

CATALOGUE TEXT

For *Recent Works II* – Published in November 2016

CLAUDE JONES: The surreal winged sculptures and meticulous fine-lined drawings and collages of Claude Jones expose a vision of a sci-fi merging of species. Her sculptures and drawings are a potent vehicle for her committed animal rights activism.

The interchange of body parts and experimental mixing of the animal, the plant and human in her art reflects our changing genetic and psychological relationship with nature. In the face of research and experimentation in the world of biotechnology, her poignant and provocative works reveal a version of an increasingly possible reality of cloned and 'designer' beings to order.

The plight and toll on animals used for experiments underpins all her works. The concept of these potential peculiar biologies and the creation of composite and mutant creatures has been her focus since 2002 apparent in exhibitions titled *Mutation & Imagination, Hybrid states, Hybridism, Creature Couples* and *Strange Things*.

For *Taxonomy* in 2010 she again turns the spotlight on science's escalating push for homogenization of species and in particular on mankind's double standards in the way animals are categorized and treated. Taxonomy is the science of classification and is the system applied to organizing living things into species. Claude Jones is responding to the complex schizoid approach we take with animal classifications where at Christmas we buy the pet dog and cat a present, but the pig and turkey are eaten at dinner.

With poignant role reversals perversely transposing animals as both perpetrators and victims, she is exposing ingrained inconsistencies and contradictions: images of dog and monkey-faced humanoids wield scalpels and guns, specimen jars and iron barred cages confine taunted cat and monkey mutants and trouser-clad hares are suspended from meat hooks. Background wallpapers are patterned with a 'decorative' recurring animal trap motif.

Distressing as the subject is, the artist renders the works in the way of storybook illustrations and children's playthings. The delicacy of the drawings and the soft colours, narrative format and child-like fairytale guise of these works subversively enhances the grim impact and the reality of man's perplexing duplicity.

Claude Jones undertook specialist international study programs and associated residencies to develop her ceramic skills for *Broken* in 2014. The medium is apt for a body of work that takes aim at the broken bodies and broken trust of man's fragile compact with animals. A suite of delicate floral firearms, baby-blue rifles and pastel-pink shotguns are cast in fragile porcelain clay. They are not toys, and aimed at anything but child's play. The artist is signaling the mixed messages and attitudes to animals that are, wittingly or not, imparted to children by adults.

Claude Jones's works are held in the collections of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Artbank and international public and private collections.

Barbara Dowse
Curator