

Irene Hanenbergh

If you had to pick one word to describe the hallucinogenic and hyper-real imagery of **Irene Hanenbergh** it would be this: mesmerising. Looking at her work is like sneaking a peek through a tear in the space-time continuum: a microcosmic techno-universe populated by strange beasts unfurls itself in the viewer's imagination. These inspiring works provoked the following inspired comment from panellist **Ashley Crawford** when reviewing Hanenbergh's work for *The Age*:

"There are hints of mysticism, the supernatural, the occult, and even a strange eroticism. But then this gothic aesthetic is met with the cool, high-tech surface of digital technology applied to aluminium creating a strange schism, a kind of cyber-alchemy."

While the paintings Crawford is referring to may begin with a computer, there's nothing bloodless about them. She produces digital images that she then prints onto metal – Zund-prints on aluminium to be precise. The results are quite simply stunning – sophisticated imagery that deliver a knock-out visual punch.

Charlotte Hallows, writing in *Un Magazine*, sums up Hanenbergh's singular visual motifs this way:

"Hanenbergh's artificial images engage with nature and diversity, technology and human utilitarianism, reason and unreason, beauty and the sublime and their inverse in monstrosity and the grotesque. This is a drama of illusion and belief. The work engages the eye on the dazzling surface of the image and creatures move their weight and presence against this surface, with the threat and poignancy of an existence in a magic theatre of hyper-reality."

A native of the Netherlands, Hanenbergh only came here in 1998, via Greece and the UK. She's well established overseas, and now local attention is coming her way. As Crawford tells it:

"Hanenbergh has become decidedly hot property in recent times. With a major installation at Melbourne's Gertrude Street and a sell-out show at Neon Parc in 2007 her sumptuous works became a must-see for collectors, curators and critics."

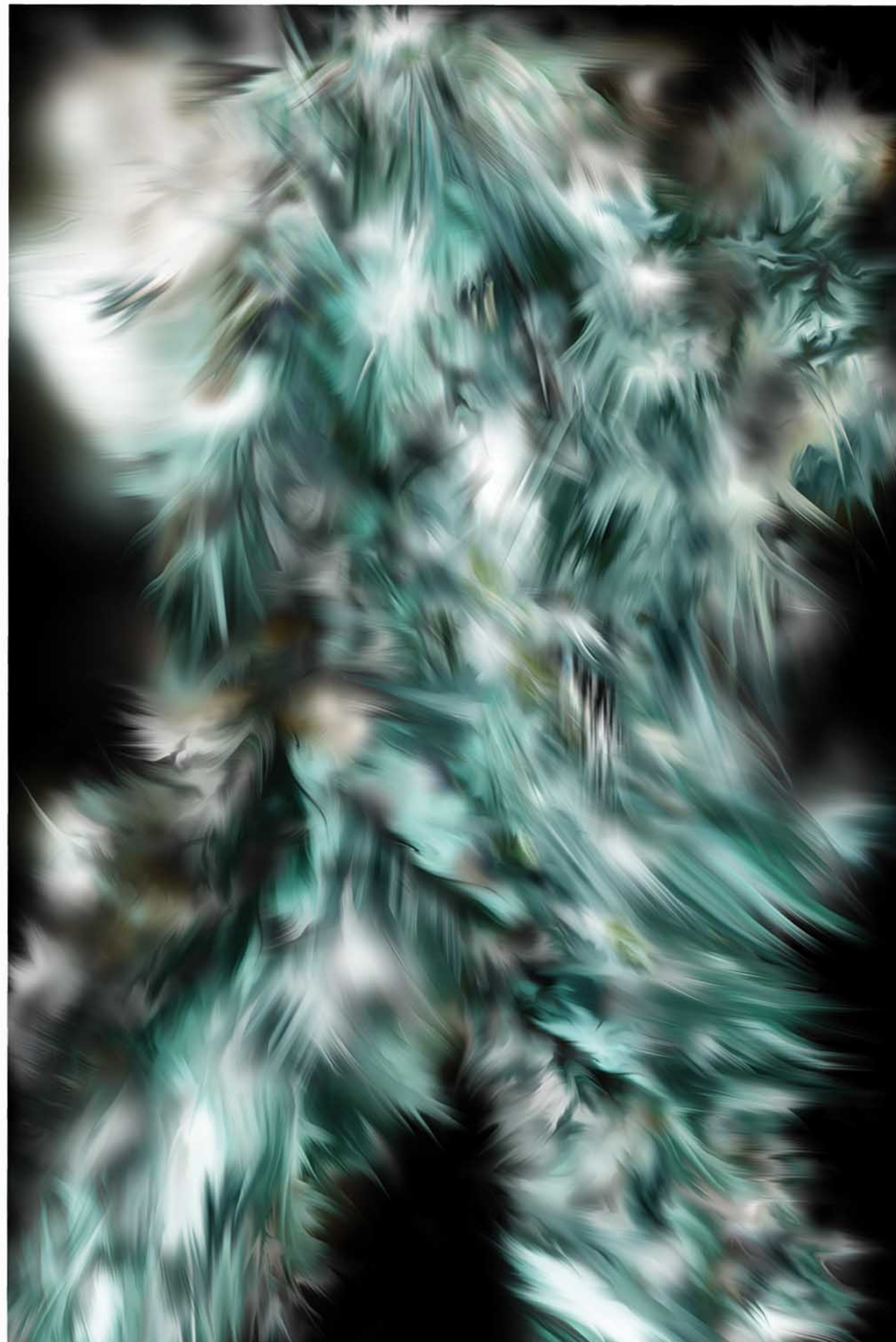
It's a safe bet Hanenbergh's career will take off locally – she consistently attracts glowing notices from experts seduced by the potency and originality of her dazzling images.

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Born: 1966

Contact: Neon Parc, Melbourne

Price range: drawings \$600-\$1,800; paintings \$1,800-\$8,000; Zundprints \$800-\$7,000; installations variable



Irene Hanenbergh, *Lake Onega*, 2007. Zund print on aluminium, 60 x 40cm. COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND NEON PARC, MLEBOURNE.