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Portakal Private Sales

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2025

PAUL CHING-BOR

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A contemporary painter whose dynamic cityscapes represent a bold new exploration of the medium, Paul Ching-Bor was born in 1963 in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, the capital of the province of Guangdong. At age twelve, he began his study of art at the Youth Arts Centre in Guangzhou. He remained at the school for six years while attending high school. He went on to study sculpture for two years at Guangzhou Fine Art University. He spent an additional two years at the Jing De Zhen Ceramic Institute, in the Jiangxi province, where his training consisted of courses in academic fine-art techniques.

In 1987 Ching-Bor moved to Sydney, Australia. There he focused on watercolors, portraying primarily the suburban neighborhood of Paddington, where his studio was located. In 1990 Ching-Bor received a scholarship sponsored by Mercedes-Benz and awarded by from the Royal Agricultural Society for the study of fine art in New York. In the following

year he received the Overseas Study Travel Grant from the Rotary Club of Camberwell, Victoria, Australia. For the next four years he saved money to insure that he would be able to prolong his stay beyond the scholarship's term, and in 1996 he was able to realize a long-held desire to move to New York. "When I first walked down the streets of Manhattan I was curious about the impact this strident city and the jostling crowds would have on my work," Ching-Bor recalled. "The structures, arches, and bridges immediately inspired me, and particularly suited my limited color palette. My favorite colors are black and white, and I found I was able to tackle New York subjects in a very free way that, in the early stages, suggests abstract painting."

Indeed, the art with which Ching-Bor finds the greatest connection is that of the New York School Abstract



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Expressionists, especially Franz Kline. In the works of Kline, Robert Motherwell, Willem de Kooning, and other artists of the era, Ching-Bor found intriguing parallels with the theories of ancient Chinese scroll painters, a coalescence that has inspired his own personal blend of Eastern and Western approaches. In response to New York, Ching-Bor's art evolved. He began to work on a big scale, using the largest and heaviest papers that he could find, in the thought of no compromise to the conventional watercolor's principle. His process involves laying down the fundamental part of the painting, which is the structure of the work. He then proceeds to glaze and splash paint on the paper until the image disappears. When the work dries, "the image bounces back." "Then I look at it again," says the artist, "The remains from the dematerialization become the new materialization of the work..."

Through this method, Ching-Bor has reconsidered the qualities of watercolor that are often thought to be intrinsic to the medium, such as sensitivity, delicacy, and transparency. According to him, his images are "not so transparent, not so spontaneous in some parts, and not so 'watercolor' anymore. They are the substantial, developed face of watercolor painting." This approach is robust and dynamic; at the same time, the works have a quiet intensity in their melancholic and stark qualities.

Living in New York has suited what Ching-Bor has sought to express in his art, and he found the spirit of the city manifested in many of its facets. "When I look at life in New York," he observed, "I see people having come from another country or state and living in Manhattan for some kind of purpose. People are not living freely; they live for the 'reason'. The contrast between dark and light is so much a part of the experience of living in New York."

Through painting urban ambiance, Ching-Bor has found a vehicle for expressing the city's intensity, loneliness, ambition, and drive. Lately the subject that has gripped him the most is the Queensborough Bridge at Fifty-Ninth Street and the East River, a short walk from his home and studio on East Seventy-Fifth Street and York Avenue. Like John Marin, who painted dynamic, sparkling watercolors of the Brooklyn Bridge that

expressed the vitality of New York from the 1910s through the 1940s, Ching-Bor uses the bridge as an expressive form. However, for him, the bridge is less a symbolic motif than a plan or form that coalesces with his subconscious and direct responses to the city. The dark, heavy surfaces, pierced with soft, streaked, and glimmering light, and the vertical thrusts, countered by plunging diagonals, are diagrams of the city as much as of the human psyche. "I have found my dialogue in the echoing steel structure," he says. "The heavy weight of the steel depicts the burden we carry. The intricacy of the pylons is the conflicting issues in our society. The haunting emotion behind the steel is phenomenal."

Ching-Bor began his images of steel structures in late 1996. These works are in tune with the rhythm of this time of defiance, tension, and gritty realism. At the same time, they are self-referential, reflecting Ching-Bor's very personal response to his surroundings.

Ching-Bor has participated in many exhibitions in Australia and the United States, and has been the recipient of many prizes and awards. In 1999 he went to Turkey, where he created a group of works for a 2002 exhibition. In 2000 a solo show of his work was held at the Butler Institute in Youngstown, Ohio, and in the following year, he was invited to take part in an artist-in-residency program in Salzburg, Austria, sponsored by Neuhaus Gallery, Salzburg, and Sparkasse Bank. The works he produced on the sojourn were included in *A New Vision of Salzburg* (2001).

Ching-Bor's works are in many private and public collections in the Australia, England, Japan, and the United States including Hilton International, Sydney; Shell Chemicals, Melbourne, Australia; Camberwell Civic Centre, Melbourne; Mobil Oil, Melbourne; Pioneer International, Sydney; the Springfield Art Museum, Missouri; Ritz-Carlton, New York; Grand Hyatt International, Tokyo; Park Hyatt, Shanghai; Sparkasse Bank, Salzburg; Myriad Hotel, New York; and the Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina.

Paul Ching-Bor received a 2013 Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.



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PAUL CHING-BOR d.1963

REVERIE IN ISTANBUL I

2001

Watercolor on paper

101.6 × 152.4 cm

Price upon request



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LOT 1



PAUL CHING-BOR d.1963

REVERIE IN ISTANBUL II

2002

Watercolor on paper

101.6 × 152.4 cm

Price upon request



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LOT 2



PAUL CHING-BOR d.1963
REVERIE IN ISTANBUL III

2002

Watercolor on paper

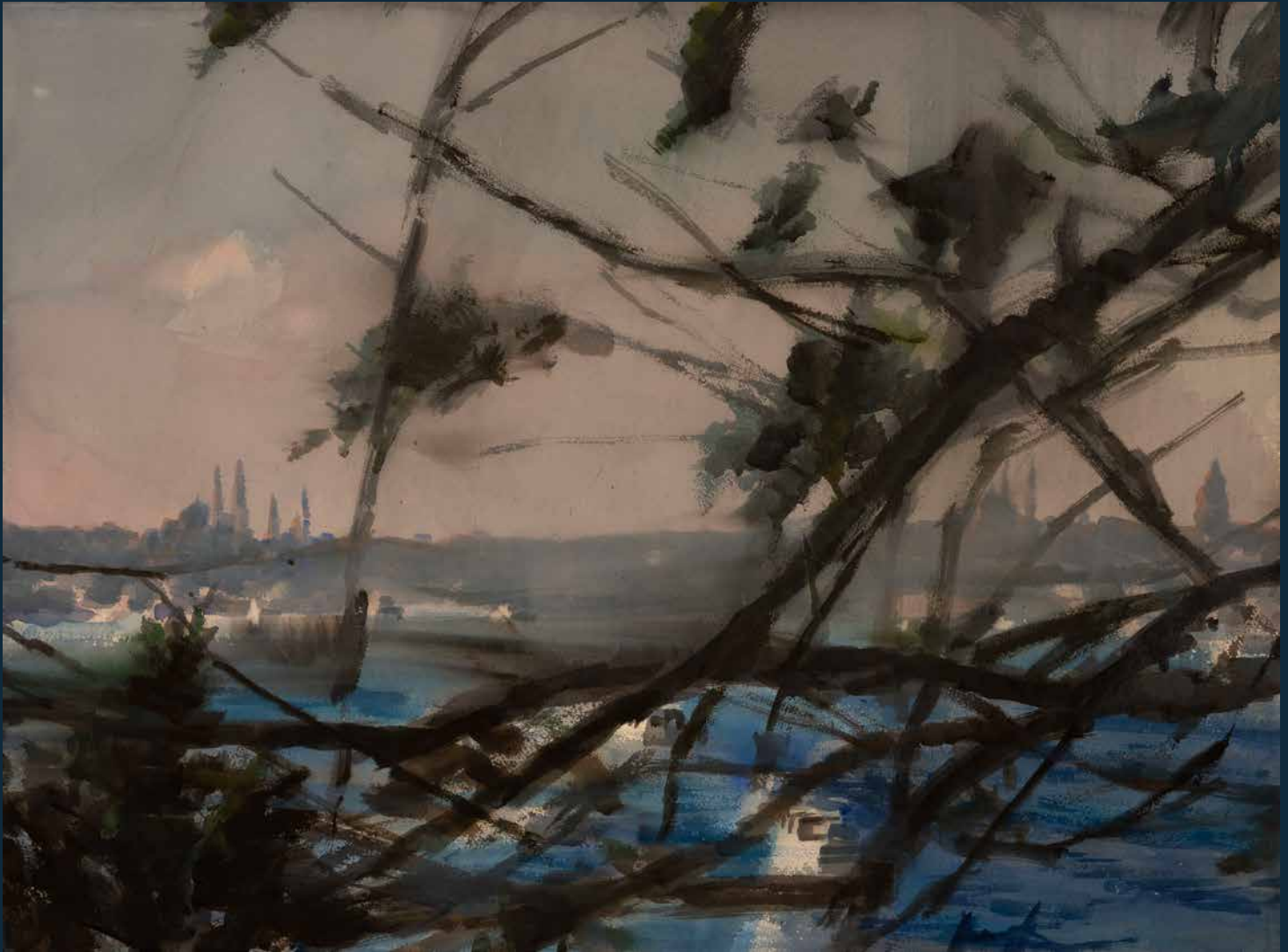
101.6 × 152.4 cm

Price upon request



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LOT 3



PAUL CHING-BOR d.1963

ACROSSING ON BOSPHORUS II

2025

Watercolor on paper

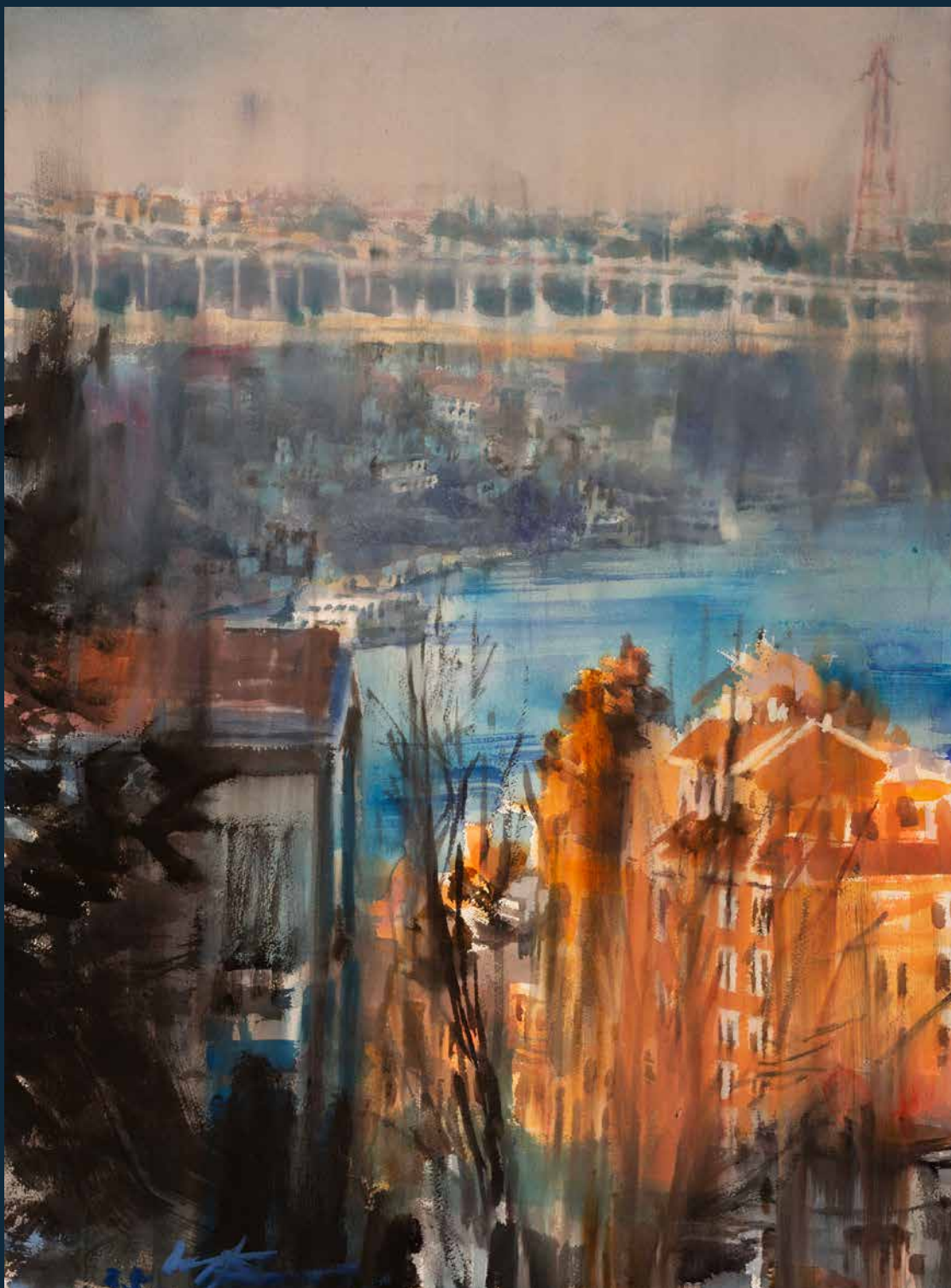
57,15 × 76,2 cm

Price upon request



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LOT 4



PAUL CHING-BOR d.1963

TWILIGHT ON BOSPHORUS I

2025

Watercolor on paper

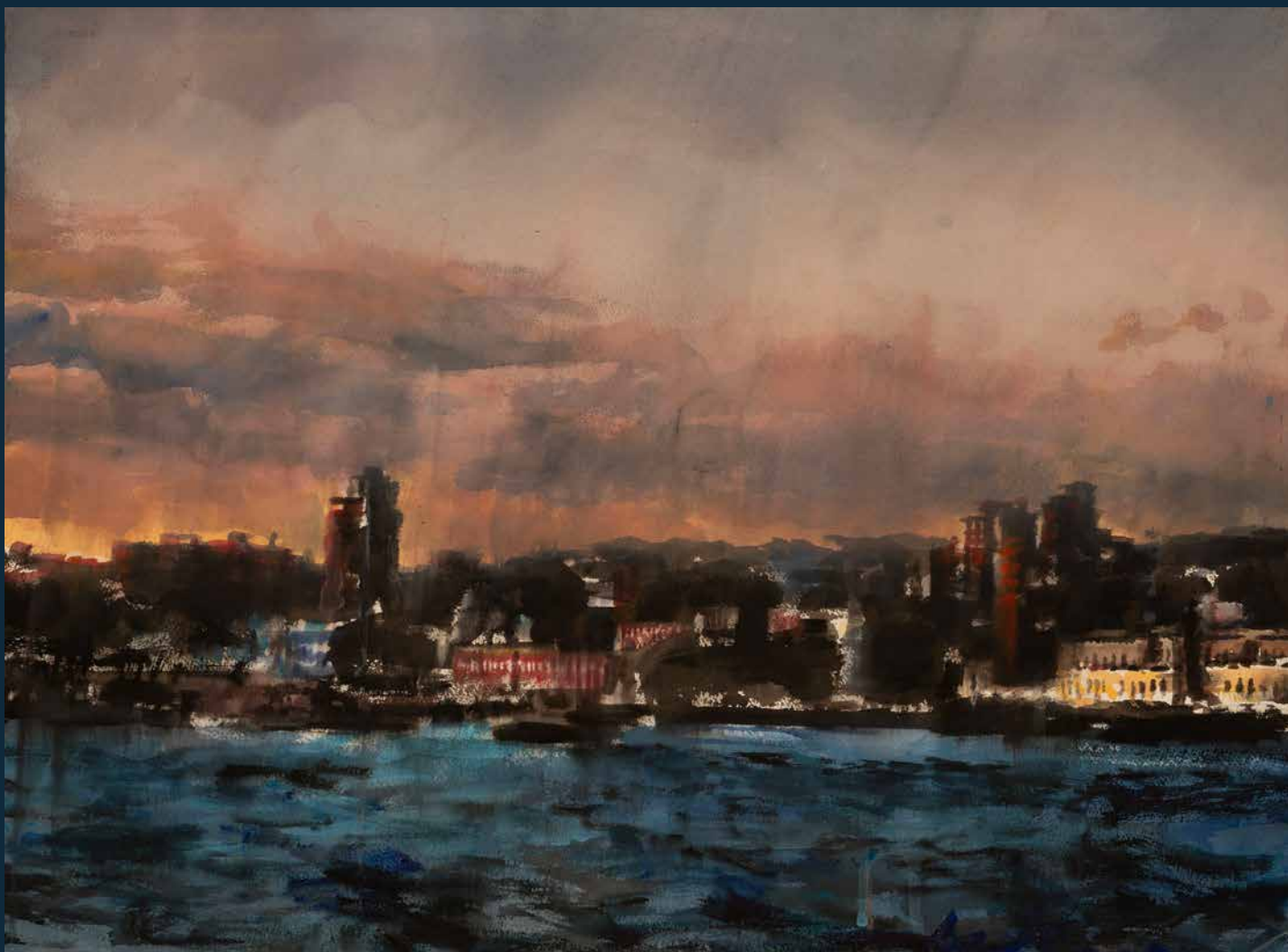
76,2 × 57,15 cm

Price upon request



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LOT 5



PAUL CHING-BOR d.1963

TWILIGHT ON BOSPHORUS II

2025

Watercolor on paper

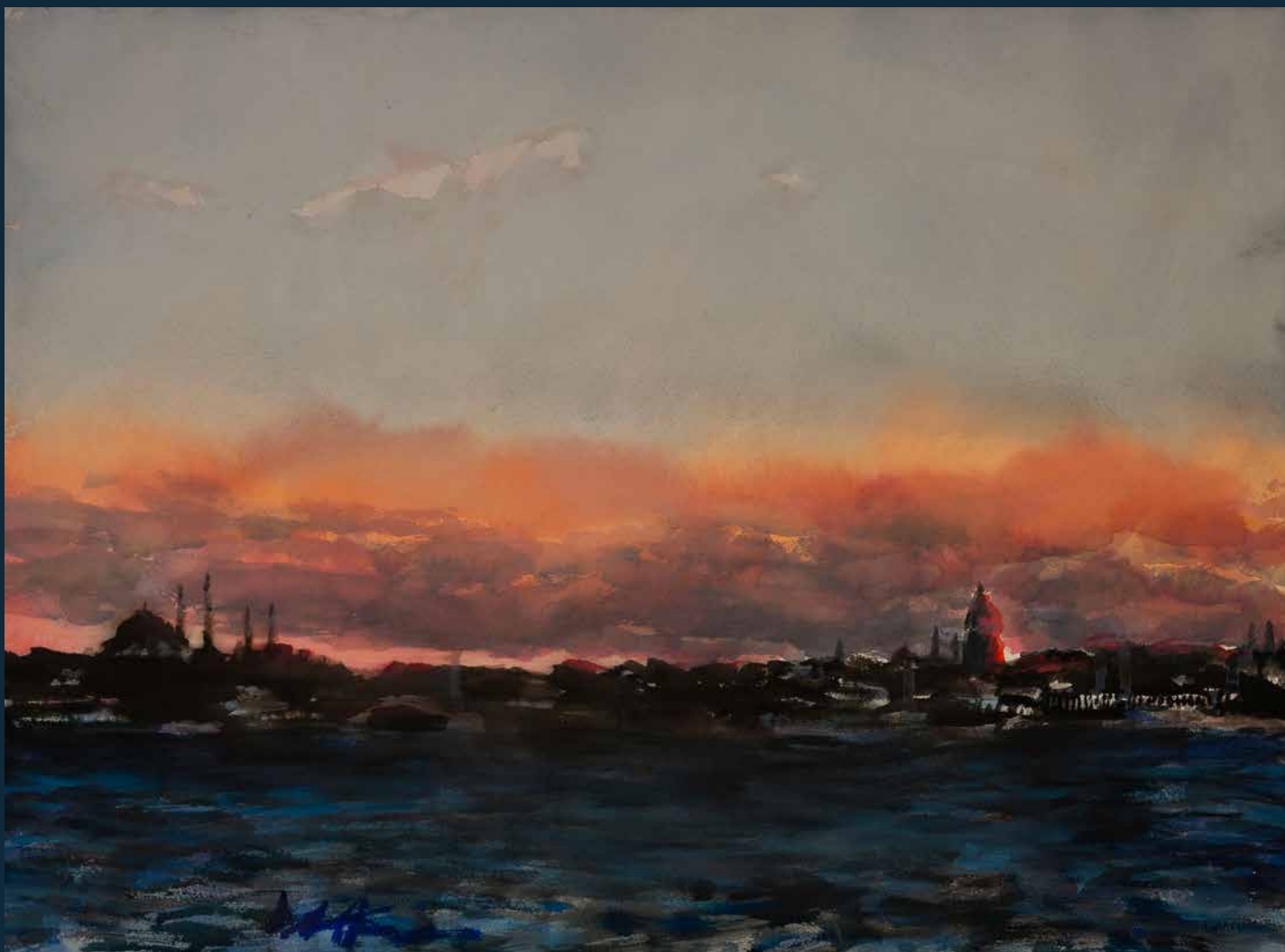
57,15 × 76,2 cm

Price upon request



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LOT 6



PAUL CHING-BOR d.1963

TWILIGHT ON BOSPHORUS III

2025

Watercolor on paper

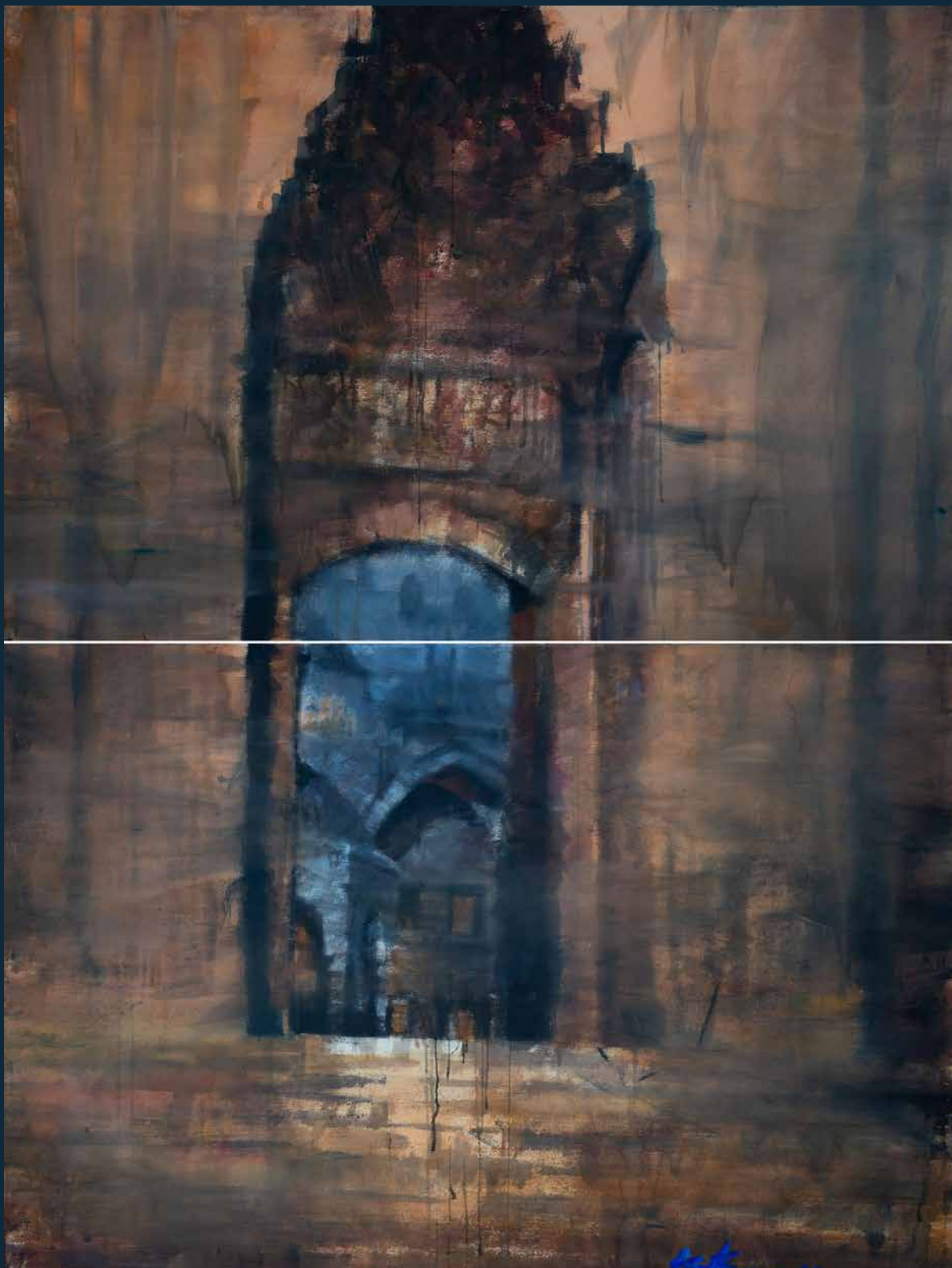
57,15 × 76,2 cm

Price upon request

LOT 7



PORTAKAL



PAUL CHING-BOR d.1963

AT THE ENTRENCE

2010

Watercolor on paper

203,2 × 152,4 cm in two panels

Price upon request



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LOT 8



PAUL CHING-BOR d.1963

LIT THROUGH I

2024

Watercolor on paper

182,88 × 261,62 cm in two panels

Price upon request

LOT 9



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PAUL CHING-BOR d.1963

LIT THROUGH II

2024

Watercolor on paper

182,88 × 261,62 cm in two panels

Price upon request

LOT 10

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