

Death by Chocolate

2019

Oil and acrylic on canvas

200cm x 155cm

Strewn across a purple chaise longue, belly bloated and arms and legs sprawled, the figure presented in *Death by Chocolate* is one who has succumbed to the ache of his addiction: chocolate. Twix, Rolos, Curly Wurly, Cadburys, Ferrero Rocher and Malteser nipples, this fiend has gone so far as to inject melted chocolate into the veins of his arm, like a heroin addict getting his fix. Chocolate is smeared across his mouth, genitals and hands; he is both degraded and liberated. What, at times, falls into a depiction of a playful, erotic adventure quickly returns back into a masochistic episode, chaotic and lawless. Eventually, the figure will awake from his euphoric sleep into a state of anxiety and humiliation at what he has just done and before he has even had time to clean up the last wrapper, the toxic cycle will start again, but this time, with a KitKat. What Epp explores so decidedly in this work is how we look to ease our anxieties and unmet desires by retreating into ourselves and indulging in our most unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as drinking too much alcohol or eating obscene amounts of chocolate.