

# Wes Fieldhouse In You the Earth

8 - 29 September 2018



*Mount Manaia Study* (2018) oil on canvas 760 x 1015mm



*Broken Bush 2* (2018) oil & acrylic on canvas 760 x 1015mm [front cover]



*Broken Bush (Grisaille – Green)* (2018) oil on canvas 760 x 1015mm

Pablo Neruda, to whom the title of this exhibition refers, has been read as a great Modernista love poet and, as a kind of patriarchal misogynist. His poem, *In You The Earth*, expresses his physical size in comparison to a woman's to convey a kind of power relationship: *Little rose,*

*roselet, at times,  
tiny and naked,  
it seems  
as though you would fit  
in one of my hands,  
as though I'll clasp you like this and carry you to my mouth ...*

This tender ode is replete with another less obvious undertone. Neruda wrote in a different time and context as did New Zealand's 19th and 20th century amateur and regionalist landscape artists. Their paintings might be viewed as equally tender while as suspiciously underscored as Neruda's poems. They are less accurate records of an environment and more the projections of a peculiarly European view of the landscape; often nostalgic and equally as often about possession and control. There is a cultural tendency to inscribe land as either feminine deity (Mother Earth) or as innate substance (Earth) – something to be both worshiped while being broken, cultivated and fertilized. Both tendencies belie the inherent contradictions that exist between romances of tenderness and care and the realities of possession and control.

*... but  
suddenly  
my feet touch your feet and my mouth your lips:  
you have grown,  
your shoulders rise like two hills,  
your breasts wander over my breast,  
my arm scarcely manages to encircle the thin  
new-moon line of your waist:  
in love you loosened yourself like sea water:  
I can scarcely measure the sky's most spacious eyes  
and I lean down to your mouth to kiss the earth.  
- Pablo Neruda*



The works in this exhibition, while largely driven by paint and process, are, in some ways, also a reflection on all of this – on our environmental uses and abuses. As for the genre, landscape painting has long been neglected for more contemporary modes. To make a landscape painting in the 21st century seems to be an almost quaint and useless endeavor. Yet, at a time when our environments are increasingly threatened, making space to revisit the genre seemed worthwhile. - *Wes Fieldhouse.*

*Study I* (2018) oil on board 320 x 390mm



*Inlet Study* (2018) oil on canvas 760 x 1015mm



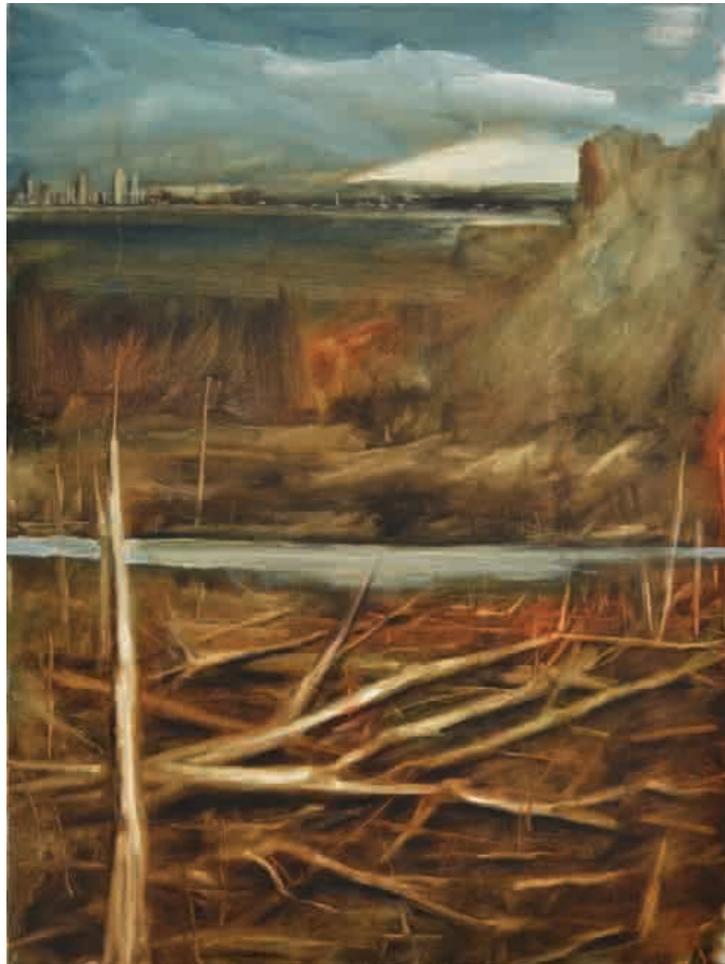
*Bluff* (2018) oil on canvas 760 x 1015mm



*Harbour Study 1* (2018) oil & acrylic on canvas 1015 x 1520mm



*Broken River* (2018) oil on canvas 1015 x 1520mm



*Broken Bush 4* (2018) oil & acrylic on canvas 1015 x 760mm



*Pewhairangi Study I* (2017) oil on canvas 1230 x 1520mm



*Broken Bush 1 (2018) oil on canvas 500 x 500mm*