

PETRINA HICKS

BLEACHED GOTHIC

ARTWORK LABELS

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Petrina Hicks is widely recognised for her refined, poetic and often surreal sensibility. Working with medium-format film, Hicks creates photographs that draw on a wide variety of literary, mythological and historical sources to explore questions of identity and psychology.

Children, animals and women are recurring subjects in Hicks's photographs, and she frequently returns to the same motifs and models, including Lauren, an ethereally beautiful woman with albinism, whom Hicks has photographed for over fifteen years. Her animal and human models sometimes act as ciphers or avatars for herself, as she plays with and disrupts symbols and imagery of 'the feminine'. Hicks's photographs are the result of months of research and refinement, as she works to remove all but the most essential elements from each frame.

Hicks's works can appear to be a celebration of the perfect; a vision of flawless bodies and clean backgrounds. This effect is created by Hicks's technically pristine lighting and painstaking attention to detail, which reflects her commitment to the purity and integrity of film photography. On closer viewing of her work, the blemishes and cracks in the images start to appear. Hicks draws us towards considering the barest of bodily marks – the fading bruise on the flesh, the slight wound on the skin, the tousled hair, the missing limb – as her seemingly faultless models occasionally show the signs of

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our inexorable transit towards decay. The tension between seduction and danger, familiarity and strangeness, and intimacy and distance are recurring themes in Hicks's work. Her practice embraces this ambiguity; it is both deeply evocative and achingly unknowable.

All works are from the collection of the artist, courtesy of Michael Reid, Sydney, and This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne, unless otherwise stated.

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Rosemary's baby

from *The Descendants* series 2008

2008, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Lauren (eyes open)

from the *Lauren* series 2003

2003, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

For kids

This is Lauren, and she is the artist Petrina Hicks's muse. What's a muse? A muse is a person who inspires the artist to create art. Working with Lauren helps Petrina come up with new ideas for her photographs. She asks Lauren to wear different clothes and pose each time she photographs her. In each picture of Lauren, the artist captures a different idea or emotion.

How many times can you spot Lauren's face in the photographs on these walls?

Lauren

from the *Lauren* series 2003

2003, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Lambswool

from *The Descendants* series 2008

2008, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

The unbearable lightness of being
from *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* series 2015
2015, printed 2019
pigment inkjet print

Copper and brass III

from *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* series 2015

2015, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Persephone

from *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* series 2015

2015, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

The beauty of history

from the *Every Rose has its Thorn* series 2010

2010, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Shenae and Jade

from the *Untitled* series 2005

2005, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Shewolf I

from *The California Works* series 2016

2016, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Fertile

from the *Every Rose has its Thorn* series 2010

2010, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Into the abyss

from the *Beautiful Creatures* series 2011

2011, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Melo melo

2019

pigment inkjet print

Venus

from *The Shadows* series 2013

2013, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Hand that feeds

from the *The Shadows* series 2013

2013, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Cleopatra

2019

pigment inkjet print

Excalibur

from the *Untitled* series 2006

2006, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Jordan I

from the *Untitled* series 2006

2006, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Minerva

from *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* series 2015

2015, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Lauren with sunglasses no. II

2019, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

The Chrysalis

from the *Beautiful Creatures* series 2011
2011

colour digital video, silent, 6 min

Peach study

from the *Still Life Studio* series 2018

2018, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Lauren in blue

from the *Untitled* series 2006

2006, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Silver bullets

from the *Still Life Studio* series 2018

2018, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Deb

from the *Untitled* series 2006

2006, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Bluebird

from the *Still Life Studio* series 2018

2018, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Zara II

from the *Untitled* series 2005

2005, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Fragrant memory

from the *Every Rose has its Thorn* series 2010

2010, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Comfort

from the *Beautiful Creatures* series 2011

2011, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

For kids

When you first look at them, Petrina Hicks's photographs seem simple and realistic. For example, this is a photograph of a young woman in a pink shirt, facing towards the camera. But the artist has made the image more complicated by covering the woman's face with white fur. The fur makes what first seems normal start to feel strange. This is why Hicks's artworks are often called 'surreal'. Rather than showing things as they are in real life, Hicks makes images that are magical and fantastical, like something you might imagine in a dream.

What is the strangest dream you have ever had?

Eye candy

from *The Descendants* series 2008

2008, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Gloss

from the *Beautiful Creatures* series 2011
2011

colour digital video, silent, 3 min 19 sec

For kids

Petrina Hicks likes to experiment with the idea of time. Think about when you have to sit very still. Does time seem to pass slowly? What about when you are playing with friends? Does time pass quickly? In this video, the artist has recorded a few seconds of film on a special camera that gives the effect of super-slow motion. What would have been a quick meeting between a woman and a butterfly is drawn out to several minutes. The slowness of the video makes it feel uncomfortable to watch. In this film the artist shows us that time can play tricks on us.

Bruised peaches

from the *Still Life Studio* series 2018

2018

pigment inkjet print, ed. 2/4

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2018

Peaches and velvet

from the *Still Life Studio* series 2018
2018

pigment inkjet print, ed. 1/4

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for
Living Australian Artists, 2018

Bird's eye

from the *Still Life Studio* series 2018
2018

pigment inkjet print, ed. 2/4

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for
Living Australian Artists, 2018

Rattlesnakes blues

from *The California Works* series 2016

2016, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Ava and Zara

2019

pigment inkjet print

Sphinx

from the *Beautiful Creatures* series 2011

2011, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Emily the strange

from the *Beautiful Creatures* series 2011

2011, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

For kids

Do you have a special connection to an animal? Petrina Hicks likes to photograph all sorts of different animals, especially cats. She is interested in the way people and animals relate to each other. Some of her works ask the question: can an animal represent a part of someone's personality? Do you think the little girl and the cat in this photograph look alike? The girl's light-pink dress matches the cat's skin, and the girl's and the cat's eyes are exactly the same colour! The artist is suggesting that humans and animals have more similarities than differences.

Serpentina II

from *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* series 2015

2015, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Birdfingers

from *The Shadows* series 2013

2013, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Lauren

from the *Beautiful Creatures* series 2011

2011, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

The forest

from the *Beautiful Creatures* series 2011

2010, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Breeze

from the *Every Rose has its Thorn* series 2010

2010, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Infinity

from the *Beautiful Creatures* series 2011

2011, printed 2019

pigment inkjet print

Darkness follows

from *The Descendants* series 2008

2008

colour digital video, silent, 4 min

Babylon

from *The Descendants* series 2008

2008

colour digital video, silent, 4 min

Ghost in the shell

from *The Descendants* series 2008

2008

colour digital video, silent, 4 min