

# Media Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## ***Naomi Hobson: Adolescent Wonderland* to open at Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery**

*Today photography needs to push the boundary...I'm using the medium to tell real stories that I feel don't get told or haven't been told. I want people to see who our youth really are: fun, playful, smart, savvy, proud, adventurous and witty.*

Naomi Hobson

From December 11, Naomi Hobson's evocative photographic series *Adolescent Wonderland* will be displayed at Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery. Presented by the Art Gallery of South Australia and Country Arts SA with support from the South Australian Government as part of a state-wide regional tour, *Adolescent Wonderland* depicts young Aboriginal people from Hobson's community of Coen on Cape York Peninsula.

Naomi Hobson is a Southern Kaantju/Umpila woman who lives in Coen, a small town of 360 people in far north Queensland. A multidisciplinary artist, she regularly works across the mediums of painting, ceramics and photography. Inspired by her immediate environment, Hobson's works express her ongoing connection to Country and her ancestors' ties and relationships with their traditional lands.

Through her work, Hobson references her family's political and social engagements as well as her own personal engagement with her Country and community. In her *Adolescent Wonderland* series, Hobson is working to empower young people, to encourage them to be themselves and to celebrate their uniqueness. Her photographic series allows the viewer to become part of the community and provides an insight into the vulnerability, playfulness and everyday moments of a generation transitioning from teenagers into adults.

The title *Adolescent Wonderland* is inspired by the classic children's novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. Themes of youth, playfulness and childhood memories are evident in Hobson's photographs, where the brightly coloured figures and their props lure the viewer into a dream-like reality.

As Naomi Hobson says, "I think young people are getting crazy adventurous with all the apps and photo settings in their mobile phones. They're just really connecting with how they want to share their story...Young people are so advanced in using technology and they also love getting their photos taken, but let them show you their story, their way; that's what *Adolescent Wonderland* is all about."

Hon. Steven Marshall, MP, Premier of South Australia says, “I’m thrilled that young people in the regions of South Australia will be among the audiences who will have the opportunity to experience the very best of contemporary Aboriginal art.”

AGSA Director Rhana Devenport ONZM says, “With a voracious practice that spans painting, ceramics and photography, Naomi Hobson’s *Adolescent Wonderland* will transport regional South Australian viewers to witness daily life in the artist’s small hometown of Coen on Queensland’s Cape York Peninsula through her deeply expressive and provocative works.”

Country Arts SA Chief Executive Anthony Peluso says, “Naomi Hobson has captured those electrifying coming of age moments. These works shine a light on the resilience, vulnerability, humour and playfulness of First Nations young people in regional communities. We are excited to launch her exhibition in Port Pirie and present it at 11 galleries in regional South Australia throughout 2022 and 2023.”

Visitors are also invited to participate in a photography competition, titled *Where’s Your Wonderland*. The competition encourages participants to capture their own everyday worlds for a chance to win, with the photographs also displayed digitally as part of the exhibition. Submissions can be made via the Art Gallery of South Australia website at [www.agsa.sa.gov.au](http://www.agsa.sa.gov.au)

This regional South Australian tour is supported by the South Australian Government and presented in partnership with the Art Gallery of South Australia and Country Arts SA. The *Adolescent Wonderland* series was first commissioned by the Cairns Art Gallery with funding from the Queensland Government through the Arts Queensland Backing Indigenous Arts initiative.

The current, expanded exhibition was initially created for the Tarnanthi *Open Hands* exhibition in 2020, presented by the Art Gallery of South Australia with Principal Partner BHP and support from the Government of South Australia.

*Naomi Hobson: Adolescent Wonderland* is on display from December 11 2021 to February 27 2022 at Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery.

For further information, visit [pprag.org.au](http://pprag.org.au) or [countryarts.org.au](http://countryarts.org.au)

Presented by



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Image caption: Naomi Hobson, Southern Kaantju/Umpila people, Queensland, born Coen, Queensland 1978, *OMG! "OMG! This is actually heavier than it looks!" Alaina.* from the series *Adolescent Wonderland*, 2019, Coen, Queensland, digital print on paper, 81.0 x 110.0 cm, © Naomi Hobson/Redot Fine Art Gallery.