



1. 不是所有的茶在中国

Acrylic, moisturizer and aerosol on canvas  
100 x 100cm  
\$600

2. *Metabolism (The Man Eating Chicken)*

Single channel video, 3.02 minutes  
\$600

*Love Teste*

Single channel video, 4.04 minutes  
\$600

3. *Shipwreck*

(a<->b Nah, Nope, No, Nada, Nothing. c. Promise)  
Mild steel box tube, bed sheet, hot rolled steel,  
vase, flowers, chain. 360 x 140 x 120 cm  
\$6000 (Urns P.O.A.)

4. *Empathy Fatigue*

Digital print 70 x 70 cm  
(edition of 6)  
\$850

5. *Deaf Blind Dumb (cunt)*

Single channel video, 5.24 minutes  
\$600

*Perpetuity*

Single channel video, 5.24 minutes  
\$600

*The Boys*

Single channel video, 3.10 minutes  
\$600

6. *Orphnaeus, Aethon, Nycteus, Alastor*

Digital print from 35mm negatives. 70 x 70 cm  
(edition of 6)  
\$850

7. *Upset By Two Nostalgias Facing Each Other Like Two Mirrors*

Digital print from 35mm negatives 100 x 100cm  
(edition of 6)  
\$850

The last time Casey had his Joker face on was for the exhibition TUNC, at OK Gallery in October 2012. TUNC was an unsettling exhibition: chains wrapped around batons, a velvet-lined and mirror-tinted cabinet that lit up to reveal replica semi-automatic guns, photographs that could have been movie stills of two beautiful young men shining in the night, one of them – Casey - in casual black jeans and dress shirt and full comic-book face paint. It was three months after James Egan Holmes had killed 70 people in a movie theatre in Aurora Colorado, during a midnight screening of *The Dark Knight Rises*. In this 2012 Batman iteration the Joker was absent, his twisted-misunderstood-genius villainy replaced by brute-force Bane. Heath Ledger's performance four years earlier in Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight*, widely awarded and also tacitly understood in popular imagination as a contributing factor in his self-immolation by prescription drugs 6 months prior to the release of the film, was still then protected by and from Hollywood, itself now part of a grand and mythological tale.

Jump cut to now, though, and Ledger's legendary attempts to 'embody' the character have been upcycled by Jared Leto for *Suicide Squad*, a movie described as one of the worst of 2016. Bemused reviews of *Suicide Squad's* candied, nonsensical brutality were often peppered with accounts of Leto's 'method', behaviour that bordered on abuse: gifting co-stars used condoms and live rats, demanding to be referred to as 'Mistah J'. This on and off screen performance, although it was largely cut from the finished film, was inevitably compared unfavourably with the 'class and depth' of his predecessor's. Where Leto's verged on self-indulgence, Ledger's could stand in contrast, the suggestion seemed to be, as an allegory for the darkness of our times, although an argument could easily be made that Leto's does this too - perhaps more successfully because of its self-indulgence, and because it does away with beauty.

At The Art Gallery of Western Australia right now, Heath Ledger is being honoured with an 'exhibition' of sorts. Props and costumes from his films appear alongside personal artefacts; scripts, notebooks, items from his home, countless photographs taken by the actor himself of artful landscapes, lighting effects, his partner and daughter. Much is made of his sensitivity and inner life, represented in this exhibition by these photographs, by journals cracked open to semi-stoned commentary on the nature of truth and reality, and tableaux of objects representing his favourite pastimes; playing the guitar, chess, surfing. The 'real life' of the actor becomes, distributed amongst artefacts of his performances, another kind of fictional character or part played - the talented and tortured, tragically beautiful man.

In that interim, between Jokers, and between TUNC – an exhibition that tested the limits of mythology and biography, – and what I see as a kind of accidental, straight-faced counterpart to it, *Heath Leger: A Life in Pictures*, Casey renounced art. This exhibition is his return to it, but it also suggests that his own process of making a life in pictures never really stopped. It utilises as material photographs, videos and texts made in 'the field' and it too lives between two spaces, the directly autobiographical and the embodied, cinematic archetype, endlessly referential. What is invention and what isn't is difficult to read. In the exhibition, itself left untitled, Casey reclines in romantic black and white on an Alice Springs hotel bedspread eating KFC and sound-tracked by television. This footage, shot for his own purposes, is intercut now with dialogue from *Paris, Texas* and other personal 'fieldwork' footage. Text under photographs of places alludes to things that might have happened in them, we don't know. Two men sing the siren's lure from *O Brother Where Art Thou* on the back of a parked ute, while the Joker sets off flares and hoists a white dress-shirt flag, sad and menacing in the background. Afterwards the three talk normally about gigs and birthdays like anyone's brothers. This video is titled *The Boys*, and I don't know whether this is intended to reference the 1998 Rowan Woods film, but it makes me queasy anyway, thinking about how quickly 'normal' can tick over into bad trouble, and vice versa. Amid images that seem familiar enough to be real, the Joker appears like a red flag. He burns everything – incense, banksias against a Lynchian red backdrop, flares, letters, the ash of which he seals with more fire inside steel. Casey's Joker though is so wry he is almost funny, and this wryness flips these moments from searing and brutal honesty into knowing un-truths, unfixing the stories from their foregone conclusions.

The opening lines of Joan Didion's *The White Album* – "we tell ourselves stories in order to live" - are often interpreted as a methodology of salvation, as though through the application of clear and recognizable narrative sense will be made, and it's because of this sense we will endure. But Didion wrote this essay in the aftermath of the Manson family murders, that quintessential moment where the enabling fictions of Hollywood and the bloody pulse of life catastrophically merged, and if there's a real lesson for us in it, it's less heart-warming than the usual line. Didion's essay is full of beautiful sentences, but sense is never made; the purpose of her essay is in fact the opposite, to elude it but to stay alive anyway. Rather than saving us, Didion suggests, the narratives we invent can be a trap that bind us to interpretation where there can and should be none, and though we might tell ourselves stories in order to live, often those stories can outright maim: goodness follows beauty, love is kind, the message will get through this time. In the end, everything will be fine. There is a quieter violence, a shaving down of the edges, in making something, someone, yourself into an image or a legible story. However many years on, these lessons still apply.