



Jonny Niesche – ‘Cracked actor’

29 September – 17 November 2017

Thursday to Saturday 12–6 pm and by appointment

Opening reception 29 September 2017 6–9pm

Peter von Kant is very pleased to announce ‘Cracked actor,’ the first UK solo show by Australian artist Jonny Niesche.

‘Cracked Actor’ is a musical piece written by David Bowie, the fifth track of the 1973 ‘Aladdin Sane’ album, written and composed in 1972 – also the birthday of Jonny Niesche. With an oscillating constellation between detailed iridescent and colourful glam rock and politically engaged art rock, the latter with its focus upon rhythm, repetition, and the avant-garde, this piece describes the decline of an aged ex film star reduced to paying for sexual performances behind the scenes of Hollywood. It is a decadent portrait of drugs and sex with no limits: ‘smack,’ ‘crack,’ ‘give me your head’ (extract). In addition, ‘Aladdin Sane’ was inspired by the story of ‘Vile Bodies’ made by British writer Evelyn Waugh in 1930, which Bowie himself read in one of his crossings: ‘The book speaks of a London in the period immediately preceding an imposing imaginary war, and he explained that at the time, ‘people had a frivolous, decadent, and stupid attitude.’ And, suddenly, they found themselves involved in this terrible holocaust. They were all out sorts and kept thinking about champagne, parties and clothes. Somehow it seemed to me that]there were strong analogies with people’s behaviour nowadays.’

Here colour palettes and their range of colours and gradients are ideally developed and generally based on the composition of the shades of colour that characterise the cover of Bowie’s ‘Aladdin Sane’ album. This is the extravagant and surprising proscenium that inspired Jonny Niesche and in turn, is offered to us.

Post-minimalist artist and idolater in equal measure, both in colour and material, he develops his practice between painting and sculpture through architectural, erotic, metaphysical, hedonistic and psychological associations. He 'thinks of the surfaces we call skin, fabric, canvas, wall and screen, and how they positively model our culture, generating contacts, connectivity and communication,' as Giuliana Bruno affirms in her text 'Surface Encounters.'* Jonny Niesche explores the expanded field of painting and abstraction by creating associations borrowed from all kinds of past and present personal experiences and reformulating our understanding of the effects of light and colour on the human senses. Planes which are often shiny and reflective surfaces made using glitter, iridescent mirrors, fabrics and dyes, welded steel translucent structures and lightweight digitally printed voiles, reflect an external character that is received and decoded by the spectator. Subsequently, the spectator is transported into a perpetual state of transformation and dazzling vibration as the result of a personalised mix of colour, light, and kinetics that in unison permeate the exhibition space. To do this he relies on the concept of exchange and cross-disciplinarity, rather than the establishment of a dominant one, so that they freely move back and forth between surfaces, shapes, symbols, riffs, and narratives. The gradients thus become 'glam' and sensual aspects of our lives that eroticise the surface of the skin, forming imperceptible but similar emotional sunsets on it. The forms create a new custom language, varying the structure from work to work. And the adorned works, in their completeness, lie in the space and on the surfaces ready to be worshipped.

Domenico de Chirico, 2017

Jonny Niesche completed his MFA (2013) at Sydney College of the Arts under Mikala Dwyer, and under Heimo Zobernig at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. In 2015 he was awarded the Fauvette Loureiro Travelling Scholarship. Niesche has exhibited internationally in group exhibitions and with notable institutions including 'Superposition of three types' at Artspace, Sydney, 2017; 'Shut up and Paint' at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), Melbourne, 2016; 'Painting. More Painting' at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne, 2016.

Recent and forthcoming solo exhibitions include Station Gallery, Melbourne, September 2018; Arsham/Fieg, New York, February 2018; 'Cracked actor' at Peter von Kant, London, September 2017; 'Sydney Contemporary' with Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, September 2017; 'Splitting Image' at Zeller van Almsick, Vienna, 2017; 'Love-light' at Sarah Cottier, Sydney, 2017; 'New Jörg, New Jörg' at New Jörg Kunstverein, Vienna, 2016. Recent and forthcoming group exhibitions include 'Mirror surface' at Massimo Carasi-The Flat, Milan, October 2017; 'Wholesome Environment' at Lundgren Gallery, Mallorca, Spain, 2017; 'Matter matters' at Massimo Carasi-The Flat, Milan, 2017. His work is held in the collections of the MCA Sydney, National Gallery of Victoria, MONA, Artbank, and in private collections in USA, Europe, Asia and Australia.

Curator and editor Domenico de Chirico, born in Bari in 1983, lives and works in Milan. From 2011 until 2015 he taught courses in Visual Culture and Trend Research at Milan's European Institute of Design (IED). He collaborates with numerous international galleries, artists and magazines. In 2016 he has been appointed as artistic director of DAMA Fair, Turin.

* <http://supercommunity.e-flux.com/authors/giuliana-bruno/>