
Glenn Brown

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28. *Swing Time*, 2016



Glenn Brown

Essays by
James Clifton and Jeff Fleming

Interview with Glenn Brown
by Steven Matijcio

Des Moines Art Center

Introduction and Acknowledgments

Jeff Fleming

My first exposure to Glenn Brown's art was in a collectors' home in Des Moines, more than fifteen years ago. This couple was interested in images that they connected with intuitively and artworks they wanted to live with daily. Apparently, Brown's small painting had struck a chord with them, as it subsequently did with me. Whenever I visited their home, I would be mesmerized by the contorted portrait hanging in their living room. I was taken by the appearance of texture when there was none; I was engaged by its references to the past though it was clearly of the moment. Its value to me lay not solely in its aesthetic appeal, although there was great beauty there, but in the authority and potency of its source material, as well as the artist's labor involved in its reinterpretation.

Brown's contributions to British art since the mid-1990s have been substantial. He was part of a group of young artists, along with Gary Hume, Damien Hirst, Mark Quinn, Jake and Dinos Chapman, and Tracy Emin, among others, who engendered a resurgence of British art in the 1990s. His work was included in the now infamous *Sensation* exhibition, featuring the collection of Charles Saatchi, which was shown at the Royal Academy in London, the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, and the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Brown was nominated for Britain's Turner Prize in 2000, and his work was featured in that year's Turner Prize exhibition at Tate Britain, along with Wolfgang Tillmans, Tomoko Takahashi, and Michael Raedecker. Brown's work has been widely collected, and he has exhibited extensively in Europe. This is his first one-person museum exhibition in the United States.

The Des Moines Art Center is honored to introduce Brown's art to American audiences, and we are grateful for the support of many individuals and organizations. The Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati is a partner in these efforts, hosting the show after its premier in Des Moines. I thank both Curator Steven Matijcio and Director Raphaela Platow for making this possible. In Cincinnati, the Cincinnati Art Museum is collaborating with the Contemporary Arts Center to present a parallel project. Gagosian Gallery, through the expert efforts of Hannah Freedberg and Roxane Perineau, has been an invaluable partner as well.

We are grateful to the many individuals and museums who lent works of art to the exhibition; without their support, this project could not have taken shape. We thank The Art Institute of Chicago, Stefan T. Edlis and Gael Neeson, Glenn and Amanda Fuhrman, Larry Gagosian, Gagosian Gallery, Galerie Max Hetzler, Olbricht Collection, Gina and Stuart Peterson, two private collections, Rennie Collection, Walker Art Center, and the artist himself. The Art Center staff, as always, has worked together to make the project a success. Chief Preparator Jay Ewart and his staff, Chief Registrar Mickey Ryan and her staff, along with Development Director Emily Bahnsen, Director of Marketing and Public Relations Christine Doolittle, and Director of Education Jill Featherstone added their expertise to every facet. This catalogue includes an essay by James Clifton, director of the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation and curator of Renaissance and Baroque Painting, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and an interview between the artist and Steven Matijcio. Annabel Wimer created the beautiful design, and Terry Ann R. Neff provided her editorial expertise. In addition, we are especially grateful to the National Endowment for the Arts for its financial support of this exhibition, Humanities Iowa for its related programs, and *Cityview* for media support. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the artist, Glenn Brown, and his partner, Edgar Laguinia, for their irreplaceable support, enthusiasm, and involvement.

Glenn Brown

1. *You Never Touch My Skin in the Way You Did, and You've Even Changed the Way you Kiss Me*, 1994





2. Previous page: *The Pornography of Death (Painting for Ian Curtis) Copied from 'Floating Cities' 1981 by Chris Foss*, 1995
3. Facing page: *Searched Hard for You and Your Special Ways*, 1995



4. *Shallow Deaths*, 2000



5. *Anaesthesia*, 2001



6. *Dark Star*, 2003



7. *International Velvet*, 2004

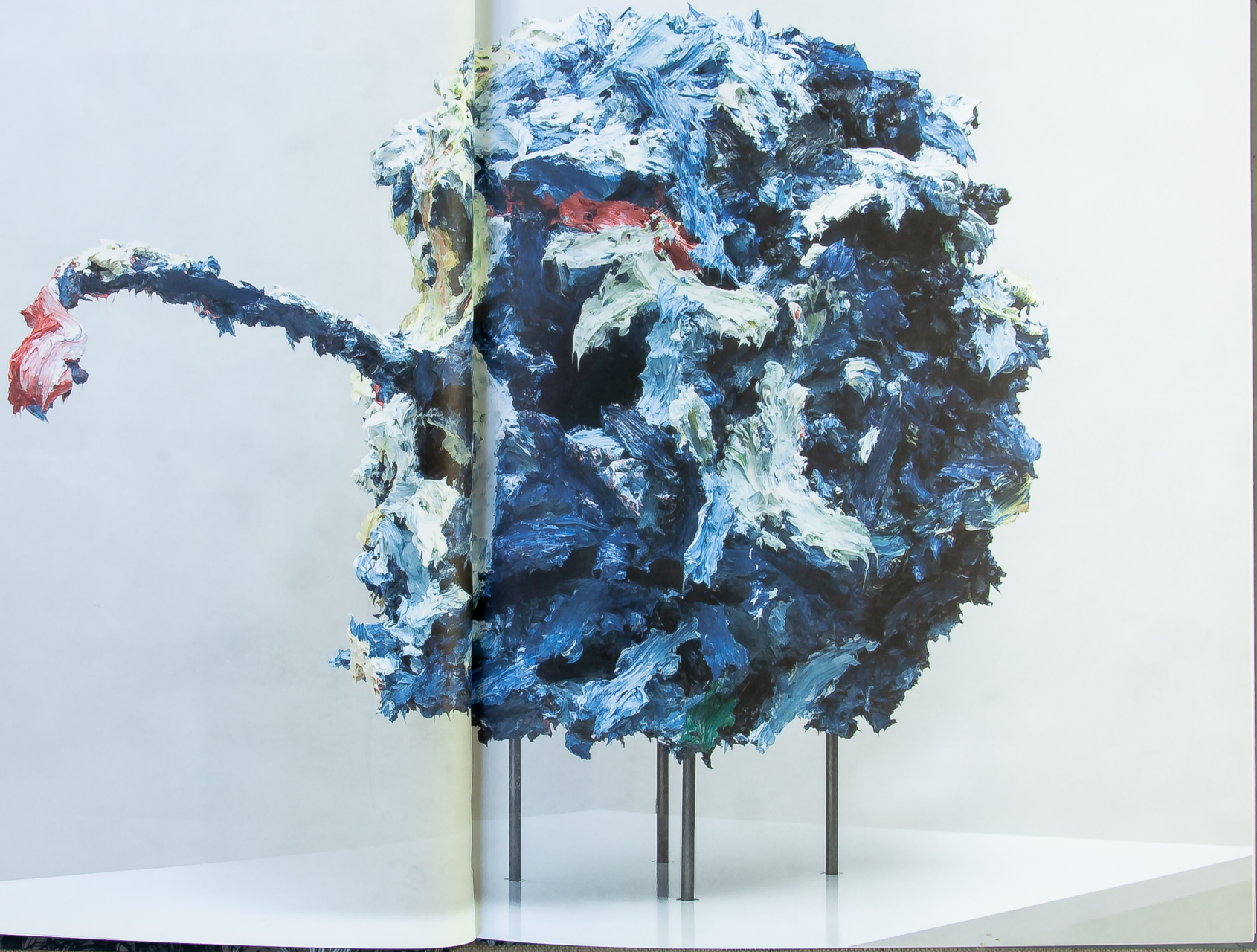






8. Previous page: *They Threw Us All in a Pit and Built a Monument on Top (part 1 and 2)*, 2003
9. Facing page: *Debaser*, 2008
19. Following page: *Wooden Heart*, 2008





It was on a dreary night of November
that I beheld the accomplishment
of my toils. With an anxiety that almost
amounted to agony, I collected the
instruments of life around me that
I might infuse a spark of being into the
lifeless thing that lay at my feet.
It was already one in the morning; the
rain pattered dismally against the
panes, and my candle was nearly burnt
out, when by the glimmer of the
half-extinguished light, I saw the dull
yellow eye of the creature open;
it breathed hard, and a convulsive
motion agitated its limbs.

–Mary Shelley
Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus (1818)

Glenn Brown: Opening the Eye of the Creature

Jeff Fleming

There is a peculiar and curious melancholy in Glenn Brown's paintings, drawings, and prints. Figures, animals, flowers, grotesque appendages, and surreal spacecraft disconsolately float in seemingly harsh atmospheres. Even his sculptures appear silent and muzzled. Yet, Brown's artworks are steeped in Western pictorial traditions. They consist of images derived from the history of art and include the familiar formats of still life, portraiture, and landscape.

Like Mary Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein, Brown stitches together elements of the past to breathe life into new creatures.[1] The reproductions of paintings in art history books, magazines, and from the Internet are the origins of Brown's imagery. In the artist's hands, the traditional subjects of Western art convey their familiar themes of beauty, life, and death. More important, Brown's art is also about image-making itself. He begins his process by searching out and selecting an image from the history of painting. He borrows from old masters such as Rembrandt van Rijn and Jean-Honoré Fragonard, as well as contemporary artists like Frank Auerbach and Willem de Kooning. After making a selection, Brown alters the image's colors, stretches and compresses the subject, or adds and subtracts portions to his liking through Photoshop. He then projects his reconstructions onto a canvas or board and painstakingly paints the image. Exaggerated and often grotesque forms appear in garish colors and dissolve into abstraction. Through

a stylized trompe-l'oeil approach, his paintings frequently appear expressionistic or painterly with heavy impasto, but in actuality their surfaces are smooth and flat. His drawings and prints follow a similar methodology.

Brown's artworks are representations of representations. Displaying obvious technical adeptness, he quotes painting's traditional subjects and techniques, of which many could be seen as outdated, and makes them fresh and new. He reaches back into art history, playing with our ideas of what art is, while simultaneously looking to the future of painting. As he stated, "The point I am trying to make in my work is that language is cultural, and I have no option to express myself other than with language. It is good old post-structuralism . . . I have no option other than to appropriate or transpose the images that the world has thrown at me."[2] In doing so, Brown reveals the dichotomies found in our collective ideas of what constitutes a language of images.

The past is never dead. It's not even past. –William Faulkner

So what does Brown find in art history's basement, and what does he add to the traditions from which he draws his source materials? Through this etymology of images, Brown creates conversations between the past and the present, himself and traditional visual practices, and with the viewer. These tête-à-têtes, in turn, expose the nature and tenor of points in time, lines on art history's continuum, but, more expressly, they reveal the artist's own lived experiences. They illustrate the conflict between the analytical and the rational, resembling the scientific achievements of Dr. Frankenstein, with the more emotional and personal, like the human being that resulted from his actions. Through this reciprocal, yet essentially guarded action, Brown adds his own sense of authenticity.

This dichotomy raises a question when discussing Brown's practice. Does he also appropriate the content of his source material when creating something new? For example, does Brown take on the deep psychological drama embodied in Diego Velázquez's *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (fig. 16) or the unearthly intensity of the English science-fiction illustrator Chris Foss's apocalyptic view of the future? It would be hard not to, according to the artist. Brown utilizes and combines these universal attributes to create something utterly different and of his own time. These new amalgamations, paradoxically, hover in the very private, Frankenstein-like laboratory of the artist's twenty-first – century studio.

Early in his career, Brown valued appropriation art, such as that exemplified by Sherrie Levine, and freely used found photography in his work. Brown ultimately chose to paint paint, taking the image of an existing art object as a starting point.[3] But, instead of cool appropriation, Brown's conversations with the past are layered with sentiment and steeped in emotion and subjectivity. He successfully implants a personal as well as a psychological charge into what has customarily, in the hands of many artists, been a casual detachment or disconnected obligation. His selected images may draw from art history's gadgets, but in doing so he achieves an individual discernment unmatched by others' approaches to appropriation.

One intriguing parallel to Brown's method is seen in Francis Bacon's series of portraits of Pope Innocent X, of which the Des Moines Art Center holds the definitive example (fig. 1). Both Bacon and Brown drew from images of Velázquez's painting from 1650 for their magnificent versions, but they incorporated ingredients from other sources as well. Titan's painting *Archbishop Filippo Archinto* (1558; Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome), with its translucent veil, and Sergei Eisentstein's film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), with its harrowing scene of a shattered monocle, could have been other foundations for Bacon's celebrated series of forty-five pictures. Each of these sources holds notions of authority, loneliness, and anguish, attributes with great appeal to Brown. Furthermore, Bacon never saw the original Velázquez painting; his knowledge of it was only through photographs. Brown's process adheres to Bacon's sentiment: "I think it's the slight remove from the fact, which returns me onto the fact more violently. Through the photographic image I find myself beginning to wander into the image and unlock what I think of its reality more than I can by looking at it."[4]

The American photographer Sally Mann echoes this notion of the possibility of a more vivid, thus a more subjective, experience in her work, or at least a more vivid *recollection* of lived experience. The photographic medium (and now digital media) has the power to displace real memories.[5] Mann also speaks eloquently about the phenomenon of creating personal memories through photographs. It seems akin to experiencing your past as if you were reading it in a book; it is familiar, but you feel slightly disconnected from it. Somehow, memories of your life are not your own until they are re-created through a photograph. The same may hold true for images of artworks and, in turn, Brown's process. His manipulation of historical images, which enable his conversations, "trigger a realization that (he is) part of the world, and yet an individual within it."[6]

The Great Queen Spider from 2009 (cat. 10) is Brown's conversation with Velázquez's *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (fig. 16). Here, Brown positioned a ghostly pope upside down,



Fig. 1 Francis Bacon
Study after Velásquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X, 1953
Oil on canvas, 59 ⅞ × 46 ⅜ inches
Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust, Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1980.1.
Photo credit: Rich Sanders, Des Moines, Iowa



Fig. 2 Frank Auerbach
Head of J.Y.M. II, 1984-85
Oil on canvas, 26 x 24 inches
© Frank Auerbach, courtesy Marlborough Fine Art, private collection

borrowing from Georg Baselitz's approach to portraiture. Fluid white and blue swirls replace Velázquez's blood-red cape, and a harsh blue background displaces the formerly regal crimson. The throne is absent in Brown's picture, and he replaced the original white papers in the pope's hand with a seemingly out of place, blank green panel. Only a vein of a similar green in the white garments connects this panel to the whole. Furthermore, Brown's pope has no head and no identity. Memories have been transformed; the content of Velázquez's work has been supplanted, in part, by that of the artist.

An important distinction to note, however, is that Brown drew from Velázquez's painting instead of Bacon's conversations with the past. "It would not make a lot of sense to make my work based directly on Bacon's, as his paintings are asking many of the same questions that mine do."[7] According to the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, Bacon's process, and in turn Brown's, is an example of creative reinterpretation. This approach emphasizes the connections between artists and their art, whether they work in the visual arts, music, or literature. In his writings, Deleuze explored Bacon's crucial relation to past painters, proposing that Bacon's head (like Brown's) was already inundated with clichés or images (photographs) from the history of art. Many of these

images no longer held meaning. The painter enters the canvas with this array already embedded on the blank surface before him. Brown acknowledges this analysis and freely uses these clichés. He "abandons himself to the cliché, he collects them, accumulates them, multiplies them, as so many prepictorial givens."[8]

Thus, Brown's brushstrokes and the emotions and visual sensations they arouse are paramount to the meaning and subjectivity of his art. In support of his conversations between the past and the present, between the artist and the viewer, he applies great technical skills to his work, but close inspection reveals much more. His pictures and objects are exuberantly and laboriously handmade. The surfaces of his paintings are luminous and engrossing; they possess breath. Brown actively searches for ways to immerse the viewer in avenues of discovery within a work of art. "Maybe I think it is the closest thing I can think of that depicts breath, the physical pulsing of the body. The closer you look at a brush mark the closer you are to the artist. That is why I fetishize brush marks like objects to be gazed at in awe."[9]

Shallow Deaths from 2000 (cat. 4) is a signature example of Brown's approach to painting. The primary source for this work is *Head of J.Y.M. II* (1984 – 85) by the British artist Frank Auerbach (fig. 2). Auerbach's picture is luxuriously fluid and alive. The sitter's head is titled slightly back and to the right, leaving his neck exposed and vulnerable. Neutral colors predominate with a swath of sky-blue paint for the left eye. One quick and sinuous brushstroke emphasizes the sternocleidomastoid muscle of the neck and becomes a focal point of the work. The background is thick with paint, but simpler than that found in many of Auerbach's pictures. Brown's painting remains faithful to the source, but he used the color blue throughout, to refer to Picasso's Blue Period, added a view of the sky with clouds as the background, and, most arresting of all, he inserted a halo over the head, a reference to the Christian tradition in art history. He also depicted the impasto of Auerbach's work in a trompe-l'oeil fashion, belying the smooth and polished surface. Here, again, Brown painted paint.

As evidenced by *Shallow Deaths*, Brown sometimes directly manipulates an existing picture, but most often he merges a variety of sources: an image from this painting, a color from another, and perhaps a title from an entirely different piece. A work is rarely a straightforward copy of another. For example, Brown again borrowed the upside-down format from Baselitz in *Searched Hard for You and Your Special Ways* from 1995 (cat. 3), although the subject is from Jean-Honoré Fragonard's *A Boy as Pierrot* (1780) (fig. 3), and he referred to Rembrandt's *Saskia van Uylenburgh as a Girl* (1633) (fig. 8) for *Dark Star* from 2003 (cat. 6). *Star Dust* (2009) draws from Jeff Koons's sculpture *String of Puppies*

(1988). Brown took his massive painting *The Pornography of Death (Painting for Ian Curtis) Copied from 'Floating Cities' 1981 by Chris Foss* from 1995 (cat. 2) directly from Foss's 1981 work. This picture has an obvious, but intriguing parallel to contemporary science-fiction illustration, which Brown often used earlier in his career, and is for many still outside the realm of traditional fine art history. He took the title for *Necrophiliac Springtime* from 2013 (cat. 14) from a Salvador Dali painting from 1936, which looks nothing like Brown's work, but the painting's still life of flowers comes from a Bernardo Strozzi painting and its background from a Eugène Delacroix work. Yet, Brown's new images are equally as genuine as their sources, even when they are so distorted and removed from the originals that their source material is difficult to determine. Perhaps it is sufficient to know that conversations have taken place.

Like his paintings, Brown's etchings are sourced directly from art history. In 2008, for his first series of prints, "Layered Etchings (Portraits)," Brown borrowed from works by Urs Graf, Rembrandt, and Lucian Freud. His second set of etchings, seen here, again references Freud's images. These chaotic and intense etchings, produced by Pauper Press in London by printing multiple images in black layered one over another, mesmerize the viewer with their rich, dense blackness. Lots of ink and an emphasis on controlled hand-wiping achieve a handmade quality. One specific source for this set of prints, Freud's etching *Woman with an Arm Tattoo* (1996) (fig. 4), is also in the Art Center's collections. Although distorted, the tattoo referred to in the title is visible in *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 4* (cat. 32), though Brown's image reverses its location through the printing process. Freud's *Blond Girl* (1985), in turn, is seen in *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 3* (cat. 31). These prints demonstrate Brown's manipulation and reconstruction of the past into something entirely new and of his own making.

Brown's drawings are equally complex and continue his practice of layering one image over another. As in his etchings, Brown takes the subjects for his drawings from multiple sources. In a distinct departure from his paintings, he does not repeat the marks found in other works, where he often paints a replica of a brushstroke. Instead, Brown's marks are a testament to the capacity of the drawn line to create life. Quick or slow, thick or thin, bold or soft, each mark exhales. This mark-making functions like Dr. Frankenstein's sutures—they stitch together bits and pieces of art history to form a new entity. These drawings are often two-sided, with the ghost image on the reverse combining with the image on the front in complex configurations. Occasionally combining two images or layering multiple translucent sheets on top of each other adds to this complexity. For example, in *Drawing 35 (after Batoni/Delacroix)* (2014) (cat. 23),



Fig. 3 Jean-Honoré Fragonard
A Boy as Pierrot, ca. 1780
Oil on canvas, 23 9/16 x 19 9/16 inches
© By kind permission of the Trustees of the Wallace Collection



Fig. 4 Lucian Freud
Woman with an Arm Tattoo, 1965
Etching on white Somerset textured paper
37 ¾ x 36 ¼ inches
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Melva Bucksbaum Fund for Print Acquisitions and funds from the Edmundson Art Foundation, Inc., 2000.22.
Photo credit: Rich Sanders, Des Moines, Iowa

Brown combines an image of a headless, nude female with the profile of a woman. These images are derived from works by the French painter Eugène Delacroix and the Italian Pompeo Batoni. Here, the right breast of the female nude becomes the eye of the woman in profile. Brown again creates a new, hybrid form.

Brown's sculptures are more self-referential than his paintings or works on paper. They are not only about paint, they are made of paint. "[The sculptures] never really leave the world of painting."[10] Brown begins and ends the creative process of his sculptures the same way as in his paintings. He alters an object or image from the past to his liking, but his combination of paint and three-dimensionality is striking. While the two-dimensional works have no texture, the sculptures are about the texture of paint itself. (One cannot help but recall the wall of Lucian Freud's studio, covered with a great thickness of paint representing the residue of years of working.) Brown begins with an armature—often a found bronze sculpture, such as an equestrian figure or the human figure, as evident in *Nymph de Bois* from 2011 (cat. 20), or in *The Glory of Spain* (2014) (cat. 21). Brown uses one large brush throughout the making of a sculpture. He paints shadows on the works to give them a light and dark side. In *Wooden Heart*

from 2008 (cat. 19), where the foundation is totally consumed by paint, the work becomes an entirely new, animated object, complete with what appears to be an extended nose, a reference to Alberto Giacometti's *The Nose* (1947). "For me, [the sculptures] exist within a surreal world that is based on getting paint to do something it shouldn't do, and to sit in a three-dimensional world that it shouldn't be in."[11]

We often warm our souls over a dead body. –Walter Benjamin

Glenn Brown, like many artists before him, makes connections to the past, but his process emphasizes both the reasoned or the rational and the personal aspects of visual language. Brown takes traditional conventions within the history of painting and breaks or reinvents them in new ways and in a fashion that is clearly his own. He converses with the past through an idiosyncratic, contemporary lens, and exposes art history to a present-day point of reference. Similar to Frank Auerbach, who amplified our ideas of what constitutes portraiture, Brown enhances the potential of imagery and process to bridge the dichotomy between the analytical and the subjective. "[Visual language] has to catch you by being enigmatic and intriguing—whether it is through color or meaning, beauty or ugliness, a celebration of life or the devastation of death."[12] Through his conversations with artists from the past and his stitching together of their images, Brown has the "ability to tell us of the endless mutation of (art) history, its decay and resurrection, its capacity to remain young when all around is getting older and older."[13] Brown's works reveal the strength of images to communicate a particular time and place, or to transcend them.

1. Brown stated, "I'm rather like Dr. Frankenstein, constructing paintings out of the residue of the dead parts of other artists' works. I hope to create a sense of strangeness by bringing together examples of the way the best historic and modern-day artists have depicted their personal sense of the world." Rochelle Steiner, "Rochelle Steiner interview with Glenn Brown," in *Glenn Brown* (London: Serpentine Gallery, 2004), p. 96.
2. Laurence Sillars, "Laurence Sillars in Conversation with *Glenn Brown*," in *Glenn Brown* (Liverpool: Tate Liverpool, 2009), p. 140.
3. Email between the author and Glenn Brown, January 2, 2016.
4. David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1987), p. 30.
5. Sally Mann, *Hold Still* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2015), p. 307.
6. Steiner, p. 97.
7. Email between the author and Glenn Brown.
8. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. David W. Smith (London/New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 92.
9. Sillars, p. 141.
10. Steiner, p. 99.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 100.
13. Francesco Bonami, "Paintophagia: The Work of Art in the Age of Manual Production of Technical Reproduction," in *Glenn Brown* (Liverpool: Tate Liverpool, 2009), p. 73.



29. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 1*, 2008



30. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 2*, 2008



31. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud)* 3, 2008



32. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud)* 4, 2008



33. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 6*, 2008



34. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 8*, 2008

Invention, Resemblance, and Glenn Brown's Portraits de fantaisie

James Clifton

Reproduction is an apt title for Glenn Brown's 2014 painting of a bearded man in a red cap (cat. 17). For it, Brown used a digital reproduction of a painting of 1645 by the Dutch artist Govert Flinck (fig. 5), taken from the website of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York,[1] to produce a painting that in its very flat surface resembles a machine-made reproduction. It is typical of Brown's work that appropriates early-modern paintings, that is, from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, in that the focus is on a single figure (most often bust- or half-length), and he has replaced the original brushwork with forms mimicking a different brushwork and the original colors with bright, garish, and unnatural hues. Even if we did not know the source painting (Brown's paintings are not exhibited with their sources), we would be familiar enough with the type to recognize the canonical authority of his source and to sense immediately his bold, witty, and sometimes violent transformations. In fact, the resemblance of his paintings to their sources is no more important than the resemblance of those source paintings to their models or sitters.

Much more important is Brown's inserting himself into a history not just of art, but of appropriation, allusion, imitation, copying, and a host of other means of using earlier works of art that have played a fundamental role, to varying purpose and effect, in Western art since antiquity. Many of Brown's paintings evoke a long tradition—with its

acme perhaps from the early sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth—of single-figure paintings of ambiguous subject or meaning that in their own time also drew on the viewers' awareness of that tradition. These focused compositions, often nearly evacuated of iconographic significance, allow the painter a circumscribed field for a concentrated display of artistic process. What ultimately makes Brown's appropriations remarkable and satisfying is that he uses, without rejecting, a pictorial tradition not simply or primarily as a mine for compositions, but to extend and elaborate the meditation on the principles of art-making that inheres already in the works of the very artists he invokes.

Appropriation does not impede invention (which could be understood in the early-modern period quite broadly as the artist's execution, by whatever means, of every aspect of a pictorial task), nor does it disqualify a work from inclusion in the canon, such as it is, evidenced enough by Gian Lorenzo Bernini's invigoration of the classical *Apollo Belvedere* for his *Apollo and Daphne*. An adaptation of form often carries with it an equivalent transfer of meaning, as in the case of Bernini's sculptural group, and there is, in some instances, an iconographic carryover in Brown's appropriations. His *Nigger of the World* (2011), for example, which is based on Rembrandt's *Susannah and the Elders* (1647) and derives its title from a Yoko Ono comment that she elaborated in a song cowritten with John Lennon, "Woman Is the Nigger of the World," uses Rembrandt's painting, to which a dose of Matthias Grünewald's tortured flesh is added, to evoke women's traditional subservience to men. Both the iconography of Rembrandt's painting—men spying on a bathing woman and pressuring her to satisfy their lust—and the history of art itself that the painting represents, in which nude women have been perennially the object of men's scopophilia, are distilled, enhanced, made more disturbing, by Brown's manipulations.[2]

Brown's interest in the iconography of his source material does, however, have its limits. Comparing his *Youth, Beautiful Youth* (2008) (fig. 6) to its source, a painting of Saint Peter by the seventeenth-century Italian painter, Guido Reni (fig. 7), he said: "in the original, he's not hitting himself. He's actually just looking up to God, looking for inspiration. But in my version of it, he's punishing himself for his . . . I'm not quite sure why. I think that as you get older, you have to punish yourself."[3] Reni's bust-length figure looks heavenward as he holds one hand to his breast and rests his head on his other hand. Brown's slight rotation of the composition altered the function of that



Fig. 5 Govert Flinck
Bearded Man with a Velvet Cap, 1645
Oil on wood, 23 ¾ x 20 ⅜ inches
Bequest of Collis P. Huntington, 1900.
© Metropolitan Museum of Art
Image Source: Art Source, NY



Fig. 6 Glenn Brown
Youth, Beautiful Youth, 2008
Oil on panel, 60 ¼ x 47 ⅝ inches
Collection of the artist



Fig. 7 Guido Reni
Saint Peter, ca. 1620
Oil on canvas, 29 ¹⁵⁄₁₆ x 24 inches
© Museo Nacional del Prado

supporting hand and introduced a comic note, which is often an important element in his work. Yet the comic is here enhanced, or at least inflected, by the inadvertent appropriateness, at least metaphorically, of the new gesture. Although it does not play an obvious role in Reni's painting, Peter does, indeed, punish himself, and his penitence for having denied Christ publicly is a frequent subject of early-modern depictions of the saint, usually conveyed by a woeful countenance and hand-wringing, but now in Brown's painting by self-battery. Brown has contributed something quite new to the visual exegesis of the biblical passage: "And he went outside and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:75; Luke 22:62).

Reni's *Saint Peter* notwithstanding, many of the artists whose works Brown has appropriated were more concerned with issues other than iconography and used tightly focused compositions as sites of genre challenges, pictorial experimentation, and virtuoso performances. Both Reni's *Saint Peter* and Brown's *Youth, Beautiful Youth*—indeed, many of Brown's paintings—fit within a long tradition in Western art in which the entire work consists of a single figure, often in bust- or half-length. One reason that heads and busts were a useful site for experimentation is that the viewer's expectations



Fig. 8 Rembrandt van Rijn
Saskia van Uylenburgh as a Girl, 1633
Oil on wood panel, 20 7/8 x 17 15/16 inches, bpk Berlin/Gemaldegaterie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden/Hans-Peter Klut/ Art Resource, NY

are easily established: everyone knows what faces look like, so deviations are easily tracked, especially in a close view. (Distortions in a landscape, by contrast, might be less readily noticed.) There is also a familiarity in that we are all embodied, artists and viewers alike, so that our experiences of the figures in paintings is somatic as well as visual. We can *feel* what it is like to be the figure in a painting—to turn a certain way, hold our hands a certain way, tilt our head a certain way. In identifying with the figure in one of Brown's paintings, we become more acutely aware of its properties that we do not share, like the horrifyingly vivid colors and fluid surface of its body.

A truism of Renaissance painting, derived from Leon Battista Alberti's fifteenth-century treatise *On Painting*, is that, through its articulation of a perspectival space, it represents a window onto another space. But Alberti also introduced the classical mythological solipsist, Narcissus, as the inventor of painting when he attempted to embrace his own reflection in a pool. We might say that the single-figure painting, a common and important type in early-modern art, does not open a window, but rather confronts the viewer with a kind of mirror. It can be a magical, transforming mirror—of fantasy, of prophecy, of theology, rather than of mere surface appearance—in which the



Fig. 9 Jean-Honoré Fragonard
Portrait of a man of letters, formerly identified as Denis Diderot, 1769
Oil on canvas, 32 3/16 x 25 9/16 inches
Photo: René-Gabriet Ojéjda. Musée du Louvre. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY



Fig. 10 Louis Michel van Loo
Portrait of Denis Diderot, 1767
Oil on canvas, 31 7/8 x 25 9/16 inches
Photo: Stéphane Maréchalle. Musée du Louvre. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY

identity of the viewer is inflected along with the subject of the painting. Thus we see ourselves romantically, in fancy costume with one of Rembrandt's *tronies*; proleptically, nearing death with Giorgione's elderly woman whose *cartellino* is inscribed "with time"; or devotionally, feeling the suffering of Christ as Man of Sorrows, who is dead-yet-alive, perversely anticipating Brown's putrefying, smiling figures.

Many of the single-figure works from the fifteenth century on are, of course, portraits, in which a likeness of the sitter is enough to carry the work's meaning and hold the viewer's attention. Surely, however, just as many are not portraits, or not-quite portraits, or portraits of which the identity of the sitter has long been lost, or portraits that were probably not very close likenesses in the first place. (There are plenty of anecdotes of patrons complaining that their portraits were not good likenesses and artists replying, more or less, so what?, since the portrait will long survive the sitter and eventually no one will care who the sitter was.) Of the obvious nonportraits, like Reni's *Saint Peter*, the iconography and the function of the work for some viewers are clear: it and its pendant, *Saint Paul*, represent the two apostolic pillars of the Church and could serve a devotional purpose. But there are many works of which the subject and function

are not clear, yet they were—and remain—compelling for other reasons, such as Leonardo's grotesque heads, Michelangelo's *teste divine*, *tronies* by Rembrandt and others, and Fragonard's *portraits de fantaisie*. The fact that writers, from the artists' contemporaries to modern art historians, have often not agreed on what to call these works (I am using terms that are conventional but also debatable) or which works to group together in categories or genres whose parameters are ill-defined, is indication that such works occupy a space of experimentation in which artists are not bound by convention.

The term *tronie* was used in the seventeenth-century Netherlands, in reference to both paintings and actual persons, to mean "head," "face," or "expression." It was applied to figures within paintings as well as to single-figure paintings, to portraits of identifiable sitters as well as to unidentified, generic, or fantastic figures.[4] Art historians have taken it up in referring to a large group of single-figure paintings by many different artists (several of which Brown has used as sources) that are finished works rather than studies and in which the identity of the sitter is not crucial to the meaning or function of the work (as it would be in a traditional portrait). Even works with identifiable sitters (such as paintings in which Rembrandt served as his own model, which are not the same as Rembrandt self-portraits) may be considered *tronies*. Rembrandt's painting of his wife, Saskia—or, perhaps more accurately described, the painting for which she sat as a model—in Dresden (fig. 8), which served as the source for Brown's *Dark Star* (cat. 6), is a good example. Instead of contemporary dress, Saskia wears a costume typical of the theater, which would have seemed as fanciful to her contemporaries as it does to us. Govert Flinck's sitter in *Bearded Man with a Velvet Cap* (fig. 5), Brown's source for *Reproduction* (cat. 17), is likewise fancifully costumed, and though the face is highly individualized, the painting probably portrays a model whose identity is not important to the painting rather than a patron or client for whom the identity and facial resemblance would have been crucial.

Jean-Honoré Fragonard was certainly aware of seventeenth-century Dutch *tronies* when he painted his so-called *portraits de fantaisie*, a group of fifteen or so small canvases made around 1770, which likewise offer focused, single-figure compositions of ambiguous subject, and which Brown has occasionally used as sources.[5] Fragonard would have been particularly aware of those works, by Rembrandt or Frans Hals, for example, marked by a very active, painterly surface. Fragonard's *portraits de fantaisie* are fundamentally appropriative, reinventing the works of other artists and inscribing themselves in the history of art. As Mary Sheriff has pointed out, "some . . . are reinventions of well-known portraits, most play on standard types within the genre, and

all refer to other works of art."[6] Most obviously, his *Portrait of a man of letters, formerly identified as Denis Diderot* (1769) (fig. 9) reworks Louis Michel Van Loo's more closely mimetic and easily identifiable portrait of the *philosophe* (fig. 10), but the resemblance to the person Diderot is no longer as important as its reference to an earlier work of art: "It is more precisely a portrait of Van Loo's portrait of Diderot, and clearly an inventive one at that."[7] Artists in Europe were traditionally trained from a young age to copy, absorb, and imitate the works of their predecessors, but ultimately to emulate them in a strict sense of the word, that is, to compete with them, to rival them, to attempt to surpass them.

Fragonard has not only made slight alterations to Van Loo's figure, but, more important, he has displaced Van Loo's relatively tight brushwork with his own, much more ostentatiously virtuosic brushwork, thus anticipating Brown's project. Brown does not simply appropriate Fragonard's compositions; he appropriates Fragonard's modus operandi—he appropriates Fragonard's appropriation—and to similar effect: to draw attention away from the subject of the work toward its means of execution. What scholars have said of Fragonard's *portraits de fantaisie* could also apply to Brown's appropriations: Fragonard's displacement of the sitter "resulted from a deliberate play with the conventions of portraiture, a purposeful confounding of the imagined and the copied, and a demonstration of wit that consciously displayed itself at every turn."[8] His *portraits de fantaisie* are "enigmatic subjects that are all but eclipsed by a virtuoso display of paint," exhibiting "an excess of technique on the very edge of naturalistic representation."[9] Thus, when Brown appropriates a painting by Fragonard—as with, for example, his *The Shallow End* (cat. 13)—he paints an inventive portrait of Fragonard's portrait of an old man, emulating Fragonard with his own virtuoso display of paint.

Although Brown's process has been well documented,[10] a couple of points are worth emphasizing. First, he tends to take over his source material more or less whole. That is, rather than lifting his figures from more complex multifigure compositions or cropping full-length figures to bust-length, his focused compositions, such as *The Shallow End*, maintain the features of the source composition, in this instance, Fragonard's *Head of an Old Man*, albeit now cadaverous, anticipating the man's next step, as it were. With some notable exceptions, Brown also preserves the integrity of the original forms, if not their exact proportions; his manipulations take place within the contour and primary lines of those forms. As much as the surfaces of his figures may seem to swirl and flow, the



Fig. 11 Antonio Tempesta
after Michelangelo
Bust of a Woman, 1613
Engraving, 8 9/16 x 6 1/8 inches
© The Trustees of the British Museum



Fig. 12 Michelangelo
Ideal Head of a Woman, 1525-1528
Black chalk, 11 x 9 inches
© The Trustees of the British Museum

figures maintain their structure, unlike the sagging, stretching, and running forms of, say, Lucas Samaras's *Photo-Transformations* or the melting Nazis who violated the Ark of the Covenant in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, which they might otherwise recall (including their horrific affect).

Second, Brown's engagement with his source material, at least in the physical art-making portion of the process, begins with a smooth, flat surface—a reproduction of a painting (initially from a published book, now also from digital sources)—and ends with a smooth, flat surface: his own canvas. Although he clearly appreciates the facture of the paintings he appropriates, he does not reproduce or mimic their often bas-relief surfaces, but replaces their texture and brushwork with his own. Like the reproductions from which he works, his paintings may give the impression, at least from even a fairly short distance, of a thickly impastoed surface, but they are relentlessly two-dimensional. They invite touch but are unrewarding to the fingertips, like a heavily worked early-modern painting that has been flattened by relining. Nonetheless, it is important to see Brown's paintings in person, rather than in reproduction (as fitting as that may seem, given his own use of source material in reproduction), so that his own trompe l'oeil, the



Fig. 13 Wenceslaus Hollar after
Leonardo da Vinci
Grotesque Profile of an Old Man with Flattened Nose, 1644-52
Etching, 2 1/2 x 1 7/8 inches
© The Trustees of the British Museum



Fig. 14 Anton Heinrich Riedel
Rembrandt's Wife Saskia, ca. 1782
Engraving, 5 5/16 x 4 1/2 inches
© The Trustees of the British Museum

deceptive appearance of surface relief, may be appreciated as it is unmasked.

Brown most often uses painterly works by artists known for bravura brushwork, such as Rembrandt, Velázquez, and Fragonard; that is, artists who call attention to the paint as paint, even as they use that paint to construct mimetic forms. Brown's paintings are at least as visually busy as theirs, but the activity comes not from identifiably discrete, fluid brushstrokes that perceptually coalesce into the compositional forms, but from laboriously rendered approximations of such brushstrokes by a greater number of small, unindividualized marks that appear somewhat dry on close inspection and do not break from the surface of the canvas. In a recent lecture, he explained his attraction to Fragonard's work:

> He's an artist which I've used on a number of occasions, partially because he creates the most delicious brushstrokes in the history of art. If there was ever an artist who loved the physicality of paint, it was him . . . But it's part of the irony of why I'm such a slow painter, because I pick artists sometimes as subjects that are the exact antithesis of the kind of artist I am.[11]



Fig. 15 Cornelis Cort after Titian
Saint Mary Magdalen in Penitence, 1566
Engraving, 13 $^{9}/_{16}$ x 11 inches
© The Trustees of the British Museum



Fig. 16 Diego Velázquez
Pope Innocent X, ca. 1650
Oil on canvas, 55 ½ x 46 $^{7}/_{8}$ inches
Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome
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Brown's brushstrokes are far from delicious, his paint far from physical (in great contrast, presumably studied, to Brown's own sculptural work), thus sharpening the tension of similarity and dissimilarity between his works and Fragonard's.

The translation of a hand-wrought image into a different medium and onto a surface that no longer conveys the original facture (especially painting) was already part of art-making in the sixteenth century, when reproductive printmaking became an important means for an artist (Titian, for example) to lay claim to his inventions and to disseminate his work. It was often the medium for transmitting knowledge of artworks, allowing for appropriation at a distance—a mediated appropriation—and thereby anticipating Brown's use of reproductions in books or online as his source material. Reproductive prints made after an artist's death, including single-figure compositions of ambiguous subject and purpose, attest to the market for these inventions as examples of the artist's genius, even as his hand is absent; thus, for example, Antonio Tempesta's 1613

engraving after Michelangelo's *testa divina* (figs. 11 and 12); Wenceslaus Hollar's series of etchings after Leonardo's grotesque heads from around 1650 (see fig. 13); and Anton Heinrich Riedel's engraving of Rembrandt's painting of Saskia that Brown appropriated for his *Dark Star* (cat. 6) (and which is nearly as disturbing as Brown's version) (fig. 14). Each of these prints identifies the inventing artist in its inscription, asserting the artist's canonical status and the desirability of his inventions. What such reproductive prints could not do, however, was to replicate an artist's touch and a pictorial surface. Cornelis Cort was highly praised for the "delicate manner and gentle touch" with which he engraved Titian's paintings,[12] terms that could have been used for Titian himself, but his engraved lines do not replicate Titian's brushstrokes, and his engravings cannot convey the way the "happy canvases [were] stroked and enlivened" by the painter (fig. 15).[13]

Brown's paintings not only recognize, but even celebrate this limitation of reproductive media. Because his pseudo-brushstrokes do not depict existing brushstrokes per se, and because they combine to form a borrowed composition, they are not quite as (ironically) self-reflexive as, for example, Roy Lichtenstein's Brushstroke paintings of the 1960s, but they share an interest in the facture of prior modes of painting and in using or referring to modern reproductive means in flattening that facture. Ultimately, Brown calls attention not to the substance of his paint, but to the reproductive status of his pictorial source and his manipulation of that source.

Brown's sources are well enough known to be reproduced in books, but not of transcendent status. He considered appropriating Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*,[14] but such a move would have perhaps commented more on (the burden of) Western culture, writ large—as did Marcel Duchamp with his defacement of (a reproduction of) the painting, *L.H.O.O.Q.*—than on the history of art, which Brown enthusiastically embraces. Diego Velázquez's *Pope Innocent X* (fig. 16), which Brown has reworked twice, first as *The Great Queen Spider* of 2009 (cat. 10), is an important painting in the history of seventeenth-century European art, yet it is not Velázquez's most famous work and, needless to say, it does not have the status of the *Mona Lisa*. Its recognizability has been greatly enhanced by Francis Bacon's myriad appropriations of it, such as the painting from 1953 in the collection of the Des Moines Art Center (fig. 1). Brown's painting differs greatly from Bacon's, not only in the pictorial surface, but also in simple compositional terms: Brown has rotated the composition 180 degrees and cut off the figure's head (Bacon's versions, he says, were "all about the head").[15] The inversion of the figure is disorienting and slows

recognition of the source, without obscuring it. Brown also inverted Jean-Honoré Fragonard's *A Boy as Pierrot* (fig. 3) for his *Searched Hard for You and Your Special Ways* (cat. 3).[16] Facial recognition is particularly difficult for upside-down figures, whether real or painted, and inversion can produce a disturbing, even horrifying, effect, turning a well-known or pleasant face into the "face of a fiend," to borrow a phrase from G. K. Chesterton.[17] Inversion defamiliarizes the subject of an image, so that as the subject recedes, the pictorial qualities advance. A. Hyatt Mayor recommended: "One should always look at pictures upside down because then you no longer see the smile on the pretty girl or the gesture or anything like that."[18] What you do see is the artifice of the painter.

Although I have suggested that single-figure paintings function as a kind of mirror, or at least provide the viewer with a one-on-one experience of the work, a kind of singular relationship,[19] which is quite different from the experience of viewing a multifigure painting or landscape, for example, this is not to say that the connection between the viewer and the painted figure is simple or firmly maintained. Brown impedes the connection in some instances by inverting the figure, but also very often by glazing the figure's eyes, as if they are blinded by cataracts and cannot return the gaze of the viewer. He has described this move and its effect in reference to his *Star Dust* from 2009 (cat. 11), for which he took a Fragonard as his starting point.[20]

> Her eyes have been glazed over. In a lot of the paintings, I like to introduce this sensibility that the figure can't look back at you. It's basically a trick that Matisse and Picasso particularly used a lot. Picasso didn't really want you to look at the figure. He didn't want you to look at the pretty woman who he was painting. He wanted you to look at him, and he was fairly selfish as most modernist artists were . . . are. So the easiest way for you to say, right, I can't actually read, and I can't actually understand what the model is trying to tell me, but I can understand what Picasso is trying to tell me. And the easiest way for taking away somebody's personality is to take away their eyes. If you can't see their eyes, you don't quite know what the person is thinking. So, if you look at pretty much every Picasso or Matisse or Modigliani painting, they don't have any eyes. It makes you look at the way the painting is painted, rather than looking at the figure which is painted.[21]

The exaltation of the artist—his hand, his genius—over the subject or even the medium of the work is at least as old as the early sixteenth century when patrons wanted something, anything, from the hand of Michelangelo, for example.[22] When, "finally, the stroke of the brush is a mark of the self," as David Rosand has put it,[23] the primacy of the hand could become a defining characteristic and a marketing strategy for some artists, such as Rembrandt.[24] By his manipulations of his source paintings, by replacing their facture with an even more ostentatious pseudo-facture, Brown asserts the overriding importance of the hand of the artist in the making of art. His refusal of the gestural application of paint—whether of Rembrandt, Fragonard, American Abstract Expressionists, or more recent potential models, like Baselitz and Kiefer—gives his works a surface approximating that of the canvases of Photorealists (with which Brown has compared his paintings) or Warhol's silkscreen prints on canvas. Yet, the results do not suggest a machine application. Rather, in using his gestureless application of paint to mimic painterly gesture, he paradoxically draws even more attention to his technique, production, and artistic prowess.

In some sense, Brown's appropriation of the compositions of his forebears is the least interesting aspect of his appropriative strategy. By prioritizing brushwork over subject, Rembrandt, Fragonard, and other early-modern artists thematized the act of painting; by withdrawing evidence of his act of painting from his versions of pictures by such painters and substituting false evidence, Brown likewise—but ironically—thematizes the act of painting. In commenting on early-modern artists' technique rather than appropriating it, Brown has wittily appropriated and elaborated their own game: playing with the viewers' perceptions of subject matter, pictorial facture, and the presence of the creating artist. In this, he stands quite apart from artists who appropriate the motifs of early-modern paintings to little interesting purpose; one of the several piquant paradoxes of Brown's works is that he is doing something new in redoing something old.

The nineteenth-century critic Roger Portalis characterized Fragonard's relationship to one of his forebears by remarking of one of his *portraits de fantaisie*, "C'est du Frans Hals enragé!"[25] Fragonard had taken Hals's bravura brushwork to a new level, ostentatiously surpassing his facility with the paint, dissolving the subject even further into a fluid weave of strokes. Inscribing himself into a history of art and a history of invention, Brown in turn emulates Fragonard, drawing attention to his own activity, but deceptively, providing a fictive fluidity of paint rather than rivaling Fragonard's real fluidity. Glenn Brown is not simply a Fragonard reborn, but a Fragonard turned upside-down, a Fragonard *ironisé*.

1. Glenn Brown, "Talk at College de France, Paris, October 31, 2014" (accessed January 26, 2016).
2. See ibid., from which my comments on these paintings derive. For a reproduction of *Nigger of the World*, see http://glenn-brown.co.uk/artworks/234/#selected_mediums=13 (accessed January 26, 2016).
3. Glenn Brown, "Rennie Collection Lecture at Emily Carr University, October 24, 2013," http://glenn-brown.co.uk/video/#/8/ (accessed January 22, 2016).
4. See especially Dagmar Hirschfelder, "Portrait or Character Head? The Term *Tronie* and its Meaning in the Seventeenth Century," in Ernst van de Wetering and Bernhard Schnackenburg, eds., *The Mystery of the Young Rembrandt* (Kassel: Stattliche Museen Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister; and Museum het Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam, 2002), pp. 82 – 90; and Dagmar Hirschfelder, *Tronie und Porträt in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2008).
5. For example, two paintings on panel from 2004: *America* and *Filth*. See *Glenn Brown* (New York: Gagosian Gallery, 2004), pp. 14 – 15, 22 – 23.
6. Mary D. Sheriff, "Invention, Resemblance, and Fragonard's Portraits de Fantaisie," *The Art Bulletin* 69, 1 (1987), pp. 81 – 82.
7. Ibid., p. 82.
8. Ibid., p. 77.
9. Melissa Percival, *Fragonard and the Fantasy Figure: Painting the Imagination* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 1 – 2, 3.
10. For the artist's description of his process, see Brown 2014.
11. Brown 2013.
12. "Delicato modo, e tratti gentili." See Carlo Ridolfi, *Le Maraviglie dell'arte . . .*, 2 vols. (Venice: Presso Gio: Battista Sgaua, 1648), vol. 1, p. 183.
13. "Felici tele vergate, & animate." See ibid., p. 187.
14. Brown 2013.
15. Brown 2013, discussing *Nausea*, Brown's second painting after the Velázquez; for his discussion of *The Great Queen Spider*, see Brown 2014.
16. In *Searched Hard for You and Your Special Ways*, Brown maintained a distinction in brushwork—typical for early-modern painting, especially portraits—between a relatively tight handling of the face of the figure and a much more (pseudo)painterly handling of the rest of the painting, which he has abandoned in more recent works.
17. James Clifton, "The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body," *Oxford Art Journal* 34, 3 (2011), p. 386.
18. A. Hyatt Mayor and Paul Cummings, "An Interview with A. Hyatt Mayor," *Archives of American Art Journal* 18, 4 (1978), p. 17, quoted in ibid., p. 387. Brown himself has looked at images upside down as part of choosing source material. See Glenn Brown, "Tate: Glenn Brown Talk with Michael Bracewell, May 5, 2009" (accessed 26 January 2016).
19. I suggest that this is true as well for his paintings of single forms that are not human, or part of a human (a synecdochal foot, for example), or quasi-human rendered almost unrecognizable through distortion, such as *You Never Touch My Skin in the Way You Did, and You've Even Changed the Way You Kiss Me* (cat. 1), *International Velvet* (cat. 7), and *Debaser* (cat. 9).
20. Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *Young Woman with Little Dogs*, ca. 1770 (?). See Jean-Pierre Cuzin, *Jean-Honoré Fragonard: Life and Work. Complete Catalogue of the Oil Paintings*, trans. Anthony Zielonka and Kim-Mai Mooney (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), p. 298 [cat. 199].
21. Brown 2013; see similar comments from the artist in Brown 2009 and Brown 2014, as well as Laurence Sillars, "Laurence Sillars in Conversation with Glenn Brown," in *Glenn Brown* (Liverpool: Tate Liverpool, 2009), p. 145: "The link that occurs between the gaze of the subject and the viewer is too strong, too exclusive. By blinding or obstructing that gaze, the viewer is asked to take other aspects of the painting into consideration. It is a trick known well to the modern painters like Modigliani and Matisse and Cézanne. If you disable the eyes of the model, by turning them to black hollows or a pale milky wash, the viewer must consider the painting as a whole, and not simply the model. Modigliani had no intention for the viewer to be aroused by his model; it was himself that he wanted to be celebrated, and looked at. It is what Modigliani does to his model that we find so appealing and so clever."
22. John Shearman, *Mannerism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 44.
23. David Rosand, *The Meaning of the Mark: Leonardo and Titian*, The Franklin D. Murphy Lectures VIII (Lawrence, Kansas: Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, 1988), p. 88.
24. Svetlana Alpers, *Rembrandt's Enterprise: The Studio and the Market* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).
25. Percival, p. 57, quoting Roger Portalis, *Honoré Fragonard, sa vie et son oeuvre*, 2 vols. (Paris: J. Rothschild, 1889), vol. 1, p. 132.

10. *The Great Queen Spider*, 2009



11. *Star Dust*, 2009



12. *A Sailor's Life*, 2011



13. *The Shallow End*, 2011



20. *Nymph de Bois*, 2011







15. Previous page: *MOTHER*, 2014
16. Facing page: *In My Time of Dying*, 2014



21. *The Glory of Spain*, 2014

14. Following page: *Necrophiliac Springtime*, 2013





22. *Drawing 24 (after Jordaens/Jordaens)*, 2014



23. *Drawing 35 (after Batoni/Delacroix)* 2014



Interview with Glenn Brown

By Steven Matijcio

Glenn Brown is an unabashed contrarian. In a 2012 interview with Mardee Goff, he mused, "Maybe it's within my nature, within my education to always think of what the opposite view might be and very often to take that view just for the purpose of intellectual challenge." When he was told that green was the least popular color in paintings because it "doesn't go with the furniture," Brown produced a spate of green canvases. Whereas most contemporary painters disavow the role of religion, and especially Catholicism in their work today, he acknowledges its presence and unabashedly wrestles with its influence. In this interview, I question what else Brown needs to regularly contradict, and how he imagines his purview in/on the other side

STEVEN MATIJCIO The concept of beauty as a standard of aesthetics and quality with which to evaluate works of art has oscillated dramatically over the centuries. What was once applauded for bringing pleasure and delight to the eyes was later denounced as being woefully complicit with antiquated bourgeois values. Beauty has reentered the discourse today, but seems perpetually at war with itself, shrouded by a suspicion that renders its pronouncement ambivalent at best. Your paintings have been celebrated and criticized from both sides of this dialectic and you have said that you acknowledge and embrace both the contradiction and the synthesis between beauty and the abject in your work. What does the word "beautiful" mean to you, and how is this translated into your practice?

GLENN BROWN With regard to art, I have heard people refer to many a strange thing or event as beautiful. For every person who calls a work of art awful or ugly, another will say the same work is beautiful and great. We do seem to equate bad with ugly and good with beauty. Jean Dubuffet applied soil, gravel, ash, and tin foil to paintings to make them look like a five-year-old had made them—all in an attempt to render them abject and ugly. So, is it a failure to stand in front of one and call it beautiful? We are invited to think of Shrek the ogre as ugly, only to be confounded by his beautiful nature and good heart. Shrek is indeed beautiful, we are informed, and it is only our stupid prejudice and misunderstanding of ogres that need reeducation. In other words, we love the contradiction of beauty. Shrek is made more beautiful in our eyes because we have learned something we had not known—that ogres deserve our respect and admiration and not our loathing. It is this act of realignment that I think is at the heart of great beauty. The transformation itself is a beautiful thing. We find it wherever we look: in nature, in people, and especially in art. It is that process of transformation that I want my paintings to have. Not only should they transform from ugly to beautiful, and bad to good, but they should move back again to bad. I spend months trying to balance the paintings so the viewer is placed at the fulcrum point oscillating endlessly between the two extremes. The beauty of a perfect French curve is contrasted by an awkward, stuttering line, or combinations of colors that have associations with fresh spring flowers while also bringing to mind rotting flesh.

SM While your early work was a more evident appropriation of its respective references, your recent work takes increasing amounts of artistic license in the modification and adaptation of its source material. Yet, with that said, there is a continuing thread that compels the audience to sense, and perhaps even pursue, déjà vu in your paintings—converting the aura (rather than the actual identification) of familiarity into an arena of ersatz memory. It is as if to say, I know this figure or form is from someplace, even if I don't know what that place is. How do you negotiate invented reminiscence, and does its presence help or hamper the reception of your work?

GB It is difficult to explain the strength or type of feeling that I experienced when looking at a Sherrie Levine photograph after Walker Evans, and finally getting it—getting the point of the appropriation. It was as if a chasm had opened up beneath my feet and everything I thought was stable and good and reliable was no longer there. I wanted desperately to induce that feeling in others. That beautiful feeling when everything you thought modern art should be—namely new, original, and, beyond everything, truthful—when all that is gone. When all Modernism is wiped away as a

childish misconception. That is what I am trying to convey when people feel my works lack originality, even if they can't put their finger on why they know something is wrong, wrong with my painting and their perception of art. I fairly quickly became tired of the simplicity of pointing out how misconceived Modernism was. I also wanted to say how great it was, too. How great it was at controlling perception. How strongly it could conjure place and how it controlled our eyes. I wanted to bite the hand of art history that feeds me, while kissing the ring on its bejeweled fingers. The work I make now uses many of the modernist tools forged by artists of different classifications and periods. The tools that help a three-dimensional and animated world be described by a line and some blobs of color. I want to add to the conventions of art history while trashing it at the same time.

SM When we extrapolate further on the influence of the audience in not only the reception, but also the production of your work, we witness Glenn Brown spanning a wide, sometimes contradictory, spectrum. The relatively minimal number of paintings made per year, a clamoring coterie of buyers, and soaring, multimillion-dollar prices have made you auction house majesty. At the same time, your work retains a crowd-pleasing populism and expanding fandom that swells beyond typical art-world jurisdiction. It speaks to "the simple pleasures of looking and the pre-linguistic pull of major, lasting art" that critic Martin Herbert highlighted in your work. Where high meets low, we are reminded of the way the old masters developed a more inclusive following across privilege and class as their work was shared in churches and public spaces. How much does reception factor into the conception of your work?

GB At the heart of your question is who do I make work for. I don't come from a particularly privileged background, so I had to sell paintings in order to have the money to be able to have the time to make more paintings. This may seem like a vulgar subject, but I think it's important. I am in some sense a Marxist, so the notion of making objets d'art for bourgeois clients was never my plan. Dealing with this contradiction is difficult. I could mass-produce works, debasing their value and allowing a larger public to purchase them. This solution could fall afoul of capitalism's vast marketplace. It is difficult to make so much work that the market becomes flooded. The artists I hold most dear are mostly painters. The handmade technology of oil paint can be so beguiling and intoxicating. Hans Memling, Lucas Cranach, Albrecht Dürer, Salvador Dalí, and yes, even Paul Cézanne made work whose very slowness and detail transform the viewers' perception. The world is rendered more complex and intense. Once one's eyes have been opened by these artists, speed of production and the hungry art market seem irrelevant.

I may make very few paintings and these may, for the time being, be expensive to buy, but I do not make the work for the collectors (though I am happy if they think otherwise). I make work for the friends who see it in the studio, and criticize it, help pull it apart, and put it back together; for the students who traipse across Chelsea and Mayfair; and the art-going public visiting the museums and galleries of the world. I don't want to spend months making a work for it to be seen by only a single collector. Art is bourgeois, and springs from a life that is privileged.

In truth, I would prefer not to sell any works at all, which would enable me to lend them to exhibitions and tours, like this one. That is not to undermine the importance of commercial galleries that put on some amazing exhibitions, often displaying work that is not for sale to audiences that have no possibility of buying it. Though it may not be the galleries' primary goal, a certain scholarly philanthropy pervades much of what goes on in commercial galleries around the world.

SM As we observe in your paintings the ostensible decay of canonical art history and the sickly dirge of its revered figures, it's easy to assume a commentary on the degeneration of a society that upholds those images as icons. And yet, in what you have written and said about these works, I sense that this approach is less about morals and condemnation, and more about the subversive delight of phantasmagoria. Curator Michael Bracewell has likened your paintings to performances and you've stated that, "Art is theatre and theatre isn't real life—it's an exaggeration of real life." Moving deeper into this metaphor, you've also championed a kind of implicit dramaturgy where, "You invent a character for a particular painting and then paint the painting as if you are that character." If we consider this in concert with your comparison of said paintings as scenes from nightmares and dreams, can we read your practice as a celebratory amplification—a phantasmagoria—of our flawed civilization via grotesque grandeur?

GB I don't like the idea of grotesque grandeur of phantasmagoria. It may imply that the subjects of the paintings and I myself are willing participants in this theater. I have said that art is entertainment, but I find painting to be a very personal viewing experience. Even in a crowded gallery, one gets little sense of what other viewers may be thinking. This is not a baying audience applauding for more. The crowd's behavior as a unified mass is present in the theater, but not usually in the art gallery. Thus, the subjects of the paintings are not aware of their role as entertainment and will not react as an actor or performer would, working to hold a crowd's attention. The pleasure of making a painting over a period of months or years is that it starts to condense experience. An array of often contradictory emotions gets wrapped up into a single

work, often containing a single object. That object becomes the personification of time, and over time things grow and things decay. An ancient oak tree is generally doing both. As some branches grow, others rot away. It is not doing this for our entertainment or applause, it is doing its utmost to stay alive. We find the gnarled glory of its form pleasing and beautiful, and duly approach it with respect and dignity, born from the knowledge that it will survive far longer than we will. Even in their putrid state, the figures I paint will probably be around far longer than you or I, and thus I hope their decay and metamorphosis is regarded with a certain dignified privacy. You see these things, but you are at best a voyeur. This is not live entertainment: this is personal.

SM There is an immaculate level of finish to your paintings as every detail is meticulously composed and executed. There is also an intriguingly mercurial quality that suggests you see these works, and even covet them, as unfinished. In previous interviews, you've admitted that you will repaint "finished" paintings in your studio even after they have been photographed, and have argued, "I like to be able to jump around and re-quote my old work, and not continually feel as if I were moving forward to the promised land." Is this restlessness a constitutive ingredient in the liquid quality of your compositions?

GB Putrefaction is the decay of matter without the presence of oxygen. It becomes a rather good description of the paintings' subjects, trapped in a world without air, without movement, and without time. How is one to animate a subject that is dead? Most of the subjects of the paintings grew old and died centuries ago. I try to imbue in their skin and clothes, their eyes and gaze even, a sense of decay. You are right—it is a mercurial quality I try to achieve. Decay as transmogrification, as transformation from one form to another. Matter and energy cannot disappear; they can only transfigure from one form to another. Thus, decay becomes a beautiful process as the body transforms into a tree, a bird, or even another body. The paintings are, after all, intensely cannibalistic. A painting of mine may never be finished, it never reaches a state of perfect harmony; it merely rests between transforming from one thing to another. I change, I get better at painting, I forget things, I grow and decline. I always think I can make a painting that little bit better.

SM In the postmodern hypotheses of theorists Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard, modern man is a repository of received information and the entire concept of originality is defunct. You've argued along similar lines that "nobody can quite have an original thought," and that your paintings should "look like . . . the entire world was made of paint, which is a metaphor for everything in the world being made of other

people's ideas. You can't look at anything without the knowledge that other people have looked at it and thought about it . . . We are made of other people's opinions whether we like it or not." And yet, while you occupy this position with what you call a "healthy cynicism," there is a presiding level of agency that diverges from resignation. Our shared language is both a contract and condition, but it does not preclude lyricism in its exercise. It's never been your intention to paint a canvas without a referential infrastructure, but what does "originality" mean to you and to your work?

GB What to paint? It's a nice idea: a blank canvas, an open mind, a new voyage. I have no choice other than to paint a painting with the knowledge of what the previous painting became. Each painting rests on the shoulders of the successes and mistakes of its antecedent. The paintings that preceded it are not only mine, but all of the paintings I can remember seeing. Indeed, I never make a painting alone—they develop together in pairs and in groups. They have drawings that they rely on. They are connected to other paintings made at the same time, made before, and in turn connect to paintings yet to be made. A painting cannot be a nonpainting. Magritte tried to make the pipe not a pipe, but the painting was always a painting of a pipe trying not to be a pipe. Imagine the human brain without language, without any shared connection to the rest of the species. Is it still a human brain if it does not function as it was meant to function and has developed over millennia to function?

Each painting is a new painting; each tries to do something that I have not done before. I try out new ideas, combinations of color and different subjects in ways that I think, but don't know for sure, will work. I try to make objects that have not existed before, that arrange languages in ways that are new to me and hopefully to others. From the bones of the past, I try to make something that is surprisingly new though not wholly original.

SM Whether you draw upon literary citations, movies, poems, and/or song lyrics, the application of titles to your paintings has become as dizzying, evocative, and coiled as the source material. Yet, while the origins of these provocative captions may be mysterious, your intention is for them to be "embarrassingly direct, and vulgar in their directness." This does not mean they are narrative or descriptive, but instead casts titles as forceful theatrics, amplifying the emotional tenor of your paintings rather than describing their contents. In a 2009 interview, you said that you covet this kind of response on the receiving end as well, preferring a direct, visceral exchange to that of the aspiring detective who wishes to decode your referential lexicon. If, however, we are all made of the overdetermined opinions of our ancestors, how do you cultivate this

kind of unfettered reciprocity?

GB In 1997, I made a sculpture called *The Sound of Music*. I did not think the viewer would picture Julie Andrews running through the Alps with arms full of edelweiss. The sculpture had nothing to do with musicals. I wanted the viewer to think of the sound of music, the noise, the filling of space with vibrating air. I wanted this pathetic, gnarled lump of paint sitting on a white-topped table trapped beneath its perspex vitrine to be surrounded with the vibration and pulsing tempo of music. But, in its imprisoned state, it seems so very silent. So, just as the viewers imagine the sound of music, they are forced to think of its absence; and end up thinking of silence instead. The title pulls you one way and the sculpture pulls you back to its extreme opposite. Noise and silence. Julie Andrews and abject abstraction.

SM Artist and writer Lynn MacRitchie echoed the sentiments of many when she acclaimed your technical skills as "legendary," calling special attention to how you "can render the surface of paint on canvas as flat and smooth as a glossy magazine." "Flatness" has in turn become a descriptor that is regularly applied to your work, highlighting the fact you paint from printed reproductions rather than the actual paintings themselves. And yet, to my thinking, the bluntness of the word can do a disservice to your labyrinthine construction of each image, belying the multilayered and uncanny qualities that produce seductive and sensuous images beyond our capture. Rather than a leveling flatness, could we read your works in a more provocative fashion as fetish objects?

GB The problem I have with the idea of my paintings being fetishized is that it turns them into objects. The sheer flatness of their surface is a denial of their objectness, of their existence as paintings. The brushmarks are trying not to be brushmarks; they are trying to be copies, flat, printed, photographed copies. The paint is trying to look like ink. They are trying not to exist in the real world at all; to have no body, no physical form. I see your point, that any painting that has been fussed over, brushed, stroked, and smothered with so much titillating detail must want to be fetishized, must seek to arouse the viewer. I suppose they do and they don't. Dalí was wonderful at creating an erotic charge not simply by sexual subject matter, but by the intensity of the way the work is painted. It is the extraordinary crispness in the details that surround the festering shadows in *The Spectre of Sex-Appeal* (1934) that makes the painting so erotic. It is the fact that you have to look at the painting on your own, nose inches from its surface, fetid breath infecting its very loveliness, that makes its encounter a voyeuristic problem. But, with regard to my paintings, I am not sure. They are so slippery and

ashamed of their own painterliness, so problematic, and rather awkward to be seen as fetish objects.

SM The sensational imagery of science fiction fundamentally informed your early work. That visual presence has receded over time, but it's arguable that the ideas underpinning this genre have become ever more central to your practice. There is no single definition of sci-fi, but it's generally considered a futuristic form of speculative fiction exploring alternate worlds and the potential consequences of present-day thought, actions, and innovations. In the past, you have likened your practice to that of Dr. Frankenstein: assembling pieces and parts to create new life. Curator and writer Rochelle Steiner took this one step farther when observing, "What appear as colorful patterns and surface textures emerge as embedded eyes, orifices and suggestive features that point to alternative realities embedded within and underlying [your] subjects." Casting another visionary eye on your work, critic Martin Herbert highlighted the fusion of your "interstellar and high art syntaxes" as painted flesh takes on the appearance of gaseous galaxies "perpetually at the brink of dissolution—or new, unstable birth." As you project seventeenth-century figures and faces into a twenty-first-century context to give them new life and adapt them to/for the future, are you penning a sci-fi treatise with every added work?

GB I am drawn once again to the poststructural idea that we exist within a grid of languages. The genre of science fiction represents a contorted, enmeshed grid that lies across the cultures of the world. Changing and warping our dreams, our escapist fantasies, and nightmare visions of the future. We have built a lexicon of images that represent what our futures might be, but these have become old memories, as generations remember their visions from the past of the future. The latest Star Wars film, *The Force Awakens*, sits somewhere between 1977 and 2015, its vision of the future wrapped in nostalgia. I have not made a directly sci-fi work for many years, but it still pervades many of the paintings I make now. I try to make things that are relevant to now, about flesh deformity and the age-old fear of decay. Hopefully, they are both visions of the future and memories of the past, but tentatively residing in the present.

SM Rhetorical pronouncements of the death of painting are (thankfully) all but deceased, and you are seen as a steadfast champion of the relevance and longevity of the medium. The rise and accelerating sophistication of digital printing processes are, however, considered a new threat to the production of paintings in a mass-market context where the how of the image is considered less important than the what. Your practice and references appear steeped in tradition, but you're quite candid about the essential

role Photoshop plays in the pre-production of the work. If we continue this course of examining your practice through the lens of future visions, how do you foresee your relationship with the computer as technology continues its ever encroaching migration?

GB Before I used Photoshop, I would use a combination of collage, drawing, and painting to create sketches on which to base the paintings. There were advantages to this more physical form of composition. Mistakes and faults in the sketch could become interesting devices within the finished painting. Playing around with bits of paper is always a good place to start, but Photoshop made so many things possible, and the "undo" tool meant never being afraid to mess up a good idea. I try out far more ideas for paintings than before I used the computer. In the last few years, I have found myself drawn back to line drawing and paper, and to the simplicity and relative speed that a drawing can offer. More ideas can be played with and finished in drawing than painting. I feel things progress more, and holes that one digs for oneself can be got out of. Old habits are easier to challenge. I have made many works that are digital prints. The computer offers things that painting cannot do. A complexity of shapes and forms can be printed that would be pointless, or at least hopeless for me to paint. I like the sheer photographic surface that it creates. Has it stopped me painting? Of course not. Can any of the best printers offer the texture, crispness of detail, and boldness of color that painting can? Much of the color applied to the paintings is built up in layers. A glazed surface allows light to pass through transparent layers and bounce back in more complex ways than ink on a flat surface can manage. Even in comparison with drawing, a digital print cannot replicate the slight tonal differences and sharp edges that ink and a pen can offer. I am sure that 3D printing and scanning will change a lot of this. I see no reason why a 3D printer cannot be used to paint with. I look forward to seeing the technology progress to allow more to happen. I will certainly be trying anything that is available. I like the idea of combining printing and painting, but so far it never quite works. Urs Fisher has made some great paintings that are partly printed. One cannot ignore the thrill one gets from standing in front of a Dürer watercolor, looking at the blades of grass, the hairs quivering around the hare's nostrils, and imagining his hand and eyes harmonizing to create these splendid marks on that very sheet of paper. Just as one relishes the marks and dribbles left over as traces of Willem de Kooning's ecstasy of flailing arms. The presence of the artists can be thrilling: they look over your shoulder at the works they once breathed on and created in years gone by.

SM You've been painting steadily for the last three decades, but have stated emphatically that you do not believe in traditional models of evolution, development, or

progression when it comes to your practice (as well as culture at large). Instead, you espouse a more gradual, less dramatic process of refinement that hones and perfects without ever reaching a definitive conclusion. Speaking to the perpetual, but no less gratifying, pursuit of the perfect canvas, you theorized, "Painting is a set of puzzles—you know there are answers but sometimes you can't find them." How do you envision the perfect painting and how has your pursuit changed over the years?

GB I don't envisage a perfect painting, by me or anyone else. I don't envisage anything perfect. I am content to see a string of happy accidents that lead somewhere interesting. There is no perfect harmony of composition, color, or form, no perfect line and no perfect beauty. No painting of the past is without considerable flaws. We overlook these things and concentrate on what works and what demands our attention. Tricks, bangs, and whistles are what a good painting is made of. The bangs may not be loud and the whistles barely audible, but creating exciting differences of color and texture across the surface of the canvas is what I am trying to achieve. I tend to start a work with a simplified structure, knowing that I will build a more complex form over it. More often than not, my enthusiasm gets the better of me and I overwork the picture. It becomes too complex, fussy, irritating to look at. This is where the puzzle gets interesting: when you have spoiled things and you need to take marks away, overpaint complex areas with more simple, flat expanses, while adding detail in others. Each painting presents a new set of problems, with a myriad of ways to resolve them. Different resolutions lead to different paintings. Each path could lead to an interesting finish, but you have to set ground rules or else a painting really could go on forever. I hope I am getting better at playing the game, and drawing really helps resolve the good from the bad.

SM While reviewing your earliest professional paintings in the 2009 Tate Liverpool retrospective, critic Martin Herbert warily observed the "virtuosic, frigid product of debates about painting's demise" by a young artist struggling to reconcile his prodigious talent and a discursive dead end. Would you only make cynical, if exquisitely crafted, renditions for the rest of your days? Rather than painting yourself into the corner of appropriation, pessimism, and a rote take on the age of mechanical reproduction, critic Waldemar Januszczak observed that years later, "instead of being repetitive, [Brown's] clever explorations of brushstrokes, illusions, signature styles and sizes led him away from his sources and closer to himself." You've never been one to court celebrity and have even substituted paintings for requested headshots, but in a 2009 interview, you said, "The real subject [of my work] is me trying to make an abstract portrait or a self-portrait." If we consider all the work made to date as a cumulative constellation toward this end, what does the aggregate portrait of Glenn Brown look like today?

GB I can remember teaching students who were desperate to find their "thing," their signature style or method that would catapult them to stardom. You would try to explain that it rarely ever works like that. That artists who think they found their "thing" tend to stop trying and get very boring. You can't just coast along making the same painting over and over and expect to be interesting. Making a good work of art is difficult: it takes time, a lot of time in my case, but if it were otherwise, it would be tedious. I like painting. I don't want it to be simple and dull. I am not suggesting that one needs to sit in front of a canvas for months on end gnashing one's teeth and wailing. There are artists who like to maintain this impression, but I think it usually is an act, a cliché that people still seem to fall for. Art is a language. If you don't understand something, ask a friend. Ask as many as possible, talk about it, write about it, and, of course, read about it. There is a lot of help to be had, so long as you don't let your ego get in the way. Pride is usually the downfall of most. If you can't admit that a work is bad, or could be better, if you can't accept criticism as the most helpful tool in the box, then you are in trouble.

If I look back at all the work I have made, it feels rather numbing. All that sentiment, pathos, drama, bad taste, and high camp make for a heady mixture. I would advise not to see too many of my paintings at any one time. It would be like eating a big box of chocolates in one go. Over the years, I think I have been rather honest and vulnerable, at times brutally so. Too much honesty and you start to bruise.

17. *Reproduction*, 2014



18. *Life on the Moon, 2016*



24. *Drawing 19 (after Dürer)*, 2015



25. *Drawing 27 (after Menzel)*, 2015



26. *Drawing 28, Vegetable Humanity (after Pierre/Watelet)*, 2015



27. *Drawing 35 (after De Heer)*, 2015



Catalogue of the Exhibition

Paintings

1. *You Never Touch My Skin in the Way You Did, and You've Even Changed the Way you Kiss Me*, 1994
   Oil on canvas
   60 ¼ x 48 inches
   Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
   Page 11

2. *The Pornography of Death (Painting for Ian Curtis) Copied from 'Floating Cities' 1981 by Chris Foss*, 1995
   Oil on canvas
   86 ½ x 129 inches
   Private Collection
   Page 12 – 13

3. *Searched Hard for You and Your Special Ways*, 1995
   Oil on canvas mounted on board
   35 x 29 ½ inches
   Courtesy of the artist
   Page 15

4. *Shallow Deaths*, 2000
   Oil on panel
   27 ½ x 22 ½ inches
   Courtesy of the artist
   Page 17

5. *Anaesthesia*, 2001
   Oil on panel
   41 ½ x 32 ½ inches
   Rennie Collection, Vancouver
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6. *Dark Star*, 2003
   Oil on panel
   39 ¼ x 29 ½ inches
   The Art Institute of Chicago
   Page 21

7. *International Velvet*, 2004
   Oil on panel
   47 ¾ x 57 ¼ inches
   Courtesy of the artist
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8. *They Threw Us All in a Pit and Built a Monument on Top (part 1 and 2)*, 2003
   Oil on panel
   Left panel: 51 ½ x 34 ½ inches (oval)
   Right panel: 60 ¼ x 40 ¾ inches (oval)
   Rennie Collection, Vancouver
   Page 24 – 25

9. *Debaser*, 2008
   Oil on panel
   39 ¼ x 29 ¼ inches
   Gina and Stuart Peterson, Los Angeles
   Page 27

10. *The Great Queen Spider*, 2009
    Oil on panel
    59 x 47 ¼ inches
    Private Collection
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11. *Star Dust*, 2009
    Oil on panel
    60 ½ x 48 inches
    Larry Gagosian, New York
    Page 71

12. *A Sailor's Life*, 2011
    Oil on panel
    64 ¼ x 47 ¼ inches
    Gina and Stuart Peterson, Los Angeles
    Page 73

13. *The Shallow End*, 2011
    Oil on paper
    50 ¼ x 37 ¾ inches (oval)
    Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery
    Page 75

14. *Necrophiliac Springtime*, 2013
    Oil on panel
    67 x 133 ¾ inches
    Glenn and Amanda Fuhrman, New York,
    Courtesy of the FLAG Art Foundation
    Page 84 – 85

15. *MOTHER*, 2014
    Oil on panel
    67 x 133 ¾ inches
    Stefan T. Edlis Collection, Aspen, Colorado
    Page 78 – 79

16. *In My Time of Dying*, 2014
    Oil on panel
    52 ¼ x 39 inches
    Private Collection
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17. *Reproduction*, 2014
    Oil on panel
    53 ¼ x 39 ¾ inches
    Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery
    Page 105

18. *Life on the Moon*, 2016
    Oil on panel
    39 ¼ x 31 inches
    Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery
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Sculpture

19. *Wooden Heart*, 2008
    Oil paint on acrylic over plaster and metal armature
    58 ¼ x 27 ½ x 35
    Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery
    Page 28 – 29

20. *Nymph de Bois*, 2011
    Oil paint on acrylic on bronze
    20 x 12 ¼ x 11 inches
    Olbricht Collection, Berlin
    Page 77

21. *The Glory of Spain*, 2014
    Oil paint over acrylic on bronze
    49 ¼ x 28 ¼ x 28 ¼ inches
    Larry Gagosian, New York
    Page 83

Drawings

22. *Drawing 24 (after Jordaens/Jordaens)*, 2014
Ink on polypropylene
11 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches
Courtesy of Gagosian Gallery
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23. *Drawing 35 (after Batoni/Delacroix)*, 2014
Ink on polypropylene
13 ¾ x 9 ¾ inches
Courtesy of the artist
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24. *Drawing 19 (after Dürer)*, 2015
Sepia India ink on Pergamenata White paper
39 ¼ x 29 ¼ inches
Courtesy of Gagosian Gallery
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25. *Drawing 27 (after Menzel)*, 2015
Indian ink and acrylic on Canford paper
Gun Metal
33 x 23 ¼ inches
Courtesy of Galerie Max Hetzler
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26. *Drawing 28, Vegetable Humanity (after Pierre/Watelet)*, 2015
Indian ink on Pergamenata White paper
27 ¼ x 19 ½ inches
Courtesy of Galerie Max Hetzler
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27. *Drawing 35 (after De Heer)*, 2015
Indian ink and acrylic on panel
29 ½ x 23 ½ inches
Courtesy of Gagosian Gallery
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28. *Swing Time*, 2016
Indian ink and acrylic on panel
44 ¾ x 35 ¾ inches
Courtesy of Gagosian Gallery
Page 3

Prints

29. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 1*, 2008
Etching on Somerset 300 gsm textured paper
Image: 31 x 24 ¼ inches
Sheet: 29 ½ x 37 inches
Courtesy of the artist
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30. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 2*, 2008
Etching on Somerset 300 gsm textured paper
Image: 30 ½ x 24 inches
Sheet: 29 ½ x 37 inches
Courtesy of the artist
Page 45

31. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 3*, 2008
Etching on Somerset 300 gsm textured paper
Image: 30 ½ x 24 inches
Sheet: 29 ½ x 37 inches
Courtesy of the artist
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32. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 4*, 2008
Etching on Somerset 300 gsm textured paper
Image: 30 ½ x 24 inches
Sheet: 29 ½ x 37 inches
Courtesy of the artist
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33. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 6*, 2008
Etching on Somerset 300 gsm textured paper
Image: 30 ½ x 23 ¼ inches
Sheet: 29 ½ x 37 inches
Courtesy of the artist
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34. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 8*, 2008
Etching on Somerset 300 gsm textured paper
Image: 30 ½ x 24 inches
Sheet: 29 ½ x 37 inches
Courtesy of the artist
Page 49

1966 Born in Hexham, Northumberland, England
Lives and works in London and Suffolk, England

EDUCATION

1988 Bath College of Higher Education, Bath (BA, Fine Art)
1992 Goldsmiths College, University of London (MA, Fine Art)

SELECT ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2016
Fondation Vincent Van Gogh, Arles, *Glenn Brown: Suffer Well*

2015
Galerie Max Hetzler, Paris, *Glenn Brown: Dessins*
Gagosian Gallery, London, *Glenn Brown at Frieze Art Fair*

2014
Gagosian Gallery, New York, *Glenn Brown*

2013
Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, *Conversation Piece V: Glenn Brown and the Old Masters*

2012
Upton House, Oxfordshire, England, *Glenn Brown*

2011
Gagosian Gallery, Geneva, *Glenn Brown: Etchings and Sculpture*
Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, *Glenn Brown*

2009
Gagosian Gallery, London, *Glenn Brown*
Karsten Schubert, London, *Etchings (Portraits)*
Tate Gallery, Liverpool, *Glenn Brown* (traveled to Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Ludwig Muzeum – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest)

2008
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, *Glenn Brown*
Patrick Painter, Santa Monica, California, *Glenn Brown: Editions and a Unique Sculpture*

2007
Gagosian Gallery, New York, *Glenn Brown*

2006
Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, *Glenn Brown*

2005
Patrick Painter, Santa Monica, California, *Glenn Brown*

2004
Gagosian Gallery, New York, *Glenn Brown*
Serpentine Gallery, London, *Glenn Brown*

2002
Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, *Glenn Brown*

2001
Patrick Painter, Santa Monica, California, *Glenn Brown*

2000
Domaine de Kerguéhennec – Centre d'Art Contemporain, Bignan, France, *Glenn Brown*
Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, *Glenn Brown*

SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2015
Centre de la Vieille Charité, Marseilles, *Art Fiction—De la ville aux étoiles*
Centre Pompidou, Malaga, *Collection Centre Pompidou*
Leeds Art Gallery, London, *One Day, Something Happens: Paintings of People* (An Arts Council Collection exhibition; traveled to Nottingham, Southport, and Eastbourne, England; Drogheda, Ireland)
Pivot Art + Culture, Seattle, *The Figure in Process*

2014
Bell Gallery and Cohen Gallery, Granoff Center, Providence, Rhode Island, *SHE: Picturing women at the turn of the 21st century*
Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Stuttgart, *Cool Place: Sammlung Scharpff*
Musée Cognacq-Jay, Paris, *Lumières: carte blanche à Christian Lacroix*
Saatchi Gallery, London, *Post Pop: East Meets West*

2013
Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, *REMEMBER EVERYTHING: 40 Years Galerie Max Hetzler*
Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, *Riotous Baroque: From Cattelan to Zurbarán*
FRAC Limousin, Limoges, *Le Grand Tout—30 ans de FRAC Limousin*
Rennie Collection, Vancouver, *Glenn Brown and Rebecca Warren*

2012
Courtauld Gallery, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, *Portrait of the Artist As...*
Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, *Beyond Reality: British Painting Today*
Karsten Schubert, London, *The Space Between*
King's Place Gallery, London, *The Mechanical Hand: Pauper Press 25 Years* (traveled to Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, Newcastle upon Tyne, England)
Snape Maltings, Suffolk, England, *SNAP*

2011
Gagosian Gallery, Hong Kong, *Figures in a Landscape*
Hamburger Kunstalle, Hamburg, *Blurred—After Gerhard Richter*
Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, *Le Surréalisme, c'est moi! Homage to Dalí*
Liljevalchs Konsthall, Stockholm, *Helvete/Hell* (traveled to Borås Konstmuseum, Borås, Sweden)
La Maison Rouge, Paris, *Memories of the Future. The Olbricht Collection*
Tate Britain, London, *John Martin: Apocalypse*
Turner Contemporary, Margate, England, *Nothing in the World But Youth*

2010
Approach Gallery, London, *Head*
Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent, Paris, *Vanité: Mort, que me veux-tu?*
Galerie Haas & Fuchs, Berlin, *Art: Curated by Michael Craig-Martin*
Gagosian Gallery, London, *Crash*
Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea, *10,000 Lives*
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Seconde Main/Second Hand*
The New Art Gallery Walsall, Walsall, England, *Behind the Mask*
Royal Academy of Arts, London, *Summer Exhibition*
Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen, Norway, *Grand National: Art from Britain*

2009
Laing Art Gallery, Tyne and Wear Museums, Newcastle upon Tyne, England, *Surface Reality*
Punta della Dogana and Palazzo Grassi, Venice, *Mapping the Studio: Artists from the François Pinault Collection*
Tate Britain, London, *Art Now: Beating The Bounds*
ZKM / Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, *Just what is it ...*

2008
Dominique Fiat Galerie, Paris, *Beyond the Lens*
Frances Leham Loeb Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, *Excerpt: Selections from the Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn Collection*
Gavin Brown's Enterprise and Maccarone, New York, *Pretty Ugly*
Honor Fraser, Los Angeles, *Jekyll Island*
Seoul Museum of Art, *Arcadia: Painters' Paradise* (traveled to Taipei Fine Art Museum as Arcadia: Dans les collections du Centre Pompidou)

2007
The Flag Art Foundation, New York, *Attention to Detail*
FRAC Limousin, Limoges, *Photopeintres*
Gagosian Gallery, Moscow, *Insight?*
Kunst HausWien, Vienna, and Kunsthal, Rotterdam, *Zurück zur Figur: Malerei der Gegenwart*
Hauser & Wirth Colnaghi, London, *Old School*
Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, *Kunst im Dialog. 100 Jahre Kunsthalle*
Museum Folkwang, Essen, *Rockers Island: Olbricht Collection*
Perry Rubinstein Gallery, New York, *Accidental Painting*
Triennale Bovisa, Milan, *Timer 01—Intimacy: Contemporary Art after Nine Eleven*
Von der Heydt – Museum, Wuppertal, *Der Symbolismus und die Kunst der Gegenwart*

2006
Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol, *Passion For Paint* (traveled to Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, England; and The National Gallery, London)
CaixaForum, Centro Social y Cultural, Barcelona, *Jean-Honoré Fragonard: Orígenes e Influences*
Compton Verney, Warwickshire, England, *The Starry Messenger: Visions of the Universe*
Domaine de Kerguéhennec, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Bignan, France, *Chers amis*
Hayward Gallery, London, *How to Improve the World: 60 Years of British Art, Arts Council Collection*
Kunsthalle der Hypo – Kulturstiftung, Munich, *Zurück zur Figur: Malerei der Gegenwart*
Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, *Full House: Geschichte einer Sammlung*
Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London, *British Art*
Quality Pictures Contemporary Art, Portland, Oregon, *POW! (Pictures of Women)*

Villa Manin, Centro d'Arte Contemporanea, Codroipo, Italy, *Infinite Painting: Contemporary Painting and Global Realism*

2005

Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, Birmingham, England, *The Nature of Things*

Bortolami Dayan, New York, *Closing Down*

Centre Pompidou, Paris, *Big Bang*

Fondazione Davide Halevim, Milan, *STRATA: Difference and Repetition*

Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Guarene d'Alba, Turin; and Cavallerizza Chiablese e il Salone delle Guardie, Turin, *Bidibidobidiboo*

The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA, Los Angeles, *Ecstasy: In and About Altered States*

Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, *Rückkehr ins All*

Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, *Direkte Malerei/ Direct Painting*

Thomas Dane, London, *Translations: Creative Copying and Originality*

2004

Artemis Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, New York, *She's Come Undone*

Haunch of Venison, London, *Must I Paint You A Picture?*

Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, *PILLish: Harsh Realities and Gorgeous Destinations*

Patrick Painter, Santa Monica, California, *Painter Editions*

2003

38 Langham Street, London (curated by Glenn Brown), *Breaking God's Heart*

50th Biennale di Venezia, Venice, *Dreams and Conflicts: Dictatorship of the Viewer. Delays and Revolutions*

Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, *Heißkalt: Aktuelle Malerei aus der Sammlung Scharpff* (traveled to Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart)

Museo Correr, Venice, *Paintings: From Rauschenberg to Murakami 1964 – 2003*

Fonds Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz, Austria, *M_ARS: Kunst und Krieg*

Regionel d'Art Contemporain, Limousin, France, *Une Collection de "Chefs-d'oeuvre"*

2002

25th Biennal de São Paulo, Pavilhão Ciccillo Matarazzo, São Paulo, *Metropolitan Iconographies*

Centro Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain; Centro José Guerro, Granada; and Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo, Vigo, Spain, *Melodrama*

Centre Pompidou, Paris, *Dear Painter, Paint Me…: Painting the figure since late Picabia* (traveled to Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; and Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt)

Edifico Cultura Inglesa, Centro Brasileiro Britanico, São Paulo, *Painting as a Foreign Language*

Talbot Rice Gallery, The University of Edinburgh, *From the Saatchi Gift*

Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 13th Biennale of Sydney 2002: *The World May Be (Fantastic)*

The Saatchi Gallery, London, *Landscape*

2001

Centre Pompidou, Paris, *Azerty: Un abécédaire autour des collections du FRAC Limousin*

The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, *Secret Victorians*

Galerie Ascan Crone, Berlin/Hamburg, *Passion*

Künstlerverein Malkasten, Düsseldorf, *Glenn Brown und Arnold Böcklin*

2000

Armand Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, *Examining Painting*

The Hydra Workshop, Hydra, Greece, *Sausages and Frankfurters. Recent British and German paintings from the Ophiuchus Collection*

Centre for Visual Arts, Cardiff, Futuro: *Decadent Art and Architecture*

Delfina Project Space, London, *Salon*

Organized by the Hayward Gallery, London, for the Arts Council of England, *The British Art Show 5* (traveled to Scottish Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; Johns Hansard Gallery, The Southampton Art Gallery, and Millais Gallery, Southampton, England; National Museum of Wales, Cardiff; and Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Birmingham, England)

Hôtel du Rhône, Geneva, *Suite Substitute IV: Beautiful Strangers*

Houldsworth Fine Art, London, *Little Angels*

Kunsthaus Zürich, Zurich, *Hypermental: Rampant Reality 1950 – 2000. From Salvador Dali to Jeff Koons* (traveled to Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg; and Rudolfinum, Prague)

The New Art Gallery Walsall, Walsall, England, *Blue*

The Nunnery Gallery, London, *The Wreck of Hope*

The Project, New York, *Glenn Brown, Julie Mehretu, Peter Rostovsky*

Tate Britain, London, *Turner Prize 2000* (with Wolfgang Tillmans, Tomoko Takahashi, and Michael Raedecker)

MONOGRPAHS

2015

Glenn Brown: 36 Drawings and a Sculpture. London: Gagosian Gallery. Text by Xavier Solomon.

Glenn Brown: Drawings. Paris: Galerie Max Hetzler. Text by Andreas Schalhorn.

Glenn Brown. London: Gagosian Gallery. Text by Rudi Fuchs.

Glenn Brown and Rebecca Warren. Vancouver: Rennie Collection. Text by John Chilver and Dominic Eichler.

2011

Glenn Brown. Berlin: Galerie Max Hetzler. Text by Jean-Marie Gallais.

2009

Glenn Brown. London: Tate. Edited by Francesco Bonami and Christoph Grunenberg. Texts by Lawrence Sillars and Michael Stubbs.

Glenn Brown: Etchings (Portraits). London: Ridinghouse. Text by John-Paul Stonnard.

Glenn Brown: Three Exhibitions. London: Gagosian Gallery and Rizzoli. Texts by Rochelle Steiner, Michael Bracewell, and David Freedberg.

2008

Glenn Brown. Vienna: Kunsthistoriches Museum. Edited by Wilfried Seipel; interview by Katarzyna Uszynska.

2007

Glenn Brown. New York: Gagosian Gallery. Text by Michael Bracewell.

2006

Glenn Brown. Berlin: Galerie Max Hetzler and Holzwarth Publications. Text by Tom Morton.

2004

Glenn Brown. London: Serpentine Gallery. Text by Alison Gingeras; interview by Rochelle Steiner.

Glenn Brown. New York: Gagosian Gallery. Text by David Freedberg.

2000

Glenn Brown. Bignan, France: Domaine de Kerguéhennec. Texts by Terry R. Myers and Frédéric Paul; interview by Stephen Hepworth.

1999

Glenn Brown. London: Jerwood Gallery. Text by Ian Hunt.

1996

Glenn Brown. Hexham, England: Queen's Hall Arts Centre; London: Karsten Schubert. Text by Phil King; interview by Marcelo Spinelli.

32. *Layered Portrait (after Lucian Freud) 4* (detail), 2008



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Interview with Glenn Brown by Steven Matijcio

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