



This is a Leeds Arts University Repository copy of: Embodied Dreaming

Author: Sheila Gaffney

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Citation: Gaffney, S. (2024). Embodied Dreaming. [Show/Exhibition]

Abstract

The output is an exhibition consisting of 53 pieces of Gaffney's sculpture, drawing, lens media and moving image work from 1979-2024 alongside written text. Research process: The space of the gallery was a key knowledge instrument in the curatorial process and integral to the decisions regarding selection of artefacts and their installation. To explore this, Gaffney employed collage as a non-vocal iterative method (de Rijke, 2024). The collaging method enabled mutually agreed visual and spatial decisions for effective visitor experience, acting as vehicles to hold the conceptualisation of ideas of play in the research. These visualisations enabled an exhibition infrastructure designed to amplify the desired tacit dissemination of artefacts and mediation of exhibition content. Research insights: The exhibition highlighted the material outcomes of processes and considerations at the core of Gaffney's feminist writing about making sculpture. The concept of time in psychoanalysis is an important part of Gaffney's research inquiry; particularly the timelessness of the unconscious, where past, present, and future are intertwined. These concepts were made manifest in the exhibition by displaying individual artefacts dating from 1979 and the 1980s alongside works made in 2024. Several pieces that had been formerly been exhibited singly were now curated alongside works hitherto unseen. The exhibition presented a proposition for how time functions in artistic research. It challenged the display norm of time, which is typically represented by the date a work is created, as a linear indicator of the development of an artist's research. Dissemination: First made available to the public at Blenheim Walk Galley, 4 October 2024 - 11 January 2025, accompanied by a publication. Exhibition at Blenheim Walk was included as part of Light Night 2024, 24-25 October 2024. There was a recorded public "in conversation" event at Leeds Arts University on 20 November 2024, now available on YouTube.

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Sheila Gaffney
Embodied Dreaming exhibition
Research Process:
collage as a non-vocal iterative method

STONEWARE GLAZE FIRE

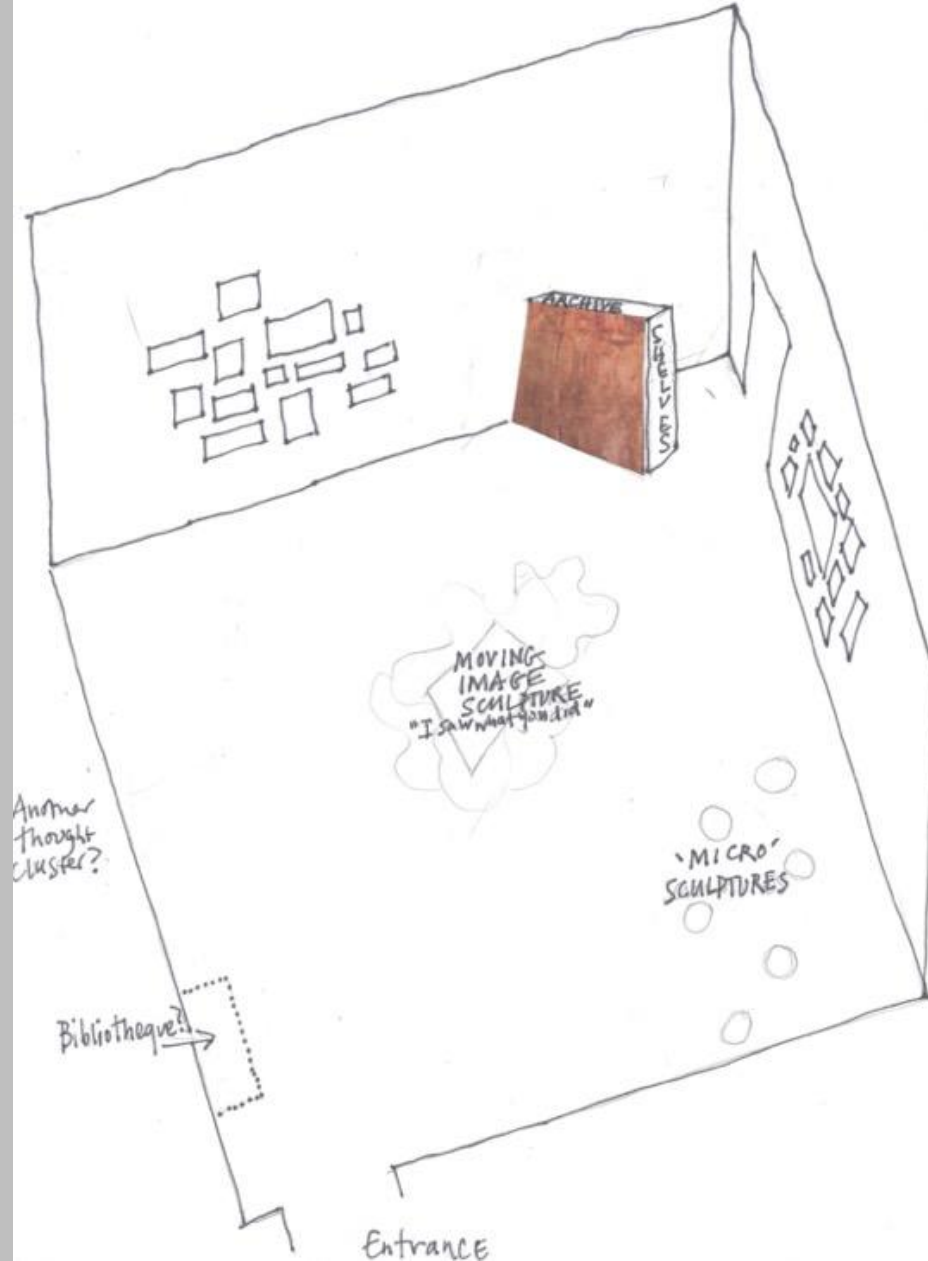
CONCEPTUAL CLOTHING

The shadow of the object
Christopher Bollas
Psychoanalysis of the unthought known

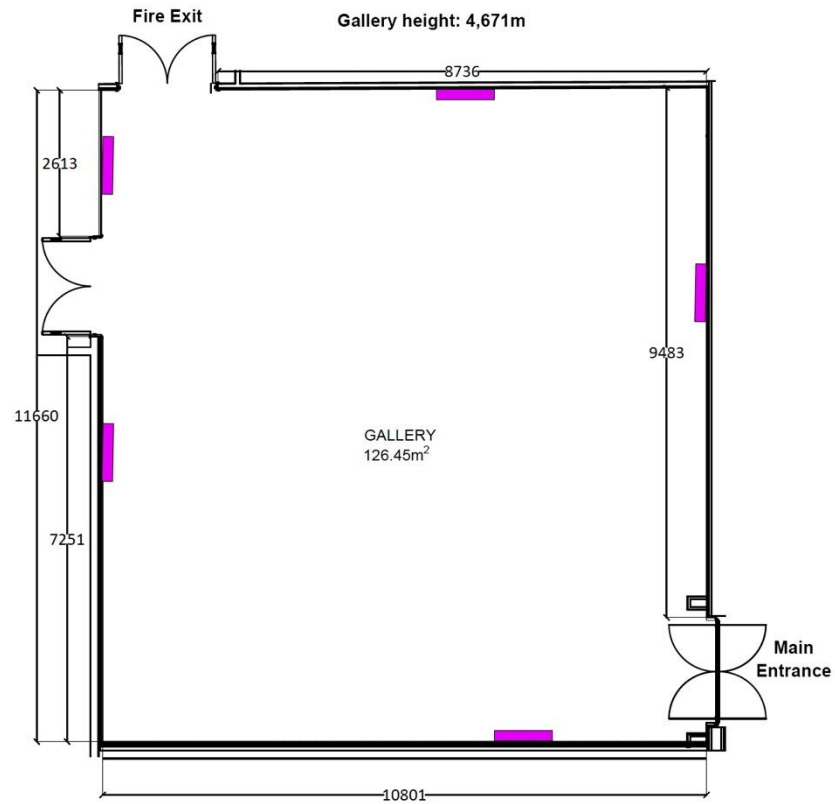
Hilary Mantel
The ghost
a memoir

Vision & Design

Walls: 'thought' clusters
(assemblages of drawing/object/photo/lightboxes)



double plug sockets

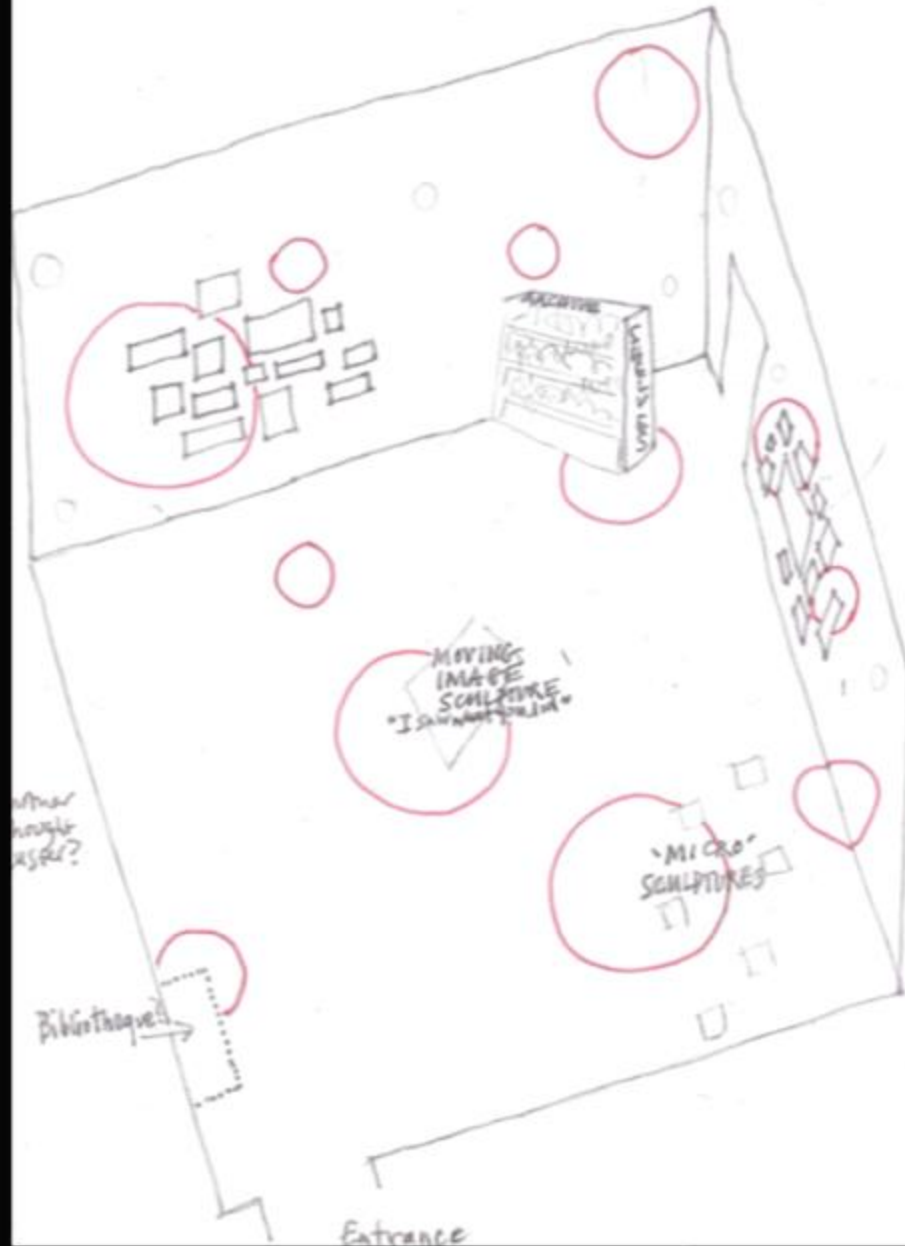


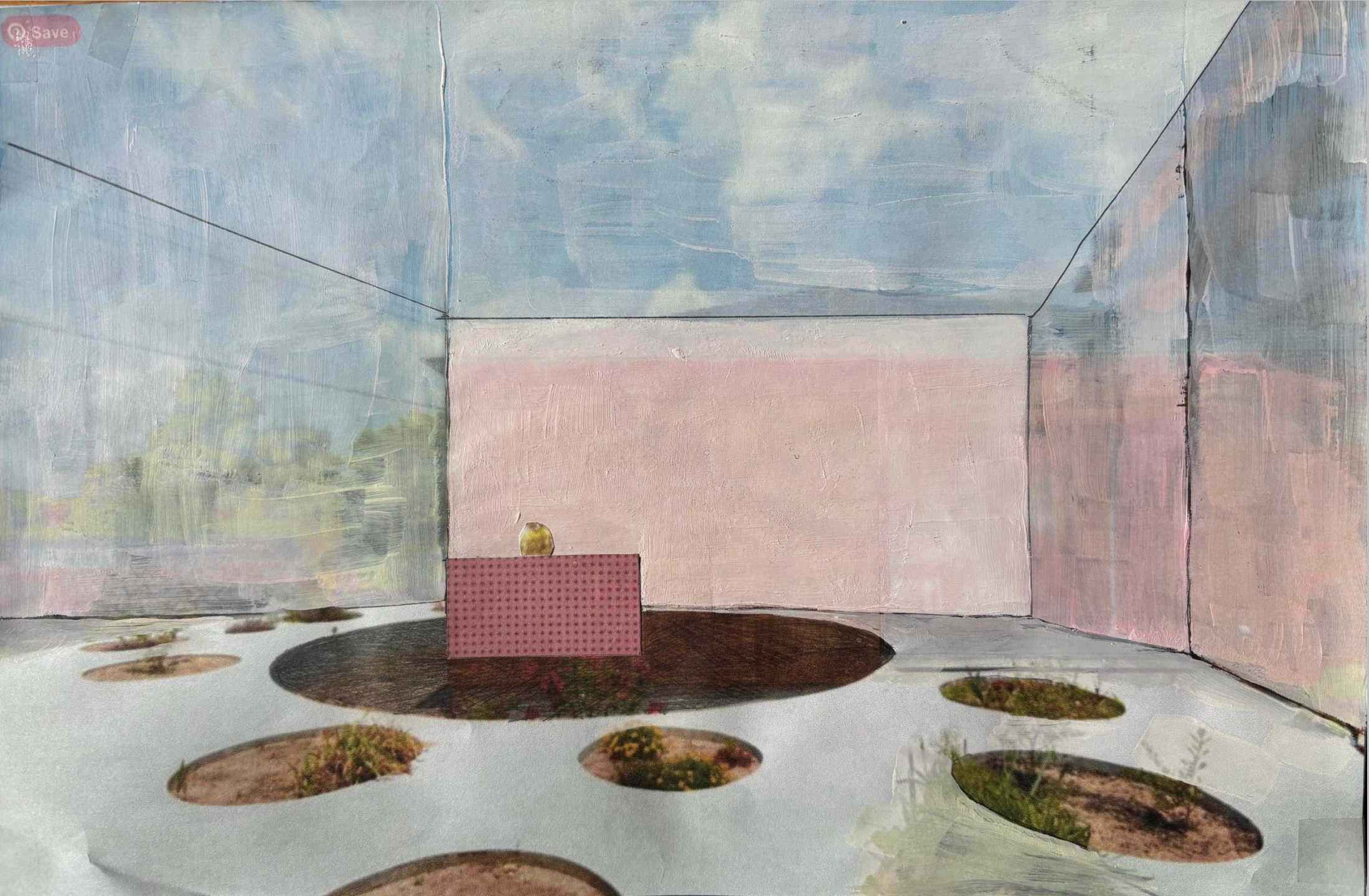


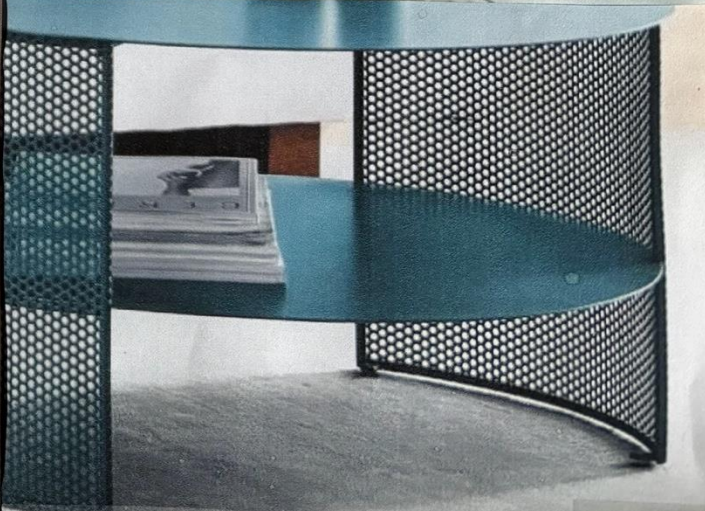


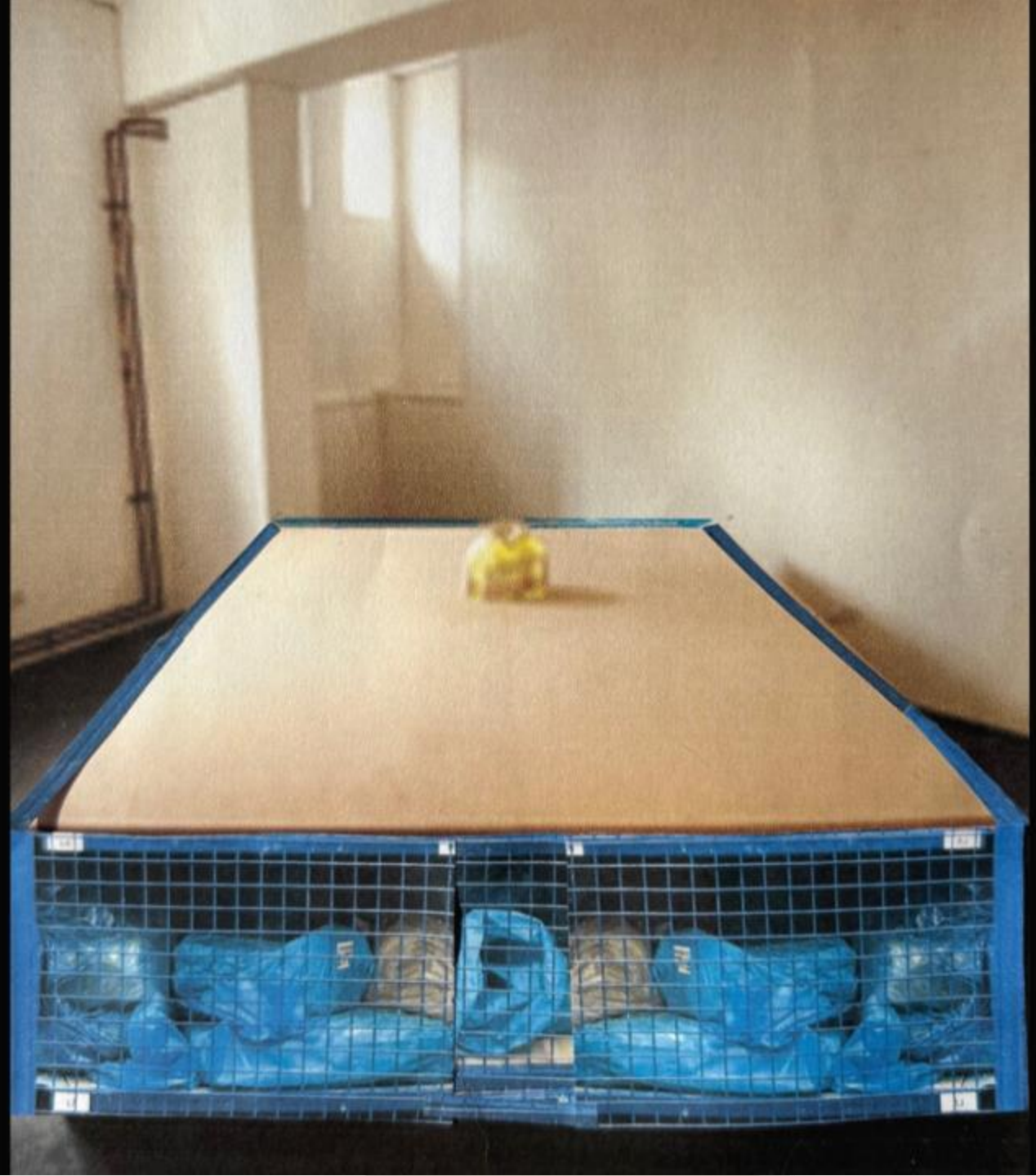
Walls: 'thought' clusters
(assemblages of drawing/object/photo/lightboxes)

DRAFT
'BUBBLE'
SUGGESTION













Sheila Gaffney Embodied Dreaming exhibition Installation

STONEWARE GLAZE FIRE

CONCEPTUAL CLOTHING

The shadow of the object
Christopher Bollas
Psychoanalysis of the unthought known

Hilary Mantel
The ghost
a memoir

Grizelda Pollock
Vision & Design

Sheila

Embodied

Dreaming

Gaffney

Blenheim Walk Gallery is pleased to present Sheila Gaffney's exhibition *Embodied Dreaming*. Representative of her entire oeuvre, the exhibition, brings together for the first time a number of sculptures, drawings, video installation and image works, lightboxes, as well as unseen process-based models, and research material, highlighting the importance of process in her practice. The title of the exhibition is inspired by her doctoral thesis titled *Embodied Dreaming as a Sculptural Practice*. In the process of theorising her own practice of making, she turns to object relations theory, more particularly British psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas' notion of embodied dreaming as integral to the process of embodiment, namely the construction of the self.

Sheila Gaffney is a sculptor whose work is known for its intricate blend of contemporary themes and craftsmanship. For four decades, Gaffney has developed a diverse body of work encompassing various forms—sculpture, mixed media and site-specific installations, drawing, photography—demonstrating her versatility and profound engagement with materiality and form. The materiality of the work is central to Gaffney's artistic practice. She is deeply invested in the physical properties of her materials and the processes involved in working with them. This hands-on approach allows her to engage with her art on a tactile level, creating pieces that are as much about the process of making as they are about the finished product. Central themes in her work are issues of identity formation, class, gender, memory and multigenerational ethnicity, constantly intersecting with research practices of sculptural making. She frequently delves into the concept of memory, using her art to render fleeting moments and ephemeral experiences. This focus on the transient nature of life is evident in her choice of materials and techniques, which often involve processes of decay, transformation, and regeneration.

Gaffney's legacy lies in her ability to bridge the gap between tradition and innovation, creating art that is rooted in histories but speaks to contemporary issues and experiences. Her work is a testament to the enduring power of craft and the importance of maintaining a connection to the past while forging new paths in the present. Through her art and teaching, she continues to inspire and influence the next generation of artists, ensuring that her legacy will endure for years to come.

Exhibition Dates: 4 October 2024 - 11 January 2025

In conversation: Sheila Gaffney and Griselda Pollock,
moderated by Marianna Tsionki
20 November 2024 5-7pm, Blenheim Walk Gallery

The exhibition is curated by Marianna Tsionki, Associate Professor & University Curator with Ruth Vicars, Curatorial Assistant, Leeds Arts University.

We would like to thank Mr Christopher Graham for the loan of Curtains. Special thanks to Leeds Arts University 3D Workshops, Academic Computing and Estates teams for generously offering their expertise and assistance in the production of the exhibition.



Sheila

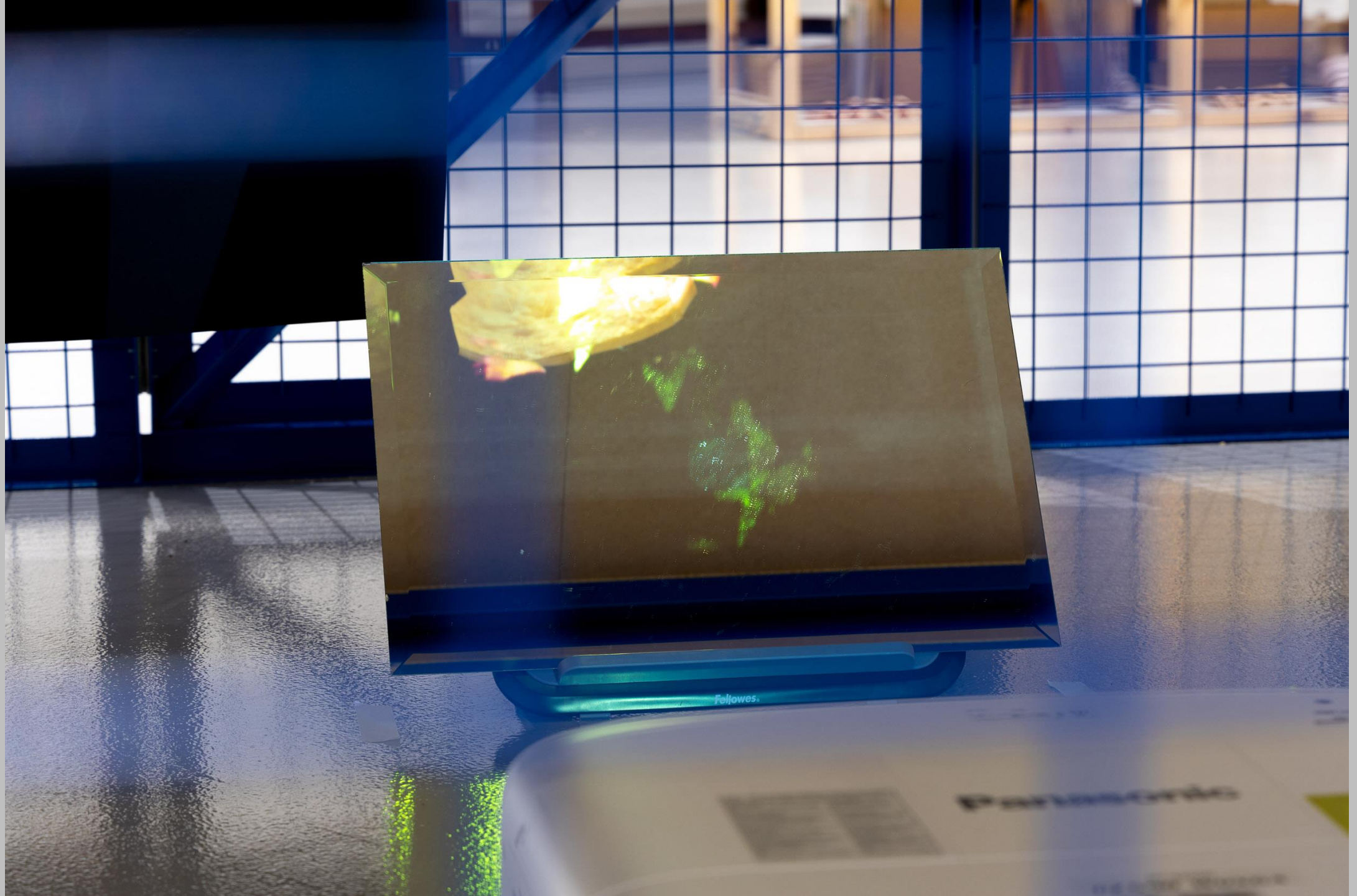
*Embodied
Dreaming*

Gaffney

Phyllis Koff's art is a powerful statement on the human condition, exploring the complexities of identity, memory, and the body. Her work is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of art to transform the world. Koff's art is a powerful statement on the human condition, exploring the complexities of identity, memory, and the body. Her work is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of art to transform the world.

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Embodied
Dreaming
Sheila
Gaffney

