

Real Love

2019

Oil and acrylic on canvas

175cm x 200cm

One of the only paintings of Epp's which doesn't feature a character alone, in *Real Love*, two creaturely figures are engaged in intercourse whilst wearing virtual reality headsets. They are lying on what looks like black satin bedsheets covered in rose petals and a romantic hue of deep purple light frames their strange, misshapen bodies. As the figures coil and wrap around one another, the flat areas of acrylic where their skin overlaps lights up in white, making the characters feel almost translucent. This painting could be depicting a scene from a Black Mirror episode, which explores how individuals grapple with the manipulative effects of cutting edge technology in their personal lives in an abstrusely dystopian future. These two figures replace the intimacy of sex between two lovers with the simulated experience of virtual reality. Detaching from the real world and instead, falling into the void of technological escapism. Never have two figures who are so physically connected felt so alone. As new technologies continue to irrevocably change our world, what will be left of our real life interactions and experiences, as we continue to spend more and more time immersed in the alternate realities of the virtual world.