

Intimately Chewed, Casually Discarded

Chewed Bubble gum hung on steel rails in a tiled box

H – 600mm

W – 600mm

D – 95mm

Describe this body of work and your motivations for taking this direction (maximum 300 words). *

This work reflects the disposability and availability of casual sexual encounters as well as the fetishistic side of touch and sexual interaction. It openly questionings social constructions of physical connection, shame, anonymity and sexualisation. Revealing elements of personal experience yet also refusing to give details, displaying a careless hanging up of experiences as if hung out too dry. The work could relate to used condoms tossed aside after use while holding onto the anonymity of each encounter. A playful way to show a part of many homosexual's sexual history that can be viewed as negative, problematic and confronting. Giving a slightly uncomfortable yet amusing twist on physical touch and sensual desire.

Explain how your artistic practice would benefit from you receiving one of the Awards.

Growing my arts practice over the last few years has been a fabulous journey and learning experience, being exposed to awards, critical thinking and reviews of my work has helped me progress my practice. The opportunity to be awarded one of the awards this year would be a highlight and achievement of my career thus far. It would allow me to continue to create and develop my practice and cater for equipment and materials. As well as furthering contemporised ideas, giving me the room to freely make and experiment with materials and processes. Making work which will be exhibited and recognised further afield, giving me access to other opportunities to share my work within different spaces.

As a hard working LGBTQ+ artist I want to be able to make a mark and share my story. Always working on new ideas to push my work allowing others view it within a broader context. An award would keep the momentum going, reaching even greater heights. Giving me the freedom to continue making work especially after the uncertainty of COVID 19. It would allow me to refine my studio to make it a more professional space for creating work and preparing for future shows and exhibitions. This award will be an investment for my future and be a pivotal moment for my career.

Explain techniques and/or concepts used towards making the entered artwork (maximum 300 words). *

The creative process behind my work is the most important thing. I find joy in appropriating everyday objects to transform stereotypes and famous historical art references. As proud member of the queer community, I use my work to examine, question and criticize the relationships between gender, (homo)sexuality and societies misconceptions about those themes. But, despite what it might look like to the contemporary spectator, a purely erotic and queer reading of the work would be misguided. There is an universal profundity at play revealing itself slowly for those willing to look.

I use a sterile, glossy and clean tiled frame to encasing the organic nipple-like forms, it encapsulates the work and enhances the suspended bodies, allowing them to exists in the space, discarded and left as a memory of a time enjoyed and now redundant.

Made from Bubble gum causes the work to be unpredictable, just about to stretch and break. Such a material holds history just from being chewed, once stretched out it looks like pink droplets made from saliva or skin, singular moments of intimacy fixed as the gum hardens. A memory suspended like a droplet about to fall, moments in time remembered. Leaving a familiar sweet aroma of bubble gum which lingers in the nostrils of the viewer.

I'm delighted by the curiously de-gendered nature of the entities (they seem neither feminine or masculine), and their simultaneous appeal and grossness. What does it say about you if you kind of want to pop one in your mouth? Is it more upsetting to chew on someone else's gum, on the nipple of someone you barely know, or on an artwork?

Contextualise the entered artwork within broader artistic or cultural movements or traditions (maximum 300 words). *

Situated within queer art this work strikes an excellent balance between seriousness and levity, centring on gay sexual encounters in bathrooms, and touching on questions of community and gender. The Daliesque nature of the melty, chewing-gum forms, observed leans the work into the bodily, in contrast to the cold glossy tiles, which is more clinical and sterile. The work brims with associations. Nipples are things some people enjoy chewing on or having chewed. Gum is something you might chew if you're about to kiss a stranger in bar or nightclub, to make sure your breath smells okay or to

lube up a drug-parched throat. The nipple-forms are reminiscent of condoms, with their teat-ish reservoirs. Referring to strings of anonymous sexual encounters: 'experiences hung out to dry'. The phrase 'dirty laundry' might also come to mind. While the placement of the nipples on their lines appears fairly casual, their crafting is full of care and delicacy, suggesting the intimacy that can attend even more fleeting sexual encounters. All the while being confined by the four walls of the frame, keeping these encounters close and almost secret. Lending the audience, a sneak peek into this 'private' bathroom like space. Accompanied with the sweet sickly aroma of bubble gum that catches the viewer in passing or upon closer inspection.

