

***Apophenie Junk Pile* — Catalogue Essay**

Bonnie-Jean Whitlock

Red Gallery, Fitzroy North, June 18 - July 4

Bonnie's paintings do not begin from representation so much as sensation. Their surfaces register movement through material: pigment absorbed into linen, wax resisting ink, and salt redistributing colour into unpredictable formations. In conversation, Bonnie described her process as collaborative with materials — an ongoing negotiation between intention and response in which materials redirect gestures and introduce moments of resistance, delay, and transformation. Linen remains loosely stretched and responsive, while surfaces are repeatedly reworked by hand. Through these processes, the paintings resist becoming fixed images and instead retain evidence of their own making.

Underlying this material process is a sustained engagement with the body — not as something directly depicted but as something distributed across surfaces. During her Masters of Fine Art, Bonnie developed a body mapping process that involved lying across fabric and tracing the shape of her body to capture bodily experience into material form. Different colours, shapes and lines corresponded to sensations, emotional states, and moments of bodily awareness. Fabric became less a support than a site of registration: a surface capable of holding memory, touch, and time.

That relationship continues through the current work. Brushstrokes remain visible and raw; pigment stains seep through the reverse of the linen, embedding themselves into the material rather than resting on top of it. Looking at the back of the paintings becomes almost as revealing as viewing the front. The works do not conceal their process — they expose accumulation, absorption, and change.

There is a geological quality to this approach. Bonnie spoke about rocks, lichen, layering, and the experience of remaining steady within a shifting world. Her paintings move in a similar way: building slowly through deposits of gesture and material interaction. Feelings emerge indirectly, often through repetition and extended duration rather than immediate expression.

What emerges is a practice grounded in tactility and embodied attention. These works do not present a sanitised or detached image of experience; instead they ask what painting can hold. Sensation becomes sedimented into surfaces. Touch remains visible. The work becomes less an image than a record — of contact, resistance, and the ongoing conversation between body and material.

Within the context of *Apophenie Junk Pile*, these paintings can be understood as part of a process of accumulation and reworking where materials and gestures are continually reconnected, reinterpreted and held in relation. Meaning emerges through these unstable linkages — through the same logic of apophenia that draws connections across fragments, residues and dispersed sensations.

Written by Scarlet Lili Thomas of LUMINOSA Arts Scene.