

# Illuminous

Paintings by Caroline Rannersberger

Flinders Lane Gallery 19 July - 6th August 2016

In this new body of work, there are three key elements that determine the outcomes. Firstly, I create highly textured and scarified surfaces which occur through reactions between different mediums and surfaces. To an extent, these reactive surfaces mimic the geomorphology of the land. Secondly, I use vivid colour, referencing in particular metaphysical and alchemical concepts dating back to antiquity. Thirdly, I explore the relationship between the land and the painting experience. In terms of content, using a mix of inks and acrylics, I continue to respond to the painting process and alchemical reactions of paint as a means to investigate ocean and land forms. I am interested in how the medium mimics the geomorphology of the land and the processes of land formation.

In addition to experimenting with painting processes, I have become interested in colour and its affect. In this recent body of work I have arrived at a colour palette of vibrant purple blues; deep yellow greens; rich red ochres; intense blacks and albumen like whites through mixing and overlaying pigment, paint and various mediums. Through experimentation, I have begun to understand how these colours relate to my own world view. There is a kind of physicality about the colour as if it lives and breathes, shifts and shimmers. As if the geomorphological and elemental changes in land formation are contained within the layers of the painting. *Saturated rock forms with loose sky gesture* contains such layers with citrine and rubicund ochres shimmering through violet blue overlays. Similarly, *Ocean drift escape* has evolved through fifty or more layers of ink suspended in mediums, often rubbed back, then overlaid that eventually becomes the movement of the ocean. The allusion to drifting suggests both drift net fishing and also the movement of ocean swells. The net like forms are result of pigment dripping, then rotating the canvas. It is almost as if the paint itself is drifting on the surface of the linen.

The use of colour takes me further back to associations between colour and alchemy, notably as a world view in medieval Europe. The illuminated manuscript, *Splendor Solis*, originally developed 1532-1535, “sets forth the philosophy of alchemy, a world view according to which the human being (the alchemist) exists and acts in harmony with nature, ...” (*Splendor Solis* commentary volume, M.Moleiro, Editor, 2011). Through alchemy, colour could be used to view various aspects of existence in general.

Early references are to four phases of colour:

nigredo, a blackening or melanosis

albedo, a whitening or leucosis

citrinitas, a yellowing or xanthosis

rubedo, a reddening, purpling, or iosis

Interestingly, these colours are also associated with physical conditions. I imagine that the world is illuminated from within the body and psyche, explained through human conditions and illuminating outward as a projection of colour onto a world stage. This

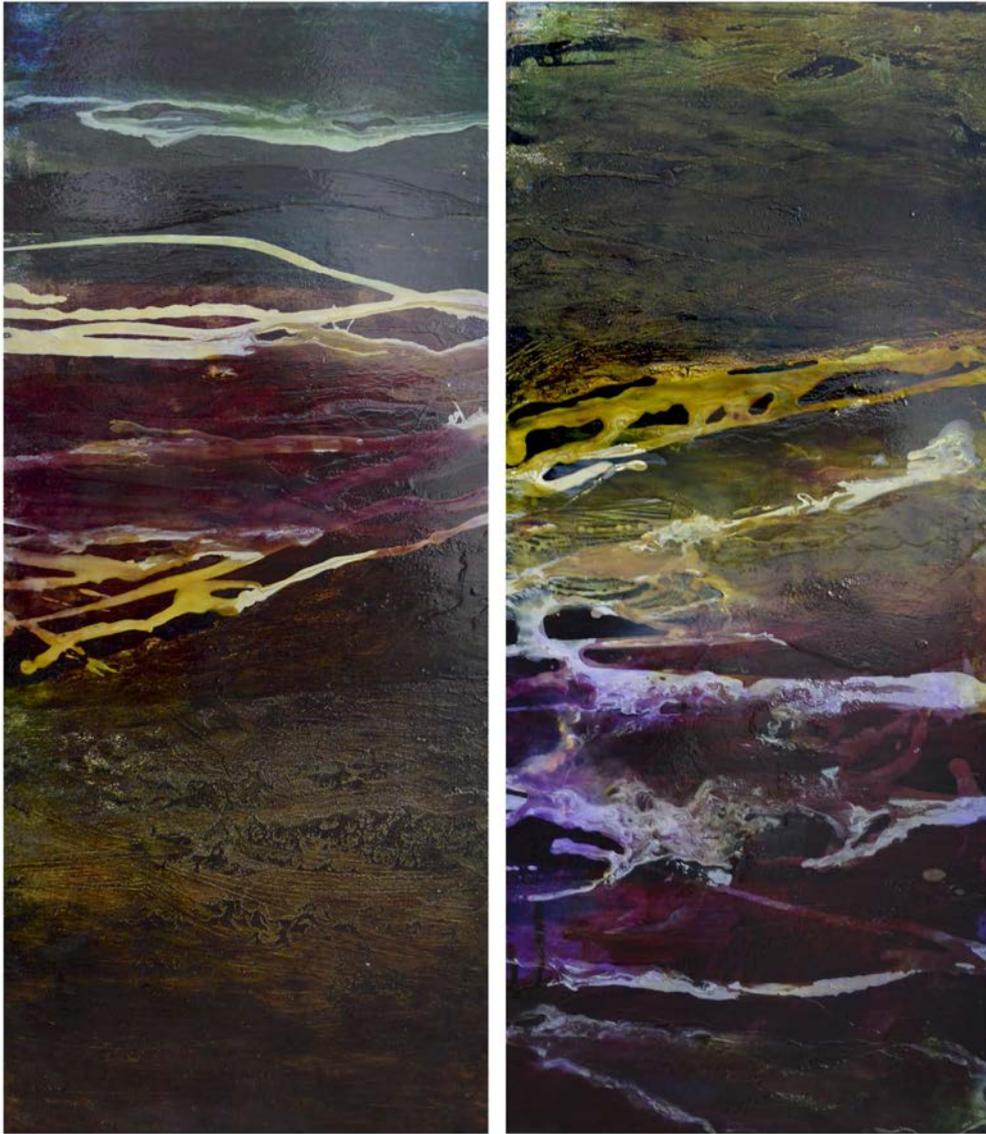
can be seen in the *Gold rock gloaming series* which has many different hues of yellow, or citrinatis. In relation to the colour, I consider the alchemical allusion to xanthosis, a bodily discolouration due to the degeneration of tissue, as perhaps a parallel to the erosion and re-emergence of land forms; strata of soil and rock struck through with fissures and striations as a result of massive upheaval over millennia; the physicality of land growth and death seen as a parallel to human existence.

The alchemy of the medium and the way in which the elements repel and interact/attract drive the outcome also drive the content of the work. This brings me back to an important feature of my work: a tripartite dissolution between the painter, the painted (the object) and the painting (process/materials). My work always begins with a connection to the field and continues in the studio. The mediums I use are propelled around by the elements: the wind and rain, the ants, the sand all push the inks and mediums across the surface, the paper, the linen and determine the image itself. In the studio, I pour inks onto the surface and then create a reaction between mediums by adding a repelling element. Often the surface cracks like rock formations, or the colour swirls like wave movement. This experimentation with reactive mediums is particularly evident in the recent *EDGE2 Isthmus* project, part of MOFO 2016 ([www.brunyislandedge.com](http://www.brunyislandedge.com)). The *Neck on site 21215 series* was created on site at the Bruny Island Isthmus (“The Neck”). I noted in my journal: “With each gust of wind the heavy paper blew across the sand; the scrub and dunes leaving their own mark as the twigs and leaves and sand scraped the paint along the surface of the paper. The paint dribbled and flowed around the page in sync with the wind movement and the rain. Stone like surfaces erupted from the repellent inks and mediums then suddenly froze as the sun burst through the clouds and immediately parched the paper. It seemed natural that rock formations should begin to emerge, almost of their own volition. Capping the Neck on the northern end is the Hounds Tooth formation and on the south is the Fluted Cape and Penguin Island. These massive geomorphological features create part of the system that helps push sand onto the dunes to create the isthmus.” (Caroline Rannersberger painting on site at the Bruny Island Neck (Isthmus), 2 December 2015).

Such painterly images evolve from seemingly chaotic and random processes, playing off the relationship between painting and geomorphology. More recently, net like formations have begun to emerge, as seen in *Drift net landscape four panel*. Drift net striations develop through a controlled dripping process, and I begin to recall the nets that wash up on the shore and the effect these pieces of floating debris can have on the marine life. Again, the dripping motion has formed the net. In terms of colour, the yellow is almost a decaying of landscape; a jaundiced erosion made of striated tissue. The net becomes a living object floating in the ocean that gradually breaks down, yet continually impacts on the marine ecology. The yellow is also the golden sun, a *splendor solis*, reflecting onto the rock face. I become aware that the world exists as an alchemical transformation in a constant state of flux and eternal becoming.

As the images evolve and devolve through the ongoing painting processes, fragments of my lived experience begin to emerge from the layers of medium and colour and become a means to describe how I perceive “Prima Materia”, the very basic elements of existence. In all these works, the light begins deep within the work; pigment refracting through multiple layers of medium; outwardly radiating colour. It is as if colour has the power and luminosity to make the world shine and to lift off into eternity.

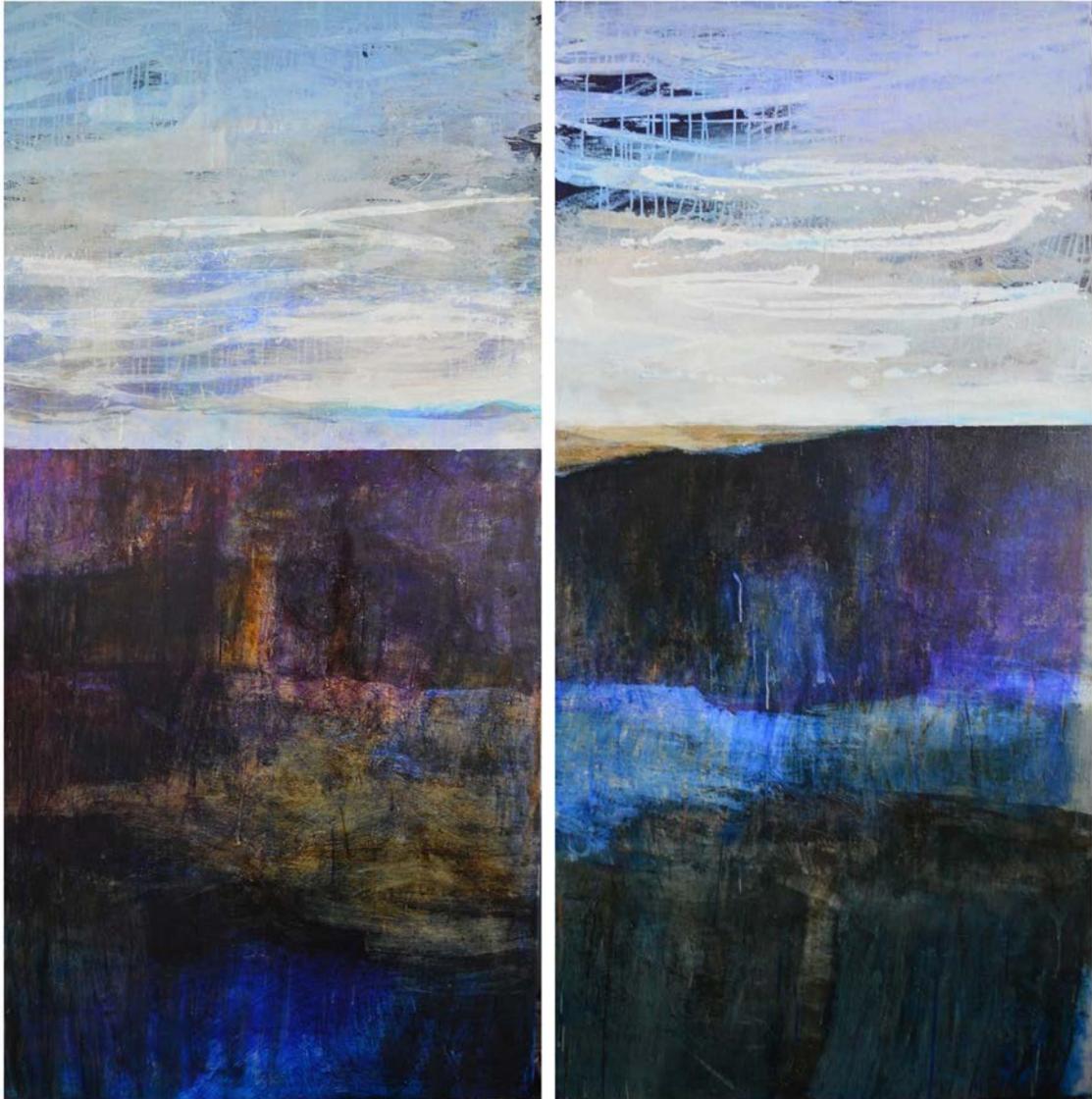
*Caroline Rannersberger*  
*Bruny Island*  
*31 May 2016*



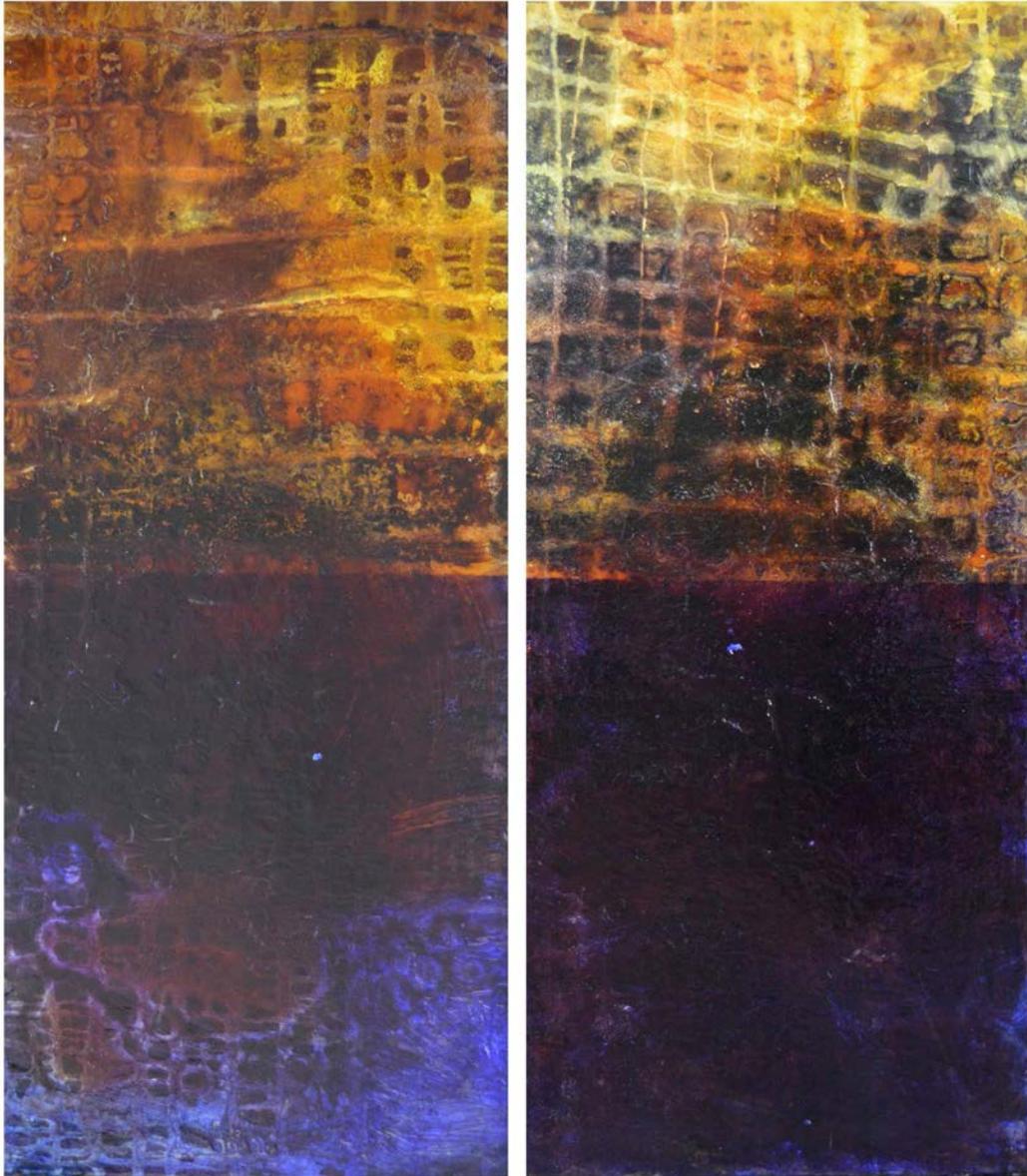
*Algal bloom I,II*  
ink and acrylic on linen;  
2x 97x41cm (total 97x82cm)  
each panel \$3000



*Ocean drift escape I, II*  
ink and acrylic on linen;  
2x 198x97cm (total 198x194cm)  
each panel \$10,000



*Saturated rock forms with loose sky gesture I,II*  
ink and acrylic on linen;  
2x 198x97cm (total 198x194cm)  
each panel \$10,000



*Ocean with drift net horizon I,II*  
ink and acrylic on linen;  
2x 97x41cm (total 97x82cm)  
each panel \$3000



*Drift net landscape I-IV*  
ink and acrylic on linen;  
4x 112x41cm (total 112x164cm)  
each panel \$3250



*Green blue gloaming*  
ink and acrylic on paper  
120cmx40cm  
\$3000



*Green umber gloaming*  
ink and acrylic on paper  
120cmx40cm  
\$3000



*Blue umber gloaming*  
ink and acrylic on paper  
120cmx40cm  
\$3000



*Ultra violet gloaming bright shore*  
ink and acrylic on paper  
120cmx40cm  
\$3000



*Ultra violet gloaming dark shore*  
ink and acrylic on paper  
120cmx40cm  
\$3000



*Ultra violet gloaming chasm*  
ink and acrylic on paper  
120cmx40cm  
\$3000



*Gold rock gloaming*  
ink and acrylic on paper  
120cmx40cm  
\$3000



*Gold rock gloaming umber chasm*  
ink and acrylic on paper  
120cmx40cm  
\$3000



*Gold rock gloaming blue lagoon*  
ink and acrylic on paper  
120cmx40cm  
\$3000