

JANE GERRISH | TANYA BAILY | JO NOLAN

DEBBIE MACKINNON | MARILYN ROSS

Nov 10 - Dec 19, Opening reception Sat Nov 14, 3-5pm

Enquiries to Stella Downer 0402018283

Introduction

Casting a light on five contemporary practices, my vision for TRANSPARENT BEAUTY was to celebrate modern ways of working with an ancient medium - watercolour.

Abstraction fuels this exhibition. With robust experimentation and brave innovations the artists of TRANSPARENT BEAUTY seek to challenge traditional preconceptions of what watercolour is - examining instead what watercolour can be.

'*Was I freed to a more open state of thought?*'

Leaving passages of white paper open, in *LIGHT DANCE,* using rhythmic transparent brushstrokes, Tanya Baily explores the flickering light and colour of Provençe. Painting in watercolour she describes a place where '*landscape, atmosphere and perception began to loosen from fixed form*' contemplating, '*untethered from my usual life in Sydney, was I freed to a more open state of thought?*'

'*These works are not botanical'*

Conceptualising watercolour as '*material and metaphor'* in *UNDERSTORY,* Debbie Mackinnon '*responds to the fleeting life of poppies growing beneath ancient olive trees.'* Working en plein air in Provençe, layering transparent watercolour with wet strength tissue,*'impressions of time, place and close attention'* are sealed into the vibrant, glowing works.

'I strive to create work of poetic complexity'

In her *TRANSLATIONS* series, Jo Nolan explores the emotive potential of watercolour. '*Luminosity, transparency, opacity, iridescence, hue, scale bring visibility to abstract concepts of feeling and mood*'*.* Rich in materiality and resonant with lived experience, the finished works pulse with sensitivity.

'*Ethereal settings'*

Building ethereal settings for her *UNDER THE WASH* series, artist Marilyn Ross employs the fluid materiality of watercolour to bathe her nudes in transparent colour. Realised in the language of abstraction, her life studies speak to humanity, conveying tender moments of connection and contemplative reflection.

'*My watercolour practice is grounded in art history*'

Moved by a recent visit to Giverny, Jane Gerrish responded with an abstract collage series. For *THE BRIDGE AT MONET'S LILY POND,* combining a fragment of French period textile with watercoloured paper swatches, the artist reimagines the scene.

'Between showers, sunshine infused the site with golden light…. a Japanese bridge..shimmering ponds..true to Monet's vision vines trailed from the bridge, while underneath blushing pink, waterlilies floated by…

Time felt suspended'

With sincere thanks to Stella Downer for believing in TRANSPARENT BEAUTY, my teacher Tanya Baily for her generous guidance along the watercolour path, and the four talented artists who have collaborated with me to realise this exhibition, Tanya Baily, Jo Nolan, Debbie Mackinnon and Marilyn Ross.

Jane Gerrish 2026

Catalogue of works

ABOUT THE ARTIST: JANE GERRISH



Born in Sydney in 1958, Jane completed her Diploma in Dress Design at ESTC, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Design at UTS. An extensive career in fashion and textile design followed next.

Retraining as a visual artist since 2007, Jane has studied with many respected artists including Jennifer Keeler-Milne, Celia Gullet and Juliet Holmes à Court.

Exhibiting her work from 2016, in 2021 she was featured in the AGNSW 150th Anniversary Edition of ‘Look’ Magazine and in 2026 she was invited to join the Australian Watercolour Institute.

Characterised by expertly detailed tonal works, underpinning Jane’s practice is enquiry, research and an unquenchable thirst for Art History.

Often researched in situ, recent exhibition themes include the lives and practices of prominent French Modernist artists.

Working in watercolour or dry drawing media, in each of Jane's series she experiments with materials, colour interactions and tonal gradations. Conveying her affinity for illumination, her atmospheric compositions seek to transfer the wonderment of her discoveries to the viewer.

Jane has exhibited in Sydney with Stella Downer Fine Art (SDFA), Waterloo; Saint Cloche Paddington; Frances Keevil (Studio W) Woolloomooloo and Gallery East Clovelly. She has had solo shows at SDFA in 2022 & 2024, Suki & Hugh Gallery, Bungendore in 2018 and 2021 and Gallery East in 2016.

She lives and works in Sydney and spends every spare moment thinking about, researching and making art.

THE BRIDGE OVER MONET'S LILY PONDS

My art practice is grounded in research, with each series resulting from enquiry. Visiting Monet’s garden at Giverny on a recent trip proved deeply rewarding.

Between showers, sunshine infused the site with golden light. In the distance, like a grand stage set, a Japanese bridge spanning shimmering ponds drew me in. True to Monet’s vision, wisteria vines trailed from the bridge, while underneath blushing pink waterlilies floated by. Time felt suspended.

Transfixed, I was compelled to respond. On my return, in my studio I painted fluid textures and transparent colours in watercolour on lush French papers. Assembled from hand cut shapes, the abstract compositions recall quiet atmospheric moments beside Monet’s lily ponds. Accents of gold and silver evoke sunshine and rain, and the sheen of reflections on water. A C20th French textile motif echoes green lily leaves and elegantly pointed petals.

Providing him with an enduring subject, it is believed an elaborate drawing of an Egyptian water garden at the 1878 Paris Exposition inspired Monet’s lily pond design.

‘I have always loved sky and water, leaves and flowers…I found them in abundance in my little pond…’ Claude Monet 1840-1926

Over 43 years at Giverny, establishing his position in Art History as the Father of Abstraction, Monet painted his iconic water lilies.

My new works form part of an ongoing project exploring the lives and practices of prominent C20th French artists.

Jane Gerrish 2026



#1
Monet's Bridge at the Lily Pond
(Monet's garden, Giverny, France, 2026)

Artist photograph taken on location at Giverny, printed on best quality archival paper

(Edition of 10)

Framed H 17 cm x W 12 cm

Photographic image H 15.25 cm x W 10 cm

$200



#2
Let's go down to the Lily Pond
(Monet's Garden, Giverny, France, 2026)

Watercolour collage with French C20th textile fragment

Framed
H 43 cm x W 87 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 22.5 cm x W 75 cm

$3000



#2
DETAIL

Let's go down to the Lily Pond
(Monet's Garden, Giverny, France, 2026)

Watercolour collage with French C20th textile fragment

Framed H 43 cm x W 87 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 22.5 cm x W 75 cm

$3000



#3
Wisteria and Lilies
(Monet's Bridge, Giverny, France, 2026)

Watercolour collage with French C20th textile fragment

Framed H 28.5 cm x W 25.5 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 22.5 cm x W 18.5 cm

$700



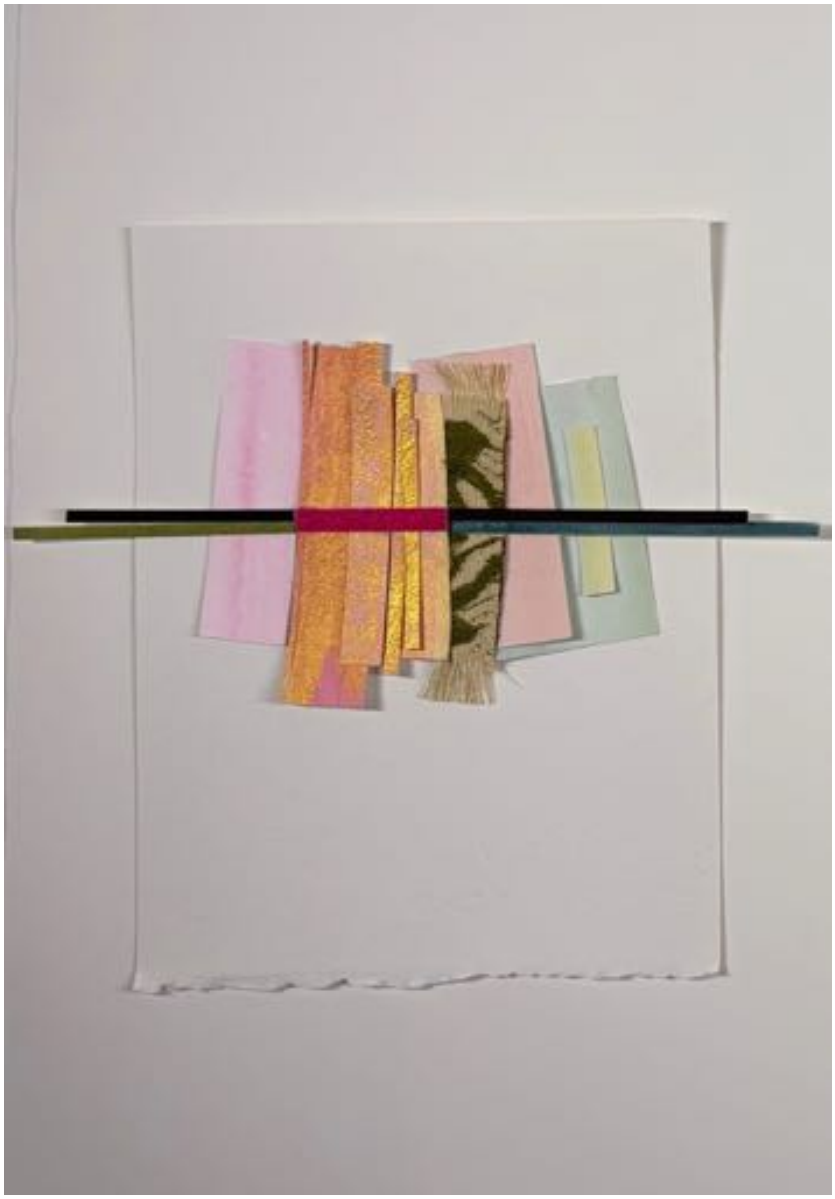
#4
Waterlilies opening under Monet's Bridge
(Monet's garden, Giverny, France, 2026)

Watercolour collage with French C20th textile fragment

Framed H 28.5 cm x W 29 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 22.5 cm x W 22.5 cm

$700



#5
Golden Light on Monet's Bridge
(Monet's garden, Giverny, France, 2026)

Watercolour collage with French C20th textile fragment

Framed H 28.5 cm x W 24 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 22.5 cm x W 17 cm

$700

ABOUT THE ARTIST : TANYA BAILY



Tanya Baily is a celebrated Australian artist based in Sydney whose work reflects a profound appreciation for the natural world.

Her education includes a BA from Oxford University, Foundation Studies at Chelsea School of Art, and a Master of Art from COFA UNSW.

In recent work, Tanya explores the diverse applications of watercolour within a painting context, extending a medium that has historically been underrepresented. She works plein air and develops large studio works from reflection and memory.

Her commitment to capturing the delicate nuances of nature has earned recognition through numerous exhibitions and awards, including the National Watercolour Prize in 2019.

Tanya exhibits in Australia and internationally, including at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, the China Cultural Centre Sydney, and international exhibitions across Taiwan and Italy. Alongside her artistic practice, she is committed to fostering creativity in others through regular classes at the National Art School and workshops for art societies across the region

LIGHT DANCE

“Light is a confused aggregate of Rays indued with all sorts of Colors, as they are promiscuously darted from the various parts of luminous bodies.”

- Sir Isaac Newton, “A Letter … containing his New Theory about Light and Colors”, Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, 1671

Selected from works made during an artist residency in Provence in October 2025, “Light Dance” reflects a period of working mostly plein air in watercolour, where landscape, atmosphere and perception began to loosen from fixed form.

Observing the landscape, I felt as though the clean, sharp colours I saw were being released from their objects and set dancing in the air. Wild fennel and grasses moved before my eyes, further fracturing the landscape. Untethered from my usual life in Sydney, was I freed to a more open state of thought?

I turned to science and discovered that Provence has distinctive geological and atmospheric conditions: warm, dry air, mistral winds, pale limestone rocks, and an abundance of small, shiny leaves. Together, these conditions affect how light disperses and how colour is perceived.

Colour and light are not bound to objects. Watercolour, fluid and transparent, describes this charged space between place and vision.

Tanya Baily 2026



#1
Light and the path

Watercolour

Framed H 67.6 cm x W 89.6 cm

Unframed
H 56 cm x W 76 cm

$3200



#2
Towards the village

Watercolour

Framed H 36.6 cm x W 46.6 cm

Unframed
H 30 cm x W 40cm

$800



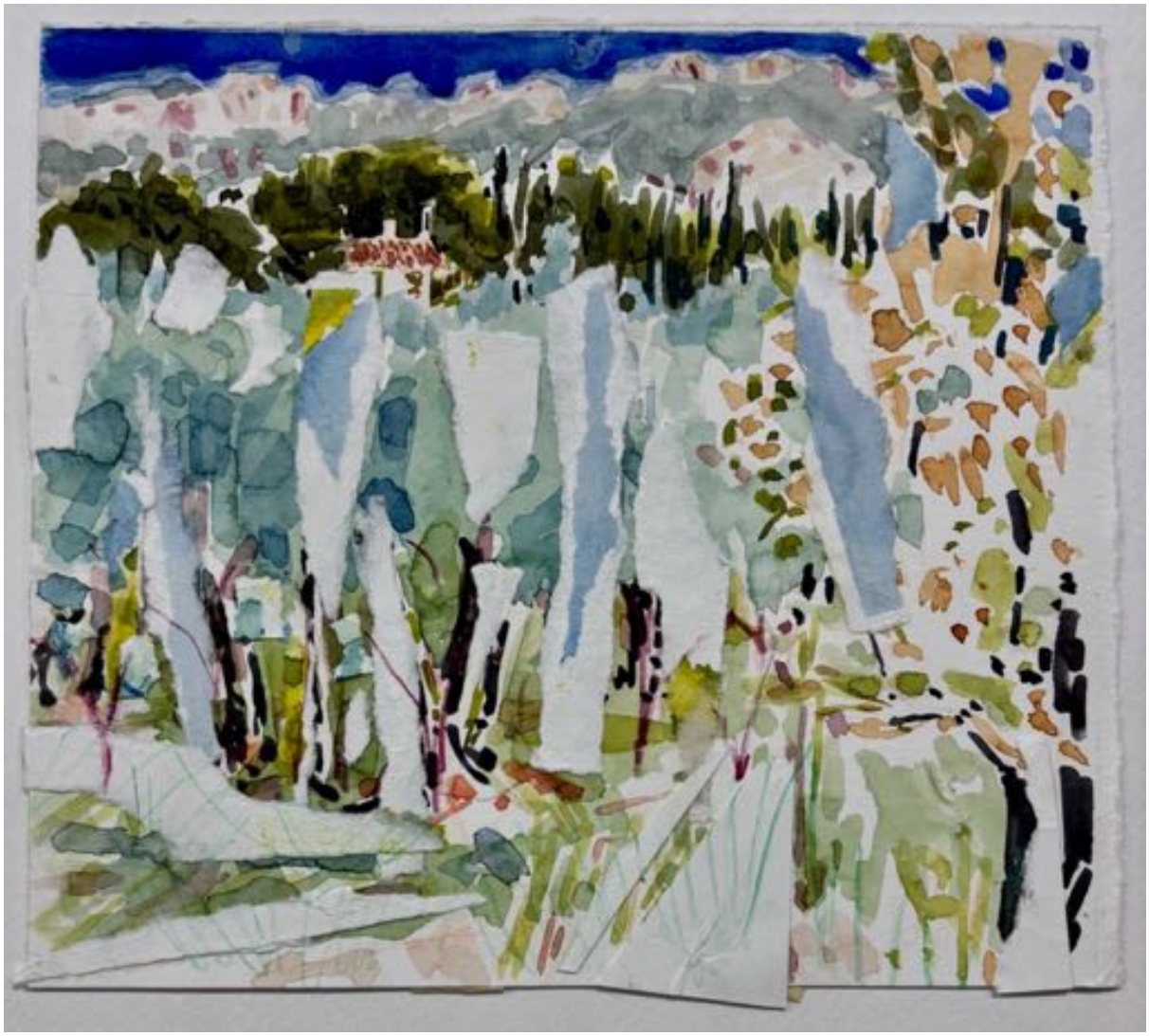
#3
Afternoon Shadows

Watercolour

Framed H 36.6 cm x W 27.9 cm

Unframed
H 28.7 cm x W 21 cm

$600



#4
Windy in the olive grove

Watercolour Collage

Framed H 26.1 cm x W 28.1 cm

Unframed:
H 19.5 cm x W 21.5 cm

$400



#5

Across the meadow

Watercolour

Framed H 25.1 cm x W 22.6 cm

Unframed
H 18.5 cm x W 16 cm

$350



#6
In the hills

Watercolour

Framed H 25.1 cm x W 24 cm

Unframed
H 18.3 cm x W 17.7 cm

$350



#7
Morning Walk

Watercolour

Framed H 22.6 cm x W 22.6 cm

Unframed
H 15.8 cm x W 15.8 cm

$350

ABOUT THE ARTIST: JO NOLAN



Born on the North Coast of New South Wales, into a family immersed in the practices of art and music, Jo Nolan grew up with an instinct for making. Painting expeditions and music were part of daily life. Early years of painting in the bush with her father, often at dawn, instilled in her a deep love of the natural world, its patterns and rhythms but also its wild unpredictabilities.

As a young woman, she ventured into the unknown landscape of the city to study and work, but her early practices remained resonant and eventually she reconnected with the essential tenets of her formative life.

Formalising her art training while also raising a young family, Jo gained diplomas in colour theory and design and later a Masters of Art (Honours in Excellence) from the University of New South Wales. In addition to university, she studied the history and techniques of painting under the guidance of an established practising artist in a cohort of supportive peers with whom she exhibited.

Jo maintains a small home studio and works on larger scale projects at the One+2 Artist Studios in Rozelle. Since 2015 she has participated in exhibitions and projects with fellow artists and within commercial galleries. Her longstanding bushland regeneration practice continues to sustain her practical engagement with the natural world. Jo is an ardent traveller.

Works emerge out of the slow and imperfect human processes of painting itself. To painting, Jo brings her life experience and evolving perception of the world. She has always been drawn by the half-light at the transition points of the day. She is interested in the palpable tensions between ancient rhythms of nature and the wildly erratic forces of the material world in which we find ourselves. Reaching for poetic complexity through the slow layering of transparent, opaque and iridescent pigments which harness light and shadow, Jo offers abstract compositions of colour and form.

TRANSLATIONS

My works emerge out of the slow and imperfect human processes of painting itself.

All art is a translation, through the bodies of artists, using the materials to hand to share something which sits beyond the reach of words. Maurice Merleau Ponty said “how would the painter or the poet express anything other than his encounter with the world?”.

Luminosity, transparency, opacity, iridescence, hue, scale bring visibility to abstract concepts of feeling and mood in the same way the perfume of a flower might evoke the excitement of the beginning of a season with its myriad associations from seasons past and present.

I strive to create work of poetic complexity through the slow layering of transparent, opaque and iridescent pigments to draw light and shadow into abstract compositions of colour and form. Perhaps these paintings are not so singular. I keep always in my mind the observations of Andrei Tarkovsky who said “the artistic image is not a specific meaning… but an entire world reflected as in a drop of water”.

I am not so interested in the rational explanations of the material world, but I am interested in the palpable tensions between ancient rhythms of our nature and the wildly erratic forces of the material world we have created.

Jo Nolan 2026



#1
Lyra

Watercolour on Moulin de Larroque cotton rag

Framed H 51 cm x W 43 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 31 cm x W 24 cm

$1400



#2
Rhapsody

Watercolour on Moulin de Larroque cotton rag

Framed H 25 cm x W 19 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 13 cm x 10 cm

$700



#3
Auteur

Watercolour on Moulin de Larroque cotton rag

Framed
H 25 cm x W 19 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 13 cm x W 10 cm

$700



#4
Tragedean

Watercolour on Moulin de Larroque cotton rag

Framed H 25 x cm x W 19 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 13 cm x W 10 cm

$700



#5
Etoile

Watercolour on Moulin de Larroque cotton rag

Framed H 51 cm x W 43 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 31 cm x W 24 cm

$1400



#6
Aria

Watercolour on Moulin de Larroque cotton rag

Framed
H 25 cm x W 19 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 13 cm x W 10 cm

$700



(FRONT VIEW pictured above)

#7
Presence & Absence 1

Artist book,18 pages plus covers (15 painted, 3 with text)

Watercolour on Khadi Paper

Unframed

Dimensions when fully open
H 15 cm x W 98 cm

Dimensions when closed
H 15 cm x W 10 cm

$1600

(FRONT DETAIL pictured below)







(FRONT VIEW pictured above)

#8
Presence & Absence 2

Artist book,18 pages plus covers (15 painted, 3 with text)

Watercolour on Khadi Paper

Unframed

Dimensions when fully open
H 15 cm x W 98 cm

Dimensions when closed
H 15 cm x W 10 cm

$1600

(FRONT DETAIL pictured below)



'how would the painter or the poet express anything other than his encounter with the world?'

Maurice Merleau Ponty, French philosopher, 1908 - 1961

ABOUT THE ARTIST: DEBBIE MACKINNON



Debbie Mackinnon is a Sydney based artist whose work is grounded in drawing, observation and a deep connection to the natural world. Born in the UK, she trained in illustration before working for many years in London publishing, where she built an award-winning career as an art director in children's books.

Since moving to Australia more than thirty years ago, Debbie has developed a full-time art practice shaped by walking, travel, wild places and the act of paying attention.

Drawing on location is central to her work. Whether in the Australian bush, on coastal tracks, or wandering during overseas art residencies, she uses drawing as a way to gather colour, light, rhythm and the feeling of place.

Her paintings and works on paper bring together landscape, plants, flowers, still life and memory. Influenced by modernist artists who transform observation through colour and expressive mark making, Debbie works intuitively with watercolour, acrylic, ink, watercolour pencil, monoprinting and collage. Loose gestural marks, transparent layers and fragments of paper allow her images to shift between observation and abstraction.

Rather than making literal records of what she sees, Debbie creates works that suggest multiple moments in time - the accumulated experience of looking, walking, drawing and remembering. Her practice reflects a belief that art begins with attention, and that drawing is a way of understanding the world more closely.

Debbie's work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in Australia and overseas, and selected for many national and regional art prizes. Alongside her studio practice, she is an experienced teacher, leading workshops and online courses that encourage artists to loosen up, experiment and develop a more personal response to the world around them.

UNDERSTORY

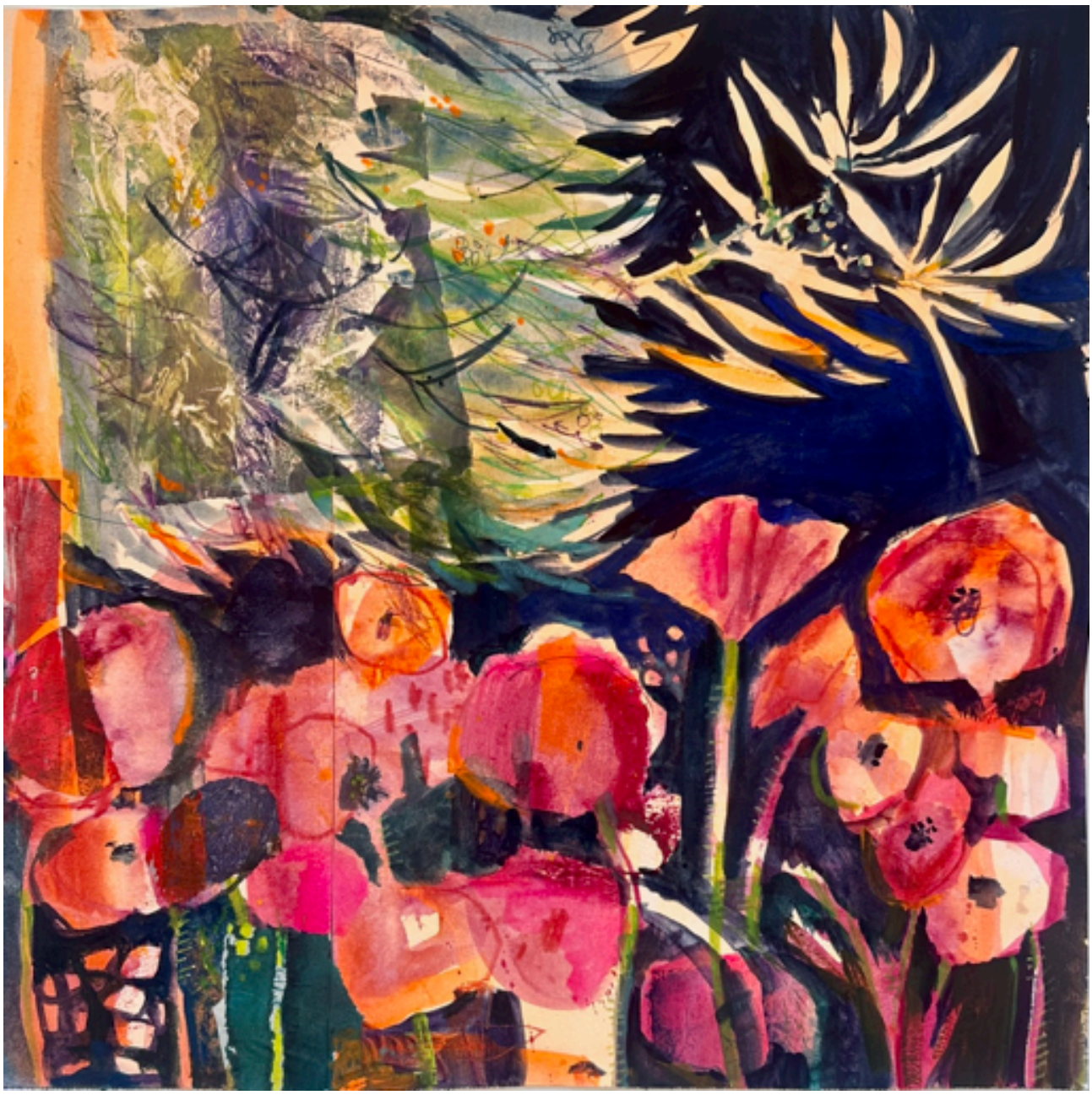
Begun on a recent art residency in Provence, this series of works responds to the fleeting life of poppies growing beneath ancient olive trees. These works are not botanical studies, but layered impressions of time, place and close attention - the brief flare of petals, the flicker of light through leaves, and the shadowed growth below.

Working with watercolour, watercolour pencil and collage made on wet strength tissue paper, transparency is used as both material and metaphor. Washes overlap, marks remain visible, and fragments of painted and printed tissue are embedded into the surface, allowing one moment to show through another.

The poppies are deliberately loose and abstracted. Their forms appear, dissolve and are suggested among darker shapes, leaf shadows and gestural marks. The collage acts as a disruption, interrupting the image in the same way that memory, movement and changing light interrupt direct observation.

These works hold the tension between delicacy and intensity. Poppies bloom briefly, dazzle with brilliance, and then are gone. Under the olive trees, their vivid colour becomes a kind of passing event - a moment of beauty caught before it shifts fades or disappears.

Debbie Mackinnon 2026



#1
Canopy

Watercolour, watercolour pencil and collage on wet strength tissue paper, on paper

Framed
H 53 cm x W 54 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 42 cm x W 43 cm

$1800



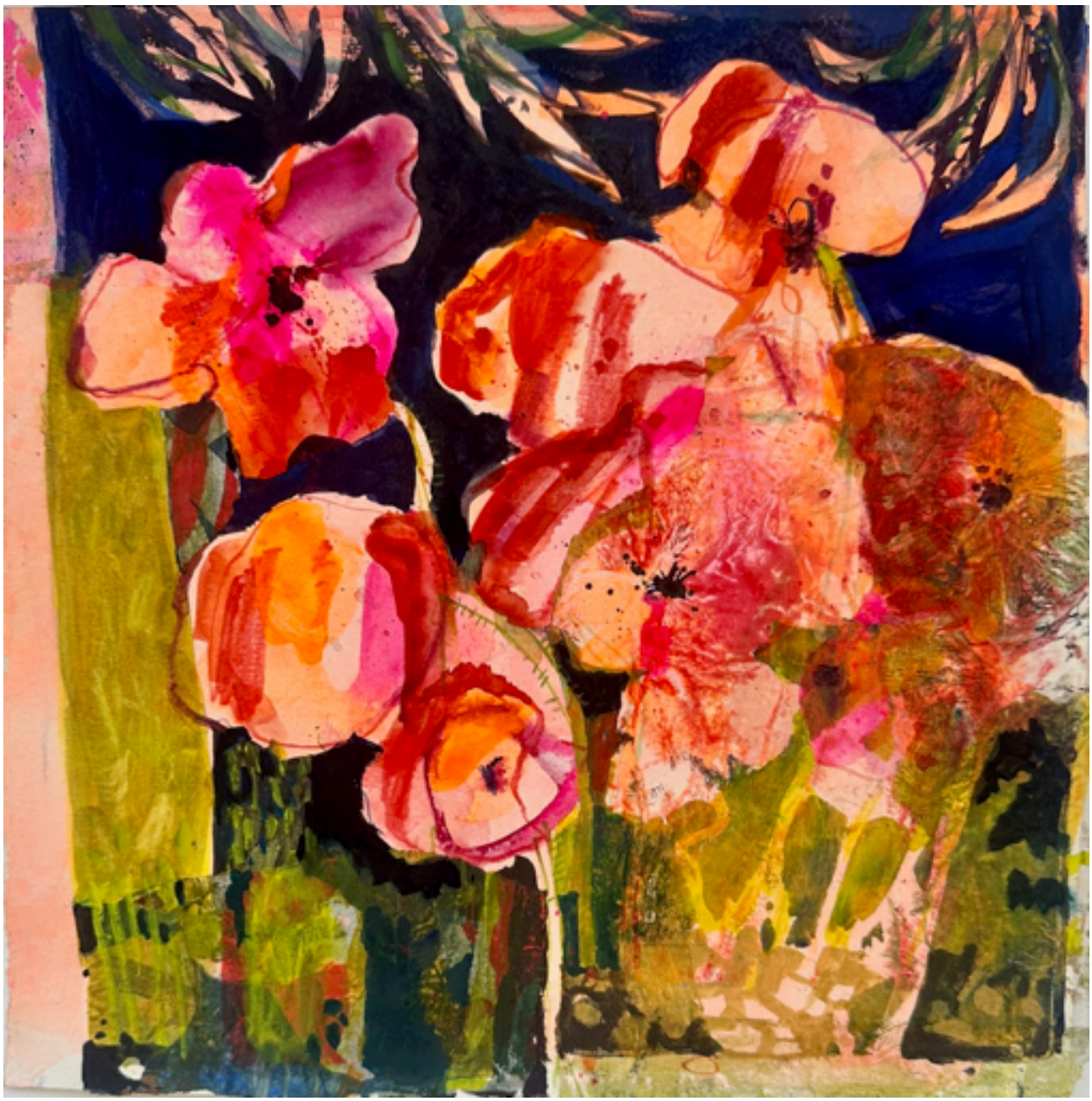
#2
Below the Leaves

Watercolour, watercolour pencil and collage on wet strength tissue paper, on paper

Framed Dimensions
H 37 cm x W 38 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 28 cm x W 28 cm

$1200



#3
All Too Brief

Watercolour, watercolour pencil and collage on wet strength tissue paper, on paper

Framed Dimensions
H 37 cm x W 38 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 28 cm x W 28 cm

$1200



#4
Bright Interval

Watercolour, watercolour pencil and collage on wet strength tissue paper, on paper

Framed Dimensions
H 38 cm x W 36.5 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 29 cm x W 27.5 cm

$1200



#5
Field Notes

Watercolour, watercolour pencil and collage on wet strength tissue paper, on paper

Framed Dimensions
H 29 cm x W 38 cm

Dimensions of paper support
H 20 cm x W 28 cm

$900



#6
Still Emerging

Handmade artist book, 8 pages plus end covers

Watercolour, watercolour pencil and collage on paper

Unframed

Dimensions when fully open
H 18 cm x W 200 cm

$1800

DETAIL



‘A painting can contain a lot of time’ David Hockney, British painter 1937 - 2026

ABOUT THE ARTIST: MARILYN ROSS



Born in Sydney in 1953, Marilyn began her creative journey at ESTC in Darlinghurst, completing *'Fashion: Design and Teaching'* in 1974.

During an extensive career in fashion, she designed for prominent Australian brands and established her own highly successful label. Seeking inspiration for her collections in Italy, Germany and France, it was during this period that Marilyn began exploring European museum collections.

Reinventing herself as an artist, for the last two decades she has maintained a full time art practice, working from her studio at One + 2 in Lilyfield, Sydney.

Continuing formal studies alongside her studio practice, Marilyn has trained with many highly esteemed artists, including Aida Tomescu, Juliet Holmes à Court, and Pam Cowper.

Beginning with a figurative motif, through a reductive process, Marilyn creates innovative abstractions on paper and canvas. She is drawn to the textural possibilities of mixing dry and wet media to create tactile layered surfaces. The beauty of colour is explored, while distinctive gestural mark making and intriguing passages of collage are ever present in her atmospheric compositions.

Since 2005 Marilyn's work has been exhibited in numerous Sydney galleries, including the prestigious *Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf* in Double Bay*, Art Gallery on Darling* in Balmain, and *The Corner Gallery* in Stanmore. A commended Art Prize finalist, she is continually developing new work.

WHISPERS IN WATER

A Watercolour Journey

My passion for life drawing has gathered momentum over the last few years. Recently rediscovering watercolour painting, I drew on elements of each practice for this new series.

Intrigued by mixing media and the range of possibilities it offers, here I have explored the beauty of transparent watercolour, and combined it with chalk pastels and graphite.

My process begins with weekly sessions in the life drawing studio. Editing later, selected drawings are developed.

While the works may begin as figurative studies, through a process of reductive abstraction, forms are simplified and lines refined.

Working intuitively, quiet atmospheres are reconstructed from memory. With emotive colour pairings, gentle brushstrokes and collage, themes of contemplation and connection are explored. Figures appear and disappear as washes build.

Using gestural lines, I invite the viewer to linger, slowly absorbing the paintings as their messages unfold.

Marilyn Ross 2026



#1
Gentle Curve

Watercolour, graphite and coloured pencil

Framed Dimensions H 24 cm x W 30 cm

Dimensions of paper support H 15 cm x W 21cm

$750



#2
Washes of Light

Watercolour, graphite, white and coloured pencil

Framed Dimensions H 41cm x W 52cm
Dimensions of paper support H 30cm x W 41cm

$1100



#3

Beneath the Wash

Watercolour, white and coloured pencil

Framed Dimensions H 41 cm x W 52 cm

Dimensions of paper support H 30 cm x W 41 cm

$1100



#4
Gathering

Watercolour, graphite and coloured pencil

Framed Dimensions H 32 cm x W 53.5 cm

Dimensions of paper support H 21 cm x W 43 cm

$950



#5
Whisper

Watercolour, graphite pencil and pastel

Framed Dimensions H 30 cm x W 24 cm

Dimensions of paper support H 21 cm x W 15 cm

$750



#6
Unfolding

Artist book with end covers

FRONT OF BOOK
(As above)
6 painted pages with small painted details on 2 end pages (not shown)

Watercolour, watercolour pencil, graphite and collage
on paper.

Unframed

Dimensions when fully open
H 20 cm X W 113 cm

$1950

FRONT DETAIL



#6

Unfolding (continued)

BACK OF BOOK
4 painted pages, tiny collage details on 2 end pages



'Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life'
Pablo Picasso, Spanish painter, 1881 - 1973