



Oliver King, *I don't give a shit about you. Success smells fantastic*, 2019. Digital print on ACM and mixed media, 120 x 80cm. COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND PAULNACHE, GISBORNE.

WHAT NEXT?

Allow us to introduce you to the work of these five artists showing at Sydney Contemporary 2019.

OLIVER KING



Oliver King, *I couldn't let myself be fucked*, 2018. Digital print on ACM, digital photographs, magnets and chain, 53 x 80cm.
COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND PAULNACHE, GISBORNE.

Why pay attention?

I Am The Shit is Oliver King's first solo exhibition after finishing his Masters of Fine Arts at Auckland's Whitecliffe College of Arts & Design in 2018 and following on from being a recent finalist in a number of New Zealand art awards. In a timely project, and amid what has been described as a global crisis of masculinity, *I Am The Shit* explores the contemporary male crisis and the entitlement of the privileged, white, straight man.

What does he do?

The series began with King photographing himself standing in front of the mirror, "feeling vulnerable in my underpants", he says. These photographs form the basis of a series of collages and freestanding sculptures. In these works, King explores the relationship with his father, using the clothes he passed down to him alongside other objects such as billboard vinyl and the chains used to display pictures.

What's going on?

The works mimic elements of signage and display found in advertising, an industry he shares a background in with his father and his grandfather. "My father was a man who dressed for success," King explains. "He always put forward this pressure on us to be beautiful."

As the fabrics form real and represented shadows, repeating patterns and shapes alluding to genitalia and other body parts, both female and male, King explores the sensual body moving between different, often unknown states of being.

Be it addressing insecurities or facing up to ideals, King is interested in the history of masculinity and how it is passed down. "It is a careful tightrope we have to balance," he says.

The artist says...

"I can only acknowledge, discuss and learn about who I am – being a privileged white straight man. Do I need to be more feminine? Do I need to be more manly? I can just start with myself – in my underpants in front of a mirror. Then we can ask 'how do we re-birth ourselves or find new form?'"

See it at...

King's *I Am The Shit* shows at New Zealand gallery PAULNACHE's stand at Sydney Contemporary 2019.

Sue Gardiner