

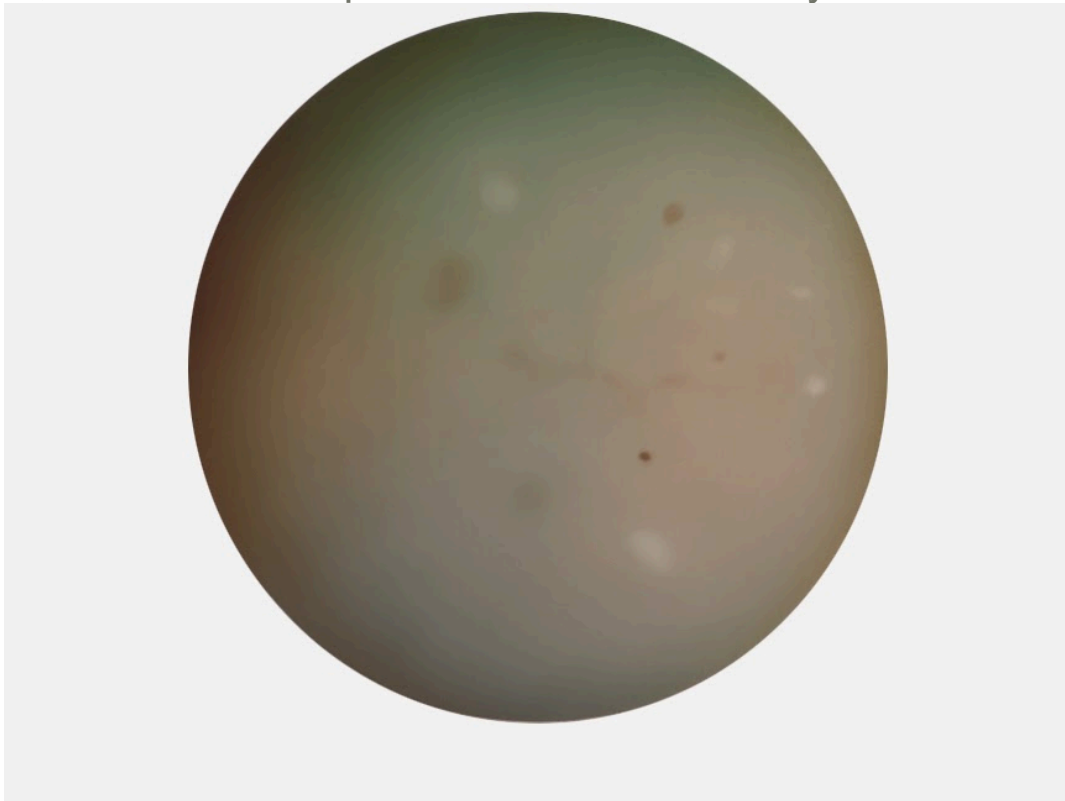


VCCA (Virginia Center for the Creative Arts) is one of the largest artists' communities in the nation. Tucked into the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, VCCA has awarded fellowships to thousands of our best national and international writers, composers and visual artists. This blog tells their story—their achievements and the work they are doing in your area and around the world. VCCA news is here, too: events, fellowships, opportunities. VCCA. Because creative space is a creative edge.

Thursday, July 17, 2014

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## Calme, Luxe and Volupté: Gwen Hardie's Body Series



Gwen Hardie has distilled her fascination with the human figure, down to its surface and what lies just beneath. Zeroing in on the flesh, these latest paintings could be anywhere you see a sprinkling of freckles and the undercurrent of veins, Hardie has abandoned previous anatomical landmarks—glimpses of an areola or telltale crease, and so removed all vestiges of narrative and psychological overtones.

Several years ago, Hardie settled on using tondos and oval shapes for her work because the squares and rectangles she had been using invited the viewer to mentally add on more, mosaic-fashion, to the composition. Circles and ovals are self-contained shapes, which your mind accepts as complete. They're also sensual and feminine and reference the alpha and omega of nature from the cosmos all the way down to cells.

There is a distinctive volupté quality that comes from the consummate fleshiness Hardie depicts—one can sense the warmth, softness and pliancy of the skin—yet these paintings are also rather dispassionate formal opuses into how light and shadow plays on the surface of things and the manipulation of volume and spatial direction.

Hardie's work will be part of *REALITY: Modern and Contemporary Painting*, Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, UK (September 27, 2014 – March 1, 2015), a survey of the last 50 years of representational painting which includes other art world luminaries as Lucien Freud, Cecily Brown, Jenny Saville and Peter Doig. [www.gwenhardie.com](http://www.gwenhardie.com)