



View of "Jane Lee," 2022. From left: untitled, 2022; *Where Is Painting #9*, 2022. Photo: Toni Cuhadi.

consistency of the paint. Even more than it addressed "where" painting might be, this quality represented the triumph of the optimistic "how" over the brooding "why."

The creative tenor of the 2020s has tended understandably toward the grim and overwrought. The uplift offered by "Where Is Painting?" therefore came as a welcome relief. That a show of this caliber should be on view at Sundaram Tagore's space at Gillman Barracks—the former British Army base that was transformed ten years ago into an arts hub, mere months after the Singapore Land Authority slated the embattled precinct to be renovated as a tepid-sounding "lifestyle enclave"—speaks of struggles to come. For now, we might follow Lee's example and punch through, smiling.

—Samantha Kuok Leese

SYDNEY

Ronnie van Hout DARREN KNIGHT GALLERY

A trademark of Ronnie van Hout's art is his way of casting himself in multiple roles, whether in low-budget videos or as the face attached to sculptural figures ranging from pajama-clad adolescent boys to a giant anthropomorphic hand named *Quasi*, 2016—short for Quasimodo. When installed on the roof of City Gallery Wellington in 2019, *Quasi* provoked the BBC headline "NIGHTMARE" HAND STATUE LOOMS OVER NEW ZEALAND CITY. Van Hout's scenarios regularly incorporate his own image into representations of social outcasts from film and literature.

The centerpiece of van Hout's latest Sydney show, "Unwelcome Home," looked like a mise-en-scène lifted from a B horror movie, comprising life-size figures made of painted resin-coated polystyrene. Four were based on full-body 3D scans of van Hout and his teenage son. The scans were used to guide a computer numerical control machine in carving the sculptures out of polystyrene blocks. Rounding out the group was *Seer* (all works 2022), a dark-blue Labrador retriever poised to attack, standing beside a vivid-red van Hout double who squints through the slats of a real venetian blind with a semiautomatic rifle at his side. In their sights was a trio of human figures colored pastel blue, soft lilac, and cream. The figure identified as *Seen 1* was modeled on van Hout standing cocooned in a padded sleeping bag with a face-framing hood. The others, *Seen 2* and *Seen 3*, are casts of his son also enclosed by a sleeping bag, one mirroring the standing father and the

other lying sleeping. In appearance, the three figures condensed a concoction of spiritual types and horror-film staples, variously invoking holy orders, angels, aliens, zombies, or pod people.

One cultural reference here, van Hout tells me, was the 1968 horror movie *Night of the Living Dead*, in which ill-fated humans defend a homestead against an army of flesh-eating zombies. From this perspective, the installation may reflect on the ways in which things denied, buried, or repressed by individuals or society can return to make one hell of a mess. This idea could be extended to clichés of the nuclear family, which are dismantled by the sight of angry red Ronnie about to shoot his duplicated self and offspring. The replication of selves in performative mode also implies an idea of identity as shaped by the media images and language we consume. Another work, *Seeing, Being*, gestured in this direction. Six large ink-jet-printed photographs depict different words monumentalized within miniature landscapes, bathed in lurid color and chiaroscuro lighting suggestive of old-fashioned sci-fi films. The word-images were arranged on the wall like a diagram to stage slippages between I (repeated), AM, SEE, IT, and THEM.



Completing the show was the moving-image work *Out (T)here*. Two monitors, mounted side by side on the wall, screened digitally scanned Super 8 footage of another father-and-son collaboration. The setting is a scrappy patch of Australian bush. One monitor shows a close-up of van Hout speaking inaudibly and gesturing. The only sound is droning keyboard music created by the artist. The second monitor reveals the object of van Hout's attention: his son meandering through the bush toward the camera. I found this work puzzling until I noticed the words SHARING STORIES, FINDING SOLUTIONS printed on the son's hoodie. This is the slogan of Djirra, an Australian organization that supports First Nations people affected by family violence. I therefore surmised that *Out (T)here* reiterated themes in the other works of both family fragility and a repressed past returning to haunt and discomfit the present.

—Toni Ross

View of "Ronnie van Hout," 2022. Foreground: *Seer*, 2022. Background: *Seen 1*, 2022. Wall: *Seeing, Being*, 2022. Photo: Simon Hewson.

CORRECTION: In the October issue, in a review of the work of Swapna Tamhane at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto [p. 197], it was falsely stated that the Le Corbusier-designed Ahmedabad Textile Mill Owners' Association House was located in Chandigarh, India, and built as a municipal center to celebrate Indian independence, when in fact it is located in Ahmedabad, India, and was not built for the stated purposes. *Artforum* regrets the errors.