

## A PEELING MISCONCEPTION

By Oliver Cain

Maintaining the dedication to pushing the boundaries between conceptualism and post-pop art through his ceramic sculptures with playful elements as an important part of his oeuvre, the English-born New Zealand artist Oliver Cain challenges the focus on his ceramic practice by venturing into the world of wearable arts with the piece *A Peeling Misconception*.

Carefully working to preserve his artistic identity and the stories he tells, Cain has created a masterpiece that is a pure reflection of his practice and his characteristic approach. Trusting the recurrent element of the banana form, he reinvents it into a complete wearable piece of art. Strongly referencing his ceramic practice and as an extension of it, the playful, whimsical and light-hearted dress created with wood, fibreglass and polystyrene, has the intention of openly questioning and confronting social constructs. The materials were chosen to resemble the fragility of ceramics, their delicacy and the fineness of porcelain to create the illusion of bringing to life a china doll, as the dress itself is solid and sits perfectly on the model, who gives life to it through movement. As much as a stand-alone sculpture, it is given life when worn and presented in a different light.

As a proud member of the queer community, Cain's art aims to examine, question and criticise the relationships between gender, (homo) sexuality and societies' misconceptions about those themes, and this masterpiece could not be less. Using the idea of the banana as a representation of still life that is able to bruise, decay, and be covered in skin, with poignant links to the erotic imagination and the phallic shape of this well-known fruit, *A Peeling Misconception* is a statement of queer identity, without forgetting the deep universe it represents, encompassing any worldly interpretation.

Thanks to the chosen shape, which resembles a huge peeling banana with smaller bananas coming out of the body of the dress, the model seems to burst out of it, having been peeled back from within like one does when eating this fruit, representing a revelation; a breakthrough; a liberation. It is a frozen snapshot of the stage of flowering, depicting the coming out process of queer individuals. Having been created without a gender target in mind, this dress can be worn by anyone. For the story it tells and the personal meaning and the emotional consideration the artist gives to it, Cain has chosen a male model to wear the dress during the show. *A Peeling Misconception* comes alive on the occasion of the exhibition World of WearableArt.

*Words by Adrian Gomis Exposito*