

ROD MCNICOL: MEMENTO MORI

21 JUNE–31 AUGUST 2014



'In front of McNicol's camera, each of these people is brought to the same point. It is possible that the camera truly does override difference...'

Monash Gallery of Art is extremely proud to present the first survey exhibition of the work of acclaimed Melbourne portrait photographer ROD McNICOL.

Comprising 44 works spanning more than three decades, MEMENTO MORI provides a compelling account of an artist deeply connected to his community and the genre of portraiture.

From his earliest black-and-white prints through to recent colour portraits, McNicol uses photography to highlight ideas of mortality. Curator of the exhibition Stephen Zagala states, 'Like Richard Avedon, McNicol uses uniform lighting and monochrome backdrops to isolate his sitters and foreground their physical vulnerability. These matter-of-fact portraits function as witnesses to the inescapable passing of time.'

McNicol has photographed hundreds of people with the same, relentless uniformity: they all look at the camera with a similar expression against the soft hue of McNicol's studio backdrop; bathed in the uniform light of clerestories and skylights, each body occupies precisely the same part of the photographic frame.

McNicol's work has been acknowledged by a string of prestigious awards including the National Photographic Portrait Prize (2012), and the Australian Photographic Portrait Prize (2004). McNicol recently won the the inaugural DUO Magazine Percival Photographic Portrait Prize for his portrait of actor Jack Charles.

Born in Melbourne in 1946, McNicol attended the Prahran College, where he studied photography during the early 1970s. His work is held in many major collections, including Bibliotheque Nationale (Paris), Art Gallery of New South Wales, National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, National Library (Canberra), and Monash Gallery of Art.

MGA Director Shaune Lakin states: 'As the home of Australian photography, MGA is pleased to have developed this exhibition highlighting the work of one of our most enduring and important portrait photographers.'



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IMAGES

Tairo 2011 from the series *Newcomers to my village* ink-jet print 60.0 x 45.0 cm collection of the artist

Jack 2006 from the series *A portrait revisited: 1986–2006* ink-jet print 45.0 x 62.0 cm (each image) collection of the artist

Meg 1998 from the series *Portraits from last century* ink-jet print 52.0 x 39.0 cm collection of the artist