



CURATORIAL+CO.

WE ARE ALL SHADY SCHISTS

AMANDA SCHUNKER
3-20 JUNE 2026

AMANDA SCHUNKER



AMANDA SCHUNKER (b. 1969) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice explores identity, heritage, and the migrant experience through an abstract engagement with landscape. Anchored in the rugged geometry of the Australian environment, her works investigate notions of belonging, memory, and human interconnectedness. Geological formations and fragmented outcrops become both metaphor and structure - grounding devices through which Schunker examines the relationship between place and self.

Central to her practice is an intuitive process of translating the physical energy of the landscape into layered fields of colour, texture, and gesture. Working between direct observation and studio recollection, Schunker begins each work in situ, using custom-made tools to establish the foundational marks of a composition from the source itself. These initial forms are later developed through rhythmic mark-making and visceral applications of pigment, allowing a distinct "sense of place" to emerge. Drawing on her background in textile design, her works balance material sensitivity with expressive abstraction, holding structure and spontaneity in dynamic tension.

Schunker lives and works on Bunurong Country in Bayside Melbourne, Australia. A multidisciplinary artist with a background in textile design, she holds a Bachelor of Arts in Textile Design from RMIT University, where she studied under influential Australian artists David Band and Yvonne Audette. Schunker regularly exhibits throughout Australia and has been a finalist in several notable art prizes, including the Omnia Art Prize and the Fisher's Ghost Art Award. In 2020, she was awarded the SBS Landscape Prize.

WE ARE ALL SHADY SCHISTS

What are we tethered to?

For Amanda Schunker, the answer lies in geological forms rather than a single identity. Her work navigates the intersection of a complex multicultural heritage, shaped by Chinese, Indian, and European lineages across England and Australia, and the raw, indifferent endurance of the natural world. Schunker seeks a practice that is unbound—free from cultural restraints, the historical weight of ancestral bound feet, and the internal prejudices we impose upon ourselves.

This body of work centers on a borderless presence—remaining unattached, yet responsive to the land. To paint abstracted rock formations *en plein air* is to enter a non-denominational sanctuary: a space that belongs to no one and everyone. Time in the field serves as the essential substrate of Schunker's practice, through which she captures the "bones" of the work. These outdoor sessions are a pursuit of neutrality, painting without borders to remain as unattached as possible, yet responsive to a multitude of triggers found in nature.

Returning to familiar sites across Bunurong Country, Yiruk Wamoon/Wilson's Promontory, and Mangowak/Airey's Inlet, Schunker taps into sensory triggers exclusive to the rock formations, capturing an energy that prioritizes intuition over deliberation. In geology, a schist is a rock that has undergone profound transformation—metamorphic forms reshaped by heat and pressure into lustrous, radiant layers. We are all a bit like these schists: shaped by pressure, layered with history, and finding our own unique lustre.

"I hope these paintings give a sense of the natural world, whether through the literal weight of rock formations or a more abstract resonance," says Schunker. "By embracing ambiguity, the work invites a personal dialogue that can shift with each viewing. Ultimately, I aim to evoke an emotive response that beckons the viewer to pause, look closer, and perhaps question the familiar."

To overcome physical restrictions, Schunker has adapted her practice using lightweight canvas and custom bamboo-pole brushes. This enables her to work broadly and directly at the cliffs, establishing the foundational composition of a piece *en plein air* before refining the narrative in the studio.

"This body of work marks a significant physical shift in my practice. Following brain surgery several years ago, the traditional mechanics of painting became a challenge; the constant movement required to work at scale caused debilitating headaches. To adapt, I devised a system using brushes attached to large bamboo poles, allowing me to maintain direct contact with the canvas while standing upright."

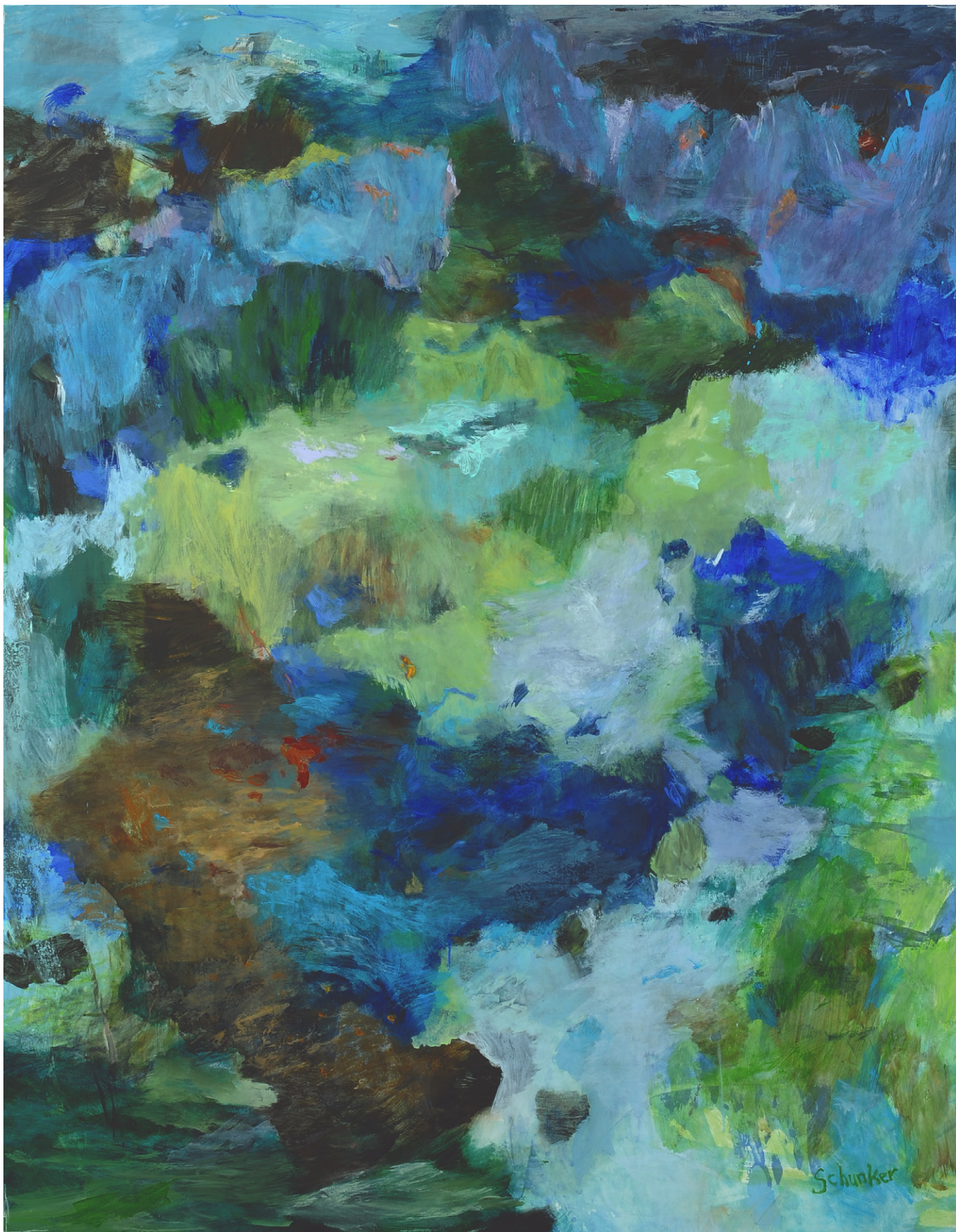
These extended marks (the "bones" of the work) serve as lines of connection between the artist's internal dialogue and the external world. By anchoring her practice in these ancient outcrops, ownership and prejudice give way to the role of the caretaker. It is here that Schunker finds a belonging that transcends human borders—we are, after all, made of the same Shady Schists.



Amity, 2026
acrylic, soft pastel on canvas
200 x 200 cm
unframed
AUD 10,800



Migration, 2026
acrylic on canvas
162 x 124 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 7,800



Hermetic Dwelling, 2026
acrylic on canvas
162 x 124 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 7,800



Advancing in Warmer Times, 2026
acrylic, soft pastel on canvas
162 x 124 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 7,800



“To paint abstracted rock formations *en plein air* is to enter a non-denominational sanctuary: a space that belongs to no one and everyone.”



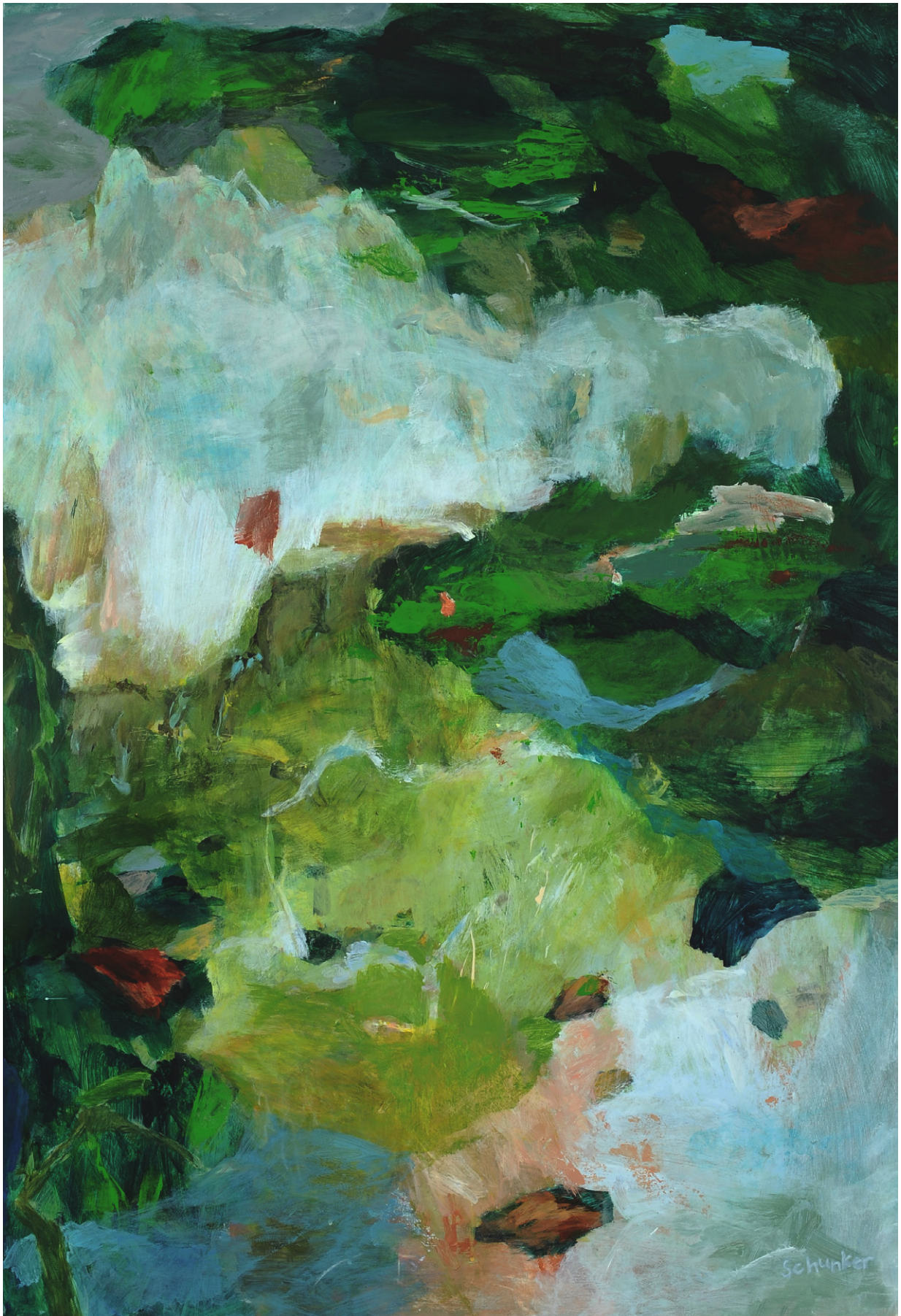
Erosional Surface, 2026
acrylic, soft pastel on canvas
124 x 162 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 7,800



Shady Schists, 2026
acrylic on canvas
124 x 162 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 7,800



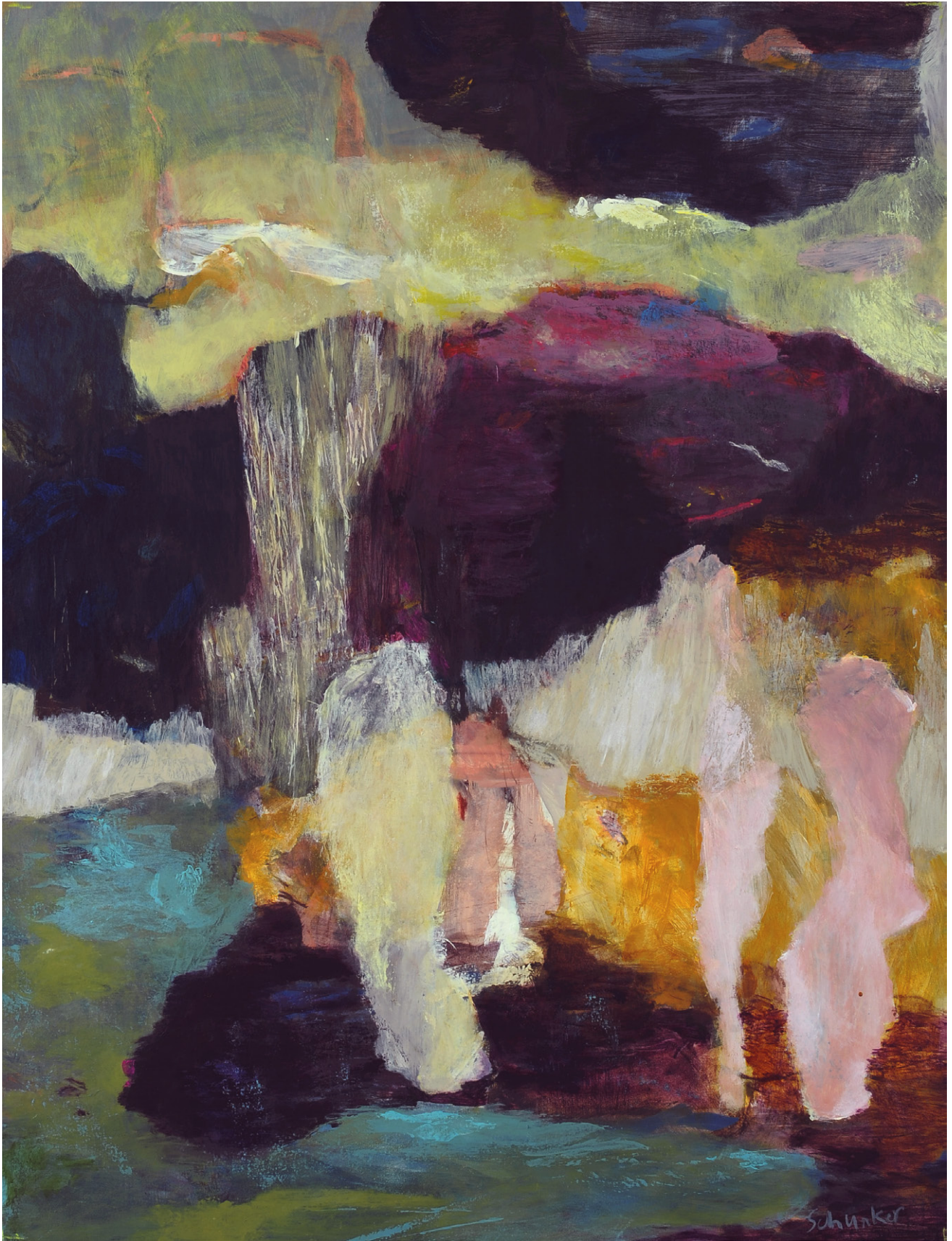
Shape Shifting, 2026
acrylic on canvas
124 x 162 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 7,800



Verdant Green Light, 2026
acrylic on canvas
111 x 77 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 5,200



Vanished Landscapes, 2026
acrylic, soft pastel on canvas
99 x 75 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 4,800



River Threaded Valleys, 2026
acrylic on canvas
99 x 75 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 4,800



Boundary in Time, 2026
acrylic on canvas
99 x 75 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 4,800



Close to Splintering, 2026
acrylic on canvas
56 x 59.5 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 3,000



Geographies are Temporary, 2026
acrylic on canvas
54.5 x 51.5 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 2,600



Common Ground, 2026
acrylic on canvas
51.5 x 54.5 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 2,600



Boulderous Union, 2025
acrylic on canvas
51.5 x 54.5 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 2,600



Continental Crust I, 2026
acrylic, soft pastel on canvas
44.5 x 32 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 1,800



Continental Crust II, 2026
acrylic, soft pastel on canvas
44.5 x 32 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 1,800



Continental Crust III, 2026
acrylic, soft pastel on canvas
44.5 x 32 cm
framed in Tasmanian oak
AUD 1,800

In a world of turmoil,
of prejudice and greed,
Would it be so difficult to simply heed
Mother Nature's call for peace and harmony?
"Spend time with me," she beckons quietly.

We are abundant with life and curiosity.
Surrender your black screens, your egos, and fast pace;
Let the anxiety and the need to dominate lose its place.

Black, white, yellow, green-
The immigrant, the outcast, the refugee-
Dissipate, appreciate, congregate, celebrate.

Our imperfections,
metamorphosed over deep time;
sedimentary layers
of a collective design.

We are the grit that didn't break.
So look to the stone, the fractures and twists,
and see ourselves:
For we are all Shady Schists.



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Profile image courtesy of the artist
Artwork photography by Chris van der Spuy

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this gallery stands. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, skies, and culture. We honour the rich artistic traditions that have existed on this Country for tens of thousands of years, and we recognise that First Nations people are the first artists, storytellers, and custodians of culture. We are committed to listening, learning, and working in respectful collaboration with First Nations communities.