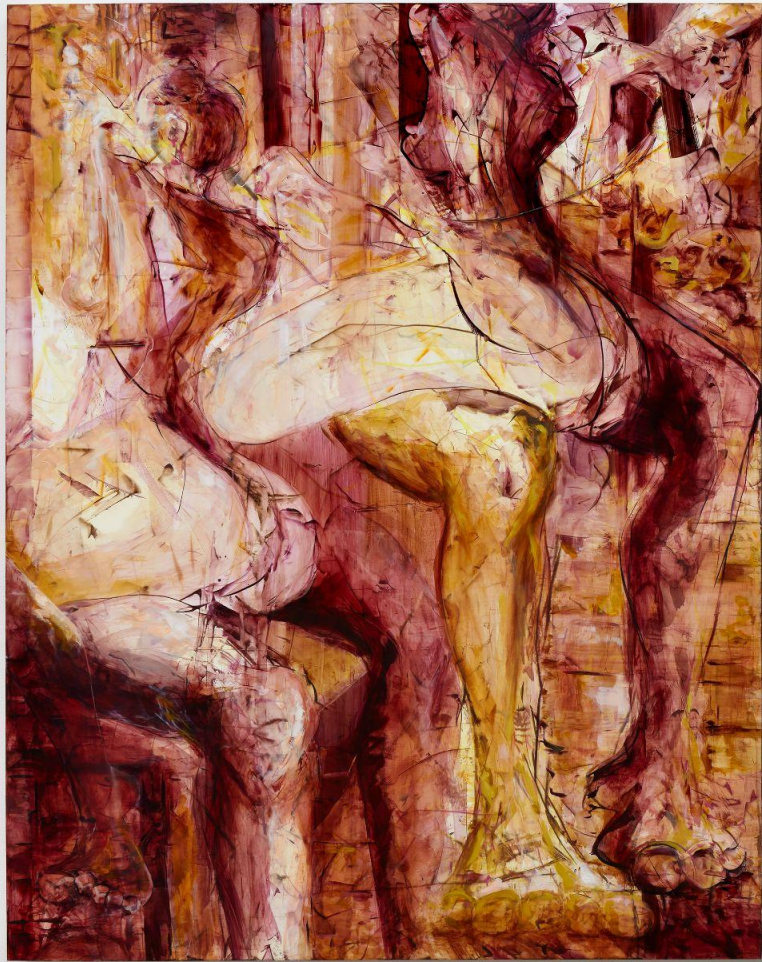


56 HENRY

JO MESSER
Speed Stick

56 and 105 Henry Street
March 19 – May 17, 2026



56 HENRY is pleased to present *Speed Stick*, an exhibition of new work by Jo Messer, on view from March 19th through May 17th at 56 and 105 Henry Street. *Speed Stick* submerges 56 Henry in the slippery worlds of Jo Messer. In this suite of paintings, bodies, fish and gestures populate the panels, operating in the hazy space between figuration and abstraction. *Speed Stick* evokes motion, adhesion, and the deeply human aspects of being. In this presentation, Messer lays those uncomfortabilities bare. Messer's representational forms seem to unabashedly slide, repeat, and slip off of her surfaces. *Speed Stick* embraces the unease: *Do it fast. Do it messy. Do it a little bit wet?*

Messer employs motifs which have long influenced her compositions: mouths, limbs, and feet. In her newest body of work, fish are introduced as a central form through which new avenues into sensuality and physicality unfold. Fish emerge as a recurring pictorial form, evocative of traditional western still life painting. The image of the fish itself, always with a gaping mouth, transcends its substance. A fish is a prize, an open wound, a means of sustenance. Its body is curved and slick. In these works fish fall in and out of focus, moving fluidly between object, body, and gesture. Here, where lovers surface and disappear, fragments of limbs get drawn to the foreground as Messer investigates the nexus of intuition and representation.

The fish become an extension of this play, both fish and figure emerging carefully throughout her panels. Messer draws out compositional elegance amidst the awkward, the slimy, and the grotesque. Throughout the exhibition, Messer employs a strategy of compositional doubling, repeating forms across and within panels. Her imagery fractalizes lithely, migrating and echoing in equal measure. Repetitions themselves destabilise the clarity of her narratives and create both rhythm and echo in her language. The rhythm of the paintings lends to their intensity, and their tactile nature connotes something slick, slimy, and ultimately unstable. This physicality asserts itself in the playful rush of shape and form that saturate and transcend the boundaries of Messer's panels.

For the first time, Messer crops significant portions of figures out of her frames as she investigates permanence and hierarchy of image in aesthetic expression. In her work, lovers without faces and feet without bodies emphasize form over narrative. Suddenly, the curve of a calf or the bones of a knee become gestural fragments, as Messer pushes even further into the abstract. *Speed Stick* invites both the delicate and the unblushing to the forefront. Among the familiar and the alien, Messer constructs entirely new associations. In her constellations of form and figure, Messer mines a vein situated gracefully between still life, figure painting and sumptuous abstraction.

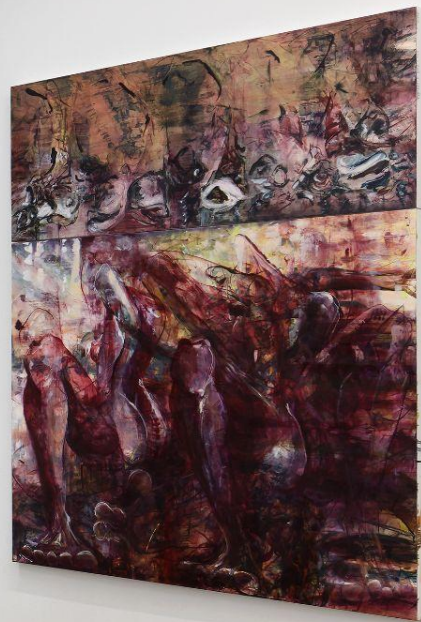
Written by Tucker Drew

Jo Messer

Born in 1991 in Los Angeles, CA. Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Bordering on abstract expressionism, Jo Messer weaves narratives that are playful, erotic, and consumptive in turn, utilizing saturated canvases that house female nudes in various states of deconstruction and abstraction. Messer masterfully implies and obscures the bodies of these women – toes and shins hint at hips and torsos and then diverge into plates of fruit or seafood. Messer's meditation on the themes of sex and food complicates the figures on her canvases, blurring the line between consumer and object of consumption. Her unique style explores painting's full potential while playing with the historical and conceptual underpinnings of the medium. Jo Messer received her BFA from the Cooper Union in 2014 and her MFA from Yale University in 2017. Her work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at 56 HENRY, New York; the Rubell Museum, Miami, FL; Morán Morán, Mexico City, CDMX and The Ranch, Montauk.



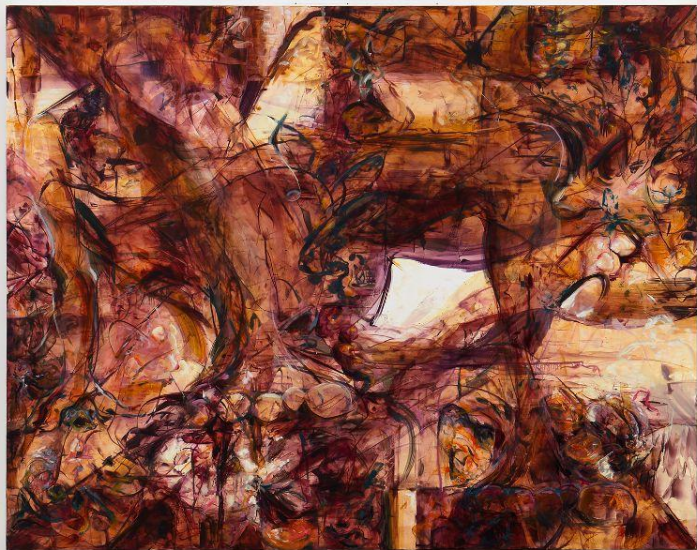


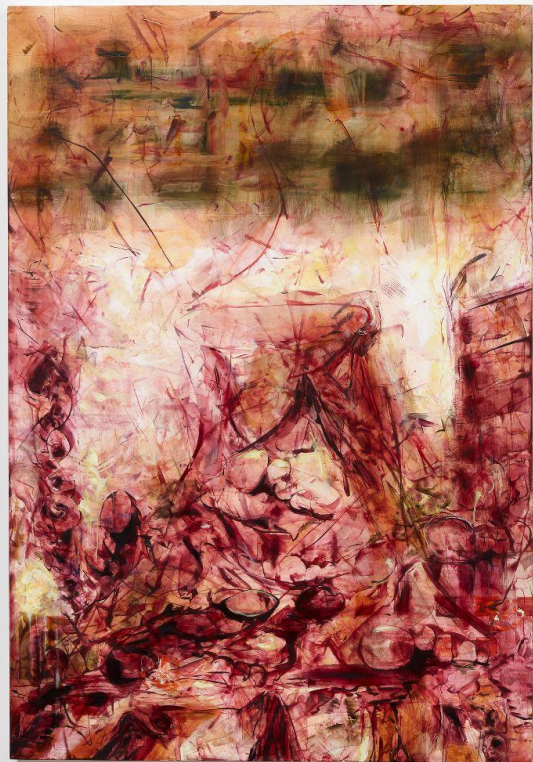




Speed stick, 2025-26
Oil on panel
43 x 53 in
109 x 134.6 cm







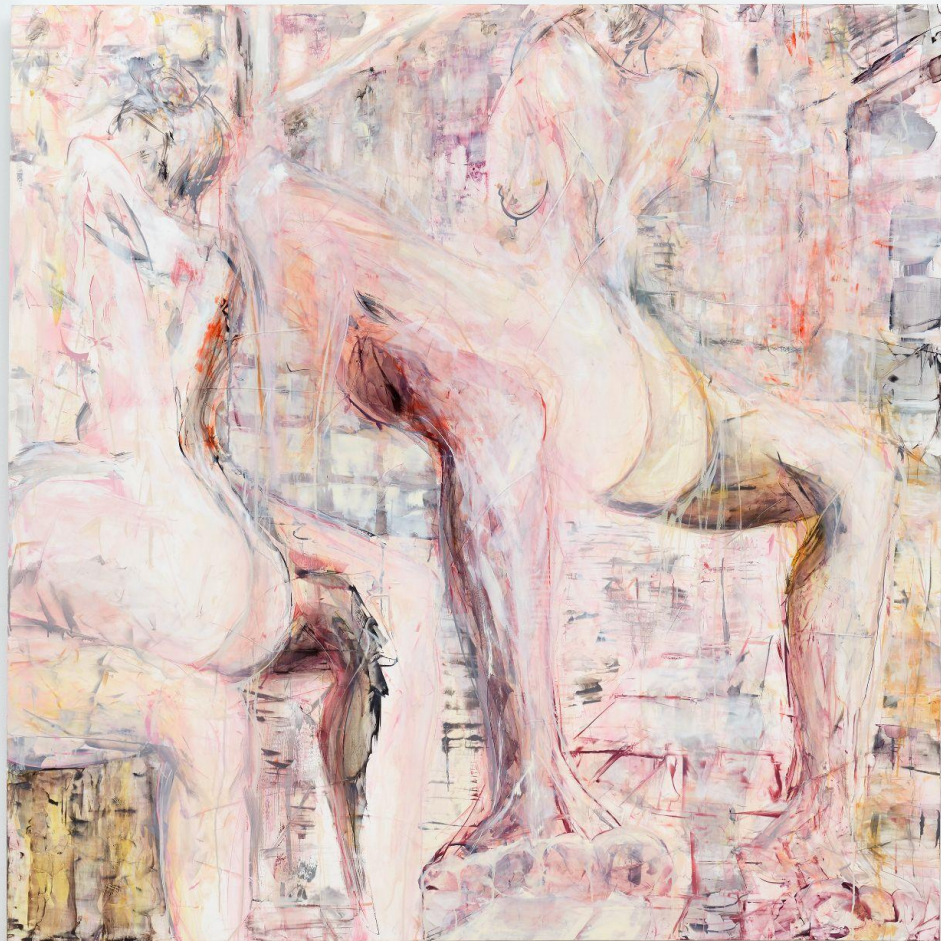
Bait me in, 2025-26
Oil on panel

Overall: 68 x 86 in
(172.7 x 218.4 cm)

Individual: 53 x 37 in
(134.6 x 94 cm), 68
3/4 x 12 in (174.6 x
30.5 cm), 53 x 37 in
(134.6 x 94 cm)







Double Dip, 2025-26

Oil on panel

59 x 59 in

149.9 x 149.9 cm





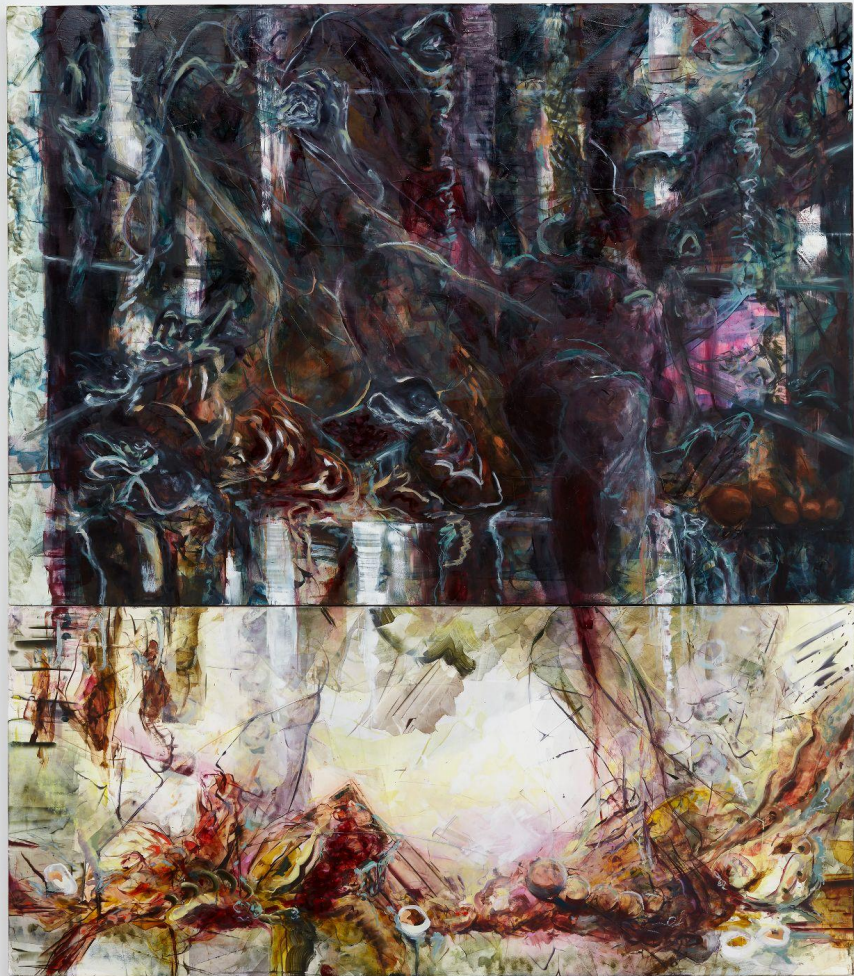


Here kitty kitty,
2025-26
Oil on panel
47 x 76 in
119.4 x 193 cm









Deep dive, 2023-26

Oil on panel

63 x 53 in (160 x 134.6 cm)

Top Panel: 39 x 53 in (99 x 134.6 cm)

Bottom Panel: 24 x 53 in (61 x 134.6 cm)









Two in the hand, 2024-26

Oil on panel

70 x 53 in

(177.8 x 134.6 cm)

Top Panel: 23 x 53 in

(58.4 x 134.6 cm)

Bottom Panel: 47 x 53 in

(119.4 x 134.6 cm)







The voice carries, 2025-26
Oil on panel
3 x 9 in
7.6 x 22.9 cm

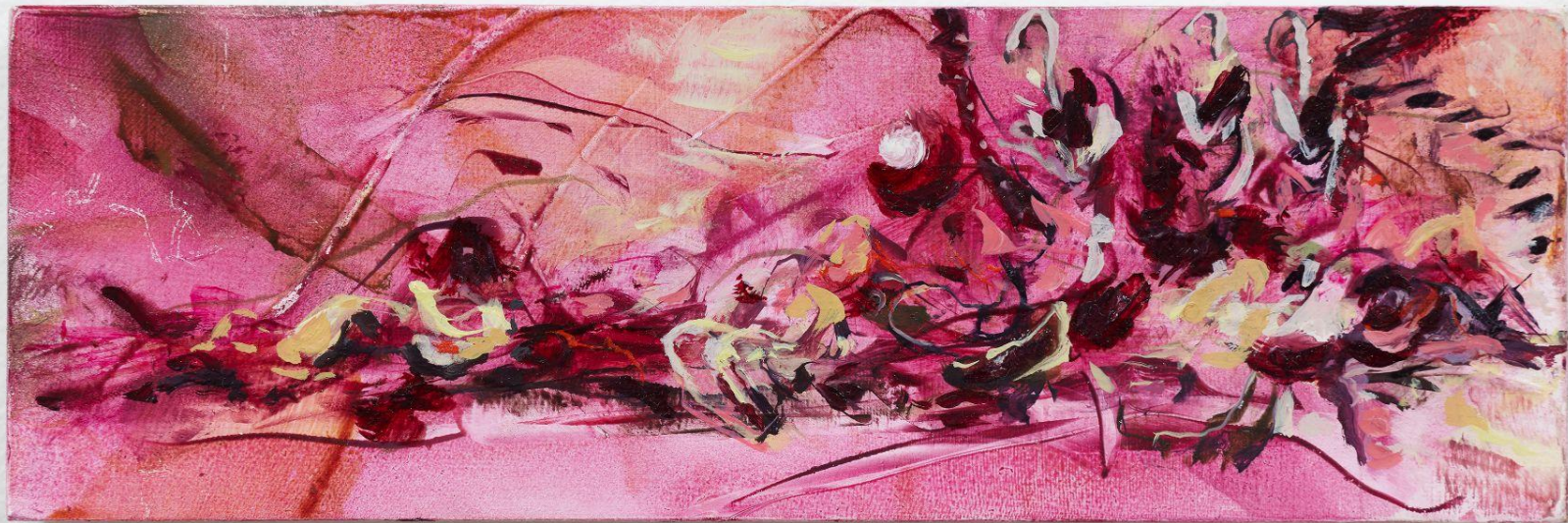


Shareable likeness, 2025-26
Oil on panel
3 x 9 in
7.6 x 22.9 cm



This forever, 2025-26
Oil on panel
3 x 9 in
7.6 x 22.9 cm





Title forthcoming, 2026
Oil on panel
3 x 9 in
7.6 x 22.9 cm

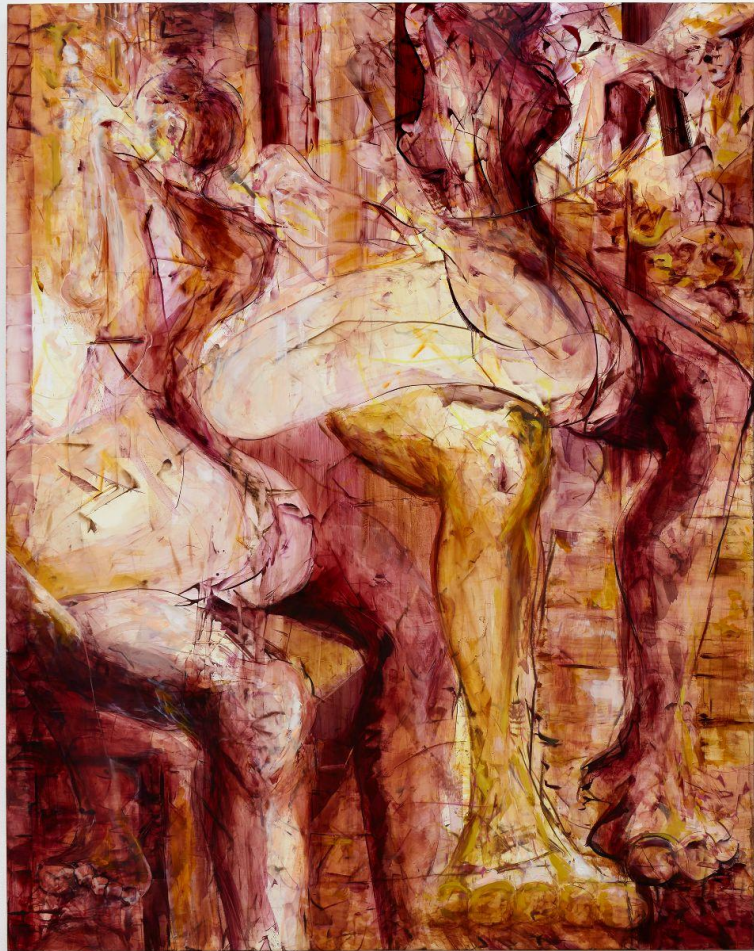




Pin the tail, 2026
Oil on panel
34 x 42 in.
86.4 x 106.7 cm







Loose lips,
2025-26
Oil on panel
59 x 94 in
(149.9 x 238.8
cm)

Each: 59 x 47 in
(149.9 x 119.4
cm)







Snatched and ready, 2023-26

Oil on panel

58 x 42 in (147.3 x 106.7 cm)

Top Panel: 34 x 43 in (86.4 x 109.2
cm)

Bottom Panel: 24 x 42 in (61 x 106.7
cm)





Information

Solo Exhibitions

- 2026 *Speed Stick*, 56 Henry, New York, NY
- 2024 *Table Wear*, Morán Morán, Mexico City, Mexico
- 2023 *EAT ME*, 56 Henry, New York, NY
- 2022 *Jo Messer*, Rubell Museum, Miami, FL
Whale Tail, The Ranch, Montauk, NY
- 2021 *Knees to Navel*, 56 HENRY, New York, NY
- 2020 *100 Days of Solitude*, OOPS, New York, NY

Collections

- Hill Art Foundation, New York, NY
- Rubell Museum, Miami, FL
- The Zabłudowicz Collection, London, UK
- The Bunker, Palm Beach, FL
- Olivia Foundation, Mexico City, MX
- ICA Miami, Miami, FL