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Petrina Hicks selected as winner of the 2008 ABN AMRO Emerging Artist Award

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The ABN AMRO Emerging Artist Award 2008 was announced in Sydney today with Petrina Hicks winning for her photographic work *Lambswool, 2008*. The lightjet print was chosen from over 50 competing mixed works by some of Australia's brightest emerging contemporary artists.

Chairman of the ABN AMRO Art Committee, Mr Peter Young, said "This year's exhibitions have showcased stimulating, thought-provoking and innovative works across all mediums and once again the quality was outstanding."

This year's judging panel comprised Del Kathryn Barton (2008 Archibald Winner and leading Australia artist), Edmund Capon (Director of the Art Gallery of NSW), Garry Shead (1993 Archibald Winner and leading Australian artist), Peter Young AM (Trustee of the Art Gallery of NSW) and Christine Morrow (Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art).

Unanimous in their decision, all judges declared Petrina's photographic work a standout piece among this year's submissions.

Edmund Capon described *Lambswool, 2008* as having "a subtle sense of beautiful subterfuge. You have this wonderful furry dog either being affectionate or about to bite the girl's arm off," he said. Del Kathryn Barton agreed "the image looks endearing but repels you at the same time. It's a very clean picture but ultimately the narrative content eludes us," while Garry Shead said "it is a loving image, but there is also a slight tension there."

Hicks will receive an acquisitive prize of \$10,000 and the work will form part of the permanent ABN AMRO Australian art collection. In addition, she will be granted an international development programme including a three-day residency at the respected Frank Mohr Institute in the Netherlands, and an around-the-world airline ticket and other opportunities through the ABN AMRO Arts Foundation based in Weesp.

"This Award offers truly emerging Australian contemporary artists a unique opportunity to expose their work to new audiences and the innovation and quality of entries exhibited this year is inspiring," said Young.

In reviewing this year's finalists, the judges also commended the giclee monochrome print of Richard Glover titled *ImModern # SP04-106, 2007*.

In addition to the primary award, ABN AMRO announced that the 2008 Employees' Choice Award had been awarded to Murray Fredericks for *Salt 187, Lake Eyre, 2007*, a pure pigment digital print on cotton rag. Fredericks wins \$2,000 and an around-the-world ticket.

On presenting the Award, the ABN AMRO Art Committee thanked the artists, representative galleries and judges who have made a great contribution.

The work of all finalists will be on public view in the ABN AMRO Tower foyer, 88 Phillip Street, Sydney, until 24 September.

For media interviews with the award winning artists, the Award curator or members of the Judging Panel, contact:

Jill Valentine, ABN AMRO Press and PR Manager +61 2 8259 5244

Notes to Editors:

About the winner – ABN AMRO Emerging Artist Award 2008

Petrina Hicks

Petrina Hicks (b. 1972) studied communications and photomedia at The University of Canberra now ANU and currently lives and works in Sydney. In 2007 The Museum of Brisbane held a solo show of Hicks' work titled *Flawless* and recently she was the recipient of La Cite, Paris Residency. Hicks' photographic works probe the dualities that are at the heart of contemporary photography; traversing the fine lines between intimacy and distance, between perfection and imperfection and between truth and artifice.

About *Lambswool, 2007*, lightjet print

Lambswool is exploring ideas relating to a future race of human beings perfected through advancements in medicine and science and their disconnection with nature. It was intended that the image look as if it was almost computer generated. This is through the use of the tools of commercial advertising photography. At first glance, the image may appear to be a polished advertising image, but on further inspection reveals a more unsettling aspect of what it means to be human.

About the winner – ABN AMRO Employee's Choice Award 2008

Murray Fredericks

Murray Fredericks (b. 1970) lives and works in Sydney. In 2004 he was awarded the Post graduate Student Award at the The College of Fine Arts UNSW and subsequently undertook a Master of Fine Arts. The *Salt* project has been a focus during the past six years.

About *Salt 187, Lake Eyre, 2007*, pure pigment digital print on cotton rag

Salt 187 is from the *Salt* project. Over the last six years I have camped alone in the centre of Lake Eyre for five weeks at a time pointing an 8 x 10 inch film camera in to the almost 'featureless' landscape. Every composition in the series has the horizon placed in the lower portion of the frame. As far as possible, all the elements that define space in the traditional landscape image have been left out. The results are a meditation on emptiness and the void.

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