

From the Prosaic to the Poetic:

Finding pathos in the everyday

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the Acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Mallory Allen, May 2019

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Precis

I had a boyfriend once who made me laugh till I cried. He made me laugh until I begged for respite, out of breath and with stomach muscles aching. Then early one morning I was notified of his death. How's that for a joke?

I had never lost someone dear to me before and had never expected to. This just didn't happen. I wasn't equipped with whatever it is that's meant to help you get through. There was no guidebook, no peers to look to for advice, no magic spell to make it go away. And so I found myself in a one woman canoe, up grief creek without a paddle. Except the creek was a deluge and I realised I couldn't swim.

In the immediate aftermath I fashioned an oar out of my own dark jokes. I believed they were brilliant and hilarious - I'm not sure anyone else agreed. Regardless, they got me through a time I didn't always comprehend and never thought I could survive. Humour cut through the despair, creating a break in which the incredible weight in my chest seemed easier to carry. Laughter made breathing possible.

With laughter on board, I began to latch on to any experiences that made the next minute or hour or day bearable. I learned that in grief a simple gesture or a moment of wonder or relief means the world. While cliché; I began to seek out rainbows, sunsets, oceans and landscapes, absorbing the quiet perspective they provided me. These poetic moments are predictably found in the vastness of nature, but they are also found in simple occurrences in our everyday lives. I notice it in my cup of tea, in the reflection of the sky on a car bonnet or in the colours of a jar of pens. These are the little things that help you go on.

Abstract

The basis of this project is to explore how an installation-based practice may generate a combination of pathos and humour within the everyday. By examining the overlooked or mundane, I have aimed to transform the prosaic into the poetic, creating installations that echo ineffable moments. This project has investigated the way emotional connection can be conveyed within contemporary art, creating poignant intimacies between the viewer and the work. This has enabled me to explore these meaningful interactions as a felt experience and to maintain a focus on everyday objects and their emotive potential. I have analysed the affective quality of art by creating a range of small gestures that encourage a viewer to take pause and consider their emotions. I am interested in recontextualising the prosaic through a variety of practice-based methods to create an emotional bond between viewer and work. The resulting gestures have incorporated improvisational tactics and the immersive nature of contemporary installation environments. Make-shift components, ludic interventions and ready-made objects create a conversation between objects. The anthropomorphosis of these elements further inspires emotion and empathy between the viewer and the work. Reductive in nature, these components have been refined down to their simplest forms ensuring an intimate, emotional response.

Introduction

Through an installation practice, I have explored notions of wonder, the sublime and loss to transform the prosaic into the poetic. Within the framework of a studio-based research project, I have evaluated how an artist can create moving moments through unassuming means. Pathos, improvisation, failure, anthropomorphism, humour and cliché have worked in parallel to build an emotional connection.

In Chapter One, pathos is explored as an appeal to emotions. Underpinned by grief, this section discusses artworks I have made that create feelings of sadness or empathy, and in turn hope and personal growth. Emily Boone Hagenmaier writes of Felix Gonzalez-Torres's work that "viewers are encouraged to delve into their own memories and losses and to celebrate rather than relinquish these experiences".¹ Similarly, grief, nostalgia and happiness exist alongside each other in my practice.

Improvisation is examined in Chapter Two. It plays a key role within my studio practice, enabling me to experiment with combinations and materials and explore their emotive potential. Active looking was explored as a method of improvisation: photography and video, sculpture and found objects have been applied to document or construct poignant moments in the everyday. I named this way of capturing 'The active looking project', (Figure 1), as I am looking to capture the instances in life that create a felt experience. These can be moments of humour, awe or sadness glimpsed, for example, in the shadow of a cloud, the reflection in a puddle, or in the lacklustre drooping of a flag. These banal moments and the found objects I come across work together to create cohesive installations made up of many components. These components all hold equal value to one another (through scale, tone or emotional resonance), and are placed intuitively within a space. The use of familiar elements creates an entry point for viewers, leading to relatable aesthetic experiences. The viewer can engage in multiple ways with the work, both bodily and emotionally.

¹ Emily Boone Hagenmaier, "'Untitled' (Queer Mourning and the Art of Felix Gonzalez-Torres)", *At the Interface / Probing the Boundaries* 58, (April): 161.



Figure 3: Mallory Allen, *The Miles on a sunset (The active looking project)*, 2018

As failure is the basis of any improvisational journey of learning, it has become both a method and a theme to be considered, as discussed in Chapter Three. Within an art practice, failure creates an opening of opportunities in which new ideas and thought processes emerge. Failure is investigated as a motif of pathos and exists throughout the physical making and installation of my work.

By giving the objects within my installations human traits, the viewer can see their own misfortunes in the work, which then provokes empathy and solidarity. This is elaborated on in Chapter Four. Elements of the work can be perceived as pathetic, lonely, wavering or goofy. The viewer is encouraged to laugh at the work and at themselves, finding humour in what can often be taken too seriously. Humour and cliché continue with this line of thinking and are analysed in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. Simon Critchley says in *On Humour* that “humour reveals the depth of what we share”.² The sharing of a joke can work as “a momentary anaesthesia of the heart,”³ a place in time where laughter allows one to forget pain and simply breathe. This idea connects everyone that has experienced an ending or loss.

² Simon Critchley, *On Humour* (Abington: Routledge, 2002): 18

³ Critchley, *On Humour*, 87.

Chapter One: Pathos

Pathos can be regarded as a way of appealing to emotion, often registered as sadness or pity. In some cases, it has been used as a tool of manipulation. In advertising, for example, it can be used to persuade people to buy something. In my work, however, it simply and sincerely encourages the viewer to inquire into sentiments that are already present, which can be both positive and negative. Pathos is found throughout my practice as I explore feelings that range from loss, melancholy, and failure to hope, resilience and happiness. This is shown in my work through the make-shift, improvised nature of its construction, the captured poetic instances, and the comical Eeyore⁴ moments. Throughout this project I have endeavoured to summon these feelings through a series of gentle actions, creating intimacies and connections between the viewer and the work.

Within this project, to identify pathos in the prosaic is to “bring art and life closer together”.⁵ With the appropriate treatment, everything around us is laden with emotion. The works in this project utilise quotidian elements, from found objects, and everyday phenomena, to office stationery. By reconfiguring them in ways such as improvised sculpture or video I can activate their poetic potential to facilitate meaningful engagement. The everyday within contemporary art is an access point that enables viewers to find a “common ground of experience that connects individuals, events and histories”.⁶ Changing an object's function in this regard creates a space that allows for contemplation and connection.

My practice is a reflection of my journey through the process of defeat, mourning and recovery and the emotions that go along with that. It also holds up a mirror to others in which they can see their own highs and lows. Loss and sadness are suggested in the work ‘32’, (Figures 2 to 4), in which a pair of inflated birthday balloons, (a ‘3’ and a ‘2’), are

⁴ Eeyore is the ever-depressed friend of Winnie the Pooh. We see ourselves in this loveable, pathetic character. He is funny, sarcastic, clumsy, and clever. “We are drawn helplessly towards him; we recognise something deeply human in his gloomy outlook. His sadness is our sadness.” Chris Cox, “Eeyore: Literature's archetypal outsider”, *The Guardian*, 9 May 2011. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2011/may/09/eeyore-literature-archetypal-outsider> (accessed 4 April 2019).

⁵ Rachel Dyer, “The Everyday”, *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture* Issue 13 (2008): 62. https://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/Issue_13/_reviews/dyer.html (accessed 8 June 2018).

⁶ Dyer, “The Everyday”, 64.

preserved within a vacuum-packed storage bag. A vacuum-packed bag, often used to store clothes or linen, symbolises our need to hold on to things, to keep souvenirs, to freeze time and not let go. Often when we lose someone we are afraid that our memories will fade and that person will be truly gone. Adding to the pathos of the work, the '3' balloon has lost air and is deflating, showing how our fight against time is futile. In my case, it represents a birthday someone should have been able to celebrate but never made it to. '32' was also made not long after my own 32nd birthday, at the point when the anticlimax of a birthday celebration hits home. It is a time when you realise "the party is over," and you are stuck, (physically and metaphorically), with a lot of dirty dishes. The juxtaposition of these themes against the imagery of celebratory balloons makes the pathos all the more poignant. By contrasting ideas of grief and sadness with the cheeriness of party decorations; the loss seems more crucial, but so does our need to celebrate our time while we have it.

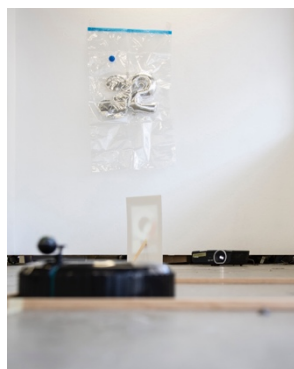


Figure 2: Mallory Allen, 32, (installation view), 2018



Figure 3: Mallory Allen, 32, (detail), 2018



Figure 4: Mallory Allen, 32, 2018

Felix Gonzalez-Torres was an artist who also used his practice to navigate through his own tragedies. In works such as *Untitled (Perfect Lovers)*,⁷ he used unremarkable objects to create a poignant piece that responded to his experiences surrounding love and grief. The work consists of two battery-powered office clocks sitting side by side on a wall, in time at first and then slowly running out of sync until one eventually stops. This work is about his relationship with his partner Ross who passed away during the AIDS epidemic.⁸ Despite, or perhaps because of its simplicity, *Untitled (Perfect Lovers)*, (Figure 5), is heartbreaking. Felix Gonzalez-Torres turned simple objects into a catalyst for a felt experience. Emily Boone Hagenmaier states that “his installations link together the personal experiences of viewers and insist that the loss of one can be relevant to many”.⁹ The work creates an emotional bond with the viewer, as they see their endings in the work and empathise wholeheartedly.

Gonzalez-Torres’s work, *Untitled, (billboard of an empty bed)*, (Figure 6), is a black and white photograph of an empty bed; it was displayed on billboards.¹⁰ The imprints of bodies are visible in the sheets and

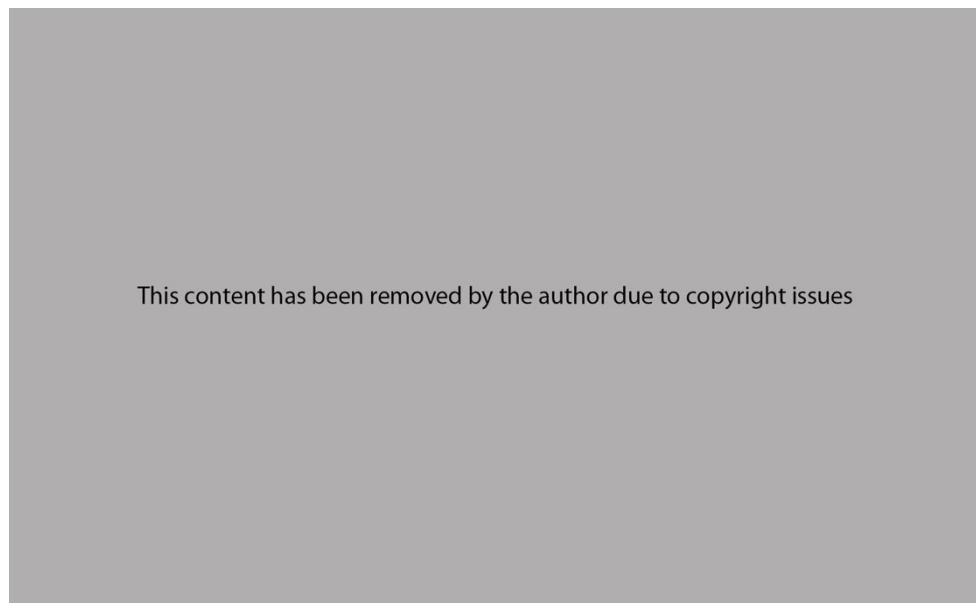


Figure 5: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (Perfect lovers)*, 1991, retrieved from <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81074>

⁷ Felix Gonzales-Torres, *Untitled (Perfect Lovers)*, 1987-1990, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas.

⁸ Hagenmaier, "Untitled", 157.

⁹ Ibid., 157.

¹⁰ Hagenmaier, "Untitled", 159.

pillows. This simple moment, frozen by the camera, inspires notions of absence and a mood of loss. It is apparent that intimacy was shared between two people in that bed, and that this has now ended. Like *Untitled (Perfect Lovers)*, this work discusses memory, sentimentality, and the fleetingness of time. If you know the story of Ross, the melancholy in the work is deepened. The thought that Ross won't be returning to that bed and that Gonzales-Torres has taken that photo aware of that fact is devastating. What I find hopeful, however, in Felix Gonzalez-Torres's work is he shows that there is a life after loss and that creating or enjoying art can be a cathartic process. He "works against the expectation that grief might dominate or impede artistic production"¹¹ and has used it to connect and inspire people.

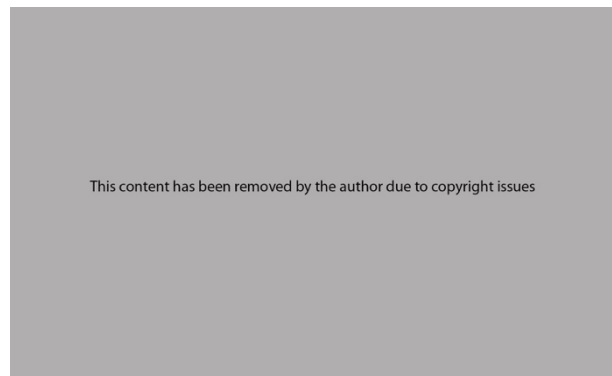


Figure 6: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (billboard of an empty bed)*, 1991, retrieved from <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/global-culture/identity-body/identity-body-united-states/a/felix-gonzalez-torres-untitled-billboard-of-an-empty-bed>

When you are gone the mountains will still be here listening to someone else complaining, (Figure 7), explores these ideas, striking an emotional chord with the viewer. The words of the title

¹¹ Ibid., 158.

scroll across an LED sign that is ordinarily used at corner stores or takeaway shops. The text itself is dreadfully bleak, simultaneously reminding us of our own mortality and ineffectuality. Nonetheless, as we are told that the hills will remain and we can be replaced by someone else, there is comfort in our own insignificance.



Figure 7: Mallory Allen, *When you are gone the mountains will still be here listening to someone else complaining*, 2018



Figure 8: Mallory Allen, *When you are gone the mountains will still be here listening to someone else complaining*, (installation view), 2018

Chapter Two: Improvisation

The items I experiment with and that have gone on to become elements of my installations were chosen from a growing collection of objects. This strange accumulation has become an extensive library I select from when needed. I am a collector of things that I believe have emotive potential, be it objects, photographs or videos. For example, the rocks used in *An agoraphobic artist with a thirst for travel*, (Figure 10), are taken from places I have visited around the world where I have felt moments of reflection, awe, loneliness or melancholy. I have stood on the shores of an isolated island in Norway and thought of the ways I could have done things better, I have walked a rocky path in Tasmania and smiled at a joke I was told years earlier, I have stood in my garden and missed a dear friend. These rocks are a souvenir not only of those places but also the feelings felt there, and so they are embedded with meaning.



Figure 9: Mallory Allen, *Rock collecting (The active looking project)*, (documentation), 2018



Figure 10: Mallory Allen, *An agoraphobic artist with a thirst for travel*, 2018



Figure 11: Mallory Allen, *The active looking project*, 2018-2019



Figure 12: Mallory Allen, *The active looking project*, 2018-2019

To notice these unplanned moments indicates an awareness of one's mood and surroundings. A method that I have named 'active looking' has become an important phenomenological research tool in my practice. This method involves purposefully engaging with my surroundings, being attuned to sensations and perceptions and becoming an active participant in my own experience. It is documented under the title, *The active looking project*, (Figures 9, 11, 12 and 14). Whether I am in the studio, on a walk, at the beach or on the bus, this method requires me to *notice* noticing. I am observing light, chance, colour, movement, patterns, humour, time and various phenomena. This is "a method for becoming aware of one's initial relationship to the world, and as a means of coming to terms with consciousness through one's own acts."¹² When travelling through my everyday motions, I try to utilise this method and document these experiences through photo, video or audio. These documented moments can be things that I sense are relevant to my practice; they may represent pathos or be aesthetically or comedically pleasing. Richard Wentworth is an artist that uses a similar technique throughout his practice. In the work *Istanbul*, (Figure 13), Wentworth noticed a plastic cup, collected it and then placed it thoughtfully somewhere else along his journey. These quick,

¹² Robert Hobbs, "Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology and Installation Art", *Robert Hobbs* (2001). http://roberthobbs.net/essay_files/Merleau-Pontys_Phenomenology.pdf (accessed 17 May 2018).

unplanned interventions are then documented through photographs. "By transforming and manipulating industrial and/or found objects into works of art, Wentworth subverts their original function and extends our understanding of them".¹³ By gleaning these moments from my everyday life, I am adding to a collection of meaningful moments, creating a toolbox laden with a pathos that can be used within my practice.

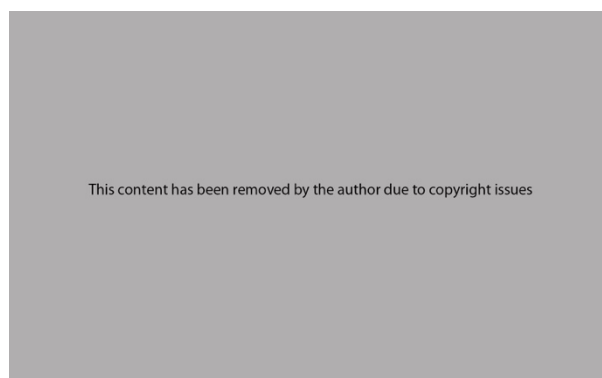


Figure 13: Richard Wentworth, *Istanbul*, 2006, retrieved from <http://dallasartdealers.org/we-went-to-soho-dust-motes-and-homoerotica/>



Figure 14: Mallory Allen, *Lost Yoghurt (The active looking project)*, 2018 -2019

¹³ "Richard Wentworth", Lisson Gallery, 2015. <https://www.lissongallery.com/artists/richard-wentworth> (accessed 8 June 2018).



Figure 15: Mallory Allen, *A thankless task*, (film still), 2018



Figure 16: Mallory Allen, *A thankless task*, (installation view), 2018

In the video *A thankless task*, (Figures 15 and 16), a snapped branch acts as a broom on a sandy path. Filmed on a blustery, grey day, the 'broom' sweeps a clearing. Powered by the wind, the branch is caught in an endless cycle as dirt is blown back onto the clearing, undoing its work. The weather and the hopeless plight of the branch contribute to a gloomy mood. For some, this poetic happening would go unnoticed; however, being attentive to my everyday surroundings has become a part of my practice. This simple occurrence was caused by natural forces, but framed by the camera is elevated to a moment of hopeless wonder. We are confronted by its futility but delight in its existence anyway.

I regularly add to my collection through visits to hobby shops or bargain basements where I can find tools and other starting points of improvisation. Functional objects such as fans, tapes, and office equipment often stand out in their working banality. These commonplace objects can hold an emotive potential and so I am searching for things that carry a certain weight or emotional aesthetic. These attributes may come in the form of a reminder of something poignant in my memory, or an imagined humanisation that creates a stirring of sentiment. Through this method of collecting, I have become the owner of an assortment of treasures I can pick and choose from, experimenting with them in limitless combinations. For example, when making *Service please*, (Figure 17), a service bell was placed upside down on a mirror, then between two blocks of wood, unable to be 'dinged'. That didn't seem right, and the process went on until finally the bell was placed between stacks of colourful office note-paper cubes.



Figure 17: Mallory Allen, *Service please*, 2019

Daniel von Sturmer, an installation artist working within the realms of video and sculpture, also utilises everyday objects that are easily accessible. Paper clips and rolls of tape, for example, feature heavily in his work, giving a snapshot into the everyday of a practising artist. In *The Truth Effect*, (Figure 18), von Sturmer presents a selection of videos projected onto screens at a life-size scale. In one, a sanding block, a roll of tape and a Styrofoam cup have been filmed rolling around a white box so they play with perception and the tension between expectation and result. The video is mesmerising and engaging, leaving viewers absorbed by the simple movements of three everyday objects. Von Sturmer proves that “what matters is not the quality of the space an artwork takes up but the quality of attention it earns.”¹⁴ His work illustrates the way small interventions by an artist can create significant meaning, evoking wonder and amusement by using easy-to-come-by items. As discussed in the exhibition catalogue ‘Into a vacuum of future events’, here we are less interested in the level of skill or time invested

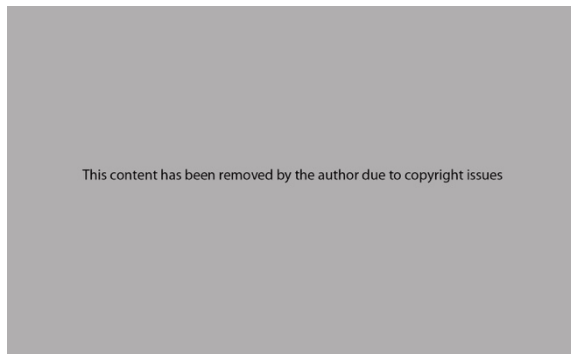


Figure 18: Daniel von Sturmer, *The Truth Effect*, 2003, retrieved from <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/L2010.81.a-k/>

¹⁴ Justin Paton and Andy Thomson, *Daniel von Sturmer: Into a Vacuum of Future Events* (Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2005), 7.

in the making of the work and more in 'its ability to create the conditions for a reflective, insightful or emotional experience.'¹⁵

This intuitive mode of making continues when it comes to the treatment of space within an installation. Not only does the work inform the place, but the site informs the work. I have found that the same set of elements installed in separate exhibition spaces is treated differently each time. Some components may not work at all in a particular area but might thrive somewhere else. After working in the white spaces of the University for most of my studies, it was interesting to test my work in the old barrel store of the Corban Estate Arts Centre, (Figures 19 to 23). The room had been left untouched, with exposed brick and concrete, boarded up windows and a single light bulb. After moving pieces around I was able to make site-responsive decisions that made use of the barrel store's idiosyncrasies. The exposed nails, window sills and many nooks available to me became improvised elements of the work. Steel beams became ready-made shelves and gaps in the brick acted as display units. The low lighting meant that the works that use illumination became more significant. Works such as *My rainbows*, (Figure 19), which used a torch and a CD to create a vivid rainbow on the wall, sat successfully in this dark space. My spontaneous choices concerning placement and negative space were heavily influenced by the size of the barrel store. It enabled me to experiment with works of a larger scale and to envision how they could connect over an area of that size. I incorporated bigger monitors and experimented with the size of projections.

It was interesting to note how some of the more smaller pieces of the installation didn't resonate physically or emotionally as they would have done in a space like my studio. In a room of that scale, some smaller works got lost in the space and became invisible. Against a backdrop of concrete and brick, unlit pieces like *Service please* were unnoticed. When discovered, the clash of textures and colours distracted from the failure of the bell and the improvised nature of the stacked paper. This weakened the anthropomorphic tug that causes us to feel empathy for the work, and so *Service please* became redundant.

¹⁵ Till Bieg et al. "Capturing Aesthetic Experiences With Installation Art: An Empirical Assessment of Emotion, Evaluations, and Mobile Eye Tracking in Olafur Eliasson's 'Baroque, Baroque!'" *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 (2018). <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01255/full#h4> (accessed 17 December 2018).



Figure 19: Mallory Allen, *My rainbows*, 2019



Figure 40: Mallory Allen, (installation view), *the Barrel Store* at Corban Estate Art Centre, 2019



Figure 21: Mallory Allen, (installation view), the Barrel Store at Corban Estate Art Centre, 2019



Figure 23: Mallory Allen, (installation view), the Barrel Store at Corban Estate Art Centre, 2019



Figure 22: Mallory Allen, *Even a broken clock is right twice a day*, (documentation), the Barrel Store at Corban Estate Art Centre, 2019

Chapter Three: Failure and futility

Within the framework of practice-based research, failure is welcomed as a catalyst for change and development. It is an “ideal standpoint for open experimentation and for raising constant questions”¹⁶. Failure is unavoidable within a practice that continually grows through trial and error, and so it is integral to a project such as mine.

Lisa Le Feuvre writes in ‘Failure’ that, “The inevitable gap between the intention and realisation of an artwork makes failure central to the complexities of artistic practice and its resonance with the surrounding world”.¹⁷ This makes way for improvisation and my ludic approach to making. In the end, failure to reach an intended goal can create a new work altogether, or it can add a humorous or whimsical aspect that wasn’t accessible previously. Le Feuvre says that “To be an artist is to fail as no other dare fail.”¹⁸ Indeed, it can be easy for an artist to achieve failure when the area we work in is so subjective. When an artist aims to make work that fails, however, they are caught in a paradox in which reaching their goal means success.

As I endeavour to create “experience-based” meaning,¹⁹ the accidental outcomes awarded by failure also sit within the outline of pathos explored in this project. As well as being a method, failure has become a central theme. The pathos of failure - the shared feeling of ineptitude we feel when we don’t reach a goal, endures throughout the work. It presents itself in the form of futility, repetition, emptiness and hopelessness. Contraptions are made that serve no purpose; balloons deflate, robotic vacuum cleaners run into a barrier and get stuck. For most, failure is an everyday occurrence and to see this echoed in these works makes them human and relatable. Portraying this in an artwork can create a more meaningful connection.

The knowingly-amateur, roughly-rendered way I put things together reinforces failure even more. This improvised de-skilling moves away from traditional techniques to create a more inclusive, relatable aesthetic. Materials are used to construct projection screens, frames or

¹⁶ Susana Martins, “Failure as Art and Art History as Failure,” *Third Text*, August, 2015, accessed June 3, 2018, <http://www.thirdtext.org/Failure-As-Art>

¹⁷ Lisa Le Feuvre, ed. *Failure* (London: The MIT Press, 2010), 12.

¹⁸ Le Feuvre, ed. *Failure*, 12.

¹⁹ Till Bieg et al., “Capturing Aesthetic Experiences”.

braces that have an anxiety-inducing fragility. This creates a sense of apprehension as the works appear to be on the brink of collapse. Tape, pins and Blutak are standard fixtures in my artworks, reinforcing the feel of impermanence. Electrical cables hang freely from their devices and projectors sit in full view. There is no illusion in the way things have been made, giving the work an unassuming straightforwardness that supports the principal themes of the project. Showing one's hand in this way creates connection and trust with the viewer as if they've been let in on a secret.

Artist Roman Signer consistently investigates expectation and failure in his oeuvre. In *Floating in a box*,²⁰ (Figure 24), he filmed a small remote control helicopter that was instructed to fly but that wobbles and dips. Its propellers continuously bump into the walls of the box. Despite the

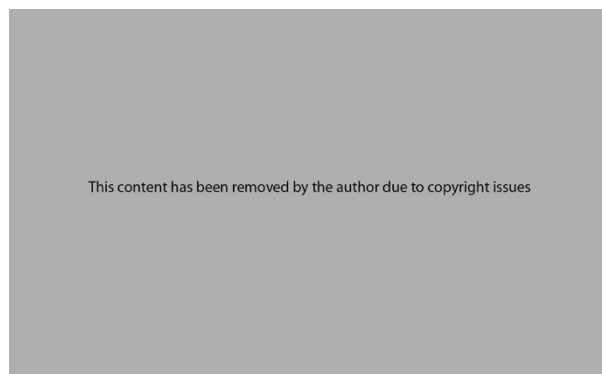


Figure 24: Roman Signer, *Floating in a box*, 1999, retrieved from <https://mona.net.au/museum/general-collection/schweben-in-einer-kiste-hovering-in-a-box-1999-roman-signer>

warning signs, the controller attempts to raise the helicopter over and over again, and we wonder if the helicopter will eventually fly neatly within its small parameters. The video ends with the helicopter finally crashing. Its flight has been a failure, and the viewer may be

²⁰ Leonard Emmerling, *Friendly Fire* (Leipzig: Kerber Verlag, 2004), 64.

disappointed, realising they were rooting for the helicopter the whole time. What is amusing is that Signer knew that a helicopter of that size needs a much bigger space in order to fly, so its failure was predetermined. The chance of it flying was absurd from the outset and so was the effort of the attempt.²¹

If failure and futility are recurrent themes throughout my practice, hope and resilience act as their partners. While pitiful at first, as the works continue in their cycles of fruitless struggle, I am struck by their perseverance. Persistence in the face of adversity is an act of courage. And so I admire the way the work bounces back and keeps going, knowing that there will always be another tough time up ahead. The work has a sense of its impending doom, but it keeps trying. Is this naive resolve silly? Something to laugh at? I think it might be a representation of what we are all doing every day.

This notion is seen in works such as *Are you an art fan*, *Lost Vacuum* and *Sad Santa*. *Are you an art fan*, (Figure 25), is a work I created using an electric turntable, a paper fan and duct tape. The turntable is mounted on the wall and the fan is taped to it. As the turntable rotates, gravity forces the fan to slowly close and then sharply open with a cascading snapping noise. The fan continues in its cycle of expansion and collapse. It struggles to reach the top of the rotation but finally gets there and can spread its wings and open again in triumph. In *Lost Vacuum*, the robotic vacuum continually comes across the hurdle of the wooden barrier but bounces off and continues on its aimless journey. *Sad Santa* is falling over but keeps smiling and waving. These objects inspire optimism and admiration by continuing to try even when things get tough.²²

²¹ Emmerling, *Friendly Fire*, 64.

²² Justin Paton and Andy Thomson, *Daniel von Sturmer: Into a Vacuum of Future Events* (Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2005), 10.



Figure 25: Mallory Allen, *Are you an art fan*, 2018

Installation artist Ceal Floyer's sound work *Till I Get it Right*,²³ (Figure 26), plays the lines from a country song, "I'll just keep on" and "Till I get it right", on loop. The positive mantra Floyer has created becomes unsettling as it is repeated. It becomes apparent that 'getting it right' is

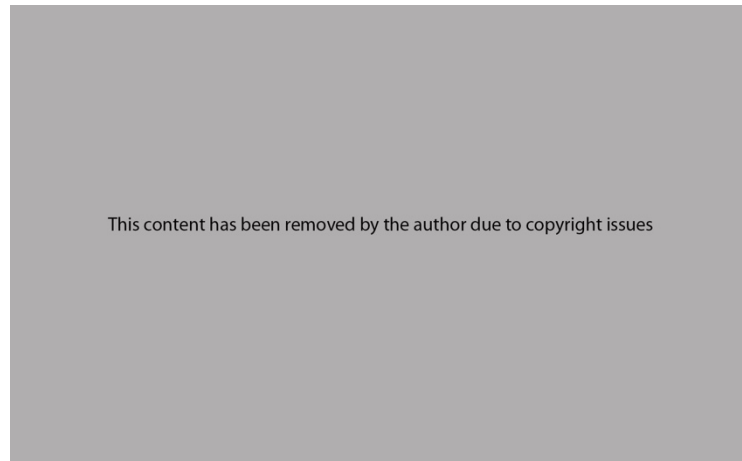


Figure 26: Ceal Floyer *Till I get it Right*, 2005, screenshot retrieved from <https://vernissage.tv/2012/07/18/ceal-floyer-til-i-get-it-right-audio-installation-at-documenta-13/>

an unreachable goal. As the singer keeps on trying until she gets it right, we realise that she is repeatedly getting it wrong. Again, this persistence in the face of failure is absurd but admirable. It is the singer "putting on an optimistic face while being trapped in a cycle of continual disappointment".²⁴ These ideas suggest that success and failure are interchangeable in an installation practice.

²³ Tacita Dean, Sergio Edelsztejn, and Mark Godfrey, *Ceal Floyer: A Handbook* (Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz, 2016), 157.

²⁴ Dominic Eichler, "Ceal Floyer", *Freize*, January 15, 2006. <http://frieze.com/article/ceal-floyer> (accessed 19 April 2019).



Figure 27: Mallory Allen, *Swingless swing*, 2018

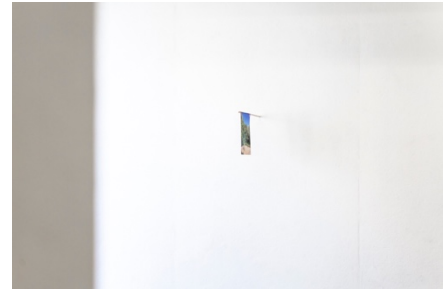


Figure 28: Mallory Allen, *Swingless swing*, 2018

Chapter Four: Anthropomorphism

The makeshift, improvised construction within my installations also holds human sentiments. Objects such as television screens lean forlornly against walls. Items are taped together impermanently, wavering, drifting. Pieces sit impotently on the floor. Together, these characteristics bring about a tone of defeat and redundancy in the work. The tentative way works like *Swingless Swing*, (Figures 27 and 28), have been made, (using tape, printer-paper and craft wood), carry timidity and downheartedness. Kinetic sculptures, newsprint images and videos projected onto foamboard contribute to an installation space made up of many humanlike facets. Reminiscent of Paul Cullen's work, which is made up of a 'pragmatic assemblage of objects, actions and enabling

mechanisms'²⁵, these pieces are not displayed traditionally, with work being placed at varying heights on the floor and walls. Each artwork within my installations brings their own degree of pathos to the table, creating a collection of awkward misfits. Items face towards each other or against, some watch longingly and some sit an aloof distance apart. The installation space suggests a singles party, where each element is an uncomfortable attendee - some are open to engagement and some face away, too shy to enjoy the experience.



Figure 29: Mallory Allen, (installation view), AUT School of Art studios, 2018

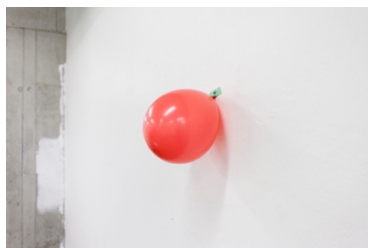


Figure 30: Mallory Allen, *Sea Air*, AUT School of Art studios, 2018

²⁵ Paul Cullen, Richard Dale, Melissa Laing, Tessa Laird, and Ruth Watson. *R/p/m*. (Auckland: Split/Fountain Publishing, 2011), 103.



Figure 51: Mallory Allen, (installation view), AUT School of Art studios, 2018

The works I create have human qualities that create a sympathetic connection to the viewer. I am interested in the way failure, futility or a sense of the pathetic make the sculptures and videos relatable, creating compassion and amusement. This process of drawing out the potential personalities of inanimate objects evokes an emotional relation, creating joy, hilarity, pity or sadness. We empathise with the work, with its trials and tribulations, its embarrassment or failure and we are encouraged to laugh at ourselves.

In *Lost Vacuum*, (Figures 32 and 33), a vacuum equipped with a navigational compass wanders aimlessly within a wooden pen. It repeatedly bumps into the barriers and never finds its way. The lost vacuum is awkward and clumsy and always running into obstacles. It is reminiscent of a drunk teenager sneaking into the house and walking into furniture. In this work I can see someone moving from one situation

to another, be it at a party or in life, trying to find their way. As Jorg Heiser states in *Things that Matter in Contemporary Art*, "sometimes one is baffled to note that the art work is already drenched with the very feeling of embarrassment one has occasionally felt oneself during sustained attempts to move confidently in social, cultural and discursive circles."²⁶



Figure 32: Mallory Allen, *Lost Vacuum*, (film still), 2018



Figure 33: Mallory Allen, *Lost Vacuum*, (detail), 2018

²⁶ Jorg Heiser, *All of a sudden: Things that Matter in Contemporary Art* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2008), 80.

Sad Santa, (Figures 34 and 35), is a video of an inflated Santa, fastened to the ground in somebody's driveway. Santa should be a strong, reliable figure, however, this Santa is on a lean and one gust of wind away from falling over. He looks as if he is struggling under the pressure of his job. In fact, especially at Christmas time, this balloon character, usually a symbol of joy and festive cheer, looks exactly how a lot of us feel; exhausted, broke and wary of the holes left by absent friends. We see ourselves in these kinds of works; our wins and our struggles are held up in a mirror for us to reflect on. Heiser writes that works like these are "allowing us to catch glimpses of the truth about ourselves and our relationships with others."²⁷



Figure 34: Mallory Allen, *Sad Santa*, (film still), 2019



Figure 35: Mallory Allen, *Sad Santa*, (installation view), 2019

Human attributes have also been applied in the video work *To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow*, (Figure 36). An oscillating desk fan continuously swings towards and away from a set of trick relighting birthday candles. The fan blows air on the candles for just the right amount of time for them to be extinguished, and as it continues on its path, it gives the candles enough time for them to relight before swinging back on them and blowing them out. The fan and the candles appear to be in a battle that no one can win and our sympathy veers from fan to candles and back again, as we continuously root for the underdog.

²⁷ Heiser, *All of a sudden*, 17.

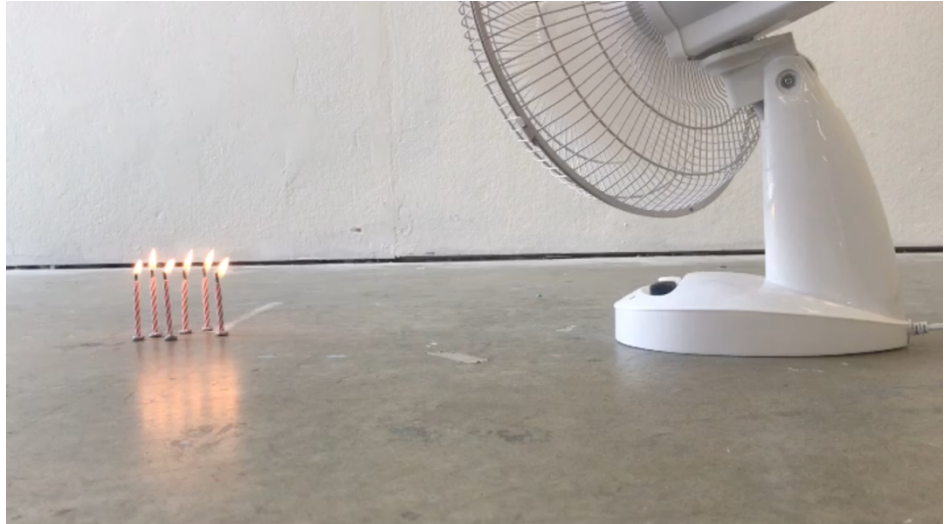


Figure 36: *To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow*, (film still), 2019

Chapter Five: Humour

Humour underpins many artworks within my practice. It is a tool that communicates ideas and creates an emotional impact. It is also a coping mechanism and a way of relating. It can lighten the mood and make people feel more comfortable. By using comedy I am able to tackle melancholy, resilience and futility in a format that is easier to engage with. For me this is a cathartic experience, for viewers it can be a way to form a relationship with the work. Simon Critchley says in 'On Humour', "the tiny explosions of humour that we call jokes return us to a common, familiar world of shared practices".²⁸ Indeed, within my practice, jokes are used as inclusive devices. Comedy is something that connects all of us, sparking relationships between not only the elements of the installations but also between the installations and the audience, and in turn the audience with each other. Like the work of Paul Cullen, Ceal Floyer, or Martin Creed, the witty titles, obscure combinations of objects and mechanical inventions I employ contribute to a range of humours, from slapstick to tragicomedy.

Within the context of slapstick, rather than exploring what the Germans call 'schadenfreude', (laughing at someone else's misfortune), I am interested in the opposite - how we see ourselves in these mishaps and are filled with empathy and solidarity.²⁹ Within this genre of humour, kinetic activity or documented failure can result in a crash or anticlimax. Quite often the work's failures relay a humorously embarrassing event. Furthermore, in works such as *Are you an art fan*, *Lost Vacuum*, or *To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow*, the repetition of those failures makes them even funnier. The viewer is presented with the mis-fires and letdowns one is faced with every day and is encouraged to laugh with them. The video work *The way things go* by Fischli and Weiss shows us a timeless example in which car tires, candles and buckets replace slapstick experts like Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton, with their emphasised movements and physical disasters.³⁰ These ordinary items are embroiled in a senseless 30 minute chain of events that took years to make. This notion in itself is absurdly funny and the pointlessness of the whole thing is entirely relatable.

²⁸ Simon Critchley, *On Humour*, 16.

²⁹ Heiser, *All of a sudden*, 17.

³⁰ Ibid., 76.



Figure 37: Mallory Allen, *Are you an art fan*, (detail), 2018



Figure 38: Mallory Allen, *Are you an art fan*, (installation view), 2018

The first joke of *Are you an art fan*, (Figures 37 and 38), is the obvious pun within the title. The humour within the kinetic motion of the turntable and fan is slapstick and as the fan very slowly closes, nervous energy is created, building a sense of anticipation. This is dragged out for a long enough time for nervous laughter to emerge. When the fan finally snaps open we are startled and the movement creates a tumbling noise. The sudden fall of the fan opening is reminiscent of an exaggerated slapstick movement, a clown falling over, for instance; however the fan opening is actually a success. Thus we laugh at ourselves for being nervous. The work is 'poking fun at our anticipation of the way things usually go'.³¹ The process is repeated over and over as the turntable rotates on its axis, with the joke building momentum as it goes, repeating "the succession of bewilderment and enlightenment".³² The fan seems to have its own personality; slightly pathetic but determined and optimistic in a cycle of failure and success.

New Zealand installation artist Paul Cullen was well-known for his witty and playful work. A simple assemblage of objects, as presented in *R/p/m* (3)³³, (Figure 39), is absurdly amusing. The disco-ball motor moves the bucket slowly around the table, making a soft, dragging noise over the Formica. The noise is bathetic and morose, comparable to the squawking wheels of *Lost Vacuum* as it moves around its pen. It reminds me of a joke made by comedian Tig Notaro called 'Stool Movement'.³⁴ Notaro, known for her dry delivery and situational humour, picks up the stool that is on stage for her and drags it along the floor. The stool makes a squealing, scratching noise. The audience laugh, and so Notaro repeats the action several times, with the audience's laughter increasing every time. In these cases repetition adds to the reception of the joke, making it funnier each time.

³¹ Paul Cullen et al., *R/p/m* (Auckland: Split/Fountain Publishing, 2011), 101.

³² Anna Dezeuze, "What's so funny?", *Art Monthly* 314, (2008): 2.

³³ Paul Cullen et al., *R/p/m*, 101.

³⁴ Tig Notaro, "Tig Notaro - Stool Sounds" (video). Posted 6 December 2011. <https://teamcoco.com/video/tig-notaro-stool-sounds> (accessed 29 April 2019).

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Figure 39: Paul Cullen, *R/p/m (3)*, 2010, retrieved from <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/explore-art-and-ideas/artwork/17288/rpm-3>

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Figure 40: Martin Creed, *The lights going on and off*, 2001, retrieved from <https://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/art-weve-helped-buy/artwork/11796/work-no-227-the-lights-going-on-and-off>

Martin Creed is another artist who recurrently uses humour in his practice. Like Paul Cullen or Tig Notaro, Creed's humour is cleverly deadpan. He often uses ready-made materials such as Blutak or household items to create simple but darkly witty pieces of work. *Work No. 227: The lights going on and off*, (Figure 40), consists of an empty room in which a ceiling light is switched on and off.³⁵ The work cheekily asks what art really is. It engages in the dialogue between high and low art using mundane materials to employ a self-deprecating tone. Ceal Floyer also employs a deadpan sense of humour in her work, using simplicity as the set-up to explore functionality and expectation. *The Drill*, (Figure 41), for example, is at first glance just a drill plugged into the wall. The punchline is that the drill isn't plugged in, the plug prongs have been inserted into holes in the wall and we don't know how they were made.³⁶ There is a moment of pleasure when the viewer realises they have gotten the joke, and feel included in something greater.

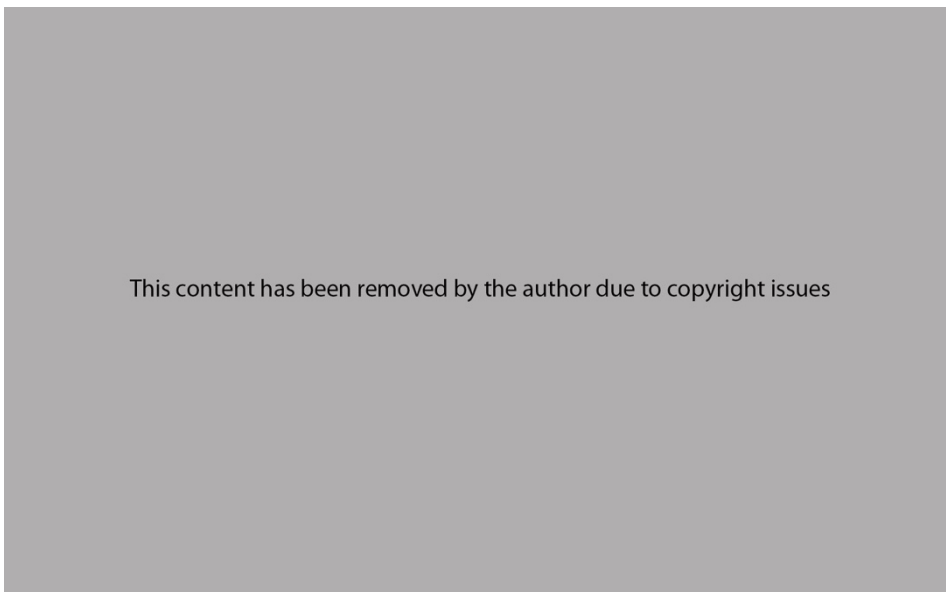


Figure 41: Ceal Floyer, *The Drill*, 2006, retrieved from <http://www.650mah.com/life-hacks.html>

³⁵ Helen Delaney, "Work No. 227: The lights going on and off," *Tate*. Published May, 2010.). <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/creed-work-no-227-the-lights-going-on-and-off-t13868> (accessed February 20, 2019)

³⁶ Dean, Edelsztein, and Godfrey, *Ceal Floyer: A Handbook*, 51.



Figure 42: Mallory Allen, *I remember you were no holiday*, 2018

I continue to build humour with a combination of simple objects with the work, *I remember you were no holiday*, (Figure 42). The functionality of the soap dispenser has been juxtaposed with the colourful frivolity of the confetti. The two items work to cancel each other out as the confetti takes the function out of the dispenser, and the dispenser takes the fun

out of the confetti. Again, humour and a mood of redundancy are intertwined. Like many works within my practice, *I remember you were no holiday* leads the viewer on a story arc of peaks and troughs, through both pleasure and discontent.

As I continue to investigate melancholy and failure within my practice, I have found that humour is a necessary tool to cut through the despair. It provides a pause or a moment of respite. Within my everyday, humour and melancholy are contingent upon each other. As they say, a smile uses fewer muscles than a frown. As stated in *The Artist's Joke*, "There is nothing that intelligent humour cannot resolve in gales of laughter, not even the void".³⁷ In times of extreme misery, laughter forces us to breathe as our lungs expand and contract. There is a point in my work where melancholy and amusement meet. Poet Richard Siken describes the experience of this moment well: "Eventually something you love is going to be taken away. And then you will fall to the floor crying. And then, however much later, it is finally happening to you: you're falling to the floor crying thinking, 'I am falling to the floor crying,' but there's an element of the ridiculous to it – you knew it would happen and, even worse, while you're on the floor crying you look at the place where the wall meets the floor and you realize you didn't paint it very well."³⁸ Situations in life are often so surprising, sad or absurd that you can choose to either laugh or cry and the work I make tries to echo that notion.

My work walks a fine line between tragedy and hilarity. *To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow*, (Figure 36), literally swings between the two. The metaphor of a flame being extinguished is poignant to most and conjures up many ideas on loss and grief. As the birthday candles are repeatedly blown out one is struck by the futility of our existence. Another year down, another year closer to our demise. If left to dwell on this existential conundrum, it could push one over the edge. However the candles spark back up, smiling in the face of gloominess and we are forced to laugh at ourselves for taking things so seriously. The act of living becomes more bearable when we look for the laughter. They were trick candles after all, and the joke is on us if we can't enjoy them while they last.

³⁷ Jennifer Higgle, ed., *The Artist's Joke* (London: The MIT Press, 2007), 13.

³⁸ "Richard Siken: Quotable Quotes", *Goodreads*. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/330164-eventually-something-you-love-is-going-to-be-taken-away> (accessed 18 April 2019).

The tightrope between 'expectation and actuality'³⁹ continues with *When you are gone the mountains will still be here listening to someone else complaining* (Figure 7). The sign sadly sits on the floor as if someone has forgotten to install it properly. The melodramatic text scrolls across at a comically slow pace. As one reads to the end of 'here', the suggestion is that the sentence is over but the sign keeps scrolling and almost as an afterthought, finishes with the quip 'listening to someone else complaining'.

This balancing act between wit and unhappiness has been embraced by some comedians who realise that jokes and sincerity are not mutually exclusive. Hannah Gadsby brought this style of comedy to the forefront with her stand-up show 'Nanette' in 2018.⁴⁰ In 'On Humour', Simon Critchley discusses the Relief Theory, where laughter is a release of pent up nervous energy.⁴¹ Gadsby tests this theory frequently throughout her show as she discusses serious topics such as homophobia, sexual assault and trauma while interspersing them with jokes. Gadsby's personal form of storytelling is both funny and touching, and works to connect people on many levels. There are many contemporary comedians embracing this new style of comedy. Tig Notaro announced she had breast cancer on stage. Maria Bamford's sets are based on her bipolar disorder. The pathos in their performances generates a feeling of community and empathy. While researching this form of comedy I found that the word that comes up repeatedly is 'connection'. My project suggests that being able to speak of one's trauma or emotion that brings people together can be translated to the world of contemporary art. As comedian Kumail Nanjiani tweeted of *Nanette*; "It made me feel happy, angry, sad, and ultimately, connected. What a gift".⁴²

³⁹ Critchley, *On Humour*, 1.

⁴⁰ Madeleine Parry, dir., *Nanette*. Netflix, 2018.

<https://www.netflix.com/watch/80233611?trackId=13752289&tctx=0%2C0%2Cb5af81b9-9284-4890-839f-6a1745639ec1-205945201%2C%2C> (accessed 4 January 2019).

⁴¹ Critchley, *On Humour*, 3.

⁴² Jesse Fox, "How funny does comedy need to be?", *Vulture*. Published 4 September 2018. <https://www.vulture.com/2018/09/post-comedy-how-funny-does-comedy-need-to-be.html> (accessed 10 February 2019).

Chapter Six: Cliché and the sublime

The cliché in art is generally not a desirable quality, being often regarded as tacky, trite or cringe-worthy. It describes something (a phrase, image or narrative) that has been used so regularly that it has lost its meaning. Often clichés lose their seriousness and are used for their cringe factor to become jokes. I believe that the use of clichés can generate a diverse range of dialogues concerning resonance, value and humour. I use common motifs such as rainbows and sunsets within my work as perfect examples of the sublime to expand on these ideas. As Eeyore says, “It never hurts to keep looking for sunshine”.⁴³ On the cliffs of Santorini, the restaurants are fully booked every evening as people drink wine and watch the sunset, even though they’ve seen a sunset many times before and will (hopefully) see it many times more. What is it about sunsets that has us so mesmerised? It represents the dying of a day but it is also a symbol of hope and new starts, as, if the sun sets it will also rise. It signifies our insignificance, reminding us that we are specks on a planet spinning around a star in the middle of a universe. The sunset may also bring us a sense of achievement - in our worst times a sunset means we have survived another day.



Figure 43: Mallory Allen, *Untitled (sunrise ascent)*, 2019

⁴³ Peter Economy, “17 Wise Winnie-the-Pooh Quotes About the Remarkable Power of Kindness, Love, and Acceptance”. *Inc.* Published 8 August 2018. <https://www.inc.com/peter-economy/17-inspiring-winnie-the-pooh-quotes-about-love-kindness-acceptance.html> (accessed 18 April 2019).

The motif of the sunset appears in *From sunrise to sunset in 12 mins 27 seconds*, (Figure 44), a video piece I filmed in Norway during the summer. The sky is a vivid pink as grass sways in a lonely field in the foreground. The catch in the title is that the sun actually never sets over this awe-inspiring scene; it skips straight into a sunrise. The video captures the sublime in action as the Arctic sun swoops down and then up without ever disappearing, as can be seen most nights that far north during that period of the year.



Figure 44: Mallory Allen. *From sunset to sunrise in 12 mins 27 seconds*, (film still), 2018

The sunset and sunrise are captured again in *Untitled, (tea and wine)*, (Figure 45), another video piece. I filmed a sunrise using my phone while on the opposite side of the planet a friend shot a sunset with hers. We talked and enjoyed wine and tea during this process, in the appropriate time-zones. This work shows a connection over many levels, through friendship, technology, space and time. It reminds us of our commonalities through the simple notion that we are all sitting under the same sky. We are comforted by the fact that as one day ends, another begins somewhere else.



Figure 45: Mallory Allen, *Untitled (tea and wine)*, (installation view), 2018

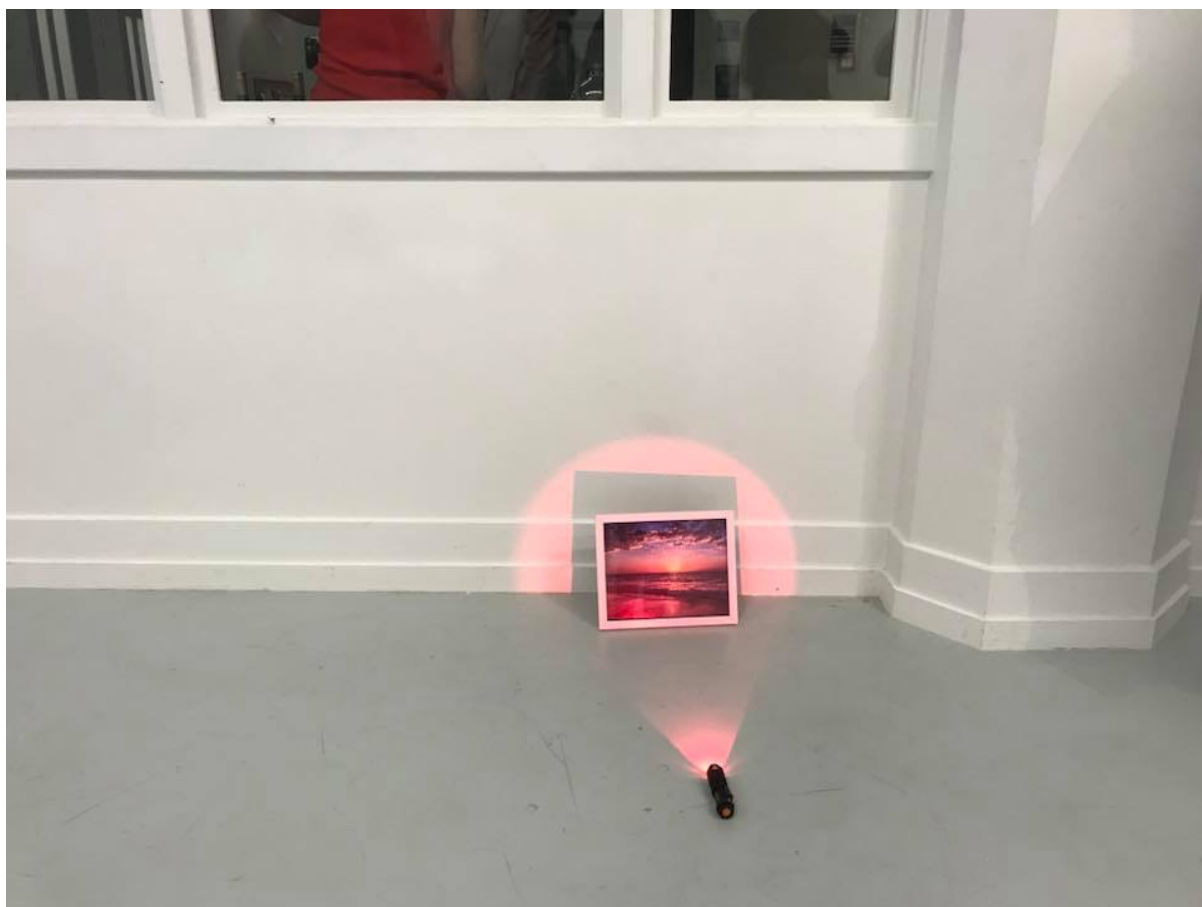


Figure 46: Mallory Allen, *Soroya 2.0*, 2018

In the work *Soroya 2.0*, (Figure 46), I again echo a sunset; a scene of beauty occurring daily in the natural world that still brings emotion to spectators. I have recreated it in a very low-fi way and made something beautiful out of everyday objects. Using an image found on the internet, a household torch and a low-quality frame I have tried to convey my sincere belief that there is beauty in everything around us, while using a humorous cliché to remind the viewer of this fact.

The work has been made in an improvised manner, with on hand materials that give it a provisional aesthetic. The picture frame leans against a wall, and the torch is placed facing it on the ground. This provides the work with an element of pity, and one can't help but think that it is trying to be something grander than it is. However, I believe it is a poetic reminder to, (as cliché would have it), "appreciate what is right in front of you." The objects used are generic; however, the cliché of the motif and the everydayness of the materials give the piece a sense of nostalgia, supplying an affective quality.

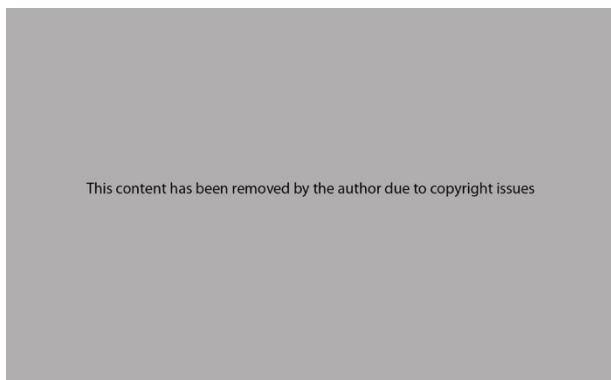


Figure 47: Francis Alÿs, *When faith moves mountains*, 2002, retrieved from <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/francis-aly/francis-aly-story-deception-room-guide/francis-aly-3>

Francis Alÿs is an artist who has characterised poetic gestures throughout his oeuvre. Alÿs's work *When faith moves mountains*⁴⁴ (Figure 47), is to me the picture of a poetic cliché. He gathered a group

⁴⁴ Francis Alÿs, "When faith moves mountains". Publication date unknown. <http://francisalys.com/when-faith-moves-mountains/> (accessed 8 June 2018).

of 500 people on a dune and gave them shovels. Over a day the group worked together to shovel sand from one side of the dune to the other. The notion that a group of people can work together over a period of time, each playing a tiny part to move a dune, is very poetic and proves the cliché of 'love can move mountains' to be true. Alÿs demonstrated that a shovel, sand, and people could create an artwork of profound meaning.

With my handling, clichés like the rainbow or sunset become poetic. Using strategies of improvisation and provisionality, the work becomes humorous. Combined with a lightness of touch, relatable context and an intimate scale, these motifs move from being overused metaphors to moments of connection between viewer and work.

Conclusion

My project demonstrates the way small gestures can create work of great emotional significance. Pathos is used in my practice to explore how we engage with pain and heartbreak. The sequence of videos, photos and sculptures generate a conversation about our relationship to grief and our perception of courage. I am interested in creating a felt experience, a faraway mood or a hunch based on anything from a memory to an emotional aesthetic. In relation to my installations, I am interested in the French philosopher "Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, which examines embodied active perception where the 'see-er' becomes one with what is seen".⁴⁵ Investigating the many ways pathos can be evoked in an installation practice has shown that improvisation, failure and humour are important tools that work concurrently to create a bond between the viewer and the work. These tools allow the viewer to acknowledge their own losses but also illuminate their strengths and resilience, allowing them to become one with the work. Throughout this project I have learnt that provisionality, play, disappointment, intuition and fun are integral to my practice, as is creating work that holds a humble charm. This allows a place where grief and sadness intersect with hope. We are reminded that our time here is short and we must "celebrate the ephemeral beauty of life".⁴⁶ While I cringe when I see someone has a "Live, Laugh, Love," poster on their wall, the cliché rings true here. They just left out "Lose".

In Nanette, Gadsby discusses melancholy and what helped painter Van Gogh during his depression. His brother, Theo van Gogh, looked out for Vincent emotionally and financially, allowing him to practice as a painter. "Do you know why we have the sunflowers? It's not because Vincent Van Gogh suffered. It's because Vincent Van Gogh had a brother who loved him. Through all the pain, he had a tether, a connection to the world, and that is the focus of the story we need: connection".⁴⁷ As I've experimented with the ways one can generate pathos in art, I have found that what connects it all is connection. The tension between melancholy and delight connects each element within the installation and these feelings allow for empathy from the viewer, connecting them with the work. The experience of love and loss is universal, and it is this connection that keeps us going.

⁴⁵ Robert Hobbs, "Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology and Installation Art".

⁴⁶ Hagenmaier, 165.

⁴⁷ Shelley Sperry, ""To Feel Connected": Hannah Gadsby's Big Idea", *Story Grid*.

<https://storygrid.com/to-feel-connected-hannah-gadsbys-big-idea/> (accessed 20 March 2019).

Catalogue of work



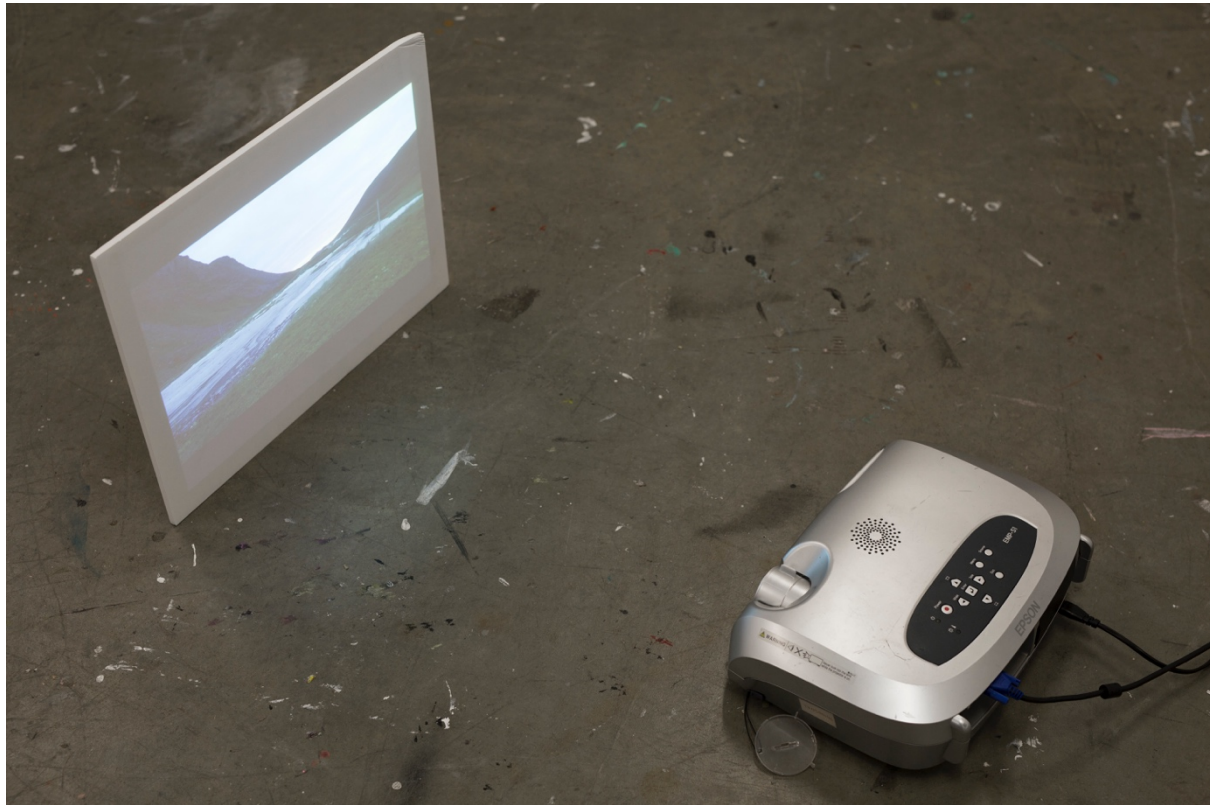
Mallory Allen, *Every rainbow I have seen since the 21st May, 2014*, digital printed photos, rolodex, 2014 - ongoing



Mallory Allen, *Let the rain fall down*, digital print on craft paper, roller blind bracket, 2018



Mallory Allen, *Who needs friends with pencils like these*, digital print on newsprint, drawing pins, 2018



Mallory Allen, *From sunset to sunrise in 12 mins 27 seconds*, (installation view), digital projection on screen made of foam board and wood, 2018



Mallory Allen, *Last hopeless chances have got to work*, dowel, metal bracket, ceramic magnets, twine, tape, 2018



Mallory Allen, *Last hopeless chances have got to work*, (detail), 2018



Mallory Allen, *The birds will still be singing when your palace falls to dust*, printed label on found object, 2018



Mallory Allen, *The birds will still be singing when your palace falls to dust*, (detail), 2018



Mallory Allen, (L-R), *A thankless task*, digital projection on foamboard screen, *Sea Air*, balloon blown up at Pt Chevalier Beach, masking tape and pin, *My rainbows*, torch, CD and plasticine, *It comes in waves*, digital print and hand towel rail, and *Crystals*, video on tablet, at AUT Talk Week, 2018



Mallory Allen, *My rainbows, torch, CD and plasticine*, 2018



Mallory Allen, (L-R), *I remember you were no holiday*, confetti, soap dispenser, and *An agoraphobic artist with a thirst for travel*, Perspex brochure holder, collected rocks, 2018



Mallory Allen, *Very unsure*, print on receipt paper, 2018



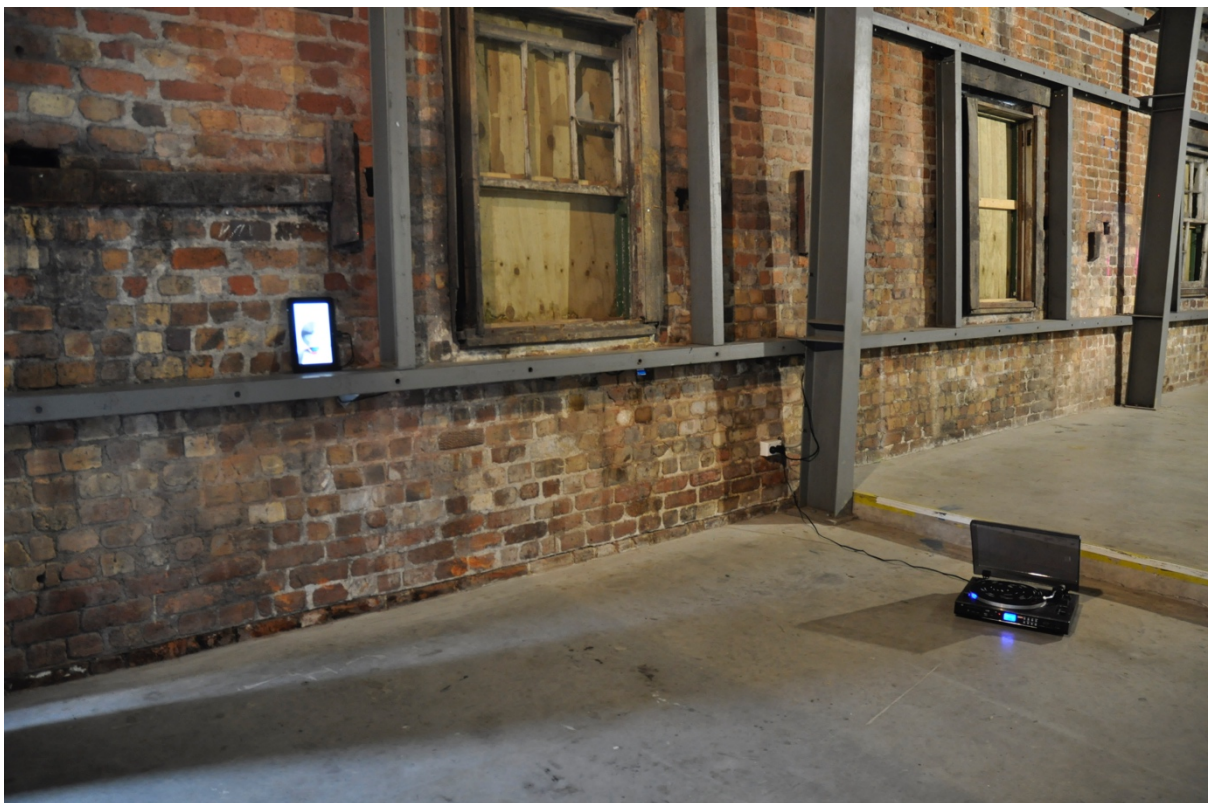
Mallory Allen, *Lost Vacuum*, robotic vacuum, masking tape, navigational compass and wood, 018



Mallory Allen, (L-R), *Lost Vacuum* and *Swingless Swing*, (installation view), 2018



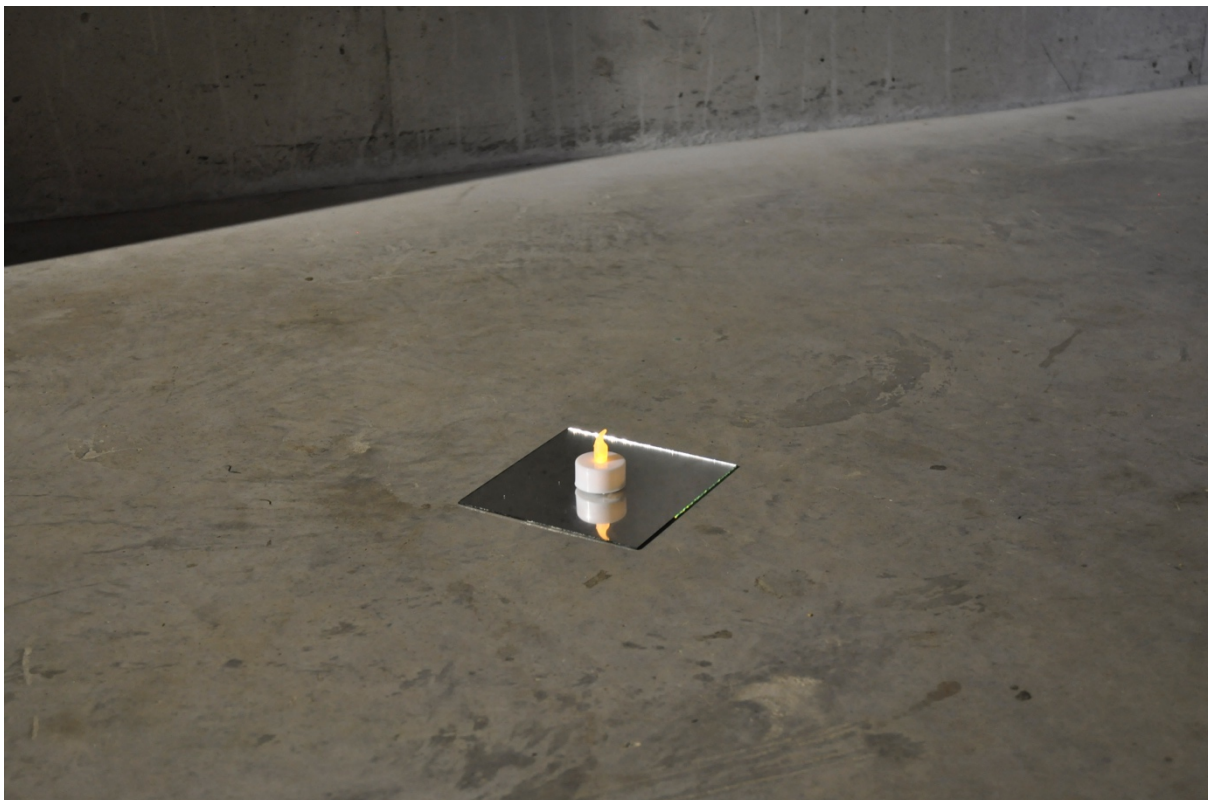
Mallory Allen, (L-R), *Lost Vacuum* and *Very Unsure*, (installation view), 2018



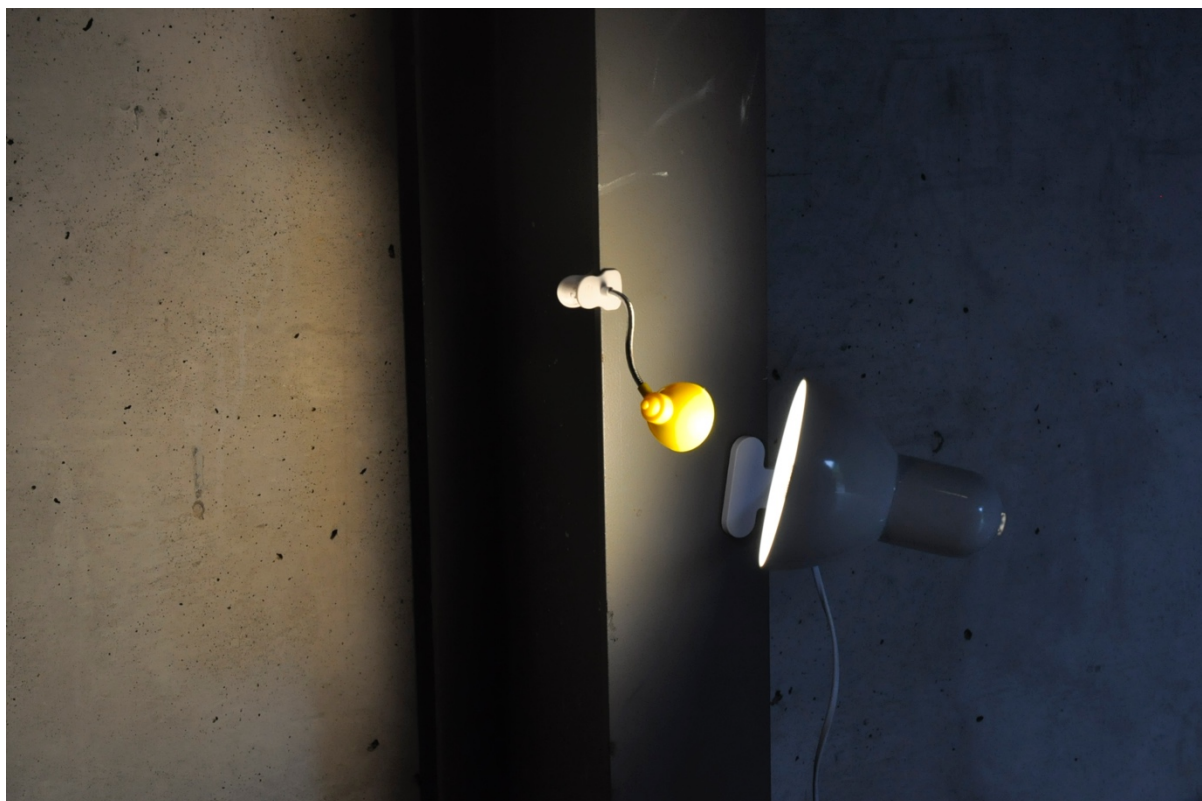
Mallory Allen, (L-R), *Colour Drill*, digital video on tablet and *Universe*, pins on record player, (installation view), 2019



Mallory Allen, *Universe*, pins on record player, 2019



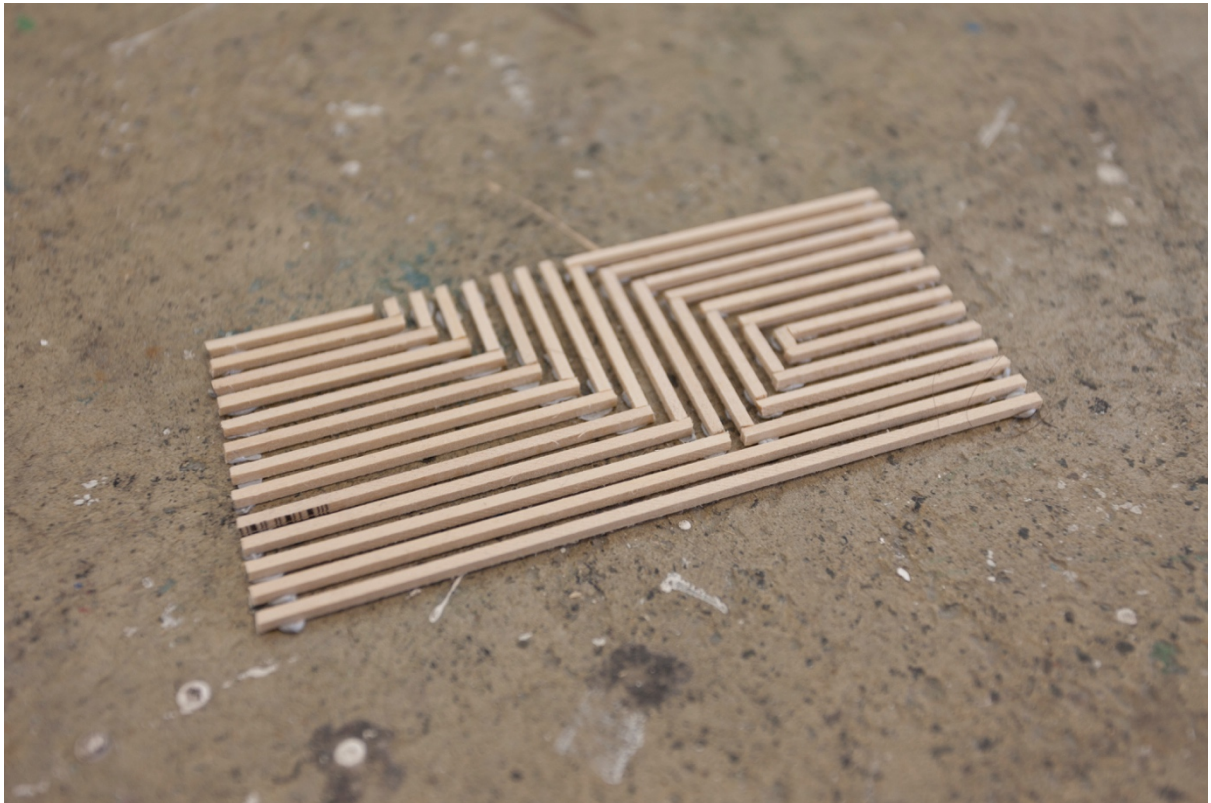
Mallory Allen, *Unbeatable*, battery powered candle and mirror, 2019



Mallory Allen, *Pals*, battery powered desk lamp and electric desk, 2019



Mallory Allen, *An anaesthesia of the heart*, Rescue Remedy and liquid dispenser, 2019



Mallory Allen, *I've been losing you one day at a time*, balsa wood and blutak, 2019



Mallory Allen, *Carwash*, video on TV monitor, 2019



Mallory Allen, (L-R), *Carwash*, *Untitled (sunrise ascent)*, and *Service please*, 2019

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Exhibition room sheet

A swingless swing walks into a bar, digital print on brown paper

A thankless task, digital video, 8 minutes (looped)

The darkest hour is only 60 minutes, digital video, 1 minute 18 seconds (looped)

Lost robot, wood, robotic vacuum cleaner, tape

Last hopeless chances have got to work, ceramic magnets, dowel, metal bracket, tape, screws, twine

Are you an art fan, fan, display turntable, tape

Jacuzzi, water pump, elbow barb, hose, plastic storage

When you are gone the mountains will still be here listening to someone else complaining, LED scrolling sign

From sunset to sunrise in 12 mins and 27 seconds, digital projection on MDF, 12 minutes 27 seconds (looped)

Old too soon and wise too late, digital print on newsprint

My rainbows, torch, plasticine, CD

All for nothing, digital video, 3 minutes 55 seconds (looped)

Supplements: *Even a broken clock is right twice a day*, *Window shopping* and *Every rainbow I have seen since the 21st May, 2014*

Documentation of exhibition







