

# THAT I SHOULD PRAY FOR ANGELS

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MICAH RUSTICHELLI

9-WEEK RESIDENCY

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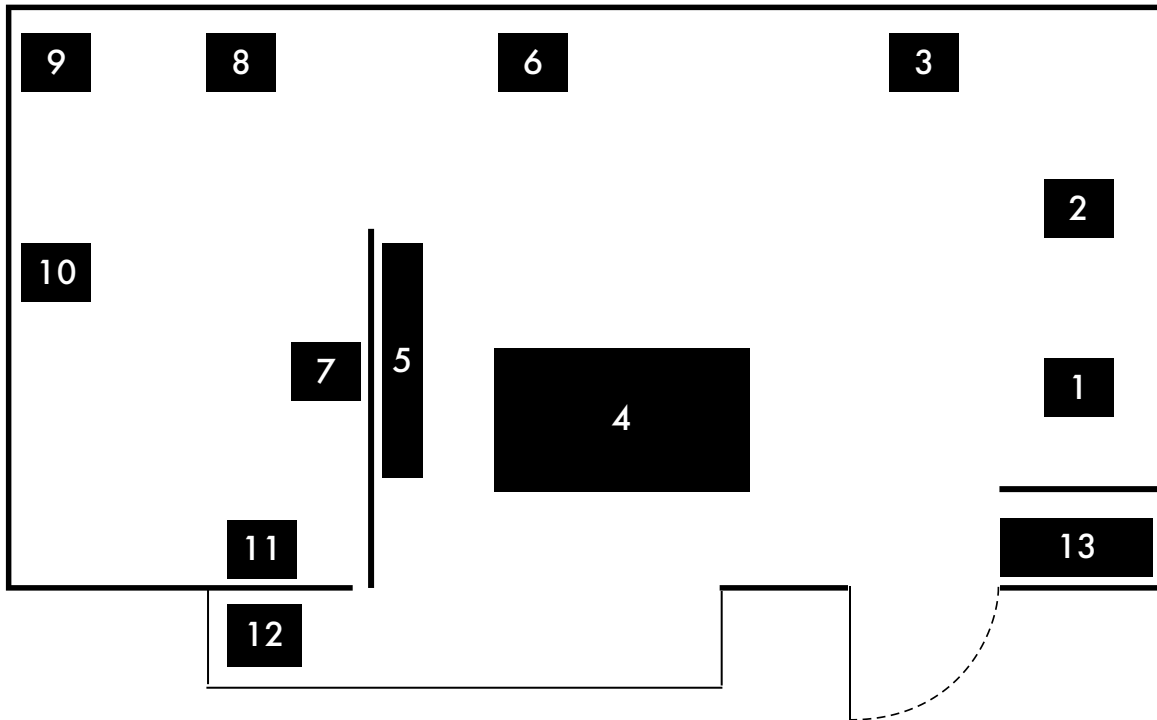
22 MAY - 14 JUNE

PRESENTED BY

**Metro Arts**

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# GALLERY ONE ROOMSHEET



**1** *Garment 1, 2025*  
Nylon, tarpaulin, paracord, thermal blanket

**2** *Garment 2, 2025*  
Leather, nylon, tarpaulin, paracord, thermal blanket

**3** *Garment 3, 2025*  
Nylon, tarpaulin, paracord, aluminium

**4** *Docking Tent, 2025*  
Nylon, tarpaulin, fibreglass, aluminium

**5** *FF - E.D.C, 2025*  
Bronze, nylon, glass, aluminium, steel, latex, silicone, PVC

**6** *Hank-ghillie, 2025*  
Nylon, cotton, steel

**7** *Sebastian, 2025*  
Nylon, polyester, fibreglass, steel

**8** *Manifesto, 2025*  
Leather, paracord, nylon, aluminium, steel

**9** *ANGELBINER, 2025*  
Steel, copper

**10** *10,000 years of consummation, 2025*  
Nylon, polyester, steel

**11** *BULL + Theban Skirt, 2025*  
Nylon, polyester, cotton, steel, polystyrene, aluminium, steel, thermal blanket

**12** *Camp Shower, 2022*  
PVC, glitter, nylon

**13** *Runway Video, 2025*  
Single-channel video, 9:50, courtesy of Zach Finlayson

Metro Arts pays its respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and create.

We honour the story-telling and art-making at the heart of First Nations' cultures, and the enrichment it gives to the lives of all. Metro Arts recognises the importance of story and expression in the process of truth-telling, and we commit to support First Nations Peoples on this journey.

Always was. Always will be.

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# EXHIBITION TEXT

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One of my favourite things to paraphrase is Terence McKenna paraphrasing Timothy Leary in saying, "find the others." I live off that phrase, always seeking community and seeking to find my people. But it's more than that, it's about the desire to embody community, to share the knowledge, be in the know, and understand the individual codes, to recognise others and be recognised as being part of a group. We need these codes; they help orient ourselves, give us shelter, even if temporary.

Micah Rustichelli's *That I Should Pray For Angels* examines queer persistence by drawing inspiration from the Book of Enoch. This ancient text, which outlines an ability to survive and thrive, also speaks to a knowledge that we now often metaphorically understand as intrinsic. Like the Book of Enoch, in which Azazel gave forbidden knowledge to humankind, this work offers queer codes of resilience that are hidden in plain sight that have been handed down. Rustichelli uses established queer symbology such as bandanas and carabiners and thoughtfully blends them with camp aesthetics and survivalist modalities.

It exhibits the tools, the symbols and forms of intimacy that sustain this way of life. Combining prepper culture and queer culture is an unlikely but fitting comparison. Rustichelli seems to be asking, how might we build a home in the rubble? What does it mean to endure? And what tools may we need? "We're well equipped to survive the apocalypse," Micah tells me, showing a collection of items sewn into a red bandana, hanging from a bronze casting of a Styrofoam rod with one end depicting a fist and notches carved into it signifying depth. The items sewn into the red bandana are the tools needed for a great fisting experience, nail files and nail clippers, lube, cleaning mats and other essentials. FF-EDC (Fisting Fantasy Every Day Carry) is a shrine, a weapon and a signal. It represents all aspects found in this show, symbology, survival, fighting and home.

Bandanas play a huge role in this show; they're everywhere. Sewn into garments, flags, headdresses, they celebrate the Hanky code, a form of communication about visibility, recognition, and belonging. Although they are often placed in a back pocket to communicate one's existence within a specific subculture, Micah brings them to the forefront. In Enoch's tale, Azazel gave humans mirrors, adornment, weapons, and was punished for it. These tools, now sewn into bandanas or hung on skirts, are still with us and still saving us. (If you want a further understanding of the specific meaning behind each bandana, I recommend checking out Micah's blog.)

Enduring isn't only about getting by; it's something we build together through our communities. It's about finding home, a place to be seen, known, and loved for exactly who one is, to be unashamedly queer. There is an intentional blend of camp and camping that has brought me great joy in previous works that still exists here. Camp as an exuberant and performative way of existing as a queer person meets the literal building blocks of outdoor living: sleeping bags, tents, first aid kits. The necessary tools needed for existence; it is both tactical and joyful. Tents exist as a temporary shelter that can be pitched anywhere and offer safety and are used here as a central motif of this exhibition.

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You'll find wearable tents fashioned in different ways in this show; some exist and look wholly like they are, a tent. "They dock in the middle," Micah explains, taking great pride in disassembling the dock. "This one has a foreskin, and the other is circumcised," he explains excitedly as he pulls a drawstring on the dock, causing its tip to tighten. Behind us are three drag-esque, gorgeous gowns, still equipped with their zippers, toggles, seams, and mesh; modelling them are some thermal blanket mannequins who are serving cunt. Great importance was taken in ensuring that these gowns still remain as tent-like as possible. These gowns represent a home, not a fixed address; it's the one that we carry around with us and wear at the forefront of ourselves and imbue it with our personality. Camp is a coded gesture of visibility, a shield against oppression; it signals I am here, and I don't give a fuck.

Made from a collection of bandanas pinned to a sleeping bag, it is a flag. As the pins holding it together slowly fall out, it breathes a sense of precarity and paradox. A flag is often seen as a fixed declaration of existence, but here it is always at risk of coming undone without regular maintenance from a caretaker. Luckily, this flag can be rolled up and moved at any moment; its transitory nature, its impermanence, carries a quiet melancholy. If we stop affixing the pins, we lose our stars in the sky, our shining guiding lights. The precarity here is not necessarily one of despair, but rather the condition of needing to be held up by one's codes. The need for us to use these codes to guide and save us. Its transitory and precarity seem to scream out to me that this flag belongs to all of us; we should collectively be maintaining this flag. Queer survival is not given; it's something that we are constantly fighting for. This is indicated multiple times in the exhibition: it's an arrow in the med-kit, to me referencing governmental control over medicine, the aids crisis, gender-affirming care, gatekeeping PrEP, etc. It's a tinfoil bullhorn helmet and a 7kg skirt made out of carabiners, referencing the sacred band of Thebes, a legendary army of queer lovers who never lost a fight. Indicating that we need to stand up and fight for what we believe in, because if we don't, who will? The weight of the jockstrap skirt feels like it represents the weight of queer existence and the ongoing struggle of fighting. Our existence is both intimate, mystic, and resilient.

The Book of Enoch, as etched into a piece of found leather from a sex store, tells us about a guide on how we might endure this world, so too does Rustichelli. These survival tactics shouldn't be needed but are. When I was younger, I would go on the internet and found my others; we'd chat every night about tactics and strategies on how to obtain hormones, how and what to wear, if passing mattered but more importantly, how to be ourselves, unafraid and unhindered. Online was the only place I found refuge in a largely unaccepting world, but as long as I am true to myself, I am home and I thank Micah for reminding me of this. We share these tactics with each other out of love for one another and as our present moment slowly shifts into another, you stand here, reading a piece of paper while others around you are dancing, both literally and socially. One of my favourite lines from a Grateful Dead song is "I can tell your future, just look what's in your hands." So go hug someone. Shake their hand. Look around you; we are your future. We're your community. You're home. Welcome.