

Media release

Gian Manik

Correspondence

Date

26 July - 23 August 2025

In the exhibition *Correspondence*, Gian Manik deepens his ongoing exploration of painting, memory, and identity through imagery drawn from art history, religious iconography, and popular culture. In these paintings, Manik recalls seemingly disparate images from throughout his life, that each carry overt or subtle associations with queer sex, desire, and love. By highlighting recollections from his private archive, Manik seeks to address and dissolve the shame that once surrounded queer intimacy in his youth. While his personal compendium of imagery is now largely sourced online, he acknowledges the vital role that archives and libraries have historically played as crucial sites of access where queer voices, stories, and histories could be uncovered and affirmed.

Though the visual references that range from saints to twinkies, may appear eclectic, collectively they compose a deeply personal, indexical record of the artist's queer awakening and artistic evolution. In *Correspondence*, each painting serves as both homage to its source and a meditation on how representation can foster understanding, affirmation, and acceptance.

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Biography

Gian Manik is a Naarm-based artist whose dextrous approach to image-making is characterised by an irreverence for genre and driven by a compulsion to paint. Interested in undermining the colonial properties arming the buttresses of historical painting, Manik ambiguates tradition through the representation of multivalent or tangential subjects.

Informed by a childhood spent voraciously copying reproductions of old master paintings, a subsequent indifference to the polarities of high and low culture has rendered his work resistant to traditional stylistic categorisation. Instead, Manik's practice can be read as an ongoing investigation into the boundaries of representation which often sprawls into the modalities and environments of fashion, music and performance.

His compositions interweave both carefully distilled and intensely gestural passages, forming a layered palimpsest that references and registers the quotidian fabric of his social and cultural surroundings. Distinguished by an interminable mix of nostalgia and desire, drama and tragedy, his work reverberates an uncertainty of meaning. Strategies such as repetition and mimicry blur the intended resonance or 'truth' attributed to each object, place, scene or character. As a result, Manik's paintings often function as parafictions, interpolating personal experience within constricted frameworks of historical narrative.

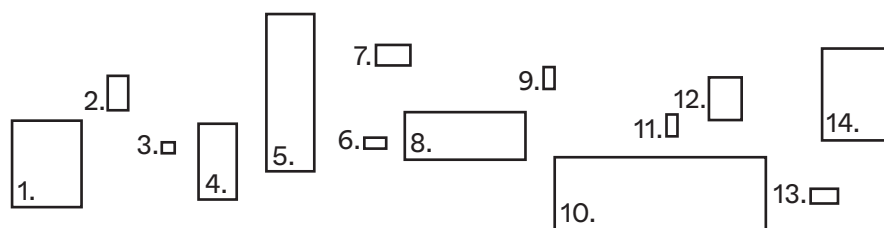
Gian Manik (b. 1985 in Perth/Boorloo) received a BFA (Honours) from Curtin University in 2011. After relocating to Naarm/Melbourne, the artist completed a Master of Fine Art (Honours) at Monash University in 2012. Since then, he has exhibited widely across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand in institutional and commercial contexts. He has received institutional commissions by the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (2022) and the Perth Institute for Contemporary Art (2024). Additionally, his work has been featured in significant exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth/Boorloo and the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

Biography (continued)

Manik was a resident artist at Gertrude Studios from 2022-2024, previously undertaking residencies at Bundanon, NSW; DESA, Indonesia, and The Australian Ballet. Manik is Ramsay Art Prize finalist (2023), and recently was named the 2025 Artist in Residence at the Monash University Prato Centre in Prato, Italy. Examples of his work are found in important public collections including the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth/Boorloo; City of Darebin, Naarm/Melbourne; Artbank, Sydney; Lawson Flats, Perth/Boorloo and numerous private collections across Australia, New Zealand, North America and Europe.

Exhibition checklist

Gian Manik
Corresepondence
26 July - 23 August, 2025

1. *Pillar of pain*, 2025

Oil on linen
96.5 × 76cm

2. *Trouble Sleeping*, 2024

Oil and acrylic on linen
30 × 19.5cm

3. *Le Beau Mec*, 2025

Oil on linen
7.8 × 10cm

4. *Academicism*, 2025

Oil and acrylic on linen
76 × 41cm

5. *The Platonic Blow*, 2025

Oil and acrylic on dyed linen
152.5 × 56cm

Exhibition checklist

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26 July - 26 August, 2025

Exhibition checklist (continued)

6. *Twink's revenge*, 2025
Oil on linen
6 × 13cm

7. *There*, 2025
Oil and acrylic on linen
16.7 × 32cm

8. *Flattery is poison*, 2025
Oil on linen
56 × 122cm

9. *Another weapon*, 2025
Oil on linen
18.3 × 10cm

10. *Look back for love*, 2024
Oil on linen
80 × 200cm

11. *Deep bells ringing*, 2025
Oil on linen
18.3 × 10cm

12. *Faith like mine*, 2025
Oil on linen
36 × 31cm

13. *Sexual affairs with all members of the household*, 2025
Oil on linen
10.5 × 16.5cm

14. *Movement of the pelvis*, 2025
Oil on linen
97 × 81cm