

# THE COMMERCIAL

## ARCHIE MOORE



## LES EAUX D'AMOORE

LAST DAY SATURDAY 19/07/14

open Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-6pm

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Archie Moore's diverse practice gives form and presence to the frail substances upon which Australian mainstream culture is built, examining the repercussions of its colonial past and the dispossession of Aboriginal people. He takes materials that we might consider benign and gives them weight and power with language that elicits racial and religious meaning. His new work, *Les Eaux d'Amoore*, a series of seven portraits in perfume, engages with another kind of fabrication of meaning.

Enfleurage, expression and distillation are perfume extraction techniques that enable a scent to be taken from its origins and be applied to the human body. Ordinarily, through these processes, a flower's scent can retain vibrancy and aliveness long after its plant origin has died, and in this way traditional perfume manufacture could be described as a kind of plant memorial. Perfume is olfactory representation, a semblance which stands in for the dead original, rather like a photograph of a person. But, unlike photographs which can be stored away and forgotten, scents arrive in our nostrils unbidden, triggering biochemical reactions that can stimulate strong memories, associations and feelings. We can't shut them out. They assault us.

Moore's series of seven perfume portraits, which venture considerably beyond the standard repertoire of traditional perfumes, delve deeply into the idea of scent as memory and seat of prejudice. Working with a master perfumer to resynthesise the strongly associative smells of his youth in South-East Queensland, this suite of aromas range from the at-face-value benign but in-fact anxiety-inducing odours of graphite pencils and paper from his first day of school in *Presage*, to the rather more routinely unpleasant combination of Brut 33 and rum in *Sapphistication*. For Moore, his concoctions are recipes associated with familial uncertainty, shame, poverty and the brutal slap of everyday racism as experienced by an Aboriginal child growing up in a less than hospitable white dominated society. But how will we interpret them from our own perspectives? Like traditional perfumes, these scents may react strongly against our own skin, inflame our nostrils, cause nausea or force thought to the images they stir. For some they may smell like nothing much at all.

In this work, Moore has crafted olfactory resonances of his past which, when we encounter them, will be absorbed by our bodies whether we want them to be or not. As we bring the scents inside ourselves, can we imagine the memories of the artist that they relate to, or the possibility/impossibility for empathy, understanding or even reconciliation? As with perfume, this transference of smell-memory from origin to host is highly subjective, impossible to grasp or to retain. The scent eventually wears off. And, like memories or personal experiences, Moore asks can we ever really share, know or understand those of another?

Bec Dean

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Archie Moore's (b. 1970) conceptual practice employs a variety of media. He produces paintings, drawings, sculpture, installation, photographs, video and, in the current exhibition, aromas embedded in Aboriginal politics as well as the broader concerns of racism, language and interpersonal relationships. Language in particular plays a constant role, as do the concepts of dwelling and dwellings. Being in one's skin and the impossibility for another to experience that is an ongoing theme.

Moore completed his Bachelor of Visual Arts at Queensland University of Technology in 1998. In 2001, he was awarded the Millennial Anne & Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship which enabled him to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague.

Solo exhibitions include *Flag*, The Commercial Gallery, Sydney; *Clover*, Boxcopy, Brisbane; *Muszel*, Higure Gallery, Tokyo; *10 Missions from God*, Spiro Grace Art Rooms, Brisbane (all 2012); *Dwelling*, Accidentally Annie Street, Brisbane (2010); *Depth of Field*, Ryan Renshaw Gallery, Brisbane (2006); *The Archie Comic Book Series*, Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane (2005); *Words I Learnt From The English Class*, Black Peppers Gallery, Brisbane (2002).

Group exhibitions include *My Country, I Still Call Australia Home: Contemporary Art from Black Australia*, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane and Auckland Art Gallery (2013 & 2014); *Mémoires Vives: Une Histoire de l'Art Aborigène*, Le musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux (2013-2014); *Experimenta – Speak to Me, 5<sup>th</sup> International Biennale of Media Art* at RMIT Gallery, Melbourne and the University of Queensland (2013 & 2014); *Transmission*, curated by Carrie Miller and Dr Matthew Hindson, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, *Contemporary Australian Drawing 2: Drawing as notation, text and discovery* at the University of the Arts, London and *Lie of the Land: New Australian Landscape* at the Australian Embassy, Washington D.C. (all 2012); *Reality Check – Watching Sylvania Waters*, curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, Hazlehurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre, Sydney and *Making it New: Focus on Australian Contemporary Art* curated by Glenn Barkley, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (both 2009).

In 2011, Moore began a musical collaboration, *Σqg√e|n*, with fellow artist, David M. Thomas, which continues to be active in an expanded form today to include two other visual artists: Geoffrey Vagg and Paul Wrigley.

In 2010, Moore was the winner of the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize. He has six times been shortlisted for the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2013). In 2013, he was commissioned by Newcastle Region Art Gallery to create the sculpture, *General Sanders vs Colonel Saunders*; Also in 2013 he was invited to participate in the University of Queensland's National Artists' Self-Portrait

Prize. His work for this exhibition, *Black Dog*, was recently acquired by the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Archie Moore's work is in the collections of the Gilbert and Tobin Collection, Sydney, Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, UTS, Sydney, the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Newcastle Region Art Gallery, the Owen and Wagner collection, North Carolina, the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, the Queensland University of Technology Art Museum, Brisbane and the University of Technology, Sydney.

Forthcoming exhibitions include: *SOUTH - Contemporary Art from Australia, Mexico, South Africa*, curated by David Corbet, Hazlehurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre, Sydney (08/08/14 - 06/10/14); Melbourne Art Fair Video Program, curated by Simone Hine and Kyle Weise, Royal Exhibition Building and Federation Square, Melbourne (13/08/14 - 17/08/14); The Commercial Gallery's presentation at Melbourne Art Fair (E113), Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne (13/08/14 - 17/08/14); *Courting Blakness*, curated by Fiona Foley, University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane (05/09/14 - 25/09/14).

*Les Eaux d'Amoore* is Archie Moore's second solo exhibition at The Commercial Gallery, Sydney.



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