

For 20 years Jane Harris has been using the ellipse as the recurring formal motif in her paintings and works on paper. This self-imposed limitation has paradoxically provided the means for a continuous research into the relationship of form, surface, colour and light within painting. Having the potential to be viewed simultaneously as two and three dimensional, these elliptical ornate forms emerge from a tightly controlled surface and the overall effect is seductive, yet restrained. Each painting is imbued with an individual character and elusive presence and the metallic pigments that she uses add lustrous and reflective qualities to the paintings' surfaces.

*“Harris’s work synthesizes two seemingly contradictory artistic impulses—toward severity and simplicity, and toward multiplicity and ornateness. And as any good dialectician will tell you, a true synthesis does more than merely contain two antithetical aspects in uneasy tension with each other—it creates something new, some third character that subsumes the others in an unexpected way.”* (Barry Schwabsky, 2007)

Recently Harris has placed an even stronger emphasis on the spatial and optical qualities in her work. Stimulated by her move to South West France in 2006, she has found renewed pleasure in the relationship of surface to light and form to space.

This interplay between and within each painting is finely orchestrated by Harris, through variations of the elliptical form, direction and scale of the brush strokes, tonal shifts and the dynamic qualities of the metallic colours. To appreciate fully the rewards of these paintings the viewer must experience them physically, perceiving at first hand the changes that occur through moving around the paintings and from the impact of changing light on their surfaces.

Jane Harris sees her works on paper, whether graphite or watercolour, as parallel and complementary investigations. She utilizes the surface properties of the particular paper she uses: Fabriano Artistico, and seeks to draw attention to both the physicality of the drawing and its optical qualities. Through her meticulous process of filling in the repeating patterns of elliptical shapes she creates intense drawings and watercolours with spatial, rhythmic and dynamic complexities.

*“Each in their own way, Harris’s drawings and paintings both share the paradox that, while they insistently call attention to their material facticity on the surface, their animation in the eye gives them life in the imagination.”* (Barry Schwabsky, 2007)

Jane Harris exhibits extensively. Public space solo shows include Galerie d’Ecole des Beaux Arts, Valence, France (2009), Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham, UK (2007), the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, CT USA (2006) and Southampton City Art Gallery UK (2001). She has been the recipient of a number of awards including the Centre Nationale des Arts Plastique de France International Research Award (2010), Rootstein Hopkins Major Sabbatical Award (2004) and the Arts Foundation Painting Fellowship (1995). In November of this year Jane Harris will be take up a two month residency at the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Connecticut, USA.

Harris’ work is included in many public and private collections around the world including the Arts Council Collection (UK), Government Art Collection (UK), Colorado University Art Museum (USA), Rhode Island School of Design Museum (USA), FRAC

Acquittaine, FRAC Limousin and Lieu d'Art et d'Action Contemporain (LAAC) de Dunkerque (France).