

Portfolio  
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2024/2025

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collaborations and exhibitions



13.11. – 29.11.  
*MAGICAL THINKING*

*Hanna Kanto &  
Melanie Ludwig*

## MAGICAL THINKING

double exhibition with Hanna Kanto

13.11. – 29.11.2024

Atelierhaus Salzamt, Linz, Austria

two artists on a video chat.  
two artists talking about life, love and finger food.  
smell the color, feel the clay.  
what is real is real, like a rose is a rose is a rose.  
what is real is the play, as we play  
alongside each other.  
what is real is the space in between,  
a sea of possibilities,  
a door to the other side.  
dip in, or enter alongside with me.  
two artists trying to make a point, to hit the nail,  
two (wanna be) witches and a broken canvas.

text by Melanie Ludwig

fotos by Clemens Mairhofer

supported by Linz Kultur and Land Oö

We started out with the working title, *two (wanna be) witches and a broken canvas*, I would say that it's quite a playful title. It was always meant to be a working title and it was a kind of joke between us, but at the same time we both liked it, I think.

Maybe because the idea of magic was already inside of it, just like the idea of failure.  
The image of the broken canvas.

We were talking a lot about the way ideas happen, and how art can happen as well. Surely, when creating a work of art you are acting and you are making concourse decisions in the process but at the same time it is also about being open to coincidences. It is about maintaining your curiosity.

On the one hand you are active, you are in control, you are planning, but then again it is about loosing control and about exploring. That's when you are almost passive, you surrender yourself to the movement, you let the artwork guide you. It can be quite surprising what bubbles up to the surface.

Quite funny. This has a lot to do with playfulness. You have to be in a playful mood in order to allow that, otherwise you won't be able to give up your fixed plans and ideas.

Of course, I always have plans and I also do lots of sketches, just like you, but even when I start to sketch the idea it is already changing and then the painting is leading the way. At the end the final work is pretty often a bit, or even totally different to what I was planning. In that way we are quite similar I guess. We are both obsessed with planning but then we change our plans again and again and again. Plans are important as a starting point. You have to depart from somewhere after all. But it would be a very different approach to art making, if you would already know the end result from the beginning. I think for me it wouldn't be so interesting.

No, it would not. But if I have an image in my head, I want to reach it and it's inspiring to try. The idea is something really exciting for me, but then during the process I get much more excited when I see something unexpected happening on the canvas. I have to say that it takes much courage to give up control though.

Yeah, sometimes I feel that art is also a way to question what you think you already know. In this sense it is really mystical, it can be a way of searching through making.

Even seeing art can have transforming effects on us, but only if we are willing to tune in and empathize. Of course, like everyone else, I bring my own experiences, feelings, prejudgments and blind spots to the piece of art I encounter, I am not an empty page of paper. But sometimes, when I experience a great work, a film, music, a book, whatever it may be, I feel really touched by it, it leaves its traces inside of me. It can be a dialog, but in order to have this conversation you sometimes have to stop to speak and start to listen. Just like Ann Carson writes in "Autobiography of Red": *Reality is a sound, you have to tune into it not just keep yelling.*

We could change it into "Art is a sound, you have to tune into it not just keep yelling". I like that idea of dipping in, tuning in, becoming a part of it somehow. It reminds me of the way children play and how the borders between the inner subjective reality and the external world get really blurry in these moments. Donald Winnicott, a prominent psychoanalyst developed a theory of the Transitional space, which is that space of experiencing, between the inner and outer worlds. Both play and art operate in this transitional space, where new meanings, identities, and forms of expression can emerge. A space where creativity thrives, a space for magical thinking and art making.

Do you wonder if making art and inhabiting this space can be a form of escapism? You have to withdraw yourself somehow in order to create.

For me to retreat in order to make art is a way of dealing with this reality. Sometimes, what is happening in this world right now is too heavy for me. To create is giving me strength and the possibility to survive. It is very necessary for me in order to go on and face all the challenges we are confronted with. At the same time my practice is very much rooted in the place and time I am living. When I work, I reflect, I respond and I try to offer new ways of reading, interpreting and telling stories.

I also like to see making art as something world building and as something that has a lot to do with the relationship to others.

Rebecca Solnit writes in "The Faraway Nearby": *We live inside each other's thoughts and works. (...)*

*I am, we each are, the inmost of an endless series of Russian dolls; you, who read are now encased within a layer I built for you, or perhaps my stories are now inside you. We live as literal as that inside each other's thoughts and work, in this world that is being made all the time, by all of us, out of beliefs and acts, information and materials. Even in the wilderness your ideas of what is beautiful, what matters and what constitutes pleasure shape your journey there as much as do your shoes and map also made by others.*

The Text is based on a conversation between Hanna Kanto and Melanie Ludwig on the train from Linz to Gmunden 10.11.2024













detail: Hanna Kanto and Melanie Ludwig, acrylic on wall, 2024





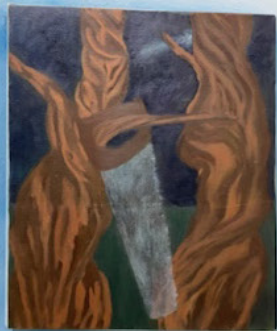


foto by Hanna Kanto, Hanna Kanto: HANGING SAW, 43 cm x 33 cm, oil on canvas, 2024



Melanie Ludwig: WILD FOLKS (couple), 60 cm x 45 cm, 2024



## hit me up, when you're building a log cabin

25.05. – 16.06.2024

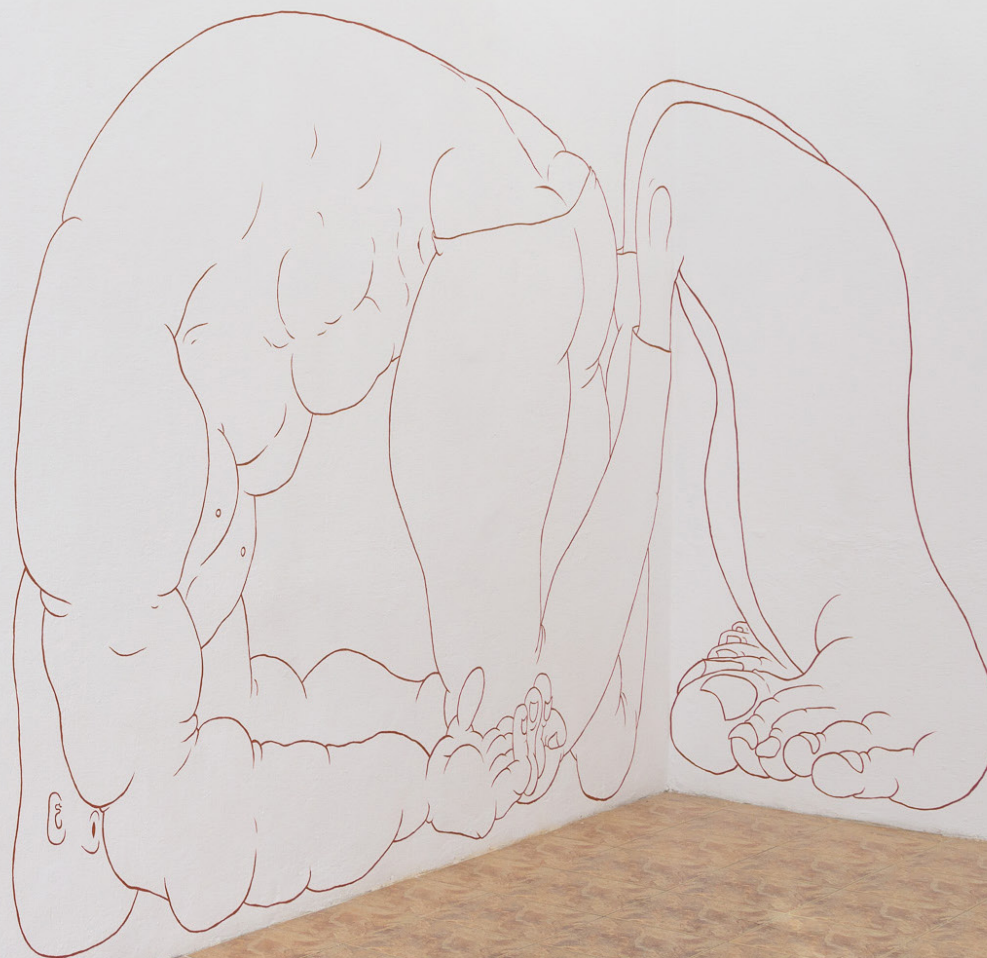
Heerz Tooya, Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria

A soft touch, permissive to meatless appetizers, embracing dangling berries. Stretched canvases depicting just enough deciliters to linger your lusts for love. Knowing that our vices in life beat so much faster than we sometimes want them to, Melanie Ludwig lets us in with a resting heart rate of 40 bpm.

While the opposite of gravitational happiness feels juuuust right by mooning sun-kissed buttocks, a grim fate lures with intense eyes. Why are we so obsessed with hiding and eager to show it simultaneously? I love a good hug. I tremble without it. Fierce without motion, bold within. Soft with the hard as hard with the yoghurt. Sensitive without making sense. Wouldn't that be amazing?

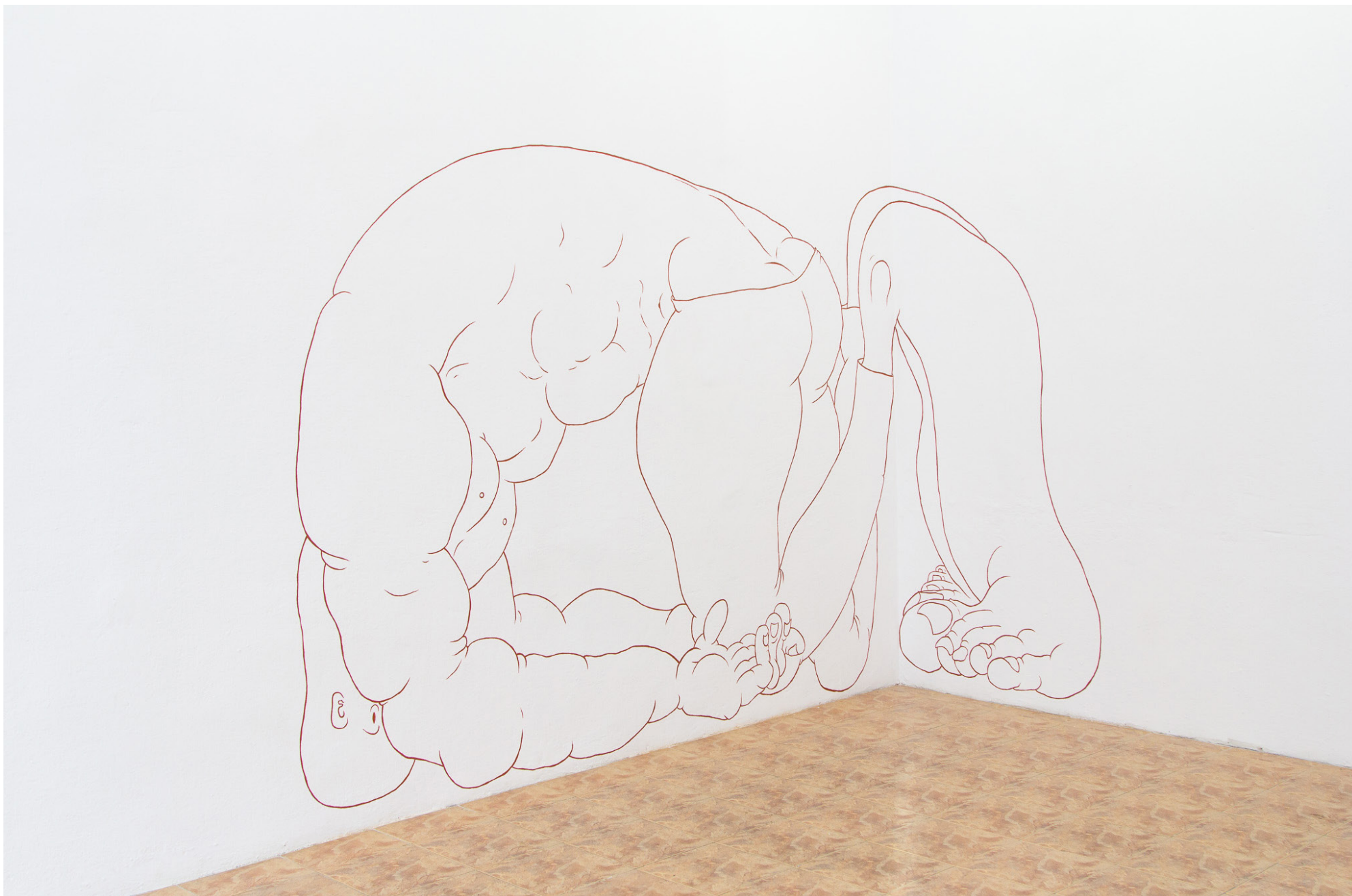
text and fotos by Lars Nordby  
supported by Linz Kultur











hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (wall drawing), 210 cm x 260 cm, acrylic paint, 2024



## my beloved siren

26.03.2024

Project Space, art quarter budapest, Hungary

double presentation with  
Kimbaly Callas: „Ocean Swimmers (Entanglement)“

supported by Culture Moves Europe Mobility Fund

fotos by Barnabás Neográdi-Kiss













paintings



Ich als Tier (1), 120 cm x 90 cm, oil on canvas, 2025



Ich als Tier (2), 120 cm x 90 cm, oil on canvas, 2025





Ich als Tier (flowers), 70 cm x 60 cm, oil on canvas, 2025



Ich als Tier (devil), 100 cm x 80 cm, oil on canvas, 2025





Ich als Tier (snake), 100 cm x 80 cm, oil on canvas, 2025





Ich als Tier (reflectionl), 100 cm x 120 cm, oil on canvas, 2025



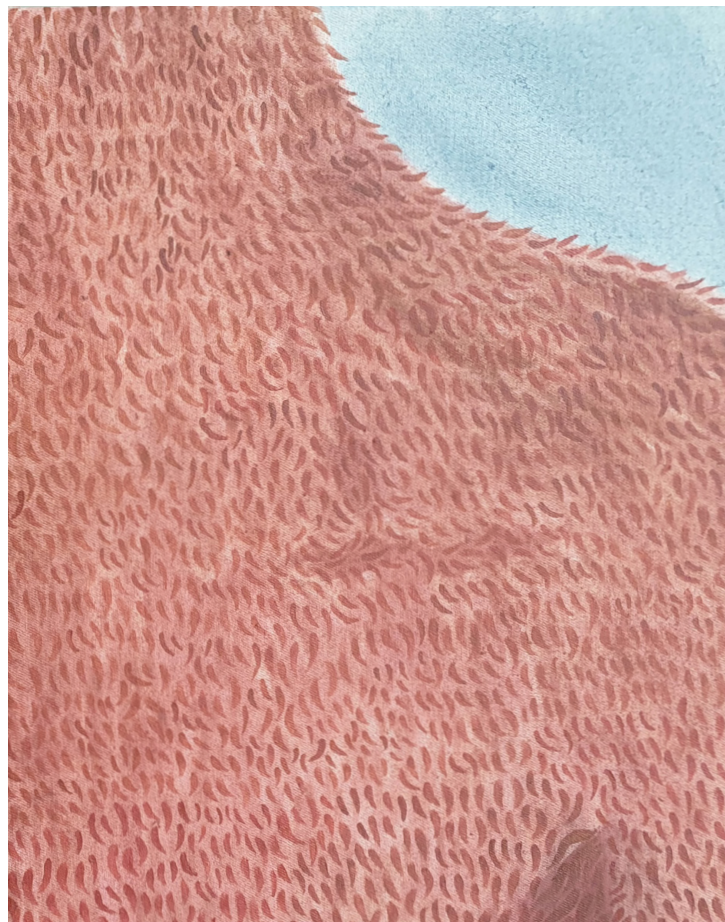


Ich als Tier (twins), 110 cm x110 cm, oil on canvas, 2025





Ich als Tier (body hair 1), 35 cm x 25 cm, oil on canvas, 2025



Ich als Tier (body hair 2), 35 cm x 25 cm, oil on canvas, 2025





Ich als Tier (sphinx), 50 cm x 40 cm, oil on canvas, 2025





Ich als Tier (hairy face), 45 cm x 35 cm, oil on canvas, 2025





MAGICAL THINKING (1,2 and 3, 150 cm x 100 cm and 150 cm x 150 cm , oil on canvas, 2024





MAGICAL THINKING (flower eyes), 49 cm x 49 cm, oil on canvas, 2024





MAGICAL THINKING (flower arms), 100 cm x 100 cm, oil on canvas, 2024





MAGICAL THINKING (wizzard), 115 cm x 130cm, oil on canvas, 2024





HAPPY ENDINGS (wolf mother), 130 cm x 145 cm, oil on canvas, 2024





WILD FOLKS (couple), 60 cm x 45 cm, oil on canvas, 2024





HAPPY ENDINGS (Artemis), 120 cm x 100 cm, oil on canvas, 2024



HAPPY ENDINGS (devil), 35 cm x 30 cm, oil on canvas, 2024





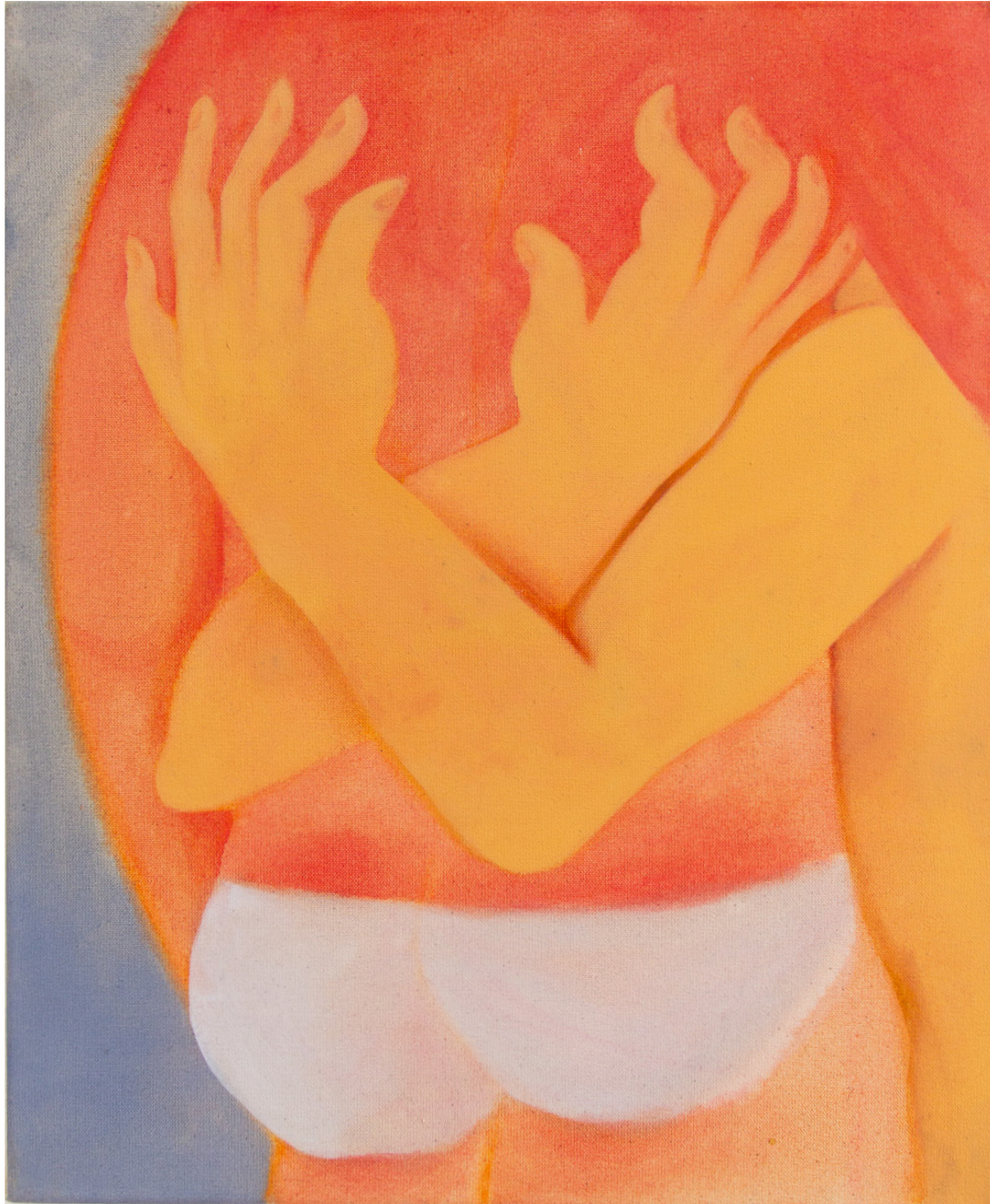
hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (1), 40 cm x 60 cm, oil on canvas, 2024



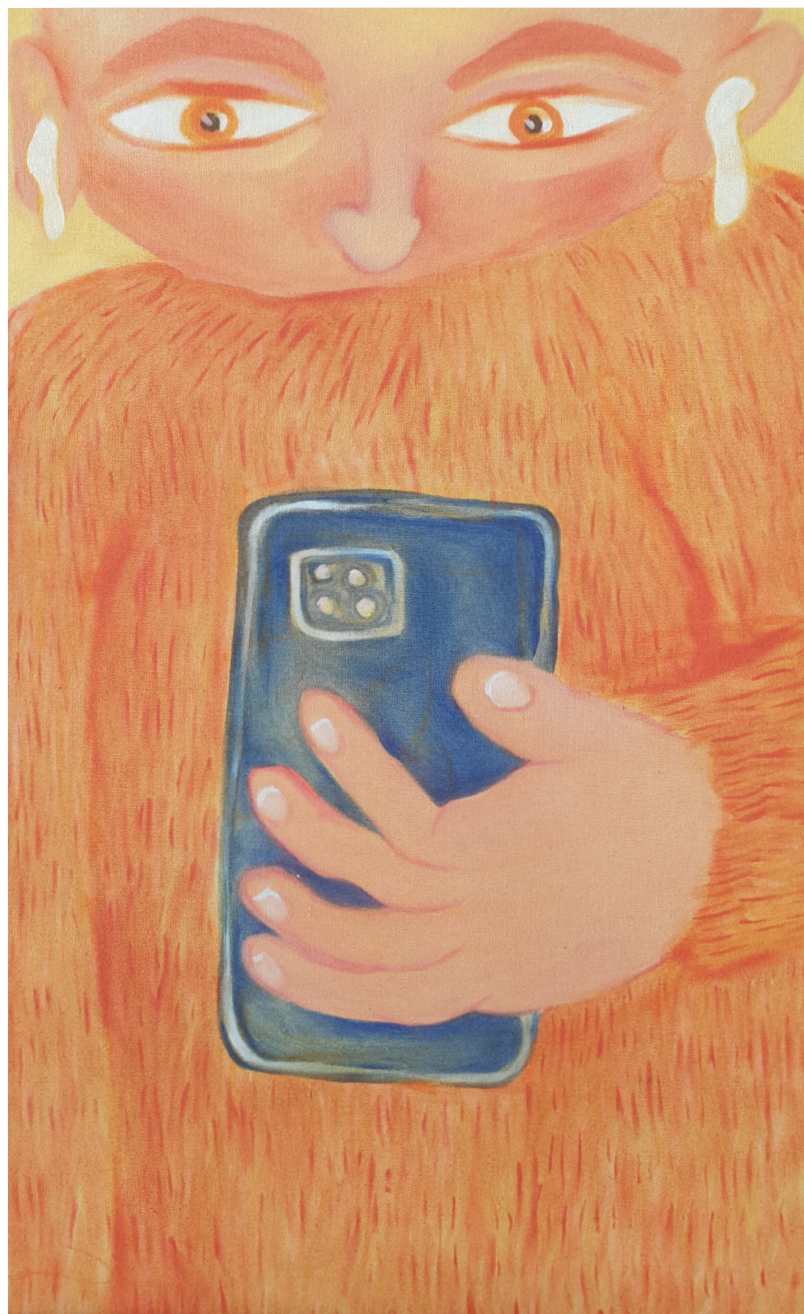


hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (2), 60 cm x 60 cm, oil on canvas, 2024





hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (3) 40 cm x 35 cm, oil on canvas, 2024



hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (4) 65 cm x 40 cm, oil on canvas, 2024





hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (6) 100 cm x 51 cm, oil on canvas, 2024

## drawings



hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (Holzfäller 3), 15 cm x 15 cm, color pencil on paper, 2024



hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (Holzfäller 4), 15 cm x 15 cm, color pencil on paper 2024





hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (Holzfäller 5), 15 cm x 15 cm, color pencil on paper, 2024



hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (Holzfäller 6), 15 cm x 15 cm, color pencil on paper, 2024





hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (Holzfäller 1), 20 cm x 15 cm, color pencil on paper, 2024



hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (Holzfäller 2), 20 cm x 15 cm, color pencil on paper, 2024





hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (Holzfäller 7), 15 cm x 15 cm, color pencil on paper, 2024



hit me up, when you're building a log cabin (Holzfäller 8), 19,5 cm x 18,5 cm, color pencil on paper, 2024

paintings



my beloved siren (Aphrodite), 100 cm x 70 cm, oil on canvas, 2024





my beloved siren (Siren), 100 cm x 70 cm, oil on canvas, 2024



my beloved siren (lo), 100 cm x 70 cm, oil on canvas, 2024





my beloved siren (furry face), 65 cm x 65 cm, oil on canvas, 2024



my beloved siren (hand), 65 cm x 65 cm, oil on canvas, 2024