



EMI AVORA

Dreamscapes: Interwoven Myths

Curated by Theresa Tan

Presented by Art Seasons and Y Art Project

Dreamscapes

Step into *Dreamscapes: Interwoven Myths* realm crafted by Emi Avora, a sanctuary where dreams take flight. Within this dreamscape, myths intertwine seamlessly across the tapestry of time, blurring the boundaries between past and present, reality and imagination, nature and artifice, humanity and divinity, interwoven myths in a constructed multiverse of colours.

Avora draws inspiration from her daily life in Asia and her Greek heritage to fill her canvas with interior spaces, still life, landscapes, while engaging in a dialogue with modernist historical canons. She explores a complex relationship with exoticism, the environment, motherhood, and everyday experiences. Avora's compositions reflect her quest for a rediscovered place and identity, as well as her curiosity about the shapes around her. Between colours and light, encounters (or conversations) between seemingly disparate objects presents a blend of dreamy and intense scenes where light plays a central role. She employs vivid palettes to invite viewers to reinterpret her work, creating a space between perception and creation, reality, and imagination.

Through her act of re-imagining, Avora proposes a reimagined space where all elements are interconnected through fluid brushstrokes and intricate webs of colours and lines. In *Dreamscapes: Interwoven Myths*, she crafts visual narratives that beckon viewers to contemplate buoyant possibilities, bridging the gap between our past and potential futures.

Between Greece and Singapore

Emi Avora, a Greek artist currently based in Singapore, embodies the essence of diaspora artistry. Diaspora artists, like Avora, seamlessly intertwine influences from their native culture with those of their adopted home, resulting in a rich tapestry of identity. Avora's work is a testament to this fusion, drawing inspiration from both her daily experiences in Asia and her Greek roots.

In Avora's art, one encounters a captivating blend of Singaporean and Southeast Asian motifs alongside elements evocative of her Greek heritage. From lush tropical foliage and ubiquitous plastic chairs to traditional Peranakan floor tiles and the occasional sighting of roaming chickens, Avora seamlessly incorporates the sights and sounds of her surroundings. In her work *"To Everything There is a Season"*, one finds Greek statues, architectural arches, plastic chairs, mother-of-pearl table and chairs all in the same space, symbolising Avora's deep connection to her origins.

These juxtapositions are not mere coincidences but rather the organic byproducts of Avora's keen observations and meaningful interactions. They serve as the foundation for her current body of work, bridging the gap between interior and exterior spaces while reflecting the intricate complexity of her identity as a diaspora artist.

Between colours and light

Upon initial inspection, these compositions exhibit a vibrant array of colours, yet the visual richness surpasses the apparent diversity. Avora's artistic creations predominantly feature three to four distinct colours (hues), skilfully manipulating tones (value) and intensities (bright/dull) to craft the illusion of a broader spectrum. The artistic process begins with the application of delicate layers of paint, delineating a preliminary sketch or skeletal framework. Subsequently, these initial layers not only guide the placement of elements but also dictate the colour palette, with lighter tones forming the foundational base and progressively incorporating more robust hues. The inherent translucency of the thin paint layers adds an additional dimension, allowing a singular colour to manifest diverse facets depending on its interaction with translucent elements.

The predominant Greek influence in Avora's artwork extends beyond the mere inclusion of solitary Greek statues or water vessels depicted in numerous paintings. It lies in the portrayal of the distinct Greek light—a luminosity characterised by its directness and clarity, casting bold shadows and infusing vibrant colours. In *"The Way of Water"*, Avora skilfully mirrors this Greek light in her painting, utilising reflective surfaces or bodies of water to recreate the play of luminosity and shadows in her artistic composition.



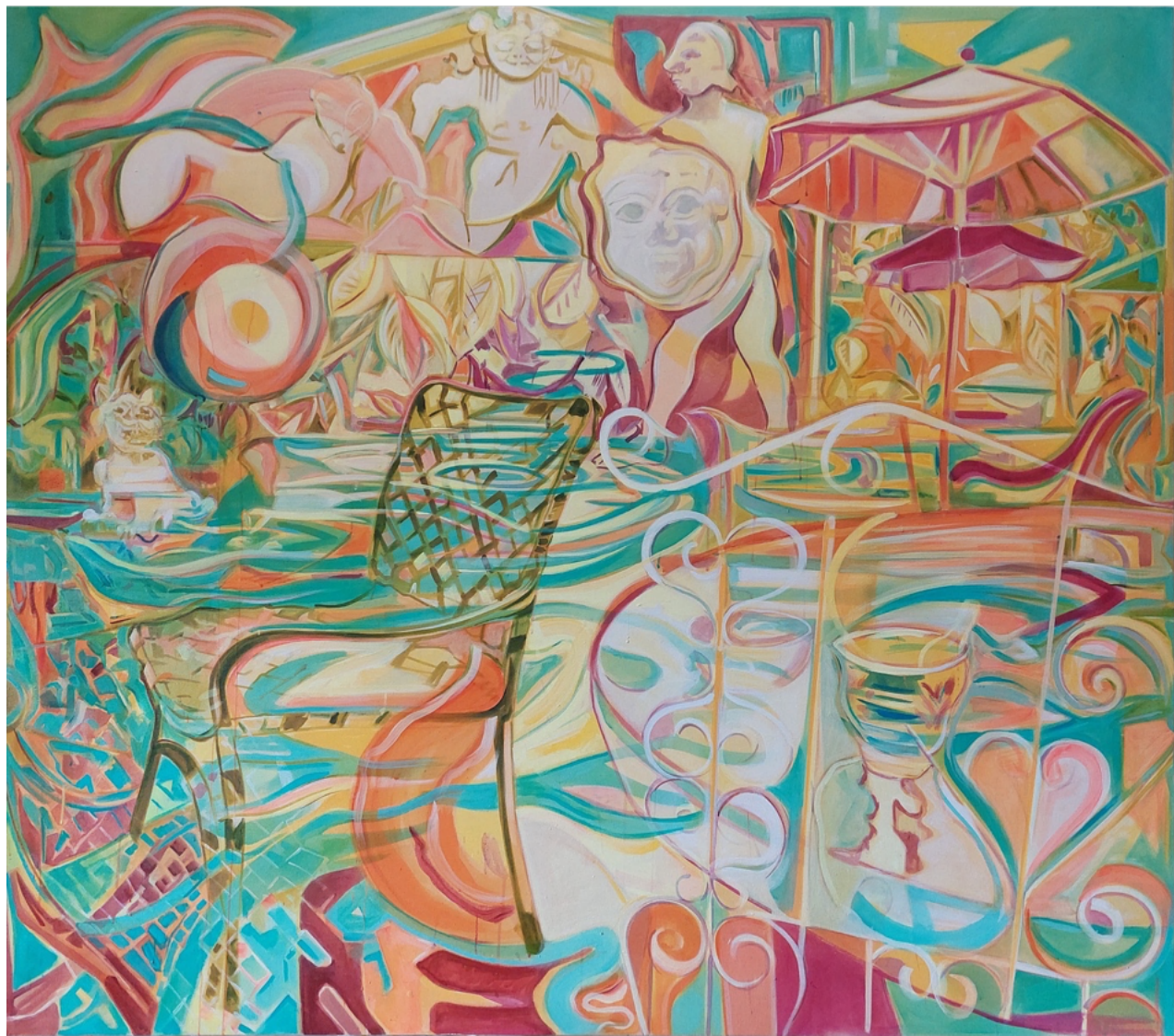
EMI AVORA

To everything there is a season, 2024

acrylic and oil on canvas

150 x 150cm

SGD 7,000



EMI AVORA
The way of water, 2024
acrylic on canvas
140 x 160cm
sgd 7,000



EMI AVORA
An elevated view, 2023
acrylic and oil on canvas
200 x 210cm
SGD 8,500



EMI AVORA
Today's lunch, 2023
acrylic and oil on canvas
140 x 120cm
sgd 6,500

Between Past and Present

In the interplay of time, where echoes of the past emerge through aged patinas—a result of canvas staining prior to painting—and what Avora dubs as 'modern relics' such as unexpected sightings of plastic chairs tucked away in obscure corners, tires repurposed as plant supports, or traffic cones nestled in garden nooks, the delineation between past and present blurs. In *"What Will Become?"*, a waterway traverses the canvas, intersecting with children at play, prompting viewers to ponder the fate of these youths, the scene itself, and the world at large. The demarcation between past and present dissolves into a state of flux, with transitional spaces hinting at closure or dissolution. These relics, reminiscent of bygone eras or lifestyles, persist as ubiquitous reminders woven into our contemporary surroundings.

Between Reality and Imagination

In the large diptych, *"Valley of Myths"*, symbols from Eastern and Western mythology occupy an imaginative space, suggesting both an interior marked by tiling and a landscape hinted at by cloud-like formations (on the upper side of both paintings). The undulating lines dragon shapes and background colour planes collaborate to evoke a sense of a mythical valley. The artwork's expansive scale invites viewers to envision these mythological symbols as small but integral parts of everyday still life; or imagine them as huge, monumental entities, alluding to broader geopolitical dynamics. This interplay introduces a playful element, juxtaposing real items like vase and bowls with imagined dragons and Greek statues of either mythical or historical significance.

Between Nature and Artifice

Are the botanical landscapes in Singapore genuine representations of 'nature', or are they more akin to idealised depictions?

In ancient Greece, where gods and myths pervaded daily life, nature—comprising trees, forests, lakes, mountains, animals, and beasts—played integral roles in the narratives. In our contemporary societies, characterised by increasing detachment from the natural world, Avora dedicates significant portions of her canvas to tropical landscapes reminiscent of Southeast Asian jungles or forests. These natural settings serve as backdrops for various elements: animals, domestic items, artisanal tools, furniture, alongside depictions of mythological beings, gods, and goddesses found on ancient pottery or reliefs. Amidst these depictions in *"Battle of the Soul"*, spaces emerge for dreaming, offering imaginary realms fuelled by both observation and fiction.



EMI AVORA
What will Become, 2023
acrylic on canvas
140 x 160cm
sgd 7,000



EMI AVORA
Valley of Myth, 2023
acrylic and oil on canvas
150 x 300cm
SGD 13,000



EMI AVORA
Battle of the soul, 2023
acrylic and oil on canvas
110 x 110cm
sgd 5,500



EMI AVORA
Permission to Daydream, 2024
acrylic and oil on canvas
150 x 150cm
sgd 7,000



EMI AVORA

Mother, 2023

acrylic and oil on canvas

135 x 135cm

sgd 6,500

Between Humanity and the Divine

In *"The Wheel Always Turn"*, tables adorned with food and drinks stand bereft of human presence. Similarly, in works like *"Chasing the Monkey"* and *"Your Very Own Illuminary"* scenes featuring tables and plastic chairs, reminiscent of local coffee shops with floral motif flooring, imply human presence while deliberately omitting living figures. Even in *"Almost like Reality"*, the chairs are conspicuously vacant. Through these depictions of spaces devoid of humans, Avora prompts viewers to envisage a parallel world to our own—a realm where encounters unfold between gods and symbols, children and animals, and everyday objects alongside ancient artifacts. By fostering connections between our collective past, present, and natural environment, viewers are invited to become protagonists in the compositions, engaging in conversations that transcend time and space.

Interwoven Myths

Nowhere is the essence of myth more vividly portrayed than in the portrayal of dragon in *"Boy and the Dragon"*, the stone lions depicted in *"Hebe and the Lion"* and the fertility goddess series.

In contrast to the multi-headed, winged dragons of ancient Greek myths, Avora's dragons bear a striking resemblance to their Asian counterparts, characterised by a single head and the ability to ascend through the clouds without wings, ushering forth wind and rain. While Greek dragons often symbolise evil, violence, and chaos, frequently depicted as menacing creatures terrorising the people or provoking knights to embark on quests to slay them, Asian dragons embody notions of sanctity, nobility, auspiciousness, blessings, and are revered as divine beings.

The Greek and Asian dragons embody divergent ideologies; however, the Greek winged lions (known as 'griffins') and the Asian stone lions merely represent physical differences, as their ideologies converge. Both cultures attributed potent mythical protective qualities to these lion statues, placing pairs outside homes to protect the household, ward off evil spirits, and attract fortune and prosperity.

The nude and swollen abdomens of the mother-goddess are symbols associated with fertility and rebirth. Avora adeptly invokes these mythical dragons, stone lions and fertility goddess from both Western and Eastern mythologies, weaving centuries of ancestral tales, legends, and cultural symbols into a rich tapestry of imagination.

Through her paintings, Avora proposes a reimagined space where all elements are interconnected through fluid brushstrokes and intricate webs of colours and lines. In *"Dreamscapes: Interwoven Myths"* she crafts visual narratives that beckon viewers to contemplate buoyant possibilities, bridging the gap between our past and potential futures.



EMI AVORA
The wheel always turns, 2023
acrylic and oil on canvas
200 x 210cm
sgd 8,500



EMI AVORA
Chasing the Monkey, 2023
acrylic on canvas
120 x 100cm
sgd 5,500



EMI AVORA

Your very own illuminary, 2023

acrylic and oil on canvas

135 x 135cm

sgd 6,500



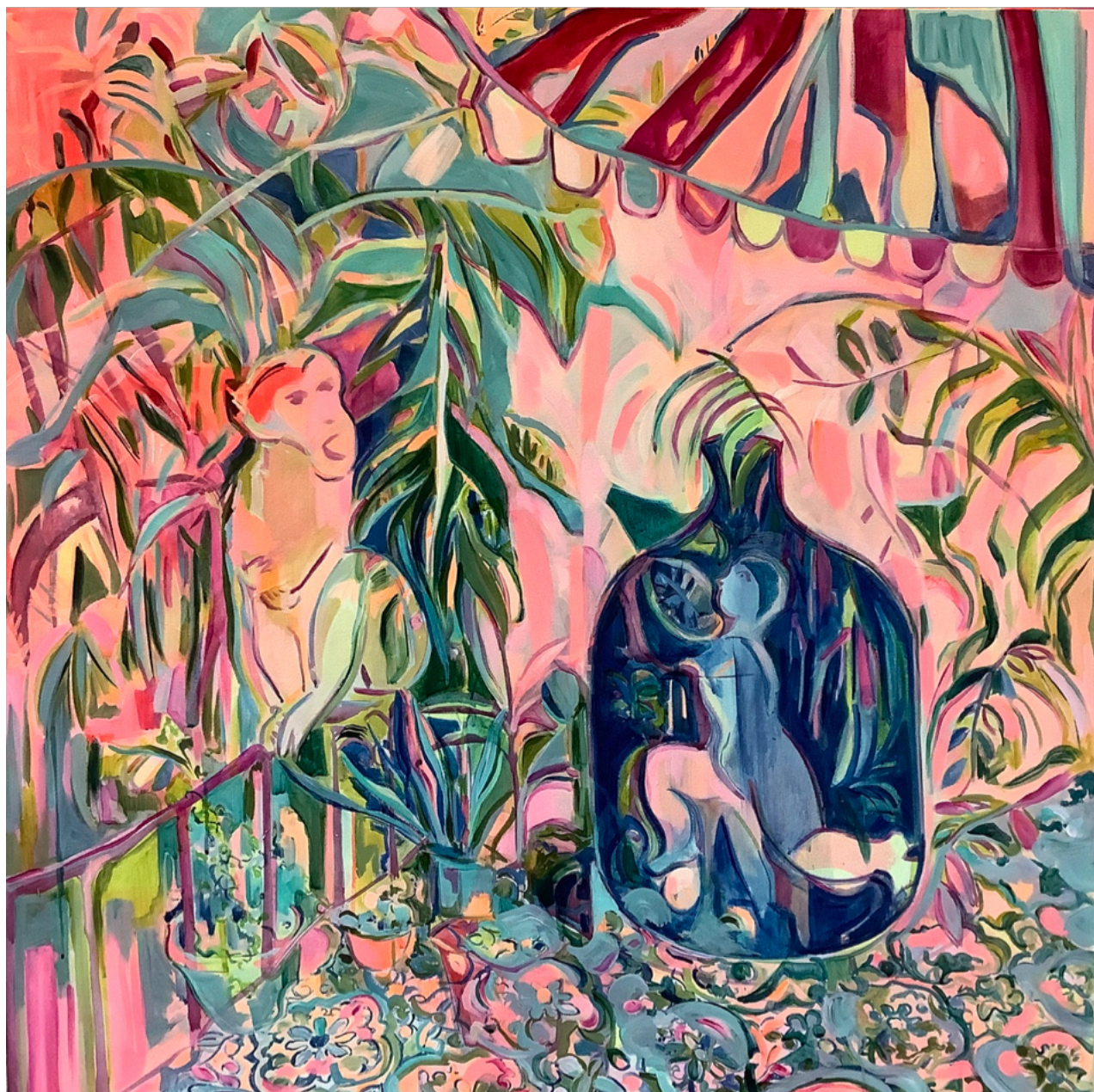
EMI AVORA
Almost like Reality, 2024
acrylic and oil on canvas
140 x 160cm
sgd 7,000



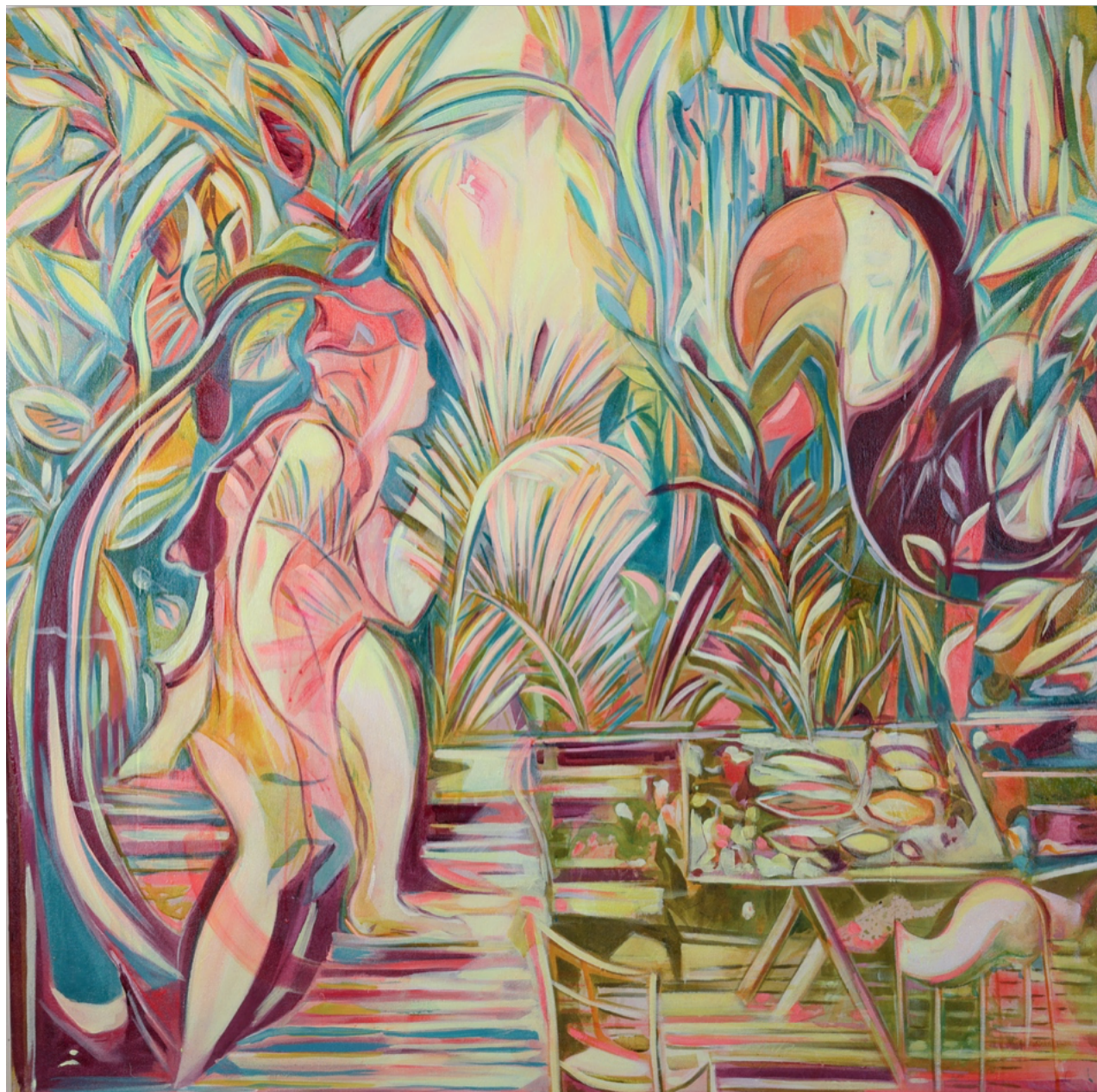
EMI AVORA
Boy with Dragon, 2023
acrylic on canvas
140 x 120cm
sgd 6,500



EMI AVORA
Hebe and Lion, 2022
acrylic on canvas
110 x 110cm
sgd 5,500



EMI AVORA
Boy and Monkey ii, 2022
acrylic on canvas
110 x 110cm
sgd 5,500



EMI AVORA
Encounter, 2023
acrylic on canvas
135 x 135cm
sgd 6,500



EMI AVORA
The Potter, 2023
acrylic on canvas
120 x 100cm
sgd 5,500



EMI AVORA
Only Tears, 2023
acrylic and oil on canvas
90 x 70cm
sgd 3,800



EMI AVORA
A Whiff from the past, 2023
acrylic on canvas
90 x 70cm
sgd 3,800



EMI AVORA
Daydreaming, 2023
acrylic on canvas
90 x 70cm
sgd 3,800



EMI AVORA

Yearning for something with no name, 2023

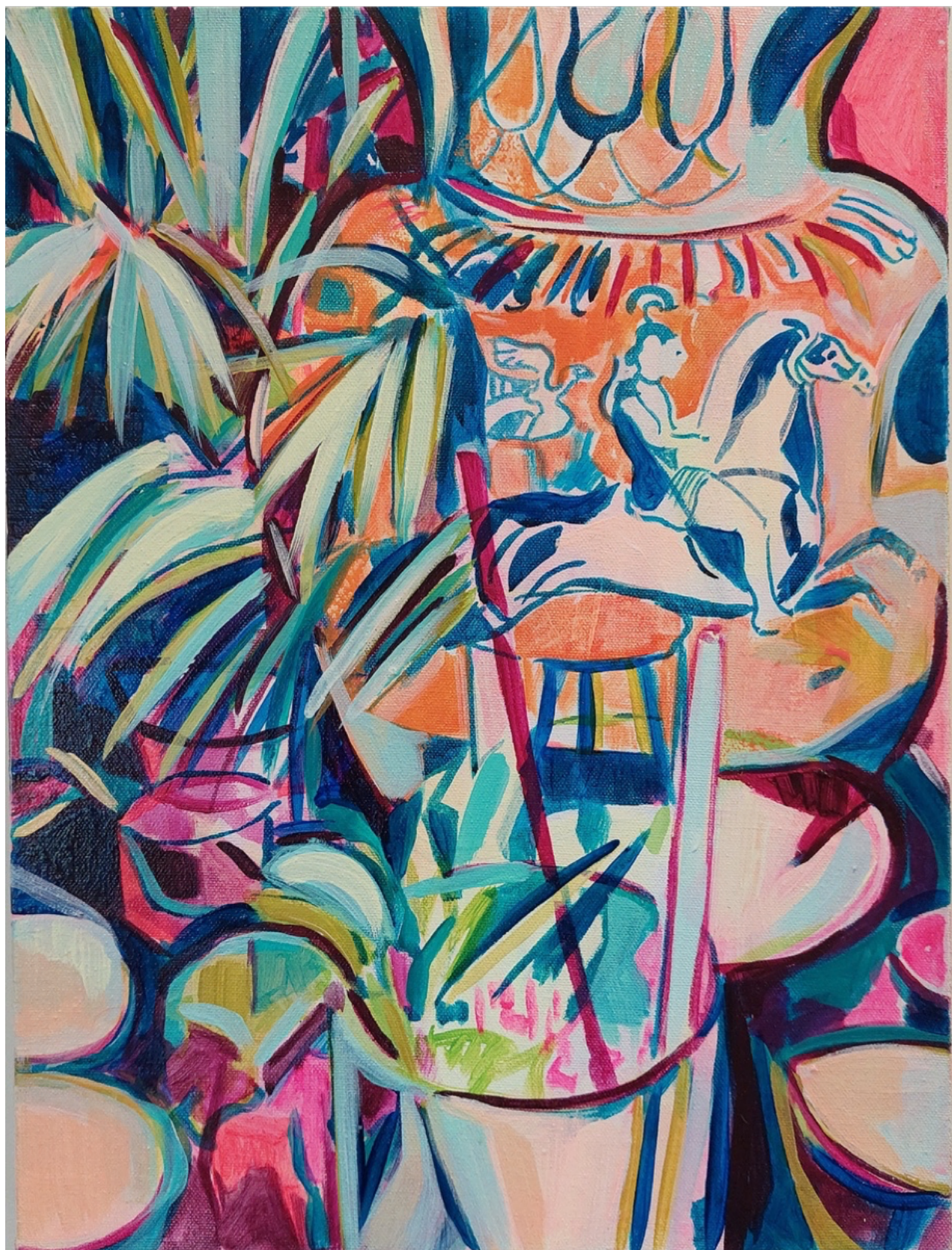
acrylic on canvas

90 x 65cm

sgd 3,800



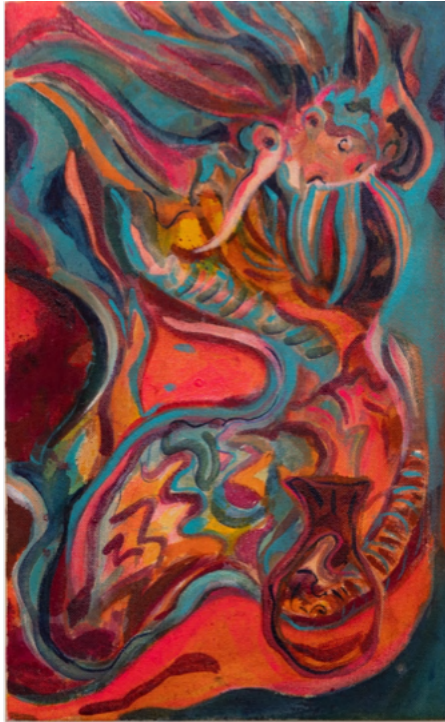
EMI AVORA
Still Life Thoughts, 2024
acrylic and oil on canvas
65x50cm
SGD 3,000



EMI AVORA
Blue rider, 2021
acrylic on canvas
42 x 29cm
sgd 2,000



EMI AVORA
Fortune teller, 2019
acrylic on canvas
42 x 29cm
sgd 2,000



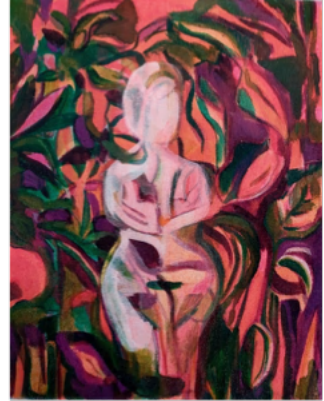
EMI AVORA
Legendary, 2024
acrylicon canvas
40 x20cm
sgd 1,200



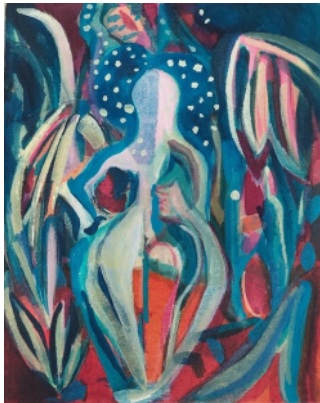
EMI AVORA
Moon Goddess, 2024
acrylic, oil and ink on canvas
40 x 25cm
sgd 1,200



EMI AVORA
Terra Nostra, 2024
acrylic, oil and ink on canvas
25 x 25cm
sgd 900



EMI AVORA
Terra Nostra ii, 2024
acrylic, oil and ink on canvas
25 x 25cm
sgd 900



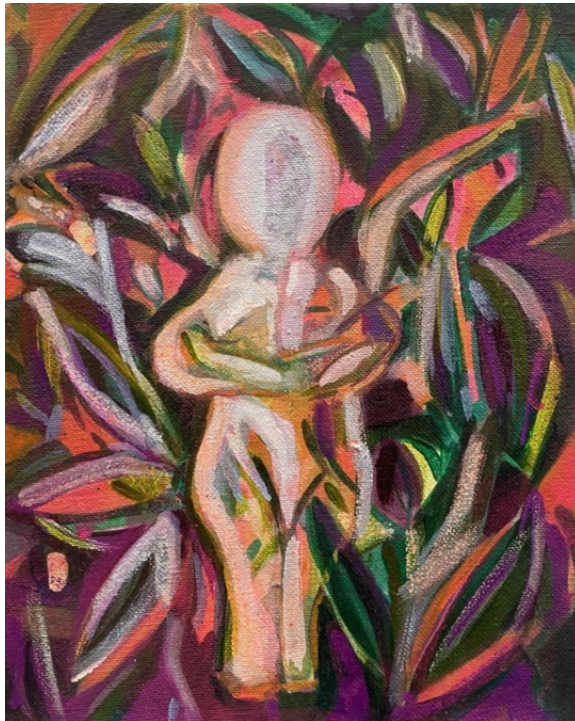
EMI AVORA
Terra Nostra iii, 2024
acrylic, oil and ink on canvas
25 x 25cm
sgd 900



EMI AVORA
Terra Nostra iv, 2024
acrylic, oil and ink on canvas
25 x 25cm
sgd 900



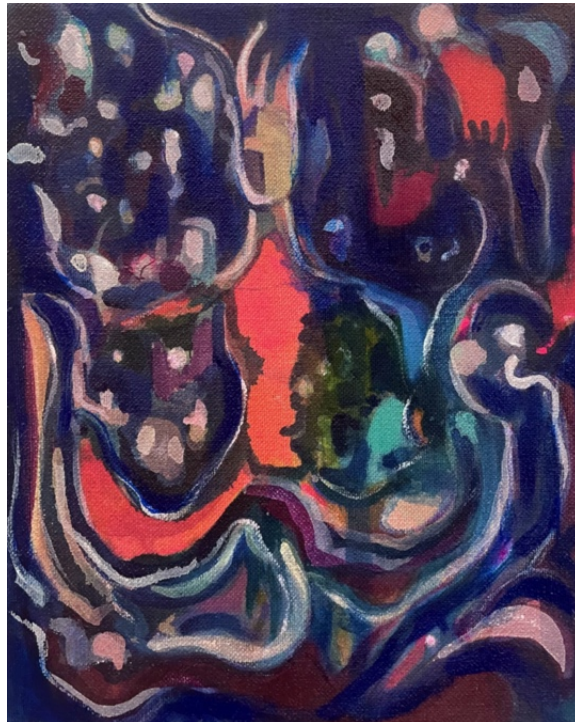
EMI AVORA
Terra Nostra v, 2024
acrylic, ink and oil on canvas
40x25cm
SGD 1,200



EMI AVORA
Terra Nostra vi, 2024
acrylic, oil and ink on canvas
25 x 25cm
SGD 900



EMI AVORA
Terra Nostra vii, 2024
acrylic, oil and ink on canvas
25 x 25cm
SGD 900



EMI AVORA
Terra Nostra viii, 2024
acrylic, oil and ink on canvas
25 x 25cm
SGD 900



EMI AVORA
Blue roots, 2024
white clay, underglaze pigment, transparent glaze
h15 x w30cm
SGD 1,200



EMI AVORA
From the Earth to the Sky, 2024
white clay, underglaze pigment, transparent glaze
h15 x w30cm
SGD 900



EMI AVORA
Storyteller, 2024
white clay, underglaze pigment, transparent glaze
h21 x w25cm
SGD 1,200



EMI AVORA
The river in between, 2024
white clay, underglaze pigment, transparent glaze
h10 x w26cm
SGD 700



EMI AVORA
Titan and Lion, 2024
white clay, underglaze pigment, transparent glaze
h20 x w21cm
SGD 900



EMI AVORA
Unlikry meeting, 2024
white clay, underglaze pigment, transparent glaze
h18 x w21cm
SGD 900



Theresa Tan, Curator and Art Historian

Theresa Tan is a member of the UK's Association for Art History and holds a Master of Arts (Asian Art Histories) from Goldsmiths, University of London.

About the artist

Emi Avora holds a Master of Arts (Fine Art) from Royal Academy Schools, London, UK, 2002, as well as a Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art) from Ruskin School of Art, Oxford University, UK. Her extensive exhibition history includes solo projects at prestigious venues such as the National Theatre of Greece in Athens, South Square Arts Centre in the UK, The Apartment Gallery in Athens, Greenberg Van Doren Gallery in New York, and Gallery Truebenbach in Cologne. Avora has also participated in numerous group shows at renowned institutions like Studio Voltaire in London, The National Museum of Contemporary Art in Athens, The Whitechapel Gallery in London, and the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki. Her work is featured in private and public collections across Europe and the USA, including The Wonderful Fund collection and the Marsh collection. Avora is a recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields award, and her work has been showcased in various publications, including ArtMaze Magazine, Create Magazine, Artist Friend, The New York Times, and Defining the Contemporary: The Whitechapel in Association with Sotheby's.

"Dreamscapes: Interwoven Myths" is the latest manifestation of Emi Avora's artistic pursuit.

ART SEASONS

info@artseasonsgallery.com
+65 91293128

Y ART 
PROJECT

info@whyartprojects.com
+65 91793103