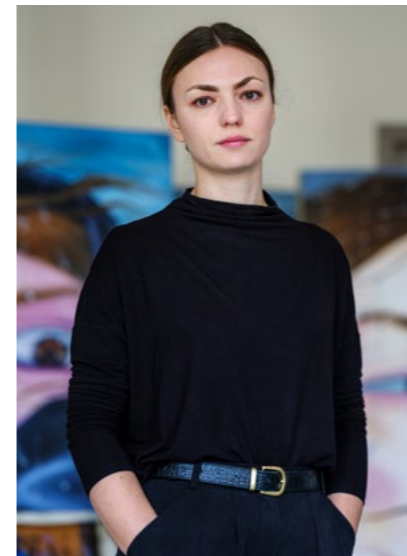


KAROLINA JABŁOŃSKA
WHICH WAY THE WIND IS BLOWING
START Museum, Shanghai
August 22 – September 27, 2025



Ether Schipper

Karolina Jabłońska



Karolina Jabłońska, born 1991 in Niedomice. Lives and works in Kraków.

Jabłońska studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków (2010-2015). Residencies and fellowships include Scholarship in Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová v Praze UMPRUM (2014-2015), LIA Programme Residency, Spinnerei Leipzig (2018), Fern Residency, Brussels (2021), Fores Project Residency, London (2022).

Deeply felt and keenly observed, Karolina Jabłońska's paintings often depict everyday situations that capture the awkwardness of certain common activities. As the artist has put it, "the paintings come from small sensory and emotional impressions." Yet, the personal is also political: metaphors for emotional states, inherent in these paintings are references to the role of women, the existential threat to their bodies and restrictions imposed by political realities.

Monumental depictions of faces – a striking portrayal of her own features that has come to function as a stand-in for the artist but also for a more generalized alter ego – suggest strong emotions but also evoke a visceral response in the viewer. Pairing dramatically distorted points of view and expressive color, the works have an immediacy that is leavened by art historical painterly references and a distinct dry wit.

Selected solo exhibitions include: **Which Way the Wind is Blowing**, START Museum, Shanghai (2025); **Sleeping and Waking**, Krupa Art Foundation, Wrocław (2025); **Karolina Jabłońska. Preserves. Works from 2023-2024**, State Gallery of Art, Sopot (2024); **How to be invisible**, Esther Schipper, Berlin (2024); **Dinner**, Piana Gallery Foundation, Kraków (2023); **No rest for the weary**, Steve Turner Gallery, Los Angeles (2021); **Dziewczyna czy tygrys / Girl or tiger** BWA Gallery, Gorzów Wielkopolski (2017).

Institutional group exhibitions include: **Global Fascisms**, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2025); **The Impermanent**, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2025); **who's afraid of cartoony figuration?**, Dallas Contemporary, Dallas (2024); **Mainly for Women**, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah (2021); **Sensation: Closer to the people**, Kunstverein Schattendorf (2019); **Paint also known as Blood**, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2019).

Institutional exhibitions as part of the artist group Potencja include **Potencja – Humoral Theory: Quattro Stagioni**, Galeria Bielska BWA, Bielsko-Biała (2022); **Potencja – Humoral Theory**, BWA Zielona Góra (2021).

Her work is held in the following collections: BY ART MATTERS, Hangzhou; Grażyna Kulczyk Collection, Mbank Collection, Warsaw; START Museum, Shanghai; Pond Society, Shanghai; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig (MdbK); National Museum, Gdańsk; The ING Polish Art Foundation and the Steffen Hildebrand Collection/G2 Kunsthalle, Leipzig.

Photo: © Sun Tianchen

Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, Which Way the Wind Is Blowing, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)

EXHIBITION TEXT

When conceiving her new exhibition, **Which Way the Wind Is Blowing**, Karolina Jabłońska's had an image in mind from a novel by American writer Ottessa Moshfegh. In the novel "Death in Her Hands", a woman walking her dog in the woods finds a mysterious note, which sets off a series of reminiscences and events. Jabłońska adopts the narrative device of the note, transforming it into a recurring iconographic motif in this series of paintings. The mysterious shreds of papers in her paintings include both writing and drawings, often blurred by rain or dissolving in puddles of water. Jabłońska appears in some of the paintings, her characteristic likeness with large eyes, expressive eyebrows, and thick brown hair a major theme throughout her work. She returns the spectator's gaze. Sometimes, only her wide-open eyes remain visible on the damp, floating drawings.

The group of paintings creates a visceral impression of what it feels like to be in a wet, windswept landscape. However, the elements have ambivalent connotations. In one painting, a hand tenderly reaches into the rain, and the water becomes a life-giving force. In others, the wild landscape suggests coldness as rain and wind tousle someone's hair and tear the soaked drawings into pieces. Here, each snippet of torn paper represents the breakdown of meaning and the beginning of a possible story—a point of departure for the imagination to construct a new plot and reinvent one's story from the shredded remnants of past identities.

The sensation of being immersed in water and wind is given form in the paintings and extended into the exhibition space. The artist has designed the exhibition architecture to bring in and reflect natural elements such as wind, water and clouds. On the floor, she installs organically shaped mirrored foil to suggest puddles, and around the paintings, a series of sheer blue-grey curtains recall dense sheets of rainfall. The open-frame design allows our view to wander from one painting to the next, enabling us to reassemble the story's multiple parts and experience its ever-shifting meaning, much like life itself.

The fragments of writing and drawing recall Jabłońska's autofictional representations of her sketchbooks and paintings. By incorporating her own self-portrait and citing herself in the ripped remains of her sketches, images depicting her alter ego become a nuanced example of meta-painting, works that draw attention to their own mode of conception and fictitiousness.



Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, **Which Way the Wind Is Blowing**, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)



Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, **Which Way the Wind Is Blowing**, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)



Karolina Jabłońska, **Flying sketches**, 2025, oil on canvas, diptych, 250 x 190 cm (98 3/8 x 74 3/4 in) each, 250 x 380 cm (98 3/8 x 149 5/8 in) (overall) (KJ 080)

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Detail: Karolina Jabłońska, **Flying sketches**, 2025, oil on canvas, diptych, 250 x 190 cm (98 3/8 x 74 3/4 in) each, 250 x 380 cm (98 3/8 x 149 5/8 in) (overall) (KJ 080)



Detail: Karolina Jabłońska, **Flying sketches**, 2025, oil on canvas, diptych, 250 x 190 cm (98 3/8 x 74 3/4 in) each, 250 x 380 cm (98 3/8 x 149 5/8 in) (overall) (KJ 080)



Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, *Which Way the Wind Is Blowing*, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)

CATCHING A PIECE OF PAPER, 2025

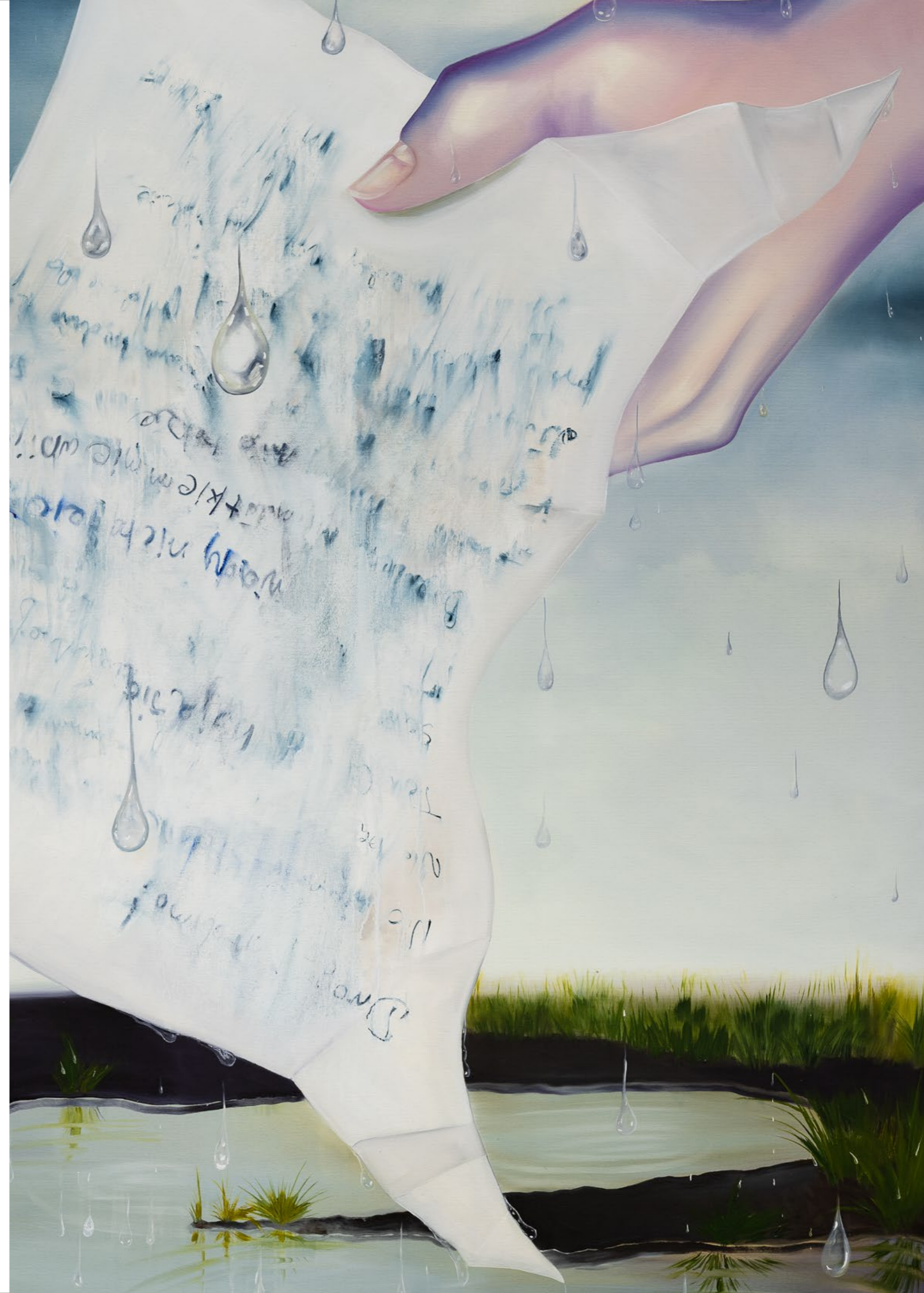
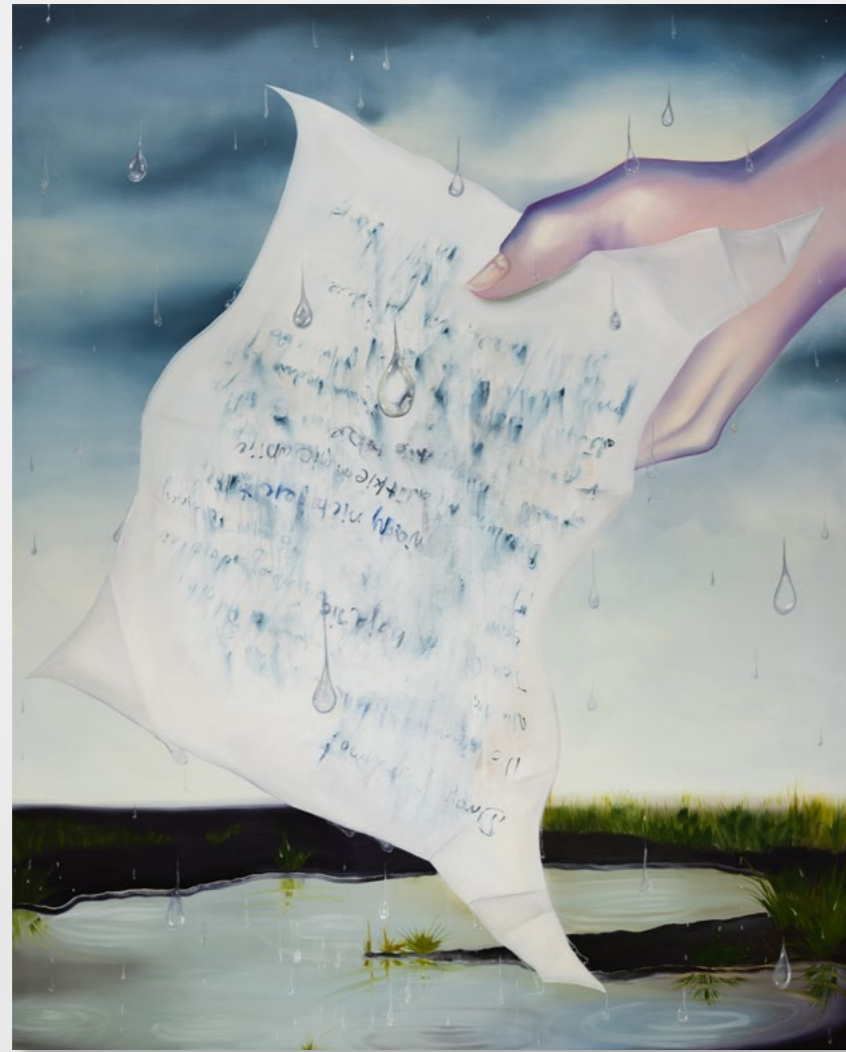


Karolina Jabłońska, **Catching a piece of paper**, 2025, oil on canvas, 160 x 130 cm (63 x 51 1/8 in) (KJ 095)

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THE LETTER FROM THE FORTUNE-TELLER, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **The letter from the fortune-teller**, 2025, oil on canvas, 200 x 160 cm (78 3/4 x 63 in) (KJ 098)

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Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, **Which Way the Wind Is Blowing**, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)

RAINDROPS, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **Raindrops**, 2025, oil on canvas, 160 x 130 cm (63 x 51 1/8 in) (KJ 091)

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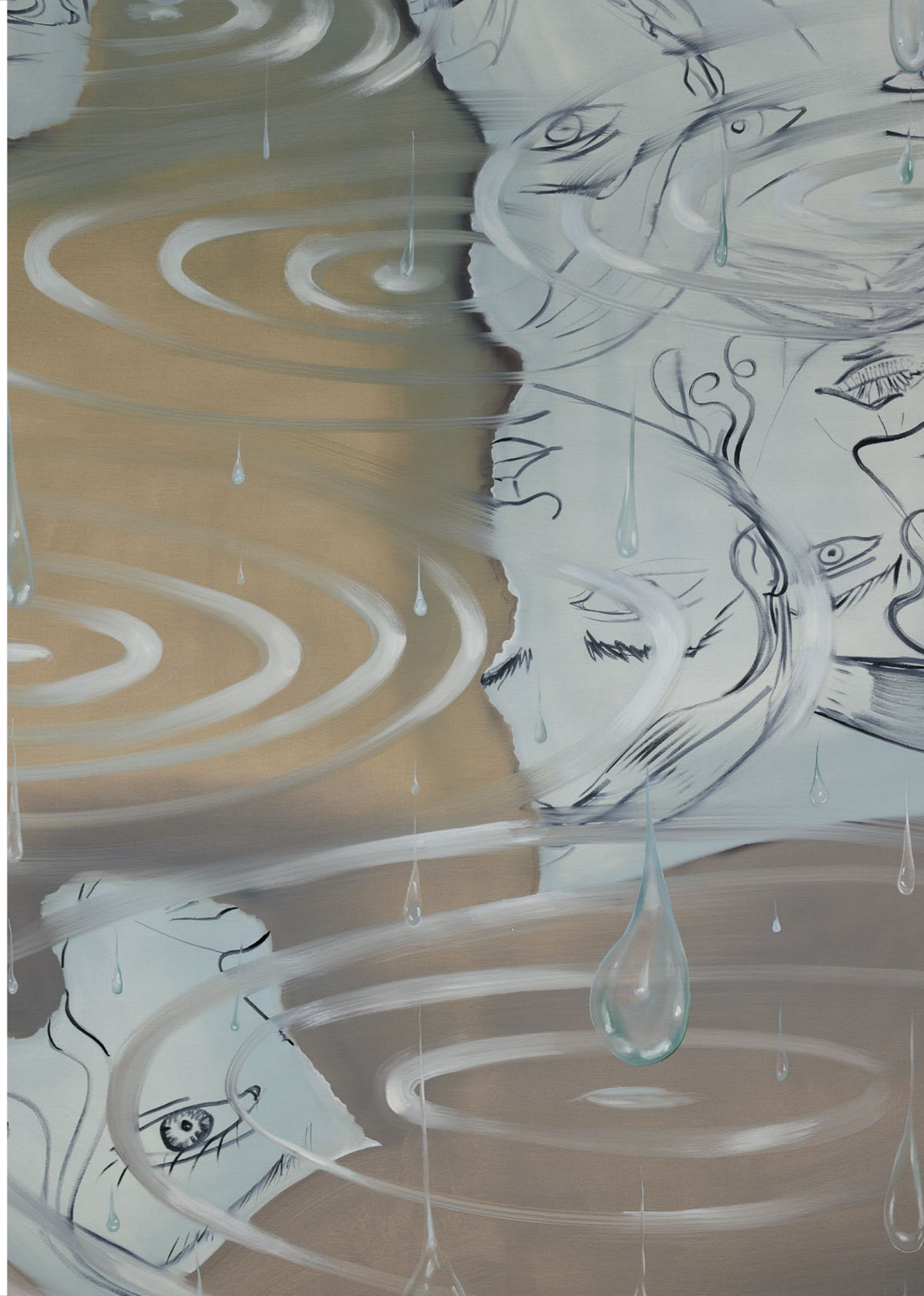


THE PUDDLE SKETCHES, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **The puddle sketches**, 2025, oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm (78 3/4 x 55 1/8 in) (KJ 087)

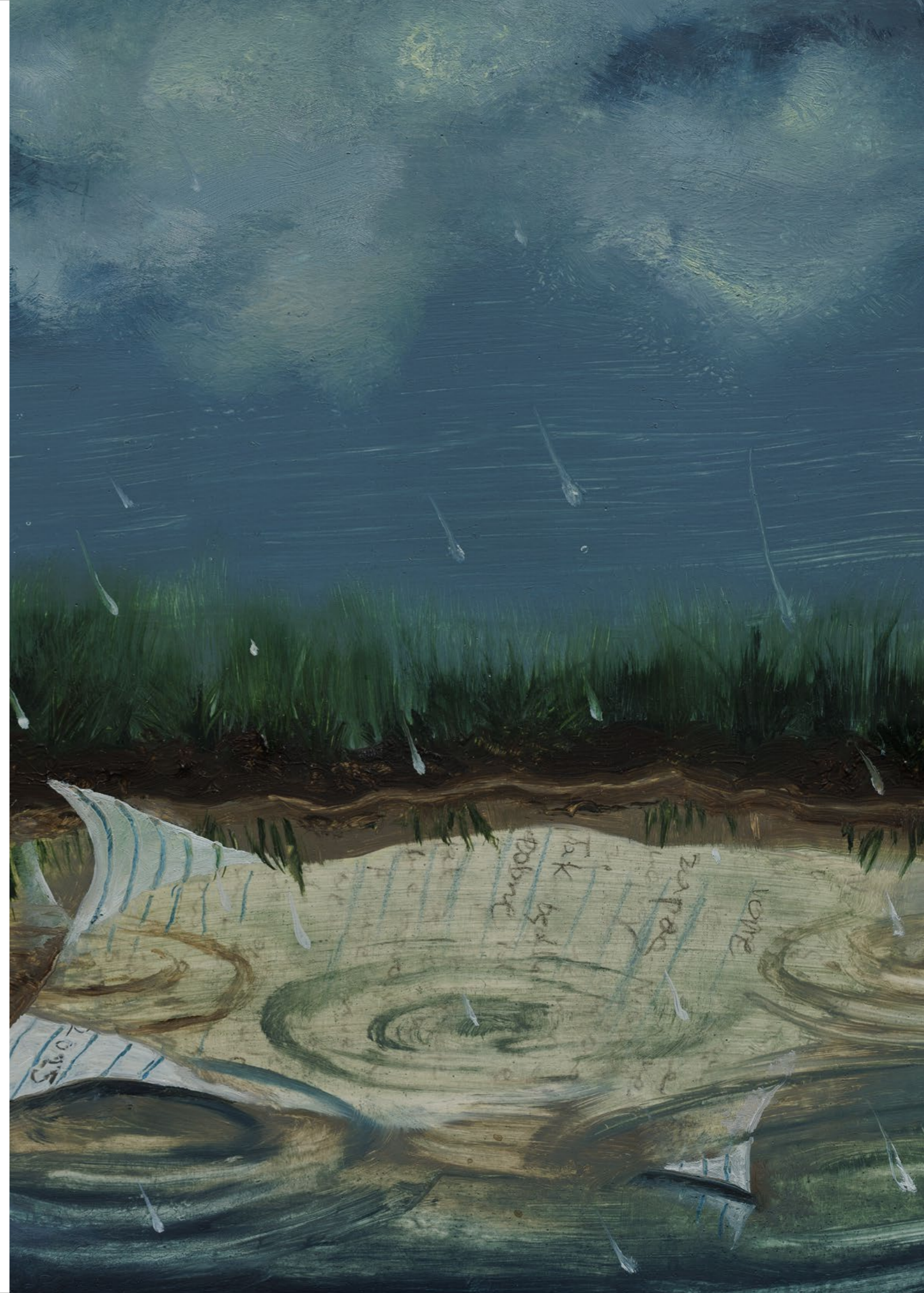
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Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, **Which Way the Wind Is Blowing**, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)

A LETTER IN THE PUDDLE, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **A letter in the puddle**, 2025, oil on wood panel, 20 x 15 cm (7 7/8 x 5 7/8 in) (KJ 097)

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DRAWINGS IN THE SKY, 2025

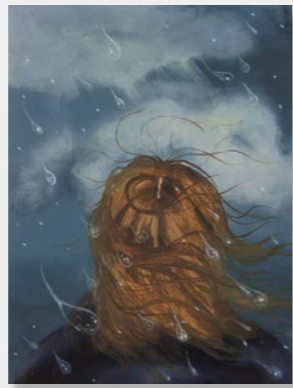


Karolina Jabłońska, **Drawings in the sky**, 2025, oil on wood, 25 x 19 cm (9 7/8 x 7 1/2 in) (KJ 094)

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THE TINY BACK OF THE HEAD, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **The tiny back of the head**, 2025, oil on wood panel, 20 x 15 cm (7 7/8 x 5 7/8 in) (KJ 088)

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THE EYE DRAWING, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **The eye drawing**, 2025, oil on wood panel, 20 x 15 cm (7 7/8 x 5 7/8 in) (KJ 081)

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THE LITTLE HEAD, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **The little head**, 2025, oil on wood panel, 20 x 15 cm (7 7/8 x 5 7/8 in) (KJ 099)

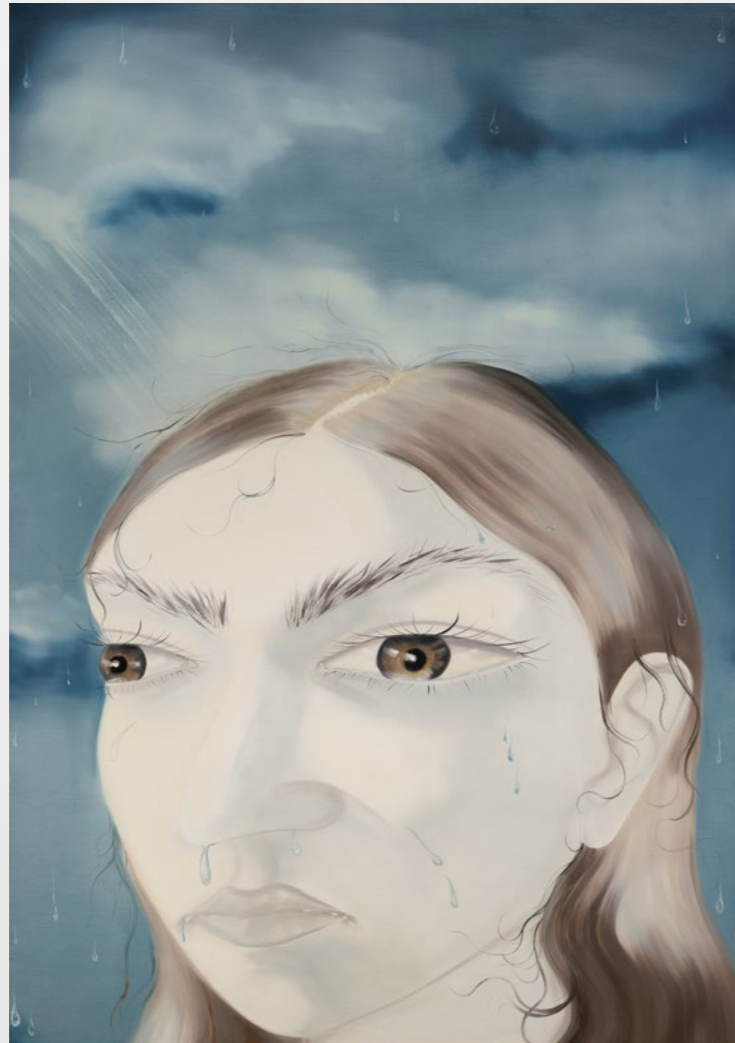
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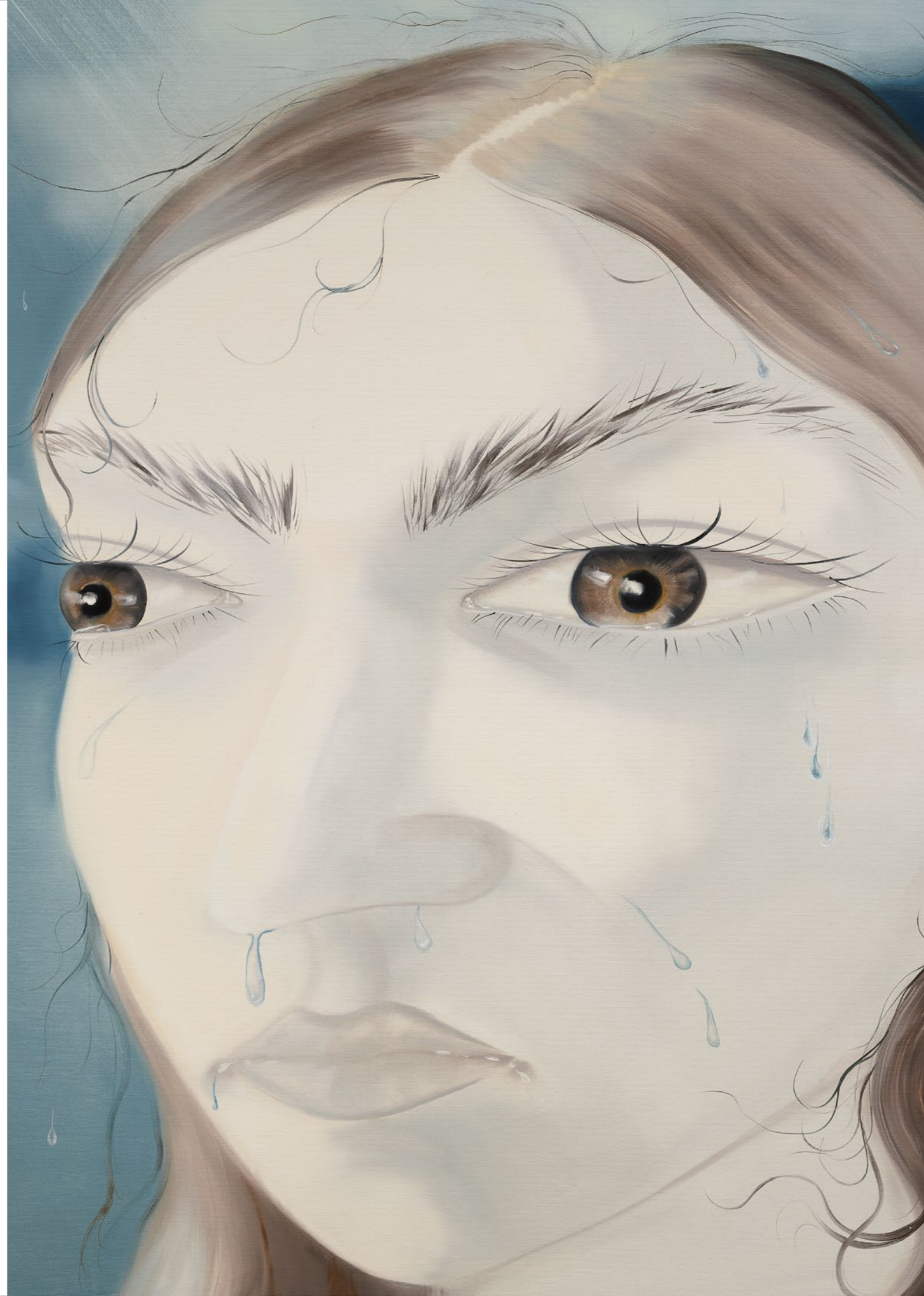
Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, **Which Way the Wind Is Blowing**, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)

A PALE SELF-PORTRAIT, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **A pale self-portrait**, 2025, oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm (78 3/4 x 55 1/8 in) (KJ 085)

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A HAND, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **A hand**, 2025, oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm (78 3/4 x 55 1/8 in) (KJ 082)

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Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, *Which Way the Wind Is Blowing*, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)



Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, **Which Way the Wind Is Blowing**, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)

THE PUDDLE, 2023

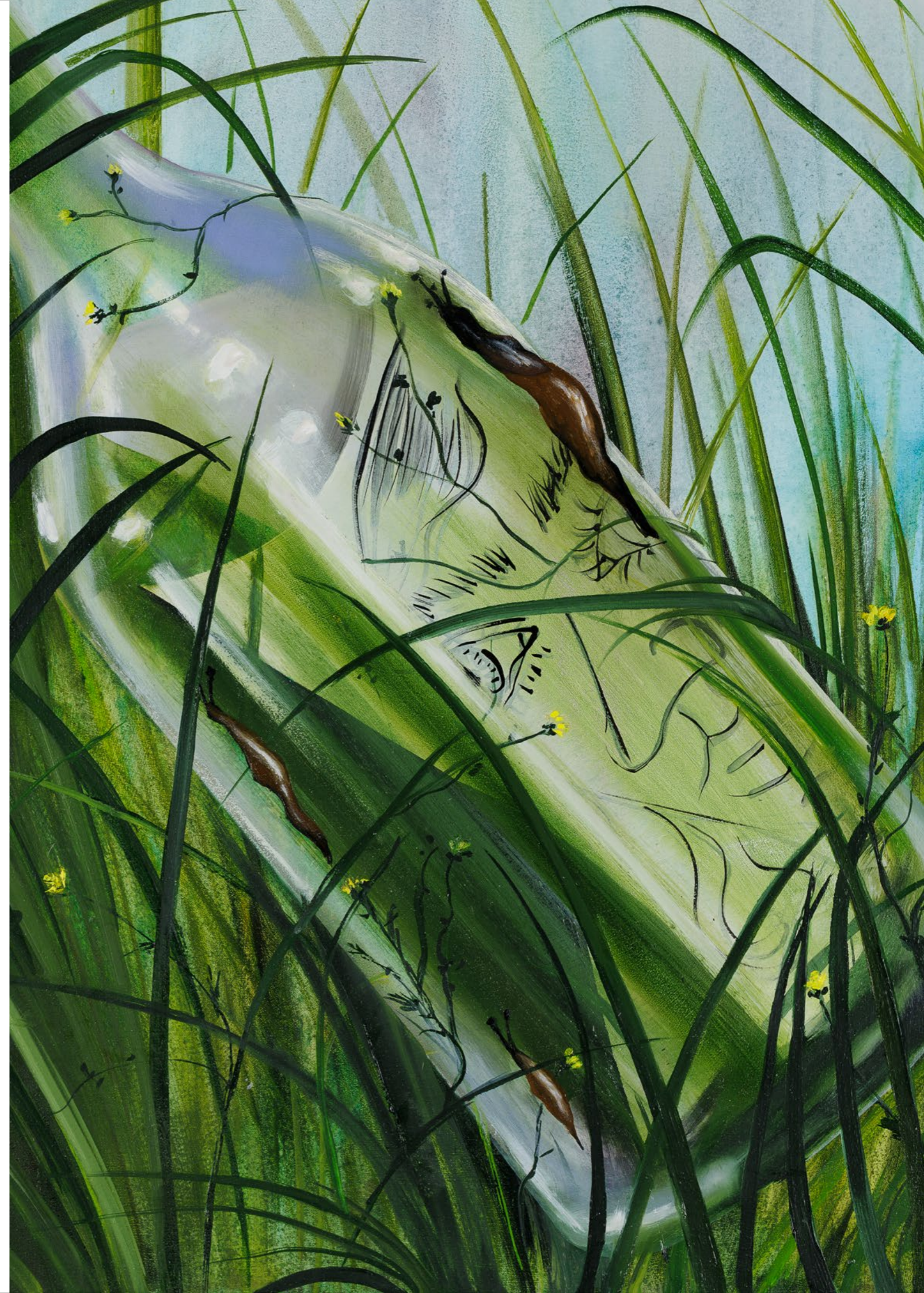


Karolina Jabłońska, **The puddle**, 2023, oil on canvas, 160 x 150 cm (63 x 59 in) (KJ 086)

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THE BOTTLE WITH THE LETTER, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **The bottle with the letter**, 2025, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 cm (19 3/4 x 15 3/4 in) (KJ 084)

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Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, **Which Way the Wind Is Blowing**, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)



Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, **Which Way the Wind Is Blowing**, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)

THE BLURRY DRAWING, 2025



Karolina Jabłońska, **The blurry drawing**, 2025, oil on canvas, 200 x 160 cm (78 3/4 x 63 in) (KJ 096)

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THE BOX WITH SKETCHES, 2024



Karolina Jabłońska, **The box with sketches**, 2024, oil on wood panel, 25 x 20 cm (9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in) (KJ 083)

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Exhibition view: Karolina Jabłońska, **Which Way the Wind Is Blowing**, START Museum, Shanghai (2025)

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