

An abstract painting with a rich, textured surface. The composition is dominated by warm, earthy tones like ochre, terracotta, and burnt sienna, interspersed with cooler shades of sage green, teal, and pale blue. The brushwork is visible and expressive, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is one of organic, layered forms, reminiscent of ancient stone or mineral deposits.

**SOPHIE
GANNON
GALLERY**

EMBER FAIRBAIRN

STONE GODS ADORNED IN TIME

**26 SEPTEMBER - 14 OCTOBER
2023**

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EMBER FAIRBAIRN

Stone Gods Adorned In Time

Ember Fairbairn likes to spend as much time as she can in nature – observing, connecting, meditating. Not only is it good for her mind, body and soul, it's also the principal wellspring for her art.

“Nature always brings me to a place of safety, a place of home, and a sense I'm being held by something greater than myself,” says Fairbairn, who completed a Master of Contemporary Art at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2019.

The artist loses herself in the lengthening shadows of native forests, and plants herself on rocky outcrops to trace the horizon line. She feels the silkiness of new leaves, hears the dry crackle of twigs, smells the fragrant earth beneath her boots. Then she returns to her home and studio in Doncaster and lets the process of painting give gradual form to the thoughts and emotions that being in the natural environment inspires within her.

“For the first time, I'm living in a suburb and I'm not that jazzed about it,” she laughs. “So I'm wanting to maintain and explore the sense of connection I have with nature.”

'Stone Gods Adorned in Time' celebrates that connection with seven oils on board that shift and shimmer in diaphanous layers of white, yellow, orange and green, sharpened here and there with eruptions of pink, blue and purple. Each painting took six to eight weeks to complete, a process that begins with the artist giving herself over to the mysteries of intuition and letting the feel of the paint determine what she does next.

“At first, you need to let go as much as you can,” she explains. “Then, as the layers build up, it's more about being analytical and logical in your subsequent choices.” The layers are laborious, comprising thousands of tiny visible brushstrokes, each mark a moment in time. As they are laid down, their uneven edges combine to reveal protean shapes, and the painting's composition begins to materialise.

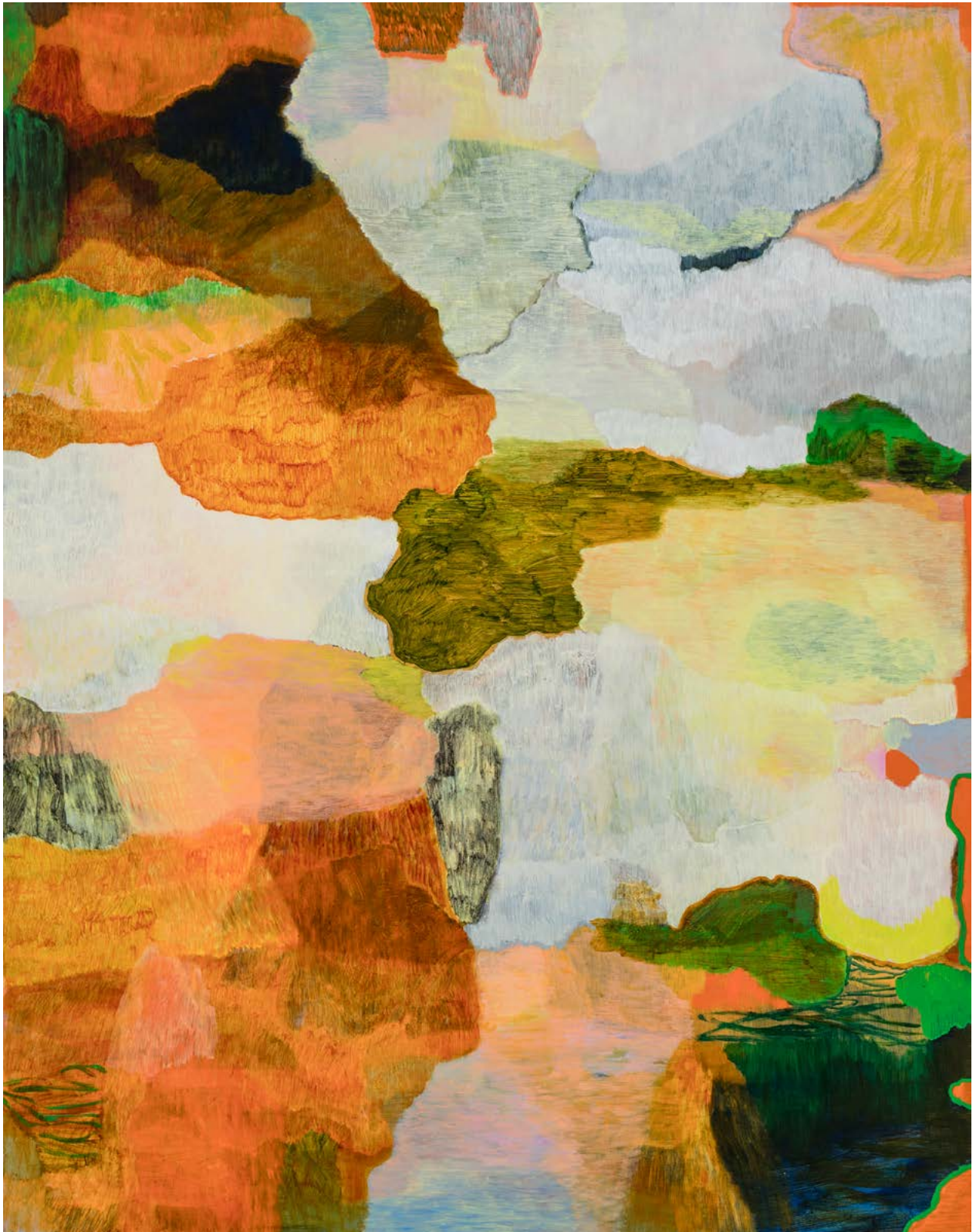
“If someone asks me what sort of painting I do, I usually say large-scale abstractions, but I am also somebody who works with the idea of land and belonging,” says Fairbairn. “When I'm painting, I'm asking myself questions like, how do I fit into the landscapes I inhabit? How do I connect with them and make them real and meaningful?”

Once a painting has legs, Fairbairn often has a battle on her hands between where she wants to take it and where the painting wants to go. Experience has taught her the painting generally knows better. “It's about trusting the work and sensing when to stop, because it's talking to you,” she says. “When you're on a journey with a painting, it becomes its own little entity – it's alive. If you insist on total control, you'll kill it, and it's so easy to do.”

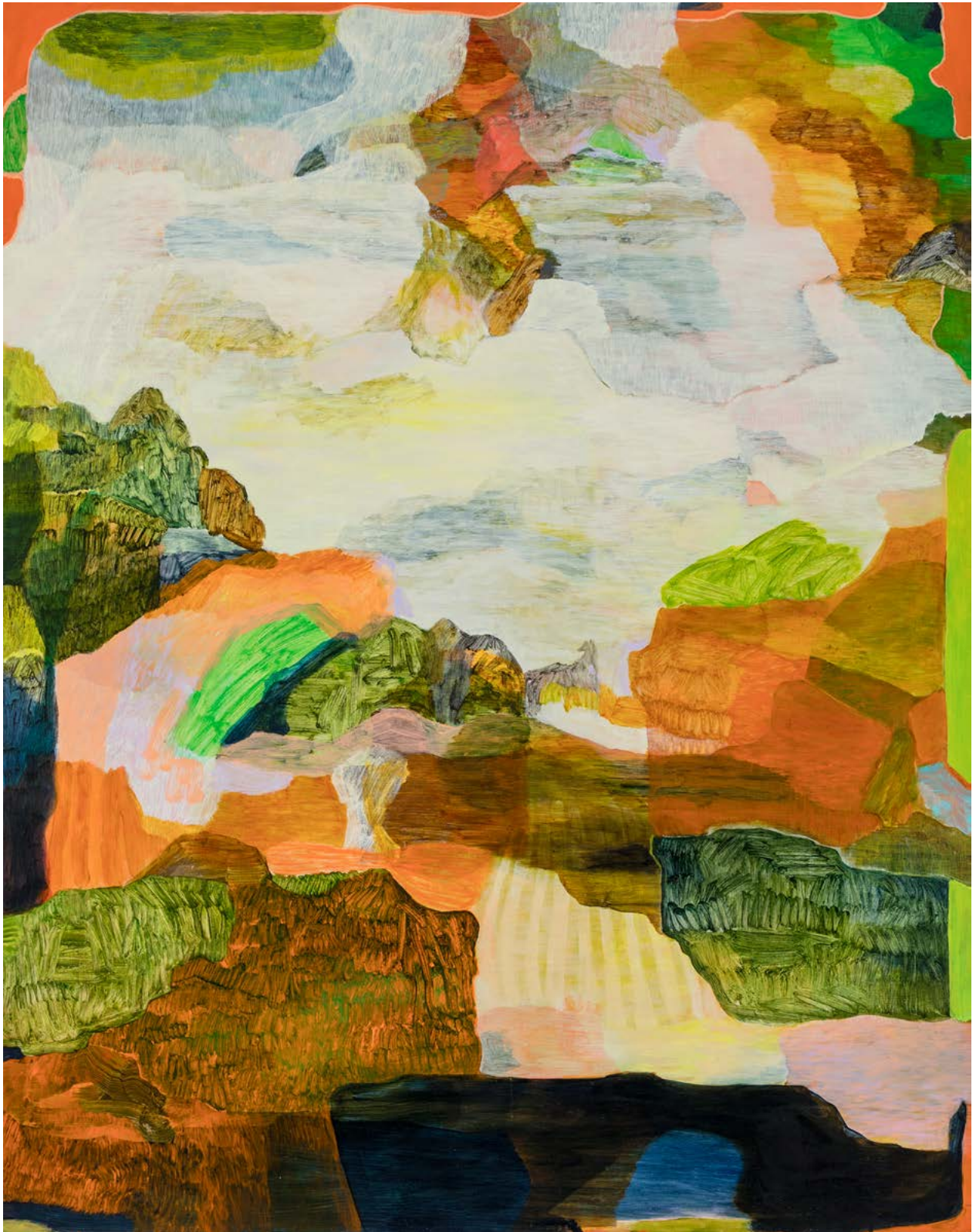
Fairbairn's visual language favours ambiguous form. Her paintings put one in mind of the dappled bark of spotted gum, a craggy escarpment in sunlight, or a foggy view through bushland. What they all share is an atmosphere that instils in the viewer the feeling of being surrounded by, and part of, the natural world.

“This exhibition is about heightening our senses to honour something important,” says the artist. “I'm thinking about the sublime and deep time and how stone and earth are like immortal gods, whereas we are just these fleeting moments.”

*Tony Magnusson
September 2023*



Permeable Ecologies, 2023
oil on board
100 x 70 cm
\$3,000 incl. GST

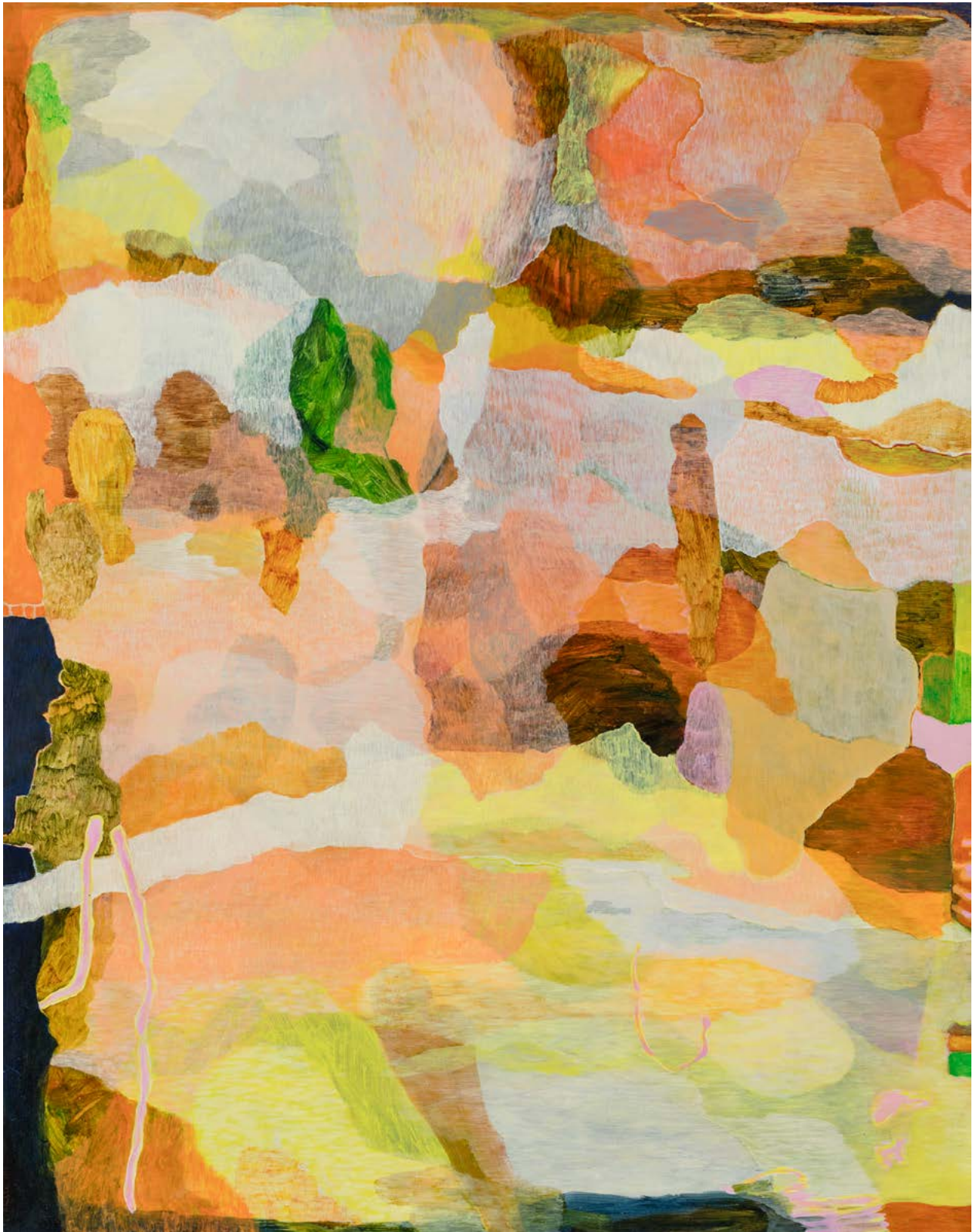


Somatic Response to an Unknown Place, 2023

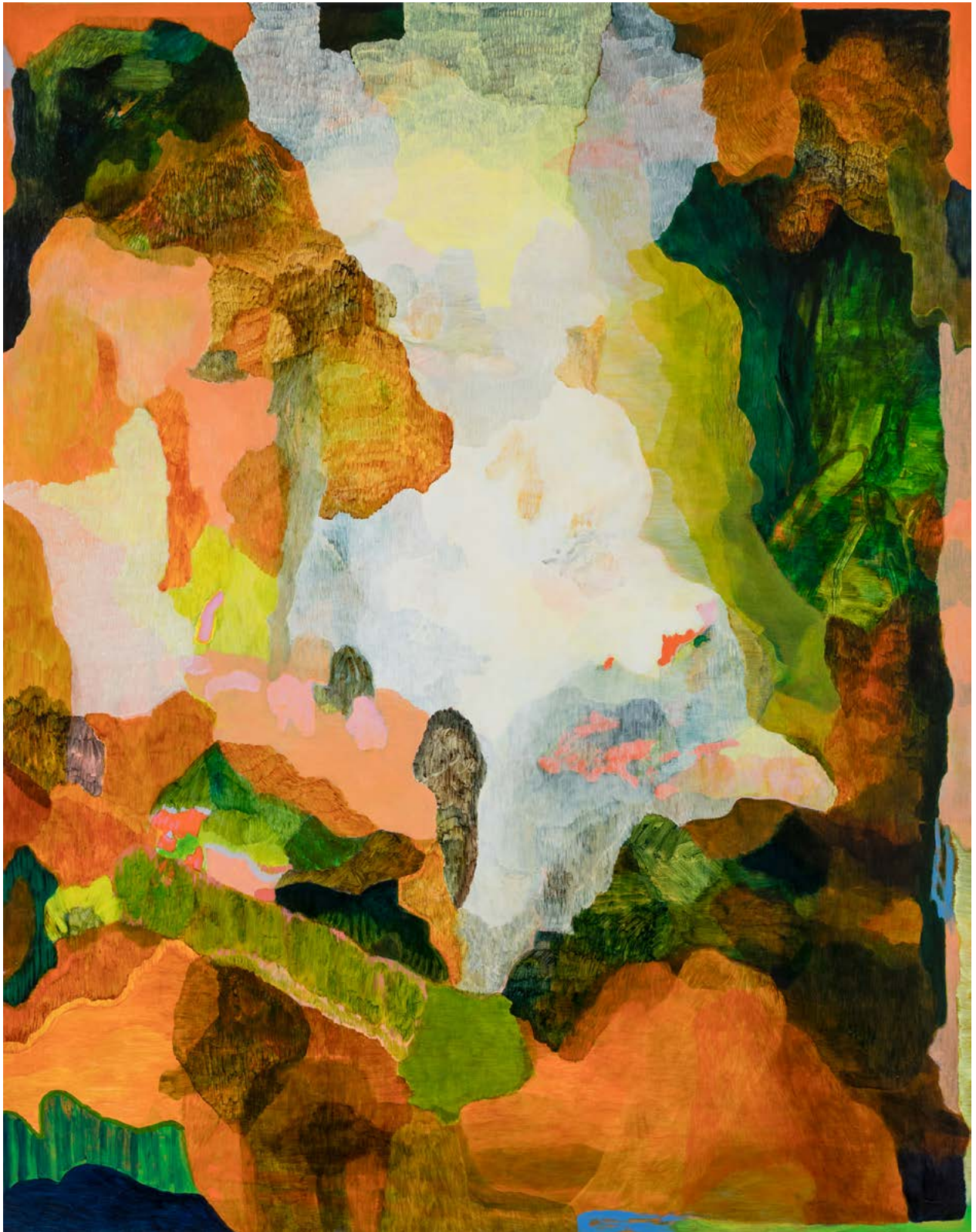
oil on board

120 x 80 cm

\$4,000 incl. GST

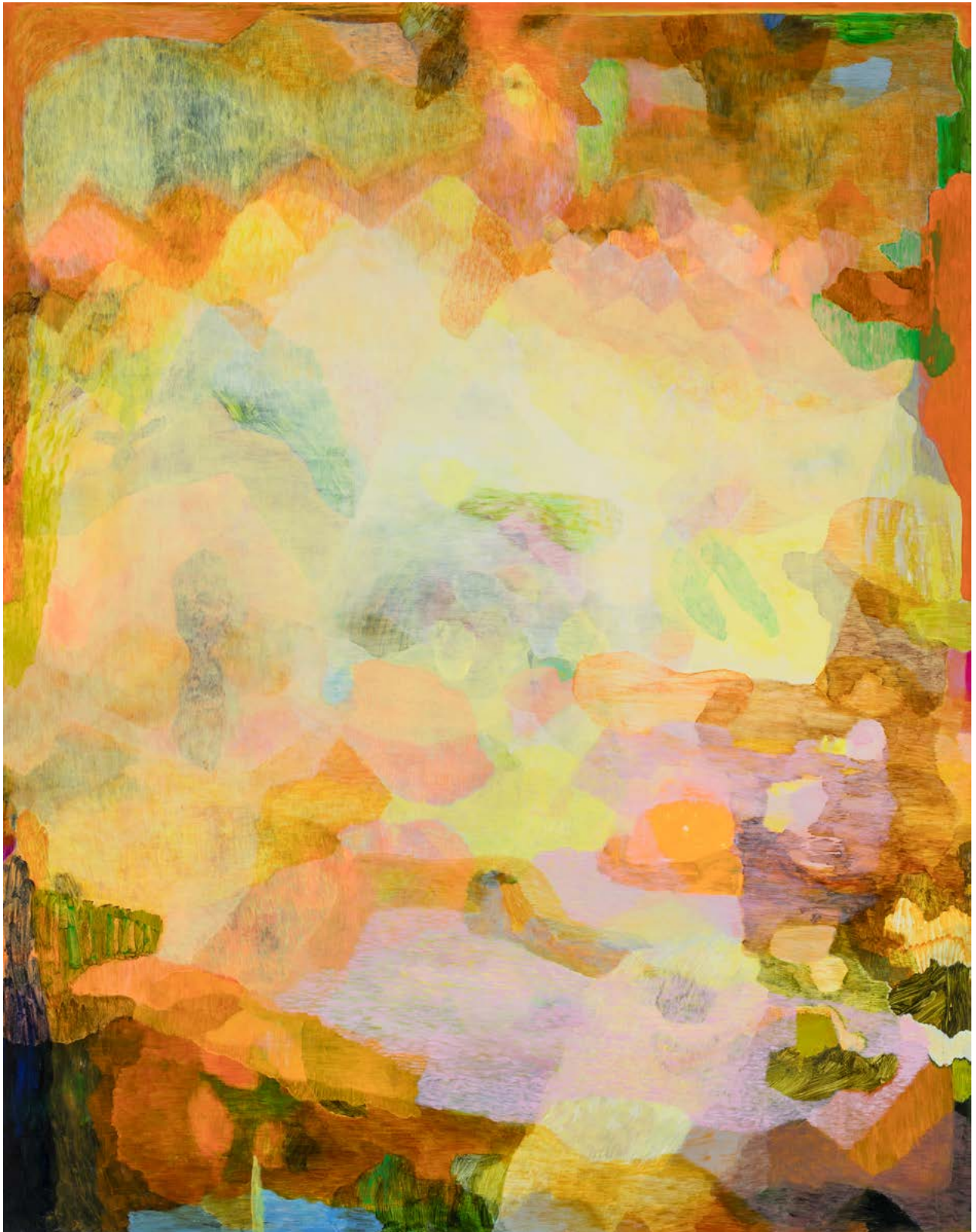


Baby Gods and Bark Spirits, 2023
oil on board
135 x 90 cm
\$5,000 incl. GST



The way home you long for is inside of you, 2023
oil on birchwood
160 x 120 cm
\$7,000 incl. GST



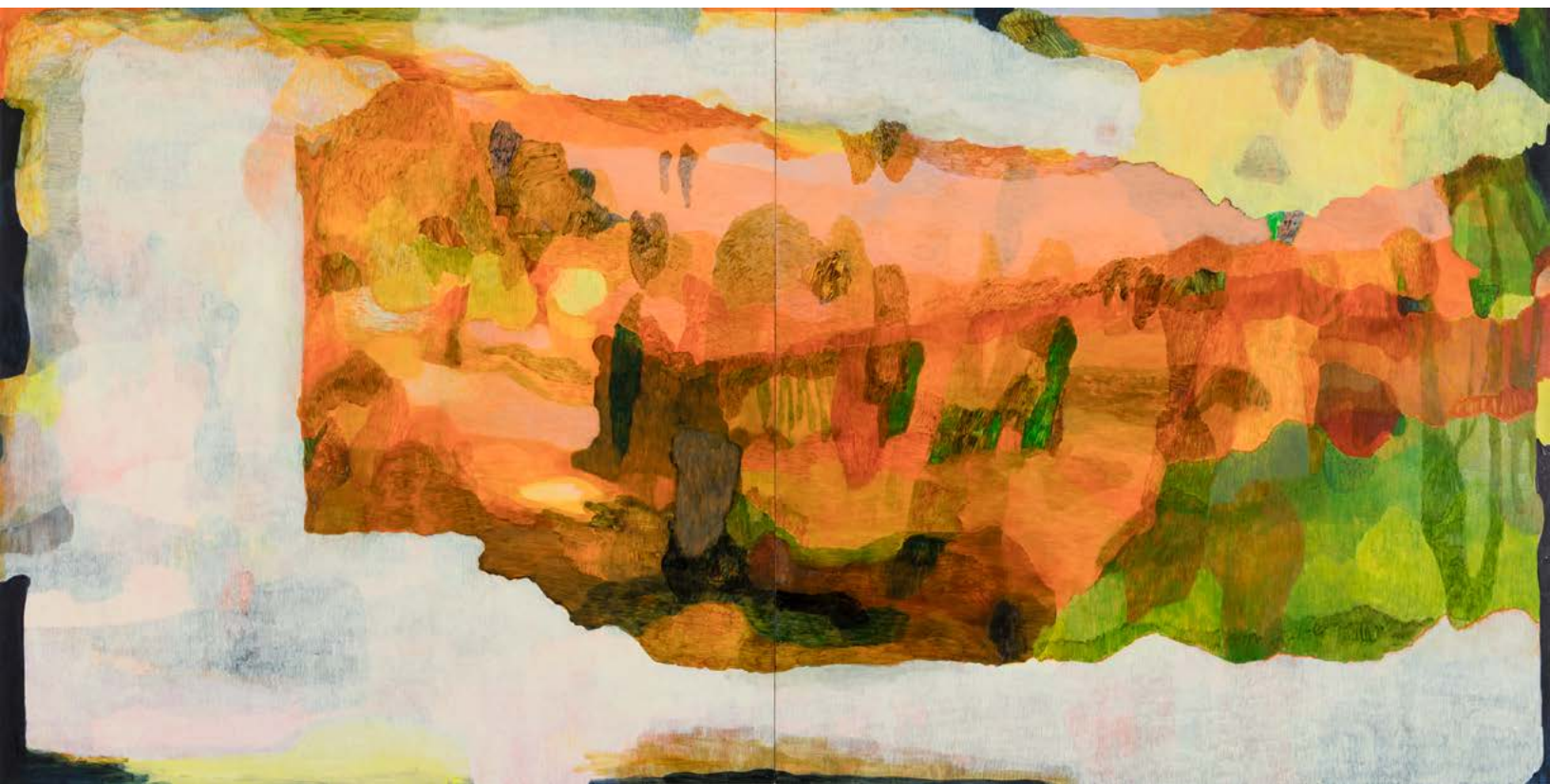


The comfort of your solid granite body under my feet, 2022
oil on birchwood
160 x 120 cm
\$7,000 incl. GST



The stories of stone, 2023
oil on birchwood
160 x 120 cm
\$7,000 incl. GST





To turn, return and renew, 2023
oil on birchwood
120 x 240 cm
\$9,500 incl. GST

EMBER FAIRBAIRN

EDUCATION

2019	Master of Contemporary Art, Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, Melbourne
2017	Graduate Certificate (Visual Art), Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, Melbourne
1995	Certificate IV (Visual Art), Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE, Sunshine Coast, QLD

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022	The forms rearrange themselves, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2020	Thin Skins, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne GoGo Series Art Award, Chin Chin, Melbourne
2018	Recent Works, Manyung Gallery, Melbourne
2015	Scent of Light, Platform 72, Sydney
2013	Supra Sex, Platform 72, Sydney
2012	We Are This, Platform 72, Sydney
2011	Form, Burringja Artspace, Melbourne

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022	Optimism, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2021	Fall Back, Spring Forward, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2020	Summer Salon, Boom Gallery, Geelong, VIC
2019	Love Letters to Feminisms, Trocadero Art Space, Melbourne
2018	Let Them Decide, VCA Art Space, Melbourne Reflections of Summer, Manyung Gallery, Melbourne Affordable Art Fair Singapore, Contemporary Art Australia, Singapore
2017	Untitled, Traffic Jam Galleries, Sydney Spring, Manyung Gallery, Melbourne Parameters, George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne, Melbourne Celebrate, Manyung Gallery, Melbourne Affordable Art Fair Singapore, Contemporary Art Australia, Singapore
2016	Affordable Art Fair Singapore, Contemporary Art Australia, Singapore Ember Fairbairn and Monica Adams, Manyung Gallery, Melbourne
2015	Shadow and Flower, Monsalvat Art Centre, Melbourne Living with Nature, Manyung Gallery, Mornington Peninsula, VIC
2014	The Colours of Spring, Manyung Gallery, Melbourne Nature, Manyung Gallery, Melbourne
2013	Cabin Fever, Platform 72, Sydney
2012	Affordable Art Fair Melbourne, Melbourne
2011	Out From Down Under and Beyond, Agora Gallery, New York Pathway to Abstraction, Agora Gallery, New York Opening, Warburton Art Centre, Melbourne

EMBER FAIRBAIRN

AWARDS AND GRANTS

2021	Finalist Tatiara Art Finalist Paddington Art Prize
2020	Athenaeum Visual Arts Research Award
2019	Art150 Travelling Fellowship, Victorian College of the Arts GoGo Art Series Award, Chin Chin
2018	Ravenswood Women's Art Prize (finalist)
2014	Montsalvat Artist in Residence

COLLECTIONS

St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney
Private collections in Australia and overseas

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