

## Just a feeling

Brent Harris

Selected works  
1987-2005

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## Foreword

When speaking of Brent Harris's work, especially his *Grotesquerie* paintings, there's a tendency to use words like 'elegant', or even 'decadent'. Those are appropriate enough as descriptive terms; they do capture something of the aesthetic tone of the work. But for the artist himself, different words are required. Words like 'diligent' or 'adventurous'; the very antithesis of the languid and agoraphobic artists of the *fin-de-siècle* period. Brent Harris is an artist who has often worked programmatically, using a sequence of paintings or prints to systematically hunt down an idea, a form or a quality of his medium. With this persistence comes a willingness to learn, to explore, to renew. What this exhibition amounts to, I think, is a testimony to the hard graft of art. Behind the pristine refinement of the works displayed are accumulated layers not only of studio craft but of reading, reflection, looking and travelling. Surprising new works combine artistic ambition with a willingness to accept the challenge of innovative processes. Familiar works reclaim their subtlety as the resonances threading through an accumulated oeuvre become apparent. The job of being an artist, and the rewards that this offers us as viewers, are both writ large.

We warmly thank Brent Harris for his collaboration and commitment to this significant exhibition and accompanying catalogue. Melbourne-based writers Sarah Thomas, James Mollison and Jonathan Nichols have each made insightful contributions to our understanding of the artwork, practice and attitudes of Brent Harris, and we thank them sincerely.

I would like to acknowledge the generous support of the Myer Foundation and Grange Securities towards the realisation of this exhibition, catalogue and associated activities. Projects such as this one depend on the generosity and assistance of private and public lenders for their success, and we are grateful to those who have lent work to *Just a feeling* from Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. Finally, my thanks go to the many Potter staff who have undertaken the necessary tasks to realise this major project at the museum.

**Dr Chris McAuliffe** Director

# Just a feeling: Brent Harris, selected works 1987–2005

*Just a feeling* addresses the progress of Melbourne-based artist Brent Harris's practice since 1987, three years after he graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts. The title, *Just a feeling*, is adopted from the series of six pink and cream works painted by Harris in 1996 and included in the exhibition (illus. p. 28). Like many of his early titles, it conveys a sense of careful resolve but tentative apprehension towards its subject. Our intention for the exhibition has been to maintain a similar tone of curiosity and openness towards the strange expanse that is the career of an artist. This exhibition of nearly fifty works draws out Harris's recurrent themes directed by key works and groups of paintings as they are organised in relation to one another across three rooms of the museum. Harris and I have had detailed discussions about the content and shape of the exhibition as well as the writers whose contributions we were keen to include in this catalogue. *Just a feeling* offers audiences the rare opportunity to review and reflect upon two decades of contemporary practice by a single artist. It offers this same, perhaps personally daunting but also modest, opportunity to Harris as well.

Of the five informal groupings of work in the exhibition, the first focuses on the development of Harris's 'abstract' works. *House* (1987), *Land's end* (1988) and *Whites hinged on black* (1988, illus. p. 25) provide notable examples of his early irregular painterly surfaces and thematic beginnings. The survey makes space for these important starting points before the more familiar pictures of the next decade where the artist built an increasingly seamless and exacting finish with each new work. Included are three key paintings from the series of fourteen *Stations of the Cross* painted in 1989, which, along with the three earlier works, most clearly show the connection with his New Zealand and modernist influences, particularly through the work of Colin McCahon.

The second grouping of work was produced between 1994 and 1996. Early in our discussions, we identified this period as a strategic juncture for the exhibition. It is a point that marks a shift in Harris's practice upon his return to Melbourne after six months in Europe, when he introduced a new sequence of 'pop-inspired' ideas into a practice focused since the *Stations* series on a clean geometric abstraction. Included here is *Appalling moment E4* (1994, illus. p. 27), the painting that is discussed differently in each of the following essays by Sarah Thomas, James Mollison and Jonathan Nichols, as well as the unusual, amorphous *Just a feeling* series of 1996. From the same year comes *I weep my mother's breasts*, a painting that hasn't previously been exhibited. This small, pale blue and white painting, which is remarkably intense, introduces most directly the influence of American artist John Wesley on Harris's practice at the time.

Harris typically works in series, usually displaying a series together, achieving a cohesive, visually unified body of work in any single exhibition, where the paintings' material finish and pictorial sophistication are made apparent from one work to another. The current survey does not offer viewers this advantage. Here we look across sequences, across years; in fact our interest has been to flesh out the disruptions and creative fractures or breaks. For example, *I weep my mother's breasts* is a one-off in the context of Harris's oeuvre. I remember the artist saying at one point when confronted with this sometimes unnerving tension: 'Well, that's the way it happened'.

The third grouping in the exhibition comprises the majestic *Untimely* diptych of 1997 (illus. p. 29) through to the sequence of works from *Swamp*, an important series of seventeen paintings that occupied Harris for a two-year period from 1999 to 2000. In projects like this one, it's not uncommon in my experience for an artist to be more alert to recent work, work that they are very much still involved with. From *Swamp* onwards, these are the paintings that haven't yet passed far from Harris's direct orbit, still holding sway in the contemporary operations of his practice, and the selection process slightly shifted correspondingly.

The fourth grouping includes the four works from the series *Grotesquerie* (2001–02) through to the present, with *He washed away my sins* (2004, illus. p. 33), the most recent *Mary* (2005, illus. p. 33), and the two paintings titled *Plato's cave* (2005). These complex works address what lies beneath the immaculate surfaces of Harris's work—and illustrate that often the perfect surfaces better allow us to see the tougher shapes. The essays included here by Sarah Thomas and Jonathan Nichols lead us via different pathways towards how we might comprehend these recent bodies of work.

Over many years, Brent Harris has maintained interdependent drawing, painting and printmaking practices. The fifth, most distinct, group of works represented in the exhibition is made up of eighteen paper pulp prints Harris produced at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute in late 2004. In his essay following, James Mollison introduces the development of Harris's imagery in these works through a discussion of material processes and techniques, and the collaboration between master papermaker and artist. The luminous large-scale paper pulp works are installed on the first level of the museum; they are displayed here for the first time in Australia.



Installation view of *Swamp* exhibition, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, 1999

Ten years ago at the Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia I had the opportunity to work with Brent Harris for the first time. His new paintings for that exhibition, *That uncertain feeling*, were incongruous, emotionally deep, animated and bright, with surfaces of cream, yellow, pink and black, some with thick moulded frames. Harris brought to Adelaide the huge yellow picture titled *On becoming (yellow no. 1)* (1996), which he described as a breakthrough work—it was the release of a sudden intuitive leap of recognition that didn't need to be entirely understood. Harris found the image, including an awkward yellow canary on a stick, in the froth around the rim of a beer glass. It is the shadow of the bird that gave him 'that uncertain feeling'. Nothing more or less certain describes the assurance and also the toughness of Harris's twenty years as an image-maker. It's a strength the artist perhaps draws in part from the close community of friends that has constantly surrounded and supported his practice, a support reciprocated by Harris with a personal gregariousness and generosity that involves all comers in the daily business of his painting.

In the course of his career, Brent Harris has come to occupy an important and especially distinctive position in contemporary art. This survey is an opportunity to seek out very specific experiences of Harris's practice, a practice that is nonetheless woven around continuing creative engagements. It presents an opportunity to review, remember and deepen our experience and understanding of this artist's work and to bear in mind its potential future.

**Bala Starr** Curator

# The passion of Brent Harris

Sarah Thomas

In this dream play, the author has ... attempted to imitate the inconsequent yet transparently logical shape of a dream. Everything can happen, everything is possible and probable. Time and place do not exist; ... the imagination spins, weaving new patterns; a mixture of memories, experiences, free fancies, incongruities and improvisations. The characters split, double, multiply, evaporate, condense, disperse, assemble. But one consciousness rules over them all, that of the dreamer; for him there are no secrets, no illogicalities, no scruples, no laws ... just as a dream is more often painful than happy, so an undertone of melancholy and of pity for all mortal beings accompanies this flickering tale.

August Strindberg, preface to *A dream play*, 1901.<sup>1</sup>

At first glance there seems to be a paradox at the heart of Brent Harris's paintings: while they deal with extreme states of emotion—the anguish of Christ's passion, the forces of desire, intimidation, transcendence, sorrow and fear—these are so intensely distilled in the process of painting that by the end they are almost hidden behind a veneer of finely tuned and immaculately rendered forms. Almost, but not quite, for this process of distillation is one which, in the end, only serves to heighten the paintings' emotional power. Such power is intensified further by a certain ambiguity between horror and absurdity that can leave the viewer wondering whether to laugh or cry.

This apparent paradox—the cool formality of the artist's visual language rubbing against the emotional anarchy that helps create it—is one which in the past has beset some of Harris's mentors, such as the American minimalist Barnett Newman. Against a background of post-war anxiety, and later the horrors of the Vietnam War, the threat of nuclear annihilation and the pervasive sense of fear that lingered throughout the Cold War period, Newman was critically scorned for his perceived lack of engagement with the 'real world'. This perception of coldness, however, could not have been further from the truth, as the artist tried to explain at the time of his first one-man show in 1950:

**These paintings are not 'abstractions', nor do they depict some 'pure' idea. They are specific and separate embodiments of feeling, to be experienced, each picture for itself. They contain no depictive allusions. Full of restrained passion, their poignancy is revealed in each concentrated image.**<sup>2</sup>

Newman's words aptly describe the early abstractions of Harris who, in 1989, paid homage to his mentor's landmark series, *The Stations of the Cross* (1958, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC), in which bands of black paint were applied to fifteen canvases with subtle variation. Harris's equally monumental *Stations* series, 1989, represented in this exhibition by *Station X (The disrobing)*, *Station XIII (The deposition)*, and *Station XIV (The entombment)* (illus. p. 26), evokes the solemnity and gravitas of one of Western art history's greatest subjects. Inspired by another mentor, fellow New Zealander Colin McCahon, to abandon colour for black and white, Harris's series dramatically distilled both form and colour in an attempt to deal with the enormity of its ultimate subject, the passage towards death. Unlike Newman's rapid application of acrylic onto raw canvas, oil paint in Harris's hands is painstakingly constructed in multiple layers until it achieves a rich, dense and uniform luminosity. The result is a powerful group of works that immerses the viewer in a solemn spirit of contemplation and meditation.

In the early 1990s Harris began to feel disillusioned with geometric abstraction, as though, as he said later, '... I was arguing someone else's argument. It was not my story'<sup>3</sup>. He subsequently embarked upon several years of creative exploration employing the Surrealist technique of automatic drawing to find a path beyond abstraction that he could call his own. From this began to emerge a tenuous edging towards figuration, a decisive shift that Harris referred to in the wry title of a group of 1994 works as his 'appalling moment'. What distinguishes *Appalling moment E4*, 1994 (illus. p. 27), from the *Stations* series is immediately apparent: the introduction of colour (an insistent shade of baby blue); a transition from sombre abstraction to whimsical and child-like figuration (an absurd elephant? an idiotic grinning face?); and the introduction of curves which evoke the body. The pure absurdity of the painting, and to a lesser extent some of those that followed, was almost a deliberate rebuttal of the earlier abstracts which were heavily bound by the weight of art-historical tradition. This was a brazen declaration of artistic license and newly found confidence.

Harris's appalling moment—the embrace of figuration—was a new beginning whose trajectory continues to unfold today. It was followed by a series of six paintings titled *Just a feeling*, 1996 (illus. p. 28), whose organic shapes were far more sexually suggestive than anything he had painted to date. Against a nipple pink background, Harris painted a series of bulbous forms each with a phallic protuberance and a series of rounded shapes (arseholes? buttocks? breasts? balls?). On one level the paintings work brilliantly as formal abstractions whose individual organic shapes take on a vital life of their own, creating a series of dynamic spatial relationships; on another they are clearly sexual, while at the same time maintaining the sense of absurd ambiguity that characterises the *Appalling moment* series.

Harris shares his interest in absurdity with the Surrealists, as well as his use of the automatic drawing technique to tap into his unconscious mind. Recently he has sought to analyse his use of the absurd in the following terms:

**The absurd gets me closer to an intensity of sensation ... The sensation of being in a body ... The sensation is only ever forming/transforming, never whole. This is why my images are nearly always cropped, part objects. They can never fully declare a meaning. Just like life ...**<sup>4</sup>

Much of the raw power of Harris's paintings derives from this ambiguity; they probe, taunt and hint at something much larger than is ever fully apparent.

The series that best exemplifies this is *Grotesquerie*, 2001–02, comprising seventeen paintings and ten woodblock prints, the most extensive and by far the darkest group of works produced to date. The series was created in two groups over a period of some two years. Here, while the paintings are still laden with ambiguity, there is no doubt that they are figured, and that at least two of the figures are gendered—a threatening, masked man whose shrouded body appears to envelope the torso of a blonde woman (*Grotesquerie no. 1*, 2001, illus. p. 31). Harris speaks of these figures as the Father and the Mother, thus establishing an archetypal familial relationship, one that harbours a frightening and dark secret. In this painting, the Mother is subsumed by the overpowering stature of her male counterpart, gazing up at him with submissive fixity.



*The untimely (nos 1 and 2)* 1997, installation view, *Orifice* exhibition, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2003

The series' forms are fluid, sometimes literally so as in *Grotesquerie (mock horror)*, 2002, which oozes down the canvas with a strong sense of the bodily (blood? sweat? tears?). Other amorphous figures appear in the series, such as a standing woman in *Grotesquerie (le regarder)*, 2002 (cover image), reminiscent of Donatello's sculpture of Mary Magdalene (c. 1454–55, Florence Cathedral), the repentant saint in old age shrouded in a distinctive cloak of long hair<sup>5</sup>. Often the paintings' deep black backgrounds take on a life of their own in gestalt-like fashion. Harris enjoys the energised play between foreground and background, presence and absence, in which silhouetted profiles can emerge unexpectedly from shadows, and tangible forms can magically dissolve into vapour. These figures are locked into a dark psychodrama, a dream-world governed by its own rules of logic, which expressionist writer August Strindberg described in 1901 as a place where, 'Everything can happen, everything is possible and probable. Time and place do not exist'.

While primarily a painter and printmaker, Harris has never lost his passion for drawing from the figure<sup>6</sup>. After completing a major series he will usually return to weekly life-drawing sessions in his studio, finding the process cleansing and regenerative and inevitably bringing him back to the body as a primary source. Ideas for works come sometimes in the form of quick pencil sketches jotted in notebooks, which may be accompanied by text articulating related thoughts. For while Harris is deeply interested in examining psychological states, sometimes employing techniques such as automatic drawing for the purpose, he is no expressionist, expelling his passions in a frenzied swirl of emotional energy. Rather, his approach is one of analytical refinement that is fed by a deep engagement with both art history and contemporary practice. His preoccupations are with some of life's biggest themes—death, sex, love and religion.

Since the large, vacant eyes and grinning mouth first forced their way into *Appalling moment*, faciality has played a key role in Harris's work. In 1997 he created a series of ten paintings called *The untimely*, represented in this exhibition by the diptych *The untimely (nos 1 and 2)* (illus. p. 29). This monumental pair of cartoon-like images focuses on the power of the gaze, reducing the face to a semi-abstract detail of nose and eye. Seen from a low, oblique angle, a child's view-point, the work raises questions about who is watching who.

Over the last couple of years Harris has returned to Christian iconography, for, in his words, 'there are few more powerful narratives for dealing with love and pain, with a world of ragged edges, or transience and death'<sup>7</sup>. The faces of Christ and Mary (among other religious icons) have been of particular interest, and in *He washed away my sins*, 2004, and *Mary*, 2005 (both illus. p. 33), Harris deploys the greatest economy of means to synthesise the features of two of the most frequently painted faces in the Western tradition. But these works are arguably more distinctive for what they leave out rather than what they include, and as usual nothing is quite what it seems: as in René Magritte's famous painting *The rape* (1934, the Menil Collection, Houston, Texas), Christ's eyes double as breasts and his lips, female pudenda.

Faces are thought to reveal information about their subjects, where shadows and silhouettes serve to conceal it. In a recent series, *Plato's cave*, 2005, Harris has returned to two drawings of shadows cast onto his studio wall by a life-drawing model back in 2000. Here he was struck by a resemblance in one of them to the Francis Bacon profile of George Dyer in the National Gallery of Australia's *Triptych* (1970), and decided to pursue the image further. The other shadow was the starting point for a nude male profile that became the signature motif for the series. It features as a double image in *Plato's cave (painting no. 8)*, 2005 (illus. p. 32), where it brings to mind questions of narcissism, identity and homosexuality. Harris has written: 'A shadow/silhouette carries only limited information about its source; we the viewer embellish meaning onto the projection. As paintings develop, meanings accrue, aided by memory and emotion'<sup>8</sup>. Yet there is an important distinction between the shadow and the silhouette: the silhouette is far more trustworthy than its illusive counterpart; the shadow distorts and deceives, while the silhouette can only define an object as it exists in real space. If we read the image then as a silhouette, it becomes one of male potency and strength; if on the other hand it is seen as a shadow, we are thrown back into the tantalising world of uncertainty, not knowing quite what to believe.

Harris is a master of suggestion, carefully nurturing visual ambiguities that reflect the chaotic complexity of life. While his shift in the early 1990s from abstraction to figuration was a definable moment, he continues to enjoy working in the amorphous realm between the two. His search for potent imagery lends much of his work a mythic quality, one brimming with powerful emotions. In Strindberg's terms, Harris is the dreamer for whom, 'there are no secrets, no illogicalities, no scruples, [and] no laws'.

1 Translation by Michael Meyer in *Strindberg. Plays: One*, Methuen, London, 1985, p. 151.

2 *Barnett Newman: Selected writing and interviews*, Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1990, p. 178.

3 Brent Harris quoted by James Mollison, "Brent Harris: "Bubbles", "Just a feeling", "Sleep", *Art & Australia*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2004, p. 75.

4 Brent Harris, notebook, 2005.

5 This figure reappeared recently in the paper pulp series. See the essay by James Mollison in this catalogue.

6 See James Mollison's essay for a more extensive discussion about the artist's recent prints.

7 Brent Harris quoted by Steven Miller, *Brent Harris: The face*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004.

8 Brent Harris, notes on *Plato's cave*, 2005.



# Demonology

Jonathan Nichols

Who or what is the little elephant that Brent Harris painted in 1994 after returning from six months in Paris? What little downfall is this one? Is it imaginary or something more? Whose reflection is it? Harris called this small, pale blue and white painting *Appalling moment E4* (illus. p. 27)<sup>1</sup> and has described how it came out of an earlier series of 'dot' paintings: 'It was a way of facializing the canvas—all it was good for was to turn that dot into an eye'. But he also said it like this: 'The profile of an elephant moving around beneath the dots appeared', and this is the explanation that most interests me. Those dots were sitting on top of the messy rubbings of earlier drawings. My thinking is that a little demon crept in and occupied the very soul of the painting, at least for a time.

Harris's remark that the elephant just 'appeared' is not so surprising—demonology works in this way. What I am calling 'demonology'<sup>2</sup> is a trade in demonic appearances, where artists build obscure, otherwise incommunicable forces—the equivalence of souls—into their works of art. With respect to the work of Brent Harris, it's important to recognize that there is an equally complete and traditional utility in such a notion. Some would say too that this is the only efficacy an artist is offered. It's an easy proposition to pull down, I know, that the artwork is 'possessed' in some way, or that paintings are the habitats of demonic spirits. Can a soul ever actually be represented or painted? No, not really. But can artists build these equivalent 'appearances'? We could just take that on face value.

This painting called *Appalling moment E4* is perhaps just such an apparition of an otherwise unrepresentable force. Mimicking the fluctuations of his own soul through the application of esoteric painterly skills and training, Harris has recruited the assistance of a demon (this time it looks like a little elephant), thereby activating the artwork with the borrowed soul of this demon. How else do we associate the obscure intensity and psychological affect with what is an otherwise inert and benign object? The finished painting, with its demonic aura, solicits in turn the same demonic spirit from within the physiology of each of us looking upon the picture. The painting enacts this exchange with each new viewer. We feel and sense the little elephant as if it were something like a consciousness reciprocating motives held deeply within ourselves. The true 'appalling moment' might be the fright this whole process gives us.

Brent Harris's first explanation above for the *Appalling moment E4* painting, the part about 'all it was good for was to turn that dot into an eye', masks this second explanation of the little elephant's demonic appearance. The language of the first explanation disguises the actual intensity of the elephant's presence. It relates a more formal, systematized method of activating the painting: the apparent disjunction between what is 'figurative' (subjective/figure etc.) and what is 'abstract' (objective/ground etc.). In the case of this painting it is the transmutation of the 'dot' and the 'eye'. (When we look closely, we notice that there are two faces, but let's move on.) This formal problem has been the talking point of modern art historians for years, since the very beginnings of 'art history' around the turn of the twentieth century. It's an explanation held more tightly within this discourse than it is among the detritus of artists' studios.

Gilles Deleuze prioritises abstraction over figuration because it suggests first exteriority, over interiority<sup>3</sup>. Deleuze proposes that the drive to *abstract* is divisible from *to represent* and held as a more deeply rooted urge. His prioritisation, though, is not completely oppositional, but intended to point the reader strategically towards the development of abstract/materialist methodologies. Only later, once this priority is established, does he return to discuss more carefully the problems of 'interior forces that climb through the flesh'<sup>4</sup>. Interestingly though, among his early writings (1962), the beautiful (if perverse) contra-image Deleuze constructs for interiority is the place of 'the spider' and the 'dark workshop'<sup>5</sup>. Under this guise, interiority is an ambiguous nether zone where one is ensnared and corrupted in resentment, negativity and 'bad conscience'.

The real fear of this image of interiority for Deleuze is oblivion (an endless, immobilizing, circularity of thinking). His caution in this careful marking-out of interiority is driven first by pedagogical motives. He is concerned for the harm that can be done to those ensnared in such a place, ensnared in this way of thinking, where one stands alone in a quiet dark hole, shouting to no one. (This is more than a therapeutic warning of neurosis.) Be that as it may, Brent Harris moves towards the image of the spider instinctively—towards this warned-against place of interiority. Since the earliest years, Harris's practice has been an ascetic meditation of sorts, but as well, for him, the studio (the artist's own 'dark workshop') is a place of personal metamorphosis.

Here I want to move to another picture in the exhibition, the portrait of Jesus titled *He washed away my sins* (2004, illus. p. 33), where Jesus is depicted with the traditional long dark hair, beard and robes. His demeanour is of a slightly grim, slightly phoney, figure, with what might be described as a veiled anguish. As with *Appalling moment E4*, the painting is 'facialized'; the canvas is painted according to the anatomy of the artwork rather than to illustrate the body's natural anatomy or the realism of flesh. The dichotomy (or disjunction) of figure/ground is suspended; figure and ground are simultaneously held in abeyance and superimposed one upon the other. The painting is the enactment of a sacred tradition, embodying the image of god(s) as they appear among us. Here, of course, Harris finds these gods in the same place as Deleuze's spider.

*He washed away my sins* is an image of Jesus, but it is also the posing of a double (a simulacrum), so it's both the real guy and the poser, simultaneously. It has the attributes of Jesus but also displays new attributes that shift his establishment face. *He washed away my sins* asks: Did he? Does he still? Harris paints the picture to deliver a sense of what he cannot comprehend alone—a consciousness that is oblivious to movement, an eternal 'blessed relief'. *He washed away my sins* seeks the complicity of a demon to enact (pose) the feeling of this space. The scale and features are slightly distorted; the lips tiny, pursed, hard to kiss. The face is dispersed around the canvas, but the eyes are drawn closed to lead us inside. Harris is self-conscious and innocent, claiming nothing in self-entitlement, and here he works at a distance from the plain confidence of many other contemporary painters. For me, though, there is more to this vicarious physiognomy; something remains of the memory of an adolescent's glance and the learned gesture of the indirect motif, the near-hidden move to turn away, to detour (a pure deviation), and so avert one's gaze, but with the knowing awareness of being seen.

There is no secret nexus in Harris's demonology. There is no such false simplicity in its workings. In a general sense, the demonic is a reflex that 'permits artists to solve the sort of dilemma[s] of which they are not always conscious'<sup>6</sup>. It's the roll of the dice that interconnects artists with the forces of the world and can account for the aura we continue to discover in works of art.



Installation view of *Appalling moment* exhibition, Karyn Lovegrove Gallery, Melbourne, 1995

I remember the day Brent Harris returned to the studio<sup>7</sup> from a lecture on New Zealand artist Colin McCahon. He was dissatisfied that there had been such a literal conversation about McCahon's so-called spiritual purpose. Harris's question was to do with the reading of the texts: 'What if the words [McCahon's painted words] were from the back of a soap packet? What of the works' spirituality then?', he asked. The appearance of unconscious energies and designs will continue to be the business of Brent Harris's studio practice. Painting, though, is not a direct mode; it has little in common with documentary or systematic orders, bodies imprinting upon other bodies, testifying to superior authenticities. Artists feed lower down the reaches, where all sorts of things can be said and done for effect that would otherwise not be said or done, well below the radar of the usual social contrivances and as a rule opposed to the organising impulses of institutions. The complicity of souls and the workings of demonology survive protected lower down in these places and are rather present but disguised.

- 1 *Appalling moment E4* is an early work among a number of paintings, drawings and prints Harris has titled *Appalling moment* (see also illus. this page).
- 2 While the term 'demonology' is never referred to as such, many of the premises of its workings are outlined by Pierre Klossowski in 'On the collaboration of demons in the work of art', trans. Paul Foss & Allen S Weiss, *Art & Text*, no. 18, 1985 (1981).
- 3 In *A thousand plateaus. Capitalism and schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari refer approvingly to early art-historical accounts of the prioritisation of abstraction (in the manner of Paul Klee) over 'empathy' (figuration), but this is also a conversation familiar from much of Deleuze's writing.
- 4 See Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation*, trans. Daniel W Smith, Continuum, London & New York, 2004 (1981), p. xi.
- 5 See Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Continuum, London & New York, 2005 (1962).
- 6 Klossowski, op. cit.
- 7 Brent Harris and I have shared a studio in Fitzroy for the last ten years.

# Singapore paper pulp works

James Mollison, AO

Brent Harris is a painter–printmaker. While his paintings are well known and appreciated, the prints have received less attention and the important place they have come to occupy in his practice is not yet fully understood. The paper pulp prints Harris made at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI) during a residency in late 2004 signal a breakthrough in his art.

A dominant aspect of Brent Harris's painting and printmaking practice until now has been his use of immaculate surfaces of lustrous, unmodulated colour contrasted with finely adjusted areas of darker toned paint. Harris has made a near fetish of beautifully printed and painted surfaces, all effort in creating them masked by the skill of his printers or successive coats of thin paint. In Singapore Harris was introduced to a new medium, paper pulp, and made exceptional use of its potential for bold textures and heightened colour.

In Paris more than a decade ago, in 1993–94, a breakthrough occurred during Harris's six-month studio residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts. At the time of departing Australia, he had begun to question his use of geometric form and how he was going to use it to extend his vocabulary. In Paris he became more acutely aware of his disaffection with the purely geometric and the level of high taste it was servicing and in time a positive emerged. He wrote, 'I don't have a position, I am unable to take myself seriously ... and the ensuing anxiety is the reality'.

A large number of thumbnail-sized drawings record the intensity with which Harris was thinking about his art at that time, and his acceptance of new ideas as they arose. He also worked at large *informe* drawings in which charcoal was smudged and erased as a means of accessing subconscious forms. He noticed that subjects were starting to emerge. In one such drawing, we see a 'target' shape underneath an automatically rendered line become facial, suggesting an elephant head, allowing the absurd to enter the work. Harris allowed this absurdity to take hold, and a new series started to develop. He identified this with the title *Appalling moment*. His 'appalling moment' was the beginning of a shift that saw controlled geometric design replaced with disorder, chance, and organic forms that could both pulse and slide across the surface. As the witty and unpredictable replaced order, his art began its move towards a more psychological basis. This notion of the absurd also informs most of the work made in Singapore; Harris uses it as a driver or catalyst to stimulate imagery.

In Paris, Harris had broken new ground working alone. At the STPI he had the help of master papermaker Richard Hungerford. Hungerford suggested Harris work on the large scale he was used to, with paper pulp as a unique way of extending his printmaking experience. For an artist new to paper pulp, coming to STPI is daunting; the medium, so open to innovation, is technically complex and reliant on the papermaker's knowledge and expertise. The level of collaboration required between artist and printer and the workshop technicians is greater than with most other print techniques<sup>1</sup>.

Brent Harris is by nature a reflective artist and his compositions develop slowly through drawing as his emotional engagement with each new work builds, and meaning starts to declare itself. He was not really prepared for the speed at which he was expected to work in Singapore. On his first day in the paper room, Hungerford worked with Harris to make seven large sheets of paper, the white base sheets. The standard large size achievable at STPI is 166 x 132 cm (66 x 52 inches). Hungerford challenged Harris, telling him, 'the paper only lasts for three working days—you had better get started'.

The process requires a base sheet of freshly made paper. This is laid out on a felt blanket that helps hold the sheet together and facilitates moving the work around. To the wet base sheet is added the coloured paper pulp, milled to its finest limit. A formation agent and water are then added which gives the pulp the viscosity of runny egg white<sup>2</sup>. The pulp is loaded with the purest quality permanent pigments; its viscosity allows every kind of movement over the wet, slowly draining and drying base sheet. The coloured pulp is opaque when used thick to obtain full intensity of colour. Used in successive thick or thin layers of lighter or darker tones, the artist is able to control the depth of the picture field. The pulp can be brushed, wiped, thrown, poured, finger-painted, splattered. Any water-soluble medium can be used to dye or mark the surface at any time during the wet stage. Clean areas can be laid in a *cloisonné* technique up to walls of thick Mylar strips pushed into the wet pulp of the base sheet, or stencilled through or over Mylar shapes that are later lifted. Unsatisfactory areas can be wiped off the base sheet with a sponge or squeegee or simply worked over. Richard Hungerford commented that 'at first it was like pulling teeth trying to get Brent to do anything other than a perfectly flat surface'. The last two prints made were *Buddha energy* (illus. p. 23) and *Quiver*, both of which exploit the possibilities of paper pulp.



#38 Mirror #2 2005



#46 Suddenly #5 2005



#45 Suddenly #4 2005

A bubbled effect can be created by splodging with a large brush, one colour over another, forming bubbles that burst and texture the surface, as in the works *Suddenly #5* (above) and *Mirror #2* (illus. p. 21). This is one technique among many others that Richard Hungerford generously shared with Harris. Hungerford encouraged Harris to work on variations of the same images, as in the six variations of *Standing figure* and *Suddenly*, as a way of digging into the possibilities of the medium rather than feeling pressured to find new imagery for each work.

When the work reaches a point where imagery, colour and surface texture satisfy the artist, the sheet is moved, still on the felt blanket, to a suction bed where excess water is sucked out. Then it is moved onto a large vertical press, where enormous pressure gradually flattens all pulp layers into one flat surface. This process also removes further moisture. At this point it is still possible to work into the damp surface with water-soluble mediums, as Harris did, to add the linear elements present in many of the finished works. The sheet is then transferred to the drying room where it is heat-dried with up to six others for eighteen hours. When the work is removed from the dryer it is as a unified sheet of paper. This does not necessarily mean the end of the process; the work now has the same life as any paper and is open to further additive processes, such as the collage of *Quiver* or the silver leaf of *Mirror #2*.

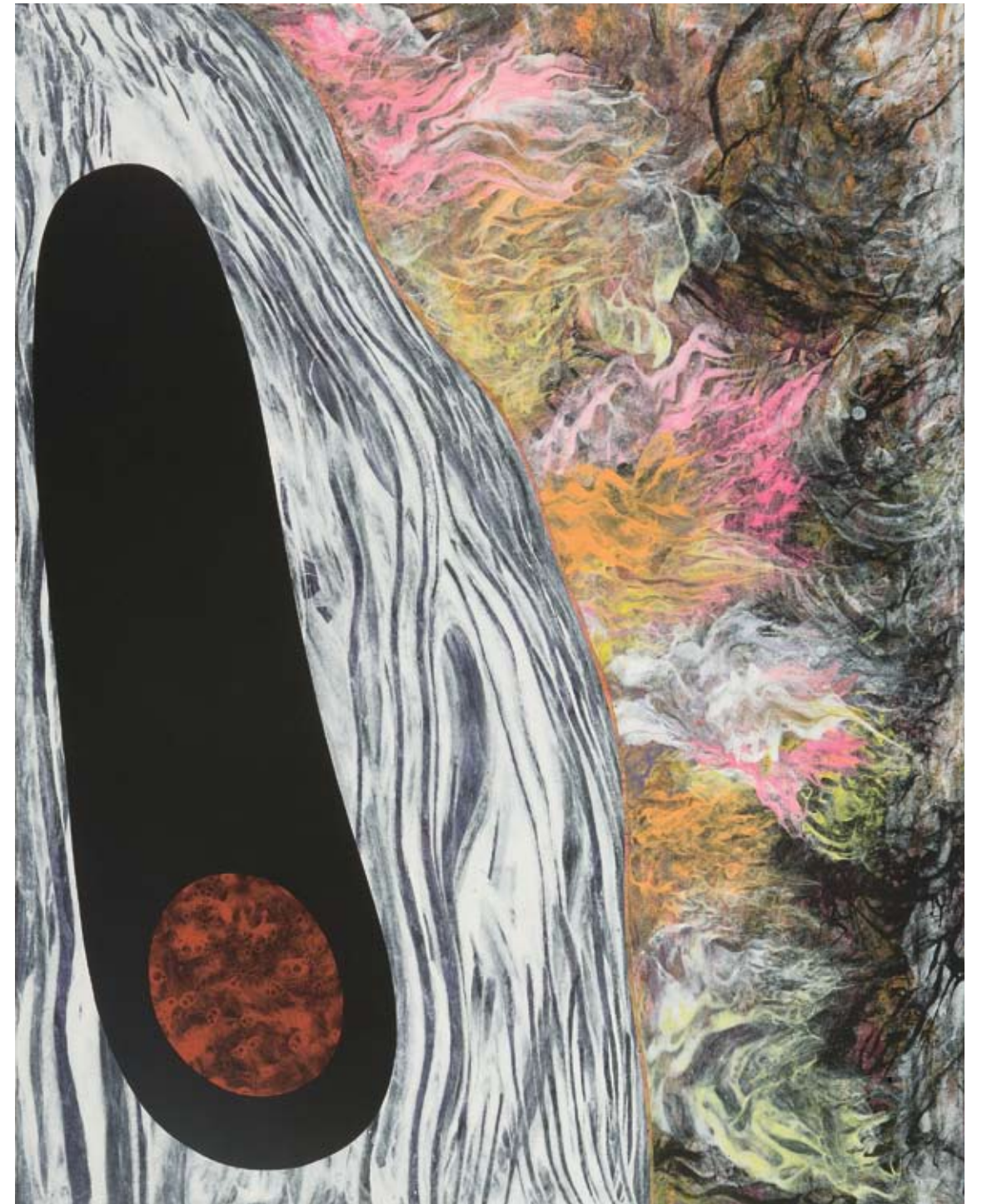
Hungerford introduced Harris to the idea of adding flocking, which gives a deliciously rich, velvety black highlight to particular areas (visible in *Standing figure #3*, *Grain* and the leaves in the two works titled *Garden*). Harris embraced silver leaf as a kitsch element in *Buddha #2* and *Mirror #2*, however to his surprise the result was far from kitsch, instead adding yet another layer of subtle tone to these textured works.

Thirty-one large unique paper pulp works were made during the four and a half week residency<sup>3</sup>. The breakthrough that Brent Harris made at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute was his acceptance of broken surfaces, exuberant colour and painterly textures, and his confidence that these could heighten the emotional charge of his imagery.

1 Ken Tyler formulated the paper pulp process in the late 1970s when he introduced a number of artists to the medium 'in which painting and papermaking are totally fused'. (David Hockney, *David Hockney: Paper pools*, ed. Nikos Stangos, Thames & Hudson, London, 1980, p. 5.) Tyler's passion for large-scale prints, now one of the major features of the STPI workshop, required that he develop and build specialist equipment. There is no comparable facility in Australia.

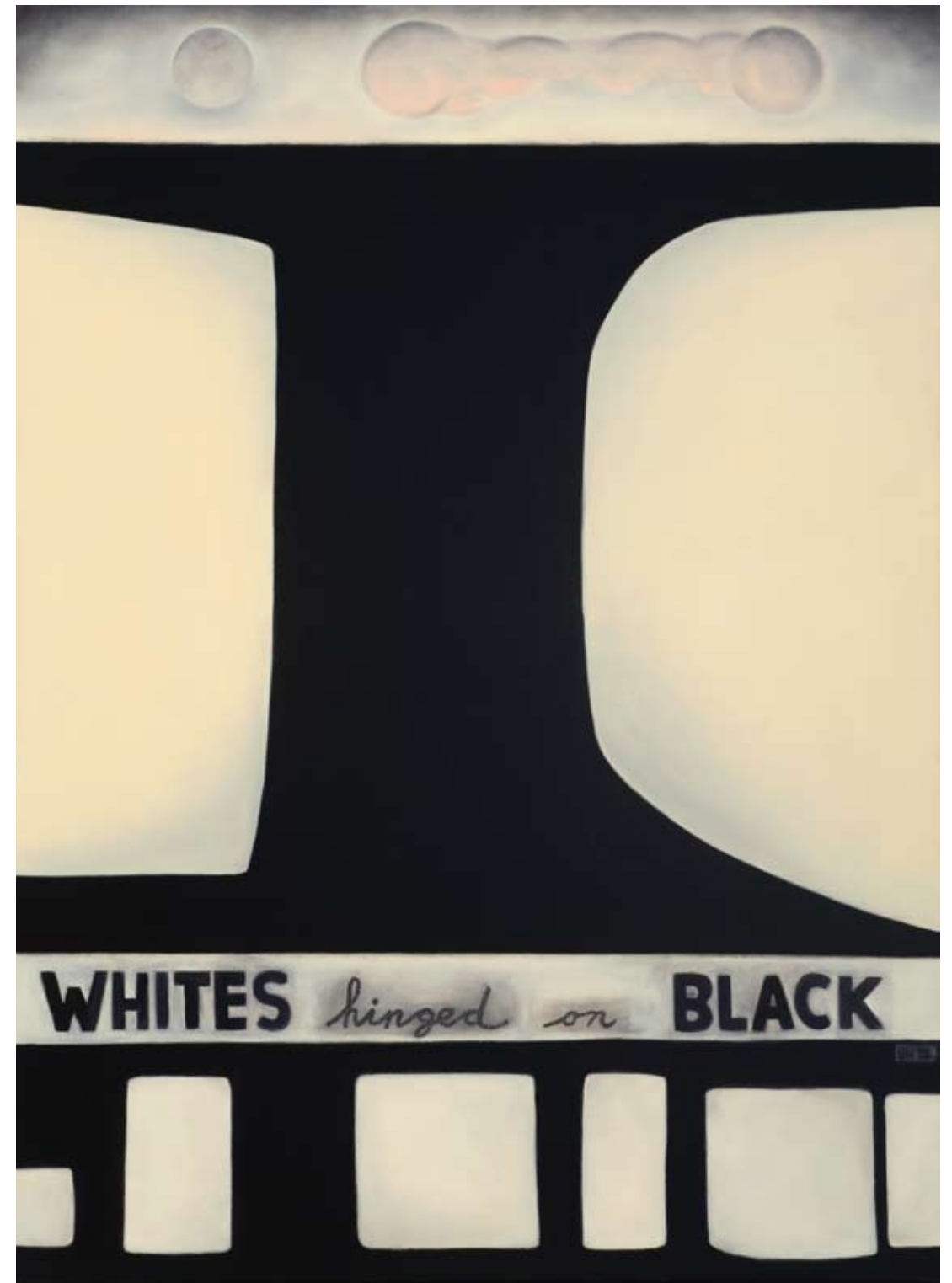
2 The formation agent is a starch by-product used to slow the water drainage from the pulp.

3 Four others were deemed unsuccessful and destroyed.

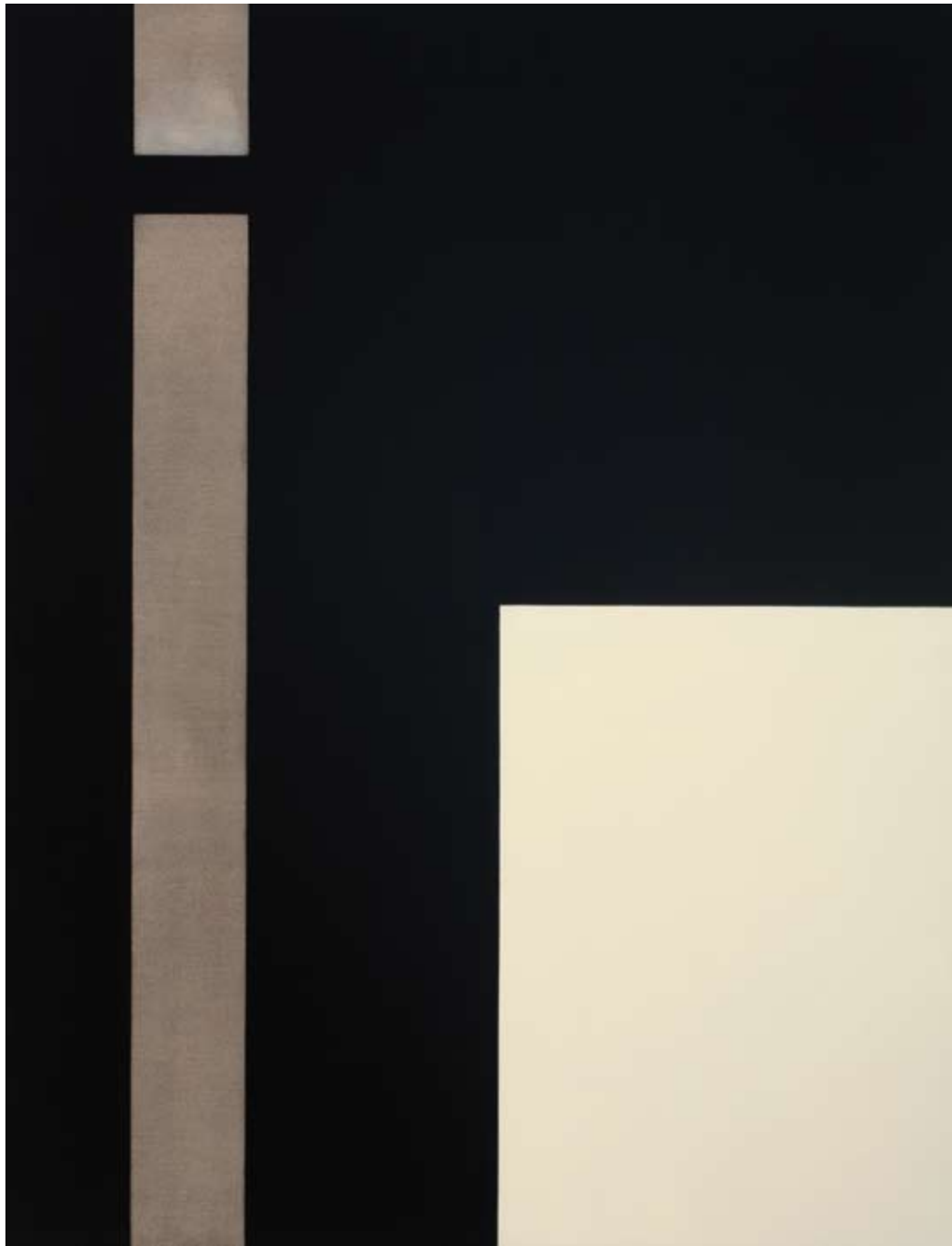


#32 Buddha energy 2005

# Plates



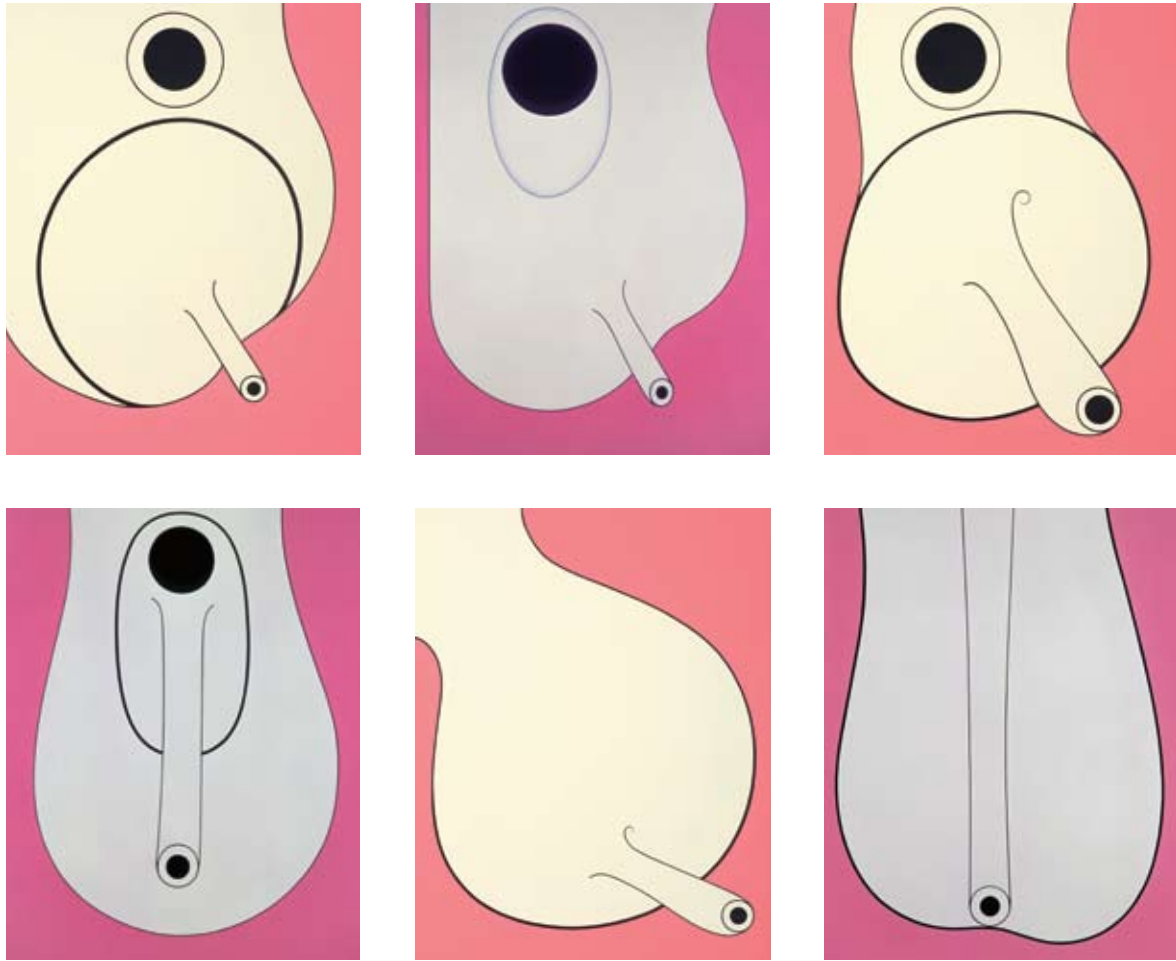
#3 Whites hinged on black 1988



#6 Station XIV (The entombment) 1989



#7 Appalling moment E4 1994



#9-14 *Just a feeling* #1-6 1996

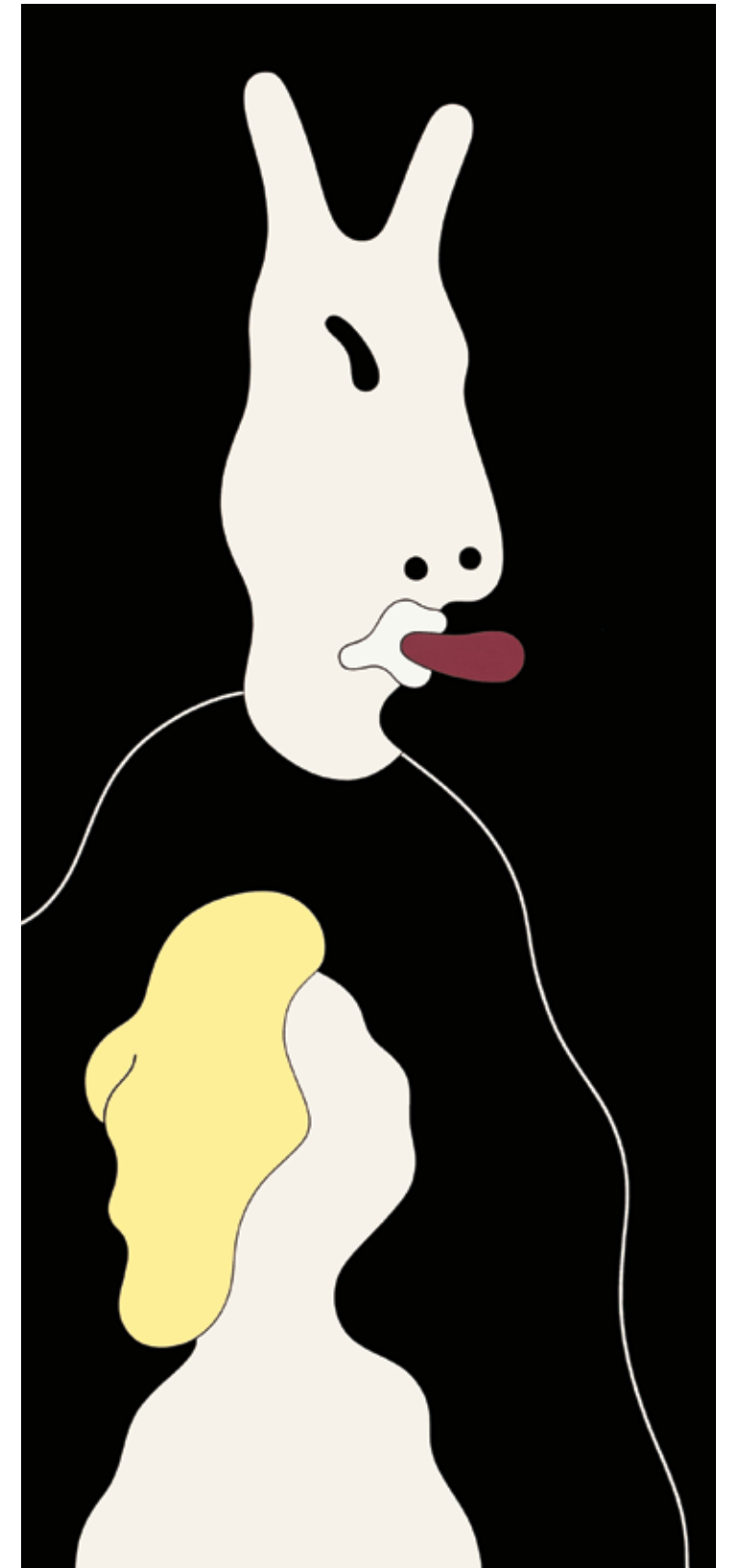


#16 *The untimely (nos 1 and 2)* 1997

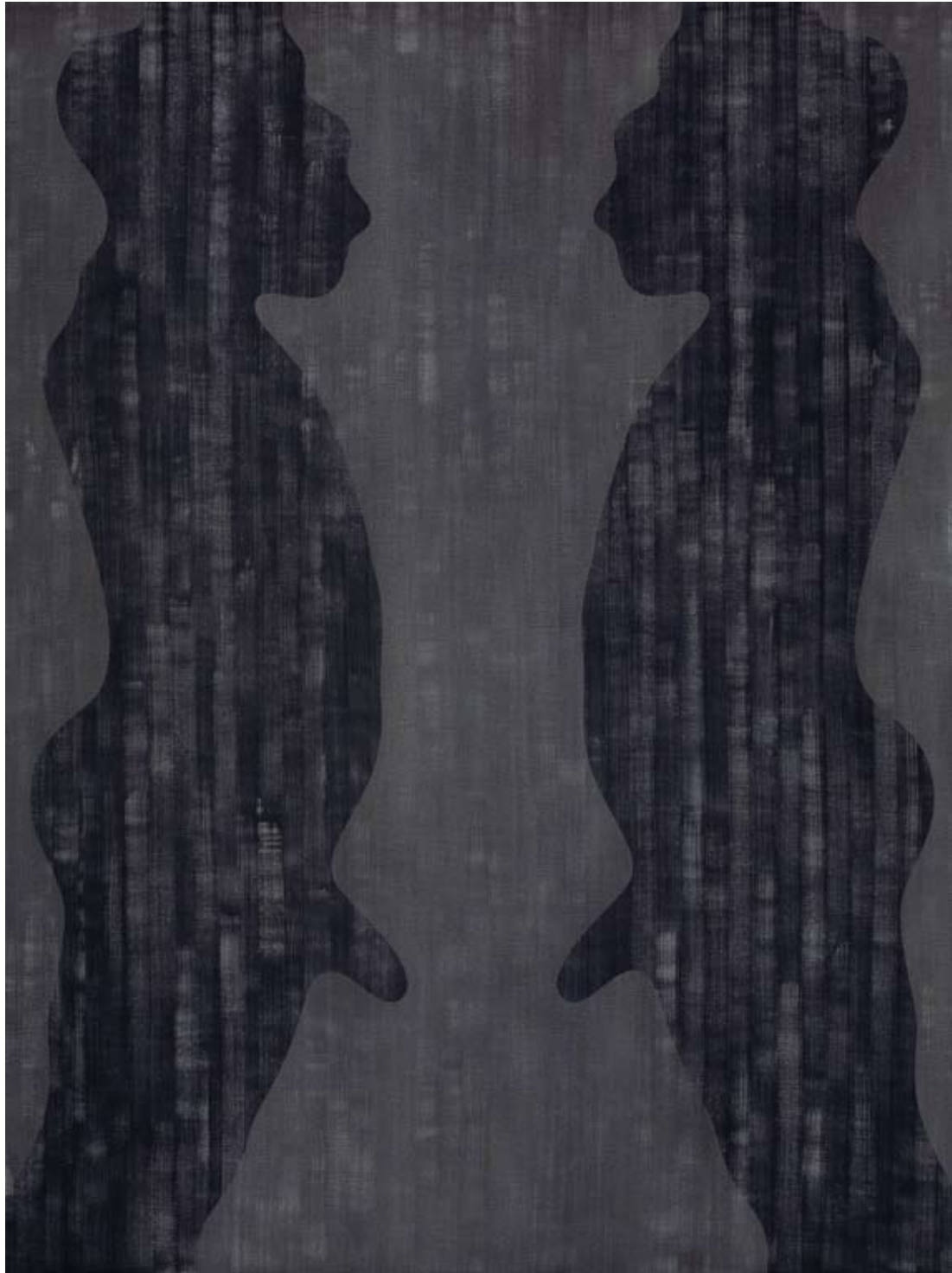




#19 Swamp grey 1999



#21 Grottesque (no. 1) 2001



#29 Plato's cave (painting no. 8) 2005



#27 Mary no. 1 2005



#26 He washed away my sins 2004

## List of works in the exhibition



1 *House* 1987  
oil on canvas  
111.5 x 182.5 cm  
The John McBride Collection



2 *Land's end* 1988  
oil on canvas  
132 x 182.5 cm  
Private collection, Perth



3 *Whites hinged on black* 1988  
oil on canvas  
152.5 x 112 cm  
Collection of Rodney  
and Barbara Davis, Melbourne



4 *Station X (The disrobing)* 1989  
oil on canvas  
197.8 x 90.9 cm  
Collection of James Mollison, AO, Melbourne



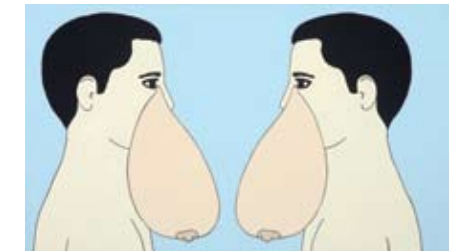
5 *Station XIII (The deposition)* 1989  
oil on canvas  
198 x 137 cm  
Collection of Mark Grant, Melbourne



6 *Station XIV (The entombment)* 1989  
oil on canvas  
197.5 x 152 cm  
Collection of Michael Jan  
and Peter Lovell, Melbourne



7 *Appalling moment E4* 1994  
oil on canvas  
136.7 x 106.2 cm  
The John McBride Collection



8 *I weep my mother's breasts* 1996  
oil on canvas  
57 x 96.7 cm  
Collection of the artist



9 *Just a feeling #1* 1996  
oil on canvas  
106.5 x 85.2 cm  
Private collection,  
Melbourne



10 *Just a feeling #2* 1996  
oil on canvas  
106.5 x 85.2 cm  
Monash University  
Collection,  
Melbourne, Monash  
University Museum  
of Art



11 *Just a feeling #3* 1996  
oil on canvas  
106.5 x 85.2 cm  
Private collection,  
Sydney



12 *Just a feeling #4* 1996  
oil on canvas  
106.5 x 85.2 cm  
Monash University  
Collection,  
Melbourne, Monash  
University Museum  
of Art



13 *Just a feeling #5* 1996  
oil on canvas  
106.5 x 85.2 cm  
Private collection,  
Perth



14 *Just a feeling #6* 1996  
oil on canvas  
106.5 x 85.2 cm  
Monash University  
Collection,  
Melbourne, Monash  
University Museum  
of Art



15 *On becoming (yellow no. 1)* 1996  
oil on canvas  
162.5 x 244 cm  
Collection of Mark Grant, Melbourne



16 *The untimely (nos 1 and 2)* 1997  
oil on canvas  
diptych, each part: 213 x 173 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne



17 *Spruce* 1998  
oil on canvas  
180 x 300 cm  
Collection of Athol Hawke  
and Eric Harding, Melbourne



18 *Swamp no. 1* 1999  
oil on canvas  
274 x 140 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne



19 *Swamp grey* 1999  
oil on canvas  
214.7 x 182.7 cm  
The John McBride Collection



20 *Swamp no. 7 lavender* 2000  
oil on canvas  
274 x 140 cm  
Collection of James Mollison, AO, Melbourne



21 *Grotesquerie (no. 1)* 2001  
oil on canvas  
274 x 120 cm  
Private collection, Sydney



22 *Grotesquerie (no. 14)* 2002  
oil on canvas  
244 x 105 cm  
Collection of Jennifer and  
Greg Goodman, Melbourne



23 *Grotesquerie (mock horror)* 2002  
oil on canvas  
244 x 105 cm  
Collection of Jennifer and  
Greg Goodman, Melbourne



24 *Grotesquerie (le regarder)* 2002  
oil on canvas  
191 x 183 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne



25 *The face* 2004  
oil on canvas  
244 x 136 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne



26 *He washed away my sins* 2004  
oil on canvas  
120 x 89 cm  
Collection of Robin Greer, Brisbane



27 *Mary no. 1* 2005  
oil on canvas  
120 x 89 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne



28 *Plato's cave (painting no. 6)* 2005  
oil on canvas  
244 x 163 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne



29 *Plato's cave (painting no. 8)* 2005  
oil on canvas  
244 x 183 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne;  
courtesy Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne



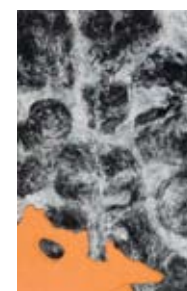
30 *Buddha #1* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling, flocking and silver  
leaf on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 132.1 cm  
Courtesy Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



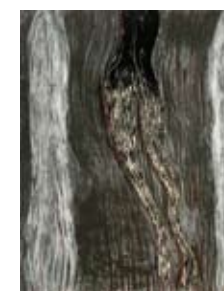
31 *Buddha #2* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling, flocking and silver  
leaf on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 132.1 cm  
Courtesy Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



32 *Buddha energy* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 132.1 cm  
Courtesy Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



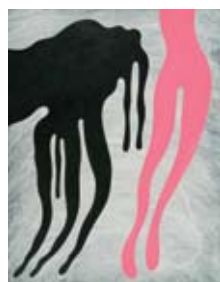
39 *Origin* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling on paper  
unique state  
130.8 x 84.5 cm  
Collection of the artist



40 *Quiver* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling, flocking and collage  
on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 132.7 cm  
Collection of the artist



41 *Shadow* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling and flocking  
on paper  
unique state  
170.2 x 133.4 cm  
Collection of the artist



33 *The cave* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling on paper  
unique state  
168.3 x 130.8 cm  
The John McBride Collection



34 *Different #1* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling and flocking on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 132.1 cm  
Courtesy Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



35 *Garden #1* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 132.1 cm  
Courtesy Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



42 *Standing figure #1* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling on paper  
unique state  
168.3 x 65.4 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne



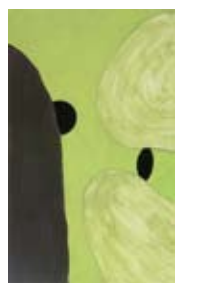
43 *Standing figure #3* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 65.4 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne



44 *Standing figure #6* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 65.4 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne



36 *Garden #2* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling and flocking on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 132.1 cm  
Courtesy Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



37 *Grain* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling and flocking on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 100.3 cm  
Courtesy Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



38 *Mirror #2* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling, flocking and silver  
leaf on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 129.5 cm  
Courtesy Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



45 *Suddenly #4* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 65.4 cm  
Collection of Athol Hawke  
and Eric Harding, Melbourne



46 *Suddenly #5* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 65.4 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne



47 *Who* 2005  
hand-coloured pressed paper pulp  
with stencilling and flocking on paper  
unique state  
167.6 x 101.6 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne

# Biography and bibliography

## Brent Harris

Born Palmerston North, New Zealand, 1956  
Arrived Australia 1981  
Lives Melbourne

## Studies

### 1982–84

Bachelor of Fine Art, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne

### 1981

Diploma of Art and Design, Footscray College of TAFE, Melbourne

## Selected solo exhibitions

### 2005

*Singapore print and paper pulp works*, Singapore Tyler Print Institute  
*Plato's cave*, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne

### 2004

*The face*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

### 2003

*Sleep: twenty small paintings*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

### 2002

*Grotesquerie*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney  
*Grotesquerie*, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne

### 2001

*Prints 1988–2001*, Ben Grady Gallery, Canberra  
*Swamp*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

### 2000

*Prints 1989–2000*, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne

### 1999

*Swamp*, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne  
*The untimely*, Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney

### 1998

*'To the forest' and 'Drift', a set of 10 intaglio prints*,  
Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney

### 1997

*The untimely*, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne

### 1996

Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney  
*That uncertain feeling*, Contemporary Art Centre  
of South Australia, Adelaide

### 1995

Karyn Lovegrove Gallery, Melbourne  
Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney

### 1993

Karyn Lovegrove Gallery, Melbourne

### 1992

Karyn Lovegrove Gallery, Melbourne

### 1989

*The Stations*, 13 Verity Street, Melbourne

### 1988

13 Verity Street, Melbourne

## Selected group exhibitions

### 2005

*Extra-aesthetic: 25 views of the Monash University Collection*,  
Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne  
*Drawn from the collection*, NGV International, Melbourne

### 2004

*HANGA: selected artists from the Nagasawa Art Park residency*, Devonport  
Regional Gallery, Tasmania  
*Making portraits: five years of National Portrait Gallery commissions*, National  
Portrait Gallery, Canberra

### 2003

*Orifice*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne

### 2002

*Archibald prize*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; tour of regional New  
South Wales; and George Adams Gallery, Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne  
*Fieldwork: Australian art 1968–2002*, the Ian Potter Centre:  
NGV Australia, Melbourne

*It's a beautiful day: new painting in Australia: 2*, the Ian Potter Museum of Art,  
the University of Melbourne, and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

### 2001

*Art on paper*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney  
*Low-down: recent acquisitions, Monash University Collection*, Monash University  
Gallery, Melbourne  
*Painting: an arcane technology*, the Ian Potter Museum of Art,  
the University of Melbourne  
*A studio in Paris: Australian artists at the Cité Internationale des Arts, 1967–2000*,  
SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney

### 2000

*The Chartwell Collection: recent acquisitions*, Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand  
*Sensational painting*, Holmes à Court Gallery, Perth  
*Spitting and biting: ten contemporary artists and the print*,  
Monash University Gallery, Melbourne  
*Workings of the mind: Melbourne printing 1960–2000*,  
Queensland University of Technology Art Museum, Brisbane, and tour

### 1999

*Woodblock prints from Nagasawa AIR Program*, Sanko Gallery, Kobe, Japan

### 1998

*Private parts*, Monash University Gallery, Melbourne  
*Sets and series*, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne

### 1997

*Geometric painting in Australia 1941–1997*, University Art Museum,  
University of Queensland, Brisbane  
*Queer crossing*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts,  
the University of New South Wales, Sydney

### 1996

*Drawn from life*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
*Other islands, art of the Pacific Rim*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

### 1993

*The black show*, Geelong Gallery, Victoria, and tour  
*Contemporary Australian painting: the Allen, Allen and Hemsley Collection*,  
Westpac Gallery, Melbourne

### 1992

*Australian pastels*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
*Recent acquisitions*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

*Rules for drawing*, Mori Gallery, Sydney

*Stations of the Cross, patronage and the visual arts:*

*Rod Milgate and Brent Harris*, Noosa Regional Gallery, Queensland

*You are here*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, and tour

**1991**

*Exposition*, Art Dock Noumea, New Caledonia

*John McCaughey memorial art prize*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

*Loaded*, 13 Verity Street, Melbourne

*Möet & Chandon Australian Art Foundation touring exhibition*,

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and tour

*New art: contemporary Australian art acquisitions*,

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

*Painting + perception*, Mori Gallery, Sydney

*Recent acquisitions*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

*Room for abstraction*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, Melbourne

*The 2nd Tokyo art expo 1991*, Tokyo International Trade Centre

*The sublime imperative*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art,

Melbourne

**1989**

*Australian perspecta 1989*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

*ICI Contemporary Art Collection exhibition*, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery,

Victoria, and Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne

*Möet & Chandon Australian Art Foundation touring exhibition*,

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, and tour

*Re: creation/re-creation: the art of copying 19th & 20th centuries*,

Monash University Gallery, Melbourne

**1988**

*A new generation 1983–1988, the Philip Morris arts grant purchases*,

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

*Studio artists*, 200 Gertrude Street inc. Gertrude Street Artists' Spaces,

Melbourne

**1987**

*Keith and Elisabeth Murdoch travelling fellowship exhibition*,

Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne

**1985**

*Three new painters*, 70 Arden Street, Melbourne

## Grants and residencies

**2004**

Residency, Singapore Tyler Print Institute

**1999**

Residency, Nagasawa Art Park, Japan

**1997**

Grant, Visual Arts/Craft Board of the Australia Council

**1993–94**

Residency, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (Visual Arts/Craft Board of the Australia Council and Power Institute, the University of Sydney)

**1988**

Grant, Visual Arts/Craft Board of the Australia Council

**1987–89**

Residency, 200 Gertrude Street inc. Gertrude Street Artists' Spaces, Melbourne

## Selected collections

Artbank Collection

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth

Chartwell Collection, Auckland

IBM Australia, Melbourne

The John McBride Collection

Monash University Collection, Melbourne

Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

Queensland University of Technology Art Collection, Brisbane

RACV Art Collection, Melbourne

Sussan Corporation Collection, Melbourne

TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection, Yarra Glen, Victoria

Te Manawa (formerly Manuwatu Art Gallery), Palmerston North,

New Zealand

## Bibliography

### Books

Colless, Edward, 'Blue funk: Brent Harris', *The error of my ways*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 1995.

Drury, Neville (ed.), *New art three: profiles in contemporary*

*Australian art*, Craftsman House, Roseville, NSW, 1989.

Grant, Kirsty & Cathy Leahy, *On paper: Australian prints and drawings*

*in the National Gallery of Victoria*, National Gallery of Victoria,

Melbourne, 2003.

Stanhope, Zara, 'Brent Harris', in Jenepher Duncan

& Linda Michael (eds), *Monash University Collection:*

*four decades of collecting*, Monash University Museum of Art,

Clayton, Vic., 2002.

### Exhibition catalogues

Colless, Edward, *Brent Harris: That uncertain feeling*,

Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide, 1996.

Gates, Merryn, *Re: creation/re-creation:*

*the art of copying 19th & 20th centuries*,

Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Vic., 1989.

Grant, Kirsty, 'Swamp (no. 2)', in Lisa Prager, Margaret Trudgeon

& Dianne Waite (eds), *Fieldwork, Australian art 1968–2002*,

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Kadota, Keiko, Jane Stewart et al., *Hanga: selected artists from the*

*Nagasawa Art Park residency*, Devonport Regional Gallery, Tas., 2004.

Lindsay, Frances, *Möet & Chandon Australian Art Foundation touring*

*exhibition*, Möet & Chandon Australian Art Foundation, Sydney, 1991.

Miller, Steven, *Brent Harris: The face*,

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004.

Mollison, James, *Brent Harris: Singapore print and paper pulp works*, eds

Matin Tran & Laura A Taylor, Singapore Tyler Print Institute, 2005.

Moore, Ross, *Brent Harris: The untimely*, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, 1997.

Roberts, Luke & Scott Redford, *You are here*, Institute of Modern Art,

Brisbane, & Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney, 1992.

Starr, Bala, *It's a beautiful day: new painting in Australia: 2*,

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2002.

Timms, Peter, *The black show*, Geelong Gallery, Vic., 1993.

Trouson, Alan, in Max Delany & Kirrily Hammond (eds),

*Extra-aesthetic: 25 views of the Monash University Collection*,

Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Vic., 2005.

Wardell, Michael, 'Brent Harris', *Australian perspecta 1989*,

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1989.

Yamamoto, Susumo, *The 2nd Tokyo art expo 1991*,

Japan Art Publishing Co. Ltd, Tokyo, 1991.

Zagala, Maria, *Drawn from the collection*,

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2005.

### Journal, magazine and newspaper articles and reviews

'Artist profile', *Artbank*, no. 4, 2000.

Colless, Edward, 'Australian perspecta 1989', *Eyeline*, no. 10, 1989.

Crawford, Ashley, 'Brent Harris: between quotation and homage',

*Tension*, no. 15, 1988.

Dodge, Alan R, 'Brent Harris: The Stations', *Tension*, no. 18, 1989.

Dodge, Alan R, 'Brent Harris: consistency and contradiction',

*Art & Australia*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1994.

Hill, Peter, 'The wagers of sin', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 2004.

McAuliffe, Chris, 'The blank generation? Monochrome in the eighties

and beyond', *Art + Text*, no. 44, 1993.

McDonald, Ewen, 'Sydney', *Contemporanea*, New York, vol. II, no. 5, 1989.

Mollison, James, 'Brent Harris: "Bubbles", "Just a feeling", "Sleep"',

*Art & Australia*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2004.

Nicholson, Tom, 'On becoming figurative: the art of Brent Harris',

*Broadsheet*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1996.

Nicholson, Tom, 'Brent Harris', *Artext*, no. 68, 2000.

Rooney, Robert, 'Sold on an iconic tone of success',

*The Australian*, 16–17 September 1989.

Brent Harris is represented by  
Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne;  
Kaliman Gallery, Sydney; and  
Lister Calder Gallery, Perth



**Just a feeling: Brent Harris, selected works 1987–2005**

Published by the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne, on the occasion of the exhibition *Just a feeling: Brent Harris, selected works 1987–2005*, 11 February to 7 May 2006

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