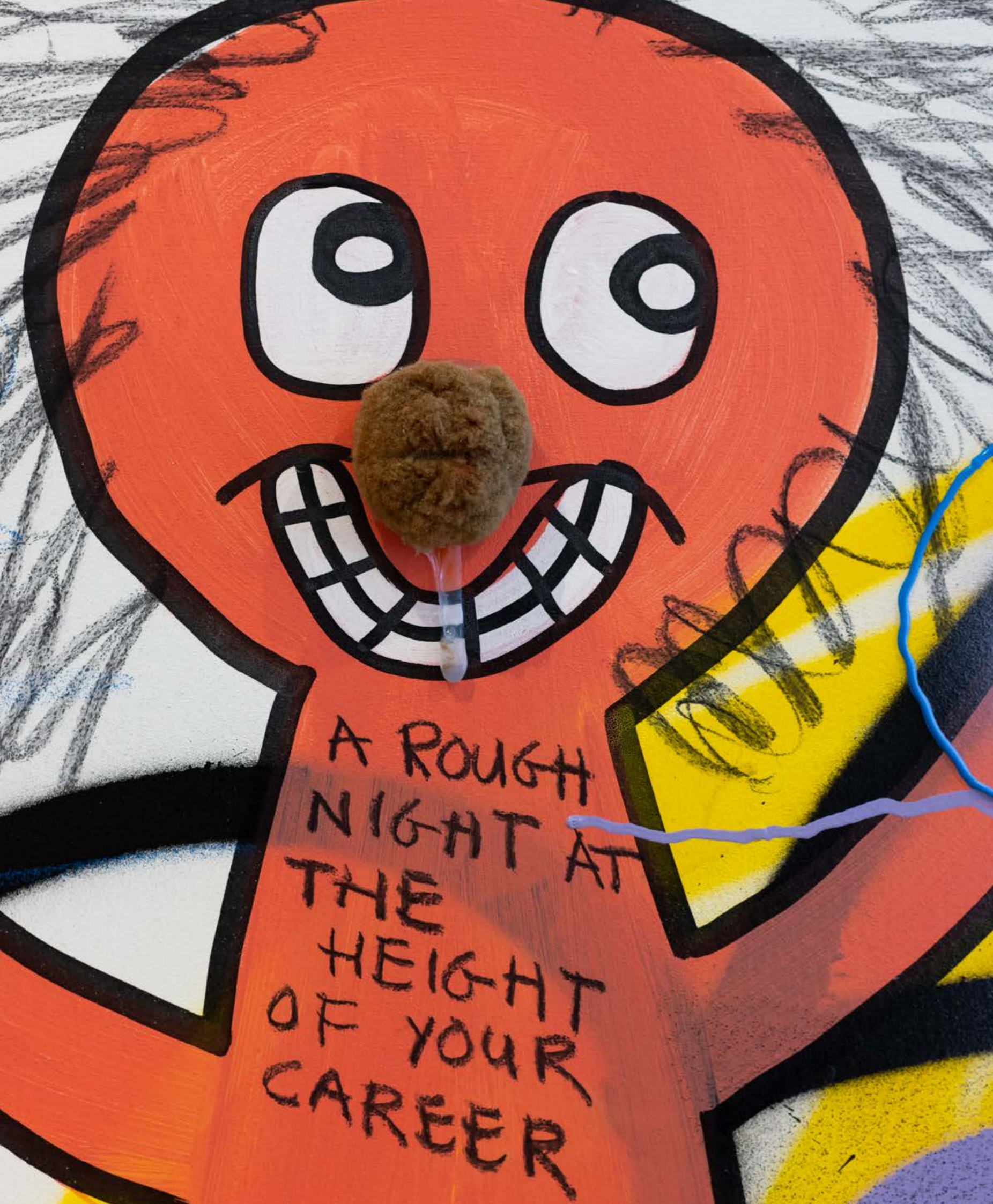


FINDING MIKEY

A SOLO SHOW BY JOI MURUGAVELL

JOI MURUGAVELL
STUDIO.SYDNEY





The first thing you need to know about Joi Murugavell is that she doesn't like putting her work into words, because today's truth becomes tomorrow's lies. So just remember that what you read below is only one perspective, and probably isn't true.

The exhibition's title, ***Finding Mikey***, is a reference to Joi's relationship with Mikey, who scans and documents her paintings. Over time Joi began leaving hidden messages and clues in the paintings specifically for Mikey to find. Consistent throughout her body of work, every inch of these new paintings beg examination for a hidden message or symbol. Only Mikey knows which tidbits were left specifically for him.

However, as a viewer you will never be able to tell which parts of the painting are for Mikey, or which are nods to the network of people in her life, or coded for someone to find as in a treasure hunt. Each quote, toon, toy and shape is a potential clue, though there is no hierarchy among the colorful din.

We are allowed to love each brush stroke, pom-pom, and pun equally. The words, toys, and cartoon symbols often land like an inside joke you have been let in on, a message hidden within the painting hoping to be found and to resonate. In this we locate the voice of Joi's paintings—not their universality but their specificity. In their playfulness they speak to anyone. But as a viewer standing before it, a Joi Murugavel painting speaks to you. No one is excluded from the fun.

Presented by Sarah Birtles Art, Sydney, Australia



Mikey Metcalf giving a speech on opening night

Photograph by Jodie Barker

MIKEY'S OPENING NIGHT SPEECH

"Hi, my name is Mikey. I've been asked by Joi to give a short speech tonight for the opening of the exhibition 'Finding Mikey'. What is 'Finding Mikey'? In a very literal sense it's about discovering 'Mikey' messages within these canvases. On a social level it's a medium for two friends to connect and amuse themselves born out of lockdown, during a time of forbidden face-to-face gatherings.

The objects on the plinths show little gifts from Joi to me for successfully finding a message within a canvas. Why all these messages to me? I am a digital documenter, and I am very privileged to have scanned and inspected every inch of these canvases - I guess the opportunity for Joi to leave messages for myself and others was too tempting.

Some of the messages have a story - such as 'Mikey's Fluff Parlour'. Some are little illustrations. Some are hidden. Many poke fun at me. Never in my life would I think I would become an artist's muse. Thank you Joi.

Thank you all for your time and I hope these canvases entertain you as much as they've entertained me"

- Mikey Metcalf 2022









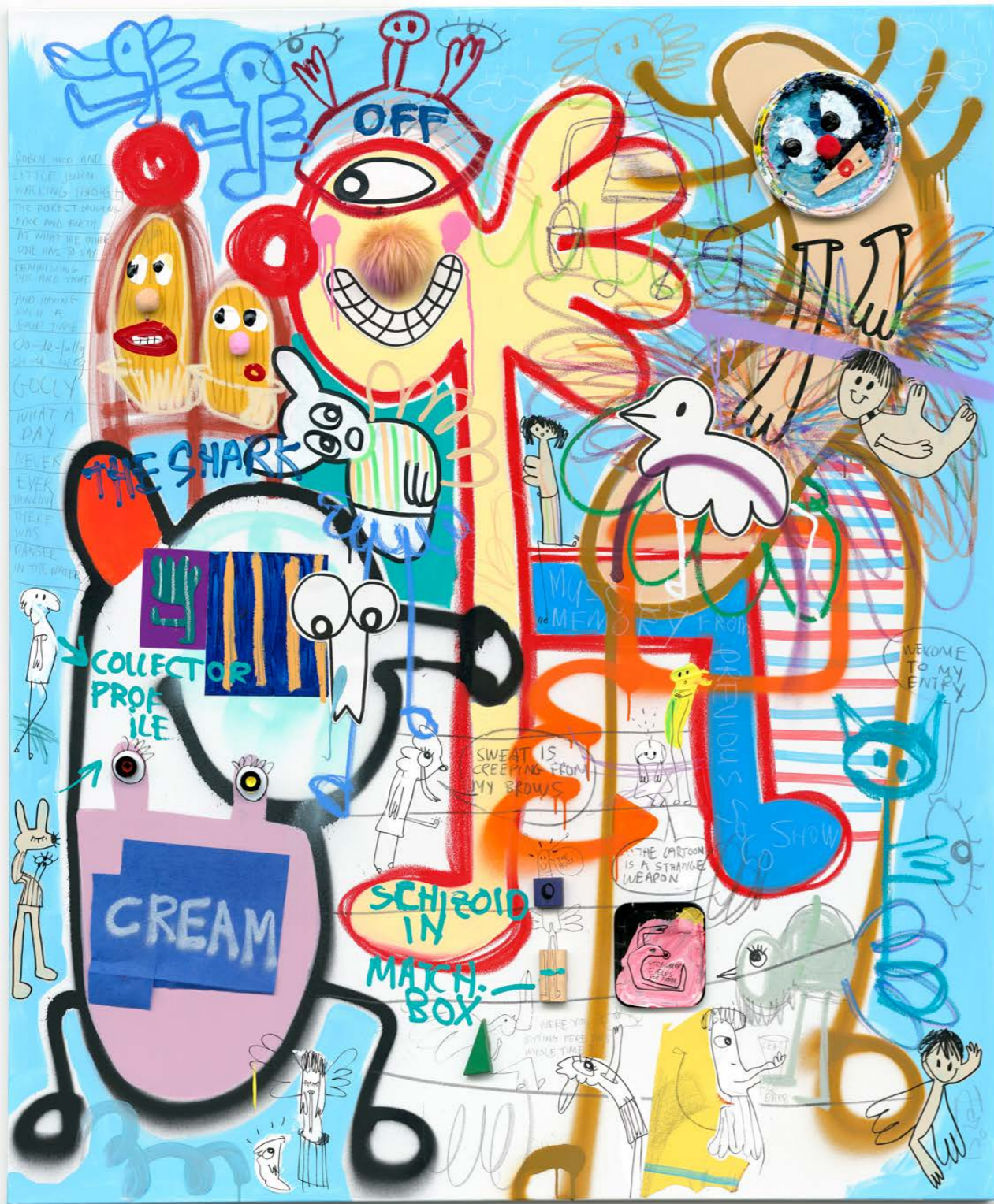
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Collector Profile, 2021

Acrylic, oil stick, wax crayon, spray paint, charcoal, collage on canvas
183x152cm



Studio Notes (the great defogger), 2021

Acrylic, oil stick, wax crayon, spray paint, charcoal, collage on canvas
183x152cm





Quizas, Quizas, Quizas, 2022

Acrylic, oil stick, wax crayon, spray paint, charcoal, collage on canvas
183x152cm



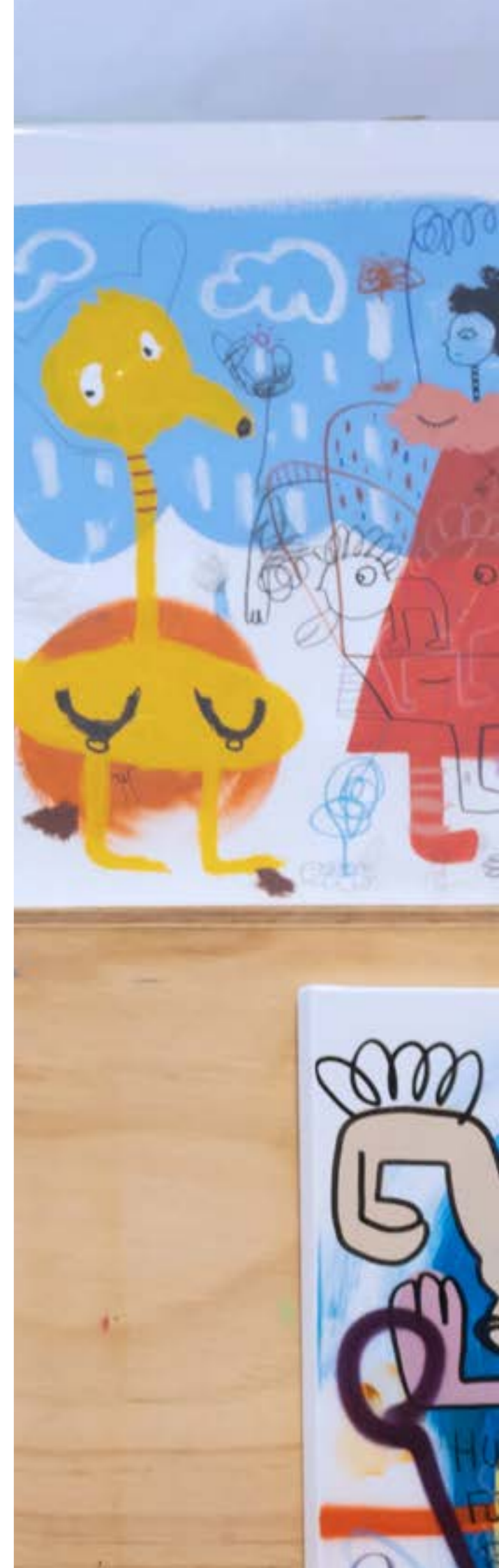
Pharmaceutical Regiment, 2022

Acrylic, oil stick, wax crayon, spray paint, charcoal, collage on canvas
183x152cm





The Toys deal with the artist's evolution as a dreamer. Joi was one of those children who would create epic worlds in her imagination. First with her toys as characters, then in vivid daydreams, which went on by her own admission 'way too long'. One night alone in her studio, Joi realised that the presence of her pictures felt comfortable, just like the characters she'd dreamed up as a kid. Her pictures were simply a new expression of the friends who inhabit her inner world.





Eat, Ink and Die, 2022
Acrylic, charcoal, collage on canvas
50x40cm



Art Pedestal (Issues & Opportunities), 2022
Acrylic, marker, felt, collage on canvas
50x40cm



Rehearsed Tension (siblings) 2022
Acrylic, graphite, collage on canvas
50x40cm



Donkey Is As Donkey Does, 2021
Acrylic, ink, collage on canvas
50x40cm



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OF LOOKING





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Photography by Jodie Barker
Scanning and documentation by Standish & Co
Words by Shannon Bell and Katherine Lauricella



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