



DANELLE BERGSTROM
Våga

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1 – 18 November 2017

Opening reception
Wednesday 1 November, 6pm



PHOTOGRAPH MICHAEL WEE

Danelle Bergstrom creates wildly evocative landscapes that pictorialise the artist's lived experiences. In her new collection, Bergstrom personifies the land as a vessel for emotion. The paintings are autobiographical expressions of recent experiences in Hill End, Australia, and Källskär, Åland, Finland, functioning as tangible footprints along well-trodden roads winding through the artist's memory. Enlisting water as a trope for the tectonics of memory and emotion, the show charts a diametric journey from contentment to turmoil – from still dams to tumultuous seas. Here Bergstrom meditates on the Swedish term *våga*, which translates to 'dare' whilst *våg* also denotes 'wave'. She builds on the idea of physical and metaphysical reflection, looking at how disturbances of a water body create distortions of reality and yet the surface quickly regains composure – a poetic symbol for the experiences of loss and rebirth so endemic to Bergstrom's art.

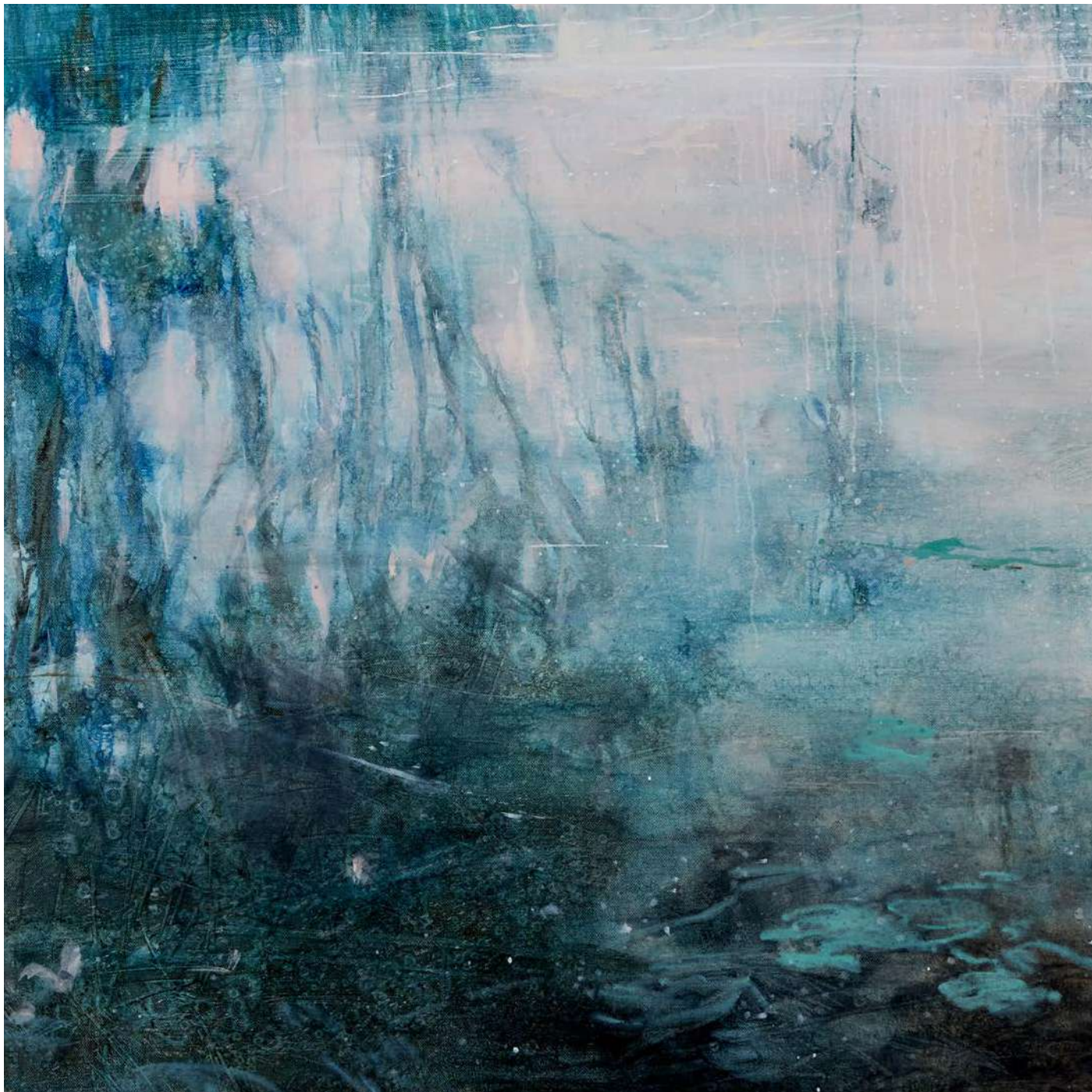
'You are where your heart is' says Bergstrom, who paints the land via mnemonic references and imaginative conjurings rather than literally en plein air. For the artist, this regional setting is a place of celebration, sorrow and serenity, embodying memorable years living there with her family. Rendering tranquil dams and native bushland with tender delicacy, the artist's new paintings function as revised narratives evoking the transformative power of nature. Layers of ghostly blues and lilacs entwined with earthy umbers create a spectral vision of the landscape that linger between the real and the remembered. In these works, Bergstrom has been inspired by the words of Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard: 'life can only be understood in reverse but must be lived forwards'. Water is pictured as a cathartic tool, cyclical interplays of distortion and composure symbolising the propensity for the

past to help us heal and move forward. With no defined perspectival focus to anchor our gaze, the painterly dams invoke a broader emotional and psychological exploration of self and environment, carrying the viewer on a voyage through the artist's dense psychological terrain. Sweeping swathes of blue water are veneered with fine dashes of dark reeds, their calligraphic construction reflecting a symbiotic balance of nature and culture.

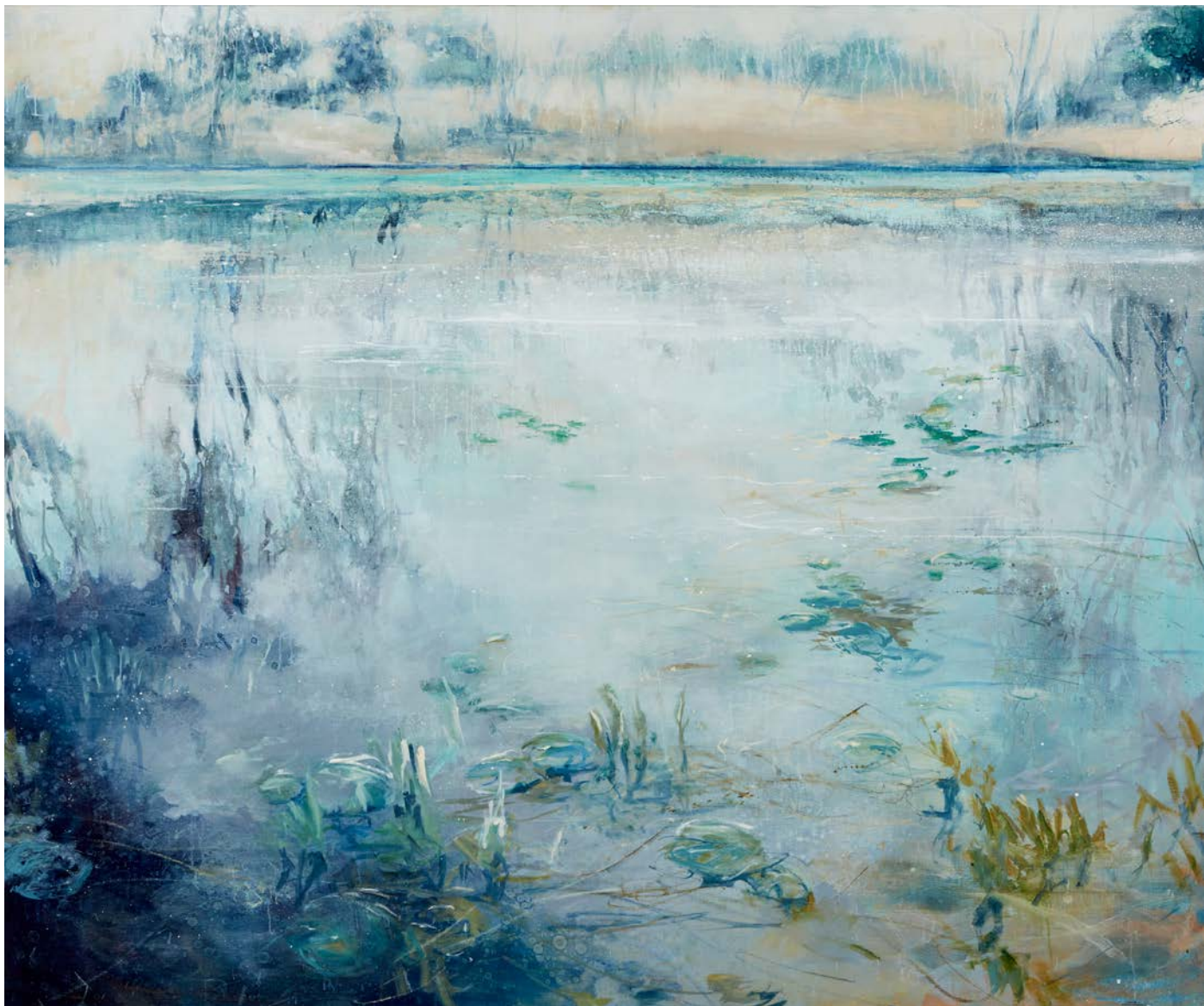
While her Hill End works are hushed, warm and serene, Bergstrom's Scandinavian seascapes evoke the roaring, dark energy of the ocean. Drawing from a recent residency on Källskär, a tiny remote island off Åland's archipelago, between the coast of Sweden and Finland, the artist pictures the unrelenting waves as the heartbeat of the sea, a rhythm that counterparts our own pulsing body. Deep indigos and icy whites mingle in choppy strokes, symptomising a fraught process of surrendering to the heart; not in an indulgent or sentimental way, but as an honest and raw acceptance of self. The quiet surface reflections evoked in Bergstrom's Hill End dams are supplanted by aerial inky voids, portals to darker worlds that visualise the artist's feelings of being lost in a dream. The works are profoundly sensorial – loud, unrelenting waves ricochet around the picture plane with primal vigour while the wintry sun prickles exposed skin and a salty perfume drifts in the ocean breeze.

In these works, the artist contemplates the paradox of water as a substance that is both formless yet forceful. At Källskär she would climb cliffs to pick wild blueberries before spending time peering down at the ocean below, mesmerized by the relentless motion and uniqueness of the waves, meditating on the poetry of how something so soft could model, chisel and erode the enduring rocks. 'Am I the rock or am I the water?' she reflects, translating these experiences as tropes for power and vulnerability; fluidity and stasis. In three of the larger works Bergstrom repeats the same rocky foundation while changing the forces of the water, a poignant analogy for her personal life which finds balance between staying strong and going with the flow. The dominant scale destabilises the viewer's footing, luring us head-first into these primitive worlds where nature reigns superior and our repressed psychological wilderness materializes with subconscious persistence. For Bergstrom, this isolated Baltic island became a place of rebirth, heralding her future.

Danelle Bergstrom completed a Bachelor of Art Education at Alexander Mackie CAE, and she also studied at the Julian Ashton Art School. She has been the recipient of major residencies including Åland, Finland (2017); Konstpedemin, Gothenburg Sweden (2011), Northern Territory Supreme Court, Darwin (2008) and Cill Rialaig, Sweden, Paris, Ireland, Co Kerry (2007). The artist has been a finalist in numerous prestigious prizes, such as the Archibald Prize in 2016, and received many awards including People's Choice Award, Portia Geach Memorial Award (2013, 2010, 2009, 2006, 2005), People's Choice Award, Salon des Refusés (2011, 2009), People's Choice Award, Redlands Westpac Art Prize (2005), Highly Commended, the Archibald Prize (2004) and Packing Room Prize, the Archibald Prize (2007, 1995). Bergstrom has painted twenty-four public commissions and her work is held in national collections including Sydney District Court, Charles Darwin University, Adelaide Justice Department, University of Technology, Adelaide University, Northern Territory Justice Department, Supreme Court, Westmead Children's Hospital, National Portrait Gallery, Transfield Holdings and the National Library.



Lost in reverie I
oil on linen
153 x 183 cm



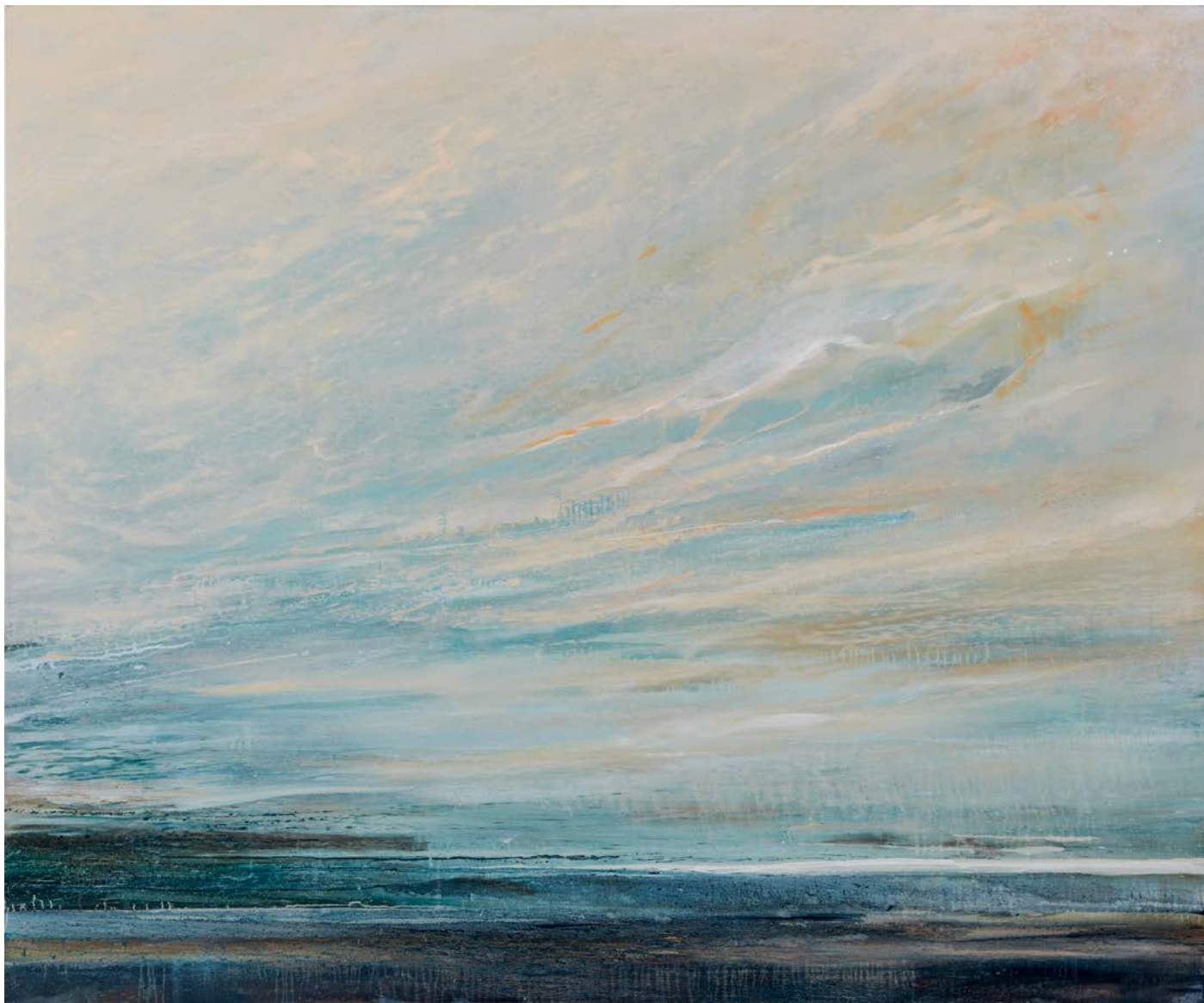
Lost in reverie II
oil on linen
153 x 183 cm



Lost in reverie III
oil on linen
153 x 183 cm



Esperence
oil on linen
153 x 183 cm



Musical reeds I
oil on linen
92 x 92 cm



Musical reeds II
oil on linen
92 x 92 cm



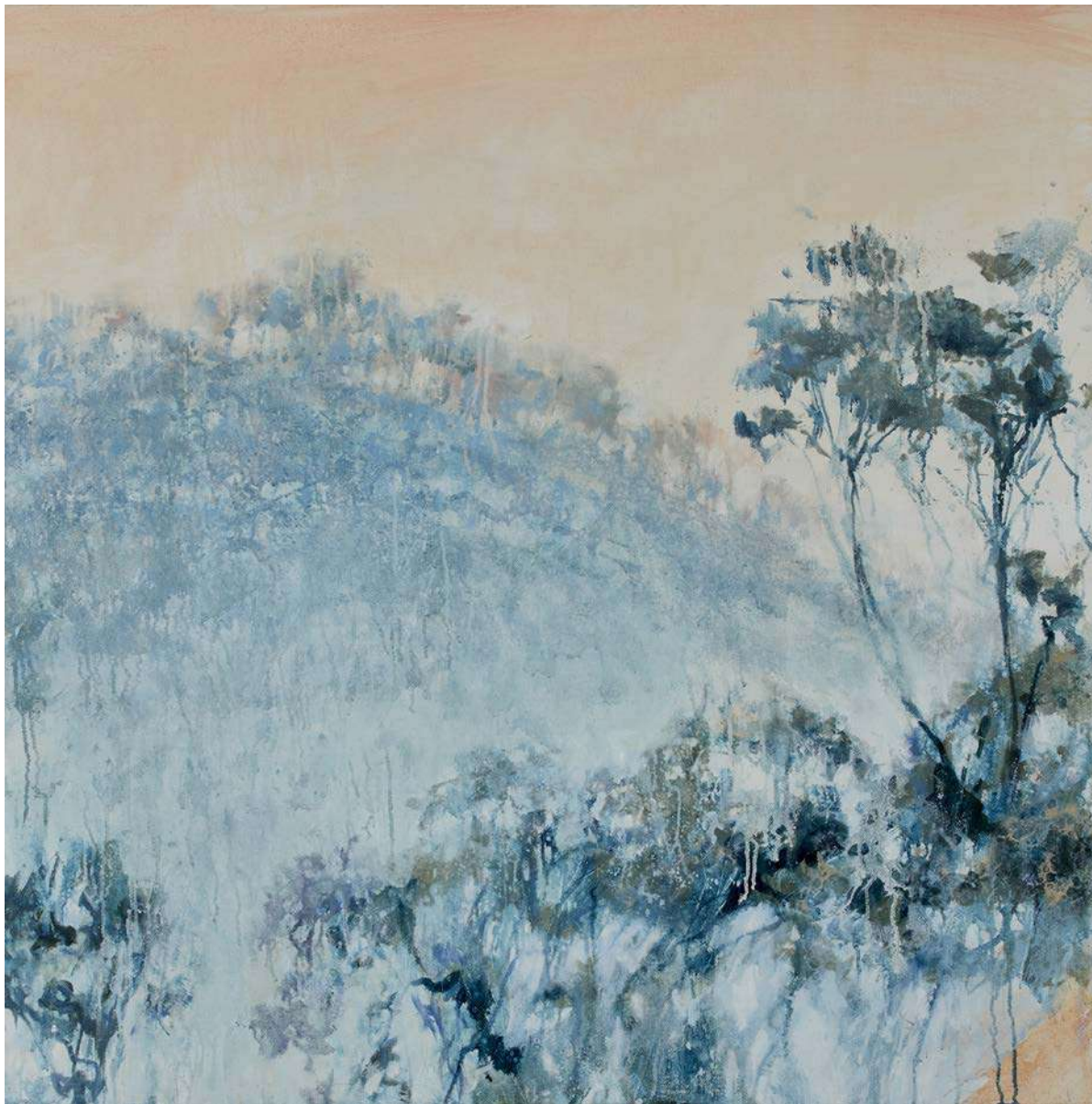
Quiet embrace I, II, III
oil on linen
137 x 46 cm each



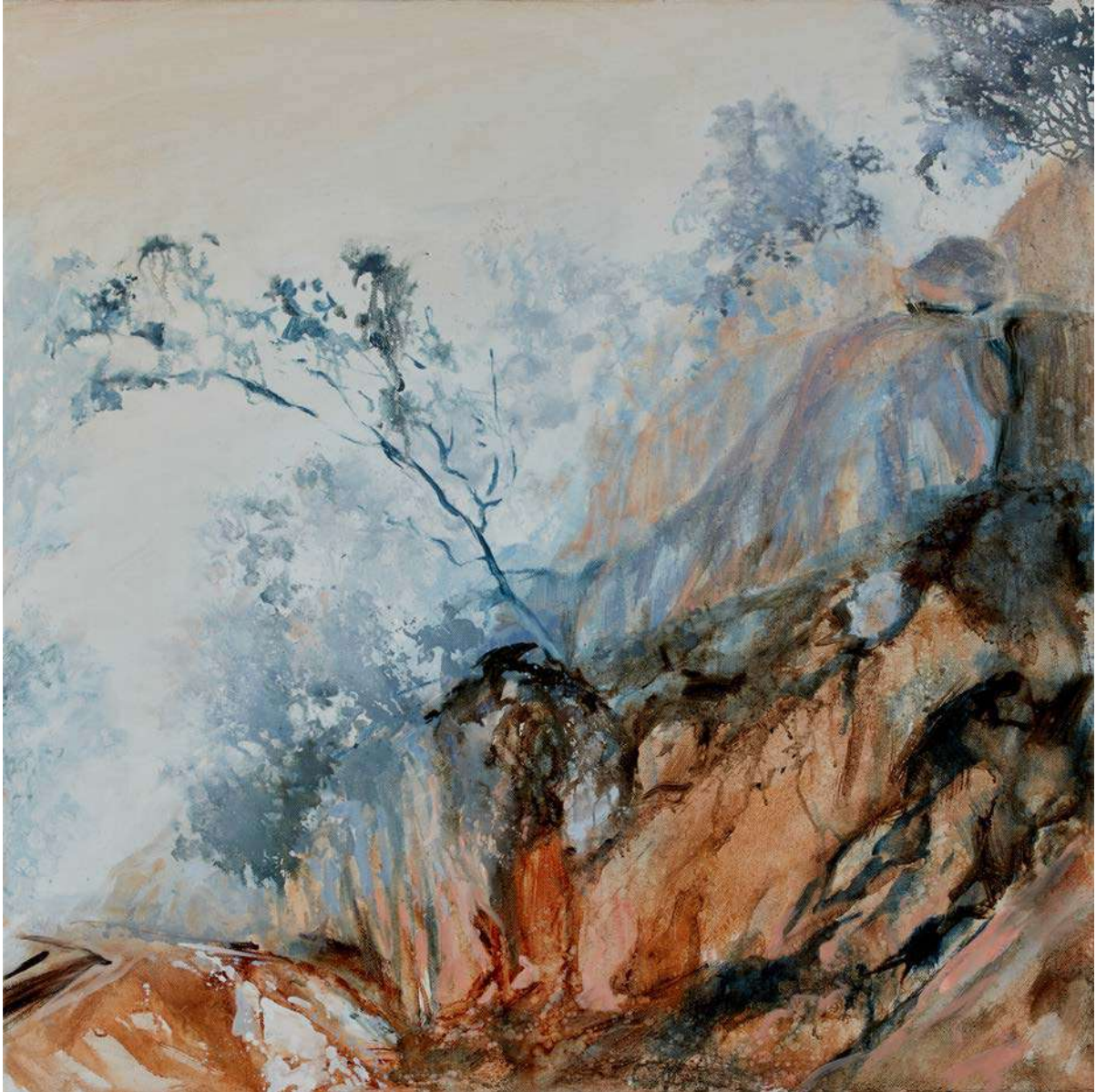
Misty I
oil on linen
92 x 92 cm



Misty II
oil on linen
92 x 92 cm

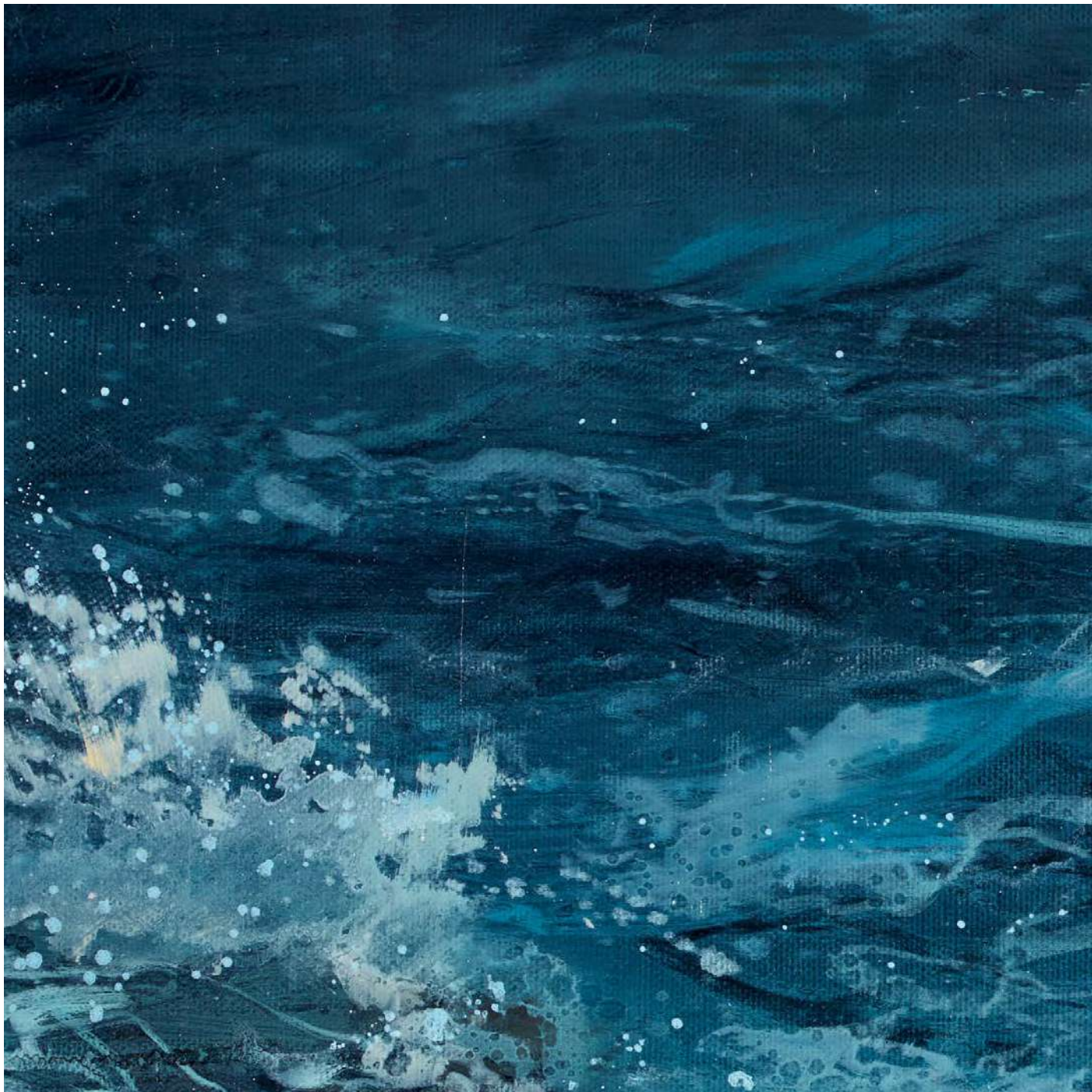


Misty III
oil on linen
92 x 92 cm



Woven hours
oil on linen
61 x 122 cm





Våga I
oil on linen
198 x 198 cm



Våga II
oil on linen
198 x 198 cm



Våga III
oil on linen
198 x 198 cm



Infinite procession

oil on linen

92 x 198 cm



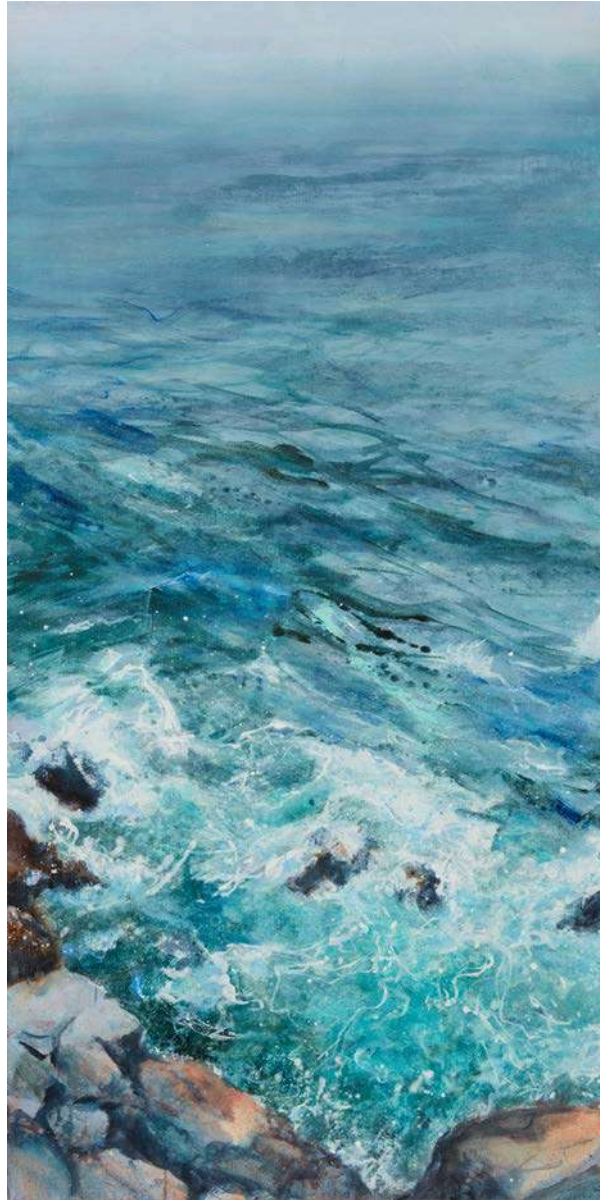
Fortitude II
oil on linen
122 x 122 cm



Fortitude I
oil on linen
122 x 122 cm



Eternal I
oil on linen
122 x 62 cm



Eternal II
oil on linen
122 x 62 cm



Invisible boundaries
oil on linen
122 x 366 cm



Resilience I, II, III, IV (clockwise)

oil on linen

61 x 61 cm each



Ensemble
oil on linen
36 x 152 cm



Trilogy
oil on linen
92 x 122.5 cm

