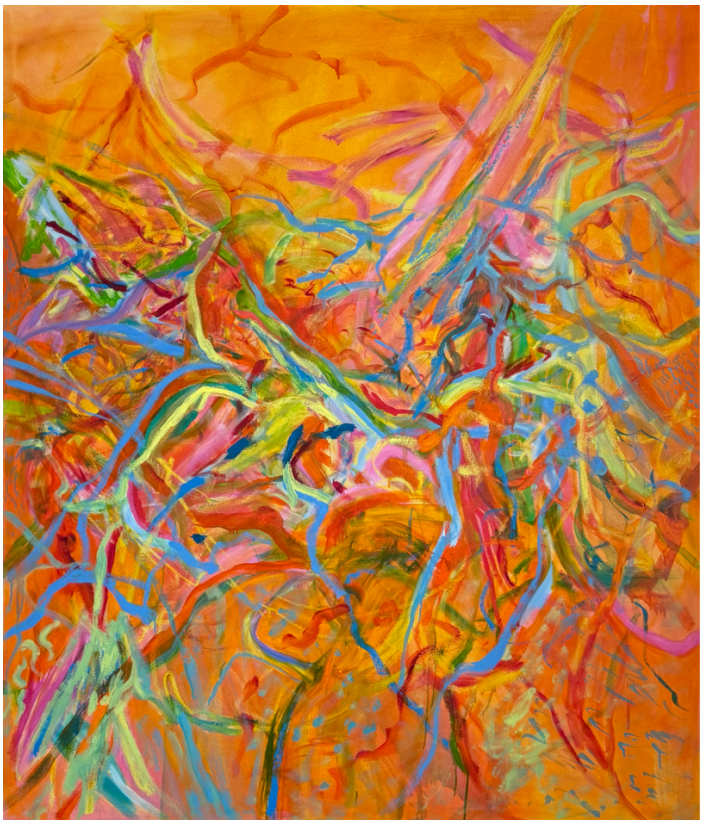
RONCHINI

RUNAWAY

SHARA MAYS



Shara Mays, *Robbin*, 2026, oil on canvas, 168 x 145 cm
Courtesy the artist and Ronchini

PREVIEW: THURSDAY, 30/04/2026, 6-8PM
OPEN: 01/05 - 06/06/2026

Ronchini is pleased to present an exhibition of all-new works by US-born, Colombia-based artist Shara Mays. As her first solo exhibition at Ronchini, *Runaway* presents a new body of work made specifically for the occasion, in her signature, vibrant, abstract style. Known for her expansive, gestural paintings that blur the boundaries between figuration and abstraction, Mays develops compositions that are at once intuitive and immersive, shaped through a process that prioritises movement, sensation, and openness.

Runaway takes its title from Mays' engagement with the historical figure of the "runaway," a term used in the archives of American slavery to describe those who fled in search of freedom. Drawing on this history, the exhibition considers movement not only as escape, but as a way of shaping one's own path. In doing so, Mays engages with the broader histories of the African diaspora, tracing how legacies of displacement and survival continue to resonate across time. Rather than revisiting these narratives directly, Mays approaches them more indirectly, thinking through how experiences of displacement, memory, and survival continue to be felt in the present.

OPENING HOURS: Tuesday–Friday 10am–6pm, Saturday 11am–6pm, Monday by appointment
21 Conduit Street, London, W1S 2XP
+44 (0)20 7629 9188 | www.ronchinigallery.com
info@ronchinigallery.com

RONCHINI

RUNAWAY

SHARA MAYS

Animated, restless, and uncontained, her compositions unfold across large-scale canvases, where colour, gesture, and movement take centre stage. Figures and landscapes that appear and disappear across her works are not fixed, but instead flicker in and out of visibility, suspended within dense accumulations of brushwork, drips, and layered pigment. These are not rehearsed scenes, nor depictions of specific places; rather, they emerge through an intuitive, open-ended process. Beginning with canvases laid on the floor, Mays pours, splashes, and spreads fluid paint in acts of physical immediacy, before moving the work to the wall, where forms begin to surface, dissolve, and reconfigure.

Long associated with traditions of observation and control, Mays radically reimagines landscape painting. She rejects the notion of the landscape as a window onto the world, instead offering what she describes as a window into thought itself. Her "internal landscapes" drawn from lived experience which includes memories of the American South, ancestral histories, and embodied encounters with the natural world. In their place, she constructs environments that attempt to grasp the unknowable: emotions, sensations, and histories that evade fixed form.

Mays' surfaces are at once exuberant and insistent. Saturated with bold, luminous colour, her paintings assert a maximalist sensibility, in which vibrancy becomes a form of presence. Brushstrokes stretch, collide, and intertwine, retaining the energy of their making. Drips are not corrected but embraced; moments of rupture and struggle remain visible, embedded within the canvas. In this way, each work holds the trace of the artist's physical and emotional engagement, inviting viewers into a space that is as much felt as it is seen.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

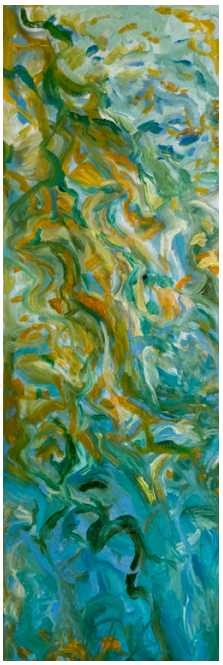
Shara Mays (b. Princeville, USA) lives and works in Oakland, California and Cartagena, Colombia. She received a BFA from Corcoran College of Art and Design in 2000, and an MFA from San Francisco Art Institute in 2020. In her work, Mays explores ways in which we navigate between cultural stereotype and singularity by engaging with the visual spaces between figuration and abstraction.

Mays has exhibited her work at venues including: Ronchini, London (2025); James Cohan Gallery, New York (2024); Harper's, Los Angeles (2024); Hunter Dunbar Projects, New York (2023); San Francisco Art Institute (2021); and de Young Museum, San Francisco (2020). Her work is held in the collections of the Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington, DC; Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas; and International African American Art Museum, Charleston, South Carolina. Most recently, her work has been featured in publications including *Artnet*, *The Guardian*, and *Juxtapoz*.

RONCHINI

RUNAWAY

SHARA MAYS



Shara Mays, *Younger Sarah (tolerable black)*, 2026, oil on canvas, 120 x 40 cm
Courtesy the artist and Ronchini

EXHIBITION: Runaway: Shara Mays
DATES: 1 May – 6 June 2026
PREVIEW: 30 April 2026, 6-8pm
OPENING HOURS: Tuesday – Friday 10am – 6pm, Saturday 11am-6pm, Monday by appointment
LOCATION: 21 Conduit Street, London, W1S 2XP
TEL: +44 (0)20 7629 9188
EMAIL: info@ronchinigallery.com
WEBSITE: www.ronchinigallery.com
INSTAGRAM / TWITTER: @RonchiniGallery #RonchiniGallery