

Citation for the Award of Doctor of Visual and Performing Arts (*honoris causa*) Ms Patricia Piccinini

Esteemed visual artist Patricia Piccinini was born in Sierra Leone in 1965 and is now recognised as one of Australia's foremost contemporary artists. Graduating in the early 1990's with a Bachelor of Arts (Painting) from the Victorian College of the Arts she has created a body of work that has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

Ms Piccinini has developed an interdisciplinary practice encompassing digital photography, video, installation and sculpture. Her sculptures are created using a combination of materials such as silicone, fibreglass and human hair and are familiar yet fantastical in their depiction of possible future species and their interaction with human beings. Often confronting yet endearingly vulnerable, her sculptures give form to her fascination with the relationship between the 'natural' and the 'artificial' while asserting the power of social relationships, love and communication. Her work is fundamentally about the human condition, despite the quasi-human appearance of her sculptures.

In a 2016 interview with the New York Times, Ms Piccinini stated: "I make these works both attractive and alluring but also grotesque and disconcerting. I want to pull you in, to create a sense of empathy for these vulnerable creatures. But I also want to push you away — to make you feel like they're unattractive and so not human. That push-and-pull dynamic creates a space for the viewer to think. ... I'm not one of those artists that claims to know what is right and wrong. What I do know is that [biotechnology] is not going away, and it's up to us as a community to figure out the ethics of it. I see my work as a catalyst for that conversation."

In 2003 she represented Australia at the 50th Venice Biennale with *We are Family*. For an artist to represent their country at the Venice Biennale is regarded within the art world as one of the very highest accolades. She has also undertaken residencies in New York and Japan funded by the Australia Council and received several development and project grants.

Ms Piccinini has had over 50 solo exhibitions to date and in the last year alone they have included *We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep*, Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco, USA (2016), *Patricia Piccinini: Bodyscape*, Yu-Hsiu Museum of Art, Caotun, Taiwan (2016), *Another Life*, University of Quebec Art Museum, Montreal, Canada (2015), and *Relativity*, Galway International Arts Festival Gallery, Galway, Ireland (2015). Her 2015-16 solo exhibition *ComSciencia* at Centro Cultural do Banco Do Brasil toured to Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia and Belo Horizonte and attracted over 1,000,000 visitors.

Her work has been included in numerous major group exhibitions internationally, including *Universe and Art*, Mori Art Museum Tokyo, 2016; *Super Natural*, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, 2105; *Power of Making*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 2011; and *Global Feminisms*, Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA, 2008. Other major contributions have been to the Sydney, Melbourne, Berlin, Liverpool, Kwangju and Havana Biennales.

Ms Patricia Piccinini is arguably Australia's most successful artists currently on the international stage and her work has been shown in and collected by some of the world's most important museums.