

Painting our *PERFORMANCE*

New paintings by Abbey McCulloch on display at Tweed Regional Gallery

Tuesday, 6 December 2016

An exhibition of new work by one of Australia's 'most collectable artists', Abbey McCulloch's *PERFORMANCE*, will feature at Tweed Regional Gallery from **9 December 2016 – 26 February 2017**.

Art Collector magazine named McCulloch as one of 'Australia's 50 most Collectable Artists' in 2009, 2010 and 2011. McCulloch's success is demonstrated by her selection as a finalist in the Archibald Prize in 2007, 2009 and 2013 for her portraits of actresses Nell, Toni Collette and Naomi Watts. Her works featured in a solo exhibition at Art Stage Singapore in 2014, and last year she was invited by iconic UK photographer Nick Knight to cover Paris Fashion Week, with her drawings featured on his fashion website SHOWstudio.

McCulloch is clearly one of Australia's most recognisable contemporary figurative painters. In her exhibition catalogue essay, Dr Laini Burton writes: "Like bursts from a camera shutter, the series of works on display in *PERFORMANCE* capture not only the most consciously posed and poised bodies, but those moments in between ... where gestures belie the vivacious, confident woman caught only a millisecond before. Somehow, we all know one of these fabulous creatures. She oozes with self-possession, acuity and style. She has a kind of élan, or je ne sais quoi that can be neither bought or photoshopped ... In this moment, McCulloch's aim comes into sharp relief ... She asks simply, 'What do you want from her?' And in asking this question, McCulloch characterises the expectations we place on others and ourselves in the performance of everyday life."

The artist explains: "The works in *PERFORMANCE* are about the ways that we perform for others – and ourselves. They are about our fictional selves revealing more about us and how our veneer can be more telling. I asked some friends to sit for me but I wasn't particularly interested in capturing their likeness, I just wanted to play around with capturing something in their expression that showed them being self-aware. In each of these images I am trying to capture that strange moment where you realise that you are being watched by yourself. The person that you are trying to be has been caught out by the person you are. It's like an out-of-body thing."

Everyone is invited to join the artist at the **official opening** of *PERFORMANCE* by Gold Coast City Gallery Director Tracy Cooper-Lavery at **6pm (for 6.30pm) DST on Saturday 10 December 2016**.

At 2pm DST on Sunday 19 February 2017, all are welcome to attend a Q&A session between the artist and Dr Laini Burton, Lecturer, Design, Head of Studio Art and Honours, Queensland College of Art, Gold Coast on topics including the artist's life, female representation, self and identity.

Abbey McCulloch is represented by This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne and Edwina Corlette Gallery, Brisbane.

Image credits:

1. Abbey McCulloch, *Beyond*, 2016, oil on canvas, 150x120cm
2. Abbey McCulloch, *Debut*, 2016, oil on canvas, 55x45cm

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The Gallery and Café is open from Wednesday to Sunday 10am – 5pm.