

# Gerwyn Davies

## *Mirage*

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14 May – 01 June 2024

“A mirage is an atmospheric illusion, one conjured as immense heat radiates off a scorched earth. It manifests as a shimmering promise of cool water bubbling away on the horizon however, it is a cruel trick of the eye, a lure that draws a thirsty traveller deeper into the peril of the baking desert.

A mirage is unusually both there and not there, fact and figment, born of both atmosphere and imagination. A mirage invites your attention but is difficult to fix in focus, it calls you forward while remaining always out of reach.

The spectacle of the mirage resonates with my ongoing photographic practice — the complications of visibility; the blurring of boundaries between authentic/artificial, real/ imagined; and the obscured portrayal of my figure that ensures it remains always just beyond visions’ reach.

This series, *Mirage*, responds to time spent in Southern Arizona, an almost cartoonish landscape of blistering extremes that is at once breathtakingly hostile and seductively sedating.

In *Mirage*, a series of figures are captured adorned in vivid costumes that glisten and entice, yet the elaborate material surfaces also resist a clear view of what lies beneath. This toying with the conventional terms of the photographic portrait and its capacity to expose and reveal something of a subject, is a hallmark of my practice to date in which I routinely pass before my own camera un/seen.

Accompanying the photographic images for the first time is a series of wall-mounted textile works. In their creation, costumes are fabricated and shot before being pulled apart and reassembled, their material fragments forming new works that depict the distinctive landscapes and signage of the arid desert State. The natural world is rendered in garish artificial fabrics, uncovering new ways of exploring my deep affection for garish and excessive materiality.

Across thirteen photographs and five textile works, *Mirage* conjures stressed surfaces and vague visions. Inspired by the vivid landscape and extreme atmospheric conditions of the desert, *Mirage* is a series of illusions in which the viewer is drawn toward the lurid spectacle of elaborate figures that remain always out of reach.”

- Gerwyn Davies, 2024

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Davies was born in 1985, and recent career highlights include major solo exhibitions 'Iridescent' at the Museum of Sydney, and 'Plush' at UNSW Galleries, Sydney.

Last year, Davies portrait *Replica* won the 2023 Olive Cotton Award for Photographic Portraiture at Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre, NSW. He is a five-time finalist in the Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Award and has been a regular finalist in The Sunshine Coast Art Prize, the Alice Springs Art Prize, and the Bowness Prize since 2014.

His work is held in public collections including the Museum of Brisbane, the Museum of Sydney, Gold Coast City Gallery/HOTA, Redlands Art Gallery, Artbank and the Queensland Centre for Photography.