

CATHALIJN WOUTERS



# STUDIO LIFE

## **An intimate view**

With this exhibition, Francis Maere Fine Arts Gallery immerses the visitors in the creative world of Cathalijn Wouters. Via an extensive selection of drawings, sketches, and works in oil, but also with video material and objects from her studio, they are granted an intimate view into how she practices her art. What subjects move and drive her? How does she translate her emotions into art? And how does she, through her art, make us reflect on who we are as human beings?

## **Life-size illusion**

The Amsterdam studio of Cathalijn Wouters was dissected into five parts, which are presented to the visitors in as many symmetric spaces in the gallery on the Kouter Square. Immediately upon entering the gallery, a first space presents an impressive display in which objects and photographs together create a life-size illusion. It is as if one enters Wouters' studio, ready to discover her world and her work.

Portraits and drawings from a model are an important part of Wouters' oeuvre, demonstrating her fascination with the human body. These recognisable, elegant figures consist of little more than a few fine, almost calligraphic lines that go straight to the essence. Time and again, Wouters manages to very accurately address the underlying emotions and imagination of the beholder.

In order to arrive at this result, Wouters goes to extremes both for herself and for her models to eventually create something, in a kind of resonance between both persons: the model and the artist.

## **From trigger to discovery**

Wouters' oil paintings are also featured prominently. The imposing canvases are characterised by her rigorous attention to formal elements such as colour, shape, and composition. The interaction between light colours and dark areas or black figures triggers the beholder to look for the stories and emotions behind the picture.

It is immediately clear that each oil painting is based on drawing sessions in which the essence surfaces in a natural way. Things that are not visible or tangible, such as feelings, thoughts, and desires, play an important part in this. Each painting is an elegant balancing act between what is and what could be. Wouters thus attempts to express the intrinsically layered nature of human emotions, which are deep and mostly defy description.



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FRANCIS MAERE  
FINE ARTS GALLERY



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Artists' studios are fascinating places. Inspiring spaces full of colours, materials, and objects where artists enter into a dialogue with themselves and make full use of their potential in order to create. These are also intimate places: behind those doors, which normally remain closed to the public, hides a complete world of an almost mythical nature.

By allowing others to look into their studio, artists fully reveal themselves. Those who enter the space are granted access to the artist's soul, as it were. The studio tells us so much about who the artist is and how his or her creations come to be. This is why Francis Maere Fine Arts Gallery places this special space central in the exhibition *Cathalijn Wouters Studio Life*. The studio, everything in it and all that takes place there, is not only a recurring subject in Wouters' recent work; the studio space in all its aspects is also the leitmotif for the structure of the exhibition, which transports visitors to the emotional world of the artist.

# FINE ARTS

Fine art is a form of transformation and it is the ability to turn any type of practice or material into something that further reflects on our universe. Each generation brings something new and redefines what fine art is. Fine art isn't about finding answers, it's about trying to find really good questions. And it is these questions that drive Cathalijn Wouters to make herself relevant in every work of art.







**THE VIEW** Oil on canvas, 40 × 50 cm, 2020

**SOMETIMES LIFE TELLS YOU** Oil on canvas, 152 × 206 cm, 2022

SOMEHOW  
LIFE TELLS  
YOU WHAT  
TO DO







**THE EYES OF MY SISTER** Oil on canvas, 230 × 218 cm, 2019

*"The paintings that I have made have all been so heavy. Since I got rid of the easels from the studio and fixing the linen against the wall or on the floor I find it more accessible. Retroactively I'm getting better and better at my paintings. The linen is now swinging around here as if it were paper. I treat it that way too. I'm finally able to get the linen down-to-earth."*

Cathalijn Wouters





**THE YELLOW THOUGHT** Mixed technique on canvas, 220 x 215 cm, 2017

**THE DRAWING LESSON** Oil on canvas, 152 x 206 cm, 2022











← **A CONVERSATION WITH MY TREE** Oil on canvas, 230 × 306 cm, 2019

**WHEN A MAN LOVES A WOMAN** Ink and wax on paper, 63 × 48 cm, 2021



**L'ORIGIN** Ink on paper, 63 × 48 cm, 2015

# MOVING LINES

The grimness of a hand-drawn line with the potential for lyrical beauty is essential to Cathalijn Wouters' drawings. Through lines, Wouters tries to convey the essence of the human form and the nature of human existence. As an artist, Cathalijn Wouters explores universal emotions, life, suffering, hope and love. It is through the daily practice of life drawings that she cultivates her ideas. Sketching nude models in her studio, she experiments with poses, gestures and expression, creating until she reaches the perfect pitch of emotional intensity. The life drawings of Cathalijn Wouters offer a good insight into her working process, a lifelong careful observation of the human form, sharpened to a simple, well-thought-out line.



**LE DESIRE** Ink and wax on paper, 31 × 48 cm , 2010

→ **THE LOVE** Ink and wax on paper, 48 × 63 cm, 2021



Red seal impression, likely a signature or studio mark.





LIEFDE



**MOEDER MET KIND** Ink and wax on paper, 63 × 48 cm, 2011

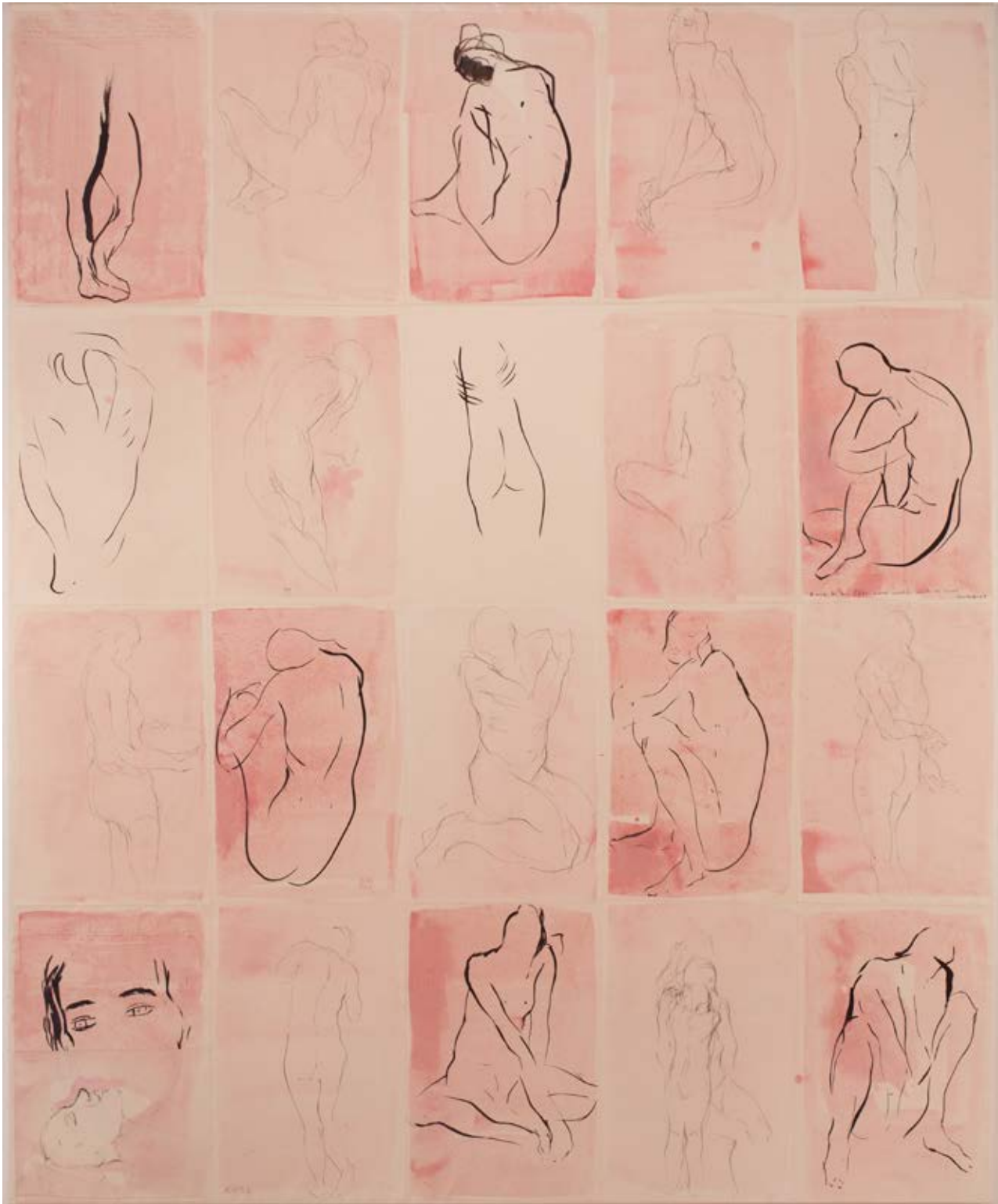
**MOTHER WITH CHILD** Ink on paper, 63 × 48 cm, 2011





**RECLINING NUDE** Ink on paper, 48 × 63 cm, 2022

**AS IF IT IS OVER** Ink on paper, 48 × 63 cm, 2022



**THE SCENT OF A WOMAN LIKE THE SCENT OF A ROSE** Ink on paper marouflaged on linen, 190 x 160 cm, 2015





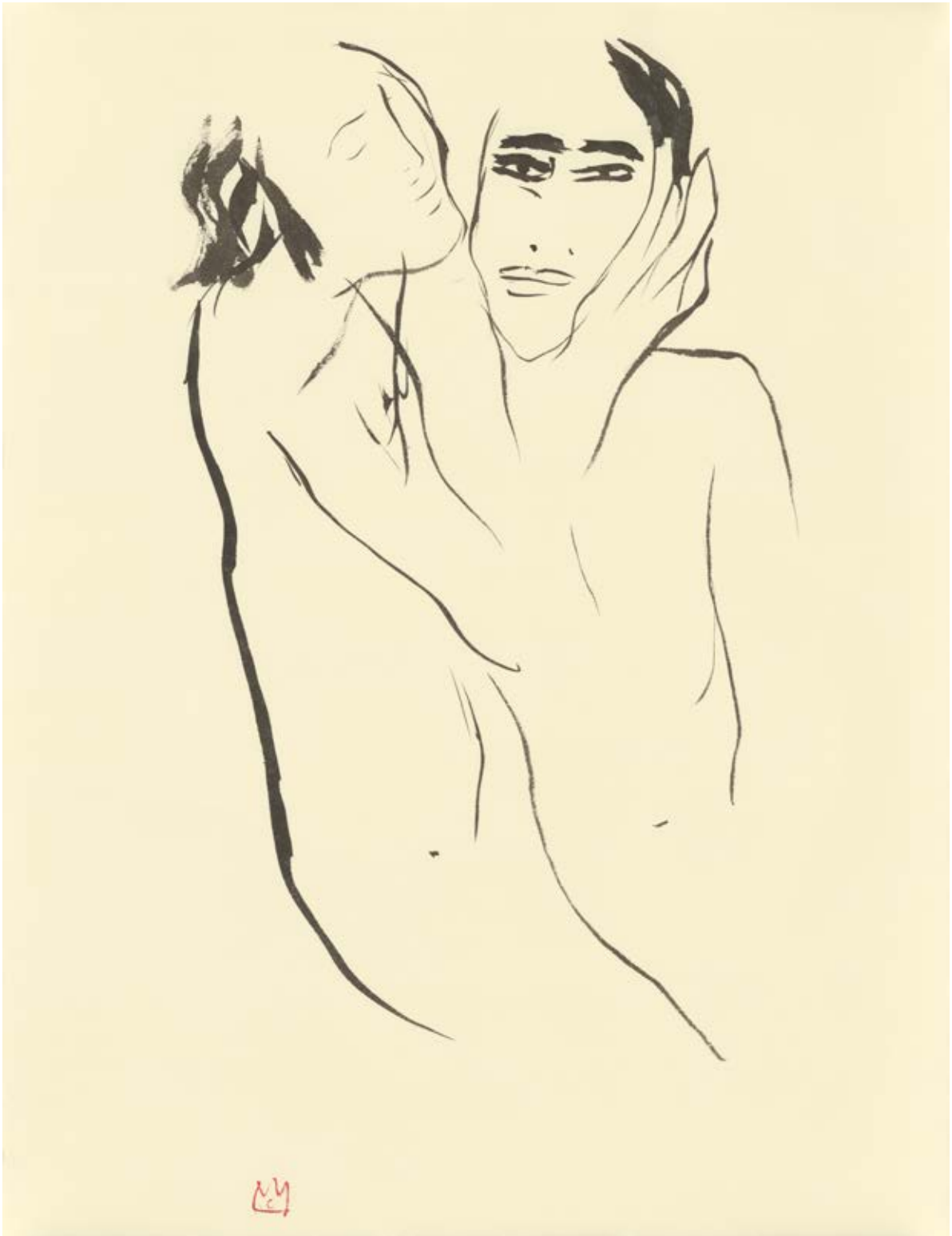
**SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE BLUE OF THE SKY** Ink on paper marouflaged on linen, 207 x 170 cm, 2019

# HEARTBEATS

It's not hard to make a work of art. The difficulty lies in being in the right condition to do it. Emptying yourself of all your baggage and opening up to the subject, whether a person or an object, so that it can permeate through you and onto the canvas. Cathalijn Wouters not only shows the emotions between the model, but also conveys her own intentions and desires on the canvas. This mix creates a universal feeling of love, desire and attraction. This is how every portrait becomes a love affair.







**BEAUTIFUL FACE** Ink on paper, 63 × 48 cm, 2010



**THE EYE** Ink on paper, 63 x 48 cm, 2010



MC





**COSMOPOLITAN** Ink and gold leaf on paper, 140 x 100 cm, 2021

**SIXTH SENSE** Ink and gold leaf on paper, 140 x 100 cm, 2021



*"My sketchbooks are my soul. They are filled with my feeling and being. When leafing through them my whole life seems to come into view. Working, trying hard, letting go, going on. The lines, the ideas, the thoughts – it's all there in those books, nicely detached from everything else. Time and again I discover the words like Corpus Amores and Pieta fill me with a religious depth that allows me to experience joy. To me, that is believing."*

Cathalijn Wouters









RD





# EYE AM

Who am I? This is a question that Cathalijn Wouters regularly asks through her work. Over the years she has had different styles but always the same result: this is me. Look at me! She likes to ask the viewer to 'kiss me with your eyes', to look with an open mind at who she is. As an artist, Cathalijn Wouters aims to touch people in a universal way with thoughts, emotions and attitudes. Eye Am Cathalijn Wouters.





**THE BLACK GLOVE** Ink on paper, 63 × 48 cm, 2016

**THE BOY** Ink and acryl on paper, 63 × 48 cm, 2018





**PIETA** Oil on canvas, 54 × 39 cm, 2019

**FROM THE VERY BEGINNING** Oil on canvas, 210 × 180 cm, 2020





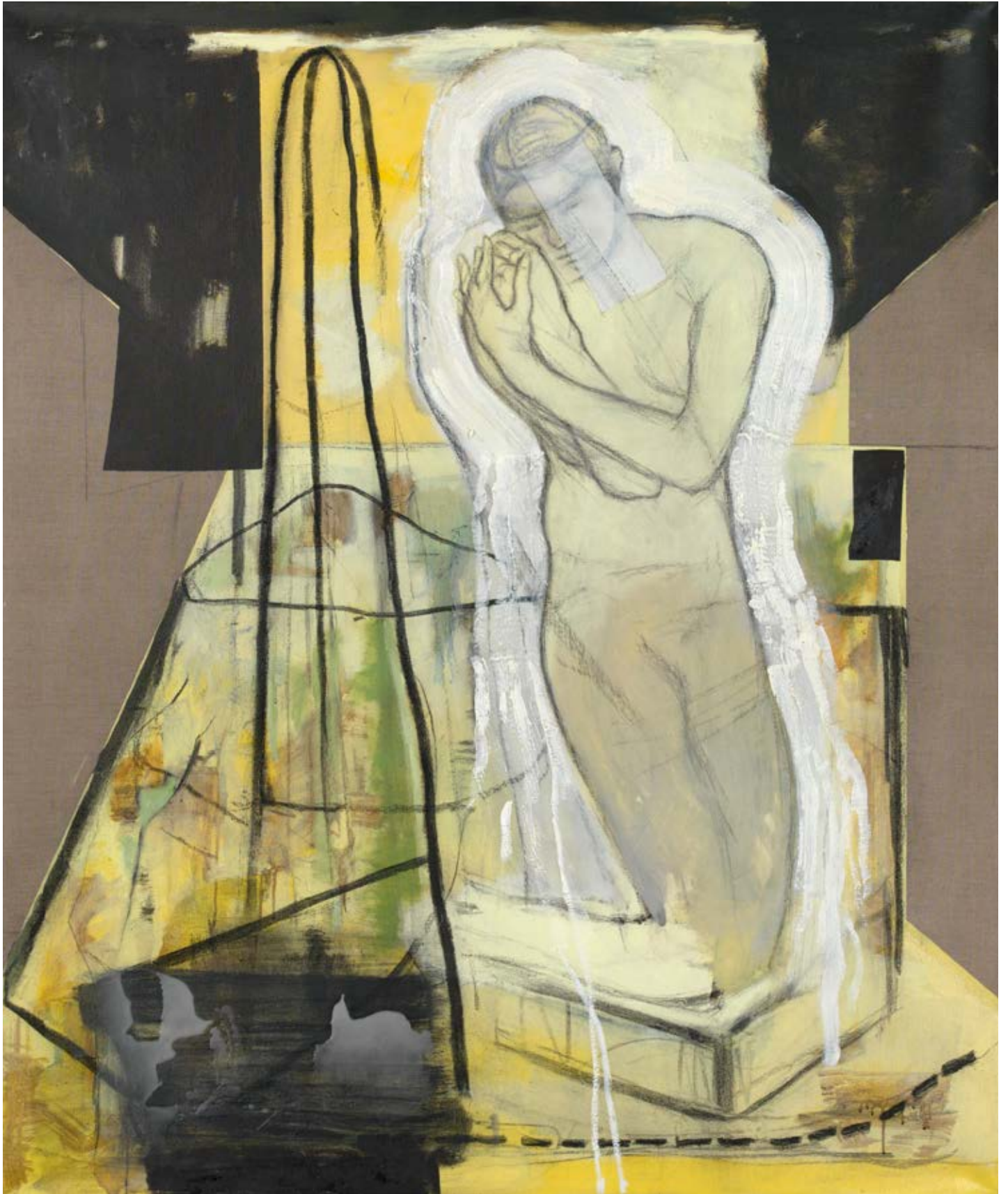




**REPENTIRS II** Mixed technique on canvas, 200 x 120 cm, 2006

*“The notes from the violin sound so lovingly in my ears. “Erbarme dich” is solace for humankind. It brings me compassion and a longing for beautiful moments. I am moved by it every time. When I falter, this piece restores me. I only need to listen to it for a little while and I know “Yes, this is what it’s all about.” With the St. Matthew Passion, Bach has created an inexhaustible source of inspiration.”*

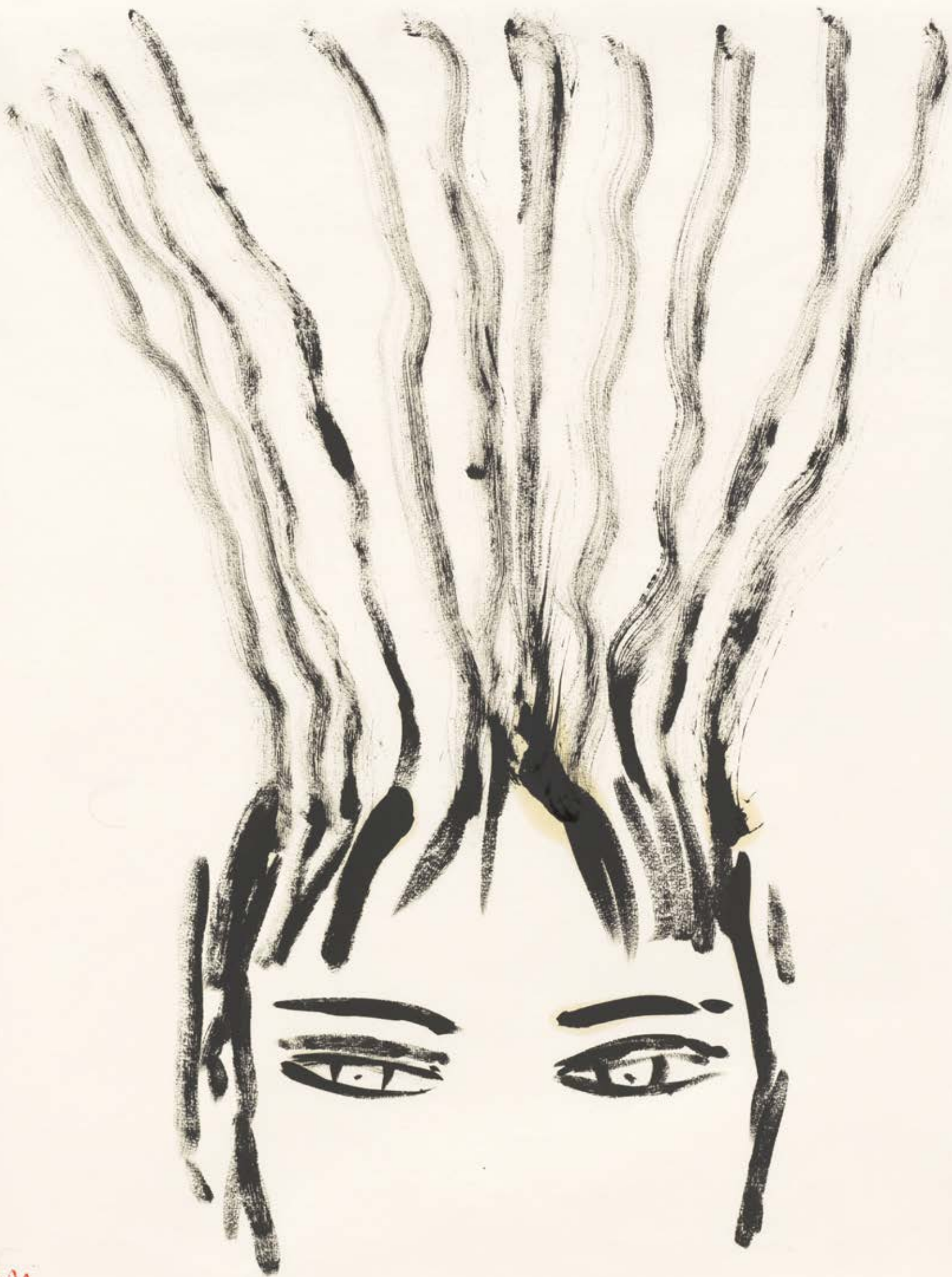
Cathalijn Wouters

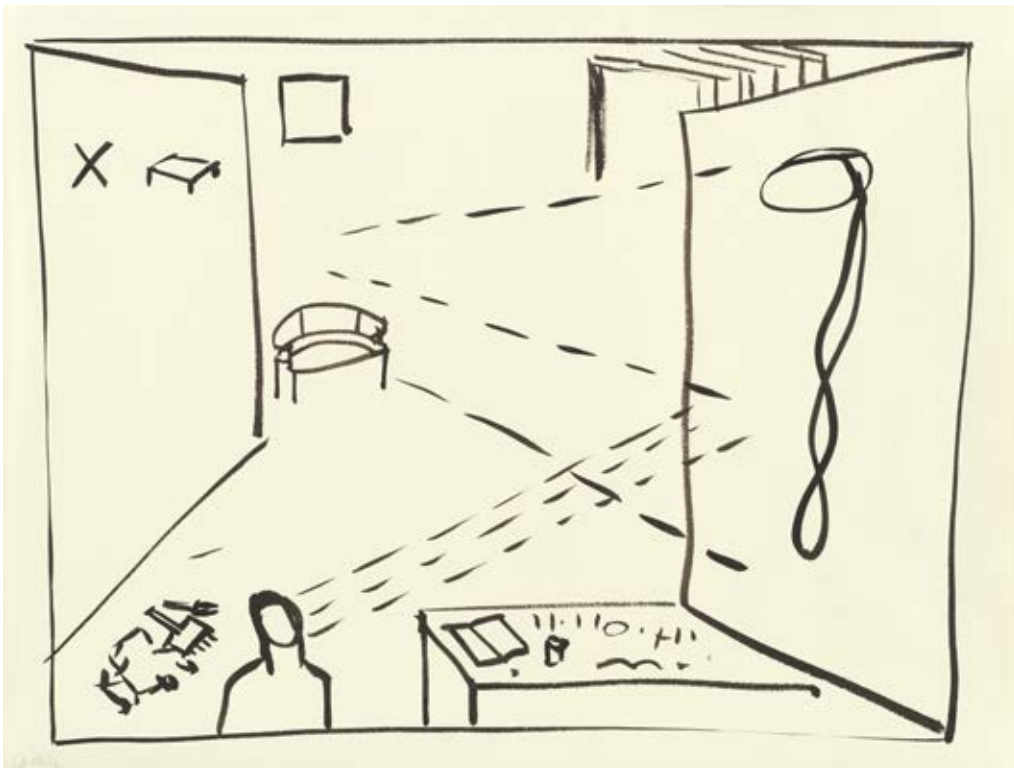


**TO SUSTAIN** Oil on canvas, 170 × 150 cm, 2009

# STUDIO LIFE

“Smelling the oil paint when I walk in here is like smelling my mother’s perfume.” Cathalijn Wouters’s deep love of painting is real. In any creative process, be it creating a painting or sketching, a truly great piece of art is about responding to every moment in that process. So the question Cathalijn Wouters asks herself is: in a painting, how can I communicate time and emotion, about how it grew and came together? Each work represents a state of being that Cathalijn Wouters feels good about at that moment, surrounded by everything that inspires her in her studio.





**TEKENING STUDIO 21** Ink on paper, 48 x 63 cm, 2019

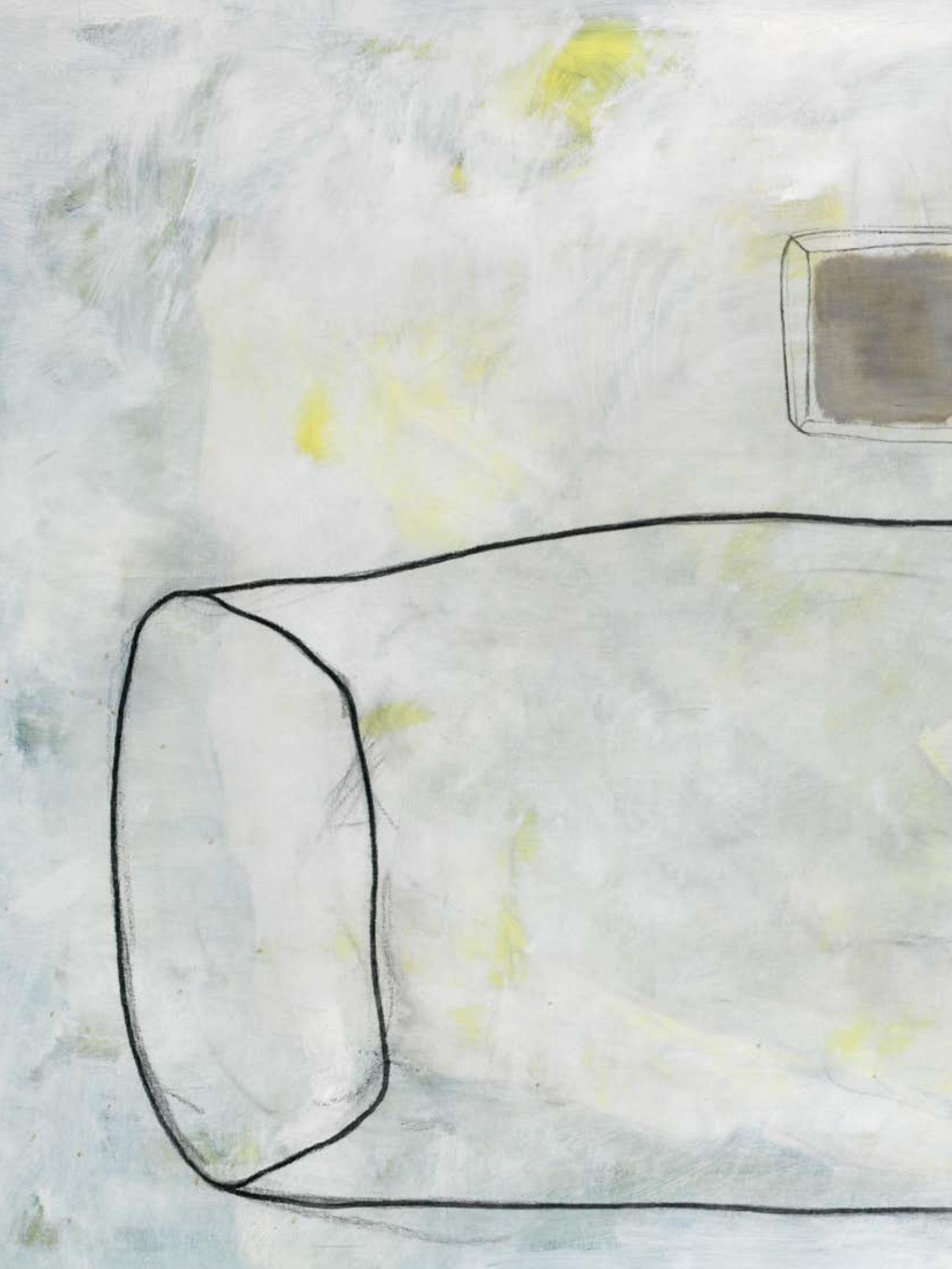
**TEKENING STUDIO 5** Ink on paper, 48 x 63 cm, 2017





**THE AFTERNOON** Mixed technique on canvas, 210 x 320 cm, 2017

→ **ESTABLISHING THOUGHT** Oil on canvas, 135 x 200 cm, 2010





# CHRONOLOGY







### 1955

Cathalijn Wouters was born, together with her brother, on 16 January 1955. Her parents, Ton Wouters and Addy Gons, welcomed the twins into a large, prominent and traditional family in Tilburg, Brabant. The family went on to have seven children in total, with Cathalijn the middle child. Her father came from a family of successful wool makers and her mother was the daughter of a captain-lieutenant at sea in the Dutch navy. This large family's door was always open, making it a busy home for Cathalijn growing up.

### 1965

During the summer months, Cathalijn's father would take the whole family on long holidays to France, Italy or Yugoslavia. Between visiting the cultural sights, Ton Wouters also made time to paint and sketch. Any of the others were welcome to join him. Even as a child, Cathalijn Wouters seemed to have a great talent for drawing. She was always searching for the relationship between herself and the space she was in. In parallel to these creative moments, television was also becoming more popular. For Cathalijn, this was her source of new discoveries. The wealth of images and different subjects fuelled her curiosity, creativity and imagination.



### 1973

At the age of 18, Cathalijn left for a year in Paris, where she was happy to just wander around on her own for days on end. The transition from tiny Tilburg to the metropolis of Paris has left an impression on her to this day. On the banks of the Seine she would buy the most beautiful art books and LPs. She also discovered the French masters in the city's superb museums. When she saw Manet's paintings for the first time, she fell in love with his use of black. She visited the Rodin Museum and read the works of Rainer Maria Rilke. Even today, Paris remains a cradle of Fine Arts for Cathalijn Wouters.

### 1975



After her year in Paris, Cathalijn Wouters started her studies at the St Joost Academy in Breda. The Wouters family did not go in for vague subjects so her father made her follow a graphic design

course. Chris Brand, a well-known Dutch type designer, taught her everything she knows about the use of black and white, brush techniques and the power of white space. Under Harry Ubbink she studied figure drawing in charcoal. Ubbink also taught Cathalijn about creating a sense of space. Large sheets of paper and thick black lines gave Cathalijn a feeling of freedom. This is also where Cathalijn developed her interest in the nude body. She discovered the art of using lines to give emotions and desires to a body. Until she graduated in 1980, Cathalijn worked hard and studied diligently, letting the typical student lifestyle pass her by.



**1978**

Wim Hoeks was Cathalijn Wouters's first love. He was a friend of her brother and a regular visitor to the Wouters family home. After her year in France, she noticed an attraction developing. Wim's free-spirited, loving and positive approach to life was a revelation for her. He opened up a whole new world for Cathalijn. His imagination, courage, daring and romantic streak gave Cathalijn the feeling that anything was possible.

**1980**

After they got married, the young couple moved to a new home in Baarn where the largest room became a studio. During this period, Valerie (1980), Marie-Fleur (1982) and Anthony (1984) were born. From that point on, Cathalijn fought a constant battle between her love for her children and the pressing desire to paint. There were many happy moments for this family of five, but in this tense environment, her frustration regularly bubbled up to the surface. Despite this, she managed to regularly exhibit at Ina Broerse Gallery in Laren and to develop her work further.



**1984**

The farewell exhibition 'La Grande Parade' for Edy de Wilde, director of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, was a turning point for Cathalijn. The theme of the exhibition was Modernism, which has been Cathalijn Wouters' favourite art movement ever since. The exhibition showcased 250 masterpieces by artists including Karel Appel, Francis Bacon, Georg Baselitz, Max Beckmann, Pierre Bonnard, Georges Braque, Alberto Giacometti, Anselm Kiefer, Yves Klein, Willem de Kooning, Fernand Léger, Henri Matisse, Joan Miró, Piet Mondrian, Barnett Newman, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Robert Ryman, Cy Twombly... This exhibition made Cathalijn Wouters realise that she too wanted to be a painter.





### 1995

In 1995, Cathalijn moved into her first studio in Hilversum. She took the concept of 'a woman like a man' very literally and started wearing men's shoes while drawing. This gave her more conviction to justify her decision to start working again as well as the strength to believe in who she is as an artist and what her art is showing the world. This led to her first solo exhibition at Kunstliefde in Utrecht.

The dominant theme running through Cathalijn Wouters's work is the body. Her whole life, she has been fascinated by the movements, shapes and emotions that make each human body so unique. Through her drawings she tries to reveal underlying emotions using the subtlety of Chinese ink, and to communicate this to the viewer. In her search for bodies and connections, she was invited to draw at the Dutch National Ballet. The way Hans van Manen worked on his choreography is how Cathalijn Wouters works on a painting. While she was drawing during these rehearsals, she would often hear "you have to come a little bit more into your body".

### 2011

After 15 years of working in the studio in Hilversum, it was time for a change. The Mondriaan Foundation offered Cathalijn Wouters a loft in New York, where she stayed for a month. Just as she left for Paris in 1973 to find new energy, life and insights, Cathalijn now had her sights on New York. During her stay she also exhibited at the Witzenhausen Gallery in Chelsea, and came into contact with a range of artists and galleries. All these encounters offered her plenty of inspiration as she prepared for a new chapter in her career.

### 2012

Cathalijn Wouters' style has evolved in parallel to her 'discoveries' of styles and artists. Her early work, for example, is an ode to Breitner and Isaac Israëls, the great Dutch Impressionists. She then discovered Paris, when her style shifted towards Monet and Degas. Both lend a feeling of wilder brush strokes to Wouters' work. With Lucien Freud, Cathalijn Wouters entered a period of development where the nude body, psyche and emotions became more central to her work. This emotion combined with the spaces she has been working with since 2012 gained more abstract lines, which can also be found in the work of Baselitz and Matisse. And so she returned to the essence – the space in her work, her space in the world.



## 2016

Cathalijn Wouters loaned several works to the 'Gravity & Grace' exhibition at Shanghai's ArtCN Gallery. During the opening, Cathalijn Wouters noticed that the Chinese public were interested in the method and technique of the work. The theme of the exhibition was a European take on Eastern techniques. During a 2004 trip to visit her daughter Valerie, who was studying Sinology in Beijing, she discovered the city's art district. The neighbourhood was bustling with shops selling brushes. In the parks people were drawing poems on the ground with long brushes and water. She felt an affinity between these brush techniques and her use of black and white and sense of space that she had developed during her student days.

The trip to New York had brought about a lot of change. Cathalijn Wouters moved her studio from Hilversum to Amsterdam. The feeling you get in vibrant international cities is something Cathalijn Wouters draws a lot of energy and inspiration from. The large space also offers her different perspectives. Lots of big windows bathe the room in a warm light. A single large wall became her easel, so that the linen and paper can simply hang against it. This gives her much more freedom than canvases that have already been framed. The space also gives her the opportunity to do figure drawing. Together with her muse Inez, Cathalijn Wouters searches for postures, shapes and emotions in order to achieve the right lines.

## 2022

With the 'Studio Life' exhibition, Cathalijn Wouters gives us an insight into her current work and lifestyle. The rhythm that prevails within both her work and herself as an artist. How she communicates with the world through her art and how her art makes us reflect on who we are as human beings. For Cathalijn Wouters, her studio is a kind of final destination. After reading books, going to exhibitions, listening to music, doing sport, and her family and social life, she steps inside her studio and lets go of all rationality to create purely using her subconscious.



## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022-04  
Ghent - Francis Maere Fine Arts Gallery

2019-04  
Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery - KunstRAI Solo

2018-04  
Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery - Vital Light Blue & Gentle Yellow

2016-09  
Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery - The Burning Gold

2016-03  
Antwerp - WM Gallery - Belgium - Body Language

2016-03  
Shanghai - ArtCN Gallery - Gravity & Grace

2014-05  
Amsterdam - KunstRAI - Janknegt Gallery

2013-09  
Amsterdam - Canvas - Changing Perspectives

2013-09  
Amsterdam - The Dutch Ballet – The Masters Hand

2011-09  
Tilburg - Studio van Dusseldorp – Reflections in Line and Form

2011-03  
New York - Gallery Witzenhausen - Establishing Thought

2010-09  
Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery - Independent

2008-09  
Den Haag - Project 2.0 - Beyond Reality

2006-03  
Arnhem - Galerie de Vijf Eijken - Beauty and Consolation

2003-04  
Wassenaar - De Greef en de Greef

1994-04  
Utrecht - Genootschap Kunstliefde – Working with The Model

1992-01  
Utrecht - SHV - De Akteurs – Children of the Sun

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021-11  
PAN Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery

2021-02  
Shanghai - ArtCN Gallery - Out Of The Blue

2020-06  
Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery - No Walls

2020-04  
Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery - Art on Paper

2019-04  
Maastricht - Kroon Gallery

2018-10  
Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery – Big Art

2018-09  
Amsterdam UWC Art for Impact - Outsider Art Gallery

2017-03  
AAF Brussels - Rademakers Gallery

2016-11  
AAF Hamburg - Rademakers Gallery

2016-07  
Art South Hampton - Rademakers Gallery

2016-02  
ART Karlsruhe - Rademakers Gallery

2015-11  
PAN Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery

2015-09  
Art Fair Cologne - Rademakers Gallery

2015-03  
Rotterdam - C.A.F - Janknegt Fine Art

2014-11  
PAN Amsterdam - Janknegt Fine Art

2013-11  
PAN Amsterdam - Janknegt Fine Art

2013-09  
Amsterdam - Canvas Internationaal

2012-11  
PAN Amsterdam - Janknegt Fine Art

2012-06  
SCOPE Basel - Gallery Witzenhausen

2012-03  
Rotterdam -RAW Art Fair - Gallery Witzenhausen

2012-01  
Amsterdam - Realisme - Rademakers Gallery

2011-11  
PAN Amsterdam - Janknegt Fine Art

2011-09  
Tilburg - Studio van Dusseldorp

2011-06  
SCOPE Basel - Gallery Witzenhausen

2011-01  
Realisme Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery

2010-11  
PAN Amsterdam - Janknegt Fine Art

2010-03  
Dutch Art Now - New York - Gallery Witzenhausen

2010-01  
Realisme Amsterdam - Rademakers Gallery

2009-11  
PAN Amsterdam - Janknegt Fine Art

2009-06  
AAF NYC - Galerie Beeld, New York

2008-09  
Rotterdam - Prima Vera Galerie - Project 2.0

2007-06  
Alkmaar - Als man en vrouw schiep Hij hen

2003-04  
Wassenaar- De Greef en de Greef

1987-04  
Laren - Galerie Ina Boerse

## RESIDENCIES

2011  
Residency in Beijing

2010  
Residency in New York

## PERFORMANCES

2013  
Changing Perspectives, a performative exhibition of artist Cathalijn Wouters and dancer/actress Inez Almeida during the Amsterdam Fringe Festival.

2013  
The National Dutch Ballet, 'The Masters Hand'; Fundraising event; Solo-Presentation of Drawings in het Muziekgebouw - Amsterdam.

## PUBLICATIONS

2010  
Independent  
Thieme Art Publishers, Author: Erik Quint, 24 x 30 cm, 85 Pages full color, ISBN 978 90 78964 766

2008  
Beyond Reality  
Marloes Waanders Publishers, Authors: Jan Kuitenbrouwer, Doris Wintgens, Wietske Jansen Schoonhoven, Ronald Kraayeveld, 24 x 30 cm, 160 pages full color, Hardcover with dust jacket, ISBN 978 90 78964 27 8

2022  
Remember Me, Lecturis Publishers, 335 x 300mm, 72 pages full color, Hardcover with linen, ISBN 9789462264373



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