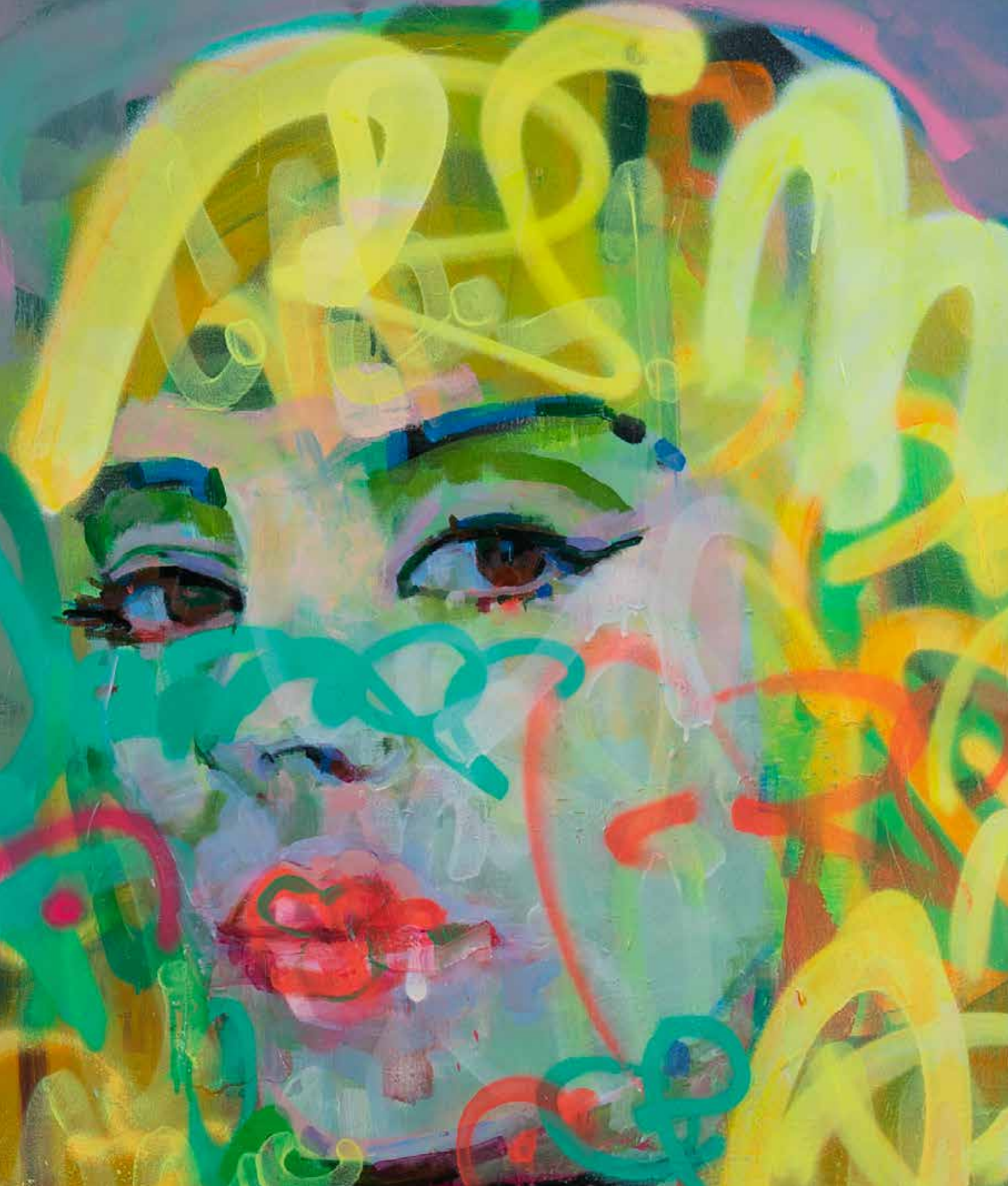


# AGAINST INTERPRETATION?

Sanell Aggenbach  
Bonita Alice  
Emalie Bingham  
Wilma Cruise  
Claude Jammet  
Kilmany-Jo Liversage  
Turiya Magadlela  
Lucinda Mudge  
Tanya Poole  
Lady Skollie



COMING SOON

## *AGAINST INTERPRETATION?*

Sanell Aggenbach | Bonita Alice | Emalie Bingham  
Wilma Cruise | Claude Jammet | Kilmany-Jo Liversage  
Turiya Magadlela | Lucinda Mudge | Tanya Poole  
Lady Skollie

EVERARD READ | LONDON





## THE ART OF DISCONTENT

Some time in the opaque future, when an intrepid scholar revisits the history of 20th century cultural discourse, the name Susan Sontag will probably loom large and luminescent. Her voracious writings galvanised a generation of new-wave intellectuals, artists and cultural activists to confront the hegemony of the capitalist order, resist the excesses of conspicuous consumption, defy the repressive pedantry of bourgeois liberalism and reclaim a sensuous aesthetic, unhindered by the aridness of intellectual analysis. Writing in the 1960s – an era bristling with febrile revolutionary zeal – Sontag described interpretation as ‘the intellect’s revenge upon art.’ She advocated that ‘in place of a hermeneutics, we need an erotics of art ... we need to see art, smell it, feel it, take it for what it concretely is!.’ And it is her 1964 essay ‘Against Interpretation’ – one of her most authoritative tomes, among a breathtakingly prolific output of essays and ruminations – that forms the fulcrum of this Everard Read exhibition, reinforcing the prescience of her polemics and its paradoxes.

Aptly called *Against Interpretation?* the exhibition comprises works by 10 women artists from South Africa and the diaspora, exploring diverse media and grappling with a plethora of semantic concerns – both personal and iconological. They straddle diverse identities, as women, as artists and as global citizens aligned to, but not necessarily belonging to specific places and socio-cultural spaces.

Of the 10 artists selected – Sanell Aggenbach, Bonita Alice, Emalie Bingham, Wilma Cruise, Claude Jammet, Kilmany-Jo Liversage, Turiya Magadlela, Lucinda Mudge, Tanya Poole and Lady Skollie – some have produced works specifically attuned to the central conceits of *Against Interpretation* while others had produced their works prior to the invitation. On the one hand, this could affect our ‘readings’ of them and the discourse they generate when juxtaposed against one another, within the conceptual and physical contexts of the exhibition title and gallery space. But, on the other hand, each of the works on display stand defiantly independent of curatorial prescription.

Simply put, the aim of this show is not to impose a neat thematic ‘fit’ between the works; but rather for the viewer to experience the ‘luminousness’ of the objects ... and resist the urge to decode their meaning ... to resist interpretation which, inevitably, is reductive and

gets in the way of really looking, feeling and hearing.’

In other words, *Against Interpretation?* offers a sensuous, enriching engagement with art in a space of contemplation, free, momentarily, of the hustle, hype, hurt and upheaval that all too often characterise the worlds of life and art.

But always the twain shall meet.

Take the works by Lady Skollie, for example. They embody the contradictions of her brash nom de guerre: the ‘lady’ – one of the class and gendered norms associated with aristocracy and refinement, versus the ‘skollie’ – the Afrikaans slang for South Africa’s criminal underclass. Through watercolours and ink as well as inchoate materials like crayon, Lady Skollie produces imagery that defies stereotypes and taboos, while confronting issues of race, sex, pleasure, consent, violence, and abuse. Fluid, whimsical, and laden with florals, floating bananas, papayas and cleaved apples – playfully crude metaphors for penises and poesies, – they are reminiscent of Walter Battiss’ erogenous iconography. The latter’s depiction of erotic imagery was as much a defiant riposte against the censorship of apartheid, as it was a precocious foray into the garden of forbidden delights. Similarly, in Lady Skollie’s works that also reference prehistoric rock art, her imagery is playfully transgressive.

But is it possible to embrace Lady Skollie’s paintings, as Sontag advocates, principally from a sensory perspective, without referencing her personal history or confronting her depictions of subcultures of sexuality, dispossession and ‘otherness’? Can we ignore the current isms of interpretation that continue to dog our consciousness of ourselves and our place in the world, like neocolonialism, feminism, racism, sexism and even neoliberalism? Can the works really immerse us in their own viscera, allowing us to simply revel in the formal exuberance of it all, without venturing into the trepidatious terrain of history and identity politics?

A similar question may be asked of our responses to Turiya Magadlela’s work. The initial impression of her ‘paintings’ is of gloriously-hued abstractions, variously ebullient or sombre. Yet her material – nylon pantyhose – and method – cutting, stretching and stitching – evoke unavoidably loaded, intimately feminine associations, not only of ‘women’s work’ but of skins, eroticised underwear and



gender-based violence. These associations are especially augmented within the context of the #MeToo movement and South Africa's ongoing scourge of femicide. They evoke semantic nuances that could not have been conveyed as effectively by using paint, thereby shifting the gaze from a 'caress of form' to an unsettling recognition of what might lurk beneath the skin<sup>2</sup>.

The polarities of wounding and healing are recurring refrains in the works of Bonita Alice's poignant *Sorry* series. Their gossamer surfaces mimic a decorative screen, the fragment of a patterned tablecloth, serviette or doily. Yet on closer examination they resemble gauze bandages camouflaging bruises and not-yet-healed wounds. Simultaneously, as Alice herself suggests, the screen serves as a confessional, a safe space, a site of remorse, retreat, isolation and self-protection. But it can also serve as a site of restoration. Do we delve into the hermeneutics of Alice's work to access its psycho-social content, examining concepts of intimacy and how these intersect with feminist discourse around sexuality? Or do we remain in a safer realm, cushioned in its formal prowess?

Therein lies the paradoxical 'rub' of Sontag's thesis. She believed that sensory appreciation of form can be separated from the complexities of content; that the language of art is most eloquent when conveyed in its own dialect and not through turgid, dense theory. 'What is important now is to recover our senses,' she urged. 'We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more'<sup>3</sup>.

In that sense, she was exactly on point, displaying an uncanny prescience of our post-millennial era. Today's concept/content-driven world is weighted by serial repetition and sensory overload, anaesthetising or bludgeoning us senseless. Sontag's writings are a reminder to allow art to breathe, to let it speak for itself through the sensuality of its own dialect – a language that interpretation, instead of elucidating, serves all too often to obfuscate or deform.

Of course, how we look at art depends on angle of vision, informed as much by our own personal 'triggers' – scars 'n all – as it does to the artists' intent. From the partial prism of my own sensibility, I view the act of looking as an inextricable part of the *ménage à trois* between artist, artwork and audience, through which form, content, intention, context and meaning flow like bodily fluids or collide in states of constant entwinement and uncoupling.

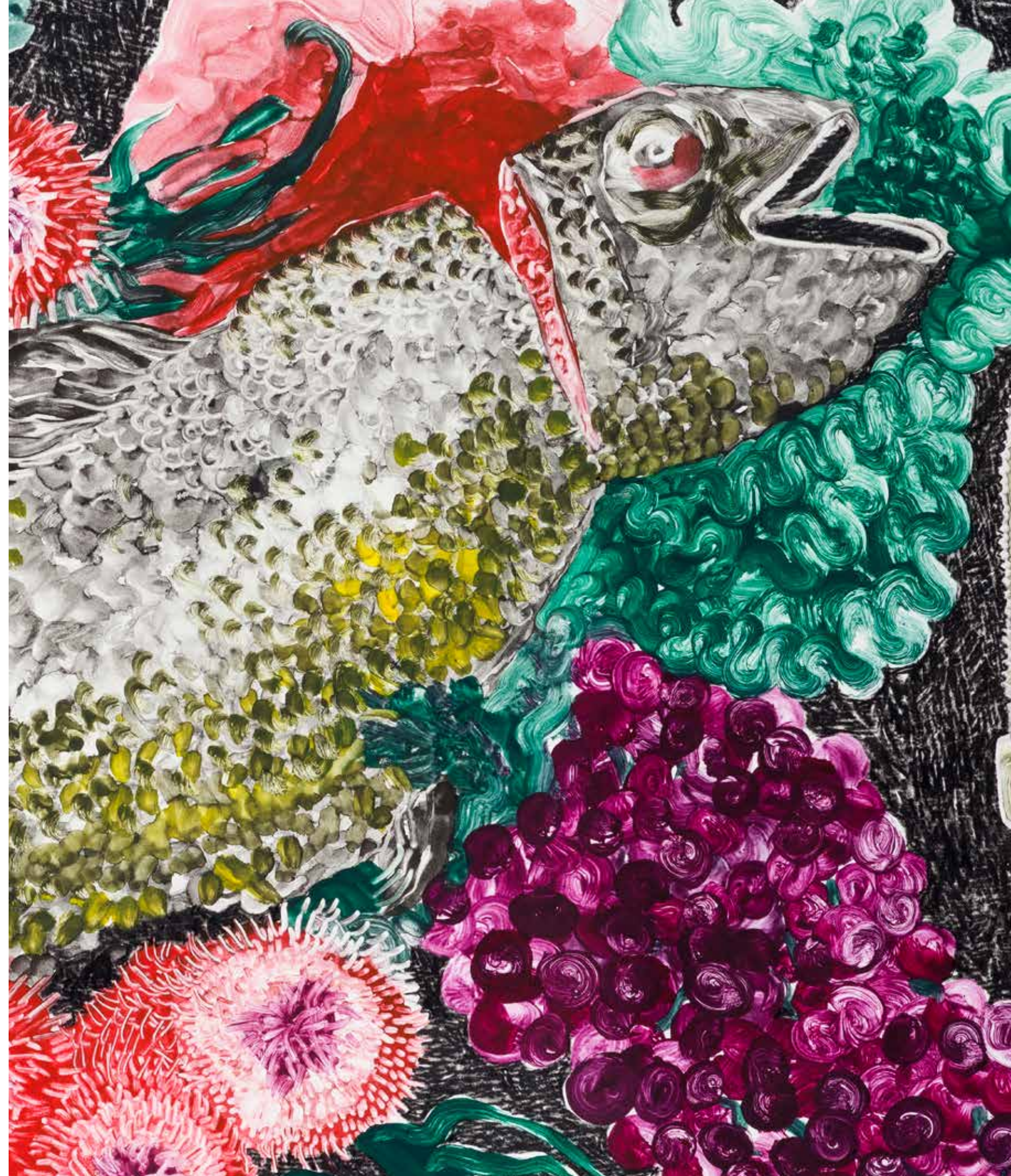
These polarities enrich the works chosen for *Against Interpretation?* The networks between instinct and intellect, impulse and thought, nature and culture, for example, are encapsulated in the works of Tanya

Poole and Claude Jammet, in vastly different incarnations. Drawing on her childhood fascination with genetics, biology and biochemistry, Poole has produced extracts from *Ancient Codes* – a collection of large-scale ink-on-paper works inspired by the natural environment. Depictions of intricately hewn weavers' nests and spiders' webs are interwoven with ganglia of branches, evoking associations of rootedness, belonging, trees of life, ecosystems, neurology, genealogy and ecological histories. They reinforce the notion of an innate, archetypal nexus between body, mind and all of nature's creatures, suggesting a way of looking that builds up hermetic relationships, instead of breaking them down.

Unlike Poole's semi-abstract depictions, Claude Jammet's figurative oil paintings provide more literal pointers to the interconnectedness of all life forms, but also to their potential for destruction. Rendered in luminescent hues, her shell works speak of fragility, vulnerability, protection and power. They are archetypal symbols of the psyche, of what artist Alessandro Papetti describes as: 'an archaeology of her disquieted soul ... an urgent need to close the circle, a pilgrimage toward hallowed ground and precedent lives'<sup>4</sup>.

In some respects, the quest for this hallowed ground is doomed to magnificent failure. We can no longer take unfiltered pleasure in nature's pantheon without acknowledging the effects of the Anthropocene era. Fractured by wars, inequality and injustice, it is a world that surpasses even the dystopian vision of George Orwell's 1984. This post-apocalyptic locality serves as the backdrop to Wilma Cruise's body of works, called the *Eric Arthur Blair* (aka George Orwell) suite of monotypes. Inhabiting an atrophic landscape, bereft of animals – apart from the opaque imprint of a four-legged creature – Cruise's spectral figures appear amorphous. They are de-individualised, mute and disconnected forms inhabiting spatial silos, paradoxically in an era defined by globalisation, digital connectivity and a cacophony of social media.

In the *Aesthetics of Silence*, written in the same year as *Against Interpretation*, Sontag wrote: 'The art of our time is noisy with appeals for silence'. One recognizes the imperative of silence, but goes on speaking anyway.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, quiet contemplation is the starting block – and possible end point of the way in which we should look at art. But even the most intimate work belongs to the culture that framed it as much as to its creator. The most ineffable of responses requires a language of expression. The act of engaging, even when expressed in primal grunts, entails some form of interpretation and choice of







language is accompanied by the baggage of personal experience. What is interpretation anyway but an attempt to commune with art and a method of revealing what a work of art says? This is the content that comprises the narratives of our lives. It informs our personal experiences and our responses to art, through objects, motifs, shapes and colours that serve as throwbacks to archives of *memento mori* – as repositories of pain and pleasure, both conscious and subliminal.

Harbouring her own set of contradictions, doubts, discontent and fears of obsolescence, the peripatetic Sontag of that time can sometimes seem imperiously quixotic. She applied arguably antiquated standards of the past – truth, beauty, transcendence, spirituality – to the new, defiant strident art of the 60s and 70s. Never an academic but not a full blown activist, she was at the intellectual forefront of a resistance movement that glowed with the promise of transformation and transcendence, but which never quite translated into a revolution. Although she was anti-bourgeoise, she enjoyed the accoutrements of white, intellectual privilege and celebrity. As the critic A.O. Scott observed: ‘She wrote almost exclusively about white men. She believed in fixed hierarchies and absolute standards. She wrote at daunting length with the kind of unapologetic erudition that makes people feel bad.’<sup>6</sup>

Without seeking to blunt the machete she brandished with such force during the 20th century, I can’t help wondering to what extent Sontag’s weaponry of words continue to wield the weight they once did; whether they still exude the prescience of a visionary or the redundancy of ideals in an era characterised by cybernautics, conspicuous consumption and cynicism. We must accept that Sontag was inextricably entwined with the currents and currency of her own era.

If we simplistically divide the 20th century history into two parts – pre- and post-1968 – those who came of age in the latter era had a fundamentally radical relationship with power and critique. Yet we cannot invest them with present-day attitudes. As observed by New Yorker art critic Peter Schjeldahl in ‘The Art of Dying’: ‘Contemporary art consists of all art works, five thousand years or five minutes old, that physically exist in the present. We look at them with contemporary eyes, the only kinds of eyes that there ever are.’<sup>7</sup>

Unlike the rapid-fire soundbites that characterise much of contemporary art criticism today, where immediacy is valued over eloquence and volume over substance, Sontag would not write about visual culture as an afterthought. She wanted to unite art and life, as well as shape a future aesthetic. Yet, ironically, the writer who warned against the stultifying impact of theory onto the fluidity of aesthetic

form would become, decades later, an integral component of the critical theory curricula reserved for the academic elite.

It is not my intention to deconstruct Sontag’s epic intellectual trajectory that has elicited vastly conflicting responses. Over the decades, thousands of scholars – devotees and detractors alike – have done so more successfully, without panel beating her critical prowess into simplistic aphorisms; nor slavishly applying a paint-by-number exegesis of her central theses. But what seems, unequivocally, an essential component of Sontag’s thought was that art, like humanity should remain inextricably sensitised to this world, with all its contradictions, profanity, pain and pleasure.

The loftiness of Sontag’s vision, combined with a canny street-eye view, are encapsulated in the works of Kilmany-Jo Liversage. Tutored in traditional art hierarchies, Liversage fuses Renaissance portraiture with a strident urban sensibility. Her psychedelic palette is reminiscent of the era in which Sontag’s writings flourished. But Liversage’s focus is on the here and now, on inner-city alleyways and sites of both decay and gentrification, where the tag, squiggle and scrawl of graffiti carry as much gravitas and value as the high art of her forebears.

The pace of history is also amped up to the speed of life in Emalie Bingham’s edgy, hand-drawn abstractions. Her canvases seem to spill over with cryptographic scribbles, and jittery lines, their shapes morphing into mitochondria and nerve endings, evoking both a sensory and semantic network of narratives. Like Poole and Jammet, they suggest the fundamental interconnectedness of all things, whether through the matrices of botany, biology or geology. And the immediacy of their edgy, energetic brushstrokes harks back to Abstract Expressionism – an art movement that exerted a major influence on Sontag – with its biomorphic imagery transmuted into personal codes.

It is a truism that art – just like our responses to it – cannot be viewed as separate from the prism of its own historical distortions and imposed hegemonies. Through the medium of ceramics – a material formerly associated primarily with craft – Lucinda Mudge sardonically confronts and subverts these biases. Using hand-mixed glazes, she painstakingly pays obeisance to the traditional techniques that, for millennia, have shaped the vessel’s form and its functionality. She also maximises the metaphoric scope of pottery – a material that is fundamentally fragile and prone to fracture. And meaning is inscribed, literally – sometimes scrawled violently – onto the medium. Through messages drawn from pop culture and South Africa’s socio-political landscape, Mudge’s vessels see-saw between polish and profanity,



humour and hurt, striking in a place where a laugh and gasp are indistinguishable.

And can we appraise the works in *Against Interpretation?* without acknowledging the still-volatile discourse surrounding art history over the last 50 years? Indeed, much of the official history of art has been a viciously contested turf war fought between mark-making and meaning, between image and concept, between the artists, historians and critics invested in maintaining the traditional hierarchies of art – the divisions between high and low, art and craft – and the iconoclasts intent on tearing them down. Art should intrinsically speak for itself, but today it has become a site of arbitrage – its ‘currency’ determined in much the same way as hedge funds and equity derivatives. The principal arbiters of market value are indubitably the critics, auctioneers and gallerists. In both *Against Interpretation* and her *Essays on Silence*, Sontag railed against the power wielded by these custodians of connoisseurship.

But the authoritative voice of the critic is waning, courtesy of the digital age with its smart phones and ubiquitous internet access. Today, everyone has a platform to express an opinion, albeit articulated along the likes, loves or hates of an emoji-driven lexicon. Sontag’s texts certainly forewarned of this era in which authentic awareness of the world would transmogrify into shallow worldliness; consciousness of materiality would become crass materialism and the genuine desire for selfhood would be replaced by the self-obsessed pursuit of the selfie.

This is possibly the most debased parody of Sontag’s plea for an erotics of art into, what Scott describes as ‘a vapid hedonism, confirming ‘the direst prophecies of ‘On Photography,’ which saw the unchecked spread of visual media as a kind of ecological catastrophe for human consciousness.’<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, the ubiquity of the posed photograph, not as truth teller but as a narcissistic tool, has become one of the defining tropes of our times. But Sanell Aggenbach’s ‘inverted portraiture’ – paintings of photographic negatives – parodies the popularised role of the captured image as a signifier of status and identity. The poses of her subjects are reminiscent of a specific typology of female visual representation popularised both in the history of painting and photography. Yet although clad in their bikinis, they are not presented as overt objects of arousal. Aggenbach suggests that because the images are derived from refracted light, they might speak to Sontag’s notion of ‘experiencing the luminousness of the thing in itself’.

But there is a ‘light’ irony to this suggestion. The negatives have

not been fully processed. Their gloss is consequently muted and their ‘forms’ rendered in muddy ‘soft-focus’ hues. All personal or racial markers like hair, skin or facial features are smudged. As such, they are depicted as eponyms of femininity and shadows of a sexuality that, rather than sensual, are subdued and as unthreatening as they are anonymous. Blank spaces to be ‘filled in’, these images invite interrogation of the very notion of interpretation itself.

Perhaps all that we can hope for by engaging with art in general and specifically, this exhibition, is truthfulness – a trait that seems outlandishly naive in a world dominated by the alternative fact, in which individuality and integrity are in danger of drowning in a swamp of smug consensus. Today’s world has become the embodiment of philosopher Jean Baudrillard’s concept of simulacrum: ‘Not that which conceals the truth, but rather the truth which conceals that there is none’<sup>9</sup>. All that matters is appearance, botoxed and buffed up into a spectacle, its brittle essence camouflaged by its shiny, seemingly unshatterable surface.

Maybe all that we can expect of art is its ability to reach, stretch, transgress and redefine itself, and to confront human consciousness, particularly during times of crisis and discontent. Had Sontag witnessed this time, she would have winced. Had she seen *Against Interpretation?*, she might well have rejoiced.

*Hazel Friedman , February 2020*

Notes

1 Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1966), 4-5, collection of Concordia University Webster Library.

2 ‘Caress of form’ is the phrase used by film theorist Laura U. Marks, in her 2002 book *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*.

3 Susan Sontag, ‘Against Interpretation’, *Evergreen Review* vol. 8, December 1964, 76-77 and cover image, collection of Concordia University Webster Library.

4 [www.everardlondon.com](http://www.everardlondon.com) › exhibition

5 Susan Sontag: ‘The Aesthetics of Solitude’ in *Studies of Radical Will*, chapter 1. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969; Anchor Books, 1981; Picador USA, 2002.

6 How Susan Sontag Taught Me to Think – The New York Times [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) › interactive › 2019/10/08 › magazine › susan-sont

7 [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com) › magazine › 2019/12/23 › the-art-of-dying

8 How Susan Sontag Taught Me to Think – The New York Times [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) › interactive › 2019/10/08 › magazine › susan-sont

9 Quoted from Mark Poster in *Simulacra and Simulations* - Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1988, pp.166-184









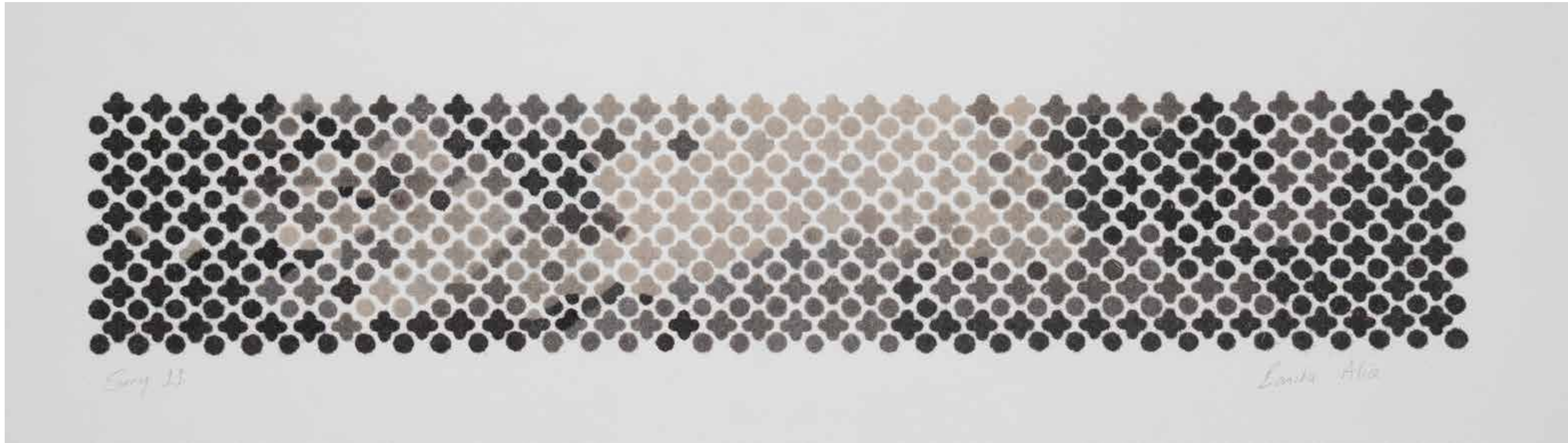


Sanell Aggenbach  
*Nocturne Swimmer*  
 oil on canvas  
 98 x 73 cm

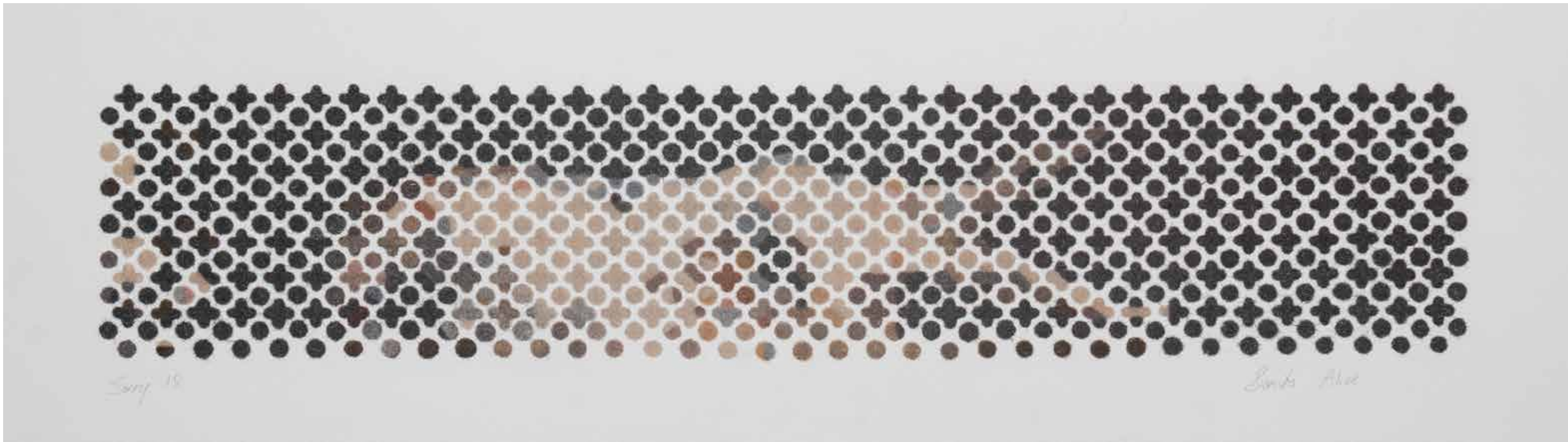


Sanell Aggenbach  
*Nocturne Gardenia*  
 oil on canvas  
 98 x 73 cm



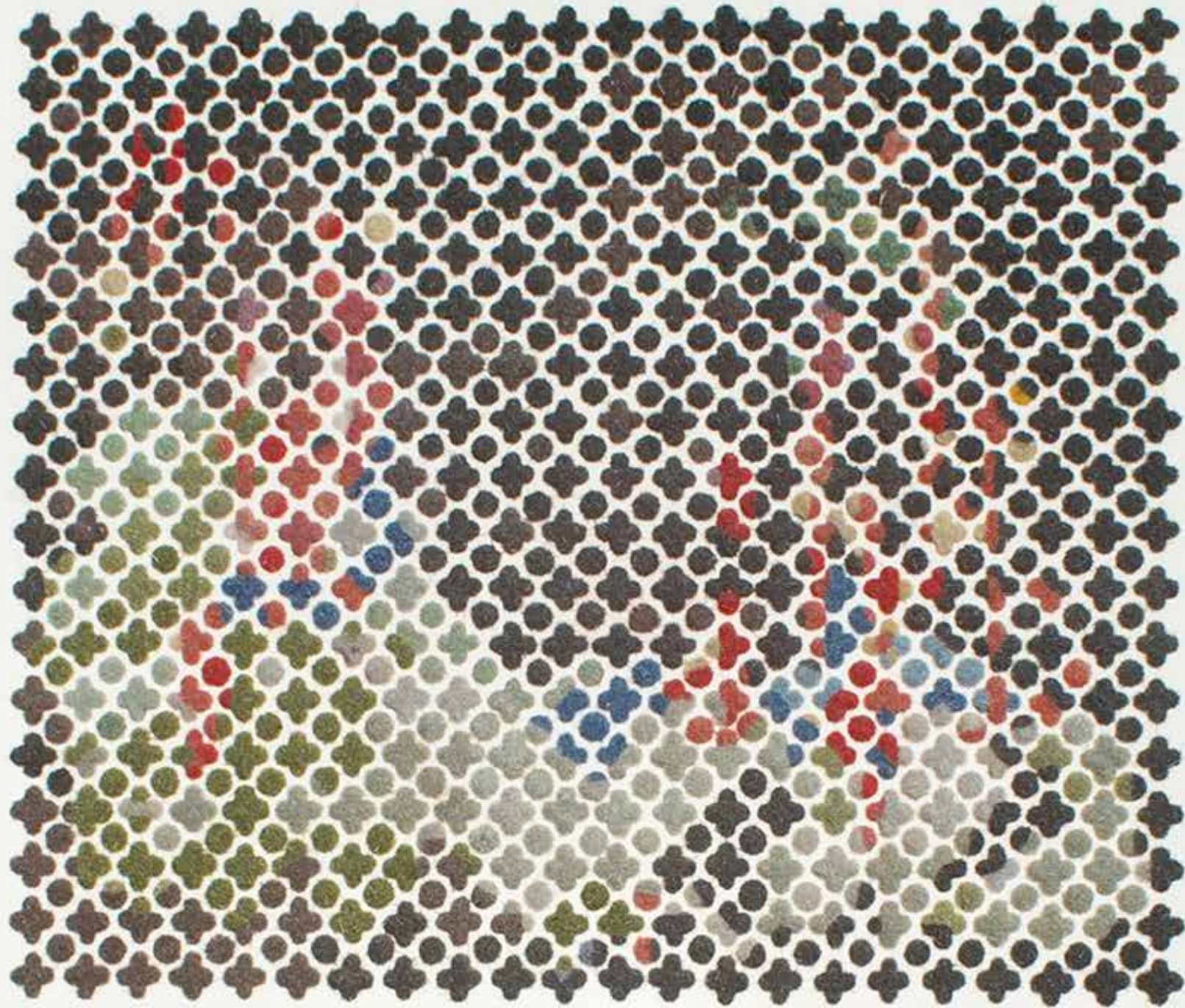


Bonita Alice  
*Sorry XI*  
 woolen dust & archival glue  
 on fabiano 300 gsm paper  
 28 x 76 cm



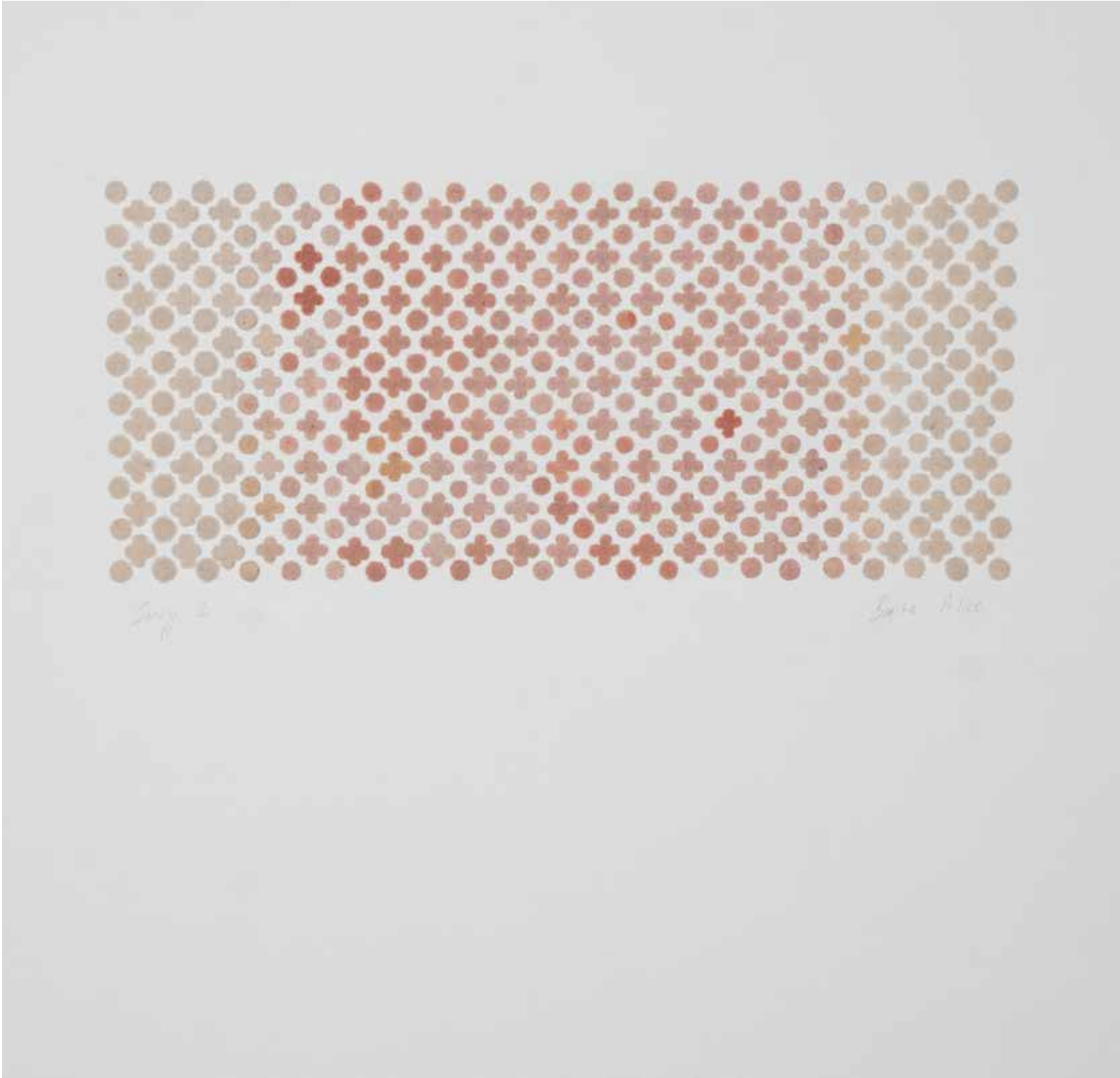
Bonita Alice  
*Sorry XII*  
 woolen dust & archival glue  
 on fabiano 300 gsm paper  
 28 x 75.5 cm





Bonita Alice  
*Sorry IV*  
woolen dust & archival glue  
on fabriano 300 gsm paper  
70.5 x 50 cm



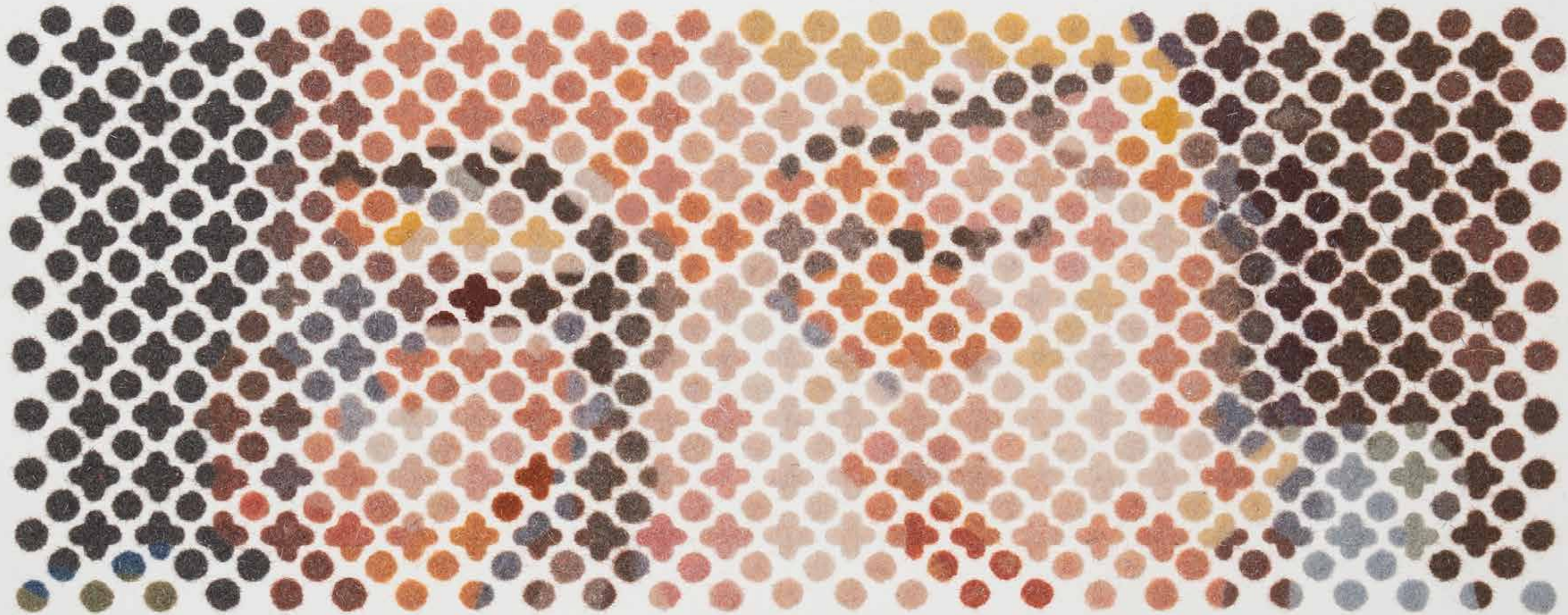


Bonita Alice  
*Sorry I*  
woolen dust & archival glue on fabriano 300 gsm paper  
60 x 47.5 cm



Bonita Alice  
*Sorry XVI*  
woolen dust & archival glue on fabriano 300 gsm paper  
56 x 76 cm





*Sorry XV*

*Bonita Alice*

Bonita Alice  
*Sorry XV*  
woolen dust & archival glue on fabiano 300 gsm paper  
56 x 77 cm





Emalie Bingham  
*Rebellious Qi I*  
mixed media on canvas  
90 x 120 cm





Emalie Bingham  
*Grace and Veg (with a side of bacon)*  
 mixed media on canvas  
 140 x 140 cm



Emalie Bingham  
*Chicken or Fish?*  
 mixed media on canvas  
 100 x 100 cm





ABOVE AND RIGHT (DETAIL)

Emalie Bingham

*Kidney-16 (Huang Shu)*

mixed media on canvas

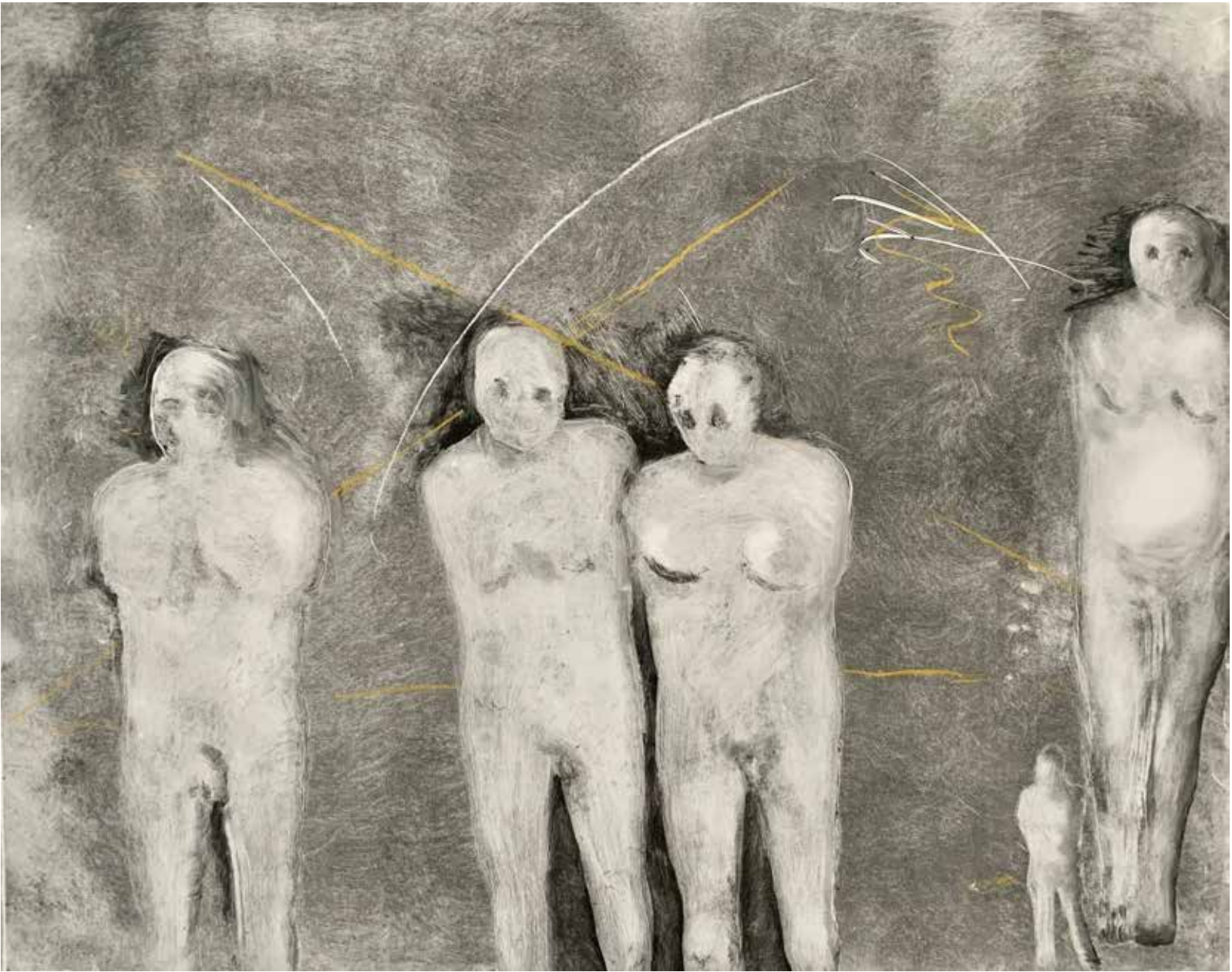
100 x 100 cm







ABOVE AND PAGE 16 (DETAIL)  
Wilma Cruise  
*Eric Arthur Blair Suite III*  
monotype  
78 x 93.5 cm

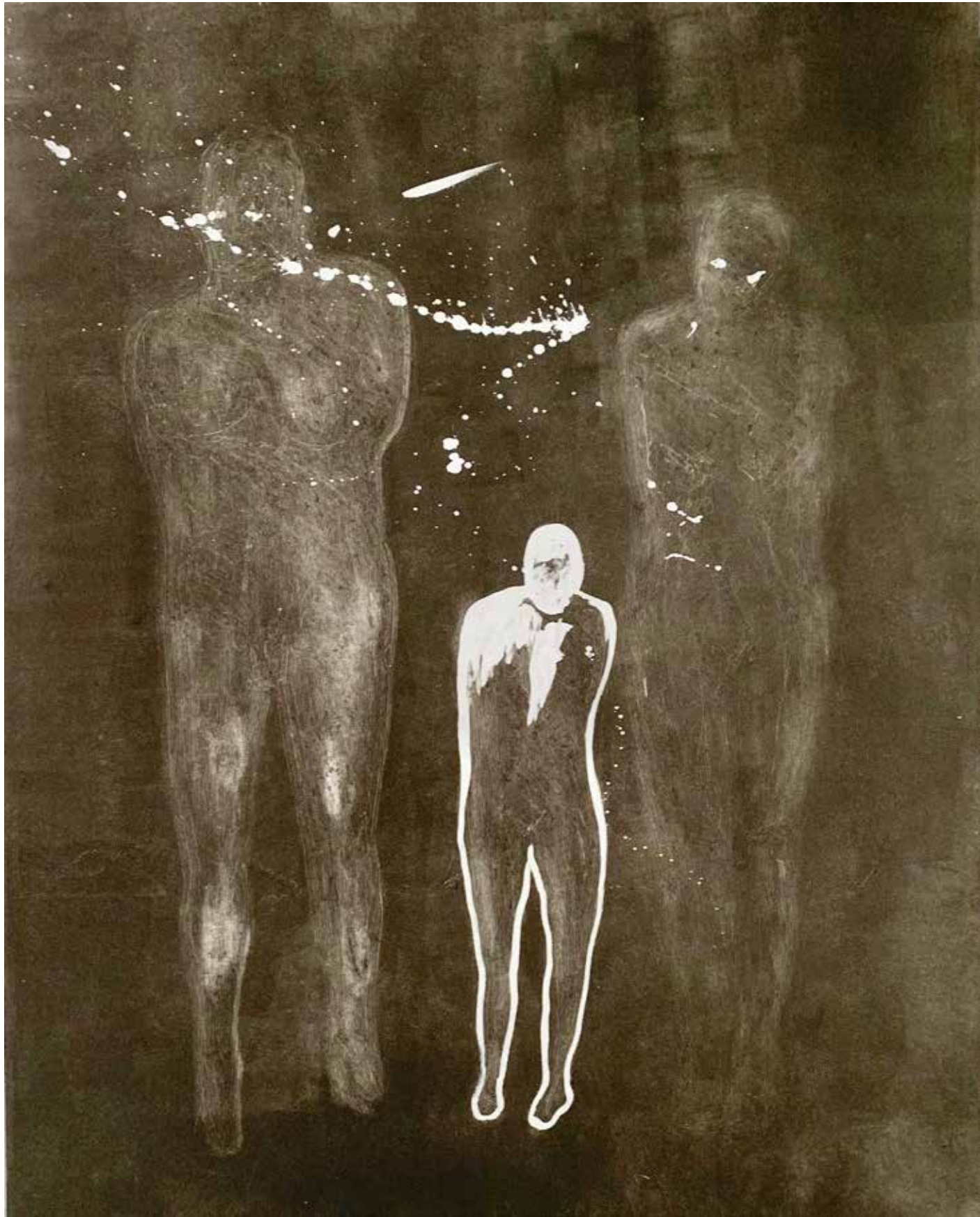


Wilma Cruise  
*Eric Arthur Blair Suite IV*  
monotype  
72.5 x 92 cm

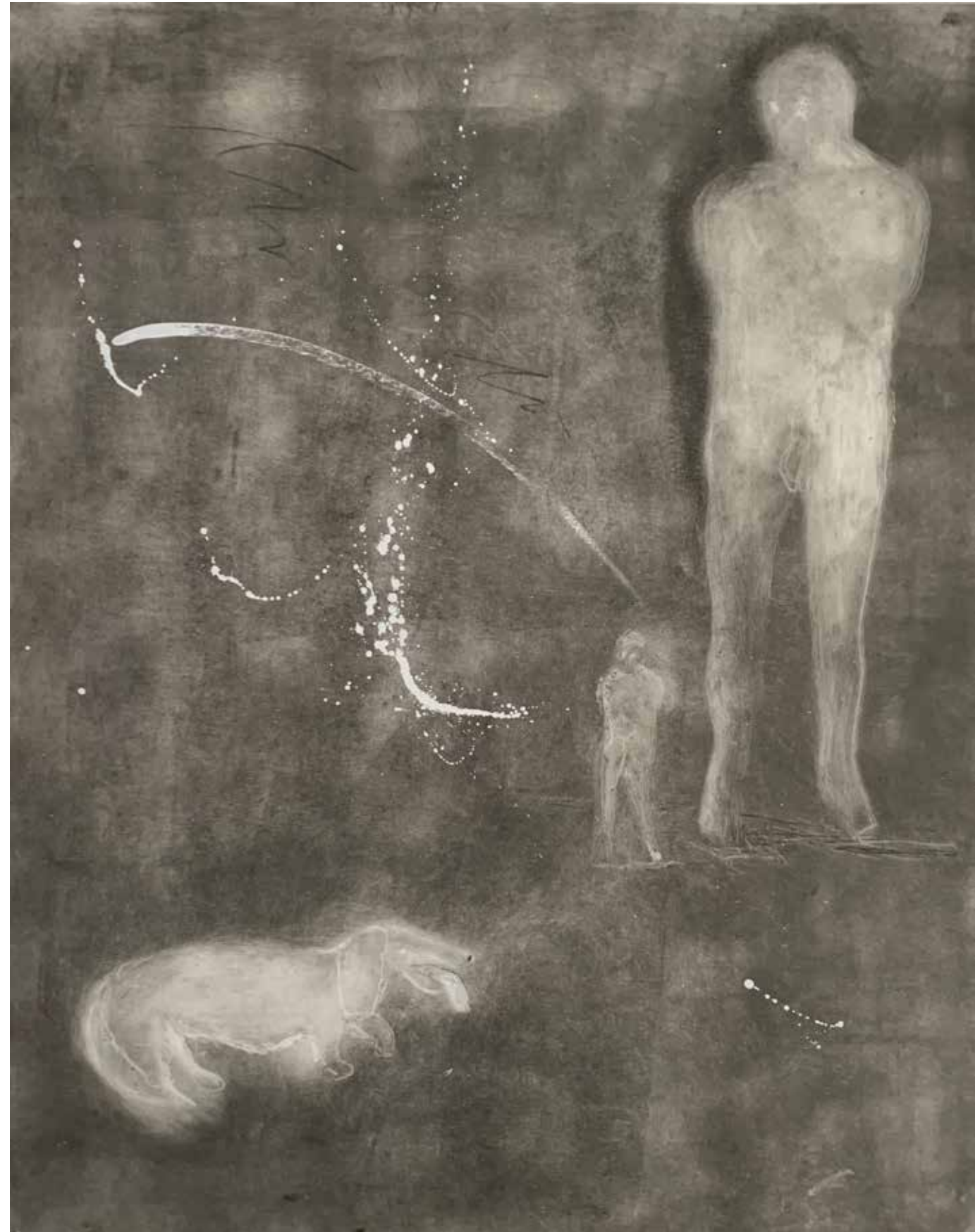






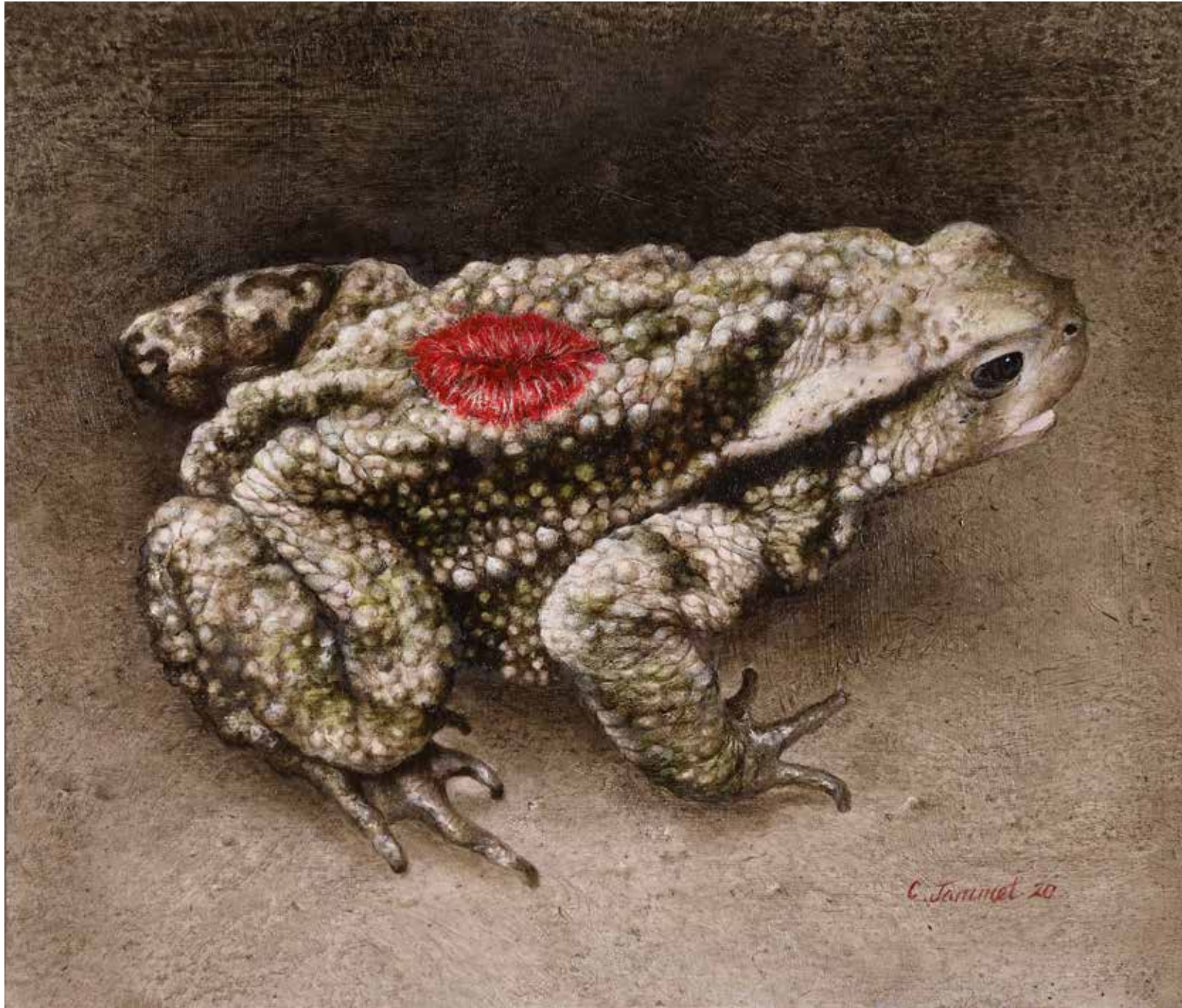


Wilma Cruise  
*Eric Arthur Blair Suite V*  
 monotype  
 89.5 x 75 cm



Wilma Cruise  
*Eric Arthur Blair Suite VI*  
 monotype  
 113.5 x 93 cm



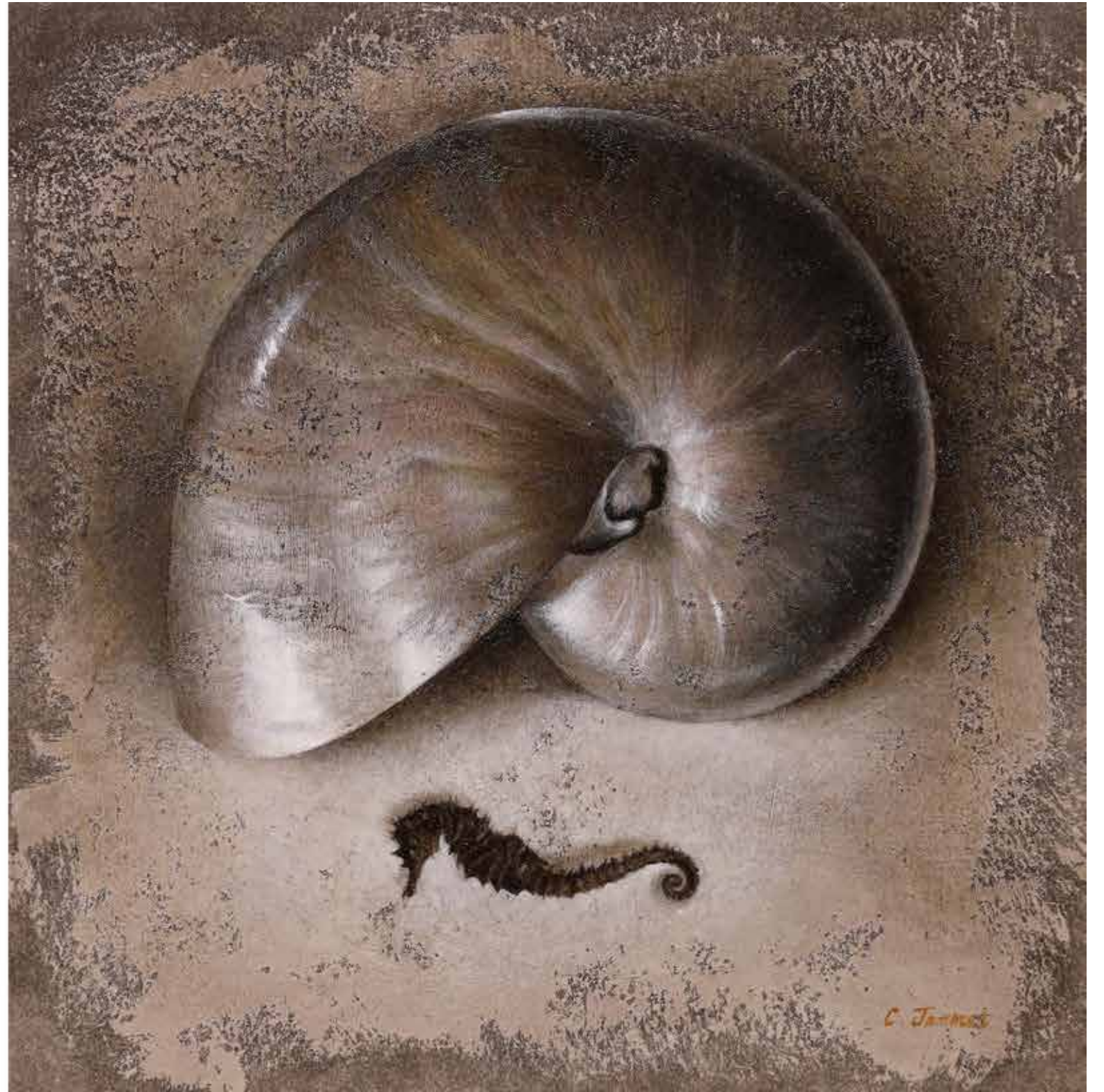


Claude Jammet  
*Kiss Kiss*  
 oil on paper mounted on canvas  
 22 x 25.5 cm



Claude Jammet  
*Eina!*  
 oil on paper mounted on canvas  
 50 x 50 cm



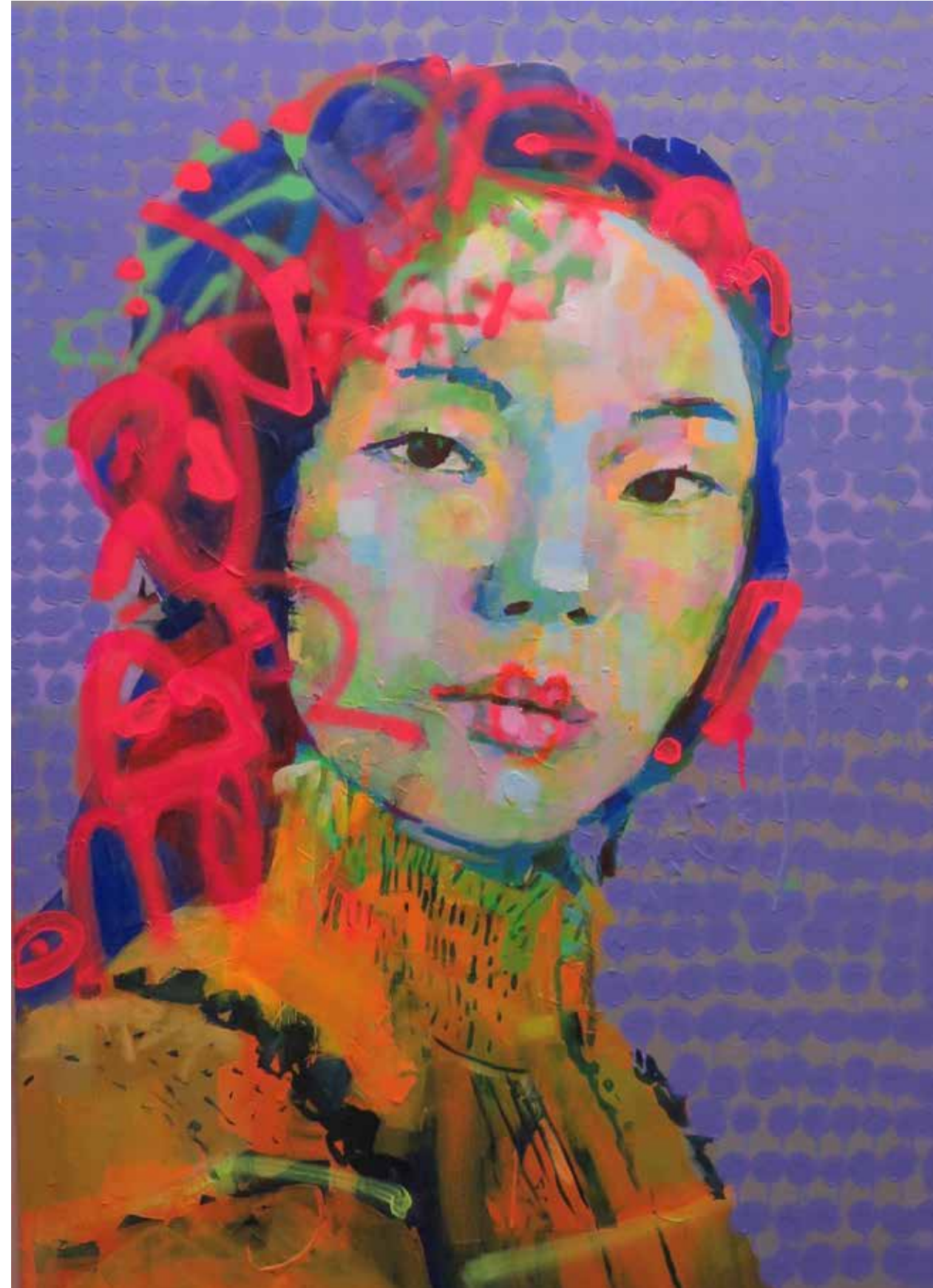


Claude Jammet  
*Oceana* (diptych)  
 oil on paper  
 25 x 50 cm





Kilmany-Jo Liversage  
*SALOME919*  
 acrylic and spray paint on canvas  
 120 x 120 cm



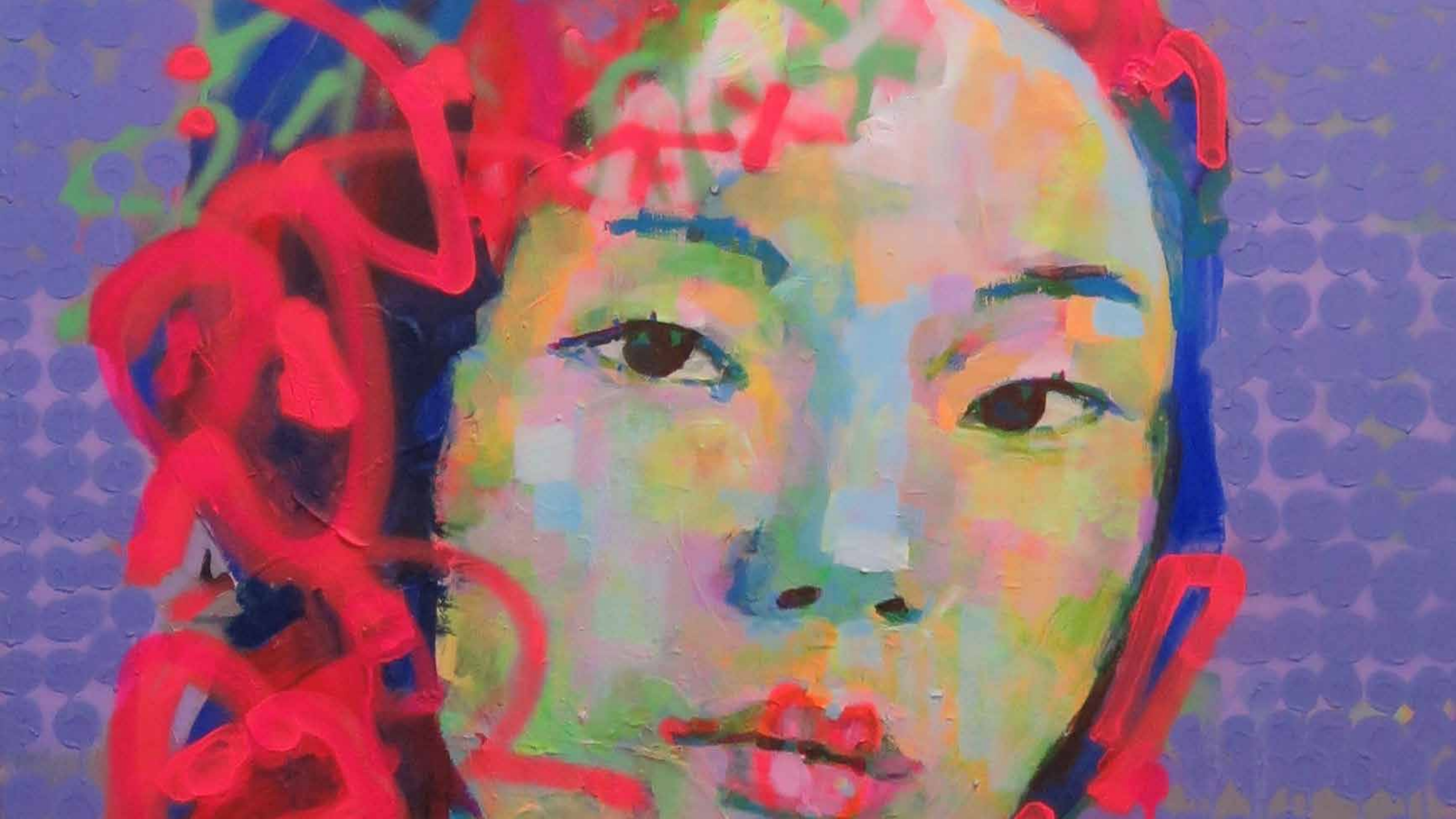
LEFT AND PAGE 22 (DETAIL)  
 Kilmany-Jo Liversage  
*VALLURA320*  
 Acrylic and spray paint  
 on canvas  
 150 x 100 cm





Kilmany-Jo Liversage  
*PORQUA320*  
acrylic and spray paint on canvas  
150 x 150 cm









Turiya Magadlela  
*Litha (Light) II*  
 nylon and cotton pantyhose and sealant on canvas  
 120 x 120 cm



Turiya Magadlela  
*Umjuluko ofihliwe ngokucwebezelayo II*  
 nylon and cotton pantyhose and sealant on canvas  
 120 x 120 cm





Lucinda Mudge  
*Here is the deepest secret*  
 ceramic  
 77 cm



Lucinda Mudge  
*Lookielookie*  
 ceramic, gold lustre  
 58 cm





Lucinda Mudge  
*Journey into the night*  
 ceramic, gold lustre  
 45 cm



Lucinda Mudge  
*Help me you idiots!*  
 ceramic  
 60 cm





Tanya Poole  
*Accumulation*  
 ink on fabiano  
 135 x 150 cm



Tanya Poole  
*Currents*  
 ink on fabiano  
 135 x 150 cm





Lady Skollie  
*The Burning Bush – always good enough to make a change,  
 small enough to doubt the change*  
 monotype  
 75 x 103 cm



Lady Skollie  
*Easter Morning Preparations*  
 monotype  
 75 x 103 cm



## SANELL AGGENBACH

b.1975, Cape Town, South Africa



Sanell Aggenbach’s work deals primarily with the intersection of history and private narratives by considering the process of recall and interpretation. Her work displays an accomplished virtuosity as she moves comfortably between the various disciplines of painting, printmaking and sculpture.

Aggenbach’s work is focused mainly on subverted feminine tropes and feminist themes. In her solo exhibition, *Bend to Her Will*, she subtly and mischievously reframed the hobbyist art of flower arranging by appropriating the traditionally masculine art of Japanese Ikebana. Her sculptural work, primarily in bronze, parody Western masterpieces from Michelangelo, Henry Moore, and Warhol to Pierneef and take a refreshing look at these pivotal references from a woman’s perspective. This can be shown in her latest exhibition *The Heart Has Many Rooms* (2019) where her *Madre Pieta* offers a more playful reimagining of Michaelangelo’s original: The Madonna and Child replaced by two plush toys cast in bronze.

Aggenbach states: ‘*My earlier works relied heavily on processing found imagery, rethinking associations and creating new fictions. These works were often an amalgamation of historic references with private narratives and forms part of a process of investigating pathologies and deconstructing the past. My primary intention is to construct subtle paradoxes by introducing a quite humour, either formally or materially.*’

Aggenbach currently lives and works in Woodstock, Cape Town. Her explorative work has secured her many achievements including winning the Absa L’Atelier Award in 2003. Her work is represented in numerous public and private collections, including Sasol, Absa, Spier, SABC, Red Bull (Austria), the South African National Gallery, 21C Museum in Kentucky (USA) and Anglo Gold.

Sanell Aggenbach  
*Nocturne Swimmer*  
oil on canvas  
98 x 73 cm



Bonita Alice  
*Sorry XVI*  
woolen dust & archival glue on fabriano 300 gsm paper  
56 x 76 cm

## BONITA ALICE

b. 1962, Johannesburg, South Africa

Bonita Alice studied at the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town in South Africa and taught in several Fine Art Departments until 2003. She spent 12 years in London before moving back to South Africa in 2020.

Alice investigates aspects within psychology and psychoanalysis in her work, which she believes are useful in understanding our relationship with the environment, as well as with animals. Alice’s interest in animal studies remains a focus in her thinking and artistic practice. Alice’s latest body of work the *Sorry Series* is rooted in the idea of unconscious selective awareness ... that *we know only as far as we choose to*. The idea at the heart of psychoanalytic thinking; is that we repress into the unconscious that which hurts us too much. The idea still seems the best route to understanding ourselves, and our species’ biggest and smallest struggles:

Alice explains further, ‘*Our discomfort in this interaction is revealed in our entirely unreliable acceptance of our duty of care for the shared environment, as if we can’t bear the weight of our interdependence and at times reject the idea entirely. Our insistence that what we call ‘nature’ is something existing only outside ourselves reveals a relationship of conflict and anxiety. Any attempt to break with something of which we are so essentially part is inevitably troublesome. The lattice form that gives structure to each image in the Sorry series recalls a decorative screen like those that partially obscure an adjoining space, as in a confessional or harem; both places of theatricalised separation.*’

Bonita works with delicate fine wool dust on paper. Her visual references include Japanese and Chinese prints, as well as Indian miniatures.



EMALIE BINGHAM

b. 1987, Cape Town, South Africa



Emalie Bingham  
*Grace and Veg (with a side of bacon)*  
mixed media on canvas  
140 x 140 cm

As a child, Emalie Bingham played with wild clay from the garden, built gyms for her hamsters out of recycled materials, and took every opportunity to draw, whether obsessively decorating schoolbooks or documenting live events.

Although she works across a diverse range of media, drawing has always been a central tool in her creative practice – a survival technique she developed from a young age. For Bingham, drawing provides both refuge and stimulation, detachment from and an intense connection to the world around and within her. She describes it as the ultimate meditation, enabling her to both accept her limitations and use her practice to transcend them.

Bingham uses pattern-making and surface-design as a medium through which she interrogates societal patterns and conventions. Her paintings are striking compositions created from her hand-drawn designs, which are often edgy, satirical, humorous and self-reflexive.

Bingham completed her Fine Arts degree at Rhodes University in South Africa. Her work is represented in the Nando’s and the Spier art collections and in many other private collections in South Africa and around the world

WILMA CRUISE

b. 1945, Johannesburg, South Africa



Wilma Cruise  
*Eric Arthur Blair Suite VI*  
monotype  
113.5 x 93 cm

Wilma Cruise is a South African sculptor and visual artist. She works mainly with fired clay in her renderings of life-sized human and animal figures. Several of her ceramic sculptures have been successfully translated into bronze editions. Her sculpture installations and exhibitions are often accompanied by works on paper – large format drawings. She has also completed several series of print editions.

Themes explored in Cruise’s work include the interface between humans and animals and existential conditions of muteness – silent, internal battles in the search for meaning.

Cruise has had over twenty solo exhibitions, curated others and completed several public works including the National Monument to the Women of South Africa at the Union Buildings, Pretoria and The Memorial to the Slaves in Cape Town.

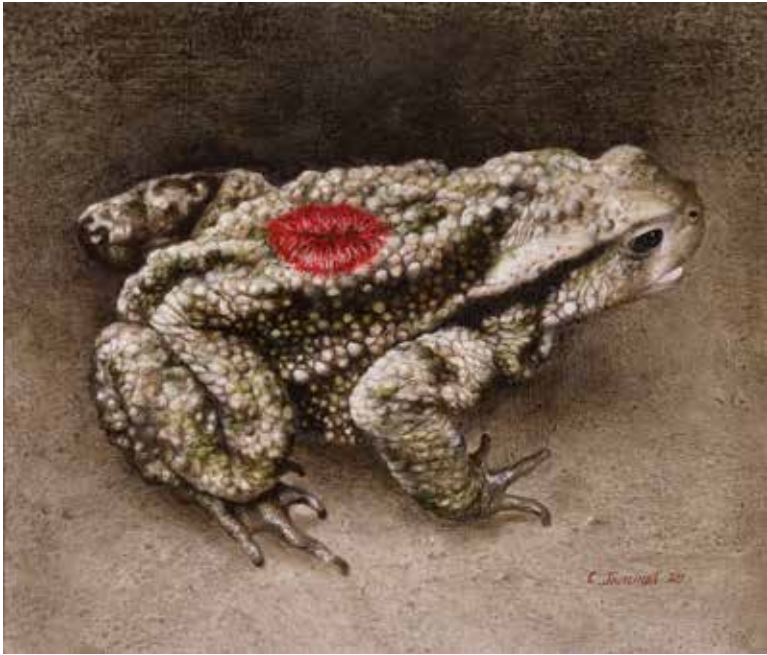
Her work is represented in public, corporate and private collections throughout South Africa. She has participated in the Havana Biennale, the Florence Biennale and the prestigious 7th Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale in Seoul, Korea.

Cruise recently completed her doctoral studies at the University of Stellenbosch in the field of art and animal ethics. She is a fellow of Ceramics South Africa and writes extensively in the field of ceramics.



## CLAUDE JAMMET

b. 1953, Zimbabwe



Born in Zimbabwe of French parents, Claude Jammet grew up in Kenya, India, Japan, in addition to long sojourns in France, before settling in South Africa where she began her career as a professional painter. Over the past two decades Jammet has lived and worked in Genoa, Italy.

Jammet is self-taught as an artist. Painting for her is a requirement; the chosen means by which to communicate her experience of the world. Over a career spanning more than four decades, her work has alluded to the perfection of nature and man, from whichever culture. Her subject matter has encompassed portraiture but also still-life and the quotidian. Giving her attention to people and objects, it seems, is a way of carrying with her beloved people, places and things, recording traces of her roots and offering a meditation on the fleeting and transient nature of all things.

Jammet has exhibited in some 20 solo exhibitions, as well as group shows in galleries across South Africa, Europe and Japan. Her work is held in numerous private and corporate collections in South Africa and across Europe.

Claude Jammet  
*Kiss Kiss*  
oil on paper  
22 x 25.5 cm



Kilmany-Jo Liversage  
*PORQUA320*  
acrylic and spray paint on canvas  
150 x 150 cm

## KILMANY-JO LIVERSAGE

b. 1973, Cape Town, South Africa

Kilmany-Jo Liversage lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa. Liversage’s expressive portraits blur the boundary between fine art and street art. Inspired by street culture, she adopts graffiti and other urban art languages, allowing her to update, renew and challenge the conventions of painting, through her rendering of female subjects inspired by Renaissance portraiture. Liversage sources her portrait images from digitised mass production and social media. The portraits are randomly selected although the person portrayed might not be familiar to the viewer it conjures up a universally recognizable sense of familiarity. The result is a series of vibrant, large-format paintings of portraits exploring urban culture, art history and human connection.

Liversage explains further, *'During the Machine Age, artists would reduce their compositions to its smallest constituent parts. With my current paintings I manufacture this deconstruction by combining the painting tradition of portraiture with idiosyncrasies from the urban culture of tagging. This enables me to explore the intersection between street art and fine art while reconstructing them into a new genre of portraiture'*

With a list of achievements that include a Sasol New Signatures Award in 2000 and a UNESCO bursary in 2005, as well as an artists’ residency in Colombia, Liversage has had the opportunity to explore and interpret the concept of street art in her unique way.



TURIYA MAGADLELA

b. 1978, Johannesburg, South Africa



Turiya Magadlela  
*Umjuluko ofihliwe ngokucwebelayo II*  
nylon and cotton pantyhose and sealant on canvas  
120 x 120 cm

Turiya Magadlela graduated from the University of Johannesburg in 1991 and then studied at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam from 2003-2004. She was awarded the FNB Art Prize (one of South Africa’s most prestigious awards) in 2015, and has since participated in numerous group exhibitions, both locally and internationally, including a commissioned immersive installation at the 2019 Istanbul Biennale.

As Magadlela’s practice has been shaped by her home city, Johannesburg – its people, politics and violence – so she shapes her artworks by cutting, sewing, stretching, manipulating and translating commonly-found objects and everyday textiles, such as pantyhose, into abstract compositions.

While Magadlela views the interpretation of her work as being open to her audiences, it is impossible to ignore aspects of her work as an allusive exploration of social history, particularly in reference to global labour conditions, consumerism, and the intersections of gendered and racial persecution.

Though her compositions are minimalist abstractions, the compelling material characteristics of the original nylon and cotton fabrics are enhanced, with the ephemeral medium carrying conceptual weight. Magadlela uses the translucency of tights as they strain, and tear once sewn together to evoke the intimacy, fragility and vulnerability of skin.

The imperfect patched-together surfaces draw on the personal, as well as the collective (and often painful) shared experiences of femininity and motherhood; what Magadlela describes as the ‘fragility, transparency, beauty, pain, distortions and liberations of a woman’.

LUCINDA MUDGE

b. 1979, Knysna, South Africa



Lucinda Mudge  
*Let Me Help You Idiots*  
ceramic  
60 cm

Lucinda Mudge is a contemporary South African artist working primarily in the medium of ceramics. After graduating from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town (1997-2000), she spent the following years between Cape Town and the UK before moving to Keurboomstrand, Plettenberg Bay, where she now lives and works.

Lucinda Mudge’s extraordinary vases are captivating with their rich colours and intricate detail. Yet beneath their glimmering surfaces is a world simmering with paranoia and tension. Mudge’s vases encompass all of life – its form and content come together in a singular unity that celebrates our abundance and possibilities. It also exists in the world as a three-dimensional object; it can’t be taken in at a single glance, but must be circumnavigated until it reveals all its contradictions and riddles. Themes, images and text are replayed and reshuffled, embodying in their very fabric, humanity’s ability to carry contradictory impulses.

Mudge has work in major corporate and private collections nationally and internationally, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Guernsey, the Netherlands, Italy and Russia.



## TANYA POOLE

b. 1971, St John’s, Newfoundland



Tanya Poole  
*Accumulation*  
ink on fabriano  
135 x 150 cm

Tanya Poole was born in St John’s, Newfoundland, and grew up in Bahrain, England and South Africa. She graduated with an MFA from Rhodes University in 1998. Trained primarily as a painter, Poole has also worked with video, performance, installation, theatre design and, most recently, paint animation. She made her solo debut in 1996 at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, South Africa followed by five more solo exhibitions from 1998 to 2000.

In addition to exhibitions in South Africa, Poole has also participated in exhibitions abroad including *Collection of South African Art*, at The Chicago Institute and the South African Embassy, USA (1996); *Three Women* at the Mattamondo Gallery, Notting Hill, London (2000); *Possibilities* (curated by the Bell-Roberts Gallery) in Mumbai, India (2007); *Juncture: New Paintings from South Africa* at the Artspace, Linienstrasse, Berlin, Germany (2010); and Mullinspoole (with Nigel Mullins) in Liemen, Germany in 2011.

Poole’s recent work is inspired by entomology, nature and the DNA of trees, with reference to investigating one’s own lineage and biological code. In her recent exhibition *Ancient Codes* at Everard Read Cape Town, Poole explains: *‘These paintings are prompted by visual hooks in the natural environment around my family’s house and my own and by deep instincts relating to family and partnerships. They are also embellished by thoughts about the ancient codes of genetics and biology, both ours and our environment’s. The process of making a painting, the thought of it and the planning of it, the mental and emotional references, the decisions on materials and scale, the construction of it, mark by mark that is like nest making, is to satisfy the urge to construct and the thought of making, to fantasise and to rationalise and this process shimmers like a web attached somewhere between instinct and reason’.*

Tanya Poole currently lives and works in France.

## LADY SKOLLIE

b. 1987, Cape Town, South Africa



Lady Skollie  
*Easter Morning Preparations*  
monotype  
75 x 103 cm

Lady Skollie (AKA Laura Windvogel) is a multidisciplinary artist currently working in Johannesburg, South Africa. She graduated with a degree in History of Art and Dutch Literature from the University of Cape Town in 2009. Alive with emotional, political, sexual turmoil and a loud questioning voice, Lady Skollie’s work investigates the socio-political climate that we live in. Filled with bold colour, god-like figures and suggestive fruits, Lady Skollie’s ink, watercolour and crayon paintings revolve around themes of gender, sex and the politics of lust, consumption, as well as her musings on identity.

The artist’s work has been exhibited widely across South Africa, and at several international solo and group exhibitions and fairs. In 2017, along with Tschabalala Self and Abe Odedina, the artist contributed artwork for the stage design of a gala performance of *The Children’s Monologues*, a benefit held by the charitable organisation Dramatic Need, directed by Danny Boyle and held at Carnegie Hall in New York, NY, USA.

Lady Skollie has been featured on BBC Africa and CNN International on *African Voices*, as well as on the BBC World Service’s online and radio series *In the Studio*. She was included in the 2018 edition of *OkayAfrica’s 100 Women*, an annual list, which honours women across 10 different fields for their achievements and influence. She received the 2019 *Mbokodo Award* for Art and Design, which honours the pioneering spirit of South African women advancing the arts. In 2019, Lady Skollie was commissioned to design the new R5 coin to commemorate 25 years of constitutional democracy in South Africa.





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