



hanna kay
about nature

cover images: Along the Margins, 2 oils on paper 56 x 76cm each
facing page: Impetus, oil sticks and oil paint on paper 120 x 160cm

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about nature

art works, a selection
2011 - 2026



trees tower
rocks weather
grasses sway
landscapes transform

A collection of artworks inspired by the natural surroundings in which I live, highlighting the confluence of forces that shape a place's unique character. The art does not dwell on grand vistas but rather on the subtle, the overlooked, and the nearly invisible.

The focus rests on primary elements - grasses, rocks and trees- whose ubiquitous presence makes them part of our shared visual experience. These elements are never static; they exist in constant motion, embodying natural cycles of growth, decay, and regeneration. Together they mirror these cycles, reminding me that both the fragile and the seemingly unyielding are bound to the processes of transformation.

facing page: Impact III, and artist book 'along the margins' as installed @ Singleton Regional Gallery
next pages: Panta Rhei 2023-25, 20 panels oils on canvas, each 100 x 100 cm (left to right), as installed @ Singleton Regional Gallery















Panta Rhei (“everything flows”) the work speaks to the constant movement and change that shape our existence. Through swaying grasses and passages of dark and light, the work evokes a world in continual transition - where nothing is fixed, and everything is always becoming.

The 20 individual panels depict grasses - some sharp, others soft, fading into a misty blur - creating a mysterious space that hints at half-remembered moments. I am drawn to grasses because of their widespread presence, which makes them a part of our shared visual experience. So often overlooked, they exist at the edges of attention: ordinary, common, and almost invisible. In these works, I want to slow that glance and hold space for their subtle beauty.

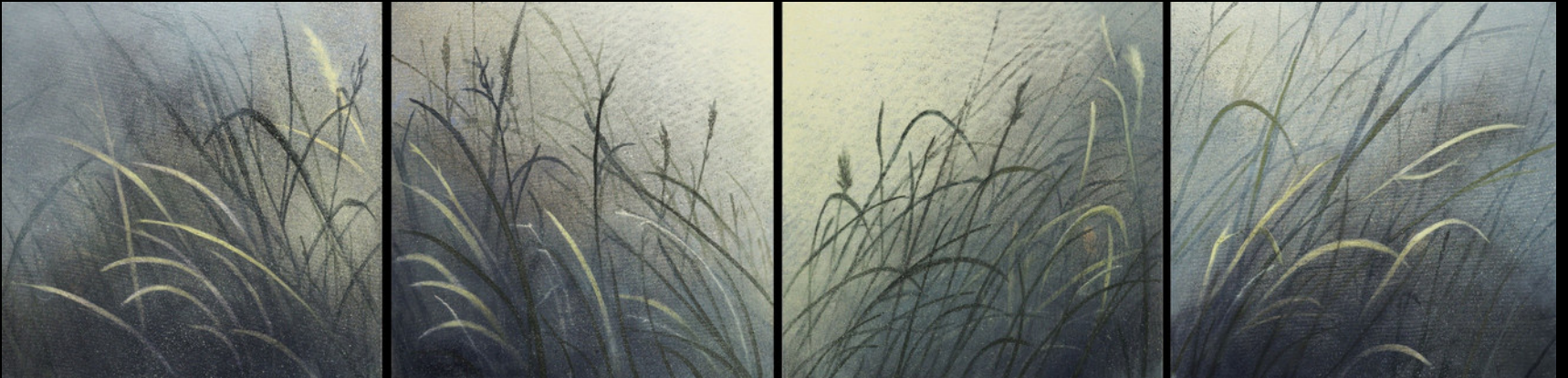




above and previous page: individual panels from the Panta Rhei series

in this interplay between the ephemeral and the enduring, I find a fragile balance that lends the collection its subtle drama. There is healing in small moments, if we choose to pay attention: to a human gesture, a written verse, the shift of light, or the turn of the seasons.

The whispers of beauty surround us, even when they take the form of thorny thistles or plain stones strewn across a parched landscape.



above: Sway, oil and tempera on canvas, 50 x 200 cm
facing page: Along the Margins, 4 oils on paper 56 x 76 cm each
next pages: Whispers series, oil on paper 37 x 28 cm each









Breeze [dry left/wet right], oil and tempera on linen, 12 canvases each 66 x 66





above: Shibboleth B, oil and tempera on linen 100 x 200cm
right: Zephyr, oil and tempera on linen 100 x 200cm





Shibboleth R, oil and tempera on linen 100 x 200cm

Shibboleth is a series of paintings inspired by the grasses and wild growth surrounding my daily walks, from the riverbank to the slopes of the ranges. Drawn initially to the aesthetic qualities of grasses - their forms, movement, rhythm, and repetition - I began painting them as a way of reflecting on nature's cycles and patterns.

While working on the series, my thoughts drifted to the Hebrew word "shibboleth" - meaning 'ear of grain' - which in turn stirred up a kaleidoscope of memories. The word carries both personal and historical associations: memories of harvest songs from childhood, but also the biblical story in which pronunciation became a test of identity and belonging. In this context, a shibboleth is a linguistic or cultural marker used to distinguish "us" from "them."



Into the woods

comprising 21 compositions on Chinese rice paper that immerse the viewer in a forest environment shaped by silence, atmosphere, and transition. Moving from lightness into darkness and back again, the series unfolds as a pictorial journey that considers the forest not simply as landscape, but as a dynamic network of communication and interconnection.

Across the works, shifting natural phenomena - dust, fog, and mist - dissolve spatial certainty and render the forest as a space of ambiguity and intimacy. Elsewhere, mountains, grasses, and other recognisable elements anchor the compositions within a more tangible terrain. While informed by the artist's immediate natural surroundings, the works do not depict specific locations. Instead, they emerge as fragments of memory: subjective impressions shaped by lived experience within the landscape.





Into the Woods. detail - oils and tempera on rice paper, 20 panels each 140 x 70cm









Into the Woods as installed @
Maitland Regional Gallery and
@ Tamworth Regional Gallery
(above)

In Flux

the series explores the convergence of forces that shape a place's singular character. The works navigate the space between fluidity and solidity, absence and substance - moving through desert, rock, and eroded remnants toward the ethereal states of dust, mist, and smoke. These forms emerge through shifting tensions between order and disorder.

Together, the collection inhabits the nexus between the immeasurable age of the natural world and the transience of human perception. While rooted in the physical world - where stone remains stone - these works invite engagement with dimensions of experience that exist beyond the material forms they depict.



Impact II,
oil and tempera on linen
155 x 140cm





above: Balance 2012, oil and tempera on linen 116 x 156 cm (2 panels)
facing page: In Flux sereis, oil sticks & oil paint on paper 90 x 115cm





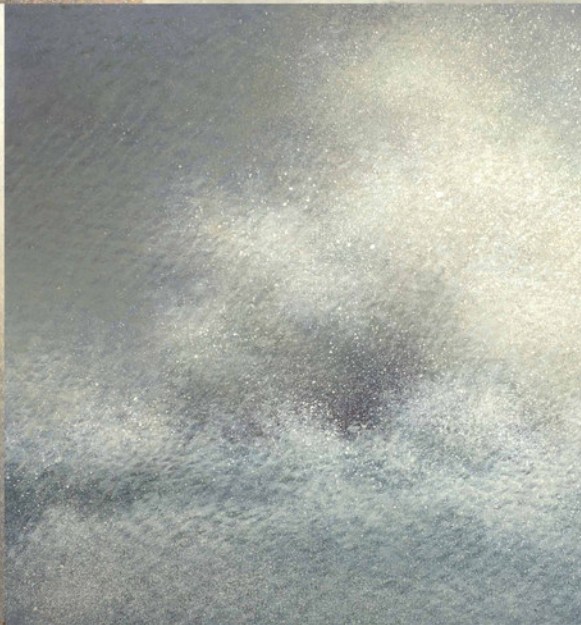


left: Terrain, oil and tempera on linen 155 x 140cm
above: In Flux series, oil sticks & oil paint on paper 90 x 115cm
next page: Impact I, oil and tempera on linen 180 x 350cm









Habitat [lost]

One spring, a wagtail built her nest in the apple tree. I was at the easel when my eyes caught a slight movement outside. A bird hovered nearby, holding a piece of straw in the tip of her beak, which she carefully placed in the half-built nest. She flew away and, several minutes later, returned with some white material that may have been spider silk. For a long time, she came back again and again with an assortment of fine straws, spider webs, bark, and short blades of grass.

I watched her hovering and inspecting her day's labour from every angle, just as I do when assessing an unfinished canvas. Suddenly, she seemed pleased with the chaotic pile of materials she had gathered. She settled onto the little stack and wiggled her tiny body to give it shape. Then she appraised the symmetrical, cup-shaped structure and flew off to fetch soft chicken feathers and crushed dry leaves, which she tucked inside her newly constructed home. At a certain point, she appeared to decide that her nest had reached perfection. She stopped abruptly and settled in to raise a family. A short while later, three chicks waited in the nest, mouths open to be fed.

The artworks that followed this unique experience are a contemplation of the nature of habitat, be it a field of grass, a river or an arid desert - an exploration of the tension between order and disorder, between what is and what was.





previous pages: Circle of Fifths, oil and tempera on clay board 77 x 305cm (16 panels)

Unravelling I, oils on rice paper, 140 x 70cm

Adrift, oil and tempera on linen 130 x 150cm

right: Unravelling 2, Oils on rice paper 140 x 70cm

facing page: Habitat [lost] IV, Oil and tempera on linen 66 x 66 cm







Concave/convex 07, Oil and tempera
on linen 2 x 50 x 50



facing page: Sheilter, Oil and
tempera on linen 100 x 80







above: Habitat II, Oil and tempera on linen 80 x 80
left: Territory (ants), Oil and tempera on linen 130 x 150







Undercurrent oil & tempera on linen 180 x 350cm
right: Undercurrent II, oil & tempera on linen 150 x 180cm





Residue, oils on paper 90 x 345 cm (3 panels)





Random Moments, 42 individual works oils on Arches Huile paper each 56 x 76cm46





all photographs by Leslie
Wand

for more information -
<https://www.hannakay.com>

