

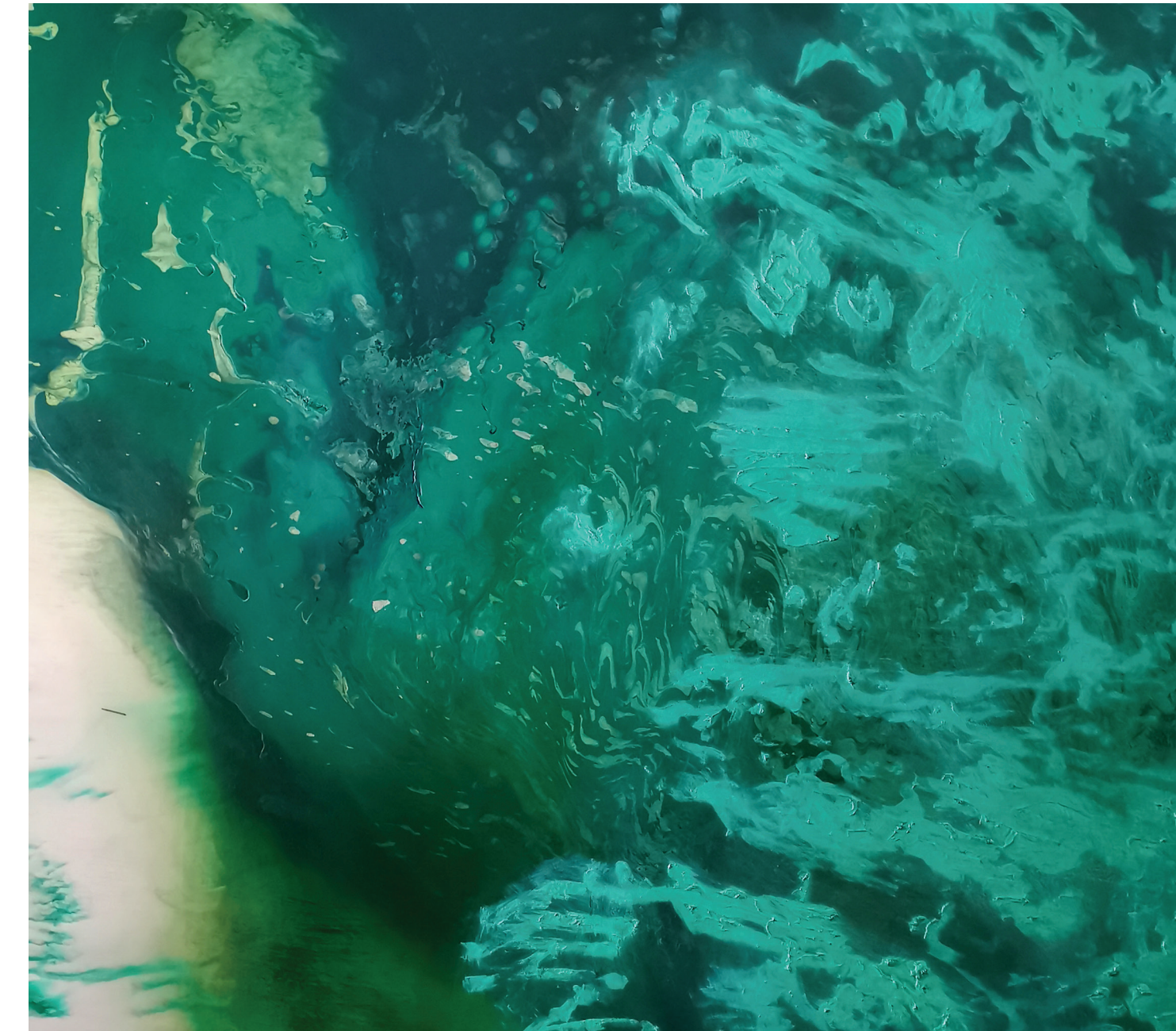
IMAGE LEFT *Study 2* 2017 - 2021
Oil and acrylic on linen,
150 x 120cm

IMAGE RIGHT The artist's studio
Sydney, March, 2021

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**UNIVERSITY
GALLERIES**



CHARLIE SHEARD : PAINTINGS

2020 arrived with an unsettling, dystopian sense of foreboding. We were all forced to re-evaluate our ways of being and doing. With uncertain and changing parameters we set about adapting what we could for this new landscape and continue to feel helpless about the world around us.

For an international artist, who has long worked in Asia and Europe, the full stop to travel and his galleries overseas struck at the fundamental purpose of his practice. In describing the realisation that his exhibitions in Berlin and Beijing were not going to happen and that he had relinquished his studio in order to exhibit, teach and travel for a year, Sheard conveyed the experience of a visceral thump that left him flailing for purpose and direction.

Artists have always been resilient and optimistically tackle the world as it comes, uncertain markets, uncertain recognition and uncertain remuneration. Sheard's tiny stone terrace in inner Sydney has a gentle light that is filtered through a chaotic cityscape. The noise outside is muted as the door closes and a large canvas is moved to make way for access. The feeling when ushered in is not unlike those small chapels found in rural places. This space, then, became the 2020/21 studio, but with defiance and possibly some small rage at circumstance, Sheard did not adapt the scale of his canvases to the new reduced, domestic arrangement. They are big, they are bold and extraordinarily energetic.

Working nearly every day with a model in situ, it is the physical quality of paint application and the purity of the palette that heralds a new dynamism in his work. These works are of the body, about the body and ultimately speak, or shout, about the very essence of painting.

Gillean Shaw
Art Curator
University Galleries

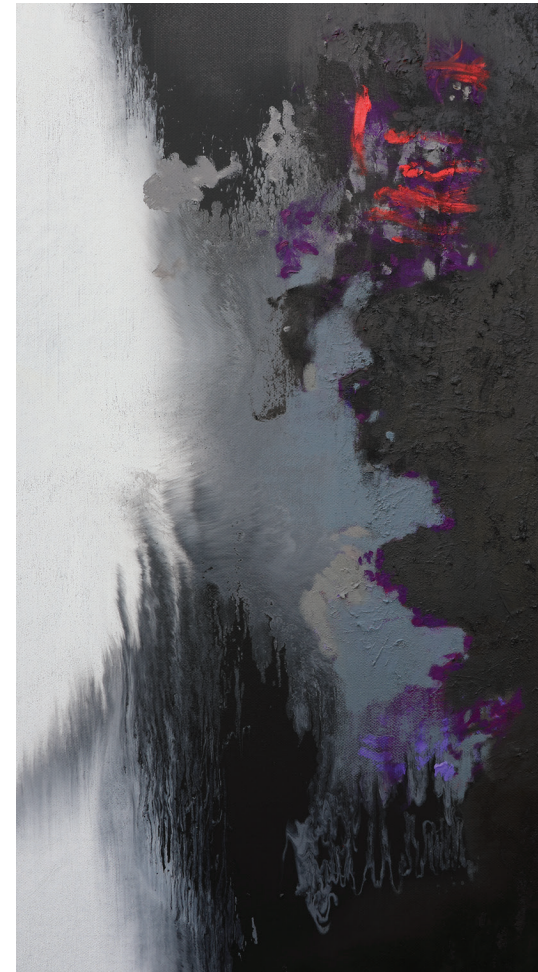


IMAGE ABOVE *Painting 2* (detail) 2015 - 2021
Acrylic and oil on linen, 198 x 215cm

IMAGE RIGHT *Chinese Painting* 2006 - 2021
Acrylic on raw linen, 198 x 214cm

IMAGE COVER *Green Painting* (detail) 2017 - 2021
Acrylic and oil on polyester, 214 x 198cm



My interest as a painter is in the origin of painting in caves, in the history and development of techniques and forms and in the unbroken historical continuity of painting as a bodily practice.

Painting is a time-based process which mirrors the time-based experience of being human. Painting also reaches back through historical time, in the same way that painting carries our experience of existence into the future. I mean both directly and bodily.

At the end of *Being and Time*, Heidegger suggests that Time manifests itself as the horizon of Being. In *The Origin of The Work of Art*, Heidegger says that The Work of Art has its own Being.

Painting is not primarily a theoretical or an intellectual discourse, it is a bodily meditation on Being. That is, it is physical and sensual by its very Nature. This original nature existed long before Thought.

The origin of painting, and the history of painting, are completely tied to the human body; the body is the key to what painting IS. At the beginning, painting was on the body. Painting on the body is deeper, more spiritual and more experiential than modern people understand. The painting on canvas is a painting on a transferred "body" (the body of the painting). Not only is painting made on the body, but it is also made by the body (the artist's body). All this relates to what Heidegger said about The Work of Art having its own Being.

Looking at the late paintings of Titian, the viewer apprehends a sense of touch. That is, the viewer experiences the artist's touch upon the things being represented. This is an example

of the direct transmission of bodily experience through painting.

To give a further example: paintings and sculptures of the human body from classical antiquity still have Being right now, in the present. They were imbued with transmitted bodily energy two thousand years ago; they still carry this weight and energy now.

My new paintings are focused on bodily energy, and on sensual forms and surfaces. To this end, I am working intensely every week with several models, but I have no interest in representation of the model or the body. My aim is to transmit bodily energy and emotions directly into pure absolute paintings. My work with the models is to clarify this intention.

The immediate roots of Abstract painting are located in the paintings and sculptures of 19th century Northern Symbolists. Their work was centred on study of the nude. 20th century Abstract painting maintains and renews the historical relationship between painting and the human body.

A painting is its own body. The Symbolists believed that this body clothes the spirit which burns within. As an abstract painter, and as a mystic, I believe that the inner fire of a painting is in fact indistinguishable from its outer form. The Being of the painting is close at hand, always within sight, but we need to open our eyes to see it.

Charlie Sheard
March, 2021