Vivienne Shark LeWitt: comedies & proverbs
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cat. 43
Ask me anything 2003
76.5 x 91.5 cm
Foreword

In its original sense, the word ‘museum’ referred to the seven muses, mythical offspring of Zeus and Mnemosyne. Any space, domestic as well as public, dedicated to the pursuit of music, poetry and history could be dubbed a museum. Vivienne Shark LeWitt’s art invokes the spirit of Thalia (comedy), Euterpe (music, lyric poetry), Melpomene (tragedy) and their sisters; even Urania (astronomy), the odd one out, because I can picture Shark LeWitt as a stargazer. The artist does not literally seek equivalences with literature and music but an art founded in subtle emotions almost inevitably invokes the time-honoured phrase *Ut pictura poesis* (As is painting, so is poetry). Vivienne Shark LeWitt’s sensibility offers an important counterbalance to our predominantly instrumental culture; it reminds us that an art based on sensibility is robust, rigorous and challenging.

By disposition, I venerate Clio, the muse of history, above all others. *Vivienne Shark LeWitt: comedies & proverbs* is an exhibition that allows not only a contemporary engagement with the artist’s oeuvre but also the rediscovery of Australian art’s recent past. There are moments of surprise; remembering just how risky it was to make small paintings in the 1980s. And there are moments of reflection; understanding how much an independent vision rests on persistence, on the artist diligently developing a sense of what it is she is after.

The process of rediscovering the character of Shark LeWitt’s art began with rediscovering the paintings themselves. We are very grateful first and foremost to the artist, Vivienne Shark LeWitt; to her representatives, Anna Schwartz Gallery and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery; and to the many public, private and corporate lenders across Australia who supported our curator’s research and who have generously lent cherished works to this exhibition. Special thanks are due to Helen McDonald, whose astute catalogue essay offers alluring insights into the artist’s work. We are grateful also to Arts Victoria, whose grant in support of this exhibition recognises the importance of engaging with an artist’s oeuvre in depth.

Dr Chris McAuliffe
Director, the Ian Potter Museum of Art
Exotic, civilizing and in tune: the art of Vivienne Shark LeWitt

Bala Starr
Curator, the Ian Potter Museum of Art

Spanning a twenty-eight year painting practice, this exhibition is the first substantial display of Vivienne Shark LeWitt’s art at an Australian museum. Shark LeWitt has lived and worked in Victoria since soon after completing post-graduate studies in Sydney in 1981, but more than a third of the fifty works selected for the exhibition have never been shown in Melbourne. After quickly gaining the attention of critics and curators in Australia and overseas as a young artist in the 1980s, Shark LeWitt’s career has developed in an unusual way. Her ambitions for her art and for her own creative processes are uniquely particular to her temperament, governed by what she describes as a ‘natural rhythm’ of creativity, rather than by the flux of external conditions. Similarly, this is a body of work that has been produced free of the influence of art-world vagaries and pressures; all the better to examine what is at the heart of her practice: the way feelings work, the way nature works, how relationships exist.

cat. 7
The making of Leopold 1984
diptych: 29 x 58 cm,
each: 29 x 29 cm
Comedies & proverbs, installed over three gallery spaces, is an opportunity to reflect on Shark LeWitt’s art. Hers is an independent practice of making paintings in response to images that appear to her as translations of particular feelings or moments. This is the imagery of introspection, self-reflection and empathy for others. Shark LeWitt communicates these closely held senses of human circumstance with unusual accuracy, a precision in part accountable to interpretative painterly methods that have remained inquisitive and open to experiment. Throughout the oeuvre, as a result of this exactitude, transactions between human and sometimes animal figures and their immediate world are rendered symbolic. The making of Leopold, a very early painting installed in the upstairs gallery is typically intoxicating in its obscurity. Flatly painted on two solid but tiny raw-edged wood panels, the work transgresses its diptych format with horizon lines and land masses that don’t meet or match. In a hot Mediterranean landscape, a stylishly outfitted couple, their hands and faces self-consciously drawn, tender and endearing, are held together in an inexplicable altercation. The couple, their two-wheeler pram precariously positioned on the left-hand panel, and a slightly spooky black-sailed boat on the distant horizon above, could be unrelated were it not for the painting’s confined format. The male and female figures exchange flashing looks but their gestures are frozen. The scenery too appears disconnected: in parts dreamy in mottled orange-brown but also nakedly sectional. It is as though three or four portentous moments across time, across different centuries, have been brought together for re-telling in this painting; there are no superfluous elements.

Shark LeWitt is not a prolific artist. Unlike many artists of her generation, her oeuvre is not marked by distinct phases or by repetition. As well, there are no discrete series that might offer a schematic framework for the selection process. Rather it is typical of the artist to move forward and backward to earlier motifs as well as re-form or evolve new images. Bearing this in mind, the exhibition has been distributed organisationally around four main thematic groupings that range across the oeuvre with the aim of offering a clear appreciation of the art’s pictorial and thematic developments.

The first of these organisational groupings comprises the allegorical paintings of the 1980s; these are installed in the more intimate space of the upstairs gallery. The second grouping is ‘transactional/relational’ paintings, the third grouping includes paintings I think of as ‘negotiating the outside’, and the last comprises paintings showing a single female figure.

The first allegorical group includes signature works of the period such as Last night I dreamed I went to Manderlay again (1985) and The omen, ‘That wascally wabbit’ (1987, held by the Art Gallery of New South Wales). These clearly show Shark LeWitt’s foundational ‘respect for the past, ancient to modern, the classic, the romantic, the Gothic, the symbolic, the iconic—in both culture and nature’. These early paintings are also the most materially experimental or adventurous of the exhibition and include all but one of the eleven made on wood panels. Since 1987, Shark LeWitt has painted almost solely on canvas, increasing the scale of the work, but she still moves easily between oil and acrylic.

In the first half of the 1980s, Vivienne Shark LeWitt, then in her mid-twenties, exhibited works in important Australian and international exhibitions including Bernice Murphy’s 1983 Perspecta, Australian visions at the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, New York, and Meaning & excellence, ANZART in Edinburgh (with Lyndal Jones, Howard Arkley, Robert Rooney, John Lethbridge, Linda Marrinon, Peter Tyndall and Geoff Lowe). The works exhibited in these exhibitions display both personal and theoretical interests and, as well as being of rougher means, are less romantic than the work that was to follow soon afterwards.

Shark LeWitt’s close friend and champion, Paul Taylor’s selection of Charles Meryon the voyeur 1827–1868. La belle et la bête (1983) to headline his article ‘Civilization and its discontents’ in the January 1985 issue of Flash Art, confirms Shark LeWitt’s own sense that her work was ‘all very public from the beginning’. It’s worth noting that Shark LeWitt’s paintings of the time lacked one or more of the characteristics of ambitious scale, prolificacy or simple bravado we now assume to exist in the work of young art-school graduates that quickly enters the public domain—and it was not so different then. But more importantly, her success at the time was to do with the simple fact that the style and content of
her work was a perfect fit for what was a Transavantgarde moment—this was confirmed as much by her inclusion in the 1986 Biennale of Sydney along with artists such as Mimmo Paladino, Gerard Garouste and Pierre Klossowski. Be this as it may, Shark LeWitt’s cover illustration for the winter 1984 issue of Art & Text (published by Taylor two years after he had curated the landmark Popism exhibition) shows a young woman in profile, a redhead who has turned away from us with eyes closed, covering her mouth with her hand. It is a picture of withholding, reserve and of looking inward.

Sensitive and compelling paintings such as the four-part Those who live in envy die in despair (1983) and Goodness always triumphs over evil (1984) became iconic for their time, personifying a critical shift in the established art hierarchy. Shark LeWitt’s work, always enigmatic, confounded public expectations of what ‘ambitious internationalist’ Australian art should be. Her small-scale supports link instead to the intimacy and privacy of the book, the pragmatism of tabletop as easel, and to ease of display in the home. In paintings such as Goodness always triumphs over evil and The bloody chamber (1983) she experimented with ways of representing the figure emblematically. Writers including Edward Colless and Judy Annear have described in detail Shark LeWitt’s early iconography in relation to fable, myth, metaphor and allegory. Increasingly, however, it is the particulars of a work’s prevailing sensibility or civility—its material surface, the colour and shape of a dress, the tilt of a woman’s head—that convey complex understandings and nuances of feeling, in turn calibrating the overall tone of a painting.

Vivienne Shark LeWitt’s ‘French phase’ formally began in 1987 when she began studying French daily at the University of Melbourne, but her seminars earlier with Meaghan Morris at Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education in Sydney had already given her ‘an early and perfect introduction’ to semiotics and structuralism so that ‘the subsequent mania for French theory has never got the better of me’.2 Another turning point occurred with the painting in 1987 of Shall I bark for you master? Or shall I bite? Ha, ha, ha, ha, the first time Shark LeWitt’s abiding respect for animals had entered the work so explicitly. The artist goes further in describing the idyllic autumn-hued Frankly I am lost, Brian of 1988 as ‘an animal liberation painting’.

The second, ‘transactional/relational’ grouping of works in the exhibition includes paintings where there is a contest between different psychological states shown in the relationship between two figures, where a ‘conversation’ or emotional exchange is at issue. These works are dispersed throughout each of the ground floor galleries. The grouping includes works from the late 1980s through to the present day, from Untitled and India song of 1988 (each showing a youthful figure in companionship with an animal), to paintings such as Prime movers (1994) and Spaghetti (1996) that depict power relations between a male and female.

Shark LeWitt’s first solo exhibition in Melbourne was not held until 1991, when Georges Mora presented six riveting paintings at his Tolarno Galleries. Four of these paintings, SOB, Marvellous Melbourne, The lemon eater with bulldog attendant and $49.95, are included in the current exhibition, the latter three forming part of the second organisational grouping of works, those that I am describing as transactional. The male and female subjects of these paintings are more physically developed, their expressions more telling than those of earlier allegorical works. However, the increased intensity of gesture and tonality in these works is built across what are still very carefully moderated surfaces. Two of the four canvases present contemporary social encounters, linking them thematically to a number of more humorous paintings (and works on paper) that were to follow later in the 1990s. $49.95’s curvaceous Cruella de Vil in chic black at the cash register confronts a customer who wears the tweed suit Shark LeWitt herself had always desired. The sale price of $49.95 recalls her family’s in-joke about the apparent cost of all things advertised on television. Marvellous Melbourne is almost frightening in its depiction of a couple raucously open-mouthed in rapture at their city’s glory, recalling something of the power of painted commentaries of 1950s Melbourne.

All of the five paintings from the 1990–91 period included in the exhibition were produced following a complete break from painting in 1989, when Shark LeWitt held a full-time position teaching art history at Prahran College of Advanced Education, reading widely, thinking and talking about art rather than making it.
cat. 17
Shall I bark for you master? Or shall I bite? Ha, ha, ha, ha 1987
81.3 x 65.9 cm
Foolish fly 1990
oil on canvas
60.5 x 50.5 cm
The third and smallest grouping of works explores the theme of ‘negotiating the outside’. It includes unusually animated paintings such as the sparkling white *Disorientalism* (2003), where a young female figure almost loses her hat as she misses the steps alighting from a plane. Her backpack, neatly pressed shorts and plimsolls indicate a traveller nevertheless well-prepared for a journey into the wide-open world; our empathy for the young woman has cause to extend into a sanguine type of hope for her future. There is something about works such as *Disorientalism* that takes us beyond modest optimism, almost to the point that they bestow a broader sense of fortune to a life’s work and illuminate the benefits of a gracious engagement ‘outside’ of oneself.

The third grouping also includes *Refreshed* (1994) and *Finished* (2001), where female figures in restrained office attire are engaged in different stages of writing a manuscript or processing paperwork. They respectively express relaxed absorption in the job at hand and a sweet elation at having just completed a task. The site is the place of work, the office or study (or studio); the subject of each figure’s negotiation is the (unseen) text or discourse and, through this, the external world. Typewriter and out-tray become intermediaries between an internal world and a realised public realm, the realm of the exhibition and the book. Such social efficacy is not restricted of course to women or to ‘good deeds’ and might just as well include daily negotiations of reading, the home, or account-keeping for instance.

The fourth and final thematic group of works are those that depict a lone female figure. These begin in the exhibition about 1990 with *SOB* and reoccur up until the present. They are not self-portraits as such, but nonetheless pursue a figurative intensity—a psychological potency—inspired in part by self-reflection or looking closely around oneself.

It is as if the artist has pursued a thought, responded to a provocation or recalled a circumstance that she then seeks to take account of pictorially. *Nat sulph* (named for the homeopathic remedy for dizziness), 2003, takes its place among other works of the same group on the major wall of the largest downstairs gallery. Featuring a beautiful female figure blowing out a candle, it links closely back in time to the sole selected work we were unable to locate for this exhibition, the wonderful *Foolish fly* (1990). Shark LeWitt states that *Foolish fly* was produced as ‘an image of what annoyance is’. It was the first painting produced after her year-long break from painting and carries quite a different sensation from works of the previous decade.

Both *Foolish fly* and *Nat sulph* provide evidence of Shark LeWitt’s special methods of conceptual production as well as her interest to explore in painting empathy and history to evoke different types of feelings: hard feelings, anxious feelings, middling feelings, light feelings. She uses the motif of soft focused light—candlelight in *Nat sulph* and a fire-fly’s natural glow in *Foolish fly*—to link across time; its effect is to inspire us to imagine a kind of foreverness beyond the familiar immediacy of social mores and relations. Shark LeWitt also uses her personal history—her memories of her mother, of growing up with her sister, and of shared family humour—as a connective link to other eras and to better understand the conditions of a painting. What is important about Shark LeWitt’s work is its internal coherency for herself, and, through her, for us too. I greatly admire her sensibility and what her art shows us of how the world might be. Vivienne Shark LeWitt is an exceptional artist, and hers is not an excessive or exaggerated vision. This is an artist who is not afraid of the dark; she’s not afraid to blow the candle out. It’s quite OK out there.

Notes


The unbearable lightness of being in the paintings of Vivienne Shark LeWitt

Helen McDonald

There is an inscrutability about Vivienne Shark LeWitt’s paintings. At first glance they seem two-dimensional; the early works are shaped like painted collages or cutouts and the later ones are linear and crisp. The whimsical comic vision of James Thurber comes to mind. He and other cartoonists established a unique style of humour in simple, figurative line drawings for The New Yorker in the 1940s and ’50s, sending up the domestic foibles of middle-class Americans. Closer inspection of Shark LeWitt’s paintings reveals signs of the third dimension; subtle tonal modeling hints at figurative mass, and fragments of linear perspective suggest spatial depth. Another layer of depth is evoked by references and allusions, which are peppered through the works. Beneath these visual illusions and tropes an esoteric form of drama takes place. Intelligence, memory, imagination, empathy and humour all play a part in this primary process of invention.

Shark LeWitt’s process is especially exacting, driving ideas in eccentric directions, bringing pressure to bear on design, mediating representation and shifting the impact of a joke. It has the power to bewilder the spectator while prompting amusement and delight.

Taking time to settle on the right motif or gesture, Shark LeWitt disciplines her forms into precise and compact compositions. She draws on routine experiences (Haircut) and images from the history of art (St Tobias and the angel), literature (The game of love and chance and Last night, I dreamed I went to Manderlay again) and popular culture (Cease and desist). Although she does not appropriate these sources as a postmodern self-reflexive gesture, she sometimes calls upon them as a strategy to comment on political ideas and the status quo.1 Addressing situations in life where complications arise, many of Shark LeWitt’s creative ventures function as means of working out the dynamics of a problem. Sometimes personalities clash ($49.95), accidents happen (Spaghetti), relationships founder (Dangerous acquaintances) and it is hard to calculate who is responsible. Humour and art-making are ways of hastening a resolution to these quasi-moral dilemmas, defusing tensions (Bloody hell), encapsulating an impulse (Foolish fly) or reducing an attitude to a moment of stillness, sometimes with only a glow, a breath or a flicker of elemental life (Nat sulph).

In much of her work, especially from the 1990s, Shark LeWitt draws on the witty remarks, sarcasm, caricature and jokes of everyday spontaneous exchanges, creating visual variants of them that are recognizably funny. She favours the immediacy of the popular cartoon more than the elevated and detached genres of satire and parody, although elements of the latter characterize aspects of her work. Her personas are prudently designed, nevertheless, and positioned in relation to others for specific effect. Described by some as a comedy of manners, her art lampoons familiar patterns of social behaviour and personality types, rather than particular individuals. Although sometimes sharp, her characterizations are generally empathetic. Images of people and companion animals in her art (India song, Hepaplex) offer a compassionate slant on attachments between pets and their owners. Pets are tenderly regarded by their masters or mistresses, whose expectations of subservience are, in turn, often cast back on themselves (The lemon eater with bulldog attendant and Shall I bark for you master? Or shall I bite? Ha, ha, ha, ha).

The drama and sentiments conveyed by the figures or personas in Shark LeWitt’s paintings are not grand or extreme. Sentiment in her art is a mediated form of emotion, more a mood or state of mind than a passion. Simple delight in modest pleasures (Finished, Refreshed), the sense of being reduced to insignificance by another’s private obsessions (‘Me? Here?’) or of repressing embarrassment at a pointed question or proposition (Temperance and $49.95), are common, everyday experiences that we all recognize. As an avid student of human nature, Shark LeWitt has a sharp eye for self-delusion (The more fool I, so great a fool to adore and MAN) and the ridiculous (The egg and I and Teresa of Avila). She is capable of pungent caricature (Marvellous Melbourne), comical farce (Cease and desist), self-parody (Disorientalism) and gentle mockery (Prime movers).
Cat. 35
Spaghetti 1996
96.5 x 86 cm
The title of the exhibition, *Comedies & proverbs*, is not strictly categorical or binding. Adages such as ‘goodness always triumphs over evil’ and ‘those who live in envy die in despair’ illustrate traditional wisdom or practical advice about how to live one’s life. However the connection between title and content in Shark LeWitt’s works is not always apparent. The anachronistic moralizing of the old sayings sits oddly with modern art, raising the possibility of hidden meaning or irony. This incongruity is echoed in the style of the work. The title for *Goodness always triumphs over evil* (1984), for instance, was inspired by ‘the unknown Master of the Triumph of Death’, who painted the early fourteenth-century murals at the Camposanto in Pisa. But Shark LeWitt designed her work like a miniature Late Gothic wooden altar-piece. Three parts of a narrative are staged within mock gold-leaf pointed-arch shaped frames, the middle one of which is divided into two panels, totaling four in all. The awkward, unfinished aspect of the painting’s manufacture, however, is entirely contemporary, with its slightly colliding panels splitting the central image down the middle, the use of mixed media, uneven brushwork, linear detailing, blocks of flat colour and lack of painterly modeling. The lateral figure-groupings in their half-arched frames are abruptly cut off by the edges of the wooden panel, suggesting that the narrative, too, is incomplete, or at least ongoing.

Although the figure grouping resembles that of fourteenth-century Italian painting, the principal personae in *Goodness always triumphs over evil* connote the romantic knights and damsels in medieval tales of chivalry, such as Ludovico Ariosto’s *L’Orlando furioso*, or the mysterious, pale-skinned classical lovers of nineteenth-century Symbolist painter Pierre Puvis de Chevannes. The two central figures, a kneeling woman in a white dress writing at a prayer-table and a man in black whose hands rest ambiguously on her shoulders, appear to be signing a contract, a marriage or engagement, perhaps, which is being celebrated or scrutinized on the left by a group of solemn onlookers dressed in twentieth-century clothes. A man in black appears in this lateral scene too, standing behind the others at a distance, with one hand to his face. Perhaps he is ostracized or hatching a plot of some kind. The narrative takes on a supernatural aspect as, from the scene on the right, a red man with devil’s horns walks out of the picture frame, raising his left hand enigmatically and glaring over his right shoulder at the man in black. Complementing each scene, the field surrounding the young couple grows lush and green, with a sprinkling of flowers, whereas the grass around the horned man turns brown. More like a figure from a Jean Cocteau movie than the Bible, this devil-man’s ominous presence is more psychological and cinematic than religious.

Few clues to a private meaning manifest in *Goodness always triumphs over evil*. As with most open-ended visual narratives in contemporary art, the beholder is free to imagine his or her own interpretation. However while some contemporary artists relinquish all authorial control, Shark LeWitt points out, when asked, that every detail of her art is there for deliberate reasons. She is drawn to the resonances of historical art and literature, and infuses her own work with a similar aura of history. The miniature size and antique appearance of her early works invest them with the mystery of a hidden text in which ancient secrets and old romantic scandals can be unraveled. Her use of cryptic painterly styles offers the thrill of discovering an outmoded school or the hand of an obscure artist, perhaps long forgotten. However, Shark LeWitt’s paintings contain more than simple references that evoke the past or produce affects. The horned man, who appears in *Goodness always triumphs over evil*, for instance, performs a function that suggests he represents an ambiguous moral conscience.

This devil-figure first appeared in *The look of love* (1982) and secondly in *Charles Meryon the voyeur 1827–1868. La belle et la bête* (1983). Charles Meryon was in fact a nineteenth-century engraver who famously depicted the Notre Dame gargoyle, the cynical *le stryge* (vampire or ghoul) who watches over Paris. The unfulfilled Meryon dreamed in vain of revisiting Paris. The unfulfilled Meryon dreamed in vain of revisiting and eventually settling in New Zealand, where he had sailed as a younger man. Shark LeWitt casts Meryon, the artist himself, as the bored custodian of Parisian daily life. In her painted version of him, Meryon occupies the right panel in a diptych, folding his huge purple wings behind him as he rests his chin on his left hand. His right hand points a pistol at the woman in the adjoining panel as she carries a sword up a red path. The addition of the pistol is a twist on the traditional French fairytale of Beauty and the Beast. Meryon is the Beast, presumably, longing to be loved by innocent Beauty. Instead of the fairy-tale gentleman within a beast’s body, however, Shark LeWitt’s Meryon has become a sinister
cat. 6

Goodness always triumphs over evil 1984

4 parts: 76 x 116 cm, each: 76 x 29 cm
Che va piano va sicuro;
There is no apparent explanation for Meryon’s malicious intentions; it is as though he has a mind of his own. The idea of him taking a pot-shot at a figure in another painting, however, not only satirizes the painting’s original artistic sources, it also upsets the illusionistic function of painting itself. As the agent of such ideas, the capricious and judgmental Meryon registers the degree of creative and moral uncertainty that Shark LeWitt confronts in each work, as well as the wit and humour she brings to the process.

Subtlety and nuance in Shark LeWitt’s works are never vague or accidental. Her later works, especially, are light but restrained in mood. The title and image of a recent work, Che va piano va sicuro; 2007, spell out this weightless, carefully tempered disposition. The title is an anglicized Italian expression that Shark LeWitt came across in a novel. Chi va piano va sicuro translates as he/she who goes slowly goes surely. With its inconclusive semi-colon, Shark LeWitt’s title chimes with the image, a sketchily painted landscape partly based on that marvellous monument to Roman imperial ambition and engineering, the Appian Way (c. 312 BCE). Stretching from Rome to Brindisi the ancient causeway is scattered with the remnants of entire suburbs, graveyards and fabulous mansions that have been subject to invasion and theft over many centuries. Nowadays, covered in grass and lined with cypress and pine trees, it is a living testament to the aesthetic of the ruin, the vanities of human civilization and the resilience of nature. Shark LeWitt’s landscape is painted in dry acrylics, featuring a couple of scratchy, dark, flat-topped umbrella pines that dominate the centre of the composition, and a soft country road that winds behind them as another forks off in front to the right up a slight hill. Behind the top of the hill the remains of a sandy-coloured brick wall or chimney rise, block-like, against the pale sky. Two small pencil cypresses punctuate the foreground, as a line of white flowers, like a wreath, brackets the right side of the picture plane. The elegant illustrational style, slightly muted colours and white surrounds of this economical scene are reminiscent of an old tinted postcard of the type one’s grandmother might have received from her soldier lover stationed in Italy during the Second World War.

The conspicuous absence of people in Che va piano va sicuro; is significant. The artist’s own home of many years is nestled at the foot of a hill in the Victorian country town of Daylesford, far from the bustling metropolis of Melbourne. A road runs past her house to an old established garden of cypresses and pines, not unlike Che va piano va sicuro; or indeed the Appian Way. On weekends and public holidays, the otherwise peaceful bush-land retreat of Daylesford, once an important gold-mining town and spa, is inundated with cars and visitors. It is a sad irony that even the individuality and obscurity of ruins and past civilizations, in their wilderness settings, are reduced to equivalence by cultural appropriation and the global tourist industry. There is a knowing resistance to exploitation in Che va piano va sicuro; however, which is hinted at by the forked road presenting a dilemma for the traveller, and the fact that both paths disappear in the middle-distance, one leading to a dense forest of trees and the other to the ruin. In a round about way the title, too, warns of danger, hinting that the Arcadian fantasy on offer might hide a darker reality. In this respect, Che va piano va sicuro; is more a philosophy of environmental care than a fairy-tale.

The integration of form and concept in Shark LeWitt’s art, especially in the early work, may be partly an effect of her art-school training at sculpting in wood. For instance, Dangerous acquaintances, 1986, which is painted as an oval-shaped image on a small wooden panel, is divided into two complementary shapes that lock into one another, almost like the Chinese symbols of yin and yang (heaven and earth). Conceptually, yin and yang are antitheses in human perception, combining to form a unified whole. On the right-hand side of Dangerous acquaintances, the yang consists of a naked man in his arched frame reminiscent of Meryon in Goodness always triumphs over evil. He looks over his right shoulder as he tips water from a large pitcher onto a flailing woman. She and her surrounds constitute the yin. Her open mouth and outstretched arm and hand express the shock of having water dropped on one from a great height, a visual metaphor for an unexpected insult or cutting remark.
A later work, *Bloody hell*, 1994, shows a similarly playful complementariness of form and concept. Shark LeWitt reinvents the tradition of headless ghosts, who speak from their severed heads, to graphically represent the idea of the mind/body split and the existence of the soul. Hence *Bloody hell* depicts a twentieth-century woman in an office-suit of no specific decade or style. She stands, practical and matter-of-fact, her sensible flat shoes planted solidly on the viridian ground. Her upright body is materially very present except that she is carrying her annoyed-looking head under her arm, as though it were a portfolio containing essential details of identity. The diagrammatic line around the space that the head once occupied describes the absence of the missing head in office-speak. It also suggests an inner life or presence. As such, *Bloody hell* begs the question, in a gruesome but bloodless way, of whether we have a soul or mind and if so whether it lives in the head or the rest of the body.

Most of Shark LeWitt’s central personae are women, and it is tempting to read feminist irony into some of the scenes she portrays. Reversing the roles in Titian’s *Diana and Actaeon*, 1559, for instance, one might identify Actaeon as the man in *Dangerous acquaintances*, who punishes the goddess Diana for spying on him as he bathes nude. Similarly, in *Bloody hell*, the traditional idea that woman is body and man is mind is drastically unpicked. The woman in *Goodness always triumphs over evil*, perhaps doubling as the artist herself, might be writing a narrative for both the painting as well as her own life thereby defying patriarchal law. Although it is possible to infer these meanings from the many connotations in the art, however, Shark LeWitt’s focus is only obliquely political. In a similar vein, it might be argued that her paintings are not really jokes, even though they at first seem spontaneous and light-hearted. As already demonstrated, their humour and criticality derive from a reflective engagement with a variety of formal, artistic, social, environmental and intellectual sources.

Many of these points of engagement are evident in my final example, *Frankly I am lost, Brian* (1988), an early landscape painted in sympathy with the tenets of Animal Liberation.\(^1\) It recalls René Magritte’s *Le blanc-seing* (1965)\(^3\), in which an upright woman in nineteenth-century garb steers her large horse through tall straight trees. Shark LeWitt’s trees are bare and planted in a single line across a path, slicing the autumn landscape into vertical segments. A man and woman riding bareback saunter from right to left across the stage-like foreground. Compared to Magritte’s ghostly mirage, Shark LeWitt’s couple on their alabaster toy-like horses are almost comical, more like an amateur-theatre version of a Gainsborough couple returning from the hunt. In Shark LeWitt’s ‘non-hunting scene’ the young woman turns to look encouragingly at a hesitant dog who carries an unharmed pheasant on his back. Matching the empathetic tenor of this work, Shark LeWitt’s lightness of touch, translucent paintwork, meticulous design, refined temperature-contrasting colour scheme and delicate atmospheric effects are vibrant testament to a sensitive, deeply thoughtful, authorial presence.

Notes
cat. 18
Frankly I am lost, Brian 1988
50 x 60 cm
cat. 2
The bloody chamber 1983
triptych: 37 x 57 cm (irreg.);
a: 23 x 19 x 4.5 cm,
b: 37 x 19 x 4.5 cm (irreg.),
c: 23 x 19 x 4.5 cm

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cat. 3
Charles Meryon the voyeur 1827–1868.
La belle et la bête 1983
diptych: dimensions variable,
each: 36 x 30 cm (irreg.)
cat. 5
Those who live in envy die in despair 1983
4 parts: 27.5 x 88.5 cm (irreg.);
a: 27 x 19 cm, b: 24 x 25 cm,
c: 24 x 25.5 cm, d: 27.5 x 19 cm
Cat. 12

Dangerous acquaintances 1986

25.5 x 15 cm
cat. 8  
*Last night, I dreamed I went to Manderlay again 1985*  
26 x 29 cm
The omen, ‘That wascally wabbit’ 1987
61 x 71 cm
cat. 22
$49.95 1990
55 x 70.5 cm
cat. 23
*The lemon eater with bulldog attendant* 1990
56 x 66 cm
Cat. 24
SOB 1990
61 x 45.7 cm
The more fool I, so great a fool to adore 1991
36 x 26 cm
cat. 27
Haircut 1993
81.5 x 81.5 cm

cat. 30
Prime movers 1994
81.5 x 81.5 cm
Cat. 29
*Bloody hell* 1994
137 x 86 cm

Cat. 31
*Refreshed* 1994
137 x 112 cm
CAT. 37
Hope (three coins in a fountain) 1998
107 x 86 cm

CAT. 34
The egg and I (for Flora) 1996
153 x 97 cm
cat. 33
Cat 1996
81.5 x 81.5 cm
cat. 36
Faith (E = mc²) 1998
112 x 92 cm
cat. 41
Teresa of Avila 2001
71 x 61 cm
cat. 40
Receipt 2001
86 x 102 cm
cat. 39

Finished 2001

81 x 92 cm
cat. 44
*Disorientalism* 2003
97.5 x 81 cm
cat. 46
Nat sulph 2003
112 x 97 cm
cat. 45
Hepaplux 2003
92 x 76.5 cm
To strike the meanest and the least
Of creatures is a sin.
Vivienne Shark LeWitt: biography and bibliography

**Biography**

Born Sale, Victoria, 1956; lives Daylesford, Victoria

**Education**

1980–81 Post-graduate Diploma of Art, Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education, Sydney
1976–79 Diploma of Fine Arts, Tasmanian School of Art, Tasmanian College of Advanced Education, Hobart
1974–75 The University of Adelaide

**Selected solo exhibitions**

2007  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt: misc.*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
2003  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt: disorientalism*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
2001  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt: pardon my sarong*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
1998  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt: sorority virtues*, Anna Schwartz Gallery at the Sixth Australian Contemporary Art Fair, Melbourne
1997  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt: works on paper*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
1996  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt: the egg & I*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
1995  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
1994  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
1991  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt: paintings*, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne
1987  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
1986  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt: paintings 1985/86*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
1985  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt: paintings*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
1984  *Vivienne Shark LeWitt*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

**Selected group exhibitions**

2008  *Who let the dogs out: The dog in contemporary Australian art*, Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, New South Wales
2004  *The decadence of the nude*, Ocular Lab, Melbourne
2003  *Penetralia: Art and psychoanalysis in Melbourne, 1940–2004*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne
1999  *It’s a beautiful day: new painting in Australia 2*, the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne
1998  *Signs of life: Melbourne international biennial*, 118 Russell Street, Melbourne
1996  *The shadow of reason*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
1995  *Double vision: artists’ portraits of artists*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, the University of New South Wales, Sydney
1992  *The nude 1992: Sara Weis Award*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, Melbourne
1991  *The golden shibboleth*, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne
1989  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1988  *From the Southern Cross: 7th biennale of Sydney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
1985  *Cartoons and caricature in contemporary art, Geelong Gallery, Victoria
1984  *The Australian Bicentennial perspectives*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (and tour to the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Frankfurter Kunstverein, Germany; and Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany)
1984  *Return to sender: Donna Marcus, Loretta Quinn, Vivienne Shark LeWitt*, Tasmanian School of Art Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart
1983  *Visual tension*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne
1980  *The gothic: perversity and its pleasure*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (and tour to 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne, and Chameleon Gallery, Hobart)
1975  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1972  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1971  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1968  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1967  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
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1951  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1950  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1949  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1948  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1947  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1946  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1945  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1944  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1943  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1942  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1941  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
1940  *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
Meaning & excellence: ANZART in Edinburgh, Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland

1983
Australian perspecta, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
D’un autre continent l’Australie: le rêve et le réel, Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France
The end of civilization. Part II: love among the ruins (curated by the artist), George Paton Gallery, Melbourne
Pirates and mutineers, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

1982
New painting, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

1978
Artists’ books/bookworks, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide; and Franklin Furnace, New York

Grants
1996
Visual Arts/Craft Board, Australia Council
1983
Visual Arts Board, Australia Council

Collections
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
City of Port Phillip, Melbourne
Cruthers Collection of Women’s Art, the University of Western Australia, Perth
Geelong Gallery, Victoria
Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
National Australia Bank, Melbourne
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Parliament House, Canberra
Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) Limited, Melbourne
Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, New York
The University of Melbourne
The University of Queensland

Vizard Foundation Art Collection of the 1990s, on loan to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne

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Books

Exhibition catalogues
Hart, D, Imagining the real: an exhibition of recent acquisitions from the Parliament House Art Collection, Joint House Department, Parliament House, Canberra, 1996.
Holmes, J, Return to sender: Donna Marcus, Loretta Quinn, Vivienne Shark LeWitt, Tasmanian School of Art Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 1985.
Lindsay, R, Young Australians: the best of young Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1987.
Journal and magazine articles and reviews

Kuspit, DB, ‘“Australian visions” at the Guggenheim’, *Art in America*, March 1985.

Newspaper articles and reviews


Writing by the artist and commissioned artwork

—— ‘Why Egyptian mods didn’t bother to bleach their hair or More notes about parkas and combs’, *Art & Text*, no. 3, 1981, pp. 80–6.
—— ‘In the desert’, *Stuff*, August 1983.
—— *Other people*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 1985.
—— ‘Exactly!’, 200 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy, Vic., 1996.
—— poster design, Opera Theatre Company of Ireland, Melbourne International Festival of the Arts, 1997.

Vivienne Shark LeWitt is represented
by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, and
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
**Catalogue of works in the exhibition**

Dimensions are given as height before width

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WorkTitle</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> The look of love</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>synthetic polymer paint on canvas</td>
<td>30.5 x 30.5 cm</td>
<td>Collection of the artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> The bloody chamber</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>synthetic polymer paint on wood</td>
<td>triptych: 37 x 57 cm (irreg.), a: 23 x 19 x 4.5 cm, b: 37 x 19 x 4.5 cm (irreg.), c: 23 x 19 x 4.5 cm</td>
<td>The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Charles Meryon the voyeur</td>
<td>1827–1868</td>
<td>synthetic polymer paint on wood</td>
<td>diptych: dimensions variable, each: 36 x 30 cm (irreg.)</td>
<td>Private collection, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> China boy in the desert. The dead girl</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>synthetic polymer paint and gold leaf on wood</td>
<td>diptych: 29 x 57 cm, each: 29 x 28.5 cm</td>
<td>Collection of Naomi Cass, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> Those who live in envy die in despair</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>synthetic polymer paint on wood</td>
<td>4 parts: 27.5 x 88.5 cm (irreg.), a: 27 x 19 cm, b: 24 x 25 cm, c: 24 x 25.5 cm, d: 27.5 x 19 cm</td>
<td>Private collection, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong> Goodness always triumphs over evil</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>oil, synthetic polymer paint and gold leaf on wood</td>
<td>4 parts: 76 x 116 cm, each: 76 x 29 cm</td>
<td>Collection of Janice and Greg Taylor, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong> The making of Leopold</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>synthetic polymer paint on wood</td>
<td>diptych: 29 x 58 cm, each: 29 x 29 cm</td>
<td>Collection of the artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong> Last night, I dreamed I went to Manderlay again</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>oil and gold leaf on wood</td>
<td>26 x 29 cm</td>
<td>Collection of the artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong> Nightmare abbey</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>oil on wood</td>
<td>22 x 15 cm</td>
<td>Private collection, Sicily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong> St Tobias and the angel</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>3 parts: dimensions variable; a: 56 x 70.5 cm, b: 27 x 18.5 cm, c: 27 x 18.5 cm</td>
<td>Private collection, courtesy Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong> Zugzwang</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>36 x 29 cm (irreg.)</td>
<td>Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Gift of Loti and Victor Smorgon, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong> Dangerous acquaintances</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>oil on wood</td>
<td>25.5 x 15 cm</td>
<td>Collection of the artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong> Frith</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>oil on wood</td>
<td>38.3 x 33.5 cm</td>
<td>National Gallery of Australia, Canberra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong> The game of love and chance</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>91 x 122 cm</td>
<td>Private collection, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong> Untitled (Bicentennial arts)</td>
<td>1986–87</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>61 x 45.7 cm</td>
<td>National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented through the Art Foundation of Victoria by ICI Australia Limited, Fellow 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong> The omen, 'That wascally wabbit'</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>61 x 71 cm</td>
<td>Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17</strong> Shall I bark for you master? Or shall I bite? Ha, ha, ha, ha</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>81.3 x 65.9 cm</td>
<td>Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Purchased 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18</strong> Frankly I am lost, Brian</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>50 x 60 cm</td>
<td>Baillieu Myer Collection of the '80s, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong> India song</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>56 x 40.5 cm</td>
<td>Collection of Naomi Cass, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20</strong> P &amp; O</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>35 x 25 cm</td>
<td>Collection of Justin and Sandra Shmith, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>21</strong> Untitled</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>45.7 x 55.8 cm</td>
<td>Laverty Collection, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>22</strong> $49.95</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>55 x 70.5 cm</td>
<td>Private collection, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>23</strong> The lemon eater with bulldog attendant</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>56 x 66 cm</td>
<td>Private collection, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24. **SOB** 1990
   - Oil on canvas
   - 61 x 45.7 cm
   - Private collection, Melbourne

25. **Marvellous Melbourne** 1991
   - Oil on canvas
   - 45.7 x 61 cm
   - Hyphema Collection, Perth

26. **The more fool I, so great a fool to adore** 1991
   - Oil on wood
   - 36 x 26 cm (oval)
   - National Australia Bank Art Collection, Melbourne

27. **Haircut** 1993
   - Oil on canvas
   - 81.5 x 81.5 cm
   - Cruthers Collection of Women's Art, the University of Western Australia, Perth

28. **As they say** 1994
   - Oil on canvas
   - 81.5 x 81.5 cm
   - Parliament House Art Collection, Department of Parliamentary Services, Canberra

29. **Bloody hell** 1994
   - Oil on canvas
   - 137 x 86 cm
   - Vizard Foundation Art Collection of the 1990s, purchased 1994
   On loan to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne

30. **Prime movers** 1994
    - Oil on canvas
    - 81.5 x 81.5 cm
    - Collection of Susan Clements, Perth

31. **Refreshed** 1994
    - Oil on canvas
    - 137 x 112 cm
    - Collection of Kalli and Brian Rolfe, Melbourne

32. **MAN (7:30 pm)** 1995
    - Oil on canvas
    - 137 x 86 cm
    - Hyphema Collection, Perth

33. **Cat** 1996
    - Oil on canvas
    - 81.5 x 81.5 cm
    - Collection of David Loh and Lynne Boyce, Sydney

34. **The egg and I (for Flora)** 1996
    - Oil on canvas
    - 153 x 97 cm
    - Geelong Gallery, Victoria. Purchased 1996

35. **Spaghetti** 1996
    - Oil on canvas
    - 96.5 x 86 cm
    - Private collection, Melbourne

36. **Faith (E = mc²)** 1998
    - Oil on canvas
    - 112 x 92 cm
    - Private collection, Melbourne

37. **Hope (three coins in a fountain)** 1998
    - Oil on canvas
    - 107 x 86 cm
    - Private collection, Melbourne

38. **Temperance (now take you for instance)** 1998
    - Oil on canvas
    - 112 x 92 cm
    - Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

39. **Finished** 2001
    - Oil on canvas
    - 81 x 92 cm
    - Janet and Michael Buxton Collection, Melbourne

40. **Receipt** 2001
    - Oil on canvas
    - 86 x 102 cm
    - Janet and Michael Buxton Collection, Melbourne

41. **Teresa of Avila** 2001
    - Oil on canvas
    - 71 x 61 cm
    - Collection of Elaine Baker and John Cruthers, Sydney

42. **‘Me? Here?’** 2002
    - Oil on canvas
    - 107 x 77 cm
    - Janet and Michael Buxton Collection, Melbourne

43. **Ask me anything** 2003
    - Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
    - 76.5 x 91.5 cm
    - Private collection, Melbourne

44. **Disorientalism** 2003
    - Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
    - 97.5 x 81 cm
    - Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) Limited Art Collection, Melbourne

45. **Hepaplex** 2003
    - Oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas
    - 92 x 76.5 cm
    - Collection of Anna and Morry Schwartz, Melbourne

46. **Nat sulph** 2003
    - Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
    - 112 x 97 cm
    - Private collection, Melbourne

47. **Cease and desist** 2006
    - Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
    - 77 x 67 cm
    - Collection of Lisa Paulsen, Sydney

48. **Che va piano va sicuro; 2007**
    - Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
    - 76 x 61 cm
    - Collection of the artist

49. **Did someone say cashmere?** 2007
    - Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
    - 77 x 67 cm
    - Private collection, Sydney
    - The artist gratefully acknowledges Naiad Einsel for her kind permission to base this painting on her original advertisement for Einiger Mills, New York, 1958

50. **‘If the shoe doesn’t fit, must we change the foot?’** 2008
    - Oil on canvas
    - 86.5 x 76.2 cm
    - Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
Vivienne Shark LeWitt: comedies & proverbs
Published by the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne, on the occasion of the exhibition Vivienne Shark LeWitt: comedies & proverbs, 3 May to 20 July 2008.

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Cover image: Nat Sulph (detail) 2003, 112 x 97 cm (cat. 46)