



Mannequin
Masquerades

Donald Keys



Guardian Angel

Some people take solace in the thought there is a spiritual being looking over them, protecting them, and guiding them away from danger. There are times in my life where my good fortune cannot be explained by luck.

76x61cm or 30x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. April 2025



Blue Angel

This blue angel is a reminder to question one's motives. Are they honourable and ethical? Will your actions lead to a better you or help enrich other's lives?

76x61cm or 30x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. April 2025



Mannequin in a Romanian Blouse

Homage to "La blouse roumaine" by Henri Matisse.
Matisse painted ten versions of La Blouse Romaine
from 1939 to 1945.

76x61cm or 30x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. May 2025.



Mannequin in a Grey Dress

Homage to "Jeune femme assise en robe
grise aux bandes violettes" (Young Woman Sitting in a Grey Dress)
by Henri Matisse

76x61cm or 30x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. May 2025.



Uniformity of Movement

Two mannequins dance in homogeneity to produce a visual narrative of love.

It's a freestyle performance of closeness and happiness.

76x61cm or 30x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. May 2025.



Mannequin Ballerina

The solo dancer telling the story of life.

What happened, how it felt, and what the future could bring.

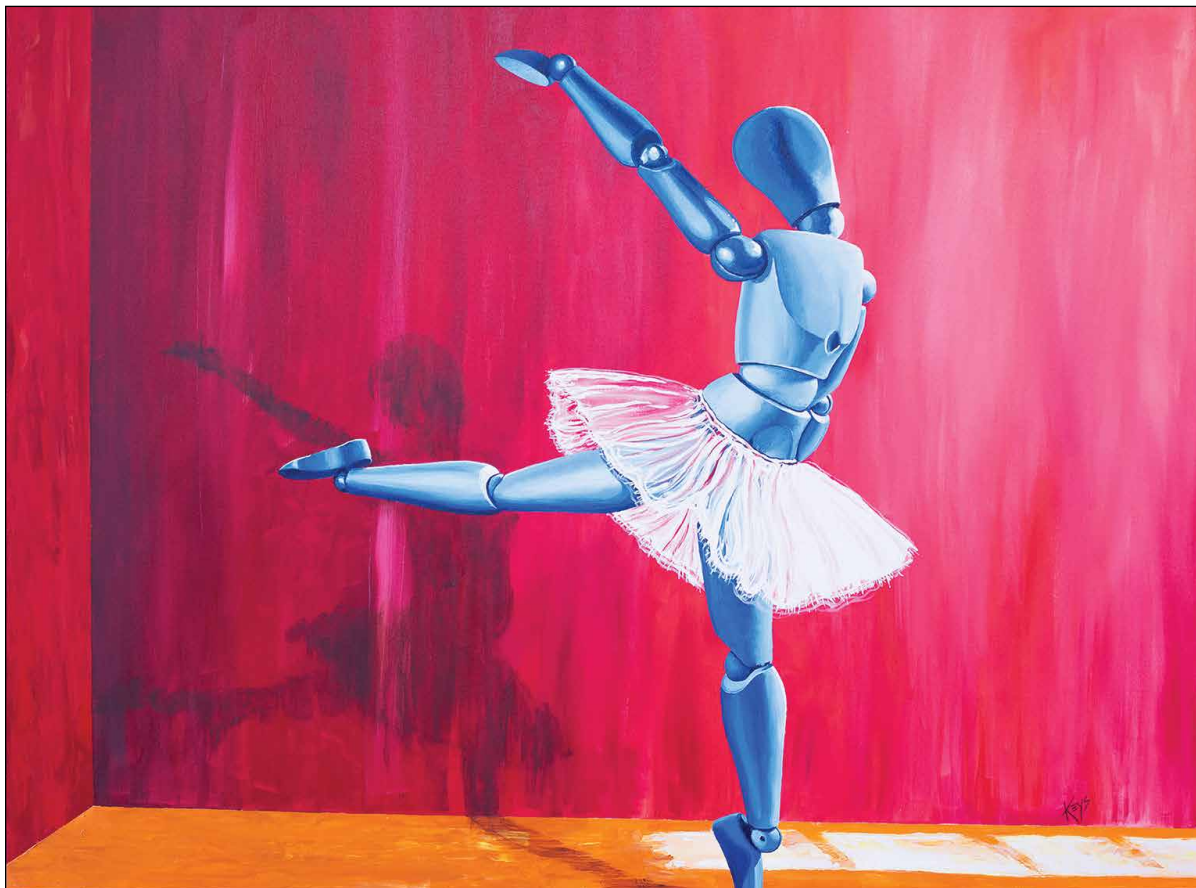
An image that relates to some personal experience.

76x61cm or 30x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. June 2025.



Mannequin Manoeuvres

*When an inanimate piece of wood is positioned a certain way it takes on a level of grace.
Adding complimentary lighting and colour gives the mannequin a life beyond the context of an artist's visual aid.*
91x122cm or 36x48" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. January 2025



The Blue Mannequin

Mostly, the artist's mannequin appears dead, however, once posed correctly they appear animated—alive.

The Blue Mannequin is seen here practicing a bit of arabesque with attitude.

91x122cm or 36x48" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. February 2025



Mannequin Splits

Before being manipulated, mannequins need to limber up.
46x61cm or 18x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. February 2025



Mannequin Requiescat

Paying homage to Briton Rivière (1840 – 1920) who painted "Requiescat" in 1888. "Requiescat," means "may he rest in peace" in Latin. The mannequin dog and horse are figments of my imagination.
42x54cm or 16x21" pencil, acrylic, and marker on paper. July 2024



Mannequin Crossing The Alps

Paying homage to Jacques-Louis David (1748 - 1825) who painted "Napoleon Crossing the Alps" in 1801. In reality Bonaparte made the crossing mounted on a mule and led by a guide.
54x42cm or 21x16" pencil, acrylic, and marker on paper. August 2024



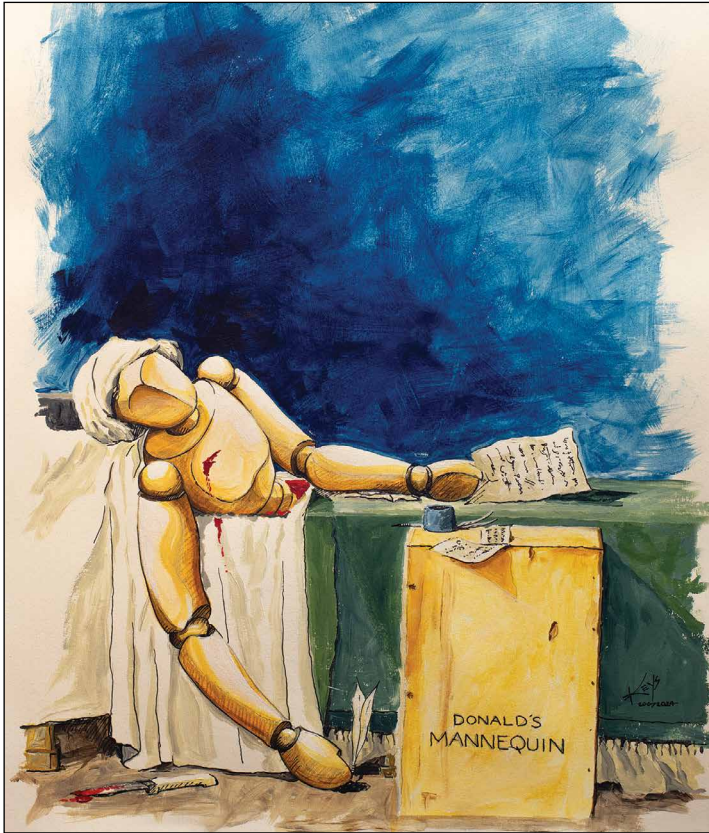
The Milk Mannequin

Paying homage to Johannes Vermeer (1632 – 1675) who painted “The Milkmaid” in 1658. There was a perception in the sixteen-hundreds that milkmaids had a reputation as being predisposed to love.
54x42cm or 21x16” pencil, acrylic, and marker on paper. August 2024



Mannequin Gothic

Paying homage to Grant Wood (1891 - 1942) who painted “American Gothic” in 1930. Many believe the painting was a satirical comment on midwesterners being out of step with a modernizing world.
54x42cm or 21x16” pencil, acrylic, & marker on paper. September 2024



Donald's Mannequin

Paying homage to Jacques-Louis David (1748 - 1825) who painted "The Death of Marat" in 1793. The original painting depicts Jacques-Louis's friend and murdered French revolutionary leader, Jean-Paul Marat.

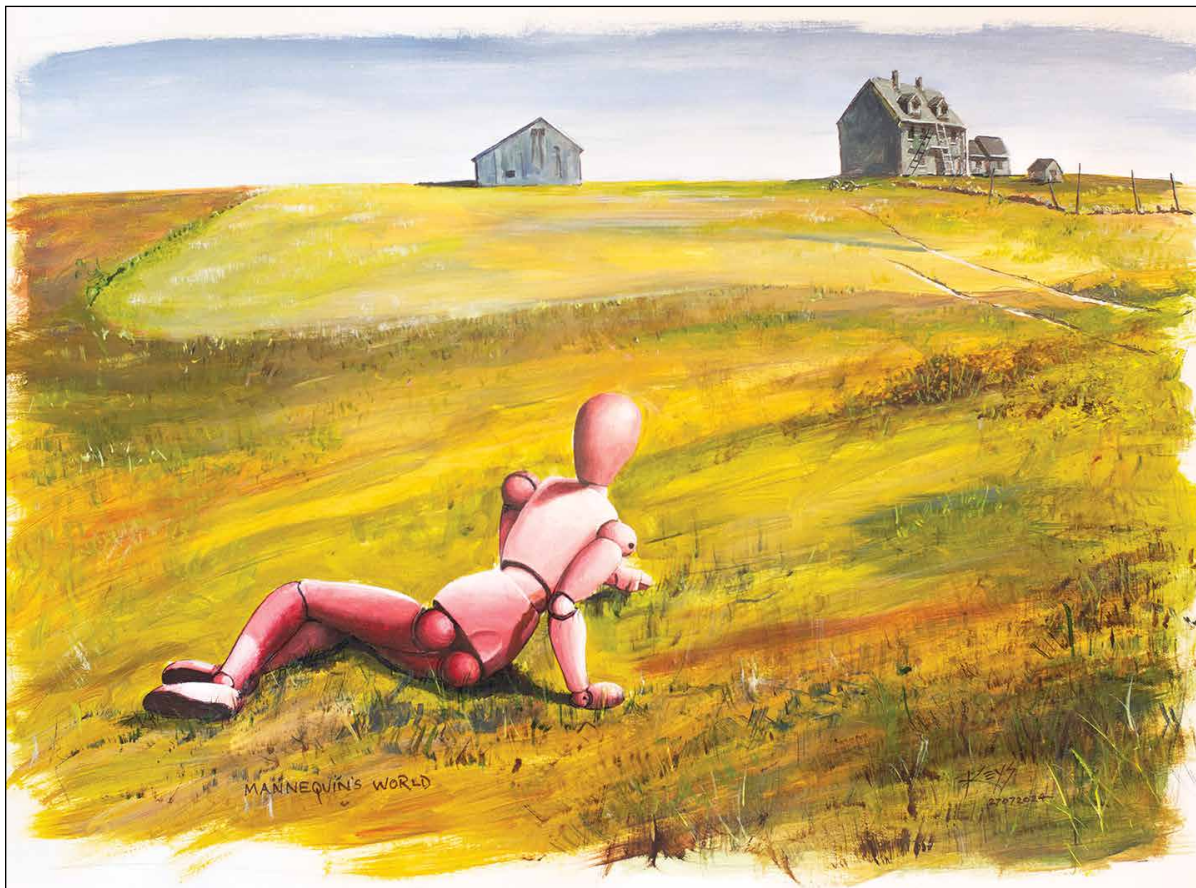
54x42cm or 21x16" pencil, acrylic, and marker on paper. July 2024



Entombment Of Mannequin

Paying homage to Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571 - 1610) who painted "The Entombment of Christ". Caravaggio painted the human state, both physical and emotional, with a dramatic use of lighting.

54x42cm or 21x16" pencil, acrylic, and marker on paper. August 2024



Mannequin's World

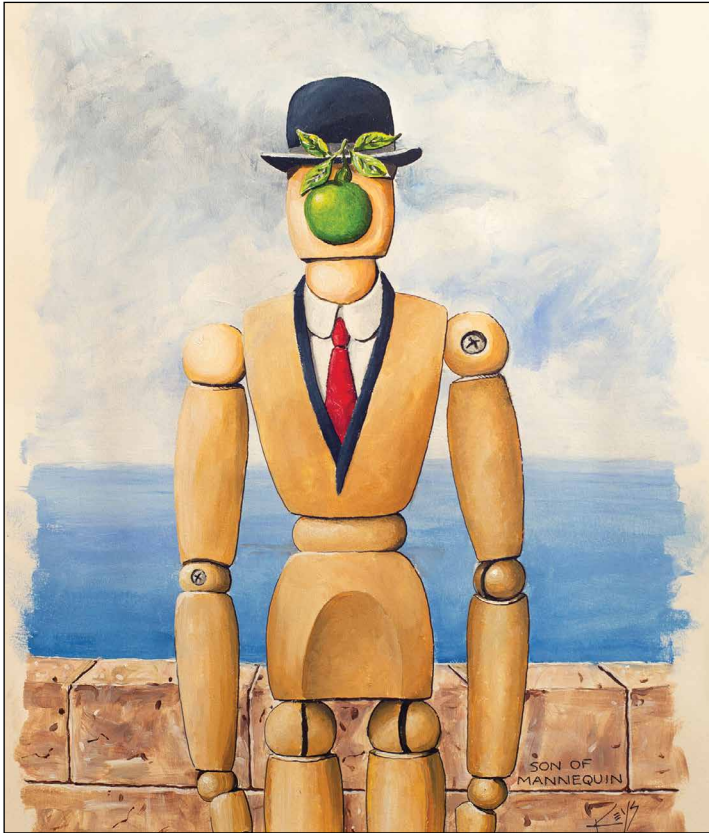
Paying homage to Andrew Wyeth (1917 - 2009) who painted "Christina's World" in 1948. Anna Christina Olson had a degenerative muscular disorder, and was firmly against using a wheelchair, so would crawl everywhere. Wyeth was inspired to create the painting when he saw her crawling across a field.
42x54cm or 16x21" pencil, acrylic, and marker on paper. July 2024



Mannequin Dance

Paying homage to Henri Matisse (1869 - 1954) who painted "Dance (1)" in 1910. The composition of dancing figures is commonly recognized as a key point of Matisse's career and in the development of modern painting.

91x122cm or 36x48" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. December 2024



Son Of Mannequin

Paying homage to Rene Magritte (1898 - 1967) who painted "The Son of Man" in 1964 as a self-portrait. Rene said "Everything we see hides another thing, we always want to see what is hidden by what we see."
54x42cm or 21x16" pencil, acrylic, and marker on paper. July 2024



Mannequin With A Pearl Earring

Paying homage to Johannes Vermeer (1632 – 1675) who painted "Girl with a Pearl Earring" in 1665. At one point in time the painting was known as "Girl with a Turban" (Meisje met tulband).
54x42cm or 21x16" pencil, acrylic, and marker on paper. August 2024



Mannequin Ashes

No contact but you can hit the ball with a bat.

46x61cm or 18x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. March 2025



Mannequin Hockey Two

A little contact and you can manoeuvre the ball with a stick.

46x61cm or 18x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. March 2025



Mannequin Tackle

Full contact and you can hold or kick the ball.

46x61cm or 18x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. February 2025



Angry Mannequins

Violent contact—you can punch the opponent—but you can't hit any balls.

46x61cm or 18x24" synthetic polymer on cotton canvas. March 2025



Secure The Hammer

Occasionally one has to embrace justice. Those who wield the hammer must be beyond reproach.

33cm tall, 26cm wide, 13cm deep, (13"x10"x5") treated pine, coated in lacquer. January 2026.



Spooning

Is there any better place to be than spooning with your lover, in a cosy bed, while the storm rages outside?

11cm tall, 37cm wide, 18cm deep, (4.5"x14.5"x7") treated pine, polymer & lacquer. December 2025



Childhood Lost

Childish play, the discarded cricket bat, the recognition of military service, and the approaching limit of life. Serious stuff!

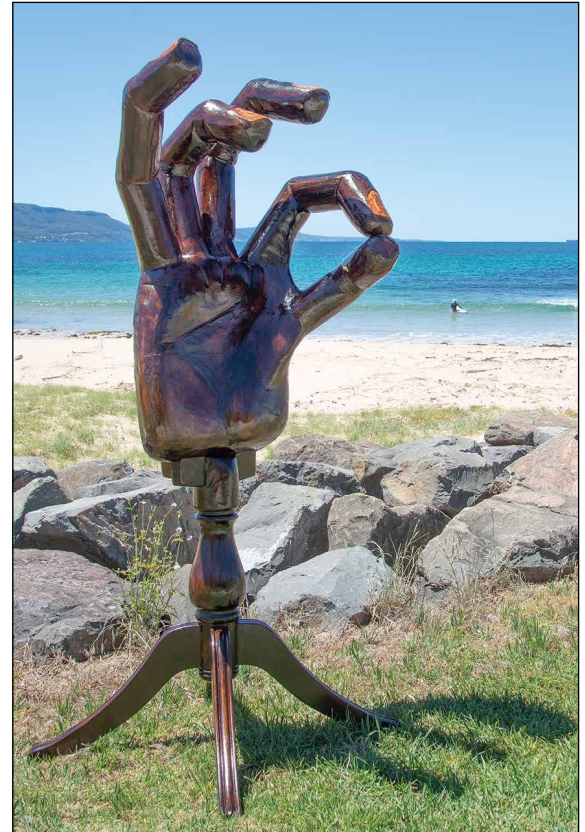
30cm tall, 40cm wide, 19cm deep, (12"x16"x7.5") treated pine, coated in lacquer. January 2026.



Battle Of The Gong

I have noticed a lot of poeple competing to make the biggest noise. Instead of yelling at each other, these two just wish to bang the gong.

28cm tall, 31cm wide, 26cm deep, (11"x12"x10") treated pine, coated in lacquer. December 2025.



It's All Okay

No matter what the situation, we can choose to consider that tomorrow will be all okay, and today's challenge will be an entertaining story.

163cm tall, 66cm wide, 74cm deep, (64"x26"x29") treated pine, wood stain patina, coated in lacquer. November 2025



Children At Play

One of the activities I miss from my childhood is climbing trees. Perspective brings more possibilities into play.

62cm tall, 34cm wide, 20cm deep, (24"x13"x7")
treated pine, wood stain patina, coated in lacquer.
December 2025



Rumination

René Descartes wrote, "I think therefore I am." Sometimes I think too much therefore I am... neurotic

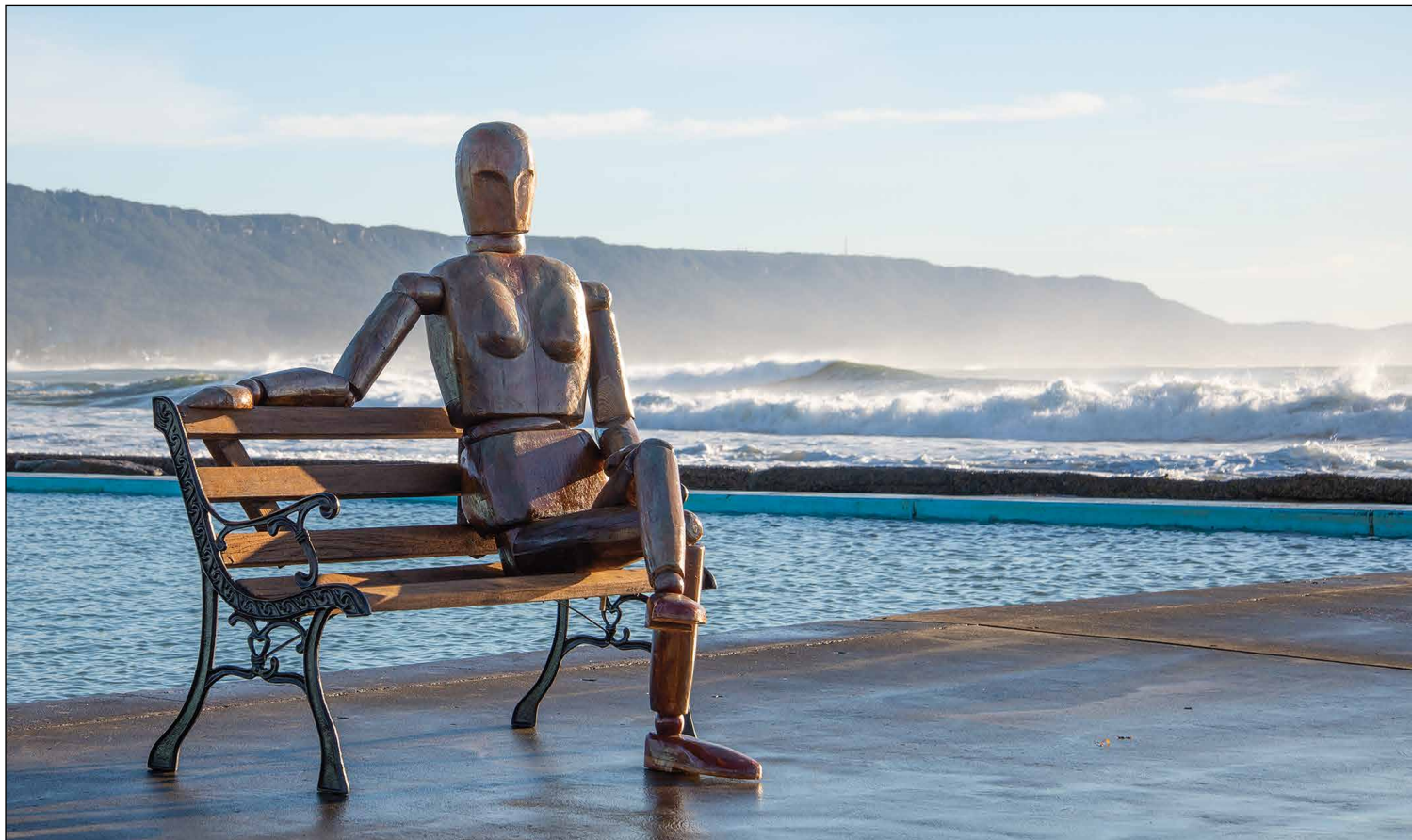
20cm tall, 10cm wide, 13cm deep, (8"x4"x5")
treated pine, wood stain patina, coated in lacquer.
December 2025



Nature's Balance

Sometimes we need to check that we are on stable ground, the roots are not rotted, and the tree is void of grubs.

40cm tall, 27cm wide, 20cm deep, (16"x11"x8")
treated pine, coated in lacquer. December 2025



Today is a gift

Whenever it is quiet, and I have time to reflect, the realisation that today is a gift brings me solace.
125cm wide, 105cm deep, 145cm tall (52"x41"x58") treated pine, cast iron, wood stain patina, coated in lacquer.

Donald Keys

Mannequin Masquerades



If I were a narrative artist, I would prattle on about posthumanism, and then indoctrinate you with piffle like: the empty shell, soulless figure from history, who lacks inner life, meaning, or significance. The proletariat being reduced to a mere physical presence, devoid of emotion, personality, and purpose—simply a puppet. But that's not what this exhibition is about. Seeing I'm not a narrative artist, and don't wish to educate you about anything, the concept was born from a far simpler idea.

An artist friend of mine asked, "What's the point of mannequins?" My immediate thought was there is no point. I suggested that mannequins were made for artists who had no friends willing to sit for them. However the idea played on my mind, after all, the mannequin has been around for hundreds of years—they must be useful for something. So began my experimentation of placing mannequins into works by past masters. Being pleased with the result, the next step was to make the mannequin the hero of some original contemporary images. Then the concept was extended to sculpture. This exhibition is an exploration of the mannequin who masquerades for pure entertainment.

Nine of the images in this series reference old famous paintings, the remaining works were referenced directly from manipulating and posing my artist's mannequin in the studio. My only hope is that some of these images raise a smile.



m2 gallery

Shop 4/450 Elizabeth St,
Surry Hills

Opening Night:

Thursday 9th April from 5:30pm - 8:30pm.
Refreshments available. All Welcome.

Exhibition ends Monday 13th April 2026
Gallery Open: 10:30am—6:00pm

Buy direct from the artist M: 0417 680 580 E: looking@donaldkeys.com.au W: donaldkeys.com.au