



## **MONA RAY** | Artist Statement

With the landscape as my ever-present muse, these paintings weave together elements of observation and memory, seeking a moment of transcendence in a time of uncertainty. While ethereal skies remain a focus in this series, trees share the stage in much of my recent work: beckoning, sheltering, gesturing toward the evanescent light.

My journey into a painting begins with charcoal or ink, or acrylic, sometimes collage, beginning with a loosely held subject and an openness to the process. My approach is intuitive and spontaneous.

With brushes, palette knives, and plenty of paint, I gradually build up colors and textures in the work, drawing in and scraping through with various tools. After the first several layers are dry, I return to the piece with layers of oil paint, at each stage considering if the conversation in the piece is coming to a close or if there is more yet to say.

Throughout this process, the painting ebbs and flows between chaos and clarity, destruction and creation, until the dialogue slows and the painting begins to say something that feels true. The piece opens up at this point and becomes three things at once: a landscape, a tangible record of my thoughts and struggles as I created it, and something larger, something I cannot entirely claim as my own—a whole greater than the sum of its parts.