

**DARREN
KNIGHT
GALLERY**



Drags'R'Us

***Drag stars & personalities
of 1990s Melbourne***

**Darren Knight Gallery
4 February - 4 March 2023**

Barbra Quicksand 1995 (detail)
wool sewings on hessian
76 x 93 cm

PAULA HYLAND (& Roger Hyland)

Drags 'R' Us

4 February – 4 March 2023

Opening celebrations Saturday 4 February 3 – 5 pm

The exhibition will present 10 wool sewings by Melbourne artist Paula Hyland from a series made in the early to mid-1990s. These works were originally exhibited at the Darren Knight Gallery in 1995 (Melbourne) and 1997 (Sydney). They are accompanied by two collages made by Paula's husband Roger at the same time.

Drags 'R' Us features portraits of personalities from the Melbourne drag scene of the early 1990s. At this time, Paula Hyland and her husband Roger became regular attendees at drag shows in Melbourne where they met and befriended many of the stars and characters from this scene.



Paula & Roger Hyland, Dulcie Du Jour and friends at the Darren Knight Gallery, Melbourne 1995.

As Roger remembers....

"Sometime around the end of 1990 we made friends with a young gay man who was always telling us about his nights at gay clubs and bars. Paula was curious and interested in going and one Saturday night, he took us to the Peel (Hotel) on the corner of Peel Street and Wellington Street, Collingwood. At that time, the Peel was open from 9 or 10 at night until 5am or later most days of the week. Typically, it didn't start to fill up until after 11 or 12.

Around this time drag queens would start to arrive after shows at venues like 3 Faces and The Exchange Hotel in Commercial Road Prahran. At that time Commercial Road was the heart of Melbourne's gay entertainment scene, although Pokeys at The Prince of Wales, starring Doug Lucas, which closed in 1992 had probably been the highest profile drag venue during its existence. In Commercial Road, 3 Faces was the most prestigious venue, massive in size with a huge stage for drag shows and a big dance floor. The Exchange was a local hotel and shows there in the smaller surrounds headlined by Dulcie DuJour (Jeff Dycer) were much more intimate.

On that first night at the Peel, as soon as Paula saw the drag queens arrive, she knew what she wanted to do. She approached Dulcie, explained she was a textile artist, and said she'd like to photograph her and make a sewn portrait. At that time Dulcie had no idea who Paula was or what a finished piece would look like. To further complicate things, Paula's camera was being repaired, so she wasn't able to start immediately. The repairs took so long, I think Dulcie doubted anything was ever going to happen but finally the camera was working and we went to The Exchange to photograph Dulcie putting on makeup and dressing for the show.

We started going regularly to the Peel and the Exchange, mostly on Friday and Sunday nights, partly because it was fun but also because Paula was making herself known to drag queens she wanted to work with. Drag queens were huge draw cards at all the venues, drinking heavily and mixing with patrons as well as performing. People like Dulcie, Paris and Rita, Miss Candee, Skye Brookes, Doreen Manganini, Barbara Quicksand, Stella Constellation and Coco were either hosts and/or stars of their own shows, which always included performances by an ever-changing cast of regulars and newcomers like Tara Wells, Miss Synthetique, Lucy Loosebox, Jennifer Ann Wells, Sue Ridge and Tracy Twat. Everyone was unanimous that artists like Doug Lucas and Kerrie Le Gore were the pioneers and great innovators in creating shows and formats for drag entertainment. Other popular gay venues at the time included: Trish's in North Melbourne, The Greyhound hotel in St Kilda, the Laird in Abbotsford, DT's Hotel in Richmond and briefly, Virgin Mary's in Commercial Road.

For Paula this was a period of intense work and pleasure. She loved the excitement, the glamour and the creativity of the drag queens and certainly felt proud of the work she was able to make but it was hard to separate her artistic satisfaction from the feeling of acceptance and belonging she felt with the people she worked with and the people she came to know while it was all happening. We both felt very privileged.”

Darren Knight Gallery is very pleased to be re-showing the last surviving works from this project. The photographs in Roger’s collages were from two main sources: photographs taken by Paula and used as references for the earlier sewings and then as the source for the screen prints and collaged elements in the later works and; pictures from the Melbourne publications, Brother Sister and The Melbourne Star Observer.

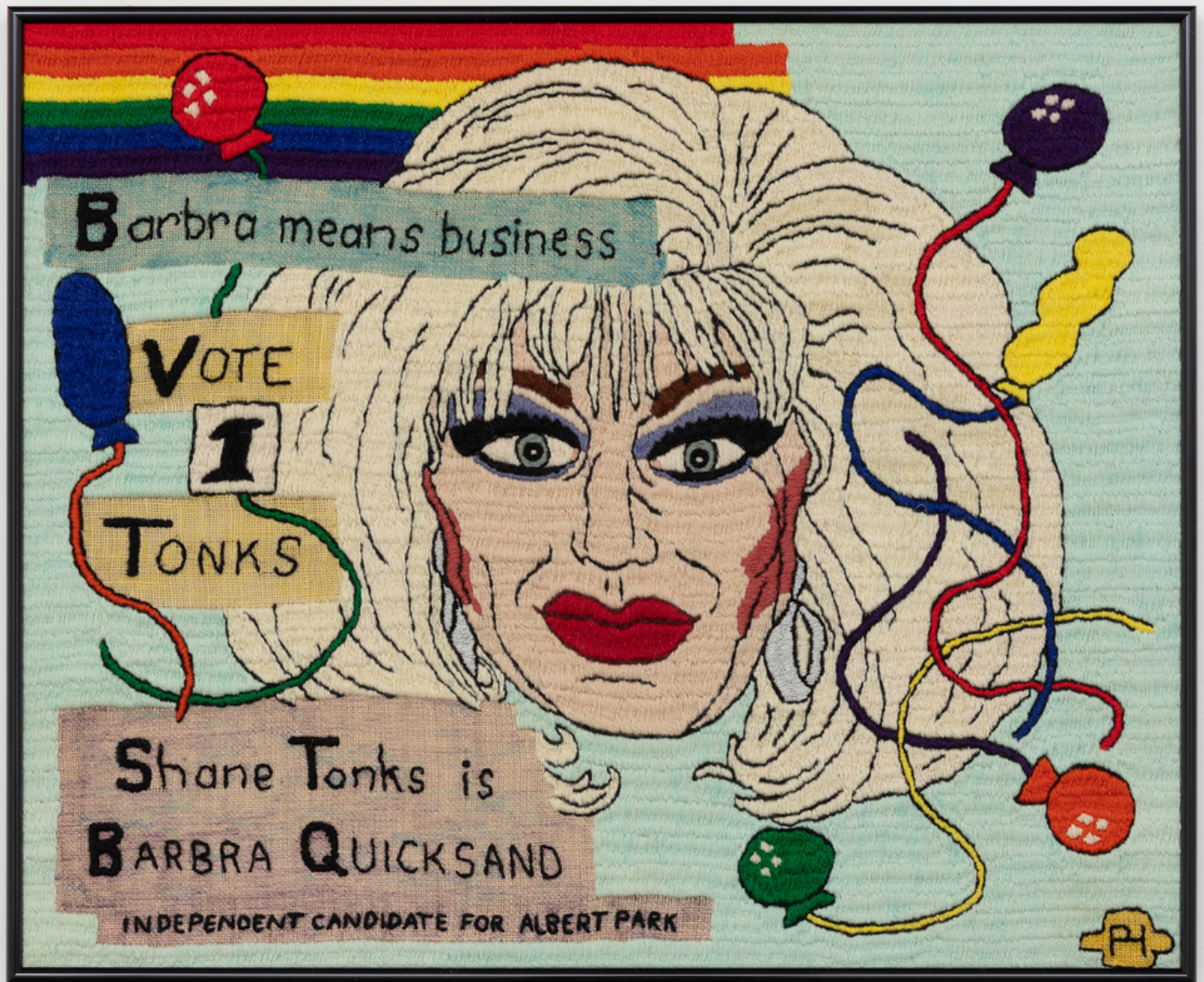


Dulcie and Lucy at Interval 1993

wool sewings on hessian

84 x 71 cm

\$6,500.00 SOLD



Barbra Quicksand 1995
wool sewings on hessian
76 x 93 cm
\$6,500.00 RESERVED

ESCAPE

Calvin Klein



Christian Dior
EXCLUSIVE ADAPTATION
FOR AUSTRALIA BY
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ecstasy !



Ecstatic Rita 1996

wool, liquitex & screen ink on hessian

110 x 124 cm

\$9,500.00



Miss Candee 1995
wool sewings on hessian
82 x 97 cm
\$6,500.00 SOLD



Dulcie - Our Lady of Flowers 1994
wool sewings on hessian
76 x 74 cm
\$6,500.00 SOLD



Pink Candee 1996

wool, liquitex & screen ink on hessian

112 x 122 cm

\$9,500.00



Drag Queen 1996
wool sewings on hessian
113 x 112 cm
\$9,500.00 SOLD



Wendy Frank'n'Burger with Veronika Puddle and Tracey Twat 1994

wool sewings on hessian

62 x 91 cm

\$6,500.00



Dulcie, The Rainbow Award Australian Madonna 1996/7
wool sewings & photocopy collage on hessian
123 x 119 cm
\$9,500.00



ROGER HYLAND

Drag busters 1995

collage on board with artist made frame

88.5 x 79 cm

\$2,500.00



PAULA HYLAND - 'Drags' R' Us', installation view, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney.



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