

Louis Maqhubela
Snake (2002)
Oil on canvas (28,5 x 130cm)
SANG Acc 2005/51

TECHNICAL REPORT

In this painting several methods of paint application are all used to provide interesting structure and texture in the final work.



Normal light



Reverse



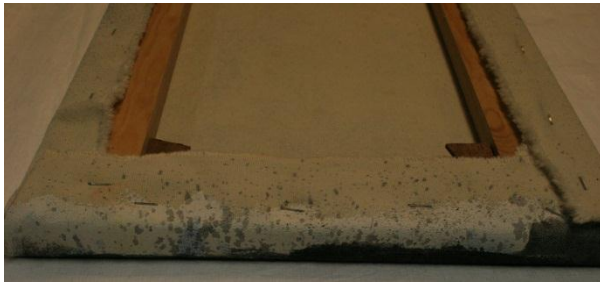
Ultraviolet light



Raking light

Support

The painting support is a standard cotton duck. The painting appears to have been painted off its stretcher, perhaps pinned to a wall, and then subsequently stretched. Evidence of this and the working technique can be seen along the taking margins and where the canvas folds over at the reverse.



Upper tacking margin showing ground and paint extending beyond the fold over edge

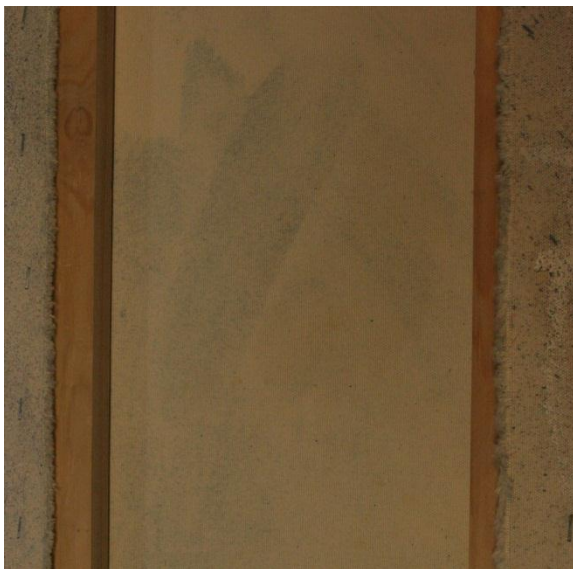


Lower tacking margin showing ground and paint extending beyond the fold over edge

Ground and Paint Layers

Examination of the paint layers reveals several interesting features of the artist's technique. As seen above, the painting appears to have been painted before being stretched to the stretcher, possibly while pinned out on a wall.

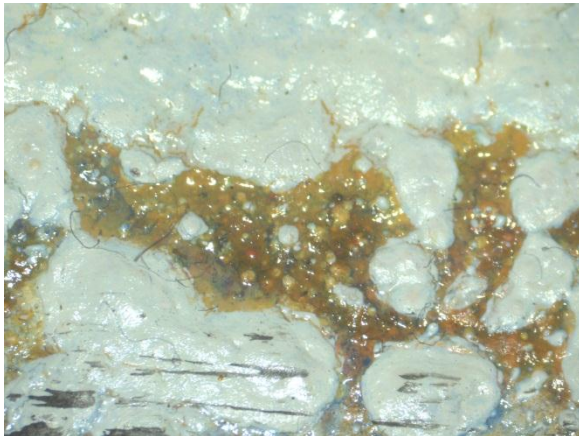
There is a white ground layer which has been applied below the picture surface and partially over the tacking margins, but not extending to the edges of the canvas. It appears to have been applied by brush. Below this ground layer in the upper half of the painting is an initial application with a broad brush of several strokes of dark paint, visible from the reverse of the canvas. This does not appear to be an underpainting or planning relating to the current composition, but merely an initial application of paint below the ground layer.



Detail from reverse showing the dark brushstrokes applied directly to the canvas below the white ground layer

The upper paint layers are applied in varying techniques, including by brush, by roller and by splattering. The paint is fairly textured and the textures provided by these differing techniques have been used to an advantage, with for example thinner glaze like washes of colour being applied over

the robust texture provided by the roller, and then rubbed back. Some paint is so textured it appears to contain inclusions of sand.



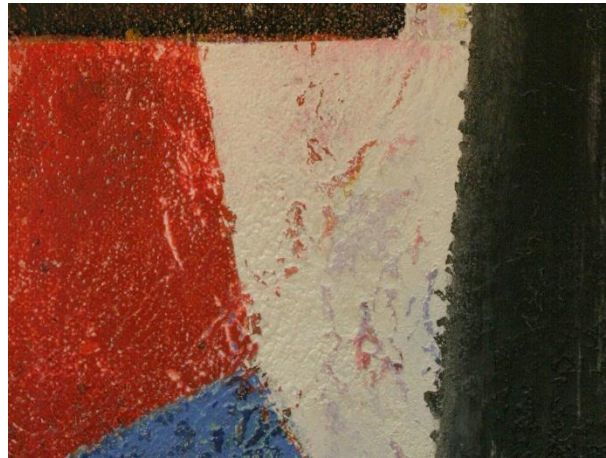
Macrograph showing splattering technique



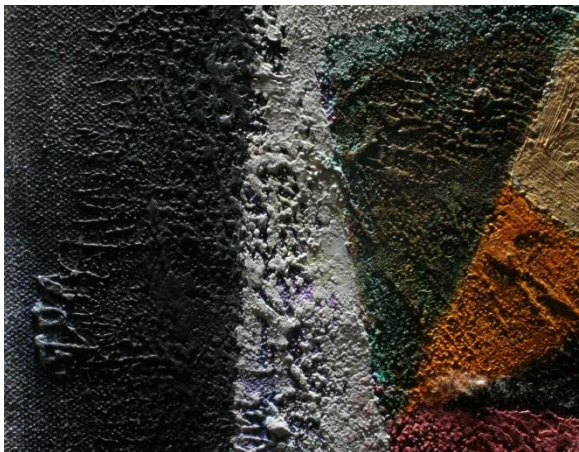
Splattering evident at the turnover edge



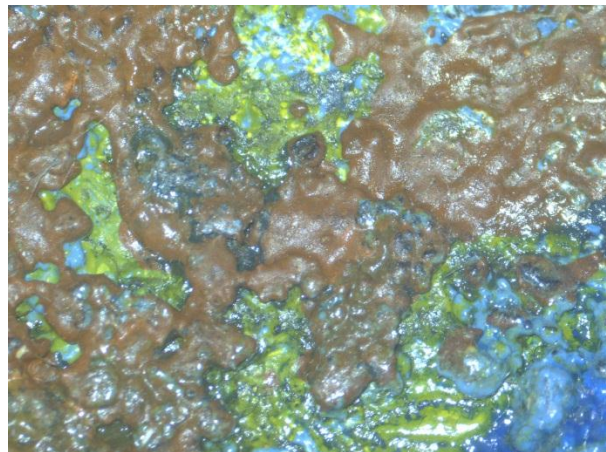
Brush strokes evident in a raking light in the beige paint



Rubbing of the upper red layer to textured layer below



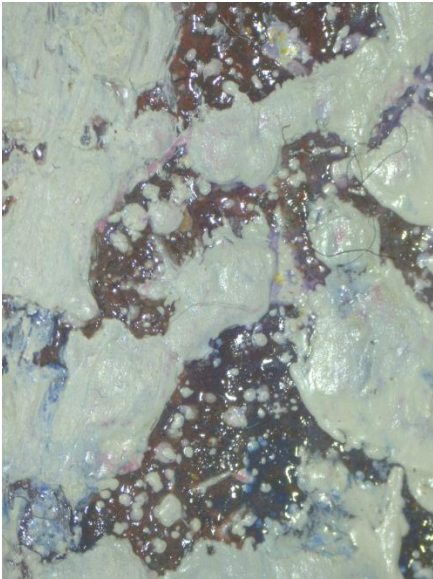
Use of a roller in the application of the lower paint layer evident in a raking light



Possible inclusions of sand in textured paint

The paint layers are interlayered with partial varnish layers which have been applied to certain areas of the paint, such as some triangles within the body of the snake, and below the black border at the edges. This can be seen as a curious fluorescence in ultraviolet light, however, some of the colours

appear to fluoresce as well, which could be due to the pigments, or due to their mixing with a fluorescing medium.



Macrograph showing interlayer of varnish below upper layer of white paint



Details in normal light and ultraviolet light showing the fluorescence of the partial and interlaying varnish layers

The blocks of colour which make up the body of the snake have been demarcated by masking and the use of a stencil.



Evidence in a raking light of masking or the use of a stencil to delineate the blocks of colour

Bronwyn Leone
June 2016