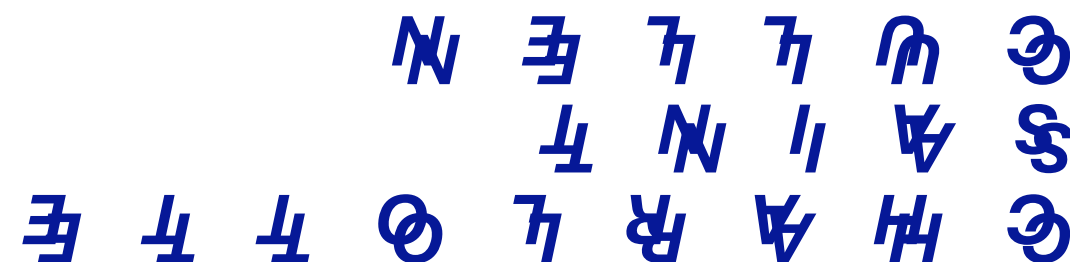




R e t r e a t o f t h e W a r r i o r



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There is something visceral about Charlotte Cullen's work. It is the knots in your stomach, the lingering trace of emotional impact, a tentative salve on still hot wounds. Bitumen and metal are contorted around themselves, each other, precariously existing despite, because of, their scarred surfaces.

Cullen's past work has incorporated everyday objects into precarious sculptures revealing the cruel optimism of financial hardship and aspirational working-class cultural memory. This show blends past and present. Lingering emotional affect collides with actions that almost appear to still be happening. From this perspective at least, it feels like a work-forever-in-progress.

The past here is evidenced not through written or spoken record but through its undeniable trace embodied within the materials themselves. In a world built for impossible neatness, the artworks' (and artist's) existence is an insistent reminder of the 'failure' and support of the bent, the broken and the queer.

- Dr Hali Santamas

Retreat of the Warrior are sculptural installations wherein scavenged and ephemeral materials entwine with formal material enquiries in metal and clay. Site is enacted as geological space for excavation, symbiotic (un)learning, resistance and healing. Intergenerational trauma, sickness and the body are manifest as material, physical encounters.

These sculptures enact warriors in retreat during battle, seeking safety and a place to heal from the ground, to take respite so to fight again. The work is weed like, finding methods and materials from the ground to build and restore as an intuitive gesture. Twigs become additional limbs, protruding from a metal vertebrate to make new appendages, clay is dug from the ground to heal wounds, while broken materials from man-made waste create hybrid new attack strategies in the warrior's arsenal.

These sculptures take on a bodily presence through the embodied process of their production. Scrappy, precarious and connected to each other through tubing, twigs and other materials they become a pack of anthropomorphic beings. Clay protrusions and natural elements give body and shape to these sculptures but wither and crack. This relationship between the ephemeral material to the metal body is explored by allowing the broken pieces to build while new elements are built during exhibition, the work growing and mutating during presentation.

Often bodily in scale these sculptures have been exhibited in solo presentations and group exhibitions. When working with others, the sculptures, through conversation with other exhibiting artists, have grown and developed as interventions. Engaging with and growing out of the space they are exhibited the *Retreat of the Warriors* have taken up space through their scale, have been found sneaking within rafters, built as intervention within damaged areas of a space or have removed tiling in the floor, ceiling and other supports to tunnel across space or reground within the space available.

Retreat of the Warrior have included: *Retreat of the Warrior (Bodies of Water)* *Retreat of the Warrior (Bones of the Waterhorse)*, *Retreat of the Warrior (Bodies of Water)*, *Retreat of the Warrior (Latent Extinction)*, *Retreat of the Warrior (Agricultural Warfare)*.

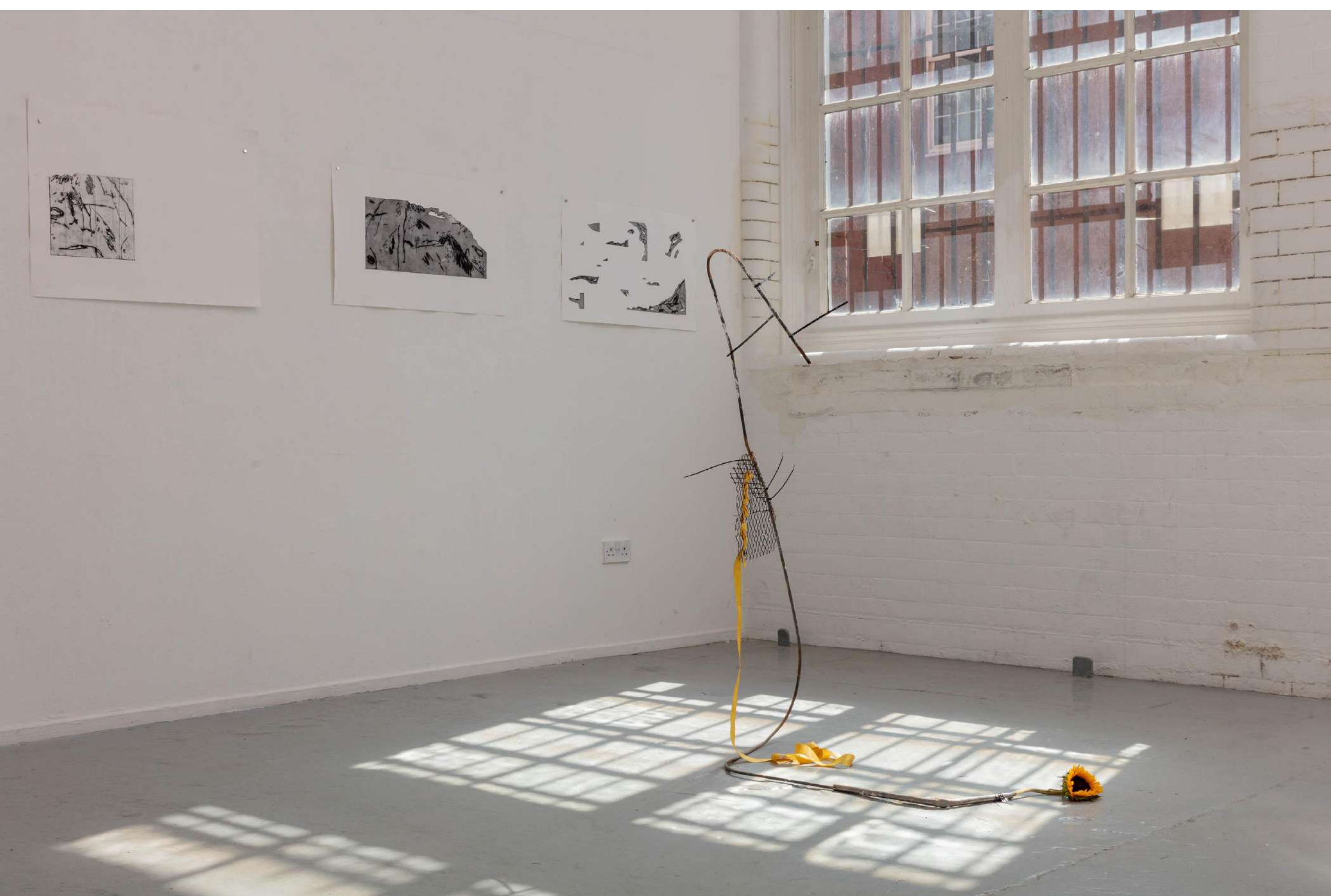
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Study for a Shield after Battle, install at Patriot Hall, Wasps studios. Edinburgh .2021



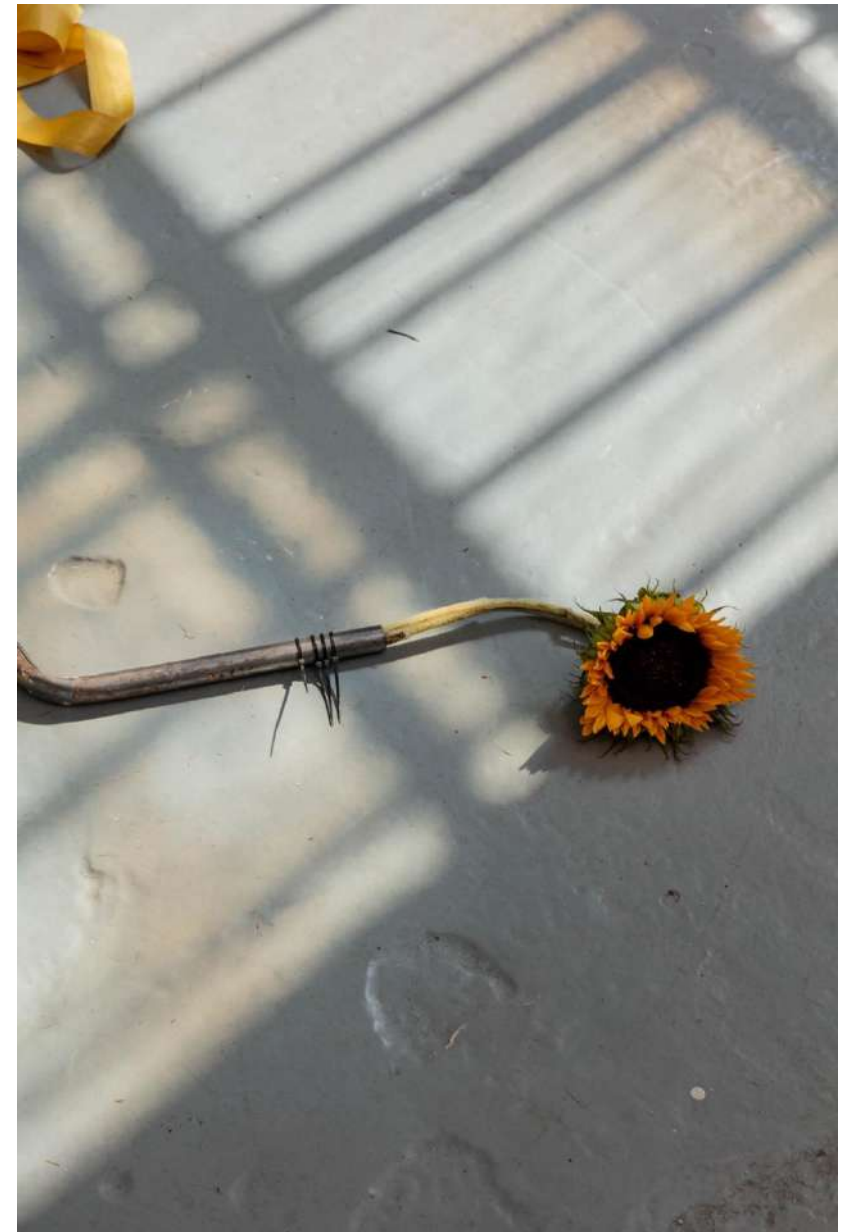
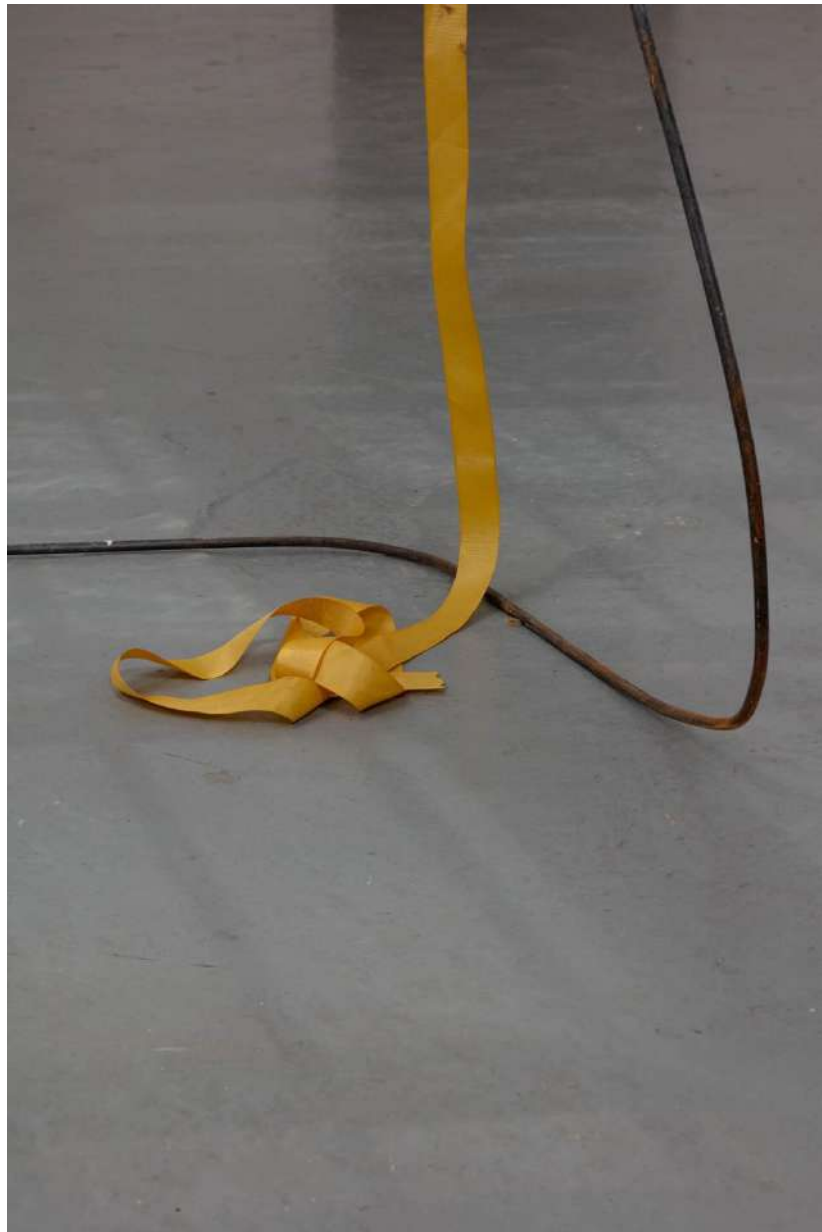
Held comfort under brat come Bríde .2021
Mild steel, plaster, melted black plastic bin bags, cable
ties, seasonal flower (yellow)



Study for a Shield After Battle (fragments), black ink on white somerset paper .2021, *Study for a Shield After Battle (Inherited on Passing Tongue) I, II, [diptych] III*, black ink on white somerset paper .2021, *Come known under fired skies*, salvaged metal grating, mild steel, plaster, cable ties, yellow ribbon, season flower (yellow) .2021



Born under fired sky .2021 Mild steel, salvaged bbq grate, cable ties, plaster, ribbon, seasonal flower (yellow)



Born under fired sky .2021

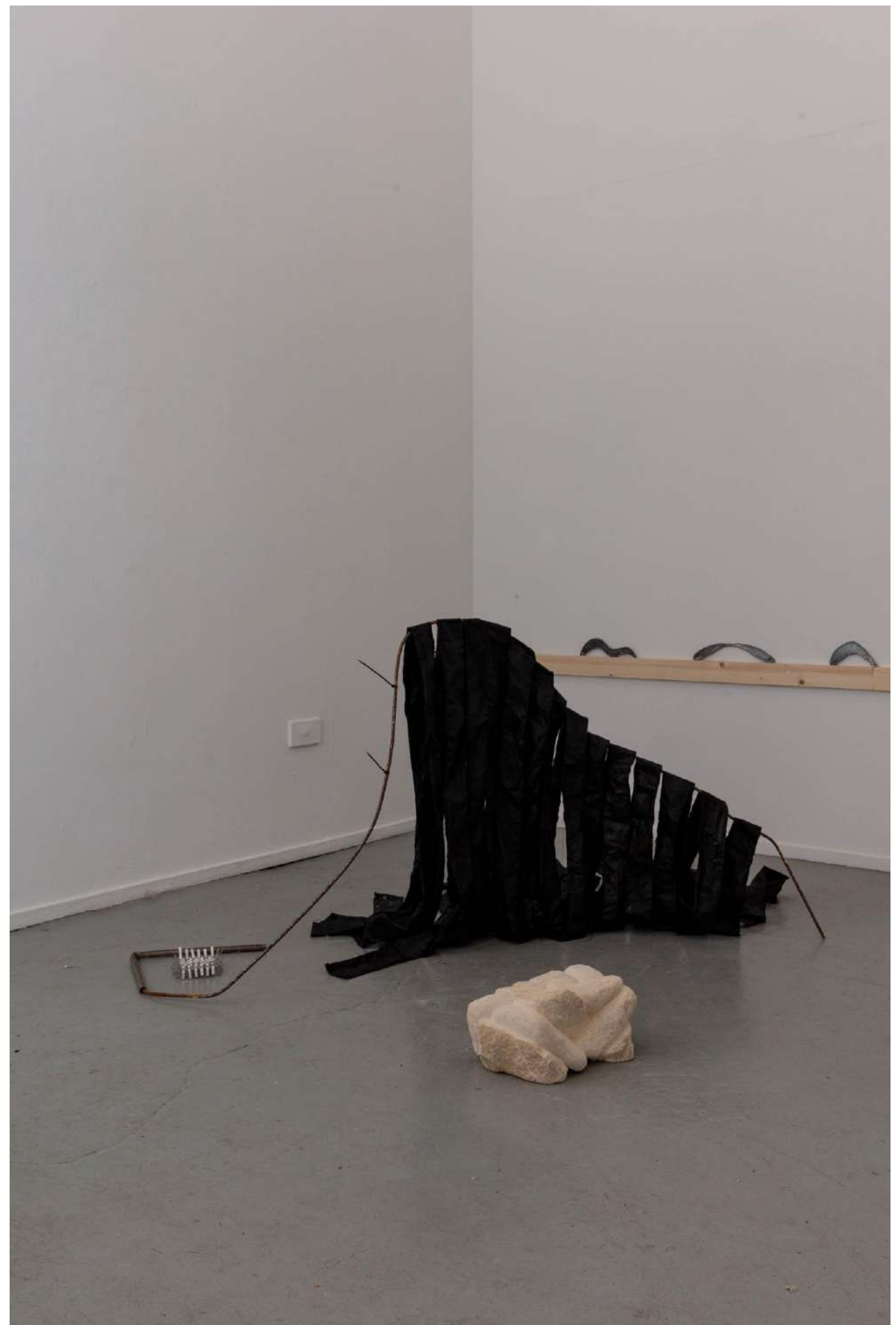
Mild steel, salvaged bbq grate, cable ties, plaster, ribbon, seasonal flower (yellow)



Untitled, mild steel, fabric, bitumen, cable ties .2021, Untitled, mild steel, plaster, cable ties, seasonal flower (yellow) .2021, *Loomer I*, aluminium .2021, *A Scuttle, a haunting*, bitumen, twig .2021, *A Wound Held Dear (Fragments from Guard of the Watergate)* steel off cuts, wood .2019 – 20



Untitled 2021, mild steel, fabric, bitumen, cable ties, seasonal flower (yellow)





Untitled, mild steel, plaster, cable ties, seasonal flower (yellow), destroyed printing plates .2021



Child .2021 mild steel, plaster, cable ties



The Bride (1 – 6), bitumen on white card .2021

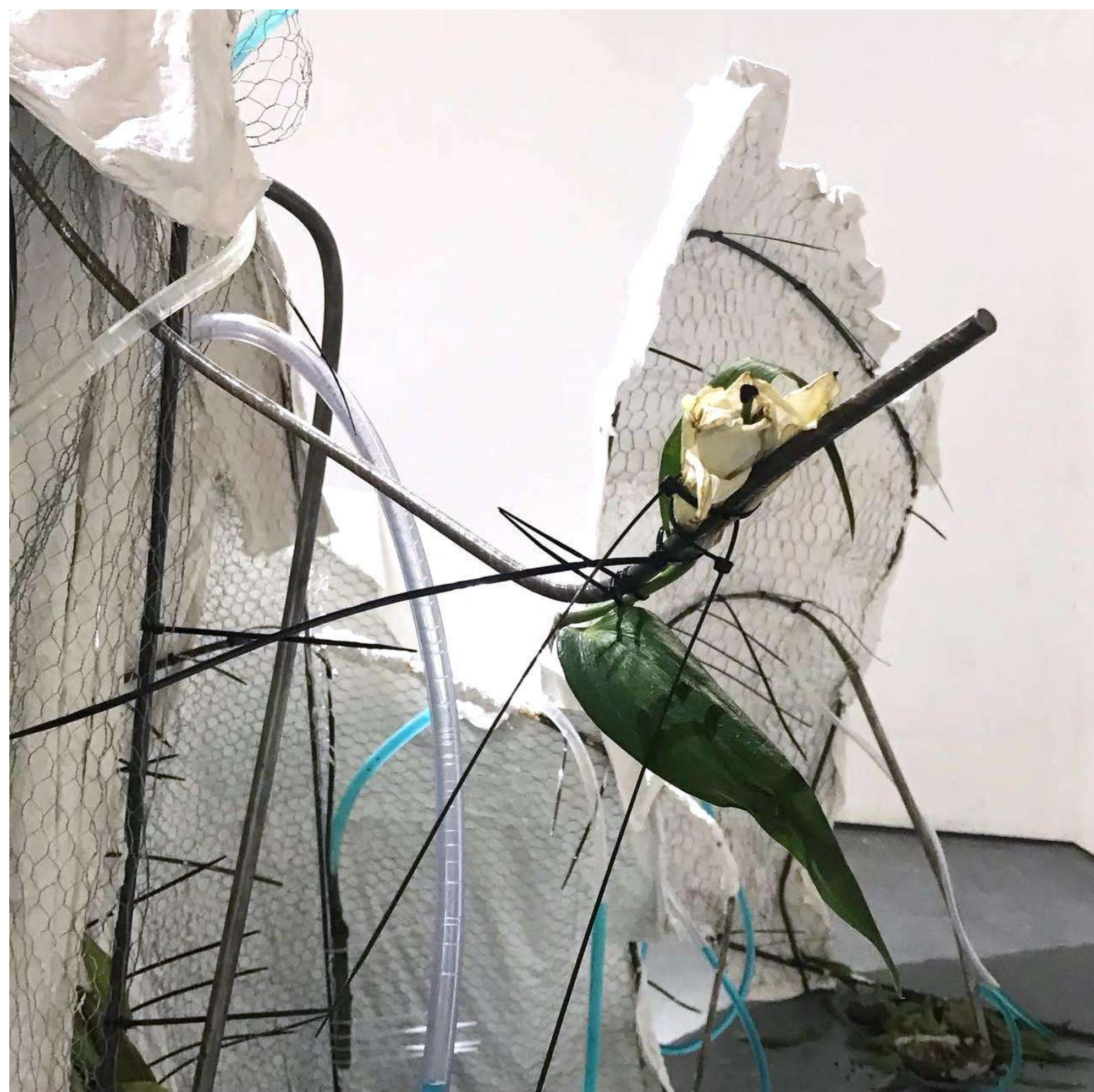


The Bríde (1 – 6), bitumen on white card .2021

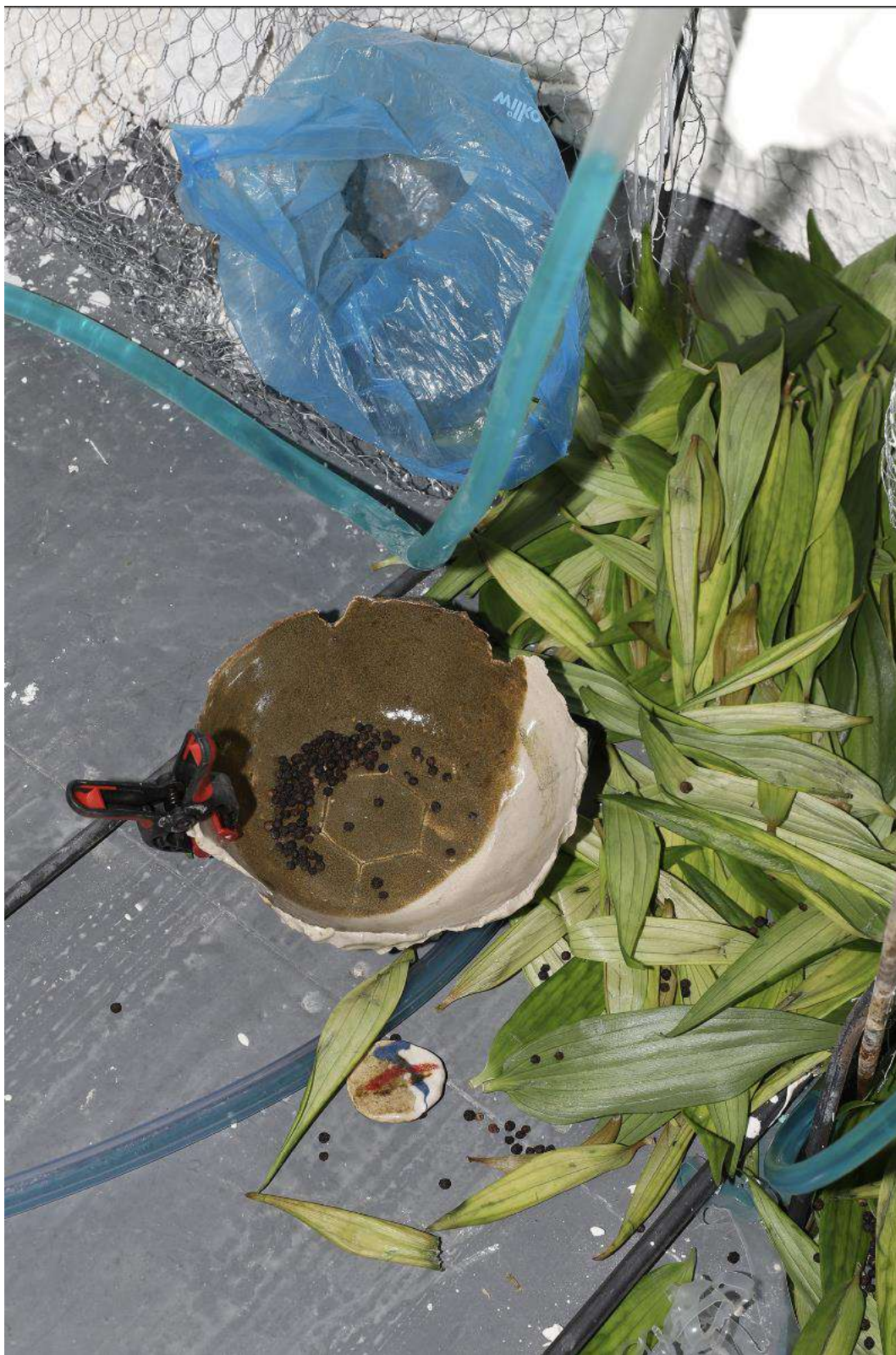


It is not enough to watch only lively bodies .2020

Plaster, mild steel, pvc tubing, bed sheets, bath cream, fired and unfired mud collected from river banks, ceramics, collected foliage and debris, excess from lilies at Salts Mill, pepper corns, 10 min audio (sound of its own making) on repeat



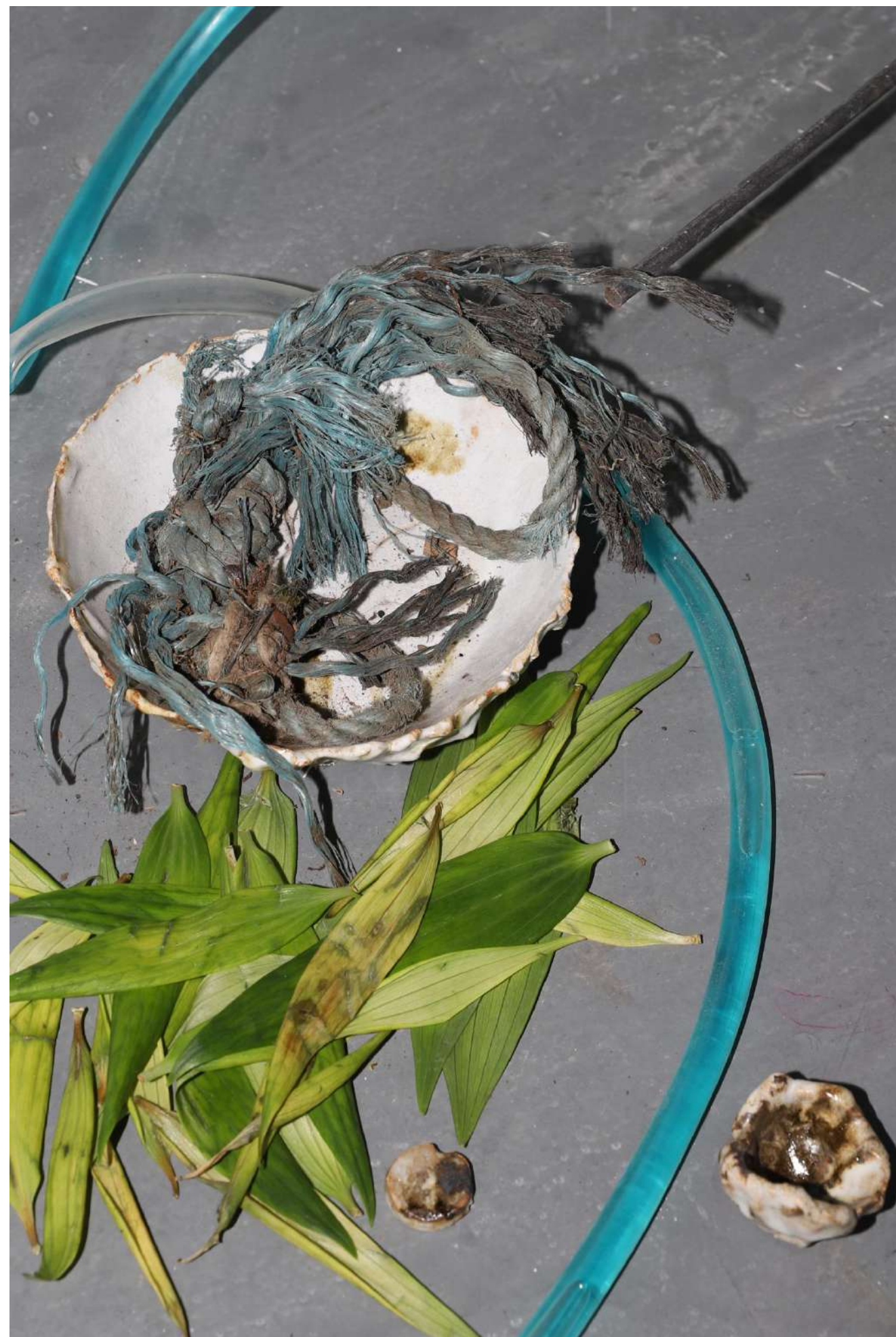
It is not enough to watch only lively bodies .2020
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It is not enough to watch only lively bodies is an area of research which focuses attention towards 'ghosts in the landscape'; spaces of failed futurity that haunt our understanding of the Anthropocene. It is an opportunity to reshape past time and understand lessons in alternative ecologies of survival, replacement and failings. Uniting through metaphor, narrative and material processes themes of long-term sickness and the body, abandoned sites of working-class identity framed through geological and archaeological excavation and the use of found, recycled and by product materials.

Material and process-led approaches in metal work and plaster converge with bodies of written and performed text, audio, video and installation, scavenged materials and mud collected from selected sites, exposed, treated and fired to consider immersive environments pre and post covid, resulting in fluid and tacit experimentation across but not contained to, sculpture, installation, conversation, guest writing, collaboration and intervention.

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Guard of the Watergate .2019
Mild steel, lighting
tsh....sihhhhh...wrrr .2019
Glass, blue plastic bags, lighting
YiYuan Tang Museum, Shanghai





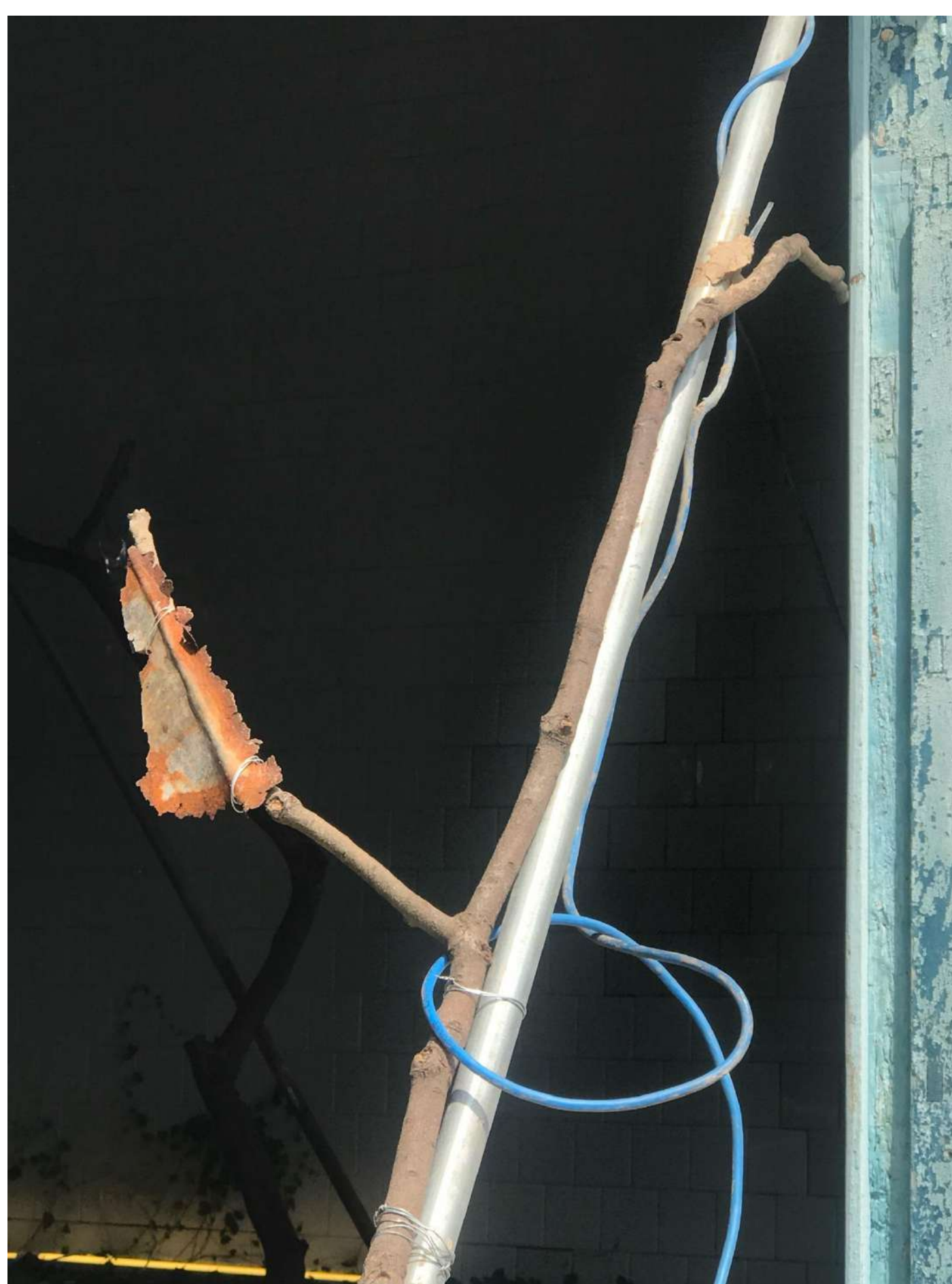
tsh....sihhhhh...wrrr .2019 Glass, blue plastic bags, lighting



Retreat of the Warrior (Bodies of Water) .2019



Retreat of the Warrior (Bodies of Water) I .2019
Mild steel, foliage, metal wire, building material



Retreat of the Warrior (Bodies of Water) II .2019
Mild steel, scrap metal, foliage, building wire, metal wire



Retreat of the Warrior (Bodies of Water) III .2019
Mild steel, foliage, building materials, metal wire, glass,



Retreat of the Warrior (Bodies of Water) installation details .2019

Imagine the scene: you're surrounded by tall reeds on the shores of a swampy river. Away from the river the land slopes upwards to low hills, covered in lush grass and open woodland. The air is warm and humming with the sound of millions of insects. From your hiding place in the reeds you are astonished to see gigantic elephants approaching the water to drink.

All of a sudden, the water near you erupts in boiling foam and the head of a hippopotamus rears up, its huge gaping mouth bristling with fearsome looking tusks... the river is the Derwent, very close to where Derby now stands – and the time is 120,000 years ago.

[Derby museum exhibition text]

The land we all walk upon has been under the sea many times, and it will be submerged again

[Jacquetta Hawkes]

Entering a site of excavation, the forebears of the river Derwent emerge from the mud which has held them and which has shaped this land. Bones transcend into metal vertebrae as the tools of man; the extraction of iron, metal work, fire and alchemy; materialise across generations into hybrid beings preserved through 100,000 years.

//

Returning to Derby to undertake the Artcore No Matter How Strong Residency I was interested in how I could re-root myself in the landscape of Derby. Having moved from Derbyshire ten years prior the city centre felt full of ghosts; half-forgotten memories and uncanny recollections of streets and other open spaces. As an entry way I began developing a fieldwork method of research. Following routes and pathways through the city I found respite by the river edge and began to think about the intergenerational relationship of early settlers also coming to the river, interacting with the same site and mud, the same material heritage. This has informed how I've approached material and making and led me to develop more work on site in the landscape. Through this I've learnt about tools, process and developed a relationship to the land and excavation to learn about making, healing and the intergenerational relationship of craft and material. The river has played an important role in this as a central force through Derby and the presence of streams throughout and under the city. [from catalogue interview]

//



Cullen, C. Retreat of the Warrior (Bones of the Water Horse) I .2019

mild steel bar and tubing, pvc tubing, clay fired and unfired, collected twigs, salvaged foliage, cable ties, mud collected from river bank fired and unfired, plastic four pack ring, calming essence lotion

34"x26"x18"

Cullen, C. *Retreat of the Warrior (Bones of the Water Horse) II*
.2019

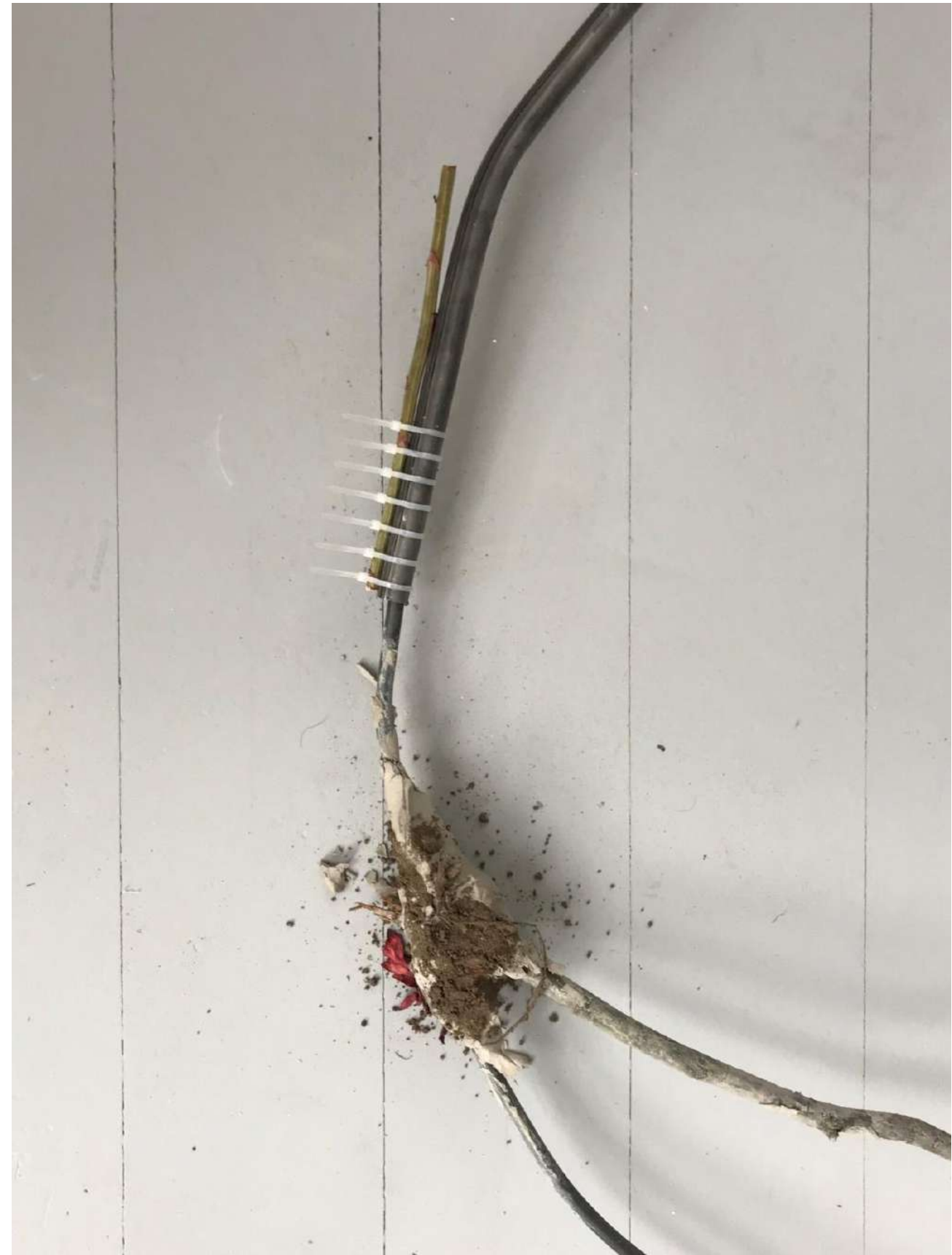
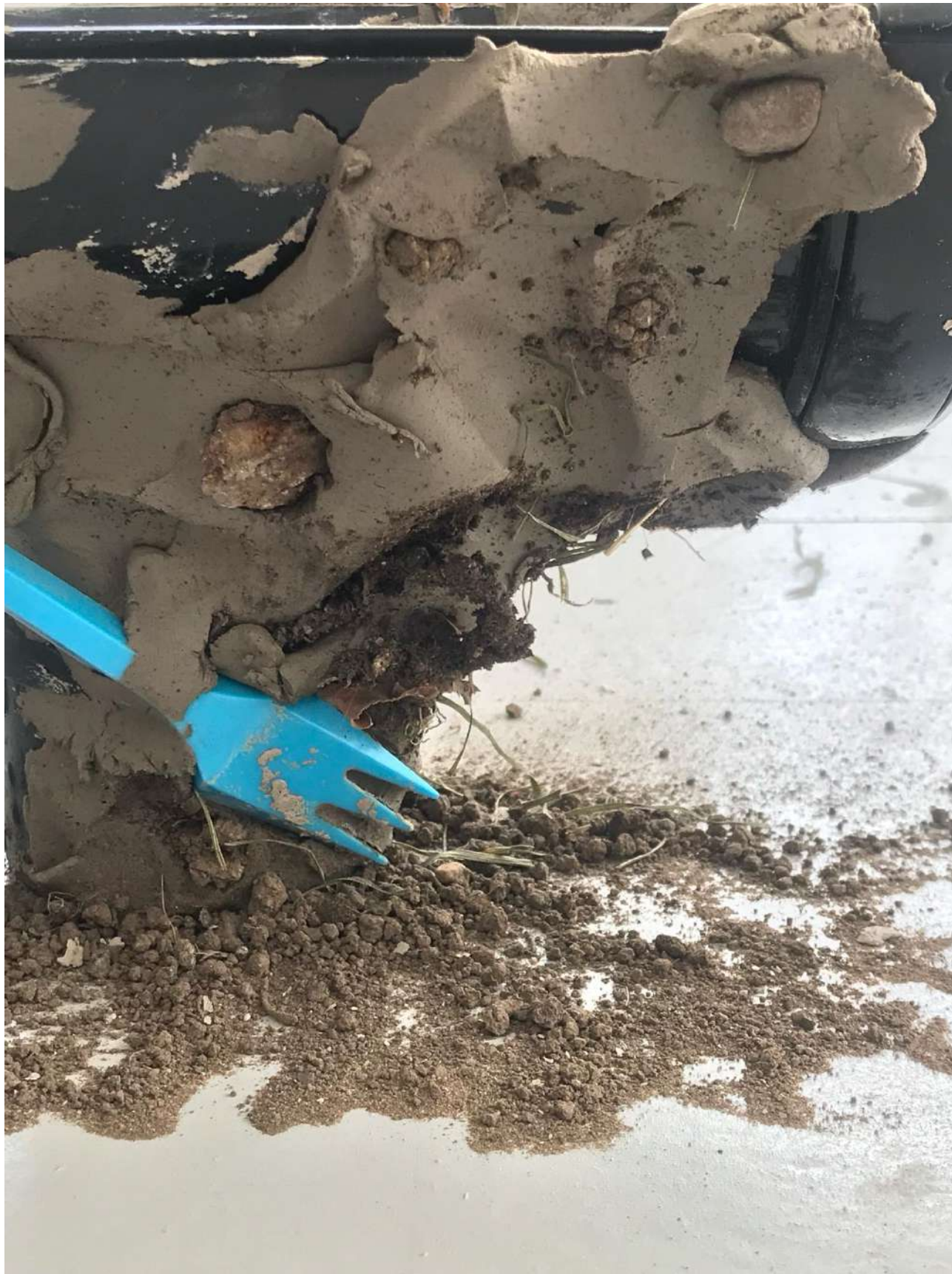
mild steel bar and tubing, clay fired and unfired, mud
collected from river bank fired and unfired, collected
foliage, pvc tubing, cable ties, calming essence lotion
77"x70"x45"



Cullen, C. *Retreat of the Warrior (Bones of the Water Horse) II*
.2019

mild steel bar and tubing, clay fired and unfired, mud
collected from river bank fired and unfired, collected
foliage, pvc tubing, cable ties, calming essence lotion
77"x70"x45"





Cullen, C. *Retreat of the Warrior (Bones of the Water Horse) II* .2019
 mild steel bar and tubing, clay fired and unfired, mud collected from river bank fired and unfired, collected foliage, pvc tubing, cable
 ties, calming essence lotion 77"x70"x45"



Cullen, C. *Retreat of the Warrior (Bones of the Water Horse) II* .2019
 mild steel bar and tubing, clay fired and unfired, mud collected from river bank fired and unfired, collected foliage, pvc tubing, cable ties, calming essence lotion 77"x70"x45"



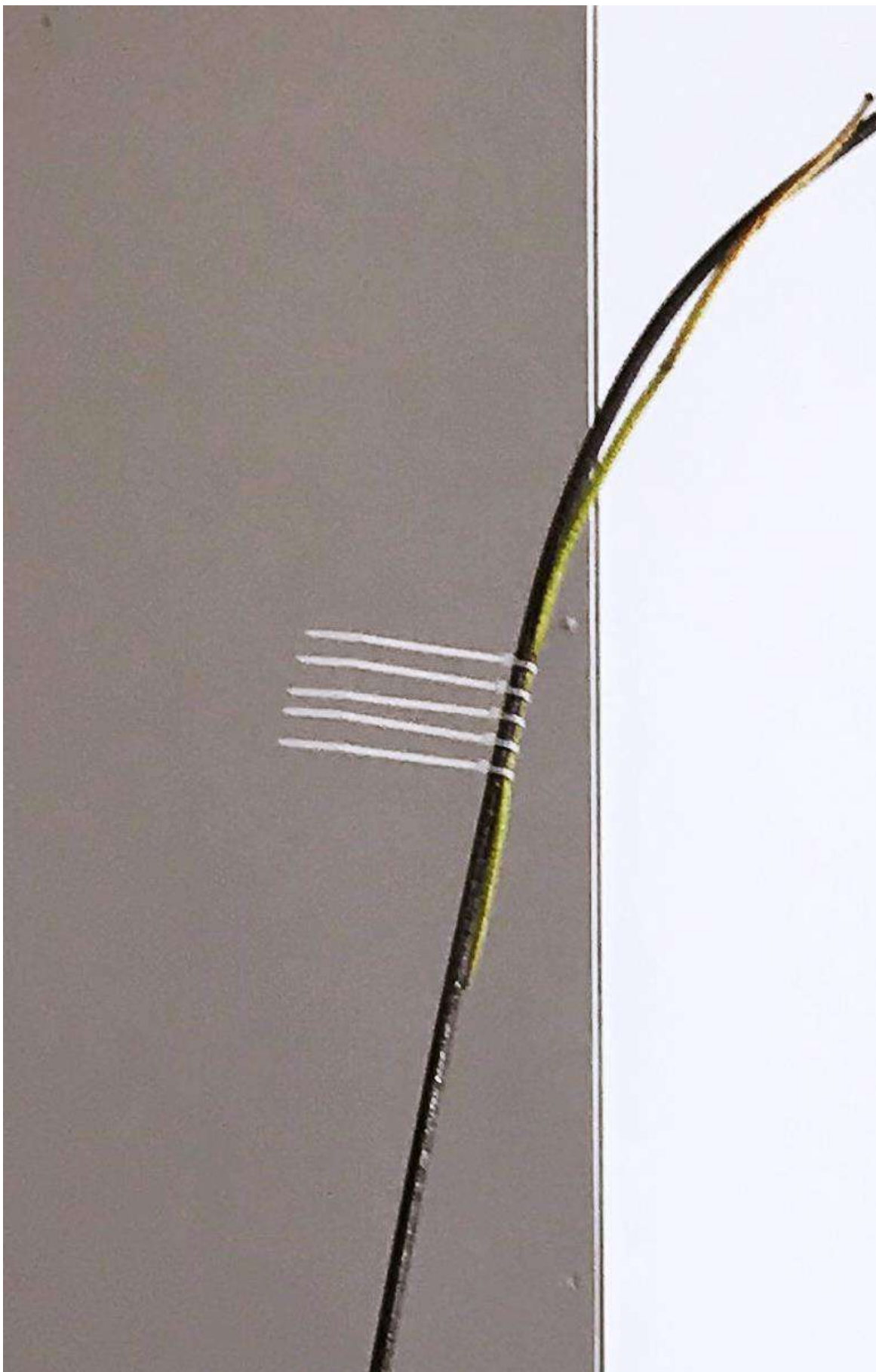
Retreat of the Warrior (Bones of the Water Horse) II
.2019

Mild steel, foliage, cable ties, plastic tubing,
calming bubble bath, ceramics, plastic 4 pack
rings



Retreat of the Warrior (Bones of the Water Horse) II .2019

Mild steel, foliage, cable ties, plastic tubing, calming bubble bath, ceramics, plastic 4 pack rings



Retreat of the Warrior (Bones of the Water Horse) II .2019

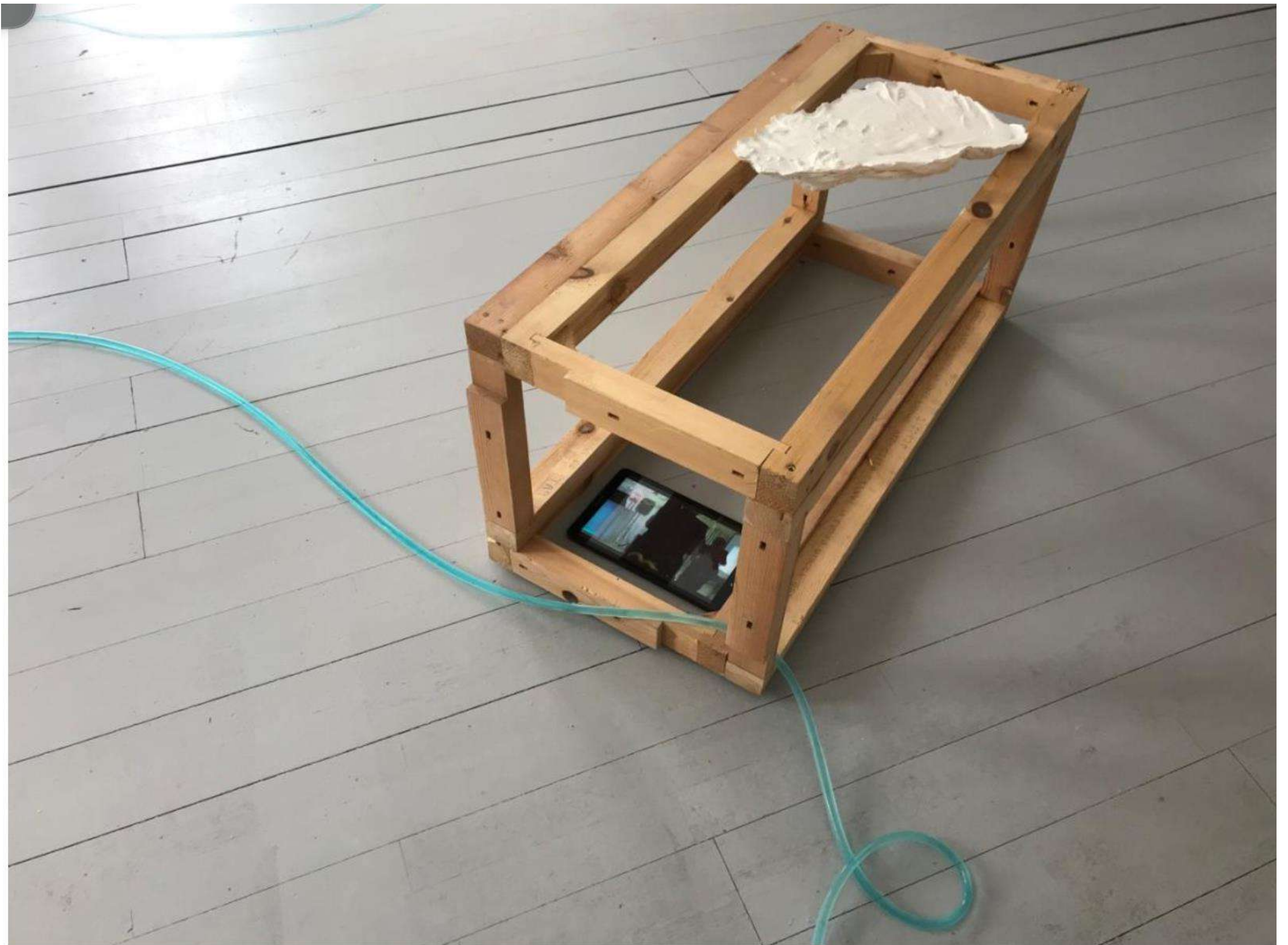
Mild steel, foliage, cable ties, plastic tubing, calming bubble bath, ceramics, plastic 4 pack rings



Retreat of the Warrior (Bones of the Water Horse) III .2019
Mild steel, foliage, cable ties, plastic tubing, calming bubble bath, ceramics, mud



Tending to Ghosts (ancestral Traces) I .2019 wood, plaster, plastic tubing, calming bath cream, screen with 12 min video

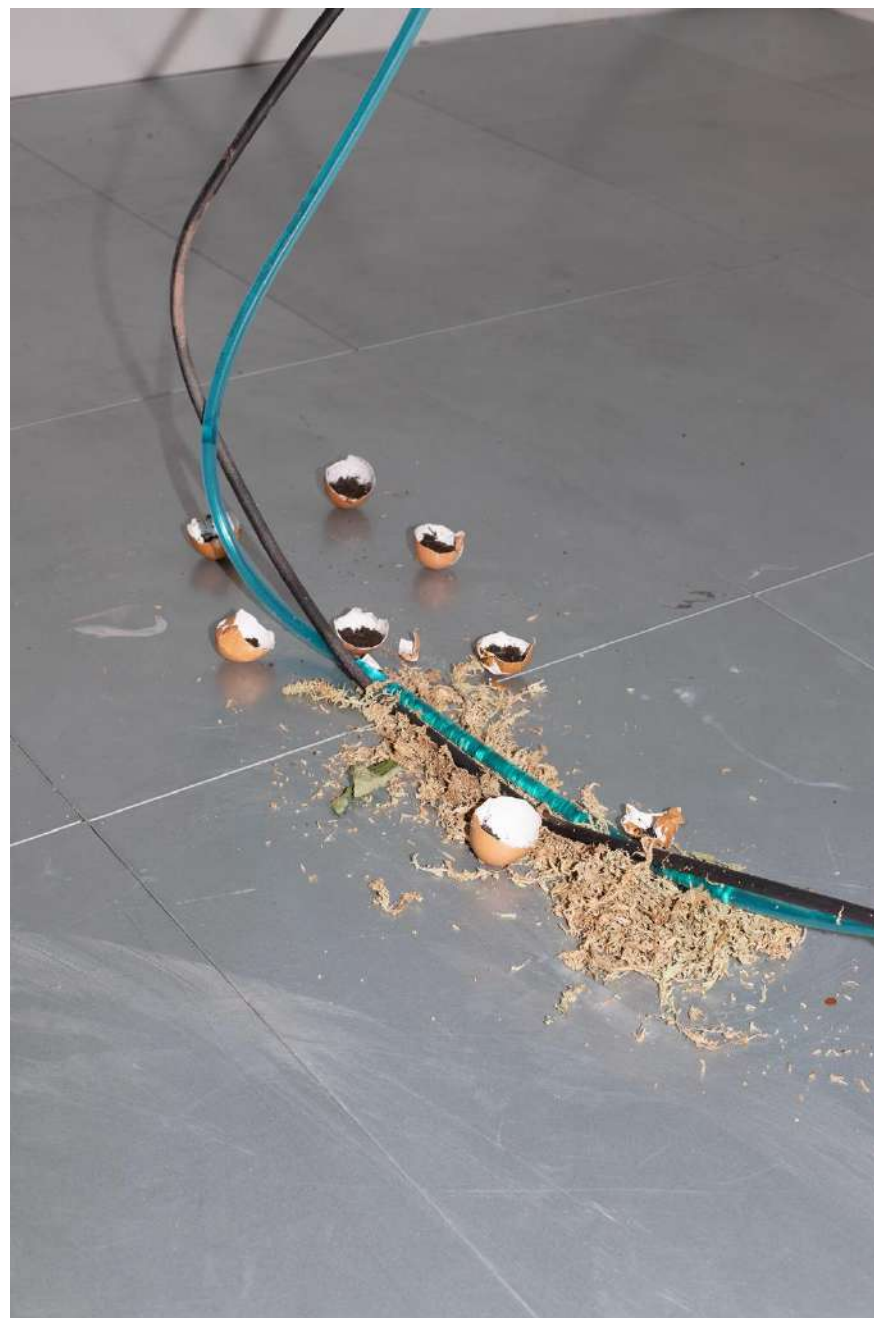


Tending to Ghosts (ancestral Traces) II .2019 wood, plaster, plastic tubing, calming bath cream, screen with 12 min video



Retreat of the Warrior (Latent Extinction) III .2019

mild steel bars and tubing, clay fired and unfired, mud collected from a river bank fired and unfired, pvc tubing, twigs, discarded foliage, dried rose and rose petals, stem with thorns, plastic water bottle, plastic food bag, ink, broken glass collected after a car crash, soil, moss, hand-made soda bread shared during exhibition, removed floor tiles, egg shells, stones and pebbles, calming essence cream.



Retreat of the Warrior (Latent Extinction) III .2019
 mild steel bars and tubing, clay fired and unfired, mud collected from a river bank fired and unfired, pvc tubing, twigs, discarded foliage, dried rose and rose petals, stem with thorns, plastic water bottle, plastic food bag, ink, broken glass collected after a car crash, soil, moss, hand-made soda bread shared during exhibition, removed floor tiles, egg shells, stones and pebbles, calming essence cream.



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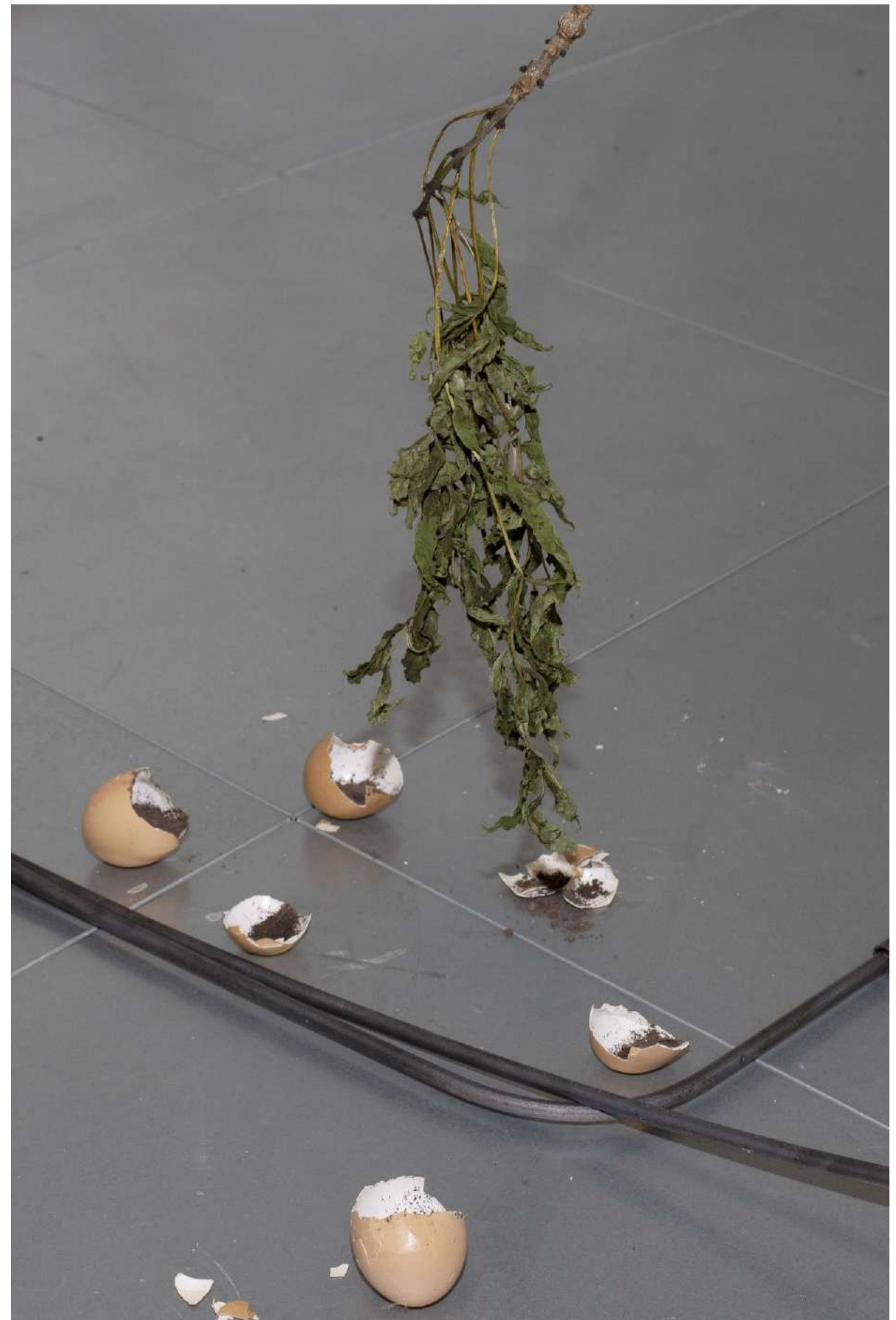
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Cullen, C 2019. Retreat of the Warrior (Latent Extinction) I .2019
mild steel bars and tubing, clay unfired, mud collected from a river
bank unfired, pvc tubing, discarded foliage, broken glass collected
after a car crash, soil, egg shells, stones and pebbles, calming
essence cream. Dimensions: 45" x 35" x 40"



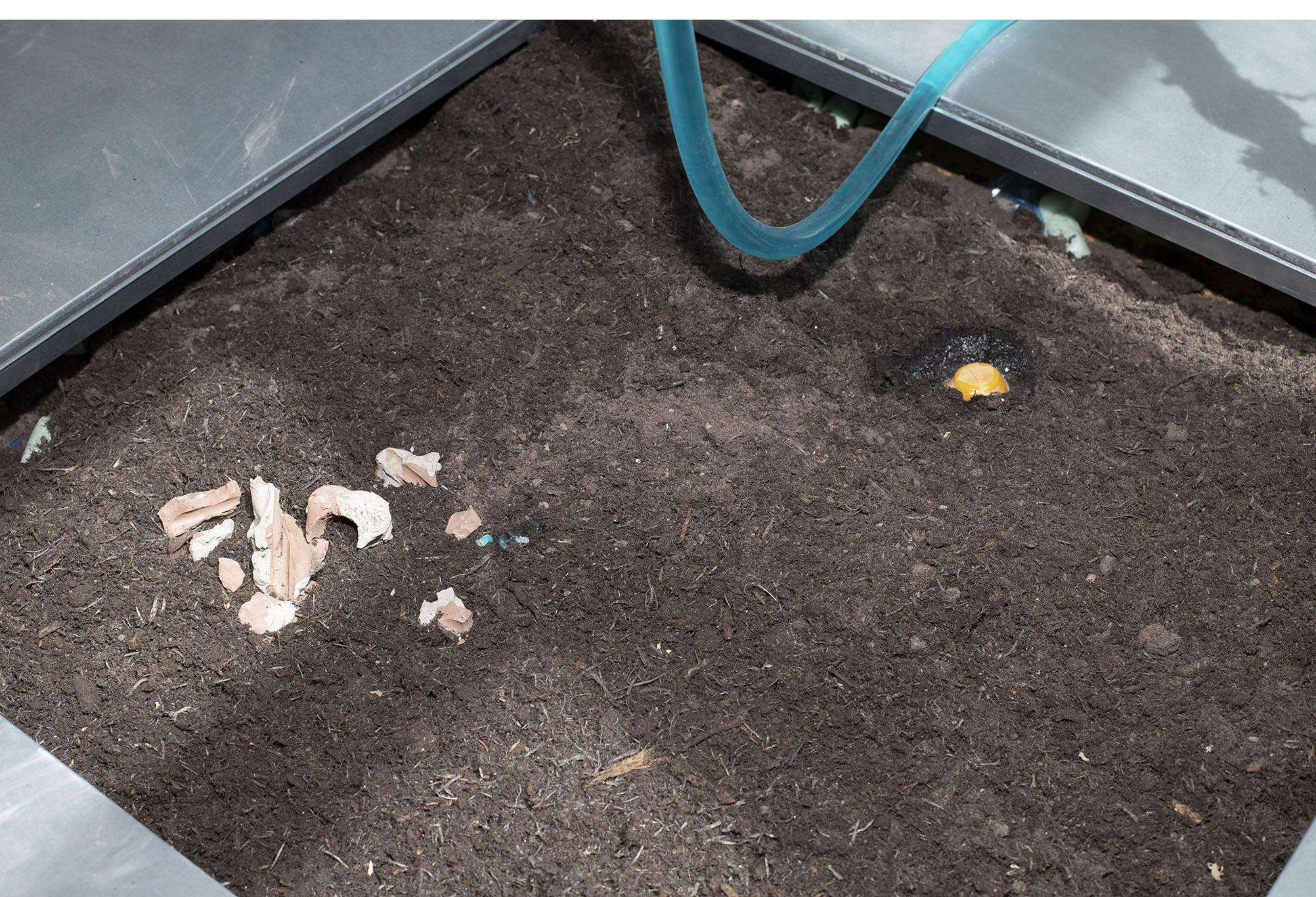
Cullen, C 2019. Retreat of the Warrior (Latent Extinction) I .2019

mild steel bars and tubing, clay unfired, mud collected from a river bank unfired, pvc tubing, discarded foliage, broken glass collected after a car crash, soil, egg shells, stones and pebbles, calming essence cream. Dimensions: 45" x 35" x 40"

Retreat of the Warrior (Latent Extinction) II .2019
mild steel bars and tubing, clay fired and unfired, mud
collected from a river bank fired and unfired, pvc tubing,
twig, discarded foliage, broken glass collected after a car
crash, soil, removed floor tile, egg shells, egg yolk, stones
and pebbles, calming essence cream.







Retreat of the Warrior (Agricultural Warfare) I .2019
mild steel bars, clay fired and unfired, mud collected from a
river bank fired and unfired, pvc tubing, plastic food bag,
moss, discarded foliage, glass collected after a car crash,
calming essence cream.





Retreat of the Warrior (Agricultural Warfare) I .2019

mild steel bars, clay fired and unfired, mud collected from a river bank fired and unfired, pvc tubing, plastic food bag, moss, discarded foliage, glass collected after a car crash, calming essence cream.



Retreat of the Warrior (Agricultural Warfare) I .2019
 mild steel bars, clay fired and unfired, mud collected from a river
 bank fired and unfired, pvc tubing, plastic food bag, moss, discarded
 foliage, glass collected after a car crash, calming essence cream.



Retreat of the Warrior (Agricultural Warfare) I .2019
mild steel bars, clay fired and unfired, mud collected from a river bank fired and unfired, pvc tubing, plastic food bag, moss, discarded foliage, glass collected after a car crash, calming essence cream.



Retreat of the Warrior (Agricultural Warfare) II .2019
mild steel bars, clay unfired, mud collected from a river bank, pvc tubing, egg shells, twig, tape, moss, discarded foliage, glass collected after a car crash, calming essence cream.

Retreat of the Warrior (Agricultural Warfare) II .2019
mild steel bars, clay unfired, mud collected from a river bank, pvc
tubing, egg shells, twig, tape, moss, discarded foliage, glass
collected after a car crash, calming essence cream.



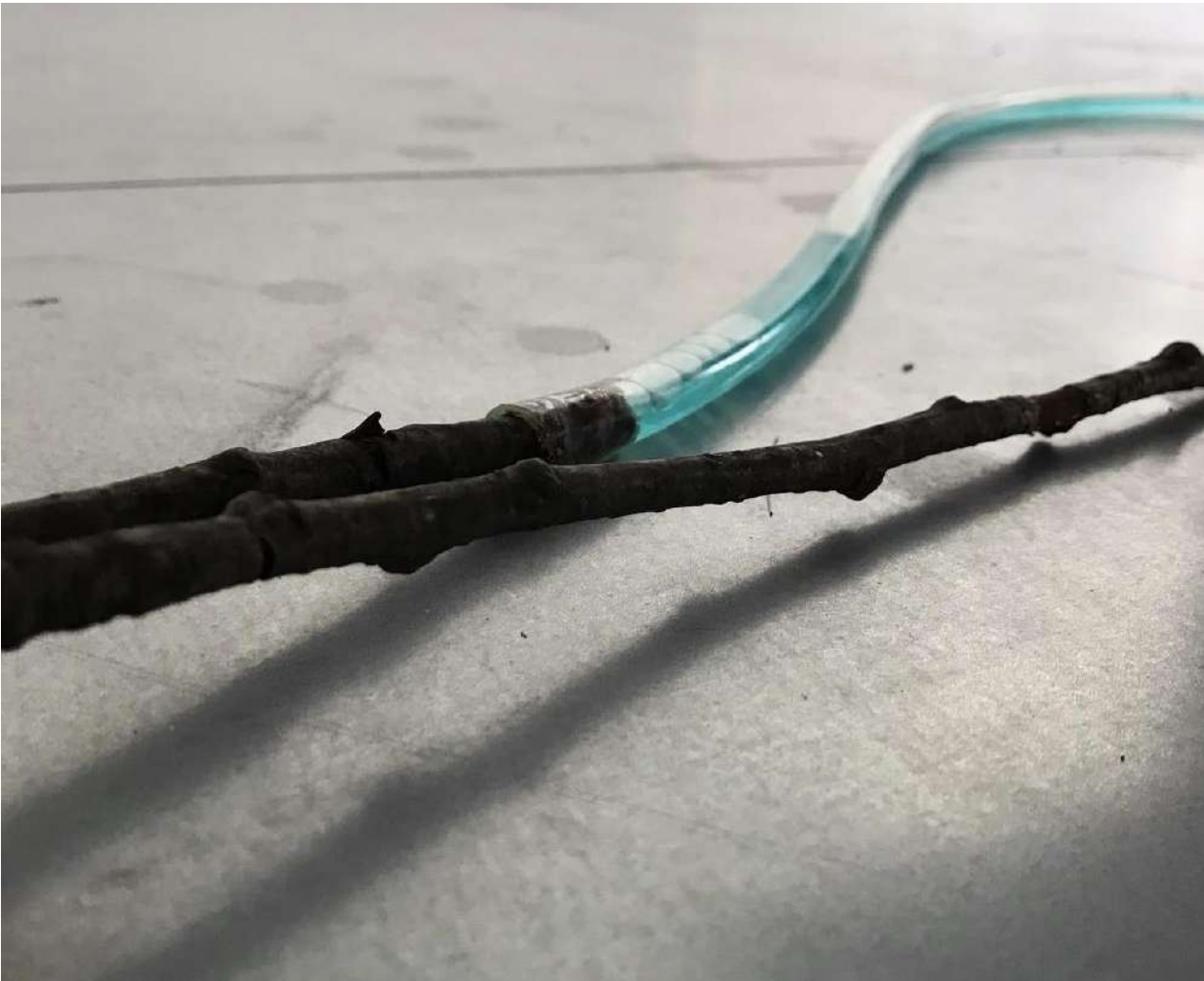


Retreat of the Warrior (Agricultural Warfare) II .2019
mild steel bars, clay unfired, mud collected from a river bank, pvc tubing, egg shells, twig, tape, moss, discarded foliage, glass collected after a car crash, calming essence cream.



Retreat of the Warrior (Agricultural Warfare) III .2019

mild steel bar and tubing, clay fired and unfired, mud collected from a river bank fired and unfired, pvc tubing, plastic food container, twigs, discarded foliage, broken glass collected from outside a bar, stones and pebbles, calming essence cream.



Retreat of the Warrior (Agricultural Warfare) III .2019

mild steel bar and tubing, clay fired and unfired, mud collected from a river bank fired and unfired, pvc tubing, plastic food container, twigs, discarded foliage, broken glass collected from outside a bar, stones and pebbles, calming essence cream.



Retreat of the Warrior installation details 2019 - 20



Workshop developed for No One Belongs Here More Than You as part of UKNA Skegness weekend for SO Festival .2019



Wisdom; or the Mother waits .2017 Mild steel, soil bags, wooden pallets, slaved wood, clay, wax, copper, ash, apple seed, light fixings, chicken wire.

Hope, faith and charity; or the daughters vigil .2017 Mild steel, bags of soil, seeds, ash, apple seeds, copper, lighting.

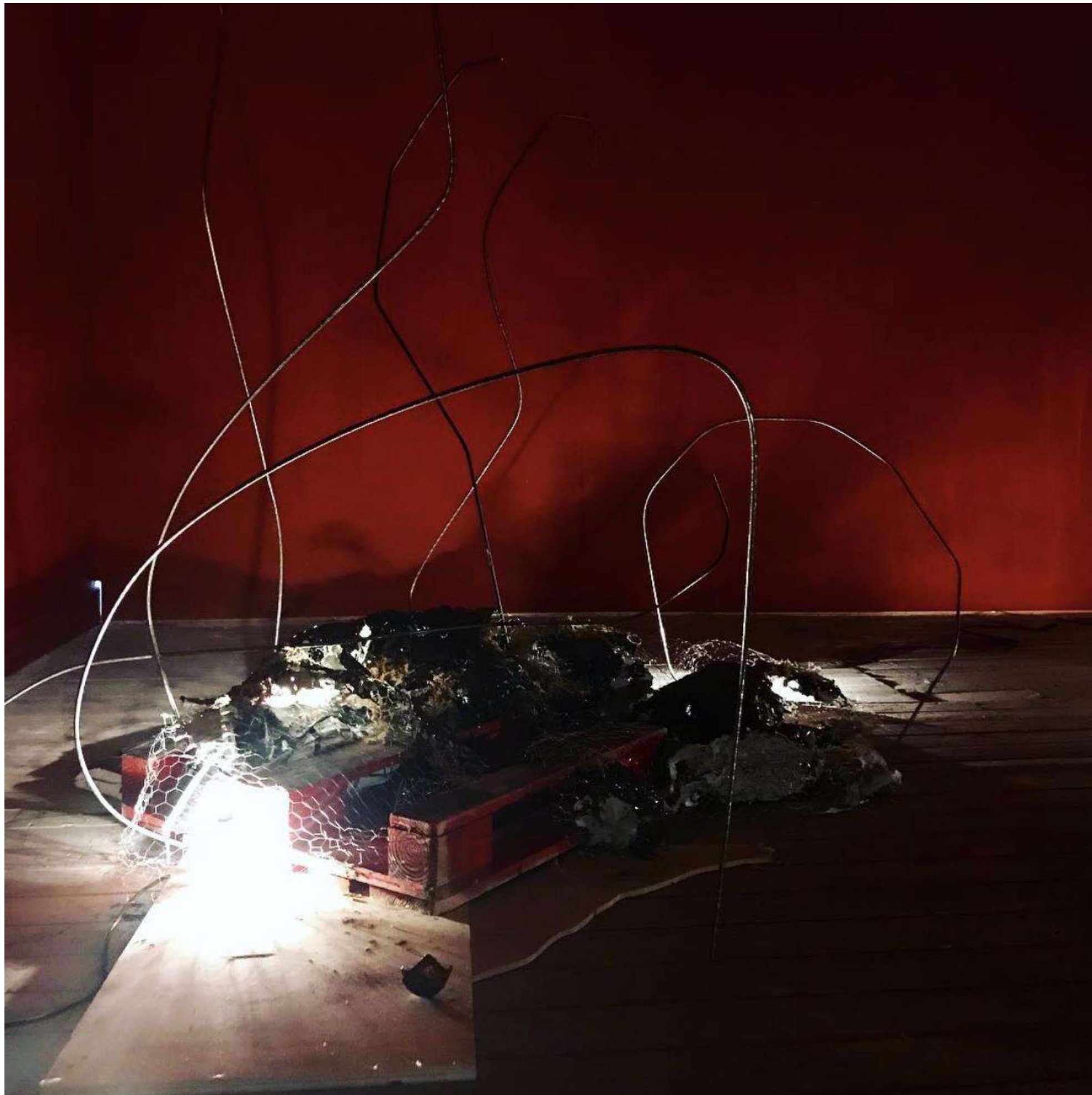
Into the Woods exhibition 2017 walls painted in custom red and fake blood, found jewelry inserted in gaps in walls



Wisdom; or the Mother waits .2017

Mild steel, soil bags, wooden pallets, slaved wood, clay, wax, copper, ash, apple seed, light fixings, chicken wire

Wisdom; or the Mother .2017
Mild steel, soil bags, wooden
pallets, slaved wood, clay,
wax, copper, ash, apple seed,
light fixings, chicken wire





To see the Rhododendrons through your Stomach .2017 print on acetate

Entwined with the roots and the soil and the sinew .2017 glass, soil, fake blood, light bulb, clay

So I'll start with where I am as I am not going anywhere, neither backwards nor forwards.
And the trees whisper hither and the spirits tell their secrets close. There's neither heroics or
ever after. Just the next,

t h e
n e x t,

t h e
n e x t .

And the aorta pumps blood through the body, extending to the abdomen. But what if it is to be
severed, misled? We search for an animal to preserve it, as the woodsman protects the whitest
snow and lips of red red,

r e d
r e d,

r e d
r e d.

And the juniper tree sings sweet lullabies to its children long gone, whispering to the earth of
the mother who ate her seed and entwined with her cold body their child lived on. As those
that enter are often lost but they live on in sugar water,

w a
t e r,

w a
t e r.

Time passes and names fade to dust and are born anew with shared meaning. Interred at Appian or Aurelian neither survive but what little it does matter when arisen as Hope, Faith and Charity, who await on their mother for Wisdom,

w i s
d o m,

w i s
d o m,

Outside of waking screams fall without effect. I beckon the pumping chamber, the echo chamber, the bloody chamber for neither companion nor collection nor communion, but leave an offering for baba yaga and continue I move on,

a n d
o n ,

a n d
o n .

And on I travel, and nowhere I find as I have never left nor have I entered. Into the woods the daur knots and the spirits connive free on the wind and animals that are not of us make their home and in shroud remains preserved a threshold,

t h r e s
h o l d,

t h r e s
h o l d.

So I'll start with where I am as I am not going anywhere, neither backwards nor forwards. And the trees
whisper hither and the spirits tell their secrets close. There's neither heroics or ever after. Just the next,

t h e

n e x t,

t h e

n e x t .



R e t r e a t o f t h e W a r r i o r