

Woman  
女人

Ma Desheng  
馬德升

May, 2025 (exact date TBC)  
3812 Gallery London  
Curator 策展人: Calvin Hui 許劍龍

Unit 3, G/F, The Whiteley,  
137 Queensway, London  
W2 4DB, England  
3812 Website: london@3812cap.com

Woman  
女人

Ma Desheng  
馬德升

London Solo Exhibition  
伦敦个人作品展

3 8 1 2 GALLERY  
HONGKONG  
L O N D O N



Ma Desheng at his solo exhibition in Centre Pompidou in 2023

## PREFACE

### Woman or the Body of Painting

Jérôme Neutres<sup>1</sup>

In the art of Ma Desheng, Woman is somewhat synonymous with painting: it is both the object and the subject of art. The female figure recurs throughout all periods and styles of Ma Desheng's work, as this exhibition clearly demonstrates, bringing together around thirty diverse pieces that span the artist's career from 1979 to 2024. Wood engravings from the late 1970s, ink on paper from the 1980s, drawings from the 1990s, acrylic paintings from the 2000s: Woman is at the heart of all the mediums explored

by Ma Desheng. This makes the exhibition a true mini-retrospective of the artist, viewed through the prism of the (tutelary) figure of women.

Sketched or precisely drawn, petrified or dancing, lively or languorous, in motion or frozen, ghostly or present, almost figurative or overtly abstract, mineral or corporeal, in black and white or in colour: the female figure in Ma Desheng's work always occupies the entirety of the canvas. As if she



On-site pics of Ma Desheng solo exhibition in Centre Pompidou in 2023 with a select few woman-themed ink paintings on show.





were the “raison d’être” and the destination of the work. A metaphor or a fantasy, voluptuous but without a face, this woman seems to have become more universal, almost mythological, over the years.

Initiated in China and then developed in France, the country in which the artist chose to live and work from the late 1980s, Ma Desheng’s oeuvre is by essence a meeting of two cultures. It is endowed with a certain universality which is perfectly embodied by the “women” in Ma Desheng’s paintings.

This exhibition in London comes at a pivotal moment in Ma Desheng’s career, as his work has gained new visibility in the most prestigious venues of contemporary art. The Centre Pompidou, which currently holds nearly eighty works by Ma Desheng in the collections of the National Museum of

Modern Art, dedicated a beautiful monographic exhibition to the artist in 2023. The show took place on its prestigious fourth floor, home to many universal masterpieces. For the occasion, the artist was honoured by the French Republic for his significant contribution to art.

Before the exhibition’s preview, Ma Desheng also gave a performance on the theme of freedom. That same year, the National Institute of Art History and the University of Sorbonne jointly presented the first international academic conference dedicated to Ma Desheng, directed by academic Aurore Blanc. It is noteworthy that a young generation of art historians is showing interest in Ma Desheng’s work, demonstrating the enduring appeal of his work. In 2025, Ma Desheng was again exhibited at the Centre Pompidou as part of a historical exhibition dedicated to the Stars (Xing Xing) movement, which he co-founded with Huang Rui

in 1979 in China. The Stars was the first contemporary Chinese art movement, and it is clear now that it had an immense impact on the development of Chinese art.

One can think that this exhibition in the new London outpost of the 3812 Gallery Hong Kong will pave the way for new developments in Anglo-Saxon museums and in China. The star of Ma Desheng is far from stopping shining (or will continue to shine bright).

1. Jérôme Neutres, Ph.D., Doctor in Semiology of text and image (University Paris-VII), writer and curator of some seventy exhibitions of modern and contemporary art since 1996; former director at the Réunion des musées nationaux- Grand-Palais, France ; former president of the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris; former administrator of the national asian art museum-Guimet, Paris.





# FOREWORD

## Woman, the untouched touches on canvas

Calvin Hui

His “women” coil, twist, twirl, slither, slouch, snuggle, recline or tower, exuding feminine sensuality in all its forms—whether strident, tender, or submissive—leaping off the canvas. Whether the bodies are lushly fleshed out or delicately willowy, they radiate a palpable, lustrous energy, emanating from pain, longing, euphoria, and fantasy. Do not fault him for his sensuously bold depictions because this is a nod to his attitude toward life and pay homage to the intrinsic desires wired into every human. To Ma Desheng, the creator of his Muses, this natural and provocative energy fuels his wellspring of inspiration and passionate pursuit of life.

I have personally known Mr. Ma for 20 years, and it was then I collected the first piece of his Rock paintings. The paintings and the spirit they convey remain eternal, with lasting energy that continues to resonate. This is where Mr. Ma’s art truly lies—nothing is ephemeral and hollow, as the themes he explores are rooted in the enduring wisdom of life.

Art repletes Ma, serving as perhaps his most precious outlet to express himself. He channels his life into the image of stones, personifying them to give voice to his inner world, recounts the tale of existence, and even celebrates the beauty of the female form with reverent awe. His bold appreciation of the female figure and women’s values signals and magnifies his admiration for what he sees as the god’s divine gift to humanity—the most pristine, natural, and organic embodiment of beauty in our universe and nature.

On Ma’s artistic conscious plane, women are manifested as highly refined silhouettes of a mythical Muse which is beyond worldly interpretation and access.

Since moving to Paris in 1986, Ma continued to nurture his aspiration of modernising Chinese art and elevating its presence on the international stage. Away from his homeland, Ma took the mission of promoting Chinese contemporary art upon himself. This acute conscientiousness reflected his deep sense of duty, born from an enduring affinity for and gratitude to his country — a sentiment he carried proudly as both a badge of pride and a defining element of his art.

The shape of the “Woman” theme is both inevitable and serendipitous. The initial eureka moment struck when our gallery Co-founder Mark Peaker and I visited Mr. Ma in his Paris studio last year. There, in his compact studio, he unveiled his collection of “magnificent” female form paintings. The striking contrast of his towering yet lushly soft depictions of women left us utterly stunned, evoking a visceral resonance that remains vivid today. What captivated us most was a triptych from 2002 — one of his earliest creations of the female form.

During lunch, Mark proposed the idea of an exhibition dedicated to “Woman,” and both Mr. Ma and I were thrilled by the prospect. In the end, Mr. Ma and I settled on a resonant title: “Woman: Ma Desheng Solo Exhibition.”

Fair to say, the title christened for this exhibition holds meaning far beyond its literal implication. The “woman” in the context of Ma’s exhibition is laden with significance: it represents the female form, the iconic muse that Ma has artistically and emotionally tapped into throughout his oeuvre; it also alludes to the artist’s life vision and philosophy — one of resilience, of gracefully navigating

through throes of pain, and of uninhibited expression through creative gymnastics.

In 2024, we hosted Ma Desheng’s solo exhibition, *Wish Upon a Rock*, at 3812 Gallery in Hong Kong. This year, we are proud to present *Woman* – Ma Desheng Solo Exhibition at 3812 London—his first-ever large-scale solo exhibition dedicated entirely to the theme of women, showcasing his extensive body of female form paintings. This exhibition also marks the inaugural show at our newly relocated London gallery in The Whiteley, a landmark revitalisation project of a historic architectural icon. For both the artist and the gallery, this moment is profoundly significant.

As the gallery owner and curator of this exhibition, as well as an avid fan and a long-time friend of Mr. Ma, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Katie Hill, who is an established academic, curator and speaker with an expertise in contemporary art by Chinese artists, and Dr. Jiang Jun, who is the chief curator of Chinese Pavilion at the 60th Venice International Art Biennale (2024), for their insightful articles and academic guidance in shaping this exhibition.

I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Jérôme Neutres, a distinguished and critically acclaimed curator, who graciously accepted our invitation to attend and speak at the exhibition opening. Dr. Neutres took the initiative in curating Mr Ma’s solo exhibition at Musée National d’Art Moderne at the Centre Pompidou in 2022. In retrospect, the exhibition in Paris offered a glimpse of Mr. Ma’s “Woman” series, with two ink paintings featuring succinctly silhouetted female figures and another sketch work communicating female form’s lusciousness in delineated fashion. It makes our London exhibition zeroing in on “woman” a curatorial and narrative extension.

I would like to thank my incredible teams in London and Hong Kong for their outstanding dedication, expertise, and team spirit in bringing this exhibition to life with such resounding success.

Last but certainly not least, I am profoundly grateful for the trust, support, and guidance of Mr. Ma. It is an honour to represent him in both London and Hong Kong.

Among the 25 meticulously handpicked works on display are Mr. Ma’s two rare woodblock prints of silhouetted, goddess-like figures from the 1970s, along with his signature ink paintings of voluptuous women—read as an intimate dialogue with Henri Matisse, featured in his 1980s oeuvre—lace the exhibition with historical significance and grandeur.

This *Woman* exhibition represents not only a continuation of our shared artistic journey and our East-meets-West creative arc with Mr. Ma but also an inventive and inspiring expansion of our vision.

The *Woman* exhibition not only invites us to an experimentally artistic journey, but also marks a groundbreaking and rewarding venture in Mr. Ma’s art journey as well as in our vision. Another message distilled from Ma’s “Woman” series is that the theme of “woman” defies eras and artistic zeitgeists, never becoming obsolete from history to the present. Ma’s “Woman” series is more than what meets the eye. As Mr. Ma’s relentless reinvention of artistic expression is steeped in his struggles, survival, and serendipitous encounters with his envisioned, idealised yet elusive female muses, the ultimate outcome of this artistic and life wisdom lends us an enlightening extension for our vision and horizon so that we could interpret and promote his art far and wide in a globally accessible language.

# ODYSSEY

‘The simpler and more natural the mind becomes, the better the world will be.’ Ma Desheng (2025)<sup>1</sup>  
‘What is real is not the appearance, but the idea, the essence of things’, Brâncuși

By Katie Hill

## Outlines

These works by the pioneering artist Ma Desheng, take us on a journey from a female figure cast in sunlight in a simple, black and white woodblock print to vast and vibrant paintings featuring bulbous female nudes, their physical and erotic bodies towering in the space. This journey follows a path from innocence to awareness, an odyssey from an earlier state of optimism to one of awakening. Coming together in a range of series spanning a period of forty-five years, the works emit a powerful visual clarity, echoing the artist’s spiritual and artistic vision of humanism, also expressed through his performances and poetry. They range from the demure to the grotesque, conveying the nude as an archetype or symbolic icon that reaches from the ancient past to modernity, one that takes on a perpetual fascination and mythology.

In the words of the artist: ‘la vie est nue’ (life is bare).<sup>2</sup> It acts as an artistic trope through which we could interrogate our existence and connection with each other and the world. Through the repetition of this motif, it takes various turns stylistically from small scale to large, from black and white prints to richly colourful paintings in vibrant palettes. These nudes contain, at different moments, lively sweeping brushstrokes and smooth, highly graphic forms, sensuality and formality, veering from the energetic and expressive, to the discreet and clean-cut.

Culturally, these nudes by an artist in the global Chinese diaspora living in Europe, have specific roots in a cross- or inter-cultural experience that cannot be disentangled. Stemming from a longer connection with globalised, metropolitan culture, the interaction was woven into the development of art in the twentieth century, with Paris as the centre of that axis of European cultural exchange

between cultural hubs such as Shanghai and Tokyo. Ma has been working for nearly forty years in Paris, the centre of modernism in the 1920s. It is therefore no coincidence that his choice of subject matter, a central theme in European painting historically, is also integral to the development of Chinese artistic modernity in the past century.

Many important figures in the history of modern art in China, including Lin Fengmian, Xu Beihong, Pan Yuliang and Zao Wou-ki (Zhao Wuji), lived in Paris and were strongly influenced by the exploration of colour, line and form that characterised modern movements in art from post-impressionism to surrealism, to pure abstraction. Indeed, as stated in a touring exhibition ten years ago, ‘Their sojourns in France caused a profound rupture with Chinese artistic traditions, and their return to China had a major impact on the formation of an entire generation of artists.’<sup>3</sup> All of these artists themselves painted female nudes. Ma’s nudes could therefore be seen as a dialogue across cultures, at the intersection of Chinese and European modernity, asymmetric modernities that extend into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Picking up on strands of Western modernism in the period following the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was a concerted quest for artists, who were part of a broader cultural movement seeking a new cultural language of contemporaneity. Ma was at the forefront of this development, actively advocating for freedom of speech and artistic expression, together with other core Stars founders, Huang Rui, Wang Keping and Qu Leilei. Their singular use of line and figuration led artists in China back to an international engagement with art, working with few resources and little or no financial support, unwittingly making connections with a migratory cultural discourse developed previously by artists such as San Yu (Chang

Yu).<sup>4</sup> The extent to which they had access to images of Matisse’s nudes or Picasso’s linear drawings is likely in older surveys on Western art, but the reference to these world-renowned masters of Western modernism in 1970s’ China was crucial as a message for cultural liberation for artists and it was a conscious cry for artistic freedom in a grey, colourless world of Mao suits and enforced political conformity. These major figures are still of great interest to Chinese audiences, as witnessed by the 2025 Picasso exhibition in Hong Kong at M+.<sup>56</sup>

Ma’s leadership at the time is captured in the photo of the artist addressing a crowd in Beijing, 1979, his charisma and leadership clearly on display, as he leans on his crutches, completely disregarding his own physical disability.<sup>7</sup> The year before, in December 1978, the Ministry of Culture officially had announced permission for the use of models in art education for the first time in decades, but this did not mean that painting nudes was by any means acceptable or normalised outside the academy.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, it was a key turning point and softening of culture that led to huge cultural developments in the following decade.

The small woodblock print *Nude* (女體) (38.5 x 28 cm) from 1979 depicts an outlined female figure kneeling, her arms bent behind her head, her shadow falling in front of her, set against a bright sun streaming out fine rays that fill the space, enveloping the scene. The work clearly expresses the idea of hope, renewal and beauty, displacing propaganda or socialist realist imagery at a moment of profound cultural change, when political orthodoxy was being challenged by humanism. The woman here is demure and graceful – her face inclined in a modest pose. What appears to be a textured ground achieved through carefully cut, repeated marks, recurs in the later works, developed at scale in his larger paintings, but already

present in this small print alongside his use of outline and neatly constructed composition. The structure of time is present too, indicated by shadow and the sun: the universal pattern of light and shadow renders this nude as symbolic of the eternal, a kind of goddess or figure of liberty representing a stark contrast to the images of the sun personifying the deified figure of Chairman Mao at the height of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>9</sup>

Strong graphic qualities and the literal carving out of space in the works also remain in his later paintings, lending them a structural precision. Often, an abstract world in the backdrop is evoked through a simple curved horizon dividing the canvas between a sky and the earth marked out through line and colour. Conceptually, these features act as philosophical markers of the universe, aligning with ancient Chinese notions of the cosmos (天地 heaven and earth) and equally a modernist universalism that bounds the pictorial in aesthetic formality, sealing it off from any recognisable reality. These features run throughout Ma’s paintings, drawing on key strands of his cultural inheritance.

## Sketches on cardboard

Several sketches on cardboard made in the mid-1990s precede the larger paintings, depicting a simple line drawing of a nude, in different poses. Expertly drawn, the outline doubled in yellow, the works show dynamism, volume and depth in their composition, from front and side perspectives. Notable is the curvaceous expression of the legs and feet, the head reduced to a limp phallus, the nipples emphasised as rapid squiggles, and the belly button adding a fleshy detail, all executed in simple lines, echoing figurative painters in the modern period exploring the human form from both Chinese and Western art. The emphasis is on line, and the rawness of the image is striking. Why does the figure taper out, and why is the

head shrunk to nothing but a floppy-looking pin? The head is rendered useless and flailing in a disturbing erasure of head and facial features as essential markers of identity. The body’s outline dominates the space amplifying its power.

The artist’s response to this question is reductive: ‘we all think too much’ implies a return to being and feeling over thought. It could be read as a contemporary Daoist response of return to nature, but also a reminder of our animal being, the head reduced to just another physiological appendage, alongside our limbs. By privileging the fundamentality of our physical being over the intellectual and refusing to endow the figures with any recognisable identity, Ma foregrounds body over mind, distorting reality in an anti-realist interpretation, as seen in numerous works by Francis Bacon and Henry Moore. Bacon uses his heads to express agony or terror, and Moore’s, though featureless and small, remain upright. Brancusi’s comments on the justification to leave facial features out of his sculptural forms, give an insight into his attention to form and beauty above all: ‘It is such a pity to spoil a beautiful by digging out little holes for hair, eyes, ears. And my material is so beautiful, with its sinuous lines that shine like pure gold and sum up in a single archetype all the female effigies on Earth.’<sup>10</sup> At the forefront of the reduction of form, Brancusi’s work *Portrait of Mlle. Pogany* was ridiculed at the Armory Show in 1913 for looking like an egg.<sup>11</sup> When Ma was growing up, his cultural environment would have been saturated with heavily political realism, so his turn away from this in his formative creative emergence as an artist concurs with his interest in Western modernism as an antidote to that restrictive and didactic approach. His awareness of body over mind/mid over body dynamic will be exceptionally acute, since severe physical challenges for him have been a central part of his life. These factors may have a bearing on how we read his work.

The markers of the female body seen in Ma’s nudes – the breasts, vulva and belly button – are also present in the earliest female figure in the world, the Venus of Willendorf, a small stone age artefact measuring 11 centimetres in height, dating from 28000-25000 BC, held in the Vienna Natural History Museum. The figurine, like others of that time dotted around Europe, could be a symbol of fertility or an early goddess. Baffling archaeologists, it is impossible to verify its meaning due to the distance of time, leaving it a mystery from the ancient past. The emphasis on the female form, though, clearly has a lineage of tens of thousands of years as evidenced by this figure, endowing it with iconic status, in the literal sense.

Rock nudes

A work from the 2000s, *Lounge in Joy (2015)*, returns to pure formalism, breaking up the form of the body into rounded forms that are another major strand in the artist’s work. In this work, the amorphous shapes form a recognisable, dismembered body, fusing the artists’ interest in primeval forms (the “Rock” series, developed over many years) and life itself, via the body and our existence through it. Its body parts are disconnected, each discreetly balanced to form the whole, in a playful dialogue with the artist’s own sculptures and the interplay between form and non-form, representation and abstraction, two and three-dimensionality, provoking a question to our visual reception of imagery itself.

Set against a pale abstracted mountain and possibly a lake or body of water, there is a suggested landscape. The curvature of the rocks is modelled to increase the sense of three dimensionality through dynamic thick strokes of paint. A body is a body of rock: how did we emerge? Where did we come from? How are we related to the primal world? Another work in the series, *Pointe (2015)*, similarly evokes rocks, but returns to a coherent (female)

body, its dancing posture indicated by her pointing leg, echoing works by Picasso, Matisse and San Yu. Here, the backdrop is monochrome, in a deep orange, painted with thick, textured strokes that create a contrast to the black and white figure, which is carved out with sculptural solidity. Though highly stylised, her arm points in towards the crutch, indicating her sexuality.

A more recent work from 2024 returns to the aesthetics of these two works. It is a simple formation of five rocks, two large ones placed as giant calves positioned as bent legs, and the three small ones positioned to form a head or body and two arms. The reduced imagery immediately evokes the female nude, without any literal representation, merging the landscape with the body in an effortlessly simple image, against a pale grey arc or horizon, suggesting a world or planet. This work brings together the artist’s engagement with the co-existence of the earth and the body, in a timeless and masterful composition.

Colour nudes

In contrast to the rock paintings, several works from 2019/2020 are cleaner cut, smooth and colourful. One, entitled *Canyon*, is a succinct formal nude in bright orange, cleanly outlined, against delineated sections in two shades of bright green. Graphically, this work instantly creates aesthetic impact with its emphasis on surface and sense of design, with clearly outlined sections dividing the space in a carefully arranged composition.

The series of large-scale nudes executed in 2013, are painted in a range of colours in a more nuanced, mottled aesthetic, into which the huge, outlined figures are immersed, merging into the whole. These figures are contorted into various postures, in which the limbs, hands and feet are elongated and some of the poses are highly eroticised and sexualised. In *Hang Back (2013)* the

figure is seen from behind, her large buttock and breasts dominating, her back twisted over her folded legs, hands on feet in an uncomfortable contortion of the body. In *Grande Odalisque (2012)*, the figure is lying on her front, reaching to her feet, her legs bent backwards. In *Look Back (2012)*, her vulva is clearly visible from behind, with a spindly hand reaching over to her thigh. In *Unfold (2013)*, the figure’s outline is exaggeratedly formalised through curves, removing any sense of realism. The titles in this series are more assertive in tone, appearing almost as instructions, lending an uncomfortable relationship between viewer and subject, explicitly exposing the potentially violent male gaze on the female body. The exaggerated poses emphasise the physicality of the women’s bodies and their sexual power.

In *Loving Nature (2003)*, the nude gets almost completely obliterated pictorially, fusing into an abstract blur within thickly laid paint, rendered through a strongly textured impasto technique, with lines scratched through like scribbles across the canvas. Here the painting exudes a forceful energy, frenetically expressing the title that integrates the body with the background, rendering it as one. Life and form are thereby integrated as the fundamental tenets of our world, as energy, life and earth become one, as captured in the title of the work.

These works seem, indeed are, far removed from Chinese cultural forms, signifying a global cultural turn in the 1980s due to a shift in political circumstances and a new wave of migration. In the earlier twentieth century, numerous artists from China engaged in a kind of transnational modernism and painted the female nude, developing a distinct form of Chinese visual modernity. Lin Fengmian’s (1900-1991) figures range from the cubist early works to elegant outline female nudes that are more decorative in style. San Yu (Chang Yu, 1907-1966) painted nudes from the



1920s to the 1960s, his last nude reaching a record auction price of 198 million Hong Kong dollars in 2019. Pan Yuliang (1895-1977) stood out, as a female painter whose works included radical self-portraits and female nudes breaking the taboo of female sexuality and self-representation.

Key figures in the history of Chinese art who were immersed in Parisian modernism, form the art historical backdrop to Ma’s nudes and arguably contest the narrative of modernism as a purely Western construct. Just as leading artists such as Renoir, Matisse and Gauguin were influenced by non-Western aesthetic forms that heavily informed their work, many Chinese artists in the West drew on diverse cultural sources in their subject and methodology. German expressionism, for example, has been a source of interest to leading painters such as Zeng Fanzhi. Emotionality is depicted through the body in Ma’s nudes through the elongated fingers and lively feet. Not only were the 19<sup>th</sup> century painters such as Millet highly formative in China, who was studied by Chinese art students in the academy, but leading painters such as Francis Bacon, Anslem Kiefer and Lucien Freud also strongly influenced painting in modern China.

Modernity, the nude in China

Within the Chinese context, modernity has a historical lineage dating to the collapse of the Qing (1911) and the 1920s exemplify a period of cosmopolitanism and rich cultural exchange. When Xu Beihong drew sketches of nudes, he did so to further the pursuit of realism to accurately record the body, coinciding with the emergence of a new art education system in China that brought in life-drawing and the female model, famously initiated by Liu Haisu in Shanghai. In the work of Lin Fengmian and others, their take up of the nude opposed this idea of realism, exploring how forms beyond or outside the real could bring about a global artistic language of modernity that refused

a clear or prescriptive narrative.<sup>12</sup> From the 1930s to the 1970s, it was forbidden to be associated with modernism due to the cultural mores and narrow ideological demands of the revolution. Only decades later did the theme return, when figurative narrative painting could be replaced by modernism again. Therefore, Ma’s nudes do more than echo a Western path of modern art, they act as a decisive position in favour of what modernism stands for – cultural autonomy.

In Lynda Nead’s study of the female nude, she points out that, ‘the representation of the female body [in these images] functions as a critical sign of male sexuality and artistic avantgardism’.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, male subjectivity in China has been a dominant aspect of contemporary art narratives and production until relatively recently. Many older generation female artists were largely overshadowed by their male counterparts until more recently.<sup>14</sup> Almost all the works from the 1990s featured male figures, often satirised in grotesque visual terms. Ma’s own (male) avant-gardism speaks to an earlier moment in cultural history, when realism was being superseded by modernism and modernism allied itself with a global visual language, neither defined by West nor East. Interestingly, his sense of powerlessness is perhaps mirrored in these vigorous female figures, who appear to be aesthetically, sensually and spiritually idolised in these works, the small phallic heads signifying a loss of male authority. Even though a gendered reading of the works might beg the obvious critique of male/female power dynamics after Laura Mulvey’s formative work on the male gaze, another reading could return to the idea of male awe and impotence in the face of female supremacy as the ultimate life-force.

Ma Desheng’s works act as a form of cultural interchange, threaded with multiple strands that make up modernity itself, as a story of cultural refraction. Yet, in an old-

fashioned way, the artist has simply, in Clark’s words, ‘the wish to communicate certain ideas or states of feeling’.<sup>15</sup> He is a contemporary classicist in one sense, furthering his own interpretation and vision, which draws on modernism, Daoism, calligraphy and classicism. An added dimension of his oeuvre is illustrated in Ma’s visceral and eviscerating performance work *La Merde* (Shit), an explosive and passionate critique. In it, the artist, from his wheelchair, shouts in French ‘why, why, why is there shit?! It is everywhere, everywhere, everywhere!’, spitting out his horror at the world in a repetitive rage.<sup>16</sup> His strong and wonderful spirit frequently spills out beyond the canvas in his live work, allowing the audiences to experience his charisma.

These works also contain a slow, internalised energy in their rigour, variety and scale as evident by the robust and decisive brushstrokes and forms. They display a strength of hand, akin to what Clark describes as ‘so complete a fusion of the sensual and the geometric as to provide a kind of armour’.<sup>17</sup> Despite the continual evolution of the nude into more contemporary interpretations that now include artists exploring femininity, gender identity and queerness as discussed in a recent article, Julia Halperin also makes the point that ‘Nudes are one of the oldest and most stubbornly provocative tropes in Western art’. Here in the work of Ma Desheng, an artist situated within a globalised context of the Chinese diaspora, a crucial layer to this history is added.<sup>18</sup>

Endnotes

1 Email correspondence with the author February 2025. ‘As for my paintings, they are all small heads, because there are so many problems in the world now because people think too much. The simpler and more natural the mind becomes, the better the world will be. You can freely express your thoughts on other questions.’

2 Ma Desheng, in ‘Ma Desheng | La vie est nue’, Gallery Wallworks, Paris. Stephen Paradisi, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-fAyIjSFQs>.

3 *Chinese Artists in Paris (1920-1958): From Lin Fengmian to Zao Wou-Ki*. An exhibition from the collections of the Musée Cernuschi, presented at the Hong Kong Museum of Art from 20 June to 21 September 2014. <https://www.parismusees.paris.fr/en/exposition/chinese-artists-in-paris-1920-1958-from-lin-fengmian-to-zao-wou-ki>

4 Huang Rui, ed. *The Stars’ Times, 1977-1984*, Thinking Hands, 2007. p.41.

5 Li Xianting, in Wu Hung and Peggy Wang eds. *Contemporary Chinese Art Primary Documents*, p.11. Ma still uses the word ‘Freedom’ in his performances, frequently reiterating this basic tenet of human autonomy in his powerful vocal works.

6 Huang Rui, ed. *The Stars’ Times, 1977-1984*, Thinking Hands, 2007. p.41.

7 Huang Rui, ed. *The Stars’ Times, 1977-1984*, Thinking Hands, 2007. p.41.

8 Huang Rui, ed. *The Stars’ Times, 1977-1984*, Thinking Hands, 2007. p.41.

9 Huang Rui, ed. *The Stars’ Times, 1977-1984*, Thinking Hands, 2007. p.41.

10 Sanda Miller, “Brancusi’s women”, *Apollo* (March 2007), 56 – 63. Quoted in Philip McCouat, ‘The Controversies of Constantin Brancusi. Princess X and the Boundaries of Art’, *Journal of Art in Society*, 2015. URL: <https://www.artinsociety.com/the-controversies-of-constantin-brancusi-princess-x-and-the-boundaries-of-art.html>

11 Smithsonian Archives, Walt Kuhn scrapbook of press clippings documenting the Armory Show, vol. 2, 1913. <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/walt-kuhn-scrapbook-press-clippings-documenting-armory-show-vol-2-14643>

12 This positioning caught up with Lin later on in the wake of WW2 and the revolution and many of his earlier works were destroyed or lost, leaving only a partial legacy of his contribution to Chinese modernism.

13 Smithsonian Archives, Walt Kuhn scrapbook of press clippings documenting the Armory Show, vol. 2, 1913. <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/walt-kuhn-scrapbook-press-clippings-documenting-armory-show-vol-2-14643>

14 Smithsonian Archives, Walt Kuhn scrapbook of press clippings documenting the Armory Show, vol. 2, 1913. <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/walt-kuhn-scrapbook-press-clippings-documenting-armory-show-vol-2-14643>

15 Clark: perfect units of form (Raphael) – p.260

16 Ma Desheng, ‘La Merde’, YouTube

17 Clark, 264.

18 Julia Halperin, ‘A New Way of Looking at the Nude. The artists redefining portraits of the human body for a more inclusive age.’ *New York Times*, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024.

‘Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux’ — A Pore Over Ma Desheng’s Art

Dr. Jiang Jun

In Ma Desheng’s artistic career, stones and the female form have been two significant and enduring themes that continue to this day. This article aims to understand and interpret his artistic practice through the lenses of existentialism and vitalism.

Born in 1952, Ma Desheng, like many of his contemporaries in China, lived under the singular artistic norm of socialist realism. The dogmatism of creation limited their attempts at diversity in The rigid dogma of creation constrained artistic diversity, reducing art to a tool for state propaganda rather than a means of personal expression and life experience.

China’s Reform and Opening-up in 1979 tore open the already loosening ideological and cultural constraints, ushering in an influx of new ideas, artistic movements, and techniques. In Beijing, where Ma was based, this change felt like an emancipation—a lifting of shackles that allowed artists to explore individual expression.

In that same year, Ma Desheng and the young members of the Stars Art Group staged China’s first avant-garde art exhibition outside the National Art Museum of China. Unlike official, collectivist narratives, this groundbreaking exhibition championed personal expression, abstraction, and artistic freedom, marking the dawn of contemporary Chinese art. As Ma Desheng recalled in a recent interview:

“The Stars Art Group represented a milestone in the history of contemporary Chinese art. Beyond its art historical significance, it also shed light on the unfettered passion, ambition, and hopes of a generation, which is emphasised in many

of my interviews over the decades. At the time, the Chinese art sphere was still heavily swayed by tradition and realism. As young artists, we sought a more expressive and abstract approach, to return to the essence of art and create an entirely new artistic culture and landscape.”

For Chinese intellectuals in the 1980s, existentialism, Nietzsche’s Übermensch philosophy, and Freud’s psychoanalysis were undeniable sources of inspiration. In an era when collectivist uniformity was still dominant, existentialism urged artists to introspect and pivot inwardly, seeking the true meaning of individual existence. No longer satisfied with prosaic and formulaic depictions, artists yearned to express their personal perspectives and life experiences through their work.

Nietzsche’s blunt critique about traditional morality and his vision of the Übermensch (Overman) fuelled a deep yearning for human liberation, which had been laying dormant for long, inspiring artists to push the boundaries of personal identity and value. They began putting societal constraints on human nature into scrutiny, exploring themes of self-determination and transcendence. Meanwhile, Freud’s psychoanalysis illuminated the artists with the significance of the subconscious, dreams, and primal instincts—concepts that laid the groundwork for the vitalism in Ma Desheng’s art which I will touch on later. This enlightenment spurred artists to delve into the complexities of human nature and raw emotions that could be tucked away discreetly in deep subconsciousness, rather than shying away from them anymore.

Existentialism, Nietzsche’s Übermensch, and Freudian psychoanalysis together formed the intellectual backdrop of Chinese artistic creation in that era. There is no denying that their influences have been permeating throughout Ma Desheng’s lifelong artistic journey. Reflecting on his work from the 1980s, he once said:

“I had two main creative principles. First, to express genuine emotions—whether social, humanistic, or deeply personal. There were no strict requirements regarding form; it could be abstract or figurative, as long as it was diverse and sincere. The second was the hope and vision young people had for the future of China. Given our historical and cultural context, it was only natural that we were filled with anticipation for what lay ahead. This passion, like a dormant volcano, had been building for years, ready to erupt.”

In 1986, Ma Desheng moved to Paris, embarking on a new chapter in his artistic pursuit. Over the years, he traveled extensively across Japan, Europe, and the United States, participating in exhibitions at prestigious galleries and museums, gradually cementing his presence on the international art stage. Yet fate had a cruel twist in store. Though Ma had lived with polio since childhood, he had been able to walk with crutches. However, a car accident in the US in 1992 left him permanently wheelchair-bound. The incident dealt a devastating blow, leaving him physically and emotionally shattered, teetering on the edge of despair.

When many were concerned that he would collapse into obscurity from then on, Ma Desheng, with extraordinary resilience, waged an unwavering battle against all odds. He drew inspiration from Michelangelo, who painted the Sistine Chapel ceiling while lying on his back. Unable to reach high canvases, Ma devised a method where caregivers would rotate the canvas 360 degrees, enabling him to paint freely. Seated in his wheelchair, he adapted his movements, regaining his artistic muscle. Every day, from 10am to 4pm, he immersed himself in painting, spending the remaining hours writing poetry. His unwavering commitment to art was a testament to the Nietzschean Übermensch, embodying the philosopher’s belief that true strength lies in overcoming suffering through sheer willpower.

In 2002, Ma Desheng embraced his an artistic “rebirth.” Converting to acrylic painting, he presented the world with a series of works that diverged from his previous styles. “Stone” gradually became his central motif, merging with the female forms in compositions. Through elaborate layering, structuring and reconfiguring, a tower of humble stones biomorph into semi- abstract female forms perching and standing tall, which appear to be both a tribute to Henry Spencer Moore and an evolution of classical Chinese aesthetics. In the meantimes, the subtle impression of Chinese Exotic Rock Aesthetics oozes out of his works. However, unlike Moore’s sculptures or China’s scholar’s rocks (Taihu stones), his depicted stone do not come in continuity or linearity, which sometimes makes it difficult to discern a complete human figure.

Staring at Ma Desheng’s stone works from 2002 onward, one cannot help but think of Albert Camus’ The Myth of Sisyphus. In this seminal existentialist work, Camus

explores the absurdity of human existence through the Greek myth of Sisyphus, who was condemned to roll a boulder up a hill, only for it to tumble down each time he neared the top. This endless, futile struggle mirrors the absurdity of human life.

But Camus’ purpose was not to lament existence’s absurdity—rather, he championed the idea and potency of defiance. Though Sisyphus knows his task may not bring him to anywhere, he persists. His rebellion against absurdity does not change his fate but affirms his existence. Through defiance, man transcends himself.

Camus’ philosophy found resonance in China during the 1980s, as intellectuals sought to make sense of their socio-political realities. In 1981, scholar Guo Hong’an introduced Camus in Sartre Studies, writing:

**“Camus was a spiritual guide for an entire generation. He walked toward absurdity with the heavy, measured steps of Sisyphus descending the mountain. He knew that evil could never be eradicated, and it was precisely for this reason that he fought relentlessly to defend human dignity and happiness. He criticized capitalism while also opposing proletarian dictatorship.”**

For many, Camus’ ideas provided a lens through which they could interpret their own experiences. Existentialism, alongside Camus and Sartre, became a defining intellectual trend in 1980s China. Looking back through Ma Desheng’s life, we would realise the underlying root for his deep

attachment to stone reveals itself. The fragmented, non-continuous pebbles in his paintings symbolise his own paralysed body, don’t they? The 1992 accident, much like Sisyphus’ boulder, was a cruel punishment from life, an unforgiving crucible. Now, every movement he makes is like pushing an immense weight uphill, every stroke on the canvas requiring Herculean effort.

But Ma Desheng still creates. Isn’t he the very embodiment of Sisyphus himself? Burdened, struggling, yet forever climbing—unyielding in his defiance against fate.

Through years of relentless creation, he has deeply engraved his defiance against the absurdity of fate into every piece of his work. He battles fate with art as his means of existence, displaying a resilience and determination that is profoundly moving. His journey echoes the famous existentialist assertion: “Existence precedes essence.” Humanity must define itself through choices and actions, giving life its meaning. Camus believed that, like Sisyphus, one must face the absurdity of existence with courage, shaping one’s own significance through action. Thus, Camus wrote: “We must imagine Sisyphus happy.”

Beyond interpreting Ma Desheng’s work through the lens of existentialism, the parallel dimension of “Vitalism” provides another perspective. His stones hold multiple meanings—they are abstracted female sculptures reminiscent of Henry Moore, embodiments of the natural world akin to Chinese scholar’s rocks, and totemic symbols of fertility from ancient art. Within them, one can see the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis, particularly its revelation of human desire—an awakening for Ma Desheng’s generation, who had lived under repression. His work also embodies Moore’s “Vitalism”—a

primal life force suppressed by modern civilisation. In early human art, the connection between the female form and fertility worship is unmistakable, a theme Freud explored in *Civilisation and Its Discontents* (1930). Freud argued that while civilisation advances human progress, it also represses instinctual desires. This perspective sheds light on why artists like Picasso drew from African masks, Moore from Mesoamerican totems, and Zao Wou-Ki from ancient Chinese oracle bone script—all responses to the constraints of modernity. “Vitalism” emerged as a countercurrent within modernist movements, advocating a return to nature and primal instincts, much like the Romantic movement of the late 18th century.

“Vitalism” is a philosophy underlining the intrinsic energy and dynamic essence of life, viewing it as more than just a material composition but an inner vitality that transcends physical form—a remedy to the toxicity of modern civilisation. Henry Moore, a key proponent of this ideology, was deeply inspired by organic natural forms—shells, bones, stones, and tree roots—using them to explore spatial dynamics and sculptural fluidity. When introduced to China in the 1980s, Moore’s “Vitalism” found a dialogue with the traditional Chinese philosophy of Daoist naturalism. The Chinese interpreted “Vitalism” through the aesthetic principle of Qi Yun (气韵)—a concept of vital energy in art—and appreciated the organic flow of life in Moore’s work. This resonance allowed Chinese artists and audiences to decode Moore’s abstract sculptures through the lens of scholar’s rock aesthetics, similar to how contemporary British sculptor Tony Cragg explored digital sculptural forms. By engaging with scholar’s rock aesthetics, Chinese artists absorbed and transformed Moore’s artistic vision, influencing the trajectory of contemporary Chinese art—including Ma Desheng’s own evolution.

From a comparative iconographic perspective, Moore’s sculptures had a profound impact on Ma Desheng’s “Stone” series paintings. Moore’s semi-abstract female forms, often devoid of detailed facial features, de-individualised the human figure, transforming the female body into a vessel of life force and primal instinct—echoing ancient fertility worship. Ma Desheng undoubtedly adopts this modernist tradition, yet he did not simply replicate Moore’s style. Instead, he fractured Moore’s smooth, flowing forms, infusing his “Stone” series with a more primitivist character. The stacked pebbles in his works evoke prehistoric megalithic structures, such as Stonehenge in Salisbury—silent, mysterious relics of ancient civilisations. His compositions also recall weathered totemic stone carvings from various ancient cultures, carrying traces of time and memory, whispering the long history of human civilisation.

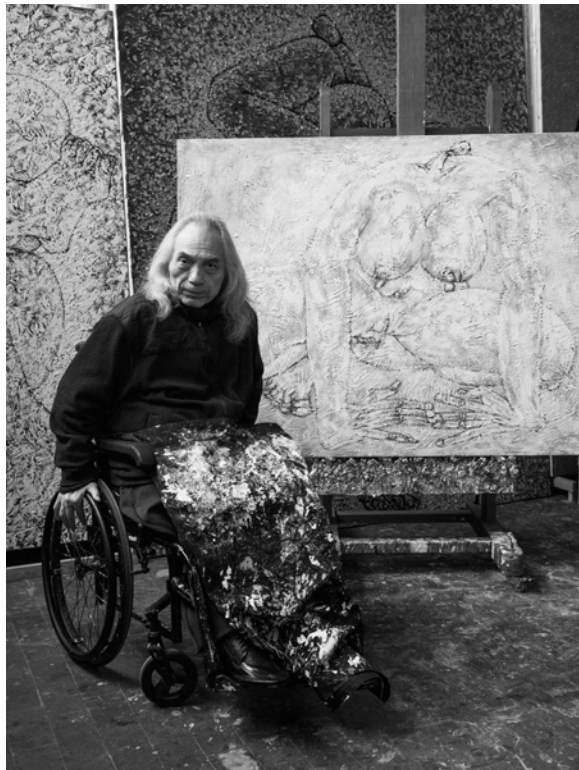
Ma Desheng’s art is a personal epic, written through the language of stone and the female form. On the canvas of existentialism and vitalism, he paints an intimate dialogue between self and fate, civilisation and instinct. His unwavering perseverance is not only an individual triumph but also a testament to the era’s ideological awakening, injecting a unique force into the development of contemporary Chinese art. His works transcend cultural and geographical boundaries, forming a bridge between Eastern and Western artistic philosophies, where the ancient and modern, the traditional and the avant-garde seamlessly converge. In his artistic universe, stones are no longer lifeless objects, but vessels of existence; female figures are no longer mere representations, but emblems of primal instinct and hope. Through art, Ma Desheng proves that no matter how absurd fate may be, no matter how oppressive civilisation becomes, humanity’s pursuit of freedom and meaning never ceases.



## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

“Women” Solo Exhibition

Ma Desheng



In my consciousness, women are goddesses, and no compliment can truly reach the zenith of their beauty. Every artist has the liberty to fashion their vision of the goddess, guided by their aesthetic and creative instincts. This freedom gives rise to a myriad of mythically marvellous beings, each shaped by nuanced perspectives. In turn, these creations define the distinctive artistic styles of their creators. Art doesn't require explanation—

it must be felt and reflected upon, leading to varied interpretations by individual beholders. That is the true charm of art.

Since 1980, my “Woman” series has been in a constant state of evolution and reinvention. In the beginning of my female form creation, my depictions of women were primarily in black-and-white ink. Later, I began experimenting with acrylic on canvas, exploring more unapologetically vivid colour palettes. For instance, *Hesitation*, *Looking Back*, and *Cloaked in Whispers*, created between 2012 and 2013, feature subdued, hazy tones interspersed with dappled specks of colour, bringing the graceful forms of women into sharp relief. In recent years, I have ventured into creating sculptural depictions of the female figure adorned in vibrant and striking shades, with the intention of revealing women's enigmatic elegance and confidence in a raw, minimalistic, and unfiltered manner, with few frills. These transformations are not changes for the sake of style but bursts of artistic impulses. Every form is born from the soul of art. A style deliberately pursued is devoid of soul. The naturally luminous form of women deserves full credit for driving the shifts, elevation, and sublimation of my artistic expression and language.

Since moving to Paris in 1986, France has become the wellspring of my creative journey and the gem of catalyst for my artistic breakthroughs. It is within France—and the European cultural milieu in general—that I was profoundly influenced and inspired by some of the most impactful modern Western artists of the 20th century.

One of them is Henri Matisse (1869–1954), a leading figure of Modern Art and a representative of Fauvism. My ink depictions of women engage in a larger-than-life dialogue with Matisse—a collision of black and white with colour that results in a serene exchange with the master. However, my colourful works of women transcend dialogue; they are my presentation and tribute to Matisse, a parade of my women before him. And I must clarify that I am not referring to “paintings of women” but to “women” themselves. At this stage, dialogue becomes redundant. Instead, the canvas creates a parallel universe where Matisse and I can raise our glasses of wine and silently admire each other's creations of the female form. As long as the soul of art remains clear, it will possess its own unique language, one that is not artificially pursued.

In the “Woman” series, I have fused the two lifelong inspirations of my art— “stone” and “woman”—into a form of expression that is both unique and thought-provoking. Stones are eternal, and so are women. Combining the two creates a “super eternity,” which is the inspiration behind merging women's figures with stones in my art. Moulding women into stone-like forms through biomorphism represents my pinnacle praise for women. This concept fuels my boundless creative passion and invites viewers to engage in profound reflection. Such reflection goes beyond recognising the physical beauty of women's bodies and forms; it ascends to an appreciation of the strength, resilience, and noble beauty that women embody.

Throughout my life, I have pursued an ideal of natural, eternal, and resilient beauty. The Earth itself began as a giant stone, and it will end as one. From nothingness to

existence, and then back to nothingness—ultimately, nothing truly happens. The highest spiritual state lies between being and non-being, and this is the essence of my “Stone” series. The “Woman” series naturalises, eternalises and idealises the existence of women and their inherent values, which all hinges and are driven by my earnest exaltation for the elegance of female forms and virtues that women represent.

I feel greatly honoured and thrilled to stage my solo exhibition in London as the inaugural show of 3812 London Gallery's relocation to The Whiteley. The selected collection of artworks showcased under the ‘Woman’ theme this time, which come in large scale, are all conceived out of my reverence and admiration for women's forms, the ideologies they symbolise, and the qualities they embody. On top of the ethos running through my Woman oeuvre, I intend my art to naturalise, eternalise and idealise the represented image of the female.

I hope people can pause for a moment, gather themselves amidst today's unnerving disquiet and disruption, and retreat to the essence of nature—the most sincere, pristine, and chaste state of mind. Only in that uncluttered composure can we truly appreciate and immortalise the everlasting pure beauty bestowed upon humanity by the creator.

I place great weight on this exhibition as it centres around “woman” — my first-ever global showcase dedicated to this theme. It holds profound artistic and emotional hefts, making it truly worth cherishing.





ARTWORKS – Woman  
作品 - 「女人」





Silver Lining 《一線生機》, 2002

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力,  
130 × 97 cm



Need a Shoulder to Cry on 《向誰傾訴》, 2002

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力,  
89 × 130 cm





**Rise and Fall 《起伏》, 2003**

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
114 × 648 cm, polyptychs (114 × 162 cm each)





“The “Woman” series naturalises, eternalises and idealises the existence of women and their inherent values, which all hinges and are driven by my earnest exaltation for the elegance of female forms and virtues that women represent.”

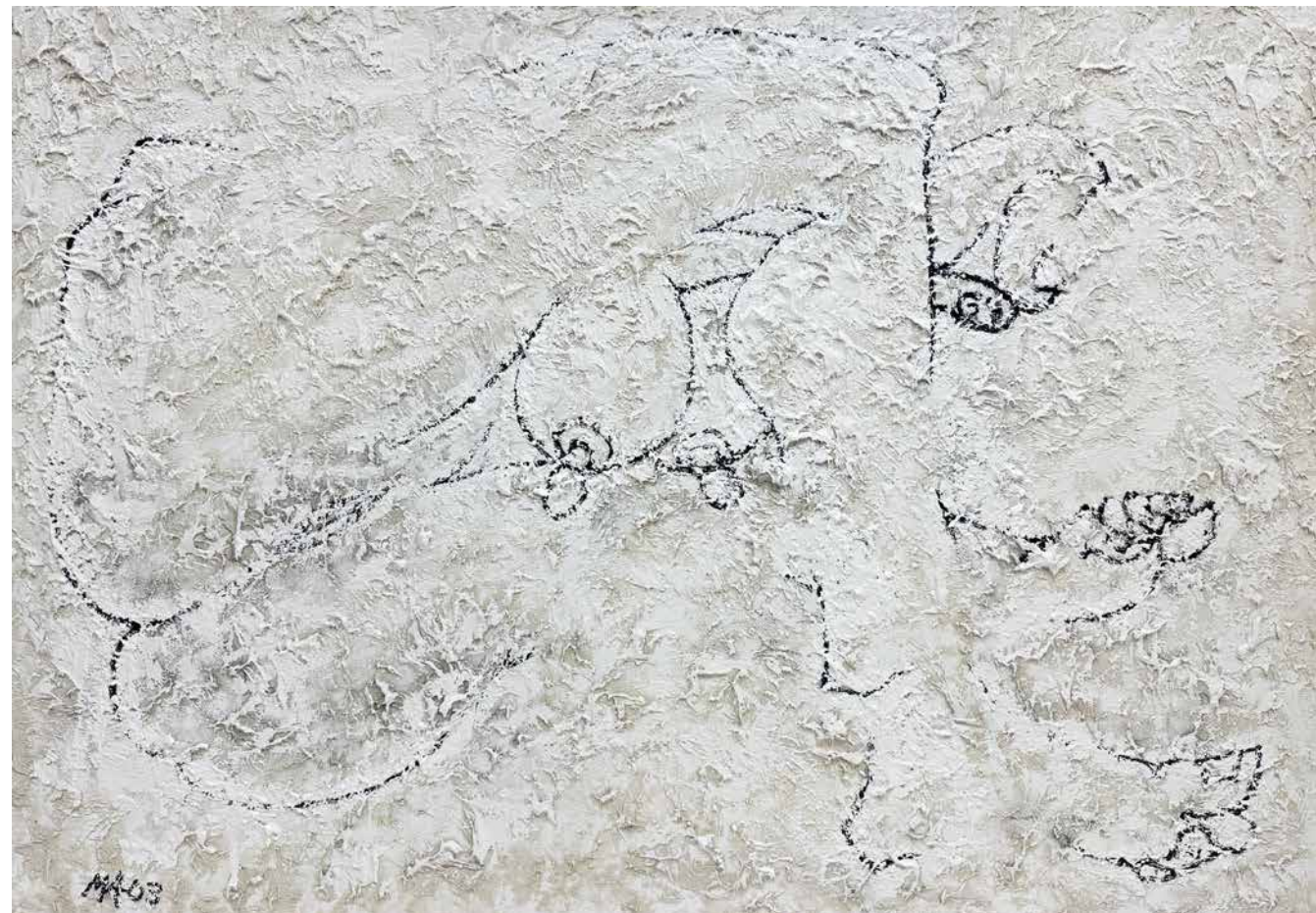
「這次的「女人」系列將女人的存在和價值自然化，永恆化，理想化，但這些都是基於我對女人的體態，女人所代表的意識形態和品質的崇尚之上。」





Stand Fast 《堅守》, 2003

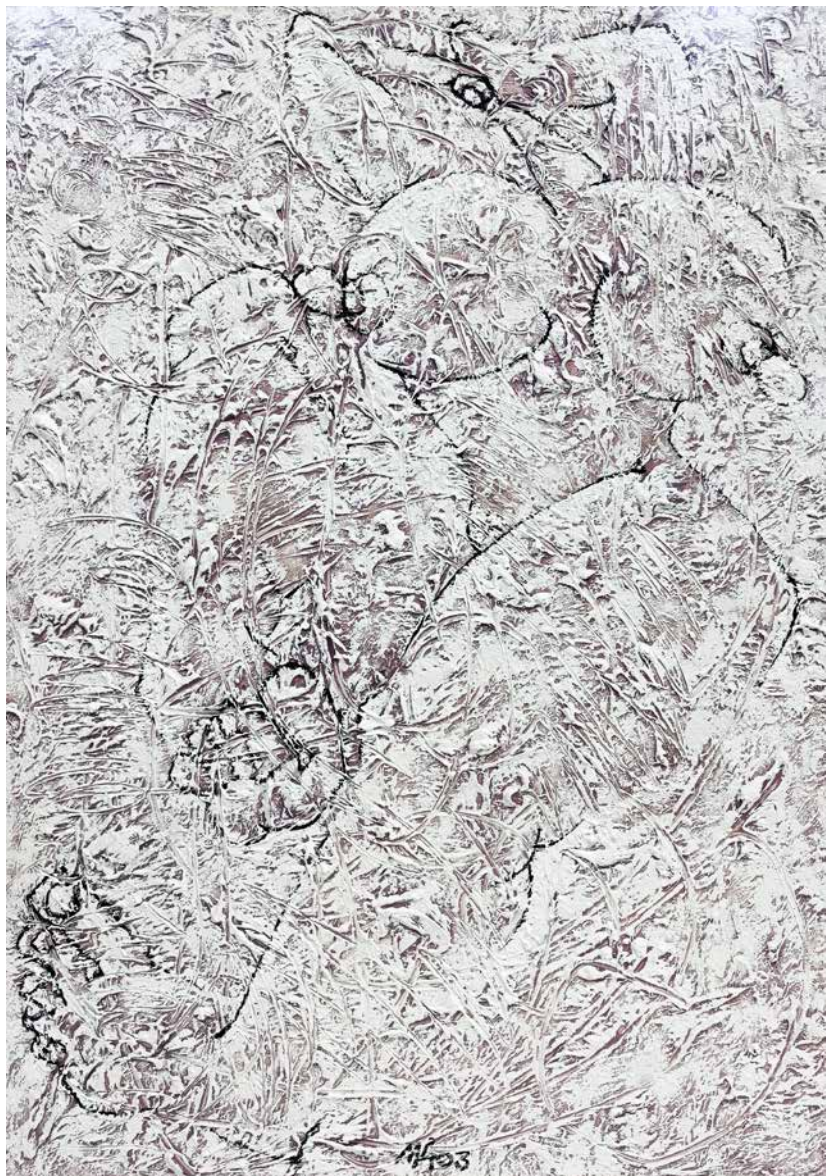
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力,  
97 × 130 cm



Unification of Nature 《自然的結合》, 2003

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
114 × 162 cm





Happiness in Nature 《自然之樂土》, 2003

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 × 114 cm



The Gift from Nature 《自然的賜予》, 2003

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
114 × 162 cm





Loving Nature 《情繫大地》, 2003

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 × 162 cm



Look Up 《仰望》, 2003

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 × 130cm





The Everlasting Trust in Nature 《自然的真諦》, 2003

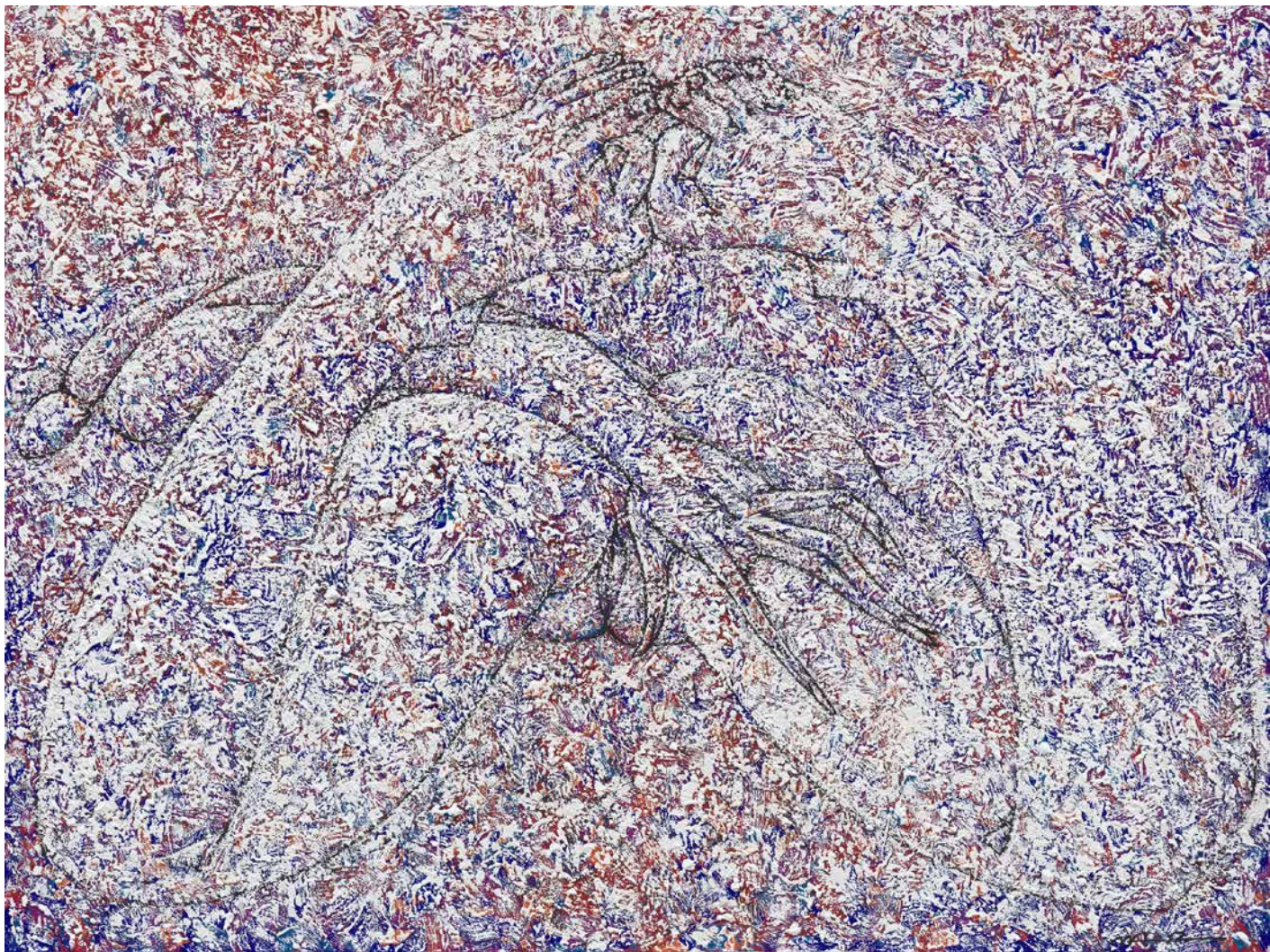
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 × 162 cm



Freedom in Nature  
《自然之自由》, 2003

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
195 × 130 cm





Look Back 《回望》, 2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 × 200cm



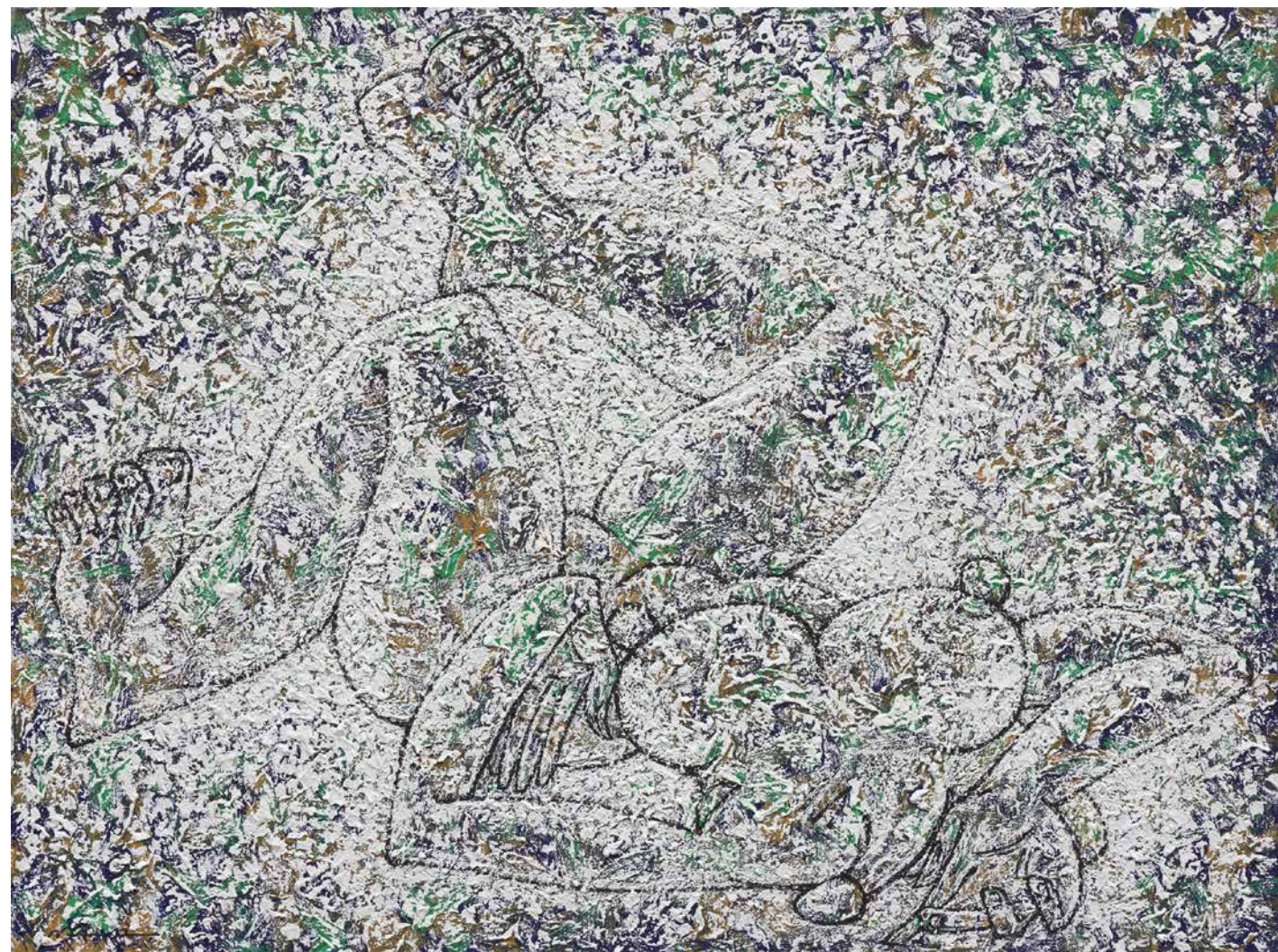
Nestled in Peace 《寧靜依偎》, 2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 × 200 cm





Grande Odalisque 《大宮女》, 2012

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 × 200 cm



Sprawl in Serenity 《靜臥》, 2012

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 × 200 cm





Nude 4, 2012

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 × 200 cm



Entangle 《纏繞》, 2012

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 × 200 cm





Nude 3, 2012

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm



Nude 2, 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 x 162 cm





Nude 1, 2013

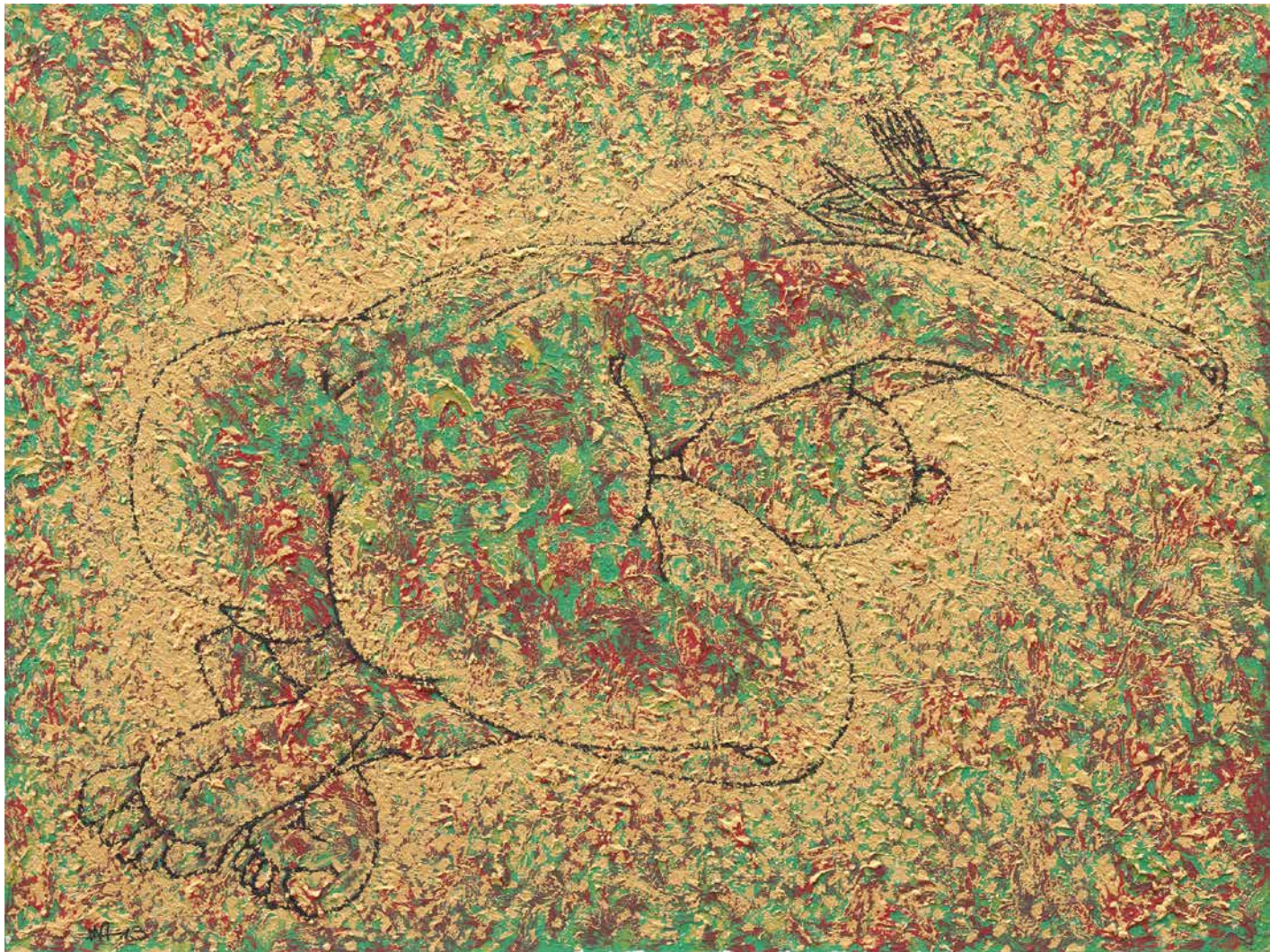
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 × 130 cm



Turning in «內收», 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 × 130 cm





Cloaked in Whispers 《耳語環繞》, 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 × 200 cm



Hang Back 《躊躇》, 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 × 200 cm





Contemplative Crouch 《蹲伏沈思》, 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm



Unfold 《舒展》, 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm





Waiting in Silence 《靜默等待》, 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm



Svelte 《亭亭玉立》, 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm



Attachment 《縫紉》, 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
200 × 250 cm







Watchful Care 《守護》, 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力,  
200 × 500 cm, diptych (200 × 250 cm each)





“Stones are eternal, and so are women. Combining the two creates a “super eternity,” which is the inspiration behind merging women’s figures with stones in my art. Moulding women into stone-like forms through biomorphism represents my pinnacle praise for women.”

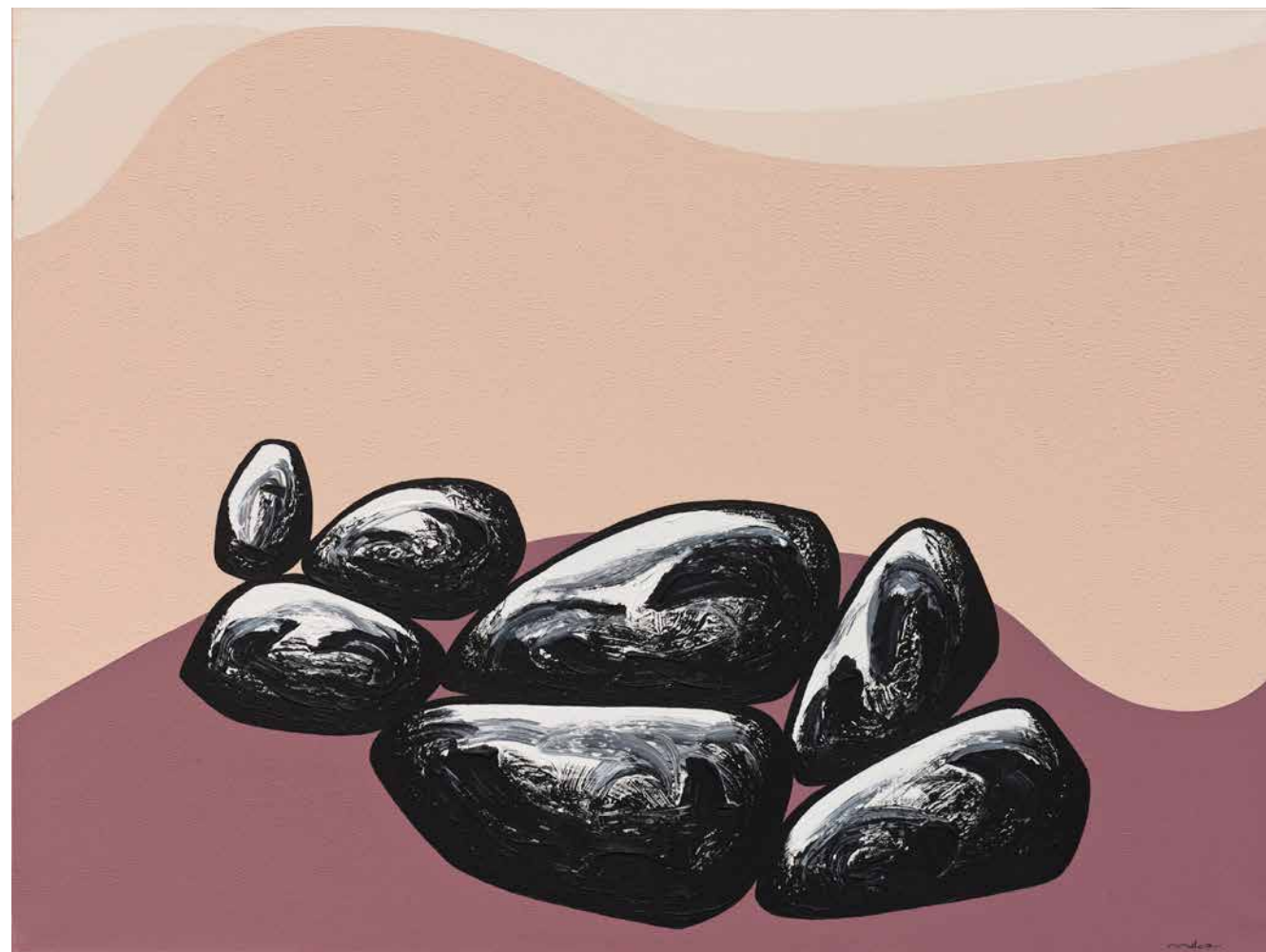
「石頭是永恆的、女人也是永恆的。兩者結合變成超級永恆，這是創作女人體畫與石頭相融的靈感初衷。把石頭女人化、把女人石頭化。這是對於女人的最高讚美。」





Openness-1 «開放—1», 2005

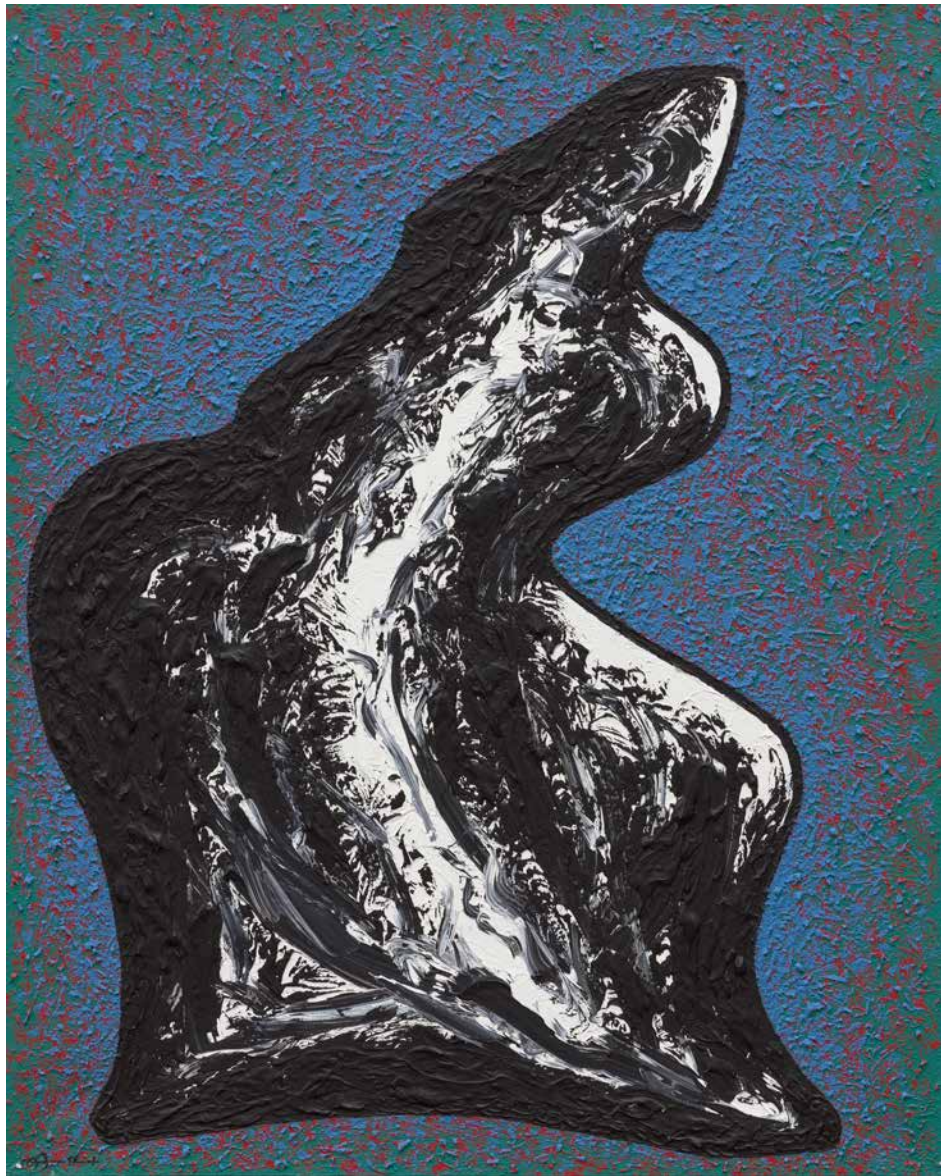
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
114 × 162 cm



Rocks 4, 2007

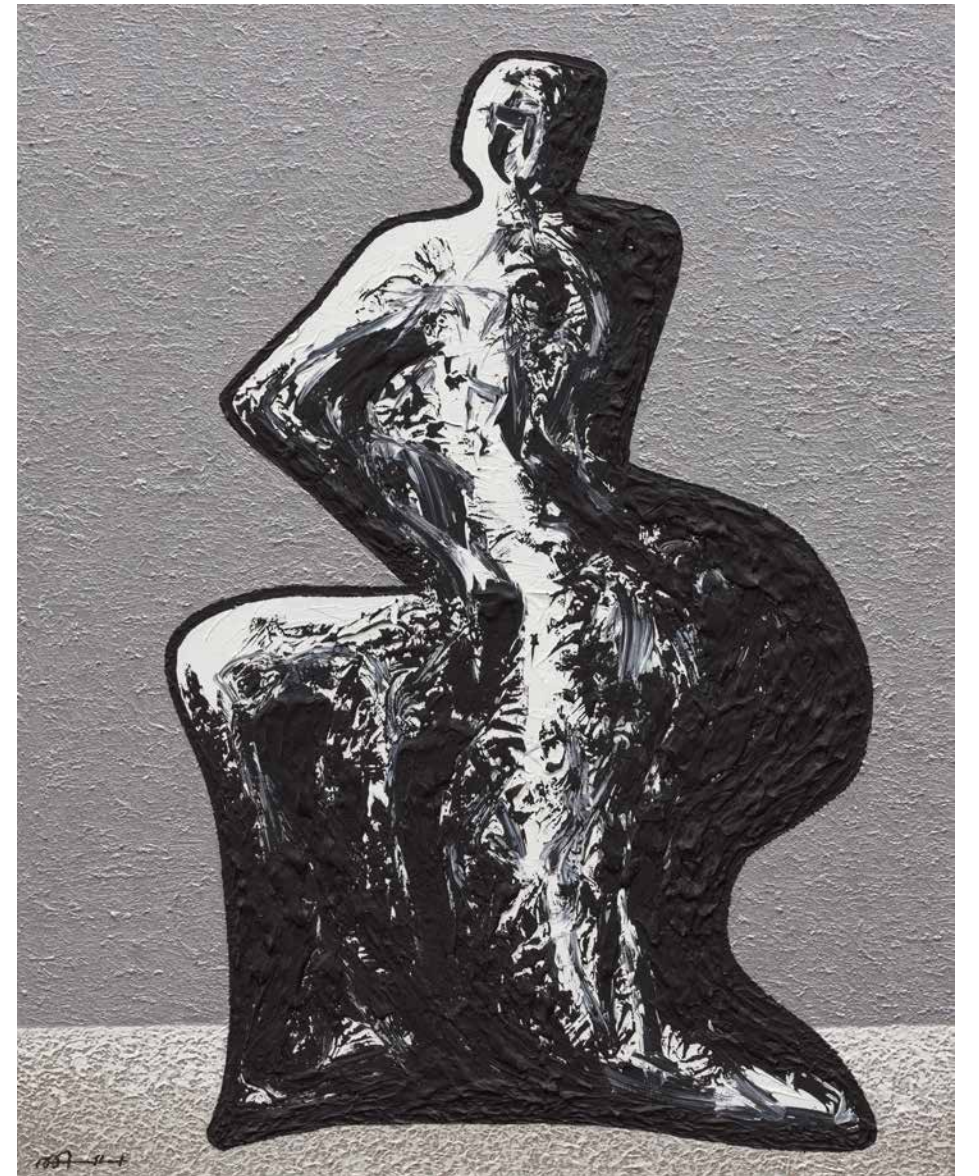
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
140 × 200 cm





Secret of Night Sky 《夜空之秘》, 2012

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 × 130 cm



The Longing 《漫長的守望》, 2012

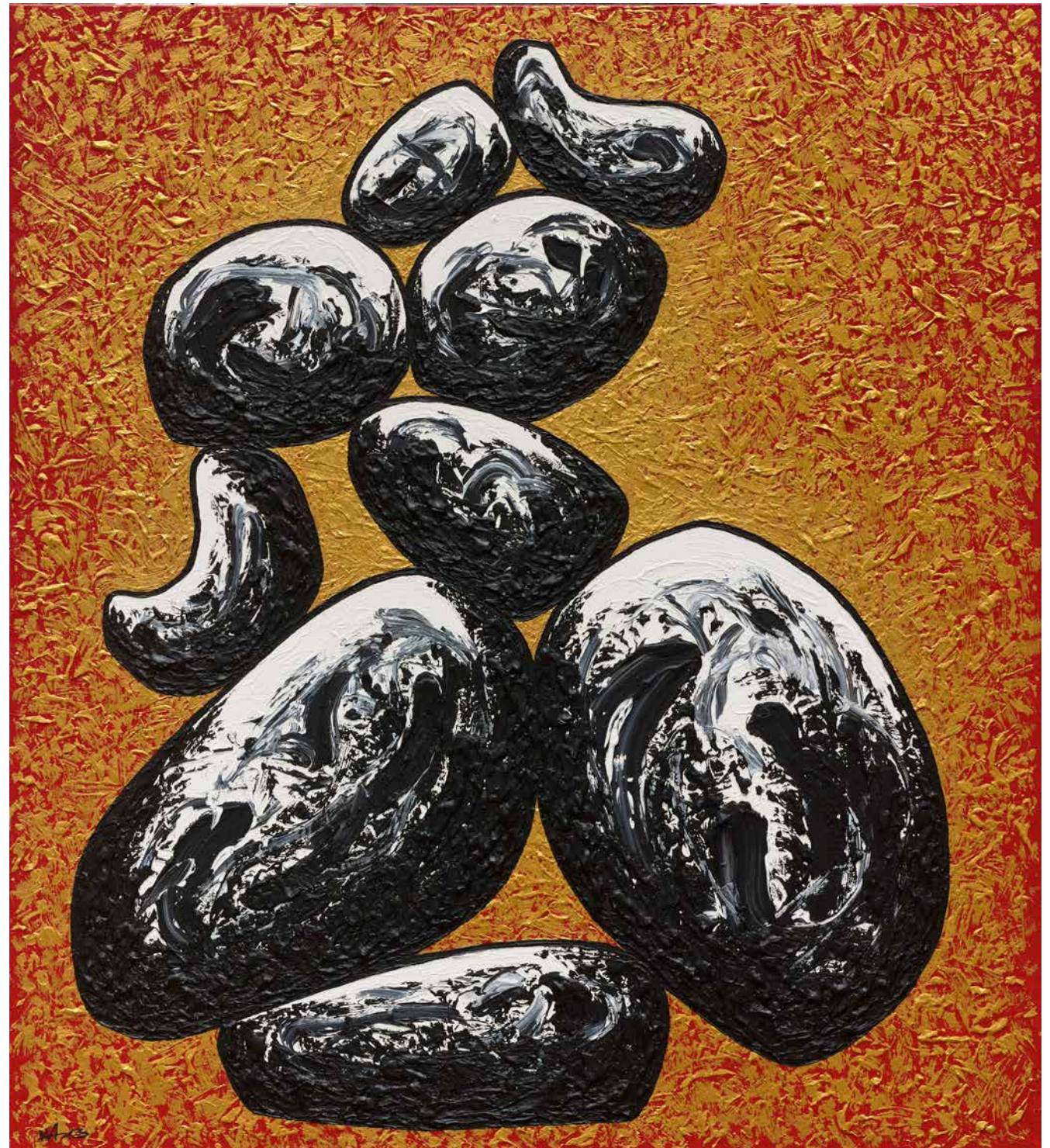
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 × 130 cm





Goddess Nu-wa I 《女娲一》, 2012

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 × 130 cm



Rocks 9, 2012

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
200 × 180 cm



**Rocks 8, 2012**

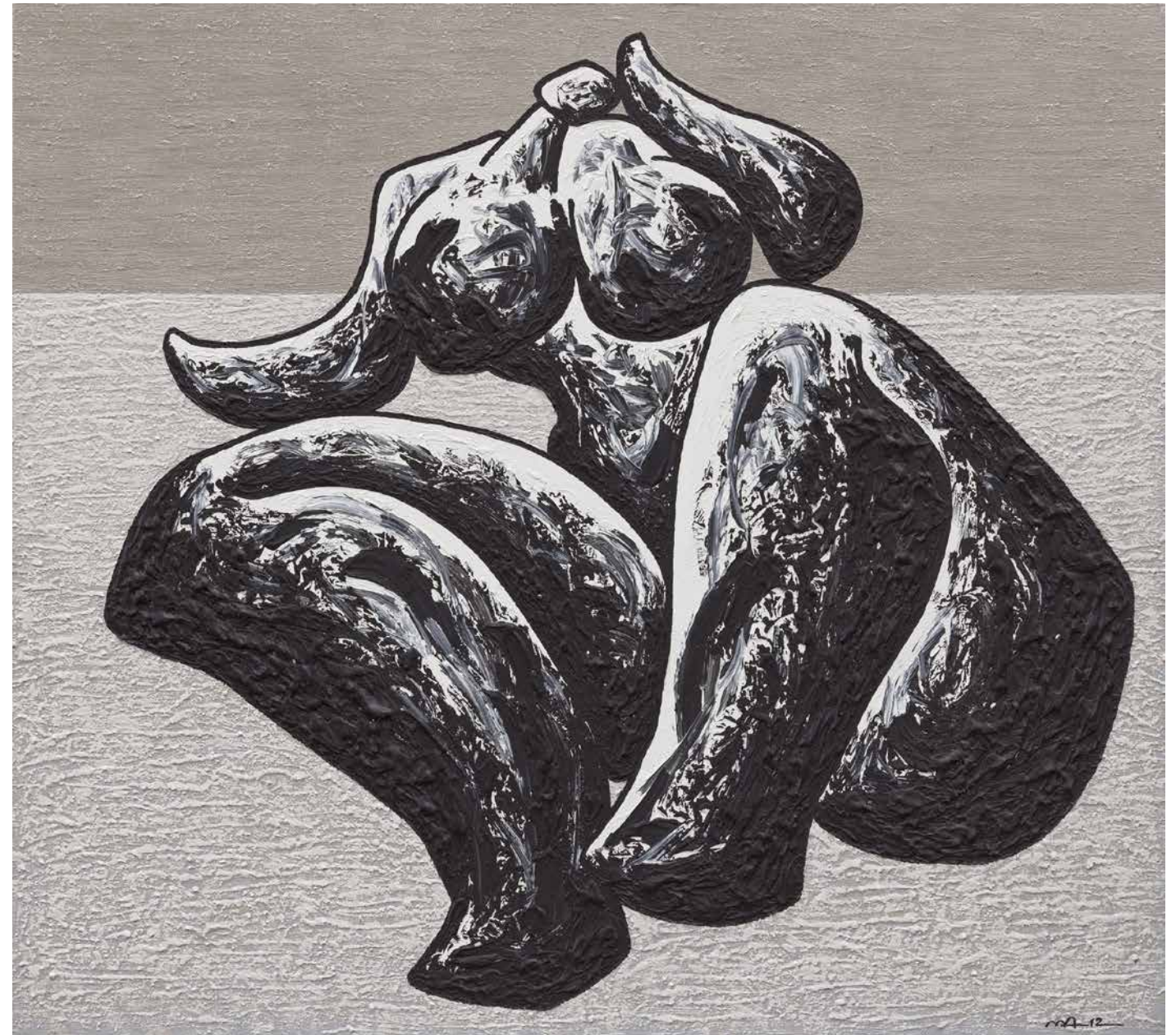
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 × 200 cm



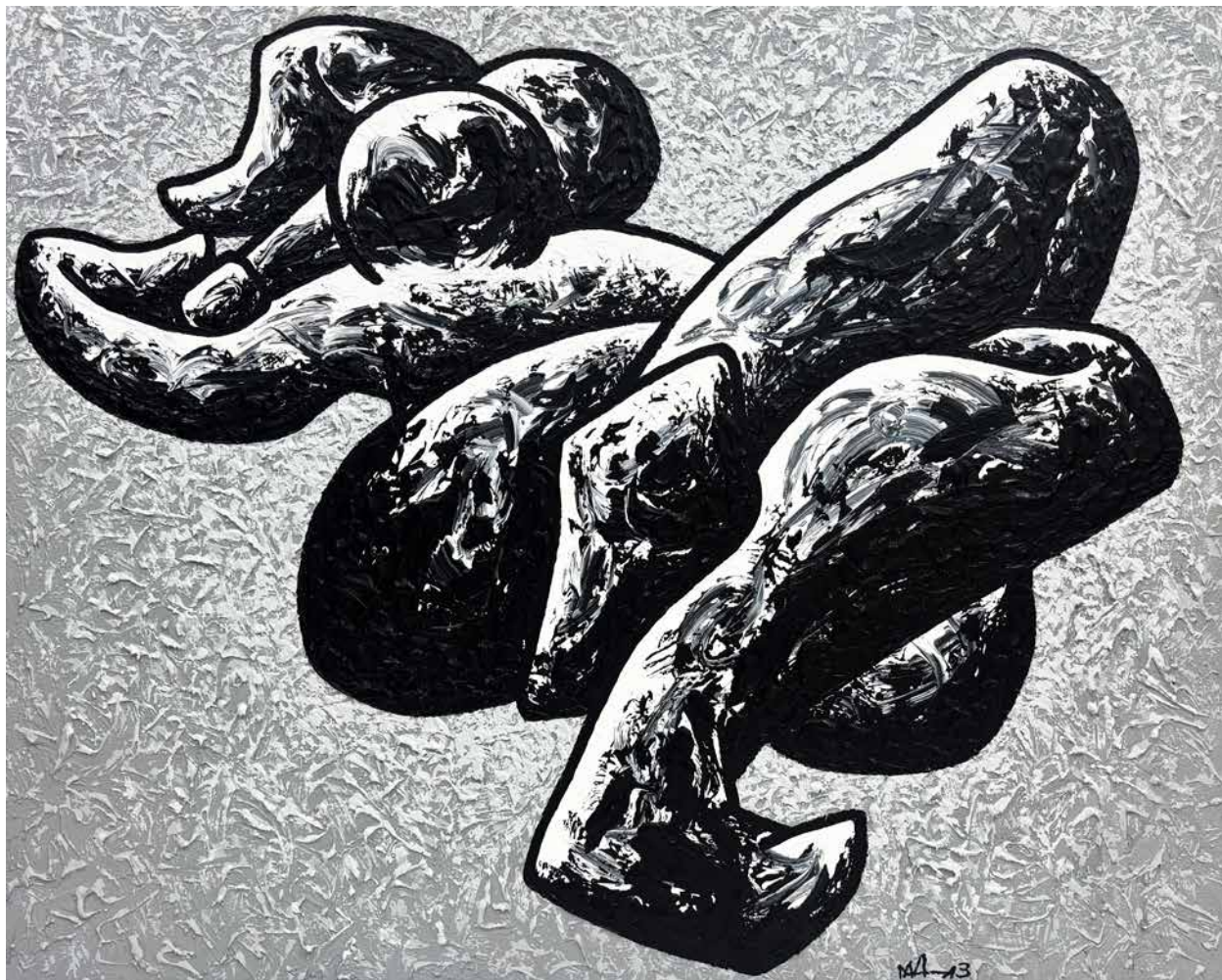


Swing to Tunes 《和韻起舞》，2012

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 × 200 cm

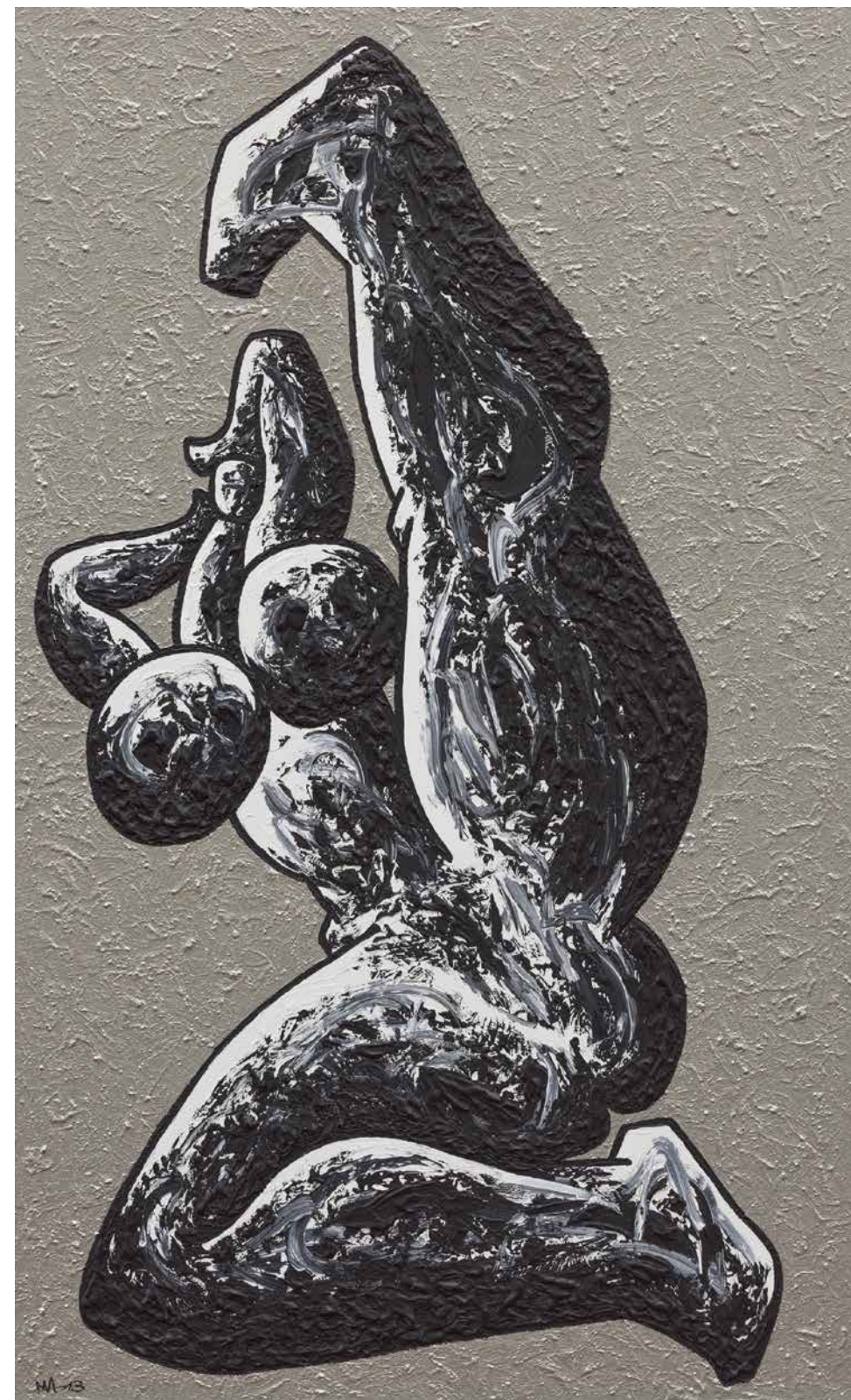






Goddess Nu-wa II 《女媧II》, 2012

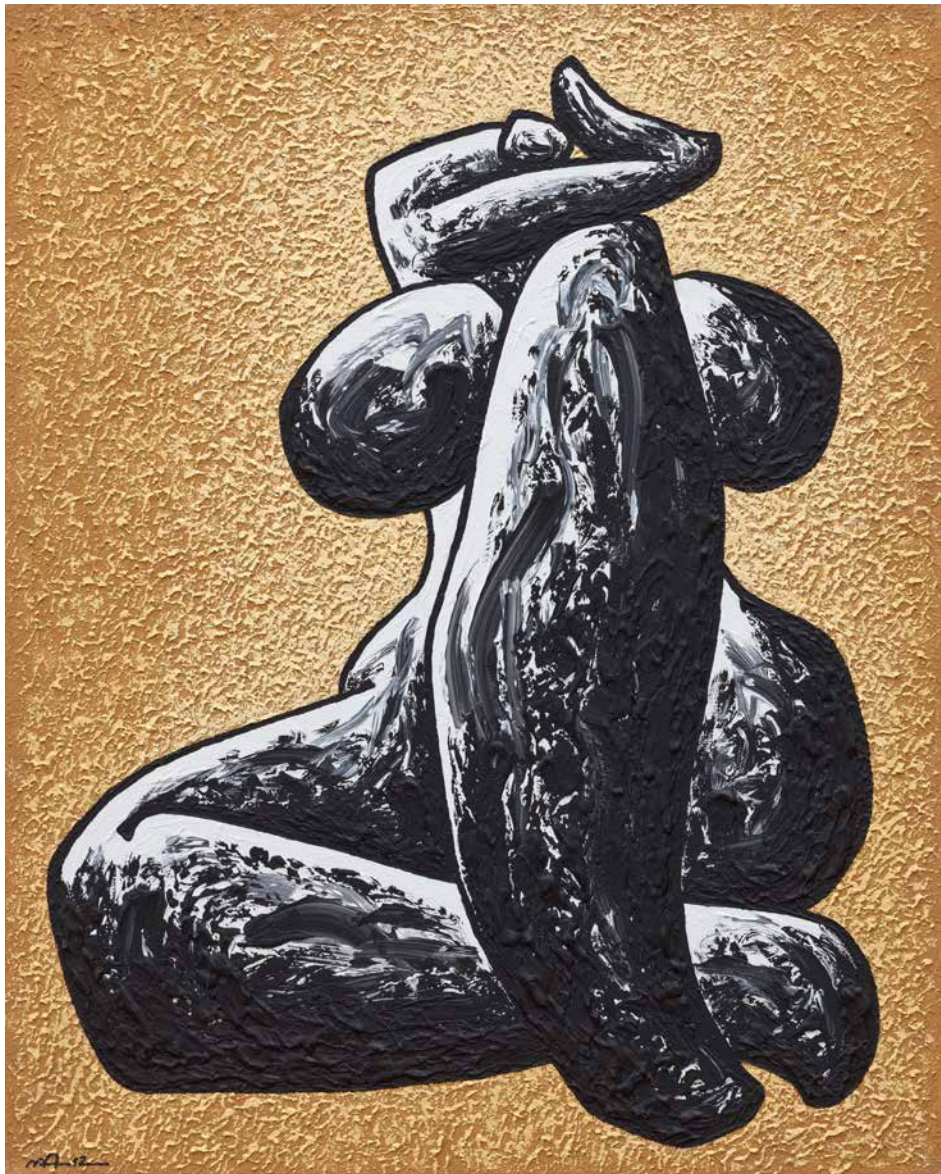
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 × 162 cm



True self 《真我》, 2013

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
250 × 150 cm





In the Waste Land 《荒原裡》, 2014

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 × 130 cm



Pointe 《舞尖之姿》, 2015

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 × 200 cm





Enchanting 《陶醉》, 2015

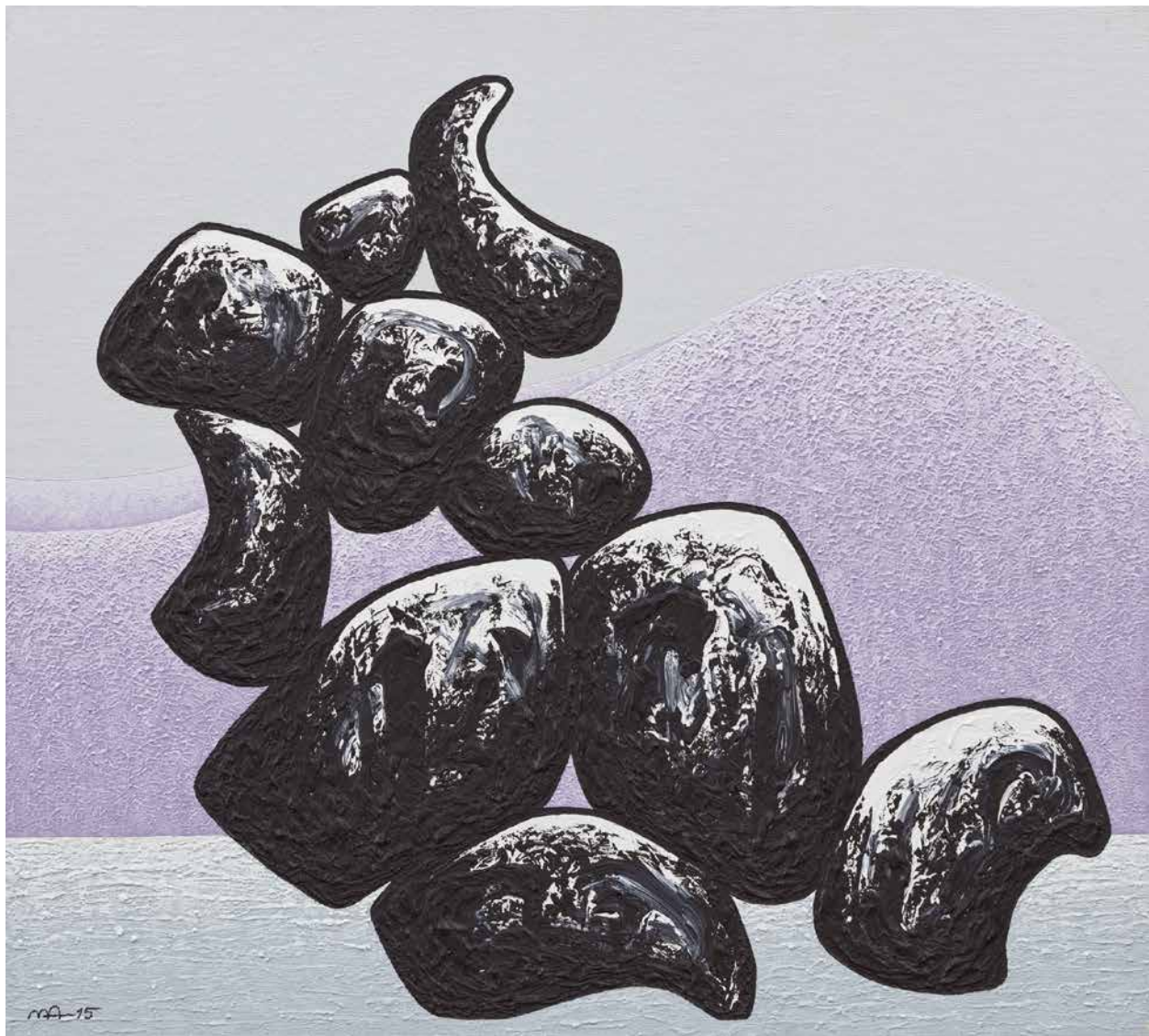
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm



Gaze into the Horizon 《眺望遠方》, 2015

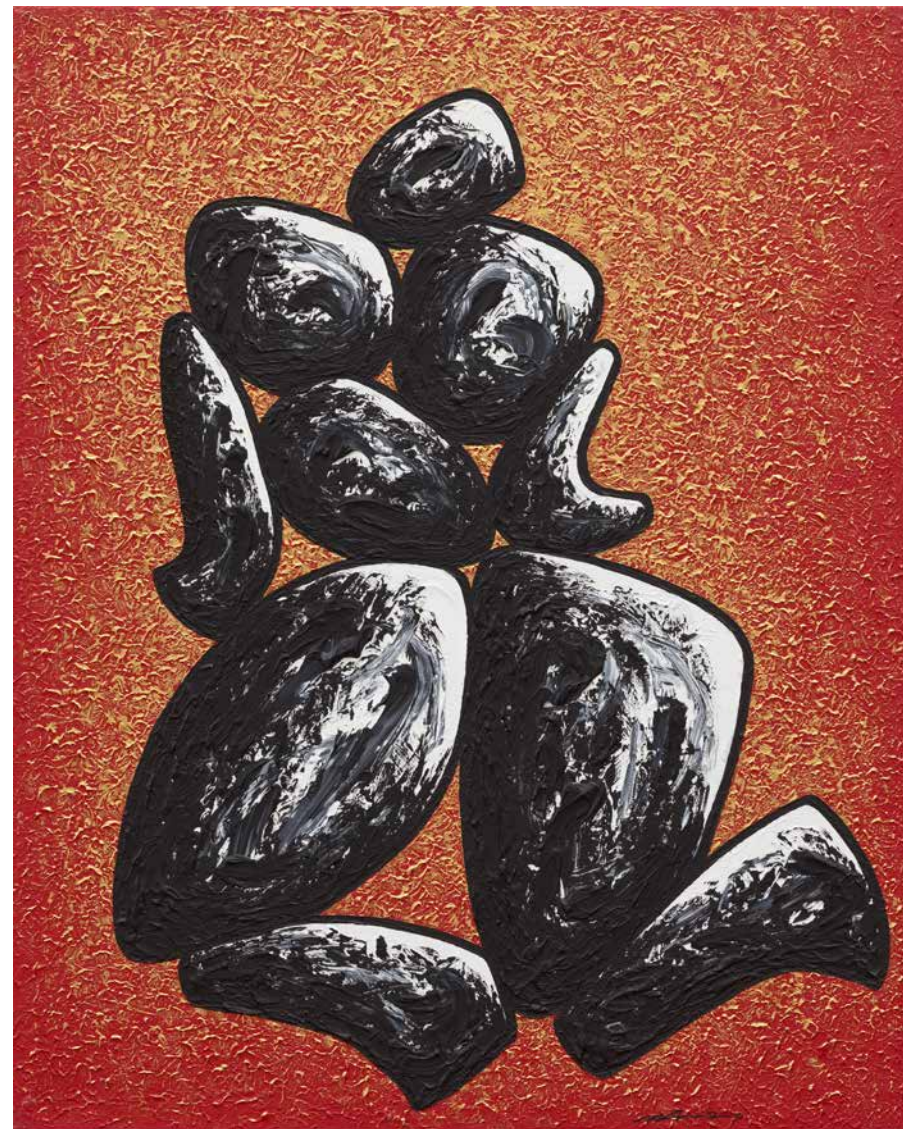
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm





Lounge in Joy 《怡然小憩》, 2015

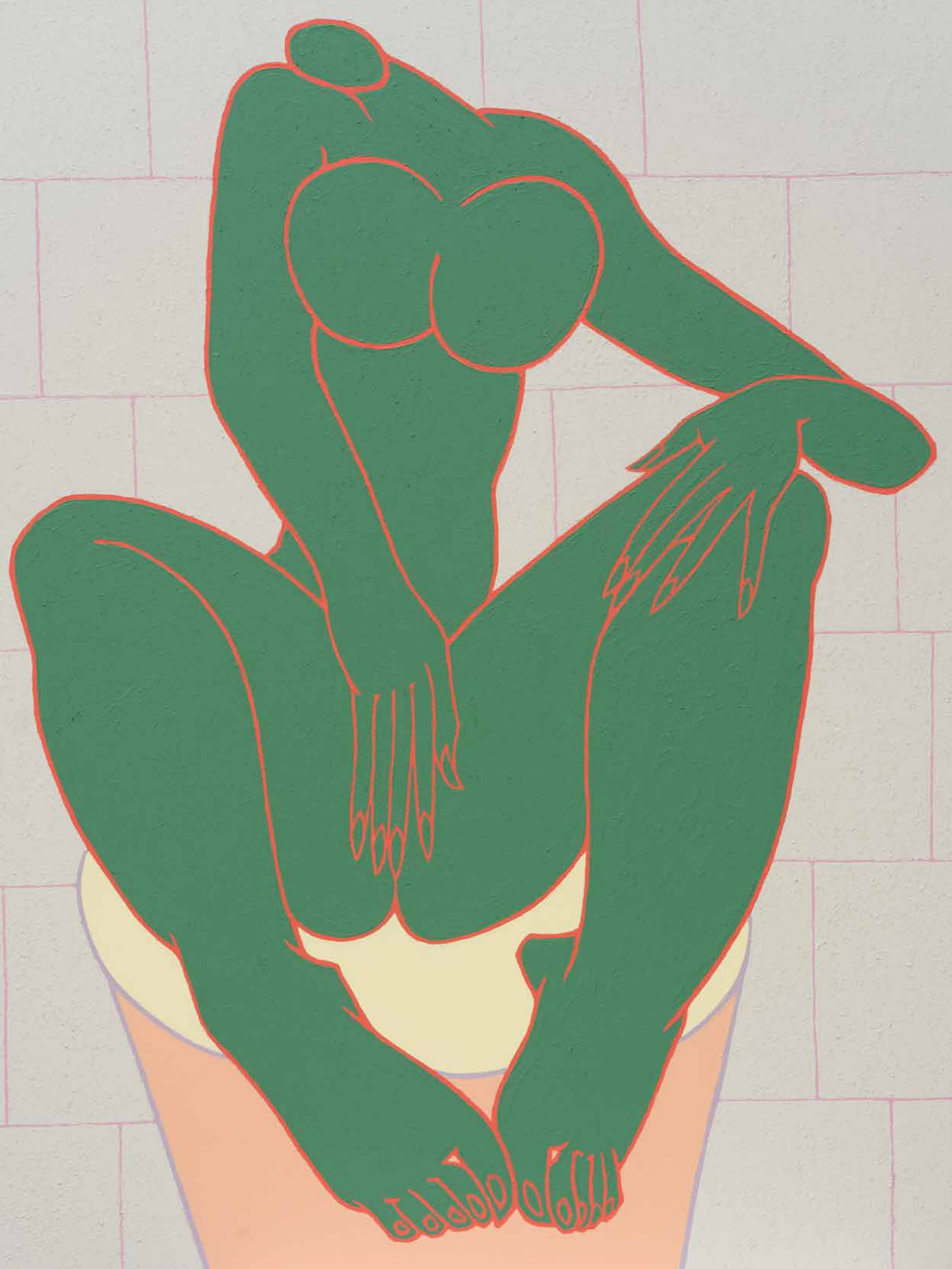
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm



Dancer 《舞者》, 2020

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm





“In my consciousness, women are goddesses,  
and no compliment can truly reach the zenith  
of their beauty.”

「在我的意識中女人就是女神，無論如何讚美  
都達不到峰值。」





Continuum of Elegance 《優雅不息》, 2017

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
300 × 1000 cm, polyptychs (300 × 200 cm each)



**Nude in Green «NA» , 2017**

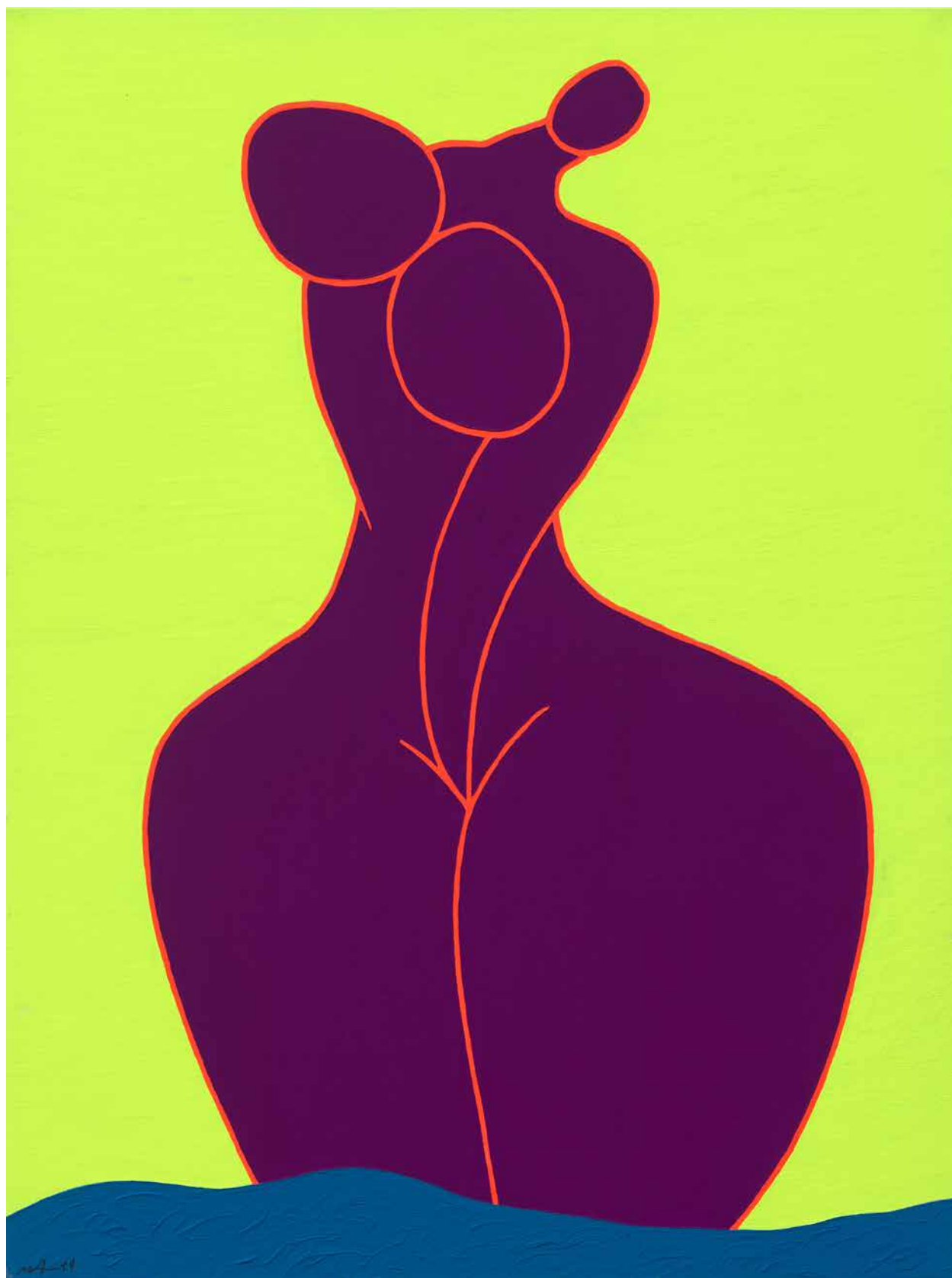
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 × 130 cm





Gazing ahead of Dawn 《晨光前方的凝望》, 2019

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
200 × 150 cm







Canyon 《峡谷之中》, 2020

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 × 130 cm



Ocean of Compassion 《無限包容》, 2020

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 × 200 cm





The Origin of the World 《世界的起源》, 2020

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 × 162 cm



Openness—2 《開放—2》, 2024

Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 × 162 cm



Female Profile 《女體》, 1979

Woodblock print 木刻版畫  
38.5 × 28 cm



School Girls 《女學生》, 1981

Woodblock print 木刻版畫  
23.5 × 17 cm







Demure 《婉約》, 1984

Ink on paper 紙上水墨  
123 × 61 cm



Poise in Flow 《從容流轉》, 1987

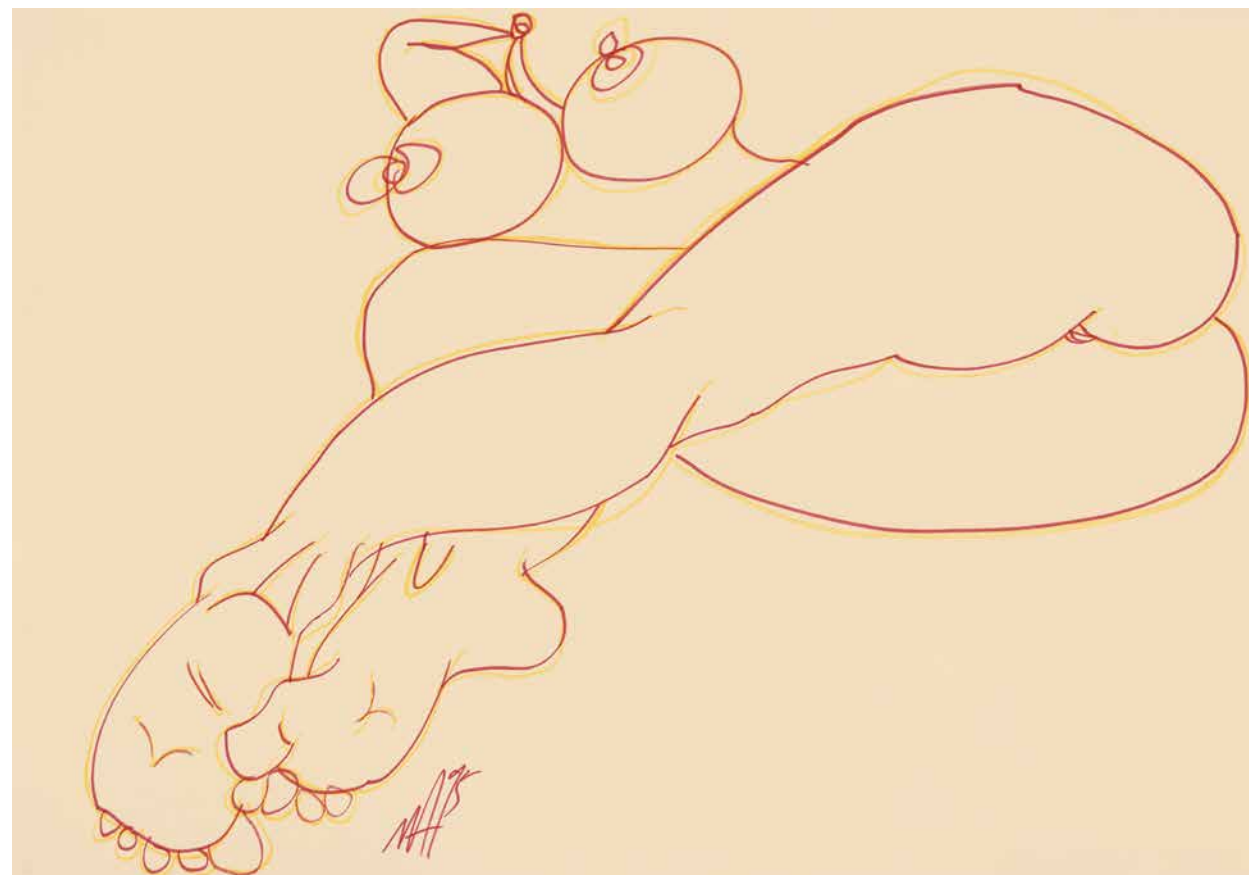
Ink on paper 紙上水墨  
68 × 94 cm





Posture of Curvature 《彎軀》, 1995

Sketch on cardboard 卡紙上素描  
70 × 100 cm



Graceful Twist 《優雅轉折》, 1995

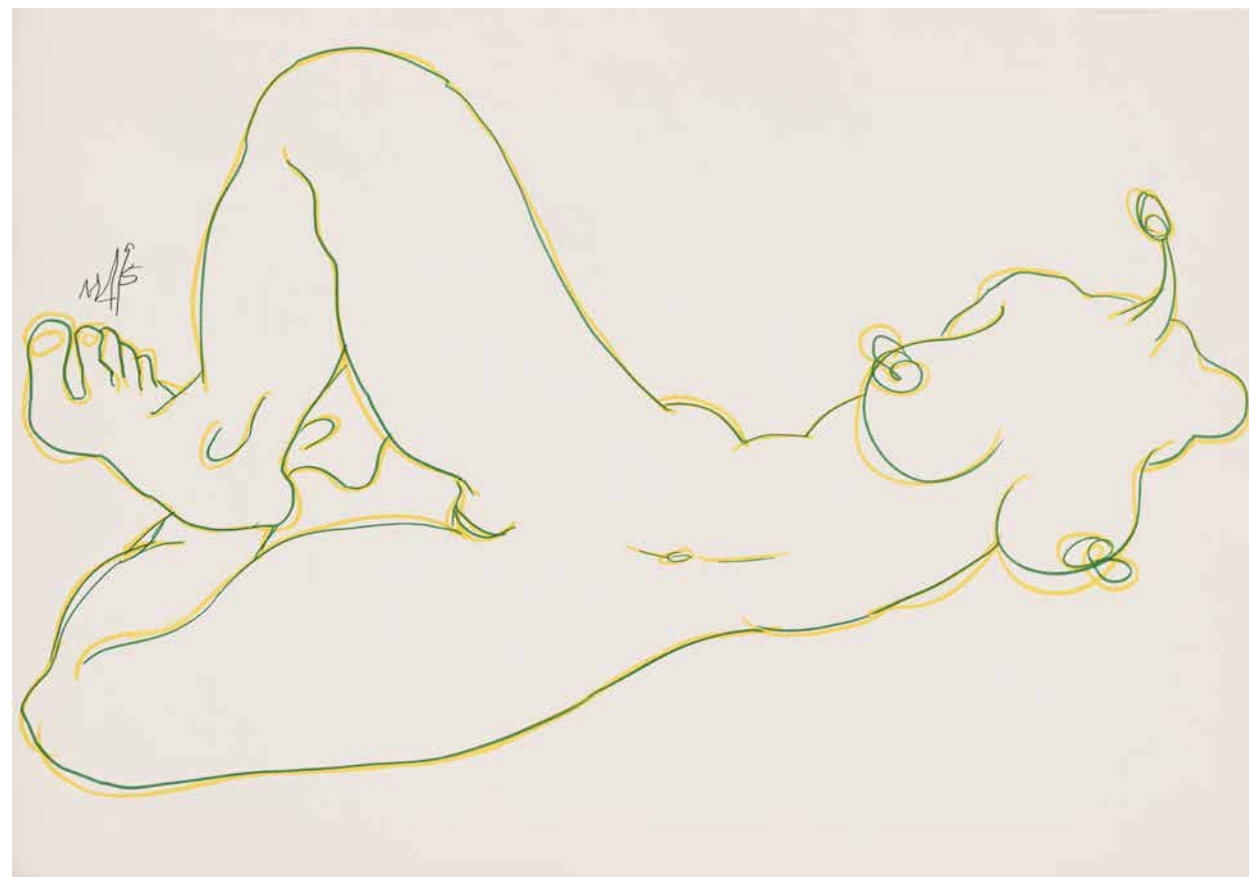
Sketch on cardboard 卡紙上素描  
70 × 100 cm





Revealing Pleasure 《悅現》, 1995

Sketch on cardboard 卡紙上素描  
70 × 100 cm



Flatly Perky 《簡然》, 1995

Sketch on cardboard 卡紙上素描  
70 × 100 cm





“In recent years, I have ventured into creating sculptural depictions of the female figure adorned in vibrant and striking shades, with the intention of revealing women’s enigmatic elegance and confidence in a raw, minimalistic, and unfiltered manner, with few frills. These transformations are not changes for the sake of style but bursts of artistic impulses.”

「近些年,我開始大膽嘗試創作雕塑感、色彩鮮豔的女人體態,旨在將女性最獨特的高雅和自信不加掩蓋的平鋪出來。這些變化,不是為了風格變化而變化,而是我強烈的衝動而裂變出的風格,是一種配套。」





2023年馬德升蓬皮杜中心個展現場圖片，展出了精選的以女性為主題的水墨作品



## 序

### 女人，抑或是繪畫的主體

Jérôme Neutres<sup>1</sup>

在馬德升的藝術中，「女人」某程度上是繪畫的代名詞：女人既是藝術表現的對象，也是藝術創作的主體。本次展覽匯集了三十餘件橫跨1979年至2024年的作品——從1970年代末的木刻版畫、到1980年代的紙本水墨、1990年代的素描、至2000年代的丙烯繪畫……「女人」這一主題始終是馬德升探索各種媒介的核心，女性形象亦貫穿了馬德升的各個創作時期與風格。這使得本次展覽成為了一場透過女性形象（或者說是守護神般女性形象），多面呈現藝術家的小型回顧展。

無論是直率速寫還是精細刻畫的手法、是堅如磐石還是翩翩起舞動、是生機勃勃還是慵懶沉醉、是動態還是靜止、是幽靈般虛幻還是真實存在、近乎具象還是徹底抽象、如金屬般冰冷還是肉體般溫暖、是黑白還是彩色：馬德升作品中的女性形象總是佔據著整個畫布，彷彿她們就是這些作品的存在理由與歸屬。作為一種隱喻或幻想，豐腴妖嬈卻隱去容貌，這樣的女性形象似乎隨著時間的推移愈發具有普世意味，近乎一種神話。

馬德升的藝術生涯開始於中國，發展於法國——他自1980年代中選擇在法國生活與創作——其作品本質上是兩種文化的交匯，具有某種共性，這種特質通過畫中的「女性」意象得以完美體現。

此次倫敦展覽的舉辦正值馬德升藝術生涯的關鍵時刻，他的作品開始在當代藝術最負盛名的場館中獲得關注。巴黎蓬皮杜中心（The Centre Pompidou）目前擁有近八十件馬德升的作品，這些作品本來被法國國立現代藝術博物館（the National Museum of Modern Art）所收

藏。2023年，巴黎蓬皮杜中心在其展出諸多世界級大師作品的四樓為馬德升舉辦了一場精彩的個展，馬先生還在預展前親自進行了一場以「自由」為主題的行為藝術演出。為此，馬德升也因其對藝術的重大貢獻而獲得了法國的高度表彰。

同年，法國國立藝術史研究院（the National Institute of Art History）與索邦大學（the University of Sorbonne）聯合舉辦了首屆以馬德升為主題的國際學術會議，由學者Aurore Blanc主持。值得注意的是，新一代藝術史學家對馬德升的作品皆表現出了濃厚的興趣，足見其作品魅力歷久彌新。2025年，馬德升的作品作為一場聚焦於「星星美展」這場歷史性當代藝術運動的一部分，在蓬皮杜中心再次參展。「星星畫會」是中國第一個當代藝術團體，由馬德升與黃銳等民間藝術家於1979年共同創立，對中國當代藝術的發展與推動產生了相當深遠的影響。

可以預見，本次3812畫廊在倫敦新址為馬德升舉辦的展覽，將為英美博物館體系及中國藝術生態的新發展鋪平道路。馬德升這顆「星星」從未停止閃耀，並將繼續光芒璀璨。

1. Jérôme Neutres，文本與圖像符號學博士（University Paris-VII），自1996年以來擔任作家及策展人主導了約70場現當代藝術展覽的策劃。曾任法國國家博物館聯盟一大皇宮（Réunion des musées nationaux- Grand Palais）館長、巴黎盧森堡博物館（Musée du Luxembourg）主席、巴黎吉美國立亞洲藝術博物館（Musée Guimet）理事。



展覽前言

女人，畫布上不可及的觸感  
策展人：許劍龍

他的「女人」或盤繞、或扭動、或旋轉、或蹣伏、或悠閒、或依偎、或斜倚、或挺立，以各種姿態散發著女性獨有的性感——無論是尖銳的、溫柔的或是健壯的，都躍然於畫布上；無論身材是豐滿還是纖細，她們都散發著熾烈的、閃耀的能量。這些都源於藝術家的當下情感——喜、怒、哀、樂；或渴望、或歡欣、或幻象。我們不必對他直白的描繪感到唐突，因為這是一種對生命的態度和對原始慾望的敬禮。對於這些「繆斯女神」的創造者馬德升來說，都是他的靈感泉源和熱愛生命的追求。

我認識馬德升已經有20年了，亦早在二十年前第一次收藏他的「石」系列作品。他的畫作所傳達的精神是永恆的，具有持續共鳴的能量。這就是馬德升藝術的精彩之處——沒有什麼是短暫和空洞的，因為他探索的主題是植根於生命中恆久的智慧。

藝術填補了馬德升的人生，藝術是他表達自我的唯一渠道——將自己和生命描繪成石頭，以石喻人，用石頭抒情，說生命的故事；他用仰慕的心情去歌頌女性身體之美，在他的筆下，女性以一種超凡脫俗、精緻絕倫的「繆斯女神」形象出現，象徵著上帝賜予人類最美好的禮物，也是他對宇宙天地之美的禮讚。

自1986年移居巴黎以來，馬德升一直以推進中國藝術現代化、提升中國藝術在國際舞臺上的影響力為己任。面對著中國當時不確定的環境，馬德升並無氣餒。相反，他將在海外傳播中國現代藝術作為自己的

使命。這樣的信念反映了他作為藝術家的擔當，這種責任感源自於他對中國文化與身份的驕傲，並將其作為自己作品中典型的視覺元素。

「女人」作為展覽主題的緣起是偶然，也可以說是必然的。去年，我與3812畫廊的聯合創辦人及行政總裁Mark Peaker去巴黎拜訪馬德升老師，在他細小的工作室內，他給我們翻開一幅又一幅「偉大」的女人體畫作，那份視覺震撼感依然歷歷在目，讓我們望而生敬。其中那組於2002年創作的最早期女人體三聯畫，仍然讓我記憶猶新。

午餐時，Mark提出舉辦一個以「女人體」為展覽主題的想法，我和馬老師對此感到興奮。最後，我們的命題：「女人-馬德升個展」。

平心而論，這個標題遠超其字面含義。「女人」在馬老師展覽的語境中不僅代表了女性形象，更是他藝術創作的靈感來源，還折射了他的人生願景和哲學——一種堅毅不移克服苦難的韌性，並通過滲透生命真諦獲得精神自由，並以其開創性的技法於畫布上無拘無束地表達。

2024年，我們在3812的香港畫廊為馬老師舉辦「在『石』空下許願」個展，今年在倫敦3812推出《女人—馬德升個展》——是老師藝術生涯中首次以女人為主題並全面性展出「女人體」畫作的大型個展，亦是我們的倫敦畫廊喬遷往全新地標式大型歷史建築活化項

目—懷特利（The Whiteley）的開幕展，對藝術家及畫廊來說，都是極具標誌性意義。

作為畫廊主及展覽策展人，又是馬老師的粉絲和他的多年好友，我在此希望感謝今次參與的著名學者和策展人，包括：英國著名的當代藝術專家與學者何凱特博士（Dr. Katie Hill），以及2024年第60屆威尼斯國際藝術雙年展中國館的首席策展人姜俊博士。感謝他們為本次展覽撰寫學術文章及提供學術指導。我還要向法國著名策展人黑陽博士（Dr. Jérôme Neutres）致以最真摯的謝意，感謝他撥冗出席展覽開幕式並發言。黑陽博士於2022年策劃了馬老師在巴黎蓬皮杜藝術中心國家現代藝術博物館的個展。回顧來看，巴黎的展覽呈現了馬先生的「女人」系列一瞥，其中包括兩幅以簡練剪影描繪女性形態的水墨作品，以及另一幅以勾勒手法展現女性體態豐盈感的素描作品。這使得我們在倫敦聚焦「女性」的展覽成為一次策展與敘事上的延續。

此外，我要感謝我的倫敦和香港畫廊團隊，為此次展覽的付出、他們的專業和團隊精神讓我引以為傲。

最後，我必須向馬德升老師致敬，非常感謝他的信任、關愛、支持和指導。我們很榮幸能成為他在英國和大中華地區的代理畫廊。

今次展覽展出25幅大尺幅畫作，包括兩幅1970年代女神般剪影的人物木版畫，相當罕見；以及於1980年代創作的水墨畫——藝術家特意地分享他與法國野獸派大

師亨利·馬蒂斯（Henri Matisse，1869 - 1954）進行的隔空精神對話，使得這場展覽更富宏大的藝術史意義。

「女人」不僅代表了3812與馬德升老師一同實踐的藝術旅程，也是一次具有開創性的拓展。我們可以從馬老師的「女人體」系列中提取出另一個訊息——「女人」這命題是超越時空、無分國界，永不過時。不僅如此，他最終的這些作品還為我們提供了極富啟發性的視野延伸，因為老師一生奮力地掙扎求存，為藝術理想而活，並在他與難以觸及的「繆斯女神」於畫布上美妙邂逅當中，啟發我們用一種蘊含普世價值的藝術語言來詮釋、欣賞和領悟他的藝術。



Calvin 許、馬德升和Mark Peaker（從右至左）在藝術巴黎2025展台合影。一部分馬德升的「女人」作品在次展出。



## 奧德修斯之旅 何凱特博士

「心靈越簡單、越自然，世界就會越美好。」——馬德升（2025年）  
「真實的不是表象，而是思想，是事物的本質。」——布朗庫西

### 摘要

先鋒藝術家馬德升的作品將為我們帶來一場令人振奮的視覺奇旅——從黑白木刻版畫中沐光而立的女性身影，到以豐滿的女性裸體為主題的宏大且充滿活力的畫作，那些承載著富有情慾張力的軀體在畫布中巍然升騰。這場穿越了四十五年創作歷程的藝術遠徵，從純真走向覺醒，見證著藝術家從早期樂觀的狀態走向覺醒的漫長蛻變，匯聚成多個系列，皆散髮著強烈的視覺辨識度。這種人文主義精神與藝術視野同樣流淌在他的行為藝術與詩歌創作之中。它們從端莊到怪誕，將裸體作為一種原型或象徵性圖標，從遠古延伸至現代，承載著永恆的魅力與神話的色彩。

正如藝術家所言：「生活是赤裸的（la vie est nue）。」裸體作為一種藝術隱喻，用以探究我們的存在，以及與彼此之間、與世界的聯繫。通過對這一主題的反復演繹，馬德升的作品在風格上多經轉變，從小畫幅到大畫幅，從黑白版畫到色彩斑斕、充滿活力的色調。這些裸體形象在不同時刻蘊含了生動揮灑的筆觸與平滑且極具圖像化的形態，兼具性感與莊重，時而活力四射、張力十足，時而含蓄內斂、剪裁利落乾脆。

從文化角度來看，這些由一位旅居歐洲的華人藝術家所創作的裸體畫作，在跨文化和多文化交流中有著難以解開的根源。我們在藝術家身上所看到的文化交織，源於與全球化中各大都市的文化的長期聯繫，這種互動被編織進二十世紀藝術史發展的進程之中。其中，巴黎作為歐洲文化交流軸心，與上海、東京等各地區的文化

樞紐緊密相連。馬德升在巴黎——1920年代現代主義的中心——已耕耘近四十載。因此，他創作的主題——即是「歐洲繪畫史上的核心題材」，也富有「中國藝術現代性發展的必然要素」，這絕非巧合。

中國現代藝術史上的諸多重要人物，如林風眠、徐悲鴻、潘玉良和趙無極等，都曾在巴黎生活，並深受當時藝術現代運動中對色彩、線條和藝術形式探索的深刻影響。這些造就了從後印象主義（Post-impressionism）、超現實主義（Surrealism）到純粹抽象主義（Pure Abstraction）的現代藝術運動。誠如十年前的一場巡回展覽所述：「他們的巴黎之旅與中國藝術傳統發生了斷層，而他們回國後卻對一代藝術家的形成又產生了重大影響。」這些藝術家本身都曾創作關於女性裸體的題材的畫作。因此，馬德升的裸體畫作可被視為一場跨越文化的對話，它矗立於中國與歐洲現代性的交匯處，而這種非對稱的現代性對話已延續至21世紀。

在「文化大革命」（1966-1976）後期，藝術家們共同追求西方現代主義，成為了尋求當代新文化語言更廣泛的文化運動的一部分。馬德升與其他「星星畫會」的核心創始人黃銳、王克平和曲磊 磊一起，站在這一髮展的前沿，積極倡導言論自由和藝術表達。他們對線條和造型的獨特運用使中國藝術家得以重回國際藝術舞台，並在資源貧瘠、資金匱乏（甚至根本沒有）的情況下，無意地與常玉等知名藝術家之前發展起來的流動的文化話語建立了聯繫。至於他們受馬蒂斯（Henri Matisse）裸體畫或畢加索（Pablo Picasso）線描作品影響的程

度，我們可以從西方早期的藝術研究中窺見一二；但在1970年代的中國，提及這些世界聞名的西方現代主義大師的意義可謂非比尋常——它不僅是藝術家們對文化解放的強烈訴求，更是對那個充斥著「灰暗中山裝」與「強制性政治統一」的單調世界發出一聲聲向藝術自由的吶喊。一如2025年在香港M+舉辦的畢加索展覽的盛況，我們可知，時至今日，這些藝術大師的創作遺風依舊被中國的觀眾所熙攘追隨著。

馬德升當時的號召力在1979年他在北京向群眾發表講話的照片中可見一斑。他倚靠拐杖，全然不見身體的殘疾之態，盡顯個人魅力與領導風範。此前一年，即1978年12月，儘管中央文化部數十年來首次宣佈允許在藝術教育中使用模特兒，裸體繪畫仍未在學院之外被廣泛接受。不過，這正是一個關鍵的文化轉折點與鬆動處，為後續十年里文化的重大發展鋪平了道路。

馬德升在1979年所作的小幅木刻版畫《女體》（38.5 × 28釐米）描繪了一位跪姿女性的輪廓，雙臂彎曲置於腦後，影子投射在前，背景是一輪放射出細膩光芒的明亮太陽，光芒籠罩了整個畫面。這幅畫作中的女子端莊優雅——面容低垂，姿態謙遜，在那個文化產生重大變革、政治正確正受到人文主義挑戰的時代，清晰有力地表達出了對希望、重生與美的嚮往，取代了宣揚社會主義的現實主義的圖像。這件小尺幅版畫中展現了他對輪廓的嫺熟運用和工整的構圖，這種看似因精心切割、重復標記而形成的富有質感的紋理，在馬德升後來的作品中反復出現，並在其大尺幅的繪畫中也得到了規模化的

發展。此外，馬德升畫作中的時間結構則是借助陰影和太陽表現：光影的普遍表現手法使這幅裸體成為了永恆的象徵，一個女神或自由的形象，與「文化大革命」高峰期將毛主席神化的太陽形象形成鮮明對比。

此外，強烈的平面特質以及對空間的直白刻畫也延續到了馬德升後期的繪畫作品中，賦予了它們一種結構精確性。畫布常被一條簡約的曲線分割出天空與大地，利用線條和色彩，在天地分野中勾勒出一個抽象的遠景世界。從概念上講，這些元素充當了宇宙的哲學標識，既與中國古代的「天地宇宙觀」相契合，又與現代主義的普遍性相呼應，將畫面約束在了美學形式的框架內，使其與任何可識別的現實都隔絕開來。這些特徵貫穿於馬德升的畫作之中，是他汲取中國傳統文化養分的關鍵部分。

### 硬紙板上的素描

在1990年代中期，幾幅馬德升繪制於紙板上的素描作品為後續的大型畫作奠定了基礎。這些素描以簡潔的線條描繪了不同姿態的裸體形象，技法精湛，輪廓以黃色雙重勾勒，從前視和側視的角度展現了構圖的動感、體積感和景深。其中，腿部與足部的曲線張力尤為引人矚目，人物的頭部被簡化為鬆軟的陽具形態，乳頭則以急促、彎曲的筆觸進行強調，肚臍亦增添了凸顯肉感的刻畫。所有一切均以簡練的線條完成，與現代中西方藝術中探索人體體態之美的寫實畫家們採用的作畫手段相呼應。馬德升對線條的強調以及對圖像粗獷的處理感令人印象深刻。但人們常會好奇發問：為何人物形象逐漸



收窄？為何頭部會被簡化至一根看似松垮的「不起眼的一個點」呢？

頭部低垂，幾乎抹去了頭部與面部特徵，取而代之的是身體的輪廓佔據了畫布的主導地位，力量感似乎被無限放大。

藝術家對這一問題的回答簡潔而深刻：「我們都想得太多了！」這暗示著我們需要回歸當下實在的感受，脫離過度思考。這可解讀為道家思想的「返璞歸真」，也是在警示著人類自身的動物性，儘管我們擁有較高層次的智力，頭部也只不過是如肢體一端的生理附屬而已。通過強調我們身體存在的根本性，並拒絕賦予畫中人物任何可識別的身份，馬德升將身體之重置於心靈之上，以一種反現實主義（Anti-realist）的詮釋使現實失真。這種手法在弗朗西斯·培根（Francis Bacon）和亨利·摩爾（Henry Moore）的眾多作品中亦可見到。培根利用頭部表達痛苦或恐懼，而摩爾畫作中人物的頭部雖無特徵且小巧，卻始終保持直立。布朗庫西（Constantin Brâncuși）關於在其雕塑形態中省略面部特徵的解釋，讓我們得以瞭解他對於形式與美的關注：「為了頭髮、眼睛、耳朵的塑造而挖出小洞，破壞一件美麗的作品，實在是太可惜了。我的素材如此美麗，它那蜿蜒的線條如純金般閃耀，足以概括地球上所有的女性之美而歸結為一個典範。」布朗庫西的大理石雕塑《波嘉尼小姐》（Mlle · Pogany, 1912），走在化繁為簡的前沿，但在1913年的軍械庫展覽（the Armory Show）上卻因形似雞蛋而遭到嘲笑。馬德升成長的過程中，生

長文化環境都可能充斥著高度政治現實主義（Political Realism），因此，他在藝術生涯的初期選擇背離這一傳統，轉而擁抱西方現代主義（Western Modernism），只因這是稀釋因政治現實主義所導致的教條主義盛行的解藥。他對於何時身體勝過思想、何時思想勝過身體的流變異常敏銳，因為嚴峻的身體挑戰一直是他生活的核心。這些要素或許會影響我們解讀他的作品的方式。

在馬德升所繪的裸體女性中，女性身體的幾個性徵——乳房、外陰和肚臍，同樣存在於世界上最早的女性雕像「維倫多夫的維納斯」（the Venus of Willendorf）中。這件石器時代的小型藝術品高11釐米，可追溯至公元前28000年至25000年，現藏於維也納自然歷史博物館（the Vienna Natural History Museum）。與當時遍布歐洲的其他類似的雕像一樣，這件小雕像可能是對生殖崇拜的體現或早期的女神形象。由於時間久遠，其確切含義已難以考證，成為了考古學家們所困惑的未解之謎。然而，正如這一尊雕像所證明的，對女性性徵的強調顯然有著數萬年的歷史淵源，因而被賦予了文學上的象徵意義。

#### 石頭裸體

二十年後，馬德升的一件作品《怡然小憩》（2015）回歸純粹形式主義（Pure Formalism），將身體形態分解為圓潤的形狀，這是藝術家創作生涯中的另一條主線。在這件作品中，無定形的塊面構成了一個依稀可辨的、被肢解的身體，通過身體及其存在來表達了藝術家對生命本身和原始形態（Primeval Forms）的興趣——此時的「石」系列已發展多年。身體的各部位相互分離，卻又

各自巧妙平衡地構成整體，與藝術家自己的雕塑作品展開了一場富有玩味的對話，並實現了「形式與非形式」、「具象與抽象」、「二維與三維」之間的交互，對我們的圖像視覺接受本身提出了詰問。

在一片蒼茫抽象的山脈與疑似湖泊或水體的映襯下，一幅山水畫卷隱約浮現，石頭的曲線通過富有動感的濃墨重彩得以塑造，顯出強烈的空間感。身體即是岩石之軀：我們如何誕生？我們來自何方？與原始世界有何聯繫？無獨有偶，該系列的另一作品《舞尖之姿》（2015年）也喚起了對石頭的聯想，最終同樣回歸成一個完整的（女性）身體，那副岩石之軀伸出的腿暗示了她的舞姿，與畢加索、馬蒂斯及常玉的作品遙相呼應。在這裡，背景是深橙單色，厚重且帶有肌理的筆觸，與雕塑般堅實手法所刻畫的黑白人物形成鮮明對比。儘管高度風格化，但我們清楚可見她的手臂指向大腿內側，暗示了她的性慾。

2024年馬德升的一件新作回歸了上述兩部作品的美學風格。它將人體簡化為一個由五塊石頭組成的結構，兩大塊石頭宛如巨大的小腿，呈彎曲狀，三小塊石頭則巧妙地組合成頭部或軀乾及雙臂的形態。這一極簡的意象立刻能夠喚起了對於女性裸體的聯想，雖無任何具象的描繪，卻巧妙、輕易地將人體與山水景致融為一體。人體以極其簡潔的形象呈現，背後襯以一道淡灰色的弧線或地平線，彷彿暗示著一個世界或星球。這幅作品以永恆精湛的構圖，展現了藝術家對大地與人類枯榮與共的詩意聯結。

#### 彩色的裸體

2019/2020年間創作的幾幅作品，與「石」系列畫作形成了鮮明的對比——線條更為簡潔流暢，色彩更為明快。其中，一幅名為《峽谷之中》（2020）的作品，以亮橙色呈現了一副簡潔而形式化的裸體，輪廓清晰，背景則由兩種亮綠色調做區分。從圖像的角度來看，該作品通過對表面質感和設計感的雙重強調，及精心佈局的空間分割，瞬間營造出強烈的視覺美感衝擊。

馬德升在2013年創作的大尺幅裸體系列，則以更為細膩、斑駁的色彩美學為基調，巨大的輪廓化人物沈浸其中，與人物與背景融為一體。這些人物被扭曲成各種姿態，四肢、手腳被拉長，部分姿勢極具情色與性暗示意味。在《躊躇》（2013）中，人物背對觀者，碩大的臀部與乳房佔據了大面積的畫幅，背部扭曲於疊起的雙腿之上，雙手置於腳部，呈現出一種不適的扭曲。《大宮女》（2012）中，人物俯臥，伸手觸及腳部，雙腿向後彎曲。《回望》（2012）中，從背後清晰可見畫中人物的陰部，一隻細長的手伸向大腿。《舒展》（2013）中，人物的輪廓通過曲線被高度概括，完全脫離了寫實。這一系列作品的標題語氣更為強硬，近乎指令，使觀者與主題之間形成一種不適的關係，赤裸裸地揭示了男性對女性身體潛在的暴力的凝視，誇張的姿態強化了女性身體的物質性與性魅力。

在《情系大地》（2003）中，裸體形象幾乎在畫面中完全消解，與厚重顏料融為一種抽象的模糊。畫作通過粗獷的厚塗技法呈現，線條如同塗鴉般在畫布上來回



穿梭。這張作品散髮出強烈的能量，狂熱地詮釋了標題所寓意的「身體與背景的歸一」，生命與形態被整合為我們世界的基本法則，能量、生命與大地渾然一體。

這些作品看似，也實則與中國文化形態已相去甚遠，標誌著1980年代因政治環境變遷與新一波移民潮引發的全球文化轉向。早在二十世紀初期，許多中國藝術家便投身於一種跨國現代主義（Transnational Modernism），創作女性裸體畫，發展出一種獨特的中國視覺現代性形式。林風眠（1900-1991）的人物畫從立體派（Cubist）早期作品到風格更為裝飾性的優雅線描女性裸體，跨度甚廣。常玉（1907-1966）自1920年代至1960年代持續創作裸體畫，其最後一幅裸體作品在2019

年以1.98億港元創下拍賣紀錄。潘玉良（1895-1977）作為一位女性畫家，其作品同樣包含了激進的自畫像與女性裸體，打破了女性「性與自我」表現的禁忌。

縱觀中國藝術史上沈浸於巴黎現代主義（Parisian Modernism）的關鍵人物，構成了馬德升裸體畫的藝術史背景，這可以說是對西方在現代主義上的霸權地位提出了挑戰。正如雷諾阿（Pierre-Auguste Renoir）、馬蒂斯和高更（Paul Gauguin）等藝壇領軍藝術家，也深受非西方美學形式影響，這些影響深刻地塑造了他們的作品。不僅如此，眾多身處西方的華人藝術家也在主題、方法論上汲取著多元的文化資源。例如德

國表現主義（German Expressionism），就引起了曾梵志等傑出畫家的濃厚興趣。在馬德升的裸體畫中，情感通過修長的手指與靈動的腳部得以表現。這反映出了米勒（Jean-François Millet）等19世紀畫家對中國藝術教育所產生的影響——他們的作品甚至成為了中國藝術院校學生的學習楷模；也反映出了弗朗西斯·培根（Francis Bacon）、安塞姆·基弗（Anselm Kiefer）和盧西恩·弗洛伊德（Lucien Freud）等近代領軍畫家對中國藝壇產生的強烈影響。

#### 現代性與中國裸體藝術

在中國語境中，現代性的歷史脈絡可追溯至清朝覆滅（1911年），1920年代是典型的世界主義（Cosmopolitanism）時期，有著文化交流蓬勃的特徵。當年徐悲鴻繪制裸體素描，是為了進一步追求現實主義，以精確記錄人體。適逢中國新的藝術教育體系興起，該體系引入了人體寫生與女性模特兒，其中以上海書畫家、藝術教育家劉海粟的倡導最具聲勢。此外，如林風眠等其他藝術家的裸體創作則與現實主義理念相悖，他們在探索超脫寫實之外的形式該如何帶來一種「拒絕明確或規範性」敘事的現代性普世藝術語言。自1930年代至1970年代，在革命時期文化習俗與狹隘意識形態要求的影響下，與現代主義有關聯的創作將被視為禁忌。直至數十年後，當現代主義得以再次取代具象敘事繪畫時，這一主題才得以回歸。因此，馬德升的裸體畫不僅呼應了西方現代藝術的發展路徑，更是堅定地站在了支持現代主義所代表的文化自主性立場上。

在學者林達·尼德（Lynda Nead）對女性裸體的研究中，她指出，「（這些圖像中的）女性身體的再現充當了男性性慾與藝術的先鋒主義（Avantgardism）的關鍵符號」。有趣的是，男性主體性（Male Subjectivity）一直到中國近期，都在當代藝術敘事與創作中佔據著主導因素。許多老一輩女性藝術家的光輝很大程度上都被男性同行所掩蓋，到近年來才有所改變。1990年代的作品幾乎全部以男性形象為主，常以怪誕的視覺手法進行諷刺。馬德升自身的（男性）先鋒主義恰好與文化史上一個更早的時期產生了互文，那時現實主義（Realism）正被現代主義（Modernism）所取代，而現代主義與一種既不被西方定義也不被東方定義的全球性視覺語言結盟。有趣的是，他的無力感或許在這些靈動的女性形象中產生了投射。這些女性在作品中似乎在審美、感官與精神層面都處在上位，而小巧的陽具狀頭部則象徵著他男性權威的喪失。儘管從性別角度出發解讀這些作品可能會引發著名女性主義電影理論家、製片人勞拉·穆爾維（Laura Mulvey）具有開創性的男性凝視（Male Gaze）研究之中「男性/女性權力動態（Male/Female Power Dynamics）」理論的尖銳批評，但換個角度來看，這種解讀卻也可以回歸到「男性在面對女性作為至高無上的終極生命力時所表現出的敬畏與無能為力」這一思路。

馬德升的作品就像是一種文化交流的體現、一部文化折射的故事，交織著構成現代性本身的多條線索。然而，若以一種老派的方式，用藝術史學家克拉克（T.J.

Clark）的話來說，藝術家僅僅「傳達某些思想或情感狀態的願望」。在某種意義上，馬德升是一位「當代古典主義者」，正在一步步發展他自己的詮釋與視野，並借鑒了現代主義、道家思想、書法與古典主義。馬德升作品的另一維度體現在其震撼人心且極具衝擊力的行為藝術作品《La Merde（糞便）》中，這是一次爆炸性且充滿激情的批判。在這部作品中，藝術家坐在輪椅上用法語高喊「為什麼，為什麼，為什麼會有糞便？！它無處不在，無處不在，無處不在！」，以重復的憤怒表達對世界的恐懼。他熾烈而璀璨的靈魂常常在其現場作品中溢出畫布之外，使觀眾能夠親身感受他的魅力。

這些作品在其嚴謹性、多樣性與規模中蘊含著一種緩慢內化的能量，這從遒勁果決的筆觸中可見一斑——它們最直觀地展現了持筆人的「力」，類似於克拉克所描述的「如此完美地融合了感官與幾何，彷彿提供了一層盔甲」。儘管裸體藝術正不斷演變出更當代的詮釋——如近期一篇文章所討論的——已涵蓋了藝術家對女性氣質、性別認同與酷兒身份（Queerness）的探索。知名藝文專欄作家、編輯朱莉婭·哈爾佩林（Julia Halperin）也指出，「裸體是西方藝術中最古老且最頑固的煽動性主題之一」。而馬德升這位身處全球華人離散群體語境中的藝術家，無疑為這段歷史增添了關鍵的一層。



# 我們必須想象西西弗斯是幸福的——精讀馬德升的藝術 (Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux)

姜俊

在馬德升的藝術創作生涯中，石頭和女人體是兩個重要且持續至今的主題。本文希望可以從存在主義和生機主義兩個維度去把握和理解他的藝術實踐。

作為一位出生於1952年的中國藝術家，馬德升和其同代的中國藝術家們一樣都曾生活在社會主義現實主義單一的藝術規範之下。創作的教條主義限制了他們在創作中的多樣性嘗試。藝術的政治和意識形態化也使得藝術成為了一種國家機器的宣傳工作，而非個體存在的表達和生命經驗的展示。

1979年中國的改革開放使得本已鬆動的文化和思想束縛被撕開一道裂縫，各種思想、觀念、和藝術流派、技術手法突然湧入。特別是馬德升所生活的首都北京，彷彿為所有中國的文藝創作者們被打開了自我表達的鏢鏑。

馬德升與「星星畫會」青年成員在代表國家藝術權威的機構中國美術館門外自發組織了首屆「星星美展」，亦是國內首個區別於官方集體主義敘事的前衛美展。他們率先以個人化、表現主義和抽象手法拉開了中國當代藝術的序幕。正如馬德升在最近的一次採訪中說道：

「星星畫會代表了當代藝術在中國歷史中的一個里程碑的時刻。而除去其重要的藝術史意義，它也代表了那一代人的熱情、抱負、希望，

這一點也是在過去幾十年的各種訪談中我所強調的。當時的中國藝術界仍然受到許多傳統和現實主義的影響，而我們作為年輕的藝術家，想要追求一種更具表達性與抽象的風格，回到藝術本身，去創造全新的藝術文化與面貌。」

對於經歷過20世紀80年代的那一代文化人而言，存在主義、尼採的「超人」哲學以及弗洛伊德的「精神分析」理論，是無法回避的外來思想啟蒙。在當時集體主義同一化傾向較為明顯的外部環境下，存在主義引導著藝術家們開始深刻反思，將目光從外界轉向自身，探尋內在生存的本真意義。他們不再滿足於千篇一律的教條主義具象表達，而是渴望通過藝術創作展現獨特的自我認知與個體生命體驗。尼採的「超人哲學」以及他對傳統道德的大膽批判，激發了藝術家們內心深處對人性解放的強烈渴望，促使他們積極探索個體價值的邊界。藝術家們開始重新審視現有的社會道德規範對人性的束縛。弗洛伊德的精神分析理論則讓藝術家們意識到，人物的潛意識、夢境以及本能慾望。我們後面討論的「生機主義」就源自於此。這使得藝術家在創作中更加註重對人物內心深處這些隱秘角落的挖掘與呈現，不回避複雜而真實的人性圖景。

存在主義、尼採的「超人」哲學以及弗洛伊德的「精神分析」理論，這三者可以被理解為那個時代中國文藝創作的精神背景。我們無疑也可以在馬德升一生的藝術創作中看到它們持續的影響。

他回憶著曾經80年代的創作：

「其實我有兩個主要宗旨。第一就是要真實表達自身感情、可以是對社會、人文、個體的任意感情。形式上也沒有特定要求，可以是抽象也可以是具象，但一定要多樣且真誠，其他的可以去慢慢發展。二是年輕人對新中國未來的一種希望與期待。在特定的歷史社會文化下，我們就自然地對未來有很多願景。這感情就像是火山一般，積累了許久，要爆發出來。」

1986年，馬德升帶著他對於未來的憧憬移居巴黎，自此開啓了一段在藝術領域的逐夢旅程。此後的歲月里，他頻繁穿梭於日本、歐洲、美國等地，積極參與各地美術館和畫廊舉辦的展覽，不斷拓展自己的藝術邊界，其作品也逐漸在國際藝術舞台上嶄露頭角。然而，命運弄人。馬德升雖然自幼罹患小兒麻痺症，但在日常生活中仍然可以借助拐杖行走。發生在1992年美國的一場車禍，致使他將終生坐在輪椅上。這場災難讓他的身心遭受了雙重打擊，使他在生死的邊緣苦苦掙扎。

就在外界都以為他會就此沈淪的時候，馬德升卻在黑暗中默默與命運頑強抗爭。憑借著驚人的意志力，他一步一步地戰勝了身心的巨大痛楚，慢慢地恢復了部分活動能力。對藝術的熱愛和執著驅使他繼續創作。米開朗琪羅為西斯廷教堂頂部做畫只能躺著繪畫，馬德

升受到啟發，坐在輪椅上不可能畫到3米高處，他讓看護人員將畫框360度的轉動使其能自由的繪畫。於是，他坐在輪椅上，以擺動上身的獨特方式，重拾畫筆。每天從上午十點到下午四點，他都沈浸在繪畫創作中，其餘時間則用來寫詩。在追求藝術的道路上，他的決心比任何人都更加堅定，這份對藝術的執著令人動容，彷彿就是尼採筆下的「超人」。尼採認為生命本身就是充滿痛苦和磨難的，只有具備強大意志力的人，才能在面對困境時不屈不撓，不斷地超越自己的極限，實現自我價值的提升。

2002年，馬德升迎來了藝術生涯的一次「重生」。這一年，他改用丙烯進行創作，發表了一系列看似與以往作品風格迥異的新作。在這些作品中，石頭逐漸成為創作的核心主題，並和女人體的意向融合在一起形成。通過精心的組疊，馬德升巧妙地將不規則的鵝卵石塑造造成獨特的半抽象人體，彷彿是對於英國雕塑家亨利·摩爾（Henry Spencer Moore）的致敬，又似乎受到了中國奇石美學的影響。但在他繪畫中的石塊是非連續性的鵝卵石，有時都難以辨識出完整的人體形象。這既不同於摩爾，也和中國文人園林中的太湖石迥異。

當我凝視馬德升2002年之後石頭主題的作品時，不禁想到法國作家加繆的存在主義代表作《西西弗斯的神話》。在這本書中，加繆以古希臘神話中的西西弗斯為象徵，探討了人類在荒誕世界中的生存困境與反抗精神。西西弗斯因觸怒眾神而被懲罰，他必須將一塊巨石推上山頂，可每當他即將到達山頂時，巨石又會無情地



滾落回山腳，如此周而復始，沒有盡頭。這種看似毫無價值、徒勞無功的行為，深刻而又逼真地反映出了人類在生存過程中所面臨的荒誕處境。

然而，加繆創作這部作品的目的，並不僅僅是為了展現生活的荒誕，更重要的是強調了反抗的強大力量。儘管西西弗斯清楚地知曉自己命運的荒誕與無奈，但他依然堅定不移、毫不退縮地推動著巨石。反抗荒誕並不是為了改變世界的荒誕本質，而是為了尋找自我存在的意義。通過反抗荒誕，人類可以超越自身的存在，獲得一種超越性的證明。

加繆的哲學在中國的真正傳播也起於20世紀80年代，1981年，剛剛轉向加繆研究的學者郭宏安，在柳鳴九主編的《薩特研究》中，撰文介紹和分析加繆的作品和思想。在這篇名為《與薩特有關的兩位作家介紹——阿爾貝·加繆》一文中，郭宏安寫道：

「加繆是一代青年的精神導師……他以西緒福斯（西西弗斯）下山那樣沈重而均勻的步伐朝著荒誕走去，他知道惡不能根除，但惟其如此，才更應該為捍衛人的尊嚴和幸福而鬥爭。他批判資本主義社會，同時也反對無產階級專政」。

此後，加繆對荒誕的探討與1980年代中國知識分子對社會現實的反思產生共鳴。許多人從加繆的思想中找到了對自身處境的解釋。加繆與薩特的存在主義思想在

1980年代的中國形成一股熱潮，成為年輕人討論的熱門話題。

回顧馬德升的人生經歷，便能深切理解他對石頭主題執著的根源。非連續性堆疊的鵝卵石難道不是那無法動彈的身體最形象的隱喻嗎？他所遭遇的車禍彷彿和西西弗斯一樣是命運給的他懲罰，也是考驗。現在他每一次身體的挪動都如同是身負巨石，每一筆的描繪都要付出常人所不可想象的體力。還在創作的馬德升難道不正是那背負巨石、步履蹣跚卻堅定攀爬的西西弗斯嗎？

通過日復一日，年復一年的創作，他將自己對命運荒謬的反抗，深深鐫刻進每一件作品之中。他以藝術為存在，與命運頑強搏擊，展現出令人動容的堅韌與不屈，也驗證了存在主義哲學的名句：「人類的存在是先於本質的」。人類必須通過自己的選擇和行動來創造自己的本質，來賦予生命以意義。加繆認為，人類應該像西西弗斯一樣，勇敢地面對荒誕的命運，通過自己的選擇和行動來創造自己存在的意義。因此加繆在書中寫道：「我們必須想象西西弗斯是幸福的」。

除了在存在主義的思想背景中解讀馬德升的創作，如前所述「生機主義」是另一個平行維度。馬德升的石頭是多重意向性的，它既是摩爾式的抽象化的女人體雕塑，也是代表自然萬千造化的中國奇石，還是原始藝術中代表生殖崇拜的石雕圖騰。在其中我看到弗洛伊德精神分析中對於人類慾望的揭示，以及摩爾雕塑所代表的「生機主義」，即一種被現代文明所壓抑的原始生命之

衝動。在人類原始藝術中女性人體和生殖崇拜之間有著密切的關係，這也是弗洛伊德在1930年出版的《文明及其不滿》中所揭露的，他認為現代文明雖推動人類進步，卻壓抑人性本能。該書以潛意識學說審視現代文明，揭示了文明與本能之間的激烈矛盾。這有效地說明了，為什麼在現代藝術史中出現了畢加索對於非洲面具、摩爾對於中美洲圖騰等原始造像、趙無極對於殷商甲骨文的吸收和借鑒，它們都代表了一種對於現代文明所造成壓抑的補償。「生機主義」便也是這一現代主義運動中回歸原始、自然、人性本能的一條支流，它也是18世紀末產生的「浪漫主義」運動的延續和變體。

「生機主義」是一種強調生命內在力量和動態本質的哲學思想，認為生命不僅僅是物質的組合，而是具有一種超越物質的內在活力，即它是現代文明之毒的解藥。「生機主義」的代表者，摩爾的創作深受自然界有機形體的啟發，如甲殼、骨骼、石塊、樹根等。他從這些自然形態中領悟空間、形態的虛實關係，以及自然力賦予形態的影響。這在一定程度上，摩爾的「生機主義」在80年代引入中國後，被和中國人「道法自然」的傳統哲學形成對話。這使得我們用「氣韻」去理解「生機」（vital），去贊嘆生命。中國藝術家和觀眾用傳統奇石美學中所蘊含的「自然造化」去解讀摩爾的抽象雕塑，及其後當代英國雕塑家托尼·克拉格的數碼雕塑。也正是借由奇石美學，摩爾的藝術才能被中國藝術家所接受並消化，推動了中國當代藝術的發展，馬德升的藝術也受益其中。

從比較圖像學上看，摩爾的雕塑對馬德升的石頭系列繪畫產生了顯著影響。首先摩爾半抽象化的人體雕塑中幾乎都是女性，並且頭部的塑造被極大程度地縮小甚至忽略，使其祛個體化。他對自然有機體的感悟被巧妙地融入到其中，巨大的女性身體變成了一種生命和本能的抽象容器，呼應了原始藝術中對女性身體的生殖崇拜。馬德升無疑繼承了這一西方現代主義藝術傳統，但他並未完全沿襲摩爾的風格。他將摩爾雕塑中連續、順滑且優雅的造型打破，使他的石頭系列更具原始主義特徵。鵝卵石的堆疊讓人不禁聯想到史前巨石。比如索爾茲伯里石環，這些巨石歷經歲月，沈默而神秘。同時，他的作品也讓人想起那些各個遠古文明中飽受侵蝕的石雕圖騰和造像，它們承載著古老的文化記憶，訴說著人類文明的悠遠歷史。

馬德升的藝術創作，是一部用生命譜寫的個體史詩。他以石頭和女人體為畫筆，在存在主義與生機主義的畫布上，勾勒出自我與命運、文明與本能的深刻對話。他的堅持與抗爭，不僅是個人精神的閃耀，更是對那個時代思想解放浪潮的有力呼應，為中國當代藝術的發展注入了獨特的力量。其作品跨越地域與文化的界限，成為連接東西方藝術理念的橋梁，讓我們看到原始與現代、傳統與創新的完美交融。在他的藝術世界里，石頭不再是冰冷的物質，而是生命的寄託；女人體不再是簡單的形象，而是本能與希望的象徵。馬德升用藝術證明，無論命運如何荒誕，無論文明如何壓抑，人類對自由、對生命意義的追尋永不停歇。



## 「女人」個展 藝術家自述

馬德升

在我的意識中女人就是女神，無論如何讚美都達不到峰值。其實每位藝術家都按照自己自由的想像去塑造，因此美妙的女神從不同的角度誕生了，隨之也確立藝術風格。藝術不需要更多的解釋，這就是藝術的魅力。

自1980年以來，我的「女人」系列一直處於持續的演變與創新之中。在最初的女性形象創作中，我主要以黑白水墨描繪女性。後來，我開始嘗試在畫布上使用壓克力，探索更大膽鮮明的色彩運用。例如：《躊躇》，《回望》和《耳语环绕》等作品，皆創作於2012至2013年間，共同採用比較低調朦朧的色彩將女性婀娜的體態烘托呈現。近些年我開始大膽嘗試創作雕塑感、色彩鮮豔的女人體態，旨在將女性最獨特的高雅和自信不加掩蓋的平鋪出來。這些變化，不是為了風格變化而變化，而是我強烈的衝動而裂變出的風格，是一種配套。因此每一種風格形式的出現都是藝術靈魂的噴發。刻意追求的風格是沒有靈魂的。這一切的主角都是女人體給予的，隨之而促進風格的變化與演進。

我1986年移居巴黎，法國變成了我藝術創作的根據地，因此也深受20世紀最具影響力的西方現代藝術家的影響和啓發。其中一位就是引領現代藝術的野獸派代表人物亨利·馬蒂斯（Henri Matisse）。我的水墨女人體畫是真正的與馬蒂斯對話，是黑白與色彩的碰撞，從而達到平靜的對話。但到了我的色彩女人體畫就不是對話了，是向馬蒂斯呈現我的女人體。特別

要說，這裡指的不是「女人體畫」，而是「女人體」。這時的我們不需要對話，而是我們各自舉起一杯紅酒，默默的欣賞著對方的作品。只要藝術靈魂是清晰的，就具有個人的獨特語言，不是刻意追求的。

在「女人」系列的作品，我將「石頭」和「女人」這兩個伴隨我一生藝術傳作的靈感意象融合，形成一種既獨特又引人深思的藝術表達。石頭是永恆的、女人也是永恆的。兩者結合變成超級永恆，這是創作女人體畫與石頭相融的靈感初衷。把石頭女人化、把女人石頭化。這是對於女人的最高讚美。因此給我帶來創作的無限激情，也希望帶給觀者耐人尋味的反思。這種反思不止於對女人體和形象的美感認知，更是昇華到對女人所代表的那種頑強，崇高的美的一種的欣賞。

在我的一生中，我追求一種自然、永恆、堅韌的理想。地球一開始就是一塊大石頭。最後還是一塊大石頭。從無到有，再從有到無。其實什麼都沒有發生。無與有之間是最高的精神境界。這是我石頭系列的精神所在。而這次的「女人」系列將女人的存在和價值自然化，永恆化，理想化，但這些都是基於我對女人的體態，女人所代表的意識形態和品質的崇尚之上的。

此次個展於倫敦舉行，作為3812倫敦畫廊遷址至The Whiteley的首場展覽，我感到無比榮幸與興奮。本次展出的「女人」系列作品，均為大尺幅之作，皆源

於我對女性形象的敬仰與讚頌，亦是對她們所象徵的理念與品質的深刻探索。除了貫穿我「女人」系列的核心精神，我借用藝術將女性形象自然化、永恆化與理想化。

我希望，人們能夠在當今動盪不安的時代中短暫放鬆，沉澱自我，回歸自然的本質 — 回到最真摯、純

淨與無瑕的心境。唯有在這樣的澄澈狀態下，我們才能真正領悟並銘記造物主賦予人類的那份恆久純粹的美。

我對這場展覽寄予厚望，因為它聚焦於「女人」——這是我全球首場以此主題為核心的展覽。它承載著深厚的藝術與情感重量，應該珍惜。



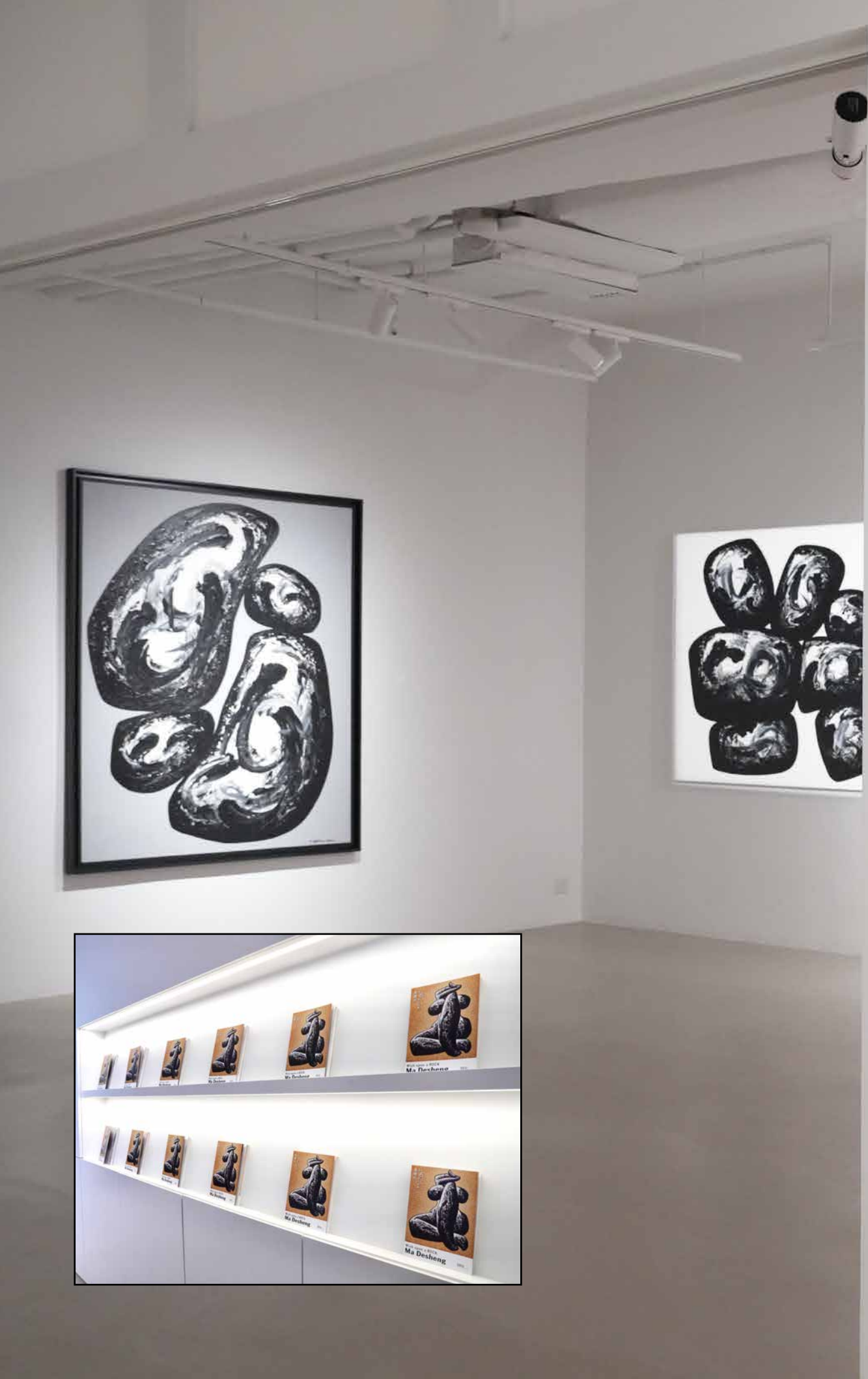




Installation images from the  
Wish Upon a Rock exhibition, 2024,  
at 3812 Gallery Hong Kong.

在「石」空下「在『石』空下許願」  
2024馬德升作品展現場照片。







## ABOUT MA DESHENG

Born in Beijing in 1952, Ma Desheng is an internationally renowned Chinese contemporary artist living in Paris. The year 2022 proved to be a milestone year for Ma Desheng, as the Centre Pompidou in Paris held a solo exhibition in his honour. The French Ministry of Culture awarded Ma Desheng the “Ordre des Arts et des Lettres” (Order of Arts and Letters) in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the art world. Ma Desheng’s works have gained widespread international recognition and are held in prestigious institutions such as the British Museum in London, Centre Pompidou in Paris, and the M+ Museum in Hong Kong.

Ma is best known as one of the co-founders and core members of the seminal Chinese contemporary art movement, the “Stars Group.” On September 27, 1979, Ma Desheng and Huang Rui organised the groundbreaking “Stars Exhibition” outside the iron fence of the small garden on the east side of the National Art Museum of China in Beijing. This exhibition caused a tremendous impact, marking a significant milestone in the development and enlightenment of contemporary art in China, and exerting a profound and lasting influence. Since 1986, Ma Desheng has lived and worked in Paris.

In 2024, 3812 Gallery is honoured to officially represent Ma Desheng and debuted “Wish upon a Rock - Ma Desheng Touring Solo Exhibition” at 3812 Gallery Hong Kong in March and will later tour to our London gallery in 2025.

### Solo Exhibitions

- 2025 “Woman — Ma Desheng Solo Exhibition”, 3812 Gallery, London
- 2024 “Wish upon a Rock – Ma Desheng Touring Solo Exhibition”, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2022 CENTRE POMPIDOU, Paris, France  
“Rêve blanc, âmes noires”, A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France
- 2020 “Au cœur des pierres”, A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France
- 2019 “L’âme hors des pierres”, A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France  
“Ma Desheng”, 10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Hong Kong  
Art Paris Art Fair, A2Z Art Gallery, Grand Palais Ephémère, Paris, France
- 2018 “Entre terre et ciel”, A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France
- 2016 “Ma Desheng”, A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France
- 2015 “1992-2002: Renaissance”, A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France
- 2014 “Black•White•Grey: Ma Desheng (works of 1979-2013)”, Kwai Fung Hin Art Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2013 “Selected Works”, Gallery Rossi-Rossi, London, UK
- 2010 “Story of Stone” - solo exhibition of Ma Desheng”, Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong
- 2007 “Ma Desheng”, Galerie Jacques Barrere, Paris, France
- 2001 “Ma Desheng”, Michael Goedhuis, New York, USA
- 1999 “The Paintings of Ma Desheng”, Michael Goedhuis, London, UK

### Group Exhibitions

- 2025 “Abstraction in Dialogue”, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2024 “Artistic Freedom: The Stars, Beijing, 1979”, Centre Pompidou, France  
“Summer-Scape”, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong  
The Treasure House Fair, Royal Hospital Chelsea, London, UK
- 2023 Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong
- 2022 Art Paris Art Fair, Grand Palais Ephémère, Paris, France  
Bordeaux + Art + Design, represented by A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France  
“L’encre en mouvement, Une histoire de la peinture chinoise au XXe siècle”, Musée Cernuschi, France
- 2021 Asia Now, Salons Hoche, Paris, France  
Art Paris Art Fair, Grand Palais Ephémère, Paris, France  
Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong  
“Love in the Dream I”, 10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2020 Art 021, Shanghai Exhibition Center, Shanghai, China  
Asia Now, Salons Hoche, Paris, France  
Taipei Dangdai, Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center, Taipei  
Art Paris Art Fair, Grand Palais, Paris, France
- 2019 “Les Étoiles 1979-2019 - Pionniers de l’art”, Les maisons du voyage de Chine, Paris, France  
Frieze Masters, London, UK  
Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong



- 2018 Art Genève, Palexpo Geneva, Geneva, Swiss
- 2017 Art Paris Art Fair, Grand Palais, Paris, France  
TEFAF New York Modern and Contemporary, New York, USA
- 2016 Frieze Art Fair, London, UK  
Art Paris Art Fair, Grand Palais, Paris, France  
Busan Biennale, Busan, Korea
- 2015 Art Paris Art Fair, Grand Palais, Paris, France
- 2012 Art HK - Hong Kong International Art Fair, Hong Kong  
Art Miami, Miami, U.S.A Galerie Frank Pages, Geneva, Swiss
- 2008 Foire de Paris, Grand Palais, Paris, France
- 2001 "China without Borders", Michael Goedhuis Gallery, New York, USA
- 2000 Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
Galerie Leda Caricio Fletcher, Milan, Italy
- 1999 Michael Goedhuis Gallery, London, U.K
- 1998 Galerie Florence Arnaud, Paris, France
- 1996 Michael Goedhuis Gallery, London, UK  
Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York, USA
- 1995 Galerie Bellefroid, Paris, France
- 1993 Galerie de France, Paris, France
- 1992 Galerie Claudine Planque, Lausanne, Suisse Galerie Facade, Paris, France  
Galerie de Casa Garden, Macao, China Phoenix Gallery, New York, USA

#### Public/Corporate Collections

- Centre Pompidou Collection (Paris)
- M+ Museum M+ Sigg Collection (Hong Kong)
- British Museum (London)
- Musée Cernuschi (Paris)
- Musée des Arts asiatiques (Nice)
- University Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong)
- Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Melun (Melun)
- Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (Fukuoka)
- Ashmolean Museum (London)
- Casa Garden (Macao)
- Fonds municipal d'Art Contemporain de la ville de Paris (Paris)
- Association du Mouvement d'Art Contemporain (Chamalières)
- Musée d'Histoire Contemporaine (Paris)
- Espace Saint-Jean (Melun)
- Fondation Oriente Sociedade Nacional de Belas-Arts (Lisbon)
- France Centre culturel français, curated by UNESCO (Firenze)
- Cité internationale des arts (Paris)
- Bibliothèque Publique d'Information (Paris)
- Museum of Oriental Antiquités (Stockholm)
- Osaka Contemporary Art Center (Osaka)
- Brooklyn Museum (New York)
- National Art Museum of China (Beijing)
- Beihai Park (Beijing)





关于 马德升

馬德升，1952年出生於北京，是一位享譽國際的中國當代藝術家，目前定居於巴黎。2022年對馬德升來說是一個里程碑的一年，巴黎蓬皮杜中心為他舉辦了個人展覽。法國文化部授予馬德升「藝術與文學騎士勳章」，表彰他在藝術界所做出的傑出貢獻。馬德升的作品在國際上廣受贊譽，被倫敦大英博物館、巴黎蓬皮杜中心和香港M+博物館等知名機構收藏。

馬德升最為人所知的身份是中國當代藝術運動「星星畫會」的創始人之一和核心成員。1979年9月27日，馬德升和黃銳在北京中國美術館東側小花園的鐵柵欄外舉辦了具有開創性意義的「星星美展」。這次展覽引起了巨大轟動，標誌著中國當代藝術發展啓蒙的重要里程碑，影響深遠。自1986年以來，馬德升於巴黎定居和工作。

2024年，3812畫廊榮幸地成為馬德升的代理畫廊，並將在香港和倫敦的3812畫廊為他舉辦「在『石』空下許願」。

主要個展

- 2025

「女人-- 馬德升」，3812 畫廊，倫敦
- 2024

「在『石』空下許願」, 3812畫廊, 香港
- 2022

龐畢度中心, 巴黎, 法國
- 「白夢.黑魂」, A2Z Art Gallery, 巴黎, 法國
- 2020

“Au cœur des pierres”, A2Z 畫廊, 巴黎, 法國
- 2019

“L’âme hors des pierres”, A2Z 畫廊, 巴黎, 法國
- 「馬德升」, 贊善里10號畫廊，香港
- 巴黎藝術博覽會， A2Z 畫廊，Grand Palais Ephémère，巴黎，法郎
- 2018

“Entre terre et ciel”，A2Z畫廊，巴黎，法國
- 2016

「馬德升」，A2Z畫廊，巴黎，法國
- 2015

「1992-2002：文藝復興」，A2Z畫廊，巴黎，法國
- 2014

「黑·白·灰：馬德昇（1979-2013年作品）」，季豐軒畫廊，香港
- 2013

「作品選」，Rossi-Rossi畫廊，倫敦，英國
- 2010

「石頭記-馬德升個人作品展」，季豐軒畫廊，香港藝術中心，香港
- 2007

「馬德升」，Galerie Jacques Barrere，巴黎，法國
- 2001

「馬德升」，Michael Goedhuis，紐約，美國
- 1999

「馬德升的畫」，Michael Goedhuis，倫敦

主要聯展

- 2025

「抽象 · 對話」, 3812畫廊, 香港
- 2024

Summer-Scape, 3812畫廊, 香港
- The Treasure House Fair，切爾西皇家醫院，倫敦
- 「藝術的自由：星星，北京，1979」，蓬皮杜中心，法國
- 2023

香港巴塞爾藝術展，香港
- 2022

法國巴黎藝術博覽會，法國巴黎大皇宮臨時展館，法國
- 「墨色流轉：20世紀中國繪畫歷程」，法國塞那基博物館，法國
- Bordeaux + Art + Design，由A2Z Art Gallery代表展出，巴黎，法國
- 香港巴塞爾藝術展，香港
- 2021

亞洲當代藝術博覽會，法國巴黎荷西沙龍，法國
- 法國巴黎藝術博覽會，法國巴黎大皇宮臨時展館，法國
- 香港巴塞爾藝術展，香港
- 「愛在夢中」，贊善裡10號畫廊，香港
- 2020

上海021藝術博覽會，上海展覽中心，中國
- 亞洲當代藝術博覽會，法國巴黎荷西沙龍，法國
- 台北當代藝術博覽會，台北南港展覽中心，台灣
- 法國巴黎藝術博覽會，法國巴黎大皇宮，法國
- 2019

「星辰共融：1979-2019藝術先鋒」，法國巴黎中國之家，法國
- Frieze Masters，倫敦，英國
- 香港巴塞爾藝術展，香港



- 2018 日內瓦藝術博覽會，日內瓦巴萊博覽中心，瑞士
- 2017 法國巴黎藝術博覽會，法國巴黎大皇宮，法國  
TEFAF紐約現代與當代藝術博覽會，紐約，美國
- 2016 Frieze藝術博覽會，倫敦，英國  
法國巴黎藝術博覽會，大皇宮，巴黎，法國  
釜山雙年展，釜山，南韓
- 2015 法國巴黎藝術博覽會，大皇宮，巴黎，法國
- 2012 香港國際藝術博覽會，香港  
邁阿密藝術博覽會，邁阿密，美國  
法國日內瓦Frank Pages畫廊，瑞士
- 2008 巴黎博覽會，法國巴黎大皇宮，法國
- 2001 「無界中國」，Michael Goedhuis畫廊，紐約，美國
- 2000 東京畫廊，東京，日本  
Leda Caricio Fletcher畫廊，米蘭，意大利
- 1999 Michael Goedhuis畫廊，倫敦，英國
- 1998 Florence Arnaud畫廊，巴黎，法國
- 1996 Michael Goedhuis畫廊，倫敦，英國  
Ethan Cohen Fine Arts畫廊，紐約，美國
- 1995 Bellefroid畫廊，巴黎，法國
- 1993 de France畫廊，巴黎，法國
- 1992 Claudine Planque畫廊，洛桑，瑞士  
Facade畫廊，巴黎，法國  
Casa Garden畫廊，澳門，中國  
Phoenix畫廊，紐約，美國

公共/企業收藏

- 蓬皮杜中心館藏（巴黎）
- M+博物館希克藏品（香港）
- 大英博物館（倫敦）
- 賽努斯基博物館（巴黎）
- 亞洲藝術博物館（尼斯）
- 香港大學大學美術館（香港）
- 默倫藝術與歷史博物館（默倫）
- 福岡亞洲美術館（福岡）
- 阿什莫林博物館（倫敦）
- 卡薩花園（澳門）
- 巴黎市當代藝術基金會（巴黎）
- 當代藝術運動協會（沙馬利埃）
- 當代歷史館（巴黎）
- 聖讓空間（默倫）
- 貝拉斯國家藝術東方協會基金會（里斯本）
- 法國文化中心，由聯合國教科文組織策劃（佛羅倫斯）
- 國際藝術城（巴黎）
- 公共資訊圖書館（巴黎）
- 東方古物博物館（斯德哥爾摩）
- 大阪當代藝術中心（大阪）
- 布魯克林博物館（紐約）
- 中國美術館（北京）
- 北海公園（北京）





INDEX 作品 覽表



Silver Lining 《一線生機》，2002  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力，  
130 x 97 cm  
pp. 22



Need a Shoulder to Cry on  
《向誰傾訴》，2002  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力，  
89 x 130 cm  
pp. 23



Rise and Fall 《起伏》，2003  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
114 x 648 cm, polyptychs (114 x 162 cm each)  
pp. 24-25



Stand Fast 《堅守》，2003  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力，  
97 x 130 cm  
pp. 28



Unification of Nature  
《自然的結合》，2003  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
114 x 162 cm  
pp. 29



Happiness in Nature  
《自然之樂土》，2003  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 114 cm  
pp. 30



The Gift from Nature  
《自然的賜予》，2003  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
114 x 162 cm  
pp. 31



Loving Nature  
《情繫大地》，2003  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 x 162 cm  
pp. 32



Look Up 《仰望》，2003  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm  
pp. 33



The Everlasting Trust  
in Nature 《自然的真諦》，  
2003  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 x 162 cm  
pp. 34



Freedom in Nature  
《自然之自由》，2003  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
195 x 130 cm  
pp. 35



Look Back 《回望》，2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200cm  
pp. 36



Nestled in Peace  
《寧靜依偎》，2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm  
pp. 37



Grande Odalisque  
《大宮女》，2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm  
pp. 38



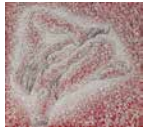
Sprawl in Serenity  
《靜臥》，2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm  
pp. 39



Nude 4, 2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm  
pp. 40



Entangle 《纏繞》，2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm  
pp. 41



Nude 3, 2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm  
pp. 42



Nude 2, 2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 x 162 cm  
pp. 43



Nude 1, 2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm  
pp. 44



Turning in 《內收》，2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm  
pp. 45



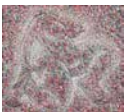
Cloaked in Whispers  
《耳語環繞》，2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm  
pp. 46



Hang Back  
《躊躇》，2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm  
pp. 47



Contemplative Crouch  
《蹲伏沈思》，2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm  
pp. 48



Unfold 《舒展》，2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm  
pp. 49



Waiting in Silence  
《靜默等待》，2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm  
pp. 50



Svelte 《亭亭玉立》，2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm  
pp. 51



Attachment 《縫縫》，2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
200 x 250 cm  
pp. 53



Watchful Care 《守護》，2013  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力，  
200 x 500 cm, diptych  
(200 x 250 cm each)  
pp. 54-55



Openness-1  
《開放—1》，2005  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
114 x 162 cm  
pp. 58



Rocks 4, 2007  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
140 x 200 cm  
pp. 59



Secret of Night Sky  
《夜空之秘》，2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm  
pp. 60



The Longing  
《漫長的守望》，2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm  
pp. 61



Goddess Nu-wa I  
《女媧一》，2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm  
pp. 62



Rocks 9, 2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
200 x 180 cm  
pp. 63



Rocks 8, 2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm  
pp. 65



Swing to Tunes  
《和韻起舞》，2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm  
pp. 67



Goddess Nu-wa II  
《女媧II》，2012  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 x 162 cm  
pp. 68



True self 《真我》，2013  
Acrylic on canvas  
布上壓克力  
250 x 150 cm  
pp. 69



In the Waste Land  
《荒原裡》，2014  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm  
pp. 70



Pointe  
《舞尖之姿》，2015  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm  
pp. 71



Enchanting 《陶醉》，2015  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm  
pp. 72



Gaze into the Horizon  
《眺望遠方》，2015  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm  
pp. 73



Lounge in Joy  
《怡然小憩》，2015  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
180 x 200 cm  
pp. 74



Dancer 《舞者》，2020  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm  
pp. 75



Continuum of Elegance  
《優雅不息》，2017  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
300 x 1000 cm, polyptychs  
(300 x 200 cm each)  
pp. 78-79



Nude in Green  
《NA》，2017  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm  
pp. 81



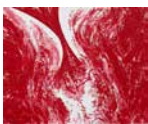
Gazing ahead of Dawn  
《晨光前方的凝望》，2019  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
200 x 150 cm  
pp. 83



Canyon  
《峽谷之中》，2020  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
162 x 130 cm  
pp. 84



Ocean of Compassion  
《無限包容》，2020  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
150 x 200 cm  
pp. 85



The Origin of the World  
《世界的起源》，2020  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 x 162 cm  
pp. 86



Openness—2  
《開放—2》，2024  
Acrylic on canvas 布上壓克力  
130 x 162 cm  
pp. 87



Female Profile  
《女體》，1979  
Woodblock print 木刻板畫  
38.5 x 28 cm  
pp. 88



School Girls  
《女學生》，1981  
Woodblock print 木刻板畫  
23.5 x 17 cm  
pp. 89



Demure 《婉約》，1984  
Ink on paper 紙上水墨  
123 x 61 cm  
pp. 90



Poise in Flow  
《從容流轉》，1987  
Ink on paper 紙上水墨  
68 x 94 cm  
pp. 91



Posture of Curvature  
《彎軀》，1995  
Sketch on cardboard 卡紙上素描  
70 x 100 cm  
pp. 92



Graceful Twist  
《優雅轉折》，1995  
Sketch on cardboard 卡紙上素描  
70 x 100 cm  
pp. 93



Revealing Pleasure  
《悅現》，1995  
Sketch on cardboard 卡紙上素描  
70 x 100 cm  
pp. 94



Flatly Perky  
《簡然》，1995  
Sketch on cardboard 卡紙上素描  
70 x 100 cm  
pp. 95



“Throughout my life, I have pursued an ideal of natural, eternal, and resilient beauty. The Earth itself began as a giant stone, and it will end as one. From nothingness to existence, and then back to nothingness—ultimately, nothing truly happens. The highest spiritual state lies between being and non-being.”

「在我的一生中，我追求一種自然、永恆、堅韌的理想。地球一開始就是一塊大石頭。最後還是一塊大石頭。從無到有，再從有到無。其實什麼都沒有發生。無與有之間是最高精神境界。」







3 8 1 2 GALLERY

HONGKONG

LONDON

