

# Terri Brooks

## Following a Path 2014-19



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*front cover image*  
*Variations on White, 2014*  
*oil & enamel on canvas*  
*153 x 153 cm*

# Terri Brooks

## Following a Path 2014-19

*A Line Made by Walking, 1967, Richard Long*

The sojourns of neighbours collide, but how often do they travel the same road? Grass bends beneath our feet as together we cross between old and new paths while talking about life and art and all the poetry in between.

I am one twinkle in the constellation of humanity trying to understand and see other stars. Light emissions fluctuate as their light is blinded by orbiting companions or, perhaps, my view is blinded by mine. I sometimes fail to see the wonder of other stars.

I feel this is where my view of Terri Brooks and her art started, overcast with distractions. However, I am not sure if becoming better friends with Brooks has led me to admire her art more or discovering the world of minimal art has resulted in seeing Brooks as a truly bright and beautiful star.

### Walking

*My neighbour walks the path I trod,  
But does she see the things I saw?*

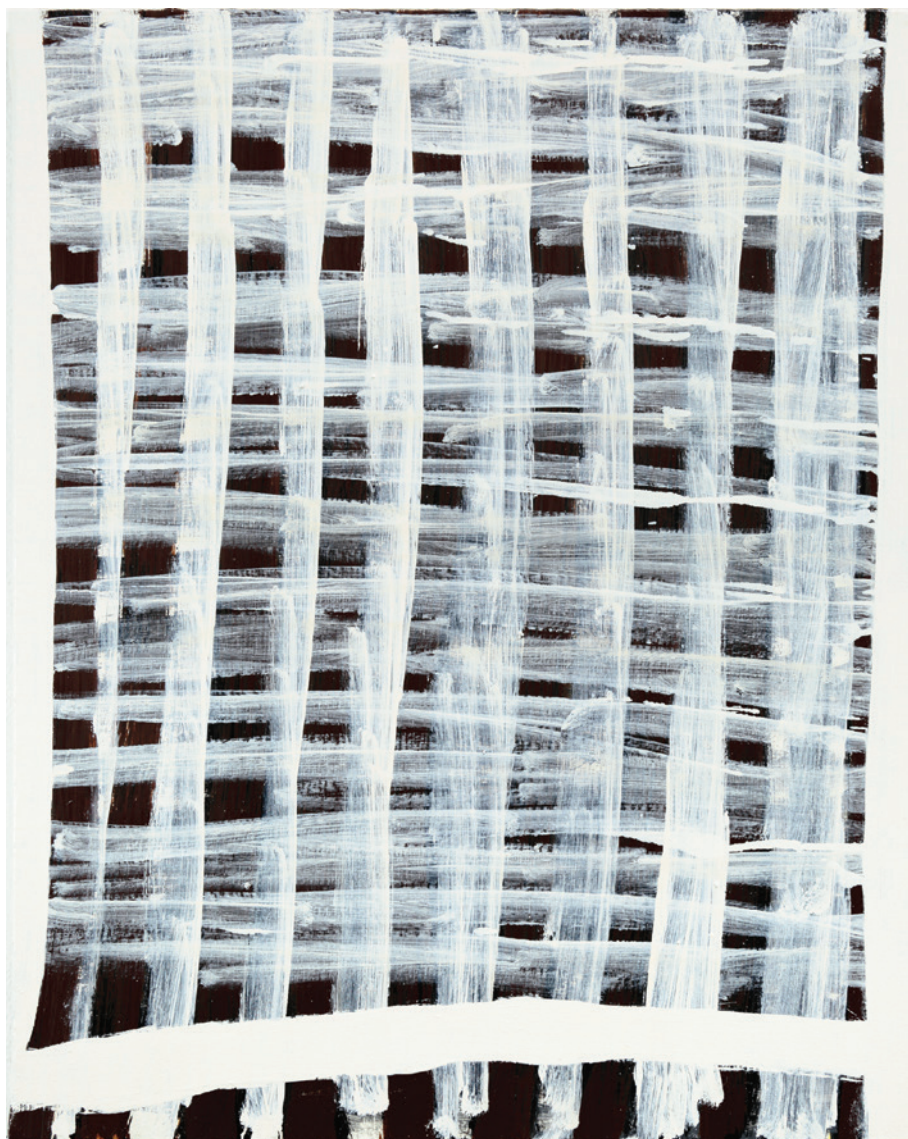
Sometimes, I ask the artist to describe herself or what her art is. The answer always seems to blend both as we walk a path that has inspired her art and directed her life. Brooks' painting philosophy is closer to Chinese landscape painting than the Western realist landscape tradition "... an artist stands on one mountain and paints what it feels like to gaze upon another mountain."

Brooks is a sixth generation Australian, or perhaps

even more. She lives near two waterways, the Yarra and the Merri, although she cannot see them from home. Her kindred birds and trees tell her the river and creek are near. Throughout her life, Brooks has walked almost all the paths that meander and weave across the meeting place of these waters. It is her space, her peace, full of music she loves and her home.

### Serenity

*My hand was held along the river banks,  
as nature and I became friends.  
The outside world called to me,  
'discover what I've hidden - seen and  
unseen.'  
Sometimes the wind and rain hastened my  
steps  
to a secret retreat,  
or the sun invited me to linger and breathe,  
with eucalypt oil drifting on the wind.  
My arms reached up to grab stringy bark  
peeling from upstretched gums.  
I climbed into the hollow trunk filled with the  
life  
of birds and bugs and me, as the tree  
decayed.  
Fields of wildflowers and grassy woodlands  
grown tall and wild in the sun  
sway in the wind,  
as I sway in the wind,  
hearing it...  
The sounds and songs that spoke  
and still speak to my soul.  
Serenity guides my life  
and the strokes of my brush.  
My art's not always calm, as nature can be*



*Loose Grid, 2019*  
oil & enamel on canvas  
76 x 61 cm



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*wild,  
simplified to bare forms,  
elementary,  
which cycles,  
comforting and peaceful and serene.*

It has been said that a 'king's' burial ground lies where the Yarra and Merri meet and Billibellary is buried here, but a freeway and revegetation now claim this land. A great meeting of Indigenous people was held at the Merri Creek on Heidelberg Road when Brooks was a child. They stayed many days in their tents and then were gone. Their departure faded into a memory, like the songs from a flock of birds gathering and then returning home. Recently, a blackbird inspired Terri's creativity and the opening lyrics of 'Blackbird' (Paul McCartney, 1968) pervaded her thoughts.

### Blackbird

*The sun shines after rain has fallen,  
glistening on receding puddles  
that beckon the little blackbirds to come and  
bathe before they fade away.  
Birds chirp and call to each other as their  
plumage puffs in splashed water.  
Black wings unfold and tails twitch, but one  
bird is different.  
A white feather interrupts the black  
symmetry.  
No other birds notice or seem to mind,  
chirping and puffing and splashing.  
Lines ripple in the water as the puddle plays  
too.  
The puddle's time is short as the sun shines  
on and on.  
Then the blackbirds flee, their songs fade,*

*the water recedes and all that remains  
are the water lines hinting of their past fun.*

The Great Heidelberg Road was the first road to be macadamised in Victoria in the late 1840s and it was private. The tollgate was near Brooks' house, as was the Yarra Bend Asylum. She remembers when Heidelberg Road was closed for days when the Merri flooded after heavy rain. That has never happened again and terraced gardens at Yarra Bend and some stone steps are all that remain of the toll gate and asylum.

It is here she stood as a child with her grandfather on a sunny day talking about nature and the park. Together they would sing 'Side by Side' (Harry M Woods, 1927) as they walked.

Brooks' history is intertwined with the land around her, culminating into her present as the rivers combine together into something greater. Painting and walking go hand in hand. Brooks walks before she paints. Thoughts float in and out while she walks and problems that house her dissipate. She obtains a state of free association while being in the now, looking, thinking and relating.

As an abstract artist, Brooks works with the elements of art that include line, shape, colour and tone. She thinks about paint and the marks she makes back in the studio. There's a relationship between what she has seen walking and marks she creates on her canvases.



*Striped Box, 2019*  
synthetic polymer & oil on card  
35 x 35 x 9 cm

# Terri Brooks

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### Contoured Paths

*A purely straight line is boring, untouched  
by the vibrations of life,  
and my world is filled with distorted lines:  
twisted, bending, curved and contorted by  
the variety of the world I live in.  
No straight line was ever true,  
an illusion of someone blind to imperfect  
beauty.*

*I like the curves, bumps and meandering  
flow of motion in the world,  
so fast my eyes can't follow or  
infinitesimally slow the world seems to  
stand still.*

*We don't always see eye to eye, out of view  
on the bent lines we follow.*

*We are intertwined in the woven lines,  
and tangle for moments  
or years or decades,  
until quiet vibrations or earthquakes move  
us on our way.*

*My lines stretch forth and are what they  
are.*

*Fear not if separation finds us because the  
weave that connects  
will see our lines intersect again,  
in this life  
or the next.*

Her city could be any city intertwined with nature and part of her essence. Brooks feels the texture of a perfectly formed geometric seed pod while she studies graffiti, road signs telling her to stop and green lights directing her to go. Scuffs, rain patterns and dribbling rust stains, new and old architecture, and forgotten traces of the presence

of man decay and are reclaimed by nature.

These marks and patterns tell her where she is and guide her hand on the canvas: thoughts of nature and how we as people are reflected in her art. We really are part of the world. We are the lightning, the wind, the rain and the thunder. During her painting process, Brooks is back in the rhythm of walking; searching for harmony but now it's with lines on the canvas, using elements of nature such as motion, gravity and time, and therefore history.

### Ash

*Walking at dusk when the lights are low,  
Black and white vision are last to go.  
That's why ash is my favourite colour.*

*Not a burnt-out end or death for some,  
A chance for something new to become.  
Art born where urban nature is mother*

*Night and then a deep breath in the dawn,  
Black, white and grey shapes and lines are  
drawn  
In the stillness of art, my soul recovers*

Kathryn Marshall



*Striped Variation, 2018*  
oil & enamel on canvas & card  
45 x 35 x 7 cm



# Terri Brooks

*"In her artwork, Terri Brooks moves concrete observations to another domain in which they adopt a new nature and quality. Because of this transposition, we as a viewer are challenged to experience reality from a new perspective." Curator, Wim van der Beek 2018.*

Terri Brooks completed her first degree, B.A. Fine Art, at RMIT University in 1987 and, in 2010, as a research scholarship recipient, graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Ballarat. Since 1989 she has held over twenty solo shows in Australia and Europe and participated in numerous exhibitions including art fairs in the USA, UK, Germany, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland and Hong Kong. She has been selected as a finalist in many art prizes including the Fleurieu Art Prize, The Kedumba Invitation Drawing Award and the Alice Prize.

*'In her childhood, Brooks was fascinated by the wallpaper in her bedroom that was browned, stained, spotted – marked by time. Sometimes she added her own marks to the outside walls of her home, blending them with the traces of age, working with the beauty of neglect. Her grandfather, a part-time house painter, gave Terri the task of cleaning his brushes against the corrugated iron wall of his backyard shed. Entranced by thinned paints and rusted iron in the sunlight, this wall became an ongoing painting for her.'*

*('Marked by Time' catalogue excerpt, 2003, Andrea Lloyd and Kevin Brophy).*

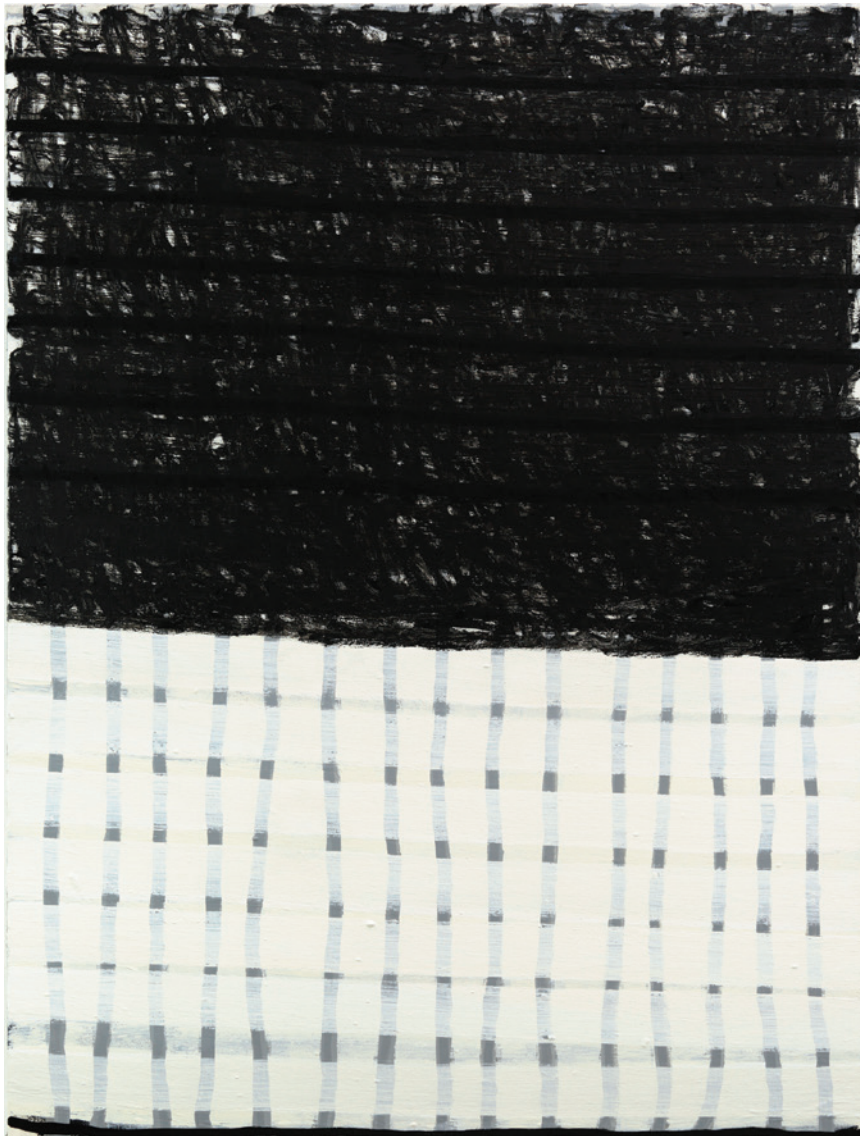


*Black Side, 2015*  
oil, enamel & pencil on canvas,  
153 x 153 cm



*Horizontal Whites, 2017*  
oil & enamel on canvas  
153 x 122 cm





*Black Weave, 2018*  
oil & enamel on canvas  
122 x 91 cm





*Variations on White, 2014*  
oil & enamel on canvas  
153 x 153 cm



*Grey Lines, 2017*  
oil & enamel on canvas  
122 x 122 cm





*Contours*, 2017  
oil, enamel & pencil on canvas  
130 x 127 cm



*Paper Painting, Blackbird Series, Waterline, 2019*  
oil & enamel on hardened paper  
31 x 22 x 14 cm





*Black White Red, 2016*  
oil & enamel on hardened paper  
25 x 17 x 22 cm (each)

## Selected exhibitions

### Solo

- 2019 Following a Path, 2014-19, Tacit Galleries, Melbourne  
Line and Weight, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 2018 Further Afield, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 2016 Principia, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 2015 It's The Thought That Counts, Kunsthuis LOOF, Netherlands  
Terri Brooks, Aptos Cruz Galleries, Stirling, South Australia
- 2014 Brown and Bone, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 2013 Over the Edges, Orexart, Auckland, New Zealand
- 2011 Over the Edge, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 2009 White Open, Post Office Gallery, Ballarat  
New Works, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 2007 Found Marks, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 2006 Painting forever and ever, part two, Harris Courtin Gallery, Sydney
- 2005 Painting forever and ever, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne

### Group

- 2019 Breathe, Museum St Wendel, Germany  
New Modern, Five Walls, Melbourne  
Colour/Field 2, Cross Gallery, Bundaberg, Qld  
Colour/Field, Gatakers Artspace, Maryborough
- 2018 Earth/Bound, Phototopia Studios, Gladstone, Queensland  
Of Colour and Light, West End Art Space, Melbourne  
The History Files, Piscina Comunale, Milan, Italy  
The Exquisite Palette, Tacit Galleries, Melbourne  
Small Works, Red Rock Regional Gallery, Cororooke, Victoria  
After London, Cross Gallery, Bundaberg, Qld

- 2017 Land/Line/Sea, Cross Gallery at Artlacuna, London, UK  
Shades of Grey, Tacit Galleries, Melbourne  
This Matters, Kunsthuis LOOF, Netherlands  
This Wild Song, The Art Room, Melbourne  
Painting, Installations, Objects, ZPAP, Galleria Kierat, Szczecin, Poland  
Timelines, Boekercontemporary, Heidelberg, Germany  
Rotterdam Contemporary Art Fair, Netherlands
- 2016 ArtTheHague Art Fair, Netherlands  
KunstRAI Amsterdam, Netherlands  
Shades of Grey, Tacit Galleries, Melbourne  
Mail Art, Piscina Comunale, Milan, Italy  
Purpuri, Space22, Milan, Italy
- 2015 Direction Now, Caboolture Regional Art Gallery, Queensland  
Off the Grid, Piscina Comunale, Milan, Italy (w/Fabrizio Fortini)  
Direction Now, Lismore Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales
- 2014 Nero su bianco, Piscina Comunale, Milan, Italy  
Direction Now, Hawthorn Town Hall Gallery, Melbourne  
Place, Aptos Cruz Galleries, Stirling, South Australia  
Melbourne Art Fair, Melbourne  
Sedimentation, Linton & Kay Galleries, Perth, WA  
Direction Now, Glasshouse Regional Gallery, Port Macquarie, NSW  
Drawing the Line, Chapman & Bailey, Melbourne
- 2013 Five, Form Studio & Gallery, Queanbeyan, ACT  
Affordable Art Fair, Hong Kong  
London Art Fair, London
- 2012 Triple Happiness, Flinders Lane Gallery  
The Lucky Handle, Kunstsammlung Neubrandenburg, Germany  
Covering Ground, Dark Horse Experiment, Melbourne



