



Ward Roberts

Australian photographer Ward Roberts lived and worked in Hong Kong for a number of years before returning back to his hometown, Adelaide. Roberts is a conceptual artist who creates exquisitely composed photographs drawing on themes such as loneliness and isolation in the modern world. The young artist's perspective is fresh and engaging, the sophisticated aesthetic prevents his work from being downbeat in spite of the fact that many of his compositions are empty landscapes. Rather, there is an innate energy at the core of his work, one which is harnessed and marshaled into every detail in the composition. Roberts' work is in many ways a rebuttal of the prevailing trend of urban, gritty style contemporary photography. There is a dichotomy at play in his fine art images which simultaneously recall the mastery of medium and calculated patience of remote academic painters, yet his subjects and presentation feel completely new and contemporary.

His highly constructed series 48 Hours presents naked bodies floating in a thick, black abyss. The suspended figures vary in pose, like ballerinas or falling acrobats in slow motion. There is a strong duality at play in every image between great freedom and physical expression and a more poignant sense of vulnerability and even loneliness. Memorably one of the models is a pregnant female, further heightening the notion of the separate autonomous nature of every human body after birth. Roberts created the images using underwater photography, an intense and laboured task. Each perfectly exposed and inventively composed image in the series is testament to the artist's painstaking approach and meticulous attention to detail.

The artist's refined eye for composition is again revealed in his minimalist landscape compositions. In the series Landscapes About Us Roberts takes as his subject both natural and urban landscapes which are devoid of human figures. The environments, such as basketball courts or car parks, are rich in normalcy, yet without a cast of human figures they appear dormant and deserted. The melancholic compositions often feel stark and bare, apart from the subtle inclusion of one object amidst the plain of solitude. Despite the lonesome quality to the work, Roberts is able to make even the most unusual and remote landscape shine, largely as a product of his highly sensitive, formal approach.

In 2008 Roberts graduated from RMIT University in Australia. He won the ACMP Les Walking award the same year and in 2009 was a finalist in both the New York Photo Festival and PDN Pix digital imaging new talent. Further, he received an Honorable Mention in the London International Creative awards and won the Xto photography fine art award.