

ELLIE COLEMAN

Highly Commended: Contemporary Art Awards 2019

Lucent Creatures

By Dr Julie Rees

Ellie Coleman's (b.1992) ongoing sculptural series, *Lucent Creatures*, at first, seem akin to treasured objects. On the contrary, her work is concerned with the devaluing and limited perceptions around the 'social value' of animals. As a vegan-artist, Ellie began formulating this series while working toward her Doctor of Creative Arts (DCA) at the University of Southern Queensland. Her primary focus is on developing ethical spaces of practice for vegan-artists who use deceased animals in their work.

Her work traverses through themes of mourning, loss, repurposing and animal ethics. To emphasise these themes, Ellie uses ethically sourced taxidermy birds and animal skulls, then adorns them with crystals. By doing this, she not only confronts the idea of death but also accentuates life's preciousness. In this way, the deceased animals become a vehicle for eliciting compassion and encouraging a re-evaluation of human-animal relationships.

Currently, *Lucent Creatures* comprises of fifteen-plus works and features various animal species such as cows, pigs, sheep, rats and birds. Each species is embellished with different coloured crystals; some entirely covered while others are clustered on specific areas of the animal. The image—which won Ellie a highly commended in the *Contemporary Art Awards 2019*—is of a taxidermy Lorikeet delicately encrusted



with white crystals. The work is deliberately posed in an isolated position not only to invoke feelings of melancholy and loss but to commemorate the individual life.

Lucent Creatures—a subject matter that can be challenging and confronting—places value on the individual animal by ingeniously casting each species from just being 'dead matter' to a lasting tribute to their lives. The result of the work is contemporary and intends to prompt discussions around the 'social value' of animals and their roles in the ecological balance of nature.

Ellie Coleman's art practice is based in Toowoomba, Queensland and has an exhibition history spanning over eleven years. Her most recent exhibitions include *Contemporary Art Awards*

Finalist Exhibition 2019, Dark Rituals, Magical Relics (2019) at the Academy Gallery in Tasmania and the USC Art Gallery (2018) on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland.

Image credit: Ellie Coleman, *Lucent Creatures* 2018, taxidermy and crystals.

Image credit: *Lucent Creatures* 2018, animal skull and crystals, photo credit: Carl Warner

Images courtesy of the artist

Ellie Coleman's highly commended artwork can be viewed at: <http://www.contemporaryartawards/finalist-exhibition-2019.com>