

**Michael Pettit**

Glox 'n Chocs (1976)

Oil on hardboard (99 x 122 cm)

SANG Acc 78/35

### TECHNICAL REPORT

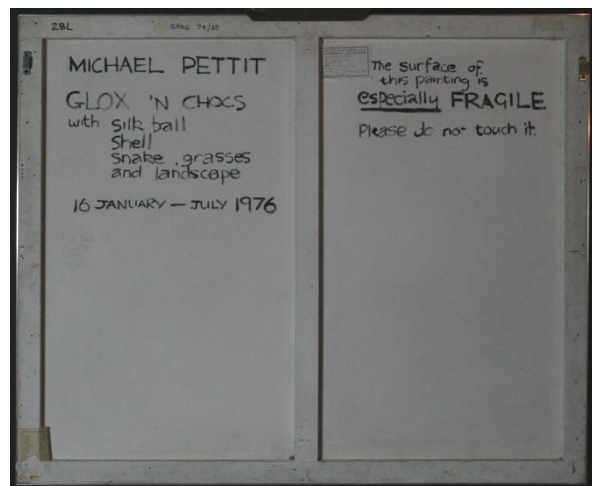
As Pettit writes on his 1970s figurative paintings:

“Most paintings of this time were in oils on smooth hardboard, luminous, rich in colour and detail. Some, like ‘Glox ‘n chox’ (SA National Gallery collection) were executed in transparent glazes on a white ground which enhances its radiance and jewel-like effect.”

([picasaweb.google.com/pettitpaintings](https://picasaweb.google.com/pettitpaintings))



Recto



Verso

#### Support

The support is a hardboard panel reinforced with cross batons at the reverse. The reverse is painted white and is inscribed “The surface of this painting is especially FRAGILE Please do not touch it” which points to the meticulousness of Pettit’s working method and his concern for the conservation and longevity of his work. The painting is also dated at the reverse “16 January – July 1976”, which reveals the long process of the artist’s working method.

#### Ground

The ground is a white oil layer which has been applied by brush in vertical strokes, evident on close inspection and in a raking light. However the overall effect is intended to be a smooth, flat, enamel-like surface, enhancing the radiance of the upper layers as explained by the artist in the quote above.



Detail in a raking light showing the vertical brush strokes of the ground application below the upper paint layers



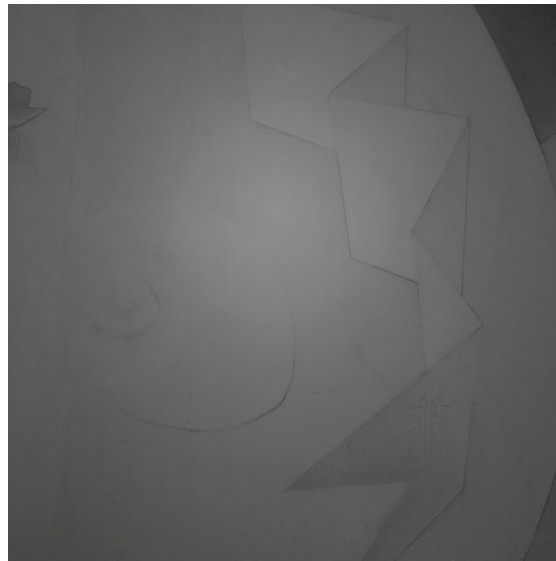
Detail showing the vertical brush strokes of the ground application evident through the upper layers due to pooling of the purple glaze and rubbing of the green

### Underdrawing

Careful planning is evident in the precise underdrawing that can be seen in infrared light. This is also partially visible with the naked eye, and appears to have been carried out in carbon-containing pencil. It can be seen in all the main elements of the still life composition, such as the chocolates and papers, the snake, the shell, the flowers, and also in the landscape.



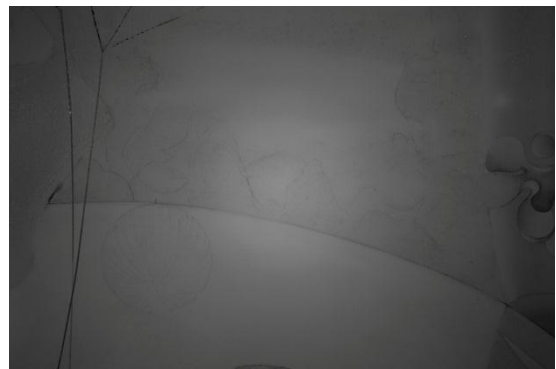
Infrared detail showing underdrawing of the chocolate and chocolate papers



Infrared detail showing underdrawing of the snake and shell



Infrared detail showing underdrawing of the flower



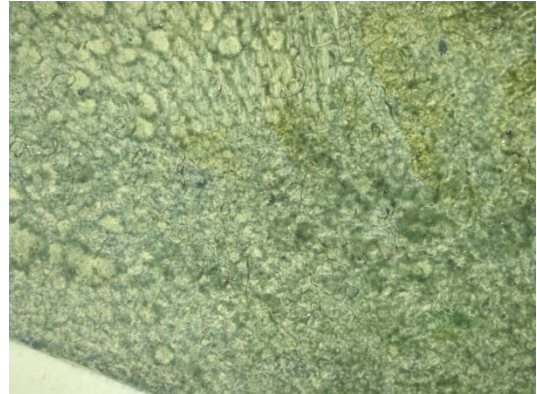
Infrared detail showing underdrawing in the landscape

## Paint

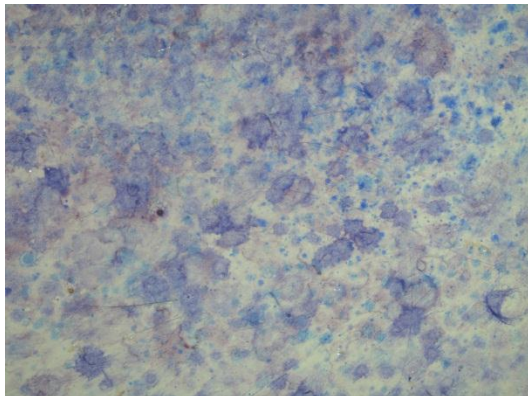
The paint layers have been applied mainly as glazes, as in the artist's statement above, over the white ground. These have been applied in a variety of interesting methods, including by splattering, by staining and blotting, and by stamping/printing. White opaque paint has been used to neaten up the edges of the glaze application, applied by brush and intended to blend with the ground layer. There is also the use of deliberate abrasion through sanding/ rubbing back and sgraffito to reveal the underlying white layer, and the use of masking or a stencil for the precise application of the paint in the grasses and the snake.



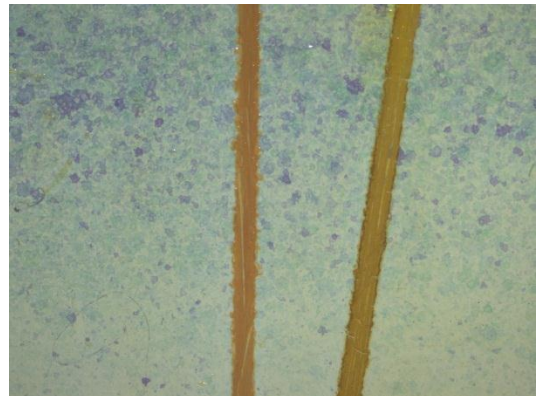
Detail showing splattering technique as well as staining and blotting in the landscape



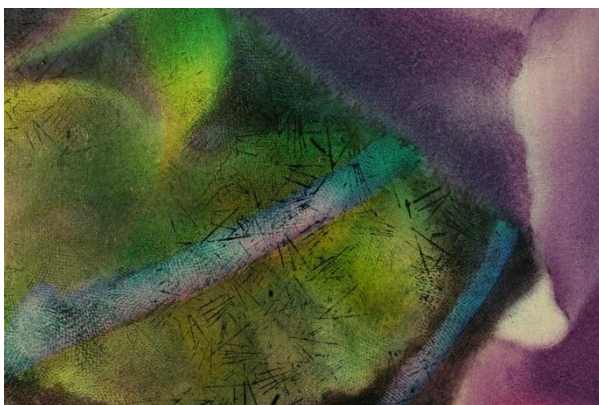
Macrograph of the landscape showing staining and blotting technique in the glaze application



Macrograph showing splattering in the shadow of the silk ball



Macrograph showing splattering at top of table and use of stencil/masking for application of grass strands



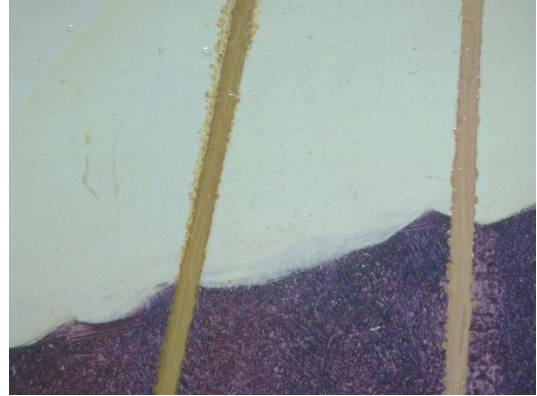
Detail of leaf showing stamping / printing



Macrograph in leaf showing stamping / printing



Detail showing splattering in the shell and adjustment of contours of the chocolate papers with white opaque paint applied by brush



Macrograph at edge of chocolate paper showing brushstrokes with white opaque paint adjusting contour of the glaze application, as well as use of stencil / masking in the grasses

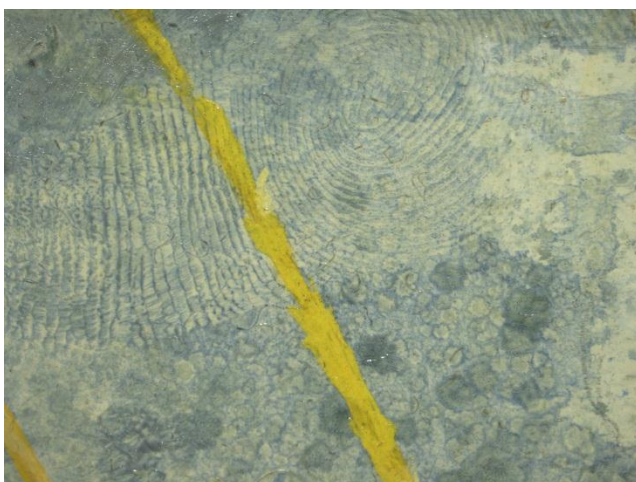


Detail showing deliberate abrasion in the snake to create the highlight by rubbing through to the white underlayer



Macrograph showing sgraffito to create the highlight in the silk ball

Along the top edge there is a thumb print, presumably the artist's as it lies below the application of the grass strand, and points to the necessarily long drying time of the application of the glazes.



Macrograph showing thumb print at top edge

## Varnish

The varnish appears to have been applied by brush and is fairly uneven, with thicker and thinner drippy brush strokes evident in an ultraviolet light.



Image in ultraviolet light showing the uneven application of the varnish which fluoresces more in the areas where it is thicker

Bronwyn Leone  
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