



The Boy Diver

Alex Pyren

26 June - 13 July 2019

The Boy Diver by Alex Pyren

Essay By Kyle Weise

The Boy Diver continues Alex Pyren's interest in playfully reflecting on lived experiences, reconstructing and transforming encounters from their childhood and moments from their daily life. Here, the artist returns to their tenth birthday party, where they would find a treasure at the bottom of Temora public pool: a \$1 coin. The exhibition focuses, not on obtaining the coin, but on reaching for it and the potentiality of this moment of endeavour and expectation.

As the coin's glint is followed through the water, the uncertainty of the moment suggests a flow of energies, yet to be regulated, that have unrestricted potential. The artist's body is implied in this recreation of a memory but is not made solid, and also inhabits this shifting ground of potential, rather than certainty.

The exhibition's traces do not monumentalise this event. Instead, the distorted lens of the water, made material in the resin of the work *In/Out of Reach*, emphasises the shifting ground of memory, and the work inhabits the uncertain interstice between the real and imagined.

Within *The Boy Diver*, this singular moment is abstracted into a combination of fragments scattered throughout the space, yet tied together by aromas of sunscreen and chlorine that permeate the gallery, and a rough blue line that circumscribes the walls. The pool's edge, represented in the work *Looking Out, Looking In*, floats unmoored in the space, and places the viewer and the gallery both within and beyond the pool and similarly, both as a spectator and participant on the borders of this memory.

A traditional mosaic, forming part of another reconstructed fragment of the real/imagined Temora pool, *The Bottom of the Basin*, extends the excavation of this memory even further. The work's traditional formal mosaic design evokes Pompeii, and the recovery of history, and random moments from daily life frozen in time. While the content of the mosaic, two species of fish common to the area where the artist grew up, the Murray cod and the eel-tailed catfish, returns this reference to the specificity of the artist's childhood.

Across peeling skin, sunscreen, water, Band-Aids, and loose change, *The Boy Diver* returns to a childhood memory. This moment is deconstructed and econstructed within the gallery, as it is filtered through intervening years, experiences materials and contexts; a memory, like the coin, that is perpetually just out of reach. *The Boy Diver* invokes the incessant movement between past and future, the impossibility of grasping a singular present moment, not to mourn this, but to celebrate indeterminacy and flux, as the grounds of possibility from which lines of flight can surface.

List of Works (Left from Window to Wall): *Looking Out, Looking In; In/Out of Reach; The Bottom of the Basin; Facing the Sun.*

Metro Arts

IMAGE CREDIT / Alex Pyren, *The Boy Diver*, 2018. Image courtesy the artist.

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Metro Arts and the artist acknowledge the Jagera and Turrbal peoples, as the custodians of this land, recognising their connection to land, waters and community. We honour the story-telling and art-making at the heart of First Nation's cultures, and the enrichment it gives to the lives of all Australians.

Always was, Always will be.



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