

# Gerwyn Davies

## *Utopia*

---

Gallery 2

25 August – 12 September 2020

"The trope of Utopia is filled with the promise of unyielding pleasure and perfection. As a fictional construct Utopia is always out of reach and attempts to pin down this fantasy are commonly marked by failure.

In this way, I am interested in real world Utopias as places that exist on a precipice, navigating the edges of illusion and reality, decadence and decay, that juggle revealing and concealing themselves in complex ways in order to maintain the artifice of perfection.

These works respond to time spent in Los Angeles and Palm Springs; cities that emphasise allure, cities heavily invested in fantasy, cities with vibrantly rendered buildings and gardens that mask truths, cities whose emblematic palm trees are themselves works of fiction, imported and mass planted prior to the Olympics, props in a spectacle that survive as the city's icons.

These works are photographic accelerations of the contrived. Images that are too rich in their detail and improbable in their flatness that they risk tipping over an edge, from the photo to the graphic. These works form part of an ongoing inventory of selves that are as manicured and idealised as the digital habitats they exist within.

Utopia continues my interest in the use of the camera as a highly fictional device and exploits the ways in which, where the photographic portrait has historically claimed a capacity to reveal its subject, it is instead always an act of concealing, embellishment and distortion. Notions that are increasingly familiar in an age of endless self-imaging."

**Gerwyn Davies, 2020**

### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Originally from Queensland, Gerwyn is based in Sydney where he is undertaking his PhD at the University of New South Wales (Art and Design). He has exhibited widely throughout Australia and internationally including exhibitions at the Australian Centre for Photography (2018), Singapore International Photography Festival (2018), Brisbane Powerhouse (2014) and the Photo LA Art Fair (2012, 2011). He has been a finalist in Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Award (2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014), The Sunshine Coast Art Prize (2019, 2018, 2017), The Olive Cotton Prize (2019), the Alice Springs Art Prize (2020 HC, 2018), the Bowness Prize (2019, 2017), Clayton Utz (2019, 2016) and the Brisbane Portrait Prize (2019). He was the recipient of the inaugural Australia Council residency at the Kyoto Arts Centre (Japan) in 2018. His work is held in public collections including the Museum of Brisbane, Gold Coast City Gallery/HOTA, Redlands Art Gallery, Artbank and the Queensland Centre for Photography.