

Easton Dunne Hail Holy Queen

18 October – 16 November 2024

onespace

Catalogue of Works



ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Exhibition Dates | 18 October – 16 November 2024

Open Event | 19 October 2024, 4 – 7pm

Onespace Gallery Hours | Tuesday to Friday 10am – 5pm, Saturday 12pm – 5pm

Easton Dunne's *Hail Holy Queen* (2023) applies a queer lens to a childhood time and place where, according to the artist, they "held an acute sense of [their]own queerness and transness but had no language or agency to recognise or express this identity, in part as a result of the conservative influence of religious beliefs on family and community".

The installation recreates aspects of Dunne's paternal grandparents' house, located on a cattle property on Ghungalu Country. It was a location for many family gatherings, often after Sunday church services, in which the artist and their family would say the Rosary together before watching television and sharing meals. Dunne describes the house as follows:

Squatters' chairs lined the verandah and the lounge room was decorated liberally with taxidermised bulls' heads and religious iconography featuring saints and martyrs in variously tortured and ecstatic poses against a backdrop of faux-brick wallpaper. These rural domestic aesthetics—often echoed in other settler-coloniser families' houses in Central Queensland—are perfect examples of campness, because of their earnestness and sincerity, and inherent kitsch-ness and gaudiness.

Taking this inherent campness as a starting point, Dunne exaggerates it further through symbolism and materiality. Objects are rendered in varying shades of bright pink, with the pink faux fur resembling cowhide, a symbol of their family's heritage as settler-coloniser graziers. The television plays an infinitely looping view around the "WELCOME TO ROCKHAMPTON/FAREWELL FROM ROCKHAMPTON" roundabout, its banality conveying the frustration of being 'stuck' or awaiting the fabled 'escape' to a bigger city that many regional LGBTQIAP+ young people find themselves yearning for.

All artist's quotes are from correspondence with them, 7 February 2023.

Emily Wakeling

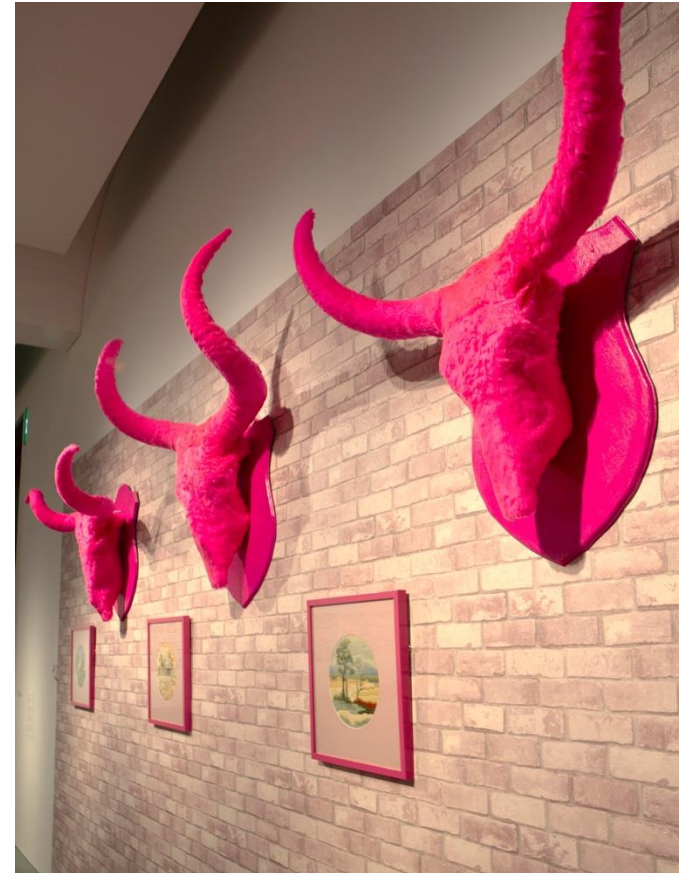


Image: *Hail Holy Queen* (Installation), Easton Dunne. Courtesy of the artist and the Rockhampton Museum of Art.



Image: Easton Dunne. Courtesy of the artist and the Rockhampton Museum of Art. Photograph: Obscura.

Easton Dunne (they/them) is a queer, transgender and non-binary artist, arts worker and arts educator who lives on Darumbal Country in Rockhampton, Central Queensland. They make work exploring queer visual narratives within rural and regional contexts, often through an autobiographical lens, utilising drawing, collage, sculpture and installation.

With a focus on materiality, symbolism and playful camp aesthetics, Dunne mines the matter of everyday regional life for glimmers of queerness, seeking to reveal, recontextualise, and recode the familiar as queer. Their work resists and reframes the hyper-masculine narrative of their hometown being the self-proclaimed “beef capital of Australia” as offering the potential for an alternate queer utopia in this regional location.

Informed by Rural Queer Studies, Dunne’s work aims to facilitate dialogue and exchange between regional and metropolitan communities around how socio-cultural and geographical factors influence diversity in queer identity work and practices.

Dunne completed a Bachelor of Fine Art at Queensland College of Art in 2012 and a Postgraduate Diploma of Education at Queensland University of Technology in 2014. They have exhibited widely since and their work has won a number of awards.

Their most recent solo exhibition, *Welcome to Paradise*, was held at Rockhampton Museum of Art in 2023. The titular work from the exhibition was selected as the branding inspiration by major Queer festival, Melt, and will be displayed at Brisbane Powerhouse as part of Melt 2024.

Artist Statement

Hail Holy Queen
24 August – 28 September 2024

Hail Holy Queen was originally developed as part of my 2023 solo exhibition at Rockhampton Museum of Art, *Welcome to Paradise*, which reflected on my experiences growing up as a queer, non-binary and transgender person in rural and regional Central Queensland during the 1990s and 2000s.

Hail Holy Queen is a time capsule with a queer twist. It recreates the intimately familiar domestic scene of my paternal grandparents' house on their cattle property on unceded Ghungalu Country, south-west of Duaringa – a place that was an important part of my childhood and youth, where our tight-knit extended family gathered regularly.

Like many settler-coloniser houses in the area, the interior decor was an eccentric mix of country kitsch and handicrafts, melodramatic Catholic imagery and figurines, and taxidermied trophy Brahman bulls heads and horns. It was wonderfully, inadvertently camp in its sincerity, and it took a few sleepovers at friends' houses when I reached high school to realise that not everyone had such things adorning their homes.

The work manipulates colour and materiality to recode the signifiers of our settler-coloniser family's Catholicism and involvement with the agricultural industry. Through soft, hot pink faux fur reminiscent of cow hide, the stereotypically rugged masculinity of the beef cattle industry embodied by the squatters chair, bulls' heads and stock whip is recast as camp, feminine and queer. The already-camp and performative rituals of Catholic devotion are exaggerated further through slick, hot pink glittery surfaces, a duality hinted at by the title of the work also. Where once the television played cartoons for my cousins and I once we had all said the Rosary, it now plays an infinite loop of the iconic roundabout entrance to Rockhampton, the banal repetition creating a sense of unease.

Hail Holy Queen reimagines the past as a site of queer presence and possibilities, unmistakably located within rural and regional Central Queensland. Although it hints at the difficulties caused by conservative religious belief systems that I grew up amidst, it's also an affectionate, playful and tongue-in-cheek work that celebrates the importance of family and queer narratives that are recognizably from Central Queensland – I think my grandparents would love it if they could see it.

Reference:

Sontag, Susan. 2018. *Notes on Camp*. Penguin Modern. London, England: Penguin Classics.

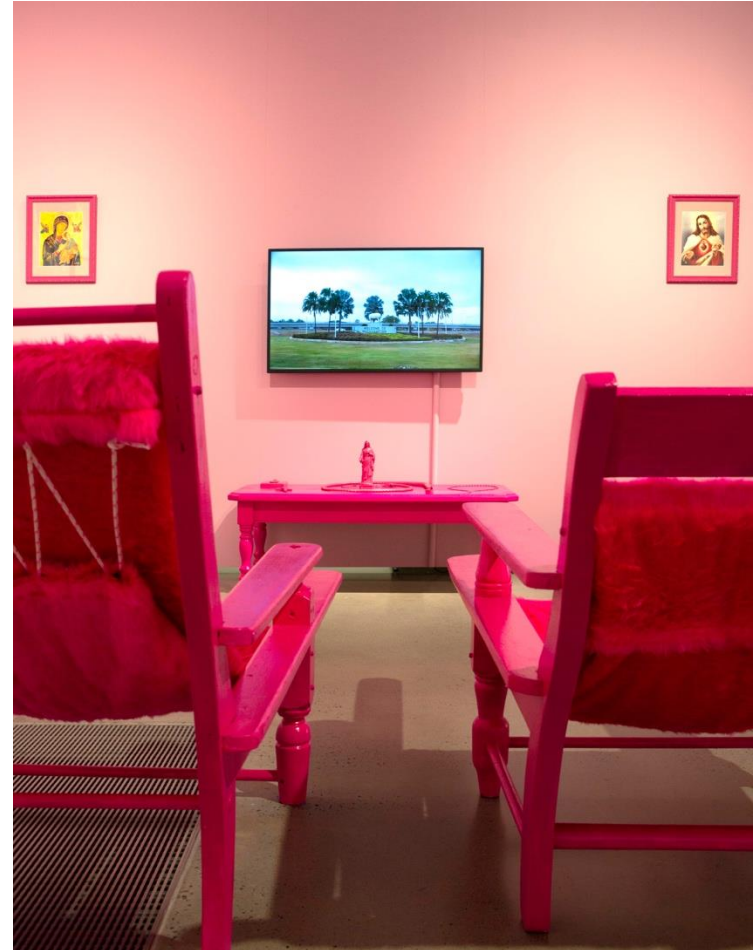


Image: *Hail Holy Queen* (Installation), Easton Dunne. Courtesy of the artist and the Rockhampton Museum of Art.

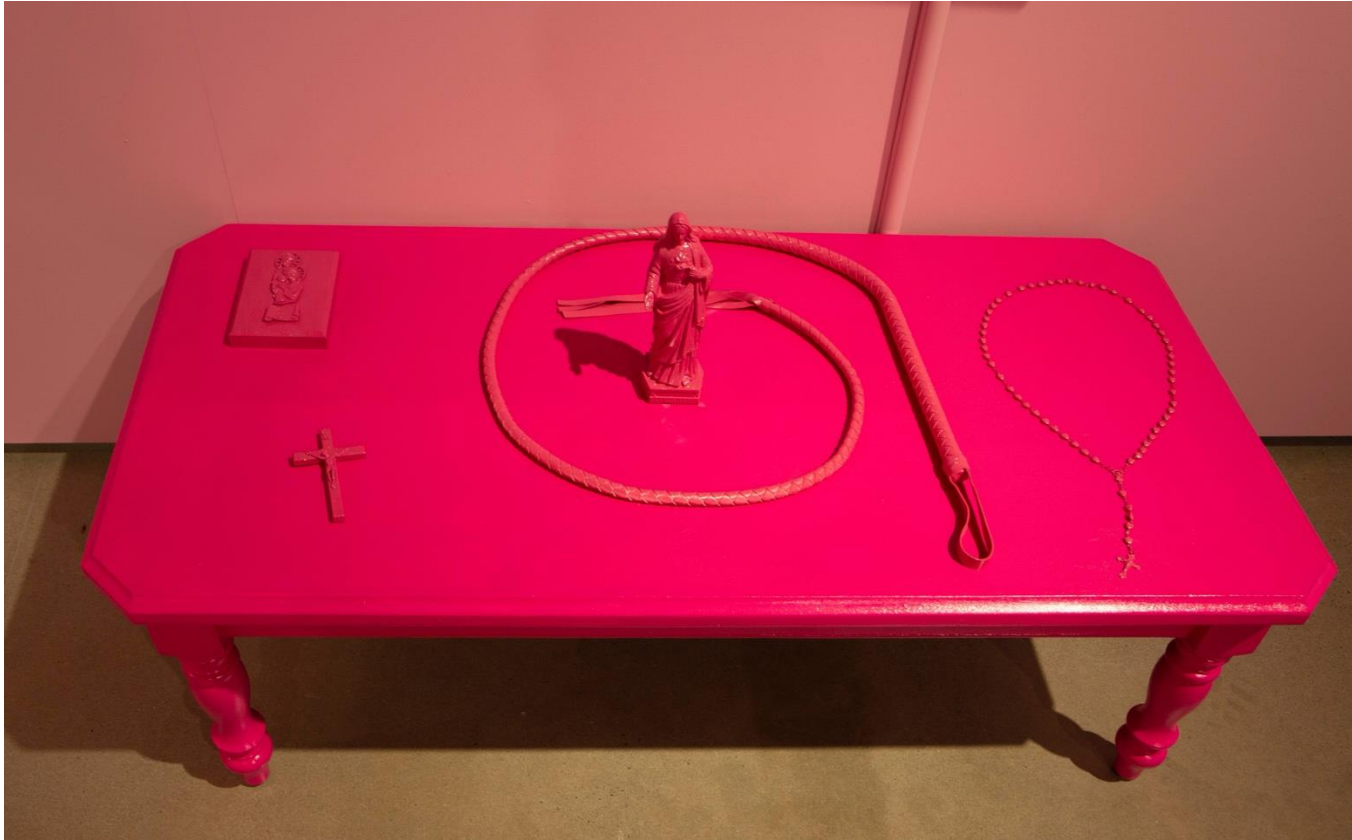


Image: *Hail Holy Queen* (Installation), Easton Dunne. Courtesy of the artist and the Rockhampton Museum of Art.

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Onespace is a Brisbane based gallery that presents and sells contemporary art, including work by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

We curate an exhibition program exploring diverse themes and media, showcasing emerging, mid-career and established artists whose works inform, stimulate and challenge. Onespace welcomes you to engage with the artists and artworks we exhibit.

Onespace is uniquely located adjacent to Maiwar beneath the Spice Apartments near the Go Between Bridge in South Brisbane. We are proudly surrounded by the dynamic buzz of the Queensland cultural precinct that is significant to this area of Brisbane.

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Gallery Opening Hours:

Tuesday to Friday: 10am – 5pm | Saturday: 12pm – 5pm

25A Bouquet Street, South Brisbane Q 4101 Australia

Onespace acknowledges the traditional custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters, culture and community. We pay our respects to elders past and present.