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Tracey Moffatt, *Hillary R. Clinton* from the series, *Under the Sign of Scorpio*, 2005. Ink jet print on watercolour paper, 43 x 58cm. COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY.

attire. "I found a sixties mui mui sundress, totally perfect for Lee Krasner on holiday. I wanted Lee Krasner in the afternoon sun and looking relaxed as opposed to all the grumpy serious shots taken of her in the New York 40s and 50s." The final photographs are amped up with special effects, and bright neon colours, erasing the signs of the studio backdrop sheet, which are apparent in the contact sheets. "My presentation of them is very respectful yet very pop, almost comic book like, especially in the use of neon colours. All these women I want to propose are pop figures. They are a part of the landscape of popular western culture. I've been Warholian in my artistic approach. I've been a fan of great talent all my life and I mean fan in the nerdy sense of the word." Though the prints Moffatt showed me were unframed, unfinished work prints, the final versions will go on view at Roslyn Oxley9 this August.

Moffatt says that film directors like **Martin Scorsese** and **Robert Altman** and writers like **Carson McCullers** and **Tennessee Williams** have been greater influences on her than have other visual artists, and it's no surprise, given the strong narrative element in her work. "It is the visual drama and atmosphere in their work that I have always tried to emulate in my still photography," she says. "My two favourite visual artists in the whole world are **Agnes Martin** and **Bridget Riley**," she adds. "Go figure." ■

Tracey Moffatt *Under the Sign of Scorpio* will be at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery from 4 to 27 August 2005. *Tracey Moffatt: In Review* will be at the Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne until the 7th August 2005.

TRACEY MOFFATT

The phenomenal international reputation of Australian born photographer and film maker **Tracey Moffatt** is sustained by her prodigious and diverse output, the large number of exhibitions she holds throughout Australia, America, Europe and Asia and the significance of the public and private collections throughout the world in which her works are held. Moffatt began her career in film and achieved critical approval with her short film *Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy* of 1989 which was shown at the Cannes film festival as was her first feature film *beDevil* three years later.

However it is for her photography that Moffatt is best known. She employs heavily cinematic techniques in the execution of her photographs. Actors play their part in set locations with painted backdrops, costumes, props and special effects. In fact Moffatt thinks of herself as "a director of photo-narratives" and encourages and delights in the multiple readings of her images.

Moffatt is represented in Australia by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery in Sydney and her last few shows have been sell-outs. The primary market for Moffatt's work is strong and her shows routinely sell out. Prices range from \$440 to \$35,000 for individual images.

Her auction prices have been more volatile, especially since Moffatt rose to market prominence in 2001 when an artist's proof of her iconic photograph *Something More* #1 fetched \$74,000

in Phillips' July auction, nearly tripling the previous Australian saleroom record for a photograph. Later that year her price peaked at \$119,250 with the sale of a copy from the actual edition of 30.

In 2004 the series of nine cibachrome images sold for \$227,050. This set was available for around \$2,500 at the time of her first solo exhibition in 1989 at the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney. Prices on the secondary market have leveled after a period when many overvalued works were left unsold.

Andrew Shapiro of Shapiro Auctioneers says: "*Something More* #1 is the iconic Tracey Moffatt image but other works are now coming up to that level. The market is steady and strong and generates local, interstate and international interest for whatever we offer."

While the photo series *Something More*, 1989 and *Up in the Sky*, 1997 have dominated the saleroom, other series include *Some Lads* 1986, *Scarred for Life* 1999, *Laudanum* 1998, *Invocations* 2000 and *Fourth*, 2001. A new series *Under the Sign of Scorpio* will be shown at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney in August this year.

Moffatt's reputation was further enhanced by the 2003 retrospective of her work at the MCA, Sydney which showed 140 works and seven films and achieved record attendances. ■

Elizabeth Sarkis



Tracey Moffatt, *Georgia O'Keeffe* from the series, *Under the Sign of Scorpio*, 2005. Ink jet print on watercolour paper, 43 x 58cm. COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY.