

SACHA ABOU KHALIL

BREAKING THE FROZEN SEAS

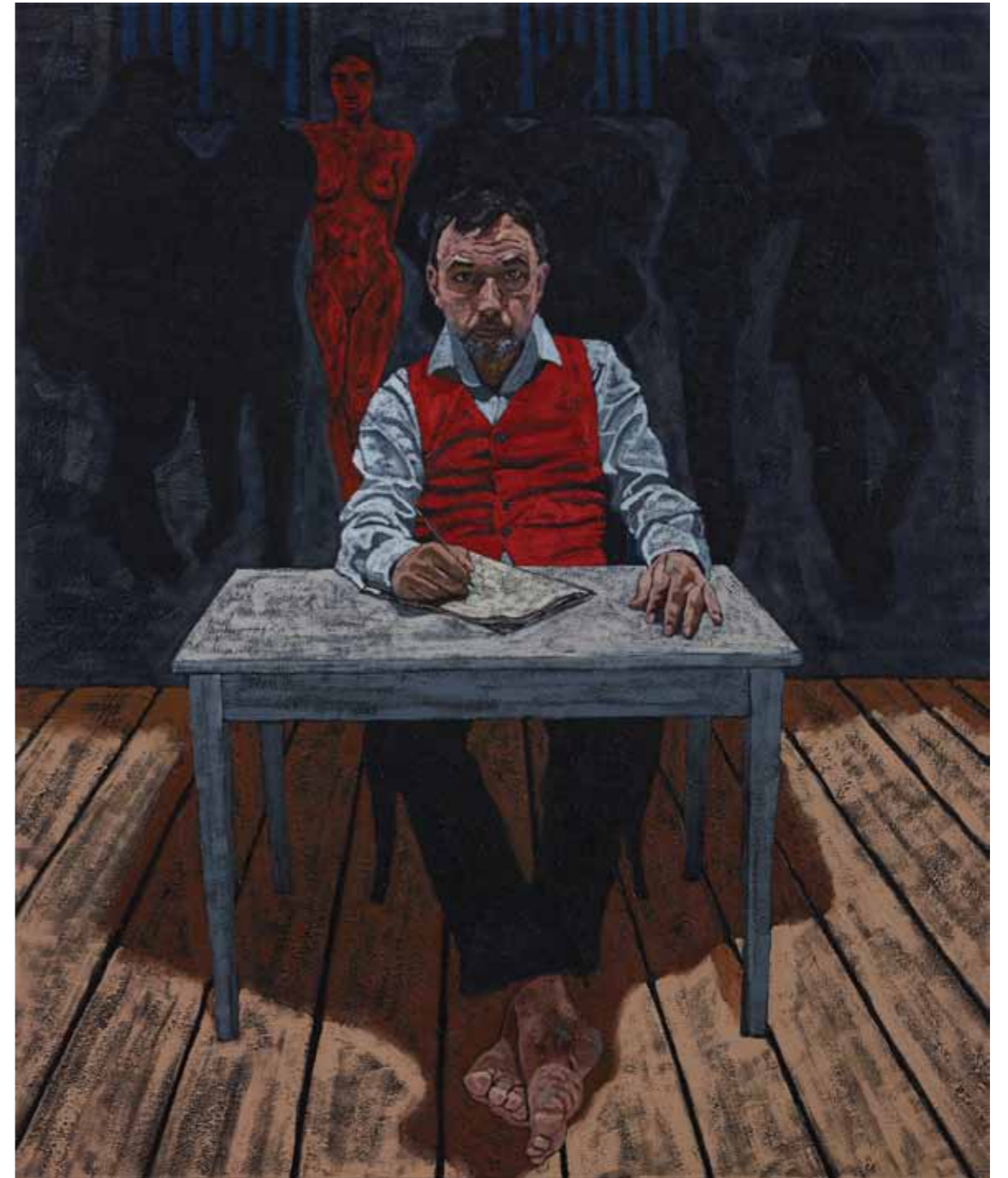
Sacha Abou Khalil has two strands of painting: hyperrealist portraits of individuals or families which he produces by commission, and expressionist portraits drawn from the fictive worlds of canonical novels such as Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, and Yasunari Kawabata's *The House of Sleeping Beauties*. For the former, Abou Khalil maintains the necessary distance to portray a world he is observing and staging in the genre of portraiture. For the latter, he employs himself, family members, and recognizable actors for models. By turning himself and them into the protagonists, he unambiguously inscribes a personal, as well as local, relevance to these texts.

Whereas 19th century realism sought to represent a truthful and objective reality through narrative content and scenes of everyday life, hyperrealism, which emerged out of pop art, shifted the emphasis away from pictorial details to the overall effect of the gleaming surface. Relying on the density of visual information packed in a photographic image, Abou Khalil's hyperrealist portraits are voided of narrative content. The image, however, never eludes signification, which is coded in the posture, clothing, and facial expressions of the painting's subjects. Rendered in the durable medium of painting, the portrait is intended to survive them in the memory of their successors.

Similarly, the narrative content of the selected literary texts is dissolved in Abou Khalil's expressionist portraits. What prevails is the artist's projection of a single fantastical moment in each of these stories. While the selection of works is disparate, Abou Khalil interprets them as existentialist reflections on youth, beauty, sexuality, death, and most potently, freedom. It is no surprise that unlike his more formal hyperrealist paintings, the protagonists are repeatedly depicted barefoot, and in the case of his son (the signifier of Abou Khalil's own youth) is bare-chested. This series of works expresses the desire to exceed the boundaries imposed by society.

Natasha Gasparian
Beirut, 2018

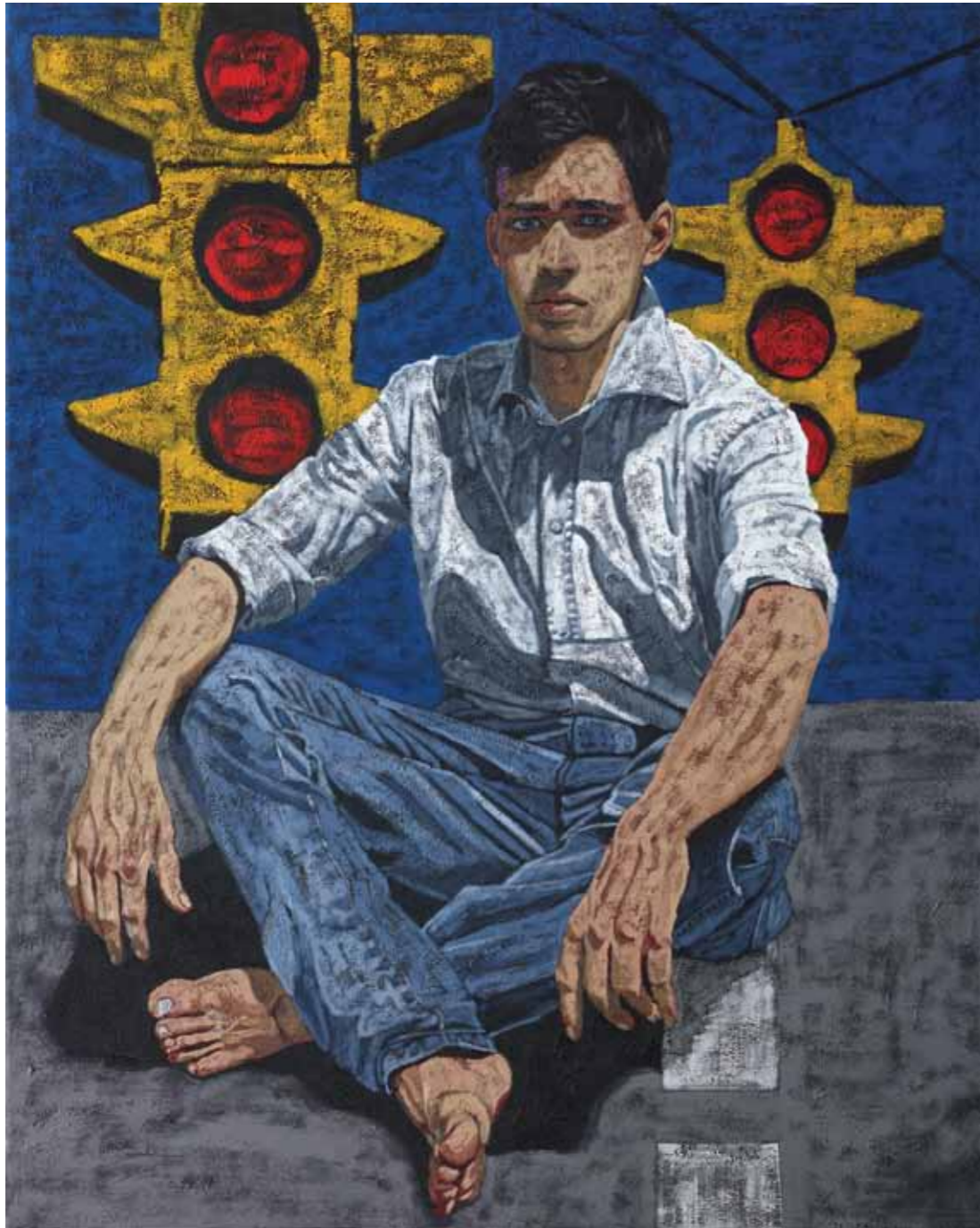
NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND
by Fiodor Dostoievski, 1864



Oil on canvas | 120x100cm | 2017

ON THE ROAD II

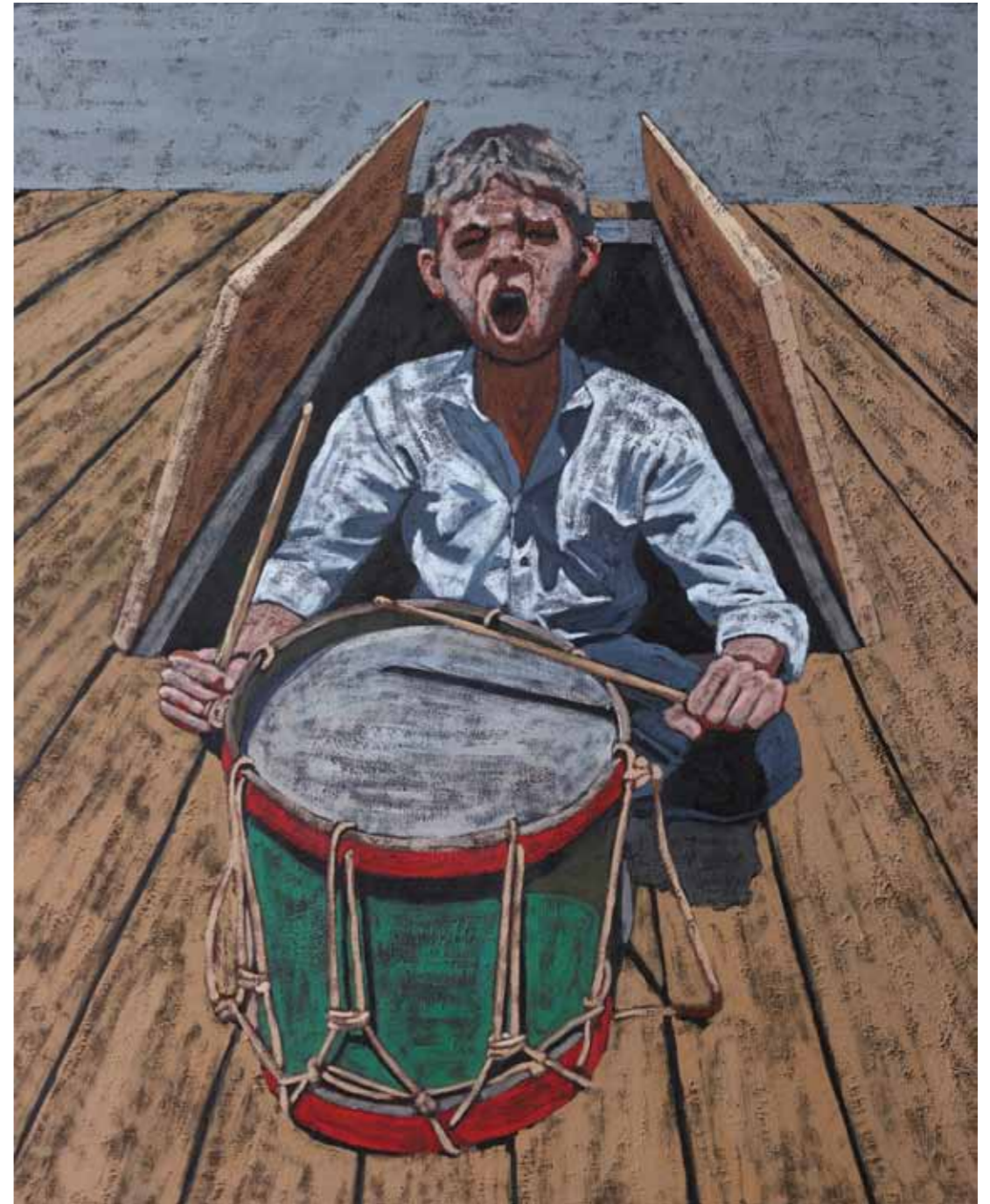
by Jack Kerouak, 1957



Oil on canvas | 100x80cm | 2017

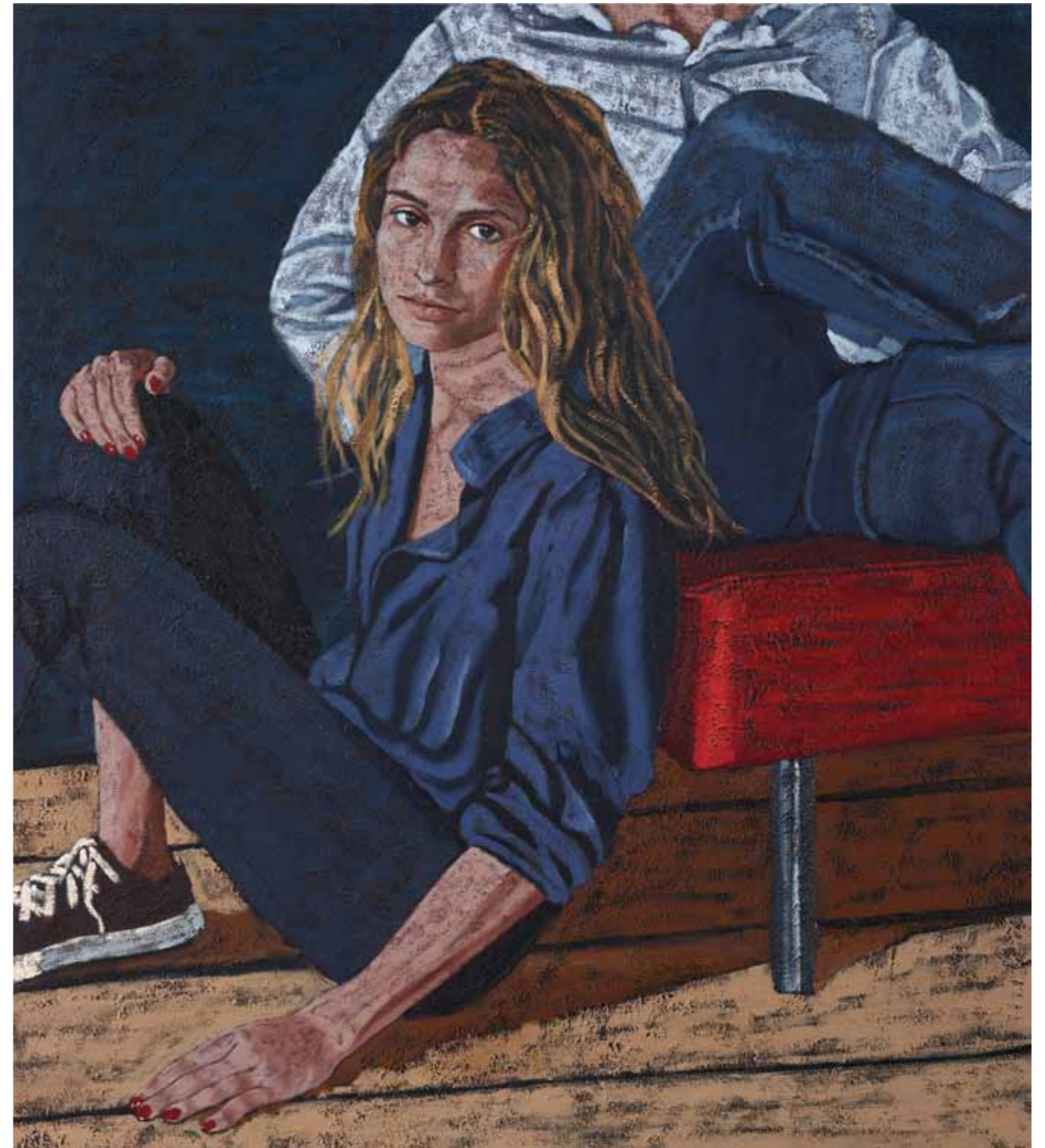
THE TIN DRUM

by Gunther Grass, 1959



Oil on canvas | 100x80cm | 2017

LOLITA VLADIMIR
by Nabokov, 1955



Oil on canvas | 90x90cm | 2017

THE BARON IN THE TREES I
by Italo Calvino, 1957



Acrylic on canvas | 130x130cm | 2017

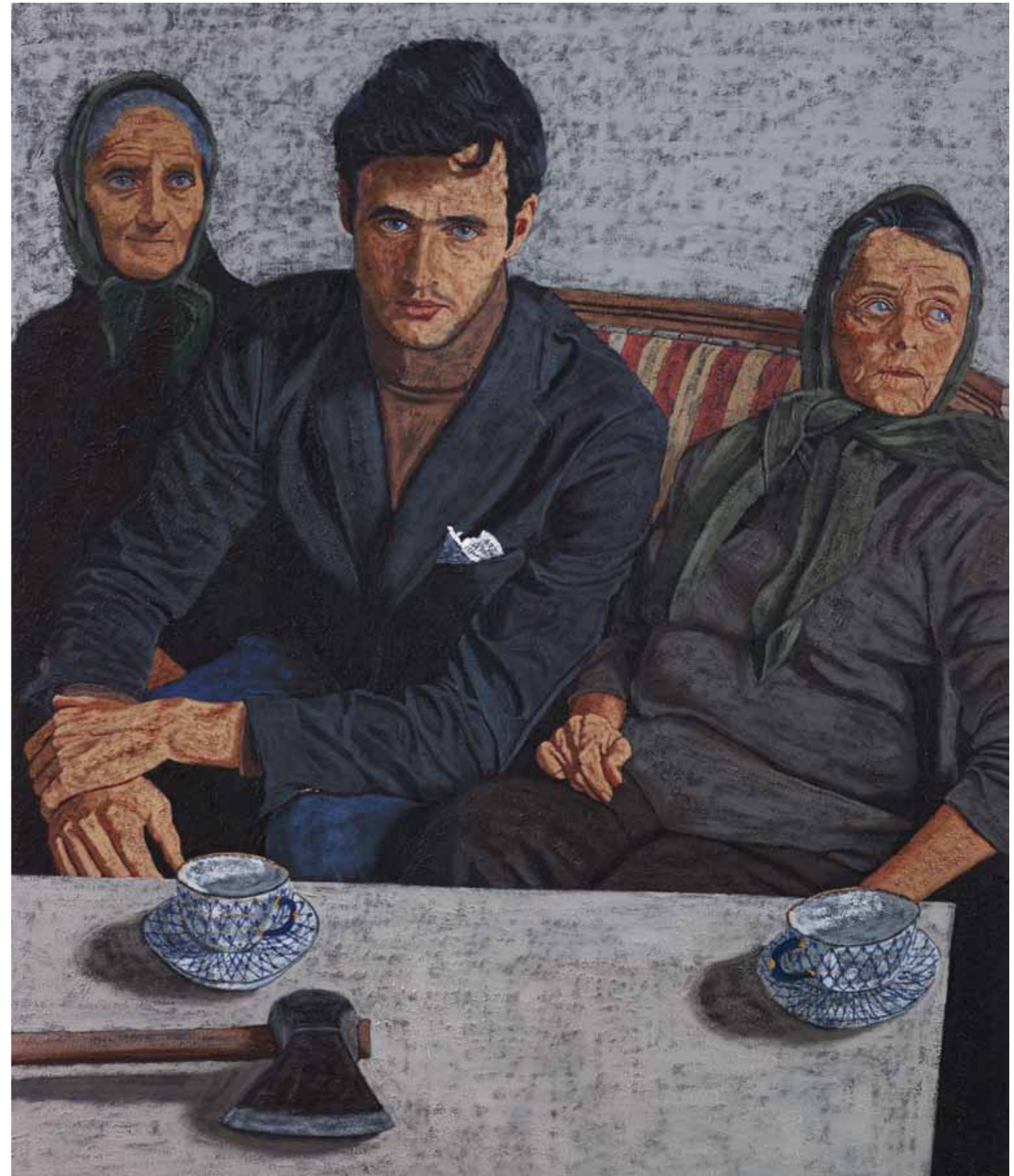
THE BARON IN THE TREES II
by Italo Calvino, 1957



Oil on canvas | 100x70cm | 2017

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

by Fiodor Dostoievski, 1866



Oil on canvas | 110x130cm | 2017

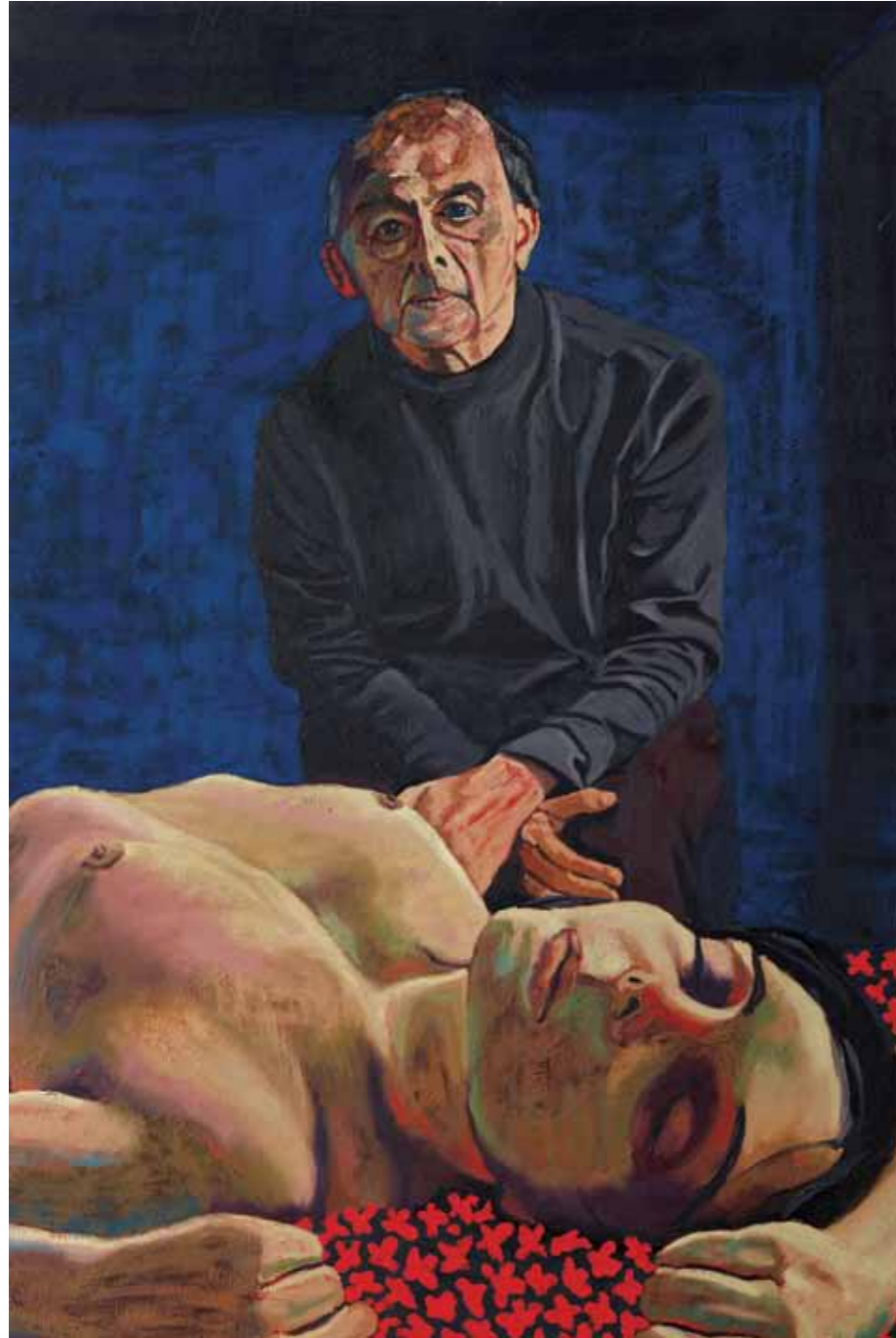
NADIA

by André Breton, 1928



Oil on canvas | 150x142cm | 2017

THE HOUSE OF THE SLEEPING BEAUTIES
by Yasunari Kawabata, 1961



Oil on canvas | 105x70cm | 2017

THE TRIAL 1
by Franz Kafka, 1925



Oil on canvas | 80x60cm | 2017

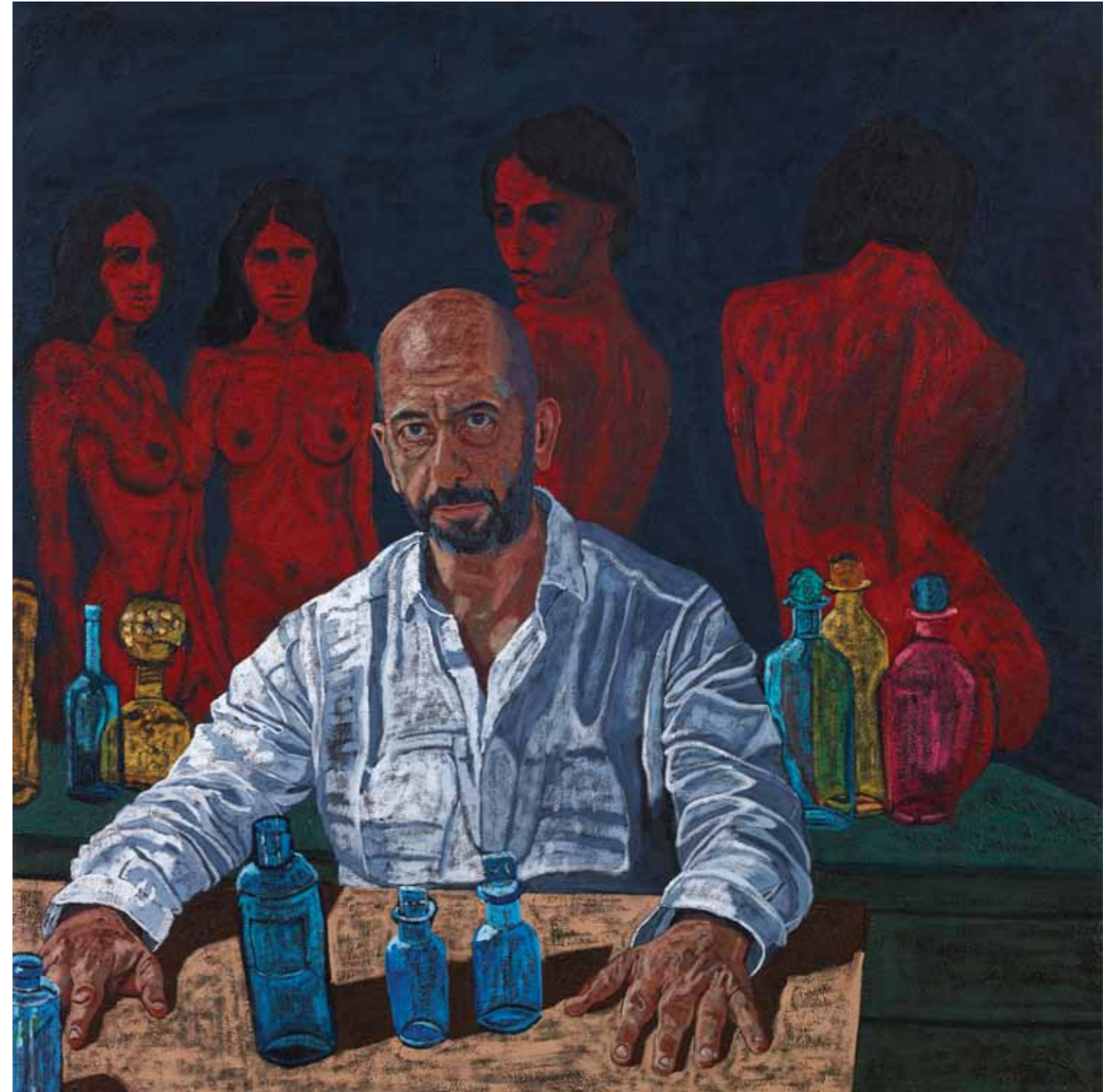
THE TRIAL II
by Franz Kafka, 1925



Oil on canvas | 150x100cm | 2017

THE PERFUME

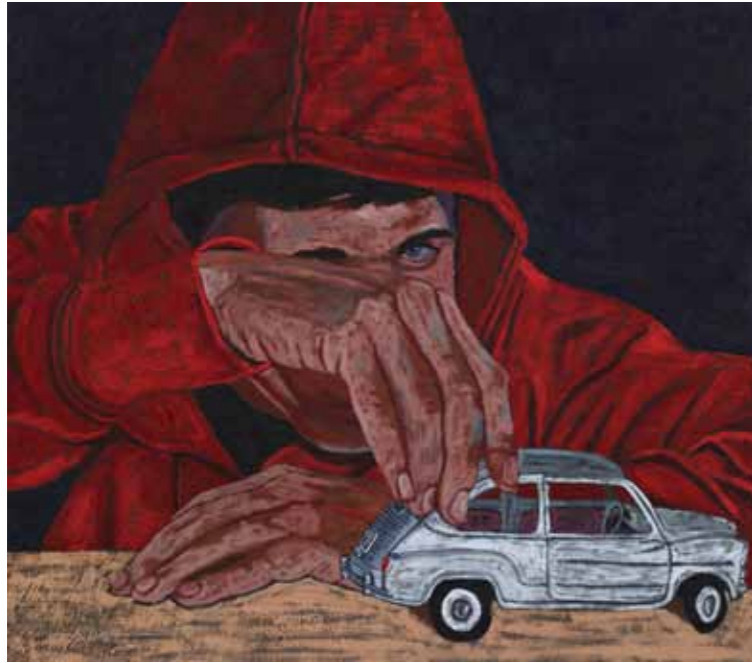
by Patrick Suskind, 1985



Oil on canvas | 130x130cm | 2017

THE ROAD

by Cormac McCarthy, 2006



Oil on canvas | 80x70cm | 2017

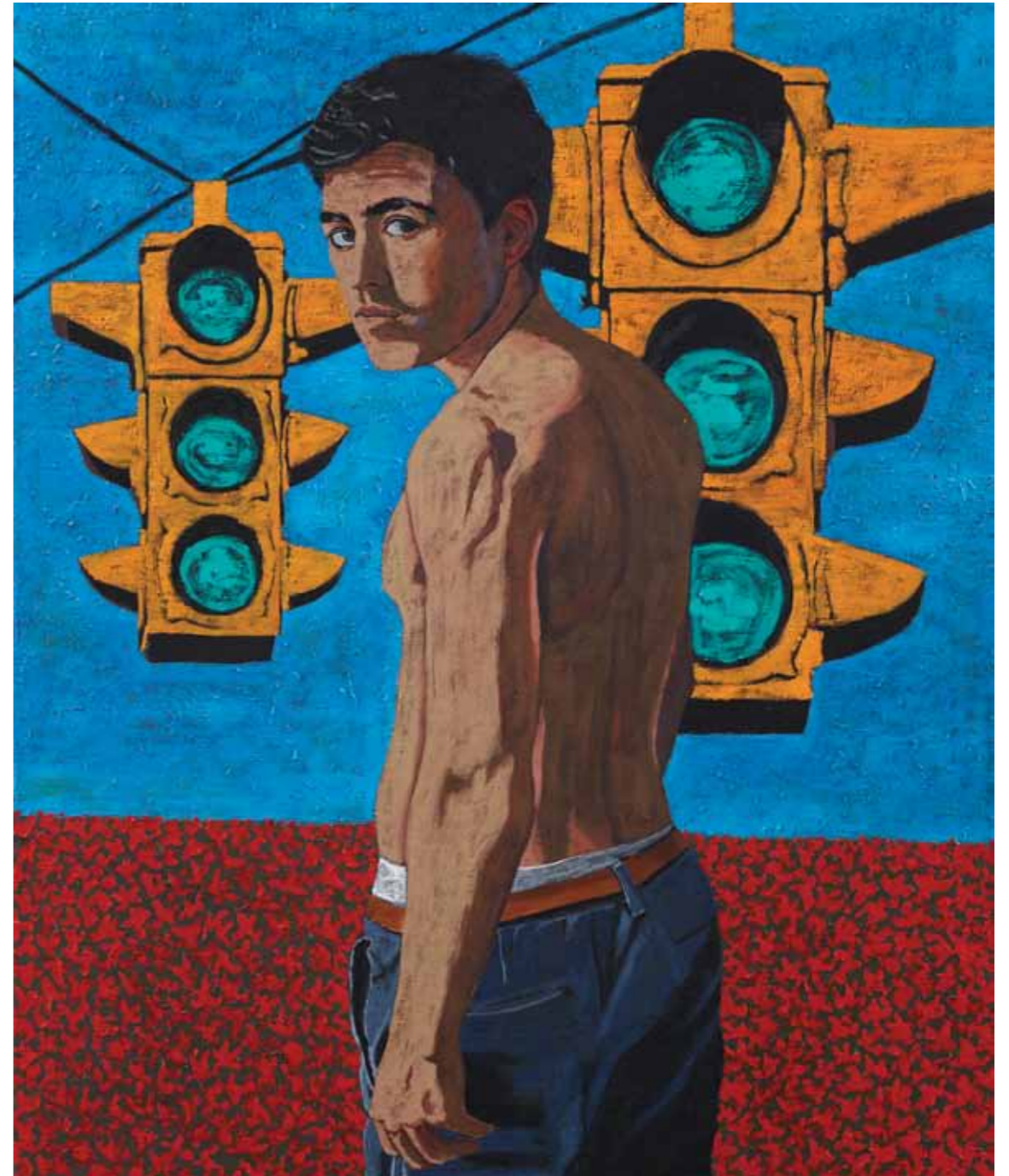
DEAD BATTERY



Oil on canvas | 30x40cm | 2017

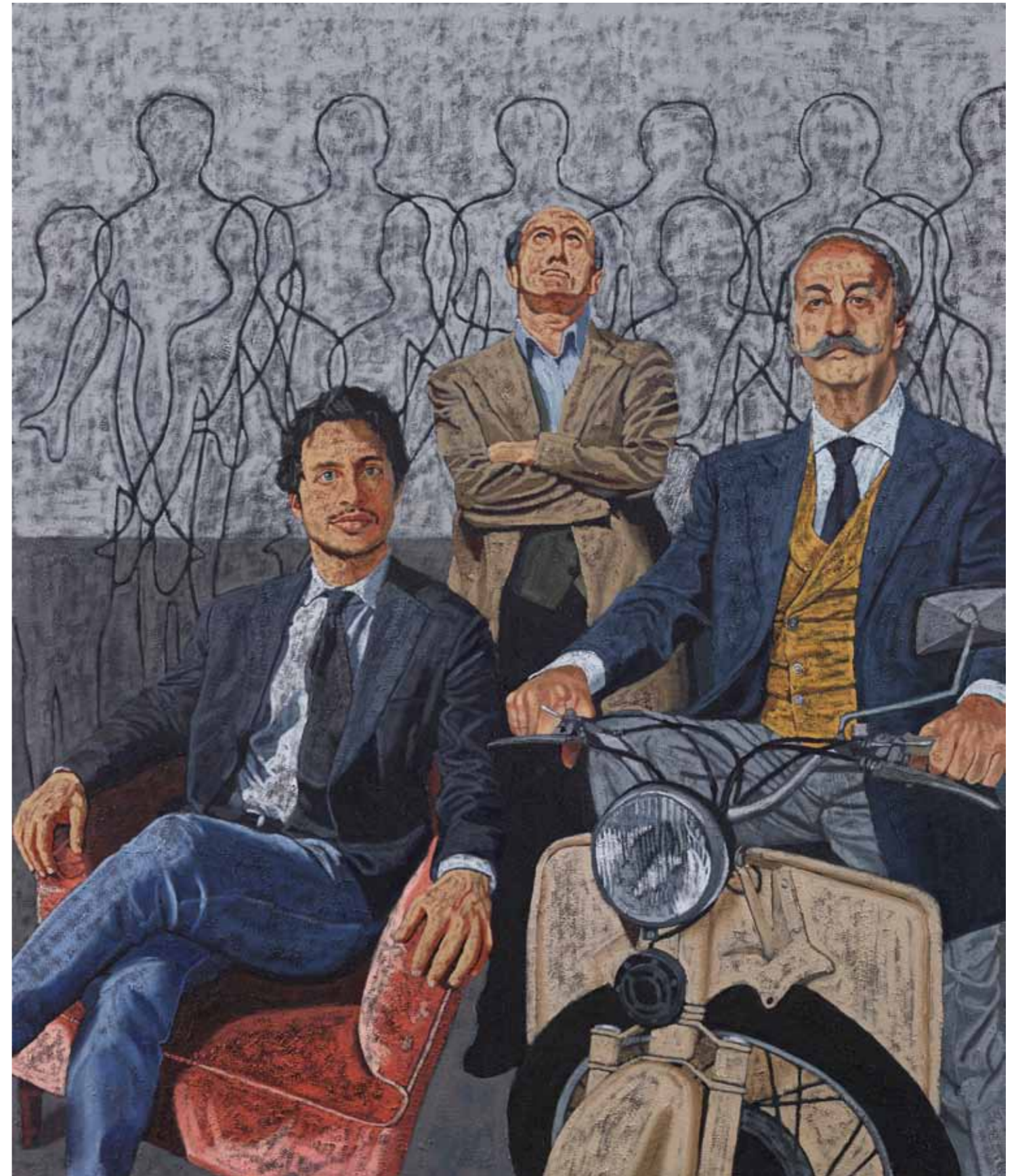
ON THE ROAD I

by Jack Kerouak, 1957



Oil on canvas | 120x100cm | 2017

DEAD SOULS
by Nikolai Gogol, 1842



Oil on canvas | 110x130cm | 2017

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Sacha Abou Khalil was born in Serbia in 1964 and raised in Mount Lebanon. He received his Baccalaureate in Lebanon in 1982, and entered the Strasbourg School of Medicine in 1983. He graduated in 1990 as a state doctor in dental surgery, and until 2011 ran his own private practice in France. In 2011, he quit dentistry. He now lives between Italy and Lebanon as a self-taught painter.

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