

## **Stephen Bram \ Lane Cormicj**

CAVES, Melbourne

Exhibition dates: 1 - 23 February, 2019

Brought together by Lane's attraction to certain triggers or points of return within our education and history, Stephen Bram and Lane Cormicj's exhibition at CAVES demonstrates both artist's interest in the arbitrariness of meaning-making. Each adopting distinct signifiers that typically denote a certain aura or ideal, both artists are concerned with how art can communicate multiplicity, and yet meaning can remain wilfully elusive.

In 1996, a younger Lane Cormicj visited Anna Schwartz Gallery and saw the work of Stephen Bram—a large wall painting occupying the upstairs gallery wall. Upon seeing this work, Lane's conception of the possibility of art rapidly expanded, and he regards viewing Bram's work as an important moment in his education as an artist. At CAVES, each work by Stephen Bram uses polychromatic abstraction and perspective as means to generate a fictitious space. The inclusion of two works on paper give the viewer an insight into his ongoing project that uses vanishing points in space to create a structural form. By placing the vanishing point outside of the pictorial frame, Bram's paintings become fragments indicative of a larger whole. Each painting offers a two dimensional space that conjures up familiar rooms recalled from our own history and memories, providing an empty place for quiet contemplation where meaning can be individually formed.

The three Madonna statues band together and make up Lane's contribution to the exhibition. Each Madonna wears a neckless with the logo of Italian sportswear company Sergio Tacchini that Lane sourced from the zips of the brand's famous 'Dallas' tracksuit (a tracksuit that he previously owned). The works are a return to Lane's 2018 exhibition at Daine Singer, where he pulverised two Virgin Mary sculptures into a white powder and displayed them in vitrines alongside photographic prints on acetate of sports people that were sponsored by Sergio Tacchini. The statues were purchased at a local discount superstore, as 'ready-mades' the avoidance of labour resonates with Lane's ongoing interest in the limitations of his skills and the use of non-singular techniques to unify his work.

Whilst Our Lady's' evocation with religion is consequential and unavoidable, and yet meaningless to the authorial intent, the association of Madonna with devotion is undeniably significant. The notion of devotion becomes accentuated as the underlying, totalising dimension of the work, and manifests in a performative commitment not uncommon in Lane's practice. Lane's devotion to Tacchini, who has been a recurring icon within his life and work, along with his continual return to Bram's wall painting from 1996—sets the premise for this exhibition. This devotion has grown from tracksuit wearing to talisman sporting, with each act demonstrating a continued fascination with how an idea or motif manifests until there is nothing left to be signified within the signifier itself.

Zoe Theodore