

FREEFALL

*Painting the Body
in Times of Cultural Crisis*

Juan Tardivo

2026

*What remains of the human body when the symbolic structures
that once gave meaning to the world begin to collapse?*

INDEX

Cover

Index

Artist Statement

Project

Research Context

How Painting Thinks

Research Process

Paintings

CV

Contact

Artist Statement

Painting begins with a question rather than an image.

I do not begin with a predetermined idea or a message to illustrate. Each project begins with a question that painting cannot answer in advance. Through colour, gesture, space and material, the work gradually reorganises itself until a form becomes visible. Meaning does not precede the painting; it emerges through the process of painting itself.

The body is the place where a question takes form and becomes visible. Identity, space and memory emerge as temporary configurations, continuously transformed by the relationships and forces that shape them.

Reading, drawing, writing and painting are not separate activities but different moments of the same inquiry. When painting reaches the limits of what it can reveal, writing continues the question.

When language reaches its own limits, another painting begins.

Painting does not explain the question. It allows the question to become visible.

Project

What remains of the human body when the symbolic structures that once gave meaning to the world begin to collapse?

FREEFALL begins with a fundamental question: what happens to the human body when the symbolic structures that once gave meaning to the world begin to lose their coherence?

Disintegration, metamorphosis, transformation and falling are not understood as images of destruction, but as conditions through which the body adapts to cultural change. When symbolic systems are transformed, the body is forced to renegotiate its relationship with identity, society and reality itself. Crisis is therefore not only the collapse of an established order, but the emergence of new and still unstable configurations of experience.

The body occupies a central place in this research: it is where historical, social and existential tensions become inscribed through colour, space and material.

FREEFALL develops through a dialogue with Albert Camus' reflections on the absurd and Oswald Spengler's analysis of cultural transformation. These philosophical perspectives are not treated as theories to illustrate, but as the origin of a question that painting pursues through its own language. Philosophy generates the question; painting carries the inquiry forward.

FREEFALL approaches painting as a form of artistic knowledge rather than as an illustration of philosophical ideas.



In FREEFALL, the body becomes the place where the instability of symbolic order acquires weight, tension and form.

Research Context

THE ABSURD

Albert Camus

Why does painting never come to an end?

For me, the absurd is not the subject of painting. It is the structure of the artistic process itself. Every painting begins with a question, carries it as far as it can, and inevitably reaches a point where it can go no further. Rather than resolving the question, the painting transforms it. The next work begins precisely where the previous one reaches its limit.

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Oswald Spengler

Why do symbolic structures change?

Spengler's morphology of history proposes that cultures possess their own internal life, evolving through phases of emergence, maturity and transformation. Rather than adopting this model as a historical explanation, FREEFALL draws from the idea that symbolic orders are not permanent. They change, dissolve and give way to new configurations of experience. The project investigates how these transformations become visible in the body through painting.

THE EXPOSED BODY

Jean-Luc Nancy

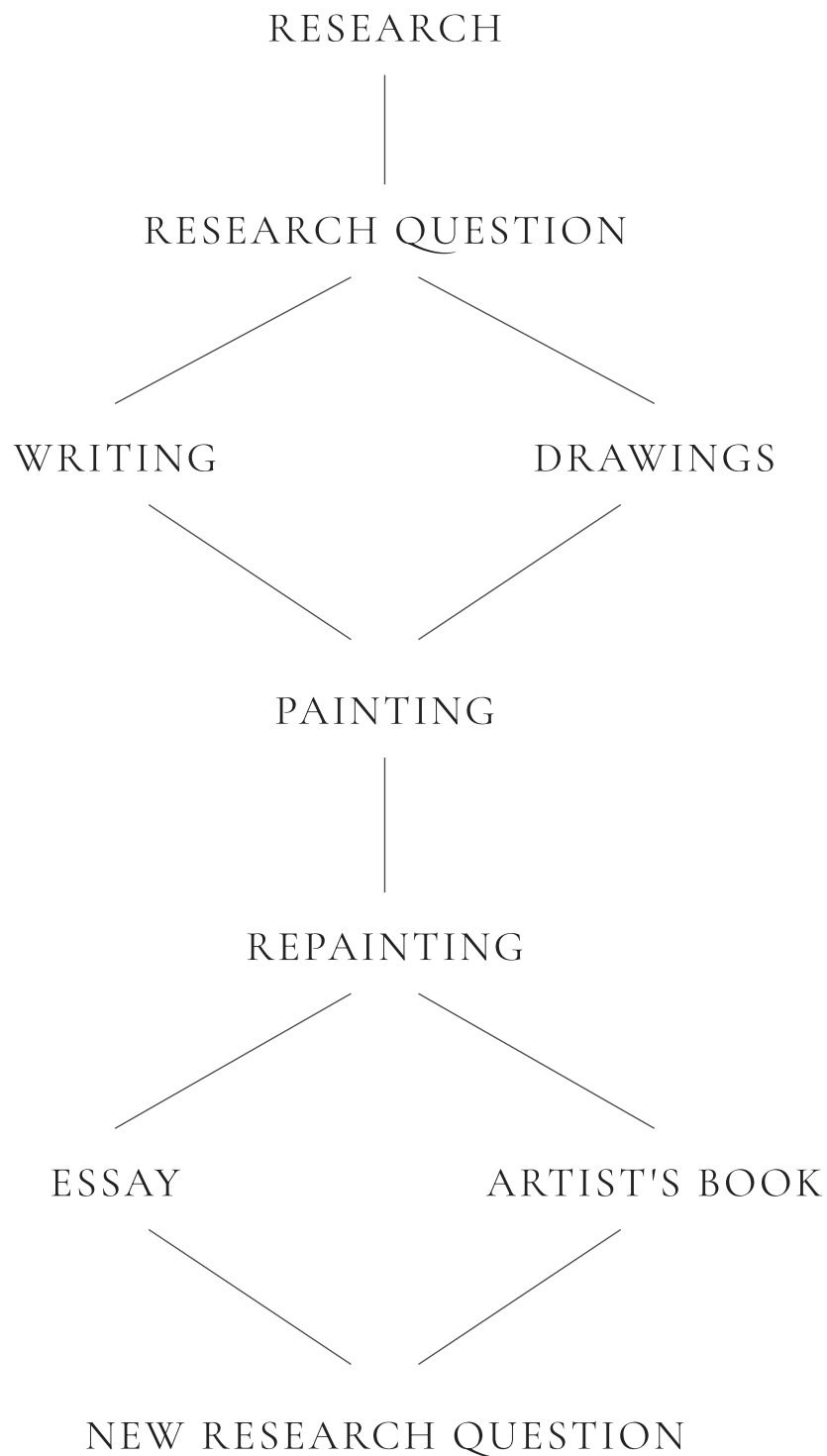
Where do these transformations become visible?

Jean-Luc Nancy understands the body not as a fixed identity but as the place where existence is continuously exposed to the world. The body is never complete or self-contained; it is constantly transformed through its encounters with what is outside itself. This understanding shifts FREEFALL away from representation and towards experience, where painting becomes the space in which this exposure can be perceived.

Nancy's reflections in *L'Intrus* also resonate with my experience of painting. Each new work enters the research like an intruder, altering the meaning of those that preceded it and forcing the entire body of work to reorganise itself.

HOW PAINTING THINKS

*Every painting carries a question as far as it can.
Its limit becomes the beginning of the next work.*



Research Process

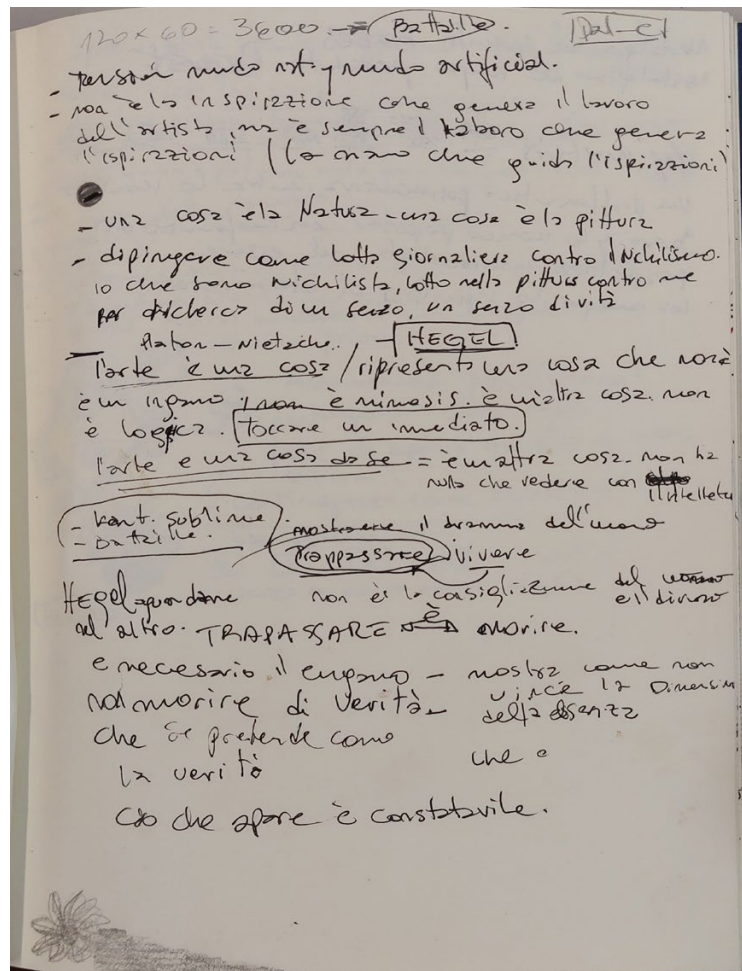
FREEFALL develops through a continuous movement between reading, writing, drawing and painting. These stages do not follow a fixed sequence. A philosophical text may generate a question, a drawing may alter its direction, and the material process of painting may reveal relationships that neither language nor planning had anticipated.

Repainting is central to this process. Forms are covered, displaced and reconstructed until the painting reaches the limit of the question that initiated it. This limit does not produce a definitive answer. It transforms the question and makes the next work necessary.

The research process is therefore not preparation for the paintings. It is the field in which the project takes form.







I paint as a daily struggle against nihilism, even as I recognise the nihilist within myself. Painting becomes a way of resisting myself and searching for meaning within the absurdity of things.



SELECTED WORKS

Ongoing research, 2026–

The paintings presented here form the first nucleus of an ongoing series intended to develop into approximately twelve to fifteen works. Its formal coherence is not determined in advance, but emerges gradually through the accumulation of the works and the dialogue between them.

Absurde Identität

Oil on canvas
250 × 200 cm
2026



Der vernichtende
Engel

Oil on canvas
250 × 200 cm
2026



Himmelssturz

Oil on canvas
300 × 200 cm
2026







Zwischen den
Ordnungen

Oil on canvas
150 × 150 cm
2026





JUAN TARDIVO

Visual Artist · Writer

Juan Tardivo (1986, Río Cuarto, Argentina) is an Argentine artist based in Munich. Working across painting, writing and poetry, his work is concerned with the emergence of form through the relations between body, colour, geometry and space.

+49 15730992223
info@juantardivo.com
juantardivo.com
Munich, Germany

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2026 – *In the Body of Painting*, My Collectif Galerie, Munich, Germany
2025 – *The Body Knows It Better*, Zoom Space 25, Munich, Germany
2025 – *Into The Wild Landscape*, Zoom Space 25, Munich, Germany
2019 – *Il Taglio Della Montagna*, Pop-up Gallery, Bologna, Italy
2017 – *Melanconia*, Garden Gallery, Bologna, Italy

Teaching

2023–present — Oil Painting Course
Munich
2020–2022 — Oil Painting Course
Bologna

Education

2018–2020
Painting Studies with Erica
Calardo
2016
Workshop with Carlos Alonso
2008–2010
School of Fine Arts,
Córdoba, Argentina
2004–2008
B.A. Audiovisual Production
Villa María, Argentina

Selected Group Exhibitions

2025 – *Shattered Echoes*, Kunstlabor 2, Munich, Germany
2025 – *Biophilia*, Feierwerk Farbenladen, Munich, Germany
2024 – *Biophilia*, Broke.Today, Munich, Germany
2024 – *NEUZW004*, Konsum163, Munich, Germany
2023 – *Bonner Herbst Salon*, The Stage Gallery, Bonn, Germany
2022 – *Precious Emissions*, MTL Arty Studio, Bologna, Italy
2016 – *Arte a palazzo* - Galleria Farini Concept - Bologna, Italy

Publications

2026 — *In The Body Of Painting*, Ed. Cris International Swiss Art Company
2025 — *Under My Skin*, Ed. Osservatorioarma
2025 — *Artbook Munich*
2012 — *This Is Not A Book Of Poetry*, Ed. Dinamo Poetico

Juan Tardivo
info@juantardivo.com
juantardivo.com
@juantardivo