



THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

Sonia Payes ventures far and wide to capture her photographs. She chats to **Jane Llewellyn**.
Portrait by **Jesse Marlow**.



Inspired by her travels and current environmental issues, Melbourne-based artist **Sonia Payes** has established a clear and distinctive voice. Sonia wants her art to make us stop and think about the future of the human race – the survival of our planet.

Payes seeks out extreme environments such as lakes in Patagonia, glaciers in Iceland or plains of boiling mud pools with sulphur crusts in Papua New Guinea. "I am not inspired by safe destinations. I like to walk on the wild side," she says.

With portraiture at the core of her practice Payes works in many different media including, photography, computer animation, 3 dimensional objects, projections, and installations. Her works can sometimes be described as strange and unconventional. Author **Sasha Grishin** describes her work as "obsessive, brooding and technically provocative."

Working from a multi-leveled, 19th century blue-stone building in Prahran Payes' work focuses on a celebration of re-generation and rebirth as well as a concern for the future. There is also an underlying element of alarm and uncertainty over whether we will survive the environmental forces unleashed on our fragile planet.

For example in her solo exhibition, *Parallel Futures* at McClelland Gallery in 2016, Payes' work contained a subtext of fire and ice, representing the environmental extremes that pose the potential for death and destruction.

"My art is a plea for change, for us not to be seduced by the illusion of progress and to preserve our environment before it is too late," explains Payes.



TOP RIGHT: Sonia Payes, *Woman in Black*, 2016.
C-Type photograph. 60 x 30 x 30cm.

ABOVE: Sonia Payes, *Minerva in Gold*, 2016.
C-Type photograph.



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Terra Mysterious
Monash Gallery of Art
12 August - 8 October 2017

Emergence
Scott Livesey Galleries
16 August - 9 September 2017

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