

Luke Duncan King
I am a...

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Bus Projects acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate: the Wurundjeri people and Elders past and present of the Kulin nations.

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09.5.18—02.06.18

Drawing from the lives of four people who identify themselves as part of Melbourne's Deaf community, *I am a...* is an exploration of personal storytelling and the performance of subjectivity. Presented through four large-scale lithographic prints alongside four multi-channel video works, the exhibition offers the audience with both static and moving portraits of King's chosen subjects, while exploring the importance of language and translation.

Building upon his printmaking practice, the four lithographic prints forms King's static representation of his subjects and friends. In describing the prints as a physical representation of a first impression, the artist uses intricate line work to build an energetic, yet distorted depiction of his subjects. Monochromatic gestural lines build each subject's portrait, spirally and concentrating to form the image. The audience, however, remains unacquainted with the subject, as the clusters of lines only just demarcate the subject's distinguishing features.

On the other hand, the moving portraits provides King with a platform to allow the audience to become acquainted with his subjects, while also illuminating insights into the diversity of the Deaf community. This platform allows the subjects to communicate their experiences directly with an audience and disclose how they also participate in a myriad of other communities and subcultures. Each video portrait explores an array of experiences and uncovers how each subject's Deaf identity intersects with other identities and subcultures, such as feminism, queerness, gender expression or motherhood. As King engages with each subject, the importance of gesture and facial expression in personal storytelling is revealed.

These portraits are united by framing each video interview with the same set of questions. This connection, however, is not immediate as the questions are asked behind the camera and in Australian Sign Language (known as Auslan), and therefore, not visually represented within the frame of

the film. Continuing his interest in audience experientially, the work transcends the traditional barriers between the Deaf and the hearing communities by using alternative forms of language to build a connection between the subject and the audience. As each subject tells personal stories—varying from accounts of banana fritters to anecdotes from their dreams and attempting to distill a life manifesto—each account is translated from Auslan into a form of language that the audience can access (captions in Auslan grammar, captions in English grammar, voice over and accompanying text).

Giving his subjects the power of representation and acknowledgment of their experiences within their community, each posed question prompts the subjects to reveal intimate aspects of their identity. Delving deeper into the reflection on self-representation, King also includes himself as one of the subjects, drawing from his own autobiographical history and delving into the history of self-portraiture.

One of the last questions posed to each subject is about their perception of silence. Reflecting on the fact that we have five senses to perceive things, King explains that when you are without one sense the others become heightened, and, for him, loudness manifests itself through the other senses, namely aesthetically.

Zoe Theodore
“I am a...” By Luke Duncan King

Luke Duncan King is a visual artist working predominantly in printmaking, also including drawings and watercolour works on paper. King recently completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours – Visual Art) at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2015. King participated in numerous group exhibitions at the Margaret Lawrence Gallery, City of Melbourne Library and internationally at 3331 Arts Chiyoda as a part of the International Printmaking Conference 2014 in Tokyo, Japan. He often collaborated with student visual artists, emerging visual artists and dancers at the VCA; and with Jodee Mundy Collaborations and Nicola Gunn, as well as with Louella May Hogan and Anna Seymour to discover performance and audience experientially, and encounter the artistic practice in a visceral and insightful way.

Zoe Theodore is a freelance writer, editor, producer and curator based in Narm, Melbourne. She was the Co-Editor of Dissect Journal's third issue and has held professional roles at ACCA and MoMA PS1. Her research and curatorial practice focuses on the relationship between performance, choreography and the gallery.

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