

Paddle

2020

Oil and acrylic on canvas

160cm x 180cm

Epp's more cynical perspective on the current art market is explored in *Paddle*. A blind art collector bids at auction, paddled raised, whilst also stroking a hairless, feline blob, which sits patiently on his lap. The collector wears Hockney's *A Bigger Splash* as a printed t-shirt and Gucci rainbow-stripe platform trainers. In the background, a blurred Damien Hirst spot painting almost looks like wallpaper. Sporting the trends and icons of art and fashion, they act as a cultural stamps of wealth for the elite players of the art market. There is something unsettling about seeing a 20th century masterpiece scaled down and wrapped around the torso of a greedy art collector. Anything can be commodified in Capitalism. Here, Epp makes a skeptical commentary on art as commerce and at times, the uncertain relationship between the artist and art collector. The eyepatch and realism used to depict the collector's ear, suggests that he is a person who cannot see the art but can hear the auction price and so, Epp's frustrations with the opaque operations of a privately held and unregulated art market become unwaveringly transparent.