

DANIEL C. MÜLLER

PORTFOLIO

2024

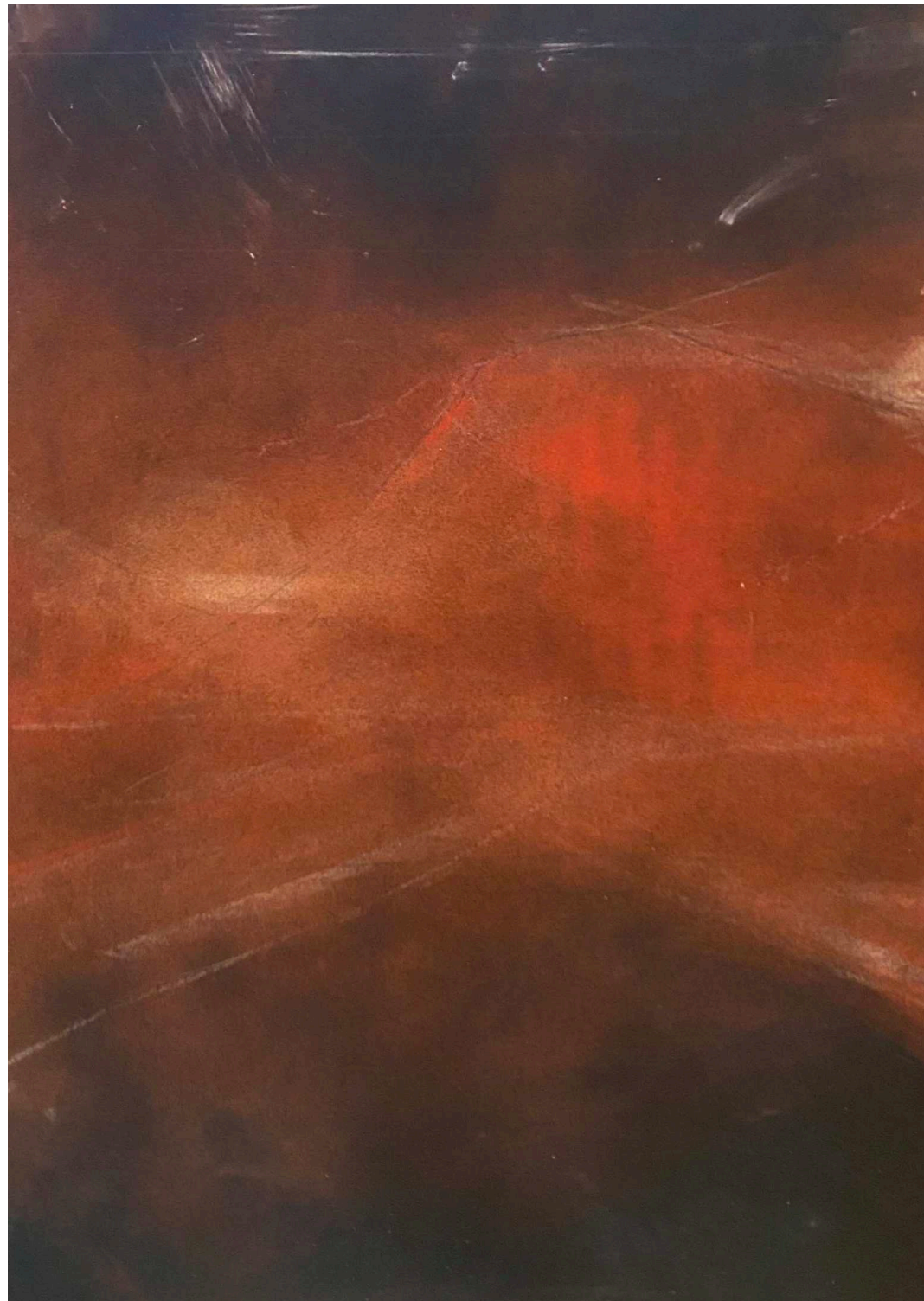
ARTIST STATEMENT

Darkness, chaos, and intensity evoke strong reactions and emotions. My work is informed by these notions and emerges from raw, nightmarish worlds of destruction. It draws on image archives from the past, whereas destruction of the environment and the self are hinted at but made impossible in the same breath. Starting from drawing, I translate and expand these themes into other media such as woodcuts, monotypes, ceramics, sculptures, and installations.

Through traditional working techniques and methods, I find access to history and can simultaneously build a bridge to the present. Formerly used in a religious context and for book printing, later popular with expressionist artists, the woodcut lends itself to expressive imagery. The removal of material in the woodcut contrasts with the application of color in painting. I combine the negation of the material with a radically subjective view of destroyed landscapes and figures driven by rituals, fear, or desire.

I am interested in contradictions and longings provoked by strong contrasts and stereotypes. Why are we afraid of darkness when brightness can also be brutal and lead to blindness? At what point does good turn into evil, and what functions are associated with such ideas? My works do not promise answers but provide material and aesthetic explorations that challenge our visual habits related to such phenomena.

A recurring theme in my work is sexuality in queer subcultures. Usually ignored or unnoticed by the general public, my work describes an anonymous world in which sexual acts take place between pleasure and pain and which is characterised by excess. In the search for adventure and tenderness, the get-together turns into threatening role-playing games and loneliness. I further address forms of hyper-masculine desire and gay body culture that lead to new constraints and stereotypes.



LANDSCAPE II

2024

Woodcut
360 × 480 cm
24 panels, each 120 × 60 cm

This dramatic landscape takes the viewer in and only reveals its disturbing details at a second glance. Amid maltreated nature and an opaque superposition of lines and forms, shadowy figures surface. The existential fear of death and destruction portrayed is expressed in the woodcutting technique, which leaves scars in the material through the wood's treatment. The large-format work comprises 24 panels that unmask the pictorial motif as construction and contrast the suggested perspective with a grid.



PATH TO NOWHERE

Woodcut

2024

14 Woodcut panels (variable sizes)
260 × 190 × 260 × 130 cm

Based on a photograph with a dystopian view of ruins in Berlin after bombings in 1945, this trapezoidal work renders the original subject almost entirely abstract. Destructive feelings are a starting point for creative work that produces something new and enables alternative perspectives. This work explores the relationship between flatness and three-dimensionality, which manifests itself in the medium, the trapezoidal shape of the woodcut, and vanishing points within the depiction.

Photography by Studio Seghrouchni



Studio view Hohlstrasse, Zurich



SEVEN SUBJECTS

Woodcut on textile
294 × 108 cm

2023

Seven woodcut panels incorporate three different themes: transience, desire, and landscape. Each plate was manually printed three times on the textile in a different order and mirrored. The multiplication of the same elements creates surprising and sometimes confusing combinations that challenge familiar visual hierarchies and analyse the relationship between repetition and diversity.

Photography by Studio Seghrouchni



Studio view Hohlstrasse, Zurich



SCORCHED EARTH

2023

Woodcut
84 × 120 cm
4 panels, each 42 × 60 cm

This four-part woodcut work is based on archival images of the Gothic church of St Martin in Ypres, Belgium, which was destroyed in the First World War and later rebuilt. Destruction and continuity resonate in this maltreated landscape with a figure reminiscent of Christ.

The woodcut was created for the group exhibition CROSSING WAYS at the Musée d'Art religieux moderne, Basilique de Koekelberg in Brussels, where new works encountered objects from the museum's collection.



OUT OF

2023

Woodcut
180 × 252 cm
18 panels, each 42 × 60 cm

18 carved wood panels are coloured with printing ink and form a transcendental motif. Good and bad, light and dark, exchange their qualities. What possibilities does the hostile, dark space offer the fleeing subject? Why does the agitated figure leave the lighter half of the picture?



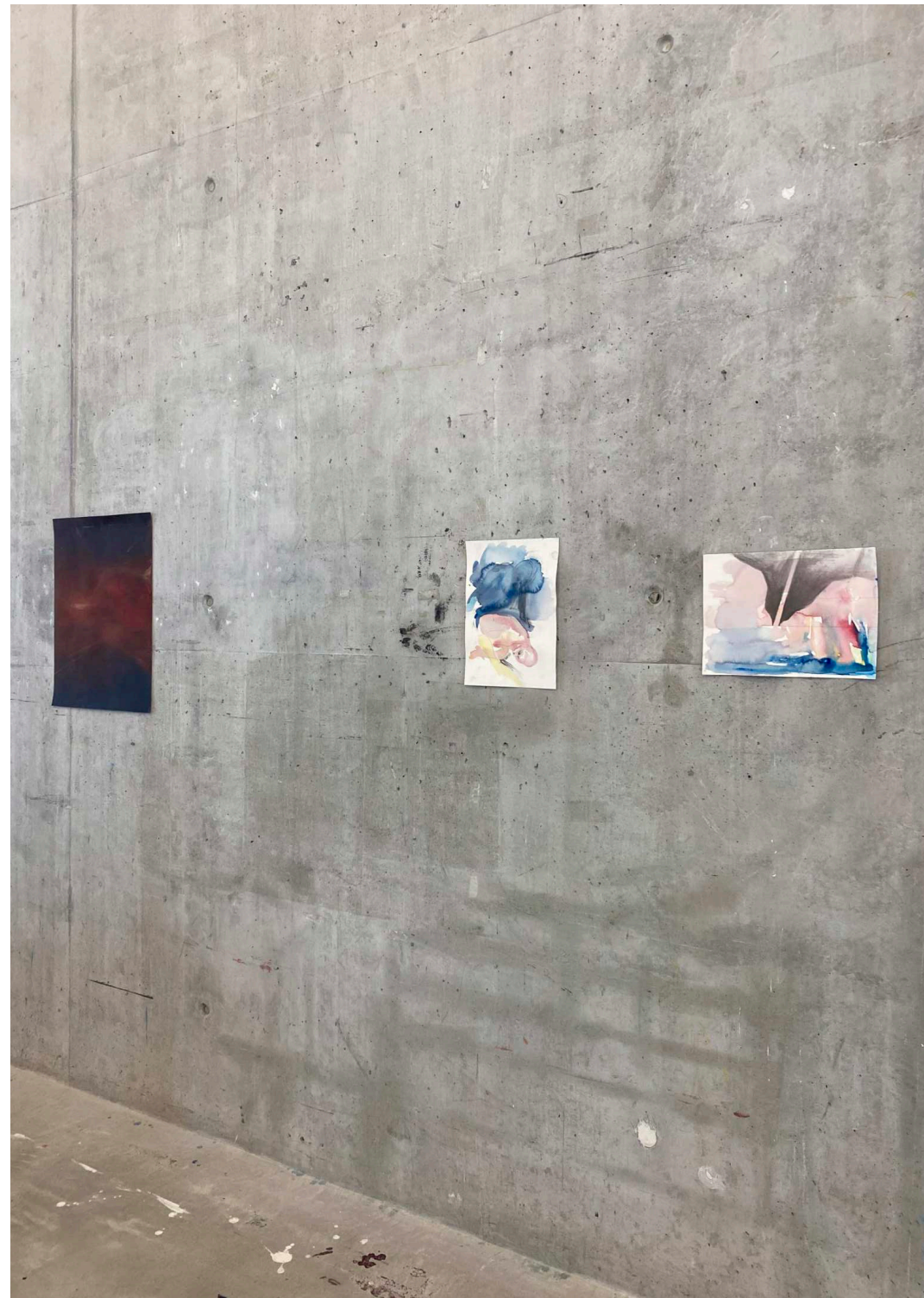


IN BETWEEN

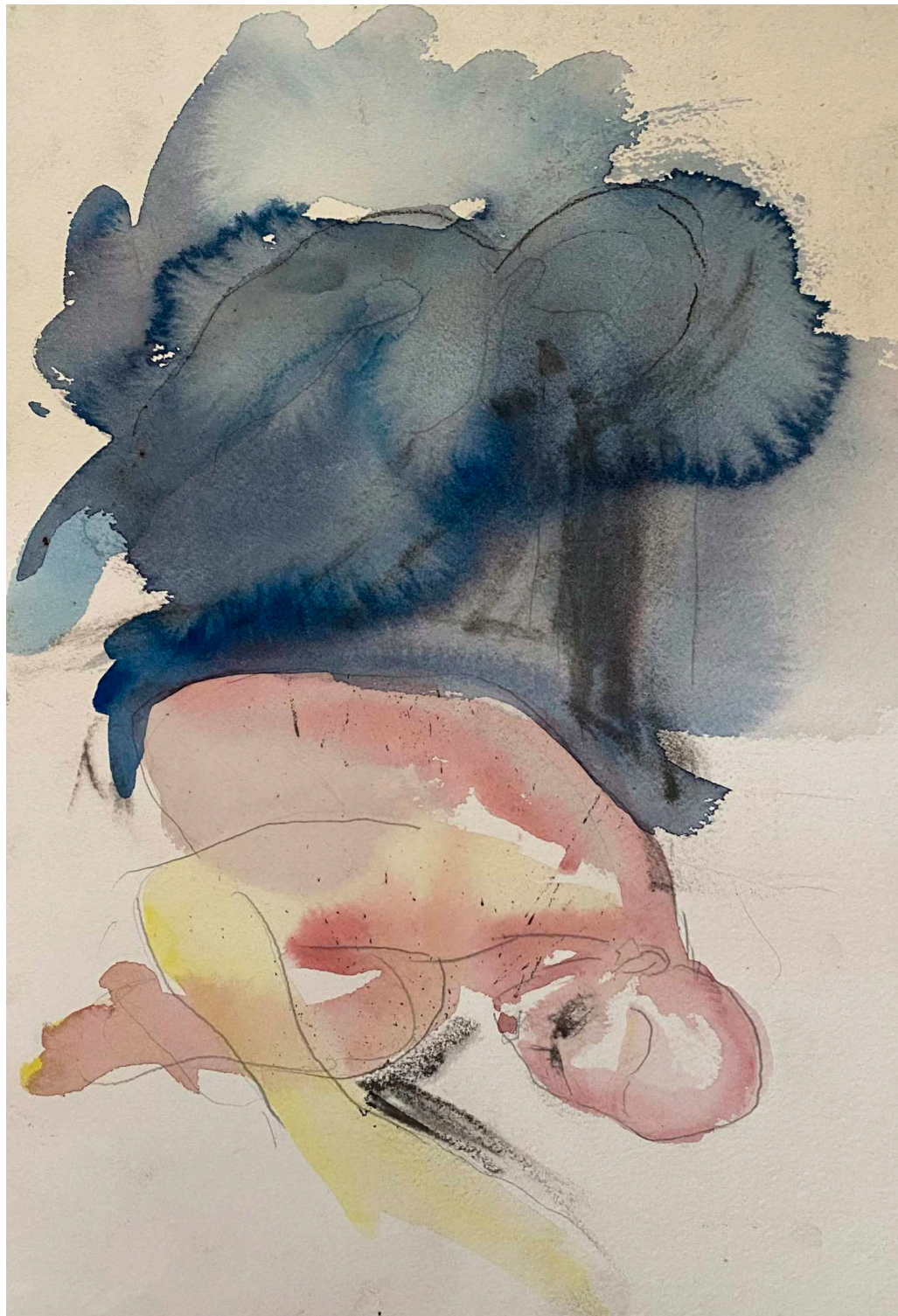
Watercolour, pastel, graphite
on paper and cardboard
Series

2021-2023

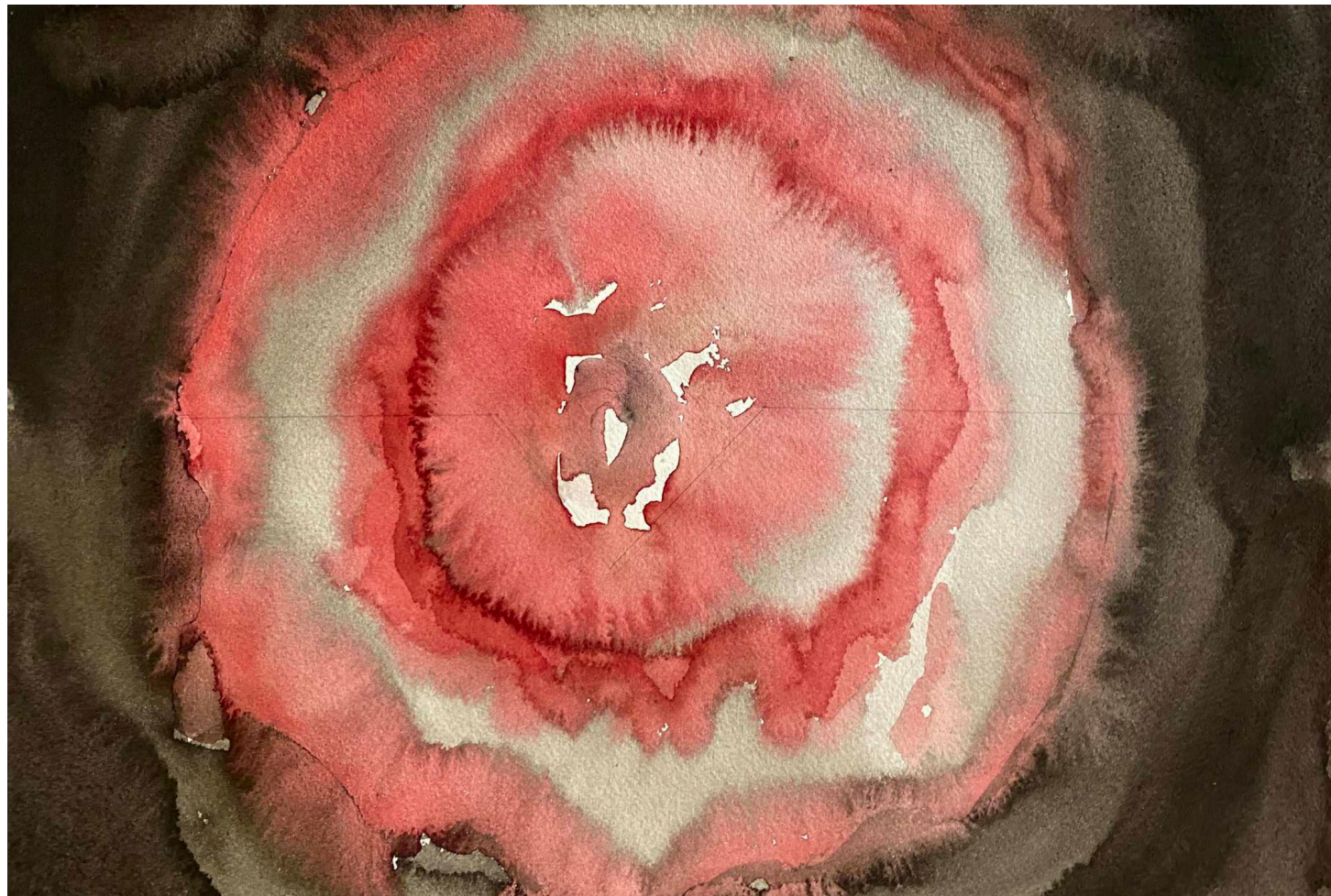
Figuration and abstraction merge in this series and mark the transition between different visual orders. What seems separable - colour and form, inside and outside - is called into question in the watercolours. The human body serves as a reference, whose openings and fluids co-determine visual perception, or which, in sexuality, connects with others and makes boundaries unrecognisable for a brief moment.



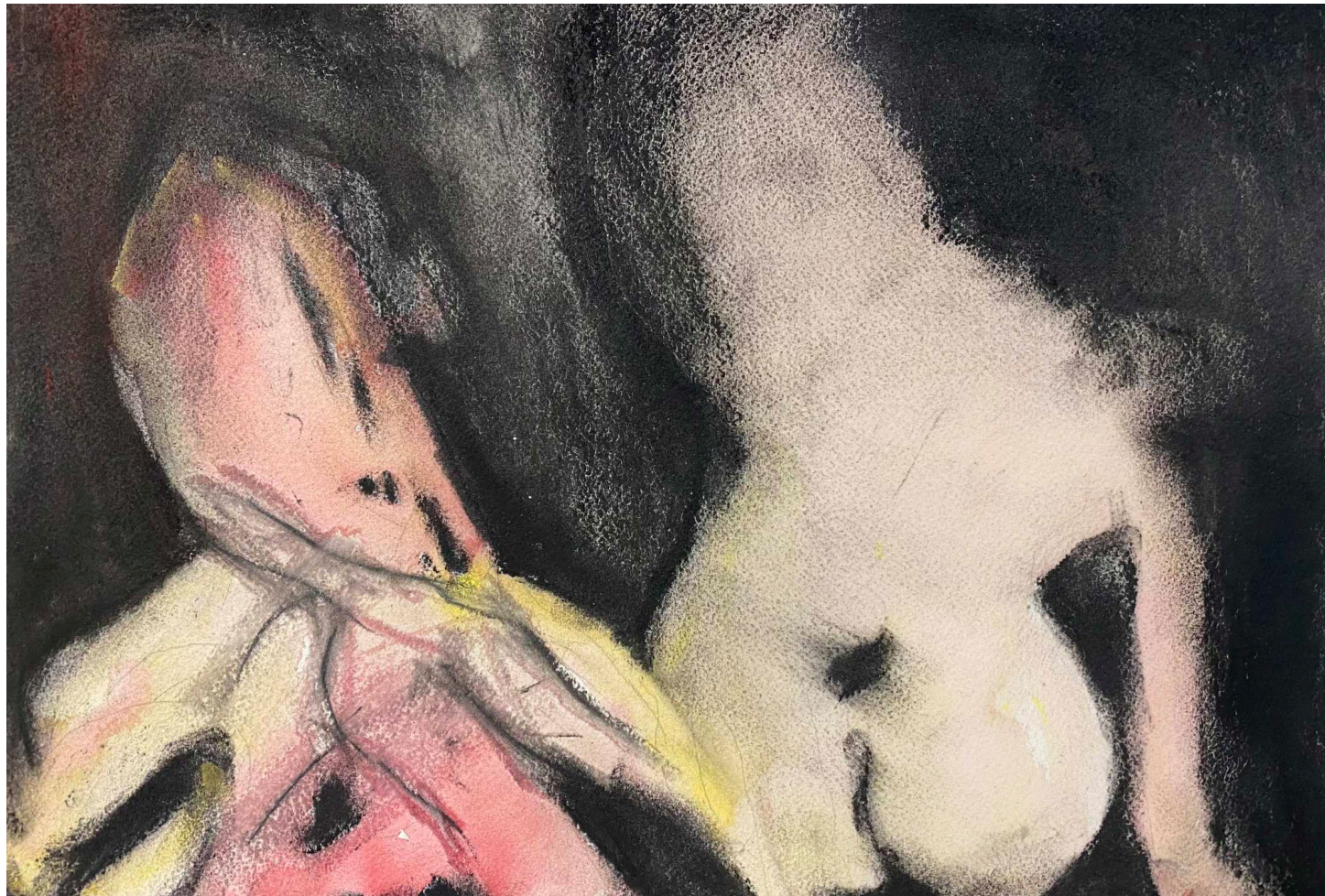
Exhibition view LUCA School of Arts Brussels



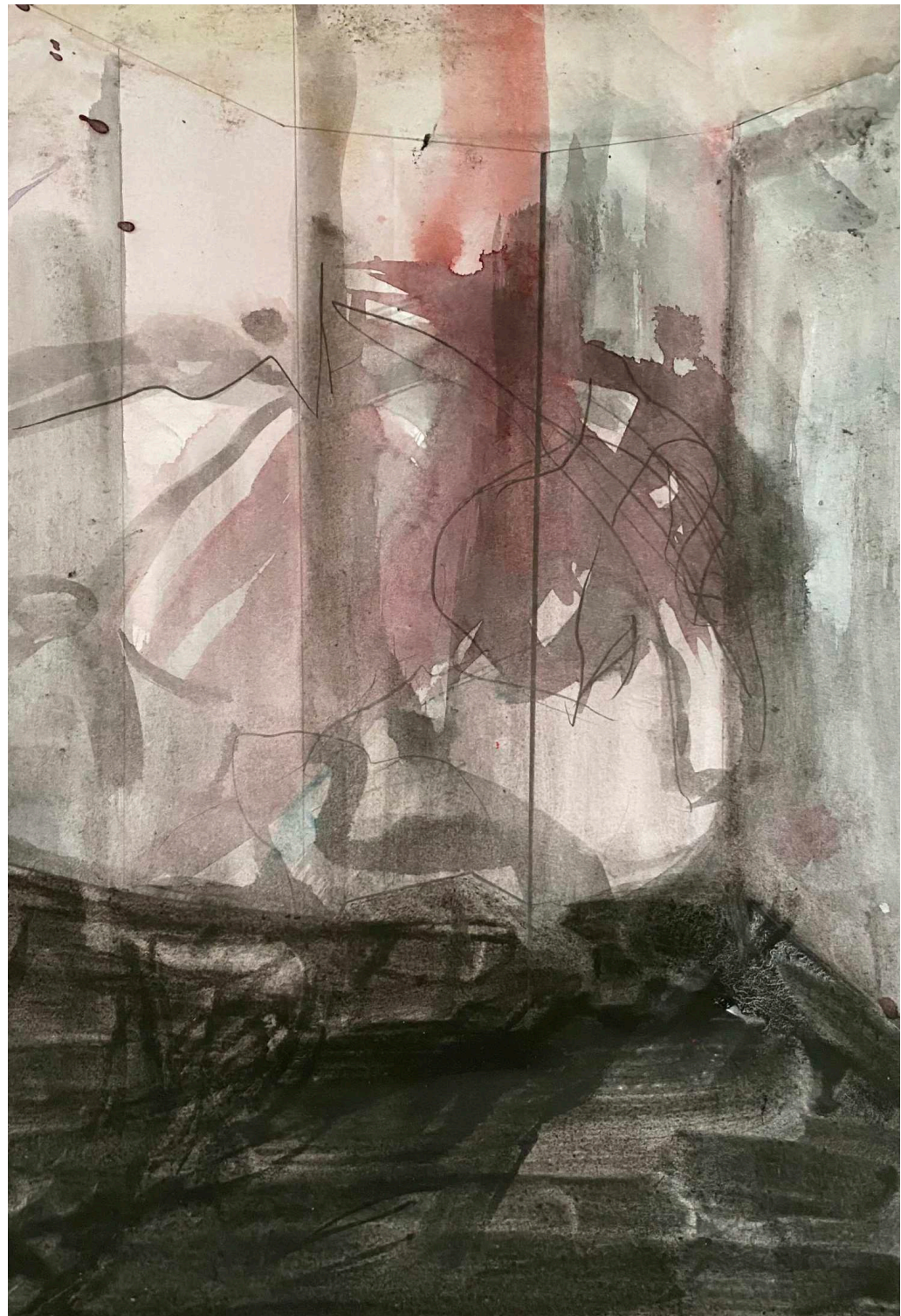
36 × 26 cm



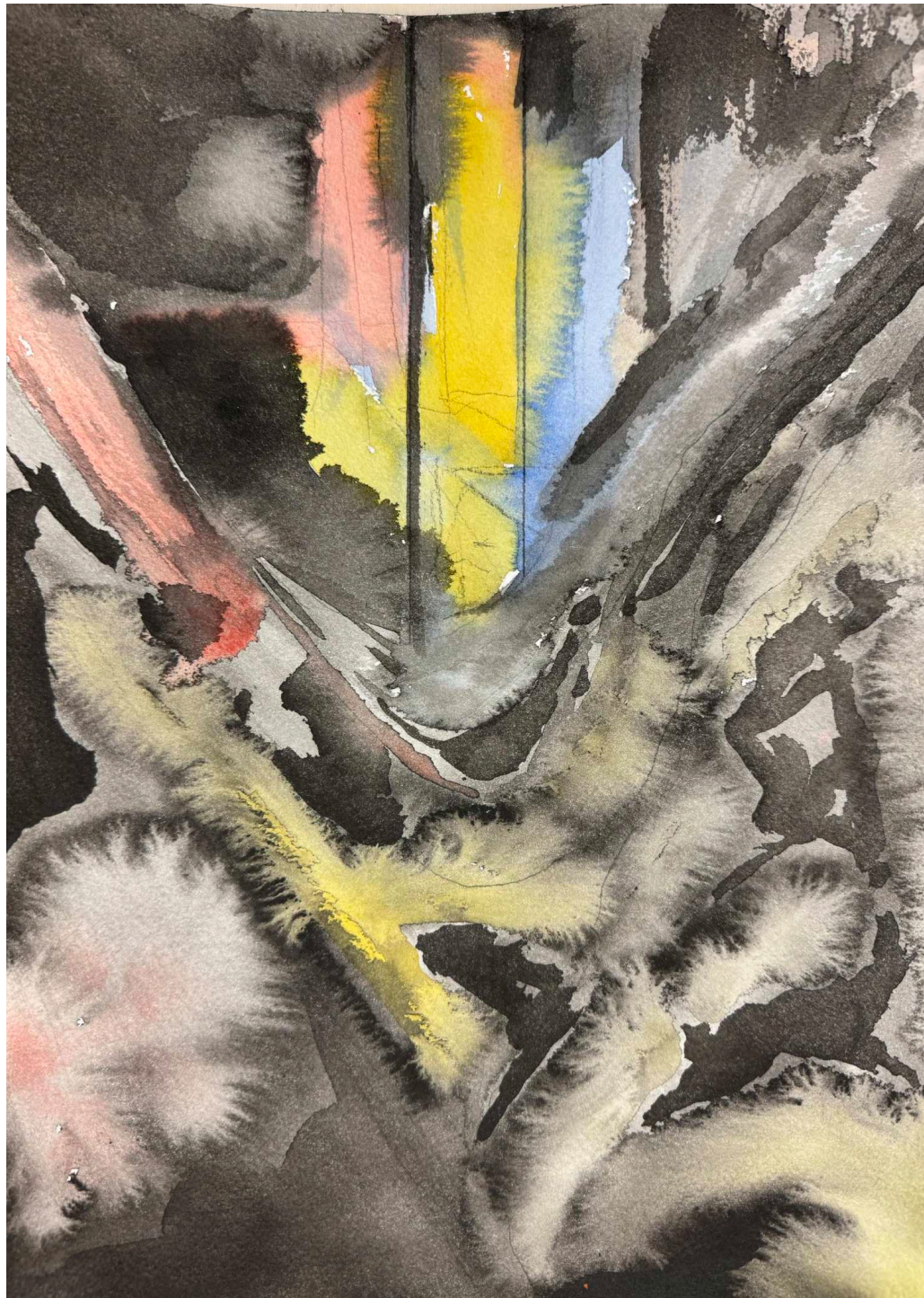
26 × 36 cm



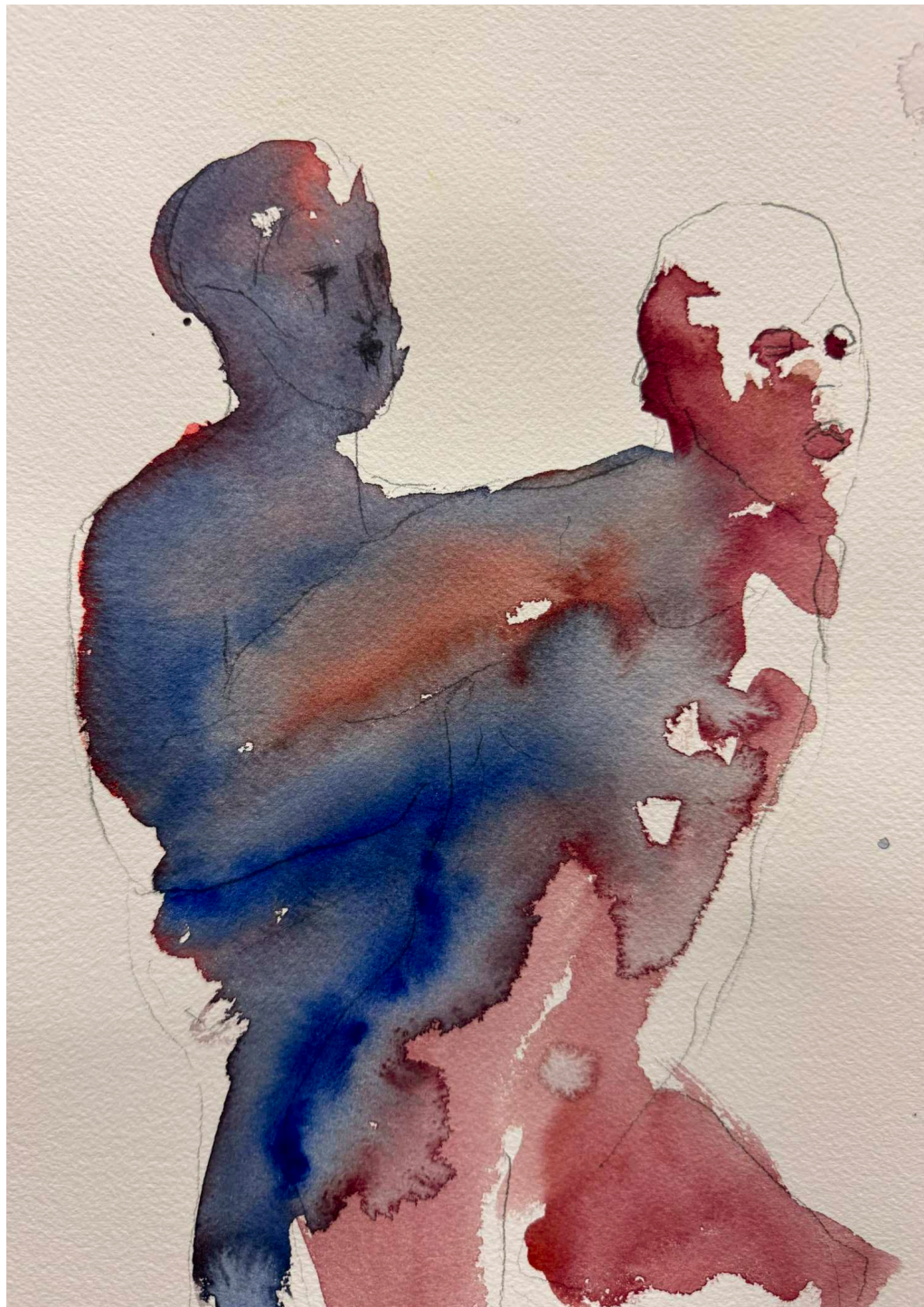
26 × 36 cm



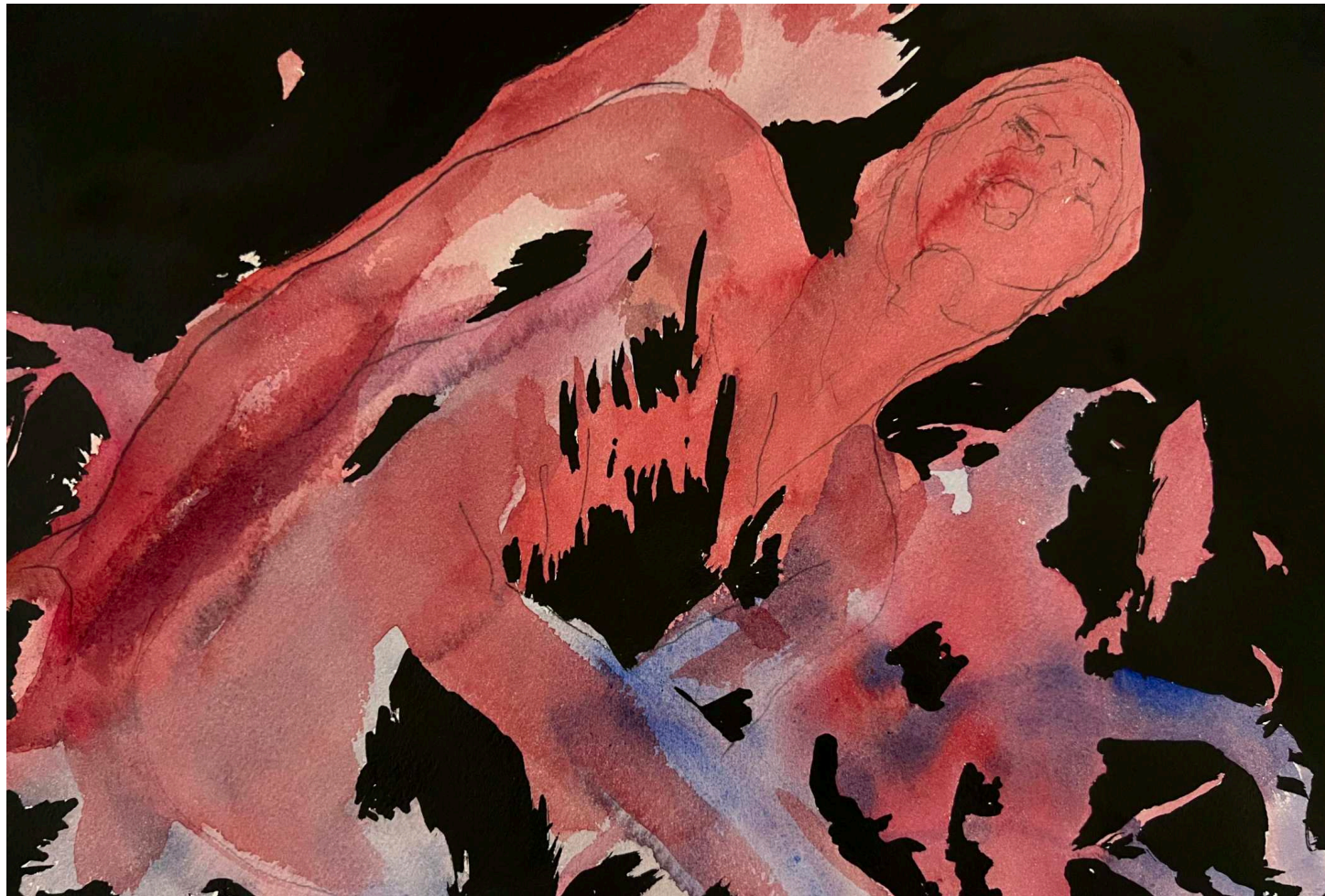
36 × 26 cm



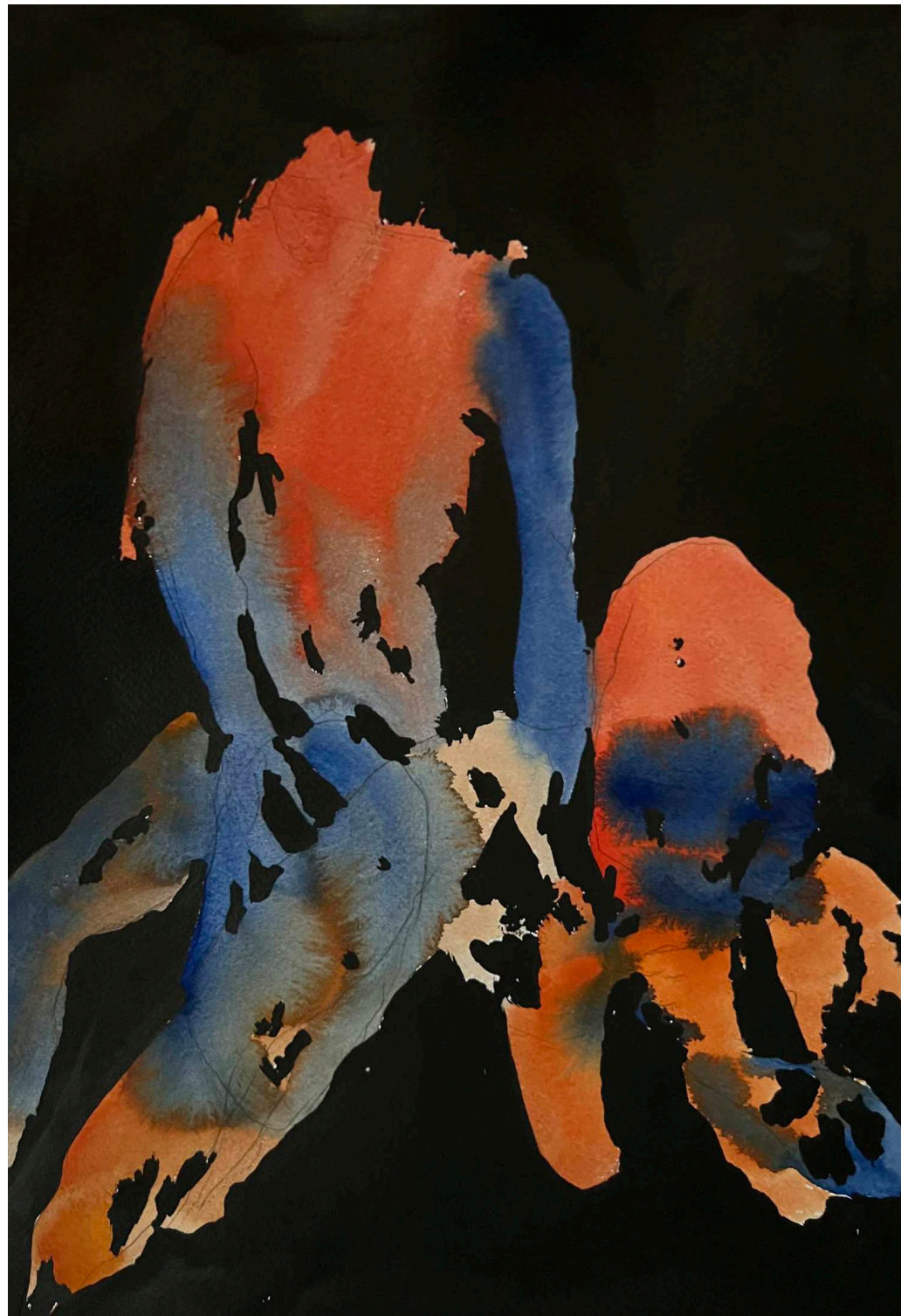
36 × 26 cm



36 × 26 cm



26 × 36cm



36 × 26cm

SKULLS

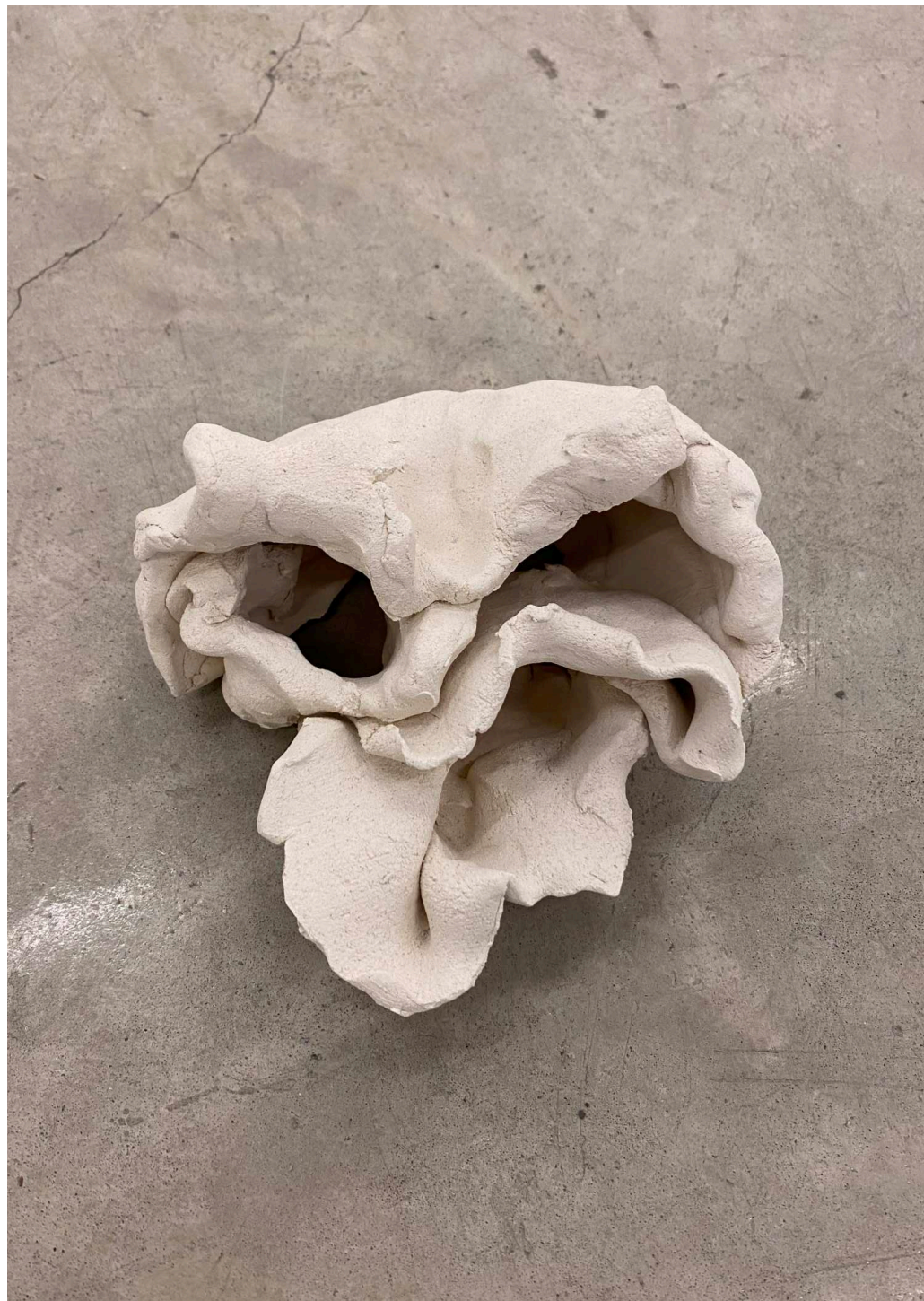
Ceramics
67 pieces
Variable sizes

2021

The mask-like faces reference primary forms of human skulls but remain an illusion. Their dents and furrows hint at emotions or destinies: imagination is a constant companion of these shadowy clay forms, which throw us back on our transience.



Exhibition view Gare du Nord Brussels



THE BELOVED

Monotype, watercolour

2019

Series

42 × 29,7 cm

This series resulted from a field trip to Iran and was inspired by the Persian tradition of miniatures. Homoerotic poems by Saadi (early 13th century) and Ubayd Zakani (1300–1371) have also influenced the monotype and watercolour series. Tenderness, as well as same-sex relationships between men, are located both in the past and in the present.



Exhibition view Zurich University of the Arts



Two Lovers, Persian miniature, Iran 1600



Two Lovers, Persian miniature, Iran 1630



Two Lovers, Persian miniature, Iran 1720 / 1



Two Lovers, Persian miniature, Iran 1720 / 2



Two Lovers, Persian miniature, Iran 1720 / 3



Persepolis, Iran 2018

Abandoned Bath in Kharnaq, Iran 2018

ULTIMA ETAS MUNDI

Woodcut on vellum
95 × 70 cm

2019

Following extensive research into incunabula (an early form of book printing) and an analysis of their structure and materiality, a reinterpretation of Hartmann Schedel's world chronicle *Ultima Etas Mundi* (The Last Judgement) from 1493 was the result of this process. The work builds a bridge to the origins of modern printing techniques in connection with Christian iconography. While Schedel's coloured illustration clearly distinguishes between good and evil, the harsh contrasts and abstract imagery of the black-and-white woodcut adaptation appear altogether more threatening and call into question the idea of a heavenly paradise.

Photography by Nadia Hauri





DAYS OF A BETTER PAST

Woodcut, woodobject, ropes
Variable sizes

2019

Sexuality takes place on a spectrum between pleasure and pain, security and isolation. This woodcut combines self-portraits and intimate moments that appear as incomplete, remembered images. The roughly treated material unveils the desire to be an object and consciously expose oneself to a partner's control. Pain can heighten the sensation, but it also runs the risk of leaving behind injuries.

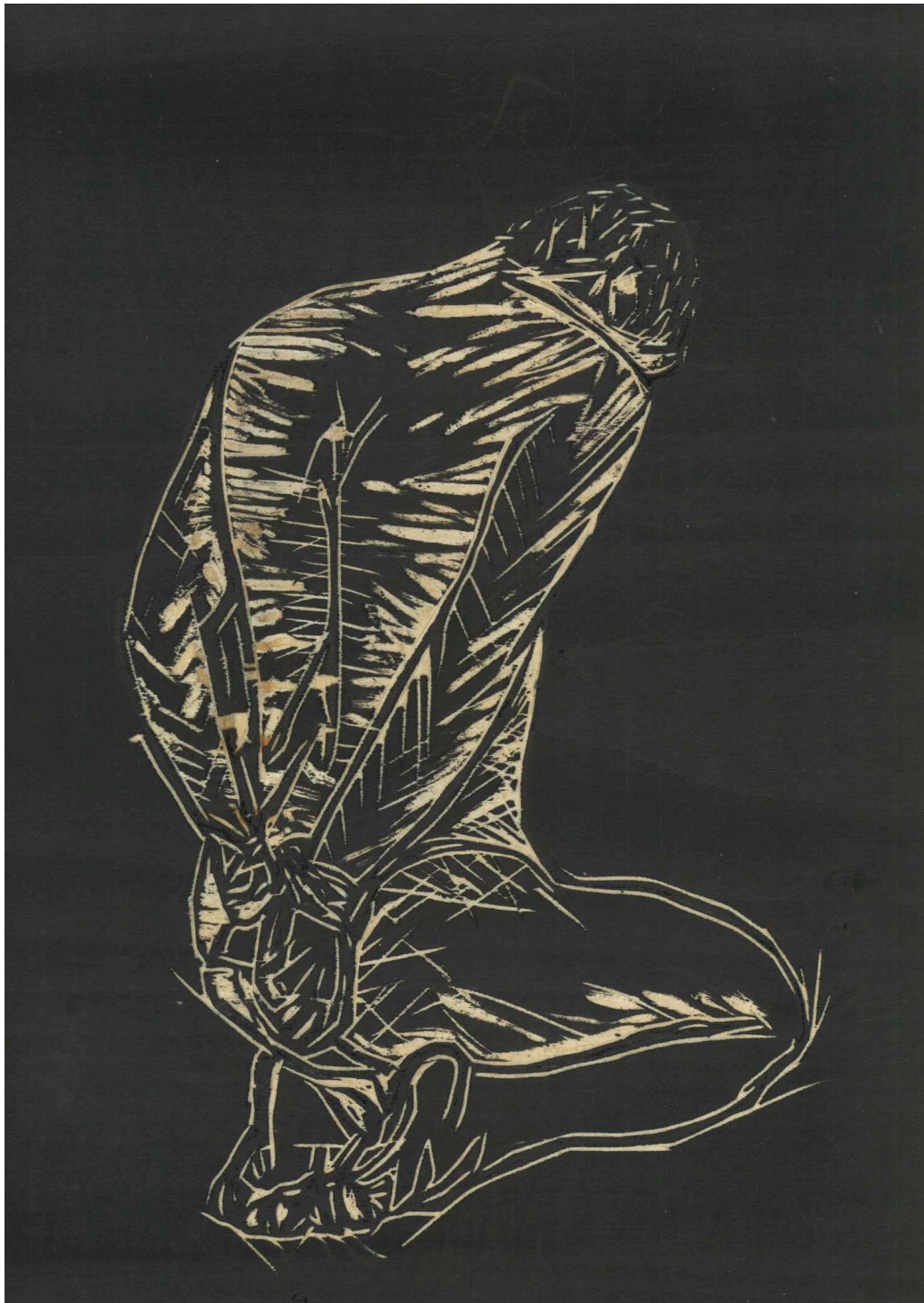
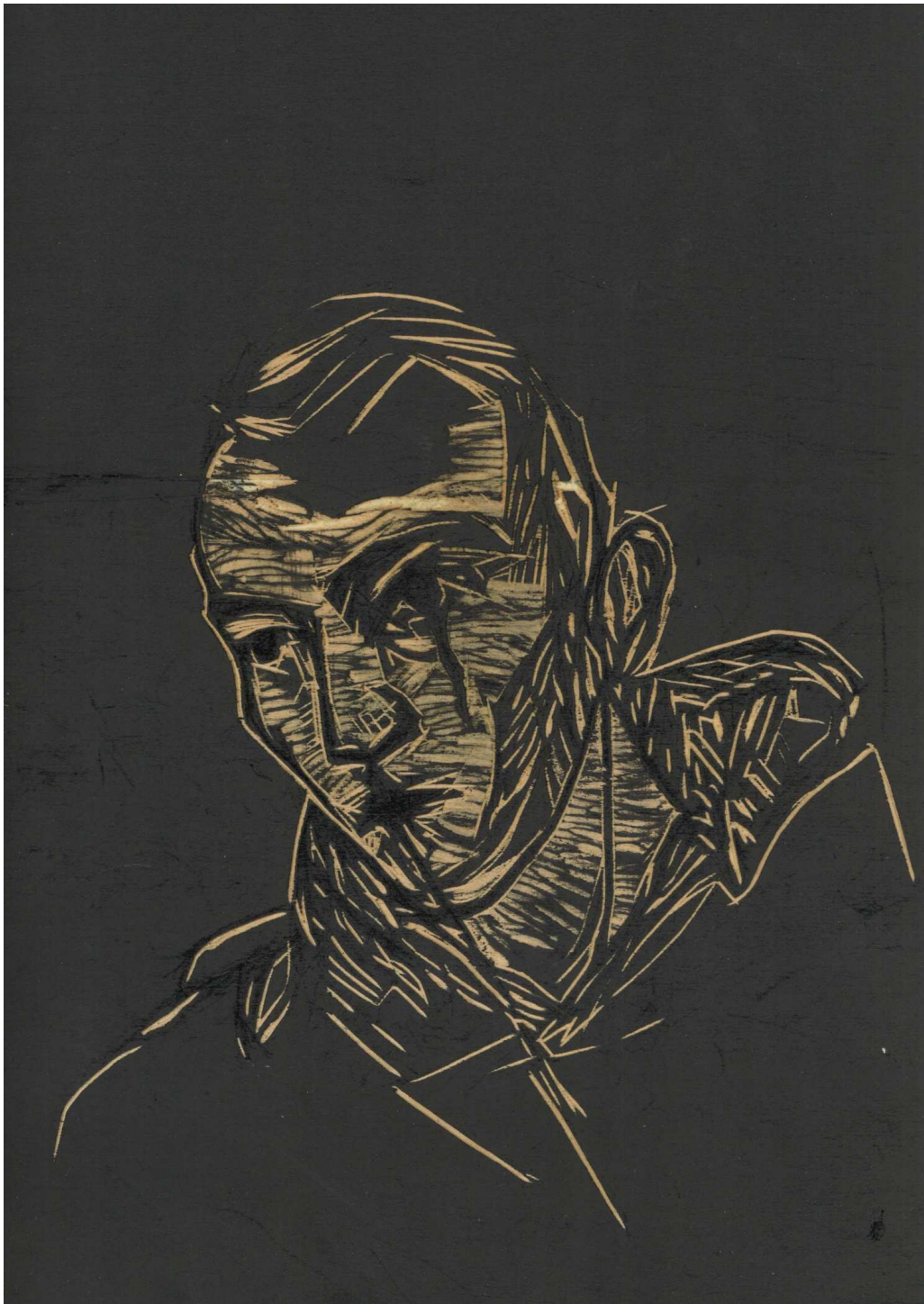
Photography by Plymouth Rock Zurich



Exhibition view Plymouth Rock, Zurich







DANIEL C. MÜLLER

*1994

EDUCATION

09/2019 - 07/2021

LUCA School of Arts, Master Fine Arts, Brussels Belgium

09/2016 - 07/2019

Zurich University of the Arts (ZHDK), Bachelor Fine Arts

GRANTS

2024

Pro Helvetia Studio Visits with Raphael Gyax

10/2021 - 09/2022

What's next_Compass ZHdK

2018

Art grant canton Solothurn

COLLECTIONS

Kunsthaus Grenchen

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

11/2024

zentral!, Kunstmuseum Luzern

10/2024

Cantonal annual exhibition, Kunstmuseum Solothurn

10/2024

IMPRESSION 2024/2025, Kunsthaus Grenchen

11/2024

zentral! Kunstmuseum, Luzern

06/2024

If I (just) lay here CC temporary space, Basel

04/2023

CROSSING WAYS MMRK Museum Basilique Nationale du Sacré-Coeur Brussels

11/2022

Cantonal annual exhibition, Kunstmuseum Solothurn

04/2022

Art for Ukraine The Other Space Antwerpen

03/2022

MOTHERLAND Het Bos Antwerpen

06/2021

Master Graduation LUCA School of Arts Brussels

10/2020

AD 00 Gare du Nord Brussels

07/2019

Bachelor Graduation ZHdK

12/2018

Art grant canton Solothurn S11

09/2018

Atelier Eberhard Hartwig, Berlin

09/2018

DAYS OF A BETTER PAST Plymouth Rock Zurich (solo)

04/2018

EINDRUCK 2018 Druckwerk Basel

12/2017

I DONT WANNA GO HOME! Coq d'Or Olten (solo)

11/2017

The Locker Room Show Plymouth Rock Zurich

11/2017

Wochenende der Graphik Druckwerk Basel

09/2017

Schaustelle, Dynamo, Zurich

04/2016

Young Art Olten (JKON)