

Emma C. Aspeling | If Descent Was a Messenger

This exhibition explores the territory of descent, a process often initiated by a painful experience which draws one down below the surface. Here, you cannot see where you are going and you have to discover new ways of seeing beyond the five senses. What you have relied on thus far for your identity is provoked: meeting unresolved grief, longing for something deeper. Here, we are returned to our familial origins, for better or worse.

Descent can be experienced as being both in the earth and under the waters. The circular forms threading between artworks denote a passageway, a return to origins, and being in a body. The gestural mark-making is a translation of the frequencies of sound, movement and remembrances held in the body and consciousness. These concepts are more obscure, yet foundational, and allow us to travel between various states of being.

There are currents running us beneath the surface which likely date back many generations. These inherited patterns are carried in the body and mind as narratives, beliefs, and mechanisms of survival. Without awareness, we repeat the lives of our predecessors, living a different story with the same undercurrents. Crisis or sufficient discomfort becomes the disruptor, a glitch, pulling us into something more instinctual. In this dissolution, repression finds expression. And a new, or simply more integrated form, perspective, story, song or dance finds its way back to the cycle of life.

99 LOOP

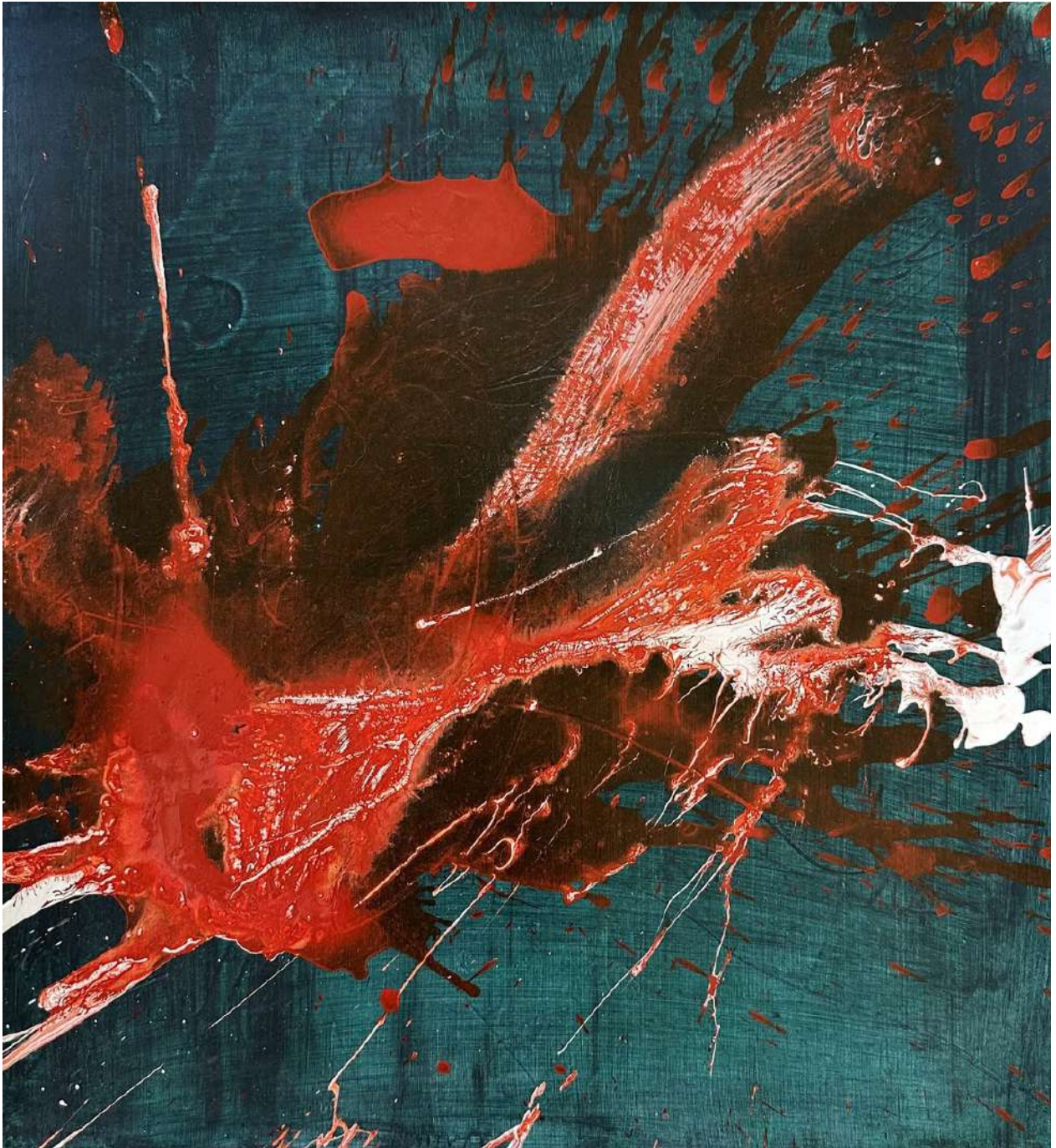


EMMA ASPELING
Heritage, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
120 x 90 x 4 cm
ZAR 35,000

99 LOOP



EMMA ASPELING
No beginning, no end, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
88.5 x 71 x 3.5 cm
ZAR 28,000



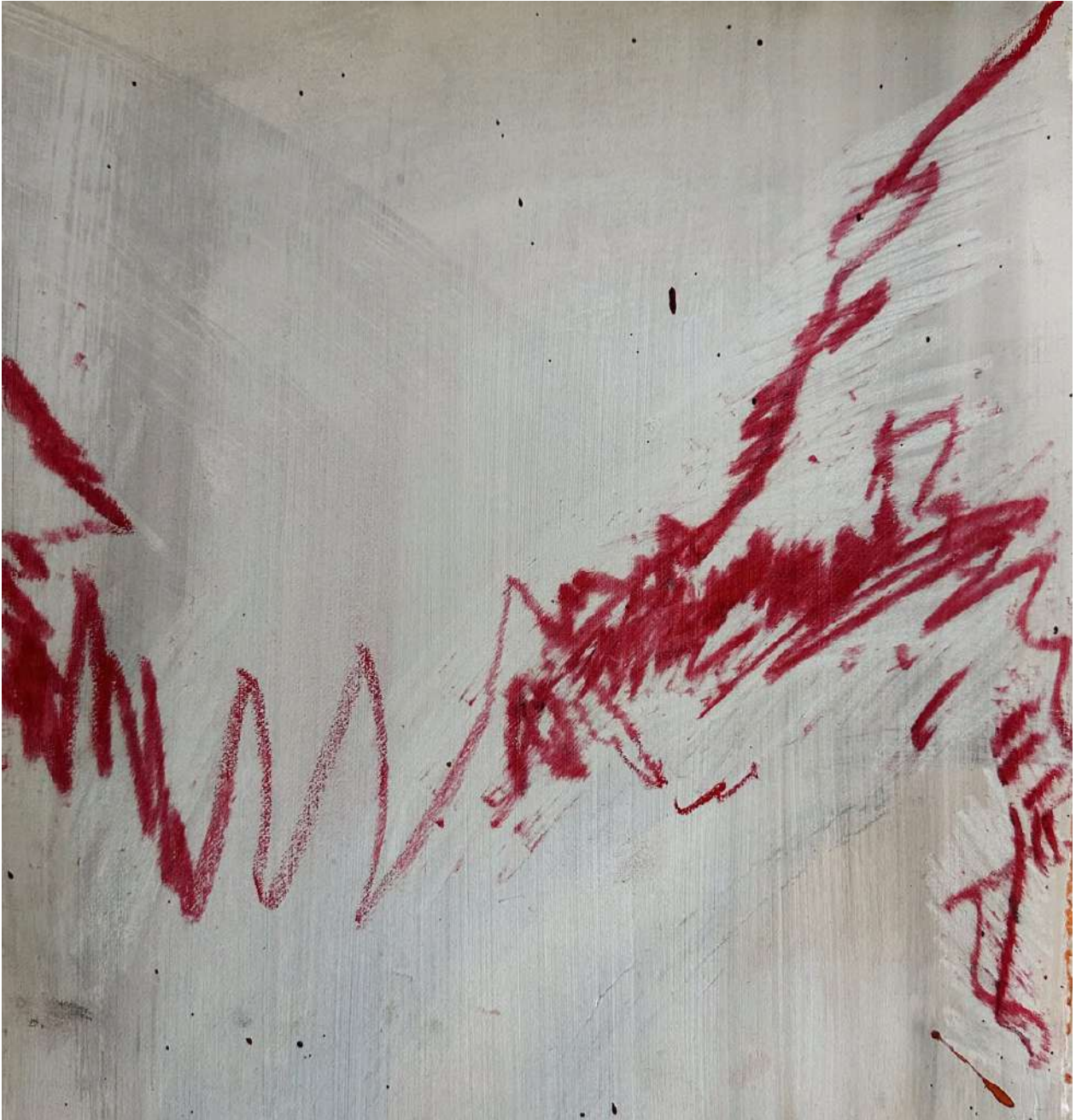
EMMA ASPELING

Primal, 2025

Mixed media on paper

35 x 32.5 cm / 44.5 x 41.5 x 3.5 cm framed

ZAR 10,000



EMMA ASPELING
The Death of Perfection (a Prayer), 2025
Mixed media on paper
26.5 x 25 cm / 36 x 34.5 x 3.5 cm framed
ZAR 8,500

99 LOOP



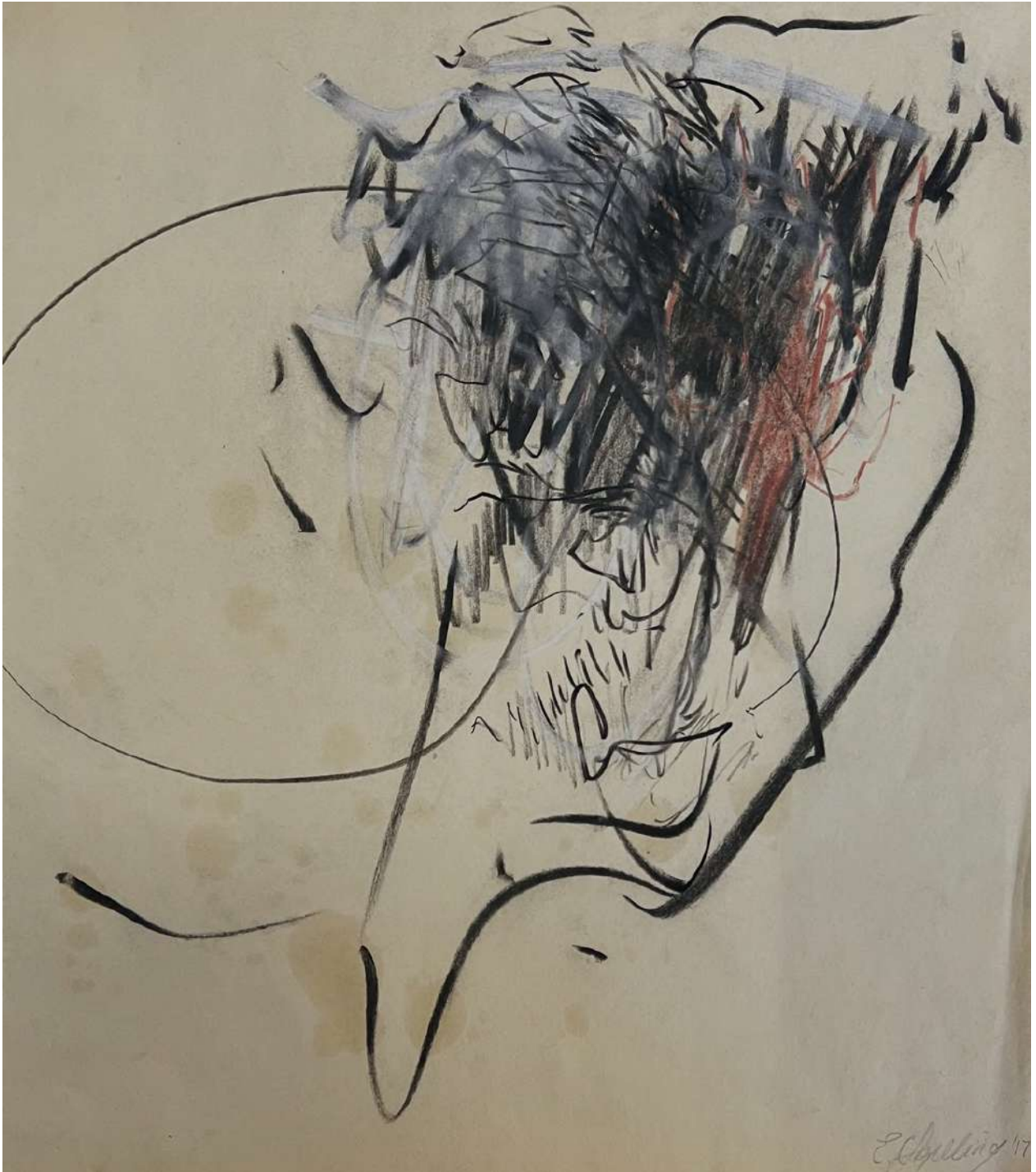
EMMA ASPELING
Small town, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
30 x 30 x 2 cm
ZAR 8,000



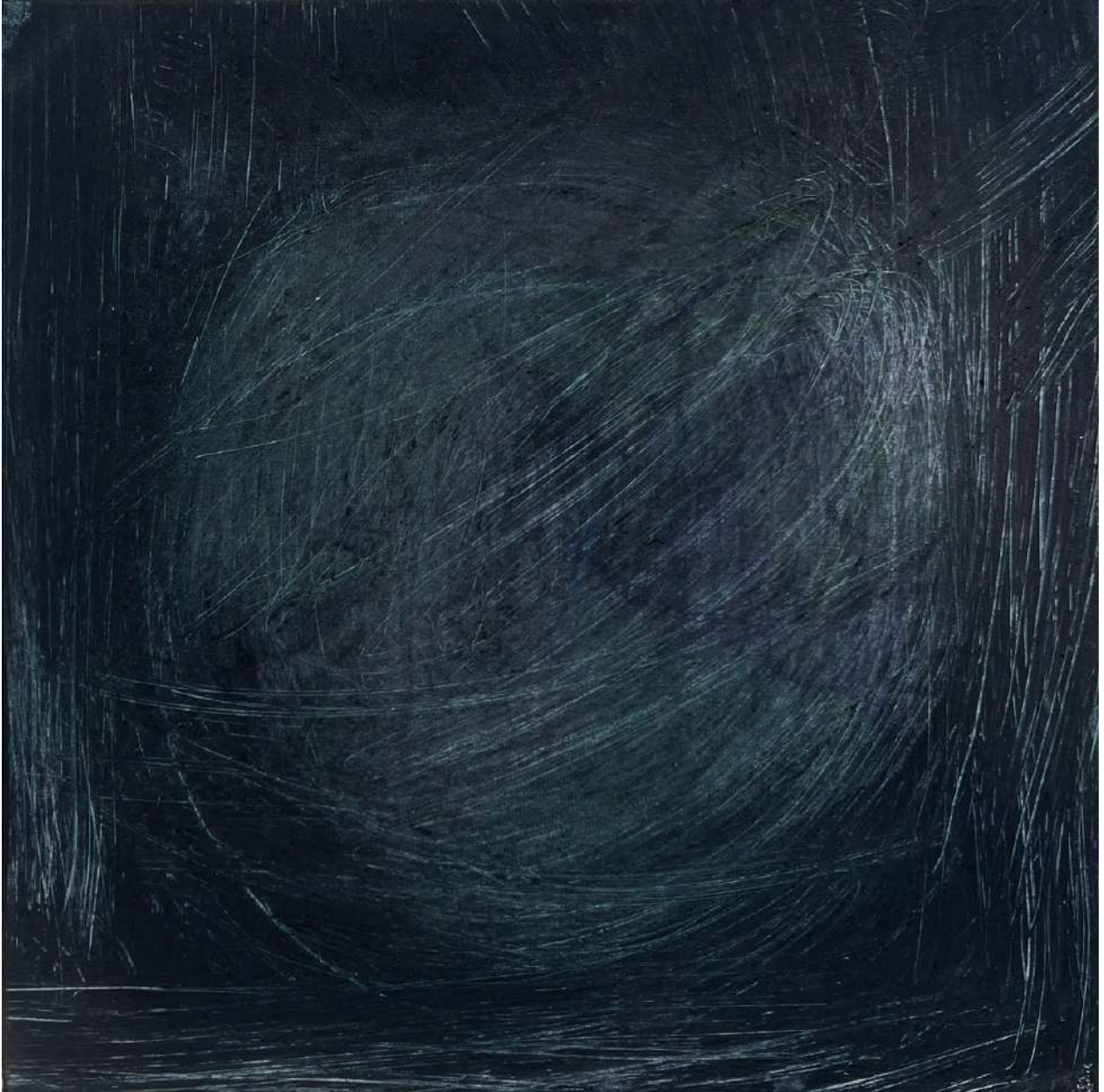
EMMA ASPELING
Corridor, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
84.5 x 75.5 x 3 cm
ZAR 30,000



EMMA ASPELING
Hands grasping, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
54 x 43 x 2.5 cm
ZAR 16,000



EMMA ASPELING
Nostalgia, gathering flying parts, 2017
Mixed media on paper
31 x 28 cm / 40.5 x 36.5 x 3.5 cm framed
ZAR 13,000



EMMA ASPELING
Purge, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
30 x 30 x 2 cm
ZAR 8,000

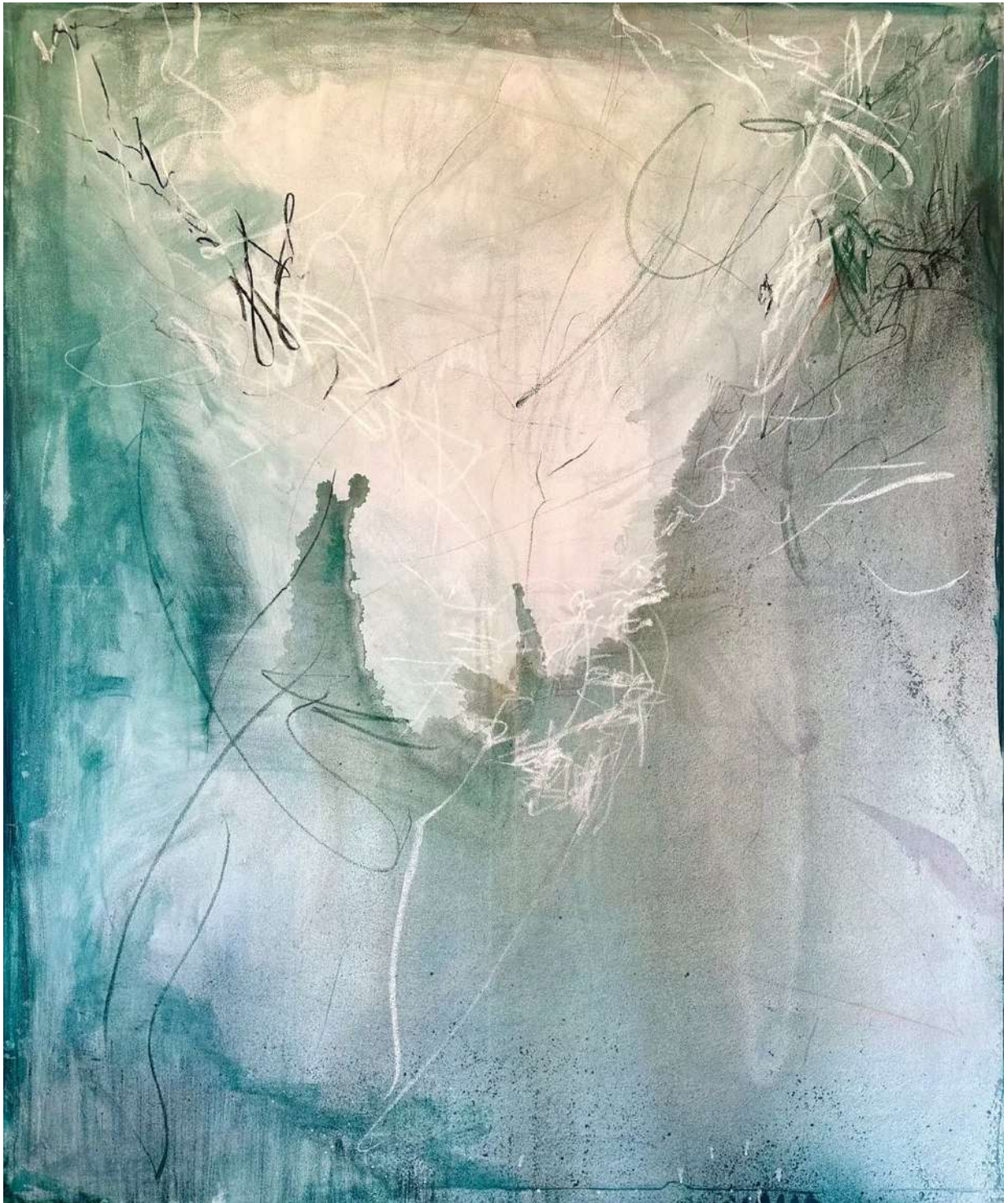


EMMA ASPELING
Meeting the wild mother, 2024
Acrylic and ink on paper
25 x 17.5 cm / 37.5 x 30 x 3.5 cm framed
ZAR 8,000

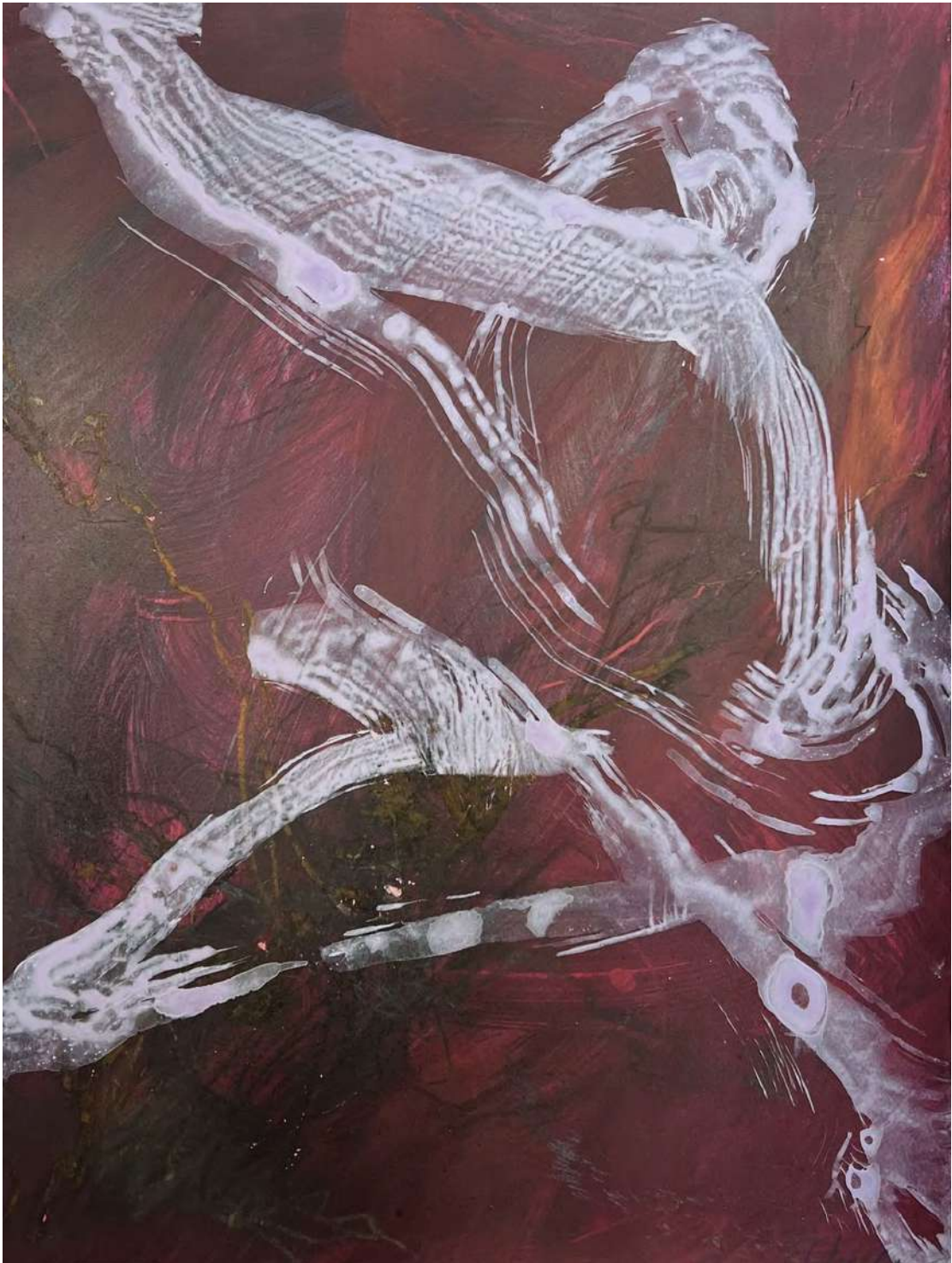


EMMA ASPELING
Body, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
100 x 80 x 4 cm
ZAR 30,000

99 LOOP

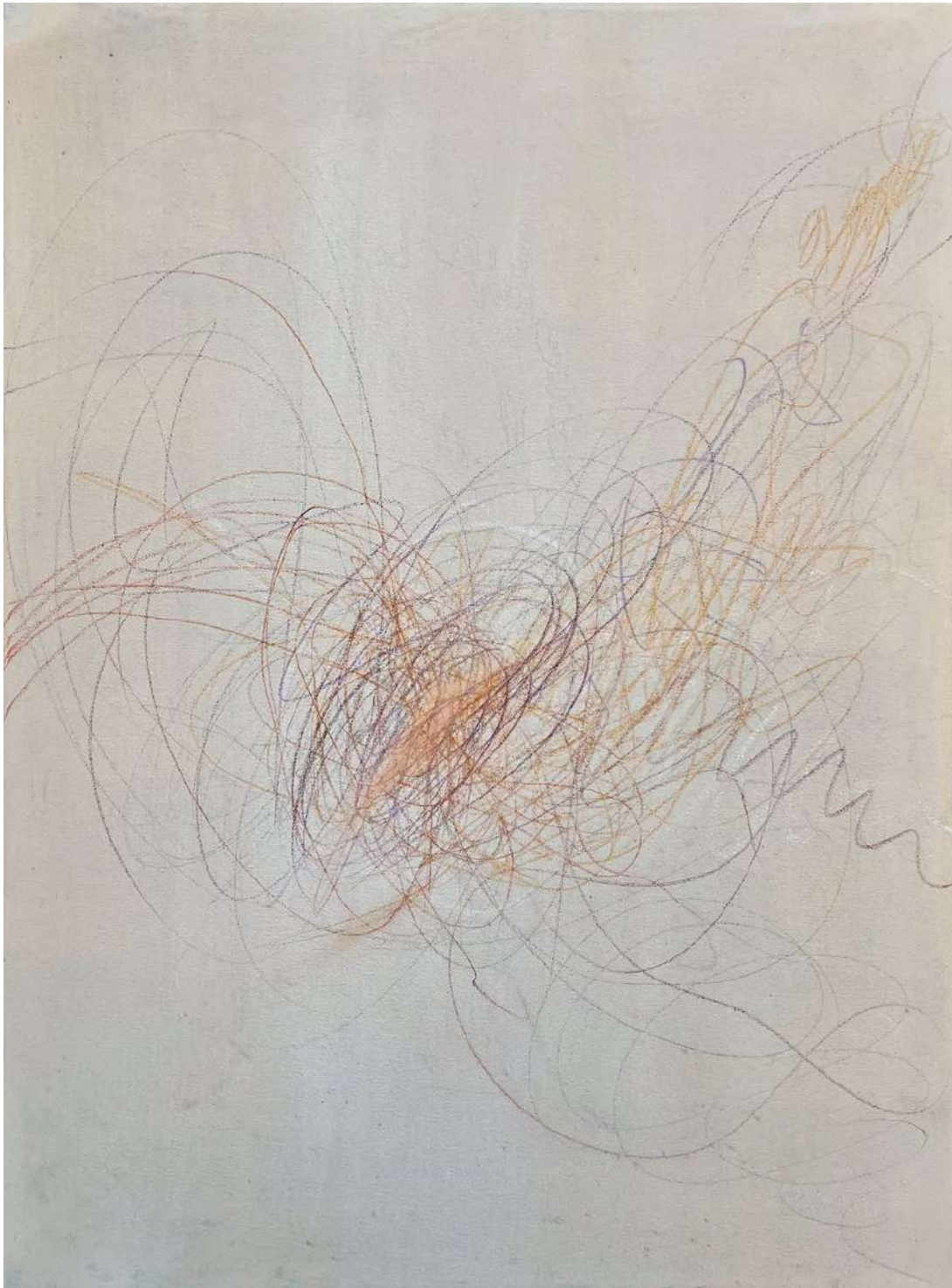


EMMA ASPELING
Opening, 2024
Mixed media on canvas
180 x 150 x 3.5 cm
ZAR 61,000



EMMA ASPELING
The dance, 2024
Mixed media on paper
38 x 28 cm / 46 x 36.5 x 3.5 cm framed
ZAR 15,000

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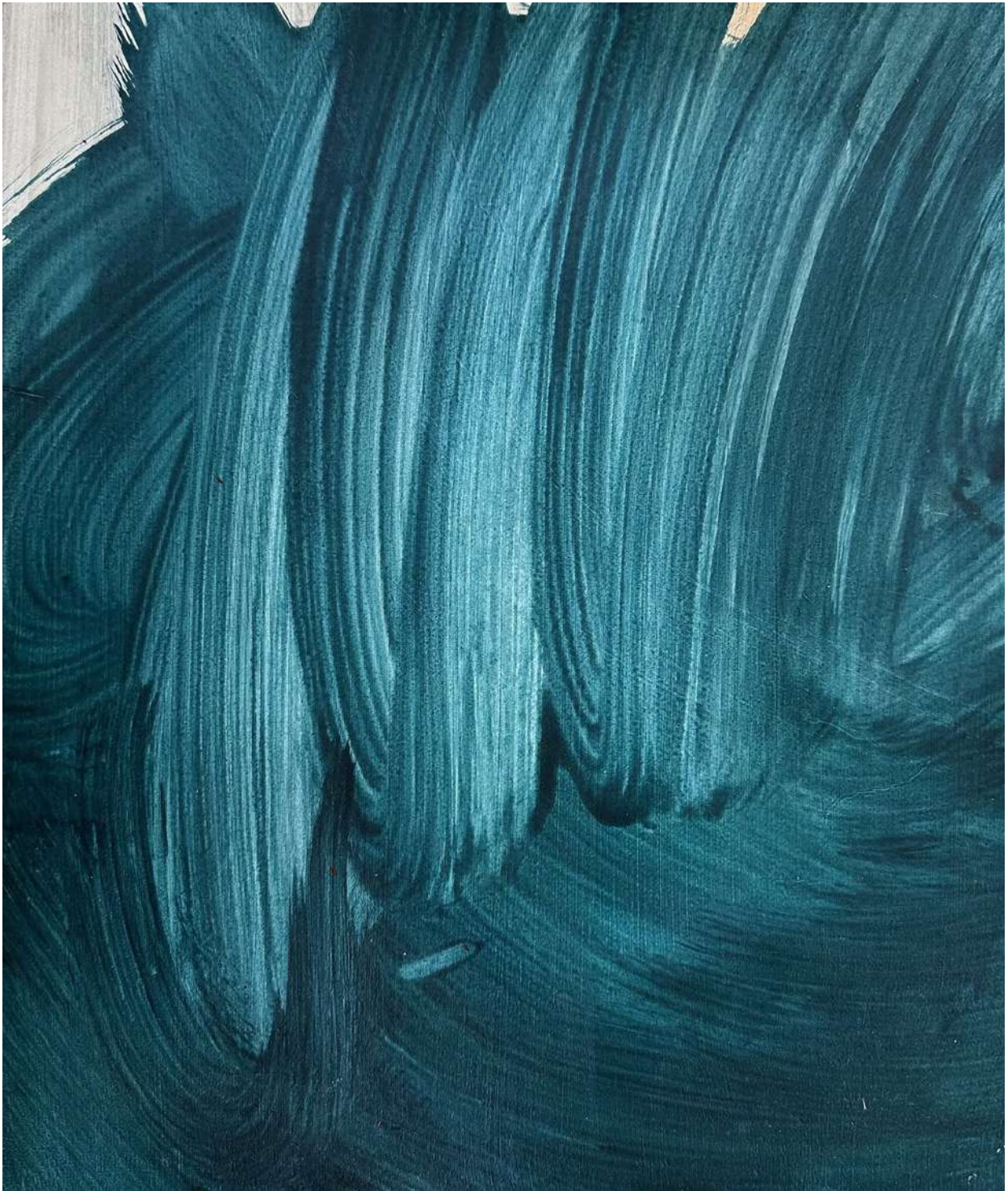


EMMA ASPELING
Beyond the senses, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
81 x 60 x 4 cm
ZAR 25,000



EMMA ASPELING
Under a tree in Chiang Mai, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
110 x 75 x 2.5 cm
ZAR 32,000

99 LOOP



EMMA ASPELING

Return, 2025

Mixed media on paper

28 x 23.5 cm / 37.5 x 33 x 3.5 cm framed

ZAR 8,500

99 LOOP



EMMA ASPELING

Sonic, 2025

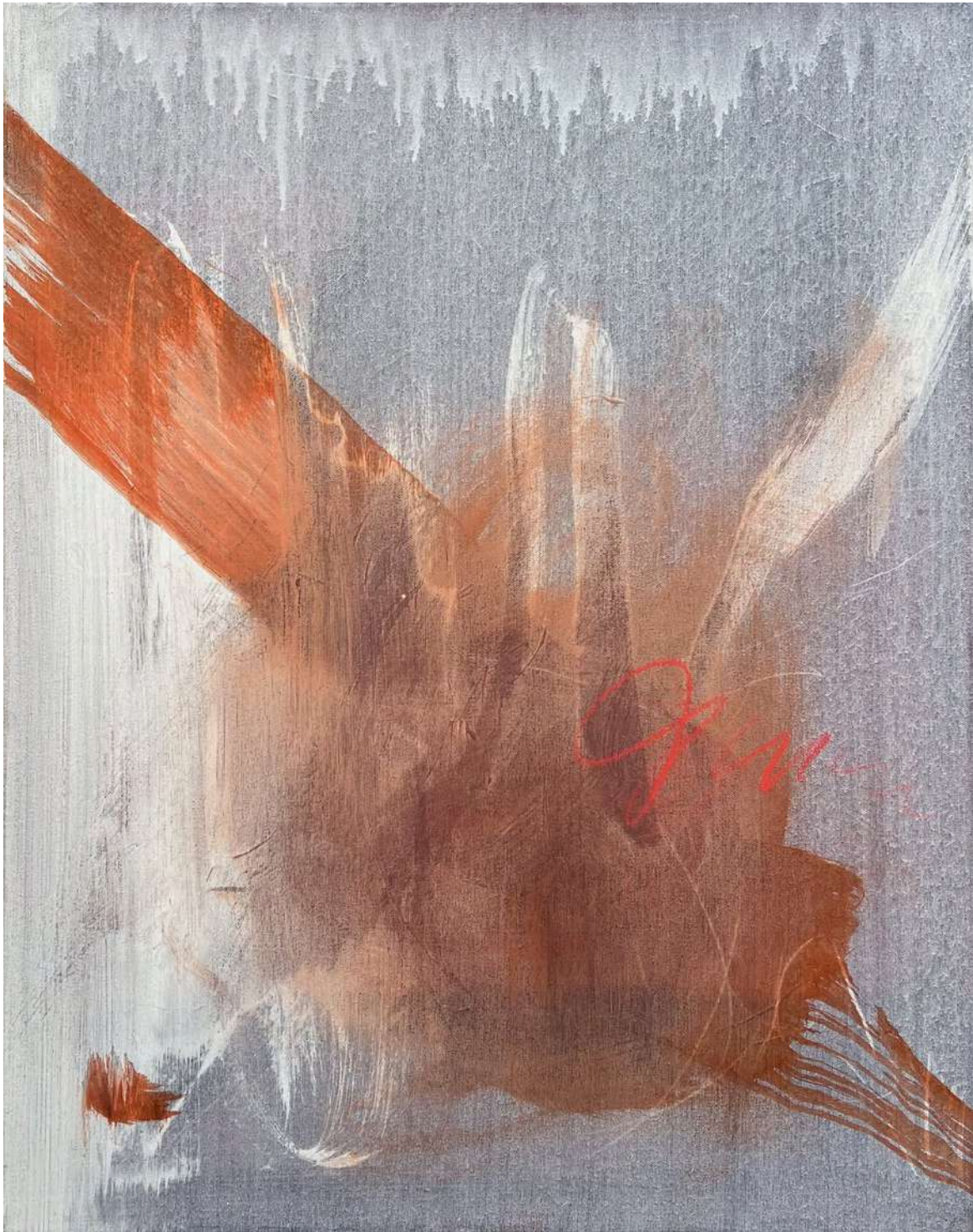
Mixed media on board

60 x 60 cm / 63 x 63 x 3.5 cm framed

ZAR 20,000



EMMA ASPELING
Muted, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
36 x 32 x 2.5 cm
ZAR 9,000



EMMA ASPELING
Die reuk van kappertjies, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
71 x 56 x 3.5 cm
ZAR 20,000



EMMA ASPELING
Interlude, 2025
Mixed media on canvas
30 x 30 x 2 cm
ZAR 8,000

About the Artist

Emma C. Aspeling (b. 1995, South Africa) is a contemporary abstract artist working primarily in mixed media across canvas, board, and paper. Her practice is rooted in intuitive processes and material exploration, with ongoing investigations into consciousness, adversity and individuation. She holds a degree in Fine Art from Stellenbosch University.

Since 2018, Aspeling has presented seven solo exhibitions, most recently *Initiation* in the *Underground Forest* (2024) at 99 Loop Gallery, Cape Town, where she has been represented since 2019. Her work has been featured in prominent local exhibitions and fairs, including the Investec Cape Town Art Fair. In 2022, during her solo exhibition *Out of Sight* she invited audiences into the creative process through setting up studio in the gallery and doing a live painting performance.

Since 2021, Aspeling has also been affiliated with Spier Arts Trust, a program with international reach that supports the development of South African artists. This affiliation has contributed meaningfully to her professional growth and expanded the visibility of her work.

In addition to her studio practice, Aspeling curated the group exhibition *In Utero* at RK Contemporary in Riebeeck Kasteel, showcasing the work of seven contemporary South African women artists. Her work continues to explore themes of transformation, the unseen, and the intersection of material and spiritual experience. Aspeling lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa.

Statement:

"My art practice is rooted in an embodied and intuitive approach, guided by an engagement with the intersection of spirituality, embodiment, sound, and language. I work with mixed media in a process that is not predefined, but rather emerges through instinct, feeling, and an openness to the unknown.

Mark-making is central to my practice—an act I regard as both transformative and revelatory. It is a form of expression that arises from a space beyond conscious understanding, one that draws from what I consider ancient memory and the collective unconscious. Each work seeks to give form to the intangible, to reflect the ongoing dialogue between spirit and matter, the visible and the invisible.

In creating, I aim to offer a space where vulnerability is reimagined as strength, and where the complexities of human existence may be sensed rather than resolved. My work is not only a personal investigation but an invitation for shared reflection—a means to reconnect with the primal and mysterious aspects of what it means to be human."