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JOHN BEARD 22 VESALIUS

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John Beard 22 Vesalius

John Beard 22 *Vesalius*

CONTENTS

METANOIA by Sue Hubbard	03
ILLUSTRATED WORKS	08
IN CONVERSATION with Catherine Milner	26
COLLECTIONS	50
CURRICULUM VITAE	51
ARTIST'S NOTES	55
SOUTH LONDON STUDIO LOCKDOWN AN EXCLAMATION IN ISOLATION Wendy Davis Beard	56

METANOIA

"I tell you that I have a long way to go before I am – where one begins…
Resolve to be always beginning – to be a beginner!"

Rainer Maria Rilke
On Love and Other Difficulties

When Odysseus started out on his last journey he knew that he would never return home but continued anyway, driven on by a thirst for knowledge. From Socrates to the German poet Rilke, artists and thinkers have tried to find answers to the point and purpose of existence. Odysseus's voyage is one of literature's most potent journeys. The questions posed are fundamental: why are we here and to what end?

There have always been individuals who travel - physically, emotionally and artistically - looking for answers. As post-Nietzschean moderns we no longer expect to find easy solutions lurking at the end of mountain ranges or rainbows. To be a painter at the beginning of the 21st century, when painting has been declared dead and revivified more times than you can utter 'ism', is a complex task. There are those, such as Cecily Brown and Richard Price, who have embraced irony, pastiche and the history of art as their milieu. For others, the choice to journey into deeper realms remains an abiding concern. To mine a seam that would have felt familiar to Rembrandt, Turner or even Cy Twombly. These artists renounce the polished surfaces and eclecticism of the postmodern to pursue depth, a tough challenge in an essentially meaningless existential world. For them, the quest is all. But directions and definitions can prove slippery. Not only psychologically, but within the medium of paint itself. A medium that has all but become exhausted by continued innovation and novelty.

For the last 50s years the art world has been so distorted by hype and careerism that it's become difficult to see the aesthetic wood for the trees. But one thing, of which we can be certain, is that most assumptions underlying both contemporary art and society are in a state of flux. As W.B. Yeats suggested more than a century ago, centres do not hold or, rather, we can no longer take it as a given that there are any fixed centres - only a ceaseless ebb and flow.

John Beard, both as man and artist, embraces this fluidity. His life has been an Odyssean search for personal and artistic fulfilment. An international rover, a watcher and close observer, he has called London, Sydney, New York and Lisbon home. This peripatetic existence reflects an ongoing internal dialogue. Aware of - as befits the previous Head of Painting at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (now Curtin University) - but outside the current framework of constrictive art world debates, his has been a bid for artistic individualism and freedom of expression.

From his native Welsh valleys to the Australian outback, via romanticism, modernism and postmodernism, John Beard has remained intellectually and artistically itinerant and unfettered. His geographical meanderings parallel his ongoing discourses as painter. The whys, the hows, the wherefores. Through his drawn and painted marks he maps undiscovered spaces like a cartographer charting new terrains. Each brush stroke smeared on canvas or paper becomes a search for fresh vistas and new worlds.

Many years ago, at a lecture by Susan Hiller, he heard her suggest that the structure of the work is its 'content', not its 'subject matter'. That thought stayed with him. In another talk at the University of Exeter in 1993, she claimed that: 'The 'self' of an artist moves reflexively through a practice, modified by what has been learned from each work made.' By training as an anthropologist, with a profound interest in psychoanalysis, Hiller was intrigued by how the chthonic informs our visual vocabulary. How ancient architypes accessed by visionaries such as William Blake, the indigenous Australians, even the ancient Greeks visiting their sacred temples in search of signs and prophesies, have long been the wellspring of artistic imagination.

Over his career John Beard has experimented with land and seascapes, with animal and human heads. His influences have been diverse, from Andrea Mantegna to John Walker and Philip Guston. He has moved through expressionist abstraction to the minimalism of Japanese mark-making in his beautiful monochromatic *Adraga* series of 1993, inspired by the rock that lies just off the Atlantic coast near Sintra in Portugal, near where he was living at the time. The speed of his mark-making, the intuitive gestures and sense of touch stripped bare of artifice, have become the hallmarks of his practice.

Lockdown has given him the chance to take a new direction. Using paper towels soaked in pungent turps held in a rubber-gloved hand, hog and sable brushes loaded with Cobalt and Cerulean Blue, Raw Siena and bleached off-white beeswax, he has swept transparent veils across his canvases to conjure a new set of 'self-portraits'. Memory played its part as an arsenal of letters and numbers drawn from Welsh grammar school O-level art returned, decades

later, in a paean of remembrance – *Avenir, Baskerville, Helvetic, Times New Roman, Futura* - to delineate the orifice of an eye socket or nose, a lip or cheek bone. These works became an extension of his exploratory mapping process: a reaching towards, an exploration that follows wherever the initial marks lead. He insists that he really didn't know what he was doing when he first embarked on this series but found himself using typographical forms to suggest the structure of a face, playing with the negative space between letters and numerals. Unsure of his direction, he worked on all sixteen canvases simultaneously, like a traveller trying different routes to arrive at their location. When he hit a dead end in one work, he simply moved to another, slowly resolving the problem through the process of making, without allowing himself to become bogged down in any one image. This continuous Beckett-like process of failing and picking himself up, allowed mistakes to be resolved as solutions. Landscapes became bodies, fonts became faces. The word became image.

He explains that in 'confronting the scale of an imaged magnified head', the gestures of his brush marks 'mimicked the natural flow and movement of the human body'. Made with a sweep of the arm and torso, instead of the hand and wrist more appropriate in scale to a life-sized head, he was following an ancient path – not he insists one looked for, but incidentally found – from ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs with their references to the human form, via the Roman architect Vitruvius and Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian man, to the measurements used by builders since the dawn of time which relate to the human reach. For Leonardo, proportions and mechanical properties of the human body were no less than an analogy for the workings of the universe. Slowly, what began to appear in Beard's recent works was a series of alphabetic and numerical forms – 'typographical hybrids' – that took on anthropomorphic elements to reveal parallels between typographic and corporeal anatomy. Andreas Vesalius, the 16th century Flemish anatomist and physician, author of the influential *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, the prototype to modern human anatomy, also became a player in this matrix of influences. As did the *The Book of Hours* c.1525 by the French humanist and engraver, Torins (Geoffroy Tory) that was published as *Champfleury* (roughly translated as 'flowery field') and subtitled 'The Art and Science of the Proportion of the Attic or Ancient Roman Letters, According to the Human Body and Face', which claimed alphabetic fonts should reflect the ideal proportions of the human form.

Once he started looking, Beard found infinite connections. In 1917 Sir Darcy Thompson pointed out in book on *Growth and Form* the correlations between biological structures and mechanical phenomena, and their relationship to the Fibonacci sequence (1). This was to be taken up later in the 20th century by Le Corbusier, who developed a universal measuring system, the 'Modulor' (2). that attempted to relate architecture to a mathematical order orientated to human scale.

Experimenting with various fonts and typefaces, Beard began to create what he refers to as 'an orchestration of fused and layered marks, the facture of the surface creating a palimpsest, a visible evidence of the chronology and history of the process of the painting itself.' He started to find parallels between the proportion, scale, contrast and weight of the typefaces with the balance and rhythm of the body, and the flow of letters in a sentence illuminated by the Bouma system (3). Gradually, through this process of experimentation, each painting found its own personality, coalescing into closely related families of roughly three or four paintings per group.

As with de Kooning's *Women* of the 1950s and 60s, the rectangle of the canvas became packed with highly charged marks, so the compact image virtually filled the picture space. As in de Kooning's *Woman in Landscape III (1968)* we are, with John Beard's iconic images *in* his body/landscapes - an intrinsic part of them - not simply viewers looking in *at* them. Enveloped by the image, we plunge into not only their physical typography but their opaque Freudian depths. Meanings are provisional: ambiguous conundrums that raise, like contemporary life itself, more questions than answers. By being *with* these experimental works, by letting ourselves journey through the process of their making, we become witnesses and fellow travellers, not to some static finite image, but to the artist's processes of thinking and the electrical charge of paint.

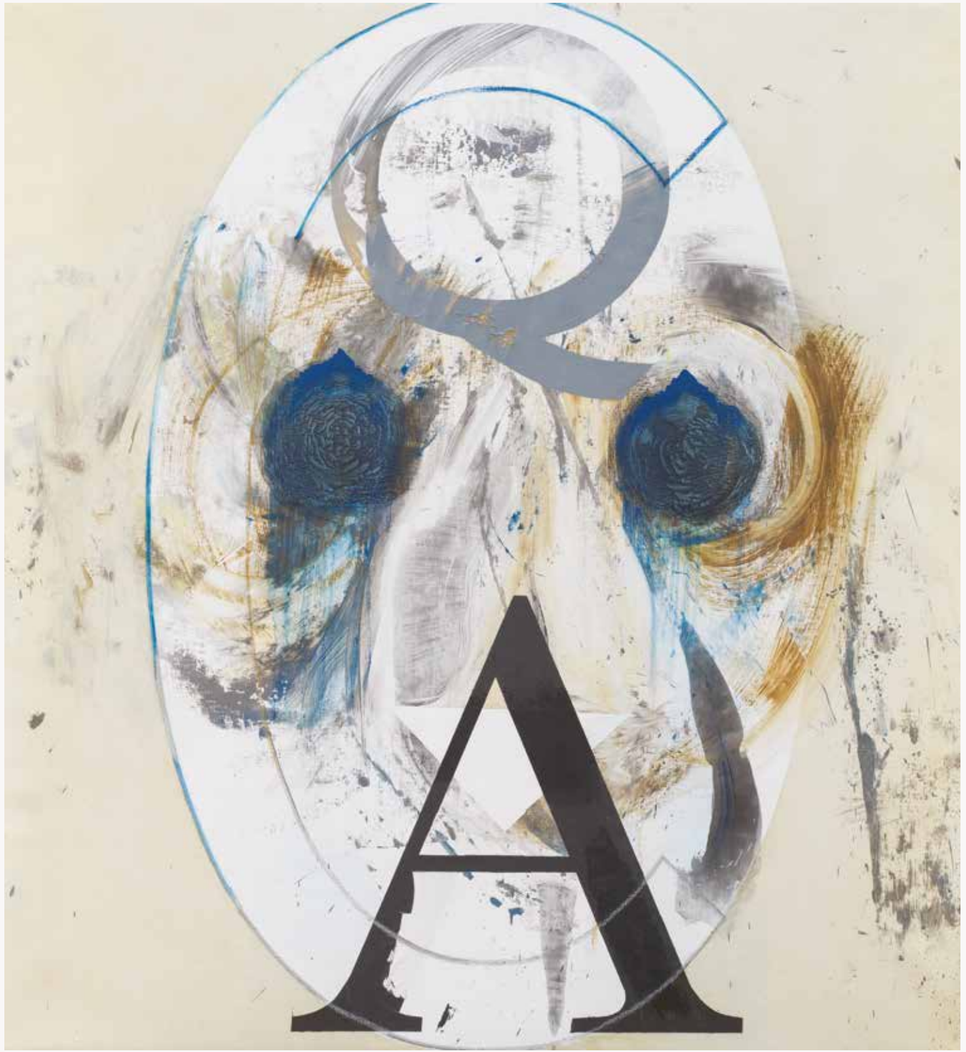
Sue Hubbard

Sue Hubbard is an award-winning poet, freelance art critic and novelist.

1. *Fibonnaci Sequence, named after Leonardo Bonnacci (c1170 - c1250), called Fibonnaci,: in mathematics Fibonacci numbers form a sequence such that each number is the sum of the two preceding ones, starting from 0 and 1. Introduced in 1202, these numbers are strongly related to the golden ratio.*
2. *The Modular: an anthropometric scale of proportions devised by the Swiss-born French architect Le Corbusier (1887-1965)*
3. *Bouma system: named after Dutch vision researcher Herman Bouma b.1934 it refers to the overall outline or shape, of a word when reading.*

24
A
6 I 9
GRACE
GRACE

A Q C,
HEAD - SP 1/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 174 cm



E ZERO,
HEAD - SP 2/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 183 cm

L S,
HEAD - SP 3/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 183 cm

R THREE = ZERO
HEAD - SP 4/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 162 cm

R Q N,
HEAD - SP 5/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 162 cm

T T (MASK),
HEAD - SP 6/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 167 cm

V,
HEAD - SP 7/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 167 cm

V ZEROC200,
HEAD - SP 8/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 168 cm

W (MASK),
HEAD - SP 9/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 183 cm

Z,
HEAD - SP 10/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 168 cm

What was your first memory of using paint?

I can remember painting a lapwing from a book of birds I found at my uncle's house where I grew up in Wales when I was about 9 or 10. I had bought myself a proper box of watercolours and a real sable brush saved for out of my pocket money. I liked using watercolours; they are very immediate and their transparency seemed magical.

Who has been your greatest influence?

I think Robin Pitman who was the head of the art department at Sir William Borlase School in Marlow back in the middle sixties. He secured my appearance in Huw Weldon's *Monitor* series of television programmes for the BBC about the arts and introduced me to a lot of ideas about science, art and philosophy as well as to a lot of interesting people. I have also been influenced by the great painter John Walker. I first met John at the RCA in the late 1970's. He encouraged me to take up a position in Australia. John is generous with support and encouragement, over the years and we have become very close friends. I still admire his work immensely.

Your style seems to contain two strands; the precise manner with which you have painted the *Raft of the Medusa and* the more gestural, expressive style of your series of self-portrait heads. What guides the style you adopt?

I like being different people – I'm somewhat of a chameleon. I'm not an artist who sticks with the same thing all the way through. It's about retaining a sense of freedom. I want to try and get away from my own shadow; to catch myself off-guard. I remember going to see a Picasso show in Paris in 1980 and thinking that each room seemed like paintings by a different artist and realising that I could do whatever I liked! When I painted *The Raft of the Medusa*, I had to apply myself and really focus on the systemic process that was required to complete the task I had set for myself. When painting the self-portrait heads, it really tormented and frustrated me in a different way. I wanted to try a different approach. Each hunch or idea usually demands a new set of rules or systems.

You seem to be using more muted colours than you did in the 1980s and 1990's. Is that a conscious shift?

In the case of *The Raft of the Medusa* I wanted to establish a complete stillness between the viewer and the painting to make people look and focus; to slow people down. So much art nowadays is a clap in the hand, but I wanted the paintings to appear elusive on first encounter as if you are perceiving an image at night. At first you can't see the forms but slowly they reveal themselves to you; painting so that it is barely visible, sitting on the very edge of perception so that slowly you unravel the structure of the painting. I also wanted to make the picture more poignant than the original and thought if I took all colour out of it, it would make it bleaker and more detached from the romantic period in which it was painted.

Like Wordsworth who wrote; *When the light of sense goes out, but with a flash that has revealed the invisible world.*

You have mentioned being taught about the Times Roman typeface when you were a child at school in Wales; what do letters and numbers mean to you?

I liked the fact that they imposed a discipline and that they come from structured systems that can be learned. Mastering it gives you a freedom and an appreciation of structures inherent in other disciplines - dance, drawing, music etc.

My first encounter with lettering came from seeing some beautifully carved relief lettering on slate on ledger stones laid on the floor of St David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire in Wales. I have always been fascinated by typefaces and numbers in all their guises. I made a connection between them and human anatomy with their 'feet', 'shoulders,' 'arms', 'ears' and 'spines'.

The beautiful series of Number works by Jasper Johns also came to mind, especially one titled *0-9*.

In 1983 you left Britain to go and live in Australia; what were the events that led up to that decision?

I was offered a position as head of Fine Art at Curtin University in Western Australia. It was the right thing for me at the time and a whole weight seemed to be taken off my shoulders; I felt I could do anything I wanted to do. There was a new energy in my paintings. Several years later I moved to New York where I lived for a couple of years and then moved to Madrid and Lisbon living and working for two to three years in each city. I have become nomadic; some people have suggested fugitive! I must admit that I thrive by refreshing the screen.

You have taught as well as painted for much of your life, a lot of young artists are not even engaging with paint. Do you think painting has had to shift position to maintain relevance or is the ship too big, so to speak, to be blown off course?

Painting is never going to go away because it results in something that is unique. But yes, it has to continue to 'shift' as you put it, although sometimes I think it shifts backwards too often - there is a lot of pedestrian and constipated stuff out there. I find that insulting to the courageous artists who have all in their way placed a brick in the wall - even a very small brick! Painting poses difficult problems; they are ongoing and offer a continuous challenge. The medium is unique in its plasticity; in its stuffness of stuff! There aren't many materials that can be transformed with such versatility.

Each stage provides a means for split-second retrospective analysis - demanding a response through hand and eye, by thought and action, conception and practice.

Paint has a physical presence - you can even smell it - it's facture and a sensuality. When you stand in front of a major work you witness a challenge set before you, an experience that informs and inspires, but also a point of reference that measures where you are, and with what you have to deal and wrestle with - that is if you decide that you want to continue with any engaging practice.

Have any new developments in art really excited you recently?

I am entertained with the broadening notion of what art is now considered to be. This often produces fatuous nonsense, but this is also a necessary condition for innovative and experimental practice to exist. From tons of rubbish there are moments of revelation and brilliance, the young are often better at mounting surprises!

I do applaud the continuing dismantlement of rigid single medium based practices within our educational systems. It's getting the correct balance between the nurturing of concepts and the methodologies of practice though that is key.

TWO C TWO,
HEAD - SP 11/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 156 cm

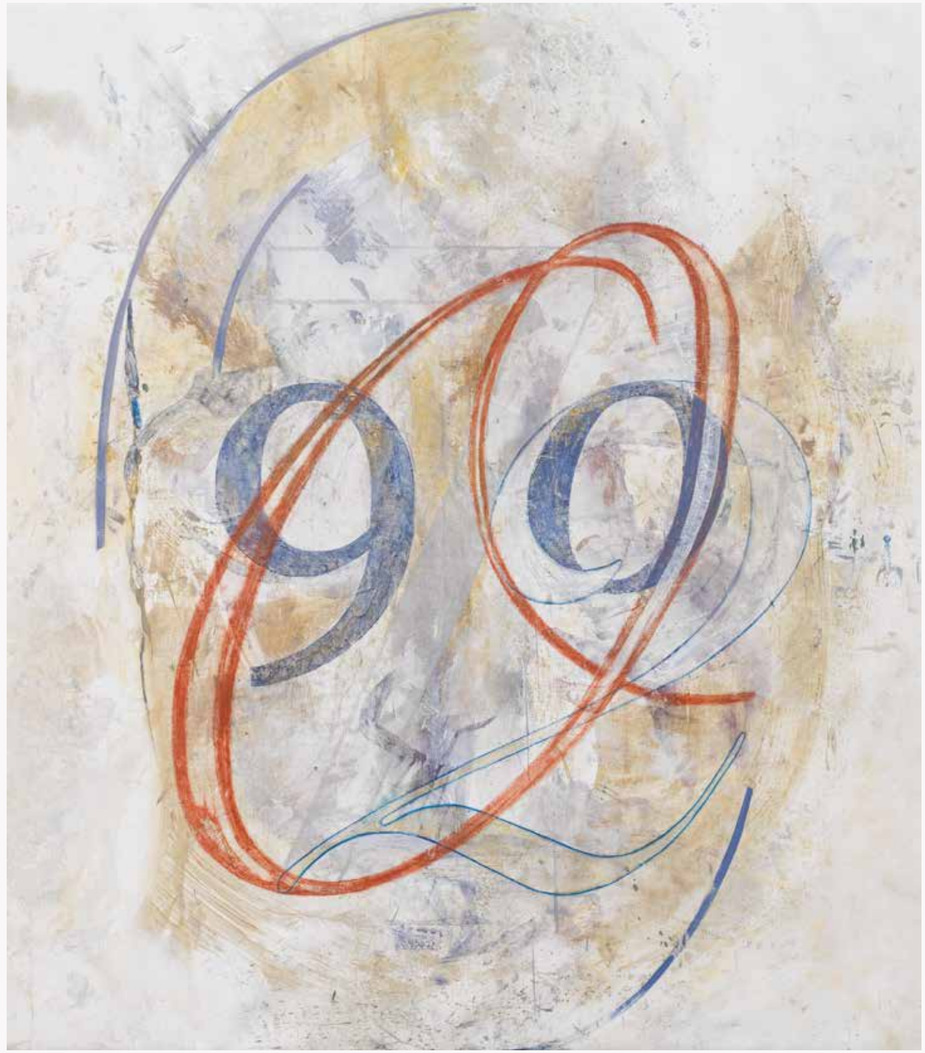
TWO FOUR S ZERO,
HEAD- SP 12/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 166 cm

TWO TWO,
HEAD - SP 13/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 162 cm

EIGHT T,
HEAD - SP 14/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 156 cm

SIX NINE IX,
HEAD - SP 15/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 174 cm

NINE ZERO TWO O,
HEAD - SP 16/2020
Oil and wax on linen
190 x 166 cm



PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Artbank Australia, Australia
Arts Council of Great Britain, England
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Australia
Bibliotheque Nationale de France Paris, France
Buckinghamshire Education Authority, England
Canberra National Convention Centre, Australia
Centro do Arte Moderna da Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Portugal
Curtin University, Perth, Australia
Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia
The Irving Deal Collection of Contemporary Drawings, Dallas, Texas, USA
The Kedumba Collection of Contemporary Australian Drawings, NSW Australia.
Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia
Mount Gambia Regional Gallery, Mount Gambia, Australia
Mobil corporation, Australia
Murdoch University, Sydney, Australia
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
National Library of Wales, United Kingdom
New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale, Australia
New Parliament House Collection, Canberra, Australia
Oxford University, England
Kunsthalle Darmstadt, Germany
Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia
Robert Holmes a Court Collection, Perth, Australia
Royal College of Art, London, England
Rural and Industries Bank, Australia
Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui, New Zealand
Shell Corporation, Australia
Soho House Collection, Amsterdam/ London/ New York
State Bank of New South Wales, Australia
State Library, Perth Cultural Centre, Australia
S.G.I.O. Australia
Sydney University, Australia
Tate Gallery, London, England
University of Melbourne (Victorian College of the Arts), Australia
University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
University of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Australia
University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
Woolongong Regional Gallery, Australia

CURRICULUM VITAE

Born 1943, Aberdare, Wales. Became Permanent Resident of Australia 1983, dual citizen of Britain and Australia 1990. From 1990, divides time between London, Sydney and Europe.

Studied at Swansea College of Art, University of London and the Royal College of Art.

CHRONOLOGY

1968-70
Taught in various schools, colleges and universities in the UK. Produced and appeared in series of Art & Design programmes for BBC1 and BBC 2 Television.

1974-79
Senior Lecturer in Fine Art, Milton Keynes College/Open University.

1975-79
Member of the Board of Studies for Art & Design, University of Oxford.

1979-83
Part-time Lecturer, Middlesex University, London.

1983-86
Senior Lecturer, Head of Painting, Curtin University, Western Australia.

1986-89
Head of Fine Art, Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia.

1986
Worked in New York and New Delhi (Artist-in-Residence at Lalit Kala Akademi Indian Arts Council, New Delhi for three months).

1987-89
Exhibited in Los Angeles and Chicago.

1989
Awarded Australian Council Fellowship. Worked for four months in New York. Resigned from tenured position at Curtin University.

1990-91
Moved to New York City to live and work whilst preparing solo exhibitions for New York and Chicago.

1991
Returned to Australia for three months to work/exhibit in Sydney.

1991-93
Moved to Madrid, Spain to live and work and prepare for solo exhibitions.

1993-93
Moved to Lisbon, Portugal, completing solo exhibitions for London and Lisbon.

1993
Six month Artist-In-Residency at University of Melbourne's, Victoria College of the Arts, with Dunmoochin Foundation Studio.

1994-96
Returned (via India) to Portugal to prepare for exhibitions in Lisbon, Madrid and London. Invited to work with Tavira Print Workshop (Southern Portugal).

1996
Four month Artist-in-Residency with the Sarjeant Gallery in Wanganui, New Zealand.

1997
Established base in Sydney. One Month Artist-in-Residency with College of Fine Arts University of New South Wales. Worked in New York and the UK for three months.

1998
Completed first short film in Sydney. Solo exhibitions in Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Ten week A.I.R. and two part solo exhibition at Tate Gallery St. Ives, England.

1999
In Sydney, prepares for solo exhibitions in Europe, commencing in year 2000. Continued printing project with Tavira Print Workshop.

2000
Resident, Art Gallery of New South Wales Studio, Cite Internationale des Artes, Paris.

2001-09
Continues working in Australia and the UK, with exhibitions in London, Lisbon and Sydney. Appointed as Professorial Visiting Fellow in the School of Art, College of Fine Art, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

2010 - 20
In 2011 a major monograph of his work was published and launched in London at The Royal Academy of Art by Sir Charles Saumarez Smith and in Sydney, at The AGNSW by the late Edmund Capon, director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In February 2010 he became a Trustee of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

2016 - 20
The artist divides his time between Sydney, London. Europe and moves from Sydney to live and work in London where he establishes a studio and residence in Greenwich. Continues to visit studio and residence in Greenwich. continues to visit and work in Spain, Italy and Australia.

The artist Is represented by Dominik Mersch Gallery in Sydney, Australia and by Messums London and Messums Wiltshire in the UK.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1981
Drawings and Paintings, Cockpit Theatre Gallery London, England

1984
Festival of Perth Exhibition, Galerie Dusseldorf, Festival of Perth Exhibition, Australia

1985
Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

Realities Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

1986
Galerie Dusseldorf, Perth, Australia

Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

Lalit Kala Akademi (Indian Arts Council), New Delhi, India

1987
Galerie Dusseldorf, Perth, Australia

Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

Realities Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

1988
Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

1989
Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

1990
Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

Realities Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

1991
Christopher Leonard Gallery, New York, USA

Representing Macquarie Galleries, Australia at the Chicago International Art Fair, Chicago, USA

Delaney Galleries, Perth, Australia

Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

1992
Pinturas 1989-92, Afinsa Almirante Galeria de Arte, Madrid, Spain

1993
The William Jackson Gallery, London, England

1994
The Beautiful and the Damned I, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, Australia

The Beautiful and the Damned II, BMG Gallery, Adelaide, Australia.

1995
ADRAGA I, Galeria Luis Serpa, (Galeria Comicos), Lisbon, Portugal

ADRAGA II, Galeria Gomes Alves, Guimaraes, Portugal

ADRAGA III, 15th Festival De Musica Capuchos, Visual Installation, Lisbon, Portugal

1998
Part I: After Adraga (May-Sept), Tate Gallery, St. Ives, England

Part II: The Land's End (Sept-Nov),Tate Gallery, St. Ives, England

Heads Phase I & III (Self Portraits and Wanganui Heads), Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Heads Phase III (Wanganui Heads), Sarjeant Art Gallery, New Zealand

Heads Phase I (Self Portraits), Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide, Australia

Heads Phase III (Wanganui Heads), New England Art Museum, Armidale, Australia

1999
After Adraga/The Land's End, Installation of selected works from the Tate St Ives, UK, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

2000
The Land's End II, Galeria Presenca, Porto, Portugal

Age of Prescription, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide, Australia

Ocean, Jensen Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand

The Rock and The Head, Stephen Lacey Gallery, London, England

2002
The Head and Uluru, (catalogue essay Anthony Bond) Boutwell

Draper Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2004
John Beard: Headlands, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2005-6
John Beard, Centro de Arte Moderna, (curated with catalogue essay by Ana Vasconcelos) Calouste Gulbenkian Museo, Lisbon, Portugal

2006
Eight Years, John Buckley Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

2007
Other Faces, (catalogue essay by Stephen Bann), Fine Art Society,
London, England

2008
Sphinx Einstein and the Panda, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2009
After Image, John Buckley Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

Headland: (a tacit Knowing) a survey exhibition 1993-2009

(curated with catalogue essay by William Wright) Australian National University Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra, Australia

2010
Eminent Women, Fine Art Society, London, England.

2011
Beyond the VEIL , WILLIAM WRIGHT //ARTISTS PROJECTS, Sydney, Australia.

2012
Beyond The Veil II, John Buckley Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

John Beard: Paintings 1992-2012, Hales Gallery, London, England

Buttress, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney, Australia

John Beard Paintings, Hales Gallery, London England

2013
Paintings by John Beard, The Fine Society, London, England

2016
After the Raft of the Medusa, William Wright Artists Projects, Sydney, Australia

After the Raft of the Medusa, The Meridian Greenwich Studio, Greenwich, London

2017
A Reflection after the Raft of the Medusa. GIAF (Galway International Arts Festival) Galway, Ireland.

2018
A Reflection after the Raft of the Medusa. The Meridian Greenwich Studio, Greenwich, London

2021
22 Vesalius, Messums Gallery London, UK

Reflections, Messums Gallery Wiltshire, UK

New Paintings, Messums Gallery Wiltshire, UK

New Paintings, Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney, Australia

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1980
50th Anniversary, Mall Galleries, London, England

Whitechapel Annual, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, England

1980
Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy Galleries, London, England

1981
Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy Galleries, London, England

Reliefs, Royal College of Art Gallery, London, England

Drawing 81, Arts Council of Great Britain (Touring)

1982
Whitechapel Annual, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, England

New Painters, Morley Gallery, London, England

100 Years of Art Education, Middlesex Polytechnic Gallery, London, England

1983
Show of Presence, Praxis Gallery, Fremantle, Australia

Pegasus Art Award, The Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth

1984
Form-Image-Sign, Biannual Survey of Contemporary Australian Art, The Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

Destination China, Western Australian Contemporary Art,

Guangzhon/Canton, China.

Fremantle National Drawing Prize Invitation Exhibition, Fremantle Art Gallery, Australia

Western Australian Art Award, Fremantle Art Gallery, Australia

1985
Western Australian Art Award, Fremantle Art Gallery, Australia

Fremantle Prize for Drawing, Fremantle Art Gallery, Australia

Five Painters in Western Australia, Galerie Dusseldorf, Festival of Perth, West Australia

Artists Salute LLoyd Rees, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

Mandorla Art Prize Invitation Exhibition, New Norcia Gallery, Western Australia, Australia

Australian Perspecta 85, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

9th Anniversary Exhibition, Galerie Dusseldorf, Perth, Australia

1986
Hugh Williamson Invitation Exhibition, City of Ballarat Art Gallery, Victoria, Australia

1987
Invisible Cities, Praxis Gallery, Fremantle, Australia

Western Australian Drawings, The Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

Art Purchase Exhibition, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Recent Work -13 Artists, Galerie Dusseldorf, Perth, Australia

Painters' Visions, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

Chicago International Art Exposition, (Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia) Chicago, USA

ART/LA 87, International Art Fair, (Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia) Los Angeles USA

1988
Recent Australian Art, Houston International Festival, Texas, USA

Lake Macquarie Art Award Exhibition, Lake Macquarie Regional Art Gallery, Australia

Melbourne Contemporary Art Fair, (Macquarie Galleries, Sydney; Realities Gallery, Melbourne; and Galerie Dusseldorf, Perth) Melbourne, Australia
Works on Paper, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

The Self Portrait, David Jones Gallery, Sydney, Australia

Australian Drawings, Gallery Anne Gregory, Sydney, Australia

Wood Cut, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

A Celebration, Realities Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

ART/LA 88, International Art Fair, (Macquarie Galleries, Sydney and Realities Gallery, Melbourne, Australia) Los Angeles USA

1989
Mindscapes, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Chicago International Art Exposition, (Macquarie Galleries, Sydney) Chicago, USA

Painters' Visions, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

Fremantle Print Award, Fremantle Arts Centre, Western Australia,

Inaugural Exhibition, Ameringer & Avard Gallery, New York, USA

1990
Melbourne Art Fair (Macquarie Galleries, Sydney and Realities, Melbourne) Melbourne, Australia

Works on Paper, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

Visual Instincts, Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney, Australia

International Works on Paper, Christopher Leonard Gallery, New York, USA

1991
Veiled Illusions, Delaney Gallery, Festival of Perth, West Australia

Inauguration of New Gallery, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, Australia

1992
The Summer Seen, The William Jackson Gallery, London, England

1993
Art Chicago International, (William Jackson Gallery, London) Chicago, USA

Inauguration (With Gallery Artists: John Beard, David Mack, Jock McFadyen, Eduardo Paolozzi, Adrian Wiszniewski, Bruce McLean) William Jackson Gallery, London, England

Accrochage (with Jose Maria Sicillia, Juliao Sarmento and Michael Biberstein) Galeria Comicos/Luis Serpa, Lisbon, Portugal

London International Art Fair (William Jackson Gallery) England

1994
Manchester Art Fair, The William Jackson Gallery, England

The Summer Seen, The William Jackson Gallery, London, England

London International Art Fair, William Jackson, London, England

Melbourne Contemporary Art Fair, BMG Art, Adelaide, Australia

12th Biennale de Zamora, Zamora, Spain

1995
London International Art Fair (William Jackson Gallery), England

ARCO, International Art Fair (Galeria Luis Serpa, Portugal and Afinsa Almirante, Spain), Madrid, Spain

1997
Inaugural Exhibition, Tavira Print Workshop, Tavira, Portugal

1999
The Possibilities of Portraiture, The National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, Australia

2000
ARCO (Galeria Presenca, Portugal), Madrid, Spain

Melboune Art Fair (Paul Greenaway Gallery, Adelaide) Australia

Painting the Century, 101 Portrait Masterpieces 1900-2000 representing 1998 with Wanganui Heads, (nine paintings + video installation). The National Portrait Gallery, London, England

2001
1m x 1m, Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney Australia

2002
HEAD ON: Art with the Brain in Mind, The Science Museum, London, England

The Shell Collection, National Gallery of Victoria, Australia

2004
Gallery Artists, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney, Australia

Recent Acquisitions, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra,

The Year in Art, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2005
Archibald Prize (Finalist), Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia

Small is Beautiful XX111, Flowers Central Gallery, London, England

Black Epiphanies, Virginia Wilson Gallery, Sydney, Australia

The Whaling Road Print Studio, Mosman Art Gallery, Australia

2006
Sullman Prize (Finalist), Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia

Archibald Prize (Finalist), Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia Wynne Prize (Winner), Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia

Who Cares? Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney, Australia

The Big Picture, Delmar Gallery, Sydney, Australia

The Sixth Drawing Biennale, Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

A Man's World, Museum of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Blake Prize (Finalist), College of Fine Arts, Sydney, Australia

Monochromed, FAS (Fine Art Society), London, England

Kedumba Collection of Contemporary Australian Drawings (Winner)

Paddington Art Prize (Winner), Sydney, Australia

2007
London Art Fair (represented by Fine Art Society), London, England

Gulf Art Fair, (represented by Fine Art Society, London) Dubai, UAE

Eye to "I", conceptions of self in recent art, curated by Geoffrey J Wallis, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia

Archibald Prize (Winner) Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia

Australian Drawing, John Buckley Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

2008
Melbourne Art Fair (represented by Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney and John Buckley Buckley Gallery, Melbourne) Melbourne, Australia.

Scope Art Fair, Basel (represented by Fine Art Society, London)

Scope Art Fair Miami (represented by Fine Art Society, London)

2009
London Art Fair (represented by Fine Art Society, London) England.

Gesichtlos- die Ästhetik des Diffusen/ Faceless- the aesthetics of Diffusion, Kunsthalle Darmstadt, (curated with essay by Dr Peter Joch) Darmstadt, Germany.

Encomium Fine Art Society, London, England

2010
Superstiton, John Buckley Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

Kilgour Prize for figurative Painting, Newcastle Region Art Gallery, Australia

2011
International Works on Paper, John Buckley Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

Heads, Utopia Art Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2013
'Australia', The Royal Academy of Arts, London, England

2015
Archibald Prize (Finalist), Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia

2019
The Summer Show, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK

Archibald Prize (Finalist), Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia

Mountains Become Islands, (curated by Alanna Irwin) Dominik

Mersch Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2020
Secret Garden, (curated by Alanna Irwin and Asleigh Jones)

Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney, Australia

Curating in Contrast, Messums Gallery London, UK

ARTIST'S TALKS/TELEVISION

TALKS

1983
Australian University Lecture Tour - Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra

1985
The Invisible Visible, The Inaugural Lecture for The Robert Holmes A Court Prize, Albany, Western Australia. Annual Salek Mink Lecture, Forces and Constraints, University of WA

1990
Invitational Lecture to Graduate Students, ARCO (Portuguese School of Fine Art)

Introduction to the collection for the guides of the The Thyssen- Bornemisza Museum in Madrid in preparation for the public opening

1996
Research in the Visual Arts, Lecture to the Faculty of Fine Arts, Plymouth University, UK

1997
Public Lecture, Current Practice, Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui, New Zealand

1997
Artist-in-Residence Lecture to the Graduate Students of The College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney. Invitational Lecture to Students and Faculty, The National Arts School, Sydney, Australia

Invitational Public Lecture to Graduate Students University Western Nepean NSW, Australia

1998
Public Lecture by John Beard, After Adraga, Tate Gallery, St Ives, England

Public Forum by Stephen Bann, East West, Tate Gallery, St Ives, England

2000
Pulbic Lecture, Current Practice, Ocean, Andrew Jensen Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand.

2002
Invitational Lecture, Slade School of Art, University College, London, England

2007
Paper given to The Artist/Gallery Relationship: How to Make it Work, Arts

Week seminar, introduced by Robyn Ayres (Arts Law), with additional papers by Gene Sherman (Director Arts foundation) and Tamara Winikoff, (National Association for the Visual Arts), Arts Law Centre of Australia and the City of Sydney

Invitational Lecture for the the George Lambert retrospective. National Gallery of Australia.

ABC radio, Mornings with Margaret Throsby. 17 Apr 2007 ... 10.05am

John Beard Artist Winner of the 2007 Archibald Prize.

2014
Talk to faculty at The Academy of Visual Arts, HKBU Hong Kong

2020
Studio Story, online talk with john Beard and Johnny Messum, Podcast, Messums Gallery London and Wiltshire.

TELEVISION

BBC Television England
Man Made, Series of six half hour programmes for BBC 2, repeated on BBC1,presented by John Barnicot, John Beard, Robin Pitman and Anthony Thornton, produced by Nancy Thomas,1968.

ABC Television Australia
Solo Exhibition - Festival of Perth, Presented by Ted Snell for Perth, February 1984.

Curtin University
"Statements Series, John Beard, Painter", Produced and Presented by Ted Snell for EMC Curtin University of Technology and the Christensen Fund, Perth, 1986

SBS Television
Australia Solo Exhibition - The Beautiful and the Damned, Adelaide, Produced and Presented by Paul McGillick for SBS : IMAGINE, Sydney, July 1994.

SBS Television Australia
ADRAGA, Profile in Portugal, Produced and Presented by Paul McGillick for SBS : IMAGINE, Sydney, November 1994. Canal 2 Portugal

ADRAGA - Solo Exhibition - Galeria Luis Serpa, Lisbon, Production of Zebra Radiotelievisao Filmes, Lisbon, Portugal for "VER ARTES", Radiotelievisao Portuguesa, Canal 2, presented by Alexandre Melo, January 1995.

BBC Television England
Tate Gallery St Ives Fifth Anniversary, BBC South West Production for "Spotlight", England, May 1998.

2015
Broadcast on CHANNEL 9, AUSTRALIA, 'HANGING AUSTRALIA' documentary about the survey exhibition of 200 years of Australian art at The Royal Academy of Arts in London. Produced by Wildbear Entertainment in association with The National Gallery of Australia

22 VESALIUS

RETURN TO A FAMILIAR OBSESSION

My decision to make a new set of self-portraits posed a new set of problems. If they were to be new, then they should be fresh and original; at least in their appearance to myself. Ideally, something that I had not seen before.

I have made several series of self-portraits over the last four decades. I titled all of them variations of HEAD/SP 6/97 (meaning Head/self-portrait number 6/1997). Each series was different from its predecessor; different in the sense that I attempted a new way of going about them. There is considerable variation in the series, ranging from the figurative to the abstracted, with some occupying that liminal space in-between representation and abstraction.

My idea with this series was to start anew by eliminating all the usual means by which one would attempt a self-portrait. Referencing oneself by means of a mirror, using photographs, videos, and of course existing drawings and paintings.

Through my construction of a self-imposed void, I was confronted with a naked beginning. I demolished all previously known parameters and constraints from which my self-portraiture had hitherto developed. In so doing, I provided for my practice a boundless revitalised framework.

The self-portrait is perhaps used here as a vehicle for a convenient continuum within my practice. Depictions of other human and animal heads, sea and landscapes, reflections on iconic historical paintings and artefacts, collaborative works with my children, multimedia installations about time, mapping, description and prescription. All these, one could argue, are vehicles for a continuing search toward the unfamiliar.

Working on all sixteen canvases simultaneously established a continuum between each painting. Mistakes and failures occurring in one work were exchanged for successful solutions in another. There existed, of course, an inherent danger of comparing, combining and of homogenisation. I wanted each painting to have its own identity and personality - its own life force. I think in the end, there were closely related sets or 'families' of three, four or five within the total group, and perhaps one or two that are oddly different.

The point of these paintings is painting itself, not just the ostensible object. The series proposes definitions of reality as provisional, in the acknowledgement that we are all involved in creating individual and collective notions of the 'real'.

And so this series is derived of a dumb intelligence; a tacit knowledge.

What resulted was an orchestration of marks fused and layered, the facture of the surface creating a palimpsest; a visible evidence of the chronology and history of the work itself.

The freedom of the mark, the speed of the gesture.

The sense of touch - light, heavy, assertive, assured, hesitant, nervous.

Wandering and moving away from one's own shadow - the escape.

An emanation of self and other, between the imagined and the real, feigned and untrue, sincere and vulnerable.

An evocation rather than a representation, a tacit knowing.

No answers, just questions.

John Beard, Artist's Notes, July 2020

For further information: www.johnbeardart.com

South London Studio Lockdown

An exclamation in isolation

My days are delineated by both dramatic & incremental adjustments my husband makes on his new body of head paintings. Shapes, colours and now typography too, shift around the studio responding like an orchestra to his hog and sable brushes loaded with oil paint - Cobalt and Cerulean Blue, Raw Sienna, Cremanitz White and bleached off-white bees wax. Pigments wiped, re-applied and animated again.

Paper towels soaked in pungent turpentine held tight in gloved hand - swipe across several veils of transparent paint. An arsenal of letters and numbers drawn from Welsh Grammar School O-level art, have returned 6 decades later to delineate a particular eye, nose or lip....Avenir, Arial, Andale Mono, Baskerville, Bodoni 72, Didot, Helvetica, Optima, Palatino, Times New Roman and Futura.

Skulls left with open orifices: 'Universal Heads' - without racial reference - even as this pandemic discriminates. Ravaging blacks, browns and Asians too. Plastic sheets laden with colour squeezed directly from lead tubes, or scraped from a pigment covered glass topped trolley are scumbled over many passages of colour and shapes. Challenging for me to decode from one, two, three, four or more days before. An exclamation in isolation!

Wendy Davis Beard

Photograph by Wendy Davis Beard