



DANELLE BERGSTROM

Entwined



Photograph by Hülya Tokur-Ehres

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2 – 25 March 2023

Opening Celebration & Drinks, Thursday 2 March, 5 – 7pm

Artist Talk, Saturday 4 March, 3pm

When I visit Danelle Bergstrom's Hill End studio, it is raining, and the village is washed in a misty haze. The landscape is drinking-in this downpour, thirsty still from the prolonged drought and Australia's hottest summer on record. A rich petrichor fills the senses, the sweet smell of wet earth after such a long dry.

Like an oasis, Bergstrom's studio offers warmth and sustenance. The gentle rhythm of rain plays on the tin roof, a soothing melody that intensifies the feeling of awe as I contemplate the extraordinary body of work the artist has created in just six months. Canvases large and small, in various stages of completion, fill the vast, bright expanse of the studio. Each canvas denotes a landscape that is familiar, yet somehow other, flooded with ethereal light and an unearthly, otherworldly beauty. The subject, the landscape of Hill End, is repeated and explored. Trunks, branches, bark and canopies are revealed through a complex layering of washes and brushstrokes. Areas of raw linen blend with gossamers of oil paint applied with a light and practiced hand that has mastered the power of speaking softly. Muted hues of umber, amber, pink, violet and periwinkle are suffused with light, a symbol of new beginnings, positivity, and regeneration.

Looking at these paintings is like being transported into the scene: to watch the artist as she works, to feel the warmth of the first rays of the sun at dawn, to breathe in the early morning mist, and exhale its winter chill. An invitation to stand in, of, and with the natural world.

Bergstrom resists the term 'landscape painting' to describe her work. Rather, the artist sees the landscape as a 'mirror of the mind' that reflects belonging and connection. Works are resolved in the studio using sketches as an aide-memoire rather than a blueprint for finished work. Each painting is a journey for the artist, an exploration of self. *Between Two Worlds*, the first work painted for this series, acts as a bridge between Bergstrom's two great loves, Hill End and Åland, Finland. It was not until the painting was finished that the artist understood she had channelled both landscapes into the one work, a portrait of love, longing, time and place.

To describe Bergstrom's relationship with Hill End as a love affair is no exaggeration, she first moved to the village in 1997, and though she has travelled widely and lived in other places, still experiences a yearning when she is away, and a 'singing in her heart' whenever she returns. Painting in isolation, with the threats posed by the global Covid-19 pandemic and the realities of restricted travel, Bergstrom has once again taken refuge in Hill End's remote and rugged landscape, producing works that explore the fragility, resilience and beauty of the Australian bush, and her emotional and psychological responses to it.

The suite of eighteen works titled *Entwined*, extended and further transformed in this exhibition to create an immersive video piece, are a triumph. A subtle shift in colour and tone plays across each canvas, creating a sense of continuity that allows the viewer to move through the landscape when rendered to large-scale video format. This playful shift in scale affords both an intimacy and a sense of expansiveness. The reduced colour palette of these works, applied with minimalistic precision, highlights the absence of undergrowth and leaf litter, leaving the raw canvas as a metaphor for the brittleness of drought, but also a symbol for hope and regeneration. So too, works, such as *Calling*, move compositionally from darkness to light, drawing the eye from the rocky foreground through to the gentle glow of sunrise and the start of a new day.

Danelle Bergstrom's paintings are landscapes of the heart and of the mind. They invite contemplation, reflection, respite, and stillness - qualities that resonate now more than ever.

Sarah Gurich

Director, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery

Bergstrom has been the recipient of major residencies in Åland, Finland (2017), Konstpedemin, Gothenburg, Sweden (2016, 2011), Northern Territory Supreme Court, Darwin (2008) and Cill Rialaig, in Sweden, Paris and Ireland (2007). She has been a finalist in numerous prestigious prizes including the Archibald Prize (2016, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2004, 2003, 2001, 1998, 1995), Portia Geach Memorial Award (2017, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, 2002, 1999, 1993), Paddington Art Prize (2007), Salon des Refusés (2011, 2005), and received the Archibald Packing Room Prize (2007, 1995), People's Choice Award, Portia Geach Memorial Award (2013, 2010, 2009, 2006, 2005), People's Choice Award, Salon des Refusés (2011, 2009). Bergstrom has painted over twenty public commissions and her work is held in many important collections including the National Portrait Gallery and National Library in Canberra, The Australian Club, Sydney District Court, Charles Darwin University, Adelaide Justice Department, University of Technology Sydney, Adelaide University, Northern Territory Justice Department and Westmead Children's Hospital.

In addition to this exhibition, Danelle Bergstrom will present a major survey exhibition at Bathurst Regional Art Gallery from 31 March until 28 May 2023.



Calling

oil on linen

122 x 366 cm



Beckoning
oil on linen
153 x 183 cm



Precious Silver

oil on linen

153 x 183 cm



Surrender
oil on linen
153 x 183 cm



Entwined XVI

oil on linen

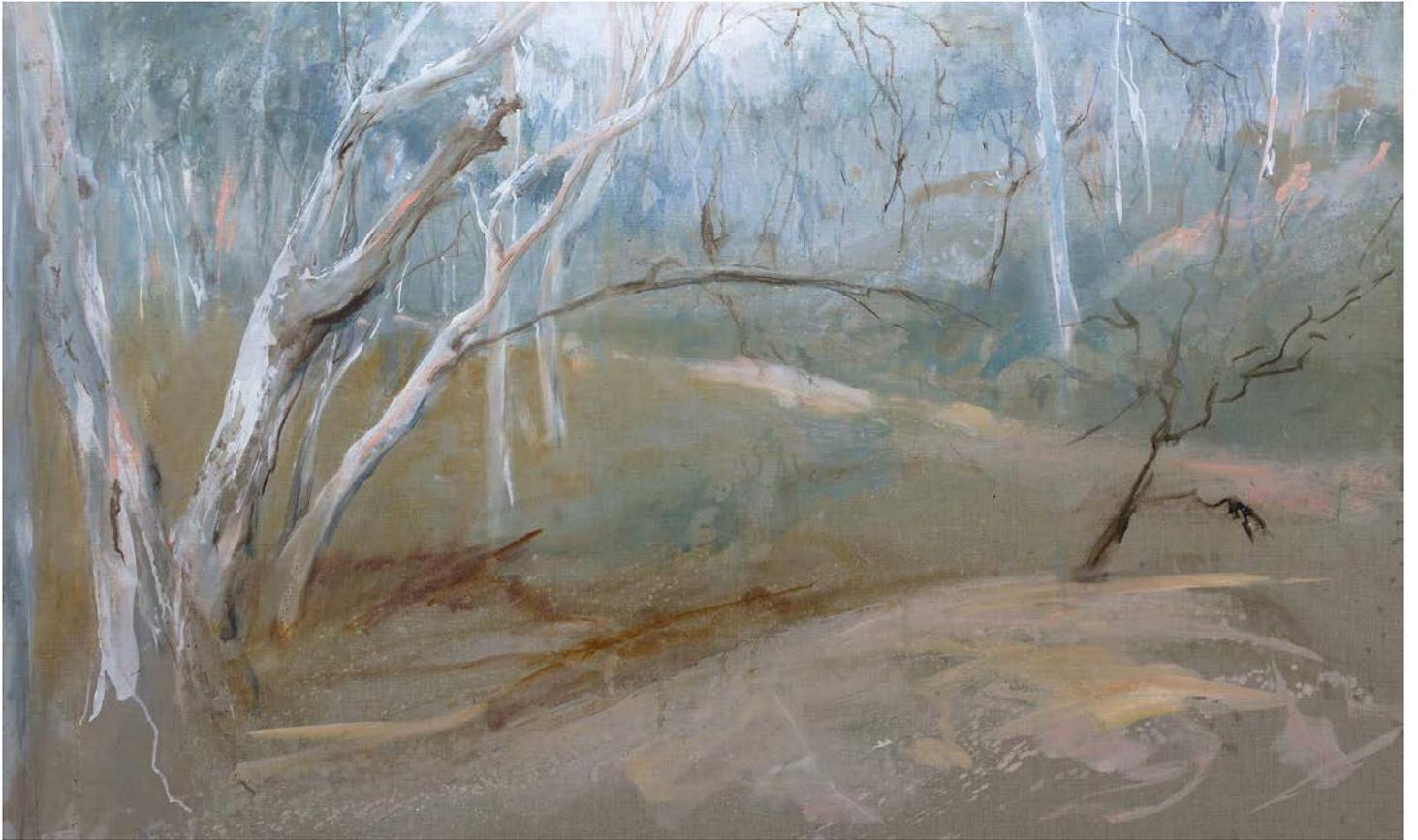
92 x 153 cm



Entwined XVII

oil on linen

92 x 153 cm



Entwined XVIII

oil on linen

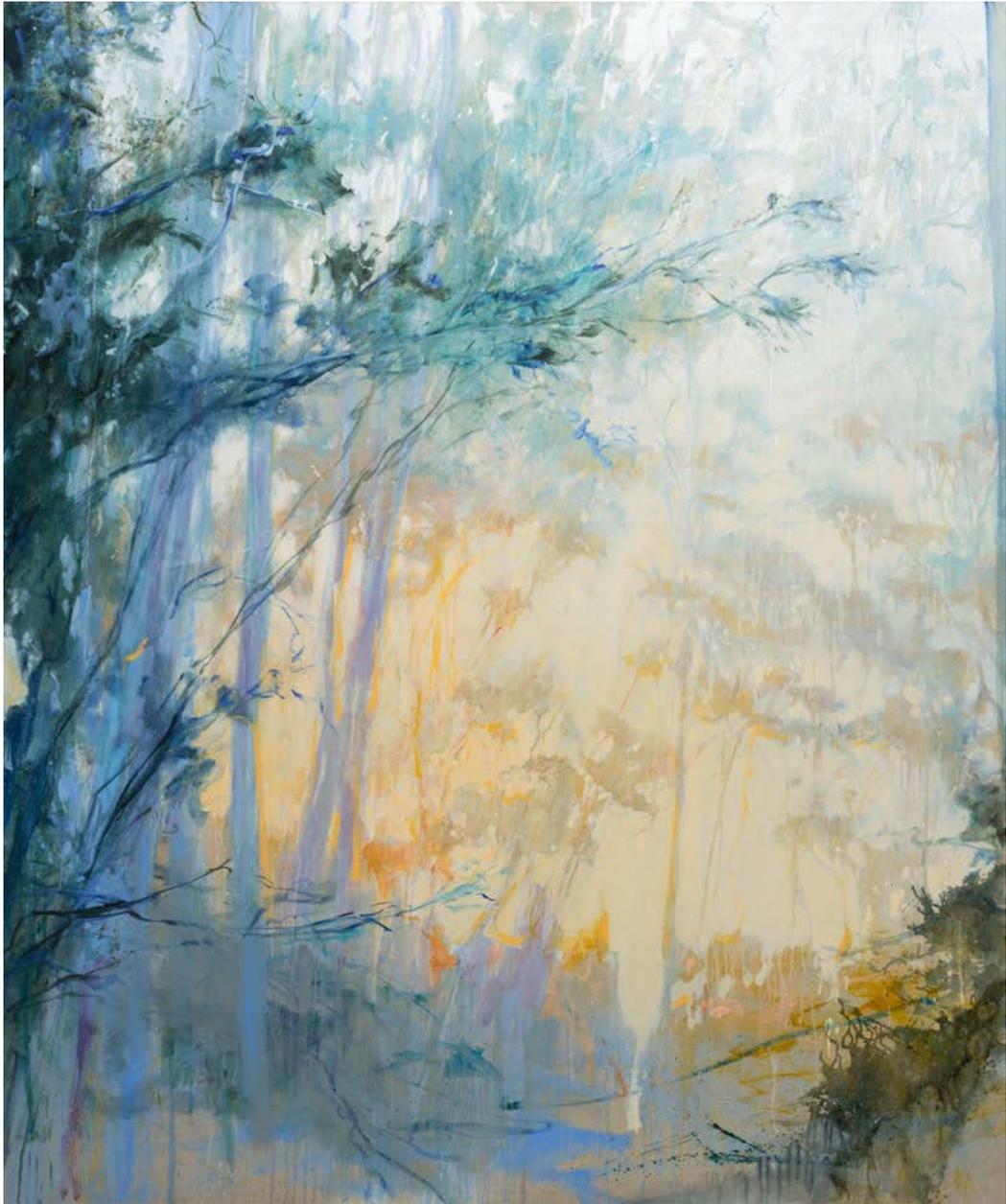
92 x 153 cm



Between Two Worlds

oil on linen

183 x 153 cm



Remember
oil on linen
92 x 274 cm



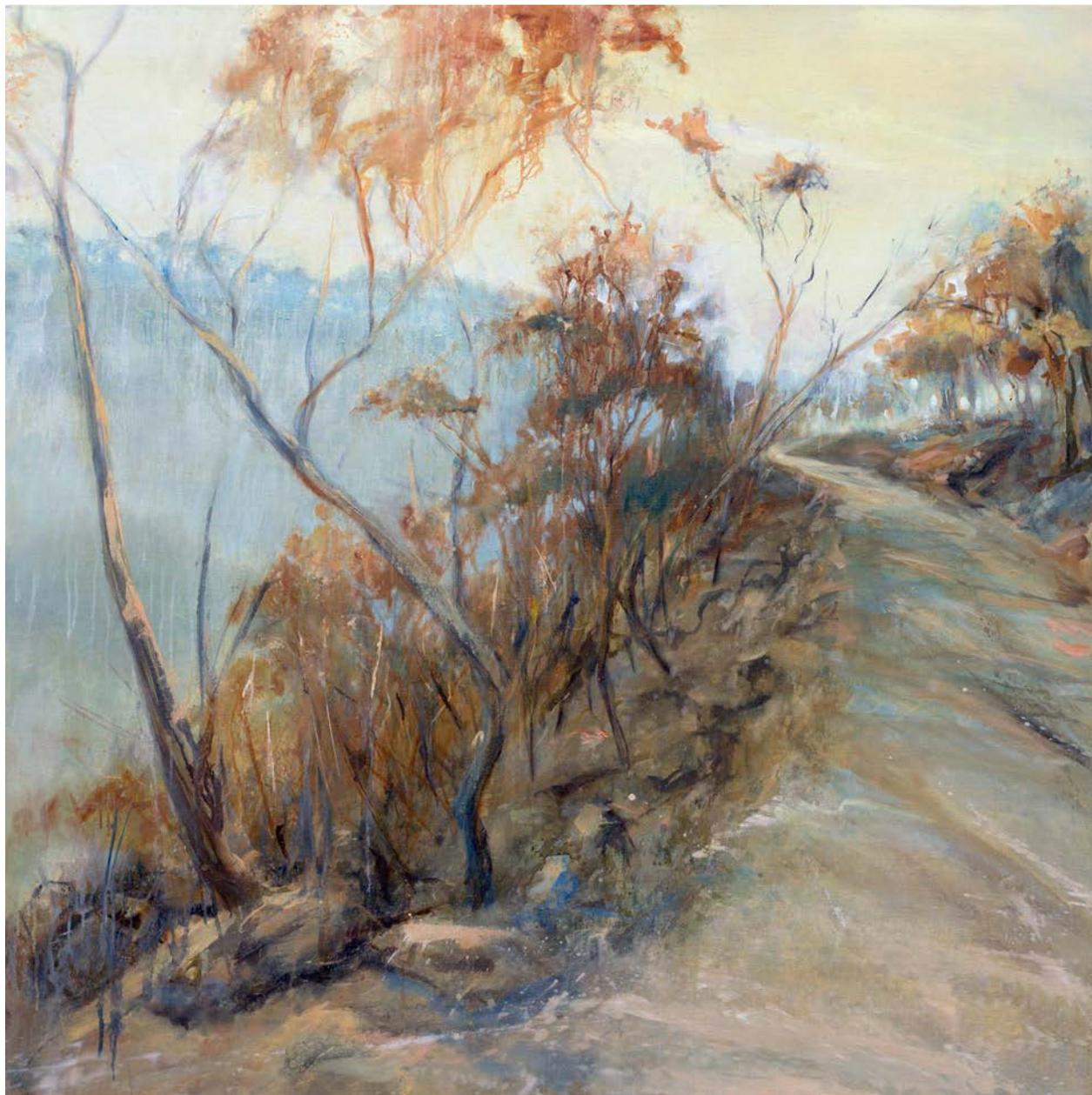
On Track I
oil on linen
103 x 103 cm



On Track II
oil on linen
103 x 103 cm



On Track III
oil on linen
103 x 103 cm



Longing
oil on linen
103 x 103 cm



Resound
oil on linen
100 x 300 cm



(L to R) *Entwined I, II & III*

oil on linen

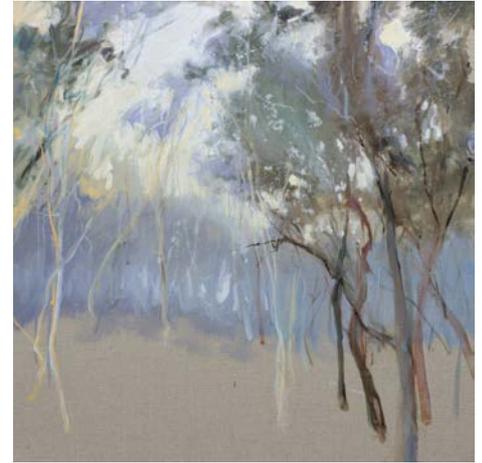
61 x 61 cm



(L to R) *Entwined IV, V & VI*

oil on linen

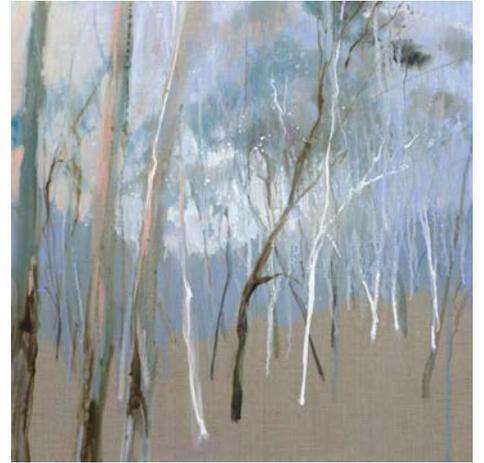
61 x 61 cm



(L to R) *Entwined VII, VIII & IX*

oil on linen

61 x 61 cm



(L to R) *Entwined X, XI & XII*

oil on linen

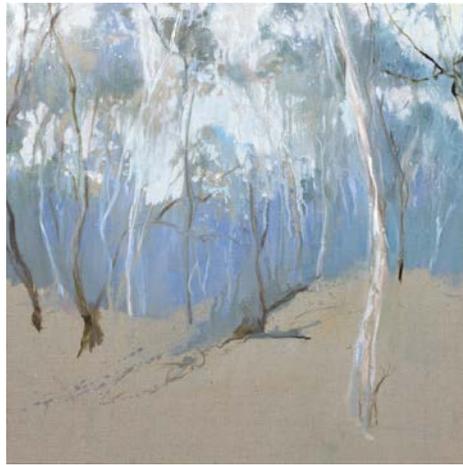
61 x 61 cm



(L to R) *Entwined XIII, XIV & XV*

oil on linen

61 x 61 cm



Predictions I
oil on linen
103 x 103 cm



Predictions II
oil on linen
103 x 103 cm



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