

RON MUECK ENCOUNTER



CHILDREN'S
TRAIL

Ron Mueck's parents were toy-makers and he grew up surrounded by their creations. He started his own career in puppetry, working in special effects for television and film. Later, he decided to make sculptures for himself, on his own terms, and began his work as an artist.

Mueck uses many different sculpture and painting techniques to show human and animal bodies with the tiniest details – down to a freckle, a crinkly knee or a strand of hair. He captures his figures in ordinary (and extraordinary!) moments, focusing on body language: the way things are expressed without words or sound.

As you explore the exhibition, you'll see shifts in scale from huge to small – never life-sized. Look at the poses of these characters, and the expressions on their faces. What – or who – do they remind you of? Why are they the size they are? How do they make you feel? Come and meet them!

cover: *Crouching Boy in Mirror* 1999–2002 (detail), edition 1/1, mixed media, The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica, photo: Walker Art Gallery, Gene Pittman

this page, from left: *Woman with Shopping* 2013 (detail), edition 3/4, mixed media, Collection Thaddaeus Ropac, photo: Hauser & Wirth; *Crouching Boy in Mirror* 1999–2002, edition 1/1, mixed media, The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica, photo: Walker Art Gallery, Gene Pittman; *chicken/man* 2019 (detail), edition 1/1, mixed media, Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2019 by Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation with assistance from Catherine and David Boyer, Friends of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, Charlotte and Marcel Gray, Ben Gough Family Foundation, Jenny and Andrew Smith, Gabrielle Tasman and Ken Lawn, Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation's London Club along with 514 other generous individuals and companies, photo: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, John Collie

overleaf, from left: *Man in Blankets* 2000, edition 1/1, mixed media, collection museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, the Netherlands, photo: Antoine van Kaam; *Havoc* 2025 (detail), edition 1/1, mixed media, courtesy the artist, photo: Gautier Deblonde; *Couple Under an Umbrella* 2013/2015 (detail), artist's proof, mixed media, Giverny Capital Collection, photo: photo: Antoine van Kaam

The Art Gallery of New South Wales acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of the Country on which it stands.

Children's trail © Art Gallery of New South Wales 2025



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Meet this woman carrying shopping bags. What is poking out of her coat? Look at the woman's face. How do you think she is feeling?

Describe how Mueck has turned an everyday activity into something unusual and extraordinary.



Choose a name for this woman and her baby. Where are they going? Draw or write their story here.

As you meet more sculptures of people, invent names for each of them.

Draw a picture of yourself crouching in this pose.



Find this sculpture of a crouching boy. Is the boy bigger or smaller than you? Notice the incredible detail of his translucent skin and bumpy spine. Can you spot any freckles or blemishes on the boy's skin?

Crouch down to get his viewpoint. Describe how you feel as you look up at the other visitors who pass by.

Crouch down

Notice the poses of other sculptures in the exhibition and try them out.

Fowl play

Walk around this sculpture. Imagine the sounds you could hear if these figures came to life. What brought them together? Is this man in a staring competition with the chicken?

If you had to enter a staring competition with an animal, what animal would it be?



Draw yourself with your chosen animal at this table.





Spot this man wrapped in blankets. Look closely at the way his hands overlap close to his face as he sleeps. What do you think the rest of his body looks like? Does he look peaceful or is he having bad dreams?

Sleep tight

Draw a new environment around the sleeping man above to make him even cosier.

Imagine new places the other sculptures in the exhibition could be.

Draw an idea for a sculpture that shows a group of your favourite animals. What will they be doing?

Which sculpture surprises you the most, and why?



Be brave and enter the space with these large dogs. Marvel at the surface texture of the creatures. Do they look carved from stone?

Notice how the dogs interact with each other and describe their expressions. Which dog could be the leader in each pack? How many dogs are baring their teeth?

**Fierce
encounter**

Under cover

Look at these two people under an umbrella. Notice how the woman looks down at the man while his hand tenderly holds her arm. How do you think these characters feel about each other?

Take a closer look at the details of their feet, from their wrinkly soles to their curving toes.



Focus on one of the feet, or even an individual toe, and draw it here.

Who has the tiniest toes in the exhibition? Who has the grossest toenails?