



PATRICIA PICCININI

Media kit

# LARGEST PATRICIA PICCININI EXHIBITION EVER TO OPEN THIS WEEK IN ADELAIDE



## EXHIBITION DATES

16 April – 26 June 2011

The long awaited, 2008  
silicon, fibreglass, human hair; plywood, leather,  
clothing, 92.0 x 151.0 x 81.0 cm  
Detached Cultural Organisation, Hobart  
photographer: Graham Baring

cover detail: *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  
photographer: Graham Baring

This month, prepare to enter the sensational and spellbinding world of one of Australia's leading contemporary artists, Patricia Piccinini – exclusively at the Art Gallery of South Australia.

*Once upon a time...* will be the largest and most comprehensive exhibition of Piccinini's works ever staged, taking in more than 80 works spanning her 15-year career to date, and including new, never-before-seen works created especially for this event.

The exhibition will be accompanied by one of the most comprehensive and innovative associated event programs ever presented by the Art Gallery of South Australia, which will enrich and add to the *Once upon a time...* experience for visitors of all ages.

The exhibition, which will run 16 April – 26 June, will include some of Piccinini's most famous creations – the stunning and sometimes shocking life-sized sculptures of fantastical hybrid creatures that blur the line between human and animal.

But it will also include equally captivating photographs, drawings, installations and sculptures that together reflect the overarching themes of Piccinini's career; including what it means to be human today, and how we interact with the creations of our evolving technologies, which are blurring the boundaries between humans, animals and machines.



Team WAF: Offspring  
2003  
fibreglass, polycarbonate, automotive paint, 45.0  
x 36.0 x 25.0 cm  
Collection of Dr Dick Quan  
photographer: Jenni Carter



Team WAF: Transfuser  
2003  
fibreglass, polycarbonate, automotive paint,  
40.0 x 29.0 x 26.0 cm  
Private collection

Art Gallery of South Australia Director Nick Mitzevich says that many visitors will be surprised by the range of the works on display, and everyone will find their own favourite among the spectacular range of art in this exhibition.

'Together, they create an alternate, unsettling reality that visitors of all ages and backgrounds can get lost in – and then come out the other side with a new perspective on their own reality, and about how they want the future of that reality to look', Mr Mitzevich says.

Running through all of Piccinini's works of art is a strong thread of hope – for humanity and our capacity for empathy.

As Piccinini says: 'My work is about relationships – relationships between humans and animals, humans and machines and humans and the environment'.

'I am interested in the opportunities for care and responsibility that new technologies present us with', she says.

'Fundamentally my work is about how the definitions of what we consider natural and what we consider artificial are moving.

'The idea that "I feel therefore I am" makes a lot of sense to me. That's why empathy is a major dynamic in the work.'

Mr Mitzevich says that, in order for visitors to get the most out of their *Once upon a time...* exhibition experience, the Gallery has developed a large and exciting range of activities that allow everyone to fully immerse themselves in the artist's world.

'For children and students, the Gallery of South Australia is running an exciting array of interactive, hands-on activities'.

'These will include *The Lab*, a space where children can create their own creatures, inspired by the exhibition and their own imaginations, and where older students can learn about the process through which Piccinini's works are developed'.

'For adults, associated events will include a film program, forums and speeches, by both the artist herself and local celebrities, as well as a series of fascinating lectures, and even in-depth art forensic and facial reconstruction drawing workshops'.



*Eulogy*, 2011  
silicon, fibreglass, human hair, clothing  
110.0 x 65.0 x 60.0 cm  
Courtesy of the artist  
photographer: Graham Baring

## MEDIA CONTACTS

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Images are now available for media  
download from:

[http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/agsa/home/Media\\_Centre/2011/Patricia\\_Piccinini/index.html](http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/agsa/home/Media_Centre/2011/Patricia_Piccinini/index.html)

## NEW WORKS

Three newly conceived works by Patricia Piccinini will be unveiled in this exhibition.

The exhibition's curator, Jane Messenger, says that these include *The lovers*, which continues Piccinini's exploration of how the machine, by developing behaviour we usually associate with animals, may be on its way to becoming a sentient and autonomous being.

'In contrast, Piccinini has moved into uncharted territory with her poignant new sculpture, *Eulogy*', Ms Messenger says.

'This sculpture of a miserable-looking creature cradled in a man's hands appears to be another of Piccinini's fantastical creatures, but it actually already exists in nature'.

'It is the highly evolved Blobfish (*Psychrolutes microporosus*), which inhabits the deep waters off mainland Australia and Tasmania. It is sadly facing extinction due to deep-sea trawler fishing'.

'This work not only demonstrates the wonder and diversity of our natural world, but also highlights how, compared to that world, Piccinini's sculptures of imaginary creatures are not really so sensational or incredible'.

## FAST FACTS

**DATES** 16 April – 26 June 2011

Open daily 10 am – 5 pm

Free Guided Tours: daily at 11 am and 2 pm

### TICKET PRICES

Adult	\$15
Concession	\$12
Member	\$10
Family	\$25 (2 adults + children)
Children (U16)	Free
Students	\$10 (with valid student card)
Members' season ticket	\$15

Book at Bass: [www.bass.net.au](http://www.bass.net.au)

### PARKING SPECIAL

Visit *Once upon a time...* and park at Wilson Parking opposite the Gallery on North Terrace and you'll receive 4 hours parking for only \$8. Bring your parking ticket with you to the Gallery for validation when you purchase your entry ticket.

#### 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

photographer: Graham Baring





Patricia Piccinini with *Big Mother* at the Art Gallery of South Australia, February 2010

## PATRICIA PICCININI

- Patricia Piccinini was born in Sierra Leone in 1965 and arrived in Australia in 1972. She has a Bachelor of Arts (History) from the Australian National University and is a Painting graduate from the Victorian College of the Arts.
- Piccinini is one of Australia's leading contemporary artists, and enjoys an impressive international reputation. In 2003, Piccinini was selected as the Australian representative at the prestigious *Venice Biennale*, showcasing the very best contemporary art in the world.
- Maintaining a vigorous output over the past six years, solo exhibitions of her work have occurred in New York, Seattle and Spain and most recently at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. Her work is represented in major Australian public collections as well as collections (public, private and corporate) in the United States and Europe.
- Piccinini's highly engaging, non-human creatures are at once fascinatingly familiar and disturbingly otherworldly. In her sculptural work, which forms a significant area of her artistic practice, the rendering of skin folds, joints, various blemishes, hair and other bodily characteristics is arresting in its realism.
- The artist uses her work as a forum for discussion about the impact of technology on contemporary life and the way in which ideas around nature, the natural and the artificial are changing our society. Specific pieces express concerns about biotechnology and Piccinini's often acutely appealing works engender and promote discussion about complex ethical issues.

# GETTING INVOLVED

The Art Gallery of South Australia has pulled out all the stops to make sure every member of the community can get involved in the Piccinini exhibition.

From hands-on art forensic workshops through to lectures and discussions (for the adults), and from cyberpet design classes through to a biotech beings lab (for the kids), everyone will have the chance to interact with the fascinating themes, ideas and creative processes of this leading contemporary artist.

Here's just a taste of the events we've got in store:

## *Once upon a time...* for children

The Lab is an interactive activity space where children from age five up can create their own fantastical life forms, using a range of materials and techniques. Activities that change weekly include Flipped out Fantasy, Hideous Hybrids, Humanimals & Cyberpets and Man or Machine. This is a space where children are given the tools, materials and guidance to let their imaginations run wild, inspired by the exhibition, and create their own creature.

## Biotech Beings Lab

Sculpture meets animation in this fascinating, hands-on introduction to biotech beings. Thirteen to 16-year-olds can design and create their own unsettling organisms, then scan them into a computer and bring them to life.

Other events include School Holiday Torchlight Tours of the exhibition, a Children's Activity Trail and the Welcome to My World opening celebrations, which include a full weekend of free activities and entertainment for children and their parents.

## *Once upon a time...* Cinema

During the exhibition, the Gallery will present free screenings of six diverse films with themes that connect to *Once upon a time...* The program has been chosen so that it includes films that will appeal to both children and adults – as well as crowd-pleasing family fare.

## *Once upon a time...* for adults

### Meet the artist

A rare and special opportunity to hear Patricia Piccinini speak directly about her challenging and evocative works.

### Art forensic workshops

Participants in this unique two-day workshop will work on a replica human skull, learning the basics of the 3D anatomical method of facial reconstruction, a similar process to that used in the development of Piccinini's works.

### What it means to be human: Free public lectures

This century will be a time of unparalleled advances in the spheres of genetics, science, ethics and philosophy. Patricia Piccinini's works are the jumping off point for this series of thought-provoking forums presented by leading thinkers.

### Celebrity speakers

Enjoy hearing from some of Adelaide's best known personalities as they respond in their own inimitable styles to the exhibition's works of art. Speakers include Simon Bryant, Peter Goers and Prof. Chris West, CEO of Adelaide Zoo.

### Drawing the dead

This facial reconstruction drawing workshop introduces participants to the anatomy of the human head and face and how to accurately depict its features, using the same techniques Piccinini employs to sketch her works prior to their creation.

*next page:* **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, photographer: Saul Steed

## ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- The Art Gallery of South Australia is the State's premier cultural institution with some 38,000 works.
- The Art Gallery surprises and inspires its diverse visitors with an equally diverse program of displays and events. In particular, the Gallery seeks to break down some of the traditional barriers around engagement with young people and families, and provide enriching, transformative experiences for a new generation of young minds.
- *Big Mother*, a monumental sculpture by Patricia Piccinini, of a genetically engineered primate breastfeeding a human baby, became part of the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia in February 2010. With a value of more than \$250,000, *Big Mother* is one of the most significant additions to the Gallery's contemporary Australian art collection in recent times. The purchase was funded entirely with donations from the Gallery's Contemporary Collectors group of benefactors.
- *Big Mother*, a staggering work measuring 1.75 m high, made from silicon, fibreglass, leather and human hair, was inspired by the story of a baboon whose baby died while she was still nursing, and who abducted a human child as a substitute. Since the sculpture went on display in February 2010 it has been viewed with intense interest by well in excess of 130,000 people.



Government partner

Major exhibition partner

