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EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 [Sacellum](#), fortyfivedownstairs
- 2019 [Conventicle](#), fortyfivedownstairs
- 2015 [Bone Idol](#), fortyfivedownstairs

ACQUISITIONS

- 2023 [Served bold](#), Geelong Gallery
- 2020 [Motherboard Portal \(Verde\)](#)
ACU Art Collection

AWARDS

- 2023 [Ursula Hoff Institute Award](#)

SHORTLISTS

- 2023 [Served bold](#), Geelong Gallery
Acquisitive Print Award
[White noise](#), Banyule Award for
Works on Paper
[Gethsemane Binary](#), Castlemaine
Experimental Print Prize
- 2021 [Miss Information](#), Geelong
Gallery Acquisitive Print Award
[Gethsemane \(Garden of Tears\)](#),
Banyule Award for Works on Paper
- 2019 [Motherboard \(Calefaction\)](#),
Banyule Award for Works on Paper

INVITATIONALS

- 2022 [Bakehouse Art Project](#)
Bakehouse Studios, Richmond

GROUP SHOWS

- 2019–22 Linden Postcard Show
- 2021 [10 Artists in 10 Weeks](#)
- 2020 Here (online), fortyfivedownstairs

EDUCATION

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

MEDIA

- 2023 [Contemporary visions: works from
the ACU Art Collection](#)
Chris Orr, Word for Word, Joy FM
- 2022 [Chris Orr, The Jewell of Art](#), The Art
Hunter TV, Ep 23

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 and staffy 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. [Motherboard Portal \(Verde\)](#) from this show was [acquired by the ACU Art Collection](#). The work was also featured on the cover of [Contemporary visions: works from the ACU Art Collection](#).

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 of his works, designed to catch and diffract light, adding a further dimension to his art. His 2022 show, ‘[Sacellum](#)’, was 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.

In 2022, Chris was invited to produce work for the iconic [Bakehouse Art Project](#) in Hoddle St, Richmond. His work has also appeared in the Linden Postcard show (2019–22), fortyfivedownstairs’ ‘[Here](#)’ group show (2020), and The Art Hunter’s ‘[10 Artists in 10 Weeks](#)’ (2021).

Chris’s work was shortlisted for the Banyule Award for Works on Paper in 2019, 2021 and 2023; the Castlemaine Experimental Print Prize 2023; and the Geelong Acquisitive Print Awards in 2021 and 2023, at which [Served bold](#) was awarded the [Ursula Hoff Institute Award](#) and acquired by Geelong Gallery.