

VITAMIN

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PHAIDON



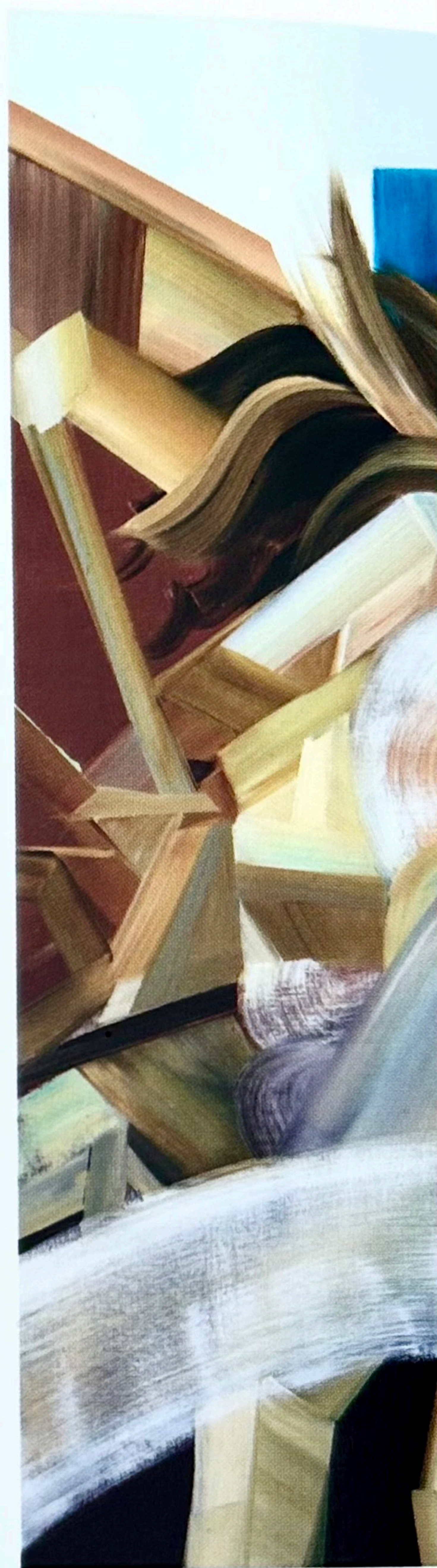
Kristine Moran has a magpie's attraction to a myriad of subjects. She has eavesdropped on wealthy Wall Street brokers and party-goers, family preparation rituals of small-town Canadian weddings, the edgy bustle of New York's 42nd Street, and has also drawn on the dystopian, urban savagery in J. G. Ballard's *High Rise* and the primal engagement with nature in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. Her work is unabashedly personal. The paintings that emerge from her reconfigured experience are a concatenation of visual shapes and colours in which everything from the form of the body to the architecture of interior space is susceptible to being dismantled and rearranged, often in radical ways.

*Undress* (2009) is a tumult of marks and forms in which the suggestions of specific body parts – breasts, buttocks and crevices – are caught up in an indecent whirlwind of gestural sweeps and blurs. In an interview with me in January 2011 Moran asserted that 'the figure has always been present in the work, whether in obvious or not so obvious ways. It is where the work originates.' *Undress*, then, is a narrative of mutability in which a woman moves from an interior domestic space (the left-hand side includes a curtain and the edge of a mirror) to an untamed wilderness that peeks through as you move across the surface. Suddenly all is changeable, and the grey edge of the mirror becomes a thick, undulating tube that insinuates itself everywhere in the bewildering room.

Moran cites as her admired predecessors a clutch of figurative painters from Giorgione and Titian to Degas and Francis Bacon. Her paintings evince a kind of hybridity, commingling abstraction and representation, that has also freely crossed generational lines. In *Sidestep* (2010) she reprises Francis Picabia's *I See Again in Memory My Dear Udnie* (c. 1914), a dazzling fusion of the organic and the mechanical. Her version, in a related palette and similar composition, manages to fuse the lyric with the architectural.

Moran's manner of building her paintings drifts towards Orphic Cubism – what she describes as a way of 'taking cubism to something more sensual'. Her tendency is to ameliorate insistent forms and hard edges with sensuous mark-making, a preference for volumetric illusion over two-dimensionality, and a palette that appeals to the tongue as much as to the eye.

On the surface, her paintings are seductive confections. But the more you look at them, the more they give back a sense of resolute structure and intelligent organization. As she paints, she tells herself stories about what she is painting, and the voice in her head is echoed by a voice from the canvas. 'It's like a chess game, where I'll make a move and the painting sits there and challenges me by asking what my next move will be.' - Robert Enright



1.





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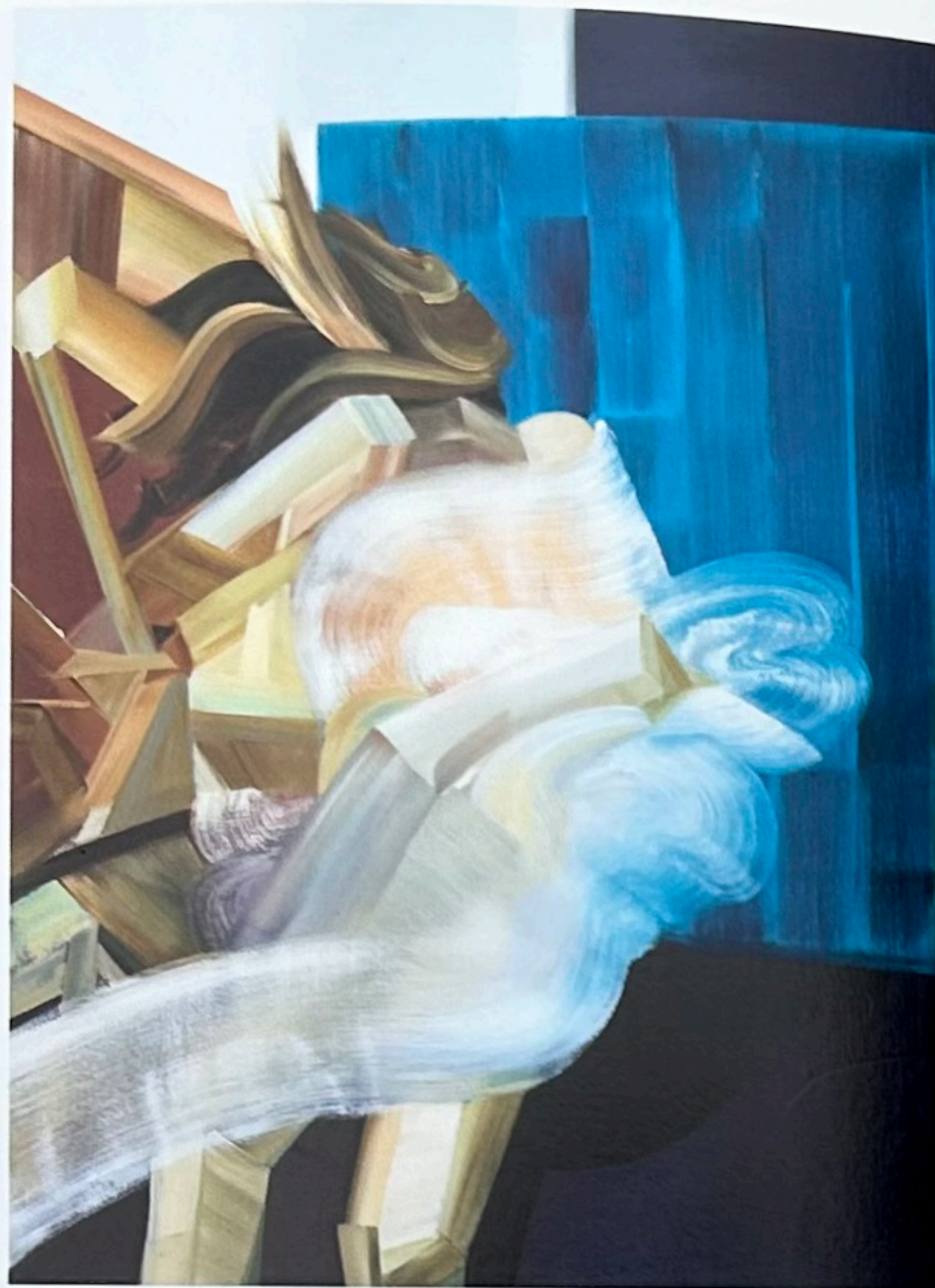
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1. *Sidestep*, 2010  
Oil on panel  
122 x 91.5 cm

2. *Reclining Nude*, 2010  
Oil on panel  
122 x 91.5 cm



3. *Undress*, 2009  
Oil on canvas  
107 x 137 cm

