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Celebrating Mundane Moments

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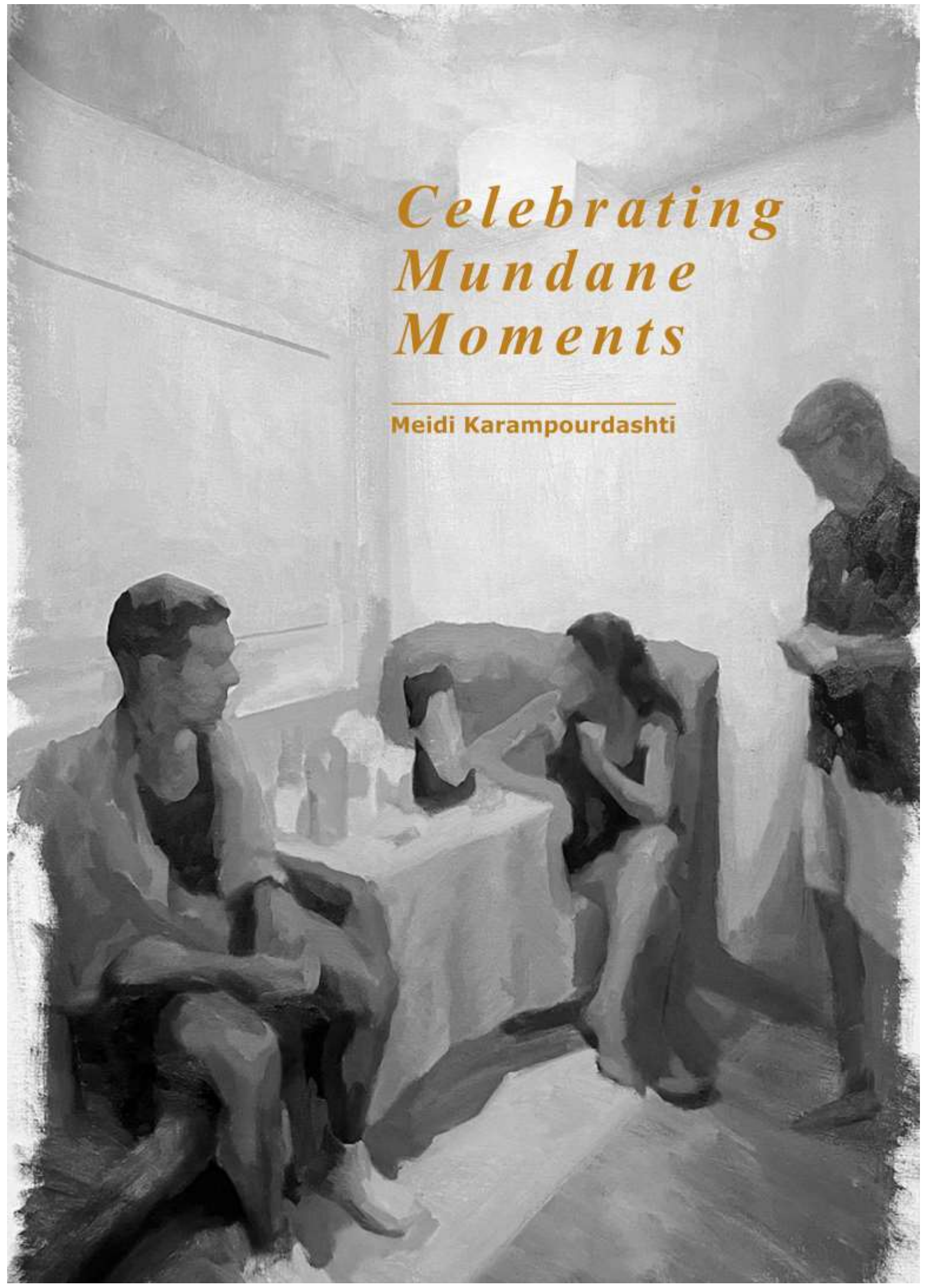
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*Celebrating
Mundane
Moments*

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Celebrating Mundane Moments

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Springfield Art Museum, Springfield, Missouri
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CELEBRATING MUNDANE MOMENTS

Art and Design Department

Missouri State University, May 2023

Master of Fine Arts

Meidi Karampourdashti

ABSTRACT

I feel appreciation for life and recognize the beauty of being present in the moment, not only living for a future goal. I paint moments that highlight shared slices of life that are common throughout many contemporary cultures. The theme of my paintings is to celebrate mundane moments with images living them, regardless of their geographical location. I am pausing the moments representing what appears over and over through life, reminding myself I can enjoy all of them. This body of work slows down to focus on the beauty of a moment's essence spent with family members or friends and not the main activities scheduled. I allow a degree of ambiguity in the finished work that reveals just enough information to make the picture feel familiar to a viewer. We carry our past within shared experiences, which ultimately allow these scenes to be perceived as a collective memory.

KEYWORDS: moment, shared experiences, memory, current culture, oil paint, image

CELEBRATING MUNDANE MOMENTS

By

Meidi Karampourdashti

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My art is eliminating "important" or "planned" activities, such as a daily plan like a picnic, to shift my focus to the typical everyday moments spent between them; like waiting for the last person to show up to start the picnic. I think these mundane times are not commonly seen as noteworthy depictions to be included in our stories or to be remembered. The theme of my paintings focuses on displaying the joy of life in mundane moments that are shared together and to paint them as memorable scenes. To me, these small life experiences *are* significant for their repetitious occurrence and for collectively taking up big portions of our lives.

My paintings include scenes with images in settings that do not belong to a specific culture or geography. I am picturing these moments within the globally shared culture that is shaped through technology and current means of communications. The familiarities that are found among various geographical locations give me the opportunity to picture a scene that can resonate with many viewers. A culture that also provides me various opportunities such as watching a 30-second video within the reach of my pocket distracting me to see the joy being in that mundane moment with others.



Image 1: *Maybe That's The Case*, 2023, oil on canvas, 32" x 27.5"

I create these moments of shared experiences in a representational painting style to create an impression of a memory that I can see myself being in. I hope when viewers see my paintings, the scenes will look familiar enough to resonate with them no matter where the viewers are coming from.

The painting following this story is an example of a typical mundane moment I have experienced many times. This painting reminds me of the joy I had, being around my friends.

My friends and I were going to watch a movie. We were waiting for the other friend to come from the bathroom which was taking forever. We couldn't start the movie but had our snacks open and made fun of the friend in the bathroom; yet we were frustrated for how every detail made the start to run later. The bathroom friend came, and we watched the movie, which was the plan for our party. I don't remember many details of that day or similar days we had these parties; however, I remember the whole day to be very fun and memorable. I especially cherish the times we spent waiting and chatting, since they had more of a friendly life and conversations than the movie.



Image 2: *I Am Not Sure How That Actually Ended*, 2023, oil on canvas, 32" x 24"

The life I experience is my inspiration to paint; I slow down life moments to show the pleasure of living itself. I control the impression of the painting by the amount of information I am showing. Precise activities in the scenes are left out and the overall interactions are muted. The gestures are static and the activity of the images and the spirit of the moments are injected through the narratives underlying the theme that is presented in

the body of the paintings. I picture these mundane “in-between” moments in a layered story that carries a vast potential in terms of the various scenarios of the moments' past and future. The various potentials generate the possibility of the painted scenes to represent anywhere or any time. These scenes carry an open-ended visual story that can be recognized but not specified as a particular activity.

Group interactions and the moments I spend with family members or friends are the moments I would like to capture. The scenes include multiple images since I would like to magnify the importance of the shared moments regardless of the activity. I am emphasizing these less important shared experiences in my paintings to extract life in its pure essence when life is simply *happening*.

I also focus on the commonality of human experiences regardless of the micro culture that can be specific to geography. Having traveled to different countries, and witnessing other cultures and lifestyles on social media, I intend to paint these ordinary moments with similarities I find in many cultures. The familiarity of the experiences can subconsciously stimulate memories of life experiences. I paint scenes that represent a setting with elements that are currently universally similar, such as clothing or house furniture. I consider the similar fashion and shared elements as a globally mutual culture which I identify and bring into my paintings. In the painting *Ok I Heard You*, (Image 3) an interior of a house is painted with furnishing that are universally common.



Image 3: *Ok I Heard You*, 2023, oil on canvas, 29.5" x 39"

I include the familiar element with details, to recreate different aspects and the atmosphere of a scene in the painting. In the painting *Tell Him When You Go Shopping* (Image 4) the throw blanket and the outfits create a summer mood in an air-conditioned interior.



Image 4: *Tell Him When You Go Shopping*, 2022, oil on canvas, 47.5" x 32"

By including other details or interactions that images have in the setting, I create a feeling in the paintings to be both universal and personal. In Image 5, I have painted the experience of feeling a springy and spongy cushion under the foot, to communicate a touchable feeling of how this velvet cobalt cushion would feel like.

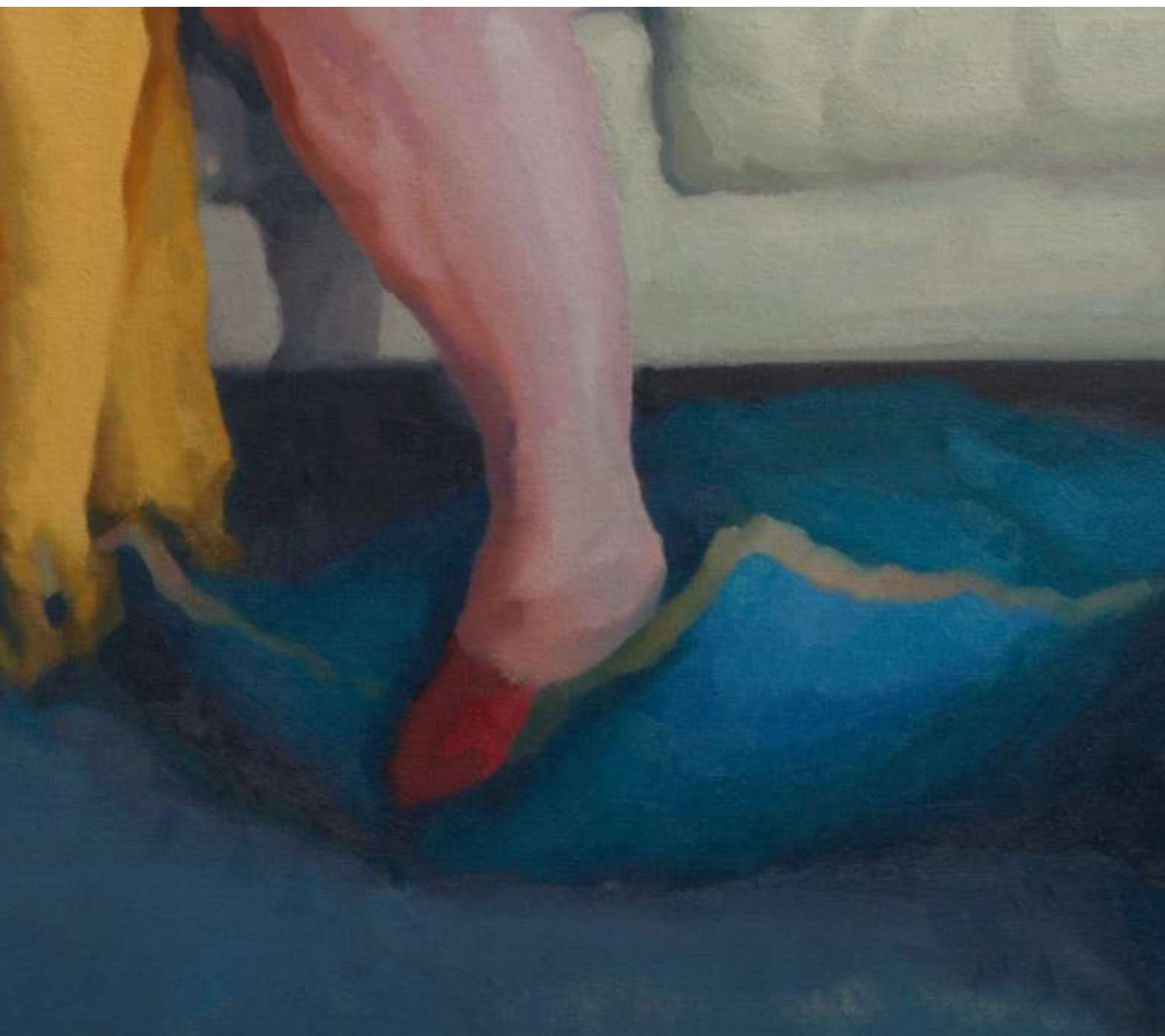


Image 5: *Tell Him When You Go Shopping* detail, 2022, oil on canvas, 47.5" x 32"

Collectively, these details help to communicate a tangible feeling like how sharing a random silent moment with someone I care about, would feel like.

I initiate my creativity based on my skills and the craftsmanship of painting. I am developing my theme predicated on the way I paint to express my narratives. My visual stories evolve through my painting language, and they are significantly tied to the craft of my painting skills. I control the impression of the painting by the amount of information I am showing, not only in the activities depicted, but also the way I paint them. While I paint, I create my perception of reality, explore and experience the moments I express. My representational painting style portrays subjects in a familiar and almost realistic manner while the brush strokes and shapes of colors are still visible. This style is also seen in *They Said That?! (Image 6)* and *Ok I Heard You (Image 7)*. This represents the reality I see, and a process of painting simultaneously.



Image 6: *They said that!*, 2023, oil on canvas, 21" x 13"

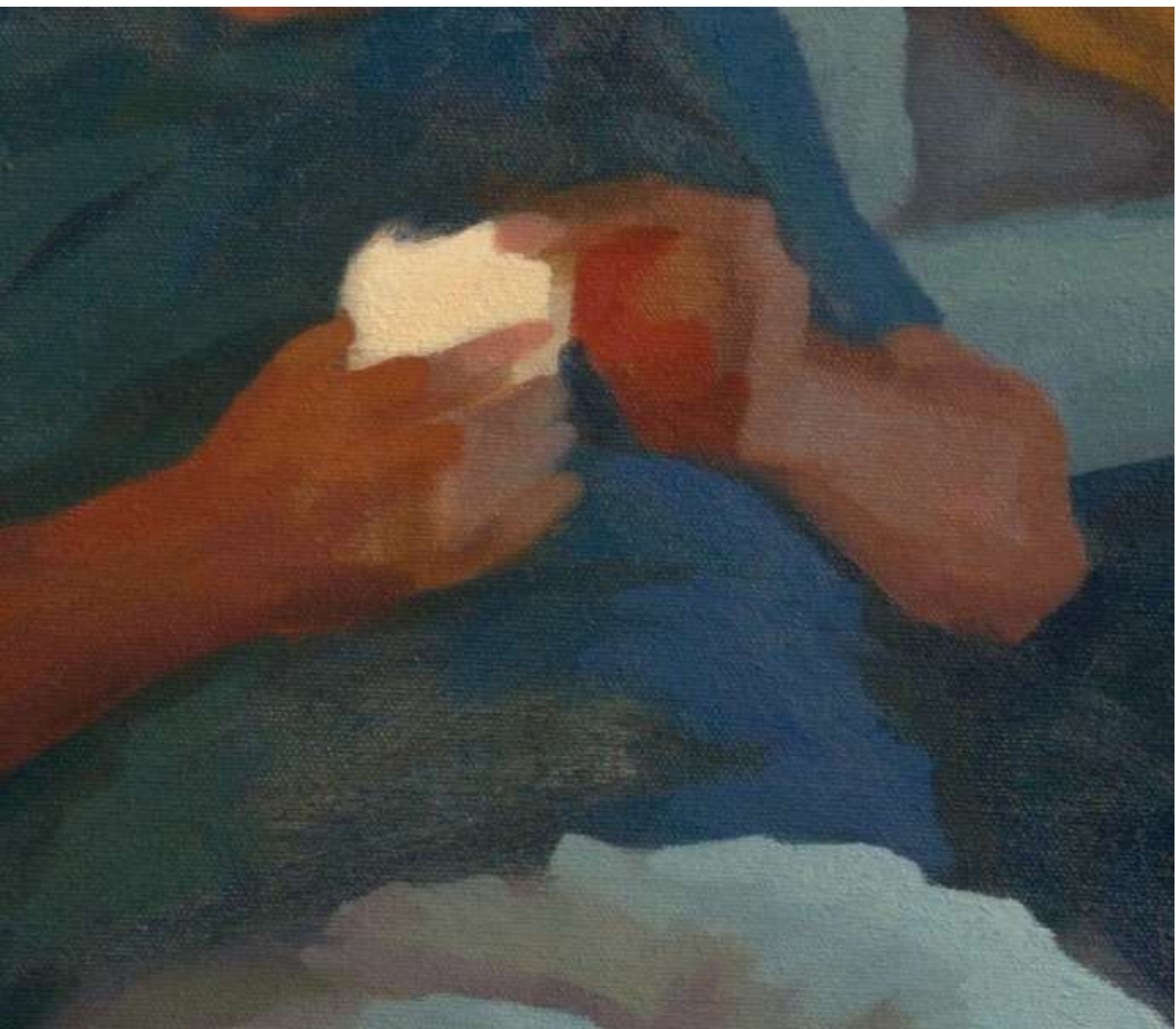


Image 7: *Ok I Heard You* detail, 2023, oil on canvas, 29.5" x 39"

The value of the process that completes a whole is essential to my practice. I paint in layers, and for every layer, I go through new batches of paints with subtle shifts of colors and tones. For every new coat, I enjoy small details created with the help of the oil medium transparency. In Image 8 and 9, details are shown that are created through semi-transparent layers of subtle shifts with different attempts of brush strokes.



Image 8: *Yeah But Not Seven Hours!* detail, 2023, oil on canvas, 26.5" x 19"

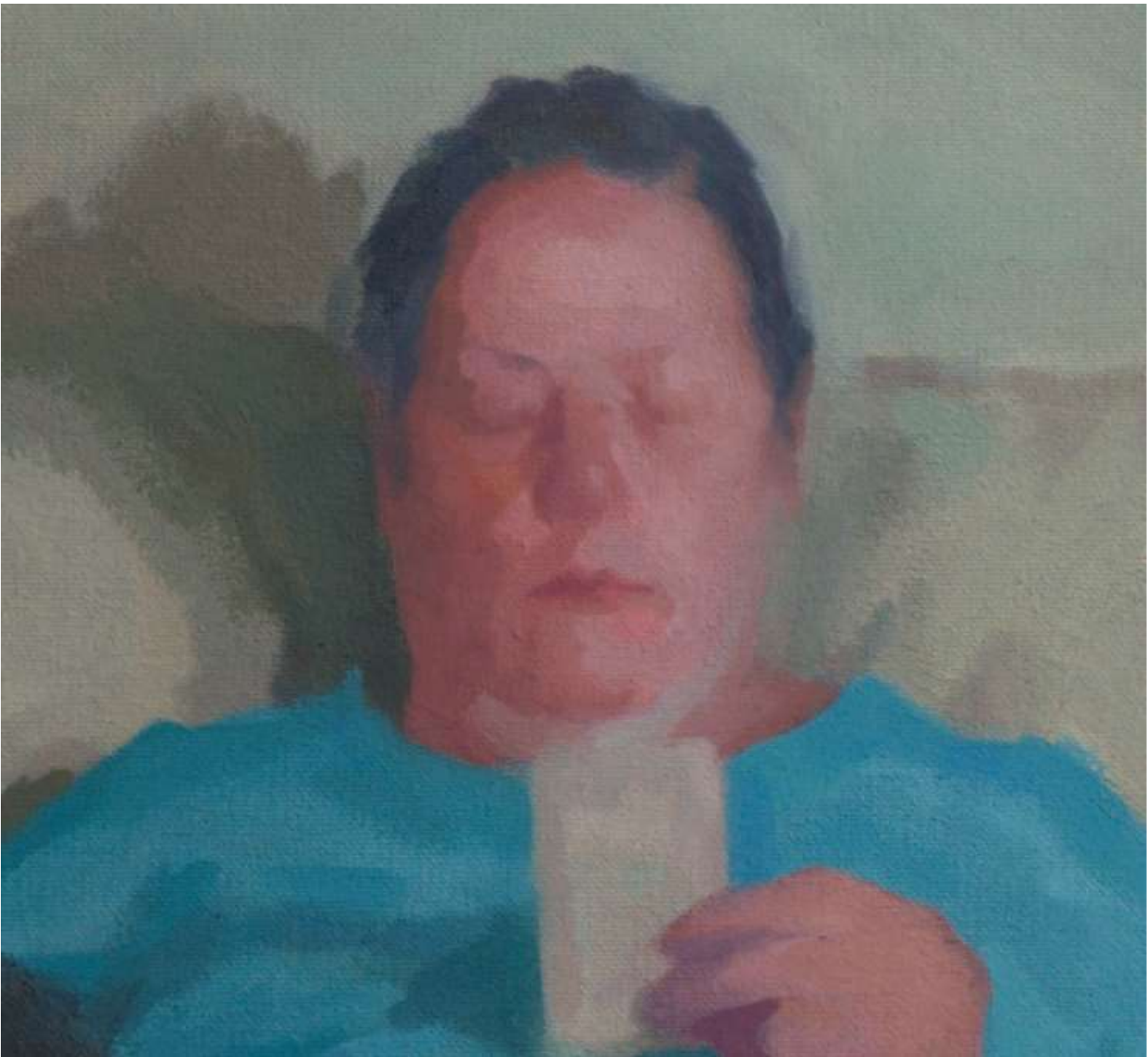


Image 9: *Tell Him When You Go Shopping* detail, 2022, oil on canvas, 47.5" x 32"

On every attempt, my brush strokes are also inevitably different, generating a visual depth created through many layers. The shifts of new colors I am putting on my previous painting passages are similar to the past layer and to the possible future one; yet different enough to be celebrated on their own. These various shapes I make in layers form an ambiguity, creating dream like images I have lived at some point but can't recall exactly.



Image 10: *Yeah But Not Seven Hours!*, 2023, oil on canvas, 26.5" x 19"

For me, these painting sessions are the same as the moments that never exactly repeats themselves. This process reminds me I can enjoy my time no matter what the future or past holds.

I am holding moments in my paintings, exploring what I might miss during the times I feel I am going over a transitional moment, to get to do something as planned.



Image 11: *I Think Around Dinner*, 2023, oil on canvas, 21" x 18.5"

I show various numbers of coats in different parts of a painting presenting the process. Many of the ambiguous layers emerging in the process have the finished value I am looking for with the same admirable quality. As seen in Image 12, bottom left part of the painting has fewer layers with some areas still showing the canvas in comparison to the center part of the picture with more layers, which I left working on since I found the quality I needed for the painting.



Image 12: *You Don't Say!*, 2023, oil on canvas, 24" x 19.5"

A painting conveys its narrative as a whole and these less worked layers give windows to how the whole piece has been developed from brush strokes to an image. Sometimes I pass layers absent-mindedly as I am preoccupied with a magnificent result that might not come or will eventually come but it makes me ignore most of the process of getting there.

We interact with the situations we are in with different senses. They subconsciously help us to record information such as temperature, the color of light, or even the Images' interactions within the settings while experiencing a moment. These give us an idea of what a winter lunch with its sharp sunlight and cool shadows feels like.

As a painter, I have the ability to shift colors and tones regardless of the objects from reality and their local colors. I create a harmony of colors and tones, while playing around with brush strokes on canvas transferring what I see as reality into a painting. I use a variety of tones and hues and push the colors to their limits. I am making the most of the oil paint's abilities, such as utilizing brightness, saturation, or the variety I can get out of them from coolest to warmest tones to recreate light effects to capture the essence and mood of an environment. With the abilities of oil paint to represent the mood and familiar objects in the images, I explore the moments' visual characteristics to amplify the appreciation for the ordinary moments.

These features help to capture a memory to be unique on its own even if not significant.

In the painting *They Said They're Almost Here*, Image 13, I created a bright warm white lamp effect illuminating the walls and faces. The ceiling warm white lamp as the main light source in the painting is accompanied by a minor early evening light coming from the window, affecting how the colors are presented in the scene.



Image 13: *They Said They're Almost Here*, 2023, oil on canvas, 26" x 16.5"

When I get into details of the painting, I don't refine specific parts on features we tend to focus on, such as faces. Unrefined details on faces and hand gestures as shown in Image 14 leave spots open to different perceptions. This is how I focus on the vibe of the scene rather than people I might know or the activity they are engaged in, and potentially pushing the viewer to complete the picture with their personal perception. The paintings are a collection of shared experiences and rely on the simplified areas within the paintings to communicate a mutual theme. With unrefined details in areas that could potentially turn a scene into an exact personal experience, for example, a recognizable face feature, I create scenes I can relate to, without specified family members, friends, or activities.



Image 14: *Maybe That's The Case* detail, 2023, oil on canvas, 32" x 27.5"

In smaller parts and details of the paintings, I also play with brush strokes to design shapes interacting in an abstract and non-representational manner. I work with tones and colors beyond the identity and physical boundaries of the reality of objects I am painting, giving me the window to bridge the represented objects to the oil paint medium in its more visual language. This also gives the painting the chance to step further away from the reality of the subject matter I perceive in the environment. Like in Image 2 we see faces, hands and a cushion created in an abstract shape design. They are not refined enough to become strongly separated, creating a bridge between my reality and painting as a discipline. I use this window to make stronger connections to the painting discipline in its basic essence. The raw, bright off-local colors within the abstract shapes give me the opportunity to create visual poetry while making a relatable life scene.

Image List:

P 2. *Maybe That's The Case*, 2023, oil on canvas, 32" x 27.5".

P 4. *I Am Not Sure How That Actually Ended*, 2023, oil on canvas, 32" x 24".

P 7. *Ok I Heard You*, 2023, oil on canvas, 29.5" x 39".

P 8. *Tell Him When You Go Shopping*, 2022, oil on canvas, 47.5" x 32".

P 9. *Tell Him When You Go Shopping* detail, 2022, oil on canvas, 47.5" x 32".

P 11. *They said that!*, 2023, oil on canvas, 21" x 13".

P 12. *Ok I Heard You* detail, 2023, oil on canvas, 29.5" x 39".

P 14. *Yeah But Not Seven Hours!* detail, 2023, oil on canvas, 26.5" x 19".

P 15. *Tell Him When You Go Shopping* detail, 2022, oil on canvas, 47.5" x 32".

P 16. *Yeah But Not Seven Hours!*, 2023, oil on canvas, 26.5" x 19".

P 18. *I Think Around Dinner*, 2023, oil on canvas, 21" x 18.5".

P 20. *You Don't Say!* 2023, oil on canvas, 24" x 19.5".

P 23. *They Said They're Almost Here*, 2023, oil on canvas, 26" x 16.5".

P 25. *Maybe That's The Case* detail, 2023, oil on canvas, 32" x 27.5".



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