

Varda Caivano's abstraction opens different ways of understanding the image, seeks to reveal the counter-effect of painting, as if it were inimical of the image. Her compositions, sometimes rhythmic and antagonistically entropic, reveal hidden layers in the painting, in addition to a solemn and urgent sense, as if something was going to happen at any moment but following a particular order.

Caivano investigates moments of light and image, almost like an archeologist exploring fossilized rocks. Her work is at once mysterious, time persistent, and timeless. In the exercise of combining and juxtaposing colors and shapes, Caivano work is a meditation on the nature of her own paintings. One of the possible ways to unlock our understanding of Caivano's work is to consider the image as essence, without the artifices commonly attributed to painting. It is as if we are facing what is behind it. It is the state of the beginning but also of the end of the light. It causes an involuntary anomaly in time, in the same way that poetry does. By exploring a rhythm marked by the gesture preceding the form, Caivano provides alternatives for the painting to suggest an essence above its image. When using the image as a tool to access subjectivity, the artist aligns her way with a poet's method, which uses words to abstract language. They are rhythmic noises that force us to look inward, for what is buried – for the origin.

Varda Caivano (b.1971, Buenos Aires, Argentina), lives and works between London and Madrid.

Her recent solo exhibitions include Mendes Wood DM, Brussels (2022); Lulu by X Museum, Mexico City (2022); Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo (2021); Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo (2019); The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2015); Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg (2006).

Her recent group exhibitions include Mendes Wood DM at d'Ouwe Kerk, Retranchement (2023 and 2022); Spiral Garden, Tokyo (2022); Zabludowicz Collection, London (2020); Hayward Gallery Touring, Leeds Museum and Art Gallery, Leeds; The Levinsky Gallery, The Arts Institute - University of Plymouth, Plymouth; University of Bath and Bath Spa School of Art and Design, Bath; Inverness Museum & Art Gallery and Thurso Art Gallery, Inverness (2019 – 2020); The National Museum of Art, Osaka (2018); Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2014); 55<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale, Venice (2013); Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham; Hayward Gallery, London; Glasgow Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow; Plymouth Arts Centre, Plymouth (2010).





2022 Mendes Wood DM, Brussels Moonlight paintings

In Moonlight paintings, Varda Caivano brings together new paintings that were all produced in 2022. Some of them saw the light of day in Mexico during the summer. Others, slightly larger in scale, were made in Madrid. Together they attest to Caivano's growing reputation as 'one of the best painters of any age, anywhere today' (Barry Schwabsky in ArtForum, 2011).

The works made in Mexico are the result of a peculiar way of working which is unique to the artist: they are painted back to front. This is how it goes. Sitting on her knees, Caivano starts painting on a piece of unprimed linen or rough jute that is laid out in front of her on the studio floor. The paint is applied with a brush or a rag or sprayed upon the surface. As the paint is wet and liquid, most of it is absorbed by the linen and seeps through the fabric. Then, at one point, the artist decides to turn over the linen

and to continue working on the flipside which then becomes the front. With charcoal lines she maps the stains that are shifting contours as the paint dries. The artist has gone fishing, so to speak. Fishing for distinctive shapes and rhythmical patterns in murky waters. Swirls and curls come into play, new layers of colors are added, exploratory contours indicate possible edges of the painting. Gradually, out of this formless myriad of specs and patches, a new image originates. An image never seen before. An image that was always there.

Caivano is a marvelous colorist. In response to the fierce sunlight in Mexico and Spain, her paintings glow with golden browns and emerald greens. Together with a sun scorched yellow and a striking cobalt blue they add up to a bright and silvery pallet. Metallic paints are part of it, changing the

reflection of light with every move of the eye. The ever-changing optical effects make parts of the image come forward and recede alternately. Strangely enough, these tacky hues of copper, gold and silver look natural rather than industrial, like the glimmering scales of pink salmon or blue mackerel. Each of the works seems vibrant with life, recalling the atmospheric sensuality of Pierre Bonnard.

The relation of the painted image to its supporting surface and its irregular edges is as complex as it is capricious. In some works, the image extends towards all sides. In others, an unworked area surrounds it. This no man's land of uncertain status is without doubt a constitutive part of the picture, but it also functions as a permeable membrane, where the realm of painting seems to interconnect with the world at large. Typically, all Caivano's paintings lack a fixed circumference, a definite framework. Each one of them is permanently negotiating a possible relation towards its very own limits – which lends the works their unruly and independent character.

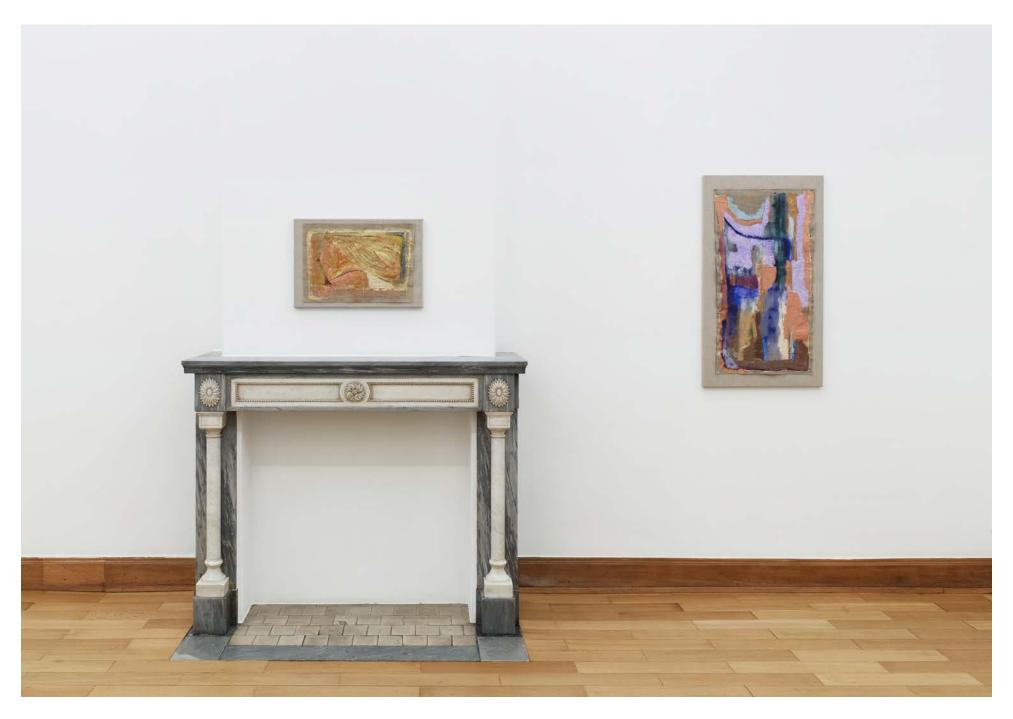
The painting process may start from vague memories of things seen or situations once observed (it doesn't get any clearer than that), but representation is not the goal. Intentions are transformed in intensities; descriptions make way for suggestions. Caivano's art evolves like thoughts, without a clear beginning, without a definite end, like a stream of consciousness. The painting process changes direction in unpredictable ways, gets interrupted or accelerated beyond control. It is difficult, if not impossible, to trace which decision led to each new step in the developing process. Cause and effect get mixed up. In the end, each one of these works is the conclusion of a succession of gestures whose purpose remains unspecified – as in life itself, one might add.

- Dominic van den Boogerd



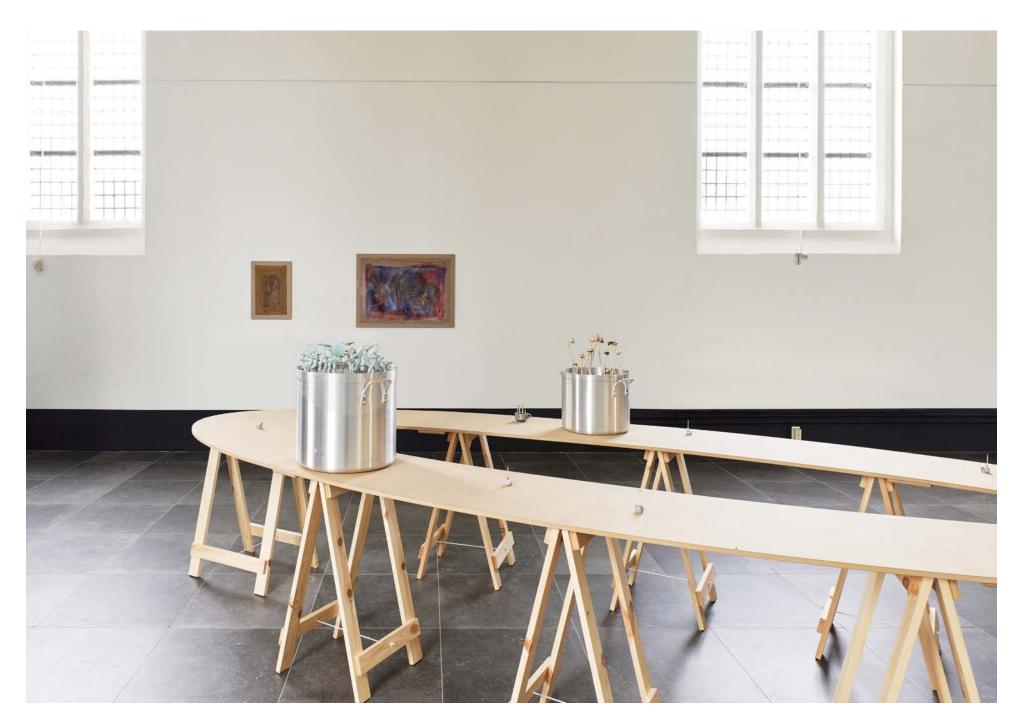












All season sanctuary, Mendes Wood DM at d'Ouwe Kerk, Retranchement, 2022



2021 Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo Varda Caivano

Caivano investigates moments of light and image, almost like an archeologist exploring fossilized rocks. Her work is at once mysterious and same time persistent and timeless. In the exercise of combining and juxtaposing colors and shapes, Caivano work is a meditation on the nature of her own paintings. One of the possible ways to unlock our understanding of Caivano's work is to consider the image as essence, without the artifices commonly attributed to painting. It is as if we are facing what is behind it.

When exploring the image's essential quality, the process of experiencing the exhibition can reveal specific psychoanalytical characteristics of the observer – The demand for questions rather than answers is well defined in its structure, and it is like an investigation of effects over causes – and their relationship to the paintings. It is as if her painting questioned the origin of the world or simply the origin of our own observation.

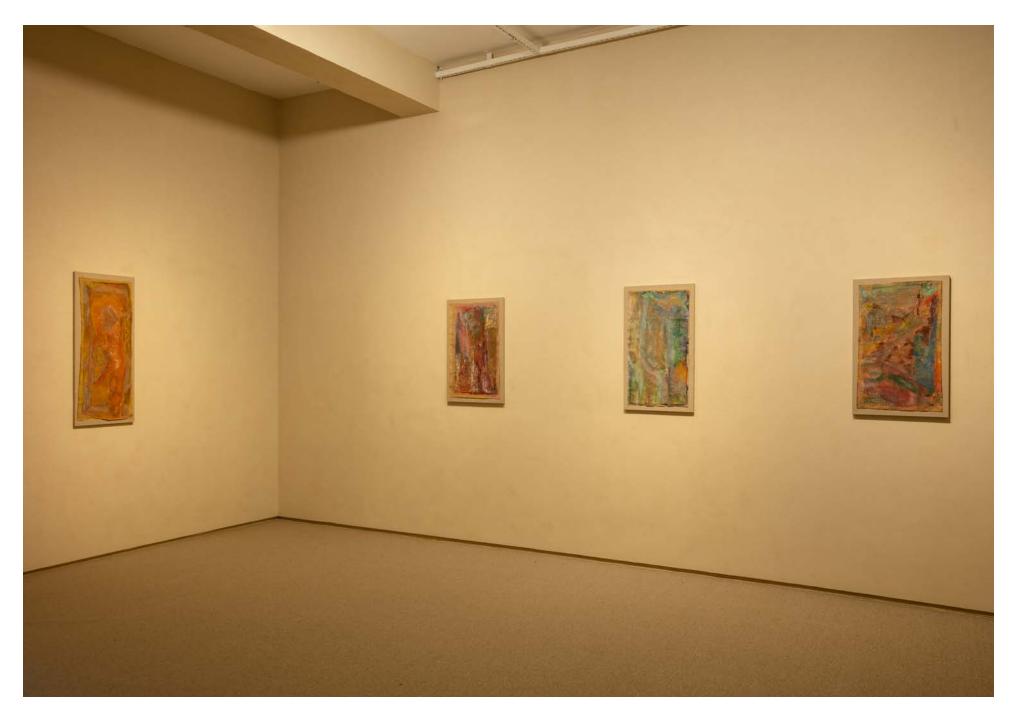
This examination is both radical and silent. The oil and coal on the jute suggest resistance but at the same time strive towards a kind of balance. The virtuously peculiar relationship between painting, jute, and the fabrics in the frame suggest a look outside the painting at the same time that takes the viewer into it, a dichotomy of ways to look at the painting. The sensitivity of Caivano's body of work finds urgency in her method. The artist paints her images from the inside to the outside.

They are negative of what can be understood in painting. It is the state of the beginning but also of the end of the light. It causes an involuntary anomaly in time, in the same way that poetry does. By exploring a rhythm marked by the gesture preceding the form, Caivano provides alternatives for the painting to suggest an essence above its image. When using the image as a tool to access subjectivity, the artist aligns her way with a poet's method, which uses words to abstract language. They are rhythmic noises that force us to look inward, for what is buried – for the origin.



Varda Caivano, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, 2021









Varda Caivano, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, 2016



Varda Caivano, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, 2019









2015
The Renaissance Society, Chicago
The DENSITY of the ACTIONS

Caivano's colors challenge boundaries, initiate contradictions, establish continuities and agilities all at once, but also in sequence ... Drawing plays an essential role in Caivano's work. It is, in the end, what brings both clarity and complexity into the pictures.

 Terry Myers, "Change of Seen" in The Density of the Actions (The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, 2015)















Untitled
2023
oil on linen
100 x 60 cm













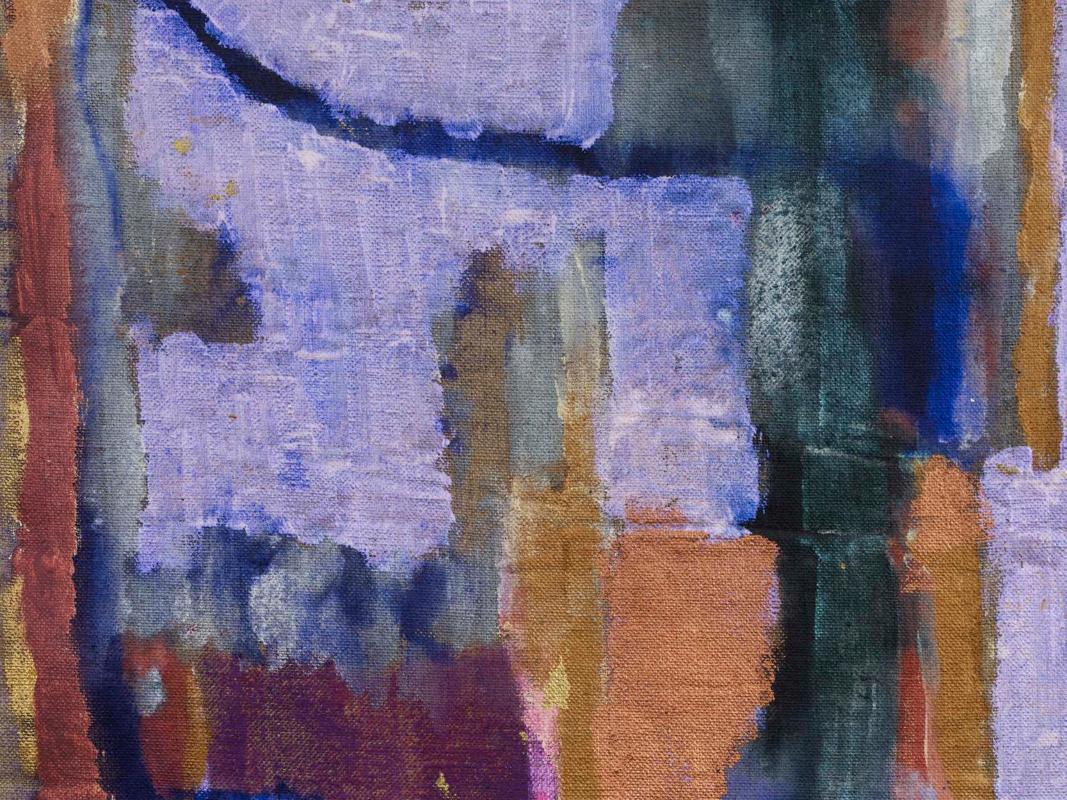


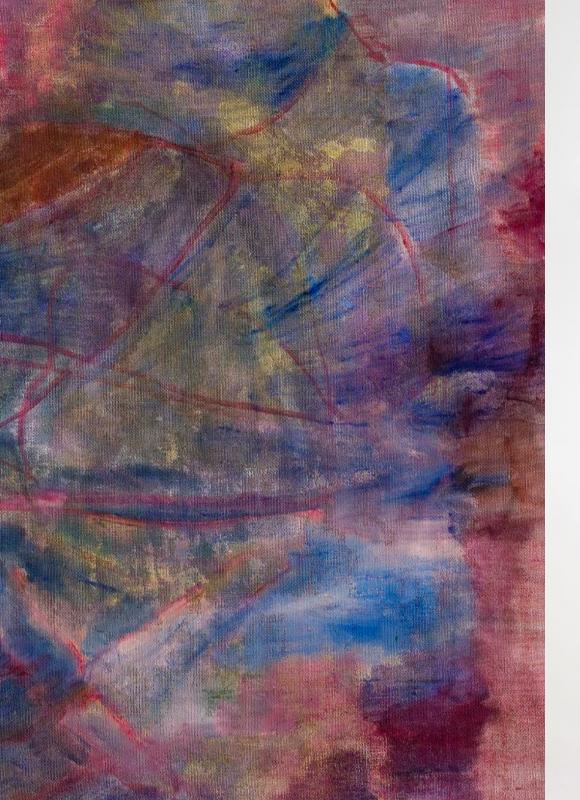




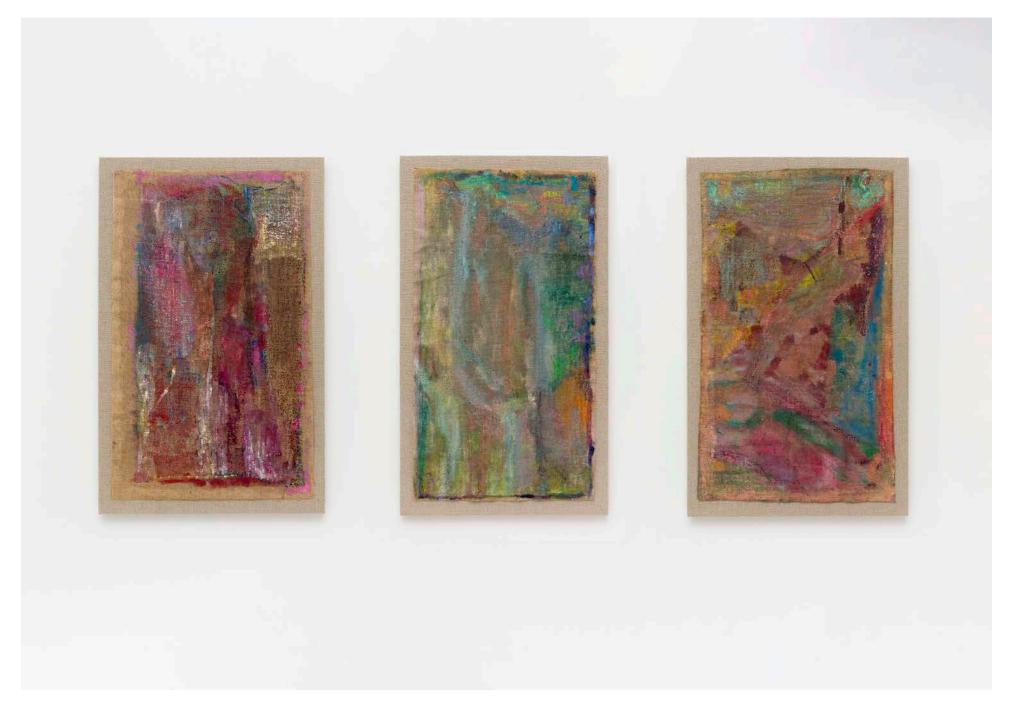


Untitled
2022
mixed technique
58 x 102 cm







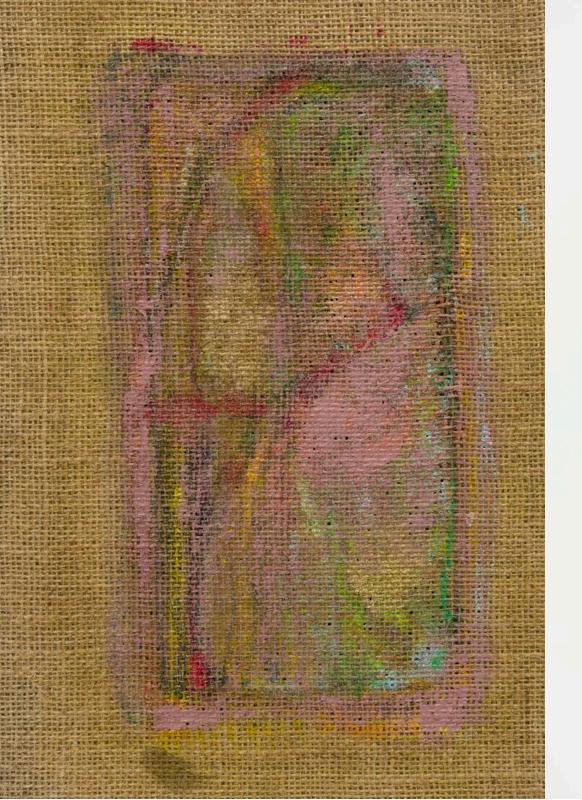








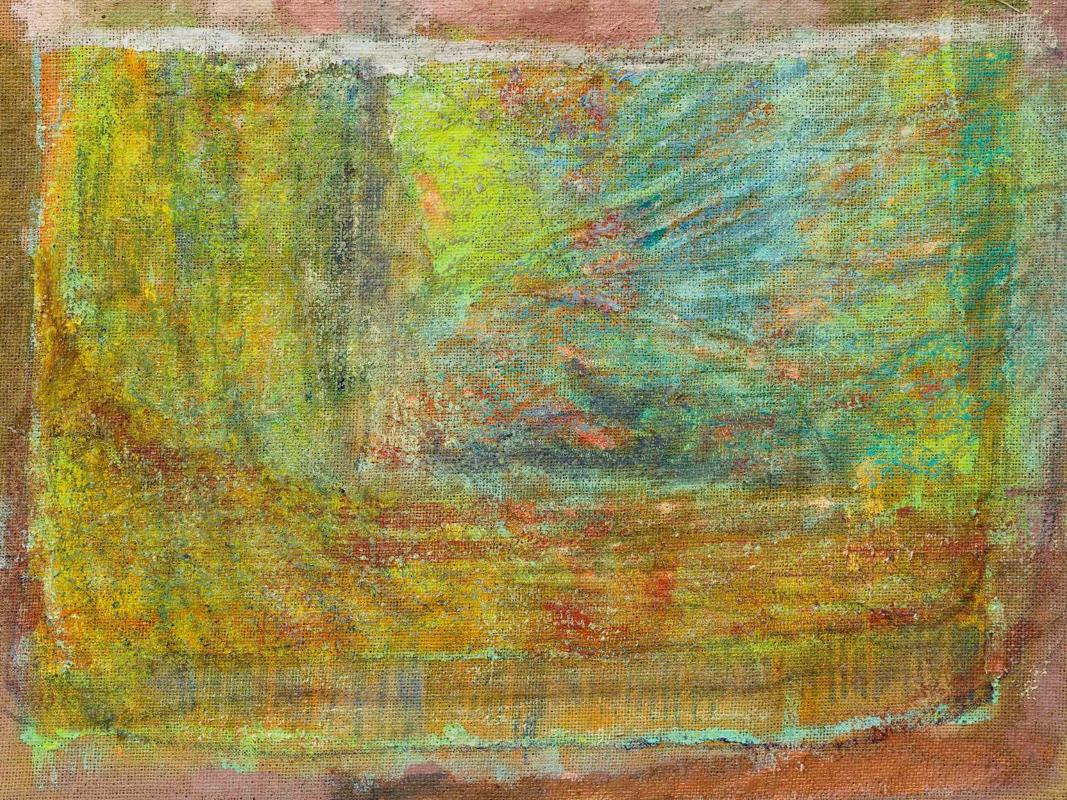






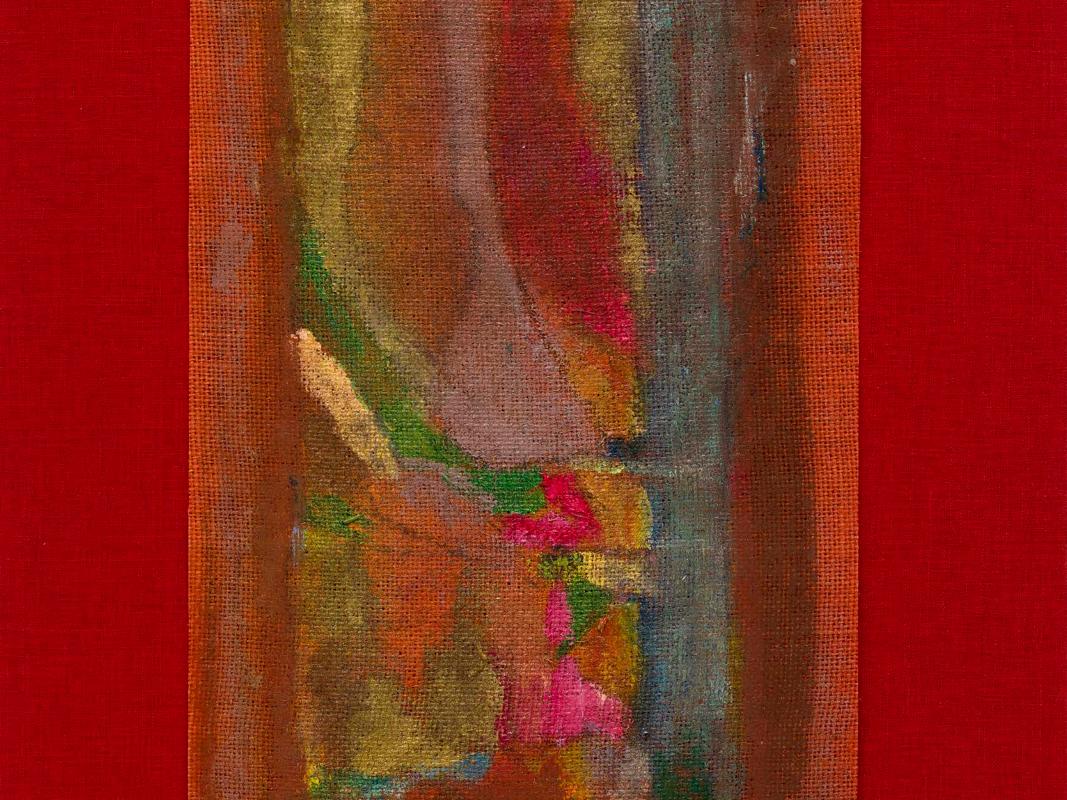
Untitled, 2020, mixed media on fabric,  $52.5 \times 36.5$  cm



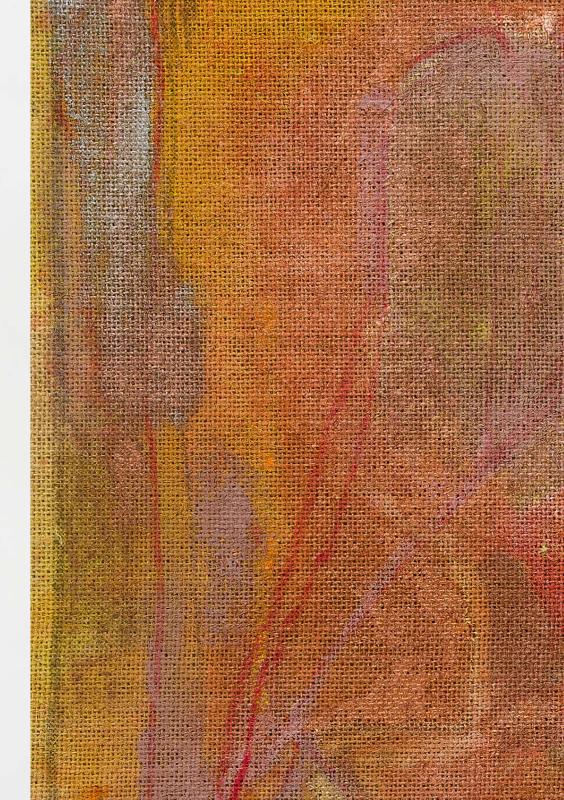




Untitled 2020 mixed media  $64.5 \times 40.5$  cm







### Education

2004

MA in Painting, Royal College of Art, London, United Kingdom

200

Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Art, Goldsmiths College, London, United Kingdom

1998

BA in History of Art, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

## Solo Exhibitions

2022

Moonlight Paintings, Mendes Wood DM, Brussels, Belgium

En México, Lulu by X Museum, Mexico City, Mexico

2021

Varda Caivano, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

2019

Varda Caivano, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2016

Varda Caivano, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2015

Varda Caivano, Victoria Miro, London, United Kingdom

The DENSITY of the ACTIONS, The Renaissance Society, Chicago, USA

2013

In the Studio, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2011

Voice, Victoria Miro, London, United Kingdom

2009

The Inner Me, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Kyoto, Japan

2007

Varda Caivano, Sies + Höke, Dusseldorf, Germany

Varda Caivano Paintings, Chisenhale Gallery, London, United Kingdom

2006

Varda Caivano: Malerei, Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg, Germany

2005

Varda Caivano, Victoria Miro, London, United Kingdom

## **Group Exhibitions**

2023

Positions, Alma Pearl, London, United Kingdom

2022

All season sanctuary, Mendes Wood DM at d'Ouwe Kerk, Retranchement, The Netherlands

The Kingfisher's Wing, GRIMM Gallery, New York, USA

Natural Function, Spiral Garden, Tokyo, Japan

A Minor Constellation, Chris Sharp Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

### 2020

No horizon, no edge to liquid, Zabludowicz Collection, London, United Kingdom

Glass Houses, Mcbean's Orchid Nursery, East Sussex, United Kingdom

#### 2019

Globe as a Palette: Contemporary Art from the Taguchi Art Collection, Sapporo Art Museum; Hokkaido Obihiro Museum of Art; Kushiro Art Museum; Hakodate Museum of Art,

# Hokkaido, Japan

Slow Painting: Hayward Gallery Touring, Leeds Museum and Art Gallery, Leeds; The Levinsky Gallery, The Arts Institute - University of Plymouth, Plymouth, The Edge, University of Bath and Bath Spa School of Art and Design, Bath; Inverness Museum & Art Gallery and Thurso Art Gallery, Inverness, United Kingdom

### 2018

Surface Work, Victoria Miro, London, United Kingdom

The Divine Joke, Anita Rogers Gallery, New York, USA

Collection 2: The 1980s Zeitgeist as a Point of Departure, The National Museum of Art,

Osaka, Japan

2017

Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom

Group exhibition, Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

Drawing Biennial 2017, The Drawing Room, London, United Kingdom

### 2016

Evolutionary Travels, Fundación Arte, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Between Something and Nothing, Richard Telles, Los Angeles, USA

Permeable Edge, Otter Gallery, University of Chichester, Chichester, United Kingdom

A Way of Living, A Palazzo Gallery, Brescia, Italy

In this soup we swim, Kingsgate Project Space, London, United Kingdom

### 2014

Group exhibition by Tomio Koyama Gallery, TOLOT/heuristic SHINONOME, Tokyo, Japan Somewhat Abstract, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, United Kingdom

# 2013

Why not live for Art? II-9 collectors reveal their treasures, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

STAG: BERLIN / LONDON, Dispari & Dispari Project, Reggio Emillia, Italy

Encyclopedic Palace, 55th International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy

Artists 'Artists, CentrePasquArt, Biel, Switzerland

## 2012

9th Gwangju Biennial - Roundtable, Gwangju, South Korea

S, M, L, XL, Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, Denmark

Varda Caivano & Yael Davids, CIRCUS, Berlin, Germany

Three Positions in Painting, Barbara Gross Gallery, Munich, Germany

Is Resistance Useless?, Marcelle Alix Gallery, Paris, France

Be With Me, Peter Bergman Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden

Collection: Contemporary Art and Themes, The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan

A House of Leaves. Second Movement, The David Roberts Art Foundation, London, United Kingdom

Art Foundation Mallorca Collection - Special Edition, CCA Andratx, Andratx, Spain

### 2011

Fountains and Drains, The British School, Rome, Italy

A Sort Of Night To The Mind A Kind Of Night For Our Thoughts, Artary Galerie, Stuttgart, Germany Colección Art Foundation Mallorca 2011 - Obras Destacadas y Últimas Adquisiciones, CCA Andratx, Andratx, Spain

Nakanoshima Collections, The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan

### 2010

British Art Show 7: In the Days of the Comet, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham; Hayward Gallery, London; Glasgow Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow; Plymouth Arts Centre, Plymouth, United Kingdom

Collection 2 - Focus on Recent Acquisitions, National Gallery of Osaka, Osaka, Japan

Resonance, Suntory Museum, Osaka, Japan

Rebecca Morris, Molly Zuckerman-Hartung, Mary Heilmann, and Varda Caivano, Rowley Kennerk Gallery, Chicago, USA

ON PTG, Rowley Kennerk Gallery, Chicago, USA

#### 2009

A Sort of Night to the Mind, A Kind of Night for our Thoughts, Herbert Read Gallery, Canterbury, United Kingdom

We're Moving (selected graduates), Royal College of Art, London, United Kingdom

40th Anniversary Benefit Auction, White Columns, New York, USA

Cave Painting, Gresham's Ghost, New York, USA

East End Academy: The Painting Edition, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, United Kingdom

Drawing 2009 Biennial Fundraiser, The Drawing Room, London, United Kingdom

### 2008

Precious Things, Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda, Ireland

Swans Reflecting Elephants: Varda Caivano, Renee So, Rose Wylie, Kate MacGarry,

London, United Kingdom

M25 Around London, CCA Andratx, Majorca, Spain

Busan Biennale, Busan, South Korea

Jerwood Contemporary Painters, Jerwood Space, London, United Kingdom

Imaginary Realities: Constructed Worlds in Abstract and Figurative Painting, Max Wigram Gallery,

London, United Kingdom

Rose Tinted Glasses, Gavin Brown passerby, New York, USA

INsideOUT, Galeria Moriarty, Madrid, Spain

Painting 2004", Victoria Miro, London, United Kingdom

Varda Caivano, Matt Connors, Thomas Hylander, Zak Prekop, Karyn Lovegrove Gallery,

Los Angeles, USA

### 2007

Very Abstract and Hyper Figurative, Dane Gallery, London, United Kingdom

An Archaelogy, Zabludowicz Collection, London, United Kingdom

Summer Group Show 2007, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, Ireland

### 2006

World-Gone-Mad, Herbert Read Gallery, Canterbury; Castlefield Gallery, Manchester; Limehouse Art Foundation, London, United Kingdom

### 2005

London in Zurich, Hauser & Wirth, Zurich, Switzerland

Expanded Painting - Prague Biennale 2, Prague, Czech Republic

#### 2004

Winter Show 2004, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, Ireland

Arrivals 2004, Pump House Gallery, London, United Kingdom

Revenge of Romance, Temporary Contemporary, London, United Kingdom

TwentyfourThirty, Keith Talent Gallery, London, United Kingdom

Painting 2004, Victoria Miro, London, United Kingdom

Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand

### 2003

Three person show, Millefiori ArtSpace, Athens, Greece

Selected Paintings, MW projects, London, United Kingdom

Dirty Pictures, The Approach, London, United Kingdom

Beca Kuitca, Galeria Fernando Pradilla, Madrid, Spain

### 2002

poT, Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo, Brazil; Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Notably, Pump House Gallery, London, United Kingdom

Only Way Forward, Neon Gallery, London, United Kingdom

Primeiro do Abril, Erika Verzutti Project Space, São Paulo, Brazil

The Michael Ashcroft, Neon Gallery, London, United Kingdom

### 2001

New Contemporaries, Camden Arts Centre, London; Sunderland Museum, United Kingdom

Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2001, Camden Art Centre, London, Northern Gallery for Contemporary

Art, Sunderland, United Kingdom

## Awards

## 2011

Abbey Award, The British School at Rome, Rome, Italy

Max Mara Art Prize for Women, United Kingdom (nomination)

### 2008

The Paul Hamlyn Awards for Artists, United Kingdom (nomination)

### 2004

Parallel Prize, Royal College of Art, London, United Kingdom

Beck's Future, United Kingdom (nomination)

## 2003

The Paul Hamlyn Awards for Artists, United Kingdom (nomination)

### **Public Collections**

British Council Collection

National Museum of Art

The Taguchi Art Collection

Zabludowicz Collection

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