



ILARIA ROSSELLI DEL TURCO



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First Page
Girl in the Mirror, 2020
15 x 20 cm, oil on panel

Opposite Page
Oakling, 2020
Plate 24.5 x 17 cm, mezzotint

Front Cover
Green Armchair, 2019
110 x 80 cm, oil on linen

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

If people were to describe me, the first word they'd use would be Italian. Having lived in London for twenty years, nationality has become an important element of my identity, even more so in the current political climate. In the very human quest about where my home is, I often find myself yearning for Italy – perhaps as an imagined, idealized place that only exists in my memory or in limpid artistic depictions.

Earlier paintings, like *Stacked* from 2016, refer directly to the Italianate painted landscape such as Arezzo in Piero's frescoes, simply recreated with boxes on a table top, while works from 2019/2020 investigate my roots in a less rational way and represent an attempt at digging deeper into memories and feelings. Rather than carefully placed, self-contained, the still-lives are natural and unplanned, with items that are scattered almost randomly. In these set-ups, objects go beyond the boundaries of the canvas, alluding to a space where more is happening. When a figure materializes, it is often as a projection of myself.

As ever, a cast of favorite objects appears in these paintings—things I fell in love with and I never tire to paint. A sugar bowl, some stark black scissors, plants. I like the idea of them entering and exiting these canvasses, like a relay race from painting to painting.

I place much significance on the quality of the surface of my works. Using colors that have body, and whose matte, dull surface absorbs light in a distinctive way, I hope that my paintings too might be seen as physical objects that retain the same tactile qualities as some of the objects they feature.

I am excited to be able to include a selection of my mezzotint prints in this book. Mezzotint is a time consuming but very rewarding technique; I am enamoured with the grainy, velvety images it produces. These prints work as a litmus test for some of the objects in my paintings, stripping them down to pure tone to consider their power.

These are all very personal, heartfelt works. My hope is that ultimately, they might trigger a viewer's own memories and sense of belonging.



Succulent | 2019
plate 15 x 10 cm, mezzotint



Stacked | 2017
50 x 66 cm, oil on linen



Couple II | 2019
60 x 76 cm, oil on linen

INTRODUCTION

| By Allen Yi

Laria Rosselli Del Turco's artistic practice revolves around observation. Her still lifes are inspired by Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, Paul Cézanne and in particular, Giorgio Morandi. Through these artists, Del Turco learned how this overlooked genre of painting has the ability to speak about the human condition and investigate the world that surrounds us. What makes Del Turco stand out in the modern art world, however, is her own amalgamation of still life. Her work bears a subtlety and timelessness in depicting simple subjects yet Del Turco goes a step further by integrating sentiments and subject matter from modern life.

Morandi and Del Turco's work involves inanimate subject matter of commonplace objects: vases, bowls and bottles. In Morandi's *Natura Morta (Still Life)*, three narrow wine bottles sit upright behind a plain white ceramic bowl. In Del Turco's *Couple II*, the bottles of wine appear again standing behind a stack of ceramic plates. While the bottles in Morandi's painting are seen as pure forms, Del Turco appears to take into account their function too, the domesticity of familiar objects and their dark content which has been a part of human culture for centuries. The bottles are opaque and mysterious and stand together in contre-jour light, like benign and watchful towers. After all, Morandi's bottles too were an echo of the many towers in his hometown, Bologna.

Del Turco incorporates other miscellaneous objects into her work. In *Stacked Still Life*, crumpled paper, books and opened cardboard boxes topple over one another in a rational configuration. Although these objects appear seemingly mundane and are frequently regarded as having little to no value, they suggest an underlying significance of everyday life. One afternoon while working on this painting, says Del Turco, the sun projected a reflection on her wall behind an arrangement of boxes. She was quick to capture and paint this light onto the canvas, which helped her understand how the element of passing time could be included in her work. In her London studio, she blocks out her windows facing North to work exclusively in the warm southern light, not only as a tribute to her origins, an expression of Goethe's "drang nach süden" (the call towards the South) but also as a testimonial to the varying shadows moving throughout the day. If William Bailey chose to exclude cast shadows from his still life paintings thus placing them in a timeless space, Del Turco desires her shadows to convey the passing of time, much like an inexorable sundial.

The world of her paintings revolves around the dining table, writing desk and simple pleasure of a house plant that grows every day. She describes them as "unashamedly feminine interiors" which alludes to her figurative works of the woman and her inner life. Del Turco has always been interested in the portrait

and the intimate one-to-one relationship with the sitter that happens while painting. Although figures coexist with still life, they rarely interact with it and rather are introspective—perhaps, they are absorbed in memories.

Beyond their functional purposes, objects within her set-up take on another, more subtle role— one that is of the subconscious. Often, they are tethered to past memories or experiences of childhood. To Del Turco, objects in her paintings are intertwined with her longing for a nonexistent place and time, one that she could call home. Having lived most of her adult life away from Italy, Del Turco finds a sense of stability in everyday domestic objects which she revisits more than once, such as a beloved pair of shears that can be seen in *Evening, Japanese Scissors and Scissors* or a sugar bowl that reappears in *Couple II, I Left You a Note, Helter Skelter* and *Off Kilter*. These items also embody another important element of still life which is its tactility—an invitation to reach out into the painting and grab them.

Tactility is important for Del Turco, not only when she offers her viewer objects that can be held in their hands, but also in the quality of the surface of her work. She does not like shiny, repellent surfaces; she chooses matte paints that can absorb and caress the light and pigments that are specially grounded at a coarser grade to yield a wide range of paint thickness. She uses a palette of softly chromatic paints and earth colors (the staple colour of her palette, Raw Sienna, again takes her back to her Tuscan roots). She is mindful of the way she touches the canvas with the tip of her brush and how the paint will sit on the surface. Her process is often based on reaction with minimum planning. She introduces one color and answers to it with another chromatic note to see what will happen next. Most of the time, Del Turco works intuitively then attempts

to explain to herself the narrative of what has occurred. Her set-ups often change while working, with some objects appearing, being moved or taken out. Of the different difficulties of painting, touch is one of the elements she feels she is better able to control.



Born in Italy in 1967, Del Turco descends from a line of Florentine Renaissance painters, most notably under the mastery of Cosimo Rosselli (b. 1440). His favorite pupil and son in law was Piero di Cosimo, another Italian painter of the Renaissance most well-known for the mythological and allegorical subjects he painted during the late Quattrocento. Cosimo's half-brother was a printmaker who specialized in maps, and his cousin Bernardo di Stefano was a painter who had also been an apprentice of Neri di Bicci. As a child, Del Turco was greatly aware of her artistic heritage which almost formed into a burden when she too felt the call towards fine art. She was the kind of child who held onto a white pebble for weeks in the belief that objects carried their own history, poetry and magic. "I have always been an animist," she says. "I am fascinated by utensils and vessels. I was also in awe of a portrait of me painted by a family friend and held a resolve of learning how to draw."

Del Turco's pathway to becoming an artist was a tumultuous one. She initially trained in illustration but the course she took specialized in photorealism, which she found very tedious.



She was able to break free from those confines by taking an illustration and etching course at a printmaking studio in Florence. There, she was exposed to a more expressionistic style and learned how to make prints, which recently became a part of her practice again. It was after she moved to London with her young family that she devoted herself to painting and her work began to be recognized.

In Del Turco's paintings, the past and the here and now are simultaneously present. Del Turco hopes to open the viewer to the same absorption she experiences while

she works — a brief suspension in time where a short drama unfolds on a tabletop or a figure gazes into the distance, ultimately revealing a glimpse of her soul.

LEFT:

Sugar Bowl | 2020
plate 10 x 10 cm , mezzotint

RIGHT:

Evening | 2020
50 x 60 cm , oil on linen



Hidden Lemon | 2012



STILL LIFE



Still Life with Succulents and Ribbon | 2019
40 x 50 cm, oil on linen



Still Life with Shells | 2019
30 x 40 cm, oil on linen



The Japanese Scissors | 2019
40 x 50 cm, oil on linen



Helter Skelter | 2019
40 x 50 cm, oil on linen





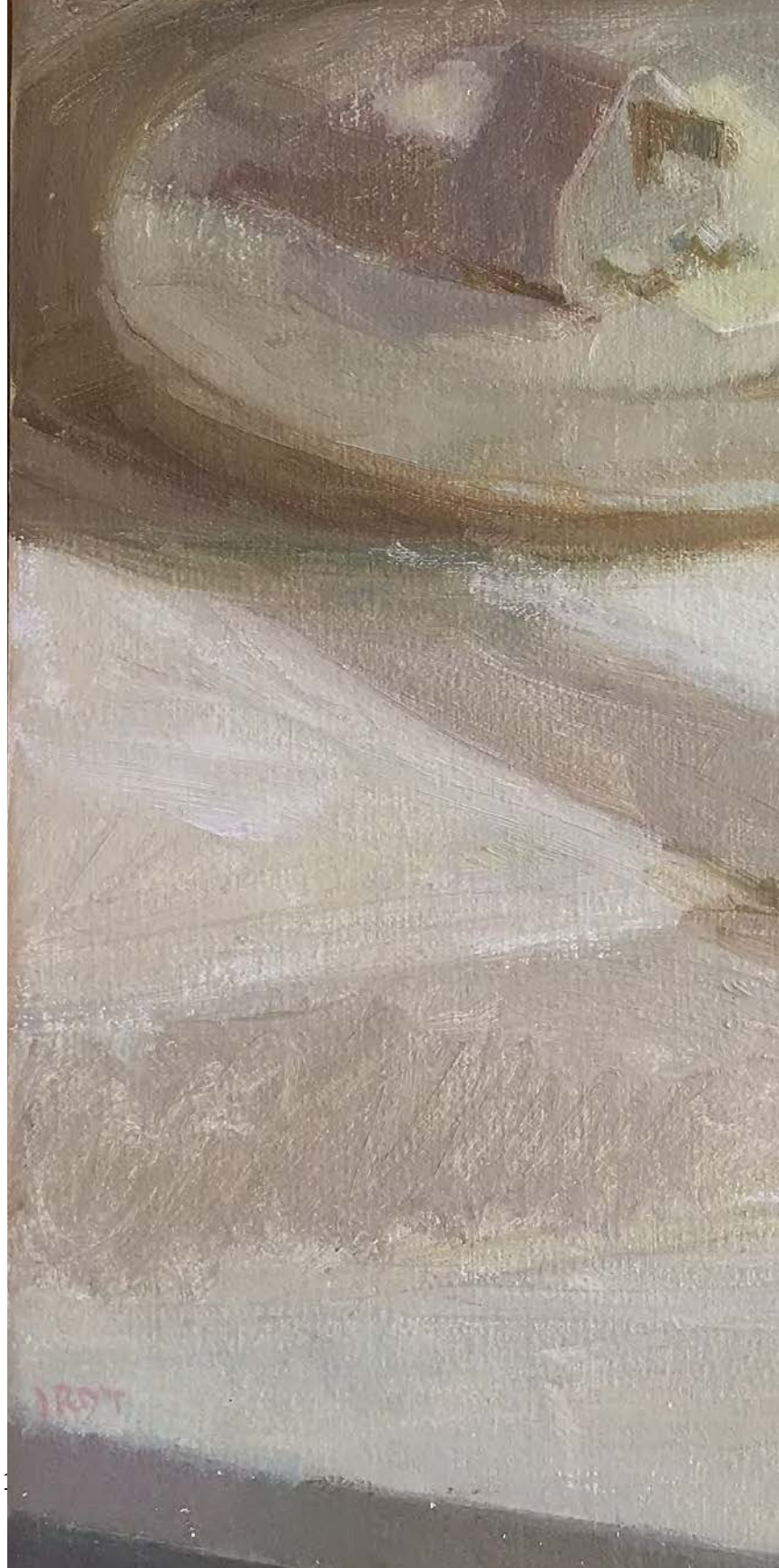
Pilgrim | 2019
40 x 50 cm, oil on linen

LEFT:
Couple II 2017
(detail)

“At first sight, Ilaria Rosselli Del Turco’s paintings suggest the past. Looking closer at the paintings, one notices her ability to abstract realism and create a remarkable energy that is difficult to find in contemporary painting today.”

- John Natsoulas

White Still Life | 2018
25 x 35 cm , oil on panel







White Shirt | 2018
24 x 30 cm, oil on panel

RIGHT:
Still Life with Watering Can | 2019
77x60 cm, oil on linen



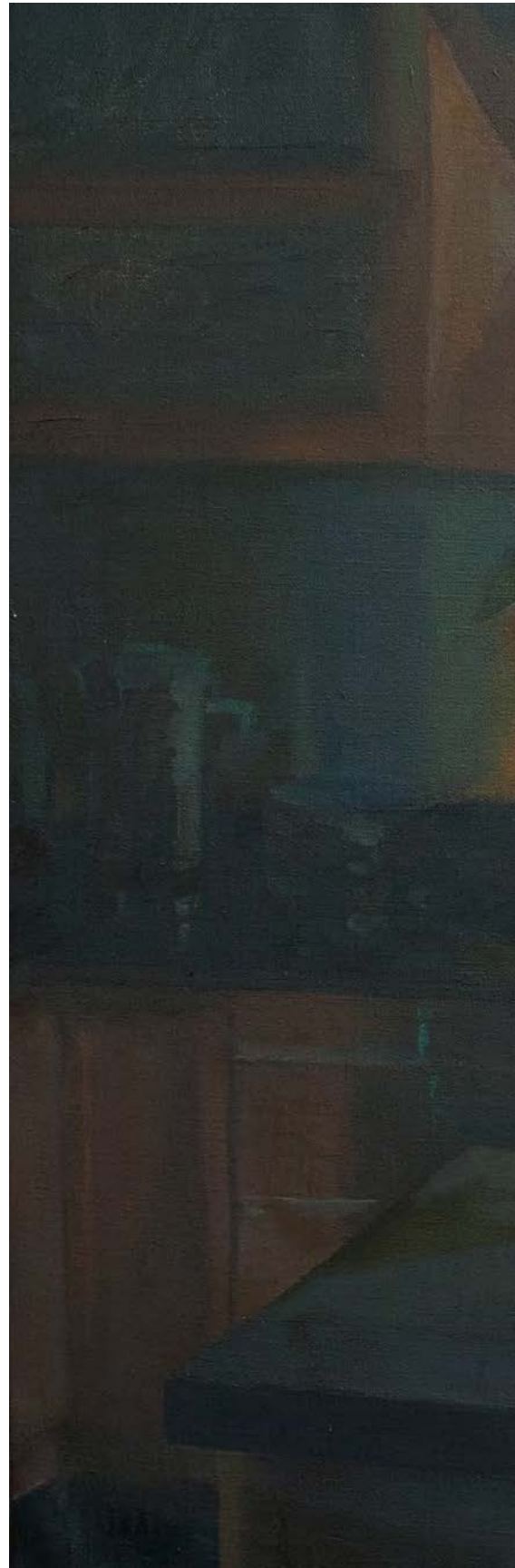


Oakling | 2020
25 x 30 cm, oil on linen



Polpette (Meatballs) | 2019
51 x 65 cm, oil on linen

Oleander | 2018
62 x 70 cm, oil on linen







Dress Down Policy | 2018
40 x 50 cm, oil on linen





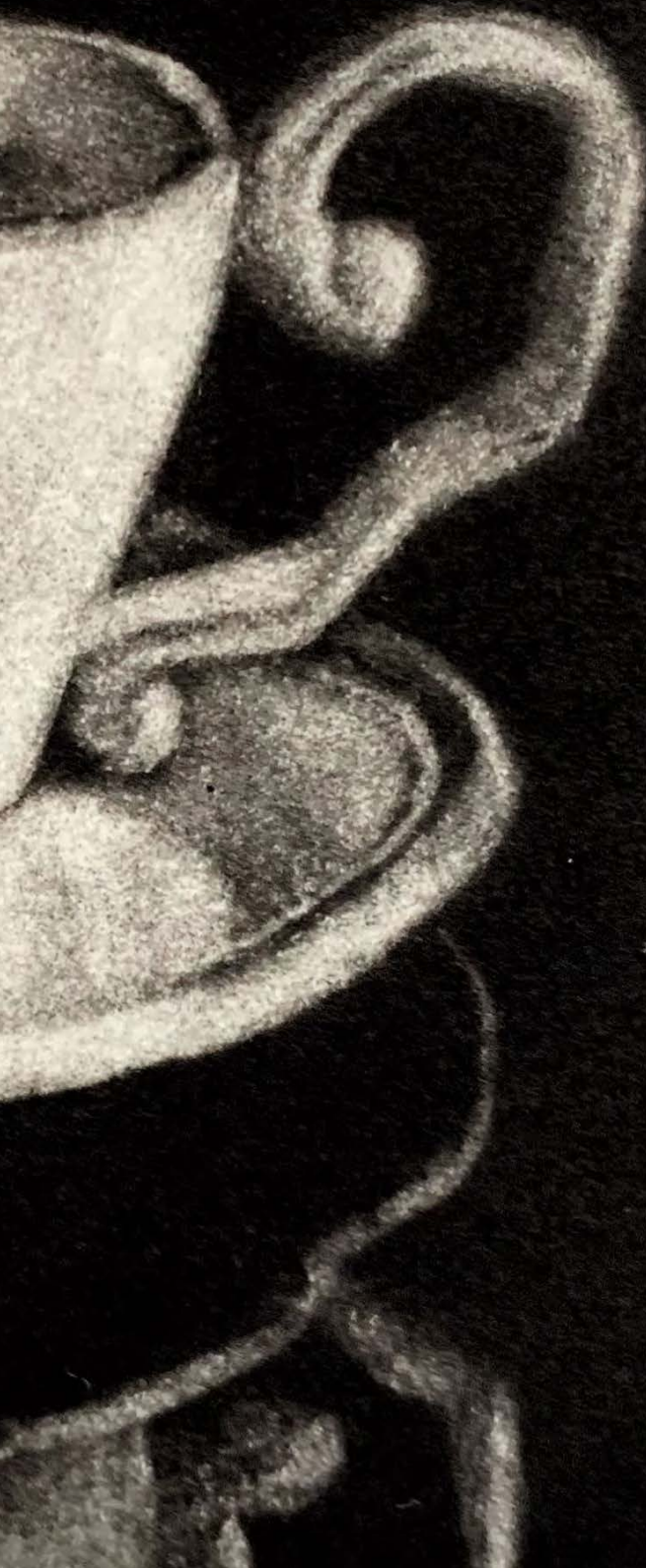
Keys | 2020
15 x 20 cm, oil on linen



Couple I | 2019
40 x 50 cm, oil on linen



Narcissus | 2020
10 x 15 cm, mezzotint



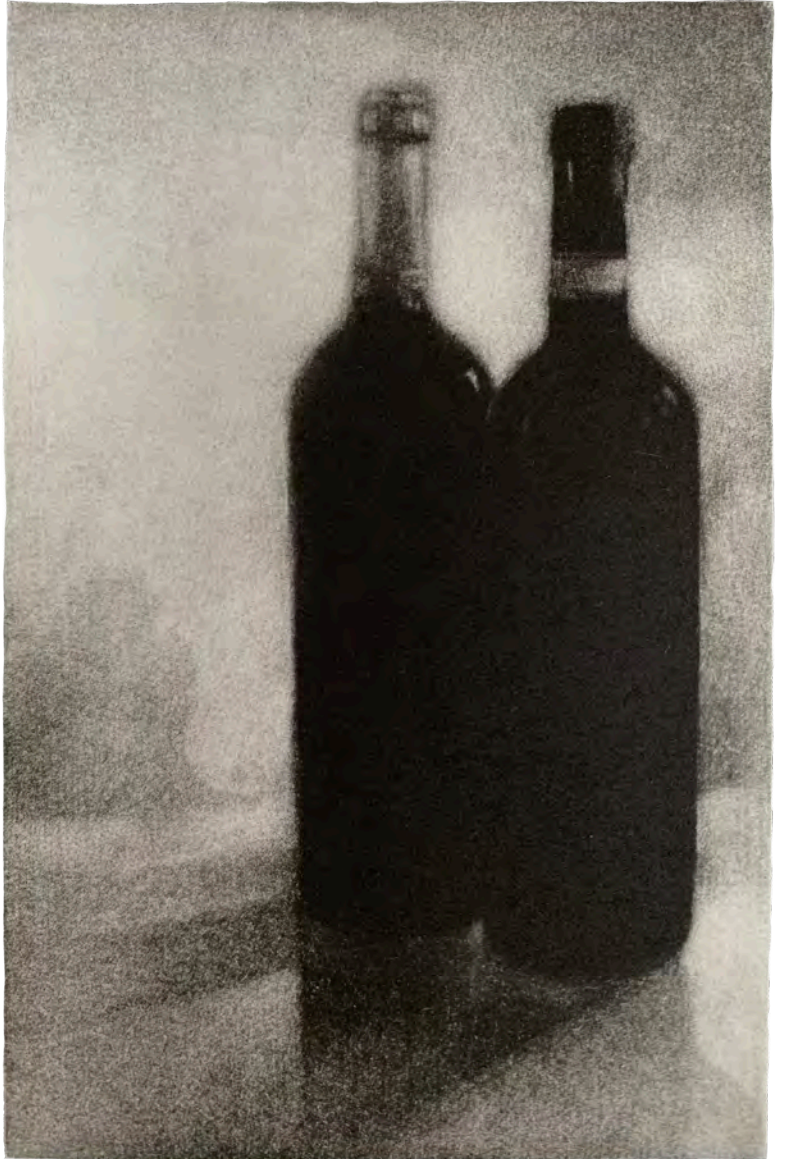
MEZZOTINTS



Rosemary | 2020
plate 12.5 x 12.5 cm, mezzotint



Bay | 2019
plate 12.5 x 12.5 cm, mezzotint



Couple | 2020
plate 15 x 10 cm, mezzotint



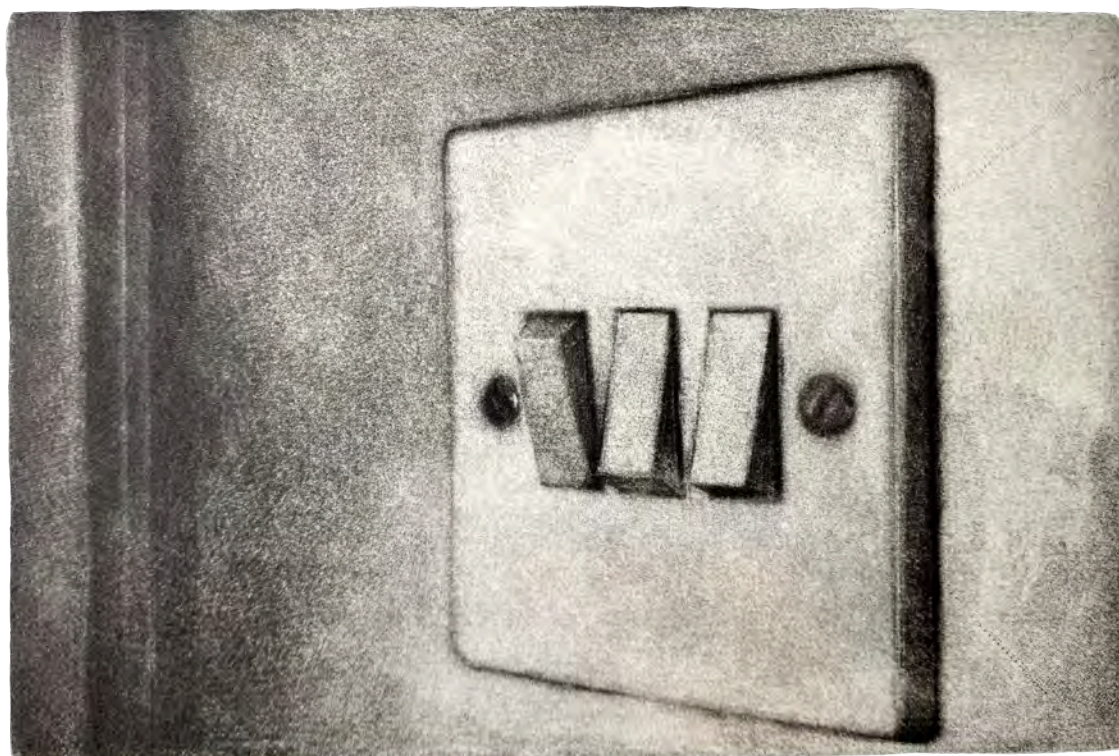
Keys | 2020
plate 15 x 10 cm, mezzotint



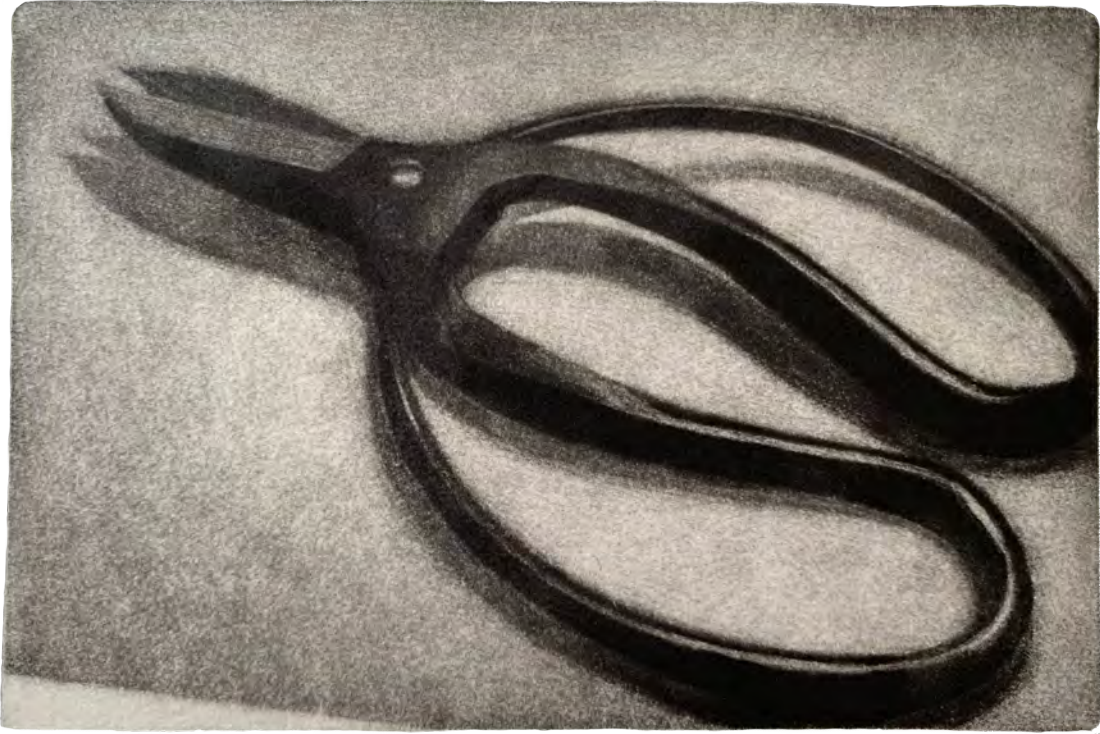
Oleander | 2019
plate 10 x 10 cm, mezzotint



Ruff 2020
plate 12.5 x 15 cm, mezzotint



Switch | 2019
plate 10 x 15 cm, mezzotint



Scissors | 2019
plate 10 x 15 cm, mezzotint





FIGURES

The Red Shirt | 2019
40 x 50 cm, oil on linen

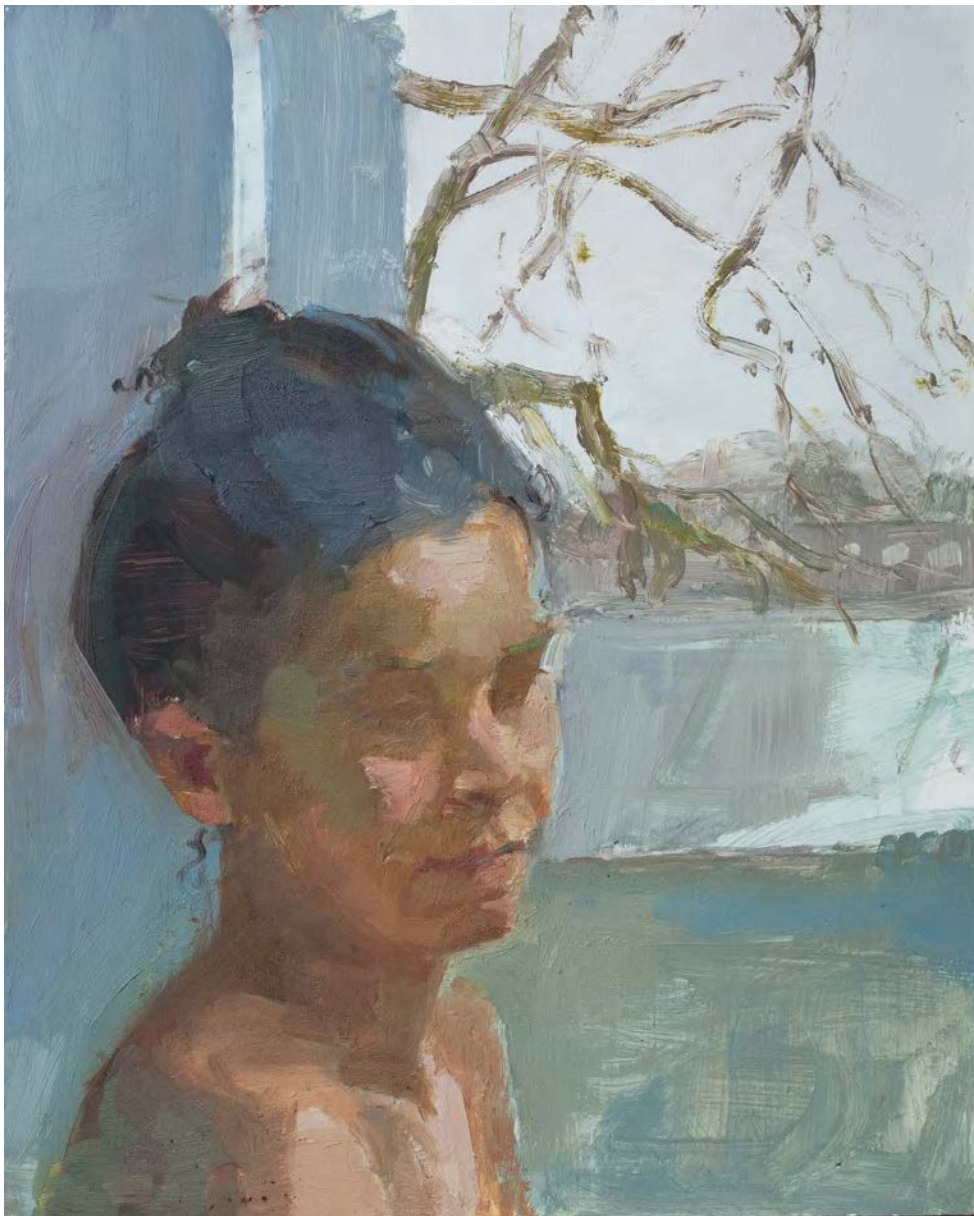


Self Portrait As the Archer | 2014
Oil on canvas



Pine | 2020
40 x 35 cm, oil on linen





Study for Winter | 2019
24x18 cm, oil on panel

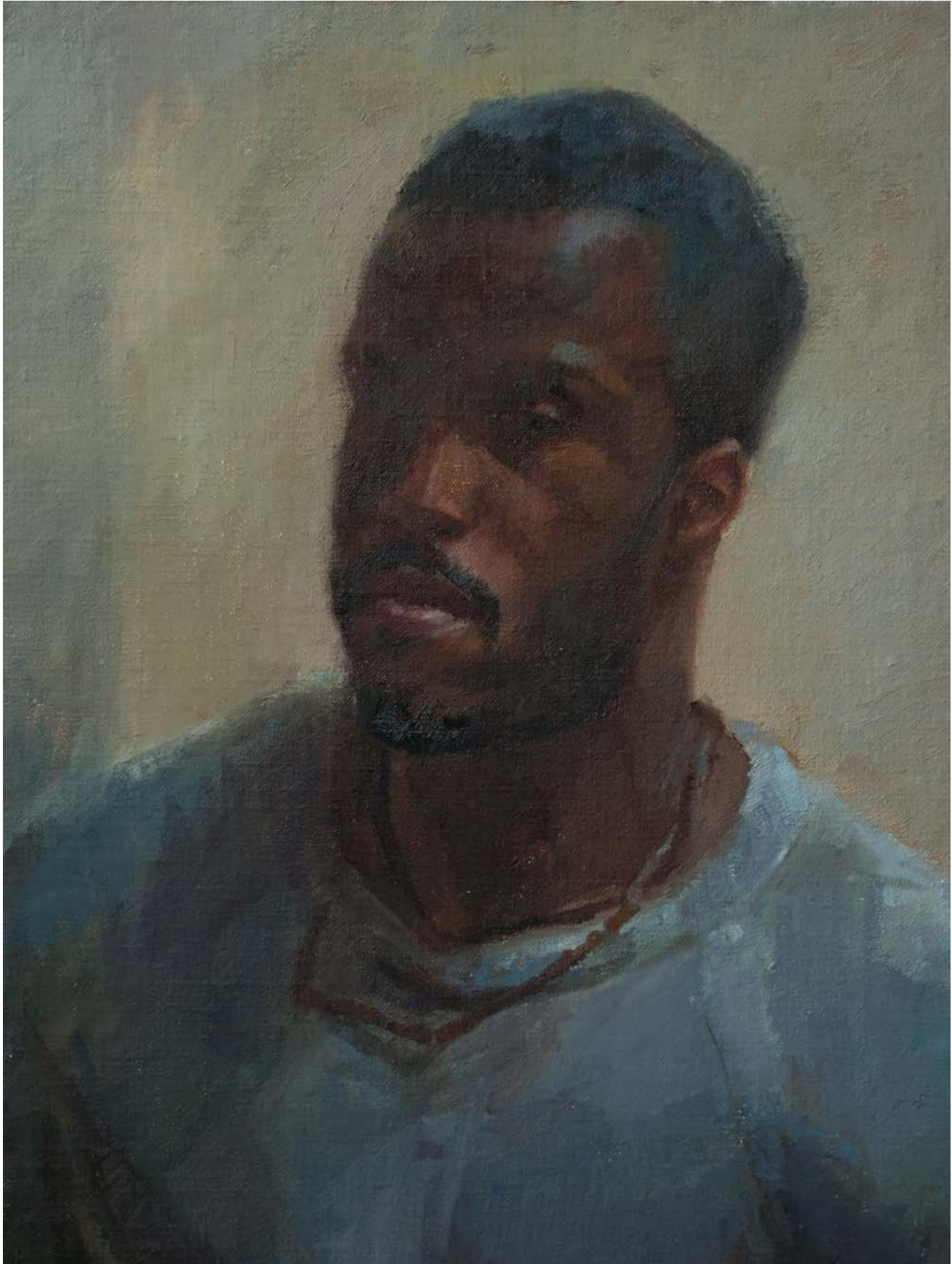
LEFT:
Winter | 2020
50 x 40 cm, oil on linen





LEFT:
Cut | 2020
60 x 50 cm, oil on linen

Girl with Eyes Closed | 2020
35 x 30, oil on linen

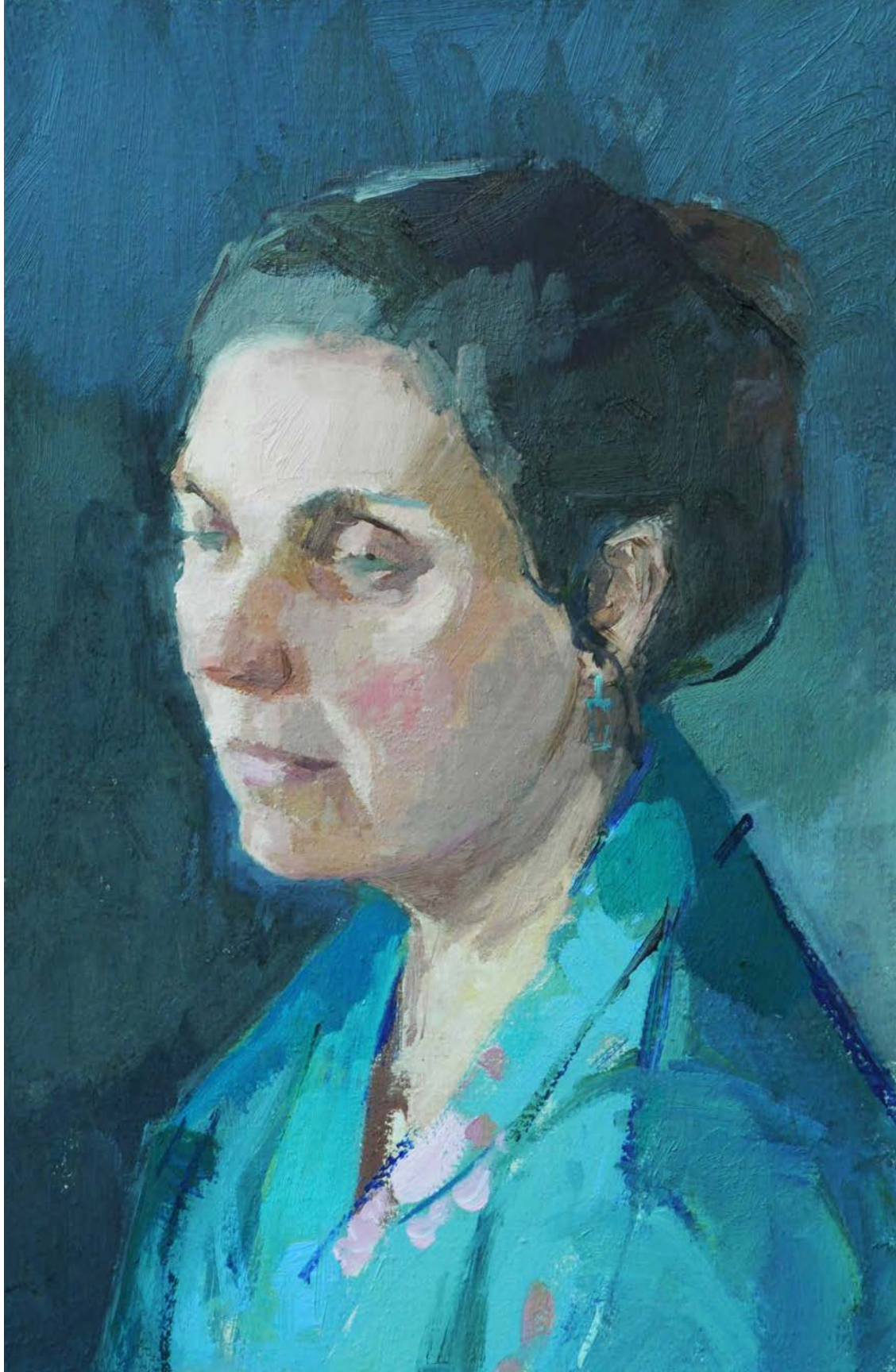


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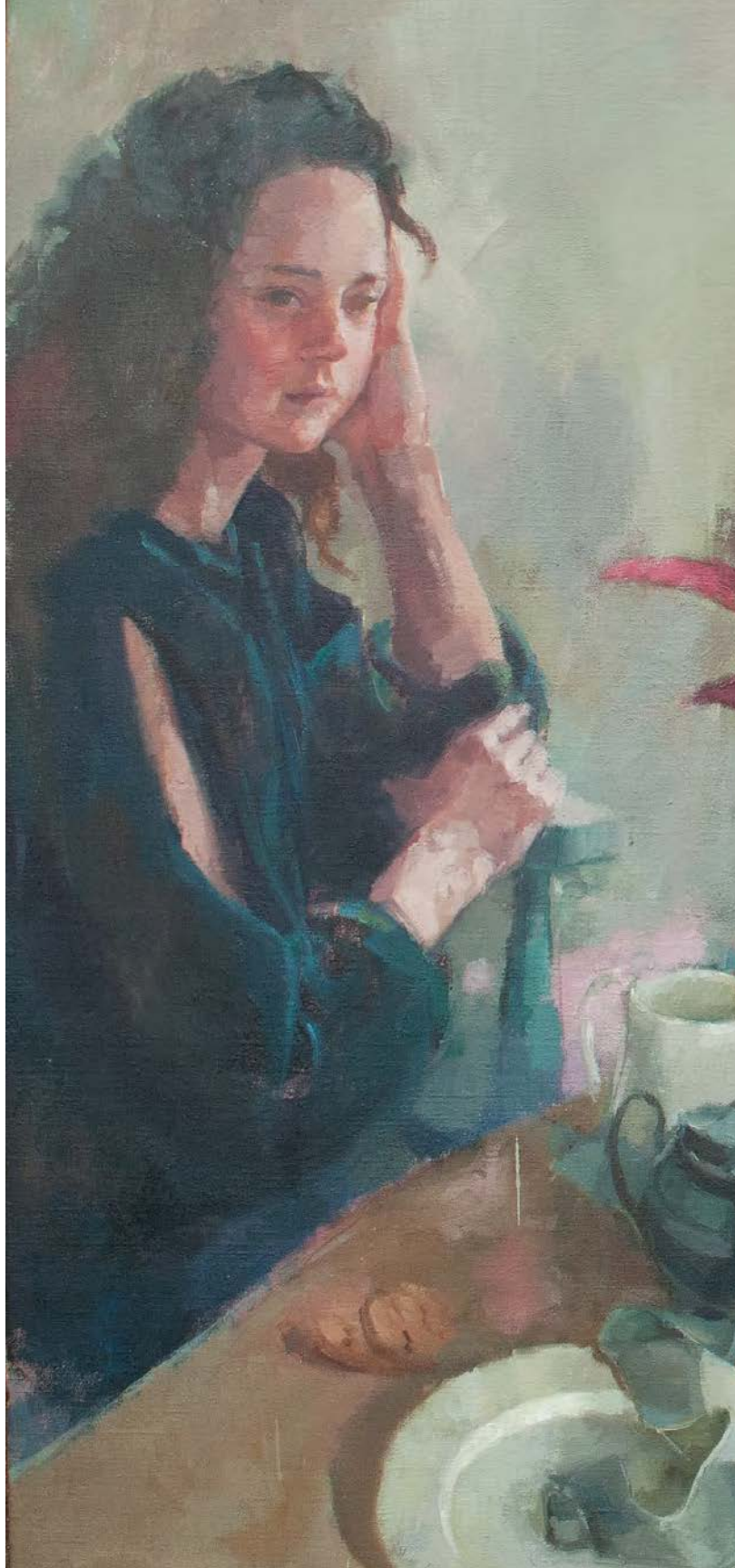
Matthew | 2014
oil on linen

RIGHT:

Woman with Green Kimono | 2012
24 x 16.5 cm, oil on board



Girl Waiting | 2019
76 x 102 cm, oil on linen







Green Armchair | 2019

110x80 cm

Studio Jungle | 2019

100 x 120 cm, oil on linen



