

GUNS & RAIN

Jo Rogge
Always in a Holding Pattern

Solo Exhibition | 20 June-19 July 2018 | Johannesburg

julie@gunsandrain.com

+27 76 294 5332

www.gunsandrain.com

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".

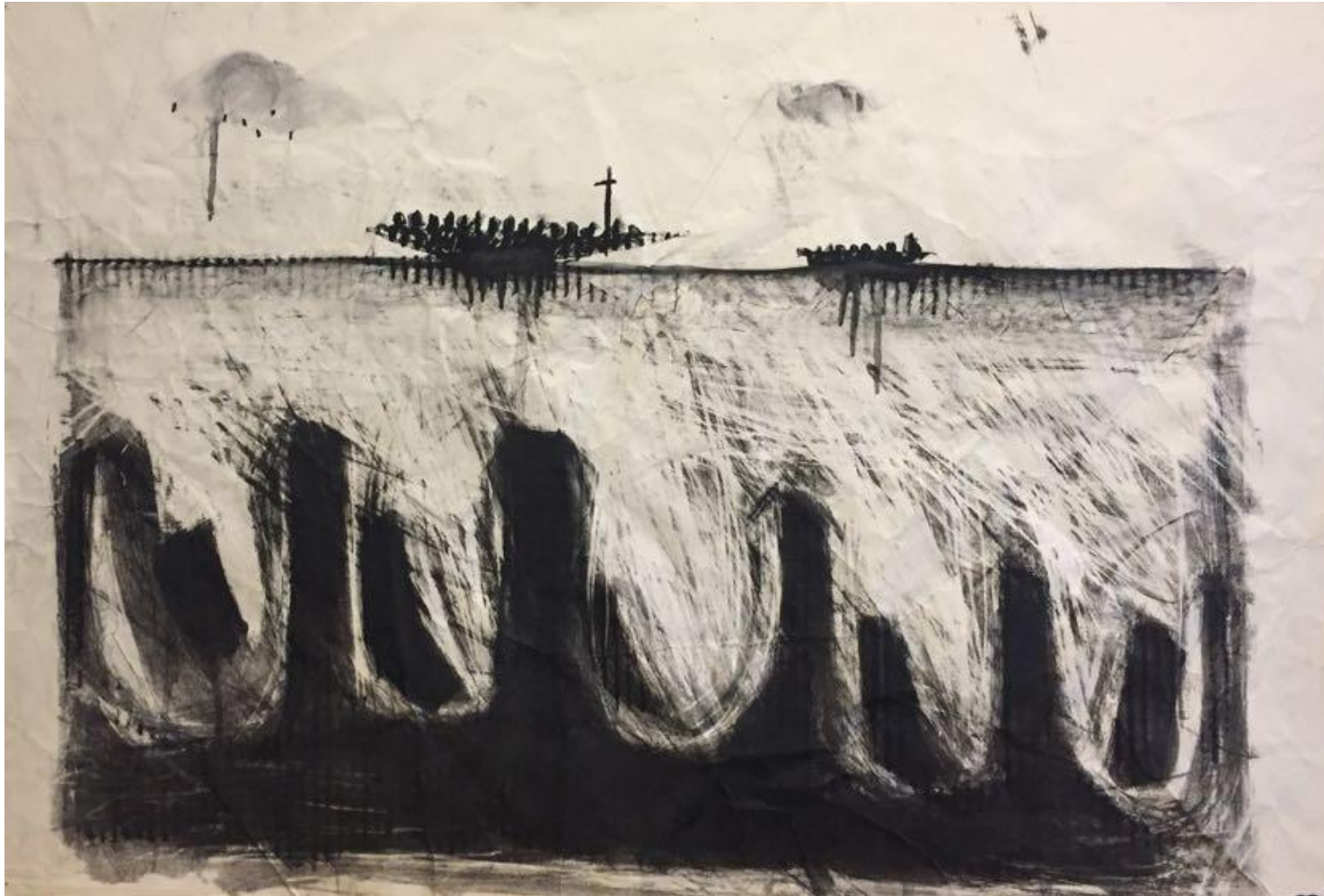
The work of renowned South African poet and writer Breyten Breytenbach is relevant here as a lens through which to interpret Rogge's art. African and Middle Eastern migrants, amongst other refugees, find themselves literally 'in a burning sea'. Breytenbach's concept of the 'Middle World' not only describes 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

*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



#aquarius (2018)
Oil pastel on found paper
56 x 81 cm

*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



Flotando (2018)
Oil on Fabriano
54 x 75cm



What the sea undid (2018)
Oil on canvas
40 x 50cm



Fortress Europe(2018)
Oil pastel on found paper
56 x 81 cm

*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



No harbour in a burning sea (2018)
Oil on canvas
49 x 59cm

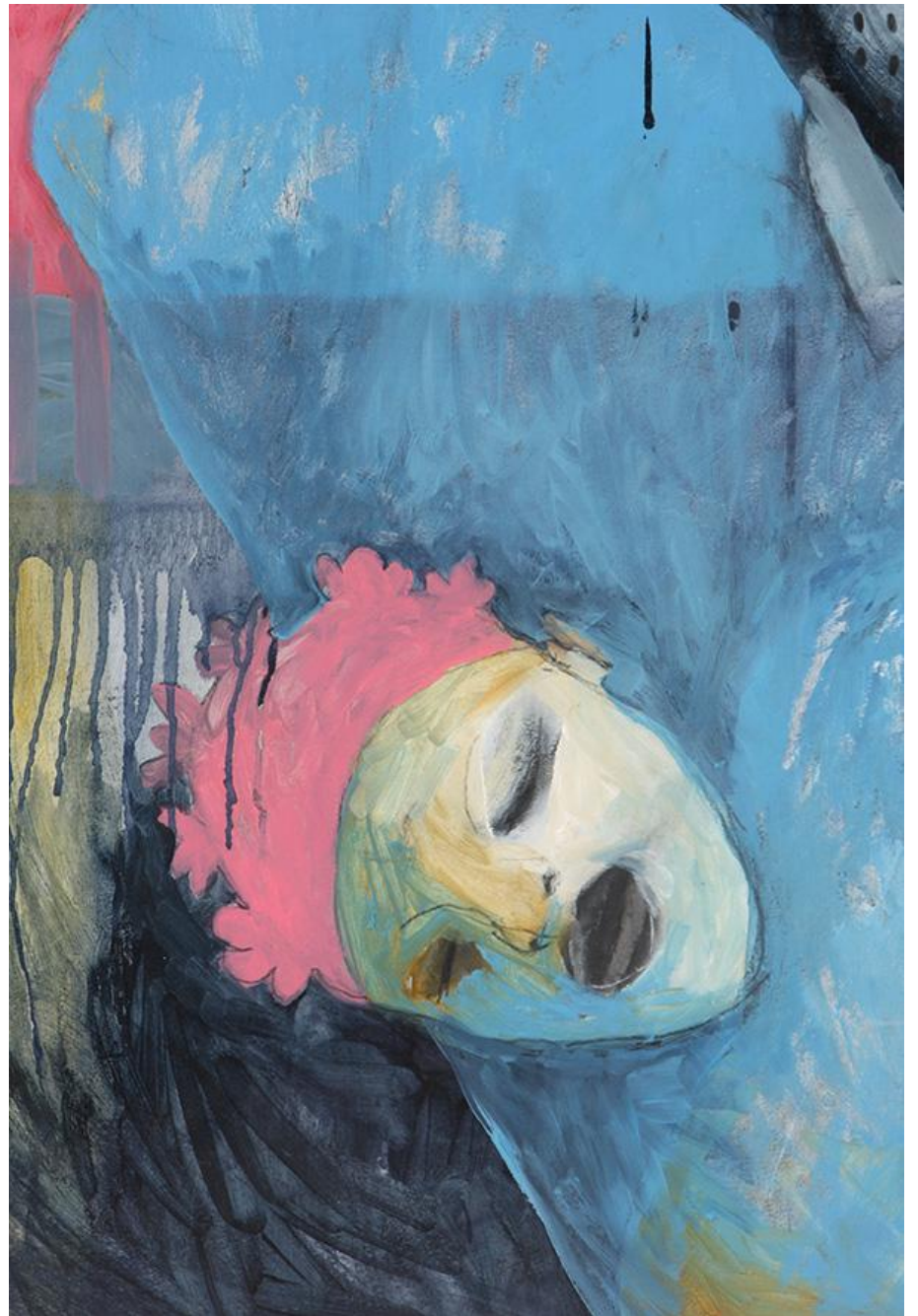


La Patera (2018)
Oil pastel on found paper
56 x 81 cm

*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



Grabbed by the throat
Oil on Fabriano
100 x 76 cm



Detail from 'Grabbed by the throat'



Cementerio (2018)
Oil pastel on found paper
56 x 81 cm

*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



That time Icarus fell 2018)
Oil on Hannemuhle paper
100 x 76cm



Tsek (2018)
Mixed media on paper
70 x 50cm



Just (2018)
Mixed media on paper
70 x 50cm



Ondi ku hole (trans. 'I love you')
Mixed media on Fabriano
100 x 76 cm



Detail from 'Ondi ku hole'

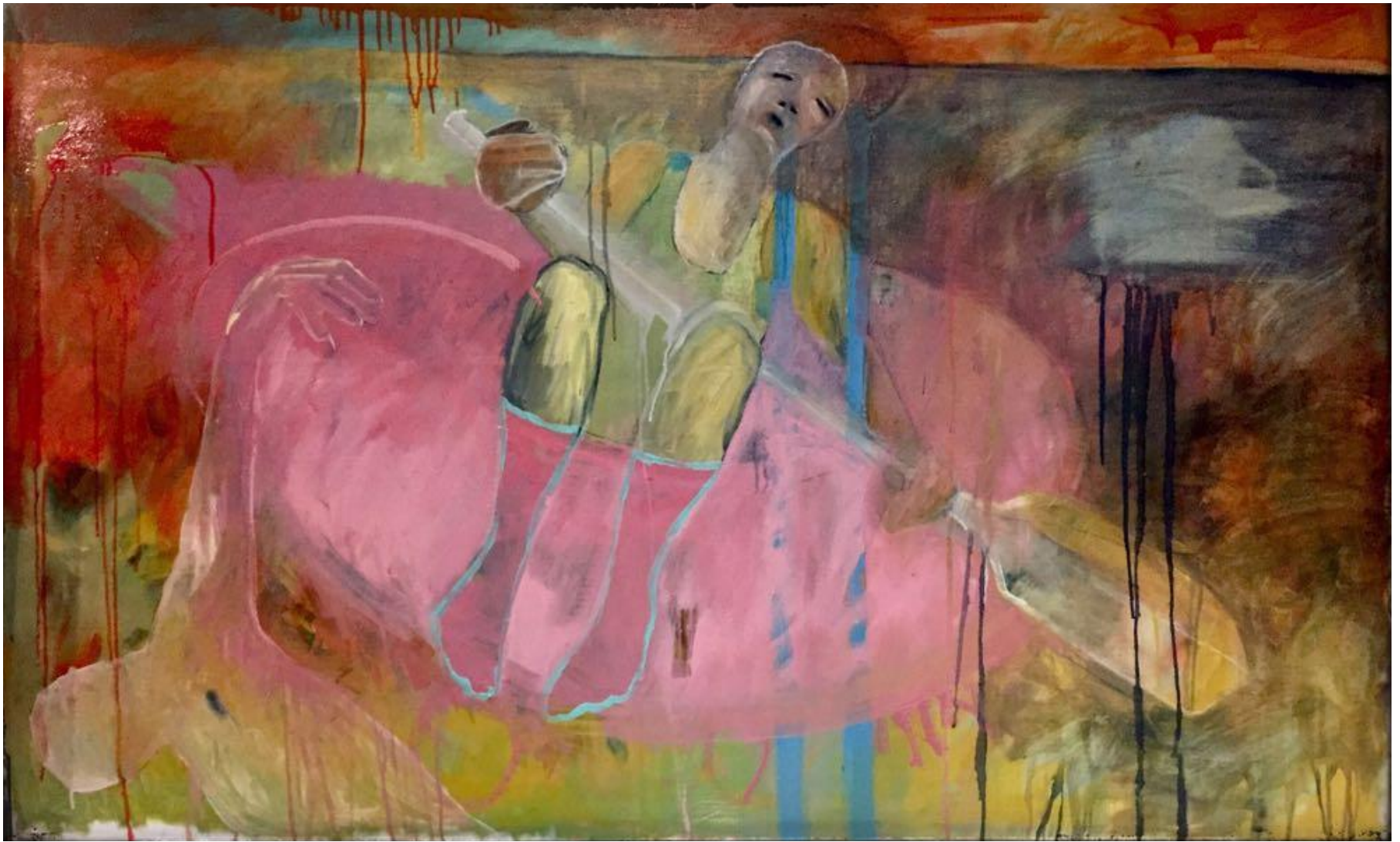


A beautiful danger (2018)
Mixed media on paper
70 x 50cm



For the mothers of the disappeared (2018)
Oil pastel on found paper
56 x 81 cm

*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



Kiss of salt (2018)
Oil on canvas
156 x 100 cm

*image fresh from studio, additional images on request



Twin Turmoil (2018)
Oil on canvas
120 x 100 cm

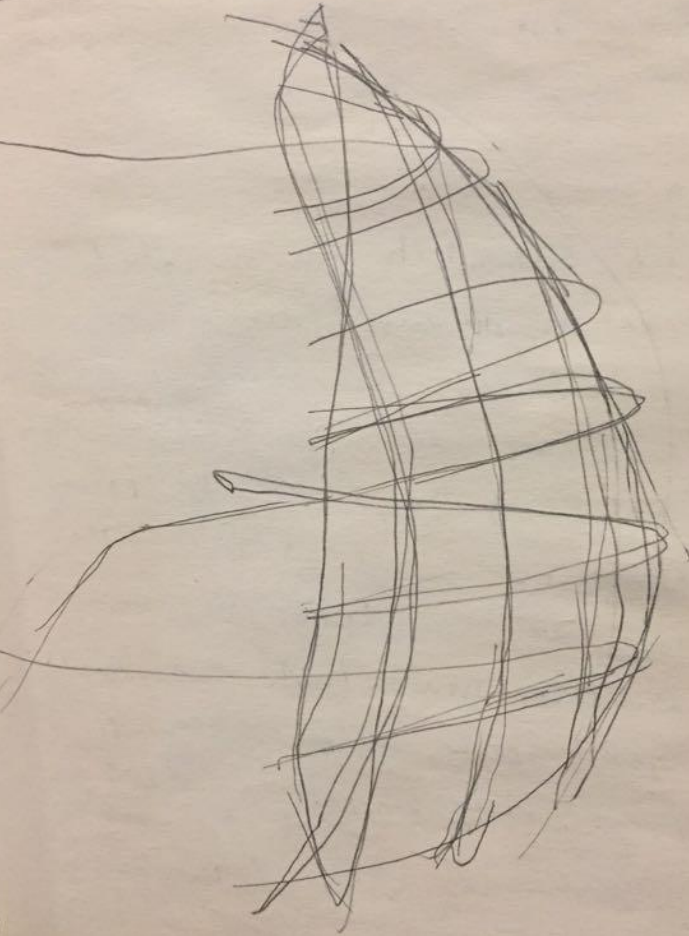


Ducking deep (2018)
Oil on canvas
40 x 50 cm



Out of nowhere (2018)
Oil on canvas
45 x 60cm

surrender

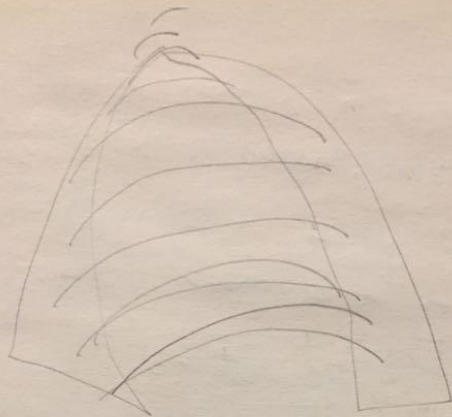


places

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

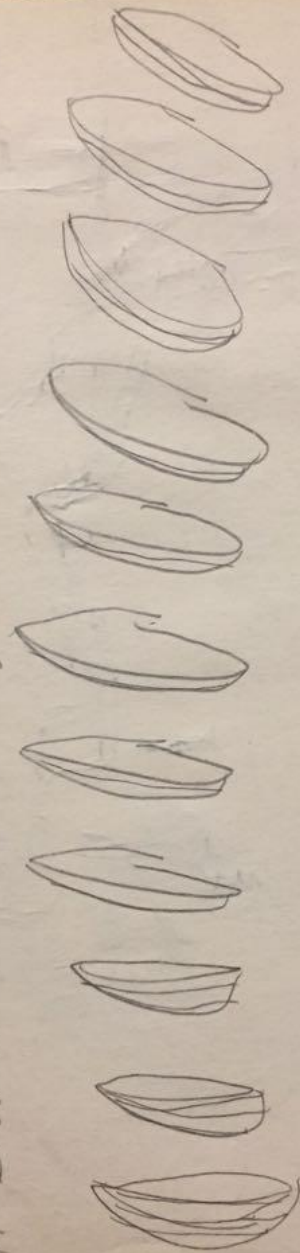


It
Closing
the
wound

boat
fish
shield
canopace
wound
vulva

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

It becomes every leaving, every departure, every going,
every trip time and sending, every tearing and
breaching while open, every fulling 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.



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