

An abstract painting with a vibrant, layered composition. The background is a mix of warm tones like reds, oranges, and yellows, with cooler blues and greens in the lower half. The brushstrokes are thick and expressive, with some areas showing drips of paint. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and emotional intensity.

# Kate Barry



Kate Barry  
23

An abstract painting featuring a dense composition of brushstrokes in various shades of blue, teal, and white. The strokes are thick and expressive, creating a sense of movement and depth. The colors are layered, with some areas appearing more saturated than others. The overall effect is a complex, textured surface that changes as the viewer's perspective shifts.

# DIVERSION

# Kate Barry

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Kate is a Side Gallery veteran, and her work sits comfortably in the sun-dappled gallery of the Red Hill space.

BY JESS MCNICOL

A local artist, Barry's works reflect her surroundings in distinct ways that aren't immediate but feel familiar. My first impressions are of lush gardens, and refined and relaxed interiors. For this collection, Barry's canvases follow no specific theme. Although each work embodies her signature layered abstraction, the unifying quality is that each was painted at some point this year.

It's been a big year for Barry, and she explains that she has recently chosen a path at a crossroads. For an artist who paints so intuitively and with such physicality, I feel there's an organic narrative at the core of each work that suggests this. Each one of the works in this collection is a snapshot of moments from the last twelve months. To Barry, they are time travellers, a record of emotion, expressions of a year in her life.

Curator Laura has worked in interesting ways with this theme, and the collection hangs in shades. This choice directly emphasises the connections between each work, yet also deliberately calls attention to the interesting comparisons they make.

The show's title, *Diversion*, is explained by Barry as a transference of energy from her day-to-day life to the surface, and I like to think you can see this in the physicality of application in each work. *Diversion* is a diary of immersive gestures, and Barry says that each of the work's titles represents her experience at the time. Similar lines and shapes across several pieces indicate the strings of Barry's life as she lives it.

Visible in *The Promise*, soft orange and pink confetti and dreamy whitewash ribbons are in motion across soft greens and nudes. It has a kind of energy that's fizzy and sweet, and it stands out immediately. It causes me to search for similar expressions elsewhere to find a sort of evolution in similar strokes, to see Barry's year unfold before me.

Areas of blue, peaceful, form Barry's baseline, and in *Blue Flames*, we see this in restful pools, but there are other works where it is expressed only as linework or found only in the darkest hues. It's there as frenetic energy around a moment of peace in *Sometimes Riot* or as a part of a loose, surreal daydream in *Dropcloth*.

There's work here, in *Summer Swathe*, *Quietly* and *Tangled Up*, that seems dominated by blocky shape, and I enjoy theorising about what causes the artist to become so defiant and certain but, at other times, so soft. To me, this exemplifies Barry's process as an expression of her ongoing conversation with her own life.

Barry's painted layers reveal her experience, and that familiarity begins to resolve itself in her gestural freedom. The works in *Diversion* express a time and place we are all familiar with — the tenderness and contemplation that make up the layers of our own day-to-day life.

Cover  
*The Promise* (detail) 2023  
Oil on canvas  
153 × 103 cm

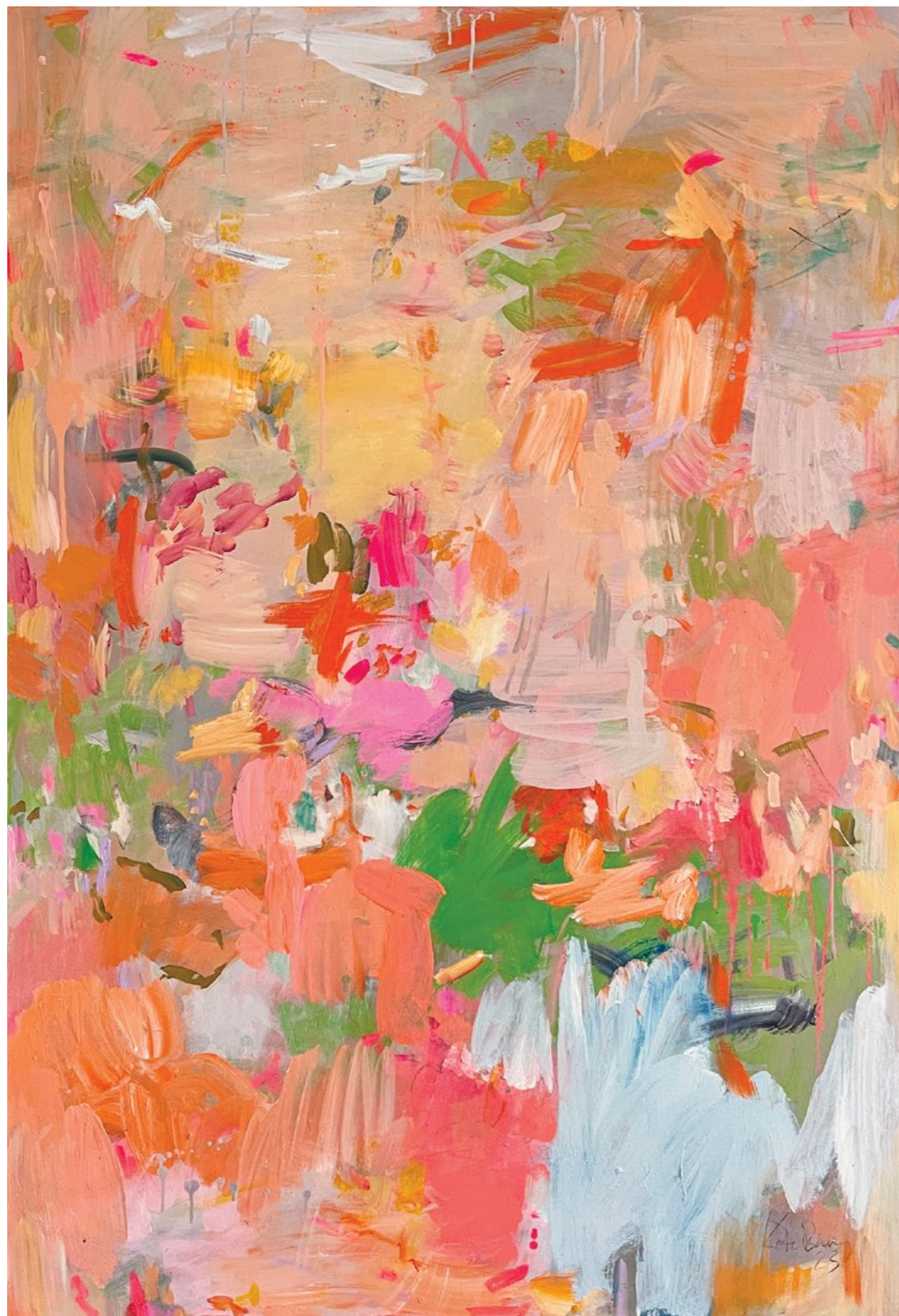
Page 1  
*Sometime Riot* (detail) 2023  
Oil on canvas  
125 × 125 cm



*Easing Down* 2023  
Oil on canvas  
63 × 63 cm



*Love's Lure* 2023  
Oil on canvas  
105 × 155 cm



Visible in *The Promise*, soft orange and pink confetti and dreamy whitewash ribbons are in motion across soft greens and nudes. It has a kind of energy that's fizzy and sweet, and it stands out immediately.

*The Promise* 2023  
Oil on canvas  
153 x 103 cm



*Parting Ways* 2023  
Oil on canvas  
125 × 95 cm



*Blue Flames* 2023  
Oil on canvas  
63 × 53 cm

There's work here, in *Summer Swathe*, *Quietly* and *Tangled Up*, that seems dominated by blocky shape, and I enjoy theorising about what causes the artist to become so defiant and certain but, at other times, so soft.



*Quietly* 2023  
Oil on canvas  
53 × 53 cm



*Sometime Riot* 2023  
 Oil on canvas  
 125 × 125 cm



*Elements Of Renewal* 2023  
 Oil on canvas  
 94 × 94 cm



# Kate Barry

Kate Barry, originally from Christchurch, is a creative force equipped with a degree in illustration, printing-making, and graphic design. Her journey led her through a prolific career in book publishing, primarily focusing on design and illustration, before reigniting her full-time devotion to painting.

With a visceral touch, Kate's art dismantles the confines of our digital lives, responding intuitively to nature and internal musings. This engagement evokes nostalgia and a profound connection to the energy that envelops us. Through her vibrant canvas, she invites passersby to become captivated by bold brushwork and vivid hues.

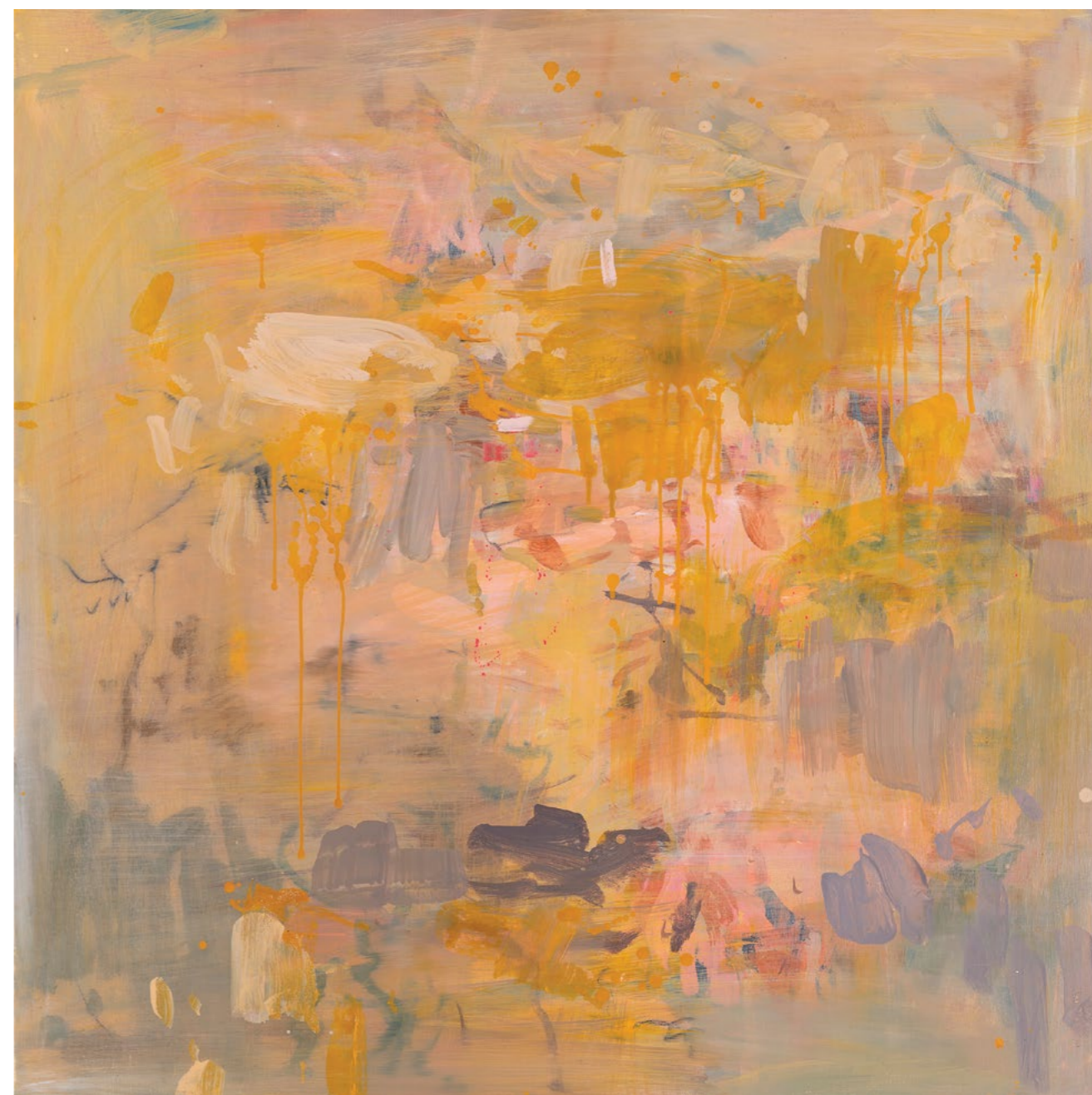
Kate's journey has been acknowledged with numerous finalist selections in esteemed awards including the Clayton Utz Prize, The Lethbridge 20,000, Lethbridge Landscape Prize, The Milburn Landscape Prize, The Hawkesbury Art Prize, and Brisbane Contemporary Art Prize.

Her artistic footprint spans the globe, with solo and group exhibitions spanning Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney, the USA, Spain, the Netherlands, Auckland, and Christchurch. Notably, her pieces find a cherished place in The Modern Furniture Stores' collections across various cities. Furthermore, her work found prominence on the international stage through ABC television's crime drama "Harrow."

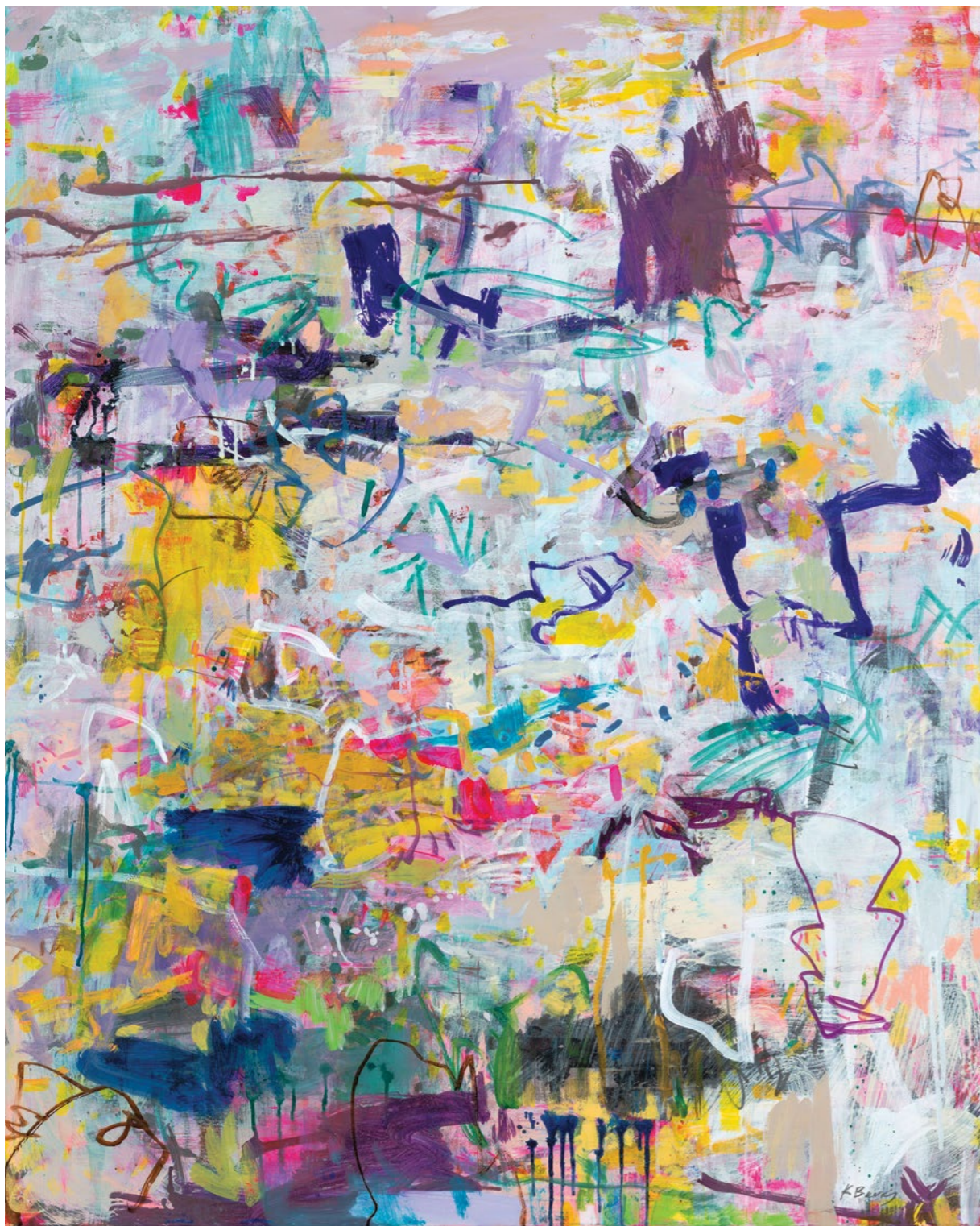
As Kate's practice surges ahead, marked by a multitude of accomplishments—ranging from commissions to online and boutique sales, television features, and national prize finalist positions—she seamlessly integrates this progression into her exploration of new conceptual dimensions, challenging the boundaries of her successful painting career.



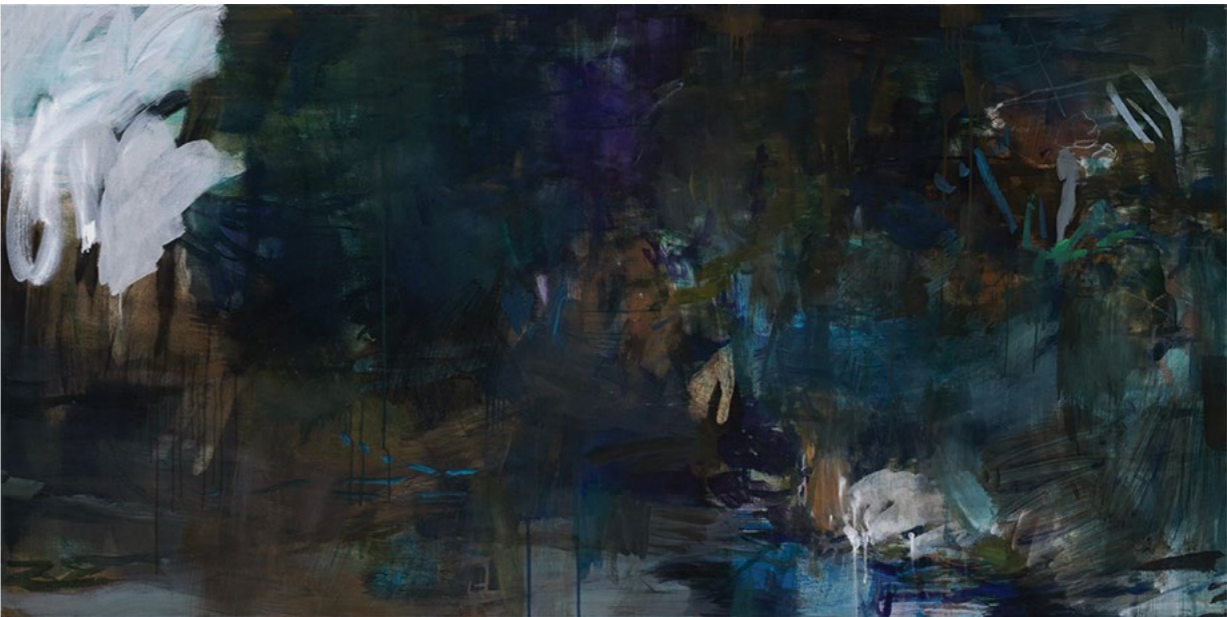
*Cockatoo Flock* 2022  
Acrylic, Ink, charcoal and pencil on board  
94 × 125 cm  
Highly Commended Award Milburn Art Prize 2021



*Illumine* 2023  
Oil on canvas  
104 × 104 cm  
Finalist Hawkesbury Art Prize



*Hoodlums* 2020  
Ink, acrylic and oil on canvas  
125 cm x 155 cm



*Glance* 2022  
Oil on canvas  
95 x 185 cm  
Finalist Lethbridge Landscape Prize



The works in *Diversion* express a time and place we are all familiar with — the tenderness and contemplation that make up the layers of our own day-to-day life.

Photography  
Page 16 Alan Uthmann  
Page 4, 22 Side Gallery

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