

TIM CRAIGHEAD

August, 2007
Oil on Linen, 46 in x 36 in



courtesy: R.B.Stevenson Gallery, La Jolla, California

PATRICIA SMITH

Slither

This is illegal in scattered America. Left flabbed pink arm links negro languid one and bedazzled bodies mangle and steam an urgent corkscrew. Breath splatters nick ripple. We are loud and racial in Florence, where the dawn drips thin orange and the clock dribbles Dalí. Alarm bellows in sinew. It's time, it seems, to flick what's hastily inflamed. Freckled jazz hands and all manners of important paint beckon at the window to be in, to redirect this coupling, to instruct us in the vagrancies of tourism. Damn this city, its sugared street corners, its insistent sculptured throat. Our colliding unleashes a rude hallelujah as we paint our fat, mismatched bodies with strokes of bruise and rip. Our little unleft suite is particular funk. It is day three in this city of tempera and clay, and I long for nothing but to be art with you.

Patricia Smith is the author of six books of poetry, including *Blood Dazzler*, a finalist for the National Book Award, and her latest, *Shoulda Been Jimi Savannah*. Her work has been published in many journals and anthologies, including *Best American Poetry* and *Best American Essays*. She is a professor at the College of Staten Island and is on the faculty of the new low-residency MFA program at Sierra Nevada College.