

Flight of the
budgerigar;
small paintings
of a big place

Jenny Keate

9 – 21 December 2025

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Flight of the budgerigar: small paintings of a big place

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For several years, Jenny Keate has been captivated by a particular strand of contemporary landscape painting – work that presents a concentrated, heightened version of reality, and invites the viewer to engage with the natural world on an emotional level.

Searching for the magic she saw in work by Australian painters, Jenny enrolled in workshops run by renowned landscape artists Ross Laurie and Idris Murphy, held in Arrernte Country, Central Australia. This part of Australia is home to extreme conditions and dramatic landscapes, including the amazing geological formations of the East MacDonnell Ranges. These vivid, abstract figurative paintings are the outcome of her time there.

During the workshops, Idris and Ross gave advice and reading recommendations that influenced the making of these works. The most influential book was *I and Thou* by Martin Buber, first published in 1923.

Buber's philosophy challenges the artist to "listen" to the landscape; to see it in all its fullness and enter into a "mutual relation" with it.

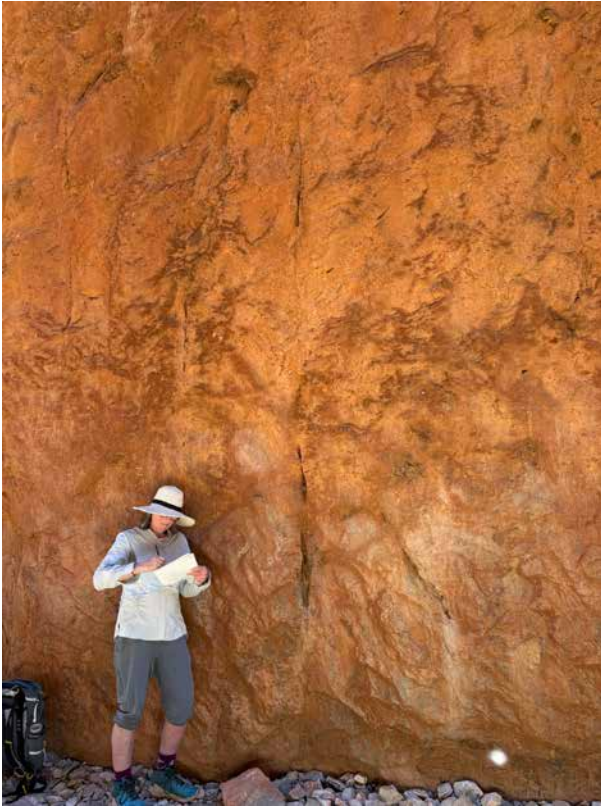
Similarly, the artist needs to enter into a reciprocal relationship with the artwork being created, and to recognise the point at which the painting begins to assert its independence and call the shots.

Ultimately, the works in *Flight of the budgerigar* focus on the aspects of the landscape that are the most different from New Zealand: waterholes, eucalyptus trees as far as the eye can see, gaps in the ranges with dry rivers running through them, and the sense of the eternal that comes from being in a landscape so little altered over millennia. They are the product of the interplay between the landscape, the painting process, and the artist.

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Jenny Keate



Jenny Keate was born in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland and studied at Otago University, graduating with a BA (Hons) in English. She later moved to Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington, where she still lives. After several years as a librarian she transitioned to an art career, initially creating fibreglass lamps from her home workshop.

She then retrained in design, earning a BDes (First Class Hons) in Industrial Design from Victoria University. Following graduation, she worked as an industrial designer while painting in her spare time.

From 2013 onwards her creative focus began to shift from design to painting, culminating in her first solo exhibition, *The Idea of North*, at Bowen Galleries in 2021.



Thinking about infinity, 2024, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Flight of the budgerigar, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Two blues and a black, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Crow song, 2024, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



The observer, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320mm \$1250



Where it began, 2024, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Elsewhere, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Luminous, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



All the times, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Listening to the landscape - Arltunga, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Small painting of a big place, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



A whole lot of not muchness, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Downriver, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Interior landscape, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Passenger, 2024, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Dry, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Dotted landscape, 2024, acrylic on birch, 320 x 320 mm \$1250



Road trip to Uluru, 2024, acrylic on birch, 320 x 510mm \$1600



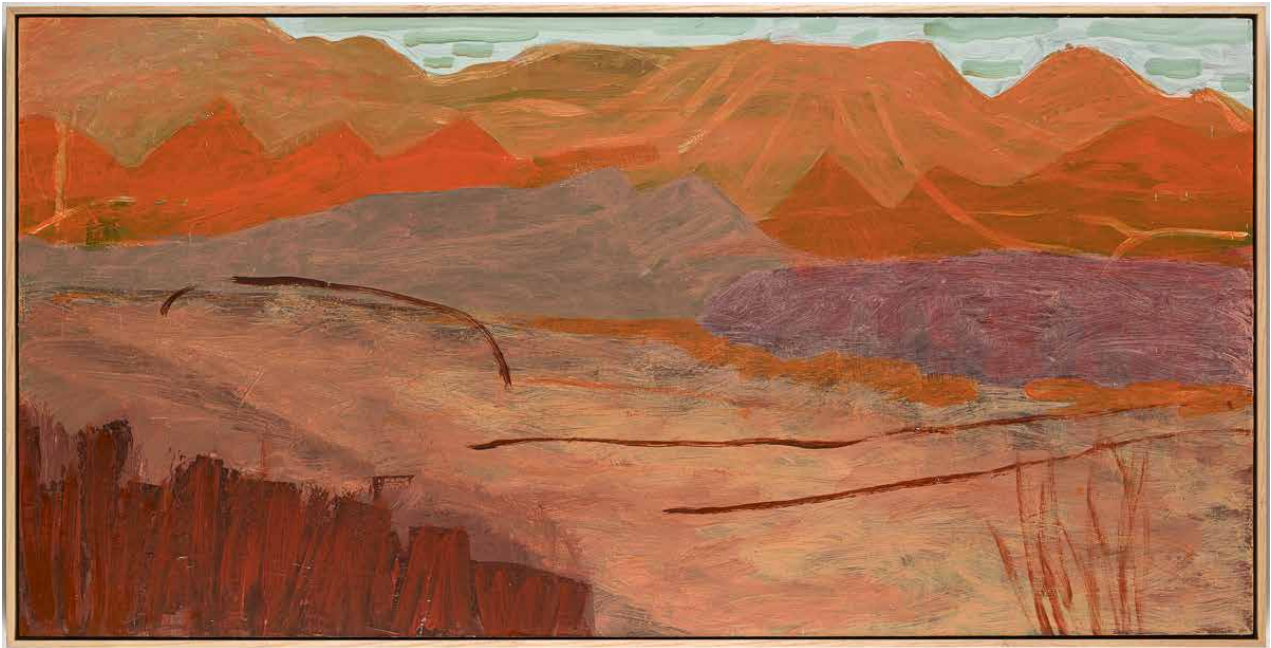
Grid, 2025, acrylic on birch, 320 x 505 mm \$1600



A time and a place, 2025, acrylic on birch, 425 x 425 mm \$1600



Figment, 2025, acrylic on birch, 420 x 420 mm \$1600



Road trip to Alice Springs, 2024, acrylic on aluminium, 540 x 1060 mm \$3200