

GUNS & RAIN

Jo Rogge  
**Always in a Holding Pattern**

**Solo Exhibition | 20 June-19 July 2018 | Johannesburg**

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## Always in a Holding Pattern

Jo Rogge's (b.1963) art is an attempt to render and navigate highly intense emotive states, provoked by a world fraught with conflict. Conflicts surrounding the body, especially bodies in precarious positions, are central to her work. In this new collection, ships, boats, and life rafts are a recurring theme; indeed one around which Rogge's work has frequently pivoted, dating back nearly a decade. Its origins go back even further, to a childhood growing up on the coast of the Indian Ocean, and a father who taught her to sail and build boats. Here, Rogge reflects on the international migrant crisis as well as imprints, patterns, and erasure in her own personal history.

Transported or beckoned by the boat-craft, the bodies in Rogge's paintings are in 'semi-states'. They sit in a submerged semi-consciousness, organically enveloped by water and botanicals. They veer between flux and stillness, desperation and rest. Spongey sandbanks rise from the sea and appear within reach, but are mirage-like. These bodies are, simply put, "always in a holding pattern".

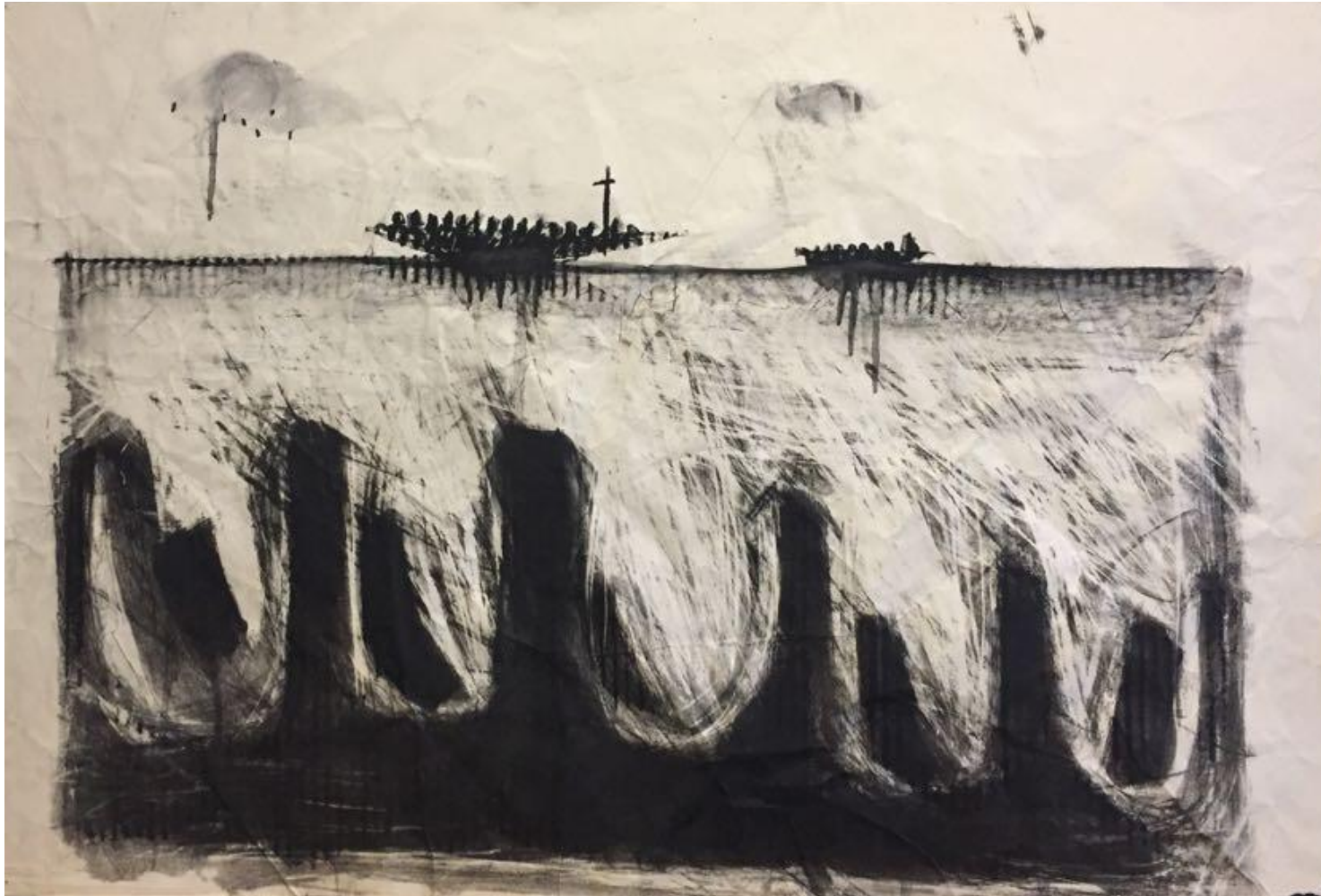
The work of renowned South African poet and writer Breyten Breytenbach is relevant here as a lens through which to interpret Rogge's art. African and Middle Eastern migrants, amongst other refugees, find themselves literally 'in a burning sea'. Breytenbach's concept of the 'Middle World' not only describes the statelessness and psychological liminality of migrants who cross the Mediterranean in life-threatening conditions -- even as this very text is being written -- but more broadly is "a poetic metaphor to understand the situation of people in flux" and those who are unclassifiable "un-citizens" (Marel Grobler 2015).

Rogge protests about extremely vulnerable groups, and indeed about 'Others' with bodies and modes of being that do not fit into accepted social and political schema. So too she reflects on her own long-time sense of displacement within southern Africa, an outcome of Apartheid's impact on her own life and family history. The 'middle world' is, as Grobler has written, a fusion between reality, imagination and memory.

The act of drawing, layering, and reworking older work is a fundamental part of Rogge's artistic process: "Because I am excavating usually strong emotional states, this provides continuity and a safe space on an emotional and physical level. I may reconnect to past experiences or states of being, and choose to either allow them to continue to exist by carrying them into new work, or to obliterate them. I paint experiences that I can't rationalise in words. By rendering events non-verbally that have either fundamentally elevated or wounded me, I am able to contain them and make sense of them."

how often were we wrapped in coolness on the floor  
the smell of turpentine and fire  
the canvases white to our empty eyes  
night's indifference  
and the moon a smile somewhere outside  
out of sight  
days decompose like seasons beyond the panes  
leaves of rain, a face, a cloud, this poem  
I wanted to leave my imprint on you  
to brand you with the flaming hour  
of being alone  
no fire sings as clear  
as the silver ashes of your movements  
and your melancholy body  
I wanted to draw that sadness from you  
so that you might be revealed  
the way a city open  
on a bright landscape  
filled with pigeons and the fire of trees  
and silver crows also out of sight in the night  
and the moon a mouth that one can ignite  
and then I wished that you could laugh  
and your body bitter  
my hands of porcelain on your hips  
your breath such a dark-dark pain  
a sword at my ear  
how often were we here  
where only silver shadows stir  
only through you I had to deny myself  
through you alone I knew I had no harbor  
in a burning sea

**Breyten Breytenbach**



Peripeteia (2018)

Oil pastel on found paper

56 x 81 cm

R 6,000

\*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



#aquarius (2018)

Oil pastel on found paper

56 x 81 cm

R 6,000

\*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



Flotando (2018)  
Oil on Fabriano  
54 x 75cm  
R 11,500 (framed)  
R 10,000 (unframed)



What the sea undid (2018)

Oil on canvas

40 x 50cm

R 9,000



Fortress Europe(2018)  
Oil pastel on found paper  
56 x 81 cm  
R 6,000

\*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



No harbour in a burning sea (2018)

Oil on canvas

49 x 59cm

R 10,000



La Patera (2018)

Oil pastel on found paper

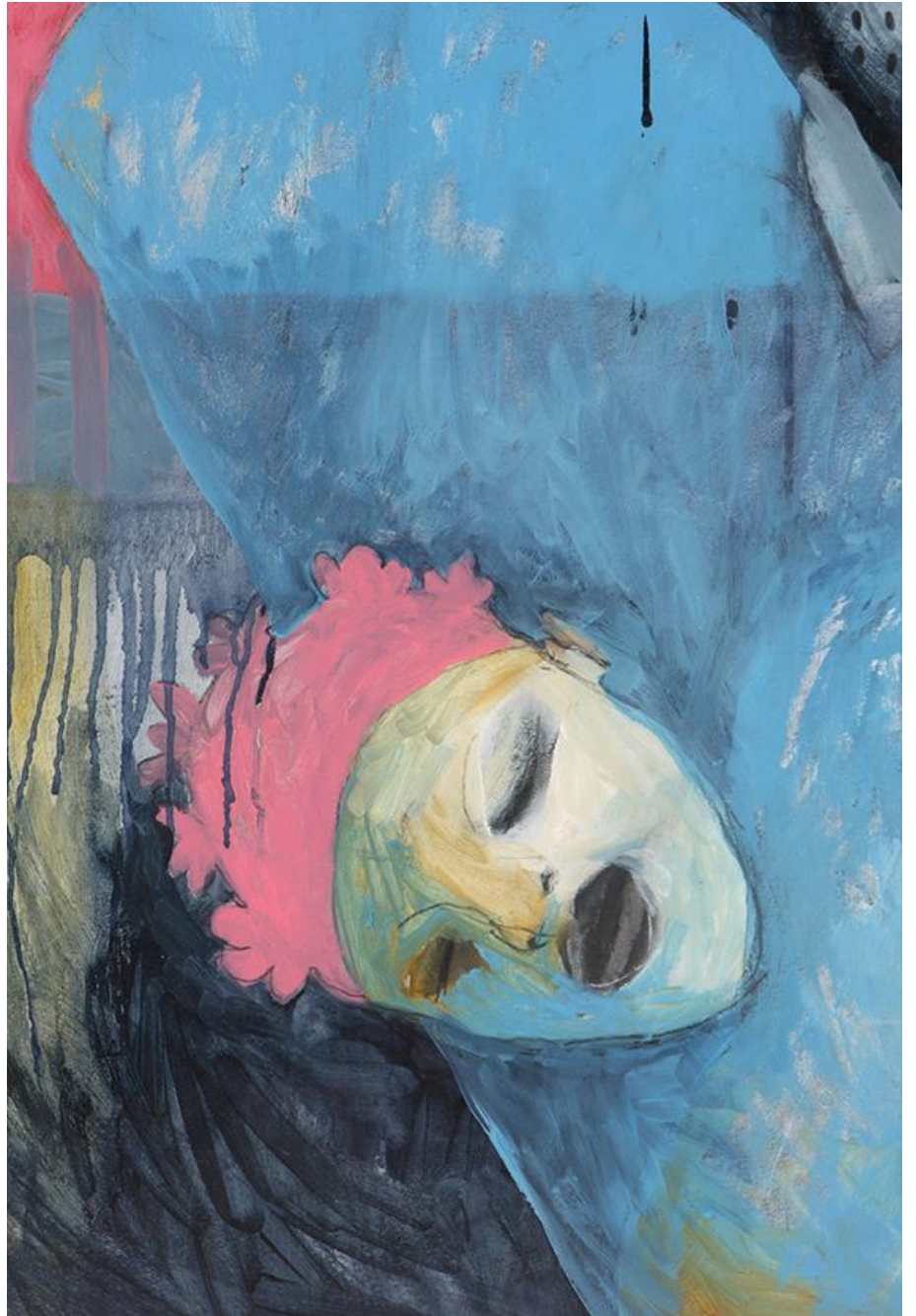
56 x 81 cm

R 6,000

\*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



Grabbed by the throat  
Oil on Fabriano  
100 x 76 cm  
R 20,000 (framed)  
R 18,000 (unframed)



*Detail from 'Grabbed by the throat'*



Cementerio (2018)

Oil pastel on found paper

56 x 81 cm

R 6,000

\*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



That time Icarus fell 2018)  
Oil on Hannemuhle paper  
100 x 76cm  
R 15,000



Tsek (2018)  
Mixed media on paper  
70 x 50cm  
R 7,500



Just (2018)  
Mixed media on paper  
70 x 50cm  
R 7,500



Ondi ku hole (trans. 'I love you')

Mixed media on Fabriano

100 x 76 cm

R 20,000 (framed)

R 18,000 (unframed)



*Detail from 'Ondi ku hole'*



A beautiful danger (2018)  
Mixed media on paper  
70 x 50cm  
R 7,500



For the mothers of the disappeared (2018)

Oil pastel on found paper

56 x 81 cm

R6,000

\*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



Kiss of salt (2018)

Oil on canvas

156 x 100 cm

R 22,000

\*image fresh from studio, additional images on request

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Twin Turmoil (2018)  
Oil on canvas  
120 x 100 cm  
R 18,000

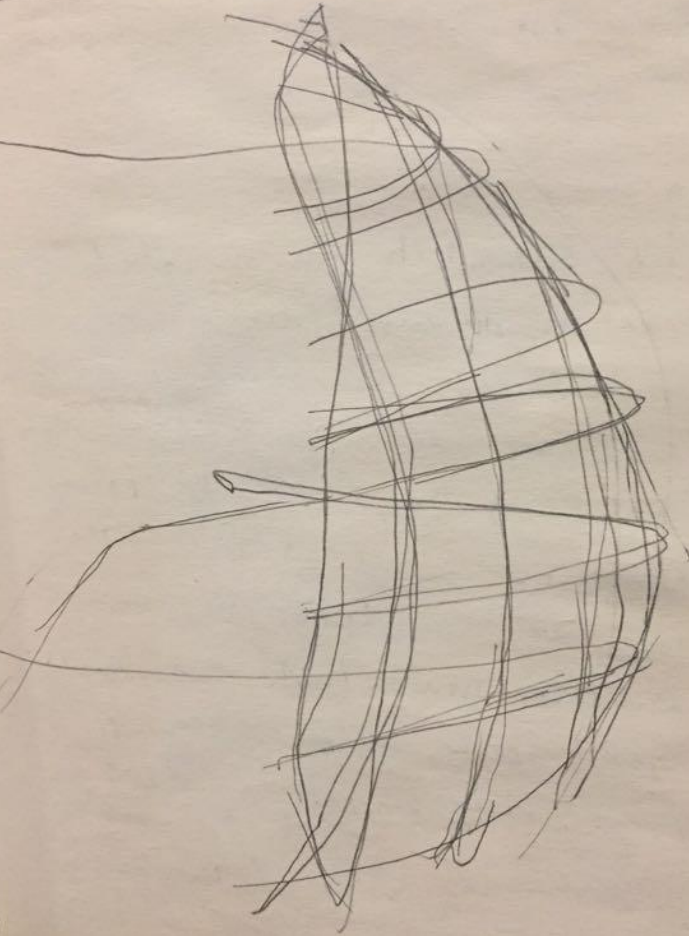


Ducking deep (2018)  
Oil on canvas  
40 x 50 cm  
R 8,000



Out of nowhere (2018)  
Oil on canvas  
45 x 60cm  
R 10,000

surrender

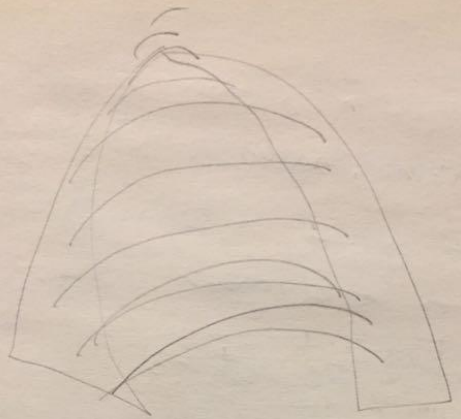


places

in a holding pattern  
and it's the sadness that  
things to me like dead  
things washed up on the  
shore

Excerpts from the artist's notebooks

before  
still  
below  
the  
ing  
in,  
mean  
need  
ed



It  
Closing  
the  
wound

beat  
fish  
shield  
carapace  
wound  
vulva

to be one of them!  
One of the poets whose song  
helps close the wound  
rather than open it.  
Juan Ramón Jiménez

me

It becomes every leaving, every departure, every going,  
every hip tube and bending, every tearing and  
franching wide open. Every falling and falling,  
it becomes every dashing and drowning, every



blow and break. It becomes every crash and every  
careening blind escape. It is every scream  
and every silence. It is every thorn and  
every burn, every graze and every scar.

Excerpts from the artist's notebooks



*Boat frame created during Rogge's residency at the Centre for Contemporary Art and Sustainability in Barcelona, Spain, 2016.*

## Jo Rogge | Bio and Exhibitions

Rogge lives and works between Namibia and South Africa. She is the founder of NJE Collective, which facilitates informal mentorship between young, developing artists and their more established counterparts. In 2016, she received a grant from the Other Foundation to create a body of work addressing identity, stigma and discrimination in the LGBTI community in Namibia. Rogge's constant interrogation of the 'Othered' body has led her to a range of projects across the globe, working in diverse media. Rogge is also advisor and editor for the first-ever documentary film about young, black, transgender Namibians. She is currently working with an award-winning Spanish director on a documentary being filmed in Namibia.

2018: Always in a Holding Pattern, Solo Exhibition, Guns & Rain, Johannesburg

2018: Group Show, Gallery One11, Cape Town

2018: Group Show, NJE Collective at Investec Cape Town Art Fair

2017: Guns & Rain, Also Known As Africa, Paris

2017: All Your Secrets, with Ann Gollifer, Guns & Rain, Johannesburg

2017: Guns & Rain, Art Africa Fair, Cape Town

2017: Another Antipodes, Freemantle, Australia

2016: Art Market Budapest – Art PHOTO, Budapest, Hungary

2016: I am a different me, Franco Namibian Cultural Centre, Windhoek, Namibia

2016: Turbine Art Fair, Johannesburg, South Africa

2016: THAT ART FAIR, Cape Town, South Africa

2015: Xom/ Etosha, Gothenburg Biennale (GIBCA-extended), Vänersborg Art Gallery, Sweden

2015: UN/Declared UN/Desirable, Franco Namibian Cultural Centre, Windhoek, Namibia

2014: Studio at Kalk Bay, Cape Town, South Africa

1992: Exile & Elegy, Soho 20 Gallery, New York City

1993 - 2010: Solo shows in Windhoek & Swakopmund, Namibia

1987 - present: Group exhibitions in Namibia, South Africa, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Canada

Work represented in public and private collections in: USA, Canada, Norway, Finland, Germany, South Africa, Spain, Namibia