

One of Australia's foremost abstract painters, Aida Tomescu's works combine a vital physical presence with a powerful handling of scale. Throughout her career spanning over 40 years, she has developed and enlarged the themes and content of her work to arrive at 'living structures', forming from within.

The title of this exhibition is a quotation from a poem by Paul Celan, underlining the important connection Tomescu sees between the cadence and structure of language and painting. Her works have long incorporated literary references, and build their rhythm during the journey of their making. The paintings are constructed through a rigorous process of building and veiling with films of pigment, scraping back, and excavating the surface of the canvas. Gradually the work turns to a particular angle, a clarity of direction. The process becomes progressively more and more complex, as the painting travels the distance to its unity and resolution.

Form evolves through an intricate chain of transitions. The painting grows from the original intentions and conception and acquires a complex life of its own. It always leads 'to somewhere new, a unity altogether more stimulating.'

'In Tomescu's mature paintings the sheer physicality of paint, its density and the archaeology of the layers, its application and movement across the surface, is inseparable from the content. The tenor of the work is guided by its colouration and by its internal rhythms, like the variations and tonalities in music.'

Deborah Hart, Senior Curator, National Gallery of Australia



With the crimson word II, 2023
Oil on Belgian linen
200 x 153 cm
78 3/4 x 60 1/4 in



'Drawing comes from the necessity to keep paintings in the midst of discovery, to find and retain a purer voice in the course of the work; let the painting whistle in an unexpected tune.'

Aida Tomescu

One of the best painters at work in Australia today, Aida Tomescu has revived a full-throated painterly abstraction, where colour and gesture flow through the work...she knits over and under surfaces in which the light and colour seem to be pulsing from within the work, not just laid on top. You feel her presence and her sensibility, moment to moment on the surface, in the painting.' - Strange Country: Why Australian Painting Matters
Patrick McCaughey, Art Historian, Previous Director of National Gallery of Victoria and the Yale Center for British Art.



With the crimson word I, 2023 Oil on Belgian linen 206 x 320 cm | 81 1/8 x 126 ir









The ear in the river and the prayer in the stone, 2022 Oil on Belgian linen 206 x 480 cm 81 1/8 x 189 in



'The structure I'm after develops gradually, as if it is off in the distance... the painting travels to become itself, and find its identity. When the work reaches resolution, many complex things are going on at once. As I aim for a clarity of direction and for an architecture to emerge, a new organic structure begins inhabiting the work, slowly perceptible, more precarious, fragile a structure that is not final, never static. It keeps building from the connections and interdependencies between the characters in the painting, from the correspondence between the layers and all the levels of transitions... down to the last drip and splatter, It holds within it possibilities for renewal.'

Aida Tomescu



'The content of the work, just like the structure, emerges through the building of the painting. It is an encounter with a presence that feels definite, precise, yet open; a quality I can never fully explain, do not recognise, yet I know it at first glance.'

Aida Tomescu





'Ultimately what gives me the painting is not the texture, it is the lack of it. I am simultaneously working with passages that are excessively full and excessively empty and with the complex spaces inbetween. To understand material in my work is to understand it in accord - in synchronicity with the open passages in the painting.'	
Aida Tomescu	

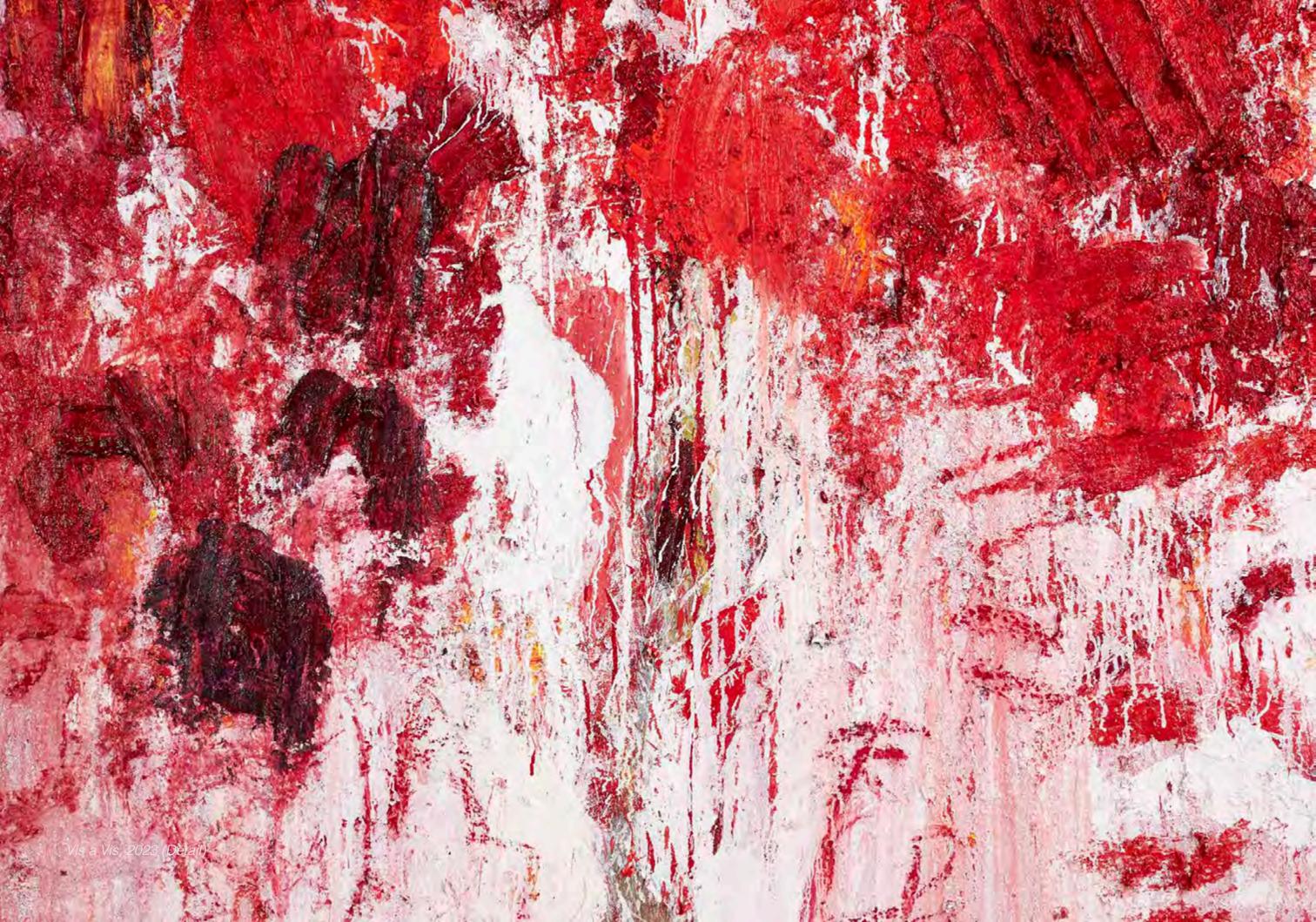


Into a carpet made of water I & II, 2018 Oil on wood panel 60 x 40 cm | 23 5/8 x 15 3/4 in (Each panel)



'Ultimately what Tomescu's art has shown us is that it can never be pinned down to one thing, that it is about open-ended associations, moving between the tangible and the intangible. It is perhaps in giving up the need for tangible certainties in favour of more subtle intimations that this fluid state of becoming is revealed.'

Deborah Hart, Senior Curator, National Gallery of Australia



AIDA TOMESCU

Born in Bucharest, Romania in 1955, Aida Tomescu has been living and working in Sydney, Australia since 1980. Tomescu studied at the Institute of Arts, Bucharest, was awarded a Diploma of Visual Arts in 1977, and shortly after her arrival to Australia completed a postgraduate degree at the City Art Institute in 1983. Tomescu has exhibited regularly since 1978 with over forty solo shows to date, and has participated in national and international exhibitions and events including Know My Name, (2020-22), National Gallery of Australia; Abstraction, National Gallery of Australia touring exhibition, (2017-2018); The Mind's Eye, Art Gallery of South Australia, (2013); Out of Australia: Prints and Drawings, The British Museum, London, (2011); and Contemporary Encounters, Ian Potter Centre: National Gallery of Victoria, (2010). In 2009, a major survey exhibition of Tomescu's works was held at the Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra. Tomescu is represented in all major art museums in Australia and in international collections including the National Gallery of Australia; the National Gallery of Victoria; the Art Gallery of New South Wales; the Art Gallery of South Australia; Queensland Art Gallery; Heide Museum of Modern Art; Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand; and the British Museum, London, UK. Tomescu is the recipitent of many prestigious art prizes including 1996 Sulman Prize; the 2001 Wynne Prize; and the Dobell Prize for Drawing, awarded by the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2003

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

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2022 The ear in the river and the prayer in the stone, FOXJENSEN, Sydney

Folded in Three, Flowers Gallery, Art Basel Hong Kong

2021 Unfolding Presence, survey exhibition, Orange Regional Gallery, Orange NSW Into a Carpet made of Water, Flowers Gallery, Hong Kong

A Long Line of Sand, FOXJENSEN, Sydney

- 2020 The Heart was a Place Made Fast, FOXJENSEN McCRORY, Auckland
- 2019 The Open Wounds of White Clouds, FOXJENSEN, Sydney
- 2017 Under the Iron of the Moon, FOXJENSEN, Sydney
- 2015 Eyes in the Heat, Sullivan + Strumpf, Sydney, Australia
- 2014 Folded in White, Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide
- 2013 Aida Tomescu, Karen Woodbury Gallery, Melbourne
- 2012 Milky Way, Melbourne Art Fair, Melbourne, Australia
- 2010 Eden Karen Woodbury Gallery Melbourne: Liverpool Street Gallery Sydney
- 2009 Paintings and Drawings, Australian National University, Canberra

Tuckson/Tomescu, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney

- 2007 Campi Flegrei Liverpool Street Gallery Sydney
- 2006 Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
- 2004 Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney

Martin Brown Fine Art at the Yellow House, Sydney Melbourne Art Fair, Martin Browne Fine Art, Melbourne

- 2003 Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
- 2002 Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney
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- 1999 Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
- 1997 Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
- 1995 Coventry Gallery Sydney
- 1994 Christine Abrahams Gallerv. Melbourne
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Deutscher Brunswick Street, Melbourne

- 1989 Coventry Gallery, Sydnev
- 1987 Reconnaissance Gallery, Melbourne Coventry Gallery, Sydney

Ben Grady Gallery, Canberra

- 1986 Design Centre, Los Angeles, United States 1985 Coventry Gallery, Sydney
- 1981 Holdsworth Gallery, Sydney
- 1979 Cenaclu Gallery, Bucharest.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS



Sewn onto stones in the sky, 2019 displaying at Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2022-23, The Sydney Modern opening

^{*}All photography by Jenni Carter & Felix Wong

