



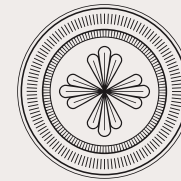
SOLO EXHIBITION | LOS ANGELES | OCT 2023

ECOTONE

SageCulture™

Filipa Tojal

**SAGE
CULTURE**



SageCulture™

ECOTONE

FILIPA TOJAL

Solo Exhibition — October 21, 2023

***Ecotone** - *noun Ecology.*

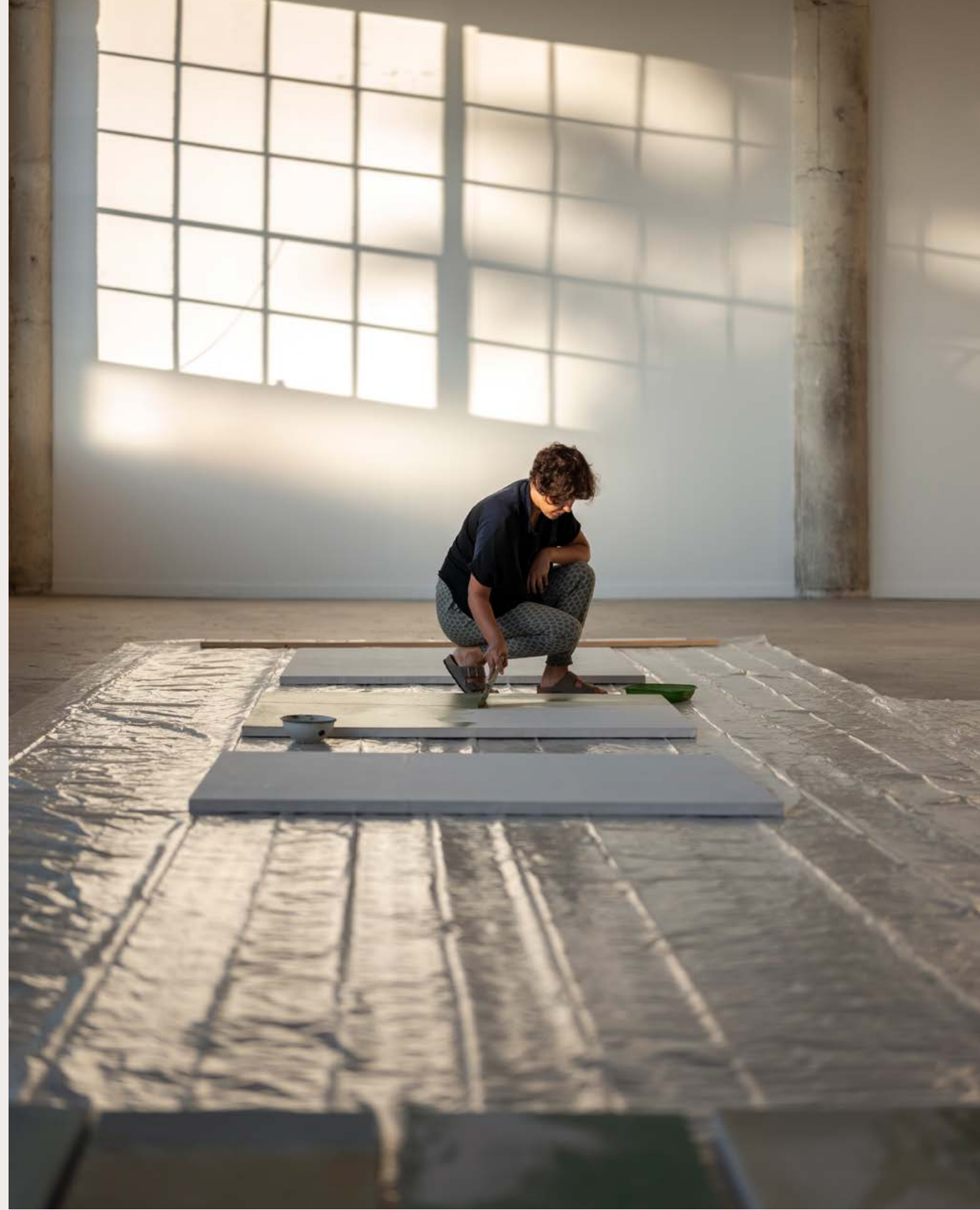
1. the zone between two major ecological communities, ecosystems, and/or ecological regions along an environmental or other gradient.

About the Artist	10
The Exhibition	42
Featured Works	82
The Gallery	138



FILIPA TOJAL

Porto — Portugal





"While still using Western and Eastern techniques and exploring the differences between these two worlds, Filipa Tojal embraces a visual and meditative process, having as her poetic and visual influence the changing surrounding scenarios."

Filipa Tojal (1993, Porto, Portugal) is a visual artist working primarily in painting. She grew up in the North of Portugal, deeply connected to the countryside and mountainside of the region, known for its diverse microclimates and elevations. While contemplation has been part of her practice as an artist, it also reflects an intrinsic aspect of her personality and philosophy, shaping her work from material selection to how she formally presents it.

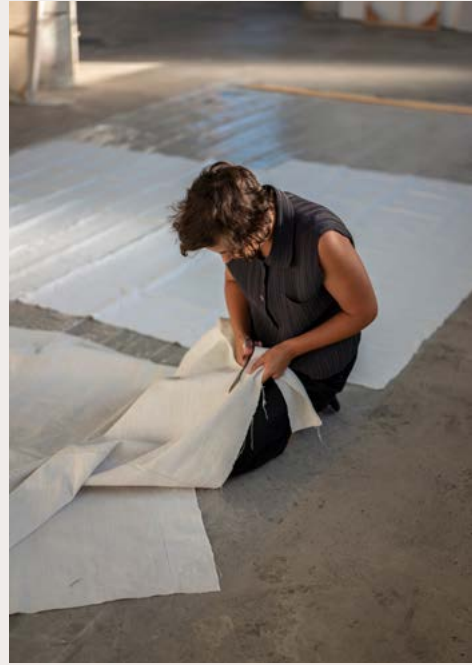
Filipa holds a BA in Fine Arts from the Faculty of Fine Arts of Porto and completed a Master's Degree in Painting at Tokyo University of the Arts. She has lived and worked in Japan for four years on a fully-funded scholarship from the Japanese Government. Her arrival in Japan at age 22 marked a profound transition, signifying a phase of personal and existential development, which naturally caused a shift in her artistic practice.

In contrast to the Western approach, particularly prevalent in art schools, often leading toward directness and assertiveness, the East strongly emphasizes nurturing introspection and encouraging self-reflection instead. This undeniable shift significantly altered Filipa's practice and immersion in her work. It began a new phase, where Filipa started exploring her genuine connection with painting.



Art in process: Intermediate
Land & Vegetation research
ground - waterbody, 2023.





Filipa Tojal at Sage Culture Gallery,
preparing materials during her 2023
Los Angeles residency supported by FLAD.



"It was a time of seeing painting in a different sense - getting confident with a brush, caring for the movement of the hand, and appreciating and understanding the materials.

This was the time that I switched to water-based techniques and explored natural binders, like rice or seaweed, but mainly, it was a time of exploring fluidity and painting on the floor - which transformed everything. In the West, we paint on easels and look at paintings from the front - we take full control of each layer, and each layer becomes an independent structure.

Painting in the ground, you only have half of the control. Most of what happens in my work concerns how the surface reacts to the paint, how the fibers absorb the pigments, how they respond to the air, temperature, etc., and how layers are blended and interconnected. There were big changes happening inside my brushwork, color palette, and spatial awareness within and outside the painting limit.

Painting is just a matter of color, brushwork direction, assertiveness, line, and form, that's it. Apparently, it is simple and narrow, and that is what fascinates me and all the painters. Your body and mind have to be in perfect harmony and balance throughout the whole process.

For me, it is a matter of contemplation towards the outside world, to the visible world, and solitude towards the invisible. Painting implies a lot of time alone".



Filipa Tojal at Sage Culture Gallery, embracing transformation, and introspection in her painting process.





Following her departure from Japan in 2020, Filipa has resided in Germany, Australia, and the UK, returning to her home country - Portugal. For the last few years, she has engaged in various art residencies, collaborated with diverse institutions and centers, and showcased her work collectively and individually worldwide.

Filipa's collaboration with Sage Culture began in 2021, the year of the gallery's inaugural presentation of her work in the United States through the solo exhibition "Verdant." Recognizing the strong connection between her work and the gallery's program and setting (a former textile factory dating back to 1960), they began envisioning a second exhibition.

This new project aspired to create the artworks in California within the gallery space, a concept that genuinely resonates with Filipa's practice as an artist. To make this happen, Filipa and the gallery actively pursued support from FLAD (The Luso-American Development Foundation), a renowned institution in Portugal recognized for its continuous support of cultural and scientific exchanges between the US and Portugal. Thanks to FLAD's generous support, Filipa secured the unique opportunity to travel to the US for the first time and focus on her second solo exhibition with Sage Culture.

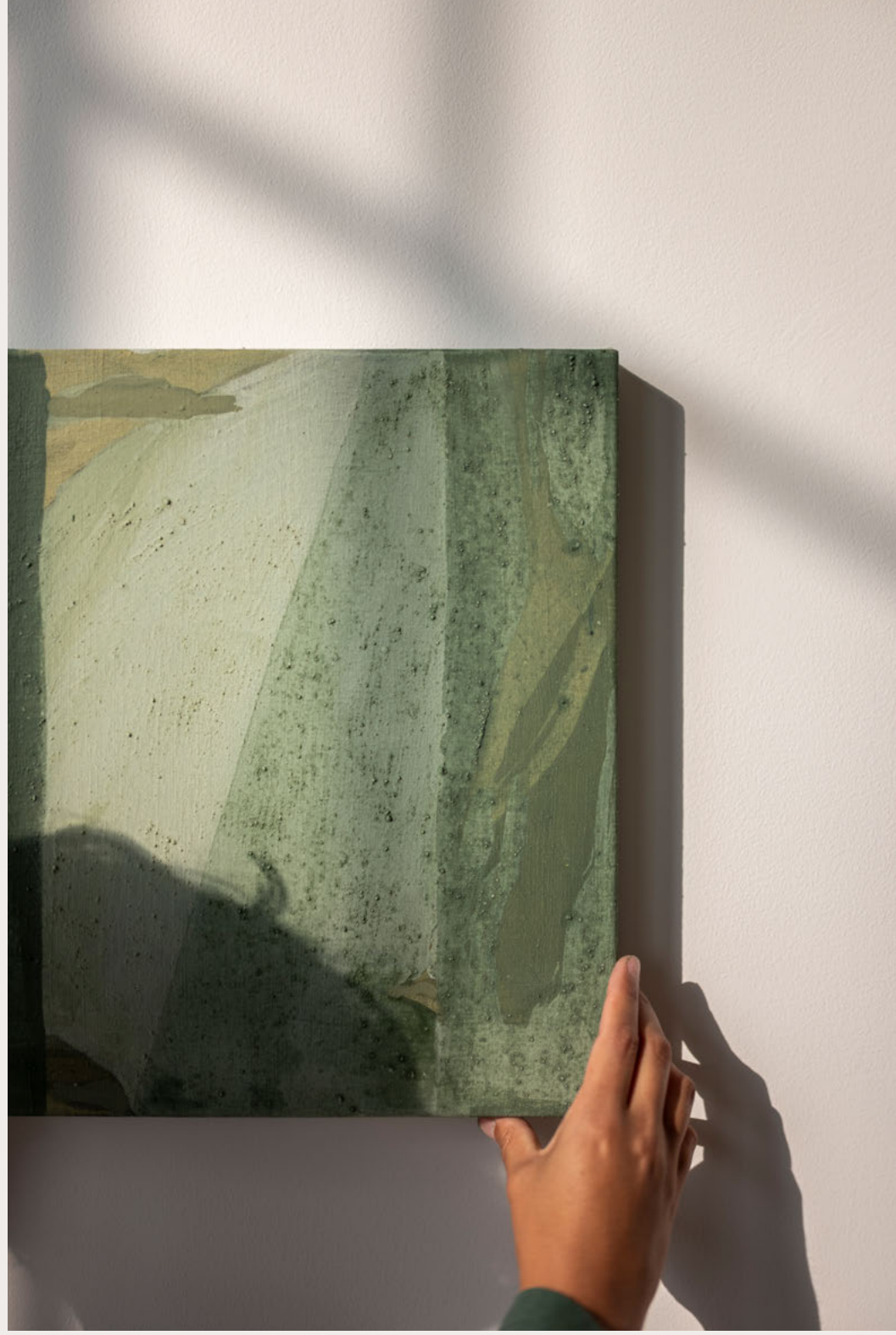


"When I was first contacted by Sage Culture, it was very interesting to connect with a slow-paced gallery that shows an honest interest in the artist's process and appreciation for nature. My first exhibition here happened during the pandemic, so I had to do everything distantly and unfortunately didn't get to experience the show myself.

I could, though, understand the harmony between the paintings and the gallery space - the lime-wash green ceilings, the columns through the space, which, almost like trees in a forest, hide and reveal the work - so I became very interested in coming to Los Angeles to work at the gallery. To work in this bright light. To see how it would then affect my work. It came as an opportunity to challenge myself and my practice."



Installation view, Ecotone,
Sage Culture Gallery,
Los Angeles, 2023.





Filipa Tojal visited Cholla Cactus Garden Trail in the desert, conducting research that inspired her abstract artwork through paintings while absorbing nature and landscapes into her gestural work.



For Filipa, an artistic residency represents a chance to test her adaptability and evolve her artistic practice. Working in a new environment serves both as a continuation of her existing practice and a fresh beginning.

Her journey to the US also opened doors to witness artworks by various artists in person for the first time, rather than through books and publications. Her visits to museums in New York, her first stop in the US, and California allowed her to experience the works of prominent art movements, including Abstract Expressionism, Abstraction, Color Field, and later Light and Space.



Filipa Tojal's analog camera captured her process at Sage Culture Gallery and the Joshua Tree Desert trip.



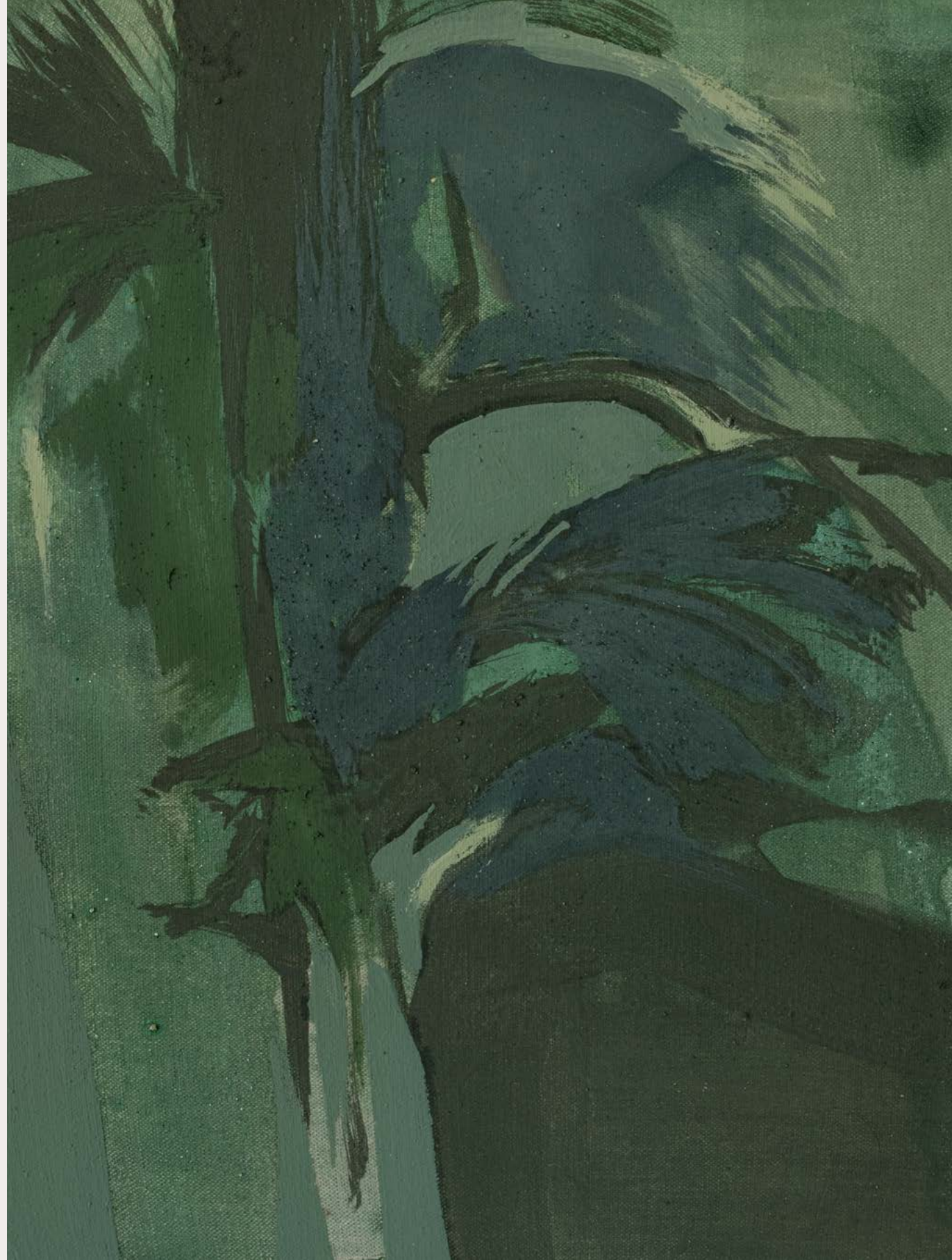
Filipa has both created and accepted the challenge to inhabit Los Angeles. This city has consistently served as a source of inspiration for American and international artists throughout history. The city's vast scale, rich multiculturalism, and thriving industries have deeply captivated artists over time, also because of its proximity to the expansive natural surroundings between the coastal and desert terrains. This has proved to be a notably fitting and productive setting for creating Filipa's new project, "Ecotone."

ECOTONE

Filipa Tojal's Solo Exhibition

An ecotone is a transitional zone or boundary between two or more distinct ecosystems or ecological communities. It represents an often-diverse area where the characteristics of one ecosystem blend with those of another. Ecotones can occur in various natural environments, such as a meeting point between a forest and a grassland, a wetland and terrestrial habitat, or the intertidal zone where the ocean meets the shore. Ecotones are dynamic and subject to change over time, influenced by factors like climate fluctuations, human activities, or natural ecological processes. -

"Ecotone," defined as a transitional area where different ecosystems integrate and blend, symbolically reflects the artist's adjustment and adaptation to the paradigm she finds herself in.





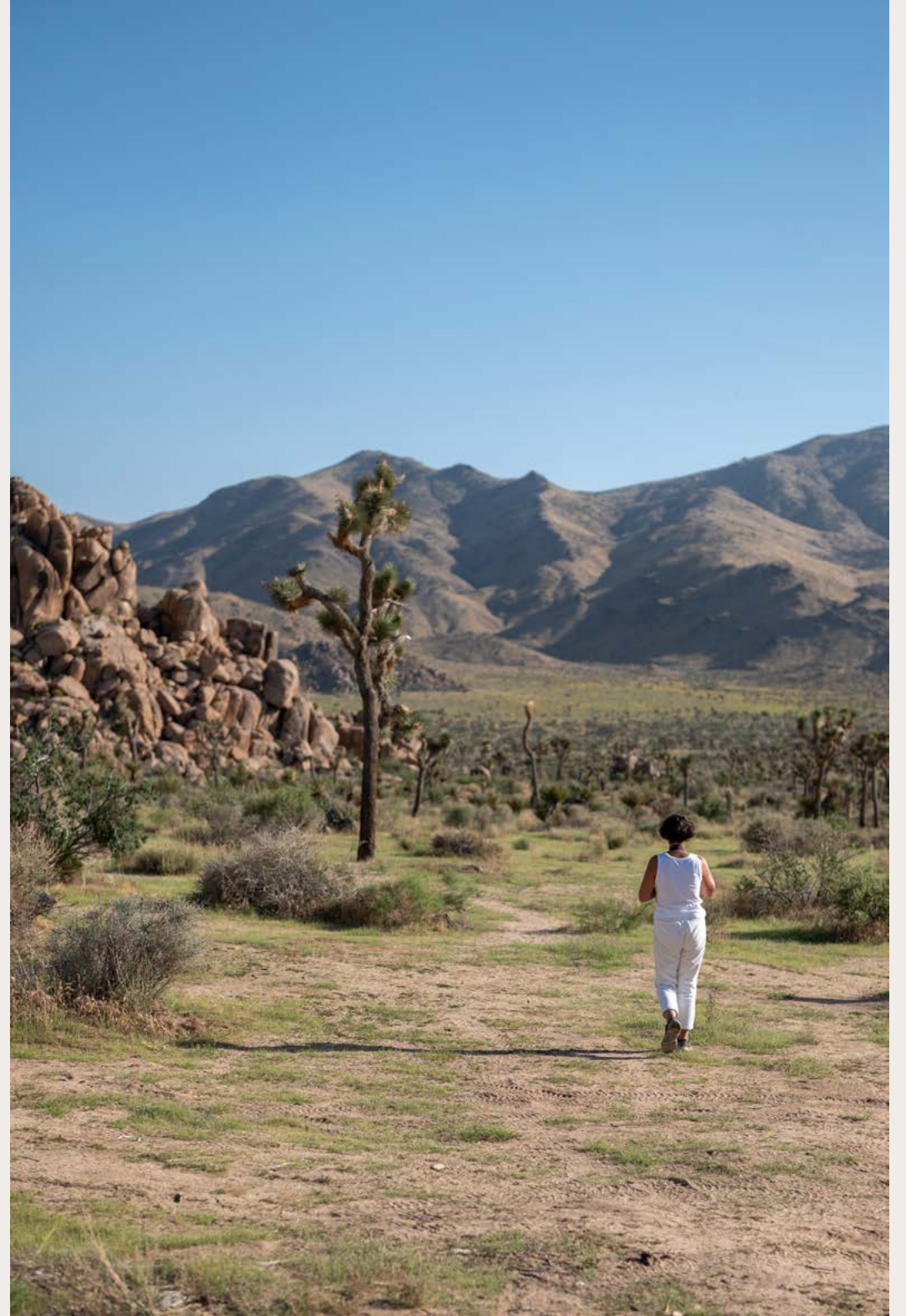


Notably, she intertwines her personal ties with landscapes, melding Portuguese mountainsides with Japanese forestry and other locations and spatial concepts that have indelibly shaped Filipa's understanding of landscape, including her experiences in Southern California.

This amalgamation of influences and elements within the exhibition encapsulates a sense of richness and dynamism denoted in this biological term. "Ecotone" as a title also symbolizes a transient place that resonates with Filipa's life journey of dwelling in various countries, cities, and territories.



A research trip to the Joshua Tree Desert was one of many immersive experiences Filipa Tojal undertook during her time in Los Angeles.



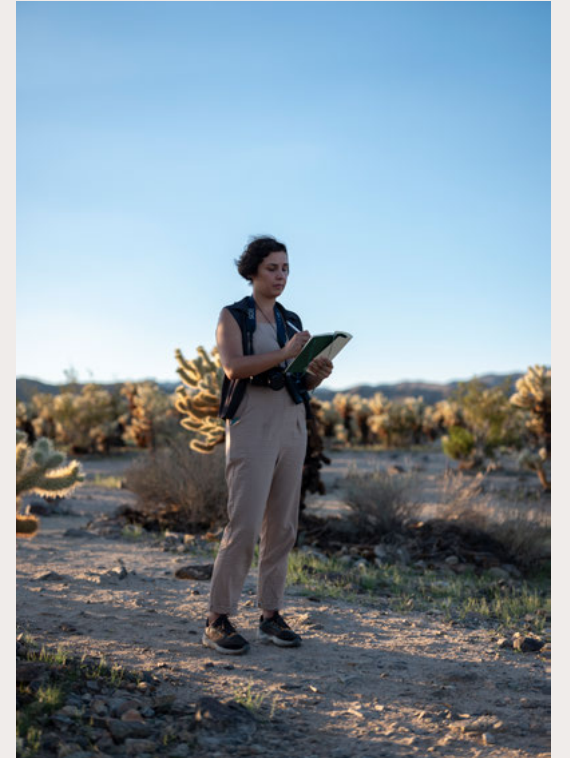
"The initial title or concept of this solo exhibition came from direct observation of the works. I work very intuitively, and it was clear to me that my paintings, besides adjoining different approaches to painting - more figurative, more abstract, more gestural, more fluid -, they also conveyed a sense of a place in between, of conjugated realities, a mix of tensions".

Ecotones, renowned for their unique biodiversity arising from the interplay of different environments, parallel Filipa's personal journey and sources of inspiration. Her skillful blend of childhood recollections, the places she has explored, and her present surroundings serve as a reflection and introduction to her fascination with landscape as a universal language.

In formal terms, Filipa's work, much like the natural world, seamlessly combines elements such as the flow of water and windswept vegetation. Her painting harmoniously weaves her European painting background with the Japanese calligraphic and gestural brushwork she encountered in Japan.



Filipa's research process involves contemplating and registering her surroundings.



During Filipa's immersive experience in California, photographs, drawings, writings, and sketches are part of the approach and come together at the Gallery during the painting process.





"For this new series of work, I went back to oil painting as well as vertical conceptions of landscape, which is where my student work began. Painting is made of addictions and substructions, of moves forwards as well as backwards. It is sometimes difficult for me to comprehend the directions of my work, so at the moment, I am wondering if my work was always indeed an ecotone".



For this residency, Filipa arrived in California with three sets of raw materials: her brushes (collected from around the world), mineral pigments (brought over from her last visit to Japan), and traditional hand-loomed linens (which are part of her family heritage). Filipa meticulously stretches and prepares each linen, sizing, and priming before commencing her paintings. She prepared the canvas surfaces upon arrival, and slowly, her paintings began to take shape in the studio, starting from scratch. From raw materials to spatial conceptions, her work mirrors her daily adjustments and growing awareness of her new surroundings.





Installation view, *Ecotone*,
Sage Culture Gallery,
Los Angeles, 2023.

Her works can take shape rapidly or evolve slowly over time, which is why she usually works on multiple paintings simultaneously. In her perception, each piece contributes to the completion and resolution of the others. This interconnectedness forms an ecosystem where different vocabularies, tensions, and directions arise. The observer can ultimately complete her work, considering the movement within the exhibition space and the dialogues between each work.

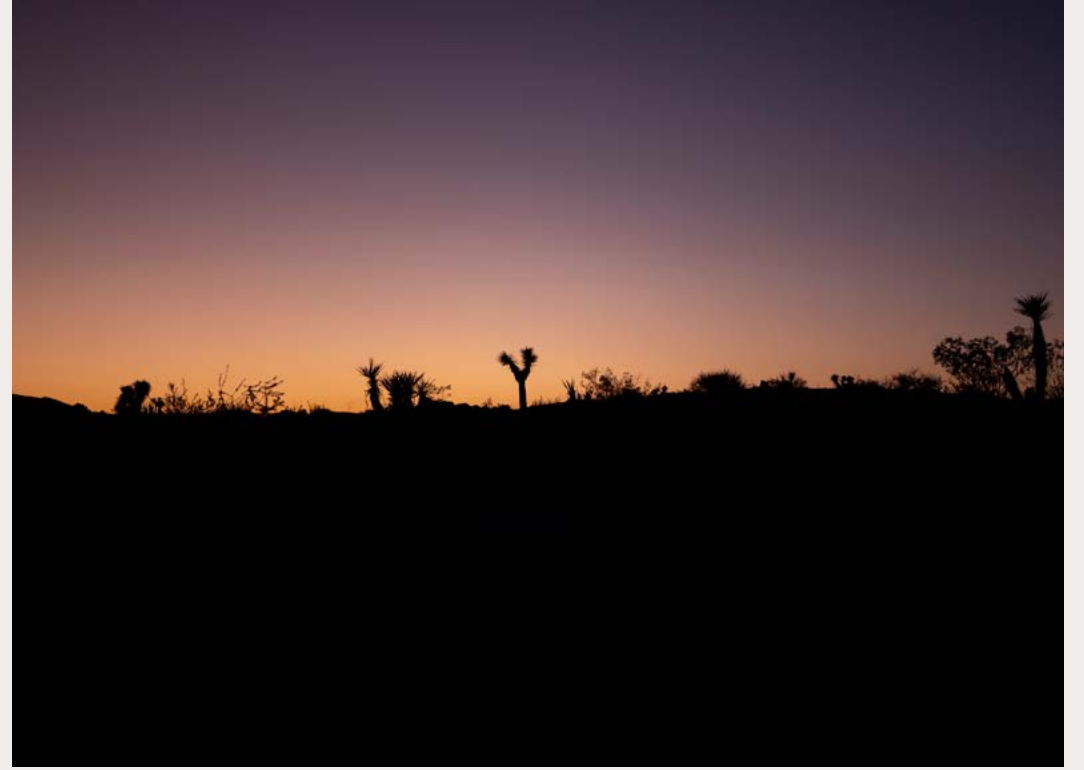




Filipa has chosen nature as her subject matter, reflecting on the concept of landscape. She doesn't see her work as representations but as constructions. Her paintings suggest a middle ground or a point of continuity between the ocean and the desert, shifting from her previous exploration of abundant vegetation and forestry to the vast and sparse land. Within her practice, "Ecotone" might appear as a step back, slightly moving to more figurative configurations, possibly as a means to understand the fresh new paradigms of landscape the artist has encountered here.

"An ecotone, in ecological terms, is essentially a transitional zone that bridges the gap between two or more distinct ecosystems or ecological communities. It's where the characteristics of one ecosystem blend with those of another. In the context of my work, 'Ecotone' could be a representation of my own adaptation and integration into different landscapes and environments.

I've drawn inspiration from Portuguese mountainsides, Japanese forests, and my experiences in Southern California, as well as many other places that have profoundly shaped my understanding of landscape. This blending of influences within the exhibition captures a sense of richness and dynamism, much like the biological term itself".



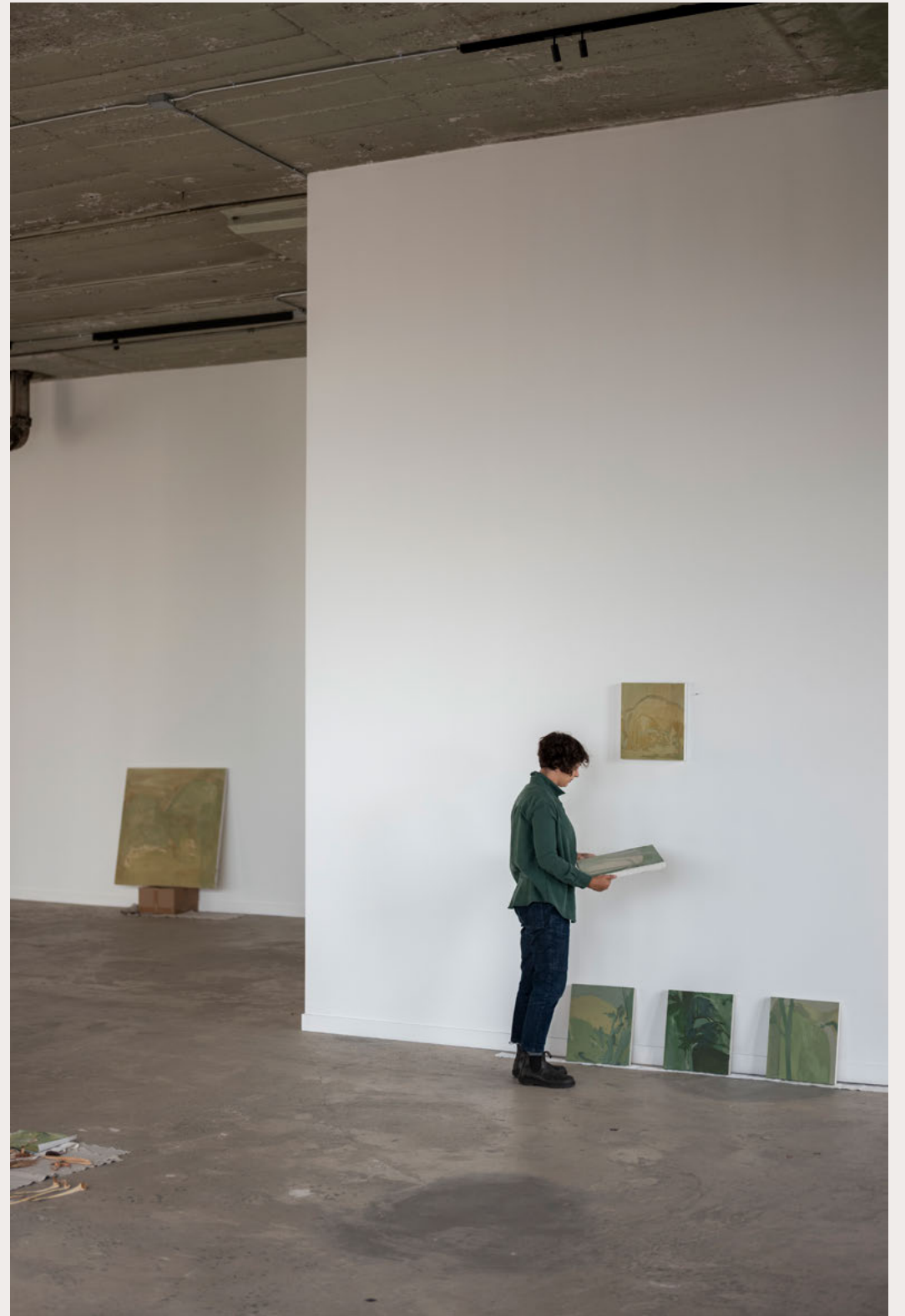


Ecotone shows the artist's adaptability and dedication to her heritage and path in an ever-evolving journey marked by both forward and backward strides. Filipa's introspective and intuitive approach to painting results in undeniably abstract works that suggest tonalities and lines of consideration about the Southern California landscape.

Her ability to mirror the expanses of the desert and ocean is evident, and while she grapples with new paradigms, her paintings maintain a sense of clarity. This exhibition represents Filipa's artistic journey, where her work becomes a bridge between different landscapes and settings, encapsulating her deep connection to the concept of landscape in its sense of universality.



Filipa Tojal at Arch Rock Trailhead, Joshua Tree registering the Sunset light reflecting on the rock formations.









Filipa Tojal's analog camera photographs of the Californian Desert.



THE WORK

Paintings







Vegetation research ground - waterbody, 2023

Pigments and acrylic binder on linen
55 × 79 in | 139.7 × 200.7 cm





Intermediate Land, 2023

Pigments and acrylic binder on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
55 × 37 in | 139.7 × 94 cm





“Neighbouring ecosystem: gestural”, 2023

Pigments and oil on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
40 × 40 in | 101.6 × 101.6 cm



“Neighbouring ecosystem: subtle”, 2023

Pigments and acrylic binder on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
40 × 40 in | 101.6 × 101.6 cm









Observation Series I, 2023

Pigments and oil on linen
15 × 13 in | 38.1 × 33 cm



Observation Series II, 2023

Pigments and oil on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
15 × 13 in | 38.1 × 33 cm





Observation Series III, 2023

Pigments and oil on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
15 × 13 in | 38.1 × 33 cm



Observation Series IV, 2023

Pigments and oil on linen
15 × 13 in | 38.1 × 33 cm





Observation Series V, 2023

Pigments and oil on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
15 × 13 in | 38.1 × 33 cm



Observation Series VI, 2023

Pigments and oil on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
15 × 13 in | 38.1 × 33 cm





Observation Series VII, 2023

Pigments and oil on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
15 × 13 in | 38.1 × 33 cm





Landshift, 2023

Pigments and oil on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
55 × 37 in | 139.7 × 94 cm







Desert green, 2023

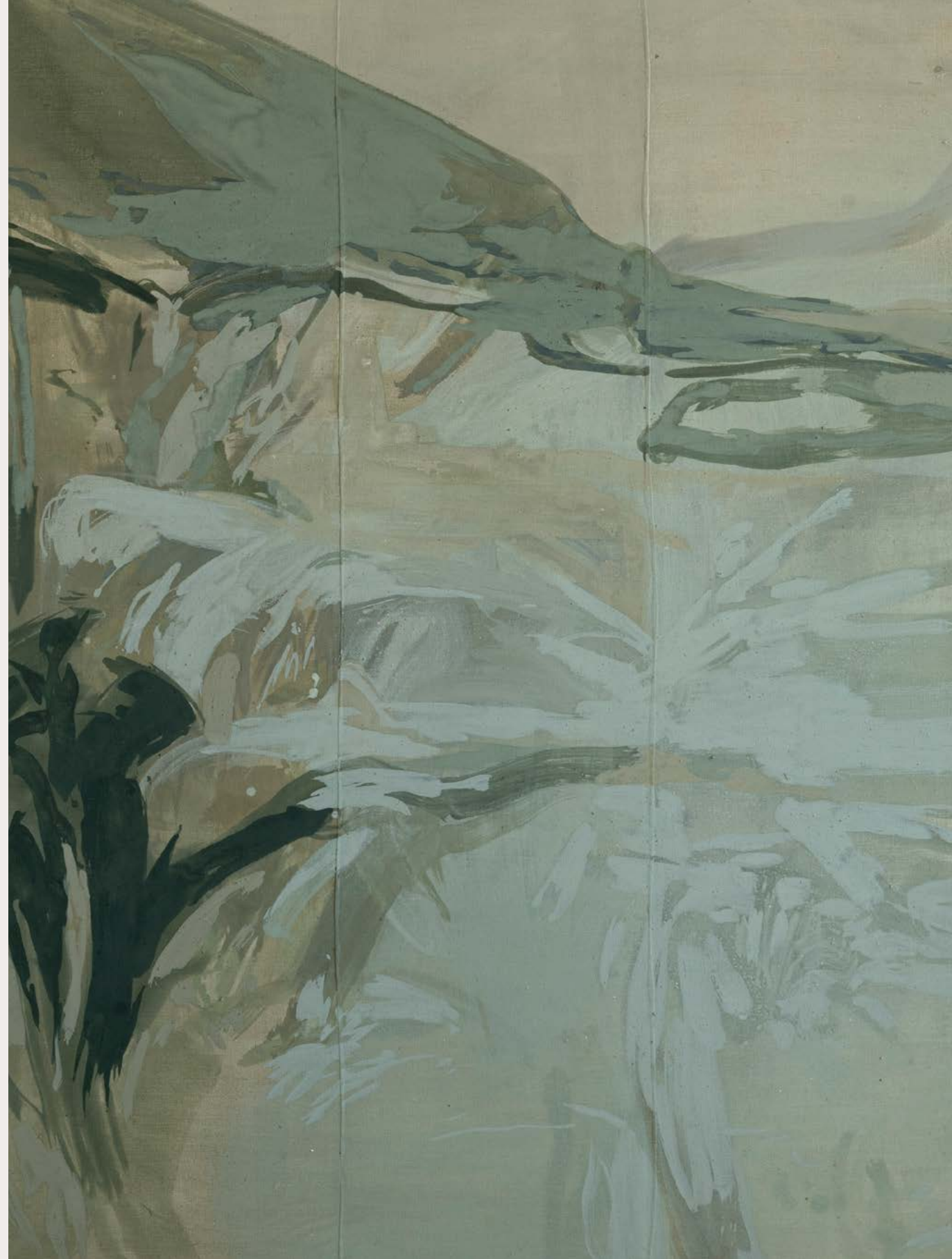
Pigments and oil on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
55 × 37 in | 139.7 × 94 cm





“Observation Stone”, 2023

Pigments and acrylic binder on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
55 × 55 in | 139.7 × 139.7 cm







Transition II, 2023

Pigments and acrylic binder on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
14 × 14 in | 35.6 × 35.6 cm





Transition I, 2023

Pigments and acrylic binder on traditional hand-loomed Portuguese linen
14 × 14 in | 35.6 × 35.6 cm





SAGE CULTURE

Sage Culture is an art gallery based in Downtown Los Angeles, founded in 2017.

The appreciation of Nature defines the gallery's mission, curation, and aesthetics. Sage Culture's concept relates to a constant attempt to artistically portray the relationship between people and Nature – from observing humanity's primordial cultures and their complete integration with the environment to the recent efforts to make sense of this relationship today.





A visit to Easter Island was the starting point and primary inspiration for developing the early concept of Sage Culture. The remote island's rich history and how ancient art forms have always acted as a powerful transformation tool for humankind profoundly inspired the founders throughout the creative process.

In line with its concept, the gallery represents artists whose deep connection to Nature serves as their primary source of inspiration. Using natural materials or promoting discussions on the subject, they contribute to reimagining this crucial but endangered bond with Earth.

These artists focus on their processes, sometimes defying traditional practices and techniques. The results frequently blur the lines between media and the established boundaries of art, craft, and design.

In the age of the Anthropocene, our marks on the planet are the subject of constant debate, and Sage Culture intends to Make this debate permanently present in its program concerning Art & Environment, promoting a reconnection with the environment through artistic contemplation.





This book is published in the occasion of the exhibition "ECOTONE"
at Sage Culture Gallery from October 21st to December 2nd, 2023.

Sage Culture LLC
Contemporary Art Gallery & Projects

725 E Washington Blvd - Downtown
Los Angeles CA. 90021 – USA

by appointment only
info@sageculture.com | +1 323 675 6615
sageculture.com



Sage Culture™