

Penny Siopis

Table Setting (1980s date?)
Oil on canvas (99,5 x 179 cm)
SANG Acc 84/51

TECHNICAL REPORT

This thickly impasted painting contains several interesting techniques of paint application, including piping and the use of what appear to be palette scrapings.



Recto



Verso in a raking light showing canvas distortion due to the thickness of the paint application

Support

The painting is executed on a cotton canvas that appears to be stretched by the artist and is attached with staples to the secondary support which is a wooden strainer with corner cross batons.

Ground

The canvas appears to have a ground layer applied by the artist. The paint layers are so thick that it is not visible at the painting surface.

Paint Layers

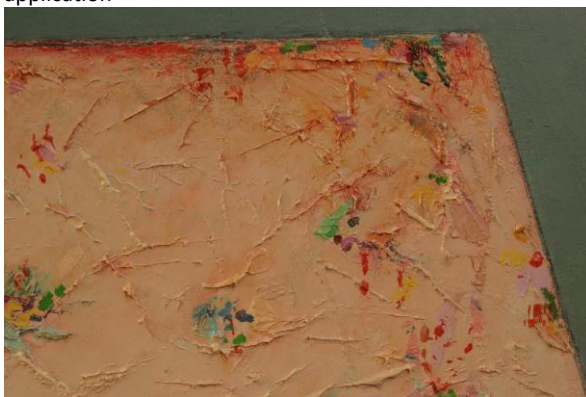
The paint has been applied in the typically thickly impasted technique of the artist working at this date. The use of unusual application of the paint is evident in the lace of the doily which may have been piped with a piping nozzle used in the decoration of cakes ('Cake Paintings' series), or may have been simply piped from the tube of paint. Since the artist was using implements for cake making at this time, it is likely that the impasted lines in the table cloth may also have been produced with the use of a cake icing knife or similar. These appear as straight and sometimes slightly curved raised lines of paint and impasto. There is an incised or ruled line demarcating the interface between the table and the background, particularly evident along the top edge.



Detail in raking light showing the piping of the paint application



Detail showing the piping of the paint application



Detail showing lines of impasted paint in the table cloth



Macrograph showing impasto in table cloth and incised line at interface between table top and background

In addition to the lacing and piped impasto the artist has also used what appear to be palette scrapings, which appear as previously dried ships of paint gathered up and possibly bound in a resin, then applied to the surface of the painting, for example in the 'fruits' lying in the doily.

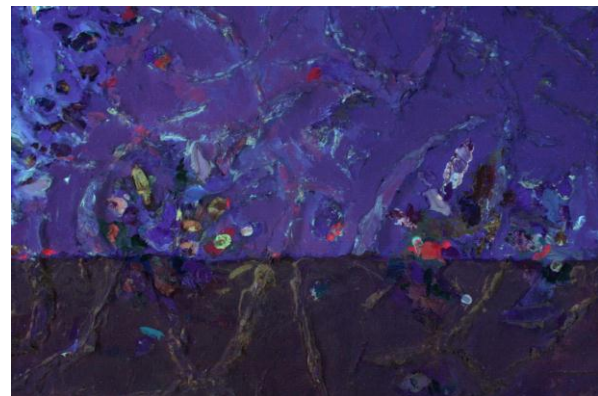


Detail showing use of palette scrapings in the paint build-up



Macrograph showing palette scrapings possibly bound in resin

A curious fluorescence in ultraviolet light, where green and yellow paint fluoresces a bright pink, may indicate the use of cadmium-zinc yellow ('lemon yellow'), older forms of which have been shown to deteriorate by chalking, and exhibit a similar pink fluorescence. Further investigation of this phenomenon is necessary.



Details in normal light (left) and ultraviolet light (right) showing the bright pink fluorescence of the light yellow and green paint



Macrographs showing close up details of the yellow and green paint that fluoresces pink in ultraviolet light

Varnish

Varnish has been applied in localised areas. This can be seen in the ultraviolet light image in the areas of fluorescence, particularly along the top of the table. This corresponds to an orange coloured resin visible in normal light and may indicate a varnish such as shellac. It appears that resin has also been used in conjunction with the palette scrapings, possibly as a binder for them.

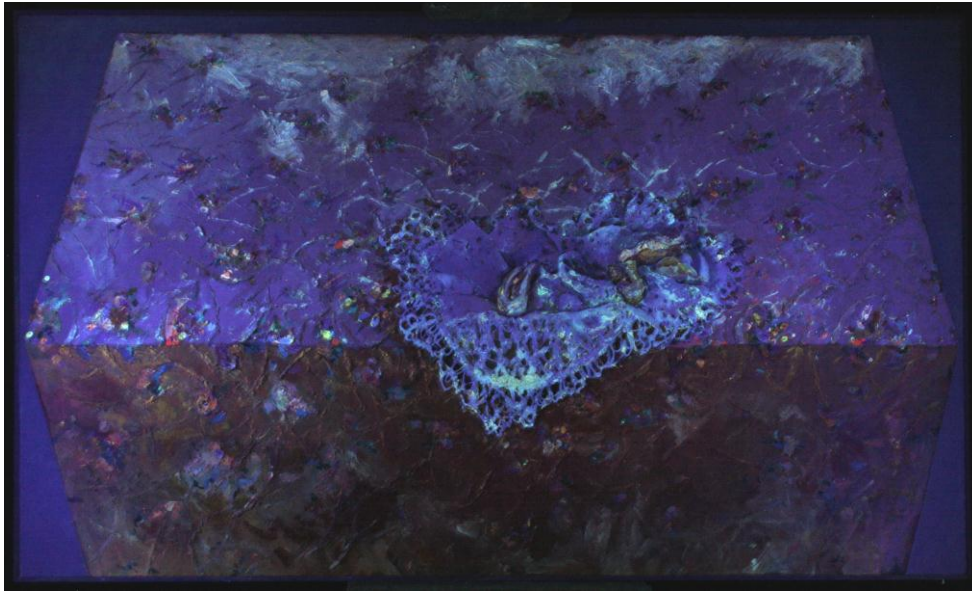


Image in ultraviolet light showing areas of fluorescence due to varnish and fluorescing pigments



Detail from an area that fluoresces in ultraviolet light showing pooling of orange coloured resin around the impasto

Bronwyn Leone

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