

# SHAPING WIT

21 APRIL — 16 MAY 2021

ART SPACE ON THE CONCOURSE





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*Shaping Wit* explores artists who use humour and irony to talk about serious or light-hearted things.

For centuries, artists have been using their medium to challenge or criticise serious issues. Alternately, artists have broken historical artistic canons to reveal that art objects or visual images can be playful or comedic. *Shaping Wit* explores the work of artists who use humour and irony to talk about serious or light-hearted things. Satirical and cynical art can provide a subtle means for compelling its audience to challenge preconceived ideas and social and political conventions.

A Willoughby City Council curated exhibition presented in partnership with the Sydney Comedy Festival.

### Artists:

Will Coles

Chris Dolman

Blak Douglas

Emily Galicek

Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro

Gillian Kayrooz

Tara Marynowsky

Kenny Pittock

FRONT COVER: Chris Dolman, *Dry Times*, 2020, oil and pencil on cotton. Photo: Garry Trinh. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie pompom, Sydney  
OPPOSITE: Will Coles, *Fake*, 2014, nickel coated bronze  
Courtesy of M. Contemporary

# WILL COLES

**Nip.Tuck**, 2019, 'cold cast aluminium' (glass reinforced plastic with aluminium dust)

**Fake**, 2014, nickel coated bronze

**Untitled (Cherubs with AKs)**, 2020, 'cold cast iron' (glass reinforced plastic with iron dust)

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Will Coles' work occupies a space somewhere between Pop and Conceptual Art, with most of this work falling into the Street Art movement. His work deals with such issues as consumerism as well as environmental and social concerns, usually delivered with his own signature dark sense of humour. His sculptures are usually a representation of an everyday object, such as a TV, mobile phone or a football, combined with a word or sentence. He casts most of his sculptures in cement which gives him the freedom to create large editions of each piece and install them in different locations. Due to the proliferation of his Street Art sculptures and despite the strength of the glue he uses, he is currently considered the most stolen artist in history.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Most of Will Coles' artwork falls into the Street Art movement. Whilst his sculptures are in major public and private collections here in Australia and overseas, there are also thousands of his non-commissioned public installations in various cities across several continents. Will has exhibited in Sculpture by the Sea (Bondi) and at Rookwood Cemetery in Hidden; Rookwood Sculpture Walk. He has also been shortlisted for the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, Gold Coast Art Prize, McClelland Sculpture Award and the Prometheus Art Prize. Will is currently based somewhere in Europe.

Will Coles is represented by M. Contemporary, Sydney.

## COLLABORATION WITH BLAK DOUGLAS

Will Coles and Blak Douglas, **Variola Major**, 2018, glass reinforced plastic with marble dust, hand painted

This is a sculpture that can only be shown in maybe two places in the world, the United States and Australia, or more specifically, Pittsburgh and New South Wales. It relates to incidents where British occupying forces are strongly suspected of deliberately giving Small Pox infected blankets to the indigenous people. This is not to shame modern Australians or Americans about their history, but to ask people to accept the good and bad elements in our history. Despite the current anti-intellectualism of framing such events as 'the black armband view of history', Australia has to accept its colonial past.





LEFT: Will Coles, *Nip.Tuck*, 2019,  
'cold cast aluminium' (glass reinforced  
plastic with aluminium dust). Courtesy  
of M. Contemporary

# CHRIS DOLMAN

***Dry Times***, 2020, oil and pencil on cotton

***Discarded Ten Gallon***, 2020, glazed earthenware

***Boots***, 2020, oil and pencil on canvas

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Chris Dolman makes paintings and objects imbued with incongruent and self-deprecating humour. Drawing from personal experience, art history and popular culture, his work hovers between existentially driven narrative and slapstick caricature. Dolman's areas of interest include failure, superstitions, pathos and loss, which he explores through his practice with an equal mix of sincerity and irony.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Vancouver Canada, Chris Dolman lives and works in Sydney, Australia. He holds an MFA (Research) from Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney University, 2018, and a BFA with Honours (First Class) from the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, 2010. In 2019, Dolman won the Fauvette Loureiro Memorial Artists Traveling Scholarship. He received the Dyason Bequest from the Art Gallery of NSW in 2017. He has also received ArtStart and New Work grants from the Australia Council for the Arts in 2013 and 2011. He was the recipient of the Wallara Travelling Scholarship, George Hicks award and the NGV Women's Association Award, VCA 2009.

Dolman has undertaken international residencies at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Villa Belleville Paris, and Frans Masereel Centrum, Belgium. National residencies include: Hill End, Bundanon Trust, BigCi NSW, Ceramic Design Studio, Parramatta Artist Studios, and Artspace Sydney. He has presented work in solo and group exhibitions in Australia and overseas.

Chris Dolman is represented by Galerie pompom, Sydney.



LEFT: Chris Dolman, *Dry Times*, 2020, oil and pencil on cotton  
Photo: Garry Trinh. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie pompom, Sydney

# BLAK DOUGLAS

*A word is enough to the wise*, 2019, synthetic polymer on canvas

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Having witnessed innumerable 'Welcomes to Country' since migrating Eastward during the early noughties and listening to a variety of elders opinions en mass, I've deduced I'm not at all convinced here on Cadigal. I've observed how economics and power have manipulated certain communities across NSW and have heard stories commensurate with 'blowing in' and overthrowing of the traditional custodians of an area. Evolution is a convoluted subject whether we're discussing Darwin's theory or Dreamings. One thing is for certain in context of the 'Sydney Basin'... when I took up residence in Redfern around 2009, individuals uttered different words of authority.

Tokenism can be a dangerous descriptive. I should know, being born several shades shy of a 'proppa blak', gaining acceptance through identity has certainly earned my quarter-casten butt its' fair share of battle scars.

If I'd received a dollar for every time someone has said – "you could do with a coat of shoe polish" then I'd be closer to retirement. However... I've NEVER accepted walung (\$) for performing a 'welcome' on another's country. Somehow an 'acknowledgement' is more politically correct and it certainly feels as such.

This piece is a poignant comment on the topic. There've been some deplorable 'circus' acts as well as 'elders' projecting absolute delusional bosh. 'Little Joe' is a 1930s cast iron money box based on the racist Deep South attitudes of the era. The mechanism sees a coin placed in the hand and he 'feeds' himself. Upon the distant hillside is a stylised Hollywood sign further indicating the side-show attraction that has become what we know as a... 'welcome to country'. (applause)

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Blak Douglas was born Adam Douglas Hill in Blacktown, Western Sydney, 1970 to an Aboriginal Father and Australian Mother. Originally he was trained in illustration and photography. Observing a family of artisans, he became self-practiced in painting with a style influenced by the study of Graphic Design and devoutly politicised per social justice. Blak Douglas' artwork is held in numerous collections that include the Australian Institute of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies, AAMU Utrecht- Holland, Artbank, Art Gallery of NSW, National Gallery of Australia, National Museum of Australia, Newcastle University Art Gallery, NSW Parliament House Collection, QAGOMA, Sydney Grammar School, Taipei Museum, Town Hall Collection and the University of Western Sydney. His work has also been acquired by City of Sydney, Blacktown City Council, Campbelltown City Council, Lane Cove Council and Liverpool City Council.





ABOVE: Blak Douglas, *A word is enough to the wise*, 2019, synthetic polymer on canvas. Courtesy of the Artist

# EMILY GALICEK

***Making it Work***, 2019, acrylic on canvas

***The Truth in Painting***, 2019, acrylic on canvas

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Emily Galicek's paintings respond to contemporary post-digital conditions, where images and screen-based content circulate through all aspects of lived and virtual experience. The post-digital image is hyper-abundant, capable of being infinitely replicated and manipulated. These processes can alter an image's meaning to the point where it becomes meaningless, or where it achieves a sense of currency through circulation: a viral meme or a tweet, for example. Given these characteristics of the post-digital image, Galicek's works question whether painting has the capacity to visualise the movement of images across networks, and if so, how?

Her paintings create a visual language that responds to the digital and the screen, using humour and parody as

key critical strategies. This is achieved through the imitation of digital design tools, such as those in Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. She also translates various image networks such as Google Images, Instagram, memes and 3D renders to the painted space. Through the creation of this visual language, Galicek's paintings become a flat, screen-like interface. Their self-reflexive nature critiques the context in which they exist: a tongue-in-cheek rendition of online culture. References from disparate locations are deliberately woven and pushed together to create paintings that operate as spaces for visual free-association, where *The Simpsons* is as fair game as Pablo Picasso.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Emily Galicek lives and works on Cadigal land/Sydney. She completed a Master of Fine Arts (Research) at the University of New South Wales in 2019. She has exhibited at Galerie pompom, COMA Gallery, Kudos Gallery, Tributary Projects and STACKS Projects. She has completed a residency at the School of Visual Arts, New York. In 2021, she will present new work in a solo exhibition at Galerie pompom and a group exhibition at Olsen Annexe.





# CLAIRE HEALY AND SEAN CORDEIRO

**Breakfast Bar / Kitchen – Chimpanzee**, 2011, Lego, Ikea bar stool and plant

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

*Breakfast Bar / Kitchen – Chimpanzee* is about the spaces we inhabit. As humans, we are forever adapting and manipulating our environment to cope with the elements and creatures that share our spaces. We build structures that enclose and protect us from nature. Air conditioning controls the temperature and we domesticate animals so they can live with us. Our control over nature (or lack thereof) is central to this body of work.

Lego and Ikea furniture are very similar in a sense: they are both objects of aspiration that require assembly. Lego, which we grew up with, represents the dreams and fantasies of a child; Ikea furniture, which has become so ubiquitous, represents the dreams and fantasies of an adult. By meshing these two objects together we can think about the gap between our fantastic dreams and our banal longings. Both products represent destruction and re-construction, which are concerns we revisit continually within our practice.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro have exhibited in Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania. They represented Australia at the 53rd Venice Biennale; the 5th Auckland Triennale 2013 and the first Setouchi Art Triennale in 2010. In 2012, they held a survey exhibition at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia, curated by Anna Davis. In 2018 they participated in the Australian Biennale Adelaide, curated by Erica Green. In the same year they debuted their major public installation *Cloud Nation* in Green Square Library, commissioned by The City of Sydney. In 2019, they unveiled their latest commission *Tower of Power* at Sydney Contemporary Art Fair.

Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro are represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, Australia.





LEFT: Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, *Breakfast Bar / Kitchen – Chimpanzee*, 2011, Lego, Ikea bar stool and plant. Image courtesy of Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery

# GILLIAN KAYROOZ

**Y3LLOW SUN BAY RUN**, 2018, single channel HD video

**Project \$portboot is Not For Sale**, 2017, single channel HD video

**Project \$portboot is Not For Sale (Breeze block Nat)**, 2017, C-Type print

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

This series of video work is an expression of youth culture and online identities in the digital age. Drawn from personal experience and pop-culture references, these absurd re-enactments of contemporary slang and the mass influx of influencer 'content creation' is presented through direct interactions with the camera and an oversaturation of visual aesthetics.

*Y3LLOW SUN BAY RUN* is an experimental video work that questions our constant need to engage with 'substance-less' digital content. How do these all-encompassing states of euphoric observation begin to shape our being when not online? The feeling of being consumed by these online platforms and spaces could be likened to participating in a marathon, however I think it is more like being on a bay run, where the people in front are taking up the whole path and walking really slow in front of you.

*Project \$portboot is Not for Sale* draws on the foundations of contemporary music videos and the ever encroaching pursuit of constant advertising in our daily lives. The participants were provided with prompts from the artist to then improvise repetitive actions and behaviours between selected objects and the camera, resulting in a surreal branding loop.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Gillian Kayrooz is an artist from Western Sydney. She holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts (First Class Honours) from Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney. In 2018 she was awarded the Create NSW Young Creative Leaders Fellowship, which led her to exhibit internationally in the Asia-Pacific region. She most recently completed residencies at the Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts and the Sapporo Tenjinyama Artist Studio, ARTnSHELTER, Tokyo. In 2021, Kayrooz became a studio artist in residence at Parramatta Artists' Studios. Gillian Kayrooz's practice is grounded in observations of her immediate surroundings and has evolved into a practice that re-authors personal histories through experimental modes of non-linear storytelling. Her work retains a focus on screen art, photo media and video installations. Although there is a vast variety of processes and materials within her work, there remains a documentative focus reflecting local culture and domestic environments.



LEFT: Gillian Kayrooz, *Project \$portboot is Not For Sale (Breeze block Nat)*, 2017, photomedia

# TARA MARYNOWSKY

***Coming Attractions***, 2017–19, hand-scratched celluloid from 35mm film trailer

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

In *Coming Attractions* Tara Marynowsky 'defaces' the female leads of nineties cinema classics, such as *Pretty Woman*, by scratching and hand colouring the celluloid surface of found film trailers. The artist creates a humorous feminist response to the backdrop of Trump-era politics. Tara Marynowsky works across the mediums of painting, drawing and film and incorporates found images as part of her practice. With a curatorial background in film and archives, her work investigates recorded images and the historical representation of women. By personally collecting archival images and formats, she seeks to alter, personify, comment and redirect them from their slumber, transporting them from past to present.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Tara Marynowsky lives and works in Sydney. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours from UNSW, College of Fine Arts, Sydney and has exhibited widely throughout Australia as well as internationally. She has been the recipient of numerous grants, awards and residencies, most recently a Marten Bequest Scholarship for Painting.

Tara Marynowsky is represented by Chalk Horse, Sydney.





# KENNY PITTOCK

***Flat Batteries***, 2019, acrylic on ceramic

***Flights Cancelled Blues***, 2020, acrylic on ceramic

***It Must Be a Sign***, 2012, acrylic on ceramic

***Trying To Leaf Things Better Than We Found Them***, 2021, acrylic paint on wall

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

This series of playful work is an optimistic exploration of personal growth, responding to ideas that are both timely and timeless. Pittock's work hints at feelings of coping with distress, humorously teased out through nostalgic iconography and colloquialisms.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kenny Pittock is a Melbourne based artist who works with drawing and ceramics to playfully critique everyday life with humour and optimism. Pittock received an Honours Fine Arts Degree in painting from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2013. Since then, has had solo exhibitions in Italy and Singapore, and has consistently exhibited his work all over Australia with galleries including ACCA in Melbourne, PICA in Perth, Artspace in Sydney and MONA in Tasmania.

Pittock was the recipient of the 2017 Redlands Emerging Artist Award. His work is represented in many collections including Artbank, Melbourne Town Hall, the University of Queensland, Deakin University, and the Monash University Museum of Art.



OPPOSITE: Kenny Pittock, *Flat Batteries*, 2019,  
acrylic on ceramic

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FREE

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ART SPACE ON THE CONCOURSE

409 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood (next to Box Office)

Opening Hours:

11am-5pm, Wednesday and Thursday

11am-8.30pm, Friday and Saturday

11am-6pm, Sunday

