

# SOKIA



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LIVING · ART · THE ART OF LIVING





Little girl against tree | 37 x 50 cm | Coloured Pencils



*The importance of art for life.  
Or is the art of living the mother of all arts?*

*A search to find the Platonic ideal of Truth,  
Beauty and the Good*



**Opus 1 (Acryl paintings on linen) and  
Opus 2 (drawings with colored pencils)**

**The World according to Sokia**

*'Listen to Dimitri Shostakovich's 'Piano Concerto in F'- andante, and discover how he succeeds in making the unsayable hearable with an almost cinematic melody. I want to tell to you more about this aspect of our lives, the unsayable.'*

**Solange de Booij-Kirschen**



**Eyes | 120 x 100 cm | Acryl on linen**

Listen to a nocturne by Chopin, a symphony by Beethoven, or a sonata by Mozart, and experience that music expresses what is lacking in words. With music as an art form, we enter the domain of the unsayable, of what cannot be put into words. This inaccessibility applies to many art forms like architecture, ballet, sculpture, and thus also to the art I practice, painting. All disciplines have one thing in common, MAN. Every artistic expression is a product of man. Without man there is no art. Let's take a closer look.

The unborn child, the fetus, has an inseparable relationship with its mother. Complete dependence on a protected world. Noise nowhere. There is unity. No room for miscommunication. After all, that could be fatal. The world.... that is its mother's womb. A languageless world. Peace is cruelly disturbed by birth. The intense, and very intimate bond between mother and child is broken. The child will be catapulted into existence and cannot do anything else than just living it. That is facticity. An unwanted farewell.

And then, as a total surprise, the isolation is broken buy the discovery of language.! Words will be revealed to the child. The outside world, into which all people have been thrown based on solidarity, provides the baby with words to replace the umbilical cord. The isolated living

space of the newborn will be demolished, and new means of communication appear. The child will be connected once more. This so-called re-connection is established by language. But it won't be as pure as it was in the womb, because hand in hand with language and speech come the evil fairies Miscommunication and Manipulation. The pure one-to-one relationship does not exist anymore. The world asserts itself, articulates itself. We stand face to face with life. Life is 'to be' and its most important characteristic is 'persevering in being' whatever the cost. In our linguistic world, where we are constantly

*'A world without esthetical differences would be a nightmare'*

conflicting, we start looking for anchor points, for things that make life bearable. We want to break through isolation and loneliness and return to the lost security. Back to that safe atmosphere, where everything is pure, and to what is TRUE. As the years go by, the longing grows and memories and secrets that are stowed away in the memory banks of our brain, reveal themselves in fragments. Increasingly we seem to be falling short. It becomes more difficult to express feelings into words. >>



**L'Amour incompris | 140 x 100 cm | Acryl on linen**

And then... then there is ART. A new domain. We enter into a world of imagination, of sound, of distortion. A world, where language has been put between brackets because it is not sufficient. The unspeakable is expressed in a different way. In color, music, movement, shape. Once again, human being is the

starting point, but this time as artist. What has been created is nothing more or less than a subjective expression by a man or woman. A newly created world, where we can experience our daily reality from a different perspective. Language has found a new home. As an artist you usually reveal your deepest feelings like

sorrow, outrage, fear, amazement, and faith in a language that is usually understood by people who look at or listen to works of art regularly. Yet, it does not have to be a goal of a work of art that the observer actually 'sees' or 'experiences' the personal expression that the artist 'tells, expresses' with his or her work. Anyway, we recognize and rediscover ourselves again in art. A desire is fulfilled. Art as a magic way to search for unity with creator and created. Like mother and child. In art, we tend to avoid the definitions and conventions that language imposes on us. In a way we might even feel at home again. Back in the womb. We touch the two-unit for a moment. We got to know BEAUTY.

Many of us strive for a long life and try to collect a wide variety of valuables during our lifetime. However length times width indicates a surface. Indicates superficiality. It is only by incorporating depth (art, music, art of living) that the content is created. Length times width times height. Here, age is just a mathematical factor. In addition to moral values -the values we share-, there are values that depend on our differences in individuality, characteristics, style, elegance, or charm. These are esthetical values. Critical for a life that wants content, that wants depth. A world without esthetical differences would be a nightmare. If you really like something very much, you want your partner or friends to like it too, but you

don't want everyone to like it. That idea is terrible. That's why cultural differences are so important, because they are the reason that different people like different things. From the point of view of beauty, a dominant culture is undesirable to say the least. Our reaction to beautiful people and to beautiful things is that they give you a good feeling and that they get the best out of us. Our finest characteristics will be revealed. The things I love, are the things I try to understand and interpret. What follows from this is always something beautiful. In other words, beauty produces more beauty. Having arrived here I want to leave the realm of art behind us. A new horizon is emerging. There is a land where we will find another form of art. The art of living.

***'Every expression of art  
has been, is, and will be a  
product of man'***

THE ART OF LIVING is all about developing a unique personality. Famous artists are always people who are special individuals. The differences between us make us unique. The art of living makes us realize that there are always many more opportunities in life, than you ever considered possible. The art of living reveals what you really like to do, where your





Prémonition | 120 x 90 cm | Acryl on linen



passion lies. This art is about 'becoming who you are'. And every individual has a task to develop his possibilities to the fullest, which is a voluntary assignment given by the one and only commander, your own inner voice: 'find the GOOD'.

It requires a special strength in fulfilling this mission, to deal with destiny, with life. Nietzsche wanted us to embrace fate. He called for a heroic 'amor fati' (love thy fate) and he added: 'all that doesn't kill me, makes me stronger'.

The art of living in encounter with fate. The world seemingly collapses, and the road seems to be nothing more than a cul-de-sac, but in reality, the world unfolds itself to you. Crises are the fault lines in your life and force you to change direction. When you look around you, you will see people struggling with ambitions to be or to become someone. But in a state of crisis you already know who you are, and that you have always been someone. Whatever it may be, fate challenges man to determine this position. It defies us, but at the same time, gives us the opportunity to show courage. Our life is the only thing we have, and thus we can't do anything else than loving it. We are damaged, for sure! But that can be movingly beautiful. Beautiful... because in that what collapses and dissolves, the truth is revealed. Artists are able to show this decay.



**Contemplation | 100 x 100 cm**  
*Acryl on linen*

A life-artist knows all of this and is still capable to enjoy the moment and the little things in life, instead of living in the past, in the future or with fear of his fate. Thus, as the years pass by, we keep on searching for TRUTH, BEAUTY and the GOOD. As the search progresses there is a growing awareness that we ourselves are in the way. We wish a lot, but we often cannot fulfill our desires. That is what I would call our human shortcoming. The difference between wanting and not being able to deliver is suffering, and we just have to cope with that. The tireless search and pursuit of Platonic ideals... that is what ART OF LIVING really means. It might be an illusion, but don't our odyssey and our wish to go to our own island Ithaka start the moment we are born? Let's desire from life the same as from a work of art that we want to experience over and over again.



**Coming home | 100 x 120 cm**  
*Acryl on linen*

Let's try to see beauty in every day's life, let's defy fate and death.

*'The unsayable is expressed  
in other ways; in color,  
music, movement, shape'*

We interpret people, works of art, literature, music, films as beautiful or ugly. Timeless beauty is not only present in great works of art, it is also present in the people and in

the things that make our daily lives a little better. It is in the presence of our loved ones, in a work of art we encounter, in a melody composed by Shostakovich or in a ray of sunlight on a flower.

Beauty is not a set of characteristics. Beauty is actually in all that is. For those who want to see it. Beauty is a promise of happiness, the face of life!

The security in the womb, the struggle with language, the encounter with the inexplicable in art, the striving for harmony and strength, our unequal struggle against fate... ultimately all our desires will be fulfilled.

# OPUS 1

PAINTINGS: ACRYL & OIL ON LINEN



**2oKia**



**Lost elegance | 120 x 90 cm**

**2oKia**



**Guardians of men | 100 x 130 cm**



Tenderness | 100 x 160 cm



**2oKia**



**La dame aux chapeaux | 100 x 150 cm**

**2oKia**



**Le rêve | 100 x 120 cm**





**Jeune fille en profile | 100 x 120 cm**

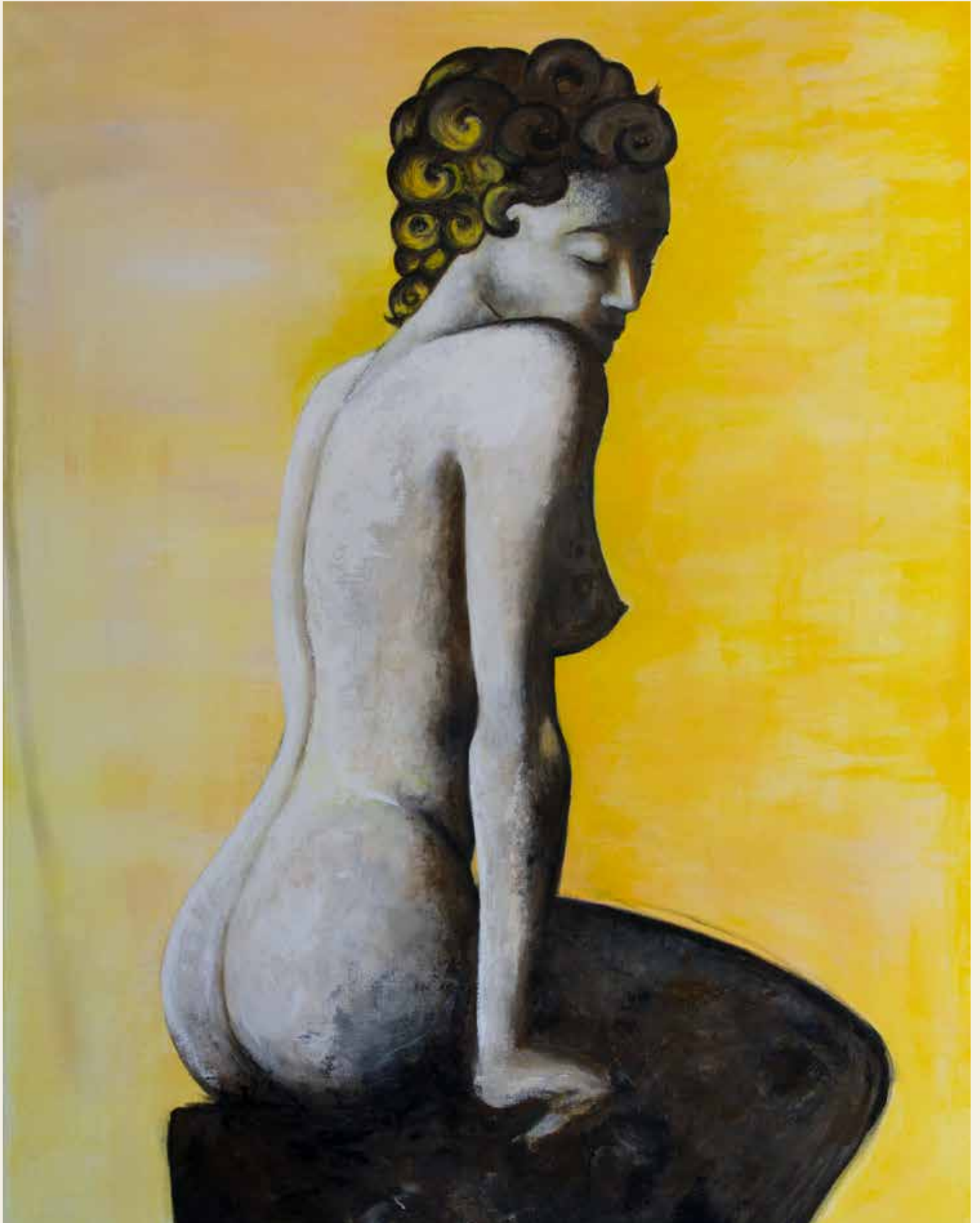




**STOP! | 120 x 100 cm**



**Ajillo | 120 x 100 cm**



**Amarillo de Dios | 100 x 140 cm**





**Rouge de pomme | 100 x 140 cm**





Le future | 100 x 120 cm

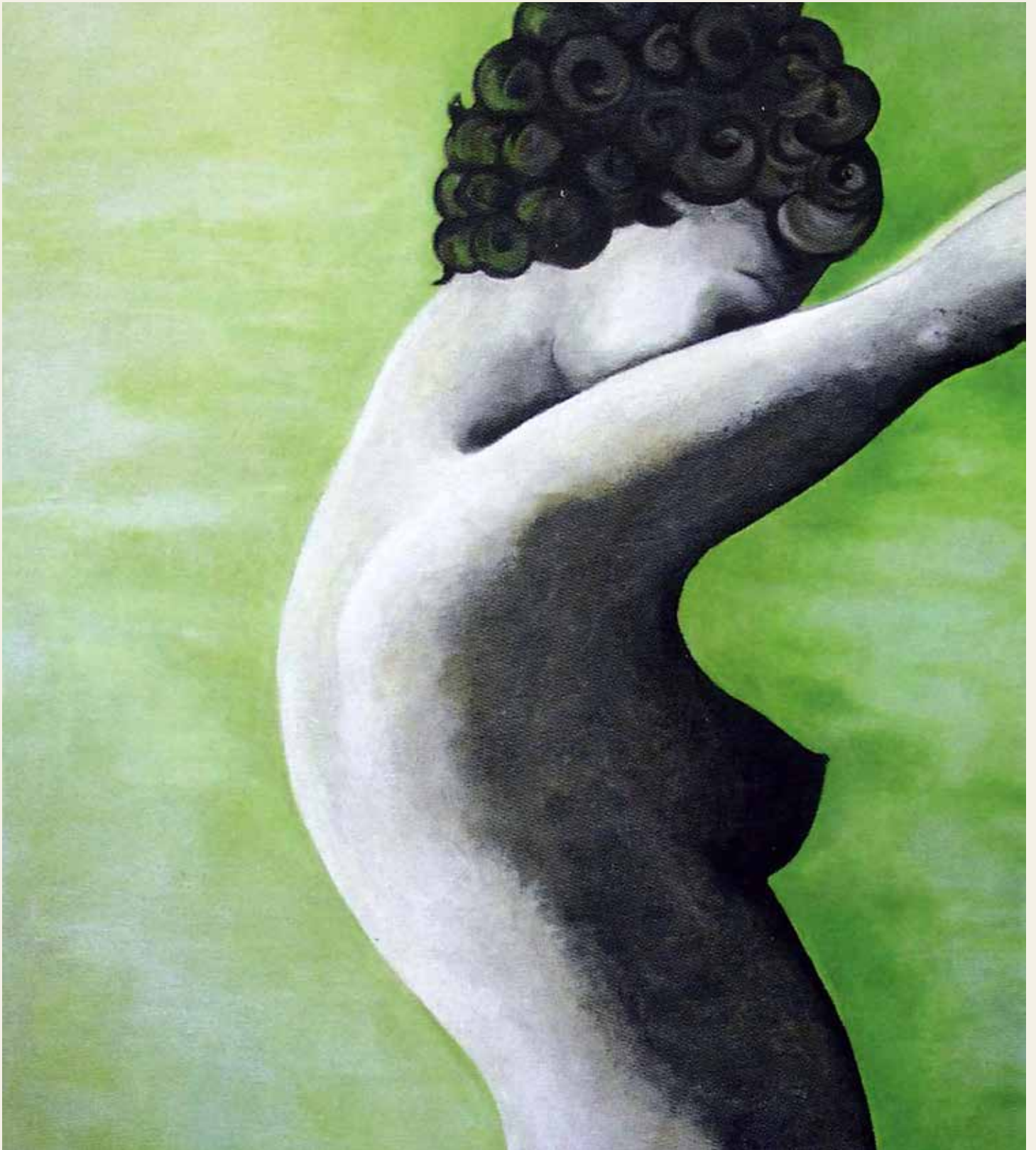


**Concerned mother | 100 x 100 cm**



**La sirène | 100 x 120 cm**





**La jalousie | 80 x 120 cm**

**2oKia**



**La dame en noir | 100 x 120 cm**



**2oKia**



**Ensemble | 100 x 120 cm**



**Torso féminin 1, Torso féminin 2 | 90 x 90 cm | Acryl on linen**





La mujer de piedra | 100 x 120 cm





La demoiselle cachée | 100 x 120 cm | Acryl on linen

## Argentinian artist Sokia: *'I want my work to affect people'*

*Interview - by Claudia van der Sluis*

The drawings and paintings of Argentinian artist Sokia, pseudonym for Solange Kirschen, are tranquil and powerful at the same time. Earthly base tones with in most cases strong contrasting colours are her trade mark. Realistic paintings in a direct, striking and expressive style. There are rarely more than one or two figures painted on the canvas. Sometimes the same figure returns in a different setting, with another facial expression, in contrasting colours or as a mirror image.

The still lifes and landscapes promise an atmosphere of composure. Portraits look back at you with eyes that are full of sadness, resignation, calmness or playfulness. You won't find any flowers or other fiddly work, Sokia doesn't like fussing. But certain details on her paintings are remarkably detailed, like the sad look in the eyes of a mourning woman or the mysterious smile around the mouth of a stone statue. It's as if Sokia wants to say: 'You can't ignore this. Look!'

Solange Kirschen grew up in the seventies in a very special Argentinian family. Her father was 61 years old when she was born and a business man of orthodox Jewish-Romanian descent in Antwerp. A trendsetter who enjoyed life. Her American mother was 30 years younger and of

*'Portraits look back at you with eyes that are full of sadness, resignation, calmness or playfulness'*

a catholic Irish-Italian background.

As a result of the unstable and threatening political situation in Argentina under Videla, she and her family moved from Buenos Aires to Brussels, where life was completely different. "We relocated from a big, spacious house to a busy city." That must not have been very easy for a 12 year old girl. "It took at least three years before I got used to Belgium", Solange remembers. As a young child Solange was a fan





Oranges | 80 x 120 cm | Acryl on linen

of Leonardo da Vinci. She already showed a great talent for drawing. At age 13 she decided she wanted to study arts, but she was too young to go to a regular Arts Academy. When she was 18, after studying at the Lycée Français in Brussels she subsequently moved on to the Academy des Beaux Arts to study sculpture. Still at school she met her husband, fell in love and went with him to The Netherlands. Her parents moved back to their beloved Argentina. Solange was 21 when Rotterdam became her new home town. A culture shock. She spoke three languages, Spanish, French and English fluently, but not a word of Dutch. Holland was small, suffocating, and... a decent cappuccino was hard to find. Smiling: "I wondered why I got myself into this."

After three years at the Academie des Beaux Arts in Brussels, Solange decided to finish her study at the Arts Academy in The Hague. She had to start from scratch, because she didn't speak Dutch yet. "That's not what I wanted", she says with a slight, but very charming French accent. It seemed she had lost interest in arts. She started to teach French and Spanish at a language school. The desire to be an artist was stronger and finally she decided to start drawing and painting again. Sokia has been very busy and produced many works of art with very different themes. Themes and concepts are hot, but not for me". Solange wants to have a free choice. She prefers

ideas that come up unexpectedly and reflect the mood she is in. She shows three portraits of sad looking women who seem to be consumed by their thoughts. They represent Solange, her mother and her grandmother. "I was 24 when I lost both of my parents in six months time, a very lonely experience. The sadness came back when I lost my mother-in-law. Coping with personal losses like that is different when you are young. I never fully recovered from the loss of my parents."

## *'Themes and concepts are hot, but not for me'*

Inspiration can occur at any moment, she explains. A look, a person, a movement can trigger it. "It can be a tiresome process, often preceded by a long wait. It's like being born, a mystery. Nothing turns into something, just out of the blue. I am very sensitive to colours, smells and movements. They inspire me too", she says. "I am very observative by nature and I absorb all the information I can get." Solange shows a painting of a female Buddha in red clothes. "The quietness and the power of a

Buddha is fantastic! I wanted to paint a female Buddha, because women possess a unique and magical kind of energy. I made her red to emphasise the complexity that goes with women. This is one of my first paintings.” When she starts painting Solange usually doesn’t know exactly what the result will be. “I have a picture in my mind, but the image has to grow. Sometimes I work for four or five hours, uninterrupted and am fully absorbed. The same moment when you are absorbed your ego is gone, and there is silence, peace. I get a really warm feeling and become one with the painting. I feel a connection, with the colour, with everything. A wonderful feeling that makes you let go of everything you have learned.”

Solange has a studio in her home in Hillegersberg (Rotterdam). On the walls hang real to life drawings of fruits and vegetables. A painting ‘in progress’ stands on an easel, waiting to be finished. Next to it a small table with brushes and paint. Against the walls you see big portfolios full of sketches of the human body in many different positions, carefully coloured pencil drawings and still lifes. Today Solange prefers to use acrylic materials. Her paintings attract attention, make you think. “I have heard that quite often lately. People just don’t stop looking and respond spontaneously”, Solange says. “Some spectators say it’s like they have received a wake-up call. I

find that very satisfactory.

I always hope I can touch people through my paintings.” Although her paintings are imbued with a sense of tranquillity, they express a lot of energy. “Passive and active energy”, she nods. “I like to show both sides. That red women with the hat... I painted a passive version of her in black and grey. You might call it yin and yang, both sides of life.” Thoughtful: “My paintings should have a positive effect on spectators. Some art makes you feel very tired. Life can be very tiresome and hard as well, but I only need a painting session to fully recharge myself.” Her dream? Would she teach children? “That would be great. Children are less afraid to try new things, they feel free and say what they think. A huge fantasy world opens when they start drawing or painting. Children see everything, their eyes are like emeralds. I want children to believe that they can paint what they see or dream. Children are natural and honest. That’s what I like.”

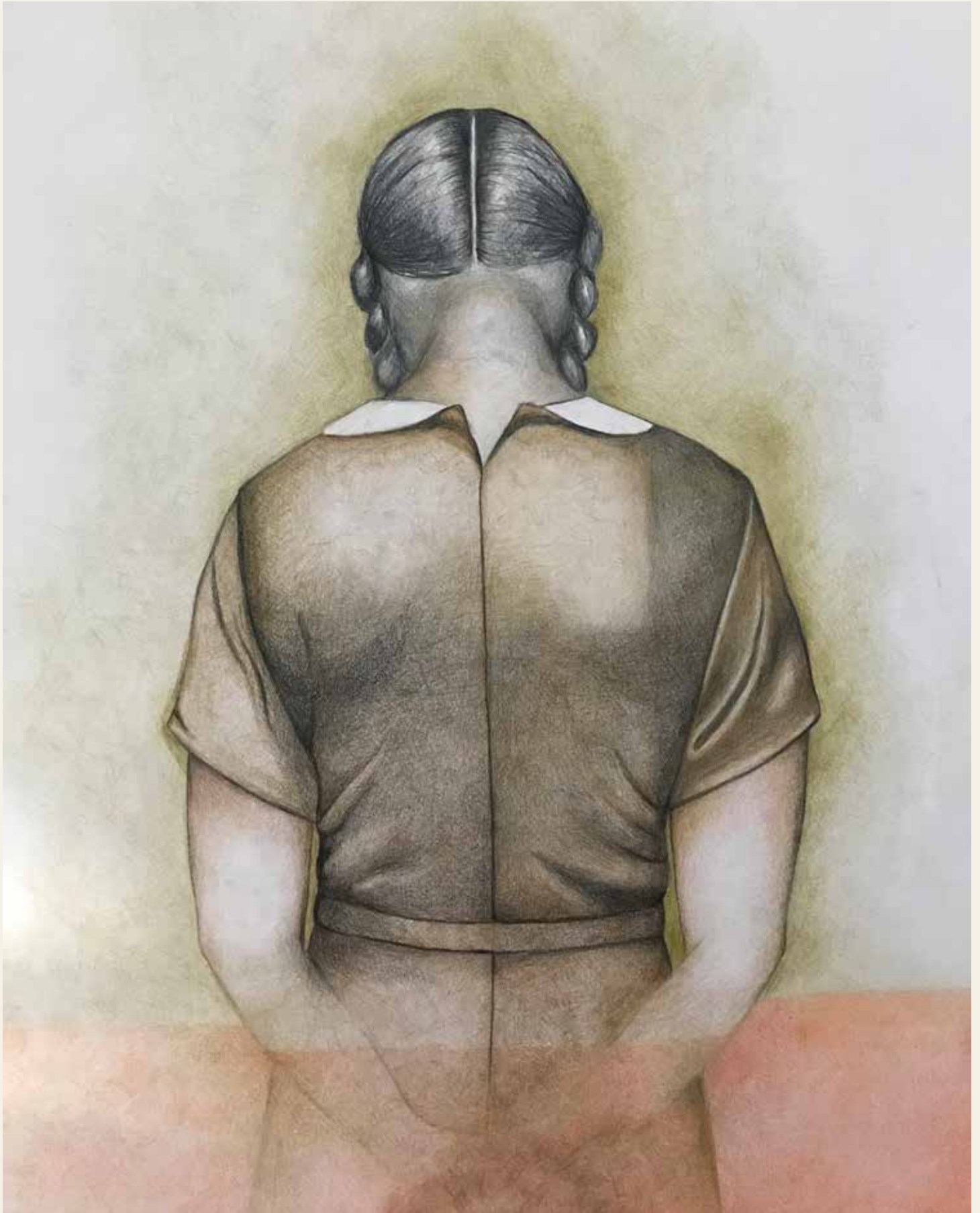
It’s not a coincidence that she is attracted by those qualities, it’s who she is and what she wants her works of art to depict. “What I do is very spontaneous. I don’t care whether it is old-fashioned or modern. You have to develop your own style, with your own colours and your own messages. I want to transmit power and energy, life! That’s my message. That’s what it is all about. And about love of course.”

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# OPUS 2

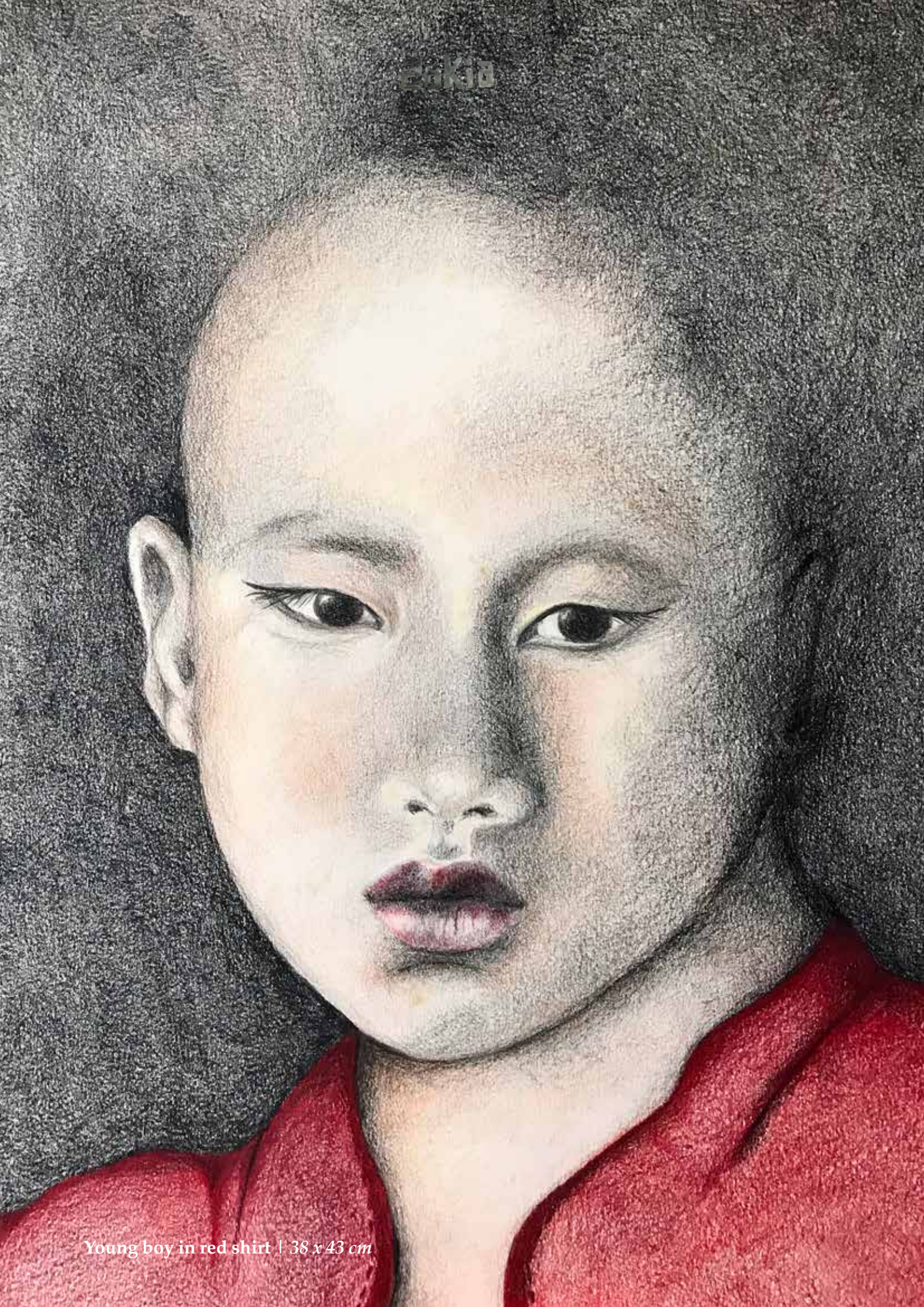
DRAWINGS: COLOURED PENCILS



Young lady | 48 x 62 cm



enKia



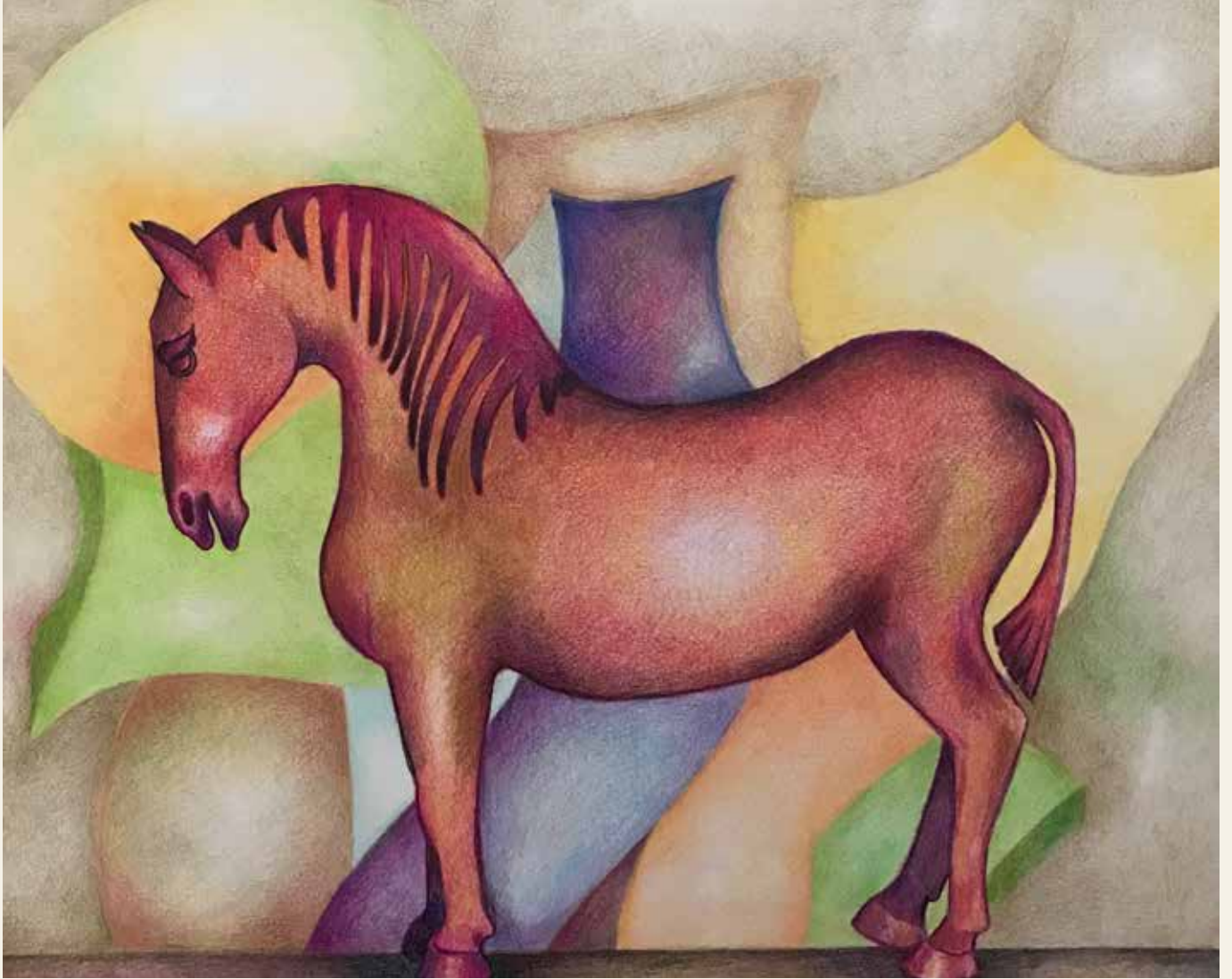
Young boy in red shirt | 38 x 43 cm





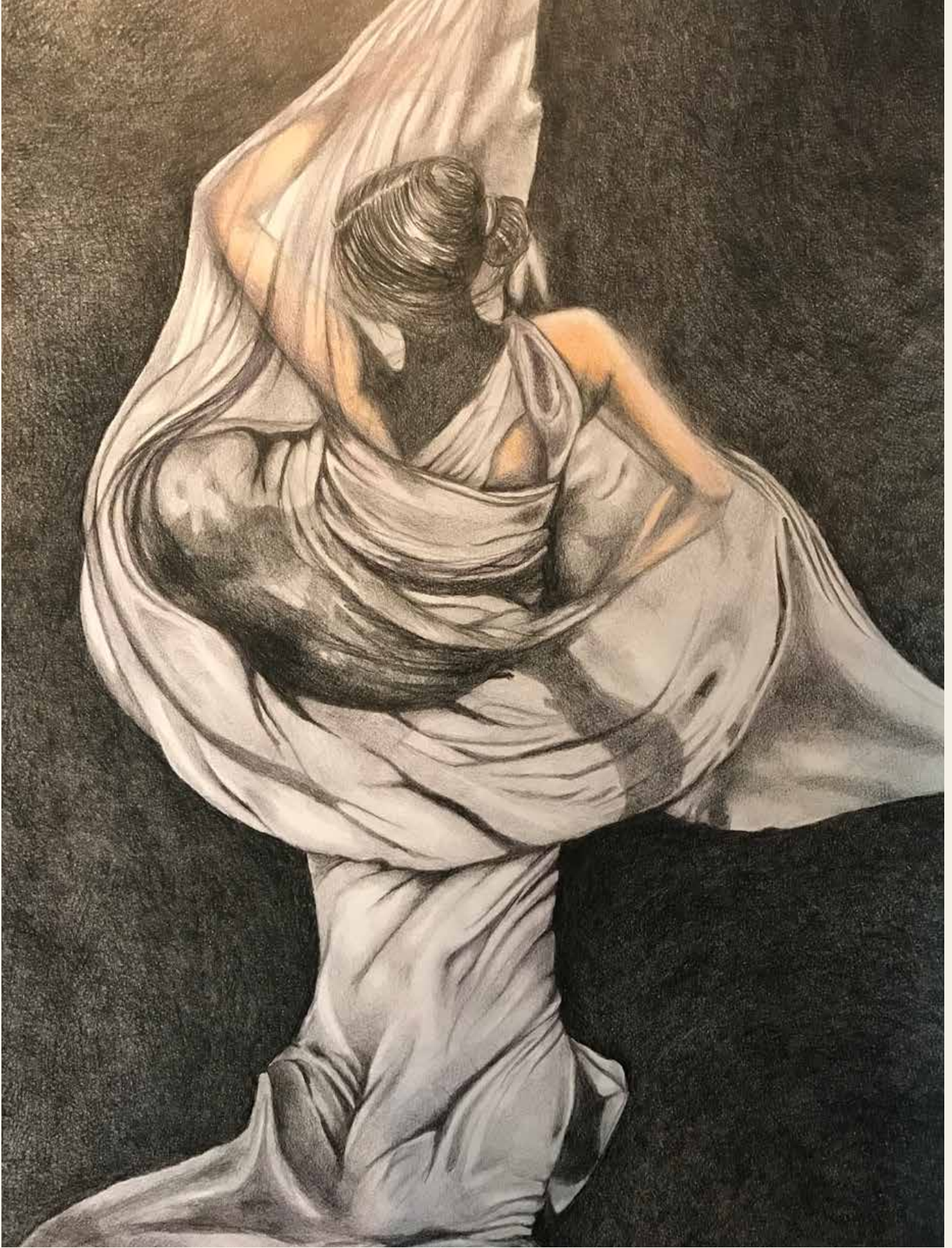
Old man | 50 x 60 cm





Horse fantasy | 40 x 45 cm





**La danseuse | 43 x 60 cm**



**2oKia**



**Horse | 38 x 32 cm**



**2oKia**



**Young girl wondering | 42 x 59 cm**



**2oKia**



**Blue dress | 40 x 45 cm**



**2oKia**



**Flamenco | 45 x 62 cm**



**2oKia**



**La dame masquée | 48 x 58 cm**





**Quatre feuilles. nature morte | 34 x 29 cm**



**Violin | 62 x 49 cm**

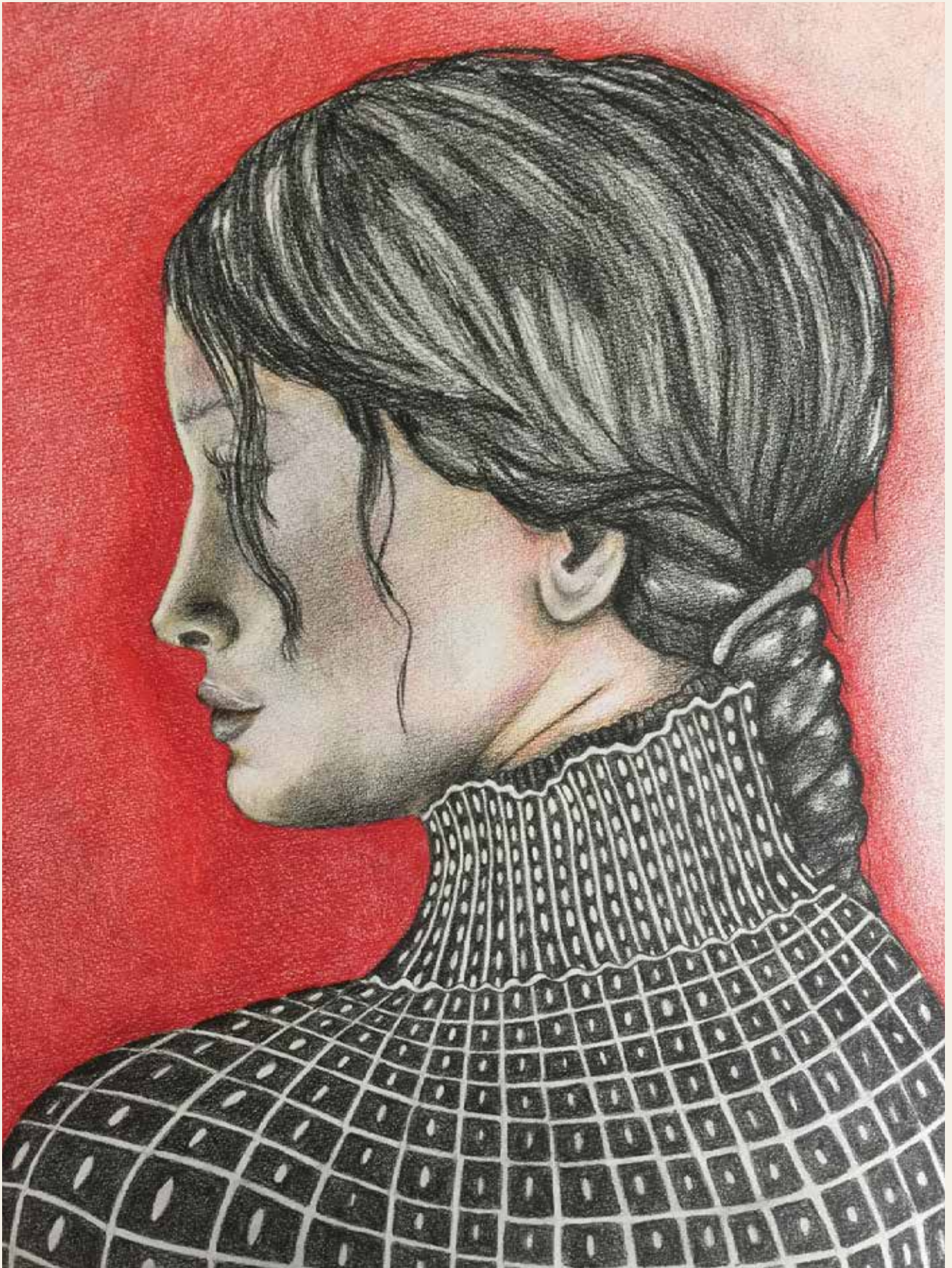


**Still life oranges, nature morte | 32 x 29 cm**



**Coquillage, nature morte | 30 x 33 cm**





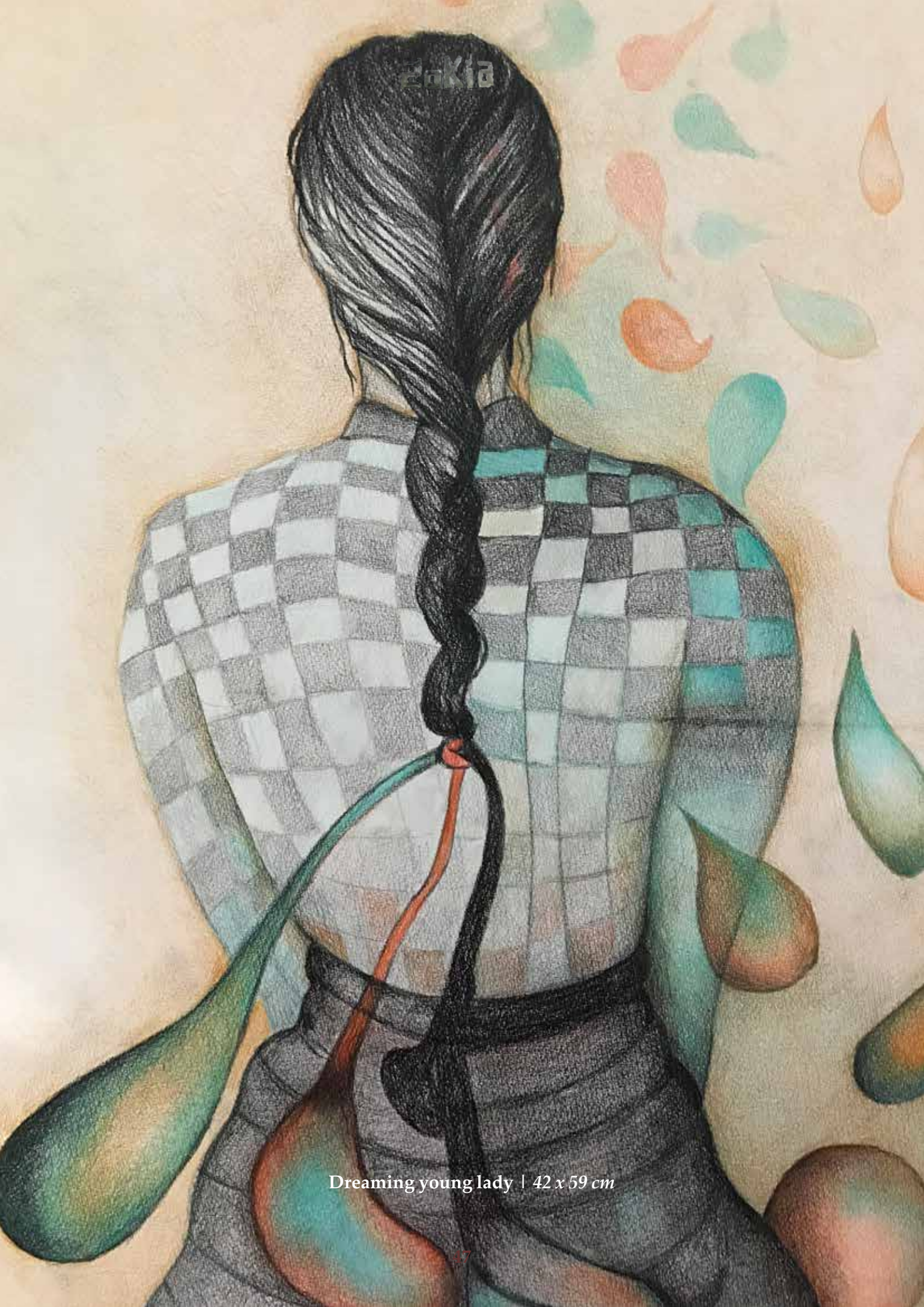
Sokia's hunger games | 39 x 42 cm





Lady with aura | 40 x 40 cm





akia

Dreaming young lady | 42 x 59 cm





Liberté  
45 x 60 cm





**Les enfants | 140 x 100 cm**





**Two sisters | 31 x 37 cm**





Thai young boy



# SOKIA



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