

An abstract painting featuring a variety of colors and textures. The background is a mix of warm tones like orange, yellow, and pink, with cooler tones like green, blue, and purple. There are large, expressive brushstrokes in green, yellow, and blue, as well as smaller, more delicate strokes in white and pink. A small black dot is visible in the upper right quadrant.

New Paintings
Angela Brennan

13 June - 1 July 2023



To view an Angela Brennan painting is to be embraced by colour. The artist's iconic combinations of radiating hues and soft forms are atmospheric, an effect enhanced by their often immersive scale. It is almost as if you can breathe them in. To be in their presence is to be acutely aware of your own body in relation to the work and a lively invitation to the eye and, indeed, the heart. For Brennan's world is deeply shaped by emotion and intuition.

While Brennan's oeuvre encompasses figurative and text based paintings and more recently ceramics, she is perhaps best known for her abstractions, and in the 1990s became one of the leading Melbourne figures associated with reworking the ideas of colour-based abstraction. Brennan's abstract paintings have a distinct 'feel' evoked through their buoyant colours, forms and surfaces that are whimsically underpinned by the concepts of analytical philosophy (with its emphasis on language) and the logic of 'imagined worlds'.

In March I visited Brennan's East Brunswick, Melbourne studio to view the works in progress for this exhibition, the artist's first with Jan Manton Gallery. Canvases were positioned in a manner that permitted easy movement between them, with multiple works in progress simultaneously. Materialising amongst the lively colours was a cluster of largely monochromatic paintings that loosely embrace the grid - an icon of twentieth century abstraction. But rather than focus on the tight rigidity of the grid, Brennan is instead enticed by the potential of the weave; a coming apart, loosening or rearranging that for the artist has potentially infinite permutations. Brennan observes;

"The black, white and grey palette emphasises a linear element while my paintings with more colour focus on form. Black and white can behave like a drawing but also a tonal painting - a world unto itself."¹

The dialogue between these two approaches permeate the body of work as a whole, evidenced in the underlying compositional elements of shape, colour and line.

In *Big Hippy* and *Little Hippy*, boldly coloured lines are released from the grid and laid out specimen-like amongst corresponding circles and squares. These marks sit atop bare canvas that heightens their pure colour and materiality. *Visiting You Again* contains scumbled purple rectangles overlaid by bright squares of peach and blue that boldly reframe fragments of the composition. Small yet piercing black dots dominate several of the canvases, peppered amongst compositions singularly or in groups. In *Black hole and colours from the art shop (2)* the title perhaps alludes to space or a universe outside of the painting itself, matched by a frank description of the artist's materials. This is typical of Brennan's titles which can change or complicate straight readings of the work, often with levity and humour.

Brennan's paintings invite us into the warm comfort of her universe, a space in which thoughts and feelings can spill and unfurl into new and endless possibilities. By gently summoning our inner lives Brennan encourages us to engage with ourselves and with her work in new and unknown ways.

- Serena Bentley
Curator | Arts Writer

¹ Angela Brennan in email correspondence with the author, Monday 8 May 2023



Reasons and Passions, 2023
Oil on linen
180.5 x 170.5cm

\$25,000



Sometimes and Always, 2023
Oil on linen
188.5 x 126cm

\$20,000



Always and Sometimes, 2023
Oil on linen
198 x 91.5cm

\$18,000



Up, Down, Strange, Charm, 2023
Oil on linen
148.5 x 136.5cm

\$18,000



Visiting you again, 2023
Oil on linen
110.5 x 76.5cm

\$10,000



Sets of sets (one), 2023
Oil on linen
183 x 137.5cm

\$20,000



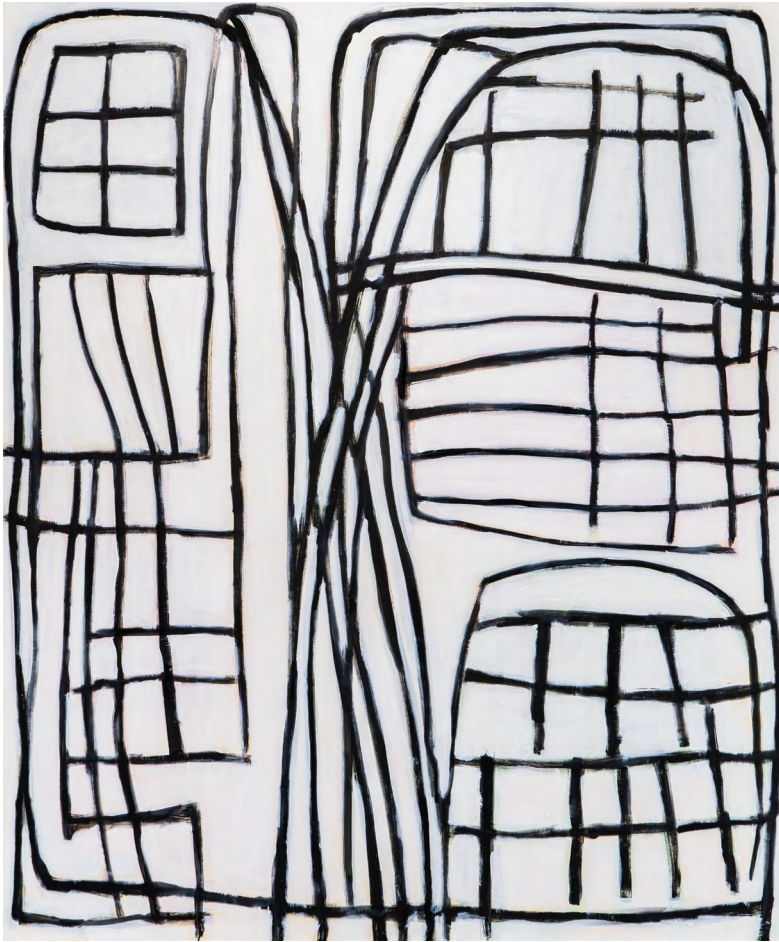
That, too, 2023
Oil on linen
90.5 x 70.5cm

\$8,900



*Black hole and colours from the
art shop (1), 2023*
Oil on linen
105.5 x 75.5cm

\$10,000



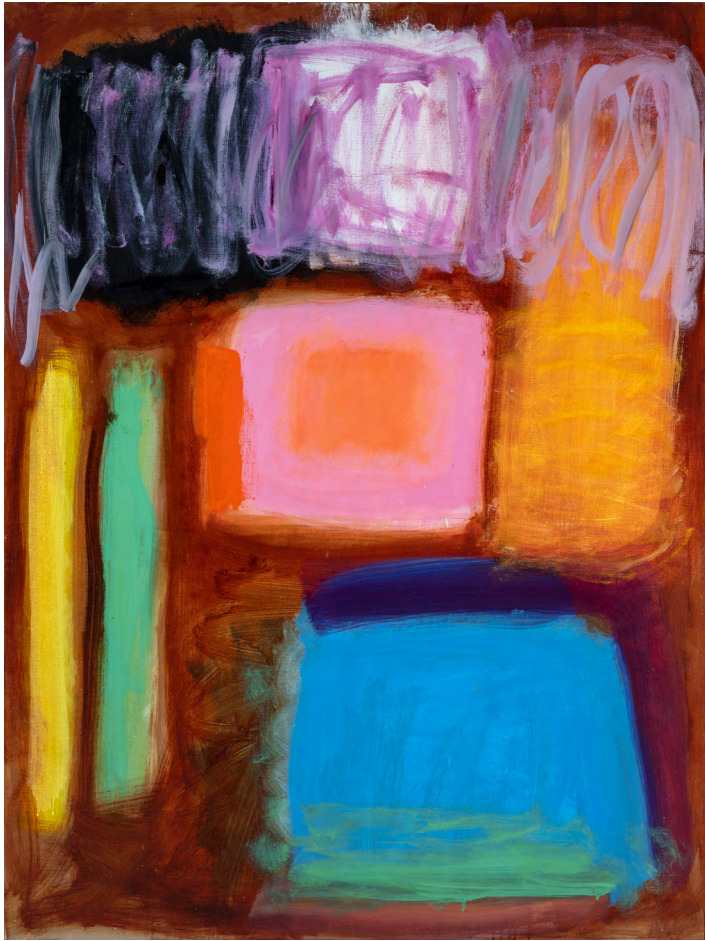
One, 2023
Oil on linen
180.5 x 151cm

\$22,000



*Black hole and colours from the
art shop (2), 2023
Oil on linen
149 x 136.5cm*

\$18,000



Five, 2023
Oil on linen
122 x 91.5cm

\$12,000



Wait there yellow square, 2023
Oil on linen
50.5 x 60.5cm

\$6,500



One morning, 2023
Oil on linen
60.5 x 50.5cm

\$6,500



Big hippy, 2023
Oil on linen
35.5 x 25.5cm

\$3,800



Little Hippy, 2023
Oil on linen
25 x 25cm

\$3,300



Obsession (1), 2023
Oil on linen
25.5 x 20.5cm

\$3,300



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Front cover image: *Black hole and colours from the art shop (1)*, 2023, Oil on linen, 105.5 x 75.5 cm

Inside cover image: *Sometimes and Always*, 2023, Oil on linen, 188.5 x 126 cm

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