

# Juan Alberto Negroni



*Planta de polvo II (Dust plant II)*  
Mixed media on canvas  
36 x 36 in

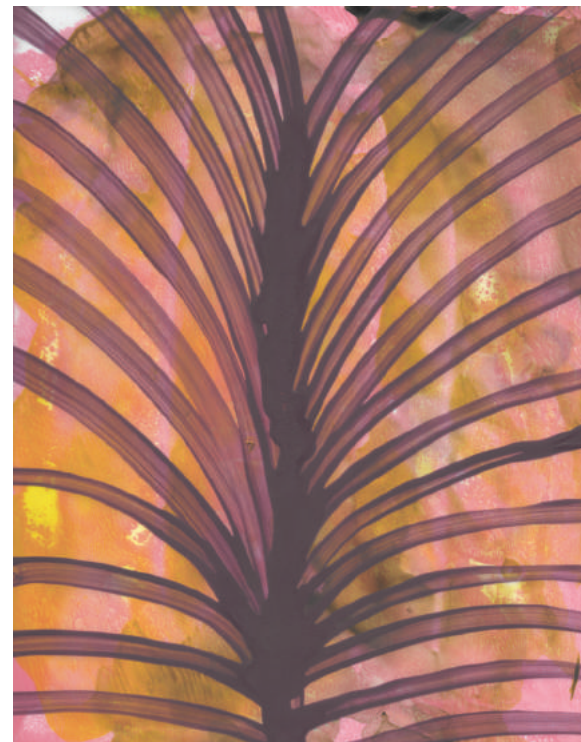
## Memory Garden

In childhood the world is viewed as a thing of wonder and beauty. We cherish significant visual experiences from that period and return to them with melancholy and fascination. The childhood gaze is a straightforward reading of the visual field, almost unadulterated. Observation leads to understanding. Eyes focus on those things that require detailed scrutiny because we do not yet understand them. Juan Negroni's current paintings reach back to his childhood memories of the times he spent in his parents' garden; a time of intense visual inquiry. As young children develop a sense of their world, they begin to connect sight and emotion, comprehending how the visual can lead to pleasure. Negroni's attempt to relive those moments in painting offers us

this common, shared experience of early visual discovery. It shifts us in time to that moment of early recognition.

His canvases are attractive for the emotions they trigger. Instead of painting scenes of himself at work in the garden. He has chosen to evoke with paint, his sensory response to that moment in that environment. His abstractions are recognizably plants but they are also specific memories of universal experiences.

The small size of Negroni's canvases suggests intimacy. But their emotional scale is considerably larger. It stretches feeling



*Pencácida*  
Mixed media on mylar  
11 x 8.5 in



*Untitled (Ash Plant 1)*  
Ink on mylar  
11 x 8.5 in

into an open public sphere, connects it to others. Emotion becomes an open and somewhat borderless space, suggestive of the outdoors. But these are not landscapes in any conventional sense. Painted in portrait mode, there is no division of pictorial space into earth and sky. No horizon. Still, their feeling is terrestrial. Their space full of earthy light. Colors mark the time of year. Spring's succulent greens are absent, so too are Autumn's softer ambers and browns. Present are the fuller, more fleshy tones of red and blue that point to times of ripe sustenance. The yellow tones radiate the temperature of a lazy afternoon.

Everything seems within reach. Patterns of vertical and horizontal lines in the foreground or background, suggest an enclosure and Negroni's layers of stains, and washes, compact the space suggested by his brush marks. Together they draw the viewer in. One feels contentment in this environment. There is no angst, no hunger, only a spiritual peace.

Juan Negroni's ultimate concern is the viewers' emotional engagement with his work and how beauty transmutes pleasure. He is a visual poet who combines abstract signs or ciphers that conjure ideas, trigger emotions, and suspend time. To dramatize a childhood discovery that is as particular as it is individual, is a great painterly achievement.

Gavin Jantjes, Artist