

DARREN SYLVESTER

CARVE A FUTURE, DEVOUR EVERYTHING, BECOME SOMETHING

ARTWORK LABELS

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Darren Sylvester: Carve a Future, Devour Everything, Become Something

Darren Sylvester is a Melbourne-based multidisciplinary artist who works in staged photography, sculpture, video, installation and music. Sylvester's practice draws on a multitude of pop culture, advertising and fashion references, filtering ideas and images back through re-creations and fabrications that have a strange resemblance to reality. His work appropriates and transforms well-known products as 'readymades', as a way of looking at the ways we live with, and are shaped by, branding.

Sylvester's recognition of branding saturation; of yearning through products, and the constant desire for more, creates a sustained tension in his work. As he says, 'although we're in a culture that provides hopes and dreams it never allows us to reach them; we're still terrible consumers and believers – always investing, yet knowing there's a diminishing return'.

Shared desires, work conundrums, loss and longing, fear of death – these are some of the subjects that appear time and time again in Sylvester's work. With its haunting and ambiguous re-creations, self-absorbed and cool cast of characters, high production values, and constant interrogation into questions of the authenticity of emotion, Sylvester's work acts as a reflection of life, and also, always, a portal into something else, something more.

All works are courtesy of Neon Parc, Melbourne and sullivan+strumpf, Sydney/Singapore, unless otherwise specified.

From 1998, Darren Sylvester began making staged studio photography – works that he describes as ‘encased miniature dramas’. These early images tend to explore ideas around relationships, conformity and individuality; and, as Sylvester explains, started with written texts:

‘Early photographs came through writing short fictional, autobiographical stories. The key was to try and provoke a line that could be interesting for a title. Once I found a line I imagined an image that could sit alongside. I would then build a set in the studio – ‘B-grade sets’ that used recycled things and op-shop finds to resemble a TV set; I’d then create mood by using lots of lights and coloured gels and smoke machines to glue it together.’

The titles of these works are lengthy and poetic – comparable to song titles. They speak to an imagined audience seeking emotional guidance, or wishing to identify with a shared emotion.

In typically self-taught style, in 2008, Darren Sylvester wrote, performed and produced an album of pop songs. The eponymous release was created over a four-month period in which the artist purchased musical instruments and recording equipment, and learnt how to sing, play the instruments, record and mix.

The album followed his visual art aesthetic, being a heavily layered production that was at once romantic and droll. A second album, *Off by Heart*, was released in 2013, followed by *Touch a Tombstone* in 2018. This most recent production is studded with soaring saxophone solos, Moog and layered synths, and is filled with songs relating to the loss of work, job security and anxiety about love.

Sylvester has spoken of the relationship of his albums (and their accompanying graphics and album design) to the creation of his sculptural works or photographic sets – that recording and mixing is similar to working with clay or plaster. You build up, layer and colour and etch back till you have the finished product.

'*For you* began as paintings in 2001 that were titled *I care for you*. I wanted to paint however I didn't want to mix colours, so I contacted Clinique who provided me with their cosmetic range of the season – colours I presumed would automatically look good as they had been market tested. I converted the cosmetics into paint and sprayed them onto clear acrylic, so when flipped around they acted like mirrors. Because the colour was designed to look good on people, you did too, so the title was just that, *I care for you*.

I had made other versions of these paintings with updated colours, in 2007 and then in 2013, with the simplified title *For you*. I asked Yves Saint Laurent to provide their current range, and instead of converting lipsticks, eye shadows and foundations to paint they were converted to light to create a dancefloor – a stylised make-up compact – washed in market-researched lighting, all brought about through my own self-consciousness about dancing in clubs. This installation also speaks of consumerist trends: since the colours change every season, every time the work is shown a new current range of colours will be seen.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

This work features an original soundtrack composed and performed by Darren Sylvester and produced by James Cecil. The music, like the lighting scheme, changes with each iteration of the dancefloor.

THIS WORK CONTAINS VISUAL EFFECTS THAT MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR SOME VISITORS.

Single again

2005

digital type C print, ed. 2/3

Monash University Art Collection

Purchased 2011

2011.26

Left to right

**I want to carve a future, devour
everything, become something**

2006

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

All you need to know you knew early

2007

digital type C print

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Purchased with funds provided by Bronwyn Doutreband, Egil Paulsen, Russell Skelton & Virginia Trioli, Sullivan & Strumpf and the Photography Collection Benefactors' Program 2008 251.2008

Time has life's meaning

2007

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Don't worry, I'm just temporary

2005

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Doomed

2008

digital type C prints

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

‘This work recreates two scenes from the video-game-to-movie *Doom* (2005). In the film, a character holds a *Galaxian 2* – a handheld video game from the 1980s, that I played as a child. Its inclusion in the movie was designed to be a gamer in-joke; however; the actor is holding the *Galaxian 2* the wrong way – sideways. Almost immediately after, the character is killed. This insignificant moment reminded me of my own childhood – and the recreation of this doomed character gives that personal moment a new significance.’

DARREN SYLVESTER

Green editorial

2016

digital type C prints

Courtesy of Campbelltown City Council collection

'This work is about an unknown promise. Five models are employed to be photographed, not to advertise a product or event, just to generously smile in tight formation, wearing absurd make-up, facing towards the viewer. In this context they become empty signifiers for anything at all. Green flattened faces straining that seem to say – 'yes' or 'welcome'. Perhaps the title could be read like a stock photography search: 'Green editorial'. The colour alludes to the green used in advertising for something organic or simply an audience green with envy.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Dreams end with you

2014

type C photograph

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Purchased with funds provided by the Photography Collection Benefactors' Program 2014

248.2014

'When overseas I like to walk through high-end flagship stores and their holistic world of branding. A considered, consumerist's dream world. This work originated from standing in a Chanel store at dusk – looking out the window, daydreaming. The words 'dreams end with you' came to me. Soon after, I saw the Chanel spring 2009 runway show: the set was a reconstruction of Coco Chanel's Paris apartment building. I reimagined that moment of staring out the window, and modelled this set on the reconstructed runway set, not the original store. It was now a copy of a copy, a dream within a dream.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

The object of social acceptance is to forfeit individual dreams

2003

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'This is a rare photograph I've taken outdoors, about friendship through American-styled parties I'd seen on TV and in movies (note the red cups). Social acceptance from others was not about being an individual, however being the same, in this case everyone here is wearing clothes I bought from Gap.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Adidas hikers

2017

digital type C prints

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

The music videos looping on this screen are a selection from Sylvester's three albums, as well as the video work *Time keeps running, never changing, never ageing*, 2006.

List of works:

Time keeps running, never changing, never ageing

2006

colour DVD, sound, 4:02 min

Directed by Darren Sylvester

Featuring Monika Abate and Francesca Carter

Saxophone solo of Bruce Springsteen's 'Jungleland'

performed by Dave Frank,

courtesy of Bruce Springsteen tribute band Stone Pony,
Cleveland Ohio, USA

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

A teenage girl is seen running through the empty streets of Asbury Park, New Jersey – Bruce Springsteen's hometown, referenced in many of his songs. Only the sounds of the ocean are heard, until a saxophone blasts the solo from Springsteen's 'Jungleland'. This solo is performed by a saxophonist from an Ohio

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based Springsteen tribute band. Without the celebratory rock'n'roll of the E Street Band underneath it, the cover of Clarence Clemons's legendary solo wails against the silence, onwards and upwards until it flitters out into darkness. The solo aligns with Sylvester's practice of re-imagining moments from pop culture. Mixing authenticity and re-creation, it turns celebration into the sound of pathos and mortality.

Dream or something like that

2013

Directed by Alifeleti Tuapasi Toki

Featuring Frank Handrum and Kate Elizabeth Jean

With assistance from Mel Edwards, Nishant Dougall,

Brigid Cara and Drew Thomson

Chapter Music, 3:16 minutes

Don't do that to yourself

2013

Directed by Darren Sylvester

Featuring Jess with assistance from Alifeleti Tuapasi Toki,

Victoria Martin and Gill Tucker

Chapter Music, 4:24 minutes

Boys die young

2014

Directors Alifeleti Tuapasi Toki and Darren Sylvester

Featuring Laura, Mai and Lei

Chapter Music, 3:12 minutes

Fresh face

2014

Directors Alifeleti Tuapasi Toki and Darren Sylvester

Featuring Iona and Danielle with assistance from Binh Van

Phan and Mel Edwards

Chapter Music, 4:24 minutes

Whirlwind

2017

Director Darren Sylvester

Featuring Amy Parker

Newville Ave Records, 4:52 minutes

Plans

2018

Directors Alifeleti Tuapasi Toki and Darren Sylvester

Featuring Isobel, Siobhan, Tobias, Carmen, Connor, Ciara and Sabina.

This video plays homage to New Orders pop video

'Round and Round' from 1989

Newville Ave Records, 3:22 minutes

Little bit of luck

2018

Directors Arada Panichayatrurn and Darren Sylvester

Animation by Arada Panichayatrurn

Newville Ave Records, 4:27 minutes

Be right back

2018

Directors Angel Doberman and Lewis Mitchell

Featuring Chi and Lucinda Price

Newville Ave Records, 2:49 minutes

Left to right

Hard to say I'm sorry

2014

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

When will I learn

2014

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

You should let go of a dying relationship

2006

two-channel colour DVD, sound, 3 min 45 sec

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'I saw David Bowie's 'Heroes' (1977) on a screen in a noisy bar so I couldn't hear the song, however I felt Bowie's solitary sadness. I had the idea to make a silent video recreation and I wanted it to play off a female performer from the same era, set-up and length. Eventually I found Kate Bush's 'Wuthering Heights' (1978) which did just this. Now in sync, the dancers interact, drift into frame, spin around and fade out. I do a terrible disservice to both; but, I'm like a person when they dance and sing alone, imagining they're a pop idol until they catch a glimpse of themselves in the mirror.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Left to right

Don't call it love if they don't love you

2006

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Our future was ours

2005

digital type C print ed. 2/3

Special Collections, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne
Purchased 2009

2009.0109.000.000

Your first love is your last love

2005

digital type C print

Private collection, Sydney

In this photo Sylvester sets the scene of a disconsolate teenage boy sitting at a table in a typical suburban, middle-class lounge room amid the detritus of a Subway meal. The empty wrappers and fatalistic title universalise his experience – those intense feelings of desperation and longing mixed with the satisfaction sold to us by the quick-fix meal. Sylvester has discussed his use of fast food references – as he says: ‘they are simply there because they’re common, everyday products, it was strange not to include them’.

Who you are or how I meet you, I don't know

2007

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Cheeseburger

2017

screenprinted wool, stainless steel

The Bosci Collection, Melbourne

'I had these out-of-date, expired McDonald's wrappers in a box for maybe twenty years. Cleaning up one day, I found them forgotten and crushed. I began to think about why I had put them there, how I had changed and how McDonald's had changed, which made me think of psychiatry; lying on a bed talking about our past, these brands and myself, intertwined whether we like it or not through life. So, I pictured us talking, both just pieces of meat, contemplating existence and how as people we change and how brands change and we all die.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Sausage biscuit

2017

screenprinted wool, stainless steel

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Fillet-O-Fish

2017

screenprinted wool, stainless steel

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Drum machine

2009

custom-made ABS plastic case, foam, wood, vinyl, wool, aluminium, electronics, mixed media

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'I saw the band New Order use a strange drum machine when performing at the BBC in 1984. It was called the Simmons Suitcase Kit, with signature hexagonal-shaped drumheads. Apparently only a few had been built as prototypes. They lacked portability however, and weren't put into mass production. While the machine no longer exists, I figured it was vital that it be rescued. I found a Simmons drums obsessive in Germany who sent me schematics of the original wiring and construction. The artwork is similar to a readymade, however of something no longer existing; a ghost of the original.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Broken model

2016

digital type C prints

Collection of Todd McKenney, Sydney

'This work was inspired by a moment during Jean Paul Gaultier's farewell show at Paris Fashion Week in 2014. I was taken by a model who had fallen on stage, a 'broken' model, limp and lifeless while the other models remained in place and held their poses, adding to the misanthropic drama. I found out later the model was Coco Rocha, and it was all an act; the fall was deliberate. Fooled, I thought to remake the same scene and have a model act dead like Rocha, mixing together empathy, lack of authenticity and fashion desirability.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Won

2013, reworked 2019

wool, carpet, flowers, microphone, speaker

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'*Won* is a rebuild of the post-Oscars acceptance speech area, a place reserved for winners and celebrities. Here you can imagine yourself inside the work, surrounded by the branded wool backdrop, red carpet and TV lighting in front of a slimline gooseneck microphone, like a modern-day conch shell, to address and speak to a passing crowd. If awards shows are designed to show winners as stars then this is what a place in heaven looks like.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Moon rock

2014

aluminium, silicon, silica, magnesium, iron, calcium, chromium, titanium, manganese, oxygen

Private collection, Sydney

'The idea of owning a piece of the moon is almost an impossibility. So I thought I would make a piece of it here on Earth as something impossible made possible. Through research I was able to find the metals that make up the moon and approached the Engineering and Science departments of Melbourne's Monash University to assist. The finished artwork is the result of months of discussion and experimentation on how to combine the metals – the result is a silvery rock that shimmers just as the moon does, only here on Earth.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Space blanket

2012

acrylic, aluminium, brass, cotton, Dacron, fibreglass, Gore-Tex, Kapton, Kevlar, lycra, mylar, neoprene, Nomex, nylon, polyester, silica, Teflon, zip

Private collection, Sydney

'This blanket is made from the same materials as an astronaut's spacesuit: multiple layers create the maximum temperature resistance and protect from dust and radiation. The hardest material to source was the white outer layer – the company that made it ceased production so I purchased a close approximate; however I knew it wasn't right. Six months later, out of the blue, the company reached out via email: it was back in production as NASA needed suits made for museum pieces, so I purchased a sheet. Turning a spacesuit into a domestic blanket created associations similar to a child's safety blanket held for protection.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

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Layers of the *Space blanket*:

1. Nylon fabric – mesh-like fabric
2. White cotton – similar to singlet material
3. Lycra – with plastic tubing
4. Nomex – a firefighting material
5. Neoprene-coated rubber – much like a wetsuit
6. Nylon fabric – seatbelt material for ballistics
7. Neoprene-coated rubber (a second layer)
8. Beta cloth – a fireproof fibreglass material
9. Aluminised kapton – a gold-coloured lightweight thermal super-insulation material
10. Mylar film (first of five layers)
11. Dacron – non-woven sail-like material (first of four layers)
12. Mylar film (second layer)
13. Dacron (second layer)
14. Mylar film (third layer)
15. Dacron (third layer)
16. Mylar film (fourth layer)
17. Dacron (fourth layer)
18. Mylar film (fifth layer)
19. Another layer of aluminised gridded kapton
20. Another layer of beta cloth
21. Teflon-coated filament cloth
22. PTFE beta cloth – the final white outer as first defence.

You make me happy and sad

1999

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Céline

2017, reworked 2019

steel, paint, acrylic, composition board, lights

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'*Céline* originated because I continuously photographed the slab of marble that sits in the front of all Céline stores. Later I realised it was because it resembled a minimalist sculpture, and being stone it was like entering a cave with attached halo lighting that pulls you in. This power inspired me to make this reconstructed readymade. In 2018, Céline designer Phoebe Philo stepped down and was replaced by Hedi Slimane, who changed the name Céline to simply Celine. I've commented before that my sculptural work often concerns mortality. That change in name now shifts the meaning of this work to become a monument, a tombstone.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Darren Sylvester

Australia born 1974

**No longer exposed to problems
or tension**

1999

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

If all we have is each other, that's OK

2003, printed 2004

digital type C print, ed. AP1/2

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Purchased through funds arranged by Loti Smorgon for

Contemporary Australian Photography, 2004

2004.552

A strange stillness permeates this image – the uncanny atmosphere comes from the duration and direction of the shoot. Sylvester took around sixty photos during the session before later deciding on this frame. His instructions to the girls to ‘be happy all the time, and then be even happier’, the attempt to recreate the experience of having fun with friends, and the inevitably fleeting feeling that, at least in that moment everything is okay, results in a strange realism common to Sylvester’s photographs.

Just death is true

2006

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Don't lose yourself in tomorrow

2004

colour DVD, sound, 4 min 32 sec

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'I read a news story (in 1997) that claimed more than 600 people in Japan were rushed to hospitals suffering convulsions after watching the *Pokémon* episode 'Dennō Senshi Porygon'. The intense colours and flashes on screen caused epileptic-type effects. I thought I could try the same: I purchased over fifty Pikachu items from eBay and placed them in a set with a computer and a boy to play Pikachu's owner, trying to sleep. The Pichachus' combined energy, however, forces the computer's iTunes 'Visualizer' to cause similar psychedelic effects to those in the cartoon, waking the boy. He becomes forever trapped in a loop of bedside company.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Listen to me

2012

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'This portrait was inspired by science-fiction films that illustrate telepathic effects through swirls and rings on screen. An idea that we can somehow direct our thoughts for influence over others is something inherent in all of us – to be understood without saying a word, free from language. The oscillating rippled visual in this photograph was choreographed beforehand in the design of black perspex rings hovered in place by assistants, so no computer post-production was used, only smoke and mirrors and a camera's depth of field to fabricate something that is only a dream to begin with. Giving form to the formless.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Left to right

I wish I had office friendships, some gossip (homeworking)

1999

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Work day

2003

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'I worked for five years in telephone market research, calling disgruntled people to do surveys and answer questions. Everything about it was soul-destroying. I would look up while wearing a headset, waiting for the person on the other end to never pick up, staring at the anonymous office ceiling, enjoying the grid patterns, working day and night. In these works, I computer-stitched together an entire office floor, shooting with a Hasselblad camera aimed at the ceiling. I made the work once I left the job and my favourite corner is the exit.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

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If only we could do what we wanted to

2000

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Night work

2003

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Ghost story

2017

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'I found what is meant to be a banal photo of hospital doors available to buy from a manufacturer in Milwaukee; however, something about it resonated – the cleanliness of the colour – and what looked like more doors behind, like heading down a tunnel. I wanted to make this style of door, with its ghostly antiseptic feel in my studio, and place a TV actor to jump around the corner, playing a joke on whoever is inside, with an orange in mouth, as if to say, "It's going to be all right".'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Sofina whitening memory white

2007

Brazilian walnut

Collection of Niki and Dan, Sydney

Left to right

Hi

2010

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Don't substitute a life to satisfy mine

2007

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

**Let hopes and dreams be things we
can achieve**

2005

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne and sullivan+strumpf, Sydney/Singapore

'I was in Canada and wanted to find the mountains used in the Paramount Pictures logo. However, I learnt it never existed, the logo is only inspired by the mountains surrounding Banff. So this collective moment we all recognise from cinema is a fabrication, which sparked the idea for this work: although we're in a culture that provides hopes and dreams, it never allows us to reach them; we're still terrible consumers and believers – always

...continued overleaf

investing, yet knowing there's a diminishing return. The yellow jackets I purchased at a Walmart and these cheap mega-chain jackets, in contrast to the mountains, exaggerates the scale of emotion.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

On holiday

2010

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'Against a sunrise, a business traveller gazes at an unknown destination. The composition plays on stereotypes of luxury aspirations and aeroplane advertisements. For example, no-one ever flies into darkness or storms in an ad. It features a 1:1 scale fabrication of the decommissioned Concorde, with original cutlery purchased over a number of months via eBay. You can see an original boarding pass, Royal Doulton salt-and-pepper pots and butter pat, a crystal glass and original cutlery. The Concorde promised us a future of supersonic travel yet is now buried in history, existing only as a symbol of a decadent past.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Left to right

Hi

2010

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Don't substitute a life to satisfy mine

2007

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

**Let hopes and dreams be things we
can achieve**

2005

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne and sullivan+strumpf, Sydney/Singapore

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...continued overleaf

investing, yet knowing there's a diminishing return. The yellow jackets I purchased at a Walmart and these cheap mega-chain jackets, in contrast to the mountains, exaggerates the scale of emotion.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

On holiday

2010

digital type C print

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'Against a sunrise, a business traveller gazes at an unknown destination. The composition plays on stereotypes of luxury aspirations and aeroplane advertisements. For example, no-one ever flies into darkness or storms in an ad. It features a 1:1 scale fabrication of the decommissioned Concorde, with original cutlery purchased over a number of months via eBay. You can see an original boarding pass, Royal Doulton salt-and-pepper pots and butter pat, a crystal glass and original cutlery. The Concorde promised us a future of supersonic travel yet is now buried in history, existing only as a symbol of a decadent past.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Dead mice

2005

bronze

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Darren, you got us into this. You get us out

2000

digital type C print, ed. 4/6

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 2003

NGA 2004.487

Left to right

What happens will happen #1

2010

digital type C print

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for
Living Australian Artists, 2015

2015.171

‘The face-painting designs in these works were based on real images of teenage protesters. They are fabrications of a person and event with the actors who appear here sourced to look similar to the protestors. The images produce a skewed idea of wanting to be involved politically, yet self-consciously desiring to be cool and included at the same time. The title alludes to the idea that the decisions that influence these young subjects’ lives are made without their input or interests at heart – that as a teenager you feel you exist in opposition to a hard and uncaring world.’

DARREN SYLVESTER

What happens will happen #5

2010

digital type C print

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Gift of an anonymous donor through the Australian
Government’s Cultural Gift Program, 2016

2016.137

...continued overleaf

What happens will happen #3

2010

digital type C print

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for
Living Australian Artists, 2015

2015.173

What happens will happen #2

2010

digital type C print

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for
Living Australian Artists, 2015

2015.172

What happens will happen #4

2010

digital type C print

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Gift of an anonymous donor through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gift Program, 2016

2016.136

Silver Lockheed

2017

digital type C prints

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'Watching *Die Hard 2* (1990) there are a number of scenes involving a plane flying into clouded darkness. I researched how that scene was done – a large model in a studio, and smoke machines. The real plane used was a Lockheed L-1011. Now decommissioned, it is used in film and TV as the plane to crash. The same was used in the TV series *Lost*. This plane felt like a 'death machine'. I purchased a model from eBay, and shot it as a simple, silvery ghost that bursts through a field of dry-ice clouds, just as the model did in *Die Hard 2*, towards darkness.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

The end

2018

digital type C prints

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'This work references the end titles of Universal Pictures films – the fatalistic words that seem jarring against an image of the Earth. I produced a custom-made balloon from a purchased stock image and made the text from wood. The transformed font came from the end screen of 1980s arcade game *Missile Command*, one of the first to substitute the ubiquitous 'Game Over' with 'The End', aiming for a more cinematic experience within an 8-bit console. Together the words and image mix to create a tension between the world's current situation and a cartoon.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

IKEA sunrise

2018

digital type C prints

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

For you

2013, reworked 2019

**based on Yves Saint Laurent Rouge
Volupte Shine, Rouge Pur Couture,
Rouge Pur Couture Le Fuchsia, Rouge
Pur Couture Slim Matte, Tatouage
Couture the Metallic lipsticks; Spring
Look 2018 Couture Palettes, Yconic
Purple Couture Eye palette; Blush
Volupte and Mascara vinyl couture
illuminated dance floor, sound**

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

I was the last in the Carpenter's garden

2008

two-channel colour digital video, sound, 13 min 4 sec

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'This is a 1:1 replica of pop group the Carpenters' garden at their house in Downey, California – the home where Karen Carpenter passed away due to complications from anorexia nervosa. I read the house was up for sale to be demolished. I contacted people who were attending a final open house, through a Carpenters online forum, requesting photos for reference. Their father was a fan of Japanese-style gardens so he built the bridge carved with 'Superstar', and a torii gate with 'Carpenters', 'Richard' and 'Karen'. I decided if the garden was no more, I could remake it in the studio to be the last person with Karen. The day after filming, just like the real garden, mine was destroyed too.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Alpha arbutin

2012

bronze

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

'Walking around department stores, I became interested in the origami-style design of mass-produced cosmetic masks sold as applicators of moisturisers and chemicals. Instead of being square or round in design they're designed as masks – I'm sure to convince the consumer that somehow Procter & Gamble pharmaceuticals have discovered an elixir for ageing while tapping our desire for the fountain of youth. I purchased a bunch of masks, dried them out and used their shape as the basis for a series of wooden carved masks, and here a similar set in bronze, returning the chemical shapes back to what influenced them.'

DARREN SYLVESTER

Left to right

SKII skin signature

2012

bronze

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Shiseido aqualabel

2012

bronze

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Hisamitsu lifecella

2012

bronze

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Lucky charms ouija

2018

acid-etched mirror polished steel

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Dingbat ouija

2018

acid-etched mirror polished steel

Collection of the artist, Melbourne

‘The ouija board may bring to mind an old Parker Brothers product that resembles a board game, or a horror film trope in which characters use it to conjure spirits to question their fates. I wanted the silvery mirror finish of my own ouija boards to appear as if they held a mystical power through their material make-up. I also felt these ouija boards should be as universal as possible, so *Dingbat ouija* uses the pre-emoji graphics of selected dingbat fonts, – one of the most universal languages on Earth, while *Lucky charms ouija* is based on the popular breakfast cereal.’

DARREN SYLVESTER