An abstract painting featuring a large, curved, reddish-brown shape that resembles a stylized letter 'C' or a thick brushstroke. The interior of this shape is filled with a textured, light purple or lavender color. The background is a vibrant green, with some darker green and blue tones visible in the lower and right portions. The overall style is expressive and gestural, with visible brushwork and a rich color palette.

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# Shahnaz Aghayeva

b.1984, Azerbaijan

**ABOUT**

## Shahnaz Aghayeva

Shahnaz Aghayeva (b. 1984, Azerbaijan) is a multidisciplinary artist currently living in Bodrum, Turkey. Her practice spans printmaking, watercolour, installation and performance, exploring feminine identity, collective memory, archetypes and the unconscious, with a particular focus on the intergenerational transmission of female experience. Moving between abstraction and figuration, her stylised nude forms challenge traditional roles assigned to women and perceptions shaped by the male gaze. Shahnaz's art features exclusively female figures, their hair consistently tied up as a visual emblem of perseverance and duty. A recurring motif in her work, the large rounded lower female forms evoke a child's perspective, gazing upward at women with awe and tenderness. From this low vantage point, proportions become distorted as heads appear smaller and bodies monumental, transforming into an act of admiration and respect. Her works invite viewers to perceive the feminine form as both sacred and idealised.

Aghayeva has exhibited internationally, and her works are held in public collections including National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan; Waste to Art Gala Museum Complex, Azerbaijan; Istanbul Museum of Graphic Arts, Turkey; as well as in private collections worldwide.

## EDUCATION

- 2002 - 2006 BA, Azerbaijan State Art Academy, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2008 - 2010 MA, Azerbaijan State Art Academy, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2023 - now MA, Mugla Sitgi Kochman University, Bodrum, Mughla, Turkiye

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *"X" istans. Merqezart*, Bodrum, Mugla, Turkey
- 2023 *Pink Venus*, Barza Baku, curated by Samira Sefi, Azerbaijan, Baku
- 2022 *Sublimation*, Gallery Kambur, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2018 *Essence*, Solo Exhibition, ROOM Baku, curated by Samira Sefi, Azerbaijan, Baku

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *Sense and Sensuality*, Milado Art Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2025 *USTART*, Azerbaijan Union of Artists, MIM Gallery, Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2025 *Edition of Sofia*, Turkish Printmaking Exhibition. Gallery GraphikArt, Sofia, Bulgaria
- 2024 *Different and together* Curated Tao Ulusoy, Osmanli Tersanesi, Bodrum Turkiye
- 2023 *Struga International Art Exhibition*, Macedonia
- 2022 *LUSTRUM*, Kun Art Space, Adana, Turkey



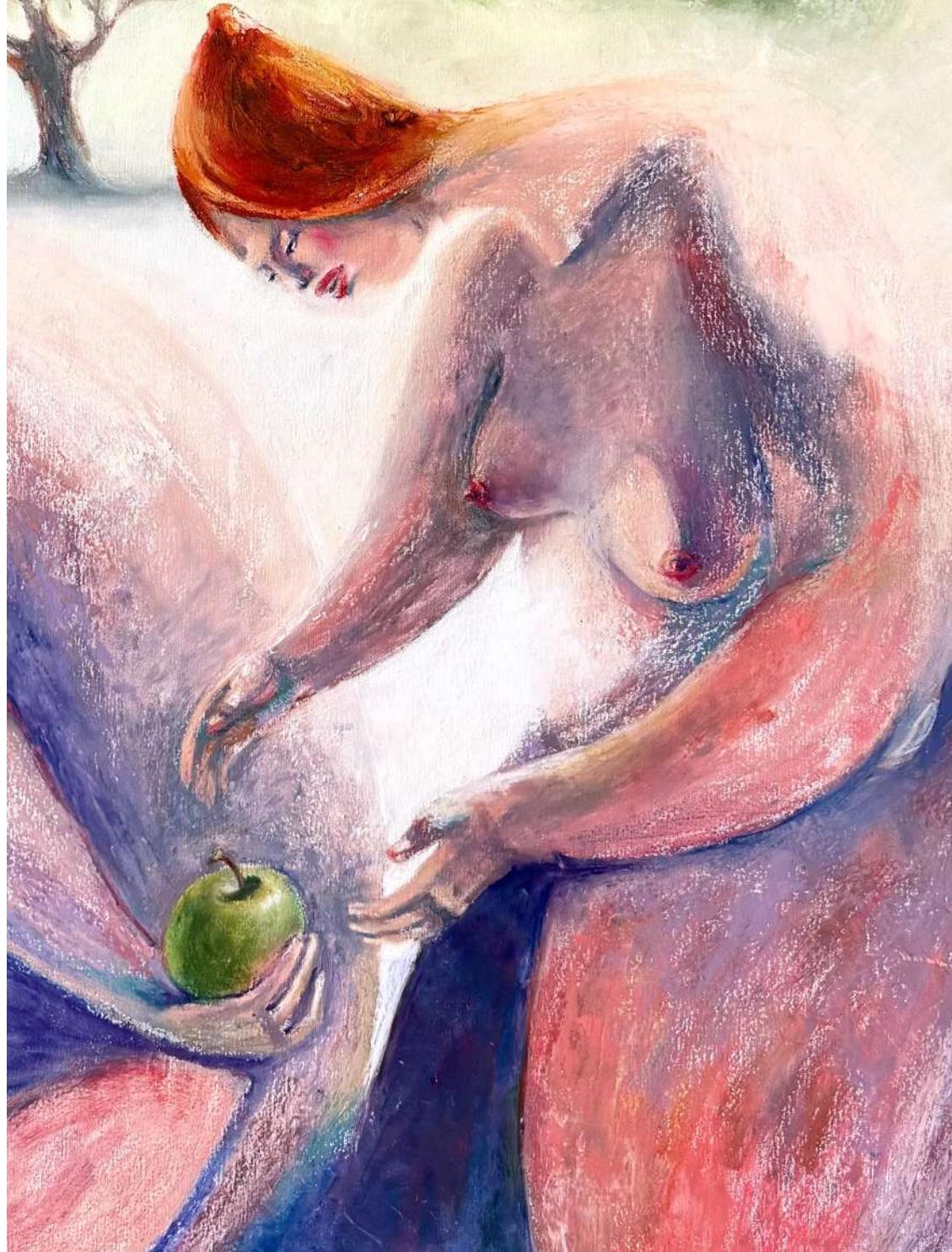
## LILIT AND EVE SERIES

In *Lilit and Eve* series Shahnaz reimagines the myth of Lilit and Eve inviting us to witness a union: a gesture of tender solidarity. An act of sacrificial knowledge and profound feminine transmission. An intimate exchange unfolds as Lilit passes an apple, symbolising knowledge, to Eve. This is not a forbidden act, but a sacred inheritance. The Tree of Knowledge echoes the writhing body language of the two figures, suggesting that wisdom does not come from the outside, but is born within the female form.

From the interview with Shahnaz Aghayeva:

"I am against all religions; most of them are tied to a patriarchal system. In a matriarchal system, they didn't exist as women were deeply connected to the wild, to nature. You've probably read *"Women Who Run with the Wolves"*, written by Clarissa Pinkola Estés.

The *Lilith and Eve* series challenges the general perception of the Lilith and Eve characters. I believe it was Lilith, not the serpent, who urged Eve to eat the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. But my Eve doesn't eat the apple right away; she slowly begins peeling it, observing (as depicted in *Sweet or Sour*, 2025). What I am trying to say is that inherited knowledge should not be passed down in its raw, uninterrogated form. One must unfold it, reaching a fundamental truth, and reassess its relevance before carrying it into the future."

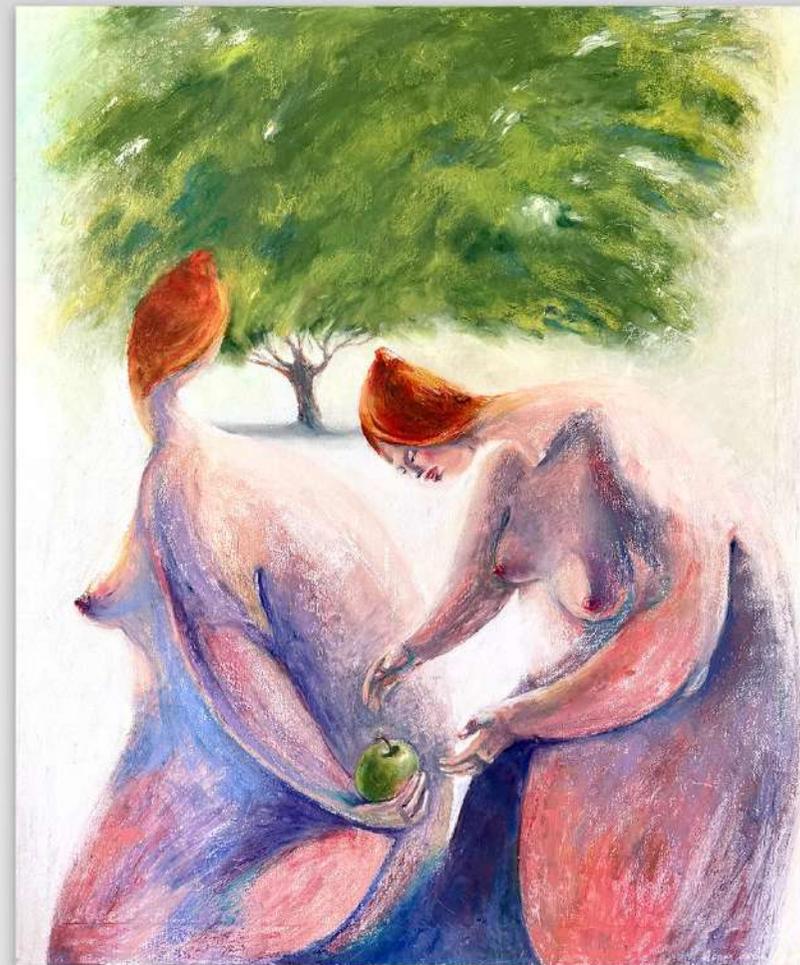


## ***Lilit and Eve, 2025***

Oil sticks on canvas  
Unframed: 120 x 100 cm

£4950.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)

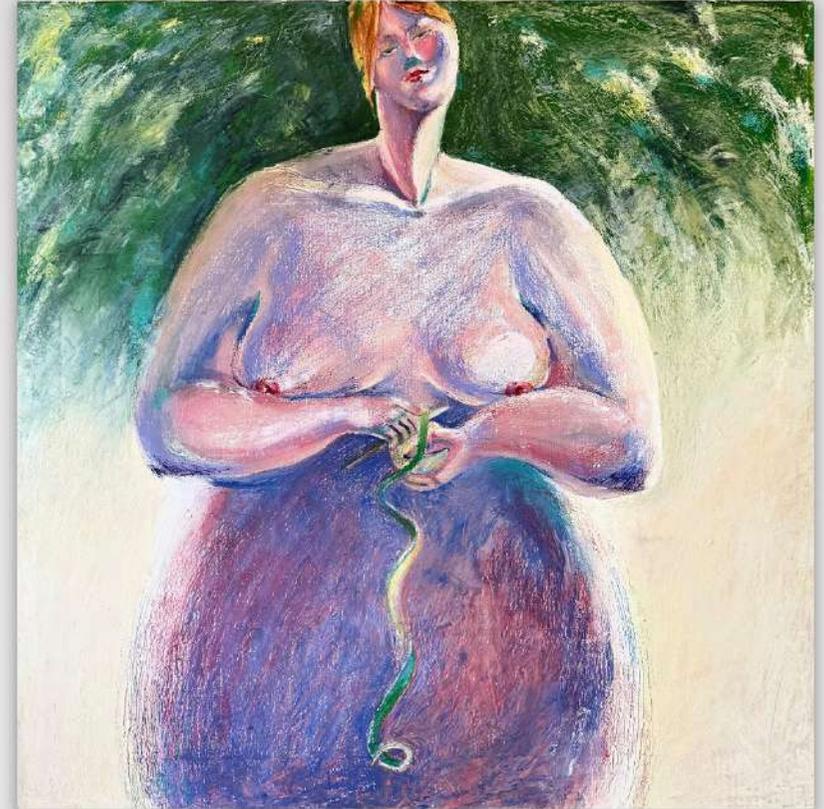


***Sweet or sour, 2025***

Oil sticks on canvas  
100 x 100 cm

£4910.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



## “X”ISTENS SERIES

The 2025 watercolour series “X”istens by Shahnaz Aghayeva portrays women in different moments and emotional states across generations and collective memories. Each story reflects the women as the bearers of culture, traditions, fear, hope, and resilience.

In her interview Aghayeva highlights the lack of community and support among women, underscoring their vital role in a decentralised society, where community becomes the accelerator for growth and success.

“Sadly, I rarely see women support women in society. It is a deeply upsetting subject for me. This series is about women who cannot coexist in a collective. For instance, in *Internal Disagreements* (2025), one group wants to move forward, while the other stops them: “Maybe we shouldn’t, maybe they’re lying.” Instead of uniting their strength to make the world better, women pull each other in different directions”. - Shahnaz Aghayeva



## ***Internal disagreements, 2025***

Watercolour on canvas  
70 x 80 cm

£1510.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



***Everyone has their  
own routine, 2025***

Watercolour on canvas

40 x 35 cm

£585.00

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## COMPOSITION & PERSPECTIVE

The composition and perspective in Aghayeva's work draw on the Asian philosophy of emptiness and fullness. The artist reflects on this philosophy: "It teaches that we learn to speak so that later we can be silent. My language is visual - I don't chat endlessly; I express essence through precise forms or words. I believe that if you want to be heard, you must speak quietly, not scream in agony."

## PULLED-BACK ORANGE HAIR

Pulled-back hair symbolizes a lack of time for self-care, compensated by red lipstick and eyeshadows. The figures seem to embrace the burden of beauty, yet this is deceptive, "an ephemeral beauty that inevitably slips away." The orange hair colour references Azerbaijan, Aghayeva's homeland, known as the Land of Fire, due to Indigenous Azerbaijanis, who were believed to have orange hair, blue eyes, and fair skin.

## NIPPLES

Naked, sharply defined red nipples are an important recurring element in Aghayeva's work. In the interview, the artist explains: "I always accentuate nipples, as they have their own philosophy: women feel and perceive the world through them first; they become a kind of 'second pair of eyes'."

## ***Nostalgia for myself, 2025***

Watercolour on canvas  
40 x 40 cm

£705.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



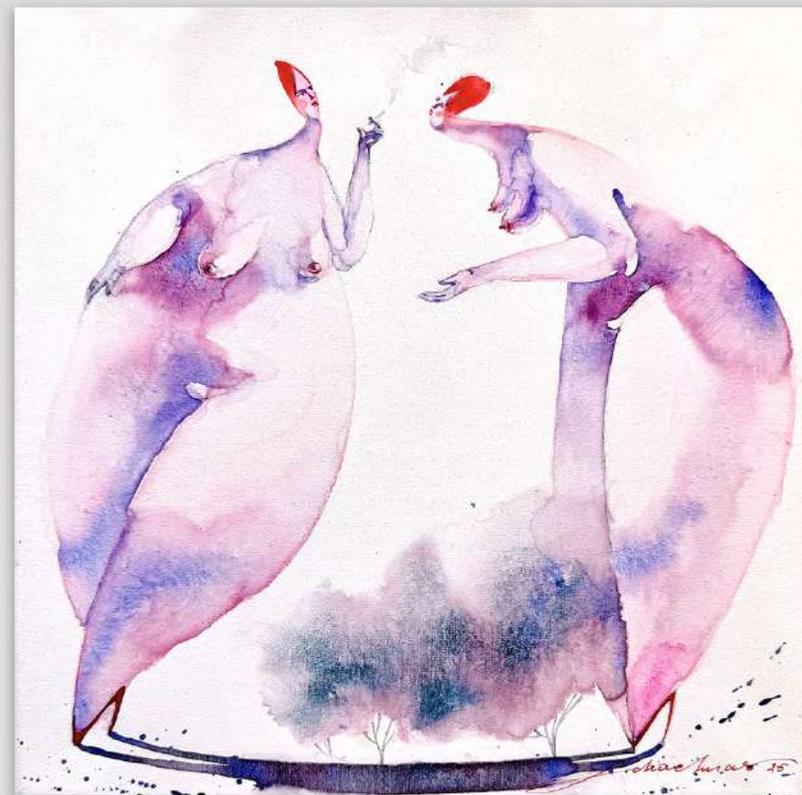
## ***Waste of time, 2025***

Watercolour on canvas

25 x 25 cm

£325.00

SOLD



***Taking advantage of  
the moment, 2025***

Watercolour on canvas

35 x 40 cm

£585.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



## ***Follow me I know the way, 2025***

Watercolour on canvas

35 x 40 cm

£585.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



## ***On different paths, 2025***

Watercolour on canvas  
25 x 40 cm

£500.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



## ETCHING SERIES

In the *Secret Meetings* limited print series, Aghayeva works with aluminium etching on Fabriano Rosaspina paper. Her fascination with printmaking began during her Bachelor's studies at the Azerbaijan State Art Academy, and over the years she has refined both her technique and artistic style.

In the interview Aghayeva explains the aluminium etching process:

"For a long time after graduating, I didn't make prints because oxidation is an extremely complex and hazardous process. Some of my professors even lost their teeth and hair due to the poor ventilation in the studios. When I travelled to Georgia to the studio of Vakhtang Megrelishvili, I was introduced to salt-based aluminium etching, a technique that is completely harmless. I learned it and became completely obsessed with printmaking.

Also, I love aluminium etching because I can cut any shape, something impossible with zinc or copper. First, I create a small sketch, then work on the metal. Cutting occurs after the work is completed. Then the plate is ready for printing."



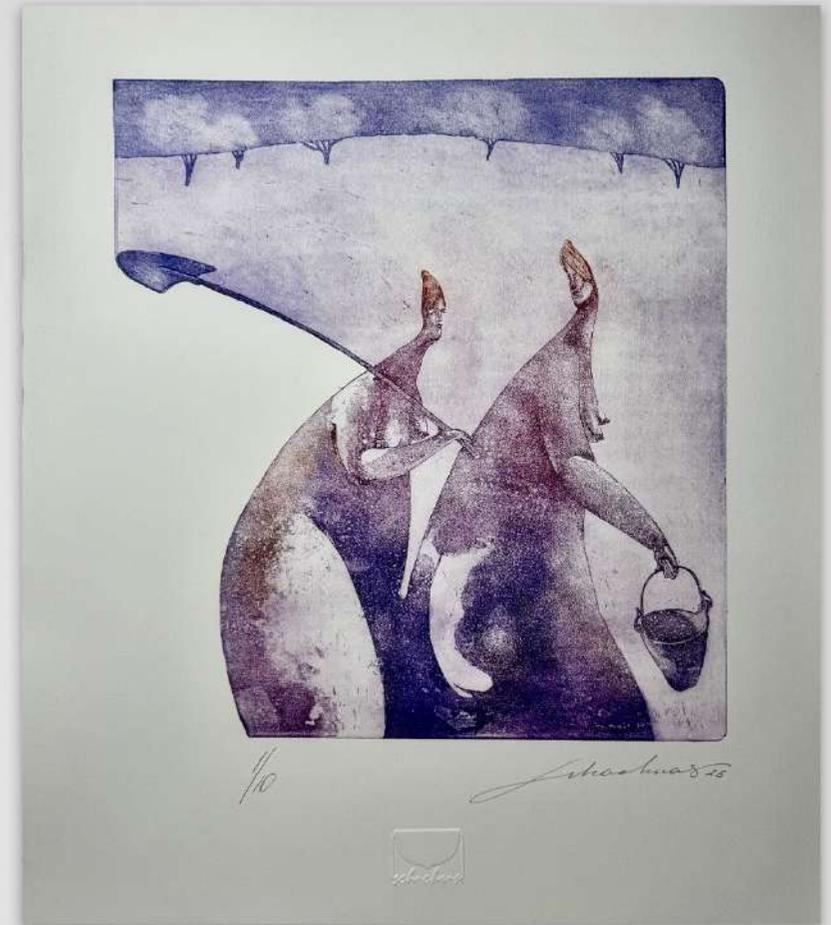
## ***Secret meetings, 2025***

Aluminium etching,  
Fabriano Rosaspina paper print  
Edition 1/10

Unframed: 42 x 36 cm  
Framed in mount: 50 x 40 cm

£500.00

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## ***Secret meetings, 2025***

Aluminium etching,  
Fabriano Rosaspina paper print  
Edition 5/10

Unframed: 36 x 42 cm  
Framed in mount: 40 x 50 cm

£500.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



## EMBROIDERY SERIES

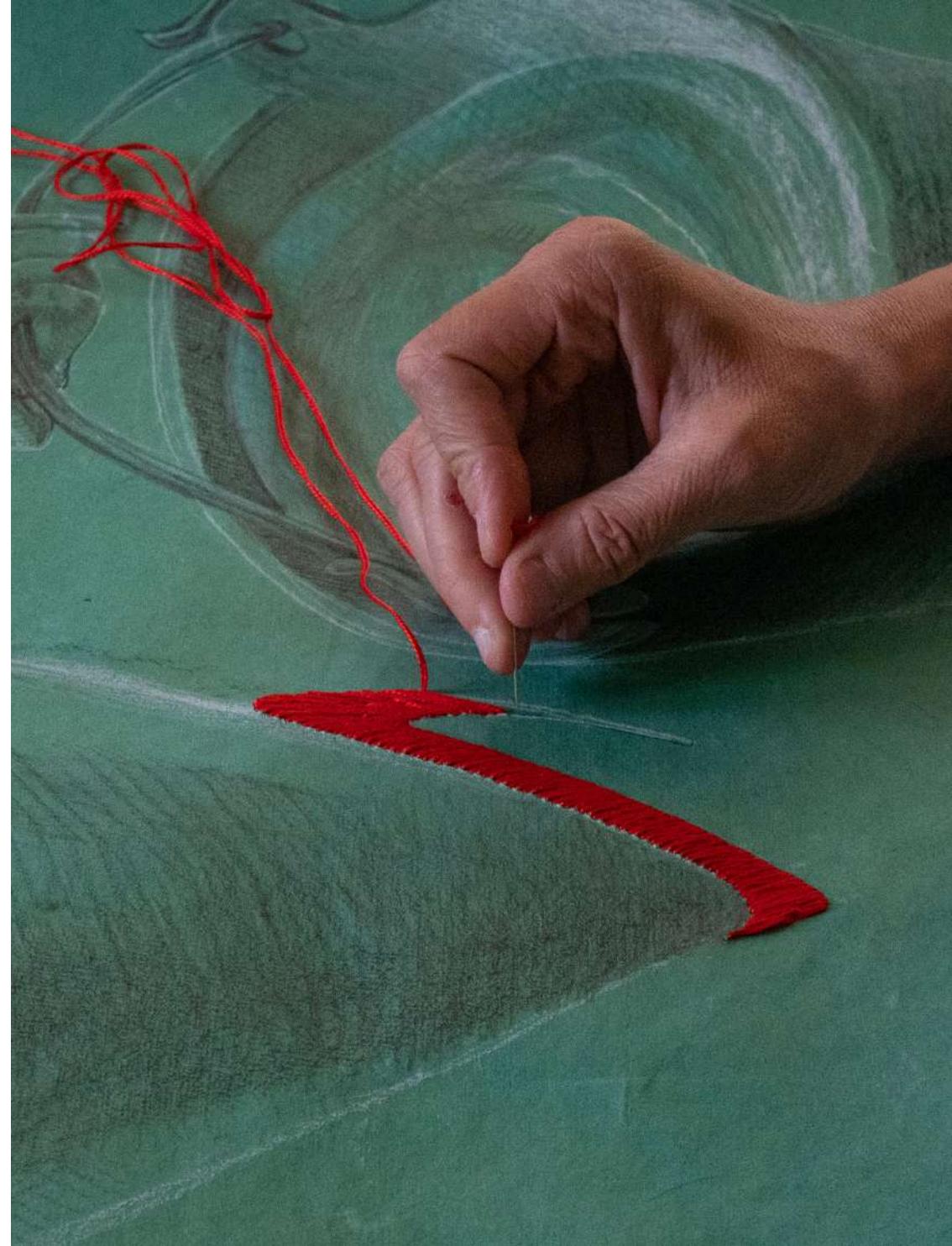
In *Personal Search* (2022) and *Smoke Break* (2025), Aghayeva combines textile, paper, and embroidery. The artist uses thread both as a material and as a symbol of connection linking the depicted figures to one another as well as women generally, across generations.

In her Interview Aghayeva reflects on the embroidery technique and her works (*Personal Search* and *Smoke Break*):

“In my family, embroidery has been passed down through generations. My grandmother embroidered, and my mother too. One day, I simply took a soft needle and started sewing.

When creating *Personal Search* (2022), I was looking for like-minded women who shared my views on life. The female characters in the work are seeking connection. They carry buckets of water, and this water holds information about all of us, linking them to one another and to society.

*Smoke Break* (2025) is about the women I grew up around. They swept the streets when I left for school, and when I returned, they would chat during their short break. All so beautiful, with red lipstick, even though their work seemed unrelated to beauty. What struck me was that men stood nearby, hands in pockets, simply watching, never offering help, and this was seen as normal.”



## ***Personal search, 2022***

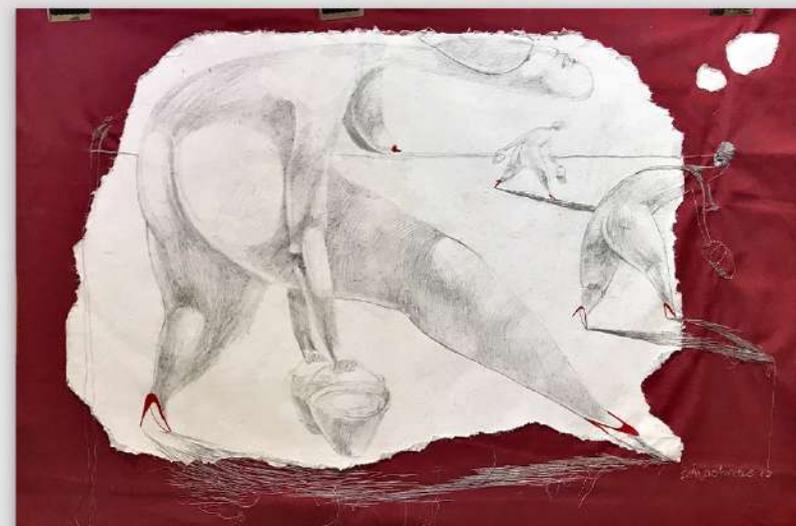
Handmade fibrous paper textile  
and embroidery

Unframed: 80 x 120 cm

Framed: 93 x 128 cm

£3850.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



## ***Smoke break, 2025***

Sanguine, white chocolate,  
embroidery on handmade  
Indian paper

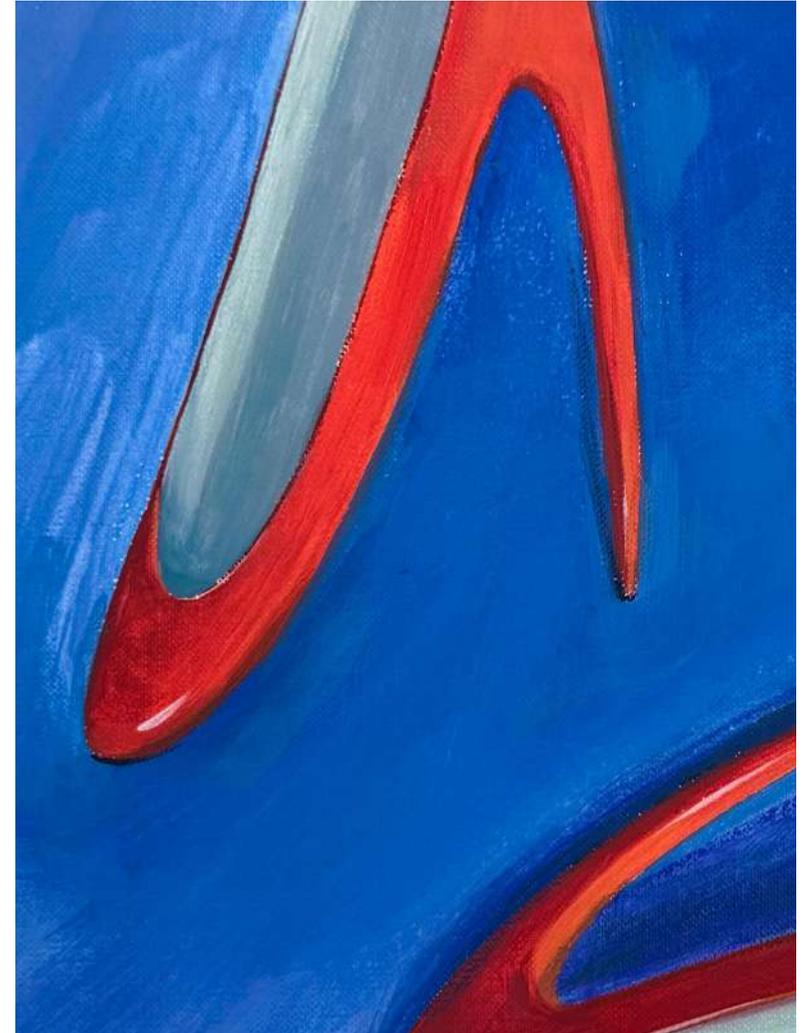
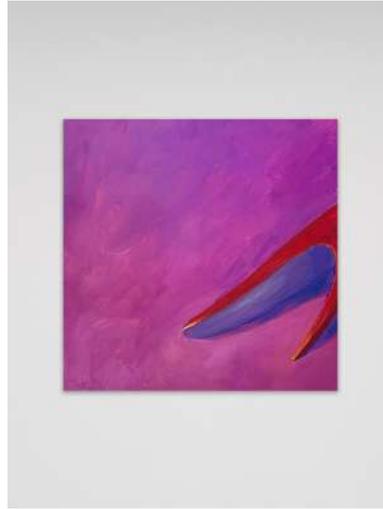
Unframed: 80 x 100 cm

Framed: 85 x 105 cm

£4235.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)





## RED HEELS SERIES

Red Heels are a powerful recurring motif in Aghayeva's work. In her interview, the artist reflects on their duality as a symbol of feminine power and social pressure, of desirability and sacrifice: "High heels, are the most uncomfortable shoes. Carrying a large mass (the voluminous female body) on thin legs, on red heels, is extremely difficult. Red heels symbolise the laws of the society we live in. We must be beautiful, feminine; we must be mothers, aunts, daughters. Everything must be flawless so no one can fault us. Red shoes signify our duty toward society, our families, and our children."

***Red Heels Series, Green, 2025***

Gouache on textured

Fabriano Tela paper

Unframed: 25 x 25 cm

Framed in mount: 31 x 31 cm

£310.00

SOLD



***Red Heels Series, Blue, 2025***

Gouache on textured

Fabriano Tela paper

Unframed: 25 x 25 cm

Framed in mount: 31 x 31 cm

£310.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



***Red Heels Series, Yellow, 2025***

Gouache on textured

Fabriano Tela paper

Unframed: 25 x 25 cm

Framed in mount: 31 x 31 cm

£310.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



***Red Heels Series, Grey, 2025***

Gouache on textured

Fabriano Tela paper

Unframed: 25 x 25 cm

Framed in mount: 31 x 31 cm

£310.00

[Press to buy / enquire](#)



***Red Heels Series, Purple, 2025***

Gouache on textured

Fabriano Tela paper

Unframed: 25 x 25 cm

Framed in mount: 31 x 31 cm

£310.00

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Shahnaz Aghayeva Presentation

2025 - 2026

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