

Diurnal Divinity, 2024
Bonnie Huang
October 18 - November 1

Exhibition text by Ianni Huang
Confession booth construction by Maxime Armand
Install by Runa Vasile
Exhibition reader by Rhea Thomas

Artist Statement

Diurnal Divinity is an inquiry into the religiosity of queer desire and intimacy examined through the fleeting moments of quotidian transcendence.

The line between spiritual and sexual is blurred – desire to be salvaged or the desire to be eaten whole?

Driven by a sense of curiosity towards intense feelings of obsession and loss of control, Bonnie investigates the intersection of intimacies in public and private spaces to demonstrate how transformative interpersonal relationships and transcendental experiences change the way we tread and feel the earth.

The solo exhibition is a reflection on devotion and divinity through a framework of queer desire and intimacy. A questioning of what spirituality, community-building, means for contemporary queer audiences. Who is our god? Our icon? What is our enlightenment?

*I'll dance, dance, dance
With my hands, hands, hands
Above my head, head, head
Like Jesus said
I'm gonna dance, dance, dance
With my hands, hands, hands above my head*

The Mother Mary and Guan Yin figures, representations of a universal desire for salvation and compassion, are brought together, blended, abstracted. The sculptural installation meshes together the urinal porta potty with the confession booth – immersing viewers into the experience of something spiritual, intimate, erotic and emotionally charged. Blending together familiar religious imageries and universal experiences with a queer sensibility – the emphasis is placed on how our everyday environments can compel us to feel deeply and memorialises these quotidian moments. Thus, inviting audiences to look at their surroundings with more attentiveness and feel the emotional weight of objects that absorb our melancholies and laments.

I hope to offer a space of connection for a more liberating perspective of understanding identity and connection by pushing beyond conventional regimes of religion and the sanitised or corporatised representations of queerness. Essentially, presenting a more sacred perspective to view the queer community and its ways of belonging.



This exhibition is supported by the City of Parramatta Council's Parramatta Artists' Studios Creative Fellowship

Exhibition Text
By Ianni Huang

I'm texting my friends...*we are soooooo back* from a bathroom stall I have to claw my way out of. Another drink, I think; a dart, the skinny ones that taste like apple-mint; no more, no way, I need to find god. I peek through the crack of my temporary hovel, I pray my weakened state remains unseen – taking shelter, I hope for a familiar face to appear, to pass me a roll under the door and hold my hand for just a little bit. I take a piss. Scooping up the fallen cardigan around my feet, I see the ground is stained and the metal fittings around me slicked with grease, corroded by fingerprints into stages of undress. Stumbling out I catch the attention of two girls who tell me I'm pretty, I look at them with that slow wide eyed amazement, drunkenly turning my head to look behind me. When I finally face them again, by divine miracle I see them glowing – their skin like mirrors, my reflection in their faces.

With our senses we are led by curiosity – the active touch, to seek a taste or smell. To surfaces, objects, places that unfurl themselves and embrace our impressions - on them we leave something notable like nostalgia, community, worship, and yet they are wordless and silent. It is a type of divinity. With rejection in traditional religious spaces, it is no wonder that so much of queer history is told and remembered through public bathrooms. In essence, it is where we gather and create belonging amongst those who feel they can enter. Within, urinals and toilet bowls observe the utilitarian (the processes and cycles of our physical bodies) and then beyond that they house a fictive refuge dictated by a level of exclusivity created by its occupants. No two bathrooms are ever the same.

In the modern day, as socially and politically charged spaces, they exist as contested thresholds. Protecting this notion of vulnerability – the gross, the sensual, and complete mundanity– it is what icons we use to adorn them that makes these places unique and exclusive. For us, there's solace where one can be invisible, anonymous, smashing out the fluorescent lights in the Horden Pavilion toilet– creating makeshift sanctuaries, robed in aluminium and ammonia. The bathhouses in Bondi – the Taylor square bathrooms – divine spaces that still represent a sense of belonging even now when they are functionally gone. It is illogical to cling to them, to remember the exchanges like fiction, but religion rarely has reason.

Bonnie Huang's *Diurnal Divinity* – the line between spiritual and sexual, that traces within us our consumption of desire, the transformative power of queer intimacy. Leading us to these sensory reflections which connect the ordinary to something more transcendent, the bathroom where bodies intersect, the place where I see my basest self in others. Taking brief moments of processing//urinating, it is the object's attentive silence that facilitate spaces for our liberation and our resistance to sanitization.

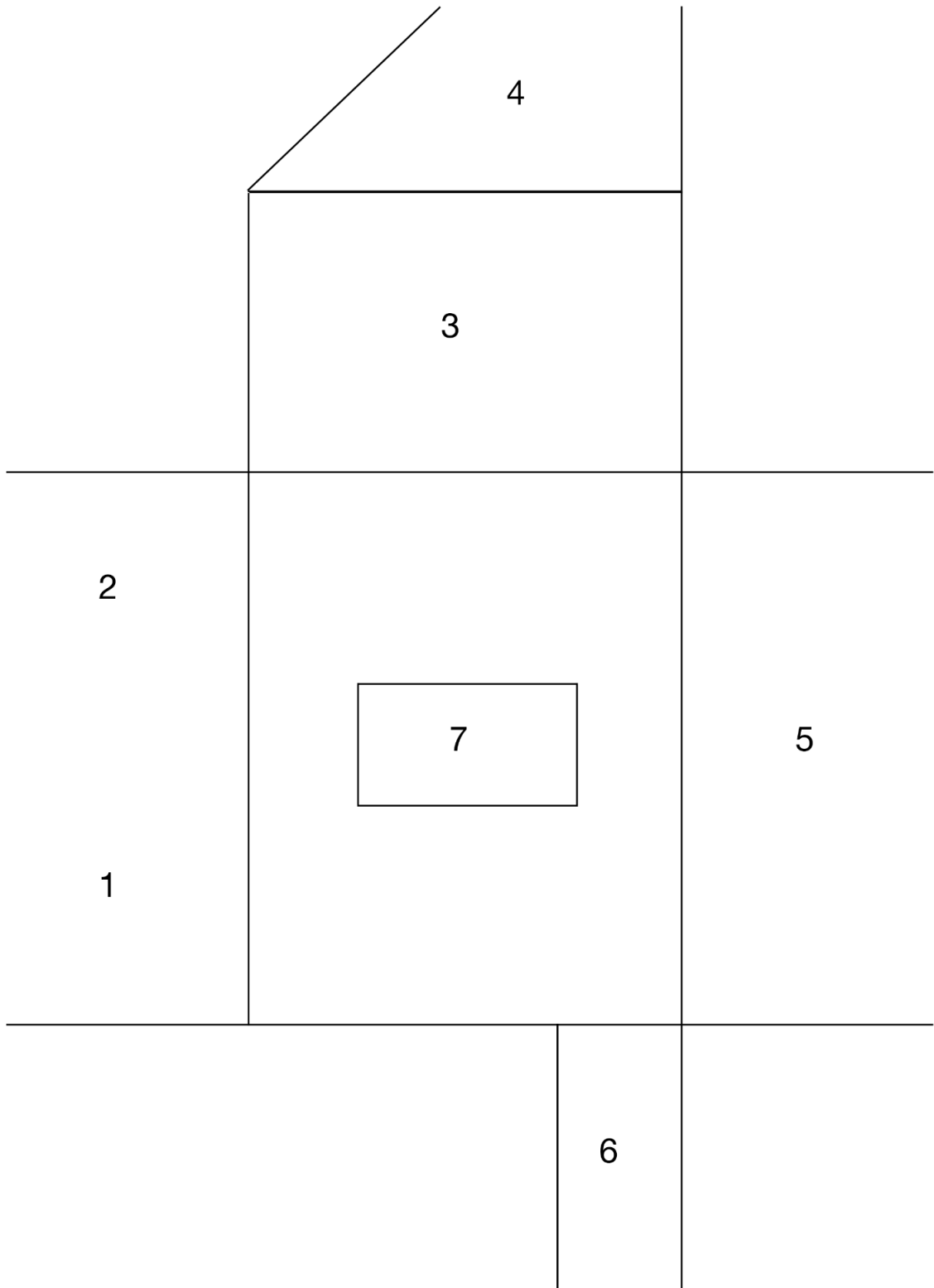


Catalogue

1. I reached for my dildo and saw her looking straight at me
Altar box, polymorph, event tyvek wristbands coated in polymorph
Dimensions
NFS
2. Undressing her robe
Wire, fabric, glue, light
\$200
3. Lost poster cross
Tattoo ink, latex sheets, eyelets, fishing line, nails, hand-polished aluminium
NFS
4. Exercises in undressing the religious figurine form
Wood, wire, expanding foam, disco tiles, silver paint, silicone, foam
\$100
5. Cleanse me of my sins
Oyster shells, piss of Runa Vasile and Bonnie Huang, screws
Dimensions variable
NFS
6. Reference nook
Installation of books, pillow, plywood pallet, painting
Books NFS, Painting \$150
7. The masculine urge to hold hands with the dude at the urinal next to you
Wood, nails, urinal, engraved aluminium sheet vinyl flooring, aluminium tape, duct tape, wheels, custom Tyvek wristbands, LED light, candles, She-wee, silicone, rat traps, hair, beads, found objects
200 x 200 x 90 cm



Floor Plan



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