

Lita Cabellut



OPERA GALLERY

IMPULSE: THE SUBLIME AND THE BEAUTIFUL

Two concepts spring to mind when engaging with Lita Cabellut's work. The first, Beauty, is a burdened one both within and outside the context of fine art. The second, Sublime, has become an instinctive counter-reaction to declarations of beauty, provoked by Edmund Burke's seminal in 1757 *'Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful'*, which illustrates the psychological factors that cause man to react to these two rigidly distinct sensations. But these two divisions alone cannot describe this particular series in its entirety; a series that draws as much from its title than from the principles it suggests. Impulse: a desire to act; a pulse of electric current; an action without forethought. "For me, painting is extremely aggressive", says Cabellut, "while at the same time contained within the realm of poetry and beauty. Beauty, Violence - these are the hands of the body of life."

Beauty, Sublime, Impulse and Violence: terms that live within every terrain of cultural history and yet are often relegated to the purgatory of contemporary artistic discourse. Studying Cabellut's expressive portraits, the impact of their size versus the vulnerability of the cracked canvas; the sheer magnitude of her female subjects versus a suspicion in their gaze, strikes me as an elegant paradox of aesthetic philosophies.

I will begin with Beauty, the most accessible and universally desired of the four. The one that most confuses, inspires and tantalizes. A deeply afflicted concept, victim to both adoration and fear, a wild instrument of seduction and Burke's highest manifestation of pleasure and love. In Cabellut's paintings we see a revival of classical theories of Renaissance beauty. Her women possess proportions of the golden ratio deemed essential to physical beauty and the innate goodness associated with it. Their beauty is pure and modest, suggestive of the immanent power and obscurity granted only to the beautiful incarnate. They manifest a hope that life would be better if they, the object of beauty, were a part of it. Yet something is amiss. Here the women retain a sad wisdom that holds no place in the spectacle of beauty of the eighteenth century. Here there is a darkness and a glimmer of contained rage; the derision of a woman who senses lasciviousness in a gaze she did not invite. Their hair, a symbol of femininity, is congealed under vibrant shades of orange and pink, embezzling their individuality and leaving them exposed to the generalizations of societal beauty constructs. "[There is] a hysterical collective to see all beauty in the same way", considers Cabellut. "In this series I break down that stable image in strokes of paint, forcing a new perspective on the concept as a whole."

It has become a modern suspicion that Beauty merely paints over society's horrors. Its entanglement with the world of appearance often deems it a superficial concept in Modern art and philosophy. Reclaimed by contemporary philosophers such as Alexander Nehamas in his encouraging book *'Only a Promise of Happiness'*, Beauty has recently been resurrected and reconnected to the value of art. The beauty in Cabellut's portraits manifest a hope that can shape and direct our perceptions. Offering much more than a superficial spectacle, there is a misery in the pursuit of these women. A tantalizing promise of happiness that urges us to pursue and understand.

"Beauty and Violence have triggered the passion of the intellect of mankind."

Impulse brings into question the dichotomy between these two giants. The violence is subtle and contained, seducing the viewer in its disguise of full lips and saturated colour. The viewer approaches, enchanted, until a moment of realization releases a duality of emotional response between attraction and repulsion; fascination and compassion. Here we encroach into the causal structure of Burkeian sublime; evoked by the presence of the violent, contained by the principles of beauty. The sublime surpasses simple beauty but holds us safe within the

boundaries of human experience.

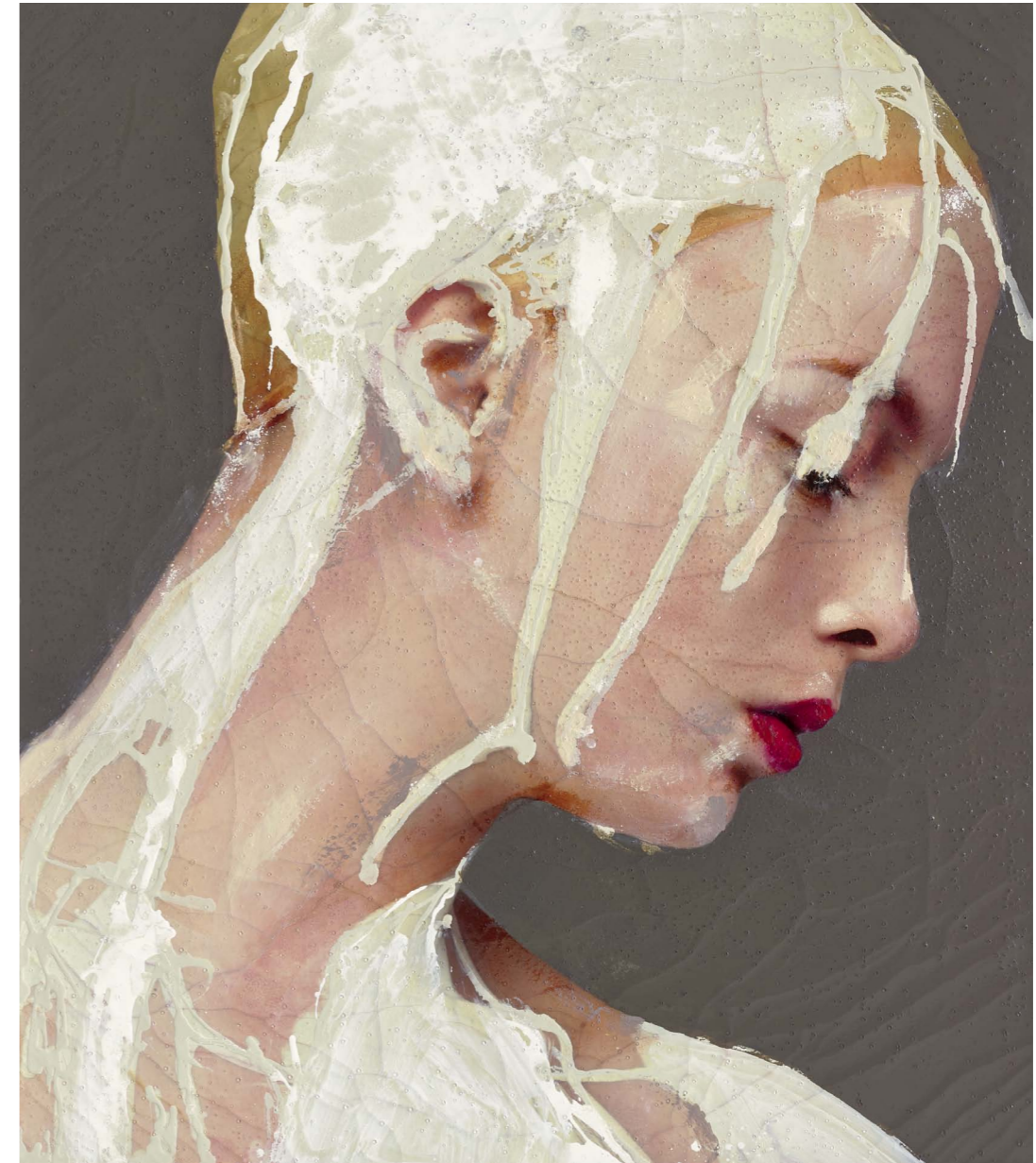
The sublime allows us to experience the highest forms of life by presenting ugliness, deterioration and deathliness; reminding us that to appreciate true pleasure and beauty is to experience true pain and decay.

The act of aestheticizing violence has long been a method of evoking the experience of the sublime in art. Where mass media often uses sensationalism to turn violent representations into objects of fascination, fine art aestheticizes the menacing as a way to humanize its experience. In her deconstruction of traditional concepts of Beauty and their relationship to violence, Cabellut examines our inherent impulse towards the duality of these sensations. These women, like the artwork they are contained in, are objects of beauty to be admired and possessed. Yet the expressions on each of their faces reveal a submission to the violence behind the gaze, the act of possession implicit in the enjoyment of their physical loveliness. They avert their eyes from our penetrating stare - knowing, restrained, on the brink of an impulsive act.

Gili Karev
Curator

“For this series I have chosen the Woman. She represents the beauty, the creation of life. I tried to reconcile these two giants: Beauty and violence, which are constantly in a process of balance.”

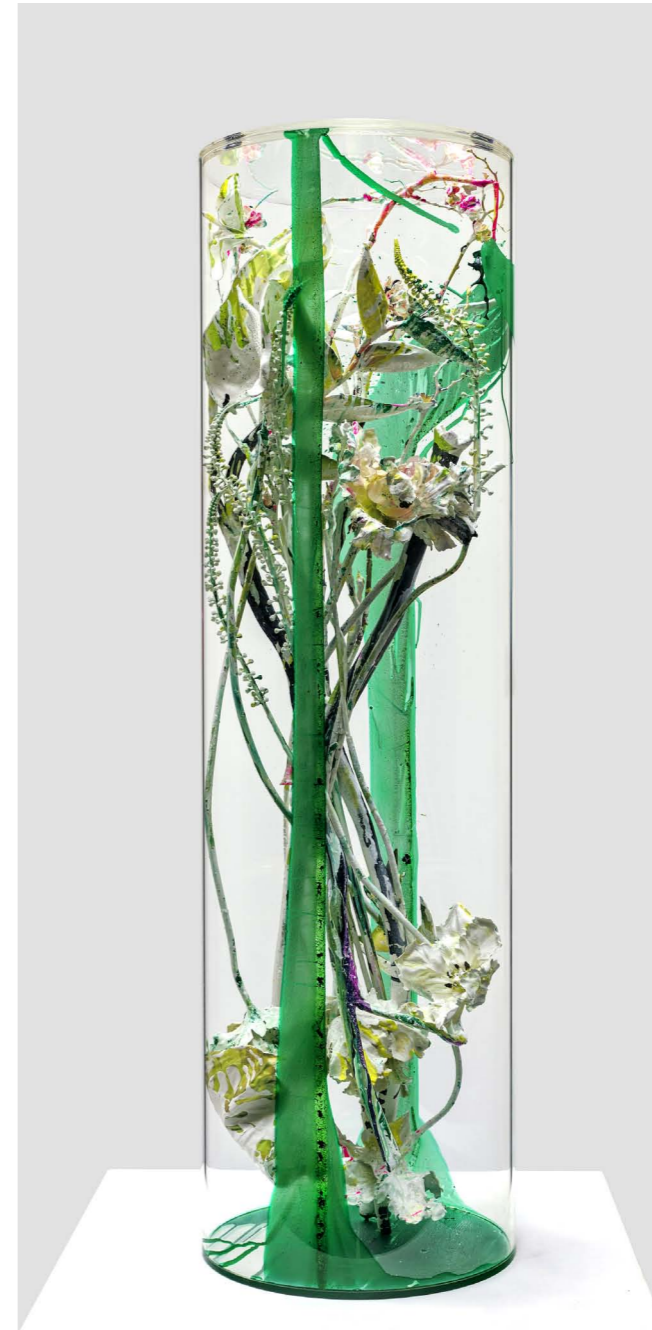
Lita Cabellut



Impulse 33, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas -115 x 100 cm



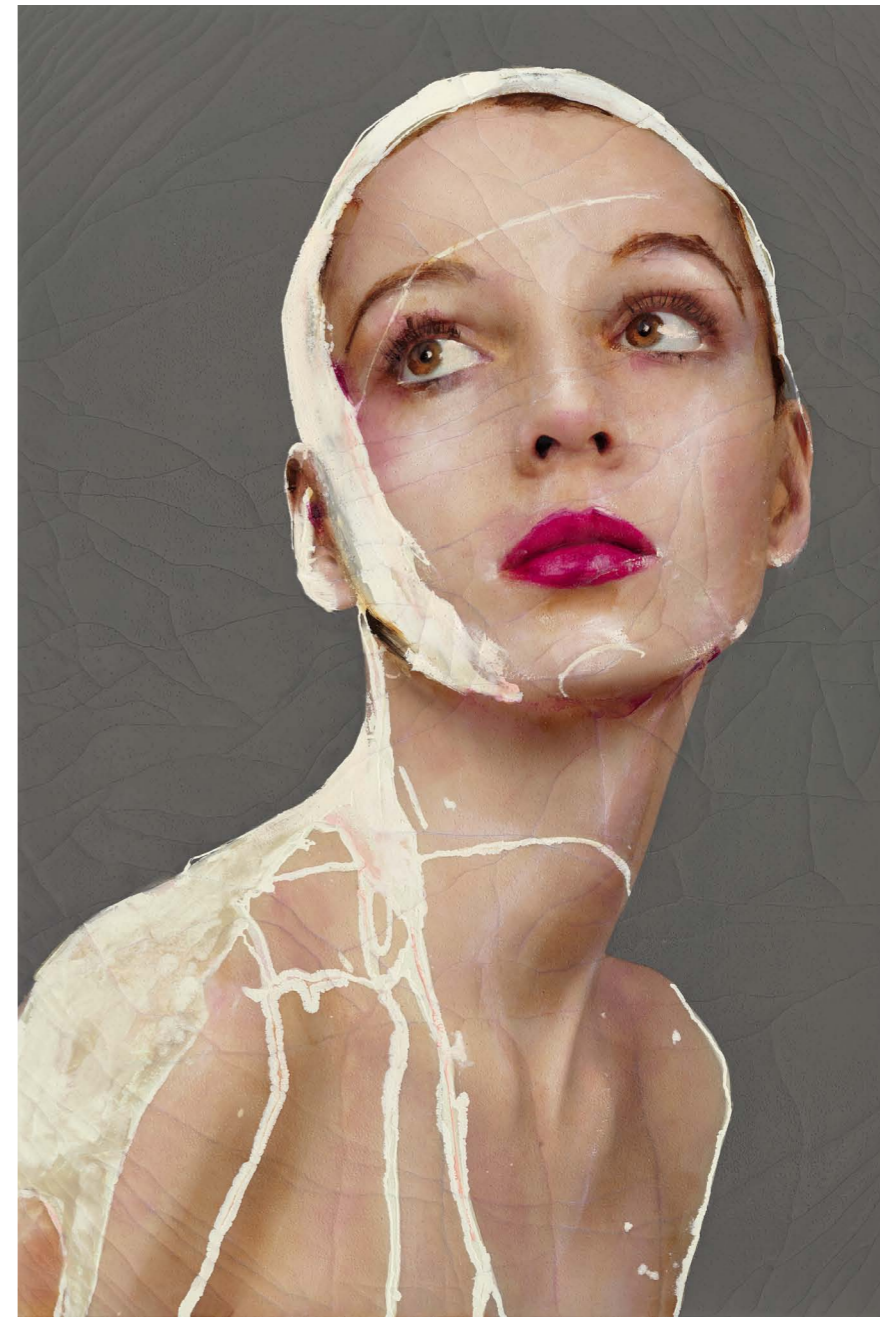
Impulse 4, 2015
Mixed media on canvas
250 x 200 cm - 98.4 x 78.7 in.



Flower installation 3, 2015 - 35 x 121 cm



Impulse 8, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas - 250 x 200 cm - 98.4 x 78.7 in.



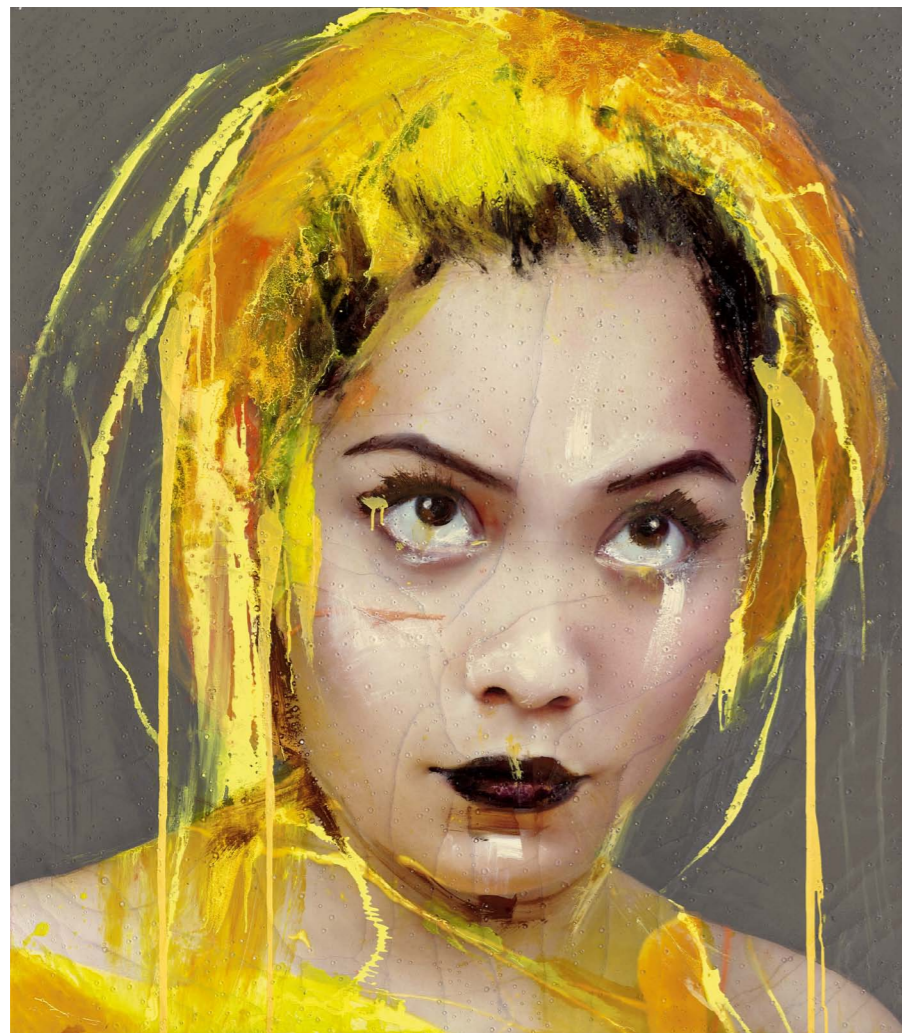
Impulse 15, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas - 215 x 145 cm - 84.6 x 57 in.



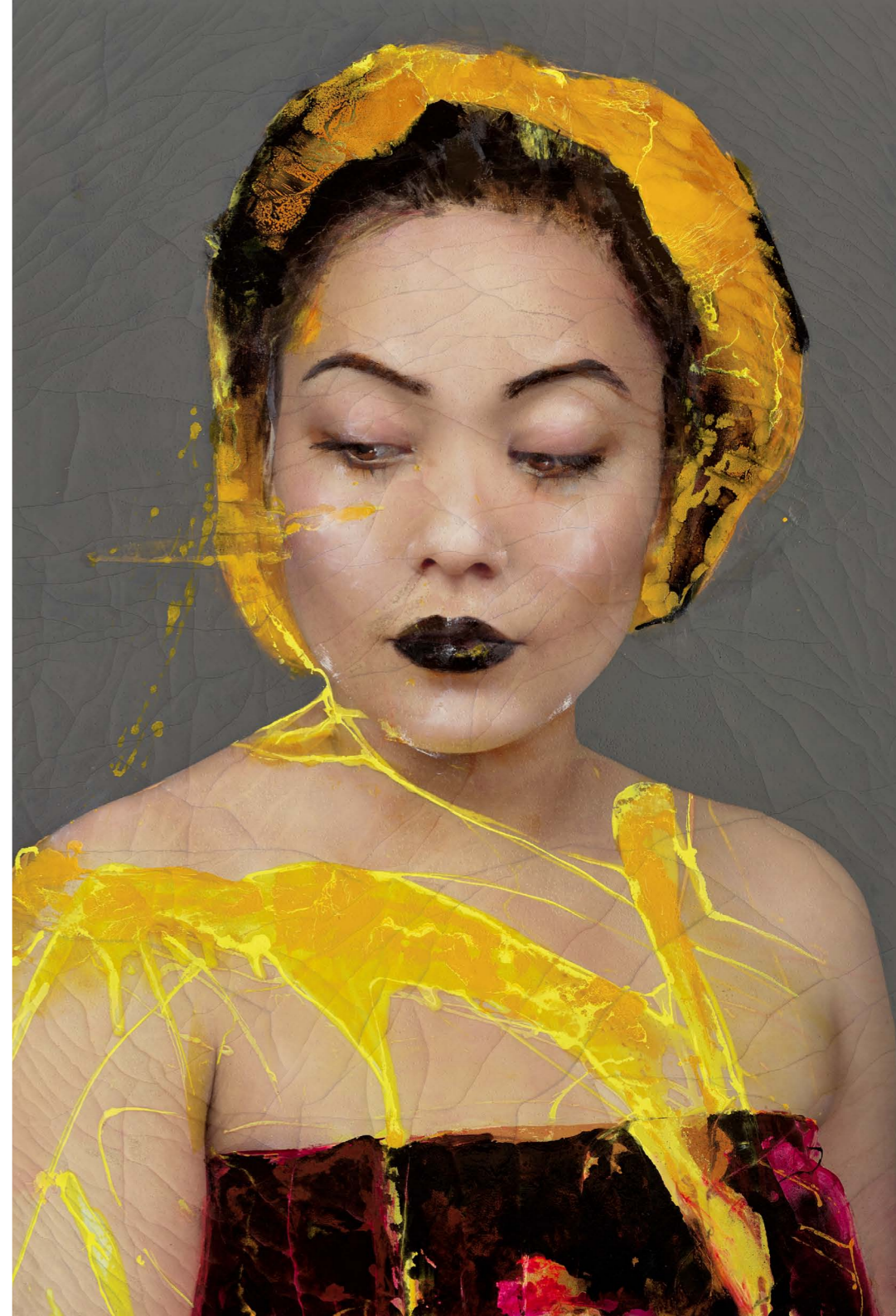
Impulse 6, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas - 250 x 200 cm - 98.4 x 78.7 in.



Impulse 5, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas - 250 x 200 cm - 98.4 x 78.7 in.



Impulse 37, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas - 115 x 100 cm



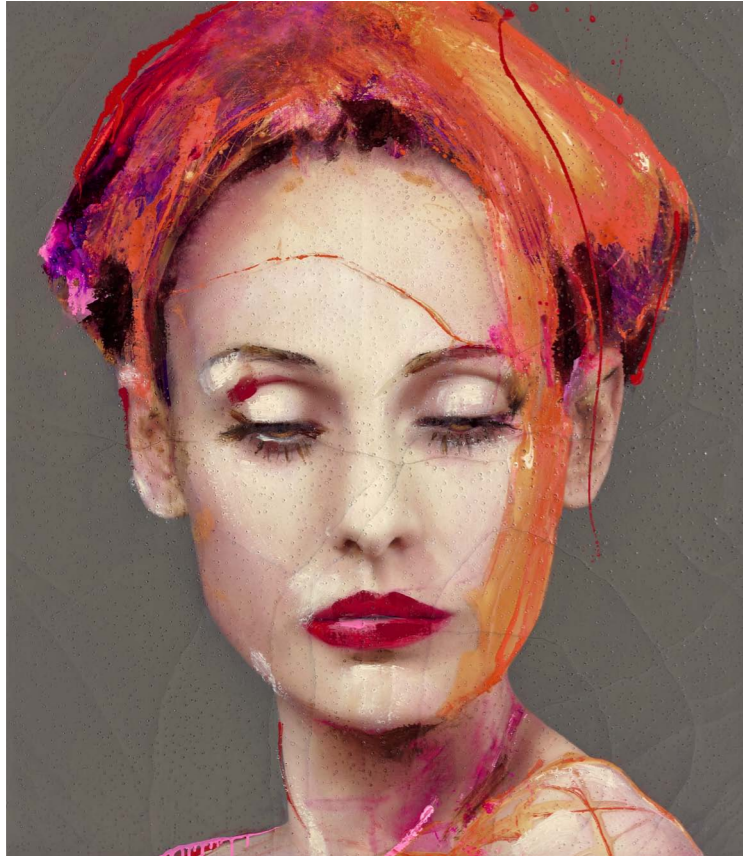
Impulse 12, 2015
Mixed media on canvas
215 x 145 cm - 84.6 x 57 in.



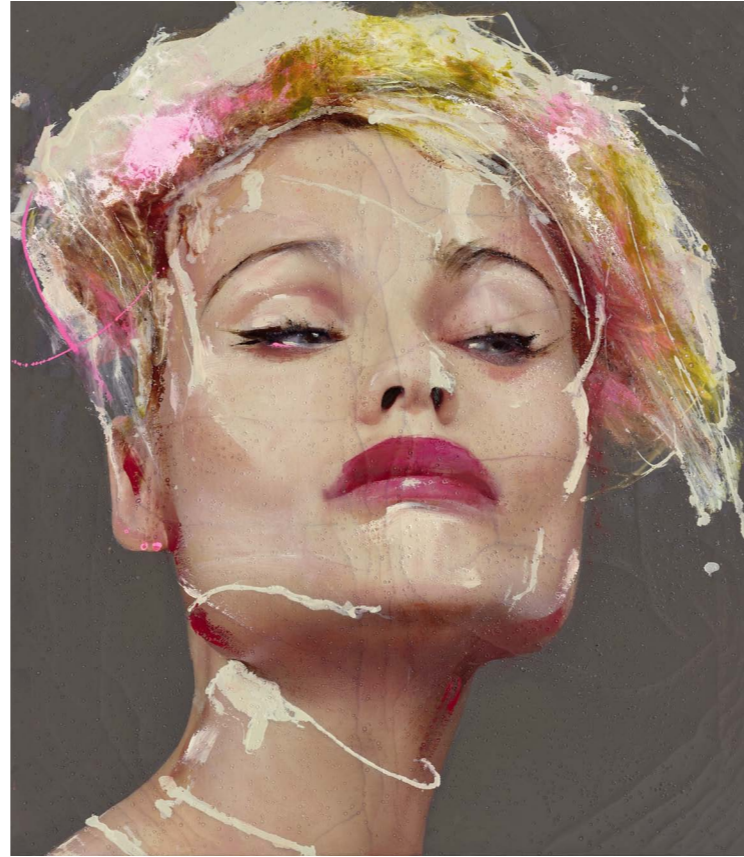
Impulse 1, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas - 250 x 200 cm - 98.4 x 78.7 in.



Flower installation 5, 2015
120 x 60 cm



Impulse 36, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas -115 x 100 cm



Impulse 34, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas -115 x 100 cm

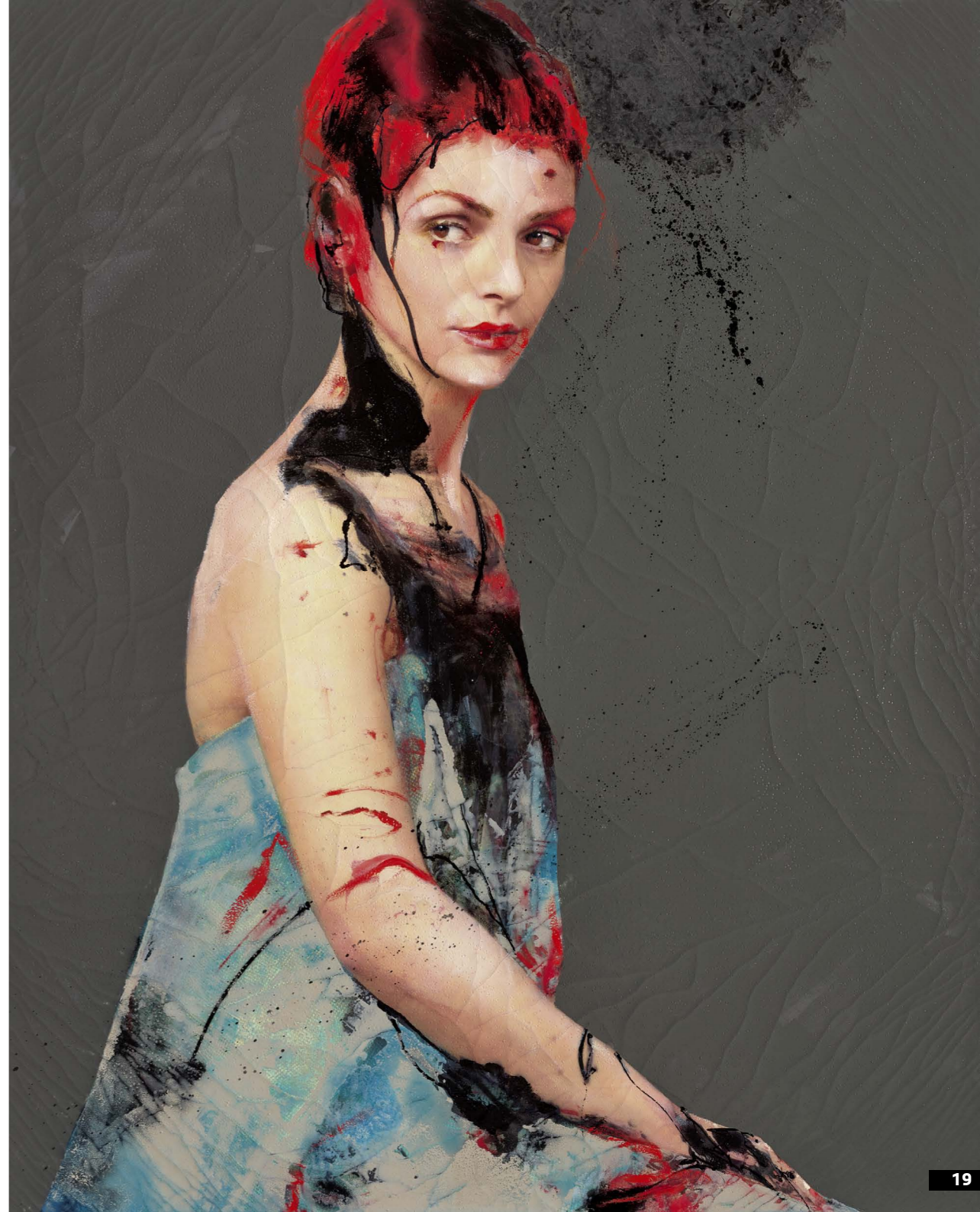


Impulse 35, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas -115 x 100 cm



Impulse 9, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas - 215 x 145 cm - 84.6 x 57 in.

Impulse 7, 2015
Mixed media on canvas
250 x 200 cm - 98.4 x 78.7 in.





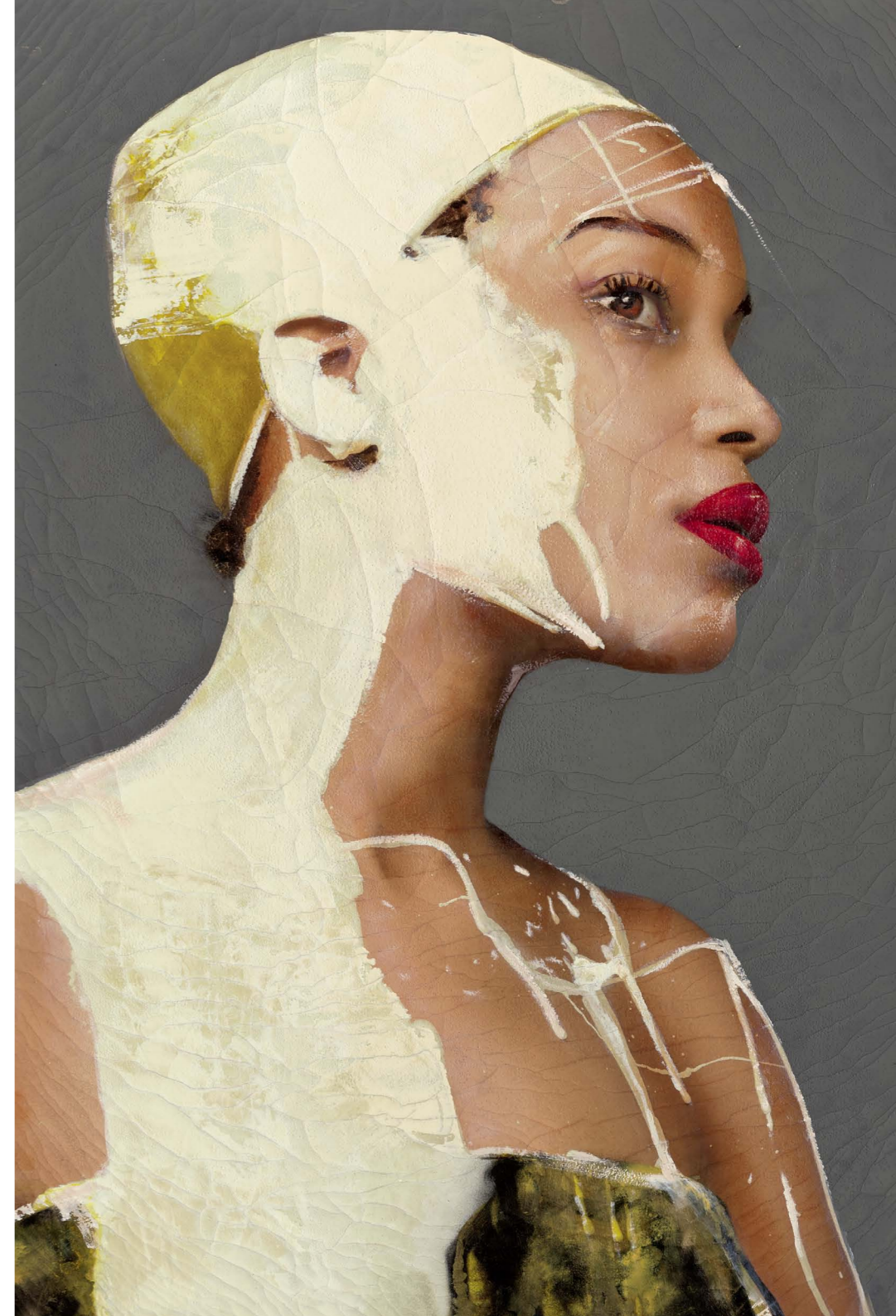
Impulse 2, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas - 250 x 200 cm - 98.4 x 78.7 in.

“Beauty and violence have triggered the passion and the intellect of mankind throughout the centuries.”

Lita Cabellut



Impulse 13, 2015
Mixed media on canvas
215 x 145 cm - 84.6 x 57 in.



Impulse 10, 2015
Mixed media on canvas
215 x 145 cm - 84.6 x 57 in.

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Infinitus 1, 2015
Photography on dibond
Edition of 5
145 x 215 cm - 57 x 84.6 in.

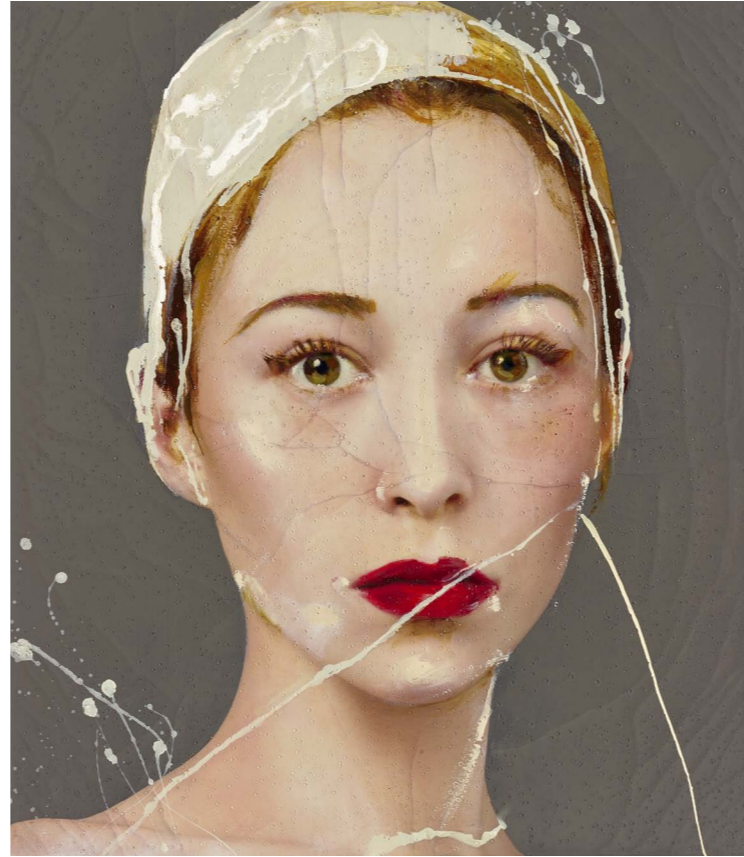
Impulse 3, 2015
Mixed media on canvas
250 x 200 cm - 98.4 x 78.7 in.



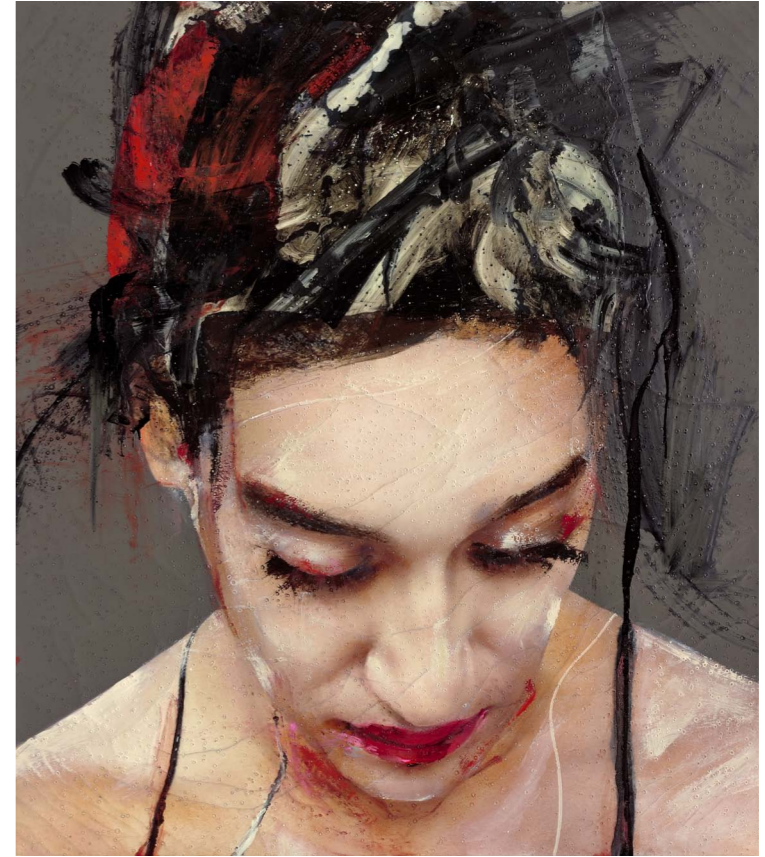




Impulse 32, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas -115 x 100 cm



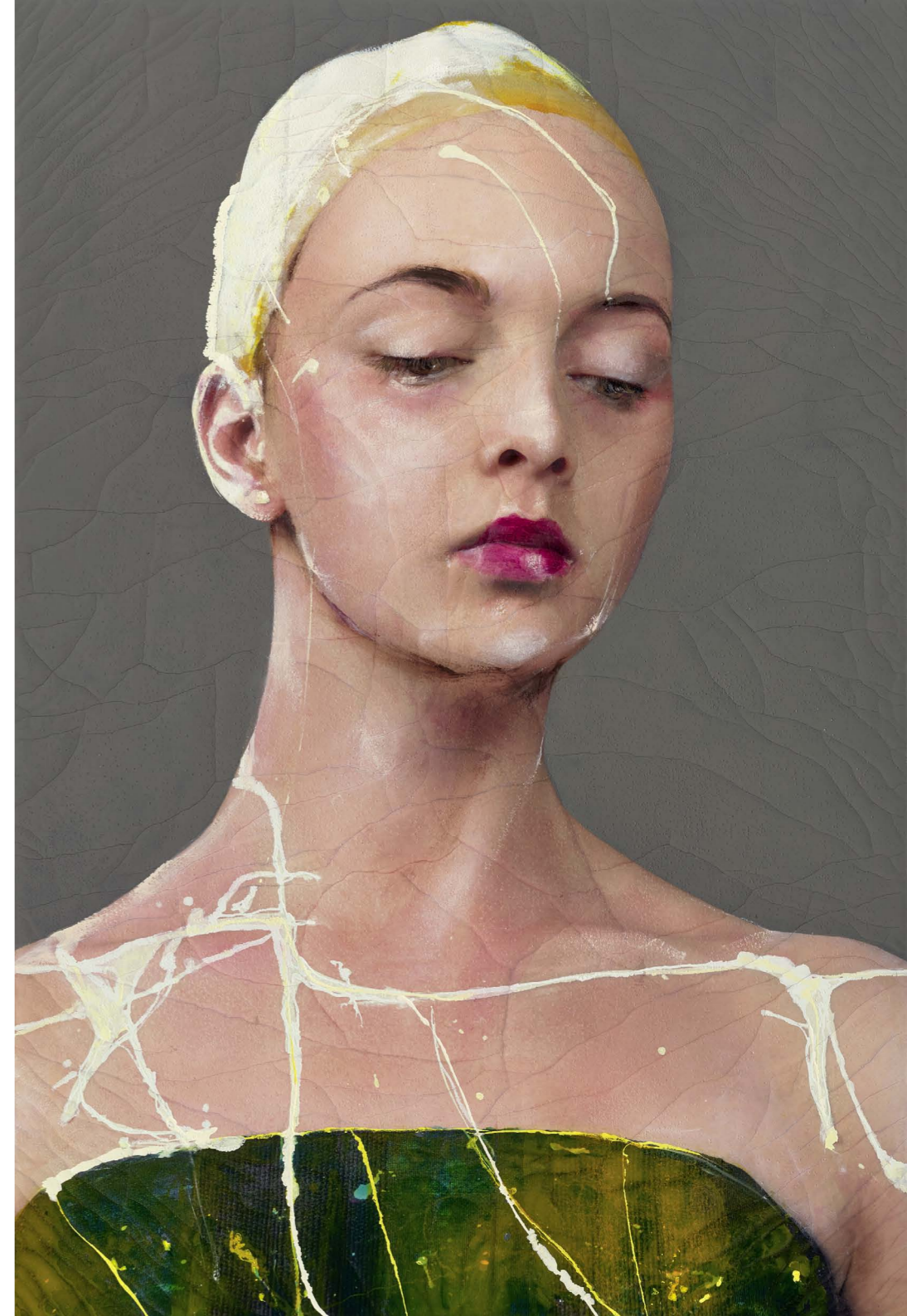
Impulse 38, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas -115 x 100 cm



Impulse 31, 2015 - Mixed media on canvas -115 x 100 cm



Impulse 14, 2015
Mixed media on canvas
215 x 145 cm - 84.6 x 57 in.



Impulse 16, 2015
Mixed media on canvas
215 x 145 cm - 84.6 x 57 in.



Flower installation 4, 2015 - 61 x 47 cm

Impulse 11, 2015
Mixed media on canvas
215 x 145 cm - 84.6 x 57 in.



“The act of painting in my case is a tremendous impulse of violence, but what holds this act is beauty and poetry; chaos and the empty spaces.”

Lita Cabellut



Flower installation 2, 2015 - 120 x 60 cm



Divine, 2015 - Photography on dibond - Edition of 5 - 145 x 215 cm - 57 x 84.6 in.



Flower installation 5, 2015
120 x 60 cm

BIOGRAPHY

Lita Cabellut was born into a Gipsy family in Barcelona in 1961. She lived on the streets until the age of 12, before being adopted by a prominent family. It was then that she was introduced to the Spanish masters at the Prado Museum, where she was deeply influenced by the paintings of Velasquez, Goya and Frans Hals. A prolific contemporary portraitist, the young Cabellut was inspired by the ubiquitous fresco paintings in her hometown. She spent four years in classical training before holding her first exhibition at the Town Hall of Masnou, Barcelona at the age of seventeen. At nineteen, she left her native Spain to study at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, Netherlands, which is where she remains today to live and work. Over the years, Cabellut has developed a unique technique that yields an inimitable quality and texture to her work, painting large-scale portraits incorporating traditional fresco techniques with modern applications of oil paint.

Cabellut's paintings have been exhibited in numerous museums worldwide, including the Netherlands Manifesta Maastricht, Seoul Arts Center, Contemporary Art Museum in Sicily, and CSMVS Mumbai. She is part of several permanent collections including the Museo de Arte Contemporanea, Italy; Fendi, Italy; Museu Europeu d'Art Modern, Spain; the Foundation Vila Casas, Spain; the Théâtre Mogador, France; Copelouzos, Greece; the Joop & Janine van den Ende Foundation and the Paul van Rensch Foundation, the Netherlands.

In 2016, Cabellut will hold solo exhibitions at Opera Gallery Beirut, Opera Gallery Hong Kong, and the Jan van der Togt Museum, Amstelveen, the Netherlands. She will also present new artworks at the Vila Casas Foundation and Museu Europeu d'Art Modern, Barcelona, Spain, in 2017.



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