

Sagls





# Jenny Sages

Show me the way

2013

King Street Gallery  
on William

10am – 6pm Tuesday – Saturday

177 William St Darlinghurst NSW 2010 Australia

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galleries association



*Black-Red on White* 2013 Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 65x9cm

# JENNY SAGES

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Jenny Sages has painted some of the greatest Australian portraits of the past decade but she is, by inclination, a landscapist. Sages's annual entries in the Archibald Prize have alerted audiences to the quality and consistency of her work, but there is nothing in those portraits, with their hard-won likenesses and psychological insights, to prepare one for a first glimpse of the landscapes.

Sages does not paint the kind of views we associate with Arthur Streeton or Hans Heysen. At first glance her works may not seem like landscapes at all, although this impression is corrected by a few moments' study.

Looking at one of Sages's panels we see a mass of dots and lines incised into a waxy surface stained with pigment. These squirming patterns might have been made by tiny worms rather than the human hand. Others resemble clusters of miniscule seeds, ready to be scattered by the wind. It seems inadequate to describe them as 'abstract' – they are like slices of rock, or plants seen through a microscope. One may discern nests, shells, animal tracks, the spines on leaves, the movement of tides, or numerous other traces of the natural environment. They are fragments that contain whole worlds.

"The veneration of matter," rhapsodised the poet, Francis Ponge - "what is more worthy of the human spirit?" This is exactly what we find in Sages's so-called 'abstracts'. They are not cerebral exercises holding themselves aloof from the material world. They are distillations of the landscape: concentrated acts of attention that almost pulse

with life. At the same time they are a form of handwriting, underlining the subjective aspect of Sages's vision.

In her preference for bright whites and yellows, Sages evokes the distinctive Australian light. Her ochres refer to the reddish earth of the outback and the works of indigenous artists with whom she has obvious affinities. Like those Aboriginal painters, Sages is painting a spirit landscape, defined by texture and detail not by familiar landmarks. There is no concession to Renaissance perspective or any Neo-classical formula. Almost everything happens on the same plane, although we might be looking at the teeming activity in a rockpool captured diagrammatically; a net draped across a void, or a ragged corner of a larger design.

In trying to make a thing rather than a picture, Sages has begun to produce paintings that are also three-dimensional objects. These works are as solid as planks; more like geological core samples than imaginary windows onto the world. They are to be looked at rather than *through*.

It should be recognised that Sages has created an entirely new kind of landscape painting. Needless to say, there was nothing of the sort in the confusing survey of 'landscape-influenced' art that represented Australia at the Royal Academy in London this year. Instead, it appears we have not yet transcended the modernist cliché which holds that anything of genuine originality is destined to be misunderstood. Like the artist herself, these works look delicate but are amazingly resilient. They will be admired and valued when the fashions of the moment have long since fallen from grace.











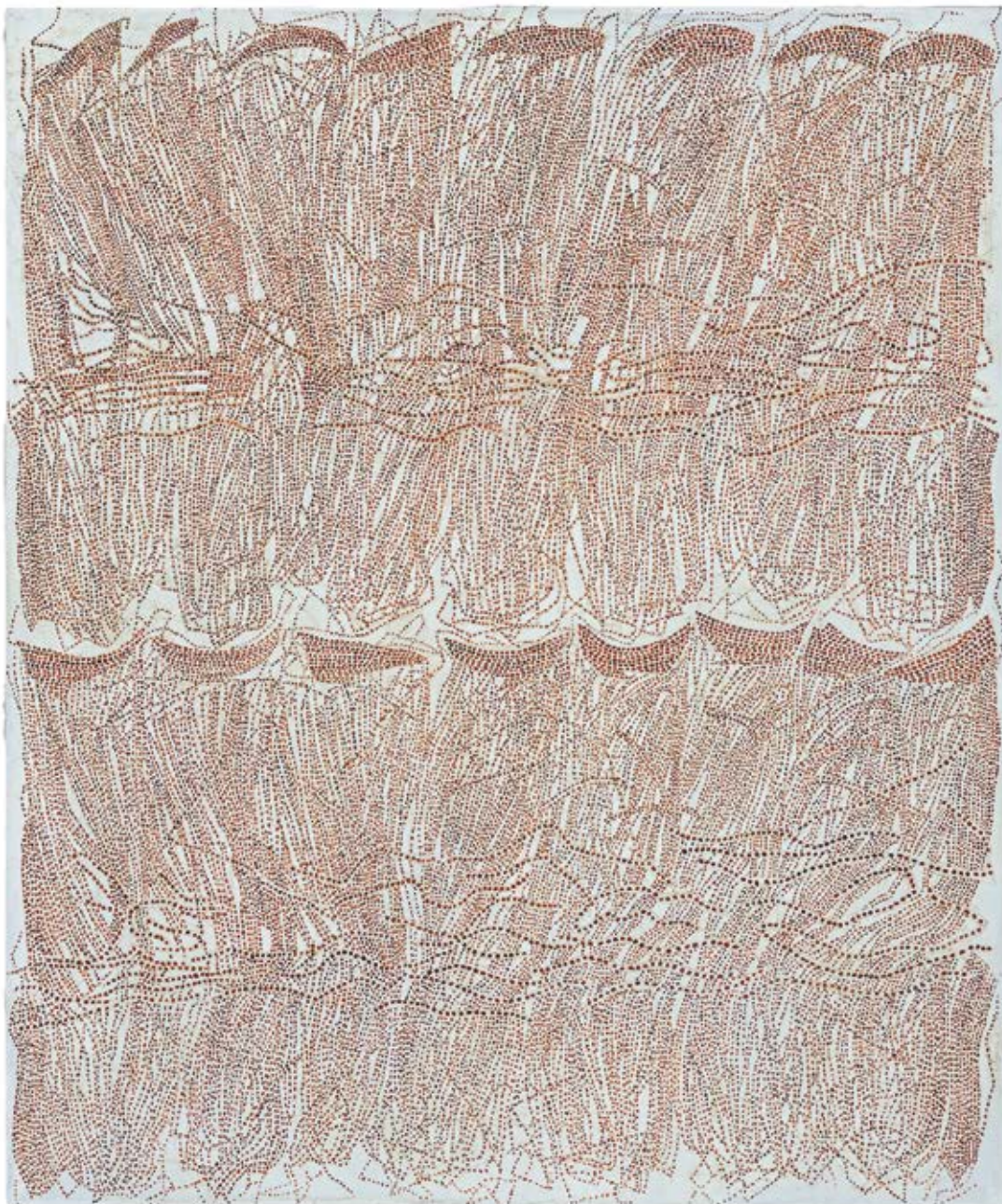
"Making art is not a rarified human kind of activity — but a basic human impulse that links up with something already in you."

Jenny Sages



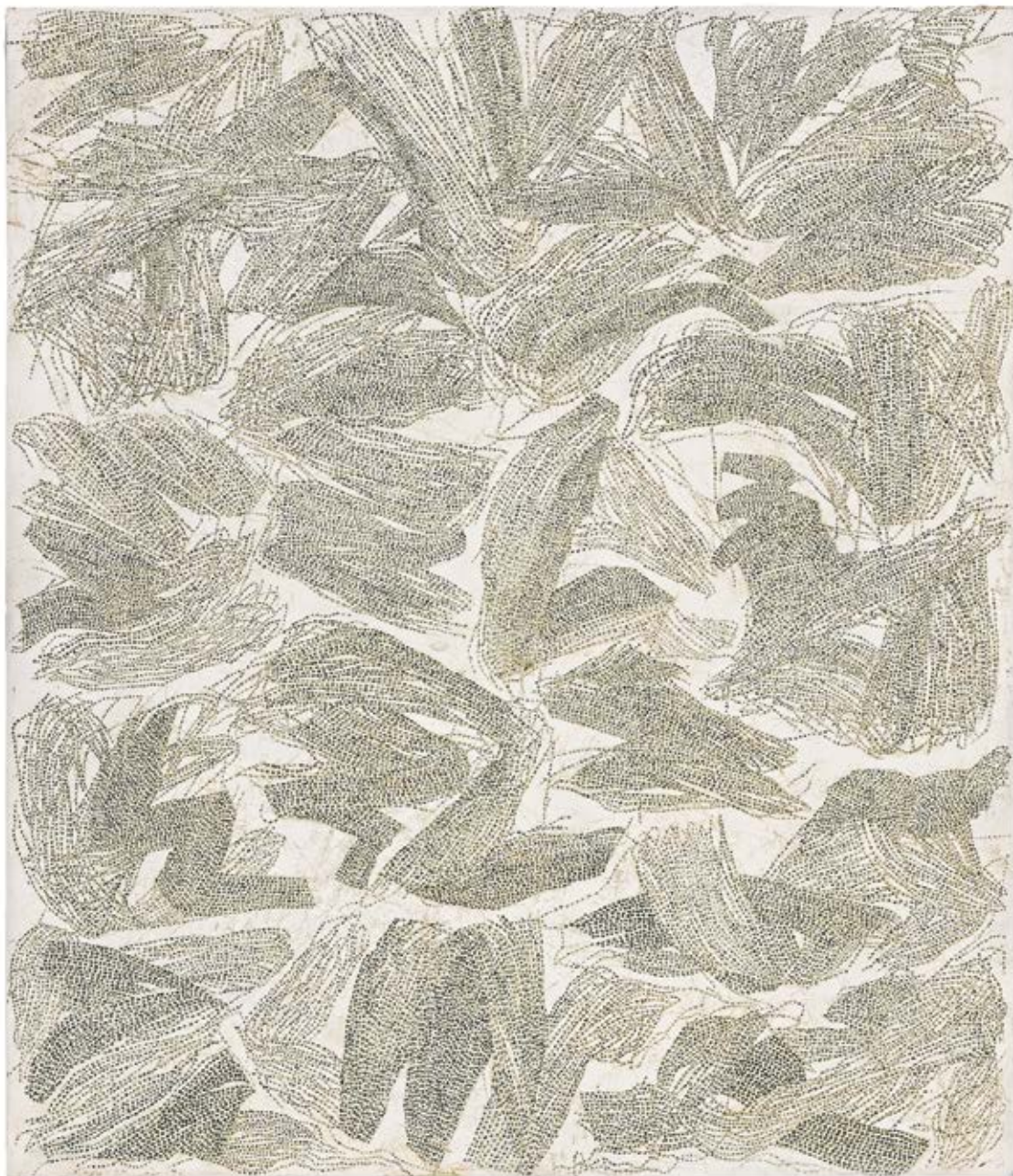






*Uncharted Country - Red* 2013 Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 70x60cm



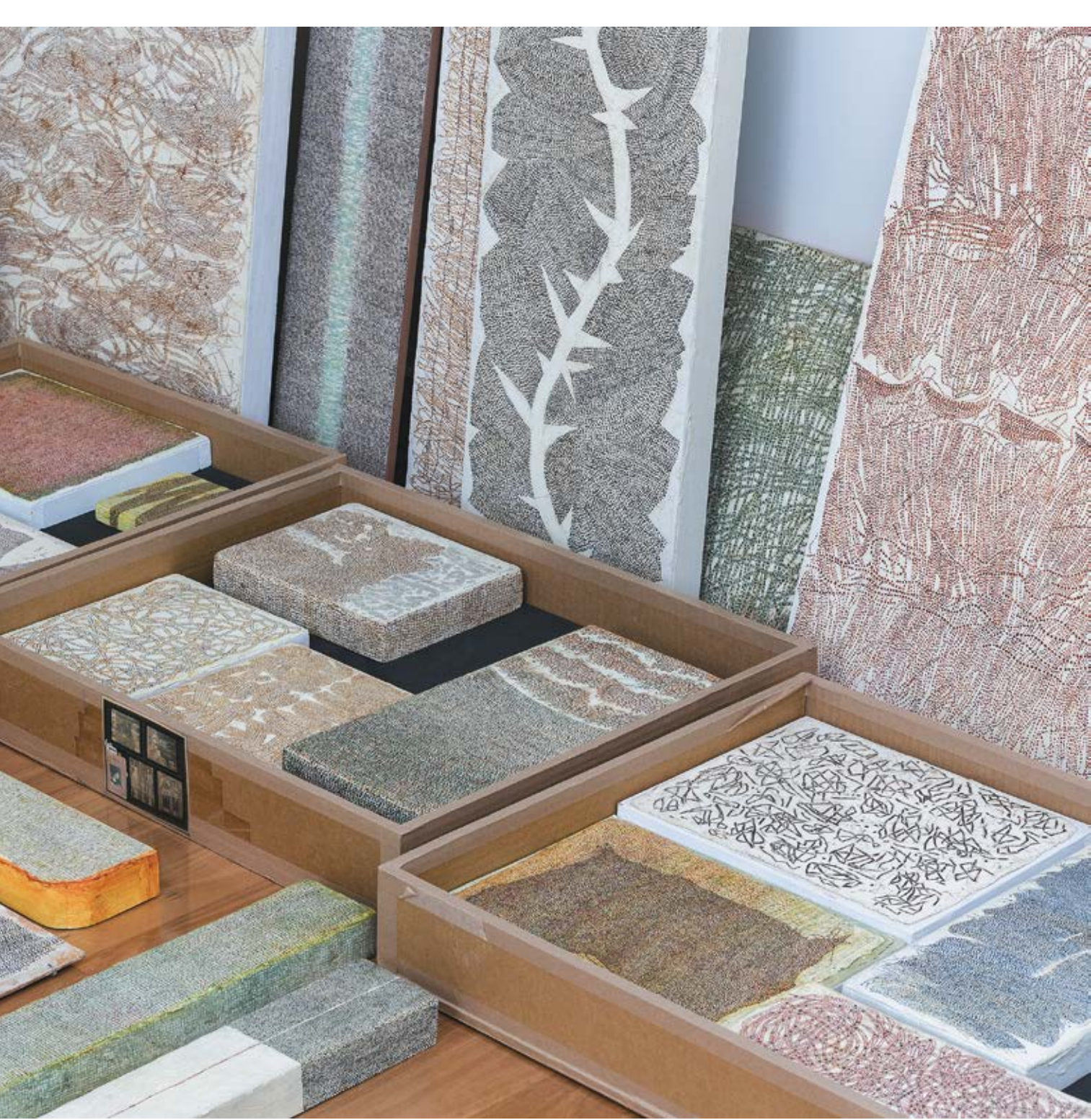


*Uncharted Country - Green* 2013 Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 70x60cm











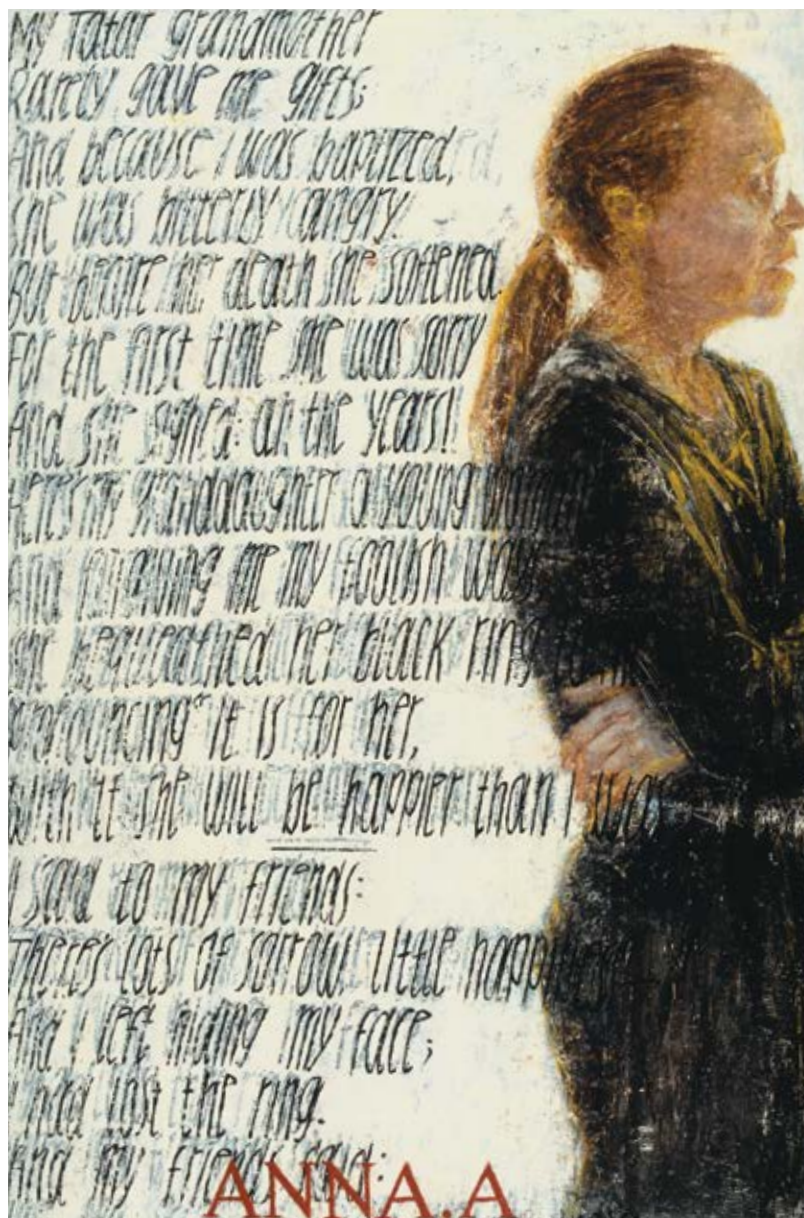


*Trancendence* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board  
100x75cm





*Il Rah [The Way]* 2013 Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 180x40cm



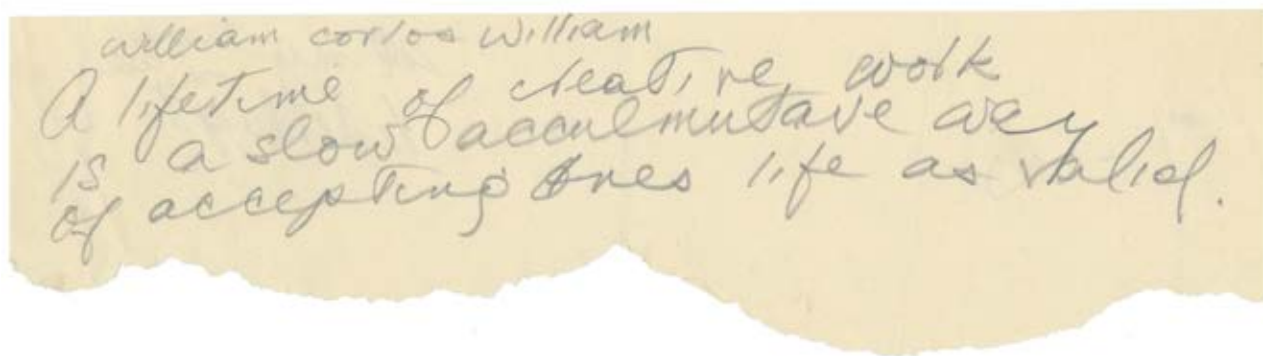
Every morning when I wake up I put on my mother's face 2010  
 Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 150x120cm



*Embroidery & Text* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board  
25x20cm



*Spiral* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board  
29x12.5cm











Jenny Sages and Sarah Engeldow (Curator) National Portrait Gallery 2012

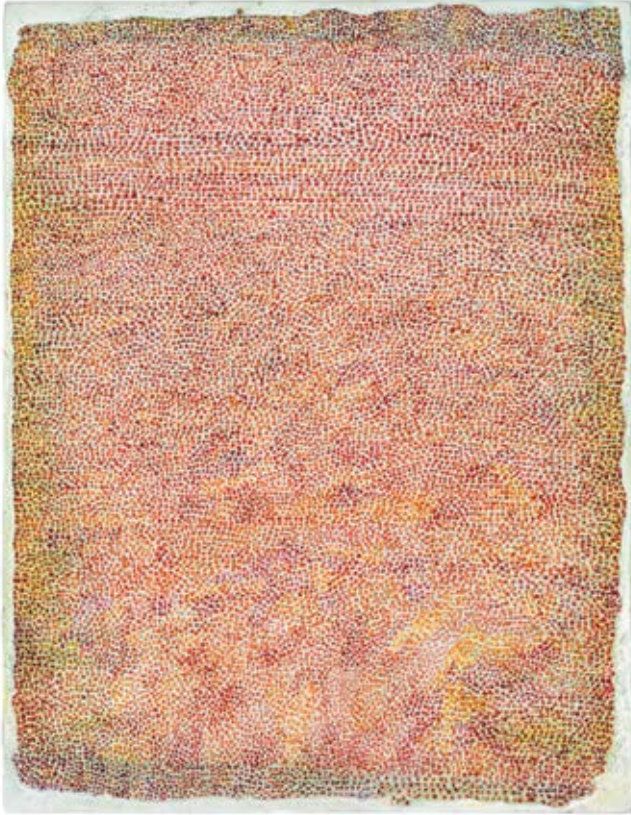


*The Blue One* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 37x18cm

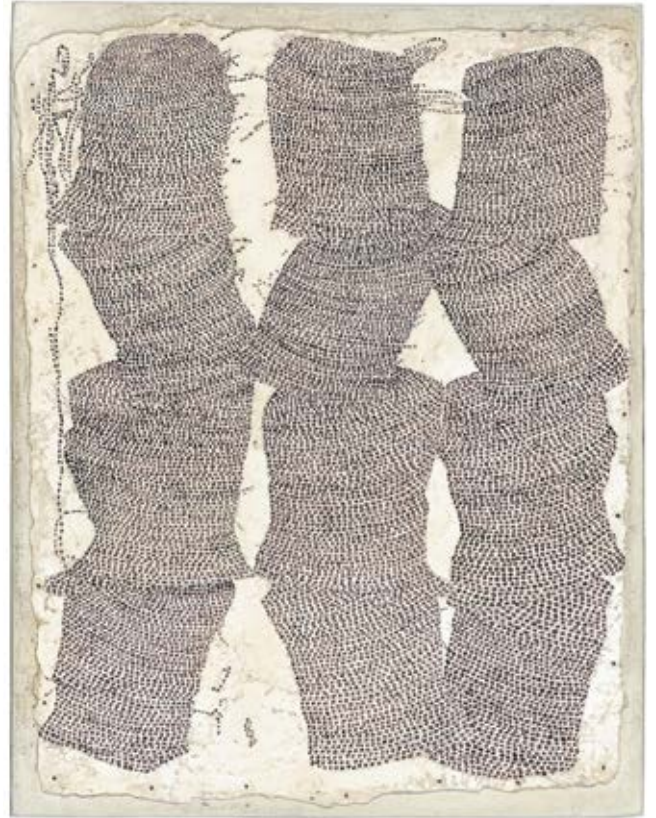


*Italian Brown, Pink Lake* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 32.5x26cm





*The Red One* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 33x26.5cm



*The Neutral Tint* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 33x26cm



*They are Predellas* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board  
90x11cm

*They are predellas  
They are story boards  
They are frames within frames  
They are the subject of my fiercest  
attention and my worst nightmares*

When time is viewed from the perspective of individual human lives, the constancy of a place allows it to move in daily cycles. The images are protected in their own space that one cannot invade. It parallels our own existence. Looking with contemporary eyes the pictures become merely a world of appearances.

\* Predellas are the smaller images of early altarpieces that narrated in sequences, the biography of a saint, they then become a boundary between image and story.



*Green and Yellow* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 16x13cm





*The First One* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 40x19cm





*Symbiosis* 2013 Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 70x60cm



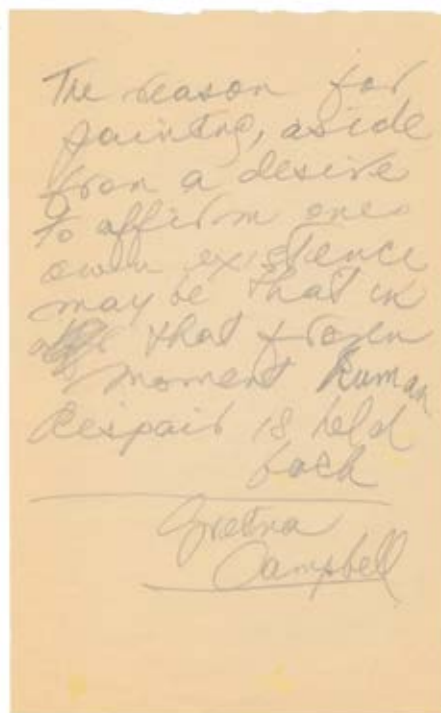


*After the Dry Season 2011* Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 160x140cm [exhibited 2011 Wynne Prize, AGNSW]





*The River* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board  
180x30cm



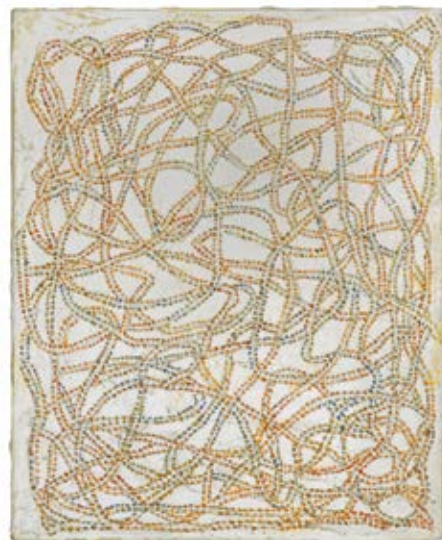


*Jawoyn Plants* 2013 Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 120x20cm each





*Transparent Oxide Red Lake* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 32.5x26cm



*Another Small One* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 25x20cm



*Small One* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 25x20cm



*Black Text* 2013  
Encaustic, pigment & oil on board 32.5x26cm





For further information,  
images and a full CV on Jenny Sages  
go to **[www.kingstreetgallery.com.au](http://www.kingstreetgallery.com.au)**

Photography of artwork: Paul Wright [except p.14]  
Photography of Jenny Sages: Fiona Edmeades p. 1  
Photography of Jenny Sages: Kathy Edwards p 28 top image  
Photography of Jenny Sages: Bruce Inglis p. 6, p. 28  
Design: Sam Woods





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Published by King Street Studios P/L 2013

ISBN: 978-0-9875540-0-0