

PETRINA HICKS – Photographer

Hicks gently subverts the pervasive language of photography as it is used in advertising and publicity, creating edgy images that intrigue and disturb. While she primarily works with people, her works transcend the boundaries of portraiture as she finds beauty in perceived imperfections and renders idealized beauty strange.

Her images are mostly of adolescents and elegantly capture the ambiguities of youth. Whilst she uses digital interventions, they are almost imperceptible, creating instead a polished hyper-reality. These subtle contrasts within the image play with photography's dual capacities as both a revealer of truths, and a perpetrator of lies. Hicks' photography embraces the scope of what it means to be human.

Following a 3 month residency in La Cité, Paris, Hicks exhibited her 2008 series, *The Descendants* at Stills Gallery. Continuing with her large-scale photographic portraiture Hicks' immaculate works probe those dualities that are at the heart of contemporary photography - traversing the fine lines between closeness and distance, between perfection and imperfection and between truth and falseness. *Lambswool*, for instance depicts a young blonde subject, almost impossibly neat, embracing a wolfhound, which gently chews on her arm. This image was Hicks' winning entry of the ABN AMRO Emerging Artist Award 2008. In 2009, the arresting image *The Boy* from *The Descendants* was selected for the finalist exhibition of the National Portrait Prize.

In an interesting departure, *The Descendants* includes a series of video portraits. Hicks further confounds the real and hyper-real by employing a visual convention used in computer 3D modelling, a 360 degree view of a static subject, slowly rotating before the camera/viewer - but in this case her subjects are real rather than computer generated. Continuing with her large-scale photographic portraiture Hicks' immaculate works probe those dualities that are at the heart of contemporary photography - traversing the fine lines between closeness and distance, between perfection and imperfection and between truth and falseness. In 2008 Hicks was commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery to create a video portrait of accomplished Australian surfer Layne Beachley, which is on display in 2009 as part of their permanent collection.

In 2006 Hick's photographs have been acquired by many institutions throughout Australia; the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Victoria, Monash Art Gallery, La Trobe University, Queensland Art Gallery,

Flinders University and Albury Regional Gallery. She has twice been profiled in Australian Art Collector Magazine as one of Australia's 50 most collectable artists.

Petrina Hicks' work has attracted many accolades over her relatively short career. In 2008, she was announced as the Overall Winner in the ABN AMRO Emerging Artist Award. In 2009 she was a finalist in the National Portrait Prize and the Moran prize for portraiture.. She has been represented in the Citigroup Photographic Portrait Prize at the Art Gallery of NSW for the last 4 years. In 2004 she was awarded the inaugural Art & About Sydney Life Exhibition prize and in 2003 she won the Josphine Ulrick and Win Schubert prize for portraiture. In 2006/2007, Hicks had a solo exhibition at the Museum of Brisbane titled *Flawless: Petrina Hicks*.

Her work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally; *ParisPhoto 2008* and *Contemporary Australia: Optimism*, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art. *Light Sensitive*, at the National Gallery of Victoria, *In Cold Light* at the Centre for Contemporary Photography, and *Truth and Likeness* at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra.