

Sigrid Holmwood: A Terrible and True History

Annely Juda Fine Art

26 January - 3 March 2023

The focus of this recent series of paintings are the Witch Trials of 1590 in Denmark and North Berwick, Scotland. In the winter of 1589, storms prevented the voyage of Princess Anne of Denmark from Copenhagen to Scotland to marry King James VI. Witchcraft was blamed, notably by King James himself whose interest in witchcraft lead him to write Daemonologie in 1597. Brutal witch trials ensued in Denmark, and then in Scotland on the King and Queen's return. Confessions via torture were commonplace, as well as women being burnt alive at the stake. The site of the Danish executions is close to where Holmwood now resides in Malmö, (now part of Sweden) and the artist grew up in Edinburgh, close to the North Berwick trials.

Paintings in this exhibition feature imagery such as fanning flames, a floundering ship in stormy seas and excerpts from historical pamphlets on witchcraft. "I suppose I have been particularly fascinated with the tension between the attraction of the swirling marks used to depict the flames and my own revulsion at the subject matter. Some of the flames depicted were used to burn women, and some were used to burn books – a reference to women's knowledge."

Sigrid Holmwood, 2022

The knowledge Holmwood refers to is that of plants and their medicinal properties. For Holmwood and other scholars, the European witch hunts became a counter-revolutionary tool that served to supress radical movements in the peasant class. "The trope of killing, and even eating, babies were often part of the conspiracy theories expressed in the Witch Hunts, thereby serving to appropriate women's reproductive capacities by silencing their medicinal knowledge of

plants that might be used to control their fertility." In a time where countries such as the United States and Poland are reversing the rights of women's access to abortion, this seems sadly more relevant. Holmwood has used madder roots as the red dye in these works which, as well as being an important historic red dye in Europe, was also used to induce abortions.

Holmwood's work focuses on the ways in which the hand-making of materials generates meaning and resists the alienation of industrialised modern life. Paints are hand made using historical methods and Holmwood has used the figure of the peasant - in her paintings but also through an adopted persona - as a means to highlight the links between the exclusion of European peasant culture and in these recent works, the supression, torture and execution of countless women as part of mass hysteria about witchcraft in the 15th and 16th centuries.

The witch hunts that took place in early Modern Europe were confounded by the spreading of information via printed maerials. The invention of the Gutenberg press in the 1450s contributed largely to the proliferation of panic and hysteria; one could liken it to the spread of moden day misinformation and conspiracy theories on the internet. News of the North Berwick trials quickly spread via the pamphlet 'Newes from Scotland', published London in 1591, an excerpt of which is printed on the green textile work in this exhibition which is dyed with weld plants gathered near the site of executions in Malmö. Another notable text is En Forskreckelig Oc sand bescriffuelse om mange Troldfolck, (A Terrible and True Description of Witches) of 1589, from which this exhibition's title originates.



Sigrid Holmwood, En förskreckelig oc sand beskrivelse, (A terrible and true description) 2022. Madder, caput mortuum, Maya blue, green earth, weld, red ochre, indigo in egg tempera on calico mordant printed with madder. 120 x 130cm





Sigrid Holmwood was born in 1978 and studied at the Ruskin School of Drawing & Fine Art, Oxford and the Royal College of Art and Goldsmiths Colleges, London.

In 2003 she was awarded the Sainsbury Scholarship in Painting and Drawing at the British School in Rome. Holmood's works have been shown widely in the UK in solo exhibitions and also Italy, Sweden, Spain and China.

Annely Juda Fine Art has held three major shows prior to this one: "The Peasants Are Revolting" in 2017, "Journey to WuMu- Paper Paintings" (with Duan Jianyu) in 2012 and "1857 Paintings" in 2008.

She has featured in many group and curated exhibitions including 'Swedish Acquisitions: Insights' at Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2022); 'I staden växter ett fält (In the City Grows a Field)' at Malmö Konsthall (2022); 'Creating the Countryside' at Compton Verney in Warwickshire (2017); 'Polemically Small" at Torrance Art Museum, Los Angeles (2011) & Saatchi Gallery in Adelaide, Australia (2011). She has been the recipient of numerous awards, scholarships and residences.

Sigrid Holmwood A fire used to burn women in Dernburg 2022

Caput mortuum, madder, red ochre, cochineal, red and yellow ochre, Maya blue, weld, chalk, and titanium white, in egg tempera on calico dyed with weld and madder 60 x 80 cm



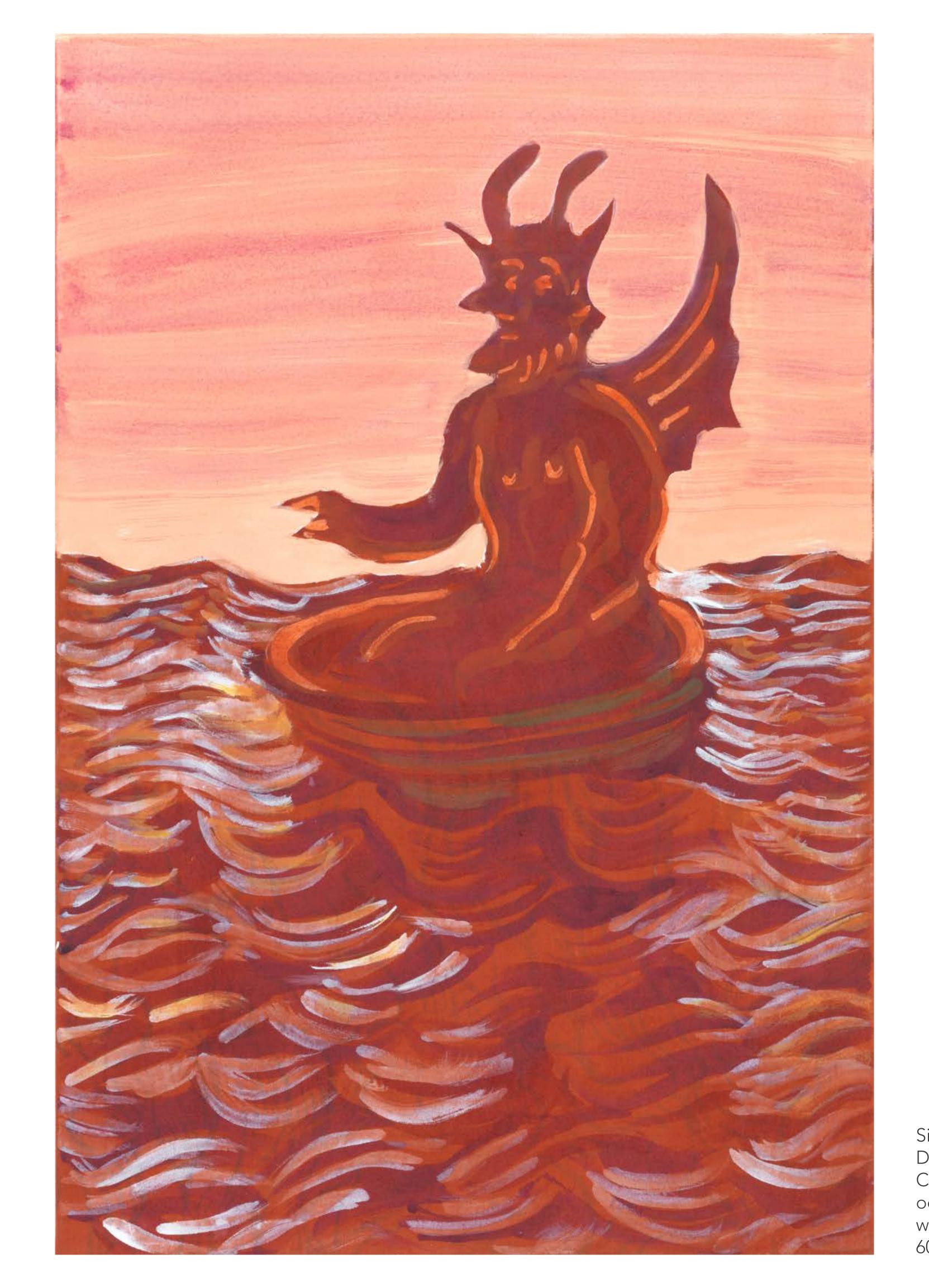


Sigrid Holmwood, Burning a book 2022 Caput mortuum, madder, red ochre, cochineal, red and yellow ochre, weld, chalk, and titanium white, in egg tempera on calico dyed with weld and madder, 110 x 80 cm



Sigrid Holmwood, Burning books and burning bodies 2022

Caput mortuum, madder, cochineal, red and yellow ochre, weld, chalk, and titanium white, in egg tempera on calico dyed with madder and weld, 120 x 160 cm



Sigrid Holmwood
Devil in a boat 2022
Caput mortuum, madder, red ochre, cochineal, red and yellow ochre, chalk, and titanium white, in egg tempera on calico dyed with weld and madder
60 x 40 cm





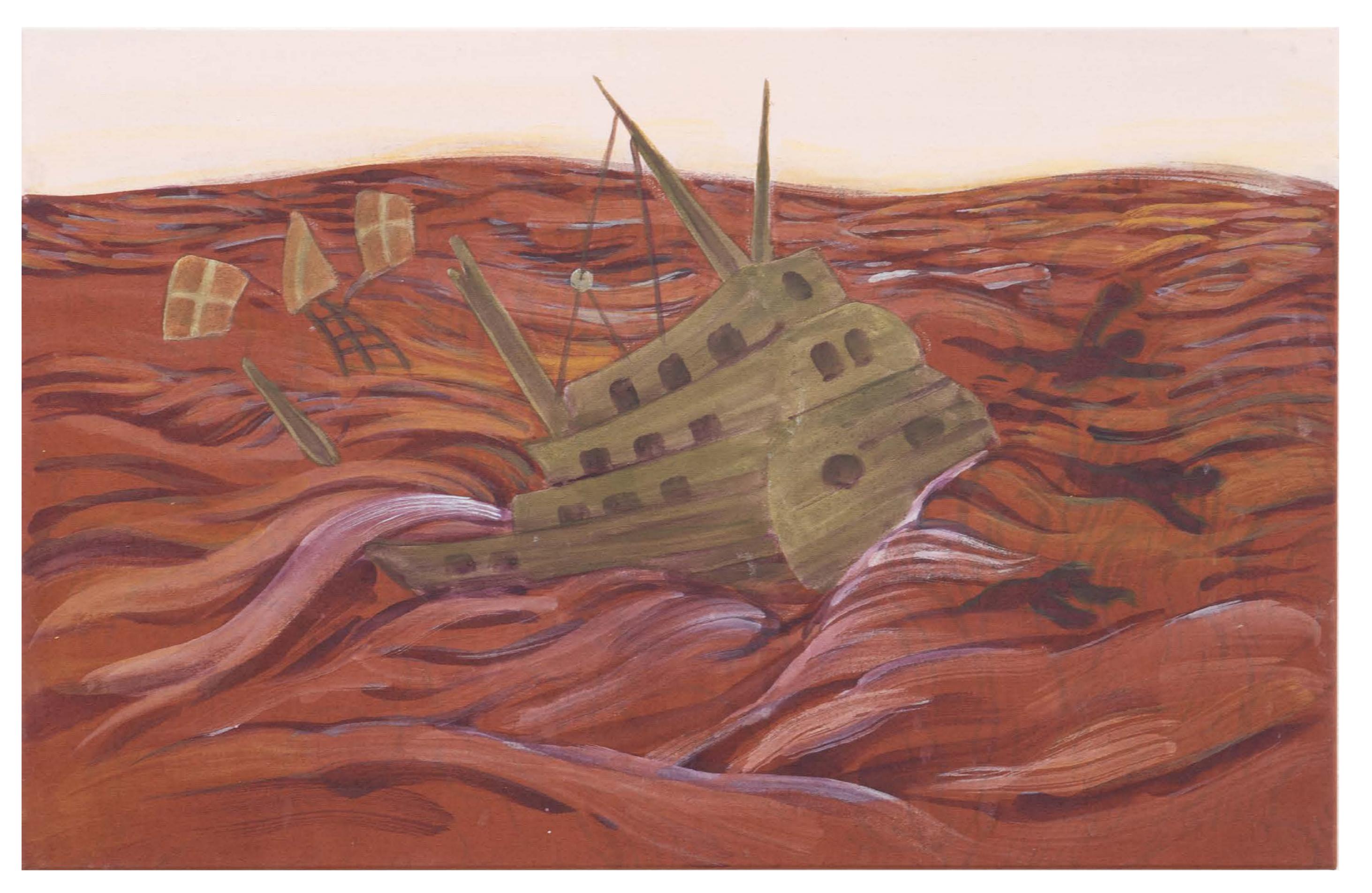
Sigrid Holmwood
The last execution by burning in England , 2022
Caput mortuum, madder, red ochre, cochineal, red and yellow ochre, green earth, Maya blue, weld, chalk, and titanium white, in egg tempera on linen
160 x 120 cm











Sigrid Holmwood,
Sinking Ship
2022
Caput mortuum, madder, cochineal, red and yellow ochre, chalk, and titanium white, in egg tempera on calico dyed with madder and weld
40 x 60 cm



Sigrid Holmwood Devil on horseback 2022

Caput mortuum, madder, cochineal, green earth, red & yellow ochre, chalk, and titanium white, egg tempera on calico dyed with madder & weld 40 x 60 cm



Madder, caput mortuum, Maya blue, green earth, weld, red ochre, indigo in egg tempera on calico mordant printed with madder, 120 X 130 cm

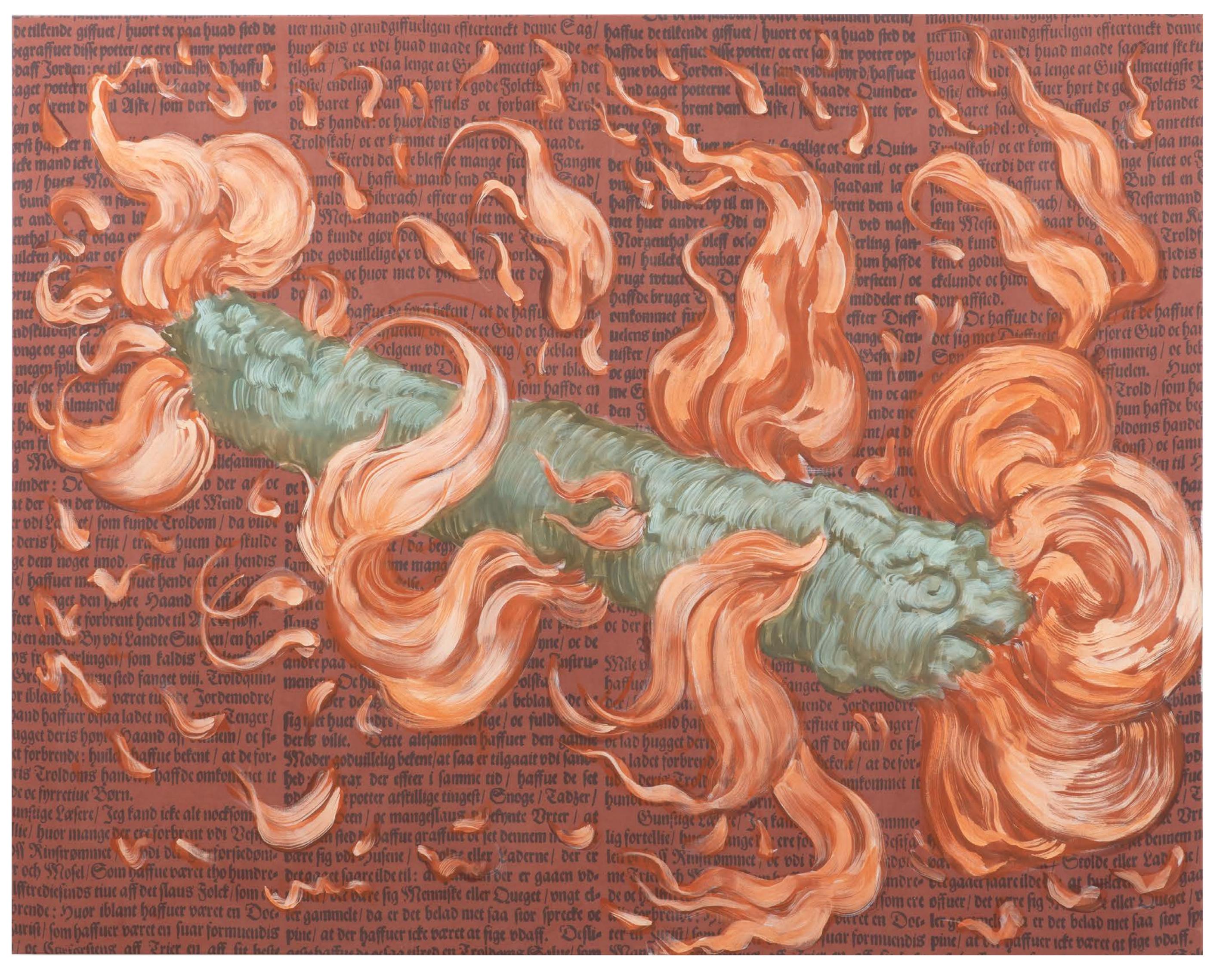






Sigrid Holmwood, En förskreckelig oc sand beskrivelse (A terrible and true description) 2022, Madder, caput mortuum, Maya blue, green earth, weld, red ochre, indigo in egg tempera on calico mordant printed with madder, 120 X 130 cm

Sigrid Holmwood, Burning log, 2022, Caput mortuum, madder, red ochre, green earth, raw umber, Maya blue, chalk, & titanium white, in egg tempera on calico mordant printed & madder, 120 x 160 cm



Sigrid Holmwood, Burning log 2022,

Caput mortuum, madder, red ochre, green earth, raw umber, Maya blue, chalk, & titani-um white, in egg tempera on calico mordant printed & madder, 120 x 160 cm



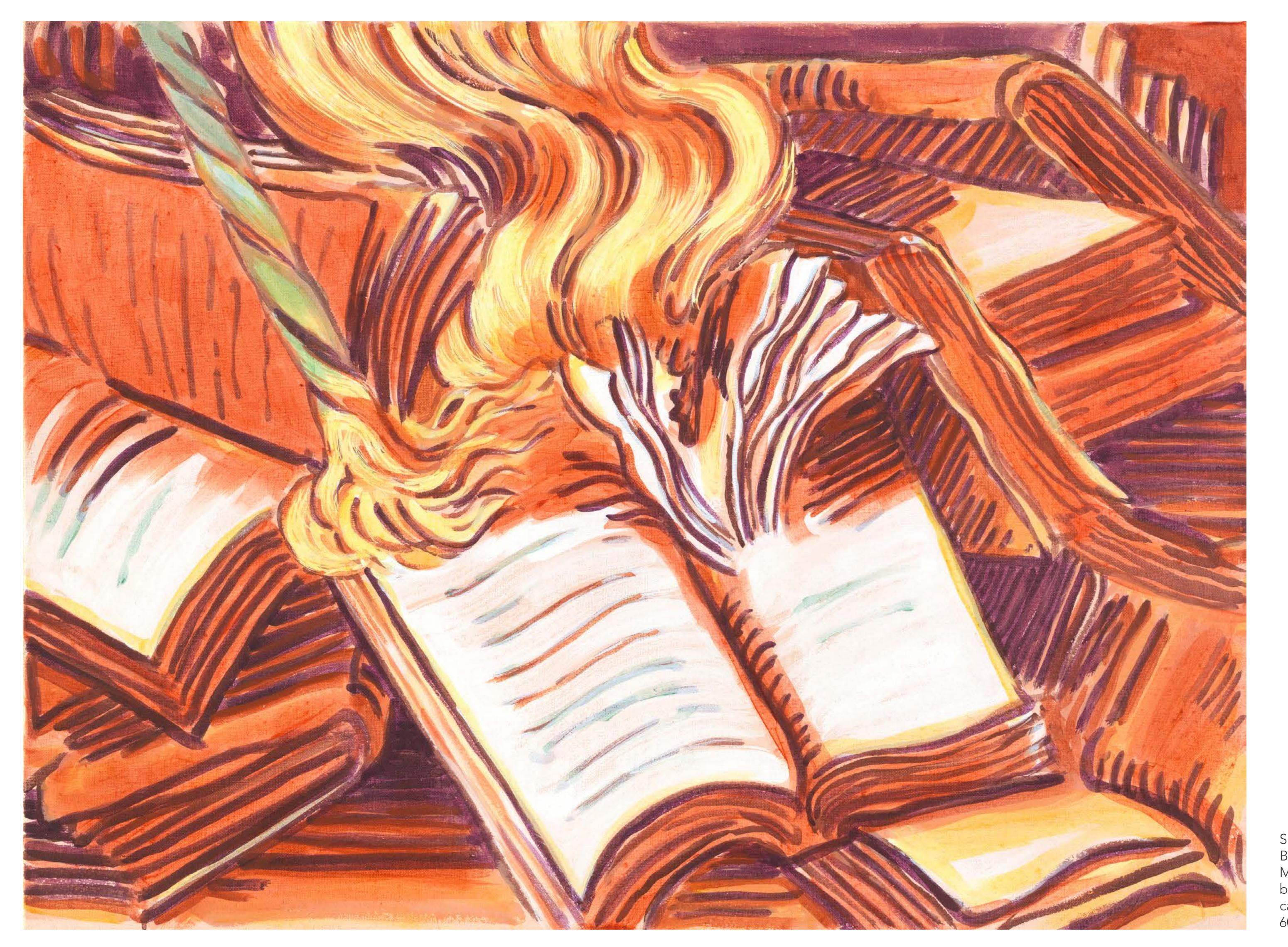




Sigrid Holmwood,
A fire used to burn women in Dernburg, 2022
Caput mortuum, madder, red ochre, cochineal, red and yellow ochre, Maya blue, weld, chalk, & titanium white, in egg tempera on calico dyed with weld and madder
60 x 80 cm







Sigrid Holmwood Bookburning 2022 Madder, caput mortuum, weld, cochineal, Maya blue, & titanium white, in egg tempera on canvas 60 x 80 cm



After moving to Malmö, Southern Sweden, four years ago, I noticed that my daily cycle route to the studio would take me past a small park with a stone monument. On closer inspection I discovered that this monument was to the memory of the women executed for witchcraft on that spot from 1543 to 1663. Further research led me to discover a particular case, replete with transnational political conspiracy theories, with connections to Scotland, where I grew up.

In September 1589 Princess Anne of Denmark set off from Copenhagen towards Edinburgh where she was to marry King James VI of Scotland (later King James I of England). Unfortunately, a great storm meant the fleet had to turn around with a layover in Oslo. The disappointed James VI set off to Oslo and then carried on with Princess Anne to Denmark where they were married and spent the winter in Helsingør. During this period reports of witchcraft trials in Trier, Germany had arrived in Denmark. Consequently, a rumour circulated that witches had been responsible for the storm and that it was a political conspiracy against King James himself. This led to a series of witchcraft trials in Copenhagen, and in Malmö, which was then a part of the Danish Kingdom. When James VI returned to Edinburgh with his bride in the spring, he personally oversaw more trials for the same case, in which women from North Berwick were accused of having conspired with the Danish witches. The case stands out as crossing national boundaries and revealing how ideas of pacts with the devil spread from Germany to Denmark, to Scotland. King James VI became obsessed with witchcraft and later wrote the book Daemonologie, in 1597.

In Malmö three women were accused in the conspiracy to brew a storm against the Royal Fleet - Marine Brennevins, Inger Christiern Skredders, and Bente Bondequinde. They were supposed to have sent their "devils", Perkild, Rutebald, and Heszemer, in small clay boats to cause the storm. Since they confessed (under torture), they were shown the mercy of being beheaded before being burned at the stake.

Sigrid Holmwood, 2023



Sigrid Holmwood		2020	Draining of the Tanks, Vermilion Sands, Copenhagen, Denmark New Raw Green, Sim Smith Gallery, London, UK	
1978	Born 19 November 1978 Lives and works in Sweden	2019	Gränsland, Hallands Konstmuseum, Halmstad, Sweden Konstnärliga avsmyckningar av Norra Djurgårdsstaden, curated by Mossutställningar, Stockholm, Sweden Speed of Thought, Newington Gallery, London, UK	
Education:		2018	50 Years, 50 Artists, Annely Juda Fine Art, London, UK Esparto: Roots and Revisions, Museu Mollí Paperer de Capellades,	
1997-2	000 Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford		Barcelona, Spain	1
2000-20	002 Royal College of Art MA, London	2017	Creating the Countryside, Compton Verney, Warwickshire, UK	
2003	The Sainsbury Scholarship in Painting and Drawing at the British		Ecos, Sala Rekalde, Bilbao, Spain	1
	School in Rome		Earth, Wind, and Fire, Griffin Gallery, London, UK	
2004	PhD Goldsmith College of Art, London	2017	Form and Volume, CFHill, Stockholm, Sweden	
		2016	Champagne Life, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK	
		2015	Anti-Social Realism, Charlie Smith, London, UK	
Solo Ex	chibitions:	2011	History Painting, The Function Room, London, UK	
		2014	Detail, H-project Space, Bangkok, Thailand	1
2022	A Terrible and True History, Annely Juda Fine Art, London, UK	0043	Stag: Berlin/London, Dispari and Dispari, Reggio Emilia, Italy	1
2020	Cannibal and Witch Eat the Rich, Celsius Projects, Malmö, Sweden	2013	The Foraged Book Project Volume One: Briefs and Proposals, Primary,	
2018	Neobiota, Yellow Gallery, Varese, Italy	2012	Nottingham, UK	1
2017	The Peasants Are Revolting!, Annely Juda Fine Art, London, UK	2012	Tatoo City, group show curated by guest artist Samson Kambalu,	1
2014	A Peasant Garden, ASC Gallery, London, UK		Castlefield Gallery, Manchester, UK	1
2013	Peasant Painting, Hallands Konstmuseum, Sweden		Passage, group show curated by Simon Keenleyside, Blindarte	
2012	Journey to WuMu- Paper Paintings, (with Duan Jianyu), Annely Juda	2011	Contemporanea, Naples, Italy	
	Fine Art, London, UK	2011	Polemically Small, Torrance Art Museum, Los Angeles, California, USA	
	Painted Performances, Upton House, Banbury, UK		The Saatchi Gallery in Adelaide: British Art Now, Gallery of South	
2011	The Astonishing Adventures of Lady Indigo, Project at Vitamin Creative		Australia, Adelaide, Australia	
	Space, Beijing, China	2010	Mock Tudor, Transition Gallery, London, UK	
2008	1857- Paintings, Annely Juda Fine Art, London, UK	2010	Miasmas, ASC Gallery, London, UK	
2006	Past-times and Re-creation, Transition, London, UK		Newspeak: British Art Now, Part 1, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK	
	Self- sufficient, Contemporary Arts Projects, London, UK	2000	John Moores Painting Prize, Walker Gallery, Liverpool, UK	,
2004	La Pittura Sale sugli Alberi, 42contemporaneo, Modena, Italy	2009	Newspeak, The Hermitage State Museum, St Petersburg, Russia The Artist's Studio, Compton Verney, Warwickshire, UK	
		0007	Back to the Future, Robilant+Voena and Stair Sainty, London, UK	
Selected Group Exhibitions:		2007	Annely Juda – A Celebration, Annely Juda Fine Art, London, UK Artificial Glory, Standpoint Gallery, London, UK	
2022/2	3 In the City Grows a Field, Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, Sweden		Cunning Chapters, The British Library, London, UK	
2022	Hockney, Holmwood and Nash: Paintings, Drawings and Sculptures,	2006	The Spiral of Time, APT, London, UK	
	Annely Juda Fine Art, London, UK		Responding to Rome, Estorick Collection, London, UK	
	Corona samlingen: Statens konstråd ny förärv, Skissernas Museum, Lund,	2005	The Jerwood Drawing Prize 2005, Jerwood Space, London, UK (touring)	
	och Havremagasinet, Boden, Sweden		Spiral of Time, OHOA, Reading, UK	
	Swedish Acquisitions: Insights, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden		Hand in Hand we walk alone, Clapham Art Gallery, London, UK	
	The Commons: Re-enchanting the World, Museum of English Rural Life,		Pocket-Scopic, Sartorial Contemporary Art, London, UK	
	Reading, UK	2004	If you go down to the woods today, Rockwell Gallery, London, UK	
2021	De Värdelösa Munnarna, Art Lab, Gnesta, Sweden		Spazi Aperti, Romanian Academy, Rome, Italy	

Extra-Natura: Konst! Scopriamo la Svezia, 42contemporaneo, Modena, Italy Compass, Sala 1, Rome, Italy

Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2003, Manchester and London, UK Vaguely Romantic, Rosie Wilde, London, UK Rockwell, Rockwell Gallery London, UK

Awards:

2003/04 Sainsbury Scholarship in Painting and Sculpture at the British School, Rome

Residencies:

2014 Artists in residence, Dawang Cultural Highland, Shenzen, China
 2013 Joya: arte + ecología, Cortijada Los Gázquez, Vélez Blanco, Almería, Andalucía, Spain
 2012 Artist in Residence, Art Museum of Halland, Sweden
 2011 Artist in Residence, Vitamin Creative Space, Beijing, China
 2003-04 Sainsbury Scholarship in Painting and Sculpture at the British School at Rome

Public Collections:

Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden Hallands Konstmuseum, Halmstad, Sweden Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, China Saatchi Gallery, London, UK were so miraculous and strange, as thes which iestie said they were all extreame lyars his mathematic fundamental the sunswered, the would not wish his whereat to suppose her wordes to bee false, but Adaiestic beleve them, in that the would discover rather to ter into him as his maiestic should not any way doubt of.

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mariage, with their antiwere ech to other: where at the Kinges Maiestie wondered greatly, and species by the living God, that he believed that all the Devils in hell could not have discovered the sail, acknowledging her words to bee most true, and therefore gave the more credit to the rest that a before declared.

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Annely Juda Fine Art

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