

An abstract painting with a vibrant, textured surface. The composition is dominated by large, expressive brushstrokes in shades of green, yellow, and red. A prominent, thick red line curves across the lower right quadrant. The background is a mix of these colors, with some areas appearing more saturated and others more muted. There are small, dark, beetle-like shapes scattered throughout, particularly in the lower left and center. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and organic form.

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Hiba Kalache  
*Embodiment*

Altman Siegel, Presidio Heights  
January 16 – February 1, 2025



## **Hiba Kalache**

Born 1972, Beirut, Lebanon

Lives and works between San Francisco, CA and Beirut, Lebanon

Within Hiba Kalache's multidisciplinary practice encompassing drawing, painting and sculptural installation, the artist addresses the geopolitics of the middle east from the perspective of a female body. Kalache returned to the Bay Area following the 2020 explosion in the port of Beirut that decimated the city, rendering daily life untenable. The highly politicized nature and history of the Lebanese landscape have figured prominently in her work, and in the aftermath of the explosion, Kalache has become more attuned to the sonic effect of trauma, how it is carried through society and how it can be translated into painting. The luminous paintings that result are both an objection and an insistence, a way of circling around an indescribable event, each urgent gesture capturing the complex and conflicting emotions which remain after a familiar landscape is lost and the image of that specific time and place has shifted and must be translated through the lens of memory. Layered with soft oil and acrylic ink washes and passionate, intuitive bursts of color, Kalache's canvases reveal references to the body or the female form, but the artist's fragmented and instinctive gestures recall the splintering of memories over the passage of time, leaving traces of emotion untethered to concrete imagery or place. The resulting works, surreal and imagined, exist outside of time and place, even when referring to the abjectness of the physical body and its experiences.

Kalache's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Lyles & King, New York, New York; Saleh Barakat Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon and The Running Horse Contemporary Art Space, Beirut, Lebanon. Group exhibitions include Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France; Consulate General of France in San Francisco, San Francisco, CA; Villa Romana, Florence, Italy; Beit Beirut Museum and Urban Cultural Center, Beirut, Lebanon; Newcomb Art Museum at Tulane University, New Orleans, LA; The Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, Belgium; California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA; and the San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA.

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Hiba Kalache  
*the moon has reached fullness*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
41 x 28 in  
104.1 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*the moon has reached fullness* (detail),  
2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
41 x 28 in  
104.1 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*the moon has reached fullness*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
41 x 28 in  
104.1 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*enough to think that Truth can be,*  
2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
86 x 65 in  
218.4 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*enough to think that Truth can be*  
(detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
86 x 65 in  
218.4 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*The moon is eaten*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 65 in  
165.1 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*The moon is eaten* (detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 65 in  
165.1 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*The moon is eaten*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 65 in  
165.1 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*to uncover other skies*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
102 x 65 in  
259.1 x 165.1 cm

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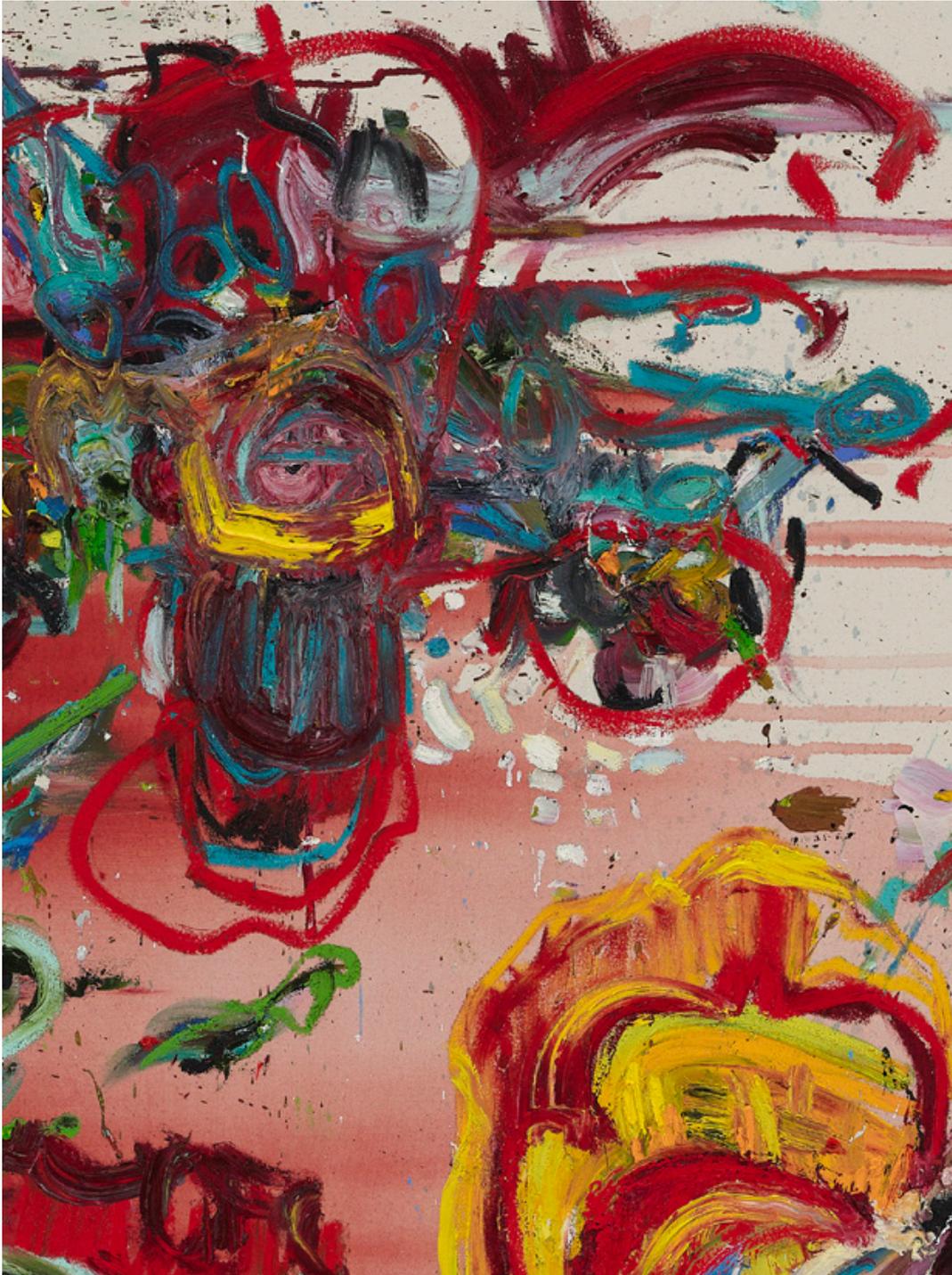
Hiba Kalache  
*to uncover other skies* (detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
102 x 65 in  
259.1 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*your Majesty: expectation,  
nondelivery!*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 65 in  
165.1 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*your Majesty: expectation, nondelivery!*  
(detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 65 in  
165.1 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*I lost the secret of Egypt*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 65 in  
165.1 x 165.1 cm

ALTMAN SIEGEL



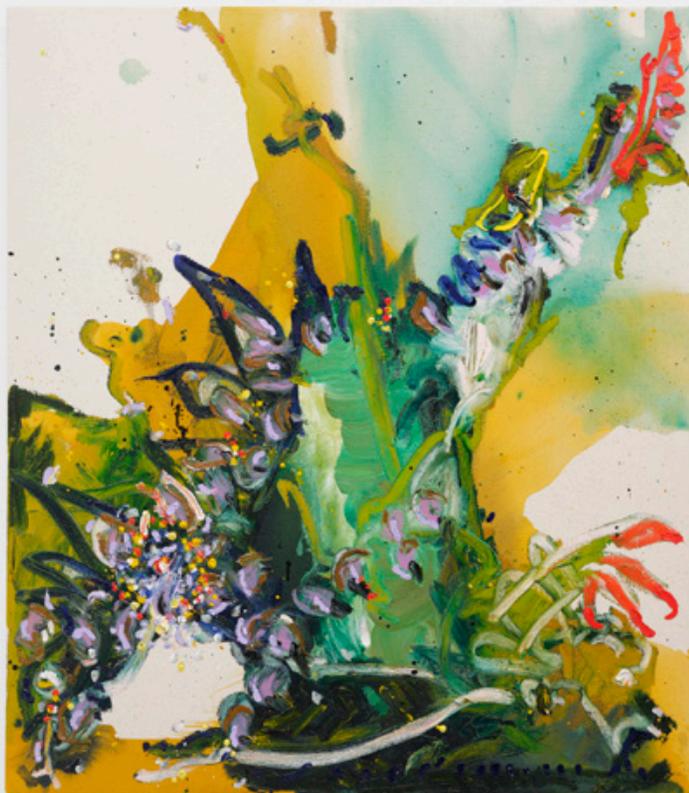
Hiba Kalache  
*I lost the secret of Egypt* (detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 65 in  
165.1 x 165.1 cm

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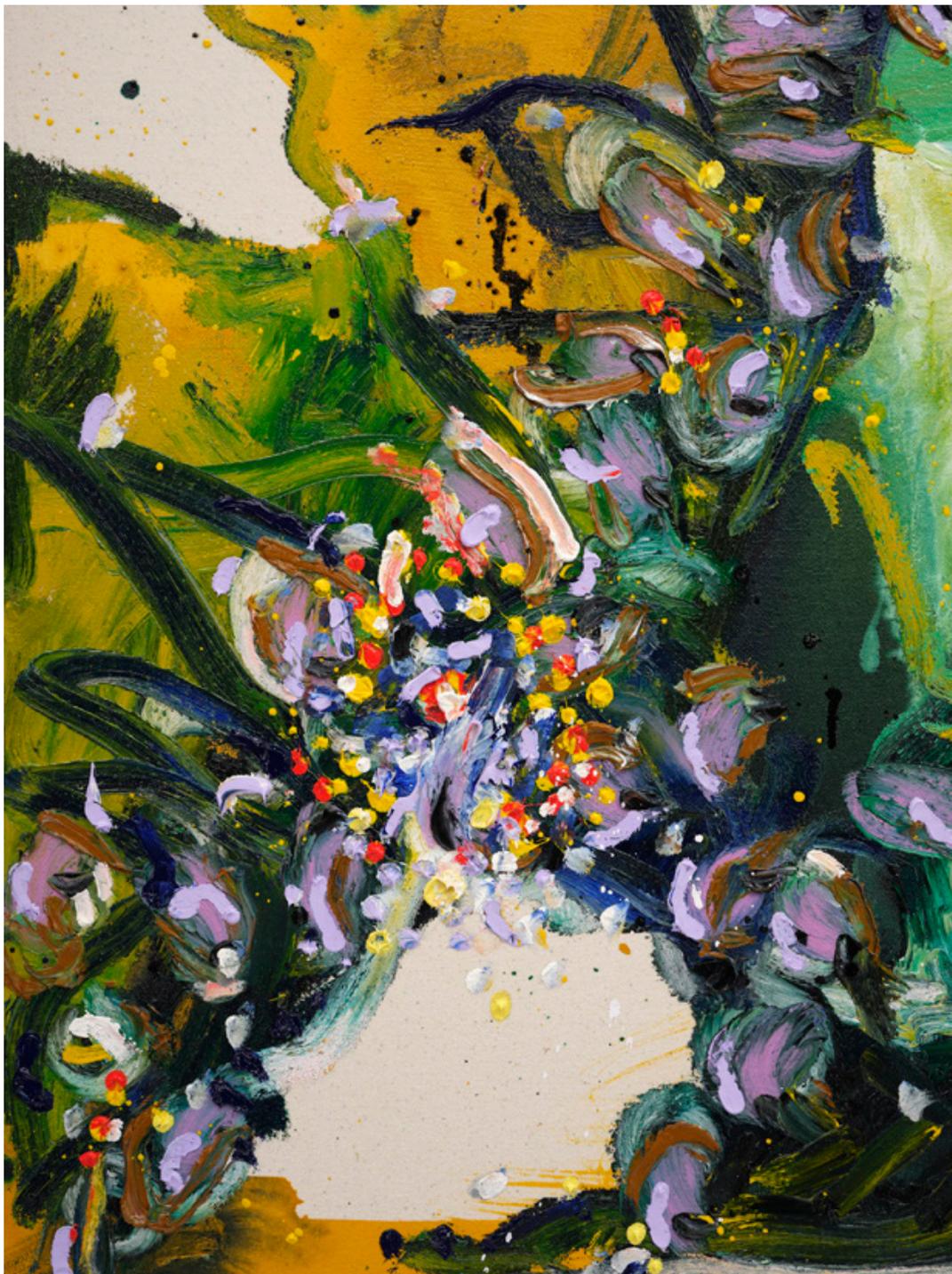
Hiba Kalache  
*I lost the secret of Egypt*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 65 in  
165.1 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*such madness!*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
32 x 28 in  
81.3 x 71.1 cm

ALTMAN SIEGEL



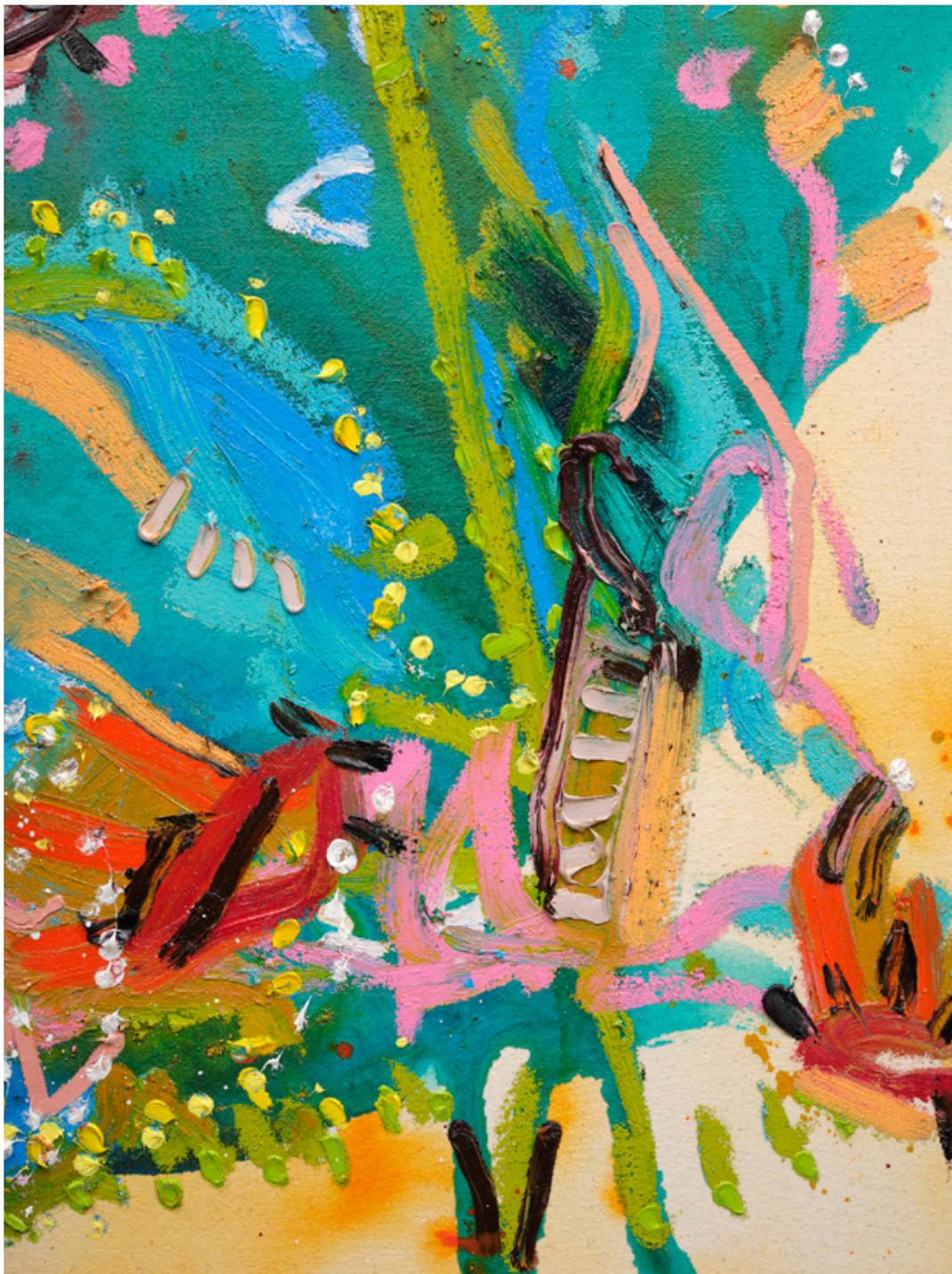
Hiba Kalache  
*such madness!* (detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
32 x 28 in  
81.3 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*can water be thirsty*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
32 x 28 in  
81.3 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*can water be thirsty* (detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
32 x 28 in  
81.3 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*can water be thirsty*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
32 x 28 in  
81.3 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*a drop of water plus a drop of light,*  
2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
41 x 28 in  
104.1 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*a drop of water plus a drop of light*  
(detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
41 x 28 in  
104.1 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*a drop of water plus a drop of light,*  
2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
41 x 28 in  
104.1 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache, *free of me and you*, 2024, Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas, 32 x 28 in, 81.3 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache, *free of me and you* (detail), 2024, Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas, 32 x 28 in, 81.3 x 71.1 cm

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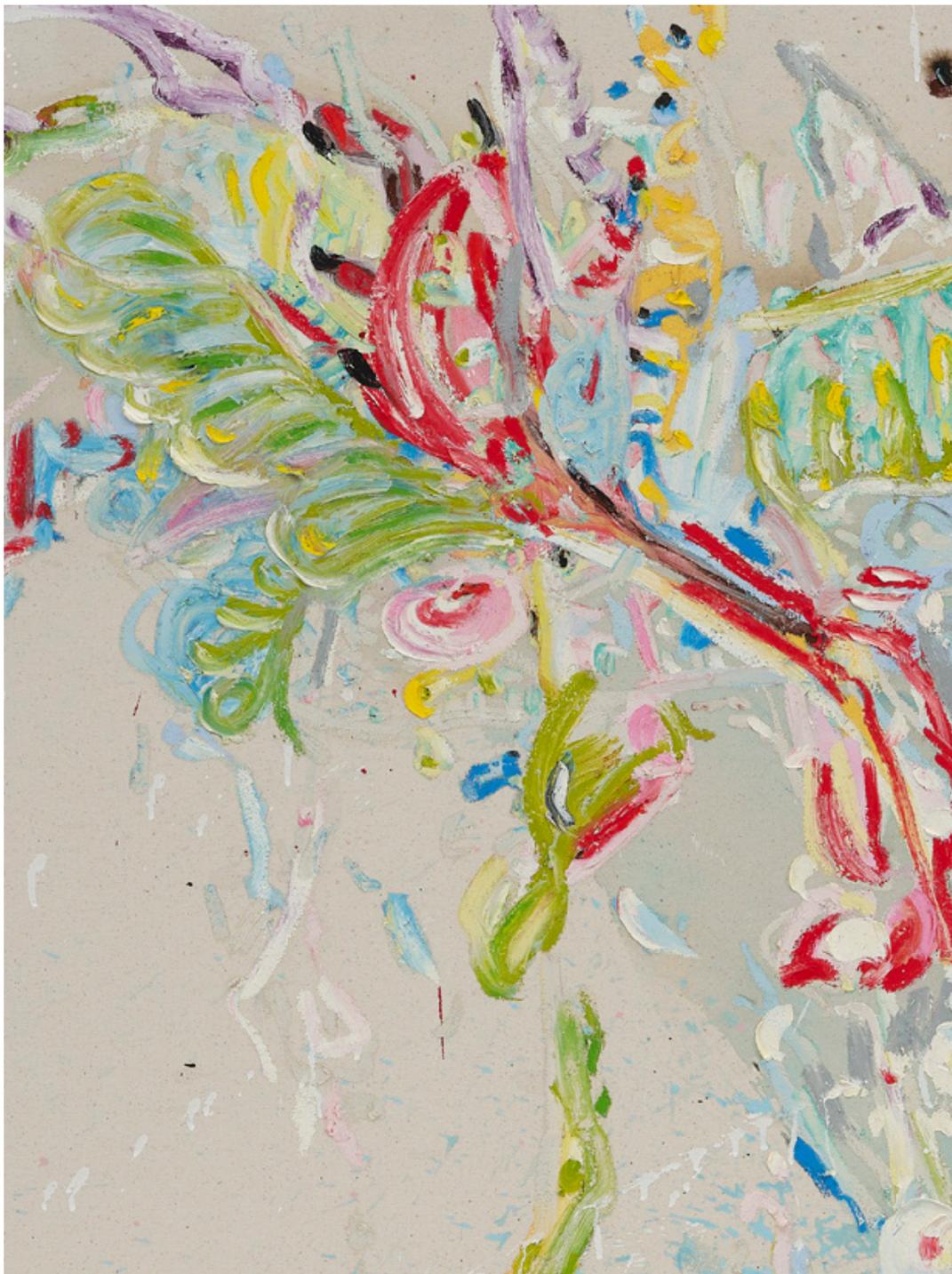
Hiba Kalache  
*free of me and you*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
32 x 28 in  
81.3 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*something non human*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 65 in  
165.1 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*something non human* (detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 65 in  
165.1 x 165.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*humbaba*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 56 in  
165.1 x 142.2 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*humbaba* (detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 56 in  
165.1 x 142.2 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*the moral of the story*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 56 in  
165.1 x 142.2 cm

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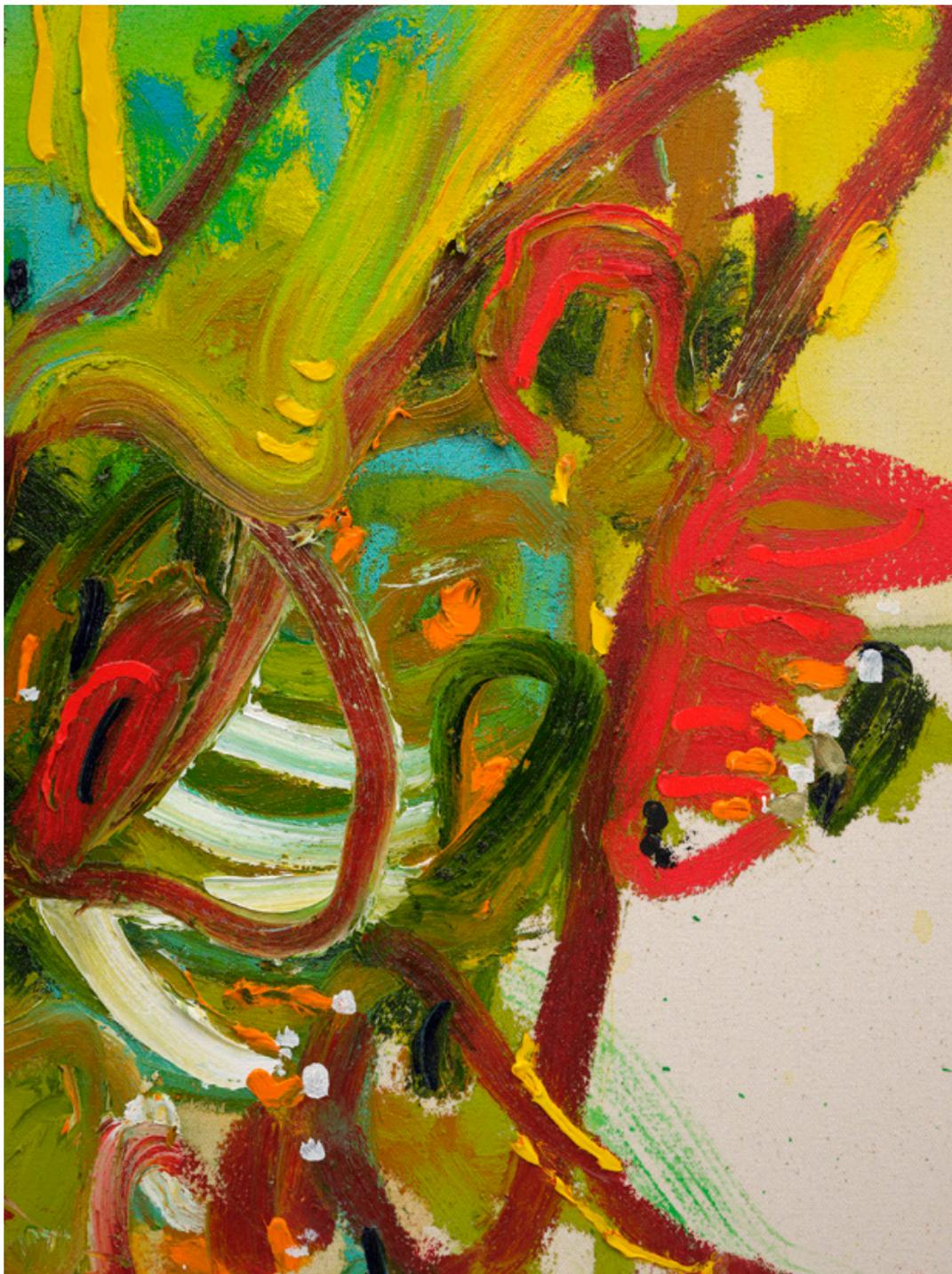
Hiba Kalache  
*the moral of the story* (detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
65 x 56 in  
165.1 x 142.2 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*that the vein has*, 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
41 x 28 in  
104.1 x 71.1 cm

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Hiba Kalache  
*that the vein has* (detail), 2024  
Ink, oil and oil bar on canvas  
41 x 28 in  
104.1 x 71.1 cm

# ALTMAN SIEGEL

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Hiba Kalache  
*Embodiment*  
Altman Siegel, Presidio Heights  
January 16 – February 1, 2025

Altman Siegel is thrilled to present an exhibition of new paintings by Hiba Kalache. This suite of paintings finds its origins in the *Kalila wa-Dimna*, a book of fables dating back to the 13th century. Though the text was first composed in Sanskrit, titled *The Panchatantra*, in the year 200 B.C., it has been translated numerous times throughout the millennia. From Sanskrit to Persian, from Persian to Arabic, and more. Here, Kalache has translated the ancient text and illustrations yet again, through the act of painting.

These folk stories engage universal human themes with animal protagonists and narrators. Each story contains ancient wisdom and powerful political subtexts that remain relevant today. The strength of storytelling has been used over the centuries as both entertainment and propaganda, often to support those with power. Masked in childlike playfulness, these tales are as sly as the two jackals that romp within their pages. In these tales, the Lion is always the leader, always feared, and always obeyed. The enduring power of these associations can be traced up until and through the present moment. Bashar al-Assad's chosen name, for instance, translates to Lion in Arabic.

Channeling the frenetic energy within these stories, Kalache breaks away from her allegorical source material in pursuit of abstraction. These works are uncompromising in their anguished search for the inexplicable. For Kalache, the painterly process grounds the body in the present moment and also propels ravenous curiosity.

These compositions often begin on a horizontal plane. They are sprayed with water, and like seeds in a garden they grow. A layer of ink is laid down, then oil, and then in a subversive act, more water and ink. The resulting interaction of oil and water mirror the friction and tension these compositions provoke. From mind to body, and from hand to thought, Kalache's tireless approach is rooted in inherited movements. The traditions of cooking, crocheting, and other hand crafts were passed down to Kalache through her female relatives. Decades later those same gestures burst forth, with uncontrollable force onto the canvas.

Kalache's primary focus in the studio is the pursuit of creating fearless, unrestricted, muscular works. Vibrant and intense in color, these pieces are part of a continuous whole, a ceaseless, breathless marathon of painting with the final outcomes serving as a pure conduit for Kalache's uninhibited spirit.

For more information please contact Altman Siegel at [info@altmansiegel.com](mailto:info@altmansiegel.com) or 415-576-9300.

Altman Siegel, Presidio Heights  
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San Francisco, CA 94115

Hours: Thursday – Saturday, 11am-5pm



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