



**JAMES  
THOMAS**

**MYNA, MINER.  
WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE.**

**SOLO  
EXHIBITION**

**25.03.23  
-13.04.23**

**LIZAMORE**  
& Associates  
CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY AND CONSULTANCY



### **Myna, Miner. What's Yours is Mine.**

Johannesburg, The City of Gold, is dotted by mine dumps and scarred with the holes that birthed them. These golden monoliths stand as monuments to remind us where the city comes from. Though golden in appearance, these mounds hold a history of both cunning enterprise and harsh exploitation that ripples into the present.

The Indian Mynah is a well known bird to all residents of the city. It is referred to as an 'introduced pest' and was brought to South Africa at the beginning of the 20th century. Coincidentally, this was the beginning of the gold rush in Johannesburg and the dawn of the people that would become known as The Randlords. The Randlords, being the mine bosses, would go on to reap the land of all its gold and acquire vast sums of wealth, all on the backs of the subjugated masses.

The Mynah in these works is the randlord. An omnivorous species with no natural predators, a symbol of a bygone era. An image of the decaying of colonial rule that is evident in the canvas itself. Their legacy hovers over the empire of Johannesburg that once belonged to them. Conversely the miners in my work are just that, miners. The men and women who moved the earth to create Johannesburg. This body of work serves to criticise and to honour. To investigate the legacy and potential future of the city and its people. Posing more questions than answers.

Johannesburg appears to be a fallen empire, with its crumbling infrastructure, decaying monuments and rampant poverty. However, as far as I can see, there is hope. Johannesburg serves as a budding bastion for the young South African. A place, like before, that promises great prospects. Although, this time around, these prospects are available to all. Despite the looming shadow of the once mighty Mynah.

## **James Thomas**

James Thomas is a 25 year old artist from Johannesburg, South Africa.

As a skateboarder since the age of 11, James has spent intimate time on the streets of the inner-city. This has given him a unique and nuanced view of the visual, socio-political and ambient landscape of the metropolis. An interest in documenting his experiences in the city developed into an obsession as he began to work in various downtown clubs and bars.

What began as writing, became drawing and eventually gave way to large-scale paintings. Through these experiences James has created art with a journalistic approach. He captures, anecdotally and personally, what it means to live in Johannesburg in the 21st century. The work draws from the nature of city: Organised chaos. Words are scrawled on the canvas as if a store front or bus stop. The colours are harsh and monochromatic and then colourful and vibrant. The harsh dualities present in the city are emphasised by contrasting elements of abstraction and realism. The compositions are at odds with one another and in a state of harmony simultaneously.



**MYNA, MINER.  
WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE.**



***The Pen & The Sword***

2023

Mixed media on canvas

122cm x 152cm

**R 45 000-00**



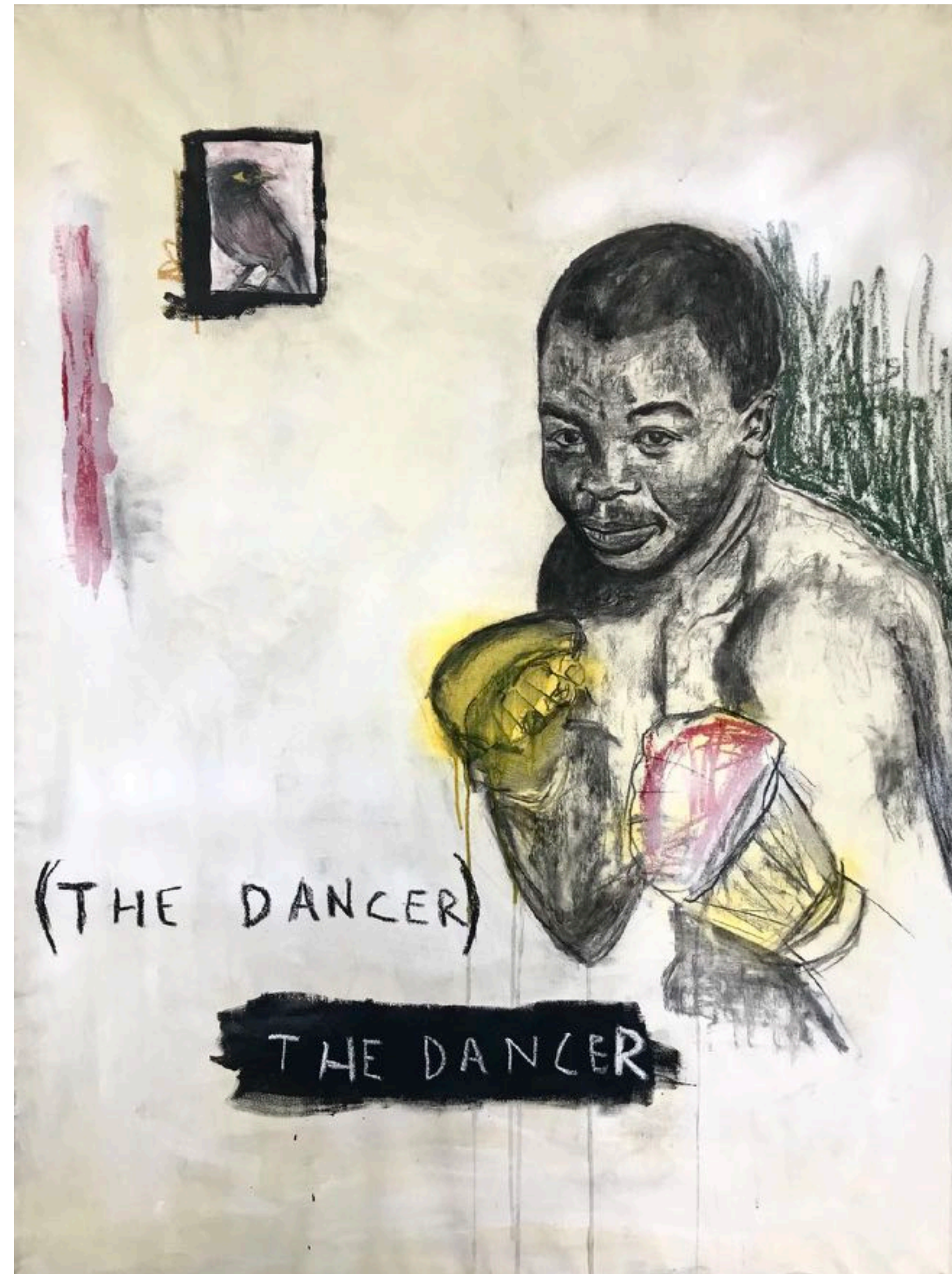
***In Spite of You***

2023

Mixed media on canvas

121cm x 91cm

**R 35 000-00**





**MYNA, MINER.  
WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE.**

***Memento Mori***

2023

Mixed media on canvas

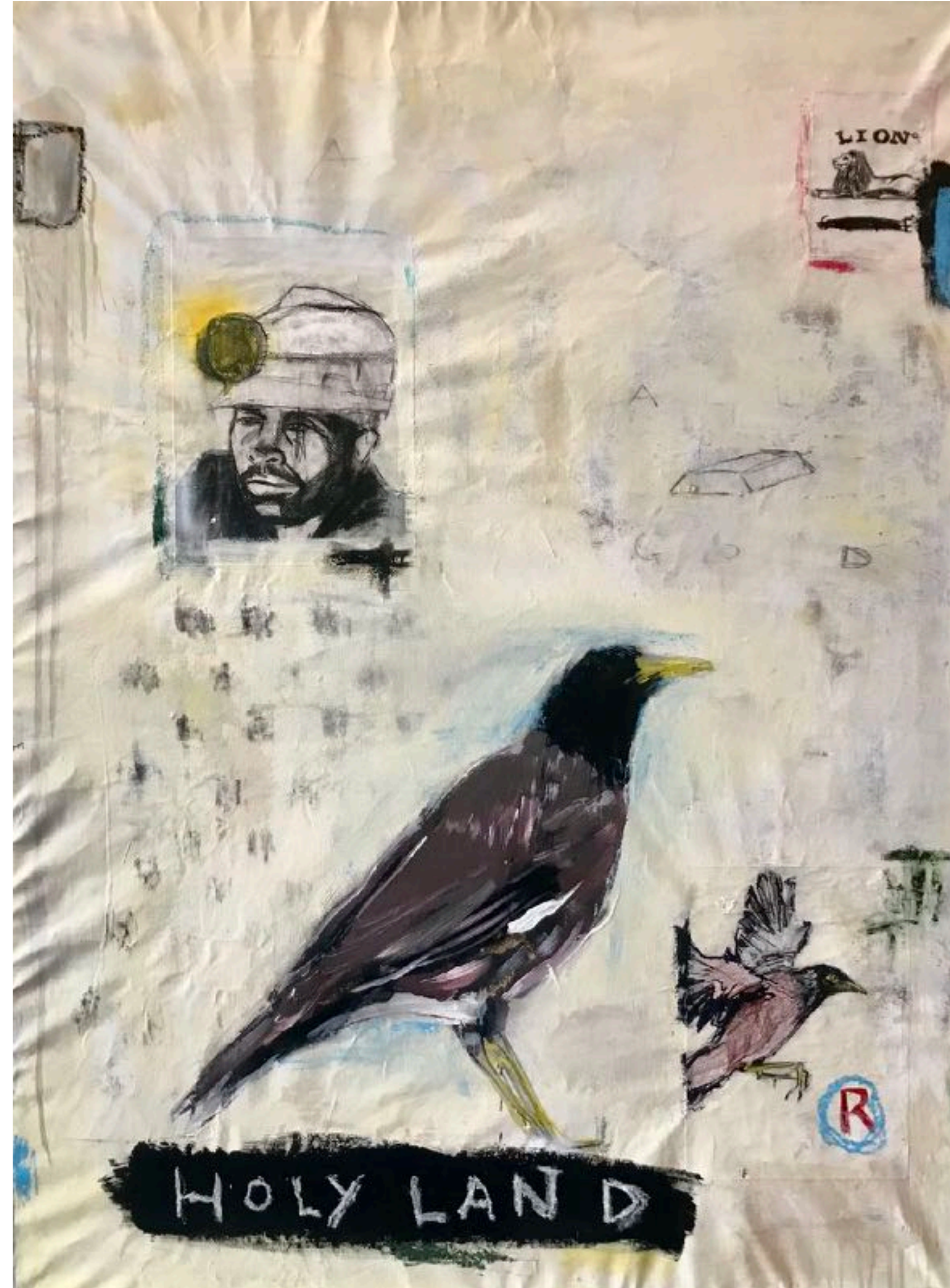
121cm x 91cm

**R 35 000-00**





**MYNA, MINER.  
WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE.**



***Lion's Share***

2023

Mixed media on canvas

121cm x 91cm

**R 35 000-00**



**MYNA, MINER.  
WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE.**



***Empire of Dirt***

2023

Mixed media on canvas  
121cm x 91cm

**R 35 000-00**



***Pride & Glory***

2023

Mixed media on canvas

121cm x 91cm

**R 35 000-00**





***Holy Land***

2023

Mixed media on canvas

91cm x 76cm

**R 18 500-00**





**MYNA, MINER.  
WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE.**



***Legacy***

2023

Mixed Media On Canvas

122cm x 152cm

**R 45 000-00**



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