

QUEEN VICTORIA ART GALLERY

Large Print Guide

TAO SUBLIME: THE ART OF TONY SMIBERT



City of
LAUNCESTON

Tao Sublime

Tao Sublime is the creative expression of artist Tony Smibert, who has developed a signature voice and rich emotional language. Smibert takes us on a journey to places both seen and unseen, from the recognisable dramatic locations of Tasmania, America and Wales, to the unique landscapes that emerge during the process of painting.

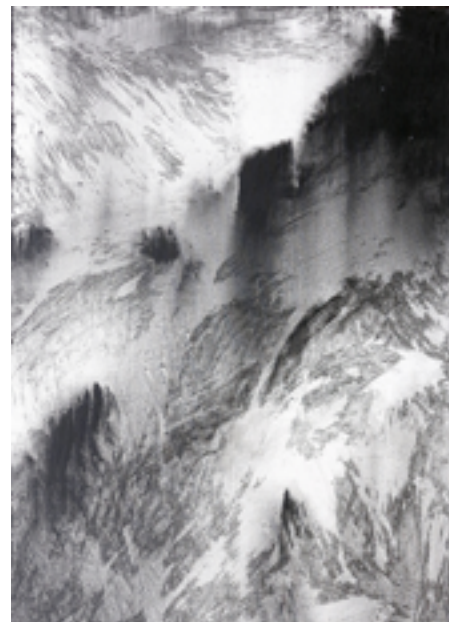
Taoism is an ancient Chinese philosophy emphasising the harmony of all things, while the sublime is the historical Western notion of the vast power of nature. Smibert evokes

this sense of spiritual connection, allowing us to be drawn into locations of contemplation or be lost in the awe and monumental power of the sublime landscape.

From haunting dark mountain forms to delicate light tonal expressions, *Tao Sublime* shows an artist connected to his practice through honed skills and energetic experimentation. For Smibert, the excitement lies in an evolution from blank canvas to finished work.

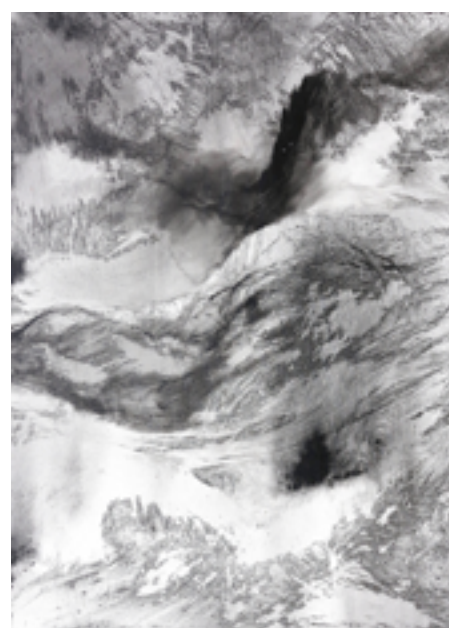
Dolbadarn Castle 2019

acrylic on canvas



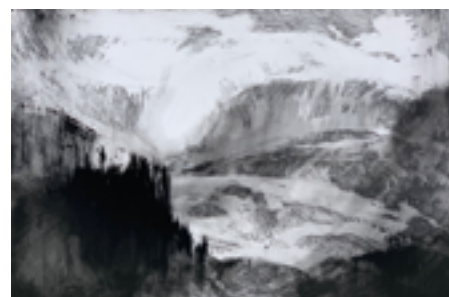
Coastal Storm 2019

acrylic on canvas



Tao Sublime 9 2020

acrylic on canvas



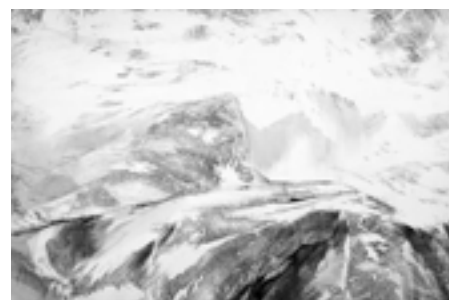
Tao Sublime 5 2019

acrylic on canvas



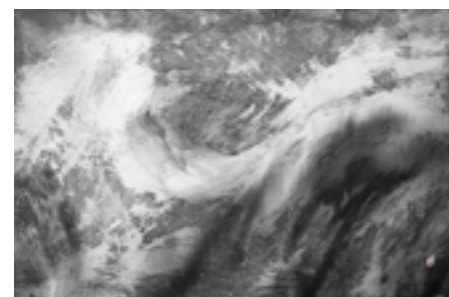
Deep Winter 2021

acrylic on canvas



The Great Wave 2017

acrylic on canvas



The Artist

Tony Smibert is a highly regarded painter specialising in acrylic wash and watercolour. His work distils influences from the tradition of the golden age of English watercolour and Asian painting techniques.

Smibert studied art at the National Gallery School in Melbourne under John Brack, who guided students through a rigorous foundation study of art practice.

The techniques of master watercolourist Joseph Turner and of American abstract painters such

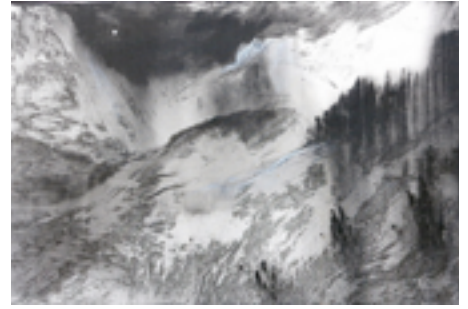
as Jackson Pollock have become pivotal to his practice.

Tao Sublime is the product of a lifetime of study as a result of an apprenticeship in art and martial art.

Tao Sublime

Moonrise 2020

acrylic on canvas



18th Century Series

1-15 2018

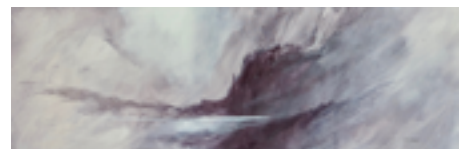
watercolour on paper



Mountain study:

Play of Light 2 2018

acrylic on canvas



Storm Capriccio 2014

acrylic on canvas



Mountain Fortress 2017

acrylic on canvas



The Guardian 2021

acrylic on canvas



Mountain, Rock, Bird

Three elements that simultaneously reflect ancient places and fleeting moments appear in many of Smibert's works.

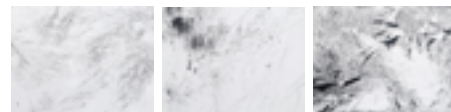
Mountains surrounded by mists and clouds symbolise the opposites of life and death. Human life is represented by the rocks and trees looking up to heaven, hovering between life and death. The fleeting moments in nature which will never return are represented by a wheeling bird.

Earth and sky interact over billions of years, but our brief experience of the landscape is as fleeting as the momentary passage of a bird.

Water Series

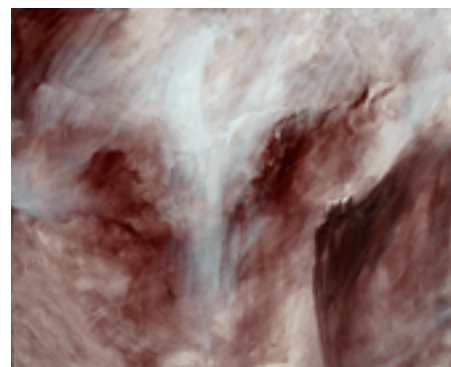
Triptych 2021

acrylic on canvas



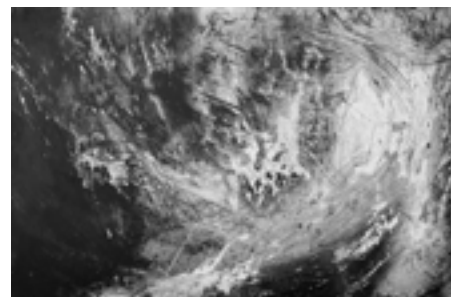
Storm in the Mountains: Play of Light 2014

acrylic on canvas



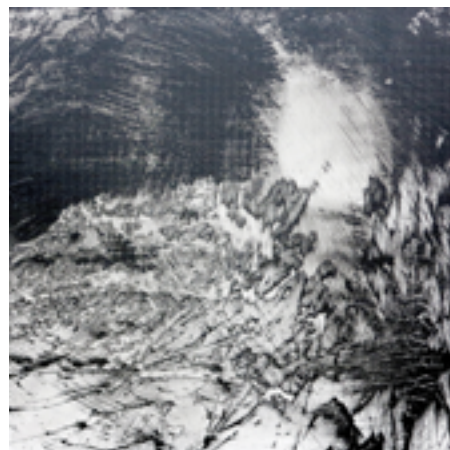
Homage to Turner's Snow Storm at Sea 2016

acrylic on canvas



Black Square Reduction 2015

acrylic on canvas



Action and Energy

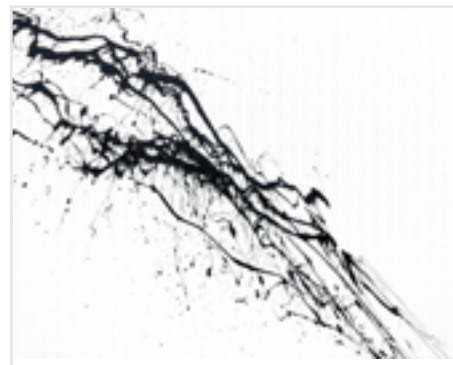
Smibert's works are a record of the unseen movement and action of mark-making merging with the energy of his body.

My method involves lots of tools and brushes, a great deal of water, big movements and using the natural marks that paint itself makes. The finished work is created by me and the paint, with success or disaster hanging on the moment...

Smibert's engagement in the Japanese martial art of Aikido also profoundly affects the way that energy and movement are reflected in these large acrylic works.

Ridgelines 2014

acrylic on canvas



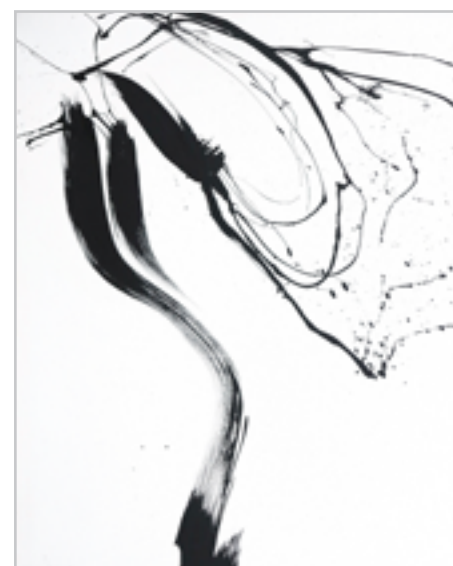
Energy 2 2014

acrylic on canvas



Flying White 2014

acrylic on canvas



Smibert and Turner

The life and painting methods of the great romantic master Joseph Mallord William Turner have had an enormous influence on Tony Smibert's creative practice. *Tao Sublime* takes inspiration from Turner's special ability to bring his canvasses to life.

Like Turner, Smibert is fascinated by the different properties of paint mediums. Both artists break away from traditional notions and expectations of the potential of watercolour and acrylic.

Turner's singular vision and dedication to his craft is shared by Smibert. The harmony between the action and the mediums of painting create a conversation, or a cause and effect, between painter and paint.

All that Smibert has learned from Turner is fused with his love of Asian art and philosophy in *Tao Sublime*, to create a unique body of work.

Deep Calm 1995

watercolour heightened with body colour on paper



Approaching the Rise 2005

watercolour on paper



Moonlight *Dolbadarn Castle* Watercolour study (colour beginning) 2018

watercolour on cartridge paper



Castle Watercolour study (colour beginning) 2018

watercolour on cartridge paper



Resting Place 2020

watercolour heightened with body
colour on paper



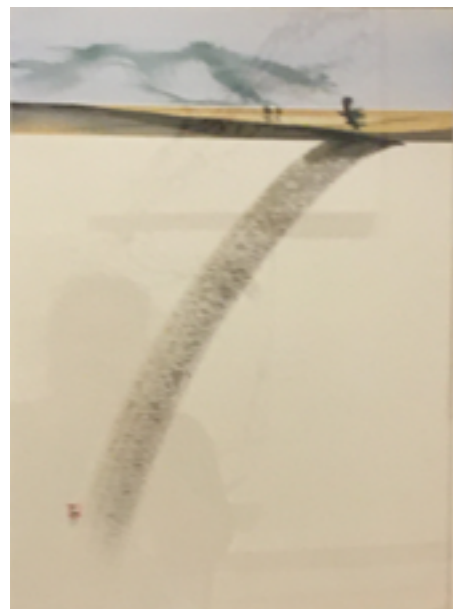
Break in the Storm 2018

watercolour on paper



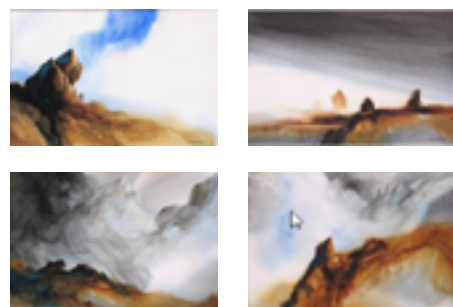
Harmony of Distance 1990

watercolour on paper



Stone Series 1, 2, 10, 11 2004

watercolour on paper



From watercolour to acrylic

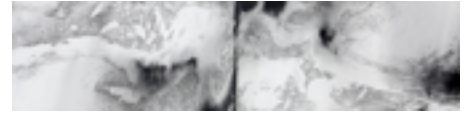
Watercolour is a difficult medium to work with. Pigments are suspended in water and applied to paper as a wet wash. Smibert's approach to watercolour aims to balance the unpredictability of the medium to create harmony.

Smibert's intense study of Turner's watercolour method, melded with the techniques of Abstract Expressionism, have profoundly affected his approach to acrylic painting.

The *Tao Sublime* works display a technically original way of working in acrylic. For Smibert, the works emerge by applying traditional methods and ways of thinking about watercolour to the newer medium of acrylic.

Torrent: The Gorge in Flood 2017

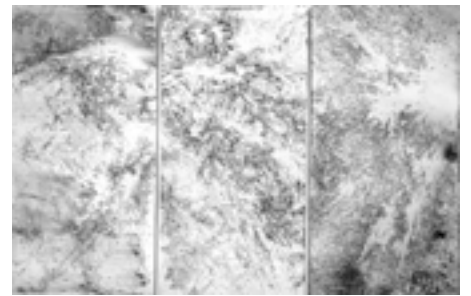
acrylic on canvas



Protolandscape

Triptych 2017

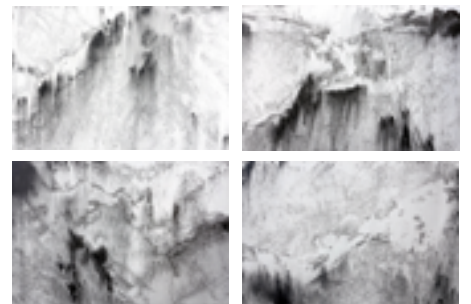
Acrylic on canvas



Tao Sublime

Polyptych 2017

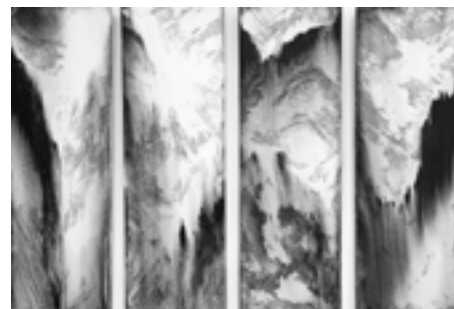
acrylic on canvas



Tao Sublime 7

Polyptych 2019

acrylic on canvas



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Photographs: Tony Smibert