
• nellie castan gallery

PRESS RELEASE

polixeni papapetrou: games of consequence

11 october – 1 november 2008

Polixeni Papapetrou uses the camera not so much to capture a moment in time, but rather ideas related to time, revealing how the past is redefined and re-interpreted with each performance. Her sharp and luminous photographs allow us to enter the time-space that children construct for themselves at key moments of their development.

Games of Consequence, Papapetrou's latest body of work, investigates the cultural status of children. As her child-models have grown up, so have the memories that she wants to reflect

upon. The new work is no longer about the historical vulnerability of children in the harsh Australian landscape but realities from her own memory. Papapetrou recalls growing up as a 'free-range child', living an after-school-hours life with other kids on the block and going off to play imaginative games, often riddled with hazards and deceptions as well as friendship and laughter.

With the complexity of adolescence awaiting them, Papapetrou's children at play are strangely reverential, because they seem to adhere to the rules. Their decisions carry weight—maybe best known to themselves—and we get drawn in. The innocent games in part symbolize the last step of childhood, the last chance for them to remain young. They're also the last historical step of childhood, because kids no longer play these games in our society. Globalized games, on Nintendos and computers, plus extra-curricular activities organized by parents, have taken over. As culture progressively deletes the freedom of kids, Papapetrou is witness to the Indian Summer of childhood.

Since she was born in 1997, Papapetrou's daughter Olympia has become the main model. Now acting with her friends and brother Solomon, Olympia—aged eleven—has entered a new stage, where her own critical consciousness matches the lyrical recollections of the artist-mother. There is something eerie and unerving in the realities evoked by the photography, because childhood has gone somewhere and the consequences are unknown.



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level 1, 12 river street, south yarra, victoria 3141

opening: 3 – 5pm saturday 11 october

exhibition ends: saturday 1 november

hrs: tuesday to saturday 12–5pm t: 03 9804 7366
