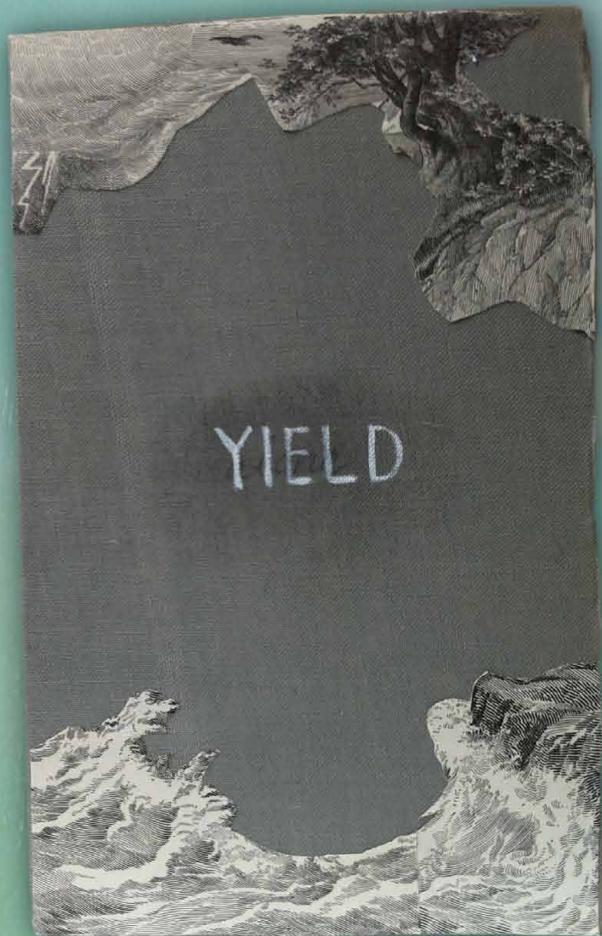




yield

jo darbyshire



jo darbyshire
yield

Bankwest Art Gallery
Bankwest Place
Perth, Western Australia
10 April – 21 July 2014

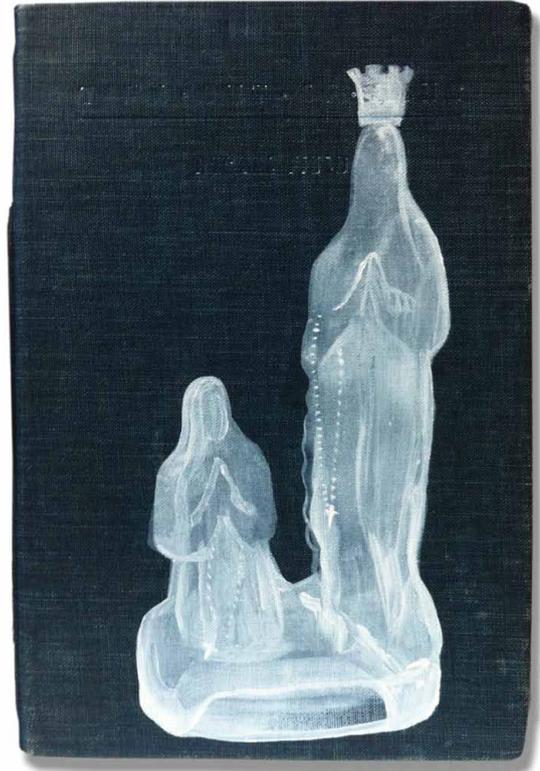
For Judy Quinlivan

Cover image:

Young Ireland 2014, oil on canvas, 150 h x 180 w cm
and
Yield 2012, acrylic and paper on linen bookcover



St Finian's Bay Holy Well 2013, oil on canvas, 140 h x 150 w cm



Holy water container no 13 bookcover 2012,
acrylic on linen on board, 21 h x 14 w cm

foreword

Sandra Murray, Bankwest Art Curator

Jo Darbyshire is first to be featured in an exhibition series at Bankwest Art Gallery recognising artists who are represented in the Bankwest Art Collection. In this new initiative Darbyshire's recent work is displayed alongside landscape works in the collection.

Inspired directly by her residency in Ireland, Darbyshire has captured the luscious land of her forebears. The Irish landscape is saturated with water; Darbyshire interprets this through her vivid palette of greens and blues, grounded with the heaviness of the dark rock and earth. There is a glow in the sky and water with a depth amongst the light articulated through transparent layers of oil paint. The delicate stencilled pattern below the surface adds to the sensation of a subaqueous terrain.

Darbyshire explores her Irish ancestry, as in the catalogue cover work *Young Ireland*. The artist references the brave Young Irelanders, a fervent nationalist group who defended their country in the 1850s and were the predecessors of the Fenians, the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

The delicate stencilled patterning predominant in this piece and others is based on the design of the air vent grills at York Gaol, in regional Western Australia, a place Irish immigrants and convicts were familiar with. These artworks connect the histories of the two countries; they are seductive colourist pieces imbued with a search for personal identity.

Bankwest is delighted to present the art of Western Australian Jo Darbyshire; her painting practice has evolved into a mature handling of paint and colour, resulting in poured and painted works of astounding luminosity and beauty. This exhibition has been enabled by the dedicated support of Bankwest with its commitment to supporting the Western Australian arts community.



St Ronan's Well 2014, oil on canvas, 180 h x 180 w cm



St Brendan's Holy Well Valentia Island Ireland, 2012



St Ronan's Well York, Western Australia, 2012

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The Irish traffic sign, *YIELD*, a reminder to Give Way, became for me on a journey to Ireland, a reminder to surrender to what one can no longer oppose or resist.

Like many Australians Ireland was the place half my ancestors came from and I wanted to imagine their experience; the initial sea journey, and the landscape they left, which of course, defines the encounter with Australia, both in the past and in the present.

These works explore what I experienced most in Ireland: the presence of water in the landscape. I looked to the sky, to Islands surrounded by water and to the land itself, where water seeped from the ground openly and was also held in wells.

I loved to visit these 'holy wells'; simple low stone walls covering springs in the ground, protected from animals and maintained by pilgrims and local people.

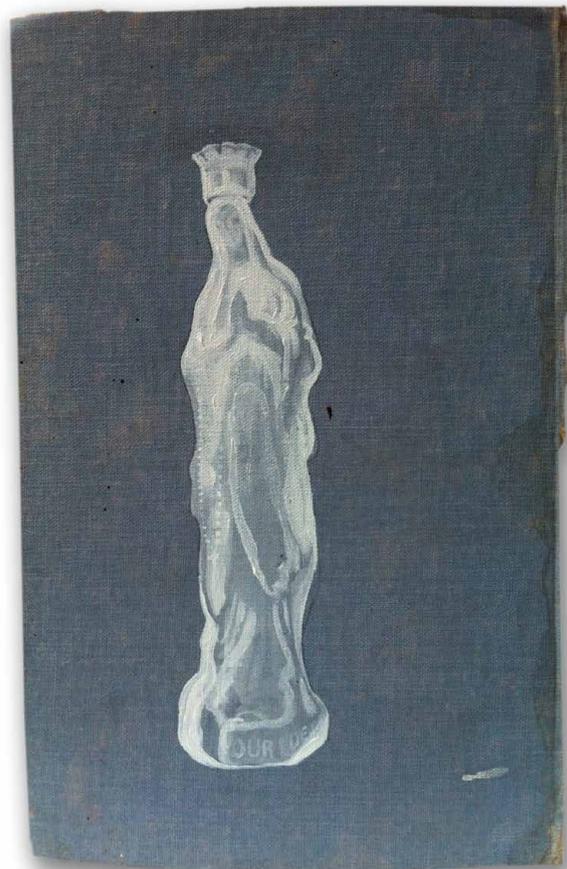
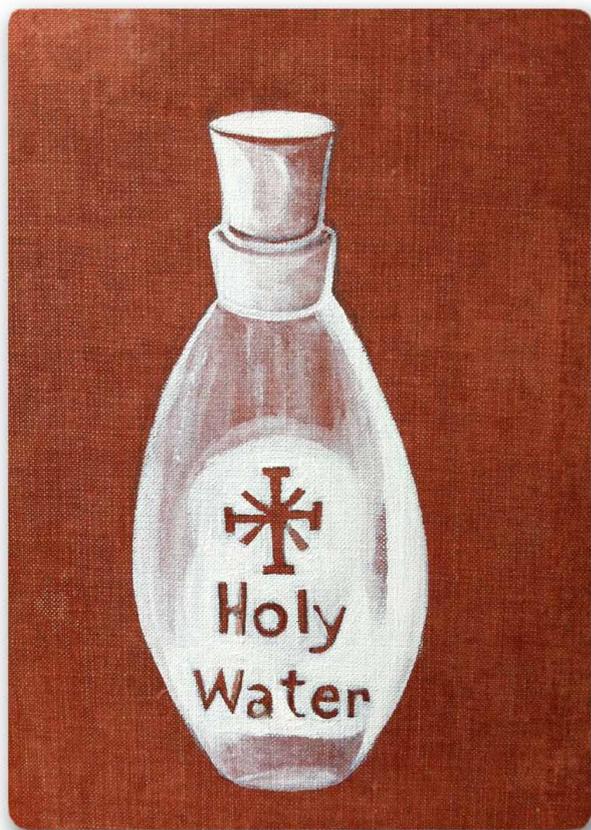
The idea and importance of the 'well' resonates powerfully in the colonial Australian landscape and I was reminded of a well, named *St Ronan's Well*, which is found 16 km from York in Western Australia, It was the last water source on the Perth – York Road, constructed by convicts and ticket-of leave men, such as my convict ancestor and his Irish wife in the 1850s.

I began to be fascinated by the visual possibilities inherent in humble objects and places, given the status 'sacred'. For instance glass globes, filled with holy water and anti-freeze, and decorated with religious figures and synthetic flowers, act as poetic markers on many contemporary graveyards. These surreal little 'underwater worlds' stand in stark juxtaposition to the restricted palette of the landscape.

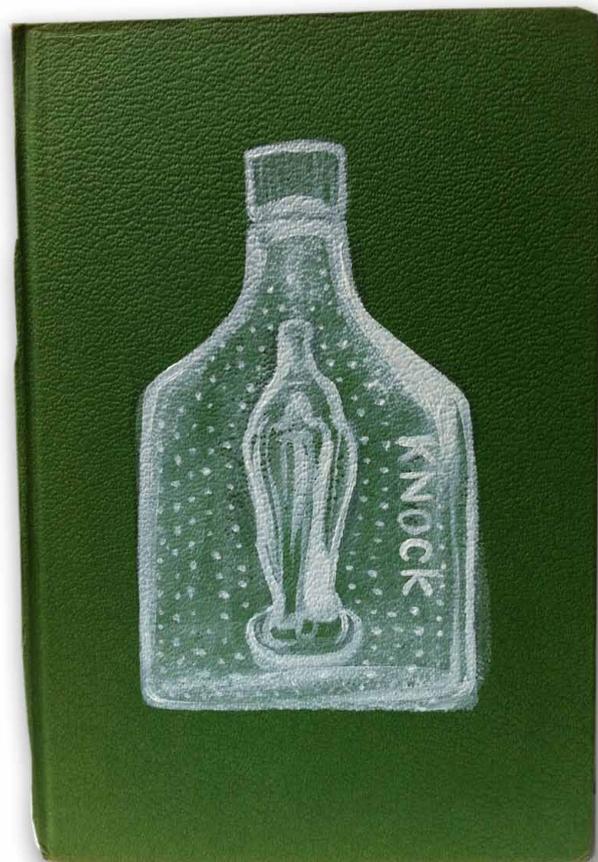
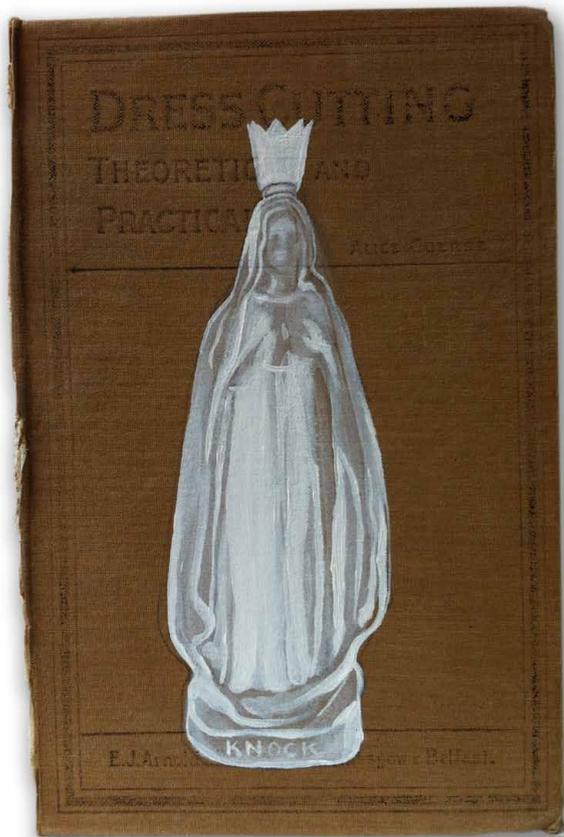
Although I am not interested in making religious or anti-religious paintings I use the symbol of the 'holy well' because it connects to deeper references to water and its contested ownership, and to material and spiritual resonances, which are still current in both countries. Painting in particular allows for both acceptance of the sacred and its deconstruction.

Jo Darbyshire 2014

In Ireland I painted images of the abundant and diverse 'holy water' containers seen in graveyards and other public and private places. Some came from Knock – Ireland's equivalent of Lourdes; some from Lourdes itself and some from local water supplies, made 'holy' by a local priest.

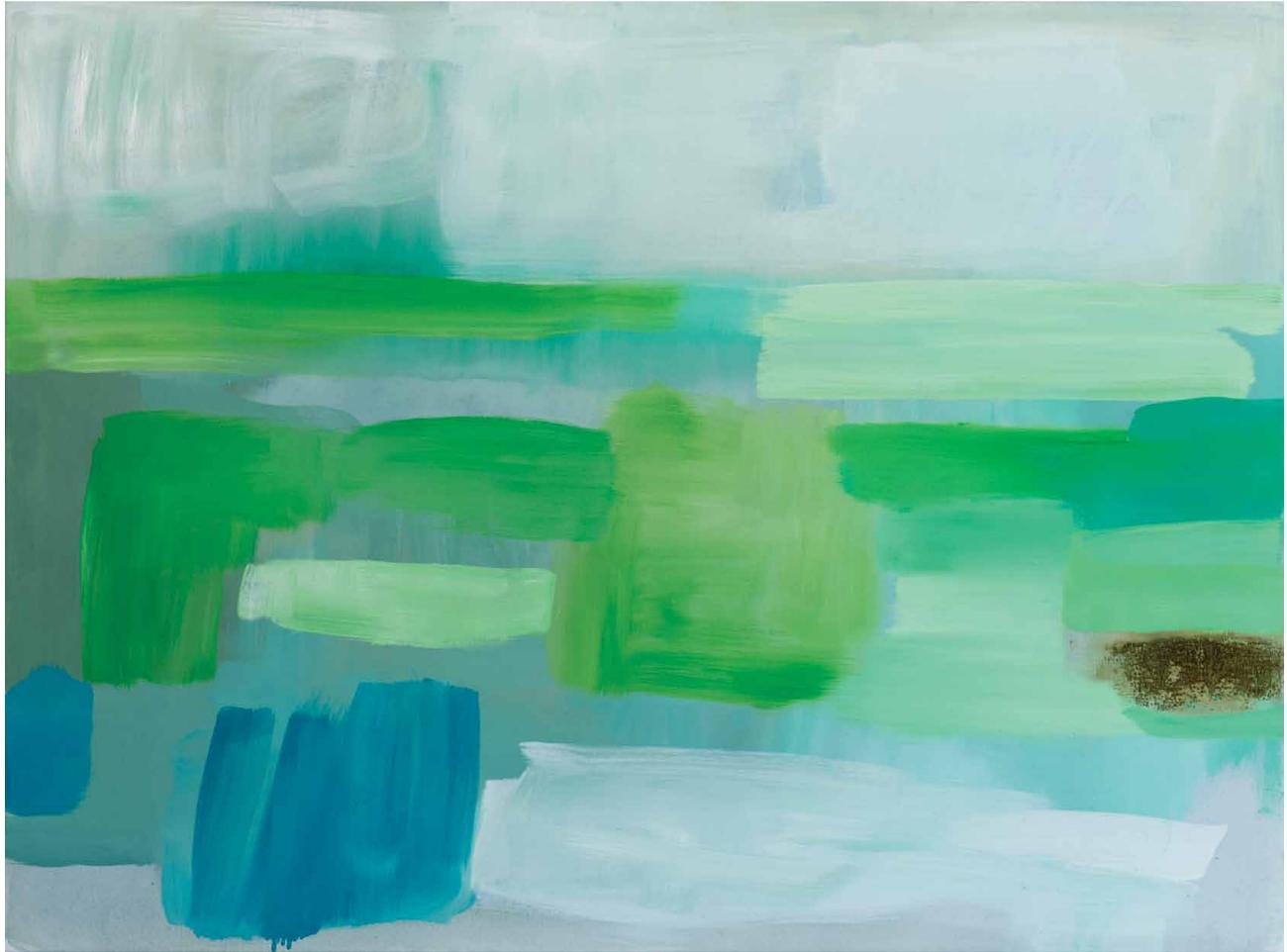


Various bookcovers 2012, acrylic on linen on board, dimensions variable





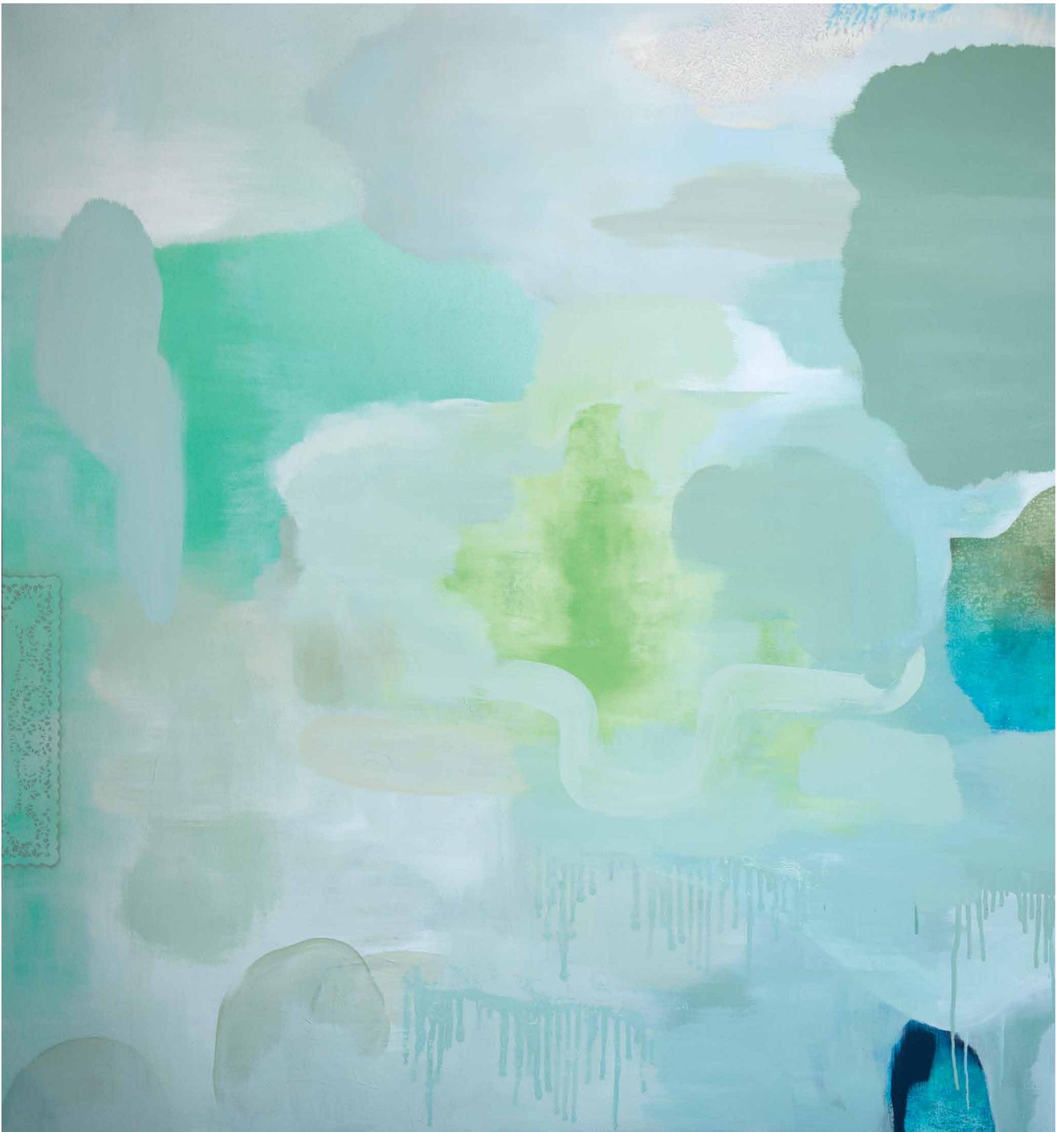
Irish Jellyfish 2013, oil on canvas, 140 h x 150 w cm



Ballinskelligs Bay 2013, oil on canvas, 84 h x 112 w cm



Fort and Sky 2014, oil on canvas, 120 h x 130 w cm



Waterville 2013, oil on canvas 150 h x 140 w cm



Little Skellig 2 2013, oil on canvas, 61 h x 92 w cm

Come to me from whence you came,
Come to me again...

The Irish landscape is unfamiliar but deeply familiar. Its winter skies and seas, its mountain ranges, its endless patchwork of green fields and the constant presence of water are far removed from the Australian experience. Yet as a first generation Australian of Irish parents, Ireland's physicality has a deep resonance that connects in a way that is both clear and opaque. From afar understanding this is shrouded in a veil of mist, much as the Irish countryside often is. It's only when you set foot on the auld sod that the sense of belonging makes sense. The ancient spirits of ancestors and of the land itself start to sing a tune that harmonises deeply at a soul level.

Sean Murphy 2014

jo darbyshire

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Bankwest Art Gallery, Bankwest Place, Perth Western Australia
2014

Jo is a member of the Artists Collective WA
www.jodarbyshire.com.au

Acknowledgements

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Also to Liz Wood, Paudiw Quinlan, Wayne Murphy, Rachel Lamb and Jean Conroy for sharing with me the beauty and mystery of Ireland and Sean Murphy, Bek Misich, Shingie Ruzengwe and my family.

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Torridon Partners is an independent advisory firm that provides strategic and financial advice to companies and government entities, with a focus on the resources and infrastructure sectors.

Torridon Partners maintains an established local presence and long-term commitment to Western Australia's economic and social development.

Special thanks to Bankwest and Curator Sandra Murray.

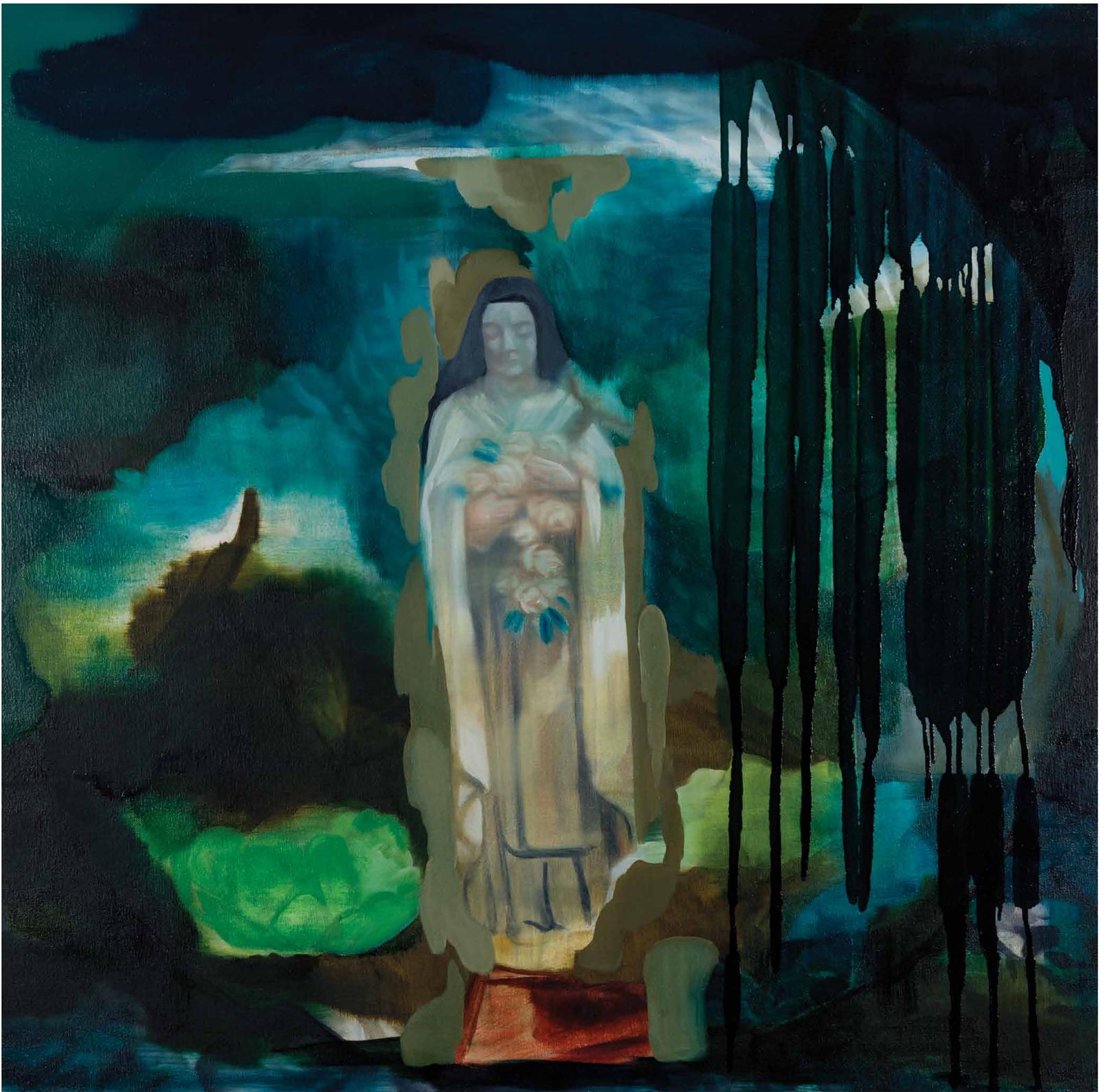
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Designer: Lauren Wilhelm



St Teresa 2013, oil on canvas, 90 h x 90 w cm