

LIST OF FIGURES

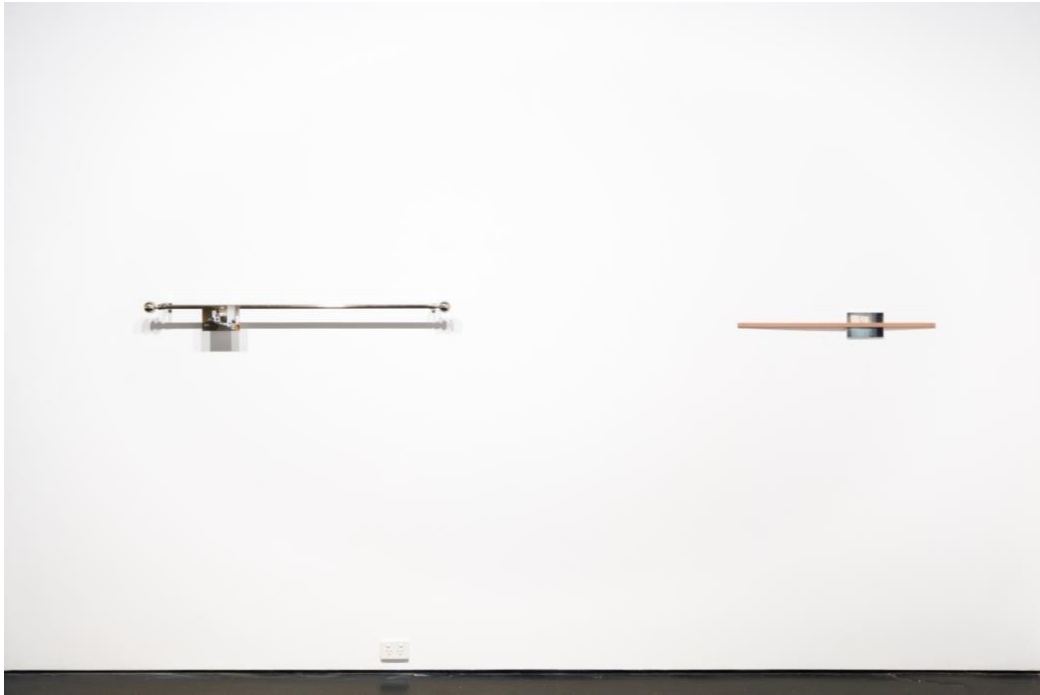


Fig. 1. Maddison Wandel, *Withholding*, 2024, Curtain rod, roller blind weight, roller blind weight, wood, photographs L – R (Housing Commission Unit, Werribee 2002) & (Mums Bedroom – before children, Werribee South, 1999). Dimensions variable.

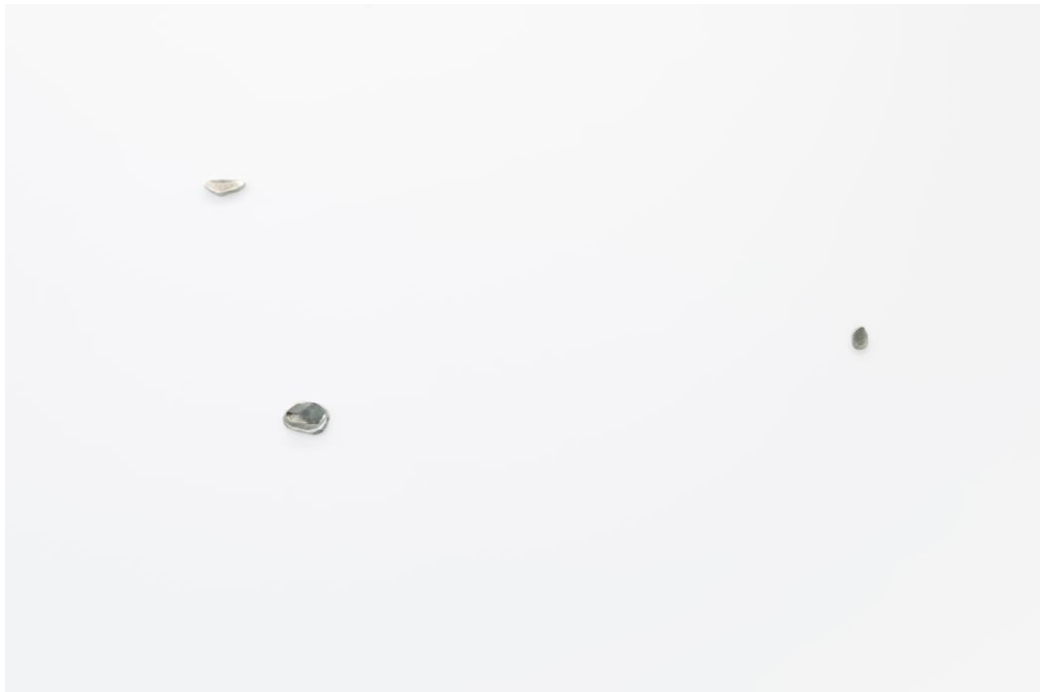


Fig. 2. Maddison Wandel, *A Calling Back*, 2024, Pewter impressions of damaged door frame, door and wall, Installation height specific to site location. Dimensions variable.



Fig. 3. Maddison Wandel, In and the out, 2024. Plastic heat impression taken of plaster cast of broken door.
15cm x 20cm.

MADDISON WANDEL FINE ART, VISUAL ART HONOURS PROPOSAL

My proposed research paper and practice will conceptually engage with the metaphor of digestion as a process of swallowing, breaking down, absorption and secretion. Digestion, in relation to past traumas, requires a willingness to swallow and hold past realities inside; digestion does not equal digested, instead it's an acknowledgment of an ongoing 'after' and not the end, a period of the in-between. For me in my practice, digestion speaks to a desire to reconfigure a primary trauma source into a present expression. Reimagining domestic spaces and their architectures as a language to share the complexities concerned with moving forward.

My developing exploration of the concept of digestion as a metaphor and means for understanding the ongoing effects of domestic abuse has been deeply informed by the writings of Gaston Bachelard, author of *The Poetics of Space* 1994. He writes of the house as responsive and adaptive to us and our past; "an entire past comes to dwell in a new house".¹ Inhabitants and space form a relationship of give and take, influencing processes of remembering and forgetting. 'Reminding' can ruffle the boundaries between reality and memory. This speaks to an 'in-between' of experience, that the 'after' of an incident of abuse is not the end of its impact. Using spatial and architectural frameworks to facilitate an understanding of trauma and abuse as something that is held in our present and in ourselves, I question a reality in which we can completely 'move on' from these experiences, a pervasive expectation I find in therapeutic and social dialogue. I offer that the 'after' is a period of digestion; moving forward, but never fully absorbed.

I have sought to devise material and aesthetic apparatuses that support sharing memories of a complex childhood. Exploring the ways we search, understand and contest traumatic histories and memories that are embedded in the present. Julia McInerney's *Ribs* 2018 prompts a deeper examination of the spatial and installation possibilities of functional domestic objects and their metaphorical weight.² Informed by McInerney, my work *Withholding* 2024 was developed through exploring and deconstructing functions and significances of objects and interiors featured in my family photographs. The function of a roller blind weight is to weigh down and straighten out the kinks in the blind, it is hidden within the sewn structure of the object. In *Withholding* I attempt to reimagine the roller blind weight as a true support that holds up the image, pressuring it against the wall. Performing tensions between what is repressed and liberated, held and released.

Fiona Connor's *What you bring with you to work* 2010 informs my research through its reimagining of intimate space. Drawing from personal letters and photographic record procured from staff, Connor recreated the bedroom windows of gallery invigilators in her show at NEW010. The interjection of intimate space into the workplace brings what may be inside to the surface. More broadly I am interested in Connor's exploration into the reinsertion of objects and architectures into the gallery as a way to reveal lived experiences, residues, and material conditions.³

A few months after moving into my unit the wall of my shower had started peeling, creating a crater-like shape which begun to mimic marks left from incidents of abuse in my

¹ Gaston Bachelard, "The House. From Cellar to Garret. The Significance of the Hut" in *The Poetics of Space*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1994, 5.

² "Julia McInerney," Gag Projects, <https://www.gagprojects.org/juliamcinerney>.

³ Sarah Lehrer Graiwer, Fiona Connor, "Sarah Lehrer Graiwer, Interview with Fiona Connor," in Fiona Connor +1 310 951 9459, eds. Sarah Hopkinson, Julian Myers-Szupinska (Auckland and Los Angeles, 2020), 48.

childhood homes. With every shower the condensation seeped into the cracks, growing mould and becoming increasingly difficult to ignore. I watched the shape grow into the reminder with which I cohabit in an uneasy peace. The crater-like shape on the bathroom wall becomes a pressure point, holding memories, mould, and me. Through this, I developed *A Calling Back* 2024. In the making of this work, I returned to my childhood bedroom in secret to take molds of battered walls, broken skirting and hinges. Poured in pewter, these casts formed part of an installation, mapping their original positions in space. I extended this with plaster casting which more closely referenced the original mark. I was struck by how small the damaged seemed. In my mind before returning, they stood tall and large over me. I wish to translate this feeling through upscaling objects or marks that reference a reality but are skewed by the memory of fear.

Since making *A Calling Back* I have been exploring plastic and plaster casting methods. Heating various thicknesses of plastic sheets to create impressions. The plastic sheet has a unique fluidity, it billows to the shape of the object, refusing to cast. The plastic is impacted by the cast in an almost bodily sense; winded, drawing away. The billowed plastic conveys the in and the out, the negative and the positive.⁴ Casting in plaster closely mimics the first touch of the original site. In doing this I question how many times the impression can be cast until it is too far removed from the original mark.⁵ How this may muddle the direct gesture of casting and recasting and impact a connection with digestion. I seek to further test the limits of objects, casts, and other possible extractions of spaces and marks through thought-out installation methods and support structures that utilise pre-existing and existing materials.

Ultimately, I wish to explore digestion as a process and metaphor for sharing the ongoing effects of abuse, emphasising the importance of sharing sincerely and with respect to the seriousness of these problems. Through attempting to understand realities that remain indigestible I wish to offer a gesture of compassion and support to myself and others.

⁴ Lily Fforde, final critique, in conversation with author, September 12, 2024.

⁵ Georges Didi-Huberman, "Opening up an Anachronistic Point of View," in *Perspectives on Contemporary Printmaking: Critical Writing since 1986*, eds. Ruth Pelzer-Montada, 184–95 (2018), 185.

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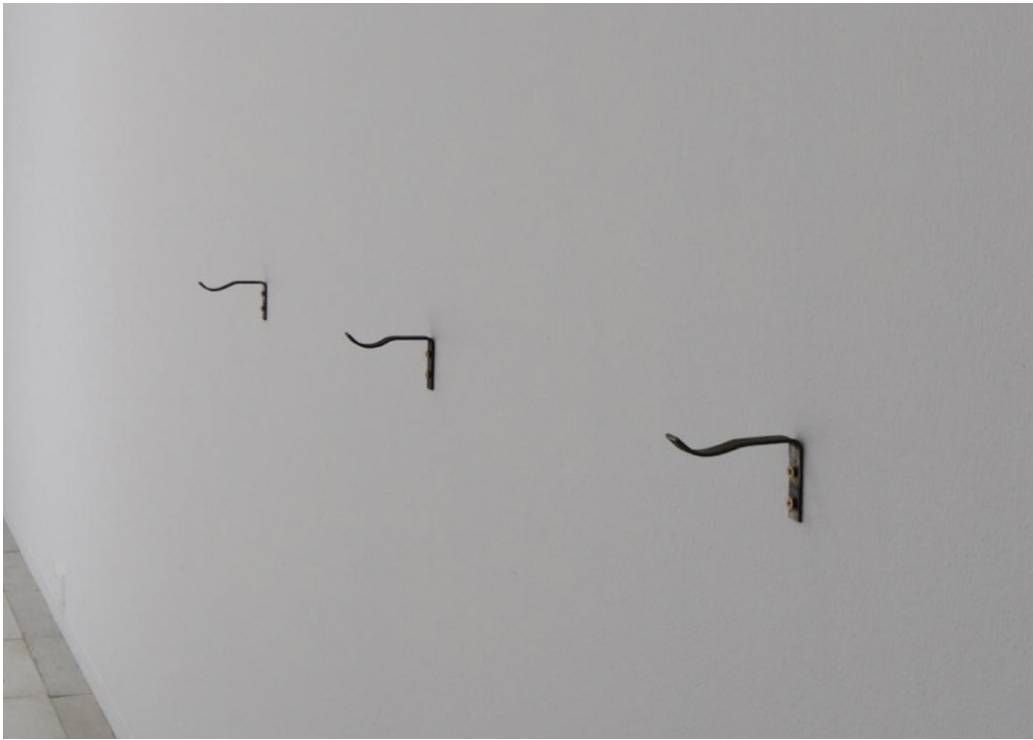


Fig. 4. Julia McInerney, Ribs, 2018, Fallen applewood, Steel brackets, Dimensions variable, Gag Projects, Kent Town, South Australia. <http://juliamcinerney.com/ribs/>.



Fig. 5. Julia McInerney, Ribs, 2018, Fallen applewood, Steel brackets, Dimensions variable, Gag Projects, Kent Town, South Australia. <http://juliamcinerney.com/ribs/>.



Fig. 6. Fiona Connor, *What you bring with you to work*, 2010, window frames, glass, timber, fittings, wax, paint, installation dimensions variable, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Victoria, <https://acca.melbourne/exhibition/new010/>.

TEXTS BY
GABRIELLE DE VIETRI

When I was little, this used to be the spare room. Apart from a broken piano and one of those MS-DOS computers, it was empty. When I was fourteen it became my bedroom, and I put my mark on it by painting the entire thing bright green. I thought it was great for about a day. I made everyone look sick and gave me sleeping problems. One night I dreamt of a hollow, arched face at the window.

That was the end of the green period. I painted the walls deep red and moved the furniture around to encourage a less creepy-foggy shift. The afternoon sun would warp as it passed through the leaded glass, and cast glowing shadows of the grasshoppers outside onto my wall.

When I was 15, my dad constructed a scarf rack that hung from the picture rail. My collection of spotty scarves quickly filled it up. Then, as my taste evolved, bold patterns of red and purple covered up the spots. Now in a cream and blue phase, I'm thinking that I might paint the walls again, to better suit my taste in scarves.

How many scarves do I have? 40? More like a thousand.

Fig. 7. Fiona Connor, Gabrielle De Vietri Text, 2010, *NEW10* (Melbourne, Victoria: Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, 2010), 8.



Fig. 8. Louise Bourgeois, *Maman*, 1999, Bronze, Steel, Marble, 9000cm by 10000 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, New South Wales. <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/art/watch-listen-read/read/maman/>.

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