

THE DIVING TREE



CURATORIAL+CO.

ANDRÉ DE VANNY

5 - 22 FEB 2025



André de Vanny is a painter and multi-media artist based in Eora/Sydney. Drawing from the ethereal qualities of early Renaissance painting and expanding upon the rich visual language of contemporary abstraction, André's work explores the delicate balance between the abject and the sublime. His practice is inherently physical, incorporating cycles of disintegration and repair which speak to the human experience of trauma and healing. Working outdoors in the natural elements his process-based practice encompasses scoring, staining and folding, stitching, sanding and stapling a range of materials from fine linens to heavy gauge canvas and reclaimed timbers. Prioritising spontaneity and chance over the predetermination of imagery and ideas, he seeks to discover new forms, organic shapes and original compositions that reveal themselves, as if by nature, free from the artist's hand.

André's painting practice is uniquely informed by cinematic and theatrical motifs. Drawing from the palettes of artists like Giotto di Bondone and Giorgio Morandi, he uses tone and colour to dramatic effect, creating sublime worlds of haunting beauty, which resonate with themes of love, loss and longing. Inspired by his work at the Sydney Children's Hospital over the past decade, his process-based practice embodies the physical impacts of trauma and the power of art to heal, through time, care and aesthetic reflection.

André is a 2023 BFA Graduate of the National Art School. He was recently awarded the James Ballaam Elsley Memorial Prize for Excellence in Drawing by NAS and was chosen by the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art to show in Hatched National Graduate Exhibition in 2024.

Curatorial+Co. acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the country on which the gallery stands, the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and cultures. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

THE DIVING TREE

ANDRÉ DE VANNY

In his debut solo exhibition, André de Vanny presents a body of work that draws deeply from his childhood spent on Dja Dja Wurrung Country/Central Victoria, where the landscape left an indelible mark on his artistic practice. Through a physical and embodied approach to painting, each canvas becomes a reflection of de Vanny's intimate relationship in the Goldfields region, particularly the arid terrain of the bushland surrounding Lake Eppalock.

Working from a palette of earth tones and deep tertiary hues, de Vanny seeks to reveal the poetic language of colour. In place of the parched earth, straw grass and ironbark trees of the Victorian bush, we see burnt ochre, sap greens, russet coppers and dark umber, reimagined in contemporary abstract form.

Whilst his subject matter draws upon the illusive qualities of memory and place, his process-based approach embeds a tangible sense of time and history into the work. Starting with large un-stretched sheets of heavy gauge canvas, de Vanny builds multiple layers of colour by staining, folding and drying the works over several months. This allows the natural evaporation process to push pigments across the canvas, generating organic marks that become held within the weave. By working outdoors, dragging, sanding and scoring the surface, he seeks to reveal the subtle vulnerabilities of the canvas, offering up the materials of fine art to the elemental forces of nature.

De Vanny says,

When I was a kid, and the lake was full, it seemed like those summers would never end. We'd spend all day in the water, holding our breath and somersaulting, or swimming out to a makeshift pontoon tethered to an old dead gum. The diving tree became our watermark, by which we'd measure the fullness of the lake as it rose and fell. This was our diving tree, from which we'd leap into the water below. The lake was so full it would swallow the roads we drove in on. Water charged over the dam wall and thundered down the concrete spillway into the Campaspe River, which fed the region for miles around. As the years passed, the mood of the landscape shifted. Drought set in and the region grew dry.

The diving tree became our watermark, by which we'd measure the fullness of the lake as it rose and fell. These spells of drought grew longer and longer until the lake vanished for a decade, and the diving tree stood alone in that empty lakebed - a relic of our childhood and the abundance of its promise. It was then that my connection to the land deepened as I found beauty in the dry remnants of a landscape in flux. It was haunting and sublime, this vast empty vessel that wore the scars of erosion and the history of the water it had held.

These works speak as much to the vibrant optimism of youth as to the melancholic beauty of a barren landscape longing for renewal. It's a meditation on cycles of growth, determination and resilience. I'm searching for a kind of sublime beauty that is borne out of hardship. I'm interested in creating works that have been weathered or scarred in some way and have emerged even more robust and beautiful for it. Perhaps it's a way of making sense of the past, revisiting the landscape of my youth, which holds both dark and golden hours.



Ares, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
266 x 193cm
AUD 8,800



Breathing Room, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
193 x 255cm
AUD 8,800



Shoreline, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
192 x 261cm
AUD 8,800



Book of Revelation I, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

165 x 244cm

AUD 7,600



Book of Revelation II, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

165 x 244cm

AUD 7,600



"These works speak as much to the vibrant optimism of youth as to the melancholic beauty of a barren landscape longing for renewal."



Telegraph Road, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
202 x 138cm
AUD 6,500



The Mulberry Tree, 2024
Acrylic on canvas, dual sided
201 x 151cm
AUD 6,500



Veil, 2024
Acrylic on canvas, dual sided
210 x 154cm
AUD 6,500



Rabbit's Foot, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
184 x 143cm
AUD 5,900



Sheepyard Flat, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

184 x 143cm

AUD 5,900



Clinker, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
181 x 135cm
AUD 5,900



Clinker II, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
190 x 140cm
AUD 5,900



“These spells of drought grew longer and longer until the lake vanished for a decade, and the diving tree stood alone in that empty lakebed - a relic of our childhood and the abundance of its promise.”



Already Here, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

184 x 143cm

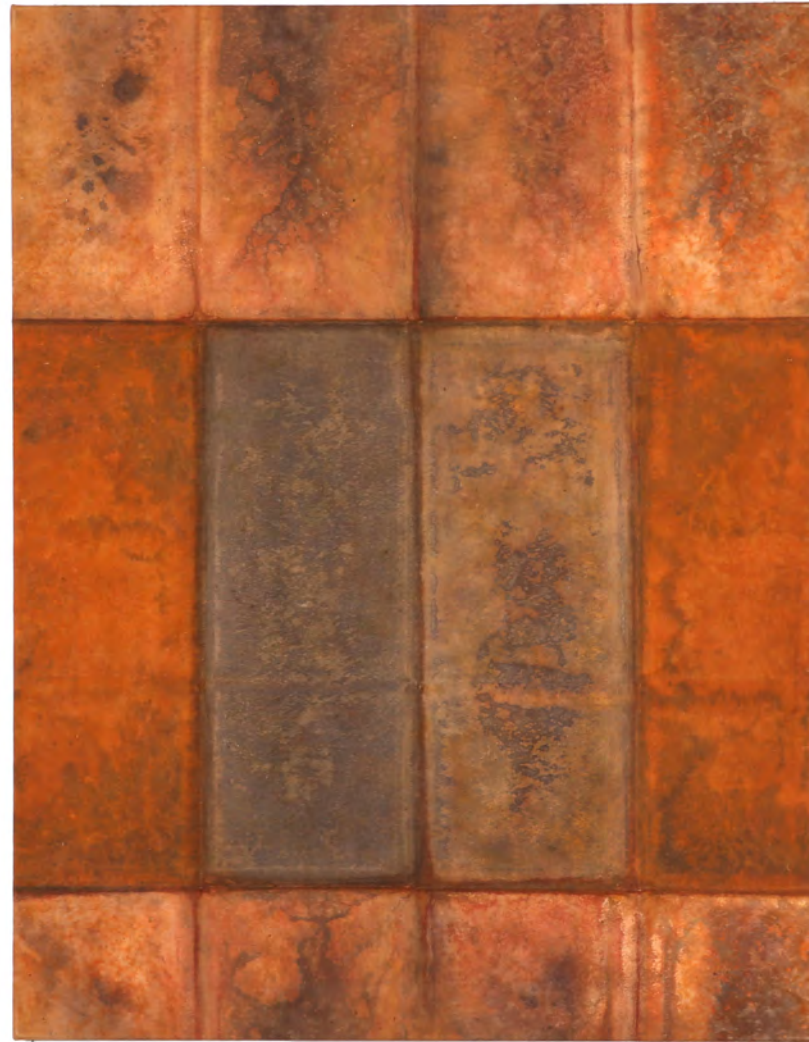
AUD 5,900



Valiant, 2024
Acrylic on linen
142 x 135cm
AUD 5,000



Rook, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
142 x 127cm
AUD 4,800

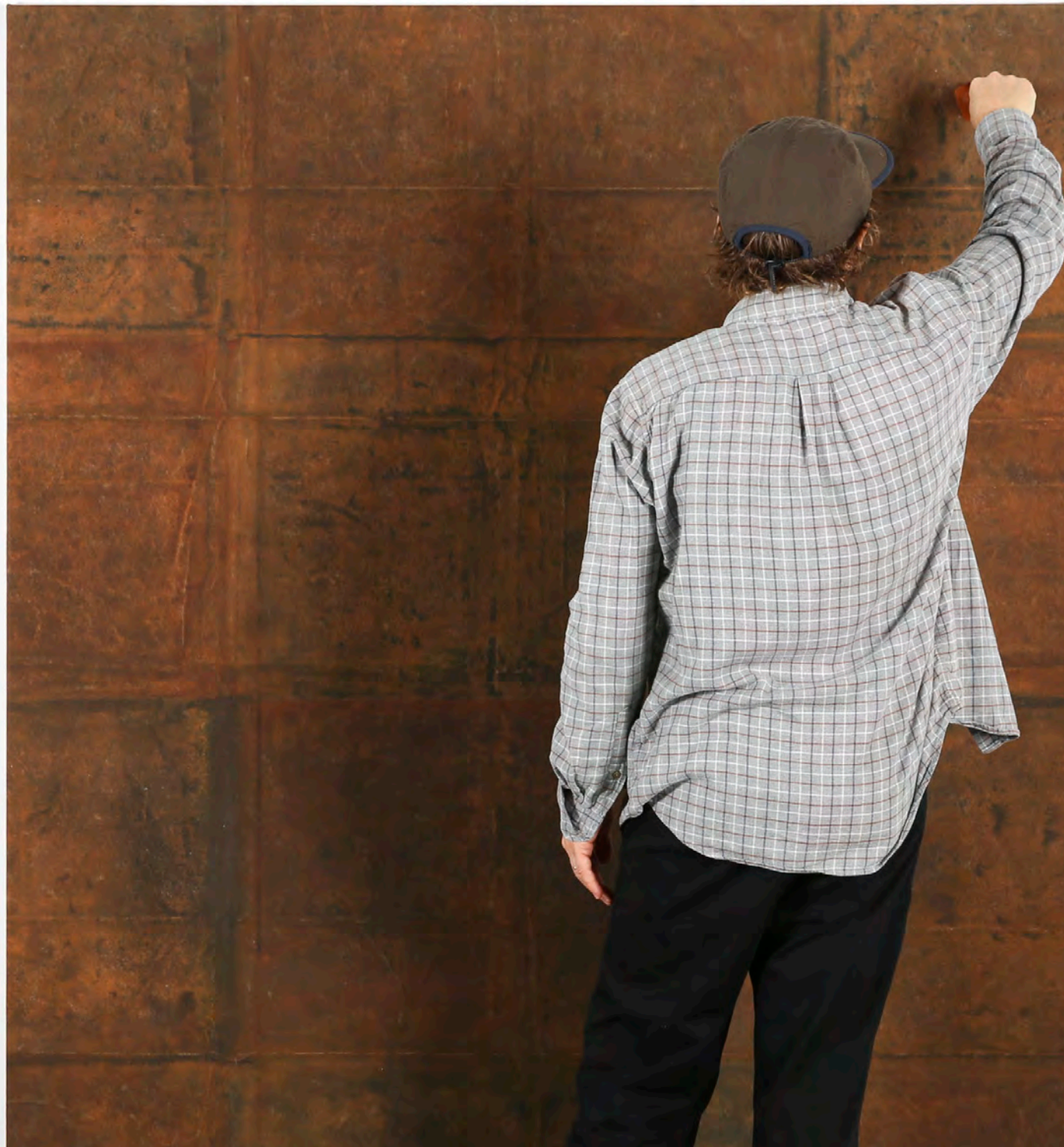


Engine Room, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
126 x 98cm
AUD 4,200



Mojave, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
100 x 99cm
AUD 3,600

"I'm interested in creating works that have been weathered or scarred in some way and have emerged even more robust and beautiful for it."





Novella I, 2024
Acrylic and oil on timber
30 x 25cm
AUD 1,000



Novella II, 2024
Acrylic and oil on timber
30 x 25cm
AUD 1,000



Novella III, 2024
Acrylic and oil on timber
30 x 25cm
AUD 1,000



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Photography, Robert McGrath
Featuring, Molly (studio assistant)

