

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE2743

Ronksley-Pavia, Michelle

(1974 -)

Born 24 August, 1974, Sheffield Yorkshire England

Occupation Artist, Teacher, Writer

Summary

Michelle Ronksley-Pavia is one of Australia's emerging scientific artists. Born in England, she has lived in various parts of the United Kingdom and Europe. She studied for eight years in Belgium, where she attended the State-operated Ecole des Beaux Arts in Brussels. Whilst in Europe she was greatly influenced by the works of the Impressionists and the Belgian Surrealist painter, Rene Magritte.

Ronksley-Pavia emigrated and took up Australian Citizenship in 1992. She attended the University of Western Sydney and continued with postgraduate study in Visual Arts. Here she was drawn to the work of artists like James Gleeson and Brett Whiteley. Ronksley-Pavia exhibited widely and joined the National Association for the Visual Arts. The influence of the Association saw her career begin to flourish.

Details

Initially, Ronksley-Pavia's artwork delved into the human unconscious using scientific subject matter with overtones of religious and particularly ethical questions in connection with DNA cloning, inequalities and racial issues. She became increasingly interested in the mixing of science and art; in Karl Jung's archetypes of the collective unconscious; and in symbolism.

During the early 21st Century she has moved to a more symbolic perspective, exploring inequalities in the new century. Her work centres on the use of bottle tops on which she paints intricate miniatures: often elements of the human body, blood cells, nerve cells and DNA structures. The human condition both internal and external feeds her paintings to produce art work which explores what makes us human. Like the viscera of painting, human bodies involve complexities of thoughts, actions and emotions mixed with chemical make-up of cells. These cells are incorporated into the bottle top images and attached using wire onto a painted canvas background. The painted bottle tops symbolise the microcosms of life within life; cells, growing and changing. The wire represents connections both internal and external, within human psyche and physical beings.

Her recent works comment on the simplicity and complexity of the human internal form: the origin of *all* humans, no matter their culture, religion, skin colour or politics. Ronksley-Pavia's work is firmly entrenched in her belief that all life begins the same way; that the beginning of human life contains all of the genetic information (DNA) necessary to become a human; that genetic material may vary but the formation of cells occurs in the same way worldwide. She believes that any differentiation after birth is made by society.

Ronksley-Pavia ran into controversy in 2000 when she submitted her entry for the Archibald Prize – a portrait of NSW Police Commissioner Peter Ryan – to the Art Gallery of New South Wales. The controversy centred on the amount of time the Police Commissioner was giving to having his portrait painted as opposed to solving crime problems in the notorious troubled ethnic areas of Sydney. Sydney newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* published an article questioning the Commissioner's commitment.

Published resources

Newspaper Article

No title, 2004

No title, 2004

No title, 2000

No Title, 2000

No Title, 2000

Edited Book

The Who's Who of Australian Visual Artists, Thorpe, D.W., 1995

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Private Hands (These regards may not be readily available)

[Records of Michelle Ronksley-Pavia](#)

Author Details

Barbara Lemon

Created 13 September 2007

Last modified 20 November 2018