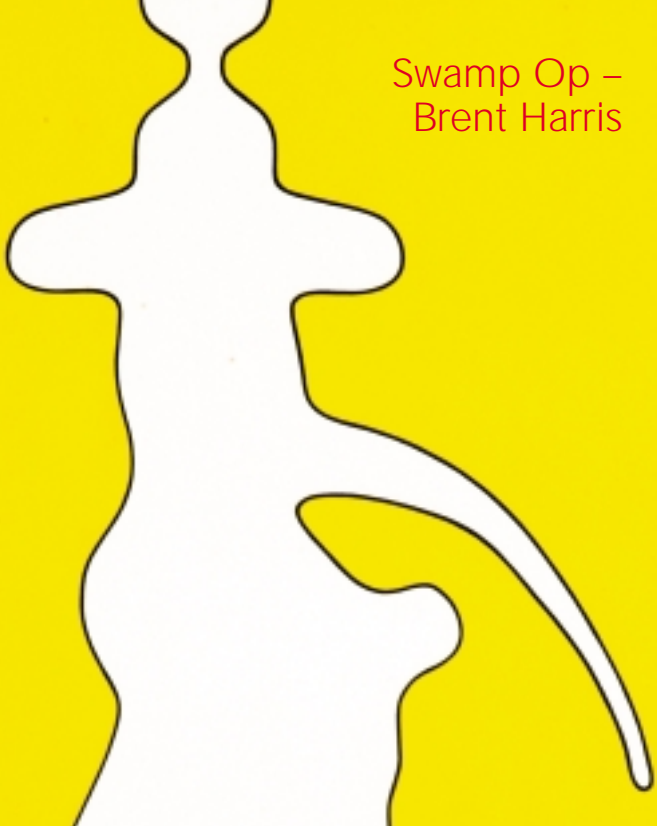


Swamp Op –  
Brent Harris





*Troubled, 1995*

## Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to present this State's first major exhibition of the art work of Brent Harris in a public institution. Currently based in Melbourne, Brent is one of the country's leading visual artists. An artist of supreme technical skill and imaginative vision, his prints, paintings and drawings displayed in 'Swamp Op - Brent Harris' use minimal forms to articulate the complex feelings and fears that animate us all.

I am proud that the State Art Collection features many works by Brent. These include significant purchases as well as valuable gifts from John McBride, Mark Grant, Jo Lagerberg and Sir James and Lady Sheila Cruthers. Our partnerships with donors such as these are vital to develop the depth and breadth of the State's leading art collection. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank them, as well as all other Gallery donors. Additionally, I would like to thank the generosity of lenders to this show.

Jan Minchin, Roshana Calder and Vasili Kaliman have provided invaluable assistance with loans and advice and we appreciate their help considerably. I'd also like to acknowledge initial discussions about this project with Dr Chris McAuliffe, Director, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, and Bala Starr, Curator, Ian Potter Museum of Art.

For me, Brent Harris's work grew in meaning as a process of discovery over the last 15 years or so. I'm indebted to Robert Cook who, as a result of his growing engagement with the artist's work, brought fresh insights to the theme of the exhibition and provided a unique perspective in his essay on Brent's work.

Most of all, I wish to acknowledge the key role played by the artist himself. At every stage Brent has generously offered comment, assistance and advice. He has been a delight and an inspiration to work with.

Alan R. Dodge  
*Director*



## Swamp Op – Brent Harris

'Swamp Op' combines evenly pitched opposites. First, we have the swamp – southern, gothic, organic, deathly, carrying a threatening undertow in its linguistic hammer-down...from the S to the p...that fades out like the memory of John Fogarty's bayou Telecaster thrum. And then there's Pop without the P – Op: crisp, clean-cut, full of a jittery 1960s Carnaby Street surface vibration that still fizzes back at us today. Pulling these poles into their 'Swamp Op' unity is the work of Brent Harris, an artist whose obliquely figurative prints, paintings and drawings spin around an endless mutation of forms that give pictorial voice to the layers of personal, sexual, existential and biological trauma we experience as humans. All of which unfolds within a keen awareness of the inevitable point of death which awaits us.

We see this expressed quite clearly in the earliest works in the show – *The stations* (1989), a series of 14 aquatints composed of opposing light and dark masses. Inspired by a mix of Barnett Newman, Colin McCahon, Rubens and Rembrandt – a group that says much about Harris's range of inspirations – the series also signals his shift from the earlier influence of Australia's Peter Booth and pre-drip Jackson Pollock.

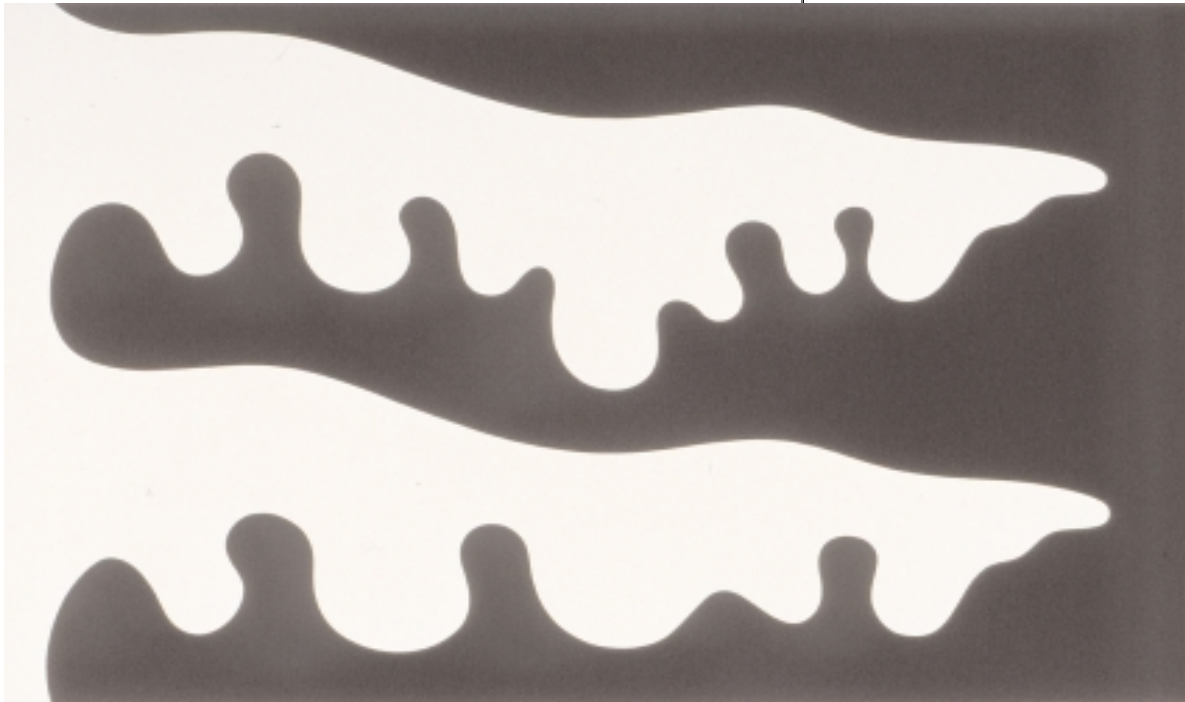
Ostensibly, this was a move from thickly-rendered surfaces to the more flatly constructed and executed approach that defines much of his practice today. It is interesting that this formal change occurred within a narrative about transformation as *The stations* quietly reveal the slo-mo passage to and from the horror of the crucifixion. And they do so in such a way as to elevate the optical flicker between positive and negative space to a matter of life and death and whatever lies beyond: the eye's movement between these masses mirrors the fragile line between life and death. Quite simply, therefore, they are about the transmutation of the organic and, as such, capture the broader spirit of pained metamorphosis (tinged with death, hope, renewal, anguish) that is at the heart of Harris's work.

In *The house of Blinky Palermo* (1992) this transcendent reaching is equally present. Painted during a period when Harris was caring for a friend who eventually died from AIDS, it hints (with similarly elegiac



*Swamp (Appalling moment)*, 2000





overtones) at a journey towards death. Both *The house of Blinky Palermo* and *The stations* are memorials for absent figures and those who may soon be.<sup>1</sup> It is possible to say that as these works move in and out of positive and negative space, Harris is positioning the human element, tenuously, in this 'gap'. As the eye moves between these two fields we too metaphorically emerge into, and then disappear from, existence: 'Dust the look from another's eyes. / And you have an empty head. / Into it has flown the whole first night after your death!'<sup>2</sup> An optical shimmer, and we're gone.

Harris's strategy here has a foundation in the work of artists such as Caspar David Friedrich whose paintings are often set at the tipping point between night and day, and thereby, life and death, this world and another. Harris's approach can also be located around the outer orbit of the poetry of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, most especially the poem *Crossing the Bar*. Tennyson wrote: 'For though from out our bourn of Time and Place / The flood may bear me far, / I hope to see my Pilot face to face / When I have crost the bar.'<sup>3</sup> While notably distinct from such precursors, Harris's approach to mortality is clearly rooted in rich cultural legacies that amplify and lock in his works' emotional and intellectual resonance for us.

His *To the forest* works of 1997-9 have equally informed reference points, these being inspired by the Edvard Munch print *Towards the forest II* (1915).<sup>4</sup> In the Munch print there is the beginning of a cascade of drips from the sky, which articulates forest trees that two huddled figures face, their backs to us. This sky directly inspired Harris's black and white *To the forest* painting (1998) and the *To the forest* screen print (1999). The other, orange, *To the forest* works shown in this exhibition are based on another Munch source – a photo of Edvard in a snowed-in garden. Behind his figure in the photo are masses of snow on trees that suggested to Harris various figures. In subsequent paintings they are depicted in an embrace that refers back to the relationship between the figures in the *Towards the forest II* print. For Harris, their physical connection represents a movement into the unknown with support from another.



*To the forest no. 1, 1998*



*To the forest no. 5, 1998*



*To the forest no. 2, 1998*

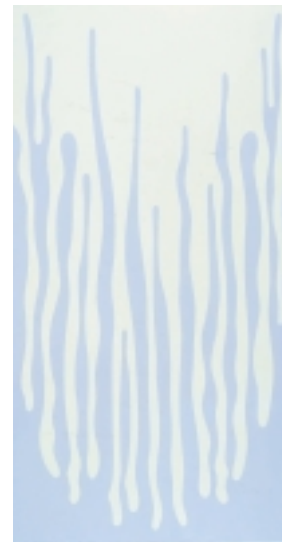


In his *To the forest* paintings and drawings this unknown domain may be within the figures themselves. Cast against an orange background, they are soft, infantile, larval. As such, they hint – in line with Harris's leitmotif – at transformation. He has taken an element of Munch – with additional, subtler, references to the sculpture of Jean Arp – and evolved something else entirely, just as he has with his other inspirations. The result is typical in his oeuvre, as Harris's active, creative and well-informed relationship to history mirrors the continual mutation of the forms that inhabit his images.

The *Swamp* (1999–2001) series of seventeen paintings and eight prints also emerge from the Munch work. In them, the drips at the top of the Munch print turn into fully formed tendrils reaching up from the depths and blobby human limbs seeping down. Entirely constructed from the positive and negative space tussle apparent in *The stations* and *The house of Blinky Palermo*, they play the old rabbit/duck game for our eyeballs. There is something fine and weird about this, always unsettling, no matter how resolved the final picture. As our perception of figure and ground shifts back and forth, the edge between these zones is increasingly, unutterably vital, just as it was in the previous works.

The *Swamps* have a definite bodily imperative, though: we feel our way into them as if our own bodies are twisting and writhing in torsion with them. This feeling is encouraged by the many subtle and overt allusions to the human body in the series. The print *Swamp no. 2*, for instance, 'depicts' a woman bent forward, her hair a huge mass, that later turns up in *Untitled triptych* (2004). *Swamp no. 3*, in distinction, sports wonky limbs and bulbous, Grimm Brothers knees. As we continue to take Harris's Rorschach test we find that, in others, contorted faces and other motifs emerge. In the process, we come to see that his *Swamp* is in speed evolution mode, turning its watery substances into physical formations: the *Swamps* catch the first, transforming, drip of the Darwinian moment.

The *Untimely* series of 1997 is, in contradistinction, more about the face, the eye, the look than the body itself. As the title suggests, the







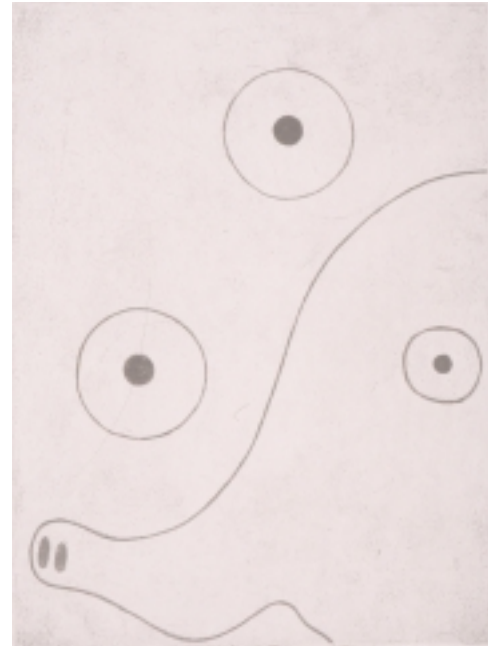


*Study for Painting spot  
(Here we give thanks to Kelley), 1993*

works cultivate a timeless zone, a non-zone where progress and linear maturation are out of the question. In this empty theatre we spy faces and noses and eye sockets and mouths. These images of facial composites exist like 'part objects' – objects fetishised and made to stand in for the whole of a body – points of connection and disconnection. Often caught in mid-twist they refer to the distorted intimacies of early childhood when everything is both over-large and over-close. The vision is intense, erotic, ridiculous, capturing our distended groping as we made out the ways our bodies connected with others: our eyes did not operate in renaissance perspective but according to more urgent, less orderly lines. In Harris's arena, though, this way of looking remains with us today, sitting underneath all we do, all the engagements we have. In psychoanalytic parlance, the primal drives are here to stay, and they are what complicate our existence, preventing us becoming wholly rational men and women.

This is also articulated in works such as *Study for Painting spot (here we give thanks to Kelley)* (1993) <sup>1</sup> and *Troubled (Appalling moment)* (1995). Featuring mouth-like or eye-like holes gaping to be filled, these forms are like babies wanting more, wanting to expand and to be full. In true Harris fashion, they are hungry with the force to expand and turn into something else again entirely. The motif in *Troubled (Appalling moment)* first appeared while Harris was working in a Paris studio in 1994. He produced a charcoal drawing that, to his own surprise, featured an elephant face in profile with a simple eye staring back at him. This more overtly figurative element was a breakthrough, but it was also somewhat embarrassing, in its blatant needy, comical, defencelessness. Resisting erasing it was Harris's artistic 'appalling moment', and in it we see the evolution of his visual depiction of need and demand, of wanting something – love, touch, food...more.

Perhaps our awareness of these factors is heightened because of the way Harris balances figure and ground in his output. Central to this is a particular depthlessness of field and what he calls an 'unmodelled figuration'. The picture plane and the objects within it are flat, shallow. Harris arrived at this type of space via artists as diverse as John Wesley, Henri Matisse and Francis Bacon and the flatness he produces is



*Troubled (Appalling moment), 1995*



*Untimely no. 10, 1998*

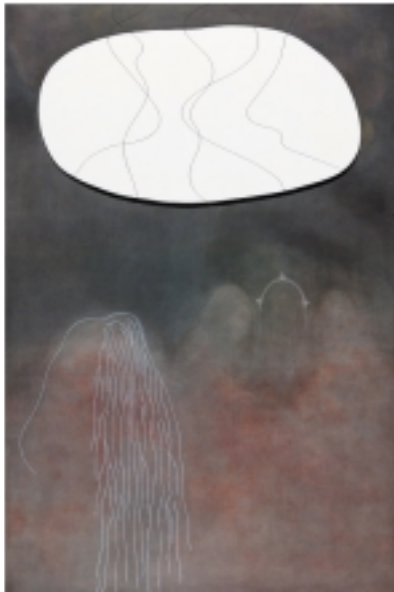


*The Untimely nos. 3 and 7, 1997*

matched by what he dubs 'intellectual, not emotional, colours'. They define a place of pictorial 'capture' that feels very otherworldly. In fact, it often feels like a cartoon space – unreal, abstract, fictitious, airless. After all, both cartoons and Harris's works are energised by the compaction of form and space in a non-specific time zone.

They do have different relations to energy, however. The energy expended in the movement, say, of a *Tom and Jerry* cartoon is caught in, compressed into, a still image in Harris's work. There is something incredibly controlled about this, and it is matched in his process of image production. Harris begins with a doodle and then goes through several pencil studies before laying out the composition on the linen or canvas in a very precise manner that shows (with some exceptions) little shift from the studies. In a kind of paradox, this clinical approach provides a platform for the portrayal and analysis of our most vulnerable states in the world. If they were more expressionistically rendered they would be far less effective. The tension is vital, it holds an atomic force.

Nevertheless, there are occasions when Harris uses space differently, implying a sense of perspective, however ambiguously defined. In the *Drift* (1998) series, for instance, there are tree-like limbs mooching across the page, small birds, faces. These are always almost such things, never specifically so. They are, again, like a groping toward form and they float and cast a kind of glandular haze over the space, a space where an unbearable loneliness prevails. They are perhaps the traces, the tea leaves, of the more tightly configured images. It is this type of space that Harris revisits in the large *Untitled triptych* (2004), the work depicting a deep, dark chasm. It features what Harris describes as the 'weeping hair of Mary', a reference back to *Swamp no. 2*, as her hair combines with watery tears. She looks flayed, gutted and hung and hollow, as well as transparently ethereal. The fluid flow-out of her defined corporeal borders activates the space around her. This is very different from the previous works, where the blobs morph and move in a *Play-Doh*-like fashion: they focus on the borders between forms, while these paintings start to undo them. Harris's forms here are seeping back into the swamp. Devolution is under way.



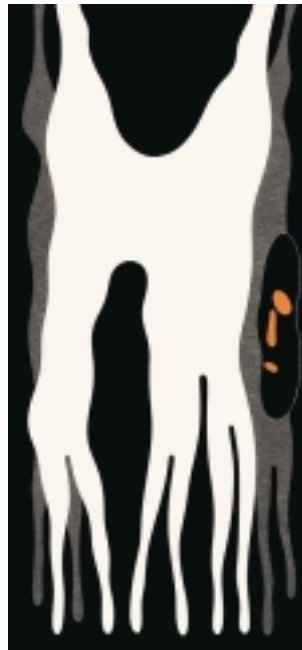


*I weep my mother's breasts*, 1996  
oil on canvas  
57 x 97.6 cm  
Collection of the artist  
(not in exhibition)

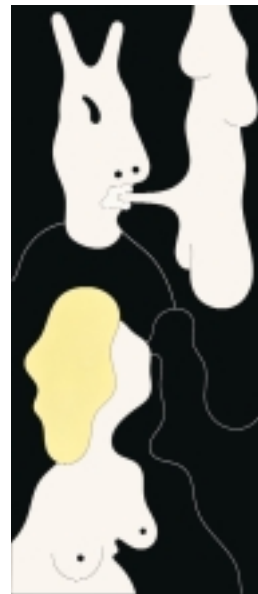
In all of Harris's work, therefore, form and content are absolutely inseparable. What the images 'tell' us is integral to the mode of their telling. For the most part this has been defiantly, deftly and teasingly ambiguous. However some, such as the *Grotesquerie* series of 2001–2002, have a more precise narrative thrust. The *Grotesqueries* refer back to Harris's recollection of various family horrors, memories of sexual development, and associated trauma. In this way, they hover around the scene of differentiation from our parents, and the plastic openness we had during the time when our identities were still being moulded. The interplay throughout is between the mother and father and the fraught relationship of the children with these two larger figures. Blood drips, at times, like the ooze of the *Swamp* paintings. Penises are cocked. Throats are slit. Tears are shed. Breasts, protuberances and sucked. And so now, the mutations and form-shifts that Harris was dealing with in previous work relate a tale about the crushing experience of disturbed family dynamics.

Following this, it's possible to see the *Grotesqueries* as being born from a version of the Oedipal story – anger against the father who oversteps his bounds, separates the child from the mother, ruling her out of bounds and incapable of relating to the siblings. Harris articulated such a scenario quite specifically in a short text he wrote in support of another painting called *I weep my mother's breasts* (1996). Inspired by John Wesley's painting *Jack Frost* (1990), the title is perfectly literal – it depicts Harris mirrored, with both figures weeping pink glands. Harris writes about its genesis: 'I was about eight, and we were driving home from a day at a local beach. I was in the front on my mother's lap, exhausted, very happily snuggled into her breast. The next thing I knew I was being violently ripped away from this comfort and dragged into the middle of the bench seat, my father bellowing at my mother, 'Isn't he too old for that?' This was the first time my mother's body had been denied to me and I remember being quite confused. I remember from this point on my mother's affection was slightly distanced.'<sup>6</sup>

In Harris's account, connection to the realm of the maternal is broken by the father. For many of the psychoanalytic persuasion, this marks



*Grotesquerie (The graces)*, 2002



*Grotesquerie no. 5*, 2001



*Grotesquerie no. 9, 2002*

the beginning of socialisation outside the domain of the feminine. Feminist commentators such as Luce Irigaray, however, have put this idea through rigorous critique and Harris does so equally, though less argumentatively. The distinction from the mother is little more than an arbitrary division based on male jealousy and the need for power. With some risk of psychologising, this split might be seen to form much of the basis for Harris's works in general. The separation of forms, their collision, their unification, their mutation has, at base, a will to connect on a level over and above that of the macho horror of the patriarchal system. It is a getting back to basics in a way, to a more primal form of being that still has the possibility of other modes of connection, be they sexual or simply friendly. It is not in any way romantic however. The bleak impersonal context of Darwinian evolution that shadows his work rules that out.

As this suggests, the strength of Harris's work is not to be found in a dutiful decoding of underlying stories, but in the way they mask and hint at them while producing a set of emotional correspondences between our own, possibly, unknown, unnamed experiences. His work hovers between our actual sensory encounter with them, and our memories of childhood, sexual encounters, and other trauma and fear – the stuff of our humanity. So if they are optic puzzles, they are ones with depth charges, and it is their ambiguity that establishes the impact. They buffet us in weird and unlikely ways, inside tightly controlled, stylised spaces that are in continual motion...just like our responses to them. Who knows, maybe 'Swamp Op – Brent Harris' is really a series of dreams we might not have known we've been having. And maybe too, seeing the work here re-connects us with some other side of ourselves we're all too used to not thinking about. In setting up this exchange Harris is reminding us that, while we might *think* we've evolved out of the swamp, we never have. And we never will.

Robert Cook  
*Associate Curator of Contemporary Art*



## Notes

- 1 The abstract artist Blinky Palermo (originally Peter Schwarze) was born in 1943 in Leipzig and died in mysterious circumstances while travelling in the Maldives in 1977. The composition of *The house of Blinky Palermo* is based on a house shape that appears in one of Palermo's paintings.
- 2 M.T.C. Cronin: 'The dust in everything', *Meanjin*, vol. 63, no. 4, 2004 (*Meanjin: on psychology*), p. 26.
- 3 Alfred, Lord Tennyson: 'Crossing the bar' (1889) in Helen Gardner (ed.): *The New Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1950*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 615.
- 4 This Munch work is owned by the National Gallery of Victoria. Harris has known it for over two decades.
- 5 The Kelley referred to in the title is Mike Kelley. Kelley is an important American artist working across drawing, installation and performance whose work focuses on sexuality, cultural hubris and power and abjection. Harris's work here refers to one of the knitted dolls that featured in Kelley's series of eight photos titled *Ahh... Youth!* (1991). These Kelley works reached pop cultural prominence after one appeared on the cover of Sonic Youth's 1992 album *Dirty*. The title of Harris's work also references Colin McCahon's painting *Here I give thanks to Mondrian* (1961).
- 6 Brent Harris: 'I weep my mother's breasts': unpublished, unpaginated text, 2005.

## Biography

Born 1956, Palmerston North, New Zealand. Arrived in Australia, 1981. Lives and works in Melbourne, Victoria.

### 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 'Brent Harris: Singapore Prints and Paper Pulp Works', Singapore, STPI  
 'Plato's Cave', Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne  
 2004 'Brent Harris: 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

- 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  
 'Orifice', Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne  
 2002 'Fieldwork: Australian Art 1968 – 2002', National Gallery of Victoria, Federation Square, Melbourne  
 'Archibald prize', Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; tour of regional New South Wales; and George Adams Gallery, Victorian Arts Centre, 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 'A studio in Paris: Australian artists at the Cité Internationale des Arts, 1967–2000', SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney  
 '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, University of Melbourne  
 2000 'Spitting and Biting: ten contemporary artists and the print', Monash University Gallery, Melbourne  
 'The Chartwell Collection: Recent Acquisitions', Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand  
 'Workings of the mind: Melbourne printing 1960–2000', Queensland University of Technology Art Museum, Brisbane, and tour  
 1999 'Woodblock prints from Nagasawa AIR Program', 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
- 1996 'Queer Crossing', Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney
- '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
- '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
- 1991 'Exposition', Art Dock Noumea, New Caledonia
- 'John McCaughey memorial art prize', National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 'Loaded', 13 Verity Street, Melbourne
- 'Moët & 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', 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
- 'Moët & 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 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
- Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
- Chartwell Collection, Auckland
- Jo Lagerfeld and Stephen Swift, Perth
- IBM Australia Collection, Melbourne
- Mark Grant, Melbourne
- John McBride Collection, Sydney
- 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, Brisbane
- RACV Art Collection, Melbourne
- TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection, Yarra Glen, Victoria
- Te Manawa (formerly Manuwatu Art Gallery), Palmerston North, New Zealand

## Bibliography

#### Books

- Edward Colless: 'Blue funk: Brent Harris', *The error of my ways*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 1995.
- Neville Drury (ed.): *New art three: profiles in contemporary Australian art*, Roseville, NSW: Craftsman House, 1989.
- Kirsty Grant & Cathy Leahy: *on paper: Australian prints and drawings in the National Gallery of Victoria*, Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2003.
- Zara Stanhope: 'Brent Harris', in Jenepher Duncan & Linda Michael (eds), *Monash University Collection: four decades of collecting*, Clayton Vic.: Monash University Museum of Art, 2002.

#### Journal, magazine and newspaper articles and reviews

- Edward Colless: 'Australian perspecta 1989', *Eyeline*, no. 10, 1989.
- Ashley Crawford: 'Brent Harris: between quotation and homage', *Tension*, no. 15, 1988.
- Alan R. Dodge: 'Brent Harris: The stations', *Tension*, no. 18, 1989.
- Alan R. Dodge: 'Brent Harris: consistency and contradiction', *Art & Australia*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1994.
- Peter Hill: 'The wagers of sin', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 2004.
- Chris McAuliffe: 'The blank generation? Monochrome in the eighties and beyond', *Art + Text*, no. 44, 1993.
- Ewen McDonald: 'Sydney', *Contemporanea*, New York, vol. II, no. 5, 1989.
- James Mollison: 'Brent Harris: "Bubbles", "Just a feeling", "Sleep"', *Art & Australia*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2004.
- Tom Nicholson: 'On becoming figurative: the art of Brent Harris', *Broadsheet*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1996.
- Tom Nicholson: 'Brent Harris', *Artext*, no. 68, 2000.
- Robert Rooney: 'Sold on an iconic tone of success', *The Australian*, 16–17 September 1989.

#### Exhibition catalogues

- Edward Colless: 'Brent Harris: That Uncertain Feeling', Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide, 1996.
- Meryn Gates: 'Re: creation/Re-creation: the art of copying 19th & 20th Centuries', Clayton, Vic.: Monash University Museum of Art, 1989.
- Kirsty Grant: 'Swamp no. 2', in Lisa Prager, Margaret Trudgeon & Dianne Waite (eds), 'Fieldwork, Australian Art 1968–2002', Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2002.
- Keiko Kadota, Jane Stewart et al.: 'Hanga: selected artists from the Nagasawa Art Park residency', Devonport Regional Gallery, 2004.
- Frances Lindsay: 'Moët & Chandon Australian Art Foundation touring exhibition', Sydney: Moët & Chandon Australian Art Foundation, 1991.
- Steven Miller: 'Brent Harris: The Face', Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2004.
- James Mollison: 'Brent Harris: Singapore Print and Paper Pulp Works', Matin Tran & Laura A. Taylor (eds), Singapore Tyler Print Institute, 2005.
- Ross Moore: 'Brent Harris: The Untimely', Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, 1997.
- Luke Roberts & Scott Redford: 'You are here', Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, & Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney, 1992.
- Bala Starr: 'It's a beautiful day: new painting in Australia: 2', Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2002.
- Peter Timms: 'The black show', Geelong Gallery, 1993.
- Michael Wardell: 'Brent Harris', *Australian perspecta 1989*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney 1989.

## Checklist

measurements are height before width

**Station no. 11 (The crucifixion)**, 1989  
oil and charcoal on canvas  
201.0 x 155.6 cm  
Collection of John McBride, Sydney

**The stations (print portfolio)**, 1989  
14 aquatints on paper  
56.3 x 38.3 cm; 56.3 x 39.9 cm; 56.8 x 38.3 cm;  
56.6 x 37.9 cm; 56.3 x 38.0 cm; 56.3 x 38.3 cm;  
56.3 x 38.3 cm; 56.3 x 38.3 cm; 57.2 x 38.2 cm;  
55.9 x 37.8 cm; 56.9 x 37.8 cm; 56.3 x 38.4 cm;  
56.3 x 37.8 cm; 56.3 x 37.8 cm  
Collection of John McBride, Sydney

**The house of Blinky Palermo**, 1992  
oil on linen  
140.0 x 109.0 cm  
Private collection, Perth

**Study for Painting spot**  
(Here we give thanks to Kelley), 1993  
pencil and conte crayon on paper  
76.5 x 57.0 cm  
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western  
Australia, Gift of Mark Grant, 1998

**Troubled (Appalling moment)**, 1995  
etching and drypoint on paper  
56.4 x 45.0 cm  
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western  
Australia, Gift of Mark Grant, 1998

**Troubled**, 1995  
etching, aquatint and drypoint on paper  
99.0 x 79.3 cm  
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western  
Australia, Gift of Mark Grant, 1998

**On becoming (yellow no. 3)**, 1996  
silkscreen on paper  
121.8 x 77.2 cm  
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western  
Australia, Gift of Mark Grant, 1998

**Study for On becoming (yellow no. 3)**, 1996  
coloured pencil on paper  
91.0 x 62.0 cm  
Private collection, Perth

**Studies for Untimely no. 1**, 1997  
coloured pencil on paper  
27.1 x 21.3 cm  
Collection of the artist

**Studies for Untimely no. 2**, 1997  
coloured pencil on paper  
27.1 x 21.3 cm  
Collection of the artist

**The Untimely nos. 3 and 7**, 1997  
oil on linen (diptych)  
191.0 x 145.0 cm; 191.0 x 152.0 cm  
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western  
Australia, Gift of John McBride, 2003

**Study for To the forest no. 4B**, 1997  
coloured pencil on paper  
20.0 x 15.5 cm  
Private collection, courtesy of  
Lister Calder Gallery, Perth

**Study for To the forest no. 5B**, 1997  
coloured pencil on paper  
20.0 x 15.5 cm  
Private collection, courtesy of  
Lister Calder Gallery, Perth

**Study for To the forest no. 6B**, 1997  
coloured pencil on paper  
20.0 x 15.5 cm  
Private collection, courtesy of  
Lister Calder Gallery, Perth

**Study for To the forest no. 6D**, 1997  
coloured pencil on paper  
20.0 x 15.5 cm  
Private collection, courtesy of  
Lister Calder Gallery, Perth

**Study for To the forest no. 3**, 1997  
coloured pencil on paper  
79.0 x 66.0 cm  
Private collection, Perth

**To the forest no. 1**, 1998  
oil on linen  
151.0 x 121.0 cm  
Collection of Jo Lagerberg and  
Stephen Swift, Perth

**To the forest no. 2**, 1998  
oil on linen  
132.0 x 244.0 cm  
Collection of the artist, courtesy of  
Lister Calder Gallery, Perth

**To the forest no. 5**, 1998  
oil on linen  
151.0 x 121.0 cm  
Collection of Jo Lagerberg and  
Stephen Swift, Perth

**Untimely no. 10**, 1998  
oil on linen  
213.0 x 173.0 cm  
Private collection, Perth, courtesy of  
Lister Calder Gallery, Perth

**Drift (print portfolio)**, 1998  
10 aquatints on paper  
50.0 x 56.0 cm each  
Private collection, Perth

**Swamp (print portfolio)**, 1999–2000  
7 aquatints on paper  
79.0 x 49.0 each  
Private collection, Perth

**Swamp no. 6 (Lavender)**, 2000  
oil on canvas  
277.0 x 143.5 cm  
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of  
Western Australia, Purchased with funds  
from the Contemporary Art Group,  
Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation,  
2000

**Swamp (Appalling moment)**, 2000  
oil on linen  
153.5 x 61.0 cm  
Collection of Jo Lagerberg and  
Stephen Swift, Perth

**Swamp no. 6 (Lavender)**, 2001  
colour screenprint on paper  
176.0 x 95.0 cm  
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of  
Western Australia, Purchased 2002

**Swamp no. 8**, 2001  
colour screenprint on paper  
175.1 x 81.0 cm (sheet)  
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of  
Western Australia, Purchased 2002

**To the forest**, 2001  
screenprint on Arches Satine 300gsm  
176 x 95 cm  
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of  
Western Australia, Gift of Brent Harris, 2002

**Grotesquerie (print portfolio)**, 2002  
7 woodcuts on paper  
33.6 x 14.8 cm; 29.8 x 14.6 cm; 26.7 x 16.5 cm;  
26.5 x 14.5 cm; 29.7 x 12.5 cm; 26.8 x 16.6 cm;  
33.7 x 14.5 cm  
State Art Collection, Art Gallery of  
Western Australia, Gift of John McBride,  
2003

**Grotesquerie no. 5**, 2001  
oil on linen  
244.0 x 107.0 cm  
Private collection, Perth

**Grotesquerie (The graces)**, 2002  
oil on linen  
274.0 x 124.5 cm  
Collection of Jo Lagerberg and  
Stephen Swift, Perth

**Grotesquerie no. 9**, 2002  
oil on linen  
244.0 x 104.5 cm  
Collection of Mark Grant, Melbourne

**Untitled triptych**, 2004  
oil on linen (triptych)  
244.0 x 163.0 cm; 244.0 x 163.0 cm;  
244.0 x 136.0 cm  
Private collection, Sydney, courtesy of  
Kalliman Gallery, Sydney

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Lister Calder Gallery (Perth)

**Robert Cook**

### **Swamp Op – Brent Harris**

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Art Gallery of Western Australia

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