

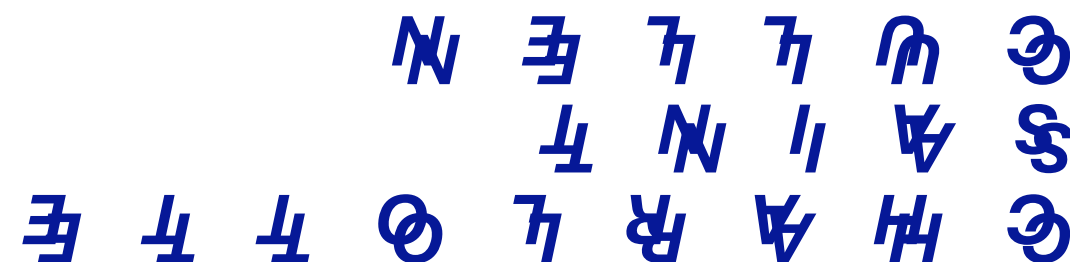
Study

for a

Shield

After Battle





Portfolio contents:

Page 3 – 24: Study for a Shield after Battle .2021 - 2023

Pg. 3. About Study for a Shield After Battle

Pg. 4: Morning Star review by Angus Reid

Pg. 5: Exhibition text by Dr Hali Santamas

Pg. 6 – 23: Sculptures within the series Study for a Shield After Battle

Pg. 24 – 28: Prints, developed in residence with LUTRA print workshop

Page 29 - 38: Associated works

Pg. 29- 30: I am the merry-go-round horse dragging up the earth beneath me at Leeds Central Library, associated archive study .2020-21

Pg. 31 – 33: I give, Blank Leeds 2022

Pg. 34: Documentation of related performance work for PANIC! at The Tetley and screened at The Arthouse Wakefield and Yonder Gallery for HCMF Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival

Pg. 35 - 36: Developmental works from Artshake International '19, Shanghai, China

Pg. 37 – 38: Guard of the Water Gate, YYT Museum, Shanghai, Chine

Retreat of the Warrior are an ongoing sculptural development throughout my practice 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 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.

Well-steeled for battle

ANGUS REID admires a unique transformation of metal into nuanced artworks of alienation, identity and social conflict

CHARLOTTE CULLEN makes work from steel and aluminium. It has sharp corners, torn edges and a bleak industrial monochrome and the rough surfaces on her assembly *Studies for a Shield after Battle* bear the traces of assault.

From the metal plates she makes prints – when pressed into paper, the identity of the battle reveals itself and at the centre of the show are two sequences of three small prints, each whispering the sources of her work.

Marrow I, II and III are like the random messages scratched into a school desk or a battered bus stop. It is not the content of the words that speak, so much as the invocation of a conflicted adolescence.

While the fantasy of ancestral battles lurks behind the work, the real ones are those of alienation, gender identity and social conflict and you feel her empathy with the agonies of the ordinary, universal teenager.

Following the *Ghost I, II and III* extends this fascination with arbitrary mark-making into the very material of steel. Her own delicate rainfall of micro scratches liberates the expressive grey tones and softness of the industrial material, as though it had its own tale of battle to tell and its own sombre relationship to trauma.

The material is a metaphor for the human body and the show teases out these complementary inside stories, one human and the other elemental. It then dares to explore

them as three-dimensional presences.

The first steps towards a surprisingly joyous assertion of a queer aesthetics, these scratched and war-torn sheets of metal – carriers of unexpected intimations of inner life and memory – arise, balance themselves and find ways to stand up together and suggest purpose and motion.

It is refreshingly genderless, a far cry from the sanctimonious narcissism of Anthony Gormley's endless repetitions of his own naked body, and it recalls the post-minimalist school of which the short-lived

American sculptress Eva Hesse was the leading light.

But Cullen has reconfigured the aesthetic into another culture, another experience of class and our own historical moment.

It greets the needs of the present without sentimentality and with clear eyes. The show expresses a burgeoning confidence in its own unexpected and mysterious beauty.

This is a new community of queer subjects that are becoming sure of themselves and beginning to dance. A shame they only had the briefest of showings last weekend.





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



Study for a Shield after Battle (After the Knight) .2023
Mild steel and aluminum
Exhibited in Leeds Artist Show at Leeds Art Gallery 2023

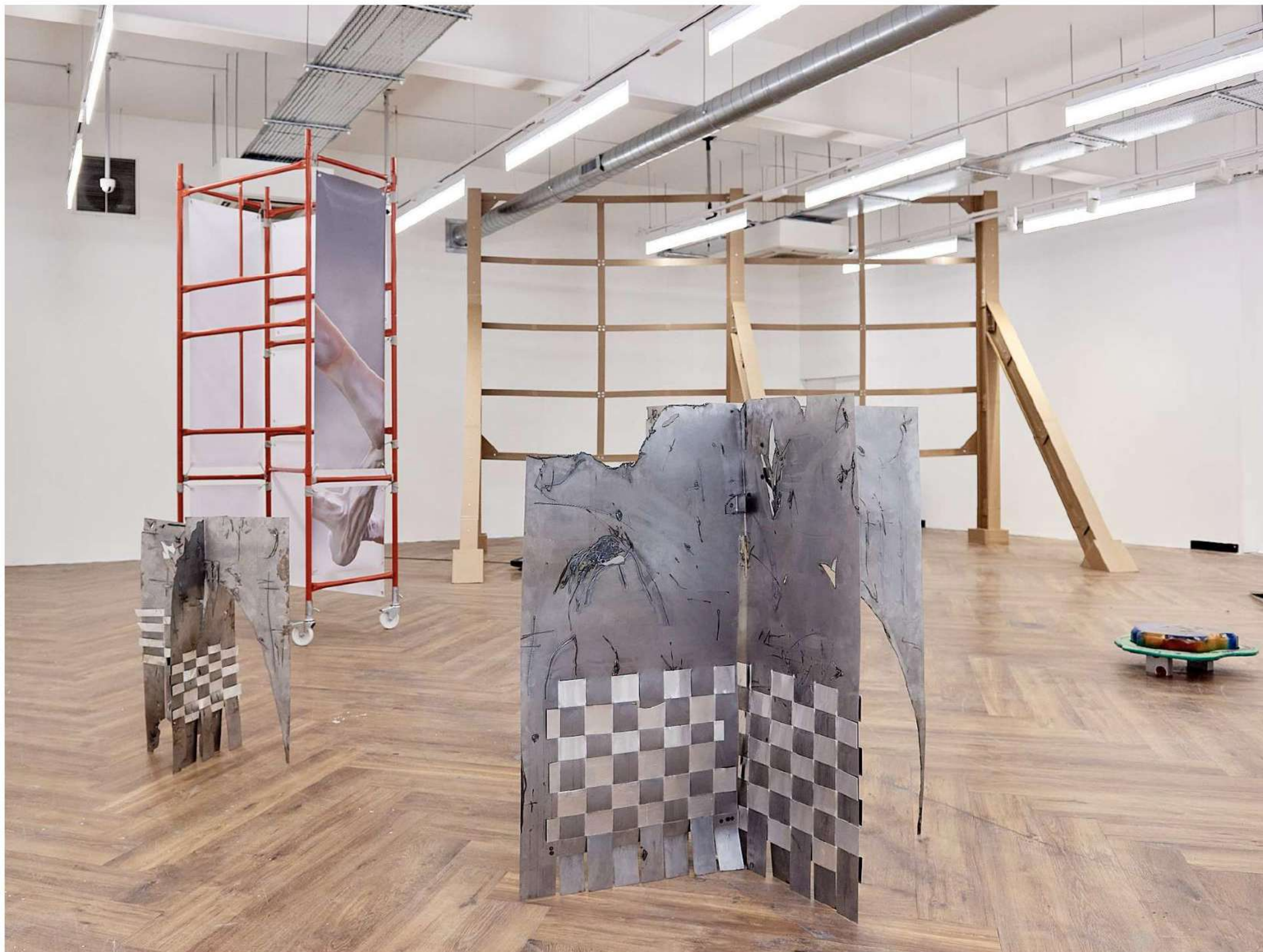


Study for a Shield After Battle (The Knight Gives), mild steel, aluminum, rivets .2022

Study for a Shield after Battle (After the Knight) .2023

Mild steel and aluminum

Exhibited in Short Lived at Hypha Studios, Stratford .2023



L) *Study for a Shield After Battle (The Knight Gives)*, mild steel, aluminum, rivets .2022 R) *Study for a Shield after Battle (After the Knight)* .2023 Mild steel and aluminum
Exhibited in Short Lived at Hypha Studios, Stratford .2023



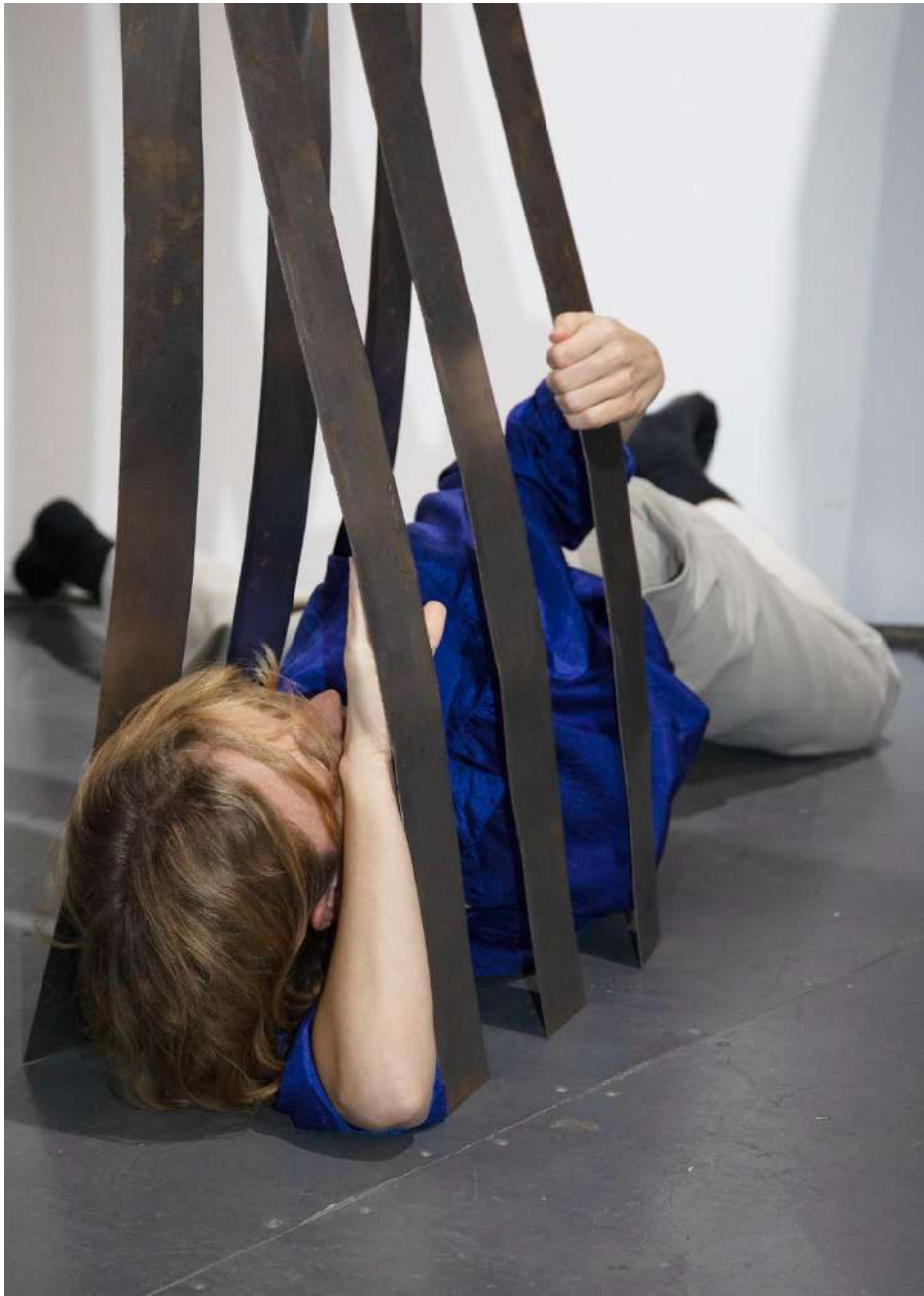
*She's the Arrow (if destroyed still true) I .2024, Study for a Shield after Battle (Forever) .2023 mild steel, aluminum
WIP I Loved So Well .2025 Mild steel, pewter
Photo credit Sam Hutchinson*



The Voice Falter, solo exhibition curated by Julia McKinley at serf, Leeds 2022, supported by Leeds Inspired with performance and response from Tora Hed, Nathan Walker, K.P. Culver, Lu Rose Cunningham. Photos Sam Hutchinson



The Voice Falters, solo exhibition curated by Julia McKinley at serf, Leeds 2022, supported by Leeds Inspired with performance and response from Tora Hed, Nathan Walker, K.P. Culver, Lu Rose Cunningham. Photos Sam Hutchinson



Tora Hed in response to The Voice Falters .2022





Study for a Shield after Battle (An Active Process) .2023

Mild steel, aluminum, glass

For Any Work That Wanted Doing, at Leeds Industiral Museum, commission for Leeds2023



Study for a Shield after Battle (An Active Process) .2023

Mild steel, aluminum, glass

For Any Work That Wanted Doing, at Leeds Industrial Museum, commission for Leeds2023



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



Study for a Shield After Battle (A new world lay inside the old one), Mild Steel and aluminium .2021



Study for a Shield After Battle (Goddess of Lead), Mild Steel and aluminium .2021



Study for a Shield After Battle (Goddess of Lead), Mild Steel and aluminium .2021

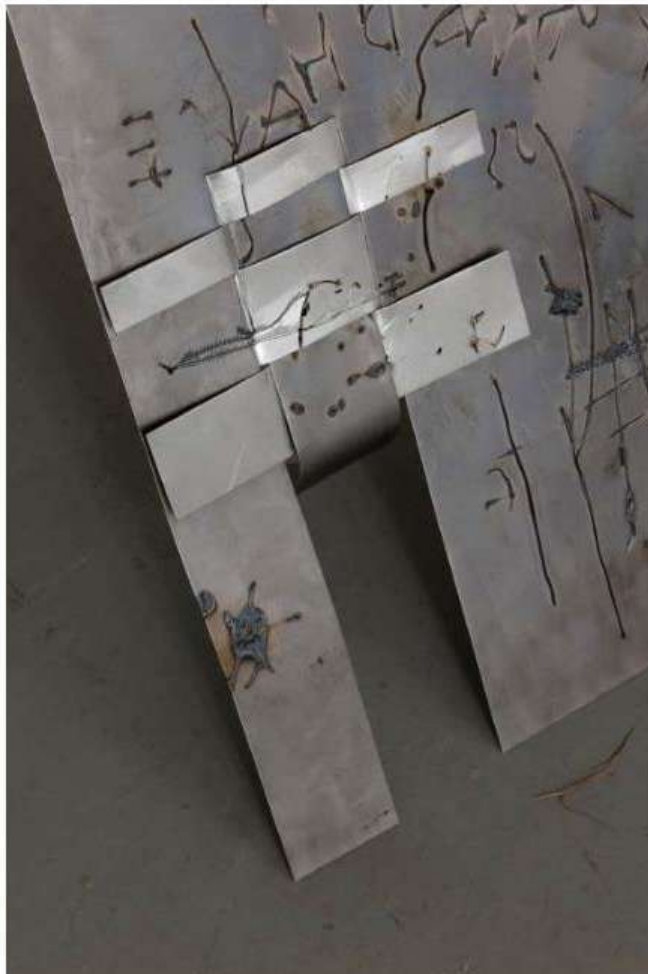


Study for a Shield After Battle (A preparation of daffodil), aluminium .2021





Study for a Shield After Battle (A preparation of daffodil), aluminium .2021



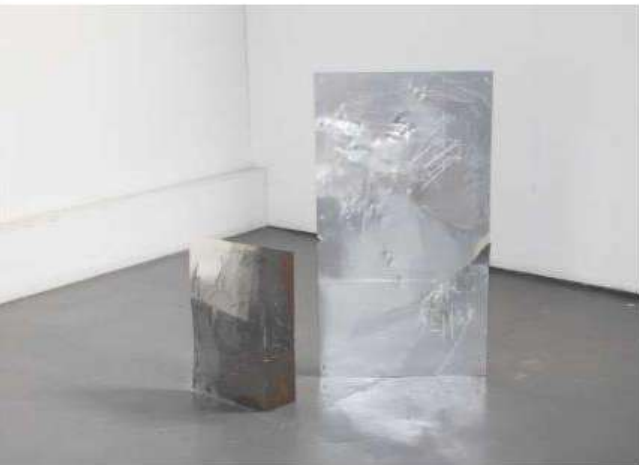
Study for a Shield After Battle (Goddess of Lead), Mild Steel and aluminium .2021



Dalida, Alluminium, cable ties .2021



Study for a Shield After Battle (Goddess of Lead), Mild Steel and aluminium .2021

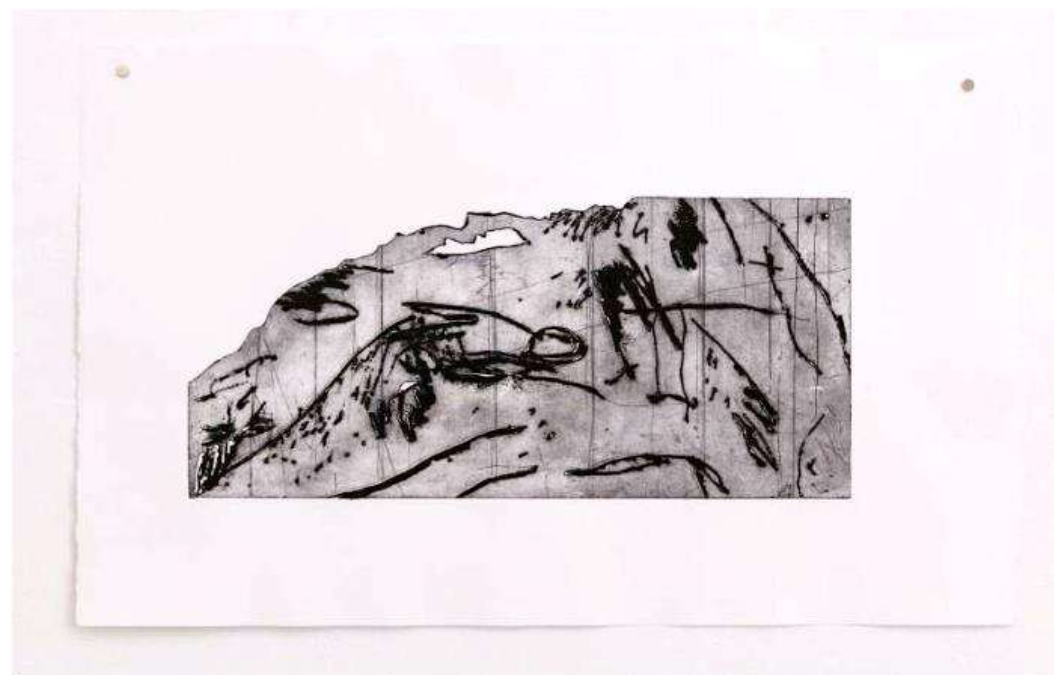
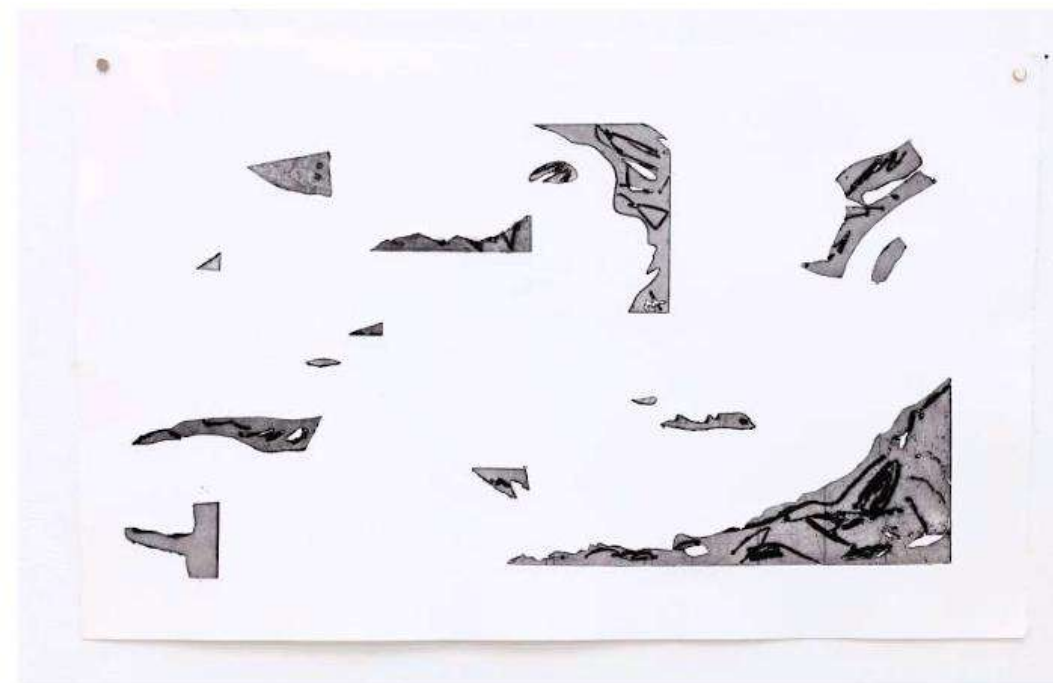




They might Fight, tin .2021



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



Study for a Shield After Battle (fragments), black ink on white somerset paper .2021
Edition of 3, 420 x 594mm

Study for a Shield After Battle (Inherited on Passing Tongue) I, II, [diptych] III, black ink
on white somerset paper .2021 Edition of 3, 420 x 594mm

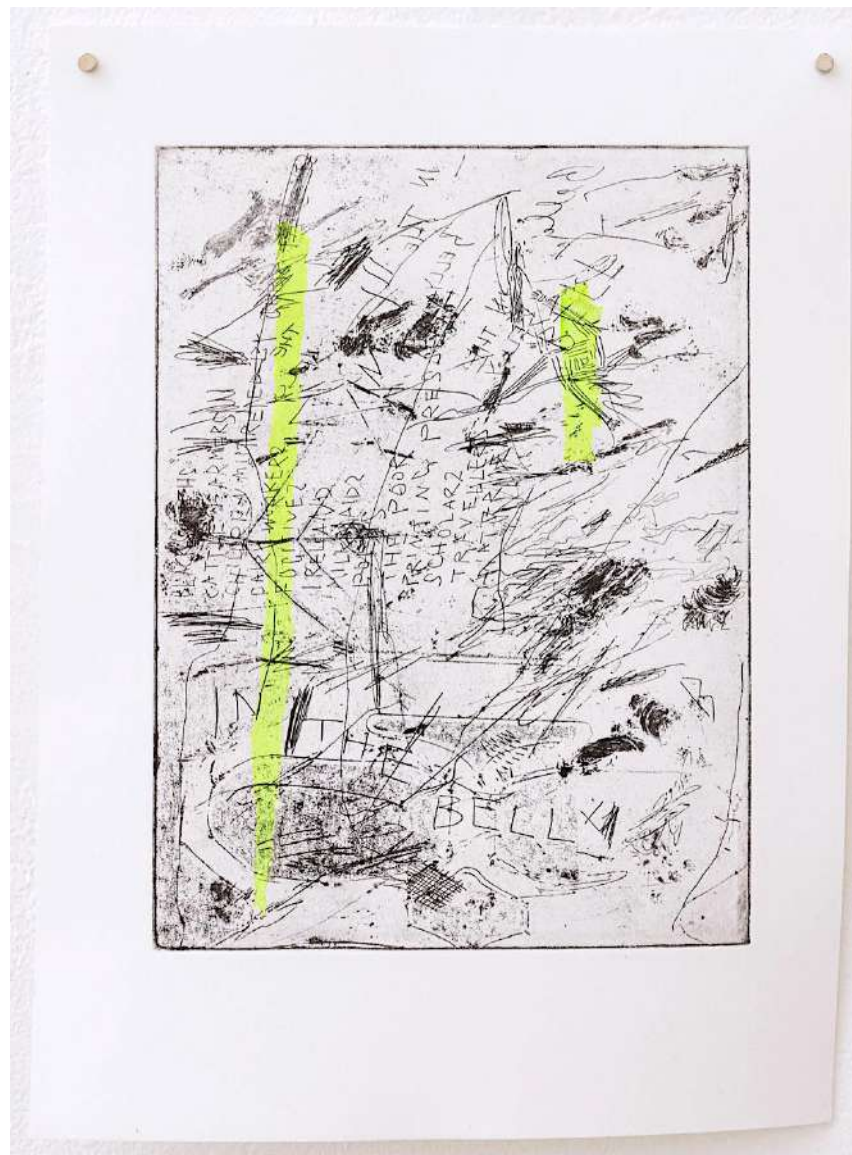
Study for a Shield after Battle (Inherited on passing Tongue) and *Study for a Shield after Battle (fragments)* evidence the patina and process of sculpted metal. Gestural marks created through plasma cutting evidence the action of heat and pressure, alongside historical marks from the metals production made visible through the printing process. Collapsing the boundary between 2 and 3 dimension, these prints interrogate the surface and histories of metal, fragmented lines become a trace which suggest a landscape while congealed and trapped ink belies the physicality of the printing process. *Study for a Shield after Battle (Fragments)* gathers together off-cuts from the artists workshop to reframe use, wear and purpose. The prints become evidence of process, of action, of battle.

A direct engagement with the land, *Following the Ghost* were created by dragging etching plates along the path of former mill workers in Armley. Each plate evidences a section of the journey, stopping when the supports broke, a decision which allowed the final form to be guided by process and action. This new form of mapping denies historical barriers created by power but evidences a gestural and intuitive response to a landscape marked by the workers who lived within and shaped it.

Considering the etchings made by school children on desks, the act of etching became a marker of a visual language which gives evidence to lives lived outside of dominant structures of control. A way of physically marking out space as an act of rebellion and act of documenting presence. These etchings were created in layers of process, so that marks became blindly added to throughout each layer and included gestural making, notes and other forms of graffiti which speak to other landscapes, migration and a playful escapism. A layer of chine-collé in a neon lime is shockingly unnatural, an aesthetic counter to the etched surface which references forms of mapping techniques which evidence use of buildings, and signal areas marked for development or clearing. This subtle nod to geographical framing positions the prints as a space which counter institutional mapping.



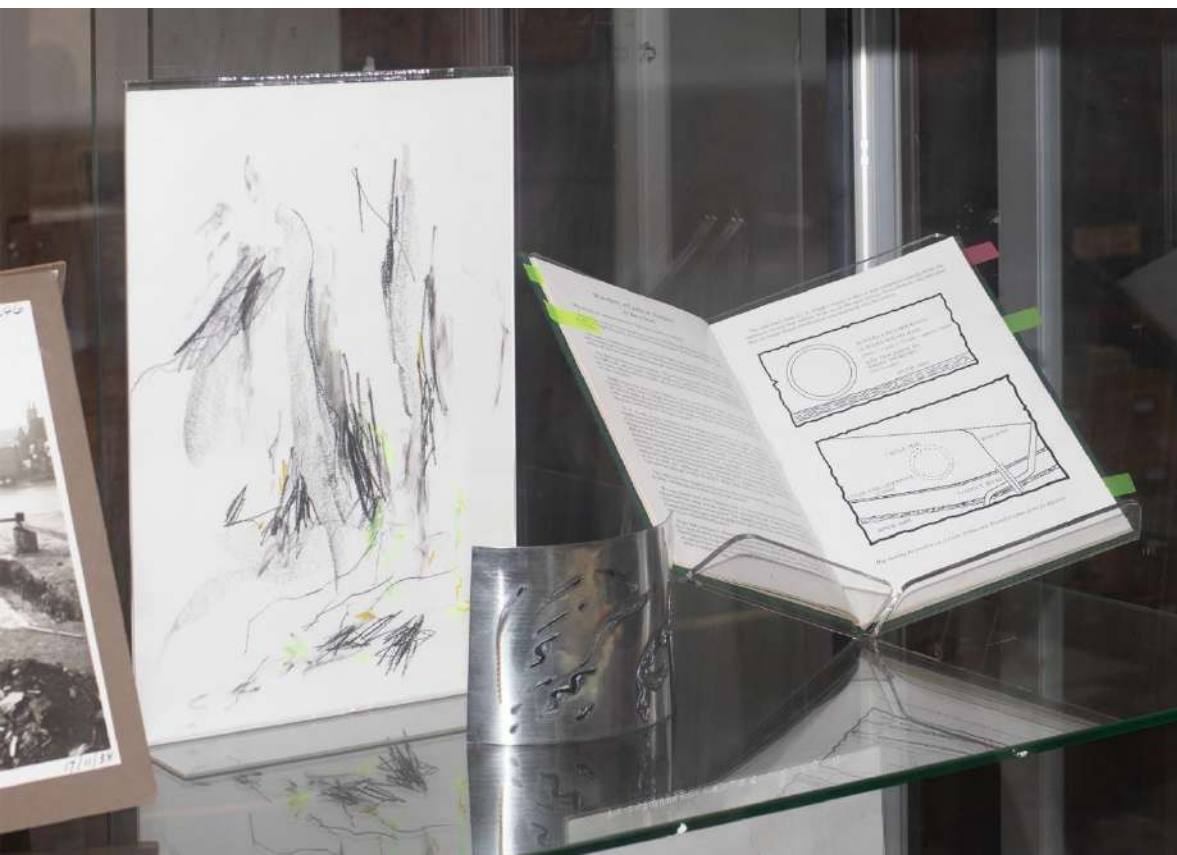
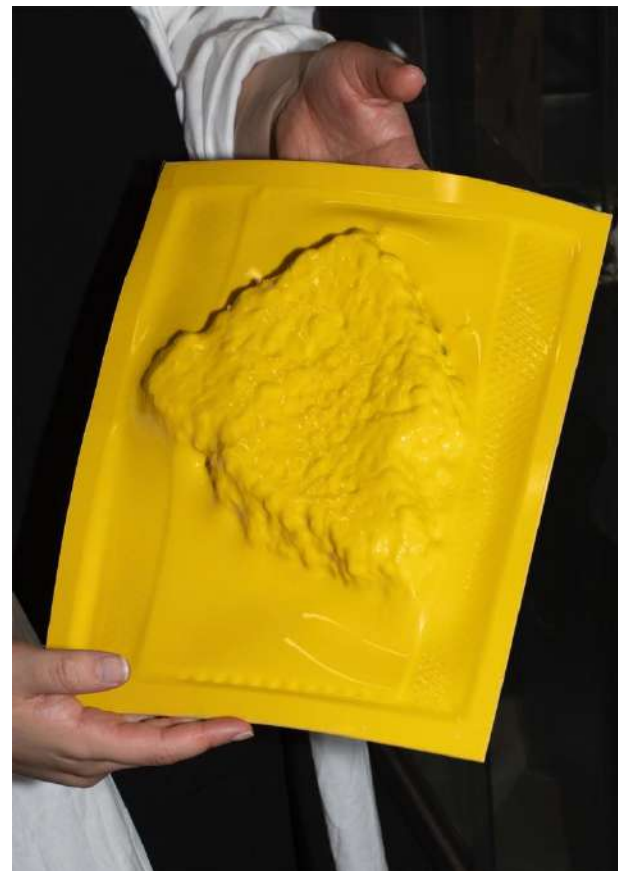
Following the Ghost, I, II, III etching, black ink on white somerset paper .2021
Edition of 10, 148 x 210mm



Marrow (A word inside a stone) I, II, III tissue paper and black ink on white somerset paper, etching with chine-collé .2021
Edition of 6, 148 x 210mm

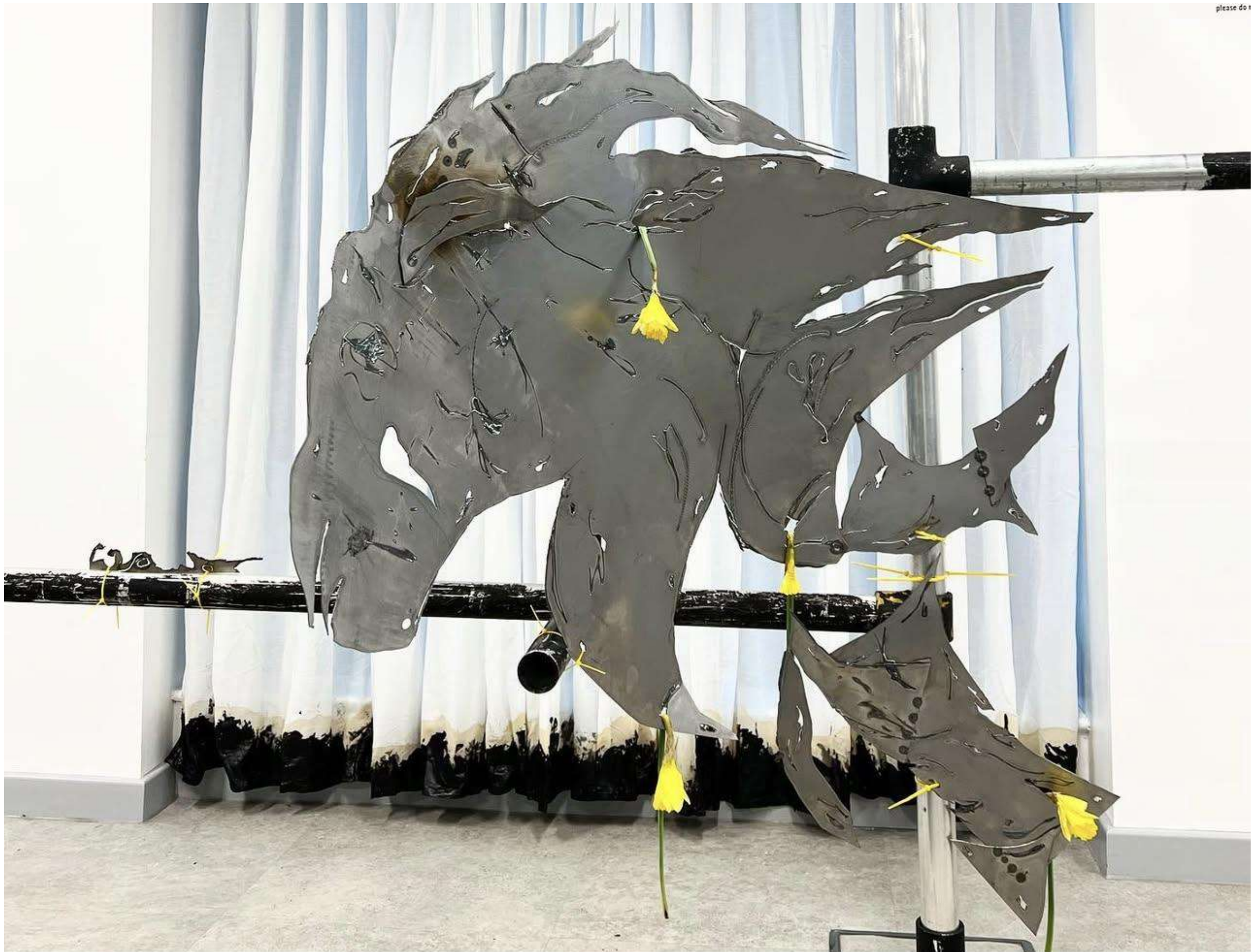


I am the merry-go-round horse dragging up the earth beneath me .2020-21
Collections intervention in the Local and Family History Department in the Leeds Central Library.





I am the merry-go-round horse dragging up the earth beneath me, in I give, _Blank, Leeds .202



I am the merry-go-round horse dragging up the earth beneath me, in I give, _Blank, Leeds .2022



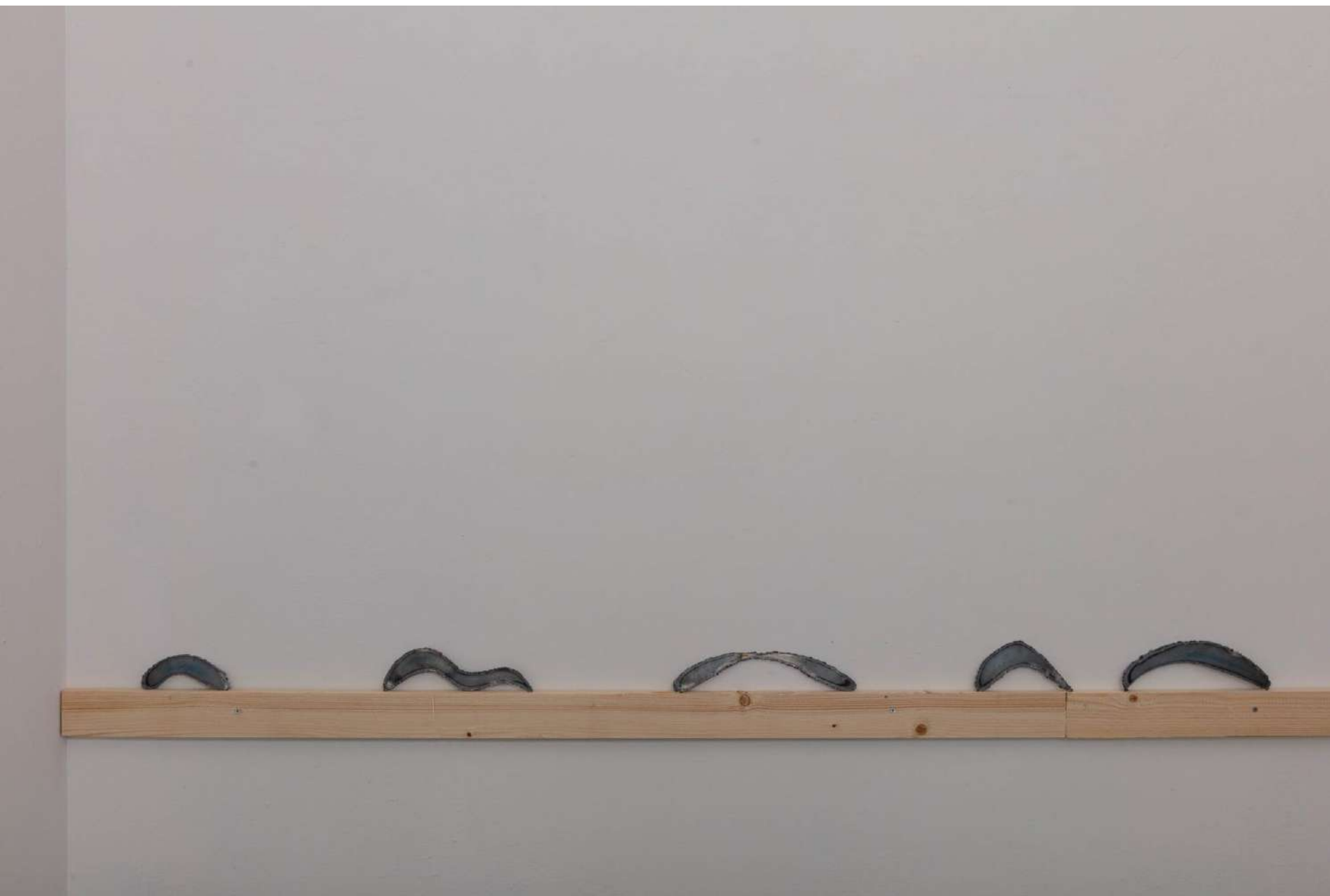
I am the merry-go-round horse dragging up the earth beneath me, in I give, _Blank, Leeds .2022



Untitled .2021



The Voice Falters, video 10min .2022
PANIC! commission

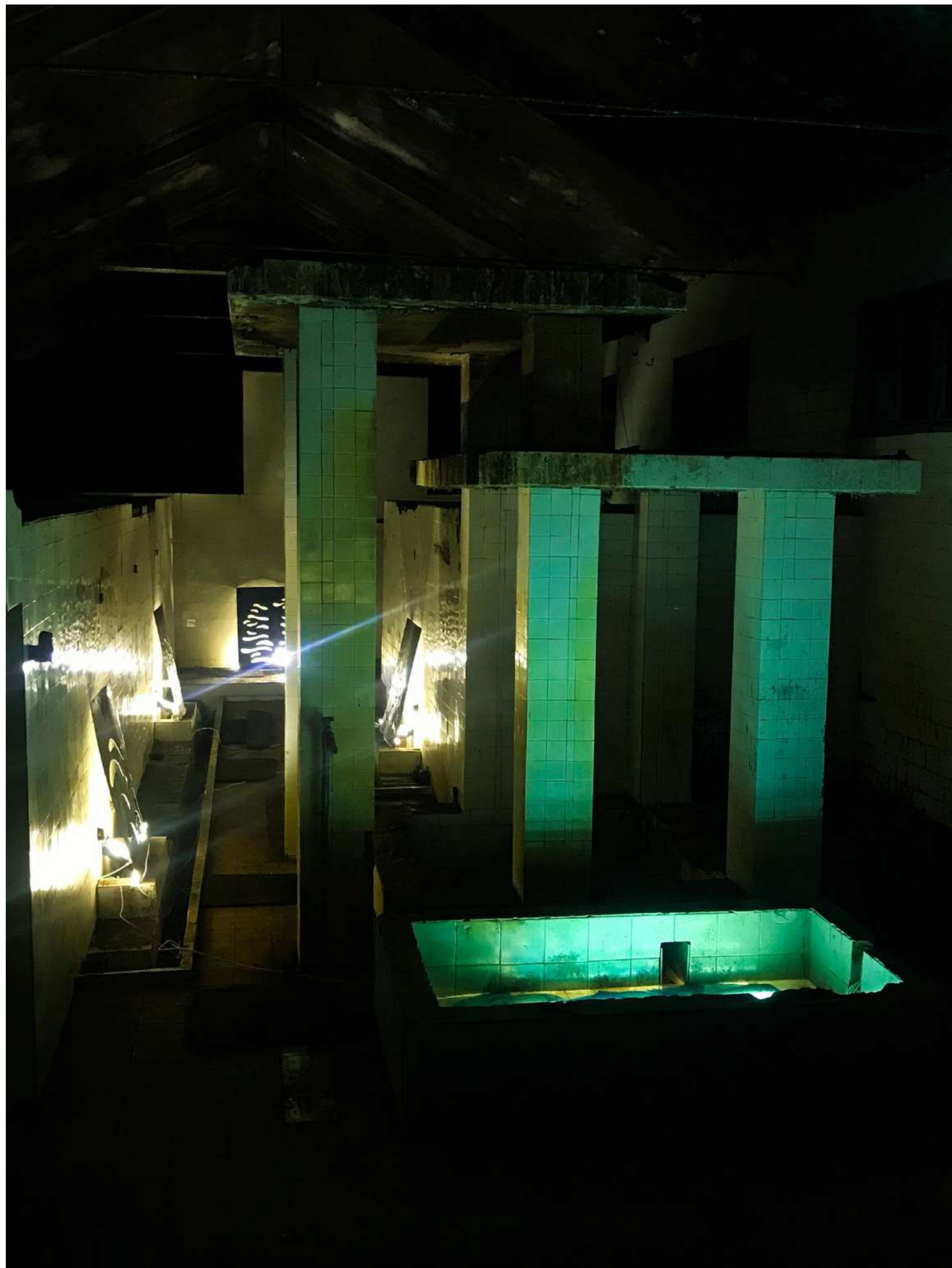


A Wound Held Dear (Fragments from Guard of the Watergate) steel off cuts, wood .2019 – 20



Preliminary studies for a shield after battle .2020

Guard of the Water Gate .2019
YiYuan Tang Museum, LuVah, Chongming Island,
Shanghai
Mild steel, lights, glass, plastic bags



Guard of the Water Gate .2019
YiYuan Tang Museum, LuVah, Chongming Island,
Shanghai
Mild steel, lights



Study

for a

Shield

After Battle

