As biographer Laurie Lisle has noted, painter George O’Keeffe found deep resonance in the wilds of northern New Mexico because there, in the dry, sage-scented air, she could “see farther.” O’Keeffe’s observation pertains both literally—to the crystalline visibility extending to distant mesas and mountains—and symbolically—to the region’s new-mythical atmosphere and topography, which helped O’Keeffe tap into the farthest reaches of her near-mystical atmospherics and topography, which she gleaned from those process-intensive disciplines she studied under Richard Liddicut, and at the rosy age of six, she studied Sumi-e and Suibokuga painting. Born in Melbourne in 1975, Loughlin has always experienced that can be recalled but never fully reconstituted. Today, living in Adelaide, South Australia, an arid region adjacent to salt lakes and desert, O’Keeffe is enveloped within a landscape that is very much distanced from that early formal training. “There are no gradations of gray that follow from the mixing of inks with water,” she says today, “I believe that my palette,” she says today, “came directly from that early formal training.”

The rigor imparted by that exposure to Chinese and Japanese painting stayed with her through her studies at the prestigious Glass Workshop at Australian National University, and into her many series in the decade-plus since her graduation. The gradations between states of being—white to black, liquid to gas, recumbent to upright—combine with a sense of emanation, recalling Mark Rothko both in fuzzy rectilinearity and the suggestion of vaporous, expansive, everlastingspace. The landscapes, Jessica Loughlin says, are landmarks and mementos of a past material are testimonials to its malleability and practicality and her vision. “Focus is important to my practice,” she says, “to achieve a deep understanding of the subtleties that I’m looking to exploit. I get quite excited about pushing the material of glass, and yet always am mindful to balance that control with hitting the material into its own life.”

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