

# THE COMMERCIAL

## MITCH CAIRNS



## FINCHES

Mitch Cairns is a figurative painter and cartoonist with an eye for abstraction and notational use of line. He whittles away extraneous detail and gets down to basic libidinal pleasures of the vernacular in a reduced palette. While Cairns professes to paint according to a 'no-fuss', 'one-idea-per-canvas', 'sure-fire-picture-making' standard, the paintings themselves, and certainly this recent group, belie a greater complexity, particularly in their technicality.

Following his exhibition of cartoons to accompany the launch of his book, *Dip or Skinny Dip*, in October last year, *FINCHES* is Cairns' first solo exhibition of paintings at The Commercial. In this new group of works, figures, texts and landscapes emerge from a cubo-futurist matrix replacing the softer, more meditative cigarette smoke sfumato of the paintings of recent years. The exhibition will be accompanied by a text by Matthew Holt.

Mitch Cairns (b. 1984) completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) in painting at the National Art School in Sydney in 2006. In 2014, he produced a Drawing Wall commission, *Studio Leak*, for Shepparton Art Museum (curated by Elise Routledge). He presented three solo exhibitions at BREENSPACE before its closure in 2013 (2012, 2010, 2008). He has held solo exhibitions with TCB inc., Melbourne (2014), KALIMANRAWLINS, Melbourne (2013), BOXCOPY, Brisbane (2012), MOP Projects, Sydney (2006, 2007, 2008) and Locksmith Project Space, Sydney (2008). And a two-person exhibition at Society, Sydney, with Matthew Tumbers, curated by Susan Gibb (2012).

Selected group exhibitions include *Outside Thoughts*, a group exhibition with Emily Floyd, Darren Sylvester and Danie Mellor, curated by Wes Hill, at Contemporary Art Tasmania (March 2015), *RELATIONSHIPPAL* with Tim Silver and Susan Jacobs at *BREENSPACE*, Sydney (2013), *Alpha Romeo*, with Christopher Hanrahan and Nigel Milsom, curated by Matthys Gerber, at Peloton, Sydney (2010), *They call them Pirates out here*, curated by David Elliot, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2010); *What I think of when I think about dancing*, curated by Lisa Havilah and Susan Gibb, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney (2009); *Reality Check*, curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, Hazelhurst Regional Art Gallery, Sydney (2009), *The Shilo Project*, curated by Chris McAuliffe, Ian Potter Museum, Melbourne (2009) and *I am a Good Boy*, curated by Elise Routledge, Firstdraft, Sydney (2008).

Cairns was runner-up in the 2014 Archibald Prize at the Art Gallery New South Wales with his portrait of philanthropist, Reg Richardson. He has been awarded a number of prizes and residencies as well as being a finalist in several prize exhibitions including, The Archibald Prize (2014, 2013), The Brett Whiteley Traveling Art Scholarship (2012) which included a residency at the Cité internationale des arts, Paris (2013) and the Linden Art Prize (winner postcard prize), Linden Contemporary, Melbourne (2012). He has been a finalist in the Geelong Contemporary Art Prize (2014), the Doug Moran National Portrait

Prize ([2013](#), [2010](#)), the Fishers Ghost Art Prize, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney (2011), the Helen Lampriere Traveling Scholarship, Artspace, Sydney (2009, 2007, 2006), the John Olsen Drawing Prize (2005), the Gruner Landscape Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (2004, 2003).

Between 2005 and 2007, Cairns was studio assistant to the late Adam Cullen.

Cairns co-founded 'The Cosmic Battle for your Heart' with Kelly Doley, Brian Fuata and Agatha Gothe-Snape, an artist-run space based in Sydney (2009–11), a survey of which, called *Eastern Seaboard*, was exhibited at Artspace, Sydney, curated by Reuben Keehan and Melanie Oliver (2011).

His work is held in the collections of [Artbank](#), Deloitte, [Heide Museum of Modern Art](#), Melbourne, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (Ergas Collection) and Wollongong University Art Collection.

Mitch Cairns will be presenting a solo project exhibition at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, from 24 October 2015 until early 2016, curated by Linda Michael.



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