ARTIST STATEMENT

Cassie Norrgard

I am fascinated with the way the unconscious embeds imagery and creatively alters it in a way that it betrays the ideals of the conscious world. By generating responses to adaptive problems in the world, the psyche impacts the outcome of behavior and personality. My aim is to replicate the nature of lucid, sensual, and carnal imagery and the way it gets repressed in the depths of the unconscious. In day-to-day life, the unconscious part of the mind actively fabricates wish-fulfilled ideas and opportunistic thoughts.

My drawings primarily express a sense of ambiguous discomfort proceeding from these ideas and generally withhold some of the information from the viewer. For my materials, I tend to look for and utilize non-traditional media that is more pertinent to the daily materials that the viewer interacts with. These materials include cardboard, newspaper, latex, packaging tape, bed sheets, shower curtains, etc. As I experiment with these types of unconventional materials, I am interested in both producing an abject response from the viewer and conceptually stimulating them with the intricate thought process behind the psyche. I want for my art to display the controversial nature of the mind and to be considered as explorations

of the human psyche. To do so, I have committed to research readings about psychoanalysis and studies that relate to dream interpretation.

The psychoanalysts Freud and Jung philosophized about personal archetypes and unconscious phenomena. Both specialized in creative interpretation of the psyche and strived to expose hidden truths within the unconscious. Methods like free association and interpretation of dreams helped them to analyze their clients' psyche and further their research on behavioral sciences. By researching their notes and strategies, I am able to treat my art more objectively, like a pseudo-scientist, and further my exploration and experimentation in the realms of the unconsciousness.

Working conceptually, I attempt to create a reaction that provokes questions concerning the mask of social constraint and that instigates curiosities on the subject of psychological experiences. I think that questions are very essential to living because they examine the way we behave and interact. Francis Bacon states, "The job of the artist is always to deepen the mystery." As one of my earlier influential artists, Bacon inspired my curiosities in art and the infinite possibilities that it can provide. Although more of his work is seen in the political or cultural spectrum, I find his content intriguing in the way that it presents a raw tension between the subject and space. In his 'Pope' paintings, he uses very emotionally

graphic imagery to describe his inquiries, which I find relative to my subject matter. As an artist, I think it's important to approach art with as much boldness and determination in order to advance art's potential. While I make my art, I strive to progress my thoughts and making changes along the way. I choose to investigate ideas that reflect the way people repress emotional content because it is something that everyone tries to do to maintain social contact.

By exploring art that values the representation of the human condition, I became attracted to the work of Kathe Kollwitz. From studying her lithographs, I grew interested in the way she conveys stylistic marks to address the concerns of poverty and hardships of her era. The impression of her mark-making provokes a benevolent attitude for her subjects, and a longing to fix it. I think it's important to make art, but also rely on the viewer to interpret the context. For example, in my 'Encaged' pieces, I present a landscape with blank figures inadvertently walking around. Protruding from their necks, their souls express a desire to free from the restriction of the body. For all we know from this piece, there is nothing that can be changed to help the situation. All the viewer can do is engage with the artwork that submits the criteria at stake.

While exploring the depths of the human psyche and its affect on reality, I find a lot of inspiration from the artists from the surrealist movement. Artists like

Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró inspire my art with the loose interpretations of dreams and unconscious thought matter. The human psyche is an infinite place to seek answers and deluded expectations. In the surrealist movement, they had practices such as the "Exquisite Corpse" to expose the psychological truth. Influenced by the limitlessness of psychologically-based imagery, I continually try to consider new possibilities and outcomes to progress my work. Consider for example in my piece, "Dream Phenomena," I attempted to practice the way that surrealist artists would begin their process. For this project in which I made impressions of the sensual aspects of dreams, I developed a process which involved writing words that described my day and plugging those words into thematic Mad Libs. By doing that, I was able to have control over creating dream criteria and could focus on producing scenes that alluded to dream landscapes.

Continuing with the mystical properties of the psyche, I strive to make the viewer curious about the inner animal. In 'The Conditioned Human,' my intent was to relate our animalistic desire with the physicality of the body. Using my body as the drawing utensil while being blindfolded, I practiced releasing instinctual and animalistic impulses by means of physically hitting, scratching, kicking, and thrusting myself against a series of non-traditional canvases that I laid out for myself. In this process, my objective was to adapt my understanding of repressed

carnal and innate desire. The bed sheets and shower curtains, on which I performed the succession of physical marks, are now archives of sensual expression.

Janine Antoni approaches the art process in the same way. I really admire Antoni for the dialectical complexity of the idea of desire that she manages to imbue her works. For example, in making the art piece, 'Loving Care,' she would dip her head in a bucket of paint and physically get on all fours to make marks on the floor with her hair. The idea of physically expressing the marks adds a lot of sensual tension to the viewer, especially since it reflects the way our bodies communicate to inanimate objects. She says, "I always feel safer if I can bring the viewer back to the making of it. I try to do that in a lot of different ways, by residue, by touch, by these processes that are basic to all of our lives." In most of her pieces she resorts to using her body in the same way to present sensual content to the viewer.

Working with non-traditional materials, I think it's imperative to make sure my utensils are recognizable to the viewer in order to construct a symbolic implication of my content. In my pieces 'Unbound Psyche 1' and 'Unbound Psyche 2', I used cardboard boxes to illustrate my interpretation of the conscious: what is on the surface of the box, and the unconscious: what can be seen coming from the inside. By using these types of materials, I suggest ideas about the duality of the self in relation to the world. The inferiority of the cardboard is meant to reflect on

characteristics of the human condition and relates the viewer to mundane aspects of life.

As I depict repressed feelings, I hope to challenge the notion in which our society enforces to maintain a civil and humane atmosphere. I am always curious about the layer in our minds that goes unnoticed and how it is more than often unpredictable. Society subdues and manipulates our thoughts to mold to whatever is politically or culturally 'right.' I think that everyone should be aware of this nature and the level of primitivity that is being repressed and hidden by our self-persona masks. Melissa Cooke, with her art, skims this theme by the way she draws. In Cooke's "Mask" series, she realistically draws self-portraits in which she wears different masks of animals. Although she only works with graphite, I find her approach to explore the nature of social constraint and carnal desire captivating. Analyzing her work, I am interested in the way she subjects herself in the work and fuses different symbols to make her composite figures. She says "Masks give permission to assume an alternate persona, allowing one to push the boundaries of their personality and eliminating repression and social restraints."

As I investigate this conflict of the mask and personality, I find it peculiar the extremes that one may go to in order to ignore unspoken wishes. In the piece, 'American Dream,' my intent was to juxtapose the wish-fulfillment of the character

in accordance to the reality of the scenario. In this project, I used photos that I found via internet that illustrate families associated with the American dream. In each picture, I whited-out the face of every person in order to withdraw their character from the image and empty each person of individuality and expression. While doing this, I added a simplistic smile to emphasize the presence of a mask on each individual. After creating masks for all the posing figures, I added an isolated figure in every picture to contradict the masked figure. In this piece, I think it's important to be mindful of the way we are capable of sacrificing our individuality for societal norms and comfort of routine to meet the status of the 'American Bourgeois'. While doing this we are essentially neglecting our true self's identity. With this piece, my intent is to make each viewer aware of the tendency we all have to ignore the deeper desires in our minds. I wanted for this piece to be interpreted as allegorizing the ethics in behavior that society "shames" us for.

Concluding my statement about my ideas and interests, I want to once more follow-up on the objective of my work. I am interested in exploring the realms of the psyche and also it's relation to the course of reality. By presenting my ideas of the social constraint vs. human nature, I want to redeem awareness for the conflict on the psychological side of the human condition. Due to the pressing role of the mask, most of all of our thoughts either never get manifested or get altered in their

existence. I am interested in evaluating these hidden ideas and breaking the barriers of social constraint in my art. Working with more unorthodox material, I hope to enlighten the viewer of the eccentric nature of humans to disguise their egocentric emotions and contemplations of wish-fulfillment.

	Title	Media	Original Format
Figure 1:	American Dream	drawing	graphite, ink, rubber cement on paper; a collection of 22 photos, 28 in. x22 in.
Figure 2:	American Dream[detail]	drawing	graphite, ink, rubber cement on paper
Figure 3:	Anxiety	drawing installation	Ink and rubber cement on paper, and fabric on wall; 8 ft. x 10ft.
Figure 4:	Anxiety[detail]	drawing installation	Ink and rubber cement on paper, and fabric on wall
Figure 5:	Blind Utopia	drawing	Charcoal, Acrylic paint, colored pencil, and food coloring on paper and foam core; 30 in. x 70 in.
Figure 6:	Blind Utopia [detail]	drawing	Charcoal, Acrylic paint, colored pencil, and food coloring on paper and foam core
Figure 7:	Blurred Mask	drawing installation	paper maché, packaging tape, acrylic paint, tarp
Figure 8:	Blurred Mask [detail]	drawing installation	paper maché, packaging tape, acrylic paint, tarp
Figure 9:	Dream Phenomena 1	drawing	Ink, marker, and salt on acetate and paper
Figure 10:	Dream Phenomena 2	drawing	Ink, marker, and salt on acetate and paper
Figure 11:	Encaged 1	drawing	Soft chalk pastel, watercolor, permanent marker, and white-out on paper and canvas; 36 in. x 48 in.
Figure 12:	Encaged 2	print-making	lithograph; 18 in. x 22 in.
Figure 13:	Masks of Involuntary Emotion	drawing	packaging tape, graphite on paper; 40 in. x 50 in.
Figure 14:	Masks of Involuntary Emotion [detail]	drawing	packaging tape, graphite on paper
Figure 15:	The Conditioned Human	drawing installation	Bed sheets, Shower curtains, and Acrylic paint
Figure 16:	The Conditioned Human[detail]	drawing installation	Bed sheets, Shower curtains, and Acrylic paint
Figure 17:	Strained Emotion	drawing	acrylic, oil pastel, and shrink wrap on paper; 22" x 36"
Figure 18:	Unbound Psyche 1	drawing	cardboard, ink, marker, tape; 3 ft. x 10 ft.
Figure 19:	Unbound Psyche 2	drawing	cardboard, ink, marker, tape, latex; 3 ft. x 9 ft.
Figure 20:	Unbound Psyche 2 [detail]	painting	cardboard, ink, marker, tape, latex; 3 ft. x 9 ft.
Figure 21:	Undisclosed Desires	painting	acrylic on board; 48 in. x 38 in.
Figure 22:	Undisclosed Desires [detail]	painting	acrylic on board; 48 in. x 38 in.
Figure 23:	Flesh Portrait	painting	oil on latex and mirror, 24" x 40"
Figure 24:	Flesh Portrait [detail]	painting	oil on latex and mirror, 24" x 40"

Figure 1: American Dream.

Figure 2: American Dream [detail].

Figure 3: Anxiety.

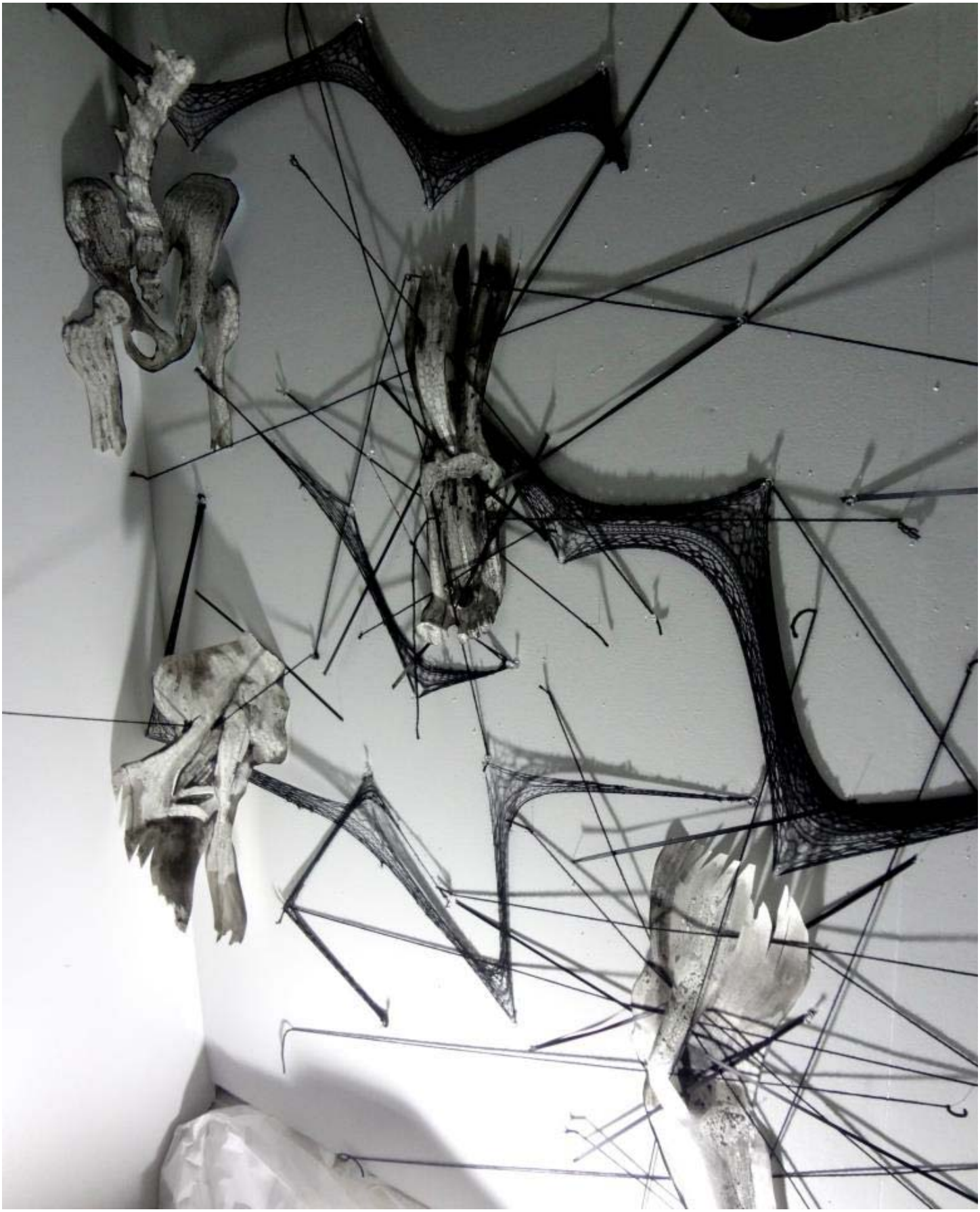

Figure 4: Anxiety [detail].

Figure 5: Blind Utopia.

Figure 6: Blind Utopia [detail].

Figure 7: Blurred Mask.

Figure 8: Blurred Mask [detail].

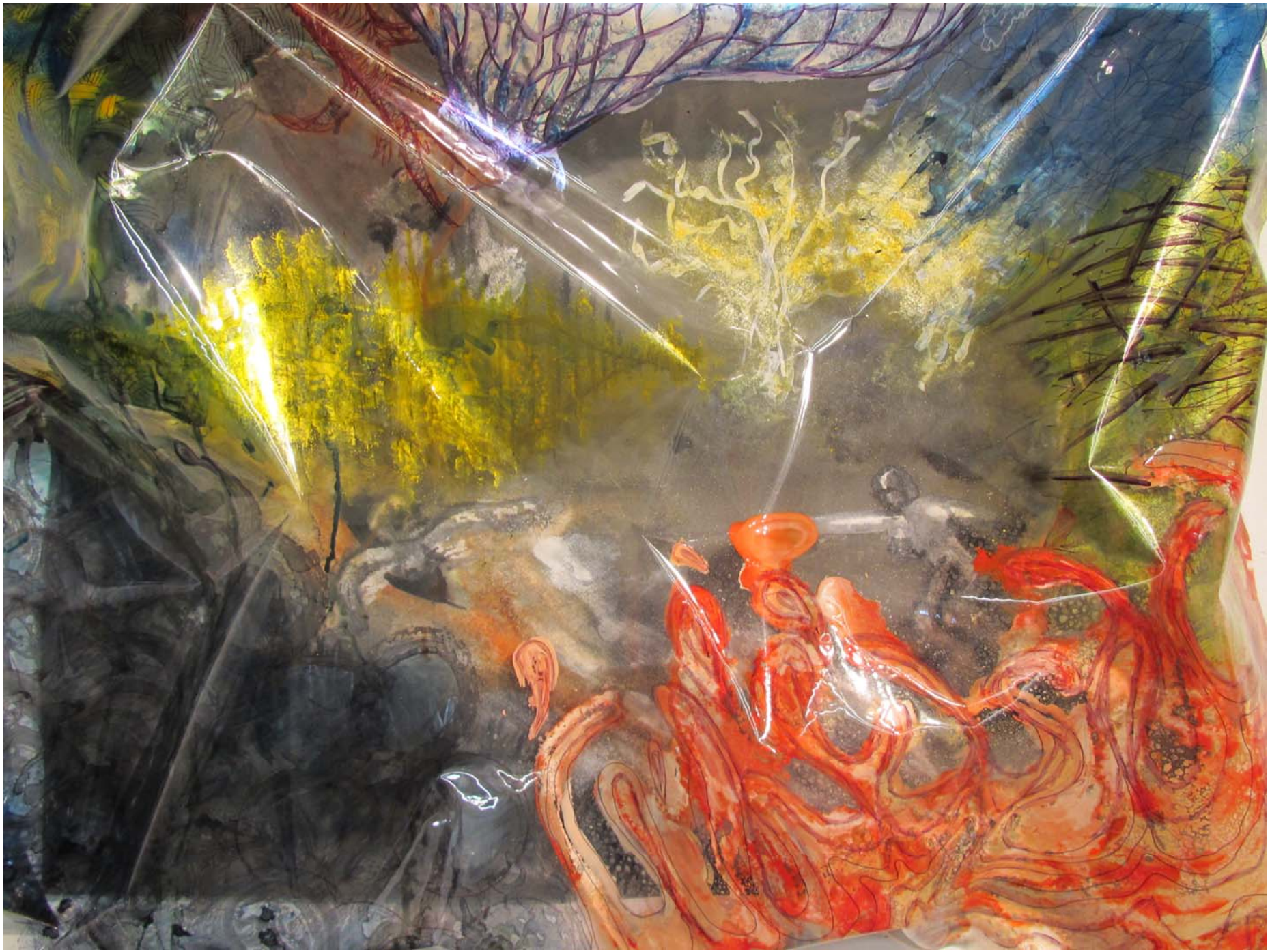

Figure 9: Dream Phenomena 1.

Figure 10: Dream Phenomena 2.

Figure 11: Encaged 1.

Figure 12: Encaged 2.

Figure 13: Masks of Involuntary Emotion.

Figure 14: Masks of Involuntary Emotion [detail].

Figure 15: The Conditioned Human.

Figure 16: The Conditioned Human [detail].

Image Not Available

Figure 17: Strained Emotion.

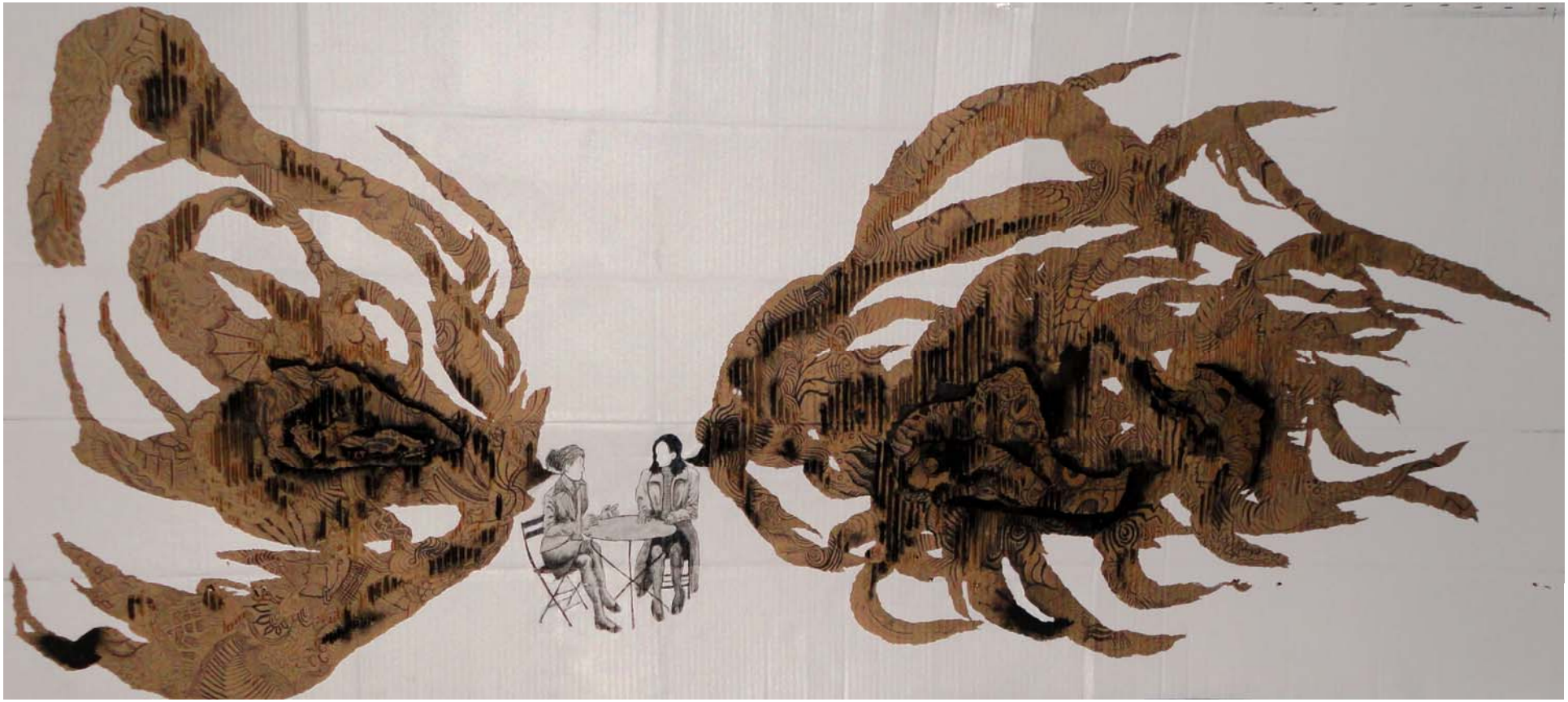

Figure 18: Unbound Psyche 1.

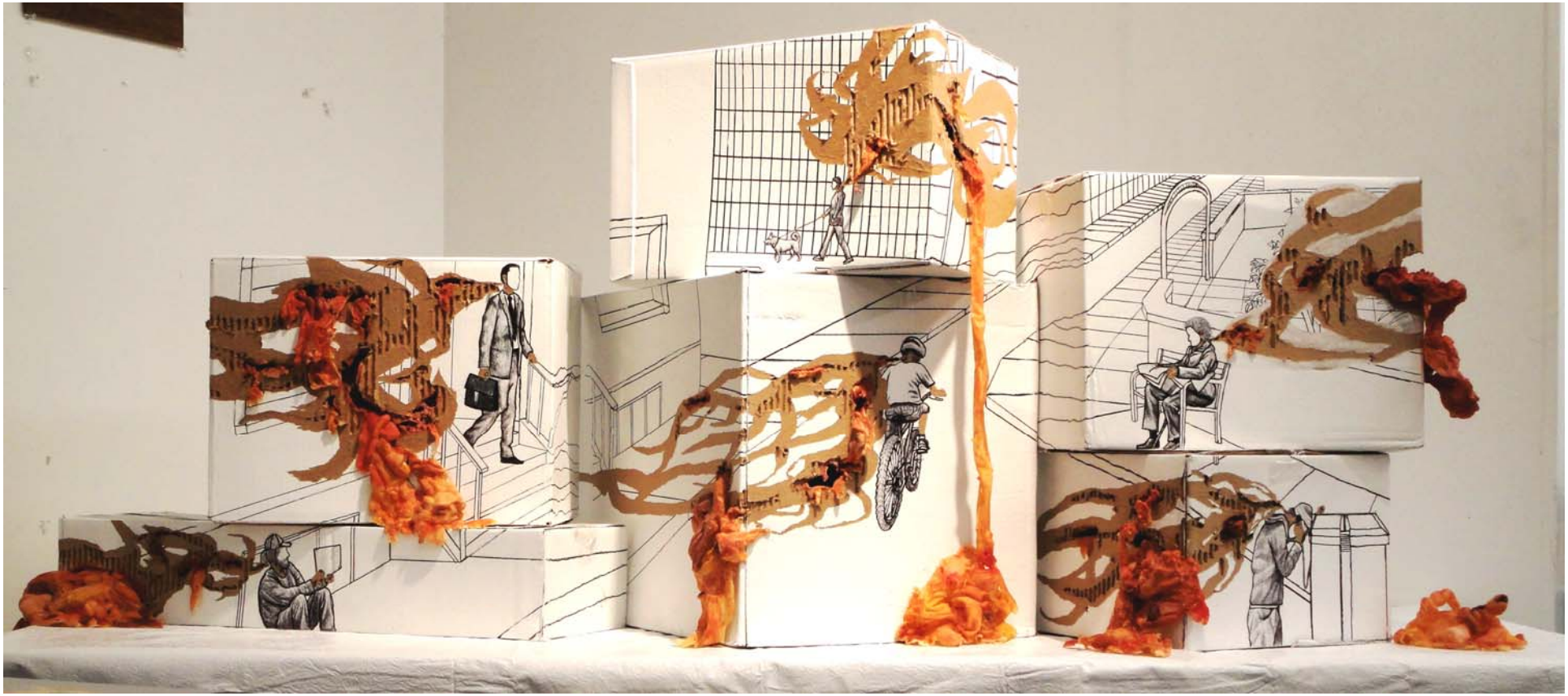

Figure 19: Unbound Psyche 2.

Figure 20: Unbound Psyche 2 [detail].

Figure 21: Undisclosed Desires.

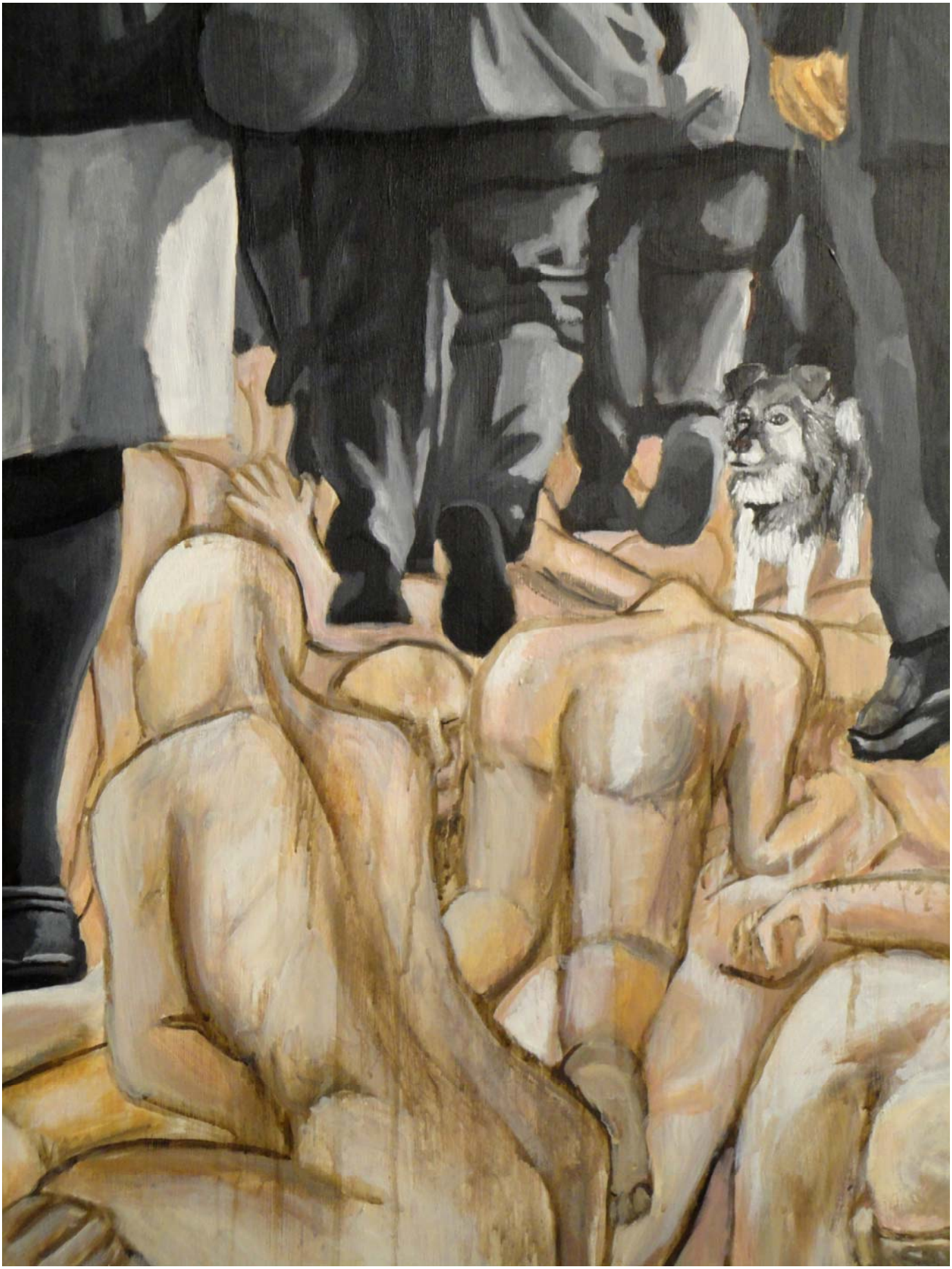

Figure 22: Undisclosed Desires [detail].

Figure 23: Flesh Portrait.

Figure 24: Flesh Portrait [detail].