

ANGELA BRENNAN
Born 1960, Ballarat
Lives and works in
Melbourne

Like a visitor to Earth 2016
oil on canvas
178.0 x 180.0 cm
[p.53]

The essence is in the detour 2016
oil on linen
181.0 x 181.0 cm
[p.52]

Trees, bodies, sky and water 2016
oil on linen
170.0 x 180.0 cm
[p.51]

Courtesy the artist;
Niagara Galleries, Melbourne; and
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

A certain pleasure principle prevails in Angela Brennan's free and abundant painterly practice, manifest in pulsing, billowing abstract paintings which highlight the inherently sensual and ineffable character of aesthetic engagement. Drawn to expansive, expressive colour, Brennan's paintings give form to thoughts and feelings: fields of colour are defined by an experimental approach to mark-making – bold contours, feathered, scumbled, scrawled – which allow for a variety of sensations and desires to consort and coexist.

Angela Brennan's early work was celebrated for the ways in which her then somewhat eccentric abstraction loosened up the formalist strictures of late-modernist painting, introducing a feminine subjectivity, playfulness or *jouissance* into the frame. In her recent work Brennan continues to explore the significance of form, fragment and detail, with reference to the work of medieval painters and Byzantine decorative arts, among other influences. With a penchant for the unorthodox and uncanny, she juxtaposes pattern and decorative motifs to create anachronistic stylistic clashes invoking energy and surprise. Rather than relying on a pre-planned schemata, Brennan's aesthetic is wholly intuitive; the paint, linen and brushes govern themselves but at the same time connect to a reality beyond the painting. MD



