ENTER ART FOUNDATION

GARETH ERNST

b 1973 Sydney, Australia. Lives and works in Berlin.

VITA

Education

1986 Certificate of Fine Arts - Illawarra Institute of Technology - AU
1986-1990 Bachelor of Arts - English, Film, Art History and Philosophy - University of Wollongong - Wollongong - AU
1990-1994 Bachelor of Creative Arts - Theatre Design and Animation - University of Technology Sydney - Sydney - AU
2004-2010 Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drawing (Honours) - National Art School - Sydney - AU
2017 Masters of Fine Arts in Painting - National Art School - Sydney - AU

Exhibitions

2018 Martin Browne Contemporary - Sydney - AU
2016 50 Contemporary Artists by Enter Art Foundation - Orenstein & Koppel Lofts - Berlin - DE
2016 Summer Show - Michael Reid - Berlin - DE
2016 Company of Men - Gaffa Gallery - Sydney - AU
2015 Undraped - LOST Space Gallery - Sydney - AU
2015 Open Studio Exhibition - Sydney Mardi Gras Festival - Sydney - AU
2014 The Adonis Project - Human Resources - Los Angeles - USA
2014 Home - Brunswick Street Gallery - Fitzroy, Melbourne - AU
2014 Open Studio Exhibition - Sydney Mardi Gras Festival - Sydney - AU
2014 Schleich Animals - ESD Gallery Darlinghurst - Sydney - AU
2013 Gorillas - Prone Gallery - Sydney - AU
2010 Honours Exhibition - National Art School Gallery - Sydney - AU
2010 GENTS Views of Taylor Square, Art and About Festival - Men’s Underground Toilets (Taylor Square) - Sydney - AU
2009 How to Draw a Truck - NG Gallery Chippendale - Sydney - AU
2007 The Art of War - Open Studio Exhibition - AU

Awards and Grants

2014 Art Grant - City of Sydney - Sydney - AU
2014 Art Grant - City of Yarra - Melbourne - AU
2010 Quick Response Grant - City of Sydney - Sydney - AU
2000 Chromacryl Portrait Prize

Publications

2015 Mardi Gras Apartment Exhibition - Sydney Morning Herald
2012 Winter User’s News
2011 The Sex Workers Outreach Project Men, Sex and Gender Diverse - The Professional Magazine

Residencies

2008 Frasers’ Residency, Chippendale - Sydney - AU

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Commissions
2005 Artwork for film ‘Suburban Mayhem’

ARTIST STATEMENT

Gareth Ernst’s work focuses on the intimate and fleeting, on mortality, desire, surveillance, and masculinity. Like the writings of Jean Genet, Gareth Ernst’s paintings, drawings and videos are illicit love letters. They deal with the secret and the underground, touching on the pornographic and the criminal. They are rapid, urgent and complete, revealing secret Worlds parallel to our own. His studies of the human form are uncompromising and direct. Gareth’s work disrupts the tradition of idealising the male form, and instead uses it as a vehicle for exploring the themes of power, vulnerability and innocence. He often achieves this through unorthodox pop culture inclusions and juxtapositions with medieval memento mori symbols—Darth Vader masks, leaked police surveillance videos, stuffed Pokémon dolls and even nibbling mice dress his works. For his audience, these juxtapositions are destabilising and contradictory, creating tension with the erotic charge of the subject’s exposure.

Monuments of Berlin The monuments of Berlin are sacred spaces, sacred objects. Built of bullet-scarred stone and metal, restored and repaired, of angels, warriors, animals and weeping mothers. They show death, sex, desire, violence, battle and adoration. They are artefacts of importance handed down to us. Passed down from generation to generation saying ‘Here! Here is what we valued. Here is what we loved. Remember us.’ These works explore permanence and impermanence. What we are left with after loss, how we remember and how we continue. The ash used is physically of Berlin, a substance of the city, changed by fire and now transmuted into new artworks. Referencing Berlin’s history as a city burnt and reborn so Gareth chooses ash as the medium for these paintings. The ash was sourced from the refugee campfires on the Berlin Tempelhof Feld. Chunks of charcoal, ground to fine powder, are mixed with water and painted like giant water colours.