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MEDIA RELEASE

JOHNNY ROMEO - Solo Show - DREAM-LAND

Opening: 28th May 2019



Internationally acclaimed Australian Pop painter Johnny Romeo makes his triumphant return to the Gold Coast with his hypnotic new exhibition, DREAM-LAND. Fresh off the back of critically acclaimed and sold out shows in New York and Sydney in late 2018, Romeo takes a deep dive into the realm of the subconscious to create a mind altering, kaleidoscopic new series of works that explores Surrealism's fascination with dreams. The series is a thrilling homage to the work of renowned Surrealist Rene Magritte that has been masterfully curated by Romeo and Terri Lew of 19 Karen Contemporary Artspace. Tearing through the barriers between the real and the imaginary like a neon-drenched fever dream, DREAM-LAND delivers electrifying Kitsch Pop renditions of iconic Magritte works that showcase Australia's King of Pop at his most psychedelic and sublime.

Surrealism has long been a major influence on Johnny Romeo's gleefully Absurdist take on Pop Art. However, in DREAM-LAND, Romeo takes his penchant for Surrealist imagery to dazzling new heights, transforming his inimitable Neo-Expressionist Pop stylings into engrossing dreamscapes that blur the lines between the real and the surreal. Taking its title from Edgar Allan Poe's 1844 poem 'Dream-Land', the series is a psychotropic journey through the subconscious that subverts familiar elements, such as Pop culture icons and everyday objects, and re-envisages them in bold, incongruous ways that challenge our perceptions of reality. Romeo's signature Technicolour palette takes on an electrifyingly hallucinatory feel, as concentrated bursts of candy coloured hues explode off the canvass with the feverish intensity of a lucid dream.

Johnny Romeo masterfully draws on the works of Rene Magritte, appropriating the artist's unsettling inventory of dream imagery as a means of fusing the psychological introspection of Surrealism with the eye-popping brashness of the Pop world. Recurring motifs found throughout Magritte's work are given a refreshingly contemporary Kitsch Pop spin throughout DREAM-LAND, as Romeo filters iconic symbols such as the mysterious suited man, apples, bowler hats and mirrors through his delightfully warped Pop

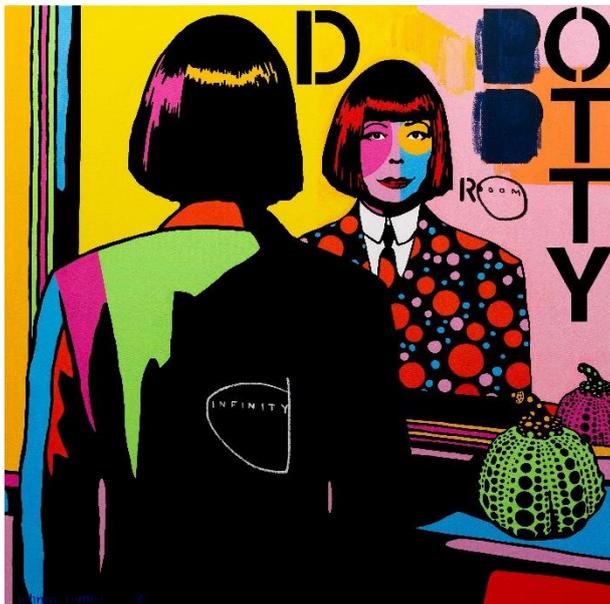


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sensibilities. Romeo has created his most compositionally sophisticated paintings to date, using Magritte's works as the basis for pushing his arrangements forward in a tighter, more representational direction without sacrificing the punk-edge that he has become known for.

DREAM-LAND is, in many ways, a celebration of real-life dream-weavers and modern day Surrealists within Pop culture. Bringing together a roster of icons across the spectrum of art, music and fashion, the series examines the way in which visionaries such as Yayoi Kusama and Karl Lagerfeld altered the everyday into the extraordinary by redefining the limits of our perceptible reality. For Romeo, these modern alchemists, like the Surrealists, pushed the boundaries of creativity and invited their audience to question what lies beyond the surface of what we can see, to break

free from the boundaries of the visible world and breathe life into our dreams.

Music references abound throughout DREAM-LAND, as Johnny Romeo showcases his uncanny knack for visually distilling eclectic sounds into his works. Characterised by their taut, sleek imagery and otherworldly colour palette, the paintings in the series evoke the dreamy melodies of classic 1960's guitar pop and the swirling, hypnotic fuzz of psych rock to create a perfect harmony between Surrealism and Pop. Lyrics strewn from artists such as the Sex Pistols, Jeff Buckley, Lou Reed, and in particular, the iconic Pop-inflected psychedelia of The Beatles, are chopped and re-interpreted through Romeo's gleefully irreverent Kitsch Pop filter, cascading across the works like the searing vestiges of a long forgotten dream.

DREAM-LAND is a visual feast for the senses that invites audiences to take a plunge down the rabbit hole of Johnny Romeo's surreal Pop visions. An intoxicating brew of Surrealist imagery, mind-bending colour arrangements and pulsating Pop slickness, the series sees Australia's leading Pop artist journey cross the vast expanses of the subconscious to create his very own DREAM-LAND.

Johnny Romeo - Solo Show - DREAM-LAND

Show runs from 28th May - 22nd June 2019

Exhibition Link:

<https://19karen.com.au/exhibitions/johnny-romeo-dreamland/>

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