



INTERREGNA

Abdul Abdullah Casey Ayres Nathan Beard

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1. An interregnum designates a period in which a throne is vacant between successive rulers, or between successive governments. The interregnum is the gap in a metanarrative of nationalism, the moment when authority releases its hold.

Uncomfortable with having to continuously justify his status as an Australian and as a Muslim, especially in light of the Sydney riots in 2012, Abdullah explores painting as a meditative and non-committal practice: where refusing to adopt an explicit position is a political act in itself. Abdullah employs off-white pastels as a useful a-signifier, alluding to a fleshy indeterminacy. In his portraiture, features are preserved while garments are rendered in silhouette, recognisable only as costume or stereotype. Xenophobic bumper stickers are re-coded as an ambiguous commands or entreaties, conveyed in sickly hues which belie their repellent content.

2. During interregna, archetypes are vulnerable to dissolution. Existing systems of cultural value are divested of their authority, and new systems of meaning can proliferate in their stead.

Ayres presents a collection of objects stripped of function and status. A cracked and useless exhaust manifold operates in reverse, billowing fog rather than removing waste pollutants, while a decommissioned motorbike, over-modified to the point of danger, hangs as a foreboding ornament.

ABDUL ABDULLAH graduated with a Bachelor of Art in 2008 from Curtin University and in 2009 received the Highly Commended in the NYSPP at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra. In 2011 he was selected as a finalist in the 2011 Archibald prize and won the Blake Prize for Human Justice. Most recently he was a finalist in the 2012 Metro Art Award. His work is included in the collections of the University of Western Australia, Murdoch University, The Islamic Museum of Australia and The Bendigo Art Gallery. Abdullah is represented by Fehily Contemporary, Melbourne.

CASEY AYRES received First Class Honours in Fine Arts from Curtin University in 2010. He has contributed work to a number of group exhibitions, including 2007's *Law of Proximity* at the Moores Building Contemporary Art

Fumbled attempts at explicit eroticism in misappropriated English are overwritten across Rothkoesque slabs of thick, flat paint, the transgression preserved beneath a thick lacquer of nail polish.

3. Interregna call into question auctoritas, the invocation of authority within a single being. Where medieval kings ruled through the strength of their convictions and by force of their personality, interregna are vacuums of personality as well as authority.

Beard has constructed a pre-humorous memorial to Tina Turner, a devout Buddhist, reminiscent of the glass coffins which display recently deceased monks in Thailand. Offerings are proffered to Tina, including artificial fried chicken as an approximation of 'soul' food, in a culture where the garishness of a display holds no negative relationship to the sincerity of a devotional belief. Audio and video of Turner chanting is interspersed with footage from her biopic, *What's Love Got To Do With It*, conflating the two until the shrine becomes a memorial to the practice of veneration itself.

4. Interregnum is a term which carries its own end with a kind of lazy inevitability – for a period between successive authorities to exist, there must be a subsequent ruler, and a healthy tradition of succession. Any act made during interregna may be suddenly overturned, and any theory suddenly rendered inapplicable.

space; and has recently exhibited work in China as part of the Pingyao International Photography festival. In November of 2012 Ayres held his second solo exhibition at OK Gallery, Perth, by whom he is represented.

NATHAN BEARD is a West Australian interdisciplinary artist whose work is primarily engaged with exploring the myriad influences of his Thai-Australian cultural background. Beard graduated from Curtin University with First Class Honours in 2010 where he currently works as a sessional academic. As a recipient of the Australia Council's Artstart grant Beard will be undertaking further research and development towards solo projects in 2013.

1. Casey Ayres, *Making hot wheels outta hoopties (Mr Tokyo Drift)* 2013 bicycle

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