

Bassam Kahwagi



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Paintings

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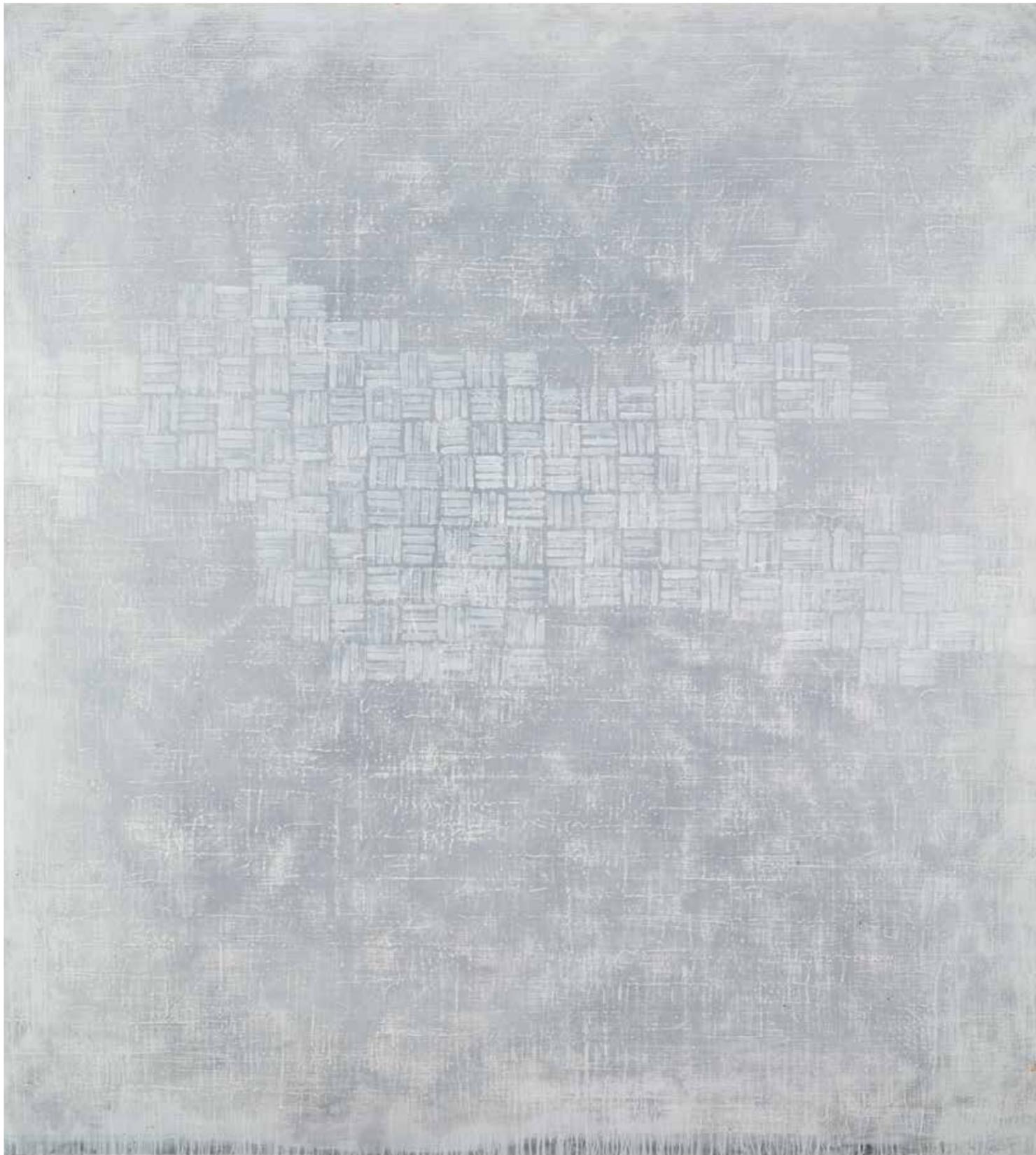
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(October/November 2025)**

Walid Sadek, *Artist*



Untitled, 2023-25
Acrylic on canvas
200 x 180 cm

[BK/1002/AoC]

Saleh Barakat

Foreword

I have known Bassam for thirty years. At that time and since, we find a painter who takes his practice very seriously. Back then, in the early nineties, he was part of a group of artists who worked around a third wave of Lebanese abstraction, a cohort that managed to carve itself a fair niche within Lebanese art circles. In parallel, another group of artists was active within the conceptual movement, gaining increasing momentum. Around the year 2000, he expressed his desire to stop exhibiting publicly and found himself another career in graphic design. When I asked him what was behind this radical decision, he answered me clearly: “The art world is moving to a new epoch, where the narrative is taking over”. He told me that he had no “sexy” story to tell, and that everything was “in” his painterly gesture. He preferred to withdraw, rather than compromise on his unconditional commitment to the brushstroke, in an almost Cezanne-like approach.

When the Port of Beirut explosion happened, he visited me, reminding me of how long I had wanted to make an exhibition for him without success. “Well, now I want to show!” he said. “Now? At this darkest moment?”, I replied. And he said: “Yes, this is the moment when I feel I need to stand by Beirut, to exhibit as a sign of solidarity”.

I seized the moment, and we organized Agial Art Gallery’s first show after the explosion in October 2020. And since then, we have been preparing the grand comeback of Bassam Kahwagi, one of the best painters of his generation, a firm believer in painting as a practice spanning five hundred years of accumulation and evolution, a painting that doesn’t carry anything but itself, no stories, no narratives, nothing but a gesture that says it all.

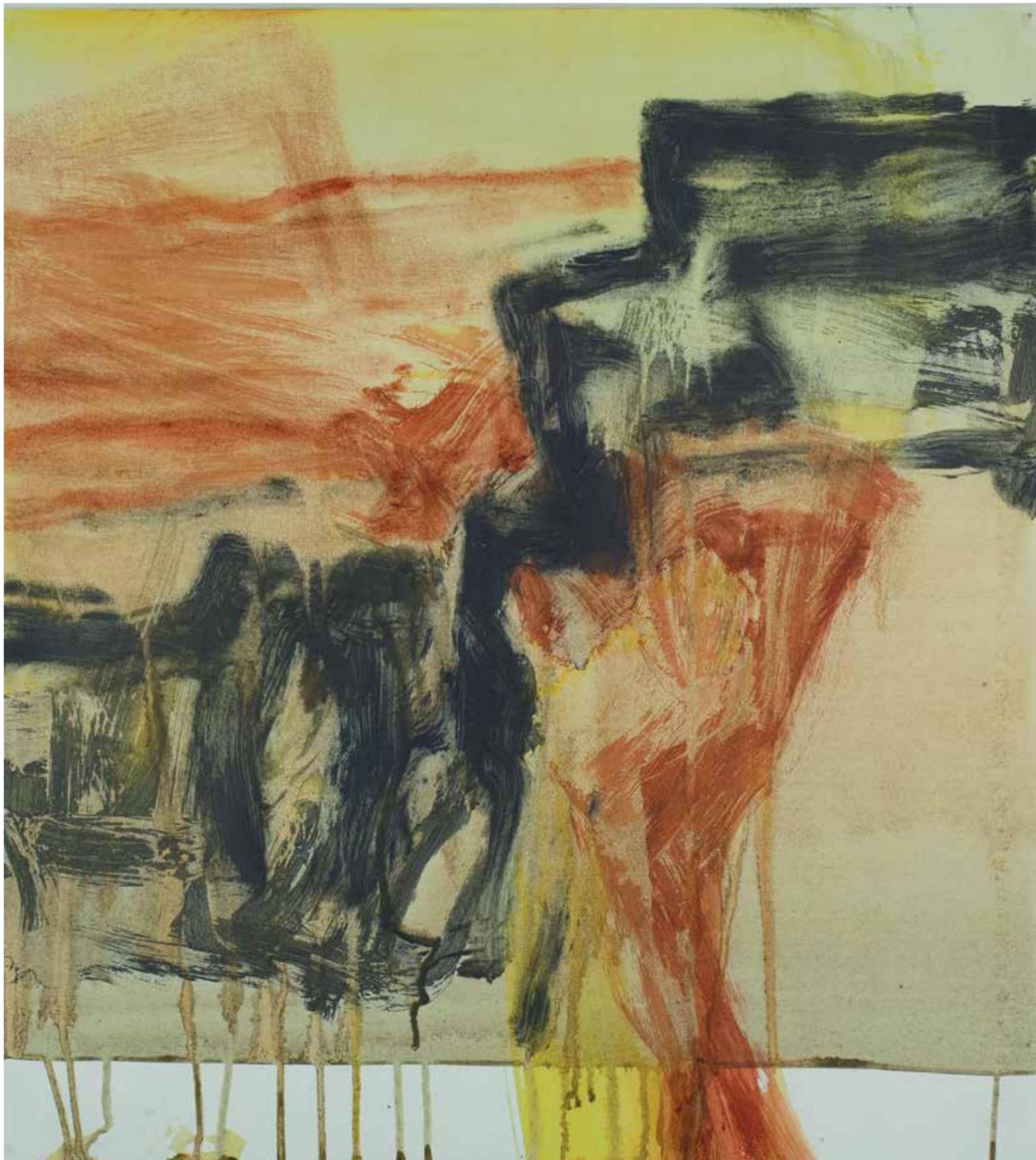
The history of painting is kept alive mainly through the perseverance of passionate practitioners like Bassam, who carry the burden of preserving a tradition since Giotto, relentlessly, and against all odds!



Untitled, 2022-23
Acrylic on paper
56 x 50 cm
[BK/S1-3/AoP]



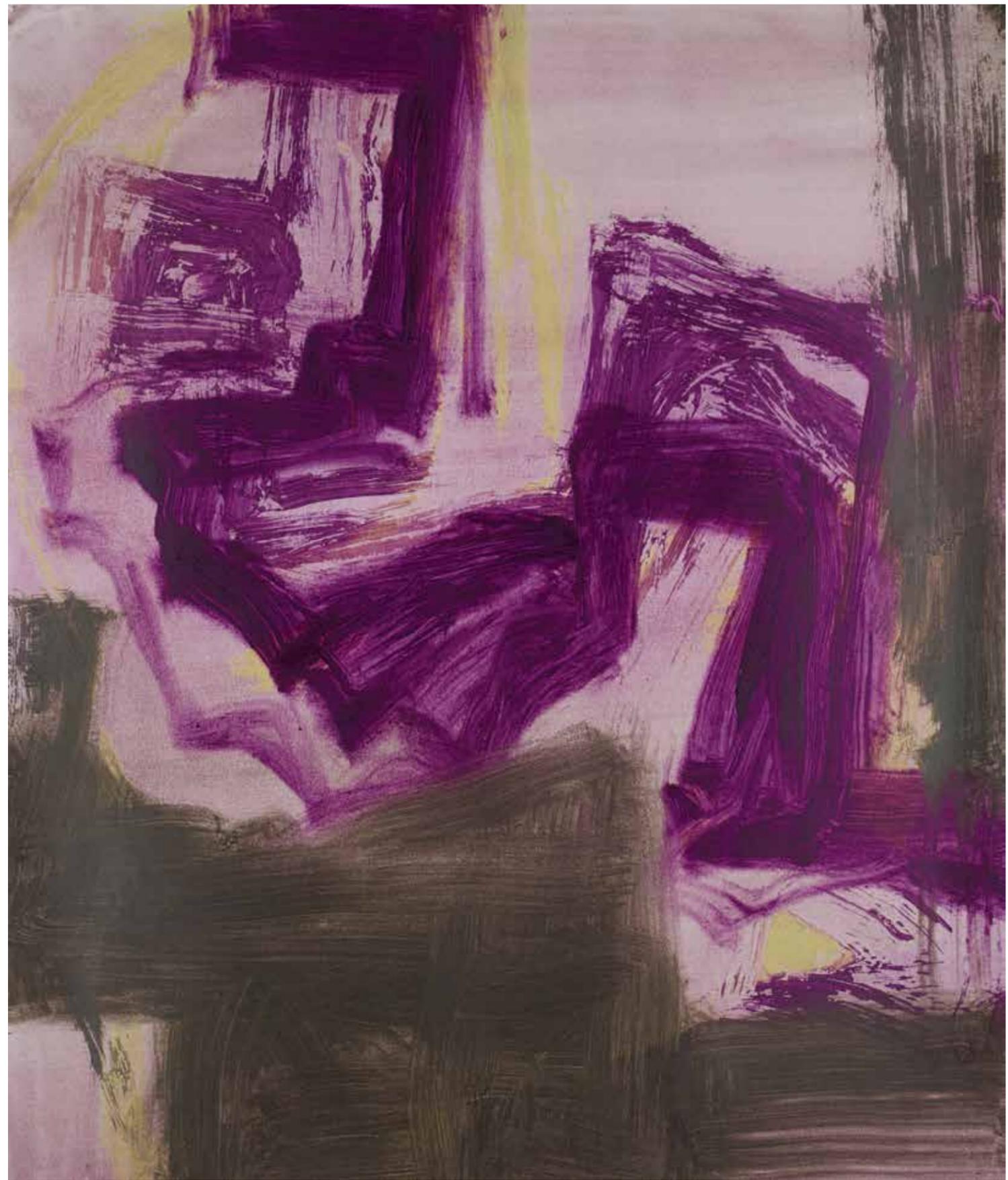
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Acrylic on paper
56 x 50 cm
[BK/S1-1/AoP]



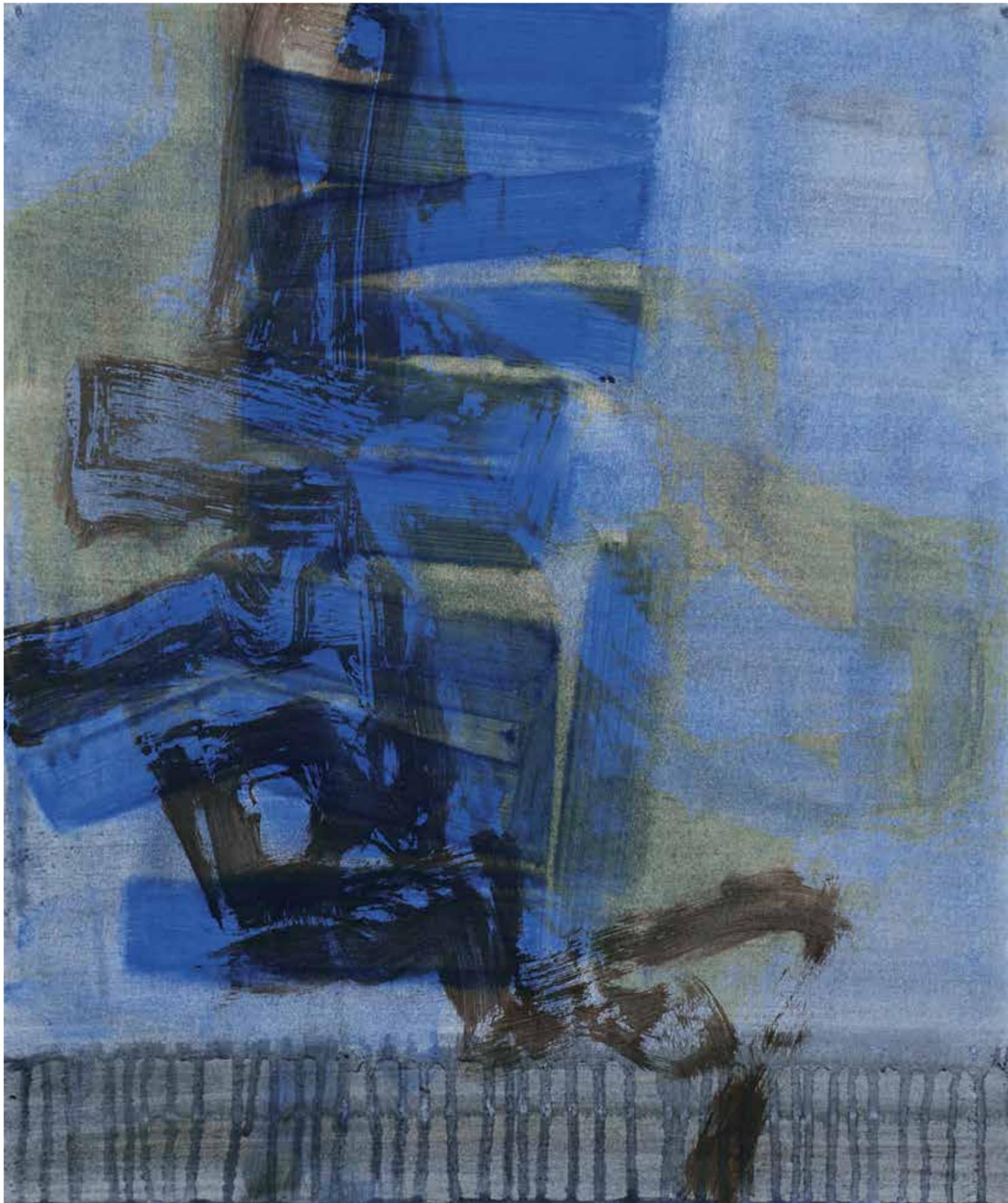
Untitled, 2022-23
Acrylic on paper
56 x 50 cm
[BK/S2-5/AoP]



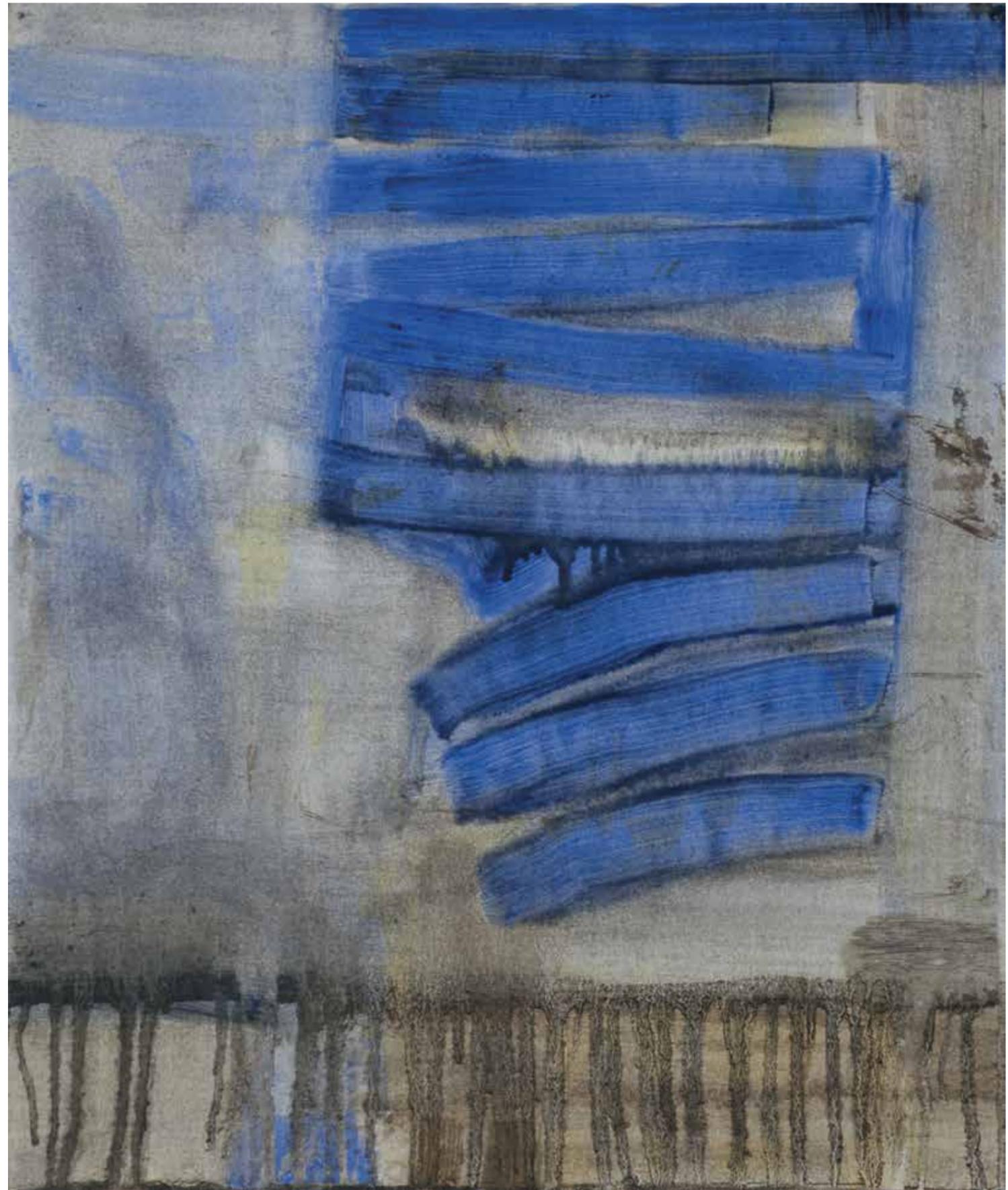
Untitled, 2022-23
Acrylic on paper
56 x 50 cm
[BK/S2-8/AoP]



Untitled, 2022-23
Acrylic on paper
59.5 x 50 cm
[BK/S7-8/AoP]



Untitled, 2022-23
Acrylic on paper
59.5 x 50 cm
[BK/S8-4/AoP]

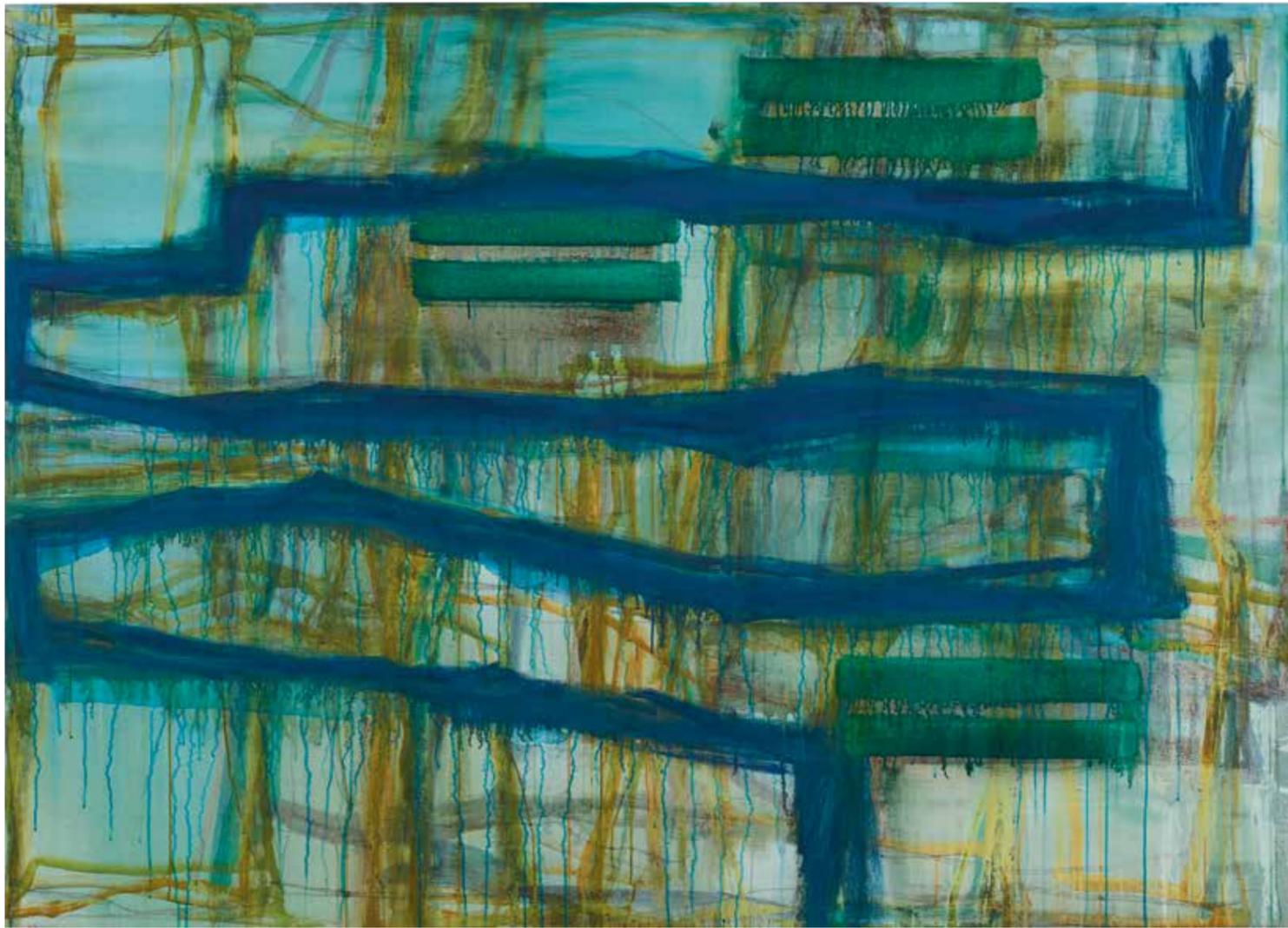


Untitled, 2022-23
Acrylic on paper
59.5 x 50 cm
[BK/S8-2/AoP]





Untitled, 2025
Waterbase oil
140 x 195 cm
[BK/1016/WbO]



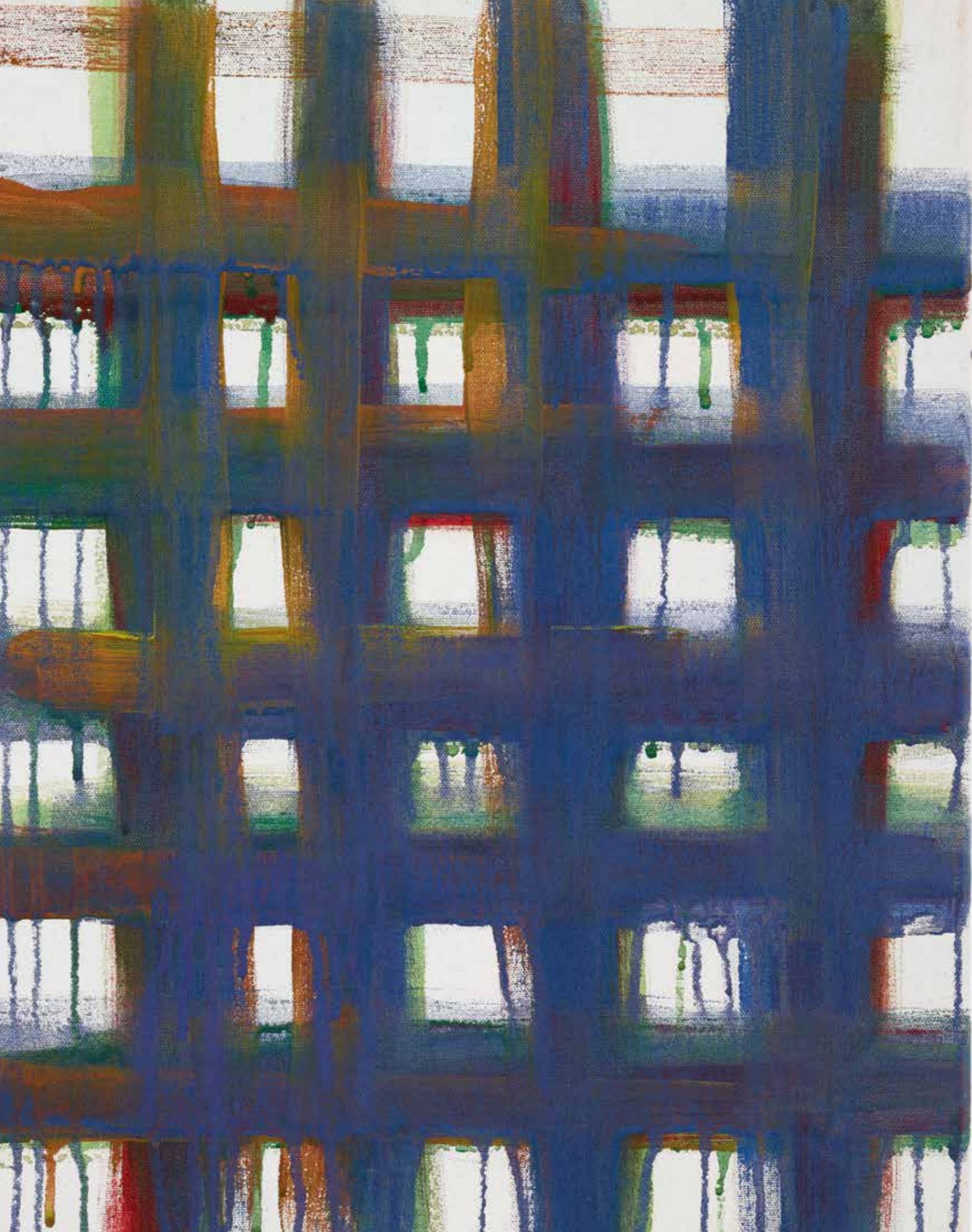
Untitled, 2025
Waterbase oil
139.5 x 195 cm
[BK/1017/WbO]

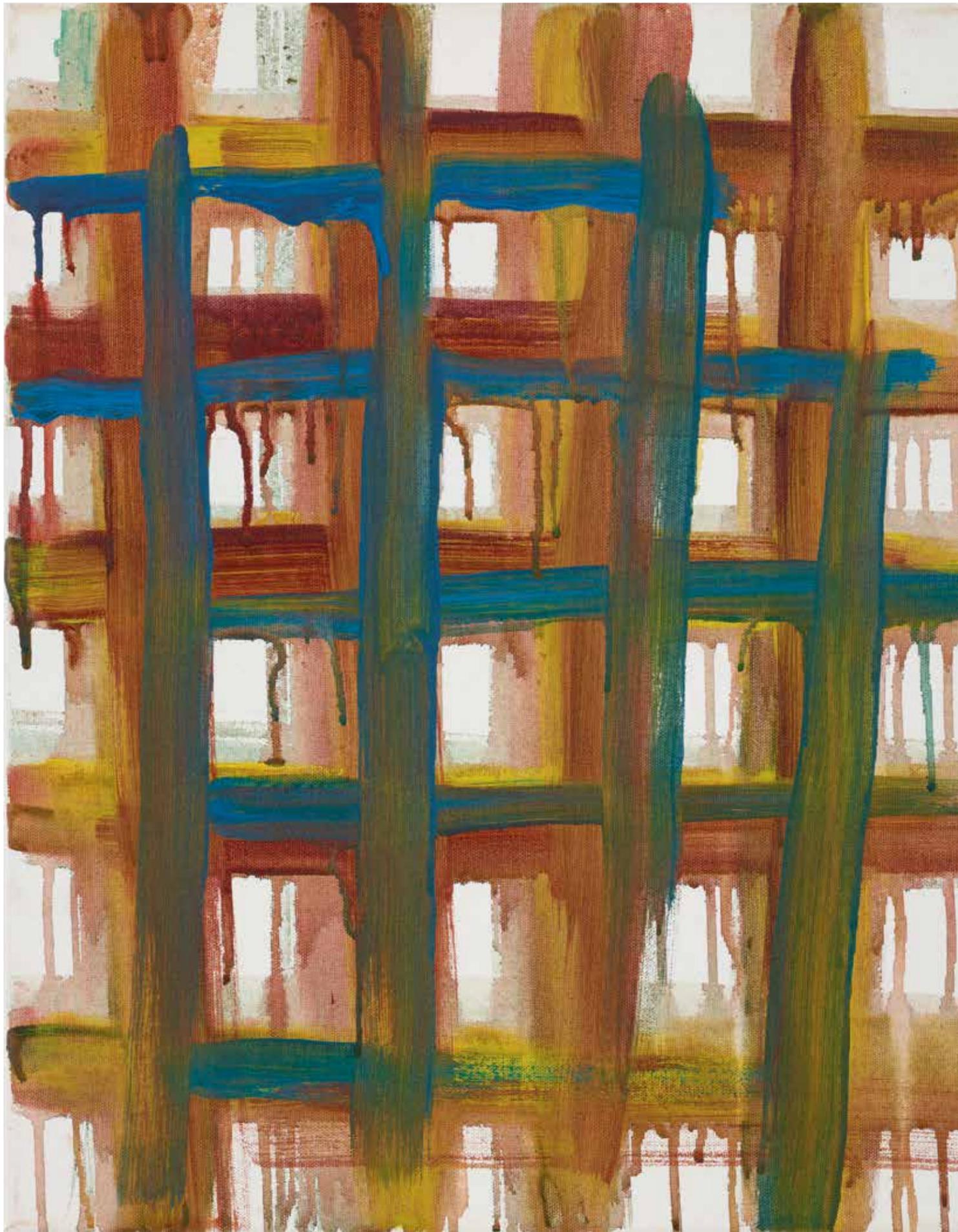


Untitled, 2025
Waterbase oil
139.5 x 195 cm
[BK/1019/WbO]



Untitled, 2025
Waterbase oil
139.5 x 195 cm
[BK/1018/WbO]





Previous page, left:
Untitled, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 40 cm
[BK/1057/AoC]



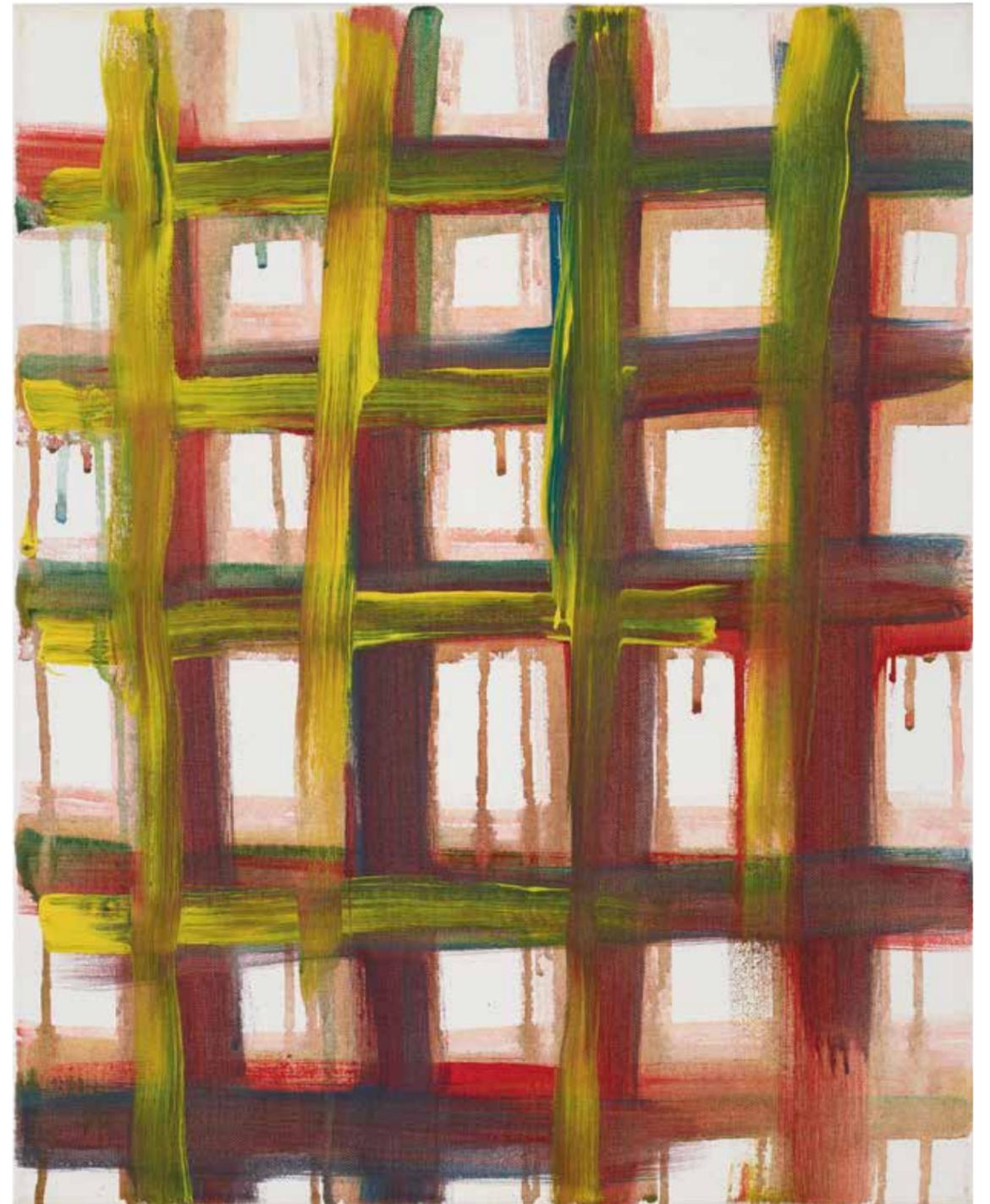
Previous page, right:
Untitled, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 40 cm
[BK/1053/AoC]

Left:
Untitled, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 40 cm
[BK/1055/AoC]

Untitled, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 40 cm
[BK/1054/AoC]



Untitled, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 40 cm
[BK/1059/AoC]



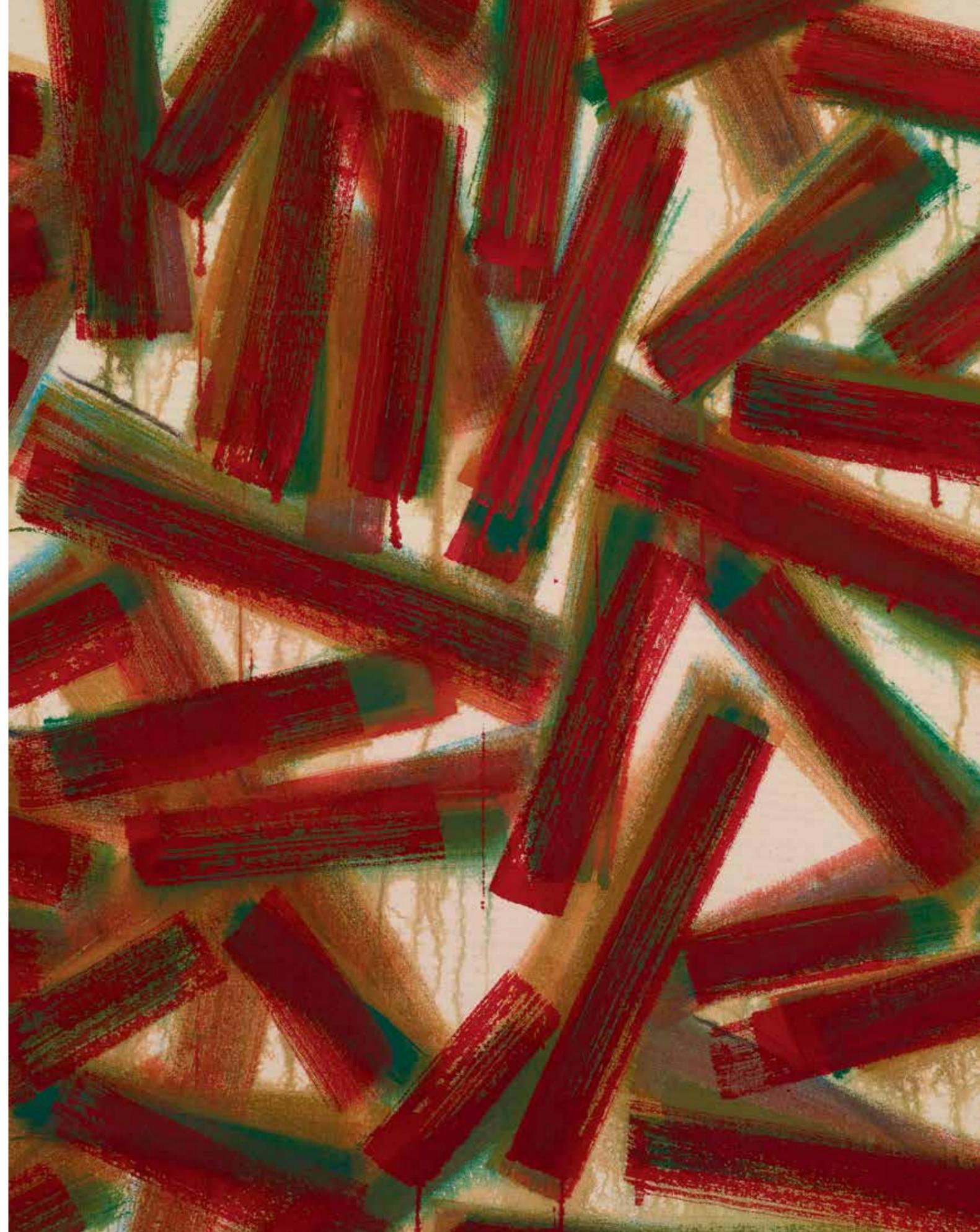
Untitled, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 40 cm
[BK/1058/AoC]



Left:
Untitled, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 50 cm
[BK/1062/AoC]

Untitled, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
70.5 x 60.5 cm
[BK/1067/AoC]





Untitled, 2024-25
Waterbase oil
96 x 125.5 cm
[BK/1031/WbO]

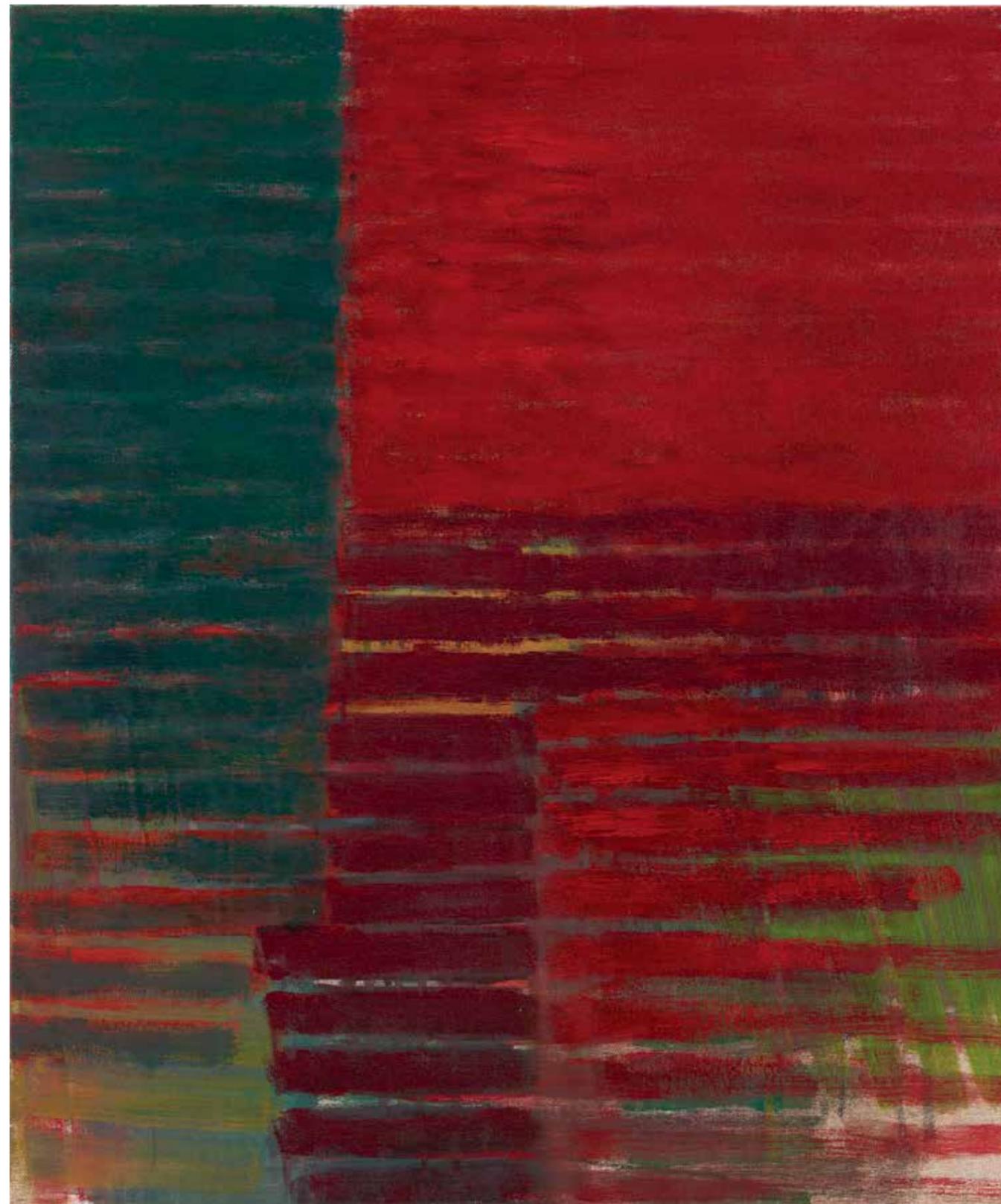


Untitled, 2024-25
Waterbase oil
93 x 124.5 cm
[BK/1032/WbO]



Untitled, 2024
Waterbase oil
60 x 50 cm
[BK/1052/WbO]

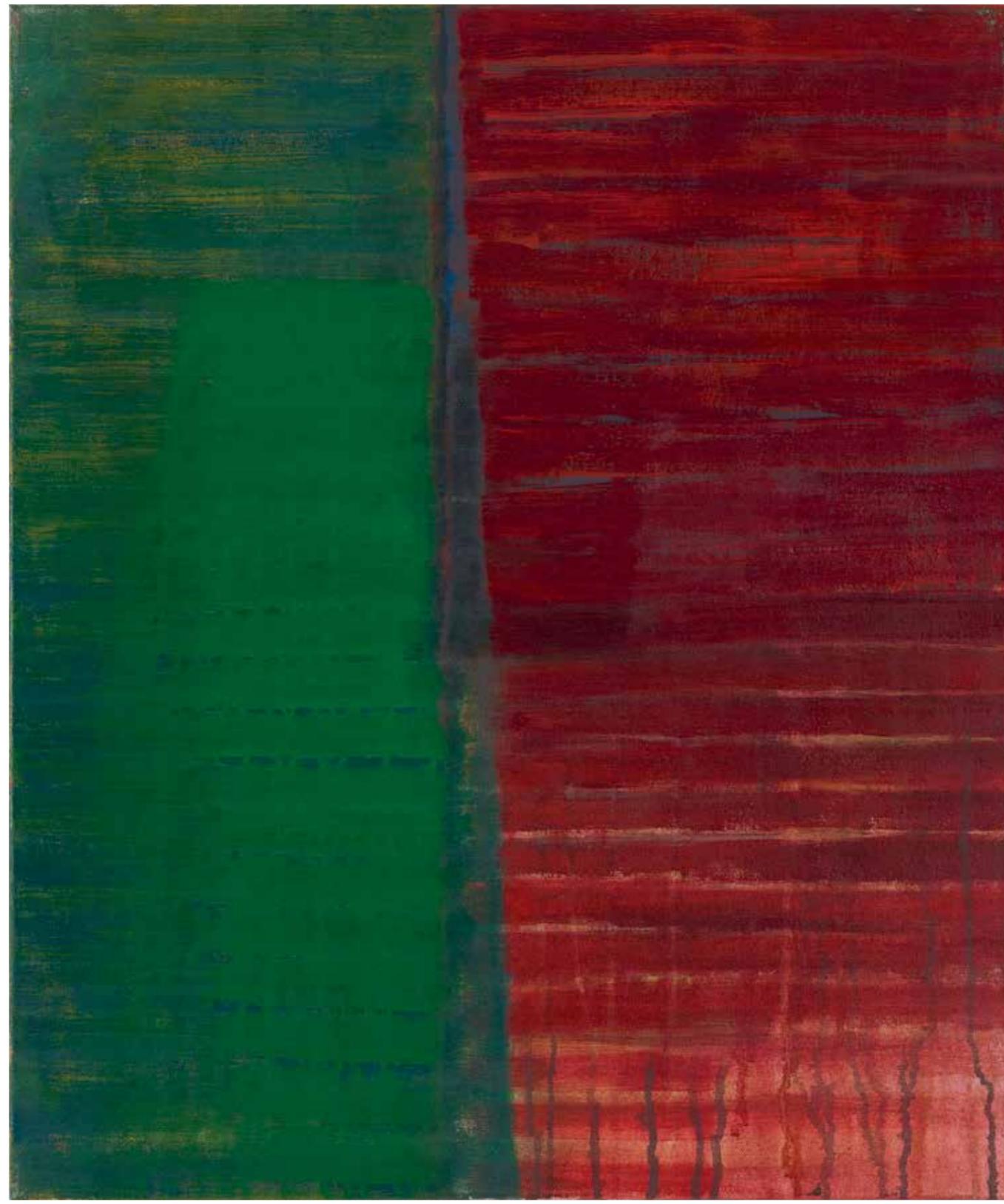
Untitled, 2024
Waterbase oil
60 x 50 cm
[BK/1048/WbO]



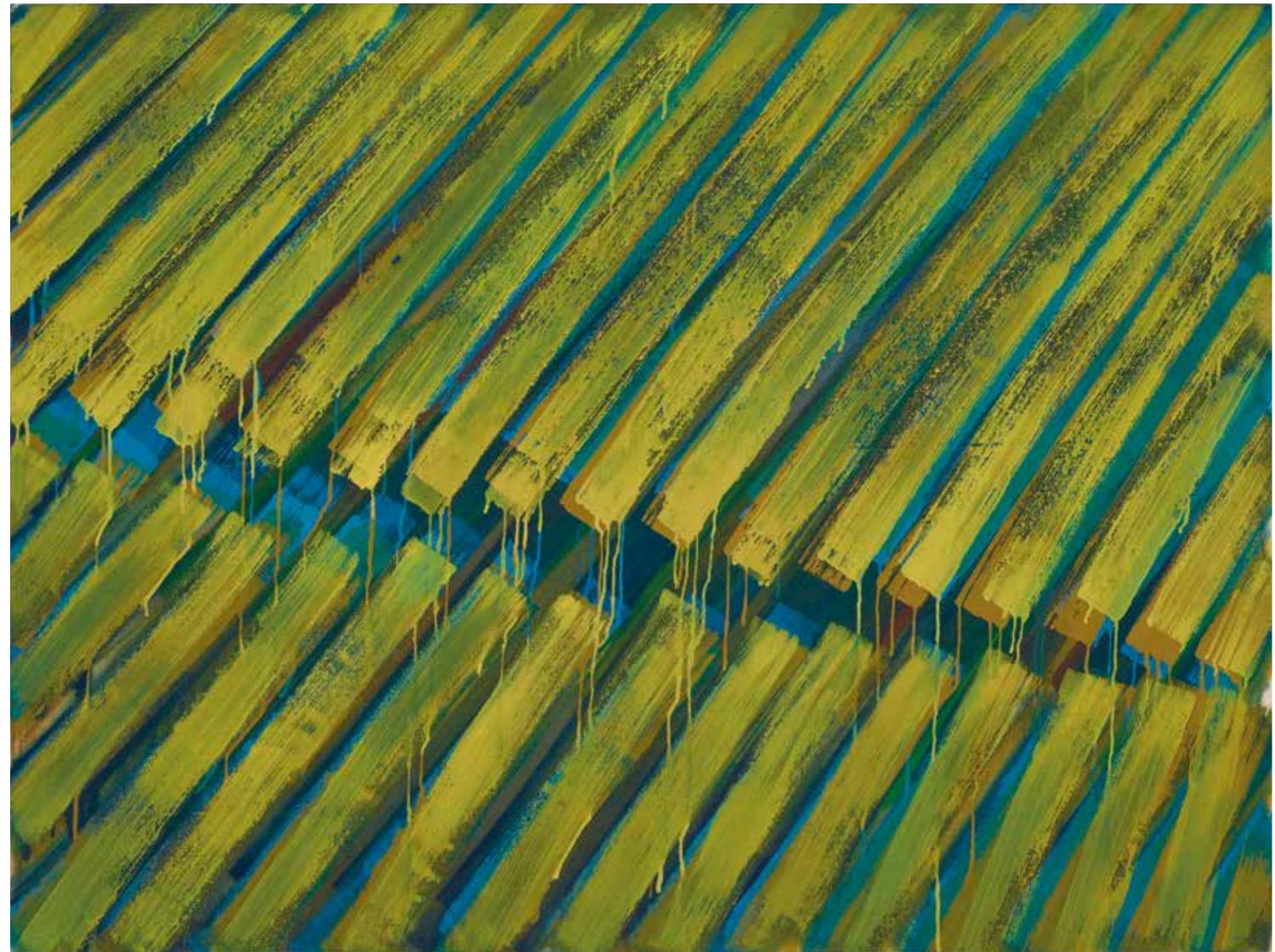
Untitled, 2024
Waterbase oil
60 x 50 cm
[BK/1045/WbO]



Untitled, 2024
Waterbase oil
60 x 50 cm
[BK/1044/WbO]



Untitled, 2024
Waterbase oil
60 x 50 cm
[BK/1047/WbO]



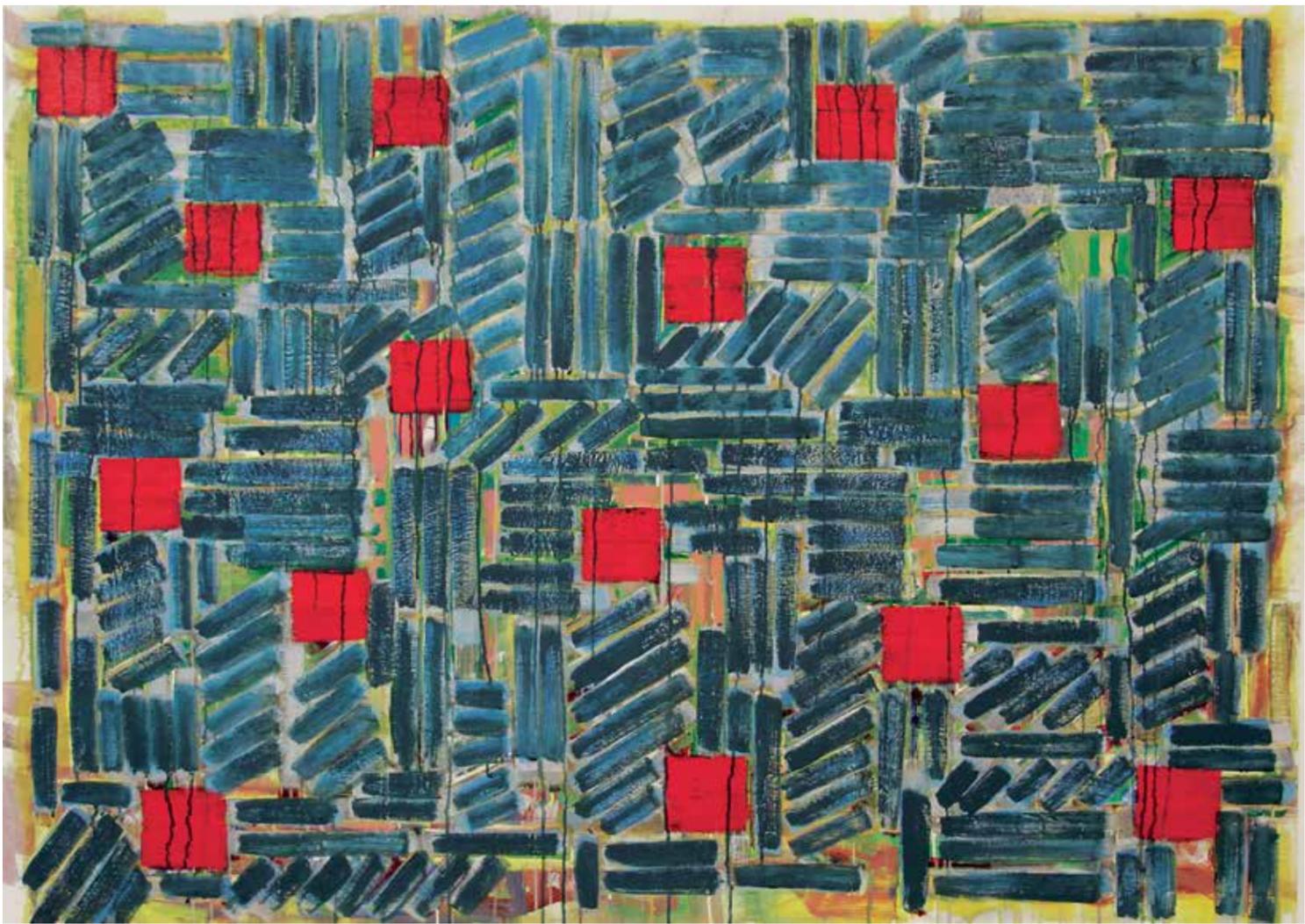
Untitled, 2024-25
Waterbase oil
95.7 x 127 cm
[BK/1034/WbO]



Untitled, 2025
Waterbase oil
103 x 143 cm
[BK/1078/WbO]

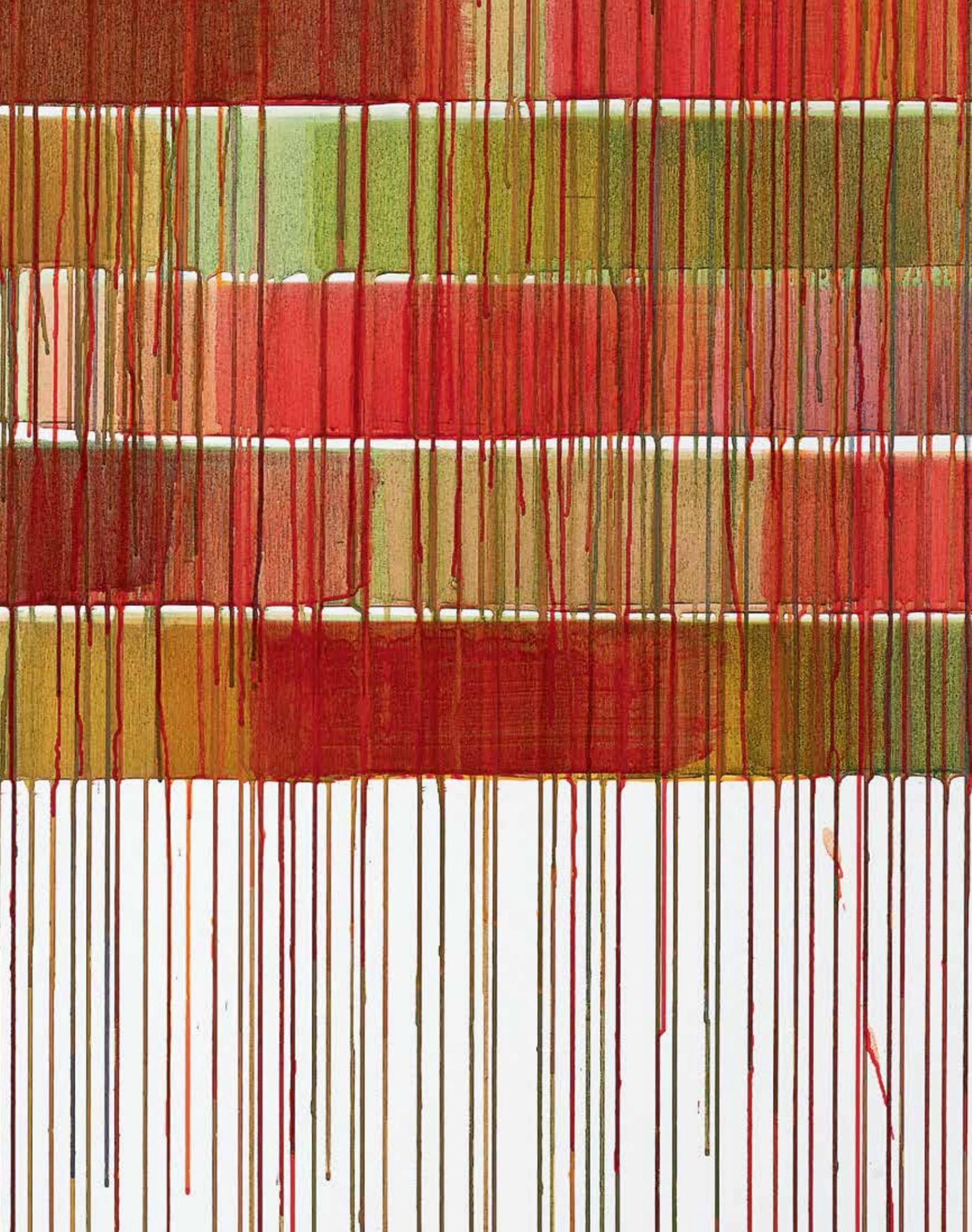


Untitled, 2025
Waterbase oil
108 x 148 cm
[BK/1080/WbO]



Untitled, 2025
Waterbase oil
105 x 146 cm
[BK/1079/WbO]





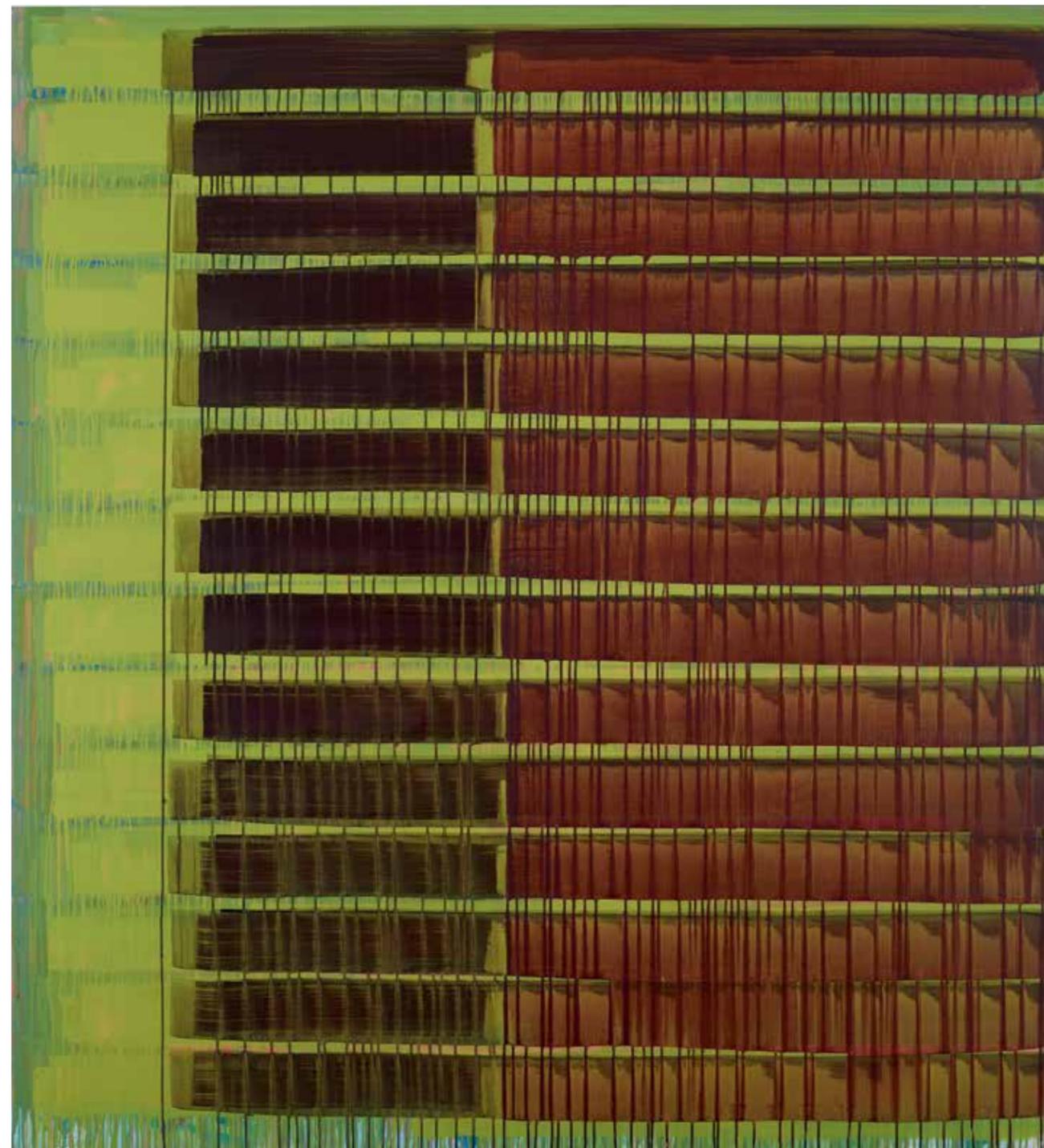
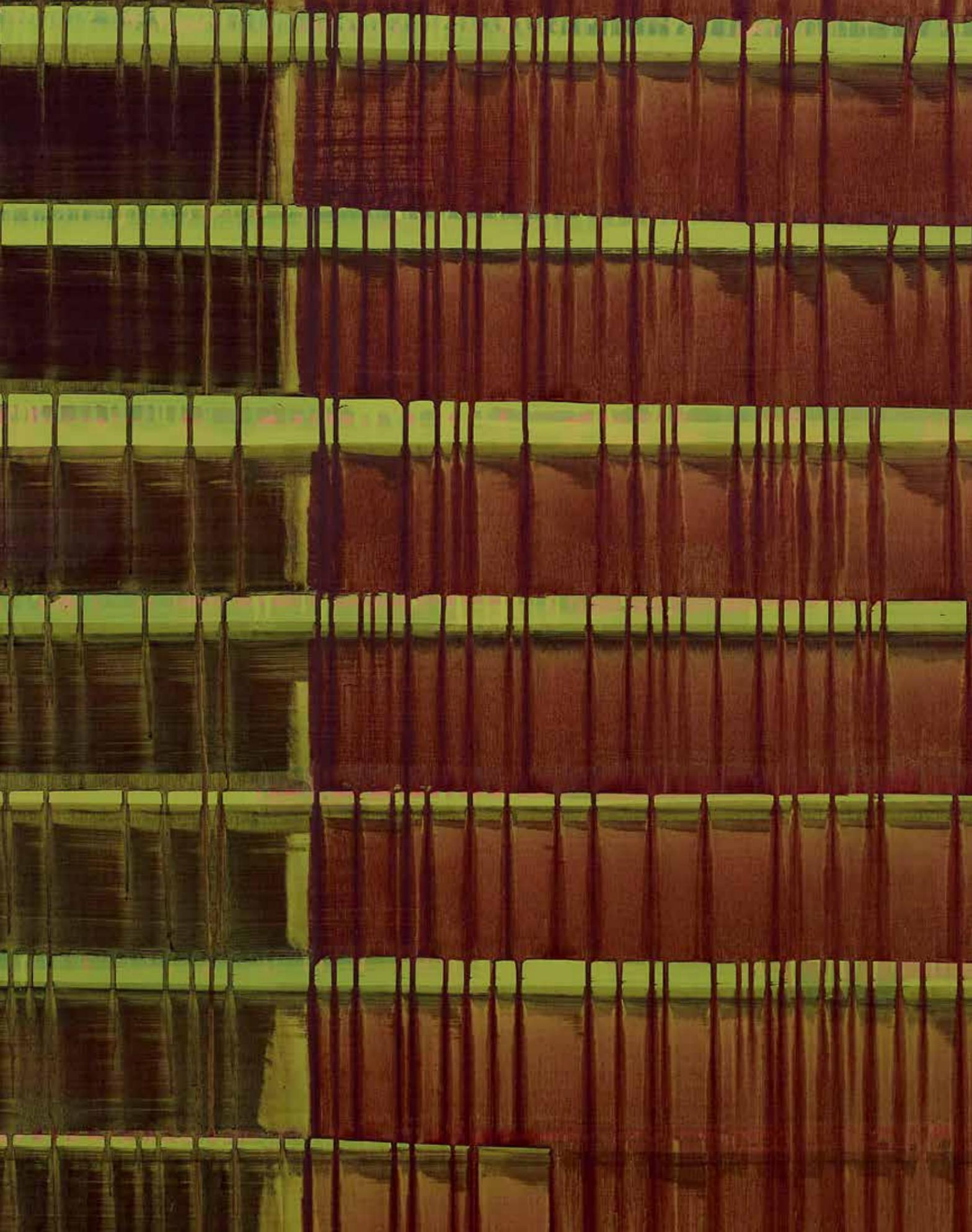
Untitled, 2023-25
Acrylic on canvas
200 x 180 cm
[BK/1007/AoC]



Untitled, 2023-25
Acrylic on canvas
200 x 180 cm
[BK/1006/AoC]



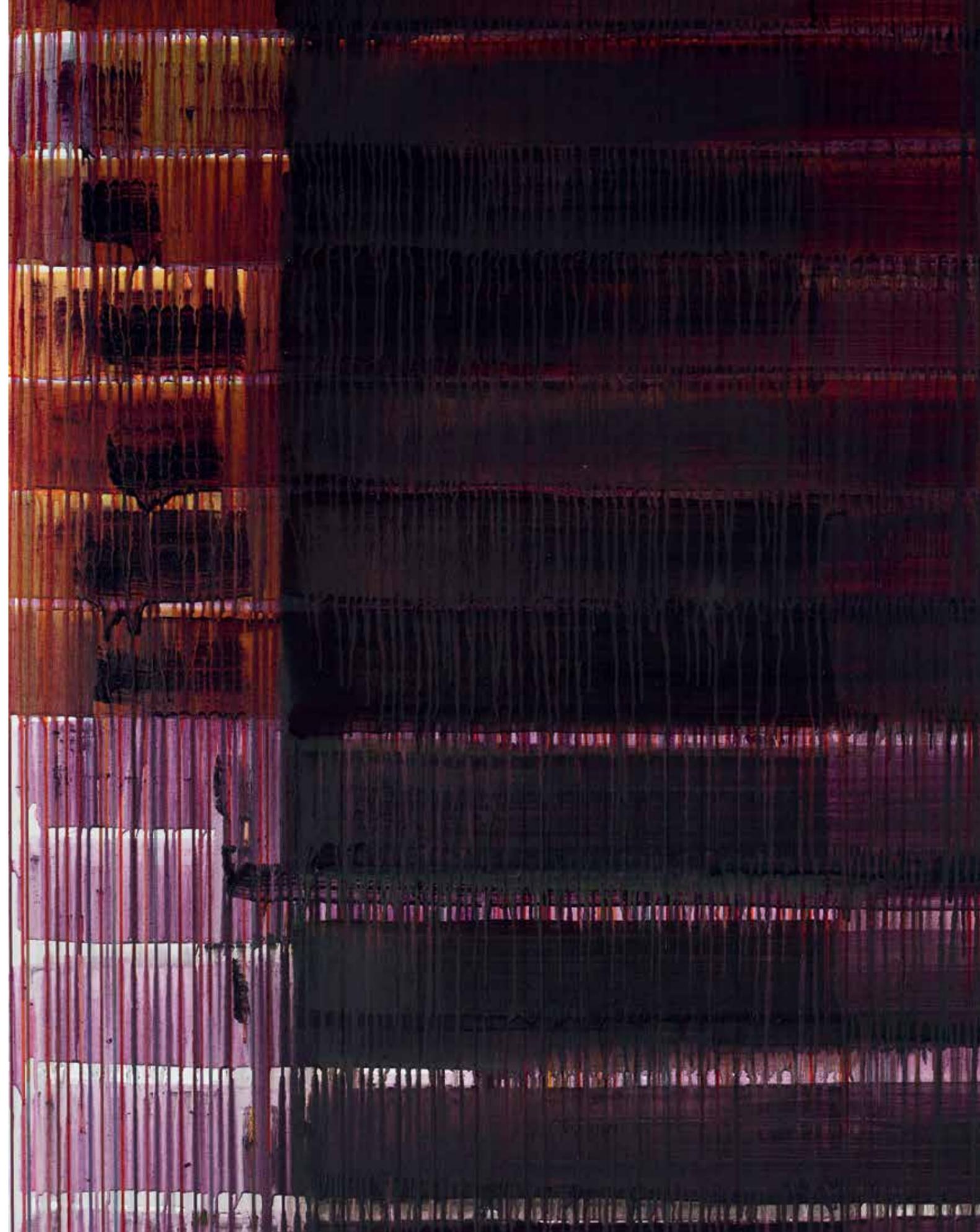
Untitled, 2023-25
Acrylic on canvas
200 x 180 cm
[BK/1005/AoC]

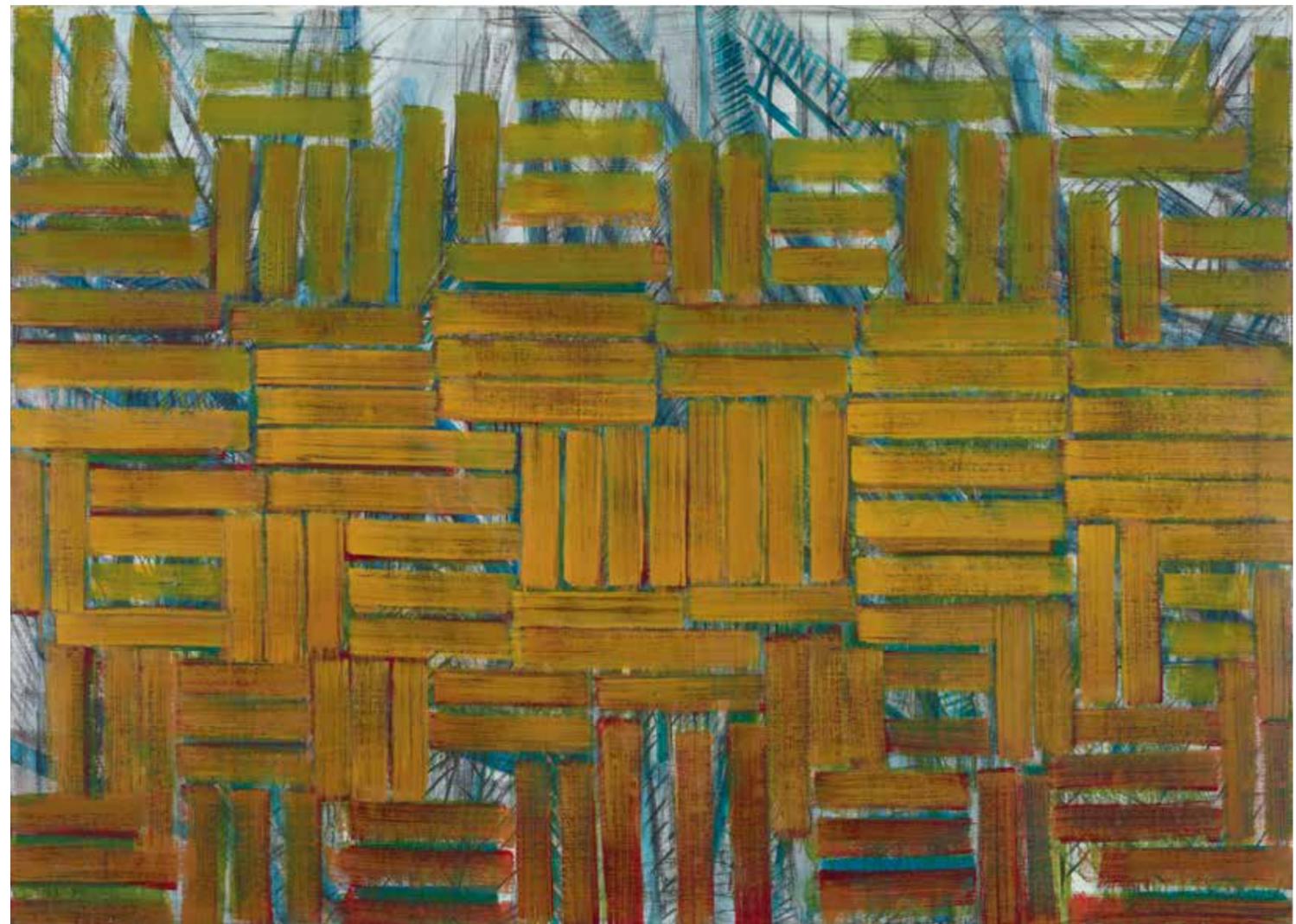
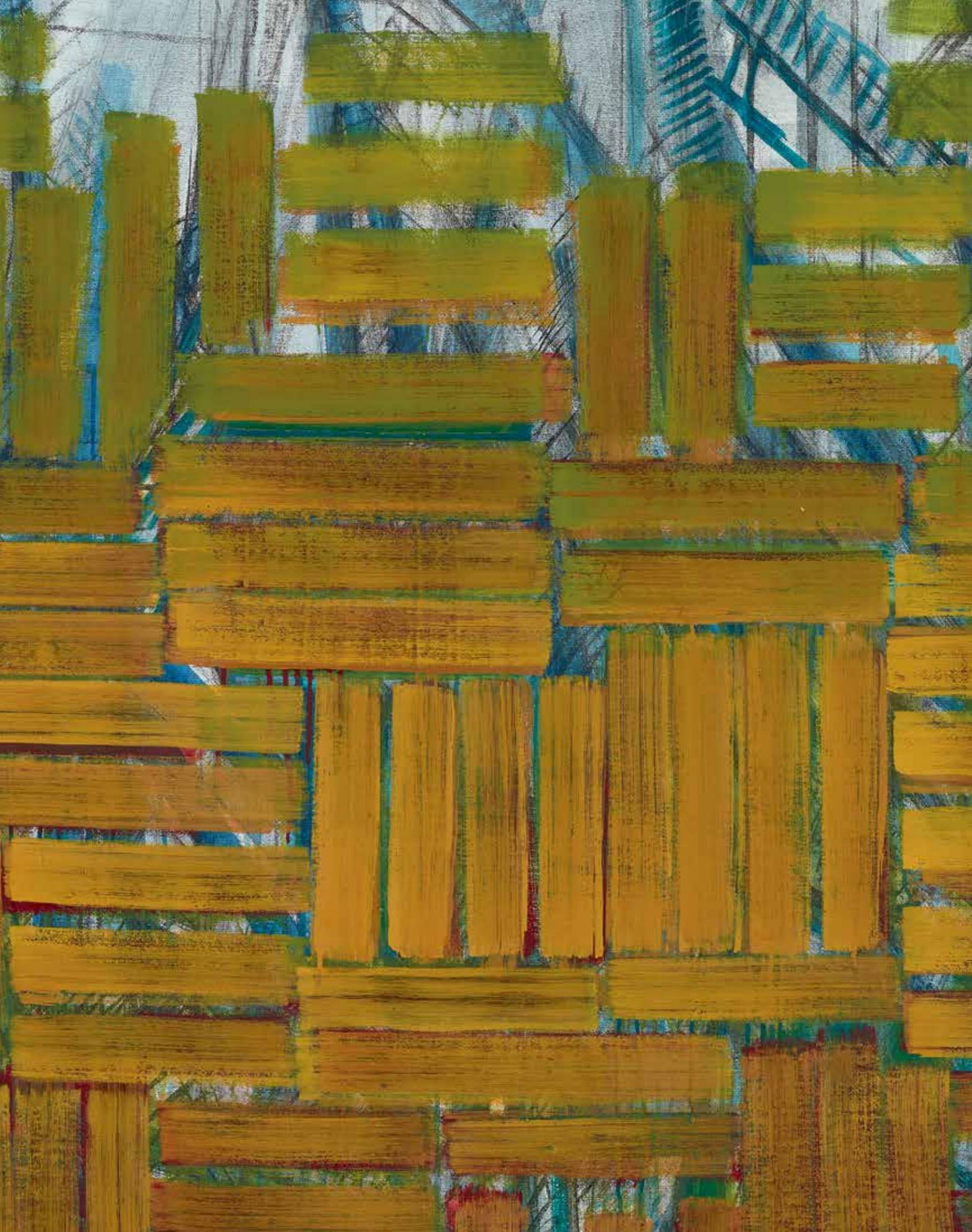


Untitled, 2023-25
Acrylic on canvas
200 x 180 cm
[BK/1003/AoC]



Untitled, 2023-25
Acrylic on canvas
200 x 180 cm
[BK/1011/AoC]





Untitled, 2025
Waterbase oil
139.5 x 195 cm
[BK/1015/WbO]

Following page:
Untitled, 2024-25
Waterbase oil
140 x 229.5 cm
[BK/1014/WbO]



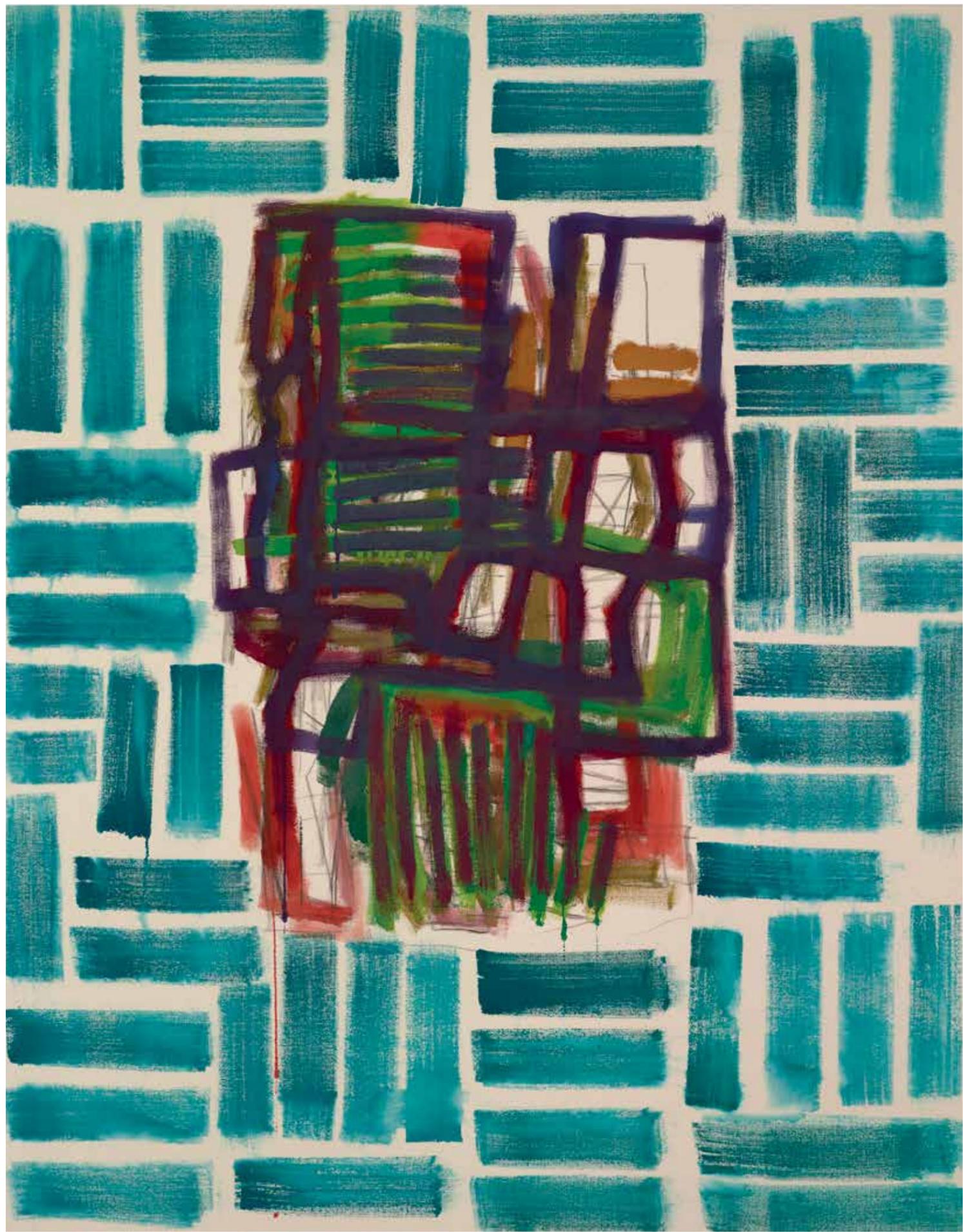
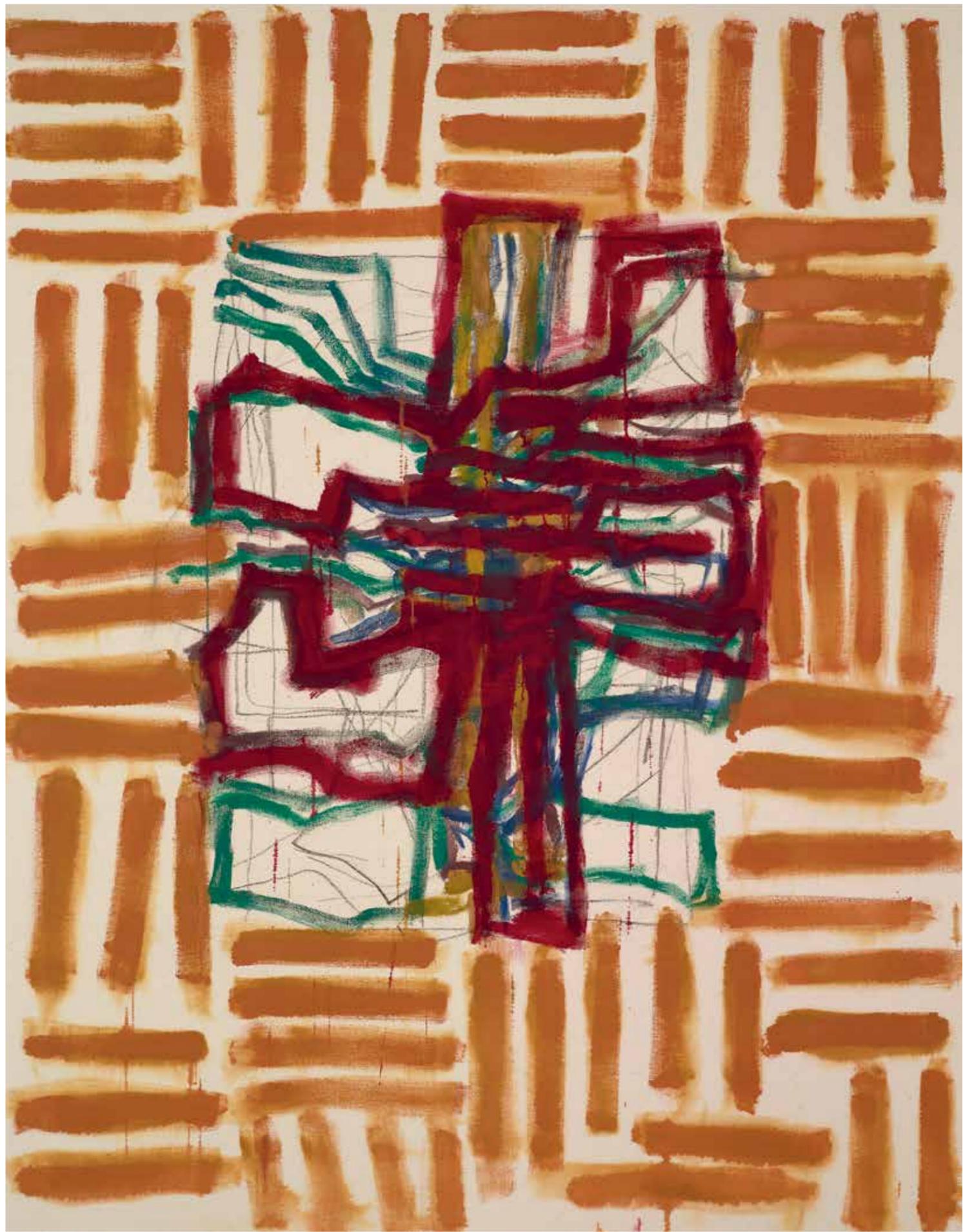


Untitled, 2024-25
Waterbase oil
145 x 257.5 cm
[BK/1013/WbO]





Untitled, 2024
Waterbase oil
135 x 105 cm
[BK/1025/WbO]



Previous page, left:
Untitled, 2024
Waterbase oil
135 x 105 cm
[BK/1023/WbO]

Previous page, right:
Untitled, 2024
Waterbase oil
135 x 105 cm
[BK/1026/WbO]

Untitled, 2024
Waterbase oil
135 x 105 cm
[BK/1028/WbO]

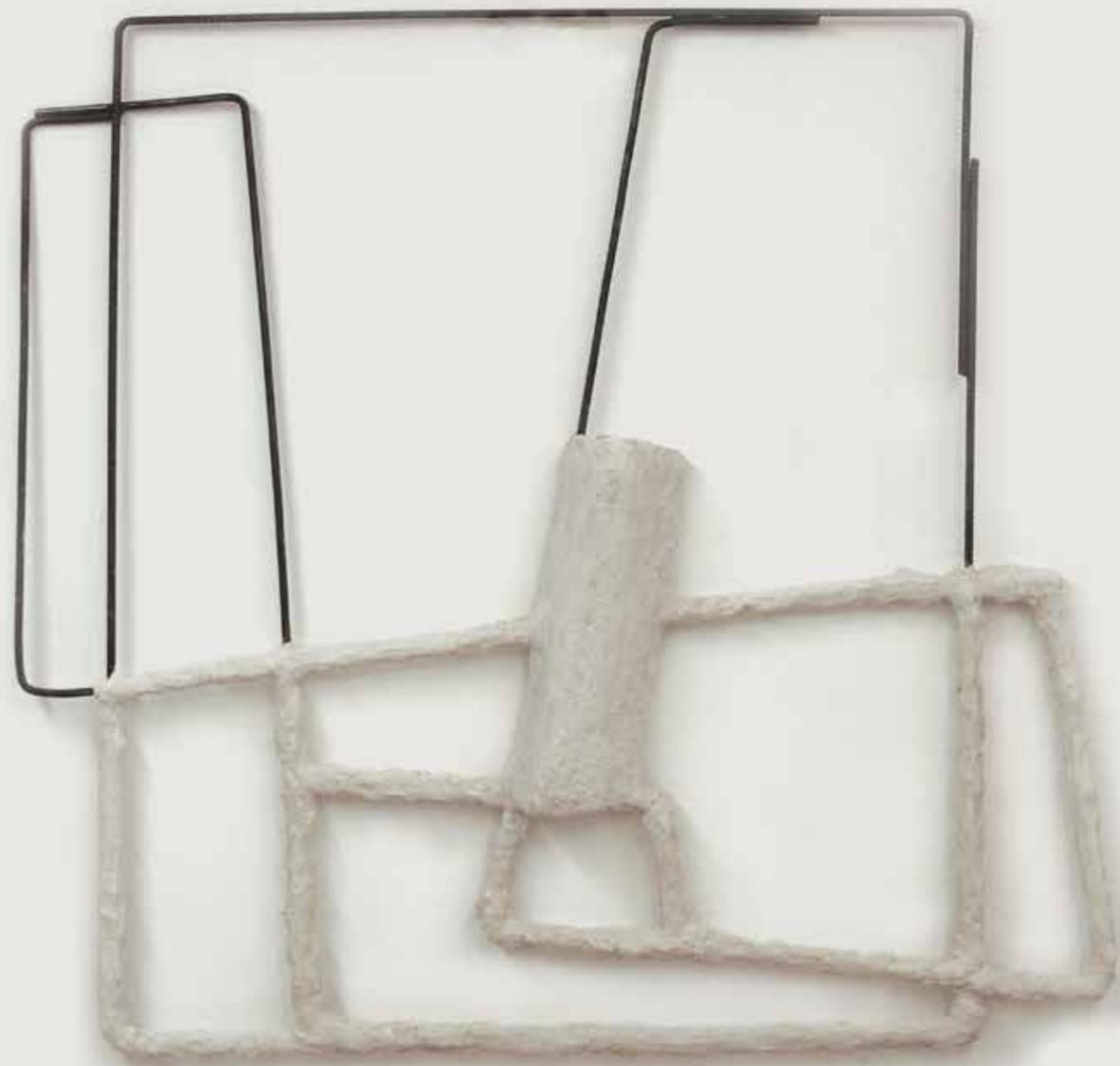


Untitled, 2024
Waterbase oil
135 x 105 cm
[BK/1022/WbO]





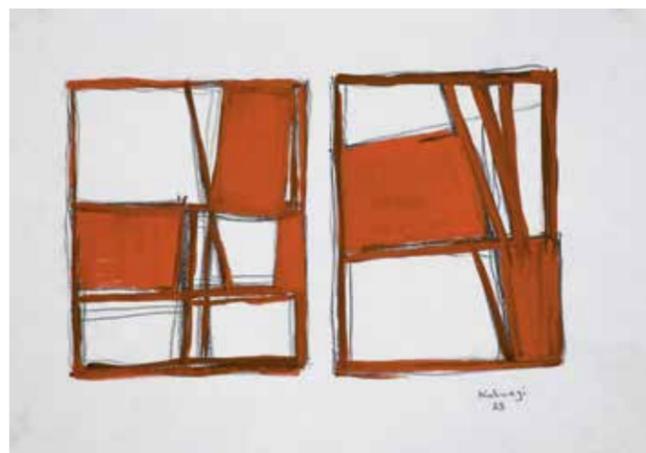
Untitled, 2023-25
Plaster, metal and natural fiber
52.5 x 42 cm
[BK/S-01/P]



Untitled, 2023
Pencil and gouache on paper
21 x 29.7 cm

Untitled, 2025
Plaster, metal and natural fiber
102.5 x 107 cm approx.

[BK/S-07/P]



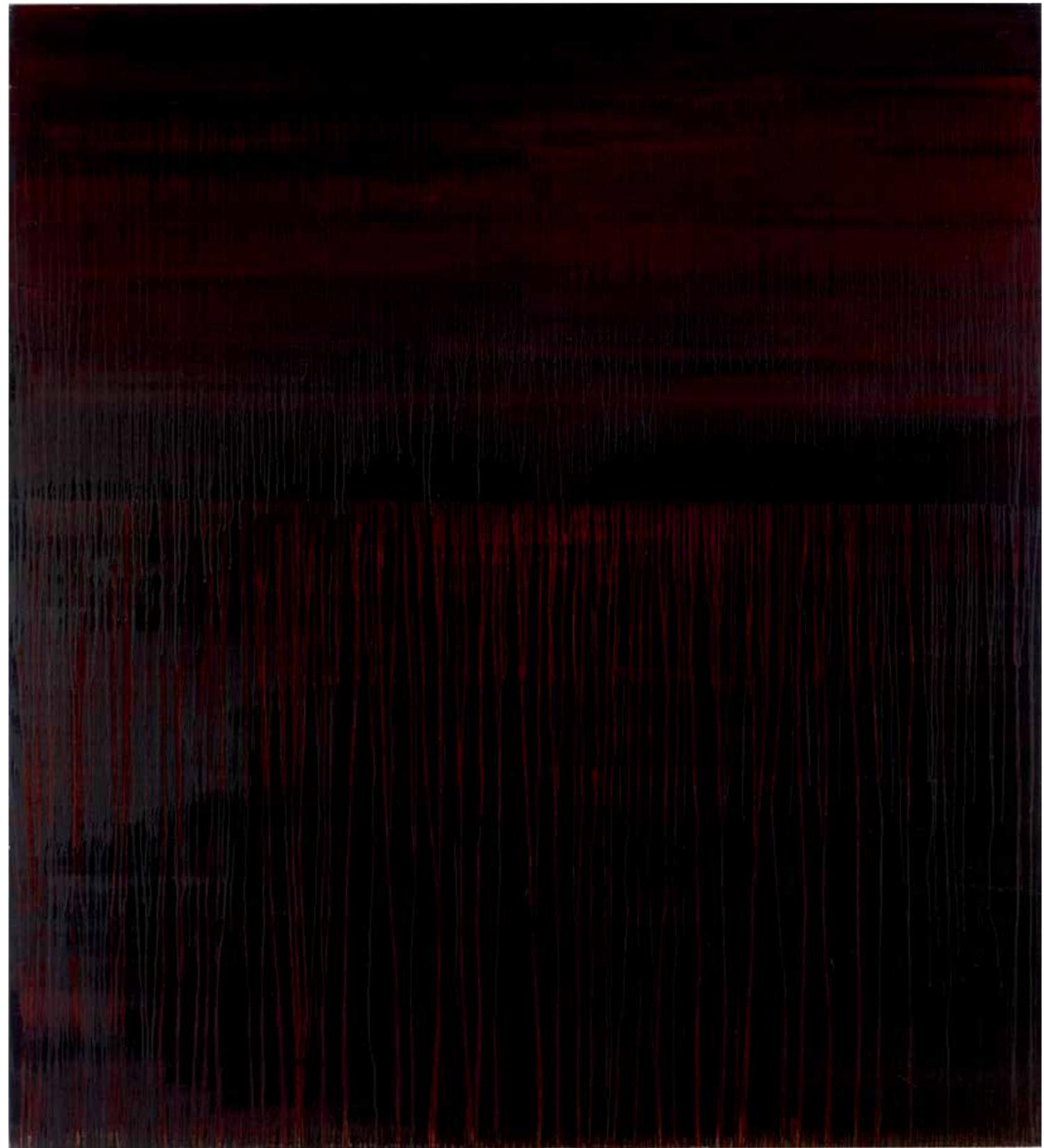
Untitled, 2023
Pencil and gouache on paper
21 x 29.7 cm

Untitled, 2023-25
Plaster, metal and natural fiber
52.5 x 42 cm approx.

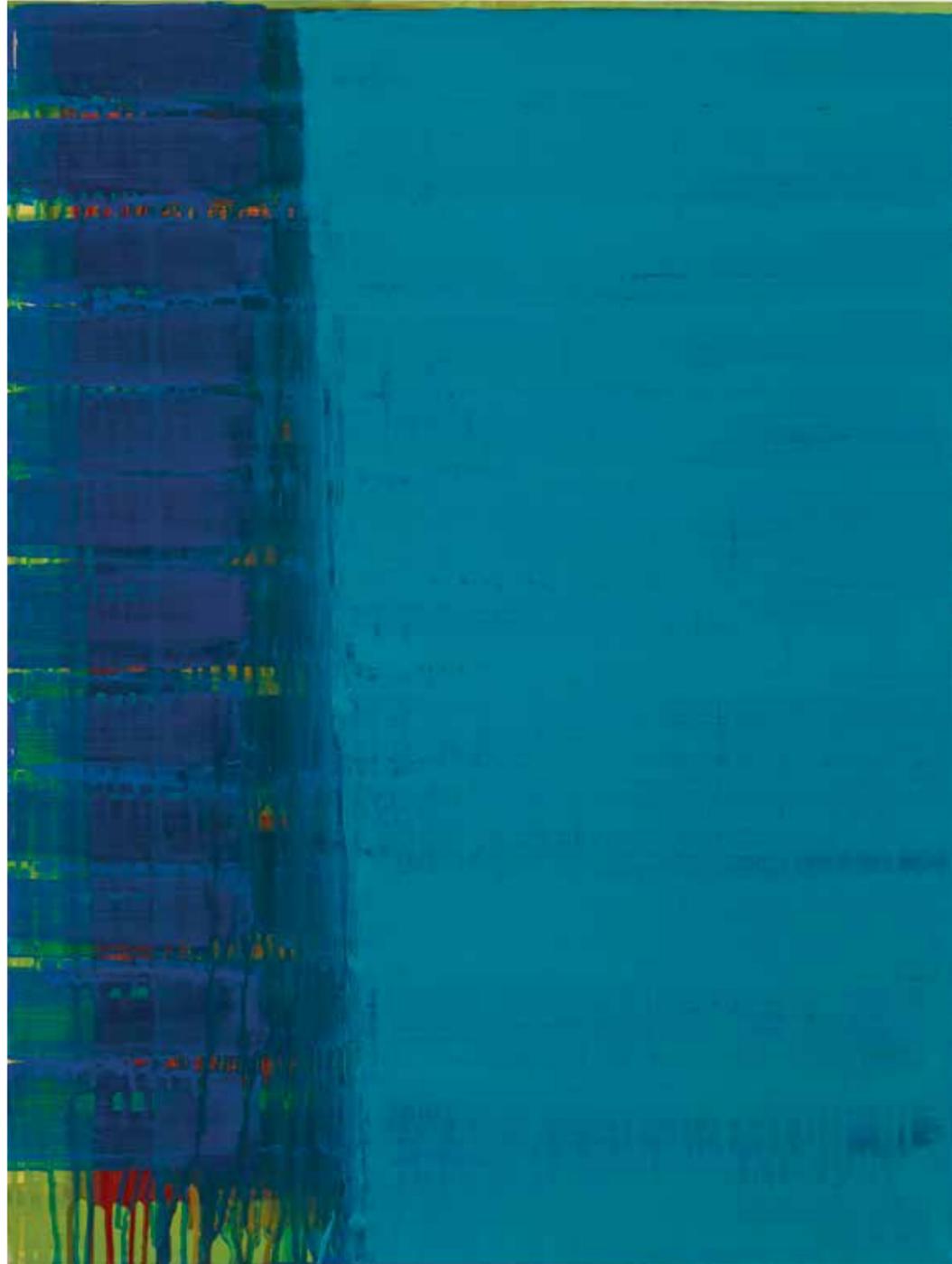
[BK/S-02/P], [BK/S-03/P],
[BK/S-04/P], [BK/S-05/P]



Untitled, 2023-25
Waterbase oil
132 x 265 cm
[BK/1008/WbO]



Untitled, 2023-25
Acrylic on canvas
200 x 180 cm
[BK/1012/AoC]



Untitled, 2022
Acrylic on canvas
80 x 60 cm
[BK/1070/AoC]



Bassam Kahwagi was born in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1963. Between 1982 and 1986, he attended several private art schools in Paris, foremost of which was the Atelier Nicolas Poussin, where he studied painting and sculpture with Maurice Guillon.

From 1990 to 1993, he attended several workshops in etching and lithographic printmaking techniques. Between 1987 and 1994, he held a number of solo exhibitions in Paris and Lebanon, after which he took an extended break from publicly exhibiting his work. In 2020, he returned to exhibiting with a solo show at Agjal Art Gallery in Beirut.

Since 2021, he has been an instructor and later an artist-in-residence with the Studio Art Program, Department of Fine Arts and Art History, at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

This catalogue was published on the occasion of the exhibition held at Saleh Barakat Gallery in Beirut, opening on January 8, 2026.

The artist expresses his deepest gratitude to those without whom the exhibition and this catalogue would not have been possible: Saleem Al Bahloly, Yasmina Traboulsi, Walid Sadek, Amy Todman, and the Saleh Barakat Gallery team.

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