

Gian Manik

You own the school, embrace your responsibility for its legacy

Gertrude Glasshouse
Friday 12 April – Saturday 11 May 2024

Harnessing imitative techniques honed during a childhood spent voraciously copying old master paintings, Gian Manik's *Untitled* (2024) recasts and filtrates Caravaggio's second version of *Supper at Emmaus* (1606). By speculating upon the futures and legacies of reproduced artworks, *You own the school, embrace your responsibility for its legacy* refutes an authenticity/kitsch binarisation, reworking the bifurcation of artisan and forger.

The fixtured suspension of *Untitled* presents a work unembellished, wholly integrated yet laid bare in the transparency of Gertrude Glasshouse. Rejecting two-dimensional flatness for poly-directional circumnavigation, this exposition strips the painting of an aura and disrupts the church-like quality assigned to many exhibition spaces. The mode of display intimates an experiential, immersive gesamtkunstwerk, insisting on renewed vantages of both recto and verso, while offering sustained impressions of the inextricable relationship between materiality and subject matter. From the stretching and joinery through to a palpable, glossy surface, the physical properties of *Untitled* are constitutive components that comprise the work's conceptual logic. In this regard, Manik's work is as much a sculpture of a painting as it is a skilled reproduction; a re-presentation that offers painting itself as the subject.

Manik draws upon Caravaggio's second iteration of *Supper at Emmaus* as fertile ground to evince an unbalanced connection between author and subject. Produced while Caravaggio was in exile south of Rome, this painting is often said to be a commissioned copy—rendered entirely from memory—painted five years after completing the original 1601 version (housed at the National Gallery, London).

Manik's transference highlights the procedural elements of reiteration. Given the innkeeper's wife in the right corner in the second version of *Supper at Emmaus* was a likely afterthought—a later addition included to placate compositional concerns—Manik elucidates a latent history of image revision, attending to the visual information lost and gained through reproduction.

Manik's research-led practice responds to the ontology of "institutional painting," that has been canonised in western art history. Adopting an insouciant approach to both style and subject, the artist blurs the lines between mimesis and representation through the depiction of imagery gleaned from disparate sources such as the internet, popular culture, and personal memories. This characteristically irreverent methodology borrows from a wide compendium of images, thereby separating aesthetic considerations from hierarchical distinctions of high and low.

Exhibition text by Archie Gibbs.

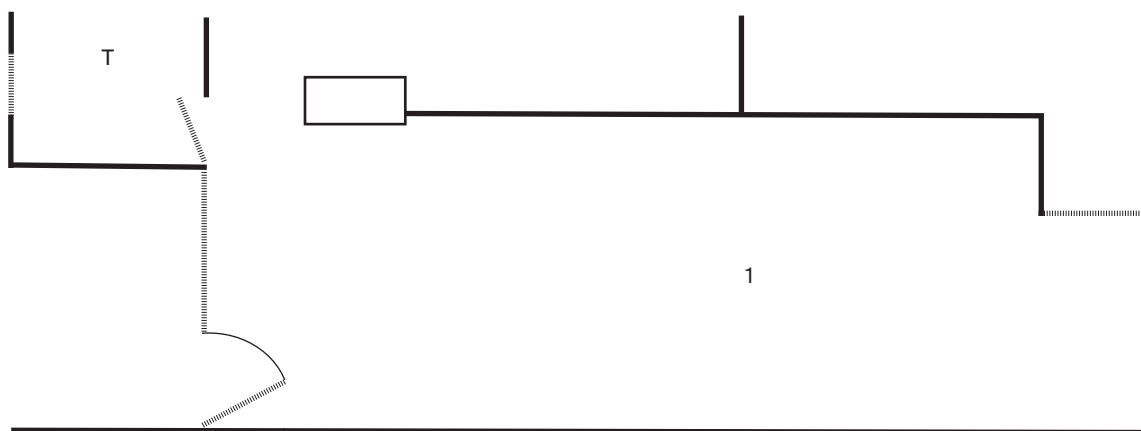
Acknowledgements

Gian Manik is represented by Sutton Gallery, Narm Melbourne.

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1. Gian Manik
Untitled, 2024
Oil, acrylic, varnish, gel, charcoal, glue,
paper, steel, sand, timber, linen, cotton
141 x 175 x 3cm
Courtesy of the artist and Sutton Gallery.



Gertrude acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners and custodians of this land and waters and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.