



SALEH BARAKAT
GALLERY

TAGREED DARGHOUTH

analogy to human life

The Failure of Analogy

At the forefront of our minds, the obvious signals of violence are acts of crime and terror, civil unrest, international conflict. But we should learn to step back, to disentangle ourselves from the fascinating lure of this directly visible "subjective" violence, violence performed by a clearly identifiable agent. We need to perceive the contours of the background which generates such outbursts. – Slavoj Žižek, "Violence".

In the largest of Tagreed Darghouth's series of paintings *Piece of Meat*, swaths of cherry pink, wine red, tangerine orange, and dashes of whites, yellows, and purples occupy the foreground of the painting. The foreground is almost indistinguishable from the background but for the sharp contrast in color; the background is dressed in blacks, blues, and greens. The painting is a glistening, flattened surface of texture, color, and movement. This finished work, like all the others, is the culmination of a long series of trials, spontaneous and overlapping, on the same canvas. It is reflective of an internal, self-reflexive dialogue that takes as its primary concern the specificity of the medium of painting.

It is also, more broadly, characterized by an engagement with the discipline of the history of art – here the painting holds a representational status. It refers to something outside the limits of its support and materials: three carcasses are hung – *hanged?* – from S-shaped hooks and are dripping in blood. Darghouth's painting nods to Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox*, where a carcass hangs upside down and spread-eagled, after having been decapitated, flayed, and stretched open. The background in Rembrandt's work, depicting a room and the face of a figure looking in from behind a slightly opened door, raises the painting's status from a still life to a genre painting: a vanitas or memento mori. Darghouth's reference to Rembrandt discloses an engagement with the art historical canon for specific linguistic devices. On the level of representation, she draws on the history of art for recognizable objects, such as the skull in a memento mori, which are blown up in scale, recur in a series, and hold an allegorical status. On a formal level, this repetition is evocative of the endless variation possible in a neo-expressionist idiom.

For her current exhibition, Darghouth puts on display series of carcasses, ears, skulls, olive trees, chopped barks, and instruments of violence such as drones, excavator buckets, and meat mincers. Of particular significance is the olive tree, which gestures to a series of olive trees painted by Van Gogh while he was staying in an asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence in 1889. Van Gogh felt a spiritual connection with the olive tree, which he claimed was analogous to a human life.

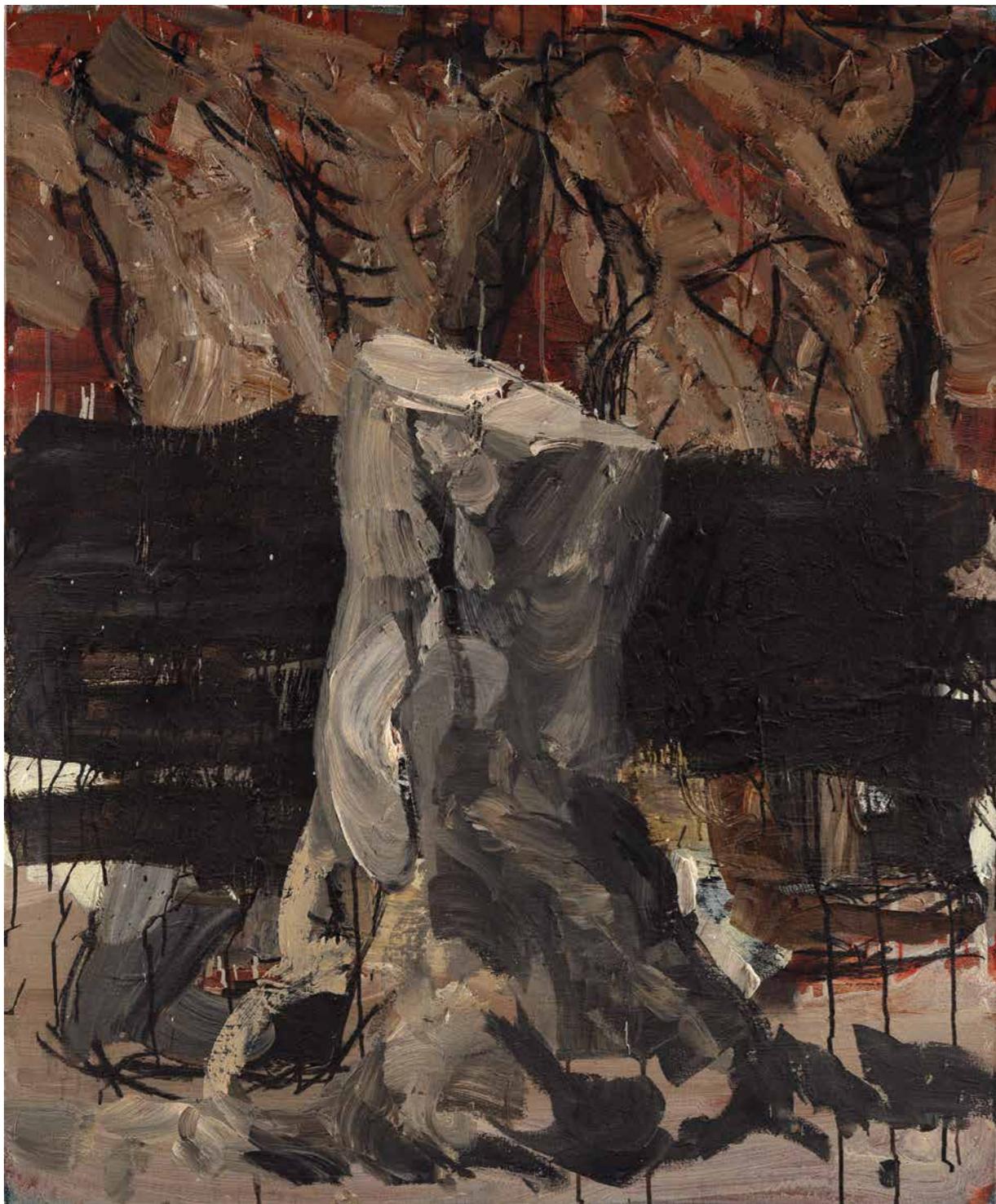
Darghouth draws upon the olive tree for its recognition and use as a symbol of the Palestinian cause, or to go further – as the cause itself, inscribed within the people. However, in contrast to Van Gogh's humanist connection to the olive tree, in Darghouth's painting it is allegorical for the failure of Van Gogh's analogy. If the olive tree is analogous to human life, as the title of the exhibition suggests it ought to be, then what is learned from her series of chopped barks is that human life is not valued in its own right, or that certain lives are valued over others. In its seriality, Darghouth's work evokes the violence practiced by the state of Israel, and that is concealed and yet systematic. Such is the descriptive claim made by her work. In her inclusion of skulls for this exhibition, the memento mori is nothing but a reminder of the universality of death. Darghouth somberly reveals that it is in death that human beings are equal. It is through this admission that she returns to the normative claim that human life ought to be valued.

Darghouth's painting is of a two-fold nature: on one hand, she employs, as allegory, elements of a vanitas or memento mori painting such as carcasses and skulls to comment on the structural violence that is manifest in the expropriation of Palestinian land, the decimation of human populations and surveillance, and on the other, it is reflective of an engagement with gesture, technique, texture, color.

Natasha Gasparian
Beirut, 2018



From the series: Strange Fruits
Acrylic on canvas | 200 x 240 cm | 2017



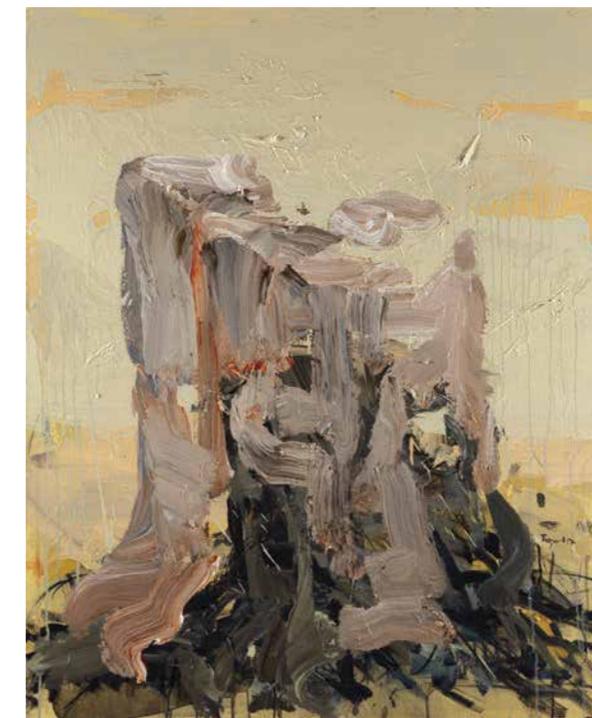
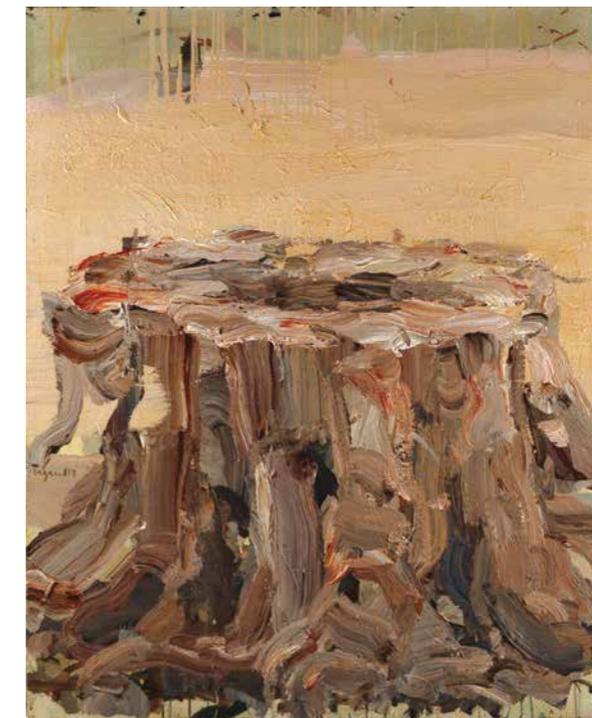
From the series: Chopped
Acrylic on canvas | 120 x 100 cm - each | 2017



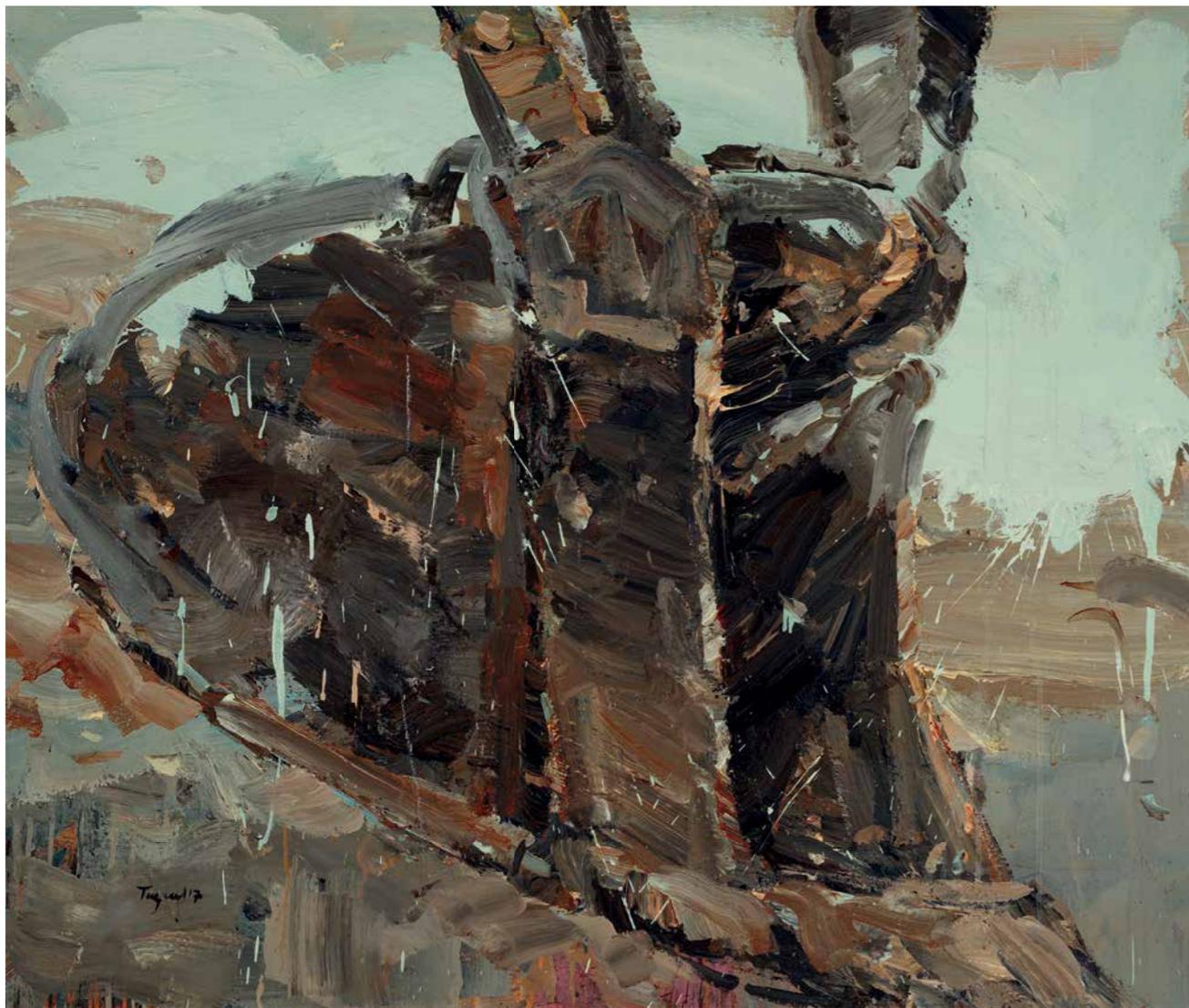
From the series: Piece of Meat
Acrylic on canvas | 160 x 120 cm | 2017



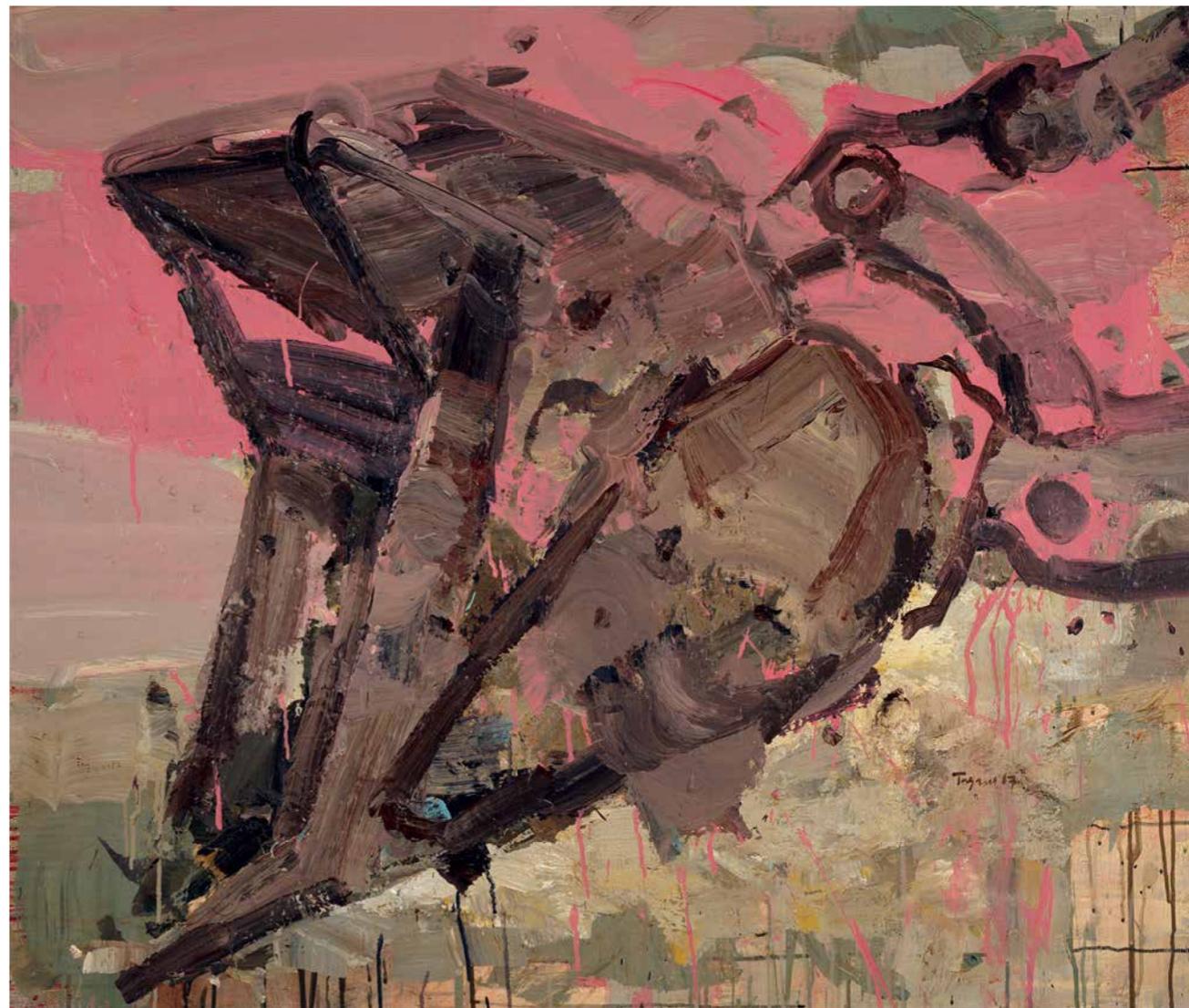
From the series: The Tree Within, A Palestinian Olive Tree
Acrylic on canvas | 200 x 150 cm | 2018



From the series: Chopped
Acrylic on canvas | 120 x 100 cm - each | 2017



From the series: Caterpillars
Acrylic on canvas | 100 x 120 cm | 2017



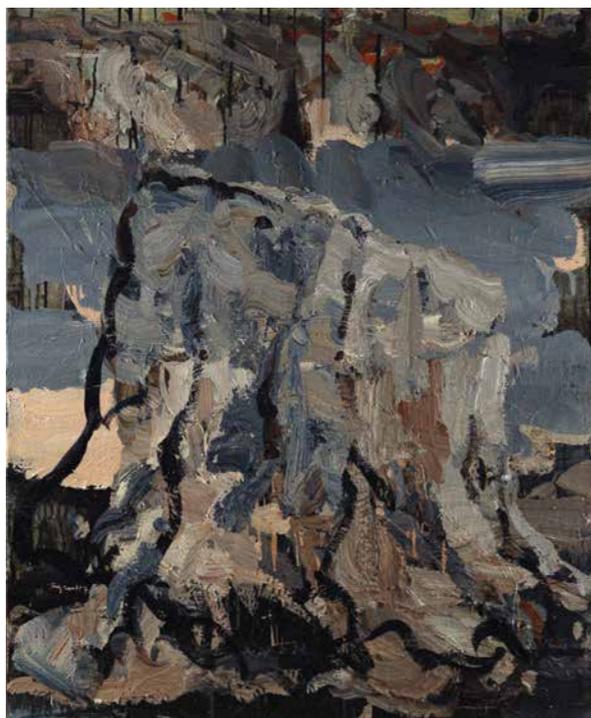
From the series: Caterpillars
Acrylic on canvas | 100 x 120 cm | 2017



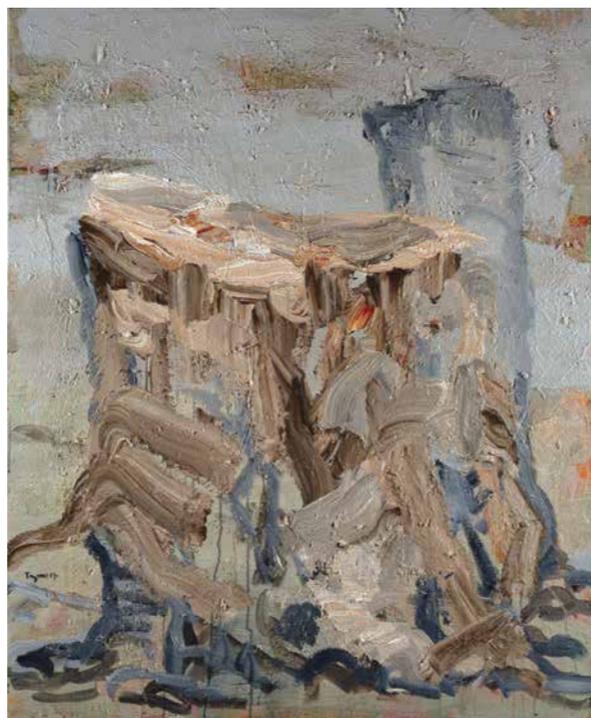
From the series: The Tree Within, A Palestinian Olive Tree
Acrylic on canvas | 200 x 150 cm | 2018



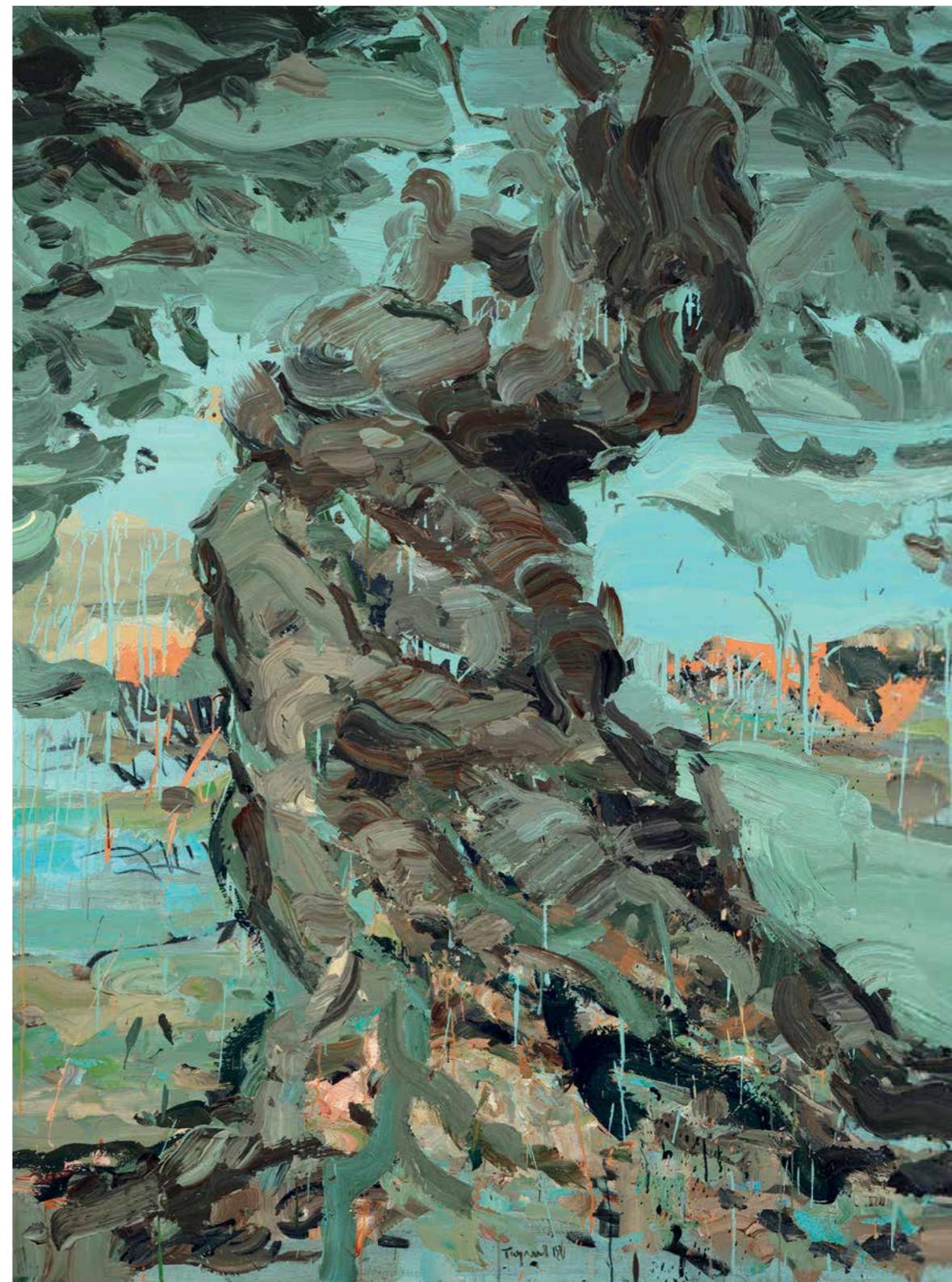
From the series: Caterpillars
Acrylic on canvas | 100 x 120 cm - each | 2017



From the series: Chopped
Acrylic on canvas | 120 x 100 cm - each | 2017

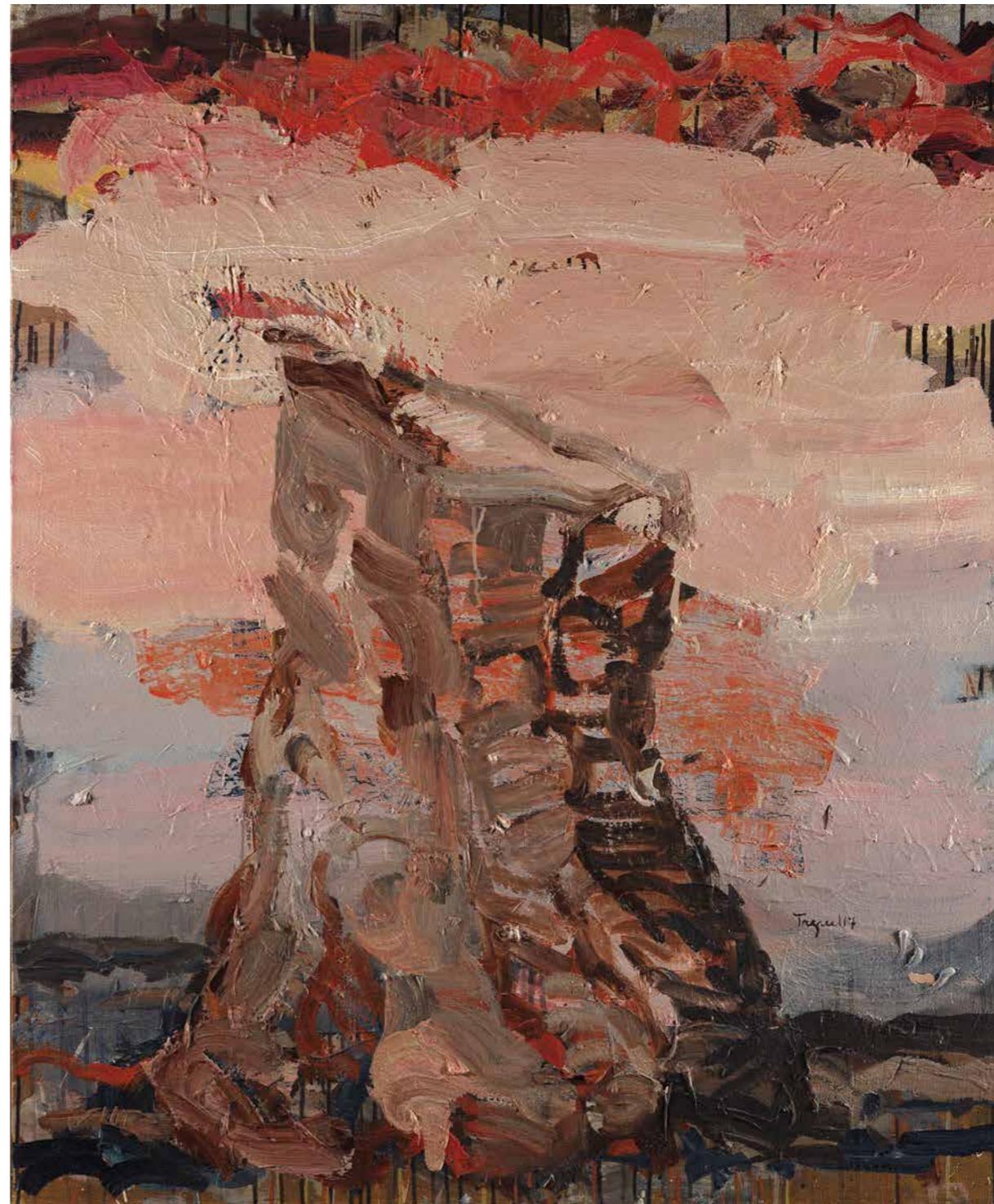
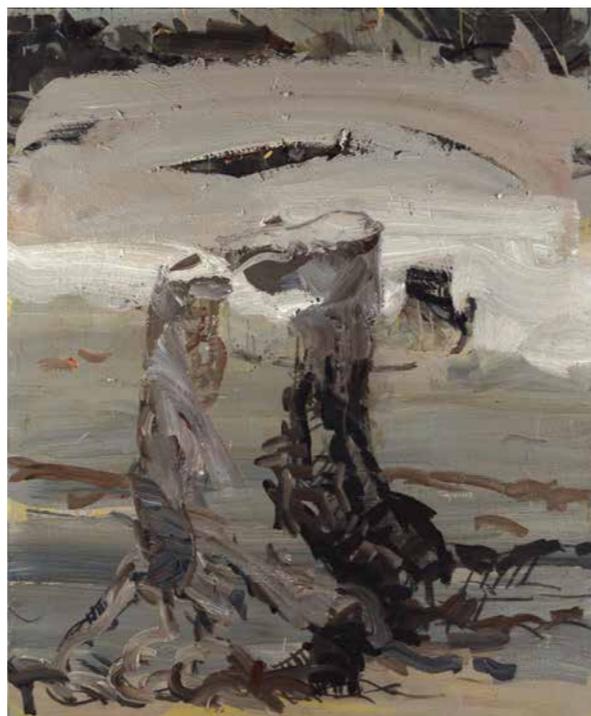


From the series: Merkava (Pages 16&17)
Acrylic on canvas | 115 x 200 cm | 2017/2018

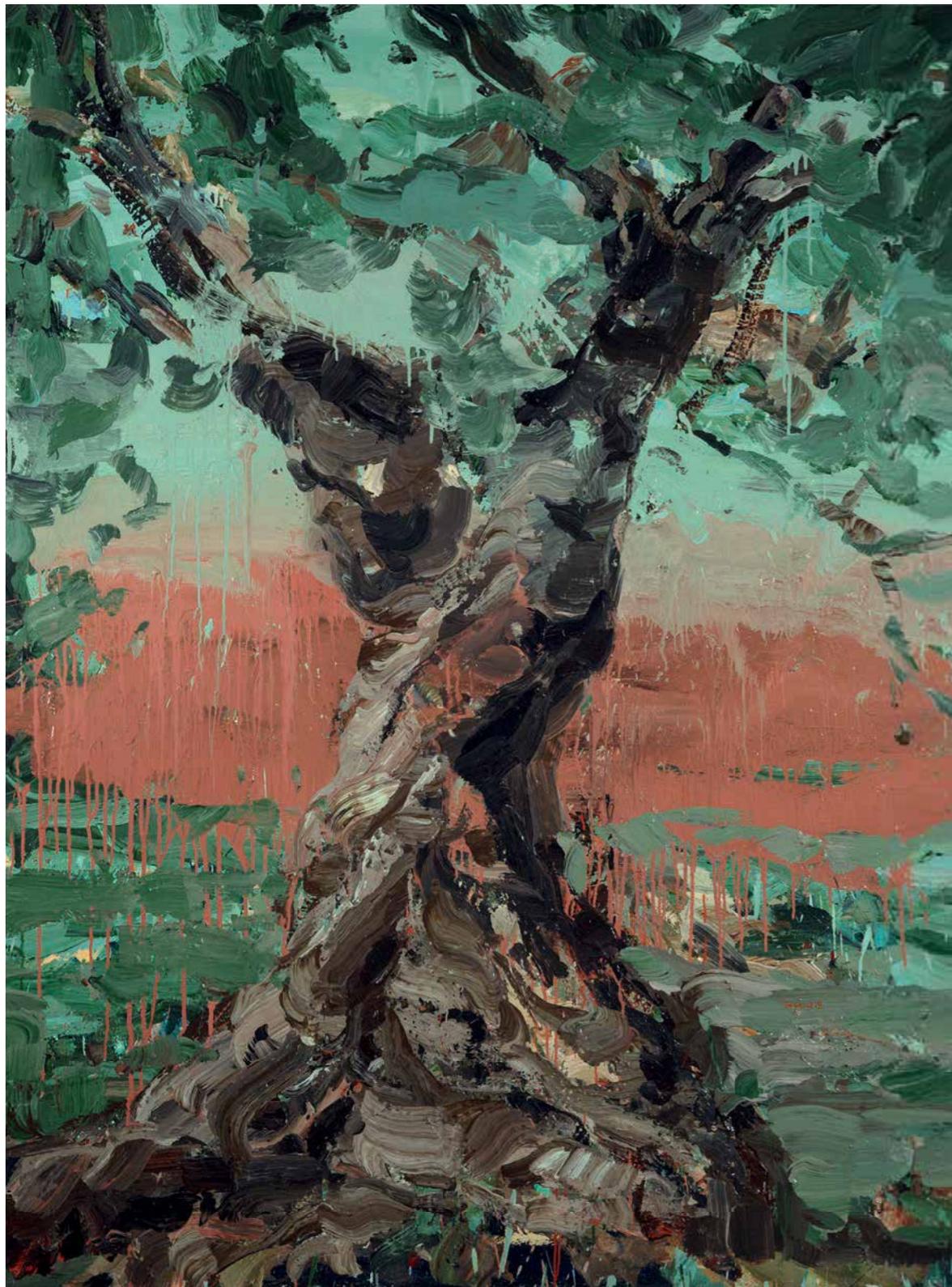


From the series: The Tree Within, A Palestinian Olive Tree
Acrylic on canvas | 200 x 150 cm | 2018





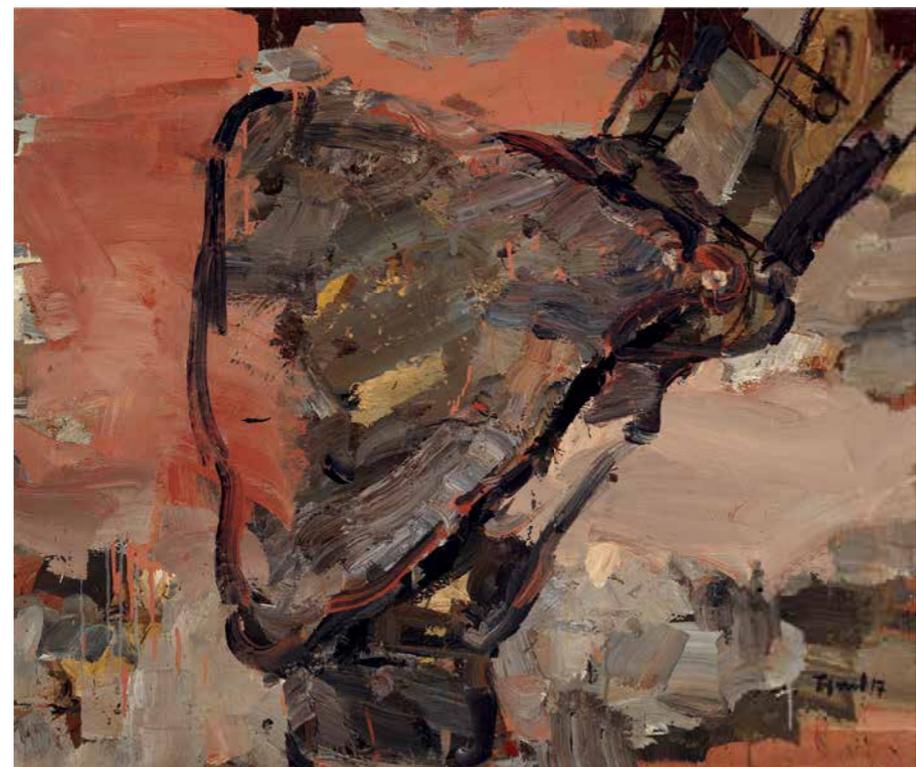
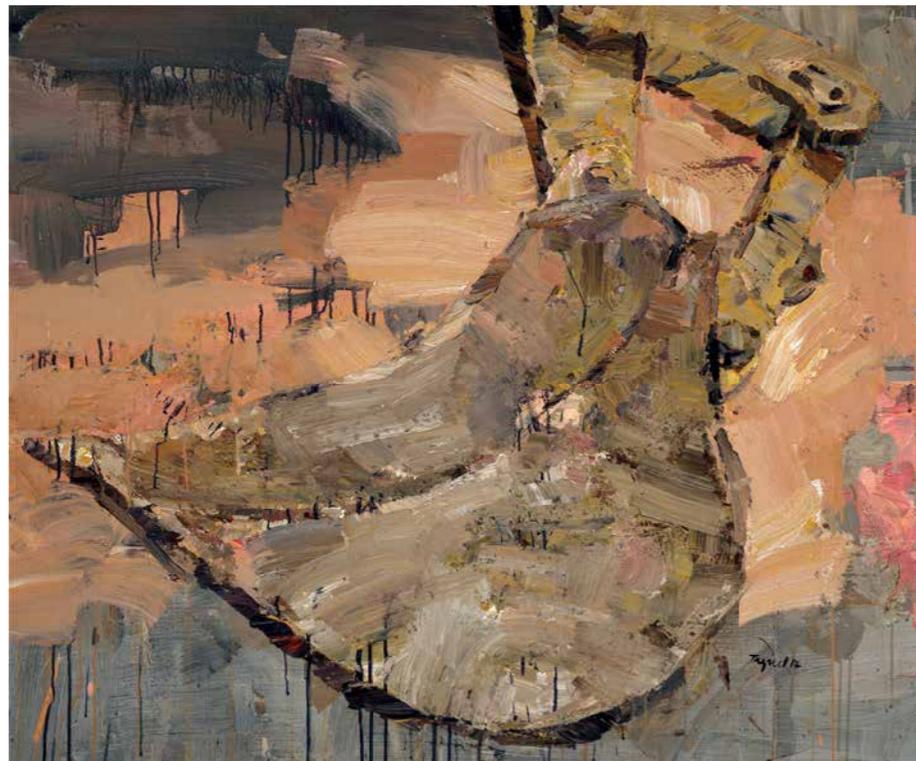
From the series: Chopped
Acrylic on canvas | 120 x 100 cm - each | 2017



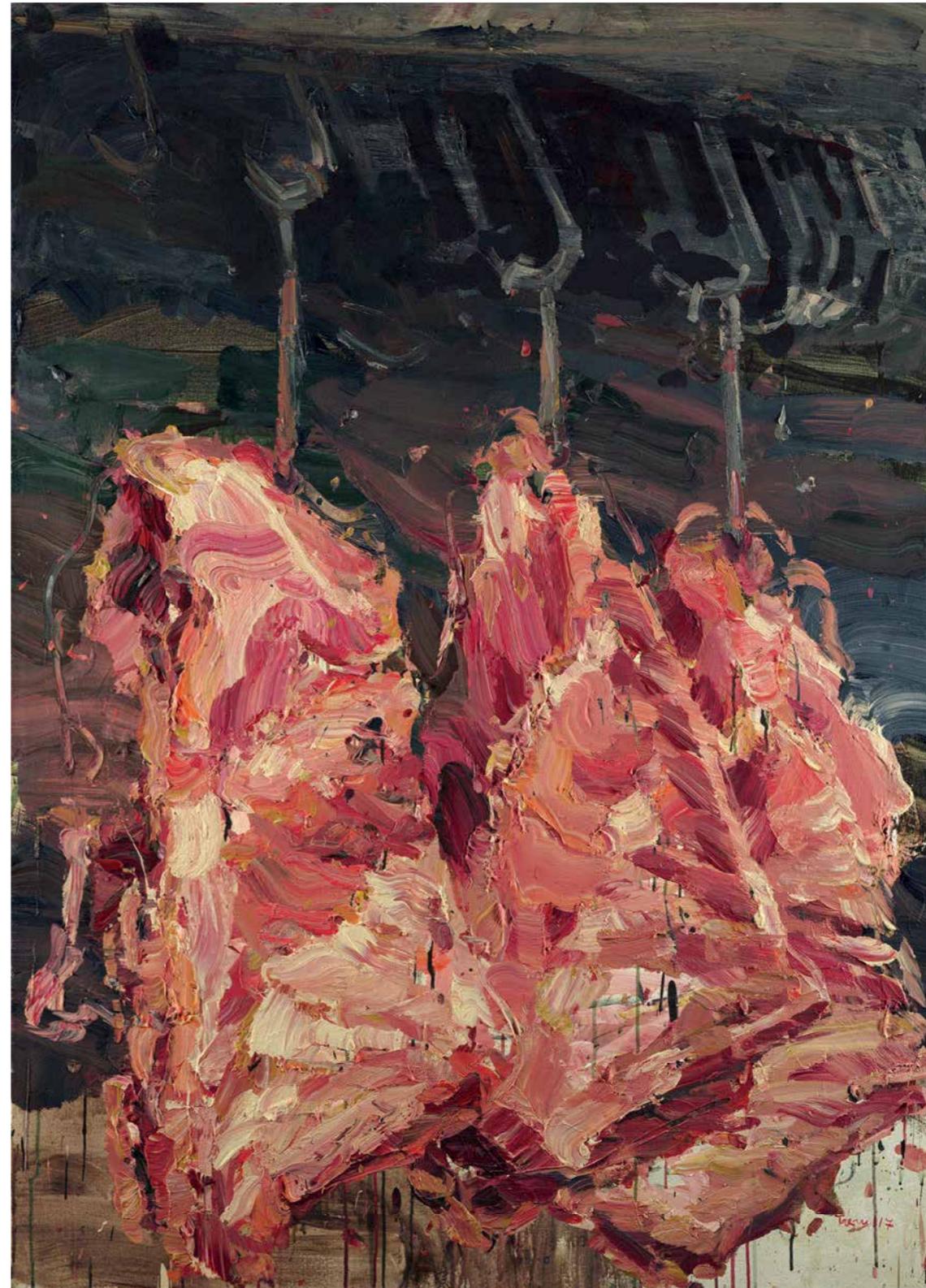
From the series: The Tree Within, A Palestinian Olive Tree
Acrylic on canvas | 200 x150 cm | 2018



From the series: Hear, Hear!
Acrylic on canvas | 150 x 200 cm | 2017



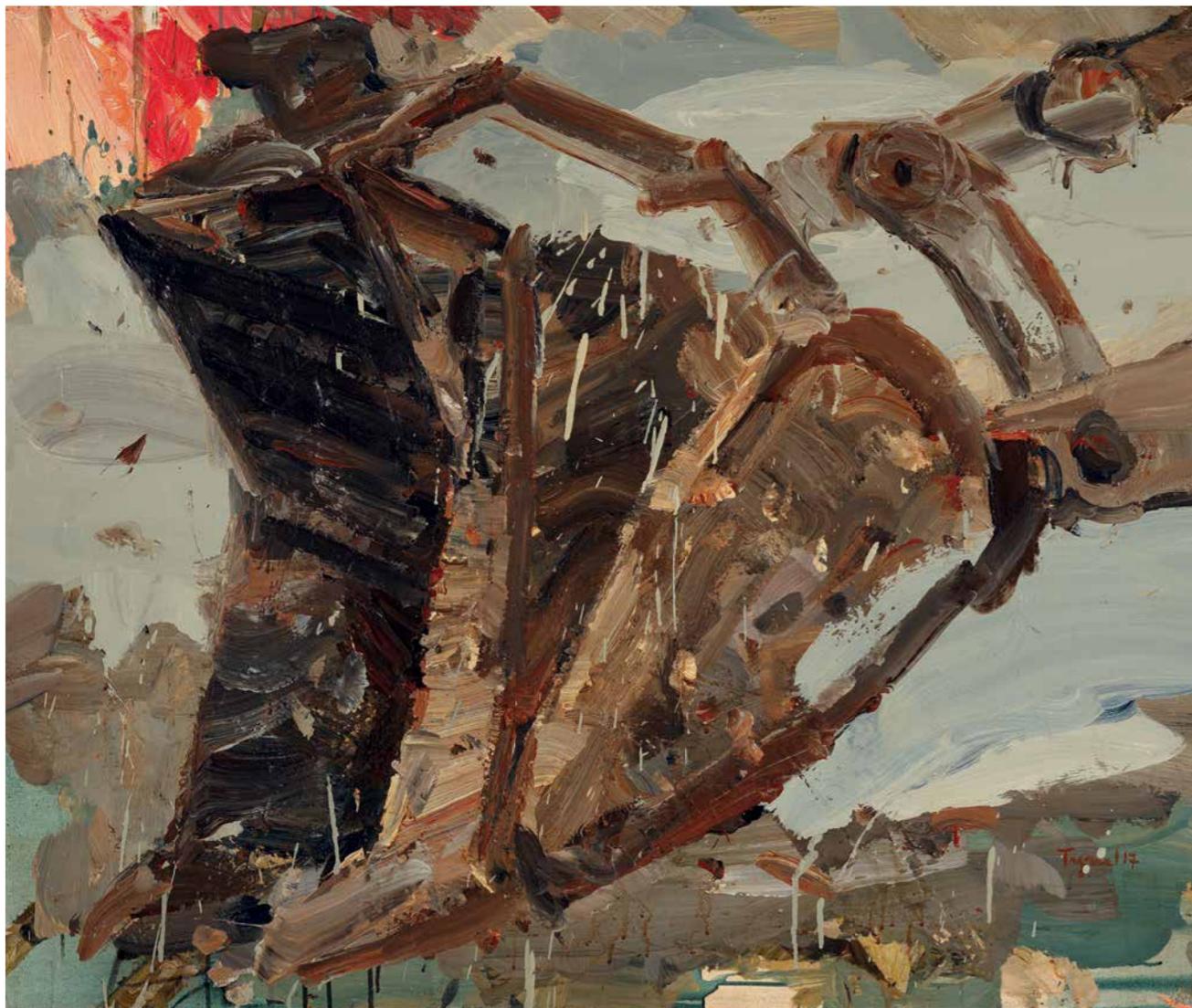
From the series: Caterpillars
Acrylic on canvas | 100 x 120 cm - each | 2017



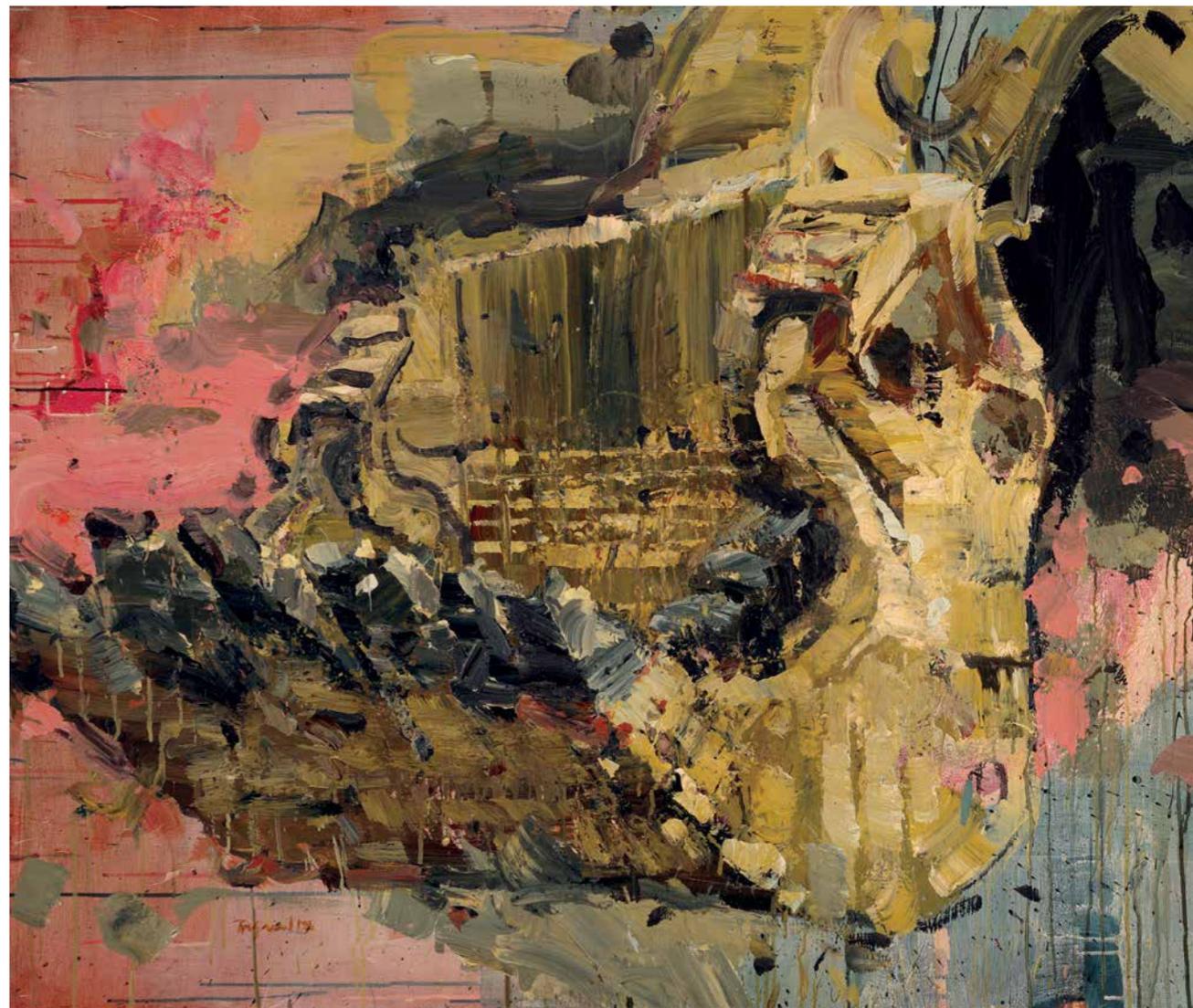
From the series: Piece of Meat
Acrylic on canvas | 160x120 cm | 2017



From the series: Vanitas
Acrylic on canvas | 200 x 200 cm | 2018



From the series: Caterpillars
Acrylic on canvas | 100 x 120 cm | 2017



From the series: Caterpillars
Acrylic on canvas | 100 x 120 cm | 2017

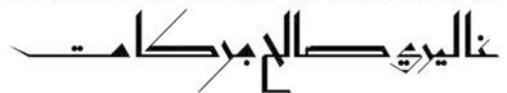
About the Artist

Born in Saida, Lebanon in 1979, Tagreed Darghouth obtained a degree in Fine Arts at the Lebanese University in Beirut, as well as a diploma in art education. She participated in the Ayloul Summer Academy, led by the Syrian-German artist Marwan Kassab Bashi, at Darat Al Funoun in Amman in 2000 and 2001. She then went on to study Space Art at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Tagreed's social and political themes draw attention to forms of structural violence and misconceptions of the Other. In 2004, Darghouth had her first solo exhibition, "Still Features", at Zico House in Beirut, which was then followed by "Falling Parts" at the Goethe Institute in Beirut in 2006. She has since had several solo exhibitions in Agial Art Gallery and has participated in numerous group exhibitions around the world, in Al-Sharjah, Amman, Beirut, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Doha, Dubai, Jordan, Istanbul, London, Miami, Munich, New York, Paris, and Singapore, among other cities. Darghouth has received several prizes, including the 2nd Prize at the Ayloul Summer Academy exhibition in Darat al Funoun in Amman in 2000, the 1st prize at the cm3 exhibition in Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris in 2003, and the Boghossian prize for a young Lebanese artist in the category of painting in 2012. She currently works and lives in Beirut, Lebanon.



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