

*Arcadia Missa* ï

PENNY GORING  
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# MOUSSE

## evry aesthetic susk: Penny Goring Dodie Bellamy

Writing about London-based artist Penny Goring, I have the urge to get it right. But there is nothing right about her libidinal artifacts, be they poems, drawings, sculptures, paintings, collages, videos, or photo memes. As she writes on her Tumblr, “evry aesthetic susk.”<sup>1</sup> Goring’s work denatures the divisions between figurative and abstract, aggressive and vulnerable, worthy and throwaway. Like all the best art, it is compulsively visceral, and more often than not obscene.

In 2009 Goring began posting to Tumblr and other social media sites, where she established an avid fan base. In 2015 her digital poetry was featured in an online exhibit hosted by New York’s New Museum and Rhizome.<sup>2</sup> And when the internet ceased to be a radical or utopian space, Goring undertook prolific gallery exhibitions, including lauded solo shows in London and Paris. In 1994, then in her early thirties, Goring received a BA in fine art from Kingston University, London. Earlier she studied fashion writing at London College of Fashion. For an artist whose career is blooming, these ancient credentials are beside the point. But catalogue copy and reviews make repeated references to them, as if to say that this may look like outsider art, but this stuff is sophisticated—Goring’s really one of us. As someone whose friends tell her “you should get an agent, you should get a bigger publisher,” I ponder what makes a valid career, and I’m not convinced that my friends are right. If one’s goal is radical alterity, that needs to be protected. In a 2013 interview in *HTMLGIANT*, Goring’s viewpoint resonates:

“I’m always deeply cringing at any sweeping statements about what art is or isn’t etc. ugh. i’m not comfortable with the capital A either. being an artist feels more like a curse to me [. . .] so now i make stuff but i’m doing it compulsively. its like i’m a donkey chasing a carrot. and i put out too much work. i treat tumblr, facebook, twit, like a wall in a studio, not a show.”<sup>3</sup>

For Goring, art is first and foremost a process. Galleries aren’t so much a step up as a different species of venue to explore. She continues to post her work on Instagram and Tumblr.

I initially spent most of my research time looking at documentation of Goring’s solo shows *Damaged Gods* at Arcadia Missa, London (2016) and *Escape from Blood Castle* at Campoli Presti, Paris (2020). Both were exquisitely curated, with drawings, paintings, sculptures, collages, and texts resonating as if in a wounded echo chamber. In the photos, hand-stitched soft sculptures float in a pool of gender that never coalesces. Not quite dolls, but doll-like, they do not invite play. Surrounded by the gallery’s vast white expanses, they seem preternaturally still. Aborted.

Figures hang with faces to the wall or upside-down. The ends of amputated legs look like red eyes, peering out. Spongy bodies have never bothered to grow feet. Partial bodies behave as wholes. Distressed, contorted figures lie on the ground, frozen in the non-time of trauma. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. Is that a cock or a leg? Deflated torsos lie on a shelf, legs drooping over the edge. Stripped of both clothing and context, they seem not so

much sexual as libidinal fragments or Freudian drives in search of a subject. To observe them feels obscene. I am thrown back on my own vulnerability, my own discomfort with exposure. Goring’s figures turn internalized oppressions inside out, refashioning damage into a sort of non-corny sublime.

My sole means of accessing them are screens. To imagine the physical impact of an in-person encounter, I think back to first seeing Eva Hesse’s *Untitled or Not Yet* (1966), the inexplicable obscenity of orbs hanging in net bags. Or peering through the peephole of Marcel Duchamp’s *Étant donnés* (1946–66), where sight felt like a gasp. The poem that accompanies *Damaged Gods* begins: “PENIS OF A POLITICIAN. VAGINA OF A VIRGIN. LABIA OF A SUICIDE. CERVIX OF AN ARTIST. CURIOUS COLDNESS OF A DEAD PENIS. WOMB OF A WITCH” and ends with “VAGINA IN YOUR MOUTH. LIVER OF AN AMATEUR. VAGINA OF A DEAD BOY. MANIFESTING PENIS. PENIS IN YOUR MOUTH.” This cataloguing of body parts evokes the specificity of fetish porn, and also the relentless accumulation of war atrocities in Pierre Guyotat’s *Eden, Eden, Eden* (1970). One of the wall sculptures in *Escape from Blood Castle* is titled *War Doll* (2019)—a pink satiny figure with a heart for a face and red tentacles extending from its sides. In this realm, eros magnetizes danger.

I don’t need or even want to know the story behind these figures. Their lack of specificity pulls me into relation. Upon the night of May’s full-moon eclipse in Sagittarius, I pour myself a glass of wine and scroll through Goring’s Tumblr for hours. Goring is one of those people it’s impossible to not look at. Damaged charisma is perhaps the most glamorous of all. Nerdy me keeps scrolling and scrolling; it’s like I’ve fallen into a vortex I can’t pull myself out of.

The further I scroll back through time, the more personal and various are the posts. Jerky gifs. Poems. Goring with a giant pregnant belly, beaming. People in her life photographed with a loving eye. Lots of gender play. Fans leave love notes in the comments. A series of pale blue bunnies I recognize from *Damaged Gods* are sewn from an old jumper. There’s a wonderful messiness in the muck of it, and so much humor. The earliest posts consist mostly of found images and poetry. In a series of “unselfies” Goring alters photos of herself by placing large dots over her face or breasts or crotch—a reductiveness that foreshadows her later work.

I’m taken with her spare ballpoint drawings of naked women in extreme yoga poses, legs thrown back over shoulders, assholes and clits displayed full frontal. In *Over and Over* (2018), beneath one woman in an impossible contortion of the plow pose is written: “WHAT DOESN’T KILL ME MAKES ME TRAUMATIZED.” I download the jpeg and think: MINE.

1 <https://pgorig.tumblr.com>.

2 *Poetry as Practice*, New Museum and Rhizome, New York, 2015.

3 Rauan Klassnik, “.....Penny Goring.....,” *HTMLGIANT*, September 7, 2013. <http://htmlgiant.com/author-spotlight/penny-goring/>.

99 Penny Goring, *unselfie* #3, 2013. Courtesy: the artist

100 Penny Goring, *Escape from Blood Castle* installation view at Campoli Presti, Paris, 2020. Courtesy: the artist and Campoli Presti, London / Paris

101 Penny Goring and Max Thomas-Edmond aka @pis\_slute, #pisswave collaboration, *@ my soul* (detail), 2013–17. Courtesy: the artists

102 103 Penny Goring, *Damaged Gods* installation view at Arcadia Missa, London, 2016.





A young man with short dark hair and a neutral expression is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a light pink, ribbed hoodie. He is holding a bouquet of white flowers wrapped in white paper with a red ribbon. A \$100 bill is visible, tucked into the bouquet. The background is dark and out of focus. The text "DONT @ ME OR MY SOUL EVR AGEN" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

**DONT @ ME  
OR MY SOUL  
EVR AGEN**





# Flash Art

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INTERVIEWS

20 May 2021, 9:00 am CET

## Material Traces of the Immaterial: A Conversation with Penny Goring by [Caroline Elbaor](#)



**Caroline Elbaor:** First off, sincere congratulations on this pair of exhibitions. That leads to my initial question: Were these shows always planned to coincide with one another, or did the timing occur by chance?

**Penny Goring:** No, the timing is coincidental — scheduling for both had to change due to COVID restrictions, and the outcome was that the London show opened not long after the exhibition at Galleria Federico Vavassori in Milan. The works in each were made at different times and are part of different series.

**CE:** Can you walk me through the separate shows individually? What is/will be on view? How did you prepare for each, and decide which works to include where? In other words, how do you feel the two exist as standalone presentations? (Or, conversely, do you feel they function inextricably, working in tandem with one another?)

**PG:** The two shows function as standalone presentations that are also inextricable — because they are my shows, everything I make is entangled and connected, making the work is a continuous accumulation, each piece leads to the next or springs from earlier work, ideas submerge and resurface over time. I'm simultaneously looking backwards and forwards whilst always wanting to explore different mediums, new approaches, or revisit and expand on previous methods or themes.



**CE:** Although the shows are distinct from one another, in some ways they bookend the current time we are in. The work in the Arcadia Missa show was made during the latter half of 2019 and January 2020, just before COVID, whereas most of the work in the Federico Vavassori show was made during lockdown: So it's pre-COVID and post-COVID, two different cycles of work, separated by time and world-wide catastrophe. The works in each show deviate in form, by being large doll sculptures and figurative paintings on canvas in London versus tiny doll sculptures, older sculptures, and abstract paintings on velvet in Milan.

**PG:** Further to this, the works at the Arcadia Missa show, "No Escape from Blood Castle," belong together, I made them to be shown together, they are trapped in Blood Castle — by which I mean the Capitalist structures we ourselves cannot escape. And the works at Federico Vavassori also belong together — collectively they constitute a hellish garden where the very idea of living without torment can only ever be an enviable luxury, a dream, something to aspire to, a state of mind only snatched at briefly in moments of denial or delusion. In some ways, the title of the show — "Those who live without Torment" — does not directly refer to the world of the show itself, but rather, to that which it is lacking: which is the peace of mind many are forced to live without.

The doll sculptures at Arcadia Missa are not intended to literally represent, for example, dismemberment; their damages are metaphorical; each doll is an entity that embodies and manifests a particular state, and is an attempt to convey intense and discrete emotion by way of showing, for example with *Grief Doll* (2019), what grief can actually feel like. *Grief Doll* is forever wearing a *Grief Flower*, it is permanently strapped to her torso, where it constantly pours forth a flood of grief, represented by the long black velvet "stamens" that flow from its center and down towards the floor — this is intended to demonstrate how grief can be experienced bodily, distorting your perceptions and senses.



**CE:** *Doom Doll* (2019) — a smaller doll, perhaps child-size, with an amputated leg and wearing a blindfold, emanates vulnerability; it is helpless and it is obviously doomed. The amputation is not intended to shock or be gruesome — the site of the wound is a hand-sewn scarlet velvet patch, almost glamorous. The remaining lone leg becomes unbearably poignant, and the blindfold, an unmistakable indication of defenselessness, is formed from a piece of embroidered peach linen that I treasured for twenty years.

**PG:** I make these doll sculptures lovingly, honoring the emotions, the frailties, the symptoms of the act of living, whilst giving them a visual language that causes each doll to enact its own particular predicament. The dolls displayed in “No Escape from Blood Castle” are explicitly performing their feelings.

**Excerpt from: No Escape from Blood Castle**

**GHOST TOURIST  
DEVIL SCAMMER  
FIBBING DRIVER  
KNIFE BUZZ**

**HIP FLASK  
BIGGER BIJOUX  
MERCY FUCKER  
BAG BIRD**

**GOLDEN BOLLOCKS  
FUTURE BACON  
ABSTRACT GAMBLE  
CAPS LOCK**

**DARKER MATTER  
DEEPER LOTION  
TOXIC CIRCUS  
DEATH TOLL**

SEE-THROUGH NYLON  
DISCO STRIPPER  
FEVER FLOWERS  
BOMB DROP

BLOODY CASTLE  
DOLLY MOTION  
SUGAR WIDOW  
CLOCK STOP

Both shows are named after the poems I wrote whilst making them. The poems accompany the shows, and also act as press releases. I regard them as a kind of natural spillage, in so much as they are a written by-product of the thinking, imagining, and visualizing that informs and propels the work. The poems are material traces of the immaterial, foundational aspects of my process, and exist as an alternative medium for me to utilize. They come about unprompted during the making of the work and relate specifically to the content of each separate show. To my mind, they encapsulate the themes of the shows and also function as individual works in and of themselves.



In fact, the poems are actually a polished glimpse of what's inside my private sketchbooks, which also act as diaries, where I habitually record my inner world — there is an untrammelled mix of anything I feel, hear, see, think, or dream, including TV shows and books, that moves me enough to explore it in the form of drawings and scribbled words. It is my place of freedom. These sketchbooks are in a sense my original source, where everything I make begins, and where the poems first appear, as incidental footnotes, diatribes, observations, lists, reminders, instructions, or messages to myself.

"Those who live without Torment," as described earlier, is a wild and dangerous garden, a place where those few fortunate beings who live without torment would never want to belong.

The series of ten paintings on velvet that were made for this show are abstract, yet they could seem to suggest insect-infested plant-like forms. This aspect of the works and the poem I wrote while painting them became the initial elements that suggested the tormented garden. We then expanded on this theme by selecting three of my earlier works: *Emergency Fence* (2016), *Doom Tree* (2016), and *Wrong Rabbit* (2017), which seemed as though they were always intended for this garden.

*Emergency Fence* is a traditional suburban privet fence, but it hangs upside-down on the gallery wall, which causes the two long spikes that are supposed to be driven into the ground to hold the fence upright and in place (on the circumference of your perfect lawn, to demarcate the boundary of your property and safe happy life), to become inverted to suggest

weapons of self-defense — those two sharp wooden spikes are a warning, like, actually, there are dangers you need to protect yourself from here, and this pretty fence needs to be subverted, repurposed, because the emergency is constantly upon us. *Emergency Fence* could kill, if it had to.

Alongside this stands *Doom Tree*, its drooping branches embroidered with a poem in scarlet thread on dense black velvets. This tree looks as if it has survived trial by fire — it's a poem-tree — it's a doom-poem, which across its various branches reads:

we invented love without loving  
we trust in the grief of the night  
give me the word  
yes pleas thank you  
poison poison

*Wrong rabbit* also belongs in this wild wrong garden. It is the wrong shape, wrong color, it is very carefully wrong, and it is embroidered with words proclaiming its wrongness: "Wrong Feelin, Wrong Face, Wrong Heart, Wrong Leg." Hidden across its reverse is embroidered "Stolen From Penny," suggesting my secret ambivalence at letting it go, this "Wrong Rabbit," this wrong thing, even though I willingly gave it up. I find this idea of "Wrong Rabbit" having been stolen from me to be evocative of many losses, for example, how time steals youth.

Excerpt from: *Those who live without Torment*

300 pink and yellow butterflies  
and they will never die  
and they will live for 48 hours  
and they will never die  
today i am wearing a voluminous powder blue dress, waist-high fuchsia knickers, strappy red wedge sandals, heart, what didn't kill me  
Fragile gestures towards Freedom from Fuckery

## Ten Brilliant Exhibitions to See as London Reopens

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY / ANOTHER LIST



Installation view of Penny Goring, Doom Doll, 2019 and War Doll, 2019 Courtesy of Arcadia Missa

### As restrictions ease, a selection of exhibitions for your art-starved eyes

APRIL 26, 2021

TEXT Lara Johnson-Wheeler

This spring, the multitude of **exhibitions** that have just opened in London are, frankly, a tonic for our art-starved eyes. Showcasing a rich array of both emerging and established artists, as well as a diverse mix of perspectives and mediums, gallery programmes right now are so vast, it can feel overwhelming. As such, we've done our own bit of curating, selecting ten key exhibitions to see now.

***Penny Goring: No Escape from Blood Castle at Arcadia Missa, 35 Duke Street, London: Until May 27, 2021***

In this Penny Goring exhibition, the artist's elegantly ominous doll forms hold their shapes while pinned to the walls, accompanied by square tiled paintings, which were created at the same time and feature the same characters. Sewing, along with her use of fabrics and shapes, subvert expectations of doll-making as a passive craft. Penny's figures are active – upside down, back to front, in action through their missing limbs or exposed hearts. Based on her own life experiences, each tells its own story.

## Don't Miss These 6 Exciting Up-and-Coming Artists With New Work You Can Check Out—Virtually—All Month

Galleries may be closed, but you can still discover new talent in these virtual exhibitions around the world.

Katie White, April 13, 2020

As cities across much of the world enter the second month of lockdown, many artists' long-awaited exhibitions have been moved to online platforms. For emerging artists in particular, exhibitions are a much-needed chance to gain a larger audience.

So, to help keep their momentum going, this month we're highlighting six emerging artists whose practices you might not know, but should—and whose most recent work can be experienced online through the Artnet Gallery Network.



Penny Goring, *Year in Suspension (2020)*, Courtesy of Campoli Presti.

### Penny Goring, **"Escape from Blood Castle"** at Campoli Presti



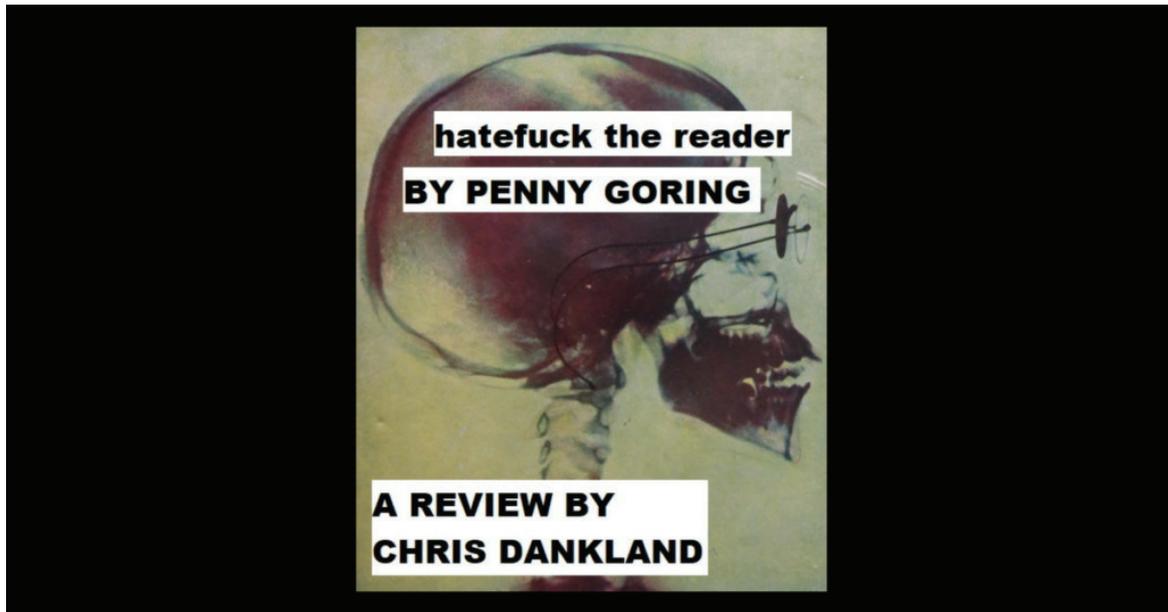
Installation view "Penny Goring: Escape from Blood Castle," 2020. Courtesy of Campoli Presti.

Delve into the gloomy, girlish imaginary world of the artist Penny Goring through drawings, paintings, sculptures, and video works that explore experiences of trauma on the body, from addiction and violence to aging and grief. Through dreamy symbols, anthropomorphic flowers, and ghost-like apparitions, Goring transforms personal narratives of death and loss into folkloric visual narratives full of wit and even confrontation. In her paintings, flat monochromatic fields of color become like the backgrounds of Byzantine icons, while her fabric doll sculptures appear to conjure both childhood transitional objects and voodoo dolls.

Penny Goring's "Escape from Blood Castle" is on view online through April 18, 2020, at Campoli Presti.

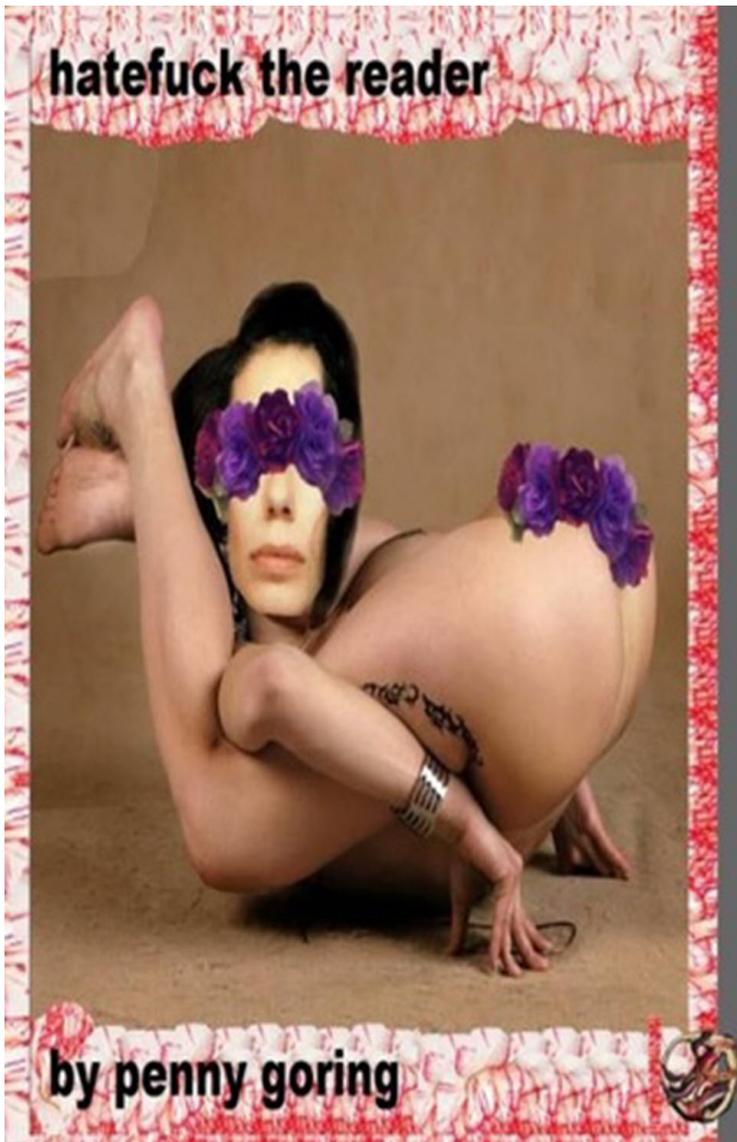
PENNY GORING'S hatefuck the reader  
REVIEW by Chris Dankland

POSTED: MARCH 15, 2018



Penny Goring's book 'hatefuck the reader' starts with the sound of someone talking so close to your ear that you can feel hot breath:

when i was invincible i believed beauty lasts forever and i died every day. you gave me nothing. i prefer to think you hit me because you are ill. i prefer to stroke my cold pillow. i prefer to sit on a chair than a sofa. i have a plastic joint in my right big toe. you permanently damaged every part of me. my aches and pains are not caused by ageing they are the aftermath of the violence. the end of a story is something i forget. in the month leading up to the twin towers event, i kept waking from a dream where an aeroplane was crashing through my window. i look better in photographs than irl. i don't truly believe in anything. i am startled when anyone calls me Pen, it implies familiarity and affection. i am slow to learn from my mistakes in life, but not in my work. i am attracted to boys girls women men anyone anything anybody. competition repels me. to describe what remains would distress me. i wonder if i will ever truly want to give up smoking. when i sit on the edge of my bed i worry about damaging the mattress, i try to sit on a different area every time, there are not enough different areas. you said i was boring in bed, then you fucked me every day for 2 years. i have cheated on all of my lovers, they were easy to fool, so was i. i joke about Art when it is invoked with a capital A. i wonder if i love anybody except my daughter, it often feels like hate. i do not intentionally remember hurt. i do not trust you. i was fined £1000 for criminal damage, this is how it happened, you punched me in the face until i stopped talking, then you grabbed a knife, then you stabbed holes in my thin plaster walls, then you ran outside, then i knew what had hurt me was outside, then i wanted to hurt the hurt, then i hurled dirty plates and cutlery out the window, then a plate smashed the sunroof of a BMW parked in the road way down below. it is a serious crime to damage a car because car equals money on wheels, and that is the true meaning of beauty.



The book comes at you in a non-stop flood of confessions:

“i got my 1st black eyes, broken nose, walking home through the park after school. i curled in a ball in the mud, a crucial bone in my spine got kicked into a new shape”

“at times i have lived with people who are now dead, believing it to be a forever thing.”  
“i have seen a dead junkie hovering 2” above me in bed, yes, i have known ghosts, and i have felt their fabric.”

The book looks beautiful to me. It's one of my favorite examples of digital literature. I look forward to the time when print versions of books become collectors items and pdfs become the norm. Nowadays most of us consume our music and movies in digital, streaming formats. We don't need cds and dvds to enjoy albums and movies. We don't need print books to enjoy great works of literature.

reasons on 33 different horizons. jus bein me. Never Mind the Bollocks brings back happy childhood memories. i read the whole Rabbit trilogy in secret, it took 18 months, that's how long it took me to leave you. i cannot do numbers, maps, names. how much is it? where am i? who are you? i have 6 uncles. uncle fred owned a cafe called The Hole in the Wall. it was there i first became aware that something in me is missing. i need something. it doesn't exist. i do not believe the beauty will be lost. i wanted to make a deflating and inflating black rubber blob of despair. big enough to fill a small room. the valves were too complex for me. instead. i stuffed a grey pair of schoolboy trousers with old underwear. sat them waist-down, legs up, should have made more, formed a circle.



## tower block 55: a poem by penny goring

London-based artist and poet Penny Goring uses unorthodox methods casually yet meticulously, to make works that are 'very carefully wrong.' Learn more about Penny [here](#) and read her poem *Tower Block 55*, written for *The Fifth Sense*.



Born in New Cross in London in the early 60's, London-based artist and poet Penny Goring spent a number of years at various art schools, eventually graduating in 1994 with a First Class (Hons) Degree in Fine Art and Commendation for her dissertation on the artist Louise Bourgeois. In the same way that Louise Bourgeois used a variety of methods to release the emotional turmoil from the course of her life, Penny creates with words and whichever cheap and domestic materials she has on hand - salt dough instead of clay, food dye instead of ink, ballpoint pens and felt tips instead of pencils and paint, open office instead of word and ms paint instead of photoshop. Over the past 50 years, her unconventional use of shapes, colours and fabrics has evolved so that today, they distinctly form the visual language of Penny's inimitable world.



*Weeping Garden*, courtesy Penny Goring and Arcadia Missa

*Do you remember the first time you felt compelled to channel your feelings into a poem?*

Yes! I was compelled. I fought it. I was in early sobriety and I was painting every day, but over the course of a year or so, swarms of words were invading my headspace and I was trying to ignore them, it was annoying. I thought at the time that painting and only painting was my True Purpose. But then I kept waking in tears from a heartbreaking recurring dream. Finally, at like 3am one awful night I jumped off my soggy pillow and scribbled all the memories that I knew were causing this dream into my sketchbook. Then I spent a week carving it into a 500 word shape that people told me was a poem. Then a magic thing happened – the dream stopped. That's how I discovered that if I write about stuff, the process takes it away from me. My memories and emotions are transformed, repackaged, and stored on a high shelf. They can't hurt me any more. They exist without me. If, over time, they wriggle back out, I can write more. In this way, I found I could redeem trauma, force it to work as protection, not damage.

I live it, sleep dream sweat weep it. It's my own dimension. I made it for me. It keeps me alive. I cannot live in any other way. Romantic Love is a spongy treacherous distraction. My work bends to my will, never hits me, is always there for me, suits my every mood swing, can cope with being cut to bits or stroked gently. I can sing it, digitise it, write it, draw it, sew it, love or hate it. Where else and with who or what could I have a relationship like that? It's not easy, but it is mine.

*Poetry is often poignant in the way it can beautifully articulate our feelings, both universally and the ones we're often too ashamed to have. What makes it so essential to you?*

It ignores the strict walls words are used to build, it uses words instead to make freedom spaces where we can say what we need to say however we want. Poetry happens despite words, not because of. I love that. I get a thrill when I read something by someone who is breaking down the walls with the very words they are usually built with. Yes, because these old word-things are all we've been given. But we don't have to employ them in the ways we are expected to. Words are not just for the government to tell lies with and hide atrocities behind. Or for deadly polite legalise and unforgiving forms to fill in that decide if you eat or starve. Or for news outlets to spread their money-led propaganda. I'm reading *The Favourite Game* by Leonard Cohen right now, he breaks with words beautifully. But he's dead. And yet he's still breaking stuff beautifully. He's still being himself. In my head. I adore that. I'm glad I will never meet him. I don't ever want to meet people who can move me. It's unnecessary. It spoils everything.

I can sing it, digitise it, write it, draw it, sew it, love or hate it.

*Are there certain themes you feel you naturally or consciously explore more than others?*

I explore themes that are close to me. That covers quite a lot of ground. I've experienced lots of highs and too much rock bottom gutter-level traumatic, dangerous, death-bringing, emotionally abusive and actual physically violent lows. I lived reckless until I got sober 11 years ago. I often make stuff concerning death and grief because I've lost a lot of friends and most of my lovers - these people are still with me in strange ways, and I honour them, use them, make them work with me. These days I feel compassion that I wasn't lucky enough to possess before. I have always lived under the rule of men and money, and right now I am angry at the ways it hobbles my life and my body. I find this future we are in to be terrifying. Also, ridiculous, in the way of a murderous clown. And I hate that it somehow feels inevitable, relentless, like a speeding juggernaut.

Sometimes I think of my sculptures as Anxiety Objects - because there's a huge amount of fear in the air I'm breathing today. And I'm at the tail-end of my menopause. It's been raging through me since 2007. That was the year I started bleeding heavily non-stop for over 12 months. This final stretch is a more manageable hellscape – and I'm completely free of sex-drive now, and that's bliss. I have the chance to be a True Person now. This tiny slice of freedom is worth losing your looks for. Having been leered at and longed for throughout childhood and adulthood - as we all are - now I can say fuck off without even moving my mouth, simply by being unapologetically old. So, that's: death/grief, recovery, addiction, anger, fear, powerlessness, ageing. These are a few of my favourite themes. Not forgetting there's always love and care, everything I make is fragile, vulnerable. Other themes: I'm bisexual, 'mentally ill', disabled, a survivor of domestic violence, casual violence, school violence.

*Who are some of your female role models that have influenced your practice today?*

Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse and Frida Khalo. I see their work as experiments with grief, they dug deeply into the detail - the deeper you go the more likely a marvellous, precious (w)hole. These women are touchstones. They are dead and I am alive.

*Where does the future of poetry lie in your opinion?*

I reckon it could save us if we let it off its leash. Unleash it. Let it rip throats out. Those throats that need ripping. And let it save those of us who need saving.

Hex ffs  
courtesy Penny Goring and Arcadia Missa

### Tower Block 55

on my dirty balcony that cannot support the weight  
of the flowers i'm growing  
& the vultures nesting in my terracotta pots  
(i am me & i ages) my skinny lil arms full of woman  
Curse Dolls  
this tower block bleeding the sky  
i smell same as you: (onion, hyacinth, sausage, cream)  
amorphous enough to fill spaces  
solid enough to endure the rising levels of ordure  
(i am high up here) & i cry tears from the sting of the onion  
not real tears from the sting of the thing between us  
& i bleed slo-mo  
& i wish fast  
my mouth a wide wet kidney dish  
i am  
sleep walking naked in Peckham down the Clayton Road  
Sorry i am wearing the lodger  
i am wearing a girl means Survivor  
i smell reluctant remnant of the days that run away  
i smell very carefully wrong  
i smell beggar, bleeder, liar, lover, crippled sexgod, thief  
i am the balcony diver  
i smell slashed wrists in the Maudsley  
i am only eating jelly babies  
bus stop on Lavender Hill  
i am throwing your books off my balcony  
we are riveted river run dry  
My only tool is 13 golden clits at the end of my gun  
i smell over the top  
i smell over the hill  
KAPOW! (i am us & we was)  
i am  
baking an ugly cake, you will eat it  
i am knitting an ugly jumper, it will fit you  
keep time at arms length, dodge its feely breath  
or smell my big death, little death, idc  
4 BETTRE OR WORSER My hands  
I CAN'T GET OUT NOW  
i am wearing the shape & smell of your dust  
What happens if you're lucky  
they haven't put a stop to that yet  
vulture on my shoulder is cooing  
Open the fridge, something is rotting:  
DEEP DISH DELETIA  
Beep.  
on my dirty balcony look over the railings you will see: landmarks, abyss, junction



# The questionnaire with the London based artist and poet Penny Goring

November 2016\_by Federica Tattoli



The work of Goring is totalising; a scene is created in which the artist materialises many of the figures and tropes found in a prolific output of poetry and drawing published online across many platforms 2009-present. Iterations of Penny and from her psyche: totems and objects of memory, desire, pleasure, hate, fear and lust. She is an artist and poet. She makes sculptures, drawings, poems, paintings, songs, image macros, videos, and interactive digital poems. Her work includes: hatefuck the reader (5everdankly publications, 2016), DELETIA – self portrait w no self (New Museum/Rhizome, 2015), LOVE TESTER DELUXE (Peanut Gallery Press, 2014), and The Zoom Zoom (eight cuts gallery press, 2011). She has performed her poetry at Looks Live at the ICA, and Re-Materialising Feminism at the ICA and the Penarth Centre, and will be presenting a selection of her digital work and performing live at The South London Gallery on 23rd November 2016. She

is co-editor of MACRO - an anthology of image macros (Boost House, 2016), and was late summer/fall poetry editor for Fanzine, 2015. Recent shows include Dreamfair/Frieze NY (Arcadia\_Missa, London), Works Off Paper (SALTS, Basel), and PROJECT 1049 in Gstaad. #pisswave is an ongoing collaborative project with hela trol pis.

***How would you present your work?***

In a space you are only allowed to enter and be in with great caution, and if I don't love you, get out.

***This Friday Nov. 11 you will open a solo show at Arcadia Missa, Damaged Gods. I know that it will be an installation of sculptures, could you tell me more about it?***

Most of the sculptures I made this year, and one I made in 1986. They are all fabric and/or wood, all the stitching done by my hand. I don't like sewing machines, the stitches are ugly, no soul. I need total control of every stitch to get the shapes, positions, everything I want the fabrics to do, the tension, warp n weft etc. This year was the first time I've worked in this way since 1996. I picked up the threads I left dangling and yanked them into now.

***You work with poetry, drawings and you have also a digital current of works... could you tell me something about these different ways to express yourself?***

Every medium is a tool to make with/toy to play with. If there was infinite time I would use everything every day.

***Anger, grief, fear, joy, anxiety and lust – which meaning have into your life and in your work?***

These things propel everybody don't they? I make to survive being me, to contain myself, to try be safe, to get through a day without jumping under a train, relapsing, or getting locked up. To stop myself going out and doing criminal damage or hurting myself.

***Where do you make your works?***

In my living room by the light of my computer screen, or standing at my kitchen worktop.

***What can't be missing from your worktable?***



Relapse Ted

***A collection you wish at least one work of yours was part of?***

I don't know anything about collections!

***A museum where you'd like to have an exhibition?***

I don't think about stuff like this.

***The market or your need to express?***

I don't know anything about the market.

***Lightness or depth?***

Both are good. But depth is deeper. And candles make light in the dark.

***Day or night?***

I love every hour of every day except between 1pm and 4pm can feel frightening - empty empty empty, and vast enough for terrible things to happen.

***A question you've never been asked but one you've always wanted to answer? Answer that question...***

Yes of course you can carry this shopping home for me, thank you.

Yes, I will gladly accept a good quality new mattress, how kind.

Yes, I would dearly love to live in a tiny corner of your huge home.

Oh my darling, you guessed right, a foot massage would be perfect.

Clean my flat? Oh wow! YES YES YES.

***Could you briefly describe one of your latest works?***

Blue Tree Grey has a 5ft wooden stand, I designed it and my dad made it, he's an old school master carpenter, I painted the stand indigo blue, made 6 long grey droopy branches for it, tied a grey velvet egg baby to its central pole with a blue ribbon, because oh dear what can the matter be, Johnny's so long at the fair, he promised to buy me a bunch of blue ribbons to tie up my bonny brown hair, and there's 6 midnight blue velveteen 'heads' tied to its branches, I see them as mourners, watchers, protectors, and they're my version of my all time favorite sculpture: Nature Study (Velvet Eyes) by Louise Bourgeois.

***What are you reading?***

Swordspoint by Ellen Kushner. I just finished The Marriage Plot by Jeffrey Eugenides, and next I'll read A Writer's Diary, Virginia Woolf.

***A film?***

I hardly ever watch films these days, they are too short. I watch TV shows. I need all the seasons. I started watching American Horror Story, Hotel last night. I love the extravagant tropes and lavish sets, really relaxing, I napped for 2 hours in the middle of Episode 1, then continued watching.

***Where would you like to live?***

Some place without the constant threat of becoming homeless.

***Do you have reference artists? Artists you'd like to work with?***

I prefer to keep whose work I look to as my secret. Having said that, Eva Hesse and Louise Bourgeois live in my head. The only person I work happily with is hela trol pis. Although I did really enjoy being involved with Jesse Darling's NTGNE.

***A project, related to art, that you'd like to do?***

I'm looking forward to renovating my mum's favorite coat, it's been savaged by moths, she's letting me 'mend' it for her, I'm gonna do... all sorts of things with the holes!

***If you weren't an artist, what job would you like?***

World's best alcohol and drug and sex and love addiction counsellor.

*Let's imagine a group show. Who would you like to exhibit with?*

I don't want to imagine this. It feels like a waste of brain-time to me.

*Yes or no to curators? If yes, who would you choose?*

I've not had much experience with curators, the ones I have met recently are lovely, so 'yes' to curators.

*A dream of yours?*

A place of my own with a spare room to work in.



armourr, image macro

## Poetry in the age of the web

*An online exhibition exploring the intersection of heartbreak, line break, and break the internet*



*Courtesy of Penny Goring, Rhizome and New Museum, NY*

Many a poetry lover will know, a poem isn't only the words that compose it: the materials in which the poem is embedded, or its technologies of publication, are just as integral to the poem as the language it employs. As London-based writer Harry Burke points out, there is no natural or neutral "blank page": every publishing decision is a choice that shapes the nature of the piece.

An online exhibition curated by Harry Burke and co-presented by Rhizome and the New Museum in New York as part of their First Look series, Poetry as Practice releases a new online poem by a different poet each Monday through 6 April, totaling six poems. Using the web not as a blank page but as a digital media environment, the varied poems draw attention to the conditions of their production and circulation.

In Alex Turgeon's piece "Better Homes and Gardens Revisited," GIFs feature animated calligrams roping through barred windows and slipping out from under doors. Ye Mimi's poetry film *Was Being Moved?* – the only piece not commissioned for the online exhibition – depicts pilgrimages, parades, and postcards. Tan Lin's poem "Mastering the Art of French Cooking and Systems Theory" uses code to pit two difficult-to-master books – Julia Child's celebrated cooking tome and Niklas Luhmann's systems theory – against one another. The two texts race at variable speeds, producing what Lin compares to a "screensaver on amphetamines." Lin says: "The piece is about ambient speed reading that's been hacked. I think you can make anything into poetry if you alter its timing. I like a novel with a stopwatch in it; but even more, I like a novel that is a stopwatch."

Penny Goring says that these days, she uses "twitter as my notebook, facebook as my scrapbook,

tumblr as my studio walls, and the internet as my archive, my source, my raw text, my toy.” Her mesmerising DELETIA- self portrait with no self is a seventy-plus-page epic (“cuz fuk internet attention spans,” she pronounces) made with multimedia publishing platform NewHive. Goring explains, “Deletia is about loss – it’s a grief circus. Too many close friends and almost all of my lovers have died young because of drugs, suicide, cancer.” To represent this ‘death snowball,’ Goring needed DELETIA to be sprawling and unconstrained. The piece, which has a twisted Tumblr aesthetic, inserts the artist’s face in a variety of images and features an original font, ‘Hell Lobster,’ which mixes Helvetica and lobster.

Batter up: giving us a hint of what’s to come with her forthcoming contribution the project (live on March 30), Melissa Broder of Twitter poetry fame describes her new poem as “audio ekphrasis.” The piece emerged from a series of sleepless nights during which she continuously listened to Oneohtrix Point Never’s R Plus Seven album. NewHive’s embeddable frames allowed song and language – both integral to her piece – to co-exist.

Attention to the material structure of a poem doesn’t detract from the linguistic or emotional force of the poem; in Poetry as Practice, this awareness actually enriches the poetic experience. In the words of curator Harry Burke: “I’m into poets who just write poetry, too! I’m into the intersection of heart-break, line break, and break the internet.”

Poetry as Practice runs through April 6, with new works published each Monday. For more, click [here](#)

# this is tomorrow



**Penny Goring: Damaged Gods  
Arcadia Missa  
12 November - 10 December 2016  
Review by Betsy Porritt**

On entering Arcadia Missa, a single railway arch in Peckham, we are asked to either remove our shoes or wear blue plastic shoe covers in order to protect the grey carpeting that covers the floor. While a practicality, this is December after-all, the consequence is that everyone entering must choose to pad about the space barefoot or to rustle over the works like a forensic analyst. Because of the abstract physicality of the works and depending on the manner in which your feet meet the floor, the gallery is then transformed into either a crime scene or a fetish room.

The sculptures that make up Penny Goring's solo show 'Damaged Gods' resemble dismembered limbs. Some explicitly refer to naked legs, vaginas and bum-holes, others are more abstract limb-like constructions, tactile fabric tubes squeezed together or shaped as totems and way-signs. There are other, smaller objects here too: small blue eyeless rabbits made of wool, worn-looking

silk dolls laid out on a shelf like gloves with bright buttons and beads for bushes. On the walls too are sections of a white picket fence. This is a landscape where the borders between public and private have been violently cut away. There is an element of the cult suggested by the words that are stitched onto a few of the sculptures. The one that most resembles an object of worship bears words that act as a form of incantation. For all its soft-furnished domesticity there is something of the temple in the space: a temple to the erotic implied by the contorted and dismembered limbs. Inanimate lust and fetish items invite eroticism without boundaries: the objects are faceless so desire can be guilt-free.

The anonymity of desire is reflected in the poem that accompanies the show, a block of text identifying body parts of people; "Cervix of an artist. Curious coldness of a dead penis. Womb of a witch." This text appeared previously in the artist's work, in a video where a woman's voice sings the words over an inset recording of a young girl dancing. It is part of a series of poem objects that use collage, video, sound and still images. Much of Goring's work appears online. It is here that she shows her concern with the language of performance and sculpture and how artists are agitating the definitions of poetry. Language is a material that can form the central part of sculpture; an object or image can be linguistic without the use of words.

The text we're given, then, rather than merely an accompaniment is really key to the cohesion of the show. Without it the sculptures have no purpose other than objects; with it they become participants in a world filled with other 'damaged gods'. Beginning with the small footwear adjustment we have to make as we enter, the exhibition is less a gallery space in which sculptures have been placed, and more an alternate linguistic world that we have entered.

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

## Penny Goring at Arcadia Missa, London

BY The Editors of ARTnews POSTED 12/02/16 5:23 PM



Installation view of "Penny Goring, Damaged Gods," 2016, at Arcadia Missa, London. TIM BOWDITCH/COURTESY THE ARTIST AND ARCADIA MISSA

Pictures at an Exhibition presents images of one notable show every weekday.

Today's show: "Penny Goring: Damaged Gods" is on view at Arcadia Missa in London through Saturday, December 10. The solo exhibition presents new works by the artist.



Arcadia Missa ï

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