



Ruth Hutchinson

Reflections on when my eyes saw my world in stone

OPENING

Saturday 6th February, 4pm – 6pm

EXHIBITION DATES

4 February – 6 March, 2010

At certain moments I felt that the entire world was turning into stone: a slow petrification, more or less advanced depending on people and places but one that spared no aspect of life. It was as if no one could escape the inexorable stare of Medusa. The only hero able to cut off Medusa's head is Perseus, who flies with winged sandals; Perseus, who does not turn his gaze upon the face of the Gorgon but only upon her image reflected in his bronze shield. Thus Perseus comes to my aid even at this moment, just as I too am about to be caught in a vise of stone-which happens every time I try to speak about my own past. Better to let my talk be composed of images from mythology.¹

Italo Calvino

Sutton Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Reflections on when my eyes saw my world in stone*, an exhibition of new sculptures and paintings by Ruth Hutchinson, who has used the classical myth of Perseus' beheading of Medusa as a point of departure for the series. This captivating body of work builds on the idiosyncratic and singular practice the artist has developed over the past decade.

Hutchinson lures the viewer in for close inspection of the intimately scaled works in *Reflections on when my eyes saw my world in stone*, only to slap them with the shock of the disturbingly abject details of each image. In a series of diminutive sculptural pieces, clustered in one section of the exhibition, seething masses of snakes, disembodied organs, masks and mirrors entwine, conjuring links between the corporal and consciousness. The sinister feel imbued in many of these works suggests an engagement with demons that lurk at the corners of the psyche. In another section, a curious collection of miniature ceramic heads, which look as though they have been petrified and severed in mid motion, is meticulously lined up along an elongated display shelf. This ensemble of eccentric characters has been seized from various sites in the artist's world and assembled here for further contemplation. A vast constellation of small circular water colours fills the final wall of the exhibition. These intricate paintings echo a concern with the myth of Medusa. Within this dense hang of works can be found a grouping of small portraits of the artist's own eye, reflecting an array of emotional states - ranging from inquisitive to horrified. Their fixed stares watch over the exhibition. These lenses can be seen as two way mirrors, working to interpret the outside world, whilst simultaneously reflecting an internal one.

Ruth Hutchinson completed her Bachelor of Arts in Ceramics (Honours) at LaTrobe University in 1997, Bendigo, after securing qualifications in occupational therapy. Over the past ten years Hutchinson has held a number of solo exhibitions within Australia and participated in numerous group exhibitions nationally and internationally, including *Hysteria: Past Yet Present*, Paul Robeson Galleries, New Jersey, USA, 2009; *Mind's Eye Lashings*, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne, 2006; *Robert Jacks Drawing Prize*, Bendigo Art Gallery, 2005; *Washi*, Craft Victoria, Melbourne, 2004; *Fold*, Craft Victoria, Melbourne, 2002; and *SOFA Chicago*, Craft Australia, Chicago, 2002. In 2000 she undertook an Australia Council studio residency in Tokyo. Hutchinson's work is held in a number of public and private collections, including Artbank and Bendigo Art Gallery.

¹ Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Vintage/Random House, London, 1996, p.4.

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