

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

*Aaron Ashwood*

DRESSY CASUAL

MAY

*14.05.26-07.06.26*

*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  
12 - 4pm, Saturday - Sunday

69 Capel Street,  
West Melbourne VIC 3003

GALLERY TWO

*Aaron Ashwood*

dressy casual

Artwork details:

*dressy casual*, 2026, mixed media installation (milk crate, fabric, foamcore, vinyl adhesive, cardboard box, cardboard tubes, balsa wood, leather from chair back, paper, mugs, magnifying fresnel sheets, windowshade blind components, t-shirt, ceramic, moulding wax, shoe soles, oats, Elmers glue, hot glue, paper mache, car components, headphone components, acrylic paint, hardware, paper cups, halloween silicon face masks, plastic, pins, receipt, brown paper bag, shoe box, pre-made stretched canvases, 1/3 used 15L Taubmans white ceiling paint, styrofoam mannequin, artists hair), dimensions variable.

Aaron Ashwood b. 1998 is a Naarm-based artist who has completed a Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art) (Honours) degree at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Ashwood's practice is multidisciplinary, following the path of least resistance in producing spatial and sparse site-specific objects and installations. The resulting outcomes produced through this mode of making become intersectional, where forms become a framework in suggesting an in-between state.

Recent projects include Units, 2a Brunswick Road, Brunswick East, 2025; Remnants, FELTspace, 2025; Picture sale catalogue, Dorp Projects, 2025; Lingered in a Rude Form, Blindside Gallery, 2024; and Tunneling, Composite, 2023.

An estranged, foam head meets us at foot level, gently piercing the room, marking a site where the artist's body becomes material. Identity, labour, and material fuse at its anchor point. Initially incapable of thought, through the transplant of Aaron's hair, the mannequin is granted a provisional consciousness. How does the artist think now? The head becomes a site where being is both preserved and performed. The hair, as a trace or index of self, evidences Ashwood's body.

This personal exchange stages a kind of release, generating both a problem and a solution simultaneously. Skipping the incremental tension of pulling one's hair out before a deadline, the artist's razor pursues a metaphoric 'answer' that sidesteps the typical trials and tribulations of artistic practice. Ashwood abandons the formalities of overthinking and the slow anticipation of prolonged making, perhaps already expended in the studio where such processes are rehearsed.

Abrupt yet mediated, the gesture operates all at once as rupture and ritual, embracing the maintenance of the body as both process and platform. In performing a sculptural operation, Aaron's own head is placed in suspension, momentarily vacated. I am reminded of Aaron's previous use of wigs and self-portraiture, establishing a lineage of substitution and doubling.

The rapid event of a sudden or impulsive haircut can be read in relation to periods of intense focus, turbulence, heightened emotion, or situations where control feels tenuous. It's a clean slate, breezy, carefree, and low maintenance. In the context of 'dressy casual', the uniform cut operates as an immediate resolution: a dubious 'rebirth' emerging from indecision or restlessness. Ashwood collapses the process into a single, resolute act. The banality and almost casual execution allow the action to hover ambiguously between seriousness and impulse, between a considered gesture and something done to puncture boredom.

The head, in its displacement, is tethered to the artist; a repository that beats time by bearing the residue of an irreversible act, a record of a moment that cannot evolve or regenerate. Immortal and immune to the pressures of productivity, the mannequin's hair is forever.

The transfer from head to foam orb operates as both a literal and symbolic extraction, attempting to expose Ashwood's internalised, private field of monologue - tensions, impulses, and unresolved thoughts. Intangible, circulating thoughts are given provisional form; however, ideas remain displaced, held at a distance, reconfigured as an object to be encountered. This sense of everythingness and the illusory totality in what the transplant represents is met with a persistent not-knowing. The mannequin embodies a contradiction between the desire to expel and mask, inflating the impossibility of fully comprehending what has been released.



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\*NORMAL\*