

Slow study of a changing landscape

YOU have heard of the slow movement. Slow food. Slow living. If there's a type of art that fits the slow philosophy, perhaps Ann Thomson's is it.

"I don't like people to say, 'Oh, that's a tree', and then they can go past quickly," she says.

"A painting can be just looked at. You don't really have to relate it to something you already know. It moves into that realm of mystery. That's what I would really like people to do — spend time with (the works)."

The last two years of Thomson's work, produced in her cloistered Waverley studio, is on view at Tim



Olsen Gallery in an exhibition titled *Inscapes* to reflect the internal landscape on which they linger.

In room one there is a series of large, vertical multimedia works which strongly evoke the feeling of the landscape while providing few points of literal translation.

"I liked the challenge of painting in that shape,"

Thomson says. "They are sort of built up. They don't come first go."

Forms resembling human figures, or "personages" as Thomson calls them, have lately entered her work. The way she

discusses these apparitions, you'd think they had walked into the pictures all by themselves.

"They seem to me to be figures; they just 'become' figures, (or) figure-like," she says.

Several discrete series of works on paper are displayed in the second room. These include *Warriors*, where Thomson has made use of "big, luscious" oil sticks as well as collage. The collage harks back to her childhood love of cutting and pasting her mother's old copies of *Women's Weekly*.

Another series, *Half The Night*, is done in acrylic on an unusual backing called tarred paper. This was once common in the building industry, and Thomson jealously

hoards old stocks of it in her studio. In areas where Thomson has scratched or torn back into the tarred paper, its geometric string reinforcement is revealed and adds texture to the work.

Thomson also lays sheets of tarred paper underneath her easel, where the paper collects drips and spatters of paint.

Instead of throwing these drop-sheets of tarred paper away, she cuts them up and adds them to her compositions where, she says, they become emblematic of passing time.

ELIZABETH FORTESCUE

Tim Olsen Gallery, 63 Jersey Rd, Woollahra; until Sunday, 9327 3922, timolsengallery.com



Ann Thomson. Picture: John Fotiadis