

CHRISTOPHER LANGTON**Colony**

24 August – 21 September 2019

Pop sculptor icon Christopher Langton presents *Colony*, his first solo exhibition since 2011. A whole-of-gallery installation, *Colony* riffs on sci-fi fantasies about space colonisation – imagining space cities surrounded by asteroids, meteorites and other celestial bodies – alongside real and imagined organisms in the shape of viruses, bacteria and fungi.

The hyperreal manifestation of his own recent experiences beset by life-threatening disease and infection, *Colony* beckons us to consider that we are all multi-cellular symbiotic organisms, negotiating a precarious shared ecology.

Langton spent two years assembling the works, drawing, meticulously designing, 3D printing with PLA – a bioplastic material produced from renewable source, corn starch – and hand painting each of the 41 individual sculptures and two Mechanoid figures in his Melbourne studio.

Visually provocative, *Colony* is appealing in colour and sheen and repellent in form and texture. Scaled-down components from space and scaled-up microscopic bacterial organisms occupy the gallery. Stepping into *Colony* is like entering a contaminated cyberspace, the zone of a video game or that of a B-grade horror movie.

Surveying the surreal and bizarre landscape, are two oversized aliens *Self-portrait as Mechanoid (Biped Version)* and *Self-portrait as Mechanoid (Avatar)*, two further iterations of his *Mechanoid* series, companions to the two currently on display at MONA, Hobart as part of the Simon Denny exhibition, *Mine* (8 June 2019 – 13 April 2020). Silent and a little menacing, the robotic figures occupy a universe that is at once fearful and fascinating.

Langton says, "Two alien 'alienated' figures emphasise the human scale and increase the number of 'alien' bodies in the installation. I would also like these figures to contribute to a political reading of the work with 'alien' also meaning foreigner, outsider, non-native or immigrant. I've deliberately made these figures weird and distorted to invoke a sense of unease. Just as with our fear of viruses and bacteria we have a fear and mistrust of the other which is seen currently in the increase of xenophobia and nationalism around the world. The figures are positioned on the periphery and look inwards, and can be seen as guards, supervisors or overseers."

Colony might be your worst germophobic nightmare or the realisation of an Elon Musk-like space-travel escape dream.

Christopher Langton's group exhibitions include the Osaka Triennial, Osaka Contemporary Art Centre, Japan, and Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, both 1998; *This Was the Future: Australian Sculpture of the 1950s, 60s, 70s and Today*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 2003; *Swoon*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2004; and *Soft Sculptures*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2009 and National Gallery of Victoria's *Melbourne Now*, 2013. His works have also been commissioned for Melbourne's *White Night*, 2018.

His solo exhibitions include *Pneumatic*, Bendigo Art Gallery, 1998; *Plastic Life*, with Patricia Piccinini, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2000; and *Buoys*, Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne, 2002. In 2012 he was awarded the inaugural McClelland Achievement Prize.

The sculptures in *Colony* are available in collectible single editions. Contact Tolarno Galleries for details.