

MEDIA RELEASE

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FLESH, BLOOD AND CYBERSPACE: THE FUTURE OF *HYPER REAL* OPENS AT THE NGA

The extraordinary artworks of *Hyper Real* have been unveiled today at the National Gallery of Australia. Visitors can expect to see a frozen sculpture made entirely of the artist's blood, a transgenic creature giving birth amidst an infinite meadow and a virtual journey through a human skull floating in space amongst the incredible array of ultra-real sculpture and digital art on display.

Hyper Real presents some of the world's most incredible true-to-life sculpted forms alongside recent kinetic, biological and virtual creations. The exhibition investigates how artists are pushing the boundaries of the genre in their exploration of what constitutes the contemporary hyperreal.

'Presenting 32 artists and nearly 50 works, *Hyper Real* focuses on extraordinary talent from around the world,' said Gerard Vaughan, NGA Director. 'Most importantly, this exhibition highlights the exceptional contribution of Australian practitioners, including Patricia Piccinini, Sam Jinks, Ron Mueck, Shaun Gladwell, Jan Nelson, Stephen Birch and Ronnie van Hout.'

'This exhibition not only celebrates the astonishing material and technical feats that have made hyperrealism such a globally popular genre, but also explores the conceptual framework within which these works operate,' said Jaklyn Babington, NGA Senior Curator of Contemporary Art. 'Contemporary hyperrealism has pushed beyond static sculpture and into the digital realm. It is a shape-shifting genre, simultaneously traditional and innovative, familiar and provocative.'

From the Renaissance to the present day, artists have long been fascinated with the human form. Hyperrealism momentarily tricks audiences into believing the artworks to be real and, in doing so, encourages viewers to reconsider what it means to be human.

Hyper Real delves into the nuances and complexities of the nude body. From the astonishing precision of replication in Paul McCarthy's work, to the idealised beauty of John DeAndrea's sculpted women and the oversized, emotionally exposed figures of Ron Mueck, the nude is central to hyperrealism.

Sam Jink's technically spectacular oeuvre is exemplified by the NGA's new commission *The deposition 2017*, an emotive exploration of the fragility of life and familial roles.

Humour and satire are used to deliver social and political commentary in Sun Yuan and Peng Yu's kinetic sculptures, while Maurizio Cattelan uses a playful juxtaposition to explore how the notions of power and evil are constructed.

Hyper Real pushes the genre beyond today's understanding of what is natural by encompassing the fantastic hybrid creatures of Patricia Piccinini.

'My work deals with ideas of transgenesis—beings that may be part-flower, part-boot, part-human – and looks upon them with compassion, love and acceptance,' said artist Patricia Piccinini. 'I question how far science and technology may take us, and what ethical questions arise around beings that are non-conformative and imperfect.'

Our computer-generated world is explored through Cao Fei's pop culture offering, created in the game of *Second Life*. Tony Oursler's digital talking head holds a mirror to the twenty-first century's social media obsession; with anguish, Oursler's projection tells the viewer it will die if it is not continually looked at and commented upon.

Creating sculptures that engage with surprising themes, the unbelievable craftsmanship of Tony Matelli's *Josh* depicts a young man who appears to both levitate and fall, while Berlinde de Bruckere's *Elie* is presented in a state between agony and death, the human and inhuman.

Sculptures depicting popular figures such as Spider Man, clowns and pin-up girls reveal how culture and the media construct other hyperreal forms, while Ronnie van Hout's doppelgängers and Marc Quinn's self-portrait – created with litres of the artist's frozen blood – provide disconcerting commentary on the infinite replication of humans in the future.

Shaun Gladwell's virtual reality artwork is an immersive experience, a simulation that tricks us into believing that we are out of our mortal shells, and exploring deep space. VR offers a technological advancement of the human body. As technology is used to enhance our human capabilities we become another kind of hyperreal figure ourselves.

The Russian collective AES+F present a high-definition 360° immersive video work evoking the aesthetic of daytime soap operas, with a provocative twist. In AES+F's inverted world, the poor overthrow the rich, women torture men, youths punish their elders and animals usurp humans.

Hyper Real explores art, psychology, science, technology and philosophy through the very *realness* of its subject matter. Welcome to humanity amplified.

ARTISTS

AES+F (Russia)	Shaun Gladwell (Australia)	Tony Oursler (USA)
Zharko Basheski (Macedonia)	Robert Gober (USA)	Evan Penny (USA)
Stephen Birch (Australia)	Duane Hanson (USA)	Patricia Piccinini (Australia)
Maurizio Cattelan (Italy)	Sam Jinks (Australia)	Marc Quinn (UK)
John De Andrea (USA)	Allen Jones (UK)	Mel Ramos (US)
Berlinde de Bruyckere (Belgium)	Peter Land (Denmark)	Ugo Rondinone (Swiss)
Keith Edmier (USA)	Tony Matelli (USA)	Jamie Salmon (UK)
Cao Fei (China)	Paul McCarthy (USA)	George Segal (USA)
Carole A Feuerman (USA)	Ron Mueck (Australia)	Marc Sijan (Serbia)
Daniel Firman (France)	Jan Nelson (Australia)	Ronnie van Hout (NZ/Australia)
		Sun Yuan & Peng Yu (China)

This exhibition is made possible through the support of presenting partner Visit Canberra, major partner Qantas, and supporting partner Maddocks, as well as Exhibition Patrons, Zeke Solomon and the Neilson Foundation.

Hyper Real opens 20 October 2017 until 18 February 2018. Tickets are on sale now through Ticketek.

MEDIA CENTRE:

Downloadable hi res images: <https://nga.gov.au/aboutus/mediacentre/hyperreal/default.cfm>

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Facebook: @NationalGalleryof Australia

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Twitter: @NatGalleryAus

Hashtag: #HyperRealNGA

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