

# NINO MIER GALLERY

LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA



**POLLY BORLAND**  
*BOD, 2023*

MARFA 2023 | NINO MIER GALLERY | MAY 5 2022 -2023 | [INFO@MIERGALLERY.COM](mailto:INFO@MIERGALLERY.COM)

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**Polly Borland**

***BOD***

**Marfa Invitational Foundation | MONUMENTS**

**May 2023 – May 2024**

**135 Golf Course Rd, Marfa, TX 79843**

Polly Borland's monumental sculpture, *BOD* (2023), will be included as part of this year's Marfa Invitational's "MONUMENTS" section in the dry grassland of the Michael Phelan Foundation. The world-renowned photographer, famous for her images of models claustrophobically wrapped in carbuncled cotton stuffed pantyhose, has rendered such a figure into a life-sized sculptural form. *BOD* is a cast aluminum figure taken from a live performer wrapped in Borland's same signature soft sculpture. The seemingly flesh-like or gooey abstracted figure, finished in matte automotive paint, embraces a new sculptural potential of the artist's original abstracted forms. The painstaking lost wax cast process, done with the help of a team of collaborating fabricators in Hudson Valley, speaks to Borland's continued interest in pushing the boundary of her artistic practice. Over the course of one year, the pink, towering tangle of bulbous forms, over seven feet high, will stand looming above visitors who approach it in the dusty desert.

*BOD*'s soft and fleshy allure belies the sculpture's resolute solidity – a strange combination of heroic, steadfast metal enveloping in an undulating, almost damp, nacreous surface. Hints of the human emerge beneath tight tugs of fabric: an exposed long neck, a jutting elbow, the crook of an ankle or the soft edges of an ear, each of which reminds us of our own physicality and immediately connect us to the implicit human presence within. Echoing the photographic origins of Borland's practice, the viewer reprises the role of photographer, searching with their own lens to connect with the ghost beneath the shell as it gazes into the arid abyss.

Aside from two foot tall preparatory maquettes, the prelude to Borland's first foray into sculpture was the artist's iconic 2018 photographic series *Morph* (2018). The series serves as a dramatic, almost surrealistic expansion of Borland's visual language, with her attention to color and reimagining of form at the forefront. *Morph* captures a model against a flat colored background, enveloped in colored pantyhose material stuffed with rough cotton fluff. In conjunction with her strange postures and crumbled poses, Borland disfigures the female body to a point of grotesque abstraction. *Morph* creates divergent moods: horrific, claustrophobic imprisonment contrasted by the perceived sensation of safety marked by a sensual swaddling of the nude; the works are human and inhuman at the same time. Overall, *BOD* carries the strange gestures of *Morph* into a new realm by evolving it into a three-dimensional form.

The artist's decision to move into sculpture began with a chance meeting with future collaborator Dan Tobin, a founder of ArtMakers and the co-owner of UAP foundry. Their conversation led to the revelation that throughout her photographic practice, Borland had already been working as a sculptor without truly realizing it. In addition to *Morph*, in *NUDIE* (2021)—her nude and subversive "selfie" photographs—the artist served as her own model, manipulating her flesh in front of an iPhone lens with such surreal proximity that her own skin closely resembled sculptural material. Noticing Borland's persistent impulse to see the body as sculpture, Tobin invited the artist to multiple foundry residencies in order to explore her sculptural practice with a myriad of materials at her disposal.

With the concept of pulling the sculpture out from within the *Morph* photographs' two-dimensional plane, *BOD* begins.

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*Polly Borland (b. 1959, Melbourne, AU; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA, US) has exhibited worldwide, especially in Australia, the UK, Europe and across the United States, including the major exhibition Polyverse at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne in 2018, as well as at institutions including National Portrait Gallery, London; University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane; National Portrait Gallery, Canberra; and Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane. Her work is in public and private collections including The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, National Portrait Gallery, London; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Damien Hirst's Murderme Collection.*

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Polly Borland

BOD, 2023

Aluminum

84 x 58 5/8 x 37 1/4 in (approximate)

213.4 x 148.9 x 94.5 cm (approximate)

Edition of 3

Installed at Marfa Invitational 2023

Marfa, Texas, US







Installation view of *BOD* at Marfa Invitational 2023  
Marfa, Texas, US







Installation view of *BOD* at Marfa Invitational 2023  
Marfa, Texas, US







Installation view of *BOD* at Marfa Invitational 2023  
Marfa, Texas, US



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Polly Borland is widely known for her portraits of prominent cultural figures and conversely, underground communities. Borland's decades-long photographic investigations of publicly and privately curated personas are built on the manipulation of body, power, sex and ego. Portraying images of raw vulnerability, pathos and a penetrating desire for comfort and care, her *Babies* series explores the very real world of infantilists – adults roleplaying as infants. Dressed in diapers, often with a pacifier in their mouth, Borland's disquieting photographs portray subjects acting out of a compensatory need to be nurtured. The subversion of the male gaze to surreal, punkish or ghoulish consequence has always been present in her photography. With later series including *Bunny* and *Morph*, she disrupts traditionally alluring images and subjects, intensifies them, repositions them and essentially turns them on their head through specific staging. This is exemplified with *Bunny* where she inverted the soft, seductive pin-up type with an aggressive, confrontational and physically domineering model (Gwendoline Christie) in bizarre rabbit garb. Playboy bunnies are certainly a continuation of classic, historic depictions of the female nude, which tend to be demure, reclining in a docile manner with smooth, glowing skin and unblemished features. Borland's images reveal wrinkles, varicose veins, layers of loose skin, body fat and other imperfections that do not exist for male consumption. They do not elicit sexual desire, but rather, reveal hidden truths.

Borland often cites Hans Bellmer, Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley as her biggest influences - all whom play with a combination of the abject, disgust, dark humor and a strangely seductive, aesthetic violence of contemporary life. Recalling Bellmer's disturbing images of doll parts reassembled as the Surrealist 'Exquisite Corpse', Borland's bodies are often rearranged and disjointed. Borland points out the moments of metamorphosis in the images; her work at its best seems to reach inside human beings and turns them inside out, exposing viscera, quietly trespassing into inner worlds to access what usually remains hidden. In her latest unpublished series, *Selfie*, Polly has started to turn the camera on herself. She challenges 'selfie' tropes and social media culture through contorted, grotesque oversized nudes. The confrontational photographic images amplify her aging body with tightly cropped images that seem sculptural and surreal in their abstraction. The artist twists, kneads, flips and folds her body, handling her flesh like a malleable material while also steering her iPhone camera with a selfie stick. Like the work of these influential artists, from the Surrealists to her contemporaries, Borland's enigmatic and absurd tableaux invite new considerations of underlying cultural contradictions.

*Los Angeles based Australian artist, Polly Borland lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. Borland is one of Australia's foremost photographic artists famed for her editorial work and portraiture beginning in the 1980s when she photographed the likes of Queen Elizabeth II, Nick Cave, Donald Trump, Susan Sontag, Monica Lewinsky and Cate Blanchett for a host of clients such as Dazed and Confused, The New York Times and The New Yorker. Having lived in London and Los Angeles, Borland's formal art practice has led her to exhibit worldwide, especially in Australia, the UK, Europe and across the United States, including the major exhibition Polyverse at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne in 2018. Borland's career as a photographer and visual artist has spanned over three decades, covering a myriad of subjects, and has shown internationally at institutions including National Portrait Gallery, London; University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane; National Portrait Gallery, Canberra; and Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane. Her work is in public and private collections including The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, National Portrait Gallery, London; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Damien Hirst's Murderme Collection*

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## POLLY BORLAND

Born 1959, Melbourne, Australia  
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

## EDUCATION

1983 Dep. Photography, Prahran College, Melbourne, AU

## SOLO SHOWS

- 2023 *Blobs*, Lyles & King, New York, NY, US  
*Playpen*, with Penny Slinger, Lyles & King, New York, NY, US  
*Nudie and Blobs*, STATION, Melbourne, AU
- 2021 *Nudie*, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
- 2018 *Polly Borland: Polyverse*, The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AU  
*Polymorph*, Sullivan & Strumpf, Sydney, AU
- 2017 *MONSTER*, Murray White Room, Melbourne, AU  
*The Babies*, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
- 2016 *Not Good at Human*, Sullivan & Strumpf, Sydney, AU
- 2014 *YOU*, Murray White Room, Melbourne, AU  
*Wonky*, The Australian Centre of Photography, Melbourne, AU
- 2013 *YOU*, Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, NY, US
- 2012 *Pupa*, Murray White Room, Melbourne, AU  
*Everything I want to be when I grow up*, University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane, AU
- 2011 *Smudge*, Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, NY, US  
*Smudge*, Other Criteria, London, UK  
*Smudge*, Gloria Actar Birkhauser, Madrid, ES
- 2010 *Smudge*, Murray White Room, Melbourne, AU
- 2008 *Bunny*, Murray White Room, Melbourne, AU  
*Bunny*, Michael Hoppen Contemporary, London, UK
- 2002 *The Babies*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, AU
- 2001 *Polly Borland: Australians*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, AU  
*Polly Borland: Australians*, Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne, AU
- 2000 *Polly Borland: Australians*, National Portrait Gallery, London, UK

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- 1999 *The Babies*, 1999 Meltdown Festival, curated by Nick Cave, Southbank, London, UK
- 1984 *Polly Borland*, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, AU

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *Picture This*, Horsham Regional Art Gallery, Horsham, AU  
*Chrome City – Australian Art in Los Angeles*, Durden and Ray, Los Angeles, CA, US  
*Sight Unseen: The Lockdown Exhibitions*, Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Collingwood, AU
- 2021 *Cake Show*, The Pit, Palm Springs, CA, US  
*Philjames & Polly Borland*, Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Collingwood, AU  
*Inaugural Exhibition*, Nino Mier Gallery, Brussels, BE
- 2020 *The Body Electric*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, AU  
*Monster Theatres*, 2020 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, AU  
*Summer Group Show*, Sullivan & Strumpf, Sydney, AU
- 2019 *LA on Fire*, Wilding Cran Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US  
*Transworld*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US  
*Glossamer*, curated by Zoe Bedeaux, Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate, UK  
*Defining Place/Space: Contemporary Photography from Australia*, Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, CA, US
- 2018 *Perfect Stranger*, Sullivan & Strumpf, Sydney, AU  
*The Waves*, curated by Kate Britton, Sullivan & Strumpf, Sydney, AU  
*Summer Group Show*, Sullivan & Strumpf, Sydney, AU  
Galerie Pompom, Sydney, AU  
*GROUP06*, Murray Whiteroom, Melbourne, AU  
*Pussy, King of the Pirates*, Maccarone, Los Angeles, CA, US  
*Spring 1883*, The Hotel Windsor, Melbourne, AU  
*Sheer Fantasy*, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, AU
- 2017 *Versus Rodin*, National Gallery of South Australia, AU  
*Homeward Bound*, Nicodim, Los Angeles, CA, US  
*Group Exhibition*, Sullivan & Strumpf, Sydney, AU  
*Spring 1883*, The Establishment Hotel, Sydney, AU  
*Contemporary Photography*, National Gallery of Victoria International, Melbourne, AU  
*Skin Thing*, Bundoora Homestead Art Centre, Melbourne, AU  
*GROUP05*, Murray White Room, Melbourne, AU  
*Group Show Winter 2017*, Murray White Room, Melbourne, AU
- 2016 *Arrival*, Sullivan & Strumpf, SG  
*Human Condition*, curated by John Wolf, Los Angeles, CA, US  
*Group Exhibition*, Sullivan & Strumpf, Sydney, AU  
*Spring 1883*, The Hotel Windsor, Melbourne, AU



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- 2015 *Borland + Borland*, Camberra Glass Works, Camberra, AU  
*Spring 1883*, The Hotel Windsor, Melbourne, AU
- 2014 *Small is Beautiful*, Flowers Gallery, New York, NY, US  
*Pardon My French*, Marcas Gallery, Anaheim, CA, US  
*Episodes: Australian Photography Now*, 13th Dong Gang International Photo Festival, Seoul, KR  
*Spring 1883*, The Hotel Windsor, Melbourne, AU  
Other Criteria Flagship Store/Gallery Opening, New York, NY, US
- 2013 *We used to talk about love*, Balnaves contemporary: photomedia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, AU
- 2012 *Theatre of the World*, Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, AU  
*Royal Melbourne*, City Gallery, Melbourne, AU
- 2011 *GROUP04*, Murray White Room, Melbourne, AU  
The University of Queensland National Artists' Self-Portrait Prize, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, AU  
*Let the Healing Begin*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, AU  
*Monanism*, Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, AU
- 2010 *Shoebox Art – Exhibition and Auction*, The Haunch of Venison, London, UK  
*PREVIEW 10*, Murray White Room, Melbourne, AU
- 2009 *Wild Things*, Stricola Contemporary, New York, NY, US  
William and Winifred Bowness Photography Prize, Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne, AU
- 2008 *GROUP 01*, Murray White Room, Melbourne, AU
- 2007 *Nick Cave: The Exhibition*, Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne, AU
- 2004 *2nd Auckland Triennial*, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland, NZ
- 2003 *Play*, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Melbourne, AU
- 2002 *Golden Jubilee Portraits*, National Portrait Gallery and Windsor Castle, London, UK  
*Contemporary Australian Portraits*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, AU  
Ten Year Anniversary John Kobal Photographic Award Show, National Portrait Gallery, London, UK  
*Nick Cave: The good son*, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Mornington, AU  
*About Face: an exhibition of contemporary Australian photo-media*, Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney, AU  
*Psycho: Art and Anatomy*, Anne Faggionato Gallery, London, UK  
*Play*, Plimsoll Art Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart, AU
- 2001 *Young British Artists*, National Portrait Gallery, London, UK

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1999 *Glossy: Faces Magazines Now*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, AU

## COLLECTIONS

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, NY, US  
Murderme Ltd., London, UK  
Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, AU  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AU  
National Portrait Gallery, London, UK  
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, AU  
Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne, AU  
Queensland University Art Museum, Brisbane, AU  
City of Melbourne, Melbourne, AU  
Lyon Housemuseum, Melbourne, AU  
Hayman Collection, Melbourne, AU

## AWARDS & COMMISSIONS

2017 Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Award  
2001 Photographed Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for her Golden Jubilee  
1994 John Kobal Photographic Portrait Award 1994

## FILM

*Polymorphous*, Screening and Artist Talk with Polly Borland  
Directed by Alex Chomicz  
Other Criteria Gallery, New York City, NY, US, 2014  
<http://vimeo.com/48286591>

*Polymorphous*, a documentary on Polly Borland and her work  
Directed by Alex Chomicz  
ABC Television, Australia, March 2013  
<http://vimeo.com/48286591>

*Berlin it's All a Mess*, IO Echo  
Directed by: Polly Borland & John Hillcoat  
MOCA TV, commissioned by: Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, US 2012  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDmlT4Qq2vc>

*Polly Borland*, Art Nation  
ABC TV, Australia  
Aired 5 September 2010  
<http://www.abc.net.au/arts/stories/s3002024.htm>

## PUBLICATIONS

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LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA

- 2018 *MORPH*, Polly Borland, Perimeter Editions
- 2013 *YOU*, Polly Borland, Perimeter Editions
- 2011 *Polly Borland SMUDGE*, Actar, Barcelona, ES
- 2008 *Polly Borland: Bunny*, Other Criteria, London, UK
- 2001 *The Babies*, Polly Borland, essay by Susan Sontag, PowerHouse Books
- 2000 *Polly Borland: Australians*, National Portrait Gallery, London, UK

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2022 Calvin Bendiant, *Conversation with Polly Borland*, Lana Turner No. 15, 2022  
Mudie Cunningham, Daniel. "Off the Wall and Into the Room: on Polly Borland",  
Pull Focus Melbourne Art Fair, Special Edition of Art Collector, 2022
- 2021 Michael Slenske, "I've Got Nothing More to Hide': Polly Borland Puts Her Nude  
Selfies on Display," Los Angeles Magazine
- 2018 Sebastian Goldspink, "Polly Borland: Settle for Nothing", Ten Gallery,  
Autumn/Winter 2018  
Jane Rocca, "From British Vogue to the Queen, a new National Gallery of  
Victoria exhibition celebrates artist Polly Borland", Domain, 2018
- 2017 Ashley Crawford, "Polly Borland treads further into darkness, turning  
celebrities into monsters", Sydney Morning Herald, November 14, 2017  
Lisa Davidson, "Polly Borland's disquieting document of grown-up babies is as  
difficult to view as it is utterly compelling..." WeHeart, August 11, 2017  
Catherine Womack, "A Glimpse at the World of Adult Babies Through L.A.-  
Based Photographer Polly Borland's Lens", LA Weekly, July 18, 2017
- 2016 Sophie Eastaugh, "Photographing the Queen: 'The most surreal moment of my  
career'" CNN, April 21, 2016
- 2012 Jane O'Sullivan, "Curator's Take", Australian Art Collector, Issue 62, 2012  
Tracey Clement, "The twisted portraiture of Polly Borland", Art Guide Australia,  
September/October  
Dan Rule, "Traveller in a strange land", The Saturday Age, August 18, 2012  
Robert Nelson, "Review in Visual Arts", The Age, September 12, 2012  
*Everything I want to be when I grow up*, Exhibition Catalogue, University of  
Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane, AU
- 2011 *Face Off*, Annemarie Kiely, Vogue Living Australia, January/February 2011
- 2010 ABCTV Art Nation, Sunday 5 September 2010  
Oyster Magazine online, September 2010

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Dan Rule, *Around the Galleries*, The Age, Saturday 21 August 2010

Dan Rule, Melbourne Broadsheet, 27 August 2010.

- 2008 *How We Met: Gwendolynne Christie and Polly Borland*, The Independent, Sunday Review, UK, June 29, 2008  
*Sheer Polly: Will Self salutes Polly Borland*, The Independent, UK, 24 July 2008  
*Polly Borland's Best Shot*, by Leo Benedictus, The Guardian, UK, 15 May 2008  
*Turning Playboy image on its head*, Richard Willingham, The Age, 2008  
ABC TV, Sunday Arts, screened 27 July 2008  
*Private Worlds, BUNNY* review by Ashley Crawford, The Weekend Australian, August 2 – 3, 2008  
*Points of View: Polly Borland BUNNY*, Photofile #84, Summer 2008
- 2003 Natalie King, *Art round up: Melbourne*, Art Monthly Australia, No. 157, March
- 2002 *Polly Borland: Portfolio*, Photofile #65, May, 2002
- 2000 *Getting to the heart of the matter: Polly Borland* by Ruth Learner, Poster Magazine, Issue 18, Summer 2008/2009

