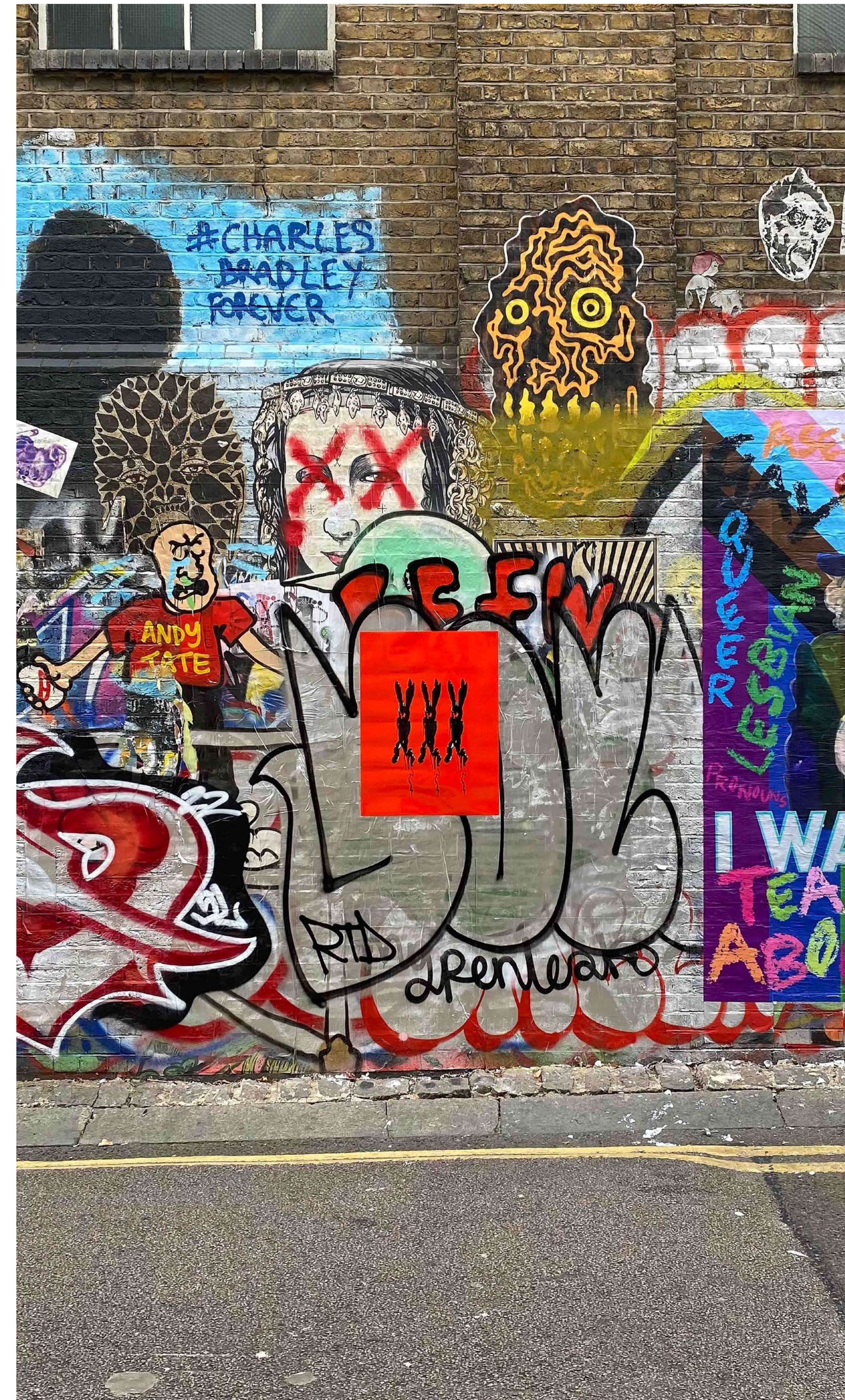
The War

The graffiti project is a wordless self-reflection built on feelings of desperation, frustrations, anxiety, pain, anger and embarrassment as a reflection on the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The artwork gives the visual image of the result after relieving stifled emotions out of a body towards the image of bunny depicting an alter-ego of an artist leaving the trail of the self presence.

The graffiti project is a powerful form of self-expression and self-reflection, using art to communicate complex emotions related to the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The absence of words allows the artist to convey their feelings in a more visceral and intuitive way, relying on visual cues to communicate the depth of their experience.

The use of a bunny as an alter-ego is an interesting choice, as it suggests a sense of vulnerability and innocence, juxtaposed with the intensity of the emotions being expressed. By leaving a trail of their self-presence, the artist is asserting their existence and their right to be seen and heard, even in the face of conflict and turmoil.

The artwork speaks to the power of art as a means of processing and expressing difficult emotions, and as a way of bearing witness to important events in our world. It also highlights the importance of empathy and understanding, as we seek to connect with others and understand their experiences, even when we may not share them ourselves.



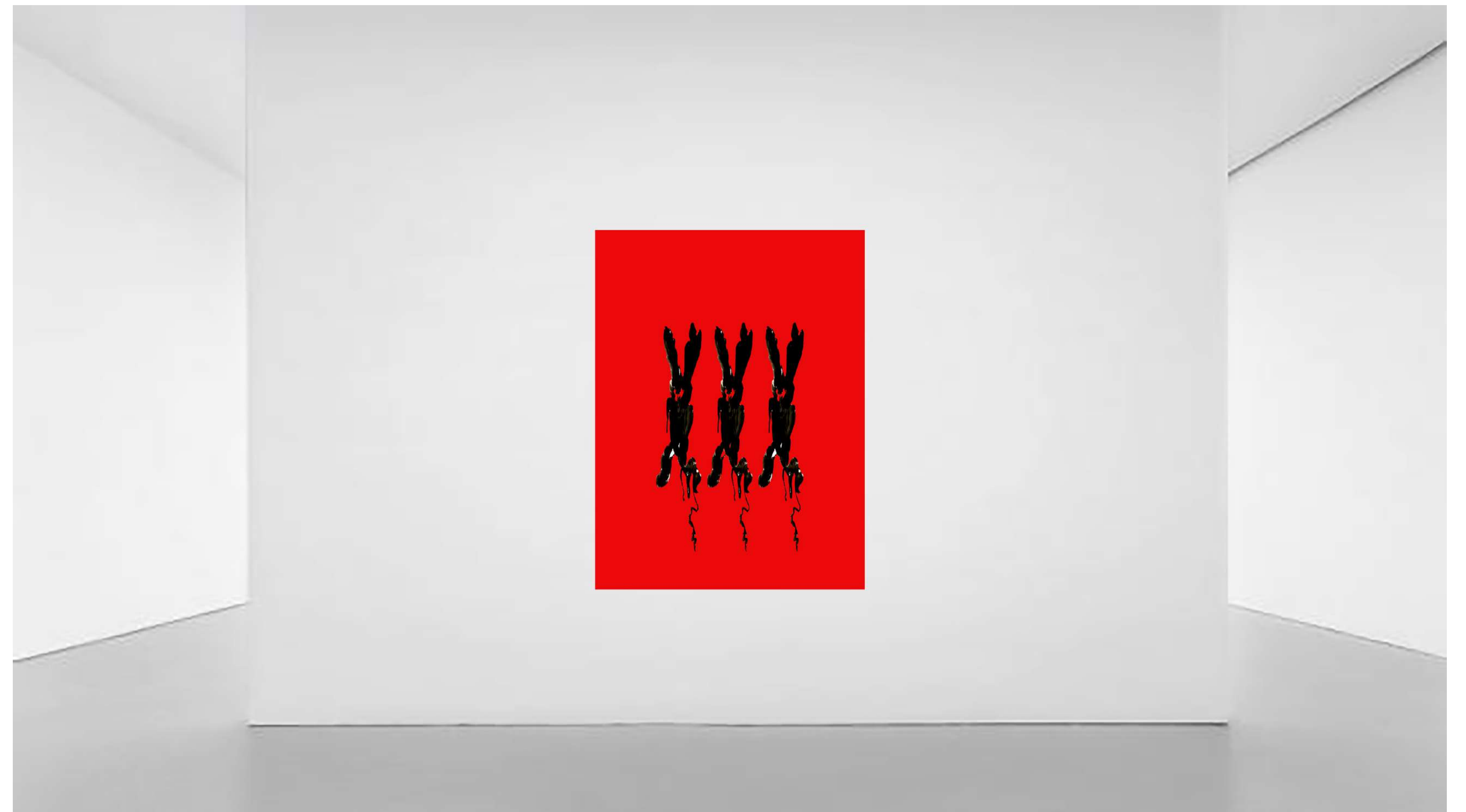
Brick Lane, London
Digital print



Oil on canvas, screen print 2022
Size 110*90

The War

The idea behind the project depicts a blooded background with three repetitive patterns of rabbits painted in black. The bunny's image refers to the ambiguity of life and the controversial understanding of security and defense. Black rabbits emphasize the insecurities of life, the hard and fragile fence of safeness based on trust, beliefs, and grief. The lack of emotional expression shown by the repetitive pattern of rabbits tied closer to each other creates the feeling of tension, stubbornness, and emotional unavailability. Through the blooded red background and the sharpness of the bunny's image, the artist reveals tense between emotions and will. Structured to the repetitive line, rabbits create an illusion of sexual masculine power trapping hidden behind painful traumatic experiences full of scares and grief.



Oil on canvas, screen print, 190*160
Installation at the White Cube London



Installation South London Gallery
Collage is installing on the wall consisting of the painting, drawings, sketches, screen-prints.

Project Rabbits Choice 2021

The work is exploring of sexual identity through an ongoing process of reproductions and repetitions during the time. The project shows the process of empowering identity through changes that occurred with the artist during the long period of relationships with practice. The work consists of paintings, objects, documentaries, and performances. I am layering paintings, drawings, and sketches one on top of another, intending to fire the curiosity of a viewer within hidden parts of the collage. The Bunny symbolizes a sexual alter-ego and ambiguity of human nature. I deform it making it more comprehensive or, on the opposite, confusing for reading, like sound or invisible vibration.



Painting
Mixed media:
Oil on canvas, screen-printing, Ink, Pen 180*140



Installation Project space
Alternative way to install the work in the project space

Project Rabbits Choice 2021

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Rabbits Love

2021

Animation "Rabbits love" is about a physical act of love, like the deceptive expectations and addiction from quick emotional attachments and deceptive feelings like treatment from massive pressure and suffocative loneliness. A rabbit image symbolizes a man who tries running away from reality to a fictional world of pleasure. Cuddles are new investments that are invaluable. Nature seems the last available entertainment in this poisoned world full of injustices and restrictions. Nature might be the only one that might give a feeling of security and independence. The blackbird is a symbol of freedom and wisdom although, it symbolizes death flying over the ground like a wish of destroying prohibitions. The fence reminds a cage as an illusion of impossibility to float like the bird. The hare becomes huge and smaller then it duplicates itself as a bacteria. Also, it might be thoughts relation among animals, plants, human beings, and World Wide Web connections. A disease or a poison is spreading the whole ground, particularly in our mind, like a huge fear. The Queen is a symbol of the strength of culture, belief, and duty. The Queen's image appears and disappears as a Gif there is no chance to erase the image from the head as a reminder about social rules and dogmas. This artwork is a confession and relief.

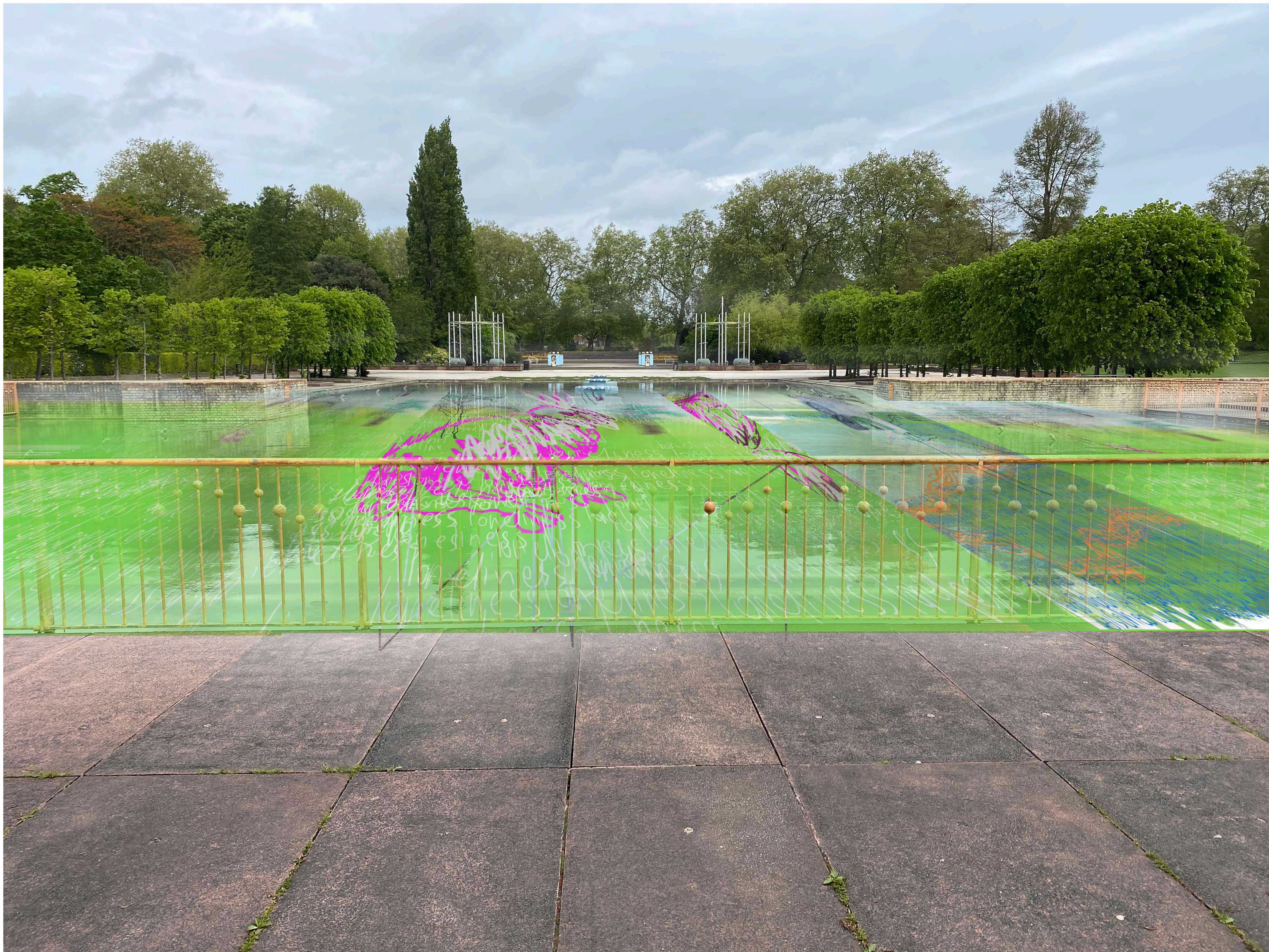
Link on the animation Rabbits Love:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVcbPkwnQUg>



Installation Rabbits Love
Project Description:

The second space depicts the same project in a way of projection animation on walls. I propose to project few different animations in one place at the same time with cacophony of sounds. I enjoy an idea of projecting videos in random order and movement. For instance, the animation which depicts on the wall might be floating as a river along the walls. Constructions in the middle of the place which remind barriers also fully embraced of noisy digital animation with bright, quickly changeable images and fuzzy, annoying noise spreading the whole space.



The installation represents an animation which is projected on the pond in The Battersea Park.

Contacts

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