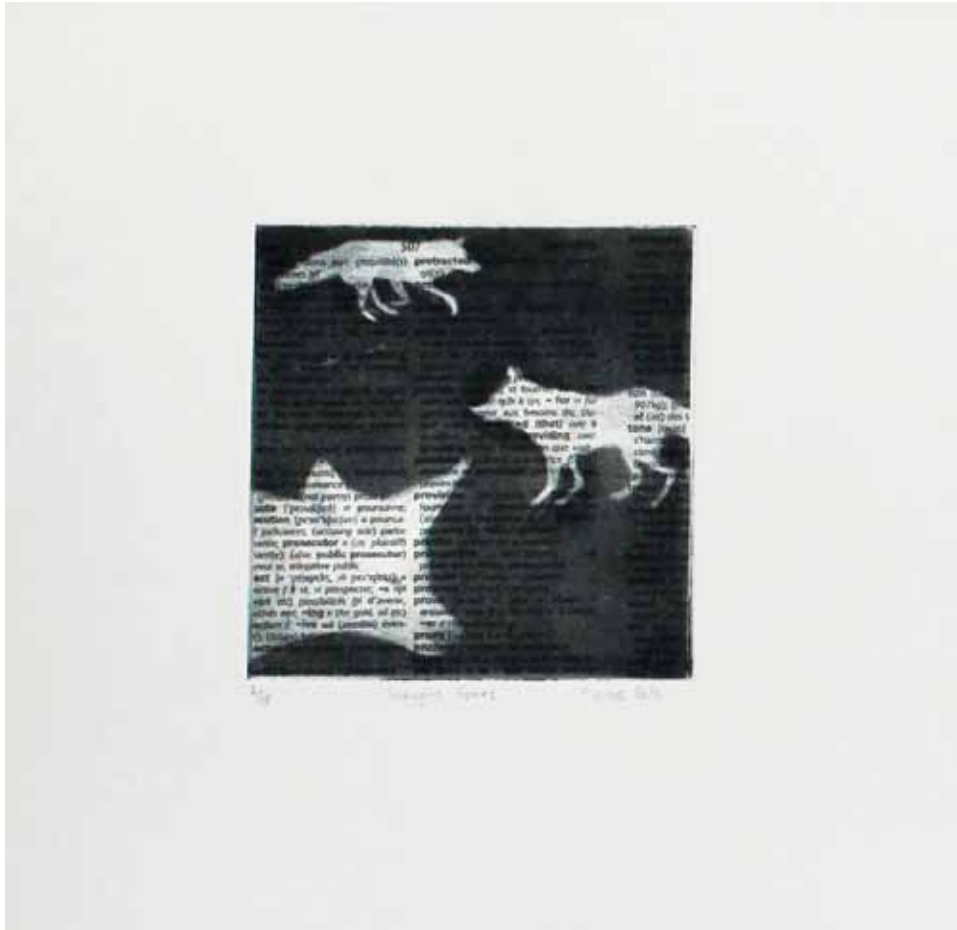


Fiona Pole

Fables & other stories



The Thought Fox  
Ted Hughes, 1957

I imagine this midnight moment's forest:  
Something else is alive  
Beside the clock's loneliness  
And this blank page where my fingers move.

Through the window I see no star:  
Something more near  
Though deeper within darkness  
Is entering the loneliness:

Cold, delicately as the dark snow  
A fox's nose touches twig, leaf;  
Two eyes serve a movement, that now  
And again now, and now, and now

Sets neat prints into the snow  
Between trees, and warily a lame  
Shadow lags by stump and in hollow  
Of a body that is bold to come

Across clearings, an eye,  
A widening deepening greenness,  
Brilliantly, concentratedly,  
Coming about its own business

Till, with a sudden sharp hot stink of fox  
It enters the dark hole of the head.  
The window is starless still; the clock ticks,  
The page is printed.

from *New Selected Poems 1957-1994*, Faber, 1995



Fables: Guardian 2013 Etching (roulette wheels on copper plate)  
Edition 15 182X180mm

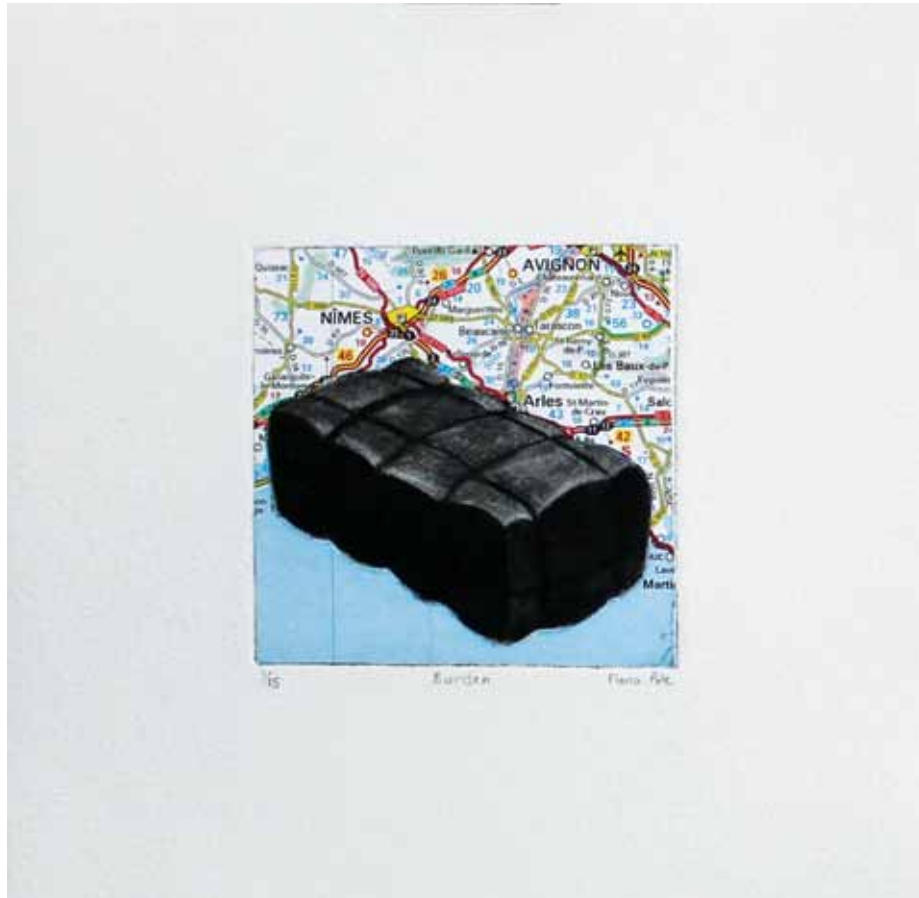
## Fables & other stories

In her new body of work, Fiona Pole has added a whole new suite of symbols to her well-known ones. They are, among others, the fox, the wolf and the bear. Pole has drawn extensively on literary works for inspiration when she made these. Chiefly, are the French fairy tales with which she became very familiar, reading them to her two children when she and her family still lived in Paris. No fewer than fifteen of the new etchings have as their subject matter, these tales. The wolf appears in many other works as well. "Children in South Africa do not really know wolves" she says, "but they hear about them in fairy tales. So, the wolf has become a veritable bogey man for them." This inexplicable fear of the unknown, these lurking threats, are just one of the many new strands Pole explores in her work. At the outset of interpreting her work, one is reminded of Claude Lévy Strauss, who once said that animals are not only good to eat; they are good to *think* with. And that is the strength in Pole's new work: she provides the viewer with a new vocabulary and fresh metaphors with which to think about her art.

Pole first stumbled on the notion of the fable when she encountered the short story collection of Mexican writer, Juan Rulfo, *The Burning Plain and other stories* (1953). The story that struck her the most, "You don't hear the dogs barking", tells about a man who is carrying his estranged, adult, wounded son on his back in search of a doctor. "You up there, Ignacio! Don't you hear something, or see a light somewhere?" he keeps on asking his son, who just answers in the negative. The story is about trust and about betrayal, a ubiquitous theme in fables and fairy tales. The eye and the ear, seeing and hearing, are cardinal in this story because not only can danger be avoided, but the goal, the end of the journey, can also be anticipated.

The dangers that lie in wait, is what Fiona Pole depicts in some of her new etchings. The wolf is paramount in this regard. Pole creates a whole screen, or curtain or veil of repeated images of the wolf. Against this curtain, she posits repeatedly printed images of an eye that is 'watching the wolf'. Marina Warner, in her book, *No Go The Bogey Man: Scaring, Lulling and Making Mock* (1998) writes about the way in which the wolf has been used by the nurse in the nursery to scare the baby, saying that she will feed it to the wolf at the door, who is already licking his chops, if it does not stop crying. She is quick to add that these are empty threats: "He that waits for a nurse's doing to a cross child what she threatens, will certainly be disappointed." Wrote a Swiss pastor, Loys Lavater, in 1572. But he still concludes, 'terrors, properly applied, are as necessary to quiet froward spirits, as praises and rewards are to encourage the tractable.' Threats are readily allayed, is what Pole wants to reassure the viewer. Reason and logic are tools for understanding the world. We need a means of understanding ourselves too, Pole seems to be saying. That is what the imagination allows us to do in her art.

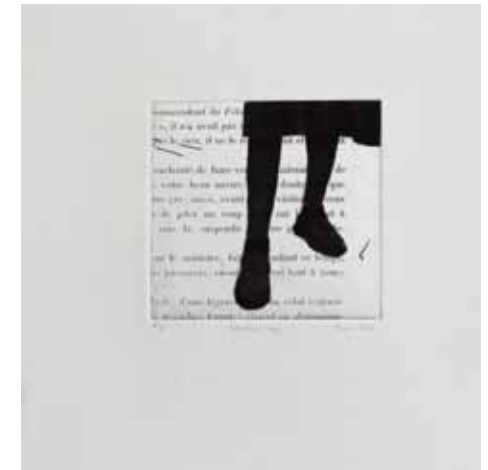
Wilhelm van Rensburg



*Fables Burden* 2013 Etching (roulette wheels on copper plate), chine collé  
Edition 15 180X178mm



*Top left* *When my ship comes home* 182X179mm



*Top right* *Wooden legs* 180X176mm



*Bottom* *Traveller* 212X210mm



*Fables Standing bear* 2013 Etching (roulette wheels on copper plate)  
Edition 15 182X180mm



*Top left The long wait* 192X192mm



*Top right Secret keeper* 212X213mm



*Bottom left Hare* 210X209mm



*Bottom right Flying fish* 165X162mm

*Fables* 2013 Etching (roulette wheels on copper plate), chine collé Edition 15



*Fables* 2013 Etching (roulette wheels on copper plate), chine collé Edition 15

**Top left** *Grey day* 192X191mm

**Top right** *A travers le Transvaal* 205X210mm

**Bottom left** *The crow* 180X175mm

**Bottom right** *Storyteller* 202X200mm

**Next page** *Wolves at the door* (Installation detail) 2014 Etching Dimensions variable

## Le Petit Chaperon rouge

Charles Perrault

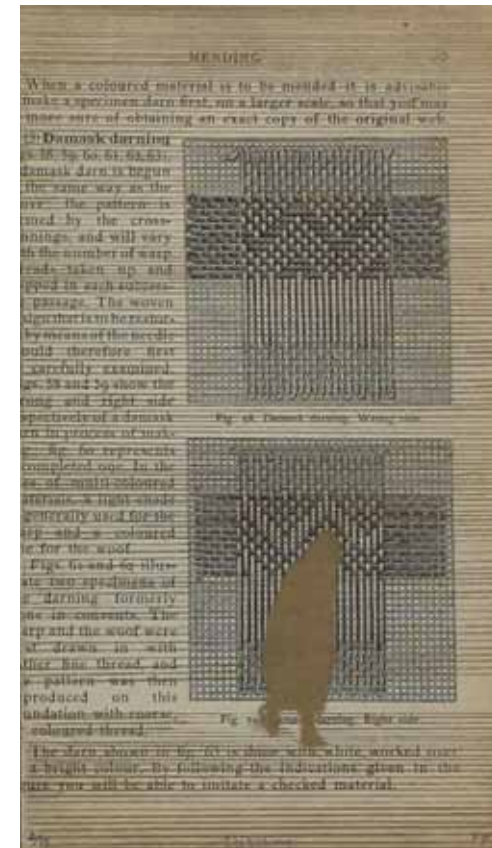
Il était une fois une petite fille de Village, la plus jolie qu'on eût su voir ; sa mère en était folle, et sa mère-grand plus folle encore. Cette bonne femme lui fit faire un petit chaperon rouge, qui lui seyait si bien, que partout on l'appelait le Petit chaperon rouge.

Un jour, sa mère, ayant cuit et fait des galettes, lui dit : « Va voir comme se porte ta mère-grand, car on m'a dit qu'elle était malade, porte-lui une galette et ce petit pot de beurre.

» Le petit chaperon rouge partit aussitôt pour aller chez sa mère-grand, qui demeurait dans un autre Village. En passant dans un bois elle rencontra compère le Loup, qui eut bien envie de la manger; mais il n'osa, à cause de quelques Bûcherons qui étaient dans la Forêt. Il lui demanda où elle allait; la pauvre enfant, qui ne savait pas qu'il est dangereux de s'arrêter à écouter un Loup, lui dit : « Je vais voir ma Mère-grand, et lui porter une galette, avec un petit pot de beurre que ma Mère lui envoie. — Demeure-telle bien loin ? lui dit le Loup. — Oh! Oui, dit le petit chaperon rouge, c'est par-delà le moulin que vous voyez tout là-bas, là-bas, à la première maison du Village. — Hé bien, dit le Loup, je veux l'aller voir aussi; je m'y en vais par ce chemin ici, et toi par ce chemin-là, et nous verrons qui plus tôt y sera. » Le loup se mit à courir de toute sa force par le chemin qui était le plus court, et la petite fille s'en alla par le chemin le plus long, s'amusant à cueillir des noisettes, à courir après des papillons, et à faire des bouquets des petites fleurs qu'elle rencontrait. Le loup ne fut pas longtemps à arriver à la maison de la Mère-grand; il heurte : Toc, toc. « Qui est là ? — C'est votre fille le petit chaperon rouge (dit le Loup, en contrefaisant sa voix) qui vous apporte une galette et un petit pot de beurre que ma Mère vous envoie. » La bonne Mère-grand, qui était dans son lit à cause qu'elle se trouvait un peu mal, lui cria : « Tire la chevillette, la bobinette cherra. » Le Loup tira la chevillette, et la porte s'ouvrit. Il se jeta sur la bonne femme, et la dévora en moins de rien; car il y avait plus de trois jours qu'il n'avait mangé. Ensuite il ferma la porte, et s'alla coucher dans le lit de la Mère-grand, en attendant le petit chaperon rouge, qui quelque temps après vint heurter à la porte. Toc, toc. « Qui est là ? » Le petit chaperon rouge, qui entendit la grosse voix du Loup eut peur d'abord, mais croyant que sa Mère-grand était enhumée, répondit : « C'est votre fille le petit chaperon rouge, qui vous apporte une galette et un petit pot de beurre que ma Mère vous envoie. » Le Loup lui cria en adoucissant un peu sa voix : « Tire la chevillette, la bobinette cherra ». Le petit chaperon rouge tira la chevillette, et la porte s'ouvrit. Le Loup, la voyant entrer, lui dit en se cachant dans le lit sous la couverture : « Mets la galette et le petit pot de beurre sur la huche, et viens te coucher avec moi. » Le petit chaperon rouge se déshabille, et va se mettre dans le lit, où elle fut bien étonnée de voir comment sa Mère-grand était faite en son déshabillé. Elle lui dit : « Ma mère-grand, que vous avez de grands bras! — C'est pour mieux t'embrasser, ma fille. — Ma mère-grand, que vous avez de grandes jambes! — C'est pour mieux courir, mon enfant. — Ma mère-grand, que vous avez de grandes oreilles! — C'est pour mieux écouter, mon enfant. — Ma mère-grand, que vous avez de grands yeux! C'est pour mieux voir, mon enfant. — Ma mère-grand, que vous avez de grandes dents! C'est pour te manger. » Et en disant ces mots, ce méchant Loup se jeta sur le petit chaperon rouge, et la mangea.

The earliest known printed version of this story dates to 1697, it was included in the collection *Histoires et contes du temps passé, avec des moralités. Contes de ma mère l'Oye*, Charles Perrault.





Five etchings on found paper 2014 Edition 15 138X80mm

Stitching

Opposite tl *The gatherer*

Opposite tr *Stockinged feet*

Opposite bl *My grandmother's hands*

Opposite br *Mending*



[1] n'y a pas, dans la vaste bibliothèque, deux livres identiques.  
Jorge Luis Borges, *Fictions*

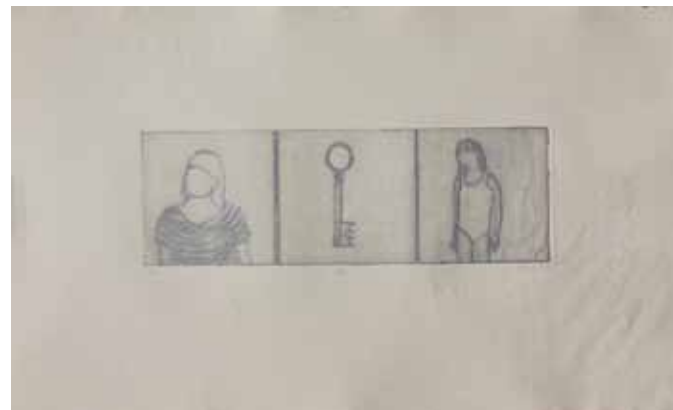
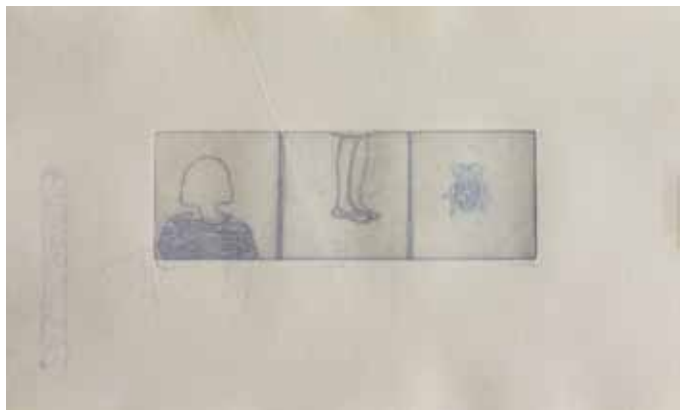


Red cat 2014 Carborundum on copper plate Edition 5 660X505mm

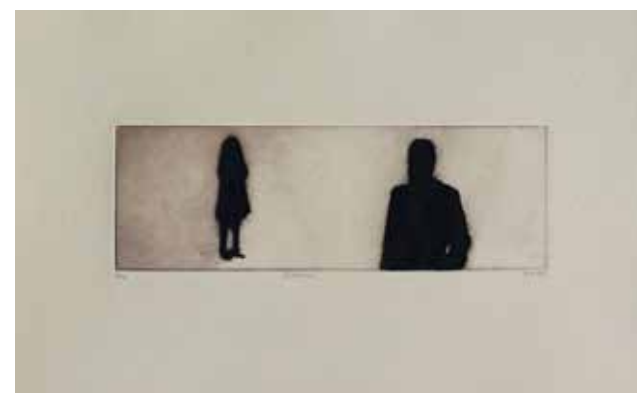
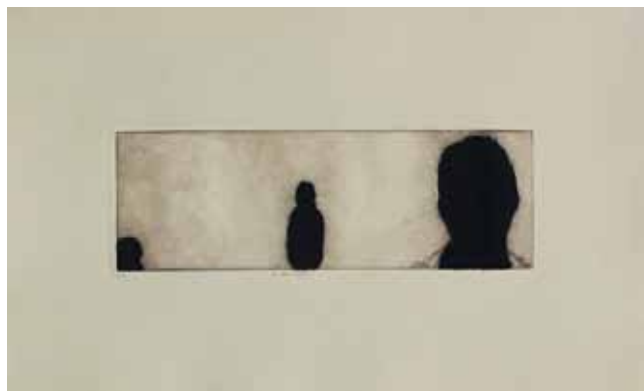


*Dancers* 2014 Carborundum on copper plate Edition 5 660X505mm

*The lost day* 2013 Carborundum on copper plate Edition 5 665X505mm

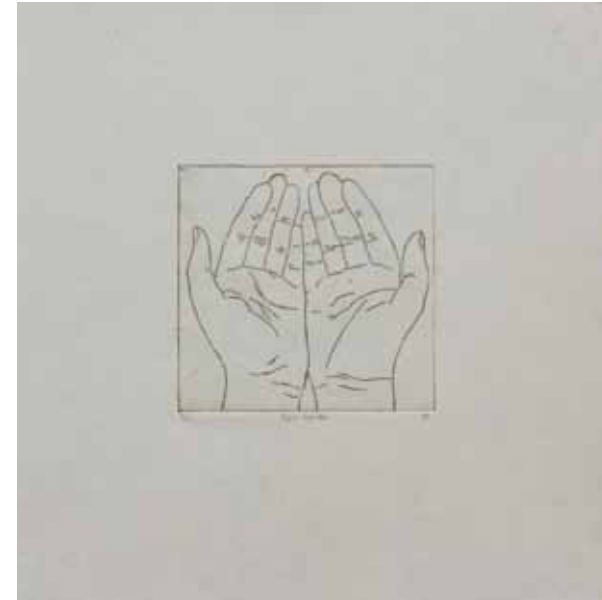
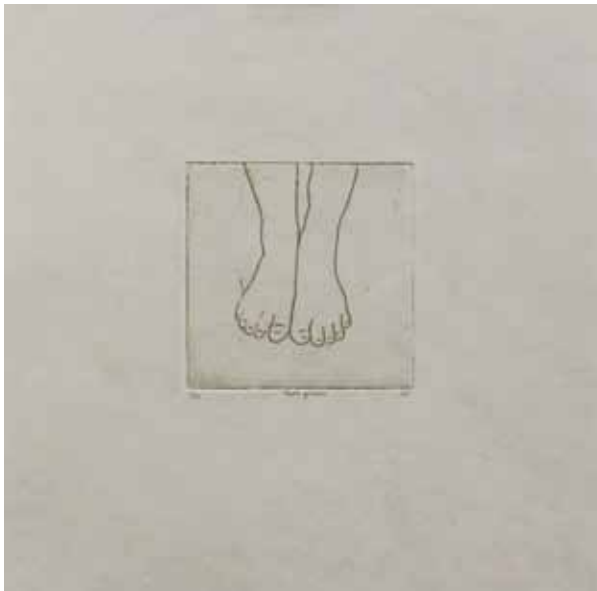


*Ladybird* 2014 Etching Edition 15 182X293mm  
**Opposite Key** 2014 Etching Edition 15 181X296mm



*Barking dogs* 2014 Carborundum on copper plate Edition 10 186X301mm  
*Distance* 2014 Carborundum on copper plate Edition 10 182X291mm

**Opposite top** *In the middle* 2014 Carborundum on copper plate Edition 10 188X300mm  
**Opposite middle** *The couple* 2014 Carborundum on copper plate Edition 10 178X293mm  
**Opposite bottom** *The return* 2014 Carborundum on copper plate Edition 10 181X296mm



*Open hands* 2014 Etching Edition 10 207X207mm

**Opposite top** *Endless miles* 2014 Etching Edition 10 209X207mm

**Opposite bottom** *Hard ground* 2014 Etching Edition 10 204X207mm



Fiona Pole with the Press Fleury at *the atelier*, Johannesburg, 2014

The Press Fleury comes from the atelier Georges Leblanc in Paris and was a gift from the last owner and master printer of the atelier, Pierre Lallier. Custom built for the atelier, the press is over 200 years old.

This historic atelier was founded in 1793 by Jean-Charles Rémond in the heart of the Latin Quarter in Paris' 5th arrondissement at 15 rue Saint-Jacques. Since the XVth century the Rue Saint-Jacques has been central to French publishing and the edition. In 1880, the atelier was moved to 187 rue Saint-Jacques and remained there until its doors shut in 2009. Throughout the atelier Leblanc's history it has witnessed some of the most ambitious printing projects undertaken, to name but a few – Napoléon's Description of Egypt; the floral albums of Redouté; prints, reviews and books by Rodin, Pissarro, Cassatt, Manet, Degas, Munch, Matisse, Villon, and De Staël; partnerships with the Chalcographie du Louvre, and so on.

The Press is now in South Africa and has been installed at *the atelier* 44 Stanley Avenue, Braamfontein Werf/Milpark, Johannesburg.

Fiona Pole wishes to thank Pierre Lallier and Fanny Boucher.

Fiona Pole was born in 1974 in Benoni, South Africa. She studied at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, where she obtained a BA Fine Arts (Honours) degree in 1996. In 2002 she graduated from the L'École Supérieure Estienne, Paris, France with a mention of excellence in her work. She specializes in printmaking and has had a number of exhibitions in South Africa and abroad. Having lived in Paris for over ten years, she and her family have returned to South Africa recently. She lives and works in Johannesburg.

À Didier, Luka et Oskar

Chapeau à Chloë Reid pour les 362 loups!

This catalogue accompanies *Fables & other stories*, a solo exhibition by Fiona Pole at GALLERY AOP, Johannesburg (February, 2014).

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