

# Osama Al Rayyan

*The Mail Man*

24/02 — 13/04 2024

*[click here for more info](#)*

Mendes Wood DM Brussels



Mendes Wood DM is proud to present Osama Al Rayyan's first solo exhibition in Brussels, *The Mail Man*. Loosely inspired by a short story by the late Egyptian writer Ibrahim Aslan, the exhibition combines paintings with the artist's first publicly displayed drawings and sculptures.

Often referred to as situationist, the visual prose of Aslan grants the writer the capacity to tell incredibly local stories with a surprisingly universal effect. Similarly, critics and admirers celebrate Aslan's capacity to weave through different genres, combining distinct writing styles in a single text. Motivated by a similar artistic freedom, Al Rayyan eschews any statement about his practice, preferring, instead, to lend himself to experimentation. Circumventing the possibilities of painting has allowed Al Rayyan to question the immediacy of his own choices in form and color, accepting, instead, the pleasure of discovery.

The setting for *The Mail Man* emerges from Ibrahim Aslan's first published collection of short stories, *The Evening Lake* (1971), which brings together various narratives, many drawn from the author's personal experiences, set in and around Cairo. Al Rayyan admits to borrowing from reality to build his own creative universe, imaginary or realistic, but without shaping these experiences into a single category. Observing often languid, sleepy figures who turn their backs away from the viewer, one can't help but wonder about the narratives behind the canvases on display. Yet Al Rayyan insists they are not to be understood as characters or representations but as imaginary figures. Issues of representation shape the reality of artists back in Syria, where the possibility of expression is reduced to replicating monuments of historical leaders. Al Rayyan, who left Damascus in 2014, prefers to find a way out of the art canon trap, where so often history becomes a commodity, pursuing a journey free from the limitations of a sole narrative.

Like the substitute postman from Aslan's *The Evening Lake* who longs for an unknown journey, the poignancy in Al Rayyan's art originates from unexpected encounters: Observing a moment that feels incredibly familiar yet realizing that it is entirely different. Painting as a tool to convey honesty, or what is as honest as possible for an artist.

**Osama Al Rayyan** (b. 1995, Damascus, Syria) lives and works in Basel.

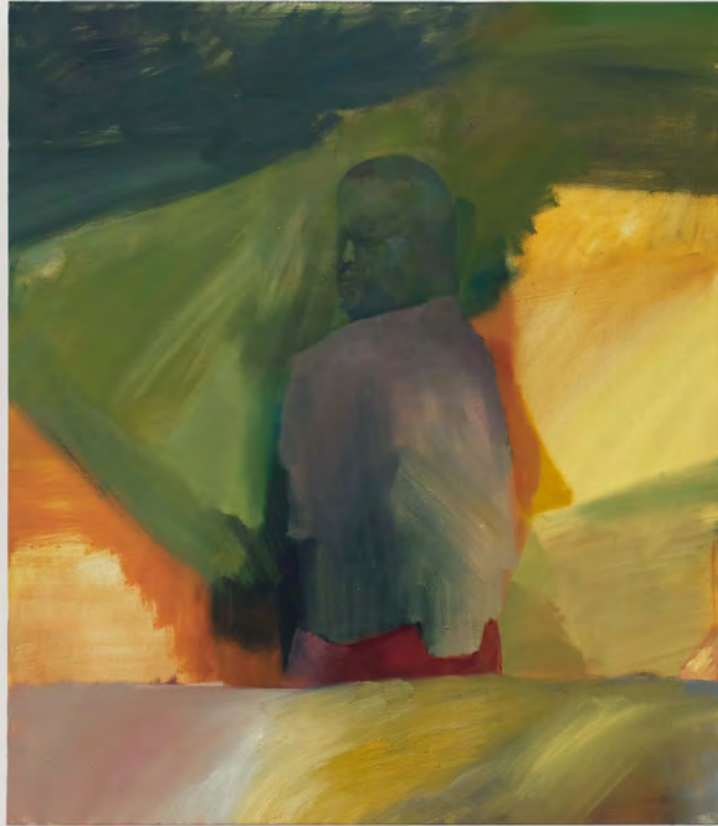
His most recent solo exhibitions include **Mendes Wood DM**, Brussels (2024); **Galleria Federico Vavassori**, Milan (2022 & 2021); **Magic Stop**, Lausanne (2022).

Additionally, his work has been included in institutional group exhibitions at **Ex-Cinema Eldorado**, Lausanne (2023); **Kunsthalle Zürich**, Zürich (2023); **Mendes Wood DM at d'Ouwe Kerke**, Retrenchement (2023); **suns.works**, Zurich (2022); **Galleria Federico Vavassori**, Milan (2022); **Sonnenstube**, Lugano (2022); **Kunsthhaus Baselland**, Basel (2021 & 2019); **Riverside**, Basel (2021).

























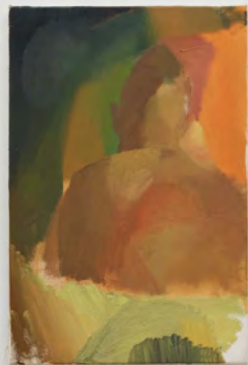


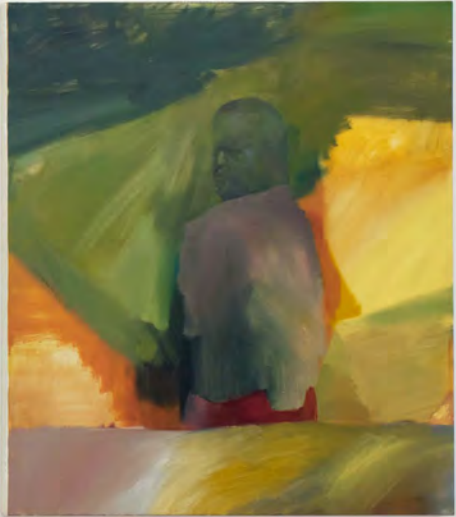






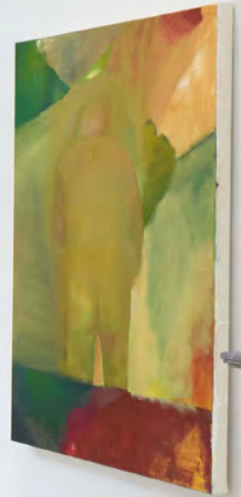












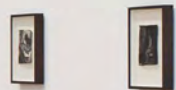
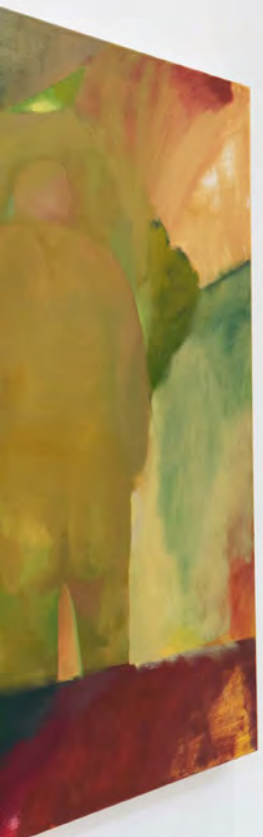




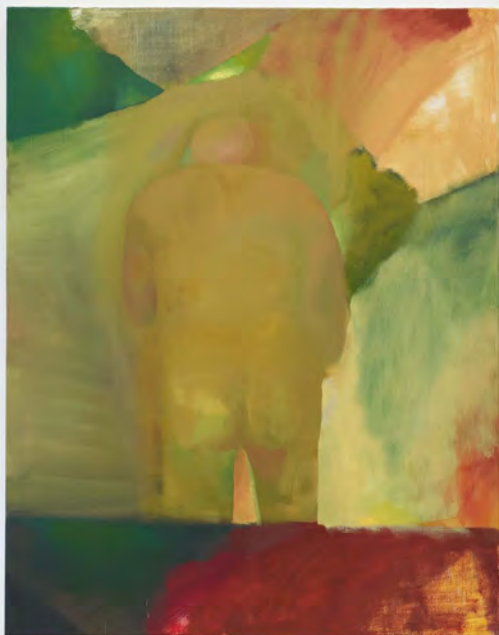


















**Osama Al Rayyan**

*Untitled*, 2024

bronze

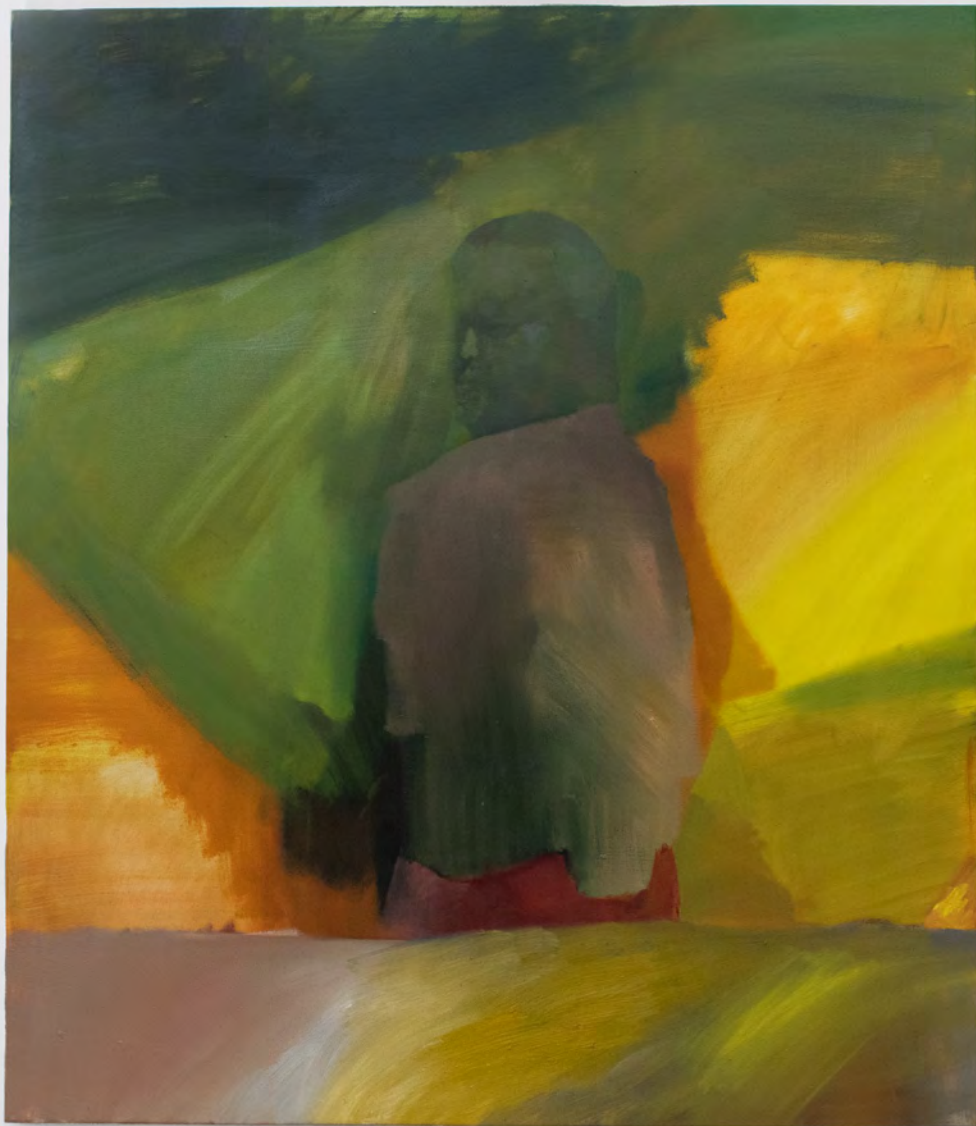
17 x 11 x 7.5 cm

edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof

MW.OAL.005







Osama Al Rayyan

*Untitled*, 2024

oil on canvas

150 x 130 cm

MW.OAL.011









Osama Al Rayyan

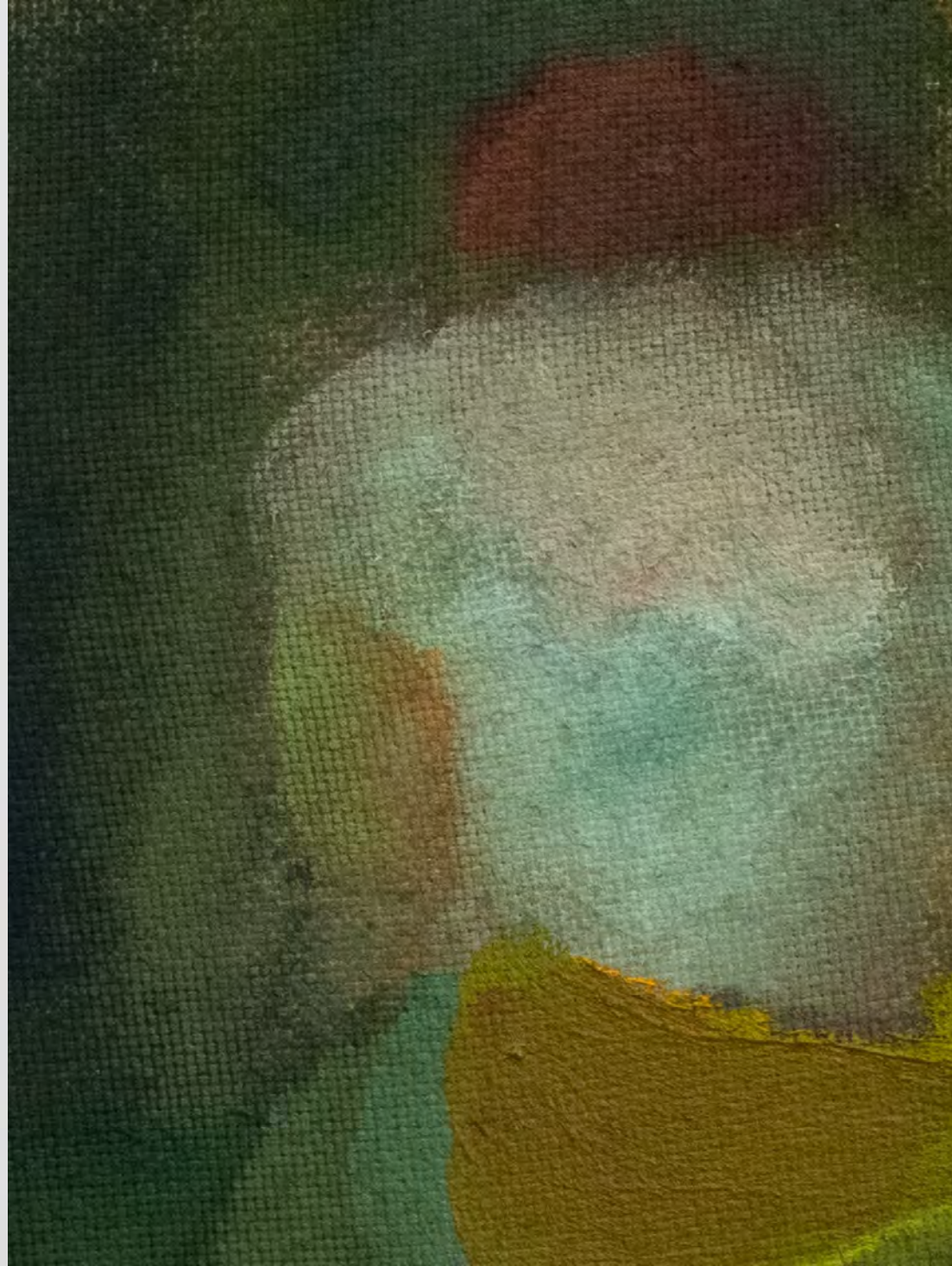
*Untitled*, 2024

oil on canvas

30 x 25 cm

MW.OAL.015









Osama Al Rayyan, *Untitled*, 2024, bronze, 9.3 x 8.7 x 8.5 cm, edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof, MW.OAL.006







Osama Al Rayyan

*Untitled, 2024*

oil on canvas

70 x 50 cm

MW.OAL.013









Osama Al Rayyan

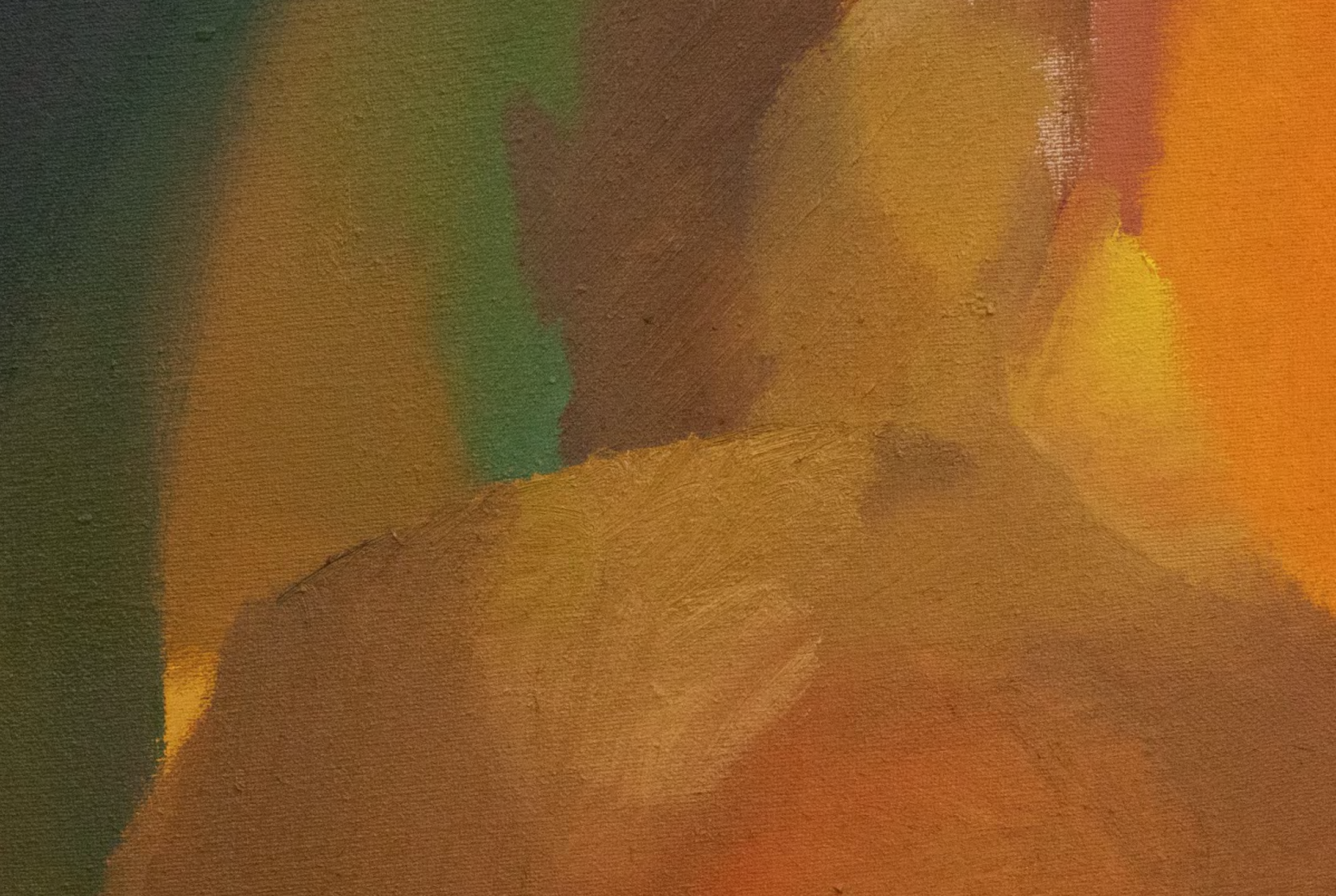
*Untitled*, 2024

oil on canvas

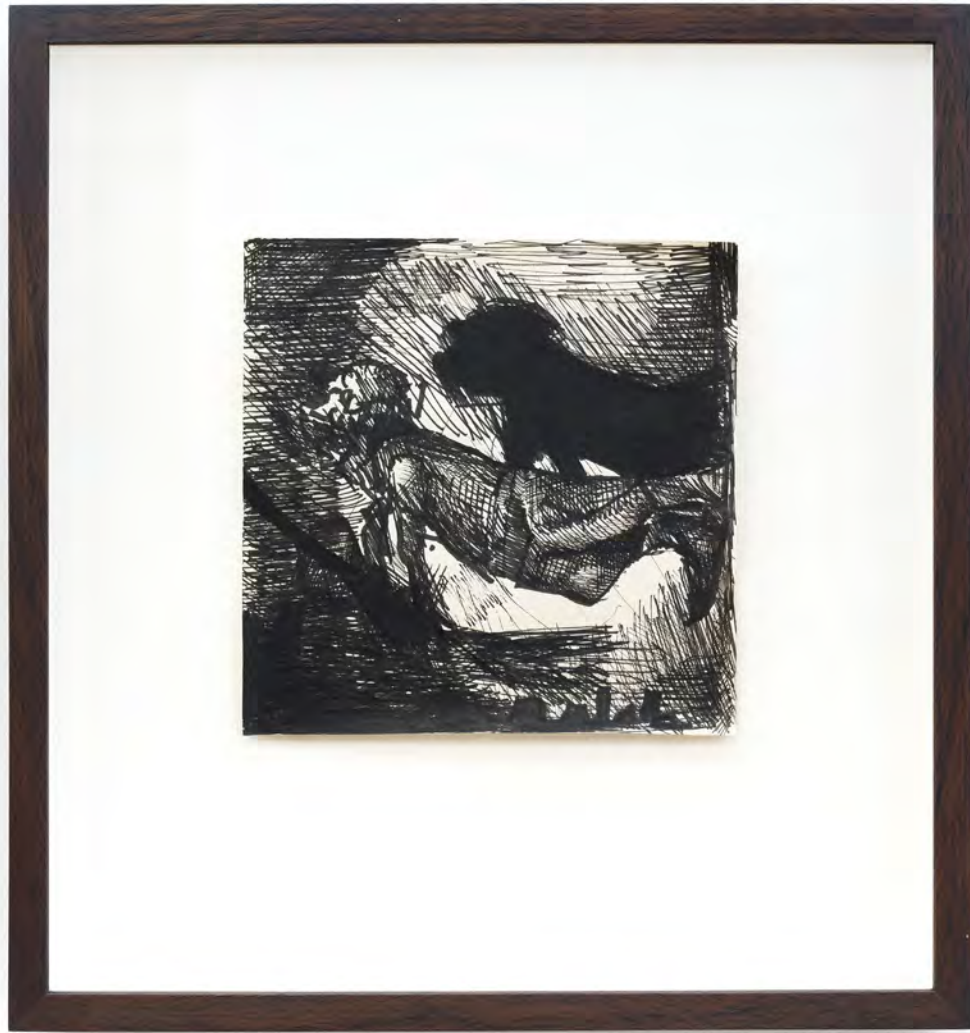
60 x 40 cm

MW.OAL.016









Osama Al Rayyan

*Untitled*, 2024

ink on paper

12 x 12 cm

MW.OAL.018







Osama Al Rayyan

*Untitled*, 2024

ink on paper

12 x 12 cm

MW.OAL.017







Osama Al Rayyan

*Untitled*, 2024

ink on paper

29 x 21 cm

MW.OAL.019





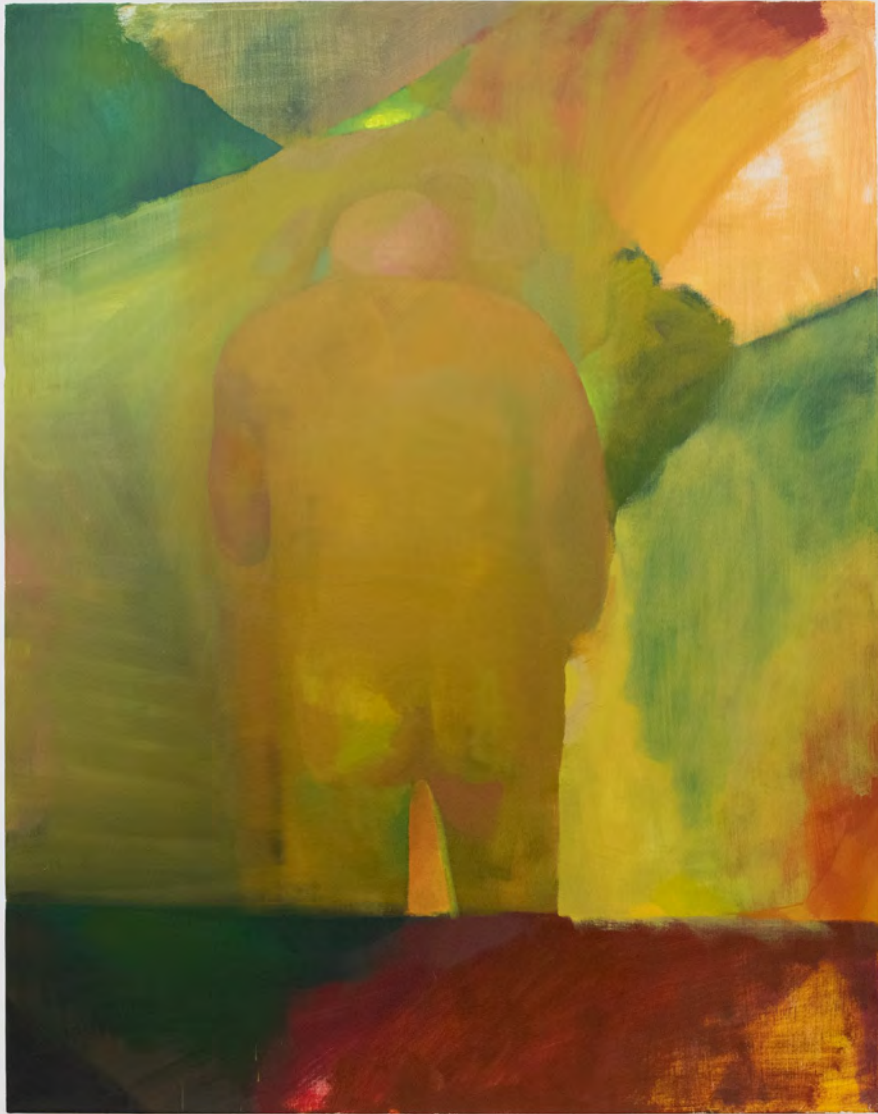




Osama Al Rayyan, *Untitled*, bronze, 9.5 x 16.5 x 7.8 cm, edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof, MW.OAL.004







**Osama Al Rayyan**

*Untitled, 2024*

oil on canvas

140 x 110 cm

MW.OAL.010







**Osama Al Rayyan**

*Untitled, 2024*


oil on canvas

190 x 120 cm

MW.OAL.012







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