

# David Griggs

## *Marcel Proust mini DV*

25 June – 13 July 2024

My most recent google searches:

*“cyclops”*

*“disc they send into space”*

*“mini dv sp vs lp”*

*“average length of a song”*

*“earlobe reconstruction”*

*“reggae 4/4 time signature”*

*“big day out”*

*“sydney to manila”*

David Griggs has an alien tattoo on his left hand but denies visitation. I am skeptical of this. Sitting in his studio, a large blue canvas with a big old Roswell Grey is staring directly at me. I get it though. There is probably a hardcore code of conduct they impart onto the few ones they free. Something like, ‘we’ve put a chip in you that will automatically explode your organs if you tell anyone about what happened on the mothership’. So I don’t blame Griggs for holding out on me.

Griggs and I both had painters in our households. He, a grandmother. And I, an uncle. This counts for something. Art has consequences. It is funny that we rarely think of it outside the realm of white, soulless walls. It all ends up in someone’s home. I remember some of the art I looked at over and over again. As soon as you begin to discuss how seeing something daily can affect the mind of a human you expose a litany of pockets, like wounds or tears in space-time. Voids into which the vulnerable mind can fold up memory and emotion without you asking it to. It will do this all the time. Your brain will do this when you are driving, when you are putting on your shoes, when you are listening to music, when you are crying. And then one day, seemingly random things are really important to you. And it’s hard to say why. A pair of vans, apples and proust - all living together in the heart. Icons. Evidence of visitation - perhaps not extraterrestrial -but love, grief, depression, peace.

The format of these artifacts is an important thing to consider. Griggs recently came across some mini-dv tapes of him skateboarding. But it wasn’t the grainy, blown-out effect that made those clips enchanting. Vinyl, cassette, icloud, film, paint - These are all just constraints. We must not confuse the format with the memory. Really, what we are romantic about is what it can’t give you.

Mini dv films could only record either 63 or 90 minutes of footage. The average song length is three minutes and 15 seconds. Vans are cool shoes but you need to buy new ones every few months because they are literally made of fabric. Words are good at explaining things but they can’t show you anything. Blue is nice but that’s not really why I like it.

In the dark it turns almost to ink and shadows clatter back and forth over it with ease. A kid somewhere wakes in the middle of the night and walks, bleary-eyed down the hall, casually passing a Cyclops skull. They are friends.

A man who has had ear lobe reconstruction because of a set of stretchers he wore from 2005-2009 but now has a large salary and a bathroom with an overhead shower brushes his teeth. He looks up into the mirror and sees a kid in a skeleton hoodie staring back at him. Boyhood. Brightness. Time well-spent. Griggs work is alive, but he'd rather you didn't look too far into it. Instead, float in quiet, cold space for a moment. Notice what comes up.

- Catalogue text by Ernie van Amstel, 2024

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in 1975, Griggs holds a Bachelor of Visual Art from Sydney College of the Arts (1999) and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Sydney (2007). He won the Willoughby City Art Prize in 2001, and is a repeat finalist in the Archibald Prize (2007, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2023, 2024) and other national prizes. A survey exhibition, David Griggs: Between Nature and Sin toured galleries in Australia (2017-2019), and his work has been curated into exhibitions in Paris, Copenhagen, Quezon City, Singapore, Sete, Manila, Bangkok, Graz, Berlin, San Francisco, Jakarta, and Miami.

Artwork by Griggs are held in important institutional collections all over Australia, notably QAGOMA, Brisbane, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney.