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Giovanni Intra

1995

18 April – 1 June 2024

Artist, writer, and gallerist, Giovanni Intra (1968 - 2002) was born in Auckland and studied at Elam School of Fine Arts. He was a founding member of Auckland's Test Strip Gallery (1992-97). Intra moved to Los Angeles in 1996 to study art theory at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, focusing his attention towards Daniel Paul Schreiber's case study in paranoia and hallucination *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (1903). Born out of the aforementioned critical theory program, together with Steve Hanson, Intra co-founded the Los Angeles artist-run gallery China Art Objects in 1999. Early exhibitions included solo and two person presentations by Julie Becker, Dan Graham, Isa Genzken, Frances Stark, Laura Owens, R.H Quaytman and poetry reading by Mike Kelly, in addition to various activities Intra regularly contributed critical texts to the following journals, *Art and Text*, *Artforum*, *New York Review of Books*, and *Flash Art*.

In partnership with Hamish McKay gallery the exhibition at Sydney Sydney brings together an intimate selection of six scarce paintings from 1995, which Intra made in New Zealand before leaving for Los Angeles. Titles such as, *Nosology*, *Cadaveric Time*, *Nosologie*, *Physiology: The Devil / Bichat* and *Fuck Cinema*, are delicately traversed on a black ground with white lettering, alluding to a plasticity found within the space of pharmacology, punk, religion, surrealism and psychiatry. A description of these works appears in the 1996 exhibition catalogue *'The Chartwell Collection: The Self and Other Inventions'*, Curator, William McAloon writes:

“Giovanni Intra's white on black text paintings have the 'look' of sixties and seventies conceptual art and, within a New Zealand context, the painted biblical quotations of Colin McCahon. But Intra's work presents the high seriousness of neither, instead opting for a conspiratorial montage of fantasies: a recitation of experimental drugs, CIA plots, Psychiatry and the influence of 'Hollyweird'”.¹

In 2023 Semiotext(e) published *Clinic of Phantasm's* an important document describing the New Zealand and Los Angeles art scenes while detailing Intra's numerous contributions to the broad field of art and criticality, with contributions by Chris Kraus and Mark Von Schelgell, Roberta Smith, Andrew Beradini, Tessa Laird, Will Bradley, Joe Mesler and Robert Lenard, describing Intra's promethean approach to writing and a multifarious life lived through art.

The gallery would like to thank Hamish McKay, Stuart McKenzie, Ava Seymour and the Estate of Giovanni Intra for their collaboration and support.

¹ William McAloon, 'The Self and Other Inventions', *The Chartwell Collection* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery, 1996), np