

Lou Hubbard

Pleasure First

Gertrude Contemporary
Saturday 16 September – Sunday 29 October 2023

When I was seventeen years old, I slipped out of The Gap, a Brisbane suburb in the gap between two mountains. I have since made artworks about formal and linguistic associations that link my experiences there such as empty swimming pools, maths operations, eye operations, the horse that I got aged eleven when my father left me for another woman.

Prior to writing Swimming Home, Deborah Levy asked, “what is a swimming pool?” Her answer went something like this. Physically, the swimming pool is a hole in the ground, covered in water, so it’s kind of like a watery grave. I once exhibited a vast collection of polystyrene “pools” that came with titles describing psychological complexes: Outdoor Complex. Indoor Complex. Complexes real and imagined. Pleasure First reframes the pool, the horse and raincoats (that item that most often ended up in my school’s lost property) and connects them in a spatial geometry, like a Venn diagram: a mindset that remains central in the adult play fundamental to my practice.

In Pleasure First my pool is gravely literal. It is the ghost of suburban malfunction. It looms monstrous, empty. Nowadays my horse gently sleeps. Raincoats are racked, cloaked and collared, slung and hung. In my hands they endure acts of control and duress, pulled and squashed, tugged into flatness. Like the pool and the horse, the raincoats are stuck still, standing-in.

Pleasure first... and then...and then.

Gertrude is pleased to present *Pleasure First*, a new solo exhibition by the Naarm Melbourne-based artist Lou Hubbard. Turning the corner as they enter the gallery, the viewer is confronted by a large, inflatable pool that leans precariously from the gallery wall to which it is tethered. Surrounding the pool are recognisable tropes from Hubbard’s broader practice—the horse, the raincoat—that relate to her memories growing up in Meanjin Brisbane.

Lou Hubbard is represented by Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne.

Gertrude acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters on which we operate and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

List of works

1. Lou Hubbard
Horse, 2023
Polystyrene, latex, linen, cotton
2800 x 800 x 600mm
2. *Artist unknown. n.d.*
Oil on Masonite
700 x 600 x 80mm
3. Lou Hubbard
Pool, 2023
Inflatable vinyl ocean pool, netting,
stainless steel sliders, D-rings & swivel
hooks, polyester webbing, wool travel
rug (1930)
Dimensions variable
4. Lou Hubbard
Pinboards, 2023
Polyester raincoats, Perspex, Velcro,
wooden box, acoustic pinboards,
powder coated tilting TV wall mounts
and bolts.
2420 x 2440 x 18mm

Artworks courtesy of the artist and Sarah
Scout Presents, Naarm Melbourne.

