An abstract painting with a rich, textured surface. The color palette is dominated by various shades of blue and green, ranging from deep, dark blues and purples to bright, vibrant greens and yellows. The brushstrokes are thick and expressive, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and organic form.

PELAGIC GESTURE

Paul Verdell

BODE

A photograph of Paul Verdell, an American contemporary artist, standing in his studio. He is wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and white overalls covered in paint splatters. He has a beard and long dark hair. He is standing in the center of the frame, flanked by three large, vibrant abstract paintings. The paintings feature bold colors like yellow, green, blue, and purple, with expressive brushstrokes. The studio floor is concrete and has some paint splatters on it. The background is a plain white wall.

Paul Verdell (b. 1991 in Long Beach, CA) is an American contemporary artist. He received a BFA from Bowling Green State University (2018). He has had residencies at Black Rock, Dakar Senegal (2022); Macedonia Institute, Chatham, New York, USA (2019); and Chautauqua School of Art Summer Artist Residency, Chautauqua, New York, USA (2017). Verdell has had solo exhibitions at Library Street Collective, Detroit, USA (2022 & 2021); Louis Buhl & Co., Detroit, USA (2021); GIFC Galleria Golf, Oslo, NO (2020); and o-oLA, Los Angeles, USA (2017). He has participated in group shows at Quappiprojects, Louisville, USA and False Cast Gallery San Diego, USA (2021); HVW8 Gallery, Berlin, DE (2018); Golsa, Oslo, NO (2018); and Soulland Copenhagen, DK (2017), among others. He lives and works in Detroit, Michigan.

Pelagic Gesture

22.07. – 27.08.2023

That which is pelagic holds significant historical meanings across diverse cultures. The sea has a long and fluctuating role within the history of art and has been represented by almost every art movement in the past and continues to persevere in our collective imagination of possibility. From J.M.W. Turner's works to Emanuel Leutze's propagandist *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851); Claude Monet's *Water Lilies* series (1920 – 1926); Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970); Vija Clemins' *Untitled (Ocean)* (1977); and Olafur Eliasson's installation *Ice Watch* (2014), there is a vast history of how this element of nature demands our collective attention and propels curiosity and imagination.

Paul Verdell's *Pelagic Gesture* presents his latest body of work which he began during his time at the Black Rock Senegal residency and has continued since his return to his home-base Michigan. A series that he describes as embodiments of the self, the presented works demonstrate the persistent imagery of his window view of the sea from his Senegal-based studio. These works are not so much representational of the sea as they are the divulgence of how this -scape he had access to through his studio window has been internalized, processed, and interpreted by his succumbing to the physical self and his pure joy of color. The works presented in this exhibition reject cynic pondering and salute unpredictability. While a certain detachment must occur between the ego and the physical self, it is in this body of work, Verdell's most abstract to date, that gets closest to self portraiture. The works demonstrate a sense of presence not only through their bodily connection to the artist but a clear dialogue with the purity of color, space, and feeling. He is present within the works with a deeper understanding of himself in relation to the larger setting.

"I was still obsessed with the sea even coming back home to Michigan. So much of these were from memory and became gestures of something I was really inspired by." ... "It feels like poetry if that makes sense. You're taking experiences and painting without a clear picture. More of a clear feeling."

– Paul Verdell

Produced with oil sticks he has made himself, Paul Verdell communes with the context he once found himself in, his materials, and the works themselves. While the motivational process may refer to an impressionistic one, his production converses with the Abstract Expressionists through his application of an internalized poetic feeling for gesture and physicality. By allowing immediacy, gesture, and movement to command his physical response to the canvas, his practice has taken the horizon line, the seascape, into an exploration of a sense of purity through color. Layering pure pigments one a top the other with a sense of play while moving around the studio, he allows his works to breathe while surrendering his next moves to an innate instinct for color and the images that are held in his imagination. It is by accepting the results that the works represent above all, the joy of the process.

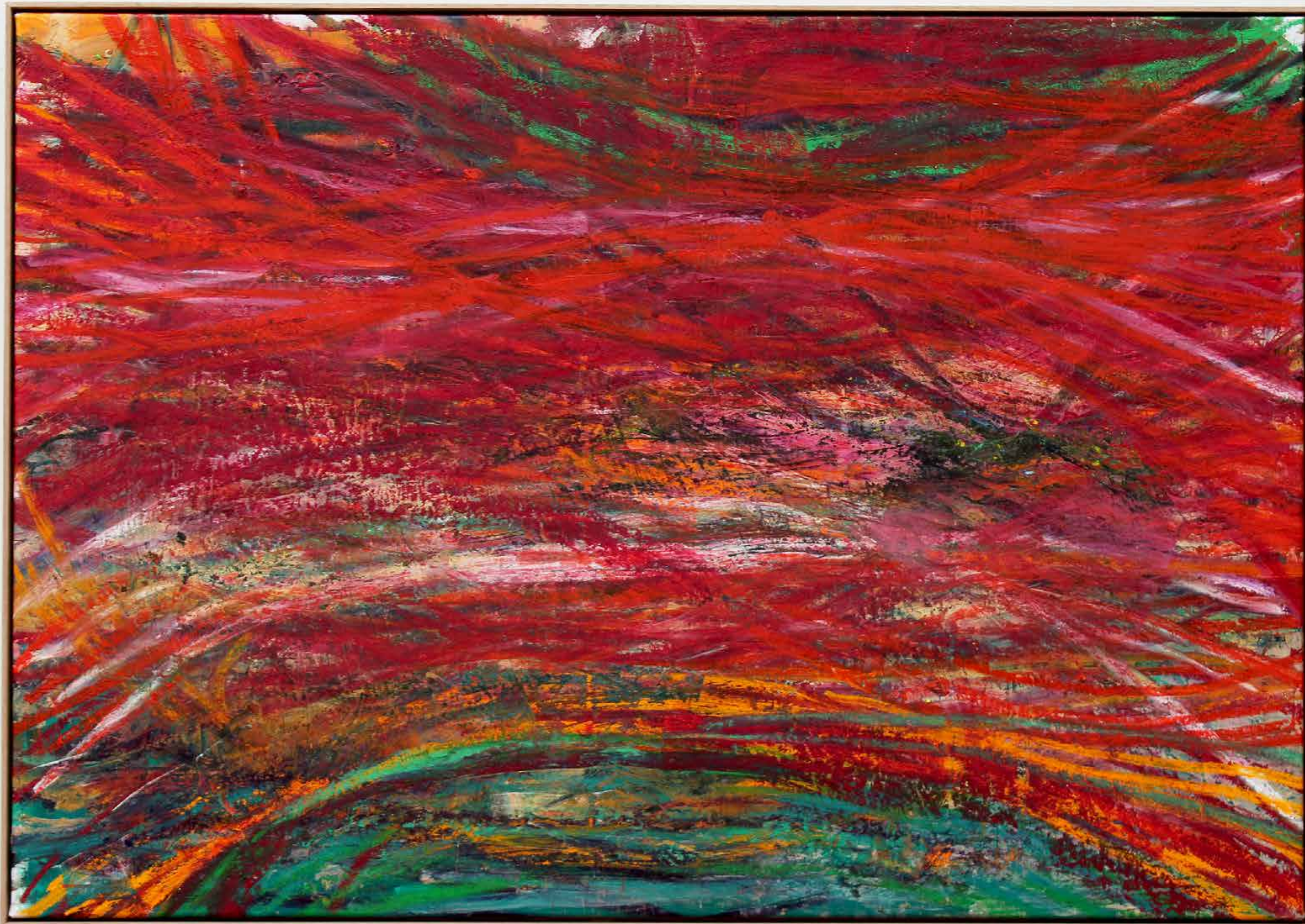


Rise, 2023
Oil stick on canvas
50.8 × 50.8 cm
20 × 20 in





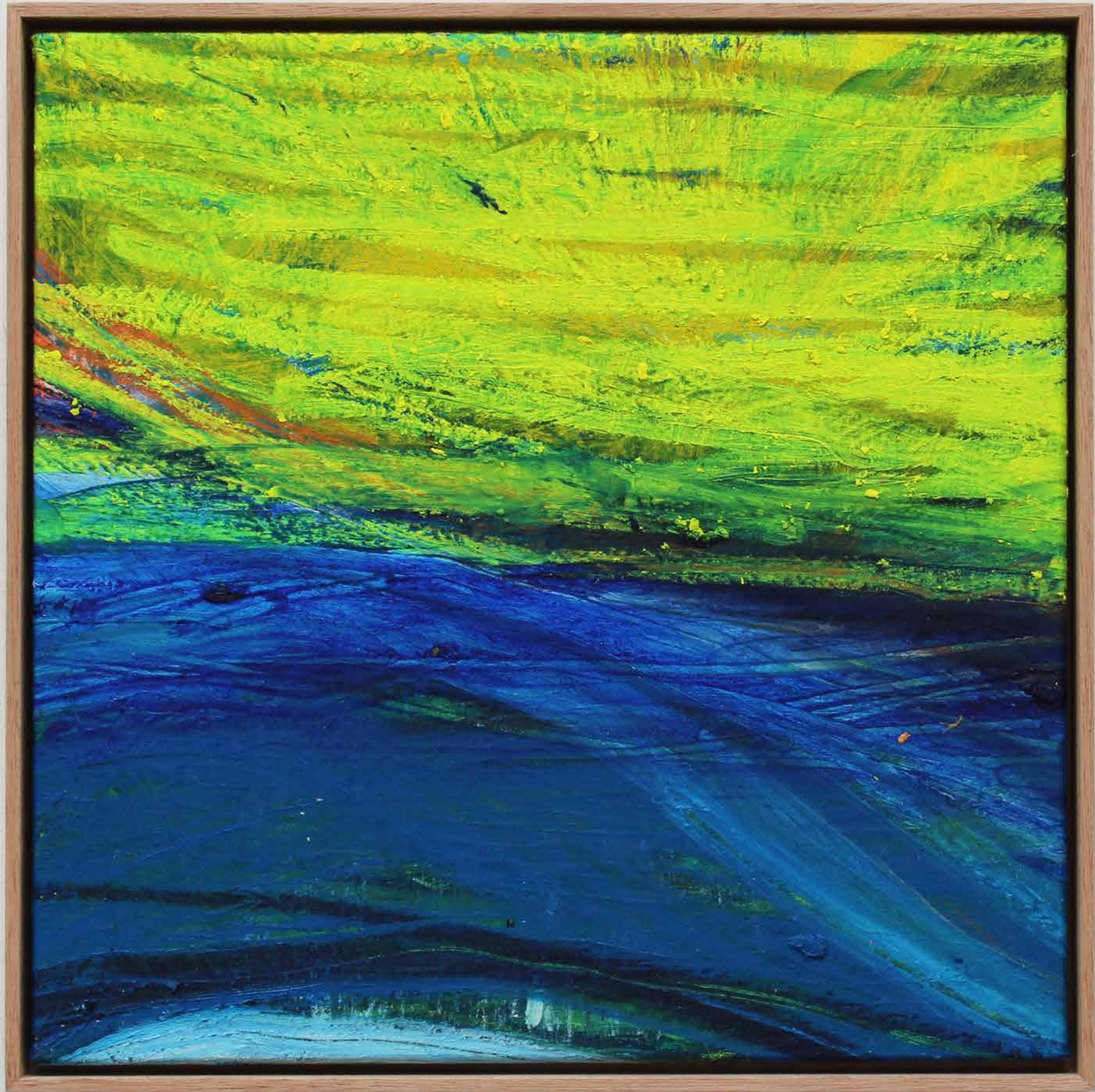




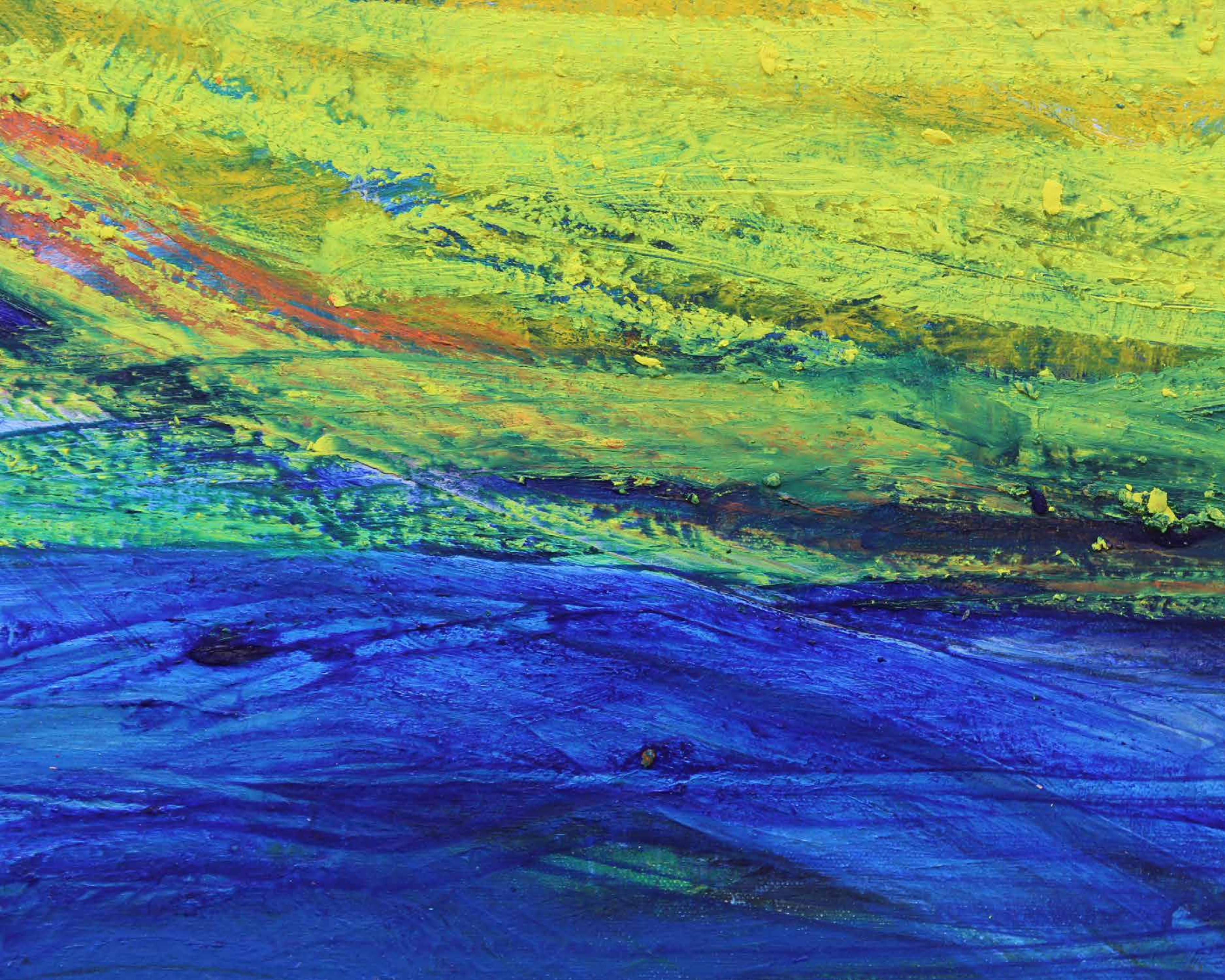
Stained Sky, 2023
Oil stick on canvas
117 x 167 cm
46 x 65 3/4 in

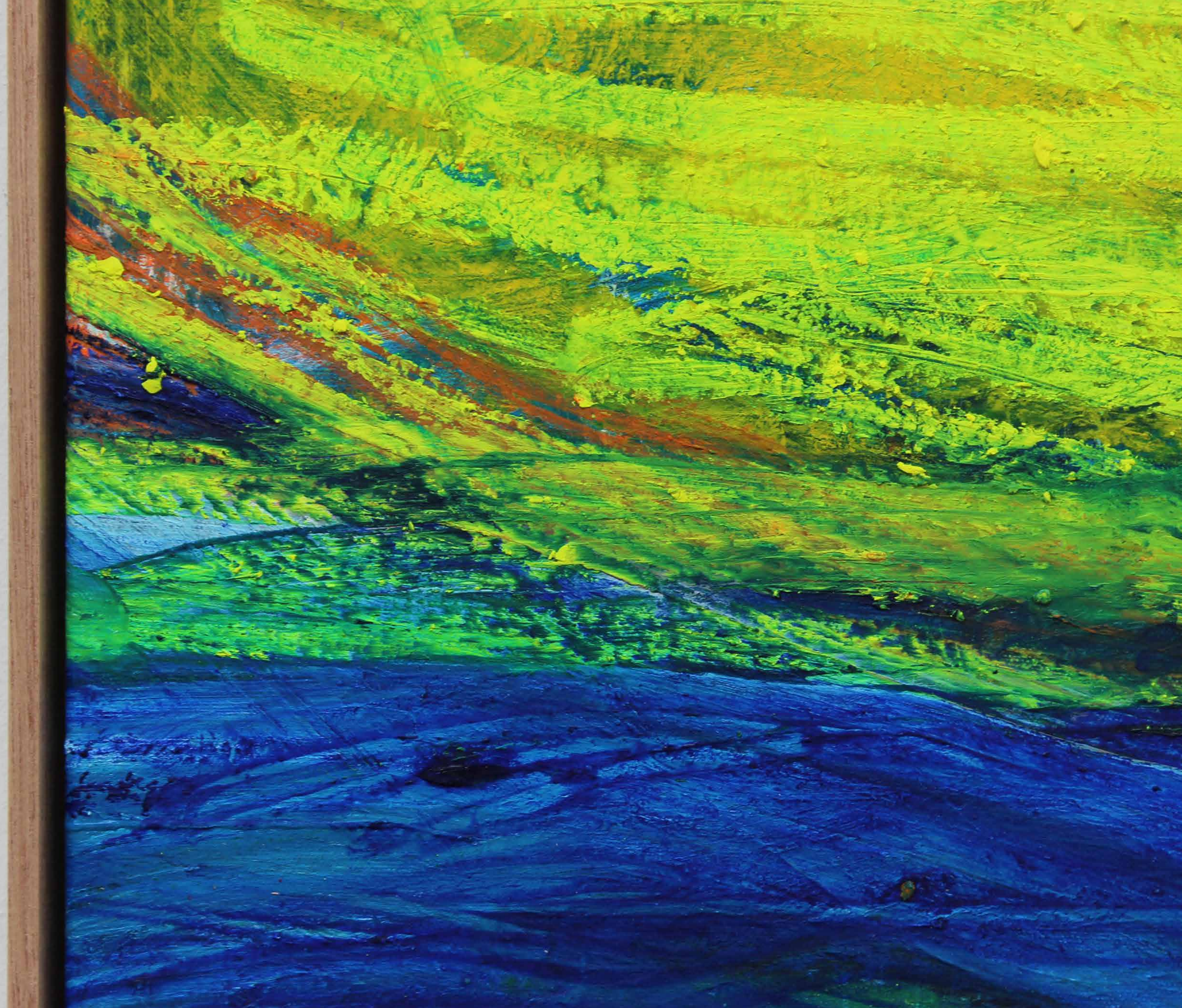






Blinding, 2023
Oil stick on canvas
50 x 50 cm
19 3/4 x 19 3/4 in







Gruesome Waters, 2023
Oil stick on canvas
167 x 162 cm
65 3/4 x 63 3/4 in







Translucent Color, 2023
Oil stick on canvas
50 x 50 cm
19 3/4 x 19 3/4 in



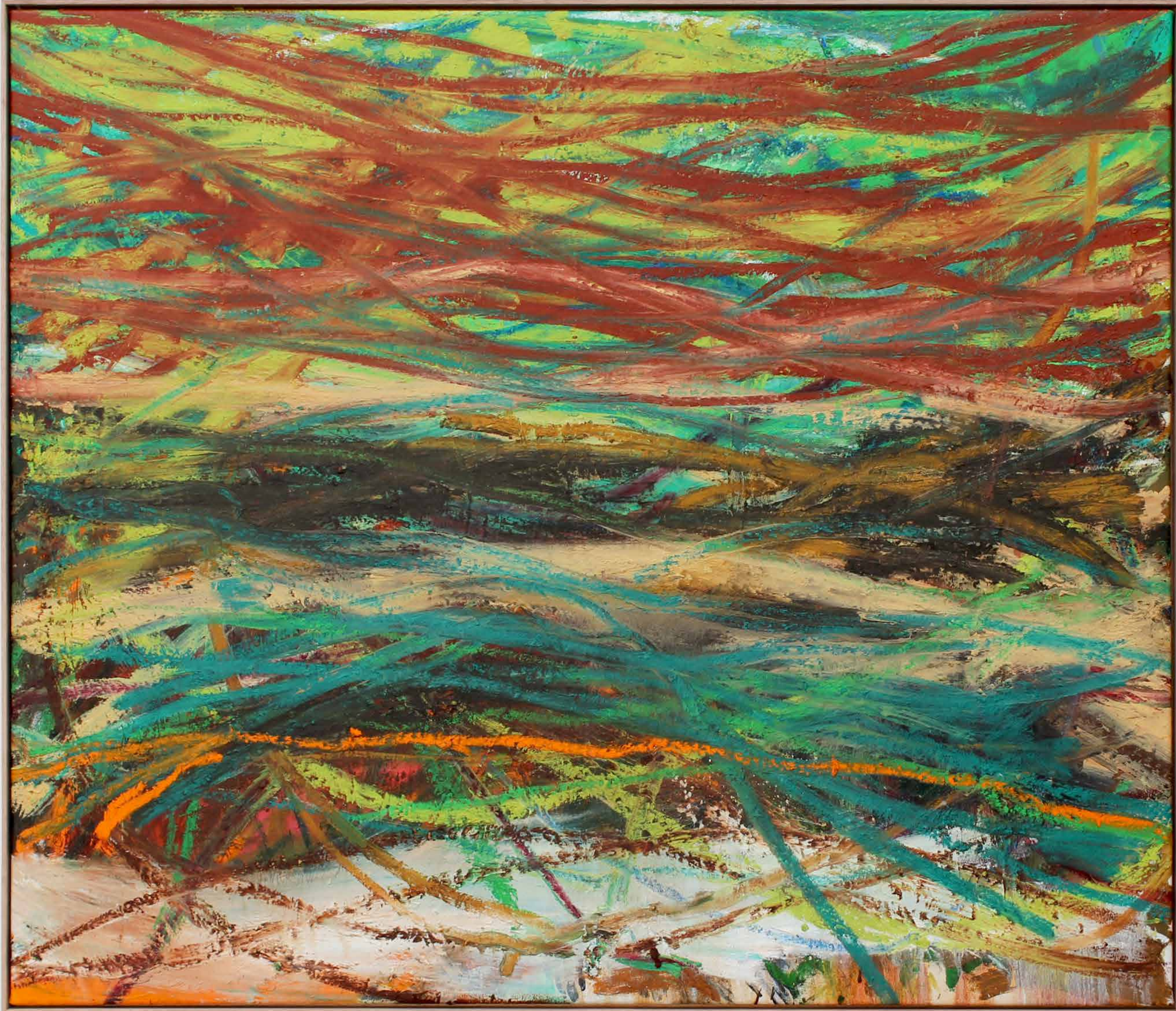




Atmosphere, 2023
Oil stick on canvas
50 x 50 cm
19 3/4 x 19 3/4 in







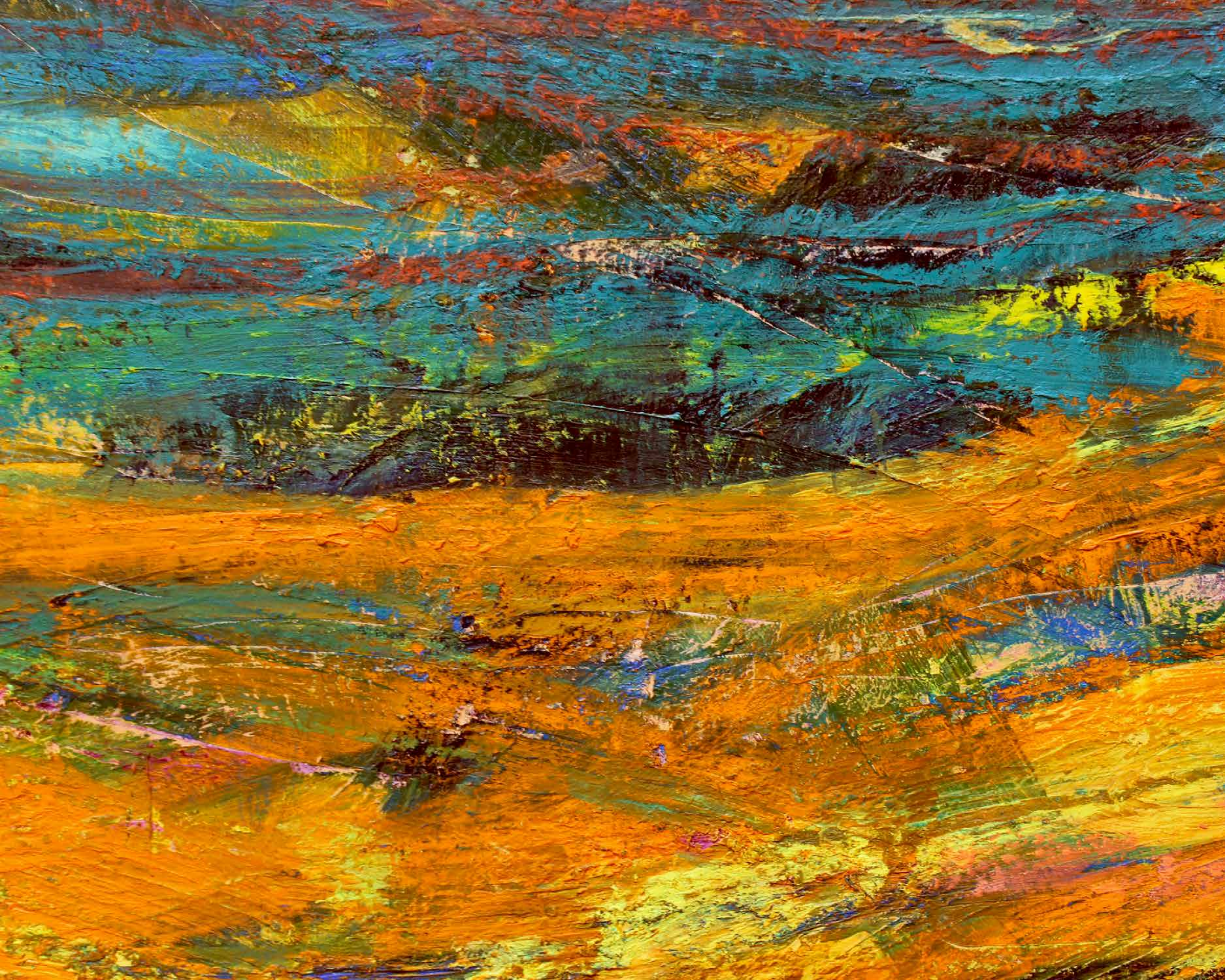
Land Grab, 2023
Oil stick on canvas
138 x 162 cm
54 3/8 x 63 3/4 in







Tiger Stripes, 2023
Oil stick on canvas
127 x 167 cm
50 x 65 3/4 in





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