

# JUDITH VAN HEEREN



## MOON OBSCURE

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY

29 APRIL TO 16 MAY 2026

# JUDITH VAN HEEREN

## MOON OBSCURE

Although she emigrated from the Netherlands to Australia as a young child, Judith Van Heeren appears to have inherited a cultural affinity for the dark, moody still lifes of the Dutch Masters, an art historical legacy she has long admired. Borrowing from this visual language, her paintings elevate Australian flora, imbuing them with the gravitas, beauty and mystery more commonly associated with European flowers in 17th-century still life painting.

With a practice spanning more than three decades, Van Heeren is presenting her first solo exhibition with Nicholas Thompson Gallery in Melbourne. Known for her small oil paintings that reward slow and attentive looking, her works feel quietly defiant in an image-saturated era increasingly dominated by empty AI-generated imagery. This new series unfolds gradually, defined by an exquisite, almost otherworldly light, and marks the first time the artist has realised a long held desire to introduce the moon into her compositions.

Growing up in the outer suburbs of Perth, Van Heeren spent time walking with her father, also a painter. "We would see banksias, xanthorrhoea, native grasses, orchids and kangaroo paws growing just outside - across the road. That was my wonderland," she recalls.

Today, Van Heeren paints from a vast collection of dried specimens in her studio, preferring them once their life has drained away. "I love the colours and the way they curl," she says. "For me, the banksia pods that have opened after fire, hold the promise of a life cycle-layered, strange and utterly compelling.

Rich with art historical references - from sfumato's hazy atmospherics to a subtle slippage between realism and surrealism - Van Heeren's paintings sit comfortably within contemporary practice. Both meticulous and experimental, they feel at once scientific and alchemical. While they may gesture towards ecological precarity, the works remain grounded in aesthetics rather than politics, resisting fixed meanings and inviting sustained contemplation.

Rhianna Melhem from *Art Guide Australia* March/April 2026

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Harvest moon*

2025/26

oil on linen

70 x 100 cm

\$13,500

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Luna eclipse (blood moon)*

2024/25

oil on linen

70 x 100 cm

\$13,500

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Moon shadow*

2025/26

oil on linen

70 x 100 cm

\$13,500

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Supermoon*

2024/25

oil on linen

70 x 100 cm

\$13,500

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Moon obscure*

2024

oil on linen

51 x 62 cm

\$8,900

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Old moon*

2025/26

oil on linen

51 x 62 cm

\$8,900

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Pink moon*

2025

oil on linen

51 x 62 cm

\$8,900

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Bushy yate pods*

2024

oil on linen board

25 x 30 cm

\$3,900

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Embrace*

2025

oil on linen board

25 x 30 cm

\$3,900

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Pink sky*

2025

oil on linen board

25 x 30 cm

\$3,900

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

*Purple banksia*

2024

oil on linen board

25 x 30 cm

\$3,900

NICHOLAS  
THOMPSON  
GALLERY



**JUDITH VAN HEEREN**

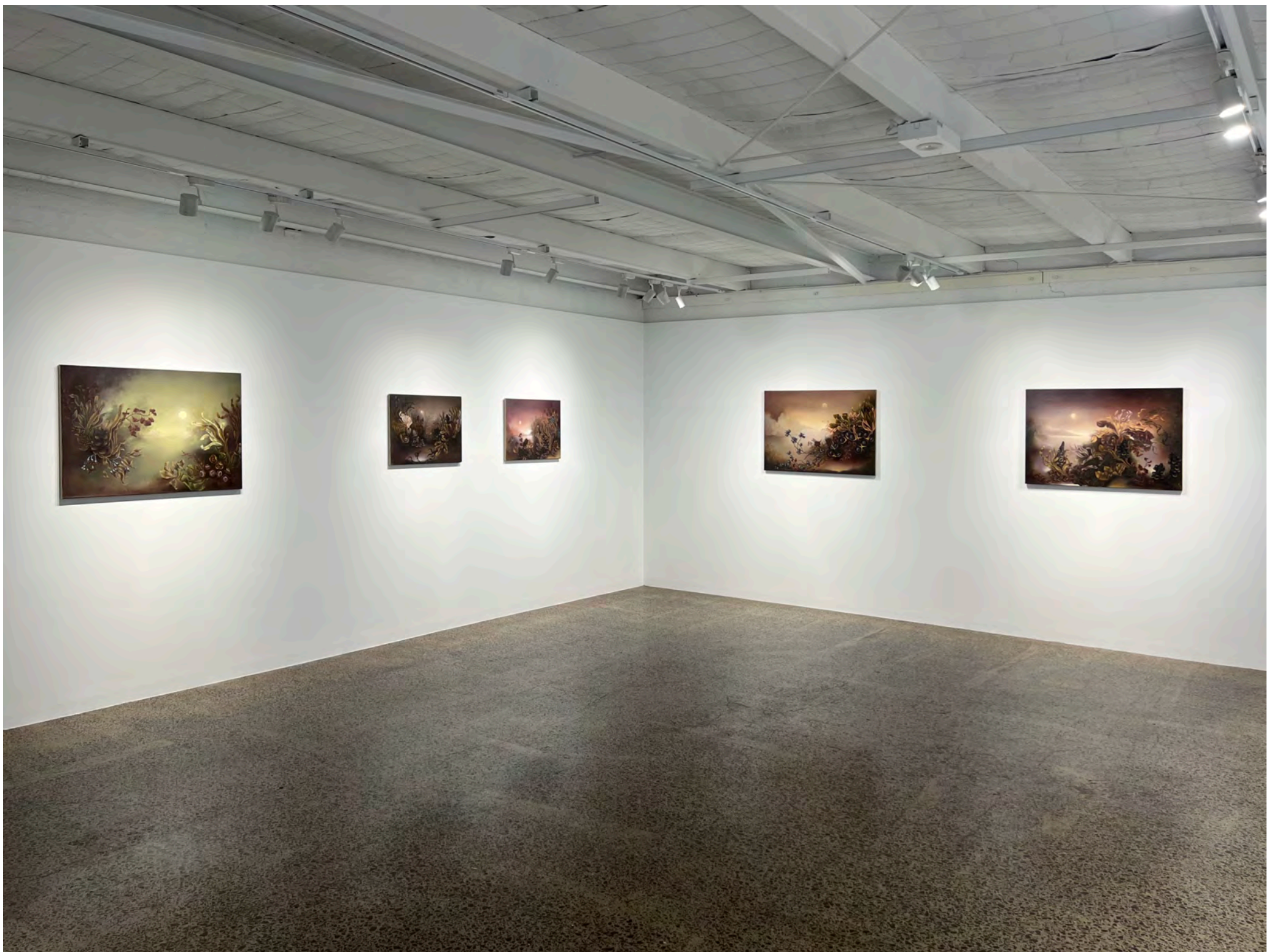
*Seed pods and leaves*

2025

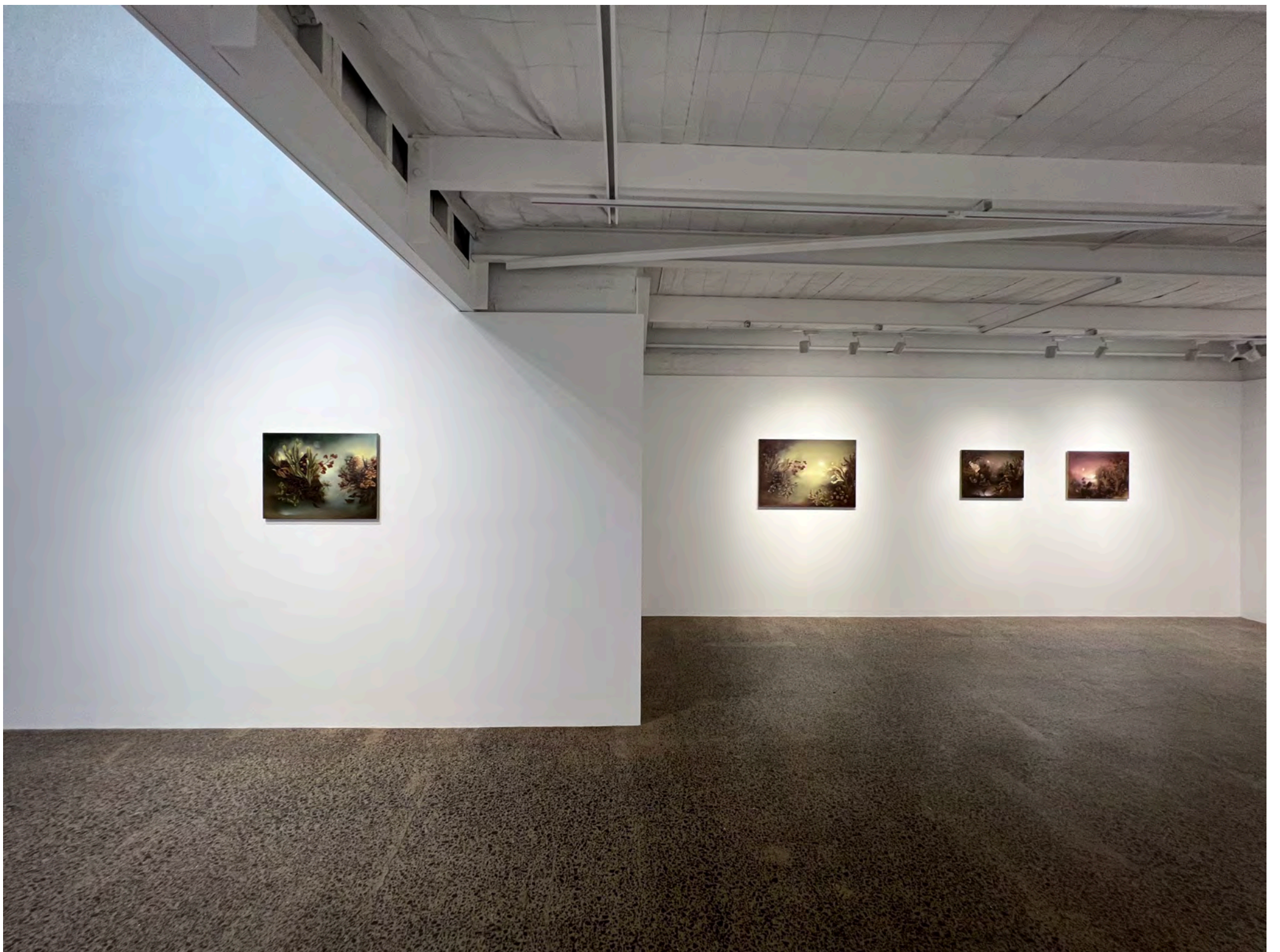
oil on linen board

25 x 30 cm

\$3,900



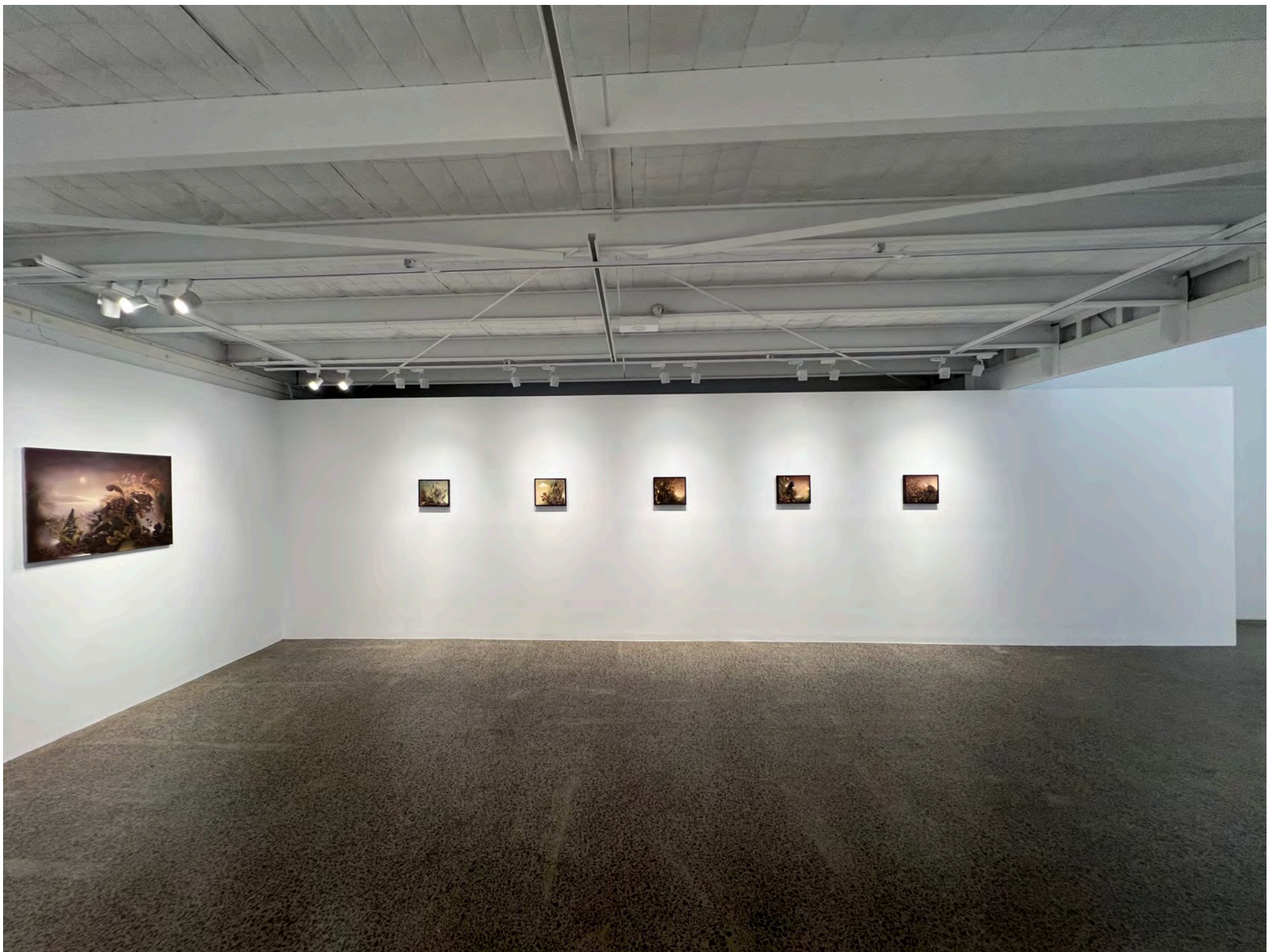
















Melbourne based **Judith Van Heeren** has a Diploma in Fine Arts (Painting), Claremont School of Arts, Perth (1981) and a Grad. Dip. in Fine Arts (Painting), Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne (1989). She has held solo exhibitions since 1982 in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, including ACCA @ Mirka at Tolarno Hotel (2008).

Judith has been included in group exhibitions throughout Australia since 1984, at institutions including the National Gallery of Victoria, University of Western Australia, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Linden New Art, Noosa Regional Gallery, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, Bathurst Regional Gallery, Lismore Regional Gallery, Gippsland Art Gallery and Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery. She has been a finalist in the Len Fox Art Prize at Castlemaine Art Gallery (2024, 2022, 2019), the Bayside Art Prize (2019), the Arthur Guy Memorial Prize at Bendigo Art Gallery (2019) and the Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize (2019); and has undertaken residencies Fremantle Arts Centre (2023 and 2018) and the Cite International Des Arts, Paris (2010).

Judith's work is held in the collections of the National Gallery of Victoria, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Artbank and significant regional, corporate and tertiary collections.

## JUDITH VAN HEEREN

### EDUCATION

- 1989      Grad. Dip. in Fine Arts (Painting), Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne  
1981      Diploma in Fine Arts (Painting), Claremont School of Arts, Perth

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2026      *Moon Obscure*, Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne  
2023      *New paintings*, Murray White Room, Melbourne  
2020      *Numinous*, Murray White Room, Melbourne  
2018      *Sea garden*, Murray White Room, Melbourne  
2017      *Sea garden*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney  
2016      Murray White Room, Melbourne  
2013      Murray White Room, Melbourne  
2011      Murray White Room, Melbourne  
2009      Murray White Room, Melbourne  
2008      Judith Van Heeren, ACCA @ Mirka at Tolarno Hotel, Melbourne  
2007      Murray White Room, Melbourne  
2005      *Aviary*, Brian Moore Gallery, Sydney  
2003      Brian Moore Gallery, Sydney  
2002      45 Downstairs, Melbourne  
2001      Brian Moore Gallery, Sydney  
1999      Crawford Gallery, Sydney  
1994      Temple Gallery, Melbourne  
1992      Gore Street Gallery, Melbourne  
1990      *Mirrors to Ourselves*, Linden Gallery, Melbourne  
1985      Gallerie Dusseldorf, Perth  
1982      FTI, Fremantle

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026      *Groundswell*, Castlemaine Art Museum  
2024      *Len Fox Painting Award*, Castlemaine Art Museum

- 2023 *Botanical Spells*, Chapman and Bailey
- 2022 *Celebrating Ellis Rowan*, Australia Club  
*Len Fox Painting Award*, Castlemaine Art Museum  
*Geelong Contemporary Art Prize*, Geelong Art Gallery  
*John Lesley Art Prize*, Gippsland Gallery
- 2021 *Quarantine Art Fair*, Point Nepean, Portsea
- 2019 *Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize*, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo  
*Sublime Sea*, Mornington Peninsula Regional Art Gallery, Mornington  
*Len Fox Painting Award*, Castlemaine Art Museum, Victoria  
*Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize 2019*, Ravenswood, New South Wales  
*Bayside Acquisitive Art Prize 2019*, Bayside Arts & Cultural Centre, Brighton, Victoria
- 2015 *Spring 1883*, The Establishment Hotel, Sydney
- 2014 *Geelong Contemporary Art Prize exhibition*, Geelong Art Gallery, Victoria
- 2013 *Murray White Room*, Sydney Contemporary 2013  
*Murray White Room*, Art Basel Hong Kong 2013
- 2012 *Animal Kingdom*, Gippsland Art Gallery, Victoria
- 2011 *The New Arcadia*, Lismore Regional Gallery, NSW  
*PREVIEW 11*, Murray White Room, Melbourne
- 2010 *On this island, meeting and parting*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre;  
Bathurst Regional Gallery, and travelling
- 2009 *GROUP 02*, Murray White Room, Melbourne
- 2007 *PREVIEW 07*, Murray White Room, Melbourne
- 2006 *Launch*, Harrison Galleries, Sydney
- 2005 *Nature by Proxy*, Brian Moore Gallery, Sydney
- 2002 *Heat*, Noosa Regional Gallery, Noosa
- 1997 *Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Art*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 1996 *Studio Past and Present*, Linden Gallery, Melbourne
- 1994 *Children, Artists and Endangered Animals*, Linden Gallery, Melbourne
- 1992 *Postcard Exhibition*, Linden Gallery, Melbourne  
*Food in Art*, Tolarno, Melbourne
- 1989 *2 x 7*, VCA Postgraduate Exhibition, Ian Potter Gallery, Melbourne
- 1988 *St Kilda One Acquisition Exhibition*, Linden Gallery, Melbourne

- 1987 *Among the Souvenirs*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
- 1986 *Living Rooms*, Praxis Gallery, Fremantle  
*Vestiges*, Praxis Gallery, Fremantle
- 1985 *Eromance Show*, Praxis Gallery, Fremantle  
*Ninth Anniversary Exhibition*, Gallerie Dusseldorf, Perth
- 1984 *New Graphics Show*, Nolan Room, University of Western Australia

### GRANTS, AWARDS & COMMISSIONS

- 2024 *Len Fox Painting Award*, Castlemaine Art Gallery (finalist)
- 2022 *Len Fox Painting Award*, Castlemaine Art Gallery (finalist)  
*Geelong Contemporary Art Prize*, Geelong Art Gallery (finalist)  
*John Lesley Art Prize*, Gippsland Gallery (finalist)
- 2019 *Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize*, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo (finalist)  
*Len Fox Painting Award*, Castlemaine Art Museum, Victoria (finalist)  
*Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize 2019*, Ravenswood, New South Wales (finalist)  
*Bayside Acquisitive Art Prize 2019*, Bayside Arts & Cultural Centre, Brighton, Victoria (finalist)
- 2014 *Geelong Contemporary Art Prize exhibition*, Geelong Art Gallery, Victoria (finalist)
- 1993 Painting for Melbourne Theatre Company production of *M. Butterfly*, Melbourne
- 1992 Poster for St Kilda Festival, Melbourne
- 1989 *Theodore Urbach Award*, Victorian College of the Arts
- 1987 Banner for Australian Bicentenary, Perth
- 1985 Poster for *Eromance* show, Fremantle
- 1983 Poster for Spare Parts Theatre Company, Fremantle  
Supreme Art Project, Perth City Council, Supreme Court Gardens, Perth

### RESIDENCIES

- 2010 Cite International Des Arts Paris
- 2018 Fremantle Arts Centre, Artist In Residence
- 2023 Fremantle Arts Center, Artist in Residence

### COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Victoria

Art Gallery of Western Australia  
City of Stonnington  
City of Port Phillip Collection  
Australian Catholic University  
Holmes à Court Collection  
Artbank  
RACV Collection

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- 2026 Art Guide Australia 'Preview: Judith van Heeren – Moon Obscured' March/April 2026
- 2018 *Sea Garden*, *The Australian*, April 4, 2018
- 2013 Megan Backhouse, *The natural order of things*, *The Age*, April 13, 2013  
Dan Rule, *Judith Van Heeren's Imagined Menagerie*, *Broadsheet*, April 19, 2013
- 2009 Paul Flynn, *On this island, meeting and parting*, *Artist Profile*, Issue 09, 2009  
ABC TV, Sunday Arts program, screened Sunday 8 November 2009
- 2007 *Must See*, *Artist Profile*, Spring 2007  
Jarrod Rawlins, *Space Invaders*, *Flash Art International*, March-April 2007  
Sam Leach, *Opinion: Judith Van Heeren*, *artinfo.com.au*  
Penny Webb, *Right Here, Right Now, Sightlines*, *The Age*, 9 February 2007
- 2006 N. Peters, *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*, University of WA Press
- 2003 Patricia Anderson, *Weekend Australian*, September 2003
- 1994 Robert Nelson, *The Age*, 13 November, Melbourne
- 1986 David McNeil, *Praxis M*, No. 13, Winter, Perth  
David Watt, *Praxis M*, No. 12, Autumn, Perth
- 1985 David Watt, *Praxis M*, No. 10, Autumn, Perth  
David Bromfield, *Art Network*, Spring 1985
- 1984 Murray Gleeson, *West Australian*, Perth
- 1983 Julian Goddard, *Sunday Independent*, Perth
- 1982 *Subiaco Post*, Perth