

## THE DREAMERS EVER LEAVE YOU WUNIKA MUKAN GALLERY

## THE DREAMERS EVER LEAVE YOU

APRIL 27 - MAY 12, 2024



Wunika Mukan Gallery is pleased to present 'The Dreamers Ever Leave You', a solo exhibition of new works by South African Artist Themba Sibeko. This will be the artists first solo exhibition in Nigeria.

Across his intimately scaled canvases, Themba Sibeko envisions scenarios-nestled in familiar territories- capturing moments of motion and rest. Sibeko's practice intertwines painting with the knowledge of scientific forms he acquired during his study of Analytical Chemistry at the University of Johannesburg, forming the foundation of his visual poetry. He closely embraces concepts surrounding the structures behind chemical bonds, juxtaposing their similarities with interpersonal relationships and encounters that forge meaningful human connections. While his works are largely figurative, they often possess blank facial features, representing human experiences and serving as metaphors for the universal human desires for recognition, approval, and a sense of belonging. They take to heart the common saying: 'There's more than meets the eye.'

For the exhibition at Wunika Mukan Gallery, 'The Dreamers Ever Leave You,' Themba Sibeko presents 10 paintings continuing his ongoing dialogue between human existence and the abstract realms of dreams and realities. His exploration of these themes dives into identity, connection and the pursuit of meaning in the ever-changing world. The works reflect a conversation initiated in Lawren Harris' poem, from which the title of the exhibition is derived, contemplating the enduring impact of dreams and imagination on the human spirit. It reflects on the idea that even as life moves forward, the dreams we hold dear and visions we cherish remain with us, shaping our perception and guiding our path.

The poem evokes a sense of transcendence and continuity, suggesting that the dreamers past continue to inspire and influence us in the present and into the future. Sibeko expands this notion by portraying his faceless protagonists as both dreamers and dancers of life, navigating life with resilience and adaptability.

This exhibition illustrates how Sibeko's practice developed a distinct storytelling style that the artist repeatedly returned to, even as he explored diverse scenes and subjects. In his own words, Sibeko describes his artworks as scenes in a movie, each carefully crafted to convey a specific narrative. He begins by researching and conceptualizing the story he wants to tell, drawing inspiration from various sources including documentaries, prayer, social media platforms like Instagram or YouTube, as well as his own imagination. Regardless of the origin of his ideas, Sibeko emphasizes the importance of creating a cohesive flow within each series, ensuring that they culminate in a complete "movie" with a clear beginning and end. Through this deliberate approach to storytelling, Sibeko invites viewers to immerse themselves in the cinematic narratives he constructs. Staying true to this, 'The Dreamers ever leave you' showcases scenes from a ballet performance's three stages of production - preperformance, performance and post-performance, which inform familiarity and connection.

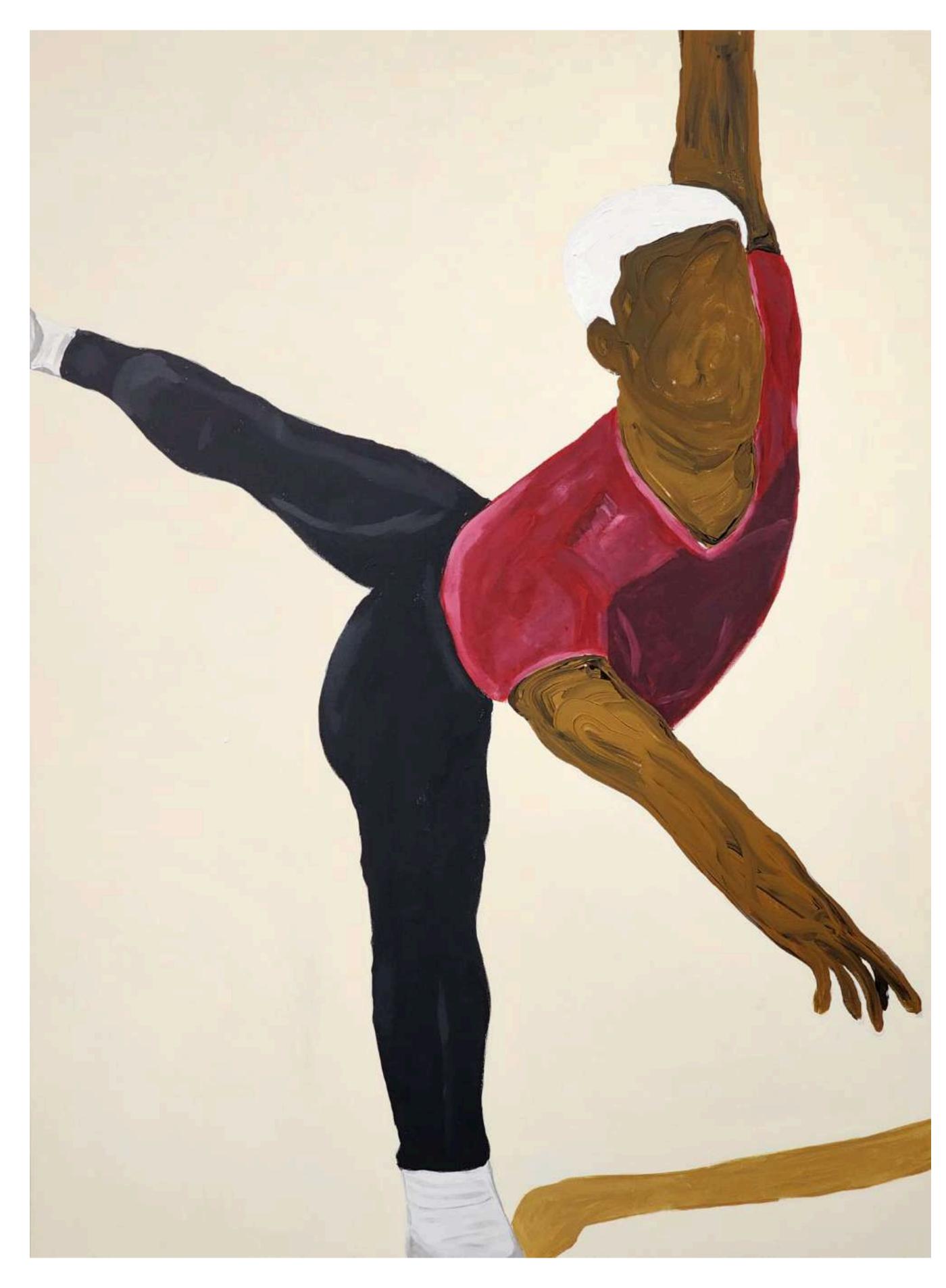
## BIOGRAPHY

Themba Sibeko (b. 1994) is a Johannesburg-based visual artist who was born and raised in Katlehong, Gauteng. He studied Analytical Chemistry at the University of Johannesburg, where he explored the relationship between the bonding of atoms and molecules, which later informs his art practice. Sibeko is intrigued by human connections and how they are similar to particles in chemistry, leading him to investigate the link between the two. This connection is expressed through his acrylic paintings and knowledge of scientific form. The aim of Sibeko's work is to emphasize the reality that we are human first, before anything else.

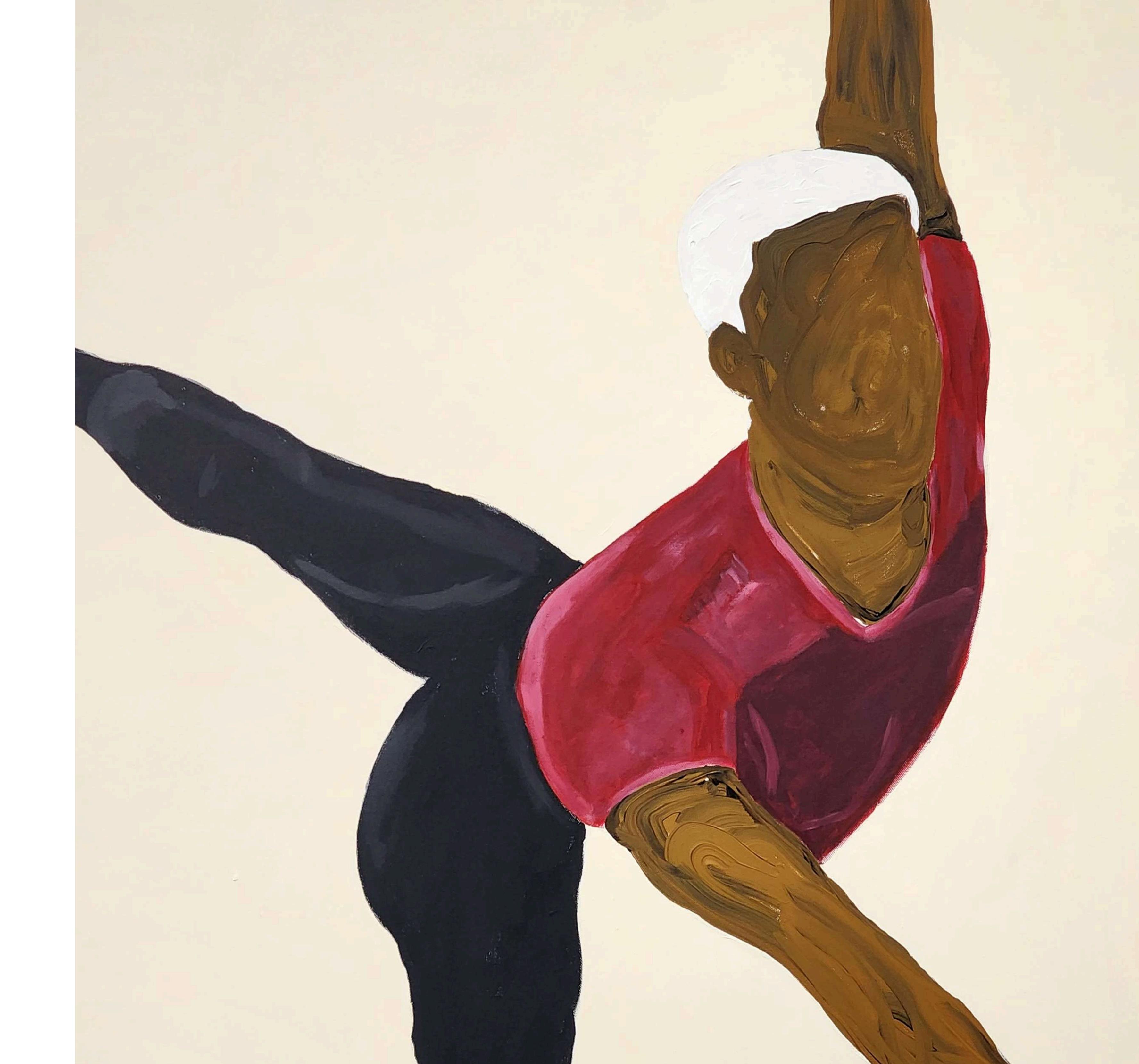
## ARTIST STATEMENT

Inspired by the people around him, his work is a contemplative study of the unknown possibilities of encountering new scenarios, circumstances, affinities, and territories in people's lives. This ties back to chemistry, where there are known as well as unknown outcomes in the bonding of particles, which he has been able to find meaning in. The removal of facial features in his work speaks to the significance of the need for recognition, approval, and a sense of belonging that individuals possess. He has allowed the viewer to insert themselves into his work and become the art itself. His work continues to question authentic human interactions through various themes and seeks to remove stigmatization from society related to how people identify with each other.

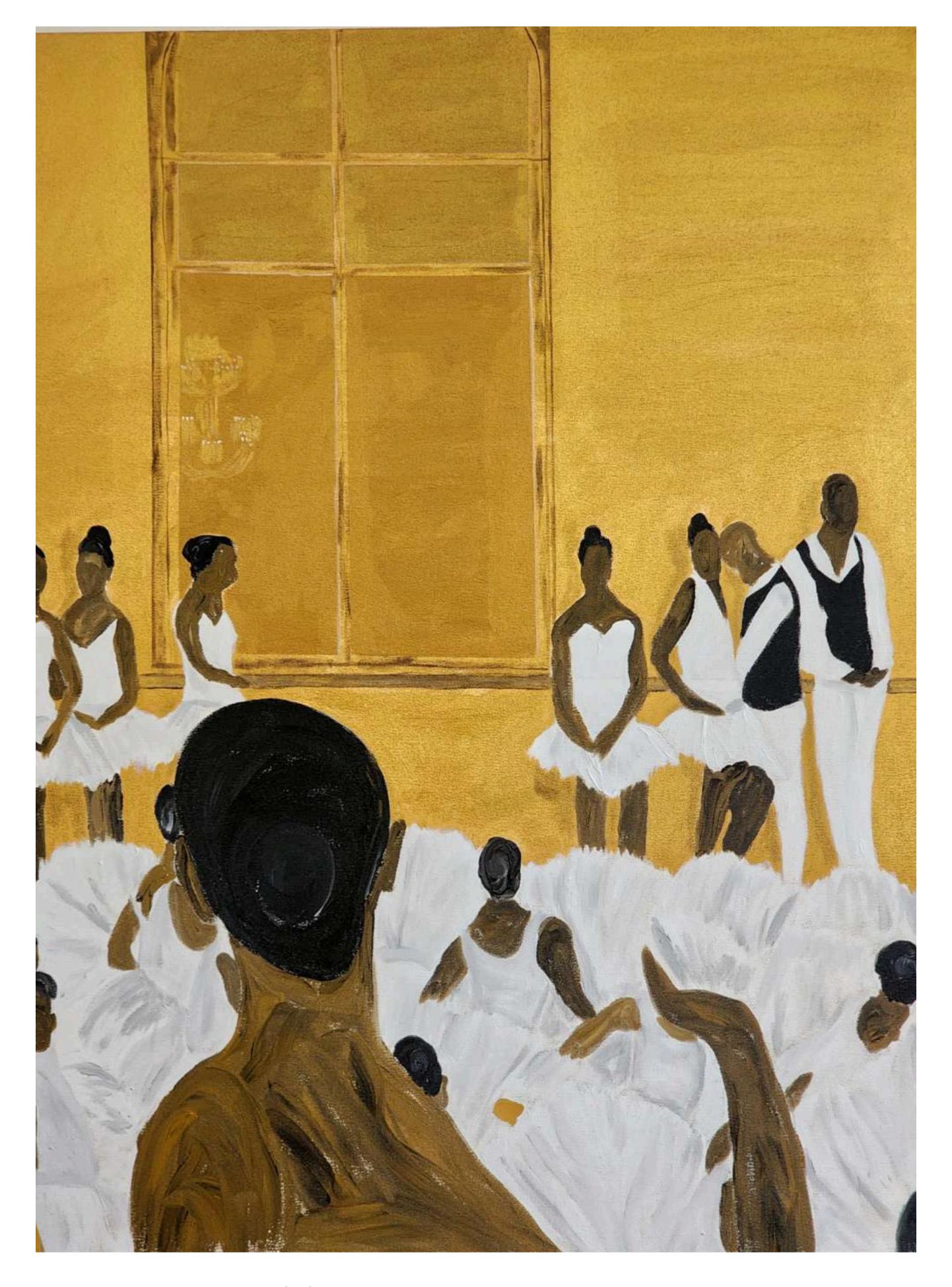




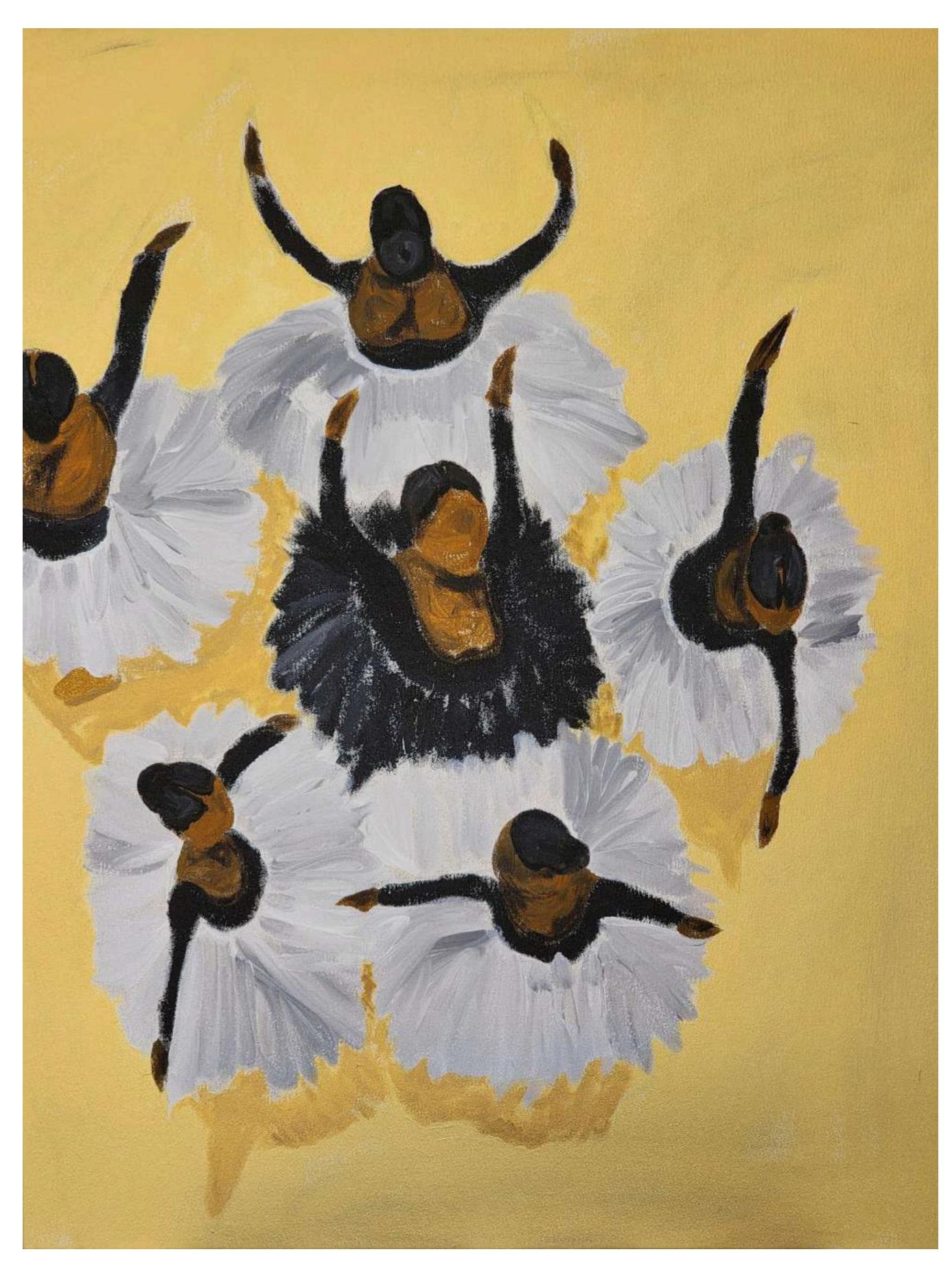
Then Came Eisha, 2023
Acrylic on Canvas
121.9 x 91.4 cm
48 x 36 inches





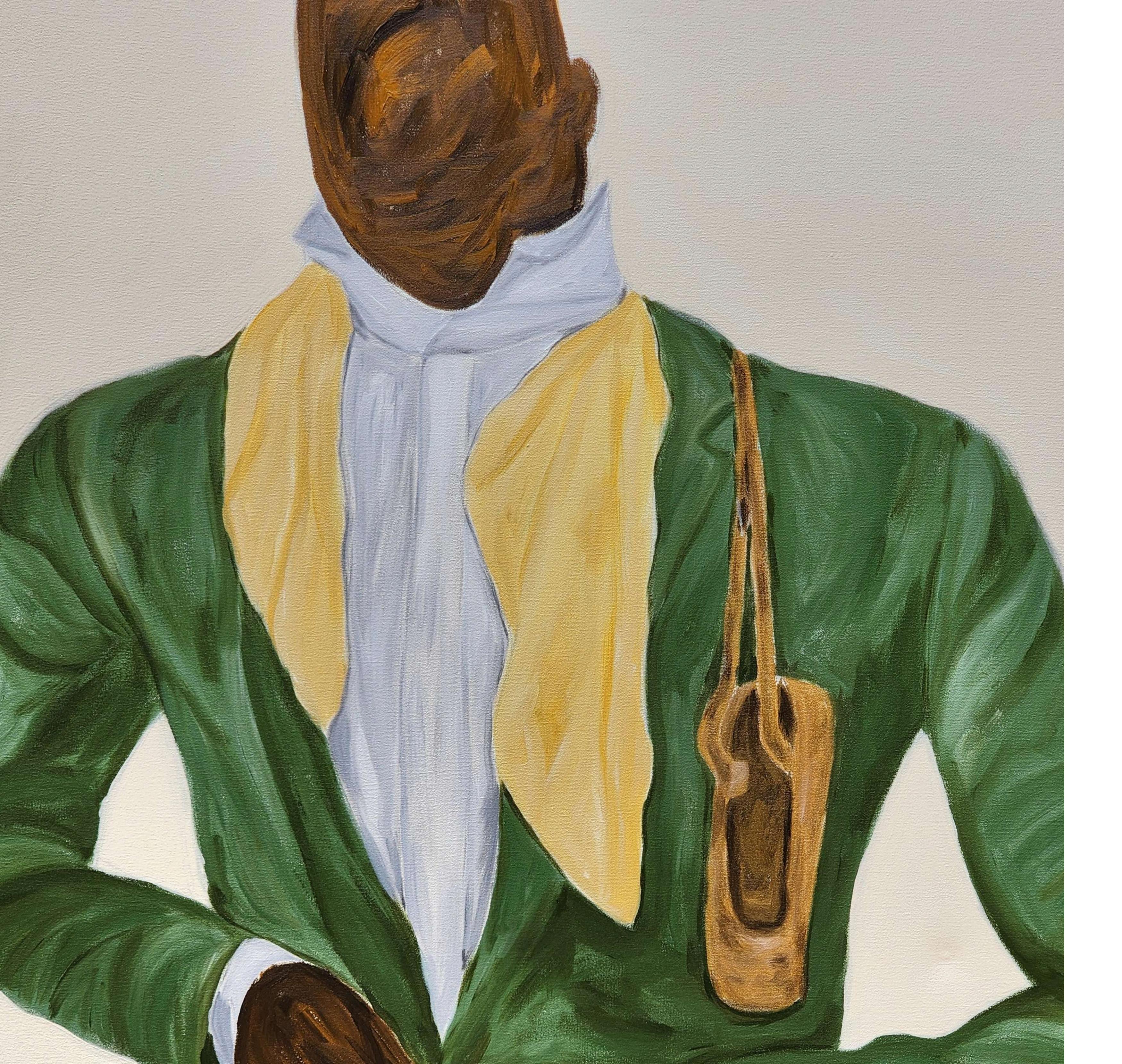


The Golden Waiting Room, 2023-2024
Acrylic on Canvas
121.9 x 91.4 cm
48 x 36 inches



The Dreamers Grace, 2024
Acrylic on Canvas
71.1 x 55.9 cm
30 x 22 inches





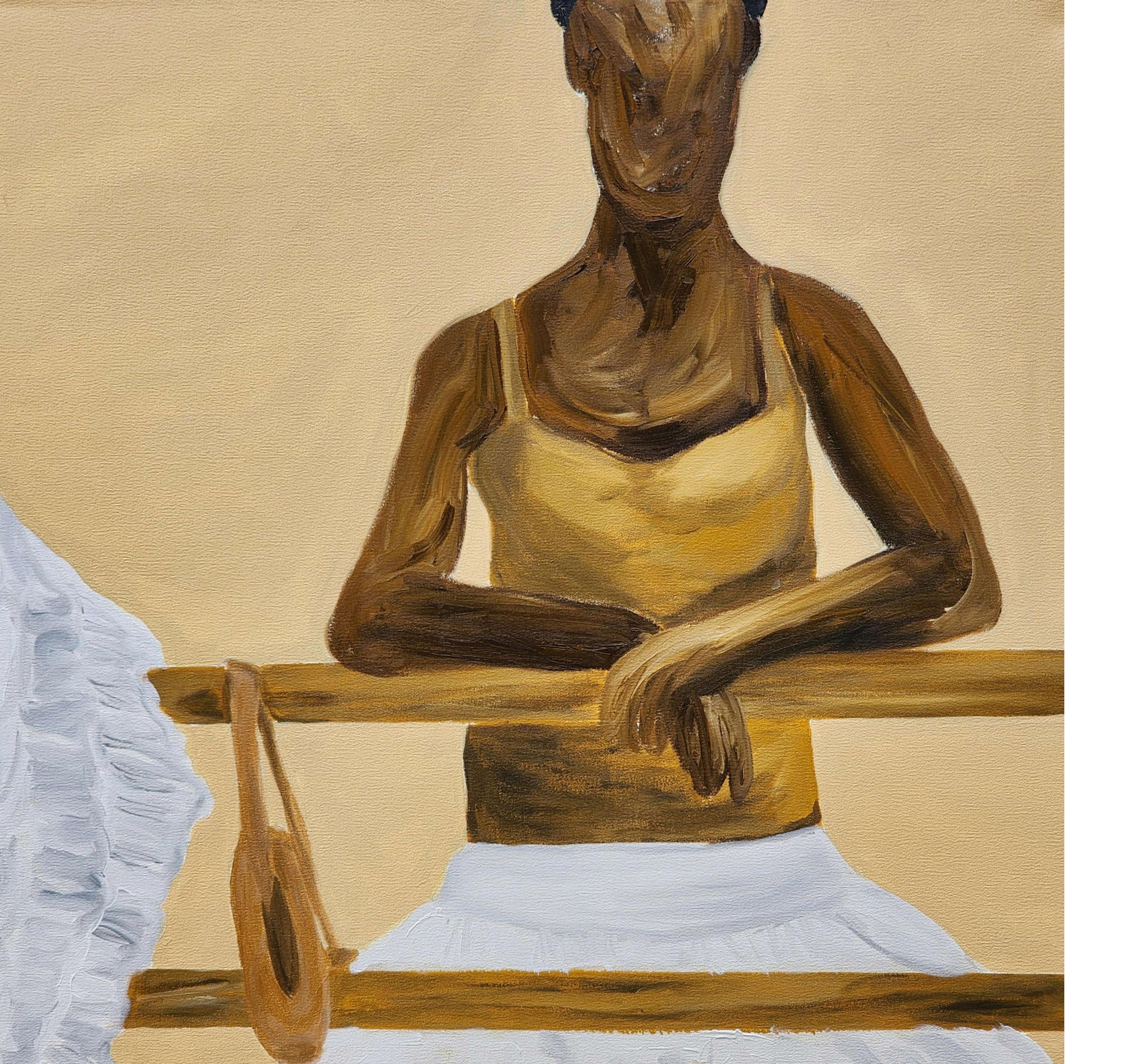


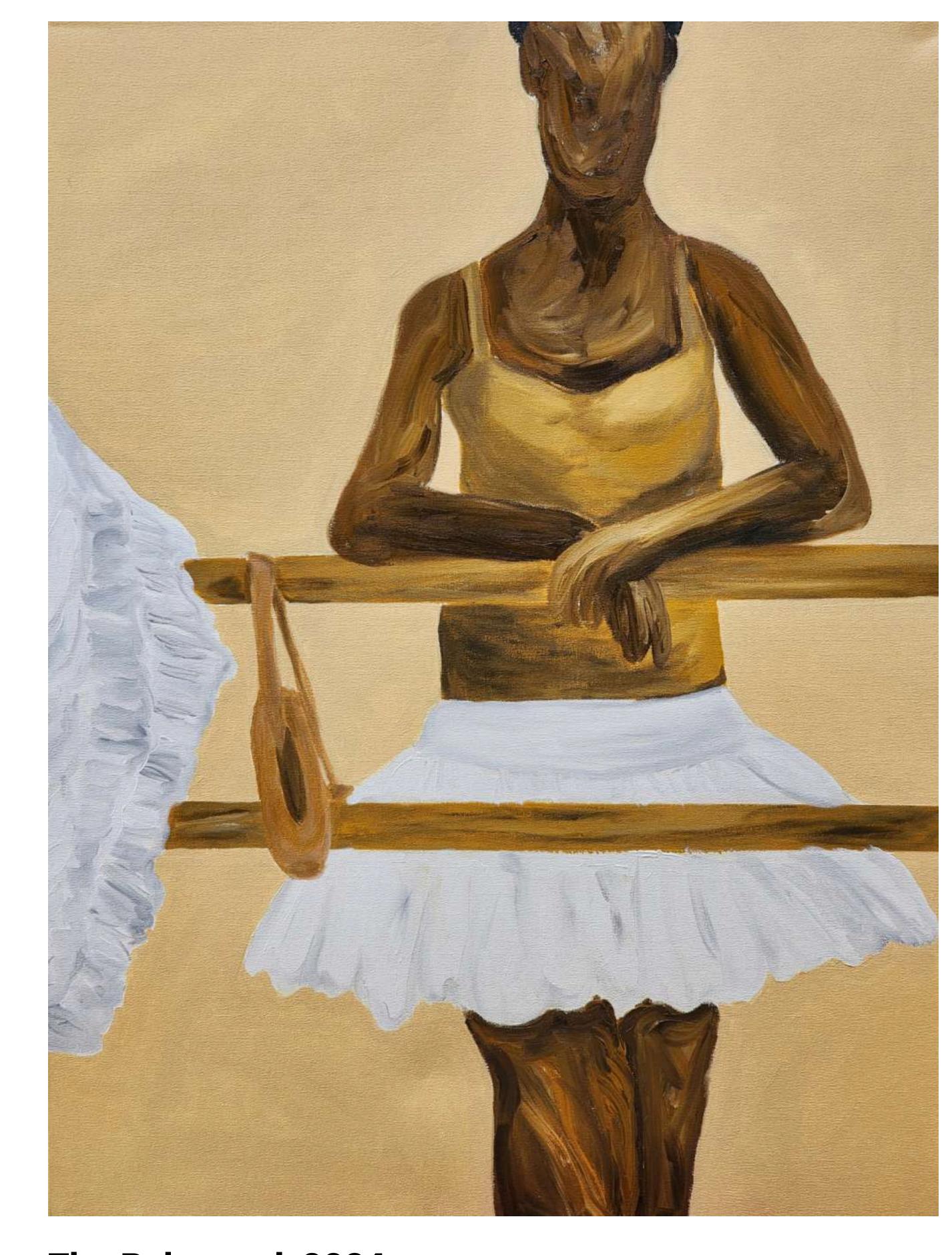
The Show is Over, 2024
Acrylic and Oil on Canvas
121.9 x 91.4 cm
48 x 36 inches



The Beginners Queue, 2023-2024
Acrylic on Canvas
101.6 x 76.2 cm
40 x 30 inches







The Rehearsal, 2024
Acrylic on Canvas
121.9 x 91.4 cm
48 x 36 inches



The Dreamers Ever Leave You, 2024
Acrylic on Canvas
121.9 x 182.8 cm (Diptych)
48 x 72 inches







Acrylic on Canvas
91.4 x 121.9 cm
36 x 48 inches



Stretchy Stretchy, 2023-2024
Acrylic and Oil on Canvas
91.4 x 121.9 cm
36 x 48 inches







Hope In a Ballet Shoe, 2024
Acrylic on Canvas
183 x 121 cm
72 x 47.6 inches



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