

## *Aphrodisiac*

2019

Oil and acrylic on canvas

200cm x 160cm

Taking centre stage is a voluptuous, red-haired reclining nude. She seems to be captured in an active moment of performance yet simultaneously posed with a sense of stillness, akin to a Renaissance model awaiting the male gaze. Whipped cream and a glazed cherry sit on top of swollen breasts, the lumps and bumps of Epp's strange, humanoid figure reflecting the sensual curves and contours of the real female form. As she rests in a hyper-sexualised state, the detail of the shine on her red lips and leather heels invites the viewer to become more than just a spectator. However, she appears to be an object of sexual desire that falls short of a 17th century ideal. The oyster balancing on her knee has turned green with mould and insects feed on the chocolate covered strawberries, which have slowly begun to rot. The Playboy Bunny, tattooed across her arm, symbolises the mystique and prestige of early 2000s sex symbols, which now feel a little out of date. What Epp suggests here is beauty and sex's intrinsic link to youth. A youth which is fleeting, leaving in its place an ageing woman eager to hold onto the erotic body of her younger self, yet ultimately failing to do so.