



LUCKY
SMITH
STUDIO

UNDER 30s EAT FREE

April 11th - June 20th

The Mill Adelaide
154 Angas Street, Adelaide SA

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ARTIST STATEMENT

The impending turn of thirty is an age of paralytic decision-making, the frazzled and hurried pursuit of escaping dreams, and an overwhelming sensation one is not where they need to be as they are compared to their contemporaries and generations before them.

Under 30s Eat Free is a visual representation of my comparative and anxious feelings towards turning 30 in the present day.

This introspection began through reading about Peter Freuchen, an early twentieth century Danish explorer who before thirty had raised a family of three in the midst of mapping the borders and climate of the arctic circle, and literally fought off wolves that encroached on his weather recording outpost - a three-day sled from the expeditions' operations command centre.

He spent five years in the arctic. Upon returning home to Denmark, Freuchen journaled, "I felt like a stranger when I encountered my old friends. I was proud of my strength and ability to live for long periods without food, but these things meant nothing to them."

As the biological urge to start a family and forego the insecurity of contract work weighs, I began a transition from the fast paced and torturous nature of the film industry to the seemingly more sensible corporate 9 to 5. I feel the beforementioned quote summarises my experience in making this transition well.

My most recent experience in the film industry consisted of 14 hour days, six day weeks, an eight week stretch without a lunch break, six weeks of social isolation, Non-Disclosure Agreements loaded with very real threat of legal action, and crippling heat - all done for the largest serial commissioned in Australia, by the biggest streaming platform of our age. However, within short succession I was informed by BUPA I have the option to stay on my parents' private health insurance until the age of 32, and I was told by my new workplace if I wish to come in early to get work done I first need to earn the company's trust via a year long probation before being granted access to the security alarm code.

I am constructing nine images of oil and acrylic on canvas, empathetically visualising many contemporary lifestyle and workplace problems shared by Generation Z and their fringes. Such concerns include whether to choose a career of passion or financial comfort, the requirement to enter a job with a wealth of knowledge beyond one's years, whether to choose a soul mate or children, and the confiscation of autonomy, which all seemingly prolong childhood into one's late-thirties.

This series of works is my life and career retrospective built on strong fluctuating binary feelings of guilt, shame, regret, anger, and self-loathing which necessitates expressive colour, scale, and visuals that demands the viewer's attention, like a pub banner announcing free meals for us kids. The imagery is confusing and abrasive, uncanny, dreamlike, familiar and yet... off, perpetuated by a fluctuating use of palette knives and brushes, and the contrast of thickly layered oils on an acrylic background.

The creation of these artworks journal my epiphany into what I believe adulthood is; that old adage, if you want to be treated like an adult you have to behave like an adult.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Lucky Smith is a passionate expressionist painter from rural South Australia, now living and working in Adelaide. Lucky specialises in large scale portraiture of pop culture personalities and surrealist scenes using oil & acrylics. An avid painter from the age of six, his organically developed style has blossomed into grand and colourful artworks that invite a crowd into vibrant conversation.

Lucky is an imaginative storyteller, learning foundations from John Collee's AFTRS Screenwriting seminar, and travelling to New York in 2022 to study story structure under screen and writing lecturer Robert McKee. Lucky uses these storytelling principles to construct scenes in his artwork which empathetically explore complex interpersonal exchanges and idiosyncratic social situations, with recurring motifs such as anthropomorphised animals and retro pop culture.

Lucky has worked in graphic design and the film industry for over a decade, working on such significant projects as *The Tourist* (2020, STAN), *La Brea* (2020, NBC), *Territory* (2024, NETFLIX), & *My Brilliant Career* (TBA, NETFLIX).

Lucky's artwork is displayed in numerous public and private collections domestically and internationally. His solo exhibition 'Your Spectrum is Showing' was held at Linhay Gallery in Auburn SA in 2022. In 2025 he had a piece selected as a finalist for the Adelaide Park Lands Art Prize. Lucky has a studio at The Mill - Adelaide, and exhibited his second solo show 'Under 30s Eat Free' as part of The Mill's visual art program in 2025.



PROJECT REPORT

With the highly appreciated support of the Independent Arts Foundation I was able to construct my second solo art exhibition, 'Under 30s Eat Free'. The \$1,000 grant was put towards material costs, including canvas, acrylic and oil paints, brushes, hooks, and online advertising.

'Under 30s Eat Free' consisted of seven large oil and acrylic paintings on stretched canvas, and a series of six whimsical Gummy Bears made using oil on card. The seven large pieces explored my anxieties of approaching thirty; a theme that spoke to my peers, and what turned out to be a worry that is a whimsical memory of attendees over age thirty-five. The personal stories behind the paintings, both entertaining and vulnerable, proved to increase the engagement and appreciation of the viewers.

The most significant result of this exhibition was the significant advancement of my visual style; adding new mediums, shading, texture, more colour to the backgrounds, and narrative. Until this point I had comfortably been using acrylic paint for all facets of my paintings, but I recently felt the artworks yearned for texture. Through thickly applied oil I was able to add texture and shading that further separated the subject matter from the backgrounds. Because of this additional separation I was now able to implement more colours into my backgrounds, adding depth and increasing the complexity of the artwork. I traditionally used two tone backgrounds from the same colour family (eg. only yellows, or only reds), but with the oil paint separating the subject matter from the background I was able to add two or three more colours, and some from different colour families (eg. blue, purple, green and beige).

A small portion of the grant was used for Instagram Advertising. A friend made a very fun and engaging video that even before boosting engagement had my highest view and interaction stats. Through boosting this video and several other reels my Instagram following was increased by 250 followers.

The other significant outcome of the exhibition is that I have so far taken two of the works created as part of this exhibition and are translating them into merchandise. The piece, '4 Sale, Beach Cats' has been turned into mugs, and a crewneck sweater with the Purple Gummy Bear printed on it is in the prototype phase.

This exhibition resulted in the sale of 2x artworks, 5x prints, and 6x mugs.

I still retain the large paintings from the exhibition, and as such will use this ready-to-install exhibition to explore my first interstate exhibition, likely in Melbourne Victoria.

I am extremely grateful for the monetary support of the IAF, but also the in-person encouragement and attendance on the exhibition opening night.

This series has been the most rewarding personal project I have undertaken in my arts career.

PRODUCED WORKS



Lucky Smith, *I wanna be fancy, like you*, 2025, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, H 1762mm x W 1016mm



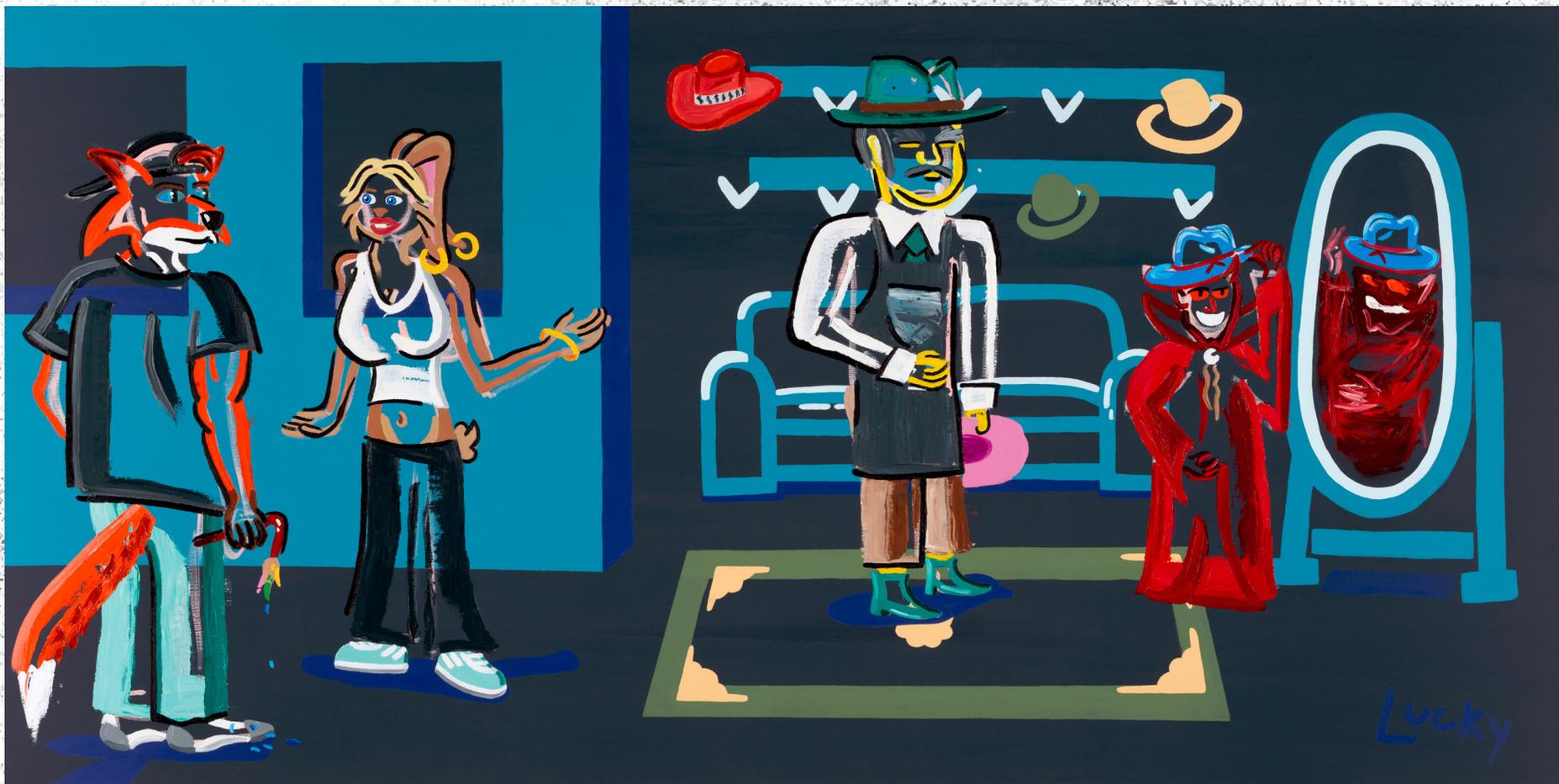
Lucky Smith, *Can't get a root with a Runny Nose*, 2024, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, H 1215mm x W 1825mm



Lucky Smith, *4 Sale, Beach Cats*, 2024, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, H 1215mm x W 1825mm



Lucky Smith, *For the glory and absolutely nothing else*, 2024, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, H 1215mm x W 1825mm



Lucky Smith, *Office Chat*, 2024, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, H 914mm x W 1825mm



Lucky Smith, *Your Problem is You're Mildly Ugly*, 2024, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, H 1215mm x W 1215mm



Lucky Smith, *Don't exchange your dreams for a 1970 Plymouth Superbird*, 2024, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, H 1220mm x W 915mm

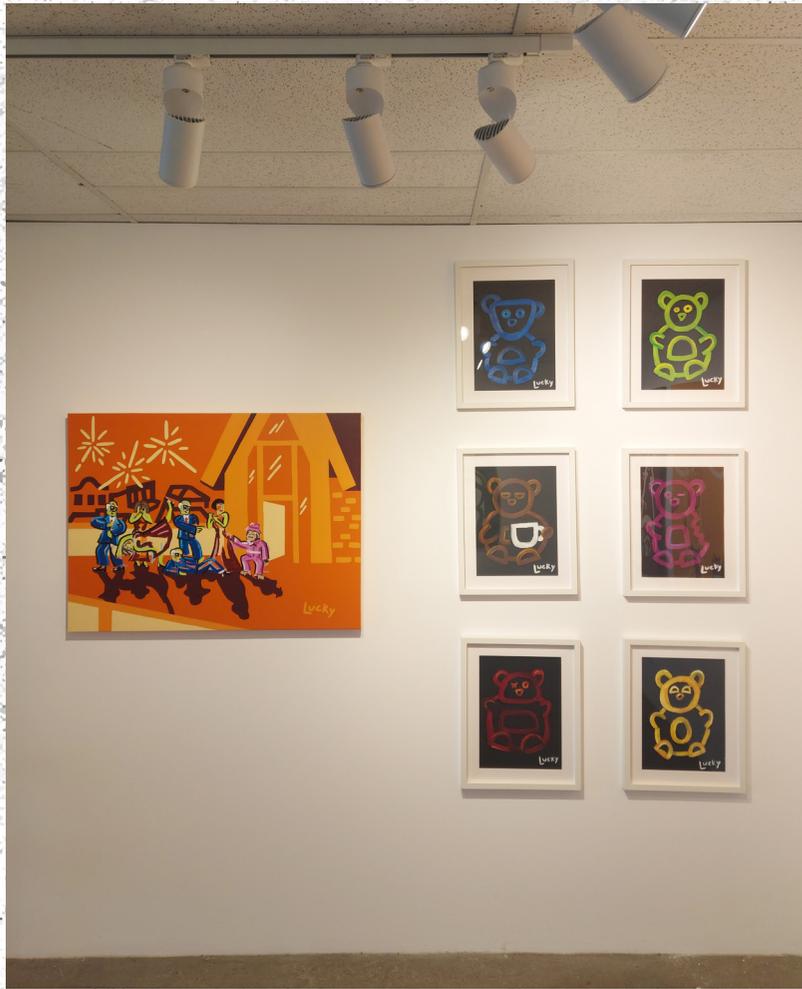


Lucky Smith, *Gummy Bears (L to R) Blue, Brown, Green, Purple, Red, Yellow*, 2024, Oil on Card, H 420mm x W 297mm

GALLERY PHOTOS



Top L-R Adele Sliuzas, Marina Deller, Lucky Smith, Clare Mayor
Allan Aughey. Btm L-R Meg Mader, The Mill CEO Katrina Lazaroff







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