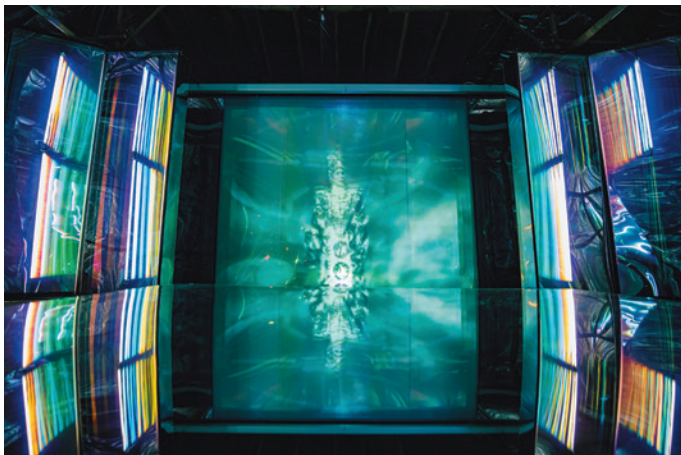


Ming Wong, *Wayang Spaceship*, 2022, mixed media, single-channel video projection (25 minutes, color, sound), multichannel audio with megaphone speakers, modified radio cassette player, 42' 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 32' 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 19' 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".



*the world then a world?* The films farmed for content here in Wong's manic collage include *Lady in the Moon* (1954), *The Nymph of the River Lo* (1957), *Seven Phoenixes (Golden Phoenix Versus the Dragon)* (1961), and *I Want My Country and My Wife Back* (1963). The aliens are all from Soviet-bloc sci-fi films of the same period.

*Wayang Spaceship*, beyond its delicious trippiness, speaks in parable about the ideality of time travel and the longing for a distant home that are often obliquely referenced in filmic and performative representations of the otherworldly. Above the stage, yet another mirrored curtain hangs, reflecting the lights and all that is projected upon the screen below—the sky is yet another screen in this confined world in which all the image rays that spew forth find their reflection and refraction upon each surface. Every territory has been claimed, leaving seemingly no room for the emergence of any new nation-states, only the possibility of new empires that, like the old ones, contract and explode, leaving nothing but the wreckage of memory behind.

—Travis Jeppesen

## MELBOURNE/BRISBANE

### Archie Moore

GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY/QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY

Since 2010, Archie Moore has been creating versions of his childhood home in Tara, west Queensland, as immersive total installations. *Dwelling (Victorian Issue)*, 2022, was the fourth such reconstruction. Each iteration morphs slightly, expanding or contracting to fit the footprint of a given gallery. At Gertrude Contemporary, viewers pushed through glass-paneled vintage doors to enter a dimly lit lounge room with 1970s television shows blaring from a boxy set. The kitchen featured an old Kelvinator fridge and a Laminex table on which lay a tin of biscuits, a kitschy Indigenous doll, and some tufts of hair. An old Metters stove had left smoke marks all over the wall. Sticky roll flytraps hung from a door-frame; a plastic flyswatter was screwed to the wall. One of the two bedrooms had a bed draped in a mosquito net (necessary in the subtropical Queensland climate). The other, representing the artist's childhood bedroom, housed a shelf lined with sci-fi, fantasy, and occultist books. The olive-green walls bore drawings—a roaring demon rendered in ballpoint here, a Dalek shooting lasers there. The autobiographical aspect of *Dwelling* recalled Gregor Schneider's menacing *HAUS u r* project, 1985–, while the sci-fi and fantasy references aligned it with Mike Nelson, whose multiroom installations can feel like a time warp or a glitch in reality. Mike Kelley's *Educational Complex*, 1995, also came to mind, given the way Moore blended his personal memory into broad institutional structures.

Unexpectedly annexed onto this remembered home was a school classroom, with neat rows of chairs and a projector playing a 1970s film extolling the virtues of mining in Australia, an industry that continues to ravage Aboriginal land and cultural heritage as it enriches an elite few. A 1959 copy of *Dawn* magazine, published by the New South Wales Aborigines' Welfare Board, sat on the projector stand, while the folding lid of a writing desk revealed a box of counting blocks next to a copy of *The Story of Little Black Sambo*. Their combination articulates the assimilationist agenda of the Australian education system in which Moore, an Indigenous artist of Kamilaroi and Bigambul heritage, was brought up. In the corner of the classroom, one saw a rusty corrugated-iron shack with a dirt floor and exposed-wire bed frame, described as Moore's grandmother's hut; the object is a memory of her actual dwelling in Glenmorgan in west Queensland and an indictment of the living conditions for many Indigenous Australians, past and present.

Where a 2018 version of Moore's childhood home featured projections of racial slurs onto the walls of one room, *Dwelling* relied on subtler, more atmospheric qualities to point to the artist's experience and internalization of racism. The smell of Dettol disinfectant, for instance, could be detected in the bathroom; the aroma, Moore has stated, refers to the racist assumption that Aboriginal people are inherently dirty, as well as to the Dettol baths his mother gave him. A peephole in the wall of the gallery's visitor toilet offered a view onto Moore's bathtub—evoking surveillance by an unseen external force.

Whereas *Dwelling* portrays racism against Aboriginal people as a highly personalized experience, almost staging an experiment in sensory ethnography, Moore's *Inert State*, 2022—a major new work simultaneously exhibited at the Queensland Art Gallery—is a stark monument to the systemic nature of that racism. A sticker on the kitchen wall of *Dwelling* linked the two: It depicts the Queensland Police crest topped with the British crown and is emblazoned with the word FRIEND. *Inert State* unfurls over Queensland Art Gallery's Watermall, turning it into a reflective memorial pool. Sheets of white office paper strewn across the pool's surface disrupt its clean lines—as if in the aftermath of some protest or fracas. Each sheet is a redacted coroner's report detailing the death of an Indigenous person in custody. There are a shameful two hundred of these in total, all dating from 2008 (the year Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued his apology to the Stolen Generations) onward. Moore excavates both institutional and individual memories, quantifying the weight and qualifying the texture of oppression.

—Helen Hughes

Archie Moore, *Dwelling (Victorian Issue)*, 2022, mixed media, dimensions variable. Photo: Gertrude Preston.

