

**Slikar u elementu**  
*A Painter in His Element*

Pejzažno – atmosferski ciklus Zlatana Vrklijana  
*Zlatan Vrkljan's Cycle of Atmospheric Landscapes*



Gotovo dva desetljeća nakon nastanka iznimno uspjele serije slika, Zlatan Vrkljan odlučuje se pokazati ih kao cjelinu u mjestu svojega djelovanja i pred publikom koja je pratila ili prati njegovu naizgled krivudavu, a zapravo rijetko koherentnu putanju. Nije on ni dosad skrivao tu zanimljivu i značajnu dionicu svojega rada, ali ju je izložio samo jedanput, i to izvan bilo kojega velikog središta - u Kostanjevici na Krki (*Galerija Božidar Jakac*, 1996.). Malo nakon te izložbe uslijedile su slikarove nove cjeline, novi ciklusi, novi izazovi (od *Poziva na večeru*, preko *Potpisa sv. Luke*, pa do *Moto motiva* i *Stroja za pomoć slikaru u krizi*) tako da je recentnijim radovima zapravo stavio u pozadinu tekovine predhodećih iskustava.

Ciklus slika predstavljen na ovoj izložbi potječe uglavnom iz 1996. godine. S obzirom na to da je Zlatan Vrkljan počeo izlagati 1978., gledajući iz današnje perspektive, tada ga zatječemo upravo na sredini dosadašnjega razvojnog puta (osamnaest ga je godina dijelilo od oficijelnog starta, a osamnaest je godina proteklo od nastanka serije o kojoj govorimo). Ali ta središnjost nije isključivo kronološka, ona je i motivska i morfološka; u ciklusu pred nama dodiruju se i stječu figurativne i apstraktne sastavnice Vrkljanova opusa. Bolje kazano, u svakom kadru slikar polazi od vrlo određene vizualne atrakcije, konkretnoga predmetnog poticaja, da bi u analizi i razradi sredstvima svojega izraza ostvario autonomnu, specifičnu plastičku napetost linearnih i kromatskih elemenata. S vrlo malo pretjerivanja smijemo zaključiti kako je, unatoč učestalom racionalno-mentalnom polazištu i čak programatičnosti nekih radnih dionica, Zlatan Vrkljan trajno obuzet rasponima mimezisa i fizisa oslikane površine.

Ciklus o kojemu je riječ usudujem se definirati žanrovski, okarakterizirati ga kao "pejzažno-atmosferski". Koristim se podatkom da je najveći broj radova nastao izravno u krajoliku, pred motivom, ili da je barem izveden prema neposredno doživljenim malim zabilježkama. Zlorabim činjenicu naslovljavanja pojedinih djela koje neosporno upućuje na njihovo izvorište u prirodnom ambijentu ili pak u prirodnom elementu (*Kuti*, s jedne strane, te *Kiša* i *Grom*, s druge). Dakle, pobude su evidentno pejzažne i atmosferske, samo što ishod nije impresionistički ili neoromantičarski, sutonjački bolećiv, nego konstruktivno opor i strukturalno ulančan.

Uzmimo na primjer sliku *Kuti*. U središnjem dijelu naslućujemo obrise nečega poput stabla, debla i krošnje, ali ponajprije ćemo slijediti homogenu fakturu usustavljenih poteza, nanizanih faseta gustoga tamnog

zelenila i smečkastih komplemenata. Na slici *Noćna kiša* središnju okomicu drži raspršena bijela svjetlost što se slijeva s izvora uz gornji rub, no bitniji je ritam oštih, odsječenih vertikalnih tokova nakupljenih (nakapljenih) silnica. Slika *Grom* resko je podijeljena isprekidanim bijelim crtama, pravim pukotinama u tkivu sivkaste površine, koja se od gornjega mračnog dijela postupno rasvjetljuje prema donjoj zoni, na samome dnu obasjanoj vrtložnim mrljama bjelila (intenzivnog plamsanja što zrači na cjelinu). Iako su potezi izlomljenih crta doista munjoliki, asocijativno bliski izgledu prirodnog fenomena, ta je slika manje ilustracija događaja u atmosferi, a više dramatičan dijalog tame i svjetlosti, međusobno propitivanje linearnih prodora i materičkih pasusa.

Na slici *Vatra* naizgled je na djelu poentilistička faktura, no bez ljeskanja i bliještanja tipičnoga za simbolističke ugođaje. Zapravo, mrlje i potezi kao da dokazuju korpuskularnu narav svjetlosti, a time i tvorni karakter slikarova otiska. *Pritisak* je još pročišćeniji i reduciraniji u slojevima i planovima tonskog razrjeđivanja i zgušnjavanja odabrane jedinstvene mukle boje, a *Kiša* je apogej monokromatske koherencije, sva u istančanim preljevima zagasitijih i otvorenijih usporednica.

Ciklus je također obilježen identičnošću tehničkih premisa (enkaustike na platnu) i istošću formata (195 x 145 cm), a zaokružen je i numeričkom potpunosti (devet radova). Svojevrsan „zaglavni kamen“ ili motivsko-stilističku jezgru cjeline nalazimo u djelu *Slikar*, u kojemu se lako evidentiraju egzogeni (teksturno-kaligrafski) faktori. U geometrijskom središtu kadra razabiremo siluetu ljudskog lika u crvenom haljetku pred platnom napetim na štafelaju, prema kojemu lik pruža ruku što ostavlja trag. Lik je sa svih strana okružen gustišem (raslinjem), sugeriranim čvrstim nanosom pigmenta, a prodor svjetlosti dolazi samo u odrazima puteljka s donje strane. Uronjenost u duboki mrak s palucanjem oko središnjeg lika i stalka svjedoče živost reakcija i opravdanost stvaralačkog čina.

Poprativši prvo izlaganje ovoga ciklusa 1906. godine, kritičar Vladimir Maleković naslovio je predgovor *Slikar u krajoliku*. Složit ću se, naravno, da je Zlatan Vrkljan odlazio u pejzaž i da je fiksirao svoj odnos prema nekim pojavnostima u prirodi i u konkretnom okolišu. Ali još mi se primjerenijim čini govoriti o *Slikaru u elementu*, o slikaru u žestokom zagrljaju sa silama „nemjerljivim“, o slikaru s ambicijom kaptiranja bitnih svojstava četiriju mitskih počela: vatre i vode, zraka i zemlje, o slikaru koji svoj položaj u svijetu odmjerava koordinatama svjetlosti i sjene, toka i stajanja, postojanja i ništenja. Jednom riječju, slikar u svom elementu vlastitim sredstvima traži i nalazi razloge neravnodušnog odnosa s vidljivim i nevidljivim.

– Tonko Maroević

Almost two decades after the making of an extremely successful series of paintings, Zlatan Vrkljan decided to display them in entirety in the place of his activity and before the audience who has been following his seemingly sinuous but in fact uncommonly coherent path. He has kept this interesting and significant part of his work hidden, but he exhibited it only once, away from large centres, in Kostanjevac na Krki (*Božidar Jakac Gallery, 1996*).

Shortly after this exhibition, new series, new cycles, new challenges ensued (from *Dinner Invitation* and *St. Luke's Signature* to *Motif's Motto* and *Machine for Helping a Painter in Crisis*), so his more recent works in fact cast a shadow on the legacy of previous experiences.

The cycle of paintings presented at this exhibition was made prevalently in 1996. Since Zlatan Vrkljan began exhibiting in 1978, from today's point of view we encounter him in the middle of his development (18 years away from the official beginning, 18 years from the making of the said series). But this centrality is not exclusively chronological, it also encompasses motifs and morphology; the cycle before us intersects and generates 'figurative' and 'abstract' constituents of the work. Better said, in every frame the painter starts off from a very specific visual attraction, a concrete objective stimulus, and then in the analysis and elaboration uses his expressive means to achieve autonomous, specific voluminous tightness of linear and chromatic elements. We will not exaggerate much if we say that - despite the frequent rational and mental starting point and even programmatic traits in certain aspects - Zlatan Vrkljan is permanently obsessed with the range of mimesis and physis of the painted surface.

I dare define the mentioned cycle as generic, characterise it as 'atmospheric landscape'. I ground this opinion upon the fact that most works were made directly in the landscape, before the motif, or was at least depicted immediately after the experienced small annotations. I abuse the fact that the titles of certain works undoubtedly refer to their starting point in the natural ambience or natural element (*Kuti* on the one hand, *Rain* and *Thunder* on the other). Therefore, the impulse was evidently landscape- and atmosphere-related, even though the outcome was not impressionist or neo-romantic, crepuscularly painful, but constructively bitter and structurally chained.

The painting *Kuti*, for instance. In the central part we sense the contours of something like a tree, trunk and top, but first we will follow the homogeneous facture of systematised strokes, serial facets of dense dark green and brownish complements. In the painting *Night Rain* the central vertical is kept by dispersed white light spreading from the source near the upper edge, but even more important was the rhythm of sharp,

truncated vertical flows of piled (dripping) details. The painting *Thunder* is sharply divided by interrupted white lines, real crevices in the greyish tissue, gradually lighted from the upper dark part to the lower zone, lit in the very bottom with vertiginous white spots (of intense glow radiating onto the entire scene). Even though the interrupted strokes pretty much resemble a lightning, associatively remind of a natural phenomenon, this painting is less an illustration of atmospheric events, and more a dramatic dialogue between darkness and light, mutual challenging of linear bursts and matteric passages.

The painting *Fire* seemingly displays pointillist facture, but without the glow and shine typical of symbolist atmospheres. The spots and strokes in fact seem to prove the crepuscular nature of light, including the material character of the painter's print. Pressure is even more purified and reduced in layers and levels of diluted and condensed tones of a uniform selected dreary colour. Rain is an apogeaion of monochromatic coherence, executed in refined layers of darker and more open parallels.

The cycle is also characterised by identical technical premises (encaustic painting on canvas) and uniform formats (195 x 145 cm) and rounded up by numeric completeness (nine works). A certain cornerstone or the essence of motif and style can be found in the work named *Painter*, easily registering exogenous (textural and calligraphic) factors. In the geometric centre of the frame we discern a human silhouette in a red dress before a tight canvas on the easel, stretching his hand and leaving a trace. The character is surrounded on all sides by dense shrubbery, hinted by the firm layer of pigment, while the only penetration of light comes from the reflections of a path in the bottom. Immersion into pitch dark with a glow surrounding the central character and the easel testify of the vibrancy of reactions and justification of the creative act.

Writing about the first exhibition of this cycle in 1996, critic Vladimir Maleković entitled his foreword *A Painter in the Landscape*. I, of course, agree that Zlatan Vrkljan went out into the landscape and fixed his views on certain natural elements and in concrete landscape. But it seems even more appropriate to speak of *A Painter in His Element*, of a painter in a tight embrace with 'immeasurable' forces, of a painter with an ambition to register the significant qualities of the four mythical elements: fire and water, air and earth, of a painter who measured his position in this world with coordinates of light and shadow, flow and standstill, existence and nothingness. In a nutshell, a painter in his element uses his own means to seek and find the reasons for the non-indifferent views of the visible and the invisible.

– Tonko Maroević



**Slikar***Painter*

1996.

enkaustika na platnu

*encaustic painting on canvas*

195 x 145 cm







**Grom**

*Thunder*

1996.

enkaustika na platnu

*encaustic painting on canvas*

195 x 145 cm



**Pritisak**

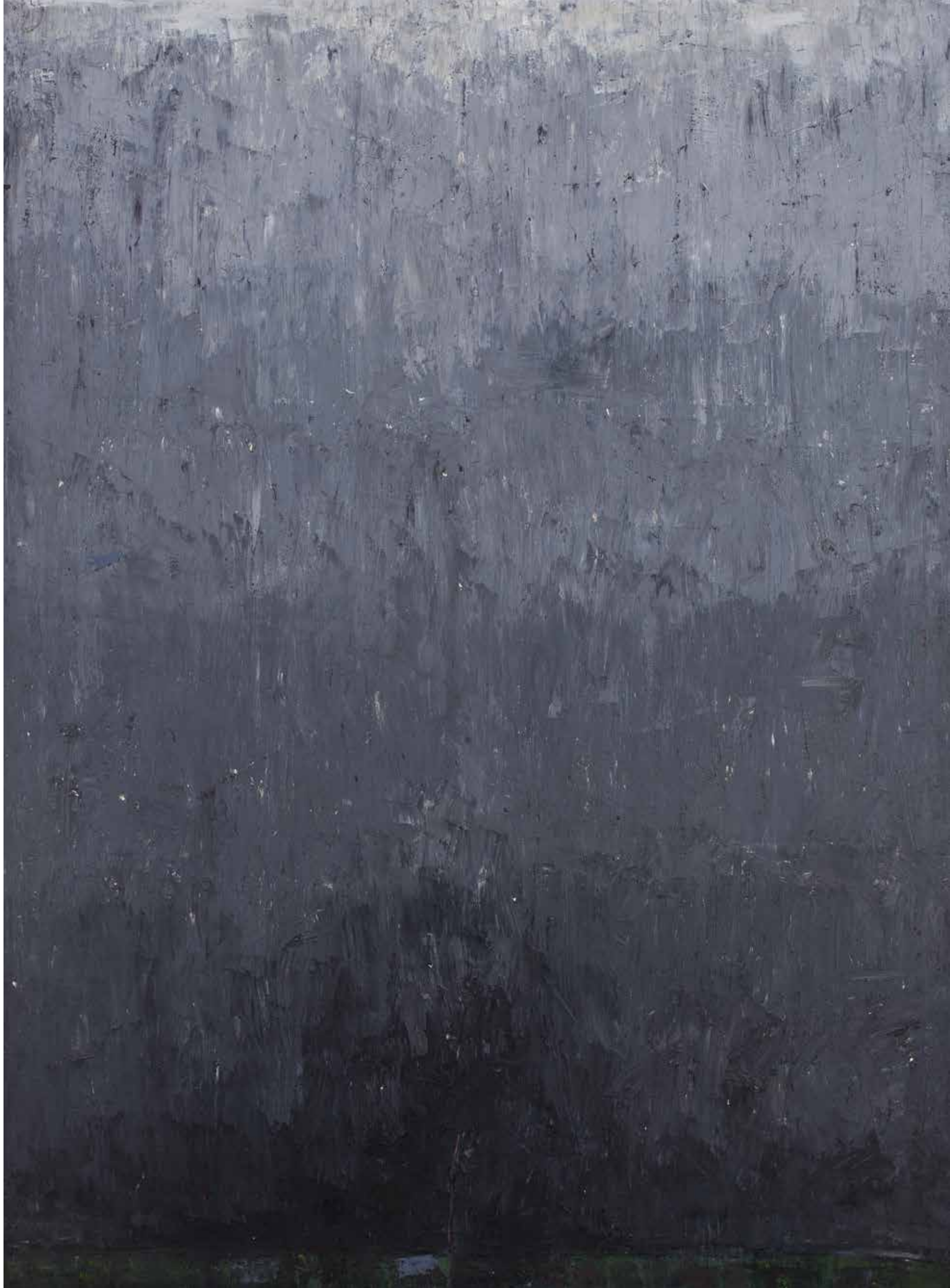
Pressure

1996.

enkaustika na platnu

*encaustic painting on canvas*

195 x 145 cm





**Pritisak**

*Pressure*

1996.

enkaustika na platnu

*encaustic painting on canvas*

195 x 145 cm



**Kiša**

*Rain*

1996.

enkaustika na platnu

*encaustic painting on canvas*

195 x 145 cm







**Noćna kiša**

*Night Rain*

1996.

enkaustika na platnu

*encaustic painting on canvas*

195 x 145 cm



**Vatra***Fire*

1996.

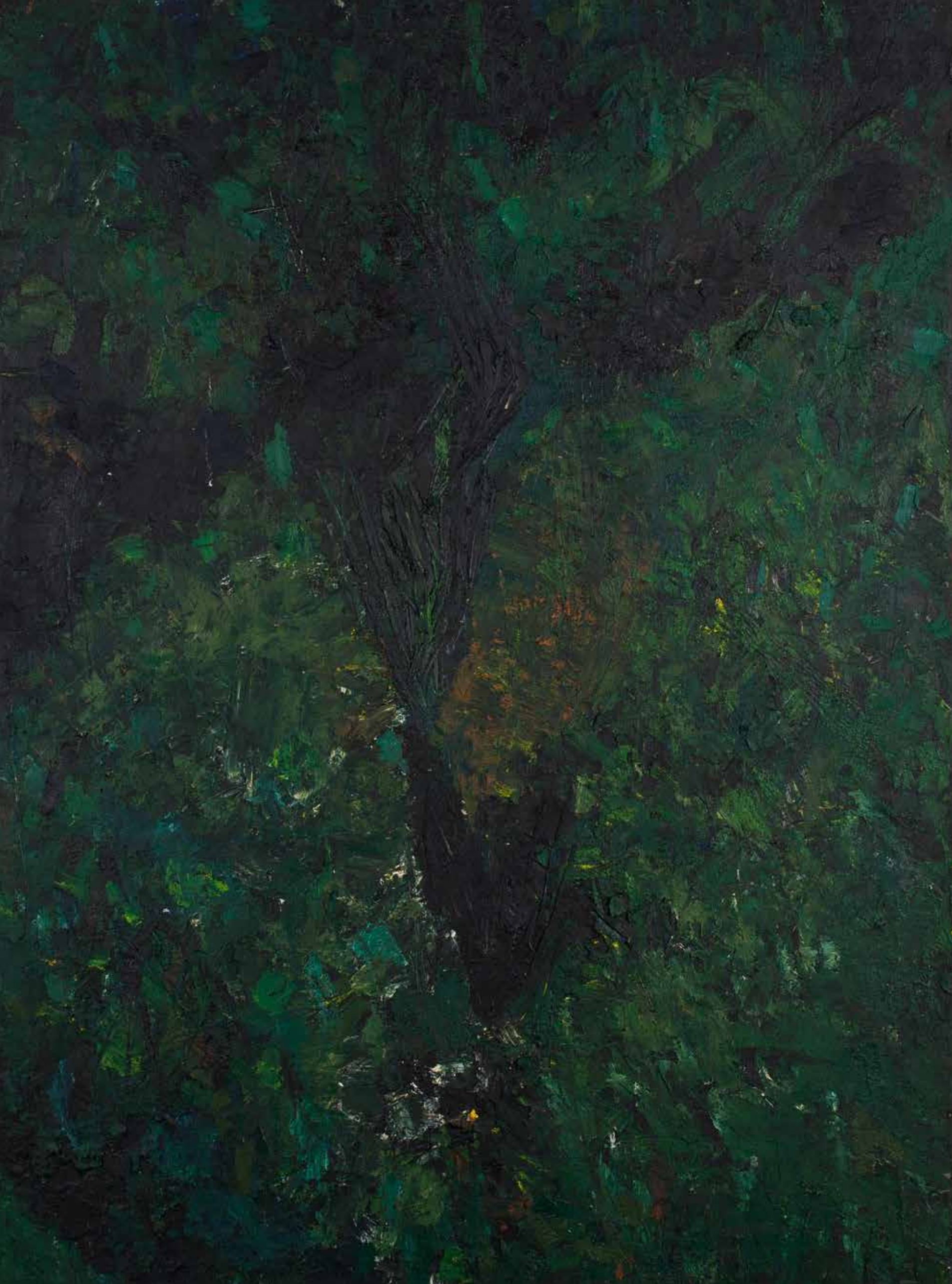
enkaustika na platnu

*encaustic painting on canvas*

195 x 145 cm







**Kuti**

1996.

enkaustika na platnu

*encaustic painting on canvas*

195 x 145 cm



**Sombeline**  
1996.  
enkaustika na platnu  
*encaustic painting on canvas*  
195 x 145 cm







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