

August 1, 2006

## Art show sees larger than life sculptures

By Phil Miller, Arts Correspondent

Massive babies, huge wild men, and gigantic women are being installed in the Royal Scottish Academy building in Edinburgh for one of the capital's biggest art shows of the year.

Ron Mueck, the Australian-born, London-based artist, who creates lifelike sculptures of people in various freakish and unsettling sizes, is spending more than a week putting 10 works in place for its opening on Saturday.

The exhibition includes the *Wild Man* and *In Bed* pieces, which dwarf their viewers, as well as a large new sculpture of a baby, called *A Girl*, which is 15 ft. long.

Mueck's sculptures are made with a precise attention to reality, with individual pores, hairs, and other details making them appear lifelike, if outsized.

The artist, who rarely speaks to the media, is personally installing the works in the RSA and adding the final touches to *A Girl*, including blood spots and an umbilical cord.

The show includes five recent sculptures that Mueck showed last winter in Paris, attracting rave reviews and more than 100,000 visitors.

Mueck learned his skills in creating lifelike forms from working in children's television, for the Jim Henson Creature Shop, creator of *The Muppets*, and making props and models for his own production company in London.

He also worked on David Bowie's film, *Labyrinth*.

Mueck works in a traditional way, by first creating small models and maquettes of what he wants to sculpt, before building the final pieces with fibreglass and other materials.

He paints the skin colours to be as realistic as possible and, on the smaller figures, sews in real human hairs.

On the larger sculptures, he uses horsehair or acrylic fibres, each sewn in individually. Clothes are also designed and fitted specifically, while the last detail the artist creates are the eyes.

The Ron Mueck show opens on Saturday and runs until October 1.



Australian sculptor Ron Mueck works on his sculpture entitled "A Girl" at the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh, Scotland, July 31, 2006.