

THE WANDERING ROOM

JAMIE
WHITESIDE
Jerks on Plastic



June 26—27, 2021

JERKS ON PLASTIC

Before beginning their career as an artist, Jamie Whiteside worked for 15 years as a professional DJ, and it is easy to see the similarities between their creative process then and now. Creating collage through mixing and remixing, cycling and recycling.

The artwork titles are remixed too, intuitively collected fragments of a headline or an overheard turn of phrase. Whiteside's work is almost exclusively made from materials found on the side of the road, and by doing so they encourage us to question the road that we are on.

Aesthetically Whiteside's work looks organic while also reminiscent of science fiction structures. Whiteside's colour pallet harmoniously swirls together pinks, yellows and blues, like that of a rainbow ice-cream melted in the sun.

The act of collecting the materials is as much a part of the artwork as the sculptures that result. With every artwork created the streets of Ivanhoe become a little bit cleaner, like the Pixar character Wall-E, routinely picking up chaos and presenting it back to us to question.

When I visit Whiteside's studio I'm invited to smell their latest sculpture. Whiteside tells me they've mixed used coffee grounds in with their paint to give their installations the extra sensorial dimension of smell. We've all seen art that stinks before, but this is nothing to turn your nose up at.

Before I leave Whiteside's studio they accidentally drop a mug and its handle breaks off. Seemingly non fussed by this, I suspect the handle may find its way in to a future artwork. No waste is wasted.



Steal it Like you Own it, mixed media on plastic basketball back board (2019—2020)



The Tranquility of Solitude, acrylic and glitter on plastic, artists own frame (2019)

Everything in Whiteside's practise is outsourced and repurposed, even the bubble wrap the work is transported in, inviting the viewer to question the impacts and sustainability of the act of art-making itself.

Many art works in recent years grapple with environmental issues. Works such as '*Hera (bronze)*' by American artist Tony Matelli, that depicts a larger than life deteriorating Greco-Roman sculpture juxtaposed with a series of life-like watermelons, questions this idea of longevity. Though the work appears to have contrasting materials, both the organic (the watermelons) and the everlasting (Bronze), it is actually underneath its surface entirely made of bronze. Whiteside takes these ideas further by incorporating the materials themselves into their exploration of the world in which we live.

Through the use of recycled materials the works ask many questions about value. If oil paintings are more valuable than acrylic, then what about work made with spray paint? If a painting on canvas is more valuable than a painting on paper, then what about a painting that's made on a basketball backboard or a seed potting tray? While working with discarded scraps may appear ephemeral, due to the nature of plastic this work could potentially last as long as a bronze sculpture.

Plastics that were destined to sit out of sight in landfill are reclaimed and given spotlight. When looking at the work we consider the destructive nature of disposability, and it is inspiring to think about this for as long as we stay in the exhibition, wondering in The Wandering Room, but what happens next is up to us.

—Kenny Pittock

This exhibition has been proudly supported by Moreland City Council through the 2020 Flourish: Arts Recovery Grant Program.



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The Wandering Room acknowledges the traditional owners and sovereign custodians of the land on which we operate, the peoples of the Wurundjeri.

We extend our respect to their Ancestors and all First Peoples and Elders past, present and future.