

# Dean Cross

## **BLACK SMOKE WHITE WALLS**

Gertrude Contemporary  
Saturday 10 February – Sunday 7 April 2024

*BLACK SMOKE WHITE WALLS* takes form as an environment of quietude, one intent on provisioning a place of solitude, even isolation. As a space, its ambiance is one of presence without distraction, eerily dullening out the sounds of the outdoor world, making one more conscious of one's own internal thinking. It is an environment of contemplation, yet also one of anticipation. This space leans on the theatrical convention of the fourth wall, whereby one is cognisant of others – be they audiences, watchers, voyeurs, witnesses – yet separated, insulated and potentially protected from them. Centred within this acoustically altered chamber, devoid of colour, Dean Cross positions an ensemble of elements awaiting activation. In the eyes of the artist, this environment is a rehearsal space for an as yet unperformed opera. The elements contained within all perform distinct functions, the libretto, the props table, the costume rack, the lighting design. Upon crossing the threshold into the space, one is implicated within the opera, in the words of the artist, 'as either chorus or soloist, depending on their ego.' In this environment of seeming calm, there is nevertheless an atmosphere of heightened suspense, as if awaiting an impending, unknown and imminent threat. *BLACK SMOKE WHITE WALLS* is conceived as the second component on a developing trilogy of projects, foregrounded by the iteration *Overture (GODZILLA)* (STATION, Eora Sydney), and set to evolve over this coming year.

Dean Cross (Worimi) is an artist primarily working across installation, sculpture and painting. Interested in the collisions of materials, ideas and histories, Cross is motivated by an understanding that his practice sits within a continuum of the oldest living culture on Earth – and enacts First Nations sovereignty through expanded contemporary art methodologies. His cross-disciplinary practice often confronts the legacies of modernism, rebalancing dominant cultural and social histories.

Selected recent solo exhibitions include: *To be Clever – To be Posh*, STATION, Melbourne (2023); *Death, Disease and Fucking Racists*, Yavuz Gallery, Sydney (2022); *Sometimes I Miss the Applause*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne (2022); *Nothing Lasts Forever*, LaTrobe Art Museum, Bendigo (2022); *Icarus, My Son*, Carriageworks, Sydney and Goulburn Regional Art Gallery (2021); *Monuments*, 4A Gallery, Sydney (2020); and *I Love You, I'm Sorry*, Firstdraft, Sydney (2020). Selected group exhibitions include: *Things that are real: Alvaro Barrington x Dean Cross*, Cement Fondu, Sydney (2023); *Free/State*, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (2022); *From impulse to action*, Bundanon Museum of Art, Illaroo (2022); *Things that will not sit still*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne (2022); *Primavera 2021*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2021); *We Change the World*, National Gallery of Victoria: Ian Potter Centre, Melbourne (2021); *On Earth*, QUT Art Museum, Brisbane (2021); *Monitor 3.0*, The Physics Room, Christchurch, Aotearoa (2021); 36th NATSIAA, Museum and Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin (2019); *Absorption, Asad Raza & Kaldor Public Projects*, The Clothing Store, Sydney (2019); *An Other Line*, Atelier Richlieu, Paris, France (2019); and *The Way We Wear*, Embassy of Australia, Washington D.C., U.S.A. (2019).

Dean Cross is represented by STATION, Naarm Melbourne and Eora Sydney.

1. *Discontinued (Fire)*, 2015  
discontinued fuji film 3000b  
8 x 10.5 cm (image size)  
52 x 42 cm (frame size)

2. *Flashes*, 2024  
looped HD video  
3 minutes 31 seconds

3. *Proposal for a New  
Proscenium*, 2024  
Aluminium, tar and sand  
227 x 336 x 159 cm (approx.)

4. *Libretto*, 2023  
photocopied and redacted  
letter sent to the artist via mail  
from R.M  
toner, ink and synthetic  
polymer, glass, steel and vinyl  
foam  
29.7 x 42 cm

5. *Theatrical Properties*,  
2018 – 2024  
timber, steel, lead and vinyl  
foam

6. *Head Shot*, 2024  
painted by S.G Australian  
Army Commando (RET)  
synthetic polymer on linen  
61 x 51 cm

7. *Quick Change*, 2024  
timber, lead, plastic, sticky  
tape, synthetic polymer and  
aerosol  
179 x 51.5 x 41 cm

8. *Axiom #1*, 2020  
glass, neon and wiring  
175 x 125 cm

All works courtesy of the  
artist and STATION, Naarm  
Melbourne and Eora Sydney.

