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## POLIXENI PAPAPETROU Games of Consequence 2008

In her new series, *Games of Consequence 2008*, Polixeni Papapetrou has returned to the landscape.

Papapetrou considers the landscape as a medium in which she can explore ideas about the contemporary social landscape of childhood. The artist uses the landscape as a visual metaphor — viewed symbolically as a space without constraints and a place where children can test and define their individuality. The depth and complexity of the natural world, ranging from an Arcadian ideal to the darker haunts that children once frequented, provide a way of reflecting on the idyllic and shadowy aspects of growing up.

As the experience of childhood has changed dramatically in developed urban areas in the past generation, the question of what it means to be a child in our society today becomes more important. The process of growing up in the modern world has changed. As recently as the artist's own childhood, play was unregimented and steeped in the natural environment. Even in the city where she grew up, she spent hours playing in vacant lots and abandoned houses and spaces outside the home that allowed Papapetrou to think in terms of uncharted territories and discovery. Papapetrou draws upon her own childhood memories as the inspiration for this work.

Papapetrou sees the type of free play and exposure to nature that she experienced growing up substantially diminished by the lure of the increasingly unnatural world of the screen, ironically supported by parental anxiety about children playing outside of the safe environment of the home. By exploring her childhood memories of play, Papapetrou is reflecting on the liberties that children had in these arcane spaces.

In images of children at play and in contemplation set in the landscape, Papapetrou portrays the landscape as a metaphorical shelter, an arcane place where children can make discoveries about themselves and where their imagination and rules can flourish. The land represents a space without constraints and a place where children attempt to define their individuality through their surroundings.

Born in Melbourne, in 1960, Papapetrou lives and works in Melbourne, Victoria. She has held over 20 solo exhibitions and is represented in many private and institutional collections including the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, National Library of Australia, Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, BHP Corporation, Museum of Fine Arts, St Petersburg, Florida, USA and Artbank. Recently works by Papapetrou were included in 'Tell Me a Story: Narrative Photography Now', Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, USA; 'Aperture 55th anniversary exhibition', Aperture gallery, Aperture Foundation, New York, USA; 'Selected works', Roger Williams Contemporary, Auckland, New Zealand; 'Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?', Te Tuhi Gallery, Manukau City, New Zealand and at the Le Mois de la Photo, Montreal Biennale.

See [www.polixenipapapetrou.net](http://www.polixenipapapetrou.net)  
[www.stillsgallery.com.au](http://www.stillsgallery.com.au)  
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