

# PATRICIA PICCININI

Once upon a time...



Welcome to the exciting world of Patricia Piccinini. We will meet some interesting, unusual, and sometimes scary creatures here.

You will discover more than sixty fantastical creatures, life-like sculptures, installations, video works, photographs and drawings.

## CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY TRAIL

## ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

NORTH TERRACE ADELAIDE SA 5000 [www.artgallery.sa.gov.au](http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au)





# ALOFT

A young boy is aloft in a strange-looking nest. He is peering from the inside out, using a grub as a stepping stone. The boy looks cute and curious – comfortable in his surroundings, however strange these may seem to us.

Have the grubs been hibernating in this nest made of human hair? What might emerge?

Why do you think this work appears to be growing from the ceiling?

On the way down the stairs, what do you see? At the bottom of the stairs, look up at *Aloft*. How does it look different from this view?

At home, gather some found materials to make your own nest. Create your own creatures to live in it.

*Aloft* (installation Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth), 2010  
fibreglass, felted human hair and wool, steel cable, silicon, human hair; horse hair; clothing, electronic motors, 1290.0 x 1510.0 x 7500.0 cm (installation dimensions variable)  
© Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York  
photographer: Bo Wong





## THE YOUNG FAMILY

This work was inspired by scientists' plans to begin breeding certain animals specifically for their organs which would then be used for transplants into patients. In *The young family*, the mother is suckling her babies. The mother seems exhausted and deep in thought. What do you think she might be thinking? How do you feel when you look at her babies?

What different animals are you reminded of when you look closely?

Draw your own playful creature as a mix of your favourite animals.

Are there other works of art in this exhibition that seem to be about caring?



*The young family*, 2002–03  
silicon, acrylic, human hair, leather, timber; 80.0 × 150.0 × 110.0 cm  
R.H.S. Abbott Bequest Fund 2003. Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria  
© Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York  
photographer: Graham Baring



## BIG MOTHER

What is the first thing you notice about this sculpture?

The inspiration for this work came from a particular event: a human baby was snatched by a baboon whose own baby had died. The artist has shown the animal gently holding and feeding the human baby, a protecting and nurturing action which shows the closeness of all humans and animals.

What do you feel when you look at this sculpture?

What emotions can you identify when you look at *Big Mother's* face?

What do you think might be inside the bags?

**Big Mother**, 2005  
 silicon, fibreglass, leather, human hair; 173.0 x 103.0 x 78.0 cm  
 Gift of the Art Gallery of South Australia Contemporary Collectors, S. Angelakis, John Ayers, Candy Bennett, Cherise Conrick, James Darling AM and Lesley Forwood, Rick Frolich, Frances Gerard, Patricia Grattan French, Stephanie Grose, Gryphon Partners Advisory, Janet Hayes, Ulrike Klein, Edwina Lehmann, Ian Little, David and Pam McKee, Dr Peter McEvoy, Hugo and Brooke Michell, Jane Michell, Paul Taliangis, Michael and Tracey Whiting and anonymous donors 2010  
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide © Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York  
 photographer: Saul Stead







# SURROGATE

Walk around this sculpture and see what you discover: *Surrogate* has big eyes, a large head (and tummy), wrinkly snout, and freckly, fleshy skin. Does the creature look young or old?

*Surrogate* is helping wombat joeys to grow in the six pouches on its armoured back. The creature must be very patient, as the joeys can take up to nine months to develop. The Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat is an endangered species that needs protection.

Later, find out more about the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat and its natural environment.



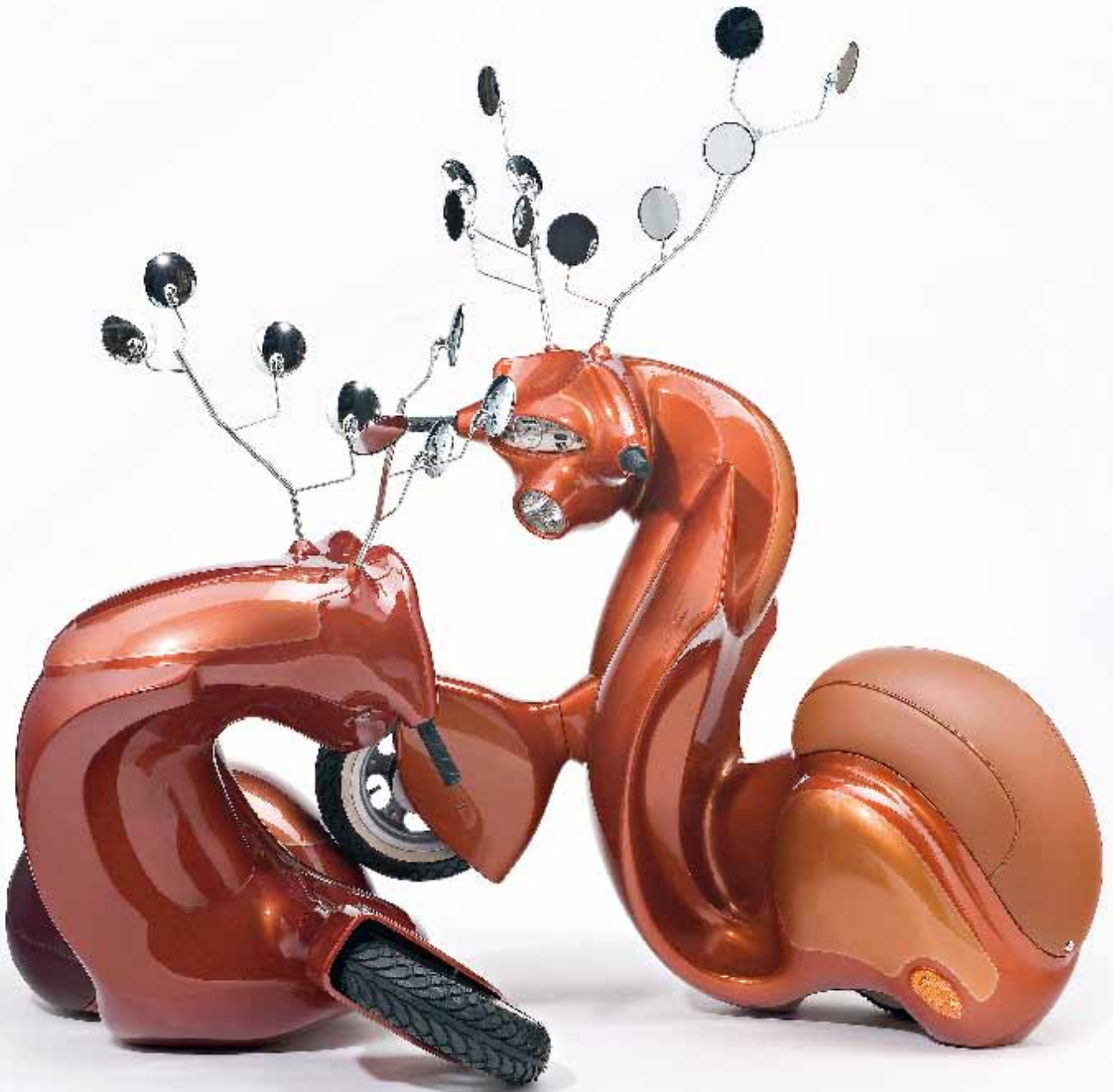
# GAME BOYS ADVANCED

Two young boys, twins, are focused on a computer game. But look closely at their faces. Do you notice anything strange about them?

Piccinini is interested in the promise of genetic engineering, but this can have both good and bad outcomes. The idea for this work came from the cloning of genes. The first cloned mammal was Dolly, a sheep cloned from an adult sheep cell in Scotland in 1996. Dolly did not live as long as expected, and developed diseases typical of older animals. Piccinini is imagining future possibilities. Perhaps these boys have been cloned and that is why they too seem to be ageing prematurely.

Would you like a scientist to be able to create another you? What would you choose to clone if you were a scientist? Draw it here.

Game boys advanced, 2002  
silicon, polyurethane, fibreglass, clothing, human hair; 131.0 x 69.0 x 35.0 cm  
Michael Buxton Collection © Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York  
photographer: Graham Baring

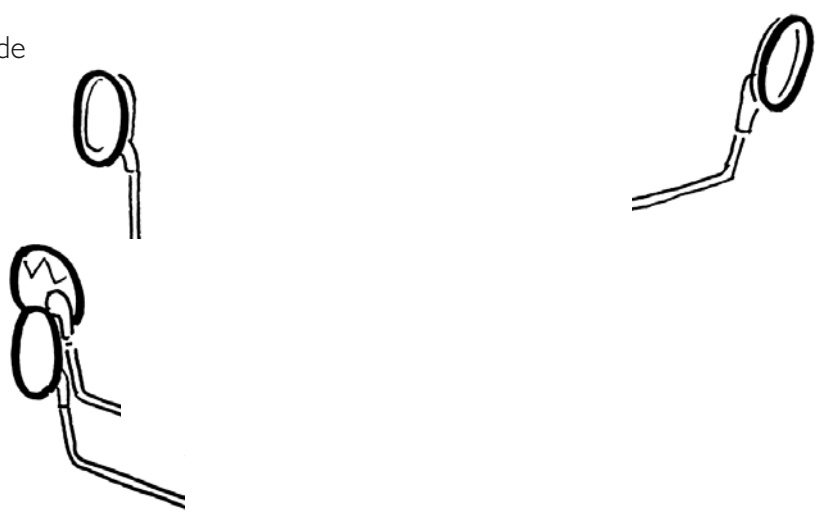


# THE STAGS

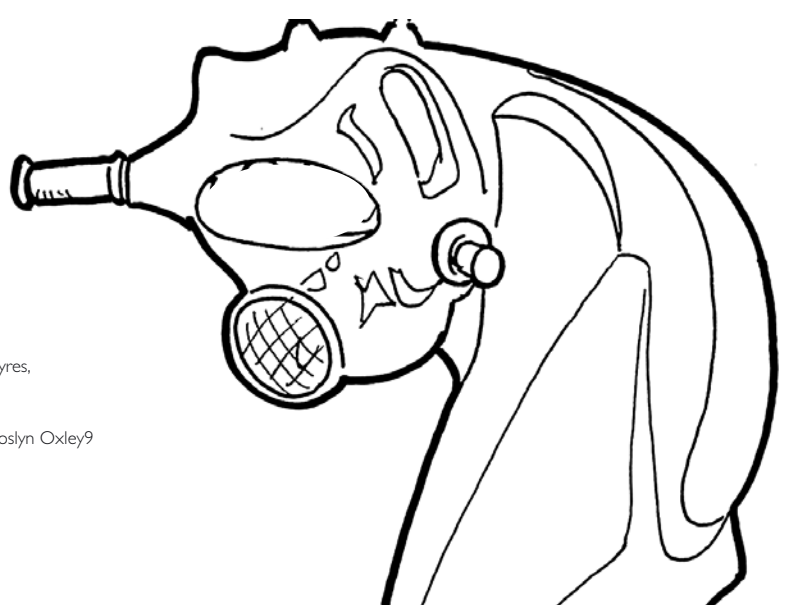
This work mixes features of animals and machines. The sculpture is a hybrid of the popular Italian motor scooter known as a Vespa, and a male deer which is called a stag.

The stags are fighting, as male deer in the wild do, over territory, or females. This is a work about evolution, about survival of the fittest. Which 'stag' is winning the fight?

List the ways in which the artist has made the scooters look animal-like?



Draw-in the missing eyes and antlers.



The stags, 2008  
 fibreglass, automotive paint, leather; steel, plastic, rubber tyres,  
 196.0 x 224.0 x 167.0 cm (overall)  
 Purchased 2009. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
 © Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9  
 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York  
 photographer: Graham Baring





## SANDMAN

The installation *Sandman* combines sculpture, video, and photography to make a whole art environment.

*Sandman* grew out of Piccinini's interest in car culture, particularly the culture of panel vans which were very popular in Australia in the 1970s and 80s. The yellow car seen in the photographs is an example of the Sandman panel van.

Look closely at the yellow panel van in the photographs and also the large, dark car sculpture. What is similar and what is different about the cars?

Imagine you now have your driver's licence. Which of these cars do you think you would prefer to drive? Why?

*Sandman* (installation view, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne)

*Destroy*, from the series *Sandman*, 2002, type C photograph, 103.5 x 184.5 cm (image); Lyon Collection, Lyon Housemuseum

*Sandman* (sculpture) 2002

steel, polystyrene, epoxy resin, polyester; fibreglass, automotive paint, 261.0 x 319.0 x 340.0 cm; Lyon Collection, Lyon Housemuseum

*Sandman* (video projection) 2002, 16 mm film transferred to HD video with 5.1 audio, 4.10 mins; Lyon Collection, Lyon Housemuseum

© Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York





## STILL LIFE WITH STEM CELLS

Piccinini's inspiration for this work came from visiting a laboratory and observing living cells in a petri-dish. Stem cells contain the possibility of being transformed into any other kind of cell – into cells for skin, heart or kidney, for example. They are very important for medical research, particularly for providing cures for various diseases.

The artist is asking us to think about the advances in medical science. She imagines the possibilities for creation from stem cells, and shows a young girl interacting with the new fleshy 'stem cell' lumps. They have human characteristics – skin, hair, veins – but are not human. What other almost-human features do you see?

Describe the stem cell lumps in your own words.

What is the young girl doing?

At home, make your own sculpture of a stem cell 'lump' with playdough or plasticine. What disease would you choose to cure with your 'lump'?



# PERHAPS THE WORLD IS FINE TONIGHT

This work is a diorama or a three-dimensional scene. There are many interesting details in the scene. Play a game of ‘eye spy’ to find as many details as you can.

What do you think the artist might want you to think about, or understand, when you view this work? Is the world shown here ‘fine’ or not?

At home, create your own story based on this scene. What title would you give your story?

Draw the creature you imagine might emerge from the sack. Will it be one of ‘nature’s little helpers’?



Perhaps the world is fine tonight, 2009  
diorama: silicon, fibreglass, clothing, human and animal hair; taxidermied Tasmanian devils and Wedge-tailed Eagles, timber; polyurethane, rocks, native vegetation, synthetic polymer paint, 327.0 x 848.0 x 648.0 cm (installed)  
Detached Cultural Organisation, Hobart  
Tasmanian devils and Wedge-tailed Eagles collection of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart  
© Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York  
photographer: Simon Cuthbert





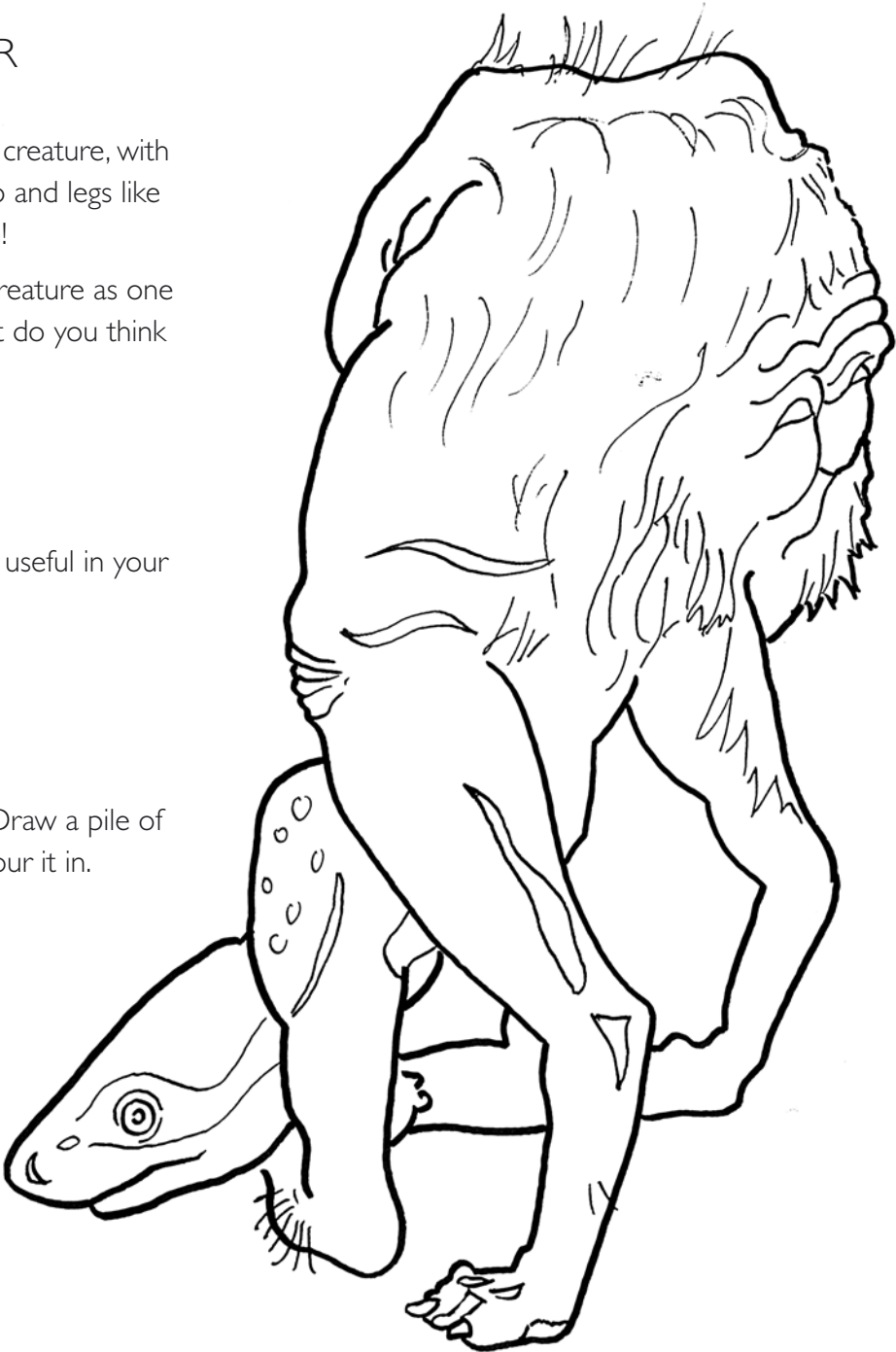
# BOTTOM FEEDER

This strange custom-designed creature, with a shark-like head, human torso and legs like a dog, loves to devour rubbish!

The artist has described the creature as one of 'nature's little helpers'. What do you think this label means?

Where might this creature be useful in your school or home?

The *Bottom feeder* is hungry! Draw a pile of rubbish for it to eat. Later, colour it in.



Bottom feeder, 2009  
silicon, fibreglass, animal fur; 66.0 x 45.0 x 40.0 cm  
Collection of Julian and Stephanie Grose © Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York photographer: Simon Cuthbert



## EULOGY

The creature held in the man's hands appears to be another of the artist's fantastical creatures, but it is based upon a real fish! It is a highly-evolved fish, rarely seen by humans because it lives in very deep waters off the coast of Australia. Blob fish have become endangered because of deep-sea trawling.

The artist is interested in blurring the boundaries between animals and humans. The Blob fish has 'an almost-human expression'.

Ask a parent or teacher to explain the meaning of the title of this work.

Why do you think the man is on his knees?  
Is he perhaps trying to save this fish, or is he perhaps about to bury it?

What could save the Blob fish from extinction?



Eulogy, 2011  
silicon, fibreglass, human hair, clothing, 110.0 x 65.0 x 60.0 cm  
© Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne;  
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York  
photographer: Graham Baring



# THE LONG AWAITED

The sculpture shows a close and comfortable relationship between two very different figures: a young boy, and an imagined creature – old like a grandparent, but appearing to be part Dugong.

Describe how the artist has made the creature look old. Would you be happy to snuggle up to a creature like this?

Dugongs are endangered mammals. Later, find out more about them and the efforts to protect them.

Draw in the missing faces. Might they be a person you know?



The long awaited, 2008  
silicon, fibreglass, human hair; plywood, leather; clothing, 92.0 x 151.0 x 81.0 cm  
Detached Cultural Organisation, Hobart © Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York  
photographer: Graham Baring





## BODYGUARD

Later, explore upstairs in gallery 15 to find this creature.

Don't be scared. This imagined creature is one of 'nature's little helpers', a bodyguard that has been especially created to protect an endangered bird.

*I have strong arms and an armoured back and I get sap from trees with my long, sharp teeth... I may look fierce but I like to help feed and look after birds called Golden Helmeted Honeyeaters. I protect them from both human and non-human dangers.*

The Golden Helmeted Honeyeater is an endangered bird. There are very few left in Victoria. Later, at home or school, find out more about endangered animals in Australia.

What does a bodyguard do? What features can you see which would make this creature a successful bodyguard or 'helper'?

If you were a bodyguard who or what would you protect?

Draw your own armour protection. Later, colour it in.

Bodyguard (for the Golden Helmeted Honeyeater) from the series *Nature's little helpers*, 2004  
silicon, fibreglass, leather; plywood, human and animal hair; 150.0 x 68.0 x 55.0 cm  
Michael Buxton Collection photographer: Greg Weight



# THE OFFERING

The artist has created an offering that you are invited to touch and hold, as you would a baby. The artist's intention is to prompt us to care about it even though it is very different to us. One of Piccinini's beliefs is that we have a responsibility to care for all creatures, including those we create. Do you agree?

Do you have any pets? Have you named them? How do you care for them?

What name would you give it?

*The offering*, 2009  
silicon, fox fur; New Zealand feral possum pelt, 15.0 x 20.0 x 28.0 cm  
© Courtesy of the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Haunch of Venison, New York

## FOR CHILDREN IN THE LAB

Saturday 16 April – Sunday 26 June

The Lab is an activity space provided free for children and families. After your exhibition visit you'll be able to create your own wonderful creations and life forms, using a range of materials. For more information visit [www.artgallery.sa.gov.au](http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au)

## FOR SCHOOLS Facilitated learning activities IN THE LAB

Monday 2 May – Friday 24 June

The Lab is an activity space for Years 1–9. Following a guided session students will be able to create their own fantastical life forms, using a range of materials. Activities change on a weekly basis. Cost: \$3 per student

## BIOTECH BEINGS LAB

Monday 23 May – Friday 27 May,  
Monday 6 June – Friday 10 June

Sculpture meets animation in this multidisciplinary examination of biotech beings. Following a guided session secondary students design and create their own unsettling organisms, then scan them into a computer and bring them to life! Suitability: Years 8–10  
Session times: 10 am–12 pm; 12–2 pm  
Cost: \$14 per student, \$10 equity

## LAB MASTERCLASS

Thursday 9 and Friday 10 June  
Suitability: Years 10–12  
Time: 10 am–4 pm each day  
Cost: \$90 per student, \$75 equity

All bookings: 8207 7033  
[agsa.education@artgallery.sa.gov.au](mailto:agsa.education@artgallery.sa.gov.au)  
<http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/agsa/home/Learning/Piccinini.html>

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