

# CHRIS ORR

## artist CV

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Name Chris Orr  
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*Poisoned (2000), Sun Shone 2 (2015), Coca Cardellino (Rosso) (2019)*

### EXHIBITIONS

2000–2 'Dolly' series  
various locations  
2015 'Bone Idol'  
fortyfive downstairs,  
Melbourne  
2019 'Conventicle'  
fortyfive downstairs,  
Melbourne

### EVENTS

2019 *Motherboard  
Calefaction*, finalist,  
Banyule Award for  
Works on Paper  
2020 *Motherboard Portal  
(Verde)*, acquired by  
ACU Gallery

### EDUCATION

1984–5 Graphic Design,  
Swinburne University  
1985–6 Art & Design,  
Prahran Institute

### EMPLOYMENT

1996–2014 Creative Director,  
Beige

Chris Orr studied art and design at Prahran Institute and graphic design at Swinburne in the 1980s. In the 1990s, he founded a graphic design practice, Beige, strongly anchored in the street art aesthetic.

Chris's first venture into the art world came about when a friend presented him with a plastic doll's head and challenged him to 'make art out of it'. The result was the 'Dolly' series: oversize digital manipulations baked on to canvas and paper. Melancholy and mesmerising, they contained a dark beauty. Displayed only in the foyer of an architect's firm in Sydney in 2001, the series was created and sold to collectors in Melbourne, Sydney, Osaka and Berlin.

In 2014, Chris took a leap of faith, winding down his graphic design practice and devoting himself to art full time. With the purchase of a skull from a medical supplies store, the 'Bone Idol' exhibition (2015) was born. Although the obvious parallel of birth and death is not deliberate, there was a tangible dialogue between 'Bone Idol' and the previous 'Dolly' series. Possessing voluminous qualities similar to the plastic doll's head, the skull proved a more challenging object to navigate.

The object is obsessively scanned and photographed to achieve optimum light and shade and to reveal previously unrecognised terrains, extracting as much out of it by trawling and navigating it close up, reinterpreting it in a myriad of ways. *El Dorado*, the corner piece work for the exhibition, was shot and coloured with light over 100 times; it was an unyielding object, taking many hours to make submissive with light and colour. The result is a carnivalised confection of candified decay. The digitised image is rinsed, saturated and drowned in colour before being blanketed in a collage of decorative stencils and architectural motifs.

Bestowing life on inanimate objects has become a theme. In 2018, Chris began work towards the 'Conventicle' exhibition. Shown at fortyfivedownstairs in May 2019 to great success, the show was an unorthodox assemblage of Renaissance-based Victorian engravings blanketed in everyday detritus, modern ephemera and classical stencils. Responding to the catastrophic pollution of modern life, old soft drink cans, disregarded packaging and discarded motherboards were expertly re-assembled in an exciting declamatory recitation of social archaeology. 'Conventicle' presented a diet of ever-changing colour, with velvet hues, fluorescent outbursts and unexpected complexions.

Specialised coloured acrylic box frames were designed by Chris specifically for 'Conventicle'. They were representative of Mexican and Greek Orthodox domestic icons, which are often festooned in fluorescent colours and electric lights.