

THE WALLS

CALLUM MCGRATH

THE GAY AGENDA

2-17 October, 2021

[Clockwise from entrance]

FILM ARCHIVES II: THE GAY AGENDA [2021]

Single channel video, colour sound

19min

PRESIDENT PETE AND SILVER JACKIE [2021]

Scanned collage, inkjet print semi-gloss

59x42cm

THE FBI FILES [2021]

Scanned collage, scanned collage, inkjet
semi-gloss

42x59cm

CRIMINALLY GAY AND LESBIAN [2021]

Scanned collage, inkjet print semi-gloss

42x59cm

MEDICI AND MATTA-CLARK [2021]

Digital collage, inkjet semi-gloss. 42x59cm.

FOREVER UNDERGROUND [2021]

Scanned collage, inkjet semi-gloss

42x59cm

Conceived as the second film in CALLUM's FILM ARCHIVES trilogy, this new video work continues CALLUM's interest in the re-articulation of history, conceiving the past in new ways that challenge typical forms of historiography. This project reconstructs specifically the history of queer organisations and societies, to consider how conservative politics has perversely shaped their trajectories. The project questions who the future is built for and how the ideological structures that prop it up can be critiqued.

THE GAY AGENDA stems from CALLUM's research into the Mattachine Society, the first gay rights organisation in America. The Mattachine Society was founded by three Marxist communists in Los Angeles and its legacy paved the way for many LGBTQIA+ organisations around the world. After three years the founding members were kicked out of the organisation due to their ties with the USA Communist Party, in an attempt to make the Society's agenda more palatable for the community. This video initially starts in a documentary format, quickly descending into fictive and speculative freefall. THE GAY AGENDA considers the intricate and complicated political forces that shaped the course of gay rights organisations, especially in regards to its normalisation, de-sexualisation and attachments to capitalism.

THE GAY AGENDA considers how temporalities of modern family life were invented by the conservative right and in turn weaponised as an exclusionary force against multiple minority groups. The project complicates the legacy of gay rights movements and considers how they have been shaped by these forces. Presented as an alternative reality, the work narratively suggests that a gay

underground conspiracy does in fact exist and is plotting an extreme escape from Earth's impending collapse.

CALLUM's work explores how queer time theory can be applied to video and collage-based work to create temporal junctures that critique dominant forms of remembrance that do not cater to the complexities or perceived 'truth' of the past. THE GAY AGENDA examines Lee Edelman's controversial text No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive, pushing Edelman's argument for radical queer anti-futurity to its extreme. In the book, Edelman argued that politics is structured by the family and that queerness should radically reject the future. Not to be taken as a serious proposal, THE GAY AGENDA instead generates an alternative reality to contemplate the relationship between past, present and future.

CALLUM MCGRATH produces research-driven video, sculpture, text, installation, sound and images that reimagine institutionalised aesthetics of remembrance, memorials and historiography. His practice layers queer art and historical references to break with conventions of linear archives. Working against the grain of hetero-centric notions of time, his work negotiates a complex net of queer history.

CALLUM holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Visual Art) with Honours from the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane (2016), and is currently undertaking a Master of Fine Art at Monash University, Melbourne. Additionally, CALLUM is a member of Kink; a research group investigating and bringing together the diverse and disparate histories of LGBTQIA+ Australian art. Recent exhibitions include: Resound, Unbound, Centre of Contemporary Photography, Melbourne (2021), The Weatherman, Metro Arts, Brisbane (2021), Brisbane Art and Design Festival, Brisbane (2021), Full Face, Queensland Art Gallery/ Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (2020-21); Thoughts and Prayers, Outer Space, Brisbane (2020); Queer Economies, Bus Projects and Centre of Contemporary Photography, Melbourne (2019); POOFTA, Metro Arts, Brisbane (2018).



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GOLD COAST, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

THE WALLS acknowledges the YUGAMBEH people, the traditional owners of the land on which we operate, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on the Gold Coast today.

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