

# NADIA SAFIEDDINE

*woman in a stream*

أجيا  
للفنون التشكيلية



AGIAL  
art gallery

“The Twilight turns from amethyst  
To deep and deeper blue,  
The lamp fills with a pale green glow  
The trees of the avenue.

The old piano plays an air,  
Sedate and slow and gay;  
She bends upon the yellow keys,  
Her head inclines this way.

Shy thoughts and grave wide eyes and hands  
That wander as they list –  
The twilight turns to darker blue  
With lights of amethyst.”  
– Poem II, from *Chamber Music*, James Joyce (1907)

In her latest collection of paintings, Nadia Safieddine diversifies the subject matter of her work by shifting the focus from lugubrious, distorted, and barely-visible figures to something – a landscape? – more definitely abstract. She takes as her starting point a classical reference: Rembrandt’s painting *A Woman Bathing in a Stream*. Half of the works on display fall within the category of the nude and the portrait, but her latest move toward the non-pictorial intimates that her three categories of painting are not as separate as in the classical distinction of genres. Painted with a technique of impasto, all of Safieddine’s work is enmeshed in the dialectical relationship between abstract expressionism and figuration.

Safieddine flouts the genre conventions that define portraiture and the nude. Although she often starts painting from a live model, the figure represented is not a specific person whose “real self”, essence, or interiority is captured physiognomically. Rather, the figure is always the projected image – each time distinct – of the artist herself. The distorted human figure, while a visually coherent image, is not at subject – the subject of the painting only emerges retroactively as an imaginary identification with the Other.

In the other half of the paintings, Safieddine drops the human body, but does not tend toward a “pure” and self-referential abstraction. Thick brushstrokes advance slowly as if soundwaves moving in frozen water. Undetectable figures of trees and streams materialize, and the landscape emerges as a figure. Likewise, in her “portraits” and “nudes”, the human figure appears as no more than a landscape obscured under layers of paint. The separateness of the genres breaks down. In Nadia Safieddine’s work, the genre is nothing more than a boundary to work against.

Natasha Gasparian  
Beirut, 2018

## THE ENVIOUS

Oil on canvas | 90x80cm | 2017







## PRÉLUDE

Oil on canvas | 110x130cm | 2018



## SLEEPING NUDE II

Oil on canvas | 140x165cm | 2017



## THE UPSET

Oil on canvas | 90x80cm | 2017





## SELF-PORTRAIT

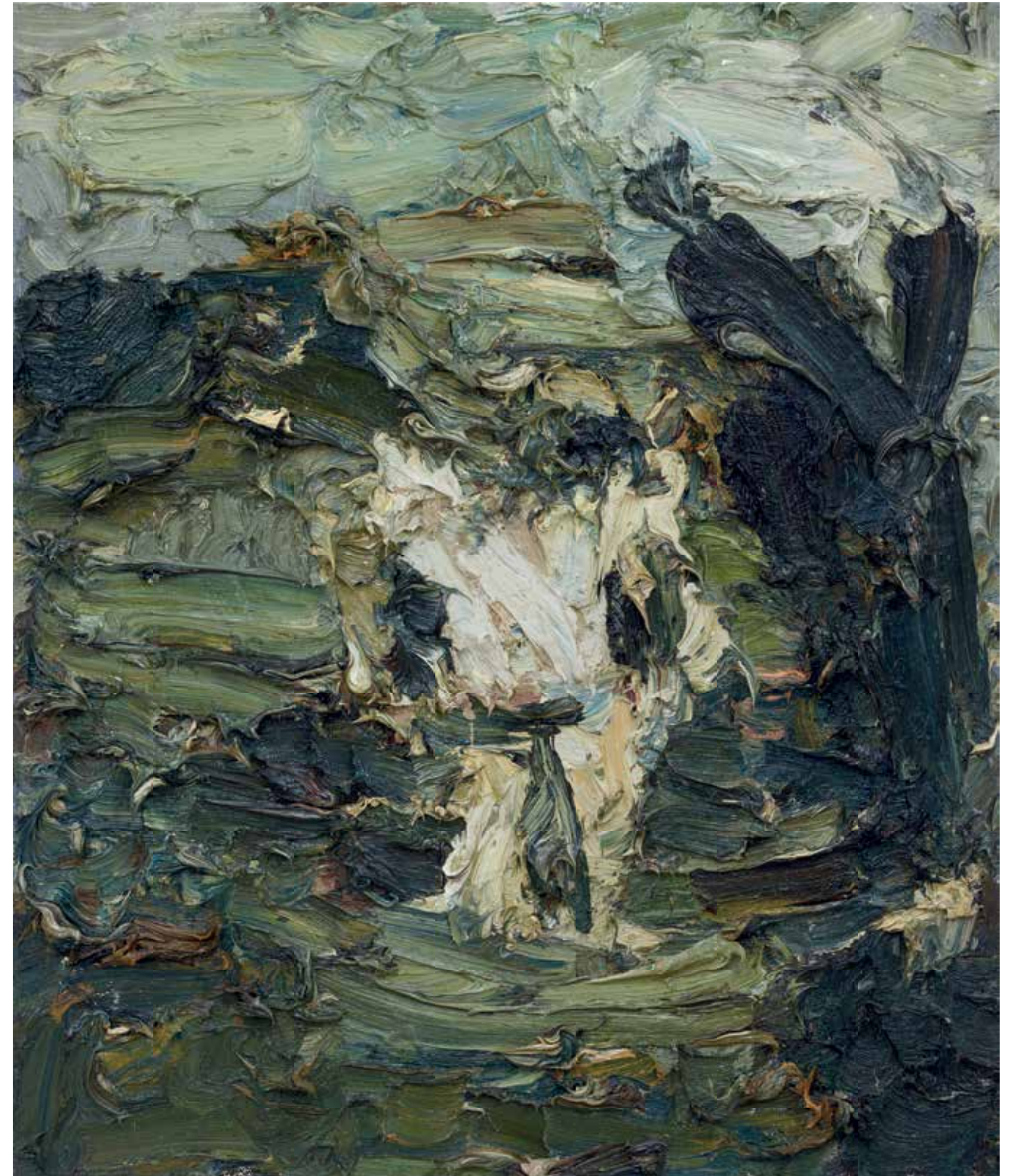
Oil on canvas | 60x50cm | 2017





## A WOMAN BATHING IN A STREAM (STUDY FOLLOWING REMBRANDT)

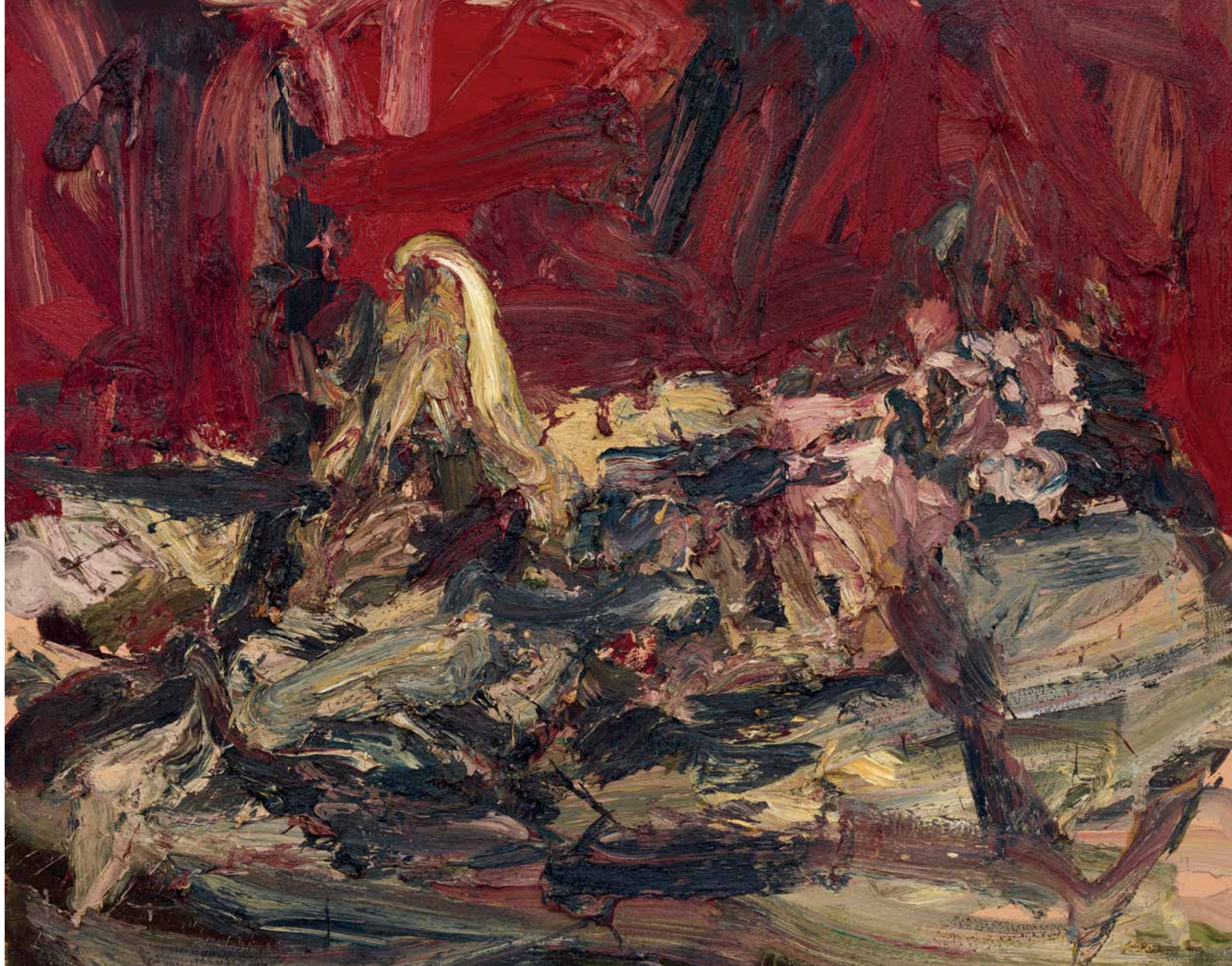
Oil on canvas | 60x50cm | 2017





# LONGING

Oil on canvas | 150x190cm | 2017







## EN SUSPENS II

Oil on canvas | 150x110cm | 2017





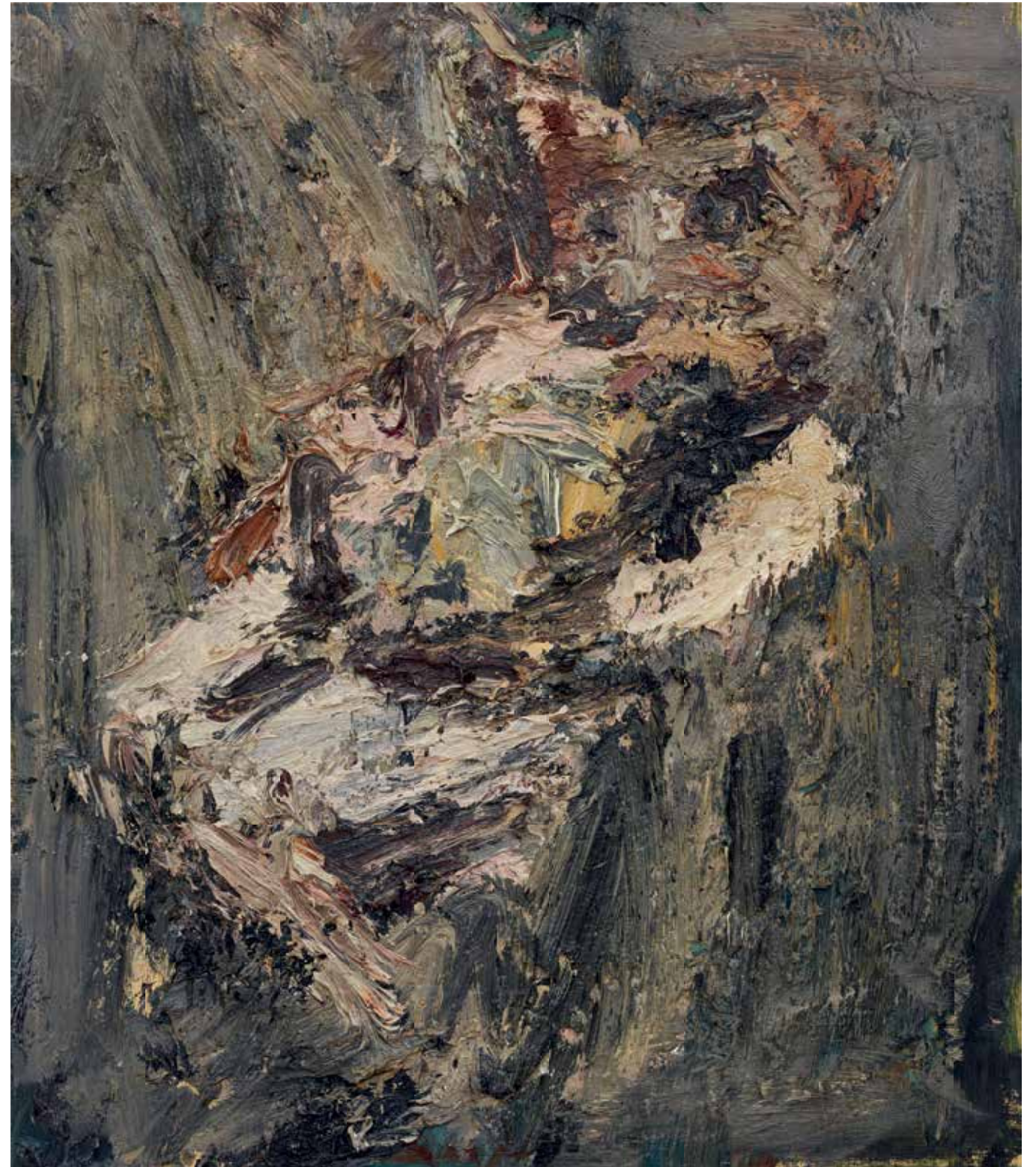
**SLEEPING NUDE I (STUDY FOLLOWING COURBET)**

Oil on canvas | 140x165cm | 2017



## EN SUSPENS I

Oil on canvas | 90x80cm | 2017







## EVASION

Oil on canvas | 110x140cm | 2018



## INCANTATION

Oil on canvas | 110x130cm | 2018



## LE POSEUR

Oil on canvas | 126x150cm | 2017







## ECLAIRCIE

Oil on canvas | 30x40cm | 2018



## EBAUCHE

Oil on canvas | 35x45cm | 2018





## IRRUPTION

Oil on canvas | 100x150cm | 2018





Nadia Safieddine (b. 1973) is a Beirut-based artist. She received a Diploma in Painting from the Lebanese University's Institute of Fine Arts in 1997. Having lived and worked in Berlin between 2002 and 2012, she had the following solo exhibitions: *Light* (2010) in Schloss Altranft, *Lost* (2006) in Galerie Orange, *Hungry Faces* (2006) in Galerie Damensalon, *Gleis 3* (2005) in Stiftung SPI, and *Hommage aux Absents* (2005) at Galerie ten21. In Beirut, her solo exhibitions include *Elegy* (2015), *Badroom* (2013), and *Time* (2011) in Agial Art Gallery.

She has participated in group exhibitions in Beirut, Berlin, Jeddah, New York, and Singapore, including *Thin Skin: Six Artists from Lebanon* (2014) in Taymour Grahne Gallery; *L'insondable Surface* (2013) at Institut Français du Liban, *Salon d'Automne* (2011) at the Sursock Museum, *Self-portraits Mirrors on the Wall* (2010) at Athr Gallery, *Jubiläumsausstellung* (2003); *Salon des Imaginären* (2003); *Bi-Rout – Contemporary Art from Beirut* (2002) at Kunsthaus Tacheles, and *Sanayeh Art Project* (1995) organized by Ashkal Alwan, among other exhibitions.

Between 2003 and 2010, Safieddine partook in a series of performative and audiovisual artistic projects, which brought together the work of several artists such as Katharina Lattermann (performer), and Joelle Khoury (composer). Since 2007, she is a member of the BBK Federal Association of Visual Arts in Berlin.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST



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Design by Carol Chehab  
Photography by Mansour Dib  
Printed by Salim Dabbous Printing Co. sarl  
19 April, 2018  
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