

BRAD HOLLAND
THIRD EYE

THE GALLERY AT PENN COLLEGE
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BIOGRAPHY

In a 1986 front-page article of its “Style” Section, the *Washington Post* called Brad Holland “an undisputed star of American Illustration.” In 1999, the editors of *RSVP*, the artists’ directory, voted him “the one artist, who in our opinion, has had the single greatest impact on the illustration field during the last twenty five years.” Bea Jackson, art director of *National Geographic*, ranks him as “one of the most influential illustrators of the 20th Century.” And Steven Heller, of the *New York Times*, has summed up the first 20 years of Holland’s career: “[A]s Pollock redefined plastic art, Holland has radically changed the perception of illustration.” In 2005, Holland was inducted into the Society of Illustrators Hall of Fame.

In the last year, his work has appeared in publications as diverse as *Time*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times*, *The New Republic*, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Penthouse*, *Arizona Highways*, *Baltimore Magazine*, and many other national and international publications. He created twin posters for the play *Com di Com Com*, produced by the Odeon Theater, Vienna, and another poster for *Sibelius: Legend from the North* for the Sydney (Australia) Symphony. His paintings were published in two books: *The Night of Q*, (Orecchio Acerbo, Rome, Italy) and *La Ruta de los Castillos*, (Pandora Books, Seville, Spain). *The Night of Q* was introduced at the 2006 Turin Book Fair, Torino, Italy, where the artist did radio and press interviews.

Holland is self-taught, and has been a professional artist since he left Fremont Ohio for Chicago at the age of 17. At 22, he settled in New York and began writing and drawing

for counter-culture newspapers such as *The East Village Other*, *Rat*, and *The New York Ace*. His work was quickly assimilated into major publications such as *Avant-Garde*, *Playboy*, and *Life*. He illustrated books for Doubleday, Random House, and Simon and Schuster. This work brought him to the attention of the *New York Times*, where, in 1971, he became one of the founding artists of the *Times' Op-Ed Page*. His drawings and paintings have since appeared in nearly every major U.S. and many international publications. These include *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Rolling Stone*, *Esquire*, *Forbes*, *Money*, *Texas Monthly*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Graphis*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazine*. Holland has painted record album and CD covers for Ray Charles, Stevie Ray Vaughn, and Billy Joel, among others.

In 1977, T.Y. Crowell published a collection of Holland's drawings: *Human Scandals*, with an introduction by author Tom Wicker. This led *Print Magazine* to call Holland

the fiercest and most independent political artist of our time." *The New York Times* nominated him for a Pulitzer Prize, describing his work as "going beyond the moment to illuminate a general condition universal in space and time. The images are sometimes brutal, but the feeling is almost always compassionate.

At the time, not everyone agreed. A 1972 article in *New York Magazine* condemned Holland's work as "fit to befuddle," and stated that "a thousand years of perusal would not suffice to render these pictures intelligible." But others defended Holland's concept that popular art should not be limited to illustrating texts, but should instead be seen as independent creations, simply "married to the text."

One prominent supporter was Arthur Paul, founding art director of *Playboy*; writing in 2004 for the design magazine *Graphis*, he summarized his experience of working with Holland:

Throughout those years [at *Playboy*] I learned that to get beautiful work from Brad you didn't need to do much art directing, you only needed to open the gates and invite him in, letting his fine sensibilities take over and giving him support. And no matter how well one knew his work, one was always surprised. He inevitably added something personal to each project that made it his-and yet powerfully universal." Author, cartoonist, and songwriter Shel Silverstein agreed, inviting Holland to collaborate on a series of articles and pictures for *Playboy*. So did famed novelist P.G. Wodehouse, with whom Paul had previously teamed Holland. Wodehouse wrote about how he had first recoiled, then warmed to the young artist's original approach to picture making.

I find it difficult to pin down my feelings about those illustrations to my *Domestic Servant* piece. My initial reaction was a startled 'Oh my Gawd!', but gradually the sensation that I had been slapped between the eyes with a wet fish waned, and now I like them very much ... I was brought up in the school of the *Strand Magazine* and the old *Saturday Evening Post*, where illustrations illustrated, but I am not sure I don't like this modern impressionist stuff better.

To date, Holland has received nearly 30 gold medals from various graphic arts organizations, including the Art Director's Club of New York, The Society of Illustrators,



Page 2: *Untitled*, acrylic on board
Above: *Prime Mover*, "Tor Books", acrylic on board, 2005



The Steps to the Steps, oil on canvas, 1998

and The Society of Publication Designers. He received the first place award at the 1986 International Biennial of Illustration in Tokyo and, in 1998, the Silver Medal of the Swiss Art Directors Club, Zurich. The American Society of Illustrators awarded Holland the Robert Geisman Award, 1987; the Hamilton King Award, 1991 and the David P. Usher Award, 2004. In 1993, he received the British “Telly” for animation and, in 2005, he received the Spectrum Gold Award for book illustration. He twice has been awarded the Playboy Editorial Award by *Playboy Magazine*.

Holland’s corporate clients include the MacArthur Foundation, Barings Bank, Toshiba, Dai Nippon, Siemens, Microsoft, Digital Equipment, IBM (USA), IBM (Germany), MCI, Aetna, Bell Atlantic, General Electric, Merrill Lynch, NCR, Strathmore Paper, James River Paper, Applied Materials, Exxon, and many others. He has created global advertising campaigns for Bankers Trust (USA), Haniel (Germany) and Ansaldo (Italy).

In 1999, Brad Holland co-founded the first American Illustrator’s Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico, (now called ICON), where he was a featured speaker. In March 2000, he co-founded the Illustrators’ Partnership of America (IPA), now a member of the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organizations (IFRRO). In 2000, Holland was awarded the Walter Hortens Distinguished Service Award from the U.S. Graphic Artists Guild for his articles and speeches on the effects of stock illustration agencies on the freelance illustration business. And in 2001, he was Keynote Speaker at the second Illustrators’ Conference (ICON) in Santa Fe.

In 2002, Holland represented the rights of artists at The American Assembly: “Art, Technology and Intellectual Property,” sponsored by Columbia University. He also has represented American artists at IFRRO conferences in Singapore (2004), Madrid (2005), and Auckland (2006).

In May 2006, Holland was a keynote speaker at the international AGIdeas Conference in Melbourne, Australia, sponsored by the Design Foundation and the Alliance Graphique Internationale (AGI). In June 2006, he chaired the jury of the 23rd Aydın Dogan International Cartoon Competition (Istanbul, Turkey) and in October, he traveled to Auckland, New Zealand to address the convention of the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organizations (IFRRO). Past venues have included the Aspen International Design Conference (1987); the Graphic Conference, Bergen, Norway (1995); the American Consulate, Rome (2000); the International Photojournalism Conference, Lahti, Finland (2003) and the International Design Conference, Acapulco, Mexico (2005). Corporate lectures have included Hallmark, American Greetings, and the Ford Motor Company.

Holland is a member of the Alliance Graphique Internationale (AGI), a past Board member of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), and a past member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of the Association of Illustrators, London, England. In 1995, he was the subject of a profile, *The Illustrated Man*, produced and presented on the Australian Broadcasting Company.

AN ARTICLE BY ...

Mr. Holland is a prolific writer and spokesperson for the role of illustrators in current society and the effects of the laws governing copyrighted material. Over the past 12 months, his writings have appeared in many diverse publications.

The German magazine *Jitter* published his satire “Express Yourself, It’s Later Than You Think” (first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* and now widely quoted on the internet); his essay “Shape and Content” was published as the introduction to *Illustration Now!* (Taschen Books); *Communication Arts* published “License to Infringe” and “First Things About Secondary Rights” appeared in *The Columbia Journal of Law and the Arts*, published by the Columbia University School of Law.

The following is an article that first appeared in the December 2004 issue of *Rough Magazine*.

Folk Artists in Electronic Winter

In the 1950’s, Television hit America like a comet, and as electronic winter set in, cultural institutions began to drop like dinosaurs. One of the first to go was the mass circulation magazine.

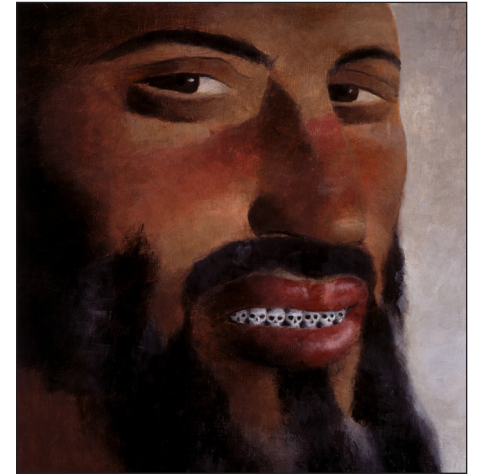
Over the next two decades the big family glossies that had once been tops in home entertainment either went belly up like *Collier’s* or—like the *Saturday Evening Post*—began to mutate. Just as other magazines tried to keep up with the times, the *Post* streamlined their masthead, spiffed-up their look and chased after fresh topics. When that failed, they even threw their Mahatma, Norman Rockwell, overboard, but the sacrifice got them nowhere. As the Swinging Six-

ties spread across America, everything changed, and the harder the old family-values *Post* tried to be hip, the more it resembled a middle-aged babe in Go-Go Boots, Twisting for dear life at the Peppermint Lounge.

Sometime near the end of the decade, a new buyer came to the rescue, downsized the *Post*, revived the old look and repositioned it for the nostalgia market. They conducted a nation-wide talent hunt for a “new Norman Rockwell.” It got them lots of publicity, and they finally bagged a young Norman wannabe, a Midwestern kid who they fetched to New York and tried to pawn off on the morning talk shows as the Second Coming of America’s Favorite Artist. But despite puff pieces in the press, the reincarnation flopped. By the age of Alice Cooper and Iggy Stooze, America didn’t look like a Norman Rockwell painting any longer, and if there was an audience left for freckle-faced Alfalfas bandaging their dog’s paws, they weren’t reading the new, old-fashioned *Post*. They were watching Andy Griffith reruns on the tube.

The publications that replaced these family magazines were so narrowly aimed at niche markets that they would have seemed a joke to old time illustrators. There were magazines for cat lovers, dog doctors, butterfly chasers and scuba divers. There were big city “lifestyle” magazines that offered tips to the new urban middle class (now equally concerned about being hip) on how to keep up with the trends.

But as the magazines shrank, the celebrity illustrators who had once been their stars began to fade. Rockwell and eleven other Sauropods from the Jurassic tried to get some last mileage out of their reputations by starting the Famous Artists School of Westport. This was a mail order art course that offered to teach you in two years how to draw your way “from rags to riches.” Week after week, in



Untitled, acrylic on board



Immovable, "Time Magazine", acrylic on board, 2006

slick ads, these "Twelve Famous Illustrators" promised to teach the lucrative art of illustration to newcomers. But surely the old pros knew their "students" would never see the kind of mass audiences they had once enjoyed. And as they entered their Golden Years, the Golden Age of Illustration went to Florida with them.

Those of us who entered the business after that knew the glamour was gone from illustration, but it affected us differently.

It was hardest on the Rockwell wannabes. They became zombies, with no spring left in their step, squatters rattling around an empty estate. They worked for less money on shorter deadlines for clients with the attention span of rats in a maze. They knew they'd never have time for the meticulous Rockwell method: the slow progress from charcoal sketch to finished oils, the elaborate photo shoots and painstaking photograph-tracing that Rockwell had used to get his famous realism. They knew they'd never get a chance to paint a granny saying grace in a roadside diner, or a happy family mugging over the Thanksgiving turkey. They knew they'd never see Rockwell's big money, never advertise TV sets in the glossies, never be household names. They knew they could do illustrations for the rest of their lives, but they'd never fit into the shoes of the T-Rex.

But others of us took these changes in stride and saw opportunity in the degraded market. In the past, artists had become "illustrators" because publishers needed pictures to "illustrate" their stories. Now, as the industry fragmented and publishers searched for new ways to turn-on readers, some of us realized that pictures had been released from the iron sleeve of storytelling. We could do something else with the space.

The changes in style and content that followed were tonic to many art directors and designers. But the change in attitude that came with it was harder for some to get down.

In March 1977, *New York Magazine* published a critical article entitled, "All The News That's Fit To Befuddle," about the confusing new pictures that were beginning to pop up on *The New York Times Op-Ed Page*. The article quoted anonymous editors who complained that "conceptual illustrators" (as we came to be called) were not illustrating articles at all, but trifling with readers, pulling their legs. If you "perused" these pictures for a thousand years, said the article's subhead, it wouldn't "suffice to render [them] intelligible." The artists named in the piece were mostly European: Ralph Steadman, Folon, Eugene Mihaesco. But it was a homeboy, "the Ohio-born Brad Holland" the article singled out as the chief villain in this disturbing invasion of the nonsensical. "Those Brad Holland condition-of-man type drawings," grumbled one critic, were so "ambiguous" as to be meaningless. "They suggest that something is wrong [with the world] but they don't say what."

Although these complaints were supposedly lodged on behalf of readers, the sources were actually editors who were unhappy that pictures in their newspaper were suddenly attracting attention – sometimes more attention than the text. They didn't like this and they couldn't figure out why it was happening. This is why our efforts to fool with the nature of graphic art began outside the markets where traditional illustrators worked.

For me, the hippie press of the late 1960's was the ideal place to light a graphic arts ghetto fire. At newspapers like *Rat* and *The New York Ace*, standards were slipshod, deadlines were short and fees were a joke. At *The East Village Other*, art directors pasted up pages wearing sunglasses in

a darkened room. Deadbeats, dope-heads, radicals and 17 year-old runaways hung around as if the place were a pool hall, and on weekends you could get a contact high from the smell of grass that leaked up through the floorboards from the Fillmore East below. These cheesy conditions would have oppressed the Rockwell wannabes. But it gave a Darwinian advantage to us fish willing to swim in a sea of chaos.

For me, chaos was the chief virtue of the hippie press. In any kind of unstable situation, where there are no rules, people can rarely tell good ideas from bad ones. And this gives good ideas a better chance for survival than they usually get in this upside-down world. The opportunity to chase bad ideas until they turned into good ones made the counterculture press a school for invention, a petri dish for turning mold into penicillin. In 1979, when I painted a controversial portrait of the Ayatollah Khomeini for the cover of *Time Magazine*, Al Goldstein, publisher of *Screw*, reprinted it alongside some dirty pictures I had done for his paper a decade earlier. (From Slime to Time) said the headline, and while some of my friends were appalled for me, I thought it was funny.

This is the kind of change that television set in motion in the field of graphic art. Like most changes, the shift away from storytelling illustration to “graphic commentary” combined good consequences with bad. On the one hand, it cost us big budgets and mass audiences. On the other hand, it opened the door to a variety of styles and concepts that once would have made us outcasts of the popular press.

Had the old family magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post* thrived and spawned a new generation of Rockwells, we might never have dissolved the old logic of linear illustration. And artists who have since found a niche in this

new market might well have gone elsewhere. If I had had to paint families-going-to-church covers for the old *Post*, I might well have become a writer instead—or a cartoonist, tattoo artist or chainsaw sculptor. I might have sold primitive paintings at a roadside stand somewhere, like a farmer selling melons in Ohio. Or I might have ended my days canceling stamps at the post office.

Instead, by the early seventies, when the *New York Times* adopted us and our work was finally deemed Ready-for-Prime-Time, the concept began to spread to other publications. Then authors like Steven Heller began to write that we had caused a “revolution in illustration.” But I didn’t think of us as revolutionaries. We were the small mammals who came out to compete after the extinction of the great meat eaters. We were survivors adapting to the Ice Age, folk artists in electronic winter.

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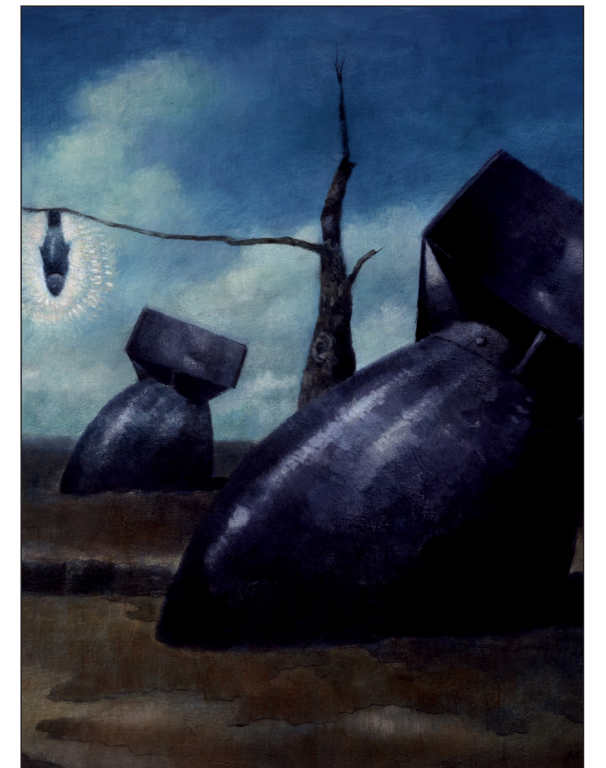


Untitled, acrylic on board

SELECTED WORKS



Previous: *Untitled*, acrylic on board
Left: *Untitled*, acrylic on board



Right: Detail of *Habitat*, "Penthouse Magazine", acrylic on panel, 2006



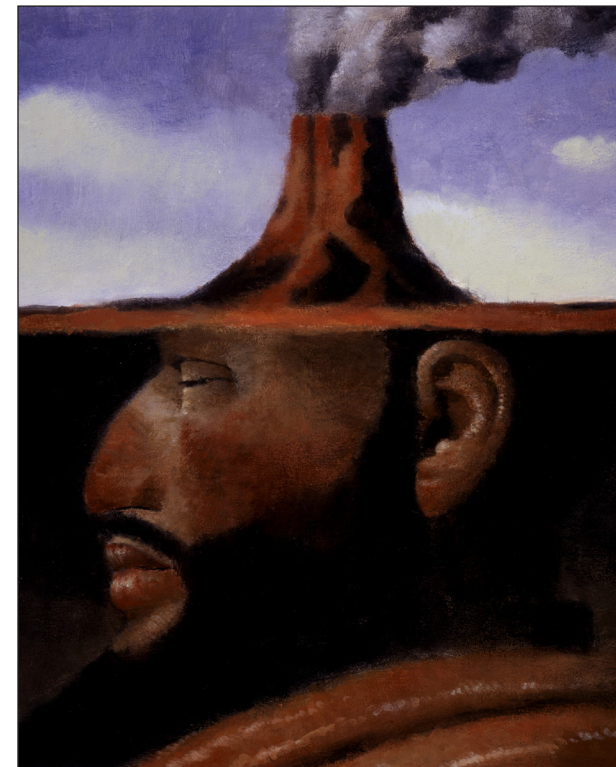
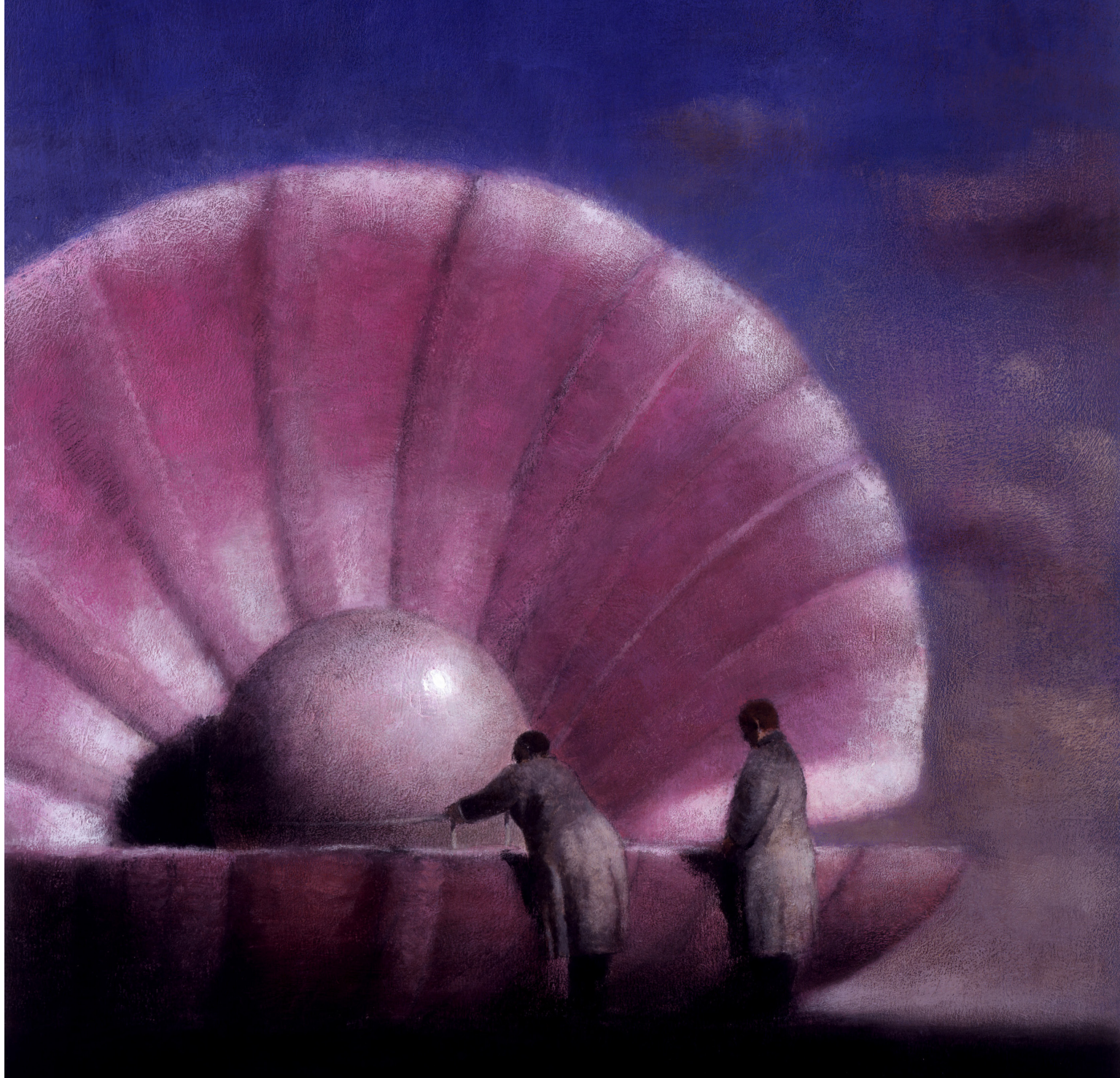
Left: Detail of *Untitled*, acrylic on board
Right *Fifth Business*, "Penguin Classic/Robertsons Series",
acrylic on panel, 2007



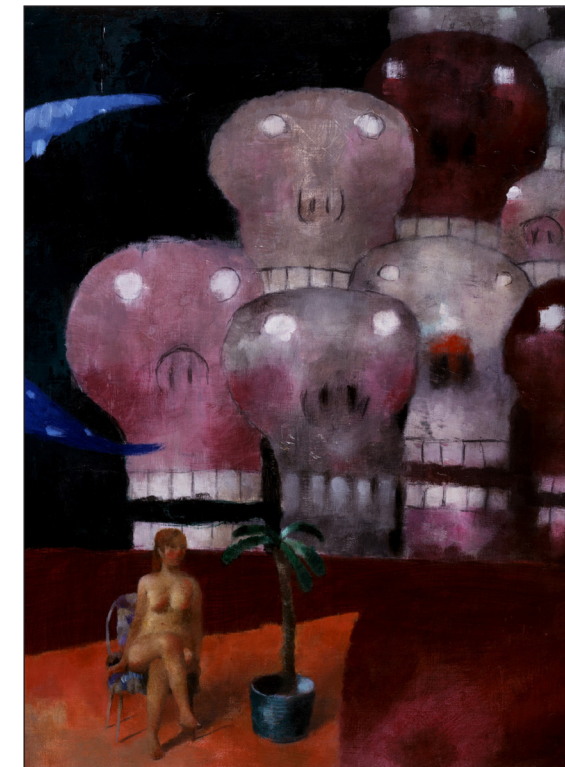
Next Page: *World of Wonders*, "Penguin Classic/Robertsons Series",
acrylic on panel, 2007







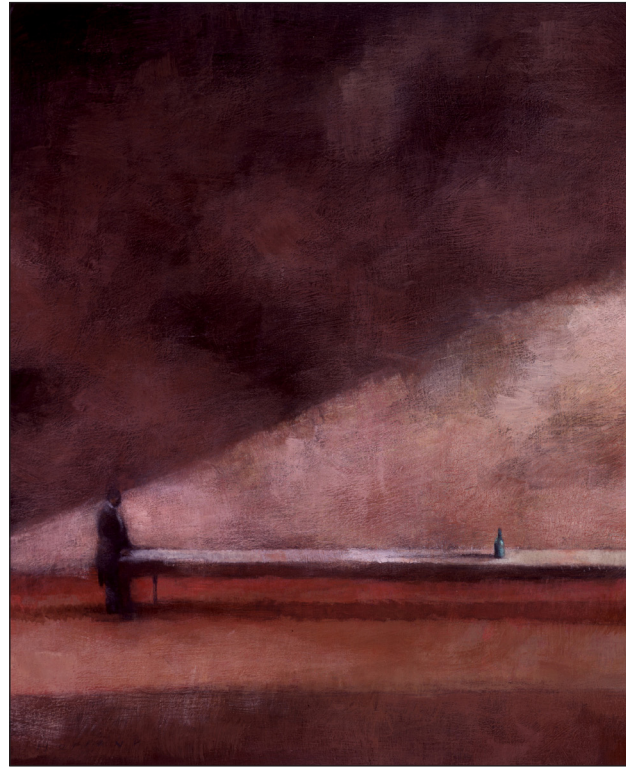
Previous Page: *Untitled*, acrylic on board
Left Page: *Pearl*, "The MacArthur Foundation", acrylic, 2005



Left: *In Tora Bora*, "Time Magazine", acrylic on panel, 2002
Right: Detail from *Whispering Heads*, Corporate calendar, acrylic on panel, 1990



Left: Detail from *Untitled*, acrylic on board



Right: Detail from *Untitled*, acrylic on board
Next Page: *Desolation*, "UU World Magazine", acrylic on wood panel
Following page: *Spirits*, "Arizona Highways Magazine", acrylic on panel, 2005





A Holland catalog was originally published to complement an exhibition of illustrations by Brad Holland presented at The Gallery at Penn College in Fall 2008. Mr. Holland's text and images were presented to the students of Art 235, Type II, in the spring semester of 2009, as part of an exhibition catalog design assignment. This particular catalog was designed by Lana Whitaker.

The Gallery at Penn College's Current View Artist Series provides a cultural resource to Pennsylvania College of Technology and local communities. The Gallery is dedicated to promoting art appreciation and understanding through its exhibitions of traditional, experimental and contemporary original art.

Penn College is a special mission affiliate of Penn State, committed to applied technology education. Over 6,800 students are enrolled in bachelor and associate degree and certificate majors, which represent more than 100 career areas. Among the offerings are an Associate of Applied Arts in Advertising Art, a Bachelor of Science in Graphic Design, an Associate of Applied Arts and Science in Communications Technology and a Bachelor of Science in Graphics Communications Management.