

JOHANN LOUW
TERUGKOMS VAN CYTHERA

7 February - 23 March 2013



SMAC Art Gallery is pleased to present *Terugkoms van Cythera (Return from Cythera)*, a new solo exhibition by Johann Louw. This is Louw's third major solo show with the gallery.

The materiality of 'paint as paint' together with the process of painting itself is significant to Johann Louw. For the artist, as he begins, the object has to be "visually seductive" and encourage a "sensory reaction in terms of both looking and painting" (Louw 2012). In this new body of work, Louw's physical engagement with the surface becomes "more personal and surreal, tapping into [his] subconscious mind" (Louw 2012).

Terugkoms van Cythera shows a shift away from Louw's socio-historic themes and a move towards a more enigmatic, introspective and psychological exploration. Referencing *The Embarkation for Cythera (L'Embarquement pour Cythère)* (1717) by French Rococo painter Jean-Antoine Watteau, the exhibition serves as an interesting antithesis to the precious celebration of life and love at the birthplace of Venus portrayed in the original painting.

There is a subtle theatricality and cinematic quality to the new works. Louw depicts dreamlike imagery reminiscent of carefully directed stills from a film of which the narrative remains uncertain. Similar to the use of montage in film, Louw juxtaposes seemingly disparate scenes in one pictorial composition. Various objects, animals and anonymous subjects emerge from predominantly grey, abandoned, unspecified and barren spaces - adding to a general sense of unease. This serves to connect multiple thoughts, associations and intense emotions into one dynamic sequence.

Louw states; "there is a balance between a story, the narrative and the images which, because of their juxtaposition, might create a reaction, I cannot foresee what will happen" (2012). As with his previous bodies of work, Louw addresses his and the viewer's own construction of meaning. We are encouraged to become an active participant as Louw's purposefully equivocal style of painting demands that we decipher the works' meanings and mysteries for ourselves.

There is also a continual engagement with the traditions of still life painting. The representation of inanimate objects in Louw's depiction of animal skulls and bones alludes to the original French term for still life - nature morte (dead nature), suggesting the interest in mortality that runs like a thread throughout the exhibition.

The exhibition concludes on the 23rd of March 2013.

Johann Louw was born in 1965 and lives and works in Piketberg outside of Cape Town. He graduated with a BA in Fine Arts, cum laude, from the University of Stellenbosch in 1988, which he supplemented with a MFA, also cum laude, in 1992. Louw has exhibited regularly to great critical acclaim throughout South Africa and Europe. In 2009 he was one of three South African artists selected to participate in an official collateral exhibition to the 53rd Venice Biennale. In 2010, Louw participated in both the 4th Beijing International Art Biennale and the Sabbioneta Biennale for Contemporary Art in Italy. Louw is currently working towards his solo exhibition at the University of Johannesburg Art Gallery in August.

SMAC Art Gallery will present a selection of Johann Louw's paintings at the ARCO International Contemporary Art Fair in Madrid, Spain, from 13 – 17 February 2013.



Dubbelbeeld: Wilde Hond en Voete

2012

Oil on Plywood

122 x 245 cm

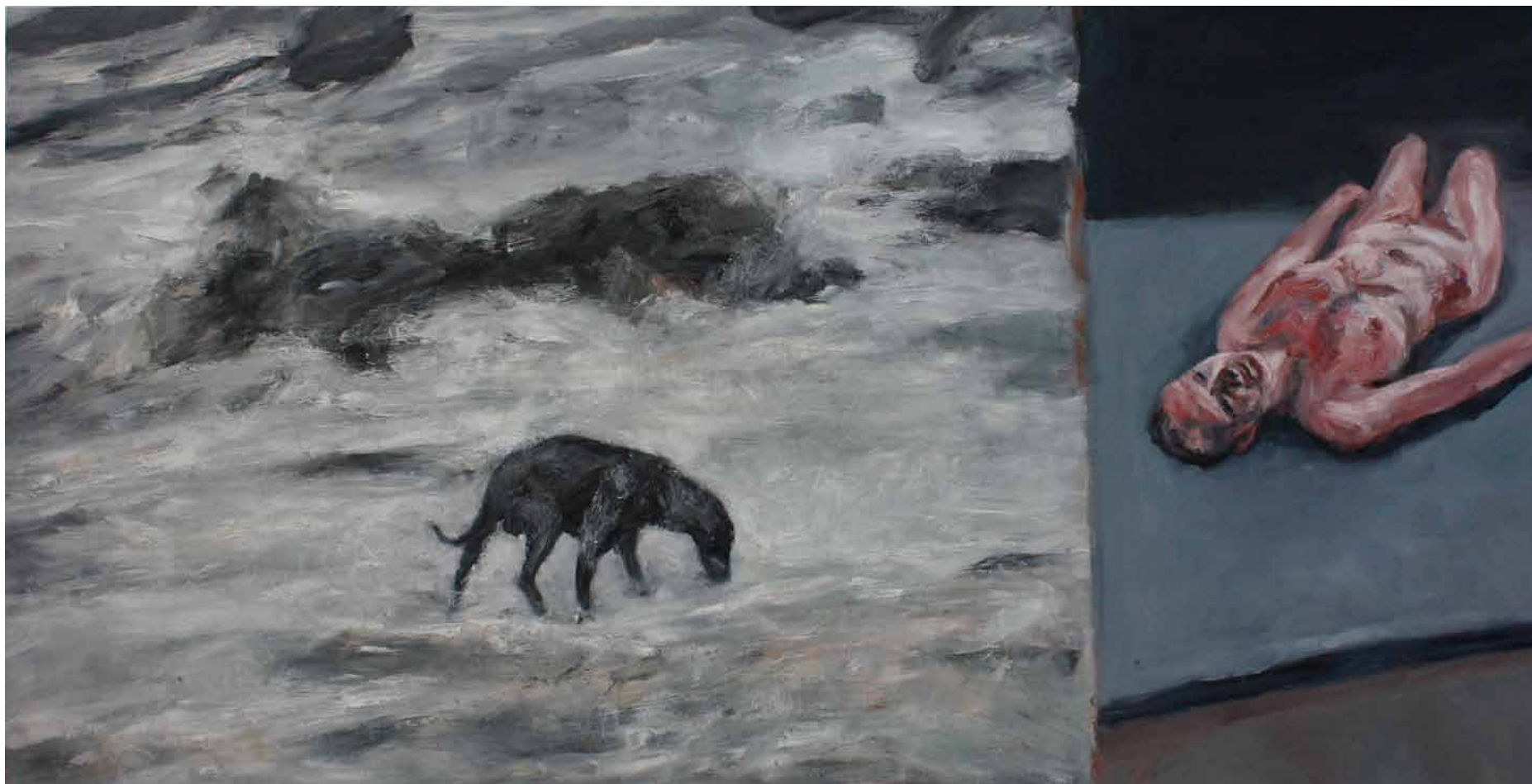


Dubbelbeeld: Man met kruipende hond

2012 / 2013

Oil on Plywood

122 x 245 cm



Dubbelbeeld: Hond in Landskap; Naak
2012
Oil on Plywood
122 x 245 cm

Portret A II
2012
Oil on Plywood
41 x 51.5 cm



Portret na Links
2012
Oil on Plywood
41 x 51.5 cm





Groot Vrou met Dooie Perd
2012
Oil on Plywood
245 x 120 cm



Gary-Halflyf met Fragment
2012
Oil on Board
245 x 200 cm

Dubbel Portret
2012
Oil on Board
122 x 244 cm





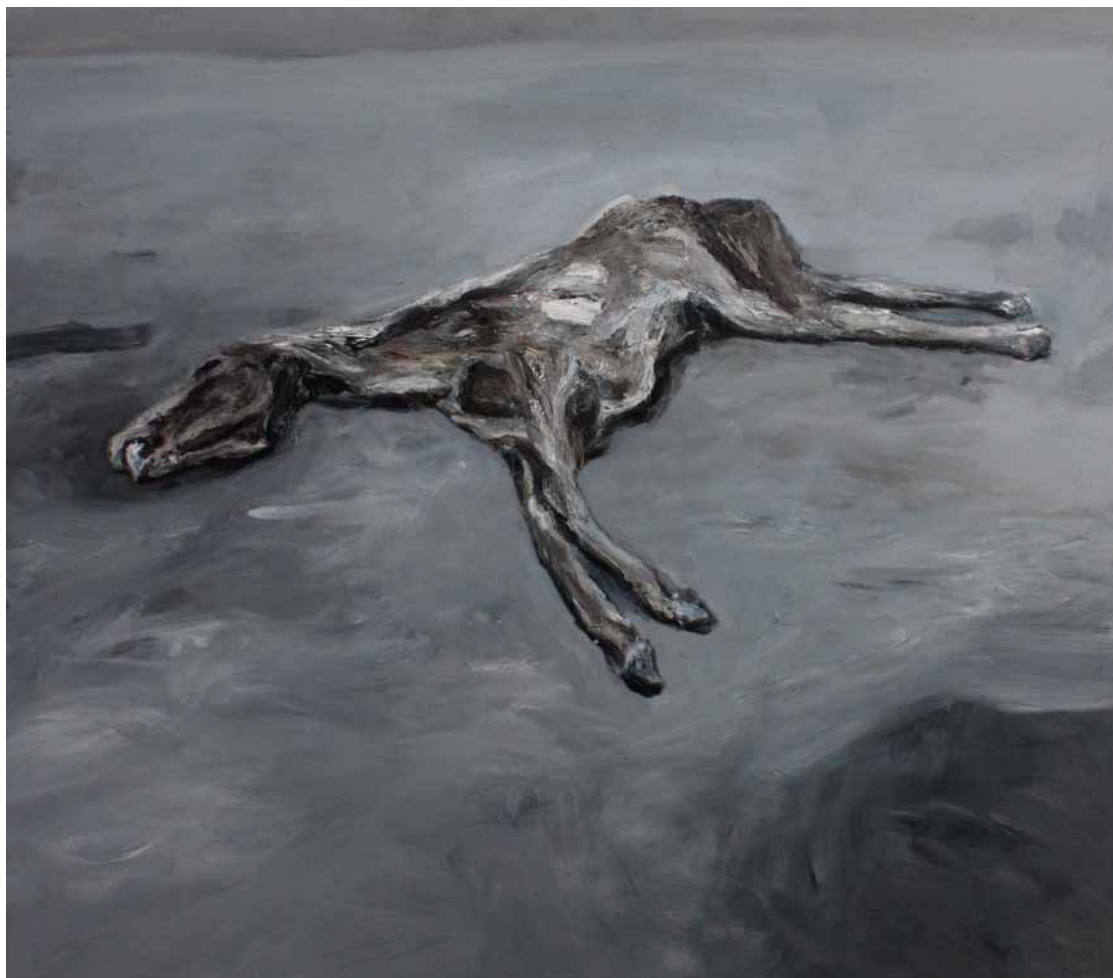
Self-portret met Rog
2012
Oil on Plywood
69 x 122 cm

Lêende Naak met Rog
2012
Oil on Plywood
122 x 129 cm





Naak Onderlyf
2012
Oil on Plywood
133 x 122 cm



Dooie Perd
2012
Oil on Plywood
122 x 136 cm

Klein Skildery: Dooie Perd
2012
Oil on Plywood
46.5 x 67.5 cm





Groot Perdekop
2012
Oil on Plywood
61 x 87 cm



Perdekop, Klein
2012
Oil on Plywood
34.5 x 45 cm



Aspersies (in grys)
2012
Oil on Plywood
40 x 40 cm



Skedel I
2011
Oil on Plywood
120 x 100 cm



Skedel II
2011
Oil on Plywood
120 x 120 cm

Klein Kakebeen
2012
Oil on Plywood
43.5 x 55 cm





Klein Stillewe met Popkop en Bokkie-skedel
2012
Oil on Plywood
46 x 70 cm



Lang Skildery met Pienk Masker en Lêende Figuur

2012

Oil on Plywood

122 x 244 cm



Groot Rubber Masker en Profiel

2012

Oil on Plywood

122 x 218 cm



Rubbermasker met Sementblokke

2013

Oil on Board

70 x 122 cm

Sementblok II
2012
Oil on Plywood
46 x 55 cm





Pienk Masker
2012
Oil on Plywood
45.5 x 60.5cm

WORKS ON PAPER

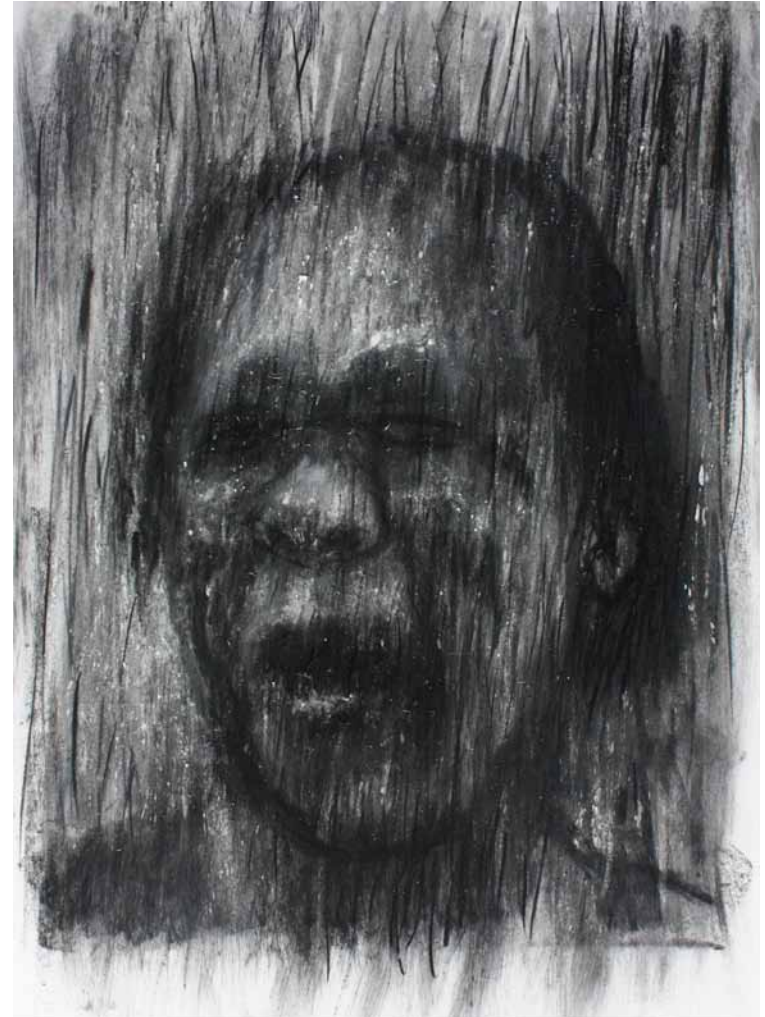


Perdekop
2013
Charcoal on Paper
70 x 100 cm



Rubbermasker
2013
Charcoal on Paper
100 x 70 cm

Portret
2013
Charcoal on Paper
100 x 70 cm





Kakkende Hond
2013
Charcoal on Paper
100 x 70 cm



Kakkende Hond
2013
Monotype
57 x 87 cm



Masker, Lêende Figuur
2013
Monotype
58 x 70 cm

Hond, Lêende
2013
Monotype
58 x 66 cm



EXHIBITION OVERVIEW











