



BARBATI
GALLERY

Scott Laufer
The Copyist

February 3 - March 3, 2024

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"...That which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced." — Walter Benjamin

Barbati Gallery is proud to present *The Copyist*, a new series of paintings by Scott Laufer whose conception was informed by the space itself: a grand palazzo in the heart of Venice, Italy. This new body of work is not only in dialogue with the artist's heretofore oeuvre in its employment of contemporary technologies used to address the semiotics of the art historical canon, but it does so by reprising a discourse proposed by Sigmar Polke with his Rasterbilder paintings. Whereas Polke was working with tools for mass image distribution of the 1960s, specifically half-tone raster printing, and exploring media and capitalism's replacement of enlightenment era values such as family and church, Laufer expands these ideas with newer technologies and symbols made commercially accessible by ubiquitous softwares like Adobe and Microsoft. These image and text generating technologies of the late 20th and early 21st centuries have supplanted the markers of religion and royal lineage, which have dominated Western society since the Byzantine era, with their blend modes, clone stamps, wingdings, and clip art. The use of these tools constitutes a formal strategy that Laufer utilizes to establish compositional and conceptual distance between the new paintings and their canonical references.

Each of the paintings Laufer samples in this new suite of paintings is chosen for its Greek and Christo metaphorical significance, two themes explored in Polke's collision of classical era depictions of god and family, mythos and mysticism, with the capitalist symbology of post-war hyper-consumerism and individualist exceptionalism. Laufer continues this line of inquiry for the information age where not only god is dead, but so is the very essence of truth; verisimilitude is blurred and flattened into the hyperplane of the digital miasma. In one example, Laufer samples moments from Johann Liss' *The Fall of Phaeton* (c.1624), which tells the story of the son of Helios who asks to drive the chariot of

the sun through the heavens for one day, loses control, and nearly scorches the Earth. He is then struck down with thunderbolts by Zeus and is killed. In Laufer's resampling, the painting is cloned repetitively on a computer to the point of pure abjection and then rendered in paint. This formal approach can be seen as a philosophical trialogue between Benjamin and his ideas on aura, Polke's assertion that copies serve primarily to provoke new questions, and Gilles Deleuze's insistence that the essence of repetition lies in the difference that occurs upon each iteration.

In Laufer's painting *0.799.1.29*, he uses details from Bronzino's *Deposition of Christ* (1545) — the most well-known version, which is currently housed in the Palazzo Vecchio, is itself a copy made by Bronzino eight years after the original. The painting is foregrounded by a Pietà; Christ's nearly nude body cradled lovingly in Mary's arms. Viewed in a house of God, or more specifically as the altarpiece of the chapel of Eleonora di Toledo, one might consider its overt eroticism more a Rorschachian reflection of their own psychic perversion than a product of artistic intent. However, nothing is more centered than his nearly visible phallus, ever-so-delicately draped by a thin, light, strip of fabric. Notions of carnal, incestuous, necrophilic impropriety and the genetic mutations that they imply have no place in a space of pious sanctity. However, when mirrored samplings of these centralized details are presented in the context of a secular space located at the center of the former Holy Roman Empire, the aura of Branzino's compulsorily censored intent is made incontrovertible.

Scott Laufer is an artist based in Los Angeles, California. Learning to paint by faithfully replicating the paintings of the old masters allowed Laufer the complex techniques to explore contemporary ideas about representation, mimeticism, and the new signs and symbols of the 21st century. With echoes of baroque grandiosity, he challenges concepts of representation and metaphor with virtuosic skill, thus presenting psychological quagmires of the uncanny. *The Copyist* will be his first solo exhibition with the gallery.



Scott Laufer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

Installation view



Scott Laufer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

Installation view





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Scott Laufer

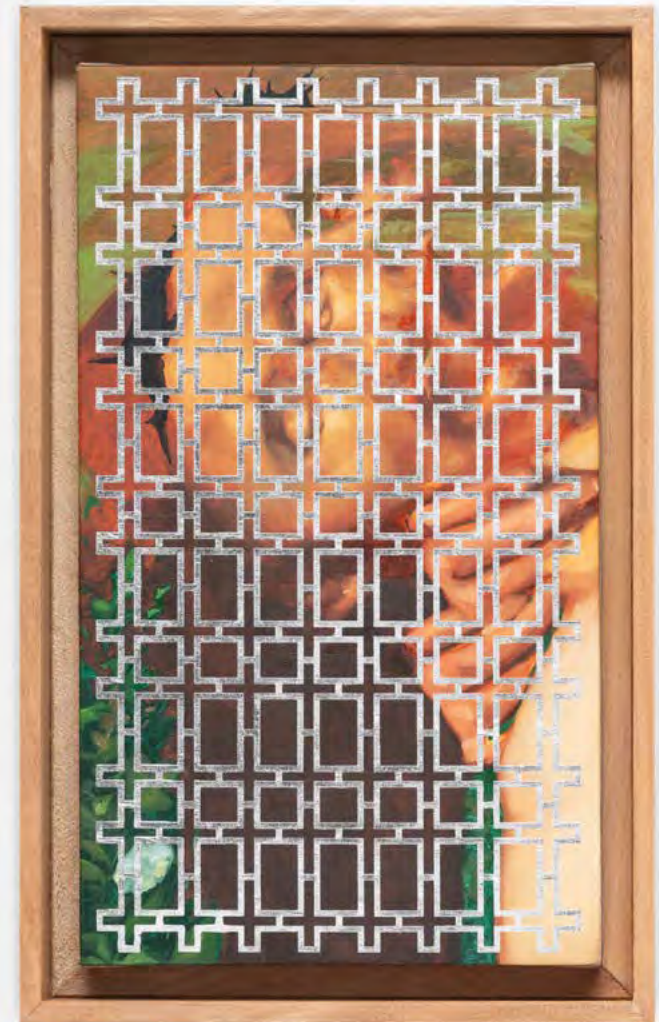
UNTITLED, 2023

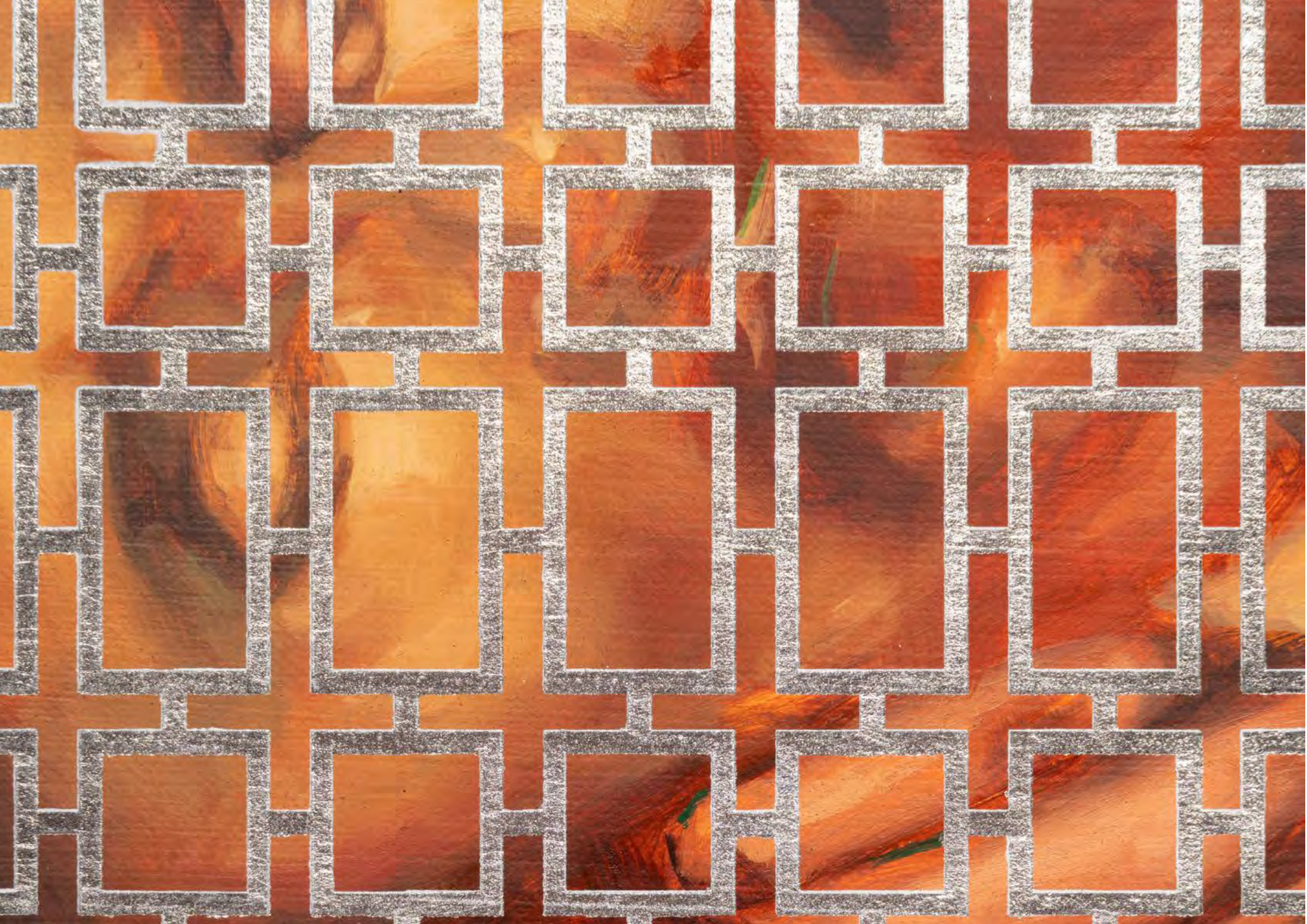
oil and silver leaf on linen

14 x 8 in.

35.56 x 20.32 cm

SL 23.008







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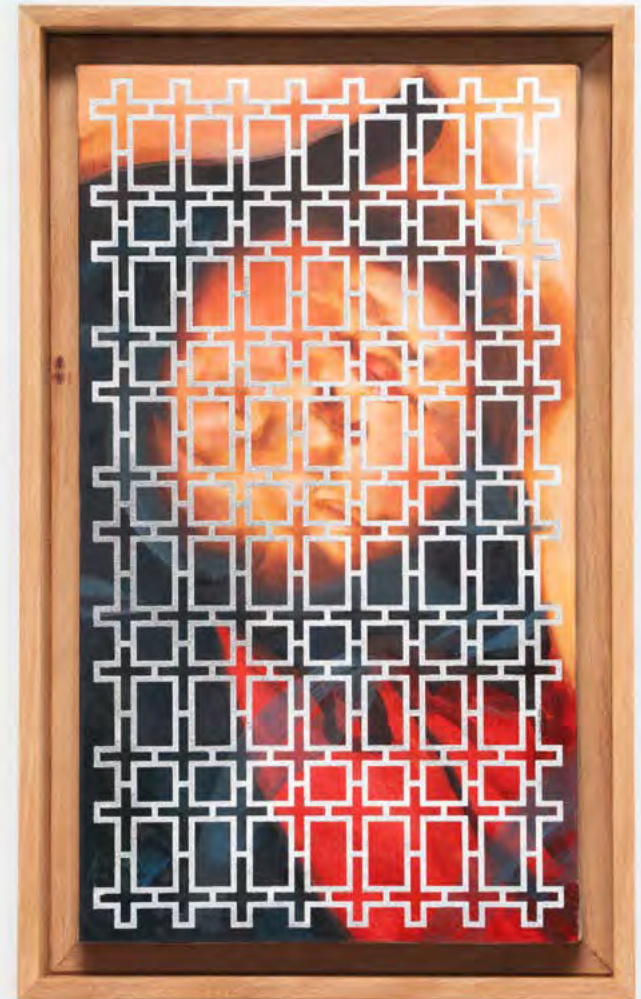
Scott Laufer

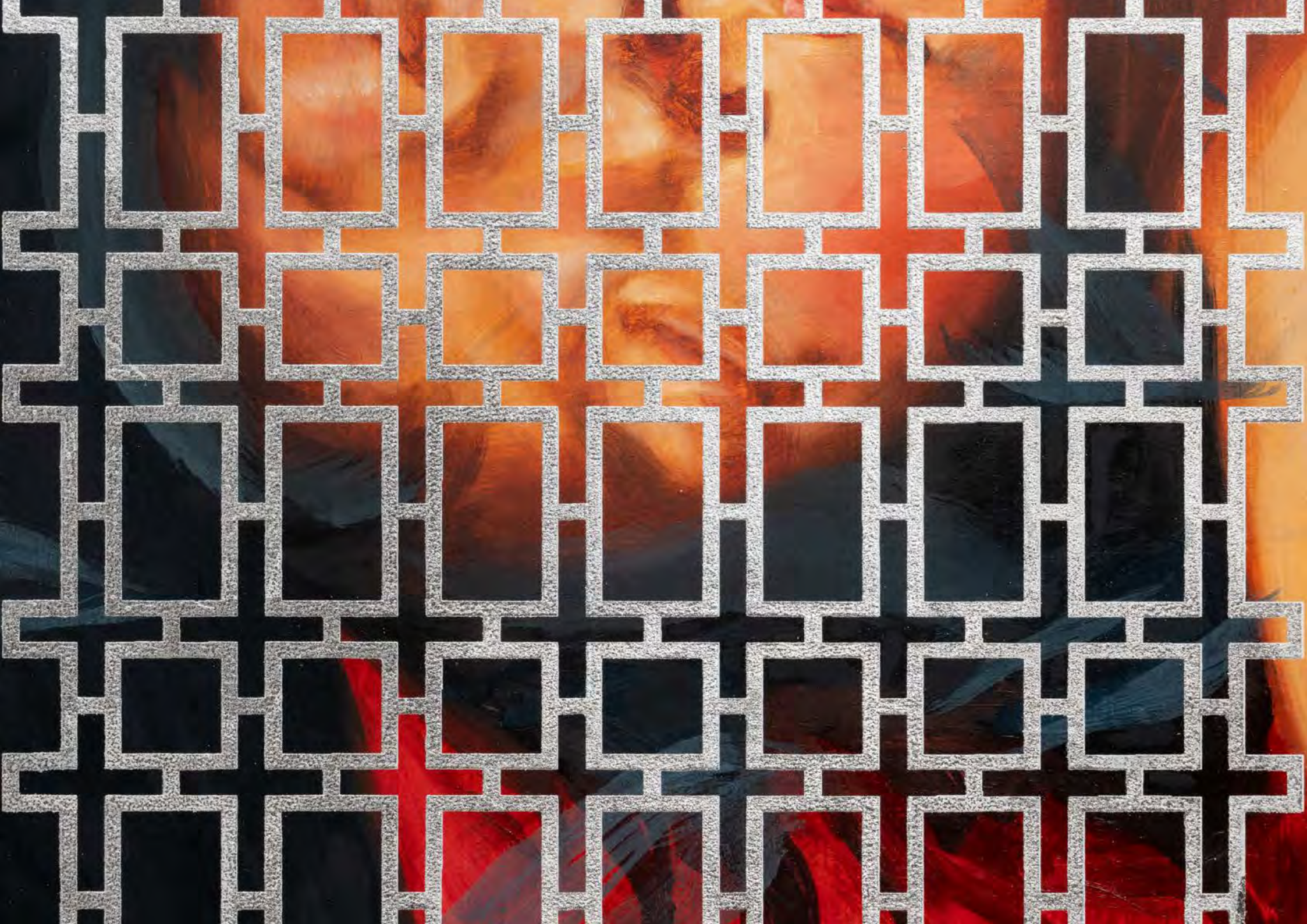
UNTITLED, 2023

oil and silver leaf on linen
5½ x 3⅞ in.

14 x 8 cm

SL 23.028





Scott Laufer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

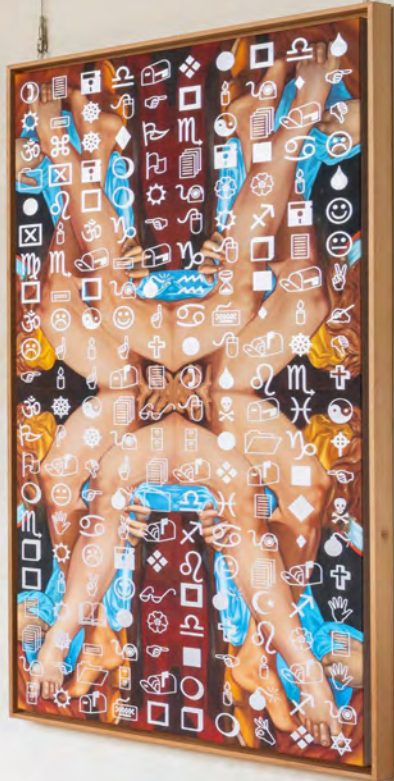
Installation view

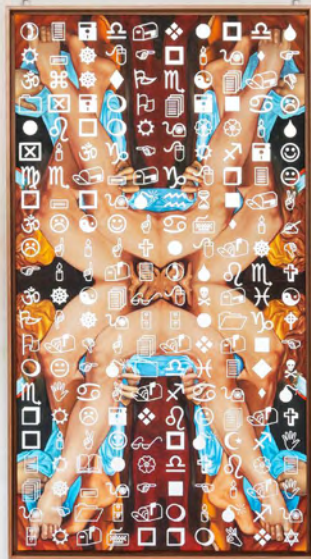














Scott Laufer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

Installation view



Scott Lafer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

Installation view

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Scott Laufer

D.799.1.29, 2023

oil and silver leaf on canvas

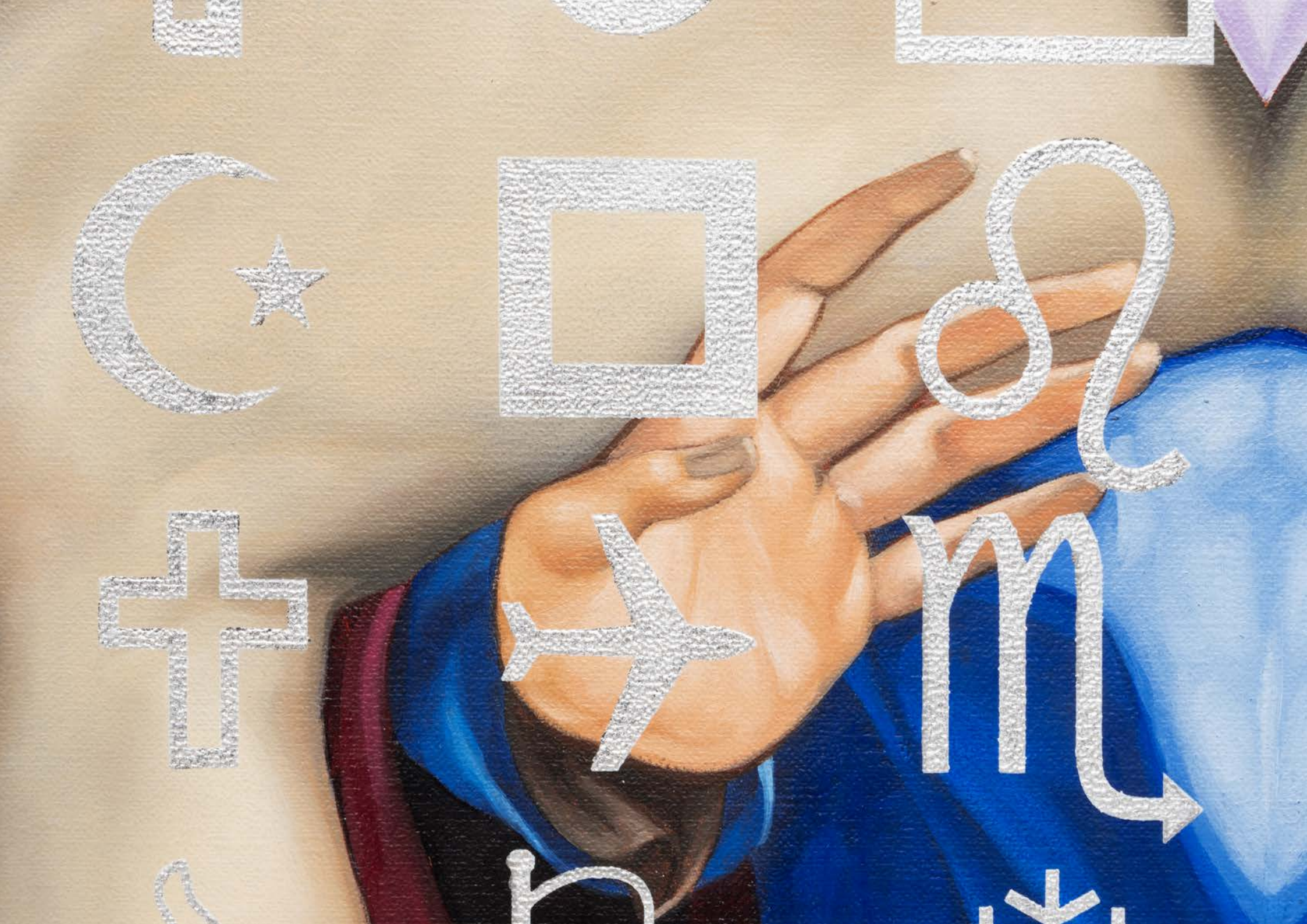
50 x 27 in.

127 x 68.58 cm

SL 23.004







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GALLERY

Scott Laufer

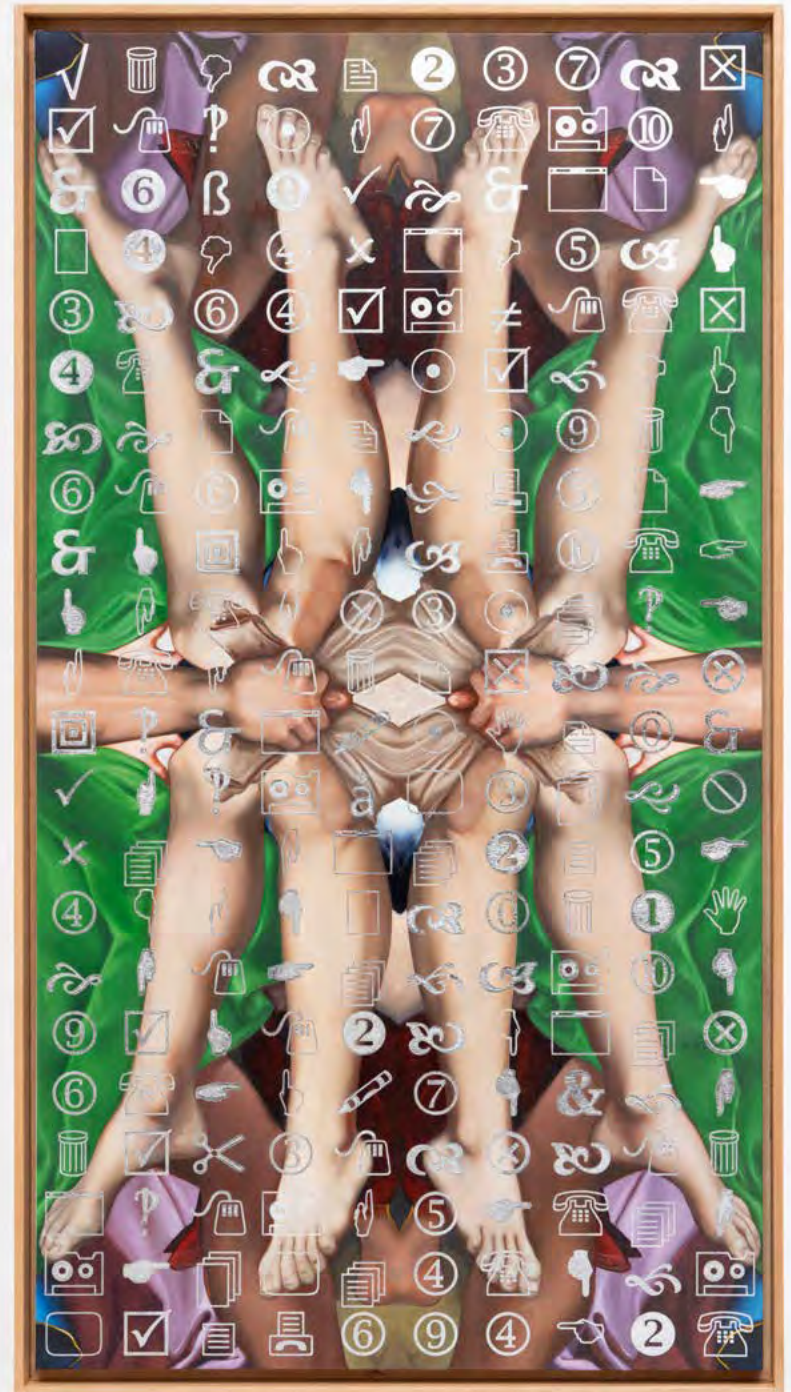
UNTITLED, 2023

oil and silver leaf on canvas

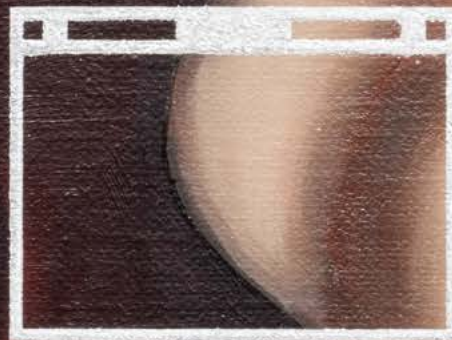
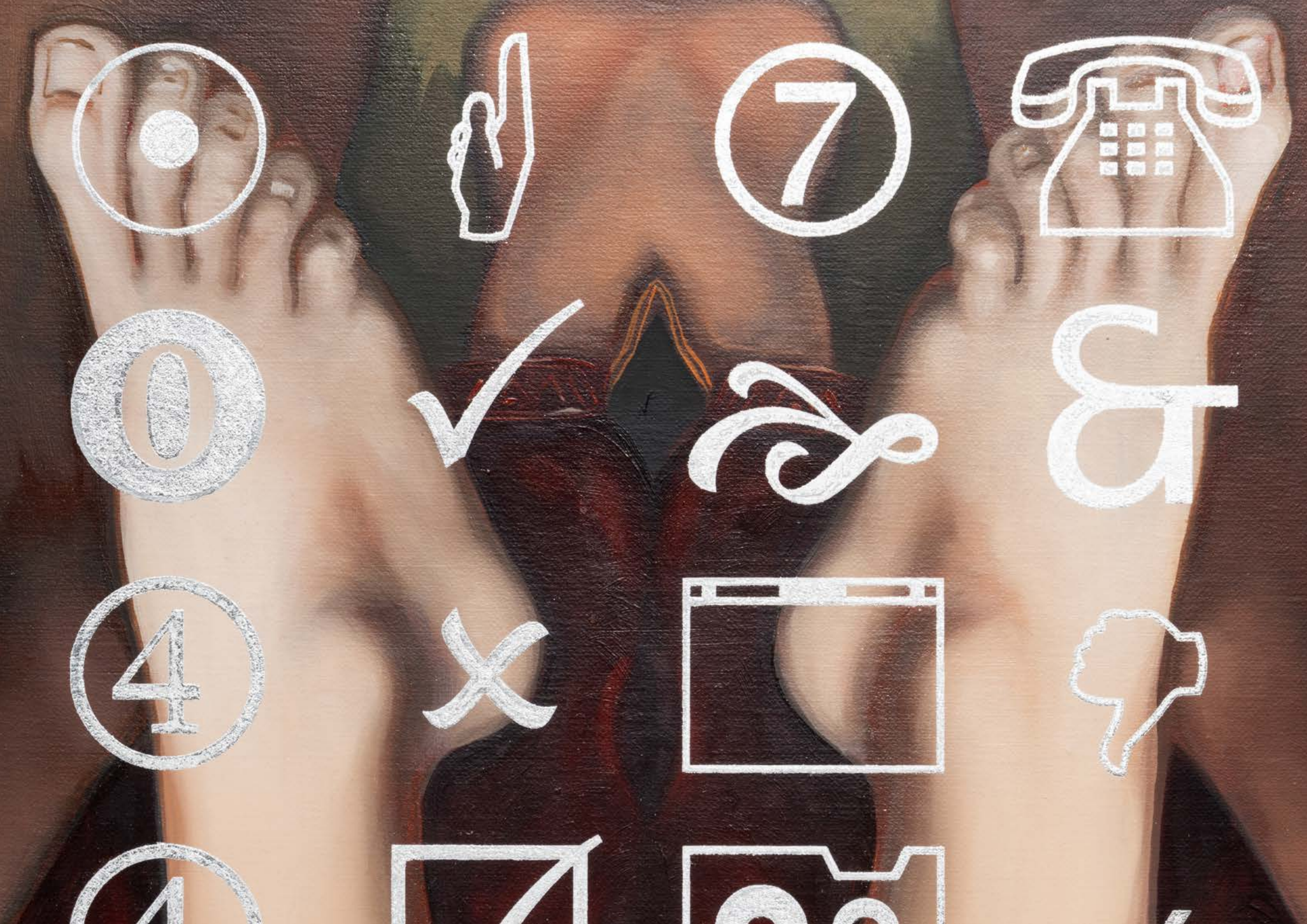
50 x 27 in.

127 x 68.58 cm

SL 23.005







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Scott Laufer

WGA3284, 2023

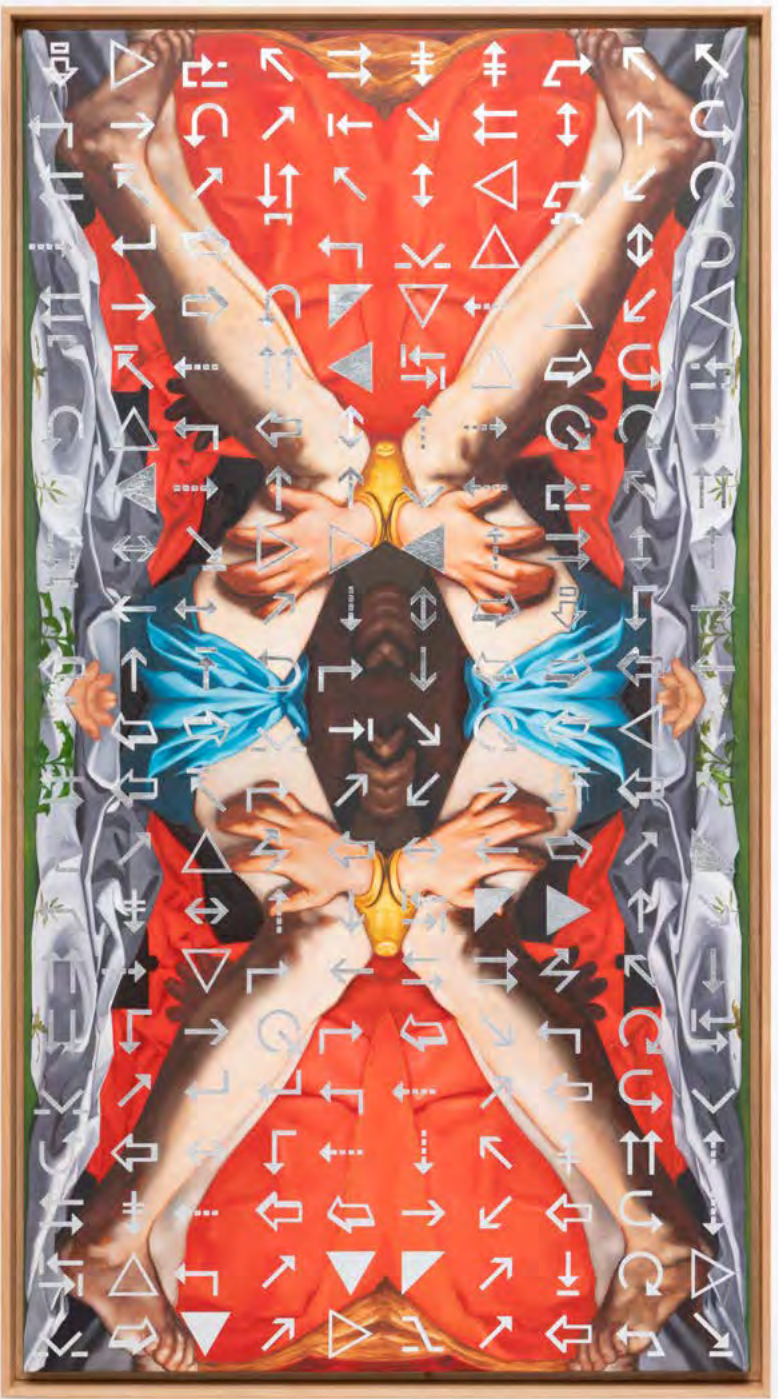
oil and silver leaf on canvas

50 x 27 x 1¼ in.

127 x 68.58 x 3.17 cm

SL 23.007









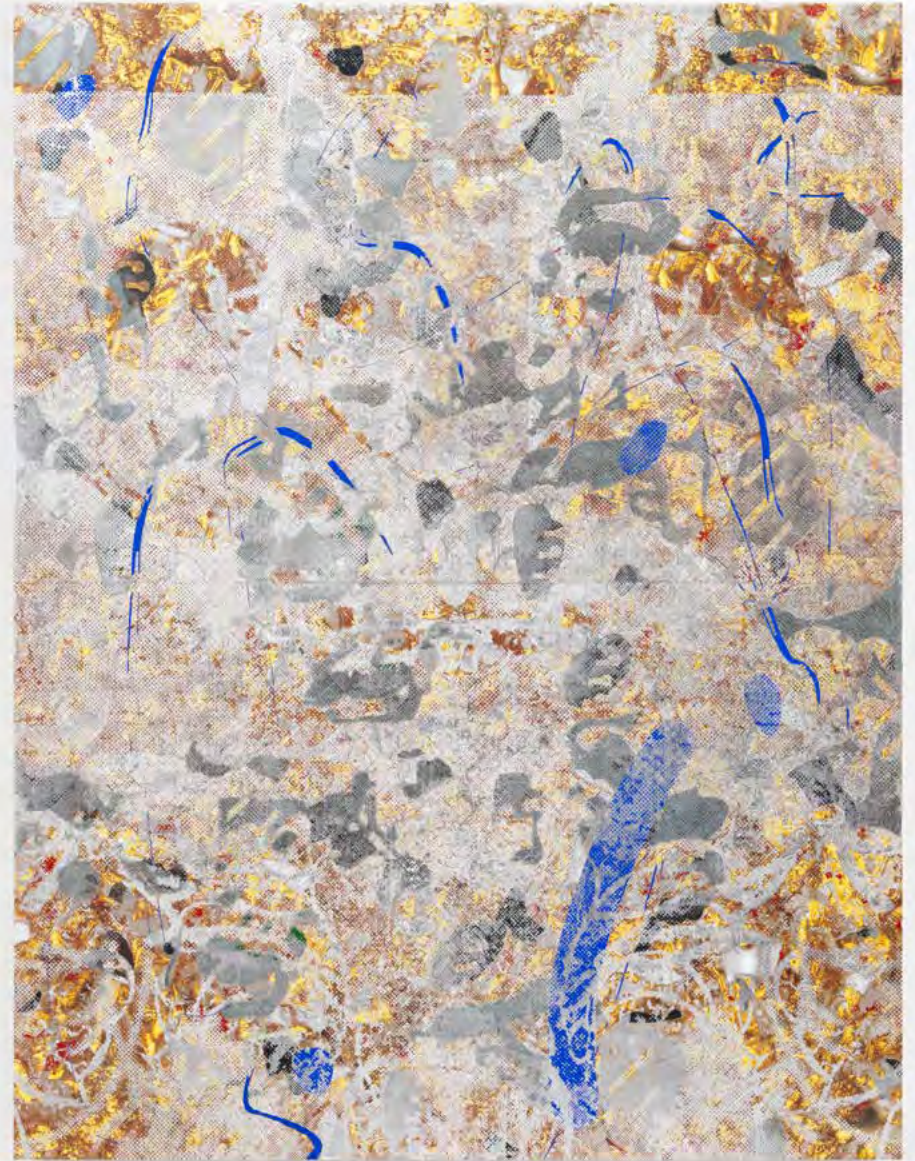
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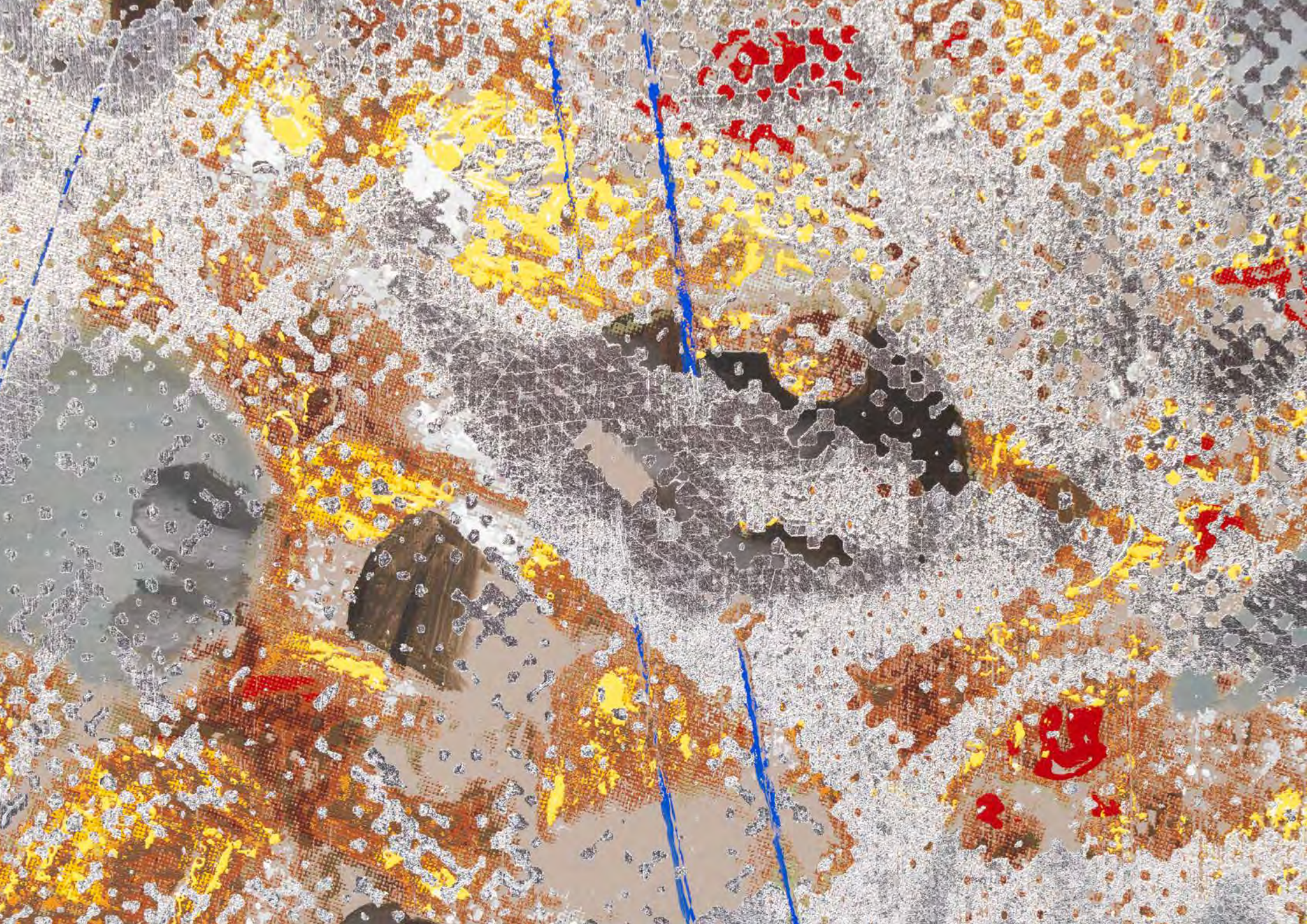
GALLERY

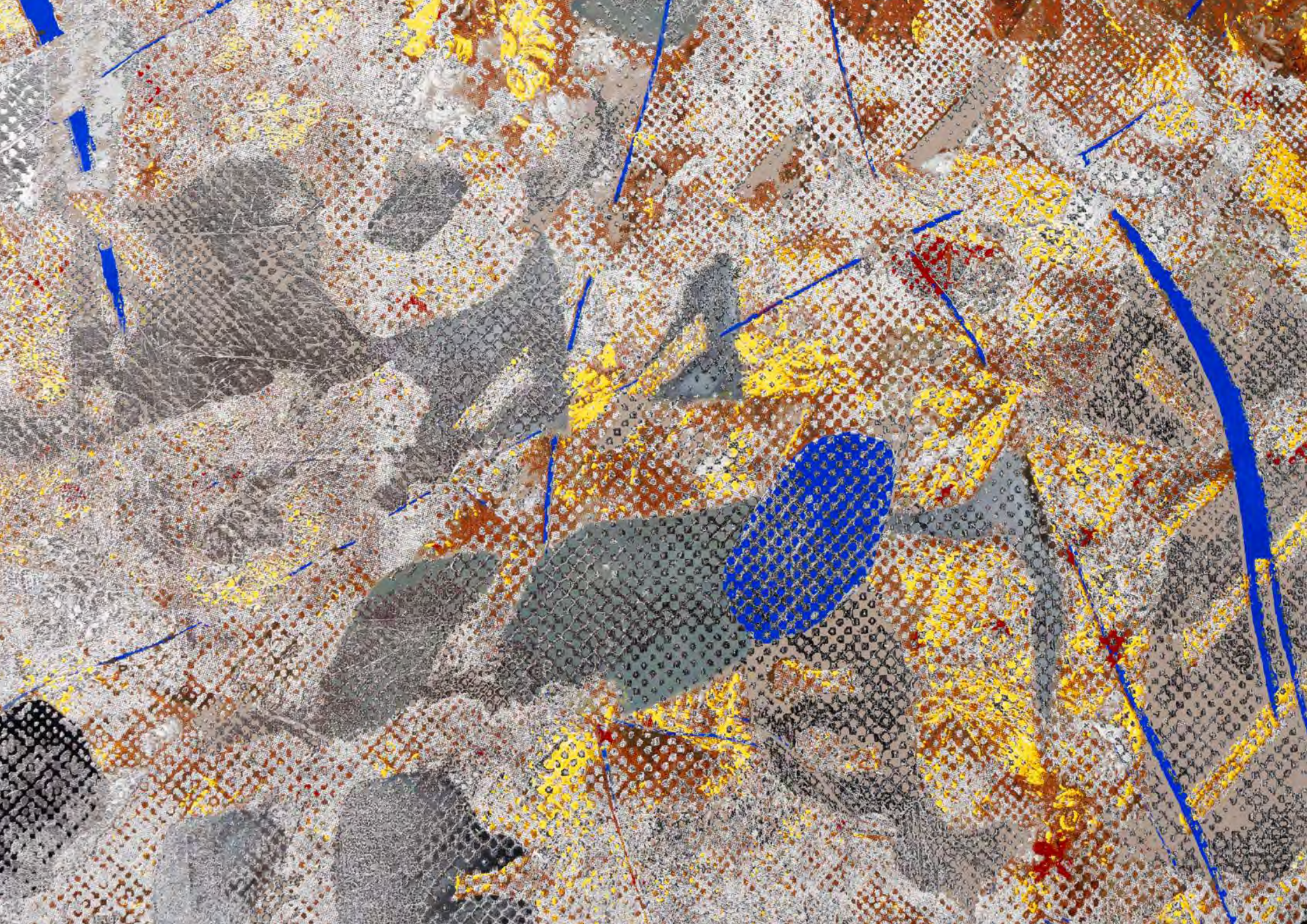
Scott Laufer

MOTH (H), 2021-2023
oil, acrylic and metal leaf on linen

51¾ x 40 in.
131.44 x 101.6 cm
SL 23.016







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Scott Laufer

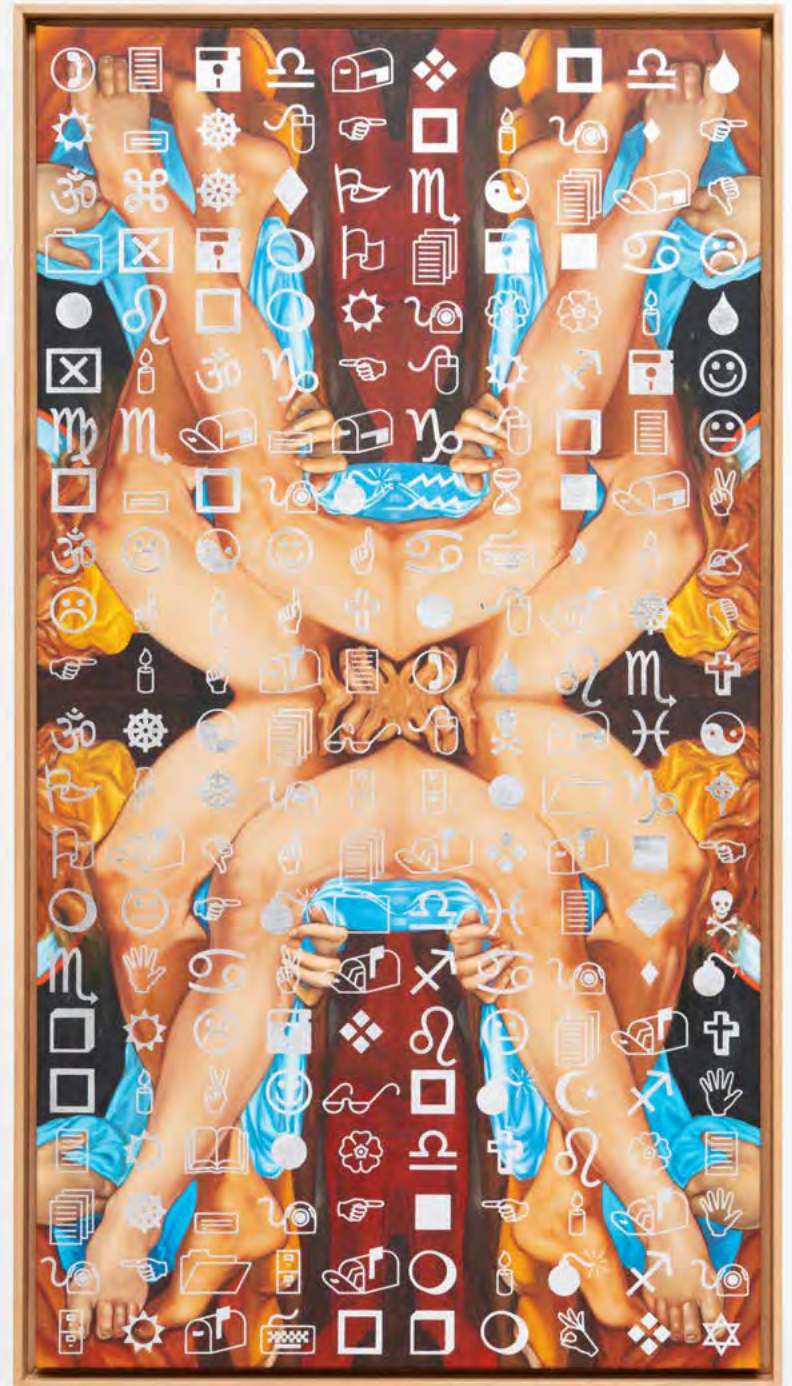
UNTITLED, 2023

oil and silver leaf on canvas

50 x 27 in.

127 x 68.58 cm

SL 23.006





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GALLERY

Scott Laufer

UNTITLED, 2023

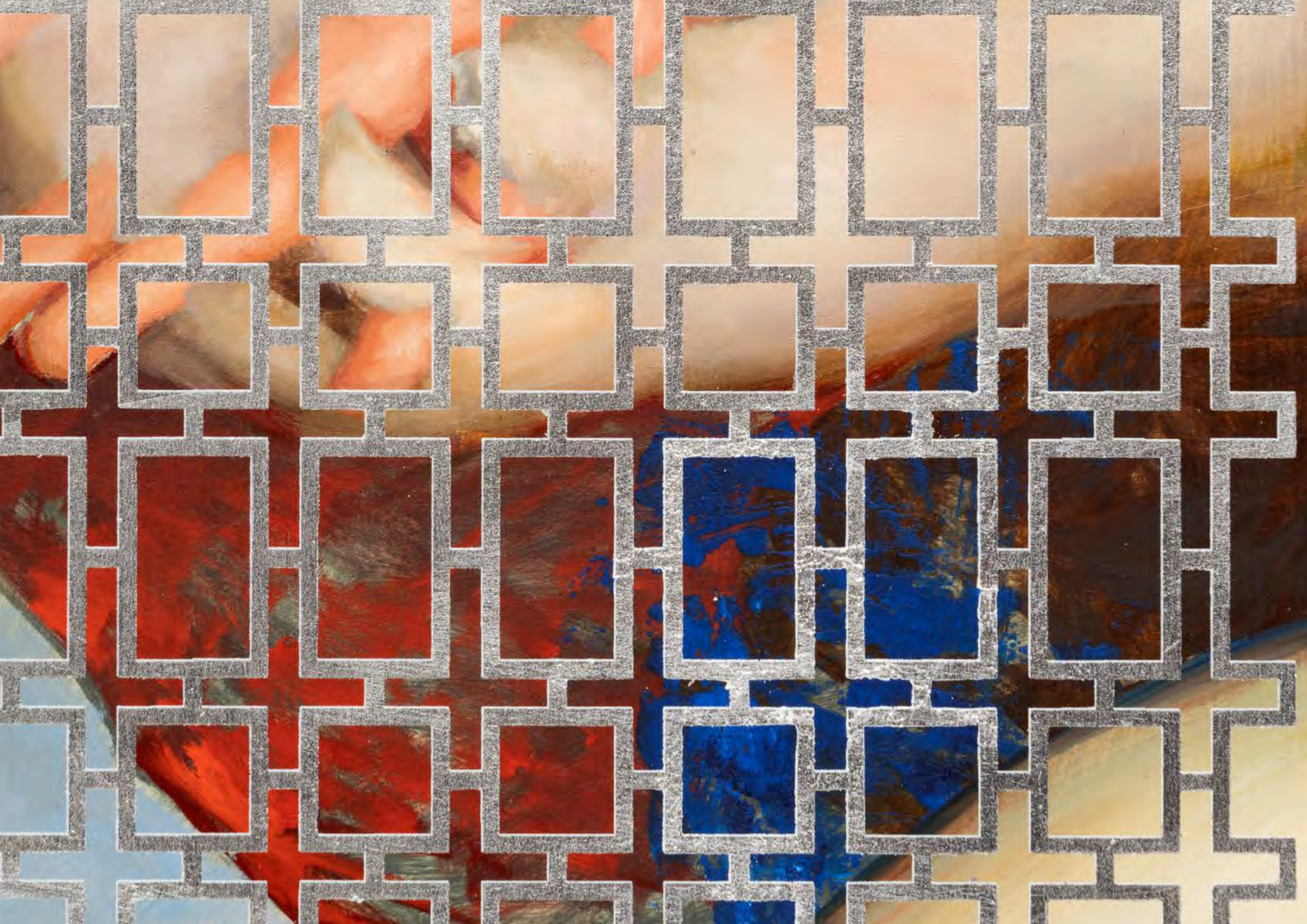
oil and silver leaf on linen

14 x 8 in.

35.56 x 20.32 cm

SL 23.029





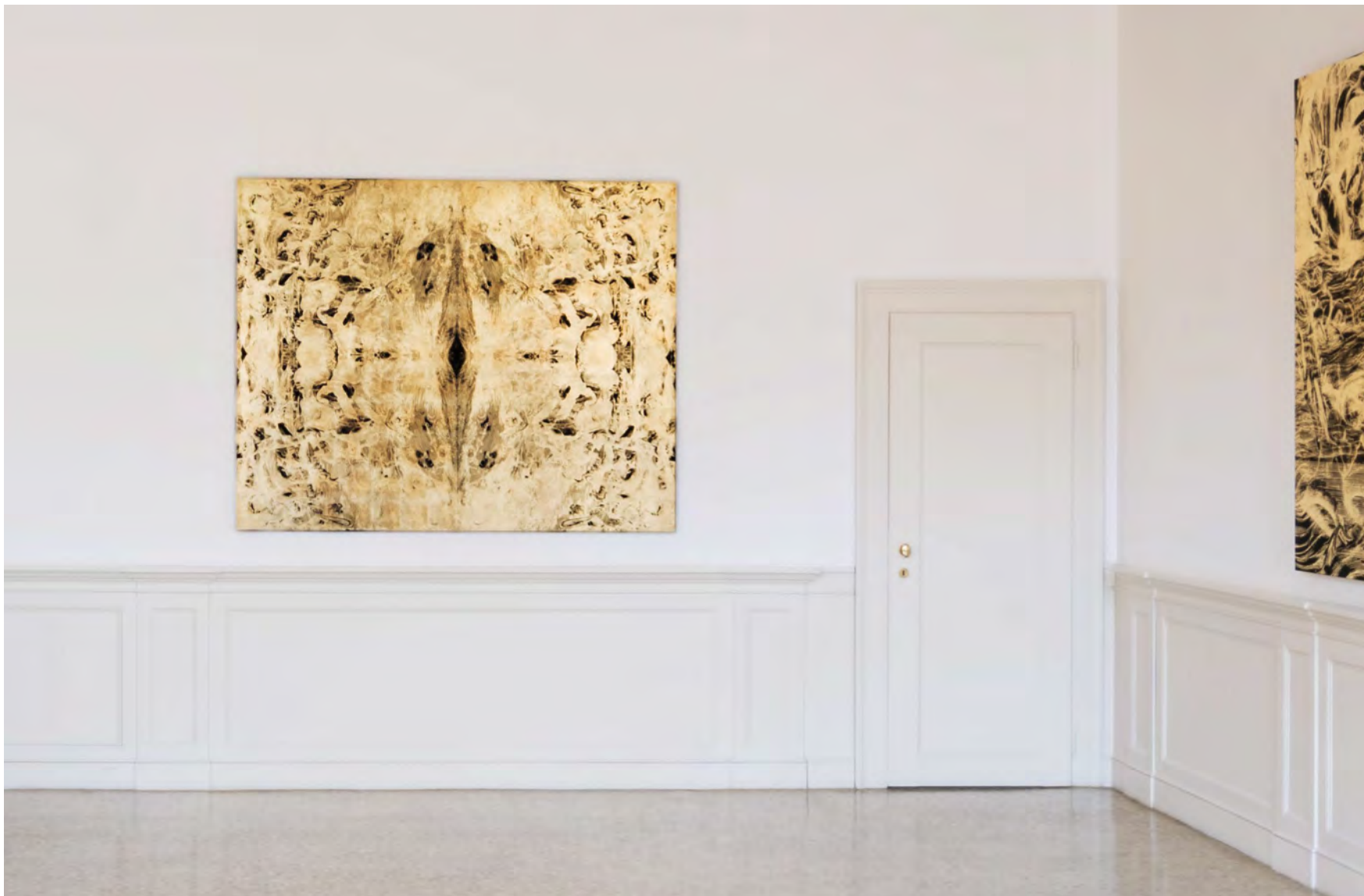




Scott Lafer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

Installation view





Scott Laufer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

Installation view



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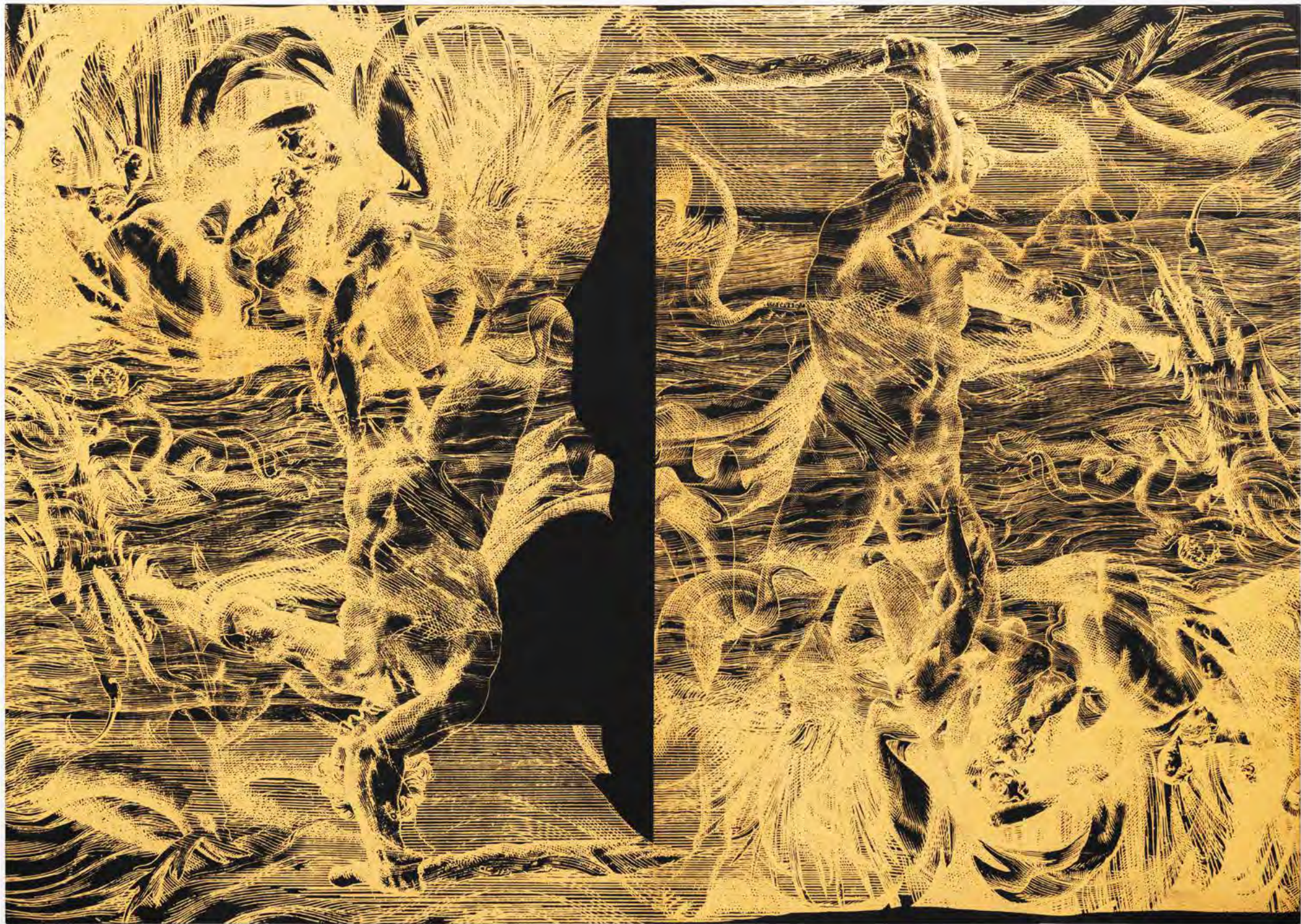
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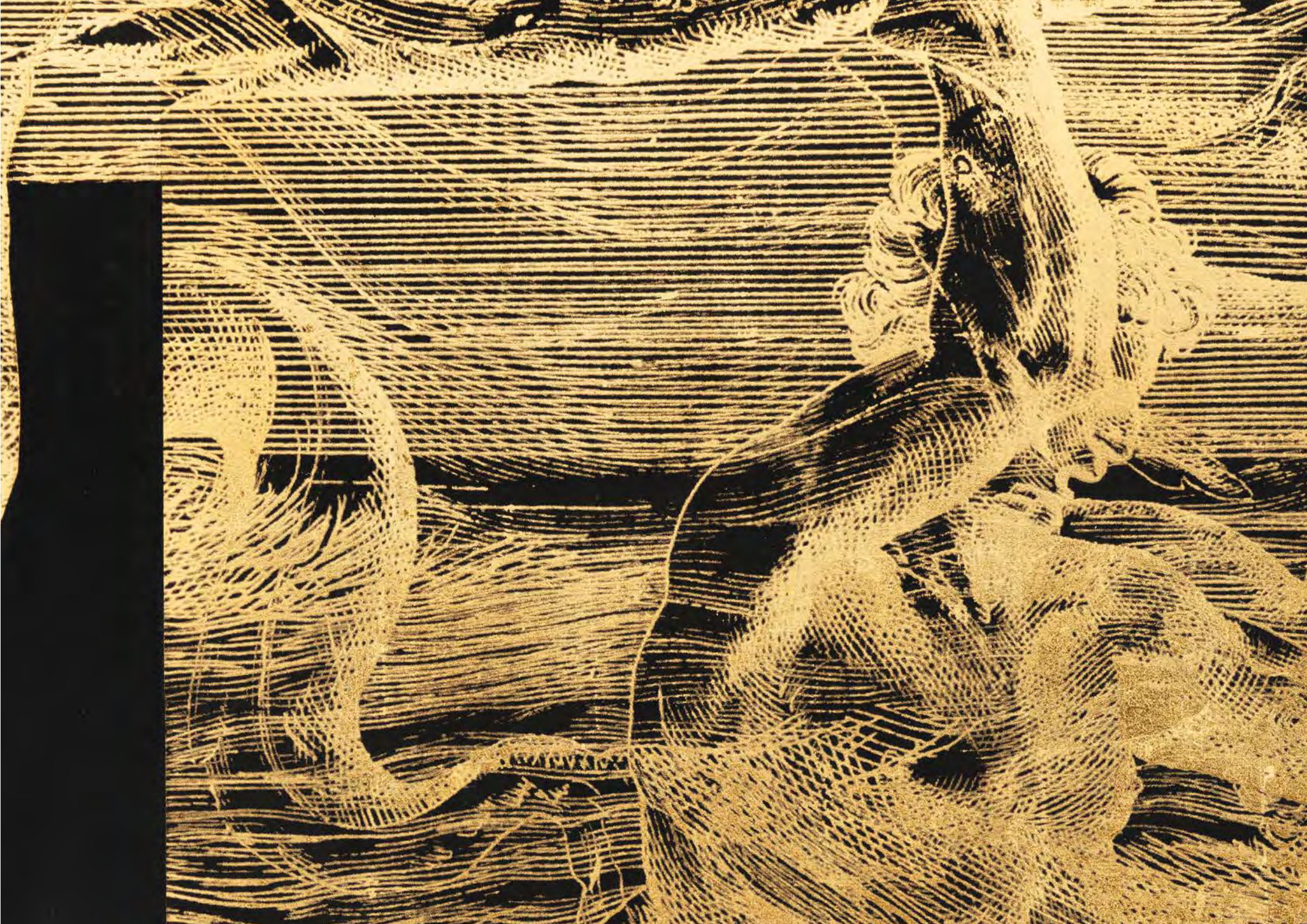


Scott Laufer

MOTH (19.50.16-86), 2023
flashe and metal leaf on linen

64 x 90 in.
162.56 x 228.6 cm
SL 23.013





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Scott Laufer

MOTH (49.97.662), 2023

flashe and metal leaf on linen

58 x 72 in.

147.32 x 182.88 cm

SL 23.011







BARBATI

GALLERY



Scott Laufer

MOTH (27.78.1(26)), 2023
flashe and metal leaf on linen

64 x 90 in.

162.56 x 228.6 cm

SL 23.012











Scott Laufer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

Installation view

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Scott Laufer

NM770, 2023

oil and acrylic silkscreen on linen

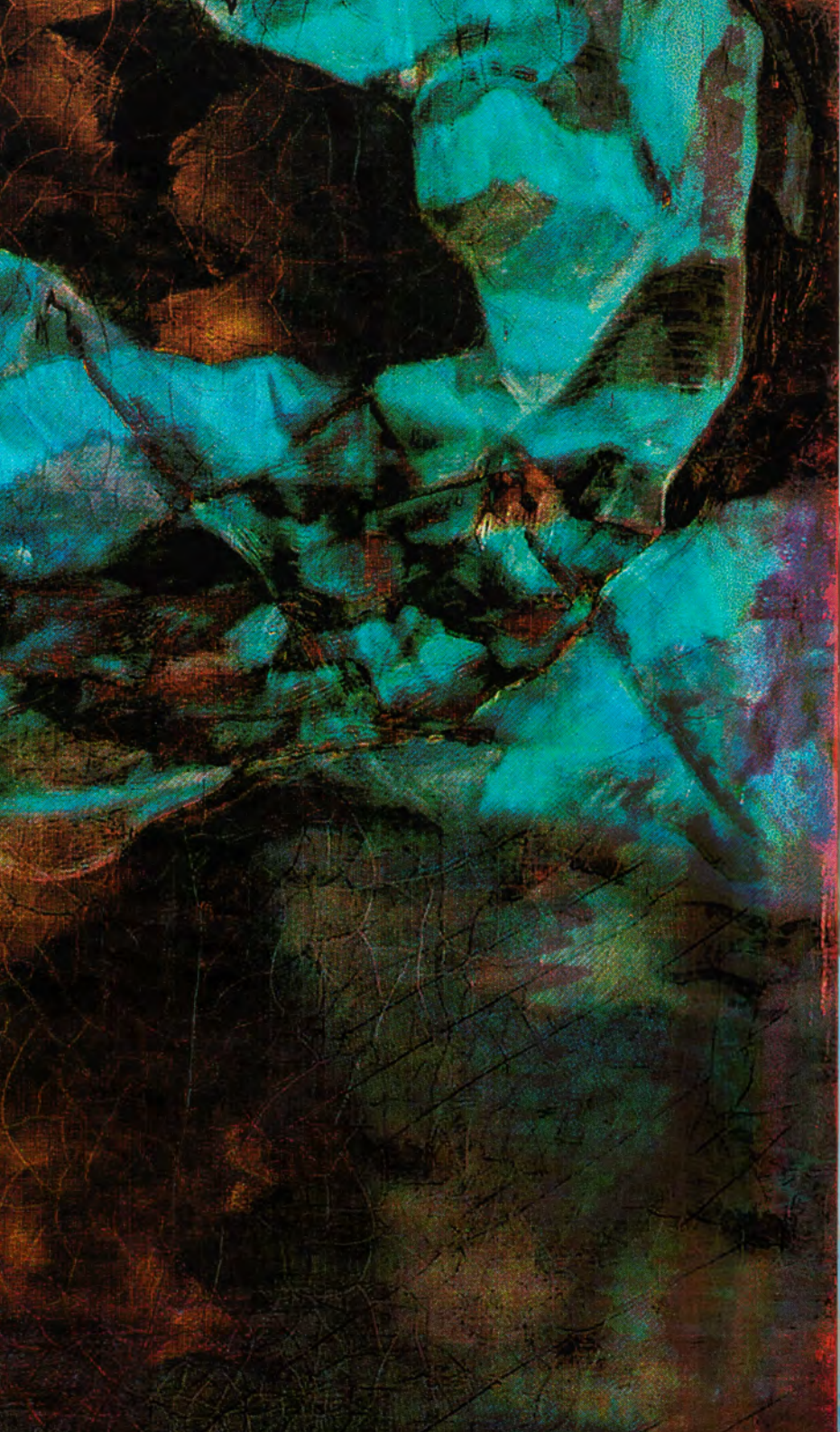
68 x 106 in.

172.72 x 269.24 cm

SL 23.019









Scott Laufer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

Installation view



Scott Lafer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

Installation view





Scott Laufer, *The Copyist*
Barbati Gallery, Venice

Installation view

BARBATI

GALLERY

Scott Laufer

UNTITLED, 2023

oil and metal leaf on arches huile paper
8 x 6 in.

20.32 x 15.24 cm

20⁷/₈ x 18½ in. (framed)

53.00 x 47.00 cm (framed)

SL 23.023





BARBATI

GALLERY

Scott Laufer

UNTITLED, 2023

oil and metal leaf on arches huile paper

8 x 6 in.

20.32 x 15.24 cm

20⁷/₈ x 18¹/₂ in. (framed)

53.00 x 47.00 cm (framed)

SL 23.022





BARBATI

GALLERY

Scott Laufer

UNTITLED, 2023

acrylic and metal leaf on arches huile paper

8 x 6 in.

20.32 x 15.24 cm

20⅞ x 18½ in. (framed)

53.00 x 47.00 cm (framed)

SL 23.024





BARBATI

GALLERY

Scott Laufer

UNTITLED, 2023

acrylic and metal leaf on arches huile paper

8 x 6 in.

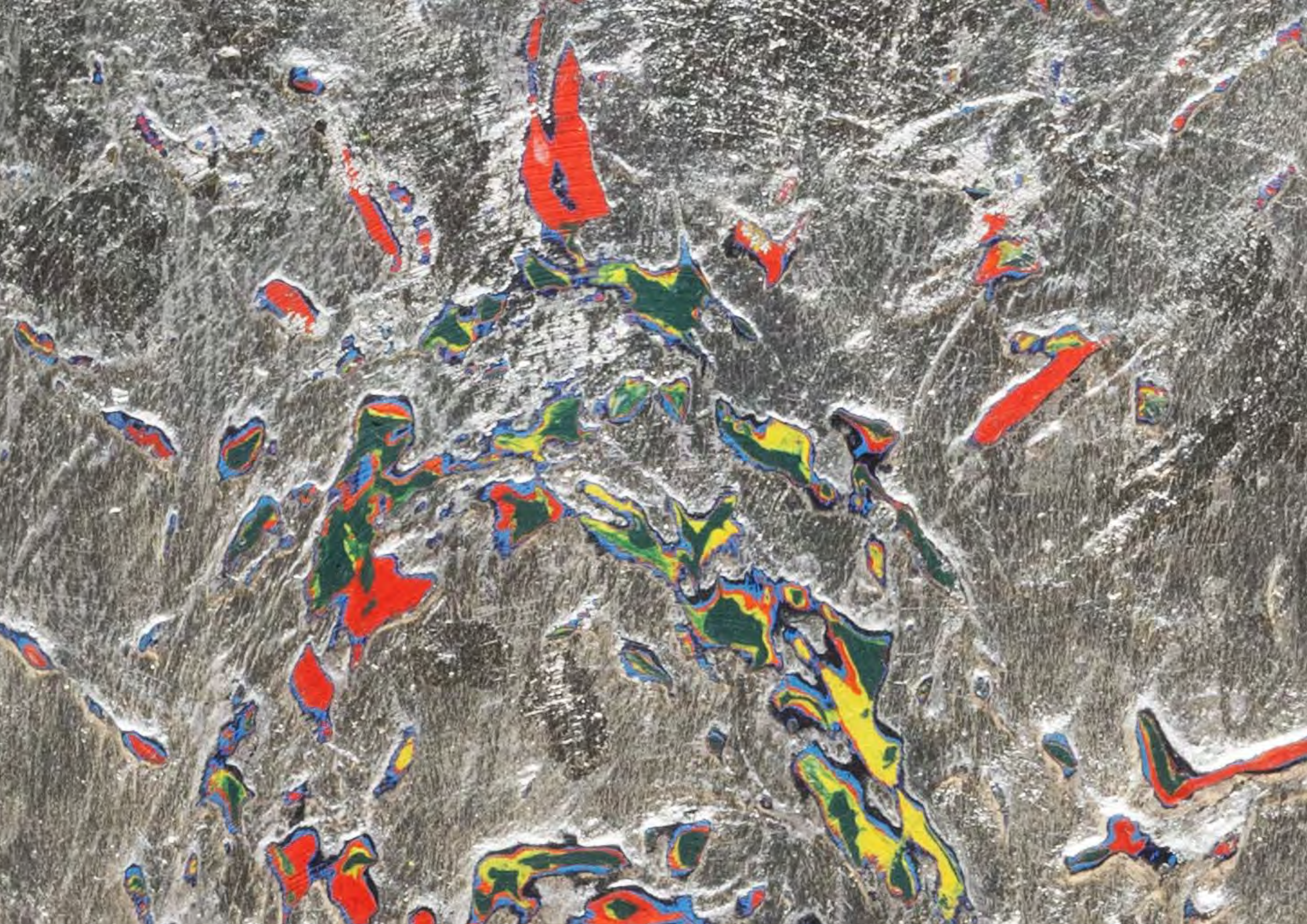
20.32 x 15.24 cm

20⁷/₈ x 18¹/₂ in. (framed)

53.00 x 47.00 cm (framed)

SL 23.025





BARBATI

GALLERY

Scott Laufer

UNTITLED, 2023
grafite on arches huile paper
8 x 6 in.

20.32 x 15.24 cm

20⁷/₈ x 18¹/₂ in. (framed)

53.00 x 47.00 cm (framed)

SL 23.026





An abstract artwork featuring a central star-like motif with six points, rendered in shades of pink, purple, and yellow. The background is a complex, textured composition of various colors including orange, yellow, blue, and purple, with a visible halftone dot pattern. The overall effect is vibrant and dynamic.

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Additional works

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Scott Laufer

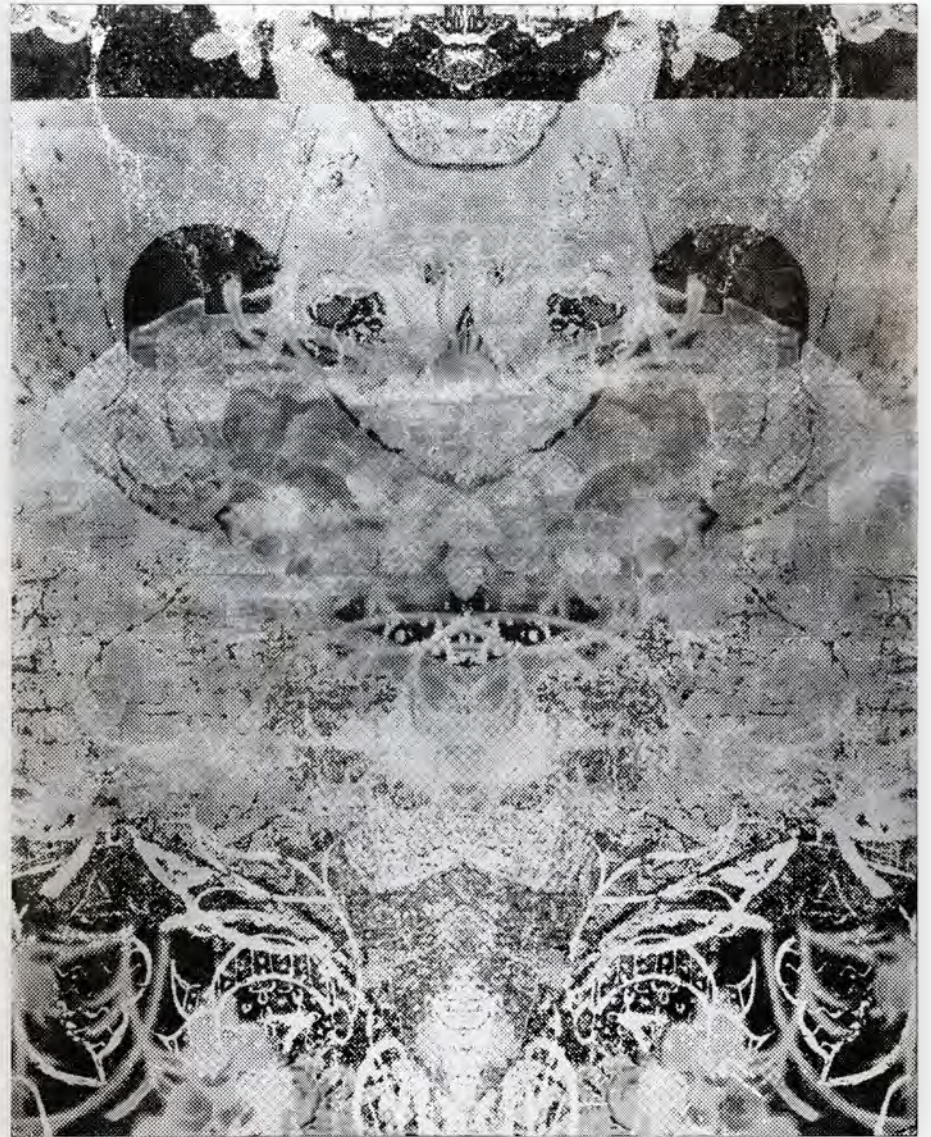
MOTH (I), 2023

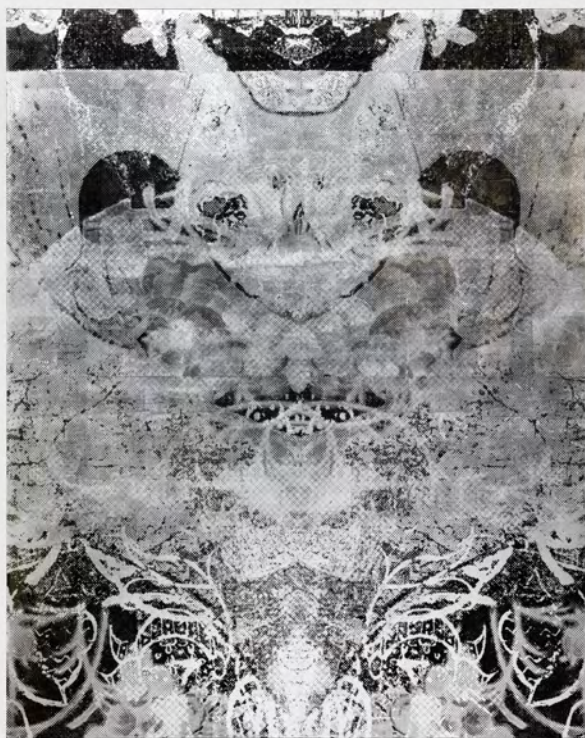
flashe, acrylic and metal leaf on linen

60 x 48 in.

152.4 x 121.92 cm

SL 23.015







BARBATI

GALLERY

Scott Laufer

MOTH (B), 2023

flashe, acrylic and metal leaf on linen

60 x 48 in.

152.4 x 121.92 cm

SL 23.017







BARBATI

GALLERY

Scott Laufer

NG6641, 2023

oil and acrylic on linen

77 x 58 in.

195.58 x 147.32 cm

SL 23.018







BARBATI

GALLERY

Scott Laufer

MOTH (C), 2023
acrylic silkscreen on linen
48 x 40 in.
121.92 x 101.6 cm
SL 23.009







BARBATI

GALLERY

Scott Laufer

MOTH (D), 2023

acrylic silkscreen on linen

60 x 48 in.

152.4 x 121.92 cm

SL 23.010





