

A Sullen Perfume

Dean Cross

Opening: 27 February 2020, 6-8pm
On view until: 28 March 2020
Location: Yavuz Gallery Sydney
86 George Street, Redfern, NSW 2016 Australia

Yavuz Gallery Sydney is proud to present emerging, Indigenous Australian artist Dean Cross in his first exhibition with the gallery, *A Sullen Perfume*.

Cross' critical practice revisits and challenges colonial narratives of Australia and the Pacific through the lens of national, archival and personal histories.

In defiance of easy labels and easy answers, *A Sullen Perfume* continues Cross' nuanced evaluation of 21st century life through retellings of personal narrative, collective culture and references to Country. Steeped with rich layers of meaning drawn from a diverse array of sources – everything from Baudelaire to *HAIR* the Musical - Cross takes us on a complex journey of enquiry. A series of loose canvases and framed drawings are transformed into strange, topographical explorations of both landscape and portraiture. A wallpaper depicting a larger-than-life Ford Laser in flames is, perhaps, an allegory for contemporary Australian life; what led us to this point, and what comes next? Punctuated by language, ambiguous forms and collage, Cross questions that which we take for granted and offers us an uncomfortable view of ourselves.

Cross, born in 1986, was raised on Ngunnawal/Ngambri Country and is of Worimi descent. He is a multi-disciplinary artist primarily working across painting, sculpture, video and photography. His artistic career began in contemporary dance, performing and choreographing nationally and internationally with Australia's leading dance companies.

The artist likens his painting process to developing a choreographic composition:

"When you make dance, it often starts with a gesture, a waving of the hand. It has no inherent meaning, but once you add in other gesture, a nodding of the head, you develop a relationship. And that's how I've built up the works in *A Sullen Perfume*."

Throughout the exhibition, Cross relates disparate pieces of material, studies, and elements to assemble works with discontinuous narratives that are finely controlled and complex, in his relation and attempt to make sense of the current Australian ecological, cultural and political reality. Symptomatic of a broader society awash with unrest, Cross employs abstraction as means to lay bare the disquieting truths beneath the surface of the 'lucky' country. He imparts, "every Aboriginal person is a landscape through their connection to Country and so every self-portrait can be read as a landscape". The works in *A Sullen Perfume* are a search for catharsis, and a way of dealing with the unfolding events before him.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Cross has exhibited extensively across Australia at galleries and museums including Art Gallery of South Australia, UNSW Galleries, Australian Centre of Photography, Artspace Sydney, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, and Alaska Projects. His work is collected by both public and private collections including: Art Gallery of South Australia; National Gallery of Victoria (Australia); and The Queensland University of Technology Art Museum (Australia). Cross was a finalist in the John Fries Award (2019), was awarded the School of Art and Design Drawing Prize, Australian National University (2017); the M16 Artspace Drawing Prize (2016); and Highly Commended, Macquarie Emerging Arts Prize (2015). Cross is a current resident of The Clothing Store Artist Studios, Carriageworks (Australia). He has completed residencies with the 4A Beijing Studio Program, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art (Australia); and Canberra Contemporary Art Space (Australia). Cross was recently nominated by curator Sebastian Goldspink as one of the 'Top 8 Australian Artists to Watch in 2020', published in ArtsHub Australia.

For inquiries and more information, please contact Sarah Hibbs at sarah@yavuzgallery.com.

YAVUZ GALLERY

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Dean Cross, photo by Dario Hardaker

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Mine/Mine, 2019, oil stick on unstretched linen, 208 x 196 cm

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