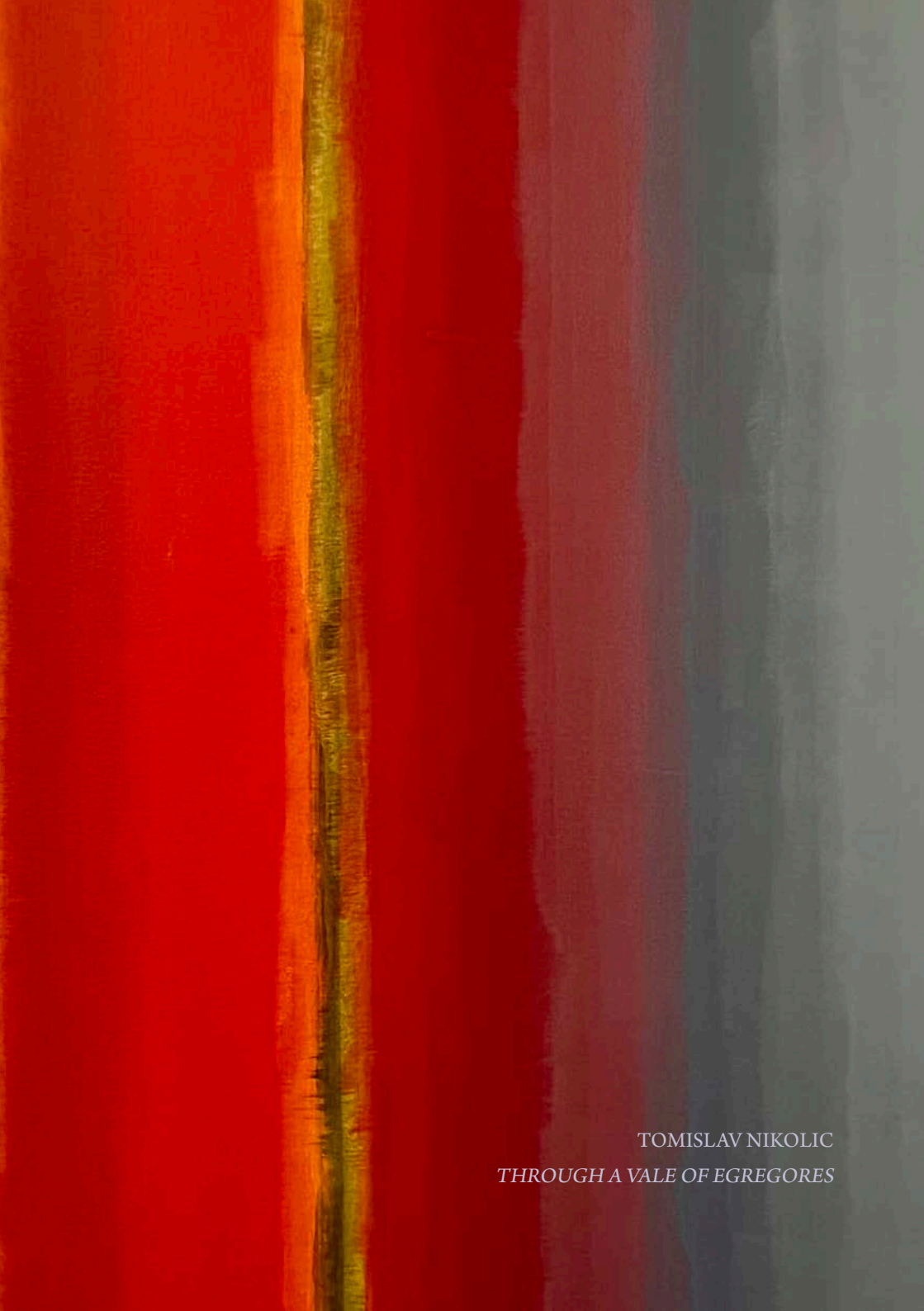

TOMISLAV NIKOLIC
THROUGH A VALE OF EGREGORES

Mark Rothko
Untitled (Seagram Mural sketch), 1959
oil and acrylic on canvas
183.5 x 152.7 cm (72 1/4 x 60 1/8 in.)
Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc.
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Below: Mark Rothko, Yorktown Heights, c. 1949.
Brooklyn Museum, by Consuelo Kanaga.



"Pictures must be miraculous."
Mark Rothko





through a vale of Egregores: a veil of contemplation, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust, rose gold leaf on canvas and wood
96.5 x 63.8 x 8

Tomislav Nikolic
the vale of egregores

Make mine a pink martini…

Mark Rothko was driven to ensure that his paintings were experienced and regarded with absolute reverence. His determination to orchestrate these encounters drew him into infamous conflicts with those who didn't offer sufficient submission, most notably, America's Miesian acolyte, Philip Johnson and the Seagrams debacle.

Regarding reverence… Tomislav Nikolic is a little less demanding. Indeed Nikolic, despite his allegiance to Rothko, remains open to the possibility that his paintings might be experienced in an atmosphere of celebratory irreverence. In this sense he offers Rothko more of a curtsy than the prostration Rothko firmly believed he deserved.

Rothko's desire for painting to carry the solemnity and pressure of spiritual transformation was both a motivation and a burden. Lamentably, the notion of painting as burden and his own tragic 'self-sacrifice' in 1970 provides a kind of unpleasant narrative authority to Rothko's life and late work. Yet in a sense Rothko perhaps believed that he really had, 'painted for our sins'.

Nikolic's new exhibition, *through a Vale of Egregores*, which celebrates twelve paintings by Rothko, come to us with less obligation, less doctrine. They present an open invitation to experience joy as much as solemnity, preferring ecstasy over agony. Yet for all their chromatic precociousness these new paintings operate without the flamboyant adornments that have been largely inseparable from Nikolic's exotic colour-field painting over almost two decades.

Setting the ornamentation of frame aside, these new paintings are not completely 'unplugged' but they are in a sense more exposed. And what is revealed is even more of Nikolic's gloriously irrational and very personal exploration of colour. Though he has long been a student to various esoteric colour theories, these paintings are certainly not a treatise on colour theory, rather they are a deeply held personal expression of a shared belief in colour's capacity to wield emotional and symbolic clout. Consider yourselves warned.



Colour has always swayed Nikolic, buffeting his senses with its visual frequency, knocking him off kilter in the most welcome way. I have always though he was keen to provoke a not dissimilar sense of vertigo and unease in us.. Yes, he wants to draw us to the beautiful transitions in pigment, to overwhelm any natural hesitation or reserve with the sheer density of colour that he has so carefully established, but he also wants to put us back on our heels just a little, making us unsure of what and whom we are about to encounter.

This is perhaps where Rothko and Nikolic meet… at the cross-roads seduction and drama, a place where Rothko offered absinthe, and Nikolic a pink martini. Both painters want that you are undone… unbuttoned by their works and both want you to believe in the transformative possibilities that elevated painting can offer.

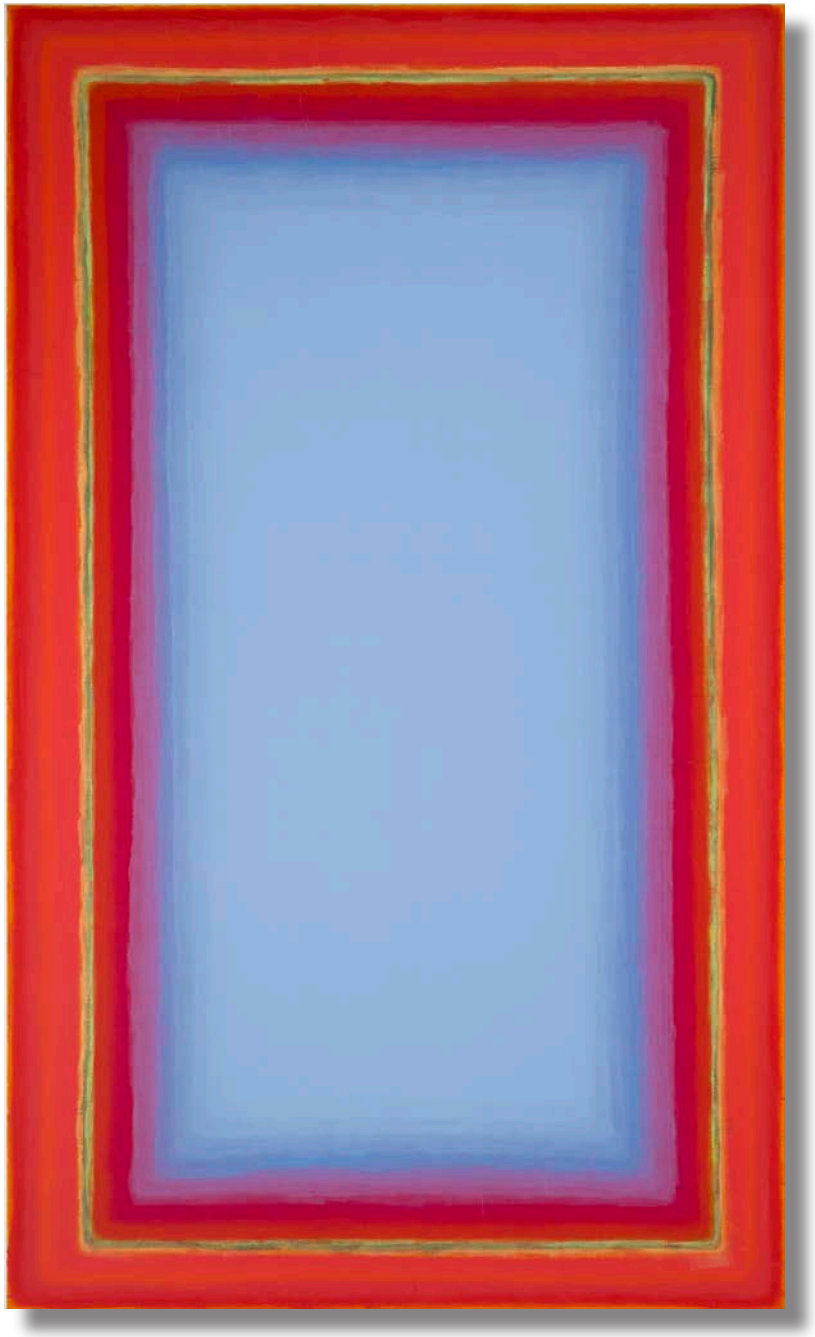
This new suite of paintings are a manifestation of the impact that a sensitive soul absorbs when confronted with Rothko's paintings over twelve rounds. They carry traces of the bruising that marked many of Rothko's paintings but there is a willful and spritely (dis)coloration in Nikolic. It is the colours themselves that are engaged in light sparring, and for the main part, they're "up on their toes", ready for action.

The heavy weight aspirations that Rothko sought for painting, particularly his own, are lighter in Nikolic. The contusions Rothko delivered to the viewer were made clear in his statement. . ."I would like to say to those who think of my pictures as serene, whether in friendship or mere observation, that I have imprisoned the most utter violence in every inch of their surface."

For all their parrying and contest, there is little evidence of violence in Nikolic's paintings. They are simply too flirtatious, and contest ultimately settles into a frisky détente.



Above: Rothko Chapel, Houston, USA



through a vale of Egregores: a veil of abundance, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust, 16ct green gold leaf on canvas and wood
230 x 137 x 8cm

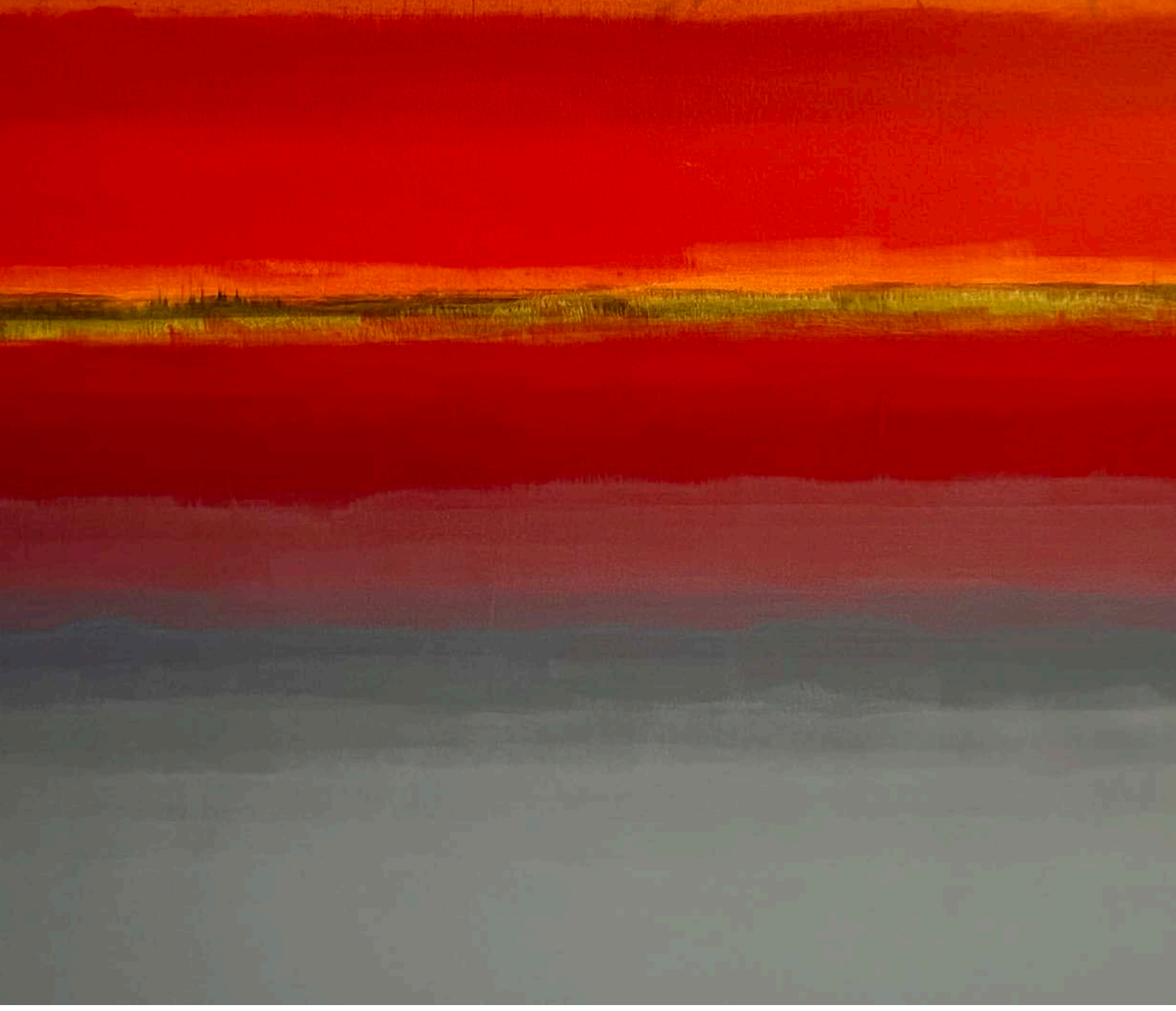
However, for all the policy agreements he makes between the chromatic factions, this atmosphere can swiftly fly into some clear-air turbulence. Out of nowhere Nikolic can substitute precocious playfulness for volatility. This energy and friction is critical to Nikolic's compositions and their impact on us and their veracity as paintings.

For the most part we can see the in the series of oscillating edges that form the succession of chromatic tidal lines, where he and his brushes have been. However these concoctions are not the result of a known or systemic process and Nikolic doesn't know exactly where this orienteering journey will end. Yes there is a map in his mind but more often than not it feels as if he has folded it away and put it in his back pocket.

The overlaying of final pigments doesn't negate the significance of those below. Indeed what we perceive in the central form is altered by the strata of colour beneath, by the density and translucency of the layers. What we perceive is determined by history, personal and shared.

AJ 2026

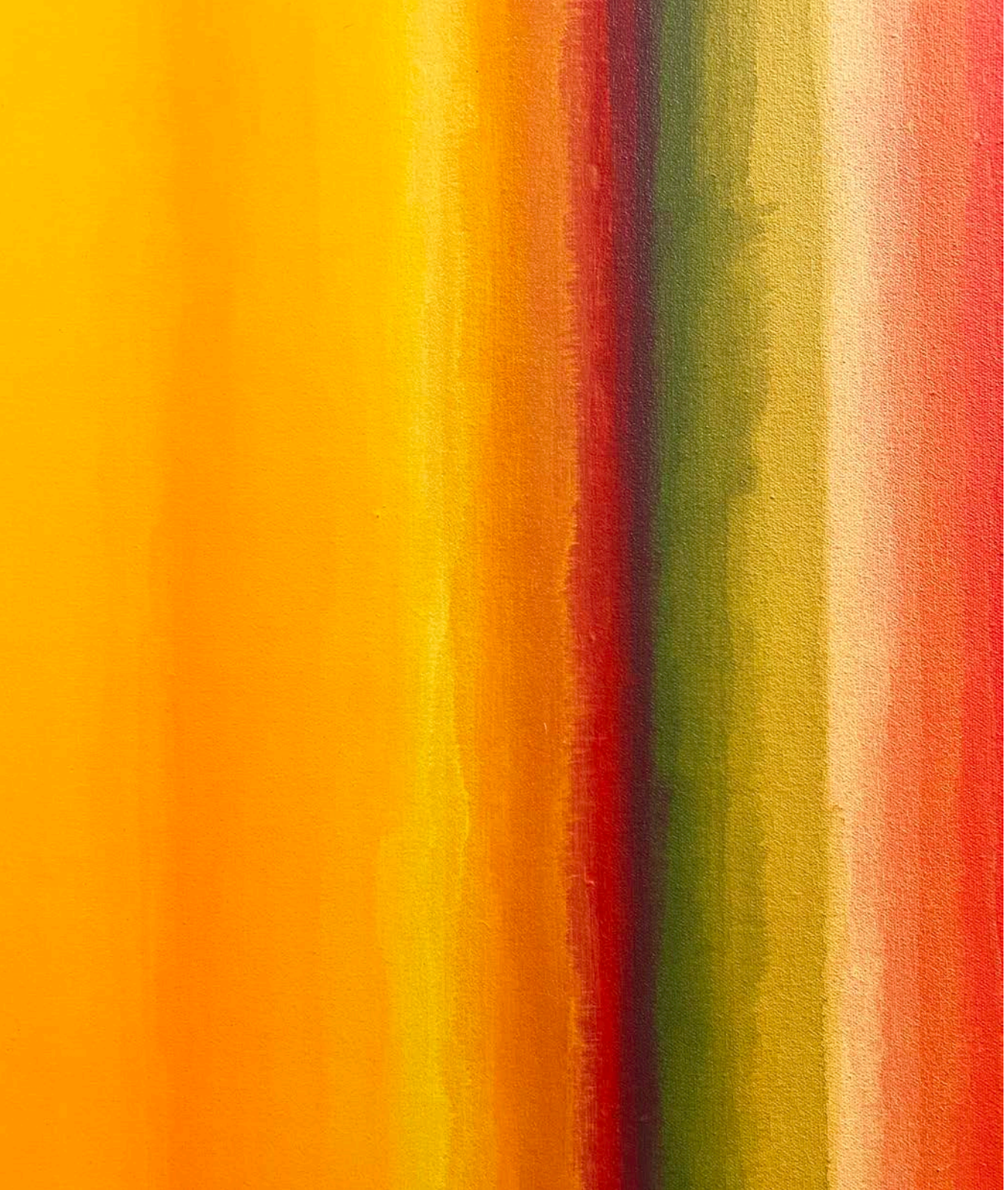




through a vale of Egregores: a veil of grace, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust,
19ct caplain gold leaf, on canvas and wood
140 x 112 x 8 cm



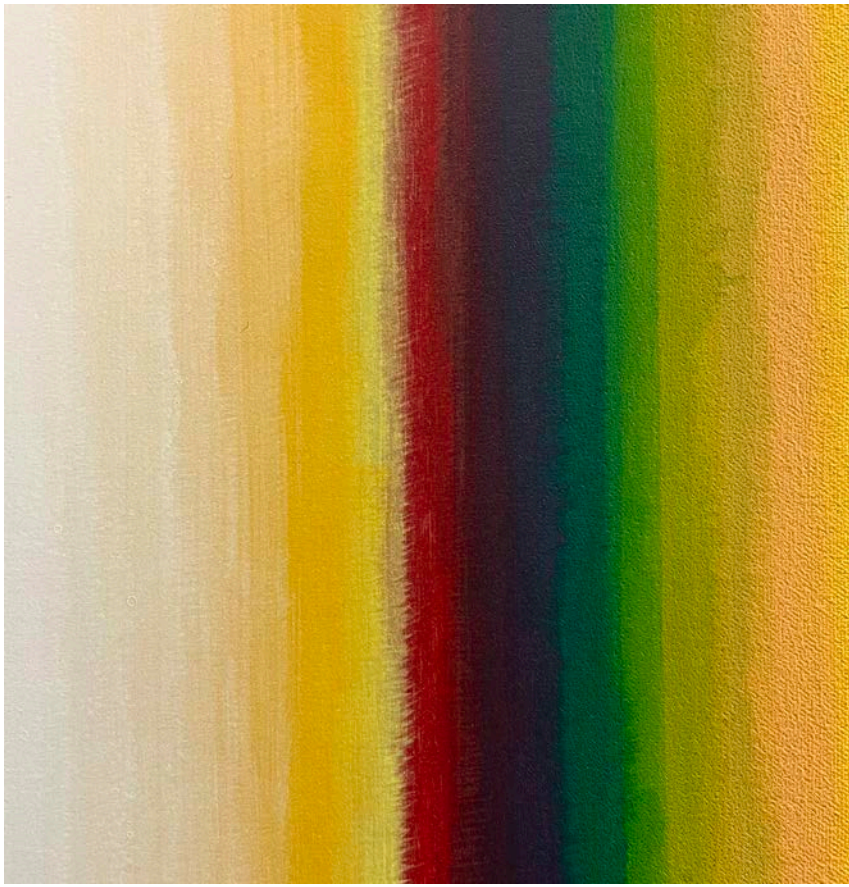




It's another tequila sunrise
Starin' slowly 'cross the sky
I said goodbye
He was just a hired hand
Workin' on the dreams he planned to try
The days go by



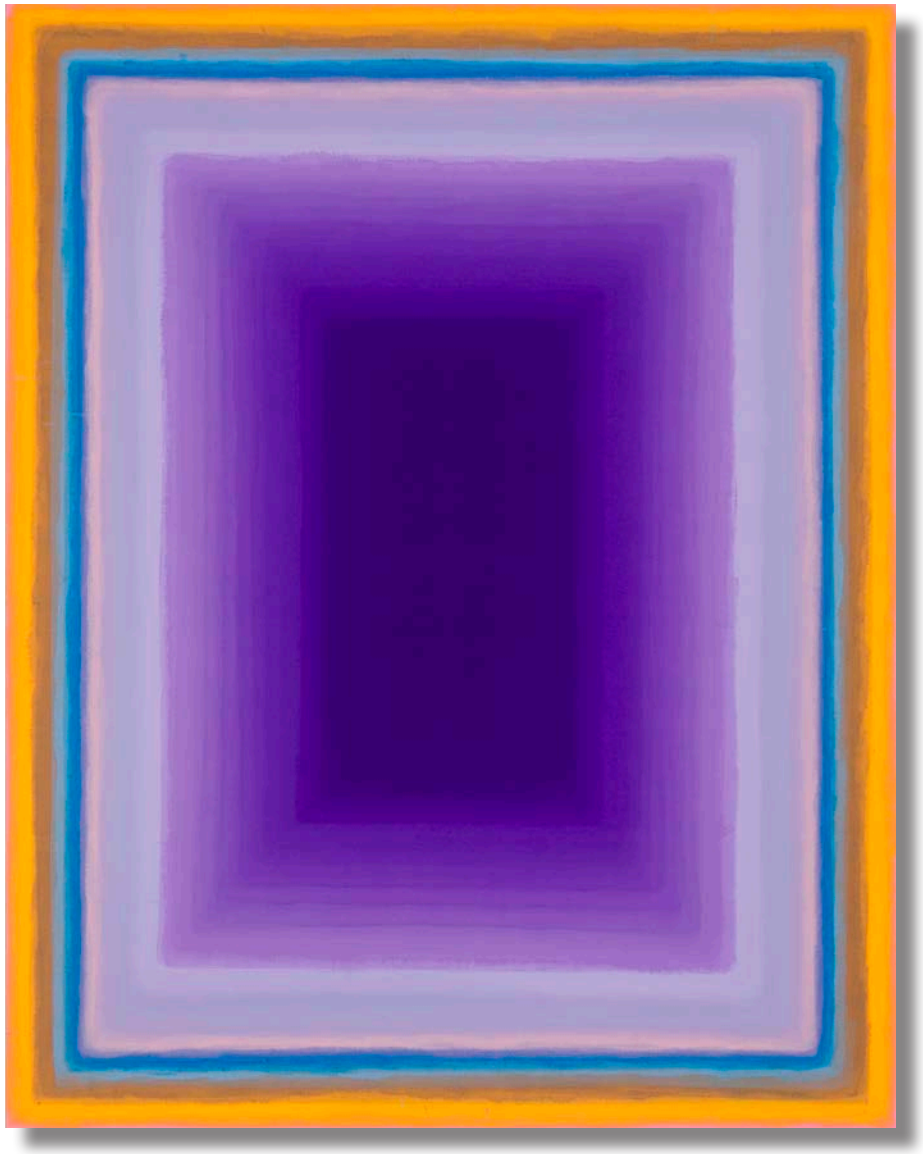
through a vale of Egregores: a veil of innocence, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust, 22ct moon
gold leaf, on canvas and wood
133.5 x 68.2 x 8 cm



through a vale of Egregores: a veil of trust, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust, 13.25ct
white gold leaf, on canvas and wood
112.8 x 95 x 8 cm







through a vale of Egregores: a veil of intelligence, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust,
23.5ct gold leaf, on canvas and wood
136.8 x 108.2 x 8 cm

I never meant to cause you any sorrow
I never meant to cause you any pain
I only wanted one time to see you laughing
I only wanted to see you
Laughing in the purple rain
Purple rain, purple rain
I only want to see you
Laughing in the purple rain



through a vale of Egregores: a veil of devotion, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust,
22.5ct champagne gold leaf, on canvas and wood
139.7 x 111.5 x 8 cm









through a vale of Egregores: a veil of confidence, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust,
20ct citron leaf, on canvas and wood
188.8 x 101.2 x 8 cm

through a vale of Egregores: a veil of faith, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust,
22ct gold leaf, on canvas and wood
97 x 64 x 8 cm

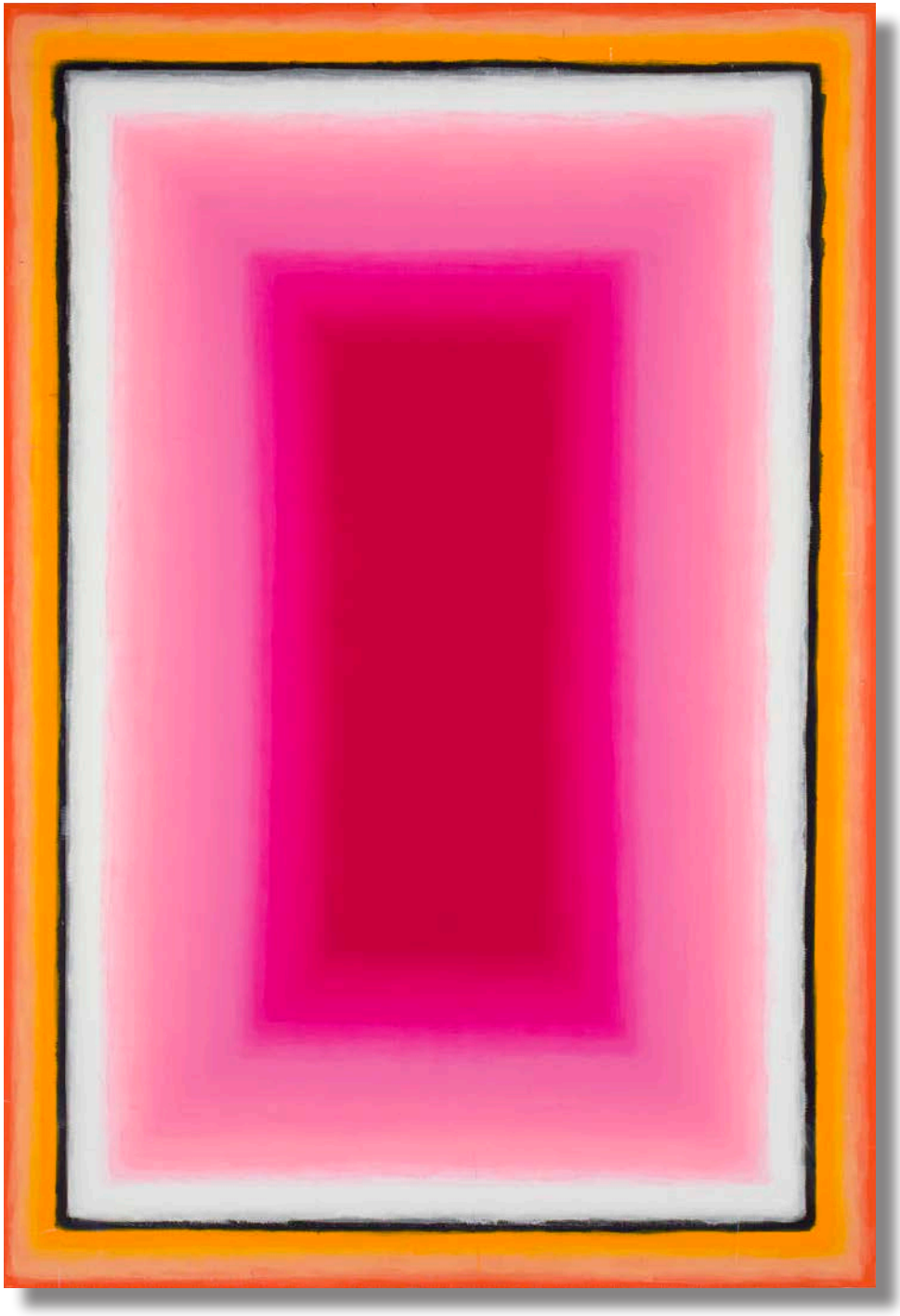




through a vale of Egregores: a veil of acceptance, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust,
18ct lemon gold leaf, on canvas and wood
206.4 x 141 x 8 cm

Pink isn't just a color, it's an attitude!
Miley Cyrus





through a vale of Egregores: a veil of synchronicty, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust, copper leaf,
on canvas and wood
175.7 x 141 x 8 cm





through a vale of Egregores: a veil of patience, 2026
synthetic polymer, marble dust,
tin leaf, on canvas and wood
202.2 x 176.7 x 8 cm







FOX JENSEN