



JULIA ROCHE  
*The Low Hum*



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## *The Low Hum*

30 August – 20 September 2025

It's 8am and I'm sitting in the car on the driveway of our farm in rural Western Australia, talking on the phone to Julia Roche. I imagine her tucked up warm in her Wagga Wagga studio, surrounded by rolling hills, the rustle of trees, the low hum of cattle, watching the clouds race past. My view, but different, and three and half thousand kilometres away. We talk about family and land, memory, weather, art. The things that stack up and settle into the layers of a life. What always strikes me is how, for artists like Roche, those layers don't sit in neat piles. They fold into each other. Life and art aren't separate, they flow together. And in Julia's case, that flow is literal: medium, pigment, and feeling moving across the canvas as if blown by wind or swept by memory.

Roche's latest body of work at Defiance Gallery is an immersive reflection on light as it passes through the natural world: scattering, softening and obscuring. The fleeting moments in the periphery when light dances through leaves, glows behind cloud cover, or dissolves into fog. As she writes, this is a series shaped by "the subtle and shifting effects of filtered light across the canvas" — the visual language of impermanence. And that's what these works carry. They're not about trees or clouds or hills. They're not even about what we see, but how it feels to see. These paintings linger in the thresholds: the moment before dawn, the pause before a shadow lifts, the hush of fog. She's painting what can't be held: light in its most fleeting forms, and somehow making it stay, just long enough for us to feel it and to breathe it in.

There is a painterly intelligence at work in her deep understanding of how paint can act like weather. Roche allows her materials to behave with a degree of freedom, letting them pool, drift, and evaporate across the canvas surface. This method reflects the natural processes she's referencing: the slow dispersal of mist, the weightless play of shadow and air. This is seen in the diptychs *Room to Breathe* and *Breathing into the Night* where the trees take centre stage, they have become buoyant almost floating across the canvas with their trunks drawn in delicate charcoal lines as if blown by rolling clouds.



*Guided*

oil & mixed media on canvas

198 x 152 cm, 201 x 155 cm (framed)

\$12,000

But this is not romanticism. The landscapes Roche paints are alive with uncertainty. They are shaped not just by observation, but by the messiness of life, motherhood, by exhaustion, by climate anxiety, by a persistent undercurrent of vulnerability. The knotty stuff of daily life on the farm. Roche tells me it's been a tough year for her family and her community. And I hear it in the work. Not loudly, but it's there as a thread running under the surface. When life is messy and heartbreaking Roche turns to the land, and it gives back. The trees breathe in what we breathe out. The landscape keeps steady. And in return, she paints it, not to capture it, but to feel her way through it.

This breathing in and out is directly reflected in Roche's studio rhythm. All the works in the series began outside, a process that has become a signature of hers, working in collaboration with environment, in direct conversation with the elements and often in the dark of the night. Brought back to the studio in the light of day the distressed painterly surfaces are worked into rhythmically and slowly, pushing the boundaries of marks and possibility with materials, layers and texture. The result has a weightlessness belying the physical weight of material and time worked into the surface. What I love most is that she doesn't try to explain it all. She doesn't impose clarity where there isn't any. Instead, she invites us into the murky bits. Where light flickers, where memory gets soft at the edges, where the self and the land start to blur. Her work lives in porous places between seen and sensed, between grief and wonder, between holding on and letting go.

Roche's paintings are the physical form of quiet wonder at the ethereal landscape. To spend time with these paintings is to be gently undone. To feel the pace of the day slow. To feel, maybe, the land breathing beneath you. In a world obsessed with certainty and speed, Julia Roche gives us something else entirely: a space to linger. To notice. To be still. And in that stillness, in the soft light that filters, scatters, and fades, there's something enduring. A quiet kind of magic. A kind of knowing. A beauty that doesn't demand attention, but rewards it.

Anna Louise Richardson, Artist/Curator  
July 2025

*Buoyant gums rise* (next page)  
oil & mixed media on canvas  
100 x 120 cm, 103 x 123 cm (framed)  
\$6,200









*Breathing into the night I*  
oil & mixed media on canvas  
153 x 122 cm, 156 x 125 cm (framed)  
\$8,000



*Breathing into the night II*  
oil & mixed media on canvas  
153 x 122 cm, 156 x 125 cm (framed)  
\$8,000







*Breathing into light*

oil & mixed media on canvas

120 x 100 cm, 123 x 103 cm (framed)

\$6,200



*Cloud trail*

oil & mixed media on canvas

120 x 100 cm, 123 x 103 cm (framed)

\$6,200







*The trees remember*

oil & mixed media on canvas

84 x 107 cm, 87 x 110 cm (framed)

\$4,500

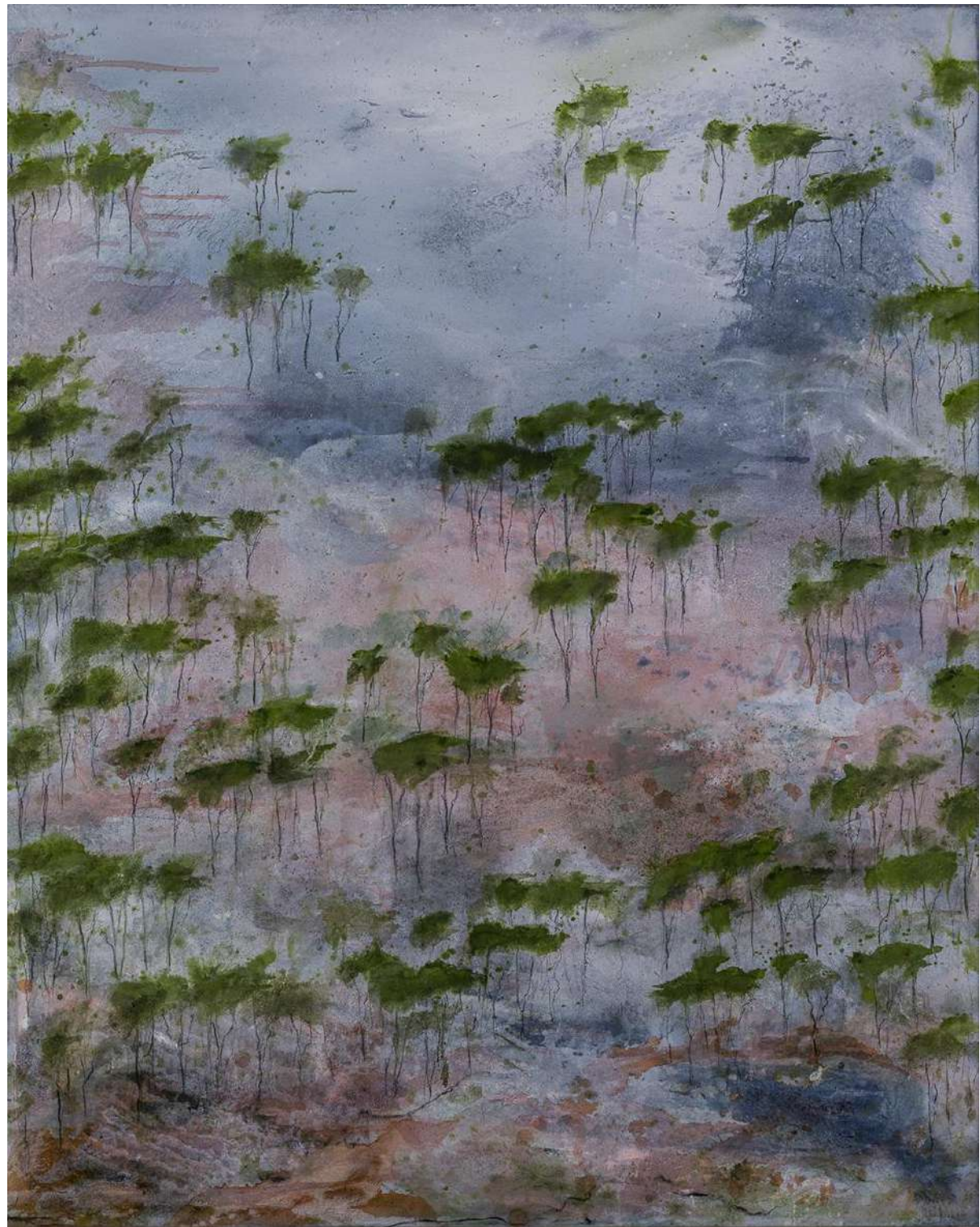


*The low hum*  
oil & mixed media on canvas  
120 x 100 cm, 123 x 103 cm (framed)  
\$6,200

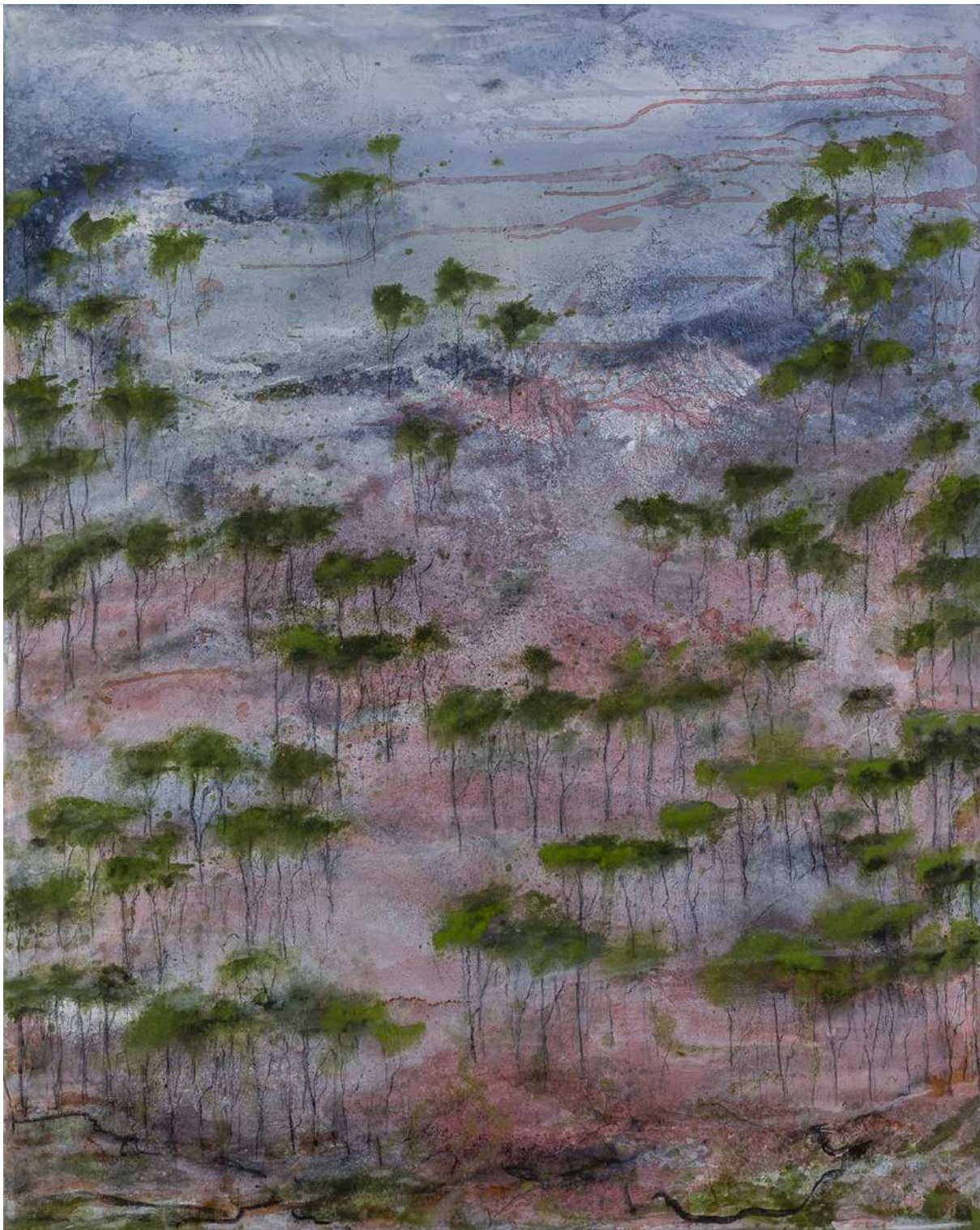




*Room to breathe I*  
oil & mixed media on canvas  
153 x 122 cm, 156 x 125 cm (framed)  
\$8,000







*Room to breathe II*

oil & mixed media on canvas

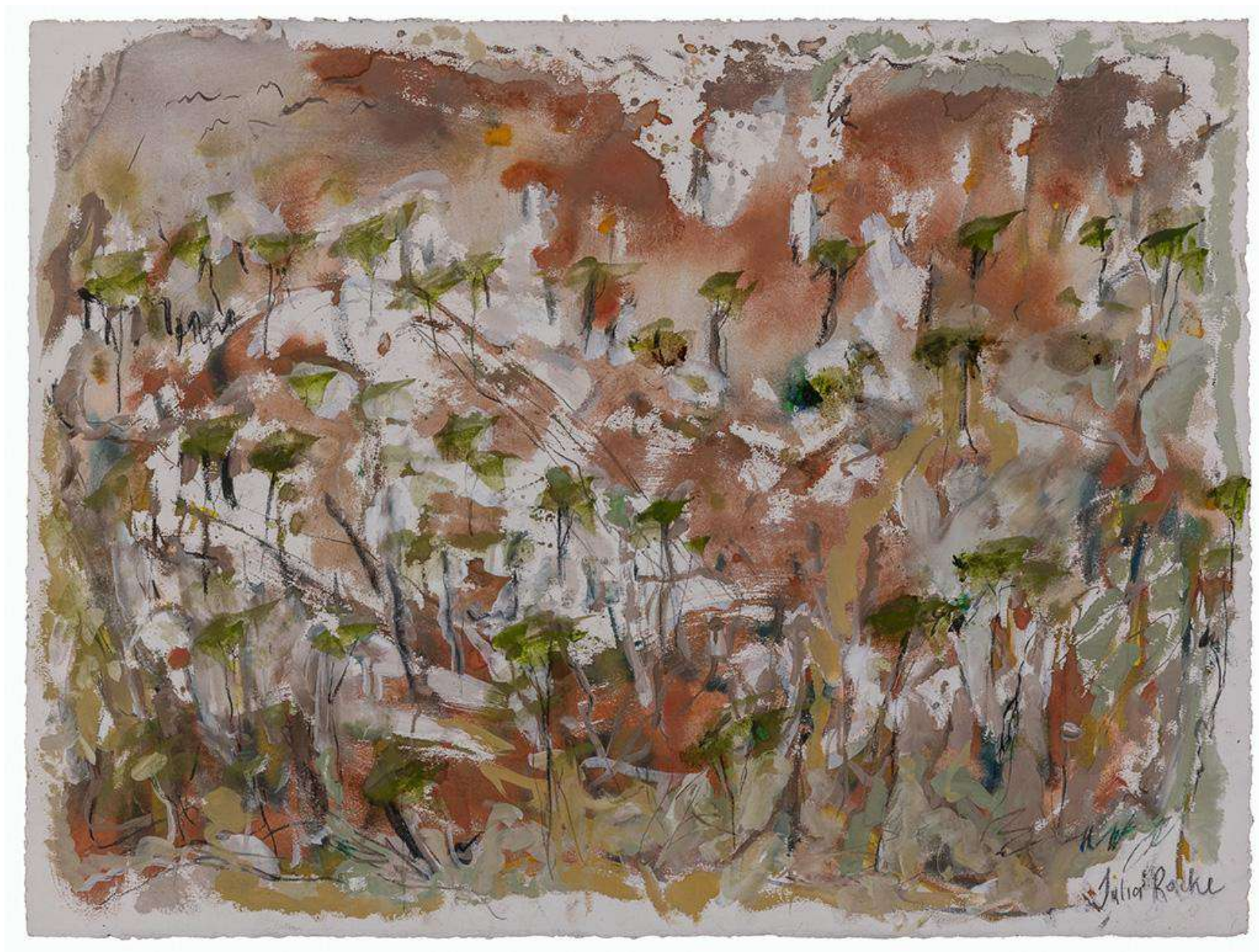
153 x 122 cm, 156 x 125 cm (framed)

\$8,000









*Before the sky talks*

oil & mixed media on cold pressed oil paper

56 x 76 cm

\$2,800





*The hush of fog I*  
oil & mixed media on canvas  
55 x 75 cm, 58 x 78 cm (framed)  
\$3,000





*The hush of fog II*

oil & mixed media on canvas

55 x 75 cm, 58 x 78 cm (framed)

\$3,000





*Shifting play of wind*  
oil & mixed media on cold pressed oil paper  
130 x 130 cm  
\$8,000





*Going with the wind*

oil & mixed media on cold pressed oil paper

115 x 130 cm

\$7,500





*How it feels to see*

oil & mixed media on canvas

150 x 150 cm, 153 x 153 cm (framed)

\$8,500





*What the clouds remember*

oil & mixed media on canvas

152 x 198 cm, 155 x 201 cm (framed)

\$12,000



JULIA ROCHE CV

Education

2012	Master of Teaching – Arts, University Of Western Sydney
2008	Bachelor of Visual Arts, Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney

Solo Exhibitions

2025	The Low Hum, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
2024	When Our Eyes Adjust, Defiance Gallery, Sydney Held in Place, OTOMYS, Melbourne When Our Eyes Adjust, Wagga Wagga Art Gallery
2022	From The Sky, OTOMYS, Melbourne Natural Relationships, Rosby Gallery, Mudgee
2021	Under A Winter Moon, Murray Arts Museum Albury (MAMA), Albury Stars Run Rampant by the Billions, OTOMYS, Melbourne Sit Beneath, 50 flag installation, Arbour Festival, Snowy Valleys
2020	Works From A Foggy Year, Cadell Place, Wagga Wagga Salt Of The Earth, Art Partners Australia, Albury
2019	Unearth, Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga

Group Exhibitions

2025	Terrain, Defiance Gallery, Sydney PAPER, Defiance Gallery, Sydney Defiance 30, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
2024	Defiance Summer Salon, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
2023	The Land of Wonder, OTOMYS, Melbourne Landscape, Defiance Gallery, Sydney Works On Paper, Defiance Gallery, Sydney Defiance 2023, Defiance Gallery, Sydney

2021	Smalls, OTOMYS, Melbourne Regenerative Vision, Brunswick Street Gallery, Melbourne
2020	Perception of Landscape, Walcha Gallery Of Art, Walcha
2019	Group Exhibition, Art Partners Australia, Albury
2017	Group Exhibition, Heaps Decent, Special Group Studios, Sydney
2013	8 Artists, Wagga Wagga Art Gallery
2009	Installation, Gaffa Gallery, Sydney
2008	Sydney College of the Arts Post Graduate Exhibition, Sydney

Awards & Residencies

2024	Kings School Art Prize, Finalist Wollongong Art Prize, Finalist
2023	Recipient of the Regional Artist Development Program, Wagga Wagga Art Gallery Wollongong Art Gallery National Contemporary Watercolour Prize
2022	Artist in Residence, Geelong Grammar School Mentorship with Helen Grace and Julie Ewington, Wagga Wagga Art Gallery
2021	Artist in Residence on Regenerative Farm Bibbaringa, Bowna in preparation for exhibition at Murray Arts Museum Albury (MAMA)
2020	Australian Bushfire Art Auction
2019	Guest Speaker at the opening of Sculptures at Erin Earth, Wagga Wagga

Collections

Geelong Grammar School
Sydney University, Wesley College, Sydney
Private collections in Australia, Hong Kong & America

Bibliography

Anna Louise Richardson, ‘The Low Hum’ exhibition essay 2025
Hayley Megan French, ‘When our eyes adjust’ exhibition essay 2024







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