

hosfelt gallery

10 December 2022 - 28 January 2023

Opening reception for the artist: Saturday December 10, 3-5 pm; artist talk and walkthrough @ 3 pm

PATRICIA PICCININI

A tangled path sustains us

Simultaneously captivating and discomfoting, Patricia Piccinini's sculptures, films, and environments confront viewers with possible ecological and genetic consequences of the way we live. In her third solo exhibition at Hosfelt Gallery, the Australian artist creates a life-size diorama of a forest from recycled scrap wood and paper. The viewer enters an immersive space, inhabited by mutated beings that Piccinini imagines have evolved to survive the existential threats of human impact — raising questions about how we treat other species, other humans, and the planet we cohabitate.

Often just a step or two away from recognizable animals, Piccinini's creations are eerily life-like. Made of silicone and real fur or hair, they leap right over any "uncanny valley." They are the immediately imaginable consequences of climate change, environmental degradation, and theriocide.

While most of Piccinini's creations come from her imagination, one work in the exhibition refers to an all-too-real image. In the aftermath of Australian wildfires, the picture of two children saving a koala splashed across the media. While the photo was used to illustrate a heartwarming tale, Piccinini notes that the rescuers are as vulnerable as the rescued — indeed victims in their own way. How, she wonders, can we expect our children to solve the environmental calamities they'll inherit from us?

Empathy is at the heart of Piccinini's practice. When she envisions a co-mingling of animal, plant, machine, and human, she asks us to question the "otherness" of creatures, cyber-forms, or humans who don't resemble the "norm." That viewers may react to these beings' exposed vulnerabilities by recoiling, speaks to the challenge of feeling a connection to those we consider "different."

Piccinini gained global recognition at the 2003 Venice Biennale with her groundbreaking installation in Australia's national pavilion. She has since presented enormous, immersive solo exhibitions at major museums around the world, including most recently in Singapore, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Slovenia, Spain, Taiwan, and Brazil.

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