

Ultra Vain

2018

Oil, acrylic and spray paint on canvas

150cm x 200cm

A self confessed sun bed abuser, *Ultra Vain* is the second painting in Epp's *Tanning Booth* series. In this work, a green figure stretches out naked on a purple sun bed, arms up, ready to absorb the harmful UV rays. He sports an array of different colours goggles, giving him an alien quality; is eight eyes or too many pairs of goggles? The light reflecting on his lower torso is painted in a way which makes the figure look like a folded piece of cardboard; the perspective flattened and the edges sharpened. In the centre of this is a tiny, Michelangelo penis. Why do all old statues have such small penises? Ancient Greek and Roman sculpture featured smaller penises as an indicator of someone more culturally or intellectually enlightened, a feature of ideal male beauty standards of that time. Epp's use of the Michelangelo penis on a moronic sun bed addict adds an ironic twist to the image. Furthermore, this is one of the first paintings where the artist explores the interplay between realism and graphic flatness on the human body. In previous work, realism was dedicated to objects and logos of consumer culture. However, in this instance, he uses it to highlight and exaggerate specific features of the male form.