



'That fella he paints like me'

Exploring the relationship between Abstract art and Aboriginal art in Australia

Chapter 1

There is nothing new in the world, or practically nothing; what matters is the variety of new stances that artists adopt from which to contemplate and consider 'so-called' nature and the works that have preceded and interested them. Giorgio Morandi (1962)¹

Background

Painting is a visual expression which can cross cultural boundaries. At its best it can transcend language in the same way as dance and music. Great paintings often have an indescribable aspect; they function within their own language, which can have a myriad of sources. A painting can be simultaneously emotional, spiritual, beautiful and profound. Great poetry can also do this, in its capacity to address multiple imagery within the one context.

Much of my artistic development has occurred on a subconscious level that was not conceived prior to practice. Using intuitive working methods has resulted in a non linear development to my painting that I believe is consistent with traditional approaches to abstract painting.

It is against the backdrop of these beliefs that I present the following thesis.

The text commences with an overview of how and why my interest in the topic developed, as I believe that nothing in life springs from a void. Further into the literature section I put both Abstraction and Aboriginal art² into historic and contemporary context both within Australia and internationally. In the methodology section I elaborate further the multiple sources influencing my practical work,

¹ Borja-Villel, Manuel. (2002). *Joan Hernandez Pijuan*. Barcelona: Museum of Art Contemporary. (Foreword)

² When referring to Aboriginal art I mean any cultural item which is displayed or housed in an art context including rock or environmentally housed art. However, this does not mean that art undiscovered or unacknowledged in the environment is not art. As this is a thesis about painting, later in the literature section I use examples of painting by Aboriginal artists.

including the influence of both Abstraction and Aboriginal art. I conclude with some reflections on Abstraction and Aboriginal art including the common ground shared and implications for the future.

Most of the ideas expressed in this text are my own. I have cited certain literary references where appropriate, and have chosen selected images to support my ideas. These images are from various sources which are also acknowledged.

Introduction

As a person who has loved the business of painting for as long as I can remember, my life and thoughts have evolved to where I am today travelling with that constant love. As a child at Westgarth Primary School, I was encouraged by my art teacher to pursue my love of Abstraction. I was aware at the time that this was unusual and my art teacher would travel around the other classes showing students what I was doing. That was the 1960s and Abstraction, as well as my teacher, was 'hot'. Later, as an adult, I realised that the artist I based these paintings on, was Bridget Riley. I was ten at the time.

My old school is in the Jika Jika district, and in the 1960s this area was a strong population base for the Aboriginal community. As such we had Aboriginal students in our classes and a commitment from staff to introduce us to both Aboriginal culture, through dreamtime stories, and Aboriginal art. From as long as I can remember I have always loved both Aboriginal art and Abstraction. Much later, at art school, when deciding which road to take as an artist, my interest had not changed. I focused on Abstraction and wrote my postgraduate paper on Antoni Tapies who I have held, and still hold, in the highest regard. As I began researching Abstraction on a more serious level, two things emerged for me as almost universal in their consistency to Abstract artists. One, the work is nearly always sourced from 'place' (mostly landscape), and two, many artists looked at 'primitive' art as a source of inspiration³.

³ Pollock and Picasso both acknowledge the influence of 'primitive' art in the development of their work. Please refer to the literature section of this thesis for more information.

My maternal family influence as a child growing up in an extended family of grandparents and an uncle, was one of creativity and a deep respect for nature. Whilst completing my undergraduate degree at RMIT, I was fortunate to have a good friend who also wanted to explore Australia. She was an indigenous person and of the 'stolen generation'⁴. Together, we set out to discover Australia. Her need to understand the country and her culture was profound and had a direct influence on the way I began to see Australia. As we travelled around, it became increasingly obvious to me that the landscape was littered with traces of Aboriginal archaeology. However, even more intriguing for me, was the witnessing of the sources of Aboriginal art. Whether it was stone flints found in tree hollows, or lichen growing on saplings in bands that immediately reminded me of burial posts, the experience could not be ignored.

My friend's search for her identity made me look at my own background. My father's family was, and still is, a mystery to me to some extent. I have spent large parts of my life estranged from this family. When I did have contact with them as a child, I thought my paternal grandmother looked like Tina Turner (figure 3). I later found out her two half sisters are part Polynesian. I quizzed her and her sisters about their heritage and was met with stony silence. They are from Ballarat and there are also rumours of Chinese ancestry, but I have been unable to substantiate this to date. Nonetheless I often thought my grandmother was of mixed race, but she would never divulge anything. When I repeatedly asked her, her response was always the same; 'I'm not saying nothing', which could hardly be mistaken for a denial.

My paternal grandparents, who had been living independent lives for many years, died two days apart during Easter in 2000. Several weeks later I began researching my father's family via genealogy. At 42 I found out my name is not my name. My great grandmother, Mary Brooks, adopted it. There is no record of any marriage, and her five children's birth certificates, including that of my paternal grandfather Leo, all state 'father unknown'. The secrecy and myths that surround 'the so called' Mr Brooks includes the notion of 'protecting the descendants from the shame of having a part Aboriginal father'. My family have lived in Carlton since the 1880s, and in 1916,

⁴ The Stolen Generation' is a colloquial term for a government policy of the mid 20th century of removing mixed race children from their indigenous parents.

when my grandfather was born, being of Aboriginal descent was something many people would want to hide. This uncertainty of my heritage and my earlier life experiences with Aboriginal people have left a constant linking and reflection on Aboriginal art and culture.

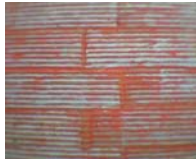


Figure 3: Olive Brooks, my grandmother (right) with Aunty Maisie, photographer unknown, date unknown.

When I had my first solo exhibition at Melbourne Contemporary Art Gallery in 1991, I included the following quote on the invitation:

This is my country, I do not feel that home is some place else. I have always had a longing for a sense of place and a historical link. When I go to the bush I find evidence of other people's existence in the land and it moves me. I can't ignore it.

After the exhibition some people in the art world including an influential critic made noises about this subject being inappropriate. It was so strong that I began to question myself and buried my interest to some extent. However as I continued to study art, and particularly Australian art, I could not help running into the same dilemma; the apparently obvious relationship between Aboriginal and Abstract art.



Aboriginal art and Abstraction in context

Chapter 2

Since 1996 I have been exhibiting at *Flinders Lane Gallery*, a leading Melbourne gallery showing both contemporary and Aboriginal artists. Through that relationship I have had ongoing access to some of the best Aboriginal art in the country and have been able to observe, first hand, the development of this work.

My area of speciality within the field of painting is Abstraction and I have long admired the work of Tony Tuckson and Ian Fairweather who are to me the `master' Abstract artists in Australian history to date. Interestingly both artists also had direct contact with Aboriginal culture. According to Daniel Thomas' monograph on Tony Tuckson,⁵ Tuckson was associate director of the Art Gallery of NSW and during his time there travelled Australia collecting some of the most profound and best examples of indigenous art available. I went into the basement of the Art Gallery in 1977 while I was living in Sydney to view the collection he had coordinated. At the time it was an aside trip on my behalf as it was not included in the general contents of the Art Gallery. I did not know anything about Tuckson and was there for my own interest in indigenous artefacts. The objects I saw there, both from Australian and Papua New Guinea, profoundly moved me; some were also terrifying. I now realise I was privileged to see these objects. I am sure some of these objects would now be classified under cultural protocol.

According to biographical details in Murray Bail's book⁶, Fairweather actually lived alongside Aboriginals on Bribie Island. This was towards the end of his life, and, in my opinion, was when he did his master works. He lived as the ultimate reclusive artist anti-hero, in his homemade hut/house, `he made chairs and a bed upholstered in

⁵ Thomas, Daniel., Free, Renee. and Legge, Geoffrey. (1989). *Tony Tuckson*. NSW: Craftsman House.

⁶ Bail, Murray. (1981). *Ian Fairweather*. NSW.: Bay Books.

ferns'⁷. According to Bail, 'Aboriginal art was an important influence on Fairweather'⁸.

Both artists were extraordinary for their time as neither artist took a lighthearted view towards Aboriginal art. Both studied it as seriously as they may have studied any other life passion including Mandarin in Fairweathers' case or Tony Tuckson's knowledge and study of contemporary art overseas. Daniel Thomas states in a monograph on Tony Tuckson:

Tuckson's sensitivity to ... Aboriginal art parallels his similar enthusiasm ... for paintings ... by Turner and Ian Fairweather⁹.

Interestingly, Thomas also states that the 'only painting permanently on view in Tuckson's livingroom' was a small Fairweather he had purchased in 1954¹⁰.

Tuckson and Fairweather were not the first artists to look to indigenous cultures during the development of their work. Jackson Pollock to whom is attributed the invention of Abstract Expressionism during the 1940s, looked at the sand paintings and totems of American Indians during the early phases of his work. According to Naifeh and White Smith, 'using an 'Indian palette' of bright yellow, red, blue, green and black, he painted gouaches of geometric Indian motifs'¹¹. Earlier Picasso, working in France, looked to African masks for inspiration, and Naifeh and White Smith claim 'Picasso's painting has the same ease of access to the unconscious as have primitive artists'¹². This follows on from a long tradition of artists looking to other cultures, including Manet, Whistler, and Van Gogh who all looked to Japanese culture for inspiration.

These events all occurred within the time of 'Modernism' and the history of the Avant-Guarde, a period of art history roughly dating from the 1820s to the 1970s. At the height of this era, successions of artists from Modrian on searched and were

⁷ Bail, Murray. (1981). *Ian Fairweather*. NSW.: Bay Books. Page 114.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Page 115.

⁹ Thomas, et al.. (1989). *Tony Tuckson*. NSW: Craftsman House.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Page 30.

¹¹ Naifeh, Steven. and White Smith, Gregory. (1989). *Jackson Pollock; An American Saga*. New York: Clarkson and Potter. Page 337.

¹² *Ibid.*, Page 351.

rewarded with fame and a place in history for discovering the next world style. Some of Picasso's high standing in the art world relies on his invention and transition through many styles that swept the world, including Cubism and Surrealism¹³.



Figure 4: Ian Fairweather, *Composition II, 1969,1*, Synthetic polymer paint and gouache on card, 116.2x85.7cm.

The work that followed on from Jackson Pollock became known as Abstract Expressionism, and became the 'it' movement of the 1950s. This included other artists such as DeKooning and Gottleib. As a consequence, America, or more specifically New York, became the cultural vanguard for the first time. Some critics like Jeff Makin¹⁴ suggest that the movement and legacy ended there. However, to me, the invention of Abstraction was as profound as the invention of the camera, and its legacy lives on. It was the first truly 'intra-view made external' in the history of western art. In its purest form it took art to another level, more like music or dance, prior to this date only artists like Turner, Monet or Van Gogh engaged in this area of the conscious. The many contemporary artists choosing to work in this style in Australia alone is proving the Abstract movement to be more than one of the many successive inventions of modernism.

¹³ Krauss, Rosalind. (1986). *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. USA: MIT Press. Krauss basically states the same things, including looking at Picasso and discussing Pollock.

¹⁴ Jeff Makin, art critic, Herald Sun Newspaper, News Limited, Melbourne. In 2003, I wrote a letter to Jeff Makin in his capacity as Herald Sun art critic, after a review appeared in the Herald Sun by Jeff Makin in which he expressed information which I believed to be incorrect about abstraction based around an exhibition of paintings by Aida Tomescu at Niagara Galleries. Jeff was kind enough to meet with me to discuss the matter further and since then has made numerous comments over the past two years in his weekly news paper column, about the finiteness of painting theories related to purist abstraction.

Part of my formal training in Australia to become an artist was encouragement from tutors to study and emulate the work of former artists that you admire, which included going to museums and actually studying or copying the work. This 'pilgrimage of art' appears to be universal to the development of any artist unless they remain a naive artist.



Figure 5: Tony Tuckson,, *White with lines (Charcoal) Black Border, 1970-73, Acrylic on hardboard, 183x122cm.*

As I noted earlier, both Tuckson and Fairweather had direct contact with Aboriginal art and culture, and I can see that influence in their work. Both adopted a palette reminiscent of the Australian continent and Aboriginal art, implementing the use of ochre earth tones with black and white. Tuckson later simplified this palette to mainly red, black and white. Both artists also used a flattened picture plane. Fairweather also incorporated the X-ray technique and cross hatching, and a 'casual use of impermanent materials'¹⁵. From there, the work differs from traditional Aboriginal painting prior to 1970s and the two artists' additional emphasis on the quality of mark(s) made is a legacy that instead dates back, I believe, to Velasquez and Rembrandt. Fairweather's subjects were mainly religious or spiritual (figure 4) while

¹⁵ Bail, Murray. (1981). *Ian Fairweather*. NSW.: Bay Books. Page 113.

Tuckson's later work relied on a 'spiritualism' or transcendence transferred through the emotion engendered in the paint strokes (figure 5).

Historically Abstraction, particularly in America was rebellious in nature. It was the 'artist's responsibility to resist mass culture and commercialism'¹⁶ alternatively looking to other cultures as a source for a more fulfilling life experience and meaningful art expression. In this way, Whistler had indulged in the lifestyle of the Japanese in the 1860s when 'he tacked purple Japanese fans on the blue walls and ceiling of his dining-room'¹⁷.

Art expressing intensity of emotion and or spirituality goes back to Turner and Manet and the impressionist paintings of Van Gogh. I believe the creative high expressed in these artists' works became the golden chalice for many artists including the Australian artists, Streeton and Roberts. Transcendence in brushstrokes, is in my opinion, a major draw-card in the plein air paintings of the Heidelberg School (figure 6). For many Abstract artists the pursuit of transcendent marks is the ultimate aim. Tony Tuckson was an artist of this tradition.



Figure 6: Arthur Streeton, *Oncoming Storm*, 1895, Oil on panel, 42x26.5cm.

¹⁶ Naifeh, Steven. and White Smith, Gregory. (1989). *Jackson Pollock; An American Saga*. New York: Clarkson and Potter. Page 703.

¹⁷ Spalding, Frances. (1994). *Whistler*. London: Phaidon Press. Page 16.

In light of the influence of Aboriginal art to the development of Abstraction in Australia, it is interesting to place Aboriginal Art in cultural context for this time. Still seen as folk art or craft by most, it was brought as a memento of travels to the outback rather than as an example of serious art¹⁸. The only Aboriginal Artist to make an impact on the general Australian psyche to this date was Albert Namatjira, and he made it painting the desert in a traditional western style. I remember, as a child, the wide spread curiosity that the general public showed to his work, relating to how an Aboriginal Artist from a mission (Hermannsburg) could paint so well in a western style!



Figure 7: Rover Thomas, *Camp at Mistake Creek*, 1990, Earth pigments on canvas, 120x150cm.

It was not until about the late 1970s that Aboriginal art started appearing in galleries painted in acrylic on canvas. This began in 1971 with the Papuna Tula movement. Geoffrey Bardon, a teacher, was sent to the mission, and having an open mind, encouraged the residents to commit their stories to canvas. It actually began with the elder men hanging around the school and painting a honey ant mural on the school walls. Geoff saw something in the work, and realising it gave the men a purpose, he supplied them with whatever materials he could find. Soon there was enough work to exhibit, so with the help of others he had the work transported to Alice Springs where it was shown in the galleries there. The rest is history. Suffice to say the Aboriginal

¹⁸ Price, Sally. (1991). *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*. USA: University of Chicago Press.

This was the status of much primitive art until about 1970. It was not included in Art Galleries as art and the artists were often unnamed.

art movement that has occurred in Australia from the mid-seventies to present is the single biggest art phenomenon in Australia of this period¹⁹.

Today, Aboriginal art by masters can fetch up to AU\$800,000. It is internationally acclaimed and is a multi-million dollar industry. It is shown at galleries from New York to London, hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and is the main means of economic support to many remote Aboriginal communities.

In the eighties, a similar phenomena to what happened at Papuna Tula also occurred at Turkey Creek, in the Kimberly region. Joel Smoker art coordinator of the Waringarri Aboriginal Arts recalls:

When we set up Waringarri Aboriginal Art in 1986, Rover sought us out, requesting boards to paint on. I knew he had already made a name for himself and began by giving him art boards... then finally stretched canvas²⁰.

The work was promoted for the first time by the major arts industry. Janet Holmes a Court acquired much of his work and he had a show at the prestigious Deutscher Gallery in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy. I saw this exhibition and for one of the few times in my life, I desperately wanted to buy one²¹ (figure 7). As time has passed the works in this exhibition have become regarded as some of his greatest creations. They were brilliant in his sense of composition and lack of self consciousness in his paint application. Rover had a career spanning about ten years before he died, and is still regarded as the master Aboriginal artist. Sensing the popularity of his work, the art world seemed to set out to find a replacement. Enter Emily Kame Kngwarreye (figure 8). With each successive artist seemed to come an increasing commercial investment. Emily became a 'mega' art star. At the peak of her popularity she was painting all day and had paintings whipped away from her as soon as she said it was done. Her art was everywhere, and many dealers secured their success selling her work. Since Emily's death there has been a procession of master Aboriginal artists, including Ronnie Tjampitjinpa and Dorothy Napangardi. Buyers loved it and dealers relished in presenting the next great artist. To some extent, this idea of master painters still continues today. Peter Timms, in his book *What's wrong with contemporary art?*,

¹⁹ Art Gallery of NSW, Media archives, Papunya Tula, 2005,
http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/media/archives_2000/papunya_tula

²⁰ Smoker Joel, *Turkey Creek Recent Work*, Catalogue, Deutscher Gertrude Street, Vic, 1989.

²¹ How I wish I had borrowed the money to do that, for at the time they were only AU\$5000.

refers to the Sotheby's sales list as 'the established hit parade of indigenous artists'. He then goes on further on the same page:

The market finds itself in the rather curious position of working to promote indigenous art as a genuine outcome of age-old cultural traditions while, at the same time, assimilating it into a particularly post-Enlightenment Western notion of the artist as individual genius.²²



Figure 8: Emily Kame, *Kngwarreye, Untitled, 1995, Acrylic on canvas 119x87cm.*

I love the work of these artists but I wonder sometimes why I am 'loving' it. I don't know the stories; I'm not supposed to and I am not culturally privy to the content. They are visual experiences for me, and I suspect for many other people. The work is beautiful but in what sense? I believe I relate to the work from a Western perspective, using parameters for evaluating Abstraction rather than an Aboriginal sense, or at least a combination of the two, which ultimately leads to muddy waters. The marketing of these artists also encourages this approach, as exemplified in Peter Timms reference to the indigenous 'hit parade'. The values of abstraction that I refer to, are those I mentioned in relation to artists like Tuckson and Fairweather. They involve quality brushstrokes that engender emotion and spirituality that are constructed in an unpretentious or honest way. They are what distinguish one artist as being greater than another. Secondary concerns of composition, subject and colour

²² Timms, Peter. (2004). *What's wrong with Contemporary Art?* NSW: University of NSW Press. Page 65.

use are also important. So is reference to current art trends. However, traditional bark painting has qualities other than this. Generally, the individual paint strokes are not emotively expressive but rather are directed by cultural or spiritual codes, which are traditional and generational. Artists such as Emily and Thomas, by up scaling the work to canvas, reinterpreted their traditional styles. It is as though the act of painting on a large scale with western materials, i.e. acrylic on canvas, caused this shift.

The question that needs asking here is whether this is a conscious decision on behalf of the artists, or is something else going on? Is big business pushing the artists to paint in a certain way or have the artists come to this point on their own? Some, or maybe all of these factors, have come into play to shape the way Aboriginal art appears today.

But the fact of the matter is that Aboriginal culture is a living evolving culture, intact within the mainstream culture of Australia. Aboriginal artists come to the large cities and in some cases are left in the gallery space to paint their exhibitions over a number of days. I'm sure there is a cross-cultural gazing going on. After all we're all artists. I'm sure Aboriginal artists look at western paintings and western painters look at Aboriginal art. Rover Thomas in fact stated when he saw a Rothko at the National Gallery in Canberra 'that fella paints like me'²³.

Which brings me back to the 'taboo' subject. Non-Aboriginal artists being influenced by Aboriginal art. As I write this I think it is silly. Why shouldn't they be, especially in light of what I have said earlier about the history of Abstraction overseas and the artistic influence that artists such as Picasso took from 'primitive' cultures. Gordon Bennet, a contemporary Aboriginal artist, devoted an entire exhibition at Sutton Gallery to referencing Mondrian (the attributed inventor of Abstraction) within his cultural motifs. Whilst the exhibition was met with critical acclaim, the reverse scenario is critically ignored. One of the reasons for this 'overshadowing' during this period of history could be due to the discomfort felt because of unresolved reconciliation issues as the government still has not formally apologised to Aboriginal people. Another reason I believe for this lack of critical interest is twofold. First, some established critics share the views of Jeff Makin, that Abstraction is a mid twentieth

²³ Carrigan, Belinda. (2003). *Rover Thomas. I want to paint*. Perth: Holmes a Court Gallery. Page 50.

century movement and any later practitioners are re-hashing concepts already culturally dealt with and second, other critics according to Peter Timms²⁴ are not equipped to discuss the content of Abstraction.

Discourse rules. And that tends to rule out the effable....Art...which invites an aesthetic and emotional response, doesn't stand much chance in the urbane academic milieu of thesis and exegesis²⁵.

As a consequence, relevant and lively discussion on Abstraction is ignored.

In recent years, I have noticed artists openly admitting they are influenced by Aboriginal Art again for the first time since Fairweather. Jenny Sages and Peter Sharp are two such artists. Peter Sharp's 2004 catalogue introduction written interestingly by Janet Holmes a Court states 'his (Sharp's) vision has been influenced by an Aboriginal approach to the world – the land is part of you and you are part of it'²⁶(figure 9).

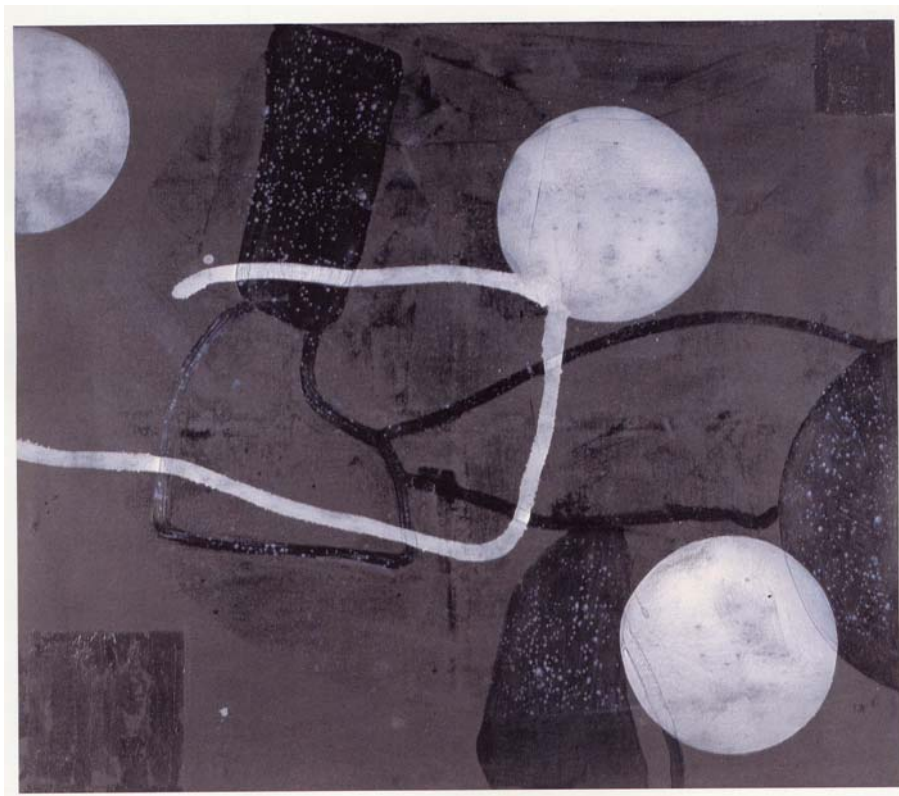


Figure 9: Peter Sharp, *Whale Song*, 2004, Oil and acrylic on linen, 182x210cm.

²⁴ Timms, Peter. (2004). *What's wrong with Contemporary Art?* NSW: University of NSW Press. Peter Timms, uses the example of Alan Mitelman paintings, to convey the difficulty in adequately describing Abstraction, 'they defied written explanation' Page 106.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Page 107.

²⁶ Holmes a Court, Janet.(2004). *Peter Sharpe. Whale.* Sydney: Liverpool Street Gallery.

I recently met a German artist named Bernd Kirken, which was a happy coincidence. He was here being sponsored by Theierry B. gallery to produce a show. He also ended up having a show in Sydney. He was attracted to my work and asked if we could meet. He gave me several catalogues that he has produced of his work. They bear titles such as; 'Walkabout' and 'Dreamtime'. I was in contact with him during his four month stay here. On the night before he went back to Germany I decided to ask him some questions as I realised the relevance of his journey to this project.

My first question was 'travelling the world, as you have, why have you such a great admiration for aboriginal art?' He found it difficult to answer direct questions, so I took general notes. The following is a generalisation of the conversation;

He first saw Aboriginal art as rock art at Ullaru and Nourlangie, it struck him as 'real' art or the essence of art compared with the polished work of Europe. This led to further interest and the development of a passion for Emily Kame Kngwarreye. Kirken even travelled to the station where Emily worked (he has been to Australia on five different occasions). He touched on the idea of a 'real' or essential or even programmed response to image making being universal, stating that hand stencilling which is common rock art here occurs elsewhere throughout the world. I was touched by this thinking as it is part of the reason I am attracted to Aboriginal art – its perceived honesty or unpretentiousness.

Bernd Kirken was hoping to relocate to Australia, but sadly his work was not successful at exhibition and he has gone home to an uncertain life in the recession affected former East Germany²⁷. This was not due to the quality of his work that he has done in the past, (figure 10) but rather a combination of factors including high prices and a reluctance for collectors to buy work of overseas artists. I also felt the quality of the work he exhibited here was not as high as I saw in a video of a TV documentary of his work and his catalogues. He produced the show for Theierry B. in three weeks, something I would never consider. In the end I was glad to meet him and enjoyed knowing another artist on a similar journey with similar aesthetics.

²⁷ Bernd Kirken states that unemployment in the former East Germany is running at 45%, and house prices are currently 25% of their value a decade ago. Also since reunification the former East German art scene has collapsed apart from the Leipzig School.



Figure 10: Bernd Kerkin, Walkabout 2, 1997, Acrylic on canvas, 135x180cm.

I will discuss further in the methodology and conclusion sections, the work of contemporary artists whose art looks like Aboriginal art but is not. It is not influenced by, nor does it reference Aboriginal art as a source of influence. These are artists such as Ross Bleckner, Japanese artist Masahiko Tsubota and Spanish artist Hernandez Pijuan. I choose to discuss these artists in these sections because they are more relevant to my practical work than a discussion about Abstraction and Aboriginal art.



Methodology

Chapter 3

In this third chapter, I will address the technical aspects of my work, from childhood reflections to my present philosophies and process.

Using the artist I admire most, Antoni Tàpies, (figure 18) I would like to point out the varying levels that abstract art can function on. Tàpies work, at first sight, appears to me emotional and charged with creative energy used in the most transcendental sense, creating an instant heightened mental effect of brilliance and clarity. He breaks new ground in the realm of art because of his inventive use of composition and materials. The iconography he uses refers to his geographic local, domestic activities, political opinions and contains historical and cultural references. All of these elements play simultaneously within the field of his painting²⁸.

I briefly likened Abstract painting to poetry in my introduction, suggesting that it has its own language and is not confined to the logical mind. As an Abstract artist, I find it a difficult task to lay down the content of my work in order, but I have grouped elements of my work under several subheadings. These headings are:

Childhood influences-painting sources

Art school and the nineties

Weathering –abstract landscape

Nature in the city

Dot paintings

White work

Subject matter (markings) - keeping it abstract

²⁸ Pewnosci, Odczuwane.(2000). *Antoni Tàpies*. Krakow: Foundation Tadeusza Kantora.

These first two sections, *Childhood influence-paintings sources* and *Art school and the nineties*, are reflective and at times autobiographical, but relevant to this exegesis as my imagery has developed over a significant time frame.

The later sections, *Weathering-abstract landscape*, *Nature in the city*, *Dot paintings*, *White work* and *Subject matter (markings) - keeping it abstract*, are interwoven with comments on the influence of Aboriginal art and the technique of abstraction that I have used.

Childhood influences – painting sources

Like so many artists before me, my childhood has had a big impact on the appearance of the work I do, and I believe it is so important that any understanding of my work cannot be complete without it. I feel that the influence of childhood on my art is slightly different to any other artist I have spoken to or read about. For example whereas John Olsen may 'paint in a childlike manner' or Charles Blackman or Robert Dickerson may 'paint childhood memories', my childhood input is manifest in a more practical or technical way. Whilst I look and interpret the world around me, I am also dealing with memories of childhood artistic practices, which also inform the work. For this reason I have included the following information, which at times may appear biographical but is integral to understanding why I paint the way I do.

At the age of eight I ended up back at my maternal grandparents permanently after the stormy divorce of my parents. My grandparents were elderly and pensioners. My grandfather was working occasionally as a house painter after retirement from a working life as foreman to a city-based construction firm. They were struggling financially after a relatively comfortable life while my grandfather was working, due to the mortgage that my grandmother had taken out late in life. After walking away from a property during the 1930s depression, my grandfather had subsequently refused to buy another house, despite the fact that on his working income he could have comfortably afforded it²⁹. However, my grandmother saved a deposit out of the housekeeping money, and bought the house without consulting my grandfather. As there was no superannuation at this time money was consequently very tight. My grandfather also refused to do any maintenance or improvements to the house even

²⁹ In the current climate of relative affluence, we sometime forget the indelible scars left by the Great Depression.

though he could have physically done the work. As such the room I shared with my mother had not been painted since the house was built in the early 1900s. As you may imagine the wallpaper was yellow and stained, and as a child during this time I spent hours visiting imaginary landscapes and creatures present in the watermarks on the wall. They became my secret dialogue. Other parts of the house were in a similar condition. The shed wall that my grandfather used to `brush out' the oil paint from his brushes was corrugated iron covered with layers and layers of washed out pastel shades of house paint. My grandfather would sometimes give me the task of cleaning his brushes, and the beauty of the layers of paint and rust in the sunlight nurtured my artistic self. There were a number of secret walls and places for me in this turn-of-the-century house and its surrounds, and I still clearly remember them all.



Figure 11: Terri Brooks, O'Grady Street, Photo, 2000.

Life with my father had been fast, flashy and at times affluent. At one stage he imported Cadillacs from America and we had a constant string of amazing cars to get around in. To find myself now having to share a room with my mother who was severely depressed, was hard.

However at this time, my grandmother noticed my interest in art and encouraged me enormously. I now attribute the fact that I am an artist to her. She wanted to be an artist herself, and spent her adult life heavily involved in arts and crafts, and, when

she was younger, in the theatre. She was always making something, decorating something or turning something into something else. I watched a TV program on Rosalie Gascoyne once with my mother, and we both agreed my grandmother was a similar creature. `Nan' could not go for a walk anywhere without picking something up and bringing it home to turn it into something else. As my mother was working, I would go out on school holidays to visit my grandmother's friends, many of whom were involved in theatre. She also told me fascinating stories; one I remember was a lounge room suite a friend of hers had built out of packing cases during the depression, which she had covered and was so good you would never have known what it was made of. Later in life I realised just how common this sort of poverty furniture was during the depression, and have collected some of it over my lifetime. It sparked a long interest in the `making do' element of Australian culture³⁰.



Figure12: Terri Brooks, Untitled, 1987, Oil and pigment on canvas, 122x137cm.

My grandfather on the other hand, was a strong handsome man. He was the iconic Australian male, and had been a shearer and an entrant to woodchops at earlier times in his life. Both my grandparents started life in the country and only moved to

³⁰ It has also occurred to me that maybe that is why I like the work of Tapies so much as his creative roots lie in the movement of Art Povera.

Melbourne during the 1930s depression. This they had in common. Their stories and love of nature gave me my love of Australian history and landscape.



Figure13: Terri Brooks, Broken Hill Window, Photo, 1992.

I now live just a block away from where this house still stands today. When I walk the streets, at times I reflect on my many journeys with my grandmother. The house is in an inner Melbourne suburb, and many of the places I remember as a child, such as the local parks and bluestone laneways, have not changed. As I have very few relatives that I know, I feel I have an attachment to place, which somehow compensates me for the lack of extended family. Lately, through many years of walking the area, the subjects for my paintings are beginning to come from within a few kilometres of where I live. Those same kilometres I knew as a child. The interest in the watermarks of nature on my bedroom walls as a child has transferred to an interest in the weathered walls of my neighbourhood. The painted corrugated iron shed and stories of 'making do' have left me looking out for, and being attracted to, these things in my current environment. I have, in fact, a series of photo albums of walls and surfaces of various areas including a Clifton Hill book and one of the Docklands. (figure 11).



Figure 14: Terri Brooks, Boiler, Photo, 1992.



Figure 15: Terri Brooks, Mirage, 1993, Oil on canvas, 122x107cm.

Art school and the nineties

During my time at Art School I loved the work of artists such as Olsen, Williams and Fairweather and my own work at this time reflected the landscape (figure 12), and I have spent a number of years travelling around Australia, including Lake Eyre, Western NSW and Kakadu. I fell in love with western NSW and became particularly interested in Broken Hill. This was a place full of all the elements that I still love today, including the open spaced environment and lots and lots of 'Australian makeshift' and left me with a Broken Hill photo album (figure 13). Snooping around this environment was like going through a live history book. Lying side by side was evidence of Aboriginal Culture and the marks of early settlers. This was when I first started to use dots, but not from Aboriginal art so much, as the raised dots seen on old metal weldings (figure 14). Nevertheless, when using dots, I was aware of the dual reference I was making (figure 15).



Figure16: Terri Brooks Storyboard, 1995, Found Objects on wood, 110x65cm.



Figure 17: Cy Twombly, Hrih, 1982, Oil stick, pencil and coloured pencil, 100x70cm.



Figure 18: Antoni Tàpies, Cruces, 1991, Paint on material, 232,5x138.5cm.

There is another example of the indelible effect that my childhood has left me with. Several years ago, I made a series of storyboards to store my bits and pieces from the environment (figure 16). It wasn't until I had done several of them that I realised I was recreating the psalm boards displayed in the Baptist church I went to as a child for some time, and this again reinforced for me the effect that personal history was having on the appearance of my work.

As I progressed at this time, my work was increasingly missing reference to the history of painting and the artists that I admired, chiefly Cy Twombly and Antoni Tapies (figures 17 and 18). As a consequence, I tried to find the energy Tapies used in his work within myself. Eventually, after several years attempting this, I realised I did not have that energy, but along the way came some successful paintings, (figure 19). Then I returned once again to my own thoughts.



Figure 19: Terri Brooks, Pan, 1999, Oil on canvas, 123x153cm.

Weathering – abstract landscape

As a result of my childhood imaginary world based around the weathered surfaces of my house, throughout the 90s I often tried to emulate 'nature' by creating surfaces in works on paper that looked weathered. I not only loved this process, but felt very peaceful doing this work. However sometimes the end result would look just like a weathered wall, and to me was not complex enough subject matter for a painting. I was unsatisfied with the notion of merely recreating something from the real world, and thought I may as well just take a photograph of the subject.

Through years of thinking about nature and weathering and what makes that piece of rusty wall so beautiful or that billboard fantastic, I realised *repetition* was at the core of most of the things I loved. Whether it be a billboard that has been plastered and replastered many times with a poster or the motion of water down a wall, it was the repetition of a fairly simple process that somehow creates beauty. Then I looked to nature and realised that repetition is there also. For indeed, what makes a tree or a field beautiful? A tree is just a collection of leaves and branches (all the same yet all slightly different). A field is just a collection of blades of grass. I then found that this thinking transferred itself, and I began looking differently at some Aboriginal art. The work of Dorothy Napangardi, for example, is similar to a field or a tree to me (figure 20). She takes the simplest means, a small white dot on black ground and repeats this marking on a large scale. The resulting image takes on an organic structure not dissimilar to a tree or a field or even a seashell's markings. It is on this level that I am influenced by Aboriginal art – the ability to recreate a natural structure as complete as any in nature. The 'organic-ness' of the work admits more easily a representation of human expression because it is not driven by straight lines and correct proportions and to me is a more natural way to paint. As this type of work can also take on a rough or awkward appearance it also reminds me of the historically important 'make do' aspect of our culture.

The end result of this thinking is that I have adopted a simulated process of 'weathering' in my work. I now use repetition rather than the literal interpretation that I began with, and I have found that this has given me greater freedom to create more individual works.

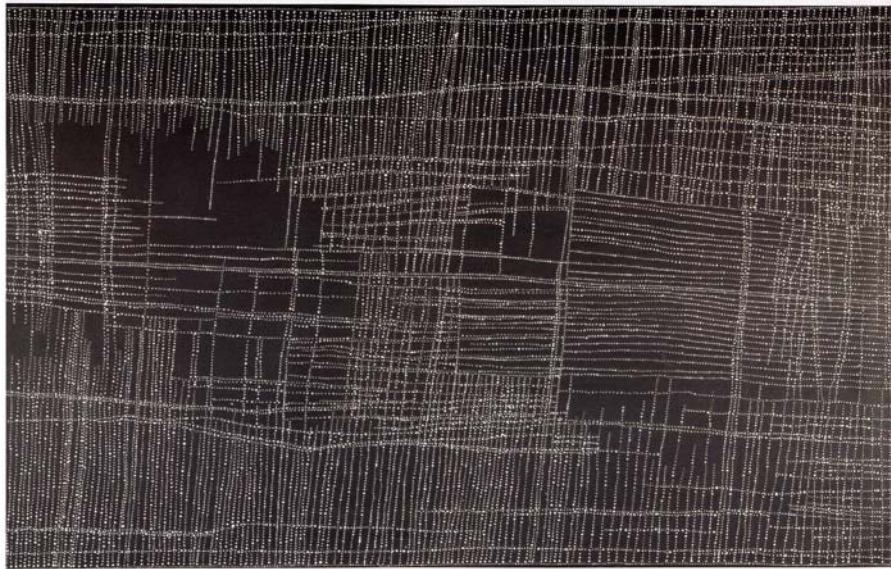


Figure20: Dorothy Napangardi, *Salt on Mina Mina*, 2002, Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122x198cm.

As an artist I am aware of current art trends. I choose to follow painting because I believe in the history of painting as an independent genre in the history of art. International focus has for some years been on new technologies and installation, however a recent article by Peter Hill entitled, 'The return of Painting', attempts to reinvigorate public interest in painting, with Hill speculating that the renewed current interest is equal to that of the 1980s. However what interests me about his article is his concluding reference 'we are to Modernism as the Mannerists were to the Renaissance'³¹. As an artist I have often considered that the current times are similar to Mannerism. For Mannerism, as reflected in the post-Renaissance context, would therefore suggest, if the analogy is to be directly transferred to Modernism, an anarchic extension in present times of the 'multiple paths' unearthed during the successive 'ism's of Modernism, which is exactly what is happening, providing, in my belief, further justification, if any was needed, for the 'independent' development of Abstraction. Contemporary art focus, however, has been slow to catch on, and is still embracing the singular cyclical focus of 'nowism'. True to this idiom the recent international art 'spotlight' on new technologies and installation has been at the expense of painting, yet there are also some very good international painters. For example, several years ago in London a group of artists emerged referring to

³¹ Hill, Peter. (August 27, 2005) *The Return of Painting*, The Age, Melbourne: Fairfax.

themselves as 'process painters'. Jason Martin has been the most successful artist of this group, and I was lucky to see several of his works while overseas. The idea behind his nature-based painting is similar in some ways to that of Aboriginal artists. The main premise is to pursue an activity albeit simple, until the detritus builds up sufficiently to become the work. In other words, the creative act is in the unintentional accumulation of an activity. Due to my own thinking about nature and repetition, and my interest in artists such as Aida Tomescu who also works in a similar way, I have allowed the existence of this movement to re-validate my work. However, there are also other individual artists not aligned to any group looking at nature and reinterpreting it to create abstract art. Brice Marden takes his line work from tree branch shapes³² and nearly all of Tony Cragg's sculptures are informed by life, in all its forms, at the sea edge³³.



Figure 21: Joan Hernandez Pijuan, *Terres Blances 11*, 1996, Oil on canvas, 195x195cm.

³² Wylie, Chairles. (1999). *Brice Marden*. New York: Dallas Museum of Art, Distributed Art Publishers.

³³ Bond, Anthony. (2000). *Tony Cragg*. NSW: Art Gallery of NSW.

In this respect a very interesting artist from Spain is Hernandez Pijuan (figure 21). His work is landscape-based in that he paints fields³⁴. The colours are reduced to white and often only one other colour, and he emulates the undulations of the landscape and the organic twists and turns of nature in his work. What is most interesting to me, however, is how similar his work is to Emily Kame Kngwarreye (figure 30)³⁵. However there is no reference to Aboriginal art in the text and Pijuan, in his 70s, has been developing his work to this point for decades. I find it amazing that two people from totally different cultures, (Pijuan is based in Barcelona and paints the southern landscape) can come up with similar painting solutions. On reflection, it has occurred to me how similar the landscape of Spain was to South Australia as I travelled from Barcelona to Madrid, and leads me to ask, is the landscape playing a powerful role here? Pijuan's work is emotive and very simple, and it is this that I love about his work. There are layers and layers of workings and, in the end, an unconscious restatement of the subject is what carries the painting. Lying underneath is the history revealed in its various stages. In this simple way his art is profound to me. It emulates life to me, the various things we do almost the same way day after day which validate our existence. Nature is a bit the same, I think. It all develops and builds upon what is present – soft rock over hard. It has nothing to do with straight lines and exactness; it is more about sympathy and existence.

Nature in the city

I once attended an art auction at Christies, just to see what went on there. I was amazed to see a procession of small green paintings depicting landscape. Whilst Australia's main tradition of art to date has been landscape and I am in keeping with this tradition, it seemed no longer appropriate to paint images of wilderness. For many reasons, including globalisation and urbanisation, I have been interested in nature in the city. Cities and suburbs have developed because of attempts to create a comfortable place to live. Due to globalisation, much of urban life is similar, and what particularly interests me about this is our attempt to control, and even eradicate, nature. But it never works. If you go into an underground car park, the weathering on the concreted walls is both incongruous and invasive. I'm sure this weather marking was not in the intention of the architect, but it happens anyway. I don't know why we

³⁴ De Corral, Maria., Weiermair, Peter., Honnef, Klaus. and Roma, Malentin. *Hernandez Pijuan*. Spain: Ediciones Poligrafa. Taken from photos in text.

³⁵ Figure 30, Limestone caverns, Nullarbor Plains in South Australia. The Limestone caverns in South Australia bear an uncanny resemblance to this painting by Pijuan.

don't just accept the natural world and incorporate it into our lives. But as with all organic structures the 'city' has evolved step-by-step concurrent with our development and awareness. I saw a photo book of Chernobyl³⁶ as it is today, left abandoned. The images were amazing; nature was already reclaiming this high tech environment. I also took a group of photography students to Fairfield Hospital after it had been closed for only a couple of years. The intensive care unit was taken over by creepers and filled with leaves. Still there amongst it all were bedpans and other remnants of the care that once occurred there. It was a profound vision.

Dot paintings

The first half of my Master's body of work, is what I refer to as the 'dot paintings'. This work culminated in a solo exhibition at Harris Courtin Gallery in 2004. To use the dot in Australia is a loaded statement, and some people thought the work was that of an Aboriginal artist. To me, however, it made perfect sense to use the dot because it is the ultimate mark for my artistic philosophy, which is repetition. The dot is the simplest most individually inexpressive mark I can think of making, but apart from the obvious reference to Aboriginal art, my theory demanded that I repeat the dot until the work took on an organic structure of its own. This did occur occasionally (figure 22) however I became frustrated with the slowness and rigidity of the process and abandoned the work.



Figure 22: Terri Brooks, *Black Dots with fringe*, 2004, Oil and enamel on canvas, 61x51cm.

³⁶ Polidori, Robert. (2003) *Zones of Exclusion; Pripyat & Chernobyl*. Germany: Steidl

White work

I did my first white painting in 1991, being influenced by my love of Cy Twombly's white work. I now know it is not just Twombly's white paintings but also the white paintings of Whistler, that have made washed whites and soft blacks a love of mine. Recently, I made the connection that Renoir's' *La Loge*, (figure 23) always a favourite of mine, was in fact at the core of what I have been doing recently. Added to this is, as usual for me, a childhood memory of the kitchen my mother decorated after my grandparents died, which was black and white and included a pencil-striped seersucker tablecloth.



Figure23: Renoir, La Loge, 1874, Oil on canvas, 80x64cm.

Lately, I have concentrated on 'crinkle cut' paintings, which also incorporate childhood references because it has appeared in my works on paper in the past (figure 24). Not only am I currently referencing corrugated iron, makeshift and Japanese aesthetics (amongst my grandparent's household furnishings was number of Japanese and Chinese objects), these works also conjour up a childhood memory. At Sunday school I made a Mothers' Day card out of a paper plate and folded paper that I have never forgotten.

The body of work that involves the white crinkle cut paintings (figure 25) refers to my breakthrough in the preamble. They were my attempt to bring it all together at the time of wanting to present my Masters thesis, although I have since moved on to some extent. After seeing the work of Chillida at the Reina Sophia (although it was entirely unconscious in the beginning) I wanted to create a signature work, an unmistakable look that I could stand by. In the white paintings, the crinkle cut encapsulates the corrugated iron of back laneways and is also symbolic of building structures incorporating the walls of the city, but they also refer to my childhood Sunday school activities. I have used black spray paint as a symbol of graffiti and mark making in the

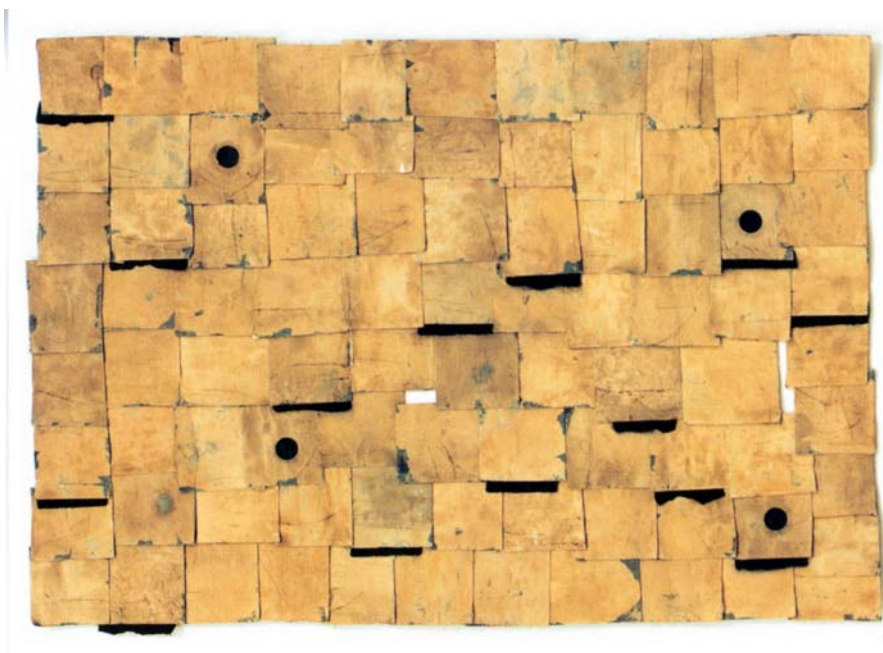


Figure 24 Terri Brooks, Ochre Patches, 1997, Collage, 91x117cm.

city both by human hand and industry (scratches and scuffs of machinery etc). The blackness and whiteness states my love of artists such as Whistler, but it also keeps the subject totally abstract. The painting activity sits in the area of mind games, such as chess or any sporting game, the perimeters of which are always sectioned off in black or white. The crinkles are created with a paint scraper which creates varying widths of ridges and marks. This technique is repeated, based on my previously stated beliefs in the structures of nature. The work forms what I call 'minor variations' and at some stage during this process I get into a very comfortable space and the work develops in a 'natural organic' way rather than a self conscious way. The painting

then continues until it takes on a presence of its own that I thought was worthwhile at the time.

However I realised after I had done a number of these works that they are highly fragile, highly impractical and do not really express my entire self in respect to my belief in painting. Yet again I have been following my own thoughts and it leads to painting that does not reference the history of painting in a satisfactory way for me. This has led back to incorporating 'gestural' marks both over and under the textured work, and eventually, to where I am today, allowing areas of texture to infiltrate the gestural field.



Figure 25: Terri Brooks, Scratches & patches, 2005, Oil on canvas, 76x92cm.

Subject matter (markings) keeping it abstract

Obvious or overriding subject matter is the most difficult aspect of my work, and has taken the longest for me to develop. I don't really know why except to say that I am not overly interested in the narrative of anyone's work. I like the fact that I can still appreciate a Turner or a Whistler despite the time lapse since they were created. The work of these artists' included a universal or timeless painting language, whereas a lot of highly fashionable art of today, is just that. I imagine it will have the same effect on me as some art from the seventies - so much 'of its time' that it is stuck there, and now fails to communicate. In a parallel way, whilst I can appreciate an Aboriginal

painting done in the 1800s, I cannot engage with most 'hard edge' 70s abstraction or Pop art for that matter. I find a lot of current narrative art 'corny' or cliché because it so heavily relies on preconceived notions made in the conscious mind, whereas I prefer the work to be more general or thematic, as in the work of Rick Amor or Doug Wright. On a more extended level, I remember a TV program exploring limestone caverns on the Nullarbor Plains in South Australia (figure 30). A film crew went down into the caves and filmed what is thought to be the oldest art engravings found in Australia³⁷. I will never forget how profound these ancient scratchings looked, even though I did not know what they were about.



Figure 26: Terri Brooks, *Locale*, 2005, Oil and pencil on canvas, 153x183cm.

Quite often, when I get into mark making, I rub away what is too obvious and work in a similar way to my dot or crinkle paintings; wiping away the obvious and leaving traces which are then built up again. This is the simplest description of where I am today, trying to work through this in a more systematic manner. I work until the image is something I could never have imagined as my search for new imagery directs the painting a strong way (figure 26). Through this slow process of finding my own

³⁷ McCarthy, Frederick. (1979) *Australian Aboriginal Rock Art*. Museum of Sydney. NSW page: 12
They are up to 21,000 years old at Koonalda, and cover a huge surface made by gouging the limestone with fingers and flints.

markings I have adopted some marks as mine but they are limited and I often find myself searching for personal motifs. Some of the motifs that I have accessed are a type of automatic writing, the loop, the dot, and the diagonal cross and a plus symbol. All of these have some attachment for me in my current life.

In this section I have attempted to put my practical work into words, including where appropriate the references to, or the indication of the influence of, both Abstraction and Aboriginal art. Like all artists who choose to not be naïve, my references and sources are many and diverse. Aboriginal art is one of the influences on my practice, but it is by no means the only one.

Select Bibliography:

- Abadie, Daniel. (2001). *Sean Scully*. Paris: Gallery Lelong.
- Aida Thomescu, (2003). Melbourne: Niagara Publishing.
- Art Gallery of NSW, Media archives. Papunya Tula, (2005).
http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/media/archives_2000/papunya_tula
- Baal-Teshuva. (1995). *Christo & Jeanne-Claude*. Germany: Tashchen.
- Bail, Murray. (1994). *Fairweather*. QLD.: Queensland Art Gallery, Art and Australia Books.
- Bail, Murray. (1981). *Ian Fairweather*. NSW.: Bay Books.
- Blackall, Judith. (2002). *Art Povera. Art from Italy 1967-2002*. Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art.
- Bloem, Marja. and Browne, Martin. (2003). *Colin McCahon. A question of faith*. New Zealand: Craig Potton.
- Bond, Anthony. (2000). *Tony Cragg*. NSW: Art Gallery of NSW.
- Borja-Villel, Manuel. (1998). *Tapiés. Cartoons and Collages*. Barcelona: Foundation Antoni Tapiés.
- Borja-Villel, Manuel. (2002). *Joan Hernandez Pijuan*. Barcelona: Museum of Art Contemporary.
- Bourdon, David. (1989). *Warhol, USA*: Foundation of Andy Warhol, Harry Abrams.
- Capon, Edmund. (2000). *Jeffrey Smart*. NSW: Art Gallery of NSW, Beagle Press.
- Catoir, Barbara. (1991). *Conversations with Antoni Tapiés*. Munich: Prestel-Verlag.
- Carrigan, Belinda. (2003). *Rover Thomas. I want to paint*. Perth: Holmes a Court Gallery.
- Centre for cross-cultural research. (2003)
<http://www.anu.edu.au/culture/abstractions/whatis/definitions.htm>
- Collings, Mathew. (1997). *Blimey, from Bohemia to Britpop*. UK: 21 Publishing.
- De Corral, Maria., Weiermair, Peter., Honnef, Klaus. and Roma, Malentin. (2002) *Hernandez Pijuan*
Spain: Ediciones Poligrafa.
- Dutton, Geoffrey. (1989). *Tom Roberts*. Qld: Mallard Press, Brisbane.
- Dutton, Geoffrey. (1989). *Arthur Streeton*. Qld: Mallard Press, Brisbane.
- Ellis, David. (1995). *Robert Greive*. NSW: Craftsman House, NSW.
- Eriskson, Britta. (2001). *The art of Xu Bing. Words without meaning, meaning without words*,
Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution. University of Washington Press.
- The Foundation Antoni Tapiés*. (2003). Barcelona: Tapiés Foundation.
- Gaunt, William. (1987). *Renoir*. UK: Phaidon Press.
- Gaunt, William. (1981). *Turner*. UK: Phaidon Press.
- Goddard, Julian. (2000). *Karl Wiebke*. NSW: Gow Langsford Gallery.
- Gooding, Mel. (2002). *Patrick Herson*. USA: Phaidon Press.
- Gotz, Adriani. (1985). *Graphics of the 70s, Federal Republic of Germany*. Germany: Institute of
Auslandsbeziehungen.
- Helmert-Corvey, (1999). Theodor, *Makus Baldegger*. Germany: Herford.
- Helmrich, Michele. (2002). *Andrew Arnaoutopoulos. Soiled/weathered*. Brisbane: Institute of Modern
Art, Institute of Modern Art Publishers.
- Hill, Peter, (2005). *The Return of Painting, The Age*, Melbourne: Fairfax
- Holmes a Court, Janet. (2004). *Peter Sharpe. Whale*. Sydney: Liverpool Street Gallery.
- House, John. (1981). *Monet*. UK: Phaidon Press.
- Hughes, Robert. (1992). *Auerbach*. UK: Thames and Hudson.
- Kanai, Miki. (2004). *Masahiko Tsubota*. Japan: Jamani Art Gallery.
- Kerkin, Bernd. (2004). *Bernd Kerkin. Antipode*. Gesamtherstellung: Ruksaldruck, Berlin.
- Kerkin, Bernd. (2000). *Bernd Kerkin. Walkabout*. Berlin: Druckerei Graetz.
- Kerkin, Bernd. (1994). *Bernd Kerkin. Dreamtime*. Berlin: Gesamtherstellung: Ruksaldruck.
- Krauss, Rosalind. (1986). *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*.
USA: MIT Press.
- Lippard, Lucy. (1983). *Overlay. Contemporary art and the art of prehistory*. New York: The New
Press.
- Lippard, Lucy. (1997). *The Lure of the Local. Sense of place in a multicentered society*. New York:
The New Press.
- Lopez-Pedraza, (1996). *Anselm Kiefer. After the Catastrophe*. UK: Thames and Hudson.
- McCarthy, Frederick. (1979). *Australian Aboriginal Rock Art*. Museum of Sydney. NSW.
- Macdonald, Vicki. (1998). *Rosalie Gascoigne*. NSW: Regaro.
- Macgregor, Elizabeth Ann. (2002). *Dancing up Country. The Art of Dorothy Napangardi*. Sydney:
Museum of Contemporary Art.
- Mackenzie, Andrew. (1989). *Albert Namatjira*. NSW: Mallard Press, Transworld Publishers.

Maloon, Terence. (1995). *Alan Mitelman*. Victoria: Museum of Modern Art, Heidi.

Marn-Grook. (Aboriginal Football) <http://www.aboriginalfootball.com.au/marngrook.html>

Marshall, Richard. (1993). *Jean-Michel Basquiat*. New York: Whitney Museum of Art.

Museum of the Future: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/lascaux/en/>

Naifeh, Steven. and White Smith, Gregory. (1989). *Jackson Pollock; An American Saga*. New York: Clarkson and Potter.

Norland, Gerald. (1987). *Richard Diebenkorn*. New York: Rizzoli.

Pewnosci, Odczuwane. (2000). *Antoni Tapies*. Krakow: Foundation Tadeusza Kantora.

Polidori, Robert. (2003) *Zones of Exclusion; Pripjat & Chernobyl*. Germany: Steidl.

Price, Sally. (1991). *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*. USA: University of Cigargo Press.

Rosenthal, Nan. (2001). *Terry Winters: Printed Work*. USA: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press.

Schmidt, Katerina. (2001). *Cy Twombly. The Sculpture*. Houston: The Menil Collection.

Seguela, Valerie. (2002). *Andres Gursky*. Paris: Pompidou Centre.

Smoker, Joel. (1989). *Turkey Creek. Recent Work*. Melbourne: Deutcher Gertrude Street.

Sylvester, July. (2003). *Cy Twombly at the Hermitage*. Germany: Book Trade Distribution.

Spalding, Frances. (1994). *Whistler*. London: Phaidon Press.

Timms, Peter. (2004). *What's wrong with Contemporary Art?* NSW: University of NSW Press.

Thomas, Daniel., Free, Renee. and Legge, Geoffrey. (1989). *Tony Tuckson*. NSW: Craftsman House.

Turner, Jonathon. (1999). *Ross Bleckner*. NSW: Martin Browne Fine Art, NSW.

Yoo, Wijin. (1996). *Ouhi Chay*. Seoul: Jean Art Gallery.

Varnedoe, Kirk. (1995). *Cy Twombly*. New York: Museum of Modern Art New York, Harry Abrams.

Weyergraf, Clara. (1980). *Richard Serra: Interviews, Etc. 1970-1980*. USA: The Hudson River Museum.

Wye, Deborah, (1991). *Antoni Tapies in Print*. Museum of Modern Art, New York: Thames and Hudson.

Cabrera, Jose Guirao. (2000). *Tapies*. Medrid: Museum Nation Renia Sofia.

Watters, Stuart. (2004). *Steven Harvey*. Sydney: Liverpool Street Gallery.

Wiebke, Karl. (2004). *Karl Wiebke*. Sydney: Liverpool Street Gallery.

Wilson, Gavin, (2000). *John Firth-Smith*. Sydney: Craftsman House.

Wylie, Chairles. (1999). *Brice Marden*. New York: Dallas Museum of Art, Distributed Art Publishers.

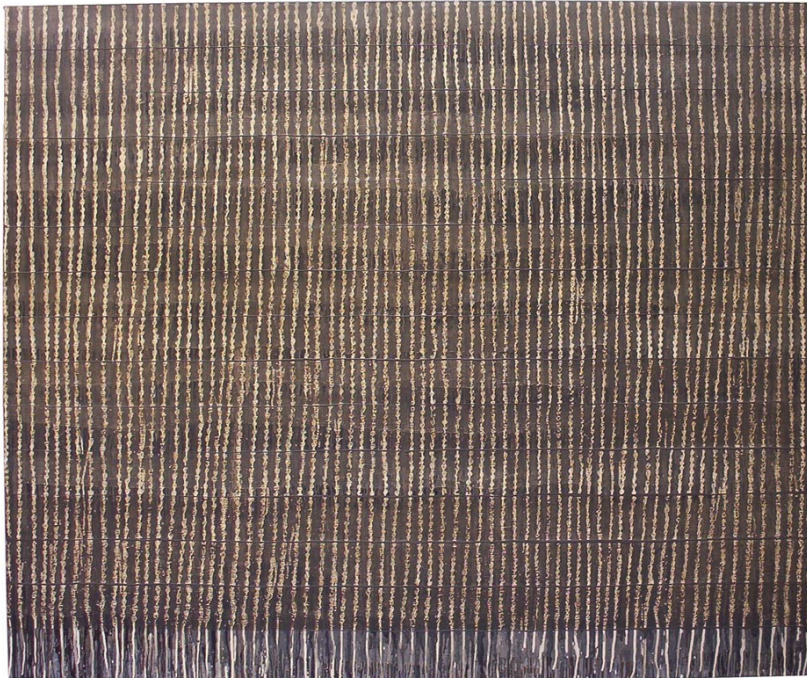


Figure 31: Terri Brooks, *Minor Variations*, 2003, Oil on canvas, 153x183cm.

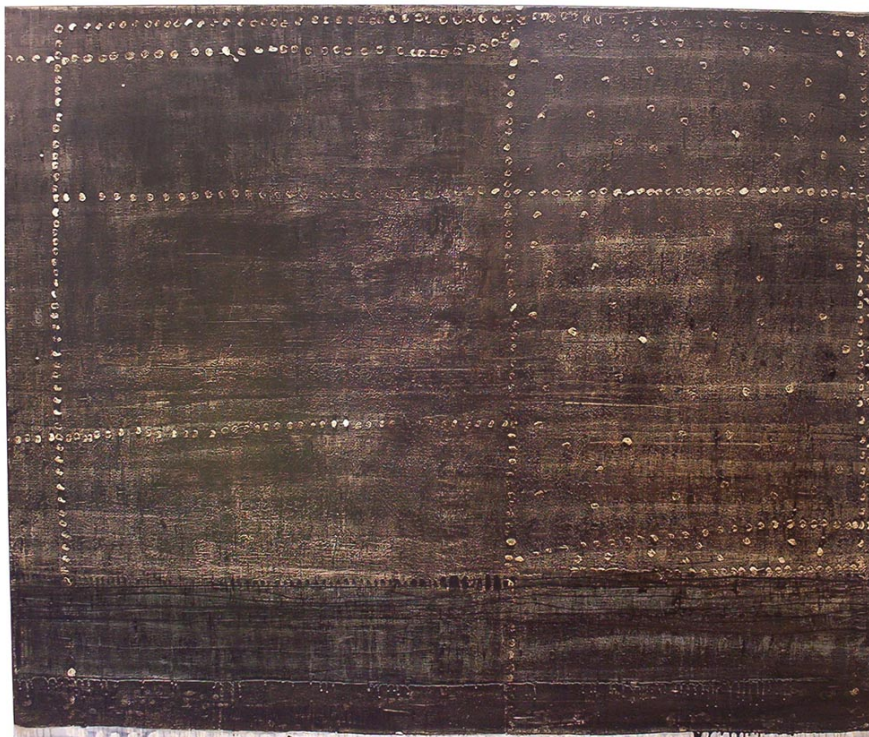


Figure 32: Terri Brooks, *White dots on black*, 2004, Oil on canvas, 153x183cm.

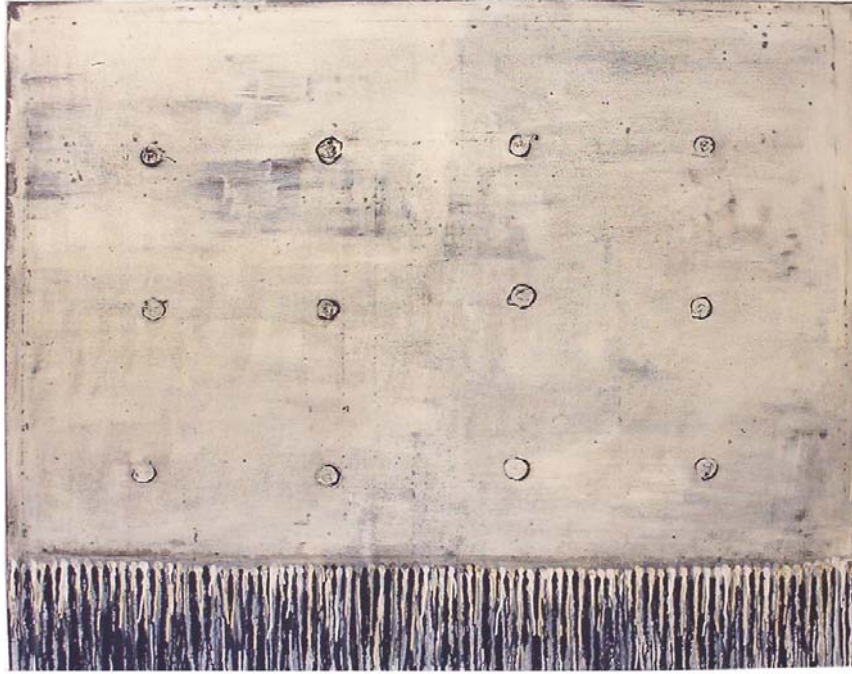


Figure 33: Terri Brooks, *Beige with black dots*, 2004, Oil on canvas, 122x153cm.



Figure 34: Terri Brooks, *White spots on beige*, 2004, Oil on canvas, 124x88cm.

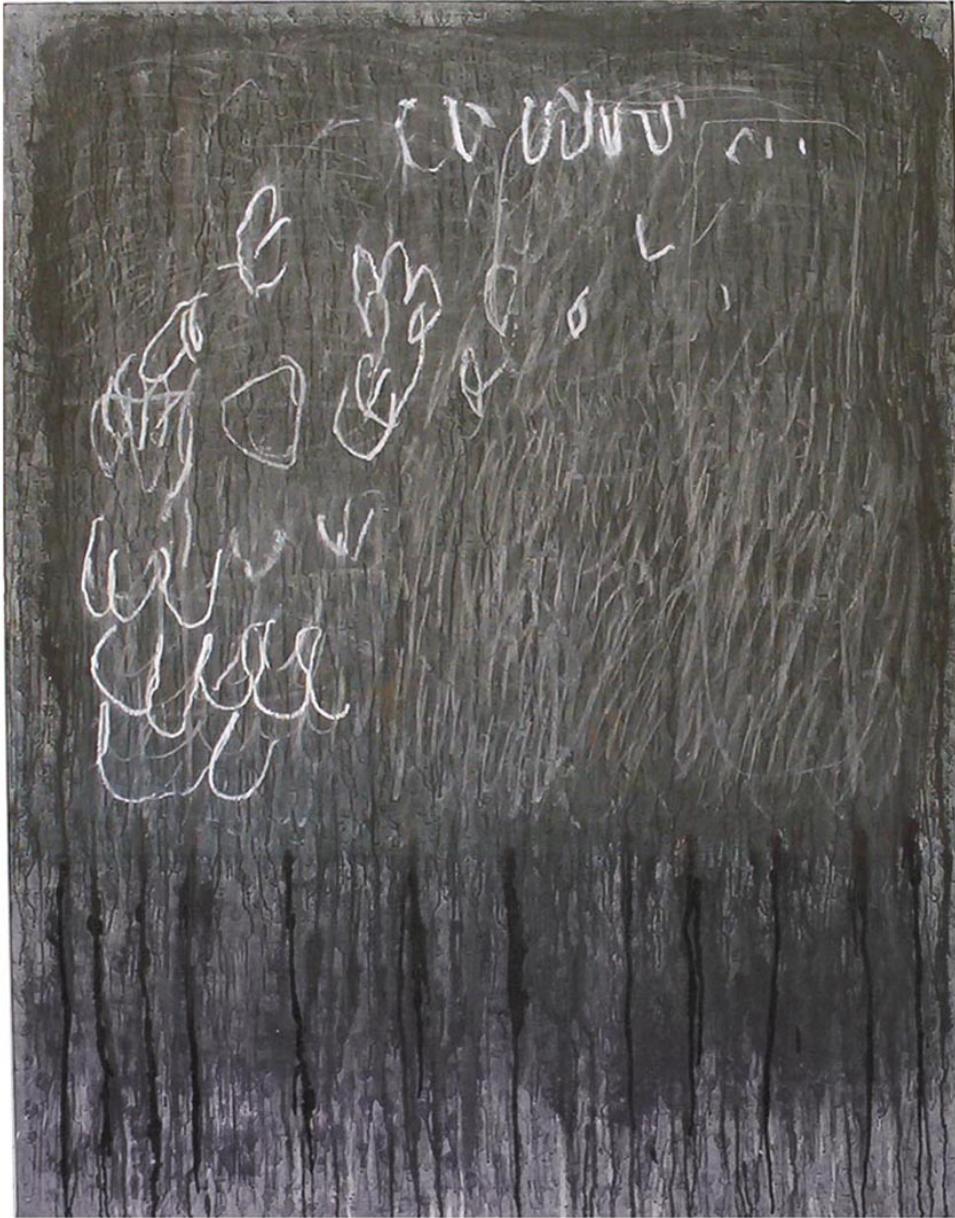


Figure 35: Terri Brooks, *Grey Play*, 2004, Oil on canvas, 137x107cm.



Figure 36: Terri Brooks, Shed, 2004, Oil on canvas, 152x183cm.



Figure 37: Terri Brooks, Thick black with white, 2005, Oil on canvas, 41x31cm.



Figure 38: Terri Brooks, Small strokes, 2005, Oil on canvas, 41x31cm.

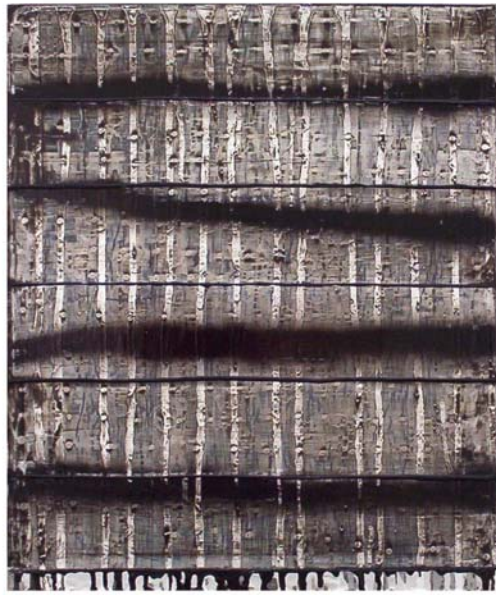


Figure 39: Terri Brooks, Four black lines, 2005, Oil on canvas, 90x70cm.



Figure 40: Terri Brook, Two black lines, 2005, Oil on canvas, 90x70cm.

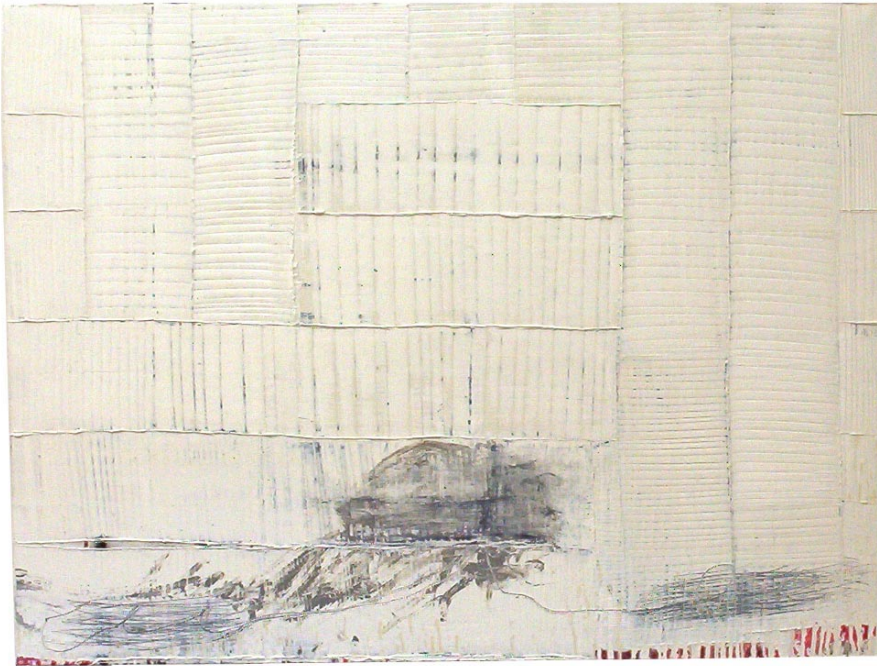


Figure 41: Terri Brooks, *Layers with small red*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 109x137cm.



Figure 42: Terri Brooks, *Layered whites*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 109x137cm.



Figure 43: Terri Brooks, *Portrait of Memories*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 153x183cm.

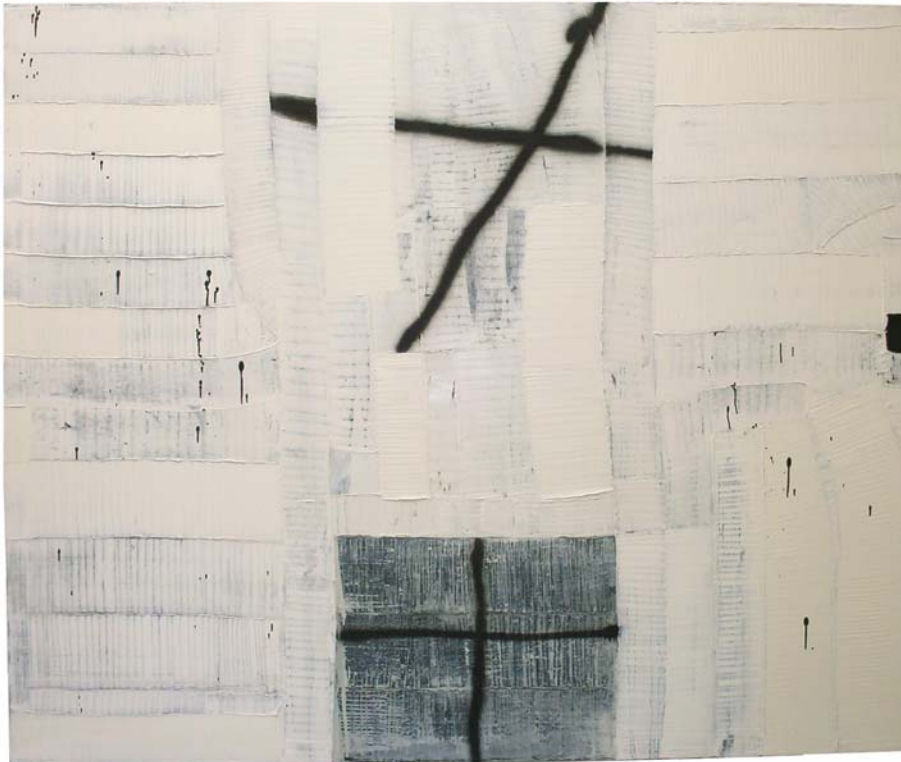


Figure 44: Terri Brooks, *Two crosses*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 153x183cm.

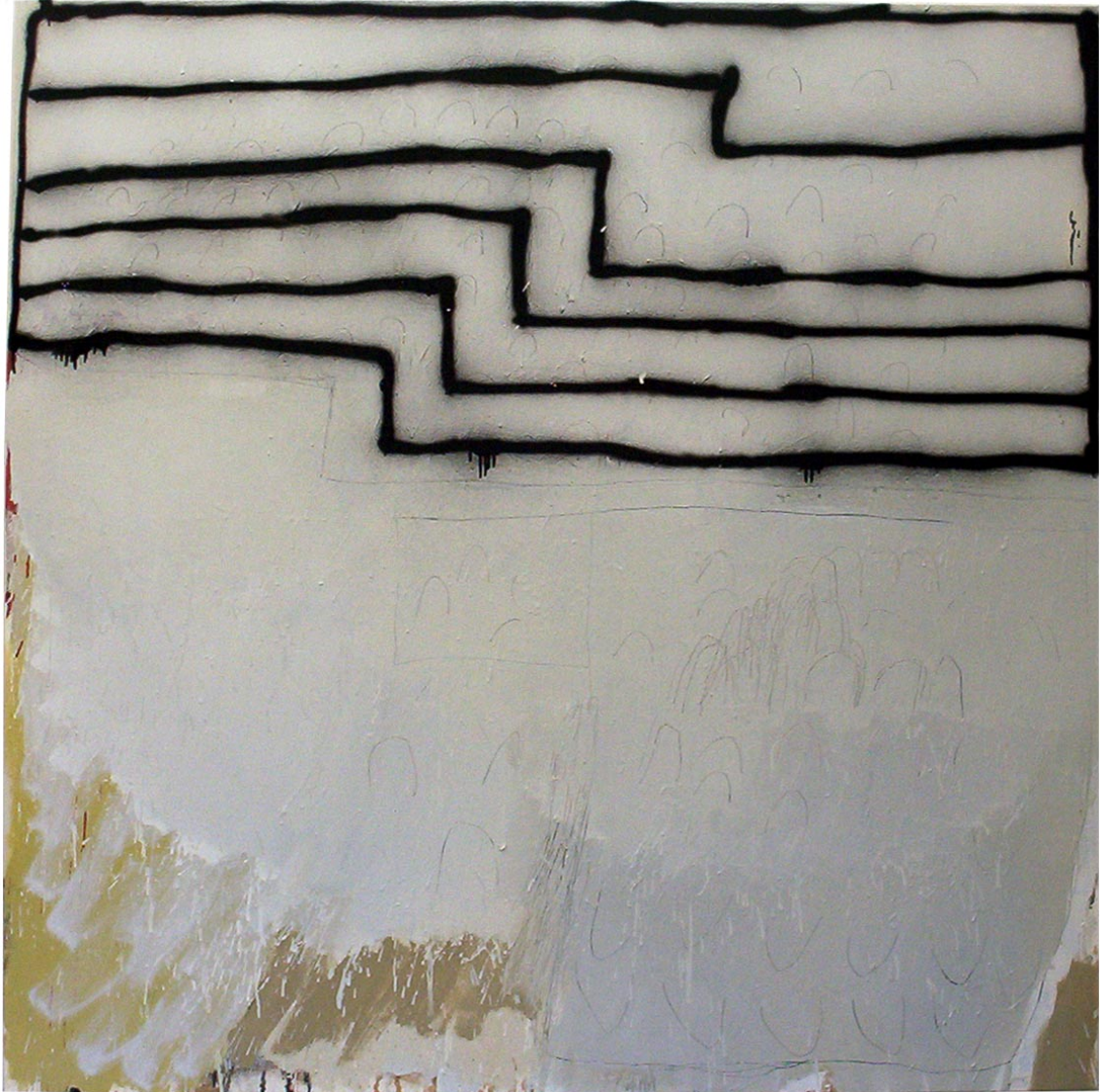


Figure 45: Terri Brooks, *Horizontal bars*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 152x152cm.