

LAURI SMITH

Winner of Contemporary Art Awards 2015

Dreamed Visions

By Dr Julie Rees

Sydney-based artist Lauri Smith (b. 1982), creates hybrid sculptures that seem to have leaped out of a science fiction fairy-tale. At first glance, Lauri's sculptures appear other-worldly. Her mysterious animal figures display humanesque features such as fleshy skin, human-like eyes, and hair. Her piece 'Fremble, the whole universe is contained within us' is inspired by the macro and micro worlds that live within us. Specifically, this artwork explores the connection between the cosmos and all the creatures contained in it. The work serves as a portal to an alternate realm where the viewer is prompted to contemplate this wondrous idea. This work—a representation of her overall practice—won Lauri the \$3000 first prize in *Contemporary Art Awards 2015*.

Lauri's passion for art developed as a child. Armed with a big imagination and a deep interest in the unconscious mind, she occupied her spare time by drawing characters and designing puppets. Influenced by the anatomy of human and animal forms, Lauri's art practice investigates the inherent link between human, animal and the universe around us. Lauri initially began exploring this concept while working towards a Bachelor of Fine Art at UNSW Art and Design (2004), majoring in time-based art to create and produce short Claymation films. From there, she went on to complete a Diploma of Special Effect, Make-up, and Prosthetics at 3 Arts College (2005) which led her to a career in the TV and Film industry. However, in 2009, she made a shift, collaborating with her fashion designer sister Hayley to create a fashion and art clothing/accessories/lifestyle label called 'Serpent & the Swan'. Collectively, these experiences have built a repertoire of technical skills which Lauri incorporates into her contemporary art practice today.

Every new piece Lauri produces gives her the opportunity to explore her concepts further. She explains, "I am becoming increasingly more interested in making my creatures as realistic as possible, so they look as though they were made of flesh and bone". This is evidenced in her current work in progress which features human faces sitting atop snow yaks set in thought-provoking tableaux.



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Lauri's working methods commence with sketches that develop over time until she is happy with the overall concept and representation of the work. The next stage is deciding on the scale, after which she begins to build the armature skeleton where the work takes form. Once completed, Lauri makes the mould in resin and casts in silicon. From there, she paints and airbrushes the silicon skin with layers of translucent silicon paint until she has the desired effect. The final touches include the application

of hair to bring her creatures to life.

Lauri is one of many artists whose work explores hybrid human-animal forms. Her unique creatures recreate her dreamed visions; as other-worldly as the realm of the unconscious from which they come.

On this page, *Fremble, the whole universe is contained within us (2015)*, resin, silicon, and hair, 30 x 43 x 30cm.

Image courtesy of the artist

Lauri Smith's artwork can be viewed at www.contemporaryartawards.com