

## PERSONAL DETAILS

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## EXHIBITIONS

2000-10 'Dolly' series  
2015 'Bone Idol'  
fortyfive downstairs  
2019 'Conventicle'  
fortyfive downstairs  
2022 'Sacellum'  
fortyfive downstairs

## GROUP SHOWS

2019, 20 Linden Postcard show  
2020 'Here' (online show)  
fortyfive downstairs  
2021 '10 Artists in 10 Weeks'  
Art Hunter/MelbourneStyle

## ACQUISITIONS

2020 *Motherboard Portal (Verde)*  
ACU Gallery, Melbourne

## AWARD SHORTLISTS

2019 *Motherboard (Calefaction)*  
Banyule Award for Works  
on Paper  
2021 *Miss Information*  
Geelong Acquisitive Print  
Award  
*Gethsemane (Garden of  
Loneliness)*  
Banyule Award for Works  
on Paper

## EDUCATION

1984-5 Graphic Design  
Swinburne University  
1985-6 Art & Design  
Pahran Institute

## HISTORY & PRACTICE

Chris Orr is of European and Narungga descent. He was accidentally born in London to Australian parents, grew up in Melbourne (mostly) and lives with his partner in St Kilda. After studying art & design and graphic design at a tertiary level in the 1980s, in 1996 he founded a graphic design practice, Beige, strongly anchored in the street art aesthetic.

Chris believes art can be created from the most mundane of objects – in part derived from working in graphic design, where you are often called upon to 'polish a turd'. Given a subject, Chris storyboards it into the third dimension.

His first serious 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 onto canvas and paper. Melancholy and mesmerising, they contained a sinister beauty. Displayed only in the foyer of an architect's firm in Sydney in 2001, the series was expanded and successfully sold to collectors in Melbourne, Sydney, Berlin and Osaka.

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. Possessing voluminous qualities similar to the plastic doll's head, the skull proved a more challenging object to navigate. It was 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. The result is a carnivalised confection of candified decay.

With a catastrophic loss in a bushfire in 2015, Chris took a hiatus to direct his creative energy into rebuilding. He returned with what became the 'Conventicle' exhibition (2019). Bestowing life on inanimate objects had, unsurprisingly, become a theme. Shown at fortyfivedownstairs to great success, 'Conventicle' was an unorthodox assemblage of Renaissance-based Victorian engravings blanketed in everyday detritus, modern ephemera and classical stencils. Responding to the overwhelming 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.

Chris designed specialised coloured acrylic box frames used for many recent works, inspired by Mexican and Greek Orthodox domestic icons which are often festooned in fluorescent and coloured electric lights. From 2019, Chris has produced made-to-order acrylic block versions of his works, designed to catch and diffract light, adding a further dimension to his art.

Chris's work has also appeared in the Linden Postcard show (2019, 2020, 2021), fortyfivedownstairs' 'Here' group show (2020), and The Art Hunter's '10 Artists in 10 Weeks' (2021). His work was shortlisted for the Banyule Award for Works on Paper in both 2019 and 2021, and the Geelong Acquisitive Print Award in 2021.

His 2022 show, 'Sacellum', is an infected confection of the sacred and technology; a melancholic wink at consumerism and spirituality; a dialogue between a certain past and an uncertain future.