

Linde Ivimey

Conversations with a caterpillar

21 August – 15 September 2018

Australian sculptor Linde Ivimey is known for her extraordinarily constructed creatures that reveal her deft handling of a range of materials, including bone, viscera, feathers, fur, precious stones and champagne foils.

Conversations with a caterpillar is her latest solo exhibition featuring a cast of new and fascinating characters – each one emanating its unique mystery and allure. This series follows on from her works currently included in an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, which were inspired by a voyage to Antarctica.

An intuitive maker, Ivimey's sculptures have a simmering intensity – they are invested with elements of her life – bones from meals she has cooked, in turn from animals she has butchered, hair she has waxed, teeth she has been gifted. Materials used are highly personal to her. There are recurring motifs in the figures – many bunnies, owls, Siamese twins, animals. Every sculpture transmits a sense that it is from a place deep within – the body or psyche.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ivimey's work has been celebrated widely since her major exhibition, *Close to the bone*: Linde Ivimey was shown at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne in 2003. She is currently in group exhibition, *So Fine – Contemporary women artists make Australian history*, at the National Portrait Gallery, which forms part of the National Portrait Gallery's twentieth birthday celebrations. Her work has been acquired by public institutions including the National Gallery of Australia and National Gallery of Victoria, as well as by important private collections in Australia and New Zealand.

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Artist Statement

"Conversations with a caterpillar was made with the simple joy of exploring a new material, viscera. A natural product, it is as essential to the body as bone or skin. A tremendously light and malleable material, it is processed and cured for longevity and takes colour dye techniques and other manipulations beautifully. All of the works, except the two woven bone pieces, are made from it.

A number of these works are studies of Antarctic scientists, precursors to the scientists included in the National Portrait Gallery's 20th Anniversary Exhibition, So Fine – Contemporary women artists make Australian history. Dana, Jack and Kate are botanists and scientists I met on my way back from the Antarctic, where they were researching the Cushion Sponge – a tiny and beautiful moss-type plant struggling to survive climate change in the sub Antarctic islands. Each takes the form of a major Antarctic mammal that I see mirroring some of their individual characteristics. They are clad appropriately in waterproof livery made of viscera.

Nocturno 1 and 2 include champagne foils, beast, and bird bones, in a whimsical cushion-carpet ride that explores the high adventure of dream states. *Sacchuro mortuis 1 and 2* are representations of "sweet deaddies", which guide our transition into dream states as we sleep. The body of these sculptures are embroidered with their bones visible externally, but contained by viscera to stop them leaking into our dreams and remaining as trusted and respected guides.

Corvan marks a change in scale and attention to the individual. *Corvan's* crow cast has left others to hatch in the studio – a murder of similarly scaled works yet to emerge.

Two woven bone works are in this exhibition, *Fur mendax* and *Conversations with a caterpillar*. *Fur mendax* is a tall and astute rabbit that holds a shiny golden egg behind her back. It's hers and she will not let it go, but she did not lay that golden egg because, as the legend goes, she is no goose. *Fur Mendax* is neither a thief nor a liar – that egg belongs to her.

In *Conversations with a caterpillar*, the work that gives the exhibition its name, an earnest butterfly winged child is engaged in conversation with a caterpillar. They share the same bony DNA and cabochon rubies, though their physicality is very different. The butterfly winged child councils the small caterpillar knowingly, about perseverance, tenacity and patience, and all the transitions that lay ahead for the little caterpillar."

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