

Body of work

I'm not sure what it is about the Pharos Trust's new centre of contemporary art, but it seems to be attracting artists who have a penchant for taking their clothes off! Their first exhibition (*ist? Ed.*) was Occupations/Discoveries by Antonio Manuel, one of Brazil's original radical artists.

A pioneer in body art, in 1970 Manuel famously ripped his clothes off and exhibited himself at Rio's Museum of Modern Art in a piece entitled, *The Body Is The Work* prompting the prominent art critic, Mario Pedrosa to declare his act, "an experimental expression of freedom."

Now, the new centre welcomes an exhibition by an artist who uses her body to press paint onto her canvases. For Joanna Jones, the body itself becomes the brush. She says "the work aspires to universality in its expression of being and presence".

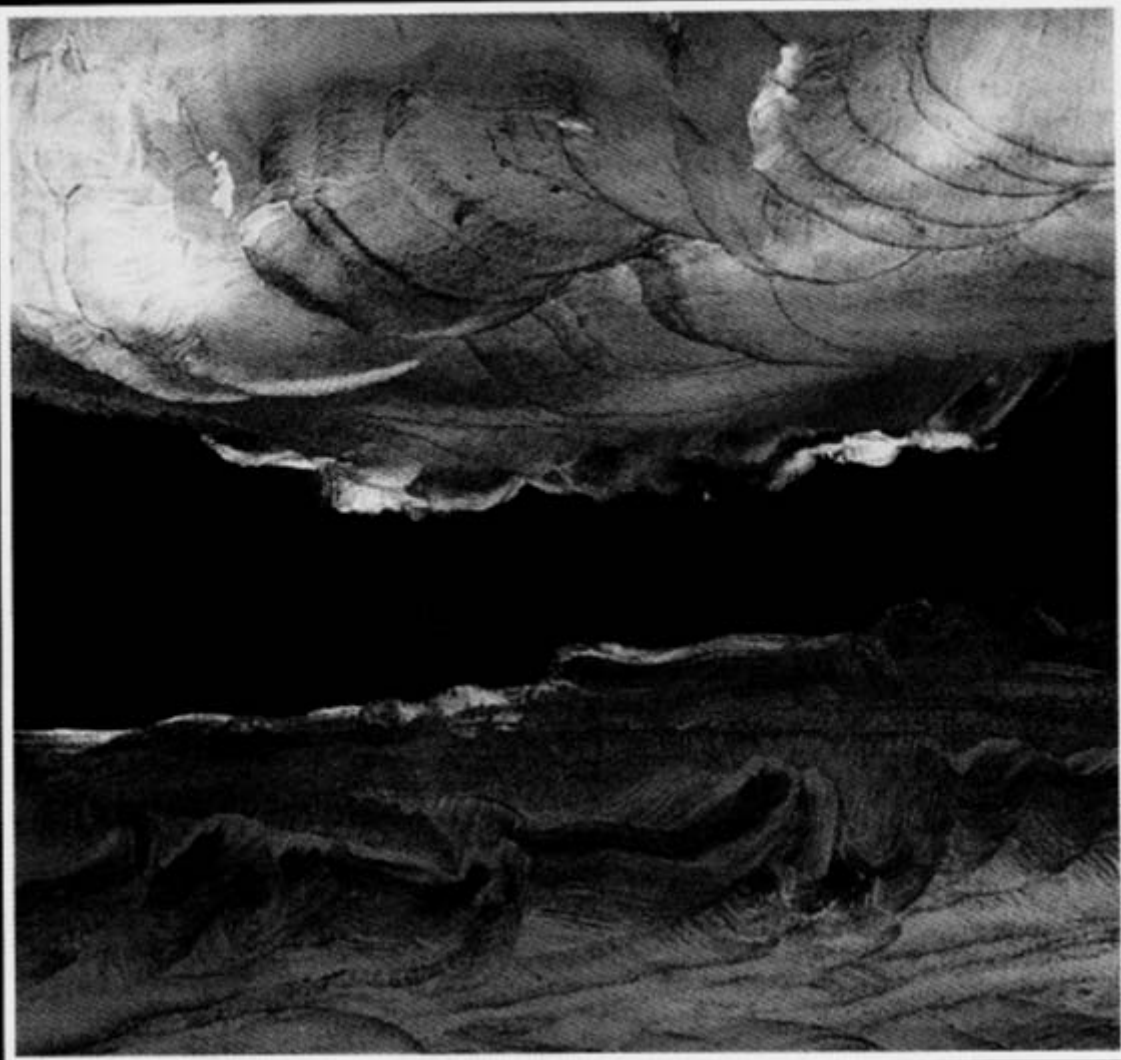
"What prompted me the first time to this act was an overwhelming wish to enter my painting and do away with any separation between my work and myself."

Her work has evolved over several decades as part of an intense emotional and intellectual process of self-discovery and unveiling. Not as a gimmick to attract attention but rather as an effort to open an inner core and to transfer primal energy from the self onto the canvas with an almost matriarchal commitment.

Two years ago, the Pharos Trust organised an exhibition of Jones' paintings at Melina Mercouri Hall in Nicosia. Impressed by the power and energy of the works, the Trust decided to prepare a major publication, a retrospective of her work over the past twenty years. The launch of the book will be accompanied by a show of her recent work.

The book launch will take place tomorrow and will be accompanied by a second show, New Paintings, created over the past two years. The book, prepared by Herman Lelie, one of the leading art book designers in the world, includes text by well-known art critic Guy Brett





and artist/photographer Laura Padgett. A distinctive voice in art criticism since the 1960s, Guy Brett has followed an independent path in mapping and interpreting contemporary art. Always informed by a trans-national perspective and positioning himself as an open-minded observer rather than a theorist, he sees art as a liberating energy within contemporary life and thought.

As Guy Brett's valuable conversation with the artist reveals, there is a primordial urge to make use of the body as a vehicle for the transference of subtle impulses and a desire to share gained experience.

In 2001, Jones had one of her abstract works projected onto the cliffs of Dover from dusk to dawn – an event that attracted thousands of viewers. As the sky darkened the work came into view and as day emerged the vast image on the cliff surface disappeared.

The work outraged Dame Vera Lynn, (WWII's "Forces Sweetheart") to speak

out against it, saying: "I don't see how it can be publicity for Britain.

"It might be publicity for the artist. People coming to Britain especially for the first time, expect to see the white cliffs of Dover, they don't expect to see an art display do they."

In the same year she was given the Artist of the Year award by the UK Arts Council. Joanna Jones has lived in Germany for twenty years and her work has been shown in museums and art galleries throughout Germany and Europe. She has an extensive bibliography. Jones will be in Cyprus on November 30 to sign copies of the book.

Exhibition

Joanna Jones

New paintings exhibition and book launch. November 30, 8pm. Exhibition until January 5. Pharos Centre for Contemporary Art. 24D Severis Ave, 1080 Nicosia. 11am-1pm, 3pm-5pm and by appointment. Tel: 22-663871. www.thepharostrust.org

