

Ivor Francis's *Schizophrenia* of 1943: Australia's First Psychological Painting

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Abstract

The oil painting *Schizophrenia* was completed by the English-born artist Ivor Francis (1906-1993) in 1943 at his studio-home in the outer suburb of Prospect in Adelaide in South Australia. The painting has not been analysed or explained in any extended way and it has attracted no academic publication or extended research. However, detailed examination has revealed that it is an aesthetic *tour de force* that well illustrates, not only the place, but also the pervasive influence of Surrealist aesthetic principles transposed into Australia. Ivor Francis's painting *Schizophrenia* is Australia's first painting with a defined mental illness as its thematic subject.

So, in the schizophrenic, morbid mental changes ferment within the brain, before any sign of derangement is discernible in the patient's conduct or speech. They are the evil flowers which flourish in the inturned garden of the soul in a profusion of pathologic production. ... At first much of the foliage may be deceptive, seeming to possess the shape, colour and odour of normal blossoms; but before long the characteristics of the fatal flora are manifest - the fungus of fantasy climbs over the branches of reason and the deadly nightshade of apathy chokes the graceful tendrils of the emotions. ... His mind becomes ingrown. (Reg Ellery, 1941)¹

The work *Schizophrenia* was painted by the artist Ivor Francis in 1943 at his studio-home in the outer suburb of Prospect in Adelaide in South Australia.² The painting's conception corresponded with the culmination of a highly formative period in Francis's life. It was a time during which Francis completed several years of teaching in the Outback in South Australia's remote Eyre Peninsula, completed art studies at the South Australian School of Arts and Crafts in Adelaide, participated in four group exhibitions and met Max Harris, one of the most formidable minds in Adelaide.³ It also was a period during which Francis was introduced to many of surrealism's artistic tenets and aesthetic theories.

The painting *Schizophrenia*, accomplished as it is, has attracted little attention since its perceptive purchase by the Art Gallery of South Australia on Wednesday 8 August, 1945 - five years before Francis's first solo exhibition and five years before his second public purchase by the Castlemaine Art Gallery in Victoria. In the fifty-nine years since its purchase, the painting *Schizophrenia* has been exhibited in only eight major exhibitions⁴ and illustrated in six major publications.⁵ The painting has not been analysed or explained in any extended way and attracted no academic paper and no extended research.⁶ Furthermore, it is not discussed in depth in any monograph, nor has it elicited detailed mention in surveys of Australian art in general or of the period. However, during the last twenty years, lucid comments by Richard Haese,⁷ Terry Smith,⁸ Jane Hylton⁹ and Christopher Chapman¹⁰ have given this hitherto neglected painting some belated prominence. This is most evident in Jane Hylton's 1987 retrospective entitled *Ivor Francis: an Adelaide Modernist* and her touring exhibition of 1989 entitled *Adelaide Angries, South Australian Painting of the 1940s*.¹¹



Ivor Francis's painting *Schizophrenia* of 1943 warrants serious consideration and deserves historical rehabilitation [fig. 1]. The painting is overlooked in scholarly discussions of Australian Modernism, despite the fact that its iconographical examination reveals much about surrealist sources and approaches in Australia. Broadly, Francis's painting *Schizophrenia* speaks of a transposed surrealism, a surrealism expressed with Australian inflections and intonations.



Fig. 1: Ivor Francis, *Schizophrenia*, 1943, Adelaide, oil on canvas, 82.5 x 62.2 cm, Elder Bequest Fund 1945, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide [0.1297].

The painting *Schizophrenia* was first exhibited in Adelaide in 1945,¹² and consists of a vertical rectangular oil on canvas measuring 82.5 by 62.2 centimetres - one of Francis's largest early works.¹³ The oil painting is even in surface texture and application and shows no visible evidence of later additions or pentimento that may have indicated any change of approach or theme. There are no extant drawings, sketches, photographs or preliminary works for the painting and, most curiously, the painting is not given even a brief mention in Francis's unpublished diary *Journal of Ivor Pengelly Francis, Photographer's Apprentice, Farm-hand, Schoolteacher, Artist, Critic. Begun Sat. 23rd. October 1944.*¹⁴ Likewise, the painting does not elicit any comment in Francis's extensively documented unpublished autobiography *Goodbye to the City of Dreams: An Autobiography*¹⁵ or the thirty-nine issues of his later publication *Ivor's Art Review* of 1956 to 1960.¹⁶ These oversights are quite surprising considering the painting's importance and the fact that it was Francis's first public purchase – that this purchase was made by the local and prestigious Art Gallery of South Australia, makes these unexplained omissions even more perplexing.¹⁷ Furthermore, the painting is largely unrelated to Francis's earlier paintings and quite unlike most of his later works. The painting's specific theme is not returned to in Francis's later paintings and as such, it remains unique in his considerable artistic output during the next fifty years.¹⁸

The painting portrays, in its lower region, the trephined section of a human head; the brain is revealed showing a large crevice from which emanates a large spiral, which curves clockwise and ends in a brick wall in the upper right, around which are grouped various amorphous forms. Next to this wall, an organic sprout is bent back and its tip arcs upward to pierce the brain in the centre of the painting. To the left of centre of the painting may be seen part of a bottle, stopped with a cork, within which is contained a hybrid creature whose growth is constrained by the bottle, but whose tail emanates from the lower left of the brain. The upper left shows two female-like forms in biomorphic distortion and in the background of these figures is a phantom-like form, which seems to reach for the bottle through a section interlaced with random lines. The whole painting is cut by four diagonal wooden shafts with metal barbs that point to various sections of the trephination. The work's title, *Schizophrenia*, obviously suggests the psychological theme of the work and the painting presents a complex set of images that attempt to give symbolic content and pictorial form to aspects of the mental illness that forms its principal subject. The psychological content of the painting is highlighted in Ivor Francis's own description of the painting's meaning in its official archival registration form, at the time of its purchase by the Art Gallery of South Australia in Adelaide in 1945:

'Schizophrenia' is a work symbolic of frustration. It has been described by an eminent pathologist as the scourge of our present era. Its origin is said to lie in the faulty upbringing of the modern child, and arises out of his inability to adjust himself to the complex social and economic conditions of our age, which confront him at maturity. Seeking escape from reality, his first fatal step leads him to turn inwards on himself into the pleasant but tragic realm of fantasy and make-believe - the gateway to dreaded *dementia praecox*. To the artist this was the malady of the world itself in 1943.¹⁹



Francis's pithy summation of the painting's content and his artistic aim give us pause to reflect. The subject of the statement's first sentence is obviously Francis's painting, yet the subject of the second sentence is the illness of schizophrenia. This unintentional grammatical slip hints at the painting's medico-social source – tellingly, of the five sentences only one refers to the painting. Furthermore, the statement's use of the phrase '*dementia praecox*,' the Latinate term for schizophrenia, the use of loaded terms and phrases such as 'symbolic of frustration,' 'escape from reality,' 'turn inwards,' 'fantasy' and 'make-believe,' the causal linking of mental illness and social life and its psychologically diagnostic tone are most unusual. Very few, if any, Australian artists were using or thinking of their work in these terms as early as 1943. Certainly, none were producing paintings based upon these or related ideas until 1944 and 1945.

Investigation has revealed that the painting's registration statement is based upon Reg Ellery's text of the time entitled *Schizophrenia: The Cinderella of Psychiatry*, which was published in 1941 by John Reed and Max Harris.²⁰ Moreover, not only the registration statement but also the actual painting is connected with Ellery's text. The connection is never hinted at or publicly admitted in any publication or interview. Reg Ellery, most probably the unnamed 'eminent pathologist' of the Francis's registration statement, was a practising psychiatrist and consultant to the Women's Hospital and the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne, who was later called to act as an expert witness in defence of Max Harris in the infamous Ern Malley case of 1944.²¹ In 1990, forty-seven years after the painting of *Schizophrenia*, Francis eventually freely admitted the connection with Ellery in an unpublished interview:

Ken Wach: Can you recall anyone at the time in the 40s reading works on mental illness and art of the insane? For example, I'm thinking of the *Vegetative Eye* and I'm thinking of poetry by Max Harris, but also works like yours, the one called *Investigation, Scientific and Otherwise, of Matter without Form*. Now, that work would seem to indicate some knowledge of mental states and mental conditions. For the 40s, that would have been quite exceptional. Where did your information come from?

Ivor Francis: Well that's *Schizophrenia*, that is. Yes, that's another one. Well, that came from Dr. Emery's [sic, Ellery's] book *Schizophrenia: The Scourge of Modern Civilization*. Yes, well now - I don't know who put me onto that book but schizophrenia was quite a problem in those days as it still is, and I actually came in contact with a case - a girl who committed suicide - and so I was really particularly interested, and Emery's [sic] book, rather strange old-fashioned sort of writing - he'd start each chapter with a verse of poetry you know - but he did write very graphically and he went right through describing the shock treatment and so on. So that inspired *Schizophrenia* - yes, I think I was interested in that sort of thing.²²

The above admission contains a revealing mistake, besides the lapse regarding the author's surname. Francis calls Ellery's book *Schizophrenia: The Scourge of Modern Civilization* – it is in fact, *Schizophrenia: The Cinderella of Psychiatry* – thus not only confirming the literary source for the inspiration of his painting, but also, through a conflation of titles, its chapter called 'The Scourge of Schizophrenia.' The much-respected Ellery lived in the affluent Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn and was said to hold Melbourne's largest private collection of books – reputedly of 10,000 volumes.²³ Curiously, in his registration



statement Francis refers to an 'eminent pathologist' rather than a psychiatrist – this is most probably a confusion on Francis's part or it is occasioned by his later recollection in 1945 of the preponderant use of pathological terms and imagery in Ellery's 1941 text – death, disease, decay, decadence and the like. Francis first met Harris, the co-publisher of Ellery's text, in Adelaide in 1940 and the mentally interactive connections between Francis as an inquiring artist, Harris as an inspiring intellectual and Ellery as an investigative clinician prompted much of the psychological tone of Francis's contemporaneous paintings. Significantly, the painting *Schizophrenia* of 1943 is the first of these.²⁴

As noted above, the third chapter in Ellery's 1941 text *Schizophrenia: The Cinderella of Psychiatry* is entitled 'The Scourge of Schizophrenia' and, in general, it gives a cogent, highly sympathetic and literary interpretation of the mental illness of schizophrenia, the condition that was first described and defined by the German psychologist Eugen Bleuler in 1911. Significantly, Ellery's account of the symptoms of schizophrenia in 1941 is almost paraphrased in Francis's 1945 outline for the Art Gallery of South Australia. Passages such as the following point to a conceptual connection between the form and content of Francis's painting and the ideas and aims of Ellery's text:

The child who thus grows up with an increasing number of faulty habit reactions is heading for a breakdown of the schizophrenic type.²⁵
...the child's mind turns inward and begins to shun the harsh and menacing reality full of terrors and insurmountable problems for the soft beguiling realm of fantasy.²⁶

Furthermore, Ellery's consistent linking of the illness of schizophrenia with the problems of contemporary society is echoed in the last sentence of Francis's registration statement. Even a cursory investigation of Ellery's eloquently expressed book *Schizophrenia: The Cinderella of Psychiatry*, offers up the source for many of Francis's subsequent images and intentions in his painting *Schizophrenia*. For instance, in Ellery's text, the mental illness of schizophrenia is described as being located in the brain, rather than elsewhere in the body and the individual suffering from its effects is portrayed as being in the grip of somatic effects brought on by non-somatic causes - both of which were radical ideas at the time. As in Francis's painting, in Ellery's text the individual is seen as being tormented by external barbs. In Ellery's book the schizophrenic is described as suffering from hallucinations, which are usually auditory, hence the depiction of the spiral cochlea of the inner ear in Francis's painting:

Except in the rare cases of true paranoia and some of the simplest reactions, hallucinations, particularly the auditory type, characterize practically the whole schizophrenic reaction. They vary from the faintest whisper of opprobrium to the menacing voices of malevolent objurgations. Subconscious guilt is projected into the derogatory remarks, which harass the schizophrenic patient. His inmost secrets appear to become audible. With obsessional persistence, tantalizing voices put bad words into his mind and goad him to do that which he abhors, so that his conduct, though seemingly erratic, may be a logical reaction to his hallucinations.²⁷



There is also, in Ellery's book, the analogical observation that latent schizophrenia is like a slowly germinating seed that is yet to show its perverse growth:

The onset of a schizophrenic psychosis may be likened to the germination of a seed in the ground. Invisible growth takes place beneath the soil for varying periods of time before the first shoot bursts through to the light.²⁸

This sprouting growth is eventually turned back in repression to mar, scar or wound the healthy development of the individual:

Sooner or later, just as the first tiny shoot pokes through the earth, the morbid idea becomes visible in conversation or conduct ... As the growth of the seed is determined by the soil, so too is the growth of a morbid idea dependent upon the type of mind in which it has germinated. So, in the schizophrenic, morbid mental changes ferment within the brain, before any sign of derangement is discernible in the patient's conduct or speech. They are the evil flowers which flourish in the inturned garden of the soul in a profusion of pathologic production ... At first much of the foliage may be deceptive, seeming to possess the shape, colour and odour of normal blossoms; but before long the characteristics of the fatal flora are manifest - the fungus of fantasy climbs over the branches of reason and the deadly nightshade of apathy chokes the graceful tendrils of the emotions. ... His mind becomes ingrown.²⁹

These unhealthy activities, choked emotion and mental wounds then find escapist expression in the unaccountability of daydreams and delusional fantasies:

Common to the whole schizophrenic group is the tendency to morbid projection wherein the patient's actions or wishes are attributed to the will of others ... in a like manner, over compensation in face of mental or physical inferiority leads to the elaboration of grandiose delusions.³⁰

The afflicted individual then often finds solace in the attractive and blunting effects of alcoholism, which further add to the development of delusions and a lack of healthy organic growth:

Individuals with a schizophrenic orientation may over-indulge in alcohol; and because the symptoms of alcoholism tend to obscure the more subtle mental changes of schizophrenia, the physician may be misled in his diagnosis.³¹

The world of external reason, the solid brick wall, cannot be breached and self-expression and proper inner growth becomes disturbed, perverted or subverted:

Thought is illogical and unrelated to action. Feeling is disproportionate to the stimulus. Actions are erratic ... Conversation tends to become incoherent: odd words are used and sentences are coloured by the patients' musings. Emotional reactions may become disturbed and distorted. Speech and feeling are no longer in tune.³²

Francis seemed fall in with the tenor of all this and his thoughts in the early 1940s managed to coalesce Ellery, Harris and something else.³³



As interesting and as laudable as all these imagist and lexical connections undoubtedly are, if this was all there was in Francis's painting the work would be marred by an overtly literary transcription into the visual, as is unfortunately common in surrealism. If this really were the case, then we would perhaps be justified in thinking that Francis's surrealism was somewhat straining after effect and sedulous rather than inspired. However, this misgiving aside, the painting's formal qualities and its regionalist application of surrealist principles belie these suspicions and throw further light upon its more extended sources and breadth of sophistication.

Depictions of the human head, usually in a sectional or transparent form, are not uncommon in surrealist art. These depictions usually show the brain as a repository of images, thoughts and mental events - no doubt in deference to the theories of Sigmund Freud. André Breton, the leader of the European surrealists, himself is not immune from this pictorial treatment. The often reproduced and celebrated work *Portrait of André Breton*, by his surrealist friend André Masson, shows a double portrait, by night and by day, with attributes such as a diamond and a central portion of the people he has known.³⁴ The phoenix to the upper right and the sun to the upper left in this work are included to give an indication of Breton's transforming and regenerative intellect. The British surrealist Roland Penrose's painting *The Conquest of Air* of 1939, showing an opened-out human head, is also but one of a series of works of this type.³⁵ Francis's painting *Schizophrenia* sits comfortably within this company, at least in its general categorisation. Of related and supporting interest are the often depicted instances of mental turmoil in surrealism. These are sometimes reminiscent of dadaist collages, but more often are made up of an Arcimboldo-like compaction of images and occasionally of a convoluted figurative composition. Penrose's paintings *Artifact* of 1937³⁶ and his *Man Wrestling with his Thoughts* of 1939³⁷ are both instructive in this regard. All of these four works, in a small way, illustrate the abiding interest the surrealists had in depictions of mental functioning and emphasize the importance that they placed upon the role of subjective thought. This was a stress that guided and crowded their imaginations since the publication of Breton's important essay 'Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality' in 1927 with its epistemological emphasis and enquiry.³⁸

If we return to the contemporaneous works of Ivor Francis and view his painting *Investigation, Scientific and Otherwise of Matter without Form* of 1943, we see a depiction of an almost subterranean scene with transparent and interpenetrating forms being pointed to by a seated and gowned figure, to the left, in the traditional pose of the philosopher.³⁹ Below him, in the centre of the almost monochromatic painting, two people reminiscent of Salvador Dalí's figures are seen - one walking towards the light outside, the other running back to the confines of the interior. This painting by Francis, executed in the same year as his *Schizophrenia*, is obviously a depiction of the famous Plato's Cave metaphor of the nature of reality and our sensory perception of it and it heralds Francis's own quickening interest in psychological and metaphysical themes. Of secondary, though important, interest is the central image of transparent forms and shapes, probably representing the plethora of the



shadows of life on the inside of the cave. These fractured images, both in Francis' *Investigation, Scientific and Otherwise of Matter without Form* of 1943 and his *Schizophrenia* of 1943, bear a striking similarity to André Masson's works of the 1920s, with their late Cubist interest in transparency and overlapping or interpenetrating forms, as later analysed by the American art historian Winthrop Judkins in his unpublished study of 1956.⁴⁰ Masson's painting *Dead Man* of 1926,⁴¹ shown in London and reproduced in most English journals at the time and his *Man* of 1925,⁴² which was originally bought by the French writer Georges Bataille, both exemplify this formal interest. Of particular interest in this latter work is the appearance of a vaguely female form in the top left corner. This shape is the forerunner of the figure in the top left section in Masson's famous painting *Four Elements* of 1924,⁴³ which was originally bought by Breton and hence much illustrated in journals and various publications. This form was of great moment for the young Salvador Dalí. For example, the bent figure surfaces in many of his paintings of the 1930s, most clearly in his *Illumined Pleasures* of 1929⁴⁴ where, as Dawn Ades, Whitney Chadwick and Ian Gibson have shown, it appears as an indication of Dalí's shame and remorse.⁴⁵

Francis' knowledge of Dalí's work and aesthetic ideas was quite extensive, despite Adelaide's isolation. Francis freely admits the influence of secondary sources such as books and reproductions:

We got all our inspiration from such prints and books, as we were able to pick up from overseas. You belonged to the school that followed Cezanne or the one that followed Picasso or the school that followed, well you name it, and we were all that way. I suppose I had a sort of sneaking feeling for Salvador Dalí. He intrigued me. And Jacqueline Hick had a strong leaning towards Daumier and David Dallwitz, of course, towards Picasso and these were the people whom we admired and, I suppose, that's why we weren't really tremendously into the Australian thing. Those overseas people became our masters, whereas in Melbourne, and, I suppose, more so in Sydney, there was a tendency for students to admire their teachers. ... We thought Surrealism was the sort of thing Salvador Dalí did. And then, it all started to filter through after the War and we read about it, but I was the only one who was a Surrealist. ... It was, I think, Max Harris who had a big part in it really.⁴⁶

Immediately after the Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art in 1939, he became even more familiar with Dalí's work in detail through reproductions of paintings spawned by the furore over his work in general and in that exhibition in particular.⁴⁷ Dalí's bent human figure then, not surprisingly, finds itself repeated, without much distortion of form or intent, in the top centre of Francis's work *Schizophrenia*, where it is meant to indicate the shame felt by those afflicted with schizophrenia. The figure's head touches the wall and its biomorphic shape and position leave us little doubt of its distant source in Masson and Dalí's earlier works. Francis's knowledge and admiration of Dalí's work may be further underpinned by the visual characteristics and composition of his painting *Venus Reborn* of 1946:⁴⁸

Ken Wach: What about that work of yours *Venus Reborn* - and your *Schizophrenia* - they're very surrealist works. Can you remember what sources you would have drawn on - personal, literary, aesthetic - sources?



Ivor Francis: Well, *Venus Reborn*, I think shows the influence of Salvador Dalí. But, Botticelli could have been just as important.⁴⁹

The biomorphic skull in this work especially echoes Dalí's forms, more obviously those in his painting *Atmospheric Skull* of 1934. The hills in the background of this work by Dalí take on an anthropomorphic form resembling the breasts of a recumbent woman, a form also repeated more obviously in Francis's *Anstey's Hill* of 1946.⁵⁰ In this painting, the breasts with the nipple suggested by a tree, mimics certain works of Dalí's where mountain ranges, well known in Spain for their anthropomorphic shape, are often used. This is most evident in the background of Dalí's little known painting *Enigma of Hitler* of 1939,⁵¹ where the nipple on the breast is suggested by a castle at the peak of the mountain range.

Another enticing similarity which also indicates Francis's extensive knowledge of surrealist paintings is provided by the brick wall in the upper right of his painting *Schizophrenia*. The brick wall acts as a barrier to the exterior world, a reminder of reason and logic and of the materiality of the world beyond internalised thought. This function of the image of the brick wall is variously shared amongst the surrealists. In the work of René Magritte especially, and in Penrose and Ernst also, we find the wall acting as a foil, or as a field upon which to place semantic or imagist conundrums - generally the wall, usually of brick, acts in surrealism as a reliable and recurrent metonym standing for an irrefutable and external reality.⁵²

By 1943, surrealist principles were well known and they became the subject of considerable and often virulent debate, especially in Melbourne and Adelaide. There are many sources for this seminal knowledge. The Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art that opened at the Melbourne Town Hall on Monday 16 October 1939 was, of course, of great importance especially considering the controversy it engendered about various aspects of liberalism and modernism.⁵³ This exhibition traveled to Sydney, but not to Adelaide, though the controversy was reported in many easily available magazines and newspapers including the *Adelaide News*, which gave it some breathless pre-publicity on Friday 18 August 1939. London too was abuzz with surrealism in the late 1930s and 1940s, especially after the highly successful International Surrealist Exhibition held at the New Burlington Galleries from Thursday 11 June to Saturday 4 July in 1936. This highly successful exhibition, organized by Penrose with Breton, Dalí and Paul Eluard in attendance, displayed almost 400 surrealist works created by sixty-eight artists who represented fourteen nationalities. Twenty-three artists in this exhibition were British and the subsequent publication of a dual language (English-French) anthology and a series of relevant lectures, did much to spread the surrealist aesthetic amongst the intelligentsia and the English public at large. The resultant publicity, indeed notoriety, augured well for the success of Alfred Barr's subsequent *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art and Julien Levy's surrealism exhibition at his gallery, both of which were shown in New York in 1936. These three major exhibitions in 1936, one in London and two in New York, together with their various publications, related lectures and newspaper and radio reports firmly cemented the place of surrealism within the English-speaking world. A total of fourteen further



exhibitions, in London alone, between 1936 and 1942, only added to surrealism's indelible cultural impact.

Surrealism's literary and scientific aspects gave it a currency not available to most artistic movements and they gave it a respectability that masked, at least in Britain, its anti-bourgeois and anarchist origins. British surrealists were quick to ally surrealism with their native romanticism and Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shakespeare and Blake were quickly, perhaps hastily, enlisted in the surrealists' constant appeals to, and invocations of, literary and intellectual authority. Australians then, as perhaps never before, were eager to respond to intellectual stimulus from the Mother Country. James Cant, the Adelaide artist who had exhibited with the British surrealists, most notably at the Mayor Gallery in London in 1935 was, amongst others, also an important source of information upon his return to Australia in 1939. From as early as 1932 the literary journal *This Quarter*⁵⁴ was available to the reader of English - this indispensable source, mostly translated by Jacob Bronowski and Samuel Beckett, was for many their first introduction to surrealist theory in English and to the surrealists' interest in mental functions and their aberrations.⁵⁵ In 1936, this exposure to surrealist concerns was complemented by the publication of magazines such as the *London Bulletin*,⁵⁶ the publication of David Gascoyne's concise work *A Short Survey of Surrealism*,⁵⁷ and Herbert Read's anthology *Surrealism*,⁵⁸ with its important and influential introduction. All of this interest, controversy and activity seemed acknowledged by the later publication of essays by André Breton⁵⁹ and André Masson⁶⁰ in the journal *Art in Australia* in 1941 and 1942. The further burst of contemporaneous publications of letters, poems and articles by Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, E. E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, Herbert Read, Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, Cyril Connolly, Edmund Wilson, Charles Henri Ford, Kenneth Burke, William James, Aldous Huxley and other luminaries in 'little' and special issue magazines and journals, Australian or otherwise, only added to the flood of information about surrealism in English.

The Australian incorporation of surrealism, no doubt, owes much to its British heritage and to the general climate of Anglophilia in the 1930s, as well as to the numerous expatriate Australians in London in the late 1930s and 1940s. At the time, in Britain, surrealism was promoted as an intellectual and artistic movement that was blithely unconcerned with conventional behaviour and morality, with the strictures of humanist tradition and with the oppressive orders of classical formalism. Herbert Read, a highly influential member of the surrealist group in London, consistently argued that contemporary standards of conventionality were based upon intellectual concepts that suppressed growth and dynamism and that were often inextricably connected to particular class values, class properties and to a seemingly irredeemable social oppression. According to Read, what was needed to rectify this, was an unshackled and liberating freedom of thought; a liberation that sought new parallels and new metaphors for a post-Freudian age.

As noted above, the Adelaide intellectual Max Harris first met Ivor Francis in 1940 and it was the nineteen-year-old Harris who introduced the thirty-four-year-old Francis to surrealist aesthetic theories and texts.⁶¹ At the time, surrealist theoretical writings on art and



the social and aesthetic responsibilities of the artist were readily available and by 1942 they could easily be supplemented by the contents of Harris's bookshop, Mary Martin, and of course by the various papers in *The Angry Penguins*, the journal he founded with Donald Kerr in 1940 in Adelaide. In addition, to this the University of Adelaide, where Harris was a student from 1939 to 1941, was surprisingly well equipped with Freud's works in English. The Workers' Education Association which eventually became the University of Adelaide's campus bookshop, ordered texts remarkably quickly. For example, Freud's text *Introduction to Psychology* was published in 1922 and available in Adelaide in the same year; his book *Totem and Taboo*, translated into English in 1919, was available in Adelaide in 1921 and his *New Introductory Lectures* of 1933 was on the University campus three years later in 1936. The collection of the State Library of South Australia in Adelaide was also remarkably well stocked, with four of Freud's publications bought between 1922 and 1924, all of them within two years of release. The precocious and redoubtable intellect of Max Harris would have spared little time in availing itself of the available literary information thus supplementing his burgeoning knowledge of the British surrealists of the 1940s. Max Harris and John Reed's publication in Melbourne of the avant-garde journal *Angry Penguins* in 1943 onwards, and the publication of Harris' book *The Vegetative Eye* in the same year, only confirmed his pre-eminent status in the intellectual circles of his time. He was both mentor and guide to many Adelaide artists; his writing and criticism, his espousal of liberalism and radicalism and his questioning of cultural isolationism and Australia's home-spun thematic identity, was of especial importance, at least until the lamentable Ern Malley hoax of 1944.⁶²

Much of the content of this formative literary and cultural background was complemented by Francis's fifty-three-year friendship with Mary Packer Harris, an Adelaide artist of Quaker persuasion, who wrote the books *Art, The Torch of Life* in 1946 and *The Cosmic Rhythm of Art and Literature* in 1948.⁶³ Mary Harris, who was no relation of the younger Max Harris, graduated from Edinburgh College of Art in Scotland in 1913 and taught at the School of Arts and Crafts in central Adelaide from 1922 to 1953 and was one of the group of artists that formed the Contemporary Art Society there in 1942.⁶⁴ Mary Harris championed Francis's work and influenced his choice of aesthetic direction soon after they first met in 1928, when he enrolled in her art classes. She later also included his paintings in Adelaide's first public showing of 'Modern Art,' the Testament of Beauty exhibition of 1939.⁶⁵ Mary Harris must have made quite an impression on Francis as her personalised teaching and art instruction are even reflected in some of the pious and socially conscious tones of his subsequent publication *Art Lessons for the RAAF* of 1944.⁶⁶ Mary Harris's Quaker-based social conscience and more spiritual personal inclinations also had their impact and prompted some of the subsequent questioning directions of the inquisitive mind of the then twenty-two-year-old Francis.⁶⁷

The International Surrealist Exhibition in London in 1936 was, as previously noted, of great importance as well; its art and theory were well supported, especially by Herbert Read, Cyril Connolly and John Betjeman. It was patronised by well-known collectors such as Roland Penrose and Edward James - patronage that seemed to sponsor a rapid flow of



anthologies. One such excellent anthology is of particular interest at this juncture. In 1936, Herbert Read edited a collection of four significant essays under the title *Surrealism*; it was published by Faber and Faber and was very widely disseminated, in two editions, throughout the English-speaking world. This anthology, with an extended introduction by Read, also contains essays on theory, poetry and literature by André Breton, Hugh Sykes-Davies, Paul Eluard and George Hugnet. As such, this well-illustrated book supplied a rare insight into surrealist aesthetics and there is little doubt that Francis was well acquainted with the publication and its content, since a copy of the original edition of 1936 remained on his lounge room bookshelf until his death in 1994.⁶⁸ The 1936 edition book jacket of this publication, which was also reproduced in the subsequent edition, shows a collage by Roland Penrose, the chief organizer of the International Surrealist Exhibition in London. The cover shows the image of an eye above a bisected nautilus shell, which terminates at a wall, with a key part submerged in a wall of bricks [fig. 2]. The purpose of this seemingly strange composition is clear: Penrose's collage of images was intended to illustrate the beauty inherent upon the unlocking of the barriers of logic and rationality.

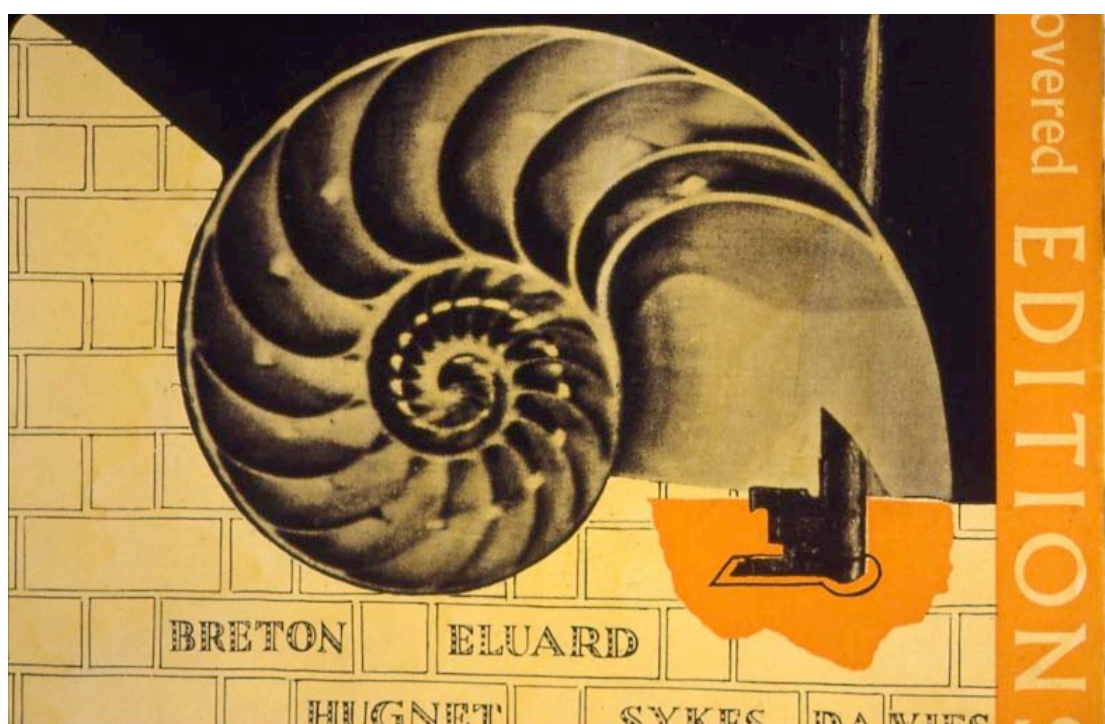


Fig. 2: Cover of Herbert Read (ed.), *Surrealism*, Faber and Faber, London, 1936.

Penrose's book cover illustration to Read's 1936 anthology provides a remarkable insight: when turned upon its side, the image of this collage presents an overarching similarity to the main image, the spiral cochlea, in Francis's *Schizophrenia*. The imagist connection between Francis's 1943 painting and Penrose's collage of 1936 is even more irresistible when we remind ourselves that the word cochlea is the Latin word for a shell. Thus, what we are presented with in Ivor Francis's hitherto neglected painting *Schizophrenia*, is a complex recombination of analogues projected upon the imagist screen of the mind - these images,



defined by the lambent light of surrealist theory, form a repository of half-remembered details recollected from subconscious thoughts and intuitions. They are not so much a case of Wordsworth's 'emotions recollected in tranquility' but more of *images* recollected in tranquility. In Francis's mind, these transposed images and their tumbling associations were harnessed to serve a new purpose. These were re-applied images that, for Francis in Australia in the 1940s, had a personalised and localised resonance. In Francis's imagination, Penrose's forms and Ellery's words seesawed in new harmony and the activity pointed to new connections. The fact that Francis's painting is not based upon drawings, sketches or preliminary works and shows no pentimento, only confirms the flashing brilliance of these iconographic connections. The resultant reconfigured images, in Francis's case, found an original outlet in a newly developed medico-literary surrealist iconography in Australian art – an iconography developed in different conditions and a different location. In a larger sense, the painting *Schizophrenia* also parallels and emulates the British, but not the French, surrealists' method of pictorial generation in that it recombines and synthesises *a priori* images that are intended to give a reflection of psychological reality.⁶⁹

All of these surrealist attributes resonate in Francis's important painting *Schizophrenia*. This painting, doubtless propelled by the content of Ellery's psychological text and mindful of Max Harris's expositions, is an aesthetic *tour de force* that well illustrates, not only the place, but also the pervasive influence of surrealist aesthetic principles transposed into Australia. Given all of this, Ivor Francis's painting *Schizophrenia* is Australia's first major painting with a defined mental illness as its thematic subject.⁷⁰

¹ Ellery Reg S., *Schizophrenia: The Cinderella of Psychiatry*, Reed and Harris, Adelaide, 1941, 54-55, 59, 60.

² Ivor Pengelly Francis was born in Uckfield, Sussex, England on Tuesday 13 March in 1906 and died in Adelaide, South Australia on Tuesday 9 November 1993. Ivor Francis's obituary appears in *The Advertiser* newspaper in Adelaide: Anon., 'Angry Penguin held true to style,' *Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, Wednesday 10 November 1993. Francis's father was a Welshman from the town of Haverford in Wales and his mother (née Wheatley) came from Devonshire, England. Francis left England for Australia on Tuesday 15 January 1924 at the age of seventeen on the ship 'Moreton Bay' arriving on Tuesday 19 February 1924. Soon after, he gained employment with Charlie Inkster of the Elliston firm on the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia and repaid his Barwell Scheme ship passage costs in ten months. Francis's parents followed and left England in mid 1925. Francis's mother and his sisters eventually left South Australia for Sydney in 1942. Ivor Francis had two sisters: Audrey Florence Francis who worked as a reporter for *The Sydney Daily Telegraph* and Vera Eleanor Francis who worked for Frank Johnson, a publisher in Sydney. Francis entered into a teacher training course in Adelaide in 1925 at the Adelaide Teachers' College on a scholarship from the Education Department of South Australia. In 1928, he attended drawing classes at the South Australia School of Arts and Crafts in North Terrace in Adelaide and studied under Marie Tuck, Mary P. Harris, Jessamine Buxton, Leslie Wilkie and Louis McCubbin. In 1929, Francis taught at the Jamestown Primary School in Jamestown, South Australia and in 1930 he was transferred to teach at Prospect Primary School under Max Gerlach at Prospect in South Australia.



Francis married Ethel Louisa Eileen Saunders at St. Margaret's Church in Woodville on Friday 21 January 1921. The pair remained childless. Francis's early married life was spent at 5 Labrina Avenue, Prospect, Adelaide, South Australia; he later designed and moved to a self-built home/studio: 'Hill-Rothviele' (anagram: Ethel/Ivor), on Piccadilly Road, Crafers, South Australia – a small rural outer suburb about twenty kilometres South-East of Adelaide. Later, Francis became very prominent in Adelaide's artistic circles as a designer, painter, exhibition organizer, teacher, critic and broadcaster. Francis also organized the 1943 Anti-Fascist Exhibition of the Contemporary Art Society in Adelaide and was a regular reviewer for the *Adelaide News* from 1944 to 1956, the *Sunday Mail* from 1965 to 1974 and *The Advertiser* in Adelaide from 1974 to 1977. Francis also self-published and distributed the thirty-nine numbers of the monthly publication *Ivor's Art Review* from 1956 to 1960 and was the Supervisor of Education for the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) from 1948 to 1968.

Ivor Francis received the Australian Federal Government Australian Council Emeritus Award for Services to the Arts in 1987.

Francis also held the following teaching positions: 1925-1944: Primary Branch of the South Australian Education department; 1944-1947: Art Master: Adelaide Technical High School (School of Mines and Industries) now Institute of Technology (1947); 1948-1968: Supervisor of Education (South Australia) with the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC).

Francis is represented with paintings in the following collections: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia; Castlemaine Art Gallery, Castlemaine, Victoria; Margaret Carnegie Collection, Melbourne, Victoria; Benko Collection, Adelaide, South Australia; Goodwood Boys' Technical High School, Adelaide, South Australia; Nailsworth Girls' Technical High School, Adelaide, South Australia; Gareth Samson Collection, Melbourne, Victoria; Agapitos/Wilson Collection, Sydney, New South Wales and the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Victoria.

³ Max Harris, the South Australian poet, critic and intellectual, was born in the Adelaide suburb of Henley Beach in 1921 and educated at the prestigious St Peter's College, where he won twenty-one academic awards including the Tennyson Medal. He went onto the University of Adelaide in 1939 where he turned out equally brilliant performances. After the Ern Malley scandal, he turned to poetry, journalism and commentary – he later wrote a much respected weekly column for *The Australian* newspaper. He received the Order of Australia award for services to literature in 1989 and the Distinguished Alumni Award of the University of Adelaide Alumni Association in 1993. He died of prostate cancer in Adelaide in January 1995.

⁴ The eight exhibitions in chronological order of showings are:

- (i) *Exhibition of Paintings: Ivor Francis, Douglas Roberts*, Royal South Australian Society of Artists' Gallery, Adelaide, South Australia, 1945, catalogue number 11.
- (ii) *Aspects of Australian Surrealism*, Naracoorte Art Gallery and Contemporary Art Society of Australia, South Australia, October 31-November 18, 1976, catalogue number 3.
- (iii) *50 Years of South Australian Art*, Myers, South Australia, Pty. Ltd., Adelaide, South Australia, 1978, catalogue number 16.
- (iv) *Art & Social Commitment: An End to the City of Dreams 1931-1948*, Art Gallery of New South Wales Traveling Exhibition; Art Gallery of New South Wales 1984-1985; National Gallery of Victoria, 1985; Queensland Art Gallery, 1985; Art Gallery of Western Australia, 1985, catalogue number 60.
- (v) *Ivor Francis: An Adelaide Modernist: Sixty Years of Painting*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, 3 July 1987-30 August 1987, catalogue number 23.
- (vi) *Adelaide Angries: South Australian Painting of the 1940's*, Art Gallery of South Australia Traveling Exhibition: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, 10 November, 1989-29 January 1990; Heide Park and Art Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, 27 February, 1990-8 April, 1990; Riddoch Art Gallery, Mount Gambier, South Australia, 4 May 1990-3 June 1990, catalogue number 21.
- (vii) *Surrealism: Revolution by Night*, National Gallery of Australia Traveling Exhibition: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, ACT., 12 March 1993-2 May 1993; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Queensland, 21 May, 1993-11 July, 1993; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, New South Wales, 30 July 1993-19 September, 1993, catalogue number 92.



(viii) *Surrealism in Australia*, National Gallery of Australia Traveling Exhibition: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, 8 October 1993-21 November 1993; Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Ballarat, Victoria, 10 December 1993-30 January 1994, catalogue number 20.

⁵ The six publications are: *Bulletin of the National Gallery of South Australia*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1945; Smith, Bernard, *Australian Painting 1788-1960*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1962, 238; Haese, Richard, *Rebels and Precursors: the Revolutionary Years of Australian Art*, Melbourne, Penguin, 1981, 74; Hylton, Jane, *Ivor Francis: An Adelaide Modernist: Sixty Years of Painting*, Adelaide, Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1987, 12 and 28; Hylton, Jane, *Adelaide Angries: South Australian Painting of the 1940's*, Adelaide, Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1989, 52; Chapman, Christopher; Gott, Ted; Lloyd, Michael, *Surrealism: Revolution by Night*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 1993, 298; Chapman, Christopher, *Surrealism in Australia*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 1993, 84.

⁶ See: Francis, Ivor, Biographical Cuttings (Dynix Bib: 28339935), Petherick Reading Room, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

⁷ Haese, Richard, *Rebels and Precursors: the Revolutionary Years of Australian Art*, Melbourne, Penguin, 1981.

⁸ Smith, Terry, 'What makes a Penguin very angry,' *Times on Sunday*, Sydney, New South Wales, 12 July 1987, 33.

⁹ Hylton, Jane, *Adelaide Angries: South Australian Painting of the 1940's*, Adelaide, Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1989.

¹⁰ Chapman, Christopher, *Surrealism in Australia*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 1993.

¹¹ Francis's paintings and exhibitions have attracted little critical comment; the following items are his main mentions in local and national newspapers in Australia: Rooney, Robert, 'From one extreme to the other,' *The Weekend Australian*, Sydney, New South Wales, Saturday 27 August 1988, M 13; Smith, Terry, 'What makes a Penguin very angry,' *Times on Sunday*, Sydney, New South Wales, Sunday 12 July 1987, 33; Kenihan, Geoffrey, 'Celebrating night to remember with a kiss,' *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, Monday 14 March 1988, 10; Ward, Peter, 'The Penguin's day has finally arrived,' *The Australian*, Sydney, New South Wales, Friday 4 August 1987, 7; Neylon, John, 'Parading the lifetime reflections of a modernist,' *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, Monday 6 July 1987; Anon, 'Artist is our new critic,' *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, Wednesday 3 April 1974; Seidel, Brian, 'Ivor Francis "back",' *News*, Adelaide, South Australia, Wednesday 28 April 1965, 10; Harris, Samela, 'Ivor Francis looking back with a sort of wonder,' *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, Saturday 11 July 1987, 38.

¹² *Exhibition of Paintings: Ivor Francis, Douglas Roberts*, Royal South Australian Society of Artists' Gallery, Adelaide, South Australia, 1945, catalogue number 11.

¹³ Francis, Ivor, *Schizophrenia*, 1943, oil on canvas, signed and dated lower right 'Francis I/43,' 82.5 cm. x 62.2 cm., Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, Elders Bequest Fund Purchase, 1945.

¹⁴ Francis, Ivor, *Journal of Ivor Pengelly Francis, Photographer's Apprentice, Farm-hand, Schoolteacher, Artist, Critic. Begun Sat. 23rd. October, 1944*, unpublished and unfinished autobiographical manuscript held at the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, Ivor Francis Bequest.

¹⁵ Francis, Ivor, *Goodbye to the City of Dreams: An Autobiography*, unpublished autobiographical manuscript held at the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, Ivor Francis Bequest.

¹⁶ Francis, Ivor, *Ivor's Art Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, November 1956 to Vol. 4, No. 6, April, 1960, 39 nos. Held at the Research Library of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney,



Australia and The James Hardie Library of Australian Fine Art at the State Library of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland.

¹⁷ During a 1990 interview with the author, Ivor Francis seemed most reluctant to discuss the painting *Schizophrenia* in any detail and seemed to deflect any questions or move onto another subject. See: Unpublished transcript of a personal interview with the author recorded at Ivor Francis's home at Crafers in Adelaide, South Australia, 25 January 1990 (possession of the author; verbatim unpublished transcript lodged in the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia).

¹⁸ The painting is quite different from Francis's other paintings – in size, colour, theme, imagery and composition. This observation may be gauged by the content of the following two survey exhibitions of Ivor Francis's paintings: Nodrum, Charles, *Ivor Francis Survey*, Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, 1988 and Hylton, Jane, *Ivor Francis: An Adelaide Modernist: Sixty Years of Painting*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, 1987.

¹⁹ Francis, Ivor, *Schizophrenia*, Artist's Registration Statement, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, 1945. The Registration Statement is also reproduced with an illustration of the painting in *The Bulletin of the National Gallery of South Australia*, Vol. 7, No. 2, October 1945. Information courtesy of Jin Wittington, Research Library of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia.

²⁰ Ellery, Reg S., *Schizophrenia: The Cinderella of Psychiatry*, Reed and Harris, Adelaide, 1941.

²¹ Dr. Reg S. Ellery, of 20 Fordeham Road, Hawthorn, Victoria, was called to act as an expert witness in the Ern Malley case in Adelaide, South Australia, on Sunday 27 August 1944.

²² Unpublished transcript of a personal interview with the author recorded at Ivor Francis's home at Crafers in Adelaide, South Australia, 25 January 1990 (possession of the author; verbatim unpublished transcript lodged in the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia).

²³ Heyward, Michael, *The Ern Malley Affair*, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1993, 176.

²⁴ Unpublished transcript of a personal interview with the author recorded at Ivor Francis's home at Crafers in Adelaide, South Australia, 25 January 1990. (possession of the author; verbatim unpublished transcript lodged in the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia). See appendix I a) and b) below.

²⁵ Ellery, *Schizophrenia*, 48.

²⁶ Ellery, *Schizophrenia*, 166-167.

²⁷ Ellery, *Schizophrenia*, 63.

²⁸ Ellery, *Schizophrenia*, 54.

²⁹ Ellery, *Schizophrenia*, 54-55, 59, 60.

³⁰ Ellery, *Schizophrenia*, 62.

³¹ Ellery, *Schizophrenia*, 81.

³² Ellery, *Schizophrenia*, 61.

³³ See appendix I c) below.



³⁴ Masson André, *Portrait of André Breton*, Ink on paper, 1941, 48.5 cm. x 62.5 cm., Masson Collection, Paris, France.

³⁵ Penrose, Roland, *The Conquest of Air*, oil on canvas, 1939, dimensions unknown, Southampton Art Gallery, Southampton, England.

³⁶ Penrose, Roland, *Artifact*, oil on canvas 1939, dimensions unknown, Penrose Collection, London, England.

³⁷ Penrose, Roland, *Man Wrestling with his Thoughts*, oil on canvas, 1939, dimensions unknown, Penrose Collection, London, England.

³⁸ Breton, André, 'Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality' (September 1924), pamphlet, 1927. Later published in Breton, André, *Point du Jour*, NRF, Paris, 1934. Recently, the essay has been republished, see: Breton, André, 'Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality,' *October*, 69, Summer, 1994, 132-144.

³⁹ Francis, Ivor, *Investigation, Scientific and Otherwise of Matter without Form*, oil on canvas, 69 cm. x 94 cm., 1943, Agapitos/Wilson Collection, Sydney, New South Wales.

⁴⁰ Judkins, Winthrop, *Fluctuant Representation in Cubism*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1956, *passim*.

⁴¹ Masson, André, *The Dead Man*, oil on canvas, 1926, 92 cm. x 60 cm., Private Collection, Paris, France.

⁴² Masson, André, *Man*, oil on canvas, 1925, 100 cm. x 65.2 cm., Mr. and Mrs. Joseph R. Shapiro Collection, Oak Park, Illinois, USA.

⁴³ Masson, André, *The Four Elements*, oil on canvas, 1924, 73 cm. x 59.5 cm., Private Collection, Paris, France.

⁴⁴ Dalí, Salvador, *Illumined Pleasures*, oil on wood panel, 1929, 23.5 cm. x 34.5 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York, Collection of Harriet and Sidney Janis.

⁴⁵ The most cogent and extensive case for this interpretative observation is made by Ian Gibson in his following studies: Gibson, Ian, 'Salvador Dalí: The Catalan Background,' in *Salvador Dalí: The Early Years*, ed. Michael Raeburn, London, The South Bank Centre and The Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery and Museums, Brighton and Lund Humphries, 1994, 49-64; Gibson, Ian, *The Shameful Life of Salvador Dalí*, London, Faber and Faber, 1997. A similar position is held by Dawn Ades and Whitney Chadwick. See the following scholarly studies and related commentaries: Ades, Dawn, *Dalí*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1982; Ades, Dawn, *Dalí and Surrealism*, New York, Harper and Row, 1982; Ades, Dawn, 'Afterword (Investigating Sex: Surrealist Research 1928-1932),' in *Investigating Sex: Surrealist Research 1928-1932*, ed. José Pierre, London, Verso, 1992; Ades, Dawn, 'Morphologies of Desire,' in *Salvador Dalí: The Early Years*, 129-160; Ades, Dawn, 'Surrealism: Fetishism's Job,' in *Fetishism: Visualising Power and Desire*, ed. Anthony Shelton, London, The South Bank Centre and The Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery and Museums, Brighton and Lund Humphries, 1995, 67-87; Bradley, Fiona, 'The Shameful Life of Salvador Dalí' and 'Omnibus: The Fame and Shame of Salvador Dalí,' *Tate: The Art Magazine*, No. 14, Spring, 1998, 83; Chadwick, Whitney, *Myth in Surrealist Painting, 1929-1939: Dalí, Ernst, Masson*, Ph. D. thesis, The Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania, 1975, later published as *Myth in Surrealist Painting 1929-1939*, Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1980; Chadwick, Whitney, 'Eros and Thanatos-The Surrealist Cult of Love Reexamined,' *Artforum*, 14, November, 1975, 46-56; Wach, Kenneth, 'Shame about Dalí,' *The Age*, Saturday 22 November 1997, 11.

⁴⁶ Unpublished transcript of a personal interview with the author recorded at Ivor Francis's home at Crafers in Adelaide, South Australia, 25 January 1990 (possession of the author);



verbatim unpublished transcript lodged in the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia).

⁴⁷ More than seventy years later it is difficult to fully appreciate the surprising scale of public interest in Dalí's almost embarrassingly overt commercialisation, loquacious promotion and extroverted self-serving aggrandisement. There was a voluminous amount of easily available popular and secondary source English language information on the notorious paintings of Salvador Dalí, in bookshops, newsagents, Mechanics' Institutes, tertiary institution libraries and public libraries. This popular material was often anonymously written and internationally syndicated out for publication in other newspapers and British and American journals and magazines, particularly those such as *Time*, *Vogue*, *The Studio*, *Vanity Fair*, *Esquire*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Look*, *Click*, *London Bulletin*, *Art Digest*, *Town and Country* and *Life*, all of which had large international circulations. These internationally available publications often, in turn, gave rise to a further spread of information in newspapers and radio programs and prompted discussions in Australian clubs, societies, special interest groups, art schools and universities. All of this activity not only reflected the broad extent of cultural exchange but also further disseminated interest in surrealism during this formative period in the development Australian late Modernism. It must be pointed out that an unusually high number of these reports were published on 1 April (April Fool's Day); a factor which not only confirmed Dalí's zany notoriety but also unexpectedly ensured the spread of information about him and the movement to which he belonged. Scanning the extensive list of publications devoted to Dalí between 1932 and 1943, the date of Francis's *Schizophrenia*, dispels any doubt about the broad scale of this popular interest and its social spread. See the bibliography in Appendix II.

⁴⁸ Francis, Ivor, *Venus Reborn*, oil on canvas, 1946, 57 cm. x 69.5 cm., South Australian Government Grant 1977, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia.

⁴⁹ Unpublished transcript of a personal interview with the author recorded at Ivor Francis's home at Crafers in Adelaide, South Australia, 25 January 1990 (possession of the author; verbatim unpublished transcript lodged in the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia).

⁵⁰ Francis, Ivor, *Anstey's Hill*, oil on canvas, 51 cm. X 69 cm., 1946, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Gift of Timothy Morrell 1995.

⁵¹ Dalí, Salvador, *The Enigma of Hitler*, oil on canvas, no/date, circa 1939; estimates of dates vary from 1932 to 1938, 79.5 cm. x 53.6 cm., Ex. Gala/Dalí Collection, Paris; now in the National Collection of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia de Madrid, Madrid, Spain.

⁵² Contemporaneous accounts of surrealism often stress the dynamic tensions found in this dualistic view of reality. The following is a representative English language listing: Aiken, J., 'Psychological Aspects of Surrealism,' *Journal of Clinical Psychopathology*, 7, 1945, 35-42; Anon, 'The Subconscious in Art,' *Theosophy in Australia*, February, 1917, 283; Anon, W. S., 'Australia's Most Important Exhibition,' *Art in Australia*, No. 77, 15 November, 1939, 16-25; Berners, Lord, 'Surrealist Landscape,' *Horizon*, Vol. 6, No. 31, July, 1942, 5-6; Caillois, Roger, 'The Myth of Secret Treasures in Childhood,' *VVV*, No. 1, June, 1942, 4-8; Davies, H. S., 'Biology and Surrealism,' *International Surrealist Bulletin*, No. 4, 1936, 8; Devree, Howard, 'Exhibition Julien Levy's,' *Magazine of Art* 30, January, 1943, 61; Francis, Ivor, 'Reintegration and the Apocalypse,' *Angry Penguins*, No. 5, 1943, unpaginated; Fry, Roger, *The Artist and Psychoanalysis*, London, Hogarth Press, 1924; Gascoyne, David, *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, Cobden-Sanderson, London, 1935; Gauss, Charles, E., 'The Theoretical Backgrounds of Surrealism,' *Journal of Aesthetics of Art Criticism*, 2, Fall, 1943, 37-44; Gleeson, James, 'What is Surrealism,' *Art in Australia* No. 81, 25 November, 1940, 27 ff.; Gleeson, James, 'The Necessity for Surrealism,' *A Comment*, No. 5, May, 1941, unpaginated; Glicksberg, Charles, 'The Aesthetics of Surrealism,' *Tien Hsia Monthly*, Vol. 9, 1939, 364-374; Grey, J. G., 'From Dada to Surrealism,' *Parnassus*, 8, 15 December, 1936, 210; Harris, Max, 'James Gleeson: A Springboard,' *Angry Penguins*, No. 2, 1941, 30; Hoffman, Franz, 'From Surrealism to "The Apocalypse," A Development in Twentieth Century Irrationalism,' *Journal of English Literary History*, XII, No. 2, 1948; Janis, Harriet, 'Paintings as a Key to



Psychoanalysis,' *Arts and Architecture*, 63, No. 2, 1946, 38-40; Kraus, F. H., 'French Moderns in America,' *Studio*, 123, May, 1942, 136-139; Leferre, F., 'An Hour with Aldous Huxley,' *Stream*, Vol. 1, No. 1, July, 1931, 5-7; Mortimer, R., 'Nature Imitates Art,' *Architectural Review*, Vol. LXXV11, 1935, 27-29; Nibbi, Gino, 'Ideas Behind Contemporary Art,' *Art in Australia*, No. 76, 15 August, 1939, 16-26; Parker, R. A., 'Such Pulp as Dreams are Made On,' *VVV*, March, 1943, 62-66; Philp, Hugh, 'Surrealism Cannot be Art,' *Angry Penguins*, No. 4, 1943-1944, 52-54; R. F., 'The American Cult for Surrealism,' *Art News*, 2 January, 1937, 17-18, 222; Read, Herbert, *Art Now.*, London, Faber and Faber, 1933; Read, Herbert, *Paul Nash*, London, Penguin, 1944; Sweeney, J. James, *Plastic Redirections in 20th Century Painting*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1934; Swinburne, M., 'On "The Necessity for Surrealism"', *A Comment*, No. 14, January, 1943, 12-13; Tyler, P., 'The Amorphous and the Fragmentary in Modern Art,' *Art News*, 44, August, 1945, 17-20, 27; Wight, F. S., 'Picasso and the Unconscious,' *Psychoanalytical Quarterly*, 13, 1944, 208-216; Wilson, Edmund, *Axel's Castle*, New York, Scribners, 1932; Zander, A. 'Stanley Spencer and the Surrealists,' *The Home*, 2 November, 1936, 33; Zweig, Stephan, *The World of Yesterday.*, New York, Viking, 1943.

⁵³ The controversy surrounding Dalí's painting and surrealism was fuelled by numerous comments in the Australian Press. The following lists the main published articles: Anon., *Adelaide News*, 18 August 1939, illustrated after p. 9; Anon., 'Town Hall Transformed as Art Gallery: Costly Pictures for Exhibition Move In,' *Herald*, Melbourne, 14 October 1939, 7; Anon., 'Modern Artists 18. Dali: Paints Visions That Storm his Mind,' *Herald*, Melbourne, 30 October 1939, 6; *Art in Australia*, 15 November 1939, illustrated p. 39; Anon., 'Modern Artists 3. Dali: Paints Visions that Storm his Mind,' *Daily Telegraph* Sydney, 15 November 1939, 6; Anon., 'No This Isn't Dali,' *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 28 November 1939, 6; Anon., 'The Only Difference between Me and a Lunatic is that I am Sane?,' Salvador Dali. What Sydney Thinks of him,' *Daily Telegraph* Sydney, 29 November 1939, 6; Lindsay, 'Norman Lindsay On Dali's Surrealism,' *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 1 December 1939, 6; John Young, 'Dali's Picture,' *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 9 December 1939, 6; Lionel Lindsay, *Addled Art*, Sydney, Australia, Angus and Robertson, 1942, 34 ff. This listing was compiled by Steven Miller, Archivist at the Research Library at the Art Gallery of New South Wales – used with permission.

⁵⁴ Breton, André (ed.), *This Quarter: Surrealist Number*, Vol. v, No. 1, 1932.

⁵⁵ This is particularly evident in André Breton's paper 'Surrealism and Madness,' *This Quarter: Surrealist Number*, 101 ff.

⁵⁶ Mesens, E. L. T. (ed.), *London Bulletin*, London, April 1938-June 1940, 20 nos.

⁵⁷ Gascoyne, David, *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, Cobden-Sanderson, London, 1935.

⁵⁸ Read, Herbert (ed.), *Surrealism*, Faber and Faber, London, 1936.

⁵⁹ Breton, André, 'Originality and Liberty,' *Art in Australia*, No. 4, 1 December 1941, 11-17.

⁶⁰ Masson, André, 'Life and Liberty,' *Art in Australia*, No. 5, 1 March 1942, 11-17.

⁶¹ Francis's debt to the ideas and influence of Max Harris is acknowledged in the following unpublished manuscript of his autobiography: Francis, Ivor, 'Goodbye to the City of Dreams', unpublished manuscript held by the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, 213-218, Ivor Francis Bequest.

This debt is also acknowledged in the unpublished transcript of a personal interview with the author recorded at Ivor Francis's home at Crafrers in Adelaide, South Australia, 25 January 1990 (possession of the author; verbatim unpublished transcript lodged in the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia).

⁶² The controversial Ern Malley hoax and its effects are the subjects of the following study: Heyward, Michael, *The Ern Malley Affair*, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1993.



⁶³ Harris, Mary Packer, *The Cosmic Rhythm of Art and Literature*, Adelaide, Frank Cork, 1948. Mary Harris also later wrote the books *In One Splendour Spun* (1970) and *In a Cat Sanctuary* (1977).

⁶⁴ Mary Packer Harris's life and work are the subjects of a very rare and modest five page booklet publication: Biven, Rachel, *Mary Packer Harris, 1891-1978*, Walkerville, Walkerville Town Council, 1986, u. p. A copy is held in the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia.

⁶⁵ Besides Ivor Francis's paintings the 1939 exhibition in Adelaide also showed the works of the following South Australian artists: David Dallwitz, Douglas Roberts, Victor Adolfsson, Jeffrey Smart, Jacqueline Hick, Ruth Tuck, Kenneth Lamacraft, Jean Lowe, John Welsh, Helen Mackintosh, Ruby Henty, Violet Buttrose, Margaret Bevan, Robert Mansell and those of Mary Packer Harris herself.

⁶⁶ Francis, Ivor, *Art Lessons for the RAAF*, Melbourne, Department of Defence, 1944. Some of these now rare irregular issue brochures are held in the Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, Ivor Francis Bequest.

⁶⁷ See appendix I d) below.

⁶⁸ Confirmed through casual conversation with Ivor Francis and observation by the author.

⁶⁹ The original French surrealists' process of pictorial generation or imagist thought generally tends to be *a posteriori* – it is not thought out and then transcribed and much more automatic, 'passive' and emergent in procedure than most British surrealism – which, by and large, already knows what it is looking for. This slightly over bold assertion would rightly be the subject of another study.

⁷⁰ The author wishes to thank the late Ivor Francis for his help, interview and hospitality in 1990 and his correspondence thereafter. Barbara Cranston the Inter-Library Loans Officer, Education Resource Centre, The University of Melbourne and Jin Wittington, Librarian, Art Research Library, Art Gallery of South Australia, also deserve acknowledgement for their invaluable and prompt assistance.

Ken Wach taught at the University of Melbourne and was the Head of the School of Creative Arts. He is now a Principal Research Fellow at the same institution. He is the author of sixty publications including the following: *Salvador Dalí: Masterpieces from the Collection of the Salvador Dalí Museum*, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1996; 'Subjectivity Incorporated: The Surrealist Vignette in the Photography of Max Dupain,' Heather Johnson and Deborah Malor (Eds.) *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art*, Sydney, Art Association of Australia and New Zealand, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2000, pp. 107-130 and 'Pablo Picasso's "Weeping Woman" of 1937'; 'René Magritte's "In Praise of Dialectics" of 1937'; 'Balthus' "Nude with a Cat" of 1949'; *European Masterpieces: Six Centuries of Painting from the National Gallery of Victoria*, Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria, 2002, nos. 83, 84 and 87.



Appendix I: Excerpts from an unpublished interview between Ken Wach and Ivor Francis, 25 January 1990

a)

Ken Wach: That's quite a new subject matter in Australian art - for people to be interested in mental illness for a subject for painting.

Ivor Francis: Quite new. Yes! There was also a lot of interest at that time, more sort of academic interest, in psychotic art and I remember being asked to review a book which I did, for *The News* on psychotic art, which had photographs of demented people and I was very disturbed by that book. See there are certain things I don't like. I don't like interest in mental matters which mean that we more or less sort of hold up for exhibition people who are something which they are to be pitied for. I think to talk about psychotic art for artists is an unhealthy sort of thing. To write a textbook on psychotic art for doctors - that's okay - must do that - but not to make a spectacle of them. Emery's [sic, Ellery's] book was very sympathetic and it would have been a book that would have given a lot of hope to people who were either like that themselves or who knew someone who was like it. But to show these poor demented creatures and how they suffered, of course it was interesting in some ways, it was all right from a psychological point of view, to show that when people draw certain things, when they're in a state like that, to show that it comes out in their drawings and their paintings. That's of interest to psychologists. And there was an interest at the time in that. There's a fellow who lives not very far from me here, who is an art teacher and, I think, a bit queer himself anyway, who for a while got himself a job teaching subnormal children. He used to plague me by dropping in here with an armful of pictures and flop them all down all over the floor. He was so excited and enthusiastic about them as he explained to me: 'Now this child's work, now he's drawn that. You know what? His grandmother is really a murderer,' and that sort of thing. I like genuine art, but I don't think that's genuine.

b)

IF: Well, Max had, I think, probably a bigger influence on me than anybody else did. Max had the ability somehow to really get me going - to inspire me. I just loved, and still love, Max's way of thinking. Mind you, I hardly ever understand what he was saying. Most people can't. But it all sounded good and so I waited on his every word and it was Max who influenced me the most - I suppose that he flattered me a bit. He used to give me the titles of all my pictures - he was always able to find titles - I couldn't. And I used to ask him 'What should I call this one, Max?' And, so, it was Max who decided everything about apocalyptic painters. And, then, when I became an art critic, it was Max who suggested, my *nom de plume* should be 'Apocalypt.' And, of course, it was David Dallwitz who coined his famous tongue twister 'an apoplectic apocalyptic.' Having fed me that idea, Max started to feed me with Freud.

KW: Max Harris did?

IF: Yes, I could never understand a word.

KW: Was that in the 40s?

IF: That would be in the 40s.

KW: That's very early.

IF: Yes, he took me out - I used to go and visit Max occasionally. He used to invite me to his home. He had the ceilings of his den covered with prints he'd probably pinched from art books in the University Library or Public Library and I remember he had these big thick volumes of Freud you see. He wanted me to take them away and read them and I said to Max, 'No, look Max, I'd much rather



you read them and then tell me all about them, I like hearing you talk about them.'

KW: That would have been quite exceptional at that time - in the early 1940's - for someone to be reading Freud. He was only just out of his teens then.

IF: Oh, he would have been in his early 20s. Yes, that's right, about 24 [Harris was nineteen years old in 1940]. Yes, it's exceptional isn't it? And, of course, his book *Vegetative Eye* - which got such a slamming - but I got terrific material out of that. It really inspired me, you know I just lapped it up, I loved every bit of it - such imagination! Yes it's an important book isn't it? Yes. And so there you are again, you see. With his poetry, it was the same thing. It's rather strange that both Doug and I painted a picture on his Rose. That's right. Doug [Douglas Dallwitz] called his *The Pelvic Rose* - I didn't do that. But, Max Harris - I don't know why he should have been such an inspiration for me, but he was. ... Max used to tell me the sort of things I needed to know. I only needed to know enough to get inspired and I was quite happy to let Max do that.

c)

KW: That *Schizophrenia* work of yours which was bought by the Gallery - the first one of yours that they bought - that's obviously a very important work for you and it has elements in it that indicate quite a knowledge of schizophrenia and it was done in '43 - so you must have read that work very well [Ellery's text] - like 'The Ear,' 'The Wall,' etc. Are there any things that you can say about it that would clear up your source of knowledge and the general feeling of that work. I mean even the spears in it are very reminiscent of Max Ernst and the idea that there's a location in the brain; that there's something wrong with the brain. Jane [Jane Hylton, Curator of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia] says that good thoughts germinate from the brain and go out and in and are blocked by the wall. I would have thought it has to do with hearing.

IF: Well, there is an ear in the picture. Yes, there's an ear in the picture and in the background you've got a bottle you see, she doesn't mention that.

KW: And you've got a female form inside the bottle and you've got grotesque figures and the brick wall indicates perhaps the closed-in world of the schizophrenic.

IF: It is, yes, it is up against a brick wall! Yes, up against a brick wall literally.

KW: And that round tube I always thought of as being somewhat like the inner workings of the ear - the eustachian tube. Is that accurate in your mind?

IF: It could be - I think the corked-up bottle would be symbolic of the frustration, of being 'bottled-up' to use the term. It's all very corny, really.

KW: Well it's metaphoric really.

IF: Yes!

KW: What about the woman in the bottle - there's a sort of female shape in there, from my memory, I think.

IF: Well I'm not quite sure about that, she might be a woman who was frustrated - I don't know, but you see, don't forget that everybody talked me into it - they told me I'm a Surrealist, and so why fight against it? [Francis here changed the subject abruptly and started talking about the Black Hole Theory]

d)

KW: Ivor, what about Mary P. Harris? You mentioned that she had mystical, spiritual, leanings and from my memory, she was a Quaker. What sort of mystical, spiritual, beliefs did she have? Were they based on a philosopher, a religion? Did you read anything of Bergson or Nietzsche or Rimbaud or people like that? Nothing much has been said about Mary Harris's beliefs like that, not according to my reading anyway.



IF: I think Mary Harris too, being a mystic, appealed to me because I had an empathy for it. These two [Max Harris and Mary P. Harris] influenced me much. I was not interested in 'schools' or 'mainstreams.' She [Mary P. Harris] had, I think, a strong religious basis, because at her lectures she used to go into a state of ecstasy at times. She'd go into ecstasy, for instance, when she'd got on to William Blake and she'd just go 'Oooh.' And she had a very deep empathy for the French Impressionists and Expressionists. I don't know why. I think it arose from Mary's admiration for guts and the ability to survive and succeed. At heart she was a pragmatist – 'put your trust in God and keep your powder dry.' Anyhow, Mary was a bit like that. I sometimes used to sort of doubt her sincerity. But, she was really very sincere from a mystical point of view.

KW: She would have been very inspiring though, in the Art School, to young students.

IF: She was tremendously inspiring, yes! And it was rather funny because honestly and truly, I mean, if some of the people whom she used to talk about in Adelaide were to hear what she said I'm quite sure it would have been Mary who would have been in the dock all the time instead of Max Harris, you know. She was dreadful the way she would make fun of people, in the Adelaide Establishment! She'd really give them tongue whippings in her lectures you know - all in the good cause of Christian pragmatism!

KW: It would be hard to get away with it today, wouldn't it?

IF: Yes. And, of course, then came the time when she wrote her last [in fact, her second last] book *In One Splendour Spun* [1970]. She wanted me to write the foreword. So I was very honoured and she gave me to understand that this book - I think she even says it in the foreword - she says that it's really an autobiography about her teaching days. So I was quite happy. I said yes, I'd write it, gladly, because I thought well, wonderful. Mary's experiences of her teaching days and all that sort of thing. Then one day a Quaker friend of hers, a chap, came around with a parcel. He handed it to me. It was Mary's manuscript. Well, I read her book which gave me the absolute horrors. I thought well, I'm certainly not going to put my name to a foreword praising it - I'll be dragged to Court! [at this point, Francis gesticulated wildly and had a look of terror on his face – as though recalling Max Harris's experiences in Court over the Ern Malley scandal in 1944]. She slanderously mentioned a number of people by name. She told terrible stories, which I since have discovered were true, which are well known now to be true and so I was a bit wrong there. She told all about the Atom Bombs in the Woomera warheads [British Atomic Bomb tests in the 1950s]. How she was able to get her information I don't know! She had all this information and yet it was all wrong - as far as I was concerned. But, of course, it's now shown that it wasn't wrong. Anyway, I was terribly upset at that - I really was.



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