

## *Tank*

2021

Oil and acrylic on canvas

180 cm x 200 cm

Epp depicts an immense orca-human animal hybrid trapped in a SeaWorld tank. Parts of his orca skin have been torn away, revealing bloodied human flesh, a tribal tattoo and an exposed toe. His human hands are clenched into fists, as if trying to punch his way through the bottom of the tank and his fleshy, toothed grimace both laughs and shouts in lunacy. His blow hole has been replaced with the end of a DIY hose tube. Penetrated by objects of human use, he is also a tool of exploitation. At the bottom of the tank are colourful dive sticks, training tools, which have been thrown in by an invisible orca trainer. The collapsed dorsal fin, now a dark symbol of the SeaWorld captive orcas who do not have enough space to swim, Epp reinforces the notion that this orca-human is a prisoner, confined to the four walls of a tiny pool. The image of a captive orca is used as a poignant reflection of the current state of the world. A state of lockdown, restrictions and social distancing. Like the hybrid animal Epp has painted, we are also currently being held captive. The son of Canadian parents who collected Inuit soap stones of sea animals, the orca is a special symbol of the artist's childhood. He also bought a cheap orca figurine from a car boot sale many years ago as a souvenir, which now sits proudly in his bathroom. He looks at it everyday whilst brushing his teeth.