

Sydney

Susan Norrie  
**BLURRED LINES**

27 August - 24 September 2022

My art practice has always incorporated reprographic silkscreen techniques, layers of oil painting and glazing as illustrated in these two recent works capturing a particular moment in Gina's salon where a young British soldier is undergoing a facial ... a mud mask and waxing.

Located on the Boardwalk, the central hub for Allied forces — the so-called 'Coalition of the Willing' stationed at Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, Iraq — the salon, like the adjacent barber shop and souvenir stalls, offered respite from the hard realities and unknown challenges of the Iraqi war.

In titling this exhibition *Blurred Lines*, I am referring to two aspects of the conflict: the 'blurred line' between interrogator and the interrogated: Gina the beautician caught in a playful moment where her hairdryer becomes 'weaponised'; the soldier seemingly at her mercy... overpowered, eyes closed, and smiling in blissful surrender.

The second aspect of 'blurred lines' is more sinister: it recalls the complexities of colonialist territorial decisions determined by the Sykes Picot Agreement (1916) and the Treaty of Versailles (1919) that can be considered the key underlying cause of the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

The monograph accompanying this exhibition is a compilation of texts, research notes and photographic stills that encapsulate my film project, *Spheres of Influence* (2019).

The two paintings are part of a suite of works that, like the monograph, document my time embedded with the Allied and Iraqi forces as an Official Australian War Artist stationed at Camp Taji in the later months of 2016.

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