



Field Work

Natalie Lavelle

14 July - 2 August 2025

Soft edges, shimmering planes

With shimmering surfaces and slow material shifts, Natalie Lavelle's abstract paintings unsettle fixed ways of seeing. The works embrace us in a space of ambiguity – a dreamlike perceptual state in which feeling precedes understanding.

How might we begin to understand this state without immediate recognition? One way in is to consider where we are positioned in relation to the artwork. Are we standing back, or are we close? Each shift in distance subtly alters what we see and how we feel. Without representative imagery to anchor us, the absence of reference can instead be an invitation to look more attentively. There is an element of delight with being with Lavelle's works. A reciprocity between how the works were made through movement and intuition, and how they are received. As we spend time with them, we notice variations in line and colour. We observe the delicate intimacies of the initial beginnings, and the strong deliberate repetition of form.

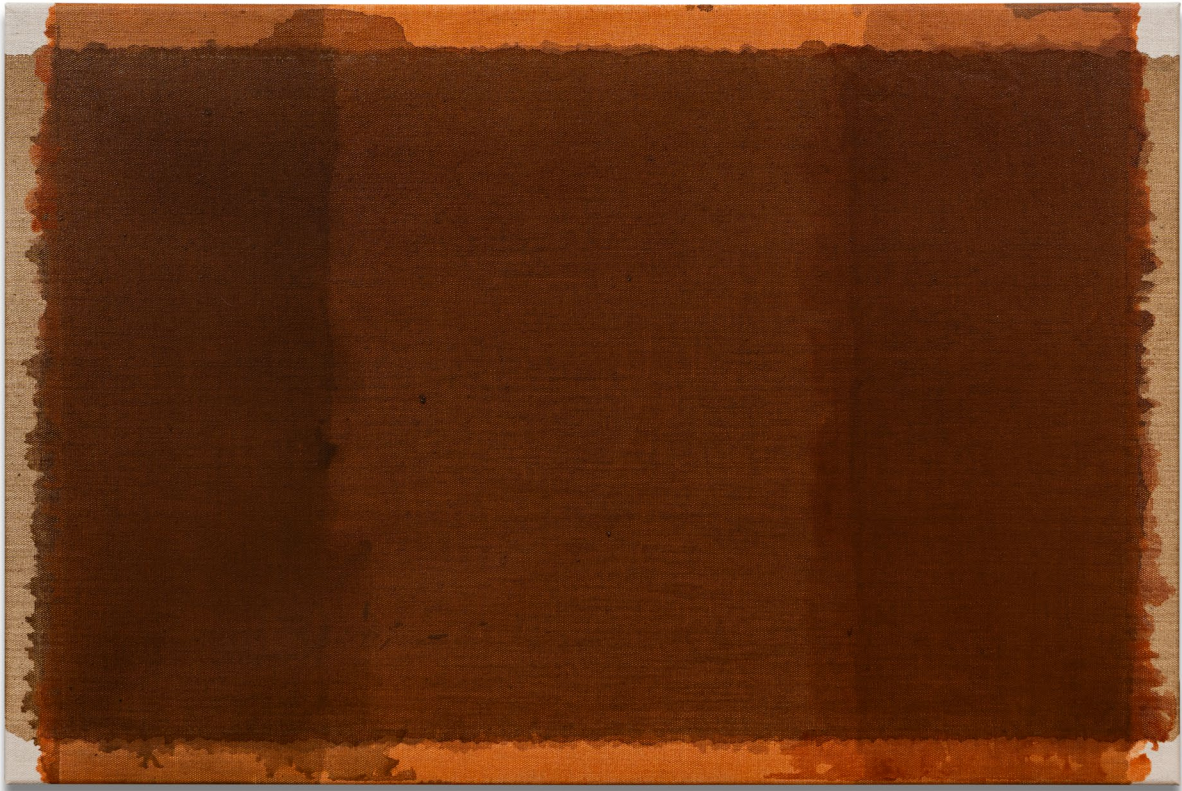
We find ourselves in relation to works that offers multiple, unfixed ways of seeing. There are no easy answers, and that openness deepens our connection.

How does our body navigate through the works? As we meet the works, are we leaning, searching, kneeling, peering? However we encounter them, Lavelle's paintings provoke shifts in the physical, perceptual, and emotional.

In the brown works, layers of sienna and warm earth tones evoke sediment and ground. The silver paintings on linen introduce optical tension, with metallic surfaces that reflect and disrupt. The stitched silver works feature thread looping in and out, evoking the intimacy of skin, both tactile and fragile.

These paintings unfold as fields rather than images. Drawing from colour field painting, Lavelle positions the field as terrain, at once immersive, unstable, and responsive. Lavelle's work aligns with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's thinking on embodied perception, and with post-minimalist and feminist practices that foreground touch, process, and instability. Lavelle continues the legacy of abstract painting by women identifying artists in *The Field Revisited* (NGV, 2018), where sensuality of material, enjoyment, and oneness with material was pertinent to processes of abstraction.

Isabella Baker
Curator and Writer



*Untitled (Iron Oxide, Mars Yellow, Raw Sienna and Burnt Umber), 2025,
acrylic on Italian linen, 51 cm x 76.5cm.*



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