

Virginie Ittah

Oceanic Feeling

Friday, February 6th — Saturday, March 28th, 2026



Sommaire

PRESENTATION _____ p. 3 - 7

WORKS ON VIEW _____ p. 8 - 26

BIOGRAPHY _____ p. 27 - 29

CONTACT & INFORMATION _____ p. 30

Galerie Poggi is pleased to present the first solo exhibition of Virginie Ittah, in collaboration with Vittoria Matarrese, author of the exhibition text. A member of the artist duo Ittah Yoda from 2016 to 2024, Virginie Ittah now develops an artistic practice in her own name, in which figures, narratives, and materials move closer to the body, intimacy, and lived experience.

Titled *Oceanic Feeling*, the exhibition offers an immersive and sensory experience through a new body of paintings and sculptures, in dialogue with two original sound works by pianist and composer Koki Nakano, as well as an olfactory work co-created with perfumer Yann Vasnier especially for the occasion.

A selection of works on paper by Anna-Eva Bergman is presented in parallel, in collaboration with the Hartung-Bergman Foundation.



After several years of research conducted as a duo, Virginie Ittah presents at Galerie Poggi an exhibition that marks a threshold. Not a rupture, but a decisive shift : that of a practice now fully assumed in her own name, in which figures, narratives, and materials move closer to the body, intimacy, and lived experience. *Oceanic Feeling* unfolds within a transformed continuity, a body of work in which collective memory, art history, and contemporary technologies are placed at the service of a profoundly human exploration.

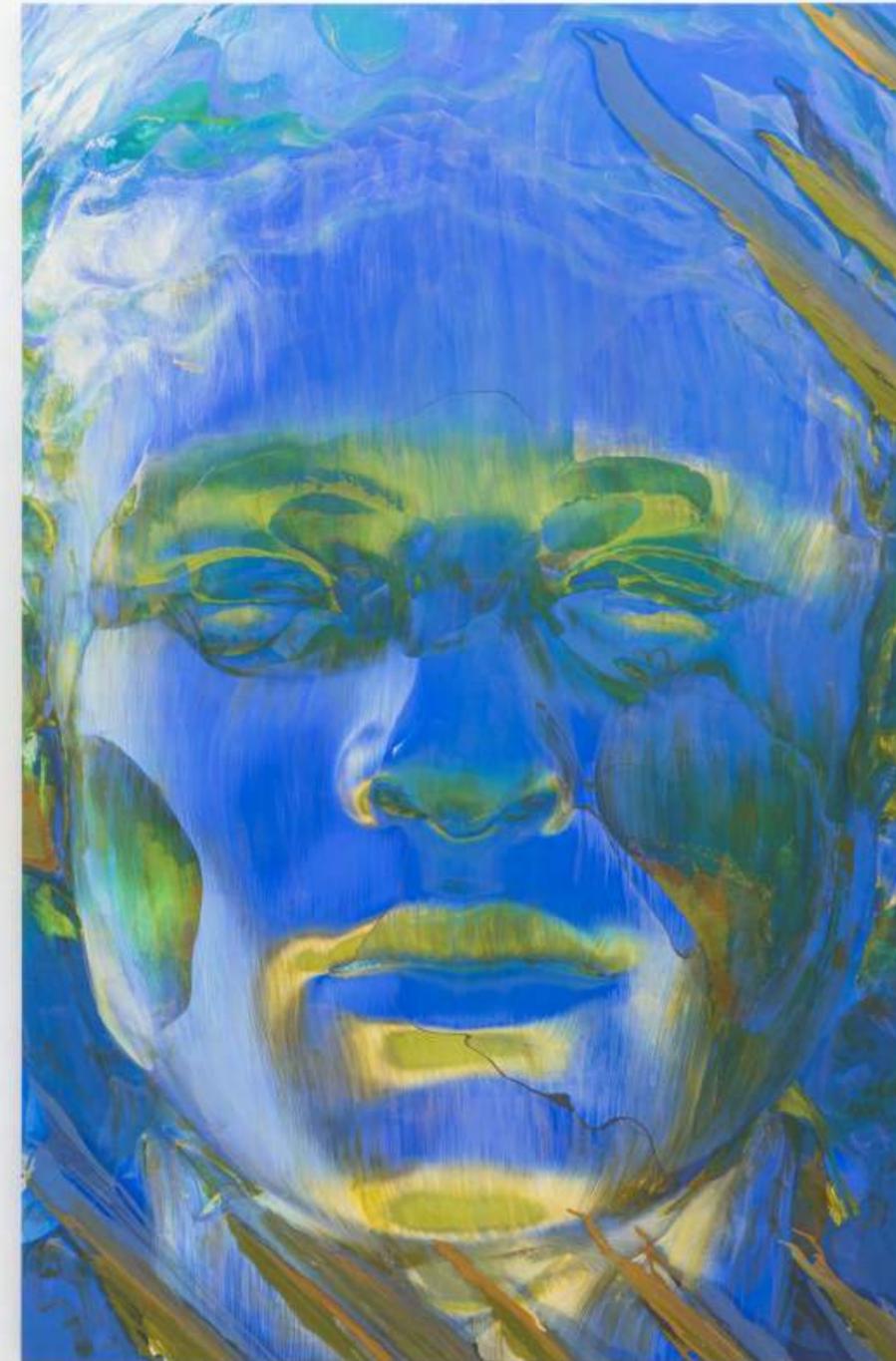
The title explicitly refers to the “oceanic feeling” as described by Sigmund Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Freud evokes an archaic state of fusion with the world, preceding the formation of a separate ego, an experience of deep continuity between the subject and their environment. Often associated with childhood, primitive memory, or certain aesthetic and spiritual experiences, this feeling runs through the entire exhibition. Bodies, faces, and landscapes are never conceived as closed forms, but as porous entities, traversed by flows, affects, and reminiscences. The ocean, omnipresent as image, color, and mental matter, becomes a central metaphor : that of a space of origin and transformation, where the boundaries between body, image, and world temporarily dissolve.

The exhibition unfolds as a two-part journey, almost two states of consciousness, articulated by a sensory narrative that engages sight, smell, listening, and bodily movement. From the entrance, visitors are invited to pass through a procession of female sculptures, figures of priestesses or guides, who welcome and orient them. Their bodies, modeled in wax and clay, bear the direct trace of the artist’s hand : imprints, irregularities, visible gestures. This presence of gesture inscribes the work within an ancestral temporality, where human figuration emerges less as representation than as the trace of a passage.

These sculptures are in dialogue with large-scale portraits printed on silk, in monumental dimensions. The faces are recomposed from 3D captures of ancient Greco-Roman sculptures held at the Louvre, combined with a synthetic child figure and a 3D capture of an adult female model. This matrilineal presence runs throughout the exhibition and extends research previously developed by the artist in her earlier pictorial and sculptural works. The recomposed features correspond to no real identity.

It is precisely this indeterminacy that allows each viewer to project their own childhood onto them. The image acts as an affective mirror, evoking that foundational moment one has stopped looking at, yet which continues to silently shape the adult one has become. Silk, chosen for its iridescent and carnal quality, evokes a fragile, almost translucent skin, reinforcing this impression of original vulnerability. This first space is accompanied by a musical composition by Koki Nakano, conceived specifically for the exhibition. Composed of sounds suggesting a slow fall, drop by drop, the work establishes an extended temporality that acts on perception and symbolically supports the emergence of the inner child, with its fragilities, impulses, and silences.

The sound envelops the space and establishes a state of emotional availability, an atmosphere of diffuse listening in which the images can resonate intimately. The color blue, omnipresent in the paintings, is also a mental substance. Water, metal, transparency, depth : the surfaces seem traversed by flows, as if the figures were emerging from a liquid milieu. The ocean then appears as this symbolic matrix, both origin, memory, and possibility of rebirth. This principle extends into the pictorial layer, composed of paint flows made from pigments the artist produces herself. The earths are mainly collected from a clay quarry located in Le Marais 91530, near Paris, as well as from various ochre and mineral earth quarries encountered by Virginie Ittah during her past residencies and exhibition projects.





The entire body of paintings is created using a bio-based, low-carbon indigo blue with which the artist has been working since her exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Lyon. This pigment gives the colour a particular depth, both material and mental, inscribing the pictorial surface within an expanded temporality where matter, gesture, and memory converge. Colour thus becomes the result of a slow process, in which the real landscape is transformed into emotional matter.

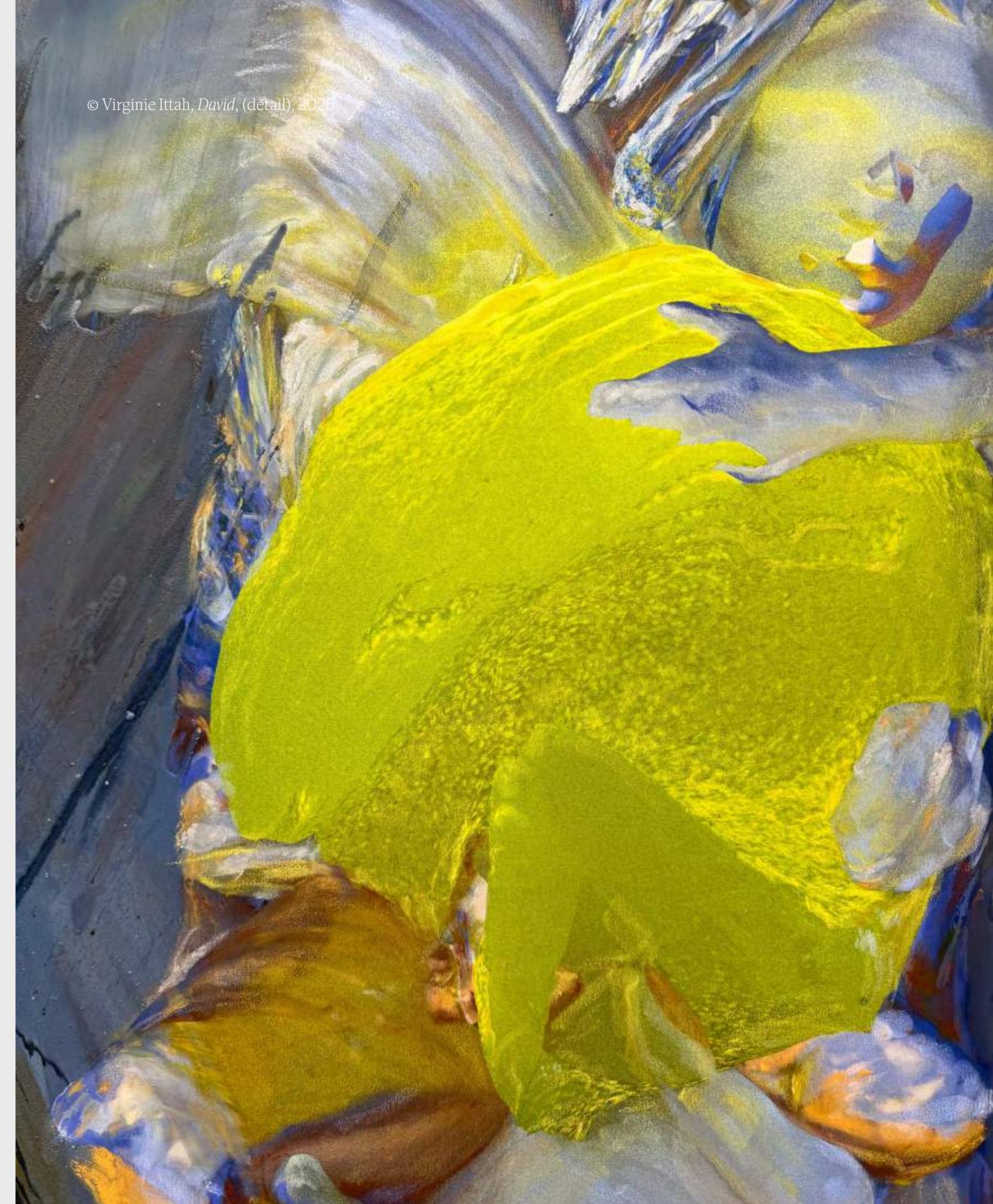
The second part of the exhibition opens onto a more conflicted inner landscape. The child figures give way to scenes of struggle and transformation. Paintings on silk depict bodies in tension, inspired by ancient wrestlers, notably drawn from 3D captures of Hellenistic bronze sculptures held at the Louvre. These figures are hybridized with the female model and reworked through digital processes, giving rise to unstable bodies traversed by contradictory forces. This series gives form to an inner struggle, in which the body confronts its masks and the shadow zones inherited from childhood. Landscape paintings accompany these bodies and unfold on another scale. Mountains, faults, oceans, and mineral strata compose scenes in which the human appears at times tiny, almost absorbed by matter. These reconstructed and distorted landscapes become mental territories, spaces of projection where body and memory merge. This second space is accompanied by a new sound work by Koki Nakano, conceived in a different register. Here, the sound becomes more mobile, more breathing, accompanying a movement of transformation and passage. It gradually guides the visitor toward the back of the exhibition, where the path narrows and reaches a point of concentration.

Ava then appears as a culminating figure. Already presented as the central piece of the exhibition *Arcadia* at the Bally Foundation in Lugano, this sculpture condenses multiple layers of historical, symbolic, and material references. Its composition notably invokes the iconography of Saint Anne, the Virgin, and the Child in Leonardo da Vinci, where motherhood is never purely narrative but conceived as a complex assemblage of bodies, forces, and inner landscapes. In Leonardo da Vinci's work, the figure of Saint Anne does not merely support the Virgin and Child : she inscribes them within a genealogy in which the body becomes a site of circulation between nature, spirituality, and becoming.

Two olfactory works accompany this journey and extend its sensory experience. Conceived as invisible landscapes, they evoke mineral, aquatic, and telluric registers, directly engaging the visitor's bodily memory. *Inner Light*, developed with Yann Vasnier, unfolds at the heart of the three central sculptures, each containing one of the components of the work within its vessel. This diffuse presence extends the bodies through an imperceptible matter that circulates throughout the space. *Ava*, for its part, hosts the work *Learning to Fly*, developed in collaboration with David Chieze. Activated through interaction with the public, these pieces function like a contained breath at the core of the form, linking bodies, images, and inner landscapes.

Oceanic Feeling presents itself as an immersive passage in which the works are seen, smelled, heard, and sometimes touched. Sound, scent, matter, and image compose a shared language, engaging the visitor in an inner journey where the sacred manifests as sensory intensity. The exhibition marks a moment of transformation in the artist's practice, where vulnerability, memory, and desire become active forces, brought into shared experience.

Vittoria Matarrese

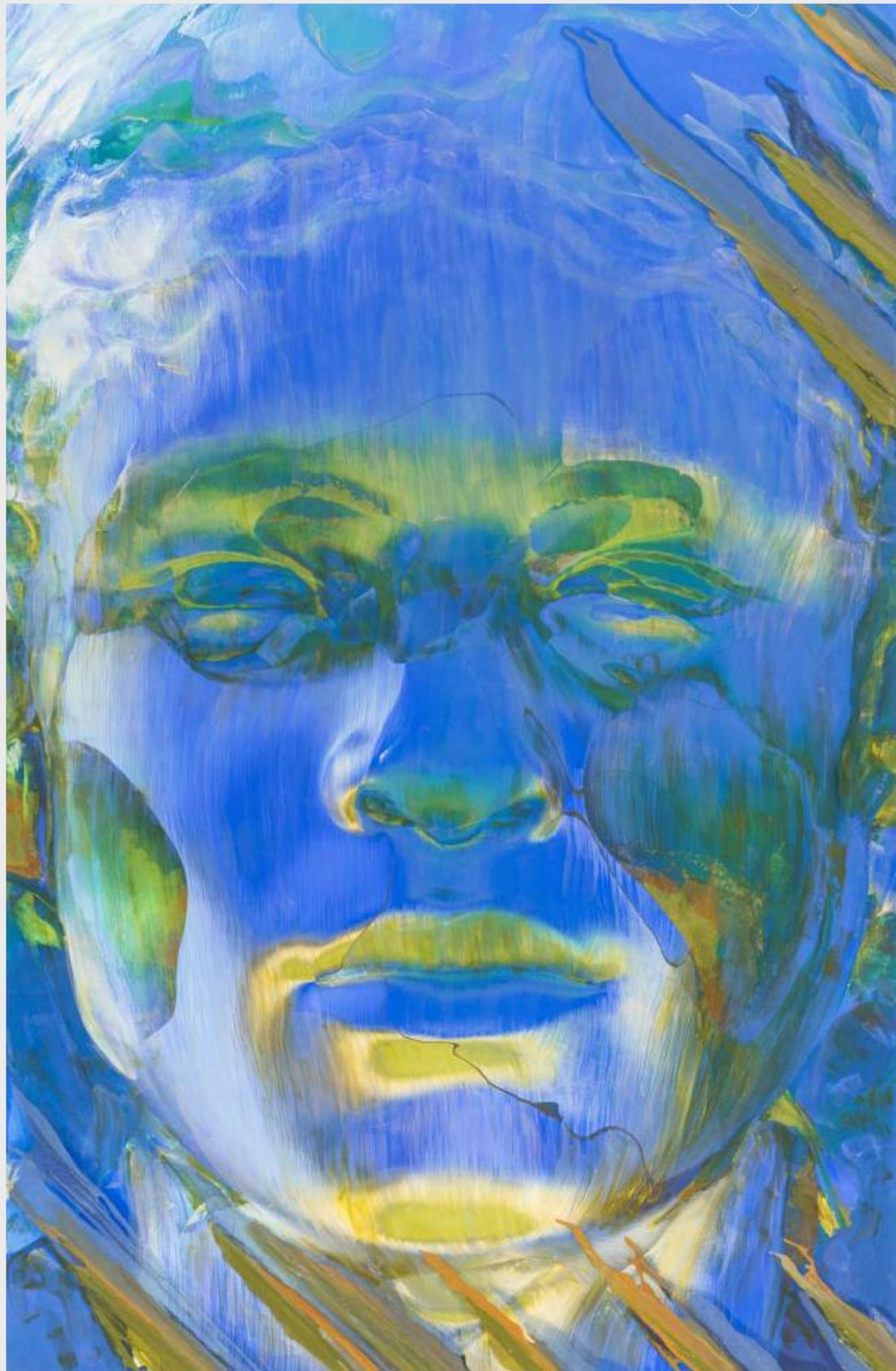


© Virginie Ittah, *David*, (détail), 2026

Works on View

Selection





Virginie Ittah

Vivian, 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick, 200 x 130 cm

Virginie Ittah
Nathan, 2025

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
61 x 61 cm





Virginie Ittah

Yann, 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
195 x 130 cm

Virginie Ittah
Yann, (detail), 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
195 x 130 cm





Virginie Ittah

David, 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
195 x 130 cm



Virginie Ittah

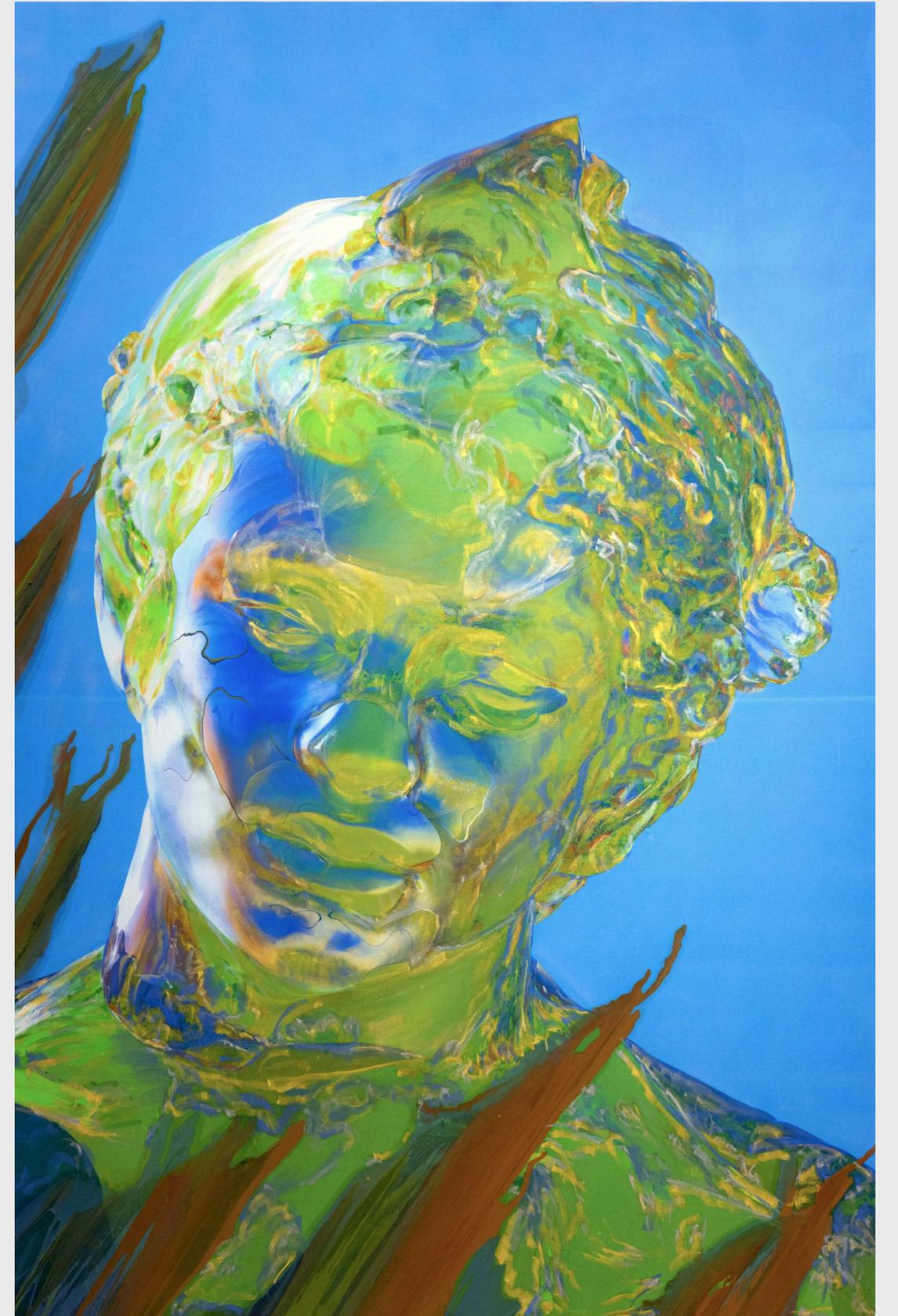
Frédéric, 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
195 x 130 cm

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
200 x 130 cm

Virginie Ittah

Tristan, 2026





Virginie Ittah

Tristan, (detail), 2026

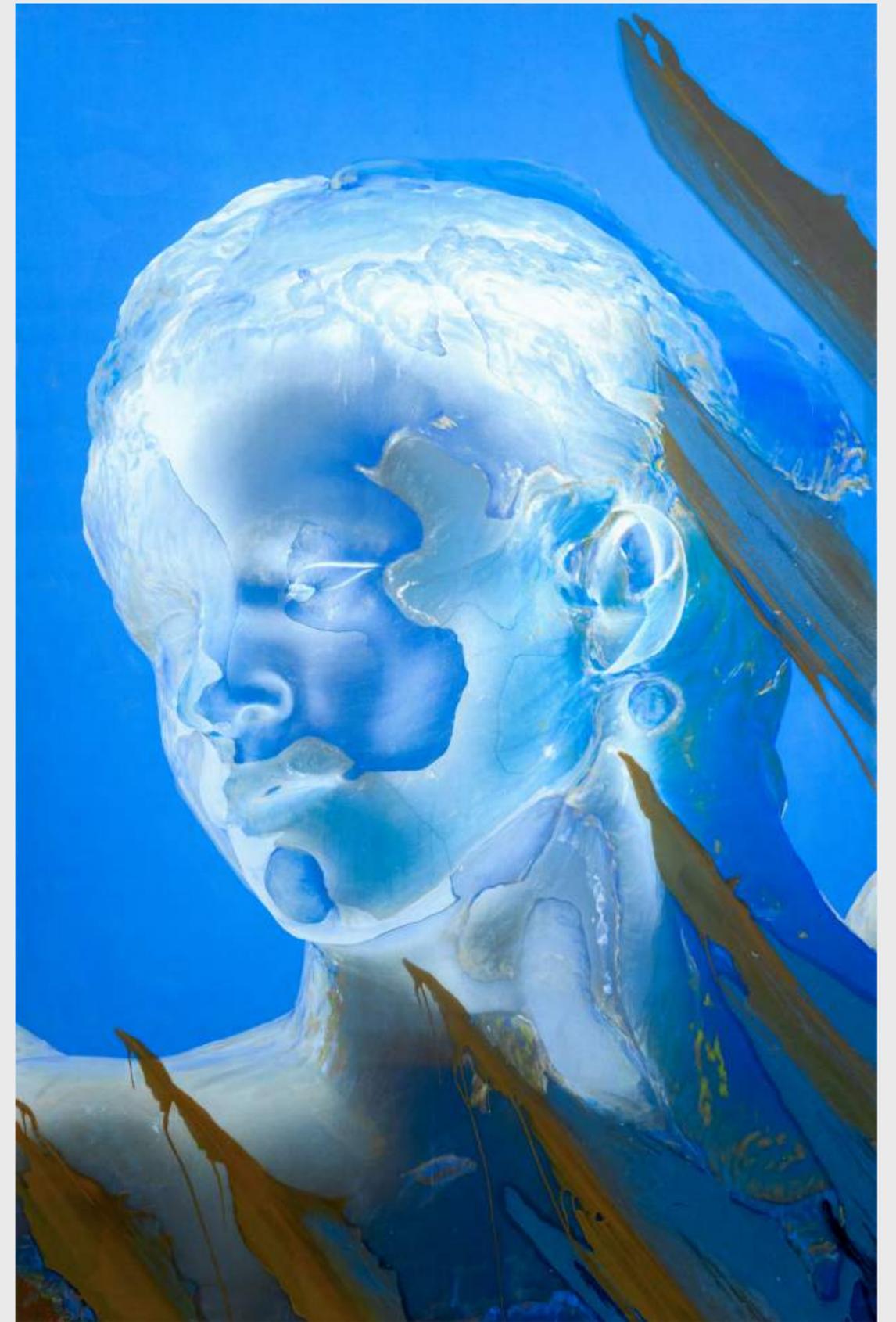
Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
200 x 130 cm



Virginie Ittah

Marie, 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), bio-based low-carbon indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
200 x 130 cm



Virginie Ittah

Iris, 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
200 x 130 cm

Virginie Ittah
Iris, (detail), 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530
Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
200 x 130 cm





Virginie Ittah

Irène & Raphaëlle, 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
200 x 260 cm

Virginie Ittah
Anais, 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
61 x 61 cm



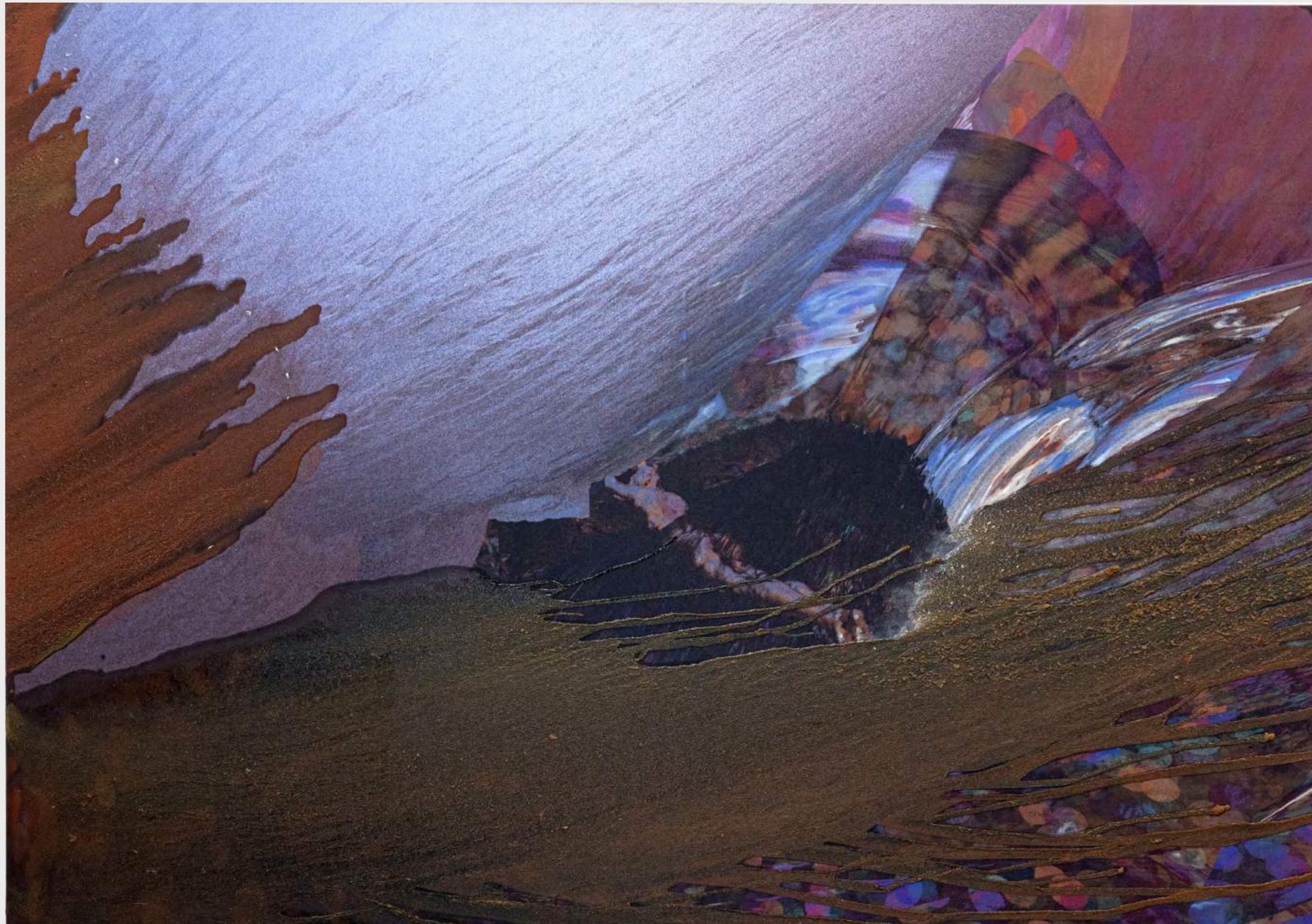


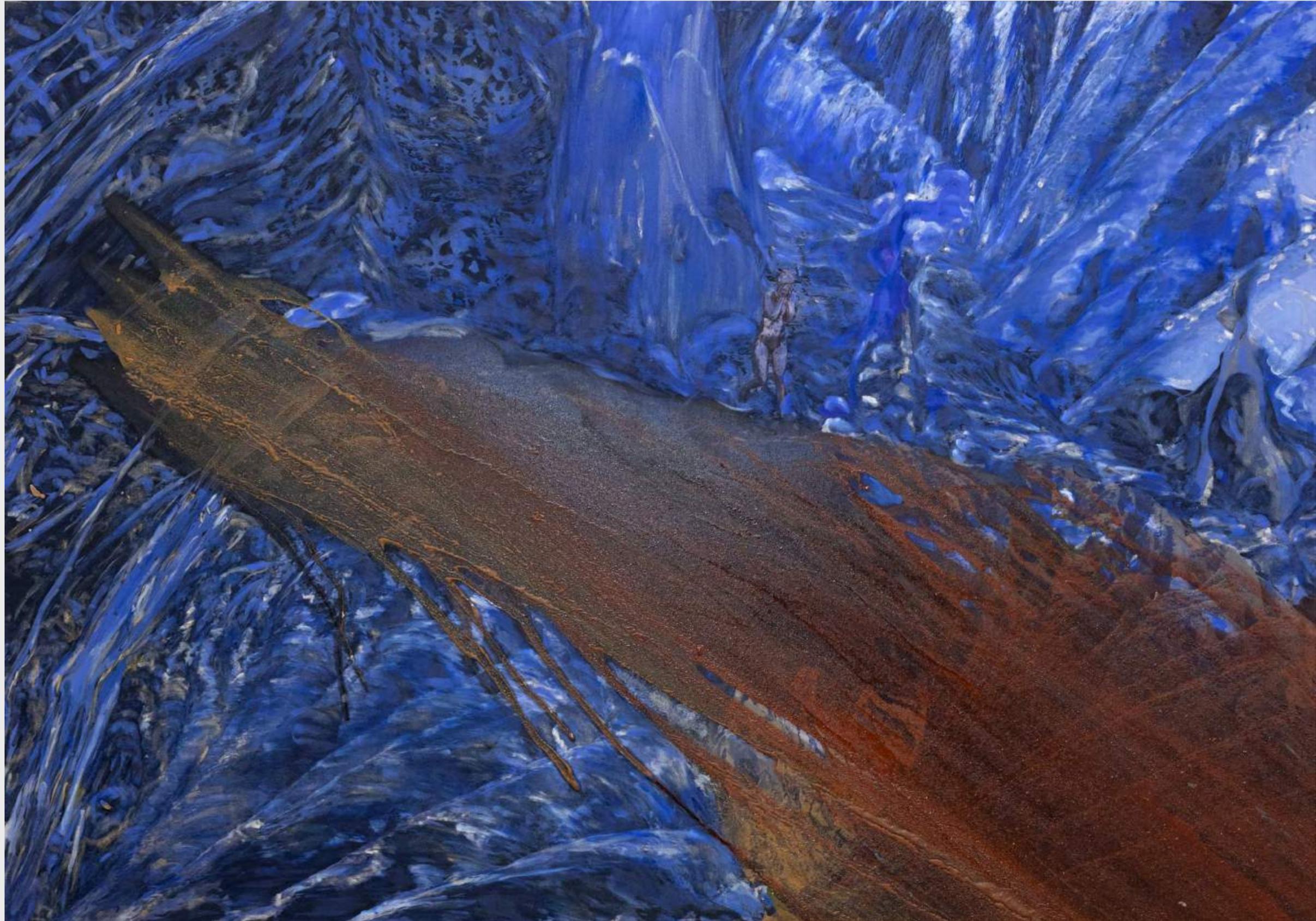
Virginie Ittah
Anastasia, 2026

Silk and cotton, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), low-carbon bio-based indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
114 x 162 cm

Virginie Ittah
Anna, 2026

Silk and wool, ochres collected and transformed
into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais),
bio-based low-carbon indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil
stick
114 x 162 cm





Virginie Ittah
Elizabeth, 2026

Silk and wool, ochres collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), bio-based low-carbon indigo (Pili), oil paint, oil stick
114 x 162 cm

Ochre and clay collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), wax, steel, blown glass, Roche Noire fragrance note comprising the Inner Light fragrance created in collaboration with Yann Vasnier (Givaudan) / Maison Pomander Walter
170 x 40 x 75 cm

Virginie Ittah
Hespérie, 2026





Virginie Ittah

Galatée, 2026

Ochre and clay collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), wax, steel, blown glass, Grounded fragrance note comprising the Inner Light fragrance created in collaboration with Yann Vasnier (Givaudan) / Maison Pomander Walter
170 x 40 x 75 cm

Ochre and clay collected and transformed into pigments by the artist (91530 Le Marais), wax, steel, blown glass, Anima fragrance note comprising the Inner Light fragrance, created in collaboration with Yann Vasnier (Givaudan) / Maison Pomander Walter
170 x 40 x 75 cm

Virginie Ittah
Calypso, 2026





Virginie Ittah

Ava, 2024

Wax, marble from Peccia and Arzo collected and transformed into pigments by the artist, olfactory work *Learning to fly* created in collaboration with David Chieze (Luzi, Mark Buxton), blown glass, brass, steel
178 x 68 x 120 cm

Biography





Virginie Ittah (1984) is a French artist living and working in Paris.

Her multidisciplinary practice, bringing together painting, sculpture, sound, and olfaction, is part of a transversal approach that connects different disciplines, geographical contexts, and temporalities. Combining ancestral know-how with contemporary technologies, she produces her pigments from stones, earths, and plants collected during her residencies and exhibitions. By reconnecting with ancestral gestures, she affirms a deep ecological commitment, while also integrating technological innovations such as 3D modeling and photogrammetry.

Her work unfolds in a constant dialogue between the tangible and the immaterial. Abstraction becomes a language for revealing the invisible : emotions, elemental forces, vital energies, and interdependent links that run through the world. Her landscapes and figures, often suspended between appearance and disappearance, open up spaces of resonance where the viewer perceives more than they see and can project their own reality. The figures she creates, born from a dialogue between ancient statuary, live models, and multiple mythologies, unfold within hybrid landscapes where time and space overlap, giving rise to immersive and singular universes.

Through this hybridization, Virginie Ittah transforms the body into landscape and invites us to rethink our relationship with the living, opening perspectives toward more symbiotic forms of coexistence. Her work also questions power relations, systemic violence, and the persistence of monstrous figures in contemporary society. In counterpoint, she reveals forms of vitality, sisterhood, and resilience, creating spaces where intimate narratives and collective imaginaries intertwine.

Between memory and innovation, ancestral gestures and advanced technologies, Virginie Ittah shapes immersive environments that question our ways of inhabiting the world and weaving sensitive connections with the living.

The work of Virginie Ittah developed within the artistic duo Ittah Yoda has been presented in numerous private and public institutions, including :

- The Museum of Contemporary Art of Lyon (FR)
- Kunstverein Göttingen (DE)
- The Lambert Collection, Avignon (FR)
- The Bally Foundation, Lugano (CH)
- ROH Projects, Jakarta (ID)
- The CIAPV - Île de Vassivière (FR)
- Podium Gallery, Hong Kong (HK)
- The Musée des Beaux Arts d'Angers (FR)
- The Centre Culturel Jean Cocteau, Les Lilas (FR)
- Palais Augmenté, Grand Palais Éphémère, Paris (FR)
- The Biennale of Nice, Le 109, Nice (FR)
- Les Rencontres d'Arles, Arles (FR)
- Hagiwara Projects, Tokyo (JP)
- Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (FR)

The artist and the duo have received several grants and residencies, and have taught, among others :

- Jury, DNSEP, ESA de Tourcoing (FR)
- Research and production residency at MAC Lyon (FR)
- MIRA Grant for Desa Residency in Indonesia, Institut Français (FR)
- Conference Abstraction and Landscape, Hartung-Bergman Foundation (FR)
- Residency and production support, Martell Foundation (FR)
- Production grant for an artwork, Fondation des Artistes (FR)
- ISCP Residency, NYC, USA (Institut Français / FACE Foundation)
- DICRéAM Grant, CNC – Centre National du Cinéma (FR)
- Fiminco Residency, Romainville (FR)
- Teaching, MA Photography, Materialising Photography, ECAL (CH)
- Artistic Project Support Grant, CNAP (FR)
- Rupert Residency, Vilnius (LT)
- Teaching, Paris-Saclay University x Inria, Hackathon, Paris (FR)
- Residency, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (FR)

In 2023, their works entered the public collections of FRAC Pays de la Loire (FR) and FRAC Artothèque Nouvelle-Aquitaine (FR).

PREVIEW

Thursday, February 5, 2026
5 pm – 9 pm
By invitation only

PUBLIC OPENING

Friday, February 6, 2026
11 am – 8 pm

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