

Airspace Projects acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we stand today, the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora Nation. We would like to pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and ever emerging. We would also like to acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who come to the gallery to participate in its program of exhibitions and events. Sovereignty was never ceded

A HARD-EARNED THIRST

Henrik Haukeland

6.10.23 – 22.10.23

A HARD-EARNED THIRST deals with the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and the effects it will have on work. AI is due to spark a transformation of society equal to, or perhaps even greater than, both the industrial revolution and the invention of the internet.

Found footage of Victoria Bitter (VB) beer commercials have been remixed utilising an AI-image generator. The artist's method is slow and labour-intensive in contrast to the intended efficient automation of AI; every frame (3604 in total across three commercials) has been remixed individually, and then pieced together again into videos.

The workers portrayed in VB ads are usually tradies, who are initially less likely to be affected by the automation of society through AI. They will be one of the few left standing in a society completely saturated with it. They will still be knocking off in the afternoon with a cold Vic, "for that hard-earned thirst", as the VB slogan goes. In this, one could see a kind of poetic struggle of manual labour in a tech-infused world, before they too are replaced in some future AI-robotic-world.

Henrik Haukeland was born 1980 in Sweden, and is now based in Naarm/Melbourne. Conceptually, his work often deals with the body—both physical and social—as well as the corresponding ideas of consumption, excess, and transformation. Arts education includes the Academy of Fine Arts in Bergen, Norway, the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, U.S., and the Umeå Academy of Fine Arts in Sweden. He has had many exhibitions in galleries and art institutions predominantly throughout Scandinavia. Exhibitions in Australia include BLINDSIDE and KINGS Artist-Run in Melbourne.

Works

from left to right

1. *A HARD-EARNED THIRST*, 2023, digital videos, 5:53 minutes
- 2-7. Untitled archival inkjet prints (stills from the videos), 2023, printed on Ilford Smooth Pearl 310 grams, 42x30cm (each). Edition of 5. 100 \$ each. If interested in purchasing, please contact: info@haukeland.se
8. (floor)
Traces of participatory opening audience effort, 2023, cans of consumed VB, dimensions variable