

# GUNS & RAIN

Bev Butkow

FNB Joburg Art Fair 2018



Coming from a place of supreme organisation and structure – as a trained accountant – Bev Butkow examines structures and how to unravel them. Moving between form and disintegration, and asking questions about imposed boundaries and power systems, her practice is marked by a deep exploration of materiality as a way of embedding social issues within making practices. Butkow's work asks questions about imposed boundaries and power systems, especially in relation to gender, by changing our reading of materials.

She cuts up and defaces existing paintings - sometimes forcefully - letting her view materials in a fresh light before ordering, arranging or weaving them together again. Chance, play and meditation play a role in transforming materials into new tactile, textured compositions.

Weaving creates space to think. An immersion in the slow in-out meditation of weaving embodies both expansion and contraction; simultaneously breaking out of structured control and then being contained by it again. Butkow's organic working process harnesses a feminine sensibility, a search for a women's way of making meaning, and a search for the language and materials that could legitimately express femininity's lost place.

Her choice of materials is conscious: currently a combination of traditional art materials like oil paint, found materials like glitter and embroidery thread, and the discards of her creative process. Nail polish trends guide her colour selection. She has previously worked with materials like perspex and plastic.

Butkow started making art in her mid-40s and is now a full-time artist. As part of her re-education, she is currently working towards a Master of Fine Art at Wits University, having completed her Honours in Art History at Wits with distinction in 2017 and presented at academic conferences. Butkow had a solo exhibition in 2015, winning a Merit Award in the SA Taxi Foundation Art Award the same year. Since then, she has exhibited in numerous group shows and art fairs including the Cape Town Art Fair and National Arts Festival. Her work is housed in local and international collections.

Deeply committed to social engagement and education, she co-founded a library in Limpopo and sits on the board of 11 schools. Born and living in Johannesburg with her husband and four children, her creative home is the Bag Factory Artist Studios, blocks away from where her grandfather peddled eggs at the Fresh Produce Market in the 50's and 60's.

*Hold me tight*

Repurposed artwork on handmade rice paper, ribbon, pearl  
beads, cord

2018

95 x 35 cm



*Hold me tight - detail*





*Constrained in a complex abundance*

Nail polish, ink, repurposed artworks, acrylic on Fabriano

2018

98.5 x 67.5 cm

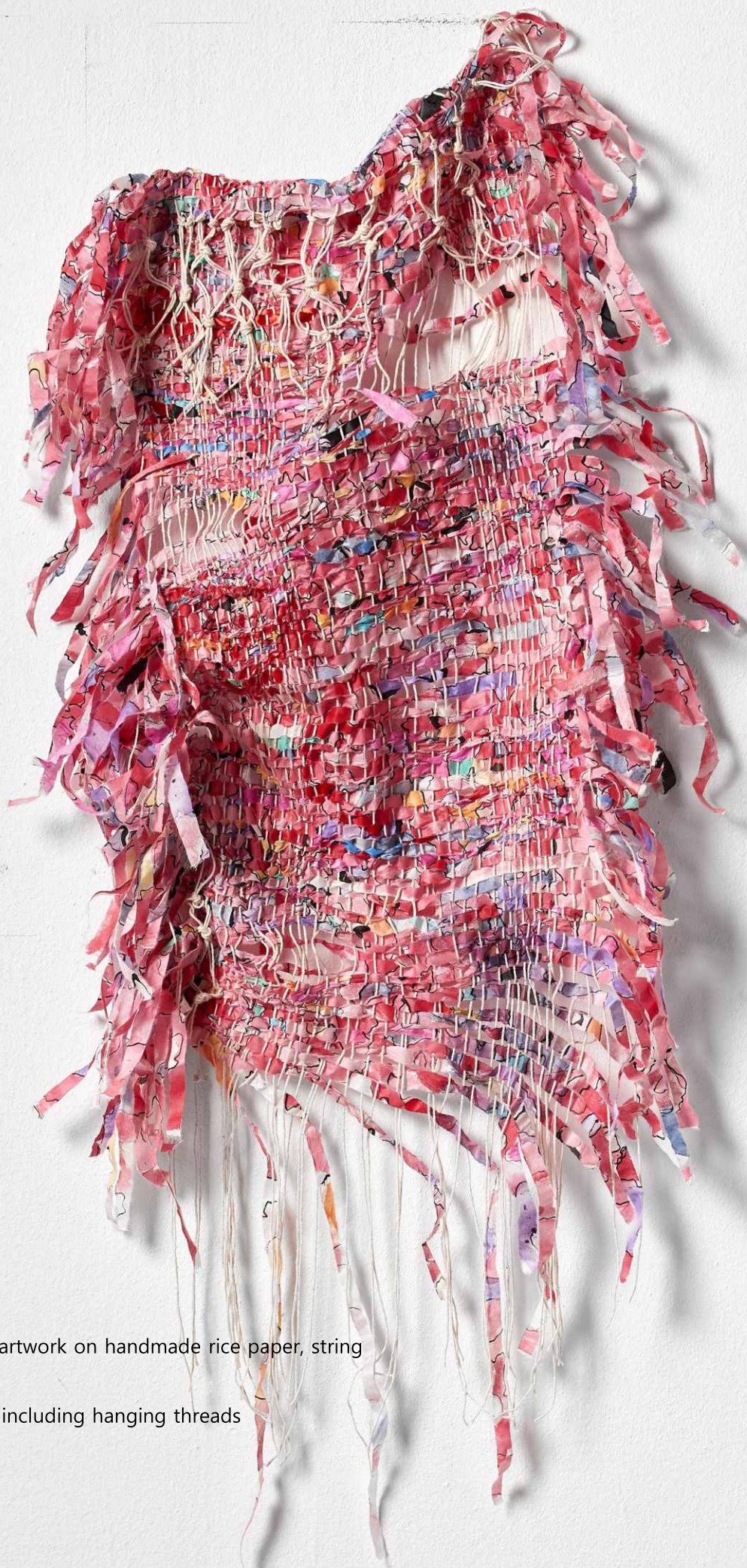


*A mesh of complicit reinforcement*

Plastic mesh, repurposed oil painting, fabric dishwashing cloths

2018

110 x 105 cm excluding hanging threads



*A softening*

Repurposed artwork on handmade rice paper, string

2018

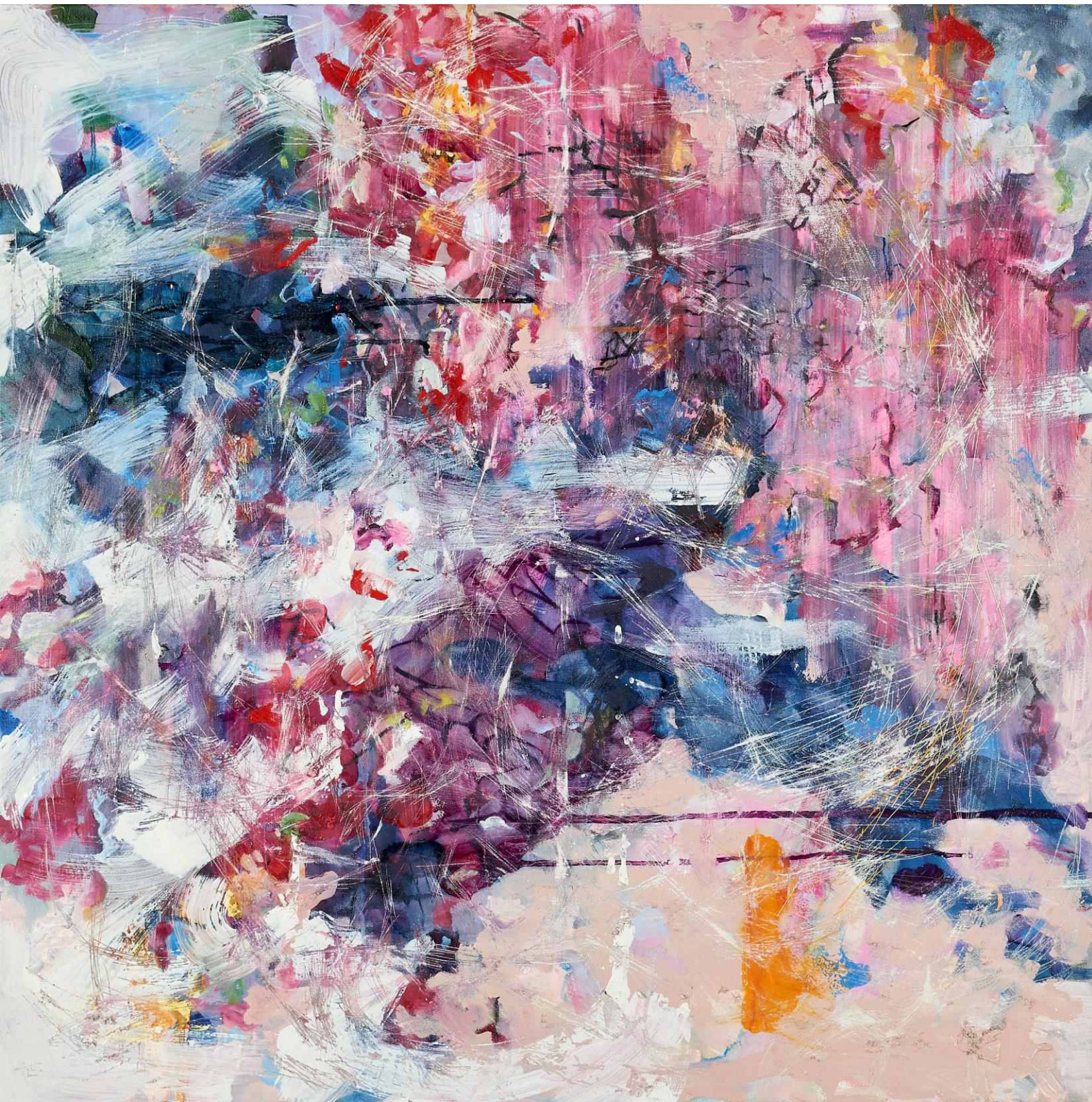
110 x 54 cm including hanging threads



*A softening II*

Repurposed artwork on handmade rice paper, string, cord  
2018

100 x 50 cm including hanging threads



*It took a little force*

Oil paint, thread on canvas

2018

100 x 100cm



*Expansion and contraction*

Plastic mesh, repurposed oil painting, fabric, dishwashing cloths,  
metal washers

2018

190 x 220cm



*Of dividing and discerning. Precariously bound*

Nail polish, ink, watercolour paint, repurposed artworks, acrylic on Fabriano

2018

100.5 x 71 cm



*This didn't happen by chance*

Nail polish, ink, repurposed artworks, acrylic on Fabriano

2018

99 x 69.5 cm



*Subversive disruption*

Plastic mesh, repurposed oil painting, fabric,  
dishwashing cloths

2018

100 x 110 cm, excluding hanging threads



*Challenge the bounds of acceptability*

Plastic mesh, repurposed oil painting, fabric, ribbon, metal washers

2018

92 x 106 cm excluding hanging threads

## Contact details

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## Selected exhibitions, awards and grants

### Solo exhibition:

2015 *m/other*, Lizamore & Associates, Johannesburg

### Selected group exhibitions:

2018 The Art of Lithography: a collaborative expression of LL Editions, Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg (forthcoming)

Joburg Art Fair

Sister Sister, National Arts Festival, Grahamstown

SculptX 2018, The Melrose Gallery, Johannesburg

Earth, Wind, Fire, Gallery Noko, Port Elizabeth

Imposed, Kalashnikovv Gallery, Johannesburg

Remembering 60 000 forced goodbyes, Sanlam Art Lounge, Johannesburg

Turbine Art Fair, Johannesburg

2017 Joburg Art Fair

35 Years : Trailblazers, Lizamore & Associates, Johannesburg

Common Ground, Trent Gallery, Pretoria

Turbine Art Fair, Johannesburg

2016 Cape Town Art Fair

Art State, Galerie NOKO, Port Elizabeth

Untitled 2.99 and 3.99, 99 Loop Gallery, Cape Town

Young Collectors II, Fried Contemporary, Pretoria

District Six 50th Commemorative Print Exchange Portfolio, District Six Museum, Cape Town

Post-Its, Constitution Hill, Johannesburg

Contemporary showcase, Gains & Rain, Johannesburg

Thami Mnyele Fine Arts Awards Top 100 exhibition, Kempton Park, Johannesburg

Turbine Art Fair, Johannesburg

2015 and before

City Soiree, Gains & Rain, Johannesburg

Thami Mnyele Fine Arts Awards Top 100 exhibition, Kempton Park, Johannesburg

Les is More, Gallery Momo, Johannesburg

Thinking in a Space, Nirox Projects, Maboneng, Johannesburg

Fresh Produce, Turbine Art Fair 2015, Johannesburg

## Awards & grants:

2017 Post-Graduate Merit Award, University of Witwatersrand (turned down so others could benefit)

2016 Johannesburg Council Chamber Totem Public Art Competition

Post-Its, Constitution Hill, Johannesburg

2015 Fresh Produce, Turbine Art Fair 2015, Johannesburg

Top 5 finalist, SA Taxi Foundation Art Award

Winner Assemblage Postcard Competition

Work represented in public and private collections in: Canada, France, Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and USA