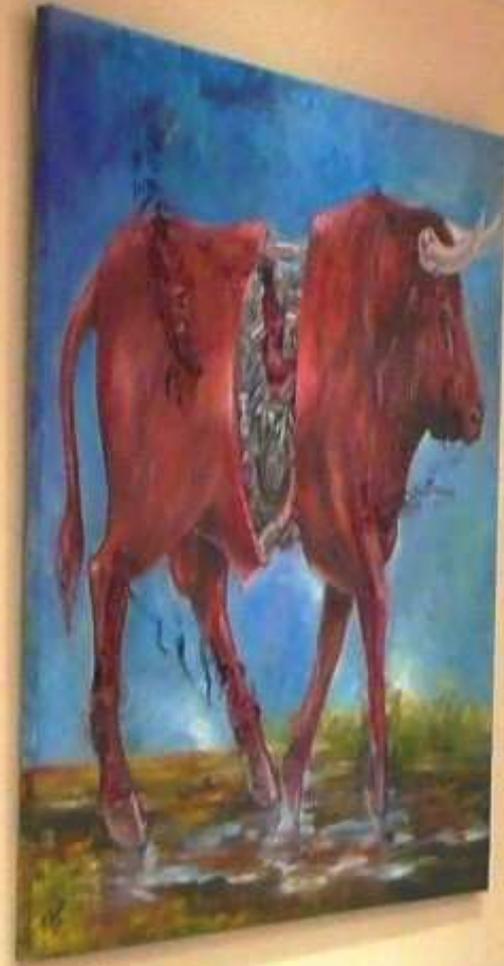


PETER JONAS ECLECTIC ART



P. Jonas
2012

"THE GAMBLER" and "RED BULL" hung at the artist's home.



Website: peterjonas.co.UK
Email: artofafrica@hotmail.com

PETER JONAS

Artist Biography

A South African artist of mixed heritage, born in Cape Town, Peter Jonas has been strongly influenced by the struggles of the Apartheid era but equally the UK (resident 18 years). He studied at Hewat College of Education, a hot-bed of political activity where he chose to express himself as a creative activist, using his specialisms in Fine Art and Psychology to forge a contemporary Dali-esque style that continues to suffuse his visual vocabulary in paintings, murals, sculpture and photography today.

Since the early 1990's, Peter has brought life to public art projects on a grand scale across three continents, painting and facilitating hundreds of meters of themed murals: in schools, community centres, hospitals, universities and other public buildings. He passionately continues with these charity projects locally and internationally.

Most notably, for the Parliament of World Religions in 1999, Peter managed more than 150 people across all ages and backgrounds to create 250 meters of religious mural art, reflecting the spiritual iconography of a country in turmoil. The late Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu were among the delegates at this televised event in Cape Town. Two large realistic portraits of the late Nelson and Winnie Mandela are current being exhibited in The South African Embassy in London, UK.

After a sell-out solo show in Switzerland, Peter was selected as one of six South African mid-career professionals for a scholarship hosted by Indiana University in San Francisco, to lecture on their Masters Program on Multi-Culturalism in Education. He was invited by several schools and the Carlos Santana Foundation to engage young people at risk, in creating public art reflecting multi-cultural heroes and role models.

Peter's six figurative surrealist paintings, including The Trojan Horse, The Juggler, Red Bull, Memories of Africa and The Gambler explore the fall-out of Colonialism and global conflict.

Based in London since 2000, Peter's paintings have been exhibited and sold to buyers in Germany, France, Nigeria, Japan, the UK and USA.

In London, Peter has shown at galleries such as Love Ketchup, The PM Gallery and he was featured in the top 100 for the Cork Street Open Show for Erotic Art in 2011.



Other highlights include commissions with a chocolatier to paint a chocolate portrait of Nelson Mandela, auctioned for his Children's Fund at a Lord's Cricket Ground Gala, and a chocolate Easter Egg of Russell Brand, presented to him live on the BBC One Show.

Peter's public works have appeared on GMTV, BBC and ITV1 News, and on *Hairspray: The School Musical*, TV presented by Denise Van Outen.

With a growing passion for film-making, Peter has co-produced and worked as Production Designer on an award winning short thriller highlighting oil pollution, that has screened at fifteen international film festivals and led to presenting on panels at the Cannes film festival and African High Commission.



"MEETING OF THE GIANTS"

The artist at home, completing a commission for a boxing promoter with a brief to depict a sparring match between two men who in real life had immense mutual admiration: international paragon of social change, Nelson Mandela, and World Heavyweight Champion, Muhammad Ali.



"MEMORIES OF AFRICA"

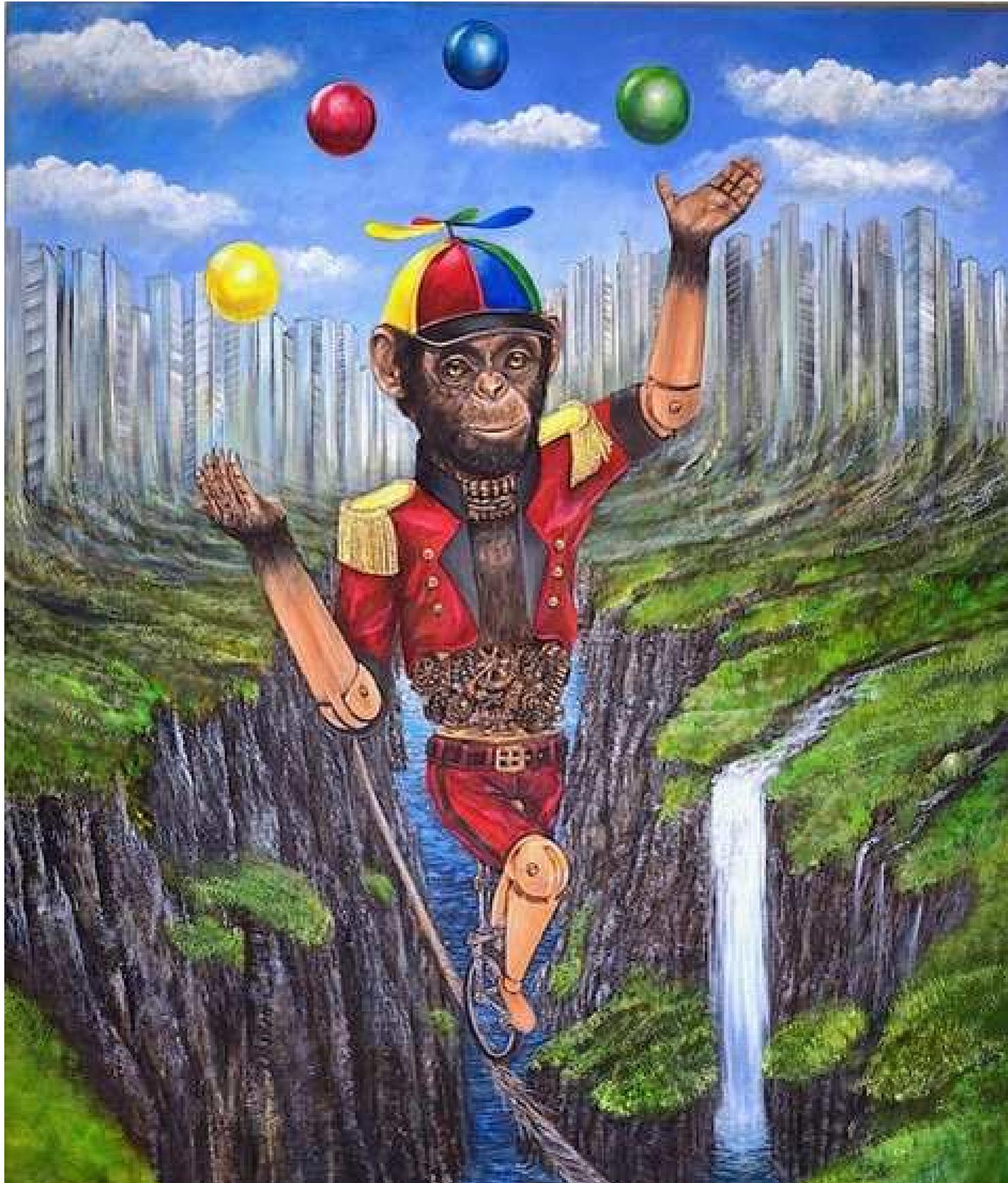
Oil on canvas, 100x150cm, 2013

The elephant embodies the magnificence of Africa, spiritually and materially disembowelled by centuries of Colonial interference: slavery, stolen treasures such as diamonds and gold, and the desecration of Africa's ancient spiritual traditions.

"TROJAN HORSE"

Oil on canvas, 150x100cm, 2013
The Trojan Horse is a response to neo-colonialist war warmongering, with so many lives lost on both sides, East and West.





"THE JUGGLER"

Acrylic on canvas, 127 x 101cm, 2016
A uni-cycling chimp tries to balance balls while crossing a precipice on a fraying steel tightrope. He is oblivious to his imminent fall.

"THE MUSE BIRD"

Acrylic on board 220x250cm, 2006

In ancient Greek mythology, muses were the deities that gave artists and philosophers the necessary spur for creation. Inspired by an album cover, this bird represents the rarefied gift granted to those artists who dare to risk all in the pursuit of their art.





"PEARLESQUE"

Acrylic on canvas, 90x60cm, 2006
These are part of a series of abstracts that tend to evoke a simple emotional response and are highly effective in both home and corporate settings.

"AVID"

Acrylic on canvas, 75x60cm, 2008
The Soulscapes pre-date more
graphically intricate surrealist works.





"CAPTIVE"

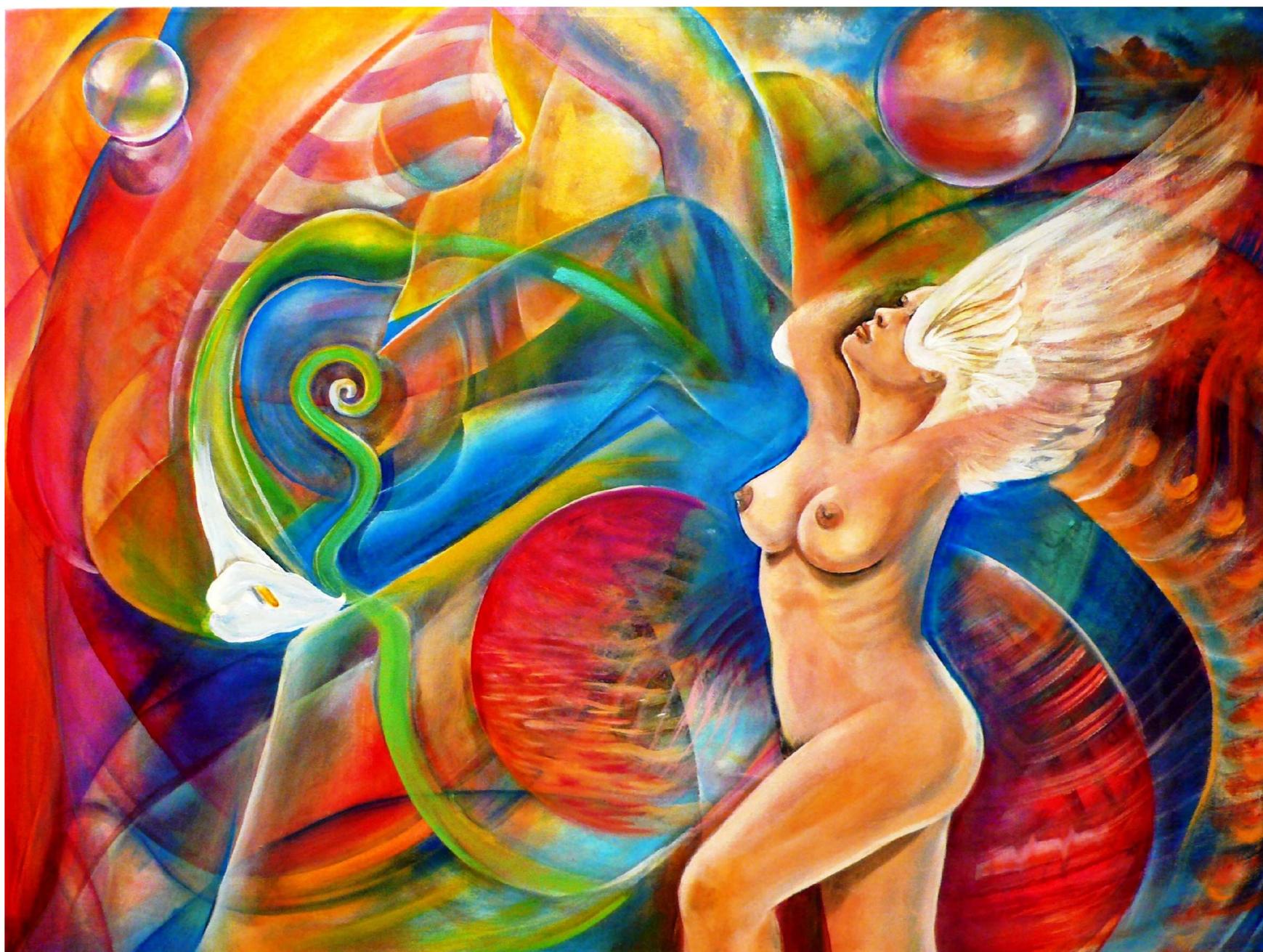
Oil on board, 150x120cm, 1998
This existential tableau of captivity vs. freedom suggests that life in physical form is in itself a form of limitation.

"GENESIS"

Oil on canvas, 150x120cm, 1999

This work juxtaposes *The Thinker* by Rodin, with Descartes' premise "I think therefore I am". Thoughts manifest as beliefs, actions and objects in the physical world and appear to define who we are.





"FOOLS RUSH IN"

Acrylic on canvas, 100x120cm, 2008
The temporary bliss of sexual fulfilment offers a glimpse of the Divine, yet so often brings yearnings, doubts and emptiness instead of love.

"DON'T PAY THE FERRYMAN"

Acrylic on canvas, 60x60cm, 2004

In Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the Soul's mythological journey through the River Styx leads to Inferno, Purgatory, and Heaven. This interpretation invites the viewer, to be the Journeyer, and to envisage what lies beyond the horizon.

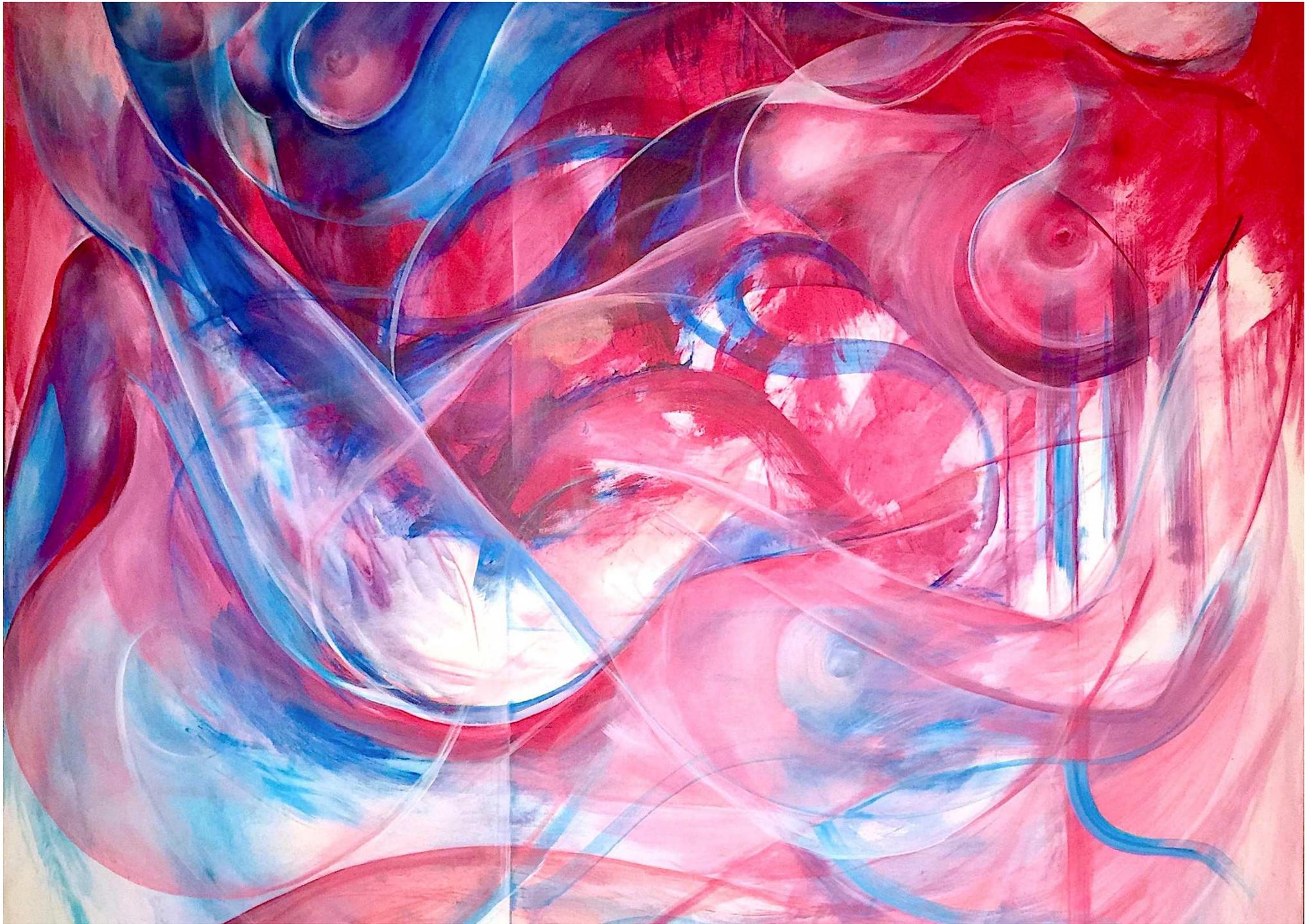




"SENSUALITY I"

Acrylic on canvas, 110 X 80cm, 2016

This series explores the essence of femininity and sensuality, and the role played by paramours. Rather than impressing a singular theme, it's layers and nebulous shapes and invite the viewer to define what they see.



"SENSUALITY II"

Acrylic on canvas, 197cmx197cm

This detail of a raw expressionist piece is an unashamed celebration of the nude female form, and with its minimal red and blue colour palette, space is valued as much as content. This is the largest work of the series, and is equally appreciated by male and female viewers.



"ENVY"

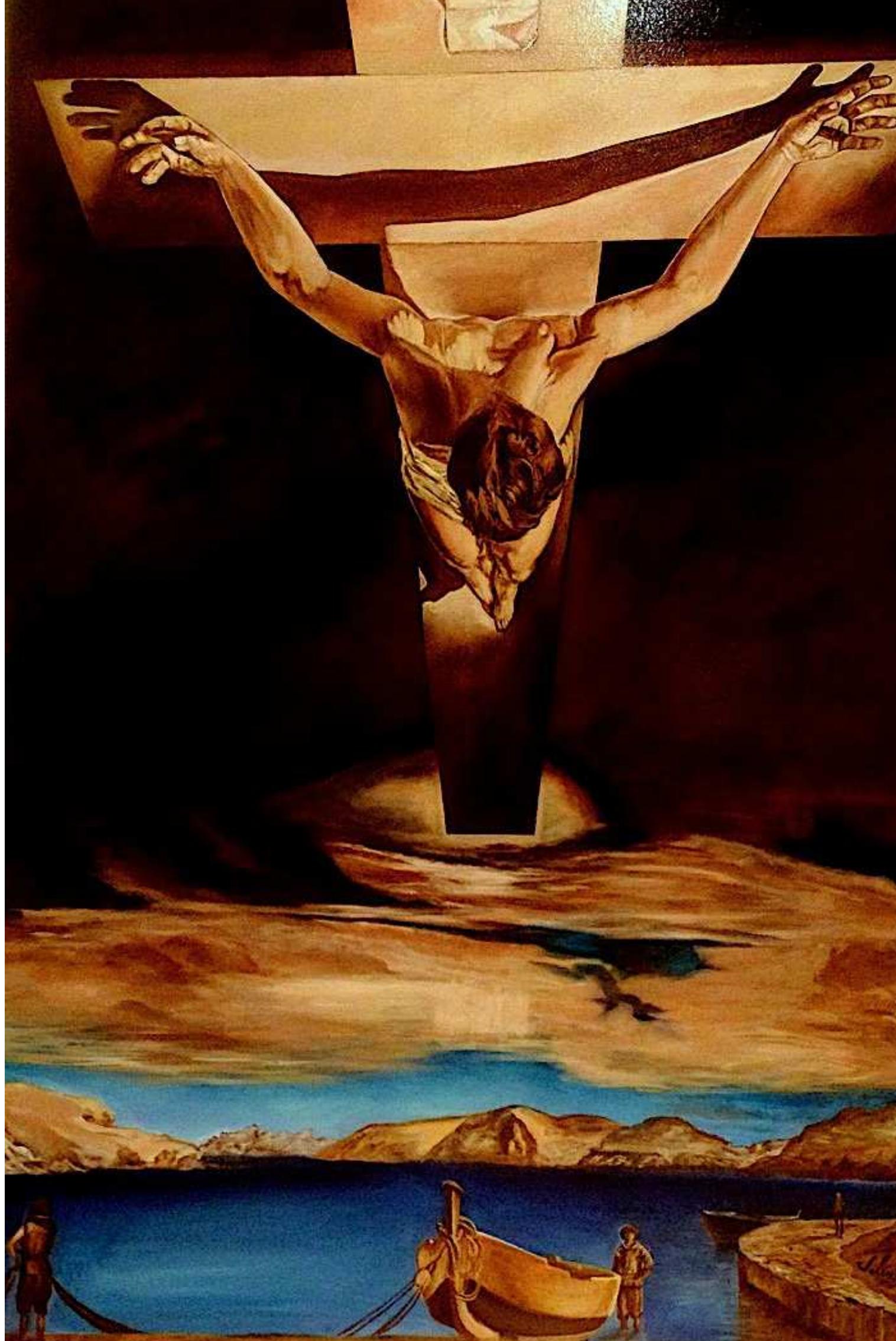
Oil on canvas, 100x50cm, 2006
Envy speaks of the desire for others' traits, ability or status, and this work echoes our yearning for that which we do not have or embody.



Original by Salvador Dali

"ST JOHN ON THE CROSS"

Oil on canvas, 100x120cm, 2015
While it is rare for Peter to do reproductions of other artists, this particular commission was of a prayer card that he carried in his wallet for years. Since his 20's he has painted surreal and ecclesiastical works greatly influenced by Salvador Dalí, so this particular request had strong personal significance.



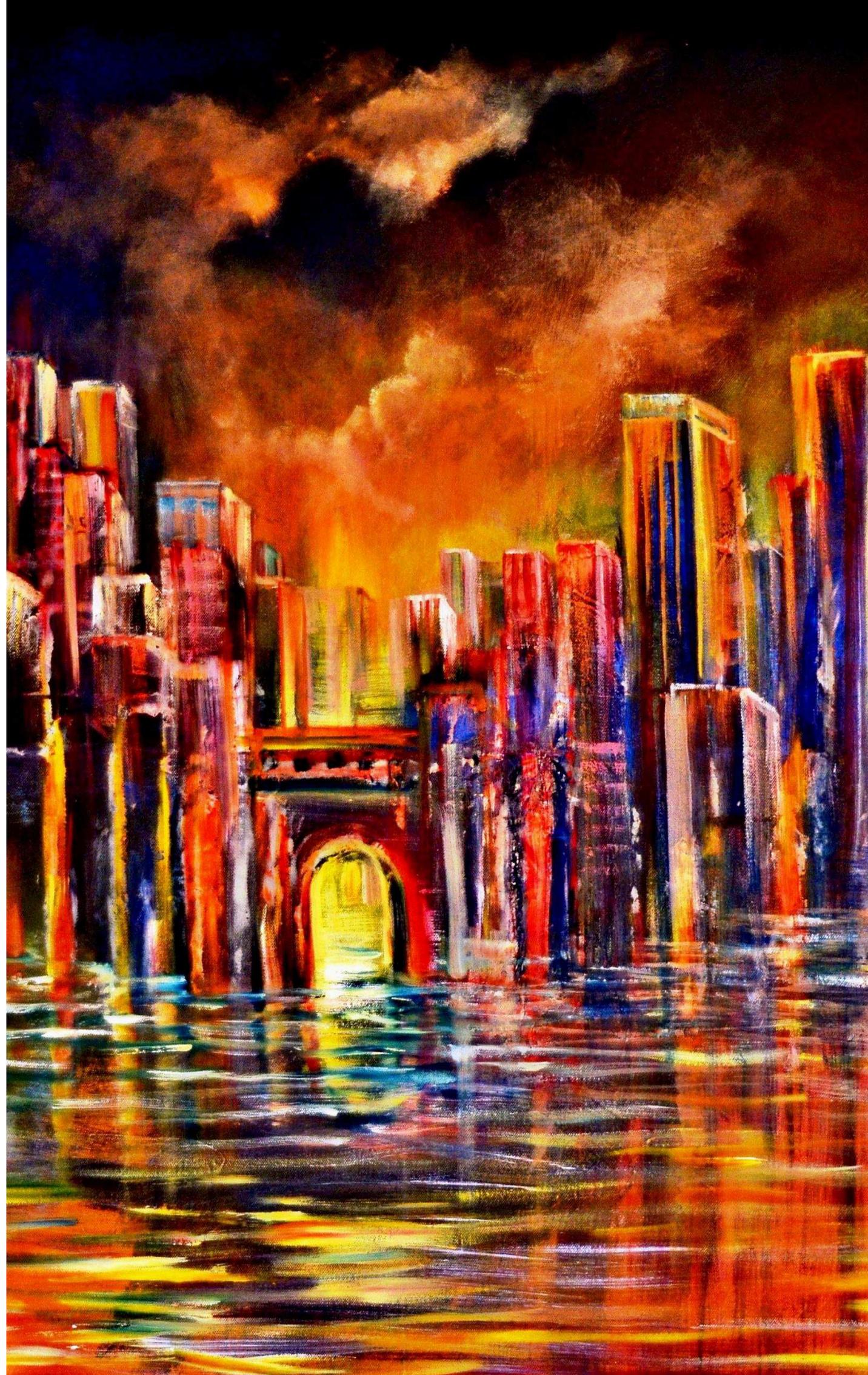


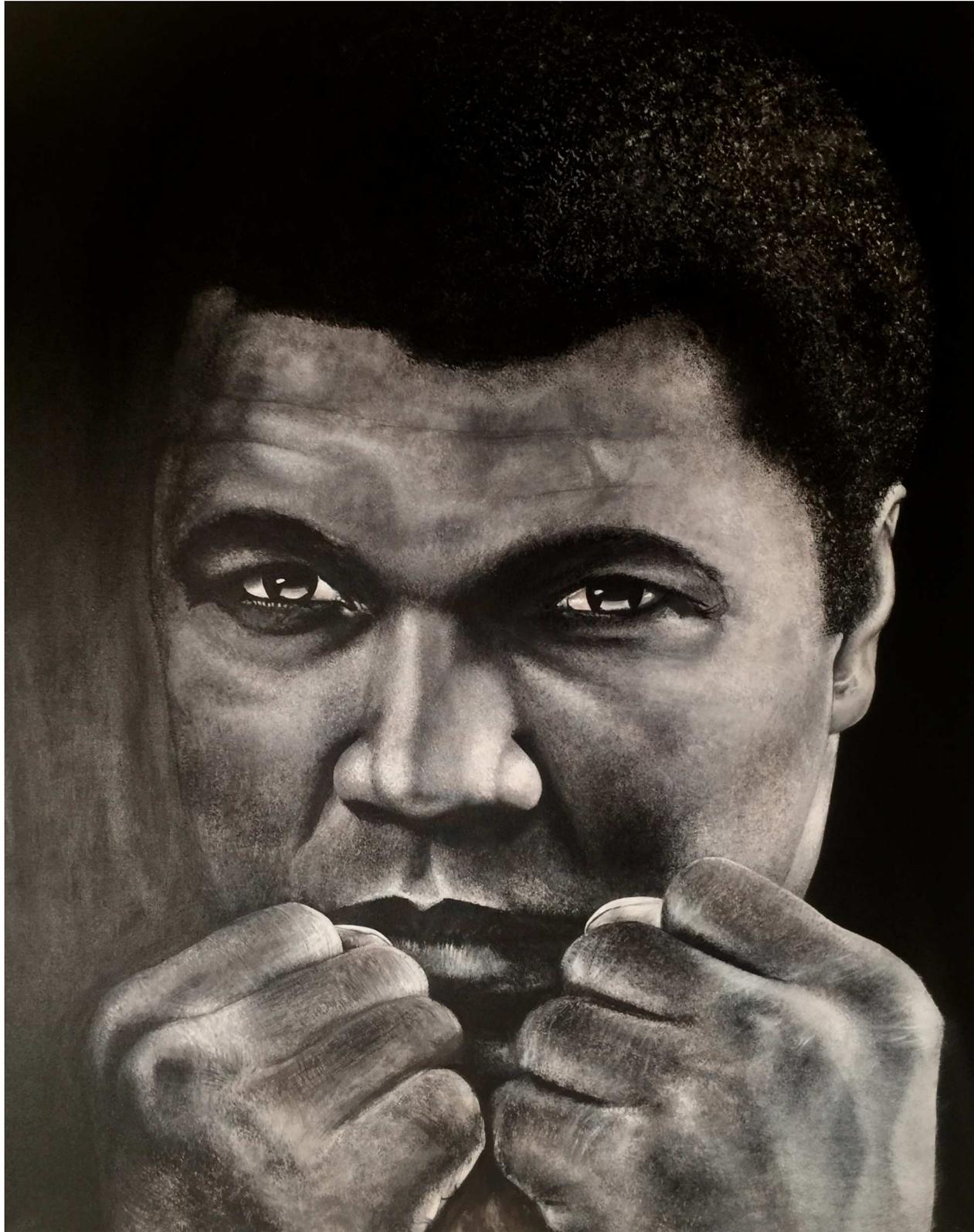
"THE AFRICAN BOY"

Oil on canvas, 100 x 120cm, 2013
The African Boy looks toward the rest of the world from Robben Island, Cape Town, the place of Nelson Mandela's 27 year imprisonment. He symbolises reconciliation for the "Rainbow Nation".

"METROPOLIS"

Oil on canvas, 100x75cm, 2012
This fiery rendition of a
mythological city expresses the
notion of a scorched Earth built
on Capitalism.





"MUHAMMAD ALI"

Acrylic on canvas 120x100cm, 2017

Muhammad Ali lives on as a role model through his legacy of hard work, indomitable spirit and showmanship. Whilst often perceived as arrogant, purists believe that his unshakeable confidence drove his success.



"LUKE"

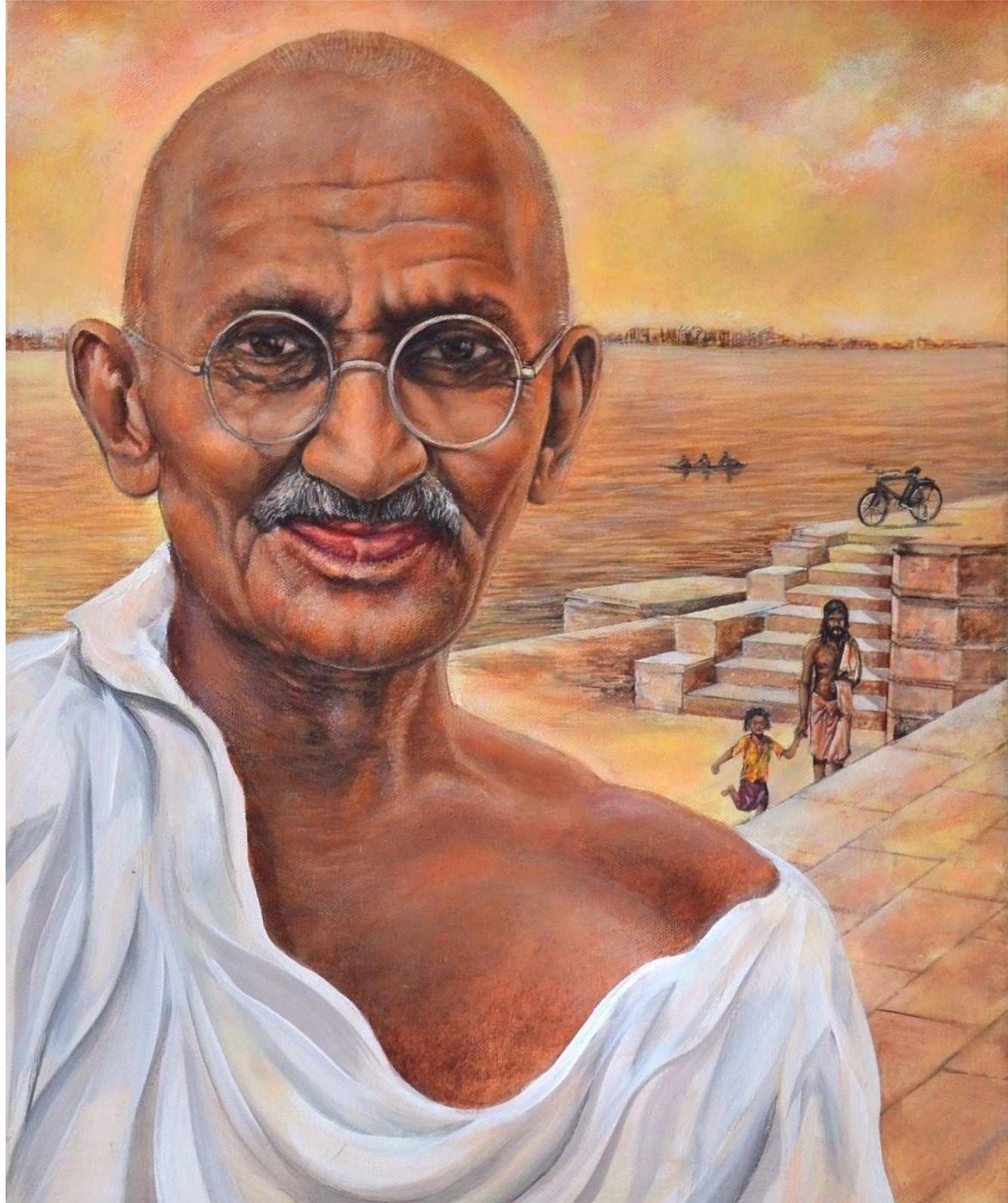
Oil on canvas 84x60cm, 2016

A portrait of the young rapper Ncane. Peter's son completed his Brit School training and a Music Production Degree. How do we define the new generation? By how they dress, their rhetoric, or by the contribution they make?

"GANDHI"

Mixed media on canvas, 50x40cm, 2011

This enigmatic leader forms part of a first series of inspirational figures. It personifies the mantra, "Be the change that you want to see in the world".





"MADIBA"

Mixed media on canvas paper, 65x50cm, 2014
This portrait of Nelson Mandela commemorates his passing and expresses the artist's deep gratitude. He wears, as always, an evocative shirt, this one symbolising the leopard skin traditionally worn by Xhosa tribal leaders.

THE TURNING POINT

A PORTRAYAL OF ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVISTS

Exhibition: Johannesburg and Cape Town, SA, 2017

With Artist's Commentary

Having passed the 21st anniversary marking the new South Africa, we are reminded to look at the legacy that we ourselves are leaving, and ask how many more generations will it take before we can truly claim to be a nation of cultural integration and maturity.

I dream and work in the pursuit of a South African cultural Renaissance, even a Pan-African Renaissance, in which prolific creativity within the arts is an ongoing catalyst for deep connectivity and social evolution. As an African community, we are still making sense of the stresses of transformation that so many sacrificed and died for, yet we are blessed with sufficient talent to start making a real difference in Africa and to become role models for other countries in political turmoil.

As an artist, I hope to honour this series of seven icons and their inspiration in portraits that aim to embody their unique sentiments and character. These signature tones echo the symbolism not only of our Rainbow Nation but also the thinking behind our national flag. We must move beyond the platitudes of simplistic colour and take this chance to re-paint the social canvas. It starts with a concerted effort from not just the artist, but also the teachers, the policemen, the shabees owners and politicians, all collectively re-defining what the essence of *ubuntu* really means.

The entire series was completed during the two month period leading up to the exhibition.

Opposite: A younger Oliver Tambo in situ at the Johannesburg exhibition.



NELSON MANDELA

Born 18-07-1918 in Qunu, Eastern Cape, South Africa

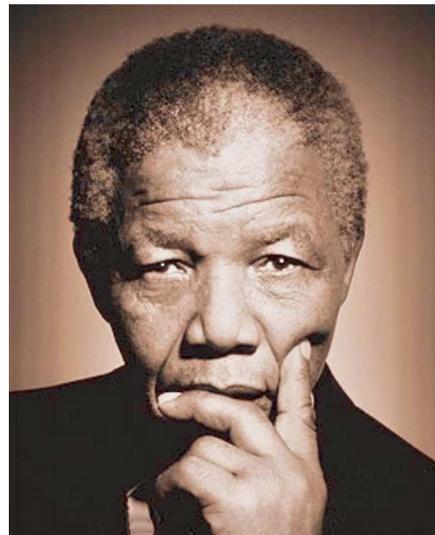
Deceased 05-12-2013 (95 years old) in Johannesburg

A rare legend in his own lifetime, Nelson Mandela inspired not only political optimism for the disenfranchised, he also helped spark a generation of creatives to express with passion what political and emotional freedom is.

I have been face to face with Nelson Mandela on three occasions: firstly on the day of his release, February 11th 1990; then several years later receiving Holy Communion at the church I attended as a child; and finally he visited a school near the high school I taught at for 10 years in Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town, as always an eloquent and engaging speaker.

These events were subliminally suffusing my creative output, and hence Madiba's image has often been included in many of the murals I have painted in several international venues. He has often been the natural choice of the street kids that I have had the privilege to work with.

On the occasion of Nelson Mandela 91st birthday, his Children's Fund organised a gala dinner at Lord's Cricket Ground, to which I donated a chocolate painting of Madiba that was auctioned and bought by an English rugby team.





Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 100cm, 2016

WINNIE MANDELA

Born 07-09-1936 in Bizana, Pondoland district, Transkei

Deceased 02-04-2018 (81 years old) in Johannesburg

Born in a village in the Eastern Cape, to a history teacher, Winnie moved to Johannesburg to complete a degree in social work in 1955 and was offered a scholarship for further study in the USA. Instead, she chose the position of medical social worker at the Baragwanath Hospital in Johannesburg, making her the first qualified black member of staff in that post.

Winnie was already politically active long before she met her future husband. She was particularly affected by research she had done in Alexandra Township as a social worker to establish the rate of infantile mortality, which stood at 10 deaths for every 1,000 births. She met and married Nelson Mandela in 1958, and they remained married during Mandela's imprisonment. She was herself put behind bars in 1969 under Section 6 of the infamous 1967 Terrorism Act, enduring torture and solitary confinement.

Winnie played a pivotal role in the 1976 Soweto student uprising, when thousands of black students took to the streets after a government decree forced all black schools to use Afrikaans and English. However, her reputation was marred after she was convicted in the 1991 killing of a suspected informant.

In the week Winnie passed away, information emerged that security forces had fabricated certain stories to wreck her marriage and reputation. While helping to organize her London memorial, the suggestion to paint her was made by Oliver Tambo's daughter, Nomatamba Tambo (South Africa's new Ambassador to the UK). I completed this portrait in less than twenty hours. As I contemplated this equally courageous and controversial figure, I wanted to create an image of her that expressed her strength, her struggle and youthful compassion.





Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 100cm, 2018

OLIVER TAMBO

Born 27-10-1917 in Mbizana South Africa
Deceased 24-04-1993 (75 years old) in Johannesburg

Oliver Tambo's significant contribution to the liberation cause, and his ideas on moving the country forward were both radical and controversial. Establishing the first black law firm in South Africa with Nelson Mandela in 1953, he went on to co-found the modern South African state.

By skillful lobbying throughout the world and attracting the most talented South African exiles (such as Thabo Mbeki), he was able to build the organization into the legitimate voice of black South Africans.

He arrived, an exile in London, penniless and unknown in 1960, with the police on his tail. His wife, Adelaide, and young children were smuggled out to join him.

Coincidentally I lived in Muswell Hill with my Danish-English partner, who grew up there, close to Alexandra Park Road where Oliver Tambo resided with his family in a large detached house that was to become the unofficial headquarters of the ANC in London.

Oliver Tambo's example for me as a teacher, lawyer, and political leader, expresses how one individual's far-reaching, multi-skilled initiatives can engender a culture of success.





Acrylic on canvas, 127 x 101cm, 2015

STEVE BIKO

Born 18-12-1946 in King Williams Town

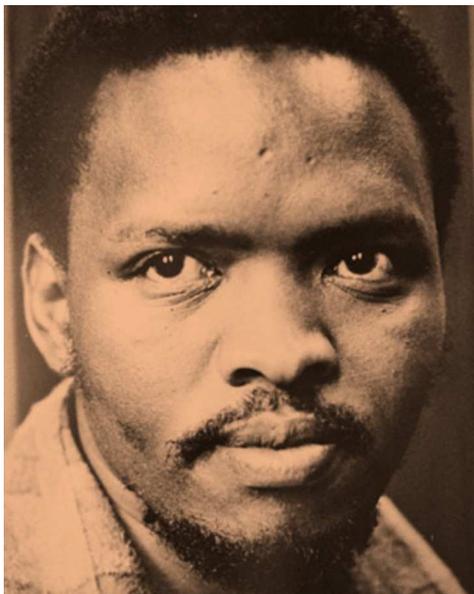
Deceased 12-09-1977 (30 years old)

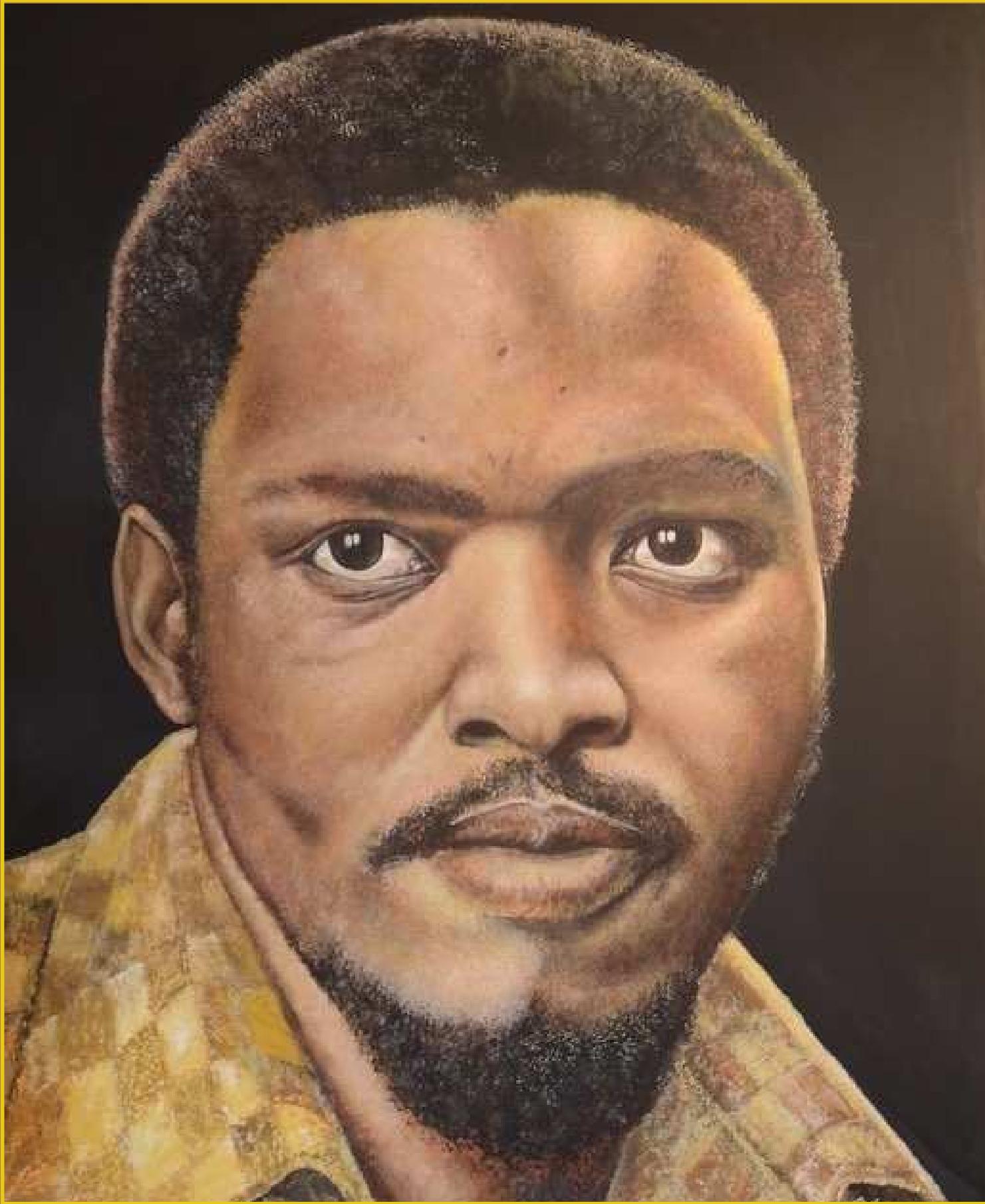
After being expelled from his first school in the Eastern Cape for 'anti-establishment' behaviour, Biko was transferred to a Roman Catholic boarding school and later enrolled as a student at the University of Natal Medical School). Whilst there he founded the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) in 1969, as there was no other union representing the needs of black students. SASO was involved in providing legal aid and medical clinics, as well as helping to develop cottage industries for disadvantaged black communities.

Steve Biko later founded the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) which would empower and mobilize much of the urban black population, and in March 1973, at the height of apartheid, he was banned to King Williams Town. Biko has been called a martyr of the anti-apartheid movement since his death in police custody on 12 September 1977.

Taken from part of a letter he left for his family before his death, this quote exemplifies his commitment to radical social change: "I've devoted my life to see equality for blacks, and at the same time, I've denied the needs of my family. Please understand that I take these actions, not out of selfishness or arrogance, but to preserve a South Africa worth living in for blacks and whites."

It is an honour to create an image of the lasting legacy of a hero, his life tragically cut short. Having briefly met Steve Biko's three sons whilst painting a mural in a friend's flat next door in Rondebosch East, I made a promise to them, and myself, that I would paint their father's portrait.





Acrylic on canvas, 127 x 101cm, 2015

WALTER SISULU

Born 18-05-1912 in Transkei

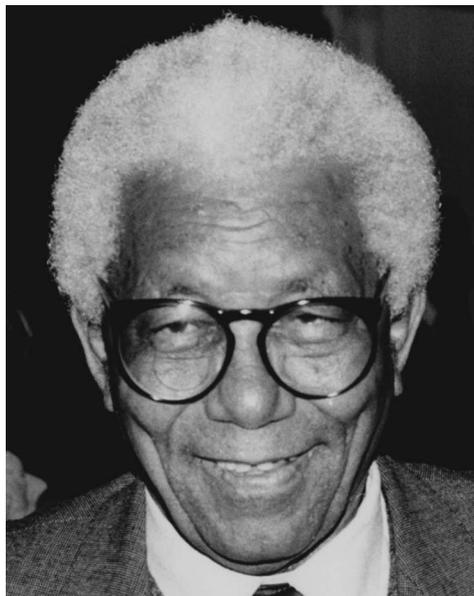
Deceased 05-05-2003 (90 years old) in Johannesburg

In 1944 along with Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu joined the ANC Youth League, initially becoming the treasurer. The son of a white foreman who came to his native village in the Transkei to supervise black road workers, Sisulu's understanding of the complexities of race, through his own mixed heritage illustrates the importance of shared responsibility in creating a more racially harmonious society.

Throughout his political career he fought against black on black violence (between ANC and IFP). In 1964 he was imprisoned on Robben Island for 26 years and was released in 1989 - at age 77. A spiritual sustenance born of strong political conviction kept him going in jail, and with this presence, he fostered unity in the first truly multi-racial elections in South Africa (in 1994) and saw the collective dream of black majority rule fulfilled.

As one of the noteworthy icons, Sisulu is to be celebrated, not just for his political philosophy, but his constant positivity and humorous outlook on what was clearly a quarter of a century of anguish during his incarceration.

Sisulu was known for his doting marriage to Albertina (a fellow freedom-fighter), and the impact which he and his family have made on the contemporary political landscape. By making he and Albertina Sisulu an integral part of this series, I have sought to reflect upon the how the marriage of two souls provides the adhesive for a nation in the throes of violent transition.





Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 120cm, 2015

ALBERTINA SISULU

Born 21-10-1918 in South Africa

Deceased 02-06-2011 (92 years old) in Johannesburg

Albertina Sisulu's leadership qualities and maternal instincts underlined the respect she earned during the struggle when she was referred to as the 'Mother of the Nation'. Albertina joined the ANC Women's League in the 1940s and became a member of the Executive of the Federation of South African Women in 1954.

On August 9, 1956, Albertina marched with Helen Joseph and Sophia Williams-De Bruyn and 20,000 women to the Union Buildings of Pretoria in protest against the apartheid government's requirement that women carry passbooks. This was one of the largest demonstrations staged in South African history.

In 1963 while her husband was appealing against a 6 year sentence, Walter decided to forfeit bail, and go underground. Apartheid Security Police visited their house and found that he had fled. They arrested Albertina and her young son Zwelakhe, and she became the first woman to be arrested under the General Laws Amendment Act. The Act gave the police the power to hold suspects in detention for 90 days without charging them and in Albertina's case she was placed in solitary confinement for almost two months while the Security Branch looked for her husband.

In 1992, a state funeral with military honours was held for her at the 40,000 seat Orlando stadium outside Soweto, and condolences from Nelson Mandela were read aloud by his wife, Grace Machel, stating: "The years have taken the toll as one by one friends and comrades passed on. Every time it seems as part of oneself is being cut off. None of those cuts could have been more painful than the loss of this dear friend, you, my beloved sister".





Acrylic on canvas, 127 x 101cm, 2016

CHRIS HANI

Born 28-06-1942 in Conceivably South Africa
Deceased 10-04-1993 (50 years old) in Johannesburg

I was inspired by Chris Hani since completing my politicized Catholic education at St Columba's Boys' High School in Cape Town. Our foreign teachers of history, Latin and English had often alluded to the difficulties faced by the soon to be heroes of our struggle. We made ANC flags and some students wrote controversial literature that was published in the school magazine, including about Chris Hani, who was at that point living in exile in Lesotho. I once spent Christmas with my son at the Chris Hani Squatter Camp on the outskirts of Cape Town.

Chris Hani anticipated the major challenges we would experience as a democracy when he said, "I think, finally, the ANC will have to fight a new enemy. That enemy would be another struggle to make freedom and democracy worthwhile to ordinary South Africans. Our biggest enemy would be what we do in the field of socio-economic restructuring; creation of jobs; building of houses, schools, medical facilities, overhauling our education, eliminating illiteracy, building a society which cares. We must build a different culture in this country, different from Africa, different from the Nationalist Party. And that culture should be one of service to people."

Chris Hani was assassinated on 10 April 1993 outside his home in Dawn Park, East Rand. Since then, a hospital and several municipalities have been named in his honour.





Acrylic on canvas, 127 x 101cm, 2016



"THE SCOOTERS AT THE SOUTHEND"

A commissioned portrait for a birthday present, adapted from an original 1960's mod poster using the likeness of the real couple.



"HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL" MURAL

This mural served as the back-drop to a comprehensive school's production of High School Musical.
Signing his likeness: International singer, Sir Cliff Richard at Kingsmead School, 2006

"Peter has always shown amazing imagination and tremendous talent in his expertise at transforming drab transitional areas into gems of magic visually".

Giles Bird OBE, Headteacher at Kingsmead School

REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES



ART IN FIVE CITIES is an Arts Partnership involving different countries, sponsors, creative teams, and deprived communities to foster positive relations and regenerate derelict neighbourhoods with murals and 3D sculptural works. The first successfully completed Art in Five Cities Project was in London, involving the Ease at the Base Youth Club. 53 children participated, from nursery age to young offenders, supported by adults to create an exciting transformation to this previously drab parking lot, facing the flats where they live.

Supported by the Big Lottery, the team painted for 14 days, much of it in the rain. Once complete, the mural was unveiled by the Mayor of Ealing, and covered in the Ealing Gazette as well as on GMTV and BBC One News, which featured a story on local communities doing their own regeneration. The project created inter-generational cohesion and previously disaffected young people were proud of the result as well as the appreciative response of local residents and commuters who pass the wall every day to reach the train station.





The team has also worked with a township school on the Garden Route on the Southern Cape, an area characterised by great natural beauty, yet with stark contrasts between rich and poor, where the majority of township children have limited life chances.



The Ha Qua Youth Programme is a hub of learning and creativity for its students, aged between seven and twenty, supported by adult volunteers

In the future, the partnership aims to establish cultural exchange and inspire the core city teams with the skills to do their own arts projects, with the aim of sharing these experiences on social media, and ultimately in an ART IN FIVE CITIES television documentary.



The wall before the Copley mural (above)....



I THINK EVERYTHING IN LIFE IS ART. WHAT YOU DO. HOW YOU DRESS. THE WAY YOU LOVE SOMEONE AND HOW YOU TALK. YOUR SMILE AND YOUR PERSONALITY. WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN AND ALL YOUR DREAMS. THE WAY YOU DRINK YOUR TEA. HOW YOU DECORATE YOUR HOME OR PARTY. YOUR GROCERY LIST. THE FOOD YOU MAKE. HOW YOUR WRITING LOOKS. AND THE WAY YOU FEEL.

LIFE IS ART



"MANDELA IN CHOCOLATE"

100x120cm, 2010. Created with 37 kilos of white Swiss chocolate and food colourant, this edible work was completed in one 18 hour marathon stretch. Auctioned for the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund at Lord's Cricket Ground, the painting raised several thousand pounds and is no longer available for viewing...it was eaten by a Sussex rugby team!





Exhibiting at the South African Embassy, London, for Nelson Mandela's Centenary, 2018,

The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.

Aristotle

The Winnie Mandela Memorial Service at the South African Embassy, London, in April 2018 was attended by Ambassadors, thought leaders and political activists



A "trompe l'oeuil" decorative mural in the artist's home.





This book was co-authored and designed with Sina Bowyer, a screenwriter, award-winning film-maker, blog writer and creator of concept books.

PETER JONAS LTD



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Back cover: "RED BULL" 2012, Oil on canvas 120x150cm
"Red Bull is one of an ongoing series involving animals with mechanical parts. Like the energy drink with its quick high, industrial growth offers short term relief without resolving the long term poverty experienced by 99% of the world.

Front cover: "THE GAMBLER" 2011, Oil on canvas 120x100cm
"The Gambler" explores the theme of greed, speculation and vice. Besides being one of the artist's personal favourites, this piece has awakened the interest of a wide audience by provoking questions.