



STEVENSON

FRIEZE LONDON

STAND G8

6-9 OCTOBER 2016

PENNY SIOPIS
'A PAINTING LOOKS'

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Penny Siopis was born in 1953 in Vryburg, South Africa, and lives in Cape Town. She has an MFA from Rhodes University, Grahamstown (1976), and is an Honorary Professor at Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town. Siopis's abiding interest in what she calls the 'poetics of vulnerability' – manifest in a tension between materiality and image – coalesces with her explorations of history, sexuality, race, memory, estrangement and violence in her paintings, installations and films.

Solo exhibitions include *Incarnations*, at the Institute of Contemporary Art Indian Ocean, Port Louis, Mauritius (2016); *Penny Siopis: Films* at the Erg Gallery, Brussels (2016); *Time and Again: A Retrospective Exhibition* at the South African National Gallery, Cape Town (2014) and Wits Art Museum, Johannesburg (2015); *Red: The iconography of colour in the work of Penny Siopis* at the KZNSA Gallery, Durban (2009), and *Three Essays on Shame* at the Freud Museum, London (2005), in addition to Stevenson Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Notable group shows include *Unfinished Conversations* at the Beirut Art Center (2015); *Boundary Objects* at the Kunsthaus Dresden (2015); *After Eden/Après Eden - The Walther Collection* at La Maison Rouge, Paris (2015); *Public Intimacy: Art and Other Ordinary Acts in South Africa* at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2014); *Prism: Drawing from 1990-2011*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo (2012); *Appropriated Landscapes*, Walther Collection, Neu-Ulm/Burlafingen, Germany (2011); *PEEKABOO - Current South Africa*, Tennis Palace Art Museum, Helsinki (2010); *Black Womanhood: Images, Icons and Ideologies of the African Body*, Hood Museum, New Hampshire; Davis Museum, Wellesley, Massachusetts, and the San Diego Museum of Art, California (2008), as well as the biennales of Taipei (2016), Venice (South African Pavilion 2013, and 2003), Sydney (2010), Johannesburg (1995 and 1997), Gwangju (1997) and Havana (1995).

Penny Siopis is known for her intense interest in the vicissitudes of desire and materiality engaging estrangement, shame, trauma and vulnerability in different media. Recently, she has worked with a dynamic mix of ink and glue. Using mostly found images, she encourages a 'figure' to emerge from a process of chance. For the artist, materiality itself is emphatically as much image and concept as any pictured 'subject' might be. Her most recent work shows her constantly pushing figuration to the edge of formlessness in a vital aesthetic of violence and eroticism.

Colin Richards, 'Penny Siopis: Desire and Disaster in Painting', in *Wild is the Wind*, 2010, p41



Split Paw Paw

1982

Oil on board

32.5 x 48.5cm





Cake Box

1981

Oil paint, wood

13 x 90 x 18.5cm

Provenance

Artist's collection



In the early 1980s, at the height of the liberation struggle in South Africa, Penny Siopis served up a decadent suite of elaborately painted cakes. Temptingly seductive, the thickly painted confections threaten to topple from tables propped up in unnatural perspective, tipped as if to lure us further. The cakes seem about to slide from their painted surfaces into our ravenous mouths. Since classical times, cakes have been the treats of choice at ceremonial or milestone events, particularly birthdays, weddings, special anniversaries and religious holidays. Cakes are the sweet stuff of wishes and hopeful expectation for the future; delectable reminders of familial celebration and ritual, they transport us back to childhood and the innocence of youthful desire. This is especially true for Siopis. When she was growing up in Vryburg in the Northern Cape, her family owned a small bakery, which was attached to their home. This bakery was an integral part of the artist's early childhood, serving as the backdrop to some of her most powerful primal memories, both comforting and traumatic. Certainly, the cake paintings seem alluring and foreboding all at once.

Siopis's painted 'soetgoed' [sweetmeats] awaken a childlike appetite lacking in self-control, even as they forewarn those with sweet-toothed cravings of the inevitable consequences of gluttony. Overindulge and they will make you sick. There are birthday cakes, queen cakes, pies filled with fruit and cream, eclairs, truffles, cream-horn pastries, profiteroles, plum creams, and in the round, a spectacular, towering column cake oozing painted icing and cake toppings. They have been expertly decorated using the tools of a baker: piping bags tipped with icing nozzles for squeezing out delicate rosebud dollops of fleshy, cream-coloured paint. Heavy with embellishment, the cakes threaten to cave in under the weight of their own beautiful opulence. Their baroquely adorned surfaces show no restraint - there are too many precariously balanced plastic ballerinas and candied cupids fighting for prime position, too many candles threatening combustion. These delicacies reek of the uncanny, straddling the line between the familiar and the strange, between cake and flesh, the festive and the macabre. Like all of Siopis's objects, they are not quite what they seem. Their soft centres hide shameful secrets.

Provocatively displayed, Siopis's fetish-like treats bemoan the loss of youthful feminine innocence. Cakes are split open like vaginas, cherry-topped eclairs and queen cakes resemble disembodied breasts, and a cream-horn pastry becomes a phallus.

Siopis's cakes offer a carefully crafted and plated critique of the white South African middle class at a time when many chose to hide behind privilege and tradition, turning a blind eye to the corpses piling up around them. The artist serves up a lavish feast of domestic bliss, poisoned from the inside by a history of state tyranny and violent transgression. Siopis's paintings are a reminder of the old adage that you cannot have your cake and eat it too.

Jennifer Law, 'Historical Delicacies' (2002), in *Penny Siopis: Time and Again*, 2014, pp69-70

Column Cake

1982

Oil paint, found objects and wood

145.5 x 22.5 x 22.5cm

Provenance

Artist's collection





Penny Siopis with Column Cake
Market Theatre Gallery, Johannesburg, 1983



The paintings are profoundly reflexive; they refer to (and thus rework) the culturally freighted history paintings which cumulatively helped to constitute white identity in South Africa. They contest History through a parody of its own imperial conventions of possessive looking, mapping and clichéd visions of self-presence by using popular and degraded forms appropriated from illustrations in history textbooks, newspapers and journals.

Griselda Pollock, 'Painting, Difference and Desire in History: The Work of Penny Siopis 1985-1994', in *Penny Siopis*, 2005, p50



History Lesson

1990

Pages torn from South African history textbooks, and photographs
127.5 x 96cm

Provenance

Artist's collection



Ibidem

1990

Oil and collage on board

45.5 x 26cm

Provenance

Artist's collection



Siopis represents history itself as exquisite corpse. The primal image of the pile recurs throughout her work: for over three decades, the fragmented bodies, heirlooms, kitsch, object-ruins have continued to amass. These are fetishes of personal and collective memory, ever returning to and layering over an originary moment of trauma embedded deep in the Freudian unconscious, as if the rupture had always been there, under the surface, waiting to emerge.

The piles are representative of the catastrophe lurking within the body that is absolutely the language of the body, played out through allegory. Here, trauma lies in the abandonment of the body, a life discarded as debris, without lineage or heirs, thus negating the possibility of continuance through remembrance. This is an image of dissemination robbed of will and agency. It is an image of the body left vulnerable to chance.

Jennifer Law, 'Historical Delicacies', in *Penny Siopis: Time and Again*, 2014, p75, p77



Comrade Mother

1994

C-print

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

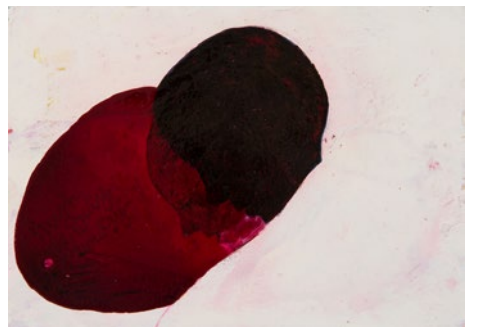
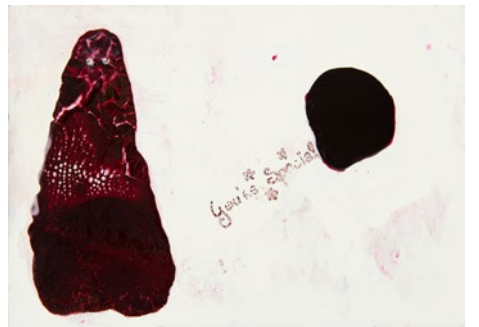
47 x 31.5cm

Provenance

Artist's collection

Comrade Mother was part of a set of six photographs made as artist pages for the journal *Atlantica* (Las Palmas) and later shown on *Black Looks: White Myths*, curated by Octavio Zaya and Tumelo Mosaka for the 1st Johannesburg Biennale, 1995.





Shame
2002-5
Set of 12
Mixed media on paper
18.5 x 24.5cm each

Provenance
Artist's collection



Three Essays on Shame was a journey into the most intimate spaces of trauma: the spaces of feminine sexuality and its abuse. The installation carried the hallmarks of Siopis's work as a whole. She is one of the few artists in the world today who can weave a material web of marks, gestures, voices, words, found things and painted surfaces to entangle the brute forces of history with the delicate threads of human vulnerability. Threading them together, so that we never see the one without the other, she challenges the viewer to share the entanglement of politically charged history and psychologically intense living. The Freud Museum did not merely house the paintings of an artist long engaged with Freudian thought as a meditation on subjectivity and the social. Instead, Siopis examined the house for its own traces, and caught up the voices, gestures and memories that inhabit the place and the legacy it archives.

Griselda Pollock, 'Remembering 'Three Essays on Shame', Penny Siopis, Freud Museum, London 2005', in *Penny Siopis: Time and Again*, 2014, p172



Installation view, *Three Essays on Shame*, Freud Museum, London



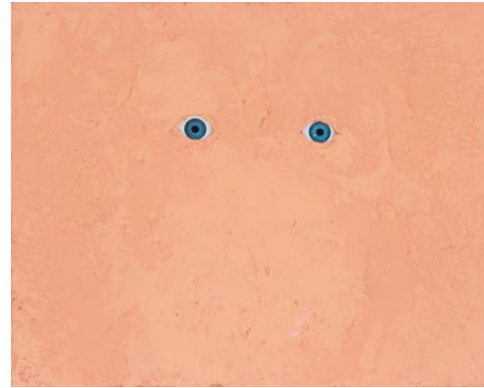
Shame involves psychological nakedness, exposure, humiliation, hurt, deep embarrassment. When shamed, we lose our dignity and integrity in full view of others – we live in a state of disgrace. But in South Africa 'shame' is also colloquially an expression of sympathy for, and identification with, someone else's public pain. If you should fall in the street people, for instance, might exclaim 'shame' or cry out 'sorry', even though they are not to blame for your fall. The Afrikaans version of this crying out at hurt is 'siestog', tellingly translated as a mixture of disgust ('sies') and pity ('tog'). Often 'siestog' implies an almost sentimental kindness.

Shame is part of conflict, and current global conflicts have reinserted a sense of shame onto the public stage. However powerfully shame is recognized and represented, it has neither a single face nor a common language. It exists rather in fragments – in the cultural detritus left over from unexpected trauma, and in the imagined spectres of fear, loathing, loss and fright which surface in our visual cultures in the wake of traumatic woundings. Mostly these spectres show only the merest of traces – intense fear or fright in a shape, a texture, colours – of what they seek to picture.

In the recent South African past, shame has been dramatized and confronted as a state of hurt and complicity in the hurt of others. Our Truth and Reconciliation Commission staged this hurt and complicity in public shows of shame, expressed in the languages of human suffering, apologetics, confession, protestations of good faith, exposures of bad faith. After this historical moment all sorts of urban legends have emerged which bespeak the state of shame, legends connecting the most public of political events to the most private and intimate of individual experiences.

Penny Siopis, artist statement for the exhibition *Shame*, Kappatos Gallery, Athens, 2003





Pinky Pinky: Green Eyes

Pinky Pinky: Hot Eyes

Pinky Pinky: Sad Eyes

2003

Oil and found objects on canvas

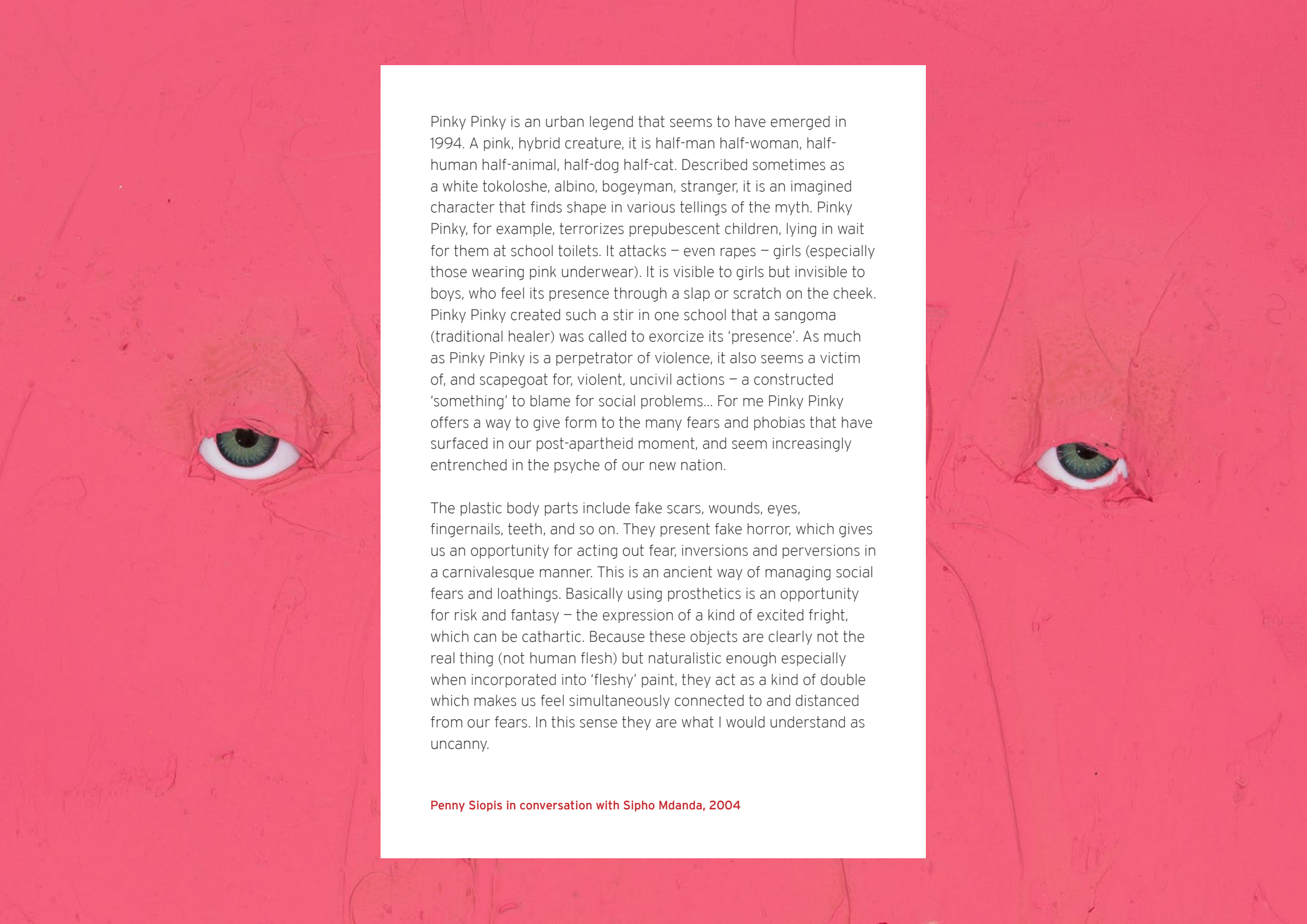
31 x 41cm; 20 x 25cm; 23 x 30.5cm

Provenance

Artist's collection

One might very well say about this kind of work that its subject is the “it looks” of the painting. Some *thing*, it seems, looks from underneath a surface, a surface which is at the same time its skin, and our sense of it being like a dead thing arises from the fact that we cannot identify with its uncanny perspective... I am speaking about the dramatization, through a certain disconnectedness of skin and its subcutaneous attachments, of a subject position that cannot entirely be comprehended from the present time or as an integrated whole.

David Bunn, 'Art Johannesburg and Its Objects', in *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis*, 2008, p150

The background of the entire page is a vibrant red color with a textured, slightly mottled appearance. Two large, realistic-looking green eyes with black pupils and white sclera are positioned on the left and right sides of the page. Each eye is peering through a jagged, irregular hole that has been cut into the red surface, giving the impression of a face or a creature looking out from behind a barrier.

Pinky Pinky is an urban legend that seems to have emerged in 1994. A pink, hybrid creature, it is half-man half-woman, half-human half-animal, half-dog half-cat. Described sometimes as a white tokoloshe, albino, bogeyman, stranger, it is an imagined character that finds shape in various tellings of the myth. Pinky Pinky, for example, terrorizes prepubescent children, lying in wait for them at school toilets. It attacks – even rapes – girls (especially those wearing pink underwear). It is visible to girls but invisible to boys, who feel its presence through a slap or scratch on the cheek. Pinky Pinky created such a stir in one school that a sangoma (traditional healer) was called to exorcize its 'presence'. As much as Pinky Pinky is a perpetrator of violence, it also seems a victim of, and scapegoat for, violent, uncivil actions – a constructed 'something' to blame for social problems... For me Pinky Pinky offers a way to give form to the many fears and phobias that have surfaced in our post-apartheid moment, and seem increasingly entrenched in the psyche of our new nation.

The plastic body parts include fake scars, wounds, eyes, fingernails, teeth, and so on. They present fake horror, which gives us an opportunity for acting out fear, inversions and perversions in a carnivalesque manner. This is an ancient way of managing social fears and loathings. Basically using prosthetics is an opportunity for risk and fantasy – the expression of a kind of excited fright, which can be cathartic. Because these objects are clearly not the real thing (not human flesh) but naturalistic enough especially when incorporated into 'fleshy' paint, they act as a kind of double which makes us feel simultaneously connected to and distanced from our fears. In this sense they are what I would understand as uncanny.

Penny Siopis in conversation with Sipho Mdanda, 2004



Pinky Pinky: Pink Eyes

Pinky Pinky: Furry Face

Pinky Pinky: Eye Ball

2003

Oil and found objects on canvas

30.5 x 40.5cm; 41 x 50cm; 40.5 x 30.5cm

Provenance

Artist's collection

The poetics to which I am devoted emphasises as much the materiality of the image as its content or concept. Viscous glue can drip in a way that makes the image – or person depicted – appear decomposing, coming apart. Glue, tinged with ink, can completely create the image, bind it as idea. Glue can cover the image like a protective second skin. Paint can slip away from the image it shapes, but it can also give the image cogent form. Colour is a seduction as much as the stain of experience, finding itself in the oddest of places.

Penny Siopis, in *Penny Siopis: Lasso*, 2007, p3

Child

2005

Glue, ink and oil on canvas

102 x 46cm

Provenance

Artist's collection





World's Edge

2010/2016

Glue, ink, and oil on canvas

150 x 200cm



Glue and ink offer me a vital, radically contingent way of working. Much of the sense of what I do is embedded in the medium itself. I am fascinated by the strangeness and openness of the dance of chance and directness in the process, and how this offers me – and the viewer – rich scope for association, imaginative projection and absorption.

It's really difficult to predict how the medium might 'behave'. The glue is opaque white when I work, gradually becoming transparent as it dries. So I can't really see what I'm doing. But I know the effects of my action, which are framed by the reference or idea that has sparked my interest. Essentially I set the conditions for something to happen on the canvas. The glue is very viscous (sticky, somewhere between solid and fluid) and this determines how the liquid ink is absorbed into or lies on the surface. Each pigment reacts differently to the glue. Working horizontally, I try to direct the flow of the medium, dripping, splashing pigment and water and tilting the canvas at different angles. The play of gravity also operates in how the canvas itself dips in sections where thick deposits of glue pool.

As the medium flows into formlessness, it dries into form, which I might then strengthen into figuration. But I try to keep figuration on the edge of formlessness, and here the medium is magical. It freezes a moment as the glue dries, giving an impression of an image in the process of becoming. It looks like and is, literally, action arrested. Where there is figuration, this effect is enhanced. There are many other extraordinary chance effects which I can harness, but only if I surrender to the process and risk having to ditch paintings that don't work.

Penny Siopis, 'FIRE, WATER, FORESTS, SWARMS', in *Penny Siopis: Who's Afraid of the Crowd*, 2011, p47

Why Do You Spurn the Good Philosopher?

2015

Glue, ink and newspaper cuttings on paper

66.5 x 50cm



Man Ray *Les Larmes*, 1932





for beggars to sell souvenirs



Who started the civil war?



The Greek government exiled



she's not Antigone!

The New Parthenon

2016

Single-channel digital video, sound

Duration approximately 15 min 26 sec

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

The New Parthenon premiered at the 2016 Taipei Biennial, themed 'Gestures and archives of the present, genealogies of the future: A new lexicon for the biennial', curated by Corinne Diserens.

<https://vimeo.com/183985675>

Siopis's work draws together the unintended and the accidental, the fabulated and the documentary via the visual, the textual and the sonic, to propose a new way of thinking historically, and to situate ready-made film fragments within the web of historical experience. Her films thus approximate a contemporary formation of 'documentary fiction' within contemporary art, or what Jacques Rancière terms 'film fables'.

In a way, having no place is the truth of Siopis's films, which not only investigate exile and geopolitical displacement, but do so, as we've seen, via a formal structure of dislocation and fragmentation. Her use of found footage, collected in flea markets and charity shops in South Africa and during travels abroad, endows her film fragments with the sense of being stranded in time, which in turn resonates with the fragmentary nature of memory. Siopis connects to important precedents in joining the aesthetics of exile and the thematics of geopolitical dislocation.

What is singular about her work is the particular filmic relation she establishes between the autobiographical and the geopolitical, which highlights historical moments of crisis when the subjectivity of difference and diaspora meets political upheaval and violence during apartheid. That relation between geopolitical event and subjective perspective is mediated in her films through the experience of reading texts, where the viewers are invited to internalize the language (often relayed in the first person), listen to the music and watch the historical footage. These texts and sounds draw us into an affective space that constructs a relationship between our own inner narratives as viewers and those presented by the film. We read her films, with the effects of light and age disturbing their surfaces, as dreamlike sequences of apparently disconnected parts. Their surfaces connect us to the materiality of the past.

TJ Demos, 'Penny Siopis's Film Fables', in *Penny Siopis: Time and Again*, 2014, p211, p216

The way in which the old footage, the grain of it, the burnt parts of the film, the scratches at the beginning of the leader tape work on us as a memory of an historical time, the outmoded technology, this disjunction between the text and the images – that's where the piece is happening. A particular technology, the editing and the sound combine to make the full experience, which is more than the historical analysis of an actual event.

William Kentridge, 'A Retrospect - Penny Siopis in conversation with William Kentridge', in *Penny Siopis: Time and Again*, 2014, pp235-6

Painting is a carnal document. Unlike photography, painting doesn't have an indexical relationship to its referent. But painting is an index of another sort, literally the trace of someone (the artist or whoever worked the painting) having acted on the surface and left tracks of that action. These tracks signal human energy, presence, arrested subjectivity, all sorts of things. I like the analogy between painting and an insect caught in amber. In this way painting is like a photograph in that it freezes time.

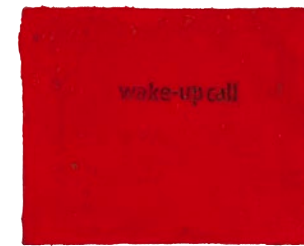
Penny Siopis in conversation with Sarah Nuttall, 'On Painting', in *Art South Africa*, 4:2, 2005, p36

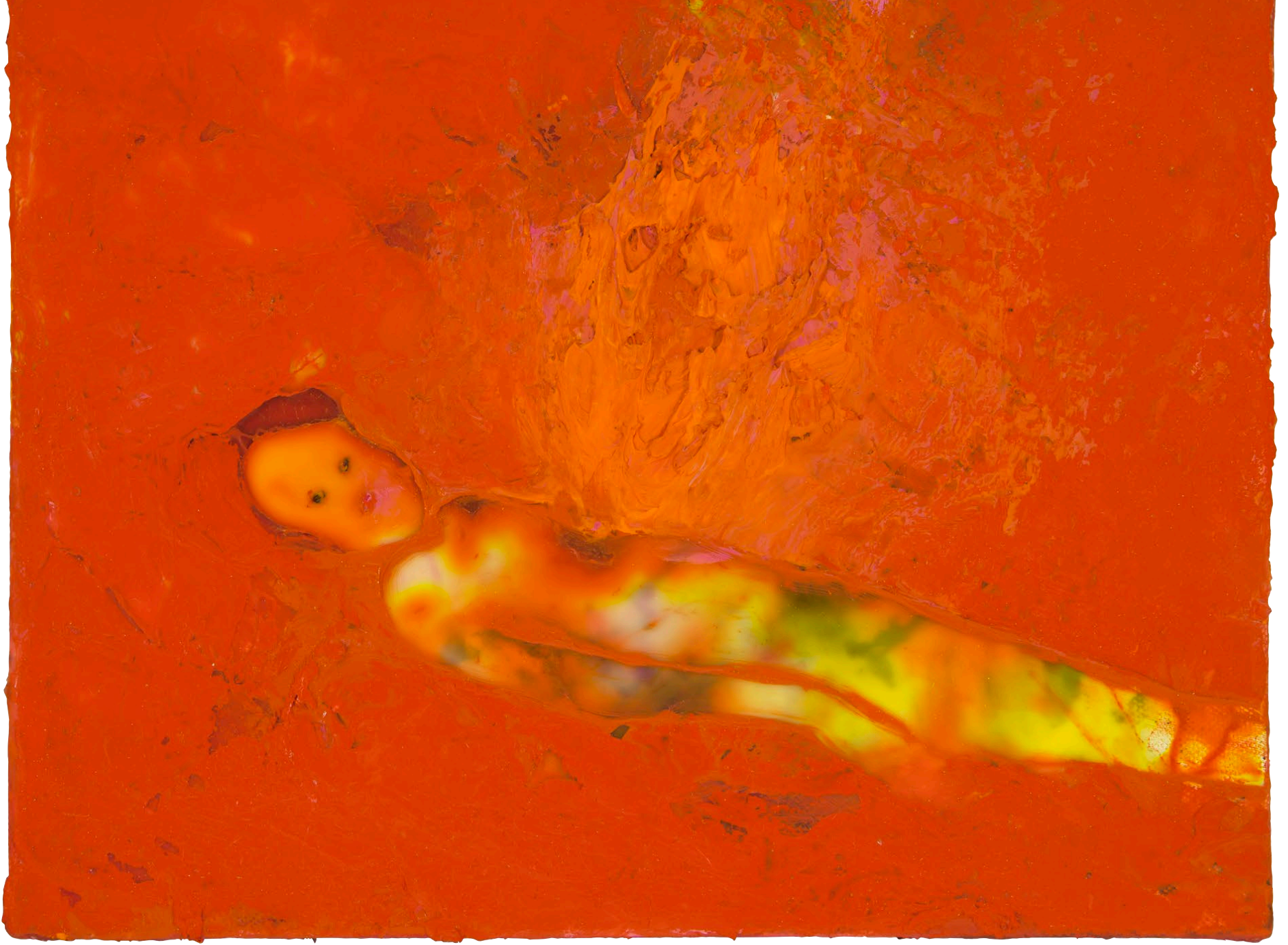
Skirmish: Wake-up call

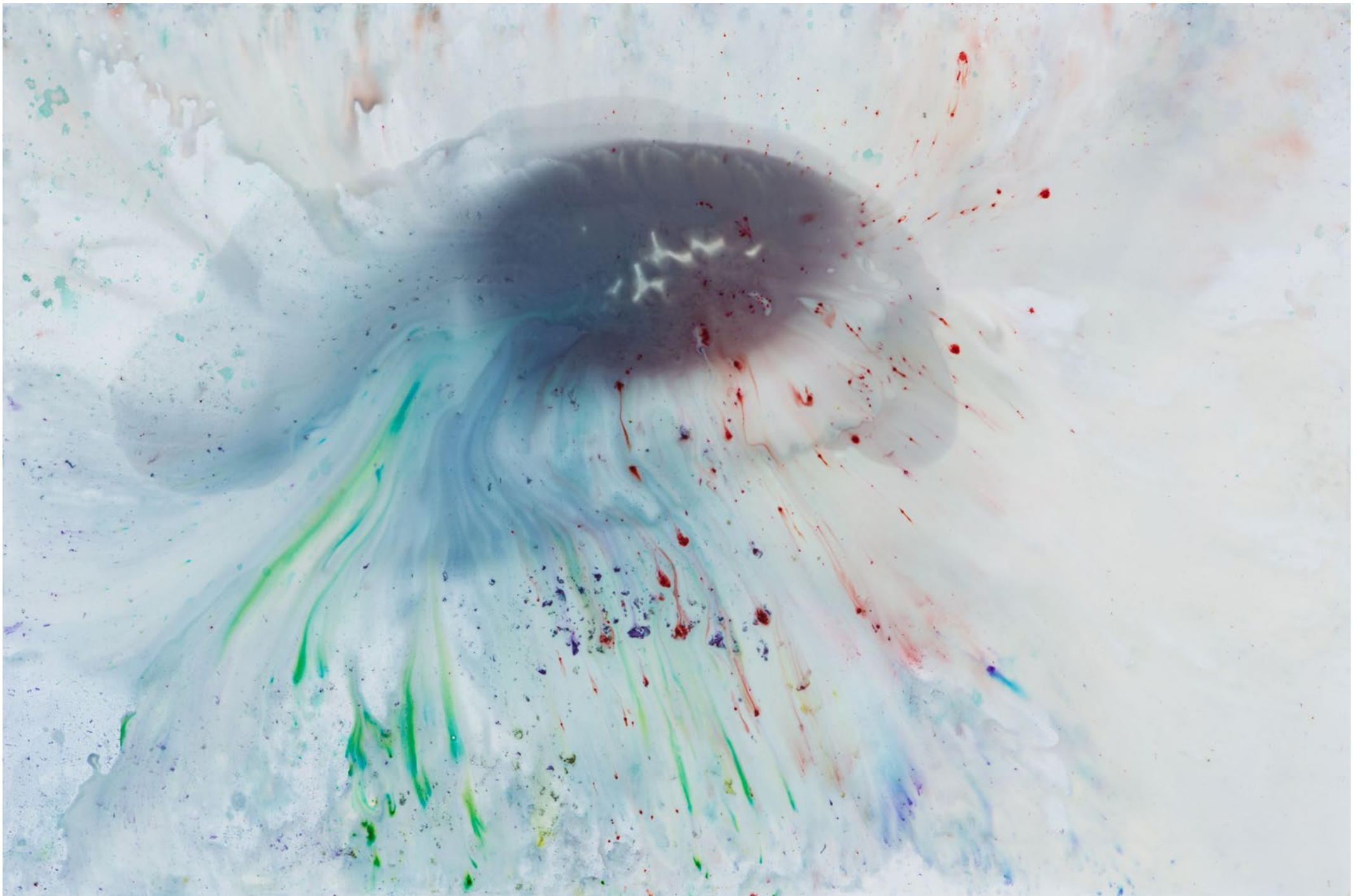
2012

Glue, ink and oil on canvas

170 x 25cm







'And then a strange thing happened'

2016

Glue and ink on canvas

100 x 150cm



Installation view

'And then a strange thing happened' (left)

The Quiet Violence of Dreams, Stevenson Johannesburg



My desire is to go as far as I can in pulling form – or materiality – away from figuration, dragging it to the verge of formlessness. This complicates how I use reference, which is sometimes the materiality itself and sometimes shapes that one might recognize as a face, or a hand. For me there's a tension between reference – sometimes seen as figuration – and materiality. There's something in this tension that hooks what can't be spoken in language into painted form, which we might be able to apprehend, but without being sure of what we read.

Penny Siopis, 'Figuring the Unspeakable', in Penny Siopis: Time and Again, 2014, p140

Matter's Swerve

2016

Glue, ink and oil on canvas

180 x 125cm



Many of these images are at once violent, erotic, tragic and beautiful. They are atavistic and elemental as well as social and analytical at the same time. Many allegorise deep human experiences like collapse, disorder, decay and formlessness. Some images emerge out of the vicissitudes of the medium itself. What happens when ink and glue act on a surface is unpredictable and exciting. This unpredictability creates a vital tension or energy between form and formlessness, balancing them on a knife edge.

The process involves the mix of ink and glue and sometimes water through splashing, dripping and moving the canvas to direct the flow. These materials then congeal into different configurations on the surface. I work with the canvas flat on the ground and then on the wall – horizontal to vertical – and work more. Back and forth, up on the wall and down on the floor. Sometimes I try to direct these configurations into recognizable images, other times I just let the medium have its way. I also throw ink or glue onto the surface in a way which emphatically registers the energy of my gesture. The openness, experimentality and risk this involves is something I love. And the 'accidents' that happen as a consequence. What occurs in one work can't be repeated in another.

The drying time of the glue depends on the thickness of the layer. There is a strong element of surprise in this, partly because the glue is white and opaque when wet and only becomes transparent when dry. Only then can I see what has actually happened to the painting. It's not all chance, of course. I have long experience with manipulating material, and this experience becomes a kind of second nature that pushes and directs me when I can't see how the opaque surface is going to settle down. You could say that I set up the conditions for chance to operate along certain lines. I have always been intensely interested in materiality as idea and sensation, as something more than merely a means to make an image.

Penny Siopis, 'On a Knife Edge: Penny Siopis in conversation with Sarah Nuttall', in *Penny Siopis: Paintings*, 2009, p3



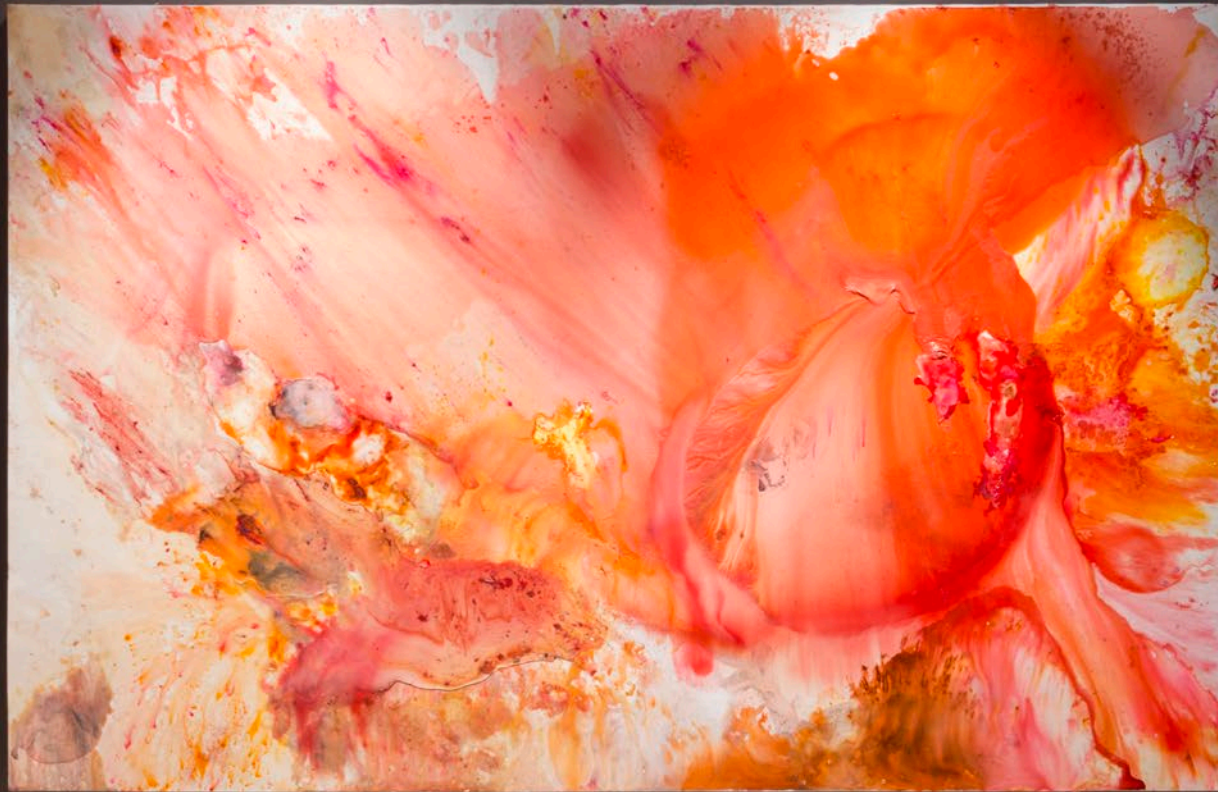
'He studies the colour of my dark eyes and writes down all the details'

2016

Glue and ink on canvas

198.5 x 303cm





Installation view

'He studies the colour of my dark eyes and writes down all the details'

The Quiet Violence of Dreams, Stevenson Cape Town

In Siopis's work, splitting time is a way of throwing the future open to new lines of development. The open-ended but relentless force of futurity undoes all stability and identity. Nowhere is the force of futurity more clearly manifested than in the relation of matter and form. With Siopis, the artist is engaged in a constant attempt to find form in formlessness. Form is not simply a reflection of matter.

Matter shapes form, but is not reducible to this function. In the drama of matter and form, what is also interrogated is the movement of the whole past – of fragments of the past – into the present, the fidelity to some kind of memory, and its coalescence and crystallization around particular modalities of the psychic and the affect.

And yet, there is no radical formlessness. There is always an operation of selection in which something of the artist – or a shape – is imposed on the matter. In Siopis's films, elements are retained which would normally have been discarded: sequences of broken scenes, dust specks, light flares. Segments and sequences of images that have nothing to do with the unfolding narrative make the film into a thing – a thing to be looked at rather than looked through.

Form, then, becomes the way in which the thingness of the thing asserts itself, drawing the artist into the space of the unarticulated. That space of the unknown triggers curiosity and creativity. It opens up to alternative forms of knowing. Its presence triggers other associations, experiences, connections and sensations. Matter and form speak before they are turned into a visual object, an image. Here again, the artist must resort to specific strategies which allow the emergence of some kind of form that is not imposed. A splash or a dribble will produce a trace or a point which is accidentally drawn by the hand. This trace or point is not an image as such. It only becomes an image as an effect of deliberation; as a result of the artist's decision to leave it there. It is only as an after-effect that such a trace or point will become the image of a bee or a fish.

Various intriguing images have haunted the artist for a long time, appearing and reappearing in her consciousness as both strange and familiar. The moment of recognizing such images is part of the creative process. Formlessness is not form gone wrong or wild. The matter that has not yet been given a pictorial shape must be read as matter. The image emerges at the moment when the artist begins to mark the matter, making it speak with a distinctive voice. For matter to become an image, it must be given a body, energy. It must be put in relation to other things.

Achille Mbembe, 'Becoming Alive Again', in *Penny Siopis: Time and Again*, 2014, pp39-40



Spirit Matter

2016

Glue, ink and oil on canvas

76 x 61cm





Gravity's Wave
2016
Glue, ink and oil on canvas
200 x 125cm





The colours are hot and I think they do reflect the fragility of the body and the emotional states that we connect very directly to the body. Deeply though I think I love hot colours because they express my need to assert Eros over Thanatos, even though I know they are metaphorically joined at the hip. I am driven by life and energy in the face of counter-pressure to balance, to return to, stasis or inertia.

Penny Siopis in conversation with Achille Mbembe, 2005

Persephone's World

2016

Glue, ink and oil on canvas

36 x 46cm



Material Acts

2016

Glue, ink and oil on canvas

125 x 180cm



The 'new materialism' asks us to be more open to the vibrancy of matter. As Elizabeth Grosz says, 'we cannot help but view the world in terms of solids, as things. But (then) we leave behind something untapped of the fluidity of the world, the movement, vibrations, transformations that occur below the threshold of perception and calculation and outside the relevance of our practical concerns. (Yet) ... we have ... access to this profusion of vibration that underlies the solidity of things.'

Matter is alive. Moves in relation to forces, human and non-human. Fluid in space and time.

Unseen by the naked eye, does not mean it does not exist. Ontology not representation. In painting too.

The matter of glue.

Work on the ground. Close gap between subject and object. No palette, no brush. Everything oriented horizontally. Viscous glue. Liquid ink. Create the conditions for something to happen.

Wet. Slippery. Gravity pulls. Liquid runs. Stuff starts to stain. Glue heats up. Emits fumes. Shows force. Vibration. Things congeal. Opaque. Impossible to make out what is going on. Painting blind. Drying starts. Becoming transparent. Ghost forms appearing. Now transparent. Something looks like something. The painting painted itself!

Now lean it against the wall. Pull subject and object apart. Vertical axis. Can't help but address the human as erect. Eyes on top. But there is no right way up. No upside down. No figure, no ground. Simply stuff that looks like an image.

All those vibrations. Now shapes. The tracks of their movement. Suspended animation.

Diagonal yellow-orange. Solid lightening flash? Gravity's doing. A blue accretion. A pooling that looks like a pool. A thing, a sign. Specs of pigment. Like eyes. Go on, make a face! But it is already there. In the open. Alterity. It feels alive. The painting looks.

Penny Siopis, 2016



'It is like in the beginning'

2016

Glue and ink on canvas

105 x 150cm



Vital Looks

2016

Glue, ink and oil on canvas

76 x 50.5cm







Note 44

2015

Glue, ink and oil on paper

18.5 x 27cm



Note 62

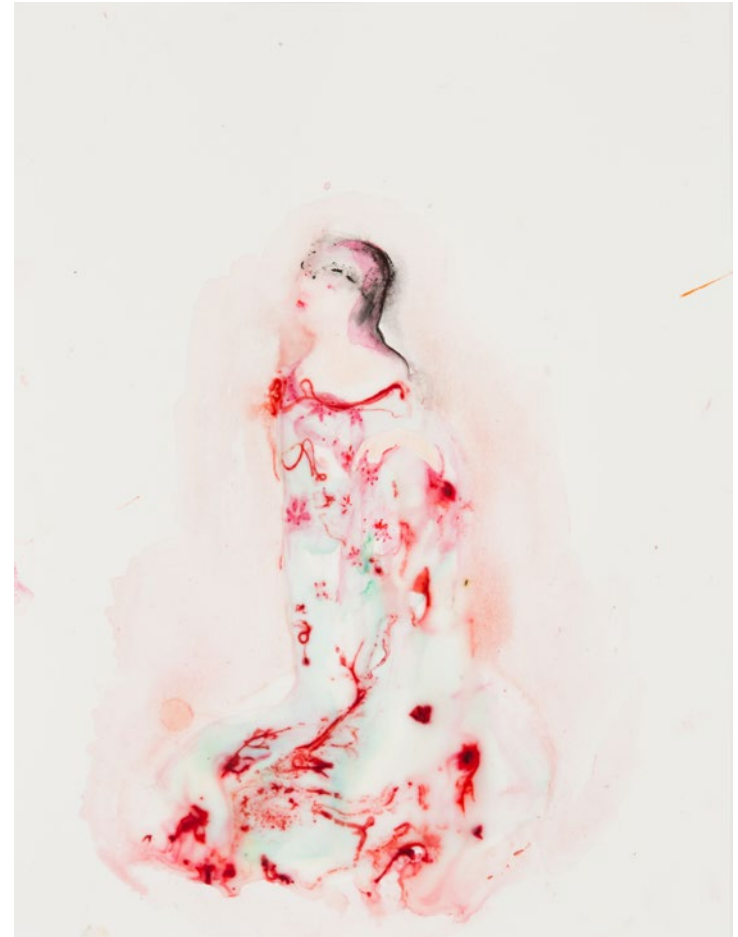
2015

Glue, ink and oil on paper

39 x 29.5cm



Note 46
2015
Glue and ink on paper
30.5 x 20.5cm



Note 45
2015
Glue and ink on paper
31 x 22.5cm

Don't stop. You can flood the picture still. It's never really dry. Put it in the sink. Let the water gush. Hold it down. The gum will rise, and let things in. Vermillion, cadmium and scarlet too. Whatever's hot and close to hand. But now for some cerulean. Be careful; don't wash away the eyes in all that blue. What, the Mediterranean? Please, no! Not to be lost at sea. Don't worry; here they can be made again. It's just a page. A skin of glue, a few specks of ink. Pithy punctuations. It's painting, after all.

Penny Siopis, *Grief*, 2016



Note 72

2016

Glue and ink on paper

50.5 x 41cm

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