

# **Photography Artist Models**

## **Multiple Image Montage/Collage**

- 1 - Ava Seymour – New Zealand Contemporary
- 2 – Hannah Hoch – German Surrealist – Early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- 3 - Jerry Uelsmann – USA
- 4 – Megan Jenkinsen – New Zealand

# Ava Seymour



## Key Features

Feature	Significance
Colour	Uses black and white vs. full colour areas. Black and White in reference to the photographic techniques of the past and references newspapers and historic photographs. Full colour used on imagery of contemporary culture e.g. Adult shop signage, street signs, advertisements...any raw flesh and meaty areas are full colour
Technique	Photographic montage, collage, uses Photoshop techniques to compose her images. Seymour plays with scale by enlarging parts of her figures to distort their appearance. She takes her background location shots often on unusual angles and with fish eye lenses to create stages for her groupings.
Subjects matter	State housing, central police station, adult shops, street signs, recognisable actual locations often in Auckland, photographic images of people placed into these locations but not appearing quite normal – often appear to have the wrong head, or missing limbs, or have had gruesome accidents.
Composition	Seymour's compositions are arranged with most of the figures and action in the foreground and placed in a location (urban landscape or interior). She poses her figures so they confront the viewer in all their revolting distortion. Often central figure placement as in traditional portrait group photography. Use she lines and angles of buildings or interiors to create perspective and unusual illusion of space drawing the viewer's eye toward her focal pint which is usually the main subject figure.
content	Makes comment on society and its ways of classifying and labelling activities and lifestyles other than what we know. Has discussed issues regarding state housing, prostitution and police action.

## Further Information

[www.micheallett.co.nz](http://www.micheallett.co.nz)



# Hannah Hoch

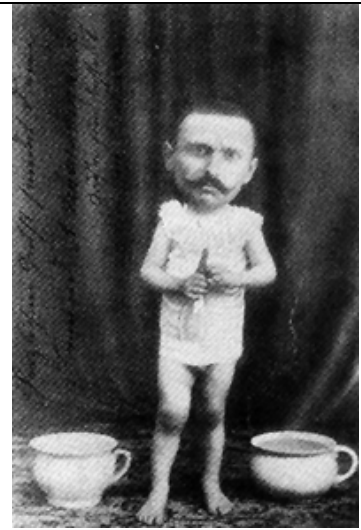
German Surrealist



“Max Ernst” 1920,  
Montage



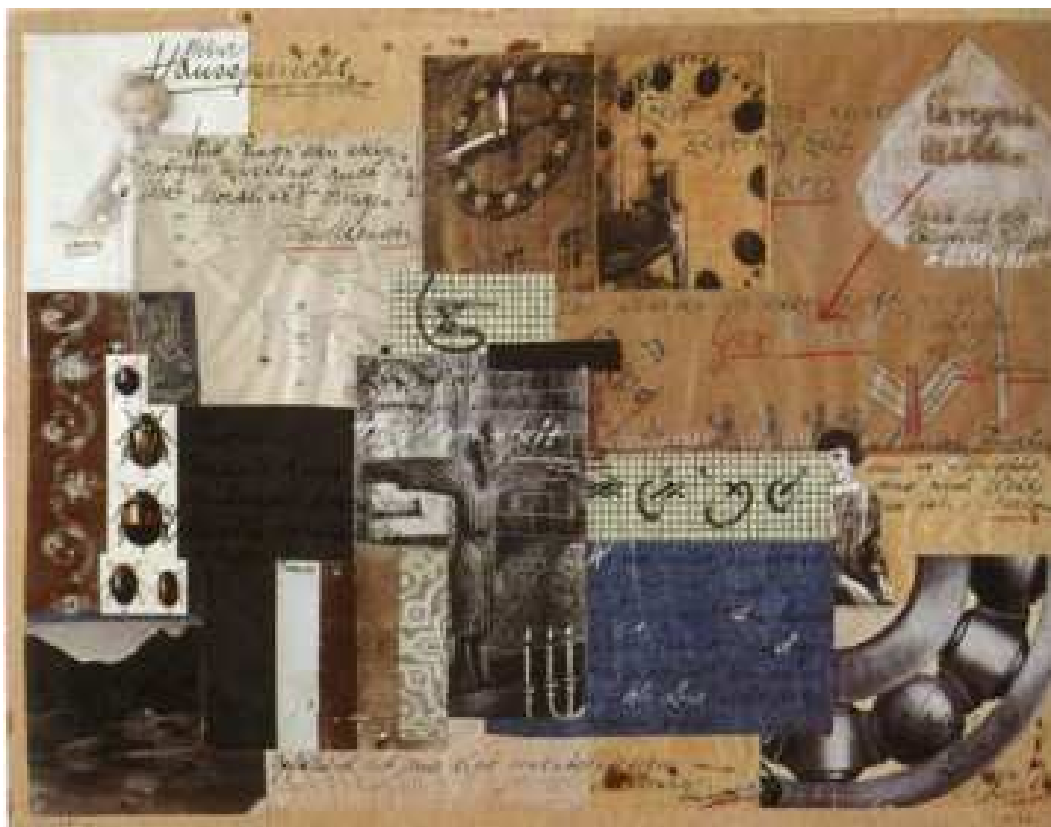
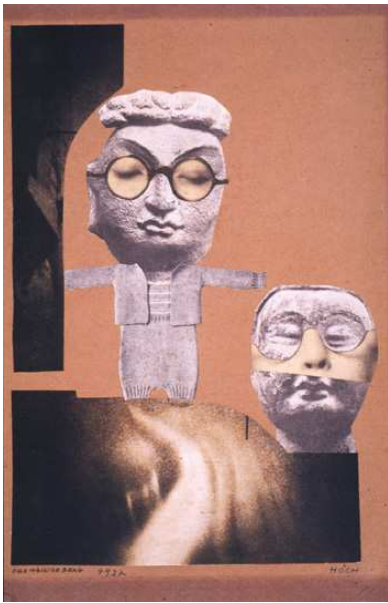
“The Bride” 1933, collage



Manhead

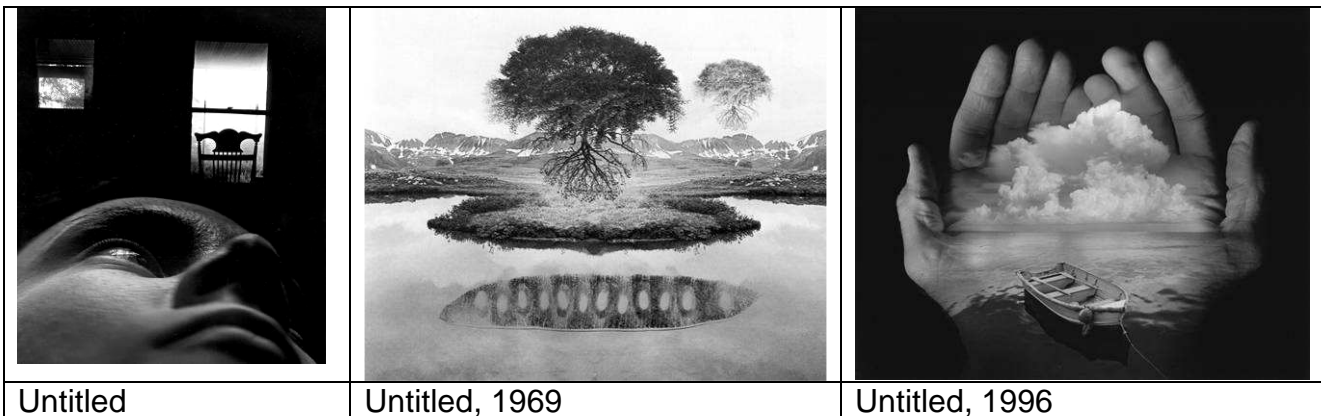
## Key Features

Feature	Significance
<b>Uncomfortable juxtapositions</b>	Human bodies mixed up with machinery. Which raise questions about the loss of humanity in the modern world
<b>Collage</b>	Challenges traditional notions of how art should be made. Collage uses common commercial materials rather than fine art oil paint on canvas. Influence of Picasso synthetic cubism and Duchamp “readymades”. Went on to influence pop artists like Richard Hamilton and Robert Rauschenburg.
<b>Low Art</b>	Cheap materials made quickly that would not last a long time. This challenged established art and was a bit like craft (scrp-books) which could be a feminist statement.
<b>Monochrome</b>	Uses mainly black and white with shades of brown. This could be because colour reproductions were not widely available in the 1920’s and 30’s. It also helps to unify the compositions in the same way as Analytical cubism monochromatic colour choice.
<b>Modern images</b>	Machine parts, BMW logos, light bulbs. Reflecting the optimism that society had for technology at the time. Modern = Good. This changed in the second half of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century with the atomic bomb and pollution.
<b>Changing role of women</b>	Hoch uses imagery to show how the situation of women has changed in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century. No longer just wives but now workers, independent, soldiers, and able to move culturally and socially.
<b>Balance</b>	Sometimes Hoch uses straight lines to “anchor” and stabilise a composition although often the images are made entirely of non geometrical shapes. These are balanced from side to side with light/dark, plain/detailed, organic/mechanical elements



# Jerry Uelsmann

American, Born 1943, "Ultimately, my hope is to amaze myself. The anticipation of discovering new possibilities becomes my greatest joy".





## Key Features

Feature	Significance
<b>Darkroom Processes</b>	All images are created in the darkroom using chemical processes. Burning and dodging, range of filters, superimposed images, sandwich negatives, and other non-digital techniques are used exclusively.
<b>Suspended Reality</b>	Imagery uses changes of scale, metamorphosis, levitation, and other impossible combinations to challenge notions of everyday reality. This works are similar to the surrealist paintings or Rene Magritte (unexpected juxtapositions and interchange textures) , and the psychological teaching of Carl Jung (Dream analysis and subconscious symbolism)
<b>Suspended Gravity</b>	Objects float above the ground with shadows underneath to reinforce the appearance of suspension. This gives a magical surreal effect.
<b>Stillness</b>	Even moving objects like birds in flight seem to be paused. This is partly created by the symmetry and vertical horizontal aspects. Creates a timeless quality that separates them from the business of the here and now.
<b>Aloneness</b>	Usually there is only one principle figure or object. This encourages introspection and meditation. The empty dingy creates the effect of a person being present but now gone. Loneliness is heightened by the reminder that someone was here but has now left.
<b>Infinity</b>	Frequent use of linear perspective devices (buildings, roads, tree lines) to create a "Window into infinity". Also uses atmospheric perspective (blurring in the distance) for same effect. This enhances both mystery and drama.
<b>Symmetry</b> <b>Central focal points</b>	Many compositions have a central focal object and mirror reflections from left to right. This creates the effect of a complete self contained realm that is separate from our own ordinary world.
<b>Static</b> <b>Horizontal and vertical</b>	Uelsmann often uses strong horizontal and vertical elements to create stationary compositions. (diagonals create movement) Where curves are used these are often balanced against each other to stabilise the image. This contributes to the peaceful otherworldly effect and encourages the viewer to meditate on the image. Calm and soothing.
<b>Simplicity</b>	All unnecessary objects and details have been removed. Only elements that contribute directly to the narrative are included. Often only three or four clearly defined elements.
<b>Dramatic Contrasts</b>	Uelsmann uses light and dark to guide the viewer's eye around the image. Highlights and strongly illuminated areas draw the eye to certain parts of the composition while strong dark areas create a sense of drama and mystery.
<b>Contrasting Textures</b>	By limiting the number of elements in each composition Uelsmann emphasises the different textures between each such as glossy oily water against rough textured bark. Care is taken to ensure each texture is rendered in high quality detail to enhance the effect.



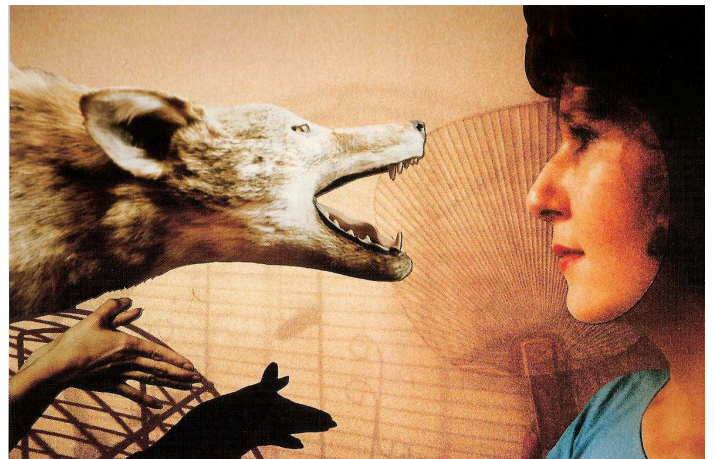
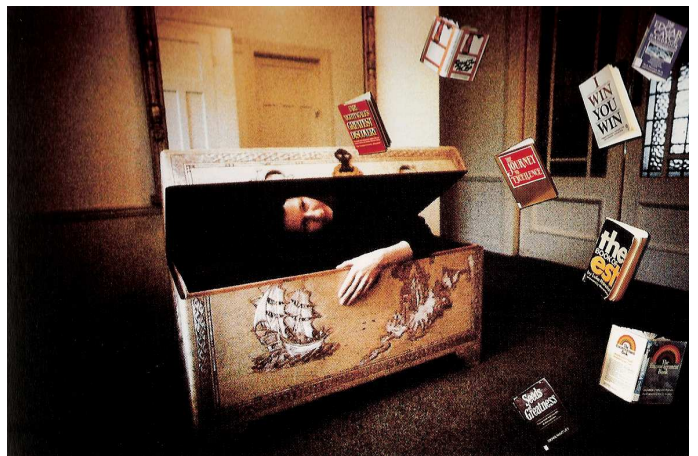
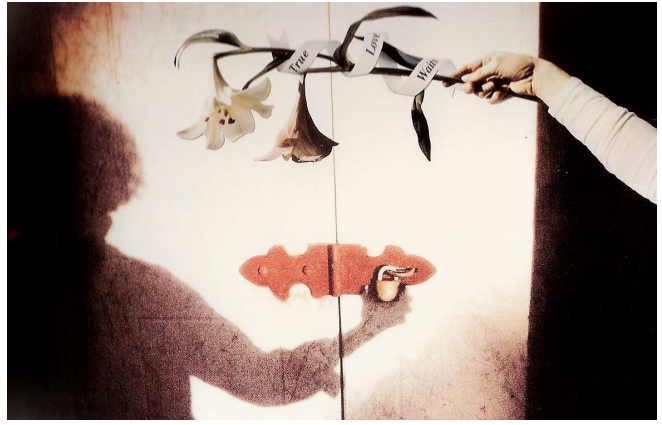
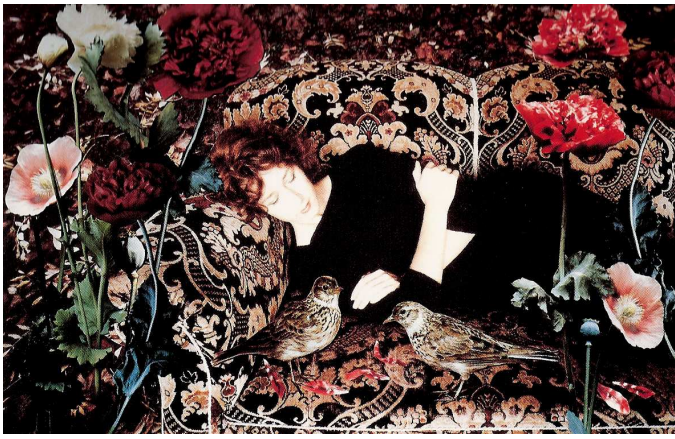
# Megan Jenkinsen

Born New Zealand 1958: "The past informs the present... *Respice, Prospice* – look to the past, look to the future, (is) a perfectly concise prescription for how to act"

		
Philosophy searches for her origins in the <i>CODEX NATURAE</i> 1997	Concord attempts to reconcile the warp and the weft of the mat of homeostasis, 1997	Prudence endeavors to construct a model of Plato's Ideal State with the building blocks of tombs of dead kings, 1997

## Key Features

Feature	Significance
<b>Classical Narrative in Contemporary Context</b>	Themes are based on the classical virtues but visualised with contemporary imagery. This implies the present relevance of past moral codes and this relationship is creation of narratives that show how the virtues are being challenged in modern society.
<b>Titles</b> (Prescribed narrative with multiple interpretations)	Long and detailed titles describe exactly what is going on in the picture although the language used means some titles are cryptic. Meanwhile the apparently random and unexpected combination of imagery allows the viewer to form their own associations and meanings.
<b>Domestic Imagery</b>	Images and objects are often (but not always) taken from every day life: fruit, vegetables, cups and books to show the relevance of the themes to ordinary common people. Celebrates the significance of daily life.
<b>Feminism / Autobiographical</b>	Exclusive use of female participants and frequent use of self portrait. Universal themes and commentary about the human condition but interpreted from a personal perspective with a high consciousness about the role of women in contemporary society. This is reinforced by the selected imagery that includes feminine elements likes flowers, dish gloves, and tea cups.
<b>The Hand</b> (active verb narrative)	Frequent use of the hand which is often the artist's own hand. Reinforces the central verb of each composition where the personified virtue is actively doing something: choosing, carrying, building etc.
<b>Photo-collage</b>	Elements are gathered and photographed individually and then cut out and assemble physically rather than through Photoshop. The collages are then rephotographed and printed and seamless montages. Digital software not universally available in the mid 1990's.
<b>Contrasting Picture Quality</b>	Some elements are printed very grainy or slightly blurred while other elements are sharp and crisp. This creates a sense of misalignment between past/present, virtue/corruption, and dream/reality.
<b>Limited Colour</b> (With opposite element included for effect)	Frequent use of a dominant chromatic hue (all blues or subdued browns) with small inclusions of intense high key colour to contrast. This draws the viewer's attention to selected elements and creates visual resonance.
<b>Surreal Colour</b>	Colours are often modified from normal being subdued, limited in hue, or saturated. This helps to unify compositions and create a alternative reality where normal rules of scale and gravity no longer apply.
<b>Geometric Stabilising Features</b>	Compositions often employ an underlying geometric element to stabilise the composition such as a strong horizontal or vertical. Central symmetrical organisations, opposing diagonals and curves, and pyramidal arrangements are also frequently used to provide structure and balance to the images.
<b>Influences</b> (Medieval, Victorian Surrealism)	Illuminated Manuscript - Use of medieval allegory to tell morality tales. Victorian Photography – Julia Margaret Cameron – Play acting with ordinary people and objects to tell stories Max Ernst – Collages to create alternate realities that tell us about our own



Geoff Harris, 2008 (no copyright) Contributions welcome ☺

# Photography – Martina Lopez (Australian)

*“The 19th century portrait, landscape and the digital media help me communicate my interpretation of the human experience. By extracting people from their original context and then placing them into fabricated landscapes, I hope to retell a story of their being, one which allows the images to acquire a life of their own. While the pieces from photographs verify an actual lived experience, the landscape stands as my metaphor for life, demarcating its quality, where the horizon suggests an endless time”.*



## Key Features

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Autobiographical	Started working with family photographs to explore her own ancestry. Themes are relevant to personal experience, childbirth, death of loved ones
Shifted contexts	The juxtaposition of photos with a different background added in = surreal quality (De Chirico, Dali) dreamlike, other worldly = Timeless quality – past present future all mixed up
Post Modern Post Colonial	Borrowing appropriating from historical sources – past and present all one continuum – Australian colonial images placed in contemporary landscape = critique of colonial values
Digital	Uses digital media to scan old images and them integrate them seamlessly with other images, elements and backgrounds – people from different times and places can come together in the same landscape (as it does in our memories)
Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung	Dream state as a way to find more universal symbolism - "pure psychic automatism" ...free from reason...the true process of thought...surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of dreams, in the indirect play of thought...I believe in the future resolution of the states of dreams and reality."
Black and white versus Colour	Muted colours create a unified picture space with the hue leaning towards sepia tones (like older photographs) colour systems are separated to symbolise separate worlds/realities/times but always a bit muted so they harmonise together. Types of colour systems used to separate elements of the compositions = Pure black and white – Often with the grainy low contrast of old photos Sepia Tone browns – Monochrome like old photos Muted Colours – hand coloured photos or faded watercolours Strong colours – used very occasionally to great effect – contrast to all other areas
Humble Images	Ordinary people set into extraordinary scenes – difference make the contrast more noticeable
Static Calm	Old photos had to have stationary subjects due to the long exposure times – The long frieze like compositional format also help the images to have a Egyptian feel – stationary/timeless Lopez often reinforces this with long horizontal horizon lines BUT also contrasts this with moving objects like flying birds
Contrast Values	Some areas/elements are in low contrast while other are very contrasting. This helps to create visual richness and symbolises multiple realities.

