

## EDGE

NEW WORK BY

**GABRIELLE  
COURTENAY**

### Exhibition details

Dates

5 - 22 December 2007

wednesday - saturday 11am-5pm

and by appointment

Curated by

**ANITA TRAVERSO**

Director

Consulting + curating

Australian contemporary art

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## EDGE

Standing alone on the edge of a line of hills facing a sunken desert basin, buffeted by harsh winds, I realise the power of abstraction to address the environmental issues of our time.

This series of work, questions our place and context within an ancient environment. Previously, my recent shows concentrated on the spiritual potential of abstract painting and the capacity of colours and minimal forms to influence the emotions and psyche.

During my months stay alone at Ochre House in 2006, Fowlers Gap in desert conditions as part of the UNSW, Iliri Artist Scholar Program run by the College of Fine Arts. Isolated in desert stone country with intense heat and fierce global winds, I encountered the process of absorption into the landscape - assisted by walking, drawing and contemplation - to be rapid.

My initial response to the sacredness of place was a series of minimal works with line and layers of oil glazes in desert colours. However over time, the lack of human contact or even music, in such harsh conditions was to have a dramatic impact, resulting in a profound shift in consciousness.

The paintings and drawings in EDGE are my response. Twisted forms from the desert are given voice on black and red grounds. The darkness hints to our past. The damage to our land started with our colonial history when forests were removed to make way for farmland and buildings. The saltbush holds our history in their roots; they nurture and are connected to the foundations of their destruction. Metallic washes flow over the works like acid rain and red lines of wind script scrawl across the work. These dramatic works follow in the vanitas\* tradition to highlight the elusive and transient nature of life.

I aim to create a dialogue between past and present, between nature, culture, politics and the primal, expressed in a dark, earthy and ultimately visceral way.

\*In the arts, vanitas is a type of symbolic still life painting commonly executed by Northern European painters in Flanders and the Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The term vanitas itself refers to the arts, learning and time. The word is Latin, meaning "emptiness" and loosely translated corresponds to the meaninglessness of earthly life and the transient nature of vanity.



**#01** Walpa #1  
oil on Belgian linen  
122 x 92 cm



#02 Windsong  
oil on Belgian linen  
122 x 92 cm



**#03** Edge  
oil, metallic powders on Belgian linen  
122 x 122 cm





**#04** Edgeling  
oil, metallic powders on Belgian linen  
183 x 92 cm



**#05** Flight  
oil, metallic powders on Belgian linen  
122 x 92 cm



**#06** And Darkness Winds Between the Footings #1  
oil, metallic powders on Belgian linen  
framed 58 x 58 cm





**#07** And Darkness Winds Between the Footings #2  
oil, metallic powders on Belgian linen  
framed 58 x 58 cm



**#08** Cassandra  
oil, metallic powders on Belgian linen  
framed 58 x 58 cm



**#09** Tales of Splendour and Dust #1  
pencil on paper  
framed 154 x 105 cm



**#10** Tales of Splendour and Dust #2  
pencil on paper  
framed 154 x 105 cm





**#11** Tales of Splendour and Dust #3  
pencil, acrylic on synthetic canvas  
141 x 92 cm





#12 Tales of Splendour and Dust #4  
pencil, acrylic on synthetic canvas  
141 x 92 cm