



Ruth Hutchinson

M(eye)ND

OPENING

Wednesday April 16th, 5 - 7pm

EXHIBITION DATES

April 17th – May 17th

Sutton Gallery is pleased to present *M(eye)ND*, an exhibition of new work by Ruth Hutchinson that furthers her interest in anatomical and physiological structures, and the human psyche.

Working across sculpture and drawing, Ruth Hutchinson draws upon imagery from both literal and invented sources — out of the realms of imagination, myth and from the world around her; especially recalling her past studies in occupational therapy that inspired a curiosity in human anatomy. Using a combination of technical dexterity and strange subject matter, she creates a world of uncanny imagery that lures and repels in equal measure. As Jennifer Long describes, Hutchinson specialises in a 'particular kind of restrained, often beautiful work, which is scientific in appearance but frequently contains an emotional or psychological kickback'.¹

For *M(eye)ND*, Hutchinson continues to bump up against the edges of science, producing a series of drawings, water colours and sculptures that each describe impossible and deconstructed anatomies, and peculiar medical devices. For example, *Them, us, me, those?* features a number of hand-made, morphed skulls of animals and humans that question human evolution and genealogy from a personal perspective; while *Trephination tool - (to create an escape hatch)* is inspired by the archaic medical procedure, trephination, in which a hole is drilled into the human skull to allow bad spirits trapped within to escape. Hutchinson has attached a net to this tool in order to trap these emissions. Each of these works is indicative of Hutchinson's exhibition as a whole which, working with ideas relating to genetics, ancestry and mortality, is both thoughtfully crafted and quietly unnerving.

The exhibition sees Hutchinson continue to incorporate the symbol of the eye into her practice, which she uses as a way to invite us to peer inside; submerging ourselves in a network of thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations. Alongside a number of drawings that feature a solitary eye looking out at the viewer, Hutchinson presents *Eye control*; an intricate wood-carved marionette that inventively reveals many optical mechanisms. On *Eye control*, Hutchinson asks, 'an all-seeing eye controlled by what or who? What propels individuals to observe certain things while disregarding others?'

Ruth Hutchinson completed her Bachelor of Arts in Ceramics (Honours) at La Trobe University, Bendigo, in 1997, after securing qualifications in occupational therapy. In 1998 she presented a major body of work — *Gadgets, Gizmos, Giveaways, Marital Aids* — at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, and has presented regular solo exhibitions at Sutton Gallery since 1999. Selected group exhibitions include: *The Anatomy Lesson*, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2012; *Contemporary Australia: Women*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2012; *Hysteria: Past Yet Present*, Paul Robeson Galleries, New Jersey, 2009; *SOFA Chicago*, 2002; and *Sex and the Settee*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, 2002. In 2000 Hutchinson undertook an Australia Council studio residency in Tokyo. Her work is held in a number of public and private collections, including Bendigo Art Gallery, MONA and Queensland Art Gallery.

¹ Jennifer Long, 'The Anatomy Lesson', *A Body of Knowledge*, University of Melbourne, 2012, p.29.

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