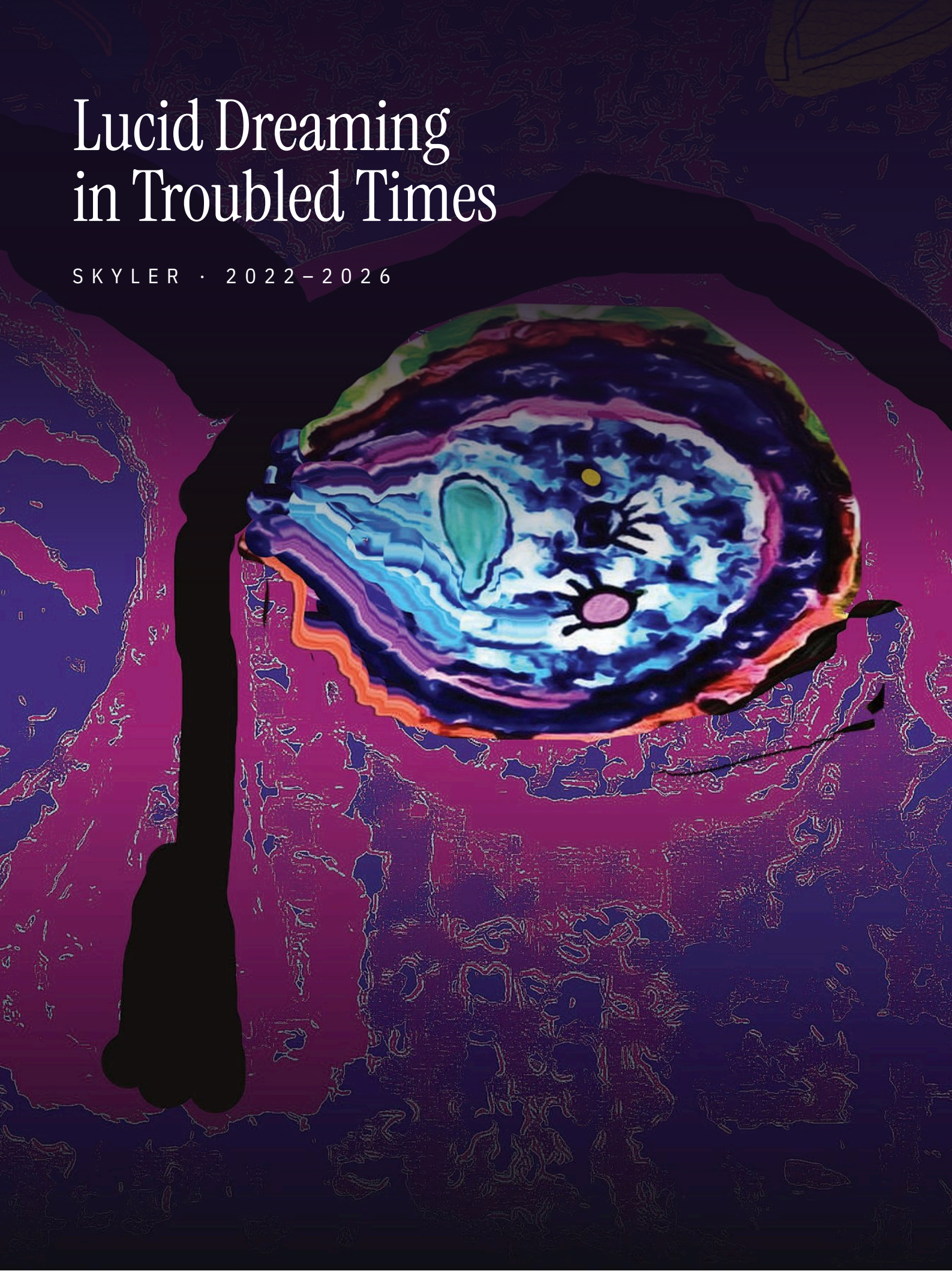
Lucid Dreaming in Troubled Times

SKYLER · 2022–2026



Lucid Dreaming in Troubled Times

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40 WORKS

SHIZUOKA, JAPAN

Lucid Dreaming in Troubled Times, 2022–2026

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Revised edition, 2026.

Also by Skyler: *From Out of the Sky, 2022–2026* (109 works).

skylers.work

Sizes are given in centimetres.

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Introduction

Lucid Dreaming in Troubled Times is a fitting title for a collection that refuses to look away. The selected works by Skyler, created over four years of dedicated practice with various media including acrylic, ink, chalk, marker, crayon, pencil, and digital tools, provide a profound reflection on our era.

The collection begins with a page of headlines from a world in crisis, presented in fragmented type across a dozen languages. Iran's internet is cut, Mediterranean death tolls are reported, and the consequences of displacement, fire, flood, and bombardment are laid bare. This multilingual cascade is not merely decorative; it mirrors the cacophony that the dreaming mind must somehow process, filter, and endure. Being a lucid dreamer is not an escape from this commotion but a conscious presence within it, an awareness that one is dreaming even as the dream becomes unbearable.

Skyler's diverse works, forty in all, seamlessly transition between intimate and civilizational themes, comic and devastating elements, mythic and mundane aspects. This restless exploration aligns with the collection's overarching themes. The artist navigates various registers, from expressing an overwhelming grief that defies language in *what the sun and moon cannot say* to portraying a village fire eater in the desert outside Dubai. *the cliff diver* compels us toward irreversible action, while *a drink too many* depicts the consequences of overshooting boundaries. Despite these tonal shifts, there's a consistent thread of unvarnished cadence, capturing the mind fully immersed in existence during a period marked by absurdity and catastrophic events; a time that does not pause to provide explanations.

Certain recurring preoccupations throughout the collection provide it with a sense of coherence. Identity, its construction, erosion, and theft, is explored in works like *we are the sum of our boundaries*, *the face stealers*, *push & pull*, and *I was American*. Each piece offers a unique perspective on the question of what sustains a self when the systems designed to protect it become the very agents of harm. Mythology, repurposed, subverted, and exhausted, is evident in *Ulysses at the sento*, *problems at mythic beach*, *Icarus, redirected*, and *Konohanasakuya*. These works examine the distance between the stories a culture tells about itself and the reality those stories can no longer encompass. Despite the collection's vibrant and energetic surface, the pervasive influence of power, manifested in its performance, cruelty, and subtle normalization, is evident in diverse works such as *freedom is slavery*, *off the cliff*, *the naysayers*, and *it feeds*.

Skyler's work is distinguished by its deliberate integration of handmade and digital elements. These works don't seamlessly transition between mediums; instead, they actively engage with each other. The gestural marks resist the pixelated nature of digital art, while the photographic ground is invaded by impasto, and the digital field is interrupted by the grain of chalk on paper. This friction is not accidental; it's a central argument of the collection: that we exist between two worlds—the slow, deliberate process of handmade creation and the fast, mediated speed of digital technology and global urbanization. It's a tension between what we create with our hands and the systems we've built that reshape us.

2 escape the silo, the concluding piece of the collection, effectively encapsulates this argument on a grand scale. Humanity retreats, generations pass, and the door opens. What awaits outside is neither punishment nor redemption but a world that has persisted in our absence and transformed into something we can no longer recognize as our own. This image is both quietly devastating and fitting as the final word, as the artist has prepared us to encounter it throughout the series.

These pieces are not meant to be comfortable. However, despite their diverse range of moods, mediums, and scales, they share a unique quality that sets art apart from mere commentary. The images exude a sense of lived experience and personal connection. Someone was present, paying close attention, and transformed their observations into something tangible. In these unsettling times, the act of sustained attention becomes a form of resistance. *Lucid Dreaming in Troubled Times* serves as a counterattack, inviting the viewer to join in the endeavor.

"김정은, 다연장로켓 실사격 참관… '전쟁 억제력' 과시"

"27 Kundgebungen in zehn Tagen: Deutschland zum Zentrum des weltweiten Iran-Protests"

"दक्षिण अफ्रीका में बाढ़, चिली में आग: जनवरी 2026 ने मौसम के सारे रिकॉर्ड तोड़े"

"EUA lançam operação militar na Venezuela e capturam Maduro"

«Украинский удар по Херсону: 24 погибших, 50 раненых»

«اینترنت ایران قطع شد؛ خانواده‌ها از سرنوشت عزیزانشان بی‌خبر ماندند»

「委內瑞拉遭美軍突襲，馬杜羅被押往紐約受審」

"Al menos 21 muertos y 50.000 evacuados mientras los incendios devoran el Biobío"

"Le Danemark avertit: une attaque américaine sur le Groenland signifierait la fin de l'OTAN"

"Burze i powodzie uderzają w Europę od Irlandii po Morze Śródziemne"

"Death toll in Iran protests may exceed 30,000 — less than 10% officially registered"

"Gavumenti efunga intaneti mazzi abiri nga olukiiko lwa leta lusembera"

「地中海横断の死者数、2026年の幕開けは記録史上最悪」

"Il Consiglio di Sicurezza dell'ONU condanna l'attacco a Caracas:
'In gioco la credibilità del diritto internazionale'"

"Εκουαδόρ: 75.000 στρατιώτες στις επαρχίες, απαγόρευση κυκλοφορίας νύχτας"

"Iran sluit internet volledig af terwijl schattingen doden oplopen tot tienduizenden"

«Куба без нафти, без світла, без надії: острів на межі гуманітарної катастрофи»

"Isola di Sardegna: 500 grifoni tornano a volare — trionfo della conservazione"

"La baleine franche de l'Atlantique Nord fait des petits:
15 baleineaux déjà repérés cette saison"

«إسرائيل تهدم مقر الأونروا وسط صمت دولي»

"Pymtheg o bŵis bach yn barod am gartrefi newydd erbyn y Gwanwyn —
y domen gariad fwyaf yng Nghymru eleni"

next year, more horsing around

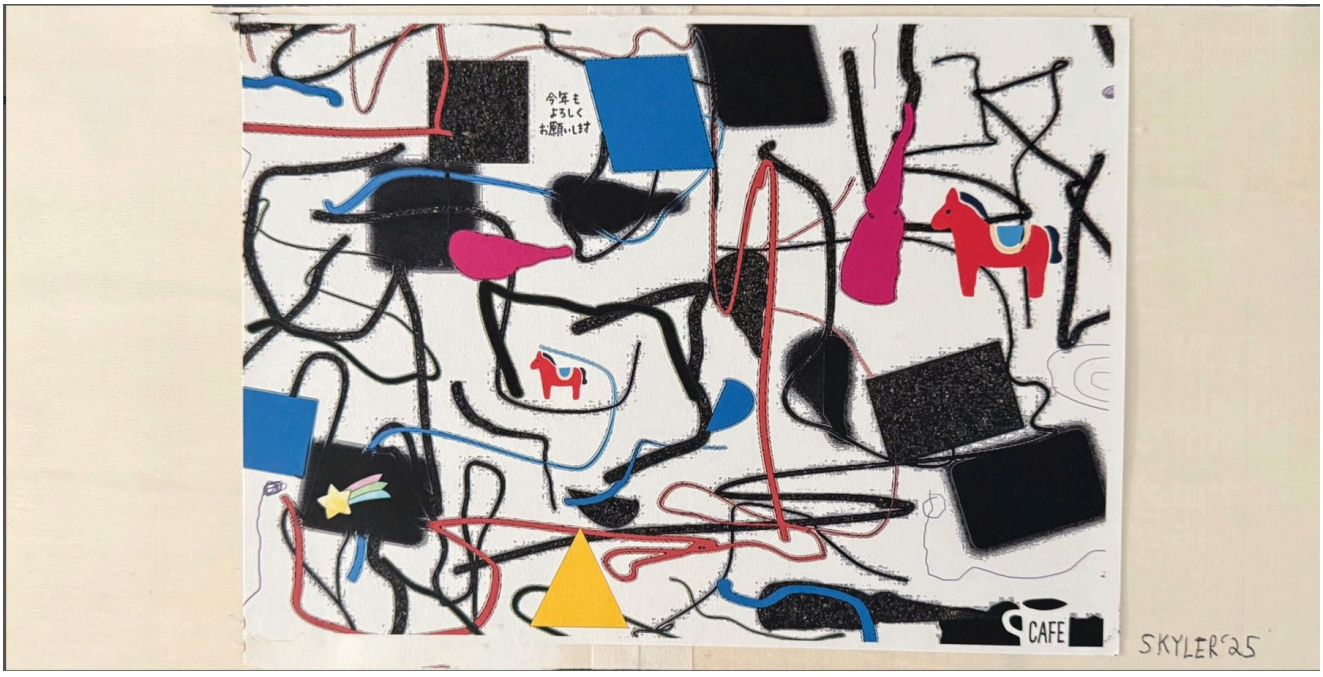
2025 · ~mixed media (paper, wood, marker and graphic work)~ · 40 x 29 cm

In “next year, more horsing around,” Skyler presents an abstract treatment of cultural transition and personal resolve. The work functions as a digital nengajō (New Year’s card), a tradition deeply rooted in Japanese culture where zodiac animals and seasonal greetings express gratitude and future intentions.

The composition is anchored by two stylized red horses, a direct reference to the 2026 Year of the Horse (Uma) in the Japanese zodiac. In Japanese folklore, the horse symbolizes health, rapid progress, and maximum energy. By doubling this motif against a chaotic web of black ink-like strokes and primary-colored geometric shapes, the artist creates a visual metaphor for navigating a frenetic modern world with the horse’s spirit — independence and boundless energy intact.

The handwritten Japanese text in the upper quadrant, 今年もよろしくお願いします (Kotoshi mo yoroshiku onegaishimasu), translates as “Please treat me kindly again this year.” This standard yet heartfelt greeting emphasizes the continuity of relationships: it is fine to go strong, but we must bring others along with us.

The title offers a playful linguistic bridge to the imagery. The Western idiom “horsing around” — meaning frivolous or noisy play — creates a cheeky juxtaposition: while the zodiac horse represents serious progress and ambition, the artist hints at a resolution to leave behind the tangled chaos of the background in favor of a more focused year ahead. A small “CAFE” icon in the lower right suggests that the occasional pause will be essential to sustaining the horse spirit.



01 *next year, more horsing around*, 2025

loose carbon

2026 · ~graphic design~ · 35 x 18 cm

This work presents carbon as an amoral traveler — a substance that follows physical laws rather than human values, yet shapes human life in profound ways. The flowing lines trace its movement through unseen systems, while the glowing blocks suggest moments where it gathers, pauses, or is redirected. Three small chain-like forms — like drifting CO_2 molecules — appear to chase one another across the field, caught in a looping motion that feels playful, compulsive, and quietly unstoppable. Dice tumbling on a casino table. There are rules, but the outcome is uncertain.

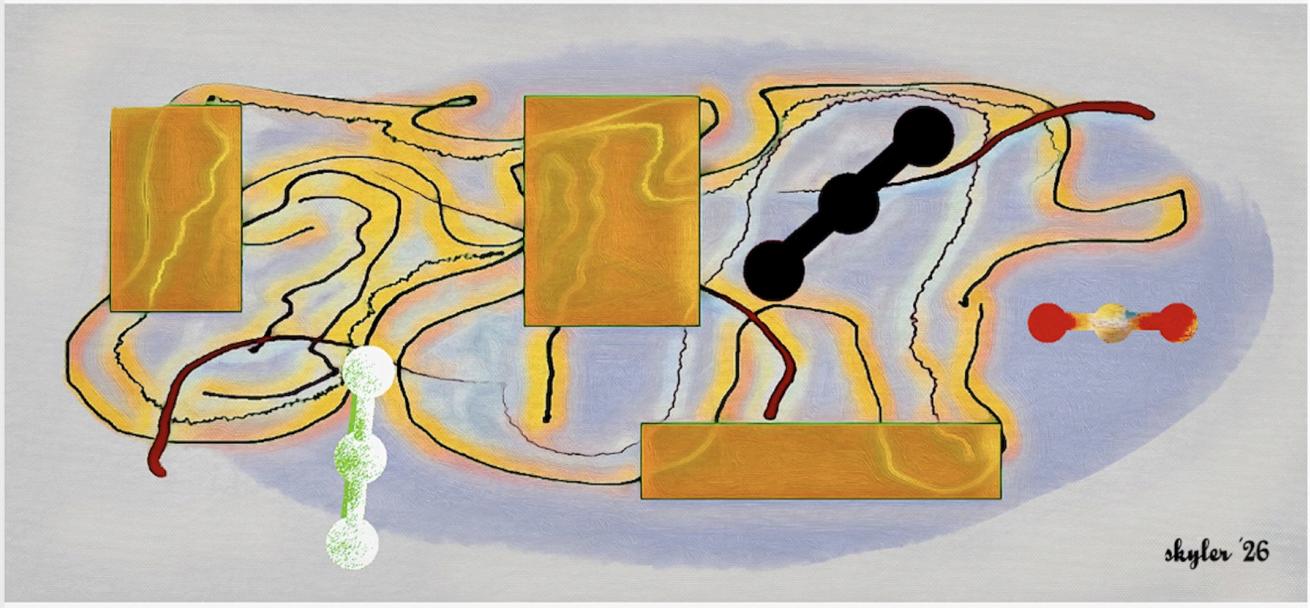
Nothing here is shown as evil or virtuous. Carbon simply moves, bonds, separates, and moves again. Yet its unattended movement carries human consequences: breath and growth, heat and fire, climate and collapse.

By mounting this digital image onto wood — a material shaped by carbon through time, growth, and living structure — the artist brings an abstract circulation back into the physical world.

The wooden support becomes a reminder that invisible processes eventually take visible form.

Skyler also reflects on carbon bonding as a metaphor for human attraction and the desire for companionship. These feelings cause us to connect, stay together, and break away or drift off.

Like carbon, our impulses are part of nature itself, yet these needs can give rise to both great beauty and joy and deep pain and irreparable loss. Carbon is a gambler, always rolling the dice.



02 *loose carbon*, 2026

moon lady, lost child, & some guy

2026 · ~mixed media on paper~ · 32 x 28 cm

This work tells a simple story: a man and a woman meet, but their differences are irreconcilable. They have a brief, intense life together and a child is left behind to make sense of it all.

Between the two adults, a red balloon drifts as a fleeting symbol of something bright that cannot hold its shape for long.

in place of the woman's face, an egg sliced in half hints at life given and life taken away — consequences shared by both mother and child. Below the couple, the child lies on his back, clearly in pain, yet the colors of dawn suggest he may still have the chance to thrive and build a better destiny for another set of three, in the next generation.



03 *moon lady, lost child, & some guy*, 2026

black balloon

2024 · ~graphic composition~ · 40 x 30 cm

I am usually filled with positive energy. The day is bursting with happy balloons; even the frogs are pretty friendly. But there are those occasional days when the whole universe seems to flip to its magnetic opposite. These are the “black balloon” days, when a malign force imprints itself on our wonderful world.

What to do about it? Just pick yourself up off the sidewalk and carry on. And find yourself a pin along the way to pop those little black bastards, those energy drainers that would have us believe the day is anything less than glorious.



04 *black balloon*, 2024

problems at mythic beach

2024 · ~ink, chalk, marker, photography, and paper on paper~ · 80 x 60 cm

This is one of my favorite works in this book. At first glance, we're tempted to feel uplifted by the cheery patterning beneath the half-fish/half-mummy figure lying in the dark red sun—a candy-bright and polka-dot festive scene—but upon closer inspection, the background reads more like detritus: a beach littered with spent paint swatches, or a palette with the meaning drained from myth itself.

The central, reclining white body—dead center and rendered in a sculptural, almost Greco-Roman style—suggests the corpse of mythology or its weary survivor. Its tonal neutrality contrasts starkly with the psychedelic chaos surrounding it. There's something unsettling about the posture—placid, perhaps resigned, and neither clearly male nor female. It floats above the multicolored sand. It seems part fish and part human.

Above, a bloated, cracked sun radiates spikes of menace rather than warmth. Its rays feel invasive, almost weaponized. At the top right, a mischievous winged figure—a postmodern Bacchus?—celebrates aboard an angular boat, raising a bottle like a toast or a defiant gesture. This god has no gravitas—he's cartoonish, vulgar, celebratory to the point of mockery. Below, the narrative panels—I intended postcards as if sketched by children who did not understand the scene—remind us of what mythology once did: explain the sea, the voyage, the seduction, the danger, and the prize. But here epic narrative has been reduced, flattened, even trivialized. The siren on the rock flashes wild blond hair; a boat drifts past wavy lines—myths remembered through the distorted lens of pop culture, dream fragments, or tourist kitsch.

My title, "problems at mythic beach," intends to be sly and tragicomic. This is not the site of heroism or transcendence, but of confusion, hangover, and bathos. The problems aren't the monsters or gods—they're symbolic burnout, aesthetic overload, and perhaps even the impossibility of believing in the stories we once told ourselves for fortitude. A beach is usually the edge of things—where land meets sea, where consciousness meets the unconscious. Here, myth meets postmodern entropy.



05 *problems at mythic beach*, 2024

Ulysses at the sento

2025 · ~ink, crayon and acrylic~ · 30 x 42 cm

This work subverts classical heroism and charts the journey inward. The sento, a public bath and important communal space in Japanese life, becomes a private arena where the epic gives way to intimacy and myth yields to frailty. This is not the tale of a triumphant return but of a man hesitating, exposed, and full of uncertainty.

The mythic hero Ulysses is transposed from the high seas to the tiled floor of a modest bath-house. Gone are the monsters and gods of Homeric epic; what remains is a lone, aging man, naked and unsure, reaching in vain for a fallen bar of soap. His bent posture and fragmented form speak of weariness, not triumph.

Once a warrior-king, he now grapples with fatigue, memory, and the humbling rituals of daily life.

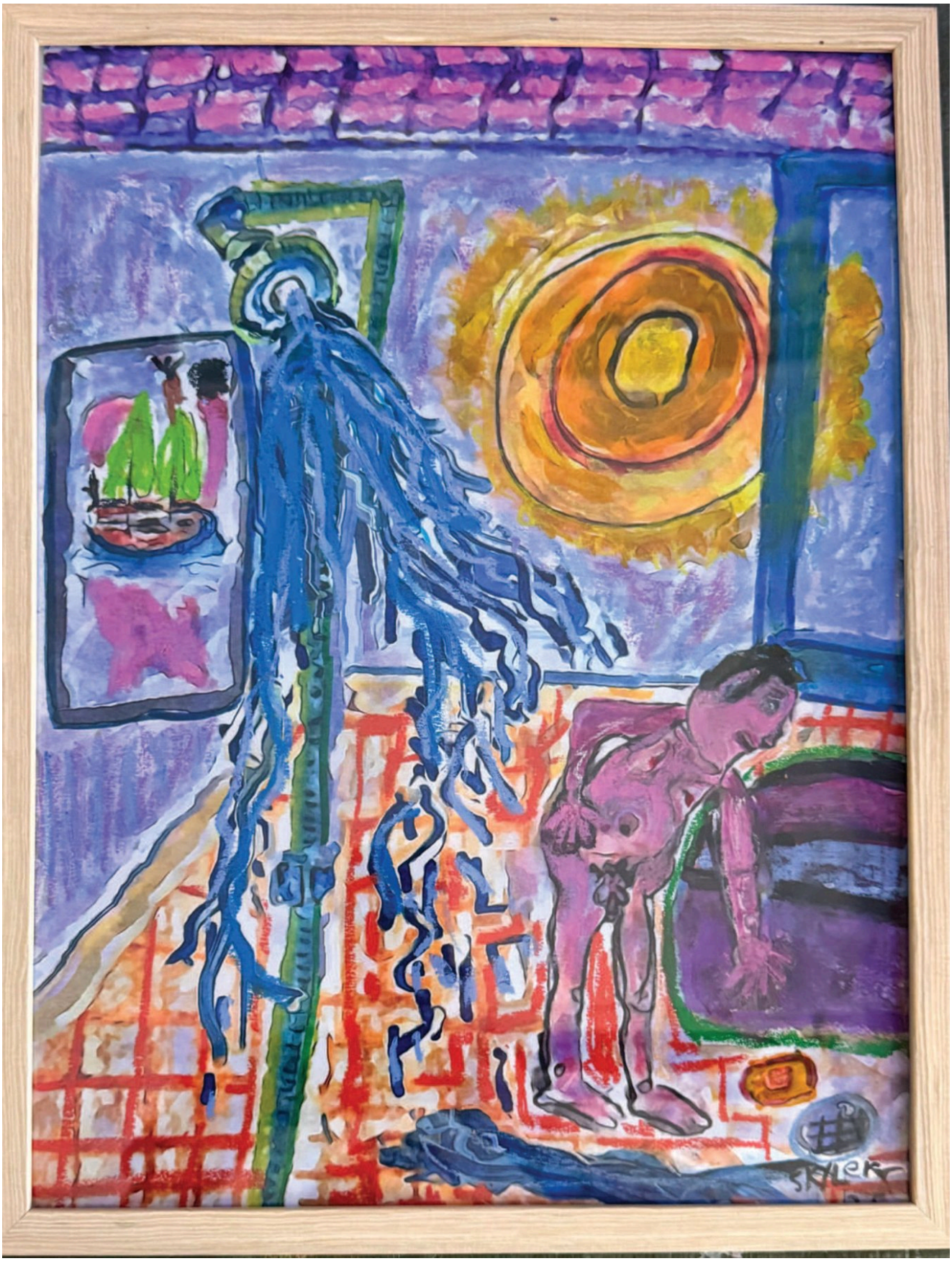
On the wall, a mirror recalls Ulysses' past: a stylized vessel with green sails hints at voyages now distant, glory glimpsed through the fog of memory. It does not reflect the man he is, but the legend he once was. A bold green shower pipe slices diagonally across the frame, gushing tangled ribbons of water like Medusa's hair. Traditionally a symbol of renewal, water here is chaotic and unruly, falling not in droplets but in ropey, animated tendrils.

Perhaps it is the sea that refuses to release him, or time itself, pouring on indifferently.

The tub Ulysses approaches is not welcoming but appears as one last trap for a tired hero, suggesting that reintegration into community will be uncomfortable, even unwelcome. Though the setting is communal, the tub is empty or at best half full, and no one else is using the facilities.

Executed in ink, crayon, and acrylic, the work carries rawness and immediacy. Layered textures evoke damp surfaces, while loose, expressive lines clash with the rigid red-orange grid of the floor.

The unnatural palette, purples for flesh, flaming oranges for sunlight, Prussian blues for water, echoes the emotional distortion of German Expressionism.



06 *Ulysses at the sento*, 2025

Nihonbashi, ground zero

2026 · ~crayon, ink, and graphic composition~ · 30 x 42 cm

This work takes Hiroshige's *Nihonbashi: Morning View* as its starting point. The original bridge was the literal zero-kilometer marker of the Tōkaidō road and the symbolic center of Edo civic life. Here that same bridge becomes a place of collision and fracture. Where Hiroshige showed orderly processions beneath an open sky, anonymous figures now crowd the spans as an undifferentiated mass, their individuality absorbed into the system around them.

Numbers appear in the middle of the composition with a strange independence, feeling less like human notation than like the state's own calculus running on its own terms, turning the bridge from a measure of distance into a measure of force. Above, military helicopters fill the sky entirely, marking the moment when a center stops organizing movement and begins generating pressure.

The materials carry this tension. Hiroshige's restrained woodblock palette gives way to fiery reds, acid oranges, and deep blues that read less as color than as warning. The ink line, shaky and urgent against the waxy crayon surface, enacts the friction between human presence and the rigid structures that contain it. Fuji looms larger than in the source, its crater open and reddened, no longer a serene backdrop but an active witness.

Origin here becomes compression. The work suggests that consolidated systems do not simply organize movement but produce pressures that push inward on the individual and outward through force simultaneously.



07 *Nihonbashi, ground zero*, 2026

forgotten hat

2022 · ~pencil, marker and computer graphics on paper~ · 40 x 30 cm

The inspiration for this work was "After: A neighborhood reduced to rubble by an atomic bomb blast, Hiroshima, 1945, Bernard Hoffman. The LIFE Picture Collection/Shutterstock. LIFE (Mar 11, 1946)"

The magazine on the atomic bomb's effects wrote, “In the following waves [after the initial blast] people’s bodies were terribly squeezed, then their internal organs ruptured. Then the blast blew the broken bodies at 500 to 1,000 miles per hour through the flaming, rubble-filled air. Practically everybody within a radius of 6,500 feet was killed or seriously injured and all buildings crushed or disemboweled.”

In making "forgotten hat" I was thinking all that remains is memory: a forgotten hat, a yellow shoe snagged on a branch, and the beautiful silhouette of a naked woman’s back. Among the rubble walks an alien—atomic man—a figure of unmaking whose presence invites absence to become terribly visible.



08 *forgotten hat*, 2022

in the news

2026 · ~mixed media (pencil and graphic work)~ · 42 x 34 cm

A lone figure sits at a table reading a newspaper, grounded in its muted weight while the room around them breaks apart into intense color and restless imagery. Pictures crowd the walls, erasing any sense of calm or private space.

The act of reading feels less like engagement than something closer to imposition. A nearby plant appears drained of life, quietly suggesting that constant exposure to the news carries a cost that is real but hard to name.

In the News describes a space where information saturates rather than informs, leaving behind a residue that is emotional, environmental, and invisible.



09 *in the news*, 2026

the dance party

2024 · ~mixed media (ink, chalk and marker)~ · 50 x 40 cm

Dance plays a significant role in both the animal kingdom and traditional human societies. It serves in courtship, communication, and social bonding, and across cultures it carries deep expressions of spirituality and identity.

In this work, Skyler explores what the urban environment does to these basic human impulses. The city makes genuine connection difficult, a tension the artist renders through the striking disparity in the figures' heights and through the diversity of race and sexuality represented among them. The materials reinforce this theme: the ink line holds each dancer apart, while the chalk and marker crowd them into one tight, jostling room.

Everyone is here, and everyone is moving, yet few of the figures look at one another. The party asks whether the city still leaves room for what dance was always for, or whether it has become one more way of being alone together.



10 *the dance party*, 2024

dance party 10

2026 · ~mixed media (ink, chalk and marker)~ · 42 x 32 cm

A dense procession of totemic figures moves across a charged field of yellow, red, green, and blue. Chalk, crayon, and ink collide to create a surface alive with friction and energy. A central figure, masked in deep blue and rimmed with white, anchors the scene while surrounding bodies sway in tight, rhythmic proximity. At the core, forms with white legs caught in an embrace hold the composition together, suggesting both balance and vulnerability within the press of movement.

Overhead, a band of suspended monitors or speakers hangs like a watchful canopy, compressing the space and intensifying the sense of contained pressure. Red circular forms pulse through the crowd like shared heartbeats. The figures remain distinct yet magnetically drawn together, holding tension rather than dissolving into a single mass through the music.

The physical materials carry this energy directly into the surface: wax resists the ink, chalk pushes through pigment, giving the work a tactile immediacy that is as much felt as seen. This is less a party than a charged communal rite, balanced at the edge of consummation or eruption, where a single shared pulse could alter the course of the night.



11 *dance party 10*, 2026

Icarus, redirected

2026 · ~acrylic & marker~ · 60 x 80 cm

In this vibrant reimagining of the classic Greek myth, Skyler transforms the traditional tragedy of hubris into a scene of chaotic but perhaps opportune redirection. The artist utilizes heavy impasto to create a sun that pulses with tactile energy, casting a fierce light over a deep blue sea dotted with white-sailed vessels.

At the center of the narrative, a minimalist, almost kinetic figure of Icarus tumbles through the sky. Rather than the cold, lonely depths of the Aegean, he is drawn toward a massive, golden coastline of craggy cliffs and caves. These structures, rendered with thick, mineral-like textures, suggest a terrestrial sanctuary or a subterranean mystery. The "redirection" shifts the story from one of terminal failure to one of unexpected arrival, suggesting that falling from the heavens might be the first step toward a more grounded, visceral discovery.



12 *Icarus, redirected*, 2026

push & pull

2025 · ~coloured pencil, ink, and marker on paper~ · 40 x 30 cm

In "push & pull," I center on nature and culture, inclusion and exclusion, movement and memory. I'm exploring coexistence without contact, systems that bind without blending, and the mirrored possibilities beneath the surface.

I lay out a layered, mirror-split composition: two family groups, divided by a lush central tree and a gate labeled "history." They move in parallel yet disconnected paths, hinting at different social realities that are side by side.

Hauntingly, the Black child on the right casts no reflection, suggesting he may not have a future, literally or metaphorically.

Across the work, embedded words like biology, history, economics, politics suggest the forces at play.

The vibrant, textured upper world cannot avoid reflecting into a quieter, distorted lower realm, where truth and memory appear submerged or refracted into other narratives.



13 *push & pull*, 2025

what the sun and moon cannot say

2026 · ~ink, chalk, marker and acrylic~ · 40 x 30 cm

This work depicts the deep grief of a couple who have lost their child.



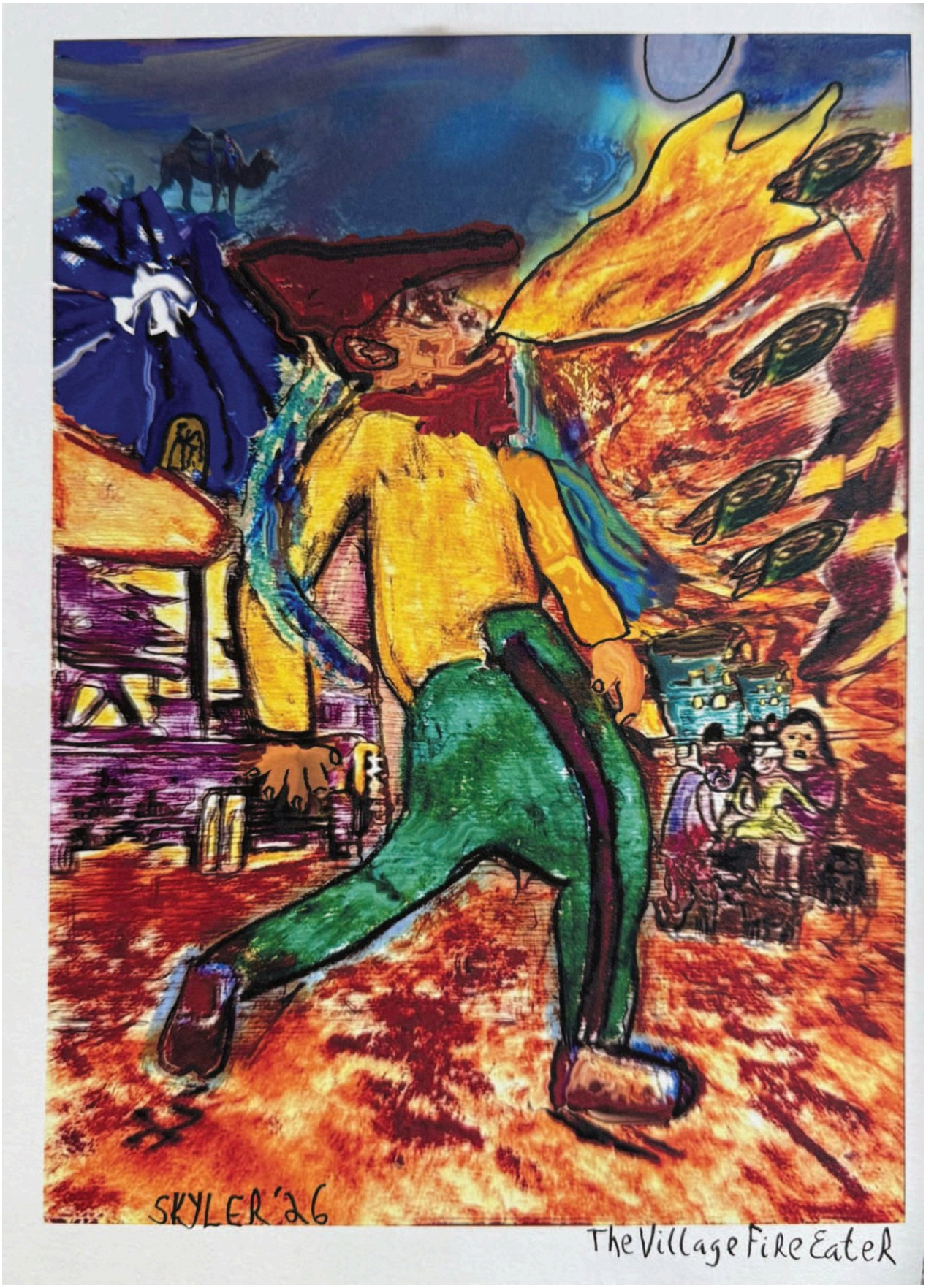
14 *what the sun and moon cannot say*, 2026

the village fire eater

2026 · ~chalk, pen & marker~ · 18 x 26 cm

On a trip to the desert outside Dubai, before Trump's war, my wife and I took in a village performance that included, along with the popular belly dancing, a fire eater show.

People don't naturally consume fire, but it's a living.



15 *the village fire eater*, 2026

we are the sum of our boundaries

2026 · ~mixed media (ink, chalk, marker & acrylic on paper)~ · 80 x 63 cm

Identity is not just made of fragments, but shaped by imposed systems, thresholds, and decisions about passage involving whether we enter or exit perceived doors.

We are constructed not from a core essence, but from the boundaries imposed on us, such as cultural, linguistic, institutional, and personal.

What is interesting is that these boundaries are messy, overlapping, and contradictory. Yet the art of life is that we still produce coherence.



16 *we are the sum of our boundaries*, 2026

flesh, bone, and the spark of life

2025 · ~mixed media (ink, chalk, marker & acrylic on paper)~ · 80 x 63 cm

“Flesh, Bone and the Spark of Life” uses geometric abstraction, expressive lines, and layered brushwork to evoke the interplay between structure and vitality. Angular forms and bold lines suggest skeletal frameworks, rigid yet fragmented, symbolizing strength and vulnerability. Warm ochres, muted reds, and gold tones evoke flesh, contrasting with cool blues and turquoise hues to highlight life’s complexity. Textures ranging from opaque to translucent emphasize the tactile quality of organic matter.

Perhaps most compellingly, the title evokes an intangible dimension: the spark of life, particularly evident in the vibrant golden hues and bright, intermittent streaks of pink that traverse the painting’s surface. These lively touches, less structured and more instinctual, serve as a visual metaphor for life’s animating force (ki), the ineffable quality separating living beings from mere matter. Together, these formal elements reflect the delicate balance between physical existence and intangible spirit.



17 *flesh, bone, and the spark of life*, 2025

a drink too many

2025 · ~mixed media (ink, chalk, marker & acrylic on paper)~ · 32 x 42 cm

This piece employs mixed media on a textured surface. The palette is diverse and lively, featuring bold yellows, greens, blues, pinks, and blacks interspersed with raw, natural tones of the underlying material. The application of color is gestural and varied, with strokes that are rough, energetic, and unevenly distributed, contributing to a sense of chaotic layering. Varying textures, achieved through layering different media, enhance the sensation of depth and complexity.

Loose, expressive lines traverse the composition, intermingling with the painted areas. Some lines appear intentional and figurative, while others seem spontaneous, their hurried nature echoing the frenzied mental state suggested by the title. Overlapping, irregular rectangular shapes provide a structural rhythm that attempts to organize the chaotic visual activity but ultimately succumbs to its disarray.

Overall, the work emphasizes the theme of excess, of going beyond one's limits, while the fragmented composition suggests the distorted perception and fractured reality that often accompany such moments. By blending materiality with thematic exploration, the piece presents a vivid, tactile representation of altered consciousness, both intoxicating and unsettling.



18 *a drink too many*, 2025

Wendy is gonna break

2025 · ~acrylic and mixed media on canvas~ · 80 x 60 cm

"Wendy's Gonna Break" addresses the mental strain of confronting an obstacle. Often the crucial act is finding a way around the "door." I've worked part-time, at different times, in a hospital morgue and a psychiatric institute—experiences that impressed on me the importance of not giving up, not letting go.

Broken ceramics signal the fragility of Wendy's state—once-whole elements of the psyche now fragmented. The feather, typically a symbol of lightness, carries tension here: painted with blood-like red veins, it suggests even the most delicate things can bear the weight of trauma. A large red door dominates the center, the overwhelming obstacle. Its encasing shape implies constriction and little room to escape. Erratic lines and disjointed forms translate a mind under pressure, while the clash between a controlled, grid-like ground and a chaotic foreground evokes the failure of imposed order.

Near the red arc, an open eye with bright yellow lashes suggests awareness of an impending break; though it's unclear whether that awareness will avert the crisis or merely bear witness to it.

The work implies an ongoing struggle. Wendy hasn't broken, yet the title hints at a near inevitability. The fragility of materials and forms underscores a hard truth: under enough pressure, anyone can "break."

The mind—our most intricate, fragile possession—keeps a delicate balance between holding on and letting go.



19 *Wendy is gonna break*, 2025

time sleep

2026 · ~pen and colored pencil on paper~ · 40 x 30 cm

Time sleep is an ink and colored pencil drawing where past and present occupy the same uneasy frame. A samurai, a contemporary figure (a salaryman on his day off?)

who has lost interest in his phone and is dozing off, and a traditionally adorned woman in kimono coexist before a distant castle and red sun. An everyday, though odd, advertisement about buying a new chicken intrudes on myth.

The work suggests time not as progression, but as overlap: roles inherited, performed, and quietly endured within a suspended, restless present that offers little respite.

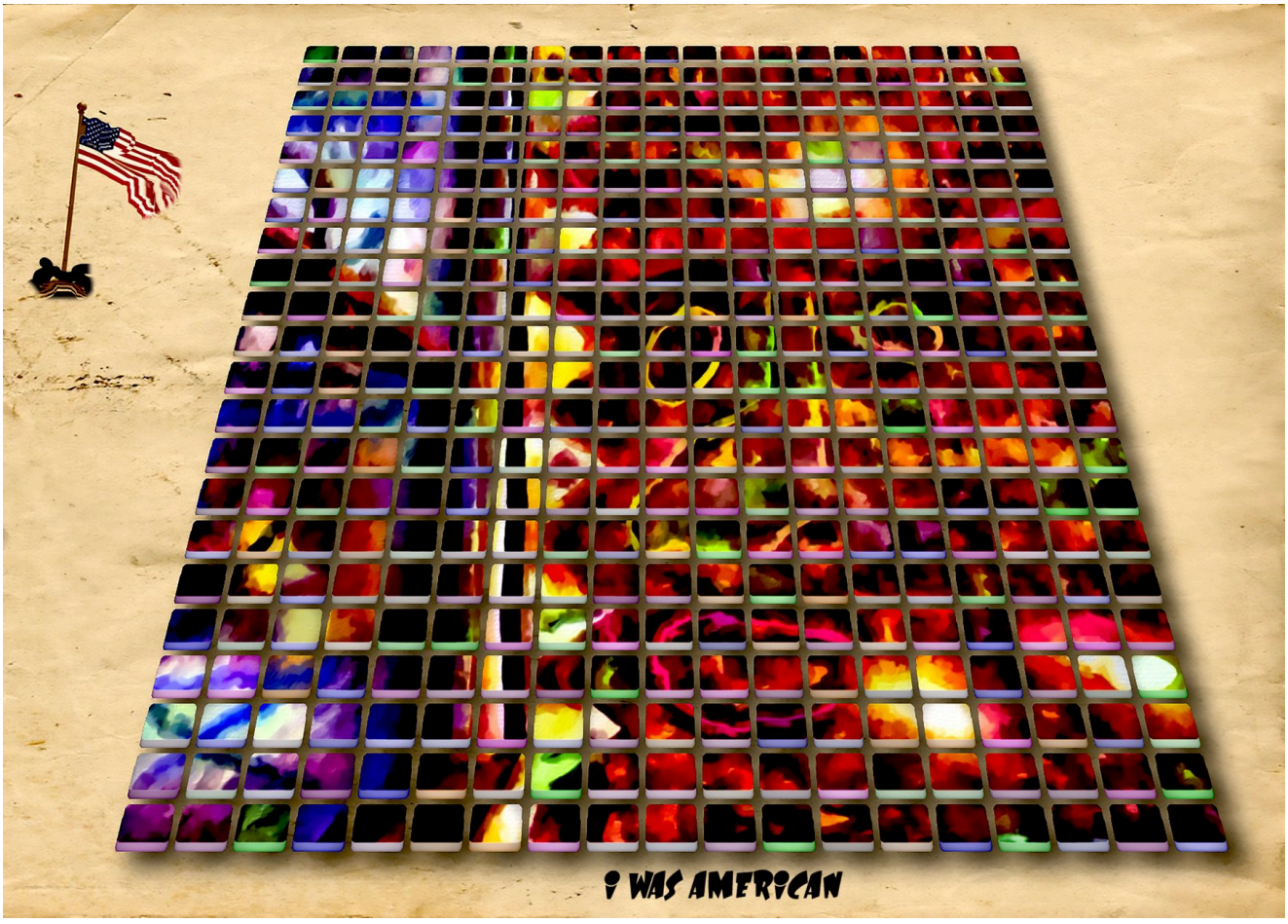


20 *time sleep*, 2026

I was American

2026 · ~graphic work on paper~ · 25 x 20 cm

A vast grid of luminous squares assembles a fractured field of color, evoking a flag without fully resolving into one. Each unit suggests containment, yet the imagery within resists coherence. At the margin, a small American flag stands in quiet contrast. The phrase I was American introduces distance, shaped by a climate in which belonging can be revoked—where even the spectacle of deportation unsettles identity, extending beyond those directly affected.



21 *I was American*, 2026

echoes of conflict, fragmented memories

2024 · ~graphic work on paper~ · 40 x 30 cm

The artwork explores individual and societal issues like lost innocence, war, and environmental damage. The broken toy top and fallen telephone pole with its wires represent the fragmented, unfinished way trauma is remembered.

Soft background hues suggest innocence and tranquility, contrasted by dark smears and red marks indicating peril and brutality, thereby amplifying the artwork's core conflict. The range of textures, from smooth to thick and impasto-like, contributes to depth and suggests a tumultuous mood.

Tiny, toy-like items are contrasted with an immense, emotive sky, highlighting the heavy burden of physical and mental struggles. A dark cloud or smoke mass hangs ominously at the upper right center. A child, black with soot and holding a coffee mug, symbolizes innocence tainted by difficulty, showing how normal life continues despite harsh circumstances.

A red rose with a blue center on the right contrasts with the dark cloud, representing lifeblood and resilience against fragility. It also signifies the potential to rebuild fuller memories, provided we endure.



22 echoes of conflict, fragmented memories, 2024

the impossibly tall people of Lunenburg

2025 · ~ink, chalk, and pastel~ · 40 x 30 cm

Here we have a waterfront townscape where human figures are stretched impossibly tall, towering over the waterline as if anchored in memory rather than reality. The houses, rendered in playful color and tilted geometry, recall both the cheer of seaside life and the precariousness of communities shaped by history and the ocean. Amid the textures of ink and pastel, the words “for rent” mark the modern intrusion of transience into a place built on legacy.

Formally, I wanted to balance density with verticality: the clustered architecture presses forward, while elongated figures, at once spectral and comical, bridge land and sea. Their stiff postures and simplified features lend them a doll-like quality, suggesting ancestors who continue to stand watch.

Thematically, I was thinking about how ancestral stories in small towns like the ones I have lived in grow outsized, inspiring awe yet casting long shadows over present residents. The “tall people” embody both the grandeur of inherited narratives and the unsettling way those narratives can dwarf the people who live in these “very pretty places” today.



23 *the impossibly tall people of Lunenburg,* 2025

it's gonna blow, that's life

2024 · ~acrylic on canvas~ · 80 x 120 cm

Though Japan often presents a calm, rational face, its heart is anchored by an unpredictable force: Mt. Fuji. Dormant since 1707, it remains an active volcano expected to erupt again, however the timing is uncertain. And life goes on in an organized fashion, with an eye to decorum, sensitive to time, place, and occasion.

So I wanted to dwell on the calm but deceptively fragile aura of Mt. Fuji. The volcano, the centerpiece of the painting, embodies a suppressed trauma—poised on the edge of eruption. Its bold blue form, streaked with fiery red and gold, captures both majestic beauty and latent volatility. The burst at the summit symbolizes the untamed power beneath a serene surface, reflecting a profound duality in the Japanese temperament.

Foxes, messengers of the Shinto deity Inari, move urgently toward both heaven and earth. Their movement up and down Fuji blends myth and nature, evoking warnings of upheaval. At the same time, trout from the Sengen Shrine churn in chaotic motion at the mountain's base, embodying disruption beneath a seemingly peaceful pond surface.

In the sky, cranes, icons of long life, circle the summit like dark omens, reimagined here with unsettling irony.

In this painting, foxes warn the heavens, trout flail in confusion, and cranes hover—blurring hope with inevitability. Even modern convenience provides irony: pilgrims and tourists can drive roughly 60% of the way up the sacred mountain to the Fifth Station (the number five in the painting) before taking their pilgrimage into the sky.

Ultimately, this work speaks not merely to Japan but to the human condition. In daily life, as on this canvas, the wall between ordinary and extraordinary is thin and, at the heart of all things, beneath the skein of order, chaos waits quietly.



24 *it's gonna blow, that's life*, 2024

Konohanasakuya

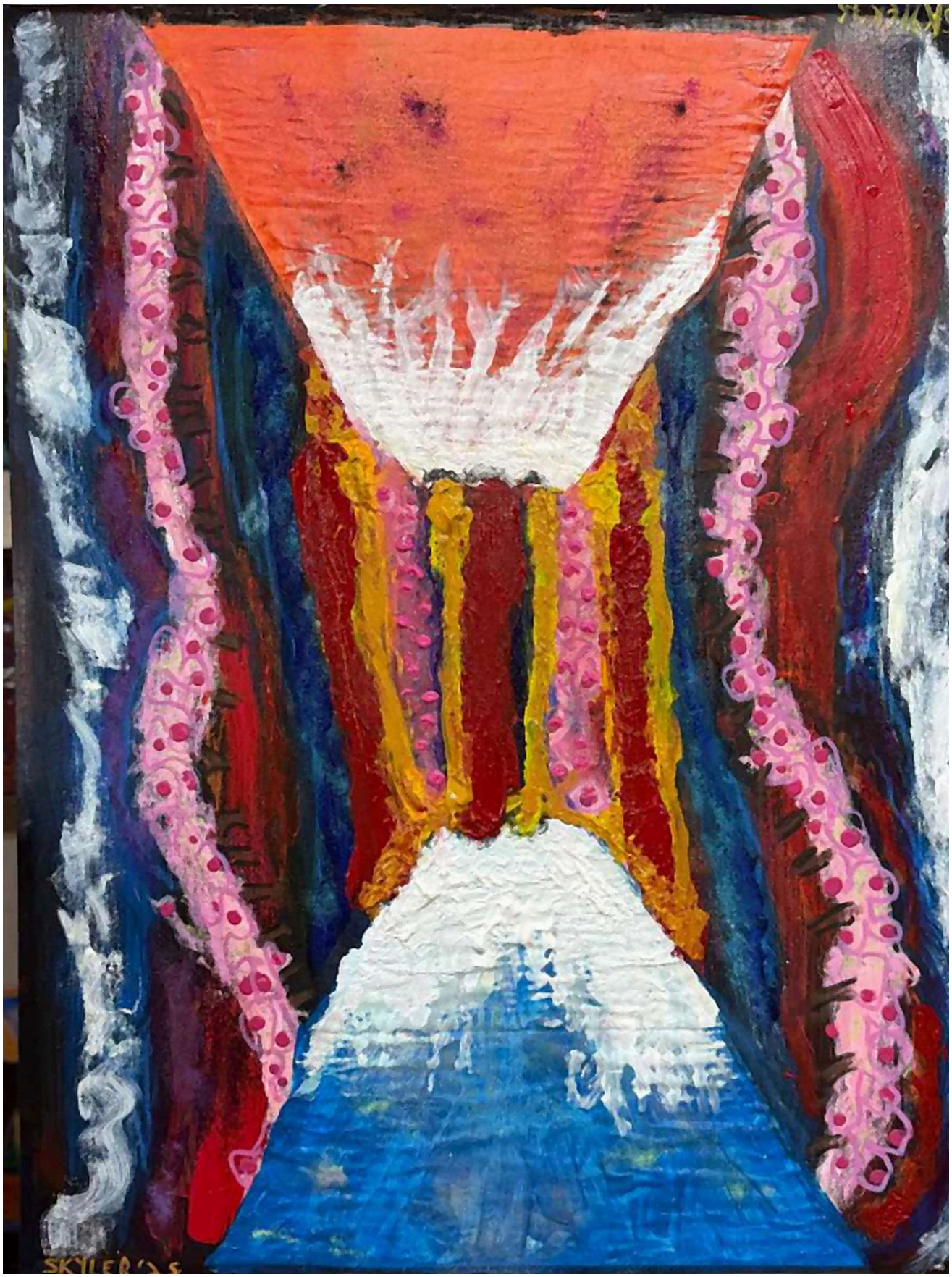
2024 · ~acrylic on canvas~ · 280 x 60 cm

Named after the Shinto goddess of Mount Fuji and blossoms, Konohanasakuya offers an interpretation of divine femininity, transformation, and creation. The composition centers on an hourglass formed by two opposing volcanoes, simultaneously suggesting womb and mountain, conduit and eruption.

From a fiery red summit, molten streams of yellow and crimson cascade downward, converging into a snow-capped blue base. This vertical flow evokes both lava and lifeblood, suggesting a sacred passage between realms — heaven and earth, spirit and body. Along the flanks, sinuous pink and red colors ripple with energy, echoing petals, tentacles, or veins. The flows seem organic, alive, and slightly unsettling.

I used a heavy impasto and saturated colors to heighten the tension. Birth is not quiet; it is elemental, eruptive, and divine. Konohanasakuya becomes both shrine and myth, a vision of life forged in fire and blossoming from ash.

I decided to sign both ends of the painting; after a year, you can rotate the work and repeat.



25 *Konohanasakuya*, 2024

off the cliff

2024 · ~acrylic, chalk, crayon, and pen on paper~ · 22 x 22 cm

I was thinking of societal upheaval and the peril faced by those belonging to vulnerable groups. Symbols of precarity and injustice are present throughout the composition.

On a thematic level, the work dwells on the deterioration of rights secured through struggle and the hollow assurances from those governing.

The black gingerbread man on the cliff's edge symbolizes a highly vulnerable individual. This individual has been deceived into feeling safe by false assurances. The old and young men represent time's passage and the breakdown of the late 20th-century North American conviction that progress and fairness were assured, a belief repeatedly shown to be misguided.

The nude Black female figure at the bottom serves as a stark symbol of the loss of basic rights and bodily autonomy, particularly highlighted by the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Her vulnerability and powerlessness are quite disturbing. The threatening eye in the stormy sky, a twisted version of "divine providence," implies that grave injustices occur and protection is withdrawn, even under a supposed higher power.

The composition's arrangement creates unease and peril. The Areopagus, a symbol of justice, is in a precarious state, hinting that the systems designed to protect the vulnerable are shaky. From the cliff's edge, a sense of uneasy weightlessness arises; the figures have nowhere to land, just a void. The viewer is pushed to acknowledge the unclothed woman's difficult situation because of her scale and prominence.

My goal was to encourage the viewer to reflect on the human suffering that occurs when society declines and abandons its weakest. What's presented highlights the emptiness of proclaimed ideals and the delicate position of safety and disaster many now occupy.

The work urges us to recognize injustice and honor our duties to one another before imperiling and casting adrift more lives.



26 *off the cliff*, 2024

the cliff diver

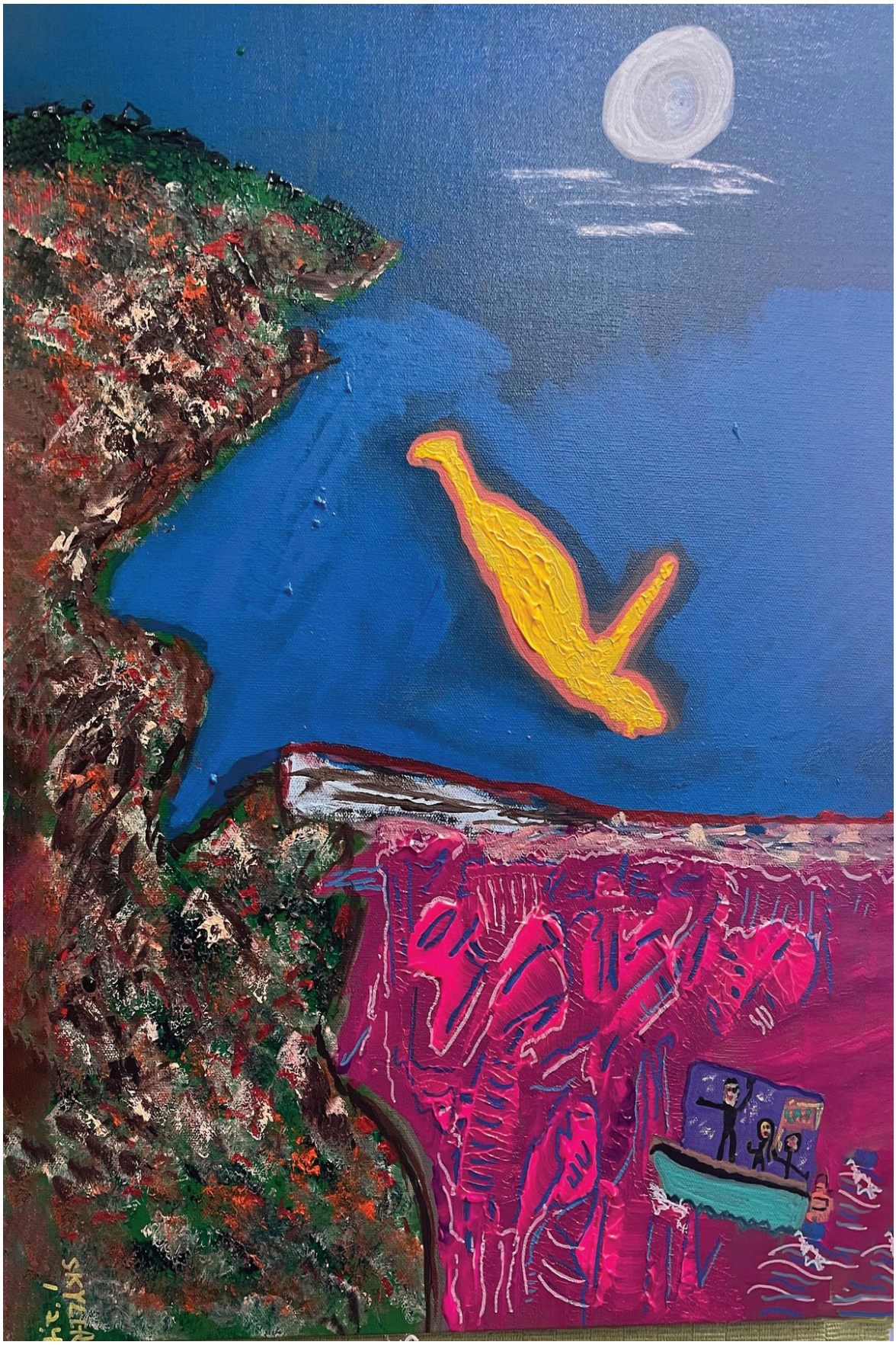
2024 · ~acrylic on canvas board~ · 40 x 50 cm

Cliff diving is simultaneously brave and ridiculous, a manifestation of the sublime. Jumping from high places into water, while not a useful skill to teach, is still a classic human behavior.

Our heroes demonstrate courage through decisive action, not through posturing or hesitation. They are made that way. Something in them answers a call that most of us only half-hear.

Though it might appear foolish to observers, the diver experiences a heightened sense of aliveness, a deeper connection to an inner calling that is an intrinsic, enduring characteristic of humanity.

So laugh if you like. Then discover your own way to leap.



27 *the cliff diver*, 2024

friends & enemies

2024 · ~acrylic on canvas~ · 40 x 50 cm

Friends are the people who help you, and enemies are those who seek to harm you. If life were only that simple.



28 *friends & enemies*, 2024

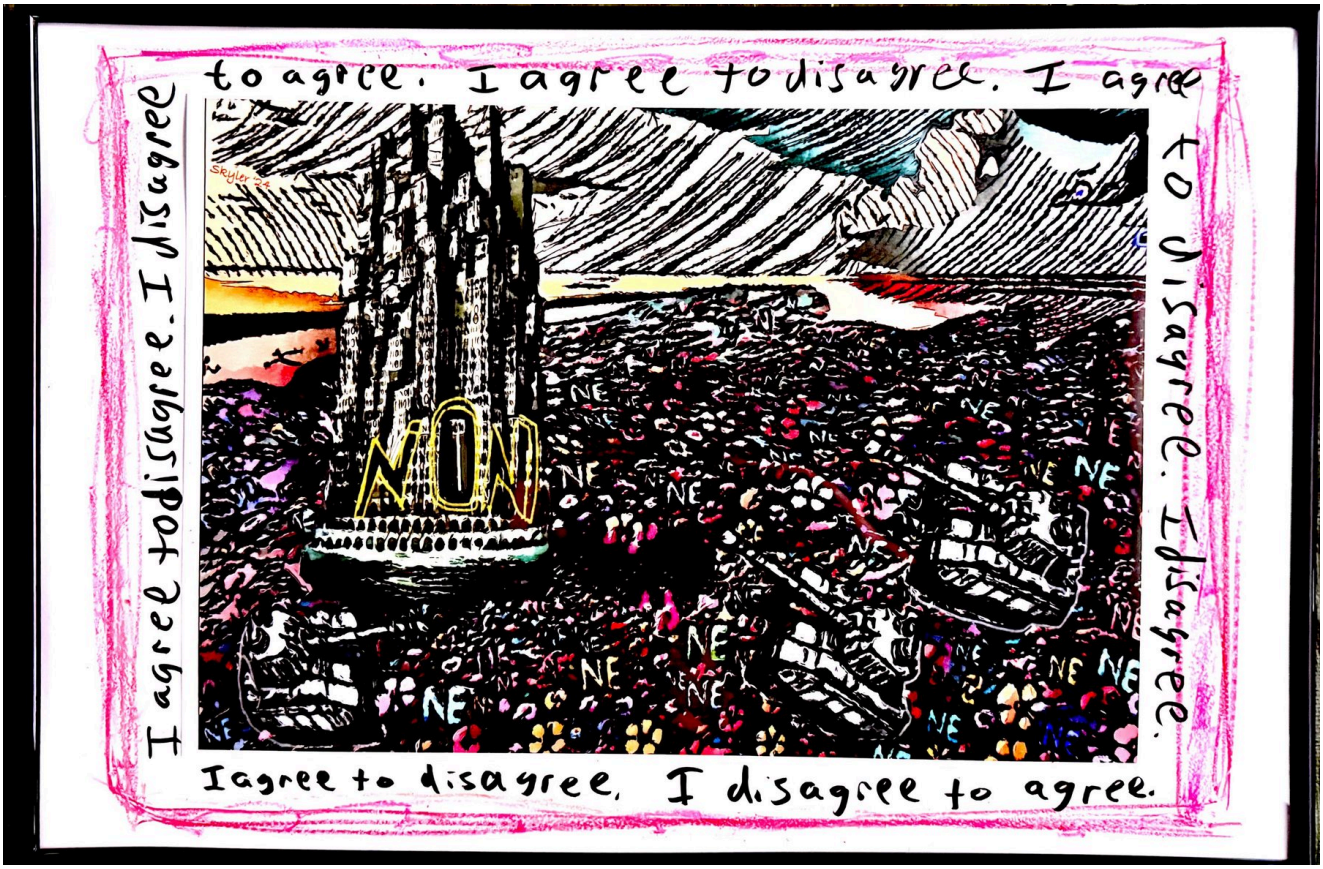
the naysayers

2024 · ~computer graphics, ink, marker, and crayon on paper~ · 60 x 40 cm

"The naysayers" uses vibrant color, bold outlines, and recurring text to create a sense of chaos and conflict, echoing themes of negativity and resistance to progress. The central tower, emblazoned with the French word "NON" in bright, glowing yellow, is a focal point, symbolizing the naysayers' dominance. Its sharp verticality contrasts with the horizontal, seemingly endless crowd below, which spreads across the foreground like a sea of individuals, each voice shouting "NE." Here "ne" (Esperanto for "no") becomes a motif for the small, repetitive negations that accumulate into a larger, systemic refusal.

The border text, "I agree to disagree. I disagree to agree," emphasizes the cyclical nature of indecision, division, and resistance that can stymie progress, reinforcing the work's critique of societal reluctance to face challenges with constructive solutions.

I decided to use hand-drawn lettering, with its uneven spacing, to create emotional immediacy, suggesting frustrated, urgent scribbling — a response to pervasive negativity. The encroaching tanks heighten this urgency. Rolling across the foreground, they add a militaristic tone, symbolizing the aggressive, combative stance of those who oppose change. Juxtaposed with the repetitive crowd, they suggest a society under siege by its own inability to agree. Color is key to the mood. The crowd's chaotic field of dark reds, purples, and blacks conveys heaviness and a cluttered atmosphere of disagreement. By contrast, the sky's warm sunset oranges and yellows hint at the possibility of resolution — a light beyond the negativity — if only the "NON" zeitgeist were diminished.



29 *the naysayers*, 2024

the face stealers

2024 · ~ink, pencil, marker and pastel on paper~ · 24 x 29 cm

Through vivid imagery and stark contrasts, "face stealers" focuses on the external forces that shape a person's persona, often at the cost of genuine selfhood.

A striking, slightly surreal scene involves two figures and the central object they examine. Color and form are expressive and somewhat abstract; figures and ground blend to create unity. The background, a bold mix of blues, greens, and browns with varied textures, creates a wooded area, lending depth and atmosphere. The two male figures, the "face stealers," feel at once integral to the setting and oddly ephemeral.

I stylized them with exaggerated features and deliberately sparse facial detail—especially in their own faces—lending them an otherworldly air. The blue-green mask they hold is both the thematic and compositional focal point.

I placed the mask at the center to draw the eye and balance the two figures, establishing a set of implied triangles. I think the mask is the most disturbing element: it both anchors and unmoors our witness of the theft. It is also rendered as one of the most realistic details, even as its presence is the most macabre.

The theft—or exchange—of a face suggests the loss of authenticity and the burden of conforming to imposed roles.

I hope the viewer thinks about the pervasive influence of societal expectations and considers the tension between conformity and self-identity.



30 *the face stealers*, 2024

breaking up is hard to do

2024 · ~marker and acrylic on canvas~ · 30 x 25 cm

Breaking Up Is Hard to Do depicts a couple's breakup as both a physical and mental crisis. A small red figure clings to a prone yellow body, caught between attachment and release, surrounded by unstable terrain and a forlorn knapsack among small boulders. This scene shows that separation is never simple. When things break apart, they leave behind evidence of their former hold, including dependence, memories, and a persistent longing.



31 *breaking up is hard to do*, 2024

spring alert

2026 · ~ink, marker, chalk and acrylic on paper~ · 42 x 32 cm

The blooming trees and child evoke tranquility, but the “spring” screen injects a sense of disquiet. An overwhelming amount of color contrasts with the figure’s detached, quiet observation. Contained within a frame, the scene poses the question of whether renewal is lived directly or is increasingly received as a signal, announcement, or instruction.



32 *spring alert*, 2026

freedom is slavery

2024 · ~pencil and computer graphics~ · 30 x 25 cm

A homage to George Orwell's 1984. Now again is a time for individual bravery and collective conviction to confront the cult of personality and unchecked power, at home and abroad. Big Brother has softened up to Big Bully.

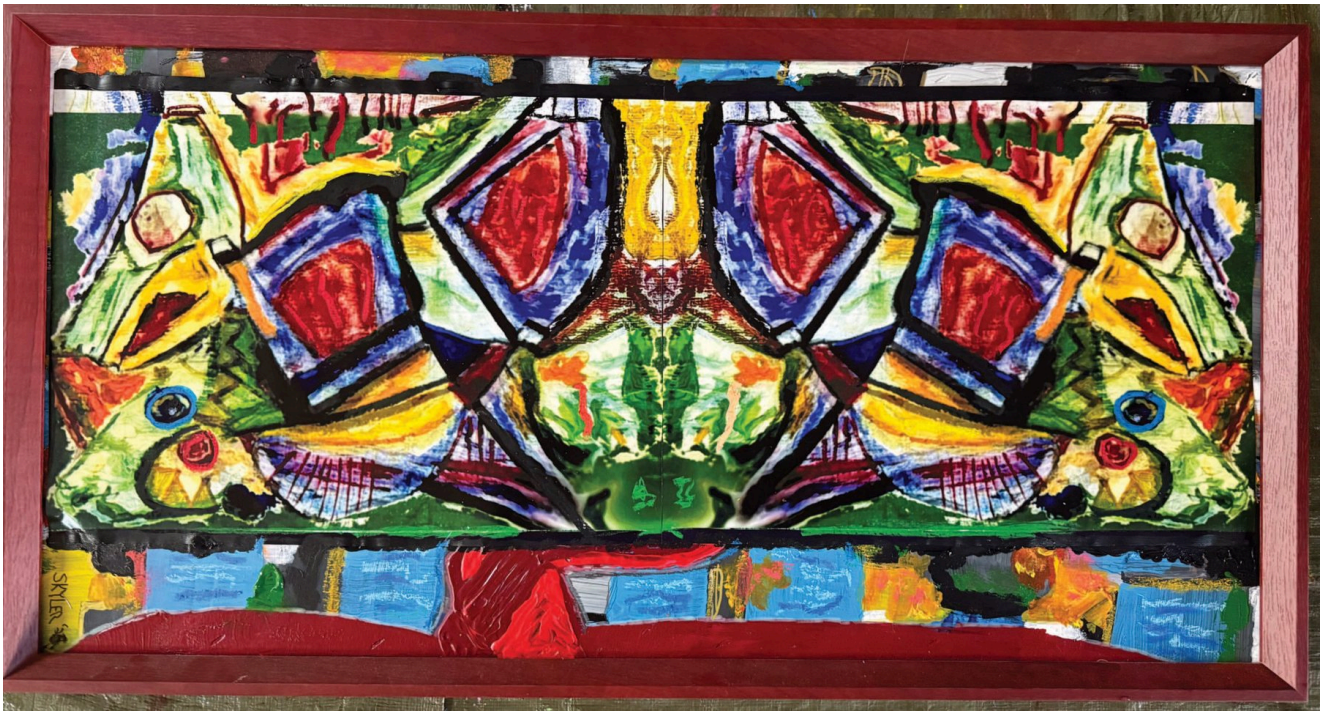


33 *freedom is slavery*, 2024

it feeds

2026 · ~mixed media on canvas~ · 83 x 42 cm

A figure, cape unfurled, materializes within a reflective, systematic space, positioned under a hanging white fish. This image evokes a sense of duality, where what is offered could also be a trap, and a descent could represent control. Surrounding forms repeat with mechanical insistence, implying a cycle that sustains itself through consumption. The subject might remind you of mass media, specifically how signals are transmitted, received, and absorbed. Feeding here is a continuous state, linking subject and system in mutual support.

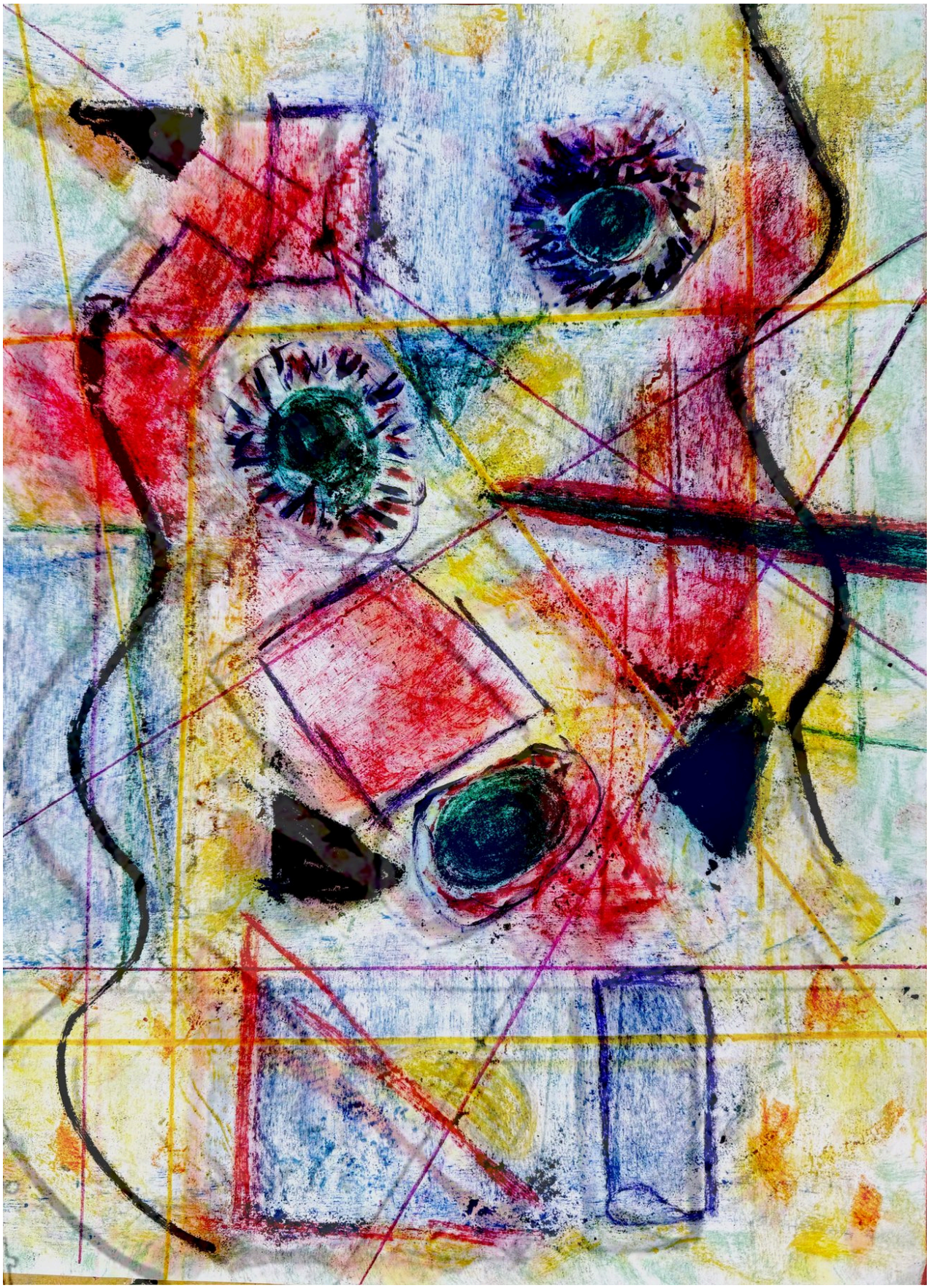


34 *it feeds*, 2026

a rainha da beleza

2026 · ~mixed media on paper~ · 32 x 46 cm

A rainha da beleza presents a confrontation between systems that uplift and systems that harm. A rigid grid, suggesting scoring, rules, and spectacle, divides the surface. It evokes the commercial valuation of beauty and the public ceremonies associated with it. Against this imposed order appear organic, eye-like and wound-like forms, hovering between adornment and injury. A sharp, dark diagonal line recalls the spear from Christian imagery, connecting modern displays of awe with ancient themes of sacrifice and vulnerability. Yet the work resists accusation. Amid abrasion, rupture, and control, moments of clarity and openness persist. This work suggests a vital force persists despite regimes that exploit the body and control perception.



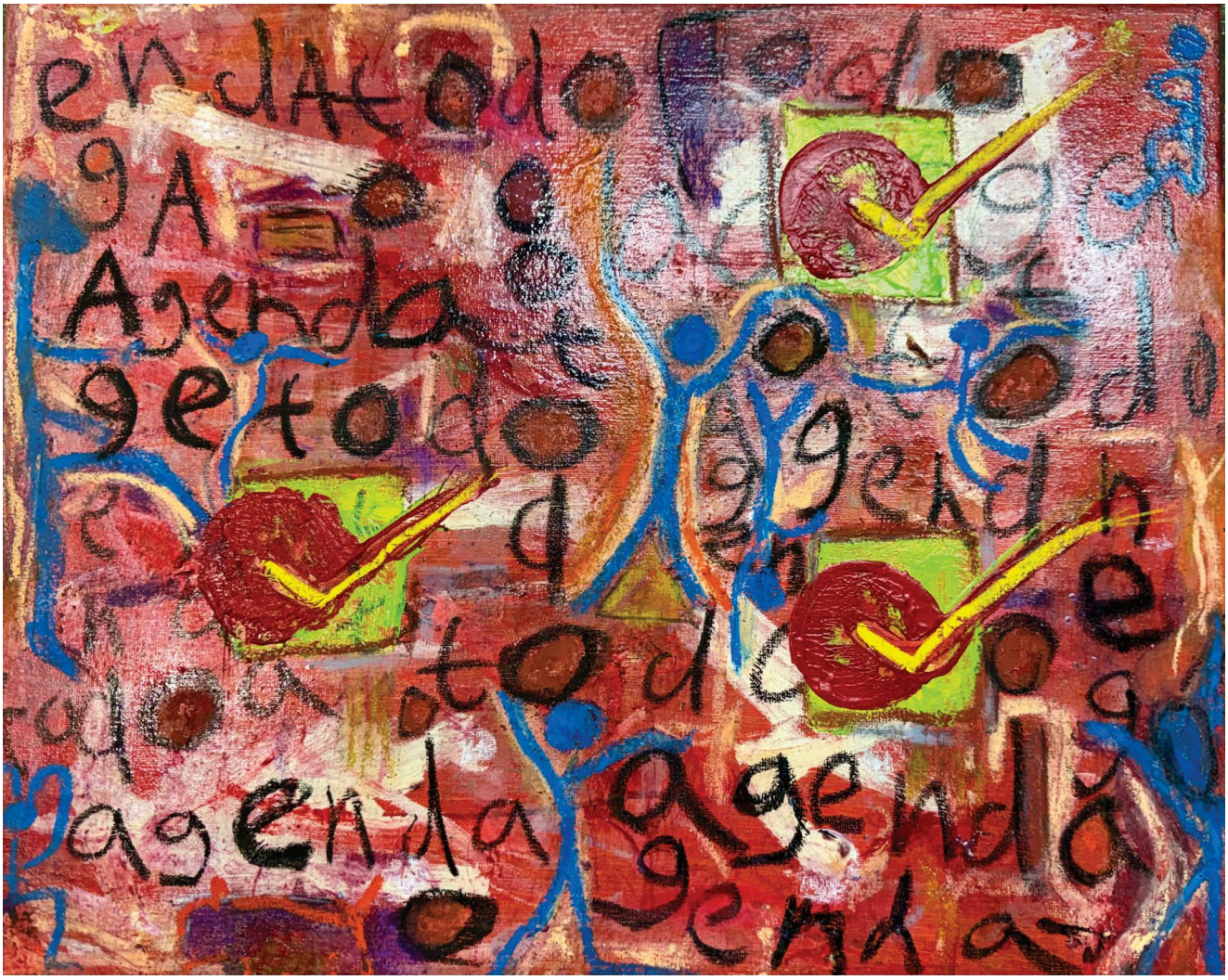
35 *a rainha da beleza*, 2026

a hidden agenda

2026 · ~acrylic on canvas~ · 52 x 40 cm

Underneath a green network of boxes with prominent checkmarks, “agenda” and “to do” are repeated as if in a bureaucratic chant. This neo-expressionist piece shifts between being structured like a list and free-flowing like a playground. Red circles disrupt the organized grid with urgency, while blue figures relax, wander, and jump freely, hinting at an underlying vitality.

The work explores the emotional residues that formal systems of planning fail to record. The artist uses raw, tactile text and organic movement to imply that organization is apparent, but desire endures. The core drama emerges from the understated, enduring friction between administrative constraints and the essentiality of human freedom.



36 *a hidden agenda*, 2026

swan song

2026 · ~acrylic on canvas~ · 32 x 46 cm

A massive gold swan commands the left field, its thick, layered surface heavy with its mass. It's more of a spectacle than a bird, an overwhelming presence that overshadows its surroundings. On its chest lies a heart-shaped opening, edged in red and filled with dark green, like a wound or a secret kept for ages. On the right, two Japanese spirit figures traverse a blue and purple expanse, indistinct from sky or water, representing a liminal space. One figure is elongated and mask-like, exuding a serene presence, as if having already transcended. The atmosphere is pierced by vertical gold lines, resembling reeds, rain, or the uprights of a hidden gate. The swan's final song is beautiful because it's a unique, unrepeatable moment. Here it is witnessed by figures who understand departure, who exist themselves in the interval between worlds.



37 *swan song*, 2026

the becoming

2026 · ~acrylic on canvas~ · 32 x 46 cm

The Becoming explores a state of continuous formation rather than a finished identity.

The artwork features layered gestures, dynamic color areas, and linear marks that resist fixed shapes. The painting displays a process rather than a subject, creating a visual space where elements constantly appear, vanish, and reappear. The darker perimeter encloses this activity, acting like a membrane or boundary rather than a frame, holding the flux in place without making it stationary. The painting, in this way, reflects real life: identity, connections, and purpose are constantly reshaped by time, memories, and new experiences, rather than being fixed permanently. What we are is never fully separate from what we have been, nor from what we are becoming.



38 *the becoming*, 2026

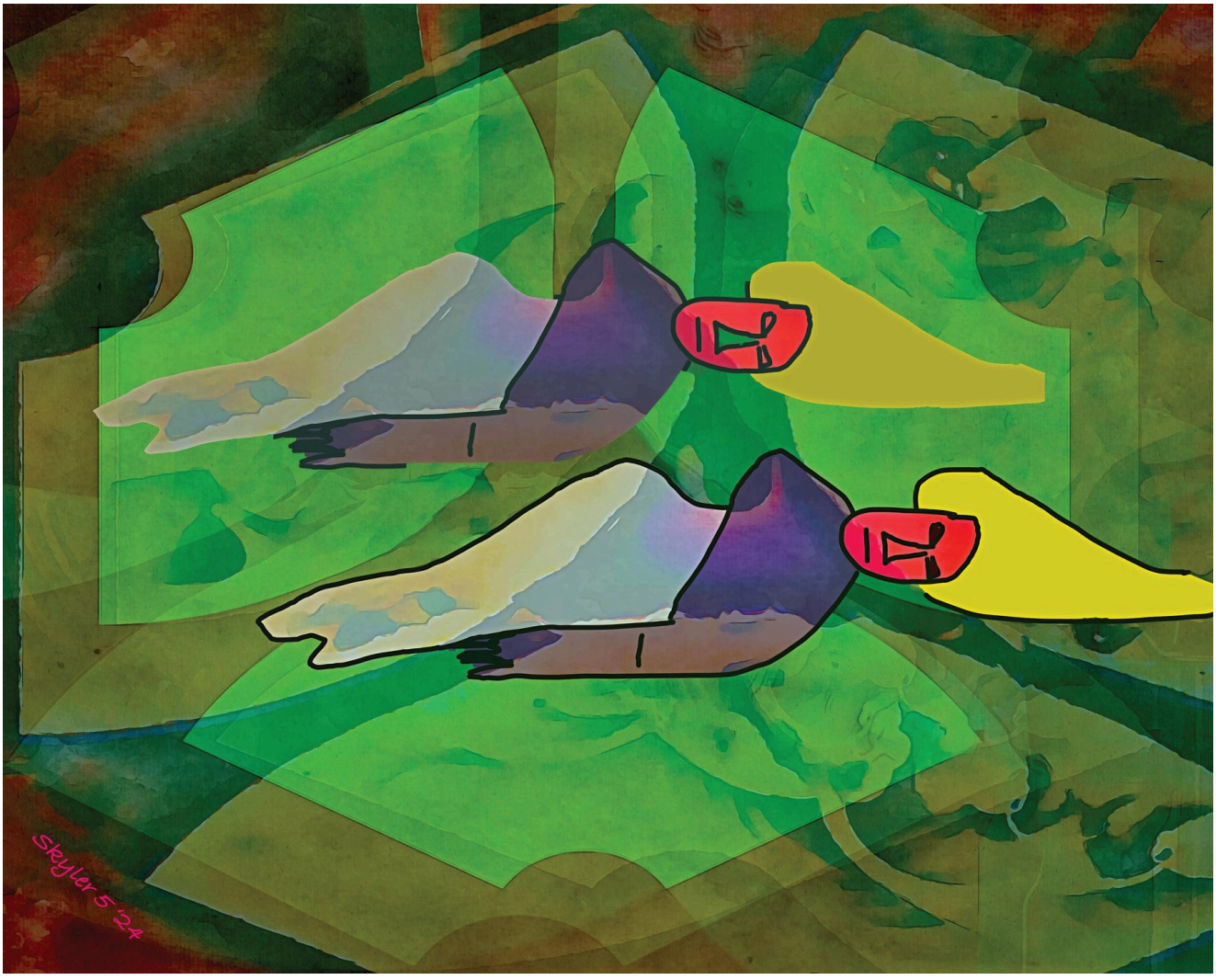
industrial dreams

2024 · ~graphic on paper~ · 40 x 30 cm

Dreams have historically served as a private realm for the subconscious to craft its intricate patterns of thought, feeling, and longing. Waking dreams, or conscious aspirations for ourselves and the world, also exist. Technology is a product of these modern aspirations, a result of our desire for betterment and change.

Industrialization has affected every landscape, even the mind that created it. Modern life's constant machine noise, screen light, and busy demands have invaded sleep, tarnishing its pure inner landscape and changing dreams.

Industrial dreams advocates for regaining our inner space, making dreaming a refuge for peace and thought, untouched by our constructed surroundings.



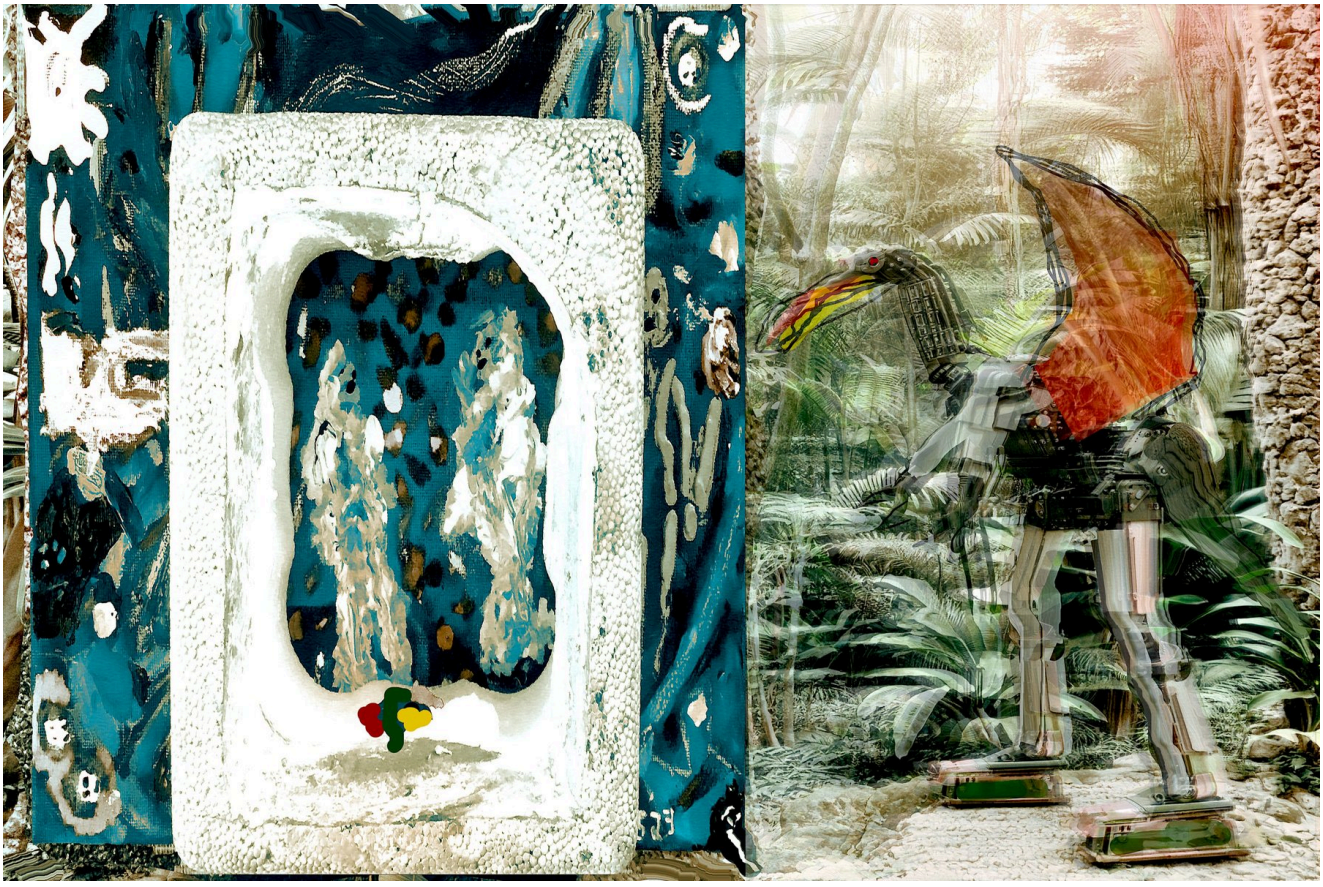
39 *industrial dreams*, 2024

2 escape the silo

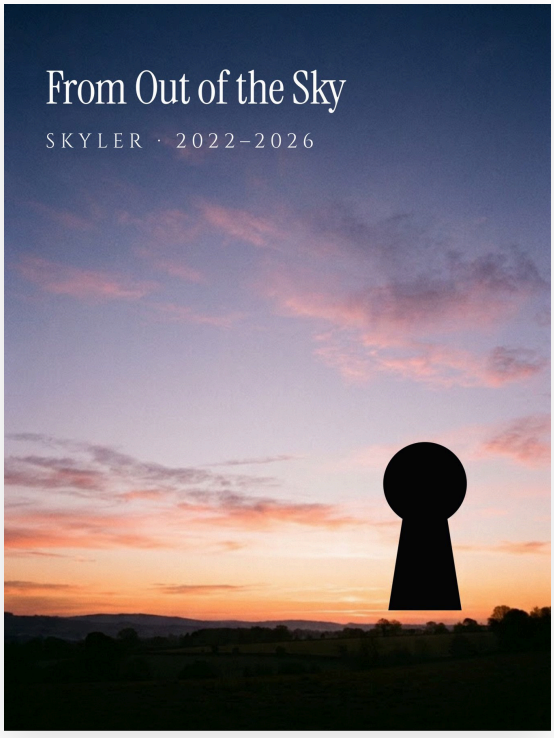
2026 · ~acrylic and mixed media with graphic composition~ · 42 x 30 cm

Humanity retreats to this sealed chamber after completely depleting the world above. Two figures emerge from the profound teal darkness within, bearing the lingering, readable traces of the former world: a small arrangement of red, yellow, and green, the ultimate language of a society that has vanished beyond these confines. After many generations, the door has been unlocked.

Instead of ruin or paradise, they find something more peculiar: a world that went on without their presence. A creature, a blend of ancient life and machinery, moves with purpose through the lush, spectral landscape, unrecognizable after humanity's prolonged departure. This is what was created when we ceased to live with responsibility to the earth and our own humanity.



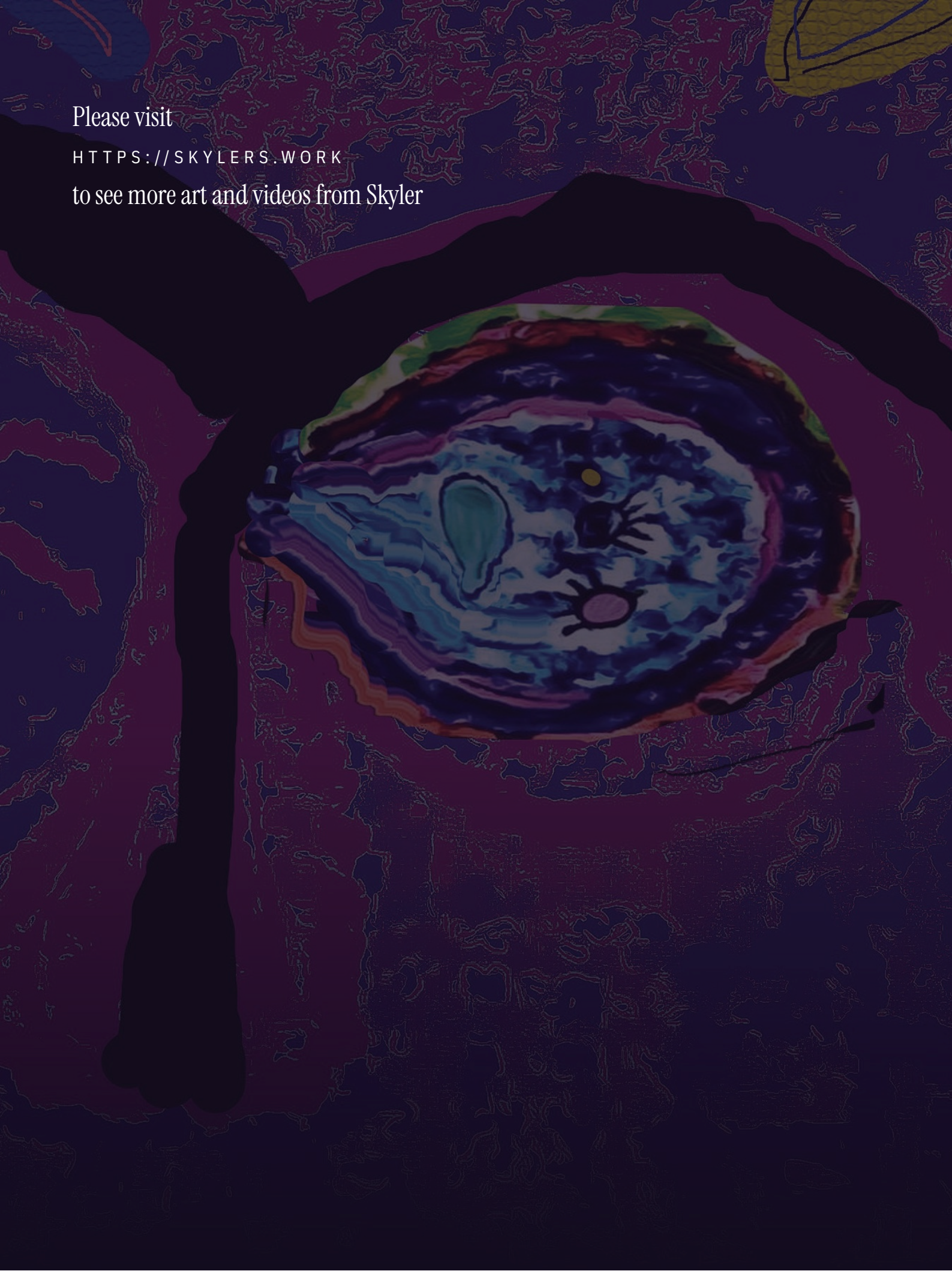
40 *2 escape the silo*, 2026



From Out of the Sky, 2022–2026

109 works in five chapters, with an introduction and an index. Many of the works in this book appear there too, alongside four years of portraits, couples, borrowed myths and views of Mount Fuji.

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