



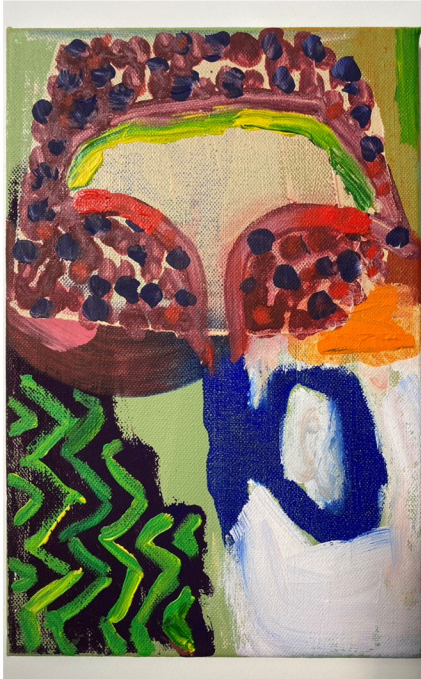
*Justine Wake*  
*Laerk Gallery, Newtown 2023*

sit the water  
in the sun





Windowsill series 1-4 acrylic on canvas 20x25



Awful painting series 2-4 acrylic on canvas 20x30





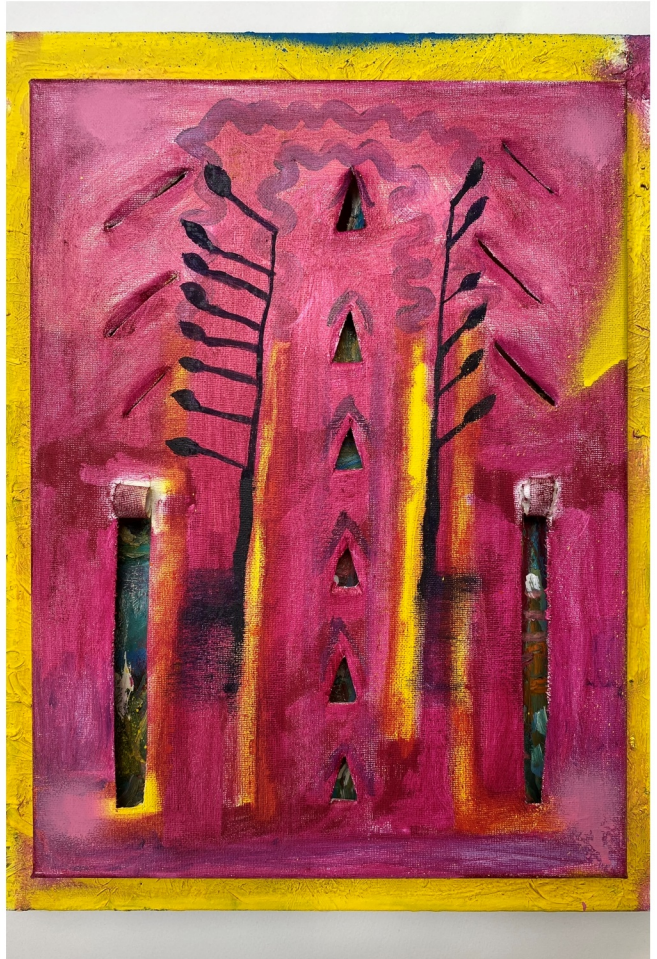
Blue tree, acrylic on canvas 40x50  
Watching through rain, oil and acrylic on board 30x30





Not asleep series  
acrylic and water colour on re-used museum postcards





In between the grass, mixed media, 40x60  
This way that way acrylic and pigment on sliced canvas 35x45





How will you know when things are better, 30x45, Catching thoughts 45x30





Mountain singing, oil pigment and acrylic on canvas 30x40



Departure acrylic on canvas 30x40





Incense again, acrylic on canvas 35x45  
Catherine wheel (I didn't realise) paint and lead pencil on canvas 20x25





Above below, oil and acrylic on board 28x35





Flight and anchor, oil, acrylic, pigment on canvas 45x35  
That day it rained acrylic on board 40x30





The water and the stars, acrylic and oil on board, 69x40





Start again, acrylic and pigment on sliced canvas 30x40  
Under the canopy oil, acrylic, spray paint on canvas40x60 (detail)





Again, the Bang! oil and acrylic on canvas 40x60  
Desktop Assemblage (with palm tree)





New shoots, dancing, spray paint, oil, on sliced canvas 40x60x7





Sunbowl, oil, spray paint and wood burn on board 10x15  
Desktop Assemblage (blue and white stripe)

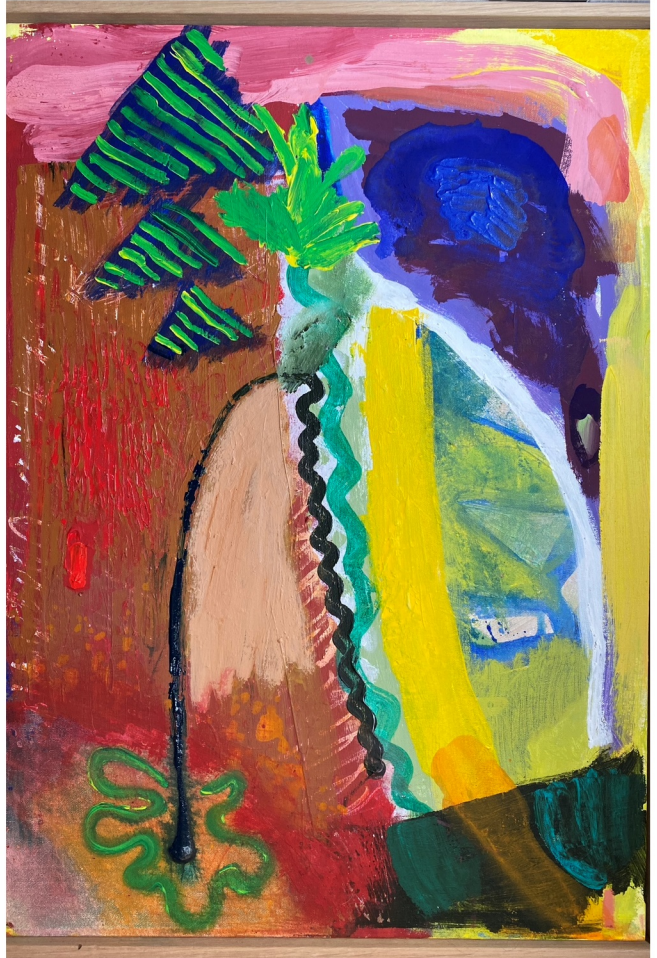


Rolling nuts on Hoosi hill, 40x50, Incense in a paper cup 20x30, Eyes and heart have run away together 45x61





Desktop assemblages (fire, golden seeds, yellow rays) found objects, sharpie, paint, glue



Pedro's garden acrylic, 50x70  
Good company, getting along 50x70





Mid-afternoon conversation, oil on canvas 50x61  
Desktop ssemblage (with crescent)

## JUSTINE WAKE: *Sit the water in the sun*

Looking at Justine Wake's works is a lively and somewhat unruly affair. There's colour, vivid and unapologetic, unstoppable, which bounces around and beckons you in. Once the joyfulness of that initial impact settles, recognisable forms start appearing. The gestures in Wake's work are gentle and expressive. The forms – often organic and loose – cohabit with scratches and more controlled patterns. Some of the motifs are repeated across several works as the exploration transfers from one work to another. One gets the sense that the whole is woven together to create a language at once familiar and mysterious, like a visual Esperanto.

When discussing her practice, Wake talks of the impulse to create which has driven her practice since childhood, art-making is an essential part of her experiencing Life. The making of a work is not planned and although she might set herself parameters – such as a certain palette, materials and time constraints – Wake dives into the act of making, responding as it happens. It can be a way to work things out, she says, to bring things to a more tangible, present form.

Everyday scenes are recorded gently and mixed with age-old symbols. Materials are repurposed, found objects are assembled and given another, more talismanic life. Being self-taught, Wake's practice is freer of rules and limitations. Marks, colour choices, signs on the canvas, paper or whatever medium she has at hand, all have a spontaneity that feels like an intuitive response to a fertile internal life. There seems to be no barriers to her creativity, everything holds potential. American writer, Pearl Buck describes this compulsion to create, "...the truly creative mind... must create, must pour out creation. By some strange, unknown, inward urgency they are not really alive unless they are creating."

In addition to the visuals, language plays an important role in Wake's practice. Her titles speak of the ordinariness of the quotidian, lived and witnessed. The works are sometimes accompanied by haikus the artist writes and these brief poems contribute another layer, a skewed way into the works offered to us. Through their condensed snapshot qualities, we are given loose clues which are open-ended enough to resonate outwards.

Lately, Wake has been exploring the three-dimensionality of the canvas, by slicing it and hinting at its structure, she reveals its sub-layer and lifts it from the flat plane into a more sculptural form. What is behind, she seems to ask...

*Sit the water in the sun* doesn't dictate your experience, it points, gently and magically, to the Everyday and the beauty which can be found in it.

written by Caro Toledo