

KINGS Artist Run acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate. We offer our respect to Elders both past and present and extend this offer to all First Nations people.

KINGS

Naimo Omar
WARNING TO
SPECIAL DRIVER OF
SPECIAL TRAIN

MARCH / APRIL
14.03.24-13.04.24

Artist Run

Established in 2003, KINGS Artist-Run provides a location for contemporary art practice, supporting distinctive experimental projects by artists at all stages of their careers.

Open 12-5pm Thursday,
Friday, Saturday, Sunday
69 Capel Street,
West Melbourne VIC 3003

STRAY VOLTAGE

Naimo Omar

WARNING TO SPECIAL DRIVER OF SPECIAL TRAIN

Warning to Special Driver of Special Train re-contextualises the train and Public Transport institution as a reflective state of experience through the form of the daily commute. This is channeled through the bodily experiences of a minority woman whose identity intersects race, immigrant, body and religious identities, as well as the acknowledged responsibilities of a settler on stolen land. As such, the poetic prose from a minority body, though standardised with a crisp American accent, articulates the capitalist and colonial histories of the Rail system common throughout the Colonial West, in which train stations provided settler accessibility to areas deemed available to be further colonised, and centuries later, are now invaluable to the movement of the working and immigrant class. Paired with footage of the artists local train stations, (Werribee and Hoppers Crossing stations) the rail system takes on a new setting that is inextricably linked with class, race, spirituality and settler colonialism.

STRAY VOLTAGE

Naimo Omar, *Warning to Special Driver of Special Train*, 2022–23, video.

NAIMO OMAR: My practice centres around a constant dissection of the different factors that comprise my identity (Black, Muslim, fat, cis woman, child of Somali diasporic parents) and how they intersect/ interact with each other — how it exists in both private and public spheres as well as the relativity of public and private when contextualised in a multitude of spaces and situations. It simultaneously functions as an active critique on viewers and their intrinsic perspectives as well as an essential reflective process facilitating healing and emotional resolution. Through the intersection of painting, moving image, text and found object installation, I seek to explore the precarious nature of existing societal structures around bodies and interrogate the various experiences of minority peoples in these spaces.

I live my life in the belly of its engine

Another flash of colour scouring buildings

Another whoosh of gas and rubber and a flush

I disappear between the fold of a blazer and the creasing of work boots

Shine captures, glistens high from black peaks and orange skies that stride

For the station

I disappear into the million eyes of a fly and see everything and nothing at once.

The train from Flinders Street to Hoppers Crossing to the 166 bus.

The train from Flinders Street to Werribee Station to the 180 or 182 bus.

The 48 or 11 tram to Southern Cross station to Hoppers-

Crossing-Station-to-the-166-bus/Werribee-Station-to-the-180-or-182-bus.

The train from Flinders Street to Hoppers- Crossing-to-the-166-bus/Werribee-Station-to-the-180-or-182-bus.

The crown sat on a train seat once. It waited for the good, loyal men to clear the way, and then it sat on a plump seat in a train and chugged away to wherever was ready for some good ploughing and polluting. Gum tree berries shrank back into their roots, or were chopped off, and notes of cash and streaming tears sprouted from the wounds. The ebb and flow of fields and battered warehouses, soccer fields to army bases, a mosque, a forgotten car, a creek beneath a bridge and the drip of remnant petrol, snaking through stones and cracks in space. Jobs were found, out in Country, and loss was found, out in Country. It didn't start with trains, but they helped.