

CHRIS ORR

artist CV

5/95 Grey St, St Kilda VIC 3182

phone 0407 245 995
email chris@chrisorr.com.au
web chrisorr.com.au
insta @chrisorraus

ACQUISITIONS

2023 *Served bold*, Geelong Gallery
2020 *Motherboard Portal (Verde)*
ACU Art Collection

AWARDS & SHORTLISTS

2023 *Served bold*
Geelong Gallery Acquisitive Print Award
WINNER Ursula Hoff Institute Award
White noise
Banyule Award for Works on Paper
WINNER Peoples' Choice Award
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

EXHIBITIONS

2024 *Motherboard*, fortyfivedownstairs
2022 *Sacellum*, fortyfivedownstairs
2019 *Conventicle*, fortyfivedownstairs
2015 *Bone Idol*, fortyfivedownstairs

GROUP SHOWS

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

INVITATIONALS

2022 *Bakehouse Art Project*
Bakehouse Studios, Richmond

MEDIA

2023 *Contemporary visions: works from the ACU Art Collection*
Chris Orr, Word for Word, Joy FM
Chris Orr – Gethsemane Binary, Still Life with Pansy, Main FM
2022 *Chris Orr, The Jewell of Art*
The Art Hunter TV, Ep 23

EDUCATION

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

Chris Orr is of European and Aboriginal 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. His work *White noise* was joint winner of the Peoples' Choice Award in 2023. He was shortlisted in the Castlemaine Experimental Print Prize 2023, and the Geelong Acquisitive Print Awards in 2021 and 2023, at which *Served bold* was awarded the prestigious *Ursula Hoff Institute Award* and the work was acquired by Geelong Gallery.

His latest exhibition is '*Motherboard*', showing at fortyfivedownstairs from 23 April to 4 May 2024.