



REMI/ROUGH
LOST COLOURS AND ALIBIS

For Timid, one of my best friends and my greatest critic...



In perhaps his most daring work Remi/Rough has detached himself away from the vernacular of his early graffiti style writing and towards the liberty of pure abstraction. In a short space of time I saw the challenge and progression of his effort. Remi felt certain that this pure abstraction could have the dynamism and recollection of his early graffiti inspired works; but how he would acquire it remained a mystery until he began to thrust himself into a new body of works that evoked the art of Franz Kline, (if he were graffiti inclined) - see Cyclops. These new works were minimalist and action painting inspired with undertones of an urban aesthetic. I knew I was witnessing a new interpretation of Kline's work and the bridging between two daring periods of art making. The painting Cult of "R" was a clear example of what Remi was trying to merge from this experience and process. One could see the appointment of two conflicting possibilities, a stark aggressive linear expression subjacent to a raging stroke of pink that forms the R, this perhaps to me was the most exciting and encouraging of his paintings because it was a clear indicator of what was to come. Remi has taken on the prospect of detachment from the art of his youth and in doing so challenged himself and others in this movement to consider the boundless creative opportunities that are universally tied to the process of making art. I view it more than just the end result of the paintings, rather how he faces the challenges of "arriving" at a new and transformative space.

The new works set the stage for the voyage, the works based on the narrative from the mythical personalities based on Homer's classic "Odyssey". And like the characters he has chosen, one can read into the parallels between the stories and process of making this art, and arrive at the decisions that will ultimately decide fate. One can see in "The King as a Beggar" wherein the rich dynamic characteristics of his familiar brush strokes break frame into the depth of blackness onto the second frame, where his buffing out of what looks like a tag implies to me that there is a struggle to release the tendencies of his past. To drop them back into

the memory of time rather than float them on top of the pictorial space. This implies to me that he is willing to push the visual iconography of graffiti into the recesses of his art to allow for new interpretations to take shape. Though not completely abandoning his origins he is clearly understanding the value of both the mental and physical act of graffiti painting and its direct correlation to modernism and abstraction.

My commentary is my own journey through his work and our dialogues; less so on my academic understanding of his subject of choice. To see an artist mature and chart a new path is a grand story in itself, for it reveals much about us and the artist and therein I suppose is why he has chosen The Odyssey.

Carlos Mare139 Rodriguez
NYC 2009

RR: We can only go so far with a graffiti painting before it has to abstract. It's all based on the letterforms, shapes... Graffiti is very structured and some people take that formula way too seriously. The design ethic itself has so much formula and that's why years ago I decided to work in black and white. Strip everything down to get back up to the original design ethic that you were basing it all on in the first place. Then you can build it back up again. These forms are ripe for abstraction. The line, the form and the function of graffiti. When I'm painting I have the shapes in my head.

TT: So less and less about sketches. It's immediate.

RR: Graffiti is a very immediate art form. People were doing whole cars in New York in less than three hours. For me I always knew that it was going to abstract, even when I was doing the most traditional graffiti. Architecture and design have always interested me and for the past 25 years those elements have always wanted to break into the paintings themselves. That confinement usually leads to some sort of explosion.

You look at a lot of people like Cy Twombly or even Hirst's early work, it's very formulaic and structured and bit by bit it's breaking down those elements. Jackson Pollock started working in a vague Cubist mode, going through to complete Jack the Dripper abstraction, it's interesting. Did you see that programme on the re-opening of the Whitechapel gallery? I showed there in 1991...

TT: They were open to graffiti?

RR: Yeah definitely. There was that huge Jackson Pollock show there in the 60's. The East End got it back then, even though it was so far out there. It's not surprising that area has been the crux of the street art intervention of the last few of years. Then slowly it moves into the Tate Modern.

TT: With Jazz Fudge, what are your immediate memories of that time?

RR: It crossed a lot of boundaries, whether it was Vadim, Swollen Members, Anti-Pop. I was working at Fatboss magazine doing the art direction and that was when we were demo-ing Reptiles tracks. We'd done the 'Liquid Playthings' 12" on an American label. I met Simon who had just started running Jazz Fudge with Vadim and he asked me to come in and do some artwork. That's when I started doing art direction for the label, and they also pushed Reptiles... we did a bunch of shows, went to Sonar with them, it was a really great breeding ground in regards to making whatever you wanted. It felt really progressive because there was no money, really small budgets but everyone still found a way to make ideas happen, and still making it really cool.

TT: It's DIY culture.

RR: It was a great grounding of how to get your ideas out – whether it was a book, a print, a tee. They had such an open door policy that immediately you were in this amazing melting pot of creativity. It did get to the point when it really should have exploded. I guess it didn't have guts in it to do it. But I learnt how easy it is to do the things you want to do.

TT: I wanted to talk about scale, London and space.

RR: London to me is a very important factor. I've lived here for 37 years non-stop. I love London. There are elements I don't like, but they are equally important to the infrastructure of the city. It's very hard not to digest those influences into the actual paintings. The whole dealing with space... it's the negative space. A lot of London is negative space. You walk through Liverpool Street and you have facades of buildings that are just huge sheets of glass. For all intensive purposes that's negative space.

I love that you can turn a corner in London and it's flat and you can see the horizon. Turn another corner and it's building blocks of concrete, metal and glass that continues to rise. You can't see anything until you're looking up at a 90 degree angle. I love that about London. Having something beautiful in an aesthetic that really isn't.

TT: And that's another important aspect in your work.

RR: Totally. There are shapes and forms in my work that are not meant to be beautiful. They are there to hold another structure together that may well be beautiful. It's about having a perfect imbalance of everything.

TT: Do pressure and deadlines get to you?

RR: It makes things really difficult. I'm struggling with that at the minute. I'm usually working on two or three paintings at a time, and you put five days of energy into a painting, then realise it has to go. Chuck it. Break it. Smash it. It's all part of the process. Painting is one of the most personal things I can imagine but as a painter you are very open to have people interpret and misinterpret your work.

TT: What's your definition of success?

RR: I've been feeling success for the past ten years. It's not a financial thing. It's not a physical thing. It's being happy and having a nice little home for me and my family. I'm happy with my lot. I don't really look for success, or excess. What is success? I don't know. All I need in my life is to be able to paint, be able to make music and have the people around me with their own ideas. I like listening to what other people are doing. I like people who are really involved, people whose passion exudes. That is what inspires me.

TT: So what about your definition of ill?!

RR: The illest thing is seeing Saul Williams on stage by himself, with absolutely no music holding an absolutely silent, captivated crowd with nothing but words. That is ill.

TT: Have you seen 'Slam' with Saul Williams and Bonz Malone?

RR: I haven't. In some ways I don't want too. I tend to not watch graffiti documentaries either. You can't condense it. I've lived through it, you don't need to see films or hear other people's spin on it. I've been part of this for 25 years. That is enough for me. Being part of something should be enough for anyone.

TT: Otherwise you're a casual viewer.

RR: And who wants casual viewers?

**A conversation with Remi/Rough and Terence Teh
London, May 9, 2009.**

From a chance meeting as teenagers in school detention, to rocking crowds on the same stages, to watching our children grow up and play together Remi/Rough and I have always been friends. In a world where friendships are predominately conducted via cyberspace, our relationship is perhaps a rarity but it comes as no surprise to me because in the twenty five years plus that I've known him he's never changed. Remi just does Remi, never follows fashion and always pushes the boundaries of what can be done within and increasingly outside the art form. A solid, colourful, dependable, thought provoking and honest friend just like the art that comes out of his pen.

Charlie Dark

Photo by Timid







It's strange but whenever people ask me how I met Remi I always have a moment when I catch myself thinking about the power of coincidence. All our lives are beholden to little moments in them that pivot you 180 degrees and that Saturday morning in Bond International was mine. Until then I'd been a photographer in search of a focus and it became quickly obvious to me that the things that Remi did and does with paint was what I'd been looking for. 10 years have passed and I still have the first artwork we collaborated on hanging on my wall, a shelf full of books that he recommended in my office and a friend and collaborator who gives me the confidence to call myself an artist.

Timid / friend and collaborator

5 days of doom
Installation by LX One, Remi/Rough, System & Timid / Agents of Change
401 Contemporary, Berlin 2009



Through the looking glass
Installation by Remi/Rough, Stormie Mills, System & Timid
London 2004







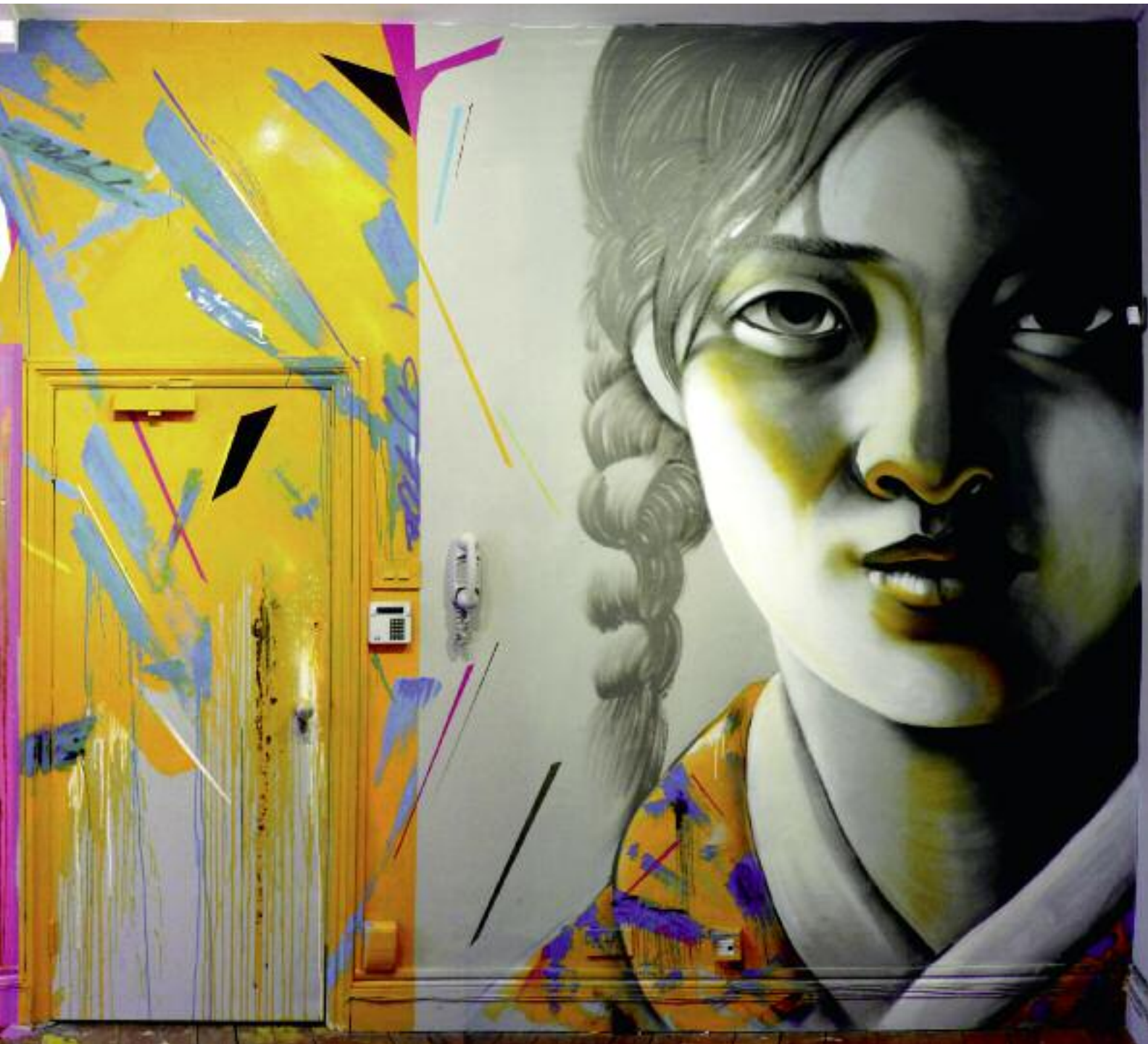


The Foundry
London 2009



Kraken Opus
Remi/Rough & System
London 2009







Prophet or profit
Part2ism, Juice 126, Remi/Rough & System
Pure Evil Gallery, London 2009



Over several years I've had the immense pleasure of collaborating with Remi Morgan on several projects, from murals to digital art. Remi's desire to create thought provoking original bodies of work and not conform to traditional standards of Graffiti have led him on a path that has no where to go but to the top. His ability to understand aesthetic chaos has been one of inspiration and dedication that always seems to come naturally and also looks as if he thought of everything right to leave in and out... and when to stop. I'm a believer in Remi's work, for inspiration, for evolution, for a departure from what has been done. Remi has simultaneously broken ground in Graffiti as an originator and made his mark on gallery walls as someone to be reckoned with... something that I know he will continue to do with a feverous desire.

Jerry Inscoc
Joker / Transcend





Derm & Rough
Aberdeen 2008





Ego
Parallel
Perfect imbalance
You're reading far too much into this
Oblivion 18
The cult of 'R'
Kill or be killed
Break / Destroy
Fall
Man of faith vs man of science



Coded Language
Peacock Arts Centre
Aberdeen 2008







Remi's a true shapeshifter. There's a saying that we have to adapt or die! Well he's adapted through every generation that's come and passed in this art for well over 20 years and his art is very much still alive. I don't think there's been a style in this culture that the Rough hasn't excelled in and if you haven't painted with him at some point in this art's history then you probably were never on the map. One of Britain's foundations without a doubt!

Part2ism



Peripheral vision
Part 2 & Rough
The Scala, London 2000



Nobody ever remembers where they buried the hatchet
Remi/Rough & Banksy
London 1999

Welcome to a world of genetic modernisation
Rough, Part 2 & Juice 126
Hull 1998

Rem's a friend from that first mad Bridlington moment with Lokiss, to my first visit to the Big Smoke. I could have been anybody, but as time has told we're friends. We have broken bread and a few wall together, seen our art grow and change, he's gone from Graff's young brother to a 'this is who I am' mature artist, with a strong visual history but the art is only part of who he is, rhythm and lyrics, Reptiles style. I know he's there, if I need him. He's seen me at my best and worst, and he's still my friend. Maybe I'll be writing something like this in 20 years, I don't think much will have changed.
One love

Juice 126 / artist, musician and friend







I always like painting with Rem. It's like he was born to be a graffiti artist... His pieces come straight from the heart with unfaltering purpose, creative energy and a style so refined it could be a portrait of his soul.

Steve More, 1Mor / friend and collaborator



Remi is the bastard son of Robert Motherwell and Franz Kline... With two fathers like that it's obvious he knows where art is coming from, is now, and is going in the future... I'm looking forward to seeing where his art goes in the future... probably a residence on Mars or Jupiter perhaps or even a galaxy far, far from here...

Pure Evil / Artist and accidental gallerist

Custom guitar for ABC Trust Charity Auction
London 2009

Handwritten graffiti in purple and white on a dark surface.

Vertical graffiti on the left wall, including the letters 'X' and 'N'.



Small graffiti text below the face.

GARD/ RANK ST/INT...





Remi/Rough and I have been friends for years. I feel like we grew up together and in many ways we did, kind of System, Remi and myself, three brothers. I first met Remi at a painting jam in Worcester in 1989. System was painting and we were both there to support him, it was the formative time (before Ikonoklast), after the painting was done there was a group forum on use of the word; 'graffiti'. Did we accept that terminology? Should we label ourselves otherwise? Stuff I really care less about now than anything, but back then I was all about it. Remi's and my views differed, but I respected the fact that he had an opinion and wasn't afraid to speak up about it. I've always admired that quality, to stand up and be counted even in the face of adversity, it's something I've done, Remi's done, and not always to our advantage in the immediate term, however it's taken use further than the

nay-sayers and diss-believers so it's worked out well, it's the courage of conviction thing, Remi's got it in bucket loads. Interestingly for me it's something I see repeatedly in his work, it's a repetition of line and rhythm, almost like a physical source of meditation, the application of a mantra to a surface.

At this time in our lives Remi and I still talk often, still paint, still critique each others work and most importantly remind each other of why we started doing what we do, different approaches, same courage of line and conviction.

Stormie Mills



GISEM

Nothing rhymes with orange
System, Remi/Rough and Timid
London 2009



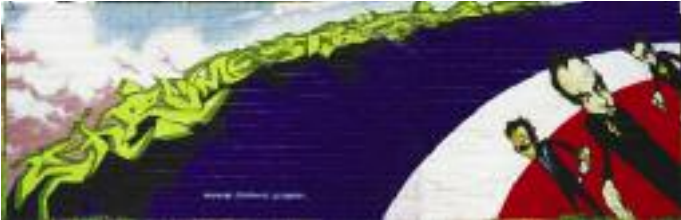


Rough FTC / Paris 1993
Rough / London 1990



Rough / Paris 1993

Rough, Shrum & Stormie / Perth 2001
Rough, Ogr & Cevys / London 2003
The graphikal aquarium by Rough & Stylo / London 1991
Rough / London 1991



Rough, Shrum & Stormie / Perth 2001
Rough, Chu & Partzism / London 2008
Rough / Barcelona 2004







Repetition, Rhythm and Remi/Rough
Nancy Victor Gallery 2007



'R' with red star
Medusa
Activator cowboy
'R' with pink splash
Twice the first time
Portrait of Saul Bass
Olympic 72
How high can you fly?
Early twenty first century post modern reductionism
Blueprint
Circle
'O'
Dark Horizon
Le Corbusier makes honey





All cities survive because of lightning bolts that shoot up from the underground. That's Remi, he has lightning bolts everywhere, walls, canvas, shell toes, but not obnoxious, or if obnoxious always well done, they say something, in addition to his name they call on all streets and give subtle praise to all of us walking them, living them.

Mike Ladd



FRAMOUGHE (Do not test...)
Remi/Rough & Frame
Chelmsford 2006







I was introduced to Rough back when he was a member of VOP. They had a unique style of their own and pulled off some great productions together taking inspiration from Andy Warhol to Dali. Rough's obvious influence of comics worked into his characters and pieces and wasn't without a sense of humour.

Like all of us he lived and breathed graffiti. His big personality and confidence in his work came across as super cocky but once you saw past that, he was just someone who loved to paint, always looking to hook up and paint with anyone who came to visit London. I especially remember the abandoned post office that was like a VOP art gallery.

When he joined us in the 'Ikonoklast Movement', I then got to know Remi. Every one of us had a completely different style and this dynamic helped inspire one another. It was all about painting without the bullshit. I was in charge of updating the crew website and was constantly updating the Rough gallery as he racked up piece after piece.

Working in magazines his style became more influenced by graphic design. While everyone else was getting onto the 3D, his lettering became even more unique and instantly recognizable, with a great eye for colour and negative space, his letterforms became more structured and abstract. And after over 20 years of evolution I think his new work is a natural progression. More of a representation of the energy he puts into his work. Letters are now fragments and the dynamic fill-ins have taken over.

He's always been a good self promoter but not without the history to back it up. Even then he is still keen to work with other artists. The exhibitions he's put together for the Nancy Victor Gallery can attest to that. I feel honoured to be included in a list of people he is also happy to represent and promote.

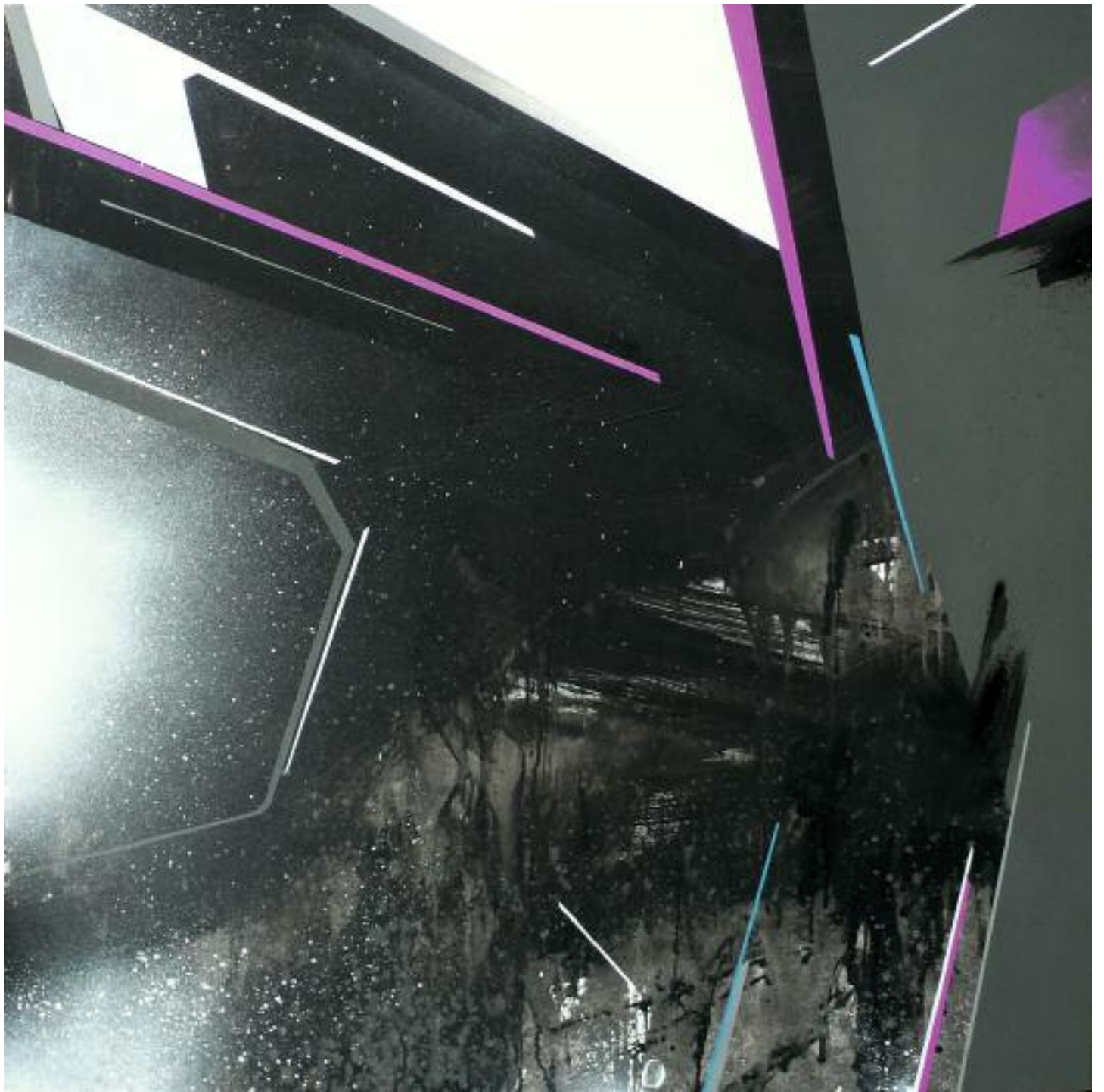
It was years ago when he came to visit me in Wales that I knew we worked well together. In just one day we knocked up a huge wall. That became the level of energy to bring to all our productions. He knows how to get the job done. Doing collaborations now are damn easy. Have something to eat, work out our piece, then enjoy the rest of the day painting, no problem. As I like an easy life, it's always a pleasure working with Remi. His solo show is a definite landmark in the evolution of his work and I look forward to seeing where the next step will take him.



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Beyond the seas
25cm x 25cm
2008

No logo
100cm x 100cm
2008









Son of fall
80cm x 80cm
2009

Callarama gala
126cm x 127cm
2008

The antagonist
140.5cm x 170cm
2008





Museum of fine art
Remi/Rough & System
Santander 2009



LOST COLORS & ALIBIS

So spoke Athene, and ashy terror seized on them all; in their dismay the weapons flew from their hands and dropped on the ground as the goddess sent forth her voice. They began to turn back towards the city, eager to save their lives. But Odysseus, with a terrible cry, gathered himself and swooped upon them like an eagle from high in air. Then Zeus sent a thunderbolt from heaven. Reeking, it fell at his daughter's feet, and the goddess of gleaming eyes spoke to the King: 'Son of Laertes, Odysseus of many subtleties, now make an end, now halt the strife of inexorable war, lest Zeus the Thunderer should be angry with you.' So Athene spoke, and with joyful heart the King obeyed. Then a solemn covenant was made between those who had been at enmity. The contriver of it had the form and the voice of Mentor now, but this was no other than Athene, daughter of Zeus who holds the aegis.

Extract from: 'The Odyssey' by Homer translated by Walter Shewring

This collection of paintings are further developments into line, shape and form. A shape has to reach a point in it's existence where it has to abstract. As a painter of letters, I followed a set of rules. These paintings reflect my movement away from formula and traditions, and now I can almost taste the freedom...

Remi/Rough

Ulysses

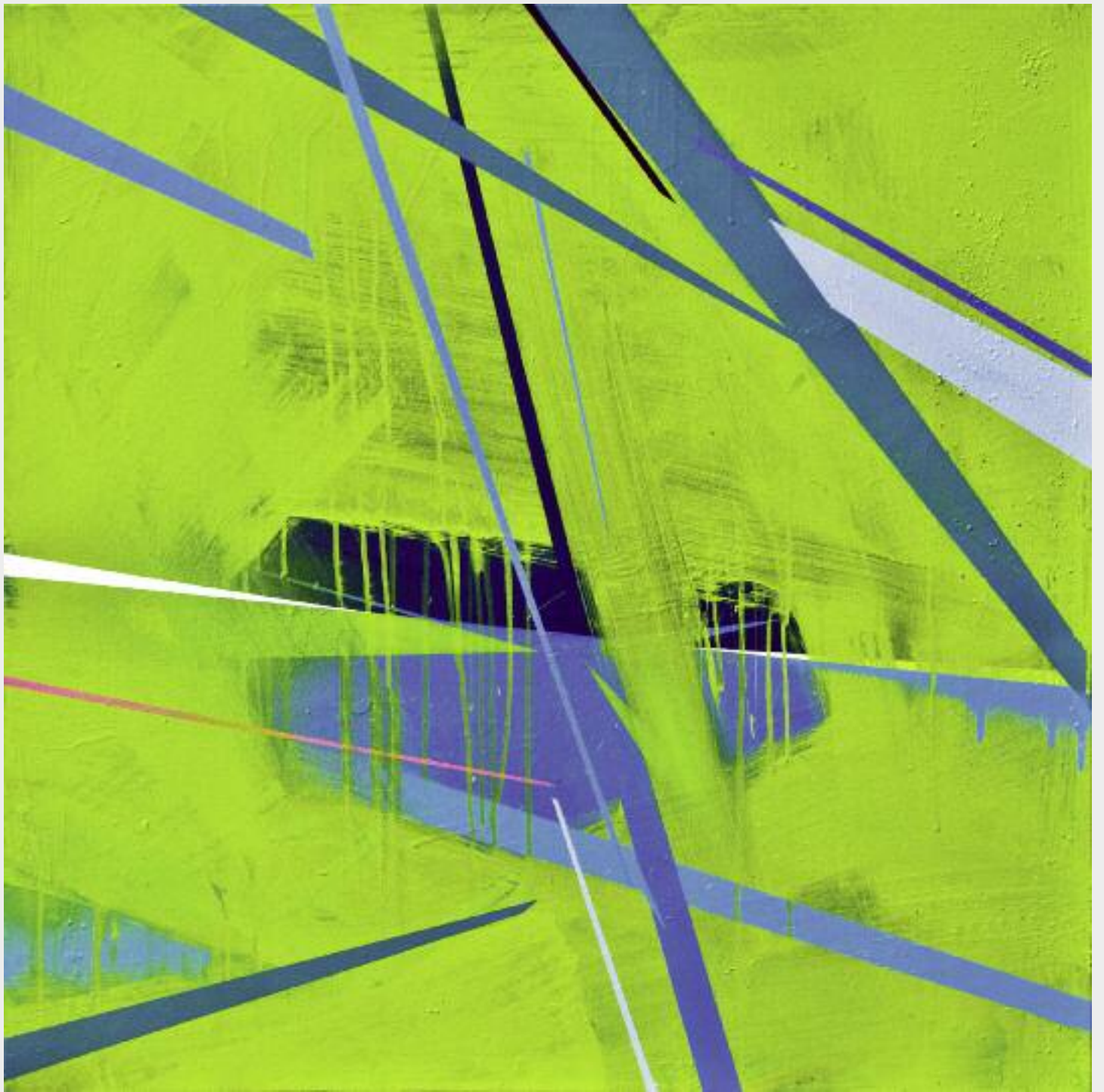
Matt emulsion and spray paint on canvas

126cm x 127cm



Linear expansion
Spray paint on canvas
60cm x 60cm





Persephone
Matt emulsion and spray paint on canvas
76.5cm x 76.5cm



Cyclops
Matt emulsion and spray paint on canvas
126cm x 127cm

Telemachus

Matt emulsion and spray paint on canvas

126cm x 127cm

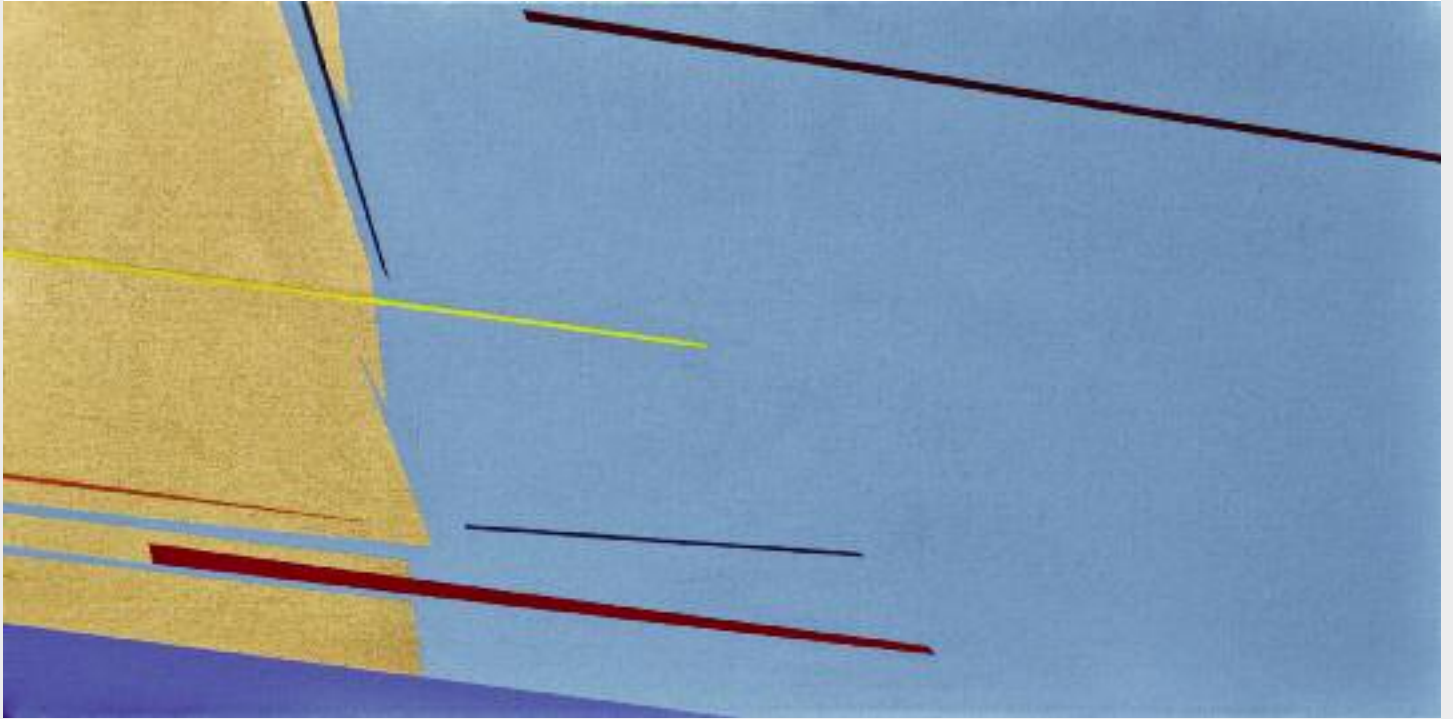


The gates of Ithaca
Spray paint on canvas
60cm x 60cm





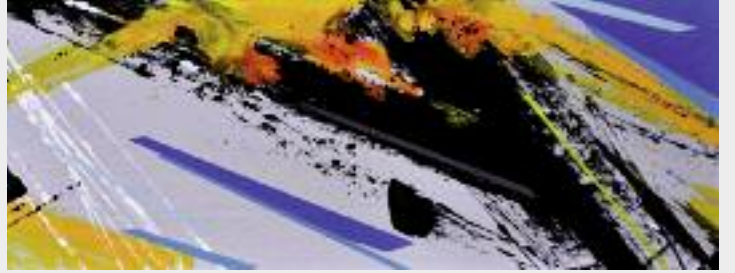
Poseidon's gate
Spray paint on canvas
41cm x 143cm



Dawn comes early with rosy fingers
Spray paint on canvas
50cm x 100cm



Orion
Spray paint on canvas
60cm x 60cm



Earth shaker
Gloss, matt emulsion and spray paint
30cm x 160cm

Hyperion

Matt emulsion and spray paint on canvas

165cm x 165cm



Erebus
Matt emulsion on canvas
120cm x 200cm



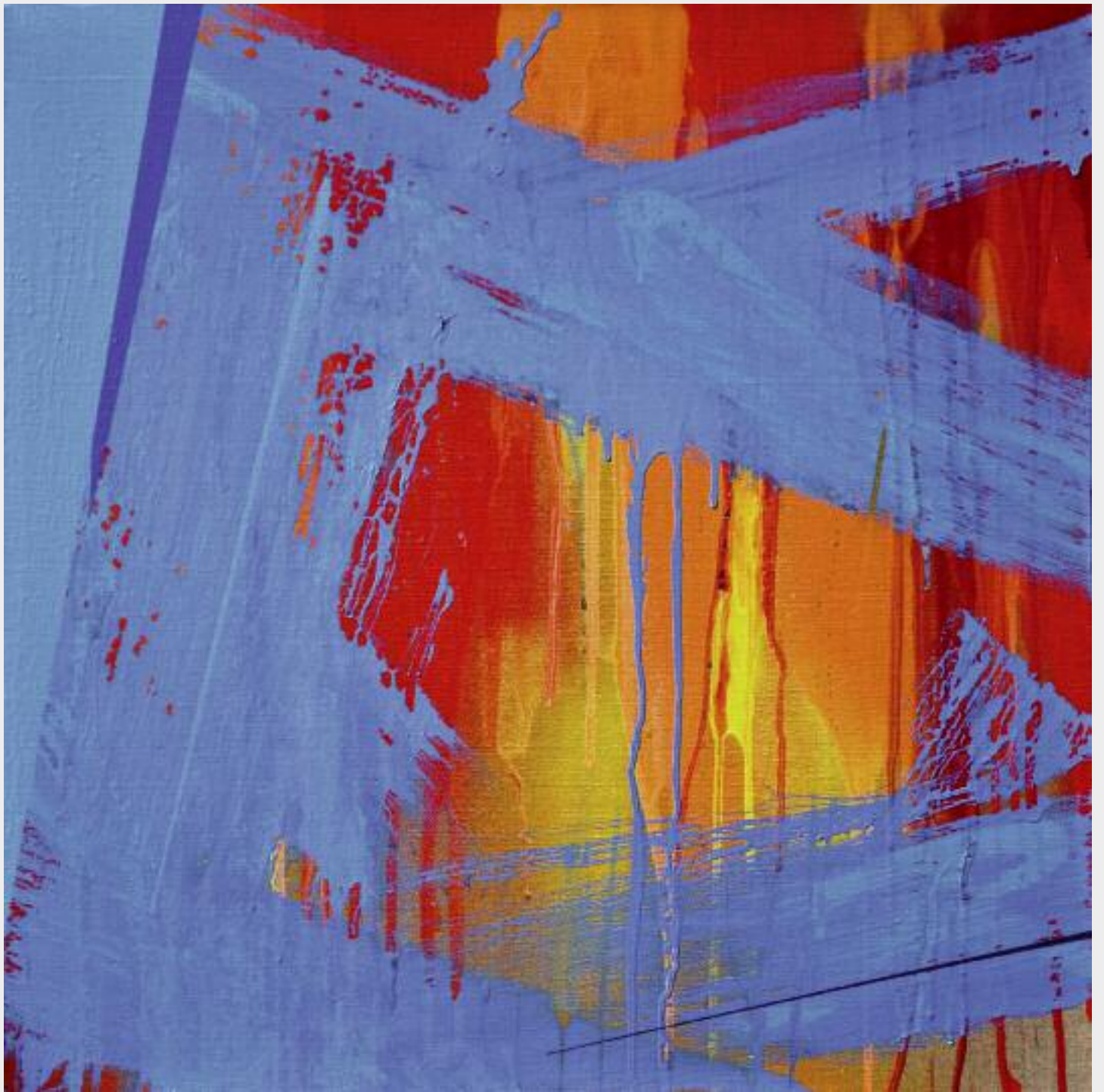
The golden fleece
Matt emulsion and spray paint on canvas
82cm x 142cm





The King as a beggar
gloss, matt emulsion and spray paint on canvas
30cm x 198cm







Subtle Odysseus

Matt emulsion and spray paint on canvas
137cm x 137cm

Circe

Matt emulsion and spray paint on canvas
60cm x 60cm

Acropolis

Spray paint on canvas
30cm x 30cm

Apollo
Spray paint on canvas
30cm x 30cm





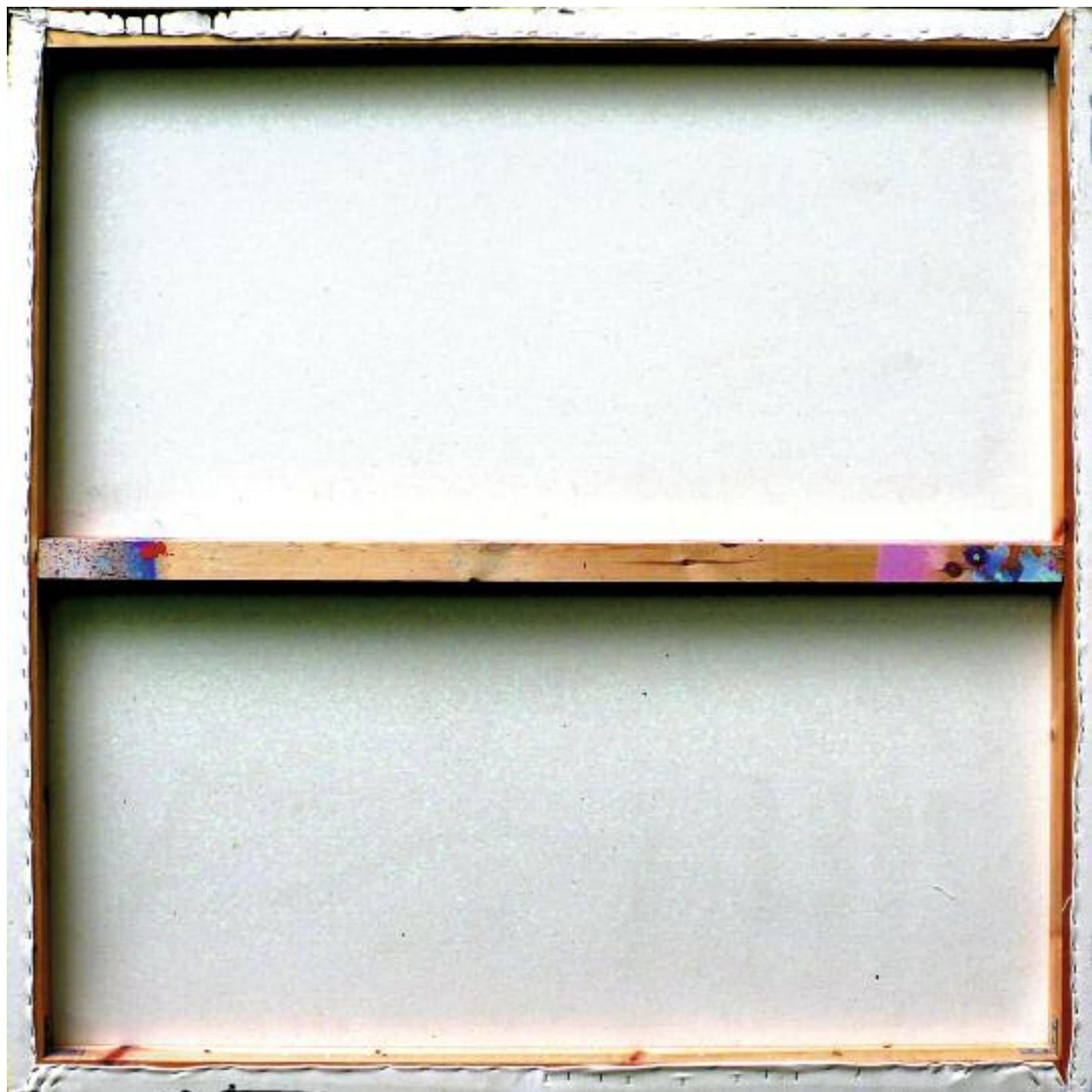
Coliseum
Spray paint on canvas
30cm x 30cm



Athene
Spray paint on canvas
30cm x 30cm







EXHIBITIONS

Solo /

06.09	-	Lost colours and alibis. Urban Angel Gallery. London
10.08	-	Eighteen. Limited Press Gallery. Southampton
09.08	-	Coded Language. Peacock Visual Arts. Aberdeen
11.07	-	Repetition, Rhythm & Remi/Rough. Nancy Victor Gallery. London
10.07	-	Remi/Rough does Paris. RZO Store. Paris
01.07	-	RigidMouth too. Nancy Victor Gallery. London
08.05	-	Unsettled Content. Best. London
10.01	-	Rigidmouth. Chamber of Pop Culture. London
04.01	-	Subcultural Cousins. Size?. London
03.01	-	The Invisible. The Cobden Club. London
03.00	-	Mike Ladd album launch. The Scala. London
02.93	-	Rough Edge. The Village Cafe Gallery. London

Group /

06.09	-	City 4 Sale. RZO Store. Strasbourg
05.09	-	Graffiti. Museum of fine art. Santander
04.09	-	A Forca Da Rua. The Print Space. London
04.09	-	The Foundry show. The Foundry. London
04.09	-	April Fools. London
02.09	-	XXI. Urban Angel Gallery. London
02.09	-	Prophet or profit. Pure Evil Gallery. London
01.09	-	5 days of doom. 401 Contemporary. Berlin
12.08	-	Mutate Britain. Cordy House. London
12.08	-	2. Urban Angel Gallery. London
10.08	-	Bridge Art Fair. Berlin
08.08	-	Cans 2. Leake Street Tunnel. London
02.08	-	Prologue. Nancy Victor Gallery. London
06.08	-	Re-GNR8. C.A.U.E. Strasbourg
02.08	-	Prologue >. Nancy Victor Gallery. London
11.06	-	Self Titled. The Autopsy Gallery. Melbourne
05.05	-	Project XI. Seven Dials. London
04.05	-	Future Fantasy. COR + Interlubke. Strasbourg
10.04	-	Through The Looking Glass. London
08.03	-	Kunst Im Atrium. Hamburg
07.02	-	Third. Exposure. London
04.02	-	Rigidmouth Book launch. Public Life. London
09.01	-	Overboard / Carhartt. Charterhouse. London
02.01	-	Aerotomechanix. Jacksue Gallery. Perth
11.00	-	Graffiti Bastards 03. Custard Factory. Birmingham
05.98	-	Seven Deadly Venoms. Custard Factory. Birmingham
06.97	-	Metamorphosis. Blueprint Gallery. Birmingham
08.96	-	Graffiti Bastards 01. Custard Factory. Birmingham
07.96	-	Fosters Ice Street Art. Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
05.94	-	400ml. Blueprint Gallery. Birmingham
05.93	-	Pressurepaint. Blueprint Gallery. Birmingham
02.93	-	Infocus. NEC. Birmingham
08.92	-	The Hideaway Festival. The Hideaway. York
05.92	-	Group show. Blueprint Gallery. Birmingham
03.92	-	Icons. Fairfield Hall. Croydon
01.92	-	Group show. Whitechapel Art Gallery. London
10.91	-	Saint Denis University. Paris
04.91	-	Group show. Blueprint Gallery. Birmingham
05.90	-	The Street Years. Wolverhampton Art Gallery. Wolverhampton
07.89	-	Class of 89. Worcester
07.87	-	Groupshow. Bedford Hill Art Gallery. London







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Terence Teh

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