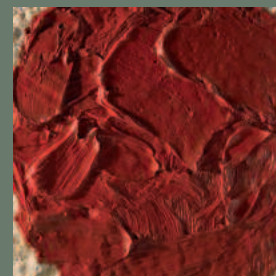
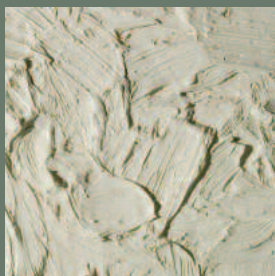
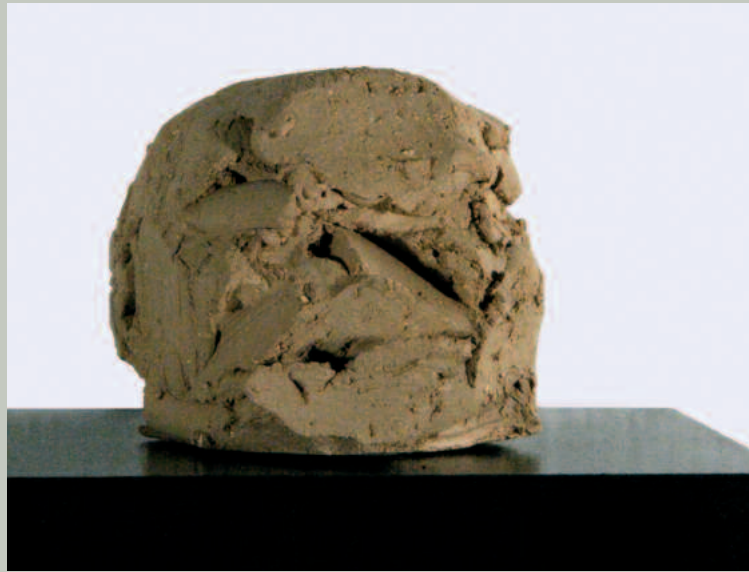




# INVENTORY JONI BRENNER







# JONI BRENNER

I N V E N T O R Y

**ART FIRST** CONTEMPORARY ART

Frontispiece: **Chiselled**

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**I have a melancholic disposition**, and even if I am strong, I feel sad often, and overwhelmed always. I think this is so because I make portraits all the time. I look intensely at my model or myself or the two skulls I have in my studio, and thoughts of living and life, its fragility or frailty, of death, memory, memorials, leaving and longing and hoping are always with me.

I've worked as an artist since the early '90s, that is seventeen years of making portraits, continually assessing and preparing exhibitions, each one a focused reflection. Generating titles, arranging groups or pairs of images, choosing photographs, frames, plinths, texts and stories, all of this produces compacted thought about what and why I make what I do.

I have been looking at art and museums for about as long, responding to other artists' work and trying to understand the resonances. I've been teaching art history too, teaching about portraiture, and learning along the way, looking back in time, as well as at the contemporary edge, making connections and then finding them come into my work in ways that are sometimes opaque and evocative and sometimes deliberate and explicit. All this activity is a form of examining life – mine and others, and I understand, in T. S. Eliot's words, that 'it is not the "greatness", the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts'.<sup>1</sup> He also says that 'humankind cannot bear too much reality',<sup>2</sup> and I know from the way I work, from being an artist, from making portraits, that living is a process of dying but also that within the knowledge of mortality, is life.

**Joni Brenner**

Johannesburg, 2007

1. T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*, Methuen, 1920

2. T. S. Eliot, 'Burnt Norton', *Four Quartets*, Faber & Faber, 1941



installations 1-X  
76 Fairfax  
off the wall  
recollect: reconnect / card  
99 Fayoum  
Black Box  
chip off the old block  
Boq portraits 1 & 2  
102 Infra-red  
on fire - burnt out Posts  
Living Fire  
Fayoum  
Yorick - of infinite jest  
dead & turn'd to clay: Caesar  
clay for Adam  
long neck arm  
rail Paganismus baselty ||  
red. Golden-bony Balzac  
jash gold vermillion  
105 terra-rosa rare  
pyro  
Andy + Phil(ip) Prado  
106 Wrest / uning / wrested  
P.V. Glob + Ditchley  
Skulls | skeletons / Giacometti  
herms  
memorials cyprian  
shutakoe

Battista & Montefeltro  
Quidobaldo

-- Souvenir / Heal Souvenir  
remain cloam

Renaissance

--- Graubelle, Toland

gash gold vermillion (G.M.H.)

cycles / Impersonal caian

'07 extracts, origins day heads  
installation  
Hydenberg

|| chatal hoyuk

petra

|| severed heads  
severed breasts

2007 | inelight 91 Moro  
Inventory Studio 1020  
serri / balzac The Palace  
Eve, Marauio at 4 am.  
scaffolding



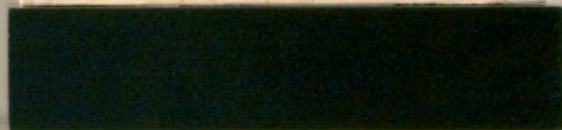
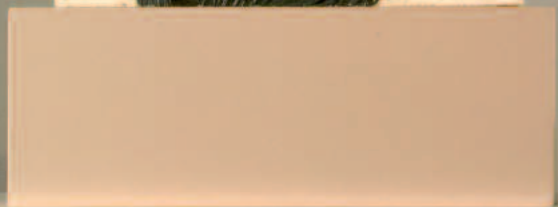


Time-ning



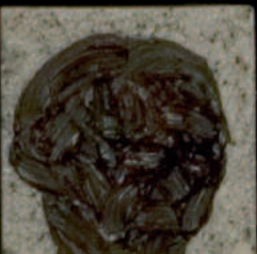
Sèvres head

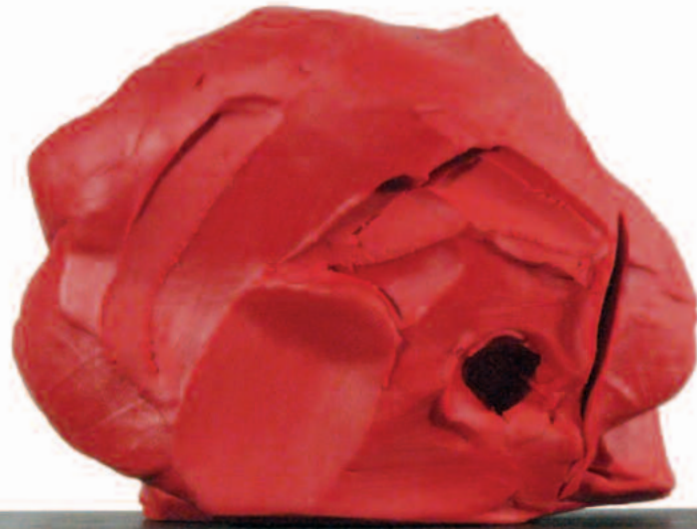












End of Her Terror

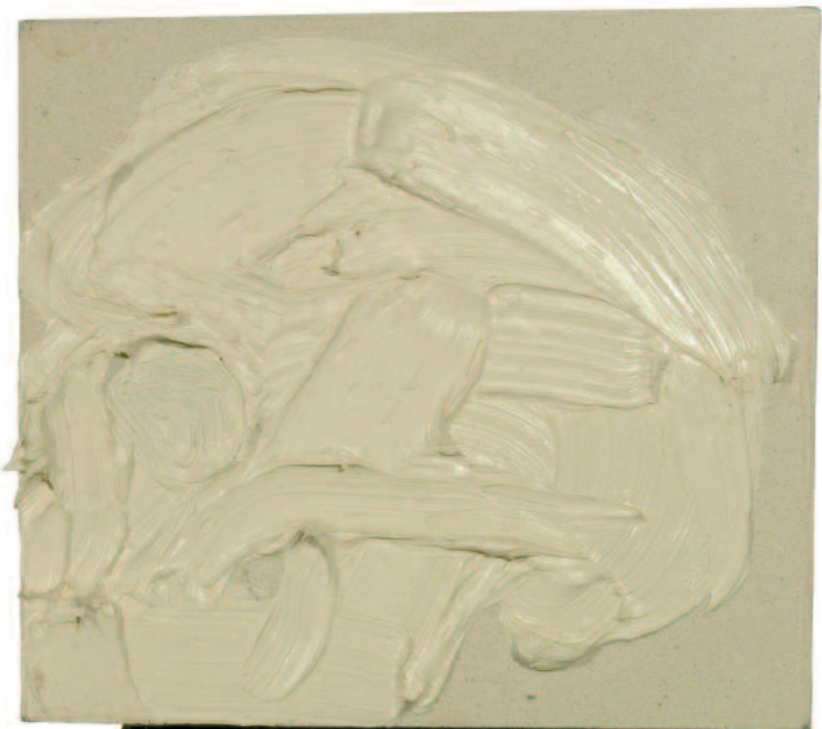
Detail of Eye from Masaccio's fresco **The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden**, Cappella Brancacci, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence





Vitrine for 3





Vitrine for 3

**Studio**, detail





Adler: cross-section





**Extracts**, 2006, on permanent loan to the Origins Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand





**Extracts** (detail) with background photograph of Ndebele initiation, rites of passage, by Dr Peter Magubane



Studio: works in progress and Joni Brenner with Wilson Mootane who has sat for her for 15 years

# Joni Brenner

## **Solo exhibitions**

- 2007 *Inventory*, Art First, London
- 2006 *Wrest*, Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg
- 2005 *Terra Rosa*, Art First, London
- 2002 *Infra-Red*, Gertrude Posel Gallery, University of the Witwatersrand
- 1999 *Off the wall*, Sandton Civic Gallery, Johannesburg
- 1996 *Joni Brenner*, Alliance Française Gallery, Johannesburg

## **Selected group exhibitions**

- 2006 *Figuring faith*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg
- 2002 *Once were painters*, Sasol sponsored exhibition, Klein Karoo National Arts Festival. Curated by Clive van den Berg
- 2001 *Atelier Exhibition*, ABSA Gallery, Johannesburg (finalist, national competition for artists under 35)
- 2000 *Atelier Exhibition*, ABSA Gallery, Johannesburg (Merit award winner, national competition for artists under 35)
- 1999 *Emergence*, Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg (national overview of 25 years of South African art)
- 1998 *Lifetimes: An Exhibition of Southern African Art*, Out of Africa Festival, Munich, Germany. Curated by Ruth SLack

## **Public collections**

- ASBA Bank, Johannesburg
- Alliance Française, Johannesburg
- Johannesburg Art Gallery
- KPMG, headquarters, Johannesburg
- PGSI, Johannesburg
- Sandton Civic Gallery, Johannesburg
- Sasol, headquarters, Johannesburg
- Unisa Art Gallery, Pretoria
- University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
- University of the Witwatersrand Origins Centre, Johannesburg



Studio: works in progress

## List of works illustrated

### Chiselled

2007, SikaGard-consolidated clay, Perspex, supawood, 14.5 x 14 x 12 cm

### Time-ring

2007, oil on wax, glass, padauk wood, 43.5 x 27 x 5 cm

### Sèvres head

2007, SikaGard consolidated clay, glass, supawood, 33 x 14 x 15.5 cm

### Efface/deface

2007, oil on marble slab, supawood, 27 x 48 x 10 cm

### Studiolo

2007, 9 works in a supawood and glass vitrine, 43 x 140 x 20 cm

This combination of paintings and sculptures grouped in an enclosed space refers to Isabella D'Este's *studiolo*, a room in her private apartments where she installed and displayed art and objects that she collected

### End of Her Terror

2007, Plasticine, leadwood, Perspex, 20.5 x 42 x 12 cm

### Vitrine for 2

2007, oil on slate, plasticine, glass, supawood, Perspex, 22.5 x 30 x 12 cm

### Vitrine for 3

2007, oil on wax, oil on slate, oil on marble, supawood, glass, 34 x 82.5 x 20 cm

### Adler: cross-section

2007, oil on Namibian rose marble slab, supawood, 32.5 x 36 x 7 cm



Published by Art First in connection with the exhibition

**Joni Brenner: Inventory**

12 October – 9 November 2007

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Origins Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand, for permission to use the photograph *Extracts* which includes the backdrop picture *Ndebele Initiation. Rites of Passage*, Dr Peter Magubane  
Photo: André Croucamp

## Artist's Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Art First for their full support of my creative practice.  
I thank Elizabeth Burroughs, Karel Nel and Natasha Christopher for their help and insights in the preparation of the exhibition *Inventory* and its catalogue, and Fred Glick, who always installs my exhibitions. I would like to thank my parents, Sonny and Peta Brenner, for being the back-up to my life as an artist.

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Benjamin Rhodes

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