

**a bruise has no tears**

Amanda Davies



Lucien Freud's remark that *'the longer you look at an object the more abstract it becomes and ironically the more real'* certainly resonated for me when I started to *really* look at Pink Eye potatoes, which belong to the cultivated nightshade family of flowering plants.

In 1803 potatoes were first planted in Tasmania, however aboriginals were eating native potatoes (*Caladenia* tubers) long before this.<sup>1</sup> The exact origin of the Pink Eye potato is unknown, it has off-white skin with purple flushes on it, deep pink eyes and yellow flesh and has been grown in Tasmania since 1928. A banal everyday rural food icon the Tasmanian Pink Eye potato comes into focus in the exhibition **a bruise has no tears**.

Potatoes inhabit darkness and are mute, but speak from their eyes with new growth feeling out and up through the dirt towards the light - to speak is to express oneself and project what is inside out into the world.

Potatoes are susceptible to disease, particularly bacterial wilt, which is often referred to as brown rot, jammy eye or sore eye, reminding me of my own dirty eyes, of conjunctivitis, grit in the eye, itchy vision. Fresh spuds pulled from the earthen darkness are dirty and soiled, their yellow and purple blemished skin looks like bruised flesh. Uprooted from their secure blanket of earth into the harsh light they appear bruised and battered. I wonder if there are tears? Do they weep?

The painter, paints the world or herself, and so I painted myself in the world, placing Pink Eye potatoes over my eyes. With the potatoes acting as a filter, a symbolic gateway to an interior (underground) reality, I opened my eyes and looked into the darkness. I entered the world where doubt becomes form and it was here I saw that a bruise does have tears.

Amanda Davies

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion\\_to\\_tasmanian\\_history/P/Potatoes.htm](http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/P/Potatoes.htm)



*a bruise has no tears*  
mixed media  
dimensions variable  
2016



Tasmanian  
Pink Eyes (sick)  
oil on linen  
36cm x 36cm  
2016







## Searching

She'd been searching for a while. Searching deep within potatoes for *something*. What kind were they? Désirée? Dutch cream? Kipfler? The search had been going on for so long, she'd actually forgotten what kind they were: and, anyway, it no longer mattered. What had not changed was her unshakeable conviction that, somewhere inside those potatoes was what she was seeking. It was there, somewhere in the crisp flesh of those potatoes, flesh that ranged from a luscious cream to a waxy white.

Something about the smell of the still-clinging dirt - or was it the sensation of the inside of those tuberous vegetables, or their parchments skin? - brought her closer to what she was looking for. Eyes closed, she could finally *really* see.

Her mind went back to a half-forgotten story: more a fable, something that had taken place before there were memories to remember anything. In that time, a Stranger had taken up clods of sticky brown earth and begun creating. 'Begun' was not quite right: in fact, the Stranger could not *begin* creating at all. Creation stretched infinitely before the Stranger, through the Stranger, and on indefinitely beyond the Stranger: the Stranger was creation itself, a self-diffusing conduit for itself. Dust, earth, mud, the slime of eternity, joined particle by particle in an infinite array of differing signification. A spiral, a maelstrom, spinning and scattering, dancing the brightness of itself.

It was within her, she realised: she need only break herself open, like the shifts of velvet that are the petals of a tulip, parting to reveal its own secret heart. She pressed down through her own clods of earth, those potatoes, and hit something.

Her fingers became colours then, and finally she poured herself out.

John Weretka

*bruises and tears*  
(painting medicine cabinet)  
mixed media  
dimensions variable  
2016





## Contributors

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### John Weretka

holds qualifications in history, musicology, art history, theology and Latin and is currently undertaking study for a Masters at the University of Divinity, preparing a translation and commentary on the early thirteenth-century liturgical commentary *De Mitræ* by Sicard of Cremona.

## **a bruise has no tears**

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Publisher: Shed Publishing

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The publication follows an exhibition **a bruise has no tears**, curated by Pat Brassington, held from 26 August to 18 September, 2016. It was part of a larger project *Artist to Artist* curated by Kylie Johnson, Contemporary Art Tasmania, Hobart.

Cover Image: *Tasmanian Pink Eyes*, 2016, paint, wood and plastic

Inside images: all paintings *untitled*, 2016, oil on linen, 31cm x 36cm

Back Image: *bruises and tears* (detail), 2016, mixed media, wall mounted painting medicine cabinet

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Thanks to Contemporary Art Tasmania and the support of an Australian Artists' Grant, a NAVA initiative, made possible through the generous sponsorship of Mrs Janet Holmes á Court and the support of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council for the Arts.

ISBN: 978-06480515-0-3

Edition: 25

