

CONTENTS

About the Artist, Selected Exhibitions 03

A Note from the Artist 04

part one: formation

Paintings (Larger works)

In Excelsis Davies (Paul) 07

From the Dark Night 08

Plasmic Fusion 09

Red Sea 10

All sorts of weather 11

Air 12

part two: generation

Centrefold for the Scientific American 14

Pond 15

Earth 16

Cherry Chinese Screen 17

Evolution: Asian Influence 18

part three: moisture

Lush Green Earth 20

Paradeisos 21

Two Views of a Hypothetical
Landscape 22

part four: heat

Sand: New Spirit of the Land 24

Red Earth 25

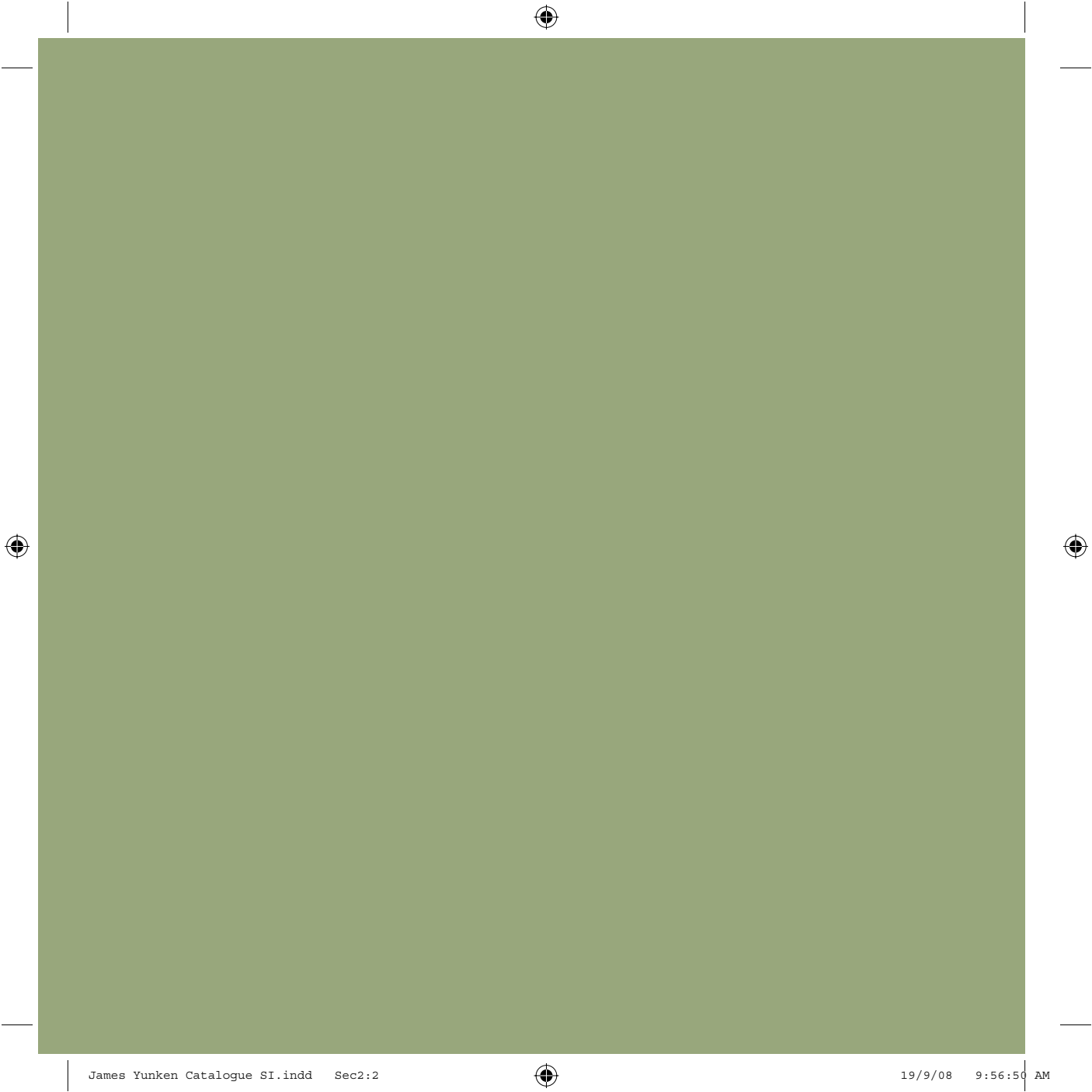
Small Works

Blind Vision 27

Silver Lining 28

Rock Pool 29

Ferment 30



JAMES H YUNCKEN

about the artist

- 1954 Born Melbourne, Australia
- 1986 Began studying drawing privately with Christopher Croft of the Graphic Investigation Department, Canberra School of Art
- 1990 Began to work full-time as an artist

selected exhibitions

- 2005 'Formal Considerations', Richmond
- 2003 'Sense of Place', SPAN Galleries
- 2001 'Presence/Absence', SPAN Galleries
- 1999 'Non-objective Representations', *Galerie helengory*
- 1997 'First Steps' Exhibition, *Galerie helengory*
- 1995 Studio Exhibition of Landscape Paintings, Smith Street Studio
- 1992 'Figurative' with Les Peterson and Tanya Myshkin, Studio One Gallery, Canberra
- 1990 Solo exhibition Dorette's Bistro, Canberra
- 1989 Solo exhibition Dorette's Bistro, Canberra

ART WITHOUT OBSERVATION

TAPPING VISUAL CURRENTS IN THE MIND

The paintings in this catalogue are arranged to reflect a grand cycle of formative and generative processes. Chunks of matter collide, generate heat, release energy; then cool, condensing into elements. Out of the fire come earth, water, and air.

These elements generate life. Water and earth are the maternal incubators in partnership with paternal fire and air. Life expands, erupting in moist, luxuriant plenitude, until drying heat forces its transformation and retreat into sparser, harder, tenacious forms.

The paintings don't come from a plan, a scheme. I go to the studio, I prepare the board, sort the paints and pigments, and begin. I let my experience drive the process, the way in which I stand and paint. Each painting has to 'speak to me' and, however subjectively, to 'mean' something to me as well as satisfying formal artistic considerations. It's not finished until then.

In this exhibition my "experience" is both my training and life lived. I have a law degree, as well as degrees in science and computer programming. When I worked for several years at the Research School of Biological Sciences at the *Australian National University* as a support programmer for environmental scientists, I became interested in evolutionary biology. Training as an artist gave me the skills to produce art, science led me, for instance, to Francis Crick's work examining consciousness and visual perception. So the experience that drove this show is original training, dialogue with scientists, and reading about visual perception.

My artistic method is as follows: I put my faith and trust in the mind, to see what it can produce unaided by props or prompts. Art without observation: no external reference material, just me, the materials and the board. I do this because the mind through its agent, the brain, has vast visual processing capabilities and vast visual resources. It is a manager and manipulator of visual information: a great fabricator (as you will be aware whenever you dream). The brain is crucial in putting together the living picture of the world in your head.

The eye, by contrast, is a sophisticated camera, feeding the necessary visual raw materials to the brain for processing. These raw materials are a very long way from that aforementioned 'living picture'. For instance: you take a photo with a digital camera. Imagine asking the camera to identify the smiling girl. It can't; it lacks consciousness. In the camera is a grid of pixels, a dead image.

But when you look at the camera's digital screen, you can immediately identify the smiling girl. Your brain performs the identification, extracts the 'girl' pixels from the 'not girl' pixels and attaches the label 'smiling girl' to her. Your eye, like the camera, merely relayed the data.

The approach, the technique I employ when painting, attempts to tap into this source, the mind, to explore how it works, to mine it. And I try to reach out to the 'whole of mind', not just that tip of the iceberg we call consciousness. Aimed at turning painting into a mental exercise, this approach shines a light into the warehouse of the mind.

Eliminating external reference – painting spontaneously without time for conscious reflection, throwing unknowns into the mix to trip myself up, acting on instinct, responding to gut feeling – is mixed with pauses, taking a look, digesting the result, considering: what's the feel; what does the painting need?

This doesn't leave a lot of scope for conscious, rational planning for one painting, let alone a series of them. Rather, by an act of faith, I trust in my source to deliver its own version of consistency. In general it does, in the manner of one who owns a group of thoughts, but not necessarily the means of logically and coherently articulating them: a small price to pay.

So this is how I arranged the work in the catalogue. It was surprising and quite exciting to see that imposing an order on a body of work could evoke a narrative of the arc of my passions and interests. And with all sorts of interesting cross-currents thrown in: Asian stuff; a warming planet; the radically different indigenous and non-indigenous cultures brought into an uneasy co-existence. And more.

Did I expect to paint a grand cycle spanning the formation of the planet, continental drift, the evolution of life, the rise of China and global warming? Not that I recall. To quote a line from the Phillip Glass opera *Einstein on the Beach*: "So this can be mistakes ..."

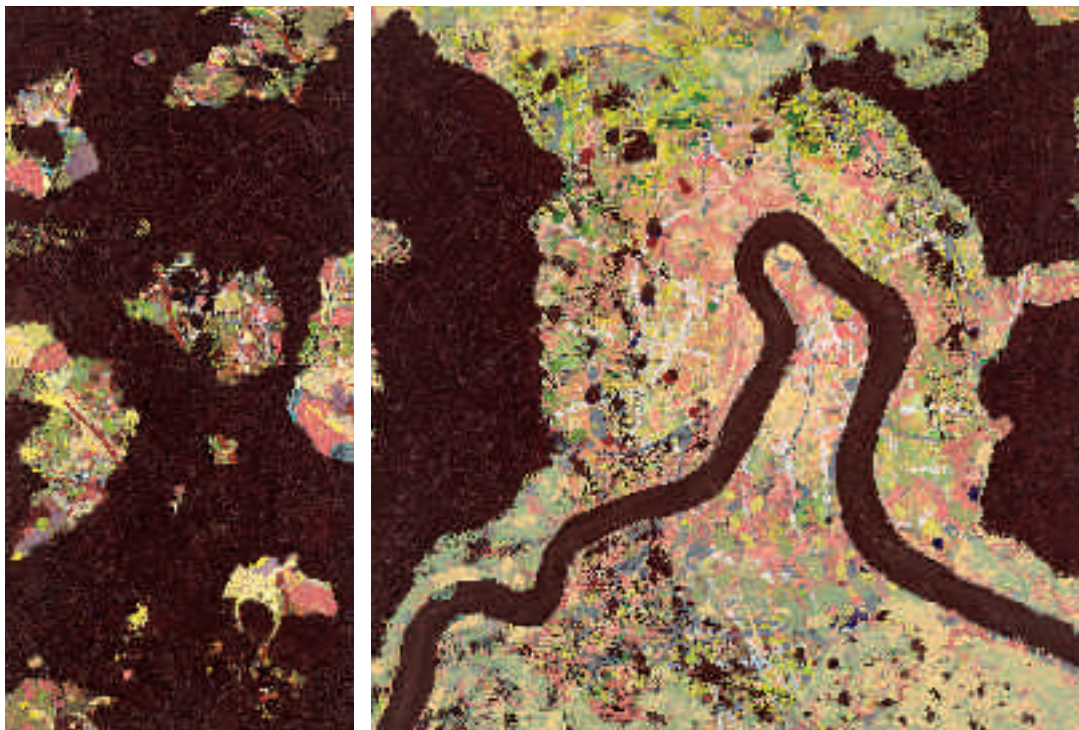
Well then, is the grand cycle a real thing or not? Or is it a retrospective invention? I can't really say for sure, so I'll leave it to you to make up your own mind.

James Yuncken 2008

PART ONE: FORMATION



In Excelsis Davies (Paul)
121 x 81 cm mixed media on board 2008



From the Dark Night

Diptych: 81 x 40 and 81 x 81 cm acrylic media on two boards 2008

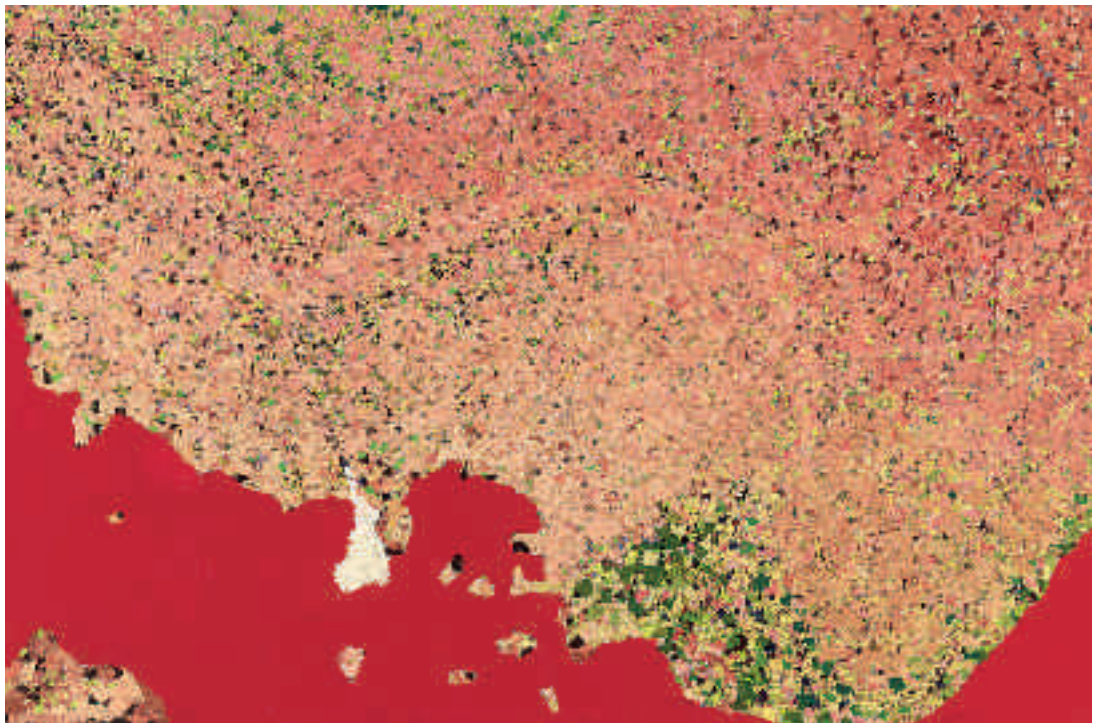
08



Plasmic Fusion

80 x 121 cm acrylic media on board 2008

09



Red Sea

80 x 122 cm acrylic media on board 2008

10



All sorts of weather
40 x 80 cm oil and oil stick on board 2008



Air

40 x 81 cm acrylic media on board 2008

12



PART TWO: GENERATION



Centrefold for the Scientific American

81 x 122 cm mixed media on board 2004 - 2008



Pond
80 x 122 cm acrylic media on board 2008



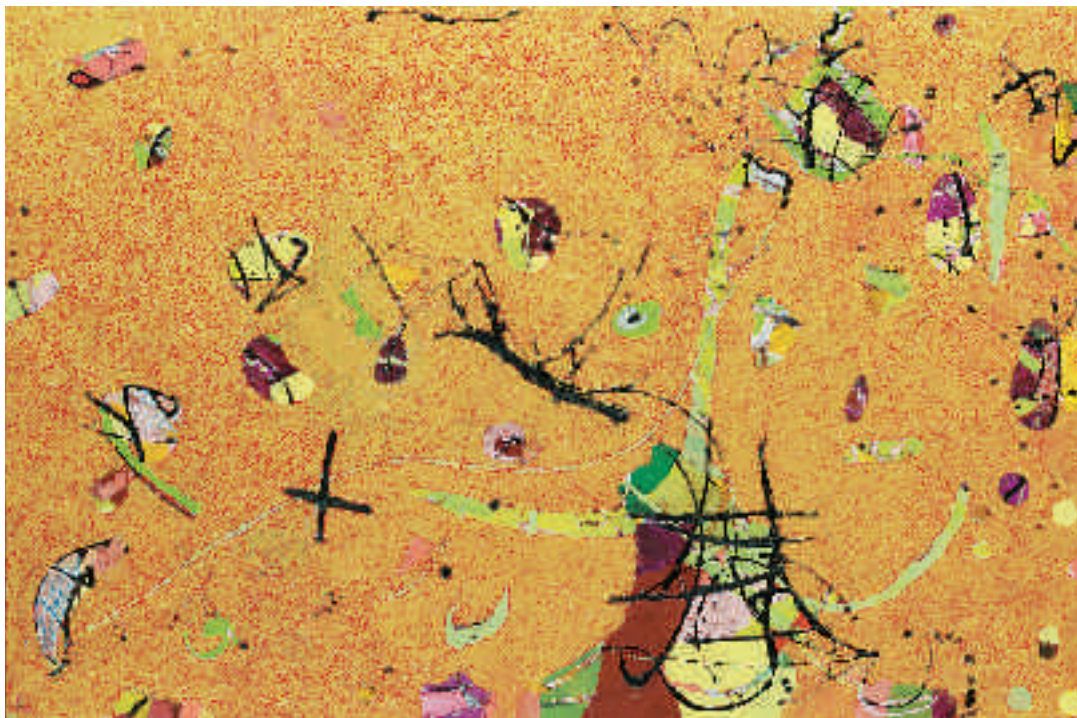
Earth

122 x 81 cm oil and oil stick on board 2006

16



Cherry Chinese Screen
121 x 81 cm acrylic on board 2006



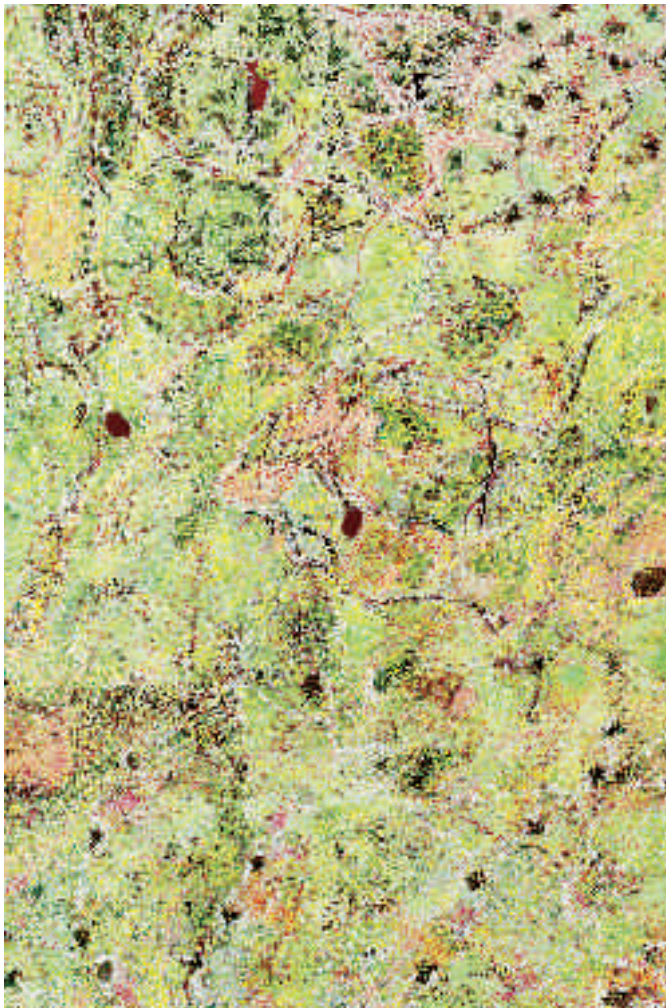
Evolution: Asian Influence

81 x 122 cm oil and oil stick on board 2006

18



PART THREE: MOISTURE



Lush Green Earth

122 x 81 cm oil, oil stick, pigments on board 2006

20



Paradeisos
81 x 81 cm oil and oil stick on acrylic on board 2006

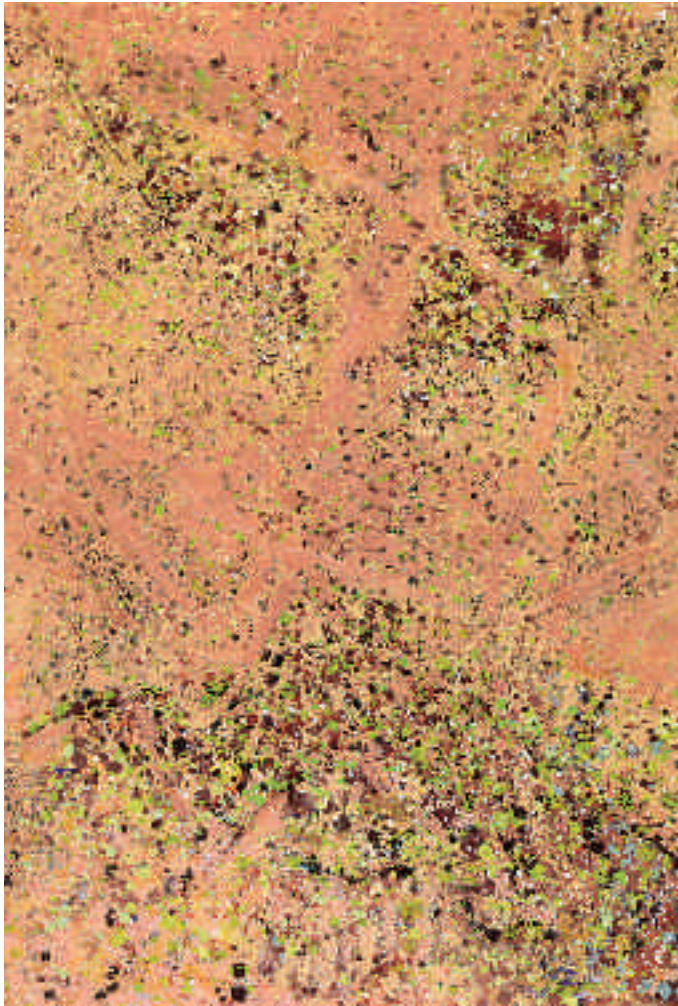


Two Views of a Hypothetical Landscape
122 x 81 cm oil, oil stick, pigments on board 2005

PART FOUR: HEAT



Sand: New Spirit of the Land
81 x 81 cm acrylic media on board 2008



Red Earth

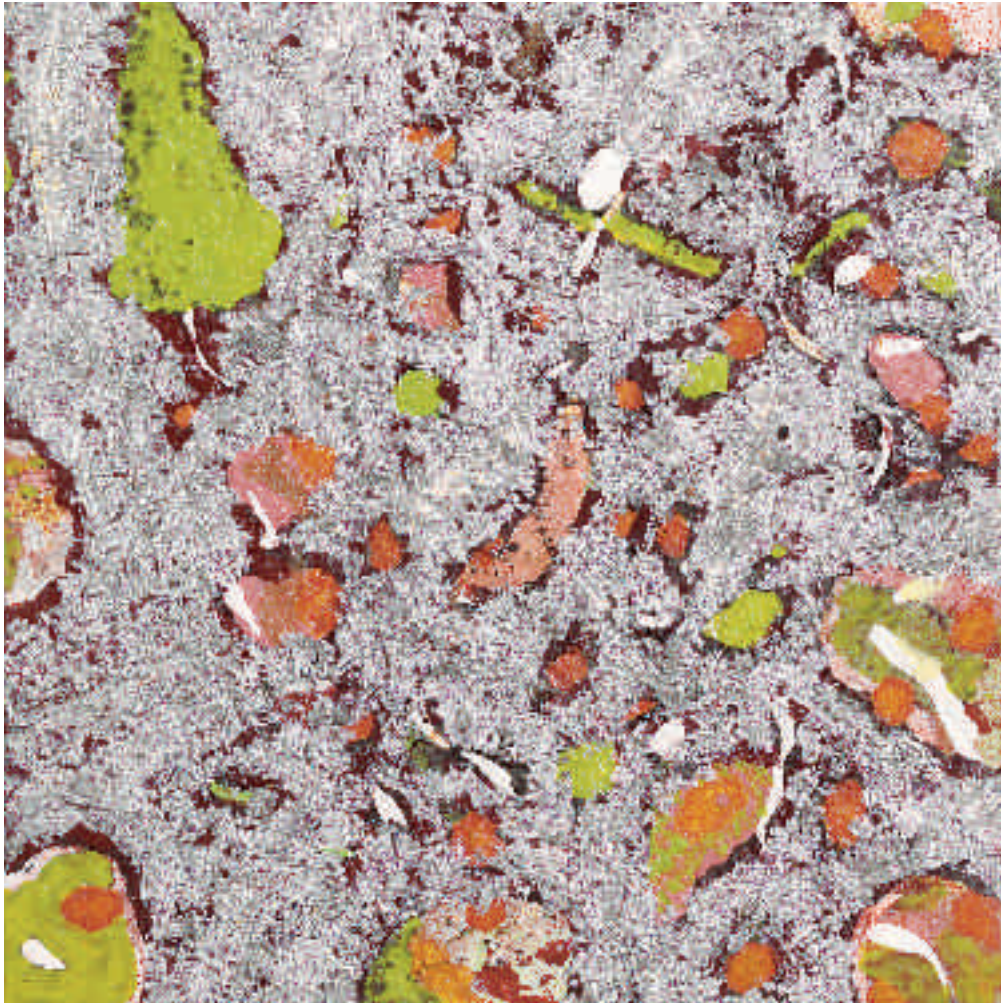
121 x 81 cm acrylic media on board 2008

SMALL WORKS



Blind Vision

24 x 24 cm oil stick on gesso board 2006



Silver Lining

20 x 20 cm oil stick on acrylic on board 2006

28



Rock Pool

30 x 30 cm oil stick on acrylic on gesso board 2006



Ferment

34 x 25 cm oil stick on acrylic on gesso board 2006

30

