

Text by Inger Marie Hahn Møller

A series of photographically portrayed young humans, sparingly but dramatically illuminated with deep contrasts between darkness and light by the Australian artist and curator David-Ashley Kerr surround us and fill us with the feeling of being observers and maybe even intruders of an intimate and private scene. These young faces seem absorbed into something out of our reach, a bubble of privateness that captures their full concentration. They are all gazing at - or into - something, which is also the source of light, enclosing their faces. As we move through the exhibition we realise that they are all absorbed into the extra reality of our time - electronic devices. This almost sacred illumination and condensed engagement originates from smartphones and tablets, and with his series *Lux*, Kerr is exploring the state of modern human relationships in a time where these flow ever increasingly through technology.

Previously, Kerr has explored the idea of humans as simultaneously a part of, and yet outside of the natural. In *Lux*, Kerr has moved a step further depicting the human with all its physicality - body, skin, hair - very close to us and very fragile, in deep connection with technology. Kerr's work is not a revolt against the classic dichotomy between nature and technology, but rather an exploration of what happens when humans and technology coalesce, and the relations between humans are mediated through technology.

Throughout his oeuvre Kerr has drawn on elements from our common mythological archive and art history. The naked human body inserted into a dystopian landscape, alone or in some kind of violent, ritualistic victim-executioner relationship to other bodies, and biblical or occult undertones are recurrent in his work. In *Lux* the relations have shifted and instead of nature we meet technology. The dense web of references is still active though in *Lux*, drawing on a formal level on the dramatic use of light as we know it from Rembrandt, where the illumination from the electronic devices surrounded by darkness becomes a modern parallel to Rembrandt's *chiaroscuro*. In our bewilderment of not knowing what these young people actually gaze at, the source of light becomes a mythical object or fetish. The absorption and the serenity of their faces indicate a truly devoted, intimate, almost sacred relationship, and with that the strong mythological and symbolic connection between light [lux] and the divine is embedded. As we gaze at these young faces devoted to some kind of almost ritualistic voyeurism, we realise that we ourselves are voyeurs as well.

Kerr's *Lux* draws us with great beauty and conflicting emotions into a sharpened sensibility towards the role of technology in our lives, in our communication, in our emotional relationships and in our engagement with the world.