

Ross Watson

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Encountering the work of **Ross Watson** for the first time, one notices immediately the handsome, youthful men who play key roles in most of his compositions. But there is so much more to a Ross Watson painting than these fresh-faced beauties. Art connoisseurs will immediately recognize the inclusion of details or entire compositions excerpted from well-known masterworks of Western European painting. Iconic works by such art historical luminaries as Vermeer, Caravaggio and others appear regularly in Watson's oeuvre. Watson's models, mostly dressed in twenty-first century attire, are usually depicted as if standing in front of these paintings, or in several instances, cleverly integrated into the Old Master compositions themselves. But these well-known paintings do not simply serve as decorative backdrops for his young male models. By removing these esteemed works from their normal milieu—museums and art books—Watson bestows upon them a fresh and sometimes unexpected perspective, almost as if we were seeing them anew. Other works out of Watson's oeuvre are clearly inspired by surrealist masters like Dalí and Magritte, with whom he shares the ability of painting as accurate as the old masters. Those paintings combine an assortment of unrelated objects, often rendered in disorienting shifts in proportion. How do these seemingly incompatible objects relate to one another? Are we witnessing a dream? Such unanswerable questions lie at the heart of Watson's work, and exemplify the fascinating complexities that never cease to engage and captivate the viewer's imagination.

Ross Watson's career as an artist began 25 years ago in Melbourne. He has since had solo exhibitions in London, Berlin and Los Angeles and participated in group exhibitions, including important surveys of Australian and international contemporary art at the National Gallery of Australia, and in the Toronto International Art Fair. His art and photography is collected by The National Gallery of Australia and Sir Elton John. Matthew Mitcham, Jake Shears from The Scissor Sisters, and François Sagat are among his famous models.

rosswatson.com



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