



*Drawing Dust*



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The Mill Castlemaine  
September 25 - October 12, 2025



Liu Zhuoquan *Where Are You? You Know More Secrets!*, 2012,  
Installation view 18th Biennale of Sydney, MCA

Cover Vicki Grace  
*Shadows in the night 01*, 2025, detail

## *Drawing Dust*

Drawing Dust is an exhibition showcasing the work of six contemporary artists: Tony Smibert, Liu Zhuoquan, Julian Cornish, Alison Kelly, Vicki Grace, and Catherine Woo. The exhibition explores subtle, evocative expressions - works that blur the lines between drawing, painting, staining and meditative gesture.

Each artist brings a distinct voice to this exhibition, yet together they create a quiet dialogue - one that drifts like dust across canvas, glass, aluminium or paper. The influence of Chinese and Japanese aesthetics is palpable in the restrained palettes, dynamic brushwork, and the philosophical embrace of space, silence, and suggestion.

From Smibert's atmospheric abstractions—grounded in his deep study of classical Chinese and Japanese techniques, Cornish's delicate mark-making and refined aesthetics, Liu's traditional Chinese painting inside glass bottles, Grace's beautiful evocation of surface and materiality, Woo's minimal yet resonant forms on aluminium and Kelly's strong yet sensitive line, shade and brush work.

Drawing Dust offers viewers a moment to pause and consider how the ancient and the contemporary can merge through technique, gesture and intuition.



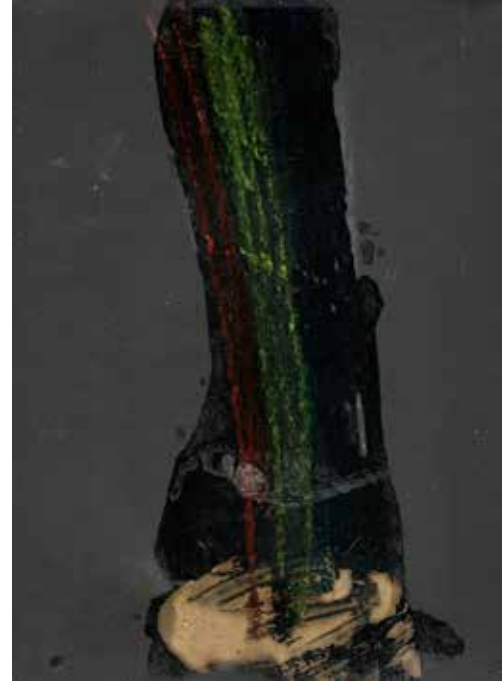
*Alison Kelly*

Alison Kelly is an Australian artist whose practice includes black-and-white and monotone paintings in acrylic and ink and photography. Kelly's artwork reflects a minimalist aesthetic and a contemplative approach to form and texture. Her paintings often explore the interplay between light and shadow, using limited palettes to emphasize movement, rhythm, and emotional nuance. Working primarily in acrylic and ink, she creates compositions that are both stark and expressive, drawing viewers into a quiet, introspective space. The absence of color in her work is not a limitation but a deliberate choice that highlights the subtleties of line, contrast, and negative space.

Alison Kelly *Chinese Rock*, 2023 detail



Alison Kelly *Chinese Rock*, 2023  
Acrylic, lacquer on paper, 17 cm x 22 cm



Alison Kelly *End of the Rainbow II*, 2020  
Acrylic on paper, 31 cm x 23 cm



Alison Kelly *End of the Rainbow I*, 2020  
Acrylic, lacquer on paper, 31 cm x 23 cm



Alison Kelly *Dust II*, 2000  
Pigment on paper, 15 cm x 10 cm



Alison Kelly *Dust I*, 2000  
Pigment on paper, 15 cm x 10 cm



Alison Kelly *Thorn*, 2023  
Acrylic on paper, 24 cm x 22 cm



Alison Kelly *Root*, 2024  
Acrylic on paper, 24 cm x 20 cm



Alison Kelly *Bunny*, 2023  
Acrylic on paper, 33 cm x 22 cm



### *Vicki Grace*

Australian artist Vicki Grace creates paintings that resonate with a quiet, poetic depth. Her connection to Eastern spirituality informs a visual language that is both minimal and meaningful, inviting the viewer into a state of contemplation. In particular she is drawn to the sacred in the still.

For Vicki, her creative process is a meditative practice in which she is mindful of the spirit of the paint and the feel of the strokes. Through many layers of paint Vicki creates a sense of space that is at once empty and expansive. Evolving and dissolving. Appearing and disappearing.

Having lived in Asia for nearly 20 years, Vicki continues to immerse herself in its beauty and beliefs, expressed in her work through a reverential use of colour, space and light.

Vicki Grace "We come spinning our of nothingness, scattering stars like dust" Rumi, 02, 2025 detail

Vicki Grace  
*Shadows in the Night 01*, 2025  
Acrylic on polyester canvas  
97 cm x 66.5 cm





Vicki Grace *Back to Black 01*, 2025  
Acrylic on linen board, 25.5 cm x 25.5 cm



Vicki Grace *Heart of Darkness*, 2025  
Acrylic on polyester canvas, 41 cm x 41 cm



Vicki Grace *Shape Shifter 02*, 2020  
Diptych, Acrylic on gessoed panel, 18.4 cm x 36.4 cm



Vicki Grace *Hei Cha*, 2024,  
Acrylic on gesso board, 35.5 cm x 35.5 cm

Vicki Grace  
*Elixir 03*, 2025  
Acrylic on polyester canvas  
97 cm x 66.5 cm





Vicki Grace  
*'We come spinning out of nothingness,  
scattering stars like dust.'* Rumi 02, 2025,  
Acrylic on gessoed panel, 32 cm x 23.2 cm



Vicki Grace *Iced Vovo*, 2025  
Acrylic on linen board, 25.4 cm x 19 cm



*Julian Cornish*

I have always loved painting and drawing, with a particular interest in oriental painting with its vibrancy, calligraphic line and use of space.

Attending classes by Andre Sollier, a master Sumi painter in the 1980s, led me to the disciplined and contemplative approach of Japanese painting. Further study with calligrapher-painter Richard Liddicut led to my ongoing practice.

I paint with reverence for the skills and traditions of Sumi painting, feeling drawn to the forms of our landscape, from the sculptural forms of the dead trees, to the calligraphy of gum leaves and the movement of insects.

Also, I am lured to the darkness and blur of the ink on unsized oriental papers and the drama of light emerging from darkness. We live in dark times but there is always light emerging.

This Sumi medium is utterly humbling, always insisting on directness of ink application and always enforcing submission to the unpredictability of ink, water, paper, brush and mind.

Julian Cornish *Emerging*, 2024 detail



Julian Cornish *Emerging*, 2024  
Chinese ink on paper, 43 cm x 43 cm



Julian Cornish *Emerging Moon*, 2024  
Collage and Chinese ink on paper, 63 cm x 52.5 cm



Julian Cornish *Vague - Dog Rocks*, 2022  
Chinese ink on paper, 50 cm x 86 cm



Julian Cornish *Numen 4 - Aireys*, 2025  
Resist and Chinese ink and collage on Nepalese paper, 60 cm x 90 cm

**in half-light**

so little peace in  
half-light truth  
the shifting truth of broken men  
of broken bodies,  
broken bodies  
little truth in  
half-light peace

Robert Avitable © March 2024  
(for Julian Cornish - *Clouds, Light out of darkness* - war on Gaza)



Julian Cornish *Three Clouds for Rafah*, 2024  
Chinese ink on paper, 43.5 cm x 55.5 cm



Julian Cornish *Illumination - Tree Rock Face*, 2025  
Chinese ink and resist on paper, 59 cm x 97 cm



Julian Cornish *Bush Calligraphy*, 2024  
Resist and ink on Chinese paper, 40 cm x 80 cm



Liu Zhuoquan *Snake 1*, 2012, detail

### *Liu Zhuoquan*

Liu Zhuoquan's work and his technique is pregnant with cultural memory. He has adapted the laborious artisanal craft of snuff bottle or 'neihua' painting whereby bent, longhaired brushes are used to painstakingly render motifs on the interior of bottles. The tradition behind this technique is one that reflects the caprice and sometime iconoclasm of modern Chinese history.

The 'inside painting' technique dates back to the Qing Dynasty in China when it was used by craftsmen to decorate ornamental snuff bottles. With the onset of the communist regime, Chinese society and traditions were ruptured and artisanal crafts such as snuff bottle painting were forbidden

Among his memories from this passage are two encounters with snakes. Both times he stumbled upon the reptiles surreptitiously hidden in crevices; once in a classroom and another time in the mountains. Neither glimpse revealed the snake in its entirety and Liu's terror has never been quelled. He tells us: "What is unseen and unknown assumes imagined fear." The reptile is a symbol of abject fear for Liu: a missing head and tail are analogous for duress.

Dr. Luise Guest, Liu Zhuoquan Sydney, Australia



Liu Zhuoquan *Snake 1*, 2012  
15 Glass bottles, mineral pigments, oil paint, wax  
Following Spread: Liu Zhuoquan *Snake 1*, 2012, detail





Liu Zhuoquan *Black Snake 2*, 2012  
Glass Bottle, mineral pigments, oil paint, 12 cm x 5 cm



Liu Zhuoquan *2 Fish Bottles*, 2020  
Glass bottle, mineral pigments, rubber stoppers, 14 cm x 6 cm each



Liu Zhuoquan *Chinese Landscape 1*, 2015  
Glass bottle, mineral pigments, wax, 32 cm x 15 cm



### *Tony Smibert*

Tony Smibert has been thinking of Malevich's black square and exploring this highly formal notion in a much bolder way than he has worked before. Also, his work is influenced by Jackson Pollock and American Abstraction.

Using jet black acrylic paint on large white canvases he has produced a great number of 'Protolandscapes'. Sometimes these are just a line or a series of lines wandering across the centre of a white panel, turning into a brushstroke and vanishing again; sometimes layer after layer of washing out and repainting to produce something surprising close to his watercolour landscapes. Peaks, mists, troughs in the ground where water settles. Some of the paintings resemble etchings or dry points as I look at them I find it hard to think of them as by the same hand that produces his extraordinary luminous watercolours only a hand span wide where employs the full gamut of romantic imagery; turbulent skies, distant waterfalls, mountains and wheeling birds.

Tony Smibert's theme is that there are natural forces at work in the act of painting too: in the materials used, and the way they interact in the element of chance which may or may not develop into a recognisable image.

Extract from an essay Protolandscapes by Jonathan Bowden , Launceston Tasmania 2015

Tony Smibert *Where Mountains Breath*, 2025 detail

Tony Smibert  
*Where Mountains Breathe*, 2025  
Acrylic on Canvas  
102 cm x 76 cm



Tony Smibert  
*Ascent to the Plateau*, 2025  
Acrylic on Canvas  
102 cm x 76 cm



Tony Smibert  
*Climbing the Tower*, 2025  
Acrylic on Canvas  
102 cm x 76 cm



Tony Smibert  
*Fortress*, 2025  
Acrylic on Canvas  
102 cm x 76 cm

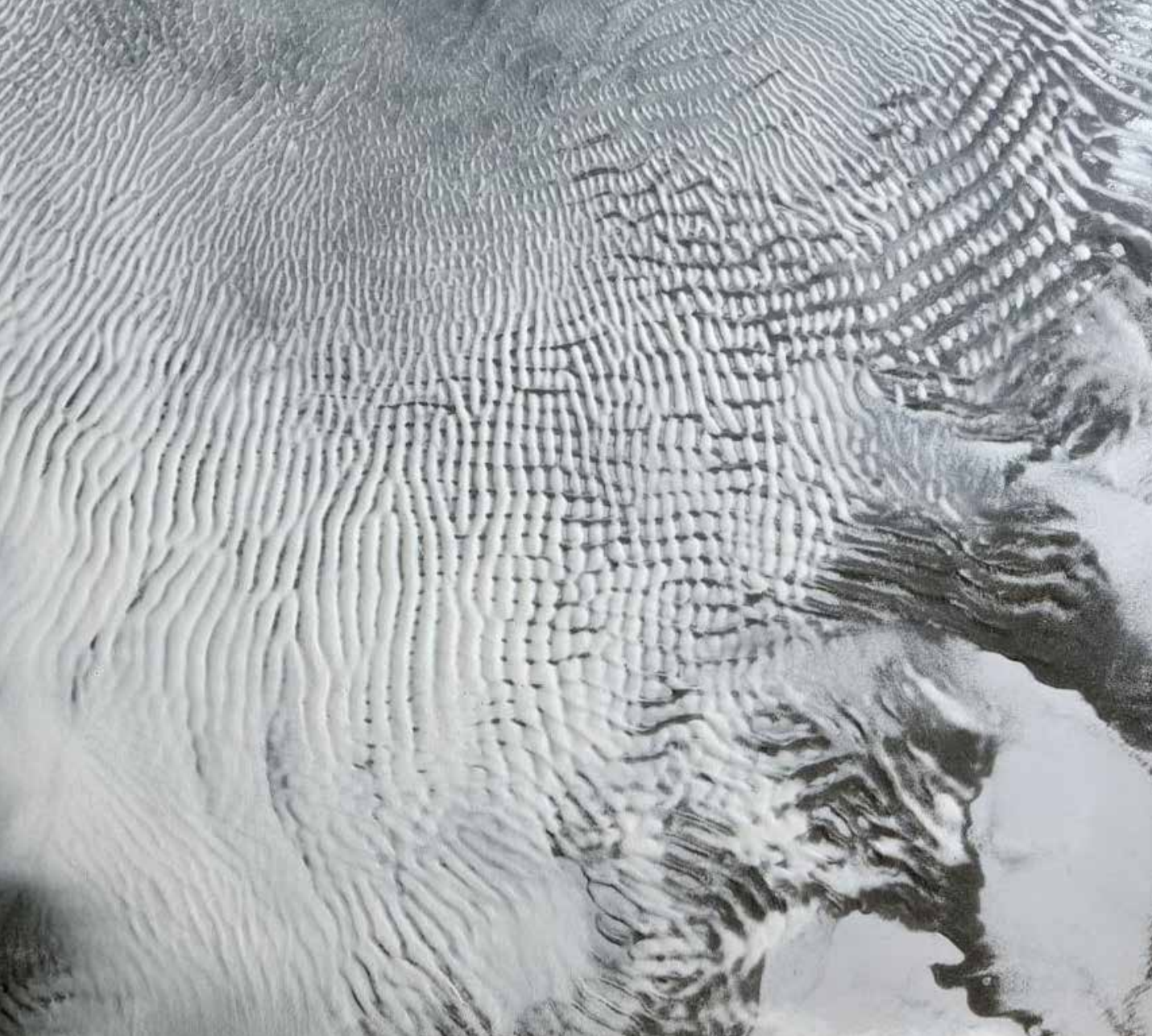


Tony Smibert  
*Last Snow on the Meadow*, 2025  
Acrylic on Canvas  
102 cm x 76 cm



Tony Smibert  
*Where the Wind Begins*, 2025  
Acrylic on Canvas  
102 cm x 76 cm





*Catherine Woo*

The work *Ebb and Salt Lake* is part of a series developed through collaborating with the immediate environment. The work has evolved through process-based experimentation where elements of the weather have been incorporated into my practice - rain has been channelled into the studio, and combined with the vibrations of the wind, the motion of water and various natural and found materials.

Walking the tidal flats in southern Tasmania, where the motion of the sea is left on the sand like a document, has been particularly influential.

In this series I have sought to track these natural forces and my interaction with them on large metal plates, leaving not so much a record of my perception of the environment as a trace of our interaction.

Catherine Woo, Hobart, Tasmania

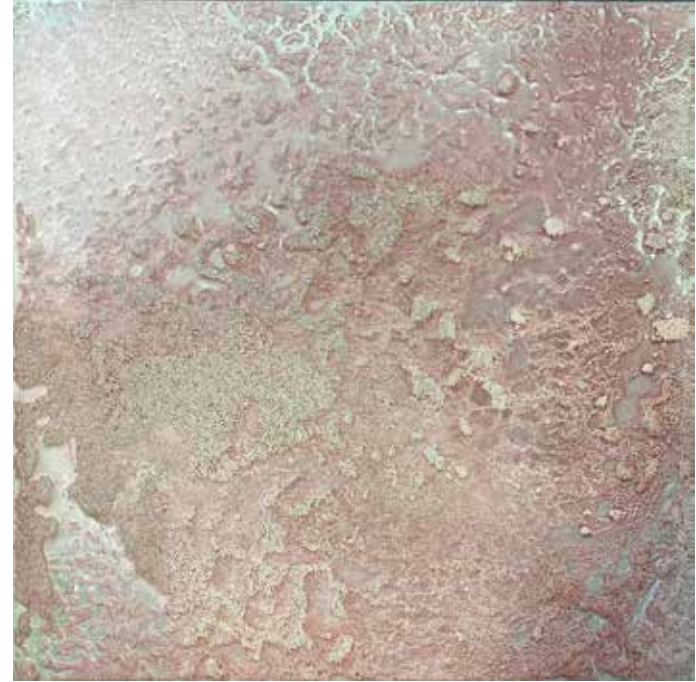
Catherine Woo *Ebb 2*, 2024, detail

Catherine Woo  
*Ebb 1*, 2014,  
Mixed media on aluminium,  
120 cm x 120 cm



Catherine Woo  
*Ebb 2*, 2024,  
Mixed media on aluminium,  
120 cm x 120 cm





Catherine Woo *Salt Lake series 1*, 2023  
Mixed media on aluminium, 40 cm x 40 cm



Catherine Woo *Salt Lake series 2*, 2023  
Mixed media on aluminium, 40 cm x 40 cm



Catherine Woo *Salt Lake series 4, 2023*  
Mixed media on aluminium, 40 cm x 40 cm



Catherine Woo *Salt Lake series 5*, 2023  
Mixed media on aluminium, 40 cm x 40 cm



Catherine Woo *Salt Lake series 11*, 2023  
Mixed media on aluminium, 40 cm x 40 cm



Catherine Woo *Salt Lake series 12*, 2023  
Mixed media on aluminium, 40 cm x 40 cm

# *Drawing Dust*

September 25 - October 12, 2025

To be opened by  
Dr. Damian Smith  
Director ACAE Gallery, Melbourne



The Mill  
9 Walker Street, Castlemaine,  
Victoria, Australia

Julian Cornish *Vague - Dog Rocks*, 2022 detail

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